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Re so la – “a very good place to start”?

12 October 2022

Guildford’s MP has labelled a “blanket ban” on solar farms “unwise” and says she supports a bid by the **University of Surrey** for a site outside of the town. The plans, put forward by the university for a solar farm across three fields, are described as an “essential component” of the university’s target to be net-zero by 2030.

Early plans for the site can be found in a request for an environmental impact assessment screening submitted by SSE Energy Solutions to **Guildford Borough Council**. A planning application has not yet been submitted for the approximately 21.6 hectare site, called Blackwell solar farm in documents.

Angela Richardson MP Conservative Guildford

Angela Richardson MP (Conservative) said on Twitter: “There is a planning application for a solar farm in my constituency which I support as it will help my local university meet its net zero aims by 2030. A blanket ban on solar farms would be unwise. Should be looked at on a case by case basis.”

The land is currently being used as farm land, and plans show the panels, of a maximum height of around 3 metres, could be surrounded by two-metre high fencing, with CCTV cameras on four-metre poles.
PM Liz Truss could ban solar panel installations from most farms in England, with **The Guardian** reporting on Monday (October 10) that, **Ranil Jayawardena**, Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, was understood to oppose solar panels on agricultural land. It also said he had asked that the definition of “best and most versatile” land be broadened to include the current 3b grade of agricultural land.

The screening request submitted to the borough council said though there were different grades of land on the fields, the whole site would be farmed as grade 3b. Documents also showed the applicants did not think the site would be visible from nearby villages or the nearby Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, though two farmhouses nearby could have a partial view of it.

In a release about the project, being put forward with **SSE Energy Solutions**, The University of Surrey said once complete the site could generate enough energy to supply the equivalent of 4,000 UK homes each year.
Professor Bob Nichol, the university’s executive lead for climate change, said: “The University of Surrey community is dedicated to doing our bit to minimise global warming and our move to home-generated solar power is an important part of our plans. Big strides like this are essential for organisations to reduce their carbon footprints. Increasing our solar generation is just one part of Surrey’s sustainability story and our road to ‘Net Zero’.”

A university spokesperson said: “The University of Surrey is putting finishing touches to the application for the solar farm proposals we announced for consultation in May. We have not yet submitted a formal planning application, but will do soon. We welcome the support for this important green energy plan from our local MP and other local stakeholders who have engaged with us. We look forward to progressing the proposal, which is an important part of our sustainability story and our road to ‘Net Zero’.”

Claygate not to suffer children’s home

12 October 2022

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Plans for a children's home in a **Claygate** cul-de-sac have been refused despite support from **Surrey County Council** which needs more beds for Surrey's vulnerable children. The application for a home for up to five children had received 25 letters of objection, ahead of a meeting of **Elmbridge Borough Council**'s east area planning sub-committee on Monday (October 10).

But officers also told the meeting a petition signed by 124 people had been submitted with a late objection letter.
The borough council's officers had recommended approval of the application for the home in Chadworth Way, but a motion to refuse the plans, put forward by Councillor **Mike Rollings** (Liberal Democrats, Claygate) was voted through by members.

While the meeting heard that the company putting forward the application, **HFM Care**, did not have experience running children's homes, officers said this was not something that would come under a planning consideration, and nor was the impact it may have on neighbouring property prices.

Surrey County Council supported the application because it would help with its aims to house more Surrey children within the county. In July 2022 just under 40 per cent of the children looked after by the county council were in homes in Surrey, with the authority aiming to increase that number to 80 per cent.

Councillor **Gill Coates** (Thames Ditton & Weston Green Residents' Association, Hinchley Wood and Weston Green) questioned the county council's support, but said she could see where the applicant was coming from wanting to house children in the currently residential property. She said: "You'd have to have a heart of stone not to want children from troubled backgrounds to be looked after in domestic properties of this type, in this sort of location."

But with flooding risks in the area, and in the house in particular, having been raised in the meeting and the potential for disruption highlighted by an objector to the plans, Cllr Coates said she still had questions on if it was the right property. She said: "That's effectively saying, I could put a shed at the end of my garden and employ somebody with 30 years experience in childcare and say, I want to run a children's home from it. "And Surrey will say: 'Well, we need the space. So, yes.' I think it's not good enough."

The home would cater for children who had been victims of child sexual exploitation and child criminal exploitation. **Yasemin Dervis**, from HFM Care, said the children would mostly be from the first group and would be "quieter and more introverted". She added: "If anything it will actually be a much quieter home than most children's homes that [the objector had] been a part of. The home will operate like a normal family home, children will go to school during the week, do their homework, go to bed at a reasonable hour. During the weekends, they will go and off and see their family and do other activities."

