



Rob Moran, Chief Executive, opened the Annual Public Meeting.

The Leader of the Council, Tim Oliver, introduced himself. Councillor Oliver stated that there had been 8 'Your Voice Matters' events over the last six months with attendance ranging from 8 to over 100. Following this, the Elmbridge Cabinet members introducing themselves:

- Councillor Malcolm Howard (Portfolio Holder for Leisure and Culture)
- Councillor Glenn Dearlove (Portfolio Holder for Environment)
- Councillor James Browne (Portfolio Holder for Planning Services)
- Councillor Mrs Ruth Mitchell (Portfolio Holder for Resources)
- Councillor Andrew Burley (Portfolio Holder for Community and Social Affairs)

Apologies were received from Councillor Andrew Kelly, Portfolio Holder for Housing.

The Council received over 30 questions in advance of the meeting which would be addressed after the presentation from the Leader of the Council if time allowed. Should the questions not be addressed this evening, they will be published on the Council's website.

### **Presentation and slides:**

Councillor Oliver gave a presentation on the vision and priorities for the Borough. The slides can be found here:

<https://www.elmbridge.gov.uk/council/my-elmbridge/>

### **Questions:**

Rob Moran, Chief Executive, asked for questions from the public.

#### **The future for Esher & District CA and the need for this highly valued charity.**

The Esher CAB is currently occupying Harry Fletcher House and the lease expires in October 2019. The Council has met with Esher CAB to commence discussions about alternative accommodation. We are looking at providing some alternative accommodation in the Civic Centre when the lease expires.

#### **Is there any coordinated effort to respond to the expansion of Heathrow airport and the impact?**

Yes. Elmbridge Council are now members of the Heathrow Strategic Planning Group (HSPG). HSPG has been formed in response to the nature of the location straddling a number of different administrative boundaries which lack a formal mechanism for strategic or 'sub regional' planning and governance other than the Duty to Cooperate. Recognising that HSPG members may have differing views on support or opposition for a further runway at

the airport, HSPG seeks to ensure that the runway and operational facilities; related development within the Development Consent Order application; and the wider area are effectively planned sustainable development so that benefits are realised, and negative impacts are reduced, mitigated against and managed during construction and operation. HSPG will assist with consultation responses where appropriate.

There is also a Council Overview and Scrutiny Task and Finish Group that has been established to respond to the current Airspace and Future Operations Consultation which is open until 11.55pm on 4 March 2019.

Residents are urged to review the consultation documents which are available at the following website: <https://www.heathrowconsultation.com/> and <https://www.elmbridge.gov.uk/news/heathrow/>

**With the closure another shop in Esher, due to high rents and poor footfall, isn't it time Elmbridge and Surrey CC got together to sort out a way to make Esher a more pedestrian friendly town?**

Nationally high streets, town centres and businesses are currently experiencing an uncertain economic climate, as well as competition from online shopping. Consumer and business confidence have been affected by political and economic uncertainty and ongoing concerns about the outcome of Brexit negotiations. Locally in Esher new leadership has taken over the Esher Business Guild with a first meeting planned at the end of January 2019. The Council has offered to support the Esher Business Guild and local stakeholders to develop their priorities and will continue to work hard with partners such as Surrey County Council to help ensure Esher remains a great place to live, visit and do business.

In addition, Elmbridge are working with partners to look at undertaking work on the Church Road/Lammas Lane junction.

**Are the recycling centres due to close next month? And is this a good idea?**

Yes. The recycling areas in car parks are abused by fly tippers. There are also a number of business owners who are using them. We think removing the facilities is the right thing to do. Most material is collected as part of the normal kerbside collections.

We work closely with Surrey County Council to explore opportunities to increase what can easily and affordably be recycled, and we are looking with interest at recent Government proposals for introducing deposit return schemes and other initiatives to overhaul the recycling systems

**My benefit forms that I have submitted to the Council seem to have been lost, why is this?**

We are aware of the specific issue raised and on this occasion, the Housing Benefit Manager has arranged to visit the resident at a suitable time at their home to complete the necessary forms.

**How is the plan for Weybridge, including the parking feasibility study progressing?**

The Council is working with partners and local stakeholders on a number of projects across Weybridge on a range of improvements that are progressing well to support the town over

the next 3 years, including the redevelopment of the hospital site. These range from sustainable transport improvements to better link Brooklands Business Park to the Station and Town Centre with a new cycle path, improvements for residents, commuters and visitors at the station to redeveloping Weybridge Hall to provide a new two screen cinema and additional affordable homes to streetscape improvements to develop a new flexible events space.

