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Climate motion sparks energetic debate in Council

17 April 2024



In a lively session at Epsom and Ewell Borough Council Tuesday 16th April, councillors engaged in a debate over a motion proposing a significant environmental mandate for future housing developments.

Councillor **James Lawrence**, (LibDem College) the initiator of the motion, emphasized the urgency of addressing climate change through stringent environmental standards in housing. He argued that aiming for the highest energy efficiency rating, Grade A of the Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) for all new house builds, would not only align with climate goals but also save residents money in the long run.

“I believe that this ambitious policy would allow us to more effectively design the housing of the future, both saving residents money and meeting our climate goals and saving energy in the long run,” Councillor Lawrence asserted.

However, concerns were raised regarding the practicality and affordability of such a mandate. Councillor **Alex Coley** (RA Ruxley) queried the feasibility of implementing the requirement and its potential impact on housing affordability.

“How much would these homes cost and to what extent would that mean that less affordable and social housing is built because of the cost of these elite homes?” Councillor Coley questioned.

Councillor **Phil Neale**, (RA Cuddington) drawing from a construction background, echoed similar sentiments, highlighting the challenges developers would face in meeting such stringent standards without significantly increasing housing costs.

“In reality…to provide housing of above A, which is what is being asked in this motion, is impossible,” Councillor Neale argued, stressing the need for practical solutions to address the housing shortage.

Amidst the debate, Councillor **Kim Spickett** (RA Cuddington) urged a nuanced approach, emphasizing the importance of considering the impact on families and advocating for a stable efficiency metric in EPC ratings.

“The focus of an EPC headline metric needs to be on reducing demand through a stable efficiency metric,” Councillor Spickett remarked, urging caution in setting overly ambitious standards.

Despite the spirited discussion, Councillor **Julie Morris** (LibDem College) urged the council to aim high, citing the potential benefits of setting ambitious environmental standards.

“It’s much easier to negotiate downwards than it is to negotiate upwards,” Councillor Morris asserted, advocating for bold action to combat climate change.

However, Councillor **Steven McCormick** (RA Woodcote and Langley and Chair of the responding Licensing Planning and Policy Committee) cautioned against rushing into decisions without considering the economic viability and broader implications of the mandate. He stressed the importance of evidence-based decision-making and cautioned against jeopardizing housing affordability.

Councillor Lawrence concluded by urging the council to consider the motion’s underlying sentiment, even if it failed to pass, highlighting the growing momentum for stringent environmental regulations.

The motion was defeated on a show of hands.

Image: Oakton Developments – new houses in Epsom

Seeing through transparency in Council Chamber

17 April 2024



In a fullsome debate during the Full Council meeting of Epsom and Ewell Borough Council Tuesday 16th April, members clashed over a motion aimed at enhancing transparency in decision-making processes. The motion, proposed by the

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Liberal Democrat group, called for a policy of 'transparency by default,' urging that all meetings and documentation be made public unless specific exemptions under the Local Government Act applied.

Councillor **Julie Morris** (LibDem College), expressing disappointment with the decision not to refer the matter to the Standards and Constitution Committee, argued that the current approach lacked proper review and resulted in too many discussions being held behind closed doors. She emphasized the need for a more nuanced approach to determine when confidentiality was truly warranted.

Councillor **Bernie Muir** (Conservative Horton) echoed concerns about transparency, citing instances where information had been withheld or meetings had been abruptly shifted to private sessions. She called for comprehensive training for both officers and councillors to ensure better understanding and adherence to transparency principles.

Councillor **Steven McCormick** (RA Woodocte and Langley) acknowledged the challenges in navigating confidentiality requirements but defended the importance of open discussions. He highlighted the unique opportunity afforded by debating the motion in a public forum, urging members to engage in constructive dialogue.

Newly-elected Councillor **James Lawrence** (LibDem College) expressed confusion over the rationale behind certain decisions to withhold information. He stressed the importance of providing clear explanations to the public and fellow councillors, especially in cases where secrecy seemed unwarranted.

Councillor **Chris Ames** (Labour Court) raised concerns about the misuse of private sessions for political reasons, emphasizing the need for robust scrutiny and public engagement. He criticized the current administration for potentially undermining transparency and urged for greater accountability moving forward.

In response to criticisms, Councillor **Alex Coley** (RA Ruxley) defended the decision to debate the motion in full Council, emphasizing the importance of public engagement. He questioned the opposition's reluctance to address transparency concerns in a public setting.

Councillor **Alan Williamson** (RA West Ewell), opposed the motion, asserting that existing transparency measures were sufficient. He cautioned against broadening transparency requirements, arguing that certain discussions necessitated confidentiality to foster open dialogue.

Councillor **Peter O'Donovan** (RA Ewell Court) highlighted the distinction between confidentiality and secrecy, emphasizing the need for a safe space to discuss sensitive issues. He cautioned against overreach in transparency efforts, citing the potential risks to privacy and effective decision-making.

Councillor **Phil Neale** (RA Cuddington), echoing sentiments expressed by Councillors Donovan and Spickett, emphasized the importance of confidentiality in certain discussions, particularly those involving commercial interests or personal safety. He cautioned against inadvertently stifling open dialogue by overly broadening transparency requirements.

Councillor **Hannah Dalton** (RA Stoneleigh) underscored ongoing efforts to address concerns regarding confidential sessions, promising clearer explanations for why certain items were categorized as confidential. She emphasized the need for balance between transparency and privacy, acknowledging the challenges inherent in navigating sensitive issues.

Councillor **Kieran Persand**, (Conservative Horton) expressing support for the motion, highlighted frustrations over perceived barriers to transparency within the council. He stressed the need for greater accountability and public trust, arguing that enhanced transparency measures were necessary to rebuild confidence among residents.

Councillor **Alison Kelly**, (LibDem Stamford) who seconded the motion, underscored the importance of improving communication and understanding among councillors and the public. She proposed measures to enhance clarity around confidentiality, aiming to provide residents with a better understanding of decision-making processes.

However, Councillor **Liz Frost**, (RA Woodcaote and Langley) Chair of the Standards and Constitution Committee, urged caution, warning against potential unintended consequences of broadening transparency measures. She emphasized the importance of maintaining a balance between openness and the need for confidential discussions to facilitate effective decision-making.

