



**Economic Growth Management**

**Local Plan Spatial Economic Growth Strategy for Epsom &  
Ewell Borough**

**Main Report**

**Prepared for**

**Epsom & Ewell Borough Council**

**By**

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**6th January 2020**

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## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

### **Relevant Issues**

Epsom & Ewell faces major challenges in providing the required amount, types and quality of employment space needed to address the patterns of growth and change expected over the coming decades. Opportunities for new development are limited, coupled with the constraints of an urban area surrounded by the Greenbelt.

Nevertheless, opportunities have been identified for providing solutions to current shortages of employment space through proactive and imaginative redevelopment of existing sites and buildings already in employment use.

Key drivers for delivering such solutions stem from the emerging strategic policy environment. The proposed designation of the Epsom and Leatherhead corridor as a Strategic Opportunity Area, being one identified within the Surrey 2050 Place Ambition, sets the scene for proactive development and regeneration.

Complementing this is the prospect of the creation of a University Enterprise Zone which would be a major catalyst for marshalling the creative and entrepreneurial talent being generated by the University of Creative Arts and is expanding its business school towards local economic growth opportunities.

Transforming the employment space offer of the borough in preparation for the substantial changes to the economic structure and operating conditions that can be anticipated over the next 20 years will involve major challenges. However substantial opportunities are available to achieve this through the redevelopment of such locations as the Utilities and adjacent East Street sites and council owned properties at Longmead. In parallel, there is the potential to create a major incubator complex in association with the potential University Enterprise Zone which would provide a major catalyst for the creation and growth of tomorrow's industries.

However, radical solutions to improve accessibility will need to be put in place in parallel with the site redevelopment projects. Given levels of road congestion, alternative solutions such as improved cycling and walking infrastructure and the introduction of new networks and systems for vehicles based on clean technologies will need to be devised in the short and medium term in order to reduce dependence on car usage.

Based on these findings the following recommendations are put forward for consideration as potential projects to enable the economic longer term prosperity of the borough.

### **Recommendations**

- 1) An early start should be made on taking forward a focused programme of high-profile flagship development projects with the potential to reposition the attractiveness of the borough to high-quality employers with good growth prospects. Redevelopment

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projects on the Utilities site, East Street, and at Kiln Lane and Longmead should be accelerated.

- 2) Epsom & Ewell should get fully prepared for submitting prompt responses to forthcoming funding opportunities from the government and Local Enterprise Partnership through the identification of a portfolio of sites suitable for high impact redevelopment, coupled with appropriate feasibility work, master planning, preparation of development briefs and costed infrastructure and site preparation proposals, outline project programmes and business cases, each prepared in advance.
- 3) Measures to substantially increase the amount of small business accommodation should be developed. As a priority, it should be directed towards the set-up of an enterprise centre suitable for the creation and growth of creative and technology-based businesses within the area in conjunction with key partners such as UCA and Nescot. Designation as a University Enterprise Zone should be actively pursued. Following on from this, under-utilised buildings with scope for adaptation should be identified and a programme established for adapting them to meet the need for growth on space.
- 4) The proposed infrastructure for the creation of an exemplary, highly attractive network of cycling and walking routes connecting the employment areas, public transport hubs and nearby residential areas should be planned and implemented as one of the key priorities. An ongoing strategy and proposals for the creation of a zero-emission transport network for other modes should follow on from this initiative.
- 5) A comprehensive suite of updated planning policies orientated to the needs of growth and change in the borough and to ensuring the highest quality development outcomes should be put in place oriented to the types of opportunities highlighted above.

## **1. Introduction**

### **1.1 Purpose of this Document**

1.1.1 The purpose of the Spatial Economic Development Strategy is to provide guidance to the Local Plan on the provision of employment land necessary to meet the economic growth opportunities and options faced by the Borough. This is distinct from other economic development activities such as inward investment promotion, business support and skills development which, though complementary, would be dealt with through separate workstreams.

1.1.2 The strategy has been prepared by Economic Growth Management to provide:

- a) An overview of the challenges for achieving economic growth within the borough
- b) The strategic context and emerging ambitions for the future of the borough and wider sub-region
- c) Opportunities for securing the future prosperity of the borough
- d) Strategic objectives for delivery of the Spatial Economic Development Strategy
- e) Priority interventions recommended for bringing forward the key spatial economic growth opportunities
- f) Supporting measures to assure longer term balanced and sustainable economic growth.

### **1.2 Supporting Evidence Base**

1.2.1 This strategy document builds on the evidence from the Borough's economic profile and an assessment of economic growth potential, evidence of demand for employment space in Epsom & Ewell, an assessment of current employment land stock and for development of specific sites and locations within the borough. These findings have been consolidated into a single Evidence Base document to support this strategy document.

## **2. Opportunities and Challenges Facing Epsom & Ewell**

### **2.1 Profile of Future Growth**

2.1.1 The revised Local Plan which is currently emerging will need to determine how to balance the supply of employment land and floorspace within Epsom & Ewell to cope with a number of factors and influences arising over the plan period to 2034.

- To the extent that the population of Epsom & Ewell along with the surrounding districts grows over the plan period, demand will intensify for supplies and services to support new or enlarged communities. More jobs will need to be created and accommodated locally from this demand. Higher levels of employment will be needed to sustain the future population more generally.
- In parallel with this, the Borough Council has an ambition to create more jobs locally in order to reduce the volume of commuting up to London and elsewhere.
- A major shift is going on in the structure of employment whereby traditional jobs that are repetitive and codifiable are likely to be replaced by artificial intelligence. Meanwhile, new types of employment involving more specialist types of workers at all levels are projected to emerge.
- Demand from tomorrow's new industries will demand new and different types of working environments, particularly in view of the identified shift towards micro-businesses in local growth sectors such as the digital, creative, high tech and professional and technical services sectors, coupled with the need to provide growth on space and to retain Epsom's large employers. There will be a need to provide highly attractive settings for working and living if tomorrow's more sophisticated workforce is to be attracted to work within the borough.

