

WOODCOTE(EPSOM) RESIDENTS SOCIETY – DECEMBER UPDATE



Dear Resident

Best Wishes for your Christmas and New Year from the Woodcote (Epsom) Residents Society.

2025 is going to be an important one for Epsom & Ewell -with lots of change in the offing. Before we turn off our machines for a few days I wanted to take the opportunity to update you on three of those issues.

John Mumford

Chair, Woodcote (Epsom) Residents Society

Local Plan update – Good News and maybe future Bad News



First, some welcome good news before Christmas. Epsom & Ewell Borough Council at a meeting on 10 December approved the Proposed Submission Local Plan (2022-2040) which will

be available for public consultation from 20 December 2024 to 5 February 2024. It can be found [here](#) together with guidance on how to respond.

This is known as the Regulation 19 Consultation is the final opportunity for residents, visitors and local businesses to feedback on the plan and comment on whether it is legally compliant and sound in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework.

Commenting after the meeting, Councillor Peter O'Donovan, Chair of the Licensing and Planning Policy, said *"The Proposed Submission Local Plan provides a vision for our borough that strikes a balance between providing much needed homes including affordable housing, infrastructure, and support for local businesses whilst ensuring enhanced protection for biodiversity and our borough's green spaces, and protecting the valuable local heritage and character of our borough's towns and villages. It is challenging to find a path that meets the many different needs of all our communities, and not everyone may agree with every aspect of this plan. However, having listened to all the feedback, and examined the comprehensive evidence base, we feel strongly that this plan ensures that everyone in our borough, both now and in the future, is given the chance to thrive in Epsom & Ewell."*

Many of you will be aware of the campaign led by the Epsom Green Belt Group not to release any Green Belt land for housebuilding. Frankly this campaign group's case was never tenable in the face of the new Government's resolve to increase local house building targets and make these mandatory.

The Plan proposes 4,700 additional homes over the Local Plan period 2022-2040 including the strategic release of four green belt sites within the Horton area to provide 2,175 new homes. This should be compared to the Government's target against which this will be judged of 10,242 dwellings over the same period. Recent experience from Elmbridge Borough Council demonstrates the risks of preparing a Local Plan being based on a brownfield only approach to housing delivery resulting in a significant shortfall of housing. The Elmbridge Plan was required to be withdrawn by the Government appointed Planning Inspector in order that a number of Green Belt sites could be incorporated to help address the shortfall.

The Residents Association-led Council has taken a sensible, pragmatic decision to designate some Green Belt sites in the Horton area of the Borough for residential development on the basis that this will reduce the risk of the Epsom and Ewell Local Plan being found unsound by the Government Inspector. It also reduces the need for even higher density and high-rise development in and around Epsom town centre and elsewhere to make up the housing numbers. Nobody wants this Borough to lose its market town character and end up looking like Sutton or Croydon.

An up-to-date Local Plan should help protect Epsom and Ewell Borough from ad hoc and inappropriate development and ensure responsibility for future planning decisions remains with the borough and its communities. It provides a framework for where in the borough new development should go and where should be protected. Importantly, it will also help to tackle the housing crisis and deliver more homes that are deemed 'affordable' for our children and grand-children.

Meanwhile one aspect of the plan that WERS would be grateful for local residents views on is whether there any local green spaces areas that you particularly cherish and would wish to see protected through 'Local Green Space' designation? These spaces need to be:

- a) in reasonably close proximity to the community it serves;
- b) demonstrably special to a local community and holds a particular local significance, for example because of its beauty, historic significance, recreational value (including as a playing field), tranquillity or richness of its wildlife;
- c) local in character and is not an extensive tract of land.

WERS is keen to identify any more such areas in addition to the 2 already proposed for Woodcote & Langley Vale ward (Millennium Green, Woodcote Green Road and Abelea Green) in order that they also may be included in the Local Plan. Local Green Space is afforded the same protection as Green Belt and should thereby prevent unwelcome development.

The potentially bad news is that the Government has recently published a revised National Planning Policy Framework which increases this Borough's housing target from 10,242 dwellings to 16,002 dwellings for the period 2022-2040. This increased level of housebuilding will be expected to be incorporated in a future Local Plan for the Borough. The consequences of this and other Government announcements on possible Local Government re-organisation will be the subject of future bulletins.

