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Dear Ms Masters,

Epsom and Ewell Local Plan Examination – Council's response to the Inspector's Initial Letter (ID_001)

Further to your initial letter (ID-001), please find below the Council's response to your queries and request for additional information and documents. This response goes through each of your points in turn with supporting information provided in Appendices where necessary.

Missing Documents

The Statement of Common Ground with National Highways is now complete (SCG08) and attached as Appendix 1 to this letter.

Statements of Common Ground

In addition to the seven Statements of Common Ground that form part of the Examination Library Documents SCG01-SCG-07 and the SoCG with National Highways (Appendix 1), the Council has also prepared Statements of Common Ground with the following organisations post submission which are contained within Appendix 2:

- Historic England (SCG09)
- Environment Agency (SCG10)
- NHS Property Services (SCG11)

The only outstanding Statement of Common Ground is with the Surrey Heartlands Integrated Care Board (ICB). We anticipate that this SoCG will be signed by the 30 May 2025.

The Council has not prepared Statements of Common Ground with five DtC bodies detailed in Chapter 2 of the Duty to Cooperate Framework (January 2023) ([Examination Library Document DTC03](#)). The reasons for this are set out in Table 1 overleaf:

Table 1 – DtC bodies and the reasons why SoCG have not been prepared	
Duty Body	Reason the Council has not prepared a SoCG
Greater London Authority (GLA)	The GLA have been consulted on the Draft Local Plan (Regulation 18) and Proposed Submission Local Plan (Regulation 19) and no responses have been received to these consultations.
Transport for London (TfL)	<p>TfL responded to the Regulation 18 consultation highlighting the Crossrail 2 would serve three of the boroughs rail stations and that due to the proximity to London the council should consider rebalancing the transport system to walking, cycling and public transport. The response also highlighted the importance of a bus stand to the south of the Ashely Centre in close proximity to a proposed site allocation.</p> <p>Constructive engagement with TfL has taken place in developing the Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP), particularly in relation to bus service provision.</p> <p>TfL responded to the Regulation 19 (REP Number 144) consultation stating that it is still their aspiration for Crossrail 2 to be a regional scheme and should it come forward, it is likely that Stoneleigh, Ewell West and Epsom stations would be served by Crossrail 2 and welcome the plan including references to Crossrail 2.</p> <p>The rest of the response focused on Policy S19 and stating consideration could be given to wording revisions.</p> <p>No issues of soundness or legal compliance were raised in the Reg 19 response and the suggested amendments are minor and therefore we do not consider that a SoCG is required.</p>
Civil Aviation Authority	<p>The Council has engaged with Gatwick Airport Limited (GAL) who have confirmed that the CAA devolved the responsibility for aerodrome safeguarding to the individual airports back in 2003 (email confirming this in Appendix 3). GAL responded to the Regulation 19 consultation and the suggested change has been incorporated into the Schedule of Modifications (SD13).</p> <p>GAL have raised no further objections/issues with the Proposed Submission Local Plan. Heathrow did not make a formal response to the Regulation 19 consultation but confirmed via an email their agreement with GALs comments (Appendix 3).</p>
Homes England (HE)	Homes England (HE) - The Council has not received any response from HE in relation to the Local Plan. In addition to the formal Regulation 18 and 19 consultation stages, HE was provided with a further opportunity to engage with the process, raise any issues and comment on the draft Local Plan in July 2024 (email in Appendix 3).

The Office for Road and Rail	The Office of Road and Rail (ORR) - The Council has not received any response from ORR in relation to the Local Plan. In addition to the formal Regulation 18 and 19 consultation stages, ORR was provided with a further opportunity to engage with the process, raise any issues and comment on the draft Local Plan in July 2024 (email in Appendix 3).
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Duty to Cooperate

As many of the Inspector's questions and areas of clarification relate to meetings the Council has held with DtC partners, the Council has compiled a table of significant meetings/activities that relate to its Duty to Cooperate activities. This is available in Appendix 4. As suggested by the Inspector, brief information is provided in relation to:

- i. Date of meeting
- ii. Who was in attendance
- iii. Outline of the strategic matters discussed
- iv. Identification of any areas of disagreement and outline attempt to resolve them
- v. Identify how that process has influenced the development of the evidence base and the overall plans policies
- vi. A note of the meeting or minutes (where held)

The meetings/activities are in date order. Where minutes or additional documents are available, they are provided in further appendices.

In relation to the Inspector's specific DtC questions as set out in the initial letter (ID-001), the Council has provided a response or signposted the relevant information in the sections below.

Duty to Cooperate Framework (January 2023) – Document DTC3

The November 2022 letter referred to in the Framework was the first formal request the Council made for assistance in meeting housing and Gypsy & Traveller needs. Copies of the 11 responses received are available in Appendix 5.

Duty to Cooperate Statement of Compliance (November 2024) – Document DTC2

- a. Redevelopment of Industrial Land – additional information on engagement undertaken.

