

Public Document Pack



EPSOM & EWELL BOROUGH COUNCIL

TOWN HALL

EPSOM

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

26 July 2023

SIR OR MADAM

I hereby summon you to attend a meeting of the Council of the Borough of Epsom and Ewell which will be held at the Council Chamber, Epsom Town Hall, Epsom on **TUESDAY, 25TH JULY, 2023 at 7.30 pm**. The business to be transacted at the Meeting is set out on the Agenda overleaf. A link to the meeting is provided above.

Prayers will be said by the Mayor's Chaplain prior to the start of the meeting.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Sing', is written over a circular stamp.

Chief Executive

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 on the internet.

A link to the online address for this meeting is provided on the first page of this agenda and on the Council's website. A limited number of seats will also be available in the public gallery at the Town Hall. 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 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. The Council is likely to resolve to exclude the press and public during discussion of these matters by virtue of the private nature of the business to be transacted.

Questions and statements from the Public

Questions and statements from the public are not permitted at meetings of the Council. [Annex 4.2](#) of the Epsom & Ewell Borough Council Operating Framework sets out which Committees are able to receive public questions and statements, and the procedure for doing so.

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.

COUNCIL

Tuesday 25 July 2023

7.30 pm

Council Chamber - Epsom Town Hall

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

AGENDA

1. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

To receive declarations of the existence and nature of any Disclosable Pecuniary Interests from Members in respect of any item to be considered at the meeting.

2. MINUTES (Pages 5 - 14)

To confirm the Minutes of the Meeting of the Council held on 23 May 2023.

3. MAYORAL COMMUNICATIONS/BUSINESS

To receive such communications or deal with such business as the Mayor may decide to lay before the Council.

4. QUESTIONS (Pages 15 - 20)

This report sets out the questions submitted which have been accepted under FCR 12, Appendix 4 of the Constitution.

5. CHAIRS' STATEMENTS (Pages 21 - 30)

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

6. ANNUAL REPORT OF THE AUDIT AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 2022-2023 (Pages 31 - 40)

This report presents the Annual Report of the Audit and Scrutiny Committee 2022-2023 in accordance with the requirement of Paragraph 7.2 of Annex 4.6 of the Council's Operating Framework.

7. FINANCIAL POLICY PANEL REVIEW (Pages 41 - 48)

Following the Local Government Association (LGA) Finance Peer Review, which took place in March 2021, an action plan was developed. As a result of the Review, Full Council agreed in February 2022 a number of changes to financial decision-making procedures and committee responsibilities. This report is an appraisal of the implementation of those changes one year on and recommends further changes to the Council's constitution for consideration.

8. EXTERNAL AUDITOR'S ANNUAL REPORT - 2021/22 (Pages 49 - 82)

This report presents Grant Thornton's 2021/22 Annual Report to members and an update on the 2022/23 Statement of Accounts.

9. MOTIONS (Pages 83 - 92)

This report sets out notices of motions ruled in order.

10. EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC (Pages 93 - 94)

The Council is asked to consider whether it wishes to pass a resolution 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 involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraphs 1 and 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 outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.

11. APPOINTMENT OF INTERIM S151 OFFICER (Pages 95 - 98)

This report has not been published because the meeting is likely to be closed to the press and public in view of the nature of the business to be transacted/nature of the proceedings. The report deals with information relating to an individual and information relating to the financial or business affairs of the Council and third parties and the public interest in maintaining the exemption currently outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.

12. EXTENDING TERM OF INTERIM DIRECTORS (Pages 99 - 102)

This report has not been published because the meeting is likely to be closed to the press and public in view of the nature of the business to be transacted/nature of the proceedings. The report deals with information relating to an individual and information relating to the financial or business affairs of the Council and third parties and the public interest in maintaining the exemption currently outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.

13. APPOINTMENT OF PANEL MEMBERS TO THE IRP (To Follow)



EPSOM AND EWELL

**Minutes of the Meeting of the COUNCIL of the BOROUGH OF EPSOM AND
EWELL held at the Council Chamber, Epsom Town Hall on 23 May 2023**

PRESENT -

The Mayor (Councillor Rob Geleit); The Deputy Mayor (Councillor Steve Bridger); Councillors Arthur Abdulin, Chris Ames, Christine Cleveland, Alex Coley, Neil Dallen, Hannah Dalton, Julian Freeman, Liz Frost, Bernice Froud, Anthony Froud, Shanice Goldman, Christine Howells, Graham Jones, Alison Kelly, James Lawrence, Robert Leach, Jan Mason, Steven McCormick, Lucie McIntyre, Julie Morris, Bernie Muir, Phil Neale, Kieran Persand, Humphrey Reynolds, Kim Spickett, Alan Williamson and Clive Woodbridge

Absent: Councillors John Beckett, Kate Chinn, Rachel King, Peter O'Donovan, Darren Talbot and Chris Watson

The Meeting was preceded by prayers led by the Mayor's Chaplain

1 TO ELECT THE MAYOR

It was proposed by Councillor Steven McCormick, seconded by Councillor Chris Ames and resolved by the Council:

That Councillor Rob Geleit be elected Mayor for the Municipal Year 2023/24.

2 TO ELECT THE DEPUTY MAYOR

It was proposed by Councillor Phil Neale, seconded by Councillor Alex Coley and resolved by the Council:

That Councillor Steve Bridger be elected Deputy Mayor for the Municipal Year 2023/24.

3 VOTE OF THANKS

It was proposed by Councillor Christine Cleveland that a vote of thanks be recorded to the Outgoing Mayor, Councillor Clive Woodbridge. Accordingly, it was resolved:

That the Council place on record its high appreciation of the excellent and devoted service rendered by Councillor Clive Woodbridge during his term of office as Mayor.

4 OUTGOING MAYOR'S BADGE AND OUTGOING MAYORESS' BADGE

The Chief Executive, on behalf of Members of the Council, presented a Badge of Office to Councillor Clive Woodbridge in recognition of his services to the Office of Mayor and the Council's Badge to Mrs Mary Woodbridge in recognition of her services as Mayoress. The gifts were acknowledged by Councillor Woodbridge who spoke of his privilege and pleasure to have been Mayor of the Borough, thanking all who had helped him during his term of office.

(The retiring Mayor, Councillor Clive Woodbridge, thereupon vacated the Chair and the newly elected Mayor, Councillor Rob Geleit, took the Chair)

5 DECLARATIONS OF ACCEPTANCE OF OFFICE

Councillor Rob Geleit and Councillor Steve Bridger made and subscribed the Declaration of Acceptance of Office as Mayor and Deputy Mayor respectively.

The Mayor spoke in acknowledgement of his election, announcing that he had selected the following organisations to help as his chosen charities:

- Love Me Love My Mind
- Age Concern Epsom
- Citizens Advice Epsom and Ewell

6 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were made by Councillors regarding items on the agenda.

7 MINUTES

The Minutes of the Meeting of the Council held on 18 April 2023 were agreed as a true record and the Mayor was authorised to sign them.

8 EPSOM AND EWELL BOROUGH COUNCIL'S CONSTITUTION

The Council received a report seeking approval of the Constitution.

Following consideration, it was resolved by majority vote in favour to:

- (1) **Approve the Constitution of Epsom and Ewell Borough Council.**

9 APPOINTMENT OF COMMITTEES 2023-24

The Council considered a report seeking approval of the allocation of seats on Committees and Advisory Panels; the appointments to Committees and Advisory Panels and the appointment of Chairs and Vice-Chairs for the 2023/24 Municipal Year.

Following consideration, it was resolved unanimously that the Council:

- (1) **Noted the allocation of seats based on political balance and proportionality;**
- (2) **Allocated seats on the Committees and Advisory Panels in accordance with the wishes of the political groups set out in Appendix 1 to the report and detailed below;**
- (3) **Appointed Chairs and Vice Chairs in light of the nominations received as set out in Appendix 1 to the report and detailed below.**
- (4) **Appointed all members of Council as substitutes for their group members on committees, where the group member is unable to attend a meeting.**

Audit and Scrutiny Committee (8): Steve Bridger (**Chair**), Robert Leach (**Vice Chair**), Chris Ames, Rachel King, James Lawrence, Jan Mason, Phil Neale, Chris Watson.

Community and Wellbeing Committee (8): Clive Woodbridge (**Chair**), Bernice Froud (**Vice Chair**), Kate Chinn, Shanice Goldman, Alison Kelly, Rachel King, Lucie McIntyre, Darren Talbot.

Environment (8): John Beckett (**Chair**), Liz Frost (**Vice Chair**), Arthur Abdulin, Tony Froud, Steven McCormick, Julie Morris, Kieran Persand, Kim Spickett.

Crime and Disorder Committee (5): Alex Coley (**Chair**), Shanice Goldman, James Lawrence, Darren Talbot, Alan Williamson.

Licensing and Planning Policy Committee (8): Steven McCormick (**Chair**), Peter O'Donovan (**Vice Chair**), Steve Bridger, Shanice Goldman, Julie Morris, Phil Neale, Kieran Persand, Clive Woodbridge.

Licensing Sub Committee Panel: Steven McCormick, Peter O'Donovan, Steve Bridger, Neil Dallen, Julian Freeman, Shanice Goldman, Kieran Persand, Phil Neal.

Planning Committee (10): Humphrey Reynolds (**Chair**), Steven McCormick (**Vice Chair**), Kate Chinn, Neil Dallen, Julian Freeman, Jan Mason, Bernie Muir, Phil Neale, Peter O'Donovan, Clive Woodbridge.

Strategy and Resources Committee (8): Neil Dallen (**Chair**), Hannah Dalton (**Vice Chair**), Chris Ames, Shanice Goldman, Graham Jones, Alison Kelly, Robert Leach, Alan Williamson.

Shareholder Sub-Committee (5): To be appointed by the Strategy and Resources Committee.

Standards and Constitution Committee (6): Liz Frost (**Chair**), Hannah Dalton (**Vice Chair**), Chris Ames, James Lawrence, Robert Leach, Chris Watson.

Financial Policy Panel (6): Neil Dallen (**Chair**), John Beckett, Hannah Dalton, Alison Kelly, Steven McCormick, Clive Woodbridge.

Health Liaison Panel (6): Christine Cleveland (**Chair**), Chris Ames, Liz Frost, Bernice Froud, Bernie Muir, Kim Spickett.

Human Resources Panel (6): Christine Cleveland (**Chair**), Chris Ames, Neil Dallen, Robert Leach, Phil Neale, Kieran Persand.

Nonsuch Park Joint Management Committee (3): Julian Freeman, Christine Howells, Tony Froud.

Surrey Police and Crime Panel (1): Alex Coley

10 REPRESENTATION ON EXTERNAL BODIES

The Council received a report seeking appointments to representation on external bodies. The following matter was considered:

- a) **Ballots.** The Council undertook a ballot for all vacancies for which the number of nominations exceeded the number of available places, as set out in the agenda. At the invitation of the Mayor, the Chief Executive informed the Council that the results of the ballots were as follows:
 - **Age Concern (Epsom and Ewell) – General Committee (2 vacancies):**
 - **Councillor Arthur Abdulin 21 votes (APPOINTED)**
 - **Councillor Steven McCormick 22 votes (APPOINTED)**
 - **Councillor Bernie Muir 3 votes**
 - **Central Surrey Community Action (1 vacancy):**
 - **Councillor Steven McCormick 20 votes (APPOINTED)**
 - **Councillor Bernie Muir 3 votes**
 - **Committee of Management of Local Citizens Advice Bureau (2 vacancies):**

- **Councillor Robert Leach 20 votes (APPOINTED)**
- **Councillor Steven McCormick 23 votes (APPOINTED)**
- **Councillor Bernie Muir 5 votes**
- **Epsom and Walton Downs Conservators (6 vacancies):**
 - **Councillor Christine Cleveland 24 votes (APPOINTED)**
 - **Councillor Liz Frost 24 votes (APPOINTED)**
 - **Councillor Bernice Froud 24 votes (APPOINTED)**
 - **Councillor Steven McCormick 24 votes (APPOINTED)**
 - **Councillor Kieran Persand 4 votes**
 - **Councillor Kim Spickett 24 votes (APPOINTED)**
 - **Councillor Clive Woodbridge 20 votes (APPOINTED)**
- **Surrey Environment Partnership (1 vacancy):**
 - **Councillor John Beckett 16 votes (APPOINTED)**
 - **Councillor Kieran Persand 3 votes**

Following consideration, it was resolved unanimously:

That the Council:

- (1) Appointed representatives to the external bodies and inter authority partnerships set out in Appendix 1 to the report and detailed below;**
- (2) Appointed the Member Champions set out in Appendix 1 to the report and detailed below;**
- (3) Noted the Officer/Member Working Groups appointed by Committees set out in Appendix 1 to the report and detailed below.**

Outside bodies				
Body on which Represented	Responsible Policy Committee	No of Reps	Representative(s)	
Age Concern (Epsom and Ewell) – General Committee	C & W	2	Councillor	Arthur
			Abdulin	
			Councillor	Steven
			McCormick	
Central Surrey Community Action	C & W	1	Councillor	Steven
			McCormick	

Outside bodies			
Body on which Represented	Responsible Policy Committee	No of Reps	Representative(s)
Committee of Management of Local Citizens Advice Bureau	C & W	2	Councillor Robert Leach Councillor Steven McCormick
Epsom and Ewell Town Twinning Association Management Committee	S & R	2	Councillor Rachel King Councillor Clive Woodbridge
Epsom Common Association	C & W	1	Councillor Steve Bridger
Ewell Parochial Trusts	C & W	3	Councillor Christine Cleveland Councillor Humphrey Reynolds Councillor Clive Woodbridge
Friends of Epsom and Ewell Parks	C & W	1	Councillor Steven McCormick
Local Government Association	S & R	1	Councillor Hannah Dalton

Joint Committees / Arrangements			
Body on which Represented	Responsible Policy Committee	No of Reps	Representative(s)
Coast to Capital Joint Committee	S & R	1	Chair of RA Group
Epsom and Ewell Community Safety Partnership	E & SC	1	Chair of Environment and Safe Communities Committee
Epsom and Walton Downs Conservators	C & W	6	Councillor Christine Cleveland

Joint Committees / Arrangements			
Body on which Represented	Responsible Policy Committee	No of Reps	Representative(s)
Already appointed to a Term of Office (4 years, 2023 – 2027)			<p>Councillor Liz Frost</p> <p>Councillor Bernice Froud</p> <p>Councillor Steven McCormick</p> <p>Councillor Kim Spickett</p> <p>Councillor Clive Woodbridge</p>
Epsom and Walton Downs Consultative Committee	C & W	1 (+ Chairman of the Epsom and Walton Downs Conservators)	Councillor Bernice Froud
Epsom and Walton Downs Training Grounds Management Board	C & W	2	Councillor Neil Dallen
Parking and Traffic Regulations Outside London Adjudication Joint Committee (PATROL)	E & S C	1 + Sub	<p>Chair of Environment & Safe Communities Committee</p> <p>Vice Chair of Environment & Safe Communities Committee</p>
South East England Councils (SEEC)	S & R	1	Councillor Hannah Dalton
Surrey Environment Partnership	E & SC	1	Councillor John Beckett
Surrey Climate Change Partnership	E & SC	1	Chair of Environment & Safe Communities Committee
Surrey Leaders Group	S&R	1	Councillor Hannah Dalton

Member Champions

	Champion
Armed Forces	Councillor Graham Jones
Alternative Transport	Councillor Tony Froud
Heritage	Councillor Kim Spickett
Mental Health	Councillor Darren Talbot

Officer/Member Working Groups appointed by Committees		
Body on which Represented	Responsible Committee	Representative(s)
Capital Member Group	S & R	Appointed by Strategy & Resources Committee
Investment Property Group	S & R	Appointed by Strategy & Resources Committee
CIL Panel	S & R	Appointed by Strategy & Resources Committee
Car Park Working Group	E & SC	Appointed by the Environment & Safe Communities Committee
Environment and Sustainability Working Group	E & SC	Appointed by the Environment & Safe Communities Committee
Local Plan Member Working Group	L & PP	Appointed by the Chair of the Licensing and Planning Policy Committee in accordance with the Terms of Reference agreed by Licensing and Planning Policy Committee on 15 July 2021.

