

Claygate Parish Council & Elmbridge Borough Council Liaison Meeting

Monday 3 February 2025 – 10 am

Committee Room 1, EBC Offices

ACTION NOTES:

1. Devolution and EBC Plans

Following the Leader's Community Engagement Event held in Claygate on Thursday 20 January where this item was discussed, there were no further updates.

2. Local Plan

Cllr Mike Rollings (MR) updated on the latest position regarding the draft Elmbridge Borough Council Local Plan, following receipt of the Planning Inspector's Initial Findings Letter (September 2024) and Final Letter (October 2024) and, in light of the Local Government Re-organisation. And the key points were:

- Report to be brought to Cabinet at its meeting of 5 February ahead of Council on 26 February with an officer recommendation to withdraw the current local plan.
- Report to be brought to Cabinet at its meeting on 5 February setting out a timetable for the preparation of a new Local Plan. This would be adopted and submitted to Government as required by 6 March 2025, providing that Council agrees to withdraw the Local Plan. Some of the Council's projects may need to be paused if their timetable runs beyond Spring 2027/28. Work programmes are currently being reviewed.
- Resources would be concentrated on Place Making projects: viability and social housing

Cllr Donna Holt (DH) enquired as to whether Claygate could be informed on land availability following the call for sites.

Suzanne Parkes (SP) confirmed that this was still progressing and that further details on this would be published later in the year but said that she would check if that could be updated for Claygate Parish Council. She did say that more urban sites had been proposed, as opposed to just grey belt/green belt.

3. Local Street Improvement Plan & EBC involvement with the SCC Initiative

There was a general discussion around proposed speeding restrictions of 20-mph to be placed in Claygate. CPC circulated a document produced by SCC which stated that a 20-mph zone across the whole village was likely to be wanted. Claygate Parish Councillors confirmed that the feedback they were receiving from residents was that this was not wanted.

SP said that SCC, as part of their Local Street Improvements (LSI) project, had divided the entire borough into areas where they would be designing and carrying out work to improve local streets and the public realm. As part of the 'package' of improvements, 20 mph was one intervention, but others were also available.

SP explained that Walton - Bridge Street & Terrace Road – were currently part of the pilot for the LSI project. She also said that it was not just Elmbridge, but that SCC was rolling out the LSI programme across the other eleven borough and district councils and that SCC did engage/consult with the council and community as part of the process.

DH confirmed that she had been approached by members of public who had said that they had experienced difficulties in accessing pavements around Claygate and that she had walked along with them to see at first hand the issues.

Cllr Gil Bray (GB) said that there would be backlash from residents should the speed restriction be imposed upon Claygate as the consensus of opinion was that they did not want the 20-mph zone.

SP said that she had regular meetings with Surrey County Council and that she would ensure that they are aware that Claygate did not want the 20-mph imposed on them.

4. Vision & Claygate The Way Forward

SP updated the meeting on the current situation:

- Due to LGR, the timetable for EBC projects was being reviewed to see what could be completed in two years/what needed to be speeded-up or paused etc.
- Place making projects were forging ahead, for example, Claygate and Lower Green but the focus would be on short-term actions rather than some of the longer-term ambitions.
- It is currently anticipated that the Council will undertake consultation with the wider Claygate community on the Vision, Objectives and Action Plan in April and then this to be taken to Council in for the June/July meeting for adoption.
- Officers will need to draft reports by the end of February, so any changes proposed by CPC will be required by then.

5. Torrington Consultations

Dawn Crewe (DC) confirmed that from the four car parks that were being considered for possible development opportunities, only Torrington was proceeding at this time. She also said that a decision would need to be made this year, otherwise this would be on hold until the Unitary councils come into effect.

6. Referrals to the East Area Planning Committee

GB enquired as to whether the Council would consider allowing CPC to be able to refer household applications to the East Area Planning Sub-Committee if they had concerns.

SP confirmed that this was a constitution amendment issue and would need to be considered in light of the Government's Planning Reform Working Paper Planning Committees. SP stated that the Government's aim was to see more applications determined under delegated authority and that her concern was that CPC's request would go against this grain.

DH and GB said that the numbers were few and this would also give greater scrutiny.

SP said that the Council stands by the planning decisions it makes but that if there were an error, the option would be for the Council to seek a Judicial Review of its decision.

GB said that some referrals were decided on technical data but said that there were others whereby a judgement call decision was required.

SP confirmed that no decisions were ever made by single officers, and that more complex cases were taken to a Development Management Case Review Panel where at least 10 Planning Officers, on average, would listen to the case. In addition, that case officer reports were signed off by Team Leaders and the Planning Development Manager/Head of Service where required/appropriate.

SP said that it was important to have the collaboration, even if there was not total agreement, but that it would be useful to have continued dialogue.

Cllr Alex Coomes (AC) said, he, as Chair of the East Area Planning Committee, would appreciate the continued support from Claygate Parish Council regarding any details they would have, if a planning application were refused, as this could prove invaluable in the appeal process.

7. Community Services – Centres' Usage

Vicky Wise (VW) joined the meeting to update on the latest position regarding the borough's community services:

- there were six centres in the borough, and provision for a meals on wheels service, community transport and dementia services
- In February 2023, Cabinet and Council published their vision for re-imagining the usage of centres as currently only 2% of the resident population were being reached, when in fact 9% were in need of help
- Areas that were particularly in need - West Molesey, Cobham, Walton and Lower Green
- There had recently been some engagement events at the centres for the public to inform of their experiences of the service – some 425 people had turned up to the various events across the week. The events had taken the form of three in-person open events also on-line and evening events, to allow more to attend, if working during the day, for example.
- There had been some listening sessions and consultation with voluntary sector partners, including questionnaires both on the website and in paper form. The consultation period closes at the end of March.
- DH confirmed that the Claygate Centre only caters for older people
- VW said the service needed a reimagining and that it had to be evidence-based, hence the wide consultation with users, etc.
- MR said that services would be reviewed in light of the local government reorganisation and that the centres fell under the category of a "discretionary" spend.

8. Hinchley Wood School – De-prioritising Claygate pupils from catchment area

DH enquired as to Elmbridge's position regarding this de-prioritisation.

MR said that in addition to this not being an Elmbridge issue, it was also not that of Surrey County Council's as Hinchley Wood school afforded academy status and therefore Trustees made the decisions.

There followed a general discussion on this issue. At the conclusion of which DH said Claygate would proceed on their own and approach Hinchley Wood themselves as this was not acceptable. Claygate Parish would send an official Claygate Parish Council letter.

9. Any Other Business

Rats Holyroyd Garages

SP said that PA Housing had been asked “informally” about removal of items causing the infestation, but that this had not been done officially. Therefore, there would need to be an official approach made, i.e. in writing, as they should be allowed some time to sort before they had a notice served on them.

It was confirmed that a site visit was being arranged.