

# Statement of Common Ground

This Statement of Common Ground (SoCG) is between Epsom & Ewell Borough Council (EEBC) and Jockey Club Racecourses (JCR) in relation to the Epsom & Ewell Local Plan 2040.

## 1) Constituent parties to this SOCG

Epsom & Ewell Borough Council (EEBC)  
Jockey Club Racecourse (JCR)

## 2) Overview

This SOCG sets out the agreed position as of February 2026 in relation to Epsom & Ewell Borough Council's (EEBC) Proposed Submission Local Plan, specifically the section relating to the Racehorse Training Industry, which includes policy DM8.

Policy DM8 seeks to support the racehorse training industry and identifies Epsom Downs Racecourse and a Racehorse Training Zone, which are defined on the Policies Map. Both the racecourse and the Racehorse Training Zone are situated within the Green Belt. The full submission policy is available in Appendix 1.

The racecourse and a substantial area of the training grounds within the racehorse training zone to the south are owned by Jockey Club Racecourses (JCR). JCR have engaged in the Local Plan process. Formal responses have been provided to the Regulation 18 (February to March 2023) and the Regulation 19 consultation (December 2024 to February 2025). 'Matters statements' were submitted in response to the Inspector's MIQs and CBRE/JCR participated in the examination hearings. JCR have also provided input into the Local Plan evidence base.

The Council is supportive of the racecourse and the racehorse training industry as demonstrated by the inclusion of policy DM8 within the Local Plan.

Policy DM8 was discussed at the Local Plan stage 2 examination hearings. The Inspector requesting a SoCG be agreed between EEBC and JCR in relation to the policy wording, supporting text and related areas on the Policies Map.

## 3) Background & Key Issues

The racecourse and training grounds are of national significance due to their key role to the horseracing industry with the Racecourse hosting the Derby, flat racing's 'blue riband' event. The area is one of only two locations in the UK where both a racecourse/racing and racehorse training co-exist.

The core baseline activity of the racecourse is horseracing with 11 racing fixtures held per annum. While legislation allows for up to 16 fixtures to be held per annum, there is a need to

preserve the quality of the racetrack for the Derby. Outside of horseracing, the racecourse operates as a key meetings, conferences, events and functions venue, which is important to its long-term viability.

Surrounding the racecourse are the racehorse training grounds, located in Epsom and Walton Downs. There are several racehorse training yards in the borough (and neighbouring boroughs) which are well-located to support the ongoing use of the training grounds.

Epsom and Walton Downs is private land, owned by JCR. The Downs are managed by the Epsom and Walton Downs Conservators through an Act of Parliament. The principal role of the Conservators is to:

- Enable the training of racehorses on the Downs until midday
- Preserve the Downs in their natural state of beauty
- Maintain public rights of access
- Ensure that the various users respect each other's rights and the Downs environment

There are strong economic links between the training yards and the training grounds with a minimum number of racehorses needed to use the training grounds to maintain their viability. The racehorse training industry within Epsom and the surrounding area has undergone a prolonged period of gradual decline with a reduction in both the number of operational training yards and the number of horses being trained. The reasons for this are varied, although those that may be influenced by planning policies include loss of training yards to residential development; restrictions on land-use and ability to generate investment capital from enabling development; and a lack of modern, suitable and affordable staff accommodation.

The loss of racehorse training yards is harmful to the ongoing viability of the racehorse training grounds, with detrimental impacts on the economy, sporting heritage of the area, and long-term management of Epsom and Walton Downs.

The Council has consented to schemes which support the racehorse training industry. In 2020 planning permission was granted for the redevelopment of South Hatch Stables to provide a modern racehorse training establishment, staff accommodation and market housing as enabling development.

#### **4) Suggested revised wording**

Council officers and representatives from Jockey Club Racecourses and CBRE have discussed the background to policy DM8, its wording and the related designations on the policies map.

The results are several suggested changes to the Proposed Submission Local Plan, which include:

- a) Additional supporting text and policy wording to S9: Economic Development
- b) Revised supporting text and policy wording for policy DM8
- c) Amendments to the Policies Map in relation to policy DM8, to include a Racecourse Area, Racehorse Training Zone and Racehorse Movement Corridors
- d) Additional definitions to be included in the glossary

The specific changes are set out below. These comprise the modifications EEBC will be suggesting to the Inspector.