The projects have been successful in attracting external funding with £2.1m coming from the Enterprise M3 Local Enterprise Partnership to support the Brooklands Accessibility project and further bids currently being considered to support the future regeneration of publicly owned sites in the town centre.

### **Weybridge Society stated that they want to do better for Elmbridge – how can Elmbridge be more strategic with the CIL funding?**

There is a strategic CIL Board whose purpose is to look at the strategy and consequences of development. For example, road improvements. Ideas should be submitted to the Council.

### **What partnership work is being undertaken following the stabbing in Thames Ditton/Hinchley Wood?**

Elmbridge Borough Council takes reports of anti-social behaviour seriously and puts the victim at the heart of the actions. Integrated victim and offender management as well as improving confidence are key objectives in the Elmbridge Community and Safety Partnership Plan for 2018/19.

In November 2018, Elmbridge Community and Safety Partnership was successful in obtaining £3,000 from the Local Committee to support a boxing club at Walton Youth Club coordinated by Eikon. This will start in January 2019 and will enable Walton Youth Centre to be open more frequently. This activity had been requested by 30 young people who Eikon had been working with.

It is true that we have seen a recent increase in anti-social behaviour and crime/disorder across Hinchley Wood, Weston Green and Thames Ditton, which we believe has increased due to youths visiting from the Kingston area and vice versa. To that end, the Police are in the process of authorising a multiple dispersal order under Section 34 of the ASB Crime and Policing Act 2014. This will commence on Friday 18 January and conclude on Sunday 17<sup>th</sup> Feb, when it will be reviewed. It will be active on Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays, which is when the vast majority of these offences have occurred. Full details will be published shortly, but it will incorporate all of the above areas.

Stop and search is a vital tool that the Police use in detecting and preventing knife crime. They will continue to conduct intelligence-led policing stop and search at every possible opportunity. Neighbourhood Policing Team officers on Elmbridge have recently arrested 2 persons and seized 2 knives from stop and searches on 6 January (Hinchley Wood – 14yr old) and 13 January (West Molesey/Walton boarder – 16yr old), which were highlighted on the Elmbridge Beat Facebook page.

Operation Sceptre, which is the planned activity from the Centre on knife crime, was held during February and September in 2018. We haven't been informed by the Centre yet on when the next Operation Sceptre will be, but Elmbridge will continue to support this. This

includes knife sweeps, educational visits to schools (ongoing in any event), amnesty bin, engagement stand at The Heart and pro-active patrols (also ongoing).

Local Safer Neighbourhood Team officers are once again holding regular Meet The Beat sessions in the community and will ensure any concerns raised regarding anti-social behaviour in their areas are dealt with. Surrey Police are also regularly conducting search warrants across the Borough linked to county lines and drug dealing/associated anti-social behaviour in general, along with working with partner agencies through the Community Safety Plan.

### **What are the Council's views on a rise in Council tax to support policing?**

It is believed that Surrey Police will see 100 additional officers/staff as a result of an increase in council tax. It is understood that there will be 50 officers for the frontline and 50 support staff. This is a matter for the Police and Crime Commissioner to address.

### **Please clarify the status of development management notes encouraging more efficient use of land and whether they change existing policies covering local character and low density areas such as Oxshott.**

Development management notes explain how existing policies are applied. They do not change or replace those policies. Elmbridge does need to make efficient use of land and this means more intensification in our built-up areas and this would include Oxshott. These are existing policies. However, we also have and will retain policies about local character which must be respected. Those two policies can conflict with each other and each individual planning application is treated on its own merits.

### **What is the Council's views on the proposed Sandown development and its impact on Esher character, transport & Green Belt?**

We are expecting a planning application for development at Sandown Racecourse in the next couple of months. Any application will be considered against the Council's planning policies and the impact on character of the area, transport and Green Belt will be some of the main issues that officers and Members will need to consider. It would be inappropriate for us to prejudge the application as it is likely to come to a Planning Committee for consideration by Members in the future. We understand that public exhibitions on the plans were held by Sandown Park Racecourse on 15 December and 15 January and we expect them to take into account any comments received by the public as part of their submission.

