EPSOM & EWELL TIMES
For the community, by the community. A not-for-profit service

19th November 2026

ISSN 2753-2771

Correction to our Epsom and Ewell Council reports

21 October 2024

We apologise unreservedly to Epsom and Ewell Borough Council's Chief Executive Officer Jackie King for an unintended publication of a report dated 26th September 2024 titled Challenges to Epsom and Ewell Council's Handling of Local Plan, reporting on the 24th September 2024 meeting of the Licensing, Planning and Policy Committee.

This report was overtaken by a report entitled Epsom Local Plan controversy heats up also reporting on the same meeting.

We attributed remarks to Jackie King even though she was not at the meeting. This part of the report has been repeated elsewhere on social media causing some concern in this sensitive area.

The first report was a draft that was intended to be discarded as it was clear that there was a muddle in interpreting the subtitles of the meeting. We do not usually report twice on the same meeting.

The report Challenges to Epsom and Ewell Council's Handling of Local Plan has now been unpublished.

Let us take this opportunity to appeal for new writers. You do not need a degree in English or Journalism. We can always reorganise the writing to a publishable standard. What we need is observers with time to provide us the facts of local matters. A Borough our size cannot sustain paid journalism. We rely on volunteers.

Fofahan makes FA fans as Epsom & Ewell progress in Vase

21 October 2024

Epsom and Ewell FC 3-1 Berks County. Isuzu F.A. Vase – First Round. Sunday 20th October 2024

Just 6 days before the 50 year anniversary of our very first F.A. Vase match against Reigate Priory, we played our 94th match in that competition against a new opponent in Berks County FC; a club formed as recently as 2009 and playing in the North Division of our League, and we were good value for our 3-1 win at a soggy KGF. For those interested, it was our 45th win in that time.

This result improved our recent form to just one loss in our last eleven matches and it is a shame that our club don't seem to be able to keep up with this off the field. They may claim this was a healthy looking attendance of 145 which, on the face of it, might seem ok for a Vase match, but when you bear in mind that there were only two other games at this or a higher standard anywhere in the Southern half of the country, we really missed an opportunity to pull in a crowd well over the 300 mark and it's really time that questions were asked about those people who are "running" our club, who appear uncaring or more worryingly oblivious to the opportunities they keep missing, instead believing that bringing in about fifteen of the Colts and a few of their parents each week is somehow sufficient to tick the "family club" box. Throw in a number of unanswered requests on the club Twitter site relating to whether there was going to be an inspection, which was a perfectly valid question following our postponement on Tuesday and you wonder whether our club really do care about your attendance at these matches. And in case anyone is wondering, yes, I have offered my services on many occasions.

There was only one person connected with the club who seemed to show a bit of energy and he was the chap on the tannoy system. Maybe he will even benefit the club, once he can actually get our own players names right!

The club held a minute's applause for supporter Peter Mitchell before the kick off. Whilst he may have been deserving of a

© 2021-2026. No content may be copied without the permission of Epsom and Ewell Times Ltd. Registered office: Upper Chambers, 7 Waterloo Road, Epsom KT19 8AY

ISSN 2753-2771

minute's recognition as he was a fairly loyal supporter over the two and a half seasons he was following us, I see no reason whatsoever for any supporters or club officials to receive this fairly recent fad of a minute's applause. In my opinion, a minute's silence should be sufficient, with applause given only to former players and maybe some Managers. Having said that, our club never even bothered to hold a minute's acknowledgement of any kind for recently passed strikers Gerry O'Rourke and Ben Forey, the latter of whom even sits on our goal scoring Hall of Fame, so it will be interesting to see what happens next time one of these tributes is required at an Epsom match.

We made four changes from our recent 2-2 draw against Fleet Town. Ethan Brazier was fit again and resumed at right back in place of the absent Niall Stillwell, while David Romer came in for Callum Wilson who had suffered a small injury issue at Thursday's training session. Faebian Witter came in between the posts ahead of Dan O'Donovan, while further forward we had a debut for Kailan North who had recent spells with Colliers Wood United and Banstead Athletic. He came in for the cup-tied Jason Bloor, who had made an appearance for Langley earlier in the competition.

As the pre-match rain eased, it became apparent that the match was not starting on time. For those who were wondering why this was, as the club chose not to advise the reason, it was due to the late arrival of the visiting keeper, Harvey Rackley-Hayes. I'm not entirely sure why this delay was allowed for just one missing player, but either way we kicked off twenty minutes after the original start time in conditions that were far better than originally expected due to the virtual non-arrival in our area of Storm Ashley.

We had an early opportunity when Kionte Gillfillian-Waul sent in a good ball, but it zipped across the wet turf and Carl Oblitey couldn't quite reach it. Then in the 17th minute we probably should have taken the lead when a free kick was half cleared to Ethan Nelson-Roberts and whilst his shot was deflected for a corner, Adam Green's delivery into the danger area looked like it would be met by Anthony Nazareth, but he missed his header from close range, only for the ball to fall back to him just six yards out at an angle, from where he sent his shot over the bar.

The visitors volleyed a corner wide at the near post, but we were back on the attack soon after and a deep Fofahan cross resulted in a drop from Rackley-Hayes, but as the loose ball was drilled into the net by Nelson-Roberts, the whistle blew as the referee felt that the County keeper had been fouled. It was a soft one for sure, but in the 26th minute we went ahead anyway after a poor back pass from Will Edwards was intercepted by Fofahan and he drew the keeper before slotting the ball between his legs and into the net from just inside the penalty area.

However, within two minutes of making the breakthrough, the visitors drew level as a deep right wing cross was met at the far post with a header back across Witter from George Gould. Our keeper got a hand to the ball but couldn't keep it out.

Fofahan was giving the Berks County defenders a lot of trouble and he had a speculative effort from 25 yards that went wide, but in the 36th minute he struck the inside of Rackley-Hayes' left hand post from fifteen yards with the ball skewing across the goal and spinning out for a goal kick! Fofahan really should have scored here after he had broken through, but instead we went in at the break with the scores level.

I felt we had shaded the first half, but at 1-1, there was also the potential for a fifth straight 2-2 draw that no one would have wanted, as it would have meant that the tie would be decided on penalties instead! We then had an early scare in the second half as Brazier and Witter got in each other's way while trying to effect a clearance, but we just about got away with it and went back in front for the second time in the 55th minute after Brazier made tracks down the right, before cutting back and delivering a decent cross that Oblitey attacked. His header struck a defender but rebounded into his path and he drilled the ball low into the corner from just seven yards out, giving Rackley-Hayes no chance.

Fofahan forced a good save from a narrow angle by Rackley-Hayes before we had to reshuffle the pack after Gillfillian-Waul was replaced by Luke Miller with Fofahan moving to the left wing instead. This was our first substitution of the day, but by the end of the match all four of our starting defenders would be off the field! Romer would be one of those, but before he departed, he capped a fine performance with a run on the left wing and a low delivery in for Green to strike at goal, but Rackley-Hayes made a superb save with his right boot to keep the close range shot out.

Witter picked up a yellow card for time-wasting but in the 79th minute Gould went in high on Romer and received a straight red card for his challenge, which also caused the obligatory sixteen man scuffle! Toby Young came on in relief of Romer after his own spell out with injury and we made the game safe in the 86th minute with a great move down the right where Oblitey collected the ball and sent it square to the supporting Craig Dundas, but he cleverly dummied the ball which sold the defender completely and left Fofahan through on goal, although he still cut back to beat someone before drilling the ball low past Rackley-Hayes from 12 yards to make it 3-1 to the Salts.

There were more chances as the ten men tried to get back into the game, but we were picking them off and a clever pass put Fofahan through, although he chose to pass instead of shooting from eight yards and it came to nothing. I don't think anyone in the ground would have blamed our winger if he had tried to get his hat trick, but it was a selfless decision and he almost turned provider again in the fourth minute of injury time when his deep delivery from the left wing was headed in by Green from six yards, only for the offside flag to be raised against him.

Still, by the end of the match we were fairly comfortable winners and whilst we will see Berks County again in the League Cup in January, we now look forward to an appearance in the Second Round, or last 128, for the first time since 2017/18 when we were edged out 3-2 after extra time at Whitstable Town. The draw comes out around Monday lunchtime and there are some very good teams left in the draw that would be nice to avoid; Jersey Bulls, AFC Whyteleafe and Fleet Town amongst them, and I haven't even mentioned the top teams in Sussex and Kent yet (including Whitstable again!). But this is a competition in which we have a prominent history, so it's just great to still be involved in it, fifty years after that very first amazing run.

