

Minutes of the Council Meeting of Spelthorne Borough Council held in the Council Chamber, Council Offices, Knowle Green, Staines-upon-Thames on Thursday 23 October 2014 at 7.00pm

Present:

Councillors:

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

Mr. Murray Litvak, Chairman of the Members' Code of Conduct Committee was also in attendance.

Councillor Suzy P. Webb, The Mayor, in the Chair

267/14 Mr Tom Napper, former Mayor's Consort

The Mayor invited all present to join her in standing for a minute's silence out of respect for Mr Tom Napper, former Mayor's consort and husband of the late Mrs Isobel Napper, who was Mayor from May to August 2013.

268/14 Presentation from NHS North West Surrey Clinical Commissioning Group

The Mayor welcomed Dr Liz Lawn, Chair of NHS North West Surrey Clinical Commissioning Group, to the Council meeting. Dr Lawn spoke to the Council about the new locality hubs and plans for integrated care in the community.

She outlined the three commissioning plan principles to:

Invest to deliver more proactive care and support to help keep people, particularly the frail elderly and their carers as healthy as possible, ensuring that they don't reach crisis levels requiring emergency hospital admission;

Develop Locality Hubs which will be used by multi-disciplinary health and social care teams, led by GPs to improve the quality of care provided in the community; and

Deliver equivalence in the out of hospital environment, ensuring both care practitioners and the public have as much confidence in out of hospital services as in hospital care.

Dr Lawn responded to member's questions. The Mayor thanked Dr Lawn for a most interesting presentation and asked that the presentation be sent to all councillors.

269/14 Apologies for absence

Apologies were received from Councillors P.A. Broom, M. Bushnell, T.J.M. Evans, D. Gohil, M.J. Madams, J.M. Pinkerton OBE, M.W. Rough and D. Saliagopoulos, and Miss Sue Faulkner, Vice-Chairman of the Members' Code of Conduct Committee.

270/14 Minutes

The minutes of the Council meeting held on 17 July 2014 were confirmed as a correct record.

271/14 Disclosures of Interest

There were none.

272/14 Announcements from the Mayor

The Mayor spoke about some recent events that she had attended including: the Civic Service, Civic Reception, a visit to Spelthorne's twin town, Melun and the opening of a sensory room at Springfield school, for children with autism and Asperger's'. She announced that she was pleased to be paying the first Mayoral visit to Staines Synagogue this Saturday the 25th November.

The Mayor gave some dates of upcoming events for councillors' diaries:

- 8 November - Stanwell Hotel dining club evening
- 9 November - Remembrance Sunday
- 5 December - Mauritian evening at London Irish Ground, Hazlewood Centre, Sunbury

273/14 Announcements from the Leader

The Leader made the following announcements:

Fair Play for Spelthorne

Team Spelthorne was awarded the Surrey Playing Fields Fair Play Award at the P&G Surrey Youth Games 2014. Members of Team Spelthorne were voted for their excellent on-court behaviour and being very courteous to opponents. Participants were also complimented for being very well behaved off court and encouraging each other. Spelthorne Borough Council has been awarded £250 and a trophy in recognition of the award. Members of the tennis team and Boccia team were presented with the trophy at Council on 17th July 2014.

Spelthorne Property Portfolio – Effective Maintenance Services

The management of the Council's property assets embraces short, medium and long term considerations which are regularly reviewed to ensure that they remain closely aligned to the Council's strategic objectives while making the properties fit for purpose and in compliance with legislative requirements.

The Council continues to undertake repairs and refurbishment of properties at this moment in time which includes two current projects:

- To carry out concrete repair works to the top (roof) levels of Elmsleigh Multi-Storey Car Park that has suffered from failed coatings and concrete cracks allowing water ingress into the structure - Contract value at £298,249.12.
- To carry out the replacement of the Greeno Community Centre roof that has become susceptible to failure and water infiltration - Contract value at £150,421.00

The above projects are currently underway and are within budget and they will be completed within this financial year. This conservative council's basic objectives in asset maintenance are:

1. to minimise reactive maintenance by improving planned maintenance arrangements
2. to demonstrate 'Best Value' in terms of suitability
3. to make a positive contribution to the social well-being of the community through its use by others such as day / wellbeing centres, voluntary groups, charity organisations or small businesses

274/14 Announcements from the Chief Executive

The Chief Executive reminded councillors that the meeting of Overview and Scrutiny Committee scheduled in the Council's diary for 4 November 2014 had been postponed to 25 November 2014.