Following the debate, the motion was put to a vote, with a majority ultimately deciding against its passage.

Image – Cllr Liz Frost responds to the motion. Council Chamber. EEBC YouTube

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Council getting belted by Green Group?

17 April 2024



The **Epsom Green Belt Group** has submitted a "complaint" to **Epsom and Ewell Borough Council**, expressing grave concerns over what they perceive as significant failures in the governance, oversight, and leadership of the **Local Plan**. The group's submission outlines several key issues they believe have hindered the proper scrutiny and preparation of the

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plan, which will shape planning permissions for buildings in the future.

In their communication to the Council, the Epsom Green Belt Group emphasizes the importance of preserving green spaces and utilizing brownfield sites to deliver affordable homes within the borough. They express frustration at what they see as resistance from planning officers to cooperate with members of the **Licensing and Planning Policy Committee** (LPPC), hindering the committee's ability to provide direction and challenge to the Local Plan.

According to the group, the LPPC, tasked with influencing and controlling the development and use of land in the Borough, has not fulfilled its obligations effectively. They argue that the LPPC should have been actively engaged in the preparation, adoption, and review of the statutory Development Plan, including Local Development Documents. However, their analysis reveals a concerning lack of involvement and debate on critical aspects of the plan.

Of particular concern, the Group argues, is the apparent absence of discussion or challenge regarding the Spatial Strategy, Plan policies, and critical decisions related to the Local Plan. Despite the completion of a public consultation, which garnered 1,736 responses, the Group asserts that none of the LPPC meetings addressed the results or expected impact on the Regulation 19 Local Plan. This lack of engagement is compounded by the cancellation of several LPPC meetings and a significant increase in the Local Plan budget without corresponding scrutiny or accountability.

The Epsom Green Belt Group urges the council to address these issues urgently and provide clarity on the timetable for scrutiny, challenge, and direction of the Local Plan by the LPPC. They demand assurance that the committee will have the freedom, opportunity, time, and resources necessary to fulfill its mandate without undue constraints or interference from officers. Additionally, they call for a contingency plan in case of further delays to the Local Plan timetable.

Epsom and Ewell Borough Council were swift to respond with answers to **six** demands made by the Green Group:

1. **The detailed timetable for the scrutiny, challenge and direction of each significant element of the Local Plan by the LPPC**

The Proposed Submission Local Plan with a recommendation will come to Licensing and Planning Policy Committee (LPPC) in November 2024. Councillors can discuss, debate and if needed change the recommendation at this meeting. If supported, the recommendation would then go to full council in December 2024 for all Councillors to discuss and debate. If supported, this would then be put to public consultation in January 2025.

2. **The date on which the analysis of the consultation results, and proposed amendments arising from it, will be presented to the LPPC for adjustment and/or approval**

A Consultation Statement will be published as part of the agenda pack for the LPPC in November 2024 where the Proposed Submission Local Plan will be considered. The exact date of this meeting is to be confirmed.

The Consultation Statement will summarise the responses received on the Draft Local Plan (Regulation 18) and how they have been considered in producing the Proposed-Submission (Regulation 19) version of the Local Plan.

3. **That the LPPC will be given the freedom, opportunity, time and resources sufficient for it to fulfil its mandate, as set out it its Terms of Reference, without undue constraints or interference from officers**

Correct. In line with the Council's constitution, officers advise Councillors in their professional capacity, and Councillors are responsible for decision making in respect of the Local Plan and its content.

The Council's constitution can be accessed from the following link: https://democracy.epsom-ewell.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=205&MId=1619&Ver=4&Info=1

4. **That review, challenge and direction of the Local Plan will be included in the agenda of every meeting of the LPPC to be held until publication of the Regulation 19 consultation**

The Council's Constitution provides the terms of reference for the LPPC, these are set out in Appendix 3 (p16-18). Agenda items coming to Council Committees are typically brought to arrive at a decision.

The LPPC responsibilities include making decisions at key stages in the production of Local Plan documents as set out below:

- Considering and approving Draft (Regulation 18) Local Plans
- LPPC considered and approved the Draft Local Plan (Regulation 18) for consultation on 30 January 2023.
- Considering and recommending for approval to Full Council, submission versions of Development Plan documents
- LPPC will consider the pre-submission Local Plan in November 2024.

The next decision related to the Local Plan regards the Proposed Submission Local Plan (Regulation 19) at the November LPPC meeting.

5. **That there is sufficient time and budget to accommodate any and all changes the LPPC may recommend**

As has been reported to LPPC, the Local Plan timetable has a limited degree of flexibility to ensure that the Local Plan is submitted to the government for examination by the 30 June 2025 deadline, which is the deadline set by government for submission under the current Local Plan system. The scale of changes made will influence whether there is a delay to the

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programme- for example, minor typographical errors or clarification of wording will not impact the programme. However, changes that require amendments to the evidence base could lead to delays that result in the transitional arrangements deadline being missed.

6. **That a contingency plan is in place should the currently proposed Local Plan timetable slip for any reason, including matters arising from the review and challenge set out above.'**

There are elements of contingency in the plan, but if the Local Plan timetable slips and as a result it will not be possible to submit the Local Plan to the government by the 30 June 2025, we will prepare a Local Plan under the reforms set out in the Levelling Up and Regeneration Act. The government are due to publish further legislation in relation to plan making reforms that will need to be considered.

Something special going on at Epsom baths

17 April 2024



Rainbow Leisure Centre in **Epsom** has recently started running tailored swimming lessons for children with special needs and disabilities.

The sessions – which have proved to be a big hit – take place in small groups in the teaching pool where it is quieter and less stressful for the children. Mums and dads join their young person in the water along with the class teacher, picking up tips on how to help their child feel more confident.

Participants are aged from 4 – 8 years old and have a range of neurological and physical difficulties such as autism, dyspraxia and impaired vision. Children are also welcome to take part in the mainstream classes during the rest of the week if they feel confident enough to do so.

Young swimmer Heidi, seen here with mum Stacey and teacher Ana, loves her classes at Rainbow. Stacey says, "She loves the water and gets to have fun while learning to be safe."

