

# Epsom & Ewell Borough Council Draft Local Plan.

1 February 2023

## Epsom & Ewell Borough Council Draft Local Plan.

### Consultation under Regulation 18 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Development) (England) Regulations 2012.

Epsom & Ewell Borough Council will be consulting on the Draft Local Plan 2022-2040. The Draft Local Plan sets out planning policies and identifies sites for future development within the Borough. When adopted, it will be used to determine planning applications that come forward within the Borough.

The consultation will run for a period of six weeks\*, commencing on noon 1 February 2023 and ending midnight on 15 March 2023. You are invited to make comments on the draft Local Plan and associated documents.

You can view a digital version of the draft Local Plan on the Council's website <https://epsom-ewell.gov.uk/local-plan> or consultation portal <https://epsom-ewell.inconsult.uk/>. Alternatively hard copies of the documents are available for public inspection at the Epsom & Ewell Borough Council offices at the Town Hall, Epsom, between the hours of 9:00am and 5:00pm Monday to Friday or at libraries across the Borough (please check individual library websites for opening times).

Our website also includes background information and technical evidence, which has been used to inform the consultation. These are available under the 'Evidence Base' section on our website.

Representations to the consultation can be made using the following methods:

Through our online portal: <https://epsom-ewell.inconsult.uk/>

- By email: [lplan@epsom-ewell.gov.uk](mailto:lplan@epsom-ewell.gov.uk)
- By writing to:

Planning Policy, Epsom and Ewell Borough Council, Town Hall, The Parade, Epsom, Surrey, KT18 5BY

The comments received during this consultation cannot be treated as confidential. Responses will be published on the Council's website, together with the name and/or organisation name of the respondent.

Only those representations that are made in writing and are received by the Council before midnight on Sunday 19th March 2023\* will be considered.

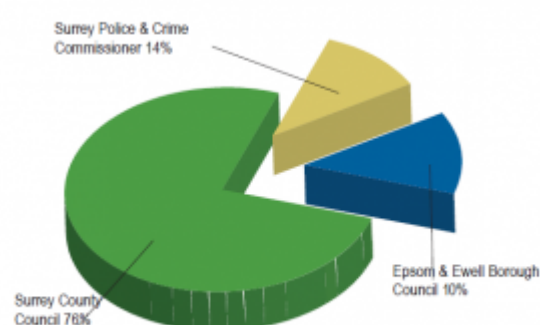
### Call for Sites request

The Council will be running a Call for Sites exercise during the same period as this Local Plan consultation. We welcome details of sites which have potential to accommodate future development in the Borough. If you have a site to promote please visit our website <https://www.epsom-ewell.gov.uk/call-for-sites> and complete the relevant form.

\*Revised subsequently by Council to a slightly later date.

## Surrey County Council proposes 2023/24 budget

1 February 2023



Surrey County Council is planning to restrict a rise in Council Tax to 2.99% in the current budget plans for 2023/24. The council's Cabinet agreed the draft budget today outlining the planned rise, which is lower than the vast majority of other councils in the UK and far lower than the rate of inflation.

Surrey County Council spends just over £1bn a year on delivering vital services such as Adult Social Care, Children's Services, maintaining roads and pavements, Surrey Fire & Rescue Service, libraries, countryside management and public health.

Image: council tax pie chart: EEBC 2022/2023

The budget also outlines the council's five-year capital investment plan that will deliver more school places and improved school buildings, increased support for children with additional needs, road improvements, big infrastructure projects like in Farnham town centre, the River Thames flood defence scheme, grant funding community projects and increasing recycling capacity across Surrey.

**Tim Oliver**, Leader of the Council, (Conservative) said: "This budget is about protecting the services that the people of

Surrey rely on, while being mindful of the huge pressures household budgets are under at the moment. The rise in the cost of living, inflation and interest rates have all impacted the council as an organisation, as well as our residents. Everything we do has simply become more expensive to deliver. However, we have worked hard over the last five years to ensure our finances are in a solid and stable state.

“We think it is important to only levy the absolute minimum we need to meet increased costs, in order to protect the money in people’s pockets as much as possible. “We are making the decision to face this financial challenge in the fairest way possible, balancing our needs and ambitions with the immediate cost of living impact on our residents.”

The budget will go before a Full Council meeting on Tuesday 7 February to be ratified.

The full details of the proposed 2023/24 budget can be found [here](#).

#### Notes:

This list shows the Council’s budget plan for next year by each service area, and an indication of how much that is in terms of average Council Tax\*.

**Adult Social Care** – *Looking after people with disabilities, severe needs, and as they get older.*

£439.7m per year (That is equivalent of £668.66 of annual Council Tax for a Band D property)

**Public Service Reform & Public Health** – *Working closely with our NHS partners to help people live healthier lives and keep them safe and well.*

£36.6m per year (That is equivalent of £55.66 of annual Council Tax for a Band D property)

**Children, Families & Lifelong Learning** – *Giving young people the best start in life, with additional care for those who need it and supporting education providers.*

£254.8m per year (That is equivalent of £387.48 of annual Council Tax for a Band D property)

**Environment, Transport & Infrastructure** – *Improving our roads and public transport, managing our countryside, and tackling the climate emergency.*

£152.8m per year (That is equivalent of £232.37 of annual Council Tax for a Band D property)

**Surrey Fire & Rescue Service** – *Keeping residents safe and responding to emergencies*

£38.7m per year (That is equivalent of £58.85 of annual Council Tax for a Band D property)

**Customer and Communities** – *Helping local communities thrive, providing libraries, registrations, customer services and funding grants.*

£18.9m per year (That is equivalent of £28.74 of annual Council Tax for a Band D property)

**Prosperity, Partnerships and Growth** – *Working with businesses and other partners to help grow Surrey’s local economy*

£1.6m per year (That is equivalent of £2.43 of annual Council Tax for a Band D property)

**Communications, Public Affairs & Engagement** – *Making sure residents are well informed, can access services, and that Surrey’s collective voice is heard.*

£2.2m per year (That is equivalent of £3.35 of annual Council Tax for a Band D property)

**Resources** – *Things like Surrey Crisis Fund, school meal provision, administrative support, IT, legal services, and management of council buildings to keep services running smoothly.*

£79.3m per year (That is equivalent of £120.59 of annual Council Tax for a Band D property)

**Central Income and Expenditure** – *Putting money into savings to help protect services in future, and repayments on borrowing used for our investment programme*

£76.9m per year (That is equivalent of £116.94 of annual Council Tax for a Band D property)

*\*For illustrative purposes, this represents the total budget split by the Band D council tax value. Some areas are funded by specific restricted grants, which are not reflected here. This is the County Council’s Band D figures only and does not include amounts raised by District & Borough Councils, Surrey Police or Parish Councils.*

Surrey County Council news service.