Epsom & Ewell: Faebian Witter, Ethan Brazier, Kionte Gillfillian-Waul, Adam Green (c), David Romer, Anthony Nazareth, Ali Fofahan, Craig Dundas, Carl Oblitey, Kailan North, Ethan Nelson-Roberts

Subs: Luke Miller for Gillfillian-Waul (59), Conrad Essilfie-Conduah for Nazareth (64), Toby Young for Romer (84), Luke

© 2021-2026. No content may be copied without the permission of Epsom and Ewell Times Ltd. Registered office: Upper Chambers, 7 Waterloo Road, Epsom KT19 8AY

EPSOM & EWELL TIMES
For the community, by the community. A not-for-profit service

19th November 2026

ISSN 2753-2771

Taylor for Brazier (91)

Report Source: www.eefconline.co.uk

Epsom & Ewell’s Green Belt controversy tightens

21 October 2024







Tensions flared during a heated meeting of the Licensing and Planning Policy Committee (LPPC) in Epsom on October 17th, 2024, as residents voiced strong objections to the proposed housing targets and the perceived threat to the borough’s Green Belt. The meeting was marked by a series of public statements and a notable exchange between committee members and the public, revealing deep-rooted concerns about the future of Epsom’s green spaces and the transparency of the council’s planning processes.

Government’s Revised Housing Targets and NPPF Changes

At the heart of the controversy is the government’s proposed revision of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), which includes significantly higher housing targets for local councils and reduced protections for Green Belt land. Epsom and Ewell face mandatory targets of 817 dwellings per annum—more than four times the current requirement of 181 dwellings per year as stipulated by the borough’s Core Strategy 2007.

Janice Baker, a resident who spoke at the meeting, expressed her dismay at the scale of the new housing targets, equating the requirement to building “50 football pitches of Green Belt land every year.” She warned that such development would irreversibly alter the borough, leading to increased traffic, overwhelmed public services, and environmental degradation. Baker urged the council to take swift action: “There are only a couple of weeks left for you to avert this disaster… the window of time is still there. It is in your hands.”

Public Frustration with Council Process

Several residents, including **Adrian Jones**, raised concerns over what they perceived as a lack of transparency and accountability in the council’s planning processes. Jones, in a pointed exchange with the committee, highlighted the delays in receiving responses to his queries about the local plan and questioned whether these were deliberate attempts to impede public participation. “Is this deliberate to stop me preparing or just a mistake?” Jones asked. His concerns were met with a promise from Councillor O’Donovan to investigate the delay, but the tension in the room was palpable.

Samantha Bentall, who was denied the opportunity to speak at the meeting, had her written statement rejected by the committee chair on the grounds that it was deemed “defamatory, offensive, vexatious or frivolous.” In an email exchange with the council, Bentall pressed for clarification on which elements of her statement were objectionable but received no detailed explanation. She accused the council of “gagging residents” and in a letter to the Epsom and Ewell Times, called for her concerns to be published, stating that they were in the public interest.

Epsom Green Belt Group’s Alternative Proposal

Adding to the public discourse, the **Epsom Green Belt Group** presented an alternative housing proposal that seeks to meet the borough’s housing needs without encroaching on Green Belt land. In a letter addressed to the council’s CEO, **Jackie King**, and leader of the Residents Association, **Hannah Dalton**, the group outlined a plan to focus development on brownfield sites and previously developed land (PDL), such as West Park Hospital and Hollywood Lodge.

The group argues that the borough’s housing requirement—calculated as 3,840 dwellings over the plan period—can be met entirely on brownfield and PDL land, avoiding the need to release Green Belt land for development. Their proposal includes detailed site-by-site figures, with 4,199 housing units proposed across various brownfield sites, of which 1,105 would be affordable or social housing.

“We hope that you can look on our proposals favourably,” the letter reads, “and utilise the suggestions to update the Local Plan then publish it for consultation as soon as possible to ensure it is submitted for examination in early January 2025.” The group also highlighted the public’s overwhelming opposition to Green Belt development, citing the 87% of respondents to the Regulation 18 consultation who rejected the idea.

Council’s Response and Timetable

Councillor **O’Donovan**, (RA Ewell Court) chair of the LPPC, acknowledged the public’s concerns but stressed that the council is constrained by legal requirements and external factors in the development of the Local Plan. In response to a question from Adrian Jones about the council’s timetable for submitting the Local Plan, O’Donovan explained that while the council is working towards a May 2025 submission, the timetable is dependent on the completion of external

© 2021-2026. No content may be copied without the permission of Epsom and Ewell Times Ltd. Registered office: Upper Chambers, 7 Waterloo Road, Epsom KT19 8AY

ISSN 2753-2771

workstreams and the processing of public consultation responses.

“The timetable for progressing the local plan is as set out in our Local Development Scheme,” O’Donovan said, noting that public consultation on the Pre-Submission Local Plan is expected to begin in January 2025. He also reassured residents that the council is exploring ways to expedite the process but emphasised the importance of having a robust evidence base to avoid future challenges to the plan.

However, many residents remain unconvinced by the council’s assurances. **Mark Todd**, chair of the local Labour Party, expressed his support for the Epsom Green Belt Group’s proposals and urged the council to prioritise the protection of green spaces while delivering the housing the borough needs. “Local people want housing and green spaces,” Todd said. “I commend the local Epsom Green Belt group’s drive to engage with local politicians and highlight all the options available.”

The Next Steps and the Community’s Expectations

The clock is ticking for the council to submit its Local Plan before the anticipated changes to the NPPF come into effect in January 2025. Failure to do so could mean that Epsom and Ewell will be forced to meet the higher housing targets, putting vast swathes of Green Belt land at risk.

Nathan Chan and **Casper Grunwald**, two Year 8 students, delivered a poignant joint statement, reminding the council of its responsibility to future generations. “This is your past, our present, and many generations to come’s future,” Chan said. “Do you want to be remembered as the people who saved Epsom, or the people who ruined our Green Belt?”

The council now faces the challenging task of balancing the need for new housing with the community’s desire to protect its cherished green spaces. As the debate over the Local Plan intensifies, one thing is clear: the eyes of Epsom’s residents are firmly fixed on the council, and they expect nothing less than a transparent and equitable solution to the borough’s housing crisis.

Conclusion

As the Local Plan moves towards its final stages, the council must navigate a complex web of legal obligations, public opinion, and environmental considerations. The decisions made in the coming months will have a lasting impact on the character of Epsom and Ewell, and the council’s leadership will need to ensure that all voices are heard and that the best possible outcome is achieved for the community.

In the words of Nathan Chan: “This is your past, our present, and many generations to come’s future.” How the council responds to this challenge will determine whether Epsom’s green spaces will be preserved for those future generations or lost to the demands of urban expansion.

Related reports:

Epsom Local Plan controversy heats up

Challenges to Epsom and Ewell Council’s Handling of Local Plan

Time to press the gas on Epsom’s Local Plan?

and many many more. Search “local plan”.

Epsom & Ewell Council Greenlights Local Projects

21 October 2024



Epsom and Ewell Borough Council’s Licensing and Planning Policy Committee has given its provisional backing to over £2 million in Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) funding for a variety of local projects, following the council’s annual funding round. The funding round, which ran between 7 May and 18 June 2024, saw a total of 28 bids submitted—five for strategic CIL funding and 23 for neighbourhood CIL funding.

Community Infrastructure funding derives from money provided to the Council by developers.

In a significant outcome, three strategic CIL bids, totalling £1.755 million, were recommended for approval. These include £1.25 million for public realm enhancements in Ewell Village, £405,000 for a full-size 3G football pitch at Priest Hill, and £100,000 for a new clubhouse at Old Schools Lane, Ewell. However, bids for Epsom Playhouse lighting replacement and increasing capacity at local GP surgeries were not successful. The latter was deemed “desirable” rather than “essential,” with other bids seen as higher priorities.

In terms of neighbourhood projects, six bids, amounting to £331,966, received backing. These include £85,000 for a new

© 2021-2026. No content may be copied without the permission of Epsom and Ewell Times Ltd. Registered office: Upper Chambers, 7 Waterloo Road, Epsom KT19 8AY

ISSN 2753-2771

community building at Glyn Hall and £78,644 for footpath improvements at the Hogsmill Local Nature Reserve. Other successful bids include upgrades to playgrounds at Bourne Hall, Gateley Green, and Gibraltar, as well as street tree planting on Waterloo Road.

Despite the committee's overall approval, 17 neighbourhood bids did not make the cut, with reasons ranging from failing initial assessments to not scoring highly enough in evaluations. This includes several bids that did not meet the "best value" criteria set out in the council's CIL Spending Protocol.

A key moment in the meeting came when Liberal Democrat Councillor **Julie Morris** (College Ward) successfully proposed an amendment to include the **Nam Yang Martial Arts** project for funding, which had initially been overlooked. Her proposal, seconded by Councillor **Phil Neale** (RA Cuddington), was passed by a majority, ensuring that the martial arts project will be considered for £161,250 in funding by the Strategy and Resources Committee.

The council's decisions on the CIL funding allocations will now be subject to final approval by the Strategy and Resources Committee, as required by the Council's financial regulations.

