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Dear ██████████

28 April 2026

Epsom and Ewell – New Plan Making System

I am writing to you with regards to MHCLG published guidance "[Rollout of the new local plan-making system](#)" published on the 6 March and your letter dated 9 April 2026 and titled Plan Timetable.

The guidance and letter referred to above identify Epsom and Ewell as one of 39 local planning authorities required to start plan making by 30 June 2026 and to have reached Gateway One (the start of the 30 month plan-making period) by 31 October 2026.

Whilst we are supportive of the introduction of the new planning system and the associated gateway checks as plans progress, however we wish to highlight the numerous issues facing our authority in complying with the prescribed deadlines which are summarised below:

- **Local Plan Examination:** The Epsom and Ewell Local Plan 2022-2040 was submitted on 10 March 2025 and is currently in the process of being examined against the December 2023 version of the NPPF. Following a series of hearings in August to October 2025, the Council has recently undertaken additional work requested by the Inspector. Following the submission of this work we are waiting for the Inspector to confirm how the examination is to proceed. However, we are anticipating undertaking a further period of public consultation followed by an additional Examination hearing following the Local Elections taking place on the 7 May 2026. If the Inspector considers that the plan can be found sound through main modifications, a public consultation on the proposed Main Modifications is anticipated to take place in Autumn 2026 with adoption anticipated before the end of the year.
- **Resourcing:** the new plan-making guidance identifies that early stages of plan-making require significant work. We have a small Planning Policy team and the requirement to start a new plan whilst also progressing the Local Plan Examination

(see above) will create significant resourcing issues as well as financial / budgetary pressures.

- Local Government Reform (LGR): Epsom and Ewell Borough Council is located within the County of Surrey which is progressing Local Government Reorganisation LGR to an ambitious timetable with shadow elections for the two new East and West Surrey Unitary Authorities taking place on the 7 May 2026. Epsom and Ewell Borough Council will cease to exist from vesting day on the 1 April 2027 when it will become part of the East Surrey Unitary Authority Area. LGR is impacting resourcing and capacity within the Council.

The published guidance on '[Getting Ready to prepare a new plan](#)' makes it clear that Gateway 1 stage requires:

- a timetable to be published
- details of project management and governance arrangements to be in place.
- a scoping consultation to have been undertaken with early engagement from stakeholders

Due to LGR our project management and government arrangements for the new East Surrey Unitary authority are unlikely to be in place for the 31 October 2026. In addition, satisfying the timescales for the new plan making system, would in our case most likely result in a main modifications consultation being undertaken on the Local Plan (2022-2040) whilst initial scoping being undertaken on the new Local Plan. This is likely to cause confusion amongst the public, specifically in the context of LGR.

To conclude, Epsom and Ewell Council are supportive of the introduction of a new plan making system, however the timescales set out are unreasonable given our local circumstances which require the prioritisation of our available resources to progress our emerging Local Plan towards adoption later this year whilst simultaneously preparing for Local Government reorganisation which will result in the establishment of a new East Surrey Unitary Authority from the 1 April 2027.

I would welcome the opportunity to discuss the content of this letter with you or representatives from the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government.

Yours sincerely



Ian Mawer
Head of Planning Policy and Economic Development
Epsom and Ewell Borough Council