

Local Planning Matters

4 November 2022



Tim Murphy's opinion piece on Epsom and Ewell's Local Plan. An up-to-date Local Plan is a necessity. It indicates to those proposing new developments or conversions to properties just what they are allowed or not allowed to do. It is also the yardstick by which locally elected councillors assess whether a particular planning application should be permitted.

The current Epsom and Ewell Local Plan was approved as long ago as 2007. It does not meet the requirements of the most recent planning legislation. In particular, it is failing to deliver the type of housing that is needed locally – affordable and in close proximity to a range of retail and social facilities and public transport. By contrast, the current Plan has been very largely successful in protecting the Borough's much valued Green Belt from inappropriate development. Two reports commissioned by the Council have confirmed that our Green Belt is performing as it should against the five criteria set out in planning legislation.

A new draft Local Plan is very likely to be discussed by the Council's Licensing and Planning Policy Committee on 21 st November. The preparation of the Plan has been overshadowed by a quite unrealistic housing target of nearly seven hundred new homes to be provided every year in the Borough.

Where does this target come from? It is set by central government and is based on outdated projections about how fast our number of households will grow in the future. Astonishingly, the number is so high because it incorporates what is known as an 'affordability' uplift – because house prices locally are so high, it is assumed these will fall markedly as more houses are built. There is no evidence that this is how our housing market operates.

Our councillors have a choice to make. They can try to meet most, and maybe all, of the centrally-determined housing target. The Borough has only limited built-up areas that would lend themselves to redevelopment for housing so, inevitably, extensive areas of our Green Belt would be sacrificed. Judging by the type of housing that has been approved over the past few years in the Borough on what are called greenfield sites, it is unlikely that the homes that are provided will meet local needs.

What guarantees will be in place to ensure that such significant increases in population will be matched by more educational and medical facilities and better transport provision? Alternatively, as in neighbouring Elmbridge, our councillors could decide not to meet the housing target but rather prioritise the provision of those types and sizes of housing most needed locally, including affordable homes, on existing built-up areas so that no valuable Green Belt need be lost.

The comprehensive redevelopment of existing commercial estates to incorporate a significant element of new housing should be a component of this way forward. Excellent design standards will be essential. Recent statements by our new Prime Minister and the Secretary of State for Communities, Michael Gove, support this approach.

What will our councillors decide?

Tim Murphy

Tim Murphy has worked as a Chartered Town Planner in local government in London, and as an environmental specialist both with WS Atkins and Partners, the Epsom-based engineering consultants, and the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) where he was responsible for examining the environmental and social impacts of the EBRD's investments in Eastern Europe. Since retiring, Tim chaired the Surrey Branch of the Campaign to Protect Rural England (CPRE) for several years, and he is currently Chair of CPRE's South East Region and heads up CPRE's Epsom and Ewell local group, campaigning to protect the local Green Belt and other open areas.

If you have views and opinions on "Local Plan Matters" – do write to us admin@epsomandewelltimes.com

Battle for Epsom School continues....

4 November 2022



A new planning application has been submitted by land owners the **Aczel brothers** to **Epsom and Ewell Borough Council** to redevelop the **Kingswood House School** site. "Demolition of an existing building, relocation and reprovision of MUGA Sports pitch, and construction of new access and parking facilities for a SEND school".

The plan is to replace the 100 years old school for many with Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) in West Hill, Epsom, with a new 60 place school for children with "extreme special needs ". Supporters of the existing school suspect the application is a ploy to develop all the land in the owners' possession into a housing estate. The new application relates to the built area and a further application is expected for a housing estate on the current adjacent playing fields. If the owners were granted both permissions but failed to proceed with the new school development the suspicion of The Kingswood school support group is that an application will be pursued in the future for housing throughout the whole land.

Kingswood House School is asking local people to object to the new school application by 21st November 2022. The application can be seen on the Epsom and Ewell BC website under reference 22/01653/FUL.

Kingswood House School is a thriving and vital part of the community that provides a first class education to over 240 local children and which is the only school in Epsom to be listed as an Asset of Community Value.

According to a report commissioned by the land owners "There are (SEND) places available across all year groups in the.... independent and.... public sector within Surrey.... and Epsom and Ewell and should any pupil from Kingswood House School require a place within (either sector) ... there will be a place available". **Alfredson York Associates Ltd.** The author of this report **Jonathan Powell** goes on to conclude in his report: "Given that Kingswood House School is not a special school and has no particular specialism that is not provided within the same catchment from which Kingswood House currently draws, the proposed development would not significantly alter the choice and availability of places."

