

LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK

CORE STRATEGY

Preferred Options



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INTRODUCTION

Core Strategy

Following the commencement of the Planning & Compulsory Purchase Act on 28 September 2004, Local Authorities throughout England must replace their existing Local Plans with a new, local policy plan, known as a Local Development Framework. Further guidance is set out in the national policy document “Planning Policy Statement 12”. The Local Development Framework, often referred to as a LDF, comprises a number of Local Development Documents including:

- Development Plan Documents (DPDs)
- Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs)
- Statement of Community Involvement (SCI)
- Local Development Scheme (LDS)
- Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report
- Annual Monitoring Report (AMR)

Further information on each of the above is provided on the Council’s website (www.epsom-ewell.gov.uk).

There are a number of Development Plan Documents that the Council is proposing to produce, the key one being the Core Strategy. All the other Development Plan Documents and Supplementary Planning Documents must conform with the policies set out in the Core Strategy. In essence, this document provides the link between the Council’s Community Strategy and the detailed planning policies within the Development Plan Documents and Supplementary Planning Documents. The Core Strategy adopts the Borough’s vision and objectives from the Community Strategy, and seeks to develop policies to deliver those aspirations.

Preparation of the Core Strategy

There are 5 key stages to the preparation process of any Development Plan Document. The stages for the preparation of the Core Strategy Development Plan Document are detailed below:

1. Issues & Options June-July 2005
2. Preferred Options January-February 2006
3. Submission June 2006
4. Examination December 2006
5. Adoption September 2007

The first 3 stages incorporate a 6-week consultation period, during which time specific and general consultees, other stakeholders and interested parties and the general public have an opportunity to comment on the papers produced. This current stage is known as the 'Preferred Options', which sets the strategic direction of this Development Plan Document. It falls between the 'Issues & Options' (which identified the key issues facing the Borough and possible options for tackling those issues and was consulted upon from 3 June to 15 July 2005,) and the 'Submission', programmed for June 2006. Following consultation on the 'Issues & Options', the comments received have been analysed and used to help inform the drafting of this document along with the Initial Sustainability Appraisal Report which accompanies this Core Strategy, and considers the social, economic and environmental effects of the options proposed.

The "preferred options", contained within the later chapters of this document, specify the Borough Council's objectives and policy direction. This document does not yet contain specific policy wording but is intended to identify the preferred options which will be developed into policies at the next stage. Upon conclusion of this current consultation, the comments received will be analysed and along with its Sustainability Appraisal Report, will inform the drafting of a subsequent document, which will be submitted to the Government Office for the South East (GOSE) and again be consulted upon. That submitted version, scheduled for June 2006, will set out the strategic policies to deliver on the objectives described in this "preferred options" document.

Sustainability

Sustainability is at the heart of the planning process as set out in the newly published “Planning Policy Statement 1: Delivering Sustainable Development”. As a result, the Council has not included a specific sustainability section in this consultation paper because it is an integral part of each chapter and because a separate sustainability appraisal has been undertaken and published independently. This also reflects a number of comments the Council received on the ‘Issues & Options’ stage. To ensure that sustainability underlines all the objectives set out in this Core Strategy, the Council has cross checked the preferred options against the aims set out in the Government’s 1999 Sustainability Strategy¹. This table can be found attached as Appendix 1, and the national aims are listed below:

1. Maintenance of high and stable levels of economic growth and employment
2. Social progress which recognises the needs of everyone
3. Effective protection of the environment
4. Prudent use of natural resources

Community Strategy

The Borough’s Community Strategy is produced by a number of significant, local partners who make up the Local Strategic Partnership. This document was adopted by the Council in April 2003.

As stated above, the Core Strategy adopts the vision for the Borough of Epsom & Ewell, as set out in the Community Strategy, *“to improve the quality of life for those who live and work in the Borough by balancing environmental, social and economic factors by providing opportunities for all and developing a society that recognises the needs of future generations”*. The key issues identified by the Strategic Partnership have informed the development of objectives contained in this Core Strategy document, including the shortage of affordable housing, the need to improve the

¹ A Better Quality of Life – A Strategy for Sustainable Development for the UK, May 1999

quality of the natural and built environment and the social needs of particular groups in our society.

The Community Strategy identifies 5 objectives to achieve its vision and developed an action plan to deliver progress with each:

- Objective 1 A caring society and a thriving economic community
- Objective 2 A protected and improved environment
- Objective 3 A safe society
- Objective 4 A healthy society
- Objective 5 A harmonious and inclusive society

Again to ensure that these objectives have been taken into consideration when drafting this document, they have been cross checked with the preferred options and incorporated into the table in Appendix 1.

HOUSING

General Introduction

New housing plays a key role in the delivery of sustainable communities and the Government has recognised this through setting a national target which states that everyone should have the opportunity of a decent home. With this in mind the Borough should aim to provide a sufficient number of homes, at a price that people can afford, and that are suitable for the needs of the inhabitants.

Being a desirable place to live, demand for housing within the Borough is high. However, due to a number of constraints there is limited land available for new development. Therefore, to help secure a sustainable future and provide a suitable housing stock it is important that the Council:

- Identifies sufficient land for new housing in suitable locations
- Uses this land efficiently according to the needs of the Borough
- Makes good use of the existing housing stock.

Housing Issues within the Borough

Currently the Surrey Structure Plan requires Epsom & Ewell to provide 3,000 new residential dwellings between 2001 and 2016, which equates to 200 per annum. These allocations are due to be replaced by the South East Plan which will assign the new housing figures and distribution at district level from 2006 to 2026. The current target of 200 new dwellings per annum may therefore be increased. Presently the Borough is meeting its housing targets and to continue this trend, and exercise control over development, it is important that sufficient land is identified for future housing.

42% of the land in the Borough is designated as Green Belt which has served to protect this Metropolitan open space, restrict urban sprawl and encourage regeneration of the urban areas. When determining the location of new housing,

attention must be given to these restrictions along with existing national, regional and local guidance. The maintenance of a high quality residential environment was identified in the 'Issues & Options' consultation as an important consideration when planning for and delivering new development.

It is important that existing and new housing becomes more in line with the needs of the Borough. The 2004 Housing Needs Survey helped to identify the needs of residents, while the 'Issues & Options' consultation highlighted a number of considerations and concerns.

Demand for housing in the Borough is high which has resulted in considerable increases in house prices. The Community Strategy (2003) identified the provision of affordable housing as a key priority within the Borough. This problem is not confined to Epsom & Ewell, but is widespread across the South East, especially in areas that have easy access to central London. The Housing Needs Study (2004) revealed there are many "concealed households" within the Borough, these being defined as people who cannot afford to be in the housing market and are living within another household. This illustrates the problem of affordability in the Borough. High house prices and rental levels also make recruitment of key workers in the public sector and lower paid staff in the private sector increasingly difficult. The services these workers provide are fundamental to the long term sustainability of the area.

Additionally there is an increasing number of single person households, a national trend which is likely to continue into the near future. This is likely to further increase the demand for smaller dwellings and affordable housing. To maintain economic and social stability it is therefore important these issues are addressed as part of the Council's future planning framework for the Borough

With limited opportunities for future housebuilding in the Borough, whatever land is identified for residential use must be utilised efficiently and contribute towards meeting local housing needs. The density, size, type and affordability of new dwellings are all factors that require consideration. Careful planning and well informed policies will help deliver the most sustainable outcomes, while ensuring a quality environment is maintained.

