



Epsom and Ewell Community Safety and Enforcement Plan

2020

Introduction

Epsom and Ewell has long been a safe place compared with neighbouring areas, a place where residents, workers, students and visitors can feel confident in going about their daily lives and enjoy all that the borough has to offer.

However, when issues do occur, they are usually highly visible, create significant public concern and if not addressed at an early stage, can escalate quickly and attract further, more serious problems.

There is also no reason to be complacent. The pattern of crime and anti-social behaviour across the country is changing, and Epsom and Ewell's proximity to London as well as its excellent transport links means that community safety is a high priority for the Borough Council and is seen as central to the borough's future success.

Summary

This plan sets out Epsom & Ewell Borough Council's intentions for a more effective and coordinated approach to the Council's community safety and enforcement role. This builds on measures already in place to be able to tackle antisocial behaviour, nuisance and environmental crime in an evidence led, partnership based approach resulting in improved community safety and sense of wellbeing.

The Council's Approach

On 17 April 2018, the Council approved its new approach to community safety and enforcement, focused on strengthening the Council's existing arrangements for tackling environmental nuisance and anti-social behaviour, namely:

- Effective use of legal powers available to the Council
- A more coordinated approach with partners
- Access to external funding
- A more visible Council presence
- A stronger focus on local intelligence
- Communicating the Council's enforcement actions and successes
- Supporting staff engaged in this work with appropriate training and support

In agreeing this approach, a new post was created in the Council to help coordinate this work.

Significant progress has been made over the last year that has led to dramatic improvements in the way that community safety and enforcement issues are dealt with by the borough Council while at the same time creating the necessary cultural shift internally to sustain the positive momentum that has already been achieved.

The Police Approach

There has been a marked change in the local policing strategy across Surrey and locally in Epsom and Ewell, with a greater emphasis on neighbourhood policing and achieving longer term resolutions. The focus back on Neighbourhood Policing should bring with it more effective problem solving, increased visibility, community engagement and public confidence. There is also an intention to increase the focus on the more deep-rooted, chronic issues within the community and the Council is benefitting from a desire to work in a more collaborative way with key partners.

Important contribution to the Council's long-term vision and Four Year Plan

The Future 40 programme has identified the emerging long-term vision for the Borough and specifically identifies feeling safe and well as a high priority for local residents, workers, students and visitors. A perception of Epsom and Ewell being a safe place is fundamental to the Borough's future success and contributes to each of the priorities in the new Vision.



Figure 1 – The Future 40 key themes

The Council's four year plan 2020-2024 sets out the medium term plan which focusses on the key themes from the vision with an added theme of "effective council".

The theme of "safe and well" focusses on a place where people will feel safe, secure and lead healthy fulfilling lives. One of the key priorities being to work with partners to keep our borough safe and secure.

Links with other strategic Council plans and strategies

The Council's approach to community safety and enforcement has direct links with the Council's new Health and Wellbeing Strategy. Feeling safe has an important contributor to overall health and wellbeing, particularly mental wellbeing. It also has a positive part to play in helping to addressing social isolation, and encouraging people to feel more connected with their community and more confident to participate in community activities, whatever the time of day. Other important issues for the wider health and social care system in the borough such as safeguarding and tackling domestic abuse, are issues where community safety and enforcement has an important contribution to make.

The development of the Council's new Local Plan is also an opportunity to consider how future spatial plans can contribute positively to community safety, including creating places that are designed with safety in mind, including shared public spaces that encourage footfall and visibility, and mixed developments (eg with different housing tenures, and incorporating retail, business and community facilities) to help build more sustainable communities.

The important work the Council does in other areas such as sports development also have an important role to play, creating positive opportunities for young people (particularly those at risk of becoming involved in anti-social behaviour or gangs) to become engaged, find a channel for their energies and aspirations, develop their understanding of respect and tolerance of others, set goals and gain a sense of personal achievement.

Exploring the evidence

Epsom and Ewell benefits from relatively low rates of crime, anti-social behaviour and disorder but its geographic position, proximity to the capital where these issues are much more prevalent and where these areas are within easy access across strong transport links, means puts it at risk. Additionally as in many local authority areas, there are parts of the borough that have experienced more anti-social behaviour and crime, than others.

