

Roberto Tambini
Chief Executive

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Our Ref: PGH/Cabinet
Date: 4 April 2014

Notice of Meeting

CABINET

Date: Tuesday 15 April 2014

Time: 19.00hrs

Place: Council Chamber, Council Offices, Knowle Green, Staines-upon-Thames

Members of the Cabinet	Cabinet member areas of responsibility
R.L. Watts (Chairman)	Leader of the Council, Strategy and Human Resources
P. Forbes-Forsyth (Vice-Chairman)	Deputy Leader, Community Safety, Young People, Leisure and Culture
T.J.M. Evans	Finance
N. St. J. Gething	Economic Development and Fixed Assets
V. J. Leighton	Planning and Corporate Development
A. J. Mitchell	Environment (including Parks and Waste Management)
D. Patel	Parking services and ICT
J. M. Pinkerton OBE	Housing, Health, Wellbeing and Independent Living
J. R. Sexton	Communications and Procurement

AGENDA

Description	Page Number
1. Apologies for absence	
To receive any apologies for non-attendance.	
2. Minutes	
To confirm the minutes of the meeting held on 25 March 2014	1 - 5
3. Disclosures of Interest	
To receive any disclosures of interest from members in accordance with the Council's Code of Conduct for members.	
4. Petitions	
(a) To receive a petition on flooding of the River Ash.	6 - 12
(b) To receive a petition and consider a report on the pilot introduction of cows to Sunbury park.	13 - 16
5. Park Properties	
Councillor Pinkerton OBE	17 - 20
6. External financial provision for Disabled Facilities Grants and Home Improvement Agencies	
Councillor Pinkerton OBE	21 - 24
7. Leader's announcements	
To receive any announcements from the Leader.	
8. Issues for future meetings	
Members are requested to identify issues to be considered at future meetings.	
9. Urgent Items	
To consider any items which the Chairman considers as urgent.	

Minutes of Cabinet

25 March 2014

Present:

Councillor R.L. Watts, Leader of the Council, Chairman of the Cabinet and Cabinet Member for Strategy and Human Resources
Councillor T.J.M. Evans, Cabinet Member for Finance
Councillor N. Gething, Cabinet Member for Economic Development and Fixed Assets
Councillor V.J. Leighton, Cabinet Member for Planning and Corporate Development
Councillor T. Mitchell, Cabinet Member for Environment
Councillor D. Patel, Cabinet Member for Parking services and ICT
Councillor J.M. Pinkerton OBE, Cabinet Member for Housing, Health, Wellbeing and Independent Living
Councillor J. Sexton, Cabinet Member for Communications and Procurement

2041. Minutes

The minutes of the Cabinet meeting held on 25 February 2014 were agreed as a correct record.

2042. Disclosures of Interest

There were none.

2043. Capital Monitoring 2013-14

Cabinet considered a report giving the spend figures on the capital programme for the period April 2013 to January 2014.

RESOLVED that Cabinet notes the current spend position.

2044. Revenue Monitoring 2013-14

Cabinet considered a report on the net revenue spend figures to the end of January 2014.

Cabinet noted that the 5.75% interest rate we are getting on the SLM £300k loan is a good rate of return for the Council.

RESOLVED that Cabinet notes the current spend position.

2045. Annual Grants awards 2014-15

Cabinet considered a report on the support given to voluntary and charitable organisations in the Borough and the proposed annual grant awards for 2014-15.

RESOLVED that Cabinet:

1. Agrees the grants awards for 2014-15 as set out in the report of the Assistant Chief Executive;
2. Notes all other support to the voluntary, charity sector;
3. Notes the performance of our key partners (over £10k per annum) and
4. Confirms that any residual better neighbourhood grants that are not spent by 28 February 2015 be distributed by the Leader of the Council to other worthy causes.

Reason for the decision:

Cabinet noted the vital role played by voluntary and charitable organisations in the life of the Spelthorne community.

2046. Food and Health and Safety Service Plans 2014-15

Cabinet considered a report seeking approval for the adoption of the Food and Health and Safety Service Plans for 2014-15.

RESOLVED that Cabinet adopts the Food and Health and Safety Service Plans for 2014-15.

Reason for the decision:

Cabinet noted that, since Spelthorne joined the Food Standards Agency's (FSA) national Food Hygiene Ratings Scheme in April 2012, there has continued to be an improvement in, and maintenance of, food hygiene standards in food businesses.

2047. Pensions Policy Statements

Cabinet considered a report on the new Local Government Pensions Scheme (LGPS) which comes into effect on 1 April 2014.

RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND that Council agrees the Pensions Policy Statements and Flexible Retirement Policy as set out at Appendix 2 and 3 of the report of the Assistant Chief Executive and that the effects of the new scheme are backdated to 1 April 2014 (the date that the new LGPS regulations come into effect).

2048. Leader's announcements

Leisure

Leisure Services has raised £21K to resurface the tennis courts in the Stanwell Recreation Ground following a successful application to SITA for funding. Work is expected to be completed by May.

A boccia tournament was held at Spelthorne Leisure Centre on Thursday 20 March. Special guest, Jessica Hunter, GB Paralympian who competed at London 2012 attended the event. Registration has opened for the P&G Surrey Youth Games coaching sessions and 176 entries have already been received.

The Community Garden project has got off to a good start at Hawkedale School in Sunbury. It is being run by a group of volunteers together with an artist, Spelthorne Natural History Society and Spelthorne Tree Wardens.

A "Keep Sakes Project" was held at the Greeno Centre to provide memory books for dementia sufferers.

Community Centre staff are receiving training to help them deliver seated dance sessions for clients who find it difficult to access mainstream exercise.

It has been another good month on Staines Moor and there are still plenty of Lapwing birds which appear to be nesting. A pair of Redshank and a single Brent Goose also arrived recently.

