

Bourne Hall, Ewell

Draft Status Report



December 2025

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Bourne Hall is a Grade II Listed community asset in Ewell, owned and managed by Epsom & Ewell Borough Council (EEBC). It serves as a multi-purpose community hub, offering library services, a museum, café, event and meeting spaces, and access to extensive parkland. This Status Report consolidates current information on operations, governance, finance, and strategic considerations to inform future planning and decision-making.

Bourne Hall operates within a shifting strategic landscape shaped by Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) and an ongoing Community Governance Review (CGR). These changes create opportunities to re-evaluate long-term stewardship models and explore potential transfer of ownership or management to a local organisation. Historically, the facility has required a significant council subsidy, previously around £700k and now £450k–£600k per annum. Recent improvements, including enhanced commercial activity and marketing initiatives have contributed to lowering the subsidy, though further work is required to achieve financial sustainability.

Operationally, the facility is run through the Council's Venues Community Commercial Services team, alongside linked support from Property, Car Parks and Parks services. Surrey County Council operates the library under a 1998 agreement, providing contributions to certain costs. The current staff cost base has increased, partly due to the expanded catering hub function. Governance is provided through the Community & Wellbeing Committee, supported by corporate performance and risk management arrangements.

Condition surveys and the Council's Asset Management Plan identify Bourne Hall as one of the highest-cost buildings in terms of future capital investment, with approximately £1.1m of works forecast and a wider proposed programme of £4.6m. Recent capital projects—including windows, roof works, solar panels, and a new playground—have been funded through a mix of Council capital, grants and s106/CIL contributions.

Bourne Hall plays an important cultural, social and wellbeing role within the Borough. Strengthening the community offer, diversifying income streams and improving operational efficiency remain core priorities. A Community Asset Plan will assess commercial opportunities, explore new stewardship models, align services with strategic priorities, and identify opportunities to maximise use of the site—potentially including relocation of nearby health and wellbeing services. These steps aim to secure long-term financial resilience while preserving and enhancing Bourne Hall's value to the community.

INTRODUCTION

The aim of this Status Report is to collate information about the management, operations, governance and financial arrangements for the Bourne Hall site into a single comprehensive document.

It is intended to capture the 'as is' situation but also lay the foundation for a new high level business plan to be produced, which will consider ways in which the asset could be further optimised to deliver both a stronger community offer, as well as work towards becoming financially sustainable. Consideration will be given to options around stewardship models and this work will be built into the future business planning process.

This work is being done in the context of **Local Government Reorganisation (LGR)** and a **Community Governance Review (CGR)**, with Members keen to explore opportunities for key community assets to continue to be owned and managed locally. As such, this will also provide a foundation for a business case to consider the potential transfer of this key Community Asset to a local organisation.



BACKGROUND

Bourne Hall is a Grade II Listed Building, owned and operated by Epsom and Ewell Borough Council (EEBC) as a community space. The building itself sits within the wider site of Bourne Hall Park in the centre of Ewell Village and adjacent to the river Hogsmill. It comprises a number of elements:



Bourne Hall

1960s Grade II Listed building incorporating a library (operated by the County Council), café, meeting, venue and event space.



Parkland & Lake

Large, landscaped parkland and lake to the front of the building.



Lodge

A period 2 storey former gate house located by the corner of High Street, north side of Spring Street and Bourne Hall gated entrance. Formerly let on a service tenancy from April 1993 for the provision of service accommodation and currently under refurbishment.



Bungalow

Located in the grounds of the site, a 1960's single storey former caretaker's cottage, currently let on a lease and providing an active income stream.



Car Park

Around 100 spaces wrapping around Bourne Hall, with cycle parking. Chargeable parking with a maximum 4 hour stay during the day and concessionary £1.50 charge after 6:30pm. There is also a nearby (chargeable) car park which can accommodate overflow parking for large events.



BACKGROUND CONTINUED

The main Bourne Hall building is a unique circular building of significant architectural interest. It was designed by Fidler & Associates in the late 1960s and has been open since 1970. It was awarded **Grade II** listing status in 2015, with further details to be found on the Historic England register.

The building is home to the County library, a museum, café and social meeting space, as well as various halls, rooms and spaces that can be hired. The venue is licenced for weddings and events. Externally, the surrounding park is open to the public seven days a week and contains open space, a lake and walks, as well as a recently installed children's playground and outdoor gym.



