

The Epsom and Ewell area could see more than 4,000 new houses built over the next twenty years if Government plans for the South East come into effect. Only a small proportion of these would come from the remaining construction due to take place on the two old mental hospital sites still to be developed – West Park and St Ebba's.

Councils in the South East have been trying to resist pressure from the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister to accept a much higher level of new building than has been the case in the past few years. A new consultation document has been launched to ask residents for their response to the plans, and particularly whether they are willing to accept 650,000 new homes over the next 20 years. The Government is believed to want an even higher figure than this.

Epsom and Ewell MP Chris Grayling warned that the proposals will have a real impact on the area if they are allowed to go ahead.

“What this means is more and more infill development,



## Help fight the housing threat

*Chris at the Horton Hospital site - the old hospital sites are not be nearly big enough to take all the planned extra housing.*

with gardens disappearing to be replaced by cul-de-sacs. But even then I think the risk is that we will lose some of our remaining open spaces to housing estates.

“I think it's completely mad, particularly as the Government itself admits that there is going to be a huge surge in immigration that will cause much of this pressure. That must be prevented from happening. We simply don't have the infrastructure to cope – not enough school places,

hospital beds, roads and space on the trains. It must be stopped.”

People can find out more about the plans for the South East and take part in the consultation by visiting the regional plan website at <http://www.southeast-ra.gov.uk/southeastplan>. “I hope everyone will take advantage of the consultation before April 15th to make their views clear about the need to resist this potential flood of new housing in our open spaces,” says Chris.



You can write to

Chris Grayling MP at the House of Commons, London SW1A 0AA  
[graylingc@parliament.uk](mailto:graylingc@parliament.uk) [www.chrisgrayling.net](http://www.chrisgrayling.net)

SPRING 2005

# FROM THE Clock Tower



‘From the Clock Tower’ is a twice yearly update from your local MP Chris Grayling.

The Epsom and Ewell parliamentary constituency covers the Borough of Epsom and Ewell, Ashted, Nork, Tattenhams and the Preston area of Tadworth.



# MP protests over hospital chaos

*Hospital struggles to cope with transfers from other hospital closures*



**MP Chris Grayling has lodged protests at the situation at Epsom and St Helier hospitals in the wake of the closure of Crawley Hospital's Accident and Emergency Department. Since then Epsom's A&E has had a big influx of new patients, causing difficulties elsewhere in the hospital.**

Staff at the hospital say they have been struggling to keep up. Elderly patients were transferred at short notice from Epsom to a reopened temporary ward at St Helier. Conditions there are far from ideal. Other Epsom patients have had their operations cancelled late in the day to allow the day case unit to be used for A&E patients. Staff say the situation has been chaotic.

The problem has arisen since the NHS downgraded Crawley Hospital and transferred its acute services to East Surrey Hospital at Redhill. East Surrey is now suffering major financial and operational problems as a result, with extra numbers of patients having to be cared for at Epsom.

"I think this makes it all the more absurd that the NHS is making plans behind the scenes to start downgrading Epsom Hospital, possibly within a matter of weeks. If the closure of Crawley A&E can cause the current chaos, it would be nothing short of lunacy to start closing Epsom as well. The consequences for other neighbouring hospitals, particularly St Helier and Kingston, would be disastrous," says Chris.

"I hope they won't try to make rapid changes - and certainly not before they have worked out whether they really can afford a new hospital in Sutton.

But if they do, they'll have another major battle on their hands."

# Campaign for Epsom Hospital goes on

*Carrying on the fight to save emergency services at Epsom*

**Chris and other campaigners for Epsom Hospital have committed to continue the fight to secure the hospital's future following the decision to downgrade it and relocate emergency services to a new hospital in Sutton.**

The NHS is currently working on the details of its proposals, and will publish its financial projections in the autumn. But staff at Epsom say there are persistent rumours that the Trust management will introduce a "transition plan" within the next few weeks which will involve closing acute services at Epsom and transfer them to St Helier.

"We are actively exploring alternative options for Epsom,"

says Chris, "and are determined not to give up the battle. I remain convinced that the NHS

has got it wrong, and has come up with a project it can neither afford nor deliver."