Communications

Cllr Robert Watts was interviewed by Brooklands Community Radio on Wednesday 19 March and spoke about a range of topics including the Corporate Plan, Council Budget, Council Tax, the Eco Park and flooding. Monthly interviews with the Cabinet Members are also being planned.

The frequency of the Bulletin magazine is being reduced from four to three editions per year with magazines now being delivered to residents in March, July and December.

Leaflets are being produced for a variety of projects including recycling promotion, the community toilet scheme and food waste reduction.

3,000 A-Z guides for older people have been produced in conjunction with Independent Living for distribution via community centres, GP surgeries, libraries, voluntary and faith organisations, social services and internal departments.

Finance

The county and local councils together with the Police and Crime Commissioner have agreed that residents who have suffered internal flooding will not have to pay any Council Tax for three months.

The Council has announced that the £14,600 donated to its Flood Relief Fund is to be given to the Community Foundation for Surrey's Flood Recovery Appeal. The Spelthorne contribution will be set aside to support Spelthorne residents. The fund is being administered by Runnymede and Spelthorne Citizens Advice Bureau and is currently open to anyone whose home has been flooded.

Environment

The Council held its 11th Eco Conference for primary school pupils in February which was attended by 7 primary schools. The feedback from teachers was overwhelmingly positive and the pupils went home freshly inspired to set up new environmental initiatives within their schools, focusing particularly on the 4Rs (reduce, reuse, recycle, repair). The Secondary school conference takes place in July.

The automated toilets in Ashford closed in December and a Community Toilet Scheme was launched. No complaints have been received regarding their closure and considerable savings will be made going forward.

Planning

Planning is running a CIL (Community Infrastructure Levy) consultation. The deadline for comments is **Thursday 10 April**.

2049. Issues for Future Meetings

There were none.

2050. Urgent Items

There were none.

2051. Exempt Business

RESOLVED to move the exclusion of the Press and Public for the following item in view of the likely disclosure of exempt information within the meaning of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972, as amended by the Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985 and by the Local Government (Access to information) (Variation) Order 2006.

2052. Exempt report – Ashford multi-storey car park – Key Decision

Paragraph 3 – Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding the information).

Cabinet considered an exempt report on Ashford multi-storey car park.

RESOLVED that Cabinet agrees to instruct the Joint Heads of Asset Management to proceed with this matter.

2053. Exempt report – Council Tax and Business Rates write-offs

Paragraph 3 – Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding the information).

Cabinet considered an exempt report on a proposal to write off some bad debts where recovery was no longer possible.

RESOLVED that Cabinet agrees to the write-off of the bad debts listed in the report of the Chief Finance Officer.

NOTES:-

- (1) *Members of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee are reminded that under Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rule, the “call-in” procedure shall not apply to recommendations the Cabinet makes to the Council. The matters on which recommendations have been made to the Council, if any, are identified with an asterisk [*] in the above Minutes.*
- (2) *Members of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee are entitled to call in decisions taken by the Cabinet for scrutiny before they are implemented, other than any recommendations covered under (1) above.*
- (3) *Within three working days of the date on which a decision of the Cabinet or a Cabinet Member is published, not less than three members [one of whom must be the Chairman] of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee are able to "call in" a decision;*
- (4) *To avoid delay in considering an item "called in", an extraordinary meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee will be convened within seven days of a "call in" being received if an ordinary meeting is not scheduled in that period;*
- (5) *When calling in a Cabinet decision for review the members doing so should in their notice of "call in":-*
Outline their reasons for requiring a review;
 - *Indicate any further information they consider the Overview and Scrutiny Committee needs to have before it in order to conduct a review in addition to the written report made by officers to the Cabinet;*
 - *Indicate whether, where the decision was taken collectively by the Cabinet, they wish the Leader or his nominee (who should normally be the Cabinet Member) or where the decision was taken by a Cabinet Member, the member of the Cabinet making the decision, to attend the committee meeting; and*

- ***Indicate whether the officer making the report to the Cabinet or the Cabinet Member taking the decision or his/her representative should attend the meeting.***

(6) The deadline of three working days for "call in" by Members of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee in relation to the above decisions by the Cabinet is the close of business on 31 March 2014

Cabinet

15 April 2013



Petition – River Ash - cause of flooding

1. A petition was submitted to the Council on 22 February in relation to the flooding in February which took place from the River Ash in the Greenlands road/Leacroft areas of the Borough.
2. The petition contains 470 signatures and in accordance with the Council's Petition Scheme, the matter is referred to Cabinet for consideration.
3. The Petition reads:

“We the undersigned petition Spelthorne Borough Council to compel Thames Water and the Environment Agency to review and mitigate the River Ash flood risk.”
4. Residents have also written to the Council on this subject and 150-200 residents attended the Local Committee meeting on Monday 17 March 2014 where a question was submitted on this issue.
5. The Environment Agency and Thames Water have been notified and urged to answer fully residents concerns.
6. In response to the letters received the Environment Agency and Thames Water provided specific answers to the questions raised (attached as appendices).
7. As the full investigation on the flooding needs to be undertaken by the Environment Agency and Thames Water as the responsible bodies the issue can only be noted at this time.

Recommendation

8. Although the issue of the flooding of the River Ash in Greenlands road and Leacroft affected the Staines ward the Council has no control over the management of the River Ash and the Thames Water aqueduct. Cabinet is asked to note that it understands the concerns of residents and sympathises with those flooded and will continue to press the Environment Agency for a full explanation to be given to residents and Thames Water to continue to provide information to residents on future actions on the sewer network.