The Council's data on environmental crime and anti-social behaviour shows a significant increase in both fly tips and graffiti over the past five years. The flytipping figures may reflect the increasing cost nationally associated with waste disposal, as well as the reduced availability of County Council recycling centres. The amount of graffiti is a cause for concern since it can be a sign of a deeper problem but it is also the case that environmental crime including graffiti is being reported more proactively by Council Officers.

Year	Fly tips	Litter reports	Dog Fouling	Noise complaints	Graffiti reports	Abandoned Vehicles Removed
2014-2015	401	602	64	489	148	25
2015-2016	758	705	106	319	110	30
2016-2017	920	486	59	334	124	83
2017-2018	1232	516	161	342	195	63
2018-2019	1206	604	86	273	294	59

Table 1 - Environmental Crime 2014 - 2019 Source: Epsom & Ewell Borough Council

Police data is measured over September – August making it more complex to compare. However it is recognised that Epsom and Ewell is in the minority in Surrey featuring total notifiable offences (ie total recorded crime), lower than in the previous year. This represents a decrease of 6% between September 2017-August 2018 and September 2018-August 2019. In addition, for the same period, it has seen the largest reductions across Surrey for serious acquisitive crime with a fall of 28%, residential burglary down by 37% and vehicular crime down by 21.6%.

Reports of anti-social behaviour to the police have also decreased significantly - by 20.4%. The most prevalent categories remaining of anti-social behaviour are rowdy and inconsiderate behaviour and vehicle nuisance or inappropriate use.

Despite the very positive improvements, like other Boroughs in Surrey, Epsom & Ewell has seen an increase in violence with injury offences of 12.7% in the same period.

	Sep 2017 - Aug 2018	Sep 2018 - Aug 2019	Percentage change
Total Notifiable Offences	2390	2247	-6%
Domestic Burglary	146	92	-37%
Robbery	21	14	-33.30%
Violence with injury	213	240	12.70%
Serious Sexual Offences	42	35	-16.70%
Domestic Abuse Crimes	289	306	5.90%

Table 2 - Police Crime Data Source: East Surrey Community Safety Partnership

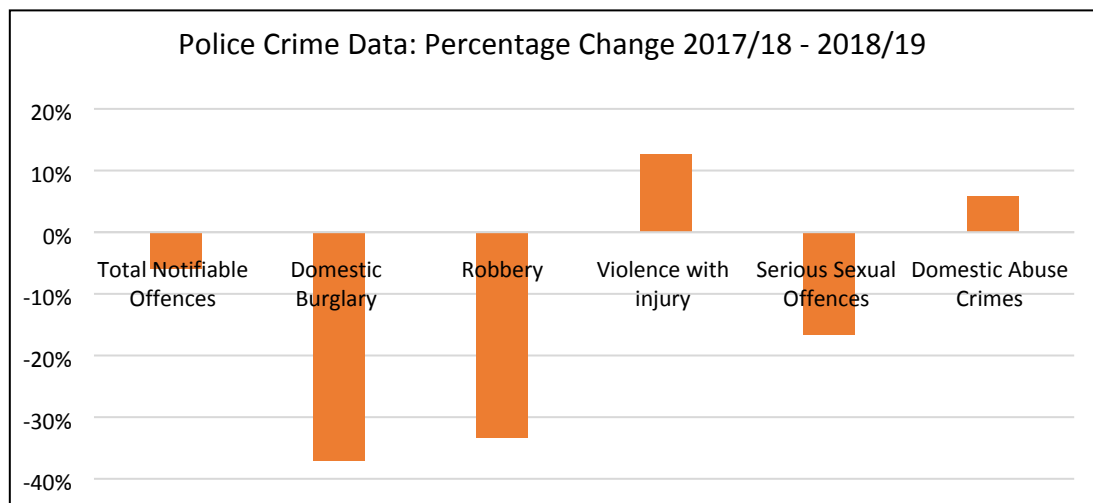


Figure 2 - Police Crime Data 2017-2019 Source: East Surrey Community Safety Partnership

There has also been an increase in hate crime across the country, which is mirrored across Surrey where religious or ethnic groups are being targeted. Although the actual numbers of cases remain small, these trends are a concern requiring more work to understand the causes and drivers of this increase, such as serious organised crime, and what action the Council and its partners can take to help address this.

National and regional trends

The national crime trends show a rise in violent crime, including crimes committed using a knife or sharp instrument. This is most noticeable in the greater London area which borders on to the Epsom and Ewell Borough on two sides. Aspects of Serious Organised Crime (SOC) are also beginning to have an impact outside of the capital and indeed, in such cases as County Lines, are deliberately being exported into areas away from the capital, utilising key transport routes. As an example, a recent serious incident of fly tipping in Epsom and Ewell that the Council and the Police were able to disrupt, was traced to serious organised crime originating in North London.

