

Minutes of Cabinet

24 March 2015

Present:

Councillor R.L. Watts, Leader of the Council, Chairman of the Cabinet and Cabinet Member for Strategy, Human Resources and Emergency Planning
Councillor C. A. Davis, Cabinet Member for Economic Development
Councillor T. Evans, Cabinet Member for Finance
Councillor N. Gething, Cabinet Member for Asset Management
Councillor V.J. Leighton, Cabinet Member for Planning and Corporate Development
Councillor J.M. Pinkerton OBE, Cabinet Member for Housing, Health, Wellbeing and Independent Living

Apologies:

Councillor P. Forbes-Forsyth, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Community Safety, Young People, Leisure and Culture
Councillor T. Mitchell, Cabinet Member for Environment
Councillor J. Sexton, Cabinet Member for Communications, ICT and Procurement

Councillors in attendance: Councillor A. Patterson, Spelthorne Independent Party

2160. Minutes

The minutes of the Cabinet meeting held on 24 February 2015 were agreed as a correct record.

2161. Disclosures of Interest

There were none.

2162. Capital monitoring report

Cabinet considered a report on the current spend position and a request for a supplementary estimate for the liquid voice project.

RESOLVED that Cabinet notes the current spend position and approves a supplementary estimate of £32,000 for the liquid voice project.

Reason for the decision:

Cabinet noted that the liquid voice project was the replacement for and upgrading of the customer services telephone system.

2163. Revenue monitoring report

Cabinet considered a report on the current spend position to the end of January 2015.

RESOLVED that Cabinet notes the current spend position.

2164. Discretionary Rate Relief Review 2015

Cabinet considered a report on those organisations applying for renewal of discretionary rate relief in 2015-16.

RESOLVED that Cabinet approves the renewal of the discretionary rate relief applications to all the organisations set out in Appendix B of the report at the percentage shown for the period.

Reason for the decision:

Cabinet noted that the Council has a responsibility under Sections 43 and 47 of the Local Government Finance Act 1988 to consider applications for discretionary rate relief from registered charities and non-profit making bodies.

2165. Draft Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2015-2019

Cabinet considered a report on the draft Health and Wellbeing Strategy for 2015 to 2019.

RESOLVED that Cabinet agrees to consult with the wider community and partners on the draft Spelthorne Health and Wellbeing Strategy for 2015 to 2019.

Reason for the decision:

Cabinet noted that the action plan within the strategy cannot be delivered just by the Council but there will be the need to work in partnership with other agencies.

2166. Food and Health and Safety Service Plans 2015-16

Cabinet considered a report on the proposed food and health and safety service plans for 2015-16.

RESOLVED that Cabinet adopts the proposed service plans for 2015-16.

Reason for the decision:

Cabinet noted that the recent Food Standards Agency (FSA) audit of Spelthorne's food safety enforcement service was very positive.

2167. Resilience services

Cabinet considered a report on the provision of resilience services in Spelthorne.

RESOLVED that Cabinet approves:

- The adoption of option 3 set out in the report including:
- The Council becoming a 10% shareholder in the Public Sector Mutual (PSM) Applied Resilience, and
- The exemption to Contract Standing Orders to award a three-year contract to Applied Resilience for risk and resilience services.

Reason for the decision:

Cabinet noted that creation of a PSM would mean increased resilience to service delivery and additional capacity to deliver resilience work.

2168. Leader's Announcements

The following are the latest service updates from various Council departments.

The Leader of the Council has announced that Conservative councillors with unspent Better Neighbourhood Grant money will be pooling their funds for a community project. A total of £2500 is being donated to the Stanwell Community Projects Group which organises activities and events for Stanwell residents of all ages. These range from fun days, craft workshops and games sessions for the youngsters and families, through to first aid training for adults and afternoon tea events for older residents.

The Council's new textile collection scheme started on 23 March. Collected items are being sorted by the Salvation Army and wearable items will be sold through markets in Eastern Europe, raising vital funds for the organisation. Old, worn or stained textiles will be recycled to make industrial cloths or padding.

The Council's website achieved a 3 star rating in the annual SOCITM Better Connected Survey. The survey rates council websites and awards a score, out of 4, for a range of criteria including content, accessibility and navigation. The score is very positive and marks an improvement from the previous year when 2 stars were achieved.

Councillor Robin Sider gave an interview to Brooklands Radio on Wednesday 18 March. He spoke about being a ward councillor and his role as Chair of the Licensing Committee.

The Council's Bulletin magazine is being delivered to residents from 21 March and can also be viewed on the Council's website.

Legal Services underwent their annual LEXCEL quality accreditation check. The assessor found no issues during the visit and noted 33 areas of good practice.

The Council Tax collection rates (cumulative) up to end February were:-

- Council Tax: 97.6% (97.8% sply)
- Business Rates: 95.99% (97.83% sply)
- Council Tax Support: 77.6% (72.1% sply)

The new call routing system being used by Customer Services has resulted in a 46% decrease in calls.

Young people aged 7-16 are being encouraged to join Team Spelthorne for the annual P&G Surrey Youth Games being held in June. The event is a great opportunity to try new sports or improve existing skills and this year the coaching sessions are being provided free of charge, thanks to sponsorship from local companies.