### **2.2 Sector Growth Opportunities**

2.2.1 Epsom & Ewell faces some exciting opportunities for growth, specifically where it has demonstrated comparatively strong growth performance or has notable competitive advantages.

- Software development
- Growth in the wider high-tech specialised subsectors
- Professional and technical services
- The creative and cultural industries
- Higher and Further education
- High-value inward investment

2.2.2 Other growth can be expected from sectors affected by the shifts coming about through demography and the impacts of new technologies:

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- Services to support an expanding population
- Digital technologies – growth opportunities arising from the forthcoming demands for, artificial intelligence, 5G communications applications and big data
- Clean technologies
- Advanced transportation and related motor trades
- Alternative high value town centre functions and services

### 2.3 Addressing the Space Requirements for Key Sectors

2.3.1 These factors will increase the requirement for a diverse range of employment space. Taking account of these considerations, a key step is to understand the requirements of the sectors and activities that can be expected to expand which will underly the options for growth in the borough. Accordingly, the table below profiles the types and sizes of employment uses and required operating environments needed to meet future demand from the sectors that are expected to grow.

2.3.2 In the case of offices, it should be noted that reference is made to varying sizes of unit. The following floor areas would apply in each case.

Micro	0 to 499 sqft
Grow on/Intermediate	500 to 1999 sqft
Medium	2000 to 9,999 sqft
Large	10,000 to 24,999 sqft
Very Large	25,000 sqft+

Sector	Space Requirements	Required Operating Environments
<b>Growth Sectors in B Class</b>		
Professional, Scientific & Technical Services	A ready supply of micro, intermediate and medium sized offices.	Within or in close proximity to the town centre and station. Should include increased provision of serviced and short lease accommodation and business centres with shared meeting space and service support for use by home working professionals and start-up companies.
Digital Technologies	High quality micro and grow on offices offered on flexible terms.	As above plus very high capacity broadband.
Creative Industries	Hot desks and community workspaces with meeting areas Lockable office units of 2-400 sqft Designer maker spaces of 2– 600 sqft Some provision for expansion units of 40-100sqm	Low cost buildings within easy reach of the town centre. Heritage and other interesting buildings if and where available. Links to the University of Creative Arts and Nescot.
Other High-Tech Activities and Clean Technologies	Clean, modern quasi office and industrial grow on and medium sized units.	Smart and presentable industrial area with good public transport.

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Sector	Space Requirements	Required Operating Environments
Business Administration and Support Services	Mostly micro and intermediate sized offices.	Within or in close proximity to the town centre and station.
Advanced Transportation Infrastructure	Intermediate sized offices for management and operational centres. Medium sized light industrial maintenance depots.	Locations for pick up and storage of electric bikes Charging infrastructure at car parking locations, and work-places Future drop-off & pick up points for electric vehicles Out of town parking depots
Artisan Manufacturing	Intermediate sized light industrial space	Industrial areas
Motor Trades	Large car showrooms units with high quality industrial space for associated maintenance and servicing operations.	Good road accessibility Car storage facilities
<b>Requirements of Non B Class Activities Expanding Due to Population Growth</b>		
Wholesale distribution and trade counters	Small and medium sized industrial and warehouse units with lorry access and parking where necessary.	Attractive industrial areas with good road accessibility and parking.
Food and beverage	Prominent intermediate sized retail units.	Attractive, high visibility retail and high-density residential environments served by good public transport and parking. Heritage buildings where available. Outside seating areas.
Speciality retailing	Small retail units	Streets with characterful frontages and interiors close together Heritage buildings where available. Internal and external spaces for grouping of market stalls for arts, crafts and accessories.
Arts, culture & entertainment venues	Empty retail units suitable for pop up activities. Performing arts spaces with seating – internal and external – and external bandstands Galleries and exhibition spaces	Within or close to town centre. Close to food and beverage outlets with internal and external seating.

### 2.4 Evidence of Demand

2.4.1 The market for office space is changing. Whereas much of the demand in Epsom 10 years ago came from financial services and related professional firms such as accountants, this appears to have receded. New types of demand have now emerged, particularly small workspace.

#### Micro Business Units and Grow-on Space

2.4.2 More schemes are needed which can address the trend for flexible working, hot desking and the use of modern technology and provide support for homeworking appear to have replaced traditional demand. Many small businesses, whilst working



flexibly still require a base or hub and are prepared to pay for decent quality and smart, slick office space, which the borough currently lacks.