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# Gladiator light-man on demand bus

1 February 2023



It's not every day you meet an Emmy award winner on a bus in rural Surrey. And it's not every day the said Emmy award winner would be driving that bus either. But that's what passengers in the north of Mole Valley may find if they book one of the on-demand, electric buses that have been running in the area since last year.

**Tim Hall** worked in TV for 40 years, including on the iconic **Gladiators** early in his career, and told the LDRS he took home Emmys for his work as a lighting director on Olympic ceremonies in Russia and Rio. Having done his last job in early 2022, he found himself in retirement, at the end of his working life and thinking: "Is this it?" He came out of retirement to drive the buses, which launched in June last year.

The LDRS\* took a trip on the bus, where passengers, both regular and new, praised the service for being reliable and good value, and for the care and attention shown by the drivers as well.

\*(Epsom and Ewell Times news partner the BBC Local Democracy Reporting Service)

As well as more than £600,000 of central government funding for better rural transport links in Surrey, the county council has put in more than £200,000 to the Mole Valley service, and hopes to expand the scheme further. Tim admitted there is often a lot of chat to be had on the buses. "You can start a conversation off and before you know it you have been excluded from it," he said.

The buses can be booked on an app, via a website or on the phone, and have no fixed route. Would-be passengers can check the availability at the time they want to travel, and can book in advance or on the day, a minimum of half an hour ahead. The service is also part of the capped bus fares scheme, meaning that until the end of March all journeys will cost £2, though those over five miles would normally cost £3.

Mother and daughter Beryl and Alison Wood had booked the bus from Cobham Sainsbury's, one of the extra places passengers can travel to outside of the designated area, back to Beryl's Bookham home with their shopping. It was Beryl's first time using the service, which she described as "wonderful" but Alison said she uses the bus a few times a month, whether for visiting her mum or for other reasons.

Alison said the drivers always made sure passengers got on and off safely, including helping with their shopping, which was particularly important for elderly people or those who are less mobile. She added: "You feel like you're being taken care of. [The drivers make] sure that you're out of the bus safely."

Other out-of-area stops that passengers can travel to include Effingham Junction station and the Dorking stations, as well as Cobham's Waitrose and Epsom hospital. Tim said the bus was very important to the people who use it, especially for those with reduced mobility as well as those using wheelchairs or other aids to get around. He added: "[Walking] more than 100 yards is too much for them. This is great. We pull up right outside their front door."

[Ed: Do you think Epsom and Ewell needs these on-demand bus services? Let us know at [admin@epsomandewelltimes.com](mailto:admin@epsomandewelltimes.com).]

## Green-belters belted up and beltless

1 February 2023



Epsom and Ewell Borough Council's (EEBC) Licensing and Planning Policy Committee voted unanimously yesterday (30 January) to publish its **Draft Local Plan** for public consultation, after the chairman rebuffed claims that councillors had not been given enough time to read it. The decision followed public opposition to suggestions of Green Belt development in the borough, including a petition with over 2,000 signatures.

Image - Google - Horton Farm, Epsom in Green Belt, that could get 1500 houses.



The meeting opened with questions from the public. The chair, Councillor **Steven McCormick** (RA – Woodote Ward) told the committee that members of the public could not ask questions directly related to the meeting’s agenda items. This is in the Council’s Standing Orders. **Steve Gebbett**, who has been campaigning to protect the borough’s Green Belt, said: “My belt’s a bit too tight. I hope you don’t mind me taking off my green belt.” In a symbolic gesture, he placed a green belt on a table, where it remained for the remainder of the meeting.

He asked: “Does the committee ever refer significant issues that affect the whole borough to the whole council?” Mr Gebbett then described a situation in which “councillors go home and tell their loved ones their legacy is: honey, I shrunk the greenbelt”.

Councillor **Julie Morris** (Liberal Democrats, College Ward) asked the committee: “Am I the only person who hasn’t seen this document before? Have you all been discussing it for a long time? The assembled public might think we’ve been cooking it up for months. But we haven’t.” Councillor McCormick told her that they’d tried “to be open and transparent with the whole process.” He added that there had been many member briefings throughout the summer and autumn, and several statements to full council with opportunities to ask questions.

He also said that the Draft Local Plan had been presented to all members to be discussed in December, and said to Councillor Morris: “Maybe you missed some of those meetings?” Councillor McCormick added: “It’s strange to disperse the idea that it has happened behind closed doors. I’m quite disappointed Councillor Morris, I’m afraid.” Councillor Morris said that she meant that she had not seen the whole document together previously.

Councillor McCormick responded: “The items were presented on 7 December to all members. You’ve had ample opportunity to come forward to seek clarification.” Councillor **Neil Dallen** (Residents’ Association, Town Ward) said he had “sympathy” with Julie Morris’ comments, adding: “This is the first time we’ve seen the 200-page document. Most of it we have covered in different places at different times. I can’t say there’s parts I wasn’t aware of. I still think there’s bits missing.”

The Draft Local Plan sets out planning policies and sites that may be developed in the Borough up until 2040. It includes nine sites for potential development, on which it proposes that a significant proportion of its housing requirement will be built.

Four of these sites are in the town centre, on previously developed – ‘brownfield’ – land. However, the Council has said that they would be unable to meet housing requirements within urban areas alone. The Draft Local Plan states: “Whilst these sustainable locations are our preferred locations for new development, they do not deliver adequate housing to meet our social responsibilities for providing housing, in particular affordable housing.” Therefore, the other sites put forward for development are located outside of the town centre and on Green Belt land.

Green Belt land includes areas of countryside that are protected from development in order to prevent urban sprawl and encourage development within existing built-up areas. National planning policy requires that Green Belt boundaries are only amended “in exceptional circumstances”.

In the Draft Local Plan, the council says that it “considers that the scale of unmet development / housing needs in the borough that would result from pursuing a brownfield only approach provides the exceptional circumstances and justification to make changes to the Green Belt boundaries in the borough.”

The Draft Plan also states that: “Through the release of less than 3.6% of the borough’s Green Belt, the council will be able to deliver an additional 2,175 dwellings over the plan period”.

