



COMMUNITY AND WELLBEING COMMITTEE

Tuesday 6 October 2026 at 7.30 pm

Place: Council Chamber, Epsom Town Hall

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

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

Councillor Clive Woodbridge (Chair)
Councillor Kim Spickett (Vice-Chair)
Councillor Bernice Froud
Councillor Christine Howells
Councillor Graham Jones

Councillor Rachel King
Councillor Bernie Muir
Councillor Phil Neale
Councillor Chris Watson

Yours sincerely

Chief Executive

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

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

Public information

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

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

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

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Exclusion of the Press and the Public

There are no matters scheduled to be discussed at this meeting that would appear to disclose confidential or exempt information under the provisions Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended). Should any such matters arise during the course of discussion of the below items or should the Chair agree to discuss any other such matters on the grounds of urgency, the Committee may wish to resolve to exclude the press and public by virtue of the private nature of the business to be transacted.

Questions and statements from the Public

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

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

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

Questions must be received in writing by Democratic Services by noon on the fifth working day before the day of the meeting. For this meeting this is **Noon, Tuesday 29th October**.

A written copy of statements must be received by Democratic Services by noon on the working day before the day of the meeting. For this meeting this is **Noon, Monday 5th October**.

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

AGENDA

1. QUESTIONS AND STATEMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC

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

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

To receive declarations of any Disclosable Pecuniary Interests or other registrable or non-registrable interests from Members in respect of any item to be considered at the meeting.

3. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS (Pages 5 - 14)

The Committee is asked to confirm as a true record the minutes of the special meeting of the Committee held on 25th February 2026, the meeting held on 5th March 2026, and the special meeting held on 9th June 2026 (all attached) and to authorise the Chair to sign them.

4. HOMELESSNESS EXPENDITURE UPDATE (Pages 15 - 24)

The Council continues to incur significant financial outlay on temporary accommodation costs to meet its homelessness obligations under the Housing Act 1996 and Homelessness Reduction Act 2017, and the level of expenditure is set to significantly exceed the budget set for 2026/27. This report sets out the actions taken to minimise homelessness expenditure and identifies the funding which will be utilised to cover the additional expenditure for 2026/27.

5. URGENT DECISIONS (Pages 25 - 30)

To report to the committee one decision taken by the Director of Environment, Housing and Regeneration on the grounds of urgency, in compliance with the requirements of the Constitution.

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Minutes of the Meeting of the COMMUNITY AND WELLBEING COMMITTEE held at the Council Chamber, Epsom Town Hall on 25 February 2026

PRESENT -

Councillor Clive Woodbridge (Chair); Councillor Bernice Froud (Vice-Chair); Councillors Kate Chinn (as nominated substitute for Councillor Rob Geleit), Graham Jones, Rachel King, Bernie Muir, Humphrey Reynolds and Kim Spickett

In Attendance: Councillor Alex Coley and Councillor James Lawrence

Absent: Councillor Rob Geleit

Officers present: Linda Scott (Interim Assistant Head of Service - Venues), Sue Emmons (Chief Accountant) and Dan Clackson (Democratic Services Officer)

30 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of any Disclosable Pecuniary Interests or other registrable or non-registrable interests were made by Members in respect of any items considered at the meeting.

31 RECOMMENDATION FROM THE AUDIT AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE IN RESPECT OF THE CALLED-IN DECISION OF THE COMMUNITY AND WELLBEING COMMITTEE MADE ON 13 JANUARY 2026 (ITEM 04) REGARDING THE OPTIONS FOR THE FUTURE OF THE BOURNE HALL MUSEUM

The Committee received a report inviting the Committee to consider the recommendation from the Audit and Scrutiny Committee ('A&S'), made at A&S's 5th February 2026 meeting with respect to the called-in decision of the Community and Wellbeing Committee ('C&W') made at C&W's 13th January 2026 meeting in relation to Agenda Item 04, "Options for the Future of the Museum".

Prior to debate, Councillor Alex Coley, as a Councillor in attendance, provided a verbal statement to the Committee in relation to the agenda item.

Prior to debate, Councillor James Lawrence, as a Councillor in attendance, provided a verbal statement to the Committee in relation to the agenda item.

The Committee considered the following matters:

- a) Councillor Bernice Froud proposed that the report's recommendation be amended from...

"Either;

(1) Accept the recommendation of the Audit and Scrutiny Committee to rescind/withdraw the decision made by the Community and Wellbeing Committee at its 13th January 2026 meeting in respect of Agenda Item 04, 'Options for the Future of the Museum', and

(2) Having considered the information provided within the Appendices to this report, agree the most appropriate course of action for the Bourne Hall Museum's future as follows:

a) Option 1: Do nothing and carry on with business as usual, or;

b) Option 2: Invest in improvement of the Museum. (Should option 2 be agreed, a funding request will go to Strategy and Resources Committee March 2026 for consideration), or;

c) Option 3: Close the Museum.

Or;

(3) Note the recommendation of the Audit and Scrutiny Committee made at its meeting held on 5th February 2026 and resolve to implement immediately the decision made by the Community and Wellbeing Committee at its 13th January 2026 meeting in respect of Agenda Item 04, 'Options for the Future of the Museum'."

To...

"(1) Note the recommendation of the Audit and Scrutiny Committee made at its meeting held on 5th February 2026 and resolve to implement immediately the decision made by the Community and Wellbeing Committee at its 13th January 2026 meeting in respect of Agenda Item 04, 'Options for the Future of the Museum'."

Councillor Froud advised her reasoning for her proposed amendment was that in her view none of the additional information provided to the Committee would result in a different decision being reached. The proposal was seconded by Councillor Kim Spickett.

