

The Local Plan

What others think

The Local Plan consultation is an opportunity for you to help shape the future of the Borough. It is important the all aspects are considered.

We have approached various organisations, representing different viewpoints, who have previously expressed opinions on how the borough should develop.

We asked these organisations what they would want you, the residents of the borough, to weigh up when thinking about the Local Plan and we asked them to explain to you their opinions.

We did not approach the local political parties serving on the Council, as they should consider all the views expressed in the survey as part of their deliberations.

Regretfully only three organisations saw fit to respond to our request.

We are grateful to the organisations who did respond.

Their messages to you follow.

Please be aware that the views given are not those of the Council.





Campaign to Protect
Rural England
SURREY BRANCH

The Surrey Branch of the Campaign to Protect Rural England (CPRE) aims to protect, promote and enhance the countryside, villages and towns of Surrey to ensure our county remains a 'green and pleasant' place in which to live and work. CPRE has an active local group here in Epsom and Ewell.

The Borough's green areas – its parks, gardens, allotments and other green spaces, including the countryside adjacent to the built up areas - are in large measure what give Epsom and Ewell its character and makes it an attractive place to live and to work. To date, our councillors and their professional officers have done an excellent job maintaining the Borough's vibrant economy whilst protecting its heritage, its open spaces, its biodiversity, and its quality of life.

However, recent national planning policy has required the Borough to commission a Strategic Housing Market Assessment or SHMA. This has proposed that the rate of new home generation in Epsom and Ewell should, in the future, be more than double the rate that we have been expected to achieve over recent years. In total, the Borough would have to find room for over four hundred additional homes each year for at least the next fifteen years – that means that each year we would be expected to accommodate around a thousand extra people, despite having already housed several thousand recently on the old hospital sites around Horton. Even worse, very recent announcements by the Government suggest that up to thirty thousand people and twelve thousand new homes will need to be accommodated within Epsom and Ewell.

Where is the money to come from to pay for the additional infrastructure – roads, public transport, surgeries and hospital places, schools, water supply and sewage disposal – that will be needed to meet the needs of all these additional people? A recent report to Surrey County Council has concluded that, over the next fifteen years, Epsom and Ewell needs a total expenditure in these areas of £125 million but financing of only £50 million can be identified, leaving a funding gap of around £75 million even at the previous level of housing provision.

There is insufficient previously developed land in the Borough to accommodate all these additional people. Consequently, there is every likelihood that unacceptable levels of 'town cramming' would result, with back garden development and high density redevelopment of existing housing areas. In addition, there would inevitably be the loss of large areas of the Borough's cherished Green Belt. A recent Green Belt study commissioned by the council concludes that the Borough's Green Belt "continues to play a vital role in preventing urban sprawl, encroachment of the countryside and coalescence."

What about the housing needs of local young people and key workers? Only half the extra population that Epsom and Ewell is expected to accommodate would be local people. The other fifty per cent would be people moving out of London or arriving from elsewhere in the United Kingdom. Large house builders don't provide the affordable homes we desperately need. What is wanted in Epsom and Ewell is far more truly affordable housing for local people. Councillors should be asked whether the large-scale loss of our open spaces and town cramming is justified simply to meet the artificial housing targets wished on us by central government, Councillors should also be asked to identify where the additional financing for the necessary extra infrastructure will come from.

Tim Murphy, Vice Chair, CPRE Surrey

CPRE Surrey Branch Office, Room G2, The Institute, 67 High Street, Leatherhead, Surrey, KT22 8AH



The Gatwick Diamond Initiative was formed 15 years ago by a group of businesses who recognised that this is an important economic area. Subsequently, research evidenced the travel to work and the supply chain patterns confirmed that at £24bn GVA, the Gatwick Diamond area is second only in productivity and size outside of London to the Thames Valley.

The Gatwick Diamond area covers four council areas in East Surrey - Epsom & Ewell, Tandridge, Mole Valley and Reigate & Banstead; and three council areas in West Sussex - Crawley, Horsham and Mid Sussex.