Report Author:

Sandy Muirhead

February 2014 flooding

Lower Colne and River Ash in Staines-upon-Thames area

March 2014

Over winter 2013-2014 the country faced an extraordinary combination of weather conditions. The South East region received 250% of the long term average rainfall in both January and February. With river catchments already saturated at the beginning of December, river levels responded to this rainfall and we saw widespread property flooding from the River Thames and its tributaries. The sheer volume of water received by the catchment meant we could not completely eliminate the risk of flooding. However we worked throughout the duration of the incident to protect communities and warn people of the risks of flooding.

River system in the Staines-upon-Thames area

The river system in the Staines-upon-Thames area is complex and consists of various connected channels which drain into the Thames itself (see Fig.1). All of these rivers, at some point, cross the Thames Water aqueduct before reaching the Thames. As levels on the River Thames were so high, these rivers were not able to discharge into it as they normally would. This caused them to back up and spill into the aqueduct at various points. This was compounded by the fact that following months of persistent rain there was also high groundwater levels (saturated ground) meaning that water could not drain away. Our initial review indicates that it was a combination of saturated ground, high rainfall and high levels on the River Thames causing its tributaries to back up that caused the flooding experienced in the Staines-upon-Thames area.

Our incident response

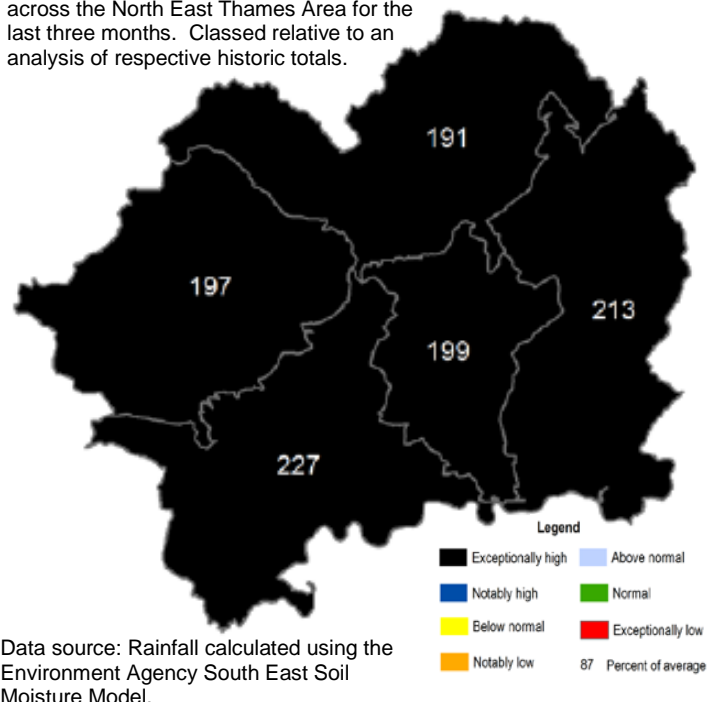
We first opened our incident room to respond to the increasing flood risk in the area on 23 December 2013. The focus on the flood event moved to the Staines-upon-Thames area in early February. For the duration of the flood event we worked closely with professional partners to minimise flooding across the North East Thames area. This included working with Thames Water to manage high flows in their aqueduct and main rivers in the Staines-upon-Thames area.

Our field teams were out across the area, clearing screens and river blockages to ensure that, wherever possible, rivers and streams were flowing freely.

River Ash sluice gate

We own and operate a sluice gate which we use to control flows from River Colne to the River Ash. This sluice gate is designed to ensure there is always a base flow in the River Ash, enough to maintain the ecosystem of the river. This is an automatic sluice gate, which adjusts automatically to send flow into the River Ash as needed. However, on 9 February we overrode this automatic setting and manually closed it completely to minimise flood flows entering the River Ash from the River Colne. As river levels on the Ash were low immediately downstream of the sluice it later automatically re-opened (as designed to do) to send a base flow back into the Ash. However on 11 February we closed the gate again and set it on manual, so it would not automatically re-open, even if the river levels immediately downstream were low and needed to be

Fig.2. Total rainfall for hydrological areas across the North East Thames Area for the last three months. Classed relative to an analysis of respective historic totals.



increased. As the gate was operating as designed prior to us manually closing it, and only open enough to provide a base flow, its full closure had only a negligible effect on the river levels on the River Ash downstream of the sluice.

We reopened the sluice slightly on the 13 February to allow a small flow back into the Ash as the river was dry immediately downstream of the structure. We did this to avoid an environmental issue (i.e. a fish kill) and damage to the river habitat. As river levels in the Ash were dropping downstream levels were able to cope with the re-introduction of this base flow.

Thames Water aqueduct

In normal conditions Thames Water pump water from the aqueduct in Staines-upon-Thames into their reservoirs. On 10 February, when flood water was overflowing into the aqueduct, the river intake was closed and they increased the pumping rate to alleviate flooding in the area. While the pumping operation continued we worked with Thames Water to partially close their sluice gate located on the aqueduct. As flows and levels began to recede on the rivers Ash and Colne Brook on the afternoon of 12 February, they did not need to close the sluice gate any further.

On 17 February, Thames Water asked if they could re-open the gate on the aqueduct to allow them to sustain pumping at full capacity to top up their reservoirs. As river levels were falling by this time we agreed that they can do this safely without increasing flood risk downstream.

Informing the public

We had flood data recorders and flood ambassadors out in the Staines-upon-Thames area from 10 to 14 February. They were on site to collect and record data on the location and number of flooded properties, as well as the flood extent, water levels and, where possible, the source and depth of flooding. They were also speaking to the public and answering any of their questions.

We issued the following flood alerts and warnings that cover the Staines-upon-Thames area.