The Council has undertaken engagement with key stakeholders on the matter of employment land, specifically given that there has been some pressure to develop employment sites in the urban area, including the borough's largest industrial estates: Kiln Lane and Longmead, to assist in meeting housing needs. This is demonstrated by timeline below:

Consultation on Draft Duty to Cooperate Framework, 25 May- 17 June 2022 (Appendix 6). The Council consulted on its draft Duty to Cooperate Framework, with neighbouring local authorities, Surrey County Council and the Coast to Capital Local Enterprise Partnership being consulted. The draft Framework identified 'supporting the local economy' as a

strategic matter for the purposes of the Duty to Cooperate. The Council had been exploring options to assist in meeting housing need, with one being the potential redevelopment of the borough's Kiln Lane and Longmead industrial estates. It was stated within the draft Framework that "this option is at an early stage of consideration, but its impact on the wider economy will need to be explored with partners to understand whether redevelopment for a housing scheme is a realistic option."

On the 16 June 2022, the council engaged with the Coast to Capital LEP on economic development matters. Matters discussed included employment land needs across the C2C area and the localised pressure that the council was facing to explore redeveloping the boroughs two largest employment sites for alternate uses, specifically housing. An outcome of the meeting was that the council would commission the LEP to produce a Kiln Lane and Longmead Economic Value Report to identify the economic value of the borough's two employment sites, including information on the types of business that occupy the sites, the number of jobs provided and the value of these businesses to the local economy.

In September 2022, the Kiln Lane and Longmead Economic Value Report was completed and published as part of the Local Plan evidence base ([Examination Library Document EV07](#)) and the findings were to be fed into the then emerging Housing and Economic Development Needs Assessment.

On the 8 November 2022 the consultants appointed by the Council to undertake a Housing and Economic Development Needs Assessment (HEDNA) undertook a briefing for key stakeholders, with a wide range of organisations being invited including the LEP, business organisations and neighbouring planning authorities. Topics discussed included the economy & labour market, employment forecasts, and employment land requirements in the borough.

No further feedback was received on the HEDNA findings and the document was finalised for publication in January 2023 ([Examination Library Document HB03](#)).

Following consideration of the evidence; the Kiln Lane and Longmead Economic Value Report, which highlighted the economic importance of the industrial estates; the HEDNA identifying a need for additional employment land within the borough and; the first iteration of the Land Availability Assessment (LAA) ([Examination Library Document HB02a](#)), which found only three sites to be available for redevelopment for alternative uses within the industrial estates, the potential redevelopment of the industrial estates was not considered to be a deliverable option to deliver significant housing. As such, this matter was not taken forward in the published DtC Framework (January 2023) ([Examination Library Document DTC3](#)) and the Regulation 18 draft Local Plan proposed a policy approach to safeguard and intensify the industrial sites.

The above evidence base documents and the DtC Framework were published in advance of the Regulation 18 Local Plan consultation being undertaken. Following the close of the consultation of the Draft Local Plan no objections were received from DtC bodies on the proposed policy approach to safeguard and intensify the two strategic sites for employment uses. The two other planning authorities in our functional economic area, Mole Valley District Council (MVDC) and Reigate & Banstead Borough Council (RBBC), were meeting their employment land needs in full.

On the 27 September 2023 the council met with London Borough of Sutton (LBS) for a DtC meeting that they requested. LBS informed officers that their new Employment Land Review (ELR) identified a significant increase in the need for employment land in the

borough over their plan period. Epsom & Ewell Borough Council (EEBC) highlighted that we cannot meet other local authorities' employment needs.

On the 9 October 2024, the Council arranged a DtC meeting with London Borough of Sutton, where EEBC highlighted the policy approach to safeguard the main industrial sites in the borough and encourage their intensification over the plan period to meet identified needs. Sutton updates that their Reg 18 strategy was to safeguard and intensify but this is unlikely to meet need and they are likely to be seeking assistance from other authorities to meet the need. No formal request has since been received by EEBC up to the present date.

On the 9 October 2024, Royal Borough of Kingston (RBK) Council arranged a DtC meeting with EEBC where they indicated that they were unlikely to meet housing and employment needs and that they were not proposing to release Green Belt, but this position will be reviewed following the publication of the updated NPPF. No formal request has since been received by EEBC up to the present date.

b. Additional information on 'further meeting with neighbouring authorities' – have further meetings taken place?

The Regulation 18 Draft Local Plan identified delivering around 5,870 new dwellings across the plan period, which comprised urban sites and release of Green Belt. Following the Regulation 18 consultation, the Council updated the Land Availability Assessment (LAA), which found the urban supply of land to be reduced, mainly due to potential sites not being confirmed as available, and therefore not deliverable. As such the housing land supply position had worsened since the Regulation 18 consultation.

