

Minutes of Cabinet

30 September 2014

Present:

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

Apologies for absence: Councillor P. Forbes-Forsyth, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Community Safety, Young People, Leisure and Culture

Councillors in attendance: Councillor I.T.E. Harvey

2092. Minutes

The minutes of the Cabinet meeting held on 15 July 2014 were agreed as correct.

2093. Disclosures of Interest

There were none.

2094. Minutes and recommendations of the Local Plan Working Party

Cabinet received the minutes of the meeting held on 3 September 2014.

RESOLVED that Cabinet notes the minutes and agrees the recommendations of the Local Plan Working Party as follows:

- To commence the preparation of a new Local Plan for the Borough.
- That Officers report back as early as possible on a proposed outline timetable/work programme and resource implications.
- To fully co-operate with other Surrey Districts on strategic planning issues and to a Memorandum of Understanding (Appendix E).
- As part of the Duty to Co-operate, to progress housing market assessment work with Runnymede and other authorities as required.
- To publish the Planning Monitoring Report 2014 subject to amendment to Table 1 and any other minor factual corrections.

2095. Capital monitoring April to July 2014

Cabinet considered a report on the actual capital spend covering the period April to July 2014.

RESOLVED that Cabinet notes the report.

2096. Revenue monitoring April to July 2014

Cabinet considered a report on the actual revenue spend covering the period April to July 2014.

RESOLVED that Cabinet notes the report.

2097. *Development of a Housing Strategy for Spelthorne Borough Council

Cabinet considered a report on the proposed three strategies, i.e. housing strategy – private sector strategy – homelessness strategy, which will comprise the complete Housing Strategy for Spelthorne Borough Council.

RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND that Council adopts the final strategies.

Reason for the decision:

Cabinet noted the need to increase the supply of new homes in the Borough and to improve the tenure mix, especially through the provision of more private rented accommodation.

2098. *Capital funding for housing opportunities

Cabinet considered a report on a potential opportunity to secure a number of temporary and private sector properties in the Borough.

RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND that Council:

- Authorises officers to continue negotiations with Thames Valley Housing for housing opportunities on the Crooked Billet site.
- Agrees, in principle, to spend £500,000 of commuted sum funding on the Crooked Billet/Thames Valley Housing project.
- Agrees, in principle, and subject to full development of the business case, including evaluation advice, to a supplementary capital estimate of £500,000

Reason for the decision:

Cabinet noted the housing situation in the Borough with a lack of temporary and private sector housing.

2099. Employment monitoring

Cabinet considered a report giving a snapshot of the Spelthorne workforce and employment monitoring data as at 1 April 2014 and updated on 1 August 2014.

RESOLVED that Cabinet notes the report.

2100. Recovery Policy for Spelthorne Borough Council

Cabinet considered a report on the revised Recovery policy for the Borough.

RESOLVED that Cabinet accepts the recommendations in the revised Recovery policy

- To ensure a professional, consistent and timely approach to recovery action across the section.
- To promote a coordinated approach towards sharing debtor information and managing debts owed to the Council.

Reason for the decision:

Cabinet noted that the policy includes good practice principles which should strengthen the Council's recovery of debt.

2101. *Request for delegated authority for Environmental Health

Cabinet considered a report on a request for amendments to the Council's scheme of delegations for Environmental Health officers (EHOs).

RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND that Council adopts the amendments to the current delegations to EHOs.

Reason for the decision:

Cabinet noted that the current delegations to EHOs were last amended in April 2012 and that there have been changes in legislation since then.

2102. Leader's Announcements

The following are the latest service updates from various Council departments:

Spelthorne Council's efforts to create a clean, green and colourful borough were recognised at this year's prestigious South & South East in Bloom Awards held on 17 September. The ever-popular Sunbury Walled Garden claimed the top-spot, receiving a Gold award and being declared overall winner in the Small Park category. Staines Cemetery gained a Silver Gilt award and was voted Best Small Cemetery in the South East. Sunbury Cemetery also picked up a Silver Gilt award.

Work has been carried out to lower a section of raised river bank along Sweeps Ditch in Staines Park. This will offer some additional flood resilience for properties on Gordon Close which back onto Sweeps Ditch.

Staff at the Fordbridge Community Centre in Ashford have raised over £1500 for Help for Heroes.

The Independent Living team hosted a stall at the recent Spelthorne Assembly. There was a lot of interest and many visitors spoke to the staff and took away leaflets.

The Environmental Health and Spelthorne Locality teams went the extra mile recently when they tracked down relatives of WW2 veteran, Edwin Tucker, who had received a public burial. This enabled the family to fulfil Mr Tucker's dying wish of having his ashes scattered on Sword Beach in Normandy.