**a) Rewording of policy S9: Economic Development and supporting text.**

Wider amendments to the supporting text and policy wording of S9 are to be suggested to the Inspector, however the suggested changes in relation to the racecourse/racehorse training industry are as follows:

Suggested additional supporting text to precede the policy:

“The borough has a successful racehorse training industry associated with, although separate from, the Epsom Downs Racecourse, a nationally significant sporting venue. To ensure the long-term sustainability of this industry and to address some of the challenges it faces, it is important to safeguard land and support appropriate development proposals.”

Suggested amendments to policy S9: Economic Development: amendment to criterion 3).

**Policy S9: Economic Development**

The sustainable growth of the borough’s economy will be promoted to meet the needs of different sectors by:

~~3) Safeguarding land for the horse racing industry to secure the long-term sustainability of the sector;~~

3) Safeguarding land and supporting appropriate development proposals, which help to secure the long-term sustainability of the Epsom Downs Racecourse and racehorse training sector.

**b) Rewording of policy DM8: Racehorse Training Zone and supporting text.**

Numerous changes are being suggested to this policy and the supporting text. As such, for clarity the proposed revised text is set out below while a ‘tracked change’ version of the submission supporting text/policy wording is available in Appendix 2.

**Policy DM8 – Epsom Downs Racecourse and the Racehorse Training Industry**

6.31. The borough has long been associated with horse racing, being home to Epsom Downs Racecourse, a nationally significant sporting venue, and a successful racehorse training industry. The area is one of only two locations in the UK where both a racecourse and racehorse training co-exist. The Council is supportive of the industry, recognising its historic links with the area and the value it has to the local and wider economy. Policy S9 is reflective of this.

6.32. Epsom Downs Racecourse is internationally renowned as the home of the Derby, flat racing’s ‘blue riband’ event and currently holds 11 racing fixtures per annum. While horseracing is the core activity, the racecourse also operates as a key meetings, conferences, events and functions venue, which is important to both its long-term economic viability and the local economy. The Racecourse Area is defined on the Policies Map.

6.33. Surrounding the racecourse are the nationally important racehorse training grounds, located in Epsom and Walton Downs. There are several racehorse training yards in the borough (and neighbouring boroughs) which are well-located to support the ongoing use of the training grounds. Both the racehorse training grounds and the racehorse training yards comprise the Racehorse Training Zone, which is defined on the Policies Map.

6.34. The Racecourse Area and Racehorse Training Zone are located within the Green Belt.

6.35. Epsom and Walton Downs, where the training grounds are located, are privately owned and are managed by the Epsom and Walton Downs Conservators through an Act of Parliament. The principal role of the Conservators is to:

- Enable the training of racehorses on the Downs until midday
- Preserve the Downs in their natural state of beauty
- Maintain public rights of access
- Ensure that the various users respect each other's rights and the Down environment

6.36. There are strong economic links between the training yards, training grounds and the maintenance of Epsom and Walton Downs. The loss of racehorse training yards within the Racehorse Training Zone is harmful to the ongoing viability of the racehorse training grounds, which could negatively impact on the economy, sporting heritage of the area, and long-term management of Epsom and Walton Downs. For this reason, policy DM8 seeks to ensure the ongoing availability of suitable racehorse training yards to sustain the long-term viability of the industry, with losses being resisted unless there is clear evidence that there is no realistic prospect of the use of the site as a racehorse training yard continuing or such a use becoming re-established in the future. Marketing periods of no less than 24 months will be required by a recognised agent specializing in the racing sector property market. Further details on marketing requirements are contained in Appendix 5.

6.37. It is recognised that the racehorse training industry requires specific supporting infrastructure to effectively function. This includes but is not limited to on-site/nearby staff accommodation, horse walks, gallops, paddocks and horse walkers. In the case of development or alterations to racehorse training yards development should be designed in line with the British Horseracing Authority's requirements.

6.38. The occupation of any staff accommodation should be restricted by condition and/or legal agreement as appropriate, to solely be for staff to ensure the general day to day operations and management of the horseracing/racehorse training industry use.

