

**Minutes of the Council Meeting of Spelthorne Borough Council held in the Council Chamber, Council Offices, Knowle Green, Staines-upon-Thames on Thursday 19 December 2013 at 7.30pm**

**Present:**

Ayers F.	Forsbrey G.E.	Patel D.
Ayub A.	Francis M.P.	Patterson A.C.
Beardsmore I.J.	Frazer C.M.	Pinkerton J.M.
Broom P.A.	Friday A.E.	Saliagopoulos D.
Budd S.E.W.	Gething N.	Sider R.W.
Davis C.A.	Grant D.L.	Smith-Ainsley R.A.
Dunn R.D.	Harman A.C. (The Mayor)	Spoor B.
Dunn S.A.	Harvey I.T.E.	Taylor S.D.
Forbes-Forsyth P. (Deputy Leader)	Leighton V.J.	Watts R.L. (Leader)
	Madams M.	Webb S. (Deputy Mayor)
	Mitchell A.J.	

Mr Murray Litvak, Chairman of the Members' Code of Conduct Committee.

The Mayor, Councillor A.C. Harman, in the Chair

**352/13 Apologies**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors C.A. Bannister, M. Bushnell, J.A. Dale, T.J.M Evans, M.W. Rough, J.R. Sexton, C.L. Spencer, C.V. Strong and Miss Sue Faulkner, Vice-Chairman of the Members' Code of Conduct Committee.

**353/13 Minutes**

The minutes of the Council meeting held on 24 October 2013 were approved as a correct record, subject to an amendment at Minute 288 /13 - Announcements from the Leader, to note that Shepperton High Street was awarded a 'Silver' and not a 'Silver Gilt' in the recent South East in Bloom competition.

**354/13 Disclosures of Interest**

There were no disclosures of interest.

**355/13 Announcements from the Mayor**

**Mayor's Events**

The Mayor thanked all those who attended his Civic Service and informed councillors of an upcoming event: the Mayor's Charity Race Night on 25 January 2014 at St. Peter's Church Hall, Laleham Road, Staines-upon-Thames.

### **Christmas Card Competition**

The Mayor presented certificates to students from The Matthew Arnold School who had participated in the successful Christmas card competition in partnership with the Spelthorne Business Forum and the Borough Council.

The three winners were: Katie Amery-Lay for the design of the official Spelthorne Borough Council card; Alice Thompson for the design of the official Spelthorne Business Forum card; and Tazmin Marshall for the design of the official Matthew Arnold School card.

The runners up were: Tahira Abdul, Romaan Aftab, Chloe Boweren, Jack Copeland, Maisie Crittenden, Jade Evershed, Alfie Fryer, Vanessa Hack, Gina Hurst, Niamh Hutnell, Jasmin Lalli, Muslimah Mair, Kelly Mwaamba, Lene Neumann, Stephen Nicholson, Jack Porter, Alexandra Rolfe, Lizzie Tolland, Grace Toms and Hayley Walker.

### **356/13 Announcements from the Leader**

The Leader, Councillor Robert Watts, welcomed the newly elected member for the Riverside and Laleham ward, Councillor Denise Saliagopoulos to the Council meeting.

The Leader made the following announcements:

#### **Economic Well-Being**

“The ‘UK Competitive Index 2013’ report has just been published. This document provides good evidence that our Borough is heading in the right direction. In 2010 we were 61st out of 379 local authority areas in England & Wales, which in itself is a healthy position, but in the latest research carried out independently by Cardiff University, Spelthorne is listed as the 13th best location. This provides the clearest signal to businesses when looking for a place to locate or set up, that Spelthorne is a premier location.

What does ‘competitiveness’ mean? Well the competitiveness of an area consists of factors that indicate the overall strength of an area to attract and retain new businesses, for instance it includes the number of businesses per 1,000 population, the number of business starts, the volume of knowledge based industries and other similar measures.

We cannot afford to be complacent and this is why I have placed an emphasis on the economic well-being of Spelthorne as a priority; this position provides Spelthorne with an excellent springboard to enhance the economic prosperity of the Borough.

The Economic Strategy which you will later be asked to approve, will provide that guiding light and direction so we focus on what is most important economically for Spelthorne, and drive home that competitive advantage for the benefit of our businesses, residents and future prosperity of the Borough.”

As part of the Council's priority of delivering quality of life services – particularly Planning and Housing, the Council will be focusing on improving enforcement for offences and in particular high priority issues such as the cutting down of preserved trees or the demolition of listed buildings.

### **Enforcement**

The Council does work hard to ensure that offences are prosecuted. In the last year there have been a number of prosecutions for benefit fraud including two resulting in custodial sentences for the offenders. The Council was able to secure the conviction of an individual for fly tipping which resulted in a six month prison sentence which has been suspended for 18 months.