- 24 December 2014 **flood alert** "River Thames from Datchet to Shepperton Green"
- 7 February 2014 **flood warning** "River Thames at Staines and Egham"
- 9 February 2014 **severe flood warning** "River Thames at Staines and Egham"
- 29 January 2014 **flood alert** "Lower River Colne and Frays River"
- 7 February 2014 **flood warning** "River Colne and Frays River at West Drayton and Stanwell Moor"
- 31 January 2014 **flood alert** "Colne Brook at Iver and Colnbrook"
- 31 January 2014 **flood warning** "Colne Brook at Colnbrook"
- 10 February 2014 **flood alert** "River Ash in the Borough of Spelthorne including Ashford and Staines"
- 10 February 2014 **flood warning** "River Ash at Ashford and Staines, including Birch Green, Knowle Green, Littleton and Shepperton"

All residents covered by these flood alert and warning areas would have received the alerts and warnings, as a minimum, to their home phone number unless they have opted out from receiving them. Those fully registered on our Flood Warnings Direct service would have received them to their chosen contacts. You can check which cover your property by visiting our website <http://maps.environment-agency.gov.uk/wiyby/wiybyController?x=357683.0&y=355134.0&scale=1&layerGroups=default&ep=map&tonly=off&lang=e&topic=fwa>

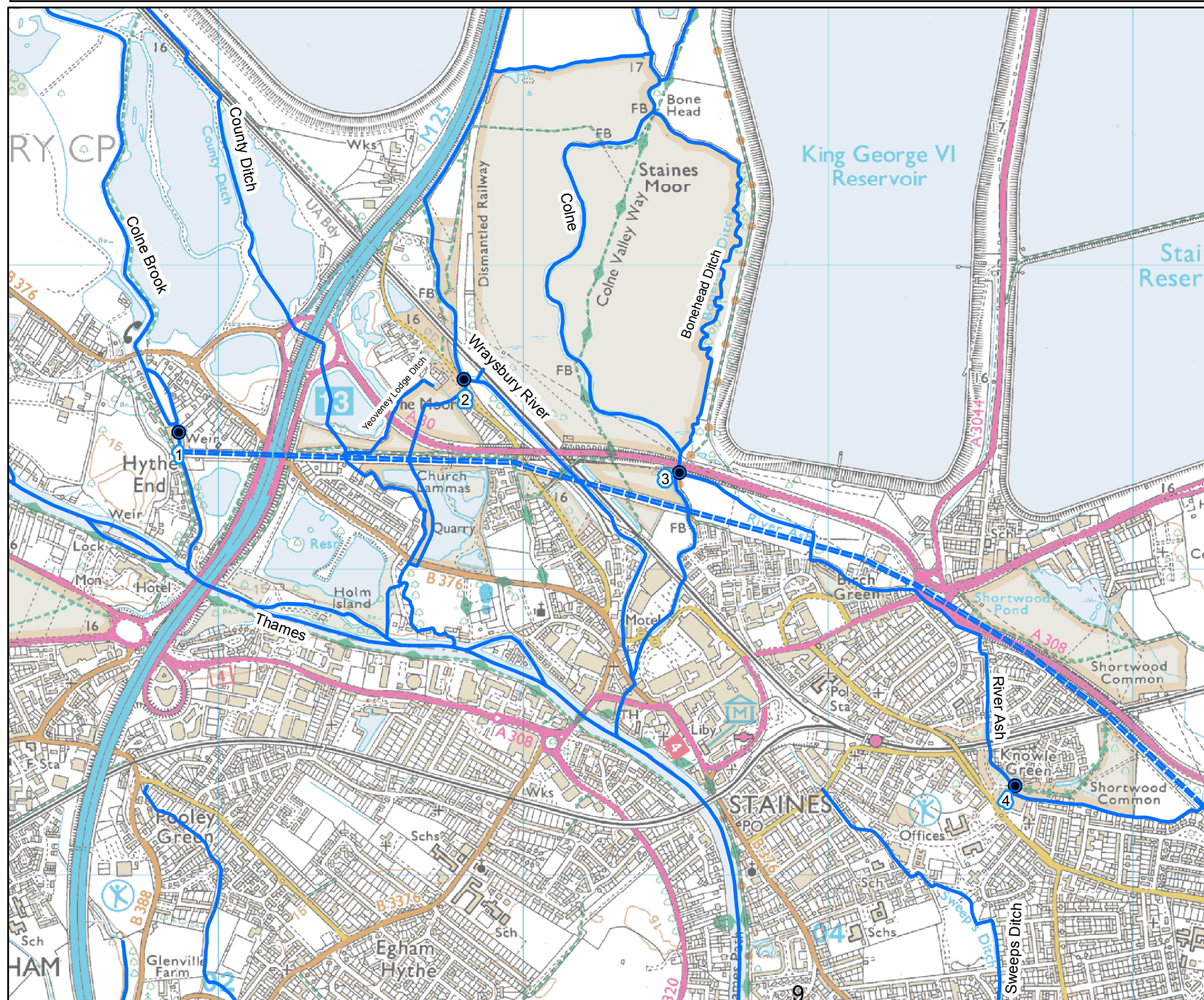
Flood Warnings Direct is a free service that allows you to receive warnings by phone, text, email and fax. To check if you are eligible to sign up and register please visit our website: <http://www.environment-agency.gov.uk/homeandleisure/floods/38289.aspx> or call Floodline on 0345 988 1188 or 0845 988 1188.

customer service line
03708 506 506

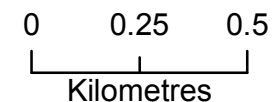
incident hotline
0800 80 70 60

floodline
0845 988 1188

Figure 1: Main Rivers and Environment Agency assets in Staines-upon-Thames area



Environment Agency
 2 Bishops Square Business Park
 St Albans Road West
 Hatfield
 Hertfordshire
 AL10 9EX



Legend

- 1 - Hythe End automated weir and gauge
- 2 - Moor Lane automated tilting gate
- 3 - River Ash automated offtake and gauge
- 4 - Knowle Green gauge
- Main River
- - - Thames Water Aqueduct (non main river)

This map is based upon Ordnance Survey Material with the permission of Ordnance Survey on behalf of the controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office Crown Copyright. Unauthorised reproduction infringes Crown Copyright and may lead to prosecution or civil proceedings. Environment Agency 100026380, 2014.

