



**SURREY COUNTY COUNCIL'S
LOCAL COMMITTEE IN
EPSOM & EWELL**

**PLANNING & COUNTRYSIDE
SERVICE ANNUAL REPORT**

29th NOVEMBER 2004

KEY ISSUE:

The following is a summary of planning and development issues, and countryside and heritage issues relating to the Epsom & Ewell area for the year ended 31 March 2004.

SUMMARY:

The report contains local performance information for Transportation Development Control which has the responsibility of responding to consultations from all the planning authorities in Surrey, on behalf of the County Council or the Highways Authority, on the transportation implications of planning applications

Surrey wide performance information is available for Minerals and Waste and Strategic Consultations on the County website at www.surreycc.gov.uk. The relatively small numbers of applications and consultations dealt with per district mean that the local statistics for these services will have little validity.

The report also highlights the work of the Countryside & Heritage Division including Rights of Way.

OFFICER RECOMMENDATIONS:

The Committee is asked:

1. to note the report
2. to comment on the performance of the service in the Epsom & Ewell area.

1. INTRODUCTION and BACKGROUND

This report includes an overview of major applications and policy developments over the past year and also any anticipated issues for the year ahead. The intention is that Members are kept informed of major developments. All statistics and performance data in this report are for the Epsom & Ewell area.

2 THE LOCAL PROFILE

The local profile was dealt with in a report to this committee on the Census Data earlier this year.

3 TRANSPORTATION DEVELOPMENT CONTROL

Transportation Development Control (TDC) has the responsibility of responding to consultations from all the planning authorities in Surrey, on behalf of the County Council or the Highways Authority, on the transportation implications of planning applications.

3.1 Number of responses to applications dealt with within 14 days:

Epsom & Ewell Borough Council (E&EBC) consulted Surrey County Council as Highway Authority on approximately 770 planning applications in 2003-04. TDC responded to 81% of these applications on the same day or the next day because the applications had little or no impact on the highway.

TDC selected 144 applications for further action (19%) and responded to 91% (average over the year) of these applications within 14 days. TDC aims to respond to 85% of applications within 14 days.

E&EBC, like other local planning authorities, is under increasing government pressure to determine planning applications quickly, within fixed timescales. It is therefore important that TDC deliver a fast response to consultations to assist E&EBC in meeting its performance targets.

3.2 Transportation gains

Where appropriate TDC request transportation improvements from planning applications. The type and level of transportation benefits sought depends on the nature of development proposed. Development proposals vary between the districts and each area has its own characteristics.

Over the last year TDC has negotiated and secured some significant contributions towards transportation initiatives, works and public transport improvements in the Epsom & Ewell area as follows:

Laing Homes Highway House Chessington Road Ewell (138 residential units)	£200,000 towards Local Transportation Schemes to improve cycle and pedestrian links towards the Rail Station and Ewell Village. + Civil engineering works costing >£94,000 to improve pedestrian facilities and safety at junction, new bus bay, new street lighting, footway widening and all necessary hard and soft landscaping as required.
Apex House West Street Epsom (14 residential units)	£10,000 towards Local Transportation Schemes + civil engineering works to extend the footway along West Street
38-40 South Street Epsom (12 residential units)	£10,000 towards Local Transportation Schemes and works

As well as the above, TDC negotiated contributions on several other sites but these were refused at committee on valid planning grounds e.g.

Horton Golf & Country Club Hook Road, Ewell (Health spa)	£100,000 towards enhancement of bus services
22 Windmill Lane Epsom (9 residential units)	£3000 and land towards junction improvement

3.3 Appeals

During the last 12 months, TDC have only been involved in one Planning Appeal Public Inquiry and this related to a mixed-use development at 40-52 Upper High Street, Epsom. Unfortunately the Inspector found against the Local Planning Authority (LPA) in respect of the highway and transportation issues. Indeed, the applicants have considered a claim for costs in respect to the highway issues.

TDC and Counsel representing the LPA agreed that a robust case was prepared and presented by SCC's representative. Having reviewed the Inspectors decision letter, TDC and Counsel advised the LPA of several inconsistencies and misunderstandings within the letter and advised that a case for a challenge to the award of costs could be made. The Elected Members of the Planning Committee, having considered the case for pursuing a challenge, determined not to proceed in this instance.

The Inspector in his letter clarified one interesting and salient point. He clearly did not consider traffic congestion a reason for refusal and that the locational policy of concentrating development within the town centre zone prevailed over any concerns regarding additional vehicles queuing at congested junctions.

3.4 Current position of Epsom Hospital Cluster

Developments at Manor Park and Clarendon Park are fully occupied and internal estate roads complete with the exception of a few remedial measures. Formal adoption is expected in 2005.

Redevelopment of Livingstone Park (former Horton Hospital) commenced late 2003 and continues at pace with a small number of properties occupied.

The off-site highway works along the first section of Long Grove Road, to provide access to Livingstone Park and safe pedestrian and cyclist access to the new School, commenced in August 2003 and was completed in January 2004. This opened up views into the site by removing the existing concrete boundary.