Mary Mannion, Swimming School Manager at the centre, comments, "The classes are very popular. We're delighted to be able to offer this service to young people and their families. Keeping fit and safe in the water is so important for children of all ages and abilities."

Rainbow is run by GLL under the 'Better' brand. As a charitable social enterprise, the organisation is committed to supporting the wellbeing of local communities.

SEND swimming takes place on Thursdays at 6.15pm. For more details, look at the app at Better_uk or contact customer services at customer.service@gll.org or call 0330 123 1500.

Epsom Karate Kids go global

17 April 2024



The Mo-ichido England Karate Association, nestled in the heart of Horton Country Park, made waves on the international stage as they ventured to Albena on the Black Sea coast of Bulgaria. Their mission: to compete in the prestigious 14th WSF World Shotokan Championships, facing off against formidable opponents from across the globe, including national squads hailing from as far as the Ivory Coast.

Led by Colin Sensei and Squad Captain Olivia Lusted, the club sent a team of 8 young competitors, proudly representing England on the global karate platform. Their performance exceeded expectations, returning home with an impressive haul

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of 1 gold, 3 silver, and 2 bronze medals. This achievement catapulted England to the 12th position out of 27 on the medal table, showcasing their resilience against adversaries with greater resources and support.

From the Mo-ichido association's humble beginnings in an old, rundown cow shed in Horton Country Park, the club has evolved into a beacon of inspiration within the local community. Offering a diverse range of activities including physiotherapy, yoga, pilates, meditation, Ki-aikido, the club has transformed the shed into a sanctuary where individuals of all ages can partake in the shared passion of karate.

With a track record of producing European and World champions, the Mo-Ichido club continues to make strides in the martial arts realm, representing excellence on both national and international fronts. However, their ambitious pursuits come with financial challenges, prompting the club to seek sponsorship opportunities to sustain their journey towards global domination.

For more information on the remarkable achievements and ongoing endeavors of the Mo-Ichido England Karate club, visit their website at moichido.co.uk.

Boxing champions young people in Epsom & Ewell

17 April 2024



A new local boxing programme, led by **Epsom & Ewell Borough Council** and delivered by **Epsom Boxing Academy**, saw its first cohort graduate in March. 14 students, referred by local schools, were enrolled on the course. Graduating students were awarded an England Boxing Bronze Award which was complimented with an AQA Empire Fighting Chance Award in nutrition and health.

The structured boxing programme aimed to help young people build confidence, self-discipline, and resilience as well as improving self-esteem and supporting positive mental health.

Councillor **Clive Woodbridge**, (RA Ewell Village) Chair of the Community and Wellbeing Committee, said; "I was honoured to attend the graduation of the Epsom & Ewell Community Boxing Scheme.

"Boxing is a fantastic way to keep fit, but it has also been shown to aid in the development of life skills including self-discipline, mental strength and control, and personal responsibility; as well as helping manage feelings of aggression. Boxing also provides invaluable opportunities for students to connect with positive mentors.

"We know that community schemes like this one are a fantastic way to tackle inclusion in sport whilst promoting positive outcomes for young people in our borough. I look forward to Epsom & Ewell Borough Council spearheading more initiatives like this one in the future."

Joe Harding, Boxing Coach and founder of Epsom Boxing Academy, added; "The scheme was a great chance to create and deliver a programme specifically for our community in Epsom & Ewell.

We saw an unbelievable change in the students over the weeks as they developed and demonstrated boxing techniques, learnt about the human body, and about food labels and nutrition.

Life coaching and mentoring helped students' progress in terms of their self-confidence, personal discipline, and punctuality. We were able to provide a safe space and an environment for the young people to express themselves. The results were outstanding. We were extremely proud to be part of such a great project."

The Community Boxing Scheme is part of Epsom & Ewell Borough Council's wider strategy to improve the wellbeing of residents through activity; and reduce barriers to sports and leisure participation for those who may not otherwise have access to facilities. It follows on from a successful swimming programme, delivered in partnership with leisure operator and social enterprise GLL and made possible by an award from Sport England funded by the National Lottery.

Image courtesy EEBC

Not in Epsom and Ewell but other Surrey elections test the water...

17 April 2024

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The fate of 116 council seats in Surrey are up for grabs as voters head to the polls on Thursday, May 2. There are 11 boroughs and districts in the county, with widespread voting taking place in six – Elmbridge, Mole Valley, Reigate & Banstead, Runnymede, Tandridge and Woking. There is also a bye-election for a single seat on Waverley Borough Council.

There are no local council elections this year in Epsom & Ewell, Guildford, Spelthorne, and Surrey Heath Borough Councils.

With a general election less than a year away, this vote will be viewed in some quarters as a significant bellwether for the race for Downing Street. Counting will begin on Friday May 3.

The first results area expected to come out of Woking Borough Council at 4pm, followed by Runnymede and Tandridge at 5pm. Mole Valley and Reigate and Banstead councils are predicted to declare by 6pm with Elmbridge tellers expected to be wrapped up by 6.30pm.

Do I need photo id? Yes -you need to bring valid photo identification in order to vote this year. Valid IDs include expired official documents such as passports that still have a strong resemblance. Voters without an accepted ID can apply for the free Voter Authority Certificate – a fast track card that will allow people to vote.

Elmbridge Borough Council

Number of seats up for election: 16
Election result expected: 6.30pm Friday, May 3.
Largest party: Liberal Democrats

There are 48 seats in total on Elmbridge Borough Council with 16, one third of the total, up for grabs on May 2. The Liberal Democrats have 20 councillors, Residents' Associations, 16, and the Conservatives, 12. The Liberal Democrats became the largest party in the borough, overtaking their coalition partners – Residents' Association – last year in a borough that has been historically Conservative.

The Esher and Walton parliamentary constituency largely covers Elmbridge and is represented by Dominic Raab, who resigned from the cabinet on April 21. He later announced he would quit as MP at the next general election.

Mole Valley District Council

Number of seats up for election: 14
Election result expected: 6pm Friday, May 3.
Largest party: Liberal Democrats

A boundary review last year led to all out–elections across the borough, delivering a sweeping victory for the Liberal Democrats. This year, Mole Valley District Council reverts to electing its members by thirds across its 13 wards. In Capel, Leigh, Newdigate and Charlwood voters will be sending two representatives, bringing the total elected this year to 14 as they replace the seat formerly held by Lesley Bushnell, In total there are 39 councillors in the district.