- b) Following further consideration, views were expressed by the Committee that it did not have enough information in order to come to a decision, owing to the redactions present within the Bourne Hall Service Review document provided at appendix 3 to the report. The Chair and the Interim Assistant Head of Service (Venues and Community Commercial Services) advised that the redactions had been authorised by the Chief Executive in

her role as Proper Officer, and that, in the Chief Executive's view, none of the content that had been redacted was pertinent to the decision being asked of the Committee.

- c) Following debate, Councillor Kate Chinn proposed that the recommendation be amended to...

“Defer the decision subject to the publication in full of the report of the service review, to include all the recommendations, and the full consideration by the Committee of those recommendations.”

The proposal was seconded by Councillor Bernie Muir. The Committee voted (3 for, 2 against, 3 abstaining) in favour of the amendment.

Subsequently, the Committee resolved (6 for, 2 against) to:

- (1) Defer the decision subject to the publication in full of the report of the service review, to include all the recommendations, and the full consideration by the Committee of those recommendations.**

The meeting began at 7.30 pm and ended at 8.01 pm

COUNCILLOR CLIVE WOODBRIDGE (CHAIR)

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Minutes of the Meeting of the COMMUNITY AND WELLBEING COMMITTEE held at the Council Chamber, Epsom Town Hall on 5 March 2026

PRESENT -

Councillor Clive Woodbridge (Chair); Councillor Bernice Froud (Vice-Chair); Councillors Rob Geleit, Graham Jones, Rachel King, Bernie Muir, Humphrey Reynolds and Kim Spickett

Officers present: Rod Brown (Head of Housing and Community), Oliver Nelson (Public Protection Manager), Richard Appiah-Ampofo (Senior Accountant) and Dan Clackson (Democratic Services Officer)

32 QUESTIONS AND STATEMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC

One question was received from a member of the public. This question was published at item 1 of the agenda pack.

A written response to the question was provided by the Chair prior to the meeting. This response was published as a supplement to the agenda item prior to the meeting.

33 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of any disclosable pecuniary interests or other registrable or non-registrable interests were made by Members in respect of any items considered at the meeting.

34 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The Committee confirmed as a true record the Minutes of the Meeting of the Committee held on 13 January 2026 and authorised the Chair to sign them.

35 ARMED FORCES COUNCILLOR CHAMPION ANNUAL STATEMENT 2025/26

The Committee received a report to the Committee of the annual statement of the Armed Forces Councillor Champion.

The Committee considered the following matters:

- a) **Raising Awareness within GP Clinics.** The Armed Forces Champion pressed the importance of increasing awareness of the Armed Forces Covenant within local GP clinics.

- b) **Future of the Armed Forces Champion Role.** Following a question from a Member, the Armed Forces Champion proposed that, following the election for the East Surrey Shadow Council, a meeting including the Shadow Councillors should be held to consider the future arrangements for the championing of the armed forces community – i.e. one Champion for the entire East Surrey area, or one Champion per ward, etc.
- c) **Silver and Gold Status.** In response to a question from a Member, the Armed Forces Champion stated that, in order to achieve silver status or higher, the Council would need to demonstrate increased proactiveness in the steps taken to improve the services provided for the borough's armed forces community, and suggested possible steps such as increasing awareness within local GP clinics, or developing a housing policy for veterans.
- d) **Advisory Board.** The Armed Forces Champion stated that he had been involved in setting up an advisory board, including representatives from local charities such as Citizens Advice and Age Concern, to discuss how local services could be improved for veterans and the wider armed forces community within the borough.
- e) **Potential Agenda Item for Future HLP Meeting.** The Armed Forces Champion suggested that an item could be taken to a future meeting of the Health Liaison Panel for consideration, to discuss the topic of increasing awareness of the Armed Forces Covenant within local GP clinics. The Committee was supportive of the suggestion. The Head of Housing and Community stated that he would reach out to the Epsom Primary Care Network Director of Operations to discuss the matter.

Following consideration, the Committee unanimously resolved to:

- (1) **Receive and note the annual statement of the Armed Forces Councillor Champion.**

36 ADOPTION OF A REVISED HOUSING CIVIL SANCTIONS POLICY

The Committee received a report recommending adoption of a revised Civil Penalty Policy to take into account the new offences which have been created as a consequence of the implementation timeline for the Renters Rights Act.

The Committee considered the following matters:

- a) **Responding to Complaints.** In response to a question from a Member, the Public Protection Manager explained that cases would be dealt with as priority required – he stated that cases involving a risk to health in particular would be considered as high priority. He stated that it could not be confidently predicted as to the degree of extra work that the new policy would create. He explained that the Council currently received c.100 complaints annually relating to the private rented sector.

- b) **Landlords' Awareness.** A Member queried how landlords will be made aware of the changes in law connected with the Renters' Rights Act. The Public Protection Manager stated that many landlords will have agents that will be able to advise them. He stated that the Government was also working on a publicity campaign for landlords and tenants, which was due for release soon. He explained that a Surrey-wide online landlords forum was due to be held on 11th March at which specialists would be present to provide information and advice. He stated that ultimately the responsibility is on landlords to make sure they are educated on all the relevant legislation and policies, but that the Council is able to provide assistance where appropriate.
- c) **Pets Ownership.** In response to a question from a Member, the Public Protection Manager stated that, under the Renters' Rights Act, landlords cannot unreasonably withhold permission for a tenant to be in possession of a pet, and now need to have clear and defensible reasons as to why a tenant within their property cannot have one. It was noted that for single homeless persons in particular, pet ownership can be a great benefit to mental health and wellbeing.
- d) **Effective Date of New Policy.** In response to a question from a Member, the Public Protection Manager stated that the new policy would become effective as of 1st May. He explained that the current policy would still be retained for a period owing to active appeals in relation to the current policy.