## in brief

## Mast battles

Chris is backing a number of resident groups angry that mobile phone companies are trying to build masts in the middle of residential areas in Ashted, Worcester Park and Epsom. "It's time that local communities had the right to decide where masts go. At the moment the law is stacked in favour of the companies – even though it's obvious that they very often get it wrong."

## Victim Support celebrates birthday

Chris hosted a 20th birthday party for Epsom and District Victim Support, of which he is Chairman. "We have a great team of people, staff and volunteers, who do an essential role in the community. I'm proud to be associated with it."

## Time for action on graffiti

Chris has backed calls for faster action on graffiti in Epsom and Ewell. "It's been very noticeable that the rapid response team on the Preston Estate in Tadworth have helped significantly reduce the problem. I think we need a similar approach in Epsom and Ewell."

## More Police cuts on the way

*We could face still more cutbacks*



Epsom and Ewell MP Chris Grayling has written to the Home Secretary to protest about the continuing poor funding of police in Surrey, after the local Police Authority warned that they had been given £14 million less than is needed to fund current policing levels in the County. The authority has warned that front line services will have to be cut if the current situation continues.

"Surrey receives the lowest police grant in the country by some margin. We get £86 per head of population from the Government – almost half the level in other areas and well below the next lowest county, Dorset, which receives £94 a head. Yet we have to provide police support for the M25, Gatwick and Heathrow airports, quite apart from the cost of major investigations in recent years."

"In recent years Epsom has lost its local superintendant, its 24 hour a day front desk at the local police station, and its full-time custody suite. Now we could face still more cutbacks. It's just not good enough he says. I meet too many people who have suffered from antisocial behaviour and crime locally. Too often the police are overstretched when they try to respond. It's time the Government realised that if you cut back policing in low crime areas, they will just become higher crime areas."

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## MP presses for British support for African medical schools

Chris Grayling MP is pressing for Britain to sponsor a number of new medical schools in Africa to help tackle the rising problem of AIDS and HIV on the continent. He wants part of the international aid budget to be used directly to sponsor the initiative.

"I have seen at first hand how African clinics are being completely overwhelmed by the scale of the problem, and simply don't have enough staff to go around. Worse still, many are losing staff to the NHS and to hospitals in other countries."

"Yet most African countries have to pay a fortune to send medical students overseas. I want to see us support medical training in some key African countries as a way of using our aid budget well, and of targeting it where it will really be of benefit."

*Need to support by using our budget well*



# AROUND & ABOUT

## Visiting local community, voluntary and charitable groups

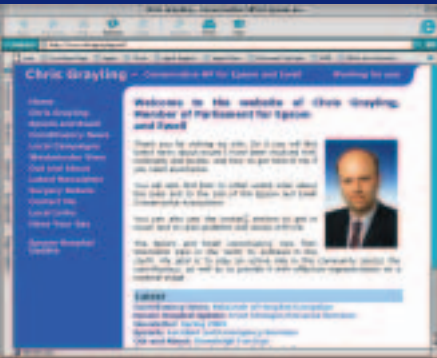


Visiting Epsom Riding for the Disabled to celebrate the purchase of its land from the NHS



Joining up as one of the first Friends of Preston Sure Start

## Keep updated



Chris's website, [www.chrisgrayling.net](http://www.chrisgrayling.net), contains information about the area, local news and details of how to contact him, as well as electronic copies of this newsletter. You can also leave your views on the special bulletin board.

With the Mayor at the official opening of an exhibition of prison art at Bourne Hall.



## contact

### A visit from your MP

If you would like Chris to attend an event or to visit your organisation, please contact the constituency office at 212 Barnett Wood Lane, Ashted, KT21 2DB or telephone 01372 271036.

### Visits to the House of Commons

If you are part of a local school or organisation that would like to arrange a tour of the House of Commons, please contact Chris's office at Westminster. You can ring the office on 020 7219 8194 or write to Chris at the House of Commons, London SW1A 0AA.

### Surgeries

Chris holds surgeries every fortnight on a Friday afternoon. The venues rotate between the constituency office in Ashted, the Epsom Conservative Club, Stoneleigh Library and Tattenham Corner Library. For details of the next surgery date and to book an appointment, please ring the constituency office on 01372 271036.

FROM THE  
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