The Council subsequently met with its four neighbouring authorities and Elmbridge Borough Council (EBC), who is within the same Housing Market Area as EEBC, which have been identified correctly by the Inspector and are detailed below:

- May 2024 – EEBC and MVDC
- May 2024 – EEBC and RBBC
- May 2024 – EEBC and RBK
- September 2023, October 2024 – EEBC and LBS
- October 2024 – EEBC and EBC

In addition, the Council also met with Surrey County Council on 11/6/2024, where the issue of meeting housing and Gypsy and Traveller needs was discussed. Information relating to these meetings are provided in the timeline in Appendix 4 with the minutes of the meetings being contained within Appendix 8.

c. Copies of the responses received in relation to the July 2024 letter attached as Appendix 3 of the report

The July 2024 letter was the second formal request the Council made for assistance in meeting housing and Gypsy & Traveller needs. Copies of the responses received are available in Appendix 7.

d. Further details on the meetings in relation to Gypsy and Travellers detailed on page 17

The meetings held in relation to Gypsy and Traveller provision were the same as those identified in section b above, including the Surrey County Council meeting on 11/6/2024. Information relating to these meetings are provided in the timeline in Appendix 4 with the minutes of the meetings being contained within Appendix 8.

e. Further details on meetings with SCC in relation to sustainable transport in November 2023 and June 2024

The Council has not held any meetings with National Highways in relation to this specific issue. Information and the minutes of the 21/11/23 and 11/06/24 meetings with Surrey County Council Planning and Place Making Team are available in Appendix 8.

A catch-up meeting on the progress of the Strategic Transport Modelling Report was held with the Surrey County Council Transport Studies Team on 17/09/24.

A meeting in relation to potential mitigation of the Local Plan transport impacts, specifically SA35: Horton Farm was held with the Surrey County Council Transport Development Planning Team on 14/01/25.

A meeting with Surrey County Council Planning and Place Making Team was held on 29/1/25. Matters discussed included a variety of DtC issues, including SCC's potential wording changes to SA35: Horton Farm in relation to sustainable transport and bus service improvements.

These meetings are included in the timeline in Appendix 4 and minutes are available for the 29/1/25 meeting (Appendix 8).

Related to the issue of improving sustainable transport, the Council has been working in partnership with Surrey County Council in developing a Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP). Various meetings/workshops have been held on the LCWIP which are detailed in the timeline of meetings in Appendix 4.

Specific dates for meetings relating to the LCWIP include:

- 14/09/23: Inception meeting with Atkins (consultants producing the LCWIP on behalf of Surrey County Council and EEBC)
- 2/11/23, 9/11/23 & 6/12/23: Stakeholder workshops: Early engagement
- 27/3/24, 28/3/24 & 18/4/24: Stakeholder workshops: Methodology

f. Further details on Planning Working Group, meetings between EEBC and the Joint Place Team and Surrey Heath and Planning Task Group.

Surrey County Council arrange a series of meetings for Local Planning Authority Representatives to attend for the purposes of sharing information and discussing strategic issues. Further information on each of these meetings is detailed below:

Planning Working Group

The Planning Working Group (PWG) is attended by all Surrey Planning Policy Managers (or their substitutes), Surrey County Council officers and invited guest speakers. The

meetings are held every two to three months and their core purpose is for sharing information.

Since work on the Local Plan recommenced in early 2022, there have been 13 PWG meetings. Further details of the matters discussed and any outcomes for each meeting are set out in the timeline in Appendix 4.

A range of matters are discussed and the timeline demonstrates how some work areas have progressed alongside the Local Plan to inform its content or the supporting evidence base, including the Surrey Low Carbon and Net Zero Viability Toolkit (Examination Library Documents OT06a – OT06e) and modelling for healthcare and education needs to inform the Infrastructure Delivery Plan – Regulation 19 ([Examination Library Document ISO01](#)).

A standing item for PWG is updates on Local Plan progress, this includes details on emerging evidence base, likely data or DtC requests in addition to key milestones, such as dates for decisions and formal consultation phases.

Meetings with Joint Place Team – Joint Prioritisation Meetings

The Joint Prioritisation Meetings are attended by Senior Surrey County Council Officers including those responsible for Infrastructure Delivery and from Epsom and Ewell are attended by the Head of Place Development. The key purpose is to share knowledge of projects and identify opportunities for delivery.

The meetings focus on the Surrey Infrastructure Plan and live or potential schemes in the borough, Community Infrastructure Levy (as a source of funding for necessary infrastructure) and updates on the Epsom and Ewell Local Plan.

A current scheme that is being progressed is the Ewell Village highway safety and public realm improvements project, which is being part funded by a contribution of £1.35m from the County Council and £1.25m from the Epsom and Ewell Strategic CIL fund.

Four meetings have been held which are included in the timeline in Appendix 4.

Surrey Health and Planning Forum

This group is attended by Planning and public health officers from District and Boroughs in Surrey, officers from Surrey County Council, NHS Surrey Heartlands, NHS England.

The Surrey Health and Planning Forum reconvened in September 2022 and aims to meet every quarter. Since the meeting was reconvened there have been four meetings which are included in the timeline in Appendix 4.

Agenda items have included, Liveable Neighbourhoods, Health and Wellbeing Strategy, Joint Strategic Needs Assessment Update, Design Codes, Health Impact Assessment, Health Estates Strategy, NHS Property Services Health Update and Future Work, Community Infrastructure Levy, Active Travel Fund and Food Strategy.

Health and Planning Forum Task Group

This group is attended by a smaller group of officers than the Health and Planning Forum, comprising mainly of Planning Policy officers from Surrey district and boroughs and Surrey County Council. The group meet quarterly.