- 2.4.3 There was a net increase of 925 businesses in Epsom between 2010 and 2018 equating to an average of 116 per year. These are accounted for principally by the major growth sectors such as information and communication, professional, scientific and technical services and business administration services. The majority of these involve office-related uses. The vast majority of this increase is accounted for by business start-ups and small expansions - of 3725 businesses in Epsom in 2018, 3,155 (85%) have between 0 and 4 employees. This suggests that there is a need to address this demand by providing more office buildings subdivided into smaller units than is currently available.
- 2.4.4 Local commercial property agents have reported that due to the increase in people working from home or out of coffee shops on an iPad etc, there has been a big change in demand from the small end office market and highlight a need for high quality incubator space. The trend for flexible working looks set to remain, and will probably increase, as more and more businesses use hot-desking, home-working and flexible hours as a way of cutting costs and using technology to its full advantage. Whilst often needing less space as a consequence, businesses still require a base, or a hub of some sort and the requirement is typically for quality over quantity.
- 2.4.5 This is an area in which intervention is likely to be necessary. The investment market won't provide short leases on new buildings so the only scope for businesses is to provide workspace from existing buildings coming back into the market. A further constraint to converting office buildings into smaller units is that the big spaces are not in tenant control, being owned by landlords. Floor areas available in empty office buildings are large and there is always a reluctance for these to be broken up and offered as short leases for smaller spaces given management costs, the cost of partitioning and less certainty of long-term income.
- 2.4.6 A comprehensive strategy needs to be developed to amplify the supply of units of this size and the type of environment favoured by creative and high-tech workers – vibrant urban locations with a strong café culture and buzzy environments in which to meet up. Appropriate solutions need to be put in place if Epsom & Ewell is to stay ahead of the game.
- 2.4.7 Net increases of businesses in all other size bands equated to an average of only 10 businesses per year (Source: UK Business Counts). This suggests that more business expansions could have been achieved if the supply of business accommodation were less constrained. The Coast to Capital LEP Strategic Economic Plan corroborates this view by highlighting the shortage of good quality, flexible, and affordable office, industrial and specialist space as one reason why the area has a higher number of micro businesses than other parts of the South East and lower numbers of scaling and medium size businesses.

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2.4.8 Amongst commercial property agents there is felt to be sufficient demand for a new business or industrial park, for start-ups and small businesses of 1-10 people. One local commercial property agent notes a significant number of enquiries for small warehouse space for high-tech uses, comprising storage, distribution and office space, mostly for units of 1-2,000 sq ft.

### Medium Sized and Large Business Units

2.4.9 The market for industrial and warehouse units in Longmead and Nonsuch is extremely buoyant with demand outstripping supply, causing upward pressure in rents.

2.4.10 Local commercial property agents have reported that many enquiries come from businesses already in the borough. They occasionally look elsewhere, even outside of the borough, simply out of interest and to see what the options are. However, 70-75% of them stay in the area partly because of the cost of moving and the risk of losing staff and having to re-recruit, and also because they are generally happy in the area, as long as they have appropriate premises and adequate space.

2.4.11 Recent deals have been: Sirius, a cloud-based IT business, who relocated from Richmond and took 3,500-4,000 sq ft of space; Skyguard, a company specialising in lone worker alarms, who relocated from the Tolworth area into the town centre – they needed bigger premises and liked the station and amenities of the town; a Sodexo business specialising in the recruitment of nurses also recently decided to locate here, as did Kantar, a marketing data consultancy and part of WPP.

2.4.12 In the past, a significant number of enquiries came from the insurance and financial services sector, for example accountancy firms attracted to the town by the presence of BDO and Deloitte. However, there are no longer any such noticeable trends, and enquiries now come from a wider range of business sectors. Units of 5,000-15,000 sq ft are much less in demand than before.

## **2.5 Mismatches in the Supply of Employment Sites and Buildings**

2.5.1 Local commercial property agents have reported that there is a current shortage of space across all size ranges. There is an acute shortage of small business units, particularly for businesses with the aspirations and potential for scaling-up.

2.5.2 Throughout the borough, there is a mismatch between the availability, types and sizes of office and industrial space currently on offer and that required by existing businesses and the emerging growth industries. This is primarily because almost all of the existing employment sites are fully occupied; when space does become available this is in high demand. Completions for office stock have been particularly low within Epsom Town Centre since the 1990s. There is a lack of flexibility in unit sizes and lease lengths that are available for units on East Street. There is a need for investment in office stock to provide units which meet current user requirements.

2.5.3 Housing pressures have been creating pressure for change of use of existing office sites, whether through permitted development rights or planning applications for new development, though in recent years, useful work has been undertaken in establishing Article 4 directions for maintaining employment uses on key sites. The surrounding Greenbelt also limits the opportunities for additional employment-related development.

### **3. Opportunities for Accommodating Growth and Change**

#### **3.1 Main Opportunities for Site Redevelopment**

3.1.1 Though there are virtually no greenfield sites for development, there is considerable scope for redevelopment of existing sites and buildings to create a substantial increase in employment floorspace.

##### The Utilities Site

3.1.2 The Utilities site includes a council car park and land formerly used for gas production and distribution. The leisure centre lies to the north of the site. The current aspiration is for a significant mixed use development providing housing for all generations (e.g. student accommodation, retirement housing and residential units for the general market) as well as employment space and a range of supporting amenities to make the scheme self-sufficient, with a high sense of place and an academic and cultural offer.

3.1.3 However, remediation will be expensive as there is considerable contamination such as a former tar pit on which the current car park sits. For this reason, high-value development and possible public sector funding for enabling work on the site may be essential if development is to be taken forward.

##### East Street

3.1.4 East Street is regarded as having potential to become the borough's Central Business District. However, many of the office buildings on the street suffer from outdated internal layouts and are ripe for refurbishment. East Street is also in need of improvement to its public realm.

3.1.5 Amongst the buildings immediately adjacent to the Utilities site that face onto East Street, there are several that have scope for recycling and redevelopment and intensification for employment uses and other complementary activity. This would complement high profile development on the Utilities site and propel this grouping of sites into a significant central business district.

3.1.6 In addition, one or more empty buildings in the street could potentially provide a site for a creative business centre, though it is likely that this would depend on the council acquiring the site in the first instance.

##### Epsom Town Centre

3.1.7 Within the town centre, there is scope for intensification of some large office sites such as Parkside House which lies behind Epsom Gateway and possibly intensification of the Ashley Centre for office uses above the retail complex. However, this would be dependent on the stronger market conditions for such schemes to be viable, so these

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must be regarded as long term prospects. In Church Street there is scope for recycling existing office buildings for intensified office uses together with secondary retail and ancillary uses.