Drawing from the above and from the earlier consultation on Issues and Options, the following key housing issues for the Borough have been identified:

1. Amount of land to be identified for new housing provision
2. Where the location of new housing should be
3. Affordability of housing
4. Density of new residential development
5. Size and type of new dwellings

Housing Objectives

This section takes these issues and describes options for each that may be developed into policies, subject to the outcome of this consultation and the results from the sustainability appraisal. The Council's preferred options are identified and justified with supporting evidence, while reasons are provided for the rejection of the alternative options.

Amount of land to be identified for new housing provision

Preferred Option CS Objective 1:

Aim to identify sufficient land to deliver the Borough's housing allocation

Identifying sufficient land would ensure that development is controlled and the number of dwellings provided meets the Borough's housing allocation.

Policy Context: The Surrey Structure Plan requires 3,000 new residential dwellings between 2001 and 2016, which equates to 200 per year.

Alternative Option: Identify land over and above the Borough's housing allocation requirement

This would increase the levels of housing provided and might contribute a greater amount of affordable housing; a desirable option when considering the Borough's housing needs. However, an over provision of housing may result in the Borough's allocation being increased in future years, which would place extra pressure on open spaces and the limited infrastructure. This is also a risk that the provision of more

dwellings would not make a significant impact on the number of affordable houses provided.

Location of new housing provision

Preferred Option CS Objective 2:

Focus housing development on previously developed land

Previously developed land may include the redevelopment of land in existing residential use, unsuitably located employment sites and infill sites within the urban area. The Council is confident that it can meet its current level of housing requirements to 2016 through the use of previously developed land. Focusing on this type of land would contribute towards a sustainable pattern of development and would help to safeguard the Borough's Green Belt and open spaces.

Policy Context: This objective would be in line with the Government's overall sustainability objectives. PPG3 and the Surrey Structure Plan encourage the provision of dwellings on previously developed land in preference to greenfield sites. The emerging South East Plan contains policies in a similar vein.

Points for Consideration:

- The limited availability of previously developed land in comparison to other land types may result in higher densities. Care must be taken to maintain the quality of the urban environment and sites should be assessed taking into account the character of the surrounding area.
- Some brownfield sites may make significant contributions towards biodiversity. Steps should be taken to identify and safeguard these sites or those features which warrant protection.
- Previously developed sites that are contaminated will incur remediation costs. This may make certain sites economically unviable.
- Existing infrastructure constraints or new requirements for additional infrastructure must be accounted for when developing previously developed land.
- Assembling previously developed sites may be difficult and time consuming. This will require careful programming to co-ordinate the timing and delivery of future housing

Alternative Option: Allow for urban extensions in areas with good transport links and other community facilities

This option was rejected for a number of reasons. Urban extensions are likely to result in development occurring in the Green Belt. This is undesirable and may have a negative effect on the quality of life for residents. It would lead to a reduction of the amount of open space within the Borough and unless strictly controlled, may pave the way for further Green Belt development. Government policy states that where available, previously developed land should be utilised first, so this option conflicts with this aim. New developments would also require additional infrastructure to be put in place. However, this may be viewed in a positive light as some additional infrastructure and facilities may be delivered and sustained by the new development.

Affordability

Preferred Option CS Objective 3:

Increase the proportion of affordable housing in new developments with the objective that a significant percentage of all new housing provision within the Borough should be affordable

The Housing Needs Survey (2004) has calculated that annually 518 affordable housing units would be required in Epsom and Ewell Borough to meet local housing needs. The existing social stock is less than half the national average level and re-lets average only 123 units per annum. After allowing for this level of supply, there is an annual affordable housing shortfall of 395 units. This shortfall has reduced since the previous Housing Needs Survey (2000) but is still substantially higher than the overall level of housebuilding envisaged in strategic planning policies. The forecast increase in single person households could further increase demand for affordable housing and smaller dwellings. Increasing the provision of affordable housing will help to reduce this shortfall and this has been recognised by its inclusion as a key component of the Community Strategy. It will also help to maintain economic sustainability if workers (especially key workers and those on lower salaries) are able to afford to live in the Borough, with the added benefit of reducing commuting journeys.

This option will require an increase in the provision of affordable housing on new private housing schemes, beyond levels currently being achieved. The existing Local Plan (2000) sets a site-size threshold for affordable housing provision, and specifies the percentage of new dwellings on these schemes that should be affordable. With the proportion of new housing in Epsom and Ewell constructed on sites of less than one hectare likely to increase, and the majority of sites likely to come forward over the next 15 years being below that size, the site threshold will need to be lowered. Given the overall extent of the housing need, and the very limited opportunities to provide for new housebuilding within the Borough's physical and environmental constraints, the Council is likely to require a higher proportion than currently of new residential development on these sites to be affordable housing. Draft PPS3 (on Housing) provides an indicative national minimum threshold of 15 dwellings.

Affordable housing should be provided on site. In exceptional circumstances, where site provision might not be practical, the Council may consider alternative forms of affordable housing provision that maximise the efficient use of land (such as alternative serviced sites or the purchase of suitable existing market housing by the developer).

Policy Context: PPG3 states that where there is a demonstrable lack of affordable housing to meet local needs, Development Plans should include a policy for seeking affordable housing in suitable housing developments. The draft South East Plan takes this one stage further stating that policies should be included in Local Development Documents that deliver a substantial increase in the amount of affordable housing. The Surrey Structure Plan sets the objective for Local Development Frameworks to achieve at least 40% of new housing provision in the County to be affordable.

Points for Consideration:

- Consideration will be given to the possibility of providing affordable housing on windfall sites that fall under the size threshold, but which will continue to contribute significantly towards the overall housing provision year on year.

Alternative Option: Retain the threshold for affordable housing as identified in the current Local Plan (2000)

The latest Housing Needs Survey has demonstrated that the current Local Plan policy is not delivering sufficient levels of affordable housing which is a key Community Strategy objective. Therefore it is desirable that planning policies reflect the priority the Council places on this objective. The most effective way of achieving this within the Borough's physical and environmental constraints is by increasing the percentage of provision on a wider range of development sites than currently being achieved.

Density of new dwellings

Preferred Option CS Objective 4:

Encourage higher densities in town centres and sustainable locations

Building at higher densities will provide a greater number of homes per unit of land, helping to reduce development pressures on the Green Belt. Provision of affordable housing would also be increased as more developments would exceed the threshold requiring affordable housing due to the intensity of use. Sustainable locations, such as Epsom town centre, have good transport links and would facilitate the use of public transport for new residents, helping to reduce congestion on the roads.

Policy Context: PPG3 encourages densities between 30 – 50 dwellings per hectare, with a greater intensity in those locations that have good public transport accessibility and other local facilities such as shops. The draft South East Plan has set a regional target of 40 dwellings per hectare as an overall average.

Points for Consideration:

- Densities must not be in conflict with the character of the surrounding area, but should complement it and integrate well with its environment.

Alternative Option: Encourage higher densities in all new developments

Although this option is likely to provide a greater amount of housing than the preferred option, it may result in developments that are not in keeping with the local area. This is undesirable if it has a detrimental effect on the urban or rural environment.

Size and types of new dwellings

Preferred Option CS Objective 5:

Aim to achieve a balance between the range of housing available in relation to the size and types of new dwellings according to local needs

This option will contribute towards the national objective of 'providing a suitable home for everyone'. The Borough's Housing Needs Survey (2004) has provided details on the types and size of dwellings residents require. Amongst many findings, the survey established that:

- 88% of households consider their accommodation to be adequate for their needs, which implies that for 12% it is inadequate
- Based on a calculation of occupants to bedroom numbers, under-occupation affects approximately 83% of all households and over-occupation 2%
- Most of the concealed household demand is for smaller dwellings, particularly flats and terraced housing.
- The retired population is estimated to increase by 15% by 2021 which may have implications for the type and size of dwellings required.

The Council can use this information to influence future developments, making them more in line with residents' requirements.