Thames Water: response to Martin Cherrett & Deborah Silver

Why did the River Ash Flood?

1. Who is responsible for maintaining and operating the Sluice Gates?

Thames Water is responsible for maintaining the sluice gate at Moor Lane, and operates it when required to according to Environment Agency instruction.

2. Was a decision made to open the Sluice Gates? What records are kept of such decisions?

See EA information.

3. On what basis was the decision made? Who authorised the decision?

See EA information.

4. What previous experience is there of the effects of opening these Sluice Gates, particularly the likely effect on residents downstream?

The last time the gate at Moor Lane was opened was during the 2003 floods when the Environment Agency requested they be used to manage the water flow. EA to answer question on the effects in 2003.

5. Was the decision made in order to divert water away from the Colne River and prevent flooding elsewhere?

See EA information.

6. When were the Sluice Gates opened?

The sluice gates are always open. However late in the evening of Tuesday February 11 the gates were partially closed (50%) as requested by Gold Command.

7. Were the Sluice Gates operating properly at the time? If not why not?

The sluice gate at Moor Lane operated as required on 11 February. The sluice gates hadn't been used for a number of years so extra pieces of equipment were brought in to make sure the gate was successfully closed, which it was, and the sluice gate was operated to the EA's satisfaction and in line with their instructions.

8. When were the Sluice Gates closed?

I think this question actually means when were the sluice gates reopened (eg back to normal). This was Monday February 17.

9. Who was told that the Sluice Gates were to be opened or had been opened? When were they told? Who passed the information on to the Police?

See EA information.

10. Why were the public simply told to evacuate and not given information about the basis for this advice?

See EA information.

The effect of dumping water in Leacroft

1. Who was responsible for this operation?

This was a Thames Water operation to discharge flood water into a main sewer, called a 'trunk' sewer. Smaller sewers drain into trunk sewers, which are larger and drain a bigger area. This trunk sewer was downstream of places suffering from sewer flooding.

2. Where did the water go to from this drain?

Water going into this trunk main takes the path of the A30 Staines Road down to to Mogden sewage treatment works in Hounslow.

3. Was the drain operating in the way that it was expected to? Was the drain inspected to ensure that this was so?

Yes and yes. The sewer was overloaded with water but not surcharging (water coming back up through manholes) during the operation and we inspected points downstream to make sure there were no operational problems.

4. What impact did the 'dumping of water' into a drain in Leacroft have on the level of the water in the River Ash?

None, as the sewer and river are unrelated. The water the tanker put into the trunk sewer went to Mogden sewage treatment works.

5. Why was the operation halted when the flooding occurred, and the water dumped in another location? We have been told by lorry drivers employed by the subcontractors "the drain in Leacroft was too small for the water and was not flowing away properly so we have had to start taking it somewhere else."

The operation was halted because if it had continued the immediate area would have been flooded by the sewer as it was becoming too full. If more water had gone in, the sewer would have surcharged - meaning the water would have come back out the manhole. Instead, water was taken away to Hounslow and away from the flooded area.

This was absolutely the correct thing to do in order to prevent sewer flooding.

Response to Nigel & Jennifer Cook

Tanker lorry in Leacroft

This was a Thames Water operation to discharge flood water into a main sewer, called a 'trunk' sewer. Smaller sewers drain into trunk sewers, which are larger and drain a bigger area. This trunk sewer was downstream of places suffering from sewer flooding and took the floodwater away to Mogden sewage treatment works.

Sluice gate

I believe this question refers to the sluice gate which is the River Ash take-off and owned by the EA – they'll need to answer this one. If not and it is the Moor Lane gate then the answers drafted for Martin Cherrett and Deborah Silver will apply.

The 'manhole' issue

Dynarod do not work for Thames Water.

In response to why 'the manhole cover was not lifted to relieve the area of floodwater' the answer is that to do this would put floodwater into a system designed only for foul water, which would overwhelm it and create significant problems downstream.

Thames Water used tankers in Leacroft to in an effort to alleviate sewer flooding in the area. Floodwater was overwhelming the sewers and in some places the high water levels in the sewer caused manholes to overflow, putting people at risk of having their properties flooded by sewage.

By tankering away this overflowing water and putting it back into the sewer system at Leacroft, where the sewer was bigger and had more capacity to take the excess flow, Thames Water were preventing customers being flooded by sewage.

Cabinet**15 April 2014**

Title	Parkland management – Pilot introduction of cows to Sunbury park		
Purpose of the report	To make a decision		
Report Author	Sandy Muirhead		
Cabinet Member	Councillors Tim Evans and Tony Mitchell	Confidential	No
Corporate Priority	This item is not in the current list of Corporate priorities but still requires a Cabinet decision		
Cabinet Values	Community and Opportunity		
Recommendations	To agree to the introduction of a group of grazing cows in Sunbury Park to assist in park maintenance and enhancement of biodiversity as a pilot.		