6.39. Access routes to and from the racehorse training yards and training grounds are identified on the Policies Map as Racehorse Movement Corridors. There is the potential for conflict between racehorses and other road users along parts of some routes. These are highlighted on the Policies Map. The Council will support schemes to improve the safety of these routes for horses, pedestrians and other road users.

6.40. Any development proposals within the defined Racecourse Area and Racehorse Training Zone, or that impact on the Racehorse Movement Corridors will be considered against, Policy S9 and DM8 as well as all other relevant policies in the Local Plan.

## **Policy DM8: Epsom Downs Racecourse and the Racehorse Training Industry**

### **Racecourse Area**

1) Within the extent of the racecourse area, as identified on the Policies Map, development proposals to support the continued use of the site for horse racing purposes will be

supported, subject to Green Belt considerations. This may include suitable non-racing development to support the long-term viability of the racecourse.

### **Racehorse Training Zone**

2) Within the Racehorse Training Zone, as identified on the Policies Map:

a) Proposals which facilitate the long-term or future use of the site for the racehorse training industry and/or as a racehorse training yard will be supported, subject to Green Belt considerations. This may include the development of new facilities, such as infrastructure to support the industry, and/or the expansion/reconfiguration of existing facilities.

b) Any proposals resulting in the loss of specific facilities which would support the long term or future use of the site as a racehorse training yard will be resisted.

c) The change of use or redevelopment of existing racehorse training yards for alternate uses not in connection with the horse racing / racehorse training industry will not be permitted unless evidence has been provided that:

i) Marketing of the site for the horse racing sector has taken place for a period of at least 24 months, at a reasonable market value with a recognised agent specializing in the racing sector property market; and,

ii) There is the opportunity for the site to revert to a racehorse training yard or uses in connection with the racehorse training industry in the future or that such opportunities to enable this have been fully explored and exhausted.

### **Racehorse Movement Corridor**

3) Any proposal, regardless of the type of development, should demonstrate that it will not adversely affect the Racehorse Movement Corridor, as defined on the Policies Map, in terms of the safety of racehorses travelling between training yards and the training grounds by virtue of the traffic generation from or the design of the development and provide mitigation where there is an impact.

4) Proposals which would improve the safety of horses, pedestrians and other road users along these routes, particularly those where the potential for conflict has been identified (as shown on the Policies Map), will be supported.

### **Key supporting documents**

- Housing and Economic Development Needs Assessment (2023)
- Scoping Report on the Racecourse and Equestrian Sector in Epsom and Ewell (2020)

### **c) Amendments to the Policies Map in relation to policy DM8**

The Submission Policies Map (reference [SD03a](#) and [SD03b](#)) defines the Racecourse Area and the Racehorse Training Zone. It is suggested that amendments are made to these designations as follows:

Racecourse Area: Amendments to encompass the racecourse and associated built area only.

Racehorse Training Zone: Amendments to include the racehorse training grounds and racehorse training yards in the borough. Removal of the Woodcote Stud.

Racehorse Movement Corridor: A new suggested designation which defines the routes taken by racehorses to access the training grounds to and from the training yards.

A map defining these areas is available in appendix 3.

#### **d) Additions to the glossary**

It is suggested that specific terms used in policies S9 and DM8, and in the supporting text be defined in the glossary to provide clarity.

The suggested terms and their definitions are:

**Racecourse Area:** the track used by racehorses and the associated facilities, including the built area which constitutes the stables, stands, administration building, parade ring and hardstanding.

**Racehorse Movement Corridors:** Routes travelled by racehorses to and from training yards to access the racehorse training grounds.

**Racehorse Training Grounds:** Specialised Thoroughbred equestrian facilities designed to condition and / or stable thoroughbreds for racing. This includes gallops which are managed to provide a variety of surfaces and terrains that mimic race conditions.

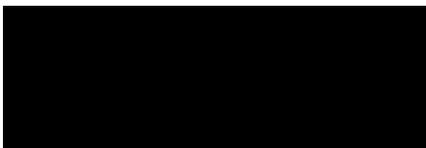
**Racehorse Training Yards:** Specialised Thoroughbred equestrian facilities where thoroughbred racehorses are stabled. Facilities can include stables, paddocks/turnout pens, tack rooms, horse walkers, staff accommodation and other specialised training equipment.