Policy Context: The draft South East Plan requires an appropriate mix of housing types, sizes and tenures to be provided, which are informed by Housing Needs Assessments. The Surrey Structure Plan states that dwelling provision should contribute towards meeting the needs of all sections of the community.

Points for Consideration:

- Housing Needs Assessments must be conducted regularly to ensure the Borough's needs are accurately assessed. Additionally the housing stock must also be monitored.
- There is also a requirement for larger, affordable units to accommodate families needing houses with 3 or more bedrooms rather than 1 or 2 bedroomed flats, and this will need to be reflected in policy development.

Alternative Option: Allow developers to decide the size and types of new dwellings

With this option, the size and type of new dwellings that are provided will be based on market forces. This may be in conflict with long term sustainability goals as it is likely that not all sectors of the community will be able to enter the housing market and thus their needs may not be met. If lower densities are chosen this would not make the best use of urban land and would conflict with national objectives.

EMPLOYMENT

General Introduction

One of the 4 sustainability aims set out in the UK's Strategy for Sustainable Development is to maintain high and stable levels of economic growth and employment. Therefore securing a sustainable economy is at the core of the Council's employment objectives. Achieving a caring society and thriving economic community is a principal aim of the Community Strategy for Epsom and Ewell.

A healthy local economy provides workers with work, and therefore an income, some of which is spent in the Borough, boosting local businesses. Areas with high levels of employment often have other benefits, such as low crime rates and higher than average academic success. Therefore a suitably vibrant employment market is a great advantage to any area, and measures should be put in place to deliver, protect and sustain it.

Employment Issues in the Borough

The Borough of Epsom & Ewell has a population of 68,000 (NOMIS midyear population estimates 2004), of which 61.4% fall into the working age bracket², equating to 41,600. 85% of this working age group are economically active (35,360), meaning they are either employed or unemployed but looking for work. This is higher than both the South East (82.1%) and the UK figures (78.2%). Economically inactive people include retired people, students, people at home looking after the family and those who are permanently sick or disabled.

Unemployment is low in the Borough, with the proportion of people in the working-age population who were unemployed in 2001 (Census) at 1.8%, which is slightly higher than the Surrey average of 1.7%, but considerably lower than the national average of 3.3%. This is also reflected in the numbers of people claiming benefit. As at May 2005, only 354 people were claiming Jobseeker's Allowance, representing

0.9% of resident working-age people (against 1.4% in the South East and 2.3% in the UK). However, fewer than 25% of these claimants were applying for allowance for more than 6 months, implying a relatively swift return to work for most of those seeking employment. Nonetheless some employers continue to experience difficulties in recruiting key workers and lower paid staff in the private sector.

Epsom & Ewell also has a highly educated population, with 36.5% of the working age population having at least a degree (compared with 28.5% and 25.2% for South East and UK respectively), 51.3% having at least 2 A-levels (46.9% and 43.1% respectively), and 69.2% having at least 5 GCSEs A to C grade (66% and 61.5% respectively).

This is reflected in the fact that over half the jobs in the Borough are managerial, professional or technical (58.5%, against 46% and 40.5% in the South East and UK respectively), with secretarial, administration and skilled trades accounting for a further 21.1% (slightly lower than the South East and UK comparisons).

Therefore, Epsom & Ewell has a variety of workplaces, including schools and colleges, hospitals, doctor and dentist surgeries, shops, offices, industrial premises, restaurants and hotels. In terms of offices, retail and industrial floor space as a proportion of the overall commercial and industrial floorspace, there is a fairly even split 3 ways between these uses. Along with the other uses listed above, each provides an essential part of the Borough's economic and social fabric, with many offering flexible working hours. This caters for the people who are employed on a part-time basis.

The provision of a variety of workplace premises adds to the Borough's vitality and viability, but it also means that it offers a good cross section of jobs for residents encouraging them to find appropriate work within the Borough. Though the Council would like to seek a reduction in the need for long distance commuting by seeking to achieve a more equal balance between housing provision and employment, it recognizes that it has the highest connectivity score in the County of 388.24 (well in excess of the County average of 153.65). Due to the rail links with London Victoria,

² 16-59 for females, 16-64 for males

London Waterloo, Sutton, Guildford and Horsham, as well as the bus links to Croydon and Kingston, there is a high percentage of residents that commute out of the Borough to work; a trend which will be difficult to change in light of the good linkages the Borough enjoys. However, though the lowest in the County, 58% of residents still commute to work by car, and this is one of the highest contributors to congestion experienced in Epsom & Ewell.

Another reason for high levels of commuting can be attributed to the ratio of economically active residents and the number of jobs in an area. If the former outweighs the latter, the area experiences a large amount of out-commuting, and vice versa. Therefore, ideally this ratio should be 'one for one' with the opportunity for all employees working and living in the same area. Currently within the Borough there are 0.89 jobs for each economically active person living in the Borough. However, it is recognised that with the Borough's good transport links to the large and varied employment market in London, a one to one ratio would be difficult to achieve. Nevertheless, appropriate levels of job opportunities should be available to local residents.

Drawing from the above and from earlier consultation, the following issues for employment within the Borough have been identified:

1. Maintaining a suitable employment mix within the Borough, providing for existing and future business needs
2. Protecting employment sites in sustainable locations
3. Supporting sustainable methods of working

Employment Objectives

This section takes these issues and describes options for each that may be developed into policies, subject to the outcome of this consultation and the results from the sustainability appraisal. The Council's preferred options are identified and justified while, where required, reasons are provided for the rejection of the alternative options.

Maintaining a suitable employment mix within the Borough, providing for existing and future business needs

Preferred Option – CS Objective 6:

Maintain mix of employment uses and different sized employment premises to provide for existing and future businesses, where appropriate

This option will help ensure that an appropriate range of business premises will remain available within the Borough. Providing a choice of suitable accommodation will make the Borough an attractive location for businesses and will encourage a diverse mix of jobs.

Policy Context: Regional guidance in RPG9 states that economic diversity should be encouraged to facilitate small and medium enterprises and support the growth of economic sectors.

Points for Consideration:

- The Council should regularly review the types of employment land available within the Borough to ensure provision is sustainable and remains suitable for market needs

Alternative Option: Adopt a flexible approach allowing the market to dictate what is required in terms of employment space, permitting changes of use and redevelopments to alternative uses

This option was rejected as a market led approach may not result in a sufficient and balanced range of employment premises being available. The strength of the residential market could result in significant losses of employment land to housing development. As employment land within the Borough is limited in supply, such losses would be unsustainable and would not help meet key Community Strategy objectives.

Protecting Employment Sites in Sustainable Locations

Preferred Option – CS Objective 7

Protect and preserve well located employment sites (in sustainable locations)

Sustainably located employment sites are well served by public transport and therefore easily accessible. Providing employment opportunities on such sites would present an alternative to use of the private car and help to reduce congestion. Part of this objective will also be to encourage redevelopment / intensification of employment premises in sustainable locations to maximise use of the employment space.

Policy Context: Policy RE5 seeks to make better use of existing employment land resources, supported by policy LO7 of the Surrey Structure Plan, which also safeguards suitably located employment land.

Alternative Option: Adopt a flexible approach of permitting employment uses to come forward for other redevelopment to other uses, such as residential

Loss of employment land, particularly that in sustainable locations, is undesirable. Maintaining a suitable level of jobs within the Borough is vital for the long term sustainability of the local economy. As this option offers no control over the levels and location of employment land provided within the Borough, it is in conflict with these objectives and was therefore rejected.