11 APPOINTMENT OF INDEPENDENT PERSONS

The Council received a report seeking the formal appointment of the council's statutory independent persons for a four year term expiring in May 2027.

Following consideration, it was unanimously agreed to:

(1) **Appoint the following as Independent Persons for a four-year term of office expiring in May 2027:**

- Andrea Armstrong
- Vivienne Cameron

- Jane Clarke
- Bill Donnelly
- John Smith

12 CALENDAR OF MEETINGS 2023-2024

The Council received a report requesting it to approve a programme of ordinary meetings of the Council for the year.

Following consideration, it was resolved unanimously:

- (1) That the Council approved the programme of ordinary meetings for the year**

The meeting began at 7.00 pm and ended at 7.50 pm

COUNCILLOR ROB GELEIT
MAYOR

This page is intentionally left blank

QUESTIONS

Head of Service:	Piero Ionta, Head of Legal and Monitoring Officer
Wards affected:	(All Wards);
Appendices (attached):	Appendix 1: Questions 1-3

Summary

This report sets out the questions submitted which have been accepted under FCR 12, Appendix 4 of the Constitution.

Recommendation (s)

The Council is asked to:

- (1) consider the questions in accordance with Standing Orders.

1 Reason for Recommendation

- 1.1 The rules regarding the submission of questions to Council are set out in Appendix 4 of the Council's Constitution (Standing Orders of the Full Council).
- 1.2 Notice of a question must be given in writing and delivered by no later than noon on the tenth clear working day before the date of the meeting at which it was intended to be considered.
- 1.3 Standing orders set out a process for questions to be put by its Members to the Mayor or the Chair of any committee, sub-committee or advisory panel.
- 1.4 The question must be relevant to some matter on which the Council has statutory powers or duties, or which affects the Borough or its inhabitants.

2 Background

- 2.1 The process and procedure for debate is set out in Appendix 4 of the Constitution. FCR 12.1 sets a period of 30 minutes for questions and their replies. A member asking a question is allowed to ask one supplementary question, which must arise from the reply given.

- 2.2 The table below sets out the questions submitted and accepted under FCR12. Each question will be taken in the order listed:

Question	Member	Committee
1	Alison Kelly	Community and Wellbeing Committee
2	James Lawrence	Standards and Constitution Committee
3	Julie Morris	Licensing and Planning Policy Committee

3 Risk Assessment

Legal or other duties

3.1 Equality Impact Assessment

3.1.1 No comments are provided on questions.

3.2 Crime & Disorder

3.2.1 No comments are provided on questions.

3.3 Safeguarding

3.3.1 No comments are provided on questions.

3.4 Dependencies

3.4.1 No comments are provided on questions.

3.5 Other

3.5.1 No comments are provided on questions.

4 Financial Implications

4.1 No comments are provided on questions.

4.2 **Section 151 Officer's comments:** No comments are provided on questions.

5 Legal Implications

5.1 No comments are provided on questions.

5.2 **Legal Officer's comments:** No comments are provided on questions.

6 Policies, Plans & Partnerships

- 6.1 **Council's Key Priorities:** No comments are provided on questions.
- 6.2 **Service Plans:** No comments are provided on questions.
- 6.3 **Climate & Environmental Impact of recommendations:** No comments are provided on questions.
- 6.4 **Sustainability Policy & Community Safety Implications:** No comments are provided on questions.
- 6.5 **Partnerships:** No comments are provided on questions.

7 Background papers

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

Previous reports:

- None.

Other papers:

- [Appendix 4 of the Constitution of Epsom and Ewell Borough Council](#)

This page is intentionally left blank

QUESTION 1

Question from Councillor Alison Kelly to the Chair of the Community and Wellbeing Committee, Councillor Clive Woodbridge.

Does this council work with local housing associations to consider leaving the carpets (subject to cleaning and inspection) so the residents can benefit from a better furnished house at the start of their tenancy, and are there any other white goods or items which could remain in the property when it changes hands? If not, is this something that we could discuss with housing associations?

QUESTION 2

Question from Councillor James Lawrence to the Chair of the Standards and Constitution Committee, Councillor Liz Frost.

Whilst Chairpersons of policy committees can be approached to include items on agenda of their meetings, there is no specific provision in the Terms of Reference of policy committees to deal with issues affecting the wellbeing of local residents, specifically when the issue is an external influence in a geographical area which is affecting the quality of life of several residents. There is provision in the Council's Constitution for questions from the public, and petitions from the public, but would it be appropriate for the Standards & Constitution Committee to rethink the ToR of policy committees, or make provision for an emergency "wellbeing" item, so that such matters can be given more thorough and efficient consideration?

QUESTION 3

Question from Councillor Julie Morris to the Chair of the Licensing and Planning Policy Committee, Councillor Steven McCormick.

When can councillors expect a detailed briefing on changes to biodiversity as potentially affected by development, small or large, which are required by central government this year, including explanations of the 10% net gain in biodiversity which is expected from some developments, and will that include a briefing on implications for development of Green Belt land currently proposed within the draft Local Plan?

This page is intentionally left blank

CHAIRS' STATEMENTS

Head of Service:	Piero Ionta, Head of Legal and Monitoring Officer
Wards affected:	(All Wards);
Appendices (attached):	Appendix 1 –Statements from Committee Chairs

Summary

To receive statements from the Chairs 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 of the Policy Committees in accordance with Standing Orders.**

1 Reason for Recommendation

- 1.1 Appendix 4 of the Council's Constitution (FCR 11) sets out that the Chair 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 of Full Council (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.

2 Background

- 2.1 The following statements have been submitted for inclusion on the agenda for this meeting, and are attached at Appendix 1:
 - 2.1.1 Chair of the Licensing and Planning Policy Committee, Councillor Steven McCormick.
 - 2.1.2 Chair of the Strategy and Resources Committee, Councillor Neil Dallen.
 - 2.1.3 Chair of the Crime and Disorder Committee, Councillor Alex Coley.
- 2.2 The procedure of questions on Chairs' Statements is as follows:

2.2.1 Each Chair in the order listed on the agenda presents their Statements to the meeting;

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

3 Risk Assessment

Legal or other duties

3.1 Equality Impact Assessment

3.1.1 No comments are provided on Chairs' Statements.

3.2 Crime & Disorder

3.2.1 No comments are provided on Chairs' Statements.

3.3 Safeguarding

3.3.1 No comments are provided on Chairs' Statements.

3.4 Dependencies

3.4.1 No comments are provided on Chairs' Statements.

3.5 Other

3.5.1 No comments are provided on Chairs' Statements.

4 Financial Implications

4.1 No comments are provided on Chairs' Statements.

4.2 **Section 151 Officer's comments:** No comments are provided on Chairs' Statements.

5 Legal Implications

5.1 No comments are provided on Chairs' Statements.

5.2 **Legal Officer's comments:** No comments are provided on Chairs' Statements.

6 Policies, Plans & Partnerships

6.1 **Council's Key Priorities:** No comments are provided on Chairs' Statements.

6.2 **Service Plans** No comments are provided on Chairs' Statements.

6.3 **Climate & Environmental Impact of recommendations:** No comments are provided on Chairs' Statements.

6.4 **Sustainability Policy & Community Safety Implications:** No comments are provided on Chairs' Statements.

6.5 **Partnerships:** No comments are provided on Chairs' Statements.

7 Background papers

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

Previous reports:

- None.

Other papers:

- [Appendix 4 of the Constitution of Epsom and Ewell Borough Council](#)

This page is intentionally left blank

CHAIR'S STATEMENTS TO COUNCIL

Councillor Steven McCormick
Chair of the Licensing & Planning Policy Committee

Taxi and Hackney Carriage Emissions

A public consultation has been launched on the proposed changes to add emissions requirements to our private hire and hackney carriage taxis licensed in Epsom & Ewell.

The emissions standards proposed are inline with the ULEZ emissions requirements. We are not talking about the ULEZ zone, or applying the emissions requirements to private vehicles.

Following the consultation, a recommendation will come to LPPC and following a decision a recommendation for adoption may come to the full council meeting in December.

Planning Performance

We continue to proactively monitor and work hard to ensure we are dealing with planning applications of all shape and size in a timely manner.

We dealt with 100% of Majors within time and have been well above the 70% target for minors and others.

A report is to be filed with central government following which they will make a final decision on whether to designate this council.

Local Plan

Currently the local plan is paused following a motion to full council in March 2023. A briefing session with members was held on 27th June with the simple question of what does unpausing look like?

A healthy discussion was had with several options discussed.

Overwhelmingly members at the briefing felt we need to unpause sooner than later with a review of the spatial strategy/selection as soon as is possible.

The call for sites is open until the end of July 2023. Once this closes the site supply can be reviewed and confirmed with numbers being updated.

At the time of writing there are several hundred brownfield sites, shown in appendix 2, that have NOT come forward. This final number will be confirmed at the end of July but it means approximately 750 units drop out of the local plan housing supply figures.

All items on the council motion in March have been complied with, a majority of which would have been progressed as a matter of course without the motion.

We have written to this council (EEBC) again asking for any additional sites that they may like to put forward for consideration into the local plan process.

ALL landowners on the Kiln Lane and Longmead estate have been contacted again.

The 2018 numbers have been reviewed and the results were shared in the June LPPC report.

Our MP has been written to and he has provided a response.

ALL responses to the draft local plan have been published on Friday 30th June at 5:00pm on our digital platform, Innovem.

Central government has not updated the NPPF nor has it given an updated timeline.

Next steps will see briefing sessions with ALL members on key aspects of the Local plan along with sessions on spatial strategy / site selection.

A paper to consider unpausing the local plan will likely come to LPPC later this year with an updated Local Development Schedule (LDS).

I will continue to provide a statement at each full council and welcome questions from members on any item under this committee's remit.

<p>Councillor Neil Dallen</p> <p>Chair of the Strategy and Resources Committee</p>
--

Independent Renumeration Panel (IRP)

The panel has been set up and hopes to provide a report for February Full Council meeting. Councillors will have an opportunity to input to the IRP over the next few months.

Town Hall relocation to East Street

Our consultants who have been appointed to look at the feasibility of relocating the town hall to 70 East Street are getting feedback from Members on how and where members work, member facilities and views on the civic spaces.

All information will be collated by our consultants who will then produce detailed layouts for how we could look within 70 East Street.

Chuter Ede Grants

Officers are working on re-introducing grants from the Chuter Ede fund this academic year and secondary schools have been contacted to identify possible applicants. The grants are small and are aimed at assisting with expenses for students hoping to attend university.

Household support fund – tranche 4

The household support fund is aimed to support the most financially vulnerable families and we have been allocated over £200k in tranche 4. Our officers are aware of many of those families through other support schemes but, last tranche, we agreed that the 'Good Company' (incorporating Food bank, Epsom Pantry, Refugee Network and East Surrey Poverty Truth Commission) would assist in reaching the most vulnerable and difficult to contact. It has been agreed, through a delegated authority form, that Good Company would be given £50k from tranche 4 to again distribute to those hardest to contact. The Good Company would report back to the Council on the use/allocation of the money. In addition, a report will come to September strategy and Resources seeking approval of an additional £50k to be allocated to Good Company to be distributed from October 2023.

Councillor Alex Coley
Chair of the Crime & Disorder Committee

The new Crime & Disorder policy committee meets on 12th September and the forward plan for the agenda is as follows:

- CSP Action Plan public consultation
- CSP review - stakeholder feedback
- Video Surveillance Systems policy
- Community Safety & ASB Intervention policy

CSP Action Plan

The purpose of the Action Plan is to set out the identified community safety priorities for the Council linked with those of the Community Safety Partnership, coupled with a coherent plan of action upon which the council will seek residents view through a public consultation.

It is proposed that the Action Plan would cover a two year period, identifying under each community safety priority, council actions and activities, including clearly defined success criteria, timescales and metrics, that would address each priority. Actions will be grouped under each of the categories of the identified CSP priorities of the focus on the most vulnerable or those at risk of harm, Serious Organised Crime and PREVENT, Identifying and tackling crime and antisocial behaviour and improving community engagement.

Following the feedback from the consultation, the final version will be presented to the Crime and Disorder Committee in January 2024 for adoption. Members will be updated on progress. To enable the right level of focus, and ensure our slim resource is not wasted, it is intended the actions are aligned to those the Council has already committed to as part of the Community Safety Partnership.

CSP review

The Council's Chief Executive has commissioned a review of our Community Safety Partnership. Recommendations focused on improved partnership working and shared resourcing to improve co-ordination and partnership agenda planning. CSP partners will feedback over the next few weeks.

Activity

This month I attended three street events with Surrey Police, Rosebery Housing and the Council's enforcement team, listening to resident concerns and logging issues.

We had a very strong and consistent attendance from partners with lots of interest from residents.

I also promoted our safer streets initiative in the Ashley Centre following Home Office funding that was supported by the Surrey PCC. Outcomes include: anti-drink spiking tools and training, drink testing kits, street pastor funding and the renewal of CCTV with high resolution digital video.

Since my appointment I have met with the local MP, the borough commander and Shopwatch which is hosted by the Epsom BID. Areas of concern have included county lines drug dealing, the use of electric bikes and scooters to facilitate crime and the increase in shoplifting, particularly in Epsom town centre.

I also attended the Surrey Police & Crime Panel as the Epsom & Ewell representative, where I offered the PCC team support and connections with the PCC's new Data Hub, which have been accepted.

I asked several questions, including for a written response on how many officers left Surrey Police in the same time period as the recruitment uplift (ie since 2019). I await the reply.

I also asked a question on the use of surplus funds and increased precept. The S151 officer suggested these would be used to meet savings targets, increase the PCC reserve, contribute to the Net Zero reserve, contribute to the inflation contingency reserve and potentially be used for a 4% pay uplift.

I then requested a written answer on the historical pensions deficit for Surrey Police Group and interest payable. I also await the reply.

Lastly I have initiated partnership relationships with fellow panel members, especially those from East Surrey. All of which led to in-depth conversations about priorities and issues unique/similar to our respective areas. All are keen to continue the conversation, particularly on joint bids for funding.

ANNUAL REPORT OF THE AUDIT AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 2022-2023

Head of Service:	Andrew Bircher, Interim Director of Corporate Services
Wards affected:	(All Wards)
Appendices (attached):	Appendix 1 – Annual Report 2022-2023

Summary

This report presents the Annual Report of the Audit and Scrutiny Committee 2022-2023 in accordance with the requirement of Paragraph 7.2 of Annex 4.6 of the Council's Operating Framework.

