

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, 14 December 2017 at 7.30 pm

Present:

Councillors:

M.M. Attewell	Q.R. Edgington	S.C. Mooney
C.B. Barnard	M.P.C. Francis	D. Patel
R.O. Barratt	A.E. Friday	J.M. Pinkerton OBE
J.R. Boughtflower	N.J. Gething	O. Rybinski
S.J. Burkmar	A.C. Harman	D. Saliagopoulos
S. Capes	I.T.E. Harvey	A. Sapunovas
R. Chandler	N. Islam	J.R. Sexton
C.A. Davis	A.T. Jones	R.W. Sider BEM
S.M. Doran	J.G. Kavanagh	R.A. Smith-Ainsley
S.A. Dunn	M.J. Madams	B.B. Spoor
P.C. Edgington	A.J. Mitchell	H.R.D. Williams

Councillor V.J. Leighton, The Mayor, in the Chair

Apologies: Apologies were received from Councillors I.J. Beardsmore, T.J.M. Evans, A. L. Griffiths and H.A. Thomson and Miss Sue Faulkner, Vice-Chairman of the Members' Code of Conduct Committee.

606/17 Minutes

The minutes of the Council meeting held on 19 October 2017 were agreed as a correct record.

607/17 Disclosures of Interest

There were no disclosures of interest.

608/17 Announcements from the Mayor

The Mayor, Councillor V.J. Leighton extended congratulations on behalf of the Council to Councillors Penny and Quentin Edgington on their marriage.

She thanked St James Senior Boys School in Ashford for hosting the Mayor's Civic Reception for business and especially Sir Peter Bonfield CBE for being the first speaker at this annual event.

She reported donations made to the Mayor's Charity Fund from Albert Duke of York Lodge, Hampton Masonic Lodge, the Salvation Army Citadel and that the proceeds of the Sunbury and Shepperton Rotary Santa Sleigh collection would be donated to the Mayor's Charity Fund.

She advised councillors of some upcoming events for their diaries:

Friday 19th January - wine tasting evening at the Holiday Inn

Friday 9th February - Mayor's Music Night event at Sunbury Cricket Club

Tuesday 13th February - cinema evening at Shepperton Studios showing Paddington 2.

Wednesday 21st March - race night at Kempton Park.

609/17 Announcements from the Leader

The Leader made the following announcements:

He thanked all staff and councillors who helped arrange the many excellent community based events which had taken place in the Borough.

He joined Cllr Maureen Attewell, Cabinet Member for Wellbeing in thanking the Ward Councillors who had donated money from their Better Neighbourhood Grants for Christmas gifts to our Meals on Wheels clients.

The Benwell Centre in Sunbury-on-Thames had received £1,300 from Tesco's Bags of Help community grant scheme to help it create a gardening club for its members and residents of Mitchison Court.

He updated councillors on the asset acquisition strategy: The Council had purchased Hanover House, which sits on the River Thames next to Bridge Street car park site in Staines-upon-Thames and was looking at options for the property once the current lease expired towards the end of next year; We had also purchased the White House next to Kingston Road council depot, with the intention of redeveloping the site to help address specific housing needs; Contractors had been appointed to develop the former Churchill Hall in Sunbury-on-Thames into three 2-bedroomed properties for affordable housing and the former Bugle Returns Public House in Upper Halliford into eight flats, both due to commence shortly; A prior approval application had been submitted for the first phase development of the Benwell House site in Sunbury-on-Thames, to convert the main building into flats, with works due to commence in the Spring of next year.

Spelthorne had published its Green Belt Assessment which sets out how areas of the Borough are performing against Green Belt criteria. The assessment would form part of the Council's evidence for the Local Plan which identifies the needs of the Borough in relation to housing, the economy, community facilities and infrastructure.

He announced a new project, "Every ward at its best" to support councillors locally to make an impact in their communities by improving sites that seemed to be 'forgotten'; such as derelict properties, fly-tipping hot spots and other

unreported nuisances. It also included looking at any underutilised Council assets. He encouraged councillors of all parties to support this initiative.

Spelthorne Council was working with partners to explore the possibility of a light rail link between Staines and a newly expanded Heathrow. This would bring benefits to the borough, including very substantial economic benefits to Staines, much less environmental impact compared to a conventional heavy rail route and directly aid residents who work at Heathrow get to their place of employment.

He reported that the Procurement and Contract Management team had presented a report to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee with recommendations on how the council can increase the amount of goods and services sourced from local businesses.

The Leader was delighted to announce that as of today he had terminated Daniel Mouawad's probationary period and his position is now permanent and substantive.