The council is currently controlled by the Liberal Democrats who have 29 elected members. The opposition is formed from six informal independents and three Conservatives. At a national level the Conservative Mole Valley MP since 1997, Sir Paul Beresford, said he will not stand in the next general election.

Reigate and Banstead Borough Council

Number of seats up for election: 16
Election result expected: 6pm Friday, May 3.
Largest party: Conservative

The Conservatives, with 22 councillors, are the single largest party in Reigate and Banstead but do not have overall control of the borough council. In the 2023 election, the Tories lost seats to the Green Party, which now has 11 councillors and Labour, one. The rest of the authority is made up of five Residents' Association, three Lib Dems, two independents.

Voting takes place across in each of the borough's 15 wards with one person elected in each. The exception is in Tattenham Corner and Preston where, to fill a vacancy, two members will be elected.
Conservative MP for Reigate Crispin Blunt announced in 2022 that he would not run for re-election, having first won the seat in 1997.

In January Mr Blunt was re-bailed until April after his arrest on suspicion of rape and possession of controlled substances.

Runnymede Borough Council

Number of seats up for election: 15
Election result expected: 5pm Friday, May 3.
Largest party: Conservative

Runnymede Borough Council went to no overall control in 2023 but has had a Conservative leader ever since it's formation in 1974. Going into this May's election there are 18 Conservative councillors, six Runnymede Independent

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Residents Group, five independents, four Labour, four Liberal Democrats, two Green Party, and one Reform UK – after former Tory and current deputy mayor Robert Bromley crossed the floor.

Runnymede is one of the three Surrey councils, the others being Spelthorne and Woking, to rank in the top five nationally for local authorities with the largest average debt per resident.

The MP for the area – which also includes Weybridge in neighbouring Elmbridge, is Ben Spencer. He was elected in 2019 with 54.9 per cent of the vote, ahead of Labour candidate Robert King, 20.6 per cent.

Waverley Borough Council

Number of seats up for election: 1
Election result expected: Early Friday, May 3.
Largest party: Liberal Democrats

Waverley Borough Council has 50 councillors across 24 wards that are voted for in an “all out” elections where every seat is decided. This year however is the much smaller matter of the race for the vacant Witley and Milford Borough seat in a May 2 by-election. The last all out vote was in 2023 when the council remained in no overall control.

The Liberal Democrats are the largest party with 22 councillors and are in coalition with the Farnham Residents’ 13 members, Labour’s two officials and the single representative of the Green Party. There are 10 councillors on the Conservative opposition and a further two independent members.

The MP representing the greatest number of people who call Waverley Borough Council home is the chancellor Jeremy Hunt. The 57-year-old MP was first elected to the Southwest Surrey constituency in May 2005.

Woking Borough Council

Number of seats up for election: 11
Election result expected: 4pm, Friday, May 3.
Largest party: Liberal Democrats

Woking Borough Council votes in thirds -with one councillor elected in each of its 10 wards. A by-election to fill the vacancy in Hoe Valley to bring the total number of seats decided up to 11. Voters in Woking began to turn their backs on the Conservatives after its financial problems became clear. The borough had a Tory leader from 2007 up until 2022 when the Liberal Democrats took control. Going into the May 2024 local elections the Lib Dems hold 19 of the 30 potential seats on the council with the four Conservatives making up the official opposition group.

The rest of the council is made up of four independent members, two from Labour and one vacant seat.

MP Jonathan Lord, who assumed office in 2010, was given a vote of confidence by Prime Minister Rishi Sunak to hold his seat in the next General Election.

Tandridge District Council

Number of seats up for election: 43
When is the election result expected: 5pm Friday, May 3.
Largest party: Residents’ Alliance

Every seat on Tandridge District Council will be decided when voters go to the polls on May 2. This year there will be 43 councillors returned to 18 wards, up from the current number of 42 – after the Local Government Boundary Commission for England redrew the electoral map. Previously the council elected its members by thirds.

Currently Tandridge Distrcit Council is led by the Residents’ Alliance, which holds 18 seats. The Liberal Democrats, 11, Conservative nine and Independent Group, four, comprise the rest of the council.

The nearest matching parliamentary constituency is East Surrey, currently held by the energy secretary Claire Coutinho after she was elected in 2019.

Epsom and Ewell candidates dominate Police Commissioner election

17 April 2024



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Nominations have closed in the race to become the next Surrey Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) with four candidates across the parties lined up. Two of the four candidates are Epsom and Ewell councillors.

The Epsom and Ewell Times has invited all candidates to submit statements to our publication and we hope to publish them in the days ahead.

The PCC role oversees the work of Surrey Police and its Chief Constable and holds them and their decisions to account. They set the strategic direction and aims for the force through the Police and Crime Plan.

In the running on May 2 are Lisa Townsend (the current PCC and Conservative), Paul Kennedy (Liberal Democrat), Kate Chinn (Labour) and Alex Coley (Independent).

Salaries of the PCC are decided on a national basis and vary depending on the size of the force; the commissioner for Surrey will receive a salary of £73,000 per annum.

PCCs are also responsible for all funding relating to policing, including the police precept, and to work with the Chief Constable to set the force budget in line with priorities and deliver value for money for residents.

Providing a link between the police and Surrey residents, the PCC listens to the public's concerns and works with the Chief Constable to create improvements.

Lisa Townsend, Conservative

Looking to get a second term, one of Lisa's major flagships is campaigning to end violence against women and girls. She has been working on various community projects including Safer Streets tackling anti-social behaviour and support services for victims.

In a post on X, formerly Twitter, Lisa said her immediate priorities are maintaining and growing the police force, as well as working with the Chief Constable on 'back to basics' policing. She said this includes "ensuring Surrey Police do what only they can: investigating and solving crime, not sitting in hospitals."

Alex Coley, Independent

Previously a Digital Lead for the Met Police, Alex said he wants "more bobbies on the beat" in Surrey. Headline policies include petitioning to parliament to change the way police funding is allocated in the country; so that the government contributes more for policing in Surrey than the taxpayer

Since 2018 Alex has been an Epsom and Ewell councillor as well as chairing the Crime and Disorder panel for the borough. The only independent candidate, Alex is campaigning to "take party politics out of policing" and put "pride and professionalism back into Surrey Police".