Image Nam Yang Martial Arts Epsom figure courtesy https://martialartsepsom.com/

Verdi's Requiem adapted for Epsom Church

21 October 2024



Epsom Choral Society (ECS) will perform the Verdi Requiem on Saturday 23rd November at 7:30pm, at St Martin's Church in Epsom. This concert promises to be a remarkable event, showcasing a special arrangement of Verdi's grand work with chamber ensemble by Michael Betzner-Brandt.

Celebrating over a century of musical excellence, ECS has been delivering exceptional performances to its audiences to mark its centenary in 2022. The choir has programmed a series of exciting and diverse concerts over the past two years, including a gala performance of Handel's Messiah and a spectacular rendition of Walton's Belshazzar's Feast at London's Cadogan Hall.

There are four outstanding international soloists:
Elizabeth Findon – soprano
Judy Louie Brown – mezzo
John Findon – tenor
Mark Nathan – baritone

The concert will be conducted by ECS Music Director, Julian Collings.

This November, ECS invites its loyal followers to experience Verdi's Requiem like never before. The arrangement by Michael Betzner-Brandt is designed specifically for a chamber ensemble, allowing the choir to bring the grandeur and emotional depth of Verdi's masterpiece to a more intimate setting while still capturing the essence and intensity of the original composition.

"Our aim is to create an unforgettable musical experience for our audience," said Nina Kaye, publicity manager. "The Verdi Requiem is one of the most powerful works in the choral repertoire, and this unique arrangement allows us to perform it in St Martin's Church in Epsom."

Tickets for this not-to-be-missed event are priced at £20, with a special half-price offer for under-25s and can be bought online www.epsomchoral.org.uk. Attendees are encouraged to book early to avoid disappointment, as this concert is expected to attract a large audience.

Join Epsom Choral Society on Saturday, 23rd November at 7:30pm at St Martin's Church in Epsom for an evening of stirring music, passion, and community. Experience Verdi's Requiem in a new light, and be a part of the rich musical heritage that ECS continues to build in Epsom and beyond.

For more information and to purchase tickets, please visit www.epsomchoral.org.uk.

County pledge to Epsom charity's fight to end

© 2021-2026. No content may be copied without the permission of Epsom and Ewell Times Ltd. Registered office: Upper Chambers, 7 Waterloo Road, Epsom KT19 8AY

EPSOM & EWELL TIMES
For the community, by the community. A not-for-profit service

19th November 2026

ISSN 2753-2771

poverty

21 October 2024



In a significant move for the region, Surrey County Council (SCC) has signed Good Company's End Poverty Pledge, marking a bold step towards addressing the growing issue of poverty across the county. The pledge, which was approved on 8th October, coincides with the United Nations' International Day for the Eradication of Poverty. This year's theme of "acting together" underscores SCC's commitment to creating fairer and more inclusive communities.

Councillor Mark Nuti, SCC's Cabinet Member for Health and Wellbeing, signed the pledge on behalf of the council. In doing so, SCC committed to developing a comprehensive, community-led Poverty Action Plan, working in collaboration with partners across the region. Councillor Nuti emphasised the urgent need to support both those already struggling to make ends meet and those at risk of falling into hardship.

"In signing the pledge, we are not only committing to support people who can't afford basic essentials like food and heating, but we are also standing with those who are on the brink of financial hardship. Poverty has a devastating effect on health and wellbeing, and the consequences ripple out into greater demand on public services," said Nuti. He highlighted the council's commitment to targeting welfare support where it's most needed and using its influence as a major organisation to "buy local," improve job opportunities, and advocate for essential changes to the benefit system.

This pledge is supported by the local charity Good Company, based in Epsom, and its East Surrey Poverty Truth Commission (ESPTC), a group working closely with individuals who have lived experience of poverty. Jonathan Lees, Founder and Managing Director of Good Company, hailed the pledge as a major step forward in the fight against poverty.

"Surrey is one of the wealthiest counties in the UK, yet we see people in our foodbank centres and pantries struggling daily to afford food and energy. Signing this pledge is an important move by SCC, and we hope that many more local organisations and individuals will join us in this fight. We can't tackle poverty alone—but together, we can make a difference," Lees stated.

SCC's Ongoing Efforts to Combat Poverty

This winter, SCC's health and welfare hub will serve as a crucial resource for those affected by rising living costs. It will provide information on Warm Welcomes and the Energy Advice Tool, grants for energy-efficient homes, and local foodbank locations. Last year, SCC's Warm Welcome venues saw 46,000 visitors, and 86,000 residents benefited from the Household Support Fund, which distributed much-needed assistance to those in financial crisis. This year, the council's Fuel Poverty programme has attracted nearly £1 million in funding, aimed at helping residents in or at risk of fuel debt.

Councillor Nuti acknowledged the strides made to help those in need but recognised the work ahead: "We'll continue to learn from those with first-hand experience of poverty, ensuring that our services respond more effectively in the future."

The Work of the East Surrey Poverty Truth Commission

The Good Company's East Surrey Poverty Truth Commission (ESPTC) has played a pivotal role in shaping the county's approach to poverty. Launched in 2019, the ESPTC brings together individuals with lived experience of poverty and senior representatives from civic and business sectors to work collaboratively towards solutions. The Commission has helped raise awareness of poverty's root causes, and its efforts have led to tangible changes in local services.

For example, after hearing first-hand accounts from residents, a local housing association shifted its approach to customer care, ensuring that tenants struggling with rent payments are treated with compassion. The ESPTC also initiated a laptop recycling project, addressing digital exclusion by providing over 360 laptops to students from low-income families.

As Good Company embarks on the second phase of the ESPTC, its focus remains on building relationships and addressing key issues identified by Community Commissioners. The charity is committed to amplifying the voices of those affected by poverty, ensuring they are central to decisions on how to tackle it.

Upcoming Event: East Surrey Poverty Truth Commission Celebration

On Wednesday, 27th November, Good Company will be hosting a special event to celebrate the work of the East Surrey Poverty Truth Commission over the past 18 months. The event, which will take place at Bourne Hall in Ewell from 11am to 1:30pm, will showcase the transformational journey of the Commission's members and explore the exciting ideas and plans for future change.

This celebration is a chance for the community to come together and hear about the Commission's work to create long-term solutions to poverty in East Surrey. Tickets are free, and all are welcome to register online.

With Surrey County Council's pledge and the continued work of Good Company, there is renewed hope for a future where

© 2021-2026. No content may be copied without the permission of Epsom and Ewell Times Ltd. Registered office: Upper Chambers, 7 Waterloo Road, Epsom KT19 8AY

ISSN 2753-2771

poverty is no longer an invisible problem, but one actively tackled by local communities, organisations, and government alike.

For more information and to register for the event, visit the Good Company's Eventbrite page.

Image: Mart Production

Mole Valley 'won't bend' to petitioners

21 October 2024



The fight to protect the green gateway into a Leatherhead goes on after campaigners seeking to stop a popular park from being turned into high rises were told the council would not "bend the knee" to their petition.

Mole Valley District Council heard from residents representing the 1,500 people who joined the call to stop the "unnecessary" development at Leatherhead 's Red House Park by Bull Hill.

They argued the open space could be saved if the council instead redeveloped the raft of empty offices or unused industrial estates in the town.

The petition, discussed at the Tuesday, October 15 full meeting of Mole Valley District Council read: "This park is used by many people and also home to lots of wildlife and historical trees.

"The plans are to build high rise flats and apartments which would look unsightly. The town has barely enough space in schools, and doctors and dentists have waiting lists so understandably very concerning for local residents."

The plan, part of Transform Leatherhead, seeks to redevelop the land within the existing one-way system known as Bull Hill, including the Red House Gardens.

The council and its development partner Kier say this is to complement the retail and leisure quarters of the town.

Bull Hill is currently made up of office space, public car parks and open space.

It was originally earmarked for retail but after work to the Swan Centre and transport studies, as well as the trend away from high street shopping, the decision was made to go for a mixed development.

In October 2023 the council and Kier Property signed the legal agreements and the joint venture is now working to develop the project.

Presenting the petition, the speaker said: "If we destroy everything that makes Leathehead a destination in favour of becoming a carbon copy of London then people will leave."

Campaigners pressed for the use of alternative sites and said there was 140,000 square metres of empty office space in Leatherhead – enough for 190 two-bed family homes.

However this was quickly shot down as they were told the council was powerless to force private landowners to hand over vacant properties -and were restricted to sites identified in its local plan.

Instead they want the campaigners to work with the council to make the site the best it can be for the town – while understanding the council needs to build on the land to hit its housing targets.

Cabinet member Councillor Keira Vyvyan-Robinson (Liberal Democrat; Leatherhead North) praised the strength of feeling but said the council can only put forward sites their owners put forward for development.

She said the new local plan has put in restrictions and that developments with high rise buildings have to prove their worth, and that play and open spaces must be provided.

The council also expected the redevelopment to increase biodiversity in the town by at least 20 per cent.