Dr Kugathan Senduran disagrees and commented: "Education provides us with the fundamental tools we require to live. Switching schools is more likely to demonstrate a wide array of negative behavioural and educational outcomes. If education collapses, everything does. You do not need an atomic bomb or a long-range missile only the collapse of education in a country to ruin it forever. I simply cannot believe the council is even considering their proposal of demolition of an existing building and interrupting children's education. I strenuously object their proposal." He is one of 30 objectors to date who have gone public on the Council portal.

Kingswood House School is holding a public meeting on the plans at the Main Hall, Stamford Green Primary School, KT19 8LU on Thursday 10th November at 7.00pm (doors open 6.40pm).

Although Kingswood House is a private school, it is a charity and any profit is reinvested into the school. By contrast, the proposed school, which is not backed by the Local Education Authority, would be run by a private operator (with profits going to shareholders) and "would not be aimed at local children", Kingswood School supporters say.

Richard Laudy, a Governor of Kingswood School, adds "There will be problems with access via West Hill Avenue, currently a tranquil street. At least two protected trees would need to be removed. The plans do not include enough space for drop-off, causing queues, overspill parking, and nuisance on local roads. The proposed new school only has 22 parking spaces. This will be insufficient for the specialist nature of the school."

Richard Evans, Chair of Governors at Kingswood House School, confirmed that the School had not been consulted over the plans and that: "...the School vehemently opposes the unacceptable plans and is working with local residents to defeat them. Kingswood House has been serving the local community for over 100 years and provides the unique offering of special needs and mainstream children developing alongside each other. Our school is a listed Asset of Community Value, which would be lost along with our playing fields if the landowners' plans went ahead. The proposal would also damage the tranquil character of Stamford Green Conservation Area, creating a chaotic new access on West Hill Avenue. We need local people to make their voices heard and object to this speculative and harmful proposal."

Cllr. Steve Bridger, Councillor for Stamford Ward, is aware of the application and has 'called it in' so it will be heard in front of the Planning Committee rather than decided by Council officers.

Public comments can be submitted via the Epsom & Ewell Borough Council planning applications website using the reference **22/01653/FUL**, then clicking on 'Make a Comment'.

See Epsom and Ewell Times earlier reports:

Community Asset to be stripped?

Grayling stood up by developers....

Tasteless Tweeting Councillor loses Tory whip

4 November 2022



A Horley councillor has lost the Tory whip after posting what his party called “wholly unacceptable and grossly offensive” posts from a now-deleted Twitter account. **Surrey County Councillor Andy Lynch** was investigated by the Conservatives for posts made last month from an account with the handle @TheLandlorduk.

Surrey County Councillor Andy Lynch now sits as an Independent.

On Tuesday (November 1), the chairman of the Surrey County Council Conservative group, **Cllr John O'Reilly**, said the investigation on behalf of the party into the account had concluded. He said: “Having spoken to senior members of the Conservative group, we have unanimously agreed that Mr Lynch’s various comments under ‘The Landlord’ twitter handle are wholly unacceptable and grossly offensive, and, accordingly, the Conservative whip has been withdrawn from him.”

Screenshots taken before the Twitter account was deleted show one post sent in response to a tweet about asylum seekers which said: “When are [politicians] going to recognise the human rights of the indigenous people to have a quiet and peaceful life?” Separately, a county council spokesperson confirmed two complaints have been received about the @TheLandlorduk account, and were being considered in line with the authority’s process for complaints against councillors.

In May this year Cllr Lynch was found to be in breach of the county council’s code of conduct for separate posts sent in February from a different Twitter account, now also deleted, with the handle @cllrAndyLynch. Tweets posted from the @TheLandlorduk account included calling the “police force an absolute disgrace these days”, and responding to a picture of a Muslim woman and child standing at a halal fridge saying: “Throw a packet of bacon in there”.

Posts also called London Mayor Sadiq Khan an “absolute knob” and London a “third world s and the murder capital of Western Europe”. A county council spokesperson said the authority’s code of conduct had no specific guidelines regarding previous conduct of the same nature but the council’s member conduct panel may take it into account when considering a complaint made against a councillor.

llr Lynch had not responded to LDRS requests for comment at the time of publication. In May, the Horley West, Salfords & Sidlow councillor was found to have breached Surrey County Council’s code of conduct for posts from the @cllrAndyLynch account.

He sent a written apology to the county council’s chief executive, its chairman and its leader. At the time, Cllr Lynch was removed from a select committee by the Conservative group, and received a statement of censure from the county council. Minutes from the conduct panel said: “The panel noted that Andy Lynch had fully co-operated with the investigation and had voluntarily admitted and apologised for his conduct.”