The meeting heard the residential house was on a three-year lease to the company, and that both Surrey County Council and **Ofsted** had been supportive of the home.

The home was refused because of flooding risks and the impact of the proposed home on the neighbouring residents.

Lighting up for menstrual dignity

12 October 2022

On Tuesday 11 October **Surrey Fire and Rescue Service** lit up Guildford Fire Station in a show of support for **Bint**i, an international menstrual dignity charity based in Weybridge, Surrey. The service will be looking to supplement **Surrey County Council**'s ground-breaking initiative, as the first UK council to provide free period products across the county and eradicate menstrual stigma and taboo whilst normalising the conversation.

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Surrey Fire and Rescue Service are to explore the distribution of Dignity Packs where needed when carrying out community engagement activities.

The event at Guildford Fire Station was attended by representatives from the Service, including Acting Chief Fire Officer, **Dan Quin**, and Chief of Staff **Bernie Beckett**. They were joined by actor and Binti ambassador **Nina Wadia**, star of TV programmes including *Eastenders*, *The Outlaws*, *Dr Who* and contestant on last year's series of *Strictly Come Dancing*.

The lighting up of Guildford Fire Station coincided with **International Day of the Girl Child**, which seeks to highlight the challenges faced by young females to their education, their physical and mental wellness, and the protections needed for a life without violence across the globe. 2022 marks the 10th anniversary of the International Day of the Girl, following its establishment by the United Nations. They note that over the past 10 years, there has been increased attention on issues that matter to girls amongst governments, policymakers and the general public, and more opportunities for girls to have their voices heard on the global stage. Yet, investments in girls' rights remain limited and girls continue to confront a myriad of challenges to fulfilling their potential; made worse by concurrent crises of climate change, COVID-19 and humanitarian conflict.

Surrey County Council initially worked with Binti to host collection and donation points at 35 Surrey buildings, including libraries and County Council buildings upon the launch of the partnership in May 2021. Since then, the initiative has spread to a total of 55 collection and donation points where people can take period products to enable Period Dignity.

Other organisations in Surrey have also come onboard, including Morrisons branches in Woking and Weybridge, as well St James Church in Weybridge.

Commenting on their support for Binti, Acting Chief Fire Officer, Dan Quin, stated: "We are delighted to be supporting Binti. As a Surrey-based charity with a global impact, they share our passion to support and protect those in need. I look forward to seeing the partnership develop, and hope that our communities will benefit from our planned work with Binti, as they have from the scheme established by our colleagues in Surrey County Council, and in particular Surrey Libraries."

Manjit K. Gill MBE, CEO and Founder of Binti commented, "We believe period products should be available like toilet paper is and Surrey County Council are leading the way to create this change. With the cost of living crisis impacting many the campaign has been designed to ensure everyone has free access. Surrey is having menstrual conversations every day and working with Surrey Fire and Rescue Service is so exciting because we think period stigma will become a thing of the past."

Binti was the first period charity registered in the UK, they have offices in India, US and The Gambia. They have now opened a period charity shop the first of its kind in Walton on Thames. Girls can buy period products and discuss all things related to menstruation. Binti's vision is to provide menstrual dignity to all girls, all over the world. This means facilitating access to pads to ensure menstrual health, educating girls about what menstruation is and what they can expect from it, and dispelling stigma, taboos, myths and negative perceptions around menstruation.

For more information on how to donate and collect and ways to get involved, visit Surrey County Council's Period Dignity webpage or the Binti website.

Surrey County Council news

Epsom and Ewell FC Top the Table

12 October 2022

Epsom & Ewell 2-0 Hailsham Town. Southern Combination League – Division One. Saturday 8th October 2022.

It was back to League action on Saturday following our midweek League Cup defeat, as **Hailsham Town** made the visit to Fetcham Grove for what was only our third home league match of the season and were defeated 2-0. Just like the two

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previous encounters at the Grove, the match was fairly comfortable for much of the time and extended our perfect league record there for the season. It wasn't the only winning sequence continued though, as this was our eighth straight League win and also our sixth straight win over the Stringers. More good news followed at the final whistle when Selsey's home defeat to Godalming Town confirmed that we went top of the table for the third time this season, and this time we will have the opportunity to stay there for a while.

