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Our Ref: PGH/Cabinet
Date: 7 December 2012

Notice of Meeting

CABINET

Date: Tuesday 18 December 2012

Time: 5.00 p.m.

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

To: Members of Cabinet

Members of the Cabinet	Cabinet member areas of responsibility
F. Ayers (Chairman)	Leader of the Council, Strategy and Corporate Governance
Mrs. J.M. Pinkerton (Deputy Leader)	Health, Well-being and Independent Living
Mrs C.A. Bannister	Communications
T.J.M. Evans	Finance and Resources
P.C. Forbes-Forsyth	Community Safety and Young People
G.E. Forsbrey	Planning & Housing
Mrs D.L. Grant	Parks and Assets
N. St. J. Gething	Economic Development
R.L. Watts	Environment

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 20 November 2012.	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. Public Sector Hub at Knowle Green - Key Decision	
Councillor Grant	6 - 15
5. Energy Advice and Green Deal service with Action Surrey (2013-18)	
Councillor Watts	16 - 21
6. Tenancy Strategy - Key Decision	
Councillor Forsbrey	22 - 46
7. Recognition of Staines Village	
Councillor Ayers	47 - 50
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.	
10. Exempt Business	
To move the exclusion of the Press/Public for the following item(s), 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.	

11. Customer Services revenues write-offs

Councillor Evans

Paragraph 1 - Information relating to any individual

and on that basis that publication would not be in the public interest because information in this report relates to (1). personal data; (2). disclosure is not in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998; and (3). the information has been provided to the authority by individuals under an obligation of confidentiality.

Minutes of Cabinet

20 November 2012

Present:

Councillor F. Ayers (Leader of the Council, Chairman of the Cabinet and Cabinet Member for Strategy and Corporate Governance)
Councillor Mrs. J.M. Pinkerton (Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Health, Wellbeing and Independent Living)
Councillor Mrs C.A. Bannister (Cabinet Member for Communications)
Councillor Evans (Cabinet Member for Finance and Resources)
Councillor P.C. Forbes-Forsyth (Cabinet Member for Community Safety and Young People)
Councillor G.E. Forsbrey (Cabinet Member for Planning and Housing)
Councillor N. Gething (Cabinet Member for Economic Development)
Councillor Mrs. D.L. Grant (Parks and Assets)
Councillor R.L. Watts (Cabinet Member for Environment)

Apologies: There were none.

In attendance: Councillor I. Napper

1849. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 25 September 2012 were agreed as a correct record.

1850. Disclosures of Interest

There were none.

1851. Members' Development Steering Group Minutes

Cabinet considered the minutes of the Members' Development Steering Group meeting held on 17 September 2012.

RESOLVED that Cabinet notes the minutes of the meeting held on 17 September 2012.

1852. Treasury Management half-yearly report 2012-13

Cabinet considered a report on treasury management activities for the first half of the year up to 30 September 2012.

Cabinet congratulated Terry Collier and the Treasury Management on the flexibility of thought and readiness to adopt new thinking which had allowed us to expand our investment thinking to maintain our income during this difficult economic period of low interest rates.

RESOLVED that Cabinet notes the treasury position at 30 September 2012 and the ongoing environment in global markets.

1853. Capital Monitoring Report 2012-13

Cabinet considered a report on the spend figures for the capital programme for the period April to September 2012 and a request for a supplementary estimate of £21,400 for the purchase of Leisure Centre Fitness kit as a loan to the Council's leisure centre contractor, SLM.

RESOLVED that Cabinet notes the current spend position and agrees the supplementary estimate of £21,400 for Leisure Centre fitness kit.

1854. Revenue Monitoring Report 2012-13

Cabinet considered a report on the net revenue spend figures for the period April to September 2012.

RESOLVED that Cabinet notes the contents of the revenue monitoring report for the period April to September 2012.

1855. Residual Grant awards

Cabinet considered a report on those organisations to be considered for funding from the residual grants fund for 2012-13.

Cabinet agreed that Sunbury Scouts should be contacted to obtain an update on the progress of their application to refurbish their headquarters. Subject to their response, Cabinet might consider the award of a further £500 to Shepperton Girl Guides.

Cabinet discussed the allocation of any future surplus and agreed that it should:

- Apply the same criteria to all organisations;
- Take account of any funding from Surrey County Council to organisations, and
- Identify one of the Council's priorities against each organisation.

RESOLVED that Cabinet agrees:

1. To allocate the remaining £17,550 to the organisations as set out in Appendix A to these minutes.
2. That in considering the allocation of any future surplus it should:
 - Apply the same criteria to all organisations;
 - Take account of any funding to organisations from Surrey County Council and
 - Identify one of the Council's priorities against each organisation.

Reason for the decision:

Cabinet agreed at its February 2012 meeting to allocate the remaining funds to voluntary and business sector organisations which had worthwhile projects supporting the local community during 2012-13.

1856. *Adoption of the Gambling Act Policy 2013-16 – Key Decision

Cabinet considered a report on the outcome of consultation on, and adoption of, the revised Statement of Gambling Policy 2013-16.

RESOLVED that Cabinet recommends Council to adopt the revised Statement of Gambling Policy for 2013-16.

Reason for the recommendation to Council:

Section 349 of the Gambling Act 2005 requires all licensing authorities to prepare and publish a Statement of Gambling Policy that they propose to apply in exercising their functions under this legislation and which must be reviewed every three years.

1857. Automated Public Conveniences

Cabinet considered a report on whether the Council should continue to provide Automatic Public Conveniences (APCs) in the Borough.

It noted that currently the Council provided two sets of APCs under contract and that the usage figures for some of the toilets had been falling steadily over the past five years.

Cabinet discussed the possibility of approaching shops and cafes with a view to operating a community toilet scheme.

RESOLVED that Cabinet agrees to:

1. Terminate the Heathmatic contract and renegotiate a new contract for two APCs at Shepperton Lock.
2. Terminate the JC Decaux contract.
3. Consult with local traders to gauge interest in community toilets and the resulting information to be reported back to Cabinet in mid-2013.

Reason for the decision:

The provision of public toilets by local authorities is discretionary, and the APC usage is not, and has never been, very high compared to the cost of renting and maintaining the units. However, there are a number of other toilets in the Borough which are available for public use.

1858. Staines Market – Key Decision

Cabinet considered a report seeking permission to authorise the Head of Streetscene to progress with a tender exercise for a contract to operate Staines market on behalf of the Council.

Cabinet noted the much-improved look of the market now compared to previous years and congratulated staff accordingly.

RESOLVED that Cabinet

1. Authorises the Head of Streetscene to go out to tender for a market contract for a period of three + two years.
2. Authorises the Head of Streetscene and the Neighbourhood Manager to negotiate and agree ad hoc arrangements and rates for use of space in the High Street.
3. Authorises the continued collection of cash rents by the successful market contractor.
4. Authorises the Head of Streetscene to continue with the current arrangements until such time as the tender has been awarded and the new contract is in place.
5. Delegates the selection of the shortlist of tenderers and the selection of the contractor to the Head of Street Scene in consultation with the Portfolio Holder.

Reason for the decision:

Having implemented a temporary arrangement for the running of the market, following the termination of the previous supplier's contract in November 2011, the Council now wants to tender the contract for a period of three years plus a further two. A contract would provide the Council with the expertise that it needs to maintain levels of income and a range of day-to-day services.

The Council considered taking the running of the market in-house (this arrangement was undertaken as an interim measure following the afore-mentioned termination), but this resulted in officers working very long hours and a reduction in the quality of service provided.

1859. Staisafe Radio Network

Cabinet considered a report on the provision of a radio communication system to replace the existing system in Staines-upon-Thames and to expand it to other towns in the Borough.

Cabinet noted that the cost of purchasing the radios would be recouped in the first year through the contributions from traders using them. It also noted that the scheme would generate funding to both pay for the salary of the Staisafe Co-ordinator and provide monies to support initiatives/events within all the towns in the Borough.

RESOLVED that Cabinet

1. Supports a supplementary capital estimate of £13k being made available for the purchase of radios;
2. Approves revenue expenditure of £14.5k per annum anticipated to be covered from the revenue income from members of the scheme;
3. Approves the initiation of a relevant tender process to purchase new radios and associated software systems and
4. Delegates the selection of a shortlist of suppliers to the Chief Finance Officer in consultation with the Portfolio Holder.

Reason for the decision:

Cabinet recognised the value to the business community in Staines-upon-Thames of the existing radio communication system and that, by purchasing the radios and leasing them back to retailers, the Council would not only be able to provide a far more effective radio system with the potential for additional capacity such as photography, recording conversations and GPS systems, but also provide income generation to support events in all the Borough's towns.

1860. *Corporate Plan – Key Decision

Cabinet considered a report on the proposed new priorities for the Corporate Plan 2012-15.

RESOLVED that Cabinet recommends Council to adopt the revised Corporate Plan for 2012-15.

Reason for the recommendation to Council:

The Corporate Plan is a key document which specifies Spelthorne's mission, vision, values and priorities for 2012-15. The plan also outlines the Council's Strategy for a sustainable, financial future and indicates how progress with the specified key actions will be reported.

1861. Issues for Future Meetings

There were none.

1862. Urgent Items

Councillor Watts informed Cabinet that there had been a recent increase in the gate fees for recycling waste, but that officers were in the process of re-negotiating the level of charges on behalf of the Council.

1863. Exempt Business

There was none.

