

TO THE MEMBERS OF SPELTHORNE BOROUGH COUNCIL

SUMMONS TO MEETING

You are hereby summoned to attend the **Meeting of Spelthorne Borough Council to be held in the Council Chamber, Council Offices, Knowle Green, Staines on Thursday 25th July 2002, beginning at 7.30pm**, for the purpose of transacting the business specified in the Agenda **set out on the next page**.

MICHAEL TAYLOR
Chief Executive

EMERGENCY PROCEDURE: - In the event of an emergency the building must be evacuated. All Members and Officers should assemble on the Green adjacent to Broome Lodge. Members of the Public present should accompany the Officers to this point and remain there until the Senior Officer present has accounted for all persons known to be on the premises. [**THE LIFT MUST NOT BE USED**]

PUBLIC SPEAKING AT COUNCIL MEETINGS

(1) Question Time

Public "Question Time" is at the start of Council meetings. This is an opportunity for any person to ask the Leader of the Council a question about the Council's activities or issues which affect the Borough.

(2) Representations on Recommendations

When the Council is considering a recommendation made to it by the Executive or a Committee, any resident can put forward views on the issues involved by making representations to the Council for a maximum of three minutes before the Council discusses the recommendation and makes a decision.

(3) Petitions

The Council has a procedure to enable petitions to be presented formally at Council meetings and for the person presenting the petition to address the Council for a maximum of three minutes about it.

Anyone wishing to (1) ask a question, (2) make representations on a recommendation, or (3) present a petition must notify the Chief Executive's office before Noon on the day of the meeting.

A G E N D A

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE
2. MINUTES

To confirm as a correct record the Minutes of the Special Council Meeting held on 27th June 2002. (Attached at [APPENDIX 1](#) [pages 4 to 6])

3. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

The Leader or his nominee to answer questions raised by members of the public (*provided questions have been submitted in writing to the Chief Executive's office before Noon on the day of the meeting*).

4. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

To receive any declarations of interest from Members in accordance with the Council's Code of Conduct for Members.

5. ANNOUNCEMENTS FROM THE MAYOR, THE LEADER OR THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE

The Mayor to preside over the presentations in relation to Warship Week 1942.

6. PETITIONS

To receive any petitions submitted to the Council.

7. RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE EXECUTIVE

To consider the recommendations of the Executive on the following matters:-
(Attached at [APPENDIX 2](#) [pages 7 to 9])

1. Spelthorne Community Strategy – Key Decision

(A copy of the Spelthorne Community Strategy is enclosed under separate cover as [Annex 1](#).)

2. Single Capital Pot – Asset Management Plan and Capital Strategy – Key Decision

(Copies of the Asset Management Plan as [Annex 2](#) and the Capital Strategy as [Annex 3](#) are enclosed under separate cover.)

3. Year 2/3 Planned Maintenance Programme – Key Decision

4. Surrey Pension Fund Deficit – Key Decision

5. Review of Housing Strategy and Adoption of the Best Value Improvement Plan – Key Decision

(A copy of the Housing Strategy is enclosed under separate cover as [Annex 4](#).)

Note: Members of the public may make representations not exceeding 3 minutes on individual recommendations before they are discussed (*provided notice of their wish to do so has been given to the Chief Executive's office before Noon on the day of the meeting*).

8. RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE STANDARDS COMMITTEE

To consider the recommendations of the Standards Committee on the revised Spelthorne Planning Code **(Attached at [APPENDIX 3](#) [pages 10 to 15])**

9. RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE MEMBERS' SEMINAR ON THE SURREY SPATIAL STRATEGY HELD ON 23RD JULY 2002

To consider the recommendations [\[attached\]](#) arising from the Members' Seminar on the Surrey Spatial Strategy held on 23rd July 2002. *(A copy of the Briefing Paper for the Members' Seminar on 23rd July has been circulated to all Members in advance under separate cover.)*

10. MOTIONS ON NOTICE

To receive any Motions submitted on Notice given under Standing Order 14.

11. REPORT FROM THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL

To receive a report from the Leader of the Council on the work of the Executive. **(Attached at [APPENDIX 4](#) [pages 16 to 18])**

12. REPORTS FROM THE CHAIRMEN OF THE COMMUNITY, ECONOMIC AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEES

To receive reports from the Chairmen of the three Overview and Scrutiny Committees on the work of their Committees. **(Attached at APPENDICES [5](#), [6](#) and [7](#) [pages 19 to 21])**

13. REPORTS FROM THE CHAIRMEN OF THE PLANNING AND STANDARDS COMMITTEES

To receive reports from the Chairmen of the Planning and Standards Committees on the work of their Committees. **(Attached at APPENDICES [8](#) and [9](#) [pages 22 to 24])**

14. QUESTIONS ON WARD ISSUES

The Leader or his nominee to answer questions from Members on issues in their Ward *(provided questions have been submitted in writing to the Chief Executive's office before Noon on the day of the meeting).*

15. GENERAL QUESTIONS

The Leader or his nominee or relevant Committee Chairman to answer questions from Members on matters affecting the Borough or for which their committee has responsibility *(provided questions have been submitted in writing to the Chief Executive's office before Noon on the day of the meeting).*

16. APPOINTMENTS TO OUTSIDE BODIES

(1) Clarendon County Primary School, Knapp Road, Ashford

To appoint a representative to serve on the Governing Body of Clarendon County Primary School until 24th July 2006, in light of the resignation of the current representative Mrs. E. Jervis. This matter was deferred for consideration at this meeting by the Council on 25th April 2002.

The School Governing Body have since put forward the nomination of Mrs. Sylvia Johns of 4 Brownrigg Road, Ashford who wishes to be considered for this appointment.

(2) Spelthorne Junior School, Ashford Common

To appoint a representative to serve on the Governing Body of Spelthorne Junior School until 30th August 2006 as the term of office of the current representative Mrs. Pat Todd expires on 31st August 2002. Mrs. Todd has indicated her willingness to be nominated for a further term of office.

(3) St. Mary's C. of E. Junior School, Clare Road, Stanwell

To appoint a representative to serve on the Governing Body of St. Mary's C. of E. Junior School, Stanwell, until 24th July 2006 in light of the current outstanding vacancy for a Governor appointment by the Council. This matter was deferred for consideration at a future meeting by the Council on 21st February 2002.

The School Governing Body have since put forward the nomination of Mrs. Doris Neville-Davies
(a former Chairman of the School Governors) who now wishes to be reconsidered for appointment.

17. URGENT BUSINESS

To consider any urgent business.

18. EXEMPT BUSINESS

To answer any questions which relate to exempt business.

MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 27TH JUNE 2002

BOROUGH OF SPELTHORNE

**At The Special Meeting Of The Council Of The Borough Of Spelthorne, Held In The
Council Chamber, Council Offices, Knowle Green, Staines
On Thursday 27th June At 7.30pm**

Appleyard M A	Grant Mrs D L	Packman J D (<i>Deputy Leader</i>)
Ayers F	Hermes A W	Paton J M
Beardsmore I J	Hirst A P	Ponton Mrs J E
Blampied G G	Hyams Mrs M	Read E I J
Burrell L J W	James P R	Searancke E J
Ceaser G S (Deputy Mayor)	Leedham Ms A	Smith J E H
Crabb T	Mellett Mrs H E L	Smith Mrs P A
Culnane E K	Napper Mrs I	Smith-Ainsley R A
Davies F (Leader)	Norcross Mrs G A	Trussler G F
Fisher C M	O'Hara E	Weston Mrs P

Councillor G.S. Ceaser , Deputy Mayor, in the Chair

APOLOGIES: Councillors V. Agarwal, Mrs P.C. Amos, H.V. Drinkwater, G.E. Forsbrey, J.M.Fullbrook, Mrs M.J. Martin, R.W. Sider, T. Stubbs, R. Watkins and Mrs J.M. Wood-Dow.

206/02 MINUTES

The Minutes of the Meeting held on 16th May, 2002 were approved as a correct record.

207/02 SPELTHORNE BEST VALUE PERFORMANCE PLAN (BVPP) 2002/2003 – KEY DECISION

The Council considered the recommendation of the Executive on a draft of the Council's Best Value Performance Plan (BVPP) for 2002/2003.

Members noted the change needed to page 5 of the spreadsheet of Performance Indicators under the section on Planning to read: Target for BVPI 107 for 02/03 be £11.51 and not £6.39.

RESOLVED:

- a. That the key priorities for the Council listed in the Best Value Performance Plan for 2002/2003 be endorsed;
- b. That the target for BVPI 107 for 02/03 to £11.51 and not £6.39; and
- c. That subject to the above change the Best Value Performance Plan for 2002/2003 as presented be adopted.

208/02 IMPLEMENTATION OF NEW POLLING DISTRICT ARRANGEMENTS – KEY DECISION

The Council considered the recommendation of the Executive on new Polling Districts and Polling Places to be introduced within the Borough of Spelthorne in May 2003.

RESOLVED:

- a. That the following Polling Districts and Polling Places for the Borough be approved:-

WARD	NEW POLLING DISTRICT	NEW POLLING PLACE
STANWELL NORTH	SN1	STANWELL MOOR VILLAGE HALL
	SN2	STANWELL VILLAGE HALL
	SN3	YOUTH CENTRE,
	SN4	ST. MARY'S SCHOOL
ASHFORD NORTH & STANWELL SOUTH	ANS1	STANWELL CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH HALL
	ANS2	FORDWAY CENTRE,
	ANS3	MOBILE POLLING STATION
STAINES	S1	SHORTWOOD INFANT SCHOOL,
	S2	STAINES COMMUNITY CENTRE
	S3	STAINES YOUTH SPORTS CENTRE,
	S4	OUR LADY OF THE ROSARY
STAINES SOUTH	SS1	ST. MARTIN'S COURT HALL
	SS2	RESOURCE CENTRE
	SS3	BUCKLAND JUNIOR SCHOOL
ASHFORD TOWN	AT1	ASHFORD PARK SCHOOL
	AT2	ST. HILDA'S CHURCH HALL
	AT3	CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH HALL
ASHFORD EAST	AE1	ST. MATTHEW'S CHURCH HALL
	AE2	CLOCKHOUSE LANE PAVILION
	AE3	ST. MICHAEL'S SCHOOL
ASHFORD COMMON	AC1	EHELDFORD SCHOOL
	AC2	ASHFORD C OF E SCHOOL
	AC3	SPELTHORNE INFANT & NURSERY SCHOOL
RIVERSIDE & LALEHAM	RL1	ST. PETER'S CHURCH HALL
	RL2	BUCKLAND INFANT SCHOOL
LALEHAM & SHEPPERTON GREEN	LSG1	ALL SAINT'S CHURCH HALL
	LSG2	ST. JOHN FISHER CHURCH HALL
	LSG3	CHARLTON VILLAGE HALL
SUNBURY COMMON	SC	KENYNGTON MANOR SCHOOL
SHEPPERTON TOWN	ST	SHEPPERTON VILLAGE HALL
HALLIFORD & SUNBURY WEST	HSW1	HALLIFORD COMMUNITY CENTRE
	HSW2	SPRINGFIELD SCHOOL
	HSW3	ST. MARY'S PARISH HALL
SUNBURY EAST	SE1	ST. IGNATIUS CHURCH HALL
	SE2	CHENNESTONE SCHOOL
	SE3	BEAUCLERC SCHOOL

- b. That the Director of Community Services to allocate parking free of charge at the Riverside Car Park for those electors voting at the new Staines Community Centre in the new polling District S2.

209/02 209/02 STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS 2001/2002

The Council considered the recommendation of the Economic Committee on the Statement of Accounts for 2001/2002.

RESOLVED that the Council's Statement of Accounts for 2001/2002, as presented, be approved.

210/02 210/02 URGENT BUSINESS – FIRE AT KNOWLE GREEN

The Chief Executive up dated members on the recent arson attack at the Council Offices and referred to the report previously circulated to all members.

The Chief Executive reported that one of the main operational problems following the fire was operating from temporary reception areas and to overcome this the feasibility of using a portacabin for a reception area was being investigated. He went on to report that the Loss Adjustor had indicated that works to bring the building back to normal working arrangements could take up to three months but ways of reducing this period was being looked at. A report on improving security would be submitted to the Executive at its meeting on 3rd September, 2002.

Discussion took place on the temporary arrangements made for people to make cash payments for their Council Tax etc at the main Post Office in Staines and at Barclays Bank in the High Street, Staines. Arrangements could be made for other sub Post Offices in the Borough to process cash payments without charge. Members felt that this issue should be investigated further to prevent people being out of pocket and whether there was scope to reimburse those people who do incur the expense.

The Leader placed on record the gratitude of all members to all Council staff who despite working under difficult circumstance had worked extremely hard to provide a service to the public and to other organisations in the building which had given assistance in the immediate aftermath of the fire.

RESOLVED:

- a. That the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Leader of the Council, be authorised to take all action necessary, including incurring expenditure to reinstate normal working arrangements at the Knowle Green Council Offices as quickly as possible;
- b. That the Officers be requested to present a report to the Executive on the 3rd September, 2002 on (a) above and on future security arrangements for Knowle Green Council Offices; and
- c. That Officers investigate the possibility of payments being made without charge to other Post Offices in the Borough.

RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE EXECUTIVE

1. SPELTHORNE COMMUNITY STRATEGY - KEY DECISION

1.1 The Executive has considered a report on the progress made towards the production of a draft Spelthorne Community Strategy and has recommended the draft Strategy for approval by the Council.

1.2 The Executive recommend that the Spelthorne Community Strategy at [Annex 1](#) be adopted.

(A copy of the Spelthorne Community Strategy is enclosed under separate cover as [Annex 1](#).)