Under the proposals, sites removed from the Green Belt for development would include:

- Land at West Park Hospital (for 150 homes)
- Horton Farm (for 1,500 homes)
- Land at Chantilly Way (for 25 homes)
- Land Adjoining Ewell East Station (for 350 homes)
- Hook Road Arena (for 150 homes)

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), which the Local Plan should generally adhere to, is undergoing consultation, including on a revision that states that: “Green Belt boundaries are not required to be reviewed and altered if this would be the only means of meeting the objectively assessed need for housing over the plan period”.





**Mr Chris Grayling**, MP for Epsom and Ewell, told the Epsom and Ewell Times: “The Borough’s proposal to simply build houses on 135 acres of green belt land, and not make any attempt to pursue the redevelopment of Kiln Lane and Longmead as a way of strengthening both the Borough’s economic future and meeting its housing need is a failure of momentous proportions.”

Mr Grayling has put forward his own proposals for development [reported in the Epsom and Ewell Times] on the Kiln Lane and Longmead estates. He told the Epsom and Ewell Times: “The kind of development that I proposed is happening elsewhere, but the Council thinks it is too difficult to do here. I think that is a cop out, and the result will be a massive loss of our green spaces in the area and real damage to biodiversity. It’s always easier just to build on a green field. But easy does not mean best.”

The Draft Local Plan, in reference to residential development on the Kiln Lane and Longmead estates, states that: “longer term opportunities for intensification for mixed use could be explored in time”.

The Council has said: “The Local Plan needs to protect our attractive and valued environment whilst reconciling the need to accommodate our development needs. The balance between protecting our environment and enabling development and supporting infrastructure, is at the centre of our spatial strategy.”

The borough’s housing need was calculated using the “standard method” in national planning guidance. The need was calculated as 576 dwellings per annum, equating to 10,368 dwellings over the Local Plan period. The Draft Local Plan, however, states: “Taking into account the borough’s constraints, the council is not planning on meeting its local housing need figure.” Instead, it has set a housing requirement of 5,400 dwellings over the Local Plan period.

Under another proposed addition, the NPFF will strengthen its existing point that local housing need is an advisory starting point for setting a local housing requirement. In an email on behalf of CPRE, (The Council for the Protection of Rural England), Surrey, to the Licensing and Planning Policy Committee, **Mr Tim Murphy** said that there was “no justification” for increasing the number of homes in the borough by 5,400. He said that the standard method used to calculate housing need “relies on household projections from 2014 which are now widely recognised as significantly inflating household growth in areas such as ours”.

The Council’s Planning Policy Manager told the committee that there is “already an existing need in the borough” and that as of June 2022, there were 1,200 households on the list for affordable housing. He added: “We have a significant need for affordable housing in the borough, including for homelessness and people in temporary accommodation.”

However, the committee rejected a motion, proposed by Cllr **Kate Chinn** (Court Ward, Labour), to ensure that 40% of all new developments exceeding 10 units included affordable housing.

Councillors also raised questions in the meeting as to whether the Draft Local Plan could be altered following the public consultation. Councillor Morris asked whether, if a large number of people came forward to oppose Green Belt development, this would form part of the “evidence base” required for Local Plan policies.

The Council’s Interim Director of Environment, Housing and Regeneration, responded: “It is the content of responses, and what new evidence and information they direct us towards, not about the number of responses received, or the number of times something is said.” She said that the council would be required to provide a statement on the consultation, with key issues that were raised, and how they were addressed with changes to the Plan.



Councillor Morris said: “We’ve taken an awfully time to get this far; I’d hate to see it abandoned. So much of the document is really really important. There are bits that are just not right. If I were to support it, it would not be that I support the content, but the concept of it going forward to public consultation.” She added: “Green Belt has become massively important. [...] Keeping hold of what we’ve got has become the name of the game recently.”

Councillor Dallen added: “Can I request that we don’t have 200 pages to go through in one night in future?” Councillor McCormick responded: “It’s noted. We’ll try to do better next time.”

Just before the vote, Councillor Morris said: “I am somewhat reassured that there can be significant change if this document goes ahead. I expected to want to vote against. I felt we hadn’t given it enough thought and time.” She added: “This is clearly controversial. A lot of people are not happy about this.”

After almost two hours, councillors voted unanimously to go ahead with the Draft Local Plan. Public consultation will commence today at noon and conclude on 15 March. Go to Epsom and Ewell Times Official Notices page to see how you can respond.

After the meeting Cllr Steven McCormick, Chair of the Licensing and Planning Policy Committee, said: “We believe the Draft Plan provides a proactive framework for the borough to grow in a strong and positive way, so everyone will have the opportunity to live in an affordable, vibrant area with a growing economy. “The Draft Local Plan is our starting point and we strongly encourage local people to help shape the final Plan by responding to the consultation.”

[Ed: Even if the Green Belt proposals are removed after public consultation this Draft will still be of value in Planning Appeals pursued by Green Belt developers in the future].

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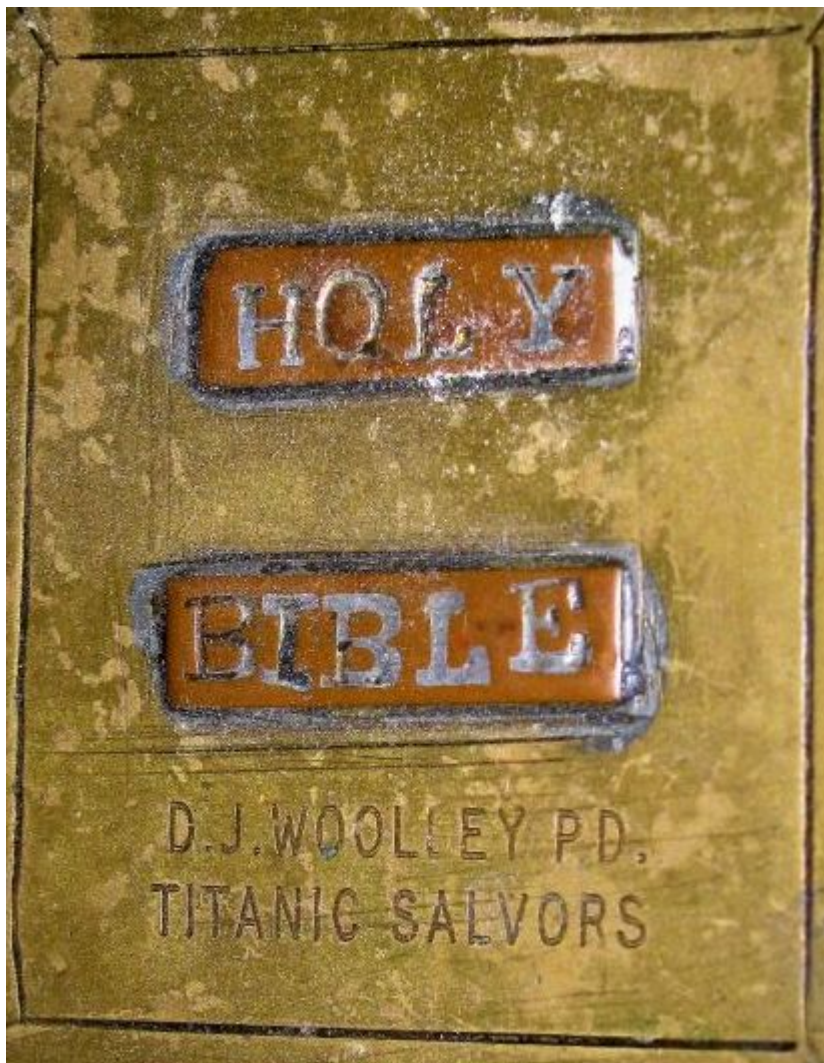
## Epsom’s Titanic Ties