If I'm honest though, this wasn't our greatest performance. The previous week we had dominated against East Preston, but this match was a lot tighter for much of the contest as we appeared to play for much of the ninety minutes in third gear, which ultimately proved to be enough this time.

We had a slight delay to the start of the match as the two Assistants were unable to get to the match following traffic issues on the way. As a result, two volunteers stepped in and it has to be said didn't appear to make any mistakes, which was more than could be said of the referee, of which more later! Incidentally, the last time we were an official short at a home match was just over ten years ago when John Bonner stepped in for a league match against Wembley in January 2012. John was actually present at this match, which probably brought back memories of that day at Merstham!

We made three changes from our previous outing. Firstly, we saw the return of Kane Charles between the posts in place of Matt Walton, while Steve Springett made his first start since his injury at Worthing United in place of the absent Aaron Bogle. Our third was our main threat on the day, Jaevon Dyer, who came in for Ricardo Fernandes and was the focal point of many of our attacks. He broke through on goal as early as the fourth minute before being pulled down by a defender from behind around 25 yards out in a central position. Now, I'm not entirely convinced that there was a lot of contact, but once the referee had decided it actually was a foul, surely a red card had to follow, but only a yellow was issued. Strange indeed!

We nearly made the visitors pay immediately as Ryan "Butch" Smith's free kick just cleared the bar, clipping the netting as it fell, it was that close. Hailsham responded with a couple of long range efforts before Conor Berwick had to make a fine close range save from Athan Smith-Joseph and he then punched clear a Smith corner as we continued to press.

However, in the 27th minute it was the visitors who almost opened the scoring as a good overlap on the right resulted in a deep cross and a header back across goal, where Kane Edwards sent a header off our bar and over for a goal kick from just six yards out. It was a lucky escape and we picked up the pace a little from that point and should have gone ahead ourselves. On the half hour mark Dyer beat two men again before unselfishly squaring the ball to Josh Owen, but he made a hash of it and ended up trying a back heel which was not even on target from a few yards out. We continued to press and Nick Wilson beat a couple of players before his shot was deflected into the path of Smith-Joseph who poked the ball wide.

A few minutes later Owen found Dyer in a good position and he twisted and turned before firing a shot just beyond the far post and then Smith tried his luck from twenty-five yards, which Berwick parried as far as Dyer who got a shot away before being clattered into by the keeper. It wasn't exactly Harald Schumacher at the 1982 World Cup (look it up kids) but it absolutely should have been a penalty, something that one of the Hailsham defenders openly admitted in conversation with people on the sidelines.

So the teams went in goalless, but it didn't stay that way for long as we were in front inside 120 seconds of the restart. Wilson played a nice pass to Owen in a central position; he then threaded the ball through to Dyer who finished clinically past Berwick from close range. He nearly scored again eight minutes later after beating two defenders before unleashing a shot that is best described by saying it hit Berwick and flew to safety, rather than him making the save. Either way, it stayed out and we then had another warning from our opposition as a free kick from twenty yards was struck fully against our crossbar with Charles beaten, and the ball flew off it to safety.

It was therefore a very good time to calm any nerves by scoring a second goal just a few minutes later. The 62nd minute to be exact and it started with a Smith-Joseph strike that was saved but not held, and the ball was fed back in again to our substitute Jubril "Jibs" Adamson whose close range shot was half saved by Berwick who had to then watch the ball dribble over his line. There was a little retribution here for Jibs, whose "goal" on Tuesday had been disallowed, despite crossing the line before being cleared. This one counted.

It should have been three-nil a minute later when Smith-Joseph roasted the full back on our left, but his low ball in was met by an air shot from Owen just three yards out. As it turned out, that would be the end of the scoring, but not the end of the controversy. Gavin Quintyne was robbed, clearly unfairly in the middle of the field and left in a heap while the attack continued. fortunately for us it came to nothing, but Quintyne made his view clear to the referee who then threatened to send our man to the sin-bin. As it was, he was about to be subbed off anyway, but it was a poor decision, regrettably it wouldn't be the last.

We added further subs in Josh Alder and Warren Colman while another, the increasingly versatile Fernandes slotted in at full back just three weeks after scoring two goals in an advanced role. Alder saw his shot deflected wide while Colman headed a deep Smith corner wide at the far post, but both players showcased our strength in depth and it certainly looked like we would be getting another goal shortly.

