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Legal and Democratic Services



STRATEGY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE

Tuesday 24 September 2019 at 7.30 pm

Council Chamber - Epsom Town Hall

The members listed below are summoned to attend the Strategy and Resources Committee meeting, on the day and at the time and place stated, to consider the business set out in this agenda.

Councillor Eber Kington (Chairman)
Councillor Clive Smitheram (Vice-Chairman)
Councillor Arthur Abdulin
Councillor Steve Bridger
Councillor Kate Chinn

Councillor Nigel Collin
Councillor Hannah Dalton
Councillor David Gulland
Councillor Colin Keane
Councillor Barry Nash

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'J.C. Beldan'.

Chief Executive

For further information, please contact Democratic Services, 01372 732122 or democraticservices@epsom-ewell.gov.uk

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- You should proceed calmly; do not run and do not use the lifts;
- Do not stop to collect personal belongings;
- Once you are outside, please do not wait immediately next to the building, but move to the assembly point at Dullshot Green and await further instructions; and
- Do not re-enter the building until told that it is safe to do so.

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Questions from the Public

Members of the public who live, work, attend an educational establishment or own or lease land in the Borough may submit a written question to, or ask a question verbally at meetings of the Committee on matters within the Committee's Terms of Reference.

Written questions must be submitted to the Council's Chief Legal Officer, who can be contacted via the following email address: Democraticservices@epsom-ewell.gov.uk. The written question must arrive by noon on the tenth working day before the day of the meeting. For example, for a meeting on a Tuesday, the request must therefore arrive by noon on the Tuesday two weeks before the meeting.

AGENDA

1. QUESTION TIME

To take any questions from members of the Public

Please Note: Members of the Public are requested to inform the Democratic Services Officer before the meeting begins if they wish to ask a verbal question at the meeting

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Members are asked to declare the existence and nature of any Disclosable Pecuniary Interests in respect of any item of business to be considered at the meeting.

3. LOCAL PLAN CONSULTATION (Pages 5 - 8)

It is important that the Local Plan consultation is expertly undertaken so that residents, businesses, community groups and stakeholders are better informed of the Local Plan and therefore able to engage. The Borough needs to resource the Local Plan engagement for the benefit of the residents of the Borough. Through commissioning expertise the success of our communications, engagement, facilitation and management of the process will be assured.

4. LOCAL COUNCIL TAX SUPPORT SCHEME (Pages 9 - 18)

This report provides an update on the current Local Council Tax Support Scheme and seeks approval for the 2020/21 scheme and action on future schemes.

5. FLEXIBLE HOUSING SUPPORT GRANT (Pages 19 - 40)

This report identifies the growth in demand for homelessness assistance since the introduction of the Homelessness Reduction Act in 2017 and the resulting increase in expenditure for the provision of the homelessness service in 2019/20.

The report recommends use of the Flexible Housing Support Grant to increase homelessness prevention activity, reduce the use of expensive out of borough nightly paid accommodation through the increased use of Private Sector Leased Properties and to purchase a new temporary accommodation rent accounting module and upgrade the existing Abritas Housing Services system.

6. REVIEW OF POLLING DISTRICTS, POLLING PLACES AND POLLING STATIONS (Pages 41 - 98)

The Electoral Registration and Administration Act 2013 requires compulsory reviews of UK Parliamentary polling districts and polling places every five years. A compulsory review must be completed by 31st January 2020. A consultation is under way to inform this process. It is recommended that a Working Group of Members is established to consider representations received and for their proposals to be brought back before this Committee on 26 November 2019.

7. BUDGET TARGETS 2020/21 (Pages 99 - 122)

This report recommends budget targets for 2020/21 and provides an update on financial planning for 2021/22 to 2023/24 as recommended by Financial Policy Panel.

8. STRATEGIC STATEMENT ON ECONOMY AND PLACE (Pages 123 - 134)

This strategic statement sets out the Council's strategic priorities for economy and place in the context of the Council's new long-term vision for the borough, and in advance of the new Corporate Plan and the forthcoming detailed strategies that will emerge over the Autumn through the Council's Local Plan process.

9. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING (Pages 135 - 142)

The Committee is asked to confirm as a true record the Minutes of the meeting of the Strategy and Resources Committee held on 30 July 2019 and to authorise the Chairman to sign them.

LOCAL PLAN CONSULTATION

Head of Service/Contact:	Ruth Ormella, Head of Planning
Urgent Decision?(yes/no)	No
If yes, reason urgent decision required:	
Annexes/Appendices (attached):	None
Other available papers (not attached):	None

Report summary

It is important that the Local Plan consultation is expertly undertaken so that residents, businesses, community groups and stakeholders are better informed of the Local Plan and therefore able to engage. The Borough needs to resource the Local Plan engagement for the benefit of the residents of the Borough. Through commissioning expertise the success of our communications, engagement, facilitation and management of the process will be assured.

Recommendation (s)

- (1) The Committee agrees to the proposed commissioning of consultation and engagement experts; and specialist software to enable residents to comment; for the Local Plan consultation with a budget up to £75,000, as set out in paragraph 4.3.**

1 Implications for the Council's Key Priorities, Service Plans and Sustainable Community Strategy

- 1.1 The delivery and implementation of the Epsom & Ewell Local Plan contributes towards all of the Council's Key Priorities. The emerging Local plan will set out how sustainable growth will be delivered during the next plan period 2015-2037.

2 Background

- 2.1 The Borough Council is nearing the stage where we need to undertake public consultation and engage the community on the emerging Local Plan. The Borough Council's Local Plan Programme identified autumn 2019 as being the timeframe for this consultation, and officers are aiming for this to commence at the beginning of November 2019.

- 2.2 The Borough undertook a similar consultation between October and December of 2017. Comments made on the previous consultation have assisted in identifying a broad approach for the Borough, with the focus being on Epsom Town Centre, the district and local centres, train stations and transport corridors. We are now seeking more detailed comments from our residents and community on our proposed policies, and the sites which landowners and interested parties have identified to assist the Borough achieve the challenging housing requirement.
- 2.3 The purpose of this stage of consultation is to seek comments from businesses, residents, community groups and stakeholders on the emerging Local Plan. It is the opportunity for the Borough to set out its Vision, to present the emerging policies, all of the information and studies that have been prepared, and to identify the sites which have come forward from the Call for Sites.

3 Proposals for public Consultation

- 3.1 It is proposed that the public consultation process incorporates a range of techniques so as to ensure wide community engagement. Other than the standard notification process to all of the Council's contacts on the Local Plan database, the following is proposed:
- The preparation of a Consultation Paper which includes proposed policy approaches and seeks comments throughout the document in a systematic way;
 - Adopting a strong website presence, that clearly directs visitors to all of the information, evidence base, documents and survey;
 - The use of mapping to identify the call for sites responses using Council's GIS;
 - Holding a number of engagement events in the community, as well as key stakeholder meetings ensuring we capture local views;
 - The experience when attending planned events to be professional and engaging; and
 - The use of social media, and traditional sign posting in key locations to help elevate interest and comments.
- 3.2 The consultation process is required to run for a minimum period of six weeks. Officers are proposing that subject to the Licencing and Planning Policy Committee agreeing to the consultation materials, the consultation would run from the beginning of November 2019. It is proposed to extend the period to cover the holiday season over Christmas 2019, providing those interested in the Local Plan with sufficient time to comment.

- 3.3 With the Local Plan consultation being a specialist form of engagement it is proposed to commission Local Plan engagement experts to assist the authority to achieve a high standard of communication of key information and messages, and to ensure the community events are successful.
- 3.4 Soft market testing assisted with identifying the costs for securing this expertise, to assist with the communications plan and key messages, public consultation events, design, management and attendance, analysis and reporting back, development of Local Plan micro site, and additional press team support. This is estimated to be in the order of £40,000.
- 3.5 It is anticipated that there will be a high level of comments on the emerging Local Plan. The survey for the Local Plan consultation is specific and as such there are specialist software applications that have been designed to meet this specialist need. These are available in the digital marketplace. Having reviewed the experience of other authorities and considered the costs, it is proposed to commission specialist software. On the basis of securing two years licence use, this is estimated to be in the order of £35,000.

4 Financial and Manpower Implications

- 4.1 In July 2019, S&R Committee approved the remaining Planning Delivery Grant balance of £155,788 to be used to fund production of the Local Plan, however, this does not include public consultation of the plan.
- 4.2 There is a need to commission expertise, additional capacity and skills so as to ensure that the Local Plan consultation is successful with a good level of engagement from residents. There is a cost associated with securing these specialist skills. There is also a need to have specialist survey software that is designed for Local plan consultations, and that this is available for use until the completion of the Local plan examination / adoption.
- 4.3 It is proposed to partially fund the £75,000 from additional income generated by the Planning Service. At quarter 1, £11,500 additional income from pre-application advice had been generated by the team. This trend is expected to continue, providing £46,000 of funding this year. The remaining balance of funding up to £75,000 will be met from the Corporate Projects Reserve.
- 4.4 **Chief Finance Officer's comments:** It is expected that the majority of the £75,000 can be funded from additional income generated by the planning team. Any shortfall can be funded from the Corporate Projects Reserve, which at 31 August 2019 holds an unallocated balance of £2,884,370.

5 Legal Implications (including implications for matters relating to equality)

- 5.1 None arising from the report.

5.2 **Monitoring Officer's comments:** none arising from the contents of the report.

6 Sustainability Policy and Community Safety Implications

6.1 None for the purposes of this report.

7 Partnerships

7.1 None for the purposes of this report.

8 Risk Assessment

8.1 Each of the community engagement events will require a risk assessment, as required for all Council events, to ensure that all potential issues are managed. Bringing in additional capacity to assist at the engagement events will assist with managing risks.

8.2 There are reputational risks for the authority should the Local Plan consultation not be professionally prepared or accessible for businesses, residents, community groups and stakeholders.

9 Conclusion and Recommendations

9.1 The Committee agrees to the proposed commissioning of consultation and engagement experts, and specialist software, for the Local Plan consultation with a budget up to £75,000.

Ward(s) affected: (All Wards);

LOCAL COUNCIL TAX SUPPORT SCHEME

Head of Service/Contact:	Judith Doney, Head of Digital and Service Transformation
Urgent Decision?(yes/no)	No
If yes, reason urgent decision required:	
Annexes/Appendices (attached):	Annex 1 - Numbers of working age claimants by ward
Other available papers (not attached):	

Report summary

This report provides an update on the current Local Council Tax Support Scheme and seeks approval for the 2020/21 scheme and action on future schemes.

Recommendation (s)

The Committee is asked to:

- (1) **Agree to continue the current scheme for the 2020/21 financial year with the underlying means tested applicable amounts being uplifted by the same percentage as the Housing Benefit rates applicable from April 2020 and applying any further Regulation changes that might apply for that financial year;**
- (2) **Agree the continuation of the Discretionary Hardship Fund for exceptional cases;**
- (3) **Agree the actions proposed to change the scheme to a council tax discount to be implemented from 1 April 2021.**

1 Implications for the Council's Key Priorities, Service Plans and Sustainable Community Strategy

- 1.1 This report supports the themes of managing our resources and supporting our communities.

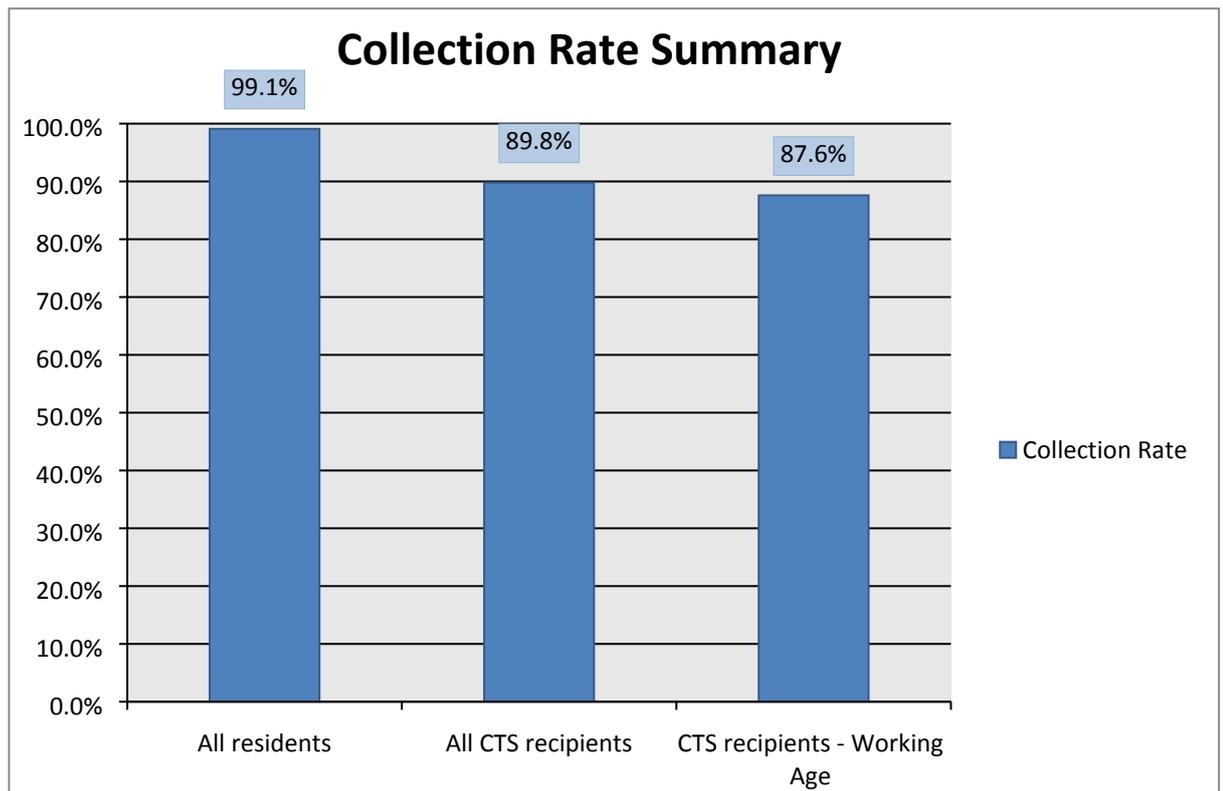
2 Background

- 2.1 Under changes made by the Local Government Finance Act 2012 to the Local Government Finance Act 1992, the responsibility for determining the arrangements for Local Council Tax Support passed to local authorities; previously a national scheme was in place. The first Local Council Tax Support Scheme had to be adopted by 31 January 2013. There were certain limitations on what local authorities could include in their schemes, for example pensioners had to continue to receive relief at the same rates as the previous Council Tax Benefit scheme.
- 2.2 Epsom & Ewell Borough Council's Local Council Tax Support Scheme which applies to working age claimants is based on the previous Council Tax Benefit scheme and continues means testing for those on low incomes. It also continues additional protection for those with extra expenses or needs through a series of premiums and income disregards. However our current scheme requires all working age recipients to pay at least 20% of their Council Tax charge (known as a Minimum Payment). Higher amounts may be payable due to the means testing of entitlements.
- 2.3 The amounts used for the means test are uplifted by the same percentage as the Housing Benefit rates set by central government each new financial year. However as Housing Benefit is subsumed into Universal Credit these rates will not be available and this is one of the key factors for the proposed changes detailed in paragraph 3.
- 2.4 Each year the Council is required under the Local Government Finance Act to consider whether to maintain or revise its scheme or to replace it with another scheme. Any revision or replacement must be adopted no later than 31 January in the financial year preceding that for which the revision or replacement is to take effect.
- 2.5 As at 31 March 2019 1686 working age claimants received help to pay their Council Tax through the Council Tax Support scheme. Of these, 824 were in receipt of income support, jobseekers allowance (income based) or employment support allowance (income related), 219 were on Universal Credit and 595 were employed. The remaining claimants were on a variety of other benefits such as disability benefits or tax credits. **Annex 1** shows the breakdown of working age claimants by ward.
- 2.6 Alongside the current scheme is a £25,000 Discretionary Hardship Fund. It assists those experiencing exceptional financial hardship and further reduces their council tax charge. This addresses those identified as being adversely affected by the Equality Impact Assessment for this scheme.

2.7 Some Discretionary Hardship Fund recipients have been given a limited period of full assistance and then a phased reduction in assistance to help them adjust their budgeting so that they may pay their Council Tax going forward. This has helped reduce some claimant's reliance on Discretionary Hardship Fund payments.

2.8 At 31 March 2019 our Council Tax collection rate was 99.1%. The table below shows the levels of collection for different categories.

Table 1



3 Proposals

3.1 At the end of October 2018 the Epsom & Ewell Borough Council became a full service Universal Credit area. For the Council it means that when people need to make a new claim for a number of social security benefits including Housing Benefit they will no longer come to the Council for help with their rent but will receive it via Universal Credit. Some existing Housing Benefit claimants will also move on to Universal Credit when they have a relevant change such as a change in employment or family circumstances. We have seen the number of claimants moving to Universal Credit gradually increasing. The government has also announced that it intends the migration of existing claimants on Housing Benefit to Universal Credit to be completed by July 2023.

- 3.2 This major change will mean that it would be difficult to continue with the means testing currently carried out by using the Housing Benefit Regulations, as rates for working age recipients would no longer be available. The software currently used for Housing Benefit for working age would no longer be updated either.
 - 3.3 It now seems an appropriate time to look for a simpler, less administratively burdensome process for providing support. In 2013 the government's intention was that Local Council Tax Support would become a Council Tax Discount, however software companies and Councils were not in a position to make such a radical change in the short window they were given to implement the scheme (8 months).
 - 3.4 The Head of Digital and Service Transformation has had discussions with the Council's software supplier and they are keen to develop a Discount approach for Support, in conjunction with Epsom & Ewell Borough Council and other interested Councils. They would expect to provide software for testing next summer for a live date in April 2021. The Head of Digital and Service Transformation has offered resources to assist with this software development and its testing and will be negotiating a discount on the software enhancement costs if this offer is accepted.
 - 3.5 The discount approach would work on a similar basis to that of our fees and charges where there would be a discount from the Council Tax charge if the person is in receipt of a qualifying benefit, such as income support, employment support allowance or universal credit with further discounts applied for those identified by the new Equality Impact Assessment, such as being disabled.
 - 3.6 Once options have been developed we will undertake the steps required under the Local Government Finance Act 2012 to bring in a new scheme namely –
 - 3.6.1 Consult major precepting authorities (Surrey County Council and Surrey Police)
 - 3.6.2 Publish a draft scheme in such manner as we think fit
 - 3.6.3 Consult such other persons as we consider are likely to have an interest in the operation of the scheme.
- Once all this work is completed a further report with options for a new scheme from April 2021 will be brought to Strategy & Resources Committee in autumn 2020.
- 3.7 This report is asking Strategy and Resources Committee to approve the continuation of the current Minimum Payment scheme for a further year in order to give us the time to develop options to run Support as a discount.

- 3.8 For the final year of the Minimum Payment scheme we will continue the discretionary hardship scheme to assist those experiencing exceptional hardship in paying their Council Tax and to mitigate the effects of the scheme for those in one of the protected characteristics under the Equality Impact assessment. However we will continue the process of making short term awards or tapering the level of awards and will make renewed attempts to help claimants manage their budgets to pay their Council Tax bill.

4 Financial and Manpower Implications

- 4.1 Central government funding towards localised Council Tax Support was cut by 10% in April 2013 and further reduced each subsequent year until it ended in 2017/18.

- 4.2 The cost of the Local Council Tax Support Minimum Payment scheme for 2018/19 was £2,976,244.

The cost of the current scheme in 2018/19 to Epsom and Ewell Borough Council and the precepting authorities is shown below.

	Cost to Surrey County Council £	Cost to Surrey Police and Crime Commissioner £	Cost to EEBC £	Total cost £
Council Tax Support for those of pension age	1,043,752	178,537	151,069	1,373,358
Council Tax Support for those of working age	1,218,193	208,375	176,318	1,602,886
TOTAL	2,261,945	386,912	327,387	2,976,244

The cost of the scheme will increase each year by the percentage increase of the Council Tax but will also fluctuate by the numbers claiming support.

- 4.3 Changing the Support scheme to a Council Tax Discount based on qualifying benefits will enable us to decrease the cost of administering the scheme and make further reductions in the overall cost of the scheme whilst still targeting those in need of assistance.

- 4.4 The Council will no longer receive the Housing Benefit administration grant for working age claimants from the migration date. By reducing the administrative burden caused by the complex means testing of Council Tax support it is expected that there will be some reduction in staffing on the housing benefits team.
- 4.5 **Chief Finance Officer's comments:** The Council's budget projections for 2020/21 incorporate the cost of continuing the current council tax support scheme.

5 Legal Implications (including implications for matters relating to equality)

- 5.1 The Council has a duty under the Equality Act 2010, in the exercise of any of our functions, to have regard to the need to: eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and other prohibited conduct; advance equality of opportunity; and foster good relations. This requires an assessment of the impact of any changes to the Local Council Tax Support Scheme on those with the relevant "protected characteristics".
- 5.2 The Community Equality Impact Assessment (CEIA) that was carried out for the introduction of the current Minimum Payment scheme would not need to be reviewed as there would be no change to Council Tax Support for 2020/21.
- 5.3 **Monitoring Officer's comments:** none arising from the contents of this report.

6 Sustainability Policy and Community Safety Implications

- 6.1 None for the purposes of this report

7 Partnerships

- 7.1 None

8 Risk Assessment

- 8.1 The main risk identified remains the adverse impacts on support recipients and financial risks to the Council and therefore the council taxpayer.
- 8.2 The impacts on support recipients is mitigated by the use of the Discretionary Hardship Fund where appropriate.
- 8.3 Whilst Table 1 shows that the collection rate for CTS working age recipients is low the small numbers involved do not have a major impact on overall Council Tax collection rates as shown. However it is necessary to ensure that an appropriate bad debt provision is made within the Council's collection fund to cover this.

9 Conclusion and Recommendations

- 9.1 It is recommended that the current scheme should continue for a further year whilst longer-term changes are investigated.

Ward(s) affected: (All Wards);

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Number of working age Council Tax Support claimants by ward

Ward	No. of working age Council Tax Support claimants
Auriol	25
College	46
Court	344
Cuddington	83
Ewell	128
Ewell Court	56
Nonsuch	28
Ruxley	220
Stamford	166
Stoneleigh	28
Town	309
West Ewell	172
Woodcote	81
Total	1686

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FLEXIBLE HOUSING SUPPORT GRANT

Head of Service/Contact: Rod Brown, Head of Housing & Community

Urgent Decision?(yes/no) No

If yes, reason urgent decision required:

Annexes/Appendices (attached): **Annex 1** - Flexible Housing Support Grant
Annex 2 - Housing Services ICT Business Case

Other available papers (not attached):

Report summary

This report identifies the growth in demand for homelessness assistance since the introduction of the Homelessness Reduction Act in 2017 and the resulting increase in expenditure for the provision of the homelessness service in 2019/20.

The report recommends use of the Flexible Housing Support Grant to increase homelessness prevention activity, reduce the use of expensive out of borough nightly paid accommodation through the increased use of Private Sector Leased Properties and to purchase a new temporary accommodation rent accounting module and upgrade the existing Abrisas Housing Services system.

Recommendation (s)

That the Committee:

- (1) Approves the use of £106,950 of Flexible Housing Support Grant to increase homelessness prevention activity and increase the supply of Private Sector Leased properties; and**
- (2) Approves the use of £63,000 of Flexible Housing Support Grant to purchase a new temporary accommodation rent accounting module and upgrade the existing Abrisas Housing Services system to assist homelessness prevention & relief administration.**

1 Implications for the Council's Key Priorities, Service Plans and Sustainable Community Strategy

- 1.1 Managing Resources - Utilise the Council's limited resources in the most efficient and effective way.
- 1.2 Quality of Life - Improve the quality of life for all residents, but particularly the more vulnerable within our society.
- 1.3 Health, Housing and Well-being is a priority theme of the Sustainable Community Strategy. The Council has a statutory duty to house homeless persons.

2 Homeless Reduction Act 2017

- 2.1 The Homelessness Reduction Act (HRA) came into force on 3 April 2018 and in response the Council has changed the way it helps people who are homeless or threatened with homelessness. The main focus of the Act is to prevent homelessness by placing greater emphasis on working together with applicants to resolve housing problems.
- 2.2 The HRA extends the requirement on housing authorities (such as Epsom and Ewell Borough Council) to provide homelessness services to all those affected, not just those who have 'priority need'. It also extends the period during which someone who might be threatened with homelessness can receive assistance from 28 days to 56 days. This means that anyone that has been served with a valid Section 21 notice to end an Assured Shorthold Tenancy that expires in 56 days or less is classed as being threatened with homelessness. Therefore, where eligible, households will be owed help at an earlier stage and for a longer period of time.
- 2.3 The Act introduced numerous new responsibilities including:
 - 2.3.1 New Prevention Duty – the housing authority must take 'reasonable steps' or actions to help avoid losing existing accommodation or becoming homeless. This means either trying to help the household remain in their current accommodation or trying to help them find a new place to live before they actually become homeless. The prevention duty stage continues for 56 days unless it is ended before because accommodation has been found, or by the applicant becoming homeless.
 - 2.3.2 New Relief Duty - If the applicant is already homeless, or likely to become homeless despite any actions taken during the prevention duty stage, the reasonable steps will then be focused on trying to help the applicant find alternative accommodation. This duty lasts for 56 days unless ended in another way. If there is reason to believe any of the household is in 'priority need' then accommodation must be provided for 56 days, even if there is also reason to believe Intentional Homelessness.

- 2.3.3 New Duty to refer - certain public authorities now have a duty to refer service users to the housing authority who they think may be homeless or threatened with homelessness.
- 2.3.4 New Personal Housing Plans – must be produced by the housing authority, with the applicant, setting out the reasonable steps that the applicant, the council's Housing Service and, if applicable, other professionals will take in order to prevent or relieve their homelessness.
- 2.4 At the time of the introduction of the HRA, the council's Housing Service took a cautious approach to adapting to the changes, allowing the new processes to bed in before reviewing the impact of the new duties on the service and any requirement to review capacity.
- 2.5 One year on from the introduction of HRA there is common consensus within Surrey Housing service teams that the Act has created higher use of temporary accommodation (TA) and greater footfall into council's Housing Services.
- 2.6 In addition, for those councils that previously demonstrated good preventative work, the Act has curtailed this good practice as it is much more prescriptive and only focuses on certain prevention & relief outcomes. There is no longer the government incentive to manage customers who fall outside of the two main Prevention and Relief duties. Rather than the much proclaimed 'extra' time to resolve households housing circumstances they are instead funnelled into a time frame that as well as being recorded by statutory returns, condenses the ability to take a much longer view. The Act has also significantly increased the administrative burden placed on the council in terms of recording and decision-making which has further curtailed prevention casework.

3 Mitigation measures already adopted

- 3.1 In addition to the provision of housing advice and direct negotiations with landlords, the council continuously uses a wide range of homelessness prevention measures intended to maintain existing tenancies, prevent homelessness or provide homelessness relief.
- 3.2 The Council has also pursued additional initiatives to further mitigate the impact of homelessness. These include:
- Revised Allocation Policy – tightened priority criteria on the Council's Housing Needs Register and dis-incentivising homelessness for achieving greater priority.
 - Acquisition of residential properties – 5 properties have been purchased for use as in-borough temporary accommodation. Funded from £3m agreed Residential Property Acquisition fund,

- Private Sector leasing (PSL) – 10 additional in-borough temporary accommodation units have been provided through PSL. Each estimated to avoid £15,000 net expenditure on nightly paid emergency accommodation
- Negotiations with Housing Associations – this has secured additional units of temporary accommodation within the borough, which otherwise would not be available.
- Conversion of council owned property – Council owned property has been converted to provide 18 additional units of in-borough temporary accommodation.

4 Flexible Housing Support Grant (FSHG)

- 4.1 FSHG was provided from 2018 to Housing Authorities to support homelessness services, including the enablement more creative responses to the challenges of homelessness.
- 4.2 Future levels of FSHG funding remain uncertain. There is also uncertainty in forecasting potential expenditure. **Annex 1** shows year to date expenditure for FSHG with a straight line forecast to year end, the same level of fee income drawn down for EEBC properties as last year with an additional £100k estimate on higher numbers of clients for the rest of the year. Based on these assumptions it is possible there could be around £385k to carry forward into 2020-21.
- 4.3 Flexible Housing Support Grant was introduced to compensate local authorities for the loss of £60 per week per client management fee income, previously included in rental payments via the housing benefit system. Authorities can offset this allowance against their own reduced rental income and must also reimburse housing associations negatively affected by the change where they are providing accommodation for EEBC clients.