In Shepperton, there was a notable prosecution for the cutting down of protected trees about which I would like to take this opportunity to give you more details.

The two Pine trees, two Oaks and one Wellingtonia were situated at land to the south of Old Manor House, Russell Road, Shepperton, just to the rear of the West London Motor Group site.

The landowner, believing that there were no tree preservation orders in place, paid £1500 to a tree surgeon to carry out the unauthorised works on 13 April 2013. No application for the works was made to the Council and there was no evidence to suggest that the trees were dead or dangerous. The defendants persisted with the plan despite significant concern from local residents and several queries on the actual day of the works.

The defendants appeared at Staines Magistrates Court on 6 December 2013 in relation to the offences. The tree surgeon was fined £750 and ordered to pay Council prosecution costs of £700.

Hanif Automative Limited, the landowner, pleaded guilty to the offence of causing and permitting the cutting down of the trees. The company was convicted, fined £10,000 and ordered to pay prosecution costs of £1500.”

The Leader congratulated the Council's legal service for securing the prosecution so quickly.

### **357/13 Announcements from the Chief Executive**

There were none.

### **358/13 Amendment to allocation of seats on Committees 2013-14**

The Council considered the revised representation of the political allocation of seats for the remainder of the 2013-2014 Municipal Year, which had been circulated at the meeting.

**Resolved** to agree the revised political allocation of seats as circulated, for the remainder of the Municipal year.

### **359/13 Questions from members of the public**

There were none.

**360/13        Petitions**

There were none.

**361/13        Leisure and Culture Strategy 2014-2016 – Key Decision**

The Council considered the recommendation from the Cabinet on the Council's revised Leisure and Culture Strategy for the period 2014 to 2016.

**RESOLVED** unanimously that the revised Leisure and Culture Strategy for 2014-16, be approved.

**362/13        Future arrangements for Spelthorne pay awards**

The Council considered the recommendation from the Cabinet on future arrangements for Spelthorne pay awards.

**RESOLVED** unanimously that:

1. Spelthorne will implement national pay awards for local government services;
2. pay awards for senior staff will be in line with the national pay awards for local government services and
3. the setting up of an Officer/Councillor/Staff informal advisory group to consider other pay issues as required, be agreed.

**363/13        The appointments process for the Independent Remuneration Panel (IRP) for the Members' Allowances Scheme 2014-15**

The Council considered the recommendation from the Cabinet on the proposed appointment of three candidates, being Brian Smith, Douglas Robertson and David Wight to a new Independent Remuneration Panel, following the undertaking of a recruitment process.

**RESOLVED** that the appointment of Brian Smith, Douglas Robertson and David Wight as members of the Independent Remuneration Panel be approved.

**364/13        Localisation of Council Tax support (adoption) – Key Decision**

The Council considered the recommendation from the Cabinet on the proposed Local Council Tax Support Scheme.

**Resolved** that the Local Council Tax Support Scheme as set out in para 4.2 of the report of the Assistant Chief Executive to Cabinet on 17 December 2013, be adopted subject to the application of the Regulations issued for schemes under the Local Government Finance Act 2012, from 1 April 2014 (for a minimum of two years).

**365/13      Technical Reforms to Council Tax Discounts and Premiums (adoption) – Key Decision**

The Council considered the recommendation from the Cabinet on the proposed technical reforms to Council Tax discounts and premiums

**Resolved** that the revised Council Tax discounts and premiums as set out in para 4.2 of the report of the Assistant Chief Executive to Cabinet on 17 December 2013, be adopted subject to the application of the Regulations issued for schemes under the Local Government Finance Act 2012, from 1 April 2014 (for a minimum of two years).

**366/13      The Corporate Plan 2013-15 – Key Decision**

The Council considered the recommendation from the Cabinet on the revised Corporate Plan for 2013-15. A copy of the Plan had been circulated to all members of the Council at the meeting.

The Leader thanked Councillor Vivienne Leighton who had overseen the production of the Corporate Plan and Vicky Ellis for the layout and quality of the artwork.

**Resolved** that the proposed Corporate Plan for 2013-15 as circulated, be approved.

**367/13      Spelthorne Economic Strategy – Key Decision**

The Council considered the recommendation from the Cabinet on the Economic Strategy.

The Leader thanked Councillor Nick Gething for his work on developing the Economic Strategy and John Brooks, Deputy Head of Planning for the document which had been well received in the business community.

**Resolved** that the Economic Strategy for Spelthorne, be approved.

**368/13      Statement of Licensing Policy 2014-19 – Key Decision**

The Council considered the recommendation from the Cabinet on the revised Statement of Licensing Policy for 2014-19.

**Resolved** that the proposed Statement of Licensing Policy for 2014-19, be approved.

**369/13      Scrap Metal Dealers' Act 2013 – fee-setting and delegations**

The Council considered the recommendation from the Cabinet on the implementation of the Scrap Metal Dealers' Act 2013.