2. SINGLE CAPITAL POT - ASSET MANAGEMENT PLAN AND CAPITAL STRATEGY - KEY DECISION

2.1 The Executive has considered a report on the first drafts of the Asset Management Plan and the Capital Strategy and details of Spelthorne's performance against the national Performance Indicators and the recommendation on this matter from the Economic Committee held on 25th June 2002.

2.2 The Executive recommend that the Council endorse the Capital Strategy at [Annex 3](#) and the Asset Management Plan at [Annex 2](#) and authorise the Chief Executive to finalise the Capital Strategy and Asset Management Plan for submission to the Government Office of the South East (GOSE) by 31st July 2002.

(Copies of the Asset Management Plan as [Annex 2](#) and the Capital Strategy as [Annex 3](#) are enclosed under separate cover.)

3. YEAR 2/3 PLANNED MAINTENANCE PROGRAMME - KEY DECISION

3.1 The Executive has considered an update on the costs and progress on years two and three of the Five Year Rolling Programme of Planned Maintenance for Council owned buildings and the recommendation on this matter from the Economic Committee held on 25th June 2002.

3.2 The Executive recommend:

(1) That the Council approve a Supplementary Estimate of £350,000 to be financed from the reserves within the Repairs and Renewals Fund, to enable all the works identified in year three of the Planned Maintenance Programme to be carried out.

(2) That the approval of this Supplementary Estimate should not be regarded as creating a precedent for the repairs and renewals expenditure in future years.

4. SURREY PENSION FUND DEFICIT - KEY DECISION

4.1 The Executive has considered a report on the latest position regarding the Spelthorne element of the Surrey Pension Fund deficit. They noted that the deficit of £13.4 million repaid by Spelthorne in March 2001 was based upon the Fund valuation from April 1999. The Fund has been re-valued in 2002 and Spelthorne has been assessed as having a further deficit of £800,000. Members noted that the Director of Resources was pursuing with the Government the possibility of the Council's Deficit repayment being met from Capital Receipts rather than Revenue and that he would report back to the Executive on 3rd September 2002.

4.2 The Executive recommend:

(1) That the Pension Fund deficit forecast at 1st October, 2002 of £800,000 be repaid to the Surrey Pension Fund.

(2) That subject to (3) below, it be agreed that the balance of £715,406 from the now defunct DSO Reserve Account be used to meet part of the repayment and the balance be met from general revenue reserves as determined by the Director of Resources, in consultation with the Leader, Councillor F. Davies and the Portfolio Holder for Corporate Services, Councillor E.J. Searancke.

(3) That the Director of Resources reports back to the Executive on 3rd September 2002 with further information on the Government allowing the Council's Deficit repayment to be met from Capital Receipts rather than Revenue.

5. REVIEW OF HOUSING STRATEGY AND ADOPTION OF THE BEST VALUE IMPROVEMENT PLAN - KEY DECISION

5.1 The Executive has considered a report on a Draft of the Housing Strategy 2003/2006 and on the associated policies and strategies, including a Key Worker Housing policy, an Empty Homes strategy and a Fuel Poverty strategy. In response to issues raised by GOSE at the last two annual Housing Strategy meetings, the Draft Strategy presented was a broad-based Housing Strategy which aimed to meet all the criteria demanded by GOSE, but also reflected the Council's own community and corporate strategies. One of the key issues addressed was the undertaking of a Housing Needs and Stock Condition Survey from which the results had been used to inform the new Draft Strategy. Closely related to the Housing Strategy was the Best Value Review of the Council's Housing Services which had recently been undertaken by the Review Panel. The Executive has considered a summary of the Housing Review, together with a Best Value Improvement Plan for the Service which was presented for approval.

5.2 The Executive recommend:

1) That subject to (2) below, the Council on 25th July 2002 approve and adopt the Housing Strategy 2003/2006, as circulated by the Director of Community Services (Annex A), for submission to GOSE by 31st July 2002.

2) That the final version of the Housing Strategy be amended to reflect various comments made by Members of the Executive including the reference to housing the homeless being the first priority, fine tuning the points identified in the Executive Summary and identifying the risk to the Council's future programme that would be caused by changes by the Government to the rules on the use of capital receipts.

3) That the Key Worker Housing policy, the Empty Homes Strategy and the Fuel Poverty Strategy as circulated (Annexes B - D) be agreed and adopted, subject to the Director of Community Services, updating them to reflect the information collected during the preparation of the Council's Housing Strategy.

4) That subject to it being updated by the Director of Community Services to reflect the latest information collected during the preparation of the Council's Housing Strategy, the Best Value Improvement Plan for the Housing Service as circulated (Annex E) be approved, including the establishment of the new post of Housing Strategy Officer at an additional full year cost of £30,000.

5) That the cost of the new post at (4) above be met from savings from the Community Services Salaries Budget for the remainder of this financial year and the full year cost from 2003/2004 onwards be met from an appropriate amount to be included in the Council's Outline Budget.

6) That a report be made to the next meeting of the Executive on the additional staffing required to implement the initiatives to improve the condition of the private sector stock in the Borough as contained in the Housing Strategy.

7) That the Housing Needs Survey undertaken by David Coutie Associates on behalf of the Borough Council be formally adopted.

8) That regular updates be made to Members on the monitoring of the Action Plan and the impact of the new policies contained in the Housing Strategy.

9) That the thanks of the Chairman of the Executive for the efforts of staff and Members during the preparation of the Housing Strategy be formally recorded in the Minutes.

(A copy of the Housing Strategy is enclosed under separate cover as [Annex 4.](#))

Councillor Frank Davies
Leader of the Council 25th July 2002

ANNEX 1

Spelthorne

Community Strategy

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Spelthorne Community Strategy

This is the first Community Strategy for Spelthorne. It is supported by a partnership of local organisations from the public, voluntary, business and community sectors. They are all committed to achieving the aims of the strategy over the next ten years of making Spelthorne:

A place where people are fully engaged and are both respected and respectful, promoting an environment that is: healthy, safe, inclusive, prosperous, and sustainable.

This goal has been produced by all the members of the partnership in consultation with representative groups of Spelthorne residents and has been further developed with the particular aims that Spelthorne should:

- have a sustainable economy providing employment which is attractive to local people and based on the unique resources of Spelthorne;
- be a community where everyone can communicate, learn and achieve together;
- be a place where people choose to live and work, providing an attractive and safe environment for children to grow up;
- be serviced by a transport system that provides real choices, is safe and reliable and which supports both the environment and the economy;
- be somewhere where young people are valued and play an active part;
- be a place where people feel valued and have a sense of belonging and pride.

This strategy contains targets that have been agreed by the local partners as the way of achieving our aims. Many of the targets are taken from other strategies or national priorities where they are relevant to local priorities. The strategy does not include every target from every document but does incorporate the most relevant. Some of the targets could be included under a number of different headings, to avoid duplication, however, they only appear once in the document.

The strategy cannot address every concern of all the people in Spelthorne, nor will it detail every aspect of work undertaken by each of the partner organisations involved. What it does show is how all the various organisations are working together to take the necessary actions to achieve the aims. This community strategy also provides a framework that allows all of the partner organisations to take account of community priorities when setting their own individual service objectives.

To achieve our vision requires action under a number of headings:

- A Healthy Community
- Community Safety
- An Inclusive Society
- A Sustainable Economy
- Improving the Environment
- Communicating and Learning Together
- A Place to Live and Work
- Effective Transport
- Younger People
- A Sense of Value and Civic Pride

This Community Strategy has been produced by a partnership comprising representatives of the following organisations:

- Spelthorne Borough Council
- Surrey County Council
- Surrey Police
- North Surrey Primary Care Trust
- Ashford and St Peters Hospitals NHS Trust
- Spelthorne Federation of Primary School Head Teachers
- Spelthorne Federation of Secondary School Head Teachers
- Spelthorne College
- Voluntary Action in Spelthorne
- Spelthorne Citizens Advice Bureau
- Apex Housing Group
- BP Sunbury
- Surrey Chamber of Commerce - Spelthorne Region
- Spelthorne Student Council

together with representatives of residents associations and faith groups in Spelthorne.

All the organisations represented on the partnership are jointly committed to achieving the goals and targets set out in this document. Achieving the specific targets will often involve joint working by several

agencies, but for clarity and accountability, a lead organisation has been nominated for each main topic area.

The following pages set out the medium and short term targets under each of the above headings that we believe will help to achieve the vision. In future years we will also produce a report on achievements from the previous year.

A Healthy Community

Lead Organisation: North Surrey Primary Care Trust

Over the next five years we will:

Improve access to health care facilities ensuring patients receive the right care at the right time.

Ensure equity of treatment and access to health care for all residents of Spelthorne.

Produce an integrated Health Promotion Strategy.

Reduce the number of unnecessary admissions to hospital and facilitate the prompt discharge of patients who no longer need to stay in hospital.

Over the next year we will:

Provide services so that older people can leave hospital as soon as they are able.

Agree an implementation plan for the Health Promotion Strategy.

Pilot an extension of the Exercise on Prescription scheme.

Ensure no one waits more than 5 months for an Outpatient appointment at Ashford & St Peters Hospitals.

Ensure no one waits more than 12 months for an Inpatient or Day Case appointment at Ashford & St Peters Hospitals.

Ensure no one waits more than 2 weeks from urgent GP referral to outpatient appointment for suspected cancers .

Ensure no one waits more than 2 months from urgent GP referral to treatment for breast cancer.

Community Safety

Lead Organisation: Surrey Police

Over the next three years we will:

Reduce the number of reported incidents of anti social behaviour and disorder by 10%.

Reduce the number of incidents of criminal damage (including graffiti) by 10%.

Reduce the number of residential burglaries by 25%.

Increase the number of arrests for supply and for possession with intent to supply Class A drugs and to reduce drug related crime by 10%.

Reduce the number of incidents of violent street crime by 20%.

Increase reporting of domestic violence by 25% and reduce by 25% the number of repeat domestic violence incidents.

Reduce the number of vehicle crimes by 15%.

Reassurance and fear of crime - to identify and deal with vulnerable areas and to promote reassurance within the community.

Reduce the numbers of fires in the home by 30%.

Over the next year we will:

Target police patrols to engage with individuals/groups causing disorder.

Target Hot Spots of particular crimes.

Serve Anti-Social Behaviour Contracts and Orders on persistent offenders.

Introduce further restorative justice projects and identify suitable projects to be undertaken by young offenders.

Target Under-Age drinking and develop and review Town Centre licensing strategies.

Refer all offenders to the Arrest Referral Scheme and the Community Drugs Support Project.

Publicise the work of the Police Domestic Violence Unit.

Improve communications links between police and the community.

Promote Neighbourhood Watch Schemes particularly in areas with high fear of crime.

Evaluate the impact of CCTV and identify the opportunities for expansion.

An Inclusive Society

Lead Organisation: Spelthorne Borough Council

Over the next five years we will:

- Improve transport for older people and those with mobility problems.
- Assist disabled people to remain in their own homes.
- Help people with mental illness, learning disabilities and people with special needs.
- Tackle areas of disadvantage in the borough.
- Improve employment prospects for all disadvantaged sectors of the community.
- Provide inclusive education for students attending all Spelthorne schools.

Over the next year we will:

- Prepare a multi agency strategy to tackle areas of disadvantage.
- Communicate to residents the aims of the Neighbourhood Wardens scheme to promote better understanding of the scheme.
- Implement the training, deployment and management of Neighbourhood Wardens in Stanwell and Sunbury Common.
- Prepare a Spelthorne Strategy for Older People.
- Review the operation of the pilot scheme that provides taxi vouchers to enable people with transport difficulties to attend hospital.
- Work to ensure the successful introduction of the Supporting People Initiative.

A Sustainable Economy

Lead Organisation: Spelthorne Borough Council

Over the next five years we will:

Take action to achieve a balanced industrial structure, which is capable of sustaining local prosperity, both in terms of high incomes and high employment levels.

Ensure an adequate labour supply with the education and skills levels needed by local businesses.

Encourage and support small businesses to establish and expand.

Work to maintain and enhance the environment and quality of life in Spelthorne.

Provide access to a good transport and communications infrastructure.

Maintain and enhance the vitality and viability of each of the Borough's town centres.

Promote the Borough (in a sustainable fashion) as a tourist destination based on the characteristics of each area of Spelthorne.

Over the next year we will:

Work with the Surrey Economic Partnership and the South East England Development Agency to introduce a business retention service for Spelthorne.

Work with BAA Heathrow to develop a local labour force strategy for Terminal 5 and the impact this will have in Spelthorne.

Support the work of the Spelthorne Regional Chamber of Commerce. Publicise the service provided by Surrey Business Enterprise Agency (SBE) and increase the number of referral points for SBE.

Investigate the possibility of establishing a Spelthorne Environmental Business Club.

Work with the Heathrow Area Transport Forum and Surrey County Council to address traffic and congestion issues and with BAA Heathrow to introduce a green travel plan for airport workers.

Complete the pedestrianisation and environmental improvements to Staines High Street and complete the works on the Staines Riverside and Memorial Gardens scheme.

Investigate the possibility of proposing Business Improvement Districts in the Borough's towns and, with Surrey County Council's small town co-ordinator, how to promote the role of the Borough's smaller town centres.

Develop a Tourism Forum for Spelthorne and Runnymede.

Improving the Environment

Lead Organisation: Spelthorne Borough Council

Over the next five years we will:

Ensure that all areas of Spelthorne meet national air quality standards.

Reduce the length of time taken to remove abandoned vehicles and fly tipped rubbish.

Work to reduce the number of incidents of flooding.

Minimise the volume of waste created and increase the percentage of refuse that is recycled.