Recommendation (s)

The Council is asked to:

- (1) Receive the Annual Report of the Audit and Scrutiny Committee 2022-2023 (Appendix 1).**

1 Reason for Recommendation

- 1.1 Paragraph 7.2 of Annex 4.6 of the Council's Operating Framework requires the Audit and Scrutiny Committee to report annually to the Full Council on its workings, recommendations for future work programmes and amended working methods if appropriate.¹
- 1.2 This report presents Council with the Annual Report of the Audit and Scrutiny Committee 2022-2023. The recommendation asks Council to receive the report.

2 Background

¹ See Paragraph 7.2 of Annex 4.6: Overview Audit and Scrutiny, Epsom and Ewell Borough Council Operating Framework, p.3. Online available: <https://www.epsom-ewell.gov.uk/sites/default/files/documents/council/about-council/governance/Annex%204-6%20-%20Overview%20Audit%20and%20Scrutiny.pdf>

- 2.1 The Audit and Scrutiny Committee approved its Annual Report 2022-2023 (Appendix 1) at its meeting on 6 April 2023. The report presents an overview of the work undertaken by the Committee between April 2022 and March 2023.

3 Risk Assessment

Legal or other duties

3.1 Equality Impact Assessment

3.1.1 None for the purposes of this report.

3.2 Crime & Disorder

3.2.1 None for the purposes of this report.

3.3 Safeguarding

3.3.1 None for the purposes of this report.

3.4 Dependencies

3.4.1 None for the purposes of this report.

3.5 Other

3.5.1 None for the purposes of this report.

4 Financial Implications

4.1 There are no financial implications in this report.

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

5 Legal Implications

5.1 There are no legal implications arising from this report.

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

6 Policies, Plans & Partnerships

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

Effective Council – Engaging, responsive and resilient Council.

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

- 6.3 **Climate & Environmental Impact of recommendations:** No specific implications.
- 6.4 **Sustainability Policy & Community Safety Implications:** No specific implications.
- 6.5 **Partnerships:** No specific implications.

7 Background papers

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

Previous report:

- Annual Report of the Audit & Scrutiny Committee, 6 April 2023, Audit and Scrutiny Committee. Online available: <https://democracy.epsom-ewell.gov.uk/documents/s26998/Committee%20Annual%20Report%202022-2023.pdf> [Last accessed 19/05/2023].

This page is intentionally left blank

Annual Report of the Audit and Scrutiny Committee 2022-2023

1. Introduction

- 1.1. This Annual Report provides the council with an overview of the work of the Audit and Scrutiny Committee undertaken during 2022-2023.
- 1.2. The Committee met four times between April 2022 and March 2023, with the following Member attendance. The meeting in September 2022 was cancelled due to the death of Her Majesty the Queen and the national mourning period.

Member	Actual Attendance at Meetings	Nominated Substitute
Councillor Steve Bridger (Chair)	4	
Councillor Nigel Collin (Vice Chair)	4	
Councillor Rob Geleit	4	
Councillor David Gulland	3	
Councillor Christine Howells	1	
Councillor Previn Jagutpal*	0	
Councillor Phil Neale	4	
Councillor David Reeve	2	1
Councillor Alan Sursham	3	
Councillor Chris Webb	2	

* Acted as a member between April 2022 and 8 December 2022. Resigned from being a councillor on 9 December 2022

- 1.3. The Committee considered and agreed its work programme for 2022-2023 in April 2022. The work programme is designed to ensure the Committee meets its statutory and local responsibilities and provides the council with added value and assurance.

2. Monitoring and Improving the Council's Governance

- 2.1. Following Full Council's approval of the Committee's updated terms of reference in February 2022, the 2022-2023 work programme has focused on maintaining an oversight of the council's framework of governance, performance, risk management, and internal control environment.
- 2.2. Governance can be defined as "comprising the arrangements put in place to ensure that the intended outcomes for stakeholders are defined and

achieved.”¹ Governance includes processes, procedures, policies, administrative systems, legal arrangements and so forth, “through which [an organisation’s] objectives are set and pursued in” their environmental context, while “ensuring that stakeholders can have confidence that their trust in that [organisation] is well founded.”²

- 2.3. To ensure good governance, the Committee has considered five reports from the council’s independent internal audit function within the year. These reports cover audit planning for the year, internal audit’s findings with respect to individual business units’ governance arrangements, and an overall opinion on status of the council’s governance.
- 2.4. The Head of Southern Internal Audit Partnership (SIAP) provided their annual opinion to Committee in June 2022, concluding that for the year 2021-2022, the overall adequacy and effectiveness of the council’s framework of governance, risk management and control was “reasonable”. The outcomes of 17 completed audits are as follows:³

Number and (percentage) of completed audits	Assurance Opinion - category
2 (12%)	Substantial – A sound system of governance, risk management and control exists, with internal controls operating effectively and being consistently applied to support the achievement of objectives in the area audited.
8 (47%)	Reasonable – There is a generally sound system of governance, risk management and control in place. Some issues, non-compliance or scope for improvement were identified which may put at risk the achievement of objectives in the area audited.
7 (41%)	Limited – Significant gaps, weaknesses or non-compliance were identified. Improvement is required to the system of governance, risk management and control to effectively manage risks to the achievement of objectives in the area audited.

There were no ‘No’ assurance opinions given during this audit period, which would require immediate actions to address fundamental gaps, weaknesses or non-compliance identified.

- 2.5. 59% of the audits received a “reasonable” or “substantial” opinion. Where weaknesses and risks have been identified through internal audit review, SIAP

¹ CIPFA (2014) *International Framework: Good Governance in the Public Sector*. London: Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy, p. 8.

² The Chartered Governance Institute UK & Ireland (no date) *What is corporate governance?* Online available: <https://www.cgi.org.uk/about-us/policy/what-is-corporate-governance> [Last accessed 10/03/22].

³ See SIAP (2022) *Annual Internal Audit Report & Opinion 2021-22*, Southern Internal Audit Partnership. Online available: <https://democracy.epsom-ewell.gov.uk/documents/s23876/Appendix%201%20-%20Annual%20Internal%20Audit%20Report%20Opinion%202021-2022.pdf> [Last accessed 02/03/2023].

have worked with management to “agree appropriate corrective actions and a timescale for improvement.”⁴ Progress on improvement actions are reported within each Internal Audit progress report brought to the Committee.

- 2.6. The internal audit annual opinion also underpins the council’s Annual Governance Statement (AGS). The 2021-2022 AGS was approved by the Committee in June 2022. The statement presented the council’s opinion on its governance arrangements and their effectiveness, as well as reporting on how governance improvements identified in the previous statement had been addressed, and actions to be pursued in the following year.⁵ The AGS was also reviewed by external audit and included alongside their annual audit of the council’s finances.
- 2.7. In addition to the above, the Committee considered:
- 2.7.1. Two refreshed performance and risk reports, which updated the Committee on the progress of the objectives within the 2022-2023 annual plan, key performance indicators, and the Corporate Risk Register.
 - 2.7.2. Reports on the council’s counter-fraud and whistleblowing arrangements, and the council’s equality and diversity activities.
 - 2.7.3. An updated local code of corporate governance for the council, which will sit alongside the 2022-2023 AGS in July 2023.
- 2.8. A report regarding compliance with the camera code of practice was initially removed by the Committee from its work programme. This report has now been scheduled to come to the Committee in April 2023.
- 2.9. The Head of Finance presented forecasts for the revenue and capital outturn for the financial year. The Committee received Quarter 1 in September (although the actual meeting was cancelled due to the national mourning period), Quarter 2 in November and Quarter 3 in February. The revenue monitoring identifies favourable and unfavourable variances and the actions to address these.
- 2.10. Capital monitoring reports focus on the core capital programme, property acquisition fund, S106 developers’ contributions and Community Infrastructure Levy. These were presented to the Committee in September (although the

⁴ Ibid, footnote 3, page 15.

⁵ The full statement can be found at: <https://www.ewell.gov.uk/sites/default/files/documents/council/about-council/financial-reports/2021-22%20AGS.pdf>
[Last accessed 02/03/2023].

meeting was cancelled due to the national mourning period), November, and February.

- 2.11. The Committee also approved the 2021-2022 Statement of Accounts and received Grant Thornton's Audit Findings Report in November 2022.

3. Scrutiny activities

- 3.1. This section pertains to the scrutiny element of the Committee's responsibilities. Specifically, it considers the scrutiny of the council's decisions and actions, matters which affect residents, future policy development and other corporate projects and initiatives the Committee feels are relevant to review.

- 3.2. To support effective, transparent and accountable decision making at the council, the Committee has the power to review policy committee decisions made, but not yet implemented, through the call-in procedure.

- 3.3. In the year 2022-2023 the Committee:

- 3.3.1. Commissioned the council's internal auditors to conduct a consultancy engagement piece on the updated Risk Management Strategy, approved by Strategy and Resources Committee in July 2022. The conclusion drawn by SIAP was that "revision of the Risk Management Strategy (July 2022) provides a strong foundation and framework for risk management within Epsom and Ewell Borough Council moving forward. It is acknowledged by the council that the new processes and protocols introduced are still being developed and embedded, and further refinements are expected as the Strategy matures. It is anticipated that observations highlighted in this commissioned consultancy review will aid in that journey."⁶
- 3.3.2. Reviewed the 'Oversight and Scrutiny' elements of the updated Constitution, via engagement with the Constitution Working Group. The updated Constitution was implemented by Full Council in May 2023.
- 3.3.3. Received a report in June 2022 on the Use of Delegated Powers.⁷ This report sets out the significant decisions taken by officers under delegated powers in the previous year.

⁶ See, Southern Internal Audit Partnership (2022) *Internal Audit Progress Report 2022-2023 (November 2022)*, Audit and Scrutiny Committee, 17th November, page. 9. Online available: <https://democracy.epsom-ewell.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CIId=157&MIId=1252> [last accessed 08/03/23].

⁷ See, Audit and Scrutiny Committee (2022) *Annual Report on the Use of Delegated Powers*, 14th June, item 4. Online available: <https://democracy.epsom-ewell.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CIId=157&MIId=1250> [last accessed 09/03/2023].

4. Improving Services and the Quality of Life for Local People

- 4.1. Scrutiny, again, is the topic of this section, within the context of how the council is performing in light of its Four Year Plan, which is split into four annual plans.
- 4.2. The Committee monitors progress made against the Four Year Plan, which encapsulates how the council will contribute to the long-term vision for Epsom and Ewell. The Committee reviewed the end of year report in June 2022.⁸ The table below provides the end of year position, noting the number of key objectives that were achieved in 2021-2022. It also includes information from the last two years.

Key to reporting Status	2021-2022		Previous years	
	No.	%	2020-2021	2019-2020
Green (achieved)	26	70.3%	58.5%	63.5%
Amber (slippage)	4	10.8%	9.4%	3.8%
Red (missed target)	7	18.9%	32.1%	32.7%
TOTAL	37	100%	100%	100%
Information only indicator	3	N/A	N/A	N/A

- 4.3. The year-end report for 2021-2022 highlighted that 70.3% of the year's objectives had been achieved and 10.8% had been delayed. There were 18.9% of objectives that were not achieved. Finally, there were three 'information only' indicators.
- 4.4. The Committee also considered: the specific update on targets not achieved; how the data is validated; a tree planting objective; and the Planning Enforcement Plan.

⁸ See, Audit and Scrutiny Committee (2022) *Four Year Plan: Year End Performance Report 2021-2022*, 14th June, item 6. Online available: <https://democracy.epsom-ewell.gov.uk/documents/s23869/Four%20Year%20Plan%20Year%20End%20Performance%20Report%202021-2022.pdf> [Last accessed 02/03/2023]

5. Conclusion

- 5.1. The Audit and Scrutiny Committee wishes to record its thanks to all those who contributed to the work of the Committee over the year.

FINANCIAL POLICY PANEL REVIEW

Head of Service: Brendan Bradley, Head of Finance
Wards affected: (All Wards);
Appendices (attached): None.

Summary

Following the Local Government Association (LGA) Finance Peer Review, which took place in March 2021, an action plan was developed. As a result of the Review, Full Council agreed in February 2022 a number of changes to financial decision-making procedures and committee responsibilities. This report is an appraisal of the implementation of those changes one year on and recommends further changes to the Council's constitution for consideration.

Recommendation (s)

The Council is asked to:

- (1) Agree with Standards and Constitution Committee's recommendation to approve the proposed changes to the constitution set-out in this report.**

1 Reason for Recommendation

- 1.1 It is considered that the proposed changes would improve and strengthen the Council's financial decision-making procedures.

2 Background

- 2.1 In March 2021, an LGA Finance Peer Review recommended that the Council review its approach to decision making and scrutiny, and to refresh the approach to the capital programme. These reviews were subsequently undertaken, with the outcome and proposed changes agreed at Full Council in February 2022.
- 2.2 One year on, it is now considered appropriate to review these changes to ensure they are functioning as intended and to identify whether further improvements could be made.
- 2.3 **On 29 June 2023, Standards & Constitution Committee considered the changes proposed in this report, and agreed to recommend to Full Council that the report proposals be approved.**

3 Refresh the approach to the Capital Programme

- 3.1 Following the LGA Peer Review, the Council agreed that capital programme forecasts should be extended (from three years) to cover a rolling five-year period, to give greater visibility of the expected capital investment required to maintain and enhance the Council's assets in future years.
- 3.2 This agreed change was implemented, with Capital Member Group (CMG) receiving (in Autumn 2022) and recommending five-year forecasts to policy committees for approval in the January committee cycle.
- 3.3 CMG consists of five members and is essentially a working party re-appointed by S&R each year. It meets in September and November, to consider initial and final capital project proposals and make recommendations to policy committees for approval.
- 3.4 CMG is not recognised in the Council's constitution and consequently its papers are not publicly available, other than its recommendations which are subsequently reported to policy committees.
- 3.5 Feedback from members is that the papers of CMG should be published. In addition, members have fed back that having different members and meetings to consider capital matters and Financial Planning matters, has led to a lack of member oversight and joined up decision making.
- 3.6 In response to the feedback and to improve transparency, it is proposed that the work CMG be incorporated into the work programme of Financial Policy Panel (FPP). This change, if agreed, would ensure that more members are directly and formally engaged in the capital programme setting process (six members on FPP compared to five on Capital Member Group), papers would become publicly available through FPP meeting agendas and there would be joined up decision making.

4 Review of Financial Policy Panel

- 4.1 FPP is currently scheduled to meet twice a year (prior to the LGA Peer Review, it met four times a year). It provides a forum that includes policy committee chairs to discuss and advise S&R Committee and the Council on strategic financial matters.
- 4.2 Members want FPP to be retained, as it provides a unique cross-committee forum for discussing the Council's strategic budget and financial policy framework, and for making recommendations to S&R with a cross-Committee mandate.
- 4.3 However, feedback from members is that the move to twice yearly meetings has resulted in the group meeting too infrequently. In addition, it has been fed back that FPP would benefit from increased engagement on the Treasury Management Strategy.