Following consideration, the Committee unanimously resolved to:

- (1) **Approve and adopt the revised policy as set out in appendix 1 to the report, with effect from 1 May 2026.**
- (2) **Nominate and Authorise the Head of Housing and Community, in consultation with the Chair of the Community and Wellbeing Committee to make future amendments to the policy arising from changes to legislation, guidance and case precedents being set.**
- (3) **Nominate and Authorise the Head of Housing and Community, Public Protection Manager, Principal Environmental Health Officer and Environmental Health Officers to determine individual financial penalties in accordance with this, and any future revisions of the policy.**

37 AMENDMENTS TO THE ENFORCEMENT AND COMPLIANCE POLICY

The Committee received a report recommending the adoption of a housing enforcement policy to ensure the Council's enforcement decisions remain compliant with the Renters Rights Act.

The Committee considered the following matters:

- a) **Separation from the Compliance and Enforcement Policy.** In response to a question from a Member, the Public Protection Manager explained that the housing enforcement policy before Members had been separated out from the current compliance and enforcement policy in light of the recent Royal Assent of the Renters' Rights Act 2026. He explained that the enforcement options set out in the newly separated policy were defined by said Act, and differed from those set out in the existing compliance and enforcement policy.

Following consideration, the Committee unanimously resolved to:

- (1) Approve and adopt the Housing Enforcement Policy in appendix 1 to the report**
- (2) Nominate and Authorise the Public Protection Manager to carry out consequential amendments to the existing Compliance and Enforcement Policy so as to remove elements relating to housing enforcement.**

The meeting began at 7.30 pm and ended at 8.16 pm

COUNCILLOR CLIVE WOODBRIDGE (CHAIR)

Minutes of the Meeting of the COMMUNITY AND WELLBEING COMMITTEE held at the Council Chamber, Epsom Town Hall on 9 June 2026

PRESENT -

Councillor Clive Woodbridge (Chair); Councillor Kim Spickett (Vice-Chair); Councillors Kate Chinn (as nominated substitute for Councillor Chris Watson), Alex Coley (as nominated substitute for Councillor Christine Howells), Rachel King, Bernie Muir and Phil Neale (as nominated substitute for Councillor Bernice Froud)

In Attendance: Councillor Chris Ames

Absent: Councillor Bernice Froud, Councillor Christine Howells, Councillor Graham Jones and Councillor Chris Watson

Officers present: Ian Dyer (Head of Operational Services), Richard Appiah-Ampofo (Senior Accountant) and Dan Clackson (Democratic Services Officer)

1 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Options for the Future of the Museum

Councillor Alex Coley, Other Interest: Councillor Alex Coley declared that he was a Member of the Strategy & Resources Committee, which would be considering the matter in July, should the Community & Wellbeing Committee agree to option 2 of the report.

2 OPTIONS FOR THE FUTURE OF THE MUSEUM

The Committee received a report presenting an appraisal of three strategic options for the future of Bourne Hall museum, drawing on findings from the Bourne Hall museum service review and the culture peer challenge report.

Prior to debate, Councillor Chris Ames, as a Councillor in attendance, provided a verbal statement to the Committee in relation to the agenda item.

The Committee considered the following matters:

- a) **Accommodation Costs.** Members raised concerns that accommodation costs appeared high and sought clarification. It was noted that the costs were internal recharges rather than operational costs. Officers advised that the accommodation costs would be assessed and reviewed through the wider venues review. Members expressed concern that inflated

accommodation costs could adversely affect future decisions by the incoming unitary authority and reduce the museum's ability to secure external funding. Officers stated that further examination would be conducted and stated that the business case to Strategy & Resources Committee ('S&R'), should the Committee agree to option 2, would cover how accommodation costs were allocated across Bourne Hall to present a more accurate financial picture.

- b) **Financial Clarifications.** Members enquired why investment of £125,000 per annum was proposed for only the first two years and whether further investment was anticipated. Officers explained that the proposed funding was intended to deliver improvements, reinvigorate exhibits, increase visitor numbers and strengthen revenue, with future investment requirements dependent on progress and local government reorganisation. A Member sought clarification on the financial tables and the assumptions behind the projected costs – Officers explained the figures were indicative, based on current costs, and were intended to illustrate the long-term financial implications of each option.
- c) **External Partnerships.** Members enquired whether discussions with potential partners could take place before the business case was considered by S&R. Officers agreed that engaging with potential partners and funding organisations could help to identify conditions necessary to secure external investment. Members suggested that current accommodation charges could potentially discourage partnership opportunities, and that a review of accommodation costs could improve the museum's attractiveness to partners. Officers confirmed that the wider venues review would also consider how council assets could be made more attractive for external investment and collaboration.

Following consideration, Councillor Kate Chinn proposed that a vote be taken on Option 2, as set out in the report's recommendation. The proposal was seconded by Councillor Phil Neale.

Subsequently, the Committee resolved (6 for, 1 abstaining) to:

- (1) **Option 2: Invest in improvement of the Museum (should option 2 be agreed a funding request and business case will be prepared to present to the Strategy and Resources Committee in July 2026 for consideration alongside the community asset review and future of Bourne Hall).**

The meeting began at 7.30 pm and ended at 8.42 pm

COUNCILLOR CLIVE WOODBRIDGE (CHAIR)

HOMELESSNESS: EXPENDITURE UPDATE

Head of Service:	Rod Brown, Head of Housing & Community
Report Author	Arjan de Jong
Wards affected:	(All Wards);
Urgent Decision?	No
If yes, reason urgent decision required:	
Appendices (attached):	Housing Service Update

Summary

The Council continues to incur significant financial outlay on temporary accommodation costs to meet its homelessness obligations under the Housing Act 1996 and Homelessness Reduction Act 2017, and the level of expenditure is set to significantly exceed the budget set for 2026/27. This report sets out the actions taken to minimise homelessness expenditure and identifies the funding which will be utilised to cover the additional expenditure for 2026/27.