Monitor the progress of the following major development and infrastructure projects affecting Spelthorne:

Terminal 5

Airtrack (or alternative rail links to Heathrow)

Central Railways

Orbital Studies (including the M25)

and make appropriate representations.

Over the next year we will:

Recycle 25% of waste taken to the Civic Amenity refuse site at Charlton Lane.

Introduce a policy and action for the rapid removal of graffiti.

Introduce a policy and action for the rapid removal of abandoned cars.

Undertake a comprehensive review of the designated Conservation Areas in Spelthorne.

Produce an air quality strategy for Spelthorne.

Produce an action plan to achieve the national air quality standard for nitrogen dioxide.

Produce a strategy for dealing with contaminated land sites.

Communicating and Learning Together

Lead Organisation: Surrey County Council

Over the next five years we will:

- Improve educational attainment in Spelthorne's schools and colleges.
- Reduce the number of unauthorised absences from schools in Spelthorne.
- Improve access to pre-school education.
- Remove barriers to children and young people using libraries.
- Increase facilities for family learning.

Over the next year we will:

- Increase the number of out of school hours learning opportunities within schools.
- Increase the number of family learning initiatives within schools.
- Increase the numbers of people involved in learning schemes.
- Undertake a survey within libraries on how to get children and younger people using them more.
- Increase the numbers of businesses involved with local schools.
- Introduce a web based communication and information system for the Spelthorne Community Strategy (SPELWEB).
- Introduce truancy patrols and pursue the outcome with young people, parents, schools and other agencies.

A Place to Live, Work & Play

Lead Organisation: Spelthorne Borough Council

Over the next five years we will:

- Take action to increase the affordable housing options available for key workers.
- Enable the provision of 100 units per year of affordable social housing.
- Enable a greater number of older people to live independent lives in their choice of accommodation.
- Develop a literary festival as part of the Spelthorne Summer Festival.
- Establish Memorial Gardens as an Arts Venue for the performing Arts.
- Develop a Spelthorne Film Festival.

Over the next year we will:

- Develop a strategy for Key Worker housing.
- Implement a strategy to meet the housing needs of local people.
- Develop the Ashford Hospital site to provide 66 units of affordable housing, 37 units of key worker housing, upgrade the existing 97 units of nurses and staff accommodation and build an extra 96 units of nurses accommodation.
- Provide 36 units of affordable housing on the Commercial Road Depot site.
- Carry out a fundamental review of Parks and Open Spaces .
- Undertake an audit of play provision.
- Establish a training programme to support Arts Groups.
- Develop an arts and sports project programme in response to the strategy for older people.

Effective Transport

Lead Organisation: Surrey County Council

Over the next five years we will:

- Reduce the number of deaths and injuries caused on Spelthorne's roads.
- Develop green travel plans for Spelthorne's Leisure Facilities.
- Extend the number of schools covered by the safe routes to schools project.
- Improve access to health care facilities for non-car users.
- Improve the road crossing points to encourage walking.
- Improve bus reliability by introducing bus lanes, install bus stop clearways to all stops where parking obstructs buses and improve waiting facilities for public transport users.
- Extend the Borough cycle network.
- Improve street lighting to provide greater security for pedestrians at night.

Over the next year we will:

- Extend the Safe Routes to School project to schools in Ashford & Shepperton.
- Introduce a bus lane to either Staines Road West or Walton Bridge Road and a bus information system to Two Rivers.
- Implement comprehensive pedestrian signing throughout Staines Town Centre.
- Improve the cycle facilities between Staines & Shepperton.
- Complete the initial licensing process of the private hire & taxi service.
- Form a Transport Project Group for Spelthorne that will:
 - Map current service provision
 - Identify unmet transport need
 - Look at possible solutions.

Younger People

Lead Organisation: Spelthorne Borough Council

Over the next five years we will:

Reappraise the use of youth centres and services for younger people.

Increase support and opportunities for young carers.

Reduce the numbers of vulnerable young people and those at risk of exclusion from school.

Reduce the numbers of teenage pregnancies.

Increase support and opportunities for families (with young children) who are under stress.

Work together on initiatives to reduce youth crime without exacerbating exclusion.

Engage with young people in order to identify their needs for improved facilities within Spelthorne and allow them to contribute to the design and provision of services and facilities (e.g. parks, youth services).

Investigate the provision of an Adventure Playground.

Increase the number of after school clubs and activities for children of primary school age.

Establish a skills centre for young people in years 8 & 9 in Spelthorne schools, who are at risk of exclusion.

Over the next year we will:

Ensure the smooth introduction of the Connexions service.

Identify vulnerable young people within schools to enable them to participate in the social education programme.

Open two new after school clubs (in Shepperton & Laleham) and start a toy library in Stanwell.

Introduce a project to assist young carers.

Undertake truancy patrols and pursue the outcome with young people, parents, schools and other appropriate agencies.

Civic Pride and a Place Where People are Valued

Lead Organisation: Spelthorne Borough Council

Over the next five years we will:

- Broaden public engagement in the community planning process.
- Increase the numbers of people involved with voluntary groups.
- Agree a compact between the voluntary and public statutory sectors.
- Increase the numbers of schools hosting community activities.
- Develop the Spelthorne Student Council into a best practice example of citizenship for young people.

Over the next year we will:

- Hold two citizenship events for junior schools.
- Increase by 10% the number of organisations represented at the Spelthorne Local Strategic Partnership Assembly compared to the numbers attending the Community Strategy Visioning Event in February 2001.
- Increase the number of schools open for community activities.
- Publicise to the community the costs to them of anti-social behaviour.

Many of the targets included in the strategy were taken from other documents prepared by organisations working in Spelthorne. These include:

- Spelthorne Crime and Disorder Reduction Strategy
- Spelthorne Community Learning Plan
- Ashford and St Peters Hospitals NHS Trust Outline Business Plan
- NHS Plan
- Health Improvement and Modernisation Plan
- Apex Group Corporate Plan
- Spelthorne Borough Council Corporate Targets
- Spelthorne Borough Council Leisure Strategy
- Surrey County Council Corporate Plan
- Surrey County Council Local Transport Plan
- Surrey County Council Early Years Development and Childcare Plan
- Surrey County Council Community Care Plan

Spelthorne Asset Management Plan

ASSET MANAGEMENT PLAN

Background to Asset base

The Council's land and property assets are extremely diverse although they are relatively small in area and value (£35.5m excluding most community assets). The assets have remained largely unchanged since 1996 when the Council transferred its housing stock. The Council has very few non operational assets (£6.6m) and the only major such asset is its freehold interest in the Elmsleigh Shopping Centre in Staines.(£5.65M)

1. ORGANISATIONAL ARRANGEMENTS FOR CORPORATE ASSET MANAGEMENT

Corporate objectives

- 1.1 The Council has a well established corporate planning process which is outlined later. This aims to deliver the Council's overall objective, which is to improve the well being of the Spelthorne Community.
- 1.2 A community visioning day organised by the Council in February 2001 started the process of producing a Community Strategy for Spelthorne. This resulted in agreement of a vision for Spelthorne in 10 years time as

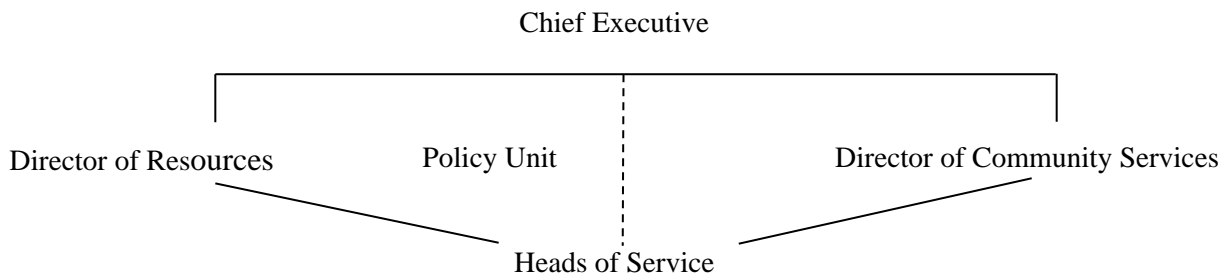
A place where people are fully engaged and are both respected and respectful, promoting an environment that is healthy, safe, inclusive, prosperous and sustainable
- 1.3 A Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) of local organisations from the public, voluntary, business and community sectors was set up to produce a community strategy based on the vision. The LSP produced a draft Community Strategy, which was considered at its Assembly meeting on the 15th May 2002. This event was attended by nearly 70 people from over 50 organisations operating in Spelthorne. As part of the process, the draft Strategy had been considered by focus groups drawn from the Spelthorne Residents Panel. Feedback from these groups was included in the discussion of the draft Strategy. The LSP will be meeting again in July to consider views on the draft strategy. The draft strategy has been considered by the Council's Executive and is being recommended to the Council for adoption at its meeting on 25th July.
- 1.4 The six key aims to achieve the ten year vision for the Borough have been agreed as requirements for:
 - A sustainable economy providing employment which is attractive to local people and based on the unique resources of Spelthorne.
 - A community where everyone can communicate, learn and achieve together.
 - A place where people choose to live and work, providing an attractive and safe environment for children to grow up.
 - A place where young people are valued and play an active part.
 - A place where people feel valued and have a sense of belonging and pride.

- An area serviced by a transport system that provides real choices, is safe and reliable, which supports both the environment and the economy.

1.5 The draft strategy is divided into ten action areas with targets that have been agreed by all the local partners, as the way of achieving the key aims for Spelthorne. Each action area in the strategy identifies a lead partner and this is the Council for six of the areas. The strategy with its ten year vision, key themes and ten action areas will now underpin all the Council's own strategies and activities, including asset management, and be the driver for individual service plans.

Corporate officer level approach to achieving corporate objectives

1.6 The Council's existing officer structure has been adopted to promote a corporate approach to all the Council's activities, including asset management.



1.7 Directors and Heads of Service work closely and meet formally at least twice a year to maintain an integrated approach to corporate issues and strategies and exchange information about key issues within their respective areas of responsibility. For example a workshop at the last meeting in early May 2002 considered the initial draft community strategy and how it was supported currently by the Council's different plans and strategies and how they might need to be adjusted.

1.8 To promote cross-departmental awareness of the Council's activities and synergy, all reports to the weekly Chief Officer Management Team (MAT) are available to Heads of Service. Directors and their department Heads of Service meet each week, following MAT meetings, to diffuse information to and from the various sections within the authority.

Responsibilities for asset management at officer level

1.9 The Head of Asset Management in the Resources Department is the Corporate Property Officer. The post was established in 1996 following transfer of the Council's housing stock. The primary purpose of the post is to take a strategic and corporate approach to the management and maintenance of the Council's remaining assets. The functions of the post are continuing to evolve in the light of experience and the increasing emphasis on asset management.

1.10 The asset management section comprises the Head of Asset Management Services (CPO) plus one full time administrative assistant. All professional services, (such as valuers, specialist building surveyors or engineers etc.) are commissioned from external sources as and when necessary.

1.11 As mentioned the primary role of the section is to provide a strategic and corporate approach to management and maintenance of the Councils assets but the day to day work of the section includes

- Organising all stock condition surveys, planned maintenance and management of all the Council corporate properties.
- Letting of service contracts for the maintenance of mechanical and electrical items.
- Managing redevelopment, refurbishment and new build contracts relating to the Council's estate.
- Feasibility studies
- The sale or purchase of land or property
- Provision of plans
- Negotiating and advising on matters relating to leases or licences.
- Management of the Councils Land Terrier System including keeping it updated.
- Employment of various Consultants and Contractors in connection with buildings and other services.
- Establishing and maintaining the select list of Consultants and Contractors.
- Management of appeals relating to business rates on Council properties.
- Management and maintenance of asset rentals.
- Risk management and ensuring compliance with Health and Safety.
- Dealing with enquiries about land ownership or the use of Council land from the public
- Providing advice on all asset management issues to MAT, officers or services and where appropriate acting as their client representative.

1.12 All these functions are undertaken in consultation with relevant service heads and departments.

1.13 In practice current responsibilities for assets are as follows

Responsibility	Post holder
Member responsibility for asset management	The Council's Executive
Ultimate overall officer responsibility for asset management	Chief Officer management team (MAT)
Strategic asset management and maintenance including gathering and maintaining appropriate data and implementation of Asset Management Plan	Head of Asset Management (CPO) (with support of Asset Management Group)
Day to day management of their operational service assets	Heads of Service
Day to day management of non operational property	Head of Asset Management (CPO)
Implementation of planned maintenance programme for all assets	Head of Asset Management(CPO)
Day to day responsive maintenance	Head of Direct and Ancillary Services

1.14 The Council are nearing completion of a Best Value review of Asset Management Services. An informal tender exercise to assess the cost of externalising all the asset management function was carried out in March/April 2002. Initial overall evaluation indicates that the current arrangements generally appeared to represent value for money and are cost effective but a more detailed and selective analysis shows that some individual elements attracted particularly competitive bids and that some benefits might be achieved through more formalised and consolidated contracts of

parts of the function. This is now being pursued and a decision will be made by autumn this year.

Corporate Officer Asset Management Group

1.15 A corporate officer asset group now operates. It is chaired by the Director of Resources (who provides a direct link with MAT as well as financial input) and includes the Head of Asset Management (the Corporate Property Office), the Head of Leisure (a primary asset user), the Head of Engineering and Environmental Works (a primary day to day manager of leisure assets) and a member of the Council's Policy unit, (the Policy Unit is involved in all major policy development including the Community Plan and Capital Strategy).

1.16 The group's remit is to:-

- Develop and co-ordinate the delivery of the Council's Asset Management Plan and Capital Strategy
- Deliver and keep under review the planned maintenance programme
- Assess and make recommendations to Management Team on matters in respect of assets – acquisition, disposal, change of use, etc.

