

Council
17 July 2018

QUESTION 1

Question from Councillor Clive Smitheram to the Chairman of the Strategy and Resources Committee, Councillor Eber Kingston

Will the Chairman of Strategy and Resources please provide details on the number of unauthorised encampments, including site hopping, there have been in Epsom and Ewell in the last three months on EEBC, SCC and private land.

Will the Chairman of Strategy and Resources also provide details of this Council's response to the unauthorised encampments on EEBC land, both during the event and after the unauthorised encampments have left?

Reply:

To our knowledge, there have been eight unauthorised encampments in the Borough within the past 3 months. These are broken down as follows:

1. Five on council owned land
2. One on highway land
3. Two on private land

Of these eight instances we believe three have involved site-hopping. Site hopping has occurred between council land and from the highway to council land and back to the highway.

On being notified of an encampment on council land the relevant Borough Council officers have taken the appropriate action at the earliest opportunity. Where an encampment has occurred outside office hours, action is taken the next day and if necessary site visits undertaken during weekends. The Council is required to undertake welfare checks in regard to education, housing and medical needs/requirements. If the checks raise no issues, Council officers are then able to serve a direction to leave land. Unfortunately, a direction to leave does not always result in the unauthorised encampments moving on and therefore our legal team will apply to the Courts for an order leave.

The council liaises with the Police, who are sometimes asked to support the work of Council officers. For larger encampments, the police are asked to consider using their own powers to direct the encampment to leave the land. We have been pleased with the recent support we have had the local police in this regard.

During the time of an unauthorised encampment our officers will often provide waste bins and these bins are collected by Operational Services once an encampment has moved on. After an encampment has left, Operational Services will clear the land as a matter of priority and any damaged entry points and fencing are repaired as required.

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In order to keep residents informed of the Borough Council's actions the council website is updated regularly to provide residents with information on the status of the encampments. The website also includes an information page for residents detailing the process that the Borough Council must follow when dealing with unauthorised encampments.

It can be found at <https://www.epsom-ewell.gov.uk/residents/unauthorised-encampments>

QUESTION 2

Question from Councillor Michael Arthur to the Chairman of the Strategy and Resources Committee, Councillor Eber Kington

Following the announcement that the House of Fraser store is set to close within the Ashley Centre, what action has the Council taken in regard to that potential closure and the likely requirement for a new tenant or new use for the vacated areas

As the freehold owner of the Ashley Centre, the Council actively maintains a close working relationship with the shopping centre owner - the long leaseholder represented by CBRE Global Investors. We meet CBRE on a regular basis with the last such meeting being held yesterday (Monday) and which was arranged immediately following the House of Fraser announcement.

The Council and CBRE's interests are fully aligned in that if, as expected, House of Fraser vacate the Ashley Centre, the emphasis must be on finding a new tenant as soon as possible. In this regard, CBRE are looking at all available options including the division of the accommodation if a single occupant is not found. The Council has offered CBRE its full assistance in any way it can help.

Separately to the officer meetings with CBRE I sent a letter on 14th June, jointly signed with Chris Grayling MP, to House of Fraser Chief Executive Alex Williamson asking him to reconsider the decision to close the Epsom store and offering to support House of Fraser in measures to improve the viability of the store. As yet I have not received a reply.

QUESTION 3

Question from Councillor Liz Frost to the Chairman of the Strategy and Resources Committee, Councillor Eber Kington

Will the Chairman of Strategy and Resources please give an update on progress in regard to the proposed statue of Emily Wilding Davison in the town centre?

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Reply:

The concept of placing a statue of Emily Wilding Davison in the town centre has come from individuals in the community and is being brought to reality through the work of the Emily Davison Memorial Project (EDMP), a community group led by Sarah Dewing. EDMP have set up a website www.emilydavisonproject.org which explains their role, the design of the statue and the funding of the project via sponsorship. Therefore my answer to this question from Councillor Liz Frost relates to what the Borough Council has been doing to provide EDMP with all the necessary support and influence to deliver the Emily Davison statue for the Town.

On behalf of the EDMP the Borough Council secured Surrey County Council's agreement to the location of the statue within the Market Square on one of EDMPs preferred sites. The location of the statue is now part of the Plan E market square plan.

