

*A bright future
for the Borough*

Epsom and Ewell Local Strategic Partnership



***A BRIGHTER FUTURE FOR
EPSOM AND EWELL***

**SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY STRATEGY
2010-2022**



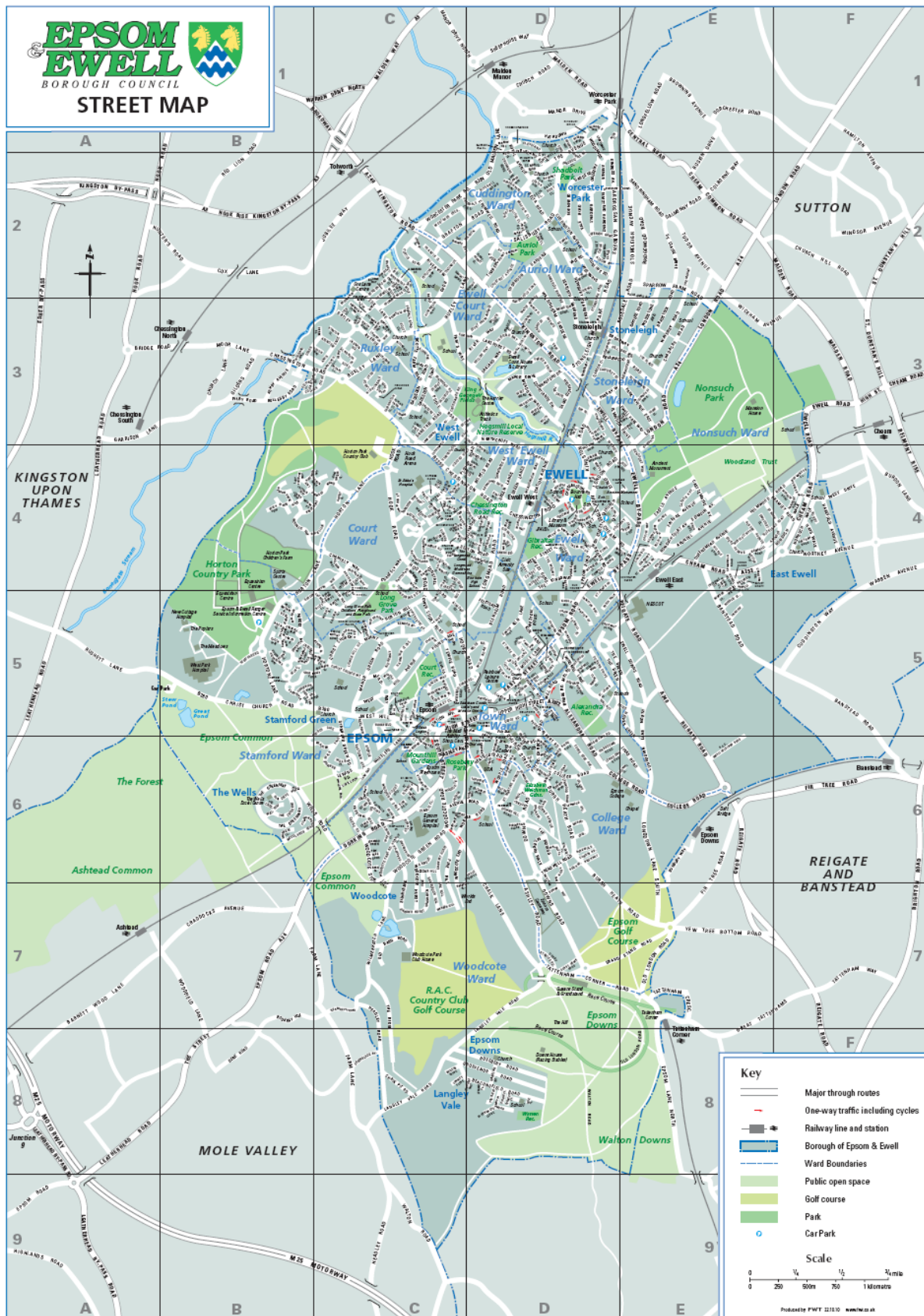
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THE FUTURE OF EPSOM AND EWELL

Map of Epsom and Ewell



Introduction to the Borough

Epsom & Borough Council's ambition is:

"To maintain and develop those distinctive characteristics that make living and working in Epsom and Ewell a matter of conscious choice and, in conjunction with others, provide quality and innovative services that are based on the identified priorities of our residents"

This Strategy looks at the future for Epsom and Ewell. It sets out how the Borough's many positive aspects will be developed and how the issues and challenges faced by the Borough will be met through partnership working. It also recognises the need to relate activities to the policies and priorities at county, regional and national level. In particular, the Strategy has a close relationship with the Surrey-wide Community Strategy.