#### **5) Matters agreed**

Both parties are supportive of the inclusion of a policy and appropriate designations on the Policies Map to address the racecourse and the racehorse training industry.

EEBC and JCR agree the suggested modifications as set out in this SoCG.

#### **6) Signatories**



Epsom & Ewell Borough Council  
Councillor Peter O'Donovan  
Chair of Licencing and Planning Policy Committee  
Date: 04.02.2026



Jockey Club Racecourses  
Justin Thomas  
Group Property Director  
Date: 04.02.2026

## **Policy DM8: Racehorse Training Industry**

- 1) Within the extent of the racecourse, as identified on the Policies Map, development proposals to support the continued use of the site for horse racing purposes will be supported, subject to Green Belt considerations.
- 2) Within the Racehorse Training Zone, identified on the Policies Map:
  - a) Proposals which facilitate the long-term or future use of the site as a racing stable and/or for the racehorse training industry will be supported
  - b) Any proposals resulting in the loss of specific facilities which would support the long term or future use of the site as a racing stable will be resisted
  - c) The change of use or redevelopment of existing racehorse training for alternate uses not in connection with the horse racing / racehorse training industry will not be permitted unless evidence has been provided that:
    - i) Marketing of the site for the horse racing sector has taken place for a period of at least 18 months, at a reasonable market value with a recognised agent specializing in the racing sector property market; and,
    - ii) Opportunities to reconfigure and reuse or redevelop the site so that it can revert to racehorse training that supports the racehorse training industry in the future have been exhausted
- 3) Any proposal, regardless of the type of development, should demonstrate that it will not adversely affect the safety of racehorses travelling between the training grounds and the racing stable yards by virtue of the traffic generation from or the design of the development and provide mitigation where there is an impact.

**Appendix 2: 'Tracked change' version of Policy DM8: Racehorse Training Industry and supporting text**

**Policy DM8: Racehorse Training Zone Epsom Downs Racecourse and the Racehorse Training Industry**

6.31. The borough has long been associated with horse racing, being home to Epsom Downs Racecourse, a nationally significant sporting venue, and a successful racehorse training industry. associated with the Epsom Downs Racecourse, a nationally significant sporting venue located within the Green Belt. The area is one of only two locations in the UK where both a racecourse and racehorse training co-exist. The Council is supportive of the industry, recognising its historic links with the area and the value it has to the local and wider economy. Policy S9 is reflective of this.

6.32. Epsom Downs Racecourse is internationally renowned as the home of the Derby, flat racing's 'blue riband' event and currently holds 11 racing fixtures per annum. While horseracing is the core activity, the racecourse also operates as a key meetings, conferences, events and functions venue, which is important to both its long-term economic viability and the local economy. The Racecourse Area is defined on the Policies Map.

6.33. Surrounding the racecourse itself (as defined on the Policies Map) are the nationally important racehorse training grounds, located in Epsom and Walton Downs, which make a positive contribution to the economy and sporting heritage of the area.

6.34. There are several racehorse training facilities / stable complexes yards in the Bborough (and neighbouring boroughs) which are well-located to support the ongoing use of the training grounds at Epsom Downs. Both the racehorse training grounds and the racehorse training yards comprise the Racehorse Training Zone, which is defined on the Policies Map.

6.34 The Racecourse Area and Racehorse Training Zone are located within the Green Belt.

6.35. Epsom and Walton Downs, where the training grounds are located, are privately owned and are managed by the Epsom and Walton Downs Conservators through an Act of Parliament. The principal role of the Conservators is to:

- Enable the training of racehorses on the Downs until midday
- Preserve the Downs in their natural state of beauty
- Maintain public rights of access
- Ensure that the various users respect each other's rights and the Down environment

6.36. There are strong economic links between the training yards, training grounds and the maintenance of Epsom and Walton Downs. The loss of racehorse training yards within the Racehorse Training Zone is harmful to the ongoing viability of the racehorse training grounds, which could negatively impact on the economy, sporting heritage of the area, and long-term management of Epsom and Walton Downs. For this reason, policy DM8 seeks to ensure the ongoing availability of suitable racehorse training yards to sustain the long-term viability of the industry, with losses being resisted unless there is clear evidence that there is no realistic prospect of the use of the site as a racehorse training yard continuing or such a use becoming re-established in the future. Marketing periods of no less than 24 months will be required by a recognised agent specializing in the racing sector property market. Further details on marketing requirements are contained in Appendix 5. These sites and their

