

**Minutes of the Business, Infrastructure and Growth Committee
11 September 2025**

Present:

Councillor H.R.D. Williams (Chair)

Councillors:

C. Bateson	S. Bhadye	N. Islam
S.N. Beatty	D.C. Clarke	
M. Beecher	M. Gibson	

Substitutions: Councillors P.N. Woodward (In place of J.R. Boughtflower)
M. Buck (In place of R.V. Geach)
L. E. Nichols (In place of S. Gyawali)

32/25 Apologies and Substitutes

Apologies were received from Councillor Boughtflower, Councillor Geach, and Councillor Gyawali. Councillor Woodward attended as Councillor Boughtflower's substitute, Councillor Buck attended as Councillor Geach's substitute, and Councillor Nichols attended as Councillor Gyawali's substitute.

33/25 Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 02 July 2025 were agreed as a correct record.

34/25 Disclosures of interest

Councillor Nichols declared he was on the Board of Directors for Knowle Green Estates.

Councillor Woodward declared he was on the Board of Directors for Spelthorne Direct Services.

35/25 Questions from members of the Public

There were no questions from members of the public.

36/25 Forward Plan

The Committee **resolved** to note the forward plan.

37/25 Spelthorne Business Hub

The Committee considered a report from the Economic Development Manager regarding relocating the Spelthorne Business Hub. Members were advised the Business Hub must either close or be relocated by the end of March 2026. A number of sites had been explored as options for relocation, with space at the Council offices being the least prohibitively expensive and the Council to still be in a position to still provide the service. The Economic Development Manager confirmed that he had spoken to some of the current tenants of the Business Hub who had expressed concern over the costs of moving to one of sites considered.

The Committee explored the suitability of the sites considered against the cost to house the Hub at the various sites. The Committee expressed concern that the current users of the Hub had not been canvassed about their preferred site for relocation. The Committee expressed a desire for the Council to continue to provide the service, and acknowledged that relocation of the Business Hub to the Council Offices would allow the service to continue at low cost to the Council.

The Committee **resolved** to

1. Agree the closure of the Spelthorne Business Hub at the Summit Centre, Sunbury by 31 March 2026;
2. Relocate the Business Hub to the Council Offices, Knowle Green, Staines-upon-Thames;
3. Approve the continuation of the Council's Business Support Service, delivered independently of the Hub premises.

38/25 Ashford BID Report

The Committee considered a report from the Senior Economic Development Officer on the feasibility of establishing a Business Improvement District (BID) in Ashford. Ashford town Centre had been identified as a location where additional investment would be beneficial, and establishment would potentially improve vitality of the town Centre and improve footfall. Initial surveys of businesses had indicated support in principal, though further feasibility studies and financial modelling were required before going to ballot for decision.

Some members of the Committee noted the proposed boundary and suggested it could be expanded. The Committee also noted the proposed levy

to operate the BID and the impact this may have on businesses, however they acknowledged the benefit a BID may have on Ashford town Centre. Some members expressed concern over the impact the proposed amount collected from the BID would have, but felt work towards a formal ballot should progress so the decision could be made by the businesses that would be impacted.

The Committee **resolved** to

1. Agree to progress the development of a Business Improvement District (BID) for Ashford town Centre proposal to the next stage.
2. Note the feasibility study undertaken on a potential Business Improvement District in Ashford completed by consultants Heartflood.

39/25 HSR/SLR Working Group Recommendation

The Committee considered a recommendation from the Heathrow Southern Rail(HSR)/Southern Light Rail (SLR) Working Group about which transport link between Staines and Heathrow to formally support. The Chair of the HSR/SLR Working Group, Councillor Bateson, advised the Committee the Working Group had met a number of times over the past year, and felt that, having considered the proposals before them, HSR proposals would be more suitable for the Council to support as it was less invasive, and would place less pressure on Council resources. However, this support would be conditional on trains stopping at Staines, evidence that the proposal would not harm Staines Moor or increase groundwater flood risk in the area, and reviewing and agreeing detailed terms of the HSR proposal.

Some members of the Committee expressed support for the proposed recommendation as they felt the SLR proposal would have a negative impact on residents near the rail line. Other members of the Committee expressed they did not support the proposal due to its environmental impacts, and impacts on the residents of Stanwell.

The Committee felt that the Council should ask that Heathrow liaise with Transport for London to consider Spelthorne being placed within Zone 6 as part of this project.

The Committee **resolved** to **recommend** to Council that this Council supports Heathrow Southern Rail (HSR) link proposal conditional upon

- (a) Trains stopping at Staines;
- (b) Evidence that the proposal will not harm Staines Moor nor increase the groundwater flood risk in the area; and
- (c) Reviewing and agreeing detailed terms of the HSR link proposal.

40/25 Exclusion of Public and Press (Exempt Business)

The Committee did not exclude the public and press from the remainder of the meeting.

41/25 Ashford Victory Place

The Chair advised this report had been withdrawn from the agenda.

42/25 Thameside House

The Committee considered a report from the Asset Manager on the proposed disposal of Thameside House to the preferred bidder on the basis that the developer will not demolish the building but will adapt it under Permitted Development. The Committee were advised of the bids received and the benefits of each. The preferred bid was recommended to achieve best value, would support Corporate Plan objectives, responds to residents' concerns about overdevelopment and would contribute towards the Council's financial resilience by generating a capital receipt which would enable the Council to pay down some of its debt early.

The Committee expressed concern over the lack of social housing offered by the bidders.

It was proposed by Councillor Bateson, seconded by Councillor Clarke, and **resolved** to exclude the public and press for the remainder of the discussion on this item in accordance with Paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended) as it was likely to disclose information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information) and in all the circumstances of the case, the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information because disclosure to the public would prejudice the financial position of the authority in being able to undertake even-handed negotiations and finalizing acceptable contract terms.

The Committee **resolved** to recommend to Council to:

- a) Approve the disposal of Thameside House, Staines, to the preferred bidder (A) as set out in more detail in the confidential Appendix 1 attached to the report;
- b) Delegate authority to the Group Head of Assets in consultation with the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Business, Infrastructure, and Growth Committee to agree any variations to the terms of the disposal relating to Thameside House;
- c) Delegate authority to the Group Head of Corporate Governance to enter into a transfer to complete the disposal and any ancillary legal documentation required in relation to the proposed disposal of Thameside House.