However, it didn't come and in the 90th minute things all went a bit strange. Firstly, a Hailsham striker got past Fernandes who then appeared to bring him down, clearly outside the penalty area, but he fell inside the box and the referee gave a penalty and booked our man. This was hugely frustrating, especially after we had been denied a clean sheet in injury time the previous week, but this time Charlie Playford's penalty wasn't a great one and Charles made a fairly easy save to preserve our clean sheet. However, this wasn't the end of it, as Fernandes wanted to continue his discussion with the referee who then waved a second yellow card in his direction to direct him to the sin-bin, only to then wave a red card at him moments later. It's obviously hard to know exactly what the referee actually sent him off for and indeed, we will probably only find out by the length of his suspension! As an aside, to ease any confusion and seeing as the "respect" rule appears to be here to stay, maybe it's time for a different colour of card to be issued if someone is sent to the sin-bin?

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Either way though, it was a fairly shoddy display from the man in the middle, who would have earned far more respect if he had got his decisions correct and consistent. Despite the irritations though, we held on and for what it's worth, I think 2-0 was a fair scoreline over the ninety minutes. Hailsham clearly should be higher than their current position, and I'm sure by next April they will be. Meanwhile, we are back at the top and if we can keep this winning run going, who knows what we could achieve on the field this season.

Epsom & Ewell: Kane Charles, Zach Powell, Steve Springett, Ryan 'Butch' Smith, Brad Peters (c), Gideon Acheampong, Nick Wilson, Gavin Quintyne, Jaevon Dyer, Athan Smith-Joseph, Josh Owen

Subs: Jubril "Jibs" Adamson for Dyer (60), Ricardo Fernandes for Springett (60), Josh Alder for Quintyne (70), Warren Colman for Smith-Joseph (75)

Report Source: www.eefconline.co.uk

Princess Anne's Epsom visit kept a bit secret

12 October 2022

Epsom and Ewell Times exclusive: 21st June 2022 **HRH The Princess Royal** entered the Borough of Epsom and Ewell. The Court Circular states: Her Royal Highness this afternoon opened the **First World War Centenary Woods'** "Regiment of Trees", Langley Vale Wood, Langley Vale Road, Epsom, and was received by Her Majesty's Lord-Lieutenant of Surrey (**Mr. Michael More-Molyneux**).

The **Epsom and Ewell Times** requested **The Woodland Trust** to explain activity at the Headley Road Car Park entrance that day. The owners of the Centenary Wood fell silent. Our investigation reveals that no "song-and-dance" has been made of the Royal event as the car park cannot open until electric vehicle charging points are working.

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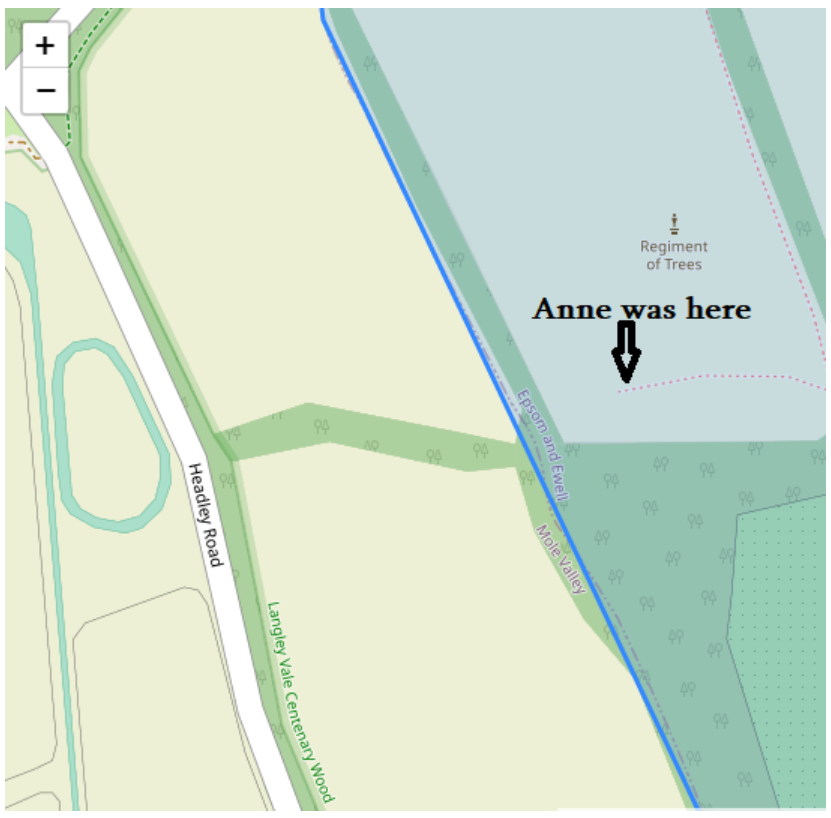

Map showing part of the Centenary Wood and where the Princess Royal was on 21st June 2022

As today's photos show, they are nearly ready but the car park remains closed. Walking is the best way to get to the Wood at the moment. The narrow country roads that surround the wood have no safe places to park.

