

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

From: Jackie King
Sent: 30 September 2025 18:29
To: [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]@stroud.gov.uk>
Subject: RE: [CAUTION EXTERNAL] RE: CPC findings



Jackie King reacted to your message:

From: [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]@stroud.gov.uk>
Sent: Tuesday, September 30, 2025 4:09:29 PM
To: Jackie King <JKing@epsom-ewell.gov.uk>
Cc: [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]@local.gov.uk>
Subject: RE: [CAUTION EXTERNAL] RE: CPC findings

Good luck with your A&S meeting!



[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

From: Jackie King <JKing@epsom-ewell.gov.uk>
Sent: 30 September 2025 16:27
To: [REDACTED] <[\[REDACTED\]@stroud.gov.uk](mailto:[REDACTED]@stroud.gov.uk)>
Cc: [REDACTED] <[\[REDACTED\]@local.gov.uk](mailto:[REDACTED]@local.gov.uk)>
Subject: RE: [CAUTION EXTERNAL] RE: CPC findings

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Thanks [REDACTED] – appreciate the clarification – fingers crossed!

Jackie King
Chief Executive

01372 73 [REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED] <[\[REDACTED\]@stroud.gov.uk](mailto:[REDACTED]@stroud.gov.uk)>
Sent: 30 September 2025 15:51
To: Jackie King <JKing@epsom-ewell.gov.uk>
Cc: [REDACTED] <[\[REDACTED\]@local.gov.uk](mailto:[REDACTED]@local.gov.uk)>
Subject: RE: [CAUTION EXTERNAL] RE: CPC findings
Importance: High

Hi Jackie

I am copying [REDACTED] in here in case he has something to add from the LGA Peer Challenge team perspective beyond my own to your questions (below).

The original CPC Report that we prepared did not use the terminology set out in the question to your A&S Committee below. The recommendation we made was:

5. **Streamline and strengthen the Council's decision-making process, ensuring that consensus is built.**

What we had noted in the report was:

“There is frustration and confusion around the lack of transparency through the decision-making process, coupled with a lack of clarity around which items for decision should go to the senior leadership team and which should go to Committee Chairs. It is important to demonstrate each stage of how the Council builds consensus through its decision-making process, by first considering whether the final decision will be made at committee or council, then clearly mapping out each step to develop the final report. This should be communicated to all staff and Members. A number of key mechanisms for maintaining good standards are flagged in the Annual Governance Statement as

‘areas for improvement’, this should be addressed as a matter of urgency.”

I don’t think we made any reference to a ‘culture of secrecy’ or suggested that there was one, and I don’t recall anyone saying that to me (although of course I wasn’t present at every discussion session) this was simply about E&EBC needing to ensure greater transparency through the decision-making process given the frustration and confusion raised with the CPC Team, reflected in the extract above.

We split the discussion sessions between different members of the CPC Team so I wasn’t present at every one of them. My own notes record that with the Member peer, I was present at a discussion where three E&EBC Members were also present and raised this in respect of one project in particular (Town Hall relocation) and there seemed to be frustration and confusion with the process in particular, which will have contributed to the recommendation above.

The E&EBC CPC Peer Review Action Plan provided to the CPC Team which revisited E&EBC on Monday 17 February 2025 helpfully set out the progress the Council had made in addressing the CPC’s above recommendation:

	Action	Owner(s)	Timescale	Progress Update
5.1	Create a process which lays out the steps for committee reports to come to committee or full council	Statutory officers	Original date: Sept 2024 Amended date: November 2024	A process note has been drafted that Statutory Officers had sight of in late 2024; the Council’s eHuB is in the process of being updated to share this process note with all officers as a support tool moving forward.
5.2	Put in place a programme of work which addresses the areas flagged in the Annual Governance Statement as ‘areas for improvement’	Statutory Officers or Director of Corporate services (DoCS)	Sept 2024	This has been implemented in two ways. Firstly, areas for improvement that are key governance issues are added to the AGS action plan. This action plan has been incorporated within the new Performance Hub software system which tracks each action through to completion. Progress is reported quarterly within the corporate performance and risk report, which is reviewed by the Strategic Leadership Team, Policy Committee Chairs and Audit & Scrutiny Committee. Secondly, we have updated our