5 Increasing prevention work

- 5.1 Since the introduction of the HRA there has been a greater emphasis placed on the range of prevention work completed by the Housing Services team. However, there are frequently delays in initiating this preventative work, due to the increased service demand referred to above, which can result in more cases ultimately requiring homelessness relief.
- 5.2 The proposal would increase the amount of prevention work undertaken, ensuring preventative work is initiated earlier so as to avoid the need to place households in temporary accommodation.

6 Increasing Private Sector Leased (PSL) properties

- 6.1 The Council's PSL scheme is a valuable option in reducing homeless expenditure, with typically each additional property generating avoided expenditure of approximately £15,000 per annum net.
- 6.2 We currently have 10 PSLs operating. Increasing the use of PSL will reduce the reliance on expensive nightly paid accommodation.

7 ICT investment

- 7.1 There are two aspects to the Housing Services ICT proposal. These are the purchase of a new temporary accommodation rent accounting module to replace the existing Academy/Capita Housing rent accounting system and an Abritas system upgrade from version 6.4 to version 9.0.
- 7.2 Both aspects of the ICT proposal are directly related to homelessness and temporary accommodation and support better and more efficient ways of working. These will significantly help reduce the administrative burdens related to the Homelessness Reduction Act.
- 7.3 **Annex 2** outlines the full business case and explains the reasons to undertake the project, provides estimated cost of the project and the anticipated benefits to us and the customer that will be gained from its implementation.
- 7.4 In summary the following benefits have been identified:

Tenancies & Rents module

- A fully functional rent accounting and rent arrears system, which is integrated into the existing homelessness module and with Housing Benefit & Cash interfaces
- More efficient/regular cash importing which will reduce staff inputting times and is less prone to errors
- More efficient rent arrears handling which will reduce debts owed to the council and free up staff resources
- Better management reporting on rental income, arrears and unit cost data
- New Rent Deposit Scheme functionality for the management of Rent Deposit applications and recording of property, landlord and financial information.
- Ability to manage loans for rent in advance/deposit payments, which could reduce expenditure for the RDS.
- Abritas is a web-based system, which requires minimal ICT input unlike the current Capita/ Academy system.
- Cancelling the Capita/ Academy contract would save approx. £12,000 pa in support costs and reduce the dependency on ICT staff for upgrades/system management/support.

- Increase staff morale in having an effective system that is not dependant on “fixes and work arounds” just to undertake very basic rent accounting functions.
- System that the whole Housing Services team can use, which will reduce reliance on one officer.

System Upgrade

- Shared and reduce costs of the upgrade and benefits of shared project management with Mole Valley and Tandridge District Councils.
- System upgrade will increase longevity/viability of the whole system and enable us make use of new system functionality/enhancements
- Customer data management functionality that is automated, compliant with GDPR and can be customised to suit our particular data retention policies
- Improved customer interface through the upgraded Customer Housing Portal (CHP)
- Housing Options Officers will be able to use mobile devices while interviewing customers. This will help speed up data input, save from double keying and will allow Personalised Housing Plans to be compiled, generated and printed as part of the interview process
- Functionality to allow customers to view and update their Personalised Housing Plans via CHP. This will reduce risk of data breaches and significantly reduce the administration currently required by Housing Options Officers. This will also have the benefit of better customer engagement with the Homelessness prevention process.
- Ability for customers to upload documents/proofs via the CHP, speeding up processing time for both Housing Needs Register and Homelessness cases.

7.5 Total costs of the purchase of the Abris Tenancies and Rent module is £17,800. Total costs of the upgrade to version 9.0 and the associated enhancements is £45,130.

8 Financial and Manpower Implications

- 8.1 Flexible Housing Support Grant (FHSG) is ring fenced and can be used for any homelessness initiative.
- 8.2 To fund an increase in homelessness prevention activity and increased use of PSL properties as set out in this report will require an expenditure of £106,950, funded from FHSG.

- 8.3 The combined costs of the Abris Tenancies and Rent module and system upgrade is £62,930, also funded from FHSG. Annual support costs for the new module are expected to be between £4,000 and £5,000, against current costs of £12,000 per annum. This represents an ongoing saving of between £7,000 and £8,000, which would be factored into the Council's revenue budget.
- 8.4 The proposed use of FHSG will fund additional temporary capacity within the Housing Service to deliver more directed homelessness prevention activity and an increase in PSL property.
- 8.5 **Chief Finance Officer's comments:** The Council has been in receipt of Flexible Housing Support Grant from MHCLG since 2017/18.
- 8.6 Currently the Council holds £771,000 in FHSG; minus expenditure for 2019/20 projected at £386,000, leaving an FHSG balance of £385,000. The proposed additional expenditure of £106,950 & £63,000 of FSHS would reduce the projected FHSG balance to £215,050. The Council has not yet been notified of grant funding for 2020/21 onwards.
- 8.7 Expenditure on homelessness prevention is identified as a key risk in the Council's budget reports. To manage the risk, service expenditure is closely monitored as part of the Council's budget monitoring procedures.

9 Legal Implications (including implications for matters relating to equality)

- 9.1 None arising from the report's recommendations.
- 9.2 **Monitoring Officer's comments:** none arising from the contents of this report.

10 Sustainability Policy and Community Safety Implications

- 10.1 None for the purposes of this report.

11 Partnerships

- 11.1 The causes of homelessness are varied and resolving homelessness requires the council to work with many partners. This includes housing associations, private landlords, government departments, police and social services as well as primary care organisations and welfare providers.
- 11.2 The Housing Services ICT proposal includes joint project working with Tandridge DC & Mole Valley DC.

12 Risk Assessment

- 12.1 Compared to a do nothing scenario, the measures proposed in this report are likely to improve the outcomes for service users and further minimise expenditure on homelessness within the borough.

- 12.2 If the proposal to use FHSG to increase the use of homelessness prevention activities and increase the use of PSL properties were not agreed, it is likely that the number of households in nightly paid accommodation would increase further with associated increases in expenditure.
- 12.3 Provisions within the HRA are heavily prescribed and introduced new administrative processes as well as increased opportunities for applicants to challenge and appeal decision making. Under a no-change scenario there is greater risk of challenge.
- 12.4 Risks of not going ahead with the ICT proposal would leave Housing Services without a Rent Accounting system and an inability to manage temporary accommodation tenancies and associated rental income of over £480,000 pa. The system upgrade would still need to be implemented within the next 12 months however we would then not be able to take advantage of the shared costs and project management with Tandridge DC & Mole Valley DC or any of the system enhancements.

13 Conclusion and Recommendation

- 13.1 The first recommendation within this report is to approve the use of £106,950 Flexible Housing Support Grant to increase homelessness prevention activity and increase the use of Private Sector Leased properties.
- 13.2 The second recommendation within this report is to approve the use of £63,000 of Flexible Housing Support Grant to purchase a new temporary accommodation rent accounting module and upgrade and enhance the existing Abris Housing Services system to assist homelessness prevention & relief administration

Ward(s) affected: (All Wards);

Flexible Housing Support Grant - balance and forecast expenditure

2019/20 Payments to Housing Associations

			to date	straight line projection to year end
Man fee	Rosebery	6 monthly	59,200	118,400
Man fee	Transform	3 monthly	1,600	6,400
Man fee	Paragon	6 monthly	17,460	34,920
Void Loss	Orbit	3 monthly	4,740	4,740
Man fees on EEBC Properties as at 2018-19 levels				34,000
2019-20 anticipated draw down at current levels				198,460
2019-20 anticipated drawn down to cover salaries				48,000
2019/20 anticipated draw down on EEBC properties				34,000

BUT - As new tenants move in man fee levels will increase

If applied to all 127 HA properties annual cost	396,000
Contribution to salary costs	48,000
Plus EEBC properties	34,000
Highest anticipated draw down potentially	478,000
<i>Additional possible liability as new client numbers increase</i>	<i>100,000</i>
Other expenditure - initiatives	5,000

Total potential expenditure 2019-20 **£385,460**

Balance currently held

Account b/f	£185,528
c/f from 2018/19	£208,075
2019/20 received	£377,218
	<u>£770,821</u>

Balance to carry forward into 2020/21 using expenditure assumptions **£385,361**

We have not been notified of future funding to date.

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Business case

Housing Services – Purchase of a new temporary accommodation rent accounting module and an upgrade to the existing Abrisas Housing Services system to assist homelessness prevention & relief administration

Release	Draft
Date	09/09/2019
Author	Annette Snell
Owner	Head of Service

Client	Service lead
Project Ref #	

Business case history

Document location

This document is only valid on the day it was printed.
The source of the document will be found in location:

Revision history

Date of this revision: 09/09/2019
Date of next revision:

Revision date	Last revision date	Summary of changes
	0.1	Add rows as required, first version is version 0.1, increment drafts as 0.2, 0.3 etc, when agreed published (non draft version is 1.0, and any further changes increment from here)

Approvals

This document requires the following approvals:

Name	Signature	Title	Date	Version

Distribution

This document has been distributed to:

Name	Title	Date	Version

Business case

1. Purpose of document

The purpose of this project document is to outline the details of the two aspects of the Housing Services ICT project. These are the replacement of the existing Academy/Capita Housing rent accounting system and an Abrisitas system upgrade from version 6.4 to version 9.0 with associated enhancements, prior to the separation of the East Surrey sub-regional partnership.

Both aspect of the ICT project are directly related to homelessness and temporary accommodation and support better and more efficient ways of working. These will significantly help reduce the administrative burdens related to the Homeless Reduction Act.

The document will explain the reasons to undertake the project, provided estimated cost of the project and the anticipated benefits to us and the customer that will be gained from its implementation.

2. Background & Reason for the Project

Rent Accounting System

Housing Services currently uses two IT systems. Academy/Capita Housing was purchased in 2003/4 and Abrisitas Choice Based Lettings in 2008. (Abrisitas was procured jointly with three other East Surrey authorities through OJEU.) Further Abrisitas modules for the Housing Register, Advice, Homelessness and Temporary Accommodation were procured in 2016/17 and the Homeless Reduction Act (HRA) module in 2018.

Following the purchase of the additional Abrisitas modules in 2016/17 the Academy/Capita system is currently only used for rent accounting. Due to historic issues the functionality for arrears management is very poor and the system is no longer fit for purpose.

The system administration, maintenance and upgrades of the Academy/Capita system are complex and time consuming for both Housing & ICT staff. The support costs are disproportionate for our use at approx. £12,000 pa.

The Academy/Capita system was upgraded in September 2017. Following this upgrade it has not been possible for ICT to roll out the system to Housing Services users. As a result, Housing Services only have access to the system via a remote connection to a PC based in ICT. This only allows one user to access the system at any one time. Following protracted calls logged with their help desk/support services Academy/Capita have now advised that they can no longer support our operating system. The current version is being decommissioned in December 2019, which would require migration to their OPEN house system.

As a result Housing Services are currently having to seek an alternative software provider for a rent accounting system. However the majority of rent accounting systems on the market are linked to property and estate management systems where the minimum use is 5000-10,000 properties and the costs of these systems are prohibitive. Housing Services currently managed less than 100 temporary accommodation properties/rent accounts.

We are not unique in Surrey as many of the councils who transferred their housing stock still manage a small number of temporary accommodation units. There is a very limited market of ICT providers who offer small-scale rent accounting systems. A market appraisal has identified that we only have two options. These are the purchase of the Abrisitas Tenancy and Rents module or a bespoke Access system designed by EEBC ICT staff. However ICT are unlikely to have the resources and time scales to develop this and it will not be able to offer the same functionality and benefits of the Abrisitas Tenancy and Rents module.

Abritas systems upgrade from version 6.4 to 9.0

The current version of Abritas system (v6.4) was procured on a sub-regional basis with Mole Valley, Tandridge and Reigate & Banstead Councils in 2008.

Further Abritas modules were procured for the Housing Register, Advice, Homeless and Temporary Accommodation in 2016/17 and the HRA module in 2018.

Whilst additional modules have been purchased the overall operating system has not been upgraded in 11 years. Housing Services are currently using version 6.4 and the latest version is 9.0.

The main reason was that all four local authority partners had to agree to the upgrade and consensus could not be reached.

The current version whilst still functional is becoming obsolete, for example the system is web based and can only operate using internet Explorer 7 however this is no longer supported by Abritas.

In addition we have been unable to take advantage of any new system functionality/enhancements rolled out and supported within later system release versions.

The current situation is that the sub-regional partnership has been dissolved and the other partners now want to separate out their systems. This is in itself a large task. Reigate and Banstead BC will no longer be using Abritas however Tandridge DC, Mole Valley DC and EEBC will continue to.

This presents the remaining partners with an ideal opportunity to jointly upgrade prior to the separation of the systems. By doing so we can share costs of the upgrade and have the benefits of rolling this out as a shared project.

The implementation of the Tenancies & Rents module and the upgrade would run concurrently.

3. Objectives

- Obtain S&R approval to use the MHCLG Homelessness grant to fund the purchase of the Tenancies & Rents module and upgrade
- Purchase Abritas Tenancies & Rents module to replace the current Academy rent accounting system
- Cancel Capita/Academy Housing contract along with associated support costs of £12,000 pa
- Upgrade the current version of the Abritas system from version 6.4 to 9.0 as part of a joint upgrade prior to the separation of the East Surrey sub-regional partnership
- Implement new functionality & enhancements to improve service delivery, especially for homelessness administration
- Separate the existing system from the East Surrey sub-regional partnership.

4. Success

- An upgraded, enhanced and fully integrated Housing ICT system that includes the Tenancies & Rents module, implemented by the end of financial year 2019/20 and delivered within budget.

5. ICT Scope

Abritas Tenancies & Rents module

The purchase of the Abritas Tenancies & Rents module offer the following functionality:

Fully integrated to all existing modules

The Tenancies & Rents module is fully integrated with all existing Abritas modules but particularly with the Homelessness module. This allows easy management of the financial aspects of temporary accommodation tenancies.

The module can be used by the whole team, which will reduce reliance on one officer and SPOF issues.

Under the Homelessness module, for case management /statistical purposes, temporary accommodation placements are already created and all temporary accommodation properties are currently set up on the system. Therefore the creation of a tenancy & associated rent account would be a very straight forward and seamless follow on process.

Rent Accounting

The Tenancies & Rents module uses double entry accounting and shows payment sources to indicate whether the payment has come from the tenant, Housing Benefit (HB) or Universal Credit (UC).

Tenancies can be created both in the past and the future and start and end dates can be changed as required to charge part periods.

The system allows for different hierarchy of accounts so charges can be made for rent & services, storage costs, loans for deposits and rent in advance.

Rent statements can be easily viewed and generated and can be accessed by the whole team.

The system works on a 52 week continual year which means that there is no complex end of year process and reconciliation reports can be generated for any period.

Arrears Management

Due to faults with the existing Academy system rent arrears management is currently extremely difficult, very time consuming and is not effective. This is one of the main business reasons for a new module. Housing Services staff are constantly dependant on "fixes and work arounds" just to undertake very basic rent accounting and arrears functions.

With the Abritas Tenancies & Rents module the arrears process is managed through clear workflows that includes automatic letter creation at any point in the arrears process.

Flexible arrears monitoring reports can be generated using the built in reporting tools. These reports quickly highlight arrears cases which require action.

Repayment agreements can be created for tenants that are in arrears, and the system will then highlight those agreements in the workflow that are not being met.

Interface of cash & housing benefit payments

In 2018/19 £350,000 in Housing Benefit & £131,000 in cash payments were processed through Housing Services.

The existing Academy system currently only interfaces with Housing Benefit and all cash payments have to be manually input on a weekly basis. This is extremely time consuming, open to error and it is difficult to reconcile payments effectively.

The Abris Tenancies & Rents module would create interfaces to enable cash payments from Civica Pay and housing benefit payments to be loaded into the system automatically on a daily basis.

This would create more efficient & regular cash importing which will reduce staff inputting times and be less prone to errors. Tenant rent accounts would be current on a daily rather than weekly basis.

Unit costs

The Abris Tenancies & Rents module includes functionality to allow staff record details of costs (e.g. repairs, redecoration, damage, recharges) incurred against properties in order to keep track and monitor costs. A configurable unit cost report gives an overview of cost totals.

This is useful for PSL recharges to landlords/tenants and for financial analysis of costs associated with EEBC owned properties.

Rent Deposit Scheme (RDS)

Rent Deposit Scheme information is currently only recorded on an excel spreadsheet and there is no central system for recording cases or managing data or finances.

The Rent Deposit functionality allows applications to be tracked within the system and contains set workflows to allow for the management of Rent Deposit applications and the recording of property, landlord and financial information.

This functionality would also have the ability to record and manage loans for rent in advance and cash deposit payments, which could reduce expenditure for the RDS.

Configuration/Set up

The Tenancies & Rents module is relatively straightforward to configure and set up, especially as the council's Temporary accommodation property data base has already been set up on the system under the Homelessness module. Configuration will be centred on our rent charging structure.

Upgrade from version 6.4 to 9.0

Epsom & Ewell Borough Councils version of the Abris operating system has not been upgraded in 11 years. Housing Services are currently using version 6.4 and the latest version is 9.0.

The current version whilst still functional is becoming obsolete, for example the system is web based and can only operate using internet Explorer 7, however this is no longer supported by Abris.

In addition we have been unable to take advantage of any new system functionality/enhancements rolled out and supported within later system release versions.

The upgrade to version 9.0 includes a number of new system functions and enhancements as standard. The following are highlighted as having a particular business use to Housing Services:

Customised personal data management (GDPR)

The data retention functionality is designed to comply with government regulations regarding the retention of our customer's personal data. The system will automatically identify applications where personal data should no longer normally be retained and flag them in an

exception report and on the applicant's Household page. After a grace period, during which the data can be flagged to be retained if required, the personal data held against the application is automatically wiped.

Records are identified for removal based on a standard set of rules, one for each application/record type in the system. Each data management rule can be fully customised to suit the council's own data retention policy. Expiry dates can be added to attachments and generated letter records, after which, they will be identified for deletion and then wiped.

User interface

The back office user interface has been modernised providing a more innovative and user-friendly experience.

Browser Support

The back office fully supports Microsoft Internet Explorer versions 9, 10 & 11. Support has also been added for Google Chrome, Mozilla Firefox, Safari, Edge.

Mobile Devices

Extending support to Safari will enable Housing Options Officers to use mobile devices while interviewing customers. This will help speed up data input and save from double keying. More importantly, it will allow Personalised Housing Plans to be compiled, generated and printed as part of the interview process. This will significantly simplify a complex process brought in by the Homelessness Reduction Act.

Actions & Pop-up reminders

This allows the creation of actions and Pop-up reminders against any process within the system.

In the system you add the reminder from the CRM screen against any process, assign it to a back-office user for a date and time; when that user next logs in to the Abris system and the reminder is due a pop-up will appear. This reminder pop-up can be dismissed, rescheduled or 'snoozed'.

SMS bidding & Bulk messaging

The bulk messaging functionality allows Housing Services staff to send messages to a selection of applicants en masse. Each message can be sent via text, email, to the client website, or a combination of the three.

SMS bidding is an automated text service that allows applicants to place bids by sending an SMS to a specified number. They are sent a response informing them of their queue position if their bid is successful, or the reason why they are ineligible for the property.

Audit tool

Senior managers can use this functionality to audit a random selection of Homelessness cases. Users can select a percentage of cases within a specified date range, and workflow exists to manage the audit process.

Upgraded Customer Housing Portal

The current client interface with the Housing Services system is via the Customer Housing Portal (CHP) through the Epsom and Ewell HomeChoice website. Via this site clients can complete on-line Housing Needs Register applications, bid for CBL properties, use the housing options wizard and message Housing Services staff.

The look and feel of the Customer Housing Portal has been updated and has increased functionality as outlined below:

Customer Document upload

This allows applicants to upload proofs/documents as part of the application process. Once submitted attachments will appear in the back office system for staff to verify once they have passed a virus scanning check.

This will enable customers to upload certain documents/proofs via the CHP, which will speed up processing time for both Housing Needs Register and Homelessness cases.

Customer viewing and updating of Personalised Housing Plans (PHP)

The Customer Housing Portal has the functionality to allow customers to view and update their Personalised Housing Plans. This will reduce risk of data breaches and significantly reduce the administration currently required by the Housing Options Officers. Legislation requires that PHPs are reviewed and updated on a regular basis. Currently this can only be done by Housing Options Officers in the back office and is time consuming. You cannot move a case on in the system until the PHP has been updated. The ability to allow customers to do this themselves will also have the benefit of better engagement with the Homelessness prevention process.

6. Stakeholders

Key project stakeholders & their potential role on the project:

- Project sponsor - Rod Brown
- Project manager – Annette Snell
- Partners - MVDC & TDC
- ICT – Guidance & ICT and new ways of working governance group
- Senior supplier – Abritas
- Legal – Contracts
- Procurement – Guidance on G-Cloud procurement
- Finance

7. Benefits

The following benefits have been identified:

Tenancies & Rents module

- A fully functional rent accounting and rent arrears system, which is integrated into the existing homelessness module and with Housing Benefit & Cash interfaces
- More efficient/regular cash importing which will reduce staff inputting times and is less prone to errors
- More efficient rent arrears handling which will reduce debts owed to the council and free up staff resources
- Better management reporting on rental income, arrears and unit cost data
- New Rent Deposit functionality for the management of Rent Deposit applications and recording of property, landlord and financial information.
- Ability to manage loans for rent in advance/deposit payments, which could reduce expenditure for the RDS.
- Abritas is a web-based system, which requires minimal ICT input unlike the current Capita/ Academy system.
- Cancelling the Capita/ Academy contract would save £12,000 pa in support costs and reduce the dependency on ICT staff for upgrades/system management/support.
- Increase staff morale in having an effective system that is not dependant on “fixes and work arounds” just to undertake very basic rent accounting functions.

- System that the whole Housing Services team can use, which will reduce reliance on one officer and any associated SPOF issues.

System Upgrade

- Shared & reduce costs of the upgrade and benefits of shared project management with MVDC & TDC
- System upgrade will increase longevity/viability of the whole system and enable us make use of new system functionality/enhancements
- Customer data management functionality that is automated, compliant with GDPR and can be customised to suit our particular data retention policies
- Improved customer interface through the upgraded Customer Housing Portal (CHP)
- Housing Options Officers will be able to use mobile devices while interviewing customers. This will help speed up data input, save from double keying and will allow Personalised Housing Plans to be compiled, generated and printed as part of the interview process
- Functionality to allow customers to view and update their Personalised Housing Plans via CHP. This will reduce risk of data breaches and significantly reduce the administration currently required by Housing Options Officers. This will also have the benefit of better customer engagement with the Homelessness prevention process.
- Ability for customers to upload certain documents/proofs via the CHP.

Adverse effects

No adverse effects for the council have been identified. Implementation of the new module and upgrade are relatively straightforward, mainly involving a small number of the Housing Services team. There has been a proven track record of implementing and delivering similar ICT projects within Housing Services on time and within budget.

8. Costs

The costs associated with the purchase of the Tenancy and Rents Module and the upgrade to version 9.0 are set out below along with future additional annual costs. By undertaking this as a joint project with Mole Valley & Tandridge District Councils there are costs savings to be made as some of the costs are shared. For example in 2017 Abrisitas quoted £29,000 for the Tenancy and Rents Module and we have now negotiated a figure of £17,800.

Purchasing this module would mean we would no longer be required to pay approx. £12, 000 pa in support costs to Academy/Capita.

The project will also include the work associated with separating out of the four local authorities systems and any individual customisation.

Item	Shared Cost	EEBC
INITIAL COSTS		
TENANCY AND RENTS MODULE	Yes	£13,550
Cash interface		£1,250
Housing Benefit interface		£1,750
Training - 2 day mandatory per partner		£1,250
TOTAL		£17,800

ADDITIONAL ANNUAL COSTS	Shared Cost	EEBC
HOSTING		
Tenancy and Rents Module		£1000
SUPPORT & MAINTENANCE		
Tenancy and Rents Module		£3000
TOTAL		£4000

Item	Shared Cost	EEBC
INITIAL COSTS		
UPGRADE		
Upgrade - implementation management	Yes	£3,333
Upgrade – development	Yes	£4,000
Upgrade - User acceptance testing	Yes	£3,000
Training - 1 day mandatory per partner	Yes	£1,000
Mobile phone (SMS) bidding service setup	Yes	£500
Unit cost reporting	Yes	£2,000
Customised tenancy data recording	Yes	£500
Customer Housing Portal Implementation	No	£15,400
Implementation of website customisations	Yes	£5,000
Administration and CMS training	Yes	£333
Customer Document Upload	Yes	£5,950
Rent deposit applications	Yes	£1000
Customised data management	Yes	£667
Bulk messaging	Yes	£783
Household tenancies	Yes	£1,000
Non-standard items		
Removal of the shared 'Sub Regional' and all remaining calculations associated to Reigate & Banstead Allocation schemes	Yes	£667
TOTAL		£45,133

ADDITIONAL ANNUAL COSTS	Shared Cost	EEBC
SUPPORT & MAINTENANCE		
Customer Document Upload		£880
SMS		
Fee for SMS bulk messaging/bidding (includes 5000 messages) in total across all partners	Yes	£167
TOTAL		£1,047

For the enhancement to our existing system the figures quoted are in addition to those already being charged for existing modules.

Procurement & Contracts

The intention is to procure the new module and upgrade using the Crown Commercial Services G-Cloud 11 framework. Previous modules were procured using this method. The Housing Operations Manager has experience of this and it is a relative quick and straightforward process.

The existing contract will be renewed and brought into one agreement. All current invoices will be aligned into one annual invoice.

9. Timescales

Time scales for implementation are dependent on final approval of S& R Committee on 24 September. However the intention is that both aspects of this project will be implemented by the end of the financial year 2019/20.

Following G-Cloud procurement a full implementation scope will be agreed with detailed timescales.

The implementation of the new module and upgrade is relatively straightforward, mainly involving a small number of the Housing Services team. Housing Services & Abris have a proven track record of implementing and delivering similar ICT projects on time and within budget.

It is proposed that the following timescales will be achievable:

Milestone	Dates (estimates)
Scoping & business case	Jul- Aug- 2019
ICT and new ways of working governance group	10 Sept 2019
S&R Committee	24 September 2019
Procurement & contracts	October 2019
Works Order signed	October 2019
Configuration Definition	Nov 2019
Upgrade Development	Nov 2019 – Feb 2020
User Acceptance Testing (UAT)	Feb 2020
Training	March 2020
System Delivery	March 2020

10. Risks

In summary the main risks are as follows:

Risks of not going ahead with the project.

The current rent accounting systems is not fit for purpose and needs to be replaced. Failure to proceed would leave Housing Services without a Rent Accounting system and an inability to manage temporary accommodation tenancies and associated rental income of over £480,000 pa.

The current proposal to upgrade the system is link to the separation of the existing East Surrey sub-regional partnership. If the upgrade was not undertaken at the same time with the partners Housing Services would be reliant on a system that had not been upgraded for 11 years and would still need to upgrade the system within the next 12 months. However we would then not be able to take advantage of the shared costs and project management. We would also still be required to pay the costs of separating out the systems.

Risks that will need to be addressed if the recommended option goes ahead

Risk	Date identified	Identified by	Impact	Probability	Risk management plan	Current status
MVDC & TDC decide not to proceed with project	09/09/2019	AS	Medium	Low	MVDC & TDC are further advance with project than EEBC. Joint project working to mitigate risk	Active
Abritas unable to deliver on time due to initial project delays	09/09/2019	AS	Medium	Low	Adhere to project plan	Active
Key staff recourses are deployed to other service priorities	09/09/2019	AS	Medium	Low	Adhere to project plan	Active

11. Dependencies

This project depends on:

- Approval by Better ways of working group on 10 September 2019
- Funding approval by S&R Committee on 24 September 2019
- Inter dependencies on Mole Valley and Tandridge District Councils

Key resource dependencies:

Implementation of the new module and upgrade are relatively straightforward, mainly involving a small number of the Housing Services team. Project lead will be Annette Snell, Housing Operations Manager. Dammika Vithanage, Temporary Accommodation & PSL Officer will be involved implementing the Tenancies & Rents module and the remaining Housing Services staff will be involved in UAT.