Given the size of the Council and the scale of its operation it is considered more appropriate for MAT to retain direct responsibility for the capital programme development and delivery.

1.17 The group is developing its role and will be looking particularly at how the information from performance indicators, both national and local can be used in a practical way to improve the Council's asset management.

1.18 The group has recently considered and is making recommendations to MAT on the options for a building in Shepperton where the lessee (the Red Cross) is not renewing its lease. This has a number of implications for the Council as it is a full repairing lease, the building is used by a number of community groups but the Council already has other community buildings in the vicinity. In considering the options and making a recommendation on this and other matters the CPO and group draws together information from the Council's various strategies, which have been subject to consultation with external stakeholders as part of their formation such as

- Leisure and Culture Strategy
- Crime and Disorder Strategy
- Local Plan
- The new Community Strategy

1.19 Heads of Service (and of course Directors) have been made aware of the role of the group through the MAT decisions and departmental management meetings and the role of the group has been explained to all staff through articles in the Council's weekly staff newspaper GOSPEL (Goings on in Spelthorne).

Member involvement

1.20 The Council operates the Leader/cabinet model of executive arrangements, with named members as portfolio holders for the various services, which were adopted formally in September 2002. Councillor Searancke has been elected as Portfolio Holder on all property and asset related issues. The Executive comprises six

members meeting monthly and they consider and decide all substantial issues on assets and capital expenditure on the basis of detailed reports and recommendations from MAT. For example over the last six months they have considered in detail the future options for the Council's existing offices and the disposal of the Old Town Hall in Staines. The Executive considered and recommended this plan to the Council on 9th July 2002. The full Council approved the Plan on 25th July 2002.

- 1.21 The Director of Resources has various rolls within the AMP group. On our senior management team he is the AMP and Capital Strategy "Champion" he is the Chairman of the AMP group and has delegated power from the Executive to take decisions on a number of property issues up to a value of £10,000, some after consultation with the relevant executive portfolio holder for Corporate Services.
- 1.22 The Economic Committee has the role of overview and scrutiny in relation to asset management. The Committee receives quarterly reports on budget monitoring, including capital expenditure and progress on schemes and receives half yearly reports on the progress and implementation of the approved five year rolling programme of planned maintenance. In a report to Members on 25th June 2002 statements on the property performance indicators were considered and the programmes effect on the backlog of maintenance. Due to the cost of the large amount of work required to the properties in this year's programme Members were given possible options on a way forward from reducing the number of properties in the programme and extend the rolling programme to six years, to increasing the budget. Members approved a 100% increase (to £700,000) in the budget to maintain the integrity of the five year rolling programme.

2 PLANNING AND CONSULTATION

- 2.1 The Council's well developed corporate planning process will now be informed by the new Community Strategy. The process commences each year with a consultation exercise with the community, focused on the key issues. Once this has been completed the Council sets a large number of corporate targets/initiatives it intends to carry out during the year in order to deliver its agreed objectives. This year the corporate targets have been aligned with the aims for the community strategy and for the first time have been divided into medium term targets (three years) and immediate one year targets.
- 2.2 Effective consultation is one of the Council's key priorities and the methods adopted include both qualitative and quantitative approaches, including Focus Groups, Area Forums and Liaison Panels, Questionnaires/Telephone Surveys, Exhibitions and Consultation documents.
- 2.3 The Council maintains a representative Residents Panel of 1,000 people, which is used in some consultation exercises - for example this year it has been used to seek views on car parks.
- 2.4 As part of a value for money review of asset management by our external auditors in summer 2001 a survey of 15 Heads of Service was undertaken to establish their views on property related issues. The outcome of this has been taken into account in delivery of the planned maintenance programme and the arrangements for day to day maintenance.
- 2.5 The Council has procedures in place to continuously review the utilisation / future of assets. The trigger to review an asset is normally one of the following:

- As part of a Best Value Review – it is a standard part of reviews to question/ challenge the uses of asset / resources currently employed;
 - In the Council's normal monitoring / scrutiny arrangements issues are raised about the future use of assets;
 - When a new project impacts on another asset;
 - As part of a wider review of assets;
 - At the request of a Service Head.
- 2.6 When a review is triggered, the relevant Head of Service, in consultation with the Corporate Property Officer, instigates consultation with other departments within the authority and externally with other parties using one of the methods as described above.
- 2.7 The consultation challenges the future need for an asset, its suitability, and cost implications. The results of the consultation are then fed back into the decision making process.
- 2.8 Proposals that are bids for capital investment are assessed using the Council's agreed assessment criteria set out below.
1. Whether the scheme has been identified as a corporate plan priority, or has been identified in a strategy document –, HIP, Local Plan, HImP, Leisure Strategy, Implementing Electronic Government Statement, etc. Each capital scheme is expected to demonstrate how it could contribute to the themes set out in the Community Strategy.
 2. Implications of not proceeding with the investment - Health and Safety, deterioration of an asset, etc.
 3. Whether the scheme attracts other sources of funding - lottery grants, private sector investment, etc.
 4. Whether it can generate long-term revenue savings, or an income stream.
 5. Whether the scheme has any ongoing revenue costs.
 6. Whether the scheme can demonstrate local need, through consultation, statistical evidence, community use and satisfaction with existing facilities.
 7. Can the scheme receive any government financial support ?
 8. Whether it generates opportunities for asset disposals to generate a capital receipt for reinvestment.
- 2.9 Any scheme submitted for capital funding is expected to contain a full financial appraisal, to include a cost/benefit analysis and a payback calculation, if appropriate. The Council is very interested in working in partnership with the private sector/voluntary sector, particularly if this will lever in other sources of finance. An example of this is the scheme to replace the Civic Offices, working in partnership with the private sector.
- 2.10 Examples of a number of recent cases where review has occurred and the different types of triggers are set out below:

As part of a Best Value Review

- 2.11 The Best Value Review of the Leisure Centres highlighted the users' concern with the water quality and the cleanliness at the centres. As a direct result of the consultation with the user's Members approved additional budgets to upgrade the water treatment plants and to renew the floor tiling to both of the Council Leisure Centres. Three of these projects have been completed on time and within budget, with the last contract

to retile our Staines Centre due to commence later this year. In addition the review raised the need to consider the long term future of the swimming pool at Staines.

- 2.12 The utilisation of Allotments will be considered as part of a Best Value review, which has just commenced.
- 2.13 As part of the Best Value review of the car parks service all avenues for their future use and management are being explored – the planned maintenance programme has therefore been adjusted to delay the work programmed to car parks.

As part of normal monitoring arrangements

- 2.14 The Old Town Hall Arts Centre (a listed building) could not be run within budget and required considerable subsidy. Widespread consultation showed that it was not well used and a large majority of the community did not consider an arts centre important. The decision was therefore taken by Members to close the facility and look at alternative uses. Extensive consultation then took place on a planning brief for alternative uses. The property has now been marketed and discussions are taking place with the preferred bidder for a freehold disposal for another leisure related use.
- 2.15 The Council reviewed its future needs for office accommodation in the light of the outcome of the condition survey carried out in 1997, which showed substantial work was required to the existing building to make it suitable for modern needs and reduce running costs. A space audit was undertaken and four options were considered, from minimal refurbishment to relocation elsewhere. We are now awaiting the outcome of our application for outline planning consent to re-develop the existing site, the intention being that in partnership with the private sector two buildings might be provided on the site, one for civic use funded by one for private use. A full appraisal will take place once the planning status is known.

Impact of a new project

- 2.16 The Riverside Regeneration Scheme in Staines led the Head of Service to consider the future of the Resource Centre located in the area affected. This is a facility which stocks play / sports equipment for young children. Research and consultation showed that it was well used, and highly regarded so it has now been relocated into a more accessible location in an underused building previously occupied by the Red Cross.
- 2.17 The need to review the use of the Old Town Hall in Staines also gave the opportunity to consider the future of the adjoining day centre. After consultation with elderly residents, the Council are now completing a new community building on a previously unused piece of land in Staines. This will include a new Day Centre but has given us the opportunity to take account of the key aims of the community strategy, and address these by providing a building more suitable for wider and longer use by different age groups. The aim is that the centre should be officially opened on 1st August 2002.

Wider review

- 2.18 **One of the corporate targets for 2001/02 specifically focused on reviewing the Council's non-operational land and property portfolio. This will be completed in September, slightly later than originally planned, due to the absence of the Corporate Property Officer for a substantial period during the year.**

3. DATA MANAGEMENT

- 3.1 Part of the role of the Head of Asset Management is to compile and maintain information about our assets.
- 3.2 Over the last few years we have made excellent progress in the collection of detailed data on all our assets and have established a centrally held core data facility including a full set of Health and Safety records. Any contract involving maintenance or improvement to buildings is let through the asset section to ensure appropriate standards are met and comprehensive corporate information on assets is validated by our consultants as part of their contract administration roll and maintained and updated by the Asset Management Section. The system was tested recently when the main reception area containing all the council public areas had to be refurbished due to fire and smoke damage, resulting from an arson attack. The information held on our systems on M&E services, floor plans and suppliers of the fixtures and fittings within the affected area enabled us to respond quickly and reduce the disruption time to the affected areas.
- 3.3 The Council has invested in many “e” government compliant systems over the last few years. We now have a new corporate office management system, a corporate GIS system, local intranet/internet facility, and financial systems and stand alone packages such as Auto Cad (a drafting system for creating and altering plans) and Arc view, (a system for creating different layers of spatial information about our assets on our corporate GIS system) all of which can be accessed from any terminal either within the Council offices or from remote locations. The system gives officers in all service areas desktop access to corporate information. In liaison with our Human Resources and IT sections the CPO has carried out a preliminary survey of the future training need of the various stakeholders that could benefit from access to the corporate data bank. Further work is required to identify resources and any costs associated with the training needs and the AMP group has set itself a target to complete the research by December 2002.
- 3.4 We purchased a new integrated system (CAP’S) in 2001. This is in furtherance of our “E” Government Strategy and is for our Planning, Building Control, Environmental Health and Land Charges systems, which all take their base information from maps from our new GIS system. The implementation is being project managed by an officer sponsors group. We are also evaluating the possibility of purchasing a related module as the most appropriate system for our estate management information (Targeted to be implement during 2002/3).
- 3.5 Responsibility for maintaining a lease diary of all property that is let and triggering appropriate action for rent reviews or lease termination/review of properties let by the Council was passed, in April 2001, to the Head of Legal Services. She is currently investigating how the current computer based diary can be improved. We will then need to investigate how this can interface effectively with the information held by the Head of Asset Management (The target is to complete this by the end of March 2003).
- 3.6 A condition survey of all major assets was commissioned in 1997 to establish the cost of repairs needed to bring assets up to a good standard of repair and maintain them in such for the next 30 years. This showed that the Council would need to spend over £10 million in the first 5 years. This was clearly unrealistic and the information was reviewed to establish what was required to ensure the Council met minimum health and safety and other statutory requirements. A working party was set up consisting of members and officers (which including the CPO) to oversee these

works which from the survey were estimated to cost £2m. By combining the work into larger contracts, the work was completed in 1998, on time and with a saving of around 35% of the original £2m estimate. This has been followed by a five year rolling programme of planned maintenance, of which we are currently in year three. The programme is designed to be flexible to allow for changes in priorities and circumstances. For example:

- a. Deferring work to a multi story car park in year 2/3 of the programme and bringing forward work to other property to enable the option studies required for a full Best Value Review of our car parks
- b. Moving forward in the programme work to a Pavilion in one of our parks. The resident Bowls Club wished to refurbish their facilities and were funding the project with a combination of grant from the Council and their own funds. Savings in cost were made and disruption to the users of the facility was kept to a minimum by combining the planned maintenance and the refurbishment into one contract. It also enables us to ensure property complies with the access requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act at an earlier date.

3.7 As the work is being done more comprehensive information is being built up about each asset with up to date plans, measurements etc where these are not already available. Details of the assets by categories and grading are included in the Context Sheet.

3.8 To enable information held about assets to be made readily accessible, maintained and useable, the Head of Asset Management has carried out or is carrying out the following:

- Completed a review of all the title deeds relating to Council owned land and property, data captured all the information and loaded the information on to an estate terrier programme that is part of the corporate GIS system. The information is not only spatial but some basic textual information is also recorded and accessible to assist officers with the day to day issues that arise.
- Is reviewing all our other existing land and property based information available (contracts, information from condition survey, planned maintenance programmes, valuation information, structural details etc) and investigating the most effective way these can be provided and maintained in electronic form and linked to the GIS system. (a module of the new CAPS system.)
- Has worked with the Head of Finance and Heads of the relevant services to identify and put in place systems to capture the information, particularly in relation to management costs, necessary for the national and local property performance indicators.
- Has identified Unique Property Reference Numbers (UPRN) for all Council land and buildings as well as all the non-Council properties within the Borough to establish a BS7666 compliant gazetteer. This ensures we are in line with the Government's proposals for electronic delivery of Land Charges information. The Council's Land and Property Gazetteer has been submitted to and accredited by the National Land and Property Gazetteer. The Council has also signed up to the Land Information Services at level two. Further development of the CAPS system will support a move to level three.
- Categorised all assets into the Office of the Deputy Prime Ministers (ODPM) standard grading A-D 1-4 as set out in ODPM guidance, and re-categorised to comply with CIPFA definitions)

- Surveyed all the Council's buildings to establish gross internal floor areas and data captured all the information onto our corporate GIS system, along with digital photos of the exterior of the properties.
- Carried out surveys to establish schematic layout drawings of all electrical and water services to all the buildings where the Council have the maintenance liability, and stored the information electronically.
- Put in place a system for all drawing information supplied with Health and Safety files to be stored electronically.