Supporting Sustainable Methods of Working

Preferred Option – CS Objective 8

Aim to support new working methods that limit the need to travel, including working from home where appropriate

This option supports the long term sustainability goal of reducing commuting levels within the Borough. Developments incorporating live-work units (which combine living space with workspace opportunities in the same building or complex) would contribute towards this and are likely to be increasingly demanded in the future.

Policy Context: The draft South East Plan requires local authorities to support and promote advances in ICT and changing working practices by positively promoting the

development of ICT-enabled sites, premises and facilities suitable to support changing and flexible working practices and home based businesses.

NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

General Introduction

A long term aim for Epsom & Ewell Borough Council, reflected in the Community Strategy, is to improve the quality of life for residents. The natural environment plays an important role in achieving this aim, and ensuring its quality is maintained and improved is a major concern of the Local Development Framework.

The natural environment contributes to the Borough in many ways and its distinctive characteristics, habitats and species are valued and should be carefully guarded. This will only be achieved by protecting the environment, maintaining a suitable quantity and quality of greenspace and minimising environmental harm from development.

Natural Environment Issues within the Borough

There are a number of green sites in the Borough which are designated and protected. The Green Belt makes up approximately 42% of the Borough with the boundaries having remained unaltered for numerous years. The Green Belt plays an important role in preserving the distinct character of Epsom & Ewell, protecting against inappropriate development and maintaining the quality of its setting. Development demands are increasing, especially in the South East where housing needs are particularly acute. This will result in further pressure being placed on the Green Belt so clear policies must be in place to facilitate its protection and management.

The issue of protecting public open space was a commonly raised concern during the 'Issues & Options' consultation and is a focus of the Community Strategy. Open spaces outside the Green Belt are equally important, contributing greatly towards the visual attractiveness and quality of life within the Borough. Many open spaces contain habitats that are important for biodiversity and nature conservation, while others provide a range of leisure and recreational opportunities. The Borough's open spaces are greatly valued not only by local residents but also by visitors and those

that work here. Many areas are designated as sites of national, regional and local importance and should be afforded appropriate levels of protection.

Public consultation also raised many concerns for biodiversity, and highlighted the need for this issue to be included in the Core Strategy. This is important, particularly when considering national levels are in decline and biodiversity is regarded as a good indicator of environmental health. The Core Strategy must therefore contribute towards reversing this trend. Areas which are ecologically important should be protected while development must be directed in a manner that not only avoids destruction but also encourages and enhances biodiversity. It should be noted that biodiversity is not just confined to designated sites and Green Belt land, but many other areas are found to make a positive contribution, being rich in habitats and species. Such areas must also be protected.

Climate change is an ongoing concern, with one outcome being an increase in the risk of flooding. The Borough only contains one small tributary of the Thames; the River Hogsmill, but also a number of famous underground springs. Although the Environment Agency has identified the vast majority of the Borough as not being at risk from flooding, steps must be taken to protect those areas that are. Should development need to occur in these areas, mitigation measures must be included to ensure that the flood risk is not increased. Political boundaries are different from natural boundaries and actions within this Borough may impact on the flood risk in other areas downstream. Therefore 'total catchment management' is desirable with consideration of the impacts that developments in one area may have on those in others. The issue of sustainable drainage will be dealt with under the Urban Design and the Built Environment section.

Drawing from the above and from earlier consultation, the following issues for the natural environment within the Borough have been identified:

1. Protection and enhancement of the Green Belt
2. Protection and management of open spaces
3. Safeguarding and improving biodiversity
4. Managing flood risk

Natural Environment Objectives

This section takes these issues and describes options for each that may be developed into policies, subject to the outcome of this consultation and the results from the sustainability appraisal. The Council's preferred options are identified and justified with supporting evidence while, where required, reasons are provided for the rejection of the alternative options.

Protection and enhancement of the Green Belt

Preferred Option CS Objective 9:

Continue to exercise strict control over development and maintain Green Belt boundaries.

Under this option Green Belt boundaries will remain unaltered and protected. Any regeneration of existing Green Belt developments would be strictly controlled and expected to be of an exceptional standard in terms of design and resource efficiency. This option was clearly identified by the Sustainability Appraisal as being the most sustainable. Additionally, this option would be in harmony with the preferred option for future development - focusing on previously developed land, which would allow the Green Belt boundaries to remain as they are. It may permit limited development for uses that cannot operate within the urban areas, such as horse racing and horse training facilities, subject to the proposals being compliant with PPG2 and saved Local Plan policies.

Policy Context: PPG2 states 'where existing local plans are being revised or updated, existing Green Belt boundaries should not be changed unless alterations to the structure plans have been approved'. The Surrey Structure Plan requires that 'the general extent of the Metropolitan Green Belt in Surrey will be maintained', which is echoed in the emerging South East Plan.

Points for Consideration:

- The Council should consider ways to make more positive use of the Green Belt with regard to access and recreation, especially at the rural/urban fringe
- The Council should consider ways of improving and restoring neglected or run-down areas of the Green Belt

Alternative Option: Allow for selected Green Belt releases in sustainable locations to meet the need for new housing

Although this option would increase the provision of housing and is therefore also likely to deliver more affordable housing, it was rejected due to the fact that the housing requirements under the Surrey Structure Plan can be met through development within urban areas and releasing it would be in conflict with longstanding national and regional policy. Therefore the Green Belt should remain protected.

Protection and Management of Open Spaces

Preferred Option CS Objective 10:

Provide and protect the required quantity, and improve the quality, of open spaces for residents, workers and visitors to the Borough, and improve access to them.

Improving the quality of the environment of the Borough, especially open spaces, is a key objective of the Community Strategy. It reflects the value placed on them by both residents and visitors. Through using information from the Open Space Study, this option would ensure that suitable levels of open space would be safeguarded.

All proposals for new residential development should be required to make a contribution to the provision of new or improved open space, outdoor sport and recreational facilities. The Council will prepare a Supplementary Development Document on how development contributions for open space will be sought. Development proposals that would lead to the total loss or partial loss of an area of open space would not be approved unless they can be fully justified or compensated for.

Policy Context: PPG 17 requires standards for open space to be set locally and that existing open space should not be built upon unless an assessment has been undertaken and the land is clearly surplus to requirements.

Alternative Option: None identified

Preferred Option CS Objective 11:

Protect and enhance areas that are nationally, regionally or locally designated as sites of nature conservation interest.

Under this option, designated sites would remain protected and policies would be introduced to distinguish between the designations. Sites would also be protected from any detrimental effects from neighbouring developments.

Policy Context: PPS 9 requires designated sites to be protected according to their national, regional or local importance. It is a Government target that 95% of Sites of Special Scientific Interest will be in favourable (or unfavourable recovering) condition by 2010.

Points for Consideration:

- Up to date information should be kept on the characteristics of nature conservation areas
- Designated sites will be detailed on the proposals map
- Consider ways in which the condition of designated sites can be improved and enhanced. Special attention should be given to the management and maintenance of historical landscapes such as Epsom Common.

Alternative Option: None identified

Flooding

Preferred Option CS Objective 12:

Adopt a risk based approach to development in flood risk areas

This option takes a proactive approach and will ensure development in flood risk areas is carefully controlled and takes place in a sustainable manner that would not increase the risk of flooding elsewhere. The areas at risk from flooding are identified by the Environment Agency, which would automatically be consulted on all proposals in and adjacent to the flood plain. How design can help reduce the risk of flooding and improve water management will be dealt with in the Urban Design and the Built Environment Section.

