

## **CHAIR/ CHAIRMEN'S STATEMENTS TO COUNCIL**

**Councillor Neil Dallen**

**Chair of the Environment & Safe Communities Committee**

### **Climate Change**

The action plan has been agreed but 'lockdown' and the Coronavirus emergency actions have had to take priority.

The 'lockdown' certainly showed improvements to climate change both locally and throughout the world. We now need to try to retain some of these gains.

### **Car parking**

Free car parking was provided during 'lockdown'. The new charges were implemented as planned and are now being used.

### **Waste and Recycling**

The Government Waste Strategy paper was delayed due to the Coronavirus emergency and is now expected later this year. It is likely to make wide ranging changes that will affect the way we recycle and collect waste. For example they are considering a deposit scheme for plastic bottles.

### **Grass cutting**

Despite reduced staff levels and other priorities our teams have done a great job and managed to keep the verges cut and weeds down during these difficult times.

### **Safe Communities**

An item on the agenda of the Environment and Safe Communities meeting this month is the proposal to establish a local statutory Community Safety Partnership for Epsom and Ewell. This should enable the Council and its Partners to focus attention and resources on the Borough's needs.

There has been no progress on CCTV due to higher priority Coronavirus emergency tasks. An update report will come to an Environment and Safe Communities committee this year.

**Councillor Barry Nash**  
**Chair of the Community and Wellbeing Committee**

As we move to the recovery phase of the coronavirus pandemic, it is important to acknowledge and recognise the crucial work of all our Officers over the last four months, during the pandemic crisis.

I know from the Community and Wellbeing Committee work areas, we had officers from our venues, operational services, health and wellbeing, leisure development and community and voluntary sector teams, all working on our emergency response.

However, special thanks for this impressive and co-ordinated response to the coronavirus pandemic, must go to every service area across the council. I would like to take this opportunity to thank the other Chairmen, for the contribution from staff in their service areas to our response.

The Community Hub, which was set up in a matter of days, has been an operational success story with 2,542 shielded residents being contacted by our Officer and volunteer team, to provide support and comfort during these challenging times. In addition, the Community Hub has contacted 770 registered vulnerable residents who also needed support, which was often followed up by welfare visits to those with specific needs. I would like to thank my councillor colleagues, who gave up their time to volunteer and support with phone calls to vulnerable residents.

I would also like to give my appreciation to Operational Services and Venues, who re-deployed the Ranger and Venue teams, providing invaluable support to our vulnerable residents by showing a friendly face with daily deliveries of crucial services, including Pharmacy medicines, Home Shopping and Meals at Home Service, as well as delivering the Special VE Day complimentary roast dinner to 200 vulnerable residents.

In addition, working with Age Concern Epsom & Ewell, provided great continuity and support to the Council and I would like to acknowledge the outstanding work and 'best practice' undertaken by the Chief Officer, Dorah May Hancock and her fantastic team of volunteers, who continue to provide an essential support service to our senior and most vulnerable residents. We also need to recognise the work of the Foodbank in supporting the most vulnerable in the community, which is even more important during these difficult times.

The Housing Team have been working tirelessly during the pandemic, to find suitable temporary accommodation (TA) for our residents. In line with govt emergency guidelines, the team provided additional accommodation for the most vulnerable residents, which increased the monthly TA numbers to 93 households.

As we move to the recovery phase, we will be working hard to find suitable outcomes for those in nightly paid accommodation and reduce TA costs. The forthcoming Defoe Court project will provide up to 24 flexible single units to accommodate residents, which will hopefully be up and running soon, helping to support those currently living in nightly paid accommodation.

As to the future of Epsom Hospital, the decision to build a new Acute Hospital site was confirmed on 3 July by the Clinical Commissioning Group, with Sutton as the chosen location. Although I have mixed feelings about the decision, especially as we lobbied hard as a council for Epsom to be the preferred site for the new hospital, I feel we now need to embrace the fact that our residents will have access to state-of-the-art healthcare. However, it is crucial we continue to work with the Hospital Trust, to ensure that resident concerns outlined in the public consultation feedback are effectively addressed, such as issues around transport and travel, bed numbers, services for older residents and more deprived communities.

In addition, I look forward to the continuity of the 85% of services being maintained at Epsom Hospital, as well as the commencement date of the capital building repair programme at the hospital site. <https://improvinghealthcaretogether.org.uk/green-light-for-500m-investment-for-epsom-and-st-helier-hospitals-and-brand-new-specialist-hospital-in-sutton/>

**Councillor David Reeve**  
**Chair of the Licensing & Planning Policy Committee**

I would like to update Council on a range of planning matters which have been impacted over recent months by the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic and other external factors.

**The impact of Covid-19 on planning policy**

The UK Government introduced measures to reduce the spread of Coronavirus on the 23 March 2020, requiring people to stay at home where possible and introducing measures to 'social distance'.

The Coronavirus pandemic has had significant impact on all aspects of day to day life, including how the Council operates and how it makes its decisions. The advice from Government in both March and May 2020 is that plan making continue as much as possible with adjustments to timetables where necessary. The Government has also encouraged Councils to look at new and innovative ways of operating including exploring new technologies where appropriate, and has provided further guidance in relation to Statement of Community involvement.

The current Statement of Community Involvement was published in November 2019. In light of the Government's latest guidance, it is now intended that a revised Statement of Community Involvement will come forward in October 2020 to Licensing and Planning Policy Committee, to seek agreement to public consultation as part of Regulation 18 process.

The national social distancing requirements established as part of the lockdown and the temporary suspension of most Committee meetings has meant the previously planned consultation on the Local Plan has had to be rescheduled. However, it's my intention to press ahead as soon as possible, keeping delays to an absolute minimum. A paper on the revised timetable for the Local Plan, including the timing of the forthcoming Regulation 18 consultation, will come to the first reconvened meeting of the Licensing and Planning Policy Committee (LPPC) on 6 August 2020. This meeting will take place online.

**Other external factors**

Government Reforms to the Planning System -

The Government has announced that it intends to bring forward fundamental reforms of the planning system in England. It is anticipated that a Planning White Paper will be published for consultation this month. The full extent of proposed reform is, as yet unclear.

## Household projections -

In late June 2020 the Office for National Statistics (ONS) published its latest 2018 population and household growth forecasts. This projects a substantial reduction in the growth of household numbers during the next plan period up to 2038.

Initial analysis of the ONS data shows that using Government's current method of calculation, demand for new homes in the borough could be in the order of 215 dwellings per annum, compared to 579 dwellings per annum based on the previous 2014 ONS projections. The government currently requires Councils to use the older 2014 ONS projections.

Along with Member colleagues and officers I will be pressing Government to accept that we can use the latest ONS projections as the basis for determining our local housing need. However, the Government have already indicated that they intend to publish for consultation a revised methodology for calculating future housing need in the autumn of this year.

Thank you, Councillors