1 February 2023



Epsom and Ewell Times’ **History Detectorist** purchased this miniature brass bible box from The Princess Alice charity shop in Epsom 2 years ago in the belief it was a piece of World War 1 trench art, but after some light cleaning he was astonished to discover the word “**Titanic**” engraved on it.

Reference is also made to **Douglas Woolley**, who claims to own the salvage rights to the Titanic and who in the 1960s made plans to locate and raise the Titanic, a plan that involved inflating nylon balloons and attaching them to the Titanic’s hull.



Although Douglas Woolley's dream of raising the wreck of the RMS Titanic and creating a floating museum in Liverpool was never realised, he wrote a book on the subject and continues to maintain that he owns the salvage rights to the "unsinkable" ship that sank off the coast of Newfoundland in the North Atlantic in the early hours of 15 April 1912 after colliding with an iceberg.

The disaster resulted in the loss of an estimated 1,500 lives, partly due to a lack of lifeboats and 2 of Douglas Woolley's great aunts may also have drowned had it not been for a premonition which caused them to cancel their trip on board the Titanic at the last minute and not travel with their luggage which went down with the ship.

Could it be that the miniature brass bible box had once belonged to one of Douglas Woolley's great aunts, or perhaps one of the survivors of the Titanic?

Having wanted to raise the RMS Titanic, is it possible that Douglas Woolley was gifted the miniature brass bible box after it was salvaged from the wreck?

If the engraving on the miniature bible box was intended to deceive for the purposes of financial gain, then why was the box donated to a charity shop and why is the name "Douglas Woolley" engraved on it when the name of a member of the Titanic's crew would have caused the box to fetch more money at auction?



Unfortunately, Douglas Woolley is now an elderly gentleman and I have not been able to make contact with him, but if any readers can tell me anything about this interesting brass object and how it came to be purchased by myself in an Epsom charity shop, The Epsom and Ewell Times and myself would be delighted to hear from you.

**George Pelham served on the Titanic** as a Trimmer and survived the sinking. It is thought he survived another sinking of a ship during the First World War and these circumstances eventually led to his nervous breakdown and admission to **Horton asylum in Epsom** in 1935. 42 days after he was transferred to the neighbouring **Longrove Hospital** he died and was buried in the **Horton Cemetery** in Epsom on 14th October 1939.

You can read the full story on [www.hortoncemetery.org](http://www.hortoncemetery.org) and also read about the campaign to restore the Cemetery where 9000 patients of Epsom's cluster of psychiatric hospitals were buried between 1899 and 1955 and now lay abandoned.



# Sutton & Epsom Receive an Oxford Education

1 February 2023



**Oxford Harlequins 67 - Sutton & Epsom 20.** Saturday 28th January. Our local rugby team travelled to Oxfordshire to play the Oxford Harlequins. In the reverse fixture at Rugby Lane the crowd enjoyed a thrilling game that was in the balance until the final whistle. On that occasion the visiting Harlequins held on to win 22-19. A lot has happened since that afternoon as Sutton & Epsom are now staring relegation in the face whilst their hosts sit comfortably fifth in the table. There were to be no surprises or a much-needed upset for the Black & Whites as the hosts strolled to a 67-20 win.

Kyren Ghumra and Robbie Marty were unavailable for S&E and were replaced by Messrs Hurley & Baptiste-Wilson on the wings and George Drye returned to the second row. It was the first time that the Black & Whites had played at the Horspath Sports Ground but in contrast it was the 150th appearance in the league for James Caddy. Freddy Bunting kicked off and a couple of minutes later he was in a very similar location lining up a kick at goal. Once more his prodigious boot bisected the uprights from a considerable distance to give S&E a 3-0 lead. A minute later the hosts lost flanker John Ireland to an injury to be replaced by Ben Jenkins. Despite these early setbacks the Oxfordshire men were soon ahead on the scoreboard. From a 5-metre lineout hooker Joshua Archer scored and Ewan Fox added a finely struck conversion for 7-3.

Freddy Bunting kept Sutton within touching distance with another superb penalty cutting Sutton's deficit to a single point as they trailed 6-7. Then Tom Varndell made his first impact on proceedings making the initial break before the ball went to the opposite side and Ben Jenkins scored in the corner. Ewan Fox missed the conversion but was soon to make amends. Tom Varndell with a powerful run down the flank stayed in play enabling the ball to be spun open and this time Ewan Fox was the beneficiary with exquisite footwork he weaved his way over. The try scorer converted his score for a 19-6 lead at the end of the first quarter.

The Surrey team had an opportunity for a swift response. The Black & Whites not only failed to exploit their 5-metre line out but allowed the hosts to break from defence far too easily. On the half hour the Horspath crowd were applauding the bonus point try from winger Josiah Ratulaveta. Oxford Harlequins were disappearing over the horizon and were benefiting from poor tackling by the visitors as they led 24-6. S&E set about the task of getting a foothold in the game. With the interval approaching a tremendous catch and drive set up the visitors and Ollie Baptiste-Wilson was only denied by an offside player intercepting. The miscreant Varndell was shown a yellow card and S&E were awarded a penalty try for 13-24.