- 4.4 Currently, treasury management performance monitoring is undertaken biannually by Audit & Scrutiny Committee, with the Treasury Management Strategy reviewed annually by FPP.
- 4.5 While this approach may seem sound in theory – with one group setting the strategy and a separate group monitoring performance against it – the result is that two separate committees receive relatively irregular treasury management updates, making member knowledge and familiarity with the Council’s treasury management function difficult to maintain through the year.
- 4.6 To date external treasury management training is mandatory for one committee (Audit & Scrutiny) each year. While the training is open to all members, treasury management training is not currently on the FPP formal agenda.
- 4.7 It is proposed that responsibility for treasury management performance monitoring remain with Audit & Scrutiny but be delegated to FPP (as was the case pre-LGA Peer Review), to be consolidated with FPP’s responsibility for setting the annual treasury management strategy. Members of both FPP and Audit & Scrutiny would receive the annual training, enabling one committee to effectively scrutinise the function and set the strategy. This training would also remain open to all members,
- 4.8 To enable Audit & Scrutiny to fulfil its oversight responsibility, it is proposed that FPP would report back annually (or more regularly on an exception basis if required) to Audit & Scrutiny to disclose how it has exercised monitoring of the treasury management function.
- 4.9 To deliver on this proposed change, as well as inherit the work of Capital Member Group, FPP meetings would be restored to four per year.
- 4.10 By consolidating the above responsibilities into FPP, the Council should benefit from continuity and improved oversight as one expert group would be in place to advise on financial strategy, capital programme setting and treasury management activities.
- 4.11 To mark this change and to recognise its new wider responsibilities, it is proposed that FPP be re-named as the Financial Strategy Advisory Group. The Group’s expected core work programme would be as shown in the following table:

Table 1 - Financial Strategy Advisory Group Proposed Core Work Programme		
Meeting	Agenda Item	Purpose
June	Strategic Financial Planning	To consider and advise on the budget setting framework for the forthcoming year(s)

	Review of Revenue Reserves	To review and advise on the level of Council reserves
September	Initial Capital Proposals	To review and advise which initial capital proposals should be worked up to final proposals
	Treasury Management Outturn	To review treasury management performance for the prior year
November	Final Capital Proposals	To review final capital proposals and recommend a programme to policy committees
	Interim Treasury Management Performance	To review in-year treasury management performance
January	Council Tax & Budget Report	To consider the government settlement and make a council tax recommendation to Council
	Treasury Management Strategy	To consider & recommend a Treasury Management Strategy for the forthcoming year

4.12 Within the Council's constitution, the specific functions of FPP and proposed changes are summarised in the following table:

Table 2 - Existing Responsibility		Current Committee/Group	Proposed Committee	Rationale
To advise S&R Committee on:	All matters relating to the Budget and Policy Framework (including the setting of staff pay);	Financial Policy Panel	Financial Strategy Advisory Group	No change
	New legislation or government policy relating to local government finance;	Financial Policy Panel	Financial Strategy Advisory Group	
	To respond on behalf of the S&R to urgent consultation requests from central or regional government.	Financial Policy Panel	Financial Strategy Advisory Group	
	To ensure effective scrutiny of the treasury management strategy and policies.	Financial Policy Panel	Financial Strategy Advisory Group	No change

Review of annual capital bids and recommend five year capital programme to policy committees.	Capital Member Group	Financial Strategy Advisory Group	As set out in paragraph 3.6
Monitoring of treasury management performance	Audit & Scrutiny	Financial Strategy Advisory Group	As set out in paragraphs 4.4 to 4.7

- 4.13 It is proposed that Financial Strategy Advisory Group (FSAG) meetings will generally be expected to take place on Friday afternoons from 2pm to 5pm.
- 4.14 The recommended group membership would remain unchanged from FPP – six members subject to rules on political proportionality. For 2023/24, those members currently appointed to FPP will become the members of FSAG. For future year appointments, recommended group membership will continue to include the Chairs of S&R, Environment, Community & Wellbeing, and Licensing & Planning Policy Committees. The S&R Chair would remain as the Chair of FSAG.
- 4.15 FSAG would remain an advisory panel (as was the case with FPP), meaning its recommendations are subject to formal ratification at the relevant policy committee (i.e. S&R unless agreed otherwise by FSAG) or Full Council.

5 Review of Budget Monitoring

- 5.1 Following the LGA Peer Review, 2022/23 saw the introduction of quarterly budget monitoring reports to Audit & Scrutiny Committee. Previously, quarterly monitoring reports had been shared with members only via Members Update (as it was then known), but not to a formal committee.
- 5.2 It is considered that the new formal reporting to Audit & Scrutiny Committee has worked well, by increasing transparency and oversight of the Council's in-year budget position.
- 5.3 As each policy committee is responsible for their budget, there is a need for individual policy committees to receive monitoring information, although this needs to be balanced with what is deliverable by officers within current resources. As such, it is proposed that officers will ensure that quarterly budget monitoring reports to Audit & Scrutiny will also be shared with policy committee chairs. These would also be shared with all members via Members News once the policy chairs have had opportunity to review their monitoring report.

- 5.4 Furthermore, to ensure material issues are formally reported to policy committees, any adverse budget variances in excess of £100,000 will continue to require formal reports with mitigation options to the relevant policy committee.

6 Next Steps

- 6.1 With FPP being an advisory panel to S&R Committee, the Chair of S&R has been consulted on these proposed changes and has confirmed their support for them.
- 6.2 The Chair of Audit & Scrutiny Committee has also been consulted and is also supportive.
- 6.3 Standards and Constitution Committee has also recommended the changes in sections 3 to 5 to Full Council for approval.
- 6.4 If approved at Full Council, the Constitution will be updated accordingly with the changes effective upon approval.

7 Risk Assessment

Legal or other duties

7.1 Impact Assessment

- 7.1.1 It is considered that the proposed changes will improve and strengthen the Council's financial decision-making procedures.

7.2 Equalities Impact Assessment

- 7.2.1 There are no direct equalities implications associated with the proposals of this report.

7.3 Crime & Disorder

- 7.3.1 None arising from the contents of this report.

7.4 Safeguarding

- 7.4.1 None arising from the contents of this report.

7.5 Dependencies

- 7.5.1 If approved, the Constitution and Treasury Management Strategy will be updated to reflect the proposed changes.

7.6 Other

- 7.6.1 None arising from the contents of this report.

8 Financial Implications

- 8.1 There are no additional direct cost implications associated with the proposed amendments.
- 8.2 **Section 151 Officer's comments:** It is considered that the proposed changes will improve and strengthen the Council's financial decision-making procedures.

9 Legal Implications

- 9.1 None arising from the contents of this report.
- 9.2 **Monitoring Officer's comments:** None arising from the contents of this report.

10 Policies, Plans & Partnerships

- 10.1 **Council's Key Priorities:** The following Key Priorities are engaged: Effective Council.
- 10.2 **Service Plans:** The matter is included within the current Service Delivery Plan.
- 10.3 **Climate & Environmental Impact of recommendations:** No significant impact.
- 10.4 **Sustainability Policy & Community Safety Implications:** None arising from the contents of this report.
- 10.5 **Partnerships:** None arising from the contents of this report.

11 Background papers

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

Previous reports:

- Financial Policy Panel Review report to Standards & Constitution Committee, 29 June 2023.
- Financial Regulations Review report to Full Council, 15 February 2022.
- LGA Finance Peer Review report to S&R Committee, 13 May 2021.

Other papers:

- Capital Member Group report to S&R Committee, 26 July 2022.

This page is intentionally left blank

EXTERNAL AUDITOR'S ANNUAL REPORT - 2021/22

Head of Service:	Brendan Bradley, Head of Finance
Wards affected:	(All Wards);
Appendices (attached):	Appendix 1 - 2021/22 Auditor's Annual Report Appendix 2 - Letter from Grant Thornton

Summary

This report presents Grant Thornton's 2021/22 Annual Report to members and an update on the 2022/23 Statement of Accounts.

Recommendation (s)

The Council is asked to:

- (1) Receive the Auditor's Annual Report;
- (2) Note the management responses to the auditor's recommendations at Appendix 1.

1 Reason for Recommendation

- 1.1 The external audit is a statutory part of the control environment for local authorities. It provides external assurance that the Council can use to demonstrate it can achieve the Four Year Plan priority of being an Effective Council.
- 1.2 The recommendations will enable the Council to meet its statutory obligations with regard to external audit.

2 Background

- 2.1 In March 2023, Grant Thornton completed the audit of the Council's 2021/22 Statement of Accounts. At that time, Epsom & Ewell Borough Council was among a minority of just [c.16% of local authorities nationally](#) to have their 2021/22 accounts signed off.
- 2.2 Under the 2020 Code of Audit Practice, it is a requirement for external auditors to issue an Auditor's Annual Report, to include commentary on the Council's arrangements to secure value for money, within three months of auditing the Statement of Accounts.

- 2.3 The auditor has met this requirement by providing the report to management on 26 May, which through this report is now presented to members at the earliest scheduled opportunity.
- 2.4 On 18 July 2023, Audit & Scrutiny Committee considered the auditor's Annual Audit Report, prior to it being presented to Full Council for information.

3 Auditor's Annual Report

- 3.1 The Auditor's Annual Report is attached at Appendix 1. The report's findings can be considered to reflect positively on the Council, with key findings relating to financial sustainability, governance and value for money summarised as follows:

Financial Sustainability

- 3.1.1 *"The Council continues to operate in a financially and operationally challenging environment. Financial planning both in the short and medium term is on a sound footing with a prudent assumptions being built into both. These challenges will continue so the need for the structured and disciplined approach to managing finances and reserves which the Council has demonstrated to date will need to continue."*
- 3.1.2 *"Our work has not identified any significant weaknesses in arrangements to secure financial stability, however we have suggested an improvement recommendation regarding the Medium-Term Financial Strategy and saving plans."*

Governance

- 3.1.3 *"The Council has appropriate leadership and management structures in place and its risk and control systems are appropriate. Our work has not identified any significant weaknesses in arrangements."*

Improving Economy, Efficiency and Effectiveness (Value for Money)

- 3.1.4 *"The Council has demonstrated a clear understanding of its role in securing economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources. Our work has not identified any significant weaknesses in arrangements."*
- 3.2 The auditors also presented three improvement recommendations, to further strengthen the Council's processes. These are summarised in the following table, along with the management response to each:

Auditor Recommendation	Management Response
1. The Council needs to set a timeline for how it will develop longer term saving plans that will ensure reserves are not further depleted. Current levels of reserves are well within the advised targets suggested by CIPFA but the reduction over the MTFS reduces the amount of headroom available to the Council.	<i>Management recognises the need to identify additional income and savings to mitigate the Council's projected budget gap from 2024/25. A report has been prepared for Strategy & Resources Committee in July 2023 to propose a framework and timeline for addressing the budget gap, for members to consider.</i>
2. The Council's current Risk Register template mostly covers the key areas seen within the sector and help support the Council's risk management process. The Council may benefit further from including the source of assurance for mitigation actions for example, is the assurance external or internal, based on recent information or data. The inclusion of the sources of assurance will allow the Council to produce more accurate risk scores to mitigate individual risks.	<i>The source of assurance (internal/external) will be disclosed for all corporate risk mitigating actions. To be implemented by 30 Sep 2023 (Q2 reporting period), which follows the annual review of the risk management strategy.</i>
3. Share quarterly budget monitoring reports with the Strategy & Resources Committee would support that committee in discharging its responsibilities around finances.	<i>Management agrees that members should be aware of budget monitoring reports, which are already taken to Audit & Scrutiny Committee. To avoid duplication and the potential scenario of two different committees reaching conflicting decisions on the same report, it is proposed that budget monitoring reports will continue to be taken to Audit and Scrutiny formally, but also shared via Members News, thereby ensuring all committee members including Strategy & Resources are kept informed.</i>

3.3 Grant Thornton has previously advised that it would be best practice for the Auditor's Annual Report to be presented to Full Council. This is because the national 'Redmond Review' recently found that in a number of high-profile corporate failures, those at the top of the organisation often cited in their defence that they were not made aware of issues raised by auditors, because audit reports had been discussed elsewhere in the governance structure.

3.4 As such, Full Council is asked to receive the Annual Audit Report and to note the management response to the three recommendations.

4 2022/23 Statement of Accounts Audit Update (as reported to Audit & Scrutiny Committee on 18 July)

- 4.1 The Council's unaudited 2022/23 Statement of Accounts were published on 5 July. Mainly due to a staff resource issue (i.e. long term sickness) in the finance team, this was after government's target date of 31 May.
- 4.2 The external audit of the accounts had been scheduled to take place in July, ahead of government's 30 September 2023 audit completion deadline. However, Grant Thornton (GT) has advised officers that due to wider issues in the audit sector, particularly the backlog of outstanding prior year audits at other councils (i.e. not EEBC), GT does not expect to have the resources to undertake EEBC's audit until October 2023. The full letter is at Appendix 2.
- 4.3 EEBC officers will continue best endeavours to progress the audit, when it starts, as efficiently as possible. Should the Council miss the audit deadline, it will be required to publish an explanatory notice on the website and then continue work to complete the audit as soon as practicable thereafter. There is no financial penalty for missing the deadline, but there will be a significant resourcing pressure later in the year if staff are working on the audit at the same time as preparing 2024/25 budget reports. In preparation, as much work as possible will be completed in advance to try to mitigate this scenario.

5 Risk Assessment

Legal or other duties

5.1 Impact Assessment

- 5.1.1 The auditor's recommendations and management actions arising from the Auditor's Annual Report should further enhance the Council's risk management framework.

5.2 Crime & Disorder

- 5.2.1 None arising directly from the contents of this report.

5.3 Safeguarding

- 5.3.1 None arising directly from the contents of this report.

5.4 Dependencies

- 5.4.1 None arising directly from the contents of this report.

5.5 Other

- 5.5.1 None arising directly from the contents of this report.

6 Financial Implications

- 6.1 The Auditor's Annual Report has been produced within the agreed main audit fee for 2021/22, as previously reported to Audit & Scrutiny Committee.
- 6.2 **Section 151 Officer's comments:** The Auditor's Annual Report forms a new part of the overall external audit process for local authorities. The Council received an unqualified (i.e. favourable) opinion on its Statement of Accounts from the external auditor for 2021/22.

7 Legal Implications

- 7.1 The Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014 sets out the framework for audit of local authorities. Grant Thornton's work is undertaken in the context of the Statement of Responsibilities of Auditors and Audit Bodies issued by the Comptroller and Auditor General.
- 7.2 **Legal Officer's comments:** None arising from the contents of this report.

8 Policies, Plans & Partnerships

- 8.1 **Council's Key Priorities:** The following Key Priorities are engaged: Effective Council.
- 8.2 **Service Plans:** The matter is included within the current Service Delivery Plan.
- 8.3 **Climate & Environmental Impact of recommendations:** None arising directly from the contents of this report.
- 8.4 **Sustainability Policy & Community Safety Implications:** None arising directly from the contents of this report.
- 8.5 **Partnerships:** None arising directly from the contents of this report.

9 Background papers

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

Previous reports:

- External Audit Update Report – Audit & Scrutiny Committee, 6 April 2023
- 2021/22 Statement of Accounts and Audit Findings Report – Audit & Scrutiny Committee, 17 November 2022.

Other papers:

- None.

This page is intentionally left blank

Auditor's Annual Report on Epsom & Ewell District Council

Page 55


2021-22

April 2023

Agenda Item 8
Appendix 1



Contents



We are required under Section 20(1)(c) of the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014 to satisfy ourselves that the Council has made proper arrangements for securing economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources. The Code of Audit Practice issued by the National Audit Office (NAO) requires us to report to you our commentary relating to proper arrangements.