Policy Context: PPG25 states that the susceptibility of land to flooding is a material planning consideration

Alternative Option: None identified

Safeguarding and Improving Biodiversity

Preferred Option CS Objective 13:

Seek to protect important habitats and species, and where possible aim to provide opportunities to enhance biodiversity

To facilitate the conservation and enhancement of biodiversity within the Borough, the fragmentation of habitats must be avoided. This option will serve to prevent this and will also protect habitats that are not officially designated sites. Biodiversity considerations will be integrated into planning decisions and it will also be examined as to how a development can contribute to increasing biodiversity. Section 106 agreements will be instrumental towards achieving this aim. The development of the local Biodiversity Action Plan will also be of assistance.

Policy Context: The Surrey Structure Plan has a policy in place to conserve and enhance Surrey's biodiversity. The South East Plan aims to reduce habitat fragmentation and improve biodiversity

Points for Consideration:

- The Council should aim to maintain up to date information on local biodiversity
- Consideration should be given to the contributions to biodiversity made by previously developed land. The Sustainability Appraisal has raised the issue that this may lead to a restriction of the availability of sites.

Alternative Option: None identified

URBAN DESIGN AND THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT

General Introduction

The built environment is instrumental in defining the character of the local area, is of considerable interest to the community, and is greatly valued. Similar to the natural environment, the urban environment significantly contributes towards the quality of life within the Borough. It is therefore important that the character of the Borough is preserved and enhanced. This objective may be achieved by not only offering protection to historical assets but also through ensuring that the design and layout of new developments are in harmony with the environment and surrounding areas. A principal part of the vision of the Community Strategy is to improve the quality of the built environment of Epsom and Ewell.

Urban Design & Built Environment Issues within the Borough

Within the Borough of Epsom and Ewell there are currently 21 designated conservation areas and approximately 400 listed buildings. These form a significant part of the urban fabric and are held in high regard. To retain the character of these areas and the architectural and historic integrity of the buildings it is important that policies are in place to facilitate their protection and enhancement. Additionally, the Core Strategy should aim to provide for the protection and care of archaeological remains, especially those of national importance. The Borough contains two Scheduled Ancient Monuments, these being the sites of Nonsuch Palace, Banqueting House and Cuddington Church in Nonsuch Park, and St Mary's Church Tower in Ewell.

Just as historical buildings contribute towards the atmosphere and character of the Borough, so do new developments. They will remain a long-life feature on the landscape for many years to come and it is therefore important that they complement their surroundings and are accepted by the community. Local identity should be celebrated and preserved.

Sustainability principles can be incorporated into new developments through good design both during the construction stage and throughout the lifecycle of the development. It is desirable that the Council takes a proactive approach towards these issues as environmental and sustainability targets are likely to become more stringent in the future.

The built environment and design issues featured strongly in the 'Issues & Options' consultation. It was therefore felt that the Core Strategy should include this theme and define objectives for the following overarching issues:

1. Protection and enhancement of Conservation Areas, Listed Buildings and archaeological remains
2. Ensuring high quality design in new developments

Urban Design and the Built Environment Objectives

This section takes these issues and describes options for each that may be developed into policies, subject to the outcome of this consultation and the results from the sustainability appraisal. The Council's preferred options are identified and justified while, where required, reasons are provided for the rejection of the alternative options.

Protection and Enhancement of Conservation Areas, Listed Buildings and Archaeological Remains

Preferred option CS Objective 14:

Seek to protect and enhance Conservation Areas and the setting of listed buildings

This option will help maintain and preserve the Borough's historical buildings and the individual character of Conservation Areas. This will ensure that these buildings / areas are protected from unsuitable developments and any adverse impacts from neighbouring developments.

Policy Context: PPG 15 states that local plans should set out clearly the planning authority's policies for the preservation and enhancement of the historic environment

in their area. The Surrey Structure Plan and emerging South East Plan contain similar objectives.

Points for consideration:

- Consider the protection of areas and buildings that are not within a conservation area or listed but may be of special interest or value to the community
- Consider how to enhance, and not just protect, Conservation Areas and Listed buildings

Alternative Option: None identified

Preferred Option CS Objective 15:

Provide appropriate protection for sites of archaeological importance, scheduled ancient monuments and future discoveries of archaeological interest.

Under this option finite archaeological remains would be offered protection according to their level of importance. A positive approach would be taken when facilitating new development in areas of high archaeological potential.

Policy Context: PPG 16 advises that policies should be made to promote the protection, enhancement and preservation of sites of archaeological interest and of their settings, especially those of national importance.

Alternative Option: None identified

Ensuring High Quality Design

Preferred Option CS Objective 16:

Ensure all aspects of a new development complement and positively contribute to the character of the area

This option will help to integrate new developments within the existing settlements and ensure the character of the area is retained. Design statements in the form of Supplementary Development Documents (SPDs), are likely to be increasingly used to set design parameters for new development and to ensure it accords with the high

standards required. Attention to detail is an important part of the development process.

Policy Context: PPS 1 states that good design should contribute positively to making better places for people. The Surrey Structure Plan, supplemented by the Surrey Design guide, requires a high standard of design for both buildings themselves and the way they integrate with their surroundings.

Alternative Option: None identified

Preferred Option CS Objective 17:

Aim to use good design to incorporate a variety of sustainable elements and principles into new developments

This option embraces the environmental goal of striving to achieve carbon neutral developments and reduce their ecological footprints. This is highly relevant when considering the long term sustainability of the Borough as new developments are likely to have a long life span. Efficient use of energy and resources shall be promoted during the construction stage, adhering to the principles of 'reduce, re-use and recycle'. The development itself should aim to achieve a very high BREEAM rating³ and be flexible to allow for future adaptations and alternative uses. This will encourage the incorporation of energy conservation features and waste management systems. Efficient water management techniques should be included alongside sustainable drainage systems, which will help to adapt to climate change and deliver long term sustainability goals. Renewable energy, such as solar panels, combined heat and power and such like should also be incorporated into developments to reduce the need for power. Developments over a certain threshold may be required to produce a sustainability statement. This option will pave the way for more specific policies to be included in other Local Development Framework documents and the preparation of supplementary advice to encourage sustainable building approaches, recycling and energy conservation in all development.

Policy Context: One of the key objectives of PPS 1 in relation to design is to ensure that developments are sustainable, durable, adaptable and make efficient and prudent use of resources.

³ A measure of best practice in environmental design and management

Points to Consider:

- The expense incurred through incorporating sustainability features into new developments has implications for developers and affordability of housing. Ways should be considered to introduce flexibility and achieve a balance between these factors. This problem should reduce in the longer term as improvements are made in the efficiency and affordability of new technologies

Alternative Option: Encourage developers to introduce sustainable elements into new developments

Although desirable, this option was rejected in favour of the above as the preferred option will provide more control over the features incorporated into a development. This alternative option will be more likely to be driven by cost and may not result in the most sustainable outcome.

Preferred Option CS Objective 18:***Aim to use good design to help create safer environments***

Reducing crime and the fear of crime within the Borough remains a priority objective and is reflected in the community strategy's aspirations for a safe society. Careful planning and good design can make a contribution towards this goal. Advice and guidance in 'Designing Out Crime' will be design considerations from the outset, helping improve the layout, features and lighting of a development.

Policy Context: Deterring crime through the quality of urban design is a national theme and a spatial priority in the Surrey Structure Plan. This is also an objective in the draft South East Plan.

Alternative Option: None identified

TRANSPORT & INFRASTRUCTURE

General Introduction

One of the key concerns of the Borough's residents is congestion. In fact, it is estimated that road congestion costs Surrey's businesses £600 million a year, and this amount is likely to increase as more people gain access to a car. It is not possible to build a way out of this problem with the construction of more or wider roads. It requires a complete re-think and the implementation of alternative methods, including investment in infrastructure.