There are three key messages coming out of the data and trends. Firstly, Epsom and Ewell remains a relatively safe place, and has seen some significant reductions in anti-social behaviour and crime over the past year. However, crime is not falling in all categories and significant risks remain associated with the borough's proximity to London where violent crime including knife crime is growing, and where serious organised crime continues to be a major risk. As a result the data provides no scope for complacency, but reinforces the need for the much more rigorous and collaborative approach being taken by the Council in relation to Community Safety and Enforcement.

There will also need to be a greater focus and coordination with partner agencies regarding domestic abuse, and violence – particularly around licensed premises and public spaces. There will also need to be greater and more proactive targeting of offenders through local enforcement initiatives, improved intelligence and greater

awareness of available support for vulnerable members of the community alongside signposting to relevant support services.

More effective enforcement

Enforcement is a key element of the Council's approach to Community Safety because it recognises how important it is for people in the local area to have respect for each other, respect for the communities in which they live and respect for the basic laws that govern wider society.

It also recognises that a positive and visible approach to enforcement provides reassurance within the local community, sends a clear message that the Council and its partners care about the local area, that crime and anti-social behaviour does not go unnoticed and for those involved in these activities, that there are consequences, ultimately through the legal system, for the choices they make.

Over the past year the Council has been strengthening its approach to enforcement, while ensuring that its actions always remain reasonable and proportionate. Therefore, not all enforcement necessarily results in formal legal action but it remains an escalation route in all cases, should other interventions and written warnings go unheeded.

While some enforcement action is relatively straightforward, it is also important to be able to address more complex cases through the courts, where the associated timescales and costs can be far greater, and where it will be necessary for the Council to demonstrate tenacity and perseverance alongside meticulous preparation and professional judgement.

In the majority of cases, effective enforcement relies on early intervention, gathering of clear evidence, understanding of the legal sanctions available to the Council and other relevant parties such as the Police and Housing Associations. Taking a robust approach to enforcement sits alongside effective preventative actions and positive engagement and communications.

A more visible approach

For local residents and businesses, feeling reassured that relevant agencies are an active presence within the community, including undertaking regular local visits and patrols, are an important contributor to feeling safe. Also, residents have a greater feeling of safety if they can see that local concerns are being taken seriously and that visible action is being taken to address them.

As part of the Council's new approach to Community Safety and Enforcement, it has been seeking to raise the profile of many ways that different teams contribute to the Council's community safety and enforcement work, including the greater level of partnership working with other agencies that is now taking place.

For example the Council has also sought to increase the visibility of staff who contribute to community safety and enforcement activity. This includes the purchase

and use of high visibility uniforms clearly branded with the Council's logo, more targeted patrols, the greater use of joint patrols with the police and specific high visibility initiatives with other agencies including DVLA and the Home Office. The Council has also deployed a new high visibility zero emission vehicle which any member of Council staff can use when out in the community on Council business.



Figure 3 - Zero Emission Enforcement Car

Over the past year there has also been a much greater focus on communications, highlighting action where appropriate through press statements and via social media and the Council's Borough Insight Magazine, highlighting action that has been taken by the Council with its partners to resolve concerns about anti social behaviour and related crime as well as raising awareness of relevant concerns. Recent examples include communications about positive outcomes achieved in relation to unauthorised encampments, and fly tipping as well as joint patrols and a stand at the Ashley Centre to promote Anti-Social Behaviour Awareness Week and the Council's campaign to increase awareness about Hate Crime.

There has also been greater promotion and take up of Community Litter Picks utilising external funding the Council secured in April and providing high visibility clothing and specialist equipment to those taking part.

Better coordination of Council functions

The Council undertakes a variety of different professional roles and functions which contribute to community safety and enforcement in the borough. This includes:

- Environmental Health including food hygiene and health & safety
- Noise nuisance
- Anti-social behaviour
- Street cleaning and litter picking
- Licensing of premises and taxis
- Rangers and Downs Keepers
- Planning enforcement
- Inconsiderate Car Parking
- Abandoned Vehicles
- Fly tipping
- Graffiti and flyposting
- Unauthorised encampments

Often these different functions have access to different legal powers and subject to different statutory regulations. Despite these differences, anti social behaviour seldom sits neatly within the scope of just one team. It is often more complex incorporating a number of different elements (eg littering, graffiti and environmental health) and there can be significant benefits from taking a more coordinated and targeted approach.