### Longmead and Nonsuch Industrial Estates

- 3.1.8 The Longmead and Nonsuch industrial estates have a strategic importance as an employment location, mainly, though not exclusively for industrial uses and a number of sites on Longmead and Nonsuch have major scope for redevelopment.
- 3.1.9 The estates need to maintain their role in supporting the local economy and population by retaining such uses as trade counters, distribution centres, motor servicing and small-scale manufacturing facilities. There is scope for intensification of these uses on the existing sites. Due to intense current demand, the industrial units have seen a significant rise in rents in recent years and the high investment returns currently being generated reduce the incentive for redevelopment and intensification in the short to medium term. For this reason, many of the sites will remain as they are for the foreseeable future, but as individual estates and buildings become time expired and reach the end of their economic life, there will be major scope for intensification of the existing uses to provide additional capacity.
- 3.1.10 However, there is also scope for provision of a complex of grow-on office and clean maker space for technology-based companies that are scaling up and expanding and other office users such as professional and business services companies and regional headquarters operations. Companies such as Photo Me and Tchibo have recently set up headquarters on the estates indicating that such office uses are viable within the industrial estates. This could be achieved through redevelopment or reconfiguration of the council owned land. A substantial amount of new office space could be provided, which would alleviate a major shortage of space for expanding companies within the borough.
- 3.1.11 Realising these opportunities on the industrial estates to their full potential will depend on achieving more intensive use of the employment land. In this regard the local plan will play a crucial role by enabling more intense uses. However, it would be important to have conditions in place to ensure that the resulting increases in land values translate into architectural and public realm quality.
- 3.1.12 Success will also hinge on improving accessibility. In recent years, consideration has been given to the building of the Kiln Lane link in order provide seamless access between the Longmead and Nonsuch industrial areas, currently severed by the Epsom mainline railway. However, feasibility work has shown that the value of transport benefits and development gains is insufficient to justify such a scheme going forward in the foreseeable future. Unless high-rise residential development were to be taken forward on adjacent sites, the required criteria for the scheme to go ahead will not be met. Moreover, apart from the cost of constructing the scheme, there would be considerable associated costs to be met such as the buying out of existing businesses

at a relatively high land values. There would also be major disruption and uncertainty caused by the need to displace a number of existing employees. Whilst this may be a possibility in the long term the Kiln Lane is not currently a viable option. In the meantime, alternative solutions, in line with the drive towards reduced car dependency and zero emission targets will need to be introduced in order to provide the required level of accessibility to these areas.

### 3.2 Strategic Policies and Ambitions

3.2.1 A number of current strategic policies and ambition statements are setting the scene for taking forward these opportunities.

#### Aims of the Core Strategy

3.2.2 Epsom & Ewell's current Core Strategy 2007 defines a series of principles which underlie the policies adopted for employment land provision to ensure or encourage:

- a) availability of sites for a range of sizes, quality and locations in order to meet the range of needs of business
- b) the regeneration and intensification of in the strategic employment areas of the Nonsuch and Longmead Industrial Estates, Epsom town centre and Ewell Village centre
- c) securing "smart growth" - growth which does not rely on imported labour or require more land - such as more flexible working practices, greater use of technology or homeworking).
- d) enhancement of the Borough's economic performance and maintaining a vibrant employment market
- e) the reduction of longer distance out commuting by the provision of a range of local jobs.

#### Economic Development Plan 2016

3.2.3 The Epsom & Ewell Economic Development Plan emphasises delivering growth and diversification of the local economy towards higher value business, locally based employment opportunities, suitable conditions for working locally and the enhancement of the economic and lifestyle roles of the town centre. It proposes a series of priority interventions oriented to spatial development to securing economic growth, including:

- a) securing and delivering the enabling infrastructure essential to improving the functionality and competitiveness of the town
- b) stimulating employment diversification, business investment and growth
- c) widening the choice of commercial property and
- d) enhancing the economic and support role of the town and local centres.

## Coast to Capital Strategic Economic Plan and Emerging Industrial Strategy

3.2.4 The Coast to Capital LEP Strategic Economic Plan sets out a long-term vision to build facilities to enable the growth of businesses to bring about high-quality local jobs. Their stated spatial development priorities, which are directly relevant to the needs Epsom & Ewell. are to:

- deliver prosperous urban centres, prioritising funding for towns and localities with ambitions for transformational development and economic growth
- develop business infrastructure and support - funding for high quality business space so that productive businesses can flourish
- invest in sustainable growth, promoting strategies for energy, waste, water and low emission vehicles
- promote better transport and mobility, such as through investment in Crossrail 2 whilst bringing further funds to roads and railways across the area.
- improve digital network capability, through investment in a new standard of full fibre broadband connectivity between the economic hubs.

The SEP highlights the shortage of good quality, flexible, and affordable office, industrial and specialist space as one reason why the area has a higher number of micro businesses than other parts of the South East, and lower numbers of scaling and medium size businesses.

## Future 40

3.2.5 Future40 is the Borough Council's initiative that seeks to create a new long-term vision for the borough focusing on the type of future that local people want. Future aspirations for the borough are focused on promoting the following themes.

- Green and Vibrant - clean energy, greater use of sustainable transport, reducing the carbon footprint and contributing to improved air quality
- Smart and Connected - connectivity, seen as a top priority including the opportunities from Cross Rail 2, access to including improved walking and cycling routes, better access for the disabled and families and the fastest and best possible digital data infrastructure and easy access to everything on the doorstep
- Safe and Well - improved safety and physical and mental wellbeing, with ready access to great medical and health facilities
- Opportunity and Prosperity - a distinct identity for the borough and a compelling reason to visit, shop, live, study, work and invest in the borough; the required investment in affordable housing and workspaces; higher quality design of

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buildings and public spaces to attract more shopping visitors businesses and retailers; and retaining the talent and skills that have been nurtured here

- Cultural and Creative - pride in the borough's rich history and heritage as an important Market Town and a famous Georgian Spa Town and renowned horseracing venue.