The Gatwick Diamond Initiative is an economic partnership that lobbies, influences and promotes the right conditions for sustainable economic growth. The Epsom & Ewell Local Plan is important because it will cover those key areas that will drive the local economy ensuring that Epsom and Ewell remains a vibrant, dynamic and attractive location for businesses to start and prosper.

These are some thoughts that residents might want to consider:

Infrastructure and accessibility

Employees need to be able to reach their places of work conveniently and cost effectively. Employers need to be able to move goods and services efficiently. Will the Local Plan address the need for improved road, rail and bus access?

Commercial property

Businesses need different types of commercial property throughout their lives. Does the Local Plan provide for small serviced office space for start-up and early stage businesses, for graduates and the self-employed? Does the Local Plan take account of the need for office premises between 1,000 and 5,000 sq ft for those businesses that have grown and increased staff? And has the Local Plan identified larger sites to attract large businesses?

Business growth

There are large businesses already in Epsom & Ewell, such as Atkins. How will their growth be encouraged? As key employers, how will the Local Plan ensure they do not move out of the area due to lack of support. How will the Local Plan support start up and early stage businesses during their fragile growth stages? Will the Local Plan encourage businesses to trade internationally, to network and collaborate.

Skills

Epsom & Ewell is rich in higher educational establishments with UCA and Nescot. Many students graduate and leave the area. How will the Local Plan support those graduates to remain in the area to work, be self-employed or start a business? How will the Local Plan ensure that the right entrepreneurial space is available for students?

Town centres

Has the Local Plan done enough to protect the vulnerable retail sector in the time of the internet. Will town centre plans attract visitors and residents to shop, dine and be entertained?

Rosemary French OBE

The Gatwick Diamond Initiative, 55c Basepoint, Metcalf Way, Crawley, West Sussex, RH11 7XX

www.gatwickdiamond.co.uk

Surrey Chambers of Commerce supports businesses across Surrey helping them to deliver their objectives by connecting them, protecting them, promoting them and representing them. Our view is that if you have a successful business community it ensures that the whole area thrives. People need jobs both for survival but also for self-fulfilment and by creating local workplaces this also has a massive effect on work-life balance, keeping daily travel time to a minimum.

Epsom & Ewell Borough is a very vibrant part of our area with over 3500 businesses within a relatively small area. Although most business sectors are covered it does have a very specific strength in the racing sector (Both training and leisure facilities) Because of its proximity to London it is a great place to set up a business but it also means that locally skilled people are lost as they are encouraged to commute into London. There are excellent rail and road links enabling businesses to travel to meetings to do business.

In order to try and keep people local and to encourage inward investment there are a number of actions necessary;

- Create a great business environment with easy access to business premises, business support and affordable housing (not requiring the higher London pay rates)
- Provide some easy in easy out start up business facilities to encourage start-up businesses to locate in the Borough
- Ensure there is access to business advice for start-ups, growing companies and those looking to export.
- Make the Borough attractive for shopping and eating with good leisure facilities-really important for larger companies and young people.
- Improve the roads into and around Epsom town centre to ease congestion suffered by many businesses in the area.
- Specifically encourage young people to stay in the area or travel into the area to take up local jobs
- Campaign to get Epsom station included within Zone 6 area specifically making travel out of London into Epsom easier for shopping and working.
- Demonstrate investment in the locality to give confidence in Epsom & Ewell as a place to be based
- Maintain the green spaces
- Build on and exploit the differentiating factor of being the home of horse racing activities
- The Epsom BID is a key driver in some of the above actions and puts decision making in the hands of local businesses to make sure priorities are met.

To cover all of the actions requires strong partnership working from all parts of the community as well as bidding for funding from local Enterprise partnerships etc There is already a good relationship across business, education and public sector which can be built on.

Andy Willmott

Surrey Chambers of Commerce

www.surrey-chambers.co.uk