Cllr Vyvyan-Robinson told the meeting she hoped residents would continue to be involved in the process as the plans continued to be revised.

Cllr Ben Wall (Liberal Democrat; Leatherhead North) dismissed fears the project would turn the town into the next Woking or Croydon. He said: "The tallest building in Croydon is 150metres tall, you can see that for miles, we're suggestion a building that's maximum 20m, you are not going to see it from Leatherhead North.

He added: "We've been talking about this for the best part of a decade, we've had countless opportunities for residents to talk to us. We are listening. Listening is not the same things as bending the knee entirely to a petition. We will listen to a petition, it doesn't mean we have to come to the same conclusion as a petition.

© 2021-2026. No content may be copied without the permission of Epsom and Ewell Times Ltd. Registered office: Upper Chambers, 7 Waterloo Road, Epsom KT19 8AY

ISSN 2753-2771

"Leatherhead has suffered from a chronic lack of investment for decades it's not the time to start throwing out multimillion investment and investment opportunities without fully assessing their potential benefits.

"I'm cautiously optimistic that these proposals incorporating public feedback can be successful.

"I'm not saying that we will come to a perfect solution but we can not let perfect be the enemy of good."

Cabinet member Cllr Claire Malcolmson (Liberal Democrat; Holmwoods and Beare Green) added: " We are listening these are not the final designs."

Nescot proud to sign the Armed Forces Covenant

21 October 2024



North East Surrey College of Technology (Nescot) is proud to have officially signed the Armed Forces Covenant at a special event at the college today (16 October). The Covenant is a formal commitment to those who serve and have served that they will be treated with fairness and respect, and a recognition of the valuable attributes they bring to the workplace.

The Armed Forces Covenant (AFC) was signed at the event by Julie Kapsalis, Principal and CEO of Nescot and Brigadier Ben Banerjee KHS QVRM DL VR, Head Army Medical Services Reserve, Army HQ.

By signing the AFC, Nescot has pledged to uphold its key principles and to recognise the critical contribution that the Armed Forces community make to our country.

Nescot has already been awarded the Bronze ERS Award for the college's commitment to the Armed Forces.

Julie Kapsalis, Principal and CEO of Nescot said, "Nescot is extremely proud to sign the Armed Forces Covenant and pledge to continue to show our support for the Armed Forces community, both as an education and training provider and as an employer.

"Indeed, Nescot's first Principal, Colonel Thomas Buchanan was a decorated army veteran of 'legendary coolness and bravery'. He was admired for his compassion, foresight, leadership and encouragement. In 1964 he became Deputy Lieutenant for Surrey, and was appointed an OBE for services to education in 1970. I am very proud to stand in his shoes today and to do something that I believe he would have been proud of and that continues his legacy."

Julie Kapsalis added, "We continue to have a unique role as an educational institution in providing opportunities for members of the Armed Forces to further their education and enhance their career prospects. We are also committed to being an Armed Forces friendly employer. We recognise the unique skills and experiences that members of the Armed Forces bring to our community. Their leadership, discipline, and resilience enrich our campus culture and provide valuable perspectives that benefit all students."

The event at the college included a flag raising ceremony by students representing our Public Services cohort, Leo, Skye and Poppy.

Leo, a student on our Level 3 Public Services programme said, "It's an honour to be part of the Covenant signing event today. I am interested in a military career and it's great that we get a chance to have visits and opportunities to interact with the Armed Forces here at Nescot."

Through our Public Services courses, our students are offered regular engagement opportunities with the Armed Forces as part of their training and also take part in the annual Poppy Appeal with the Royal British Legion.

Earlier in the day, our Public Services students benefitted from inspirational talks in the college's theatre from Brigadier Banerjee, Head Army Medical Services Reserve who spoke to them about some of the amazing experiences from his career, and from Ben Trevan from Nescot's Foundation Learning team and British Army Reservist with The Royal Regiment of Fusiliers.

Ben Trevan spoke to the students about his role as a Learning Support Assistant at the college and as a Reservist. He said, "I have been a Reservist for two years now. Although the role can be challenging, it offers a great sense of camaraderie. I have been able to use my transferrable skills from both, teaching and my role as a Reservist. More importantly, I am able to fit my Reservist role around my teaching job. I am very grateful and thankful to my employer, Nescot for their support with respecting my commitments and allowing me the time to train. The signing of the Armed Forces Covenant reiterates the fact that I'm supported both by the Army and Nescot, which are both a part of my daily life."

Invitees at the event also had opportunities for networking and were invited to tour Nescot's facilities including the college's cutting edge immersive learning spaces.

© 2021-2026. No content may be copied without the permission of Epsom and Ewell Times Ltd. Registered office: Upper Chambers, 7 Waterloo Road, Epsom KT19 8AY

ISSN 2753-2771

The event which was held at the college's Skills Park was also attended by representatives from the Armed Forces community and local organisations from: Reserve Forces' and Cadets' Association for Greater London (GL RFCA); 135 Geographic Squadron; Epsom & Ewell Royal British Legion; Royal Navy; Epsom & Ewell Borough Council; Combat Stress, Nescot staff and students.

More information about the covenant, including how organisations can help support the forces community, is available on the Armed Forces Covenant website.

Related report:

Surrey Scouts honour Armed Forces Covenant

Image: Julie Kapsalis, Principal and CEO, Nescot and Brigadier Ben Banerjee, Head Army Medical Reserve, Army HQ, sign the Armed Forces Covenant at Nescot.

Epsom and Ewell adopts new Climate Action Plan

21 October 2024



Tuesday 15th October Epsom and Ewell Borough Council's Environment Committee approved a new five year Climate Action Plan (2025-2029).

The Plan outlines a comprehensive strategy to meet the Council's commitment to becoming carbon neutral by 2035. This second five-year plan builds upon the first Climate Change Action Plan, which ends in 2024, and introduces 52 key objectives across six main themes, aiming to reduce the Council's own carbon footprint and address Borough-wide emissions. The Plan also reflects input from cross-party groups and officers involved in climate change and biodiversity efforts.

The six themes include:

1. Council Leadership and Influencing Others: Focused on policy development, leadership, and collaboration with external partners to influence carbon reduction across the Borough.
2. Council Buildings and Energy Use: Aimed at reducing energy consumption in council-owned buildings and exploring renewable energy options such as solar panels and energy-efficient systems.
3. Transport: The plan includes strategies to reduce emissions from the Council's fleet and encourage electric vehicle infrastructure in public car parks and on streets.
4. Environmental Improvements: Objectives include increasing biodiversity, promoting local food production, and ensuring sustainable land management practices.
5. Waste Management: Targeting reductions in waste production and improving recycling rates across the Borough.
6. Technology and Information Systems: Leveraging data and new technologies to track carbon impacts and implement climate-smart solutions.

The plan incorporates specific performance indicators, financial costs, and the projected carbon impact for each objective, ensuring transparent monitoring of progress. Key initiatives include transitioning to a green fleet, enhancing energy efficiency in public buildings, supporting local energy projects, and promoting biodiversity and sustainable transport options. The plan stresses the importance of partnerships, particularly with Surrey County Council, to foster local and regional collaboration on environmental sustainability .

Here is a summary of ten interesting objectives from the 52 listed in the Climate Action Plan:

Local Plan Development: Integrate climate change mitigation and adaptation into the Local Plan, focusing on low carbon design, energy-efficient buildings, sustainable transport, and environmental impact minimisation .

Green Procurement: Revise procurement policies to prioritise low-carbon products and services, thereby reducing the Council's total carbon footprint from supply chains .

Supplier Engagement: Identify the Council's most carbon-intensive suppliers and collaborate with them to reduce their emissions .

Energy Efficiency in Private Rentals: Support compliance with Minimum Energy Efficiency Standards (MEES) in private rental properties, ensuring properties achieve an Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) rating of E or above .

Green Skills Development: Work with Surrey County Council to promote green careers and skills development,

© 2021-2026. No content may be copied without the permission of Epsom and Ewell Times Ltd. Registered office: Upper Chambers, 7 Waterloo Road, Epsom KT19 8AY

ISSN 2753-2771

particularly in the areas of construction and retrofitting, to meet future workforce needs .

Tree Planting: Implement the Council's Tree Management Plan to increase tree cover in the borough, enhancing biodiversity and contributing to carbon sequestration .

Sustainable Energy Production: Explore options for larger-scale sustainable energy projects on Council-owned land, such as solar farms .

LED Lighting Replacement: Replace traditional lighting at Council assets, like Epsom Playhouse and Bourne Hall, with energy-efficient LED lighting .

Solar Energy Feasibility: Investigate the potential for installing solar panels, solar storage, and solar carports on Council-operated assets and land .

Government Funding for Green Projects: Actively pursue government and external funding opportunities for energy efficiency and decarbonisation projects across Council buildings .