### Surrey 2050 Place Ambition

3.2.6 The Surrey 2050 Place Ambition provides a shared vision to maximise effectiveness in the delivery of services, private sector investment and government funding opportunities and to deliver efficiencies of scale. Its vision is for a county of well-functioning and connected places, with healthy communities and a high quality of life based on collaborative and innovative solutions to meet the need for new homes, greater economic prosperity and infrastructure improvements. This will be underpinned by three shared strategic priorities that will inform and support targeted delivery at a local level.

- 1) Improving current connectivity between strategically important hubs - a coherent infrastructure investment strategy which will improve local and strategic connectivity, aimed at unlocking development opportunities, addressing the impacts of climate change and improving the overall health and well-being of residents.
- 2) Enhancing the "place offer" of Surrey's towns by making sure land is used in the most efficient and versatile way to unlock the potential of Surrey's towns, increase the provision and choice of homes offered, safeguard employment land and premises within town centres close to sustainable modes of transport and ensure a continued and flexible supply of premises to meet changing economic needs.
- 3) Maximising the potential of the county's strategic economic assets, focusing strategic interventions and transformational projects in eight Strategic Opportunity Areas (SOAs) that can support priority industrial sectors and improvements to connectivity both within and beyond Surrey, within a common framework focused on investment in infrastructure, unlocking strategic sites and improving connectivity between key hubs and along strategic movement corridors. The Epsom to Leatherhead M25 (Junction 9) Corridor is designated as an SOA.

### **3.3 Support for Unlocking Constraints to Economic Growth and Change**

3.3.1 Given the above strategic policies and ambitions, a number of opportunities to fund the bringing about of conditions for the addressing the mismatches and shortages of



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employment space necessary to accommodate Epsom & Ewell's growth industries can be expected to come forward.

### ➤ Epsom to Leatherhead M25 (Junction 9) Growth Corridor

As mentioned above, the Epsom to Leatherhead Corridor is defined as one of eight Strategic Opportunity Areas, within which strategic interventions and transformational projects will be focused to support priority industrial sectors and improvements to connectivity over the next 20 years. In order to maximise the potential of the county's strategic economic assets, the Place Ambition seeks to develop infrastructure funding solutions aimed at unlocking development opportunities.

### ➤ Proposed designation in Epsom & Ewell of a University Enterprise Zone

The University of Creative Arts in Epsom provides a hub for creative industries, fashion, art, and design, together with specialisms in business and marketing for the sector. University Enterprise Zones are specific geographical areas where universities and business work together to increase local growth and innovation. Working with the Local Enterprise Partnerships, the aim is to stimulate development of incubator or 'grow-on' space for small businesses in locations that encourage businesses to interact with universities and to innovate. The zones would have access to business support packages and the specialist facilities and expert knowledge offered by universities.

To take forward to the UEZ concept, it will be necessary to provide a site or buildings on which to take forward a suitable development scheme for incubator and grow on space located either in or close to the University, such as the town centre or East Street. The development scheme for the centre must be suitable for fast track delivery and implementation in order to meet contracted outputs from the scheme.

### ➤ Coast to Capital LEP Funding Programmes

Funding schemes such as the Local Growth Fund have the specific purpose of generating economic growth by co-financing such aspects and enabling infrastructure and site preparation works which can unlock development opportunities for development of commercial floorspace and housing. One of the Coast to Capital LEP's top priorities is to deliver prosperous urban centres for towns and localities with ambitions for transformational development and economic growth and to prioritise funding for them. Another priority is to develop business infrastructure and support by seeking funding to develop high quality business space so that productive businesses can flourish and bring better paid jobs to the area.

### ➤ Borough Council Initiatives

In recent years, the Epsom & Ewell Borough Council has been active in seeking to line up development opportunities. It has embarked on programme of acquiring town

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centre offices as well as other sites that can play a strategic investment role, creating scope for several large projects to be brought forward. In parallel, the council has been proactive in applying for funding from a range of individual proposals. The Local Plan is an opportunity to determine what can be achieved in terms of spatial development, but this also depends on proactive initiatives in bringing forward property development. However, a number of key imperatives will underly the success in taking forward Epsom & Ewells key spatial development opportunities.

## **4. Key Imperatives**

### **4.1 Key Success Factors**

4.1.1 Taking account of the above challenges, opportunities and strategic ambitions, the following factors will need to be considered.

- The need for high impact interventions to reposition the borough's local economy
- Site development readiness to respond to major opportunities for transformation, to resolve shortages of employment space
- A policy framework to facilitate and respond to ongoing growth and change
- A transport system enabling unimpeded movement and reduced car dependence.

### **4.2 Interventions to Reposition Epsom & Ewell**

4.2.1 In the early years of the forthcoming local plan period, considerable benefit could be achieved by bringing forward a manageable number of high impact development projects that will address the employment space shortages of Epsom & Ewell. These can position it for attracting businesses involved in high-value activities, such as those involving advanced technologies which are emerging into new industries that are currently being projected.

### **4.3 Responses to Transformational Opportunities**

4.3.1 In order to deliver these projects and to capitalise on the proposed Epsom to Leatherhead Corridor strategic opportunity area, it will be necessary to have firm development and regeneration proposals worked up. For this, a portfolio of candidate sites, proactive mechanisms to bring them forward and optimise their development will need to be in place. Prior work is needed on the design, planning and costing of schemes for supporting infrastructure, site preparation and public realm improvements and arrangements for timely procurement and delivery programmes, so that robust business cases and funding bids can be promptly generated.