~~associated training grounds, paddocks and fields are included within the Racehorse Training Zone defined on the Policies Map, within which any development proposals will be considered against, as well as all other relevant policies in the Local Plan.~~

~~6.37. It is recognised that the racehorse training industry requires specific supporting infrastructure to effectively function. This includes but is not limited to on-site/nearby staff accommodation, horse walks, gallops, paddocks and horse walkers. In the case of development or alterations to racehorse training yards development should be designed in line with the British Horseracing Authority's requirements.~~

~~6.38. The occupation of any staff accommodation should be restricted by condition and/or legal agreement as appropriate, to solely be for staff to ensure the general day to day operations and management of the horseracing/racehorse training industry use.~~

~~6.39. Access routes to and from the racehorse training yards and training grounds are identified on the Policies Map as Racehorse Movement Corridors. There is the potential for conflict between racehorses and other road users along parts of some routes. These are highlighted on the Policies Map. The Council will support schemes to improve the safety of these routes for horses, pedestrians and other road users.~~

~~6.40. Any development proposals within the defined Racecourse Area and Racehorse Training Zone, or that impact on the Racehorse Movement Corridors will be considered against, Policy S9 and DM8 as well as all other relevant policies in the Local Plan.~~

~~6.34. The loss of equestrian facilities within the Racehorse Training Zone is potentially harmful to the ongoing viability of the Epsom Downs as a racehorse training centre, which could in turn undermine its contribution to the economy and sporting heritage of the area and long-term management of its attractive open landscape.~~

~~6.35. Marketing periods of no less than 18 months will be required by a recognised agent specializing in the racing sector property market. Further details on marketing requirements are contained in Appendix 5. 98~~

## **Policy DM8: Racehorse Training Industry Epsom Downs Racecourse and the Racehorse Training Industry**

### **Racecourse Area**

1) Within the extent of the racecourse area, as identified on the Policies Map, development proposals to support the continued use of the site for horse racing purposes will be supported, subject to Green Belt considerations. This may include suitable non-racing development to support the long-term viability of the racecourse.

### **Racehorse Training Zone**

2) Within the Racehorse Training Zone, as identified on the Policies Map:

a) Proposals which facilitate the long-term or future use of the site for the racehorse training industry and/or as a racehorse training yard racing stable and/or for the racehorse training industry will be supported, subject to Green Belt considerations. This may include the development of new facilities, such as infrastructure to support the industry, and/or the expansion/reconfiguration of existing facilities.

b) Any proposals resulting in the loss of specific facilities which would support the long term or future use of the site as a racehorse training yard racing stable will be resisted.

c) The change of use or redevelopment of existing racehorse training yards for alternate uses not in connection with the horse racing / racehorse training industry will not be permitted unless evidence has been provided that:

i) Marketing of the site for the horse racing sector has taken place for a period of at least ~~24~~48 months, at a reasonable market value with a recognised agent specializing in the racing sector property market; and,

ii) There is the opportunity for the site to revert to a racehorse training yard or uses in connection with the racehorse training industry in the future or that such opportunities to enable this have been fully explored and exhausted.

~~Opportunities to reconfigure and reuse or redevelop the site so that it can revert to racehorse training that supports the racehorse training industry in the future have been exhausted~~

### **Racehorse Movement Corridor**

3) Any proposal, regardless of the type of development, should demonstrate that it will not adversely affect the Racehorse Movement Corridor, as defined on the Policies Map, in terms of the safety of racehorses travelling between training yards and the training grounds and the racing stable yards by virtue of the traffic generation from or the design of the development and provide mitigation where there is an impact.

4) Proposals which would improve the safety of horses, pedestrians and other road users along these routes, particularly those where the potential for conflict has been identified (as shown on the Policies Map), will be supported.

#### Key supporting documents

- Housing and Economic Development Needs Assessment (2023)
- Scoping Report on the Racecourse and Equestrian Sector in Epsom and Ewell (2020)

**Appendix 3: Suggested amendments to the Policies Map to define the Racecourse Area, Racehorse Training Zone and Racehorse Movement Corridor**