These objectives exemplify the Council's comprehensive approach to addressing climate change, focusing on reducing carbon emissions, enhancing energy efficiency, and fostering community engagement in sustainability efforts.

Epsom's homelessness crisis

21 October 2024



Finding temporary accommodation for families at risk of homelessness is the "biggest financial pressure" facing Epsom and Ewell.

Following Epsom and Ewell Times report 13th October 2023 on Epsom and Ewell Council's 10th October 2023 meeting of the Community and Well-being Committee: "Council Grapples with Rising Cost of Homelessness", Emily Dalton probes further after this year's meeting 8th October 2024.

Our local Council (EEBC) provides around temporary units to 250 households, according to data from July 2024. Of those, 90 are nightly accommodations.

The council spent £1,665,493 on nightly emergency accommodation in 12 months to April – an overspend of £395,000. EEBC had originally budgeted for 70 families in nightly paid accommodation but throughout the first five months of 2024, the Council was regularly supporting in excess of 90.

"The situation remains significantly serious and will be for some time to come," said Councillor Clive Woodbridge, speaking at a Community and Wellbeing meeting on October 8. Despite hard-working officers behind the scenes, council documents stated that it is unlikely the number of homeless families will decrease over the next 12 months.

EEBC is absorbing the costs through its original budget, a homelessness grant reserve and the council's general fund balance and contingency. Nearly £650k has been awarded to EEBC as part of a Homelessness Prevention Grant for this financial year 2024/25. But, officers warned that if demand remains exceptionally high, the local authority may have to dip into its reserves.

Homelessness "affects all households of all sizes", a EEBC officer told the committee. He added: "But particularly for us, the higher expenditure is around family-sized households." Overcrowded and multi-generation families, rather than rough sleeping was presented as the most prominent issue coming before the council, the officer said.

Due to demand for accommodation, officers are on occasion having to use economy hotel rooms when no other accommodation is available. The total cost for this can be around £140 per night.

Officers explained the council has a legal "duty" to help people at risk of homelessness and so will continue to foot the bill for temporary accommodation despite the budget pressures.

Landlords were encouraged to take on more council tenants at a landlord forum run by EEBC on September 26. The council is looking for landlords of three, four and five-bedroom houses to sign up to its private sector leasing scheme, so it can reduce the amount it spends on the nightly units. EEBC also highlighted the 'Rent Deposit Scheme' as a preventative homeless measures where councils support tenants with deposits and guarantees.

© 2021-2026. No content may be copied without the permission of Epsom and Ewell Times Ltd. Registered office: Upper Chambers, 7 Waterloo Road, Epsom KT19 8AY

ISSN 2753-2771

Looking for new ways to solve the problem, EEBC has asked landlords to help provide emergency housing for families and individuals at risk of homelessness. Although the event was reportedly “well attended”, council officers said it may be “slow burn” for landlords to come forward for the scheme. Officers said there were a couple of approaches but “nothing concrete yet”.

Related reports:

Epsom and Ewell Press Release on Homelessness

Council Grapples with Rising Cost of Homelessness

Image: Evelyn Simak cc-by-sa/2.0

Some Surrey boroughs get brownfield funding

21 October 2024



Surrey councils will get nearly £2m to release disused brownfield sites to unlock desperately needed land for house building including cash to clear asbestos and transform the “heart of Camberley”.

Boroughs and districts are bracing themselves for tough new Government housing targets that could see the demands to deliver new homes skyrocket.

In an effort to alleviate some of the pressures the Government has announced £68m of funding is to go directly to 54 local authorities to turn what it describes as neglected land into housing.

Two of those councils are in Surrey; Surrey Heath Borough Council is set to receive £1,480,300, with Tandridge District Council in line for £250,159.

The funding is to be used clearing empty buildings, former car parks or industrial land in order to make way for homes.

Historically it is expensive to get such sites ready for housebuilding and can sit as empty eyesores for years.

Surrey Heath Borough Council has said in a statement the funding will support its new housing development in London Road site, “near the A30 in the heart of Camberley”.

It added: “The grant will be used to demolish derelict buildings on the site and safely remove asbestos from the former Allders building, clearing the way for future development. “

The money is part of a three-year £180 million Brownfield Land Release Fund 2 launched in July 2022 to allow local authorities in England to build on blocked brownfield land.

Prime Minister Keir Starmer said: “From the outset we promised to get this country building again to deliver 1.5 million homes over this parliament and help tackle the housing crisis we have inherited. That is the essence of fixing the foundations and driving growth.

“I said this government is on the side of the builders, not the blockers. And I meant it. This funding for councils will see disused sites and industrial wastelands transformed into thousands of new homes in places that people want to live and work. Our brownfield-first approach will not only ramp up housebuilding but also create more jobs, deliver much-needed infrastructure, and boost economic growth across the country.

“This government is rolling up its sleeves and delivering the change the British people deserve.”

Housing and planning minister Matthew Pennycook said: “The government is committed to a brownfield-first approach to housebuilding, and we have already taken steps to prioritise and fast-track building on previously used urban land through our proposals for a ‘brownfield passport’.

“The funding announced today will support the delivery of thousands of new homes and boost economic growth by unlocking development on scores of abandoned, disused and neglected urban sites across the country.”

Releasing brownfield land is one step in meeting the needs for housing but some councils are calling on the government to do more.

Waverley Borough Council has written to the deputy prime minister Angela Rayner over the government’s wider planning reforms, which currently would require the council to deliver 1,379 homes a year – a figure that borough leader Councillor Paul Follows called “unrealistic” and “unachievable”.

He added: “The proposed standard method is fundamentally detached from the realities of local constraints, including national designations such as the Surrey Hills National Landscape. It risks undermining both the environment and community cohesion, and we urgently need a more credible, locally tailored approach.”

© 2021-2026. No content may be copied without the permission of Epsom and Ewell Times Ltd. Registered office: Upper Chambers, 7 Waterloo Road, Epsom KT19 8AY

EPSOM & EWELL TIMES
For the community, by the community. A not-for-profit service

19th November 2026

ISSN 2753-2771

Further concerns were raised over the role of developers in housing delivery.

Planning authorities such as Waverley have no control over the rate of housing completions.

The Allders building in Camberley will have asbestos cleared to make it suitable for housing (image Google)

Surrey Tories bouncing back already?

21 October 2024



The Conservative election turnaround in Surrey shows no sign of slowing after the party beat the Liberal Democrats, Labour and independents to take two more seats at the October 2024 by-elections.

Voters in Elmbridge backed the Tories in both seats contested on Thursday, October 10 – holding on to Weybridge and winning Hersham Village.

The polls were called following the death of former Conservative councillor and "community champion" Charu Sood, who died after a cancer battle in August, and the resignation of Chester Chandler.

The two victories build on other Tory wins in Surrey with the party winning in Waverley Borough Council following a huge 19 per cent swing and victory in Runnymede where they doubled Labour's vote share.

The wins have left the Conservative group leader on Elmbridge Borough Council in buoyant mood and talking up the possibility of going into coalition with the residents groups to offer "a better approach".

Councillor John Cop said: "We're back, after a couple of difficult years it's amazing to see the council group grow again.

"I think it was a combination of two factors.

"Firstly there was a very clear rejection on the door of what the Liberal Democrat council has done.

"The Hersham community has been treated really poorly.

"There's been the closure of the community centres, still not fully reopen and there was a lot of concern around high rise buildings going up on the town centre – and the council not getting a local plan in place leaving us open to development.

"Secondly. there was a real anger at the new Labour government, winter fuel coming in, and talking down the economy, I think that was why we saw such a dramatic turnaround."

Elections in Elmbridge take place every year, with the fourth year left free for the county council ballot.

The Conservatives had not won in Hersham since 2021. Cllr Cope put the reversal in fortune down to the popularity of their candidate whom he dubbed "Mr Hersham" '

In Weybridge, the party held on to narrowly hold the seat, in what was their first victory there since 2022.

The new council now comprises 21 Liberal Democrats, easily the largest party, 13 Residents Associations Group members, 11 Conservatives, two Hinchley Wood RAG and one independent.

It leaves the door open for a change of control at the top should the residents associations go into coalition with the Conservatives, something Cllr Cope said he would look to do.

Cllr Cope said: "We would welcome going into coalition with the residents associations and change the council for the better.

"I would be more than happy to talk to the residents' associations to see if they would prefer a different approach."

Weybridge St Georges Hill results in full

- Colin McFarlane: Conservative Party 608 votes, 46.0 per cent (Elected)
- Andrew Kelly: Weybridge and St George's Independents 598 votes, 45.2 per cent
- Brittany Johansson, Green Party, 116 votes 8.8 per cent

Turnout 19.7 per cent

Hersham Village

- John O'Reilly. Conservative Party 1029 votes 55.4 per cent (Elected)

© 2021-2026. No content may be copied without the permission of Epsom and Ewell Times Ltd. Registered office: Upper Chambers, 7 Waterloo Road, Epsom KT19 8AY

ISSN 2753-2771

- Vasha Khodiyar, Liberal Democrats 736 votes 39.6 per cent
- Francis Eldergill. Labour Party 94 votes 5.1 per cent

Turnout 27.1 per cent

Newly elected Elmbridge Borough Councillor Colin McFarlane and John O'Reilly (image John Cope)

What were the odds of Epsom & Ewell's 4 x 2 + 2?