Sutton failed to take advantage of their numerical superiority. Firstly, James Caddy was shown a yellow for a high tackle and the game became 14-a-side. Secondly, Ewan Fox extended the host's lead with a penalty to make it 27-13. Soon after the referee concluded the half. It would take a considerable effort and a comeback reminiscent of the Rugby Lane encounter if the Black & Whites were going to get anything from their afternoon's endeavours.

If there were any doubts about the outcome of this fixture they were resolved in the opening five minutes of the second half. The hosts were in no mood to sit back on their laurels and coast home as they turned up the heat in search more tries. Try Number 5 came from a catch and drive from an impressive distance that saw Ben Jenkins collect his second try of the afternoon. Ewan Fox did the necessary for 34-13. Try Number 6 followed a couple of minutes later and it was a close-range effort courtesy of fine play by the pack with flanker Tom Walton getting the glory. With the extras added the score was 41-13 and the contest was over and it was only a question of how many the hosts would score.

The Black & Whites rallied and threw everything at the Harlequins perhaps in the belief that attack was the best form of defence. A quickly taken tap penalty by the returning Caddy and a 5-metre line out created a chance. Drye, Boaden and Hegarty went close before the ball was knocked on in the face of a resolute defence. As the game opened up with both sides eager to run the ball S&E were handicapped by the loss of their quicksilver 10 Jamie Flatley to an ankle injury. On the hour the hosts replaced Ewan Fox with Oliver Brian. Immediately his half-back partner, scrum half Harry Burn, was crossing the whitewash to give him his first shot at goal. Replacement Brian duly obliged for 48-13.

The crowd then were treated to the Tom Varndell Show. His first score was a classical run on the outside of his man demonstrating blistering pace considering his 37 years. The second came moments later and was the best of the afternoon. If the first was orthodox the second was



stunning as his perfectly angled run against the grain saw him collect his second. Oliver Brian accepted one of his two offerings and it was suddenly 60-13. Sutton & Epsom responded with great heart. Replacement Ross Parsons poached the ball to make an opportunist break down the touchline but was unfortunately injured in the process. However, at last the visitors took advantage of an advantageous field position. From the lineout George London drove back the defenders to be halted a metre shy but George Drye following up forced his way over the line to score. Freddy Bunting wasted no time in dropkicking the conversion for 60-20.

The game ended with Oxford Harlequins ninth and final try. They spun the ball wide and fullback Jonathan Hughes' arcing run saw him score. Oliver Brian added the conversion to conclude the scoring as the referee signalled the end of the game with the rampant Quins 67-20 victors. The result told the story. Oxford Harlequins were vastly superior on the day. Sutton & Epsom did not help their cause with a combination of weak tackling and errors when close to scoring. The Oxford Harlequins backs had impressed at Rugby Lane without Tom Varndell but with the formidable winger in their ranks they had more than enough firepower to overwhelm S&E. Next Saturday S&E host Camberley in the fixture re-arranged from 10 th December. The visitors will be smarting from a most surprising defeat at Bournemouth that has derailed their title hopes. Way back in September Sutton & Epsom lost at Watchetts Recreation Ground by 43-21. The promotion-chasing visitors will be looking to return to winning ways to keep up the pressure on the leaders, Wimbledon, and the match will kick off at Rugby Lane at 2:30pm.

#### **Sutton & Epsom**

Lawrence Elliott, Sam Hurley, Freddy Bunting, Alex Mawdsley, Ollie Baptiste-Wilson, Jamie Flatley, Austin Bell, Tom Boaden, Alex Mount, Will Lloyd, George Drye, Ewan McTaggart, Chris Farrell ©, Rob Hegarty & James Caddy.

Replacements: (all used) Dan Jones, George London & Ross Parsons.

#### **Oxford Harlequins**

Jonathan Hughes, Josaiah Ratulaveta, Edward Yeates, Toby Haines, Tom Varndell, Ewan Fox, Harry Burn, Bradley Cook, Joshua Archer, Joel Hopkins, Harvey Tricker, Allan Purchase, Tom Walton, John Ireland & George Primett.

Replacements: Jonathan Vermont, Ben Jenkins & Oliver Brian

## Micro-homes for a macro-problem?

1 February 2023



Epsom and Ewell Borough Council is planning to purchase movable micro homes for families needing temporary accommodation in the borough. In a report to the Strategy & Resource Committee on 26th January, officers stated that demand in the borough for temporary accommodation is acute. They plan initially to purchase three family micro homes at a cost of £435,000. The homes, which boast exceptional energy efficiency, will be constructed off site and craned into position. They have a 50 to 60 year life span, come fully furnished and can be moved to another site if required. Several councils, from Cornwall in the west to Southend in the east, have already developed schemes with similar units.

Subject to planning permission, which will be applied for in the next three months, the units will be located on a brownfield site near the Kiln Lane Sainsbury's. The Council has already secured a £75,000 grant from the Brownfield Land Relief Fund to assist with the preparation of the site for development.

The report was greeted with enthusiasm by councillors. "It looks a progressive and radical solution," said Councillor **Alan Williamson** (RA, West Ewell Ward), "and it's to be commended. I would like to see this as the basis for further developments in the borough."

The interest was so great that one officer suggested arranging some tours before the homes are occupied.

Councillor **Kate Chinn** (Labour, Court Ward) was also wholehearted in her support. "Anything that stops families being separated, moving out of the borough, being able to remain with their support networks is fabulous," she said.

After the meeting the Council issued a press release confirming:

Epsom & Ewell Borough Council has submitted a planning application to create three new temporary homes to house local families at risk of homelessness.

The proposal is in response to the acute demand for temporary accommodation in the borough, particularly for family-sized homes. It forms an important contribution to the Council's recently launched Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy, which includes the objective to increase accommodation options in the borough including temporary accommodation.

The proposal makes use of brownfield land alongside Fairview Road in Epsom and was approved by the Strategy & Resources Committee on Thursday 26 January. The proposal will now go through the due planning process and if approved, work will start in March 2023.

Alongside providing life-changing support to the families who will make use of the homes, investment in the properties will lead to savings for the Council over time, as the cost of the development is offset by rental income and a reduction in the need for expensive nightly paid accommodation. The Council has also been successfully awarded funding of £75,000 from the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities' Brownfield Land Relief Fund, to be invested in this project.