Car Park closed during normal hours at the Centenary Wood

Line of electric vehicle charging points waiting for power.

The 650 acre Centenary Wood at Langley Vale is the English site of the four for the four nations of the United Kingdom. Epsom and Ewell is very privileged to have this extraordinary amenity at our doorstep.

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Ed: This story was ready to break just before Queen Elizabeth II died. Out of respect for the Royal Family we put a hold on publication until after the State Funeral. The car park remains closed as of today.

Can we be sustainable?

12 October 2022

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Sustainable Epsom and Ewell is an independent, apolitical and entirely volunteer led environmental group aiming to raise environmental ambitions in the Borough. Sustainable Epsom and Ewell was founded in late 2019.

As a group they organise events for local residents, have a website with useful local information and tips for residents, and take action with our Council. They also have a social media presence on Facebook and Instagram.

At Sustainable Epsom and Ewell they feel strongly about our local environment and want to share their resources and extensive local knowledge to get more residents involved and taking action. They have high ambitions for our Borough and believe the Council can and should take a greater lead and bolder actions to address, mitigate and adapt to the Climate and Environmental Crises.

Sustainable Epsom and Ewell and St Martin's Church
Eco Fair 2022

Over the past years they have organised several events including "**Green Friday**" to raise awareness about the excessive consumption culture promoted through Black Friday events, a Cycling themed debate where both Surrey and Local councillors spoke as well as committee members of the **Epsom and Ewell Cycle Action Group**.

However, their biggest events to date have been two **Eco Fairs**, organised in partnership with **St Martin of Tour's Church** in 2021 and 2022. The aims of the Eco Fair are threefold:

1) to highlight and showcase the groups active in our Borough as well as Council teams active in the environment fields,

2) to inspire local residents and groups to volunteer, take action and share experiences,

3) to highlight the strong proportion of residents keen to take personal action whilst encouraging the Council raise their green ambitions through action.

The 2022 fair included over 14 different groups, including Surrey Wildlife Trust, Epsom and Ewell Tree Advisory Group, the Lower Mole Partnership, Oxfam, the Epsom Repair Cafe, Dr Bike and the Epsom Civic Society as well as local green businesses.

Sustainable Epsom and Ewell and St Martin's Eco Fair 2022
MP Chris Grayling with the Sustainable Epsom and Ewell Team
Photo: Emma Ward

This year in addition to the many residents who attended, the Fair attracted a visit from MP **Chris Grayling** and Epsom and Ewell's Mayor **Clive Woodbridge**.

In the short-term future, they hope to continue to expand their reach to residents, campaign for real, ambitious and proactive Council measures in the environmental fields and provide opportunities for local groups and residents to meet and engage through events.

www.SustainableEpsomEwell.co.uk

Facebook/Instagram: @SustainableEpsomEwell

Surrey's Fire Service sends 4×4 to Ukraine

12 October 2022

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Two **Surrey Fire and Rescue Service** (SFRS) staff members set off to Poland yesterday (Thursday 6 October) to donate another 4×4 Land Rover to the **Ukrainian Fire and Rescue Service.**

This donation is part of the National Fire Chief Council and UK charity FIREAID's convoy 4. Convoy 3, which was delivered in May this year, also saw a donation of two 4×4 Land Rovers by SFRS.

The vehicles, which have been decommissioned by the service, are typically used for off-road/rural firefighting. The service has worked with its Fire Authority, Surrey County Council, to prepare and release the vehicle.

The two staff members who have volunteered, will meet other UK Fire and Rescue Services who are donating items, they'll then handover the vehicles in Poland next week.

Acting Chief Fire Officer, Dan Quin, said: "I am proud to be able to continue our support to the people of Ukraine during this incredibly difficult time. Thank you to all organisations who are supporting these efforts and to Chris, who also donated the equipment during the last convoy, and Lee from our Engineering team, who are supporting the delivery. Chris will be taking us on the journey over on our Instagram channel, so please do follow us so you can witness another historic effort from UK Fire and Rescue Services."