At the time of the first account being deleted, from which Cllr Lynch called journalist Yasmin Alibhai-Brown “a racist b***”, he was also a Reigate and Banstead borough councillor but did not stand again in May’s local elections. A borough council spokesperson said he was suspended by his council political group as part of its disciplinary process, and remained suspended until the end of his electoral term in May.

The investigation by the borough council’s monitoring officer did not conclude because the complaints were withdrawn. Cllr Lynch was elected to the county council in May 2021.

“The Landlord” account repeated comments about Ms Alibhai-Brown including calling her an “evil, racist loon”.

Trading favours for Epsom’s Foodbank

4 November 2022



Surrey Trading Standards with Buckingham have donated 1,760 items and over £550 for the **Epsom & Ewell Foodbank**. The items donated include food, household cleaning supplies, personal care items and cash.

The donations are in celebration of Buckinghamshire and Surrey Trading Standards reaching the milestone of 150

Primary Authority Partnerships, making it the largest regulatory provider of Primary Authority services.

Image: Jonathan Lees of Epsom and Ewell Foodbank

Primary Authority is a means for businesses to receive assured and tailored advice in meeting various regulations through a single point of contact. This is invaluable for start-up businesses to get it right from the outset and enables all businesses to invest with confidence in products, practices, and procedures.

The landmark achievement comes off the back of Buckinghamshire and Surrey Trading Standards also winning the **“Service Excellence Award”** at the BEIS Regulatory Awards 2022.

Michele Manson, Business Team Manager at Buckinghamshire & Surrey Trading Standards said: “We’re delighted that we and our partners have been able to collate so many donations for Epsom & Ewell foodbanks. The work they do is so vital and it’s great that we have been able to aid them like this. We were determined to celebrate our recent achievements in a meaningful way that supported our local communities, and this has been the perfect way to do that.”

Jonathan Lees, Managing Director and Founder of Epsom and Ewell Foodbank said: “It’s great that Bucks & Surrey trading standards have worked with their business partners to make this donation, cooperation like this helps us to continue to provide vital emergency support to people in the local community.”

James Lowman, Chief Executive Association of Convenience Stores said: “Entering our partnership with Bucks & Surrey Trading Standards was one of the best decisions we have made, and it has continued to deliver every year. The quality of support from the team, has been consistently professional, pragmatic, and engaged. This has helped us to tackle new and existing compliance challenges with confidence.”

Business partners who have helped contribute donations include:

- Green Motion Car and Van Rental
- Delphic HSE Ltd.
- Natural Instinct Limited
- Coca Cola Europacific Partners
- Global Manuka UK
- E Scooter Professional LTD
- Solution EU Limited
- Bahlsen LLP
- Sports Supplement Ltd
- Creative Nature

For more information on Primary Authority Partnerships, please visit:
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/primary-authority-overview>

For more information on Epsom & Ewell foodbank please visit: <https://epsomewell.foodbank.org.uk/>

Surrey County Council News

Concerned with driving for ages

4 November 2022



Age Concern Epsom and Ewell are fortunate to have many volunteers that give up their time to help provide various services to support members of the older community in the borough of Epsom and Ewell. One of these services is its well used transport service which takes clients to medical appointments across the borough and further field. To provide this service, they have a wonderful small team of volunteers who carry out around 1000 trips a year.

Stuart Kendrick (L) and **Alan Carlson** (R) and Mayor Clive Woodbridge celebrate long-service

Two of these drivers, **Alan Carlson** and **Stuart Kendrick** have each been driving for us for over ten years, and this month they will both have reached an amazing milestone of completing 2000 drives.

Alan, a retired special needs teacher, and previous mayor of Epsom and Ewell in 2001/2002, has lived in the borough most of his life. He started driving for Age Concern Epsom and Ewell in 2012, he’d not long retired and wanted to do something useful with his time and his large car! He appreciates that the transport service can help take away the anxiety that some clients feel and aims to provide calm reassurance when driving our clients to their appointments. He really enjoys meeting people and hearing their interesting stories and he’s been able to build up good relationships with many of them.

Stuart, a retired minicab driver, originally from South London started driving for Age Concern Epsom and Ewell following his retirement because his wife suggested he might like to go and do something useful! He really enjoys meeting our clients and gets a sense of fulfilment knowing that he is doing something that they really appreciate. His wife now often accompanies Stuart on his drives, and they all love the chats that they have on the way to appointments.

Age Concern is extremely grateful to all their volunteers but would especially like to thank Stuart and Alan for completing 2000 drives for Age Concern Epsom and Ewell and on 24th October held an informal lunch party for them with invited guests.

