

STATEMENT OF COMMON GROUND

1. List of Parties involved:

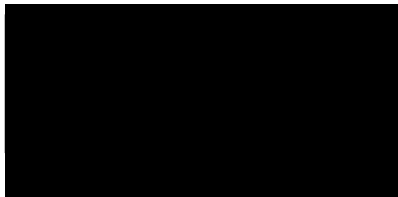
- Epsom & Ewell Borough Council (EEBC)
- Mole Valley District Council (MVDC)

2. Signatories:



28.07.21

*Epsom & Ewell Borough Council
Councillor David Reeve, Chair of Licensing and Planning Policy Committee*



14.06.21

*Mole Valley District Council
Councillor Margaret Cooksey, Cabinet Member for Planning*

3. Strategic Geography

The Statement of Common Ground (SOCG) is between the local authorities of Epsom & Ewell Borough Council (EBBC) and Mole Valley District Council (MVDC)

EBBC and MVDC share a common boundary within the Surrey County Council administrative area. The authorities have considerable economic and planning and physical linkages. Both authorities are in the Kingston and North East Surrey Housing Market Area and are similarly influenced by London in terms of the economy and overspill. In terms of planning, both authorities have extensive areas designated as Green Belt and both have areas of common land and heritage assets which constrain development. With regard to physical linkages, both authorities share Junction 9 of the M25 as their motorway access point, have the A24 as their spine roads, and share a principal railway line to London. There are cross-boundary natural environments as well as cross-boundary health and education functions. There is also significant out-migration from Epsom & Ewell borough to Mole Valley district.

Since the two local authorities are within the same Strategic Housing Market Area and share so many linkages and commonalities, it is beneficial to prepare a SOCG to deal with the strategic and locally specific cross-boundary issues identified.

Both authorities lie in separate Functional Economic Market Areas (FEMAs). However, both authorities are located within the Coast to Capital Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) Area and are partners of the Gatwick Diamond Initiative. They also share a strategic objective in the Surrey County Council Place Ambition document for improved connectivity in the Epsom and Leatherhead area.

The map below shows the authorities in relation to each other (with the black lines indicating administrative boundaries).



4. Strategic Matters

Both parties have identified the following as strategic matters of importance and agreements on positions are set out below:

Housing Need

Background

EEBC has yet to complete its housing capacity work but its local housing need is currently 577 new homes per year. MVDC has a local housing need figure of 456 new homes per year and has strived to meet its housing need figure in its Local Plan by (i) allocating town centre sites for housing-led redevelopment; (ii) adopting a policy of gentle densification on brownfield

sites; (iii) allocating outmoded office complexes for housing-led regeneration; (iv) de-designating Green Belt for housing; (v) allocating Green Belt sites in and around Hookwood for housing; and, (vi) amending village boundaries for housing development. MVDC has a local unmet need of c1,700 dwellings over its plan period 2020-2037.

The parties agree:

1. Due to constraints including the statutory Green Belt, and other primary constraints EEBC may not be able to meet its own housing need figure, let alone another authority's target.
2. Due to the fact that 76% of the district is designated as Green Belt and 45% is designated as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty or Area of Great Landscape Value and both its principal towns are Conservation Areas, MVDC is unable to meet its own local housing need in full and so cannot meet any unmet housing need which may arise from Epsom & Ewell borough.
3. Both authorities will seek to meet their own need for additional Gypsy and Traveller pitch provision.

Education

Background

There are significant linkages between the two authorities with (i) the admissions policy at St Andrews School in Ashted favouring children attending feeder primary schools, several of which are outside Mole Valley; (ii) much of Ashted is within the catchment area of Rosebery Girls School in EEBC; (iii) the most logical college-based, post-16 education for many Mole Valley teenagers being North East Surrey College of Technology (FE college in Ewell); and, (iv) the nearest tertiary education for many Mole Valley residents being the University for the Creative Arts in Epsom.

The parties agree:

4. Planning for education will require discussions across the two local authority areas with the involvement of Surrey County Council's Pupil Place Unit but SCC are currently suggesting that the primary and secondary pupil place growth arising from the MVDC Local Plan can be accommodated within the existing school estate.

Health

Background

There are significant linkages between both authorities with St Stephen's Practice having GP surgeries in both areas, Epsom residents using Leatherhead Community Hospital and Mole Valley residents using Epsom General Hospital.

The parties agree:

5. Planning for health provision will require discussions across the two authority areas, involving the Clinical Commissioning Groups and Surrey Downs Integrated Care Partnership and MVDC is allocating sites for enhanced healthcare provision in both Ashted and Leatherhead.

Transport

Background

Junction 9 of the M25 suffers capacity issues at peak times and hampers connectivity across the Epsom-Leatherhead sub-region.

The parties agree:

6. They will work with Surrey County Council and Highways England to identify ways to invest in the road network and improve connectivity across the Surrey 2050 Place Ambition's Strategic Opportunity Area 6: the Epsom-Leatherhead corridor, particularly improving movement through the main centres and enhancing connectivity between the main centres and with the M25 (Junction 9).

The Horse Racing Industry

Background

The horseracing industry is a significant employer in Epsom and north-eastern Mole Valley and racehorse training in and around Epsom is of national significance. Existing horseracing stables should be safeguarded from redevelopment to other uses unless it is proved conclusively that there is no prospect of them being used for racehorse training.

The parties agree:

7. They will work with the Jockey Club and Jockey Club Estates to ensure that racehorse training in Epsom and Ewell and Mole Valley has the conditions to thrive.
8. They will investigate extending MVDC's new Racehorse Training Zone, a designation within which horse racing stables and gallops are safeguarded, into Epsom and Ewell.

Non-Significant Matters in the Context of this Statement of Common Ground

The parties agree:

9. The following matters are defined in the National Planning Policy Framework as strategic matters but which are not significant in the context of this Statement of Common Ground:
 - Affordable housing, employment, retail and leisure;
 - Infrastructure for telecommunications, security, waste management, water supply, wastewater, flood risk, coastal change and the provision of minerals and energy (including heat);
 - Conservation and enhancement of the natural, built and historic environment, including landscapes and green infrastructure, and planning measures to address climate change mitigation and adaptation.

5. Governance Arrangements

The authorities are committed to working positively together, sharing information and best practice and continuing to procure evidence jointly, where appropriate, throughout the plan preparation phase and beyond. This co-operation and collaboration takes place at senior member, chief executive and senior officer as well as at technical officer level.

Joint working will include the following existing governance arrangements:

- The Surrey Place Ambition; and,
- The Surrey Planning Officers' Society; and

This Statement of Common Ground is signed at planning portfolio holder member/chair of Licensing and Planning Policy Committee level and will be reviewed at each key stage of plan-making. It will be updated to reflect progress made through effective cooperation.

In terms of governance, the authorities agree:

10. To continue to work with the other Gatwick Diamond authorities on housing, employment and other strategic issues affecting the Gatwick Diamond as a whole;
11. To continue to work collaboratively on plan preparation and evidence, whilst acknowledging others' timetables and timescales.
12. To respect each other's right to develop their own plans that fit the specific circumstances of the local authority's communities;
13. To meet at member and officer level to review the situation and respond to new issues and changing circumstances; and
14. To update this SoCG as progress continues through the preparation of the local plans and development plan documents for each of the authorities.