Infrastructure is another area that is becoming a priority for residents, not only in the Borough but also in the wider region of the South East. Recent consultation on the draft South East Plan resulted in thousands of responses highlighting concerns over the deficit in the existing infrastructure, which will be exacerbated further as housing development increases. Investment is required beyond developers' contributions to provide a sustainable infrastructure for the Borough, including schools, hospitals, doctor and dental surgeries, other community facilities, services (electricity, gas, water supply, sewerage, telecommunications) and the public transport network. Tackling traffic congestion, parking and public transport issues is a key feature of the Community Strategy's objective to protect and improve the environment.

Transport and Infrastructure Issues in the Borough

Transport issues have been raised in a number of different chapters in this paper as many elements contribute to the ongoing congestion problems that this Borough faces, including schools, workplaces, shops and other facilities. The location of development in relation to other facilities, including public transport is key in tackling congestion. The travel distance from one's home to the abovementioned services will help determine what form of transport is used for each journey. The promotion of mixed use development assists in reducing some of these distances, so decreasing the number and length of car trips required. Planning Policy Statements 1 and 6 encourage town centres to contain a mixture of uses for this very reason. Maximising

accessibility to services by providing people with a choice of non-car travel options will help facilitate a modal shift in transport patterns.

Car ownership is high in the Borough with 1.37 cars for each household, compared to the 1.1 national average (Census, 2001). This is a 19% increase from 1991. In fact, over 40% of households in the borough have 2 or more cars. This is a determining factor in Epsom having what has been perceived as the worst traffic congestion in Surrey. It is also due to the network of roads that run through the Borough, some of which connect to key roads, such as the M25 and A3, and are therefore used as links or when these principal roads get congested. The main roads in the Borough (A24, A240 and A232) do not just provide access from Epsom or Ewell to neighbouring towns, but they also connect towns outside the Borough to each other creating more through traffic (e.g. Leatherhead and Ashted to Kingston or Sutton).

Drawing from the above and earlier consultation, the following transport and infrastructure issues relevant to this Borough have been identified, and will need to be addressed:

1. Mode of transport used
2. Highway Safety
3. Infrastructure Requirements

Transport & Infrastructure Objectives

This section takes these issues and describes options for each that may be developed into policies, subject to the outcome of this consultation and the results from the sustainability appraisal. The Council's preferred options are identified and justified while, where required, reasons are provided for the rejection of the alternative options.

Mode of Transport Used

Preferred Option CS Objective 19:

Encourage non-motorised forms of travel

Traffic congestion is a key concern amongst residents, though many wish to utilise their car for the majority of their trips. A change in this trend is only going to be fully achievable through a change of mindset. However, a number of measures can be implemented to support this objective:

- Promotion of Green Travel plans for businesses and schools
- Development of pedestrian and cycle path networks
- Adoption of stringent car parking policies, especially in Epsom town centre
- Using s106 monies towards transport improvements

All developments will be expected to promote and support sustainable methods of transport.

Policy Context: Surrey Structure Plan's policy DN2 requires that all development proposals incorporate measures to encourage walking, cycling and the use of public transport. Policy DN3 goes on to refer to the application of car parking standards, with DN4 supporting development linked to public transport. PPG 3 for housing and PPG 13 for commercial development set out the relevant, maximum car parking standards.

Points for Consideration:

- Somewhat ironically, the more effective the policy in de-congesting road traffic, the more car users are likely to maximise the opportunity to utilise the clearer roads. Only fiscal measures, such as taxation, tolls and oil prices are likely to have a significant impact on the number and length of car journeys and this is outside the remit of planning.

Alternative Option: None identified

Highway Safety

Preferred Option CS Objective 20:

Implement highway safety measures

Matters pertaining to health and safety are essential, and therefore this is considered a mandatory objective, as highlighted by a number of respondents to the 'Issues & options' paper in relation to highways.

Policy Context: Policy DN6 in the Surrey Structure Plan seeks to resist development that would reduce highway safety.

Points for Consideration:

- The County Council is responsible for highway issues. Epsom & Ewell Borough Council seeks to reinforce its relationship with the County Highway Department to enforce and implement suitable highway measures which increase safety for drivers, cyclists and pedestrians. It is important these links are maintained and strengthened.

Alternative Option: None identified

Infrastructure Requirements

Preferred Option CS Objective 21:

Ensure infrastructure is provided in advance of, or at least in parallel with, the associated development

The key element of this objective is to ensure developers liaise with the various service providers to ensure delivery of the necessary infrastructure required to serve their development, especially where there is no capacity left in the existing network. In the case of transport links, it seeks to ensure they are implemented ahead of occupation, so the development's users will be able to use the transport network upon completion of the scheme.

The Council will prepare Supplementary Planning Documents to identify the circumstances under which the Council will expect development contributions from new development and the level of contributions that will be required. These are likely to include contributions for education, transport, health facilities, libraries etc and they

will be integrated with requirements described elsewhere in this document for affordable housing and open space and recreation facilities.

Policy Context: The Surrey Structure Plan states that local authorities will not permit development unless the infrastructure that is required to service the development is available or will be provided within a timescale determined by the local authority, with the developer expected to provide or contribute to the infrastructure improvements related to the new development.

Points for Consideration:

- It is recognised that much of the infrastructure required in the Borough is provided by partners, not the Borough Council (e.g. education and highways by County, hospitals by the NHS, services by the relevant utilities companies etc). The Borough Council consults with these external bodies to ensure they are aware of the Council's plans and policies, and seeks to gain information on their future proposals. Many of these agencies are active partners in the Local Strategic Partnership which is responsible for preparing and keeping under review the Community Strategy. They are therefore working together to tackle economic, social and environmental issues in the Borough.
- It is further recognised that developers' contributions will only deliver part of the infrastructure required. The Borough Council, through its response to relevant consultation papers, and along with other groups and organisations, is pressing central Government to provide sufficient funding to eliminate any deficit.

Alternative Option: None identified

TOWN CENTRE AND LOCAL CENTRES

General Introduction

The Government's key objective for town centres is to promote their vitality and viability. Town centres provide a mixture of functions, enabling people to shop, work, live and visit other services without having to make multiple visits. Across the South East there is a network of centres with an identified hierarchy, from the large primary centres with extensive catchment areas, to the smaller local centres which provide a valuable service to the local community. All these centres serve an important function and make a vital contribution to the sustainability of the South East.

Town Centre Issues within the Borough

Epsom has been identified in the draft South East Plan as a Secondary Regional Centre and it is desirable that it maintains this role. Epsom has to compete with many nearby larger centres such as Kingston and Sutton, making it important that the area remains competitive. The town centre will therefore be a focus for development and it is imperative that the Core Strategy makes provisions for this, ensuring that development takes place in a positive and sustainable manner. Epsom town centre currently has a variety of functions and it is an objective to maintain, strengthen and enhance the existing mix of facilities and services, while remaining aware of limitations such as traffic congestion.

Within the Borough there are many smaller local centres which have an important social and economic function. These centres ensure that people's everyday needs are met within the local area and provide an essential resource for local residents, especially the elderly and those who are less mobile. The 'Issues & Options' consultation highlighted the need for the Core Strategy to take a positive approach to strengthen these local centres and maintain their accessibility.

Drawing from the above and from earlier consultation, the following issues for the town and local centres within the Borough have been identified:

1. Maintaining and enhancing the vitality and viability of Epsom town centre
2. Supporting and improving local centres

Town Centre and Local Centre Objectives

This section takes these issues and describes options for each that may be developed into policies, subject to the outcome of this consultation and the results from the sustainability appraisal. The Council's preferred options are identified and justified with supporting evidence while, where required, reasons are provided for the rejection of the alternative options.