The Local Development Framework for the Borough serves as a local delivery mechanism but partnership working will also deliver actions to meet local needs.

About Epsom and Ewell Borough

The Borough of Epsom and Ewell is in Surrey, 15 miles southwest of London. It is the smallest district in Surrey, with a population of around 72,000. Although the majority of people live in the urban areas of Epsom, Ewell and Stoneleigh, large areas to the south of the borough are protected open space.

There is a larger than average older people population. There are low levels of deprivation, with low levels of unemployment and high wages. People have above average qualifications. The ethnicity of the area is mostly white. However, the number of Black or Minority Ethnic residents is above average for the South East. The health of people is generally good and life expectancy is high, but life expectancy is lower for those living in more deprived areas.

Epsom Racecourse is internationally famous for being the venue of the Epsom Derby race meeting and the racehorse training industry has a local economic significance. Epsom is now a university town with the elevation of the University for the Creative Arts to its new status. North East Surrey College of Technology provides both further and higher education. The Borough provides the base for a number of national and international businesses and has an important local general hospital.

The Borough benefits from a significant area of open space including Epsom Downs, Nonsuch Park, Epsom Common, Horton Country Park and the Hogsmill Open Space, along with a number of Borough Council managed parks and recreation grounds and the privately owned RAC Club. This is particularly striking in a Borough with such easy accessibility to the advantages of London and the wider South East and used both by local residents and others.

Epsom and Ewell Today - Strengths, opportunities and challenges

The Borough is in many ways a successful place. It is popular with its residents, providing a very pleasant environment in which to live and work.

One of the most striking things about the Borough is the pleasantness of the environment and the extent to which the Borough is blessed with large areas of green and open land within it and in adjacent Boroughs. This open space is highly valued by local residents and provides the benefit of a range of ecological habitats.

However, there will be pressure in the future to provide more housing and an appropriate balance must be achieved between the preservation of the green environment and the social needs of the Borough in the form of suitable and affordable housing. This could mean higher densities in some parts and the use of certain open space in others.

In addition to its visible, physical appearance, the Borough benefits from a community that is relatively healthy, prosperous and well-educated and that is socially-minded and concerned about its maintenance. Residents recognise that measures will need to be taken to ensure its future, appreciating the obligation to support certain groups and communities having particular needs.

Epsom & Ewell is a highly accessible location but there is significant pressure on the road network given the high volume of traffic flowing both into and through the Borough.

There are opportunities to help meet global climate change objectives at the local level through a range of measures, including the development of more sustainable low-carbon buildings, encouraging sustainable travel patterns and the use of renewable and low carbon energy sources.

In summary there are a number of challenges that will need to be faced to preserve its position but there are also opportunities open to the Borough to develop its current characteristics, benefits and status.

These are examined in more detail in the following section.

Housing



Strengths

There is a varied housing stock offering a wide range of accommodation, albeit expensive relative to many other areas. New housing developments in recent years have been reasonably well integrated into the existing housing stock. Rosebery Housing Association is the principal provider of social/affordable housing but there are a number of other social landlords operating in the Borough.

Challenges/Opportunities

The Borough tends to lose many of its young people and families because of the cost of housing. The average cost of a home is over £360,000, relative to a UK average of £246,000 (Land Registry figures - July-September 2010).

There is a commitment to provide new housing, some of which will need to be of the "affordable" category. The mix of local housing should provide for a balanced social community and also ensure that employment needs are met. Delivering the target whilst preserving the things that make the Borough special will be challenging, though.

There are opportunities for new housing to be built to higher energy efficiency standards. There will be challenges to retrofit such advances within our existing housing stock, thereby encouraging people to individually contribute to cutting carbon whilst making savings in their energy bills.

Meeting the housing needs of older people and students will provide particular challenges in the future.

The opportunity for new housing development on the vacant psychiatric hospital sites is coming to an end. There is a challenge to reduce the number of empty houses and flats (particularly those above shops) in order to increase the supply of available homes.

The Local Development Framework provides a key document in setting out how the housing needs of the Borough will be provided for.

Population make-up, Health & Social Care



Strengths

Health is good, indicated by the overall rates of mortality:

Life expectancy - male 79.9 (England average 77.7)

Life expectancy - female 84.4 (England average 81.8)

(NHS Borough Health Profile 2009)

Challenges/Opportunities

The population is changing and the older component of the population tends to be a demanding and dependent one.