The highway works to dual the section of Chessington Road from Ruxley Lane to Hook Road and provide a new traffic signal junction at Chessington Road / Ruxley Lane including pedestrian and cyclist facilities commenced in January 2004. This work is expected to be complete towards the end of 2004 with an extensive landscaping scheme following in the 2004/2005 planting season.

4 COUNTRYSIDE AND HERITAGE

In the Countryside and Heritage Division, a major piece of work over the last year has been the preparation of the new Rural Strategy. The Local Committee discussed the consultation draft at its last meeting.

4.1 Rights of Way

The weather conditions over the summer months have meant that vegetation growth on Rights of Way has been especially prolific. Contractors have cleared in excess of 7 kms of Rights of Way in the Borough in an effort to keep routes clear for users. The Lower Mole Project have completed the signposting and way-marking of Epsom Common which they started last year and have surfaced 100m of footpath into Horton Country Park. The whole of Epsom Downs has been surveyed and a number of rights of way were found to be on incorrect alignments, some of which will require legal Orders to be made to rectify the position.

5 STRATEGIC CONSULTATIONS

During 2003/04 the Spatial Policy Group has continued preparing the Surrey Structure Plan which reached its crucial Public Examination stage in November 2003. The final Structure Plan is expected to be approved by the County Council in October 2004. The Local Committees have had opportunities throughout the process to comment on the plan as it developed. The Group has also been very involved in the preparation of the South East Plan (being prepared by the Regional Assembly) and, in particular, has acted as the lead officer support for the preparation of various sub-regional strategies. The group has also played a key role in the continuing push for more affordable housing in the county and has taken a lead role in the proposed 'S' developments being promoted by the County Council using its own land.

6 MINERALS, WASTE AND COUNTY COUNCIL DEVELOPMENT

Surrey County Council is responsible for deciding planning applications for:

- mineral developments (proposals for the extraction of minerals such as sand, gravel, clay, chalk and oil and gas or facilities for their initial processing);
- waste developments (proposals for the disposal, storage and processing of waste, such as landfills, energy from waste plants, recycling, transfer stations, composting facilities, etc); and
- developments the County Council needs to carry out for itself, or jointly with another body, to deliver the services for which it is responsible for providing (for example, proposals at schools, social

services facilities, the County Council's own office buildings, and new or significantly improved roads).

In this report, applications for minerals and waste developments are referred to as 'county matter' applications and applications for the County Council's own development are referred to as 'county development' applications.

Within the Planning and Countryside Service the Minerals, Waste and County Development Division is responsible for processing both county matter and county development planning applications and reporting them, as necessary, to the Planning and Regulatory Committee.

6.1 County Matter Decisions

During the year the County Council issued decisions on 31 county matter applications (28 permissions and 3 refusals) and 16 submissions for approval of details required pursuant to conditions on an existing planning permission (details pursuant) or schemes of conditions on Interim Development Order permissions or Review of Old Minerals Planning permissions (all approved). None of the 31 county matter applications determined were for developments requiring an environmental impact assessment (EIA) to be undertaken and the applications accompanied by Environmental Statements. Details of the decisions issued within the Epsom and Ewell Borough Council area can be found in Annexe 1 of this report.

Of the 47 county matter decisions (applications, details pursuant and schemes of conditions) issued in 2002/03, 47% were determined under delegated powers by the Head of Planning and Countryside, and 53% by the Planning and Regulatory Committee.

Due to the more complex nature of many minerals and waste development proposals, longer periods are required to enable extensive consultations and negotiations, and to ensure that the proposed development is acceptable in all respects. In recognition of this, no targets are set by Government to apply to county matter applications for Best Value performance indicator BVP109. Instead the County Council is required to set its own year on year target for determining county matter applications subject to BVP109.

BVP109 only applies to decisions on county matter applications not accompanied by environmental statements. Of the 31 decisions to which BVP109 applies, 32% (10) were determined within 13 weeks exceeding the target set for 2002-2003 of 25%. Given the very small number of cases involved no meaningful statistics can be produced for each of the Districts.

6.2 County Development Decisions

During the year the County Council issued 60 decisions for county development proposals (56 permissions and four details pursuant submissions approved). Details of the decisions issued within the Epsom and Ewell Borough Council area can be found in Annexe 2 of this report.

Of the 60 decisions on county development applications and submissions, 67% (40) were determined under delegated powers by the Head of Planning and Countryside, and 33% (20) by the Planning and Regulatory Committee.

There are no Best Value performance indicators which apply to county development applications. However, of the 56 planning permissions issued for county development applications in 2003/04, 70% were determined in less than 13 weeks.

6.3 Applicant satisfaction surveys

In 2003/04 the County Council was required by Best Value Performance Indicator BV111 to survey applicants who had received a decision on a minerals and waste application over the period 1 April to 30 September 2003. The survey questions, set by government were designed to investigate applicants' experience with the planning service delivered by the County Council, and their overall satisfaction with the service. Eleven applicants were surveyed of whom nine responded. Of these, six (66.6%) were very or fairly satisfied, one (11.1%) was fairly dissatisfied and two (22.2%) were neither satisfied nor dissatisfied with the service provided.