Spelthorne Council, along with Surrey County Council and Recoup, have won a funding bid from WRAP for a project to study, measure and compare different methods of improving plastics recycling rates. The study will take place over the next few months in Stanwell and Sunbury Common and will trial three different methods for encouraging residents to recycle more. The Council is also supporting the Pledge4Plastics campaign, a new government backed initiative created to increase the collection of plastic.

The increasingly-popular Spelthorne Assembly was held on 19 September. A wide variety of more than 80 stands ranged from the emergency services and frontline public services, to dozens of voluntary, community and faith organisations as well as the business sector. Headline speaker was Dr Vince Cable, MP, addressing issues of economic development in the Borough and beyond. The popular Make It Happen section saw four bids put forward to win £1,000 grant money. The winner was Dramatize, a theatre group for people with learning disabilities.

Staines-upon-Thames Magistrates dismissed an appeal by taxi driver, Ahmad Jamali, against Spelthorne Council's decision to revoke his license in January this year.

Spelthorne Council is consulting on changes to Ashford multi-storey car park and is asking whether the site should be used for housing, shops or alternative parking; or whether there are any particular services or facilities residents would like to see provided. All ideas are welcome. The consultation ends Friday 17 October.

Following the introduction of Individual Electoral Registration (IER), Spelthorne residents are being urged to complete their online electoral registration if they received notification that they need to do so. Anyone who received a letter telling them they were not transferred to the new system is being asked to take action.

Spelthorne Council is appealing to local businesses to help fund this year's Christmas lights in Staines-upon-Thames. Spelthorne Council announced last year that it would spend £10K to fund the purchase of new Christmas lights for the town centre; responsibility for finding the cost of the installation, maintenance and storage of the lights (estimated to be £7K) would rest with local businesses. Cllr Colin Davis is hoping to establish a Retail Forum which will give local retailers the opportunity to discuss all matters regarding the town centre, including Christmas lights.

Spelthorne Council is launching a series of art competitions for Spelthorne school children to mark the centenary of World War One. The competition will run annually until 2018 with each year having a different creative category - art, short story, photography and poetry – all themed around World War One.

The Council Tax collection rates (cumulative) up to end August:-

- Council Tax: 54.8% (54.9% sply)
- Business Rates: 48.89% (53.57% sply)
- Council Tax Support: 39.8% (30.4% sply)

The Recovery partnership with Elmbridge ended at the beginning of September following the departure of Spelthorne's Recovery Manager.

Interviews for the positions of Recovery Manager and Revenues and Customer Service Operational Manager have been arranged for 29 and 30 September.

From next month the Housing Benefits team will receive earnings data from the DWP which will enable them to more accurately administer Housing Benefit payments.

The new Housing Options team leader post comes into effect on 14 October.

Work is continuing in the Spelthorne Community Garden and two gardening and woodcarving workshops have been held for students at Hawkedale Infants School in Sunbury-on-Thames. The young people learnt about different plants and how to care for them and also tried their hand at carving a new wooden welcome sign for the garden.

Sunbury Leisure Centre has been rated as excellent in the recent QUEST assessment which puts the facility among the best in the country in terms of industry standards and good practise. QUEST is the UK's Quality Scheme for Sport and Leisure.

Seventeen bids from a mix of nationally recognised house builders and others have been received for the development of Bridge Street car park and are currently being evaluated. A report will be presented to Cabinet on 18 November to agree the preferred developer.

A flat located above the pavilion in Staines Park has been renovated by Spelthorne Council to provide new housing for residents in need of temporary accommodation and a tenant has moved in. Another pavilion flat located in Long Lane Rec in Stanwell was also renovated by the Council earlier this year. A2Dominion Housing will manage the properties on behalf of the Council.

A report has been submitted to Cabinet regarding the adoption of three draft housing policies (Housing Strategy, Private Sector Strategy, and Homelessness Strategy). If agreed, consultation with the community would be followed by adoption of the final strategies at full Council on 23 October.

The Communications team recently commissioned MEL Research to carry out telephone surveys to find out what residents think about Spelthorne's services and the Borough in general. The survey will soon be coming to the end and the Council would like to thank those residents who took part and the results will be published as soon as possible.

Cllr Jean Pinkerton was interviewed by Brooklands Radio on Wednesday 17 September. She spoke on a range of topics including housing, community centres and flooding.

To assist with planning communications activity, departments (via their Web Librarians) are being asked to fill in the monthly publicity planner which can be found on SpelNet. This helps the Communications team to support departments and identify potential clashes.

We continue to see steady increases in the numbers of residents subscribing to our social media channels and newsletter. Current figures are as follows:-

Enews: 758 (+60 vlm)

Twitter: 1964 followers (+28 vlm)

Facebook: 544 followers (+22 vlm)

The Communications team is working to update the Council's web pages in readiness for the annual SOCITIM review.

2103. Issues for Future Meetings

There were none.

2104. Urgent items

There were 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 7 October 2014***

