

Epsom and Ewell
Local Plan
2022-2040



Draft Local Plan 2022-2040

Frequently
Asked
Questions



www.epsom-ewell.gov.uk
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Section 1 - General Local Plan Questions

Q1 - What is a local plan?

All local planning authorities have to produce a Local Plan which sets out planning policies for its area. Local Plans set out the amount and location for housing and employment growth for (at least) the next 15 years.

The Local Plan will be used to decide planning applications that come forward in the borough. The policies cover a range of topics including housing, employment, open space, design, historic buildings, green belt and environmental issues. The policies will reflect those of national government but will be locally specific to Epsom and Ewell. When adopted it will also be the overarching framework for any future Neighbourhood Plans that are adopted.

All councils are required to review their Local Plans at least every 5 years. The emerging local plan will cover the years 2022 to 2040.

Q2 - What stage is the local plan currently at?

We are currently at the earliest consultation stage (formally known as Regulation 18 consultation in the plan making process). There will be another consultation stage (known as Regulation 19 consultation) before the Plan is submitted for independent examination. The programmed adoption date is expected May 2025. Further information on the timetable for preparing the Local Plan is contained in our Local Development Scheme.

Q3 - What happens if we don't prepare a local plan?

If the local plan is not updated, there is a risk that central government could intervene and prepare a local plan for the council which would likely limit local involvement and decision making in the process. The borough will also be at increased risk of unplanned, speculative development due to its current shortfall in housing delivery. Getting an up-to-date Local Plan adopted will ensure that local people have a greater say on how their communities are developed in the future and are in a stronger position to defend itself from unsuitable speculative planning proposals.

Q4 - Is 'no change' an option for the new Local Plan?

It is important to understand that the government requires up to date Local Plans that are pro-growth. The consequence of zero change means zero growth. The government is clear that housing need is acute in the country and housing growth is fundamental to increase affordability and prevent homelessness, in addition it supports a growing economy and investment in social and physical infrastructure.

Q5 - What is the difference between our 'Housing Need' and 'Housing Requirement'?

In line with national planning policy, the 'housing need' for our Borough is calculated using the government's Standard Methodology. Based on the current calculation, the housing need for Epsom and Ewell Borough is calculated to be 10,368 new homes up to 2040, or 576 new homes per year.

The 'Housing Requirement' is set within the Draft Local Plan, which takes account of the housing need figure and considers whether there are any constraints or other factors that may mean that we should plan for a different number of new homes. The 'Housing Requirement' could be either higher or lower than the 'Housing Need' figure, depending on the local context.

The Draft Local Plan identifies a Housing Requirement figure of 5,400 new homes up to 2040.

Q6 - What is the Sustainability Appraisal (SA)? How does it affect the Local Plan?

In line with national planning policy, the Local Plan is required to be prepared with the objective of contributing to sustainable development. The Sustainability Appraisal (commonly referred to as an 'SA') aims to make the plan more sustainable by making it more responsive to the environmental, social and economic effects of any strategy.

The SA does this by considering the ways in which the plan can contribute to either improving or adversely impacting on local conditions. In doing this, the SA helps to make sure that the proposals in the plan are the most appropriate given the available reasonable alternative options.

The SA incorporates a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA), which is a legal requirement. The SA process has been undertaken by specialist consultants, AECOM, on behalf of the Council. The SA will be reviewed and updated after each stage of the Local Plan process, and the findings of the SA will continue to be incorporated into the Local Plan as it develops toward the adoption.

Q7 - What has the Council done to identify sites for new homes to meet the Housing Requirement?

The Draft Local Plan identifies a number of sites and other sources of housing supply, which together are projected to deliver 5,889 new homes up to 2040. This provides the Borough with a 9% buffer of supply over the Housing Requirement.

The housing supply trajectory set out in the Draft Local Plan is informed by the evidence accumulated through the production of a 'Land Availability Assessment' and emerging Town Centre Masterplan.

Q8 - How is the emerging Local Plan affected by Government's proposed Planning Reforms?

The government has put forward a Bill which sets out reforms to the wider Planning system. It also announced further changes to national planning policy currently being consulted on. These are proposed reforms and do not change the current policy as it stands at present. There is currently no firm timescale for it to be developed into legislation, and when it does, there are likely to be interim measures and transitional arrangements for councils like ours which are already in the middle of preparing a Local Plan. We will closely monitor the progress of these proposals but continue with preparing our Plan.

