

EPSOM AND EWELL BOROUGH COUNCIL

# LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK

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CORE STRATEGY: ISSUES AND OPTIONS



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## SUMMARY OF ISSUES

TOPIC	ISSUES
Sustainability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How can the Council make development more sustainable?</li> </ul>
Green Belt	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Should the Green Belt boundary be altered to meet development needs?</li> </ul>
Housing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Where should new housing development be located?</li> <li>• How much should be affordable?</li> <li>• Is there sufficient infrastructure to support it?</li> </ul>
Travel	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What can the Council do to improve accessibility within the Borough?</li> <li>• Are there ways in which the need to travel can be reduced?</li> </ul>
Employment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What type of employment uses should the Council promote?</li> <li>• How much employment should be provided within the Borough?</li> <li>• Where should this employment be located?</li> <li>• What employment uses should be retained?</li> <li>• Should some areas be identified for retention due to their importance for employment purposes?</li> <li>• How can the Council reduce the need to travel to work?</li> </ul>
Community / recreational / cultural facilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is there sufficient variety and geographical spread of good quality community/recreational/cultural facilities provided within the Borough?</li> </ul>
Epsom Town Centre, and local centres	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What kind of town centre should the Council be seeking?</li> <li>• What should be the roles of the local centres?</li> </ul>
Quality of Life	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What design principles should be used to enhance the viability, vitality and attractiveness of communities and centres, and provide a consistent approach to development and conservation throughout the Borough?</li> <li>• What measures can be introduced to decrease levels of anti-social behaviour?</li> </ul>

## **A) SUSTAINABILITY**

Planning has a key role in shaping the place in which we live and supporting the implementation of environmental, social and economic objectives, with the overall aim of producing sustainable communities for all.

The Council produced a Sustainability Strategy in 2001, the principles of which have been incorporated into the Community Strategy.

It identifies a number of key issues:

- Environmental responsibility (conserving energy, recycling etc)
- Providing a quality, non-polluting and accessible transport choice
- Character and vitality of the local area (including noise, air quality, litter, anti-social behaviour)
- Raising awareness and improving skills (education, skills, training)
- Healthy lifestyles (housing, open spaces, quality of life)

The Government's Sustainable Communities Plan (February 2002) and the new Planning Policy Statement 1: Delivering Sustainable Development, promotes re-use of previously developed land, mixed-use development, higher housing densities, sufficient service infrastructure and more inclusive communities.

There are two key elements to these documents:

- Development should be in sustainable locations
- The development itself should be sustainable using new technology and methods of construction

### **Issues:**

**How can the Council make development more sustainable?**

### **Options**

1. Policies should be introduced to encourage energy efficient developments / use of renewable energy, even if they cost more
2. Policies should be included that encourage biodiversity (the range of wildlife supported by our environment)
3. Policies to protect environmental resources
4. Policies to ensure the delivery of adequate service infrastructure, such as water supply, sewerage, electricity, gas, ICT networks etc
5. Development should be concentrated in areas with good access to public transport and on previously developed land

## **B) GREEN BELT**

The Green Belt, which surrounds most of Epsom and Ewell, forms part of the large Metropolitan Green Belt around London. 42% of the Borough's land is designated as Green Belt being rich in wildlife and providing important recreational opportunities. The Borough's open spaces are greatly valued not only by local residents, but also by nearby Londoners.

The fundamental aim of the Green Belt (as set out in PPG2) is to:

- Check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas
- Prevent neighbouring towns from merging into one another
- Assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment
- Preserve the setting and special character of historic towns
- Assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land

These principles are enshrined in Government guidance.

Once approved, the boundaries of a Green Belt can be altered only in exceptional circumstances. If such an alteration is proposed, the Secretary of State has to be satisfied that the local authority has considered opportunities for development within the urban areas contained by and beyond the Green Belt.