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 28 November 2012**

Cabinet

18 December 2012



Title	Feasibility Study for Public Sector Hub for Knowle Green		
Purpose	Resolution required		
Report of	Assistant Chief Executive	Confidential	No
Cabinet Member	Councillor Denise Grant	Key Decision	Yes
Report Author	Dave Phillips		
Summary	<p>The purpose of this report is to help councillors to decide whether to commence a detailed feasibility study (with Surrey County Council SCC) to see if co-locating both councils within a refurbished Knowle Green office is financially viable.</p> <p>The proposal includes to co-locate SBC and SCC services into a refurbished accommodation in Knowle Green. This requires SCC to purchase a long leasehold interest in the SBC building for the sum of £3.00m</p> <p>The £3.00m capital received from SCC for the LLH purchase will be used to reduce SBC £6.34.m capital costs for delivering the Spelthorne Hub.</p>		
Financial Implications	<p>The report demonstrates that even after taking into account financing costs over a 25 year period on the basis of the current analysis the Council would be financially better off as result of the proposed scheme.</p> <p>Surrey County Council and Spelthorne Borough Council would jointly fund the detailed feasibility study estimated to cost £100k, the cost of the feasibility study would be apportioned on the basis of an approximate 75:25 split between SBC and SCC reflecting the benefits accruing to the parties</p>		
Corporate Priority	Maximising assets		
Recommendations	That the Cabinet agrees to proceed with a detailed feasibility study for the Knowle Green Public Sector hub proposal and that a supplementary revenue estimate of £75k be made.		

MAIN REPORT

1. Background

- 1.1 Public sector service provision in the Knowle Green area is characterised by single purpose stand-alone buildings, with the quality, efficiency and effectiveness of the premises varying significantly. Both Spelthorne Borough Council (SBC) and Surrey County Council (SCC) are committed to rationalising property usage within their own businesses.
- 1.2 The work to rationalise property usage within both councils has followed on from the collaborative Surrey wide mapping exercise which sought to identify the location of all public sector assets in Surrey to identify opportunity for property rationalisation across the public sector. This asset mapping exercise identified Knowle Green as one of the sites in Surrey with the greatest potential to realise efficiencies for the public sector and the council taxpayer through rationalisation of property assets.
- 1.3 In 2008-09 the Council undertook a stock condition survey which indicated that backlog maintenance liabilities for SBC for Knowle Green were estimated at £2.74m. Major elements within the building require more urgent attention than others, delaying expenditure further will have a detrimental affect on the building and its ability try meet health and safety statutory requirements. For example the electrical installations have not been renewed for 40 years, major components such as window frames and roof coverings will need replacing etc. If the Council stays on the Knowle Green site then it will need to address the backlog maintenance issue. It therefore needs to look at options to identify the most cost effective means of achieving this.
- 1.4 The Knowle Green site is large and could deliver wider council objectives and improve site utilisation. There are also opportunities for further rationalisation of the public sector estate through the co-location of property.
- 1.5 Both councils jointly commissioned an initial viability study which considered the relocation of services provided by SBC, SCC, Surrey Police (SP), Surrey & Sussex Probation Trust (SSPT) and the Surrey Primary Care Trust (PCT) into a single building solution. As the viability study progressed Surrey PCT were excluded from the proposals due to uncertainty regarding future operating model/structures and the lack of resources available to help deliver the project.
- 1.6 The original viability study completed in January 2012 considered three options,
 - For SBC and SCC to continue in existing accommodation and rectify backlog maintenance

- For SBC and SCC to co locate within a single new build solution at Knowle Green
 - For SBC and SCC to co locate within a refurbished single solution within the existing SBC accommodation at Knowle Green
- 1.7 The viability study included an investment appraisal which considered project cash inflows and outflows over a 25 year investment period to determine the overall project cash benefit of each option. These future cash benefits are then discounted allowing options to be assessed on a Net Present Value (NPV) basis (a measure of the total net outflows over a period taking account of the time value of money i.e. expenditure in the future is worth less than equivalent expenditure in present).
- 1.8 The original investment appraisal forecast the project would deliver a positive NPV benefit for the original partners, namely (SBC, SCC, and SSPT) of £6.20m and required net invest to save capital of £4.60m. SSPT have since withdrawn from the project indicating their preferred option would be to move probation services from Swan House, Knowle Green into the adjacent HMCS courts complex.
- 1.9 This leaves SBC and SCC as the project partners, given the withdrawal of SSPT the revised Hub proposal is still forecast to deliver a reduced NPV benefit of £2.35m and requires a slightly reduced net invest to save capital amount of £4.36m. This is mainly due to a slightly revised refurbishment specification to reflect the potential income of the local rental market which has offset some of the loss of SSPT cash benefits.
- 1.10 This report follows on from the presentation of the initial viability study at January Cabinet which set out the initial conclusions with respect to Knowle Green site. At the January Cabinet officers were asked to undertake further work to enable consideration of whether there was a sufficient business case to justify working up a detailed feasibility study
- 1.11 Since January 2012 more detailed research has been undertaken to reflect demand in the current local property market in terms of the achievable disposal receipts and potential rental income. The current position is reflected in an updated viability study which includes a revised investment appraisal to reflect the changes since the original report.
- 1.12 The updated investment appraisal forecasts the project would deliver a revised positive NPV benefit for the partners of £2.35m i.e. the hub option would be £2.35m cheaper than the alternative option of SBC and SCC separately addressing their accommodation issues. This requires gross invest to save capital of £6.34m (£4.36m net after disposal receipts). This overall NPV benefit is apportioned between as follows SBC £1.68m and SCC £0.67m.
- 1.13 This updated study reflects that SSPT are no longer part of the proposal, and incorporates all recent local property market research undertaken. The significant changes that have impacted on the investment appraisal and NPV project benefit calculation are,

The Withdrawal of SSPT from the Proposals

- 1.14 The withdrawal of SSPT has resulted in a reduction in the forecast capital receipts of £1.00m increasing the amount of investment required. Additionally their withdrawal has detrimentally impacted on the running cost calculation by £0.094m. The effect of this is significant as this amount is multiplied and discounted over the investment period of 25 years.

Changes to the on going Property Operating Costs Methodology

- 1.15 The investment analysis used in the original study included costs associated with capital charging (asset rent) as these were considered to be an on going property operating cost. These charges measure the property resources consumed in providing services, for local authorities. This is the depreciable amount or the depreciation charge.
- 1.16 Further research has established that investment appraisals used to inform business cases should not include depreciation charges and these have now been removed. This has detrimentally impacted on the running cost calculation by £0.083m. The effect of this is significant as this amount is multiplied and discounted over the investment period of 25 years

Updated Market Information on Forecast Rental Income Levels

- 1.17 Our recent research on the potential demand for rental space and potential rental levels suggests that the assumptions used in the original study did not adequately reflect the over supply and reduced demand in the Staines locality. The effect of this is to reduce rental levels slightly below those used in the original study

Main benefits

- 1.18 The main benefits of the proposal as identified in the updated viability study are now to:
- Reduce public sector buildings in use at Knowle Green from 4 down to 1, with the additional provision of a smaller day care centre at a more suitable location.
 - Reduce public sector GIA floor space from 9,801m² to 6,189m² equivalent to a 37% reduction in space used.
 - Provide approximately 740m² NIA of commercial letting space for private sector income generation
 - Improve service delivery through joining up services in a single building solution
 - Provide approximately 150m² NIA of space for Voluntary and Community and Faith Sector groups which is a similar amount of space to current provision. However the refurbished space will be capable of being occupied more efficiently enable increased capacity in terms of people numbers groups
 - Improve environment for staff and public

- Reduce carbon footprint through significant reduction in building floor space used and energy usage

2. Key issues

2.1 Knowle Green is characterised by single purpose stand alone buildings, on a large under utilised site. Current property occupancy costs are high when compared with other parts of the public sector as well as buildings having significant backlog maintenance liabilities (BML). The SBC building has forecast backlog maintenance liabilities of £2.74m that must be addressed should the project not proceed. This forecast cost was prepared in August 2010, research into price inflation for refurbishment works indicates that amount identified would not require adjusting.

2.2 The existing office accommodation is dated and of a cellular layout making it difficult to use the space more cost efficiently, and public access is not easy.

2.3 The Spelthorne Hub seeks to address these issues by:

- Maximising reduction in overall floor space occupied by the public sector, reducing property from four buildings to one building
- Delivering improved overall space usage ratios through more effective use of space
- Creating better, modern, and more flexible facilities for staff and improving the customer experience.
- Reducing property operating costs by generating rental income from lettable space
- Reducing overall backlog maintenance liability for participants
- Improving customer satisfaction and increasing scope for integrated service solutions
- Supporting the Council's affordable homes policy by delivering new affordable homes at Knowle Green.

These benefits will be delivered through better use of space and changes to Adult Social Care service delivery. This will allow SCC to dispose of a number of freehold assets that will make a significant contribution to the capital costs of the Hub

3. Options Analysis and Proposal

The original viability study completed in January 2012 identified three options for Knowle Green.

1. Do Nothing and Continue with Existing Locations and Maintenance Plans

Although the baseline position is to do nothing the reality is that the Hub partners will continue to undertake business as normal. This baseline option assumes the same properties will continue to be used to provide public services. A major consideration with this option is the current BML identified

for the SBC office of approx £2.74m. If the project does not proceed the issues associated with BML will have to be addressed. This assumption is set against a backdrop of reducing service and property management budgets.

The baseline position will also perpetuate the current inefficient and ineffective use of property. Opportunities to improve condition and use existing surplus capacity will be difficult to realise from fragmented stand alone buildings of older cellular design.

2. Purpose Built, New Build Property to House all Interested Services

The new build solution would allow all the Hub partners to continue a business as normal position until the building is ready for occupation, therefore minimising disruption to service delivery. This option requires significantly more “invest to save” financing and is dependant on achieving almost £9.00m in capital receipts from asset disposals, which in the current market carries a significant risk.

