

Public Document Pack

Legal and Democratic Services



To: All Members of the Council

Dear Councillor

COUNCIL - TUESDAY, 21ST JULY, 2020 ,
<https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/2416960062429310735>

Please find attached the following reports for the meeting of the Council to be held on Tuesday, 21st July, 2020. These were not included in the original Agenda pack published previously.

5. CHAIRMEN'S STATEMENTS (Pages 3 - 12)

To receive statements from the Chairs/Chairmen of the Council's Policy Committees, briefing Members on current events and issues relating to the relevant Committee's area of work.

8. LOCAL GOVERNMENT STRUCTURE IN SURREY (Pages 13 - 18)

To develop a response to Surrey County Council's statements on reorganising the local government structure in Surrey.

For further information, please contact Democratic Services, democraticservices@epsom-ewell.gov.uk or tel: 01372 732000

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'K. Beldan'.

Chief Executive

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CHAIRMEN'S STATEMENTS

Head of Service: Amardip Healy, Chief Legal Officer
Wards affected: (All Wards);
Urgent Decision?(yes/no) No
If yes, reason urgent decision required:
Appendices (attached): Appendix 1 – Chairs/Chairmen's Statements

Summary

To receive statements from the Chairs/Chairmen of the Council's Policy Committees, briefing Members on current events and issues relating to the relevant Committee's area of work.

Recommendation (s)

The Council is asked to:

- (1) consider the Statements from the Chairs/Chairmen of the Policy Committees in accordance with Standing Orders.**

1 Reason for Recommendation

- 2 Part 4 of the Council's Constitution (Rules of Procedure, FCR 11) sets out that the Chair/Chairman of each of the Policy Committees is able to submit a statement to be included as a standard item on the agenda for each meeting (excluding the Annual meeting and budget meeting). The statement will brief members on the current events and issues relating to the relevant committee's area of work.

3 Background

- 3.1 The following statements have been submitted for inclusion on the agenda for this meeting, and are attached at Appendix 1:
 - 3.1.1 Chair of the Environment and Safe Communities Committee, Councillor Neil Dallen
 - 3.1.2 Chair of the Community and Wellbeing Committee, Councillor Barry Nash

3.1.3 Chairman of the Licensing and Planning Policy Committee,
Councillor David Reeve

3.2 The procedure of questions on Chairs/Chairmen's Statements is as follows:

3.2.1 Each Chair/Chairman in the order listed on the agenda presents their Statements to the meeting;

3.2.2 At the conclusion of all the Chairs/ Chairmen's statements, 15 minutes will be set aside for Members to ask questions on the statement of any Chair/ Chairman.

4 Risk Assessment

Legal or other duties

4.1 Impact Assessment

4.1.1 No comments are provided on Chairs/Chairmen's Statements.

4.2 Crime & Disorder

4.2.1 No comments are provided on Chairs/Chairmen's Statements.

4.3 Safeguarding

4.3.1 No comments are provided on Chairs/Chairmen's Statements.

4.4 Dependencies

4.4.1 No comments are provided on Chairs/Chairmen's Statements.

4.5 Other

4.5.1 No comments are provided on Chairs/Chairmen's Statements.

5 Financial Implications

5.1 No comments are provided on Chairs/Chairmen's Statements.

5.2 **Section 151 Officer's comments:** No comments are provided on Chairs/Chairmen's Statements.

6 Legal Implications

6.1 No comments are provided on Chairs/Chairmen's Statements.

6.2 **Monitoring Officer's comments:** No comments are provided on Chairs/Chairmen's Statements.

7 Policies, Plans & Partnerships

7.1 **Council's Key Priorities:** The following Key Priorities are engaged:

No comments are provided on Chairs/Chairmen's Statements.

7.2 **Service Plans:** No comments are provided on Chairs/Chairmen's Statements.

7.1 **Climate & Environmental Impact of recommendations:** No comments are provided on Chairs/Chairmen's Statements.

7.2 **Sustainability Policy & Community Safety Implications:** No comments are provided on Chairs/Chairmen's Statements.

7.3 **Partnerships:** No comments are provided on Chairs/Chairmen's Statements.

8 Background papers

8.1 The documents referred to in compiling this report are as follows:

Previous reports:

- None

Other papers:

- Constitution of Epsom & Ewell Borough Council

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CHAIR/ CHAIRMEN'S STATEMENTS TO COUNCIL

Councillor Neil Dallen

Chair of the Environment & Safe Communities Committee

Climate Change

The action plan has been agreed but 'lockdown' and the Coronavirus emergency actions have had to take priority.