Finally, the Leader thanked staff and Councillors for their support and hard work over the last year. Despite the financial difficulties facing the Council, Spelthorne had continued to develop innovative solutions to generate sustainable income streams, ensuring that it can continue to provide the essential services our residents need and deserve.

He wished all members and officers a blessed Christmas and a prosperous New Year.

610/17 Announcements from the Chief Executive

The Chief Executive, Daniel Mouawad, announced the setting up of a small dedicated unit in the Council focused on delivery of commercial acquisitions. The acquisitions would generate net income streams for the Council to support the provision of services to residents and the delivery of housing development projects within the Borough, such as Benwell, increasing the supply of a mix of housing tenures. The additional resources were being funded from amounts prudently set aside from the rental streams of the Council's commercial asset acquisitions.

He thanked all the staff throughout the Council: including the depot, Community and day centres and at Knowle Green, for their sterling support over the last year and looked forward to making 2018 a most productive year.

611/17 Questions from members of the public

There were no questions submitted from members of the public.

612/17 Petitions

There were none.

613/17 Calendar of meetings 2018-2019

The Council considered the recommendation from Cabinet on a calendar of meetings for the Municipal Year 2018-2019.

Resolved that Council approves the calendar of meetings for 2018-2019 as attached to these minutes.

614/17 Supplementary Capital Programme Provision for Asset Acquisitions

The Council considered the recommendation from Cabinet seeking approval of a supplementary capital estimate for property acquisitions within the Borough of £200m for 2017/18. This would enable the Council to be able to bid for high quality investment opportunities which may arise over the coming months.

Resolved that Council:

1. approves the supplementary capital estimate for property acquisitions within the Borough of £200m for 2017/18 to support the economic development and well-being of the Borough and investment purposes;
2. agrees the revised set of prudential indicators which include increasing the operational boundary and authorised limit for external debt by £200m; and
3. re-confirms the Council's Minimum Revenue Provision policy to ensure prudent provision is made to cover repayment of loans.

615/17 Annual Report on Complaints to the Local Government Ombudsman

The Council received an annual report on complaints made to the Local Government Ombudsman which showed that for the financial year 2016-2017, the Ombudsman decided 9 complaints in relation to Spelthorne Borough Council of which it upheld 1.

The Ombudsman's full decision in respect of the upheld complaint was attached to the report.

Resolved to note the report on complaints made to the Local Government Ombudsman for 2016/17.

616/17 Report from the Leader of the Council

The Leader of the Council, Councillor I.T.E. Harvey, presented the reports of the Cabinet meetings held on 22 November and 12 December which outlined the matters the Cabinet had decided since the last Council meeting.

Councillor P. Edgington asked the following question on the Leader's report:

“Can the Leader explain how Cabinet is making sure we are GDPR compliant and why this is not in the Corporate Risk Register?”

The Leader gave the following written response after the meeting:

“The Council has been proactive in its response to the forthcoming implementation of the General Data Protection Regulations in May 2018.

Unlike many authorities the Council took action to appoint an Information Governance Officer (IGO) in January 2017 to assist with implementation.

The IGO has developed a detailed action plan to allow the Council to track progress towards compliance and has undertaken training of staff. The IGO continues to work across the Council to help services ensure they will be compliant. As GDPR is considered a significant corporate risk it is recorded on the corporate risk register at Paragraph 7a.i.-v., which allows regular reviews of progress and “flagging of any issues”.

617/17 Report from the Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee

The Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, Councillor C.A. Davis, presented his report which outlined the matters the Committee had decided since the last Council meeting.

618/17 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.

619/17 Motions

There were no motions.

620/17 Questions on Ward Issues

There were no questions on Ward issues.

621/17 General questions

The Mayor reported that one general question had been received, in accordance with Standing Order 15, from Councillor Q.R. Edgington:

“Has the Leader had any recent discussions or meetings with any of the Surrey District Council Leaders regarding re-organisation of Local Government in Surrey?”

The Leader, Councillor I.T.E. Harvey, responded with “no.”

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

“The MP for Spelthorne, Kwasi Kwarteng, said recently at a public meeting in Ashford that he thinks Local Government in Surrey needs to be re-organised. Does the Leader of the Council agree with the MP for Spelthorne?”

The Leader, Councillor I.T.E. Harvey, gave the following response to the supplementary question during the meeting:

“I don’t think the policy of Westminster is particularly relevant, however, what we will do in Spelthorne is reflect the views of residents and one of our main financial strategies is driving towards that.”

Season's Greetings

As this was the last meeting of the Council in 2017, the Mayor, Councillor V.J. Leighton extended season’s greetings and best wishes for the New Year to all Members and Officers.