21 October 2024

Combined Counties League Premier Division South									
		P	W	D	L	F	A	GD	PTS
14	Horley Town	14	3	4	7	29	34	-5	13
15	Epsom & Ewell	13	3	4	6	19	30	-11	13
16	Camberley Town	11	3	2	6	15	22	-7	11
17	Chipstead	12	3	1	8	17	35	-18	10
18	Sheerwater	13	2	3	8	21	37	-16	9
19	Balham	12	1	3	8	14	31	-17	6
20	Spelthorne Sports	13	0	4	9	8	27	-19	4

Epsom and Ewell 2-2 Fleet Town. Combined Counties League – Premier Division South. Saturday 12th October 2024.

For the fourth time in a row our match resulted in a 2-2 draw, this time against high-flying and unbeaten Fleet Town at the KGF on Saturday. We could and maybe should have handed them their first League loss of the season, having come from behind to lead with twenty minutes remaining, but a late Dan Bone equaliser ensured that we had to share the points once again, and in all fairness, the draw was the correct result.

In front of an attendance counted as 116 (yet officially and farcically advised as 148) that included around twenty of our Colts, we made just one change from the team that had drawn 2-2 at Redhill seven days previously with Niall Stillwell coming in for his first start for the club at right back for the injured Ethan Brazier, as he had done in our draw with the leaders.

We kicked off towards the Chessington end for the first time in a number of matches and Carl Oblitey had the first chance when he tried his luck from long range but was well wide, while the visitors were a lot closer with their first attempt after a deep Tom Smith cross was headed wide at the far post by Danilo Cadete. However, they took the lead in the 11th minute after a good move on the left resulted in a low ball in that was teed up nicely for Matt Surmon to drive it into the net, with a slight deflection off a defender from the edge of the penalty area.

Last season we had to play two home matches against Fleet Town after the original contest had been abandoned for an injury, but in each case an early Fleet goal was answered rapidly with an Epsom equaliser, and this time it was no different, as we only had to wait three minutes to draw level. For the second match in a row we had another own goal in our favour, as Oblitey had tried to put a through ball for Ali Fofahan on the right, but over hit his pass. However, Fofahan retrieved the ball and sent over a dangerous low ball with his left foot. With Oblitey waiting for a tap in, Ross Stepney got there first, but only succeeded in diverting the ball into his own net off the crossbar from five yards out!

Stepney then earned a yellow card for going through Fofahan, but it's not entirely clear how Fleet didn't retake the lead in the 28th minute, when a low shot was well saved by Dan O'Donovan, but the follow up from close range from Tane Caubo somehow went back across the goal, missing the target from what appeared to be extremely close range. O'Donovan made another good low save with five minutes of normal time remaining from Luke Kandi before our keeper nearly claimed an assist when his free kick went to Jason Bloor, whose shot was on target and would have crept inside the right hand post of Finley Purcell, but was blocked by a defender and we went in at the break on level terms.

Surmon headed an early chance over the bar for Fleet within a couple of minutes of the restart and the majority of the possession was with them for a while, but on the hour we began to redress the balance and Ethan Nelson-Roberts sent in a dangerous ball that was cleared just ahead of Oblitey by Smith. Caubo headed another half chance wide for the visitors, but then somewhat against the run of play we took the lead in the 70th minute. A clever pass set Fofahan away down the right, and he cut back onto his left foot before delivering a peach of a cross to Oblitey, standing unmarked and five yards out, leaving him with the simplest of headers into the net.

David Romer came on for the injured Stillwell, which led to a little bit of defensive reshuffling, but we pushed forward again and Nelson-Roberts was denied by a superb last moment tackle, before Kionte Gillfillian-Waul produced a great run and pass across the six yard box, which was just missed by a defender. It appeared that Oblitey, standing beyond him, had expected the defender to reach it and didn't quite react in time; the ball scraping off the underside of his boot from a few yards out.

A third goal then would surely have finished off Fleet Town and their unbeaten record, but good teams find a way back and although their substitute, the prolific Dan Bone, sent a header just wide, he made amends with a low shot from the edge of the area that was just out of reach for O'Donovan in the 84th minute. It's not clear to me whether Bone was on the bench for tactical reasons, or whether he was coming back from injury, but he always gives us problems and it was fortunate for us that he didn't play the full ninety minutes.

We had one last chance in the final minute of normal time when a Fofahan free kick was headed wide by Oblitey who had done well to lose his man, but just couldn't keep the header on target, and after seven minutes of injury time the final whistle confirmed our fourth straight "Desmond".

For those who are unaware, our third 2-2 draw against Redhill last week was the first time in club history that we had

© 2021-2026. No content may be copied without the permission of Epsom and Ewell Times Ltd. Registered office: Upper Chambers, 7 Waterloo Road, Epsom KT19 8AY

ISSN 2753-2771

even had three of these in a row, so to see a fourth consecutive one is quite bizarre. The simple facts are that we have only one loss in ten matches now, but whilst the Redhill result was a good one, particularly from 2-0 down, I don't believe I'm the only person that thinks the other three of those matches really ought to have been wins.

It's not a major criticism though. Although we are currently in 15th place now with thirteen points from the same number of games, we remain seven points clear of the two relegation positions and are in much better form than the clubs down there, who are presently Balham and Spelthorne Sports. Don't be fooled by the FA Full Time site or even the very useful Football Web Pages site though, it is two clubs and not one that will go down this season. Right now though, it definitely won't be us.

With our League position fairly secure for now, we can turn our attention and focus to a pair of cup matches now, and against the same club as Berks County visit for the League Cup tie on Tuesday and the F.A. Vase tie the following Sunday. On current form, we will be favourites to progress through these ties, but also will need to hold on to a lead when we have it, as a draw in either or both of those matches will send us to the lottery of a penalty shoot out. Additionally, we have fought back from going behind five times in the last four matches, so it would be nice to see us start a little better in the matches to come.

Epsom & Ewell: Dan O'Donovan, Niall Stillwell, Kionte Gillfillian-Waul, Adam Green (c), Callum Wilson, Anthony Nazareth, Ali Fofahan, Craig Dundas, Carl Oblitey, Jason Bloor, Ethan Nelson-Roberts

Subs: David Romer for Stillwell (71), Conrad Essilfie-Conduah for Bloor (75)

Surrey County Council finances under the spotlight

21 October 2024



A recent Local Government Information Unit report presents a worrying picture of local government finances across the UK, with a particular focus on the impact of budget cuts on services for children, young people, disabled people, and broader council operations. This report gives context to Conservative Party run **Surrey County Council'**s current financial struggles.

The Local Government information Unit (LGiU) is a local government membership body, thinktank and registered charity.

Key Findings from the LGIU Report:

1. **Service Cuts Affecting Vulnerable Groups**: The report highlights that local councils are cutting essential services to balance budgets. Vulnerable groups, including children, young people, and disabled individuals, are bearing the brunt of these cuts, leading to long-term negative consequences. This is especially evident in cuts to children's social services, school transport, and support for disabled people.
2. **Savings Targets and Financial Shortfalls**: Local councils have collectively approved over £3 billion in savings for the current financial year but still face a predicted funding shortfall of more than £5.7 billion by 2026-27. **Surrey County Council** stands out as having the fifth highest savings target for 2024-2025, but also has the second highest predicted financial shortfall for 2026-2027, highlighting significant concerns about its sustainability.
3. **Surrey-Specific Context**: **Surrey County Council** is under immense pressure to meet high savings targets while facing a projected budget shortfall that indicates financial vulnerability in the longer term. Given the nationwide picture, Surrey's situation is part of a broader struggle that local governments face, attempting to maintain statutory services while cutting others. Surrey has a history of difficulties with funding, particularly in delivering adult social care and children's services, which have increasingly become the focus of cost-saving efforts.
4. **Impact on Services**: Specific areas of concern include reductions in spend on children's social care, safeguarding, youth services, support for care leavers, and independent living for disabled individuals. The report

© 2021-2026. No content may be copied without the permission of Epsom and Ewell Times Ltd. Registered office: Upper Chambers, 7 Waterloo Road, Epsom KT19 8AY

ISSN 2753-2771

notes that many councils, likely including Surrey, are adopting measures such as reducing staff in children's social care and pushing for more "independence" among care leavers, which may ultimately reduce the quality of care available.