The 'lockdown' certainly showed improvements to climate change both locally and throughout the world. We now need to try to retain some of these gains.

Car parking

Free car parking was provided during 'lockdown'. The new charges were implemented as planned and are now being used.

Waste and Recycling

The Government Waste Strategy paper was delayed due to the Coronavirus emergency and is now expected later this year. It is likely to make wide ranging changes that will affect the way we recycle and collect waste. For example they are considering a deposit scheme for plastic bottles.

Grass cutting

Despite reduced staff levels and other priorities our teams have done a great job and managed to keep the verges cut and weeds down during these difficult times.

Safe Communities

An item on the agenda of the Environment and Safe Communities meeting this month is the proposal to establish a local statutory Community Safety Partnership for Epsom and Ewell. This should enable the Council and its Partners to focus attention and resources on the Borough's needs.

There has been no progress on CCTV due to higher priority Coronavirus emergency tasks. An update report will come to an Environment and Safe Communities committee this year.

Councillor Barry Nash
Chair of the Community and Wellbeing Committee

As we move to the recovery phase of the coronavirus pandemic, it is important to acknowledge and recognise the crucial work of all our Officers over the last four months, during the pandemic crisis.

I know from the Community and Wellbeing Committee work areas, we had officers from our venues, operational services, health and wellbeing, leisure development and community and voluntary sector teams, all working on our emergency response.

However, special thanks for this impressive and co-ordinated response to the coronavirus pandemic, must go to every service area across the council. I would like to take this opportunity to thank the other Chairmen, for the contribution from staff in their service areas to our response.

The Community Hub, which was set up in a matter of days, has been an operational success story with 2,542 shielded residents being contacted by our Officer and volunteer team, to provide support and comfort during these challenging times. In addition, the Community Hub has contacted 770 registered vulnerable residents who also needed support, which was often followed up by welfare visits to those with specific needs. I would like to thank my councillor colleagues, who gave up their time to volunteer and support with phone calls to vulnerable residents.

I would also like to give my appreciation to Operational Services and Venues, who re-deployed the Ranger and Venue teams, providing invaluable support to our vulnerable residents by showing a friendly face with daily deliveries of crucial services, including Pharmacy medicines, Home Shopping and Meals at Home Service, as well as delivering the Special VE Day complimentary roast dinner to 200 vulnerable residents.

In addition, working with Age Concern Epsom & Ewell, provided great continuity and support to the Council and I would like to acknowledge the outstanding work and 'best practice' undertaken by the Chief Officer, Dorah May Hancock and her fantastic team of volunteers, who continue to provide an essential support service to our senior and most vulnerable residents. We also need to recognise the work of the Foodbank in supporting the most vulnerable in the community, which is even more important during these difficult times.

The Housing Team have been working tirelessly during the pandemic, to find suitable temporary accommodation (TA) for our residents. In line with govt emergency guidelines, the team provided additional accommodation for the most vulnerable residents, which increased the monthly TA numbers to 93 households.

As we move to the recovery phase, we will be working hard to find suitable outcomes for those in nightly paid accommodation and reduce TA costs. The forthcoming Defoe Court project will provide up to 24 flexible single units to accommodate residents, which will hopefully be up and running soon, helping to support those currently living in nightly paid accommodation.

As to the future of Epsom Hospital, the decision to build a new Acute Hospital site was confirmed on 3 July by the Clinical Commissioning Group, with Sutton as the chosen location. Although I have mixed feelings about the decision, especially as we lobbied hard as a council for Epsom to be the preferred site for the new hospital, I feel we now need to embrace the fact that our residents will have access to state-of-the-art healthcare. However, it is crucial we continue to work with the Hospital Trust, to ensure that resident concerns outlined in the public consultation feedback are effectively addressed, such as issues around transport and travel, bed numbers, services for older residents and more deprived communities.

In addition, I look forward to the continuity of the 85% of services being maintained at Epsom Hospital, as well as the commencement date of the capital building repair programme at the hospital site. <https://improvinghealthcaretogether.org.uk/green-light-for-500m-investment-for-epsom-and-st-helier-hospitals-and-brand-new-specialist-hospital-in-sutton/>

Councillor David Reeve

Chair of the Licensing & Planning Policy Committee

I would like to update Council on a range of planning matters which have been impacted over recent months by the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic and other external factors.

The impact of Covid-19 on planning policy

The UK Government introduced measures to reduce the spread of Coronavirus on the 23 March 2020, requiring people to stay at home where possible and introducing measures to 'social distance'.

