

MINUTES OF THE SPELTHORNE BOROUGH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Council Meeting of Spelthorne Borough Council held in the Council Chamber, Council Offices, Knowle Green, Staines-upon-Thames on Thursday, 20 October 2016 at 7.30 pm

Present:

Councillors:

M.M. Attewell	Q.R. Edgington	A.J. Mitchell
C.B. Barnard	T.J.M. Evans	S.C. Mooney
R.O. Barratt	K. Flurry	D. Patel
I.J. Beardsmore	P.C. Forbes-Forsyth	J.M. Pinkerton OBE
J.R. Boughtflower	N.J. Gething	J.R. Sexton
S.J. Burkmar	A.C. Harman	R.W. Sider BEM
S. Capes	I.T.E. Harvey	R.A. Smith-Ainsley
R. Chandler	A.T. Jones	H.A. Thomson
S.M. Doran	J.G. Kavanagh	H.R.D. Williams
S.A. Dunn	V.J. Leighton	

In Attendance:

Miss Sue Faulkner and Murray Litvak

Councillor A.E. Friday, The Mayor, in the Chair

Apologies: Apologies were received from Councillors C.A. Davis, M.P.C. Francis, C.M. Frazer, N. Islam, M.J. Madams, O. Rybinski and B.B. Spoor

234/16 Presentation from Ashford and St. Peter's Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust

Chief Executive Suzanne Rankin, Chairman Aileen McLeish, and Chief Nurse Heather Caudle gave a presentation on behalf of the Ashford and St. Peter's Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust and answered questions from councillors.

The presentation covered:

- The new Sustainability and Transformation Plan;
- An update on the merger with the Royal Surrey County Hospital;

- The current financial position of the Trust and future challenges;
- Measures put in place to improve emergency care;
- Evidence on the quality of local services; and
- How patient experience has been used as a key performance indicator.

235/16 Minutes

The minutes of the Council meeting held on 21 July 2016 were agreed as a correct record, subject to minute 187/16 on the report from the chairman of the Planning Committee being amended to reflect the fact that application 16/00560/FUL was in fact refused and the word 'convict' in minute 190/16 being replaced by the word 'evict'.

236/16 Disclosures of Interest

There were no disclosures of interest.

237/16 Announcements from the Mayor

The Mayor made the following announcements:

“On 6th September, 9 of the 11 Surrey Mayors and Council Chairmen visited Spelthorne for our Civic Day and toured the borough. We stopped at the Millennium Embroidery, Walled Garden, Queen Mary's Sailing Club, London Irish at Hazelwood and Shepperton Studios. I am pleased to report that there was universal surprise at the quality of what our borough has to offer. I heard the words: "I did not know this is here and how lovely or interesting it is" many times during the course of that day.

On 10th September more than 100 passengers joined us for our Flappers & Dappers 20s themed river trip. May I take this opportunity to thank all those who came most sincerely. I am delighted to report that we raised £1955 for our selected charities, thanks to everybody for their generosity.

The next event in the calendar is our Annual Business Reception scheduled for Friday 11th November at Hazelwood, the home of London Irish. Further details are available from Sheila Kimpton, the Mayor's Secretary.”

238/16 Announcements from the Leader

The Leader made the following announcements:

“Thank you, Mr Mayor.

The voting process for whether we should introduce a Business Improvement District (BID) covering Staines-upon-Thames runs from 1st November until 29th November. The Council supports the development of the BID as we believe that it will enhance economic prospects of our main town centre.

At our last Council meeting in July you gave authority for the Council to increase its prudential borrowing limit and approved an additional supplementary capital estimate for property acquisitions within the Borough of £400m for 2016/17. At that time we were able to advise you of a significant property investment opportunity we were actively pursuing, although we were unable to provide you with all the details of the proposed deal as we had signed a non-disclosure agreement with the vendor.

By now you will be aware that this deal involved the purchase of the BP International Campus at Sunbury-on-Thames. Despite fierce competition from a number of significant institutional investors from both the UK and abroad, we completed the purchase of the site on 29 September, which encompasses the entire campus, excluding the South West corner. This is an outstanding deal for Spelthorne, the like of which has not been seen before in the UK. The BP International Campus is the largest privately owned office park in the UK and is currently home to approximately 3,000 employees. The site comprises 11 office buildings which provide 620,000 sq ft of accommodation, with surrounding land and 2300 car park spaces. Under the terms of the agreement, BP will remain as tenants at the Sunbury site, leasing back the offices from the Council for a minimum period of 20 years. According to the publication Property Week, our acquisition of the site is the largest ever commercial property investment by a local authority in the UK.

You will be aware that Spelthorne faces significant cuts to the grants it currently receives from central government over the next few years. The acquisition of the BP International Campus will provide approximately £3m net revenue surplus per year to support the Council's finances and this deal alone will essentially enable us to balance the Council's budget for the next two years. By signing this deal we are in a far stronger financial position, enabling us to protect the vital services which our residents and businesses need and deserve.

