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Legal and Democratic Services



To: All Members of the Community and Wellbeing Committee

Dear Councillor,

COMMUNITY AND WELLBEING COMMITTEE - THURSDAY, 10TH JUNE, 2021 ,
<https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/rt/4304171723054780430>

Please find attached the following document(s) for the meeting of the Community and Wellbeing Committee to be held on Thursday, 10th June, 2021.

1. **QUESTION TIME** (Pages 3 - 4)

To take any questions from members of the Public.

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

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "K. Beldan". The signature is written in a cursive style.

Chief Executive

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Question Time

Written question 1 from Mr Alex Duval, resident of the Borough:

The Terms of Reference of the Community and Wellbeing Committee include:

- 1 The development and promotion of sport, leisure, cultural and recreational activities.
- 2 Management of parks, open spaces and countryside and allotments.

In this context, I am delighted to see the focus EEBC is giving to the future protection and preservation of the natural environment within the borough.

Living on the edge of Horton Country Park ('HCP'), which falls within the protected Green Belt, I have been concerned to see the very considerable amount of development, particularly over the last two years, of land within HCP that is leased out by EEBC. I believe several Councillors will be aware of, or familiar with, the developments that have been undertaken, and those for which further planning and licensing applications have been submitted.

These developments reduce the openness of the site, remove natural green areas on which wildlife depends, and further increase the already considerable noise impact on local wildlife and neighbouring residents alike. Many of the recent developments (which fall within Epsom & Ewell Critical Drainage Areas) also increase the flooding risk to parts of HCP and nearby properties, and will therefore further negatively impact the wellbeing of residential neighbours.

Given the ongoing threat to native wildlife from the development of land, HCP provides a refuge for many rare species of birds, animals, insects and plants. During the course of the pandemic, HCP has been an invaluable source of peace and escape for the borough's residents, supporting both the mental and physical health of the hundreds of people who have used the park each day. It also continues to afford our children the opportunity to reconnect with nature.

What steps does EEBC, and particularly the Community and Wellbeing Committee, intend to take to protect the invaluable benefits that the whole of HCP brings, ensure that leased land is used only for the purposes for which it was granted, and avoid further inappropriate development within HCP's boundaries?"

Response from the Chair of the Community and Wellbeing Committee:

Dear Mr Duval,

Thank you for the question and for representing a number of residents who are taking an interest in this issue.

The Community and Wellbeing Committee is committed to promoting the wellbeing of residents in the Borough with Horton Country Park playing an important role.

The concerns you have raised over inappropriate development are being taken extremely seriously by both this Committee and the wider Council. In response to your question, I can confirm that the Council's Planning and Enforcement Team visited the site last week and are in the process of assessing their findings. Should the inspection reveal any unauthorised development then the appropriate enforcement action will be taken.

In the unlikely event that a tenant of the Council is unwilling to comply with any resulting planning enforcement action, the tenant's refusal to remedy any inappropriate development will constitute a material breach under the Council's ground lease. Should this occur, the Council's Estates Team will take the appropriate action.

I hope this provides comfort that your concerns are being addressed.