3.9 The Council is conscious of the need for the systems and procedures that we put in place to be proportionate to the size and value of our asset base. We believe that the data we have already captured or are in the process of obtaining is appropriate for our current and foreseeable needs. It will enable us to:

- Give maximum and easy access to comprehensive information about assets to all relevant officers to aid their effective day to day service management, encourage innovative use of assets and ensure any proposals for use of assets are considered with full knowledge of relevant information about the real cost of the assets and any legal restraints.
- Manipulate the data to measure our use and the performance of our assets against the national performance indicators, including local indicators when adopted.
- Use the information to rationalise our assets – for example using the information in the rationalisation of our allotments and grazing sites.
- Provide good base information to support Best Value reviews and help all services continuously improve their performance.

4 PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT AND MONITORING

4.1 We are at an early stage in property performance review and benchmarking and we are conscious that whatever we do needs to be proportionate to the size and type of our assets.

4.2 We have mentioned in paragraphs 2.11 – 2.18 how we are using assets and information on assets to improve service delivery linked to our strategy objectives.

4.3 As part of our corporate management process mentioned earlier we set annual targets and these include targets for asset management. They normally relate to the achievement of individual schemes (eg disposal of a property, start of a scheme etc.) rather than benchmarks. For the first time this year we have set medium term targets (three years) as well as one year targets. The targets adopted this year are:

Medium Term Targets

To establish clear benchmarks to enable the Council to review the effectiveness of all its assets and landholdings.

Short Term Targets

- (a) To report on progress on the 2001/02 Planned Maintenance Programme to MAT and Members by May.
- (b) To agree the 2002/03 Planned Maintenance Programme by May and to ensure that programme is completed by March 2003.

- (c) To report to Members on the Council's future office accommodation requirements and the future use of the Knowle Green site, including initial costs, by July.
- (d) To complete a database of non-operational property, as set out in the External Audit report on Asset Management, by July
- (e) To produce an updated Asset Management Plan and submit to GOSE by July so as to achieve an improved rating of at least satisfactory.
- (f) To report to Members on progress on negotiations on the refurbishment of the Elmsleigh Centre, by July.
- (g) To implement the approved strategy including the action plan on the Council's non-operational land and property, by March 2003.

4.4 We recognised that the first step towards effective performance measurement of assets themselves was to ensure that we had comprehensive information about our assets in a form which can be manipulated and ensure that we can assess our position against the national property indicators. We joined the AMP Network set up by the Institute of Public Finance and have been regular attendees at their meetings to enable us to learn from best practice elsewhere and assist us in benchmarking with other similar authorities

4.5 During the Best Value review of asset management we have attempted benchmarking by obtaining information from other authorities across a number of aspects but found information was held in such different forms that this was difficult to do in any meaningful way.

4.6 In an effort to overcome this difficulty and to assist the benchmarking process Spelthorne are members of the North West Surrey benchmarking group which consist of:-

Runnymede BC
Woking BC
Elmbridge BC
Surrey Heath BC
Spelthorne BC

4.7 The Chief Executive's Group meets five or six times a year. A property sub group has been set up and meets regularly and is aiming to establish meaningful local PI's for benchmarking, with the ultimate goal of establishing cross cutting practices and procedures to improve the individual services. We will be comparing our position on the national PIs with others in the group to see how we might improve as soon as they are available.

4.8 We are introducing a number of local PIs for 2002/2003 and those for Asset Management are:

- To monitor and reduce debt by 25% of income due on leased properties
- To monitor income as a % of running costs of village halls
- To pay all invoices within the agreed contractual times
- To ensure all plans relating to the Council's estates are computerised

4.9 Reports are currently made by the CPO half yearly to Members of the Economic committee on achievement of the planned maintenance programme and an annual report is made on the achievement of corporate targets, including those for asset management. In the preparation of this Plan we reported to Members of the Economic Committee in June on the current position on our property assets and intend to do so each year as this Plan is revised.

5 PROGRAMME AND PLAN DEVELOPMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION

5.1 The Council has no housing stock, having transferred this in 1996, and the majority of its operational assets relate to leisure and community use. Its major operational assets are two Leisure Centres, the Council Depot, The Council Offices and town centre car parks.

5.2 Key areas for investment in recent years have been the two Leisure Centres, one of which is a dual use centre with a school, to ensure these continue to meet current public needs and expectations – for example, extension and improvement of the gym areas and upgrading of the water treatment plant to both sites.

5.3 In 1999 the Council reviewed its future requirement for a depot. As a consequence it acquired a new more central site for a depot with the intention of disposing of the original depot site, which is in a residential area, for housing including a substantial element of affordable housing in accordance with its Local Plan Policy and Housing Strategy. The new depot is now operational with reduced running costs. The old depot site has been sold and is in the process of being redeveloped with 70 new units of accommodation, of which 35 are for open market sale with the remaining 35 being owned by a local Housing Association. Half of the 35 affordable units are to be for rent and the other half for shared ownership, with 100% nomination rights in favour of the Council. As a consequence of this review:

- b. two heavily contaminated sites have been cleaned up;
- c. the Council received a gross capital receipt of £4.6m (£2m net after the cost of the new depot); and
- d. substantial affordable housing is being obtained in support of our Local Plan and Housing Strategy.

5.4 As mentioned in paragraph 2.15 the Council reviewed its future needs for office accommodation in the light of the outcome of the condition survey carried out in 1997. A space audit has been undertaken and four options considered. We have now submitted an application for outline planning consent to re-develop the existing site. We intend to appoint advisers in the next three months to assist us with a private sector development partnership to provide new civic offices.

5.5 The future arrangements for town centre car parks are being considered as part of a Best Value review, a key element of which is options for their future management and maintenance. To assist in this review a condition survey and improvement appraisals have been commissioned in respect of four of our multi story car parks.

5.6 The Council is now in the third year of the five year maintenance programme agreed after the condition survey in 1997 mentioned earlier. In 1999/2000 the Council agreed to create a central repairs and renewal fund bringing together a number of different revenue budgets for repair and maintenance and made additional contributions from reserves to provide an annual sum of £500,000 for asset maintenance. From this it was agreed a planned maintenance programme for £350,000 per annum should be started with a further budget of £150,000 for responsive repairs. To date the essential works contract plus the last two years

planned maintenance programmes have been completed on time and within contract sum.

5.7 Possible shared or dual use of assets has been a key consideration for some years whenever the future of assets are considered and examples include:

- Use of part of the Council Offices by the Voluntary Sector, Spelthorne Chamber of Commerce and the provision of offices for County Council officers working locally – how this might continue was an important consideration in assessing the future options for offices mentioned above;
- Acquisition from the County Council of a library it was proposing to close in Stanwell in the most deprived part of the Borough, and its conversion to a joint use Day Centre and Library. It also now includes a resource centre.
- Building a dual use leisure scheme at school premises in Sunbury.
- Day centres – maximising community use in the evening and ensuring any changes increase flexibility for this. The new Day Centre in Staines currently being completed is specifically designed for wider community use.
- Sunbury Millennium Embroidery. The Council has provided space in its Walled Garden in Sunbury for the Sunbury Millennium Committee to build a display area, a teaching room and a café. The Council has also provided funding through the Leisure Capital Partnership to support the building cost. Along with Sunbury Park, Orchard Meadow and the River Thames this will provide a tourist attraction for this area in Spelthorne. This project promotes civic pride and regenerates an area.
- Friends of Sunbury Park. The establishment of a Management Plan for Sunbury Park identified the desirability of establishing a support group for the park - the Friends of Sunbury Park. The group has now been constituted and has a committee of 15 with a membership of over 30 local people. The aim of the group is to support the development, maintenance and security of the Walled Garden, Sunbury Park and Orchard Meadow in partnership with the Council.
- Cedars Pavilion. The prime user of the pavilion, in a Council park, a playgroup, will be extending the pavilion to incorporate low level toilets and a kitchen. This will improve the Council's facility and has been funded by the Early Years and Childcare Partnership.
- The Red Cross Shepperton. The Red Cross have been rationalising the number of buildings it has been operating and wish to terminate the lease on this building. Various local community groups use the facility and the Council is working to see how it can make best use of the site and still support the other groups that use the building. (See paragraph 1.18.)

5.8 At present the Council does not have any programme for acquisition of property other than in relation to its housing strategy. It will, however, consider ad hoc purchases or grants to assist or support community groups. For example it has recently purchased a disused bank next to the Riverside Arts Complex in Sunbury, the freehold of which is owned by the Council, to allow the charity to which it is leased time to raise funds itself for the property. We are in the process of developing a policy on purchasing

property to support community organisations to ensure a consistent and corporate approach to such partnership working. This will enable all parties to make best use of the extensive external funding opportunities that are available to community groups.

- 5.9 The two significant development schemes currently under way –the Memorial Garden Scheme (creating a new riverside park) and the new Staines Community Building are due to be completed in August. Other than the new offices for the Council no other major capital schemes are planned other than refurbishment of the Elmsleigh Centre (see paragraph 5.17)

Under use and disposal

- 5.10 As described in paragraph 2.5 there are four different situations which currently trigger review. In particular the Best Value reviews of all areas of activity which will be taking place over the next 2-3 years will ensure all operational property is reviewed.
- 5.11 As mentioned previously, the Head of Asset Management is currently reviewing all non-operational land and property and this will be completed by September 2002. The majority of the non-operational assets are either small areas of land designated as highway sub-soil, open space amenity land left over from the transfer of our housing stock, or community buildings let to guide/scout groups or local organisations.
- 5.12 Where it has become apparent greater use could be made of property, including shared use, positive steps have been taken to achieve this as indicated in paragraph 5.7 above.
- 5.13 All disposals or changes of use are considered by the Head of Asset Management, with relevant Heads of Service and where appropriate by the Corporate Asset Group, the Chief Officer Management Team and Members.
- 5.14 Bearing in mind the type and scale of assets held, it is felt the arrangements outlined in this Plan are proportionate to ensure all relevant issues are considered and property is actively managed.

Spending and Output Information

- 5.15 The Council has a rolling four year capital programme which is reviewed annually. Heads of Service identify capital and revenue resources required for their service, including any related to assets used for the service. These are then considered by the corporate asset group/Chief Officer management team against the Council's corporate priorities.
- 5.16 Priorities for capital investment have been agreed and are set out in the Capital Strategy. Criteria have been agreed for assessment of capital bids and details are set out in paragraph 2.8.. The Capital Programme is considered by the Chief Officer management team. The draft programme is then considered by members, firstly by an Overview and Scrutiny Committee, then by the Executive and finally by the Council. Spending against budget is monitored quarterly by the Council's Economic Overview and Scrutiny Committee.
- 5.17 The only major non-operational or "investment" asset is the Council's freehold interest in the Elmsleigh Shopping Centre in Staines. The leasehold interest in this is likely to be transferred in mid July and the Council expects the new leaseholders to

come forward with refurbishment plans. The Council had almost agreed terms for a refurbishment with the existing leaseholder when it suddenly withdrew its proposals and put its interest on the market. As this is the Council's only major non-operational asset and it is important to the viability of Staines Town Centre this will be a key asset investment issue for the Council.

5.18 No significant capital receipts are expected other than a share of proceeds from Right to Buy properties from Apex Housing Association. We receive an element of the proceeds of houses sold with the preserved right to buy and additional shared ownership. In the financial year 1999/2000 we received £1.4m, in the year 2000/2001 we received £800,000 and in the last financial year 2001/2002 we received £1,057,082. The receipt from the sale of our former Council Depot was around £4.6m gross. At this stage it is not expected that the review of non-operational property due to be completed in September 2002 will result in any significant capital receipt given the nature of the properties.

5.19 A summary of the capital programme is at **Appendix A**.

6 PERFORMANCE INFORMATION

6.1 Attached as **Appendix B** is a spreadsheet outlining how in a simple form we have recorded our assets and information on our performance against the national performance indicators.

ANNEX 2

Spelthorne Capital Strategy 2002

CAPITAL STRATEGY

1. PURPOSE

- 1.1 The purpose of this strategy is to set out our approach to capital investment, both in terms of the capital assets we already own and also in terms of the development of new assets. This strategy sits alongside the Financial Strategy, and underpins the achievement of the Council's Community Strategy and Plan. It cannot be viewed in isolation but brings together a raft of other strategies – Asset Management Plan, Procurement Strategy, Leisure, HIP, Environmental, Waste, Electronic Government and Older People Strategies.