Cabinet Member for Communities and Community Safety (which includes Surrey Fire and Rescue Service), Denise Turner Stewart, said: "Surrey County Council's priority is to ensure no one is left behind and supporting yet another national convoy does just that. I am so pleased that we are able to support this national effort and we would like to sincerely thank all involved." Surrey County Council has a lot of information available on surreycc.gov.uk for communities who'd like to support, as well as guidance for Ukrainians coming to Surrey.

Surrey County Council News

"Blot on the landscape" – Ewell care home inked in

12 October 2022

A derelict site in Ewell is to become a 70-bed care home. The Organ Inn was known to any one of Epsom and Ewell driving to London. Situated prominently on the Ewell-By-Pass at the London Road junction. It last functioned as Jim Thompsons with Thai Cuisine and was also known as The Organ and Dragon. The building was demolished and the ground left derelict for years. Thursday 6th October Epsom and Ewell Borough Council's **Planning Committee** granted full permission for the construction of a 70-room retirement care home of four storeys and a basement. Councillor **Nigel Colin** (RA College Ward) described the site at present as "a blot on the landscape."

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The Organ Inn before demolition. Image courtesy Peter Reed Epsom and Ewell History Explorer. Top Image: The site viewed from Ewell Bypass.

There were two objections registered that were dismissed by the Councillors in the face of a strong application supported by planning officers. The construction of the home will contribute 38 units to the housing targets of the Borough of @ 579 per annum.

A Planning Need Assessment submitted by the applicant from **Carterwood**, a specialist in health and social care, indicated that there is a net need for 1279 en-suite wetroom bedrooms in the market catchment area (4 miles from the Application Site) and 540 in Epsom and Ewell. In terms of 'specialist dementia' care, the Assessment sets out that there is a net need for 529 en-suite wetroom beds in the market catchment area and a net need for 226 en-suite wetroom beds in Epsom and Ewell.

London Road care home plans. From design and access statement, credit: Simon Brown Architects

The Council officers reported that the developer applicant does not have experience in care-home provision. **Surrey County Council Adult Social Care** commented on the application: " While the Applicant is an organisation with no history of operating care homes itself, there is no reference to a care provider working in partnership with the organisation in the application. There is therefore very little indication of what type of care will be delivered on Site, whether the care home will operate with or without nursing care provision, and no description of exactly how the particular development would benefit local residents or the joint health and social care system. The application therefore suffers by comparison with others, which provide details of future operational plans. Having said this, regrettably, I cannot find anything in the local planning policies which requires clarity on who will operate any future care development, nor any requirement for an operator statement alongside other statements in the application."

Cllr **Alex Coley** (RA Ruxley Ward) questioned this inexperience and was advised by officers that the developer will contract with a specialist service provider.

Various conditions must be met by the developer, **65 London Road Limited**, a private company under the sole directorship of **Kirpal Singh**. A company that has declared over £3 million in net assets in its last and only accounts ending 31st March 2021 – in which it declared a trading loss of £2400.

The Council require the company to enter an agreement (known as a section 106) to contribute money to the improvement of bus infrastructure at both the A24 northside bus stop and A24 southside, including shelters and real time passenger information; a Push button controlled pedestrian crossing facilities on London Road and a 3-metre-wide footpath on both the London Road and Ewell Bypass frontages of the Application Site, to be dedicated as public highway.

HOBBLEDOWN NOBBLEDOWN?

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HOBBLEDOWN

This popular leisure destination for a family day out on Horton Lane Epsom had asked the Planning Committee for various permits. Installation of new restroom facilities, new boundary fencing and relocation of entrance gates, new play structures etc.

Tempers were tested somewhat when **Cllr Coley** stated a flood risk assessment was necessary before proceeding further. Planning officers disagreed. Cllr **Kate Chinn** (Lab Court Ward) suggested that if the contention had been raised before the meeting the public row could have been avoided. Cllr **Steven McCormick** (RA Woodcote) brought deliberations to an inconclusive end my proposing a deferment of all of Hobbledown's requests. A motion passed by all Councillors bar three.

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14 against 59 = 70? Dilemma for Headley

12 October 2022

Councillors have been warned to "be under no illusions" that a plan for 70 homes at Headley Court could be progressed as they rejected an application for 59 homes on the same site. A long history of applications on the green belt site is set to continue, with various parts of it currently under appeal and the district council's local plan currently under examination.