The task group meets to discuss health matters specific to plan making and development management. The purpose is to share, raise issues so that we can work collaboratively on matters relating to health

The meetings have included discussions about a draft Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between Public Health and all Surrey Local Planning Authorities, and the introduction of Health Impact Assessment Policies.

These meetings are included in the timeline in Appendix 4

Duty to Cooperate Statement of Compliance – Update (March 2025) – Document DTC1

- a. Further details on meetings with 5 neighbouring local authorities that took place in January 2025.

The information requested above and minutes of the meetings are available in Appendix 8. The meetings were held on the following dates:

- 20/01/25 London Borough of Sutton
- 27/01/25 Mole Valley District Council
- 30/01/25 Royal Borough of Kingston Upon Thames
- 30/01/25 Elmbridge Borough Council
- 31/01/25 Reigate and Banstead Borough Council

- b. Have any other meetings taken place since November 2024.

The timeline of meetings in Appendix 4 sets out the meetings which have taken place since November 2024. These include:

- 8/11/24 –EEBC and Surrey Heartlands ICB to discuss policy wording related to primary healthcare requirements for policy SA35: Horton Farm
- 11/11/24 –EEBC and SCC Education Place Planning to discuss and agree wording for the IDP in relation to education provision
- 14/01/25 – EEBC and SCC Transport Planning representatives to discuss potential mitigation of Local Plan transport impacts.
- 22/01/25 Meeting with Natural England to discuss the results and ecological interpretation of the additional air quality modelling work and the implications for the final Habitats Regulations Assessment and the need for an SoCG.

Gypsy and Traveller Assessment

In December 2023 the PPTS was updated with the only change being made to the definition of gypsies and travellers. The definition reverted to defining travellers as all those of travelling background, not just those who are currently travelling. The amendment was

effective from 19 December 2023 for plan-making and decision-taking, and Table 2 below highlights the changes to the definitions.

Table 2 – comparison of definitions contained in the PPTS 2015 and 2023.	
PPTS 2015 – definitions	PPTS 2023 – definitions
<p>1. For the purposes of this planning policy “gypsies and travellers” means:</p> <p>Persons of nomadic habit of life whatever their race or origin, including such persons who on grounds only of their own or their family’s or dependants’ education or health needs or old age have ceased to travel temporarily, but excluding members of an organised group of travelling show people or circus people travelling together as such.</p>	<p>1. For the purposes of this planning policy “gypsies and travellers” means:</p> <p>Persons of nomadic habit of life whatever their race or origin, including such persons who on grounds only of their own or their family’s or dependants’ educational or health needs or old age have ceased to travel temporarily or permanently, but excluding members of an organised group of travelling showpeople or circus people travelling together as such.</p>
<p>2. In determining whether persons are “gypsies and travellers” for the purposes of this planning policy, consideration should be given to the following issues amongst other relevant matters:</p> <p>a) Whether they previously led a nomadic habit of life.</p> <p>b) The reasons for ceasing their nomadic habit of life.</p> <p>c) Whether there is an intention of living a nomadic habit of life in the future, and if so, how soon and in what circumstances.</p>	<p>2. In determining whether persons are “gypsies and travellers” for the purposes of this planning policy, consideration should be given to the following issues amongst other relevant matters:</p> <p>a) whether they previously led a nomadic habit of life</p> <p>b) the reasons for ceasing their nomadic habit of life</p> <p>c) whether there is an intention of living a nomadic habit of life in the future, and if so, how soon and in what circumstances</p>
<p>For the purposes of this planning policy, “travelling showpeople” means: Members of a group organised for the purposes of holding fairs, circuses or shows (whether or not travelling together as such). This includes such persons who on the grounds of their own or their family’s or dependants’ more localised pattern of trading, educational or health needs or old age have ceased to travel temporarily, but excludes Gypsies and Travellers as defined above.</p>	<p>For the purposes of this planning policy, “travelling showpeople” means: Members of a group organised for the purposes of holding fairs, circuses or shows (whether or not travelling together as such). This includes such persons who on the grounds of their own or their family’s or dependants’ more localised pattern of trading, educational or health needs or old age have ceased to travel temporarily or permanently, but excludes Gypsies and Travellers as defined above.</p>

The Epsom and Ewell GTAA (June 2022) ([Examination Library Document HB04](#)) was produced having regard to the PPTS 2015 definition of Gypsies and Travellers , however as we set out later in this response that the GTAA contains information to calculate need based on the on revised definition contained in the PPTS 2023.

Household Surveys

We note questions are raised about the timing of the surveys which the GTAA authors acknowledge were undertaken during Covid 19 restrictions being in effect. The consultants state that they would usually aim to complete fieldwork during the non-travelling season and also avoid days of known local or national events. However, due to COVID-19 restrictions, the fieldwork was completed between October and December 2021, and the researchers were able to collect information on the residents on all occupied sites (para 3.22 of the GTAA provides more information).