We report if significant matters have come to our attention. We are not required to consider, nor have we considered, whether all aspects of the Council's arrangements for securing economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources are operating effectively.

Section	Page
Executive summary	3
Commentary on the Council's arrangements to secure economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources	4
Opinion on the financial statements and use of auditor's powers	5
Use of auditor's powers	6
Financial sustainability	7
Governance	10
Improving economy, efficiency and effectiveness	14
Follow-up of previous recommendations	16
Appendices	
Appendix A – Assessing Value for Money in the Services	18
Appendix B – Responsibilities of the Council	22
Appendix C – Risks of significant weaknesses, our procedures and findings	23
Appendix D – An explanatory note on recommendations	24

Agenda Item 8 Appendix 1

The contents of this report relate only to those matters which came to our attention during the conduct of our normal audit procedures which are designed for the purpose of completing our work under the NAO Code of Audit Practice and related guidance. Our audit is not designed to test all arrangements in respect of value for money. However, where, as part of our testing, we identify significant weaknesses, we will report these to you. In consequence, our work cannot be relied upon to disclose all irregularities, or to include all possible improvements in arrangements that a more extensive special examination might identify. We do not accept any responsibility for any loss occasioned to any third party acting, or refraining from acting on the basis of the content of this report, as this report was not prepared for, nor intended for, any other purpose.

Grant Thornton UK LLP is a limited liability partnership registered in England and Wales: No.OC307742. Registered office: 30 Finsbury Square, London, EC2A 1AG. A list of members is available from our registered office.

Grant Thornton UK LLP is authorised and regulated by the Financial Conduct Council. Grant Thornton UK LLP is a member firm of Grant Thornton International Ltd (GTIL). GTIL and the member firms are not a worldwide partnership. Services are delivered by the member firms. GTIL and its member firms are not agents of, and do not obligate, one another and are not liable for one another's acts or omissions.

Executive summary



Value for money arrangements and key recommendation(s)

Under the National Audit Office (NAO) Code of Audit Practice (‘the Code’), we are required to consider whether the Council has put in place proper arrangements to secure economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources.

Auditors are required to report their commentary on the Council’s arrangements under specified criteria and 2021-22 is the second year that we have reported our findings in this way. As part of our work, we considered whether there were any risks of significant weakness in the Council’s arrangements for securing economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources. Our conclusions are summarised in the table below.



Financial sustainability

The Council continues to operate in a financially and operationally challenging environment. Financial planning both in the short and medium term is on a sound footing with a prudent assumptions being built into both. These challenges will continue so the need for the structured and disciplined approach to managing finances and reserves which the Council has demonstrated to date will need to continue.

Our work has not identified any significant weaknesses in arrangements to secure financial stability however we have suggested an improvement recommendation regarding the Medium-Term Financial Strategy and saving plans.



Governance

The Council has appropriate leadership and management structures in place and its risk and control systems are appropriate. Our work has not identified any significant weaknesses in arrangements.



Improving economy, efficiency and effectiveness

The Council has demonstrated a clear understanding of its role in securing economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources.

Our work has not identified any significant weaknesses in arrangements.


Commentary on the Council's arrangements to secure economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources

Councils report on their arrangements, and the effectiveness of these arrangements as part of their annual governance statement. Under the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014, we are required to be satisfied whether the Council has made proper arrangements for securing economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources. The National Audit Office's Auditor Guidance Note (AGN) 03, requires us to assess arrangements under three areas:




Financial sustainability

Arrangements for ensuring the Council can continue to deliver services. This includes planning resources to ensure adequate finances and maintain sustainable levels of spending over the medium term (3-5 years).



Governance

Arrangements for ensuring that the Council makes appropriate decisions in the right way. This includes arrangements for budget setting and management, risk management, and ensuring the Council makes decisions based on appropriate information.



Improving economy, efficiency and effectiveness

Arrangements for improving the way the Council delivers its services. This includes arrangements for understanding costs and delivering efficiencies and improving outcomes for service users.



Our commentary on the Council's arrangements in each of these three areas, is set out overleaf.



Opinion on the financial statements



Audit opinion on the financial statements

We gave an unqualified opinion on the Council's financial statements on 3 March 2023. The delay in sign off related to delays in the receipt of information relating to the pension liability from the County auditors rather than any issues at the Council.

Audit Findings Report

More detailed findings can be found in our AFR, which was published and reported to the Council's Audit and Scrutiny Committee in November 2022.

Whole of Government Accounts

To support the audit of the Whole of Government Accounts (WGA), we are required to review and report on the WGA return prepared by the Council. This work includes performing specified procedures under group audit instructions issued by the National Audit Office.

Preparation of the accounts

The Council provided draft accounts in advance of the national deadline and provided a good set of working papers to support it.

Grant Thornton provides an independent opinion on whether the accounts are:

- True and fair
- Prepared in accordance with relevant accounting standards
- Prepared in accordance with relevant UK legislation



Use of auditor's powers

Opinion on the financial statements

Auditors are required to express an opinion on the financial statements that states whether they : (i) present a true and fair view of the Council's financial position, and (ii) have been prepared in accordance with the CIPFA/LASAAC Code of practice on local Council accounting in the United Kingdom 2021-22

We have completed our audit of your financial statements and issued an unqualified audit opinion on 3 March 2023. Our findings are set out in further detail on page 6.

Statutory recommendations

Under Schedule 7 of the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014, auditors can make written recommendations to the audited body which need to be considered by the body and responded to publicly

We did not issue any statutory recommendations

Public Interest Report

Under Schedule 7 of the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014, auditors have the power to make a report if they consider a matter is sufficiently important to be brought to the attention of the audited body or the public as a matter of urgency, including matters which may already be known to the public, but where it is in the public interest for the auditor to publish their independent view.

We did not issue a public interest report

Application to the Court

Under Section 28 of the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014, if auditors think that an item of account is contrary to law, they may apply to the court for a declaration to that effect.

We did not apply to the court

Advisory notice

Under Section 29 of the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014, auditors may issue an advisory notice if the auditor thinks that the Council or an officer of the Council:

We did not issue an advisory notice


- is about to make or has made a decision which involves or would involve the Council incurring unlawful expenditure,
- is about to take or has begun to take a course of action which, if followed to its conclusion, would be unlawful and likely to cause a loss or deficiency, or
- is about to enter an item of account, the entry of which is unlawful.

Judicial review

Under Section 31 of the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014, auditors may make an application for judicial review of a decision of an Council, or of a failure by an Council to act, which it is reasonable to believe would have an effect on the accounts of that body.

We did not apply for judicial review

Financial sustainability



We considered how the Council:

- identifies all the significant financial pressures that are relevant to its short and medium-term plans and builds them into its plans
- plans to bridge its funding gaps and identify achievable savings
- plans its finances to support the sustainable delivery of services in accordance with strategic and statutory priorities
- identifies all the significant financial pressures that ensures its financial plan is consistent with other plans such as workforce, capital, investment and other operational planning which may include working with other local public bodies as part of a wider system
- identifies and manages risk to financial resilience, such as unplanned changes in demand and assumptions underlying its plans.

Financial Planning and Managing Pressures

2021/22 and 2022/23 have presented significant challenges to Council finance teams in terms of financial planning. During 2021/22 the Council continued to experience the financial impact of Covid-19, with the loss of income and pressure on services. Whilst the impact of Covid-19 reduced in 2022/23 the Council faced new pressures arising from inflation that wouldn't have been factored into budgets or financial planning.

The Council delivered an overspend of £1.68m on service budgets in 2021/22. After transfers from the General Fund Working balance reserve of £530k and a contribution of £1.15m for Covid related pressures from the government the Council was able to balance its financial position. The main reasons for the deficit were a reduction in car parking income (£1.2m), loss of income from sports and leisure facilities due to Covid (£440k) and reduction in income from commercial property (£430k).

In regard to 2022/23, third quarter performance forecasts the General Fund will underspend £300k. This has been achieved by an increase in income from licensing and treasury management though partially offset by reduced income from car parks and Planning.

Assumptions underpinning revenue budgets for 2022/23 and over the medium term, which agreed in February 2022, had to be revised following the significant economic challenges and cost increases affecting the global economy. In particular employment costs for direct employees and those of providers, premises costs (energy inflation), transport costs (fuel inflation) and of the general impact of inflation on the purchase of goods and services, including suppliers passing on additional costs or renegotiating contract prices. Some of the most significant levels of inflation are being experienced in the construction and this impacts on Capital programmes.

The Council has positioned itself to manage the pressures moving forward by controlling in year expenditure in 2022/23 and identifying approaches to dealing with future funding challenges. Overall, inflation and other factors have also led to significant increases in the Council's projected MTFP funding gaps (cumulative £4.3m funding gap in the period 2024/25 to 2026/27, as reported to Full Council in February 2023).

The Council has recently submitted its 2023/24 budget proposal and revised its MTFs in the light of the Local government funding settlement in December 2022. We note the Council is proposing a balanced budget with £1.25m savings identified to for 2023/24. The Council has been able to balance its 2023/24 budget mainly through £1.25m savings/additional income and £2.4m drawdown from reserves'

Summary Forecast	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27
	Budget £000	Budget £000	Budget £000	Budget £000
Cost of Service b/f (before interest and planned use of reserves)	10,517	11,394	11,342	11,746
Pay & Prices Increases	1,260	657	670	683
Contingency for Service Changes and Pressures	1,280	-184	267	77
Increases in Fees & Charges	-417	-442	-469	-238
Star Chamber Savings / Additional Income	-1,246	-83	-65	-27
Net Cost of Services (excluding interest and planned use of reserves)	11,394	11,342	11,746	12,241
Interest on Balances	-720	-830	-880	-830
Contributions to / (from) reserves	-2,383	-266	-150	-100
Forecast Net Cost of Services	8,290	10,246	10,716	11,311
Business Rates Forecast	1,653	1,692	1,243	1,268
Revenue Support/Other Grants	333	333	0	0
Council Tax Income Forecast	7,361	7,620	7,811	8,017
Council Tax Surplus / (Deficit)	27	0	0	0
Business Rates Surplus / (Deficit)	-1,085	0	0	0
Collection Fund Income	8,290	9,645	9,054	9,275
Funding Shortfall	0	601	1,662	2,937

Agenda Item 8
Appendix 1

Financial sustainability

Savings plans and reserves

The Council has not historically needed had to resort to delivering significant savings programmes over the past few years although in the last three years efficiencies of £1.24m have been delivered. Any savings required have been managed via service Heads who have played their part in ensuring that any funding shortfalls can be mitigated by financial savings identified ahead of the budget year in question. The shortfall over the MTFS period is £4.6m which is a significant challenge for a Council with a net budget of £8.2m. The savings required for 2023/24 have largely been identified but those required subsequently need to be developed.

The likelihood is that with increased income generation available that the Council will have to draw down on reserves. CIPFA has regularly commented that councils should be particularly wary about using reserves to deal with shortfalls in current funding. The Council is fortunate that it has strong reserve position. The reserve position as per the last audited set of accounts were as follows:

	Balance 31 March 2021 £000	Balance 31 March 2022 £000	
Capital Receipt Reserves	4,050	3,821	Receipts from the sale of assets earmarked for capital programme commitments and invested under the Treasury Management policy.
Community Infrastructure Levy	8,419	9,320	Receipts available for funding of infrastructure improvements
Earmarked Strategic Reserves	25,152	23,255	Provisions for future expenditure or against identified liabilities
Working Balance	3,383	2,853	General Fund Working Balance

The Council has consistently kept to its MTFS target of holding a GF working balance of £2.5m per year up to March 2024 and £1m in the corporate projects reserve.

Managing financial risks

The Council manages risk through its Corporate Risk Strategy and the Audit and Scrutiny Committee provides oversight of the process. The Corporate risk register was reviewed in the year of audit (November 2021) with a report taken to the November 2021 committee. This included the main financial risks to the Council at the time. Additionally the performance and risk report is presented quarterly to the committee.

Capital investment

In 2021/22 the Council, similar to other bodies, underspent on its original planned capital budget of £4.3m, eventually delivering a plan of £1.7m in year. Clearly the difficult economic conditions were not helpful.

The 2022/23 capital programme was agreed in February 2022 and given the underspend on 2021/22, in July 2022 budgets totalling £2.56m were carried forward into 2022/23. Quarter 3 capital expenditure monitoring in 2022/23 projected expenditure for the full year of £2.899m which is £1.13m less than the £4.03m budget.

Borrowing Position

The Council does have long term borrowing of £64m which relates to funding of its commercial properties and whilst it pays £1.6m of interest on this per annum the Council also has significant investments that generate approx £2m per annum. The current position is therefore sustainable and the investments have held up despite the uncertainty arising during Covid-19.

Conclusion

Overall, we are satisfied the Council has appropriate arrangements in place to ensure it manages risks to its financial sustainability. The Council remains financially resilient given its historical position but the challenges in the next few years are significant. Management are clearly aware of the risks to its financial position and reporting and monitoring is detailed and clear. The Council has strong levels of reserves but these will be reduced over the life of the current MTFS. Saving plans up to 2023/24 are largely identified but after that there is a clear funding gap. The Council therefore needs to shortly begin developing clear plans for how it intends to identify new saving plans to ensure reserves are not further depleted.

Improvement recommendations



Financial sustainability- Recommendation 1

Auditor judgement

The Council has a track record of delivering its financial position and has a strong reserve position to fall back on. The MTFS however identifies a shortfall and saving plans are only fully developed up to 2023/24. Existing plans will require the utilisation of reserves to deliver a balanced revenue budget.

Summary Recommendation

The Council needs to set a timeline for how it will develop longer term saving plans that will ensure reserves are not further depleted. Current levels of reserves are well within the advised targets suggested by CIPFA but the reduction over the MTFS reduces the amount of headroom available to the Council.

Management response

Management recognises the need to identify additional income and savings to mitigate the Council's projected budget gap from 2024/25. A report will be prepared for Strategy & Resources Committee in July 2023 to propose a framework and timeline for addressing the budget gap, for members to consider.



Governance



We considered how the Council:

- monitors and assesses risk and gains assurance over the effective operation of internal controls, including arrangements to prevent and detect fraud
- approaches and carries out its annual budget setting process
- ensures effective processes and systems are in place to ensure budgetary control; communicate relevant, accurate and timely management information (including non-financial information); supports its statutory financial reporting; and ensures corrective action is taken where needed, including in relation to significant partnerships
- ensures it makes properly informed decisions, supported by appropriate evidence and allowing for challenge and transparency. This includes arrangements for effective challenge from those charged with governance/audit committee
- monitors and ensures appropriate standards, such as meeting legislative/regulatory requirements and standards in terms of staff and board member behaviour (such as gifts and hospitality or declaration/conflicts of interests) and where it procures and commissions services.

Risk management

A long term vacancy and the disruption of routine review due to Covid-19 meant that Internal Audit provided limited assurance on their review of risk management in 2021/22. However we note there were no high priority recommendations made and that towards the end of the year actions were implemented to improve arrangement e.g. the risk management strategy was updated in March 2022 and regular review of the Risk Register has once again commenced. Risk are now routinely reviewed by the Leadership team, Heads of Services, Boards, the Strategy & Resource Committees, the Audit & Scrutiny Committee, the Policy Committee, chairs & members and Internal Audit.