3. Refurbishment of Existing Spelthorne BC Offices and Relocation Within this Property

The refurbishment solution through careful project delivery programming will allow many of the Hub partners to continue a business as normal position and may not adversely affect business continuity. This option requires significantly less “invest to save” finance and does not require partners to achieve such high capital receipts from asset disposals

4. Option selected

As part of the feasibility study a detailed scoping exercise was undertaken to assess the requirements for each option being tested. The requirements for each option were input into an investment analysis. The investment analysis indicated the refurbishment option delivered the most cost effective solution when measured against the do nothing or new build alternatives. The decision was therefore made to progress the refurbishment option. The main factors that influenced that decision were

- Refurbishment considered less of a ‘Big Bang’ approach
- Fewer planning challenges
- Smaller ‘invest to save’ borrowing required
- Fewer assets to dispose of in a challenging market
- Quicker implementation process

4. Financial Implications

- 4.1 The investment appraisal forecasts the project would deliver a revised positive NPV benefit for the partners of £2.35m. This overall NPV benefit is apportioned between the councils as follows SBC £1.68m and SCC £0.67m.
- 4.2 A summary of the combined investment appraisal outputs for the two councils are detailed below in table 1.

Table 1

25 Investment Appraisal	Baseline carrying on as at present	Refurbishment
Capital Spend	£3,052,800	£3,983,440
Annual ongoing net costs	£14,664,000	£8,778,280
One-off Project costs	£0	£390,550
Total Cost	£17,716,800	£13,152,270
NPV Adjustment	£12,475,720	£10,150,400
25 year forecast saving	£2,325,320	

Table 2 below provides a more detailed breakdown of the figures between the two councils in terms of funding requirements and impact on operating costs

Table 2

Spelthorne Hub		SBC	SCC
Analysis of Financial Implications			
Forecast Project Capital Cost , (excluding Public Works Loan Board finance charges)	£6,348,626		
SCC would part fund the project through their purchase of the long leasehold interest in the refurbished SBC HQ building for			£3,000,000
SCC will generate capital receipts from disposal of their assets within the borough			£1,975,000
Net Capital Cost (NCC)	£6,348,626 - £3,000,000 (£3,000,000 - £1,975,000)	£3,348,626	£1,025,000
The project will eliminate the need to tackle backlog maintenance liabilities (BML), currently forecast at		£2,740,532	£312,340
Net Capital Costs BML deducted (NCC-BML)		£608,094	£712,660
Current net property operating costs		£277,501	£286,500
Forecast net property operating costs		£129,000	£196,308
Annual Saving (AS)		£148,501	£90,192
Payback (years) NCC/AS		22.55	11.36
Payback (years) NCC-BML/AS		4.09	7.90

It can be seen from the above that for SBC the proposal would reduce net operating costs from £0.28m per annum to £0.13m giving a saving of £0.15m per annum and this saving would pay back the net investment in 22.50 years. The payback term reduces significantly if the current BML are included in the payback calculation this results in the payback period reducing to just over 4 years. SBC will lead the project and incur all capital borrowing to fund and deliver the project. SCC will commit to the project through purchasing a long leasehold interest in the refurbished Spelthorne Hub for a lease premium calculated by the District Valuer services of £3.00m this will give SCC a 999 year lease in the building for the space they will occupy which is 1450m² GIA.

- 4.3 SCC purchase of the long leasehold will be part funded from the disposal of SCC buildings at within the borough (Based upon the above it is recommended the detailed feasibility study be commissioned to further develop the project. SBC and SCC would jointly fund the feasibility study estimated to cost £100k. The cost of the feasibility study would be apportioned on the basis of SBC funding approximately 75% of the feasibility study costs and SCC funding approximately 25% of the remaining costs. The final apportionment will be calculated by reference to each council's benefits as a percentage of the overall project benefits.

5. Other Considerations

- 5.1 The project aims to deliver other benefits that are non-financial in nature, which will have a positive impact in a number of areas:

Internal Organisational Benefits such as:

- Enhanced working environment and positive impact on sickness absence, staff attraction and retention

Relationships with Project Partner Benefits such as:

- Potential to join up and share services
- Establish processes designed around customers
- Easier and simpler customer access to services
- Increased levels of customer satisfaction

Process Improvement Benefits such as:

- Easier to join up service delivery and develop continuous process improvement
- Simplification of process between different tiers of local government, the wider public sector and voluntary, community and faith groups

Wider Benefits such as:

- The positive impact on the locality and specific communities through joining up public sector services within a single building solution enabling services across county and borough authorities and wider public sector partners to be more integrated and joined up.
- Use surplus public sector space to deliver on wider government issues such as business start ups and the Localism agenda.

- Maximising value from the fixed cost base supporting the councils aims in delivering affordable housing within the borough

6. Risks and How They Will be Mitigated

6.1 Current Property Market for Disposals

Given current market conditions there are significant risks attached to assumptions around asset disposals. As a result, a more conservative approach to market value has been adopted. If tested in the open market these values may differ, dependant on what the market may be willing to pay at the time of disposal. These values will be reviewed as more definitive market testing is undertaken during the course of the feasibility study.

In arriving at the market value of the surplus assets (set out in the table above) no market testing has yet been undertaken. The values adopted in the appraisal have been prepared in accordance with the RICS Valuation - Professional Standards, 8th Edition.

6.2 Availability of Finance

The availability and cost of finance may become an increasing issue for any proposal however as the refurbishment option requires less invest to save finance this was a factor in the decision to select refurbishment over the new build option.

6.3 Current Rental Market Staines

The refurbished Hub solution includes for approximately 740m² NIA (net internal area) of commercial letting space. An additional 246m² NIA of space is currently occupied by Surrey Police and a further 88m² NIA by a commercial enterprise. It is assumed this space requirement will continue and has been included in the viability assessment.

Having 740m² ft of commercial letting space represents a risk to the viability study results that may impact considerably on the project cash benefits forecasts should the space prove difficult to let and remain void for any long period. This risk has been offset by undertaking detailed research in the local area, which suggests there is demand for high quality category B office space. The refurbished building will be to a high quality category B standard, rental incomes used in the investment appraisal are based upon detailed investigations with local letting agents.

Additionally recent British Property Federation (BPF) research shows office leases are becoming shorter, often less than 5 years, longer lease lengths will increasingly contain break clauses at shorter intervals. The emergence of this more fluid occupier market brings with it a higher risk of space remaining un-let for long periods. To mitigate this risk the levels of service charge used in the investment appraisals is in the lower band which would encourage lettings. This more fluid market may create an opportunity for short term flexible letting space to smaller local companies fitting the business start up

model encourage by Government. The open plan space the hub will create will offer flexible options able to accommodate a range letting space and time options.

6.4 Business Continuity

The refurbishment solution through careful project delivery programming will allow many of the hub partners to continue a business as normal position and may not adversely affect business continuity. There is potential for the refurbishment project to be undertaken over stages given the design of the building and current surplus space. Additionally the SCC buildings may be used as part of any temporary accommodation solution.

6.5 Planning

The next stage of the viability report will need to assess in detail the planning challenges and opportunities around delivering a scheme. This will need to cover Knowle Green as well as the other SCC sites which they are looking to dispose of.

7. Timetable for Implementation

- 7.1 A detailed feasibility study would take approximately a year to undertake, so would be completed January 2014
- 7.2 Project works – April 2014- to Sept 2015

Background Papers:

There are none

Cabinet**18 December 2012**

Title	Energy Advice & Green Deal service with Action Surrey (2013-2018)		
Purpose	Resolution required		
Report of	Assistant Chief Executive	Confidential	No
Cabinet Member	Councillor Robert Watts	Key Decision	No
Report Author	Francesca Nesbitt		
Summary	<p>A flagship Government led initiative the Green Deal relies on involvement of a number of agencies and local authorities are encouraged to participate to ensure the scheme works to help householders deal with increasing energy bills.</p> <p>To ensure that happens at a local level capital investment is required to fund a 5 year energy advice service and Green Deal partnership within Surrey. The scheme will assist homeowners to reduce fuel bills and carbon emissions, and ensure residents in Surrey maximise the benefit from the new Energy Company Obligation (ECO) subsidy and Green Deal loan scheme. Operating within a Surrey wide partnership will enable participation at lowest cost and draw in resources from a central base.</p>		
Financial Implications	Local councils in Surrey are required to invest a total of £15,000 each over 3 years (£5,000 per annual budget). There will be a profit share option available at the end of year 3 or year 5.		
Corporate Priority	Service and Support		
Recommendations	Recommended for approval		

1. Background

- 1.1 The Green Deal is designed to help householders and businesses increase the energy efficiency of properties across the UK. The Government considers the role of local authorities and other local partners likely to be key in ensuring effective and intensive delivery of the ECO and Green Deal in particular areas. The Government believes that many natural incentives will exist allowing effective partnerships to form, and no particular regulatory requirements are needed to encourage this. Local Authorities are key local partners and can choose to deliver the Green deal either directly or in with commercial partners and local organisations.
- 1.2 As this area was perceived as needing a lot of work and resources across Surrey are stretched in relation to delivery on energy reduction targets it was considered appropriate to pool resources and work with a local organisation ie Action Surrey. We have worked with them for a number of years on various projects including the Warm and Healthy Homes programme.
- 1.3 However, such activities as expected by Department of Energy and Climate Change (DECC) for local authorities to participate in does cost but pooling resources across Surrey minimises those costs.
- 1.4 As a result Action Surrey is looking for capital investment to fund a 5 year energy advice service and Green Deal partnership within Surrey. The scheme will assist homeowners to reduce fuel bills and carbon emissions, and ensure residents in Surrey maximise the benefit from the new Energy Company Obligation (ECO) subsidy and Green Deal loan scheme. In respect of the ECO local authorities are thought likely to act as partners, adding value by, for example, providing information on local housing stock, and endorsing and helping market company activity, using their position as a trusted interlocutor with households to increase local acceptance and take-up
- 1.5 As well as promoting the ECO subsidy and Green Deal loan, Action Surrey will provide local oversight for homeowners in finding a reliable Green Deal Assessor, Installer and /or Provider, and partner with Surrey's Trading Standards in providing sample inspections of work carried out under the Green Deal. This aspect is also felt to be key to helping uptake as many householders may be concerned about "cowboy" builders.
- 1.6 The Action Surrey project will also satisfy legal requirements under the Home Energy Conservation Act for local councils to report on how the Green Deal and ECO is being promoted in their area and the progress that is being made on these plans. An initial report will be submitted under a coalition (the Surrey Climate Change Partnership) and a 2 year progress report will also be submitted as required by DECC.