### **Concerned about cuts to prevention and early intervention programmes and services**

Although we have seen an increase in recent months of anti-social behaviour and crime/disorder in Hinchley Wood, Weston Green and Thames Ditton we have actually seen an 8.8% decrease in reported anti-social behaviour. This equates to 155 less reports compared to the same period the previous year.

The Public Spaces Protection Order is still in place for Walton and the Council has applied for an extension to this with the support of Surrey Police. A Cabinet decision on the extension is due on 13/02/19. The Public Spaces Protection Order has been very successful in reducing anti-social behaviour in the area.

The Family Support Programme is vital and makes a difference to those who are referred to the service. There is a proposed reconfiguration of services at the County Council which address prevention and early intervention.

**The Hersham day centre consultation did not go to every household nor was there a self-addressed envelope contained.**

We need to know what residents want. We apologise that the survey does not seem to have been received by everyone and we made sure there are opportunities for everyone to return the survey.

Further information can be found on the Council's website:

<https://www.elmbridge.gov.uk/news/hersham/>

**What actions can we take together to improve the vitality and success of all of our high streets?**

Locally the Council continues to work hard with town centre groups to support our businesses and high streets to adapt and thrive against growing competition from neighbouring towns and the long-term rise of internet shopping and the digital high street.

We have worked hard to help enhance and adapt our town and village centres with free parking offers, streetscape improvements and direct funding to businesses - with over £1,000,000 invested since 2009 to support projects across our towns and villages. Partnership work with Surrey Highways to develop plans to improve accessibility helped secure over £2m in external funding for sustainable transport improvements. We have developed street art, promoted and championed independent retailers through our Retail Awards and helped upskill businesses with retail specific masterclasses and specialist events from Google Digital Garage to help businesses make the most from digital opportunities.

We will continue to try and look to learn from elsewhere across the country and work closely with our town and village centre groups to bring forward further support through our Enterprise Elmbridge programme in 2019.

It was noted that business owners can help with applying for the funding available from the Government's new High Street Fund and that a joined-up approach is key.

**There are a number of unauthorised moorings along the River Thames, especially in Molesey where they are being advertised as Air B&Bs. Occupants are also building fences on the tow path – what are the Council doing about it?**

There are a range of land owners along the riverbank. We have been to Court and obtained injunctions where we can. We are working closely with Spelthorne Borough Council and the Environment Agency to coordinate a suitable response which may well be a Public Spaces Protection Order. It is important that we work in Partnership to address the issue, especially if Health and Safety concerns are raised.

## **What are the Leader's views on a unitary authority?**

Councillor Oliver, Leader of Elmbridge Borough Council, stated that he would be resigning on Friday (18 January 2019). Councillor James Browne would be the acting Leader of the Council and Councillor Ruth Mitchell as Deputy Leader.

As Leader of Surrey County Council, Councillor Oliver stated he wishes Surrey County Council to vacate the Kingston offices by the end of 2020 and be located within the county.

It is for each local authority to decide the levy on council tax. We will be focussing on every single line of cost. Surrey County Council (SCC) has significant responsibilities and SCC are determined to deliver improved outcomes on Children Services and Surrey Fire and Rescue Service.

Unitary is a discussion that needs to take place in the future. We need to move forward in a way that reduces the tax burden. There is no agenda around unitary authorities.

**There is a new traffic island on Hersham Green. The new layout is a shortcut for traffic. There is no notice of signs.**

We will make Surrey County Council aware.

**Are the Council working in partnership with regard to diversionary activities for young people?**

Not all crimes in the Borough are committed by young people. In relation to the recent incidents, there are a number of young people who are travelling into the Borough to commit crime. The Elmbridge Community and Safety Partnership is the mechanism we use in the Borough to work with other organisations such as Surrey Police.

**What is the rationale behind demolishing Harry Fletcher House?**

As stated earlier, the building is at the end of its life. In the short term, the building will be demolished for 26 parking spaces for Surrey Police who are expanding their office space in the Civic Centre. In the medium to long term this area may be considered for housing. Enabling the Police to park at the Civic Centre will enable a greater police presence in the Borough as currently officers start their shifts from Staines Police Station. There is a logic to the above that needs to play out.

**Praise was given to Elmbridge Borough Council in relation to being granted an injunction from the High Court to deal with unauthorised encampments. Officers who attended meetings in Thames Ditton and Hinchley Wood spoke very well and kept residents updated. This was warmly received.**

The Council acknowledged this.

## **Closing the meeting**

Rob Moran, Chief Executive, brought a close to the questions and stated that any questions not answered at the meeting would be available on the Council's website.