I would like to thank my fellow councillors and the small team of officers who worked tirelessly, together with our expert external advisors to ensure that we won the race to acquire this site. This was truly a team effort which we should be very proud of. I am very proud of!

Securing the Council's financial stability is our highest priority at this time. Although this deal is a monumental step in enabling us to protect key Council

services we still need to do more. The acquisition of the BP Campus forms a key part of our long term strategy to develop new ways of generating sustainable income streams and make us a self-funding Council. Under my Leadership we will work tirelessly to achieve this for our Borough.

Without this approach we would face some very difficult decisions about the future funding of some of our services. As a caring Conservative Council we care passionately that we should continue to provide the essential services our communities need. One service which is highly valued by many of our residents is our Spelride community transport service. I am delighted to announce that far from cutting this service we have recently purchased and taken delivery of four new replacement Spelride vehicles at a cost of £218,000. These vehicles are specially designed for passengers with mobility problems who struggle to use public transport, providing a lifeline for the elderly and people with disabilities, enabling them to get around the borough and live independently within their own homes. I would like to thank Cllr Attewell, Portfolio Holder for Community and Wellbeing, for her hard work in delivering this.

Colleagues, I'm sure you will agree that the sheer magnitude of the BP deal and improvement it makes to the Council's finances shows that Spelthorne means business. In completing this deal we have announced that we are a serious investor in our community, capable of taking on some of the biggest institutional investors and winning. We want people to know how serious we are in growing our asset base, how we are strongly focused on providing sustainable income streams for the Council; how we can directly influence the economic development and prosperity of the Borough; how we can deliver much needed housing for our residents and how we pride ourselves on a clean and safe borough. With this in mind I am introducing a new strap line for the Council that tells the world just that - **'Spelthorne Means Business'.**

239/16 Announcements from the Chief Executive

There were none.

240/16 Questions from members of the public

There were none.

241/16 Petitions

There were none.

242/16 Report from the Leader of the Council

The Leader of the Council, Councillor I.T.E. Harvey, presented the report of the Cabinet meeting held on 28 September 2016 which outlined the matters the Cabinet had decided since the last Council meeting.

243/16 Report from the Chairman of the Audit Committee

In the Chairman's absence, the Vice-Chair of the Audit Committee, Councillor D. Patel, presented the Chairman's report which outlined the matters the Committee had decided since the last Council meeting.

244/16 Report from the Chairman of the Members' Code of Conduct Committee

The Chairman of the Members' Code of Conduct Committee, Mr. Murray Litvak, presented his report which outlined the matters the Committee had decided since the last Council meeting. The Chairman provided a verbal update in respect of the Code of Conduct Hearing Panel that met on the 12 October 2016, confirming that a letter of apology had been sent to the complainant.

245/16 Report from the Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee

In the Chairman's absence, the Vice-Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, Councillor S. Mooney, presented his report which outlined the matters the Committee had decided since the last Council meeting.

246/16 Report from the Chairman of the Planning Committee

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

247/16 Motions

In accordance with Standing Order 17 the Council received one written Notice of Motion.

Councillor Harman moved and Councillor Boughtflower seconded the following motion:

“This Council is very concerned to learn that Abellio is cutting a number of crucial bus routes in Spelthorne. This Council asks Abellio to reconsider this action as a matter of urgency. This Council also asks Surrey County Council to work with either Abellio or an alternative to ensure these services are maintained for vulnerable users such as school children and elderly residents.”

Councillors debated the motion.

The Mayor then invited councillors to vote on the motion proposed by Councillor Harman.

The motion was carried.

Resolved that Spelthorne Borough Council is very concerned to learn that Abellio is cutting a number of crucial bus routes in Spelthorne. Spelthorne Borough Council asks Abellio to reconsider this action as a matter of urgency. Spelthorne Borough Council also asks Surrey County Council to work with either Abellio or an alternative to ensure these services are maintained for vulnerable users such as school children and elderly residents.

248/16 Questions on Ward Issues

There were no questions on Ward issues.

249/16 General questions

The Mayor reported that three general questions had been received, in accordance with Standing Order 15, from Councillor Edgington.

1. Question from Councillor Q.R. Edgington

“What progress has Councillor Mitchell made to reviewing and delivery of the parks grass cutting contract?”

Response from Councillor A.J. Mitchell, Portfolio holder for Environment and Compliance

“Thank you for your question, Councillor Edgington. I refer you to the response I gave to your last question with regard to this matter at Council on 21st July 2016.

In your short tenure as Leader of the Council you would have been aware of the necessity for financial responsibility. We estimate that the budget would have to be increased by £40K to £50K a year to achieve your aims. This is not feasible at this time although we will continue to review our grounds maintenance budget as appropriate. The current contract expires in 2019 and we will review the uncut areas as part of any specification for the new contract.”