The homes are pre-fabricated and built offsite to provide an innovative, attractive and low-cost housing solution. They are at the forefront of energy efficient design and provide safe, welcoming spaces for families.

Cllr **Neil Dallen**, Chair of the Strategy & Resources Committee, said: "I am delighted that this key project has been approved by Committee, and that its importance has been emphasised by the level of funding we have received from central government. The impact of homelessness cannot be underestimated, and increasing temporary accommodation provision for local families will have a positive impact not only on those being housed, but on the borough as a whole.

"This will now progress through the planning process and we will await the outcome with interest."

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## Surrey Council stretches Epsom & Ewell Council resources

1 February 2023



At Thursday 26th January meeting of the Strategy and Resources Committee of Epsom and Ewell Borough Council eagle-eyed financial expert Cllr **David Gulland** (Lib Dem, College Ward) spotted a loss of £250,000 in the borough council's on-street parking income.

A council officer explained that, although highways are Surrey County Council's (SCC) responsibility, they had previously contracted Epsom & Ewell Borough Council (EEBC) to do the enforcement of on-street parking. EEBC already had their own enforcement officers managing the off-street car parks, so economies of scale could be realised by doing them both together. EEBC used to collect nearly £400K from on-street parking permits and enforcement notices.

But now SCC has unilaterally decided to end that contract and put it back out to a private sector contractor, so EEBC can no longer benefit from the on-street parking income or the economies of scale. Officers are doing all they can to reduce the cost and minimise the loss of income, he insisted.

Cllr Gulland was unimpressed with SCC's actions. "I think we should note that for possible action at county council election time," he suggested.

Related Stories:

[Local Parking \(enforcement\) Wars opinion piece by Cllr Eber Kington](#)

[Private Public Parking Penalisers Surrey County Council privatises parking enforcement](#)

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## Pay rises for Epsom and Ewell Borough Council

1 February 2023





At Epsom and Ewell's Strategy and Resources committee meeting on 26th January, councillors discussed rates of pay in the forthcoming year – for staff, for the Chief Executive and for themselves. Most staff will receive a capped 3% cost of living pay increase. This is a result of the Council's Employee Pay and Reward Procedure 2020-24, a four year pay deal agreed at the beginning of that period. This compares with a Consumer Price Index rise of 10.5% for the 12 months ending in December 2022.

This compares with a proposed increase for the Chief Executive of the borough of at least 15%, a figure which made Cllr **Kate Chinn** (Labour, Court Ward) feel "uncomfortable". The top of the salary range for the Chief Executive will become £143,376 in the 2023/4 year.

A council officer explained that a review of pay for Chief Officers had been undertaken some years ago, but that the Chief Executive's pay had been excluded from that review. Following an external benchmarking exercise, "this is a catch-up exercise," she said. Nevertheless, "for the staff to get 3% because of the agreement that they're in and the chief exec to get 15 to 16%, it does feel quite difficult," Cllr Chinn complained.

Cllr. **Eber Kington** (RA, Ewell Court Ward) took comfort from the gender pay gap which continues to be negative, showing that women employed by the local authority earn on average more than men. This is primarily due to the majority of front-line operatives being male and senior management roles being held by a significant proportion of women. "This does suggest that this is an organisation to which woman feel comfortable applying and where they wish to stay and seek promotion within the organisation," said Cllr Kington. "I think that is something we ought to be proud of as a local authority."

However, the issue that provoked the most councillor participation was their own pay. The motion that councillors were asked to vote on suggested that their allowances should mirror the staff pay award and rise by 3% in 2023/24, with an independent Remuneration Panel determining the increase in 2024/25.

Cllr **David Gulland** (Lib Dem, College Ward) felt "personally unhappy in voting any increase for the councillors" in the current environment.

However, the meeting's chairman, Cllr **Neil Dallen** (RA (Town Ward), pointed out that the last two independent remuneration panels had recommended a considerable increase in councillors' allowances, but the council had voted at the time not to accept those recommendations, otherwise allowances would now be much higher than they are.

Councillor **Alan Williamson** (RA, West Ewell Ward) agreed. "There is a widening gap between this authority and other districts around Surrey," he argued. "In future fiscal years, we should get back on track in line with the independent recommendations."

"We have bills," said Councillor **Monica Coleman** (RA, West Ewell Ward), "and some of us have to decide if we're going to be councillors or get a job. There are some occasions when I have to decide whether to work or go to a meeting and sometimes work rules because that pays my bills."

A sentiment that was echoed by Councillor Chinn. "A really good overhaul of the allowances would be very welcome," she said, "and looking at allowances for things like carers, transport, child-minding .... to enable as many people as possible to become councillors."

The basic allowance for a councillor will rise to £4,031.70 in 2023/24. Some posts such as committee chairs and vice chairs receive additional allowances.

Related reports

Balancing the Borough's Books

## Surrey doctors to go on strike?

1 February 2023



Royal Surrey hospital trust bosses are beginning to plan for three days of junior doctor strikes which could have a “significant impact” on services. A national ballot is currently taking place of members of the BMA Junior Doctors union, which closes on February 20.

If members vote for action, it could mean a possible 72-hour strike taking place in March, a board meeting heard on Thursday (January 26). As yet the trust, which runs Guildford’s Royal Surrey County Hospital as well as the Haslemere hospital, has not been directly impacted by its staff striking, though ambulance strikes in December saw the hospital put measures in place.

Meeting documents said the junior doctors’ strike was more likely than others to meet the 50 per cent threshold needed for members to strike because a national ballot was being held. According to the BMA website, junior doctors have seen their pay cut by more than 25% to their salaries since 2008/09.

Bill Jewsbury, the trust’s medical director, said the three-day strike, which he thought “probably would” go ahead, would have a “significant impact” on various parts of running the trust. The meeting heard that other, more senior doctors, would need to “step down” into the roles, along with non-union members.

Dr Jewsbury added: “That then has an impact beyond that 72 hours because we then have to rest those people. “What you’re looking at is a much longer period of disruption than just your three days’ of strike.”

According to the documents, a review carried out of the day of ambulance workers’ striking in December had identified one incident that was being investigated of the strike having an impact on patient care. The meeting also heard that the possible junior doctors’ strike would impact on its target to clear the backlog of people waiting more than 78 weeks, a year and a half, for treatment by the end of March, in line with national guidance.

Getting rid of all the people on the waiting list was described in documents as “the biggest operational challenge affecting the trust”, with a peak of 207 patients in the category at the beginning of October, falling to 161 at the end of November and to 155 in the first week in December.