2. COMMUNITY STRATEGY

- 2.1 Spelthorne has just completed its first Community Strategy. It is supported by a partnership of local organisations from the public, voluntary, business and community sectors. This strategy was produced by the Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) and was launched at the assembly meeting in May 2002. This event was attended by nearly 70 people representing over 50 organisations operating in Spelthorne. It has also been considered by focus groups drawn from the Spelthorne Residents panel. They are all committed to achieving the aims of the strategy over the next ten years of making Spelthorne:
- A place where people are fully engaged and are both respected and respectful, promoting an environment that is: healthy, safe, inclusive, prosperous, and sustainable.
- 2.2 This goal has been produced by all the members of the partnership in consultation with representative groups of Spelthorne residents and has been further developed with the particular aims that Spelthorne should:
- have a sustainable economy providing employment which is attractive to local people and based on the unique resources of Spelthorne;
 - be a community where everyone can communicate, learn and achieve together;
 - be a place where people choose to live and work, providing an attractive and safe environment for children to grow up;
 - be serviced by a transport system that provides real choices, is safe and reliable and which supports both the environment and the economy;
 - be somewhere where young people are valued and play an active part;
 - be a place where people feel valued and have a sense of belonging and pride
- 2.3 In committing itself to the Community Strategy Spelthorne Borough Council has adopted ten priority areas for action. The services that the Council provides or commissions will play a key role in achieving success in a number of the key areas, in others we will have only a subsidiary role as other organisations will be lead players. In order to achieve this aim, to be the type of organisation that can successfully deliver its contribution, the Council believes that it needs to achieve success by being in touch with the Community, by delivering Best Value Services and by developing its employers.
- 2.4 The other strategies of the Council will all be reviewed to identify the linkage with other strategies, and the key themes.
- 2.5 The Council has a well-established corporate planning process, which at the top level has a mission statement with identified critical success factors. Each year the key priorities are then identified and the schemes and initiatives it intends to carry out to deliver its strategic policies are set. These are monitored by the Scrutiny Committees and at senior officer level. For 2002/03 the corporate targets have one year targets and medium term targets, in all there are some 165 targets.
- ## 3. CONSULTATION
- 3.1 One of the Council's key priorities is to be in touch with the needs and priorities of the people of Spelthorne. To this end we adopted four principles of consultation as set out below:
- To commit itself to full and open consultation with all sections of the community;
 - To select methods of consultation that are appropriate to the issue under consideration and the section of the community;
 - To report back the results of any consultation undertaken; and
 - To use the results of any consultation undertaken to inform the decisions it has to make.
- 3.2 The methods we use to consult include the following: Focus Groups, Area Forums and Liaison Panels, Self-completion Questionnaires, Exhibitions and Consultation Documents.

- 3.3 Spelthorne Residents Panel consists of a representative sample of 1000 residents across the Borough. This panel can be surveyed on a regular basis to seek views on a range of different issues. This year the Panel has been used to seek views on Customer Services and Council run Car Parks. A large consultation exercise has been conducted on the Council's Housing Service. The results of these have been fed back in the Council's newspaper.
- 3.4 The Council runs 5 Area Forums, which cover the 5 main towns in Spelthorne. These meet twice a year to discuss topics of Borough wide appeal as well as more local issues. In 2001/02 the Forums concentrated on Community Safety.

4. PRIORITIES FOR CAPITAL INVESTMENT

4.1 The Council's current priorities for capital investment are as follows:

- a) Promoting the development of affordable housing in the Borough. The Council is committed to improving the supply of affordable housing within the Borough and has a target to produce 165 units from 2003/04. The recent housing needs survey indicated that there was a requirement for an additional 725 units of affordable accommodation over and above the re-lets. The Council has reviewed its housing strategy so far as it is able to take account of the results of the research.
- b) Working with a range of partners to provide for those people who have special housing needs – people with disabilities, the homeless, etc. The Council is committed to improving its target on the number of families, and the length of time they spend in Bed and Breakfast. The need for further good quality temporary accommodation has been identified.
- c) Offering grant support to people to enable them to live in their own home where the home has become unfit, or because disability adaptations are required. The Council is currently responding to the Regulatory Reform (Housing Assistance) Order 2002, which is likely to come into force this Summer. We are consulting the Spelthorne residents on the need for different types of funding schemes. We have targeted private households where there is an older person in residence who is over 55 years of age.
- d) Implementing the Leisure and Culture Strategy.
The aim of the strategy is to provide a framework of planned policies, objectives and actions that will guide the provision and opportunities for leisure and culture over the next few years. The strategy seeks to provide direction to all local leisure and cultural providers in Spelthorne and provide a framework so we can best work together to achieve the aims and objectives.
- e) Promoting the recommendations contained within the Local Plan. An annual budget of £100,000 is available to implement environmental improvements.
- f) Ensuring that the Council's land and buildings are kept in a good state of repair.
- g) Promoting economic regeneration within the Borough.
- h) Providing amenities for specialist groups, particularly the elderly and youth.
- i) Promoting environmental sustainability for future generations.
- j) Investing in Information and Communications Technology to support the development of service improvements through e-Government and to achieve the 100% electronic service delivery target by 2005.

5. ASSESSMENT CRITERIA

- 5.1 All schemes which are put forward for capital investment are evaluated, particularly in relation to need, viability and what the return is on capital employed. The detailed criteria are set out below:
- a) Whether the scheme has been identified as a corporate plan priority, or has been identified in a strategy document, HIP, Local Plan, HImP, Leisure Strategy, Implementing Electronic Government Statement, etc. Each capital scheme is expected to demonstrate how it could contribute to the themes set out in the Community Strategy.
 - b) Implications of not proceeding with the investment, Health and Safety, deterioration of an asset, etc.

- c) Whether the scheme attracts other sources of funding, lottery, private sector investment, etc.
 - d) Whether it can generate long-term revenue savings, or an income stream.
 - e) Whether the scheme has any ongoing revenue costs.
 - f) Whether the scheme can demonstrate local need, through consultation, statistical evidence, community use and satisfaction with existing facilities.
 - g) Can the scheme receive any government financial support.
 - h) Whether it generates opportunities for asset disposals to generate capital receipt for reinvestment.
- 5.2 Any scheme submitted for capital funding is expected to contain a full financial appraisal, to include a cost/benefit analysis and a payback calculation, if appropriate. The Council is particularly interested in working in partnership with other private sector/voluntary sector, which will lever in other sources of finance. An example of this is the scheme to replace the Civic Offices, working in partnership with the private sector.
- 5.3 All schemes are submitted to be Corporate Asset Group, and then to Management Team (MAT). The role of MAT is to ensure that investment priorities are set which accord with service priorities/performance. Two good examples showing how investment priorities have been based on service performance are set out below.
- 5.4 The Best Value Review of the Leisure Centres highlighted the users' concern with the water quality and the cleanliness at the centres. The Council has agreed to make substantial investment to improve both. As part of this exercise we took part in the Sport England Benchmarking so that we could compare our Leisure Centres with similar centres in the country, particularly in respect of expenditure, income and usage.
- 5.5 Consultation has shown the users felt concerned/vulnerable when using the Tothill Multi-Storey Car Park because of its access, design and lighting. We have benchmarked our own performance with a number of other authorities, and particularly monitored the performance of this car park in comparison with our other car parks. As part of the Best Value review of car parks, the Council is reviewing the future of the Tothill car park. A significant budget has already been approved for improvements if it is decided that the Council should keep the car park in its present form.

6. FINANCIAL RESOURCES

- 6.1 According to the Council's external auditors, "The Council has substantial financial resources" which are underpinned by "strong corporate arrangements to ensure that its financial standing is soundly based." This position has been achieved to a large extent by the way the Council has undertaken its capital expenditure with careful evaluation of the strategic benefits and the revenue implications of individual schemes. A key contributor was the transfer of the Council's housing stock in 1996, which rendered the authority debt free. The resources the Council now has are as follows as at 1.4.02:

Unapplied Receipts	£
Housing receipts	-
General receipts	5,434,609
Reserved Receipts	£
Housing Receipts	6,192,636
	7,389,917
Revenue Reserves available for Housing	8,317,507
Total:	27,334,669

- 6.2 The Council considers whether PFI is appropriate on individual schemes, but to date has not used PFI.

7. CAPITAL PROGRAMME

- 7.1 The Council prepares a 4-year capital programme and reviews this on an annual basis. The programme falls into 3 main areas – Housing Investment Programme; General Capital Programme; New Schemes Fund.

7.2 Housing Investment Programme

The Borough has set a programme of approximately £26 million over the next 4 years, as part of the review of the current Housing Strategy Review.

- 7.3 The Council has undertaken the Housing needs and stock condition survey in 2001/02 which has been used to inform the development of the strategy. In addition to this a wide consultation exercise has taken

place in respect of transferred tenants, "enabled" tenants, applicants on the waiting list and homeless people, and this will inform future development of the housing strategy. Research has also been done on key worker housing, and the Council is looking for ways to assist this group of workers.

- 7.4 The Council is also mindful of the potential impact of the Homes Bill, especially the expanded homeless categories. This identified priority will need to be fed into the priorities for investment.
- 7.5 There are 3 key areas for the housing capital programme: enabling, renovation, and specialist housing. There is no investment in Council housing as the Council completed LSVT in 1996.
- 7.6 The current aim is to provide at least 100 additional units each year through a Joint Commissioning Programme with the Housing Corporation. This is being increased to 165 units in the light of the housing needs survey which identified an annual requirement of 725 units. Housing investment has been increased to provide additional affordable housing units, which will impact on housing homeless people, and reduce the length of stay and the cost of bed and breakfast.
- 7.7 The Council and Corporation have selected through a competitive process 4 preferred partner housing associations. Grant support to these associations from both Housing Corporation SHG and Local Authority SHG is subject to a twice-yearly bid round.
- 7.8 The RSL's we work with are all striving to achieve Client Construction Charter Status, ensuring that all organisations we work with (rather than the individual schemes) will be Egan compliant by 2003.
- 7.9 The priorities for provision are: regeneration schemes, existing property purchases and new build schemes. A particular need for family accommodation has been identified. The consultation has shown that there is lower level of satisfaction with existing property purchases and the Council is currently undertaking more research to determine why.
- 7.10 The Council has identified several estates, which are showing increasing signs of low demand. This issue has surfaced nationally very strongly this year. Locally, analysis of the Housing Register and lettings data shows that the best solution for such properties is to demolish and rebuild, and this is in progress on three sites.
- 7.11 The Council is also concerned to ensure that investment is made across the Borough and not just in the areas of existing social housing.
- 7.12 All schemes are subject to individual scrutiny before, during and after completion. All new build schemes are audited before final LASHG payments are made. The Housing Needs team visits all new build schemes and the Council works closely with RSLs via Joint Commissioning to encourage user feedback. Programme outputs are reported to the appropriate Scrutiny Committee.
- 7.13 The priorities for private sector renewal are: eradicating unfitness, prevention of further deterioration, adaptations for elderly residents/disabled persons and rented properties, including HMOs.
- 7.14 These priorities may change with the implementation of the legislative changes, and in the light of the consultation.
- 7.15 **General Fund Capital Programme**
- 7.16 The Council has set an annual limit to this programme of £598,000 at a 1997 price base. All bids are reviewed by the Council's Management Team. Once a draft programme is compiled, it is considered by the Executive Committee. The progress of the programme, once approved, is monitored by the Corporate Asset Group and the Council's Economic Committee.
- 7.17 In practice a large proportion of the budget is spent on Information and Communication Technology (ICT) projects, where the Council is working towards the achievement of the Government's target to offer 100% of public services electronically, where this is feasible, by 2005. At 31 March 2002 the Council's BVPI 157 figure was 42% of 408 identified types of transactions. Historically, the Council has on average invested about £250,000 per year in ICT, and this will be supplemented in 2002/03 by £200,000 of Local Government OnLine (LGOL) funds. It is expected that similar LGOL funding will be available in 2003/04 to enable the programme to continue at a brisk pace.

- 7.18 The Council has outsourced its ICT support since 1989 and is tendering for a new contract from 1 January 2003. The tender includes the provision of major ICT infrastructure change, including projects to re-engineer the public website and intranet, to improve desktop management and to set up secure networking. These will entail significant Capital investment, but will be essential in supporting the e-Government programme and enabling improved working practices and reductions in revenue costs. Other current ICT developments are less dependent upon the outsourcing contract, and include implementation of document management and workflow, initially within Revenues and Benefits (but to be extended corporately), contact management as part of the Council's Customer Service Strategy, and projects to improve services relating to Leisure and other bookings.
- 7.19 The Council has invested heavily in Geographic Information Systems , and currently holds 155 separate datasets, ranging from digital map data to aerial photography, street light locations to the land drainage network, and planning constraints to the land terrier. All datasets include attribute and management information and GIS use is now considered essential in a number of key service areas, such as:
- a) Asset Management – a record of all our property interests (Land Terrier) is stored on the GIS, giving details of lease, ownership, disposals etc along with detailed building plans of the interiors of many.
 - b) Electoral Services – used to redesign polling areas in relation to amount of electors within an area
 - c) Environmental Health – location of pollution and contaminants have been captured using historical maps.
- 7.20 It is also becoming an integral element within new software applications, as demonstrated with the implementation of the CAPS *Uniform* system within Planning, Building Control and Land Charges, which now has GIS as an embedded element . Historical records are being captured for these systems, and the systems themselves will be converted to a browser format during 2002, which will facilitate public access through the web. Other applications currently being assessed, including Grounds Maintenance, Cemetery Management, Environmental Health and Estate Management, also entail integration with GIS.
- 7.21 We have developed a BS7666 compliant Land and Property Gazetteer, which has been submitted to the National Land and Property Gazetteer, and is accredited at the highest Level. The NLPG supports the wider aims and objectives of the National Land Information Service as well as other national projects.
- 7.22 **New Schemes Fund**
- 7.23 After the sale of the Council's housing stock in 1996, the Council established a capital fund of £15.18m to undertake priority capital schemes – this fund is known as the New Schemes Fund. The interest earned on this fund is credited back into the fund. The following policy guidelines were set for the use of the fund.
- a) Schemes with an ongoing revenue cost are not generally acceptable.
 - b) All schemes would be considered in the light of the criteria as contained in Section 5.
 - c) The New Schemes Fund is monitored via 6-monthly reports to the Council's Management Team and the Economic Committee. To date, over £8m has been spent from the fund on a range of projects.

8. FINANCING OF THE CAPITAL PROGRAMME

The HIP is funded by the Housing Corporation Social Housing Grant and from housing resources.

- 8.1 The General Fund capital programme is financed using capital receipts. The Local Government OnLine programme is providing direct support for the Council in 2002/03 and 2003/04, and has also provided support for Surrey Partnership e-Government projects.

