

Public Document Pack

Democratic Services



COMMUNITY AND WELLBEING COMMITTEE

Thursday 22 June 2023 at 7.45 pm

Place: Council Chamber, Epsom Town Hall

Online access to this meeting is available on YouTube: [Link to online broadcast](#)

The members listed below are summoned to attend the Community and Wellbeing Committee meeting, on the day and at the time and place stated, to consider the business set out in this agenda.

Councillor Clive Woodbridge (Chair)	Councillor Alison Kelly
Councillor Bernice Froud (Vice-Chair)	Councillor Rachel King
Councillor Kate Chinn	Councillor Lucie McIntyre
Councillor Shanice Goldman	Councillor Darren Talbot

Yours sincerely

Chief Executive

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

EMERGENCY EVACUATION PROCEDURE

No emergency drill is planned to take place during the meeting. If the fire alarm sounds continuously, or if you are instructed to do so, you must leave the building by the nearest available exit. You will be directed to the nearest exit by council staff. It is vital that you follow their instructions.

- You should proceed calmly; do not run and do not use the lifts;
- Do not stop to collect personal belongings;
- Once you are outside, please do not wait immediately next to the building, but move to the assembly point at Dullshot Green and await further instructions; and
- Do not re-enter the building until told that it is safe to do so.

Public information

Please note that this meeting will be held at the Town Hall, Epsom and will be available to observe live using free YouTube software.

A link to the online address for this meeting is provided on the first page of this agenda. A limited number of seats will be available on a first-come first-served basis in the public gallery at the Town Hall. If you wish to observe the meeting from the public gallery, please arrive at the Town Hall reception before the start of the meeting. A member of staff will show you to the seating area. For further information please contact Democratic Services, email: democraticservices@epsom-ewell.gov.uk, telephone: 01372 732000.

Information about the terms of reference and membership of this Committee are available on the [Council's website](#). The website also provides copies of agendas, reports and minutes.

Agendas, reports and minutes for this Committee are also available on the free Modern.Gov app for iPad, Android and Windows devices. For further information on how to access information regarding this Committee, please email us at democraticservices@epsom-ewell.gov.uk.

Exclusion of the Press and the Public

There are no matters scheduled to be discussed at this meeting that would appear to disclose confidential or exempt information under the provisions Schedule 12A of the Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985. Should any such matters arise during the course of discussion of the below items or should the Chair agree to discuss any other such matters on the grounds of urgency, the Committee may wish to resolve to exclude the press and public by virtue of the private nature of the business to be transacted.

Questions and statements from the Public

Up to 30 minutes will be set aside for questions and statements from members of the public at meetings of this Committee. Any member of the public who lives, works, attends an educational establishment or owns or leases land in the Borough may ask a question or make a statement on matters within the Terms of Reference of the Committee.

All questions must consist of one question only and cannot consist of multiple parts. Questions and statements cannot relate to planning or licensing committees matters, the personal affairs of an individual, or a matter which is exempt from disclosure or confidential under the Local Government Act 1972. Questions which in the view of the Chair are defamatory, offensive, vexatious or frivolous will not be accepted. Each question or statement will be limited to 3 minutes in length.

If you wish to ask a question or make a statement at a meeting of this Committee, please contact Democratic Services at: democraticservices@epsom-ewell.gov.uk

Questions must be received in writing by Democratic Services by noon on the third working day before the day of the meeting. For this meeting this is **Noon, 19 June**.

A summary of statements must be received by Democratic Services by noon on the working day before the day of the meeting. For this meeting this is **Noon, 21 June**.

For more information on public speaking protocol at Committees, please see [Annex 4.2](#) of the Epsom & Ewell Borough Council Operating Framework.

Filming and recording of meetings

The Council allows filming, recording and photography at its public meetings. By entering the Council Chamber and using the public gallery, you are consenting to being filmed and to the possible use of those images and sound recordings.

Members of the Press who wish to film, record or photograph a public meeting should contact the Council's Communications team prior to the meeting by email at: communications@epsom-ewell.gov.uk

Filming or recording must be overt and persons filming should not move around the room whilst filming nor should they obstruct proceedings or the public from viewing the meeting. The use of flash photography, additional lighting or any non-handheld devices, including tripods, will not be allowed.

AGENDA

1. QUESTION AND STATEMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC

To take any questions or statements from members of the Public.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Members are asked to declare the existence and nature of any Disclosable Pecuniary Interests in respect of any item of business to be considered at the meeting.

3. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING (Pages 5 - 8)

The Committee is asked to confirm as a true record the Minutes of the Meeting of the Committee held on 17 January 2023 (attached) and to authorise the Chair to sign them.

4. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT (Pages 9 - 14)

To set out proposals on how the Council will better engage with residents to receive feedback on services and better understand residents' needs

This page is intentionally left blank

Minutes of the Meeting of the COMMUNITY AND WELLBEING COMMITTEE held at the Council Chamber, Epsom Town Hall on 17 January 2023

PRESENT -

Councillor Alex Coley (Chair); Councillor Christine Cleveland (Vice-Chair); Councillors Bernice Froud, Luke Giles, Debbie Monksfield, Julie Morris, Phil Neale, Peter Webb and Chris Frost (as nominated substitute for Councillor Christine Howells)

In Attendance: Councillor Bernie Muir

Absent: Councillor Christine Howells and Councillor Guy Robbins

Officers present: Brendan Bradley (Head of Finance), Rod Brown (Head of Housing and Community), Ian Dyer (Head of Operational Services), Mark Shephard (Head of Property and Regeneration), Richard Appiah-Ampofo (Senior Accountant), Rachel Kundasamy (Health and Wellbeing Officer) and Dan Clackson (Democratic Services Officer)

14 QUESTION TIME

No questions were received from members of the public.

15 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Chris Frost, Other Interest: In the interest of openness and transparency, Councillor Chris Frost declared that he was married to a member of the Citizens Advice management board.

16 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The Committee confirmed as a true record the Minutes of the Meeting of the Committee held on 4 October 2022 and the Minutes of the Special Meeting of the Committee held on 24 November 2022 and authorised the Chair to sign them.

17 CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2023/24

The Committee received a report summarising the proposed 2023/24 capital programme and a provisional programme for 2024/25 to 2027/28. The Committee's approval was sought for the programme to be submitted to Council in February 2023.

The following matters were considered by the Committee:

- a) **Bourne Hall Patio Material:** A Member enquired as to what surfacing options might be available as an alternative to slabs for the Bourne Hall patio. The Head of Operational explained that tarmac was put forward for consideration but deemed incorrect by the Conservation Officer as it is a listed building and does not match the existing surface. The Member suggested that as materials are ever developing and changing, it may be prudent to revisit material options nearer the time.
- b) **Playhouse Solar PV and Payback Period:** A Member sought clarification regarding the payback period for the Playhouse Solar PV and enquired as to whether the increase in electricity fuel price had been factored in. The Head of Finance explained that the payback period for energy efficiency schemes used to be 7 years but was extended to 10 years for climate change action plan items. He confirmed that increases in energy costs make payback periods for energy efficiency investments more viable. The Chair confirmed that future installation of Solar PV on other Council owned buildings is an ongoing consideration.

Following consideration, the Committee unanimously resolved to:

- (1) **Submit the capital programme for 2023/24 as identified in section 3 of the report to the Council for approval on 14 February 2023;**
- (2) **Note the provisional forecast of schemes for the capital programme for 2024/25 to 2027/28;**
- (3) **Note that schemes subject to external funding from Disabled Facilities Grants only proceed once funding has been received.**

18 FEES AND CHARGES 2023/24

The Committee received a report recommending fees and charges for which the Committee is responsible, with the new charges being effective from 1 April 2023.

The following matters were considered by the Committee:

- a) **Service Rates:** Following a question from a Member, the Head of Operational Services explained that, in the interest of staying competitive, certain areas within Community Services are not recommended for a rate increase, due to a likely adverse effect on customer volumes, with one such service being 'Community Alarm'.
- b) **Services Categorised by Demand:** A Member suggested that it would be helpful for services, as listed in the appendix of the report, to be categorised and sorted by a 'low, medium, high' system, in terms of

service demand. The Chair explained the recent challenge in accurately assessing service demand post-covid due to the pandemic's effect on service usage. He agreed that such a system would be helpful and suggested it could be something to investigate for the future.

- c) **Bourne Hall:** In response to a question from a Member, the Head of Operational Services explained that the hire rate for the main hall at Bourne Hall has been kept unchanged and the daytime hours adjusted to attract an increased usage of the main hall. He stated that the Council is investigating the possibility of holding events, such as a monthly vintage clothes sale, as a source of income and as an opportunity to further develop Bourne Hall as a community hub.
- d) **Bathing Service:** Following a question from a Member, the Head of Operational Services explained that the bathing service, listed on page 22 of the agenda, had mostly ceased but was being restarted following the Council's taking-over of the venue. He explained the increase to the service charge was made in the interest of recovering costs, whilst being mindful of maintaining a reasonable price for service users.
- e) **Houses of Multiple Occupation Charges:** In response to a question from a Member, the Head of Housing and Community explained that charges for HMOs are set out in guidance to local authorities. The Head of Property and Regeneration explained the charges differ between applications over 5 units and applications up to 5 units due to separate calculation bases.