1. Key issues

- 1.1 Friends of Sunbury Park (FOSP) are in favour of a scheme first devised two years ago under a previous officer to introduce grazing cows into Sunbury Park to assist in managing the grassland area and enhancing its biodiversity. FOSP are keen to see the project progress to fruition. To engage with a wider number of residents a day of consultation on the scheme was held in September 2013. About 80 people attended with attendees having mixed views but were generally positive about the cows once their concerns were addressed.
- 1.2 Subsequently a number of dog walkers have formed the Sunbury Park Action Group (SPAG) to oppose the introduction of cows. Their main concerns appear to be potential loss of amenity, safety issues and animal welfare but also and most importantly, their ability to walk their dogs. A petition with approximately 240 signatures to date has been submitted by SPAG opposing the introduction of the cows.
- 1.3 For many years cattle have been on Dumsey Meadow and Shortwood Common, both sites perhaps more open to abuse and security issues than Sunbury Park in terms of the cows welfare but also well used by dog walkers without any problems to dog owners or their dogs. The cows used would not be breeding cows and of a docile breed – Belted Galloways. To fit with the encouragement of more flowering plants and finer grasses they would be present for just four or five months of the year. Belted Galloways are used in other parts of Surrey and further afield where there is public access and regular dog walking.
- 1.4 To introduce the cows would enhance the biodiversity of the park and add interest to this park where the grassland is not managed and there are real

issues of dog walkers not collecting their pets' faeces. The excuse is often made that this is due to the length of the grass but with grazing there would be no excuse as faeces could be found in the shorter grass for removal.

- 1.5 It is expected in all our parks that dog owners keep their animals under control at all times.
- 2. Options analysis and proposal**
 - 2.1 The proposal is to introduce grazing Belted Galloway cattle into the park (probably at any one time 4 or 5 cows). The risk of interaction with dogwalkers and the animal's health and welfare have been considered but based on experience elsewhere it is considered there could be ecological and educational benefits with the presence of the cows and no risk to dog walkers.
 - 2.2 Not to have the cows would not enhance the look of the park and there is no funding available to cut the grass on a regular or even annual basis. Only the cutting of paths, Orchard Meadow and the Walled Garden are included in the grounds maintenance contract.
- 3. Financial implications**
 - 3.1 The annual cutting of the grass via a cut to be disposed of would cost in the region of £6k. The capital funding for the scheme would come from the HLS grant with a small amount from current budgets (which has been accounted for). Annual cost would then be about £1k for the cattle management.
- 4. Other considerations**
 - 4.1 A local authority has a statutory duty to enhance wildlife and the introduction of cows provides a unique opportunity of reducing costs on maintenance, enhancing wildlife value and providing an educational opportunity.
- 5. Timetable for implementation**
 - 5.1 Installation of gates and fencing May 2014.

Background papers:

Appendices: Site map and background information

Appendix 1 Background Background

Sunbury park is one of our more “natural “and historic parks. The park has had considerable support from local residents and more specifically Friends of Sunbury Park (FOSP) over the years. There has long been interest by FOSP to encourage the park’s biodiversity. As a consequence back in 2010 a management plan was developed. It particularly focused on wildlife value and the encouragement of developing a meadow in the central grassland area. However, to develop meadows they do need regular cutting in late summer.

When the previous biodiversity officer investigated this aspect annual hay cuts were going to cost in the region of £6,000/year as the grass had to be disposed of due to contamination by dog faeces.

To find a more economical route the then biodiversity officer looked into grazing of cattle on the site. As a result Surrey Wildlife Trust attended a FOSP meeting to explain the use and type of the cattle and that they were quite safe to graze in public areas with dog walkers etc present. This technique is used in Dumsey Meadow, Staines Moor and Shortwood Common and is commonly used in many localities both in Surrey and further afield.

In 2010 as part of the development of the Higher Level Stewardship (HLS) scheme, to manage our grazed areas (primarily Dumsey Meadow, Staines Moor and Shortwood Common), Natural England (the awarding body for the HLS grant) agreed we could include Sunbury Park. Therefore, in the HLS bid which was subsequently successful in terms of funding there was a capital bid put forward for fencing works in Sunbury Park so cattle could graze safely.

FOSP were also supportive of this approach as it would add to the history of the site and the presence of the “Ha Ha” is evidence that historically the site would have been grazed.

However, the then biodiversity officer left and it took time to appoint a new member of staff and there were other priorities to deal with so the project was not resurrected until 2013.

However, the project has now raised concerns amongst some of the dog walkers in Sunbury Park

— Fencing • gates



Cabinet**15 April 2014**

Title	Parks Properties		
Purpose of the report	To make a decision		
Report Author	Liz Borthwick / Terry Collier		
Cabinet Member	Councillor Mrs Jean Pinkerton OBE	Confidential	No
Corporate Priority	Delivering quality of life services		
Cabinet Values	Community		
Recommendations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To approve the use of Long Lane Recreation flat and Staines Park Pavilion flat to be used as temporary accommodation. • To approve a supplementary capital estimate of £38,450 for work to be carried out to ensure the facilities are fit for purpose. • To agree a contingency fund of £5,000 per year for maintenance including any new tenancy handover. • Authorise ACX Liz Borthwick in consultation with the Portfolio Holder to approve any issues to enable the flats to be occupied. • To agree that the two flats be managed on behalf of Spelthorne Council by A2Dominion at a cost. 		

1. Key issues

1.1 On 17 December 2013 Cabinet noted the shortage of temporary accommodation for homeless families. Cabinet authorised the Strategic Housing Group (SHG) to investigate the possibility of a business model for the provision of the flats for temporary accommodation.

1.2 There are a number of key issues and they are as follows

- The cost of bringing Staines Park Pavilion first floor flat into use is £33,150. The cost of Long Lane Recreation Pavilion first floor flat is £5,300 (costings from Asset Management).
- A number of Housing Associations have been approached about the Management of two properties on behalf of the Council to deal with any reports and rent collection. The Environmental Health Manager has advised that for the two properties the only option is A2Dominion (a copy

of the expected management arrangements are attached as appendix one).

- The Council have recently tendered for a support contract for households in existing temporary accommodation (28 units). The tender was based on unit costs per property and can be expected for the additional properties. The support assists the Council with duties relating to safeguarding and the general wellbeing of vulnerable households.