Mole Valley District Council's development management committee meeting on Wednesday (October 6) refused the application by **14 votes to zero**, with four abstentions, in line with the officers' recommendations. After outline permission was granted in December 2020 for up to 70 homes on the site, it could now see a previous application for 70 homes approved, after an appeal was lodged with government inspectors.

The site, former Ministry of Defence land, is located over the road from the NHS Seacole Centre, used as a temporary hospital during the coronavirus pandemic and as a temporary mortuary.

Developers warned during the meeting that if councillors rejected the scheme for 59 homes then the 70 home plan would go ahead if granted on appeal, despite having previously offered to take the larger plans off the table.
Tony Williamson, representing **Angle Property**, said: "Be under no illusion, if this application is refused tonight, and approval is granted by the planning inspectorate then the 70 unit scheme will be implemented and progressed. The concessions offered in this application will be lost. In that scenario, I'm sure the local residents will not be thanking this committee."

The previous application, deferred from a November 2021 meeting had been appealed by the developer for non-determination. Subsequently, a June meeting of the development management committee concluded it would have refused the application, had it not been sent to central government for a decision.

The latest refused plans included three two-bedroom, 28 three-bedroom, 17 four-bedroom and 11 five-bedroom homes, with eight of them being affordable. Officers described the housing mix as "unacceptable" because a three-bed home sold under shared ownership "would not prove attractive due to affordability issues". The district council's local plan, currently undergoing inspection at government level, identifies the Headley Court site as a whole for 120 homes.

There is still an appeal on the east part of the site for 14 senior living homes in the listed building there and redevelopment of the rest of the site for 100 new-build senior living homes. Headley Parish Councillor **Jane Pickard** said the said the village was at risk of doubling in size, and that the new plans had seen a shift away from smaller homes. She added: "We are prepared for a major increase in the size of our community, but want it to be done in a way which enhances rather than damages the semi rural character in the green belt."

Cllr **Tim Hall** said he knew of at least three planning applications around Headley Court and Headley road, "all of which have serious transport implications". He said: "This needs to be linked together. Because Headley Road, as has been said previously by the residents, is not a great highway. It's a rural Surrey lane, in the nicest possible way."

Will "Top Tory" Surrey County lobby Coffey?

12 October 2022

A council chief has called on select committee members to use their status as a "top Tory" authority to influence health spending at government level. Calling ambulances backed up outside hospitals "dangerous" and saying "we don't want old people on trolleys in corridors", one of the council's health directors said it would take everyone working together to

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get through the winter.

Surrey County Council's adults and health select committee heard on Wednesday (October 6) from representatives from Surrey Heartlands Integrated Care System (ICS), South East Coast Ambulance Service (SECAmb) and Frimley Health and Care ICS.

As the health organisations set out their plans for winter pressures, and commitment to working together to cope, members heard of current issues including Frimley Park hospital beds being nearly 100 per cent full most of the time and systems issues causing delays in ambulance handover times.

Liz Bruce, joint executive director for adult social care and integrated commissioning (Surrey County Council and Surrey Heartlands ICS), said she "absolutely agreed" that ambulances backed up outside hospitals was "high risk and dangerous to everybody else in the community". She said: "We don't want old people on trolleys in corridors, and therefore we're all in this together." She highlighted the importance of the "whole system" working together, saying improvements were "everybody's responsibility".

The director said: "What can this committee do to help us? A Conservative council, a top Tory council, you can help us by influencing government around funding nationally for hospital discharge and social care, and how we support sick people safely to go into hospital and come out again. Because we don't want to see elderly people go into long term care when they don't need to."

While the government had announced £500million for health care over the winter, she said it was not yet clear how it would be allocated or if it was "truly new money". Saying she expected the winter to be "extremely challenging", she added: "It's very obvious that we're going into significant and stark problems in our system for people in discharge. I've asked [my team] to build, very quickly, a business continuity plan around with winter discharge."

The meeting heard from **South East Coast Ambulance** and **Surrey Heartlands** representatives about what was being done to improve ambulance handover times. Moving towards electronic patient records, virtual wards and daily meetings were all hoped to help with delayed handovers which were made worse by sicker patients and "systems problems".

SECAmb's deputy director of operations **Mark Eley** said he was having to balance offering staff overtime, particularly in the current financial situation, with the risk they might "work too hard, wear themselves out" and go off sick. He said: "Staff are becoming very weary and worn from the last two years, so I'm not pushing too hard because as I increase my overtime, I can increase my sickness if I'm not careful."