LIBRARY

The **library** is operated by Surrey County Council (SCC) by way of an agreement dated 18th March 1998 (see Appendix 1). Under the terms of this agreement, SCC (the occupier) is obliged to contribute a proportion of the running costs (outgoings), repair and maintenance costs and cost of capital works (so long as they directly benefit the occupier). There are detailed provisions in the agreement as to the process, exclusions and appropriate apportionment of costs. The agreement gives SCC the benefit of issuing either 3 months' notice to reduce the footprint of their occupation (with EEBC having the right to object) and 6 months' notice to terminate the agreement in full. EEBC (as freeholder) does not have the mutual benefit of such provisions.

STRATEGIC CONTEXT

Bourne Hall is a key community facility within the Borough. The Council owns, manages and operates it directly, providing both revenue and capital support, within the following policy framework;

- **Strategic Priorities (2025–2027):** the Council has recently adopted a set of core priorities in light of the LGR context. This includes a strategic asset review, with a focus on community assets, along with the consideration of options to transfer suitable assets to a new local governance structure.
- **Four Year Plan (2020–2024);** it is noteworthy that community facilities and venues such as Bourne Hall have been a priority for many years, linking in with the broader focus on Health & Wellbeing and Culture.
- **Arts, Culture & Heritage Strategy;** makes clear reference to Bourne Hall, recognising its importance and significance in support of the strategy's core objectives.
- **Health & Wellbeing Strategy:** focussing on improving the mental health & wellbeing of the Borough's residents, recognising the important role that arts, culture and heritage facilities play.



STRATEGIC CONTEXT CONTINUED

In 2019 a **Business Plan** was produced (Appendix 2) to review the footfall and usage of Bourne Hall, with the view to improving room hire utilisation and reduce the amount of subsidy the council was required to contribute yearly. At the time of writing, the subsidy was circa £700k per annum.

The business plan considered four options, with option 2 being the preferred and recommended option.

Unfortunately, the Covid pandemic meant that the facility had to remain closed for long periods and progressing the actions from the business plan had to be de-prioritised.

However, since then and post covid, significant progress has been to make changes and implement some of the recommendations, including the installation of the playground and outside gym. In addition, work has been done to drive forward income-generating activity and to strengthen the community offer. The subsidy (which is still significant) is now much lower at around £450,000 for 24/25.

In 2023, work was commissioned to produce a Communications Plan for Bourne Hall (see Appendix 3). This included analysis of current audiences and activity and also made a series of recommendations, under the following themes;

- Development of a **vision/new identity**
- **Rebranding** – to include new signage and cover all communications channels
- Creation of a **marketing role**

There were a range of more detailed suggestions provided, most of which have been taken forward and implemented, where budget has allowed.

Option 1: Do nothing

Option 2: Enterprising Approach – deliver a stronger and more diverse commercial offer to improve viability

Option 3: Tapered substitute – including internal remodelling and reconfiguration of the space

Option 4: Change the use of Bourne Hall

CURRENT OFFER

Bourne Hall offers a wide range of activities, services, events and access to resources, acting as a form of 'community and social hub' for local residents. This constantly evolves as new opportunities arise and creative ideas are considered, with a current snapshot including;



Library

Operated and run by Surrey County Council. It is open 5 days a week by SCC (Tue-Sat) and on Monday is opened by the staff at Bourne Hall. It has a large provision of traditional and more contemporary library material and a programme of events and activities run.



Museum

A free museum open 6 days a week, with exhibits, displays and regular exhibitions, charting the Borough's history through a range of medium and materials. Providing free access to schools and home-educating groups and other interest groups.



Flying Saucer Coffee Shop

Open six days a week, with external patio space to take refreshments outside in good weather.



Meeting, events & performance space

A wide range of different sized meeting space and event venues, including performance space and with ability to hold licenced wedding and ceremonies.