16% of its population aged 65+

5% of its population aged 80+ (ONS 2008)

Epsom & Ewell is a diverse community with nearly 20% fall outside the category of "White British" (ONS data 2007). The Borough has two super output areas* that figure within the Top 20 most deprived in Surrey (one in Court Ward and one in Ruxley Ward) whereas overall the Borough is one of the least deprived areas in England (DCLG IMD 2007).

Whilst most of the residents of the Borough have work, enjoy good health, and live in areas that are attractive and enjoyable, a small proportion in some particular areas do not benefit from these advantages. Sustaining the mental and physical health of all the residents, and ensuring we have a community where people enjoy living, will be a challenge.

A mix of technological change, varied working practices, a move to GP commissioning consortia and funding pressures will mean that health service delivery will be different in the future. However, educating people about the need to move health services into the community and also the provision of support in the home for carers will be important factors. Epsom General Hospital currently provides a centre for health care and could evolve to provide a focal point for the delivery of some of the new health and social care services.

Encouraging walking and cycling to increase physical activity and improve health would provide an added benefit of reducing reliance on motorised travel.

*These are areas smaller than a Ward with data collected that allows national comparisons.

Employment and economic development



Strengths

Current levels of unemployment for the Borough are low relative to other parts of the country. Many people of working age have jobs, and the Borough enjoys the fruits of relative affluence.

Epsom & Ewell Constituency	1.6%
England average	3.5%

(July 2010 figures - source NOMIS)

Challenges/Opportunities

The economic prosperity on which the Borough depends is based on a mix of jobs. These are to be found either via local employers or through work outside of the Borough that requires longer commuting. A significant number either commute into, or out of, the Borough for work. This is to be expected for any location on the edge of London, but a wider range of employment closer to home for all ages would be welcome, given the benefits for the environment and the local economy.

The retail centres have been comparatively healthy in the past and the smaller shopping areas such as Ewell Village, Stoneleigh and West Ewell remain vibrant.

Retail centres will continue to be under pressure from the larger neighbouring commercial centres like Kingston, Sutton and Croydon, all of which are larger. The retail activity will also be potentially eroded by wider changes like internet shopping.

Areas of focus for Epsom & Ewell could include:

- supporting new and established SMEs, particularly focused on innovation, and building on sectoral opportunities including creativity, tourism and racing
- skills development for young people and adults
- analysing Epsom's position within the local economic geography and making the case for the town as a key location within the functioning economic area
- optimising the positive benefits arising from Epsom Market

Education and training – schools and colleges



Strengths

Schools are good and the Borough benefits from a number of further and higher education establishments (e.g. North East Surrey College of Technology - NESCOL, University for the Creative Arts - UCA, Laine Theatre Arts).

The local schools and colleges provide a sound basis for providing the education and skills for the future, for example:

%pupils gaining 5+ A*-C GCSEs incl. English and Maths in 2009

Epsom & Ewell Constituency 75%

England 70%

Challenges/Opportunities

The pattern of achievement across the Borough is not consistent as not all of our young people are achieving the same level of good qualifications. In Court & Ruxley Wards 66% of pupils achieved 5 A*-C, whereas in Nonsuch Ward this was 100%.

NESCOL and UCA are strong Further/Higher Education assets for the Borough, but there is scope to make more of the contribution, e.g. to build on links with the fashion, creative arts and technology industries, as well as important local cultural facilities such as Laine Theatre Arts.

There is also the opportunity to develop these associations to encourage the instigation of new start-up businesses, generating local employment and supporting the Borough's economy. This would retain talent and strengthen the economic base of the Borough.

Transport



Strengths

Transport links are good, by road and rail both into London and out of it. The M25 is close and readily accessible from the Borough.

Challenges/Opportunities

Car ownership and usage is high and encouraging more sustainable travel patterns will be a challenge.

One of the consequences of relative affluence is traffic congestion, particularly in Epsom Town Centre.

No major new transport infrastructure is expected in the next decade, although the Kiln Lane Link Road would relieve congestion if it is funded at some time in the future. The Local Development Framework sets out a series of changes to the highway network that will improve the shopping environment across Epsom Town Centre. These could be achieved without the need for new major transport infrastructure.