The format of the risk register includes risk consequences, a risk score which uses a 4x4 likelihood by impact matrix, risk owner, controls/mitigations, risk score post controls/mitigations, direction of travel and further actions. A governance recommendation outlined in the 2020/21 Annual Audit Report was to include a target score and further actions that can be undertaken to further control the risk. The Council have now incorporated both these elements into their Risk Register, resulting in further transparency on the status of risks. To improve the Risk Register even further, the Council should consider including sources of assurance to better guide control over risks and mitigating actions. For example, an assurance measure for a financial risk could be a dedicated reserve that could be used to bridge any service budget gaps.

Budget Setting

As reported in prior years, the Council has effective budget setting arrangements in place. Budgets are discussed with budget managers, heads of services, the Leadership team and other relevant stakeholders before Committee approval. The Council also have demonstrated consistently strong financial planning. Due to the Covid-19 pandemic and central government schemes being reduced, the Council finished with an overspend of £530k in 2021-22. Nonetheless, the Council's identified mitigations, savings and financial reserves to combat further overspend are sufficient contingencies for the short-term.

Budgetary Control

The Council has appropriate processes in place to ensure there is robust scrutiny over the budget. Quarterly budget monitoring reports are shared with the Audit & Scrutiny Committee where reasons for budget variances are clearly presented, as well as mitigations for increased expenditure to prevent further overspend. For example, in the Q3 budget monitoring report there was a variance of £1.4m Environment and Safe Communities, largely due to difficulty recruiting staff post Covid-19. Suggested mitigations included review of increased expenditure and developing a financial recovery plan among others.

However budget monitoring reports are not shared with Policy Committees. As a minimum, the Strategy and Resources Committee who, as per their terms of reference, have responsibility to "make recommendations to the Council on budget and policy matters" should receive such reports. The Committee does review the budget and see the year end outturn but is not sighted on any in year performance.

Legislative and Regulatory Standards

The Council has clear mechanisms in place to meet necessary standards including cultural, legislative and regulatory. In reference to cultural standards, the Council's Code of Conduct sets out the behaviours expected of staff members, including openness, transparency, personal ownership and engagement, which are aligned to the public sector Nolan principles. In reference to legislative and regulatory, the Constitution outlines the framework for monitoring compliance with legislation, and the Council has a Monitoring Officer who is responsible for upholding and reporting on the compliance of the Council's activities.

The Constitution also contains clear policy for staff around gifts, hospitality and guidance on what does and does not need to be disclosed or registered. Staff are responsible for their own declarations and are free to seek guidance from the Monitoring Officer. Council declarations are publicly available via the council website.

Agenda Item 8 Appendix 1

Governance

Furthermore, the Council have a clear strategy against fraud and corruption. It emphasises training around fraud, new systems for fraud detection and prevention measures, which involves making better use of information and technology, improving fraud controls and processes and prioritising fraud recovery.

In addition, the decision making process in place at the Council allows for stakeholders to be properly informed and allows for challenge and transparency. As per the Constitution, committees are given the space to be properly informed before making decisions through professional advice from qualified consultants and public engagement as needed. The Audit & Scrutiny Committee hold the power to scrutinise any decision made by committees and hold decision-makers into account. Finally, the report template for Committee decisions requires consideration of all stakeholders which allows for informed decision-making.

Internal Audit

The 2021-22 Internal Audit Report & Opinion highlighted six service areas with Limited Assurance. By March 2023, none of those areas still had Limited Assurance. Underlying themes which caused significant weakness in those service areas was a lack of leadership, oversight and reporting. Of those six service areas, only the HR Performance Management and Health & Safety service areas had outstanding actions.

For HR Performance Management, the outstanding action is to conduct a survey of new starters post April 2022 to understand how they are settling in and whether they have clear goals/objectives and a Personal Development Plan set out. For Health & Safety, the outstanding action is to complete an initial visit with each relevant location and / or team. We recommend that the Council prioritise the completion of these actions to ensure improvement of the overall services. Despite these outstanding actions, our view is that the Council have demonstrated their ability to promptly address limitations and weaknesses within their services.

As referenced earlier in this section, the Council has improved its risk management arrangements. In 2021/22, risk management function suffered due to a vacant Business Assurance Manager post for 18 months consequent to the pandemic, causing a lack of risk review and oversight. The Council improved processes quickly through an updated risk management strategy and more robust Risk Register template that now includes target scores and further mitigating actions. Subsequently, it is evident that the Council sharpened their Risk Management Strategy and incorporated audit recommendations.

Overall, the Head of Internal Audit Opinion (HIAO) gave the Council a 'Reasonable' score in their review of governance functions. However, since then, the Council have demonstrated improvements across areas that previously had been scored with Limited Assurance by the HIAO. Therefore, we believe that the Council have demonstrated substantial governance throughout 2021/22.

Conclusion

We found no evidence of significant weaknesses in the Council's arrangements for ensuring that it makes informed decisions and properly manages its risks. We have identified two opportunities for improvement, set out on pages 12-13.

Improvement recommendations



Governance – Recommendation 2

Auditor judgement

The Council’s current Risk Register template mostly covers the key areas seen within the sector and help support the Council’s risk management process. The Council may benefit further from including the source of assurance for mitigation actions for example, is the assurance external or internal, based on recent information or data.

Summary Recommendation

The inclusion of the sources of assurance will allow the Council to produce more accurate risk scores to mitigate individual risks.

Management response

The source of assurance (internal/external) will be disclosed for all corporate risk mitigating actions. To be implemented by 30 Sep 2023 (Q2 reporting period), which follows the annual review of the risk management strategy.



Improvement recommendations



Governance - Recommendation 3

Auditor judgement

Budget monitoring reporting is not shared with all Policy Committees. This may be appropriate for most of these Committees but Strategy & Resources Committee as per its terms of reference, has responsibility to “make recommendations to the Council on budget and policy matters” should receive such reports. The Committee does review the budget and see the year end outturn but is not sighted on any in year performance.

Summary Recommendation

Share quarterly budget monitoring reports with the Strategy & Resources Committee would support that committee in discharging its responsibilities around finances.

Management response

Management agrees that members should be aware of budget monitoring reports, which are already taken to Audit & Scrutiny Committee. To avoid duplication and the potential scenario of two different committees reaching conflicting decisions on the same report, it is proposed that budget monitoring reports will continue to be taken to Audit and Scrutiny formally, but also shared via Members News to ensure all committee members including Strategy & Resources are kept informed.



Improving economy, efficiency and effectiveness



We considered how the Council:

- uses financial and performance information to assess performance to identify areas for improvement
- evaluates the services it provides to assess performance and identify areas for improvement
- ensures it delivers its role within significant partnerships and engages with stakeholders it has identified, in order to assess whether it is meeting its objectives

Financial & Performance Information

The Council agreed a Four Year Plan for the period 2020 to 2024 in February 2020. The six themes are:

1. Green & Vibrant - A better place to live where people enjoy their surroundings
2. Safe & Well - A place where people feel safe, secure, and lead healthy, fulfilling lives.
3. Opportunity & Prosperity - A successful place with a strong, dynamic local economy where people can thrive
4. Smart & Connected - Alive and connected socially, economically, geographically, and digitally.
5. Cultural & Creative - A centre for cultural and creative excellence and inspiration.
6. Effective Council-Engaging, responsive and resilient Council.

An amended Annual Plan for 2021-22 was agreed on 30 September 2021 replacing the previous KPT's and KPI's. A total of 26 objectives were agreed and supported by a number of KPI's. The Council provides regular updates of how the Council is performing against these Annual Plan targets. This takes the form of both an annual review of performance (see evidence column for annual review and appendices) and an interim update during the year. The financial plans of the Council are aligned to the annual Plan and the plan drives the budget each year. A new performance management framework has been developed in 2022-23 and was shared with the most recent Audit and Scrutiny committee in February 2023.

Service evaluation

The budget process involves a rigorous assessment of services and heads of service are involved in that process and asked to review their services annually and determine how they can support the council's financial savings objectives while at the same time

maintaining service performance. This took place as part of the Strategic Financial Planning round in July 2022 and will be reprised in July 2023 post local elections.

Partnership Working

The council works with a number of key partners. The most significant ones are:

- Epsom & Ewell Property Investment Company Ltd (EEPIC), the Council's wholly owned subsidiary, holds two commercial properties outside the Borough. The properties were acquired in 2017 to generate additional income for the Council, before the introduction of new statutory guidance in 2018, which restricted the ability to acquire further properties outside the Borough using borrowing
- Greenwich Leisure Ltd (GLL) the council's leisure services provider

The Council also works closely with a number of partners: Epsom Walton Downs Conservators, Nonsuch Park Joint Management Committee, Community Safety Partnership, Joint Action Groups, Surrey County Council, Other district councils, NHS, Surrey Police, Voluntary Sector.

Procurement, Commissioning and Contract Management

The Council has a procurement strategy (updated in March 2022) and operates a very small procurement team (2 staff) and they work as champions of procurement, supporting Heads of service as appropriate. Given the capacity limitations the team have to prioritise the procurements they get involved with in detail and inevitably these tend to be the larger value, more risky procurements. The Contracts Register is currently managed by the Head of Procurement and is updated formally on the website every 6 months for external scrutiny purposes.

The Council also updated its procurement standing orders at the same time it developed its strategy. There is also a clear procurement pipeline and there is clarity about the procurements expected in the next 12-18 months. Significant contracts to be reviewed/extended are Greenwich Leisure Ltd (GLL) leisure contracts and the HR & Payroll system.

Agenda Item 8 Appendix 1

Improving economy, efficiency and effectiveness

There is a process for tender waivers and a waivers template needs to be completed and signed off by Head of Service and sent to Procurement team to log. They need to be under a threshold. Head of Policy and Corporate Resources then signs off. there is a log of who has signed off, notice for awards over 25k. There have been 3 waivers so far in 2023 year, 15 waivers in 2022, 11 in 2021.

Conclusion on Improving Economy, Efficiency and Effectiveness

The Council has demonstrated a clear understanding of its role in securing economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources. We have assessed the arrangements concerning the 3e's and raised no indications of potential significant weaknesses.

Follow-up of Prior year Improvement recommendations

Recommendation	Type of recommendation	Date raised	Progress to date	Implemented?	Further action?
1	Replace or refresh the 2020-24 MTFS	July 2022	Now updated	Yes	N/a
2	Update Investment Strategy to reflect property investment risks in a hybrid working setting	July 2022	The Council's February 2022 Capital Strategy Statement provides a framework for asset planning	Yes	N/a
3	Include target scores and SMART further actions in Risk Register	July 2022	The Council have implemented this recommendation	Yes	N/a
4	Include performance trajectory and information on KPI accuracy in performance reporting	July 2022	The Council have implemented RAG ratings on key objectives	Yes	N/a
5	Develop SMART objectives and develop a framework for delivery of Performance Management objectives	July 2022	Key objectives are SMART. The Corporate Performance Reporting Guide includes a performance flowchart which outlines the process for developing, sharing and updating objectives.	Yes	N/a