2. Key issues

- 2.1 The Green Deal offers an opportunity to local authorities for job creation, a large reduction in CO2 emissions and through the elements of the ECO, a reduction in the fuel poverty. However like any new initiative the scheme will inevitably face challenges in its infancy and local authorities are

well positioned to ensure that residents and organisations looking to take advantage of the Green Deal get a fair deal.

The main issues prompting this proposal are:

- 2.2 Promoting take up and community engagement - Ensuring residents are aware of the Green Deal and the ECO subsidy will be paramount to helping the scheme succeed and improving the lives of those residents in fuel poverty or those at risk. Only 5% of all solid wall houses across Surrey are currently insulated, leaving a huge number that could benefit from a grant to help overcome the cost of installing this improvement. For some the Green Deal loan may not be necessary, however for others it will be a useful mechanism to overcome the upfront cost of making their home more comfortable and affordable to live in.
- 2.3 Sufficient levels of advice, impartiality and switching energy provider - There are concerns shared across industry about several key elements of the Green Deal, which include; cold calling and selling of the Green Deal, the impartiality of the Green Deal Assessment, whether the Green Deal is suitable for some homeowners who may be under heating their homes and what happens after the Green Deal Plan is in place and the savings are not realised (due to behavioural change). Although the Green Deal does provide an accreditation scheme and the Energy Saving Trust will be providing a remote advice line, whether this will be sufficient support to generate enough consumer confidence to encourage take-up of Green Deal is uncertain.
- 2.4 Ensuring the Green Deal is inclusive for local installers and consumer confidence - The government has been clear that it is simply establishing a framework to facilitate the development of a Green Deal market place, the rest is to be left to the private sector and local authorities to take advantage of the policy and new legislation. Local authorities currently have the opportunity to shape what the Green Deal looks like in their area and decide who the major beneficiaries are of resulting economic activity.

3. Options analysis and proposal

- 3.1 Option 1 – Action Surrey This proposal builds on the existing community engagement model and network infrastructure that Action Surrey has already established across the County. It offers a 5-year support programme for local authorities that actively engages the local community and provides tangible, bespoke energy advice to homeowners helping them save energy in the home, provide guidance on Green Deal and ECO, and delivers measurable CO2 reductions from housing. The project can be defined as a Green Deal Advisor and Partnership programme, facilitating the successful take-up of Green Deal and use of ECO by residents in Surrey. The service will be built around 4 main strands:

- 1) Marketing & Community Engagement (Community outreach, communications and marketing)
- 2) Advice (Impartial energy advice service through a call centre and website)
- 3) Installer Network and Panel of Providers (a local, trusted installer network and referral service to a panel of Green Deal Providers)
- 4) Strategic Support and Reporting (Local Authority reporting and strategic support around energy efficiency)

- 3.2 Option 2 - The Green Deal Provider such as Climate Energy, British Gas and Enact will be the organisation who will provide the financing for the measures to be installed on the property.

The Green Deal Provider will look to contract in the Green Deal Advisor to provide the Green Deal Assessment, and Green Deal Installer to carry out the installation. They will design, organise and facilitate the installation to ensure that the installation process runs smoothly from beginning to end. This includes being responsible for all paperwork that is completed both by themselves, the Green Deal Advisor and the Installer.

- 3.3 Option 3 – Not participating - The Green Deal is soon to become the mainstay of the energy efficiency industry. If we do not participate we lose a mechanism of support for our residents. We will have no control over the Green Deal products that are being offered and will be heavily reliant on providers/installers working direct with the resident. There will also be no impartial advice for residents, loss of engagement with our local community and lose of the fuel poverty work steam and the function to bid for funding opportunities.

- 3.3 I propose we opt for option 1. We want to continue with Action Surrey's other services which we would not be able to continue without the Green Deal partnership side of the equation. We already rely heavily on Action Surrey to be our one stop shop for energy advice in general and for their help outside the Green Deal such as stands, energy audits, applying for funding such as the recent DECC funding.

4. Financial implications

- 4.1 The project will run from April 2013 to March 2018 and the financial forecast for 5 years is set out below. The project has start up costs of £24,200 which would be provided by Thameswey Energy Ltd in January 2013 covering the period up to the official start of the project, April 2013. Thameswey Energy Ltd will provide a total investment of £47,200 and local councils are being requested to partner in the scheme which will need an investment of £15,000 each (£5,000 per annual budget). This is based on all 12 local authorities participating to achieve economies of scale. This investment is covered by government policy. There will be a profit share option available at the end of year 3 or year 5 that will offer the following repayments from the growth bid:

3 year option		5 year option
Local Authority contribution (total for 3 years) per member	£ 15,000	£ 15,000
Profit share received per council (12 LA's incl. SCC)	£ 2,407	£ 10,932
Total 3 year cost to local councils (per council) after profit	£ 12,593	£ 4,068
Total annual contribution from council after profit share	£ 4,198	£ 1,356

Councils that leave before year 3 will not be entitled to a profit share

4.2 The repayment of scheme funding is subject to the project achieving its aims and objectives and the development of the Green Deal market place. In participating in a shared project, innovation risk is spread across all partners and encourages ownership amongst local authorities.
The 5-year cash-flow for the project is included in appendix 1.

- After the first 3 years of operation the scheme becomes self-financing and then becomes profitable.
- The objective is to allow Members of the scheme to remain in free of charge after 3 years.
- Members can leave after 3 years and take a profit share or wait until the end of year 5 and take a larger profit share.
- Any new Members wishing to join after the scheme commences will need to pay the £5,000 pa for the first 3 years of their membership.
- Any members wishing to leave before the end of year 3 will not be entitled to a profit share

4.3 The £5,000 will be taken out of the home insulation capital bid

5. Other considerations

5.1 Deliverables

- 1,250 Green Deal Plans (worth approx. £6,000 each)
- 1,200 ECO funded energy improvements
- 1,300 privately funded energy improvements (outside of green deal finance),
- save residents over £1 million in energy bills.
- 2.2 full-time positions and 2 temporary positions.
- save 100,000 lifetime tonnes of CO₂

6. Risks and how they will be mitigated

6.1 If we opt for option 1 we are not solely be dependent on Green Deal sales for the project to survive and deliverables are tangible and based on historical achievements in the area.

7. Timetable for implementation

7.1 January 2013 – 2018 (5 Year project)

Background papers:

Appendices:

Appendix 1 - 5-year cash-flow for the project

Action Surrey Green Deal Financial Projection

	2013	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	5 Year total
	START UP	Yr 1	Yr 2	Yr 3	Yr 4	Yr 5	£
	£	£	£	£	£	£	£
Income							
Private funded measures (referral fees)	0	19,213	10,193	15,145	20,448	28,659	93,657
EPCs (referral fees)	0	120	150	216	252	288	1,026
Green Deal referral fees	0	18,900	47,250	85,050	132,300	181,440	464,940
ECO referral fees	0	10,625	14,575	18,668	23,257	29,610	96,735
Local Authority Funding	0	60,000	60,000	60,000	-	-	180,000
Thameswey Project Funding	24,200	13,000	10,000	-	-	-	47,200
Total Income	24,200	121,858	142,168	179,079	176,257	239,997	883,558
Costs							
Marketing	5,000	35,000	45,000	50,000	55,000	60,000	250,000
Website & Database Development	2,000	2,601	2,666	2,732	2,801	2,871	15,670
Oak Tree House Expenses	1,200	4,789	4,909	3,832	3,927	4,026	22,682
Salaries	12,000	54,903	56,276	57,683	59,125	60,603	300,589
Employee Expenses	1,500	6,667	6,833	7,004	7,179	7,359	36,542
Thameswey Overhead Recovery 15% of salaries		8,235	8,441	8,652	8,869	9,090	43,288
Trading Standards Inspections		1,000	2,500	4,500	7,000	9,600	24,600
Loft Clearances (subsidy for fuel pool)		2,500	-	-	-	-	2,500
Staff training		2,500	-	2,500	-	-	7,000
Thameswey Refund + 5% of funding		-	8,000	25,000	16,500	-	49,500
Total Costs	24,200	117,695	134,625	161,903	160,401	153,548	752,372
Net Surplus	0	4,163	7,543	17,176	15,856	86,449	131,187
Cumulative Surplus			11,705	28,881	44,738	131,187	

Cabinet**18 December 2012**

Title	Spelthorne Tenancy Strategy		
Purpose	Resolution required		
Report of	Assistant Chief Executive	Confidential	No
Cabinet Member	Councillor Gerry Forsbrey	Key Decision	Yes
Report Author	John Hesbrook		
Summary	The purpose of this report is to inform Members, of the Council's Tenancy Strategy that has been produced following consultation with the Council's five preferred partner Registered Social Landlords (RSL's), other stock owning RSL's in the Borough and the Citizens Advice Bureau.		
Financial Implications	The possibility of tenancies not being renewed and those people presenting to the Council as homeless.		
Corporate Priority	Service and Support		
Recommendations	For Cabinet to approve the Spelthorne Borough Tenancy Strategy and for it to be implemented with immediate effect.		