Efforts will need to be made to improve public transport links and facilities, combined with an enhanced environment for pedestrians and cyclists. This will provide clear and safe opportunities for movement around the Borough. Achieving the optimum traffic management solution will be a challenge and this will include work on such aspects as:

- the parking strategy - the provision of car parks and the charges levied, along with the residents' parking scheme
- accessible services and facilities
- a balanced mix of housing and employment locations
- improved provision for walking and cycling
- improved public transport

Environment, sustainability and amenities



Strengths

The very green nature of the Borough, which local people greatly value, needs to be nurtured, as the quality of the environment can be lost so easily. Over a half of the Borough is open space, with some 42% protected as Green Belt land. The open space has special characteristics and Epsom Common, Horton Country Park and Epsom & Walton Downs are protected for their ecological value. Nonsuch Park and the Hogsmill Open Space are of strategic importance, given their proximity to urban developments. Green infrastructure plays a useful role in helping to mitigate against the adverse impacts of climate change, in addition to encouraging local biodiversity.

The built environment is of high quality in general with many buildings of particular character and value and a significant proportion within the various Conservation Areas.

Challenges/opportunities

However, there will be pressure to develop land to provide additional, and more affordable, housing. This will give rise to a need to secure a sensible balance between the protection of open space, along with the existing built environment, and meeting the future housing needs. There should be a mix of new homes being provided, including affordable housing. This should be located close to amenities and public transport.

Most of the open space is of high quality. However some, such as Priest Hill, is in poorer condition. A number of buildings, particularly some business premises in retail centres, could have their appearance improved.

The Local Development Framework is a key document in setting out the approach to balancing the protection of the open space with the development needs, particularly for housing. There will be a challenge to retain the architectural quality whilst ensuring that any new building is of an equivalent or even better standard.

The Borough faces both challenges and opportunities in relation to climate change and the use of renewable and low-carbon energy generating sources. Plan E identifies possibilities for Epsom Town Centre retailers and other businesses given its variety of uses across the day.

Crime and Community safety



Strengths

Crime and disorder is low and crime rates in the Borough are, in the main, falling.

Total notifiable offences in the Borough

2006/07 4987

2009/10 4123

The Community Safety Partnership has achieved considerable success in reducing some of the "environmental" crimes, such as graffiti.

Challenges/Opportunities

Efforts will be needed to continue the trend in reducing crime and disorder and some areas tend to be see more problems than others.

Residents' perceptions of crime, and concerns over the safety of their environment, are issues that are of particular importance.

The migration of crime and criminals from London is a significant factor. Epsom Town Centre continues to present a challenge as a locality where crime levels are higher than the rest of the Borough.

There are a number of "hidden" problems and incidents of domestic abuse are one particular area that will need to be handled sensitively.

The quality of the local environment depends on successfully tackling crime and anti-social behaviour by a minority of the population. Engaging the local community in supporting the work of the formal agencies is an important element of community safety.

Older residents and other vulnerable people can be more vulnerable to some types of crimes and so will need particular support.

Vision for the way forward



The Local Strategic Partnership has looked at the way that Epsom and Ewell can respond to the current challenges and the opportunities for the future. In doing so it recognises that it will need to reconcile various tensions and competing values. The aim will be to build on the successes and the benefits of living in the Borough today, as the Council's own ambition suggests.

This will be a continuing process as external and internal circumstances present further challenges and opportunities.

The Local Strategic Partnership has identified the following topics as areas for future focus and partnership working:

- The visual appearance of the surroundings, both in terms of the natural and the built environment
- The commitment to maintain and enhance our sustainable communities, through a mix of uses that allow our residents, businesses, employees and visitors to live, work and play
- The ability to get around (including the use of the existing transport and traffic infrastructure, car movements and alternative means of travel)
- The promotion of community safety and the enhancing of public confidence, recognising the formal position and responsibilities of the Borough's Community Safety Partnership
- The support for particular communities (children & young people, older people and the disabled, the disadvantaged and pockets of relative deprivation)
- Social change and the achievement of a balanced demography
- Economic prosperity
- Improving Epsom Town Centre and maintaining other local centres

Delivering the Vision



The Local Strategic Partnership has looked at the way in which the Vision can be achieved and the implications this has for partnership working in the future. In developing its Strategy it has considered three distinct sources of information:

- 1) The views of its local residents established via surveys
- 2) The Surrey-level strategic priorities
- 3) The views and priorities of the constituent partner organisations, including the democratically-elected community representatives

1) Views of local residents

In the case of the first source, the following issues were stated to be of particular significance (Epsom & Ewell Place Survey 2008, reported in 2009 and Epsom & Ewell BC's Citizens' Panel 2009). In some cases a comparison is made with a similar survey of the residents carried out in 2004.

What is important in making Epsom & Ewell a good place to live?

- Low level of crime
- Good Health services
- Clean streets
- Parks and open spaces
- Education provision

What needs improving?