Paul Kennedy, Liberal Democrat

Hoping to be third-time lucky is Paul- a former barrister, accountant, actuary and Mole Valley councillor. Some of his campaign policies include "bringing back community policing" and combatting offending behaviour through restorative justice, education and support for mental health and addictions.

In a press statement, Paul said: "Like many people I disagree with the idea of PCCs, but we're stuck with them for now. So, let's do the job properly." If elected, Paul said he will work with the Chief Constable to fix the issues highlighted in the December 2023 inspection report.

Kate Chinn, Labour

Councillor for Epsom and Ewell, Kate's policies include refocusing on neighbourhood-based policing and using empty shops in the town centre for a police presence. Preventative measures is another concern as Kate aims to increase support services for young people.

Kate has said that she wants to review current training to ensure police have a good understanding of domestic violence, misogyny and sexual assault.

The deadline to register to vote is April 16, which can be done online. Elections take place on May 2, with the result announced the following day.

To vote for your preferred candidate, a valid ID must be brought to the polling station. This can include passport, driving licence, disabled or older person's Bus Pass funded by the UK Government, and a biometric immigration document. Residents without an accepted form of photo ID can apply for a free Voter Authority Certificate (VAC).

Avoid ticket scams this summer

17 April 2024

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Residents are being warned to be aware of online ticket scams that are catching out eager concert-goers ahead of the summer.

Surrey Trading Standards is pleased to announce the launch of a campaign aimed at curbing event ticket fraud across both counties. With a number of residents falling victim to deceptive practices when purchasing event tickets online, this initiative seeks to protect residents from financial loss and disappointment.

Event **ticket fraud** involves unscrupulous individuals exploiting the high demand for tickets to concerts, sporting events, and other popular attractions. Fraudulent practices include the sale of counterfeit tickets, non-existent tickets, and tickets with inflated prices. Such schemes not only result in financial losses for consumers but also tarnish the reputation of legitimate event organisers and venues.

Surrey Trading Standards has already witnessed online scammers attempting to exploit people wanting to see concerts by Taylor Swift, and the Foo Fighters. Future scams may include Glastonbury and sporting events such as Wimbledon and this summer's Paris Olympics.

Steve Ruddy, Head of Trading Standards at Buckinghamshire and Surrey Trading Standards said: *"Music and sports fans are at risk of huge rises in online ticket fraud. Criminal activity selling fake tickets is becoming more and more prevalent online and we urge people to avoid disappointment by being cautious when purchasing tickets for all sporting and music events.*

"Ticket fraud not only harms consumers financially but also undermines trust in the marketplace. Our campaign aims to empower our residents with the knowledge and resources they need to make informed ticket purchases. By raising awareness, we can create a safer environment for consumers to enjoy live events across Buckinghamshire, Surrey and beyond."

Tips for purchasing event tickets online

- Only buy direct from legitimate ticket sites
- Always use a debit or credit card when you buy tickets online (not bank transfer). This helps to protect your money should something go wrong
- Be extra cautious when purchasing tickets advertised by individuals on social media Fraudsters use social media to advertise tickets that don't exist. If you're looking for a ticket, always search for it yourself from a trusted source
- Low prices and seemingly great deals are often used to disguise scams. However, if demand for tickets is high or an event is sold out, fraudsters can charge more to trick desperate buyers
- Check the details of the site you are buying from and before entering payment ensure the web address starts with https and that there's a padlock icon in the browser bar
- Check the vendor is a member of the **Society of Ticket Agents and Retailers (STAR)**

Residents are encouraged to report their concerns about event ticket fraud to the **Citizens Advice consumer service** on 0808 223 1133. The helpline takes all enquiries on behalf of Trading Standards across England and Wales and will pass the report to the relevant Trading Standards team.

Alternatively, if you have been a victim and lost money, please report to Action Fraud at **actionfraud.police.uk** or by calling 0300 123 2040.

1st generation UCA graduates celebrated

17 April 2024

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Two graduates from the University for the Creative Arts (UCA) in Epsom, Surrey have been named in Universities UK's 100 Faces campaign, celebrating the stories and achievements of first-generation students.

McKenna Marsden and **Troy Hunter** feature in the campaign's arts and sports talents category alongside Happy Valley star, Amit Shah, the crime writer Sir Ian James Rankin OBE, and BBC Sports Personality of the Year 2022, Beth Mead. All 100 graduates listed by Universities UK were the first in their families to attend university.

"Going to university gave me a lot more independence and taught me new skills, developing my abilities in a subject which was once just a passion," said McKenna, who is a BA (Hons) Fashion graduate. He was chosen by British Vogue as one of its top 50 emerging designers, showcased his graduate collection at London Fashion Week, and interned at Christopher Kane.

He said: "University gave me stability while allowing me to break into the fashion industry, leading to many big achievements. I don't think I would have had the success I did without studying at university."

Originally from Newcastle, McKenna's working-class background was the main inspiration for his final graduate fashion collection and continues to influence his designs.

"Anything is possible if you believe it and work hard for it no matter how many setbacks you may have, if you believe you can achieve your goals you can," McKenna added.

Troy, who graduated from UCA in 2013 with a degree in BA (Hons) Film Production, has gone on to write episodes for the hit Netflix show Sex Education and an episode of Eastenders. He was also nominated for Outstanding Breakthrough Creative (Television) at the NAACP Awards.

Troy said: "Studying film production at UCA made a huge difference in my life, it gave me the confidence and determination to continue pursuing a career in the TV and Film industry when people around me were telling me otherwise."

His success continues in the form of a short film called Mya and his debut play Black Pride, as well as a television adaptation of the same name, with Maia Pictures.

New research commissioned by Universities UK revealed the transformative impact of going to university, with almost three-quarters of first-in-the-family students agreeing their degree gave them the confidence to apply for jobs without feeling like an imposter.

Vivienne Stern MBE, Chief Executive of Universities UK, said: "There are those who say that too many people go to university. I disagree. These stories tell you why. In this country, you are still twice as likely to go to university if you are from the wealthiest background, compared to the least wealthy. That's not right.