Greater partnership and multi-agency working

Much more can be achieved if relevant organisations pool local evidence and intelligence and make coordinated use of their various statutory powers. This is central to an effective “joint enforcement team” approach.

Over the past year the Council has started undertaking regular joint operations and joint patrols with Surrey Police in response to specific community concerns and incidents relevant to the work of the Council. Council officers have also engaged where appropriate in many more multi agency operational activities including

- Community Harm and Risk Management Meeting (CHaRMM)
- Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC)
- Mapping of Offenders, Locations and Trends (MOLT)
- Joint Action Groups (JAG)
- Serious Organised Crime Joint Action Group (SOCJAG).

Greater use of legal powers

The Council has made significant progress over the past year making better use of available powers such as:

- Community Protection Warnings
- Community Protection Notices
- Injunctions
- Fixed Penalty Notices
- Writs
- Banning Notices

At a more strategic level, the Council has also adopted a new Public Space Protection Order for alcohol control, and successfully secured a three year injunction through the courts to tackle unauthorised encampments and associated fly tipping on Council land. As with the other legal routes, both of these have proved to be highly effective.

Encouraging reporting

Reporting is the vital first step in any effective approach to community safety and enforcement and over this past year encouraging greater reporting has become central to the Council's work in the community with stakeholders and partner agencies. In the absence of such reporting, it is difficult for the Police and other statutory agencies to secure the resources needed to tackle local concerns.

This past year the Council approached Surrey Police to explore if improvements can be made to the 101 telephone reporting service and their on-line reporting facility to make it easier for local people to report community safety concerns where there is not an immediate threat to life or property.

The Council also adopted a new safeguarding policy and programme of awareness raising and staff training to support this together with a new mechanism for Officers and Members to more easily report safeguarding concerns

The Council also implemented a new operational approach to secure intelligence sharing to help better understand over time, emerging areas of concern such as Serious Organised Crime and County Lines.

Community Safety, Safeguarding and reporting arrangements, also featured in the induction of Council Members after the Local Elections in 2019 to help Members play a full part in reporting concerns in their wards.

Use of evidence to better target services

Drawing on data from the Police and Council over the past year, additional operational activity is taking place with partner agencies to better understand, tackle and prevent anti social behaviour in the following locations across the borough.

1. Epsom Station, Epsom
2. Epsom Square, High Street, Epsom
3. Sefton Road, Epsom
4. High Street/Church Street Junction, Epsom
5. Ash & Wandle Court, Watersedge Estate, Ruxley
6. Ashley Centre & Car Park, Epsom
7. Long Grove Park & Skate Park, Epsom

This is a targeted multi agency approach to address specific issues within a locality. Initial results look promising and if this operational approach to targeting multi agency activity shows positive results, then this type of targeting will be applied to new areas in the future.

Resourcing

By reprioritising existing staff resources, the Council has established a new Community Safety and Enforcement post which has been instrumental in enabling the Council to make such strong progress over the past year.

The Council has secured funding totalling £50,000 over two years from the Police and Crime Commissioner to help resource equipment and staff training and two further successful bids totalling £6,000 to the Local Committee which have helped fund additional body worn cameras and mobile CCTV.

The Council has also been in discussions with the Business Improvement District to offer assistance to help them deliver commitments to tackle community safety issues impacting on local businesses including on the high street and retail areas supporting both the day time and evening economies.

The Council will continue to look at opportunities to utilise existing activities, functions and resources in a way which can better contribute to addressing community safety and enforcement issues on the ground. For example making more use of the combined presence that Council services have out in the community, such as utilising existing staff to help gather local intelligence as part of their day to day roles, and using existing communications channels to raise the profile of the Council's community safety and enforcement work.

Staff training and support

Positive staff engagement has been key to the progress that has been made over the past year and to the positive support that staff have given to the Council's new approach to Community Safety and Enforcement. A suite of training opportunities have been developed, with 37 members of staff from across the Council having benefitted from training to date totalling over 260 hours.

Workshops have also taken part with all staff teams relevant to Community Safety and Enforcement to support and facilitate more joint problem solving and information sharing.