### **4.4 Policies Enabling the Required Responses to Growth and Change**

4.4.1 In parallel, it will be important to have the relevant development policies and conditions in place for ongoing investment in new development concepts, adaptation and intensification of existing employment sites and buildings.

### **4.5 Addressing Local Accessibility Constraints**

4.5.1 In addition, there will be a need for the creation of transport infrastructure and systems that will remove the need for people to travel by car and that will significantly reduce levels of traffic congestion since this is a major constraint on new investment within the borough. Radical solutions will need to be taken forward if development proposals are to be successful.

## **5. Strategic Framework**

### **5.1 Core Aims**

5.1.1 The core aims of the Local Plan Spatial Economic Growth Strategy for Epsom & Ewell are to:

- a) identify solutions for the provision of adequate employment space to meet the borough's needs for economic growth and change needs and within the plan period and
- b) bring about the interventions and local plan policy changes and approaches required to deliver these solutions.

5.1.2 In meeting these core aims, the strategic objectives defined below will need to be pursued.

### **5.2 Strategic Objectives**

1. To accelerate the exploitation and impacts of Epsom & Ewell's key economic growth opportunities.
2. To establish planning and development economic policies enabling optimum responses to economic growth opportunities, future changes and space shortages facing Epsom & Ewell.
3. To create the conditions to enable opportunities for investment and economic growth within Epsom & Ewell to be realised and optimised.
4. To create conditions for the movement of people and goods in and around Epsom & Ewell that address the demands of population and employment growth, taking into account future transport modes.
5. To put in place required initiatives to maximise the productive capacity of the borough's infrastructure, economy and workforce.

## **6. Priority Interventions**

6.1.1 In order to strength the borough’s longer-term economic prospects, it is proposed that the following projects, set out the each of the project profiles below, are prioritised.

Project No. 1: University Enterprise Zone and Creative Businesses Hub

Project No. 2: Accelerated Redevelopment of the Utilities & East Street Sites

Project No. 3 Longmead Office & High-Tech Expansion Hub

Project No. 4 Epsom & Ewell Cycle Network

Project No. 5 Creation of a Business Investment Zone and Required Development Tools

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<b>Project No. 1</b>	
	<b>University Enterprise Zone and Creative Enterprise Centre</b>
<b>Scope</b>	
	<p>Development of an enterprise workspace centre focused on high-value creative and technology-based businesses (including equine technology) offering incubator and grow on workspace.</p> <p>On-going programme of refurbishment and adaptation of vacant buildings to service ongoing expansion requirements of growing businesses.</p>
<b>Rationale</b>	
	<p>Surge in number of micro businesses in the digital sectors outperforming the C2C regional average.</p> <p>Major scope for exploitation of economic growth from local creative talent and entrepreneurship, such as that generated by UCA.</p> <p>Lack of grow-on space identified as a major constraint to the scaling up of growth businesses.</p>
<b>Outcomes Sought</b>	
	<p>Accelerated provision of incubation and grow on space.</p> <p>A thriving cluster of high-value creative and technology-based businesses.</p>
<b>Steps to Implementation</b>	
	<p>Promotion of Epsom for designation as a University Enterprise Zone.</p> <p>Identification and redevelopment of a suitable building for creation of up to 2000 m<sup>2</sup> for incubation and grow on space.</p> <p>Formation of a partnership between the University, local authorities and other stakeholders.</p> <p>Applications for match funding from local sources.</p> <p>Incubator centre development programme.</p> <p>Assembly of centre staff, specialist mentors and investors &amp; engagement of potential clients and project launch.</p> <p>On-going programme for adaptation of under-utilised properties for grow-on space.</p>

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<b>Project No. 2</b>	
	<b>Accelerated Redevelopment of Utilities, East Street and Kiln Lane Sites</b>
<b>Scope</b>	<p>Comprehensive transformation of a redevelopment corridor to the south of the Waterloo mainline bring forward:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) High-quality, integrated development on the Utilities site, incorporating mixed-uses including education, arts and culture , new employment space, housing, upgrading of the Rainbow Centre and high-quality supporting amenities.</li> <li>b) Intensification of adjacent sites in East Street to enhance supply of employment space.</li> <li>c) Redevelopment and intensification of Council owned and other possible sites at Kiln Lane for mixed use development.</li> </ul>
<b>Rationale</b>	<p>Utilities site provides opportunity for enhancing supply of employment floorspace. Gateway sites on East Street providing opportunity for development of new employment space also offering education, arts and culture. Many of the buildings on East Street have outdated interiors but with scope for intensification of office uses. Kiln Lane is a strategic employment area but significantly under-utilised. Project addresses a major shortage of office for space in all size ranges.</p>
<b>Outcomes Sought</b>	<p>Realisation of a high-profile central business district for the borough supported by high quality amenities and new housing.</p>
<b>Steps to Implementation</b>	<p>Master plan for the utilities site and adjacent East Street redevelopment opportunities.</p> <p>Costed programmes for site remediation and preparation for the Utilities site, public realm improvements for East Street and Kiln Lane and for relocation of existing businesses where required.</p> <p>Application for Enterprise Zone status for entire development zone and selected sites at Longmead.</p> <p>Business case for funding of site preparation and public realm works as a basis for funding to kick start redevelopment.</p> <p>Development agreements with preferred investors and delivery partners.</p>