If you would like more details about the Age Concern Epsom and Ewell Transport Service, please contact Transport Desk, Monday – Friday 9.00am – 12.30pm on 01372 732 456.

Alternatively, if you would like to like to volunteer for Age Concern Epsom and Ewell, please contact Jane Hodgson, Volunteer Coordinator Monday – Wednesday 9.00am – 3.00pm on 01372 732 458 for an informal chat.

Fortune Not Favouring The Bold

4 November 2022



SUTTON & EPSOM 19 OXFORD HARLEQUINS 22 – Sunday 30th October – With the clocks going back in the morning it was the last of the 3pm kick offs before the seasonal variations and Rugby Lane welcomed another new opponent, Oxford Harlequins. At the end of Round 5 the Oxonians were the league leaders having thumped the previously indomitable top dogs of Maidenhead but a duo of defeats in the last two weeks have left them in fourth place. Meanwhile the Black & Whites have attracted the label of ‘Close But No Cigar’ with a trio of narrow defeats and a draw leaving them in the drop zone. It appeared to be a question of whether the visitors could get their season back on track or whether the hosts could finally see out a close encounter of the frustrating kind. For the home supporters it was unfortunately the former as the visitors hung on to record a 22-19 victory.

It was selectorial swings and roundabouts for S&E as they welcomed back their influential ten, Gareth O’Brien, and gave a debut to Joe Reid but lost impressive centre Archie Fitzgerald to injury. The visitors initiated proceedings on a sunny and mild autumnal afternoon with S&E favoured by the breeze. From the outset the game was played at a furious pace. James Caddy gathered the kick off and countered with Tom Brooker and George Drye to the fore before a booming clearance from Gareth O’Brien sent the opposition scurrying back deep in their 22. The Quins won the ensuing line out and ran the ball hither and thither before being awarded a scrum 30 metres from the Sutton line. Excellent passing and rapid recycling overcame staunch Sutton defence as Andrew Jarvis touched down in the corner despite the tackle of Michael Davies. Ethan Fox failed with the challenging conversion but Oxford Harlequins led 5-0.

Hardly had the Rugby Lane crowd had time to digest another early and unpalatable offering when lightning struck twice and Andrew Jarvis repeated the dose in the far right corner. A scything line break and slick passing saw full back Jack Antoniou marauding towards the line only to be dragged down 5 short by a tremendous tackle by Freddy Bunting. However, support was on hand and with a superb Ethan Fox touchline conversation the visitors were 12 up in ten pulsating minutes. The tenor of the game was then illustrated by two penalties awarded. Firstly, the Oxonians declined a simple kick in front of the posts and then S&E attempted one from near halfway. Neither side garnered points and at this stage it seemed unlikely that OH would rue the gift of three points. In contrast from the Sutton miss Tom Brooker caught the drop out and returned the ball with interest deep into the 22. The ball went right and prop Will Lloyd, standing in at stand off, supplied an exquisite pass for Tom Boaden to power over. Freddy Bunting added the extras as Sutton trailed 7-12.

The Horspath Sports Ground men responded to the effrontery of the Sutton score and returned to the Black & White 22. The hosts conceded a penalty as a defender lay prone by the ruck, the gentlemanly opponents declined the skulduggery of throwing the ball at him as is the fashion in the elite game and spun it wide. Following a few phases it was brought back for the offside any way. A tap-and-go penalty reaped the reward and from the ruck near the line prop George Primett found the perfect line to receive the pass and score under the posts. Ethan Fox chipped conversion made it 19-7 on the half hour. With the approaching interval Sutton had to stem the tide and make an impact on the scoreboard. A bone-shaking tackle by Ben Tame on the influential 15 Jack Antoniou demonstrated Sutton’s defensive resolve. Then in the dying embers of the half O’Brien and Brooker combined to put S&E in prime position. However, the opportunity for a morale-boosting score and a shift in momentum was squandered by a technical infringement at the scrummage. The visitors proceeded to clear and Mr Rodwell blew for half time with Oxford Harlequins 19-7 to the good.

Freddy Bunting got the action underway once more as the former league leaders looked to replicate the start. Sumptuous back play with sublime offloads brought the visitors within touching distance of glory. Yet it was S&E who turned over the ball and won a relieving penalty. Prop Will Lloyd had been replaced by debutant Joe Reid, 36 years young, who was to be influential from the next scrum onwards. Sutton’s advantage at the set-piece now became complete dominance. The decimation of Reid’s first scrummage was like a shot of adrenalin in the body of the home XV as confidence coursed through their veins. Soon the crowd were on their feet as Ollie Baptiste-Wilson sprinted down the touchline in front of the Memorial Grandstand, passed inside and Freddy Bunting sauntered home only to be denied by the winger’s foot being in touch. S&E bulked up their pack as the Brobdingnagian lock Ewan McTaggart replaced Josh Glanville. As more destructive scrummaging followed the referee offered a cautionary word to the Oxfordshire pack but the inevitable yellow emerged at the next set-piece. The numerical advantage soon saw a second Sutton score. Bunting kicked to the corner, Captain Drye caught the throw and the pack remorselessly advanced over the line for Tom Boaden to score his second try. Freddy Bunting converted to trail 12-19.