Recommendation (s)

The Committee is asked to:

- (1) To note the priority actions points which have been taken to manage homelessness over the past 6 months.
- (2) To note the use of the Homelessness, Rough Sleeping and Domestic Abuse Grant, the recently announced Rough Sleeper Programme funding and a 4% inflationary uplift in the nightly paid budget, to meet the increase in expenditure, during 2026/27, to enable the Council to meet its duties under the Housing Act 1996 and Homelessness Reduction Act 2017.

1 Reason for Recommendation

- 1.1 The Council has a statutory duty to assist homeless households under the Housing Act 1996 and Homelessness Reduction Act 2017. If we do not meet our statutory obligations, then the Council will be in breach of its obligations and open to legal challenge.

2 Background

- 2.1 Expenditure on nightly paid accommodation to meet homelessness obligations comprises a significant amount of the Council's annual spend. At quarter one the net total level of expenditure is forecasted to be £250,000 over the 2026/27 annual budget. This is mainly due to the consistently high number of homelessness approaches, which has risen by 87% in the past two years, and a lack of affordable settled accommodation to place homeless households.
- 2.2 The working environment continues to be very demanding. The ongoing impact of high housing, utilities and basic living costs continues to have a significant impact on the number of households requiring assistance and the complexity of issues with which households approach continues to present huge challenges as our statutory partners are under similar pressures.
- 2.3 The demand on the small stock of private rented properties is as high as ever, including competition from other areas, such as London boroughs, for accommodation placements.
- 2.4 In addition, affordable housing options in Epsom and Ewell are severely limited, which is in large part due to the low level of affordable housing development over the past decade.

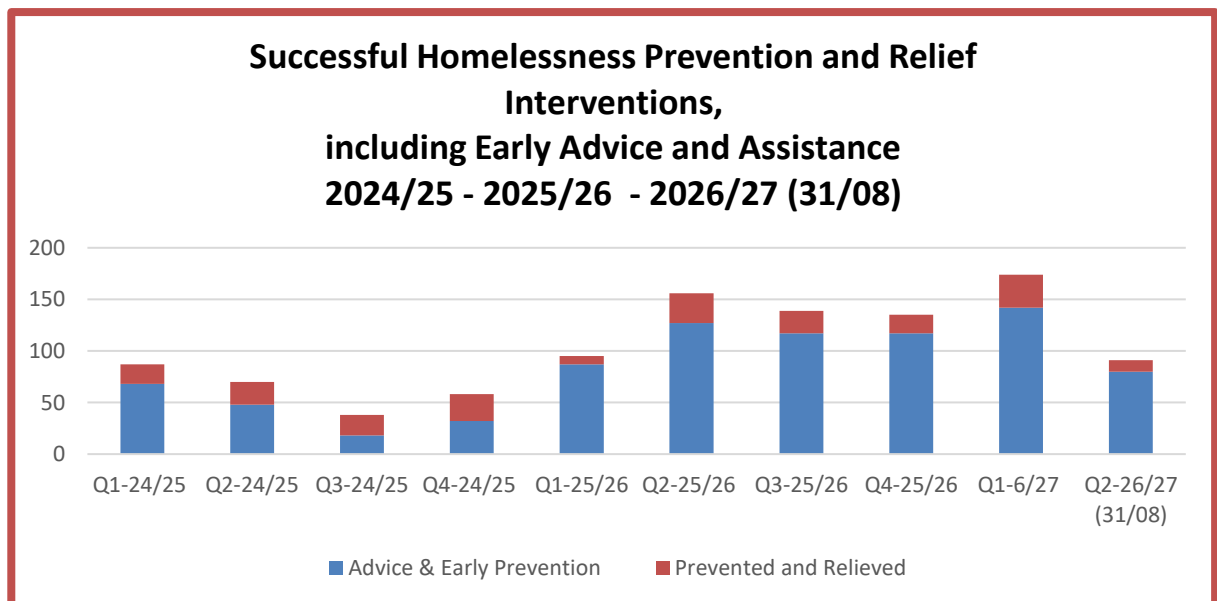
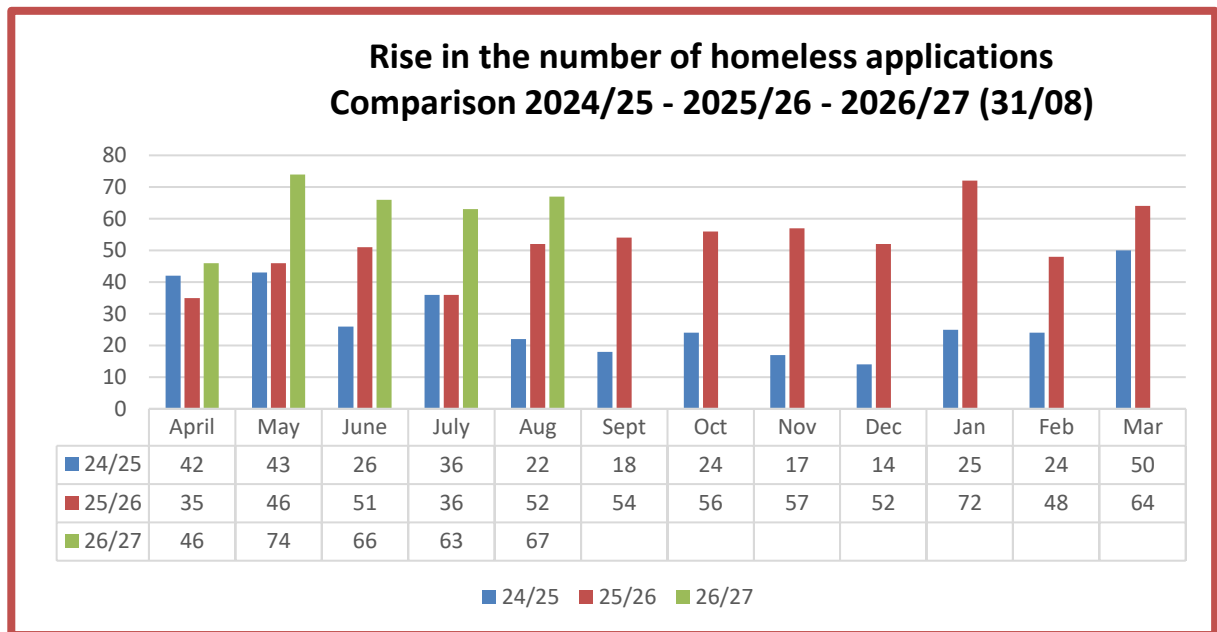
Fig X