Following consideration, the Committee unanimously resolved to:

- (1) **Agree the fees and charges for 2023/24 as set out at Appendix 1 of the report.**

19 REVENUE BUDGET REPORT

The Committee received a report setting out estimates for income and expenditure on services in 2023/24.

The following matters were considered by the Committee:

- a) **Pay Award Provision:** A Member expressed concern regarding the 3% pay increase for Council employees when set against the rate of inflation and encouraged Councillors to be mindful of the potential impact on staff. The Head of Finance confirmed that the 3% is below the inflationary increase and stated that he recognises the pressure this can place on recruitment and staff – he explained that the pay increase is set against affordability and budget constraints faced by local government. He highlighted the current Pay Policy which will run until 2024, which caps pay at 3% increase – he stated that when the new Pay Policy for the subsequent 4-year period comes is agreed (should Councillors agree to a 4-year period), he would expect considerations, such as those raised by the Member, to be taken into account.

Following consideration, the Committee resolved (8 in favour and 1 abstaining) to:

- (1) **Recommend the 2023/24 service estimates for approval at the budget meeting of full Council in February 2023.**

20 EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

The Committee resolved to exclude the Press and Public from the meeting in accordance with Section 100A (4) of the Local Government Act 1972 on the grounds that the business would involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Act (as amended) and that pursuant to paragraph 10 of Part 2 of the said Schedule 12A the public interest in maintaining the exemption would outweigh the public interest in disclosing the information.

21 VOLUNTARY SECTOR FUNDING 2023-24

The Committee received a report considering the previous year's support provided to voluntary organisations and asking the Committee whether the funding arrangements should continue for 2023-2024.

The following matters were considered by the Committee:

- a) **Funding and Economic Pressures:** A Member expressed their admiration for the work done by the voluntary organisations. The Committee considered that continuing the previous year's level of support for 2023-2024 was acceptable, taking into account current economic pressures on the Council.
- b) **Unique Clients Helped:** The Chair clarified that the number of 'unique clients helped', as listed on page 3 of appendix 2 of the report, refers to the number of unique individuals that were helped, and not the number of times help was provided to clients.

Following consideration, the Committee unanimously resolved to:

- (1) **Confirm that the previous level of support given to the voluntary organisations should continue for 2023-2024.**

The meeting began at 7.30 pm and ended at 8.12 pm

COUNCILLOR ALEX COLEY (CHAIR)

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Head of Service: Andrew Bircher, Interim Director of Corporate Services

Wards affected: (All Wards);

Urgent Decision?(yes/no) No

If yes, reason urgent decision required:

Appendices (attached):

Summary

To set out proposals on how the Council will better engage with residents to receive feedback on services and better understand residents' needs

Recommendation (s)

The Committee is asked to:

- (1) **Agree to support Officers in carrying out the engagement activities set out in the report, incorporating Member feedback.**

1 Reason for Recommendation

- 1.1 The reason for the recommendation is to take forward a renewed approach to community engagement using a variety of methods as set out below.

2 Background

- 2.1 The Annual Plan 2022-2023 included the following two objectives:

- Create a community panel which reflects the diverse nature of our Borough.
- Hold a series of community conversations with an emphasis on listening to the seldom heard.

- 2.2 The Council had a citizens' panel a number of years ago, but this is no longer active and the person who used to run it no longer works for the council. This was part of the communications team. The panel was not considered to be demographically representative of the Borough.

- 2.3 In addition, there is a lot of work involved in the creation and maintenance of a citizens' panel. This involves making sure it has sufficient numbers with active engagement and that it is representative of the profile of the borough. It should also be refreshed on a regular basis to ensure that those on the panel are providing fresh insights. Finally for the panel to be useful there needs to be a programme of work that the panel is asked about and their answers taken to inform policy development etc. Currently the citizens' panel is not up to date and has not been used in recent years
- 2.4 The other part of the target from 2.1 above is to hold a series of community conversations focussing on the seldom heard. There is more work to be done in this area although there has been some very successful engagement with residents as part of the local plan consultation which showed a good way of getting views from different groups of people via different platforms (including social media), and other consultations such as taxi licencing.
- 2.5 There are significant challenges with funding and maintaining an effective citizens' panel and we do not believe that establishing another citizens' panel (which would need to be started again from scratch) would deliver what the Council wants from community engagement. We also want to hear from specific community groups on specific issues and it is unlikely that one solution, e.g. a citizens' panel, is going to be the right vehicle to capture that feedback.
- 2.6 In response to this, the target above has been updated and reflected in the 2023/24 annual plan as follows:

“Bring forward a Project Initiation Document (PID) that proposes how we better receive feedback from people who work, live and study in Borough, regarding our priorities and services.”