In stark contrast to the first period the visitors opted to kick at goal from near halfway from a penalty awarded after the restart. Ethan Fox impressively extended the lead to 22-12. S&E made another change as Ross Parsons replaced Austin Bell at 9. But the significant change occurred when Quins' prop George Primett was injured at the next scrum. The referee explained the intricacies of the laws and briefly uncontested scrums were on the menu. The Black & Whites took full advantage as Ollie Baptiste-Wilson replicated his touchline tightrope tap dance on the opposite flank. To the delight of the crowd he dived into the corner. Freddy Bunting converted magnificently from the touchline as OH led by 22-19. Five minutes later amid great concern from both physios Tom Brooker was forced to retire having put in a thunderous performance and Josh Glanville returned to the fray.

The closing stages were utterly compelling as the Oxford Harlequins tried to force Sutton & Epsom back into their half whilst their opponents attempted to manufacture one final chance. The status quo was maintained in the arm wrestle for supremacy until deep into time added on. Finally, Sutton had a foothold in enemy territory and advanced towards the 22 only to be halted by foul means rather than fair. The penalty was eminently kickable to those who know the burgeoning reputation of Bunting's boot. The expectant crowd anticipated seeing the kicking tee being ferried onto the paddock but no. The hosts opted to kick for touch and go for the win. The first hurdle was overcome as they caught the throw. The forwards were now a mass of desperate bodies as the Sutton trundled forward in search of glory. Then a shrill blast of the whistle and despair for S&E and delight for OH as the visitors were awarded a final scrum. With Joe Reid off nursing an injured knee this was a far easier challenge and the ball was dutifully kicked off the park. The jubilant visitors, arms aloft, celebrated a very tough 22-19 win.

For Sutton there was much to admire. Through necessity Alex Mount was pressed into service as hooker and revelled in his new role and the line out was markedly improved. The triumvirate of Brooker, Caddy and Drye were outstanding ball-carriers in the pack. The ace up the sleeve was Joe Reid's appearance off the bench who was a wrecking ball in the set scrum. Meanwhile Ollie Baptiste-Wilson enhanced his reputation as a lethal finisher. However, it was a superb team performance against one of the prominent teams in the league. For the visitors it was a joy to watch the almost faultless handling and creativity of their back division with one-handed offloads commonplace. In an era of ever-increasing size it was a delight to see the rather diminutive centre Toby Haines buzzing around taunting the defence like the most annoying of mosquitoes being a constant pest with jinking runs and telling passes.

Following a trio of new league opponents the Black & Whites face familiar opponents in local rivals Wimbledon next Saturday 5th November. For those of you making the annual pilgrimage to Barham Road please note the kick off will be at 2:30pm.

Sutton & Epsom

Mike Davies, Stefan Cooksammy, Freddie Bunting, Jamie See, Ollie Baptiste-Wilson, Gareth O'Brien, Austin Bell, Alex Mount, Tom Boaden, Will Lloyd, George Drye ©, Josh Glanville, Ben Tame, Tom Brooker & James Caddy.

Replacements (all used): Joe Reid, Ewan McTaggart & Ross Parsons.

Oxford Harlequins

Jack Antoniou, Josaia Ratulaveta, Toby Haines, Adam Field, Andrew Jarvis, Ewan Fox, Harry Burn, George Primett, Josh Archer, Joel Hopkins, Harvey Tricker, Alan Purchase ©, Titus Waldock, Callum Fitzpatrick & Ross Toward.

Replacements: Jorn Voegtli, Paco Estaban, Ralph Jones.