REVIEW OF POLLING DISTRICTS, POLLING PLACES AND POLLING STATIONS

Head of Service/Contact:	Amardip Healy, Chief Legal Officer
Urgent Decision?	No
If yes, reason urgent decision required:	
Annexes/Appendices (attached):	Annex 1 - Public Consultation Document
Other available papers (not attached):	None

Report summary

The Electoral Registration and Administration Act 2013 requires compulsory reviews of UK Parliamentary polling districts and polling places every five years. A compulsory review must be completed by 31st January 2020. A consultation is under way to inform this process. It is recommended that a Working Group of Members is established to consider representations received and for their proposals to be brought back before this Committee on 26 November 2019.

Recommendation (s)

- (1) That a Working Group be established to consider all representations received in respect of the public consultation in respect of Polling Districts, polling Places and Polling Stations;**
- (2) That the Working Group should comprise 5 members with the Chairman of the Residents' Association, the Leader of the Liberal Democrat group and the Leader of the Labour group nominating 3 members, 1 member and 1 member respectively**
- (3) That this Committee considers the proposals of the Working Group at its meeting on 26 November 2019.**

1 Implications for the Council's Key Priorities, Service Plans and Sustainable Community Strategy

- 1.1 The (Acting) Returning Officer (the Chief Executive) has a duty to provide a sufficient number of polling stations and allot electors to the polling stations in such manner as she thinks most convenient.

2 Background

- 2.1 The Council last conducted a review of polling districts and polling places in November 2011. The Electoral Registration and Administration Act 2013 introduced a change which requires compulsory reviews of UK Parliamentary polling districts and polling places every five years. The next compulsory review must now be started and completed between 1 October 2018 and 31 January 2020.
- 2.2 A polling district is a geographical area which is a sub-division of a ward or constituency and, for each polling district, there must be designated a "polling place". The term is not defined in legislation but could for example, be a public building.
- 2.3 The responsibility to designate a polling place is a matter for the Council. If no polling place is designated, the polling district becomes the polling place. It has been the Council's approach (and recommended best practice) to designate various buildings - Bourne Hall, for example - as polling places. Decisions about polling stations within the polling place are for the (Acting) Returning Officer to make.
- 2.4 A review is all the steps set out in Schedule A1 to the Representation of the People Act 1983. The review process, from the publication of the review until the publication of the documents at the end, must all take place within the specified period.
- 2.5 The Electoral Commission's guidance on Reviews of polling districts, polling places and polling stations prescribes the manner in which representations made by returning officers about the location of polling places are to be published. The regulations also prescribe the information that is to be published upon the completion of a polling place review.

3 Consultation

- 3.1 On 11 September 2019 notice of the review was published on the Council's website. A Consultation document was published on 11 September 2019 and the consultation period will close on 16 October 2019. Any elector in the Constituency was invited to make representations on the designation of polling districts or places. In addition, the Council notified the following groups/individuals about the review:

3.1.1 The Member of Parliament for Epsom and Ewell, Chris Grayling,

3.1.2 Epsom and Ewell Access Group

- 3.1.3 Surrey Disabled People's Partnership
 - 3.1.4 Members of Epsom and Ewell Borough Council
 - 3.1.5 Surrey County Councillors representing divisions within the Epsom area
 - 3.1.6 Election agents who acted at the 2011 elections
 - 3.1.7 Candidates who stood in the 2011 elections
 - 3.1.8 Residents Associations
 - 3.1.9 Registered political parties who regularly field candidates in local and parliamentary elections in the Borough
- 3.2 The Public Consultation document is appended at **Annex 1**.

4 Results of Consultation

- 4.1 It is proposed that a Working Group be set up to consider all of the representations received in respect of the Public Consultation. It is suggested that the Working Group be politically balanced and comprise 5 members. Nominations for 3 members are invited from the Chairman of the Residents' Association Group while nominations from the Leaders of Liberal Democrat Group and Labour Group are invited for 1 member each.
- 4.2 The following nominations to the Working Group have been received:
- Residents' Association Group: Councillor Nigel Collin, Councillor Clive Woodbridge and one Councillor from Nonsuch Ward
 - Labour Group: Councillor Kate Chinn
 - Liberal Democrat Group: Councillor Julie Morris
- 4.3 The Working Group's terms of reference will be to consider all representations received as a result of the public consultation and to recommend proposals in line with those representations.
- 4.4 The review process needs to be concluded by 31 January 2020. It is therefore proposed that the Working Group report back to this Committee with its proposals on implementation of the proposals on 26 November 2019.

5 Financial and Manpower Implications

- 5.1 The cost of the review can be contained within existing budgets.
- 5.2 **Chief Finance Officer's comments:** None for the purposes of this report.

6 Legal Implications (including implications for matters relating to equality)

- 6.1 The Council must conduct a review of its polling districts and polling places by virtue of the Electoral Registration and Administration Act 2013
- 6.2 The Council must comply with the Public Sector Equality Duty. Polling places need to be accessible to disabled residents. The Council complies with its duties by ensuring that the public consultation includes disability groups
- 6.3 **Monitoring Officer's comments:** The legal implications incorporate the Monitoring Officer's views.

7 Sustainability Policy and Community Safety Implications Partnerships

- 7.1 There are no sustainability issues. Community safety in respect of the adequacy of the polling stations will be considered from representations arising from the public consultation

8 Risk Assessment

- 8.1 There is no risk associated with the administrative process of carrying out this public consultation or from the deliberations of the Working Group.

9 Conclusion and Recommendations

- 9.1 The Council must carry out a review of its polling districts and polling places. This must be completed by 31 January 2020. A public consultation is underway and will finish on 16 October 2019. It is recommended that a politically balanced Working Group be set up to consider those representations and to recommend proposals. Due to the deadline it is recommended that the Working Group report back to this Committee on 26 November 2019 with its proposals.

Ward(s) affected: All Wards.



PUBLIC CONSULTATION

POLLING DISTRICT AND POLLING PLACES REVIEW

EPSOM AND EWELL BOROUGH COUNCIL

September 2019

**Kathryn Beldon Acting Returning Officer
Epsom and Ewell Borough Council
The Town Hall
The Parade
Epsom
Surrey KT15 8BY**

www.epsom-ewell.gov.uk

Background

The Electoral Administration Act 2006 (Section 16) introduced a number of changes to the Representation of the People Act 1983 in respect of the way in which reviews of polling districts and polling places must be undertaken.

First Review

The Act specified how frequently reviews should be undertaken and made it a requirement that relevant authorities (i.e. this Council) carry out a review every four years. The Council was required to conclude the first review by 31 December 2007. The review was duly undertaken in September 2007 and the outcome of the review reported to Council in December of that year.

Subsequent Reviews

Notwithstanding the legislation, the Council regularly reviews its polling places but duly completed a second statutory review in December 2011.

The Electoral Registration Act 2013 introduced a change to the timing of compulsory reviews and the next compulsory review that had to be held between 1 October 2013 and 31 January 2015 was completed in December 2014. This review has a requirement to be held and completed between 1 October 2018 and 31 January 2020

Definition of a Parliamentary Constituency, a Ward, Polling District, Polling Place and Polling Station

To assist any interested party who may wish to make representations, the following definitions may be helpful:

a) Parliamentary Constituency

This is an area designated by the Boundary Commission which is represented by a Member of Parliament (MP) in the House of Commons. This cannot be changed by the review – it is the division of the constituency into polling districts and places that is under review.

b) Wards

The Borough is divided into areas known as “Wards” which are represented by Borough Councillors.

c) Polling Districts

A polling district is the area created by the division of a Ward into smaller parts, within which a polling place can be determined which is most suitable for the electors.

d) Polling Places

A polling place is the building or area in which the number of polling stations will be selected by the (Acting) Returning Officer.

e) **Polling Station**

A polling station is the room or area in which voting takes place. This must be located within the polling place that has been designated for the particular polling district. The number of polling stations to be accommodated within a polling place is the decision of the (Acting) Returning Officer.

Timetable for the Review

The Council is required to publish notice of the holding of a review. This has been carried out by way of notices posted outside the Town Hall, Epsom on all the Borough Boards and on the Council's website. The timetable for the review is set out below:

Publication of notice	11 September 2019
Publication of consultation document	11 September 2019
Closing date for representations	16 October 2019
Consideration of all representations	16 – 18 October 2019
Report to Strategy and Resources Committee	26 November 2019
Publication of notice of amendments to electoral register and intention to publish revised version of register (if necessary)	19 December 2019
Publication of revised version of register (if necessary)	2 January 2020

Criteria for Polling Places and Polling Districts

The Electoral Commission has set out guidance to assist in assessing the current arrangements and any proposals for change.

As part of the assessment of the suitability of polling district boundaries, the following should be considered:

- Are the boundaries well defined? For example. Do they follow the natural boundaries of the areas? If not, is it clear which properties belong in the polling district?
- Are there suitable transport links within the polling district, and how do they relate to the areas of the district that are most highly populated? Are there any obstacles to voters crossing the current polling district and reaching the polling place e.g. steep hills, impassable major roads, railway lines, rivers?

There are also a number of factors that must be considered when reviewing existing polling places or assessing new polling places, including:

- The location: is it reasonably accessible within the polling district? Does it avoid barriers for the voter such as steep hills, major roads, rivers, etc.? Are there any convenient transport links?
- Size: can the polling place accommodate more than one polling station if required? If multiple polling stations are required, is the polling place ample enough to accommodate all voters going into and out of the polling stations, even where there is a high turnout?
- Suitability: is the building readily available in the event of any unscheduled elections? Is there any possibility that the building may be demolished as part of a new development? Is the building accessible to all those entitled to attend the polling place?

The Electoral Commission recognises that the choice of polling place will often be a balance between the quality of the building in terms of access and facilities and the proximity of the building to the electors it is intended to serve and that there may be circumstances, as in the case of College Ward, where the polling place might fall wholly or partly outside the polling district because suitable alternatives are not available in the relevant Ward.

Although it is Council policy to avoid the use of schools wherever possible, there may be locations where there are no other suitable premises in the area. For the purposes of elections, the (Acting) Returning Officer is entitled to use free of charge, subject to covering the cost of heating, lighting and caretaking charges, schools maintained or assisted by a local authority as well as those schools that receive grants made up of monies provided by Parliament. However if using a school is the only option, where possible, the polling station(s) should be so located within the grounds to enable the school to

remain open with suitable separation of pupils from voters to cause minimal disruption to the school day. The decision to close any school ultimately remains with the school itself.

In conducting this review, it is proposed that, in order to minimize the risk of queues at a polling place, as far as possible, around 1500 and no more than 2000 voters should be assigned to each polling station as recommended by the Electoral Commission. It should be noted that the number of postal voters in each polling district is a relevant consideration in this regard. In the event of a combined and/or Parliamentary Election, given more complex arrangements and higher voter turnout, it may be necessary to review these numbers. In all circumstances, consideration is given to whether a polling place is capable of accommodating more than one polling station, if necessary.

Current practice, to avoid confusion and delays at polling stations and the Count, is not to locate polling stations from more than one Ward in the same building and this will be taken into consideration when considering any proposals.

Polling station staff are encouraged to make comments and observations regarding the suitability of polling places to which they are allocated and Polling Station Inspectors visited all polling stations during the recent elections in May 2019. Any comments have been taken into account when conducting the review.

The Role of the (Acting) Returning Officer

Whilst it is for the Council to decide on the creation of polling districts and location of polling places, it is for the (Acting) Returning Officer to decide how many polling stations are required for each polling station and must allocate electors to the polling stations in such manner as he or she thinks most conducive to the smooth running of polling day.

The Council is required to consult the Returning Officer for every Parliamentary Constituency that is wholly or partly within its area. The whole of the Borough falls within the Parliamentary Constituency of Epsom and Ewell there are no other Constituencies wholly or partly within its area.

Therefore the Council needs only to consult the (Acting) Returning Officer for Epsom and Ewell as part of the review and the (Acting) Returning Officer must comment during any review on both the existing polling districts and the polling stations and any proposed changes.

Other representations

Any elector in the Constituency may make representations on the designation of polling districts or places.

The Council is also required to seek representations from those with an expertise in relation to access to premises and facilities for disabled people. Such persons must also be given the opportunity to comment on the representations made by the (Acting) Returning Officer (which are contained in this consultation document).

Summary of Consultees

Set out below is a list of persons specifically notified about the review:

The Member of Parliament for Epsom and Ewell, Chris Grayling
Epsom and Ewell Equality Forum
Surrey Disabled People's Partnership
All Epsom and Ewell Borough Councillors
All Surrey County Councillors representing divisions within the Epsom area
Election agents who acted at the 2019 Borough elections
Candidates who stood in the 2019 Borough elections
Residents Associations (SCoRA)
Registered political parties who regularly field candidates in local and parliamentary elections in the Borough

Completion of the review

After considering all of the representations, a report will be presented to the Strategy and Resources Committee. It is anticipated that this will be at its meeting on?. The Strategy and Resources Committee will consider the report and make recommendations as it thinks appropriate to full Council on ? at which the final decisions will be made.

The Council is required to give reasons for its decisions in respect of the designation of both polling districts and polling places and these will be published, together with the following information, on the Council's website and made available, on request, at the Town Hall, Epsom

- all correspondence sent to the Returning Officer in connection with the review
- all correspondence sent to any person who the Council thinks has particular expertise in relation to access to premises or facilities for persons who have different forms of disability;
- all representations made by any person in connection with the review;
- the minutes of any meetings held by the Council where details of the review have been considered;
- details of the actual designations of polling districts and polling places agreed as a result of the review; and

- details of where the results of the review have been published (as already stated above).

Challenging the Review

Although the Electoral Commission has no initial role in the review process itself, it does have an important role in respect of considering representations and observations made that a Council has failed to conduct a proper review on one of two grounds:

- that the Council has failed to meet the reasonable requirements of the electors in the constituency, or a body of them (i.e. the reasonable requirements of a particular area of the authority have not been satisfactorily met);

or

- that the Council has failed to take sufficient account of the accessibility to disabled persons of polling stations within a designated polling place.

Representations based on any other grounds will not be considered by the Commission.

All representations made to the Commission must be in writing either by post, or email and should include the location and any other relevant information, stating specifically why it is inaccessible or does not meet the reasonable requirements of the electors.

Who may make a representation to the Electoral Commission?

Section 18D (1) of the Representation of the People Act 1983, sets out who may make representations to the Electoral Commission namely;

- not less than thirty registered electors in the constituency (although electors registered anonymously cannot make a representation)
- a person (except the (Acting) Returning Officer) who made representations to the council when the review was being undertaken
- any person who is not an elector within the constituency but who the Electoral Commission feels has sufficient interest in the accessibility of disabled persons in the areas or has particular expertise in relation to the access to premises or facilities of disabled persons

The (Acting) Returning Officer is entitled to make observations on any representations made to the Commission.

What will the Electoral Commission do?

The Electoral Commission is required to consider any representations and observations and may direct the relevant council to make any alterations it sees necessary to the polling places designated by the review. Should a Council fail to make the alterations within two months of the direction being given, the Commission may make the alterations itself.

Proposals

Set out in Appendix A are details of current polling districts and polling places for each of the 13 Wards within the Borough of Epsom and Ewell. Appendix B contains a breakdown for each polling place with the details of any proposed changes and the comments of the (Acting) Returning Officer. A map is also attached showing the location of all the polling places identified in the Schedule.

Included in Appendix B are details of known proposed developments. The potential increase in the electorate in any affected polling districts is an estimate based on two eligible electors per property and full occupancy of the approximate number of proposed dwellings.

The electorate, broken down into polling districts, is based on the electorate as at 1 September 2019.

Any significant comments from polling station staff or polling station inspectors regarding the condition or accessibility of currently used polling places are included where appropriate.

A full review of polling places was last conducted in 2011 and a copy of the report to the Strategy and Resources Committee dated 15 November 2011, including comments on the proposals at the time, is available on request or can be downloaded from the Council's website. The recommendation to further investigate the feasibility of creating a new Polling District and Polling Place for voters in Ruxley Ward was acted upon and a report went to the Strategy and Resources Committee on 1 April 2008.

Certain matters required addressing prior to the European Elections in May 2014. Representations received during the previous review were taken into consideration when looking at alternative polling places and a report was considered by the Strategy and Resources Committee on 12 November 2013, subsequently ratified by Council on 10 December 2013.

There are no known plans which would affect the availability of those Council-owned premises currently used as polling places and the Council has had no indication that private venues currently used will not be available in future, apart from as indicated in Appendix B.

Representations

Any persons wishing to make comments or representations regarding the proposals may do so. Any representations you wish to make should be **received by close of business (5pm) on**

16 October 2019

All representations must be made in writing either by post or email.

Representations by post should be sent to:

Electoral Services
Epsom and Ewell Borough Council
The Town Hall
The Parade
Epsom
Surrey
KT18 5BY

Representations by email should be sent to:

electoralservices@epsom-ewell.gov.uk

For any queries, please telephone 01372 732000 and ask to speak to Electoral Services.

All representations will be published on the Council's website as soon as possible after receipt. Even if you have already commented on the proposals, you may make further submissions in response to views and comments you see on the website.

The final decision will be taken by Strategy and Resources Committee at its meeting on 26 November 2019 and, if necessary, a notice of any alterations to the register will be published on the Council's website no later than 19 December 2019 and any new polling districts and polling places will become effective at all elections held after 2 January 2020.

EPSOM AND EWELL BOROUGH COUNCIL

CURRENT SCHEDULE OF POLLING DISTRICTS AND POLLING STATIONS

WARD	POLLING DISTRICT	POLLING PLACE
CUDDINGTON	AA	Rowe Hall, 2 nd Cuddington Scout HQ, Salisbury Road, Worcester Park KT4 7LP
	AB	St Mary's Church Hall, The Avenue, Worcester Park KT4 7HL
AURIOL	B	Stoneleigh Methodist Church Centre, Stoneleigh Crescent, Ewell KT19 0RT
EWELL COURT	CA	Ruxley Church, Ruxley Lane, West Ewell KT19 0JG
	CB	Ewell Court House, Ewell Court Avenue, Ewell KT19 0EB
RUXLEY	D	Epsom & Ewell High School, Ruxley Lane, West Ewell KT19 9JW
WEST EWELL	EA	Harrier Centre, King George V Rec Ground, Poole Road, West Ewell KT19 9RY
	EB	All Saints Church & Community Centre, Fulford Road, West Ewell KT19 9QY
COURT	FA	Southfield Park Primary School, Long Grove Road, Epsom KT19 8TF
	FB	Community & Wellbeing Centre (Main Hall) (Former Longmead Centre), Sefton Road, Epsom KT19 9HG
STAMFORD	GA	The Fellowship Hall, West Hill, Epsom KT19 8JD
	GB	The Church Hall, Christ Church, Christ Church Road, Epsom KT19 8NE
	GC	The Wells Social Centre, Spa Drive, Epsom KT18 7LR
STONELEIGH	HA	Stoneleigh Baptist Church Hall, The Glade, Stoneleigh KT17 2HL
	HB	Stoneleigh Baptist Church Hall, The Glade, Stoneleigh KT17 2HL

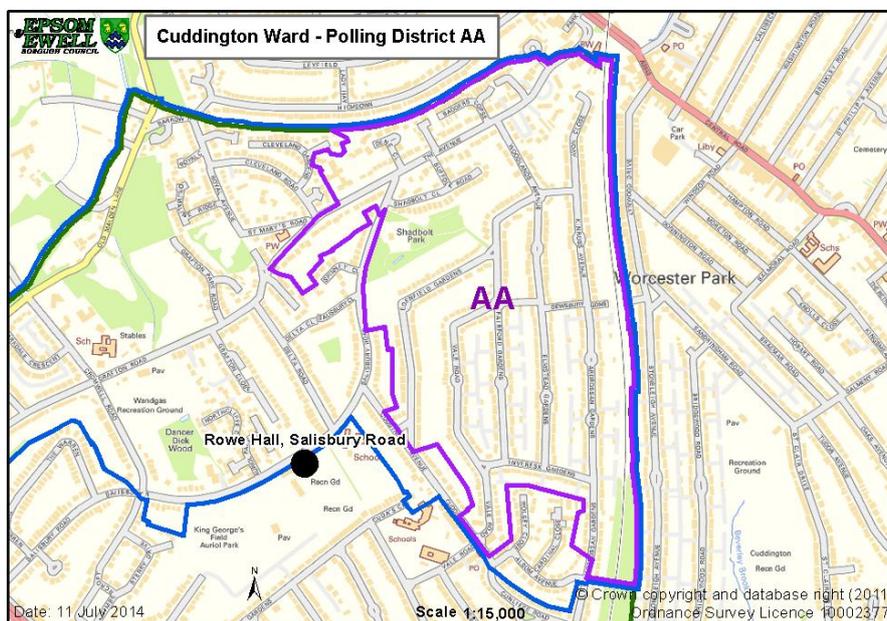
WARD	POLLING DISTRICT	POLLING PLACE
NONSUCH	IA	St Paul's Church Centre, Northey Avenue, Cheam SM2 7HS
	IB	Wallace Fields Junior School, Dorling Drive, Ewell KT17 3BH
EWELL	JA	Bourne Hall, Spring Street, Ewell KT17 1UF
	JB	Glyn School, The Kingsway, Ewell KT17 1NB
	JC	Defoe Court, 87 East Street, Epsom KT17 1AQ
TOWN	KA	Defoe Court, 87 East Street, Epsom KT17 1AQ
	KB	Epsom Playhouse, Ashley Avenue, Epsom KT18 5AL
	KC	St. Barnabas Church, Temple Road, Epsom KT19 8TU
COLLEGE	LA	The Pavilion, Alexandra Recreation Ground, Alexandra Road, Epsom KT17 4BU
	LB	The Church House, Church Street, Epsom KT17 4PX
WOODCOTE	MA	Grace Baptist Church, 32 Dorking Road, Epsom KT18 7NH
	MB	St Martin's C of E Junior School, Ashley Road, Epsom KT18 7AD
	MC	Langley Vale Village Hall, Rosebery Road, Epsom KT18 6AF

**EXISTING POLLING DISTRICTS AND PLACES AND (ACTING)
RETURNING OFFICERS' REPRESENTATIONS**

Cuddington Ward

Number of Polling Districts: Two
 Number of Polling Places: Two
 Electorate in Ward: **4522**
 Postal Voters in Ward: **641**
 Notes: There are no planned developments which would significantly affect the electorate of this Ward.

Polling District	A(A)
Electorate in District:	2475
Postal Voters:	331
Polling Place	Scout Hut (Rowe Hall), Salisbury Road, Worcester Park
No. of Stations	2
Map Ref.	1
Proposal	No change
Comments	Premises and location satisfactory Disabled access - good Parking – limited off-street parking available on site. On-street parking available around venue.



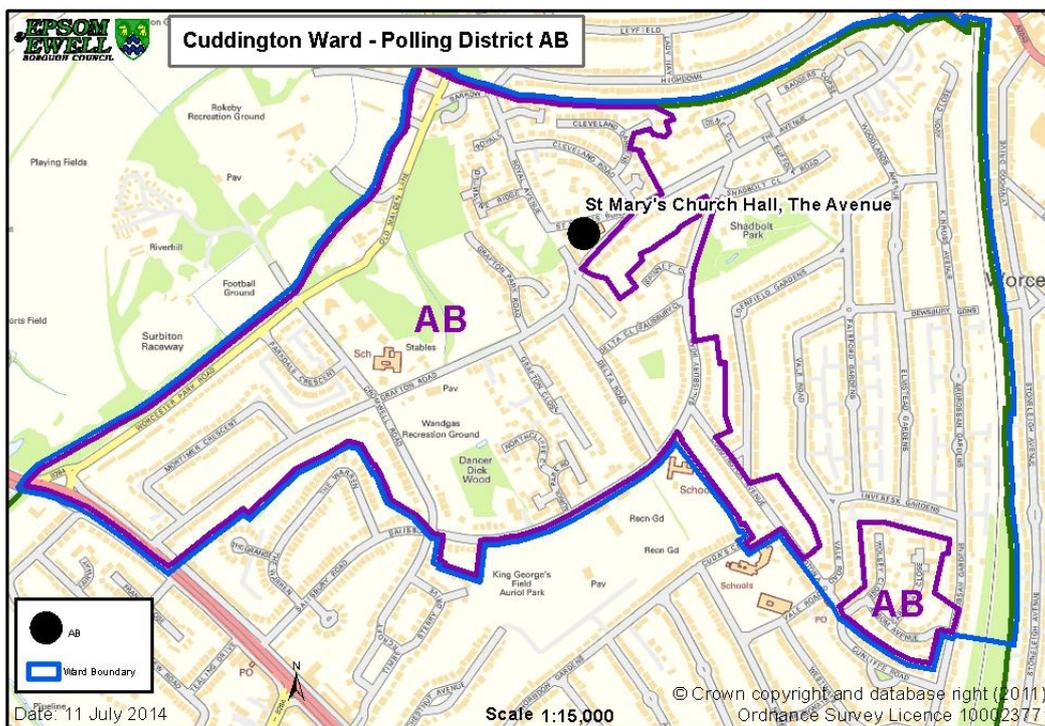
(Acting) Returning Officer's Representations

The previous reviews in 2011 and 2014 did not lead me to believe that the Polling District boundary or the Polling place are unsuitable and no adverse feedback has been received post the May 2019 elections.

I consider the polling district and polling place to be appropriate.

Cuddington Ward (cont)

Polling District	A(B)
Electorate in District	2047
Postal Voters	310
Polling Place	St Mary's Church Hall, The Avenue, Worcester Park
No. of Stations	1
Map Ref.	2
Proposal	No change
Comments	Premises and location satisfactory Disabled access - good Parking - off-street parking available on site. On-street parking also available around venue.



(Acting) Returning Officer's Representations

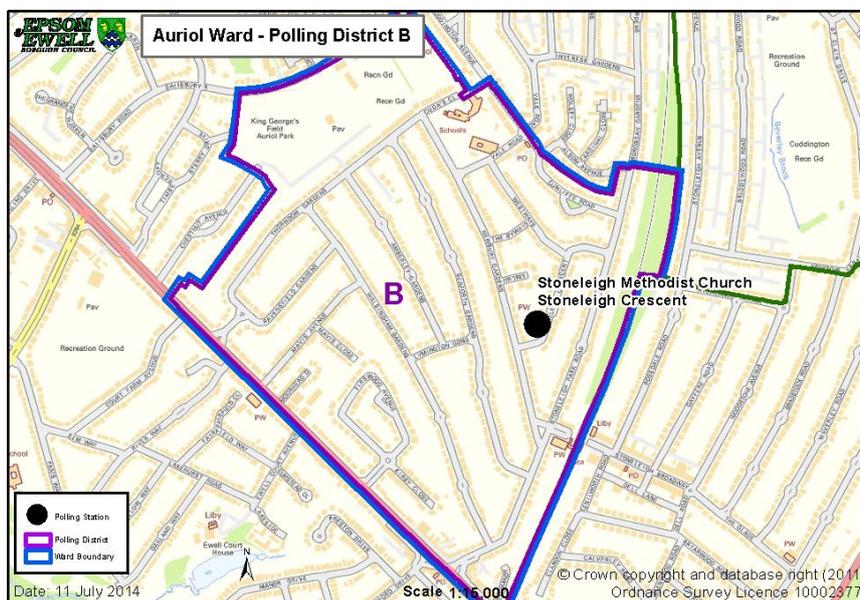
The previous reviews in 2011 and 2014 did not lead me to believe that the Polling District boundary or the Polling place are unsuitable and no adverse feedback has been received post the May 2019 elections.

I consider the polling district and polling place to be appropriate.

Auriol Ward

Number of Polling Districts: One
 Number of Polling Places: One
 Electorate in Ward: **3096**
 Postal Voters in Ward: **390**
 Notes: There are no planned developments which would significantly affect the electorate of this Ward.

Polling District	B
Electorate in District	3096
Postal Voters	390
Polling Place	Stoneleigh Methodist Church Centre, Stoneleigh Crescent, Stoneleigh, Ewell
No. of Stations	2
Map Ref.	3
Proposal	No change
Comments	Premises and location satisfactory Disabled access - good Parking – off-street parking available on site. On-street parking available around venue.