The Borough Council has also agreed to take ownership of the statue and is working with the EDMP on a Memorandum of Understanding to ensure that the transfer of ownership is legally agreed and arrangements for the on-going maintenance of the statue are understood and in place.

The Borough Council has confirmed that, as the (future) owners of the statue, no planning consent will be required and that deemed consent applies in this case.

These arrangements, and the site location agreement, have provided the EDMP with the certainty needed for the project group to move forward with seeking sponsorship for the statue.

Finally our nominated Borough link officer continues to work closely with EDMP and will do so until the project reaches its conclusion.

QUESTION 4

Question from Councillor Guy Robbins to the Chairman of the Strategy and Resources Committee, Councillor Eber Kington

Will the Chairman of Strategy and Resources give an update on the proposal to create an arts and cultural centre at Horton Chapel?

Reply:

As you will be aware the Borough Council has for a long time sought to bring Horton Chapel into community use and, following a bidding process in September 2016, the Council agreed to proceed with a scheme put forward by the Horton Chapel Arts & Heritage Society.

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Since then the Horton Chapel Arts & Heritage Society has worked tirelessly to produce a development plan and secure lottery funding to redevelop Horton Chapel into an arts and heritage centre. I was very pleased to hear that the Society, despite enormous competition, secured grant funding from the Heritage Lottery Fund totalling £1.44 million. In doing so the scheme was recognized for its ability to deliver high quality outcomes and value for money.

I was pleased to read that, in his announcement of the successful lottery bid, the Chair of the Horton Chapel Arts & Heritage Society thanked “Kathryn Beldon and her team who have provided us with a lot of help, encouragement and professional support along the way”.

A condition of the HLF grant is for Horton Chapel to be transferred to the Horton Chapel Arts & Heritage Society and the Council is working with the Society to secure this as soon as possible.

Finally, the Borough Council ring-fenced £1.45 million for the redevelopment of Horton Chapel for community use, funding which will be transferred to the Horton Chapel Arts & Heritage Society. That money, alongside the lottery funding, will enable restoration and refurbishment works to go ahead with the intention, I understand, that Horton Chapel will re-open as an arts and cultural centre at the end of 2019.

QUESTION 5

Question from Councillor Tina Mountain to the Chairman of the Strategy and Resources Committee, Councillor Eber Kingston

Over 5 million pounds has been collected from CIL payments. How does the Council anticipate using this money for the good of the Community?

Reply:

The purpose of the [community infrastructure levy](#) is to raise funds from developers who are undertaking new building projects to help pay for infrastructure that is needed to support new development. It can be used to fund a wide range of community infrastructure improvements. These could include:

- New school, hospitals and other health and social care facilities
- transport schemes – including highway improvements, new cycle and pedestrian routes and public transport enhancements
- parks, open spaces and leisure facilities

The mechanisms for distributing money collected through the Levy can vary from authority to authority. In Epsom & Ewell, our Levy is divided as follows:

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- 80% of our Levy is identified for strategic improvements. We require that such schemes are identified within our Infrastructure Delivery Plan, which is a document that sits alongside our Local Plan. The Infrastructure Delivery Plan identifies the specific community infrastructure improvements that will support new development planned for through the Local Plan – as they take place over the next fifteen-twenty years. It also clearly identifies the use to which the 80% CIL money is being used for the good of the community. The Borough's Infrastructure Delivery Plan can be found on the council's website <https://www.epsom-ewell.gov.uk/sites/default/files/documents/residents/planning/planning-policy/community-infrastructure-levy-cil/Infrastructure%20delivery%20plan%202013.pdf>

The Borough Council's S&R Committee considers bids to allocate monies from the 80% - those bids are assessed and prioritized against the Infrastructure Delivery Plan.

- 15% of our Levy is set aside for local community improvements. We have recently run a pilot scheme where such schemes could be promoted and bids made by councillors for the good of local communities and borough residents generally. The pilot scheme was open to all councillors to submit bids on behalf of communities' and those bids are currently being assessed against a criteria agreed by the S&R Committee.

Finally we use the remaining 5% of our Levy to administer the whole process. This includes the day-to-day implementation, monitoring, charging, recovery and enforcement, in addition to administering the distribution of collected funds. It is important that we invest in these processes to ensure that we optimise the amount we collect. To date our investment of the 5% has been very successful – as evidenced by the scale of money collected since July 2014.