3 Proposed Consultation Approach

- 3.1 An officer working group has been considering how best to approach the requirement to better engage with people who live, work and study in the Borough. Working on the assumption that there is not one single approach, and the council would benefit from a variety of feedback channels, the following engagement objectives are proposed:
- 3.1.1 Objective 1: Obtaining regular feedback on council services / customer satisfaction.
- 3.1.2 Objective 2: Ability to deliver 'mass' consultations on particular issues, e.g. new services, strategies/plans and policies.

3.1.3 Objective 3: Ability to deliver targeted engagement on particular issues, e.g. products and software, design / improvement projects where user testing is required.

3.1.4 Objective 4: Ability to deliver targeted community engagement with hard-to-reach groups.

3.2 A further important assumption is that, at this stage, future engagement activities should be delivered within the council's current financial and officer resources. If at a later stage additional resources are felt necessary to enhance engagement activities, then business cases will be prepared at the time, and funding will need to be identified.

4 Exploring Engagement Options

4.1 The four objectives above can be arranged into two activity areas - feedback on existing council services (including venues), and consultations – both of which are underpinned by equality impact assessments. The latter will ensure that for each engagement activity, the council will strive to include those that are seldom heard and / or hard to reach.

4.2 Feedback on council services

4.2.4 Activity 1 – Complaints, compliments and comments (CCCs). This would involve a review of complaints and comments in all channels to be able to learn what customers are telling us, the themes and how we can improve. Work is done on this already, but the data is not shared widely and improvements are limited. We would aim to establish an officer working group to analyse comments and complaints and suggest improvements that can be taken forward. A report on complaints should come to councillors and be made public so that people can see the progress that is being made and acknowledgement of the issues that cause frustration.

4.2.5 Activity 2 – Microsoft Forms / surveys: each service to have a series of customer satisfaction questions. Submissions can be made online, paper, council offer to complete with a helper if requested, forms promoted through council's social / third sectors partners. This can be done through venues and could be targeted at particular services following events e.g. a survey on users of the museum at Bourne hall, feedback after an event at the playhouse, surveys in reception of the town hall. There is often a degree of user fatigue with surveys and so the use should be limited but capturing user experience at the point of delivery is very important. An option to hold a pop up stall or the like in public spaces to canvass feedback on services or key topics would be a positive way for the council to engage with residents

4.3 Consultations

4.3.1 Activity 1 – Review current council consultations guidance / process documentation, to ensure it is up-to-date and adopts modern practices for equality impact assessments etc.

4.3.2 Activity 2 – develop the success we have had recently with consultations. Recent example of using external company and social media to gain responses to the local plan has been very successful. The approach in this area would be to consult on issues that affect wide numbers of people e.g. local plan, through to focussed or targeted consultations on people who make use of particular services e.g. taxi licencing.

We have also recently carried out consultations with hard-to-reach groups through partners, e.g. working alongside partners to establish the need and user requirements for the pantry.

We would also carry out consultations on particular issues involving product design e.g. design of new website to use small number of user / experience testers.

There will be different approaches for the above, some of which are best delivered in small groups face to face through to others which are better done online to capture wider numbers.

In some cases it may be better to make use of external agencies rather than using staff to deliver the consultation to ensure there is an unbiased approach and responses are impartially analysed

Responses from the above will be used to inform product development and discussion and added to committee reports, to help decision making. We can also make key results public via the website.

4.4 Officers would welcome views from Members of the Committee to help deliver on the objectives above. Views would be welcomed on matters including, but not limited to, the following:

4.4.1 Are there any other activities which officers should consider?

4.4.2 Would Councillors welcome complaints feedback relating to services in their area?

4.4.3 How would councillors want to hear the outcome of consultation activities so as to provide a feedback loop to the initiatives above?

5 Risk Assessment

Legal or other duties

5.1 Equality Impact Assessment

5.1.1 For the consultations planned above EqIA would be done

5.2 Crime & Disorder

5.2.1 Working alongside the CDRP we could carry out surveys on opinions on crime and disorder issues

5.3 Safeguarding

5.3.1 Not arise directly from this report

5.4 Dependencies

5.4.1 n/a

5.5 Other

5.5.1 n/a

6 Financial Implications

6.1 **Section 151 Officer's comments:** Budget has not been identified for new expenditure so the activities identified above will be met from existing resources

7 Legal Implications

7.1 **Legal Officer's comments:** None arising from the contents of this report directly.

8 Policies, Plans & Partnerships

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

8.2 **Service Plans:** The matter is included within the current Service Delivery Plan.

9 Background papers

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

Previous reports:

- n/a

Other papers:

- The Annual Plan 2022-2023
- The Annual Plan 2023-2024

This page is intentionally left blank