### **Issues:**

**Should the Green Belt boundary be altered to meet development needs?**

### **Options**

1. Make no amendment to the Green Belt boundary and to continue to apply rigorously the controls over development within the Green Belt
2. Provide for some development in the Green Belt in recognition that some uses cannot operate within the urban area but require a location in the countryside such as racehorse training facilities

## **C) HOUSING**

- The Surrey Structure Plan requires Epsom and Ewell to provide 3,000 new residential dwellings between 2001 and 2016 (200 per annum).
- The South East Plan will be replacing the Surrey Structure Plan, allocating the new housing distribution at district level from 2006 to 2026.
- Epsom and Ewell's current target of 200 new dwellings a year may be increased.

The Borough is currently meeting Structure Plan requirements in providing market housing (813 dwellings have been constructed in the first 4 years of this period).

The buoyant housing market has resulted in high house prices which are out of reach of many local people, for example, young adults living with parents because they cannot afford to buy or rent. A key challenge is to meet (unmet) housing need through the provision of affordable housing, e.g. social housing or shared ownership, for people with lower incomes.

### **Issues:**

**Where should new housing development be located?**

**How much should be affordable?**

### **Options**

1. Promote higher densities in more sustainable locations (in areas with good local services, such as public transport provision and local shops)
2. Where should new housing be located (open spaces, conversion of vacant office premises, other vacant / under-utilised sites or properties, redevelopment of existing housing, infill sites - such as partial development of large gardens, town centre mixed-use schemes)?
3. In the order of 40% of the total number of housing units should be affordable on sites of 15 or more units or involving 0.5 hectare or more of land (in line with current Council policy)
4. 40% of all new housing in the Borough should be affordable (in line with the adopted Surrey Structure Plan, and emerging regional and sub-regional strategies). Also lower the current threshold (on sites of 15 dwellings or 0.5 hectare) to which this contribution will apply
5. Seek contributions from sheltered accommodation and commercial development in the form of commuted sums towards affordable housing

## D) TRAVEL

The Government is promoting modes of travel other than car use. Increases in road traffic have produced unsustainable levels of congestion and pollution. The effects are felt at a local level through poorer air quality, noise, busier roads, and at a global level through climate change. Journeys by road are becoming slower and more unreliable, causing problems for business and stress to drivers. Congestion costs Surrey businesses an estimated £600 million per year.

- There is an average of 1.37 cars per household in the Borough (above the national average of 1.1 cars per household).
- 54% of residents in the Borough travel by car or van to work

PPG13 seeks to integrate planning and transport policy at all levels with a view to promoting sustainable transport choices, while reducing the need to travel.

### **Issues:**

**What can the Council do to improve accessibility within the Borough?  
Are there ways in which the need to travel can be reduced?**

### **Options**

1. Give greater priority to improving public transport, walking and cycling facilities
2. Encourage businesses, schools and other organisations to adopt Green Travel Plans and mechanisms to ensure the policing of such measures (action plans to reduce reliance on the car and promote alternative forms of transport)
3. Adopt car parking standards for residential and commercial property that:
  - (a) Are in line with Government's maximum limits as set out in PPG3 and PPG13

OR

- (b) Provide less spaces than the Government's maximum limits

## **E) EMPLOYMENT**

The Borough of Epsom and Ewell is predominantly residential with good public transport access to London.

Employment within the Borough is primarily based around Epsom Town Centre, Nonsuch and Longmead Business Parks, Ewell Village and Stoneleigh Broadway though found in a range of premises: schools, hospitals, offices, industrial units, shops and leisure centres.

- 70.5% of people aged 16 to 74 in the Borough of Epsom & Ewell are classified as economically active. This is higher than the national average of 66.9%.
- 1.8% of economically active residents in Epsom & Ewell are unemployed, considerably lower than the England average (3.3%).
- 20,364 (61%) of Epsom & Ewell's working residents are employed outside the Borough, while 53% of jobs in Borough are filled by non-EEBC residents commuting into the Borough.
- There are 30,491 jobs (as at 2002) in the Borough and 33,199 residents aged 16-74 who work (as at 2001), meaning there is approximately a ratio of 1.09 workers to every job.