Rob Moran encouraged attendees to join the Residents' Panel. We ask the Panel's views on the Council's services two to three times a year.

Further information on the Residents' Panel can be found here:

<http://www.elmbridge.gov.uk/council/my-elmbridge-residents-panel/>

The meeting concluded at 09:08pm.

## **Submitted questions in advance of the meeting:**

Questions which were answered at the meeting have not been included in this section.

### **Environment & Transport**

**I looked at your website for the recycling bin information to see whether I could recycle something. You bang on about how it is important we recycle the correct things so that your load does not get rejected and then only provide the most basic of information as to what we can and cannot recycle leaving an enormous void of information between what we can and cannot recycle. It almost looks like you started to develop this information and then gave up.**

The search tool isn't a perfect tool but works from a large database of search terms and is gradually expanding as more people use it. There is the option to suggest a new item - when you hit the search button for an item not listed (Copper for example) it will suggest alternatives - usually words with similar spellings, or similar meanings, but if it is not there you can hit the button to suggest it is added.

We try to find a balance between too much and too little information in the recycling guide we send out to residents each year, but the accepted items has not changed for about 8 years now. The 'yes' list includes household items which we can take and we try to group items we can take into easy to remember categories. The only metals accepted are tins, cans and clean foil, so we cannot take pipes and other scrap metals.

The 'no' list also hasn't changed either, although each year we review our information and highlight different items which have caused confusion or problems - based on feedback from crews, residents and the sorting facility where the recycling is taken.

We have never been able to accept carrier bags in the recycling bin, so this is not a recent change. We have always asked for recycling to be put loose in to the bin, not bagged, and bags have never been on the 'yes' list. Having said that, plastic bags can be used to line the food waste bin so there is an opportunity to reuse them for that.

The Community Recycling Centres can take a wide range of materials, including scrap metals you enquired about. Some sites collect more materials than others - but for example Charlton Lane (Shepperton) does take the hard plastics referred to. The full list of sites is on the Surrey County Council website and each has their own page detailing what materials they can take: <https://www.surreycc.gov.uk/waste-and-recycling/community-recycling-centres> We work closely with Surrey County Council to explore opportunities to increase what can easily and affordably be recycled, and we are looking with interest at recent Government proposals for introducing deposit return schemes and other initiatives to overhaul the recycling systems.

**Across Elmbridge plastic is collected in residents' landfill bins, recycling bins, public rubbish bins and during road sweeping. This and commercial waste is collected by Joint Waste Solutions and other waste contractors. Some plastic waste may escape into Elmbridge waterways and hence reach the sea. Other than this, how might plastic waste generated in Elmbridge escape into the greater environment? Is some "Elmbridge" plastic waste exported to other countries where care with disposal is at a lower level than here?**

One of the many good reasons for collecting from wheelie bins (rather than other containers such as bags or boxes) is that it helps to minimise spillages and litter which might contribute to this type of problem. The refuse and recycling we collect is taken to facilities chosen by Surrey County Council who are the waste disposal authority. Our recycling is delivered directly to the sorting facility, where it is split into the various materials for onward processing. Other waste, such as refuse is bulked at the tip sites and transported for disposal. While there is a risk of waste escaping during this transport, there are regulations which require vehicles to ensure their load is secured to prevent this.

Plastics from our recycling bins are sometimes sent overseas. These are not sent for disposal, but for recycling in to new plastic products. The plastics are baled and transported, and these bales are an important commodity for the buyer so losing material through careless handling is not desirable for them.

Other routes that may see plastics from Elmbridge enter the environment include littering and from products that are washed down the drain or flushed away.

**Please comment on the level of service you are providing for waste collection, we are continually experiencing missed collections which appear to be on the increase**

The performance of our contractor has improved, with the number of missed collections reducing in recent months. However, Amey are still not providing the level of service we expect for our residents. I will continue to work with them, and the Joint Waste team, to push for a reliable collection service. Please make sure missed collections are reported - either online or via Customer Services.

**Is the Council planning to separate waste further into more categories prior to collection from households?**

We do not have any plans to change the waste and recycling services from the existing arrangements.

**What can you do about non-Blue Badge holders parking in disabled places?**

Whenever a blue badge space is found to be improperly used a parking penalty will be issued to the vehicle. Furthermore, when the parking attendant suspects a blue-badge is being fraudulently used they can ask to inspect the badge, and in certain circumstances the badge may be confiscated.