The two local authority owned and managed gypsy and traveller pitches in the borough contain 23 pitches in total and the households that reside on these pitches were all¹ interviewed during the surveying work which followed a two-stage process:

- Stage 1 - telephone interviews
- Stage 2 – socially distanced interviews

The household surveys were used to determine the status of each household against the planning definition contained in the PPTS (2015). Figure 5 of the GTAA identifies that from the 23 pitches, 28 households were interviewed, 11 met the planning definition and 17 did not meet the planning definition. The number of households is greater than the number of pitches as some hidden households were identified during the household interviews.

The GTAA identifies that whilst the needs of those households that do not meet the planning definition set out in the PPTS 2015 do not need to be included in the GTAA, they have been assessed to provide the Council with components of need to consider as part of their work on wider housing needs assessments.

The need of the borough's Gypsies and Travellers for the period 2022-2040 having regard to the 2015 PPTS definitions is set out in Table 3 below.

Table 3 - Need for Gypsy and Traveller households in Epsom & Ewell that did and did not meet the 2015 PPTS Planning Definition by 5-year periods					
Years	0-5	6-10	11-15	16-18	Total (plan period)
	2022-27	2027-2032	2032-2037	2037-2040	
Need - Definition met (Source GTAA figure 2)	6	1	2	1	10
Need - Definition not met (Source GTAA figure 10)	6	1	1	0	8
Total need	12	2	3	1	18

The Regulation 18 Draft Local Plan proposed providing 10 gypsy and traveller pitches at the strategic green field allocation Land at Horton Farm (Draft Allocation SA6). This allocation would have met 100% of the gypsy and traveller need at the time under the 2015 PPTS

¹ one household was interviewed by proxy (where information was obtained from other family members, site residents or site managers).

definition. The council followed a sequential approach to seeking to meet gypsy and traveller needs as set out below:

1. Utilising spare capacity or intensifying existing sites within the borough.
2. Expanding existing sites within the borough.
3. Finding new sites within the borough.
4. Meeting needs outside of the borough via the duty to cooperate.
5. Assessment of Green Belt sites should exceptional circumstances be demonstrated.

The Councils Meeting Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Needs Topic Paper (Examination Document [TP05](#)) provides further information on the findings of this sequential approach which concluded that the only opportunity to provide additional supply is through the release of green belt sites.

The Submitted Local Plan retains the Land at Horton Farm strategic allocation (SA35) and the requirement to deliver 10 gypsy pitches which accounts for 56% of the identified need meeting the 2023 PPTS definition. However, to assist in meeting needs over the plan period, Local Plan Policy S8 'Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Show people' has been amended to include criteria-based requirements (criterion 6 and 7) to enable the provision of gypsy and traveller accommodation from unallocated (windfall) developments.

To conclude:

- The GTAA 2022 is based on the 2015 PPTS, however as set out above the assessment provides information to enable the need for gypsy and travellers' pitches based on the updated definition contained in the 2023 PPTS to be calculated.
- The implication of the definition change is that the need for gypsy and traveller pitches has increased from 10 to 18 over the Local Plan period (2022-2040) as set out in the Meeting Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Needs Topic Paper – December 2024 ([Examination Library Document TP05](#)).
- The surveys were undertaken during covid 19 restrictions; however, this enabled all households at the two established local authority sites in the borough to be interviewed to determine their future accommodation needs over the plan period.

We therefore consider the evidence base is up to date in terms of identifying the needs arising for Gypsy and Traveller accommodation when assessed against the updated definition in the PPTS 2023 which our Local Plan is being examined against.

Surrey County Council Statement of Common Ground and reference to mitigation

The Strategic Highway Modelling Assessment of the Proposed Submission Local Plan ([Examination Library Document IS04](#)) concludes:

- Overall, the Local Plan sites are mostly reasonably small and/or well located in relation to existing transport connections and amenities. As a result, the highway impacts tend to be local to the development sites themselves and the cumulative impact is in general tolerable.
- It is not considered that any impacts would be considered severe in terms of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).

- There is a need for localised mitigation tied in with specified development sites as well as schemes to address cumulative impacts. In particular, high-quality pedestrian and cycle links linking the development sites with where people want to travel is required, in order to limit travel by private vehicles, and this includes connections to their local bus and rail services.

The key policy framework to mitigating the impacts of Local Plan development on the highway network are through the delivery of the Surrey Local Transport Plan 4 (2022) ([Examination Library Document OT02](#)) and Surrey County Council's emerging Decide and Provide Policy. The mechanisms to deliver mitigation include:

- Epsom and Ewell Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) ([Examination Library Document OT03](#)) – this document was endorsed by EEBC in September 2024 and subsequently approved by SCC in May 2025. The LCWIP identifies priority walking and cycling schemes in the borough (see later section of this referring to the Infrastructure Delivery Plan for more information). Potential funding sources for the LCWIP include Active Travel England Funding / CIL / developer contributions.
- Local Street Improvements (LSI) – 19 Zones have been identified in Epsom and Ewell where the County Council will be designing and carrying out work to improve local streets and the public realm. The improvements will allow more people to walk, wheel and ride locally promoting active travel. The LSI zones and LCWIP core walking zones will be contiguous. Potential funding sources for the LSIs include Active Travel England Funding / CIL / developer contributions.
- Surrey Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP).
- Implementation of the Surrey Healthy Streets Design Code (adopted 2023)
- Mobility hubs – the borough of Epsom and Ewell presents an opportunity to deliver mobility hubs of different types and size with opportunities for the implementation of an e-bike hire scheme.