The Coronavirus pandemic has had significant impact on all aspects of day to day life, including how the Council operates and how it makes its decisions. The advice from Government in both March and May 2020 is that plan making continue as much as possible with adjustments to timetables where necessary. The Government has also encouraged Councils to look at new and innovative ways of operating including exploring new technologies where appropriate, and has provided further guidance in relation to Statement of Community involvement.

The current Statement of Community Involvement was published in November 2019. In light of the Government's latest guidance, it is now intended that a revised Statement of Community Involvement will come forward in October 2020 to Licensing and Planning Policy Committee, to seek agreement to public consultation as part of Regulation 18 process.

The national social distancing requirements established as part of the lockdown and the temporary suspension of most Committee meetings has meant the previously planned consultation on the Local Plan has had to be rescheduled. However, it's my intention to press ahead as soon as possible, keeping delays to an absolute minimum. A paper on the revised timetable for the Local Plan, including the timing of the forthcoming Regulation 18 consultation, will come to the first reconvened meeting of the Licensing and Planning Policy Committee (LPPC) on 6 August 2020. This meeting will take place online.

Other external factors

Government Reforms to the Planning System -

The Government has announced that it intends to bring forward fundamental reforms of the planning system in England. It is anticipated that a Planning White Paper will be published for consultation this month. The full extent of proposed reform is, as yet unclear.

Household projections -

In late June 2020 the Office for National Statistics (ONS) published its latest 2018 population and household growth forecasts. This projects a substantial reduction in the growth of household numbers during the next plan period up to 2038.

Initial analysis of the ONS data shows that using Government's current method of calculation, demand for new homes in the borough could be in the order of 215 dwellings per annum, compared to 579 dwellings per annum based on the previous 2014 ONS projections. The government currently requires Councils to use the older 2014 ONS projections.

Along with Member colleagues and officers I will be pressing Government to accept that we can use the latest ONS projections as the basis for determining our local housing need. However, the Government have already indicated that they intend to publish for consultation a revised methodology for calculating future housing need in the autumn of this year.

Thank you, Councillors

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LOCAL GOVERNMENT STRUCTURE IN SURREY

Head of Service: Amardip Healy, Chief Legal Officer
Wards affected: (All Wards);
Urgent Decision?(yes/no) No
If yes, reason urgent decision required:
Appendices (attached): N/a

Summary

To develop a response to Surrey County Council's statements on reorganising the local government structure in Surrey.

Recommendation (s)

The Council is asked to:

- (1) Agree this Council's strategic principles on the local government structure debate for Surrey, be:**
 - i. local democratic accountability;**
 - ii. devolving decision making to the lowest level commensurate with effective delivery;**
 - iii. efficient and cost effective service delivery;**
 - iv. a local authority's knowledge of people and place.**
- (2) Authorise the Chief Executive to start discussions with all local authorities in Surrey to consider the future structure of local government in Surrey which respect the principles set out at recommendation (1) above.**

1 Reason for Recommendation

- 1.1 The Leader of Surrey County Council (SCC) has announced his plans to examine the structure of government in Surrey ahead of the government's planned White Paper on devolution and reform in the autumn. In his statement to Council on the 7 July, the Leader stated

“By working with government ahead of this White Paper, I believe we can secure greater powers and responsibility, and we can examine what the right structure of government is for Surrey’s future - to tackle the challenges we face and take the opportunities that are coming our way”

“We will continue our work in exploring the options, and engage our partners across Surrey, with a view to coming back to Council in early autumn.”

- 1.2 To ensure Epsom and Ewell are able to contribute to this debate and respond to proposals for reorganisation, Council is being asked to authorise the officers to work with partners to develop a response which best meet the needs of local residents.

2 Background

- 2.1 The Devolution White Paper due to be published this Autumn will set out the government’s plans for “economic recovery and renewal, and for levelling up opportunity, prosperity, and well-being across the country. These plans will include restructuring our local institutions to deliver these outcomes, establishing more mayors and more unitary councils the populations of which will depend on local circumstances but as a rule of thumb are expected to be substantially in excess of 300k-400k.”
- 2.2 Under current legislation it is open to the Secretary of State, subject to consultation and Parliamentary approval, to implement if he thinks fit any unitary proposal submitted by a council in response to an invitation which any council may request. In considering a unitary proposal the Secretary of State expects to have regard to the extent it is likely to support the delivery of the outcomes sought in the White Paper.
- 2.3 The preferred option of the County Council, is to have one single-tier unitary council, responsible for all of the functions and the delivery of the services which are currently provided by the County Council and eleven District and Borough Councils.
- 2.4 Some of the recent cases for change have arisen out of government intervention. One key example is the division of Northamptonshire County Council, which resulted from the County Council failing to comply with its duty under the Local Government Act 1999 to provide best value in the delivery of its services. The County has been divided into two unitary authorities.
- 2.5 To shape the future of local government in Surrey, this Council wishes to keep its residents at the heart of any plans. This requires an understanding of the impact of any change on the Borough’s communities and the services they need and use.