More cash for Ukraine refugee hosts

4 November 2022



Epsom Refugee Network welcomes the promised increase in cash to those local residents who take into their homes individuals and families who have had to flee Ukraine. It is hoped the extra money will attract more hosts in an increasingly difficult situation. **Jo Sherring**, leader of the Epsom Refugee Network, told Epsom and Ewell Times: "As we launch an appeal for new sponsors in the area, we welcome the news of the increased thank you payments which we hope may encourage more families to consider offering a place of safety to a family fleeing Ukraine. We are also desperate to find sponsors for families who are already in the UK and are having to move on from their first sponsor and find a new host family. If you are thinking of hosting and have questions please, please get in touch". www.epsomrefugeenetwork.org

Surrey County Council and local district and borough councils who are managing the "**Homes for Ukraine**" scheme locally have agreed an additional thank you payment, to be paid monthly to host families from end of November 2022 to March 2023. This is acknowledging that the financial circumstances faced by host families in Surrey, who welcomed Ukrainians into their homes, will have changed from the time they agreed to host Ukrainian families to our current

economic situation in the UK.

Currently, host families are paid £350 a month for being sponsors, this payment will be increased by £250 to £600 a month from end of November 2022. This is to compensate for the rise in energy, food and fuel bills in this cost-of-living crisis. This applies to existing hosts who are already in receipt of thank you payments, and new hosts who complete all the checks satisfactorily going forward. This funding comes from DLUHC (**Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities**) via the County Council to the district and borough councils to pay the sponsors directly once they have passed all the relevant housing, DBS (**Disclosure and Barring Service**) and safeguarding checks.

Surrey County Council leader **Cllr Tim Oliver** said “We are forever grateful for the unerring warm welcome and support that communities, charities, and district and boroughs continue to offer our Ukrainian guests here in Surrey. But in particular to those sponsor families who have opened their homes up to welcome Ukrainian families to live alongside them and their families. As if this sacrifice were not enough, we now need to ensure that they are not being penalised financially and can continue to offer support as sponsors in this current economic climate. Unfortunately, the conflict in Ukraine continues and so there is still a need for host families. SCC has taken the decision to increase the thank you payments after fears many people wouldn’t be able to afford to extend their current six-month agreements as winter approaches and the cost-of-living bites.”

Additional reporting from Surrey County Council news.

Another MP challenger out of the blocks

4 November 2022



Local Epsom and Ewell Liberal Democrats announce local candidate and former Captain in the Royal Military Police **Helen Maguire** has been selected as the Liberal Democrat Prospective Parliamentary Candidate for Epsom & Ewell. Helen has lived in Surrey with her husband and 3 children for over 11 years. In the British Army, she served in Iraq and Bosnia. Helen now runs an award-winning charity fundraising consultancy, delivering vital funding to charities nationwide. She recently won ‘service Leaver of the year’ in the British Ex-Forces in Business awards 2022. In her spare time Helen can be found running on Epsom Downs. She has represented Epsom & Ewell Harriers Athletic Club for over 10 years.

Image: Helen Maguire (2nd from left) with supporters in Epsom High St

Helen was a key campaigner in Esher & Walton during the 2019 General Election where she played a pivotal role in increasing the Liberal Democrat vote by 18,000 with the largest swing in the country of 27.7%. Repeating this in Epsom & Ewell would result in Helen winning the seat from the conservatives.

According to the Liberal Democrat’s press release “Helen is a local community champion, volunteering her spare time to numerous charities within the constituency, an activist who fights for local issues to be heard. Following her selection earlier this month, Helen has been actively campaigning in Epsom, including protesting against the Tory plans to allow Fracking in Surrey and knocking on doors to listen to and understand first-hand about the local issues such as the Chalk Pit fiasco.”

Helen Maguire stated: “I am absolutely honoured to be selected as the Liberal Democrat prospective Parliamentary candidate for Epsom & Ewell. I am standing for honesty and integrity, and a fairer society for all.”

See Gina Miller’s recent announcement of her ambition to stand for Parliament in Epsom and Ewell reported [HERE](#)

Emissions a taxing issue for Council

4 November 2022



Thursday 27th October's meeting of **Epsom and Ewell's Licensing Committee** was taxed by emission standards for the Town's black cabs. Over the summer the Council had circulated a draft hackney carriage and private hire vehicle and driver policy for consultation. One local response was "Black diesel cabs have the highest emissions of any vehicle and they regularly travel up and down my road polluting the air. The most common black cab models in London are polluting the streets with nitrogen oxide (NOX) emissions up to 30 times the level of personal petrol cars of the same age."

In London since 1 January 2018, taxis presented for licensing for the first time have needed to be Zero Emission Capable. This means having CO2 emissions of no more than 50g/km and a minimum 30 mile zero emission range. First-time taxi vehicle licences are no longer granted to diesel taxis. ZEC taxis with petrol engines need to meet the latest emissions standard (currently Euro 6). Transport for London offers £7500 payments to support taxi-drivers making these changes.