### **Issues:**

**What type of employment uses should the Council promote?**

**How much employment should be provided within the Borough?**

**Where should this employment be located?**

**What employment uses should be restrained?**

**Should some areas be identified for retention due to their importance for employment purposes?**

**How can the Council reduce the need to travel to work?**

### **Options**

1. Offices and other employment uses should be concentrated in the town centre and industrial estates
2. New offices and employment use development should only be permitted in existing commercial areas, sympathetic to adjacent uses
3. Such development could also be located in areas with good access to public transport
4. Encourage working from home
5. Encourage the growth of the horseracing industry
6. There is a need for additional hotel accommodation in the Borough

## **F) COMMUNITY / RECREATIONAL / CULTURAL FACILITIES**

Community/recreational/cultural facilities includes a broad range of services: schools, hospitals, doctor surgeries, clinics, libraries, museums, gyms, sports centres, outdoor sports facilities, open spaces, community centres, day centres, places of worship, theatres, cinemas and the like.

Infrastructure goes beyond the scope of roads and gas, electricity, water and telecommunications networks, to including such facilities as those listed above, especially schools and medical premises.

Facilities valued by the Borough's communities add to the quality of life of the local residents.

### **Issues:**

**Is there sufficient variety and geographical spread of good quality community / recreational / cultural facilities provided within the Borough?**

### **Options**

1. Is there sufficient number of community/recreational/cultural facilities provided within the Borough?
2. What type of facilities should the Council promote?
3. Where should these facilities be located?
4. How can these facilities be made fully available and accessible to all Epsom and Ewell residents, and visitors to the Borough?
5. Encourage the dual use of private facilities to make them available to the wider public

## **G) EPSOM TOWN CENTRE AND LOCAL CENTRES**

Epsom town centre is one of the more important town centres in Surrey being the main centre within the Borough. It caters for a wide range of people and their needs, though has to compete with nearby larger centres, such as Kingston and Sutton.

The Government promotes town centre development in preference to other locations:

- Mixed uses to facilitate linked trips, reducing the need to travel
- Concentrating the town's retail offering within its centre, or if necessary on the edge of town, to improve their vitality and viability

Local centres provide a necessary service for convenience shopping, meeting local needs on a daily basis. There are 19 local centres within the Borough of varying sizes.

### **Issues:**

**What kind of town centre should the Council be seeking?  
What should be the roles of the local centre?**

### **Options**

1. Promote a mix of uses in the town centre (retail, offices, residential, leisure, other community facilities)
2. Improve the safety and attractiveness of the environment (landscaping, street furniture, public art, pedestrian paths and crossings etc)
3. Limit the number of bars/pubs in the town centre
4. Safeguard and promote shops in local centres
5. Permit change of use from shops to restaurants/takeaways in preference to shop units remaining vacant, especially in local centres

## H) QUALITY OF LIFE

As well as community/recreational/cultural facilities, the quality of life within communities, can be improved by adopting and implementing design led development.

Such approaches have been encouraged through Lord Rogers' report "Towards an Urban Renaissance" (1999); a Government report "Our Towns and Cities: The Future – Delivering Urban Renaissance" (2000); a private sector report endorsed by Government called "Urban Design Compendium" (2000); and various publications by the Government's architecture champion, the Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment (CABE).

The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 provides Local Authorities with more powers to compulsorily purchase land for assembling land. Such powers are used in specific circumstances to facilitate regeneration, not for housing development in residential areas.

### **Issues:**

**What design principles should be used to enhance the viability, vitality and attractiveness of communities and centres, and provide a consistent approach to development and conservation throughout the Borough?**

**What measures can be introduced to decrease levels of anti-social behaviour?**

### **Options**

1. Applications for significant developments should include a detailed design statement explaining and justifying the design
2. Where deemed appropriate, compulsory purchase powers may be used to assemble a site for regeneration purposes, enhancing the site's use and appearance
3. An application should be accompanied by a statement showing how it complies with "Designing out Crime" guidance