The issues with Frimley Park hospital beds being full "almost all of the time" were also said to be caused by not being able to discharge patients who were well enough to go home.

County children home challenges

12 October 2022

The challenges facing Surrey County Council's bid for more children's homes include high property prices, competition for places and no priority for the authority for homes in the area. Officers outlined plans to nearly double the number of spaces available for Surrey children in the county at a meeting of the children, families, lifelong learning & culture select committee on Tuesday (October 4).

The meeting heard of the authority's aim to house 80 per cent of its looked after children within the county, a number that in July 2022 was just under 40 per cent. An officers' report showed that in July, 45 of the 118 children in children's homes placements were living in Surrey, but this did not include those in residential schools, parental assessment units and in "unregulated" placements.

If these groups were included, then the number was 49 of 147 children in Surrey at that time. Plans to increase the number of children staying in the county would mean increasing the number of beds available by an additional 45 just in children's homes, or 69 to include all residential provision types.

Currently there are 28 beds in nine children's homes that are run by Surrey County Council, following the closure of one in February within 24 hours of an Ofsted inspection which said residents were at risk "of significant harm".
There are also 26 beds available in six children's homes run by external providers, but not included in total figures are 12 registered beds in two specialist services solely for young people with sexually harmful behaviours.
Councillor Jonathan Essex (Green, Redhill East) asked if there was an option to bring more of the residential services in house at the council, highlighting costs in the report which showed the weekly cost of a placement in a council-run children's home ranging on average from £3,177 to £4,294. This was in comparison to an average weekly cost in July on the open market of £5,232 per week.

The meeting heard that running children's homes "wasn't easy" and that having other providers could mean more support for the authority. Meeting documents show that the council's intention would be to run the new homes in the first

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instance, but consideration would be given to working with “trusted and high-quality” external providers. Documents also showed that Surrey faced challenges with its location near to London, which contributed to “increased competition” for beds in children’s homes and some of the highest property prices in the country outside of London.

High costs of living made it hard for new providers to set up in the county which in turn meant “upward pressure to the cost of placements in Surrey”. The county council also does not have priority access to local homes in the area, and other local authorities can refer children to homes in the county in placements which may last for several years. There is also a need to increase the number of places available because of the number of children in “unlawful” placements in Surrey.

Unregulated placements are not subject to Ofsted inspections but the county council is responsible for quality assuring all unregulated provision where looked after children will be placed. As of September 12 2022, there were five Surrey children looked after by the county council and aged under 16 in “unlawful” placements, so called after a change to legislation in September 2021.

Tina Benjamin, the county council’s director – corporate parenting, said: “Unregulated, unlawful placements are not something we ever want to use and we try to do everything we can to avoid them. Unfortunately the national lack of placements sometimes means that we have to.” She said as well as looking for other placements for the children, the authority would work with providers to try to get their Ofsted registration.

Plans to re-purpose £18 million of capital funding to bring about the additional capacity will be brought to the council’s November cabinet meeting.

Thought for Food in Surrey

12 October 2022

The first Surrey Food Summit took place at the WWF Living Planet Centre in Woking last week. Surrey County Council organised the event to bring together stakeholders across the local food system, including farmers, local food businesses, food caterers and local food initiatives in Surrey to begin sharing different perspectives on challenges, including related health inequalities, in our food system and explore ideas for addressing them together.

The council is in the process of developing a food partnership and whole food system strategy to ensure it can provide nutritious, affordable, local and sustainably produced food for residents. The food summit is an opportunity to better understand the local food system, and to co-produce the whole-system food strategy. Recognising the current economic climate, the strategy aims to have an initial focus on addressing food poverty and sustainability challenges.

Those in attendance heard from a number of speakers during the event, including Emily O’Brien of Sustainable Food Places, Cllr Marisa Heath, SCC lead member for environment and CEO of Plant Food Alliance, and David Edwards, Director of Food Strategy at WWF. There was also an opportunity to engage in a food system mapping activity, to draw together our priority areas of action and build on existing work.

Carolyn McKenzie, Director of Environment and Project Sponsor for the food strategy said: “The food summit was an important event to bring together our key stakeholders and build a vision for a sustainable food system in Surrey.”

For further information please visit the Surrey Food Partnership – Healthy Surrey webpage or contact the food strategy leads at Surrey County Council – Jane Semo (Jane.Semo@surreycc.go.uk) or Negin Sarafraz-Shekary (SarafrazShekary.Negin@surreycc.gov.uk).

Surrey County Council news

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