- 2.6 A unitary authority has around 900 statutory duties which fall within around 120 functions. These are currently divided between the two tier existing structures. However, there are also a range of discretionary services which many of the District and Boroughs provide to their residents and businesses, and indeed there are some services which the Tier Two authorities provide on behalf of the County. The future delivery of these key services need to be considered within the context of the foreseeable challenging financial environment.
- 2.7 Where reorganisation has happened elsewhere, it has followed detailed business cases, political and public debate, and Government approval.
- 2.8 The County Council have now published a report to its Cabinet meeting on the 21 July, setting out its proposed position and reasons for such. It states “Given the new and growing challenges faced by Surrey, even before Covid-19, the presents a significant opportunity to better organise local government... in a more effective and financially sustainable manner”.
- 2.9 To shape the future of local government in Surrey, this Council wishes to keep its residents at the heart of any plans. This requires an understanding of the impact of any change on the Borough’s communities and the services they need and use.
- 2.10 The Council believes having a set of strategic principles, will help the Council to influence the debate on the local government structure within and amongst Surrey Authorities. These principles are:
 - a. local democratic accountability
 - b. devolving decision making to the lowest level commensurate with effective delivery
 - c. efficient and cost effective service delivery
 - d. a local authority’s knowledge of people and place

3 Risk Assessment

Legal or other duties

3.1 Impact Assessment

- 3.1.1 There are no specific equality considerations associated with this report.

3.2 Crime & Disorder

3.2.1 There are no crime and disorder considerations associated with this report.

3.3 Safeguarding

3.3.1 There are no safeguarding considerations associated with this report.

3.4 Dependencies

3.4.1 The ability to respond is dependent on staff resources across a number of departments. The impact of Covid19 has put pressure on all resources and this will remain the case for some time.

3.5 Other

3.5.1 None.

4 Financial Implications

4.1 The project will have resourcing implications and a report may need to be taken to Strategy and Resources Committee to make available a budget.

4.2 **Section 151 Officer's comments:** none arising from the contents of this report.

5 Legal Implications

5.1 There are no specific legal implications arising from this report. The Local Government & Public Involvement in Health Act 2007, empowers the Secretary for State to invite proposals in respect of a single tier of local government. There are also provisions for the merge of two district Councils into a single district, and for one to split into two.

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

6 Policies, Plans & Partnerships

6.1 **Council's Key Priorities:** The Council's Four Year Plan sets five overall themes, reflecting the priorities for the Borough until 2040. It recognises the challenges, and sets out a road map of how the Council will continue to drive to work as efficiently and effectively as possible.

6.2 **Service Plans:** The matter is not included within the current Service Delivery Plan.

6.3 **Climate & Environmental Impact of recommendations:** There are no specific climate and environmental recommendations associated with this report.

- 6.4 **Sustainability Policy & Community Safety Implications:** There are no specific sustainability and community safety implications associated with this report.
- 6.5 **Partnerships:** The report proposes to work with likeminded authorities to develop a response and or proposals for Surrey.

7 Background papers

- 7.1 The documents referred to in compiling this report are as follows:

Previous reports:

- None

Other papers:

- Local Government in England: structures, House of Commons Briefing Paper, Number 07104, 8 June 2020
<https://researchbriefings.files.parliament.uk/documents/SN07104/SN07104.pdf>
- Northamptonshire County Council Best Value Inspection, January – March 2018, Max caller leader Inspector
https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/690731/Best_Value_Inspection_NCC.pdf
- Surrey County Council's Leader's Statement to Council, 7 July 2020,
<https://mycouncil.surreycc.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=121&MId=7485&Ver=4>
- Report to Cabinet, Surrey County Council, " Recovery and Devolution White Paper: Opportunities and Benefits for Surrey"
<https://mycouncil.surreycc.gov.uk/documents/s68594/RECOVERY%20AND%20DEVOLUTION%20WHITE%20PAPER-Cabinet%2021%20July%202020.pdf>
- Letter dated 10 July 2020 from Leader of Surrey County Council to Secretary of State
<https://mycouncil.surreycc.gov.uk/documents/s68595/Annex%201-%20correspondence%20to%20SoS%20Re.%20Public%20Service%20Reform.pdf>

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