This defeat will not count

17 April 2024

	Premier Division South						
Pos	Team	P	W	D	L	GD	PTS
16	Spelthorne Sports	36	10	8	18	-25	30
17	Guildford City	36	8	4	24	-51	28
18	Sheerwater	36	7	4	25	-56	25
19	Epsom & Ewell	35	7	3	25	-40	24
20	Colliers Wood United	33	5	7	21	-38	22

Epsom & Ewell FC 1-3 Fleet Town. ABANDONED AFTER 55 MINUTES. Combined Counties League – Premier Division. Saturday 13th April 2024.

An attendance of around 80 people gathered at the Madgwick to watch our penultimate League match at the ground before we move on to Corinthian Casuals for next season. However, it didn't work out quite like that as the contest was abandoned in the 55th minute following a nasty injury to young Fleet defender Ed Scott and the fixture will now have to be rearranged back at the Madgwick, with Thursday 25th April looking to be the most likely date, due to our opponents currently having matches scheduled for both remaining Tuesdays. Please note that this is only speculation on my part and confirmation will follow in the near future.

Those present on a sunny day (but one which had brought swarms of flies out behind the far goal where we were standing) witnessed an hour of football that summed up our season really as we looked quite threatening in patches, only to part like the Red Sea at others and we were 3-1 down at the time of the abandonment.

We had a number of changes to the line up from the loss against Spelthorne Sports as Thompson Adeyemi, Jaevon Dyer and Callum Wilson were all unavailable. Worse still, Wilson confirmed that he is done for the season following a dislocated thumb. However, it wasn't all bad news as Carl Oblitey returned from injury up front while Tijani Eshilokun was also back

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in the line up alongside Luke Taylor who made his first start for our club. Also back from injury was Ethan Brazier who relegated Ayran Kugathas to the bench and was arguably our best player on the day, making a number of marauding runs.

Now, I'm not a fan of playing three at the back, as regular readers will be aware. We started the season with that formation and we have recently tried it towards the end of recent defeats to Balham and Horley Town. However, this time we started with the three and on this occasion, I could see why. Clearly the plan is now to try and outscore teams in the knowledge that we do not do clean sheets any more!

It is sound logic based on the fact that we are now nineteen matches without a clean sheet, and this formation did enable us to play Oblitey up front alongside Will Kendall, which was a bit of a throwback, although it will only work if enough service is provided to our front two. It nearly paid dividends with just 32 seconds on the clock as Ethan Nelson-Roberts made tracks down the left and sent over a low ball, but it was just too far ahead of Kendall who couldn't wrap his leg around the ball enough at the far post to keep the shot on target.

The opening minutes looked quite promising for Salts fans until a hopeful punt upfield from the visitors left our keeper Dan O'Donovan and our retreating defender Matt McGillivray uncertain of who should claim the ball on the edge of the area and while they dithered, Dan Bone nipped in to poke the ball away from both of them and roll the ball into the empty net in just the eighth minute.

This was horrible, but we were back on level terms just three minutes later after Eshilokun fed the overlapping Brazier on the right wing and his pinpoint cross enabled Oblitey to score with a diving header into the bottom corner of the goal from six yards out. Luke Miller was next to deliver a dangerous right wing cross but it was punched away by Fleet's keeper Filip Chalupniczak. It was a fairly even contest to this point, but then we started to get pushed back by our opponents. McGillivray was forced into conceding a yellow card to stop an attacker breaking through.

We then had an extremely odd and contentious issue in the 24th minute. Chalupniczak made a routine catch and went to drop kick it clear, only for it to hit Oblitey on his back, just outside the penalty area and rebound straight into the net! It was surely a lucky break for us, but no! The referee consulted with his Assistant before then disallowing the goal and awarding a free kick against our man. This appeared extremely harsh, but having seen the video from our excellent Videographer Gary Jarman, you can see Oblitey jumping to block, even though his back was turned. On many occasions, the goal would still have stood, and I believe it should have still counted, but I can at least understand why it might have been disallowed. You'll have to draw your own conclusions as to whether Oblitey really did enough wrong here!

The setback gave us momentum for a while and Miller sent a ball in that was just turned away from Eshilokun at the far post, but on the break Fleet struck a shot just beyond our own post and from this point until the end of the half you could see us being pushed back. Brazier had to head an effort off our own goal line but in the 39th minute they went ahead through the ill-fated Scott with an unmarked near post header from a corner that was a carbon copy of one we conceded recently at home to Horley.

We nearly equalised in the second minute of injury time after Nelson-Roberts did really well to reach the touchline just a few yards out and pulled the ball back for Adam Green to side foot it towards the goal. It took a slight deflection on the way, but even so, it was somehow clutched right on the line by Chalupniczak and we went in at the break a goal behind, but not yet out of the match. However, the writing was on the wall within two minutes of the second half after a long throw was flicked on and then volleyed in from about ten yards by Bone to make it 3-1 which left us facing a mountain to climb.

However, the game took an unfortunate twist in the 55th minute when Nelson-Roberts threatened to break through on the left, but was then brought down by a high and very clumsy looking tackle from Scott, which left the offender in a heap in the floor. It was immediately clear that he was badly injured and all those in the ground knew there would be the possibility of an abandonment, as happened to us eighteen months previously when Andy "Woody" Hall was injured in a goalless draw at Forest Row. Looking back at the incident itself, it's possible that one of Scott's feet got caught in or on the artificial surface, which was why the original challenge looked so awkward as he looked off balance when he made it. Either way, this became the second Combined Counties League match to be abandoned at the Madgwick since the artificial surface was installed back in August after an injury curtailed the Cobham v Abbey Rangers fixture back in the Autumn of 2023. We obviously wish Ed Scott well for the future and hope he is back playing the game he loves as soon as possible.

From a personal point of view, the Forest Row match I referred to was abandoned with the score level at 0-0 and we went on to win the replayed contest 2-0 which, although we didn't know it at the time eventually gave us the pivotal second place finish and subsequent home advantage in the Southern Combination League playoffs last season. I wonder whether this replayed fixture turns out to be as significant. A new date for Fleet's re-visit will be advised as soon as possible.