2. Options analysis and proposal

- 2.1 The preferred option is to return the properties into use by homeless households on a assured short hold tenancy (similar to private landlord). The two flats are two bedrooms and are suitable for families. The two properties will be managed by A2Dominion on behalf of the Council. The properties will be repaired in order to comply with the relevant requirement for housing.
- 2.2 A number of risks have been identified about the location of the properties within the parks. Both properties are on the edge of the park with good street lighting. There is access to the parks in the evenings.
- 2.3 There will be management arrangements in place to support the residents and as such this should act as a comfort for people living in the flats and residents nearby.

3. Financial implications

3.1

Capital Costs	
Properties in use	£33,150 (Staines Park) £5,300 (Long Lane)
Total	£38,400
Annual costs	
Maintenance	£2,500 per property
Managing agent cost	£1,200
Total	£3,700
Income	
Social rent	£4,800 per property
Support contract costs	£1,400 (paid from existing budgets)

- 3.2 The annual costs will be supported by the income with savings of £23,000 on bed and breakfast. The payback on the capital sum will take a number of years but it is likely that if the facility was rented for other functions e.g. businesses, the capital work would still need to be carried out or a rent free period to be offered to allow an organisation to fix the facility so it is fit for purpose.

4. Other considerations

- 4.1 There may be issues around eviction if the households do not wish to leave the properties at the end of the tenancy or if the Council needs to evict, for example if there are significant rent arrears. There would be costs associated with the eviction process. The Housing Options and legal service teams would work together with the marketing agents to manage the process in the most cost effective and fair manner.
- 4.2 There may be issues arising from local residents and councillor concerns about the flats being occupied, particularly if there are any anti-social behaviour issues. The Council would work closely with the managing agents to minimise any concerns. Cabinet Members are supportive of the proposals and would help inform colleagues about the importance of the flats being occupied.
- 4.3 Risks are mitigated by virtue of the fact there are only two flats and that would each be let to one household rather than multiply occupants.

5. Timetable for implementation

- 5.1 The Council want to commence tenancy during June 2014.

Background papers:

**Appendices:
Management Arrangements – Appendix one**

Management Arrangements

Appendix one

Spelthorne Borough Council employs the services of A2 Dominion to act as managing agents of the two park properties which the Council will be letting out on a temporary basis to homeless families. A2 Dominion will be contracted at a set fee to carry out the basic management functions, which will be:

- To ensure the legal paperwork is signed by the tenant prior to their moving into the property. (Having said this I could foresee instances where it would be expedient for the Council also to be able to set the tenancy papers in order. Legal / Seras has stated they will be drawing-up this paperwork as its quite specific to LAs and not the usual tenancy paperwork – otherwise I would have got A2D to do this also;
- Collecting the rents and submitting these to SBC on a monthly basis (minus their agreed fee);
- Carrying out quarterly checks of the flats to ensure that they are being looked after properly by the tenants;
- Carrying out essential maintenance, the costs of which will be submitted to SBC for approval/payment. The bigger maintenance items I anticipate would be arranged by our Asset Management, but A2D would look at the small stuff such as blocked loos, broken boilers, annual gas/electricity checks, clean-out at the end of each tenancy to ensure the flat is ready for re-letting, etc.;
- Working with the Council in instances where residents behave in an unneighbourly manner (noise, accumulations, etc). It is envisaged that EH would be involved on the noise and ASB side also, but our own Legal team would take any formal actions on behalf of the Council, but we would also need to look at landlord insurance costs here to see if this would be cheaper/more appropriate – A2D are going to get me some information on this;

Cabinet**15 April 2014**

Title	External financial provision for Disabled Facility Grants, Home Improvement Agencies and Handy Person Services.		
Purpose of the report	To make a decision		
Report Author	Tracey Willmott-French, Senior Environmental Health Officer		
Cabinet Member	Councillor Mrs Jean Pinkerton OBE	Confidential	No
Corporate Priority	Delivering quality of life services		
Cabinet Values	Community and Self-Reliance		
Recommendations	<p>To enter into a contract with Surrey County Council for the management of the Home Improvement Agency Service and Handy Person Service contracts on SCC's behalf, and for the exception to contract standing orders for the need to go out to tender at this time, the contracts will signed on the 16 April 2014.</p> <p>This will initially be for one year, however the contract may be rolled over to a second year while methodologies for the delivery of the services across Surrey are discussed and implemented.</p>		

1. Key issues

- 1.1 In December 2013, Surrey County Council (SCC) wrote to the Council stating that from April 2014 they would not be renewing contracts with Handy Person Services (HP) or Home Improvement Agencies (HIA) service providers. Instead they would be entering into contracts directly with the district councils. District councils are expected to make their own arrangements for the provision of these services using the funding SCC would give them. SCC is doing this to regularise their contract provision across Surrey so that all HIA and HP contracts are held directly by the local authorities (LA).
- 1.2 SCCs contract with the LAs will be for one year. However, this could be rolled over into two years depending on progression with the development of the Better Care Fund (BCF) mechanism that will provide future HP, HIA and Disabled Facility Grants (DFG) funding streams (*Part 1 of background section below refers*) to the districts from 2015-16 onwards.
- 1.3 There is no assurance that this funding will continue post 2014-15. Although, ensuring people continue to live as independently as possible for as long as possible, and helping people return home after hospital admissions are priority targets for Public Health England (PHE) and SCC. The continued provision of the services provided by HIAs and HPs are essential to achieving this. SCC has therefore raised the need for the continuation of funding, though ultimately the decision will rest with the Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCG). As with the DFG

funding provision, due to financial constraints it is likely that changes will be required in the manner in that these services are provided.

- 1.4 SCC's proposed changes in contractual arrangements have been discussed with Spelthorne's HIA and Age UK.