- 2.5 The graph provides a snapshot of numbers in nightly paid accommodation at the end of each month. What it does not demonstrate is the large number of households entering and leaving nightly paid accommodation each week and the work involved in moving customers around to ensure they are placed in the most suitable accommodation for their households' needs, taking account issues such as schooling, fleeing violence, disabilities and being close to support networks.

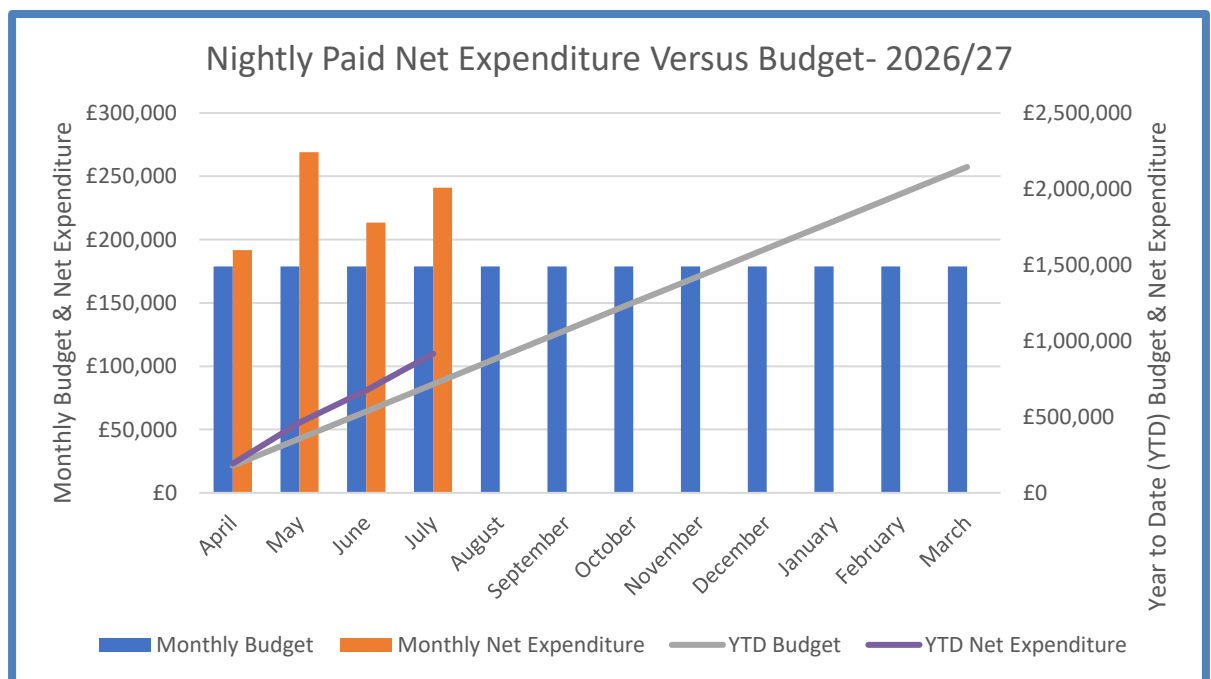
- 2.6 Without the increased focus on prevention and the dedication of the housing team, the numbers of households living in nightly paid accommodation and the associated expenditure would be higher still. The fact that the percentage rise of households in nightly paid accommodation over the past 12 months is considerably lower than the rise in homelessness approaches, illustrates the success of the officers finding housing solutions, despite the considerable challenges.
- 2.7 The charts below (fig Y) illustrate the rise in approaches and the number of successful homelessness preventions.