Epsom & Ewell: Dan O'Donovan, Ethan Brazier, Ethan Nelson-Roberts (c), Adam Green, Reece Tierney, Matt McGillivray, Luke Miller, Tijani Eshilokun, Will Kendall, Carl Oblitey, Luke Taylor

Subs: none

Report Source: www.eefconline.co.uk

Surgery delay after hip break led to death

17 April 2024

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An elderly woman who tragically died after waiting five days for hip surgery prompted a coroner to raise concerns that a hospital is putting patients at risk of an early death.

Anne Rowland, a care home resident in Oxted, died in East Surrey Hospital after inflammation and infection of the lungs following surgery.

Ms Rowland broke her hip following a collision and fall with another care home resident who was partially sighted on February 27, 2023. She was taken to East Surrey Hospital the same day.

Coroner Anna Crawford found there was “no clinical reason” for the surgery not taking place until five days later on March 3 as the patient was “clinically fit”.

She concluded that outstanding infrastructure repairs and the use of different guidelines from the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) that the Surrey and Sussex Healthcare NHS Trust was “placing patients at risk of early death”.

NICE guidelines say that hip surgery should take place on the day of the injury or the day after. Early mobilisation is recommended for hip fracture patients to reduce the risk of complications, including pneumonia.

East Surrey Hospital uses a metric of 48 hours within which to conduct such surgery and does not use the NICE timeframe. Although the hospital has a dedicated operating theatre for trauma patients, on some occasions demand outweighs capacity.

However, the surgery did not take place because “other trauma patients were prioritised ahead of [Mrs Rowland] based upon their relative clinical need”.

Operating theatre capacity at the hospital has on occasion been compromised by infrastructure failings. An entire new surgery unit is being constructed and is anticipated to be completed by 2025 at the latest. The orthopaedic theatres also need new air handling and chillers which is yet to be completed.

The coroner concluded that waiting for her operation “caused” Mrs Rowland to develop dementia and immobility. This “contributed” to her developing aspiration pneumonia following surgery. Mrs Rowland’s condition deteriorated resulting in her death at East Surrey Hospital on March 31, 2023.

Ed Cetti, chief medical officer of Surrey and Sussex Healthcare NHS Trust, said: “We are profoundly sorry for the delay in Mrs Rowland’s hip surgery and offer our deepest sympathies to her family during this difficult time.”

The Trust said that in the months since Mrs Rowland’s death, it has “significantly” reduced delays in hip fracture surgery. In November 2023 59 per cent of operations occurred within 36 hours and 91 per cent within 48 hours.

Mr Cetti added: “We always strive to perform surgeries of this nature as soon as possible and monitor our performance against the 36-hour time window identified by NICE guidance. We also monitor against a 48-hour window to ensure any patients that miss the 36-hour target are not waiting longer than 48 hours.

“Recognising that not all patients are medically well enough for surgery within 36 hours, we are working on improving our performance further and reaching the 80 per cent target by the end of 2024/25.”

Image: Entrance to East Surrey Hospital. Credit Get Surrey•

Surrey Uni works on self-drive safety

17 April 2024



As the UK prepares to introduce legislation that paves the way for self-driving vehicles later this year, scientists and experts led by the University of Surrey have launched a new network to ensure that this new technology is safely implemented.

The MASSDRIVE (Methods for Assurance of Self-Driving Vehicles) project has been funded by Innovate UK to help the

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country and industry develop robust methods of approving and certifying self-driving cars as they become available.

Professor Saber Fallah, co-investigator on the project and the Director of Connected Autonomous Vehicles Research Lab (CAV-Lab) at the University of Surrey, said:

“MASSDRIVE is all about bringing together industry, scientists, regulators, and the public to begin a conversation about how we can make self-driving cars safe for our roads.

“Our main goal is to make sure these vehicles are safe. We want to create strong connections between car makers, people who set the rules, academics, government groups and local communities. By having regular discussions, workshops and meetings, we’re creating a space where everyone can share ideas and good ways of doing things, focusing particularly on making sure the AI in cars is trustworthy.”

MASSDRIVE is a collaboration between the universities of Surrey, the West of England and Bristol.

If you want to know more about MASSDRIVE or if you are interested in shaping methods for the safety of self-driving vehicles, please contact Professor Saber Fallah.

Image: Creator: eschenzweig Common License 4.0

Just not cricket to replace Banstead pavilion?

17 April 2024



A long-standing cricket club’s ambitious plans to construct a modern pavilion and expand its facilities have sparked a debate from people that live in the area, saying it would “ruin the village feel”.

A centuries old sports club wants to modernise its facilities, in part due to the massive growth of the game among girls and women, although some warn its ambitious plans overstep the mark.

Banstead Cricket Club has applied to demolish its current clubhouse, which it says was only every designed to last 10 years but has stood for 60, and replace it with a new modern facility that conforms to “Sport England and the sports governing body standards”.

It is also seeking to refurbish its pavilion to create a dedicated changing space for women and girls. While opponents to the plans aren’t arguing against its need to modernise, and would like to see the 182-year-old cricket club get a new clubhouse – they say they are worries about the size and location of the plans. They feel the potential increase in social events at the site, could have a negative impact on people living near the ground.

The club, however, told the Local Democracy Reporting Service that they are “not trying to just suddenly become an events business” and that “the most important thing to stress is that Banstead Cricket Club is a cricket club”. The application has already had 252 comments with the majority (151) backing the plans and 91 objecting.

Club chairperson Neil Bowman said: “We need something bigger and we need something that has more than one room. We need to have other areas where people can hang out, or have a team meeting. We didn’t design it as a wedding venue, and we do appreciate the neighbours’ concerns, there was a concern about creating an event venue, and all the additional traffic, noise.

“I can entirely understand people’s concerns, but we are not trying to do that, we are trying to build a modern clubhouse.” The club said that Sport England and the England and Wales Cricket Board have been consulted in terms of the most ideal sighting for the new building and it’s the internal layout.

Its new location will allow people to take in matches from either of the club’s two pitches. The club has also said it will re-lay its car park with an environmentally friendly solution. Project head Ian Rusbridge said: “We are not trying to just suddenly become an events business, that’s not our game.