1. Background

- 1.1 As part of its package of Localism, Welfare Reform and Austerity measures, the Government is introducing changes to the way in which affordable housing is provided in England. These include changes to the way that affordable housing is funded and also far reaching welfare benefit reforms. In addition as part of the new Localism Bill 2011, the Government is proposing a set of measures, which will allow Local Authorities and Registered Social Landlords (RSLs) increased flexibility in the way they allocate and provide tenancies. At the heart of this are two key changes.
- The provision of flexible fixed term tenancies for tenants of social housing. Existing social housing tenants on lifetime tenancy agreements will remain on their existing tenancies. On average Spelthorne have approximately 230 new tenancies each year.
 - Local Authorities to have increased flexibility on how they allocate social housing
- 1.2 Specifically the Localism Act 2011 introduced a range of duties and powers on the Authority in relation to the provision and letting of social housing including:
- 1.3 To have a Tenancy Strategy in place by January 15th 2013, to set out objectives for the Council which RSLs will have regard to in letting social housing
- 1.4 To ensure the Tenancy Strategy is developed with consideration of the local allocations policy and homelessness strategy and in consultation with RSLs.
- 1.5 The Tenancy Strategy needs to be considered within the wider context of forthcoming changes to our Allocations Policy and the wider welfare reforms being introduced. Reports will be submitted to Cabinet at the appropriate time on all these issues.

2. Key issues

- 2.1 The Localism Act 2011 introduces a number of provisions in relation to social housing. In particular, the introduction of a new type of tenancy, the fixed term tenancy, which can be used as an alternative to the current system of secure, lifetime tenancies.
- 2.2 The Act also introduces new provisions in relation to the way in which the housing list is managed and how priority can be awarded. Local Authorities and affordable housing providers now have discretion to consider a greater range of factors when letting properties and when considering the type of tenancy to be awarded.
- 2.3 The purpose of the Tenancy Strategy is for the Local Authority to set out how it sees the new tenancy type being used, its priorities in relation to who should be housed and for how long. It sets the framework which affordable housing providers need to have regard to when developing their landlord tenancy and allocations policies. It should be noted that these changes will not affect existing tenancies, and as such these changes are a gradual process that will

only take effect with new tenants/tenancies, e.g. approximately 5000 existing affordable housing tenancies against approximately 230 new affordable housing tenancies in Spelthorne each year. It is intended that a new Allocations Policy will be submitted to February 2013 Cabinet.

3. Options analysis and proposal

- 3.1 The ultimate aim of the Strategy is to make the best use of the limited affordable housing stock available. The introduction of the fixed term tenancy is not designed to take security away from tenants but to allow RSLs to better manage their housing stock and deal effectively with issues like under occupation, evolving household circumstances and allocation of adapted properties etc. In most cases it is assumed that fixed term tenancies will be renewed at the end of their term. We will be consulting with our partner RSLs in the future on establishing clear criteria for assessing when a tenants financial circumstances have improved to a level where they no longer require an affordable home and are able to secure suitable housing through private renting, shared ownership or private purchase. We will use the agreed criteria as set out in the Choice Based Lettings Partnership, Allocations Policy as currently set out or as amended in the future. It is considered reasonable for an applicant to use up to 30% of their gross income towards housing costs (i.e. rent/mortgage). This threshold is used when determining whether an applicant has sufficient income to pursue outright purchase or shared ownership options
- 3.2 It should be noted that the Strategy sets out criteria for when a lifetime tenancy should be offered and states that fixed term tenancies will be for a minimum of five years. Only in exceptional circumstances will an RSL offer a shorter term tenancy.
- 3.3 There is a detailed review procedure for the end of a tenancy within the Strategy. We will expect RSLs to assist tenants in managing and upholding the terms of their tenancy. RSLs will not be allowed to use the end of a tenancy as an excuse not to renew the tenancy of a difficult client (and make them homeless). We would expect to see clear evidence of a RSLs efforts to engage with a tenant and to resolve any issues that might threaten the tenant's right to remain in the property before a tenancy is not renewed.

The preferred option

To approve the Tenancy Strategy for Spelthorne that has been produced following consultation with RSLs and the Citizens Advice Bureau (see appends).

Alternative options considered

- 3.4 **Option 1:** Not to produce a strategy – Not an option as there is a Government requirement for all Councils to adopt a Tenancy Strategy by January 15th 2013.
- 3.5 **Option 2:** A Surrey wide Joint Tenancy Strategy agreement, or an agreement with our Choice Based Lettings Partners (Elmbridge & Runnymede). This option was not pursued as it was not viable for all Surrey

Authorities to sign up to the same Agreement. The decision not to enter into an Agreement with our CBL Partners was due to our differing requirements. For instance Runnymede has their own Housing Stock and consequently is far more active and accountable in how their Tenancy Strategy is implemented. Non stock owning Authorities such as Spelthorne and Elmbridge are entirely reliant on RSLs for their affordable housing offer, and therefore have significantly less control.

4. Financial implications

- 4.1 There is a risk that tenants with fixed term tenancies may present themselves as homeless if their tenancies are not renewed. As detailed in the Strategy, we would expect an RSL to have engaged with the tenant some months before the end of the tenancy to establish whether a tenancy would be renewed. There is a system of appeal for a tenant who is informed that their tenancy will not be renewed.
- 4.2 As previously indicated, the expectation is that a tenancy will be renewed unless a tenants financial circumstance have improved sufficiently for them to secure suitable housing through other means.
- 4.3 If a fixed term tenancy was to be ended because of under occupation but the tenant still meets the criteria for affordable housing, that individual would be offered a suitable alternative accommodation. As such it is considered there is a relatively limited risk that clients will present themselves as homeless at the end of their fixed term tenancies.

5. Other considerations

- 5.1 We are aware that some RSLs are already using fixed term tenancies. It is important that we introduce our Tenancy Strategy as soon as possible to ensure that all RSL's are meeting the wider aims of the Council in the use of these tenancies. Our Stock transfer RSL A2Dominion have their own Tenancy Policy (see appendix 2) which has been approved by their Board and broadly aligns with our own.

6. Risks and how they will be mitigated

Consultation was undertaken with the Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB), our stock transfer RSL (A2Dominion), Thames Valley Housing, Metropolitan Housing, Paragon Community Housing Group, Catalyst Housing Group and Notting Hill Housing to ensure our Tenancy Strategy was developed that broadly aligned with the policies and aim of our RSL Partners documents. Meetings were held with A2Dominion and feedback received from other RSL Partners and the CAB, amendments were made to our own document as a result of consultation to ensure a consistent approach is being adapted to these forthcoming changes. This consultation should therefore reduce the risk of the Tenancy Strategy not being fully taken into account. An Equality Impact Assessment (appendix 3) has also been carried out to assess the issues around the Tenancy Strategy and as such it is considered that this will mitigate the risk of any challenge on this point.

7. Timetable for implementation

To be implemented with immediate effect.

Cabinet

18 December

Background papers:

None

Appendices:

Spelthorne Council Tenancy Strategy (Appendix A)

Equalities Impact Assessment (Appendix B)

The Tenancy Policies of RSLs with housing stock in Spelthorne that formed part of the consultation process will be available in the members room prior to the Meeting for information purposes should members wish to view these documents.

Spelthorne Tenancy Strategy document

1. Introduction and background
 - 1.1 As part of its package of Localism, Welfare Reform and Austerity measures, the Government is introducing changes to the way in which affordable housing is provided in England. These include changes to the way that affordable housing is funded and also far reaching welfare benefit reforms. In addition as part of the new Localism Bill 2011, the Government is proposing a set of measures, which will allow Local Authorities and Registered Social Landlords (RSL's) increased flexibility in the way they allocate and provide tenancies. At the heart of this are two key changes.
 - The provision of fixed term tenancies for tenants of social housing
 - Local Authorities/RSL's to have increased flexibility on how they allocate social housing
 - 1.2 These tenancies will in most cases be for a minimum of five years. This is in recognition that currently RSL tenancies are granted to meet an immediate need, such as homelessness or overcrowding, which may change over time resulting in homes being under occupied or occupied by tenants who could afford to buy a home or rent a home on the open market.
 - 1.3 The Council and its RSL Partners welcome the additional flexibility that fixed term tenancies will provide. Providers of affordable housing in the Borough will give due regard to our policy when granting tenancies. It should be noted that the Council does not own its own housing stock and is reliant on its RSL Partners for properties to allocate to households on the Housing Register.
2. Overview
 - 2.1 The Government change to legislation that allows providers of affordable housing to grant a fixed term tenancy is a change to the current situation, whereby affordable homes are let on what is known as an Assured tenancy. An Assured tenancy is effectively for life, subject to full payment of rent and compliance with all tenancy conditions.
 - 2.2 Existing tenants who remain in their current affordable homes will not be affected by these changes and will continue their tenancies under their existing terms and conditions, including the right to buy/right to acquire, succession rights and the right to exchange their tenancy with another Assured tenant.
 - 2.3 As of the 27th February 2012, there are 1882 households on the Spelthorne Housing Register. Within these figures, 17 households are classified as being in emergency housing need (Band A), 162 households in urgent housing need (Band B) and 1199 households with an identified housing need (Band C).

3. Local Context
 - 3.1 Spelthorne is an attractive Borough with excellent schools, attractive open spaces and good transport links. The Borough benefits from scenic river walks along the banks of the River Thames and is in close proximity to Heathrow which offers good and varied employment opportunities for residents. As such, the demand for housing in the Borough is high and like most Boroughs in the South East, property prices are high. Levels of home ownership are high at about¹ 77%, 22% rent their home with 9% of these renting from the private sector.
 - 3.2 Access to the private rented sector for those on low incomes and benefits has become more difficult due to the changes in housing benefits that were introduced in April 2011.
 - 3.3 The supply of affordable rented homes is limited and it is important that the stock that is available is used to its full potential to provide homes for those in the highest housing need who require assistance from the Council.
4. Objectives
 - 4.1 The objective of Spelthorne's Tenancy Strategy and each respective RSLs Tenancy Policy is to ensure that the affordable housing stock is used as effectively as possible, to provide homes for Spelthorne residents in housing need who are unable to secure a home that meets their housing needs for themselves in the private sector. This can be achieved if more people can be assisted in moving on from affordable housing once they are in a position to sustain an alternative housing option, such as home ownership or the private rented sector.
 - 4.2 The use of fixed term tenancies also provides an opportunity to help address under occupation by giving the affordable housing providers more opportunity to move people to smaller accommodation when their current accommodation is larger than their actual housing need (i.e. occupying a 3 bed property when their need is only for a 2 bed property). This will release larger properties for those that need them, including overcrowded households. Currently an incentive scheme is in place and a financial reward can be offered to encourage those under occupying properties to move, however neither an RSL nor the Council have the power to require people to move to a smaller home. The RSL's will not be obliged to renew a fixed term tenancy at the end of the term and will support tenants who are under occupying an affordable property to find a more suitable alternative in this situation.
 - 4.3 The affordable housing providers will prepare tenants for independence once their situation has improved by making it clear from the start of their tenancy that the arrangement is not necessarily a permanent one/assured lifetime

¹ Figures from Housing Needs & Stock Condition survey undertaken in 2006

tenancy. The Council's Housing Options team will also be available to offer housing advice to tenants when appropriate. Whilst our Tenancy Strategy deals with the granting of tenancies from affordable housing providers, it is important to understand that applicants for affordable housing may also be offered properties/tenancies within the private rented sector.