Training includes conflict management, use of enforcement legislation, safeguarding, domestic abuse, operational problem solving, crime prevention and communication skills.

Staff have also been proactively consulted and engaged in the decision making for the design of the new high visibility uniforms to ensure that it best matches their different operational needs while ensuring the Council achieves a highly visible presence.

Annual Community Safety and Enforcement Action Plan 2020

	Area of delivery	Action	Target Date	Responsible Officer
1	More effective partnership working	Explore the value and approach to establishing an Epsom and Ewell Community Safety Partnership and if demonstrated, put these new arrangements in place with the agreement of partners.	June 2020	Damian Roberts
2		A minimum of 4 targeted joint enforcement days per year.	December 2020	Rod Brown
3		Explore providing a key partner with the power to apply Community Protection Warnings and Community Protection Notices	June 2020	Rod Brown
4	Underpin greater staff action through effective training and support	Build capacity and confidence within the Council's workforce by delivering relevant training for at least 20 staff with enforcement, safeguarding or community safety responsibilities.	December 2020	Shona Mason, Rod Brown, Ian Dyer
5		Ensure that staff training includes the importance of keeping Members and relevant parties updated on progress	April 2020	Shona Mason, Rod Brown, Ian Dyer
6		Continue to improve safeguarding activity through greater staff awareness and training.	December 2020	Rod Brown with all heads of service
7		Hold an annual workshop for all Council teams and relevant partner agencies involved in community and enforcement work to share learning and best practice	December 2020	Rod Brown

	Area of delivery	Action	Target Date	Responsible Officer
		and identity areas for further improvement		
8		Review the effectiveness of the existing body worn cameras for the Park Rangers and Downs Keepers.	December 2020	Ian Dyer
9	Taking a more coordinated approach with partners	Contribute to multi agency working on community safety and enforcement through the Community Harm and Risk Management Meetings (CHaRMM), Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC), Mapping of Offenders, Locations and Trends (MOLT), and Serious Organised Crime Joint Action Groups (SOCJAG).	December 2020	Rod Brown
10		Work with Surrey Police and colleagues across East Surrey to review the future provision of CCTV in the borough and produce an update report for members.	January 2020	Rod Brown
11		Deliver awareness raising sessions for staff and members on the use of the Partnership Intelligence Form as a way of achieving better crime detection.	May 2020	Rod Brown
12		Carry out regular joint patrols with Surrey Police in at least five geographic areas of the borough.	November 2020	Ian Dyer
13		Continue to organise Joint Action Groups for the remaining identified areas based on current data.	August 2020	Rod Brown

	Area of delivery	Action	Target Date	Responsible Officer
14		Procure and deploy new mobile CCTV facility to support JAG outcomes where identified as a need.	August 2020	Rod Brown
15		Work with relevant partners to complete the borough's first Domestic Homicide Review and ensure that lessons are widely disseminated.	December 2020	Rod Brown
16		Work with landowners to help reduce the vulnerability of land to unauthorised encampments.	May 2020	Amardip Healey
17	Having a more visible presence in the community and with vulnerable groups	Ensure enforcement work is well publicised and utilise the visibility of Council staff to provide added community reassurance and support.	Ongoing	Rod Brown, Ian Dyer, Ruth Ormella Shona Mason
18		Work with faith organisations and community groups to provide more community reassurance around hate crime ie that the statutory authorities find this type of crime to be unacceptable, that perpetrators will be prosecuted, and that efforts will continue to be made to promote mutual understanding and respect between communities.	December 2020	Rod Brown
19	Making greater use of local intelligence	Carry out an annual review on the identified areas subject to JAGs and using available data, to ensure the evidence supports their future inclusion and examine whether there may be further areas.	December 2020	Rod Brown
20		Continue to encourage surrey police to further improve the on-line and 101	June 2020	Rod Brown

	Area of delivery	Action	Target Date	Responsible Officer
		reporting to make it easier to local people to register their concerns.		
21	Providing greater reassurance through more effective communications	Develop a communications plan to promote the good work and successes of the Council in addressing community safety issues in the community.	April 2020	Rod Brown, Shona Mason
22	Resourcing	Explore other potential sources of external funding	December 2020	Rod Brown
23		Write a bid to the Surrey County Council Community Safety Fund for finance to support local community safety work.	July 2020	Rod Brown
24		Explore the scope of drawing in both staff time and financial resources from the Business Improvement District (BID) and Rosebery Housing Association.	June 2020	Rod Brown