(Acting) Returning Officer's Representations

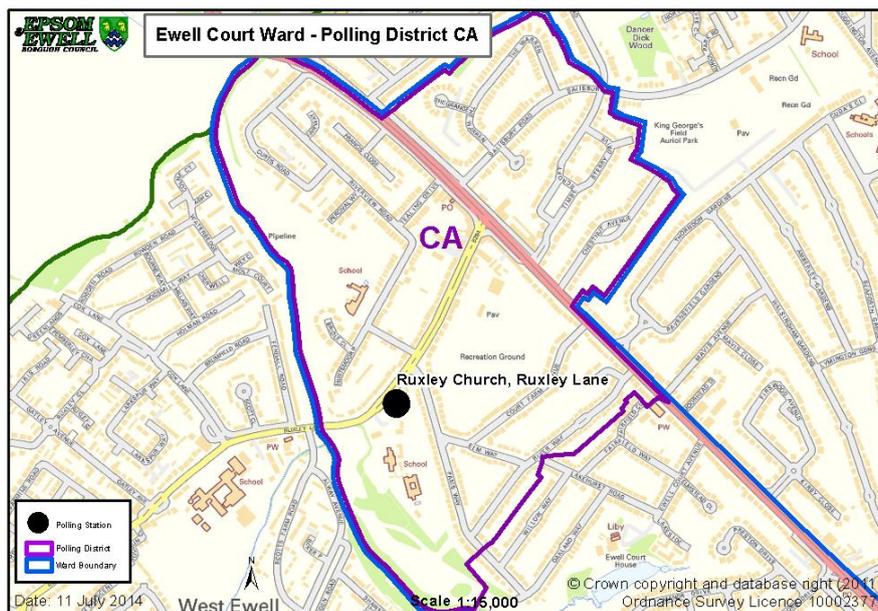
The previous reviews in 2011 and 2014 did not lead me to believe that the polling district boundary or the polling place are unsuitable and no adverse feedback has been received post the May 2019 elections.

I consider the polling district and polling place to be appropriate.

Ewell Court Ward

Number of Polling Districts: Two
 Number of Polling Places: Two
 Electorate in Ward: **4330**
 Postal Voters in Ward: **666**
 Notes: There are no planned developments which would significantly affect the electorate of this Ward.

Polling District	C(A)
Electorate in District	2626
Postal Voters	418
Polling Place	Ruxley Church, Ruxley Lane, West Ewell
No. of Stations	2
Map Ref.	4
Proposal	No change
Comments	Premises and location - Good Disabled access - Good Parking – off-street parking available on site.



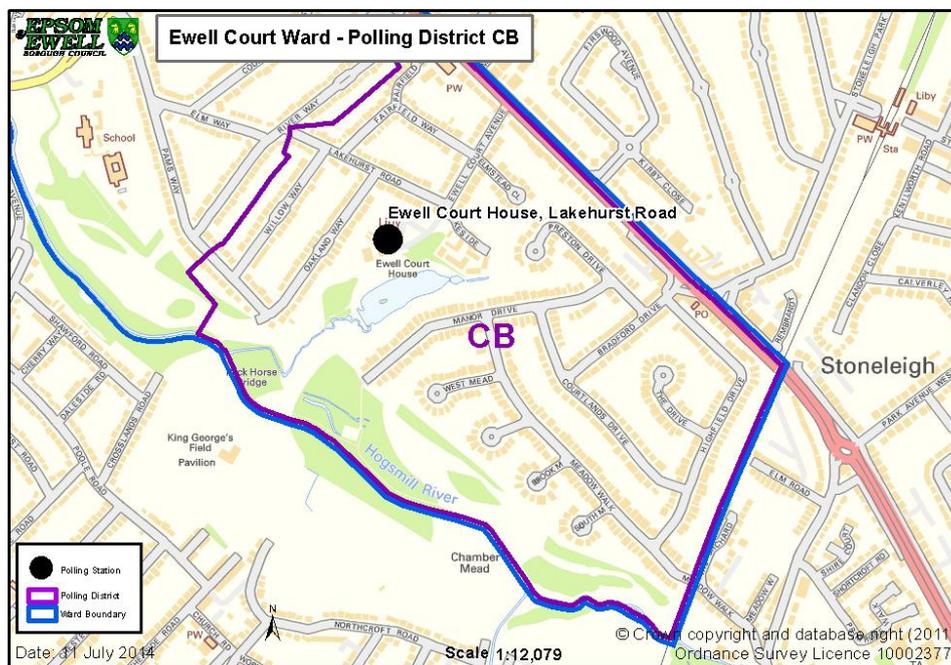
(Acting) Returning Officer's Representations

The church has been designated as the polling place for C(A) since 2013. The previous review in 2014 did not lead me to believe that the polling district boundary or the polling place are unsuitable and no adverse feedback has been received post the May 2019 elections.

I consider the polling district and polling place to be appropriate.

Ewell Court Ward (cont)

Polling District	C(B)
Electorate in District	1704
Postal Voters	248
Polling Place	Ewell Court House, Lakehurst Road, Ewell
No. of Stations	1
Map Ref.	5
Proposal	No change
Comments	Council owned premises Premises and location satisfactory Disabled access – good via separate side door Parking - off-street parking available



(Acting) Returning Officer's Representations

The previous reviews in 2011 and 2014 did not lead me to believe that the polling district boundary or the polling place are unsuitable and no adverse feedback has been received post the May 2019 elections.

I consider the polling district and polling place to be appropriate.

Ruxley Ward

Number of Polling Districts: One

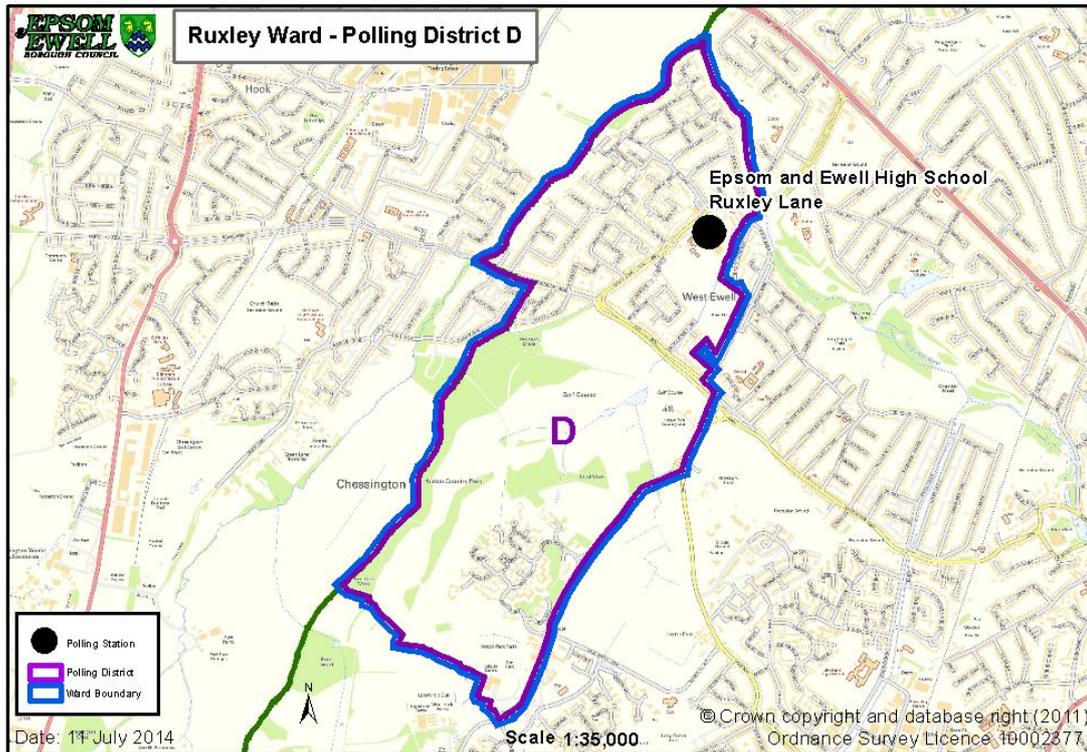
Number of Polling Places: One

Electorate in Ward: **4608**

Postal Voters in Ward **699**

Notes: There are no planned developments which would significantly affect the electorate of this Ward.? EE High playing fields application

Polling District	D
Electorate in District	4608
Postal Voters	699
Polling Place	Epsom & Ewell High School, Ruxley Lane, West Ewell
No. of Stations	2
Map Ref.	6
Proposal	No change
Comments	<p>Premises and location satisfactory Disabled access - good Parking – off-street parking available on-site for disabled only during school hours</p> <p>Polling station is located in the North Annexe in a room also used as an I.T. suite. The North Annexe is separate from main school building and the School remains open on polling day. Other parts of the Annexe are still used by the school on polling day.</p>



Ruxley Ward (cont)

(Acting) Returning Officer's Representations

In 2014 a representation was received from a resident of the Clarendon Park area stating that they believed the distance of the polling station from Clarendon Park was potentially a deterrent to voters.

It is recognised that the location of the current polling place in Ruxley Ward is not entirely satisfactory but enquiries have failed to identify any premises suitable for designation as a polling place in the southern half of the Ward and there would be a significant cost implication in providing temporary accommodation and also in finding a suitable location for any temporary unit to be located.

The size of the polling district is still within acceptable tolerances. The number of voters potentially voting at each station is just over the recommended tolerance set by the Electoral Commission and there is possible scope for increasing the number of polling stations at the premises. However there are proposals to develop the school playing fields which could increase electorate by 300-400 voters. If this happens then an alternative location within the school may need to be identified or the site could be included into West Ewell ward subject to the necessary permissions from the Boundary Commission.

There have been issues with vehicle access for voters during the school hours and a compromise has been reached with the school regarding access for disabled voters. There is plenty of on street parking in roads close to the

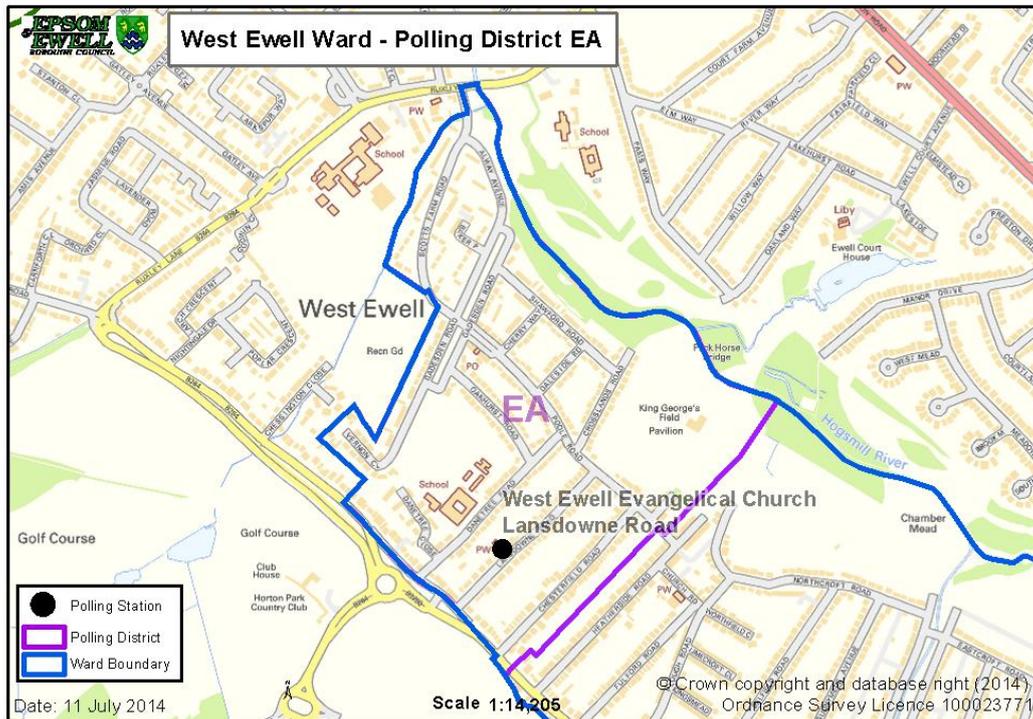
school. To advise voters regarding the limited access a warning is now printed on poll cards.

In the absence of any alternatives, I consider the polling district and polling place appropriate.

West Ewell Ward

Number of Polling Districts	Two
Number of Polling Places	Two
Electorate in Ward	4711
Postal Voters in Ward	489
Notes	There are no planned developments which would significantly affect the electorate of this Ward.

Polling District	E(A)
Electorate in District	1492
Postal Voters	144
Polling Place	West Ewell Evangelical Church, Lansdowne Road, West Ewell
No. of Stations	1
Map Ref.	7
Proposal	Changes
Comments	<p>Premises and location satisfactory Disabled access - satisfactory Parking – Limited off-street parking on site; on-street parking on residential road.</p> <p>First used as a polling place in 2013. These premises are used as an alternative to Danetree School until 2016. Unfortunately it became unavailable and the Harrier Centre, Poole Road has been used since 2017. Church is now available again and the intention is to revert back.</p>



West Ewell Ward EA (cont)

(Acting) Returning Officer's Representations

First used as a polling place in 2013 the church was used as an alternative to Danetree School until 2016. Unfortunately the church became unavailable and the Harrier Centre, Poole Road has been used since 2017. Although the facilities within the Harrier centre are good comments have been made by voters regarding parking. The main car park is quite a distance from the actual building and the access road to the disabled parking is narrow with limited spaces available. The Harriers athletic club meet on a Thursday so the main car park has become full with voters having to park on adjacent roads.

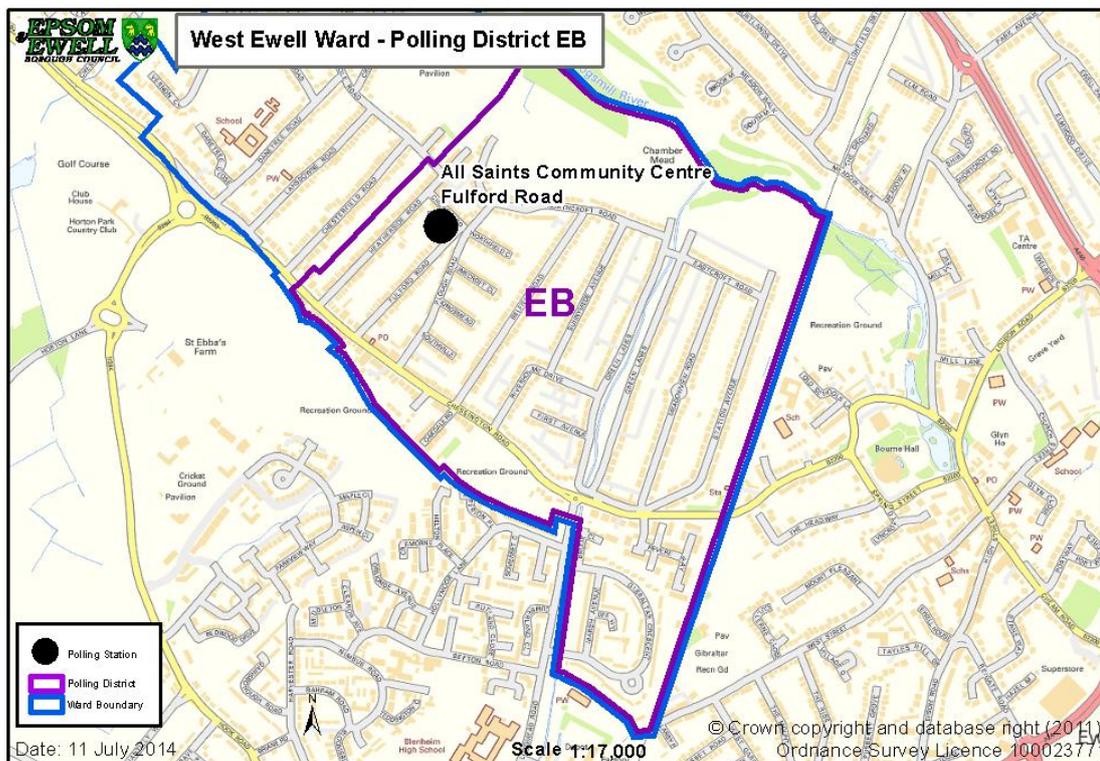
The Church has indicated that it would be available again and the intention is to inspect the premises with the intention to revert back.

I am not aware of any adverse feedback regarding the use of these premises.

I consider the polling district and polling place appropriate.

West Ewell Ward (cont)

Polling District	E(B)
Electorate in District:	3219
Postal Voters	345
Polling Place	All Saints Church Community Centre Fulford Road, West Ewell
No. of Stations	2
Map Ref.	8
Proposal	No change
Comments	Premises and location satisfactory Disabled access - good Parking – limited off-street parking available on site otherwise on-street parking in residential road.



(Acting) Returning Officer's Representations

The previous reviews in 2011 and 2014 did not lead me to believe that the polling district boundary or the polling place are unsuitable and no adverse feedback has been received post the May 2019 elections.

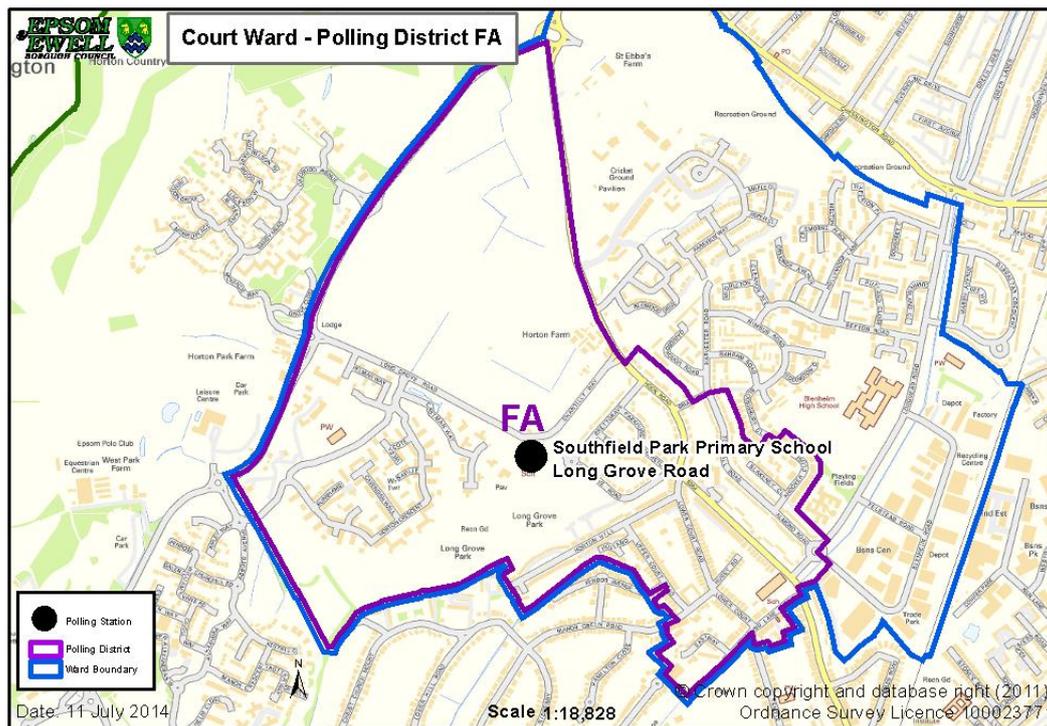
I consider the polling district and polling place appropriate.

Court Ward

Number of Polling Districts: Two
 Number of Polling Places: Two
 Electorate in Ward: **5026**
 Postal Voters in Ward **561**
 Notes: There are no planned developments which would significantly affect the electorate of this Ward.

Polling District	F(A)
Electorate in District	2714
Postal Voters	332
Polling Place	Southfields Park Primary School, Long Grove Road, Epsom
No. of Stations	2
Map Ref.	9
Proposal	No change
Comments	<p>Premises and location satisfactory Disabled access - good Parking – off-street parking available on school premises.</p> <p>This school closes on election day.</p> <p>Although it is Council policy to avoid the use of schools wherever possible, it is considered that there are currently no other suitable premises in the area. Schools are notified of scheduled elections as early as possible, preferably before the start of the academic year to allow schools the option of setting an INSET day.</p> <p>When the Horton Chapel refurbishment is complete there is intention to investigate if it will be a suitable alternative to the school – refurb expected 2020? However the chapel is not as central in the polling district as the school and some voters will have to travel further.</p>

Court Ward FA (cont)



(Acting) Returning Officer's Representations

Whilst it is recognised that it is not ideal to use the school there is currently no other venue available other than the school to use.

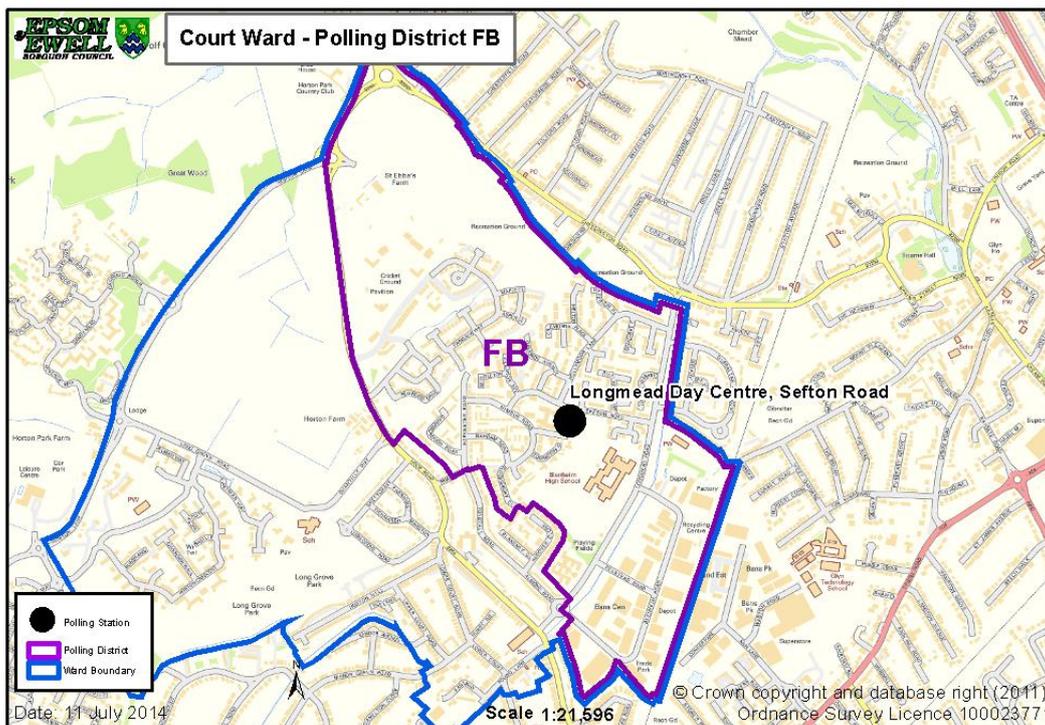
For the County by-election in Nov 2015 the staff room was used for polling station which allowed the school to remain open however the room was very tight for 2 polling stations and is not suitable for normal full elections with higher turnout's especially Parliamentary elections. The school uses the main hall for school dinners which appears to be the main reason that they close on polling day. However if an agreement could be reached there is alternative access to the hall which would avoid voters mixing with pupils and allow the school to stay open.

When the Horton Chapel refurbishment is complete there is intention to investigate if it will be a suitable alternative to the school – refurb expected 2020? However the chapel is not as central in the polling district as the school and some voters will have to travel further.

Subject to the above comments, I consider the polling district and polling place appropriate.

Court Ward (cont)

Polling District	F(B)
Electorate in District	2312
Postal Voters	229
Polling Place	Health and Wellbeing Centre (Former Longmead Centre), Sefton Road, Epsom
No. of Stations	1
Map Ref.	10
Proposal	No change
Comments	Council-owned premises Premises and location satisfactory Disabled access - good Parking – off-street parking available on site. The polling station is located in the main hall.



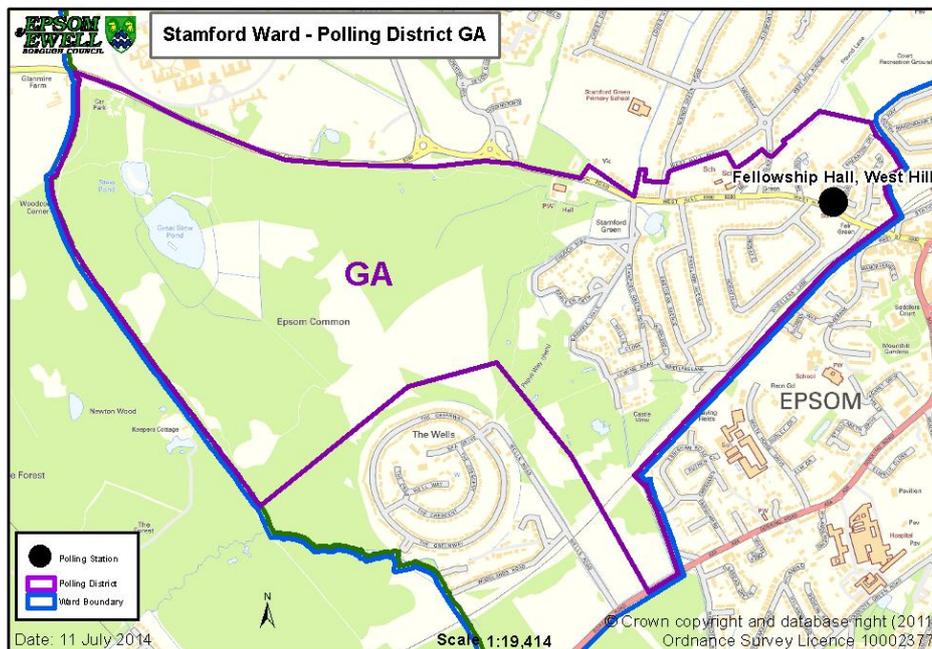
(Acting) Returning Officer's Representations

. Taking into account postal voting trends, I consider that the size of this Polling District is still within acceptable tolerances and there is scope to create another polling station at the polling place, if necessary. No adverse feedback has been received post the May 2019 elections.
I consider the polling district and polling place appropriate.

Stamford Ward

Number of Polling Districts	Three
Number of Polling Places	Three
Electorate in Ward	5414
Postal Voters in Ward	799
Notes	There are no planned developments which would significantly affect the electorate of this Ward.

Polling District	G(A)
Electorate in District	1510
Postal Voters	215
Polling Place	The Fellowship Hall, West Hill, Epsom
No. of Stations	1
Map Ref.	11
Proposal	No change
Comments	Premises and location satisfactory Disabled access - adequate Parking – small public car park opposite, no on-street parking available close to venue.



(Acting) Returning Officer's Representations

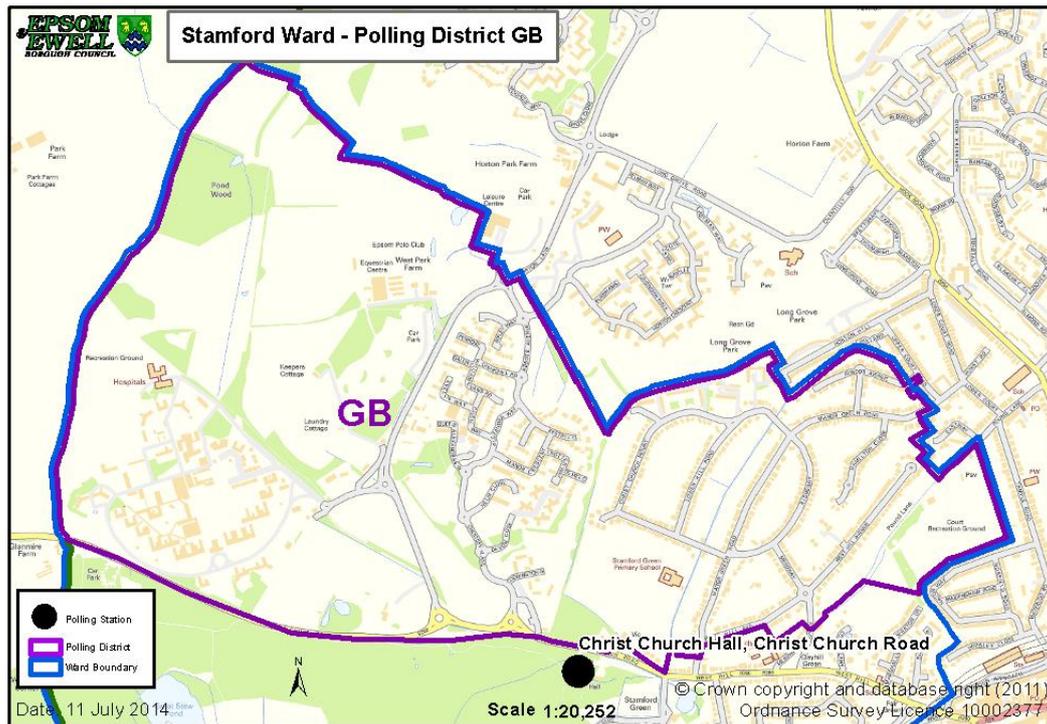
The previous reviews in 2011 and 2014 did not lead me to believe that the polling district boundary or the polling place are unsuitable and no adverse feedback has been received post the May 2019 elections.