Maintaining and Enhancing the Vitality and Viability of Epsom Town Centre

Preferred Option CS Objective 22:

Maintain and encourage a suitable mix of uses in Epsom Town Centre

This option will help to ensure that Epsom town centre retains its position as an important secondary retail centre in the South East through providing a suitable range of services to meet the needs of the wider community. Promoting a mix of uses in the town centre was identified in the Sustainability Appraisal as a highly sustainable option. Emphasis will be put on improving the quality of the environment to make it more attractive to shoppers and new developments will be required to respect the scale and character of the area. Further Supplementary Planning Documents are likely to be prepared by the Council to assist the conservation and regeneration of the town centre.

Mixed use schemes that contribute towards the range of retail, leisure, employment and housing opportunities offered within Epsom town centre will be encouraged. Any proposal considered to have a detrimental impact on the functioning of the main town centre will be rejected. It is likely that the extent of the town centre will remain as currently shown on the Local Plan (2000) Proposals Map.

Policy Context: PPS6 requires the Core Strategy to set out the role of different centres, while the Surrey Structure Plan states that town centres will continue to be the main focus for the development of employment, retail, leisure, high density housing and other service facilities.

Points for Consideration:

- Regular assessments of the town centre should be conducted to ensure it is providing for the needs of the wider community.

Alternative Option: Allow the market to direct uses within the town centre

This option was rejected as it may not result in the most sustainable outcome. The residential market is currently strong, which may result in a reduction or dilution of other uses in the town centre, for example a reduction in the amount of employment land. Maintaining a suitable mix of uses is a priority for the long term sustainability of the area.

Preferred Option CS Objective 23:

Safeguard and promote retail facilities in local centres

This option will ensure that local facilities remain available for residents who wish to shop locally or are fully dependent on the resource. It has been identified as a highly sustainable option. The facilities cater for local needs and having a small catchment area, they are likely to be accessible by foot, and may reduce the need for a trip further afield to a larger centre. This option will help to encourage appropriate uses within the local centres and prevent those that may be detrimental to the area.

Policy Context: PPS6 requires the mix of uses in local centres to be carefully managed and strategies to be developed for strengthening centres.

Points for Consideration:

- Regular assessments of local centres should be conducted to ensure they are providing for the needs of the local community.

Alternative Option: None identified

COMMUNITY, RECREATIONAL & CULTURAL FACILITIES

General Introduction

A variety of facilities adds to the quality of life for residents, workers and visitors. Leisure facilities encourage healthy living, community facilities promote social interaction and inclusion, and cultural facilities develop understanding and appreciation of arts and culture outside people's normal sphere of life. Though some facilities will not be appropriate for every member of society (e.g. an elderly person's day centre), each will be utilised by different sections of the public for various purposes, and therefore are an important part of the Borough's social fabric.

Community, Recreational and Cultural Facilities Issues in the Borough

The borough has a good selection and geographical spread of facilities, each adding to the attractiveness of the area as a place to live and work. The range of facilities include 4 libraries, a museum, a theatre, a multi-screened cinema, a public leisure centre, numerous private sports centres and clubs, 3 day centres, community centres, and numerous churches of different denominations.

Drawing from the above and earlier consultation, the following issues relevant to this Borough have been identified, and will need to be addressed:

- 1 Maintaining a mix of community, recreational and cultural facilities
- 2 Maximising the use of and accessibility to facilities

Community, Recreational and Cultural Facilities Objectives

This section takes these issues and describes options for each that may be developed into policies, subject to the outcome of this consultation and the results

from the sustainability appraisal. The Council's preferred options are identified and justified, while where required, reasons are provided for the rejection of the alternative options.

Mix of Community, Recreational and Cultural Facilities

Preferred Option CS Objective 24:

Protect, improve and provide community facilities, especially ones that specifically cater for young and old people

Such facilities provide an essential part of the urban fabric, creating opportunities for residents and Borough visitors to get involved in pastime activities and interests. For young people they help to provide a distraction from boredom, which can lead to anti-social behaviour, and for the older generation they provide a much needed opportunity for care, entertainment and social interaction. In addition, there are facilities, such as the theatre, cinema, and churches that cross all age groups, and therefore create greater social inclusion. Provision of this type will still be encouraged, but the focus will be on facilities for young and old people, as identified in the Community Strategy. This is also in line with the Council's Sports and Leisure Strategy, from the young people's perspective, and the fact that the Borough has an aging population at the other end of the spectrum.

Policy Context: Policies DN12 and 13 in the Surrey Structure Plan seek to protect and provide social, community, leisure and recreation facilities, identifying land where necessary to ensure facilities are brought forward as part of new developments, and only lost in the rare cases of over-provision.

Alternative Option:

Seek to protect, enhance and provide community facilities, but have no particular focus on any age or people group

For the reasons set out above, the Community Strategy has identified the particular needs of young and old people, and therefore the preferred option is favoured.

Maximising use and accessibility

Preferred Option CS Objective 25:

Maximise use and accessibility of all community, recreational and cultural facilities, both indoor and outdoor, so all facilities are made as widely available and accessible as possible to all residents and other Borough users

The Borough is well provided for in terms of different types of facilities. However, there may well be occasions when various groups or organisations wish to use one or more of the facilities on offer, but they are either fully booked or otherwise unavailable, and this will need exploring when proposals for redevelopment come forward either for new facilities or involving the loss of existing ones. Due to the limited land available, and therefore the expense of land, it is not always financially viable to build additional provision. It is therefore essential to maximise the use of facilities the Borough already has. For example, schools may only use their sports halls and pitches in school hours, and these could potentially be made available in the evenings, weekends and school holidays. Equally, community and church halls can sometimes double up as badminton courts, meeting rooms and the like. Accessibility not only means that facilities should be situated in easily accessible locations, but it also includes making facilities 'disabled friendly' (compliant with Disability Discrimination Act requirements) and suitable for different people. It is for these reasons that the Council supports the preferred option.

Policy Context: Surrey Structure Plan's Policy DC12 also encourages local authorities to site facilities at locations easily accessible to the community being served.

Points for Consideration:

- Planning permissions may have attached to them appropriately worded conditions to secure the dual use of facilities. It is sometimes more difficult, and potentially resource intensive, to arrange with owners to open up their existing facilities to other users, especially when this creates additional work, such as making caretakers available to secure premises.

Alternative Option:

Permit organisations to utilise their own facilities, and not make them available to the wider public

This option would require many more facilities being provided, many of which would only be used by certain groups at specific times. This would therefore not fully maximise their potential. It is therefore not a preferred approach.

APPENDIX 1

Sustainable Development

The four aims of sustainable development are:

1. Maintenance of high and stable levels of economic growth and employment
2. Social progress which recognises the needs of everyone
3. Effective protection of the environment
4. Prudent use of natural resources

Community Strategy

The five objectives of Epsom & Ewell's Community Strategy are:

- Objective 1 A caring society and a thriving economic community
- Objective 2 A protected and improved environment
- Objective 3 A safe society
- Objective 4 A healthy society
- Objective 5 A harmonious and inclusive society

Core Strategy Objectives

The Core Strategy has identified the following objectives for the Borough:

HOUSING

Preferred Option CS Objective 1:

Aim to identify sufficient land to deliver the Borough's housing allocation

Preferred Option CS Objective 2:

Focus housing development on previously developed land

Preferred Option CS Objective 3:

Increase the proportion of affordable housing in new developments with the objective that a significant percentage of all new housing provision within the Borough should be affordable

Preferred Option CS Objective 4:

Encourage higher densities in town centres and sustainable locations

Preferred Option CS Objective 5:

Aim to achieve a balance between the range of housing available in relation to the size and types of new dwellings according to local needs

EMPLOYMENT

Preferred Option – CS Objective 6:

Maintain mix of employment uses and different sized employment premises to provide for existing and future businesses, where appropriate

Preferred Option – CS Objective 7:

Protect and preserve well located employment sites (in sustainable locations)

Preferred Option – CS Objective 8:

Aim to support new working methods that limit the need to travel, including working from home where appropriate

NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

Preferred Option CS Objective 9:

Continue to exercise strict control over development and maintain Green Belt boundaries.