Fig Y



- 2.8 The Homelessness Strategy & Action Plan 2022-27 was agreed at the Community & Wellbeing Committee in November 2022. The Action Plan identified the key objectives and listed the appropriate actions to be taken during the lifetime of the strategy. The Action Plan has been consistently updated and the actions due are all complete.
- 2.9 However, we recognise that there are other areas which also affect the overall cost of homelessness, including a focus on preventing homelessness, being able to encourage households to move on into more appropriate accommodation and the quality and timeliness of decision making. The Strategic Housing Manager completed a review of the homelessness service, to help identify areas of improvement to ensure we maximise the resources at our disposal and keep expenditure to a minimum.
- 2.10 In addition to increasing demand, the cost of accommodating households in nightly paid accommodation continues to rise due to several factors, including competition from other local authorities, including London boroughs.
- 2.11 The rent level which the Council can charge households for temporary accommodation is restricted by the Housing Benefit temporary accommodation subsidy formula and this has not increased since 2011. Consequently, the Council is unable to mitigate the increase in temporary costs by charging homeless households higher rents.
- 2.12 Fig Z (below) shows forecasted costs for 2026/27, which is expected to show an overspend of £250,000.

Fig Z



3 Priority action points

- 3.1 The housing service has made significant progress since the implementation of the Homelessness and Rough Sleeper Strategy in November 2022. This strategy was supported by a 4-year Action Plan outlining a wide range of activities the council will pursue to address the continuing pressure from homelessness demands. This Action Plan was presented to this committee on 24th November 2022 and to date, all key actions due have been completed.
- 3.2 The service review, completed earlier this year, focused on improving workflows and processes to ensure the team is working to its maximum efficiency. This has resulted in an increased focus on prevention-based activity, move on from temporary accommodation of some of the more long-term and complex cases and a more proactive approach in our dealings with other agencies.
- 3.3 The Renters' Rights Act, came into force 1st May 2026. One of the main changes is that section 21, so called no-fault evictions, of the Housing Act has been abolished. This should significantly reduce the number of homelessness approaches from the private rented sector, which in recent years has consistently been the main reason for approaches to the service.
- 3.4 The Housing Delivery Group is an officer group from housing, finance and property which meets quarterly to consider how the housing potential of the Council and other public body assets can be best utilised. The group is currently working on bringing forward several projects, which if realised will increase both temporary and settled accommodation within the borough.
- 3.5 One of the initiatives proposed by the Housing Delivery Group, was creating new homes utilising modular buildings. The proposed modular home scheme at Fairview Road, which was subject to an appeal at the Land Tribunal has now been able to proceed. The purchasing of new temporary accommodation through the Government's Local Authority Housing Fund 3 (LAHF3) programme, has delivered five additional family-sized temporary accommodation units within the borough with a sixth anticipated in the Autumn. This will positively impact nightly paid expenditure and increase the number of in-borough temporary accommodation.
- 3.6 The Council joined with neighbouring authorities to hold an East Surrey wide Landlord's Forum, earlier this year, which was well attended and focussed on the implementation of the Renters Rights Act, which came into force on 1st May 2026.

- 3.7 The draft Local Plan includes an evidenced and robust affordable housing policy, which once implemented will help to increase delivery of affordable housing on section 106 development sites.

4 Next steps

- 4.1 The issues faced by the Council in accommodating homeless households are unlikely to dissipate over the coming 12 months. It is therefore highly likely that despite continued positive performance from officers, the number of households in temporary accommodation will remain high for the foreseeable future.
- 4.2 The economic outlook remains challenging and has had a direct impact on housing delivery, leading to fewer residential developments coming forward and thus an overall reduction in house building and consequently the development of affordable housing.
- 4.3 Officers will continue to work with housing associations, the MHCLG and other partners to explore all options to increase the overall supply of affordable housing.
- 4.4 The on-going position within the service will continue to be reported monthly to the Chair and Vice Chair of this committee.

5 Risk Assessment

Legal or other duties

5.1 Equality Impact Assessment

- 5.1.1 Minimising homelessness will have a positive impact on inequalities.

5.2 Crime & Disorder

- 5.2.1 None for the purposes of this report.

5.3 Safeguarding

- 5.3.1 Assisting homeless households to access safe and secure accommodation will have a positive impact on safeguarding.

5.4 Dependencies

- 5.4.1 Expenditure will continue to be monitored closely, and adverse variances reported to Audit & Scrutiny Committee through the Council's agreed budget monitoring procedures, and to the Chair and vice Chair of this committee.

5.5 Other

- 5.5.1 None for the purposes of this report.

6 Financial Implications

- 6.1 The budget for 2026/27 is based on 100 families in nightly paid accommodation, but as at 31 August 2026, the Council was supporting 135. In addition, the average net cost of nightly paid accommodation continues to rise due to competition from local authorities in Surrey and inner London.
- 6.2 The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) has recently announced additional funding to meet the costs of eliminating rough sleeping, some of which the Council can use towards temporary accommodation costs.
- 6.3 At quarter 1, the full year spend for 2026/27 is forecast to be £250,000 over budget. Expenditure will be funded through the original budget, the Homelessness, Rough Sleeping and Domestic Abuse Grant, an element of the recently announced Rough Sleeper Programme and the Council's corporate contingency which was set aside to offset additional homelessness budgetary pressures.
- 6.4 **Section 151 Officer's comments:** Temporary accommodation costs continue to place pressure on the Council's financial position, reflecting sustained demand and the limited availability of affordable housing options. The Council continues to monitor demand and expenditure closely and is considering opportunities to manage costs wherever possible. These pressures will remain an important consideration as part of the transition to the new authority from 1 April 2027.

7 Legal Implications

- 7.1 The Council's obligations, powers and duties in relation to homeless households are contained within the Housing Act 1996 and Homelessness Reduction Act 2017. If we do not meet our statutory obligations, then the Council will be in breach of its obligations and open to legal challenge.
- 7.2 **Legal Officer's comments:** none for the purposes of this report

8 Policies, Plans & Partnerships

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

Safe & Well: Work with partners to improve health and wellbeing of our communities, focusing in particular on those who are more vulnerable.
- 8.2 **Service Plans:** The matter is included within the current Service Delivery Plan.
- 8.3 **Climate & Environmental Impact of recommendations:** Not applicable.
- 8.4 **Sustainability Policy & Community Safety Implications:**

- 8.5 **Partnerships:** Registered Providers, in particular Town & Country Housing, Transform, East Surrey Outreach Service (ESOS), local letting agents, private sector landlords, Surrey housing authorities.