## **Planning**

**What is being done to promote and protect the heritage of Elmbridge?**

When considering relevant planning applications where heritage assets are concerned, Policy DM12 of the Council's Development Management Plan is used. For Conservation Areas this is supported by Character Appraisals and Management Plans (CAMP) which help to identify and assess their special interest. There are currently 16 CAMP documents and the Council's Planning Service has a rolling programme to prepare the remaining 10, the most recent one has just been through public consultation. In addition, the Council actively monitors the condition of Listed Buildings within the borough through a buildings a risk survey. These measures ensure the important role of protecting the heritage of Elmbridge is achieved.

**EBC's residential planning policy is in disarray, and residents are losing faith in the planning process. What practical action do Councillors intend, to defend semi-rural Oxshott, particularly against inappropriate density increase through garden grab.**

Nationally, there is a drive to deliver more homes faster, as well as achieving the effective use of development land. The revised National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2018 supports this approach. Specifically, NPPF paragraph 123, says that where there is a shortage of land for meeting identified housing need, it is especially important that planning decisions avoid homes being built at low densities and ensure that developments make optimal use of the potential of each site. It states that 'Local Planning Authorities should refuse applications that fail to make efficient use of land, taking into account the policies within the NPPF'.

Existing local policies promote the efficient use of urban land and buildings and new housing schemes in sustainable locations. Policy CS17 Local Character, Density and Design requires new development to deliver high quality and inclusive sustainable design, which maximises the efficient use of urban land. Policy DM2 Design and Amenity, requires all new development to achieve high quality design and respect local character. Policy DM10 Housing, promotes housing types and sizes that make the most efficient use of land and meets local housing need on housing sites of 0.3 hectares or more.

Elmbridge has a shortfall in its housing land supply and sites coming forward for development are predominantly small in size. The local housing need figure has significantly increased and is now 612 homes per year based on the Government's standard methodology. This is a significant increase from previous housing need figures identified in the Kingston and North Surrey Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) (2016).

However, the qualitative information from the SHMA remains relevant as it outlines the 'right' type of homes needed. The SHMA identified an overwhelming need for smaller homes (1 to 3 bedrooms), indeed the provision of smaller homes is vital for widening the choice of homes within the Borough. As demonstrated in the Authority Monitoring Report (AMR) (2016-2017), past delivery of new homes in the Borough has been dominated by large, four or more bedroom properties on large plots. Going forward, this size of home does not make a positive contribution towards meeting local housing need.

The constrained land supply and protection of the Green Belt may lead to development of previously developed land which includes re-development of existing properties and subdivision of existing plots. As land is at a premium, the Council has to ensure that any site that comes forward for development is fully utilised and that no opportunities are missed. Due to the high need for new homes this does mean the Council must focus on smaller, higher density housing.

The Councils existing policies support development proposals that are design-led, of a high quality and that respects local character. The Council does not accept that smaller units and higher densities detrimentally affects character of an area. To enable the optimisation of land and to respond to local housing needs development schemes will need to be innovative and utilise higher densities while respecting the local character. The Council is proactively working on this and has produced a guidance note for developers to ensure that higher densities are correctly designed as to not impact the character of an area.

The Council is committed to responding to the current housing challenge and is in the process of producing a new Local Plan. We have been further developing our Local Plan evidence base and this work will inform the next key stage in the Local Plan preparation. This includes identifying the most suitable and sustainable sites for development and working with infrastructure providers from an early stage. This will help us plan for new homes in the right places.

## **Community & Social Affairs**

### **Will the walk-in centre in Weybridge be replaced?**

An update on the plans for the future of healthcare services in Weybridge was produced by North West Surrey Clinical Commissioning Group in December 2018. A short summary is below, although residents can view the full update on the CCG's website: <http://www.nwsurreyccg.nhs.uk/news/latest-news/282-update-on-weybridge-hospital-site>

North West Surrey CCG and partners have been reviewing their plan for the future of out of hospital services across the region. Considering the broader landscape of urgent care services and how they can be improved is a crucial step in making sure we get the right services in Weybridge.

This programme has involved community engagement since September 2018. The CCG has published a case for change which can be found on their website. The Weybridge Rebuild Group consists of NHS staff, NHS Property Services and Elmbridge Borough Council representatives. The intention is to make an application to the Surrey Heartlands Health and Care Partnership One Public Estate Programme to progress planning for the Weybridge site.