The achievements of Borough's young people were celebrated at the Spelthorne Youth Awards at Shepperton Studios on Thursday 5 March. The Mayor presented seven 'star award' trophies and twenty one outstanding achievement certificates.

The winners of the World War One art competition for schools were announced on Thursday 5 March. The winning pieces were created Imi Geczy from Buckland Primary School, Preeah

Sangha from Staines Preparatory School and Josh Tampai from The Bishop Wand C of E School. A selection of the art work will be on display at the Sunbury Embroidery Gallery from 31 March until 12 April.

Sunbury and Spelthorne leisure centres - operated by Everyone Active in partnership with the Council - have both been awarded 'excellent' statuses by Quest following rigorous assessments which looked at every aspect of the centres operations and management.

The Spelthorne Walking for Health Scheme coordinated by Leisure Services, recently received national accreditation. As part of the scheme, three short walks are led by volunteer leaders each week with the aim of encouraging residents to be more active and to get out-and-about with people in their local area. The scheme continues to be very popular, especially with those who have had recent health problems.

Up to 33 people from Spelthorne, Runnymede and Windsor and Maidenhead will be able to play a special role in June's Magna Carta celebrations as charter bearers, helping to carry a replica of the Magna Carta during the River Relay on 13 and 14 June. Nominations are being taken from community groups until the end of April.

Spelthorne Council's Community Centres have benefitted from the purchase of new equipment to help them run activities. The Benwell Centre in Sunbury-on-Thames has received a projector which will enable them to host movie days. The Staines Community Centre will gain an indoor bowls mat and the Fordbridge Centre in Ashford has asked for a new oven and so they can begin cookery classes. The Greeno Centre in Shepperton will use their funds for tools and electrical work needed for the Men in Sheds project, designed for men who like to spend time on practical hobbies, making and mending things.

The Independent Living team have started hot-desking arrangements with Surrey Social Services at the Community Centres, making best use of the space available and helping to build good working relationships.

Parties are being held on 23 and 24 April to celebrate the 25th anniversary of the Fordbridge Centre in Ashford.

The Council held a flag raising ceremony to commemorate Commonwealth Day on Monday 9 March. Mayor, Cllr Suzy Webb, was joined by veterans from the Royal British Legion, Burma Star and the Jewish Veterans Association as well as residents, councillors and council staff. The Mayor read out a message from the Queen and the Secretary to the Commonwealth, Kamallesh Sharma.

The Queen sent her personal good wishes to everyone who attended a special service at St Mary's Church in Stanwell on Friday 6 March to mark the 800th anniversary of the sealing of the Magna Carta. Local residents and churchgoers Beryl Wilkins and Melanie Cooper led the congregation in prayers. Chair of the Spelthorne Museum, Nick Pollard, read Kipling's famous poem "The Reeds of Runnymede" and arranged a Magna Carta exhibition. Mayor, Cllr Suzy Webb, also read a lesson.

2169. Issues for Future Meetings

There were none.

2170. Urgent items

There were none.

2171. Exempt Business

RESOLVED to move the exclusion of the Press and Public for the following item in view of the likely disclosure of exempt information within the meaning of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972, as amended by the Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985 and by the Local Government (Access to information) (Variation) Order 2006.

2172. Exempt report – Council Tax and Business Rates write-offs

Paragraph 3 – Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding the information).

Cabinet considered an exempt report on a proposal to write off some bad debts where recovery was no longer possible.

RESOLVED that Cabinet agrees to the write-off of the bad debts listed in the report.

NOTES:-

- (1) *Members of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee are reminded that under Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rule, the “call-in” procedure shall not apply to recommendations the Cabinet makes to the Council. The matters on which recommendations have been made to the Council, if any, are identified with an asterisk [*] in the above Minutes.***
- (2) *Members of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee are entitled to call in decisions taken by the Cabinet for scrutiny before they are implemented, other than any recommendations covered under (1) above.***
- (3) *Within three working days of the date on which a decision of the Cabinet or a Cabinet Member is published, not less than three members [one of whom must be the Chairman] of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee are able to “call in” a decision;***
- (4) *To avoid delay in considering an item “called in”, an extraordinary meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee will be convened within seven days of a “call in” being received if an ordinary meeting is not scheduled in that period;***
- (5) *When calling in a Cabinet decision for review the members doing so should in their notice of “call in”:-***
Outline their reasons for requiring a review;
 - Indicate any further information they consider the Overview and Scrutiny Committee needs to have before it in order to conduct a review in addition to the written report made by officers to the Cabinet;***

- ***Indicate whether, where the decision was taken collectively by the Cabinet, they wish the Leader or his nominee (who should normally be the Cabinet Member) or where the decision was taken by a Cabinet Member, the member of the Cabinet making the decision, to attend the committee meeting; and***
- ***Indicate whether the officer making the report to the Cabinet or the Cabinet Member taking the decision or his/her representative should attend the meeting.***

(6) The deadline of three working days for "call in" by Members of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee in relation to the above decisions by the Cabinet is the close of business on 27 March 2015