Cllr **Julie Morris** (LibDem College Ward) asked why the proposed new taxi policy could not require all new applications for hackney and private hire vehicle licences to be ULEZ compliant (ultra-low emission zone). Despite issues of emissions being raised during the consultation the draft policy had not specifically proposed such a requirement. The Council officer stated that 12 months would be required to undergo a legally necessary consultation. Ms Morris went on to claim that the Council was lacking in leadership over the climate emergency.

The draft policy requires new vehicle licence applications to comply with Euro 5 (the standard from 2011) rather than the London standard of Euro 6 (applicable to new vehicles from 2015). The officer explained that implementing London's higher standards would risk reducing the provision of black cabs in Epsom as the income of local black cab drivers was lower than their London counterparts.

The committee's chair Steven McCormick (RA Woodcote) indicated that he would work with officers and endeavour to achieve the required consultation and bring back a revision on emissions standards within 6 months. The committee approved the new policy to go for decision by the Full Council in due course.

The Local Government Association advises that consultations should last between 6 to 8 weeks and possibly shorter in urgent situations.

Click [HERE](#) for the full report to the committee – pages 11-138 re taxis.

Balancing the Borough's Books

4 November 2022



Borough budgets are difficult to follow. However, a practice adopted this year presents to Council committees an overview of budget plans. Without savings being made in the budgets for 2023/2024 onward the Council is predicted to face a loss of £2.6 million by 2025/2026. [Small compared with Woking Borough Council's Black-Hole of a debt of £2.4 billion – see our report on their debt [HERE](#)]

Thursday 27th October's Licensing Policy and Planning Committee received a report from the Council's Finance Department. The overview and recommendations provided to the Councillors is helpful and highlights are reprinted with some edits below. Full REPORT [HERE](#) (see pages 7 – 10). The recommendation approved by the Committee that "growth items" must be funded from existing budgets means that some items will not grow but will diminish. Cuts might be avoidable if recommended rises in various chargeable services are sufficient to pay.

Report to Councillors:

"The Council is facing a great deal of uncertainty, with sufficient information unlikely to be available to reliably predict the medium-term impact of elevated inflation and the cost-of-living crisis on Council services before the end of 2022. As such, the report to Strategy & Resources Committee modelled 3 scenarios – optimistic, neutral and pessimistic – to forecast the Council's future budget position.

In the neutral scenario, adopted for financial planning purposes, the Council faces a projected budget deficit of **£2.6m by 2025/26**.

Budget targets include:

Excluding any new growth in expenditure, a level of savings of £2.6 million is needed to achieve a balanced budget over the next three year financial planning period to 2025/26.

Recommendations:

That estimates be prepared including the delivery of savings already identified in the Financial Plan for 2023/24 totalling £215,000.

That at least £396,000 additional revenue be generated from an increase of 6% on discretionary fees and charges in 2023/24.

That a provision for pay award is made of £524,000 that would allow for a 3% cost of living increase.

That the homelessness service be set a target to reduce net costs by £243,000 per annum.

That any additional new growth items supported by Policy Committees will need to be fully funded from existing budgets."

Surrey Ambulance employee woes far from over

4 November 2022



An NHS chief executive has never in her career seen employee relations cases of the "volume and a complexity" as at her current troubled ambulance trust. **South East Coast Ambulance Service (SECamb)**, the NHS trust which covers Surrey, is on an improvement journey, after an "inadequate" rating for how the service was led in June and a report this week which downgraded its overall rating.

The trust's interim chief executive, **Siobhan Melia**, said though she was not happy with the pace of the progress on improving the culture at the trust, she understood why it was not moving quickly. She told a board meeting on Thursday (October 27): "I have never in my career seen a volume and a complexity of [employee relations] cases that we are dealing with." She said she understood why limited staff resources and an "incredibly high case load" were contributing to this.

The meeting heard what progress was being made against two warnings given in the June report, which found a culture of "bullying, harassment and sexualised behaviour" at the trust.

A report published this week by the **Care Quality Commission** downgraded the trust's overall rating, finding that staff were "burnt out", working beyond their hours and not always getting breaks. But the area of "caring" was given a "good" rating in the latest report, with patients found to be treated with kindness and compassion.

Thursday's meeting focused on the two warning areas of four highlighted in the June report, namely risk, clinical governance and quality improvement, and of a culture of bullying. The latest report will be addressed at future board meetings of the ambulance trust, which covers Surrey, Kent, Sussex and parts of Hampshire.

According to meeting documents, the trust's planned outcome for concerns around culture centred on a "significant reduction in bullying and harassment", and staff feeling empowered and supported to raise concerns.

The interim chief executive said there needed to be "absolute clarity" on there being zero tolerance on behaviours that did not align with trust values, and a "decisive position" taken that sexually inappropriate behaviour would not be tolerated.