Over the coming months we are aiming to develop a timeline for renovating the hospital site. As soon as more details are available they will be shared with the public.

### **Anti-social behaviour and the level of policing available to tackle it**

Although we have seen an increase in recent months of anti-social behaviour and crime/disorder in Hinchley Wood, Weston Green and Thames Ditton we have actually seen an 8.8% decrease in reported anti-social behaviour. This equates to 155 less reports compared to the same period the previous year.

The Public Spaces Protection Order is still in place for Walton and the Council has applied for an extension to this with the support of Surrey Police. A Cabinet decision on the extension is due on 13/02/19. The Public Spaces Protection Order has been very successful in reducing anti-social behaviour in the area.

Local Safer Neighbourhood Team officers are once again holding regular Meet The Beat sessions in the community and will ensure any concerns raised regarding anti-social behaviour in their areas are dealt with. Surrey Police are also regularly conducting search warrants across the Borough linked to county lines and drug dealing/associated anti-social behaviour in general, along with working with partner agencies through the Community Safety Plan.

The Safer Neighbourhood Team consists of the Borough Commander, 2 Sergeants, 2 PC's and 12 PCSO's.

The Neighbourhood Policing Team consists of 5 Inspectors, 10 Sergeants and currently 79 PC's spread across 5 rotas providing 24/7 policing. Our Neighbourhood Policing Team officers have also been allocated specific wards to patrol/fully embed in.

### **Worried about burglaries and the recent stabbing. What is the plan?**

A 14-year-old boy from Kingston-upon-Thames has been charged following an assault on a group of teenage boys in Thames Ditton on Saturday evening (January 12). The boy, who cannot be named for legal reasons, has been charged with robbery, grievous bodily harm and possession of a knife in a public place, and will appear at Staines Magistrate's Court today (16 January). A 15-year-old, who was also arrested, has been released under investigation. The incident took place following an altercation on a bridge over train tracks in Woodfield Road around 8.34pm. One boy was taken to hospital with suspected stab wounds where he remains in a serious but stable condition. A second boy was also assaulted but has since been released from hospital.

#### Domestic burglary

Aug 44 (last year 47)

Sep 42 (last year 48)

Oct 60 (last year 75)

Nov 87 (last year 106)

Total = 233 (last year 276) - decrease of 15.58% for same period last year

**FYTD = 415 (last year 505) - decrease of 17.82%**

Residential burglaries remain the Borough Commander's No.1 priority for the Borough, though we've had some excellent results over the last few months, having locked up a number of individuals. Those arrested and charged (some already convicted) include a Chilean national, a serial burglar from Aylesbury, 2 locals from Thames Ditton, a local from Cobham and another from Walton. The Elmbridge Borough Commander is ensuring that anyone charged with burglary will be named and shamed on our social media and when convicted their photo will also be uploaded with the court result. This sends a message that burglary will not be tolerated in Elmbridge and will help to reduce further offending, especially those who live in the Borough. Burglary numbers continue to remain down on last year, and as above, we are now locking more burglars up. Our positive outcome rate has improved from 3.6% to 5.3% FYTD over the last couple of months.

There were 14 burglaries in December.

The Borough Commander has had access to additional resources to tackle burglary in recent months such as dogs and covert and overt policing tactics

Forensic property marking kits are still available from the Elmbridge Neighbourhood Police team and over 400 have been issued to residents.

#### Housing

**I would like to hear what plans there are for social (not affordable) housing in the Borough**

By way of background, since 2011, as a result of a change in Government policy, most of the new rented affordable housing developed in Elmbridge and elsewhere has been let as what is known as “Affordable Rent” levels rather than the cheaper Social Rent product. Affordable Rents are charged at up to 80% of market rents, whereas in Elmbridge, social rents are around 40%-50% of market rents. To put it into context, figures for 2017/18 show that the typical weekly rents for a 2-bedroom property in Elmbridge let at social rent was £128, whereas for Affordable Rent the figure was £189.

In short, there is a trade-off between developing a smaller number of the most affordable homes (at social rent levels) and a larger number of less affordable homes (at affordable rent levels). Like most other councils, we have opted to support the latter approach, but Government has been signalling that it wants to support the delivery of social rented housing and when we have more detail, then we will be in a better place to set out specific plans. In the meantime and given the evidence we have is that the majority of the local need for affordable housing is for social rent, we will be seeking to negotiate the inclusion of social rented housing on larger development sites and will also target the Council’s Affordable Housing Enabling Fund at proposals which will include social rented housing.