I consider the polling district and polling place appropriate.

Stamford Ward (cont)

Polling District	G(B)
Electorate in District	2891
Postal Voters	483
Polling Place	Church Hall, Christ Church, Christ Church Road Epsom
No. of Stations	2
Map Ref.	12
Proposal	No change
Comments	<p>Premises satisfactory. Location – adequate Disabled access - adequate Parking – car park available on site but not immediately adjacent to building.</p> <p>Although the building is on the edge of the Polling District boundary, it is considered overall to be a more 'central' location for voters than the previous polling station which was Stamford Green School and so is in line with Council policy to avoid the use of schools whenever possible. There are two pedestrian crossings on the main road either side of Christ Church Hall.</p>

Stamford Ward GB (cont)



(Acting) Returning Officer's Representations

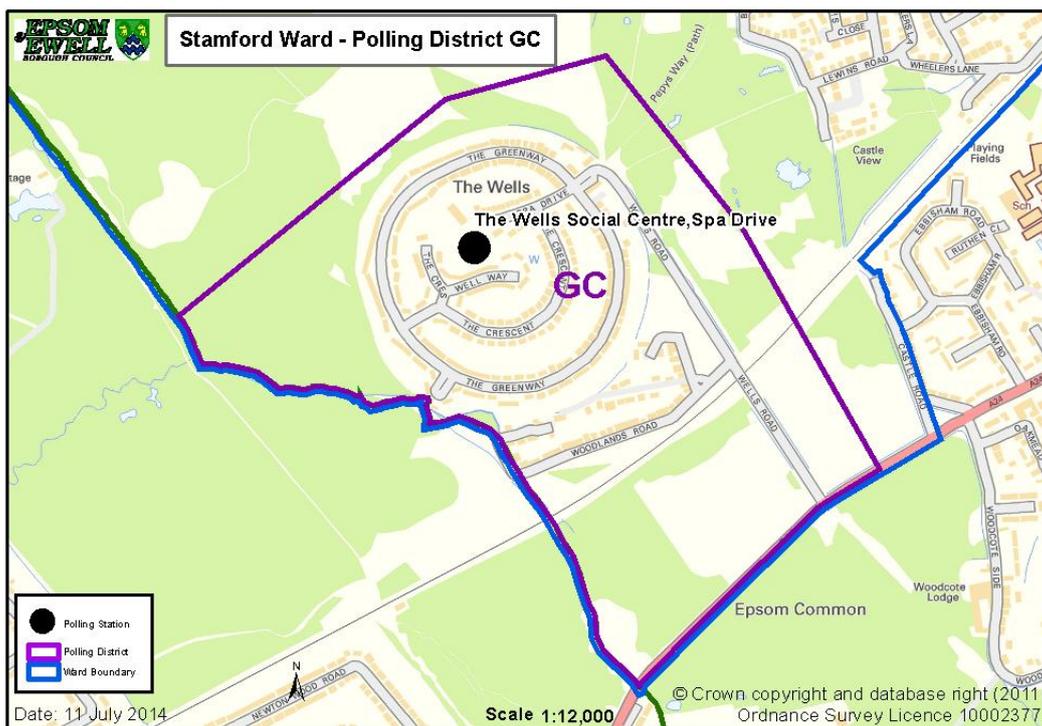
, I consider that the size of this polling district is still within acceptable tolerances and an additional polling station was created and been in place at this polling place since the 2015 elections.

The previous reviews in 2011 and 2014 did not lead me to believe that these premises are unsuitable and no adverse feedback has been received post the May 2019 elections.

I consider the polling district and polling place appropriate.

Stamford Ward (cont)

Polling District	G(C)
Electorate in District	1013
Postal Voters	101
Polling Place	The Wells Social Centre, Spa Drive, Epsom
No. of Stations	1
Map Ref.	13
Proposal	No change
Comments	<p>Council-owned premises Premises and location satisfactory Disabled access – Good Parking – good – car park on site.</p> <p>The polling station was located in the Main Hall in the 2019 elections</p> <p>This building is due to be redeveloped and alternative arrangements will need to be made for voters whilst building work is underway until the new community hall is available</p>



(Acting) Returning Officer's Representations

The previous reviews in 2011 and 2014 did not lead me to believe that the Polling District boundary or the Polling place are unsuitable and no adverse feedback has been received post the May 2019 elections.

This building is due to be redeveloped and alternative arrangements will need to be made for voters whilst building work is underway and until the new community hall is available. The date of these works is not currently known but it is expected that a temp building will be located somewhere on the current centre site.

Subject to the above comments, I consider the polling district and polling place appropriate.

Stoneleigh Ward

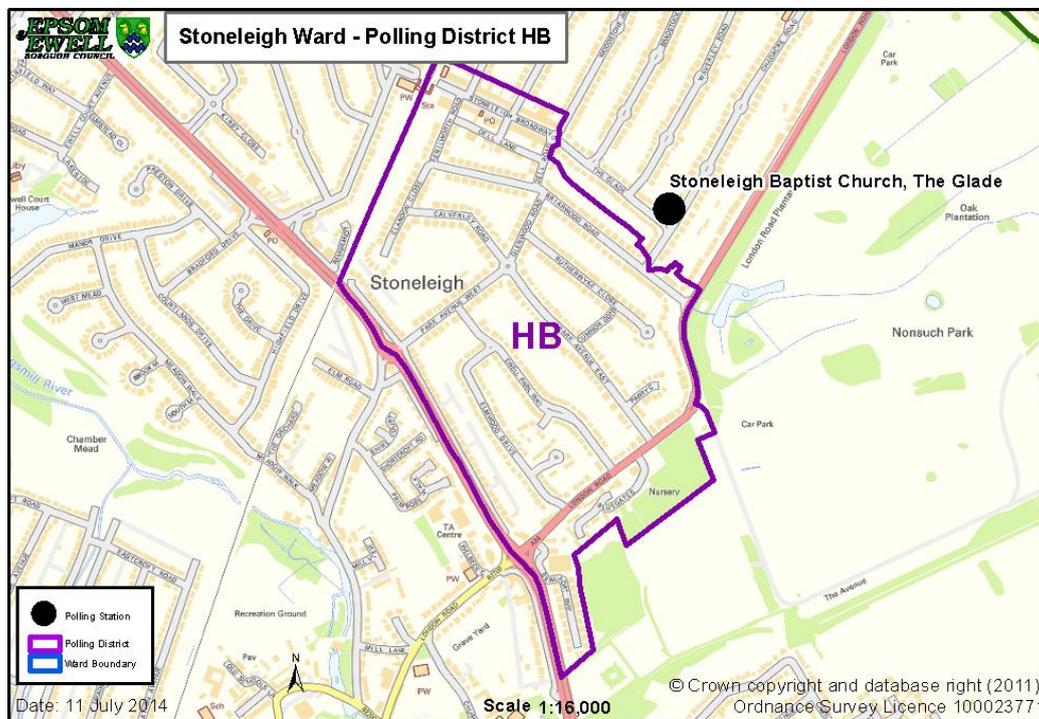
Number of Polling Districts: Two
 Number of Polling Places: One
 Electorate in Ward: **3676**
 Postal Voters **433**
 Notes: There are no planned developments which would significantly affect the electorate of this Ward.

Polling District	H(A)
Electorate in District	1898
Postal Voters	226
Polling Place	Stoneleigh Baptist Church Hall, The Glade, Stoneleigh
No. of Stations	1
Map Ref.	14
Proposal	No change
Comments	Premises and location satisfactory Disabled access - good Parking – limited off street parking available. On-street parking available around venue



Stoneleigh Ward (cont)

Polling District	H(B)
Electorate in District	1778
Postal Voters	207
Polling Place	Stoneleigh Baptist Church Hall, The Glade, Stoneleigh
No. of Stations	1
Map Ref.	14
Proposal	No change
Comments	Premises and location satisfactory Disabled access - good Parking - limited off street parking available. On-street parking available around venue.



(Acting) Returning Officer's Representations

Previously in 2007 it was suggested that H(A) and H(B) should be merged into a single polling district. Since this would have no effect on the number of polling places, it was considered that this would be an administrative exercise of no direct benefit to the electorate in the Ward and the Council resolved in December 2007 to retain the status quo. There have been no further requests to merge so no change is expected to the existing polling districts.

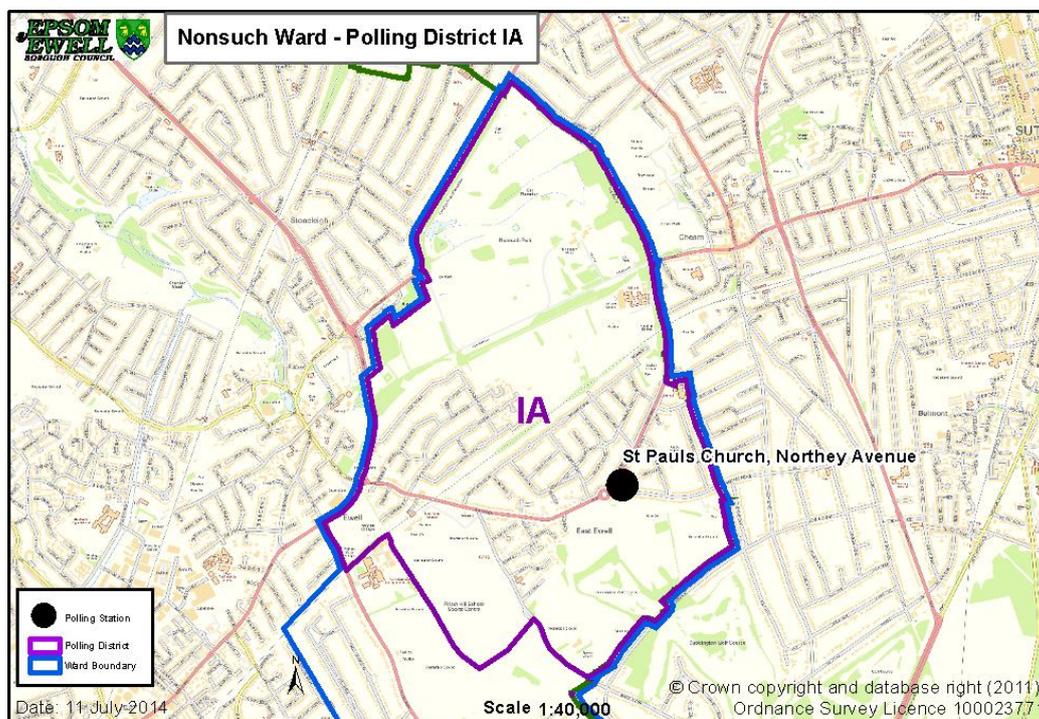
This is a busy polling place but the previous reviews in 2011 and 2014 did not lead me to believe that a merger was desirable or that the premises were unsuitable and no adverse feedback has been received post the May 2019 elections.

I consider the polling districts and polling place to be appropriate.

Nonsuch Ward

Number of Polling Districts: Two
 Number of Polling Places: Two
 Electorate in Ward: **4586**
 Postal Voters **704**
 Notes: The redevelopment of land at NESCOT on the Reigate Road is still underway and the current electorate is likely to increase further

Polling District	I(A)
Electorate in District	3700
Postal Voters	565
Polling Place	St Paul's Church Centre, 15 Northey Ave, Cheam
No. of Stations	2
Map Ref.	15
Proposal	Change
Comments	Premises and location satisfactory Disabled access - good Parking – off-street parking available on site. On-street parking available around venue Move polling district boundary so properties within the NESCOT development become part of Nonsuch I(B)



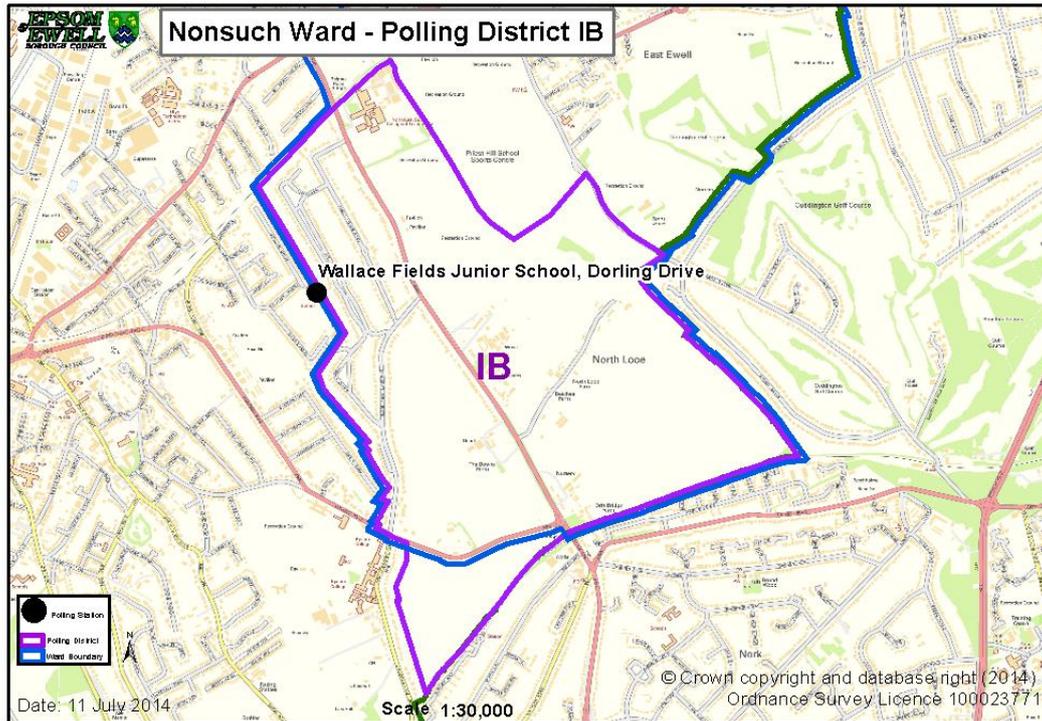
(Acting) Returning Officer's Representations

Since the NESCOL development the electorate for this station has increased by approx. 200 voters this is expected to rise as further properties are occupied. The location of the site means that voters currently have to travel quite a distance to this polling station. The intention is to move the polling district boundary from the existing line to run along the back of the properties in Chatsfield, Conaways Close and St Normans Way. The voters on the NESCOL site will then be part of Nonsuch I(B) and vote at a different polling station to be decided.

Subject to the above changes, I consider the polling district and polling place to be appropriate.

Nonsuch Ward (cont)

Polling District	I(B)
Electorate in District	886
Postal Voters	139
Polling Place	Wallace Fields Junior School, Dorling Drive, Ewell
No. of Stations	1
Map Ref.	16
Proposal	Change to ?
Comments	<p>Premises and location satisfactory Disabled access – good Parking – off street parking available on school premises and on-street parking available close to venue.</p> <p>Although the Polling Place is not actually located within the Nonsuch Ward boundaries, it is immediately adjacent to the Ward and it has worked very well for many years.</p> <p>This school closes on election day.</p> <p>Although it is Council policy to avoid the use of schools wherever possible, it is considered that there are no other suitable premises in the area. Schools are notified of scheduled elections as early as possible, preferably before the start of the academic year to allow schools the option of setting an INSET day.</p> <p>Move polling district boundary so properties within the NESLOT development become part of Nonsuch I(B)</p>



Nonsuch Ward IB (cont)

(Acting) Returning Officer's Representations

At the time of the previous review, it was noted that, although the Council has a policy to avoid the use of schools and the school is closed on election days, there was no more conveniently sited alternative to Wallace Fields Junior School. NESCOL had been approached in the past but responded at the time, that, because of the intensity of use of the site, they could not make any accommodation available unless an election falls in a half term or vacation period (which is unlikely).

A further site visit undertaken to NESCOL in 2011 and 2018 established that there was in fact no suitable accommodation available for the purposes of polling on this site at the time. However now that the NESCOL housing development of the site is almost finished there is a proposal to move the polling district boundary and include the new properties within I(B) instead of I(A).

Although the location of NESCOL in the polling district is not ideal, being across the busy Reigate Road, it is hoped that somewhere suitable within the site can be found. The parking and disabled access to the building is very good and using this location would stop the need for the school to be used.

We have had a small number of complaints from some parents regarding the closing of the school mainly down to child care cost issues. The school is not able to stay open during polling day due to its layout and access via an alley on the far side of the school for voters on foot from the polling district.

There is also the possibility of using the pavilion at the playing fields owned by Glyn School adj to the NESOT site but this will need to be investigated to see if the site and building is suitable.

Subject to the above comments being accepted I consider the proposals for the changes to the polling district and polling place to be appropriate.

Ewell Ward

Number of Polling Districts: Three

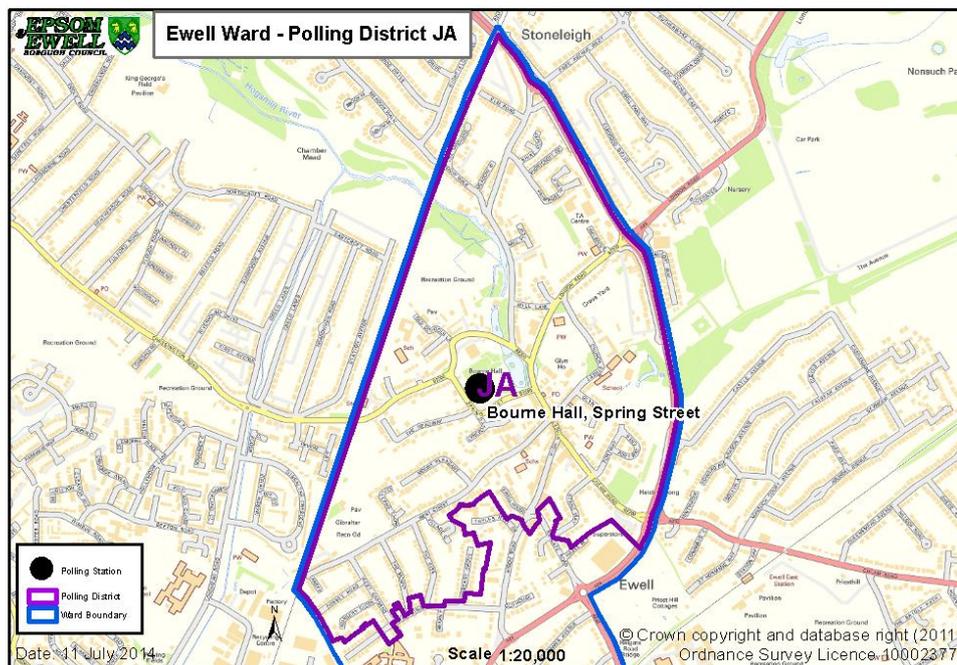
Number of Polling Places: Three

Electorate in Ward: **4340**

Postal Voters **644**

Notes: There are no planned developments which would significantly affect the electorate of this Ward.

Polling District	J(A)
Electorate in District	2637
Postal Voters	376
Polling Place	Bourne Hall, Spring Street, Ewell
No. of Stations	2
Map Ref.	17
Proposal	No change
Comments	Council-owned premises Premises and location satisfactory Disabled access - good Parking – off-street parking available (public car park). The polling station is located in the Rose Room.



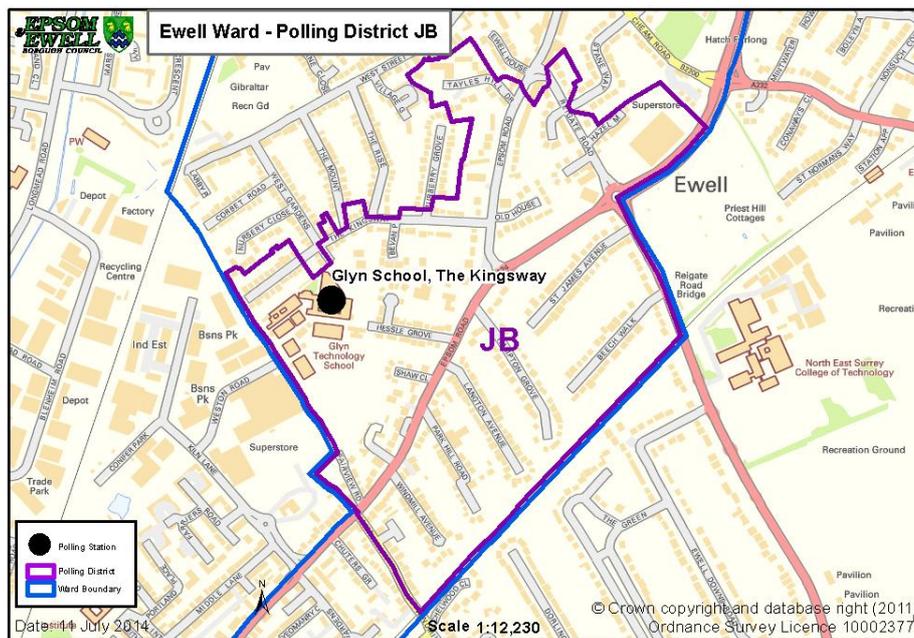
(Acting) Returning Officer's Representations

The previous reviews in 2011 and 2014 did not lead me to believe that the Polling District boundary or the Polling place are unsuitable and no adverse feedback has been received post the May 2019 elections.

I consider the polling district and polling Hall place appropriate.

Ewell Ward (cont)

Polling District	J(B)
Electorate in District	1174
Postal Voters	199
Polling Place	Glyn School, The Kingsway, Ewell
No. of Stations	1
Map Ref.	18
Proposal	No change
Comments	<p>Premises and location satisfactory Disabled access - adequate Parking – limited off-street parking available on school premises. On-street parking available close to venue.</p> <p>The polling station is currently located in the staff room so that the school can remain open on polling day as Classroom X1 is no longer available. Disabled access is via a lift as the staff room is accessed via stairs. There is a bell on the ground floor for those requiring disabled access to obtain assistance</p>



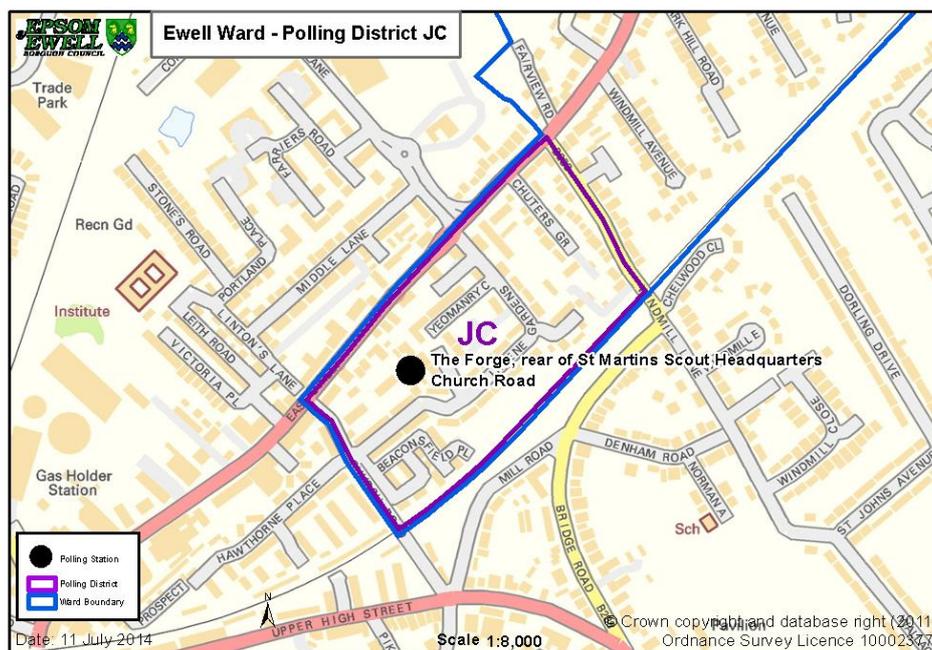
(Acting) Returning Officer's Representations

The previous reviews in 2011 and 2014 did not lead me to believe that the Polling District boundary or the Polling place are unsuitable and no adverse feedback has been received post the May 2019 elections.

I consider the polling district and polling place appropriate.

Ewell Ward (cont)

Polling District	J(C)
Electorate in District	529
Postal Voters	69
Polling Place	Defoe Court, 87 East Street, Epsom
No. of Stations	1
Map Ref.	19 NEW map required
Proposal	No Change
Comments	Premises and location satisfactory Disabled access – good Parking – no parking on site The polling station is located in the conference room.



(Acting) Returning Officer's Representations

After the demolition of the Lintons Centre various premises were investigated but the only premises that was available was "The Forge", a building located behind the Scout Hall, and owned by the Scouts. This building located at the rear of the site was found to be large enough to accommodate the small number of electors eligible to vote in polling district J(C) however it's location on the site was not ideal – extra lighting was required due to issues with the state of the access drive after dark for voters on foot and the vehicle access (the drive is very narrow and gated) and the limited parking. As the options for polling station accommodation in this area were very limited, its use was trialled as a polling place during the European Elections in May 2014 and for elections in 2015.

Due to the access problems at this site when Defoe Court in East was identified as a good central location and was large enough for 2 polling stations the decision was made to move from the Forge to Defoe Court for elections in 2016 onwards.

Even though there is no parking for voters on site the premises is otherwise deemed suitable as it is a new building with good disabled access and 24 hour staff on duty for any assistance needs. This same building is also used for voters who vote in polling district K(A) and although we try to keep voters from different wards in separate locations the room is large enough and the room division made by staff and signage for voters has not caused any problems to date.

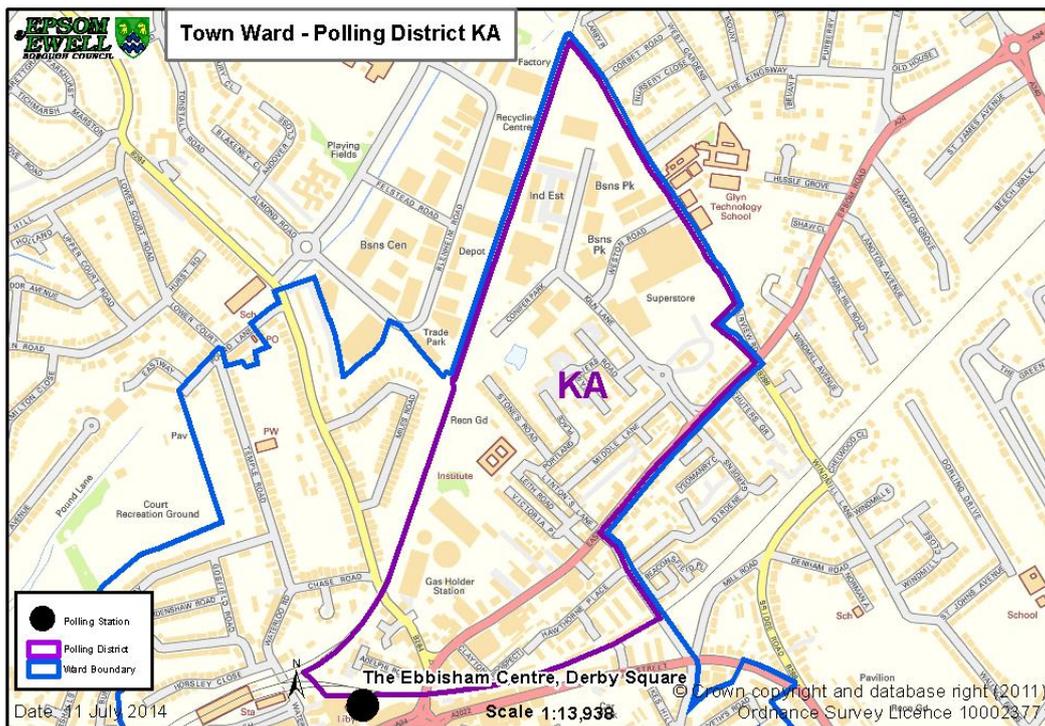
I consider the polling district and polling place adequate.