Although the County Council did not achieve the BV111 target of 75% satisfaction and the satisfaction level is down on the 2000/01 survey 76.9% satisfaction level, rapport with applicants is generally good. The small number of applicants dealt with means that disproportionate percentage swings can result from slight variations in results.

As BV111 only applies to applicants receiving decisions on minerals and waste applications the County Council decided to run a similar survey for applicants who had received a decision on county development applications (County Council applications). The survey was conducted in the same way as the BV111 survey.

Twenty applicants were surveyed on the county development survey, of whom eight responded. Of these, six were very satisfied and two fairly satisfied with the service, giving an overall satisfaction score of 100%.

6.4 Summary of Minerals and Waste Planning Enforcement Activities During 2003

The 2003 Annual Monitoring Report, to be published later this year, will contain a chapter on Enforcement that gives statistical information regarding visits and complaints in addition to a broad-brush view of enforcement officers' work, and details several specific sites of particular interest that have been dealt with throughout the County during the year.

The associated appendix then details sites, the number of site visits and a brief individual site update on both the mineral and major waste sites within the 11 local planning authorities within the County.

In the Borough of Epsom, 11 monitoring site visits to authorised mineral and waste sites took place. There were no reports of unauthorised waste operations. Details of the site visits can be found in Annexe 3 of this report.

CONCLUSION AND REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

This report details the work and performance of the various aspects of the Planning and Countryside service in the Epsom and Ewell area. Members are asked to note the work of the service and comment on any of its aspects.

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MINERAL AND WASTE PLANNING DECISIONS ISSUED IN 2003/2004 – Epsom & Ewell

Application No Applicant	Site Address	Description of Proposal	Decision	Date
EPSOM & EWELL				
EP03/0380 Taurus Waste Recycling	Epsom Chalk Pit, College Road, Epsom	Installation of a weighbridge.	Granted	18/09/03

Annex 2

COUNTY DEVELOPMENT DECISIONS ISSUED IN 2003/04

Application No Applicant Site Address	Description of Proposal	Notice Issued and Decision Date
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EPSOM & EWELL

EP02/1219 Glyn Technology School, The Kingsway, Ewell	Construction of two-storey extension comprising new sixth form and administration block; alterations to existing car parking to create net increase of 8 spaces	GRANT 16/04/03
EP03/0137 Sports Pavilion at former Horton Hospital Site, Long Grove Road, Epsom	Temporary use of former sports and social club building for education purposes for a period of 9 months from September 2003 and construction of a fenced hard play area of 130 sq m.	GRANT 19/06/03
EP03/0126 Sycamore Centre, 14 West Hill, Epsom	A single storey extension to existing hall and classroom building; replacement of all windows with powder coated aluminium double-glazed windows and replacement roof on hall and toilet elements	GRANT 01/07/03
EP03/0224 Land at Rosebery School, White Horse Drive, Epsom	Extensions and replacement accommodation comprising new two storey teaching block and single storey music and drama block, single storey extensions to existing gymnasium and music block, extension to wc's, covered links between new and existing buildings, eleven new parking spaces and 2366 sq m. of new hard play area to form new tennis courts	GRANT 28/07/03
EP03/0224a Rosebery School, White Horse Drive, Epsom	Details of external materials, temporary works compounds, car parking and cycle storage provision and hard and soft landscaping works pursuant to conditions	APPROVED 28/07/03
EP03/0523 Linden Bridge School, Grafton Road, Worcester Park	Removal of 17 trees shown as being retained on plans approved under EP02/0346	GRANT 26/09/03
EP03/0951 Glyn Technology School, The Kingsway, Ewell	Details of external materials, landscaping, speed cushions, works compound area and method of construction statement pursuant to EP02/1219	APPROVED 19/03/04
EP04/1213 Ewell Grove Infant School, West Street, Ewell	Erection of new 1.8m high bow-top railing fence for a distance of approximately 40m at the northern end of the south-western boundary of the school and matching replacement gates	GRANT 30/03/04

Schedule of Enforcement Activity during 2003

Annex 3

Site Name and Address	OS Grid Ref (eastings/ northings)		Activity	Operator	No. of Visits in 2003	Remarks
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EPSOM AND EWELL

Blenheim Road, Epsom	521150	161864	Waste Processing / Transfer	Surrey Waste Management	3	Monitoring of site operations continue.
Chalk Pit, College Road, Epsom	522754	160115	Waste Processing / Transfer	Taurus	4	Operations continue. Weighbridge granted permission in September. Extension of existing yard being addressed.
Chalk Pit, College Road, Epsom	522712	160171	Waste Processing / Transfer	Epsom Skip Hire Ltd	4	Waste transfer operations continue within Lawful Development Certificate limitations.