2. Options analysis and proposal

- 2.1 **Option One** – Accept SCCs request to enter into a contract with them for the provision of HIA and HP services. The next few years are going to be critical in securing ongoing and appropriate financial provision for the funding of DFGs, HIA and HP services.
- 2.2 Bringing these three interconnected services together under one contract manager (the Senior Environmental Health Manager) will allow for a more joined up delivery of service; achieve a better understanding of the dependencies of each so that the services are delivered in a cost-effective manner. It will also enable the Council to fully engage in future funding discussions with a greater knowledge and understanding of the issues involved.
- 2.3 **Option Two** - Do not accept SCC's request to take on and contract out their provisions for the HIA and HP services. This may impact on the delivery of these services to residents. Further, if CCG funding is reduced in the future, not engaging in the management of the contracts may weaken Spelthorne's position in discussions about future service provision.

3. Financial implications

- 3.1 Initially there will be no financial implications other than the officer resources involved in putting the HIA and HP service contracts in place and the ongoing management of the contracts. However, it's anticipated that SCC's funding for the provision of these services will be reduced post 2015-16; if this is the case, this will involve discussion with SCC; though this will happen regardless of whether SBC takes on the management of these contracts.
- 3.2 In addition to the SCC funding, Spelthorne provides an annual grant of £25,000 to Age UK to assist with the provision of Handy Person Services within Spelthorne. This grant is a three year provision which ends in February 2015. The SCC-HP contract may impact on whether this grant is continued beyond February 2015 and how; consideration will need to be given to this before February 2015.
- 3.3 Spelthorne holds its own contract with A2 Dominion to provide HIA services for the delivery of DFGs within Spelthorne. The cost of this contract to the Council is £27,000 per annum.
- 3.4 Following discussions with Spelthorne's Legal team and SCC, it is proposed that the Council enters into a one year contract with an exception from Contract Standing Orders for the need to go out to tender (due the imminent changes in the funding mechanism from 2015-16 onwards and various other practical and financial reasons).

4. Other considerations

- 4.1 SCC / CCG might decide not to continue to provide funding for HIA and HP services beyond the next financial year. Aside from the impact this would have on our existing HIA service provision and that of the HP services within the Borough, it may also have a negative impact on SBC's perceived image as the public might believe that the decision not to continue to fund these services belonged to SBC rather than the SCC/CCG. If SCC/CCG does withdraw funding in the future, SBC

would need to ensure this is communicated to residents appropriately to minimise any impact on SBC.

5. Timetable for implementation

- 5.1 If Members agree to SBC managing the HIA and HP services contracts on SCC's behalf, and for the exception to contract standing orders for the need to go out to tender at this time, the contracts will signed on the 16 April 2014.

6. Background

Part 1 – Local Authority Funding for Disabled Facility Grants

- 6.1 Local housing authorities have a statutory duty to provide disabled facility grant (DFG) aid to people with disabilities to adapt their homes so they can live more independently for longer.
- 6.2 The Department of Communities and Local Government (DCLG) currently provide financial assistance to help local authorities meet the cost of providing DFGs. The level of financial support Spelthorne has received is given in table 1.

Table 1: DCLG annual allocations to Spelthorne DFG provision

	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16
DCLG / DoH Allocation	£285,000	£318,453	£342,590	£289,717	£296,914	£296,914 (proposed)
Spelthorne's Contribution	£214,779	£232,759	£26,336	£210,283	£153,086 (proposed)	TBC
Total DFG spend	£499,779	£551,212	£368,926	£500,000	£450,000 (proposed)	TBC

- 6.3 From April 2015/16, the funding discussed in paragraph 1.2 above will instead come from the Department of Health via the Better Care Fund (BCF).
- 6.4 This funding will be paid to upper-tier authorities, who must allocate it to the district authorities so they can continue to meet their statutory duty for DFG provision.
- 6.5 The provisional DFG component of the BCF for the whole of Surrey is £3.7 million. SCC has stated that DFG funding for 2015/16 is likely to remain the same as 2014/15. For Spelthorne this will be £296,914.
- 6.6 In going forward beyond 2015/16, a new action plan outlining the spending for the BCF will need to be developed. In respect of this SCC has stated they will be looking to change how DFGs across Surrey are delivered. This will be driven by financial constraints, which in turn will affect DFG funding for Spelthorne.
- 6.7 Such discussions are not new to Surrey; between 2007 and 2012, SCC's Supporting People team worked with second tier local authorities to review how Home Improvement Agencies (HIA) deliver their services and its integration into the DFG process. The aim of the review was to improve consistency of service delivery and the reduction of SCC's costs towards funding HIAs.
- 6.8 To ensure Spelthorne's resident's needs continue to be met, the Council must actively take its part in any future conversations and associated work streams that arise regarding any potential changes.

Part 2 - SCC funding for HIAs and Handy Person Services

- 6.9 The main purpose of Handy Person Services (HPs) and HIAs are to help people live safely and independently for as long as possible. HIAs and HPs are 'not for profit organisations' supported by Government and local authorities to help vulnerable people.
- 6.10 HPs carry out practical jobs around the home such as changing light bulbs/plugs; fitting key safes, grab rails, home safety fittings; and installing telecare equipment. HIAs provide advice on practical, financial and legal matters related to adapting the home, repairing or insulating it, as well as project managing more significant works.
- 6.11 Historically, SCC has held contracts with HP and HIA service providers; with Age UK as Spelthorne HP service, and A2 Dominion as Spelthorne's HIA service.
- 6.12 The services covered by the SCC contracts are services that Spelthorne Council (SBC) has no statutory duty to provide. However, they are services that are central to achieving the council's value of 'self-reliance' as both provide a focused service for those most disadvantaged and in need, and enable a greater level of independent living.

Background papers: None

Appendices: None