### **What is the housing situation in Elmbridge?**

In short, the housing situation in Elmbridge doesn’t really change from one year to the next. The average costs of buying or renting in the Borough remain amongst the highest in England, reflecting the attractiveness of Elmbridge as a place to live. The flipside to this is a continuing affordability challenge, with the latest Strategic Housing Market Assessment indicating that 70% of forecasted housing need in the Borough over the next 15 years comprises households requiring affordable housing – i.e. households who cannot afford the costs of buying or renting in the private market. This translates into a significant demand for affordable housing, which far exceeds supply and this is reflected in our housing register having in excess of 2000 applications. You will have heard about our plans to prepare a new Local Plan, which will set out targets to deliver additional housing of a range of types and tenures to 2035, but ultimately, whilst the Council can influence the market, we do not have the ability to control it.

### **Could you clarify Elmbridge Council’s stance on increased housing in the Borough?**

The Council has long-supported the delivery of additional affordable housing within the Borough, given the well-documented need. In the three years from April 2018 to March 2021, we are expecting around 350 affordable homes to be provided, with the majority of these being provided by housing associations.

However, recognising the scale of the need and recognising the opportunity to do something more ourselves, the Council has become directly involved in housing delivery again and has set up a housing company, EBC Homes Ltd, which will be delivering affordable housing of its own. The evidence we have gathered indicates that around 70% of the housing need arising over the next 15 years in Elmbridge will be for affordable housing, and the majority of that is likely to be amongst households who will require social rented housing (which is the type of affordable housing with the lowest rents).

Due to national policy decisions, it has been difficult to deliver social rented housing in Elmbridge and elsewhere over the last five years or so but going forward we will look to negotiate a greater proportion of social rented housing on new developments where it is

feasible do so and when we have a new Local Plan adopted, I anticipate that it will set out clear expectations as to the proportion and type of social housing that developers should be providing on future housing developments.

## **Resources**

### **Do all boroughs contribute the same proportion of their council tax to Surrey CC?**

The amount charged by Surrey County Council for each property band is the same throughout Surrey. However, the proportion of the total council tax bill which this takes up is dependent on the charges made by other authorities such as the borough/district council, police and in some cases a parish council.

For an Elmbridge household in 2018/19 - excluding those which are within the area of Claygate Parish Council - Surrey County Council's proportion of the total council tax bill is 76%. For comparison, Elmbridge Borough Council's proportion is 11% and Surrey Police is 13%.

### **Please outline the benefits to the local community of further housing on central Hersham.**

Throughout the Borough as a whole there remains a demand for more affordable housing and this includes Hersham. The average costs of buying or renting in the Borough are among the highest in the country. The latest Strategic Housing Market Assessment indicates that 70% of forecasted housing need in the Borough over the next 15 years comprises households requiring affordable housing. These are households who cannot afford the costs of buying or renting in the private market. This means there is significant demand for affordable housing, which far exceeds supply and this is reflected in our housing register having over 2000 applications.

Housing is one of the options, among others, for the Hersham community site which has been presented to residents. There is an ongoing consultation which is open until 25 January. Residents may take part in the survey through our website: <https://www.elmbridge.gov.uk/news/hersham/>

### **When is the village hall going to be opened?**

### **At the last meeting you mentioned you did not want to put housing in the place of the Hersham community site but the recent survey asked if residents would be happy with housing - have your plans changed?**

The Hersham community site comprises the Hersham Centre for the Community, the Hersham Village Hall and the public car park on the Queen's Road, opposite Hersham Green.

The Hersham Centre for the Community and hall site are now over thirty years old. The village hall is closed due to its condition, as well as concerns regarding health and safety. However, following investment in 2017 the Hersham Centre for the Community is open and actively used.

At Elmbridge Borough Council we believe there is the potential to provide fit for purpose community space on this site and to consider additional community services. A feasibility study has been commissioned to consider a wide range of options for this site including a basic refurbishment and reopen for the village hall. However, before we start on any project we need to understand the needs of residents and have produced a resident survey to help us.

The survey is available until 25 January, after which time we will review and consider the responses, with the expectation of preparing a range of possible options for the site. We intend to bring these options back to residents for consultation in early spring 2019.

More information on the consultation is available on our website:  
<https://www.elmbridge.gov.uk/news/hersham/>