2025 Derby Arrangements



40 Residents were at the Langley Vale Hall for the update on progress with the arrangements for the 2025 Derby Festival last Friday.

Epsom & Ewell Borough Councillors Steven McCormick and Bernice Froud led the meeting. We were also joined by Helen Maguire, our MP and Jim Allen, the new General Manager at Epsom Racecourse. The Borough Police Commander was unable to attend the meeting and had sent her apologies.

From January there will be monthly meetings leading up to Derby Week itself and Councillor McCormick is hopeful that the Borough Police Commander will attend all these meetings.

Most of the meeting was spent reporting progress on actions agreed in July.

Key points to note are:

1. Epsom & Ewell Borough Council has a consultation on a proposed Public Spaces Protection Order (PSPO). It is open until 5 January 2025 and all residents are encouraged to respond to the consultation. If implemented the PSPO would remove the need for a temporary dispersal order for Derby Week. [The consultation is here.](#)
2. The Police have confirmed to Epsom Racecourse that Langley Vale will form part of their security plan for Derby Week in 2025.
3. The Racecourse General Manager and Steven McCormick have a meeting planned with representatives of the travelling community to discuss arrangements for Derby Week and build a shared understanding of the impact of recent incidents on Langley Vale Residents.

Further actions agreed included:

1. Borough Councillors exploring with Epsom Racecourse/Jockey Club responsibility for damage caused to residents' property by members of the public attending the Derby.
2. The Residents Society liaising with other Residents Associations bordering the Downs in Reigate & Banstead borough to share intelligence/lessons learned and coordinate reporting.
3. Clarifying with the Police exactly what actions they were actually going to take to improve reporting of incidents (in particular involving firearms) and how they were going to provide better protection for residents and their properties in Derby week.
4. Ensuring coordination between the different Police forces in Surrey which support the Derby event.
5. Building relationships between the Police, the travelling community and Langley Vale Village.
6. Re-building relationships between the Police and Langley Vale residents

It was recognized that if the Derby is considered a World Class Event it required World Class support and resourcing – which is currently squeezed.

Delivery Moped Issues in Epsom & Ewell

Local residents have expressed growing concerns about the impact of delivery moped riders on safety and the community. In response, a motion was presented by Councillor Steven McCormick at the recent Epsom & Ewell Borough Council meeting to address these pressing issues.

The Motion read:

The Council notes that home delivery via motorcycles and pedal cycles from takeaway outlets is increasingly popular. This trend responds to customer demand, contributes to the local economy, and provides employment opportunities for delivery drivers. However, it has also led to some unintended consequences that need to be addressed to ensure the benefits of delivery services are balanced with the need for community safety including:

- Parking Issues: Delivery drivers frequently resort to inconsiderate, dangerous, and illegal parking on pavements, which endangers pedestrians and disrupts shoppers.
- Pavement Riding: Instances of motorcycles being ridden on and across pavements have been reported, causing safety concerns.

The key actions agreed by the Council were:

1. Planning for the Future:

- The Epsom & Ewell Local Planning Authority (LPA) consider the requirements for motorcycle parking in new retail developments and changes of use applications
- Develop necessary policies and supplementary planning documents to support this requirement.

2. Engaging Delivery Companies:

- Write to delivery companies such as Uber Eats, Deliveroo, and Just Eat to highlight the issues caused by pavement parking and riding.
- Convene a round-table meeting with delivery companies to discuss best practice guidelines for delivery riders operating in Epsom & Ewell.

3. Enforcement and Collaboration:

- Work closely with partners, including the Police and Surrey County Council, to enforce current parking restrictions and identify measures to discourage motorised vehicles from accessing footways.

4. Parking Solutions:

- Identify and highlight current parking areas that can be accessed and used by delivery riders.
- Explore the potential for new alternative parking areas to support responsible rider behaviour.

All the actions will involve collaboration with stakeholders, including residents, businesses, and delivery riders, to develop fair and effective policies. If you would like **to contribute your thoughts or report issues related to delivery mopeds, please email smccormick@epsom-ewell.gov.uk**.