As it stands, Local Plan policies need to be evidenced based and justified. The evidence base is the collection of technical documents prepared and used to inform the development of policy for the Local Plan. These evidence base documents help us to write policy from an informed perspective, based on quantitative and statistical analysis alongside other considerations like the results of consultations and national policy. The evidence base demonstrates an acute need for new homes in the borough to meet a range of needs. The lack of housing provision in the borough exacerbates problems of housing affordability and other problems in the borough. The provision of new homes is fundamental to increase affordability and prevent homelessness, in addition it supports a growing economy and investment in social and physical infrastructure.

Q9 - Why can't all development take place on brownfield sites?

The Draft Local Plan prioritises and focuses development on the brownfield sites with an emphasis on brownfield sites in Epsom Town Centre.

However, the Council cannot allocate previously developed land for housing without the agreement of the landowner or without any evidence of the deliverability of the site for new housing development. As the availability of brownfield sites within Epsom Town Centre and the wider built-up area is limited, previously developed sites and greenfield sites within the Green Belt have been identified for new homes.

Q10 - Will new infrastructure, such as roads and healthcare, be delivered to support new housing development?

In order to mitigate the impacts of new development and to create sustainable communities, the Draft Local Plan requires that new and improved infrastructure will be provided alongside any development proposals, at the right time and in the right place to support new housing

The Council will continue to work with infrastructure providers, other stakeholders, neighbouring councils, and other infrastructure partners, to ensure that new and existing infrastructure is provided, improved and maintained to support the development proposals identified in the Local Plan.

The Council has produced an Infrastructure Plan (IP). The IP identifies the Borough's existing infrastructure provision as well as the known requirements that have

emerged through initial engagement with infrastructure providers and Surrey County Council to date. The IP is a 'living' document so will be updated when new information becomes available as the local plan progresses.

The Infrastructure Plan will be reviewed and updated throughout the plan-making process. The IP will summarise the infrastructure requirements, set out who is responsible for delivering it, and consider the cumulative impact of smaller sites on the existing infrastructure.

Section 2 - Consultation Questions

Q11 - How can I get involved and provide comments on the draft Local Plan?

If you want to be informed or take part in future consultations you can complete our online form <https://epsom-ewell.inconsult.uk/>

Alternatively please email us at: localplan@epsom-ewell.gov.uk

As part of formal consultations we will run a series of in-person drop in events. The times and locations of these events are detailed below:

Date	Location	Time
Monday 13 February	Bourne Hall, Azalea Room	14.30–19.30
Thursday 16 February	Ashley Centre, Central Square	12.00–17:00
Tuesday 21 February	Bourne Hall, Azalea Room	14.30–19.30
Wednesday 22 February	Community & Wellbeing Centre, Sefton Road	10.30–15:30
Saturday 25 February	Ashley Centre, Central Square	11.00–16.00
Tuesday 28 February	Community & Wellbeing Centre, Sefton Road	10.30–15.30

Q12 - How long does the consultation period run for?

The consultation starts on 1 February 2023 and ends at 23:59 on 15 March 2023.

Q13 - How can I provide feedback on the Draft Local Plan?

Comments must be received in writing. To provide your comments, please register to use our online consultation software and answer the questions embedded within the document. Our online consultation portal can be accessed from the following link:

<https://epsom-ewell.inconsult.uk/>.

Alternatively, you can your written comments along with your contact details (e.g. name and organisation) via one of the following methods:

- By Email: localplan@epsom-ewell.gov.uk
- By writing to: Planning Policy, The Old Town Hall, The Parade, Epsom, KT18 5BY.

Q14 - Where can I see a paper copy of the Draft Local Plan?

You can download a copy from our website: <https://epsom-ewell.gov.uk/local-plan>

and print it yourself; or

You can view one of the copies of the Draft Local Plan that have been made available in the borough's libraries and at the Town Hall. Please check the opening times before visiting.

Q15 - Will my comments be made public?

The comments you make during a formal consultation will be published or summarised and we may publish your name, your organisation alongside the comments. We cannot accept anonymous comments for any consultations.

By submitting your response to a consultation, you are consenting to your contact details being added to the Planning Policy consultation data base, and you may be contacted regarding future planning policy consultations. If you do not want to be contacted for future consultations or for your information retained please make this clear in your response.

Q16 - What happens next?

Once the consultation period has ended, we will consider all the comments and information submitted to produce the final publication version of the plan. We will then undergo another round of consultation (known as Regulation 19) before the final version is submitted to the Planning Inspectorate.

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