She said the backlog of cases meant people were getting "frustrated" at the length of processes because the trust was "running to catch up". Ms Melia said she had found herself "challenged" as a woman chief executive in 2022 to have taken a sexual safety workshop in the last week. She added: "I'm listening to the lived experiences of female members of staff at SECamb, who are talking quite openly in that workshop about some of the things that are happening. So we simply have to get more decisive, more strong in the actions that we take and continually say: 'We will protect you as we should when you're an employee of SECamb'."

Saying decisions on sanctions in proven cases needed to be "much faster", she added that the trust needed to "deliver the actions in a much more overt way" to match words and communications that were being put out.

The trust's executive director of human resources and organisational development, **Ali Mohammed**, said that 25 per cent of employee relations cases involved bullying, harassment or sexual safety.

He said once the initial work had been done on meeting targets set out after the CQC report and clearing the backlog of cases, more of a "learning culture" needed to be brought in at the trust. But he said ultimately it would be the staff that

would be able to tell leaders if things had changed for the better. He said: “Are we winning in terms of people feeling that there’s a different culture within the organisation? That’s the key thing in the end, asking the individuals themselves because they are the best judge of it.” He said there was an “individual and collective responsibility” on all board members, managers and “every single individual within the organisation” to push the same message and the same culture. He added: “This isn’t something one person could do in isolation. I think it’s a test we should hold ourselves to as a board, and as a senior management community, that it is something that we personally will be pushing forward.”

The board’s chairman **David Astley** said the trust needed to “root out” inappropriate behaviour. He said all staff needed to feel confident and safe at work, whether on the front line or in other areas. Mr Astley added: “They’ve got to feel safe, so they can do the best job they can for their colleagues, and more importantly, the patients.”

Surrey to SEND £40m for special schools

4 November 2022



A £40 million project to improve education facilities for some of Surrey’s most vulnerable children has moved to its next stage. **Surrey County Council** is currently not providing enough spaces in its “alternative provision” schools, which cater for children who have been excluded from mainstream schools or have additional educational needs. [Ed. SEND = special educational needs and disability.]

The current facilities are also described by the council as in “extremely poor” and “dilapidated condition”.

It is hoped that being able to provide places in council-run facilities will unlock more than £1m a year because the cost of a place with private providers is around £30,000 more per year than in an authority setting.

A meeting of Surrey County Council’s cabinet on Tuesday (October 25) heard from the authority’s cabinet member for education and learning that the new and redeveloped sites would be “first class”.

Councillor **Clare Curran** (Conservative, Bookham and Fetcham West) outlined plans for sites across Surrey which would be redeveloped, demolished or built from scratch to aim to increase the authority’s capacity.

Currently, according to council documents, the authority can only provide 196 spaces, out of a total of 240 that are required by law.

Legally, the county council must secure suitable, full-time alternative education for children who, because of reasons including illness or exclusion, would not be in education unless it was arranged for them.

It must also make sure there is provision for children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) who have Education, Health, and Care Plans in place.

Alternative provision is often a short-term solution until a child can return to mainstream education or move to a dedicated school, but in some cases is a longer-term solution.

Cllr Curran said the new sites would provide an environment where children would feel valued, could access high quality curriculum and get the emotional, health and well-being support they needed.

She said: “These short-stay schools can include some of the most vulnerable and marginalised children and young people that are in the county. We really want to ensure that we’re providing them not only with first-class accommodation, but a first-class learning experience.”

The plans, which would add 44 alternative provision places, include new sites in Elmbridge, on a council-owned site at Thamesfield Farm North, in either Surrey Heath or Runnymede and a new school on a new site for Reigate Valley College.

There are also plans to demolish the current Fordway School in Spelthorne, with the school relocating temporarily to Wey Valley College in Guildford while a new school is built, and plans to requires remodel and expand the Wey Valley College site.

The targets for the school sites are autumn and winter 2024.

An officers’ report said: “The current assets are in extremely poor condition and lack capacity to provide adequate places in appropriate locations across the county. Existing accommodation across the current nine buildings is significantly undersized and the buildings are in a dilapidated condition which is likely to render them unusable within the next two years. As such, the existing accommodation does not enable the provision of a full statutory educational offer that meets the educational needs of Surrey’s most vulnerable learners.”

Cabinet members approved the £43.2m budget for the project, which should also generate £5.77m in capital receipts when current council land is sold off.

The officers’ report showed that the average cost of a child going to an independent facility was around £52,000 per year, compared to £22,000 per year for a place at a maintained specialist school.

The additional places in council-run schools would mean a difference of £1.32m a year to the council’s budget.