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<b>Project No. 3</b>	
	<b>Longmead Office &amp; High Tech Expansion Hub</b>
<b>Scope</b>	<p>Redevelopment or reconfiguration of the council owned sites at Longmead.</p> <p>Provision of a complex of grow-on office and clean maker space for expanding companies with a particular focus on high technology businesses.</p>
<b>Rationale</b>	<p>Major shortage of space of all sizes throughout the borough.</p> <p>A shortage of high-quality premises for expanding companies requiring between 500 to 2000 ft.<sup>2</sup> is constraining business growth.</p> <p>Route to delivery facilitated by two adjacent sites being in council ownership.</p>
<b>Outcomes Sought</b>	<p>Through the provision of grow on space, higher numbers of micro businesses scaling up and progressing to medium size, strengthening the economic structure of the borough.</p>
<b>Steps to Implementation</b>	<p>Formulation of detailed development brief.</p> <p>Demolition, decontamination and site preparation works.</p> <p>Development agreement with the preferred investor and delivery partner.</p> <p>Designation of the site as part of an area-wide Enterprise Zone and the University Enterprise Zone.</p>



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<b>Project No. 4</b>	
<b>Scope</b>	<b>Epsom &amp; Ewell Walking &amp; Cycle Network</b>
	<p>A comprehensive network of walking and cycling routes connecting Epsom and Ewell West and East Stations, the main Town Centre destinations, University, East street and Longmead and Nonsuch and adjacent residential areas.</p> <p>Creation of a cycle tunnel under the Epsom mainline.</p> <p>Comprehensive cycle storage, battery charging and hire hubs at stations and key employment and visitor destinations.</p>
<b>Rationale</b>	
	<p>Sustainable solution for provision of accessibility into and around Epsom.</p> <p>Encouragement of more people to live healthier lives.</p> <p>Boost to the attractiveness of the town centre and industrial areas to investors, incoming and existing employers, shoppers and visitors.</p> <p>Raises investment confidence required to stimulate and accelerate redevelopment and intensification of existing employment sites.</p>
<b>Outcomes Sought</b>	<p>Improved links between residential, retail and employment centres, reducing community severance.</p> <p>Improved and safer permeability throughout the town centre.</p> <p>Reduced burden of car ownership.</p> <p>Reduced congestion and pollution throughout Epsom Town Centre and other identified congestion hotspots.</p> <p>Accelerated investment commitments at major redevelopment sites.</p>
<b>Steps to Implementation</b>	<p>Design of routes.</p> <p>Negotiations with site owners.</p> <p>Costed programme of infrastructure provision.</p> <p>Business case for funding.</p> <p>Construction programme.</p>

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<b>Project No. 5</b>	<b>Creation of a Business Investment Zone and Required Development Tools</b>
<b>Scope</b>	Creation of required designations, investment incentives, planning and development tools to major opportunity sites to be brought forward.
<b>Rationale</b>	Interventions are needed to address market failure in modernising and intensification of the borough's employment zones and creating the operational environments for an optimum profile and balance of economic growth and performance matching the borough's potential.
<b>Outcomes Sought</b>	Accelerated transformation of the Utilities, East Street, Kiln Lane and selected Longmead sites to create a sustainable, high profile business district, additional housing capacity and high quality, complementary amenities.
<b>Steps to Implementation</b>	<p>Case and application for Enterprise Zone status covering the Utilities, East Street, Kiln Lane and Longmead area.</p> <p>Support to UCA in achieving designation of a University Enterprise Zone.</p> <p>Investment into flexible planning mechanisms such as a local development order and masterplans and development briefs.</p> <p>Setting up required procurement arrangements to assure fast track delivery required to satisfy public sector funders.</p> <p>Participation with Surrey County Council in defining an ambitious vision and implementation plan for the proposed M25 J9 Leatherhead to Epsom Growth Corridor.</p>

## **7. Supporting Measures for Spatial Economic Development**

### **7.1 Establishing the Policy Responses to Growth Opportunities and Change**

7.1.1 Because Epsom & Ewell has a limited range of development options for accommodating the economic growth of Epsom & Ewell, the main opportunities for rectifying the under-supply of employment floorspace are on existing employment sites with scope to be re-cycled, re-developed and intensified.

7.1.2 Achieving this will depend of having a Local Plan development policy framework that will inspire, facilitate and guide the way forward in maximising the benefits of change and growth, subject to the necessary controls. The borough's ambitions, targets and approaches to growth will need to be clearly articulated, in parallel with policies and proposals that enable the developments that will realise the preferred growth opportunities to proceed and shortages of employment space to be resolved. In this regard, a number of policy interventions will be required.

- a) A policy for retention of office and industrial space and the continued use of Article 4 directions.
- b) Guidance on future development mix of across strategic employment locations, defining where different types and sizes of uses will be located and under what conditions.
- c) General policies for enhancing provision of small business workspace and medium sized offices and locations for business incubators and enterprise centres.
- d) Policy for change of use of disused retail units.

7.1.3 Within the policy framework, guidance will need also to be provided for:

- incorporating employment space into high density mixed-use residential schemes
- supporting the growth in students and visitors, including housing, provision of performing arts and cultural venues, food and beverage outlets
- opportunities to encourage the growth of the visitor economy
- individual sites with major potential for redevelopment and reuse
- the provision and siting of infrastructure for advanced transportation.

7.1.4 This policy background should provide the framework for site specific policies that will inform future master planning, development briefs and public realm improvements. This will include policies and development management guidelines for:

## *Town Centre*

- Policies for provision of additional large office sites, wider choice of small and medium sized offices, change of use policies for empty retail units, siting of hubs for food and beverage, culture, entertainment and experiential retail and change of use policies for accommodating health and community services and guidance on mixed use schemes.
- Vision and policy for the site assembly of East Street north and south and Utilities sites
- Updating of Plan E Area Action Plan to address current opportunities and proposals.

## *Longmead and Nonsuch*

- Vision and policies for the major site assembly, consolidation of the motor trades, retention of employment uses and provision of small affordable offices and high-tech space within the industrial areas with scope for intensification of industrial and warehouse uses.