5. **Reserves and Exceptional Financial Support**: Councils, including Surrey, have been drawing on reserves to balance their budgets, but these reserves are not limitless. Nationally, 19 councils were granted Exceptional Financial Support (EFS), highlighting that more councils are approaching financial failure, a risk acknowledged by Surrey as it plans for the coming years.
6. **Broader Implications for Children's Wellbeing**: The Children's Commissioner and experts like Lynn Perry from Barnardo's have warned that cuts to preventative services for children could lead to a "lifetime cost" for the current generation. With Surrey's budget pressures, similar outcomes could be expected locally, particularly as youth services and early intervention programmes may face further cuts.
7. **Miscellaneous Cuts**: The report details examples of "almost comical sounding" cuts being made to balance budgets—such as changes to coffee suppliers, reduced support for coastal lifeguards, and reduced asbestos collections from households. These reflect the desperate measures councils are taking to preserve statutory services amidst financial constraints.

Councillor Responses:

Cllr **Bernie Muir**, Conservative Party, Surrey County Councillor – Epsom West Division and Epsom & Ewell Borough Councillor – Horton Ward, responded to the LGIU report:

"Our transformation over the last few years has given us a solid base and is helping us weather the storms encircling local government and indeed the global economy.

"That means that while the county council has a solid and robust budget thanks to many years of hard work and bold thinking, we face pressures like everywhere else.

"66% of our budget is spent on supporting young people, families and adults. This includes spend of £1.2m per day on Adult Social Care, £0.5m per day on Children's Social Care, and about £6m per month on Home to School Transport Assistance.

"Whilst the council's finances are stable, demand on our services continues to increase at a faster rate than our funding, and so our funding position is anticipated to remain challenging for the foreseeable future. We are working innovatively and reviewing the way we deliver some programmes of work to ensure we are fit for the future, continue to deliver the best outcomes for our residents and that no one in Surrey is left behind."

On behalf of four opposition Residents Association County Councillors, Cllr **Eber Kington** said:

"Epsom and Ewell Residents' Association County Councillors recognise that Surrey County Council continues to be penalised by Governments in terms of central Government grant funding despite the huge contribution that the Surrey economy makes to the national economy. There is also the assumption by Westminster that all Surrey residents are wealthy, which ignores both the pockets of deprivation in Surrey, but also the fact that Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) and Adult Social Care costs are not just related to poverty but are common across all communities.

"That said, SCC has not spent or borrowed money wisely and ignored our calls to adopt a different financial approach, including the funding of more early intervention and preventive measures to reduce future costs. In fact, SCC's inflated capital spending on infrastructure, not all of it high priority, has resulted in cuts to the planned SEND school building provision which is clearly a wrong option choice when you consider that SEND provision is one of the services that has the most pressing need.

"SCC also continues its spending on highly paid staff with 61 Directors now in the salary bracket of over £100k, including 11 of the highest paid Directors heading the Communications and Engagement Directorate. It has also been revealed that SCC has funded over 6,000 mobile phones for staff. A recent £17 million project to replace SCC's financial IT system was late and ran over budget, with the final cost acknowledged as £27m (although money is still being spent), an overspend of £10m and the equivalent of 1% on the overall SCC council tax bill.

"Currently, SCC is using a Government Bus Service Improvement Plan grant to fund a new Digital Demand Responsive Transport (DDRT) scheme that allows residents to book a convenient bus journey when they need it, focusing on rural areas without scheduled buses. However, the take-up is currently quite low and some journeys cost SCC anything from £12 to £104 per person. That is not sustainable when the Government grant runs out and SCC finds itself having to fund the DDRT system.

"Removing some of these high-cost items may not improve the budget gap very much given the overall SCC annual budget, but a clear change of policy to the funding of early intervention and prevention schemes, a capital programme that focuses on the essential services, better project management of high costing schemes and IT projects, and a leaner management structure will make a difference and are policies that Residents' Association and Independent County Councillors will continue to advocate in the coming months."

Conclusions:

The financial pressures on Surrey County Council are reflective of a broader, systemic problem affecting local authorities across the UK. Surrey's high savings targets and predicted budget shortfall for 2026-2027 illustrate a challenging future where further cuts to crucial services seem inevitable. This raises concerns for local residents, especially the most

© 2021-2026. No content may be copied without the permission of Epsom and Ewell Times Ltd. Registered office: Upper Chambers, 7 Waterloo Road, Epsom KT19 8AY

ISSN 2753-2771

vulnerable, and suggests the need for urgent government intervention to ensure sustainable funding for local services.

A call from the Local Government Association (LGA) for financial stability and multi-year funding settlements is particularly relevant for Surrey, as it struggles to maintain a balance between mandated services and community needs.

Ancaster acquires the Epsom keys to Allams

21 October 2024



Sponsored article: Ancaster Group has announced the acquisition of Allams of Epsom, a prominent Skoda dealership that has been a cornerstone of the local automotive industry for over 70 years. This move comes as Ancaster celebrates its 75th anniversary, marking a strategic expansion for the group across South West London and Surrey.

Allams of Epsom, located on Longmead Business Park, has been serving customers in the region since its establishment in 1952. The dealership is well-known for offering the full range of Skoda vehicles and operates as an authorised service and MOT centre. For decades, it has built a loyal customer base, providing reliable service and quality vehicles to generations of local residents.

With this acquisition, Ancaster Group continues to solidify its presence in the South East, adding to its existing network of 13 dealerships representing brands such as Nissan, Hyundai, MG, Renault, and Dacia. This addition will allow the group to further enhance its customer offerings, particularly in the fast-growing Skoda brand. Ancaster's Managing Director, Stephen Wood, expressed enthusiasm for the future, stating, "This acquisition is a strategic milestone for us, as it accelerates our growth and broadens the brands we offer in South London and Surrey. Allams and Ancaster share the same important core values of customer service provided by a motivated and committed team."

Allams will continue to operate under its current name, with customers benefiting from the enhanced support and synergies provided by Ancaster's wider network. The acquisition positions Ancaster to serve the Surrey and South West London markets even more effectively, with a strong focus on customer satisfaction, as both companies are known for their dedicated service teams.

The Allams dealership has long been a fixture in Epsom, having earned a reputation for trust and quality in automotive sales and servicing. For local residents, this acquisition signals the continuation of a trusted service, now backed by the broader expertise and resources of a larger dealership group. Ancaster's purchase ensures that Allams will remain an integral part of the community, while also benefiting from new growth opportunities within a larger organisation.

Ancaster Group, which was founded in 1949, has built its reputation over the decades through customer service, trust, and value. With this latest acquisition, the group looks set to strengthen its ties to the local community, continuing to offer a comprehensive range of new and pre-owned vehicles across multiple brands.

For Epsom motorists, this new chapter in the history of Allams promises continuity in quality service, combined with the benefits of a broader dealership network under the Ancaster umbrella.

Sutton & Epsom Rugby beat the unbeaten

21 October 2024



On Saturday 11 th October 2014 Sutton & Epsom RFC visited Crescent Farm to play Sidcup who were the early season league leaders of London 1 South after five games. On that day the Black & Whites tore up the form book winning 23-16 with a stunning Kyren Ghumra try manufactured by a perfect kick from Frankie Murray. Almost a decade later to the day it was a sense of dejà vu as

© 2021-2026. No content may be copied without the permission of Epsom and Ewell Times Ltd. Registered office: Upper Chambers, 7 Waterloo Road, Epsom KT19 8AY

ISSN 2753-2771

high-flying Sidcup arrived at Rugby Lane this time topping Regional 2 South East. The visitors were the only unbeaten team in the league, had secured the maximum 20 points from four wins in which they had scored the most points and conceded the least by a considerable margin. It was not a case of lightning striking twice but more like Thor's hammer descending from the heavens in a cataclysmic explosion such was the intensity and physicality of this superb contest won by S&E by a margin of 12-7.

Freddy Bunting got the ball rolling as Sutton played towards the clubhouse with the permanent threat of rain. The early exchanges ceded little territory before a wonderful kick from Josh Twyford angled into the home 22. The hosts responded with two bone-shaking tackles from Ben Tame, that set the tone for an afternoon not for the fainthearted, and a fine kick from Gareth O'Brien cleared their lines. The ferocity of the tackling and a slippery ball hindered the attacking prowess of both XVs. Kiwi Josh Rea demonstrated his talent with a brace of tackles followed by a fine break, Bunting probed with the boot and Sutton attempted to prise open the visitors' well organised and aggressive defence. The first genuine chance came on the quarter hour when Austin Bell kicked ahead and the covering Seb Ellison was caught as he attempted to run from his line. However, in the ensuing frenetic melee the referee awarded Sidcup a scrum for a knock on.