**Resolved** that the fee levels and delegations, as detailed in the report of the Assistant Chief Executive to Cabinet on 17 December 2013, be approved.

**370/13 Attendance at meetings by Councillor Madams**

This item, intended to excuse Councillor Madams' absence from all Committee meetings due to ill-health, was withdrawn as Councillor Madams was able to attend the Audit Committee on 12 December 2013 and was also present at this Council meeting. The Mayor wished her well.

**371/13 Report from the Leader of the Council**

The Leader, Councillor Robert Watts, presented his report on the work of the Cabinet at its meetings held on 26 November 2013 and 17 December 2013.

**372/13 Report from the Chairman of the Audit Committee**

As the report from the Chairman of the Audit Committee had not been included in the Council agenda papers nor laid around at the meeting, this item was not dealt with.

**373/13 Report from the Chairman of the Licensing Committee**

The Chairman of the Licensing Committee, Councillor Robin Sider, presented his report, which outlined the matters the Committee had decided since the last Council meeting.

**374/13 Report from the Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee**

The Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, Councillor Philippa Broom, presented her report which outlined the matters the Committee had considered since the last Council meeting.

**375/13 Report from the Chairman of the Planning Committee**

The Chairman of the Planning Committee, Councillor Richard Smith-Ainsley, presented his report which outlined the matters the Committee had decided since the last Council meeting.

**376/13 Motions**

There were none.

**377/13 Questions on Ward Issues**

There were none.

**378/13 General questions**

**Under Standing Order 14, Councillor Marion Rough asked the following general question, which in her absence at the meeting, was read by Councillor Spencer Taylor:**

“Regarding the motion proposed on 25 October 2012 which received total cross party support concerning the habit of spitting and its connected problems with discarded gum littering, can the Cabinet give an update on the progress being made for our Borough to adopt strong measures to deal with this anti-social habit with its attendant costs and health risks?”

**Response by the Portfolio Holder for Environment, Councillor Tony Mitchell:**

“Thank you for your question Councillor Rough.

A report went to Cabinet on 17 December 2013 which gave details of the possibilities to implement measures to tackle the issues of spitting and chewing gum waste.

The Cabinet considered that enforcement of spitting at this time is unachievable due to other corporate priorities taking precedence, the limited resources available and the difficulty of enforcing it.

Nevertheless, Cabinet recognises the concerns expressed by residents regarding the habit of spitting. Cabinet also acknowledges the concerns expressed by Councillor Rough regarding the littering of chewing gum.

It is for this reason that Cabinet agreed to a 3 month trial between now and the end of March 2014 to enforce chewing gum littering in Staines-upon-Thames. In addition the Council is conscious of the need to educate residents about the anti-social habit of spitting.

This pilot scheme will be restricted to the pedestrianised areas of Staines town centre using powers granted under the Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Act 2005 to issue fix penalty notices.

Cabinet will review the scheme after the 3 month period has expired and determine whether it is reasonable to implement across the Borough as a whole.”

**Under Standing Order 14.2, Councillor Spencer Taylor asked the following supplementary question, on behalf of Councillor Marion Rough:**

“Given that two local authorities have already sought to combat this blight, it is hoped that this trial will include the enforcement of spitting given the cost of approximately £15k to clean the area in question.”

**Response by the Portfolio Holder for Environment, Councillor Tony Mitchell:**

“The initial area with regards to spitting will be by way of education and attempting to draw people’s attention to the anti-social behaviour and it is

really a matter of seeing how the three month trial works for a decision to be made as to any future action and enforcement.”

**Under Standing Order 14, Councillor Bernie Spoor asked the following general question:**

“When did Surrey County Council contact SBC about the use of the green belt land by Fordbridge Roundabout to be used as a Fire Station site?”

**Response by the Leader of the Council, Councillor Robert Watts:**

“Having looked through the Council’s files and electronic records, the earliest record we can find on negotiations with Surrey County Council about the fire stations issue goes back to March 2009.”

**Under Standing Order 14.2, Councillor Bernie Spoor asked the following supplementary question:**

“If it was so long ago that this first came about, why has the information about the sale of the land, which is Green belt, not been made available before?”

**Response by the Leader of the Council, Councillor Robert Watts:**

“Because at the moment we are still negotiating; the land has not yet been sold. I will clarify the date with the officers and give you a written response.”

A subsequent written response was provided as follows:

“On receipt of the Council question on 19 December 2013 officers did an initial review of the records which indicated that the County was in discussions with us in 2012. However, a further search of our electronic records indicates that we first started discussion over a new centrally located station with the County in 2009. However, this was related to a number of options around the Council’s White House Depot location.”

**379/13      Urgent Business**

There were no urgent items.