Town Ward

Number of Polling Districts Three
 Number of Polling Places Three
 Electorate in Ward **5282**
 Postal Voters **777**
 Notes

Polling District	K(A)
Electorate	1365
Postal Voters	192
Polling Place	Defoe Court, 87 East Street, Epsom
No. of Stations	1
Map Ref.	20 NEW map required
Proposal	No Change
Comments	Premises and location satisfactory Disabled access - good Parking – no parking available The polling station is located in the conference room.

Town Ward KA (cont)



(Acting) Returning Officer's Representations

When trialed back in 2001, The Ebbisham Centre was not a popular choice with the electorate owing largely to the issue of parking (there is no free or convenient on-street parking in the vicinity of the building). However, this would apply to the majority of locations in the Town centre. The options for polling station accommodation in this area were very limited and no other suitable premises had been located.

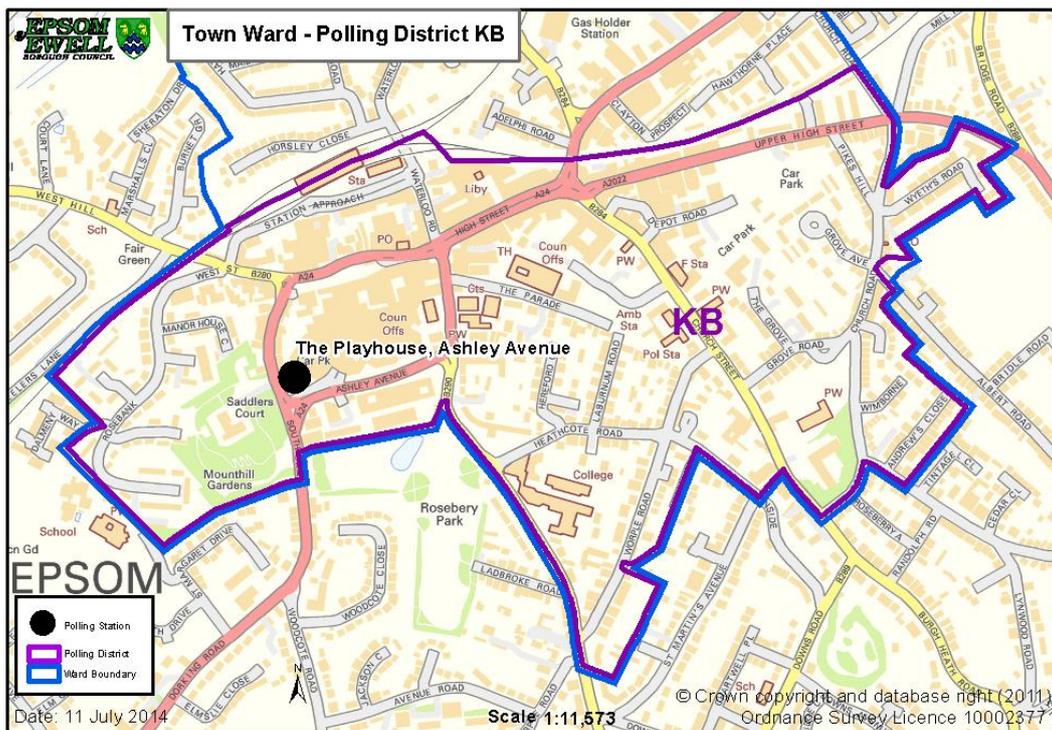
Since Defoe Court has been available this has been a much better located polling station being a new building it has good disabled access and 24 hour staff on duty for any assistance needs. Although there is no parking the station is much more centrally placed in the polling district and the only complaints we had was from voters in the first year of use, who were directed to Sainsbury by their sat navs but this is no longer an issue.

This same building is also used for voters who vote in polling district J(C) and although we try to keep voters from different wards in separate locations the room is large enough and the room division made by staff and signage for voters has not caused any problems to date.

I consider the polling district and polling place appropriate.

Town Ward (cont)

Polling District	K(B)
Electorate in District	2691
Postal Voters	431
Polling Place	Epsom Playhouse, Ashley Avenue, Epsom
No. of Stations	2
Map Ref.	21
Proposal	No change
Comments	Council owned premises Premises and location satisfactory Disabled access - good Parking - Multi storey public car park adjacent to Playhouse. No on-street parking close to venue. The Polling Station is located in the Myers Hall.



(Acting) Returning Officer's Representations

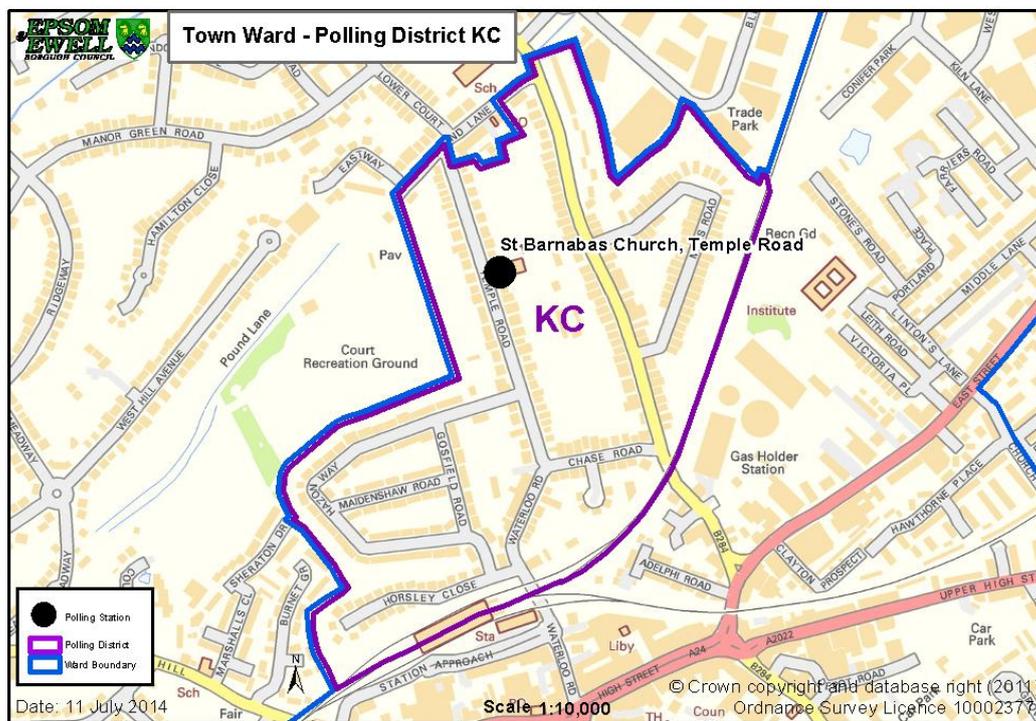
Town Ward KB (cont)

The previous reviews in 2011 & 2014 did not lead me to believe that the Polling District boundary or the Polling place are unsuitable and no adverse feedback has been received post the May 2019 elections.

I therefore consider the polling district and polling place appropriate.

Town Ward (cont)

Polling District	K(C)
Electorate in District	1226
Postal Voters	154
Polling Place	St Barnabas Church, Temple Road, Epsom
No. of Stations	1
Map Ref.	22
Proposal	No change
Comments	Premises and location good Disabled access - good Parking – off-street parking available on site.



(Acting) Returning Officer’s Representations

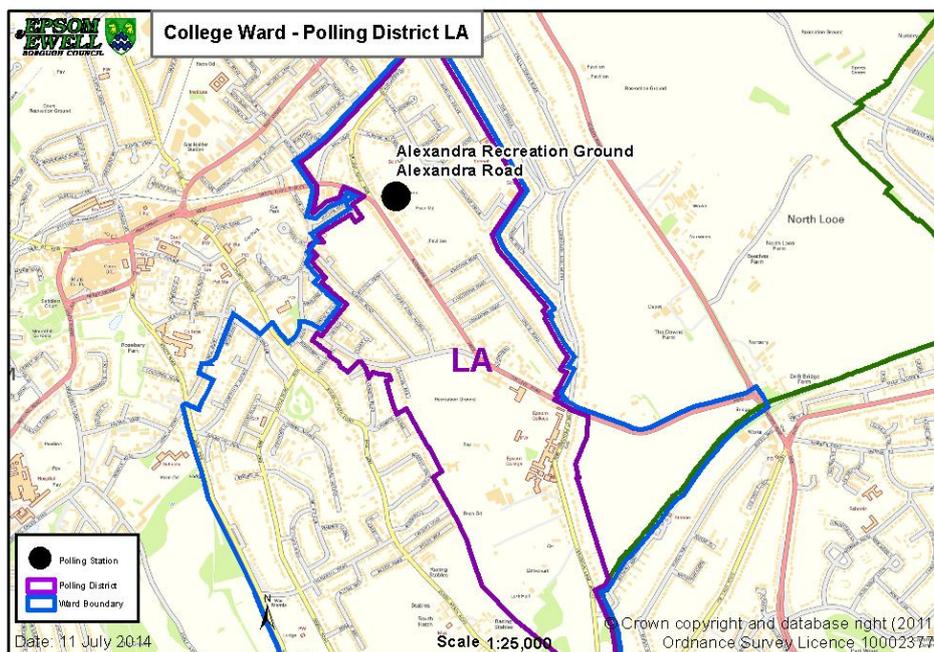
The previous reviews in 2011 & 2014 did not lead me to believe that the Polling District boundary or the Polling place are unsuitable and no adverse feedback has been received post the May 2019 elections.

I consider the polling district and polling place appropriate.

College Ward

Number of Polling Districts Two
 Number of Polling Places Two
 Electorate in Ward **4293**
 Postal Voters **754**
 Notes There are no planned developments which would significantly affect the electorate of this Ward.

Polling District	L(A)
Electorate in District	2147
Postal Voters	347
Polling Place	The Pavilion, Alexandra Recreation Ground, Alexandra Road, Epsom
No. of Stations	1
Map Ref.	23
Proposal	No change
Comments	Council owned premises Premises and location satisfactory Disabled access - Adequate Parking – close to pavilion for staff & disabled. In main car park for other voters.



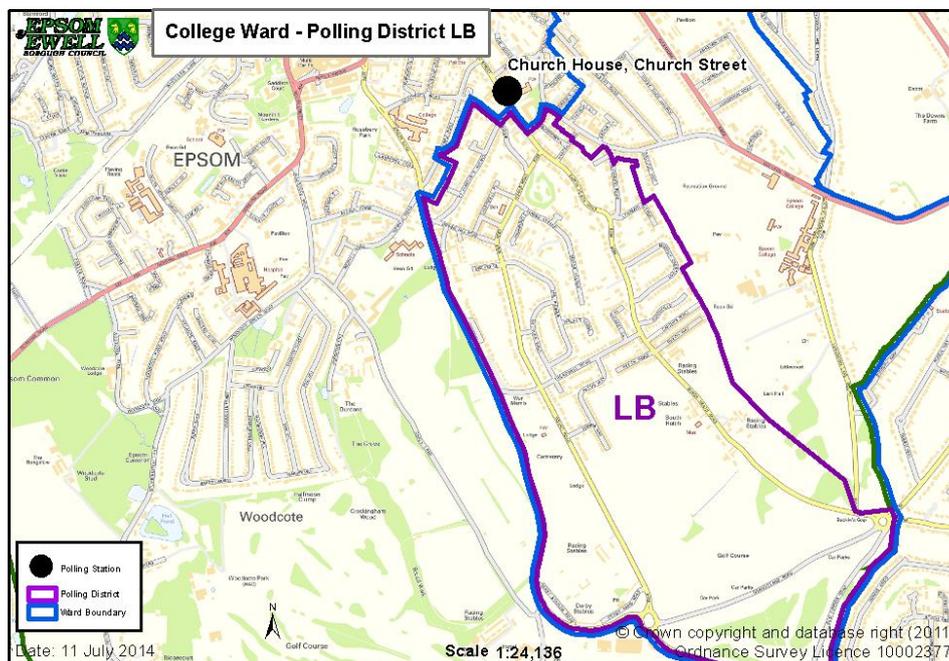
(Acting) Returning Officer's Representations

The previous reviews in 2011 and 2014 did not lead me to believe that the Polling District boundary or the Polling place are unsuitable and no adverse feedback has been received post the May 2019 elections.

I consider the polling district and polling place appropriate.

College Ward (cont)

Polling District	L(B)
Electorate in District	2146
Postal Voters	407
Polling Place	The Church House, Church Street, Epsom
No. of Stations	1
Map Ref.	24
Proposal	No change
Comments	<p>Premises and location satisfactory Disabled access - good Parking – off-street parking available on site. No on-street parking close to venue.</p> <p>Although the Polling Place is not actually located within the College Ward boundaries, it is immediately adjacent to the Ward and it has worked very well for many years.</p> <p>As far as the Council is aware, there are no other suitable premises (halls etc) within the College Ward/Polling District boundaries.</p> <p>The polling station is located in The Wisley Room.</p>



(Acting) Returning Officer's Representations

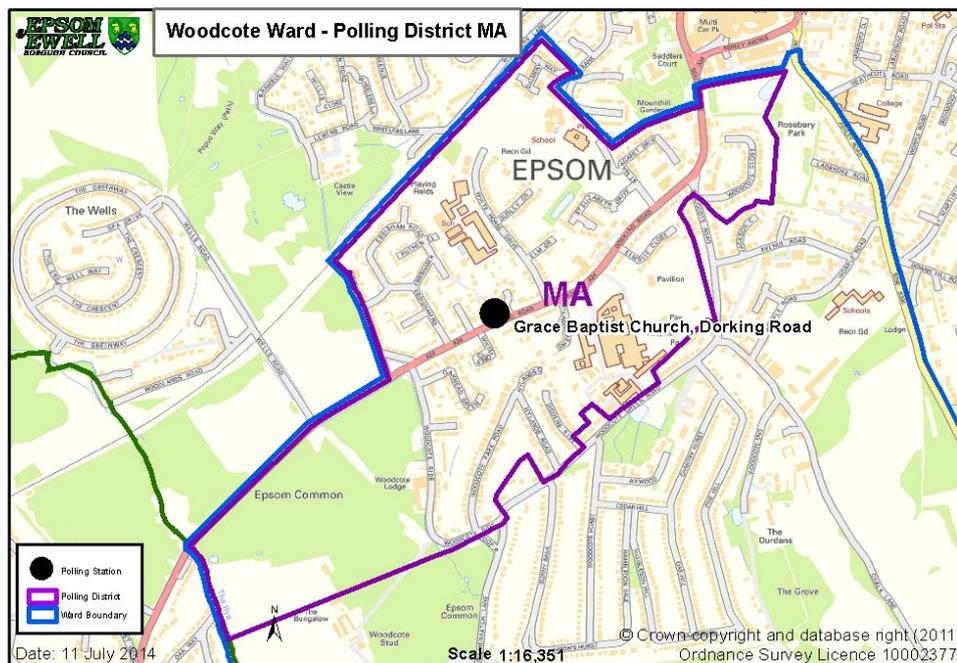
The previous reviews in 2011 and 2014 did not lead me to believe that the Polling District boundary or the Polling place are unsuitable and no adverse feedback has been received post the May 2019 elections.

I consider the polling district and polling place to be appropriate.

Woodcote Ward

Number of Polling Districts	Three
Number of Polling Places	Three
Electorate in Ward	4475
Postal Voters	804
Notes	There are no planned developments which would significantly affect the electorate of this Ward.

Polling District	M(A)
Electorate in District	1662
Postal Voters	279
Polling Place	Grace Baptist Church, 32 Dorking Road, Epsom
No. of Stations	1
Map Ref.	25
Proposal	No change
Comments	Premises and location satisfactory Disabled access - adequate Parking – limited off-street parking on site



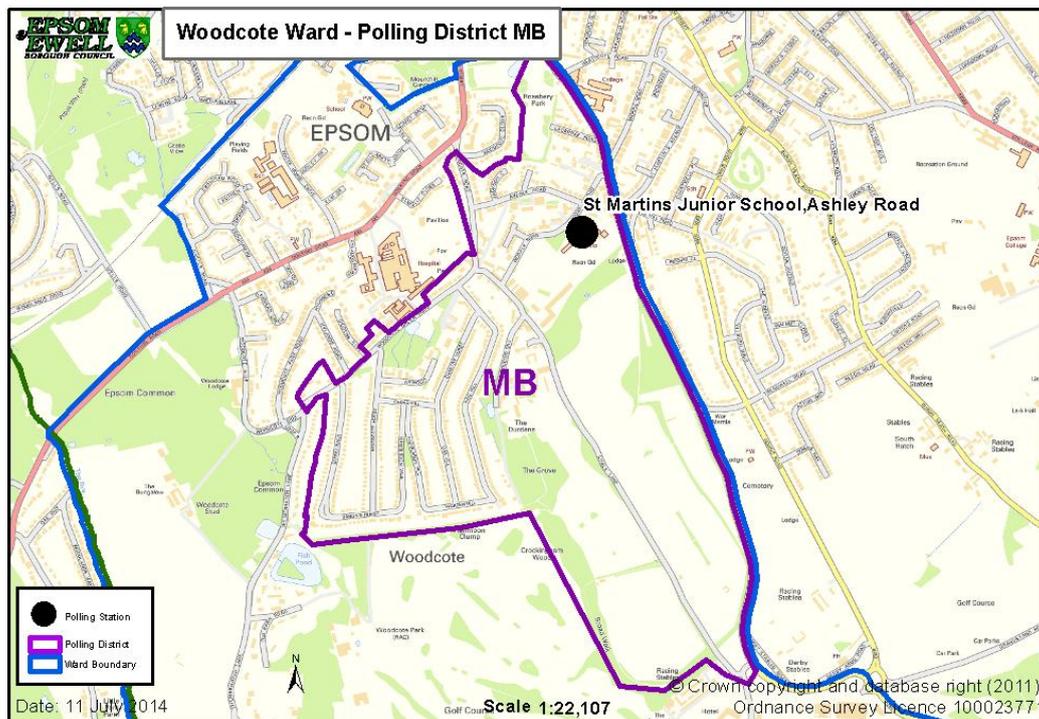
(Acting) Returning Officer's Representations

The previous reviews in 2011 and 2014 did not lead me to believe that the Polling District boundary or the Polling place are unsuitable and no adverse feedback has been received post the May 2019 elections.

I consider the polling district and polling place appropriate.

Woodcote Ward (cont)

Polling District	M(B)
Electorate in District	1538
Postal Voters	329
Polling Place	St. Martins C of E Junior School, Ashley Road, Epsom
No. of Stations	1
Map Ref.	26
Proposal	No change
Comments	<p>Premises and location satisfactory Disabled access – adequate Vehicle access via Ashley Road only Parking – off-street parking available on school premises</p> <p>It is Council policy to avoid the use of schools wherever possible but there are no other suitable premises in the area. Schools are notified of scheduled elections as early as possible, preferably before the start of the academic year, to allow schools the option of setting an INSET day.</p> <p>The polling station is located in the Music block as this building is separate from the main building and can be cordoned off from the rest of the School so that it can remain open on polling day.</p>



Woodcote Ward MB (cont)

(Acting) Returning Officer's Representations

As per the previous view although it is Council policy to avoid the use of schools wherever possible suitable alternative premises have yet to be found. W.S. Atkins was approached but confirmed that they had no suitable accommodation available. The premises at the University of Creative Arts in Ashley Road is likewise unsuitable. The racecourse is not within the Polling District and is too remote with no regular/reliable public transport links.

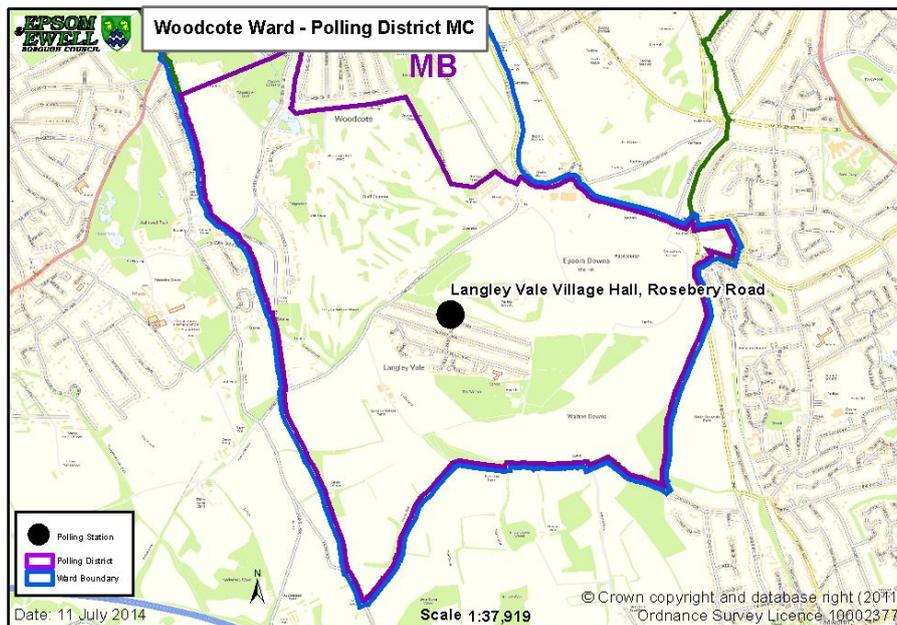
At the time of the previous review, it was reported that as a result of reconfiguration of the premises, discussions with the new Headteacher had resulted in the offer of the use of a separate classroom block close to the Ashley Road entrance. These facilities had the advantage of being self-contained and close to the car park for disabled voters. Since this review the accommodation has been used, without the rest of the school having to close. A ramp for the slight lip into the classroom was provided and for the curb from the car park.

With the use of this classroom block polling day has been successful with the school remaining open for all elections. The access to the polling station for vehicles is via Ashley Road only and a message to voters is now included on all poll cards so they are aware.

In the absence of any alternatives, I consider the polling district and polling place appropriate.

Woodcote Ward (cont)

Polling District	M(C)
Electorate in District	1275
Postal Voters	196
Polling Place	Langley Vale Village Hall, Rosebery Road, Epsom
No. of Stations	1
Map Ref.	27
Proposal	No change
Comments	Premises and location satisfactory Disabled access - good Parking – on-street parking available around venue.



(Acting) Returning Officer's Representations

During the 2011 review concerns about accessibility for disabled people due to the sloping access to the Village Hall were raised, and it was suggested that the adjacent Church Hall or the school at Langley Vale might be a more appropriate venue. It is Council policy to avoid the use of schools wherever possible and the school is less conveniently located than the current polling station.

A site visit was also made to the Church Hall and although the slope to the building is less than at the Village Hall, the layout of the building was considered unsuitable as a polling place and there would be no advantage in relocating there.

The previous reviews in 2011 and 2014 did not lead me to believe that the Polling District boundary or the Polling place are inappropriate/unsuitable and no adverse feedback has been received post the May 2019 elections.

I therefore consider the current polling district and polling place appropriate.

BUDGET TARGETS 2020/21

Head of Service/Contact:	Lee Duffy, Chief Finance Officer
Urgent Decision?(yes/no)	No
If yes, reason urgent decision required:	N/A
Annexes/Appendices (attached):	Annex 1: Minutes of the meeting of Financial Policy Panel dated 10 September 2019 Annex 2: - Report to Financial Policy Panel dated 10 September 2019
Other available papers (not attached):	Medium Term Financial Strategy 2016-2020

Report summary

This report recommends budget targets for 2020/21 and provides an update on financial planning for 2021/22 to 2023/24 as recommended by Financial Policy Panel.

RECOMMENDATION (S)

That the Committee:

- (1) Notes the recommendations of Financial Policy Panel held on 10 September 2019.**
- (2) Agrees the following overall budget targets for 2020/21:-**
 - (a) estimates are prepared including options to reduce organisational costs by £544,000 in 2020/21 subject to government grant announcement, to minimise the use of working balances and maintain a minimum working balance of £2.5 million in accordance with the medium term financial strategy;**
 - (b) that at least £290,000 additional revenue is generated from an increase in discretionary fees and charges, based on a minimum overall increase in yield of 3.0%, with the exception of car parking which is set at 6.0% as these charges are adjusted every two years;**
 - (c) that a provision for pay award is made of £400,000 that allows for a 2% cost of living increase;**

- (3) **Agrees that further savings are identified for inclusion within the new Medium Term Financial Strategy for 2020-2024 to reduce the Council's net operating costs by a minimum of £1,825,000 over the period 2020/21 to 2023/24;**
- (4) **That Capital Member Group seeks to maintain a minimum capital expenditure programme to control the use of capital reserves between 2020 and 2024, subject to an appropriate prioritisation of spend to save and externally funded schemes.**

1 Implications for the Council's Key Priorities, Service Plans and Sustainable Community Strategy

- 1.1 The recommendations in this report are consistent with the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy 2016-2020.

2 Background

- 2.1 At its meeting on 10 September 2019, Financial Policy Panel received detailed financial analysis of the Council's budget position, including forecasts for the next ten years, in the Budget Targets report attached at **Annex 2**. Having considered the report, the Panel advises Strategy and Resources Committee to agree the recommendations of this report.

3 Proposals

- 3.1 That the Committee agrees the budget targets recommended by the Financial Policy Panel.

4 Financial and Manpower Implications

- 4.1 All financial and manpower implications are set-out in the report
- 4.2 **Chief Finance Officer's comments:** It is important that the budget target recommendations be agreed in order to maintain the future financial health of the Council.

5 Legal Implications (including implications for matters relating to equality)

- 5.1 There are no legal or equality implications arising from the contents of this report.
- 5.2 **Monitoring Officer's comments:** There are no comments arising from the contents of this report.

6 Sustainability Policy and Community Safety Implications

- 6.1 No implications for the purposes of this report.

7 Partnerships

7.1 No implications for the purposes of this report.

8 Risk Assessment

8.1 The financial risks for budgets over the next four years are set out in the Budget Targets report attached at **Annex 2**. Most significant continues to

be increased homelessness expenditure, the impact of further benefit reforms being proposed by government and continuing reductions in government grant funding.

8.2 Action required to manage these risks is also set out in that report, including the need to deliver cost reductions in the region of £544,000 in 2020/21 and £1.825 million over the next four financial years.

9 Conclusion and Recommendations

9.1 This report covers budget targets for 2020/21, taking into account the financial forecast for the next three years and the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy.

9.2 Based on the assumptions used, the forecast identifies that cost reductions are required in the region of £544,000 in 2020/21 and £1.825 million in total over the following three financial years.

9.3 The budget strategy involves continuing to deliver efficiency savings and generate extra service income whilst reviewing service levels so that service costs can be reduced as needed to achieve a balanced budget year on year.

9.4 Following the Committee's approval of budget targets, the policy committees will be asked to give guidance on the preparation of detailed service estimates in the October/November committee cycle.

9.5 The Financial Policy Panel will next receive an update on the budget position for 2020/21 in December 2019 when the draft estimates have been prepared.

Ward(s) affected: (All Wards);

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**Minutes of the Meeting of the FINANCIAL POLICY PANEL held on 10
September 2019**

PRESENT -

Councillor Eber Kington (Chairman); Councillors Kate Chinn, Nigel Collin, Neil Dallen, David Gulland, Colin Keane, Barry Nash, Clive Smitheram

Officers present: Lee Duffy (Chief Finance Officer), Brendan Bradley (Chief Accountant)

1 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were made by councillors regarding items on the agenda for the meeting.

2 REVIEW OF RESERVES

The Panel received and considered a report reviewing the level of the Council's reserves.

The Panel requested confirmation that the Audit Commission's suggested range for un-earmarked reserves was 5% to 100% of net operating expenditure, as stated in the report. *(Post meeting note – officers have confirmed the Audit Commission's suggested range of 5% to 100%).*

The Panel queried the appropriateness of the Property Income Equalisation Reserve target balance and whether it was, in fact, over prudent.