- 4.4 Currently the majority of affordable housing properties in Spelthorne are let under Assured tenancies at target social rents (formerly council housing rents). However, a new type of rent setting regime for affordable housing, known as Affordable Rent was introduced by the Government in 2011, as a new type of tenancy, designed to help address the shortage of affordable homes in England and ensure those in the most need can be housed. Affordable Rents are calculated at up to 80% of the private market rent in the locality they are situated. Although they are more expensive than target social rents, they are more affordable than renting at the full market rent – hence the Government naming them Affordable Rents. An Affordable Rent is usually around 70-80% of the market rent. These will also be a fixed-term tenancy, which is usually a minimum of five years, but in some exceptional circumstances, can be two years. The rent for any property will not exceed the Local Housing Allowance (LHA) rate for the property type in any instance. The percentage of full market rent charged will vary, with an affordable rent for a larger family home (3, 4, 5 bedrooms) likely to be discounted more than a one and bedroom properties to keep it within the LHA rates. New affordable housing tenancies offered in Spelthorne will either be under the target social rent regime or the new affordable rent regime, and the rent regime applicable for the tenancy will be made clear to applicants on offer of the tenancy.
5. The Strategy
- 5.1 The Council wants to ensure that affordable rent levels in Spelthorne remain affordable. The affordable rent model will enable affordable housing providers to set affordable rents at up to a maximum of 80% of the market rent for a comparable property within the same locality². Spelthorne's market rent levels vary between localities, these variations will be reflected in the affordable rents calculated for each locality. However, in no instance will the rents charged for affordable rented properties, exceed the relevant Local Housing Allowance (LHA) rate that is applicable for that property size at the time of rent setting. This is to avoid excessively high affordable rents in high value areas.
- 5.2 The government plans to introduce a universal credit system and benefit cap in April 2013 which will limit the amount of benefit available to families to £500 per week. When setting rents, affordable housing providers should also be mindful of the potential impact of the proposed benefit cap.

² Due to introduction of the Localism Bill 2011

- 5.3 This section sets out the circumstances in which an Assured tenancy will be granted and those in which a fixed term tenancy will be used. This approach takes account of the objectives set out in this document and the continuing rights of existing Assured tenants.
- 5.4 The following will be granted Assured tenancies:
- Assured tenants whose tenancy commenced before 1 April 2012 moving to another affordable/social rented property (already protected in law).
 - Older people who have reached state retirement age and will occupy a general needs property. The terms of sheltered housing and extra care tenancies will remain the same as they are and will be let as Assured tenancies.
- 5.5 Fixed term tenancies should normally be offered for a minimum period of five years, including any probationary period. The Council is supportive of the use of Starter Tenancies by RSL's. The Council and its RSL Partners are of the opinion that the minimum fixed term of two years should only be used in exceptional circumstances, as this is unlikely to encourage a household to invest in their home and community. The Council will require written justification in all instances of RSL's offering two year tenancies. Two year tenancies should only be issued where there is a short term risk that the tenant may no longer require the property within a relatively short time frame of commencing occupancy, or the property has been identified as being part of a regeneration scheme or other development project. In all other circumstances a fixed term tenancy of five years will be granted for new affordable housing tenancies after April 2012.
- 5.6 Applicants who are officially ineligible for housing, for example foreign nationals who are subject to immigration control and other people from abroad excluded by statute or regulation and do not therefore, have recourse to public funds, will not be nominated for housing by the Council or local providers of affordable housing and will be obliged to seek their own accommodation.
6. Succession
- 6.1 In some circumstances and depending on the tenancy type, a spouse, partner or any other household member may be entitled to succeed the tenancy. The Localism Act has introduced only one statutory right of succession, to a spouse, partner, or any other household member. Any other successions will be entirely at the discretion of the affordable housing provider in consultation with the Council. All applications to succeed a tenancy will be assessed on a case by case basis by the Landlord.

- 6.2 All successions to a flexible tenancy will only be for the remainder of the life of that tenancy, and subject to a full review as set out below when the end of the tenancy is due.
7. Tenancy Reviews
- 7.1 No less than six months before a flexible tenancy is due to end, it will be subject to a review using the criteria detailed below. If it is decided, as a result of the tenancy review, that a tenancy will not be renewed, written notice advising the tenant of such will be served. The notice must contain the reasons for the decision and also notify the tenant of their right to appeal. Should a tenant appeal and fail to have the decision overturned, the landlord will be able to seek possession of the property. The landlord's right of possession may then be challenged in the County Court only on the grounds that the landlord has made a legal error or a material error of fact.
8. Review Criteria
- 8.1 The tenancy review criteria could include the continuing needs of tenants, any assets they might have accrued or inherited during the period of the tenancy, attitude to work/training opportunities that might have presented themselves during the period of the tenancy and pressures on social housing.
- 8.2 Tenancies will not normally be extended where one or more the following apply:
- The financial capacity of the tenant/s to secure alternative market accommodation or affordable tenures, financial criteria as set out in the Choice Based Lettings Partnership Allocation policy. However the Council and its RSL Partners are keen to ensure that any assessment of financial capacity is managed in such a manner that ensures it does not act as a disincentive to work.
 - The conduct of the tenant throughout the fixed term. This includes any anti social behaviour issues, rent arrears, or property management issues. In instances that the affordable housing provider wants to refuse a further tenancy due to the conduct of the tenant, they will be expected to provide a detailed record of support and engagement with the tenant to assist them in maintaining their tenancy.
 - The property is under occupied by one bedroom or more.
 - The property has been extensively adapted but for someone with a disability who no longer lives with the tenant (this allows the property to be released for someone who will benefit from the adaptations).

8.3 The Council recognises that there may be circumstances in which it would be unreasonable to expect someone to move even if the above criteria applied, and would want a tenancy to continue if:

- The tenant is a care leaver and still receiving support from social services because of this.
- The tenant is participating in a family intervention programme or an equivalent programme.
- Other circumstances as deemed appropriate by the RSL/Council:

9. Termination of a flexible tenancy

9.1 When flexible tenancies are coming to an end, it is essential that the tenant is given sufficient notice so that they can seek advice about their options. Accordingly, notice will be served six months before the tenancy is due to end. It is the statutory duty of the affordable housing provider to provide housing advice/support to tenants in this situation. Well in advance of a tenancy being terminated, the affordable housing provider will assist the tenant to explore their options for alternative housing. Such options, could include, home ownership, a privately rented home or a more suitable affordable rented home. The Council's Housing Options team will also offer housing advice to tenants in this situation if requested.

9.2 If the tenant refuses to move when the notice period expires, the normal eviction procedure will take effect.

10. Advice

10.1 The housing officers in the Council Housing Options team will assist tenants with a wide range of advice to help them resolve the issues arising out of the termination of their tenancies. This will include signposting to other Council departments when appropriate and to voluntary organisations that help people with their housing issues. Housing information can also be accessed on Spelthorne Council's website, use the following webpage/link –

<http://www.spelthorne.gov.uk/article/684/Housing>

11. Appeals

11.1 If a tenant disagrees with the decision reached by their affordable housing provider to terminate their tenancy, they may use the appeal process as follows.

- All applicants have the right to request general information about their tenancy review, including the facts that have been taken into account and the reasons for terminating their tenancies.