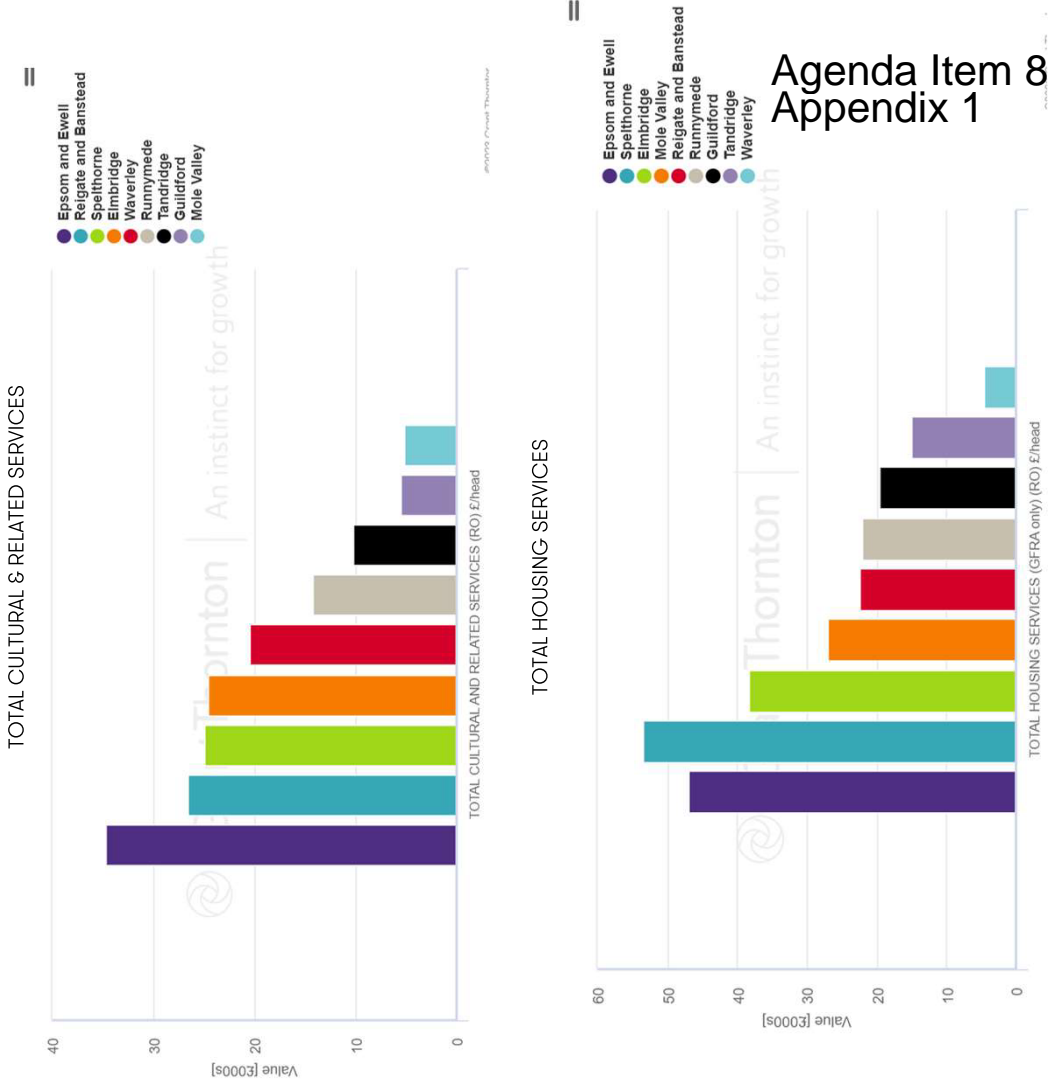
Appendices

Appendix A - Assessing Value for Money in the Services

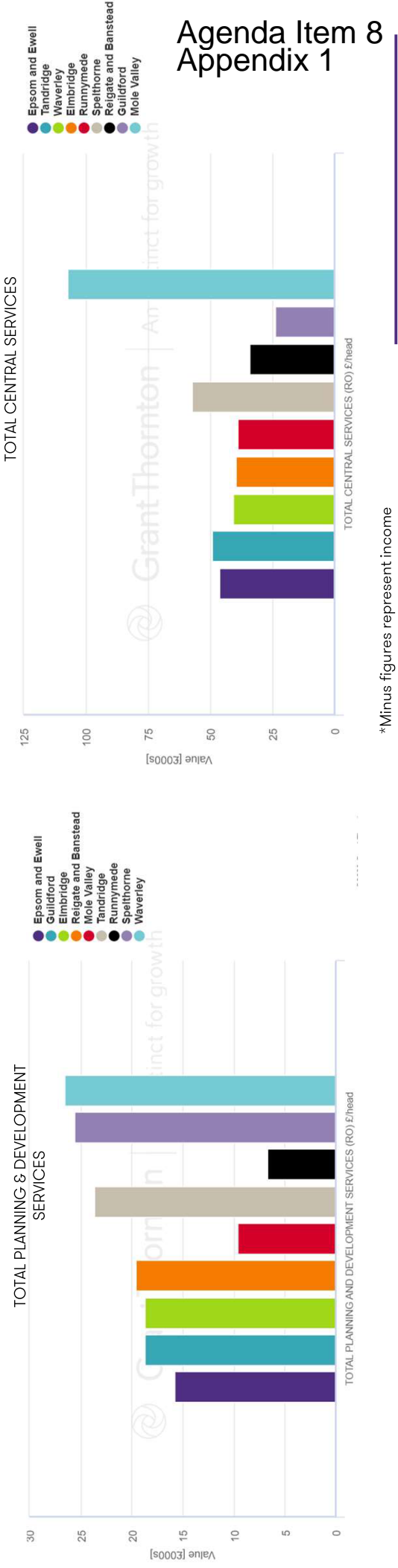
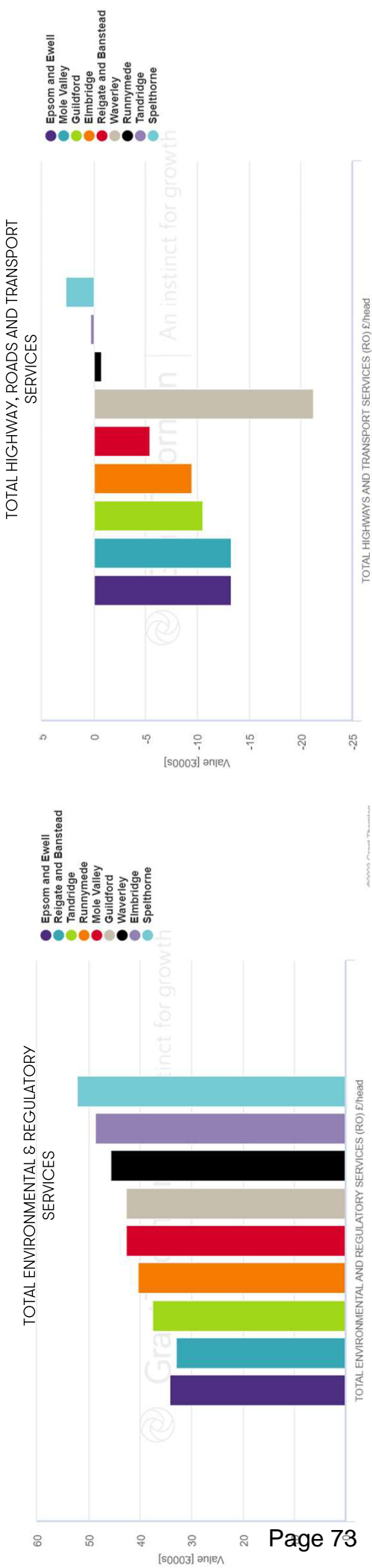
As part of our review we used the Grant Thornton data analytics platform CFO Insights to benchmark Epsom & Ewell Council's net expenditure on services against other local authorities in Surrey. These boroughs include:

- Reigate and Banstead
- Spelthorne
- Elmbridge
- Waverley
- Runnymede
- Tandridge
- Guildford
- Mole Valley

CFO Insights uses the most recently available public data (2022-23 RO Return). As displayed in the graphs on the right and overleaf, the results show that Epsom and Ewell have a relatively high total spend for Cultural & Related and Housing services compared to other Surrey boroughs, but have a relatively average spend and/or net income across all other services.



Appendix A - Assessing Value for Money in the Services



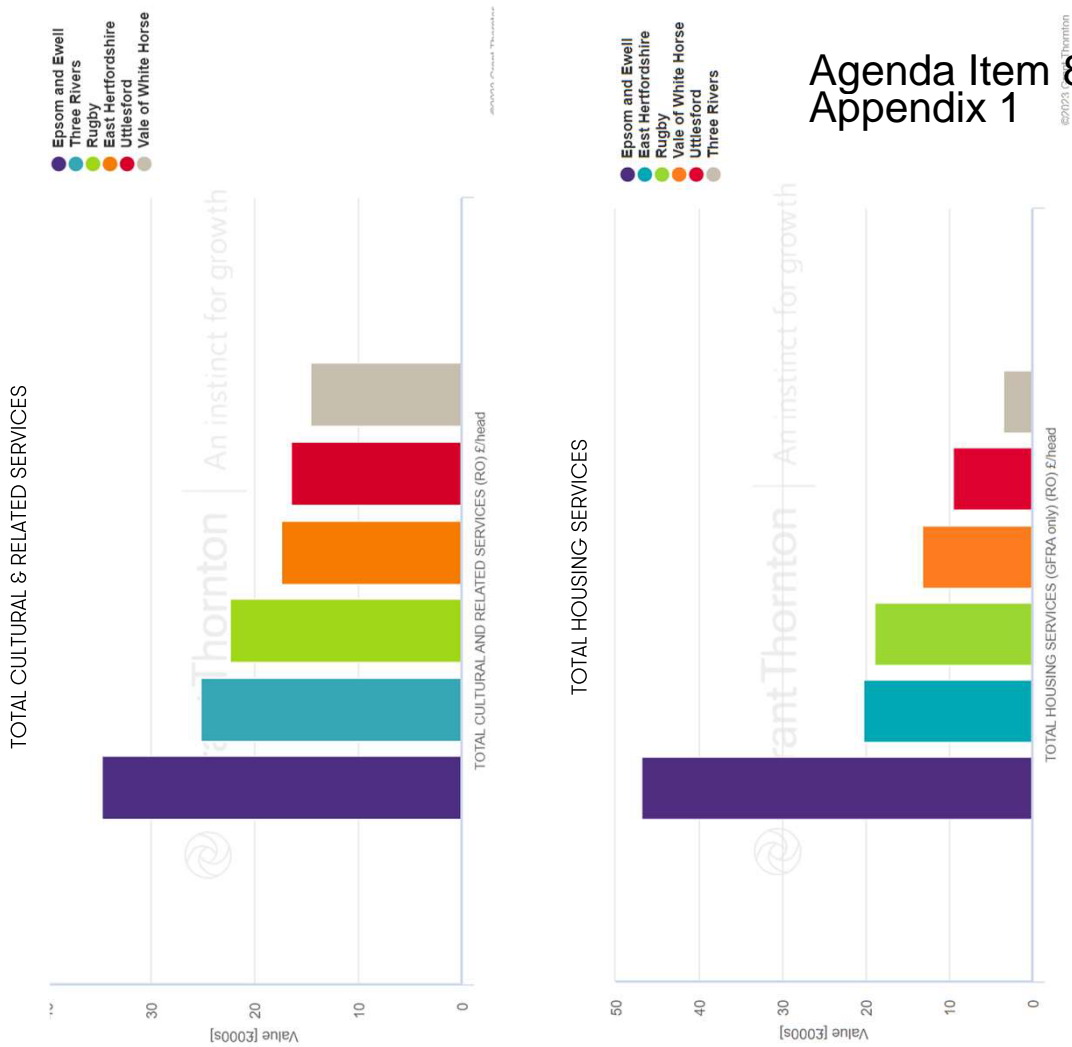
*Minus figures represent income

Appendix A - Assessing Value for Money in the Services

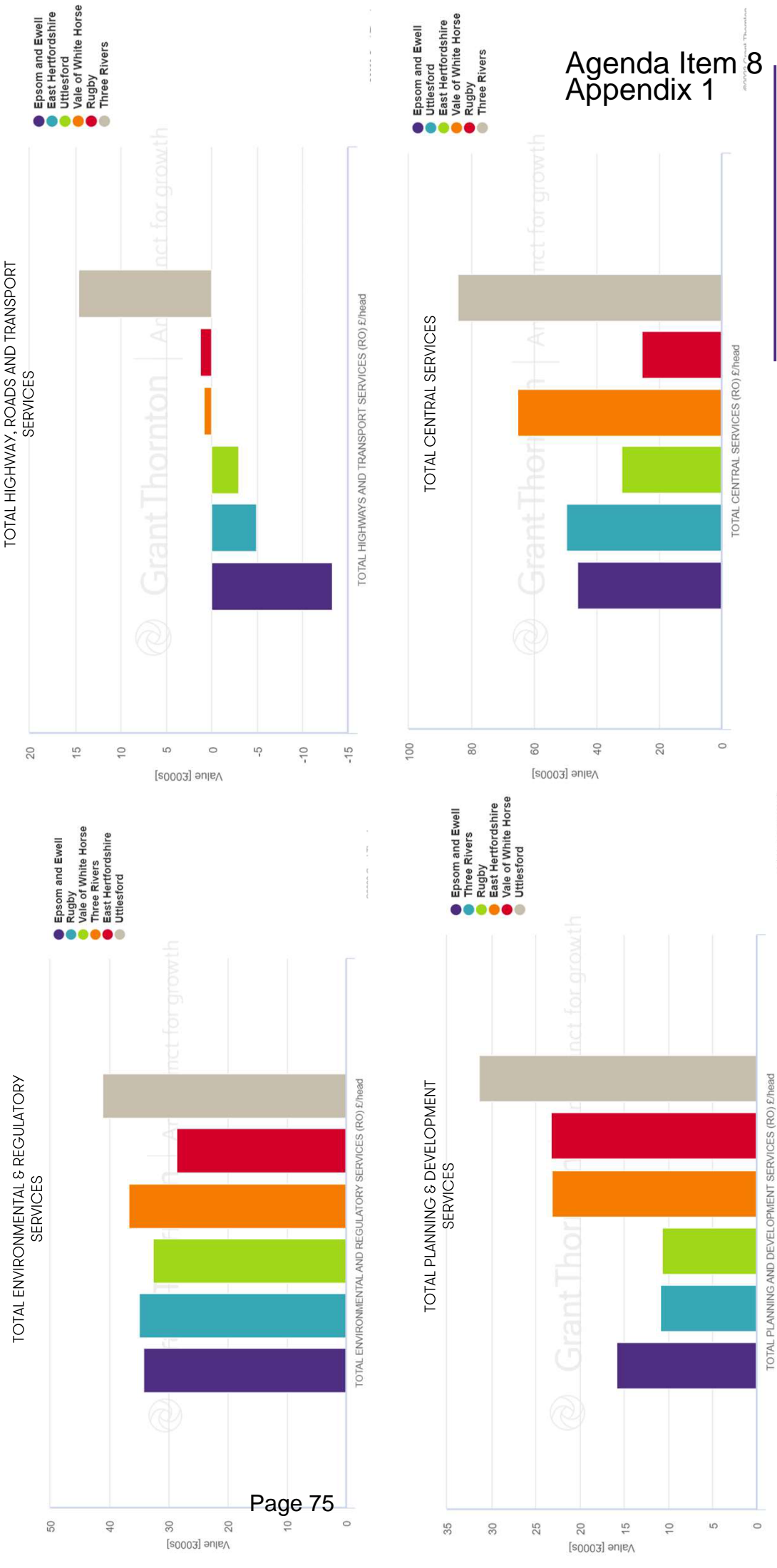
We also benchmarked Epsom & Ewell Council's net expenditure on services against 'near neighbour' boroughs, which are boroughs with similar characteristics in regard to their demographics. These boroughs include:

- Three Rivers
- Rugby
- East Hertfordshire
- Uttlesford
- Vale of White Horse

Mirroring comparison to the Surrey boroughs, as displayed in the graphs on the right and overleaf, the results show that Epsom and Ewell have a relatively high total spend across their Cultural & Related and Housing services compared to other near neighbours. Notably, Epsom & Ewell have an overall total net income for their Highways, Roads and Transport services that is significantly higher than near neighbours that have a lower net income or have expenditure.



Appendix A - Assessing Value for Money in the Services



Appendix B – Responsibilities of the Council

Public bodies spending taxpayers' money are accountable for their stewardship of the resources entrusted to them. They should account properly for their use of resources and manage themselves well so that the public can be confident taxpayers money is being appropriately used.

Financial statements are the main way in which local public bodies account for how they use their resources. Local public bodies are required to prepare and publish financial statements setting out their financial performance for the year. To do this, bodies need to maintain proper accounting records and ensure they have effective systems of internal control.

All local public bodies are responsible for putting in place proper arrangements to secure economy, efficiency and effectiveness from their resources. This includes taking properly informed decisions and managing key operational and financial risks so that they can deliver their objectives and safeguard public money. Local public bodies report on their arrangements, and the effectiveness with which the arrangements are operating, as part of their annual governance statement.

The Chief Financial Officer (or equivalent) is responsible for the preparation of the financial statements and for being satisfied that they give a true and fair view, and for such internal control as the Chief Financial Officer (or equivalent) determines is necessary to enable the preparation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

The Chief Financial Officer (or equivalent) or equivalent is required to prepare the financial statements in accordance with proper practices as set out in the CIPFA/LASAAC code of practice on local Council accounting in the United Kingdom. In preparing the financial statements, the Chief Financial Officer (or equivalent) is responsible for assessing the Council's ability to continue as a going concern and use the going concern basis of accounting unless there is an intention by government that the services provided by the Council will no longer be provided.

The Council is responsible for putting in place proper arrangements to secure economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources, to ensure proper stewardship and governance, and to review regularly the adequacy and effectiveness of these arrangements.



Appendix C – Risks of significant weaknesses, our procedures and findings

As part of our planning and assessment work, we considered whether there were any risks of significant weakness in the Council's arrangements for securing economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources that we needed to perform further procedures on. The risks we identified are detailed in the table below, along with the further procedures we performed, our findings and the final outcome of our work:

Risk of significant weakness	Procedures undertaken	Findings	Outcome
Financial sustainability - no significant weaknesses identified	N/A	N/A	N/A
Governance – no significant weaknesses identified	N/A	N/A	N/A
Improving economy, efficiency and effectiveness – no significant weaknesses identified	N/A	N/A	N/A

Appendix D – An explanatory note on recommendations

A range of different recommendations can be raised by the Council’s auditors as follows:

Type of recommendation	Background	Raised within this report	Page reference
Statutory	Written recommendations to the Council under Section 24 (Schedule 7) of the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014.	No	N/A
Key Page 78	The NAO Code of Audit Practice requires that where auditors identify significant weaknesses as part of their arrangements to secure value for money they should make recommendations setting out the actions that should be taken by the Council. We have defined these recommendations as ‘key recommendations’.	No	N/A
Improvement	These recommendations, if implemented should improve the arrangements in place at the Council, but are not a result of identifying significant weaknesses in the Council’s arrangements.	Yes	Pages 9, 12 and 13

© 2022 Grant Thornton UK LLP. Confidential and information only.

'Grant Thornton' refers to the brand under which the Grant Thornton member firms provide assurance, tax and advisory services to their clients and/or refers to one or more member firms as the context requires. Grant Thornton UK LLP is a member firm of Grant Thornton International Ltd (GTIL). GTIL and the member firms are not a worldwide partnership. GTIL and each member firm is a separate legal entity. Services are delivered by the member firms. GTIL does not provide services to clients. GTIL and its member firms are not agents of, and do not obligate, one another and are not liable for one another's acts or omissions. This proposal is made by Grant Thornton UK LLP and is in all respects subject to the negotiation, agreement and signing of a specific contract/letter of engagement. The client names quoted within this proposal are disclosed on a confidential basis. All information in this proposal is released strictly for the purpose of this process and must not be disclosed to any other parties without express consent from Grant Thornton UK LLP.