In accordance with Council Standing Order 15.2, Councillor Q.R. Edgington asked the following supplementary question:

“Thank you Councillor Mitchell. Can you explain the vast anomalies within contract delivery of this Borough? For example, the grass is cut outside this building and taken away but not in our parks. And why can't wild seeds be sown in those areas which are not cut to make them more presentable?”

Councillor A.J. Mitchell, Portfolio holder for Environment and Compliance, gave the following response to the supplementary question:

“The specification for parks and open spaces allows for different areas to be cut at differing frequencies, for example cemeteries are box cut and kept to a higher standard than a grass verge. Play areas are also box cut whereas the grass surrounding the play area is cut and drop. This is normal practice for grounds maintenance contracts to deal with differing levels of footfall and activity.

The management of wild flower areas can be very costly and if managed properly does take up both time and cost, not something we considered when trying to reduce costs in 2009. That said our Commons officer has put together a programme of bulb planting and wild seed sowing in two parks in Spelthorne - Fordbridge and Groveley. This will be taking place this year in the uncut areas.”

2. Question from Councillor Q.R. Edgington

“Does the Leader agree with the decision by Surrey County Council to charge residents of the Borough from the 1st of September up to £50 to dispose of their building waste?”

Response from the Leader of the Council, Councillor I.T.E Harvey

“Thank you for your question, Councillor Edgington. As you will be aware from your time as Leader, this is something over which Spelthorne Borough Council has no influence. We obviously have sympathy with anyone facing additional costs but also recognise that Surrey County Council, who set these charges, are facing very considerable budget pressures.”

In accordance with Council Standing Order 15.2, Councillor Q.R. Edgington asked the following supplementary question:

“I thank the Leader for his response. Does he agree with massive increases in charges made by Surrey County Council? When fly tipping increases in this Borough, who will pay for the cost of waste removal on the streets?”

Councillor I.T.E Harvey, Leader of the Council, gave the following response to the supplementary question:

“Neighbourhood Services have been monitoring the effects of the changes recently undertaken at the waste transfer station in Charlton Lane and we can confirm that we have not seen the suggested significant increases in fly tipping as a result of some of the charges introduced. Neighbourhood Services will continue to monitor and continue to liaise with Surrey officers on this subject. In addition to this, Surrey County Council have recently developed a fly tipping strategy and have been promoting this by way of a campaign to alert residents to the potential outcomes of not disposing of their waste properly.”

3. Question from Councillor Q.R. Edgington

“Following the redevelopment of the Charlton Waste facility, what steps are the Council taking to control air quality in the Borough?”

Response from the Leader of the Council, Councillor I.T.E Harvey

“The applications for the EcoPark were supported by air quality modelling and assessment. The contribution of the EcoPark was predicted to be insignificant for particulate pollution, and throughout the borough the levels of particulate matter are well below the relevant objectives. Nitrogen dioxide emissions from the EcoPark will be about 1% of the air quality objective; road traffic is responsible for over 80% of emissions in Spelthorne. The traffic emissions are largely due to vehicles on trunk and main roads controlled by the Highways Agency and Surrey County Council.

A continuous monitoring station (recording levels of nitrogen dioxide, and particulates) was installed in Upper Halliford in February 2016, funded by Surrey County Council – a legacy of the efforts of the late Councillor Watts. This monitor will be in place throughout the ongoing construction phase, commissioning and into the operational phase.

The Council is reviewing its 2005 Air Quality Action Plan. The success of the action plan will depend on external partners such as Highways England, Surrey County Council and Heathrow Airport Ltd taking responsibility for their air quality actions and engaging constructively in the process.

Throughout this process the Council continues to assess all major planning applications for impacts on local air quality through Core Policy EN3 to ensure any significant impacts are mitigated. It also continues to work closely with partners such as the County Council and Heathrow Airport to look at possible air quality actions and funding streams thereof.”

In accordance with Council Standing Order 15.2, Councillor Q.R. Edgington asked the following supplementary question:

“Can Councillor Harvey ensure that the monitoring station will continue to be funded by Surrey County Council and can he seek assurance from the Leader of Surrey County Council that this will be the case? So therefore the massive increase that Spelthorne residents are being asked to pay for the waste facility will at least be compensated.”

Councillor I.T.E Harvey, Leader of the Council, gave the following response to the supplementary question:

“Surrey County Council has agreed to fund the monitoring station through to mid-2020. Surrey County Council’s decision whether to continue with the monitoring after this will depend on the outcome of the air quality results obtained.”

250/16 Appointment of representative Trustees

Ashford Sick or Needy Charity

It was proposed by Councillor Harvey and seconded by Councillor Harman to re-appoint Mr Alan Hatchman, Mr Mike Mulford and Mr Daniel Shenton as Council representative Trustees of the Ashford Sick and Needy Charity for a further four year term of office until October 2020.

Resolved that Mr Alan Hatchman, Mr Mike Mulford and Mr Daniel Shenton be re-appointed as Council representative trustees to serve on the Ashford Sick or Needy Charity for a further four year term of office until October 2020.