9 Background papers

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

Previous Reports:

- [Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Strategy 2022/27](#) - Community & Wellbeing Committee November 2022
-

Other papers:

- None

Housing Service Update

As set out in the main report, the Housing & Homelessness service undertook a service review and below is a summary of the measures which housing are implementing following the outcome of the review.

The main focus is on where the pressures are most acute, where resources are most stretched and where the proposed changes should have the most significant impact. The review focusses on the length of time spent in temporary accommodation rather than solely the total number of households.

The review proposes a more proactive and creative approach to spending the Homelessness, Rough Sleeping and Domestic Abuse Grant in line with government guidance to spend the majority share on prevention-based activity.

The approach advocated by the review is in the process of being implemented and progress against the main points is listed below.

- *Realigned the focus of the rent deposit officer post to take a more proactive approach with landlords and households in long-term TA. The post will work closely with the existing and new move on officer posts and commenced early September.*
- *Improved referral process to ETHOS, employment support project, to increase the employment prospects and income of households in TA, which will subsequently increase their options in the private rented sector.*
- *New post created to cover hospital discharge to cover both physical and mental health discharge commenced July 2026, in order to reduce the number and complexity of referrals.*
- *Housing adviser upskilled and moved to the housing options team, to ensure more effective triage with earlier intervention and better-quality advice.*
- *Increased resource for the management of temporary accommodation placements and the administration of the housing needs register, to help improve the link between temporary and settled accommodation, and to process the increase in housing register related activity.*
- *New standard operating procedures produced and implemented, in order to improve the management and, where necessary, the termination of temporary accommodation placements.*

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URGENT DECISIONS

Head of Service:	Rod Brown, Head of Housing and Community
Report Author	Dan Clackson
Wards affected:	(All Wards);
Urgent Decision?(yes/no)	No
If yes, reason urgent decision required:	
Appendices (attached):	Appendix 1 – Urgent Decision Form DEC 160

Summary

To report to the committee one decision taken by the Director of Environment, Housing and Regeneration on the grounds of urgency, in compliance with the requirements of the Constitution.

Recommendation (s)

The Committee is asked to:

(1) Note the urgent decision and the reason for that decision.

1 Reason for Recommendation

- 1.1 To report to the Committee a decision taken by the Director of Environment, Housing and Regeneration on the grounds of urgency, in compliance with the requirements of the Constitution.

2 Background

- 2.1 The scheme of delegation sets out that the Chief Executive and Directors are authorised to take decisions on grounds of urgency regarding matters which would otherwise be reserved for determination by a Committee or Council. A matter can be deemed urgent if, in the reasonable opinion of the officer concerned, a delay would seriously prejudice the interest of the Council or of the public and it is not practicable to convene a quorate meeting of the relevant decision-making body in sufficient time to take the decision.

- 2.2 Since the last ordinary meeting of the Community & Wellbeing Committee one urgent decision has been taken by the Director of Environment, Housing and Regeneration in consultation with the Chair, Cllr Clive Woodbridge and published in Member News in line with the Council's Constitution, Appendix 2, Paragraph 3.1. iii. The decision form has been appended to this report.

2.2.1 **Decision 160** – Homelessness and Housing Reviews.

- 2.2.2 **Urgency reason for decision 160** – Following the end of the previous contract for this statutory review service in December 2025, an Urgent Decision was required to appoint Turning Point as the review service provider to avoid the risk of the Council being exposed to incurring unnecessary housing costs, and scarce resources being allocated in an unsound way.

3 Risk Assessment

Legal or other duties

3.1 Equality Impact Assessment

- 3.1.1 None arising from this report

3.2 Crime & Disorder

- 3.2.1 None arising from this report

3.3 Safeguarding

- 3.3.1 None arising from this report

3.4 Dependencies

- 3.4.1 None arising from this report

3.5 Other

- 3.5.1 None arising from this report

4 Financial Implications

- 4.1 **Section 24 considerations:** None arising from this report.

- 4.2 **Section 151 Officer's comments:** Finance are consulted as part of the urgent decision-making process.

5 Legal Implications

- 5.1 **Legal Officer's comments:** Legal are consulted as part of the urgent decision-making process.

6 Policies, Plans & Partnerships

- 6.1 **Council's Key Priorities:** N/A
- 6.2 **Service Plans:** The matter is included within the current Service Delivery Plan.
- 6.3 **Climate & Environmental Impact of recommendations:** None directly.
- 6.4 **Sustainability Policy & Community Safety Implications:** None.
- 6.5 **Partnerships:** N/A
- 6.6 **Local government reorganisation (LGR) implications:** There are no implications from LGR for this report – this action has been taken in advance of any potential restrictions imposed.

7 Background papers

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

Previous reports:

- None.

Other papers:

- None.

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EPSOM AND EWELL BOROUGH COUNCIL

DECISIONS/ACTIONS TAKEN IN CONSULTATION WITH COMMITTEE CHAIR

Officer requesting authorisation: Arjan de Jong

Date of request: 15/04/26

Committee concerned: Community & Wellbeing

Subject: Homelessness and Housing Reviews

Reason why this decision/action cannot wait until the next scheduled committee: Following the end of the previous contract for this statutory review service in December 2025, an Urgent Decision is required to appoint Turning Point as our review service provider to avoid the risk of the Council being exposed to incurring unnecessary housing costs, and scarce resources being allocated in an unsound way. It would be reasonable to expect the number of requests for a statutory review during 2026/27 to be between four to ten during the year.