Matt Jarratt, chief operating officer, told the meeting: “That is going to be a major challenge was going forward.”

## ‘It felt like mum was a prisoner’ in Surrey Hospital

1 February 2023



A woman said she felt like her mum was “a prisoner” when she couldn’t take her home from a Surrey hospital. The daughter, who we are choosing not to name, said it felt like the family was caught in a “never-concluding circle” when trying to communicate between NHS trusts to get her mum discharged.

Her mum was in hospital for five months, having been admitted to Guildford’s Royal Surrey County Hospital with pain following breast cancer, but the family living in West Sussex meant a lot of communication about release was across different NHS trusts.

By Colin Smith, CC BY-SA 2.0, <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=9266476>

She told a meeting of the Royal Surrey trust board on Thursday (January 26) that conversations about getting her mum discharged were “awkward” and “difficult” as she tried to negotiate her mum’s release from hospital and whether or not she needed a care plan in place.

Board members apologised for the patient and her daughter’s experience, which included time at Haslemere Hospital, and said the trust would address issues such as communication between themselves and neighbouring trusts. Alexandra Ankrah, NExT director at the trust, sympathised with the woman’s experience, saying she had been through similar with her own mother, though not at Royal Surrey.



Addressing concerns that her mother had felt like a “bed-blocker”, where people who are medically well enough to leave hospital cannot be discharged because there may not be the appropriate social care measures in place at home, she and others in the meeting agreed they did not like the term. Ms Ankrah said: “No one should ever be made to feel that they don’t have a right to our care and services.”

The daughter, who chose not to make a complaint against the trust, said: “I felt like my mum was a prisoner.” The meeting heard that many patients were in similar situations regarding communication across county borders, and a meeting would be organised using the patient story as a basis to make changes.

The chief executive, Louise Stead, said it came up “every single week” with people caught in “an impossible little maze”. The trust’s medical director, Bill Jewsbury, said getting people home when they were well enough was “really important” because most people wanted to be at home and improved once there. He added: “If we are really honest with ourselves, we are incredibly risk averse around discharge planning.”

Dr Jewsbury said the story was “a classic example” of saying somebody needed a care package in place before they could be discharged but said it would be “quite a powerful driver” for the family to be able to take their relatives home. He said the trust should ask itself: “Have we had that conversation with yourselves as the broader family? [Have we] phrased and pitched it in such a way as: ‘There are going to be some risks involved in perhaps getting your mother home. ‘It isn’t without risk but we can get your mother home.’”

He said it would be “worth trying” and that the hospital could do more to work with families as well as outside groups such as charities and churches in supporting patients.

The hospital’s own virtual wards, where patients can continue to be treated at home and which started late last year, were also raised as one way of helping to tackle the issue.

The daughter told the meeting: “If somebody had presented me with a disclaimer for signing mum out of the hospital, I would have done that.”

## Grants to save energy... time running out

1 February 2023



Surrey residents have just three weeks left to apply for a grant to help make their home warmer and more energy efficient, ahead of applications closing on Friday 17 February 2023.

People living in hard to heat homes and on lower incomes, could receive grants between £10,000 and £25,000 to improve insulation and install renewable technology - helping to save energy, reduce emissions and combat rising energy prices. Improvement measures include loft insulation, cavity and external wall insulation, underfloor insulation, and renewables, such as solar electricity panels.

Residents can check if they are eligible by visiting the Action Surrey website - [www.actionsurrey.org](http://www.actionsurrey.org), or by calling them on 0800 783 2503.

**Marisa Heath, (Englefield Green, Conservative) Cabinet Member for Environment at Surrey County Council said:** “We know this is a challenging time for many and we’re really pleased to be offering this funding to our residents who need our support the most.

“Improving the energy efficiency of homes in Surrey will also help us achieve our goal to be a net zero county by 2050. “I encourage residents to check if they are eligible as soon as possible.”

So far, over £1.5m has been allocated across the county to fully fund over 250 energy efficiency improvements. Funding has been awarded through central Government to Surrey County Council, leading on behalf of the local authorities across the county. The project will be delivered and managed by Action Surrey - an energy efficiency advice service set up in partnership with all Surrey local authorities.

Keep up to date on progress towards our target of making Surrey net zero by 2050 and find out what you can do to help. Sign up to our Greener Matters newsletter to get updates here: Our climate change newsletter - Surrey County Council ([surreycc.gov.uk](http://surreycc.gov.uk))

Surrey County Council news service

# The Surrey levels mean no level funding?

1 February 2023



The allocation of levelling up funding from central government was announced last week, with more than 100 projects given a share of £2.1billion. But no funding was given to Surrey's councils, with one of the county's proposed projects being improvements to Caterham town centre and flooding measures.

Three bids were put in across the county in total, with the other two being for better cycling and walking routes to the east of Woking and a new health centre in Sheerwater. Overall, government figures show £672m was allocated to develop better transport links, £821m for community regeneration and £594m to restore local heritage sites across the country.

More than £200m was given to councils in south east England, including £45m to Kent County Council for more border control points and traffic improvement measures at Dover and £20m each for improvements to Folkestone and Sheerness town centres.

Over the border in Hampshire, Rushmoor Borough Council was also awarded £20m for a state-of-the-art leisure centre, library and cultural space in Farnborough to help tackle high levels of obesity, inactivity, and poor mental health in the area. But Surrey's councils were not awarded any cash, with only three bids being put in between the county council and the 11 district and borough councils.

We break these down in detail below, including the cash that was asked for, and those councils which did not bid for funding.

## Unsuccessful bids:

Surrey County Council's £12m bid to improve walking, cycling and bus routes to the east of Woking would have created better connections to the town centre, and were part of wider plans to improve sustainable travel options in the county. The scheme would have seen improved footpaths, cycle paths and tracks, more secure bike parking and e-bike charging stations and proposals to fund a trial e-cargo bike hire scheme for businesses and residents. Bus improvements would have included better accessibility, real-time information and bus stops with living roofs.

A county council spokesperson said: "Whilst our bids in the latest round were not successful, we will continue to work closely with government to identify and access funding for the vital work we are doing to ensure no one in Surrey is left behind."

Woking Borough Council also put in a bid for £3.8m for a 'health and community campus' in Sheerwater.