This page is intentionally left blank

Councillor Bridger
Chair of Audit and Scrutiny Committee
Epsom and Ewell Borough Council
Town Hall, The Parade,
Epsom,
Surrey,
KT18 5BY

Grant Thornton UK LLP
30 Finsbury Square
London
EC2P 2YU
T +44 (0)20 7383 5100
F +44 (0)20 7184 4301

26 June 2023

Dear Councillor Bridger

I write to you to provide the Audit and Scrutiny Committee with an update on the timetable for the delivery of the 2022/23 financial statements audit.

The Local audit market has been struggling for a number of years. We have explored these items in detail in the attached publication which was issued earlier in the year [About time? \(grantthornton.co.uk\)](https://www.grantthornton.co.uk). The reality is that shortfalls in UK trained public sector auditors, weaknesses in other local authorities accounting and capacity, increased complexity of accounts under IFRS and a substantial increase in regulatory scrutiny by the Financial Reporting Council and the Quality Assurance Directorate of the ICAEW have all combined to get the position where only 12% of audits were signed by the 30 November 2022 deadline. Since the issuing of the statutory override which dealt with the Infrastructure Assets, a swathe of audits have been signed and Grant Thornton has signed close to 50% of its 2021/22 audits. It should be noted Grant Thornton is substantially ahead of other firms in terms of audit sign off based on publically available data from the Public Sector Audit Appointments Limited (PSAA) published in March 2023. Additionally, I believe this figure would have been higher were it not for the issue that emerged nationally concerning the impact of the 31 March 2022 Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS) triennial valuation on the reporting of defined benefit pension assets and liabilities within 2021/22 financial statements.

At the end 2022 there were over 600 audits outstanding in local government. Whilst audit resources (in the context were the audit requirements of us have probably doubled in five years) are an issue, the longstanding issues at councils such as Warrington, Nottingham, Sandwell, Croydon, Slough, Liverpool etc with the multiplicity of statutory action are a considerable drain on our audit resources. The input into one of these bodies is over 8 x the original budget and due to Government commissioners and other interventions we are required to prioritise this work. Our aim is however to clear the majority of the backlog by March 2024, whilst recognising that some audits remain difficult due to complex technical or legal issues and finance team capacity.

The backlog of audits has been significantly compounded by the triennial valuation issue referenced above and means we will not be in a position to start the Epsom and Ewell Borough Council until October 2023. The delayed start is a consequence of us needing to undertake further work relating to the triennial valuation issue.

The Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities has launched an inquiry into financial reporting and local audit to determine how the backlog of audits can be resolved but at present no announcement has been made. We will ensure the Audit and Scrutiny Committee are kept updated when further updates are provided.

This is a very challenging time for all concerned but Grant Thornton is determined to reduce the backlog and put the local audit system back on a sustainable footing. We have always had excellent engagement from the

Council's finance team in supporting the delivery of the financial statements audit and will ensure this positive relationship continues in 2022/23 and beyond.

Yours sincerely

Paul Cuttle

Paul Cuttle, Key Audit Partner

For Grant Thornton UK LLP, Local Auditor

MOTIONS

Head of Service:	Piero Ionta, Head of Legal and Monitoring Officer
Wards affected:	(All Wards);
Appendices (attached):	Appendix 1 - Motion 1 Appendix 2 – Motion 2 Appendix 3– Motions Flowchart

Summary

This report sets out notices of motions ruled in order.

Recommendation (s)

The Council is asked to:

- (1) consider the Motion in accordance with Standing Orders.

1 Reason for Recommendation

- 1.1 The rules regarding the submission of motions to Council are set out in Appendix 4 of the Council's Constitution (Standing Orders of the Full Council). Motions ruled in order must be listed on the agenda.

2 Background

- 2.1 The table below set out the Motions ruled in order:

Motion Number	Title	Proposer & Seconder	Committee	Responding Chairman
1	Debate not Hate	Proposer: Councillor Hannah Dalton Seconder: Councillor Julie Morris	Standards and Constitution	Liz Frost

2	Monitoring of the Chalk Pit site, Epsom	Proposer: Councillor Bernie Muir Seconded: Councillor Kieran Persand	Environment	John Beckett
----------	--	---	-------------	--------------

- 2.2 Each Motion will be taken in the order listed, with the proposer moving the motion and the seconder, seconding and confirming when they wish to exercise their right to speak.
- 2.3 Once a motion has been put, the Mayor will invite Members to decide how the motion should be dealt with. The Mayor will ask for a vote without debate, on whether the motion should be referred to an appropriate Committee for consideration (FCR 16.5). This will be on the basis of a simple majority.
- 2.4 All amendments must be in writing, proposed and seconded. The mover of the original motion will be asked if they wish to accept the proposed amendments. Those which are accepted in full or in part will result in the original motion being amended accordingly. If they are not accepted, then the amendments will be debated in accordance with Standing Orders (FCR 17).
- 2.5 FCR 14.1 sets 90 minutes to deal with all motions including amendments.
- 2.6 The process for debate is summarised in the Motions Flowchart, Appendix 3.

3 Risk Assessment

Legal or other duties

- 3.1 Equality Impact Assessment
- 3.1.1 No comments are provided on Motions.
- 3.2 Crime & Disorder
- 3.2.1 No comments are provided on Motions.
- 3.3 Safeguarding
- 3.3.1 No comments are provided on Motions.
- 3.4 Dependencies
- 3.4.1 No comments are provided on Motions.
- 3.5 Other

3.5.1 No comments are provided on Motions.

4 Financial Implications

4.1 No comments are provided on Motions.

4.2 **Section 151 Officer's comments:** No comments are provided on Motions.

5 Legal Implications

5.1 No comments are provided on Motions.

5.2 **Legal Officer's comments:** No comments are provided on Motions.

6 Policies, Plans & Partnerships

6.1 **Council's Key Priorities:** No comments are provided on Motions.

6.2 **Service Plans:** No comments are provided on Motions.

6.3 **Climate & Environmental Impact of recommendations:** No comments are provided on Motions.

6.4 **Sustainability Policy & Community Safety Implications:** No comments are provided on Motions.

6.5 **Partnerships:** No comments are provided on Motions.

7 Background papers

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

Previous reports:

- None

Other papers:

- [Appendix 4 of the Constitution of Epsom and Ewell Borough Council](#)

This page is intentionally left blank



Proposed Title of Motion	Debate not Hate
Proposer	Cllr Hannah Dalton
Seconders	Cllr Julie Morris
Motion Set out motion in full	<p>This Council notes:</p> <p>This council notes that increasing levels of toxicity in public and political discourse is having a detrimental impact of local democracy and that prevention, support and responses to abuse and intimidation of local politicians must improve to ensure councillors feel safe and able to continue representing their residents.</p> <p>This council therefore commits to challenge the normalisation of abuse against councillors and officers and uphold exemplary standards of public and political debate in all it does.</p> <p>The council further agrees to sign up to the LGA's Debate Not Hate campaign. The campaign aims to raise public awareness of the role of councillors in local communities, encourage healthy debate and improve the response to and support those in public life facing abuse and intimidation.</p> <p>This Council resolves to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Write to Chris Grayling MP to ask their support of the campaign. 2. Write to the Government to ask them to work with the LGA to develop and implement a plan to address abuse and intimidation of politicians. 3. Ensure the council has a clear reporting mechanism which councillors to use to monitor and record incidents of harassment and abuse of councillors and/or officers.

	<p>4. Regularly review the support available to councillors in relation to abuse and intimidation and councillor safety.</p> <p>5. Work with the local police to ensure there is a clear and joined-up mechanism for reporting threats and other concerns about the safety of councillors and their families and discuss the need to take a preventative approach that accounts for the specific risks that councillors face, as they do with other high-risk individuals, like MPs.</p> <p>6. Take a zero-tolerance approach to abuse of councillors and officers.</p>
Relevant Committee(s) Motion would relate to	Standards & Constitution
Name of the Chair of such Committee	Cllr Liz Frost

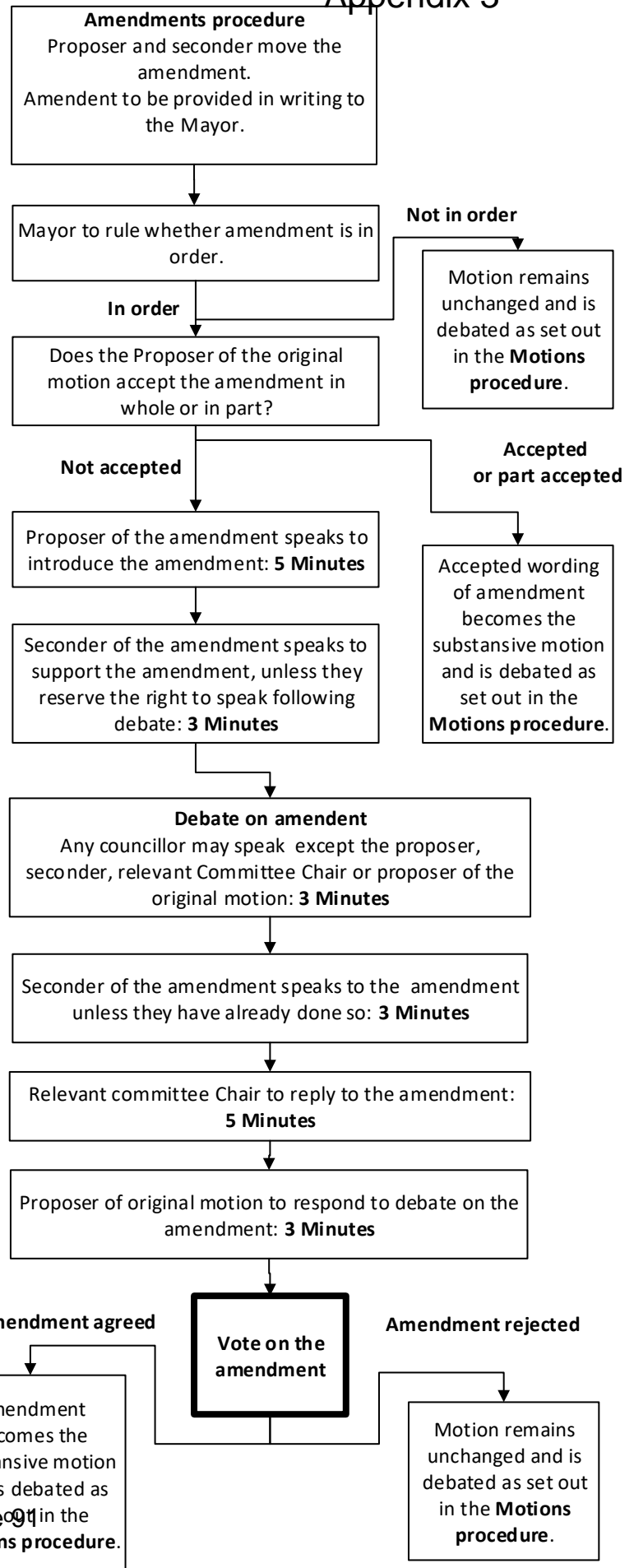
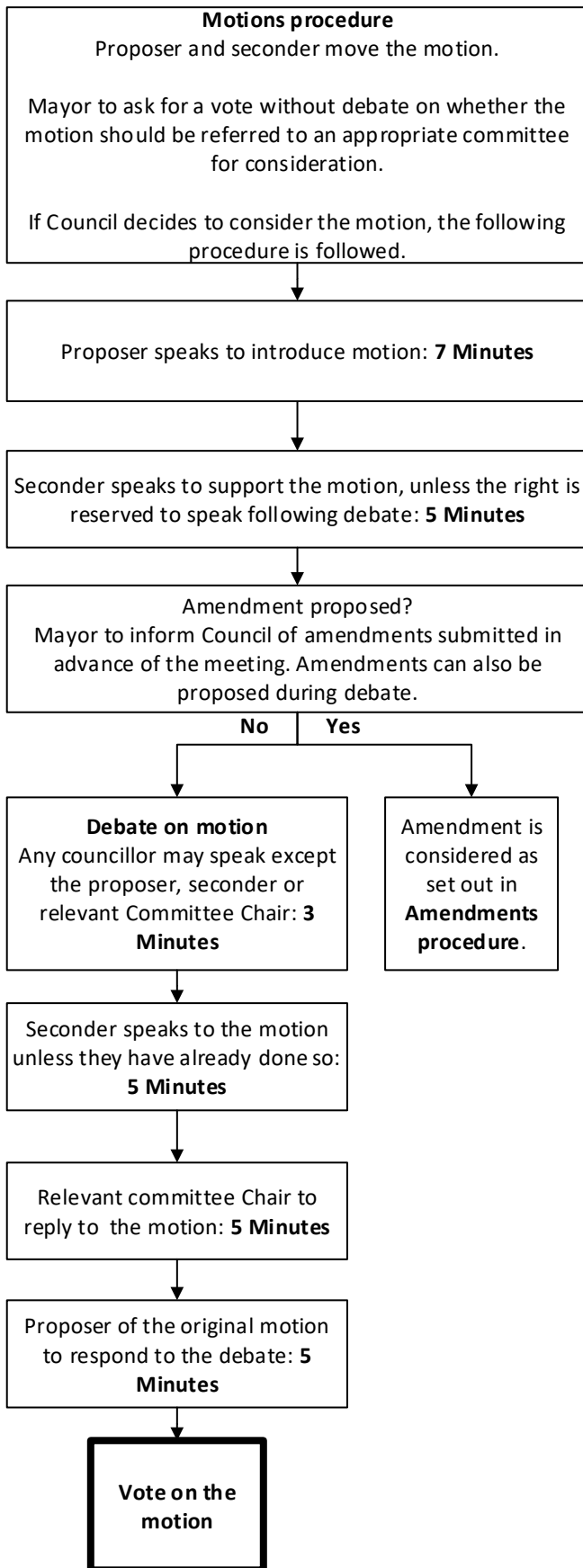


Proposed Title of Motion	Monitoring of the Chalk Pit site, Epsom.
Proposer	Bernie Muir
Seconder	Kieran Persand
Motion Set out motion in full	That this Council mandates officers to install professional noise measurement equipment around the Chalk Pit site in College Road, Epsom, to leave that equipment in place for a minimum period of three months, and to respond to any breaches of noise regulations on the site with the imposition of a noise abatement order on the landowner and any identified operators responsible for the excess noise.
Relevant Committee(s) Motion would relate to	Environment Committee
Name of the Chairman of such Committee	Cllr John Beckett

This page is intentionally left blank

Council motion and amendment flowchart

Agenda Item 9 Appendix 3



Note:
No Member may speak more than once on a motion or more than once on an amendment unless otherwise permitted by standing orders.

This page is intentionally left blank

EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

Under Section 100(A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the Council may pass a resolution to exclude the public from the Meeting for Part Two of the Agenda on the grounds that the business involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 1 and 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 outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.

This page is intentionally left blank

Document is Restricted

This page is intentionally left blank

Document is Restricted

This page is intentionally left blank