9. CORPORATE OFFICER ASSET MANAGEMENT GROUP

- a) A corporate officer asset group now operates. It is chaired by the Director of Resources (who provides a direct link with MAT as well as financial input) and includes the Head of Asset Management (the Corporate Property Office), the Head of Leisure (a primary asset user), the Head of Engineering and Environmental Works (a primary day to day manager of leisure assets) and a member of the Council's Policy Unit, (the Policy Unit is involved in all major policy development including the Community Plan and Capital Strategy).

b) The group's remit is to:

- Develop and co-ordinate the delivery of the Council's Asset Management Plan and Capital Strategy
- Deliver and keep under review the planned maintenance programme
- Assess and make recommendations to Management Team on matters in respect of assets – acquisition, disposal, change of use, etc

Given the size of the Council and the scale of its operation it is considered more appropriate for MAT to retain direct responsibility for the capital programme development and delivery.

c) The group is developing its role and will be looking particularly at how the information from performance indicators, both national and local can be used in a practical way to improve the Council's Asset Management.

9.1 A good example of the Council's approach to asset management is the Civic Offices project. Outline planning permission is currently being sought, to demolish the Civic Offices and replace with a private sector office block and Civic Offices, the former substantially funding the latter. Once planning permission is obtained a full feasibility study including costings will be carried out to establish viability of the project. The objective is to rationalise use of the current asset, but also provide a building, which meets modern day standards in terms of energy management. The specification will detail the need to comply with the Egan recommendations.

10. ASSET BASE

10.1 Spelthorne Borough Council has an asset portfolio of £35.47m, which is made up of 111 assets. The annual income from our assets totals £667,000 per annum. The Council transferred its housing stock in 1996.

10.2 As part of each Best Value Review, the use of assets by the respective service is challenged.

11. PARTNERSHIP WORKING

11.1 Our commitment to working with other agencies for the benefit of the local community and a clear planning framework has led to a series of key partnerships either for individual schemes or on an ongoing basis. A key example is the joint working involved with Town Centre Developer Partners (MEPC and Aberdeen Asset Management) and Surrey County Council, which has enabled the regeneration of Staines Town Centre.

11.2 The Borough Council's commitment has been to make a series of Compulsory Purchase Orders and provide the required infrastructure including road and pedestrianisation schemes and a Riverside Park at a total cost of approximately £6m which has facilitated approximately £300m in private sector investment in the Town. The development now incorporates 48 retail units in the Two Rivers Retail Park; a new 10 screen multiplex cinema; a Hotel and 75 high quality flats overlooking the Thames.

11.3 Spelthorne Borough Council was instrumental in establishing the Staines Partnership to manage this capital investment through active Town Centre Management.

11.4 The Staines Partnership has attracted membership and revenue funding, from a wide range of private sector organisations. It has the vision of making Staines Town Centre and its surrounding areas the first choice for the Business, shopping, cultural and leisure needs of the residents, visitors and workforce by offering a quality environment and facilities at all times.

11.5 Another good example of partnership work on capital projects is the joint work on ICT projects.

11.6 Spelthorne has been a key player in developing the close working relationship between all local authorities in Surrey, which extends to joint working with a number of other public sector agencies.

11.7 Partnership achievements include a Surrey local authorities Extranet, which joins up the Intranets of most Surrey local authorities, and the Surrey Citizen's Portal (www.surreyonline.info), which includes, among a range of facilities, deep-linking to the relevant pages of each authority's website and a Surrey-wide change of address service. The authorities are also pooling capital resources for joint developments such as a recruitment portal and PartnersOnline.

- 11.8 £960,000 of capital funding was secured through the Local Government Online (LGOL) programme for the Surrey Alert Pathfinder, a joint project involving Surrey County Council, the Borough and District Councils in Surrey, Surrey Police, the Ambulance Service, Health Authority and the Army. This is developing a sustainable central electronic hub for the collection and dissemination of emergency and major incident information from all responsible partners in Surrey.
- 11.9 The Surrey Local Authorities have also just been awarded £650,000 over two years for Local Government Online Partnership projects for:
- Contact Management across authorities
 - Further Portal development and customer access channel development
 - Support to Community Strategy Planning
- 11.10 Two projects which the LSP have initiated are detailed below which also indicate the effectiveness of partnership working in Spelthorne.
- 11.11 The Borough's review of older people services highlighted the public concern with transport. A group elected by the LSP has been given the task of mapping current service provision, identifying unmet need and identifying potential solutions.
- 11.12 Another key project concerns delayed transfers from Hospitals. We have had preliminary discussions with Ashford & St Peters Hospitals NHS Trust and North Surrey Primary Care Trust to investigate the possibility of using existing sheltered housing units (upgraded to a higher care level and with appropriate IT) to ease the problem of delayed transfer patients at the hospital. This work will be developed in the next 12 months, involving Surrey County Council Social Services and will develop issues identified in the Councils Best Value Review of Elderly Services and supported by the Spelthorne Community Strategy.

Criteria Ref.	Primary Criteria	Capital Strategy Ref.
	The Capital Strategy	
1	Provides clear strategic guidance about the council's capital objectives, priorities and spending plans and demonstrates that these are directly linked to and consistent with key corporate and service objectives as outlined in the authority's corporate documents. It should identify council wide cross-cutting activity and initiatives.	2.2 & 4.1
2	Describes the framework that the authority has put in place to ensure that the capital strategy is a corporate document.	9
3	Identifies all key aspects of capital expenditure within the authority and those areas where the authority is able to apply significant influence on others.	7
4	Explains the approach implemented in the prioritisation of capital project proposals.	4.1
5	Explains how the revenue implications of capital investment are taken into account.	5.1
6	Is informed by the outcomes of Best Value reviews and of other relevant reviews and improvement/development plans.	5.4 5.5 10.2
7	Identifies how relevant stakeholders' and partners' views are sought and inform the working and development of the capital strategy.	3.1
8	Identifies key partners and describes partnership working.	11

NB – For the Secondary Criteria the original DTLR guidance contained two separate criteria with the same index number. For the purposes of this checklist they are included as 4a and 4b.

Criteria Ref.	Secondary Criteria	Capital Strategy Ref.
	General Content	
1	Sets out sufficient information to inform all bidding for capital resources.	Paras 4 & 5
2	Outlines the council's approach to PPP/PFI and to other means of alternative capital funding.	6.2
3	Addresses corporate policies on procurement strategies as envisaged in Best Value guidance (e.g. in the report of the Construction Task Force, chaired by Sir John Egan).	7.8
	Partnership Working	
4a	The strategy identifies how partnership working is being further progressed by steps being taken to work with other councils and relevant organisations (for example, capital projects in co-operation with neighbouring councils, local primary care trusts, voluntary sector and private sector).	11.1 – 11.12
	Performance Measurement and Monitoring There is evidence that:	
4b	Performance measures and benchmarking are being used to describe and evaluate how the deployment of capital resources contributes to the achievement of corporate and service objectives.	5.5
5	The results of performance measurement and benchmarking are being communicated to Stakeholders where relevant.	3.1 3.4
6	The results of performance measurement and benchmarking are being used to seek service improvements and target service delivery.	5.5 + 7.6
7	Performance measurement activities relate to capital projects and to the influence of grants and partnerships.	
8	There is a corporately agreed 3-year strategy explaining the council's approach regarding the effective management, measurement and monitoring of the council's capital programme.	5.3
	Cross-cutting Activity	
9	There is evidence of the development and/or delivery of key priorities and targets to achieve cross-cutting objectives such as regeneration and	11.2 11.4

	sustainable development.	
10	There is evidence of cross-cutting activity leading to improved outcomes, including consideration of and where appropriate adoption of innovative solutions (for example, in the use of new technology; in the shared use of accommodation; in the provision of more customer focused service delivery.	7.18

Spelthorne Housing Strategy 2003 – 2006

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Introduction

It has been six years since the Council transferred all its 3600 council homes to the then newly formed Spelthorne Housing Association, with promises that this would bring more investment into these homes, and a belief that tenants would be better served by a dedicated housing provider.

Six years on from Stock Transfer over £13 million has been spent on modernising and improving stock and now 98% of all Apex homes have central heating. 90% have benefited from new doors and windows and 500 homes have had new bathrooms and kitchens. A further £1.6 million per year is spent on day to day and cyclic maintenance.

In transferring our homes, the Council freed itself of day-to-day management responsibilities, allowing us to focus clearly on the more strategic work in our continued role as housing authority for the Borough. With the money the Council received from the transfer of homes, we have delivered over 500 additional affordable homes to help those most in need of housing. The Council was forward looking at the time and saw that significant benefits could be achieved through transferring the homes.

So the promises made at the time have been delivered.

We have also recently consulted all those that transferred over to Spelthorne Housing Association, and we are pleased to find that an overwhelming majority feel that the management of their homes, and the services they receive have improved under Spelthorne Housing Association.

However the need for more affordable housing has not disappeared; indeed it has grown to almost crisis proportions. Average house prices in the Borough are £180,000 – well above the reach of many people in need of housing.

In the last 12 months, a comprehensive Housing Needs and Stock condition Survey was undertaken. In addition, a wide ranging consultation exercise was undertaken with users, partners and stakeholders ranging from Registered Social Landlords to applicants on the waiting list and homeless people.

We have undertaken research into the scale of the local key worker housing problem and considered the potential impact of the New Homes Bill. It has also been essential to take into account the priorities included in the new community strategy for the Borough and the priorities identified in the National and Regional Housing Agenda.

The result of this research has identified many competing priorities and demands on the Council's future investment plans. Nevertheless the council recognises the importance of good quality housing- poor housing can impact on health, limit educational achievement, can impact on employment prospects and can undermine balanced sustainable communities.

This new strategy aims to meet the many and varied needs across the Borough.

The Borough and its partners will all need to work together to meet the community vision of :

A place where people are fully engaged and are both respected and respectful, promoting an environment that is healthy, safe, inclusive, prosperous and sustainable.

I welcome the introduction of the Council's new four year housing Strategy, covering our actions till 2006, and hope to see this housing strategy playing its full part in meeting this vision.

Leader of the Council

Summary of main aims.

Partnership working

- The Council will continue to work towards meeting the vision of the Community Plan - in partnership with the range of agencies in order to deliver the community plan, develop services, and ensure the needs of Spelthorne residents are met in full.

Assessing and meeting housing needs

- There is significant housing need in Spelthorne and the Council aims to provide at least 660 affordable homes over the next four years
- Ensure new developments are sustainable, follow best practice, and take into account relevant government guidance.
- The Council will be issuing Supplementary Planning Guidance to assist with the provision of affordable housing
- Strengthen the current partnership arrangements with housing associations and the Housing Corporation
- Continue to review the housing needs of the Borough

Developing Sustainable Communities

The Council will to work towards:

- Improving choice for housing applicants and developing a Homelessness Strategy
- Improving support for those in temporary accommodation and reduce reliance on the use of Bed and Breakfast
- Meeting the needs of key workers
- Assessing the needs of black and ethnic minority households
- Working with the Supporting People team, and others, to meet the needs of those with special needs.

Improving the quality and suitability of the housing stock

- To improve 310 properties by 2006
- To increase the number of adapted properties for disabled people by 100 each year.
- To improve conditions in more than 70 private rented homes each year.
- To further develop the Care and Repair Agency to assist our Supporting People work, and to assist 100 residents to improve or adapt their homes through the Care and Repair Agency each year.

The Spelthorne Landscape

Spelthorne is a compact urban Borough resting 15 miles west of Central London. It is bordered by the M25 to the west, the River Thames to the south and west, the London Borough of Richmond-upon-Thames to the east, and Heathrow Airport to the north.

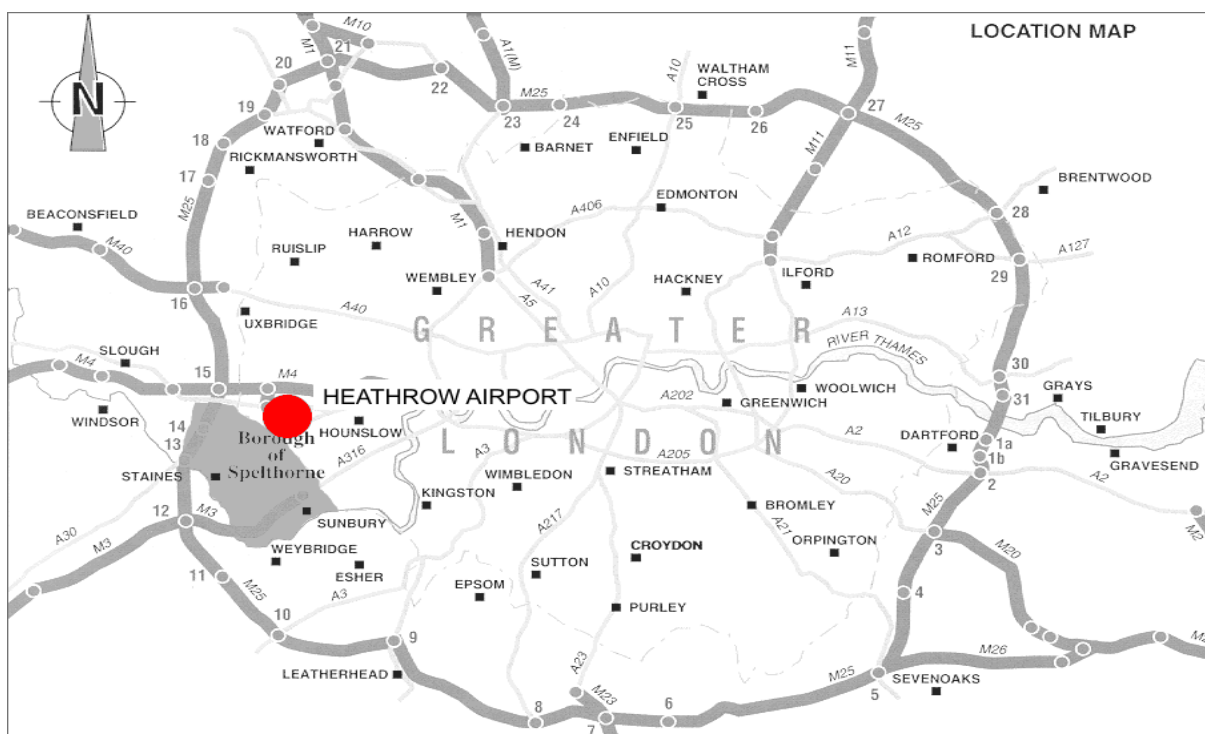
Given its location close to London and with its good transport links by road, rail and air, it is not surprising that commercially the area is one of the most significant in Surrey. About 20% of all commercial or industrial property

in the County is located in the Borough. This includes the headquarters of many national and international companies, such as BP Amoco, Courage, the Ian Allen Group, Del Monte, Samsung Electronics and Shepperton Film Studios.