				AGS production checklist and template for the 2024/25 Statement, which now includes a reference to where the areas of improvement are being tracked, e.g. within the AGS action plan or another programme of work.
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The CPC Team's revisit was of course dominated by the changed circumstances and in discussing the Council's readiness for Local Government Reorganisation, but my own notes relating to discussion around the above suggest that the CPC Team noted the progress made above with the process note for officers, and observed that a 'forward plan' of committee / council reports, detailing all the consensus-building steps along the way (noting intended target dates for discussion with SLT, Leader / Chairs, informal committee discussions / external consultation with stakeholders, residents as appropriate) shared between officers and Members would be a helpful tool in improving transparency around the decision-making process, if not already being employed.

I trust that helps a bit.

Kind regards

[Redacted signature]



[Redacted text block]

[Redacted text block]

[Redacted text block]

[Redacted text block]

[Redacted text block]

From: Jackie King <JKing@epsom-ewell.gov.uk>

Sent: 29 September 2025 14:53

To: [Redacted] <@stroud.gov.uk>; [Redacted] <@stroud.gov.uk>

Subject: FW: [CAUTION EXTERNAL] RE: CPC findings

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Hi [REDACTED]

I hope you had a good break. Sorry to chase when I know you will have a lot to catch up on!

Our A&S is tomorrow evening so any assistance you can provide would be really helpful?

Many thanks

Jackie King
Chief Executive

01372 73 [REDACTED]

From: Jackie King
Sent: 22 September 2025 13:23
To: [REDACTED] <[\[REDACTED\]@stroud.gov.uk](mailto:[REDACTED]@stroud.gov.uk)>
Cc: [REDACTED] <[\[REDACTED\]@stroud.gov.uk](mailto:[REDACTED]@stroud.gov.uk)>
Subject: RE: [CAUTION EXTERNAL] RE: CPC findings

Thanks [REDACTED]

Jackie King
Chief Executive

01372 732202

From: [REDACTED] <[\[REDACTED\]@stroud.gov.uk](mailto:[REDACTED]@stroud.gov.uk)>
Sent: 22 September 2025 13:19
To: Jackie King <JKing@epsom-ewell.gov.uk>
Cc: [REDACTED] <[\[REDACTED\]@stroud.gov.uk](mailto:[REDACTED]@stroud.gov.uk)>
Subject: [CAUTION EXTERNAL] RE: CPC findings

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Dear Jackie,

Thank you for your email.

Kathy is currently on annual leave but will respond to your email on her return.

Kind regards



[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

Working together to make Stroud district a better place to live, work and visit

From: Jackie King <JKing@epsom-ewell.gov.uk>
Sent: 22 September 2025 13:09
To: [REDACTED] <[\[REDACTED\]@stroud.gov.uk](mailto:[REDACTED]@stroud.gov.uk)>
Subject: CPC findings

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Hi [REDACTED] – hope all is well with you.

In the absence of a follow up report for our CPC I wonder if you could help with something?

Our A&S committee are asking what we are doing with the 'serious' findings from the CPC review and have posed the following question for next weeks committee:

1. What specific actions are being taken to address the concerns raised by the Local Government Association Peer Review regarding the 'culture of secrecy' and lack of transparency?

Although these were comments made in the original report, I didn't take that to mean we had a serious issue and it wasn't a specific issue to look at on our action plan.

I wondered if you could further quantify how many people had said this and in what context – also, if you had any conversations during the follow up? This would help put it in context.

Many thanks for any help you can give!

Kind regards

Jackie King

Chief Executive

Epsom & Ewell Borough Council
Town Hall, The Parade, Epsom, Surrey, KT18 5BY

Tel: 01372 73 [REDACTED]

(Executive Assistant - [REDACTED])

Email: [REDACTED]@epsom-ewell.gov.uk

Website: www.epsom-ewell.gov.uk

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