275/14 Questions from members of the public

The Mayor reported that under Standing Order 14, one question had been received from a member of the public, Mr A. McLuskey. In his absence, the Mayor read out his question as follows:

Question from Mr A. McLuskey

"Would the Leader agree with me that it is regrettable to find the dangerous quagga mussels in our community and can he reassure me as to what steps (within its powers) Spelthorne will be deploying to eradicate or at least prevent the spread of these unwanted visitors?"

The following response by the Leader, Councillor Robert Watts, was given in writing:

"Thank you for your question, Mr. McLuskey.

As I am sure you will have noticed, the finding of this species has received local and national press attention. The Environment Agency is responsible for the health of our local rivers and they have put together information (now available on our website) on how to mitigate the spread of the mussel. The Environment Agency will act to deal with this invasive species, as far as they are able. Sadly, the mussel is but one of an increasing number of invasive

species. Spelthorne will promote mitigation measures and hope residents and visitors to our rivers and ponds will take, and act on, the Environment Agency's advice."

276/14 Petitions

The Mayor advised that no petitions had been received in time for inclusion on this agenda. However, she acknowledged that a petition was received by the Chief Executive on Tuesday this week (21 October 2014) and this would be brought to the Council at a time that was convenient for the family concerned.

277/14 Development of a Housing Strategy

The Council considered the recommendation of the Cabinet on the three strategies – housing, private sector and homelessness – comprising the complete Housing Strategy for Spelthorne Borough Council.

Resolved that the housing, private sector and homelessness strategies comprising the complete Housing Strategy 2014-2017 for Spelthorne Borough Council, be adopted.

278/14 Capital funding for housing opportunities

The Council considered the recommendation of the Cabinet on a potential opportunity to secure a number of temporary and private sector properties in the Borough for housing.

Resolved:

- (1) to authorise officers to continue negotiations with Thames Valley Housing for housing opportunities on the Crooked Billet site;
- (2) to agree, in principle, to spend £500,000 of commuted sum funding on the Crooked Billet/Thames Valley Housing project and
- (3) to agree, in principle, and subject to full development of the business case, including evaluation advice, to a supplementary capital estimate of £500,000.

279/14 Delegated Authority for Environmental Health Officers

The Council considered the recommendation of the Cabinet on amendments to the Scheme of Delegations to enable Environmental Health officers to use the powers granted to the Council under new and existing legislation.

Resolved that the proposed amendments to the Scheme of Officer Delegations in relation to Environmental Health, be approved.

280/14 Report from the Leader of the Council

The Leader of the Council, Councillor Robert Watts, presented the report of the Cabinet meeting held on 30 September 2014, which outlined the various matters the Cabinet had decided since the last Council meeting.

281/14 Report from the Chairman of the Audit Committee

In the absence of the Chairman, Councillor Mary Madams, the Vice-Chairman of the Audit Committee, Councillor Tony Harman, presented the report which outlined the matters the Committee had decided since the last Council meeting.

282/14 Report from the Chairman of the Crime and Disorder Scrutiny Committee

In the absence of the Chairman, Councillor Philippa Broom, the Vice-Chairman of the Crime and Disorder Scrutiny Committee, Councillor Alfred Friday, presented the report which outlined the matters the Committee had decided since the last Council meeting.

283/14 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.

284/14 Report from the Chairman of the Members' Code of Conduct Committee

The Chairman of the Members' Code of Conduct Committee, Mr Murray Litvak, presented the report which outlined the matters the Committee had decided since the last Council meeting.

