

CHAIR'S STATEMENTS TO COUNCIL

Councillor Alex Coley

Chair of the Community and Wellbeing Committee

It has been an almost unique experience these past few months, with many exceptional situations coming to fruition. Some good, some bad. And yet, the more things change the more they stay the same.

Homelessness remains our single biggest item of expenditure. The formula that decides our Homelessness Prevention Grant is undergoing a government consultation which might have a negative impact on our funding. On the other hand we have been successful in winning two funding bids. The first funds a Housing Options Officer and the second is joint funding for the East Surrey Outreach Service. We have also been successful in recruiting a Strategic Housing Manager who knows the borough well.

At the time of writing I await committee approval on our Homelessness and Rough Sleeper Strategy. This is a significant piece of work and will shape our approach for the next five years. In particular by reducing our costs and keeping residents closer to their support networks, jobs and schools.

I would also like to congratulate my colleagues on the Environment & Safe Communities Committee on recent enforcement action. I have campaigned on littering and nitrous oxide use for seven years and I'm grateful to see action. I hope that our newly formed Crime & Disorder sub-committee (of which the Chair of Community & Wellbeing is a permanent member) will use its scrutiny powers to shine a light on other areas where we can make a difference to our community.

Energy costs remain an existential concern at The Rainbow Centre. We have been in discussion with GLL to keep the swimming pool open. Furthermore, the cost of chlorine has more than doubled, compounded by a shortage of supply. Initiatives could include a streamlined winter timetable and moderation of heating and air conditioning. Many pools across the country have been forced to close and we await the outcome of a sustained lobbying effort to see what support the government might offer.

Income generation work at Bourne Hall is underway under the guidance of the Community Services Manager who has taken on the role on an interim basis. There are plans to create a catering hub base in the Community and Wellbeing Centre, to expand the offering of the café and rebrand it as the Flying Saucer Café. This will include a patio space looking onto Bourne Hall Park. The very popular heritage days

have proven how commercially successful this space can be and we will build on this with future events.

Work continues on our Arts, Heritage and Culture Strategy. Our first steering group meeting brought together the brightest minds in the borough and many useful insights were gathered. Of these the following stood out:

1. The need to produce joint bids quickly in response to funding opportunities; a joint framework is being explored
2. A sense of shared creative identity; a workshop has been undertaken
3. The co-ordination of employers, educators and local authority around agreed objectives; these are being developed

I am keen that we join up the elements of being a creative hub with opportunities for skills and employment. In particular how this benefits young people. In November I was given a tour of our new Youth Hub premises in Global House and met the management team. With year 2 funding now agreed, they are well established with local employers and education providers. In year 1 over 200 young people were helped to access training, apprenticeships and employment, as well as building the skills and confidence to succeed.

Coherence in our approach will be key to connecting young people, creativity and the local economy. The findings of our emerging Local Plan's Housing Economic Development Needs Assessment made it clear that Epsom & Ewell has a shortage of industrial space. This is a known requirement for keeping our graduates in the borough when they seek performance, manufacturing and studio space to start new businesses.

We need more housing, but we cannot forget economic infrastructure. Businesses look to locate in specific towns for their distinct offering, not large counties with sprawling geographies and varying opportunity, connectivity and infrastructure. Getting this mix right needs to be locally led.

I have worked cross-party with members from other districts and boroughs to lay bare the missteps at county hall on a Surrey Strategy for Accommodation, Housing and Homes. Not least the risk that Local Plans could be thrown out by a planning inspector if an alternate evidence base were created. Lead members from all the East Surrey districts and boroughs firmly rejected a Surrey wide strategy. It was made plain that Surrey County Council does not have a mandate on this policy area.

As always we work across party lines where we can, we defend our residents where we must and we deliver where we have promised we will.

Councillor John Beckett

Chair of the Environment and Safe Communities Committee

Christmas Parking

The Council is working with the Epsom Business Improvement District (BID) to support the shops and our residents over the Christmas period. Therefore, we have once again agreed to offer free parking in all our Epsom car parks on the 3 Sundays leading up to Christmas. These are Sunday 4th, 11th, and 18th December 2022.

SCC On-Street Resident Parking Permits

From 1 November 2022, Surrey County Council has increased the charges for their on-street Resident Parking Permits. The lowest permit increase is 33% going up to a staggering 73%

Permit 1	£50 - £80	60%
Permit 2	£75- £100	33%
Permit 3+	£75 - £130	73%

For more information, please see here <https://www.surreycc.gov.uk/roads-and-transport/parking/where-to-park/review-2022>

Car Parking general

Work is currently underway in Depot Road Car Park to install two charge points for electric vehicles. This follows on from the installations in Hook Road and the Ashley Centre and this will be our first public charge points in a surface car park. Works to install EV points in Dorset House, Ewell is also due to be completed by the time this report is published.

Hook Road Car Park

The Council has negotiated with the organisation that runs the Hook Road Arena Sunday car boot for it to move, during the winter months, into the lower levels of Hook Road Car Park. The car park currently is shut on a Sunday so this will bring in much need extra revenue to the council during these difficult times, as well as helping a local business keep continuity to a well-attended event within the borough. Conversations with Surrey Fire and Rescue are also underway to make sure that the venue is safe.

Surrey County Council

The Districts and Boroughs within Surrey currently undertake several tasks on behalf of the county, the main two being Environmental Maintenance and On Street Car Parking Enforcement. Surrey County Council has decided that it now wishes to centralise these activities and take these services back from the Boroughs and Districts, possibly by April of next year.

Negotiations are still taking place but there appears to be a big difference in the level of services the residents of Epsom and Ewell will receive in the future. SCC currently operates only 4 grass cuts to the highway verges per annum whereas EEBC does around 6-8 per annum. Also, it is feared that the flexibility of contacting EEBC on local parking issues will be lost when this service is centralised.

Environmental Enforcement

The first Fix Penalty Notice (FPN) was issued by EEBC Environmental Officers for a littering offence in Adelphi Road.

Tree Strategy

After this item was presented in its draft form to the E&SC committee, a targeted consultation commenced on the 7th November and will close on the 12th December 2022

Markets

The successful monthly Ewell Artisan Market has grown each month in popularity and is currently at 40 stalls with a waiting list.

Climate Change Action Plan

The Climate Change Member Working Group has met and has reviewed the Councils Action Plan. This will be considered at next ESC meeting in January.

Councillor Steven McCormick
Chair of the Licensing & Planning Policy Committee

An updated Taxi Policy which will be on the agenda at full council for consideration and adoption quickly followed with an update on emissions as soon as a consultation and committee availability allows.

Local Plan work progresses towards publication of our draft Local Plan (Regulation 18) on the 1st February 2023.

Significant work has contributed to the creation of this draft local plan and this is the point when all residents and interested parties have their chance to have their say and input into the plan that will shape our borough for years to come.

Members have been heavily involved at all key stages of the evidence based approach to the local plan with several briefing sessions taking place covering:

- Spatial Strategy review session
- Land Availability Assessment
- Housing and Economic Development Needs Assessment
- Local Plan Viability Study

A walk through of the draft local plan will take place with members on 7th December.

The councils four year plan 2020-2024 has several priorities that rely on the the local plan to help deliver:

- Enhance the borough's natural assets, preserving and increasing biodiversity
- Encourage high quality design which balances the built environment with new open green spaces
- Work with partners to keep our borough safe and secure
- Promote Epsom & Ewell as a great place to live, work and study, and encourage inward investment
- Work with partners to develop and improve transport and infrastructure with particular emphasis on sustainable travel options

Please help inform our residents and interested parties to input into the local plan consultation starting on 1st February 2023.