The Chief Finance Officer explained that the target balance represented one year's rental income from each of the five commercial properties purchased in recent years using external borrowing. It was explained that the reserve would be needed to mitigate the risks of losing a tenant and associated rental income, as services to residents depended on this income and the Council would have to fund the annual borrowing costs. The reserve would also be needed to mitigate the risk of having to undertake significant capital works at any of the properties in order to maintain tenants/rental income. The Chief Finance Officer confirmed his view that the target balance was appropriate and proportionate to the risks faced by the Council, and agreed to circulate a post meeting note with further detail.

The Panel also queried the level of reserves held principally for Insurance, Value Added Tax, and Property Maintenance.

The Chief Finance Officer explained that these reserve balances were required for the purposes set-out in the report, and considered that the balances were

appropriate and proportionate to the level of financial risk faced by the Council in the medium term.

Following consideration, the Panel agreed:

- (1) That the overall level of the Council's reserves and provisions were appropriate for the sound management of the Council's finances.*
- (2) That the level of individual reserves and provisions were appropriate and it supported the transfers between reserves as set out in paragraphs 7.18, 7.22, 7.35 and 7.51 of the report.*

3 BUDGET TARGETS 2020/21 AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY 2020-2024

The Panel received and considered a report that sought guidance on the budget targets for 2020/21 and the development of the Medium Term Financial Strategy 2020-2024.

The Panel queried the level of pay provision; the Chief Finance Officer explained that the provision was an estimate based on CPI inflation of 2% and that the actual figure would be agreed as part of the pay award at a subsequent Strategy & Resources Committee.

The Panel asked about progress on the work programme for addressing the funding shortfall identified within the next four year forecast. The Chief Finance Officer explained that a base review had identified savings that would be incorporated into the budget setting process. Star chamber meetings had been held with Heads of Service over the Summer and the outcome of this process would be reported to members in due course.

The Panel were informed that the Fair Funding Review had been delayed by the Chancellor of the Exchequer in favour of a one year settlement for 2020/21, with provisional individual settlements for Councils expected to be announced in December 2019. However, the Fair Funding Review could still adversely impact the Council's financial position from 2021/22, and the Medium Term Financial Strategy forecasts factored in the most likely scenario.

The Panel agreed that the minimum working balance target should remain at £2.5million.

Accordingly, the Panel agreed to recommend to Strategy & Resources Committee:

- (1) The following overall budget target for 2020/21:-*
 - a) That estimates are prepared including options to reduce organisational costs by £544,000 in 2020/21 to minimise the use of working balances and*

maintain a minimum working balance of £2.5 million in accordance with the medium term financial strategy;

- b) that at least £290,000 additional revenue is generated from an increase in discretionary fees and charges, is based on minimum overall increase in yield of 3.0%, with the exception of car parking which is set at 6.0% as these charges are adjusted every two years;*
 - c) that a provision for pay award is made of £400,000 that allows for a 2% cost of living increase*
- (2) That further savings are identified for inclusion within the new Medium Term Financial Strategy for 2020-2024 to reduce the Council's net operating costs by a minimum of £1,825,000 over the period 2020/21 to 2023/24;*
- (3) That Capital Member Group seeks to maintain a minimum capital expenditure programme to control the use of capital reserves between 2020 and 2024, subject to an appropriate prioritisation of spend to save and externally funded schemes.*

COUNCILLOR EBER KINGTON (CHAIRMAN)

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BUDGET TARGETS 2020/21 AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY FOR 2020-2024

Head of Service/Contact:	Lee Duffy, Chief Finance Officer
Urgent Decision?(yes/no)	No
If yes, reason urgent decision required:	N/A
Annexes/Appendices (attached):	Annex 1 - Budget Forecast Annex 2 - Financial Modelling Annex 3 - Economic Indicators Annex 4 - Surrey Council Tax Charges Annex 5 - Key components of 2016-20 MTFS
Other available papers (not attached):	Budget Book 2019/20

Report summary

This report recommends budget targets for 2020/21 and provides a further update on the financial forecast and issues affecting the new four year financial plan.

Recommendation (s)

That the Panel recommends to the Strategy and Resources Committee:-

(1) The following overall budget target for 2020/21:-

- (a) estimates are prepared including options to reduce organisational costs by £544,000 in 2020/21 to minimise the use of working balances and maintain a minimum working balance of £2.5 million in accordance with the medium term financial strategy;
- (b) that at least £290,000 additional revenue is generated from an increase in discretionary fees and charges, is based on minimum overall increase in yield of 3.0%, with the exception of car parking which is set at 6.0% as these charges are adjusted every two years;
- (c) that a provision for pay award is made of £400,000 that allows for a 2% cost of living increase,

(2) That further savings are identified for inclusion within the new Medium

Term Financial Strategy for 2020-2024 to reduce the Council's net operating costs by a minimum of £1,825,000 over the period 2020/21 to 2023/24;

- (3) That Capital Member Group seeks to maintain a minimum capital expenditure programme to control the use of capital reserves between 2020 and 2024, subject to an appropriate prioritisation of spend to save and externally funded schemes.**

1 Implications for the Council's Key Priorities, Service Plans and Sustainable Community Strategy

1.1 The Medium Term Financial Strategy comprises a supporting document to the Council's Corporate Plan.

1.2 The key components of the current Medium Term Financial Strategy 2016 – 2020 are attached at Annexe 5.

1.3 The Strategy and Resources Committee has agreed the following key service priority:-

“Produce a new Medium Term Financial Strategy with regard to the Fair Funding Review and report to Strategy & Resources Committee”

1.4 It is the Financial Policy Panel's role to advise the Strategy and Resources Committee on all matters relating to the budget and policy framework.

2 Background

2.1 The Financial Policy Panel has already received a report in the early stages of preparation for next year's budget and the review of the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS):-

2.1.1 On 18 June 2019 the Panel agreed the preferred approach to carry out the 2020/21 budget review and the budget reporting timetable.

2.2 This report seeks the Panel's guidance on the corporate targets for preparing the 2020/21 budget and discusses the main issues faced in preparing the new Four Year Financial Plan and MTFS for 2020-2024.

2.3 The report covers:-

2.3.1 A review of the Council's financial standing;

2.3.2 The budget outlook for 2020/21;

2.3.3 An update of the ten year budget forecast 2020-2030;

2.3.4 Key funding changes during the next ten years (new homes bonus, localisation of business rates, welfare benefit changes and public sector pensions).

- 2.4 The report provides an updated estimate of the efficiency savings needed next year and the scale of total savings needed over the following three years.

3 Financial Planning

- 3.1 At its last meeting the Financial Policy Panel discussed the difficulty of planning in an environment with a high degree of uncertainty. The Government's future funding settlement for local councils remains unclear going forward with the outcome of the Fair Funding review and the Redistribution of Business Rates review still unknown and their impact for individual councils.
- 3.2 The Fair Funding Review had initially been expected to feed into a multi-year funding settlement for local authorities from 2020/21. However, on 9 August the Chancellor of the Exchequer, Sajid Javid, announced that a multi-year funding settlement will now be postponed until next year. Instead, the Treasury will conduct a one-year Spending Round for 2020/21, due to complete by the end of September 2019, although no exact date has been given for the announcement of any figures.
- 3.3 With existing funding streams at increased risk the Council has taken a prudent approach for financial planning, limiting the Council's reliance on funding from Government through retained business rates and New Homes Bonus Grant to fund the annual cost of providing services.
- 3.4 As outlined in the report Financial Planning 2020/21 to the Financial Policy Panel in June, a work programme has been agreed to assist in addressing the funding shortfall for the next Medium Term Financial Strategy 2020-2024.
- 3.5 The key features of the programme comprise:-
 - 3.5.1 A base review, this entails reviewing the year end position for 2018/19, identifying any potential savings, additional cost pressures and areas where savings can be developed. These will be used to update the financial plan.
 - 3.5.2 A 'Star Chamber' exercise where Service Heads will present options for their services on how savings to the Council can be generated over the next four years.
 - 3.5.3 Service Reviews to be undertaken over the next four years with the aim of improving efficiency, effectiveness and cost.
 - 3.5.4 Property Related Review – to realise cost reduction of Council operational buildings, increase income from investment properties and generate new receipts from surplus buildings/land.

3.5.5 Income Generation Review – to include analysis of charging powers and service utilisation and identify options for income generation.

4 The Council's Financial Position

4.1 The Panel has received a separate report on this agenda reviewing the level of revenue and capital reserves.

4.2 The increase in strategic reserves over the last four years are mainly as a result of one-off gains from New Homes Bonus Grant and Business Rates Pilot scheme. The levels of New Homes Bonus funding are in decline and over the next four years following the Fair Funding Review it is very unlikely that the Council will be in a position to be able to make further significant contributions to strategic reserves.

4.3 The level of strategic reserves are expected to be at £14.7 million by the end 2023/24, compared to £14.3 million anticipated at the end of 2019/20.

4.4 The projected level of strategic reserves includes an increase in the Property Income Equalisation Reserve of £1.7 million to meet the Council's objective to accumulate sufficient funds to cover the potential loss of one year's rental income at properties funded through borrowing, this is partially offset by a reduction in the other strategic reserves of £1.3 million.

4.5 A summary of the Council's forecast movement in reserves is as follows:-

	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
General Fund Working Balances	3,416	3,257	2,730	2,731	2,731
Strategic Reserves	14,324	14,906	15,263	14,972	14,731
Capital Receipts	2,626	2,076	1,626	1,276	1,026

4.6 The above forecast also shows a steady decline in the level of uncommitted capital receipts and by 2023/24 is expected to be just above the minimum agreed level of £1 million. This forecast also assumes an increase of £100,000 year on year in revenue funding for the annual capital programme to mitigate this and assist the Council in developing a sustainable capital programme

4.7 The following assumptions have been used in forecasting the position on reserves at the end of 2023/24:-

4.7.1 £700,000 annual capital programme requiring financing from either capital reserves or revenue.

- 4.7.2 £300,000 per annum of corporate projects reserve being used to fund revenue budget/schemes
- 4.7.3 £75,000 from the property maintenance reserve required to fund the annual backlog maintenance works.
- 4.7.4 £25,000 per annum from the insurance reserve used to finance costs within the revenue budget.
- 4.7.5 Annual contributions of £675,000 are made in 2020/21 and 2021/22 from the revenue budget to the property income equalisation reserve.
- 4.7.6 £2.5 million of the business rates equalisation reserve is used by 2023/24 to mitigate the impact of the fair funding review and potential NHS appeal.
- 4.8 In order to prepare the draft MTFS it is recommended that the policy on the minimum working balance is set at £2.5 million.
- 4.9 As discussed, there is no set formula for deciding on policy for a minimum level of working balance for the next four years but the following factors provide a context for the decision:-
 - 4.9.1 The Council's turnover is approximately £40 million including benefit payments and the balance would be approximately 5% of gross expenditure;
 - 4.9.2 The Council's turnover excluding benefit payments is approximately £20 million and the proposed balance would be approximately 10% of gross spend on services;
 - 4.9.3 The Council's net budget requirement (council tax and formula grant) is £8.5 million and the proposed balance would be approximately 25% of net expenditure.
- 4.10 The Panel's views are sought on an appropriate minimum working balance for the next MTFS.

5 Budget Outlook for 2020/21

- 5.1 The following comprises an analysis of the potential extra bottom-line costs the Council faces next year, and the steps needed to manage the budget position (i.e. to set a balanced budget with no use of the working balance). The figures are high level and they will be investigated further as part of the budget setting process. No detailed estimates have been prepared at this stage.

Budget Deficit prior to Budget Savings Strategy	£000
Budget deficit carried forward (planned use of working balance in 2019/20)	0
Forecast of Potential Cost Increases	
General Inflation (estimate based on unavoidable increases in specific budgets only, e.g. fuel and energy, contracts and business rates)	+ 190
Allowance for Staff Pay	+ 400
Increase in cost of waste collection	+ 31
Increase in provision for property maintenance	+ 50
Funding for Property and Regeneration Manager (funded from future income generation)	+ 50
Funding for projects within the capital programme	+ 100
Loss of funding from SCC towards Bourne Hall	+ 80
Reduction in Retained Business Rates (Baseline reset for 2020/21)	+ 160
Net prior year funding from collection fund	+ 122
Potential Budget Growth	1,183
Steps Needed to Address Budget Deficit	
Remove provision for Local Elections	-70
Increase in dividend income from EEPIC (Council owned Property Company)	-100
Increase income from interest on balances	-34
Increased income from property, including acquisitions or reduced costs	-100
Star Chamber savings or increases to income	-185
Increase in Fees and Charges at an overall yield of 3% (6% for car parks)	-290
Council Tax Increase – provisionally at 3%	-245
Potential Budget Reductions	-1,024
Required Use of Working Balance in 2020/21 after savings *	159

- 5.2 The highest expenditure risks for next year where more detailed analysis is being carried out at an early stage in the budget process is:-

5.2.1 The growing costs of homelessness and temporary accommodation;

5.2.2 Delivery of efficiency savings targets included in the forecast.

5.3 There is also a further risk on delivering additional income from services and further reductions to grants and contributions received from both central government and Surrey County Council as they seek also to reduce.

6 Ten Year Budget Forecast

6.1 Annexe 1 comprises an update of the forecast budget position for 2020/21 (as set out above) along with an indicative forecast for the following nine years to March 2030.

6.2 The forecast indicates that a level of savings of £1.825 million is needed to achieve a balanced budget over the next four year financial planning period and would involve an annual saving of £0.544 million for 2020/21, broken down indicatively as follows:

2020/21 Budget Targets	£000
Increase in dividend income from EEPIC (Council owned Property Company)	-100
Increased income from property, including acquisitions or reduced costs	-100
Star Chamber savings or increases to income	-185
Further efficiencies or income to balance budget	-159
2020/21 Total Savings or Additional Income	-544

6.3 Without making savings the budget would move incrementally to a £1.8 million budget deficit by 2023/24. The general fund working balance would be fully utilised before that date.

6.4 The detailed forecast for the four years of the new Medium Term Financial Strategy at **Annex 1** is summarised in the following table:-

	<u>2019/20</u>	<u>2020/21</u>	<u>2021/22</u>	<u>2022/23</u>	<u>2023/24</u>
	<u>Budget</u> <u>£000</u>	<u>Indicative</u> <u>£000</u>	<u>Indicative</u> <u>£000</u>	<u>Indicative</u> <u>£000</u>	<u>Indicative</u> <u>£000</u>
Net Expenditure on Committee Services b/f (before use of interest on Balances & BRER)		8,328	8,484	8,742	8,508
Pay & Prices Increases		590*	598	606	618
Increases in Fees & Charges		- 290	- 210	- 210	- 216
Policy Committee budget changes		161	150	150	250
Changes to external funding		80	0	0	0
Allowance for increased income from property		-100	-100	-100	-200
Reduction in transfers to Property Equalisation Reserve		0	0	-500	0
Savings Target		- 285	- 180	- 180	- 180
Forecast Net Cost (before use of interest)	8,328	8,484	8,742	8,508	8,780
Interest credited to General Fund	-96	-130	-175	-240	-270
Funding to /from Business Rates Equalisation Reserve	-1,845	0	-200	-150	-100
Forecast Net Cost of Services	6,387	8,354	8,367	8,118	8,410
Retained Business Rates Forecast	1,585	1,425	816	832	849
Council Tax Income Forecast	6,525	6,770	7,024	7,287	7,561
Collection Fund Surplus / (Deficit)	-1,723	0	0	0	0
Assumed Collection Fund Income (Formula Grant + Council Tax)	6,387	8,195	7,840	8,119	8,410

* assumes annual pay increases limited to 2% and allows for unavoidable price inflation only

Forecast Budget Shortfall (required use of working balance)	0	159	527	- 1	0
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6.1 The forecast position is dependent on the detailed assumptions used and the ability of the Council to make the necessary savings.

6.2 The following factors have been used to prepare the forecast:-

FOUR YEAR FORECAST: ASSUMPTIONS USED		<u>2020/21</u>	<u>2021/22</u>	<u>2022/23</u>	<u>2023/24</u>
	<i>BASE</i>	<u>Indicative</u>	<u>Indicative</u>	<u>Indicative</u>	<u>Indicative</u>
	<u>£000</u>				
General Inflation - prices	9,500	2%*	2%	2%	2%
Annual pay award	11,000	2%*	2%	2%	2%
Fees & Charges allowance: annual increased yield on discretionary charges	-6,600	3%**	3%	3%	3%
Interest rate used		1.0%	1.25%	1.5%	1.5%
Change in Retained Business Rates	-1,585	-10.1%	-38.4%	2.0%	2.0%
Increase in Council Tax income	-6,525	3%	3%	3%	3%

** assumes annual pay increases limited to 2% and allows for unavoidable price inflation only*

*** increase to parking charges are applied every 2 years*

6.3 Assumptions have been made on potential significant changes to government financing as a result of the Fair Funding and the Business Rates Retention reviews and are discussed further below. These include:-

6.3.1 New Homes Bonus

6.3.2 Localisation of Business Rates

7 New Homes Bonus Scheme

7.1 The Council in recent years has benefited from the award of New Homes Bonus grant, based upon the number of new residential properties in the borough in the preceding year, with a supplement for affordable housing.

- 7.2 The methodology for this grant allocation was changed in 2017/18 by Government which resulted in a significant reduction in funding allocations in 2018/19. Originally the Council received a rolling 6 years of individual allocations; this was reduced down to 4 years from 2018/19 alongside a further reduction by only awarding funding for growth in homes above the 0.4% per annum baseline.
- 7.3 The amount of funding available from New Homes Bonus has diminished substantially over the last few years, in 2016/17 the Council received in excess of £2 million. With most of the current award made up from legacy payments there is a strong likelihood that this source funding could reduce even further in the future or be removed altogether as part of the Fair Funding Review.
- 7.4 Due to the future uncertainty regarding this grant the 2019/20 Budget approved by Council in February 2019 agreed that New Homes Bonus is no longer used as a source of funding for on-going services.
- 7.5 If the current scheme remains unchanged following the Fair Funding Review then the following grant is forecast over the next three years;

	2019/20 £'000	2020/21 £'000	2021/22 £'000	2022/23 £'000
2016/17	158			
2017/18	46	46		
2018/19	219	219	219	
2019/20	21	21	21	21
2020/21		21	21	21
2021/22			21	21
2022/23				21
Projected Grant (based on current scheme)	444	307	282	84

8 Localisation of Business rates

- 8.1 The Government last year announced they would be undertaking a review of Retained Business Rates. The impact of the review remains unknown and in all likelihood will be delayed until 2021/22. However, the Council can still expect to see a reset of its Baseline position for 2020/21, which means that the benefit that the Council was receiving from the fund for being above its baseline will be removed. For the purpose of the forecast position it is assumed that the Baseline will be reset for 2020/21 and as a result reduce the funding receivable from retained business rates to £1,425k.
- 8.2 The impact of the Review is expected in 2021/22 and business rates income is anticipated to reduce by a further £625k which is the equivalent to the amount of negative RSG which was removed from the settlement in 2020/21 but likely to feature as part of the future settlement for business rates.
- 8.3 The forecast assumes these reductions are seen in 2020/21 and 2021/22, with the Council's subsequent share of retained business rates income for 2022/23 and 2023/24 increasing by 2%.
- 8.4 The Council maintains a Business Rate Equalisation Reserve to finance any fluctuations in its share of Business Rate income. The uncommitted balance on this reserve if the proposed transfer identified in the Review Reserves report takes place will be £500,000.

9 Economic Indicators

- 9.1 A table of the latest economic indicators is attached at **Annex 3**.
- 9.2 These statistics are issued by HM Treasury and the tables compare economic indicators available in July 2019 to those published one year ago.
- 9.3 The following table provides a summary of the main national economic issues that have an impact on the Council's budget at least for this year and next:-

	Indicators	EEBC Budget Impact
Inflation	The Government's inflation target is 2%. Inflation (CPI) 2.0% in June 2019. HM Treasury collates independent average forecasts which for CPI are 1.8% for 2019 and 2.1% for 2020.	On prices the main concern is the level of increase on energy, fuel and index linked contracts. The level of increase will require additional funding to be allocated in 2020/21. The provisional forecast for 2020/21 includes a pay award settlement at 2% (the Government's target for

		inflation). Currently CPI remains at 2%, however, this could increase in the next few months as a result of current economic uncertainty.
Interest Rates	The bank base rate remains at 0.75% and is only expected to increase slowly from 2020 onwards	Interest on Balances was budgeted at 0.8% for 2019/20. The forecast return on investments anticipates a gradual increase in returns up to 1.5% by 2023/24.
Household wealth and Demand	GDP growth was at 0.5% (Apr to June) Unemployment in UK at 3.8% (1.29m to May) The seasonally adjusted retail sales index is at 2.9% (June)	Benefits: The number of benefit applications has generally reduced in the last couple of years. However, with the implementation of Universal Credit this may account for some of the decrease in the number of applicants. Homelessness: The number of households in temporary accommodation is currently greater than last year (46 at the end of quarter one) and this trend for an increasing number of homeless households appears to be continuing into 2019/20.

10 Financial Modelling

- 10.1 The ten year financial forecast includes assumptions as set out in paragraph 6.2 of this report.
- 10.2 The budget outlook estimates the level of savings needed based on a central case forecast. **Annex 3** provides an analysis of the impact of best case/worst case variations to the assumptions used.
- 10.3 Given uncertainties over the economy and public sector funding, significant variations may occur requiring careful monitoring and impact analysis throughout the budget process and the next four years.

11 Fees and Charges

- 11.1 The 2020/21 budget forecast assumes an additional yield on charges set by the Council generating £290,000 based on a minimum overall increase of 3.0% in total income, 6% for car parks as it was agreed that these charges will be adjusted every other year and no increases were applied for 2019/20.

- 11.2 Any shortfall in income will need to be offset by additional cost savings so that a balanced budget can be achieved.

12 Council Tax

- 12.1 The forecast assumes an increase of 3% per annum in council tax income. This level of tax increase would keep the council tax at the lower end of the Surrey Districts, consistent with the council tax policy.
- 12.2 The current Band D for the Borough is £198.36. The Borough's council tax is benchmarked against the other Surrey District council tax levels in **Annex 4**.
- 12.3 Although the forecast is based on a 2.99% increase options can be prepared for higher or lower levels of council tax. For each 1% increase the gain is £63,000 per annum. The cumulative effect of any variations to council tax increases need to be taken into account in the forward projections.
- 12.4 Currently central government has set a cap on the percentage increase allowed. For this Authority an increase of 3% or above would require a referendum to be held.

13 Capital Programme

- 13.1 The capital programme agreed in February 2019 can be found on page 78 of the Budget Book 2019/20.
- 13.2 The Strategy and Resources Committee (July 2019) agreed that schemes totalling £4.91 million be carried forward and added to the £1.11 million programme approved for 2019/20.
- 13.3 The capital programme review for 2020-2024 is under way. The Capital Member Group held their first meeting earlier this month. Scope for capital investment will be restrained taking into account the revenue budget position, the reducing level of capital reserves and the limited scope for capital disposals at the current time.
- 13.4 A separate report on the agenda reviews the level of capital reserves, but the forecast position shifts funding of the Council's core capital programme away from use of diminishing capital receipts to being financed through the revenue general fund. By the end of 2023/24 £0.5m of the estimated £0.7m annual capital programme is expected to be financed from revenue.
- 13.5 It is anticipated that the core programme will be restricted to essential investment in existing assets and investment in projects that will reduce future running costs or raise additional income (spend to save schemes) however there is scope for external funding of schemes and in particular the use of specific grants such as the disabled facility grants.

14 Proposals

- 14.1 The proposals for the Strategy and Resources Committee are set out in the recommendations of this report.
- 14.2 The Panel is requested to advise whether any changes are needed to the budget strategy or the charging assumptions used in setting the budget target for 2020/21.

15 Financial and Manpower Implications

- 15.1 Decisions on a pay settlement for April 2020 are not required prior to the budget being agreed however resource constraints will need to be taken into account in any pay award.

16 Legal Implications (including implications for matters relating to equality)

- 16.1 The Council will continue to fulfil its statutory obligations on all services provided.

17 Sustainability Policy and Community Safety Implications

- 17.1 The Council's new Medium Term Financial Strategy will support the Council's new Corporate Plan, including the sustainability and community safety priorities therein.

18 Partnerships

- 18.1 None for the purposes of this report.

19 Risk Assessment and Conclusions

- 19.1 This report covers budget targets for 2020/21, taking into account the financial forecast for the next ten years. The report also considers the major risks to and uncertainties over the Council's finances over the next four years.
- 19.2 2020/21 will comprise the first year of a new four year financial plan. In setting budget targets the Panel is also being asked to provide advice on the development of the new Medium Term Financial Strategy.
- 19.3 Based on the assumptions used, the forecasts indicate that further significant budget reductions are required in the region of £544,000 in 2020/21 and £1.825 million over the next four financial years after allowing for price increases, charging increases and government grant cuts.

- 19.4 The budget strategy involves increasing income and reducing expenditure in regards to property, continuing to deliver efficiency savings and generate extra service income whilst reviewing service levels so that service costs can be reduced as needed to achieve a balanced budget year on year.
- 19.5 The budget strategy also requires limiting the reliance on funding from government such as retained business rates and specific grants for funding council services.
- 19.6 Following the review of the Corporate Priorities, service plans should facilitate a reduction in the net cost of providing services over the next four years.
- 19.7 The greatest financial risks continue to be the increase in homelessness expenditure and the impact of further benefit reforms. The main corporate finance risks are the level of funding reductions as a result of the Fair Funding Review.
- 19.8 The budget position for next year will be reassessed later this year when detailed estimates have been prepared.

Ward(s) affected: (All Wards);

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STRATEGIC STATEMENT ON ECONOMY AND PLACE

Head of Service/Contact: Damian Roberts, Chief Operating Officer
Mark Shephard, Head of Property and Regeneration

Urgent Decision?(yes/no) no

If yes, reason urgent decision required:

Annexes/Appendices (attached):

Other available papers (not attached):

Report summary

This strategic statement sets out the Council's strategic priorities for economy and place in the context of the Council's new long-term vision for the borough, and in advance of the new Corporate Plan and the forthcoming detailed strategies that will emerge over the Autumn through the Council's Local Plan process.

Recommendation

(1) To agree the Strategic Statement on Economy and Place.

1. Implications for the Council's Key Priorities, Service Plans and Sustainable Community Strategy

- 1.1 This contributes directly to the delivery of the Council's new long-term vision for the borough including each of its five strategic themes. It also contributes directly to the four priorities in the Council's current Corporate Plan, including "Supporting Businesses and our Local Economy", and "Supporting our Community".

2 Background

- 2.1 The Council has an important community leadership role in shaping the future success of the borough in the broadest terms. This arises from the Council's clear democratic mandate and is underpinned in legislation, starting with the Local Government Act 2000, which gave local authorities the power to act to promote the economic, social and environmental wellbeing of their area. This power was updated and further extended by the Localism Act 2011, which introduced a general power of competence, ie "a local authority has power to do anything that individuals generally may do"
- 2.2 The Council has taken its community leadership role very seriously, delivering more for the borough than the minimum statutory requirements through a range of highly valued discretionary services and using its role to influence wider strategic outcomes for the borough. This includes the Council's contribution to economic development, health and wellbeing, community safety, leisure and cultural provision, support of the voluntary sector, and services for more vulnerable people, such as meals at home and telecare to name a few.

3 Future40 Long term vision for the borough

- 3.1 The borough's new long-term vision has been developed out of the largest engagement exercise ever undertaken in the borough. It draws on the feedback of thousands of residents, businesses, workers, students and visitors and those organisations from the public, private and voluntary sectors with a stake in the future success of the borough.
- 3.2 The resulting draft vision for Epsom and Ewell identifies five key priorities as set out below.



- 3.3 The borough's vision will have an important role in shaping and informing the Council's future decisions, particularly in relation to the positive outcomes that can be achieved for the economy, place and local communities. This is illustrated below under each of the five themes of the vision.

Green and Vibrant

- 3.4 Enhances the quality of the public realm, making it more open, attractive, welcoming, comfortable and connected. Seeks opportunities to add to or enhance green infrastructure (including facilitating greater access), and achieves high levels of environment sustainability

Opportunity and Prosperity

- 3.5 Contributes to enterprise, jobs and employment skills by protecting and enhancing strategically important business (eg creative, retail, digital and equine industries), education and employment sites, protecting the vitality of the high street, secures more affordable housing for local workers, students and families, more affordable work spaces for new and embryonic businesses, particularly linked to the University and NESCOL.