A £492m project is already underway to regenerate the area, which the council said is the second most deprived area in the county. The campus would have given residents access to maternity clinics, chiropody, disability support, GP services, dentistry, parenting support and nursery care.

The council said it should have a "significant and positive impact on some of the borough's most vulnerable and harder to reach residents". In response to the bid being unsuccessful, Cllr Will Forster (Liberal Democrat, Hoe Valley), the council's deputy leader, said given the area being the second most deprived in Surrey, the council felt they had "a strong case". He said the council was "disappointed" to have missed out on the latest round of Levelling Up funding. Cllr Forster added: "The next phase of the Sheerwater Regeneration Project has already commenced and we remain committed to working with partners to develop the new health and community campus and delivering the much needed facilities."

Tandridge District Council's application for £8.7m would have meant money being put towards regenerating Caterham, including new flood measures to help with the regular flooding there. The East Surrey MP, Claire Coutinho, thanked the district council for its work in putting together the bid, and said she was "disappointed" the money was not awarded. She added: "I will work with Tandridge District Council and central government to explore all future funding opportunities, to make sure that East Surrey gets the funding it needs to improve our towns and villages."

The leader of the council, Councillor Catherine Sayer (Independents and OLRG Alliance, Oxted North & Tandridge), said: "We are extremely disappointed our bid for funding was unsuccessful. We planned to use this funding to regenerate Caterham, boost the local economy, attract more people to work, visit and live in the area and introduce much needed flood alleviation measures. This would build on the work we've already done to improve Caterham Valley town centre." She said a lot of time and hard work had been put into the bid, and said the council would look for feedback on the application and appeal the decision if possible. Cllr Sayer added: "We will also consider another bid when government confirms details of the third round of funding."

## Councils which did not apply for the funding:

The other district and borough councils did not apply for levelling up funding, though some have bid for and received central government funding in the form of the UK Shared Prosperity Fund. These included a £1m award to Elmbridge Borough Council to be used for the Walton Playhouse and in playgrounds, and the same amount to Runnymede Borough Council which it will use for transforming Chertsey high street and grants for new businesses.



The full list of councils which did not make a bid for Levelling up funding were:

Reigate & Banstead Borough Council  
Spelthorne Borough Council  
Mole Valley District Council  
Elmbridge Borough Council  
Runnymede Borough Council  
Surrey Heath Borough Council  
**Epsom & Ewell Borough Council**  
Guildford Borough Council  
Waverley Borough Council

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Surrey County Council on the level.

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## Remembering the victims of genocide

1 February 2023



**Epsom & Ewell Borough Council** will carry out a number of activities to mark Holocaust Memorial Day on Friday 27 January. **Holocaust Memorial Day** is a time to remember the six million Jews murdered during the Holocaust, the millions of other victims of Nazi persecution and those killed in the more recent genocides in Cambodia, Rwanda, Bosnia and Darfur.

The Council will light up the clocktower in Epsom Market Place in purple in memory of the victims of the Holocaust and genocide worldwide.

The Mayor, Councillor **Clive Woodbridge**, will give a speech which will be available to view on the Council's YouTube channel from Friday - <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC0UGt6AEUCYhS3gjs4jEsysg>.

An exhibition will take place at **Bourne Hall**, Ewell, looking at the history of the Holocaust and linking it to local stories from the Borough. Visitors will be able to place LED candles on the shrine as a mark of respect.

Virtual candles can also be lit by visiting [www.illuminatethepast.org](http://www.illuminatethepast.org).

To learn more about the Holocaust and genocide, please visit [www.hmd.org.uk](http://www.hmd.org.uk).

Epsom and Ewell Borough Council

Related article:

Flight of refugees: history repeating?

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## Local Parking (enforcement) Wars

1 February 2023



An opinion piece from **Cllr Eber Kington**: This week SCC announced a seven-year contract worth £96.5 million, with private company Marston Holdings Ltd, for parking and traffic enforcement. In April, SCC will be centralising parking enforcement, a service which currently is managed by Surrey's Borough and District on behalf of the County.

Image: Cllr Eber Kington on patrol

The accompanying comments to the announcement, made by the Kevin Deanus, Cabinet member for Highways and Community Resilience, promise much. But residents need to be aware, SCC does not have a great track record when it comes to taking back decision making and centralising services previously provided by the Borough Council on behalf of the County.

When SCC took back the maintenance of highway verge trees the policy became one of no maintenance unless a tree is diseased, dying or dead. And no longer will SCC automatically replace a tree lost to our urban streets. Instead, our residents have to pay £25 just to get a location looked at. £25 which is not refundable and, as often is the case, ends with the site being declared as unsuitable for a tree.

In April, SCC is also taking back the cutting of verges. The 6 to 8 seasonal cuts by the Borough Council, recognising seasonal weather conditions, will be reduced a standard county-wide cut of 4. Hardly an upgrade on what has gone before. And will SCC be pro-actively managing overhanging branches in our urban alleyways? My concern is that SCC does not even realise it's a job to be done.

And the abolition of Local Committees and centralisation of highway decisions. Now residents have no public meeting to ask questions of Highway Officers, petitions are determined at SCC's HQ in Reigate by council officials or a SCC Cabinet Member, and road safety schemes are decided by a Cabinet Member rather than local County Councillors.

So, what will this £96.5 million contract mean? Kevin Deanus, Cabinet member for Highways and Community Resilience, said: "The new contract will mean that Surrey County Council can more directly and consistently manage on street parking enforcement across the county, helping to tackle inconsiderate parking and make parking restrictions more effective."

We all want safe and considerate parking, and there has to be a penalty for those who do neither. But that £96.5 million contract has to be paid for somehow. Will we see parking meters introduced where currently there are 1 hour or 2 hour waiting limits? Will additional yellow lines, designed to push drivers into paid for parking spaces, be introduced. Will the new system be flexible enough to ensure that our local primary schools are visited regularly to manage dangerous parking and idling cars? And will Residents Parking Zone Permit charges go up once again.

Personally, I'm not sure that SCC's desire for consistency and effectiveness in parking enforcement also equates to fairness in delivery and a recognition of local needs, and it won't be just another way to make our residents pay.

### **County Councillor Eber Kington**

Eber Kington is a former Mayor of Epsom and Ewell. He represents the Epsom and Ewell Borough Council Ward of Ewell Court Ward and on the County Council of Surrey he serves the ward of Ewell Court, Auriol & Cuddington.

Related stories from Epsom and Ewell Times:

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## **Local Plan battle heating up?**

1 February 2023