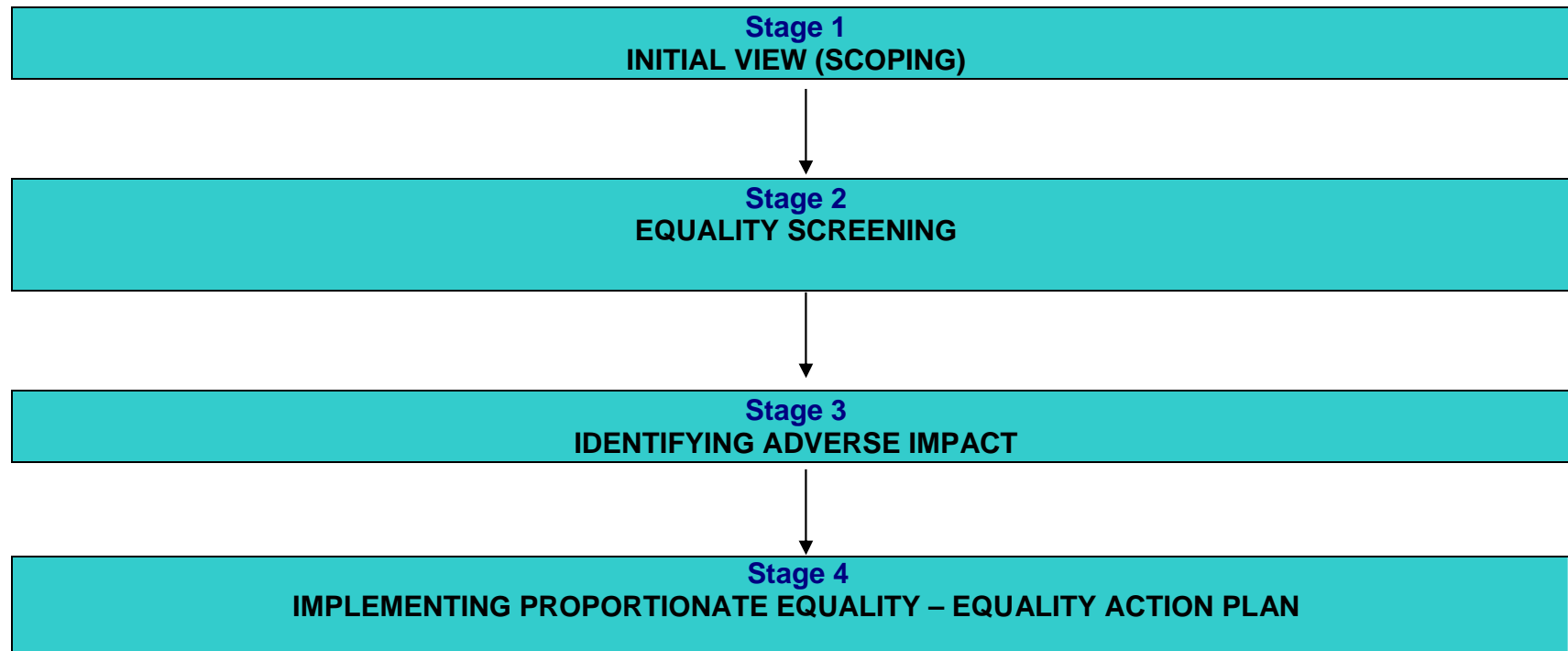
- An applicant who is unhappy with a decision made under this policy should in the first instance contact their affordable housing provider, area housing officer to explain why they think that the decision is unreasonable.
- If an applicant wishes to pursue the matter further, they should obtain a copy of their affordable housing provider's appeal process and ensure that they submit an appeal within the stated time limit. For reference the majority stock holding RSL in Spelthorne, state that an appeal must be put in writing within 21 days of receiving notice that the tenancy is not to be renewed. The same RSL states, in cases that a new tenant wishes to appeal against the type of tenancy offered to them or the length of the fixed term tenancy they have 5 working days to do so from the time they first receive the offer.
- Where an applicant wishes to appeal the termination of a tenancy and the notice period expires during the period of the appeal, the tenant will be permitted to stay in the property where this is not likely to lead to an unreasonable delay in the property being vacated.-
- If the appeal review upholds the decision, the tenant then has recourse to the County Court.
- Should the County Court uphold the decision, the tenant will be obliged to leave the property.

NB: If you do not have data to support your objectives you will need to develop monitoring mechanisms that will support and help you identify the gaps in service provision or employment issues.

SPELTHORNE BOROUGH COUNCILS

EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT TOOLKIT

6. EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT FLOWCHART



STAGE 1 – SCOPING

Scoping is the initial planning stage of the assessment. The aim of this scoping is to identify how the EIA will be conducted and assessing at this early stage:

AGREEING WHO WILL LEAD AND CARRY OUT THE ASSESSMENT

Establishing responsibility and ownership has been identified as a critical part of making the assessments a meaningful exercise.

1.1 Policy, Practice, Functions or Service being assessed	<i>Please state policy or service being assessed</i>
The Council's Draft Tenancy Strategy	
1.2 Lead Officer	<i>Please state name and contact details of lead officer who will be conducting the review.</i>
Lead Officer Heather Morgan – Head of Planning and Housing Strategy Implementing Officer John Hesbrook – Housing Strategy and Enabling Officer	
1.3 What do you think are the main issues relating to diversity within your policy or service area?	It is suggested that it would be helpful for those who carry out the assessment to begin by offering an initial view of what they think are the main issues relating to diversity for the policy or service being assessed. This can then help shape the questions that will form the basis of the assessment and ensure that the assessments are tailored to the specifics of the service, rather than just working

	<p>through a set of standard questions.</p> <p><i>Some things you may wish to consider.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>How do you think that your policy or service currently meets the needs of different communities in Spelthorne?</i> • <i>Do you think that your policy/service specifically contributes to promoting Equality and Diversity in Spelthorne? if so, in what way?</i> • <i>Do you think that your policy or service presents any barriers to any community or group? if so please provide evidence.</i> • <i>How can your service or policy tackle these barriers ((gender, disability and race at least) age, religion/faith and sexuality))</i> • <i>Are there any equality objectives that are on-going or planned for the future, if so please state.(These could be included in your Equality Action Plans (Stage 4)</i> • <i>Please list our proposed equality objectives, at this stage, if any?</i>
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Current

The Council does not have an existing Tenancy Strategy, it is a statutory requirement of the Localism Bill 2011 that one is in place by January 2013. Currently the Council has an Allocations Policy (this policy will remain in place), this sets out the criteria by which properties are allocated, social housing tenancies are managed by the tenant's landlord (relevant Housing Association). The Allocations Policy which is partnership between three Local Authorities (Spelthorne, Elmbridge

and Runnymede) and two Housing Associations (A2 Dominion and Elmbridge Housing Association) has been subject to a thorough Equalities Impact Assessment.

Future

The Tenancy Strategy is to establish guidelines which Housing Associations will give regard to in the management of all tenancies, including the new fixed term tenancies being introduced. For example, criteria for renewing tenancies and processes to be followed when ending a tenancy, succession rights, how under occupation will be dealt with etc. It is not anticipated that the Tenancy Strategy will create barriers for any community or group and will actually assist those in the highest housing need into housing.

STAGE 2: EQUALITY SCREENING PROCESS (Risk Assessment)

1. Introduction

Stage 2 consists on undertaking a screening (or equalities risk assessment). Key areas to consider are?

- What are the key policies, functions and services which may have 'Relevance' to equality and diversity?
- How will you rank these?
- Will you consider individual policies

The outlined Equality Screening Process (ESP) should be used where Service areas are conducting Service based Equality Impact Assessments (EIAs) and/or Policy based EIAs. The purpose of this screening process is to identify policies or practices we believe have a 'Relevance' to disadvantaged groups e.g. BME communities, people with disabilities, women or men, etc. This process should enable the lead officer to identify what are the key equality issues in their respective service area and to identify policies or practices believed to could have an adverse impact on disadvantaged groups.

2. How to use the Equality Screening Process

Each Lead Officer is asked to identify which services, functions, policies or practices that have a ‘Relevance’ on service delivery in relation to the six diversity themes using the scoring sheet. Points should be provided on the basis of actual or presumed ‘Relevance’ based on the information provided in section 1. By the end of the exercise you should have added all the points and given a score. The next stage is to identify which polices/practices have a high/medium or low adverse impact.

2a. Points

- 5 – This policy or practice could have a very high relevance on our service delivery
- 4 – This policy or practice could have a relatively relevance on our service delivery
- 3 – This policy or practice could have a medium relevance on our service delivery
- 2 – This policy or practice could have a relatively low relevance on our service delivery
- 1 – This policy or practice could have a very low relevance on our service delivery

2b. Scoring

- 1-10 points** – Low Relevance
- 11 – 20 points** – Medium Relevance
- 21 and above** – High Relevance

Please see example below:

Service, Function, Policy, Practice.	Age	Disability	Gender	Gender Reassignment	Marriage / Civil partnership	Pregnancy	Race	Religion / Belief	Sexual Orientation	Total Points	Impact H/M/L
Example Services	3	2	1	3	1	2	3	1	2	12	Med

3. Equality Screening Process

Service, Function, Policy, Practice.	Age	Disability	Gender	Gender Reassignment	Marriage / Civil partnership	Pregnancy	Race	Religion / Belief	Sexual Orientation	Total Points	Impact H/M/L
Tenancy Strategy	3	3	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	13	MR

4. Conclusion – Policy or Service EIA?

If a policy/practice has a score of 25 or over, it is advisable that a Policy based EIA is undertaken. If most policies score below 25, it would be advisable to conduct a service based EIA, which will involve an EIA that overviews all policies or practices in your respective service area.

Conclusion – service based EIA

STAGE 3. IDENTIFYING ADVERSE IMPACT

The aim of an assessment is to identify whether the service or policy has an adverse impact upon people with disabilities, black and minority ethnic communities, men and women, heterosexual, gay, bisexual and lesbian communities, older and younger people and faith communities. The assessment should ultimately produce proportionate equality objectives, which help remove barriers and link into service plans. The end result must, at least, produce one equality objective for each of the three equality themes listed by the Local Government Equality Standard, namely gender, disability and race.

Stage three comprises of two sections.

- Concentration on the aims of the service, policy, function or practice.
- Focuses on the practical delivery of the policy or service.

Assessing the Aims and Criteria of the Policy or Service

This section will determine whether the underlying aims, policies and procedures of the policy or service comply with the Disability Discrimination Act 1995, and Disability Discrimination Act 1995 and (Amendment) 2005, Sex Discriminations Act 1977, and Single Equality Act 2005, Equal Pay Act 1970, Employment Directive (Religion/belief) 2003, Employment Directive (Sexual Orientation) 2003, Employment Directive (Age Discrimination) 2006 and the Local Government Equality Standard. In addition to the key questions below, you may wish to include any specific issues that were identified during the scoping stage of the assessment.

Key Questions	Issues to consider
<p>3.1 What are the aims of the policy, practice, function or service?</p>	<p><i>What needs is the policy/service designed to meet?</i></p> <p><i>What are the current priorities?</i></p> <p><i>You could also refer to your current Service Plans</i></p>
<p>The aim of the Tenancy Strategy is to set out the guidelines by which affordable housing tenancies will be managed in Spelthorne. This includes the circumstances when a lifetime tenancy will be granted, the minimum fixed term tenancies to be offered and how these tenancies will be managed. The introduction of fixed term tenancies allows the opportunity to review a household’s needs at the end of a tenancy term, for example, under-occupation issues, whereby the size of the household has changed from when the tenancy was granted. The Tenancy Strategy will allow affordable housing to be utilised to its full potential and allocated to those in the highest housing need. The introduction of fixed term tenancies will prioritise and enhance opportunity for those in the highest housing need. Affordable housing properties occupied by those on a fixed term tenancy whose financial circumstances have improved sufficiently to be able to meet their own housing needs, either through purchasing a property or renting on the open market will be reallocated at the end of the tenancy.</p>	

This will result in a higher turnover of properties than would be achieved if Lifetime tenancies were being offered in all circumstances.