Preferred Option CS Objective 10: *Provide and protect the required quantity, and improve the quality, of open spaces for residents, workers and visitors to the Borough, and improve access to them.*

Preferred Option CS Objective 11:

Protect and enhance areas that are nationally, regionally or locally designated as sites of nature conservation interest.

Preferred Option CS Objective 12:

Adopt a risk based approach to development in flood risk areas

Preferred Option CS Objective 13:

Seek to protect important habitats and species, and where possible aim to provide opportunities to enhance biodiversity

URBAN DESIGN AND BUILT ENVIRONMENT

Preferred option CS Objective 14:

Seek to protect and enhance Conservation Areas and the setting of listed buildings

Preferred Option CS Objective 15:

Provide appropriate protection for sites of archaeological importance, scheduled ancient monuments and future discoveries of archaeological interest.

Preferred Option CS Objective 16:

Ensure all aspects of a new development complement and positively contribute to the character of the area

Preferred Option CS Objective 17:

Aim to use good design to incorporate a variety of sustainable elements and principles into new developments

Preferred Option CS Objective 18:

Aim to use good design to help create safer environments

TRANSPORT AND INFRASTRUCTURE

Preferred Option CS Objective 19:

Encourage non-motorised forms of travel

Preferred Option CS Objective 20:

Implement highway safety measures

Preferred Option CS Objective 21:

Ensure infrastructure is provided in advance of, or at least in parallel with, the associated development

TOWN CENTRE AND OTHER LOCAL SHOPPING CENTRES

Preferred Option CS Objective 22:

Maintain and encourage a suitable mix of uses in Epsom Town Centre

Preferred Option CS Objective 23:

Safeguard and promote retail facilities in local centres

COMMUNITY, RECREATIONAL AND CULTURAL FACILITIES

Preferred Option CS Objective 24:

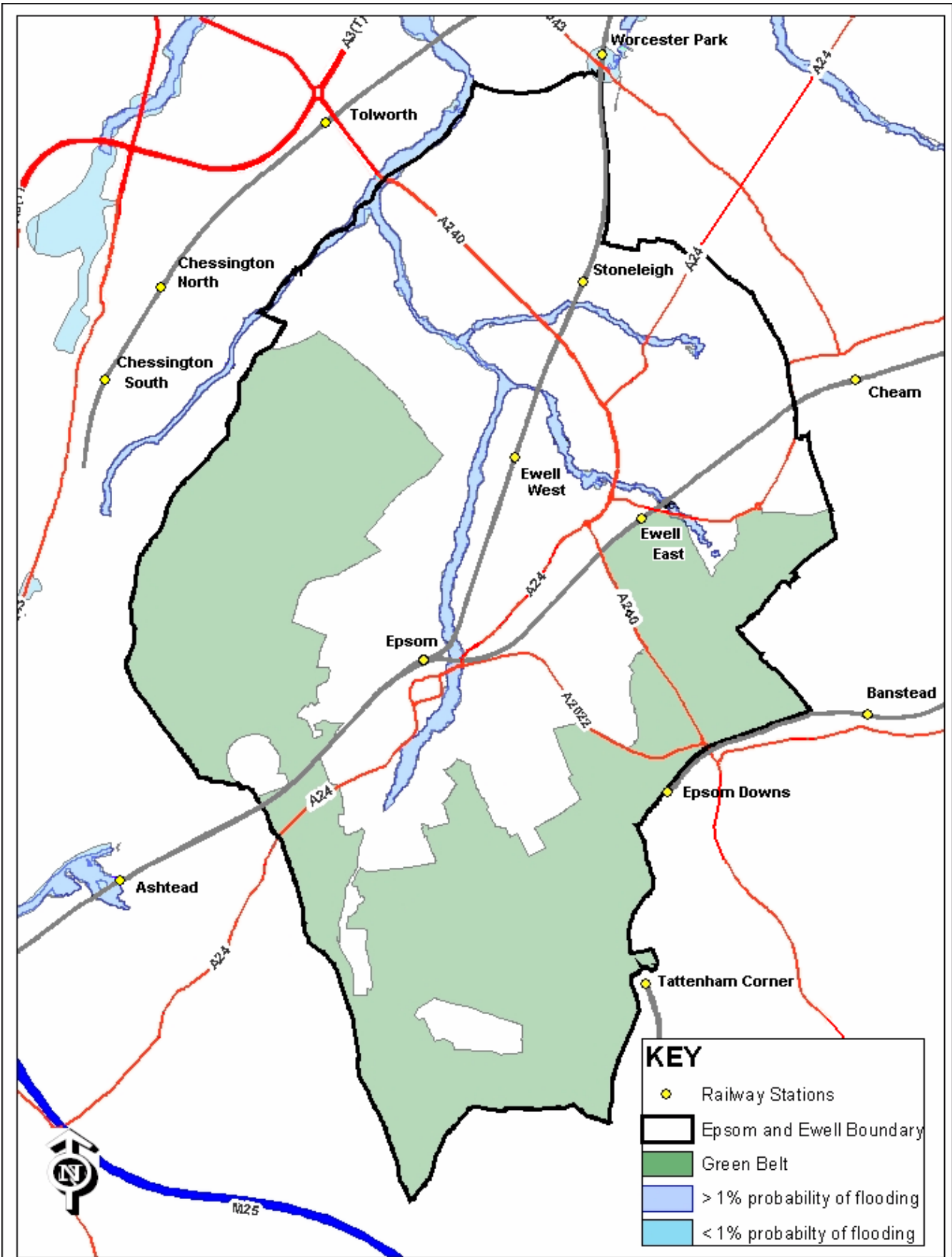
Protect, improve and provide community facilities, especially ones that specifically cater for young and old people

Preferred Option CS Objective 25:

Maximise use and accessibility of all community, recreational and cultural facilities, both indoor and outdoor, so all facilities are made as widely available and accessible as possible to all residents and other Borough users

Conformity of Core Strategy Objectives with the Aims of Sustainable Development and Community Strategy Objectives

Chapter	Core Strategy Objectives	Aims of Sustainable Development	Community Strategy Objectives
Housing	CS Objective 1	2, 3	2
	CS Objective 2	3	2
	CS Objective 3	2	5
	CS Objective 4	3	2, 4
	CS Objective 5	2	5
Employment	CS Objective 6	1, 2, 3	1, 2
	CS Objective 7	1, 2, 3	1, 2
	CS Objective 8	1, 2, 3	1, 2
Natural Environment	CS Objective 9	3	2
	CS Objective 10	3	2, 4
	CS Objective 11	3	2, 4
	CS Objective 12	3	2, 3
	CS Objective 13	3	2
Urban Design & Built Environment	CS Objective 14	3	2
	CS Objective 15	3	2
	CS Objective 16	3	2
	CS Objective 17	3, 4	2
	CS Objective 18	2	2, 3
Transport & Infrastructure	CS Objective 19	2, 3, 4	2, 4, 5
	CS Objective 20	2	1, 3
	CS Objective 21	2	5
Town Centre & other centres	CS Objective 22	1, 2, 3	1, 2, 5
	CS Objective 23	1, 2, 3	1, 2, 5
Community/Recreational/Cultural Facilities	CS Objective 24	2	1, 4, 5
	CS Objective 25	2	1, 4, 5



CORE STRATEGY KEY DIAGRAM

APPENDIX 2



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