The Catering Hub

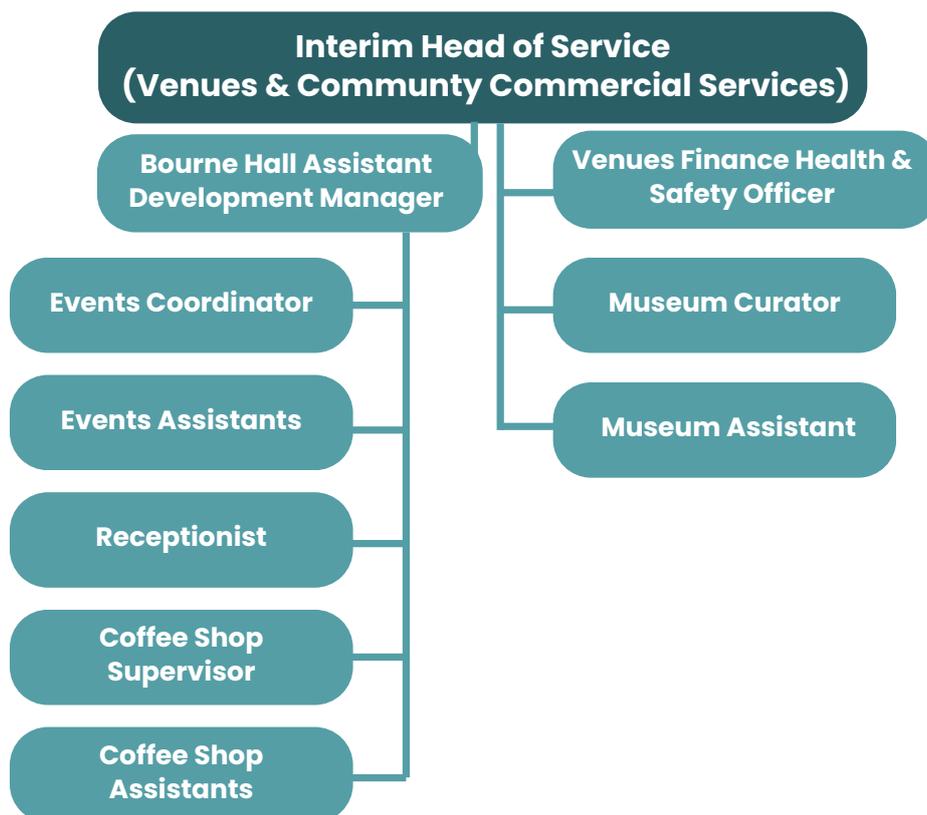
Offers catering services to larger events and also provides food to The Community and Wellbeing Centre. Embryonic work is underway to extend this offer to supports the events/café offer at The Playhouse with a business case required to understand the full extent of the opportunities available.

More detailed work, including a SWOT analysis will be carried out to look in more detail at the opportunities and challenges facing the facility, as part of a future business plan.

OPERATIONS AND ORGANISATION

Bourne Hall is operated and run by the Council, with staff employed directly. It sits within the **Venues Community Commercial Service** function, reporting into the **Interim Head of Service**. There are links across to staff within the Car Parking, Parks and the Property team.

The following sets out the current staff structure (FTE equivalent not known). For 24/25 the staff salary costs were reported as circa £290k (probable outturn). For 25/26 the reported forecasted cost is circa £435k, most likely reflecting the inclusion of costs for the catering hub. A contribution to internal Corporate Support Services also forms part of the budget and this has been reviewed as part of the financial analysis work.



The museum has previously benefitted from volunteers, although none are understood to be active at the moment.

The library is operated and managed directly by Surrey County Council under an occupation agreement dated 1998.

GOVERNANCE, RISK & PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT

Bourne Hall is overseen by the **Council's Community & Wellbeing Committee**, with reports or decisions going to Full Council as required. The Council's **Constitution** sets out the formal governance and decision-making arrangements.

Performance & Risk management forms part of the Council's Corporate Performance & Risk Management process, with regular reporting in line with Council procedures.

While there have periodically been wider groups and partnerships in place around key themes (e.g. Museum), there are understood to be limited active formal groups in place at the moment, although partnership working takes place as and when beneficial.

The library is managed directly by Surrey County Council with all formal working arrangements and governance through County operations and structures.