Interim Habitats Regulation Assessment

The Council published an Interim HRA alongside the Regulation 19 Local Plan consultation in December 2024 and this document forms parts of the Examination Library ([Document SD04b](#)).

The additional air quality work was required as the Local Plan Strategic Highways modelling ([Examination Library Document IS05](#)) identified that a road link adjoining the Mole Gap to Reigate Escarpment SAC (the B2032 in neighbouring Mole Valley District Council) triggered an in-combination exceedance of the 1,000 AADT screening thresholds set by Natural England (see paragraphs 3.4.46 -3.4.55 of the Interim HRA).

As a result of this exceedance, in the absence of detailed air quality modelling, the Interim HRA (Examination Library document SD04b) states that a conclusion regarding adverse air quality impacts upon the site integrity of Mole Gap to Reigate Escarpment SAC was unable to be reached.

The Council agreed with Natural England that further air quality modelling work would be commissioned by the Council and subsequently evaluated by the Council's HRA consultants to inform a full Appropriate Assessment of air quality impacts. This work was undertaken and enabled the HRA to be finalised in February 2025 ([Examination Document SD04a](#)).

The Statement of Common Ground between the Council and Natural England ([Examination Document SCG07](#)) dated February 2025 confirms that both parties agree:

- They have worked constructively, along with the Council's HRA consultants, to address the air quality issues identified through the HRA process.
- The outstanding air quality issues have now been resolved and the conclusions are reflected in the Final HRA, which meets the requirements of The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended), in relation to the Epsom & Ewell Proposed Submission Local Plan.
- Natural England have no outstanding concerns in relation to the soundness or legal compliance of the Proposed Submission Local Plan.

Biodiversity Net Gain requirements for specific greenfield site allocations

The Council's proposed Policy S15 Biodiversity Net Gain requires 10% BNG on qualifying development proposals (as set out in regulations) and requires higher requirement of 20% from greenfield site allocations.

Proposed Policy S15 is evidenced by a Position Statement prepared by Surrey Nature Partnership (SNP) (attached as Appendix 9a). The Position Statement recommends that authorities in Surrey adopt a policy of Biodiversity Net Gain of a minimum of 20%. It makes this recommendation based on government research and findings from the State of Surrey's Nature document.

The Position Statement signposts to Defra's Impact Assessment (2018) which suggests that a minimum of 10%, and net gain at a level 10% or above is necessary to give reasonable confidence in halting biodiversity losses. In addition, the document refers to the Surrey Nature Partnerships State of Surrey's Nature report (2017) (attached as Appendix 9b) which concluded that the extinction rate within Surrey was higher than the national extinction rate. The report notes the gradual weakening and fragmentation of habitats leads to final loss of all local population of species. In conclusion, the case made is that the national goal for the recovery of biodiversity will require an elevated approach from Local Planning Authorities (LPAs) in Surrey.

In addition, a further argument made in the Position Statement for a higher BNG threshold relates to 'natural capital', 'natural capital' (where the natural environment is valued monetarily) is considered high in the County, where the County is dependent on and relies on the natural environment for its economy and health and well-being of residents. Therefore, in recognition of the essential role, investment in the natural environment in the County over and above the norm is considered to be justified.

The Position Statement notes that some authorities have already adopted policies above the national minimum of 10% BNG including Guildford Borough Council in their adopted Development Management Policies (2023) which included a 20% Biodiversity Net Gain requirement.

More recently our neighbouring planning authority of Mole Valley District Council has adopted a Local Plan requiring a minimum of 20% BNG on planning applications, unless an exemption applies. This requirement is set out in Policy EN9: Natural Assets of the Mole Valley Local Plan 2020-2039 which was adopted by the authority on the 15 October 2024.

We acknowledge that planning practice guidance states that a higher percentage BNG should not be sought unless it is justified and clearly sets out what needs to be demonstrated:

Plan-makers should not seek a higher percentage than the statutory objective of 10% biodiversity net gain, either on an area-wide basis or for specific allocations for development unless justified. To justify such policies they will need to be evidenced including as to local need for a higher percentage, local opportunities for a higher percentage and any impacts on viability for development. Consideration will also need to be given to how the policy will be implemented. (Paragraph: 006 Reference ID: 74-006-20240214).

In terms of local opportunities for a higher percentage, the Position Statement referred to sets out that the 'natural capital' in the County is high, meaning the County relies on and benefits from the natural environment for its local economy. The County Council is leading on the preparation of a Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS) which will identify locations to improve nature and provide other environmental benefits in Surrey and is supportive of Surrey LPAs requiring at least 20% BNG through emerging Local Plan policies (recommending the 20% at Regulation 18 and welcoming the change at Regulation 19). The County Council also arranged early discussions on BNG with all Districts and Boroughs, including discussions across the county at Planning Working Group (Sept 2023) updating districts and Boroughs on the LNRS and BNG, where local authorities were invited to participate in a joint tender to appoint consultants to survey land owned by the authorities to consider the opportunities for potential to deliver off site mitigation land for BNG. EEBC participated in this work and 5 council owned sites were surveyed to determine their suitability for BNG mitigation.