Safe and Well

- 3.6 Contributes to a safer environment, with increased footfall and activity rates in urban areas, protecting local employment opportunities, investing in areas that have become run down, and creating a place where people want to visit and dwell. This includes transforming the environment in less affluent areas, bringing in more investment and local community infrastructure, promoting physical and mental wellbeing, tackling social isolation, and encouraging healthy behaviours such as walking and cycling and access to fresh food.

Cultural and Creative

- 3.7 Contributes to the cultural and creative life of the borough, ensuring that there are spaces for people to gather and meet, including vibrant high streets, high quality shopping and leisure experiences and a strong evening economy and good design that enhances the character and identity of a place and celebrates its cultural and creative assets, its cultural institutions and its rich history.

Smart and Connected

- 3.8 Contributes to connectivity in all its guises, making use of smarter thinking and technology to reduce the friction associated with navigating between spaces and making it easier for people to access what they need. Recognising and utilising complementary uses and activities as part of a more holistic joined up approach.

4 Surrey Place Ambition 2050

- 4.1 The Council has contributed to the development of the Place Ambition 2050, a strategy for growth and ambition across Surrey, which has been shaped by the work of the two Local Economic Partnerships (LEPs) that cover the Surrey area, Boroughs and Districts in Surrey, the County Council and other local infrastructure providers.
- 4.2 The Surrey Place Ambition seeks to secure “good growth” by taking a place based approach that integrates economic, social, and environmental priorities. It identifies three Strategic Themes that will be set the context for delivery over the next 30 years.
- The first is to significantly increase the opportunities to support “good growth” arising from our unique position as the most connected place in the UK in terms of both transport and digital connectivity.
 - The second priority is to enhance the overall quality of our towns and urban areas, recognising that these are the places where most people will continue to want to live and work.
 - The third priority is to maximise the economic potential of the area, making sure that strategic investment is focused on the strategic places, one of which encompasses Epsom and Ewell, that offer the greatest opportunities to deliver the right infrastructure and skills to support growth in productivity and jobs.
- 4.3 This wider Place Ambition recognises Epsom and Ewell as an important economy within the wider sub region with excellent connectivity and a focus for delivering good growth over the next 30 years.
- 4.4 The Place Ambition also promotes the view that Councils, such as Epsom and Ewell, should make active use of their own local assets and their own developments to facilitate the achievement of the wider place ambitions for their area.

5 Plan E

- 5.1 The Council's Town Centre Area Action Plan (Plan E) was developed in 2011 by the Council and its strategic partners to provide an ambitious plan for the future of the Town Centre that continues to be relevant today. The focus has been on improving and effectively managing what already exists, while making the most of the opportunities ahead.
- 5.2 Over the past eight years the Council has been able to progress a number of important elements of Plan E, including the significant programme of highways and public realm works which incorporates the transformation of the Market Place which is currently underway. Alongside informing the work and decision making of the Licencing and Planning Policy Committee and the Planning Committee, Plan E continues to help drive the work of other Committees and the Council as a whole. Recent examples include the creation of the Business Improvement District (BID), the Council's approach to community Safety and Enforcement which was approved by this Committee last year, the local CIL programme, and the work of Future40 to help shape the future identity of the borough as a creative and enterprising place.
- 5.3 Plan E identified a range of strategic objectives under the following four key themes:

5.3.1 Land use

This includes retaining the focus on employment by protecting employment land uses and ensuring the town remains attractive for existing and potential businesses

5.3.2 Movement & accessibility

This includes reducing the impact of traffic through the Town Centre and improving pedestrian access and access to public transport and taking a proactive approach to car parking management.

5.3.3 Public realm & public spaces

This includes creating a high quality, attractive, safe and uncluttered street scene and ensuring that there is effective overall management of the public realm

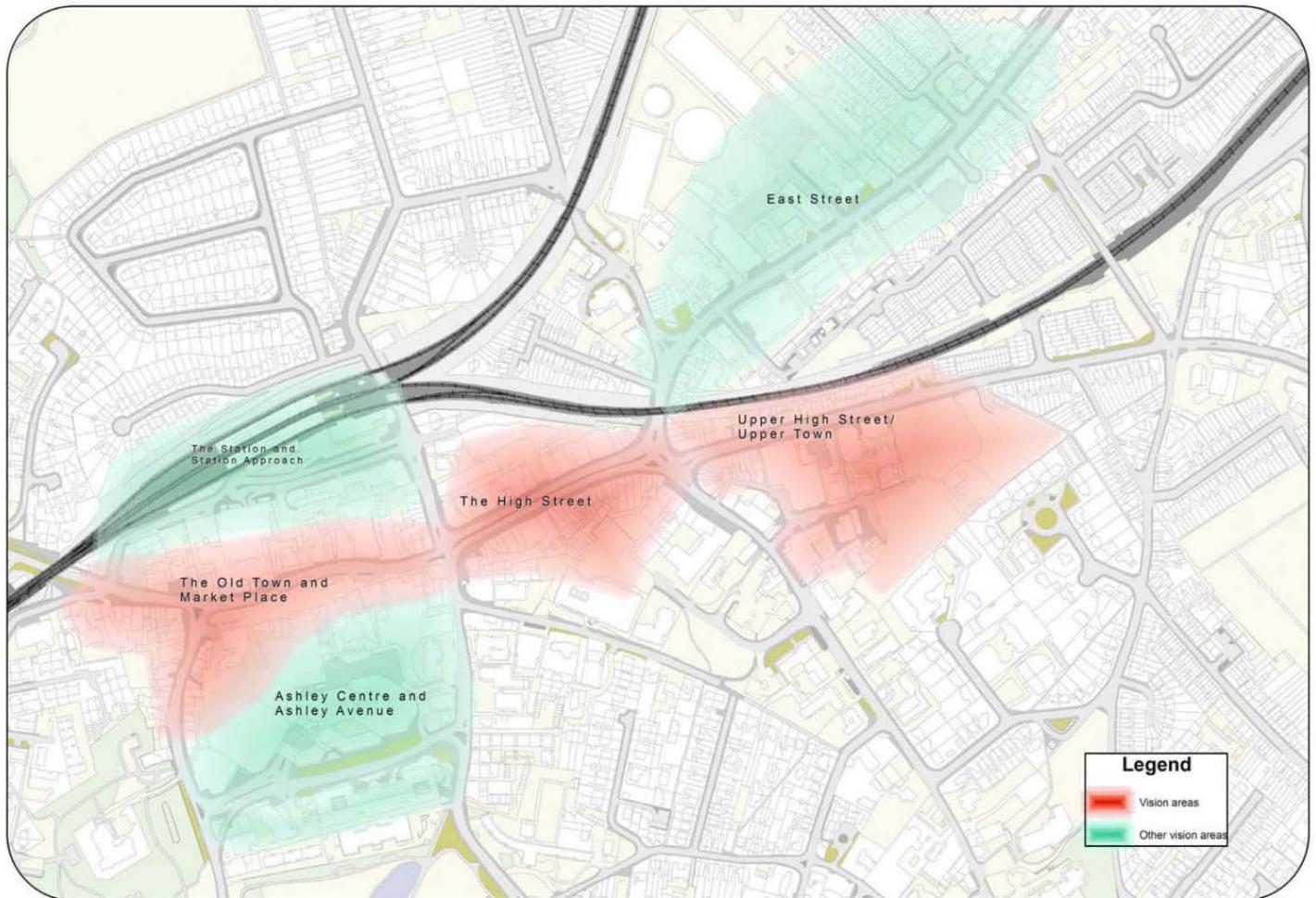
5.3.4 Identity, character & management

This includes strengthening the role of the Market as a central feature of the Town Centre, recognition and enhancement of Epsom's unique identity including its historic associations, effective management of the town centre and its promotion as a safe high quality destination.

5.4 Plan E also identified 6 distinct and strategically important areas within the Town Centre where more focused attention is needed. These are:

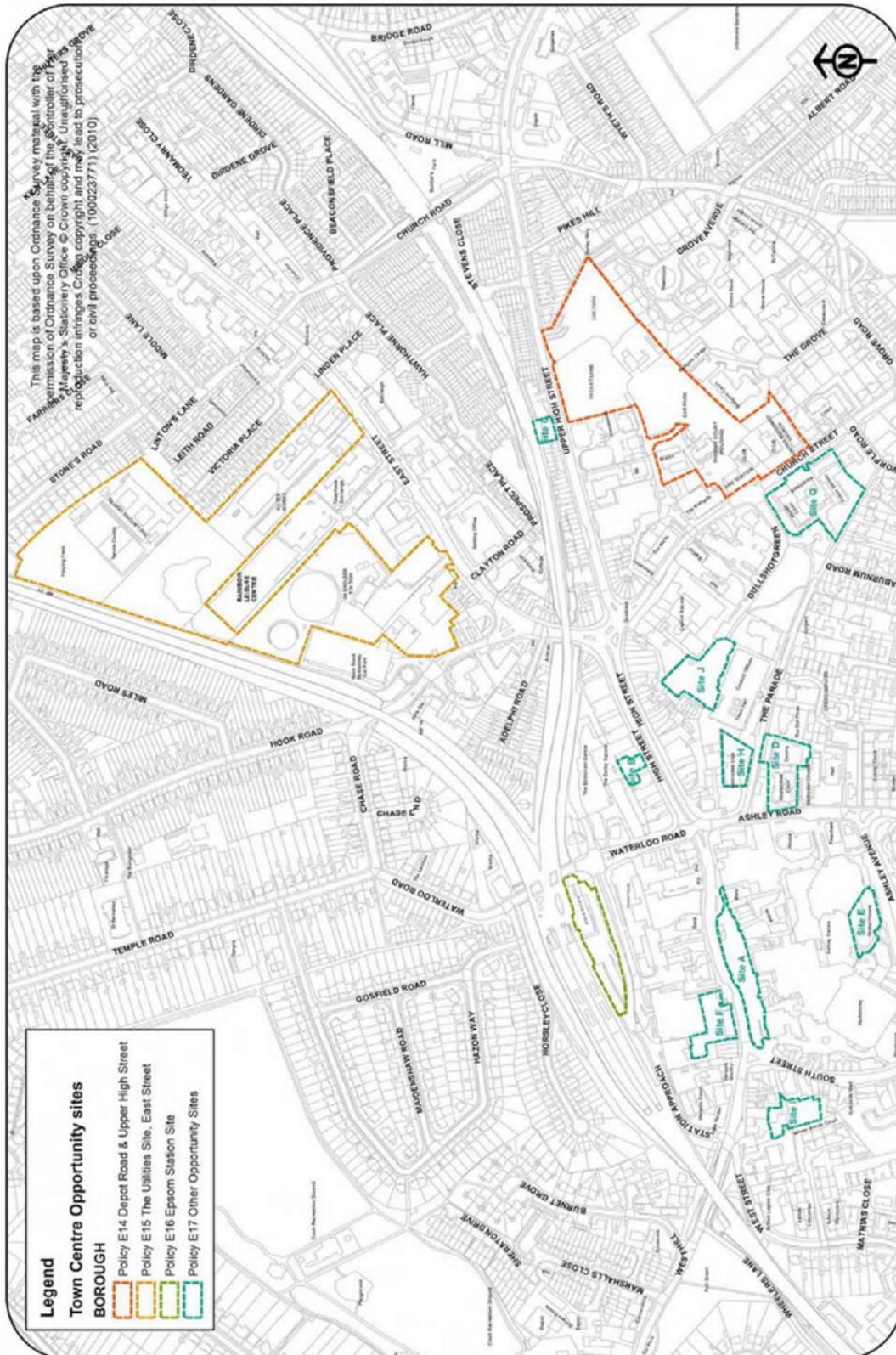
- East Street
- High Street (East) Including Epsom Square
- Upper High Street and Upper Town
- The Old Town and Market Place
- Ashley Centre and Ashley Avenue

These are illustrated in the map below.



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The Plan E The Town Centre Area Action Plan (Plan E) also identified a number of specific opportunity sites within the Town Centre where there was scope to address current issues and achieve greater economic, social and environmental outcomes. These areas are illustrated on the following map.



Approved Plan E opportunity sites

6 Article 4 Direction

- 6.1 In 2015, the Council served Article 4 Directions in response to the Government's decision to extend and expand the national permitted development regime to allow the conversion of office buildings to residential use without the need for a planning application.
- 6.2 The Council focused on those key office sites in the borough that are particularly valued for their employment status and may be lost without the additional protection provided by the Article 4 Directions which in effect removes the permitted development right to change the use of an office building (Class B1) into residential accommodation (Class C3).
- 6.3 The following office accommodation sites are provided with some protection through the Council's Article 4 Directions:
- Adelphi Court, East Street Article 4 Direction
 - A-Plan House, 30-38 High Street Article 4 Direction
 - Bradford House, 39a East Street Article 4 Direction
 - Eastleigh House, East Street Article 4 Direction
 - Emerald House, East Street Article 4 Direction
 - Epsom Chase, 1 Hook Road Article 4 Direction
 - Epsom Gateway, Ashley Avenue Article 4 Direction
 - Global House, Ashley Avenue Article 4 Direction
 - Horizon House, Upper High Street Article 4 Direction
 - Newplan House, 41 East Street Article 4 Direction
 - Nightingale House, East Street Article 4 Direction
 - Oaks House, West Street Article 4 Direction
 - Parkside House, Ashley Avenue Article 4 Direction
 - Sollis House, 20 Hook Road Article 4 Direction
 - The Kirkgate, Church Street Article 4 Direction
 - The Wells, Church Street Article 4 Direction

7 Housing Delivery Action Plan

- 7.1 The Council has a Housing Delivery Action Plan that was agreed by Licencing and Planning Policy Committee at its meeting on the 12 September 2019. This recognises the physical constraints on housing development in the borough set against the context of significant and growing levels of housing need in Epsom and Ewell.

- 7.2 The Housing Delivery Action Plan seeks to identify ways to facilitate an increase in the delivery of new housing to address local housing need, including the development of more affordable homes for local people. The Council will need to continue to look for ways to facilitate the development of new homes using its own assets including through new acquisitions and unlocking opportunities through partnership working and wider site assembly.

8 Strategic Priorities and informing future decision making

- 8.1 This Strategic Statement provides a context to inform future Council decision making, including acquisition, disposal or development of its own land and property assets, the nature and type of partnerships the Council may wish to enter in to and the actions the Council may wish to take to facilitate longer-term land assembly linked to larger strategic development.
- 8.2 To assist the Council in maximising the social, economic and environmental outcomes it can achieve, alongside core considerations of financial viability, future decisions relating to the Council's own asset management (purchase, disposal, use and development) will need to demonstrate their clear contribution to one or more of the following strategic priorities:
- A) Contribution to the delivery of the Council's Long-term vision and the delivery of the strategic priorities set out in its Corporate Plan
 - B) Provides an opportunity to facilitate "Good Growth" as set out in the Surrey-wide Place Ambition
 - C) Within the Town Centre - contribution to priorities set out in the Council's Plan E – Area Action Plan, including the defined opportunity areas.
 - D) The scope for the protection of key employment sites, further strengthening the protection provided by the Council's Article 4 Directions
 - E) Contributes to the priorities set out in the Council's Housing Delivery Action Plan.
- 8.3 The above will be further informed over time by the Council's strategic policies and evidence that are being developed for the Council's New Local Plan including the work on the Transformation Master Plan and the new Economic Strategy and Retail Survey.

9 Financial and Manpower Implications

- 9.1 There are no direct financial or staffing implications arising from this strategic statement. However, the Council's income is dependent in part on rental values from over £49 million of assets it owns in the borough. This means that a strong and confident economy in the borough, where existing businesses want to stay and new businesses want to come to invest, and where people want to work, will bring many external and internal benefits, including strengthening the Council's income base and therefore reducing the proportion of Council services that need to be funded from local Council Tax.
- 9.2 The Strategic Statement on Economy and Place will also have an important role in informing the Council's future asset (property and land) strategy as part of its important economic and place shaping role. This includes informing decisions relating to the purchase, use, development and disposal of Council assets.
- 9.3 **Chief Finance Officer's comments:** none for the purposes of this report.

10 Legal Implications (including implications for matters relating to equality)

- 10.1 None arising from the report's recommendations.
- 10.2 **Monitoring Officer's comments:** none arising from the contents of this report.

11 Sustainability Policy and Community Safety Implications

- 11.1 Sustainability and Community Safety ambitions are strongly articulated in the Council's new long term vision and will be expressed in a more detailed way through the Council's forthcoming Community Safety and Enforcement Plan and the Council's Climate Change Action Plan which are both due to come forward in the Autumn.

12 Partnerships

- 12.1 The Council will continue to seek the engagement and support of partners in the delivery of its wider place ambitions including how it achieves the best outcomes from its assets. A recent example of this is the decision by Strategy and Resources Committee, at its meeting in July, to explore the opportunity of a partnership arrangement for improving outcomes at Ewell Court House which builds on a track record of effective partnership working in other areas such as Leisure provision.

13 Risk Assessment

- 13.1 This report is seeking to maximise the opportunity for the Council's own asset management decisions to contribute positively to the wider economic and place ambitions for the borough and reduce the risk of any miss alignment.

14 Conclusion and Recommendations

- 14.1 Members are asked to support the approach set out in this report to ensure that the Council's future decision making relating to its own assets, contributes directly to the delivery of the Council's wider place ambitions.

Ward(s) affected: (All Wards);

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**Minutes of the Meeting of the STRATEGY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE held on
30 July 2019**

PRESENT -

Councillor Clive Smitheram (Chairman); Councillor Colin Keane (Vice-Chairman); Councillors Arthur Abdulin, Steve Bridger, Kate Chinn, Nigel Collin, Hannah Dalton, Neil Dallen (as nominated substitute for Councillor Eber Kington), David Gulland and Barry Nash

In Attendance: Amber Banister (Audit Manager) (Grant Thornton (External Auditor)) (Items 01 - 05 only)

Absent: Councillor Eber Kington

Officers present: Kathryn Beldon (Chief Executive), Damian Roberts (Chief Operating Officer), Lee Duffy (Chief Finance Officer), Amardip Healy (Chief Legal Officer), Gillian McTaggart (Head of Policy, Performance & Governance), Ruth Ormella (Head of Planning) (Items 01 - 03 only), Mark Shephard (Head of Property and Regeneration), Brendan Bradley (Chief Accountant), Tony Foxwell (Senior Surveyor) (Items 01 - 08 only) and Tim Richardson (Committee Administrator)

1 APPOINTMENT OF VICE-CHAIRMAN

Councillor Colin Keane was appointed Vice-Chairman for the meeting.

2 QUESTION TIME

No questions were asked or had been submitted by members of the public.

3 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor David Gulland, Other Interest: In the interests of openness and transparency, Councillor David Gulland declared that he had been the Treasurer and a Trustee of the Horton Chapel Arts & Heritage Society, but had resigned these positions.

4 ALLOCATION OF PLANNING DELIVERY GRANT RESERVE

The Committee received a report updating it on the allocation of funds from the Planning Delivery Grant Reserve and presenting an updated proposal for allocation of funds required to support the current Local Plan delivery schedule.

Following consideration, it was resolved:

- (1) **To approve the use of the balance of the Planning Delivery Grant Reserve to support the work on the Local Plan over the period 2019 – 2021, as set-out in Section 3 of the report.**

5 STONES ROAD ALLOTMENT SITE

The Committee received a report summarising a number of options considered in seeking to propose a long-term future for the former Stones Road Allotment site, and recommending that an application should be made to remove the site from its statutory designation as allotment land.

The following matter was considered:

- a) **Protection of Great Crested Newt population.** The Committee considered the need for adjoining land owners to manage their sites in a manner which supported the protection of the Stones Road Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), and in particular it's Great Crested Newt population. It was noted that officers had been in contact Surrey County Council regarding this, as the County Council was the land owner of the adjoining Confer Park Gypsy site.

Following consideration, it was resolved:

That the Committee:

- (1) **noted the options that had been considered in arriving at the suggested way forward for the Stones Road Allotment site;**
- (2) **approved the removal of the Stones Road Allotment site from its classification as statutory allotment land by way of an application to the Secretary of State;**
- (3) **delegated authority to the Chief Legal Officer to take all necessary steps to secure the declassification of Stones Road Allotment as allotment land.**

6 2018/19 STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS AND AUDIT FINDINGS

The Committee received a report covering Grant Thornton's audit findings and presenting the Statement of Accounts for 2018/19 following the external audit.

The following matter was considered:

- a) **Unqualified opinion on the Council's accounts and thanks to Officers.** The Committee noted that the External Auditor proposed an unqualified opinion of the Council's Accounts, and was informed by the Chairman that this was the 20th year in a row that this had been achieved. The Committee expressed its thanks and congratulations to the Chief Finance Officer, Chief Accountant and their team for their work to achieve this. In particular, the Committee thanked the Chief Accountant for his work to accommodate changes in pension regulations.

Following consideration, it was resolved:

That the Committee:

- (1) Approved the Statement of Accounts for the year ended 31 March 2019;**
- (2) Agreed the Annual Governance Statement included within the Statement of Accounts;**
- (3) Received the Audit Findings for 2018/19;**
- (4) Agreed the management action in response to audit recommendations;**
- (5) Agreed that the Chairman or Vice Chairman of Strategy and Resources Committee and the Chief Finance Officer sign the Letter of Representation on behalf of the Council;**
- (6) Delegated any further amendments to the 2018/19 Statement of Accounts to the Chief Finance Officer in consultation with the Chairman or Vice Chairman of Strategy and Resources Committee.**

7 2018/19 FINANCIAL OUTTURN REPORT

The Committee received a report summarising the Council's financial performance for 2018/19 and detailing the capital budgets to be carried forward for schemes where costs would be incurred in 2019/20.

Following consideration, it was resolved:

That the Committee:-

- (1) Received the report on financial outturn for 2018/19;**
- (2) Noted the carry forward £4.910 million budget for capital schemes to be added to the 2019/20 capital programme.**
- (3) Agreed that the one-off gain, generated in 2018/19 from the 100% Business Rates Pilot, should be set-aside to mitigate the potential future impact of both business rates appeals and the Fair Funding Review on the Council's funding, as detailed in section 4 of the report.**

8 2018-19 TREASURY MANAGEMENT YEAR-END PERFORMANCE

The Committee received a report reviewing the performance of the council's treasury management function in 2018/19.

Following consideration, it was resolved:

That the Committee:-

- (1) received the report on the Council's treasury management performance 2018/19;**
- (2) approved the actual 2018/19 prudential indicators.**

9 EPSOM CEMETERY EXTENSION

The Committee received a report providing an update on the current position of the Epsom Cemetery extension and seeking approval for an additional budget requirement of £150k.

Following consideration, it was resolved:

That the Committee:

- (1) Noted the progress to date;**
- (2) Agreed to fund the increased works cost of £150,000 from the Corporate Projects Reserve.**

10 EWELL COURT HOUSE

The Committee received a report exploring the opportunity and potential benefits from entering into a partnership with a specialist from the wedding and events sector to maximise the public and community use of Ewell Court House. This approach had been recommended by the Council's Community and Wellbeing Committee at its meeting on 20 June 2019.

Following consideration, it was resolved:

That the Committee:

- (1) Agreed the approach set out in the report to increase bookings at Ewell Court House and put the building on a more financially sustainable footing.**
- (2) Agreed that officers seek to appoint, through a competitive selection process, a suitable specialist partner to manage bookings and events at Ewell Court House as well as day to day maintenance through a leasehold agreement.**
- (3) Agreed that subject to the successful outcome of the selection process, to delegate the decision to agree terms and enter into an agreement with the specialist partner organisation for a period of no more than 15 years to the Chief Operating Officer and the Chief Finance Officer, in consultation with the Chairman of Strategy and Resources Committee.**

11 FUTURE40 - DRAFT LONG-TERM VISION FOR EPSOM AND EWELL

The Committee received a report detailing the outcomes from the Future 40 public engagement, and setting out the next steps in bringing forward a new vision and putting in place arrangements to oversee its successful implementation.

Following consideration, it was resolved:

That the Committee:

- (1) **Agreed the draft long-term vision for Epsom and Ewell set out in paragraphs 6.5 and 6.6 of the report for further stakeholder engagement.**
- (2) **Noted that the Committee was due to consider the Council's new draft Corporate Plan 2020-2024 at its 26 November meeting.**

12 MANAGEMENT OF UNREASONABLE CUSTOMER BEHAVIOUR POLICY

The Committee received a report presenting a policy to protect staff and councillors from unreasonable customer behaviour which could hinder the handling of a customer's complaint or request. The policy also reminded customers that the Borough Council has a zero tolerance towards unacceptable behaviour.

Following consideration, it was resolved:

That the Committee:

- (1) **resolved that the Management of Unreasonable Customer Behaviour Policy (attached at Annex 1 to the report) be agreed with immediate effect;**
- (2) **Agreed to delegate to the Chief Legal Officer in consultation with the Chairman and Vice Chairman of the Committee any updating of the Policy which may be necessary to reflect good practice.**

13 APPOINTMENT OF MEMBERS AND CHAIRMAN OF THE SHAREHOLDER SUB-COMMITTEE

The Committee received a report requesting it to agree the appointment of Members and a Chairman to the Shareholder Sub Committee in accordance with the Sub Committee's Terms of Reference.

Following consideration, it was resolved:

- (1) **That the Committee appointed the following Members and Chairman for the Shareholder Sub Committee as required by its Terms of Reference:**
 - **Councillor Eber Kington (Chairman)**
 - **Councillor Clive Smitheram**
 - **Councillor Barry Nash**
 - **Councillor Neil Dallen**
 - **Councillor Kate Chinn**

14 CAPITAL MEMBER GROUP

The Committee received a report requesting it to consider appointments to the Capital Member Group, approve an increase in budget of the Disabled Facilities programme and to agree the capital bidding process for 2020/21 to 2022/23.

The following matter was considered:

- a) **Payback criteria for renewable energy projects.** Following a question from a Committee Member, Officers informed the Committee that it was not proposed to extend the payback period for projects (which was 7 years in the case of renewable energy projects), as doing so increased the risk that the projected income/saving from the project would become unreliable. In exceptional cases a project which required a longer payback period could be presented to the relevant Committee for consideration.

Following consideration, it was resolved:

That the Committee:

- (1) **Appointed the following Members to the Capital Member Group:**

- **Councillor Eber Kington (Chairman)**
- **Councillor Neil Dallen**
- **Councillor Colin Keane**
- **Councillor Barry Nash**
- **Councillor David Gulland**

- (2) **Approved the increase in budget of £42,090 for the Disabled Facilities programme, in line with the allocation of central government grant funding;**

- (3) **Confirmed the criteria for considering capital bids as set out in paragraph 9.1;**

- (4) **Confirmed the criteria for assessing 'spend to save' capital bids as set out in paragraph 9.2.**

15 MEMBERSHIP OF THE CIL PANEL AND TERMS OF REFERENCE

The Committee received a report requesting that it agree the membership and the terms of reference for the CIL Panel.

Following consideration, it was resolved:

That the Committee approved :-

- (1) **The membership of the Panel being: the Chairman of Strategy & Resources Committee, the Chair of Community & Wellbeing Committee and Councillor**

Nigel Collin as a nominated member from the Strategy & Resources Committee;

- (2) The following substitutes for the Panel: the Vice Chairman of Strategy & Resources Committee; the Vice Chair of Community & Wellbeing Committee and one additional member of Strategy & Resources Committee;**
- (3) The terms of reference for the CIL Panel;**
- (4) To delegate to the Chairman of Strategy & Resources Committee who in conjunction with the Chair of Community & Wellbeing can agree any changes to the nominated member from Strategy & Resources Committee or substitutes;**
- (5) To delegate to the Chief Finance Officer, who in conjunction with the Chairman of Strategy & Resources Committee agree the annual allocation for CIL 15% funded projects.**

16 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The Minutes of the Meeting of the Strategy and Resources Committee held on 2 April 2019 were agreed as a true record and signed by the Chairman.

The meeting began at 7.30 pm and ended at 8.41 pm

COUNCILLOR CLIVE SMITHERAM (CHAIRMAN)

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