285/14 Report from the Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee

In the absence of the Chairman, Councillor Philippa Broom, the Vice-Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, Councillor Alfred Friday, presented the report which outlined the matters the Committee had decided since the last Council meeting.

286/14 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.

287/14 Motions

There were none.

288/14 Questions on Ward issues

The Mayor reported that two ward issues questions had been received from Councillors R.D. and S.A. Dunn. In accordance with Standing Order 15.3(c) of the Constitution, the Mayor directed that the questions and answers would be

given in writing at the meeting without being read aloud. Copies had been laid around for all present at the meeting.

(1) Question from Councillor S.A. Dunn:

“Can the Portfolio holder for Planning let me know if the owners of the site of the former Fordbridge Nurseries in Sunbury-on-Thames, or any developers, have been in discussion with the Planning Department regarding its possible use?”

Answer from the Portfolio Holder for Planning, Councillor V.J. Leighton:

“Thank you for your question, Councillor Mrs. Dunn.

The Council has numerous ‘pre-application’ discussions each year where planning advice is given and the content of that is confidential, as is also the question of whether any particular developer has approached the Council for such discussions.

However, Members can approach our planning staff for confidential advice at any time on any planning matter and I encourage the Member to do so

I am able to confirm in relation to this site that it is in the Green Belt, and if any advice were sought, the Council’s firm policy on the Green Belt would be made very clear.”

In accordance with Standing Order 15.2, Councillor S.A. Dunn asked the following supplementary question:

“Can the portfolio holder assure me that any pre-application discussions are fed back to ward councillors so they are kept in the loop and do not find out the information too late in the day to do anything about it?”

The Portfolio Holder for Planning, Councillor V.J. Leighton, subsequently gave the following response in writing:

“I have discussed this with the Head of Planning and he has confirmed that Members may approach him on any planning matter but where residents, businesses or developers have approached officers for technical planning advice on a confidential basis this will need to be respected.”

(2) Question from Councillor R.D. Dunn:

“What has happened to the £250,000 insurance money received for the fire at the pavilion in Laleham Park?”

Answer from the Portfolio Holder for the Environment, Councillor A.J. Mitchell:

“The insurance monies received totalled £200,000 and they were for flooding and subsidence, not a fire at the pavilion. To date £50,000 of this has been spent on consultation in the park with residents, via libraries and the web, and the production of a detailed master plan for the park by landscape architects

Chris Blandford Associates which will enable us to plan future facilities in the park. The remaining money is likely to go towards toilets and possibly a café facility depending on overall costs. Other elements of the master plan will only move forward as and when funding becomes available.”

289/14 General questions

The Mayor reported that three General questions had been received from Councillors R.W. Sider, C.M. Frazer and I.J. Beardsmore. In accordance with Standing Order 15.3(c) of the Constitution, the Mayor directed that the questions and answers would be given in writing at the meeting without being read aloud. Copies had been laid around for all present at the meeting.

Question from Councillor R.W. Sider:

“Will the Council join me in congratulating Sunbury Walled Garden in achieving a gold award and being declared the overall winner in the small park category, Staines Cemetery being voted best small cemetery in the south east and being awarded a silver gilt, and Sunbury cemetery also achieving a silver gilt, all awards of which were in the South and South East in Bloom Awards; and will the Leader agree with me that these are magnificent results and reflect on the enthusiasm and dedication to duty of both Council ground maintenance staff and the Head of Street Scene?”

Answer from the Leader of the Council, Councillor R.L. Watts:

“Thank you for your question, Councillor Sider.

It is always gratifying to know that the residents and the thousands of visitors to our parks, gardens and cemeteries appreciate the hard work that goes into attaining such prestigious awards. I would like to thank all the officers and our contractors whose contributions help us to achieve this recognition of very high standards year on year.”

Question from Councillor C.M. Frazer:

“Given the Council’s clear commitment to economic, social and community development in Spelthorne, will the Council join me in expressing our wholehearted support for promoting and achieving full, Spelthorne-wide, coverage of the Oyster transport scheme?”