In terms of viability, in the Draft Local Plan (Regulation 18 version) included a policy for a 10% BNG requirement on all qualifying schemes (Policy S14 Biodiversity – [Examination Document PV01](#)) this requirement was assessed by the 2022 Local Plan Viability Assessment ([Examination Document EV04](#)). This assessment used the cost scenarios of the Government's BNG Impact Assessment and concluded that the types of interventions would be modest. Paragraph 10.35 (b) of the assessment states that greenfield sites have the greatest capacity to bear planning obligations such as affordable housing, developer contributions and environmental standards. This is also demonstrated in Tables 10.4, 10.6 and 10.9 in the assessment which show development viability for a sample of greenfield sites assessed with sizable buffers between the Residential Value and Benchmark Land Value under a range of scenarios.

During the Regulation 18 public consultation, the Council received representations from Surrey Wildlife Trust and Surrey County Council who signposted to the Surrey Nature Partnership Position Statement for 20% BNG and recommend increasing the requirement to 20% in line with the Position Statement.

Having considered the Position Statement, State of Surrey's Nature report and initial viability assessment the Council updated the policy to require a minimum 10% BNG all sites except for specific greenfield site allocations where a minimum of 20% would be required. This revised policy requirement was reassessed in the Council's Viability Note 2024 ([Examination](#)

[Document EV03](#)) which forms part of its evidence base and considers the potential additional costs that may arise. The note used costings from Kent County Council (detailed in table 5.2 on p15) which had published potential costs of higher levels of BNG and reappraised the greenfield sites and suggests that the financial impact of 15% or 20% is relatively modest where delivered on site. This is demonstrated in Appendix 1 of the Viability Note which shows all hypothetical greenfield sites tested are viable (green).

Having regard to the PPG (Paragraph: 006 Reference ID: 74-006-20240214), for the reasons set out above, we consider that there is strong evidence for seeking a higher percentage BNG requirement from specific greenfield site allocations within the Local Plan and that our viability evidence base indicates that the requirement for a minimum of 20% BNG will not negatively impact the viability of these greenfield sites.

Housing Trajectory

The Council is continuing to engage with site promoters of the sites allocated in the Local Plan and several of the sites are progressing through the development management process. Table 4 below provides information on the planning status of some of the site allocations that will deliver in the first five years of the plan period:

Table 4 – Planning Status of specific Local Plan Site Allocations	
Site Allocation	Status as of 15 May 2025
SA1 (Southern Gas Network Site)	Hybrid planning application (full planning permission for 455 dwellings and outline permission for the re-provision of a performing arts centre) approved by planning committee in April 2025 (subject to completion of a S106 agreement).
SA7 (Former Police and Ambulance Station Sites)	Planning permission granted and landowners have confirmed that they are due to commence construction in early 2026.
SA10 (79-85 East Street)	Recent planning approval and non-material amendment under consideration.
SA23 (140-142 Ruxley Lane)	Recent planning permission implemented (site cleared).

We welcome the opportunity to update you further on the status and timescales for delivery of the Local Plan allocations in due course.

Infrastructure Delivery Plan

The Infrastructure Delivery Plan – November 2024 ([Examination Document IS01](#)) has been informed following extensive engagement with Infrastructure providers and reflects the need for additional infrastructure resulting from the development contained within the Submission Local Plan.

The core infrastructure required to support the Local Plan as set out in the IDP is detailed in Table 5 overleaf:

Table 5 – Key Infrastructure necessary to support the Epsom and Ewell Local Plan		
Infrastructure Type	Provision Required	Timescale(s)
Education	Additional Early Years Provision at site allocation SA35	Subject to demand at the time the site allocation is delivered
	Additional Early Years Provision across the borough	Subject to demand
Transport	Improved E9 bus service	To support site allocation SA35
	<p>Cycling and Walking Priority areas and high-level interventions identified in the LCWIP Level 1 (subject to feasibility)</p> <p>High level cycle interventions (e.g. Table 14 in the LCWIP sets out the prioritisation for phase 1 cycle corridors) with six identified as priority)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A24 Dorking Rd (estimated cost £6.8m) • A24 Epsom Town Centre (estimated cost £11.6m) • Epsom TC to Epsom Downs (estimated cost £13.2m) • Hook Rd to Longmead Rd (estimated cost £8.6m) • Chessington Rd (estimated cost £7.1m) • A24 Ewell to Nonsuch Park (estimated cost £17.7m). <p>High level walking interventions (e.g. zebra crossings, footway widening, controlled crossings, wayfinding etc.)</p> <p>Table 13 in the LCWIP sets out the prioritisation table for phase 1 walking corridors with three areas identified as priorities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Town Centre – South (estimated cost £16m) • Town Centre – North (estimated cost £18.5m) • Ewell Centre (estimated cost £15.3m) 	Linked to development being undertaken in proximity to priority corridors.
	Local Street Improvements (LSI)	Linked to development being undertaken within the relevant LSI Zone.