The game continued with great pace whilst thunderous tackling from both defences held the upper hand as time after time ball-carriers were unceremoniously dumped onto their posteriors. With the half hour approaching Josh Twyford perfectly placed kicked settled irritatingly just outside the Sutton 22 and a hesitant Bell, now at 15 after an injury to Gareth O'Brien, kicked out on the full. The visitors failed to prosper as their lineout faltered. From a Sutton scrum Rob Hegarty ducked, weaved and evaded tacklers before offloading to the galloping Glanville who burst to halfway where, as ever, Dan Jones was in support. The ubiquitous flanker set off on one of his increasingly familiar runs and was finally halted by the swarming Sidcup defence in their 22. Sadly this exhilarating attack ended as a pass was delivered to a man who was more trying to get out of the way than storm forward.

The Rugby Lane team's confidence was growing and Bell put through a grubber on halfway and recovered it and chipped over to the 22. The second kick was rather over-egging the custard and a grateful opposition regained the ball. To remind everyone who was the top team Sidcup went onto the attack. An excellent kick-chase established them in the Black & White 22. It was now the moment for their backs to demonstrate some wonderful handling in the wet conditions. Sutton were scrambling on their line defending for their lives. Perhaps it was frustration or impatience but with a try looking probable the Crescent Farm men conceded a penalty by going in from the wrong side. Freddy Bunting thumped the ball to halfway and danger was averted.

As the enthralled spectators were contemplating a 0-0 score at the break the deadlock was finally broken. Sidcup 15 Seb Ellison collected a Bunting kick on his 22. His return was not his finest strike but the ball descended into space for the rapidly approaching fullback. A favourable bounce was recovered and Seb Ellison ran the ball back from halfway. The covering Freddy Bunting ushered him to the corner no doubt hoping this would be a 5-point score at worst. Up stepped the experienced Josh Twyford who converted magnificently from the touchline to put the league leaders 7-0 ahead. It was already in time added on but the robust nature of the contest had meant that the medical teams had been on the paddock rather more often than usual rebuilding their troops and there was ten additional minutes. Josh Twyford just failed to increase the visitors' advantage as a long–range penalty drifted wide. Then it was a case of cattywampus in extremis as a Sutton scrum buckled. Fortunately for the hosts the Twyford kick into the corner erred in their favour and sailed out of the dead ball area. The half finally concluded with the Black & Whites pressing for a score.

The Kent men were determined to reaffirm their status and put the Sutton upstarts in their place at the start of the second period as they kicked an early penalty into the corner. S&E were soon in survival mode as they had a scrum 5 metres from their line. Tremendous Sidcup scrummaging drove the Black & White eight over their line at a rate of knots. Steve Munford managed to touchdown to avert the try. Now it was Sidcup's turn to have the put in. The home supporters feared the worst based on the most recent evidence. Incredibly Sidcup conceded a penalty at the scrum as it wheeled. The hosts gleefully accepted the salvation. Reinvigorated by their defensive resilience they went onto the offensive.

Sutton progress was met by a Sidcup side whose tremendous tackling scythed down all before them. But the Black & Whites were not deterred and started to benefit from a flurry of penalties. The spectators were divided over the perennial question: "Take the three points or kick into the corner?" The team went for the higher tariff option. The excellent S&E lineout secured possession but progress could be measured by inches rather than yards so resilient was the visitors' defence. Then an infringement gave Freddy Bunting a 'free ball' and he kicked to the corner where the ball escaped the clutches of two of his comrades. Another 3 points was declined and this time a huge tackle dislodged a ball giving an escape route for the leaders that they gratefully accepted.

The action switch ends but a lofted kick ahead just drifted into the Sutton 22 and an alert Bunting called for the mark and set off on a counter. Replacement Angus Findlay made a wonderful run into the Sidcup half. The ball came to Lawrence Elliott outside the 22 and to counter the onrushing defence he kicked ahead along the deck. The crowd were distracted as Elliott was poleaxed but Josh Rea kept his eye on the ball and won the race to score. Though Freddy Bunting missed the conversion his side now trailed 5-7.

Mr Willis declared that there were 11 minutes to play as the crowd urged on both teams for

© 2021-2026. No content may be copied without the permission of Epsom and Ewell Times Ltd. Registered office: Upper Chambers, 7 Waterloo Road, Epsom KT19 8AY

ISSN 2753-2771

another score. Sidcup descended into the Sutton 22. Austin Bell seeking anonymity and respite for an injured shoulder retreated to the flank for a breather. Unaware of his condition he was given the ball close to his line. He kicked for touch but the breeze meant it settled on halfway. Bell was first to the ball and fly-hacked onwards wisely declining to scoop it up on the run. The ball advanced deep into the 22 and S&E regained possession. The ball was sent wide where Jordan Huie collected the pass and ran straight for the corner. A fabulous covering tackle brought him crashing down but he stretched out to score his first try for Sutton. An ecstatic crowd cheers increased when the insouciant Bunting made the touchline conversion look elementary for 12-7. The hosts managed to see out the game without creating unwanted anxiety to record one of their best wins in many seasons.

Any side contemplating beating Sidcup this campaign will need to bring their 'A+Triple Star Game'. The front row triumvirate of Messrs Gibboons, Fordham and Carmen are formidably supported by a powerful back five. With the ageless Josh Twyford as the puppeteer at 10 they have variety in attack and multiple threats. Traditionally their defence has been superbly organised but there is now an almost savage power to their tackling. Indeed both sides dug so deep in defence they might have enjoyed vistas of Bondi beach. Sutton rose to the challenge and matched the league leaders for defensive desire and were neither intimidated nor subdued. Willing forwards carried, the backs attacked at every opportunity and the kicking game was astute. From 1 to 18 the Black & Whites raised their level to new heights. There have been an avalanche of tries in the league so far at Rugby Lane but this was by far the match of a season that is still in its infancy.

Sutton & Epsom

O'Brien, Huie, Scott, Elliott, Bell, Bunting ©, Munford, Boaden, Mount, Gibson, Glanville, Tame, Rea, Jones & Hegarty.

Replacements: Hilton, Green & Findlay.

Sidcup

Ellison, Masters, Leek, Smith, Keeley ©, Twyford, Sullivan, Gibbons, Fordham, Carmen, Clarke, Stock, Ruff, Healey & West.

Replacements: Conlon, Williams & Pooley.

Image courtesy Robin Kennedy

Public meeting about Epsom Hospital future

21 October 2024



A public meeting has been scheduled for October 17th, 2024, at the **Epsom Sports Club**, located next to **Epsom Hospital**, to discuss the future of local healthcare services. The meeting, organized by the **Epsom and Ewell's Residents' Associations**, will be centred on the evolving plans for Epsom Hospital and the broader health services in the area. The keynote speaker, **James Blythe**, Managing Director of the Epsom and St Helier NHS Trust, will provide an update on the trust's long-term plans, including the new Specialist Emergency Care Hospital (SECH) in Sutton and the modernization of both Epsom and St Helier hospitals. The event will be followed by a Q&A session, allowing local residents to voice their concerns and ask questions directly to the leadership.

This meeting follows recent developments within the Epsom and St Helier NHS Trust, which is moving forward with a £500 million project to build the SECH in Sutton. This new hospital will centralize acute services such as emergency care and surgery, while 85% of other services will remain at Epsom and St Helier hospitals, ensuring local residents continue to have access to a wide range of healthcare services nearby. The new SECH, located on the Sutton Hospital site, is designed to enhance patient outcomes by co-locating with the Royal Marsden Hospital and the London Cancer Hub.

Epsom and Ewell's newly elected MP, **Helen Maguire**, has made healthcare a key priority in her first 100 days in office. Maguire has been an advocate for the new hospital in Sutton, meeting with the Epsom and St Helier NHS Trust to see that the project moves forward without delays. In a press release marking her 100th day in office, Maguire emphasized her commitment to ensuring that the SECH is built and that Epsom and St Helier hospitals are modernized to better serve the local community. She has also scheduled a meeting with Health Secretary Wes Streeting to gain more insights into the government's broader healthcare strategy

Maguire's focus on healthcare comes at a time when the trust is also addressing other critical issues such as managing its financial constraints while improving patient services. Maguire attended the trust's recent Annual Public Meeting, underscoring the importance of the SECH in addressing long-standing challenges.

Local residents are encouraged to attend the public meeting on October 17th to stay informed about the future of their healthcare services and to have their say in the discussions about these transformative plans for Epsom and its surrounding areas.

© 2021-2026. No content may be copied without the permission of Epsom and Ewell Times Ltd. Registered office: Upper Chambers, 7 Waterloo Road, Epsom KT19 8AY

EPSOM & EWELL TIMES
For the community, by the community. A not-for-profit service

19th November 2026

ISSN 2753-2771

Event Details:
Topic: The Future for Epsom Hospital and Local Health Services
Date: October 17th, 2024
Time: 7:30 PM
Venue: Epsom Sports Club, next to Epsom Hospital
Speaker: James Blythe, Managing Director, Epsom and St Helier NHS Trust
Format: Presentation followed by a Q&A session with refreshments

© 2021-2026. No content may be copied without the permission of Epsom and Ewell Times Ltd. Registered office: Upper Chambers, 7 Waterloo Road, Epsom KT19 8AY