When the decision/action is needed by: 17/04/26

Proposed action/decision:

Decision -

- (1) Approve the award of a contract for the conduct of reviews of allocation and homelessness decisions to Turning Point Limited for a period of 1 year with an option to extend for a further period of 1 year;
- (2) Nominate and authorise to Turning Point Limited the Council's statutory functions pursuant to the provisions of s166A(9) and s202 of the Housing Act 1996 to perform reviews of decisions made either regarding the suitability of accommodation offered s166A(9) or as the result of a decision upon a request for assistance as homeless s202, and
- (3) To nominate and authorise the Head of Housing and Communities, in consultation with the Head of Legal, to finalise the terms of the proposed Service Level Agreement and authority to enter into it on behalf of the Council.

Rationale -

As part of the Housing and Homelessness service, any applicant for housing has a statutory right to have certain negative housing decisions reviewed independently of those who made the original decision. This can occur when the officer's decision is that no main housing duty is owed to an applicant.

Some larger councils perform these reviews internally, but this option is not available to EEBC as the team is too small and there isn't the necessary separation from those making the original decision. Instead, we have in the past used an external provider to carry out our reviews. The most recent provider ceased doing so in December 2025. In preparation for this, from the Autumn 2025, officers have been exploring other options, including using other local councils, or securing another provider, but without success. The work involved in reviewing decisions is of low value (<£5k a year) and not that attractive to providers and, in addition, there are very few providers of this service.

Recent negotiations with a potential provider were protracted as the Service Level Agreement (SLA) offered to the council was not considered to be fit for purpose and our lawyers had to draft our own SLA, the terms of which could not be agreed, and we needed to start again. Officers have now found another provider, TurningPoint, who as recently as 9th March 2026 have agreed to the terms, meaning, subject to a decision being made, we are now in a position to agree the SLA and start using their services to review Housing Officers decisions.

There is some jeopardy in not having a review process in place, as it exposes the council to the risk of having to accept a long-term housing duty to households who would not otherwise qualify and where we would normally make a negative decision which would be upheld on review. This would result in them not being able to access accommodation - and save the council money. In practice reviews of the original decisions often confirm the original decision as being sound. Without a review service in place, the risk is that the council cannot make negative decision and as a result the applicant will gain access to scarce social housing, in perpetuity, denying a qualifying local household access to the accommodation. The financial cost of not being able to review negative decisions, even for a few months, could be substantial and ongoing as the applicant would be able to continue to live in the accommodation given. We are aware of two applicants approaching the stage where a review may be requested plus a further applicant who officers consider will be likely to seek a review. So, there is a degree of imminent risk with a high risk of an appeal being lodged with a deadline for determination before early June 2026.

The search for a replacement service provider has taken much longer than anticipated. Officers have been trying to avoid the need for the UD process and were anticipating being able to ask for a decision at Community and Wellbeing Committee either in November 2025 or early in 2026. However, without a provider in place until now this has not been possible. The next scheduled C&W Committee is not until 7th July 2026 and the earliest an extra-ordinary C&W could occur would be early June 2026 Either of these options would expose the council to significant risk.

Up until April 2026 the Housing Service has not received any formal requests for a statutory housing review which is unusual and not expected to continue. On that basis I believe an Urgent Decision to appoint Turning Point as our review service provider is justified and avoids the risk of the council being exposed to incurring unnecessary housing costs, and scarce resources being allocated in an unsound way.

Finance consulted: Yes

Finance comments: The cost of this service can be met from existing budgets and will mitigate the risk of significantly higher and ongoing housing and temporary accommodation costs.

Legal consulted: Yes

Legal comments: The Council has statutory functions under Parts VI and VII the Housing Act 1996 in relation to allocation of social housing and assistance of the homeless: they include the function of carrying out reviews of decisions under the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017. Failure to discharge our statutory duties could expose the Council to legal challenge and pose a significant financial and reputational risk to the Council.

By the Local Authorities (Contracting Out of Allocation of Housing and Homelessness Functions) Order 1996 ("the Order") the Council is permitted to contract out those functions (including the review function) to a third party provided that any such contract is (i) for no more than 10 years and (ii) subject to revocation by the Council forthwith.

Considered the following (Para 3.2 Appendix 2 of the Council's Constitution).

Consultation views: Chair of C&WB supports actions (email 01/04/26)

Range of options considered: Considered operating without a statutory review service in place. This was discounted as the risks associated with not being able to perform a statutory housing review within statutory timescales were considered unacceptable including reputationally and financially. The option to perform the reviews using existing staff resources. This was discounted as there is no suitably experienced and impartial senior member of staff able to perform the statutory review of an original housing decision.

Staffing, financial, and legal implications: No staffing implications. Financial implications significant and detailed above. Legal implications require an appropriate review service within statutory timescales.

Policy framework, equalities, climate change or wellbeing implications: None

Risks: Financial risks as described above.

Other guidance: None

Constitution, contract and financial procedures and regulations: Appendix 2 and 5, and Annex 4-1 of the Council's Constitution,

The need to secure Best Value: Not applicable to this decision

Chair and/or Vice Chair consulted: Yes

Date: 1st April 2026

Views of the Chair and/or Vice Chair:

Please ensure a detailed explanation is set out on the UD form.
Happy to proceed with this for the reasons set out

Name: Clive Woodbridge

Date: 1st April 2026

Decision/action authorised by:

Signature:



Date: 17/04/26