- Traffic congestion
- Road and pavement repairs
- Activities for teenagers
- Affordable decent housing

What has become worse since 2004?

- Community spirit and neighbourliness
- Availability of hospital services and care of the elderly
- Commercial/employment/economic issues (including the variety of shops in Epsom, jobs/unemployment and business opportunities)



Residents' priorities

- **Environmental concerns**
 - Condition of the roads
 - Condition of pavements
 - Level of litter
- **Social concerns**
 - Community spirit
 - Supporting young people into adulthood
 - Services for the elderly
- **Transport concerns**
 - Level of traffic
 - Parking (residential and for shopping/work)
- **Crime & anti-social behaviour concerns**
 - General anti-social behaviour
 - Alcohol-related problems in general
 - Alcohol-related problems in Epsom Town Centre

The LSP recognises that some of these issues fall solely or principally to one particular agency. In this case it will not figure any further in this document and will only be picked up by the LSP if there is seen to be a need because of problems.

The LSP will focus on those areas that it considers a priority and that can only be tackled by joint action through a number of agencies.

2) The Surrey-level strategic priorities and the Local Area Agreement

The Surrey Sustainable Community Strategy, *Standing Up For Surrey*, sets out the Surrey Strategic Partnership's longer term goals and plans to make Surrey a better place to live, work and do business in.

The wider County strategy is built around five themes, namely;

- Children and Young People
- Health and Wellbeing

- Housing, Infrastructure and Environment
- Safer and Stronger Communities
- Economic Development

To ensure greater symmetry with the wider Sustainable Community Strategy the Borough's Sustainable Community Strategy has broadly adopted the themes above to form the framework for its own strategy.

Where relevant the Epsom & Ewell LSP will look to support the delivery of the targets of the County-wide plan.

On the other hand, Epsom & Ewell's LSP expects to secure support from the Surrey Strategic Partnership in the delivery of the desired outcomes it has for the Borough.

3) The views and priorities of the constituent partner organisations

In order to develop this Sustainable Community Strategy a conference was held on 2 December 2009 at which LSP partners discussed the future issues and the actions to be taken to respond to them. These have been drawn together under 5 main topic headings:

- **Children & Young People**
- **Health Housing and Well-being**
- **Economic Well-being**
- **Environment and Sustainability**
- **Safer & Stronger Communities**

The initial priorities and areas for action are set out in the attached Annexe. The topics have been selected given the challenges and opportunities set out in the first part of this document.

In addition to the 5 themes set out above, the LSP has recognised that there are a number of cross-cutting issues that do not sit within one of the identified topic areas. These are:

- **Equality & Diversity** - access to services and community cohesion
- **Work in areas of relative disadvantage** - Court & Ruxley Wards
- **Communication and engagement with the public** - on the broader aspects of the LSP's work (and as distinct from the work at Thematic Partnership level)

Action Planning and setting targets

There will be an annual action planning process to support this Strategy. Work will also take place to identify the specific indicators and targets that will form the basis of performance management in the future by the LSP.

Delivering the Strategy

The LSP has identified that two mechanisms will be needed to deliver the vision. This will involve:

1. Partner Resources

- a. Staff time
- b. Money

AND

2. Epsom & Ewell's Local Development Framework (LDF)

For the first point, partner agencies will use this Strategy as a key document when considering their own respective individual policies, strategies and investment decisions.

It will influence service planning and resource use in the future of all partners so that the shorter-term actions can be delivered and the longer term objectives achieved.

For the second point, the LDF replaces the Borough Plan and comprises the Core Strategy, supported by other detailed documents. It sets out the Spatial Plan for the Borough and its stated objective is *'To create a strong, safe and prosperous community'*.

The delivery of the LDF, either through the facilitation of growth or the intervention of the Council and its partners in the planning & development process, will help achieve the Vision. In turn, this Strategy will influence the development of the future planning policies and documents that will be produced as part of the ongoing LDF process.

The Strategy will also be used to influence "higher level" decision making at county, region and national level to ensure that inward investment is secured to deliver the objectives. It will therefore be supported by, and link to, a wide variety of other policy documents.

The role of Voluntary, Community & Faith Sector

The LSP has also recognised that the work of the Voluntary, Community & Faith Sector will be critical to the delivery of this Strategy in order to complement the work of the public sector agencies and businesses.

This will be particularly relevant during a period in which the funding available to public sector agencies is likely to be very constrained.

THE FUTURE OF EPSOM AND EWELL

Annexe - Thematic Partnerships and Emerging priorities for LSP action (August 2010)