## *Ewell and Stoneleigh*

- Policy for village economic growth.

## *The Downs*

- Policies to enable new equine stables and supporting infrastructure for equine development within the Green Belt and other sporting and leisure facilities.

## **7.2 Creating the Conditions for Investment and Economic Growth**

7.2.1 To enable use of employment land and property to their full potential, a strategic approach will be needed to the regeneration, renewal and where appropriate, intensification of the older office locations, industrial estates and under-utilised areas in the outlying urban areas, including the unlocking the potential of Ewell and Stoneleigh as small-scale sustainable business locations.

7.2.2 Within this strategic policy framework, proactive interventions will be required in order to bring forward development of specific sites that relate to those growth opportunities that Epsom & Ewell wants to support.

7.2.3 In each case, a robust, ambitious and exciting vision needs to be formulated and communicated, set against supportive policies oriented to developing the capacity of

employment land and property so that it can be used to its full potential. A number of key tools need to be deployed for this to be achieved.

➤ *Feasibility Studies and Strategies*

Forward looking site development feasibility studies and strategies for the regeneration and revitalisation of the industrial areas and other employment locations will be needed to inform on-going development planning and preparation of costed implementation programmes.

➤ *Masterplans*

Imaginative masterplans will be needed to set out the vision for each of the main development zones. These need to clearly reflect the local ambitions of how these are to be transformed, to suggest the types of scale of development that is acceptable and aspired to, clarify where different uses are to be located and how these are to be integrated with other forms of development local amenities, infrastructure and environmental assets. These must also be carefully crafted to tie in with measures to reduce traffic levels and congestion and to maximise their impact in alleviating shortages in high quality business floorspace.

➤ *Development Briefs*

Development briefs then need to be formulated for individual sites to confirm the parameters of development, expected design standards and supporting infrastructure.

➤ *Public Realm Improvements*

Detailed plans for public realm investment and improvement need to be put in place and implemented in advance of site developments taking place, in order to ensure that the required investment is attracted and that the capacity and quality of such developments is optimised.

➤ *Bringing the Projects Forward*

Defining and implementing a sequential programme of such initiatives will be a key step in demonstrating movement forward from the status quo. Further to this, there is a need to formulate specific projects based on feasibility studies, project programming and costing, setting up fast track procurement mechanisms and the selection of delivery partners, the formulation of business cases and the preparation of bids submitted for funding sources. The borough is already progressing useful work in preparing and submitting a number of proposals to relevant funding sources.

### 7.3 Providing for Unimpeded Movement into and Around Epsom & Ewell

7.3.1 Creation of the conditions for a modernised, fully functional urban public transport system will be essential to the success of the development initiatives aimed at enhancing the supply and quality of the borough's employment space. To achieve this objective improved multi-mode accessibility for each of the employment areas will need to be incorporated in the Local Transport Plan. In this regard, several key factors need to be considered.

➤ *Local Access*

- Alternative measures to provide seamless accessibility into the major employment zones such as the proposed comprehensive walking and cycling network.

➤ *Inter-modal Integration*

- Convenient and rapid transfer between rail, bus, and bicycles and in the long term, electric vehicles for hire, drop off and with pick up points at the fringes of the town centre in advance of the advent of autonomous vehicles.

➤ *Permeability*

- Enhancements of cycleway and pathways to enable workers, shoppers and visitors to move unimpeded from the transport gateways and interchanges to and through the various parts of the urban areas they need to get to.

➤ *Vehicle Usage*

- Comprehensive infrastructure strategy to support the advent of low emission vehicles - provision of charging capacity, charging points, parking depots and servicing facilities for vehicles to hire parking bays and drop-off and pick up points.

### 7.4 Maximising the Productive Capacity of the Borough's Infrastructure, Economy and Workforce

7.4.1 To successfully accommodate growth of its key sectors and tomorrow's industries, the required response from Epsom & Ewell is getting maximum positive impact from the infrastructure, resources and support mechanisms which enable businesses and the workforce to work to full efficiency whilst adapting to changed business and employment models brought about by new technologies, climate change and wider global shifts.

7.4.2 Key measures will include:

- Optimising the scope of major development opportunities in the town centre and the industrial estates as described above.

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- Measures to ensure a fully functioning and accessible town centre.
- Possible set up of a Business Investment Zone – Identify boundaries of special status employment area on the Local Plan Inset Proposals Map.
- Provision of very high capacity broadband.
- Encouraging maximum use of sustainable working practices such as homeworking and small business workspaces and support hubs.

## **8. Concluding Comments**

This strategy has sought to highlight the major challenges faced by Epsom & Ewell in matching the quantity and quality of employment space needed to address anticipated patterns of economic growth and change, alongside proposed solutions. Proactive and imaginative redevelopment of existing sites and buildings already in employment use will be the route forward, encouraged by County level proposals to include the borough as part of a Strategic Opportunity Area within the Surrey 2050 Place Ambition.

Bringing forward redevelopment of the Utilities and adjacent East Street sites, and key sites at Kiln Lane and Longmead, along with the creation of a major incubator complex in association a possible University Enterprise Zone will provide the conditions for the creation, growth or attraction of tomorrow's industries and a competitive and prosperous local economy.

Having the required planning policies, designations and development tools in place to deliver these solutions will be critical to optimising the benefits of future growth and change within the borough.

The provision of alternative choices to car use by way of improved cycling and walking infrastructure and the introduction of new networks and systems for vehicles based on clean technologies will help alleviate local congestion whilst providing a healthier environment and lifestyle for local residents and workers.

A series of ambitious but realistic proposals has been put forward. It will now be for Epsom & Ewell and its partners to take up these challenges to deliver the substantial and lasting local benefits that these can now bring about.