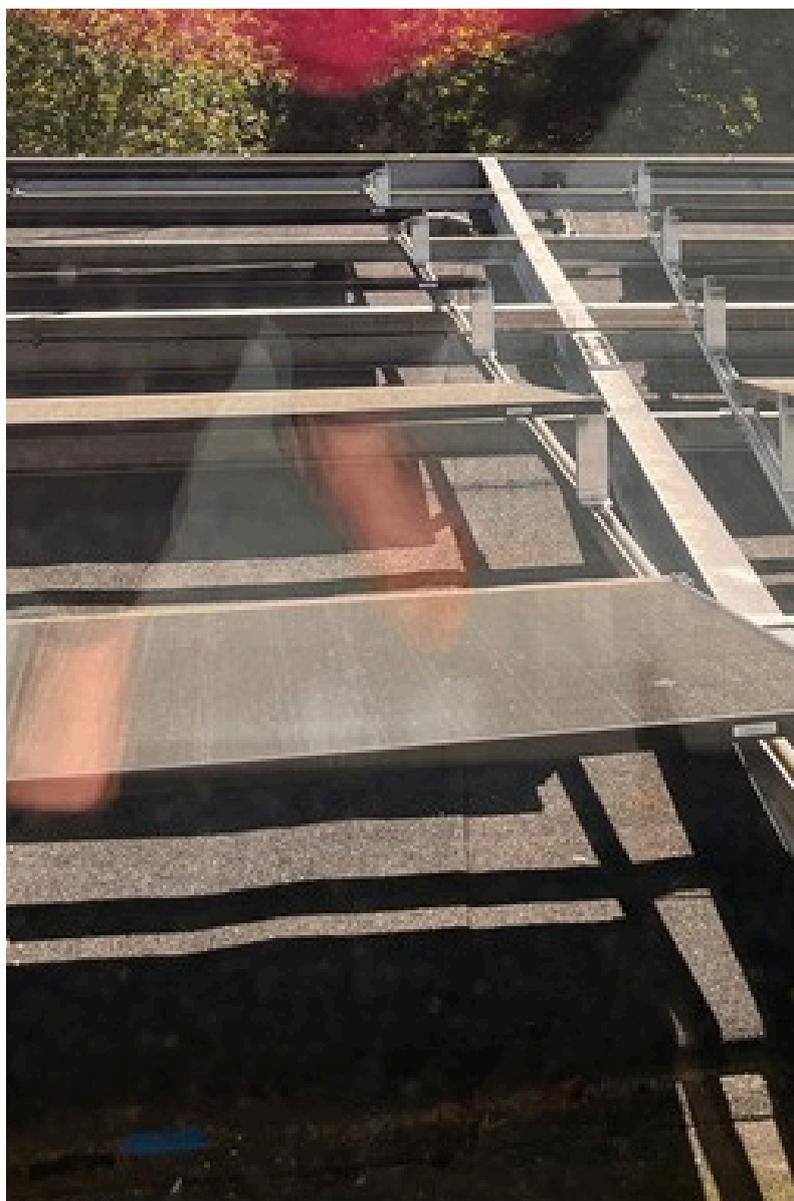


ASSET MANAGEMENT

The site is managed on a **Corporate Landlord** model, with operational matters dealt with locally and through the Head of Venues Community Commercial Services. Repair and maintenance issues, as well as capital projects are managed by the Property and Facilities team through the normal processes, with relevant officers from the Car Park and Parks teams liaising as appropriate.

The Council's **Strategic Asset Management Plan (AMP)** 2020-2030 sets out the Council's approach to the strategic management of its land and property assets. It includes a 10 year Planned Maintenance Programme (PMP), which is reviewed annually and indicates the long term financial cost, underpinned by condition surveys undertaken on a five year rolling programme. Of note;

- **Routine maintenance and repairs** will be a mixture of planned and reactive works, met from the revenue budget. Minor day to day repairs are covered under the facilities management contract.
- **Maintenance works** are currently categorised in three levels of priority and are undertaken as soon as possible, as budget allows.
- Approval for **major capital works** and improvements is through a project basis through the capital programme bidding process.
- Forecasts around **capital expenditure** will be mindful of emerging legislation, guidance and priorities around **Minimum Energy Efficiency Standard (MEES)** and associated work to continue to decarbonise the estate.



ASSET MANAGEMENT CONTINUED

The AMP sets out an average annual maintenance forecast as a 'global' figure for the key venues comprising Bourne Hall, Epsom Court House, Hook Road Arena and Ewell Court House of £256,260 per annum, equating to £2.56m over 10 years.

The AMP notes that 'the buildings that will require the highest level of capital expenditure will be the Town Hall at circa £1.5m followed by Bourne Hall at £1.1m and the Epsom Playhouse at £0.87million.