Properties that have been adapted and the adaptations are no longer required due to a change of circumstances of the household makeup, will be assessed to establish whether it is appropriate for the household to still occupy this property or whether they should be offered an alternative non adapted property and the adapted property re-allocated to a household that requires the adaptations. The previous practice of lifetime tenancies for all did not allow for any review of under occupancy of properties or of re-allocating adapted properties, when the adaptations were no longer required by the household. The introduction of the Strategy will enable the Council and its Housing Association partners to utilise the affordable housing stock available in Spelthorne to its maximum potential in order to assist those in the highest priority housing need.

3.2 What do your staff/team members say about your initial view?

- You could:
- What do staff members feel are the gaps, or what do they feel could improve the service?
 - Speak to your colleagues within your team
- List what equality objectives that are currently implemented or will soon be implemented.***

The day to day running of the Housing Team and interfacing with service users to assist them with their housing issues will largely remain the same. All the current equality procedures as practiced by the Housing Options team will remain in place. Any issues with regard to the introduction of fixed term tenancies will only result in additional interaction with the Housing team when a tenancy review will be undertaken six months prior to the end of a fixed term tenancy. It is expected that the large majority of fixed term tenancies will be renewed and it is only in certain circumstances as detailed in the Strategy when a tenancy will not be renewed, the criteria to establish whether a tenancy is to be renewed does not discriminate against any service user.

Key Questions	Issues to consider
<p>3.3 What does available data and the results of any consultations show about the take up of services? What is the impact on different groups? (qualitative and quantitative)</p>	<p><i>You could look at:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>previous community consultation exercises,</i> • <i>customer service reviews and analysis.</i> • <i>Census data</i> • <i>What are the experiences of front-line staff in relation to the provision of the service?</i> • <i>location of facilities.</i> • <i>lack of access to translation/interpretation or access to building or services,</i> • <i>eligibility rules could be a barrier?</i>
<p>Documents can be translated/interpreted as required as part of a Council-wide commitment to equality of access to information and there is a language line available for translation.</p> <p>Access to front line Housing staff is achieved by phone, and in person in the main Council offices. Physical accessibility has been factored into designing the main Council reception area and the Housing Options reception area. Any issues here would be covered under the EIA for Facilities Management. The Locata Search Moves bidding system has also been subject to an Equalities Impact Assessment.</p>	
<p>3.4 Can you identify any gaps? What are the reasons for this?</p> <p><i>(Please note: If you do not have any data, you may wish to develop service based monitoring mechanisms that collate data on under-represented groups)</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Are communities or service users aware of this policy or service?</i> • <i>Are there any accessibility issues?</i> • <i>Is service provision monitored, if so how?</i> • <i>Is there a lack diversity awareness amongst staff?</i>

Staff will always benefit from updated diversity awareness training and further requirements can be assessed in annual appraisals. However there are no specific issues at this time.

3.5 What practical changes do you feel would help reduce any adverse impact on particular groups?	<i>For example, changes in communication methods, language support, disability measures, changes in eligibility criteria, developing monitoring mechanisms, diversity training?</i>
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Ensure monitoring of the effectiveness of policies is widely disseminated, and consultation takes place with specific hard to reach groups where issues arise.

Reminder in all communications that language support etc is available

Staff to attend diversity training as required.

3.6 What would be the benefits of making the above changes and are there any negative impacts that such an action would have on different communities?	<i>You may want to consider the benefits and consequences for the group(s) concerned, other communities and the Council, if we were not to make the suggested changes?</i>
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The benefit of the above would be to ensure that where policies within the Strategy are not being as effective as they could be. This can be identified and specific groups are involved in providing suggested solutions.

On-going staff training will ensure that the issues of diversity and equality are given proper consideration.

If such actions were not undertaken, there is an increased likelihood that certain groups within the community will feel excluded from the on-going monitoring process.

STAGE 4. IMPLEMENTING PROPORTIONATE EQUALITY OBJECTIVES & MAINSTREAMING DIVERSITY – THE EQUALITY ACTION PLAN

Your Equality Action Plan (Draft)

5.1 Referring to **Stages 1** (Scoping), **Stage 2** (Screening) and **Stage 3** (Adverse Impact) please list what objectives you will implement to mainstream diversity in your service area.

Please complete your Equality Action Plan ensuring that you have listed at least objectives in regards to disability, gender and race/ethnicity.

Outcome	Objectives	Lead	Resources	Deadline	Progress
Updated information and guidance on Tenancy management for service users	Comprehensive overhaul	John Hesbrook	Staff time	September 2012	
Effective engagement and drawing on expertise	Engage with Registered Providers when the Strategy is not delivering expected outcomes	John Hesbrook	Staff time	March 2013 if appropriate as a result of monitoring	

Inclusion	Reminder of language support in letters which we send out	John Hesbrook	Staff time	September 2012	
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Congratulations, you have now completed your Equality Impact Assessment. Please send a copy of your EIA to:

Arif Sain, Senior Consultant
Office: 01279 460022
Mob: 07906 380 976
E:mail: **Inclusivity_consultancy@yahoo.co.uk**

Cabinet**18 December 2012**

Title	Staines Village		
Purpose	Resolution required		
Report of	Chief Executive	Confidential	No
Cabinet Member	Councillor Frank Ayers	Key Decision	No
Report Author	John Brooks		
Summary	<p>This report explains the background to a request from the Staines Village Residents and Traders Association (SVR&TA) to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recognise the historic area of Staines to the west of the town centre, and broadly centred on Church Street, as 'Staines Village', and • To agree to appropriate signage to identify that area. 		
Financial Implications	There are none.		
Corporate Priority	This matter is not in the list of corporate priorities		
Recommendations	<p>The Cabinet is asked to:</p> <p>(1). Express its wholehearted support to the Staines Village Residents and Traders Association in its objectives.</p> <p>(2). Note the longstanding use of the name 'Staines Village' for the area broadly co-terminus with the Staines Conservation Area.</p>		

1. Background

- 1.1 In March 2012 local residents and traders residing in the area, which is broadly co-terminus with the designated Staines Conservation Area, formed the SVR&TA. The proposed boundary is shown in the plan at Appendix 1 to this report.
- 1.2 Their presentation document, in support of the proposal, explains that this area has been known locally as Staines Village for over 50 years and in the 1980s and 90s a regular Village Fair was held. They see the formal recognition of this area helping them to recreate and build on the sense of community and improve the town's image generally.
- 1.3 The formation of the group appears to have widespread support from within that area with some 65% of people responding to 200 consultation letters sent out by the Association to local residents and traders. 95% of those responding support the formal recognition of Staines Village.
- 1.4 The Association has adopted a formal 'vision', 'charter' and 'terms of reference'. In essence they seek to:
 - 1.5 Foster community identity and spirit.
 - 1.6 Encourage protection and maintenance of the Conservation Area.
 - 1.7 Support the elderly and infirm within the area.
 - 1.8 Run social and community events including street parties, fairs, local markets, and 'clean-up' activity in off-street areas.
 - 1.9 Support the maintenance and development of the area's commercial life.
 - 1.10 Influence local matters relating to parking, traffic and development.
 - 1.11 Support the community involvement of St Mary's Church and other amenity groups who support the Association's aims.

2. Key issues

- 2.1 There is no statutory mechanism or requirement for a Council to approve the naming of an area or its renaming. At a technical level, the Association and local residents and traders are therefore free to ascribe the name 'Staines Village' to the area they have defined. Nevertheless, the objective of the Association to foster a strong community spirit and work to the benefit of that area is admirable and aligns strongly with the Council's aspirations across the Borough. The efforts of the Association are worthy of the Council's whole hearted support and encouragement, and it is also appropriate to note the use of the name Staines Village which appears to be long established locally.
- 2.2 They have also stated that it may be desirable to finally assess the precise boundary of the area which may merit some slight expansion. In discussion with officers, there appears to be a need to check whether the boundary of the area of 'community' and proposed 'Village' needs to reflect the defined boundary of the Staines Conservation Area. The two do not have to be exactly the same. What is important is that there is strong local support for whatever precise boundary is finally agreed by the Association in conjunction with the local residents and traders.

- 2.3 The Association has also stated that they will be seeking the assistance of the Council in obtaining planning permission to erect, at the Association's cost, three signs to indicate the boundary of the Staines Village area. Officers can, of course, advise on this and the decision would need to be consistent with any reasonable highway-related requirements of the County Council and also their formal approval. The final decision on any planning permission rests with the Planning Committee. I see no objection, in principle, to the suggestion but there will, of course, be a need to get the scale, design and location of these signs right and avoid any potential confusion with other Staines signage. There is merit in the Association finalising the precise boundary of the area before any signage scheme is formulated.

3. Options analysis and proposal

- 3.1 There is no statutory requirement for a Council to approve the naming or renaming of an area within its boundary.
- 3.2 However, the Council wishes to support the Staines Village Residents and Traders Association in its objectives.

4. Financial implications

- 4.1 There are no financial implications.

5. Other considerations

- 5.1 There are no considerations to be taken into account other than those highlighted in 2.2 and 2.3 above.

6. Risks and how they will be mitigated

- 6.1 There are no specific risks attached to this proposal.

7. Timetable for implementation

- 7.1 A timetable has not yet been drawn up.

Background papers:

There are none.

Appendices:

Appendix 1

Map of Proposed Village Boundary