	Within the borough 19 Zones have been identified. The cost of delivering LSI measures is estimated to be approx. £1.5m per zone.	
	Bus Service Improvements (contained in Bus Service Improvement Plan)	Ongoing
	Ewell Village Public Realm Improvements (Cost £2.6m)	Years 1-5
Health	GP practice extensions (up to 3 sites)	By 2040
	Primary care facility at Horton Farm (SA35)	Occupation trigger point – dependent upon needs
Utilities	Upgrade of Sewage Treatment Works (estimated cost £40M)	Between 2030 and 2050
Police	Additional Fleet Vehicles to support population	Ongoing
	ANPR system on key highway routes	Years 1-5

Strategic and Non-Strategic Policies

The Strategic Local Plan Policies of the Local Plan are detailed in Table 6 below.

Table 6 - Strategic Local Plan Policies	
Policy Code	Policy Title
S1	Spatial Strategy
S2	Sustainable and Viable Development
S3	Climate Change Adaptation and Mitigation
S4	Epsom Town Centre
SA1	Southern Gas Network Site
SA2	Hook Road Car Park
SA3	Solis House, 20 Hook Road
SA4	Bunzl, Hook Road
SA5	Epsom Town Hall
SA6	Hope Lodge Car Park
SA7	Former Police and Ambulance Station Sites
SA8	Epsom Clinic
SA9	Depot Road and Upper High Street Car Park
SA10	79–85 East Street
SA11	Finachem House, 2–4 Ashley Road
SA12	Global House
SA13	Swail House
SA14	60 East Street
SA15	Corner of Kiln Lane and East Street (101B East Street)

SA16	Land at Kiln Lane
SA17	Hatch Furlong Nursery
SA18	Land to the Rear of Rowe Hall
SA19	7 Station Approach
SA20	Esso Express, 26 Reigate Road
SA21	Richards Field Car Park
SA22	Etwelle House, Station Road
SA23	140–142 Ruxley Lane
SA24	Garages At Somerset Close and Westmorland Close
SA25	64 South Street
SA26	35 Alexandra Road
SA27	22–24 Dorking Road
SA28	63 Dorking Road
SA29	65 London Road
SA30	Epsom General Hospital
SA31	Land at West Park Hospital (South)
SA32	Land at West Park Hospital (North)
SA33	Land at Chantilly Way
SA34	Hook Road Arena
SA35	Land at Horton Farm
S5	Housing Mix and Type
S6	Affordable Housing
S7	Specialist Housing
S8	Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Show People
S9	Economic Development
S10	Retail Hierarchy Network
S11	Design
S12	Amenity Protection
S13	Preserving Identity of Place with Heritage
S14	Biodiversity and Geodiversity
S15	Biodiversity Net Gain
S16	Flood Risk and Sustainable Drainage
S17	Infrastructure Delivery
S18	Green and Blue Infrastructure
S19	Transport

The non-strategic Policies of the Local Plan are detailed in the Table 7 below.

Table 7 – Non-Strategic Development Management Policies	
Policy Code	Policy Title
DM1	Residential Space Standards
DM2	Self-Build and Custom Housebuilding
DM3	Loss of Housing
DM4	Primary Shopping Areas and Retail Frontages
DM5	Edge of Centre or Out of Centre Proposals
DM6	Neighbourhood Parades and Isolated Shops
DM7	Employment Land
DM8	Racehorse Training Zone
DM9	Visitor Accommodation
DM10	Building Emissions Standards

DM11	Sustainable Water Use
DM12	Health Impact Assessments
DM13	Development Impacting Heritage Assets
DM14	Shopfronts
DM15	Green Belt
DM16	Landscape Character
DM17	Trees, Woodlands and Hedgerows
DM18	Pollution And Contamination
DM19	Open Space, Sport and Recreation
DM20	Community and Cultural Facilities
DM21	Education Infrastructure
DM22	Aerodrome Safeguarding
DM23	Digital Infrastructure and Communications

We consider that to make it clearer in the Local Plan which policies are considered to be strategic, modifications could be made to paragraphs 1.18 and 1.19 (page 10) by including the additional text shown underlined below:

1.18. To deliver the vision and objectives, there are a suite of policies and land designations. These are divided into high level policies called ‘strategic policies’ (identifiable by the policy starting with the prefix S), and ‘site allocations’ (identifiable by the policy starting with the prefix SA), which set the strategy for the Local Plan and provide the high-level principles that development must adhere to. For emerging Neighbourhood Plans it is important to note that policies in a Neighbourhood Plan must be in line with the strategic policies within the adopted Local Plan. Specific land designations are detailed on the Policies Map which accompanies the Local Plan.

1.19. There are also detailed (non-strategic) policies called ‘Development Management’ policies (identifiable by the policy starting with the prefix DM), which provide the detailed criteria and standards which proposed development will be assessed against. Non-strategic policies in this Local Plan may be superseded by any policies identified in future Neighbourhood Plan

I trust this provides the clarification you require, but please do let the Council know if you have any further questions.

Yours sincerely



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