Further, in the 2025 budget, it was also reported that Bourne Hall would require circa £1.1m of capital investment.

A breakdown on the current proposed capital works for future years for Bourne Hall, along with indicative costing is set out below;

Works	Budget (indicative)
Heating and ventilation replacement.	£2,200,000
Lodge refurbishment	£360,000
Bungalow refurbishment	£300,000
Roof covering replacement	£120,000
Car park works	£75,000
Lift controls replacement	£120,000
Main Hall stage lighting	£150,000
Colour wash external lighting	£100,000
External decorations	£100,000
Library toilets refurbishment	£70,000
Internal refurbishment works	£1,000,000
	£4,595,000

FINANCIAL MATTERS

The Council oversees and manage the finances for the facility through its existing Council financial management arrangements.

The Council insures/arranges insurance as required, including public liability insurance. Users of the premises for events and venue hire will be required to provide appropriate public liability cover as part of their user agreement. Purchase of supplies and procurement of professional fees and building contracts is undertaken in line with the Council's existing procurement and purchasing rules.

Revenue

The following table is extracted from the Council's approved Budget Book 2025/26 and sets out the last 2 years high level revenue accounts, with a forecast for the current year.

It is clear that expenditure fell considerably from 23/24 to 24/25, but is predicted to increase again for the coming financial year. This includes a significant increase across all categories, including staff costs, premises, supplies & services and support services. Costs of capital charges have remained the same.

Total income has remained broadly stable, but is predicted to increase significantly for 25/26.

These figures have been reviewed and explored in more detail. There are some reported operational discrepancies that need to be worked through. However, the current published proposed revenue deficit for 25/26 is currently forecasted at £608k.

	2023/24	2024/25	2024/25	2025/26
	Actual £	Original Estimate £	Probable Outturn £	Estimate £
Employees	199	262	289	435
Premises	426	336	289	435
Supplies & Services	31	23	28	61
Support Services	119	43	3	149
Capital Charges	241	117	117	117
Total Expenditure	1016	781	789	1107
Contributions from other agencies	(154)	(111)	(111)	(111)
Sales	0	0	0	(151)
Fees & Charges	(188)	(229)	(229)	(242)
Total Income	(342)	(340)	(340)	(504)
Contributions to (from) reserves	29	5	0	5
Net Expenditure/(Income)	703	446	449	608

FINANCIAL MATTERS CONTINUED

Capital

Capital projects to date have included the following;

Works	Completion	Cost (£)	Funding source
Patio installation	2022	90,000	EEBC Capital Programme
Windows replacement	2025	636,000	Grant funding & EEBC Capital Programme
Solar panel installation	2024	116,000	Grant funding
Playground installation	2023	55,000	s106 funding
Roof & insulation	2024/25	220,000	EEBC Capital Programme
	Total	1.17m	

The current 'ask' for the 26/27 Capital Programme is circa £1.6m, with further details provided in the Asset Management section above.

To date, the funding streams to support revenue and capital activities have primarily been direct Council funding and/or use of Community Infrastructure Level (CIL) funding, with some grant funding for specific items.

Moving forward, depending on the future ownership & stewardship model, other sources of funding may be secured including opportunities for new grants and further income generation. This would be considered as part of a future business plan.

MARKETING & COMMUNICATIONS

A number of improvements around communications have already been implemented following the 2023 report.

Through recent staff changes, 0.25FTE is now allocated for Communications and Marketing activities, working alongside the Council's in-house communications team, as appropriate.

The main communications channels are currently the website and Facebook pages.

The website is currently being upgraded following system upgrades.

There will be opportunities to further enhance the Communications & Marketing offer going forward, and this will be considered as part of a future business plan.



FUTURE OPPORTUNITIES

Moving forward, there are a number of areas to be considered in more detail, including;

-  'True cost' accounting to ensure full and transparent understanding of costs (existing and projects), alongside consideration of benefits.
-  Further development of the 'offer' at Bourne Hall to move towards a more financially sustainable model and strengthen the community benefit.
-  Review the facilities to improve financial stability and release any surplus space or land.
-  Consideration of options around future stewardship models including Community Council, Charitable Trusts etc.
-  Local Government Reorganisation context, which will see the formation of a Unitary authority, providing opportunity to reshape the arrangements with the (currently SCC) library function.