Answer from the Leader of the Council, Councillor R.L. Watts:

“Thank you for your question, Councillor Frazer.

Public transport has an important role to play in reducing congestion as well as a means of travel for those without a car or regular use of one. The Oyster card is a convenient, and potentially, a cheaper way of paying for travel on public transport in London and I would fully support its use being extended across Spelthorne as a whole.”

In accordance with Standing Order 15.2, Councillor C.M. Frazer asked the following supplementary question:

“Will the Council be seeking an urgent meeting with Transport for London and all other interested bodies in order to take forward our policy?”

And will such a meeting please include a request to network rail to tackle the deplorable state of their railway station in my ward in Ashford?

Response from the Leader of the Council, Councillor R.L. Watts:

“We will be dealing with our MP in relation to the Oyster card as I believe he has contacts with TFL. In relation to Ashford Station we are looking at what we can do there. Several years ago there was regeneration done in Ashford but it was not deemed suitable to do any work at the station by the then conservative councillors for that area.”

Question from Councillor I.J. Beardsmore:

“Government Guidance is quite clear Spelthorne is a standalone Housing Management Area so why are we merging with Runnymede?”

It is nothing to do with the duty to co-operate

The only effect will be to put a new element into the mix that will increase the demand on our housing. Something which can only put more pressure on our Green Belt so is this the reason why?”

Answer from the Leader of the Council, Councillor R.L. Watts:

“Thank you for your question, Councillor Beardsmore.

Firstly, as a point of clarification, the Government document referred to by Councillor Beardsmore refers to ‘Housing Market Areas’ not ‘Housing Management Areas’.

The ‘government guidance’ referred to is actually a study commissioned by the Department for Communities and Local Government from the Centre for Urban and Regional Development Studies (CURDS) at Newcastle University that was published in 2010 and based on the 2001 Census. This work is now reasonably outdated.

Actual Government guidance on determining the extent of housing market areas is contained within the Planning Practice Guidance note on Housing and Economic Development Needs Assessments published in 2014. Paragraph 10 of the PPG note on housing needs assessments clearly states that:-

‘A housing market area is a geographical area defined by household demand...’

Paragraph 10 goes on to state that: -

‘The extent of the housing market area identified will vary and many in practice will cut across various local planning authority administrative boundaries. Local planning authorities should work with all the other

constituent authorities under the duty to co-operate.'

As such Government guidance in the PPG acknowledges that housing market areas do fall across administrative boundaries and that local authorities within the same housing market area should work together under the duty to co-operate. This is the basis for working with Runnymede Borough Council on this particular issue and is anyway a sensible use of resources.

The demand for new housing is determined by Government population and household projections which are periodically published by the department for Communities and Local Government. These have to be taken into account when undertaking a study of housing need and demand across a housing market area as advised in the PPG note on housing needs assessments.

However, it will be for this Council to decide what needs it can meet and what its future planning policies are in this respect.”

In accordance with Standing Order 15.2, Councillor I.J. Beardsmore asked the following supplementary question:

“1. I would like clarification as to what the PPG note is, as it was cancelled in 2007 and the PPS that replaced it in 2011 is also cancelled. There hasn't been a PPG issued by any government for at least 8 years.

2. Have they plugged the new numbers into the methodology used by CURDS to establish their housing management areas?

3. Why is it that we are mixed with Runnymede – I still haven't had an answer to that?

The Leader of the Council, Councillor R.L. Watts, subsequently gave the following response in writing:

“1. The government published draft Planning Practice Guidance in August 2013 and which has been regularly updated since. This is published on the government's Planning Portal web site
<http://planningguidance.planningportal.gov.uk/>

2. The government's Planning Practice Guidance explains how housing market areas should now be identified. This guidance does not refer to CURDS.

3. The Planning Practice Guidance requires authorities to 'cooperate' with adjoining authorities in understanding the extent of their housing market areas and that is why we are currently working with Runnymede to establish the facts.”

290/14 Urgent business

There was none.