“We don’t foresee (a surge in) event hire, there may be a little bit more during the summer – because at the moment we can’t hire it out at all. The other thing to stress, is that the cricket club is run by volunteers, who have full time jobs, and lives and children. They haven’t got the capacity to run a cricket club let alone an events business. ” Adding to that, in terms of the design the architects we employed, their speciality is sport pavilions.”

The club has a licence until 1am but says it is rarely used and that the events held usually stop serving alcohol at 11pm. It said it did not see this changing in the future. Among the objections however include the increase in traffic around the green belt area, noise that would come from an expanded pavilion, and the determination visual impact it would have.

One objector wrote that the scale of the two-storey building was “far too large” and would “ruin the village feel” of the site. He felt the current buildings were perfectly adequate and would support plans that improved and updated the

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facilities within the same space.

The Local Democracy Reporting Service spoke with another resident who has also written in to object. Robert Garbut lives off Park Road, near the club, and challenged the size of the plans, its impact on traffic and neighbourhood fears the site could become a late-night venue.

He said: “It’s massive. It’s a 350 per cent increase over two floors, on another field that had never been built on before. Earth-moving trucks that will have to move into the park – I’m sure people just don’t realise what is happening. Having said all of that, the cricket club has been there for a hundred years, it’s hugely successful, they need more changing rooms.

“We assumed they would knock down the old clubhouse and build an all-singing all-dancing version of that. They also own the practice field adjacent to that – that’s where they want to build, you can understand that as it makes sense to build it on your own land rather than land owned by Reigate and Banstead Council.

“All of our objections are about the superscale of this social venue, nobody but nobody wants to be mean spirited. We want the club to be a great building not the ramshackle thing they’re in now.”

The planning application is still with Reigate and Banstead Borough Council’s planning team. A date has yet to be set for when it will be determined.

Image – visualisation of new pavilion and current inset.

New SEND school blocked by Nimby?

17 April 2024



A group of Surrey parents say they are “devastated” and fear it is back to the drawing board after plans for a ‘much needed’ special needs school will likely be quashed.

Planning permission was approved by Mole Valley District Council (MVDC) in March 2023 for a state-run Betchwood Vale school on the site of the vacant Chalcraft Nursery and garden centre. Around 82% of kids with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) have to commute out of the district to go to a specialist school. One mum said she covers 80 miles a day on the school run to access education for two of her children

But a single claimant took it to the High Court to challenge the procedure on the way the decision was made on two grounds: application of the environmental habitat regulations and traffic flow. The court has said the first point is valid and thrown out the second.

Using his delegated authority, the council’s Deputy Chief Executive decided not to defend the legal challenge, asking the court to quash the decision, given the legal costs.

Originally scheduled to open in September 2023, parents say they were thrilled to think there might ‘finally be a school locally’ to cater for their needs.

Elizabeth Marett, mum and campaigner for the school, told the Local Democracy Reporting Service that she feels education for disabled children is not being prioritised. She said: “I am disappointed, angry and upset with the local residents who have taken it upon themselves to oppose the schools because they are essentially saying the education of disabled children is unimportant.”

“There are children who need schools, and if this isn’t built, their future is very bleak. Is there any way we can convince these people that what they’re doing is really damaging for the local children of the future? These schools are hard to come by. There are so many children in the county that need to go to this school.” Other parents called it a “bitter blow” to the SEND community.

Elizabeth said some children in her son’s class “have nowhere else to go” as mainstream school is not possible for children with anxiety and complex needs.

Betchwood Vale school is likely to be for high-functioning autistic children, who do not have other learning disabilities, if it goes ahead. It would teach children between seven and 19 years old, providing places for around 60 pupil in its first year and going up to 180 children over a few years.

Currently, more than 100 autistic children who live in Mole Valley and require a specialist place go to school out of their district, meaning they spend a long time every day travelling large distances between home and school.

One mum said she covers 80 miles a day on the school run to access education for two of her children whilst another is transported 22 miles in the opposite direction.

Fighting against the application in the planning meeting (March 2023) was an unofficial group called Ladyegate Road

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Residents Association Ltd (LRRA). The group, named after a private road near the site, objected to the application because of the adverse impact on traffic flow and approach to Dorking, the negative effect on biodiversity and that no alternative options have been investigated for the site.

Planning documents reveal Surrey County Council (SCC) Highways warned of “minor” impacts to traffic on the A25 junctions as a result of the proposed school. It also added conditions of improving vehicle access on nearby Punchbowl Lane.

Cllr Joanna Slater (Conservative for Leatherhead South) said: “What is also troubling is that this has happened completely behind the scenes. Councillors did not know.”

The council’s Development Management Committee (DMC) meeting on 3 April heard that the team claim they were not informed of the SEND school decision being changed or is likely to change. A spokesperson for MVDC said it is not “unusual practice” for a decision to be taken by a senior officer under delegated authority. They said all local ward members were kept updated in the proceedings.

Cllr Slater added: “At best this is a delay to the SEND school opening. At worst, it will result in the whole project failing as the budget for planning permission has been spent.”

Clare Curran, Lead Cabinet Member for Children and Families at SCC, said: “We are disappointed with Mole Valley’s decision not to defend the judicial review. The proposed Betchwood Vale Academy is critical to achieving Surrey’s ambition that autistic children are educated closer to home.”

SCC have promised to deliver 2,440 permanent additional specialist school places in Surrey between 2019 – 2026 to create capacity for 5,760 planned places by 2030/31.

SCC said it has been advised by the Department of Education of their ongoing commitment to deliver Betchwood Vale Academy in full once a positive planning application has been confirmed.

A Mole Valley spokesperson said: “We are working as quickly as possible to get a decision from the Court. Once that is made, we will reconsult on the planning application and soon after – return the application to the Development Management Committee to make the planning decision.”

It added: “This will allow us to ensure that there is no future potential for legal challenge and that once a new decision is made, if it is to again approve the application, then the delivery of the school can start swiftly.”

The Department of Education has been contacted for comment.

The Ladyegate Road Residents Association is not an official body. The Local Democracy Reporting Service (LDRS) tried to contact the group for additional comment but was unable to do so.

Related report:

Surrey to SEND £40m for special schools

Image: Betchwood Vale SEND school plan. From Design and Access statement. Credit: Jestico + Whiles Associates Ltd.

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