Spelthorne has a population of approximately 90,000, covering 21 square miles (13,880 acres). The major centres of population are Ashford, Shepperton, Stanwell, Sunbury and Staines, with no physical boundaries between them.

There is very great pressure for development, both commercial and residential, but the physical nature of the Borough is such that where land is not in the urban areas it is either long established green belt or covered by water (there are extensive reservoirs) so all development takes place on brown-field or windfall sites, and the Council ensures a careful balance between the need for different types of development and safeguarding a sustainable environment.

Figure 1.



The Borough has a history of positive and stable political and managerial leadership, and takes a leading role in improving the quality of life for people who live and work in the Borough.

Much of this work is now under-pinned by Spelthorne's Community Plan. This sets out the vision for Spelthorne and how it will be achieved.

Spelthorne's Community Plan

The future aims of Spelthorne are now reflected in the Community Strategy for Spelthorne which has recently been produced by the Local Strategic Partnership. This strategy, with its vision, key themes and action areas, will now underpin all the Council's own strategies and activities, including its housing strategies, and be the driver for individual service plans.

The process of producing a Community Plan started with a community visioning day, organised by the Council, in February 2001. This resulted in agreement of a shared vision for Spelthorne in 10 years time as

“A place where people are fully engaged and are both respected and respectful, promoting an environment that is healthy, safe, inclusive, prosperous and sustainable”

The Local Strategic Partnership

A Local Strategic Partnership which consists of local organisations from the public, voluntary, business and community sectors considered the draft strategy at its Assembly meeting on the 15th May 2002. This event was attended by nearly 70 people from over 50 organisations operating in Spelthorne. As part of the process, the draft Strategy has also been considered by focus groups drawn from the Spelthorne Residents Panel and feedback from these groups has been included in the discussion of the draft Strategy.

The strategy was adopted by this Council on the 25th July 2002.

A ten-year vision

The LSP agreed six key aims in helping achieving the ten-year vision

- Have a sustainable economy providing employment that is attractive to local people and based on the unique resources of Spelthorne.
- Be a community where everyone can communicate, learn and achieve together.
- Be a place where people choose to live and work, providing an attractive and safe environment for children to grow up.
- Be serviced by a transport system that provides real choices, is safe and reliable and which supports both the environment and the economy.
- Be somewhere where young people are valued and play an active part.
- Be a place where people feel valued and have a sense of belonging and pride.

The Community Plan is divided into ten action areas, as a way of achieving the above aims. Each action area identifies a lead partner to co-ordinate the action necessary to achieve the targets. This is the Council for particular action areas. Many of the targets are taken from the current plans and strategies of the partner organisations (e.g. the Council's Housing Strategy, Leisure and Culture Strategy and Local Plan, the Spelthorne Crime and Disorder Reduction Strategy, HiMP, NHS plans, Surrey County Council's Community Care Plan etc.). In future, as these plans and strategies are reviewed and updated by the various partners, they will be aligned to wards the achievement of the ten-year vision.

The Council is the lead partner on the action areas to make Spelthorne 'an inclusive society' and 'a place to live, work and play'. Some of the medium term targets from these are particularly relevant to our housing strategy such as to:

- Assist disabled people to remain in their own homes
- Tackle areas of disadvantage in the borough
- Take action to increase the affordable housing options available for key workers
- Increase the supply of affordable housing in the Borough to meet housing need
- Reduce the dependence on bed and breakfast for homeless households

The priorities and actions in this housing strategy are therefore for the first time set in the context of supporting a vision for Spelthorne which has been agreed by all the public, voluntary, business and community sectors in the Borough, who will all be working to the same vision.

A corporate approach

The Council has always had a strong corporate focus, with integrated working between different departments and a culture of positive performance management and innovation. If anything, this has increased over the last six years since the transfer of housing stock in early 1996.

Since well before any statutory requirement for a best value performance plan the Council has been setting itself and publishing corporate targets, with clear timescales, for all areas of its activities. This year, for the first time, these have been set as medium and short term targets to align with the emerging Community Strategy. The Improvement and Development Agency, following its review of the Council in Spring 2000, recognised the Council as having a history of well-managed and effective performance management systems.

The Council was the first district council to adopt shadow executive arrangements in December 1998. The Council formally adopted executive arrangements under the Local Government Act 2000 from September 2001. Members have been closely involved in producing this strategy, including through a seminar to discuss the key findings from and issues raised by the housing needs and stock condition survey and meetings to address the issues raised by the best value review of the housing service.

Consultation

One of the Council's key priorities is to be in touch with the needs and priorities of the people of Spelthorne. To this end we adopted four principles of consultation, as set out below.

- To commit itself to full and open consultation with all sections of the community
- To select methods of consultation that are appropriate to the issues under consideration and the section of the community
- To report back the results of any consultation undertaken to inform the decisions it has to make
- To use the results of any consultation undertaken to inform the decisions it has to make

We have carried out considerable consultation focussing on housing issues over the last year as part of the Best Value review of housing. This involved surveys of people we had nominated to accommodation, people on the housing register, those that the Council accepted as homeless and also those in bed and breakfast and other temporary accommodation. We also consulted housing associations in the Borough and housing developers.

We also specifically sought the views of all tenants of properties transferred in 1996 on whether the Council had delivered on its promises and on the quality of the service they were currently receiving. We have sought views from local employers including schools, the police and health authority. We have held seminars on key aspects of newly adopted policy – such as key workers and, of course, we have had a housing needs and stock condition survey carried out. All the information from these consultations and surveys inform and shape this strategy.

Best Value

The Council has always accepted the need for continuous improvement and fully embraced the concept of Best Value, with a formal strategy adopted by the Council 3 years ago. We have been involved in the LSVT South East Benchmarking Club and participated in a local peer review on the housing service. The peer review simulated the housing inspection process in order to highlight areas for improvement. This work has given us opportunities to see how we compare against others and to look for best practice.

Our Best Value Review of housing services has just been completed and this together with the housing needs survey has raised a number of fundamental issues about what our priorities and strategy should be now, 6 years on from LSVT. As part of the process a challenge group was set up, which included the use of a 'critical friend', and representation from the Citizens Advice Bureau and Rentstart. The outcome of this review is reflected in this strategy and the improvement plan prepared as part of the review. Now the review has been completed, the appropriate overview and scrutiny committee will monitor progress on the action plan on an annual basis.

Linking with national priorities

The Government has stated it wishes to strengthen the strategic role for local authorities across all housing in their areas, including both the public and private sectors. The Government also aims to support sustainable home ownership. The Council very much supports these goals and is currently working to improve the sustainability of owner-occupation within the stock, while also ensuring there will be on-going opportunities for people to access owner-occupation locally, through low cost home ownership options.

The Government has also set out its measures to raise the standards of private rented housing, encourage new investment and tackle problems at the bottom end of the sector.

The Council is committed to ensuring all households have access to a decent home. Spelthorne Council has recently carried out a stock condition survey of properties in the Borough and is working with landlords in the private sector to raise standards.

The Government has also set a goal to bring all social housing up to a decent standard by 2010 and tackle fuel poverty among social housing tenants. Significant progress has already been made in bringing social homes up to a decent standard - as the investment opportunities generated from stock transfer has ensured that all former council dwellings have now benefited from central heating, new windows and improved insulation. We are also developing our approach towards tackling fuel poverty, and have appended our fuel poverty strategy to the back of this strategy document.

Measures to deliver new affordable housing in line with local needs are also now in place, while reforms to our lettings policies to promote a more customer-focused approach will be considered within the planned review of allocations.

Regional and local priorities

The South East Regional Housing Statement 2002 – 2005 identifies a number of drivers for change, all of which are relevant to Spelthorne and Surrey generally.

The Council fully supports that the number one regional priority is the production of new affordable homes. The Council's priority therefore will be to increase the size of our housing programme by increasing property acquisitions to 100 per year and funding new developments on sites brought forward under the planning system via Section 106 agreements.

In addition, the Council has adopted an Empty Homes Strategy designed to assist owners in bringing property back into use. A target has been set for 10 units in the first year.

The needs of key workers and their inability to meet their own needs from the market are acknowledged to be a serious problem across Surrey. The Council has now adopted a Key Worker Housing Strategy for the first time in order to help promote our goal of developing sustainable communities.

Although homelessness in Spelthorne is not as great a problem as in neighbouring London Boroughs, diminishing new build opportunities a small private rented market, and the reducing number of re-lets, mean fluctuations in demand put increased reliance of the use of bed and breakfast accommodation. The Council is giving the highest priority to improving performance in this area, in recognition that families that spend long periods in bed and breakfast can't begin planning their lives until their housing needs have been met.

Our Best Value Improvement Plan details a number of actions designed to reduce reliance on bed and breakfast with a view to meeting the Government's target of 6 weeks by 2004. Other measures planned include the review of allocation policies and procedures in light of the Homelessness Act.

The Council is currently exploring with Social Services (their Commissioning Team) and Ashford and St Peters Hospital Trust the potential for assisting with delayed transfer of some elderly people from acute hospital wards. This will include discussions with Apex Housing Group on extending direct access to extra care sheltered housing schemes within the Borough where appropriate. Future work will also focus on the scope for reducing both admissions to, and delayed hospital discharge of older people.

The black and minority ethnic (BME) population is small at around 6%, as revealed by the housing needs survey. However, this is almost twice as large as the Council previously estimated. We will continue to review the data we have collected on these groups to feed into the wider work being undertaken to meet the over-arching equalities agenda.

Our work is directed at ensuring people have access to a safe and decent home.

Partnership working

Underpinning much of the current and future work of the Council is its belief that partnership working is essential across all areas of its activities. The Council has developed a reputation for the quality and extent of its partnership working. The Improvement and Development Agency, as part of the peer review exercise it undertook in 2000, concluded "The Borough of Spelthorne is well regarded for the range of partnerships it has developed. It is seen as a competent, trustworthy organisation. External partners like doing business with the Council and feel that this is an organisation that will deliver on its promises".

In the housing field partnerships include the development of the common housing register, Joint Commissioning with the Housing Corporation, the selection of preferred Housing Association partners, partnerships on energy efficiency initiatives, cross borough working with neighbouring authorities, and so on. Such partnerships are all aimed at making Spelthorne a place where people choose to live and work.

Working with other Local Authorities to improve services

The Council assisted in the development of a homeless hostel in Walton - developed in partnership with Elmbridge and Runnymede Councils.

We are now in early discussion with officers of Runnymede Council about running a cross-boundary Landlords Forum, as there are likely benefits for both landlords and the Council in doing this. Such work is in recognition of sub-regional housing markets and that issues can sometimes be better addressed through taking a broader - more strategic - overview of the opportunities and possibilities of joint working.

A more recent partnership is the *Runnymede and Spelthorne Community Legal Services Partnership*, which was launched at the Council Offices in May. We will be playing an active part through its steering group to build a network of advice/information services on social/welfare issues readily accessible to local people when they need advice or help. Early accessible advice can often prevent problems escalating, particularly on housing and welfare issues. Over the coming years the Council will actively engage other local authorities in reviewing the possibilities of joint working where possible.

Working with the Police and other partners to reduce Crime and Disorder

The Council works closely with the Police and other agencies to reduce crime in Spelthorne. The plan and actions for achieving this are set out in the Crime and Disorder Strategy. This was developed through seeking the views of Housing Associations, tenants and the wider community, in order to produce a Strategy that reflected local priorities and concerns, and was realistic and achievable. The overall aim is *"To reduce Crime and Disorder by 10% and to maintain the low fear of crime"*. The key strategic aims are to:

- Reduce anti-social behaviour and disorder and criminal damage, including graffiti
- Reduce residential Burglary, drug use and drug related crime
- Reduce violent crime and vehicle crime
- Promote reassurance and maintain a low fear of crime.

A series of Multi-Agency Task Groups have been established to implement the wide range of initiatives planned, and there are strong links between the Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership - responsible for the Strategy and the Police and Housing Associations operating in the Borough. In addition, Apex, Airways and Metropolitan Housing Associations are key partners in the community warden scheme for Stanwell and Sunbury. In Stanwell, the warden operates from Ashford Hospital. In Sunbury Common the warden operates from the Forest Drive Estate. The wardens are designed to provide reassurance to residents, help reduce the fear of crime and tackle environmental issues. The key housing partners are providing 50% of the funding, with the balance coming from Government.

The Apex Group is also involved in the mobile CCTV Scheme, which aims to deploy cameras in 'hot spots' throughout the Borough, including social housing estates.

A particular initiative to tackle anti-social behaviour is the establishment of a formal Community Incident Action Group. Each partner agency, including RSL's (registered social landlords), are now able to refer persistent offenders to the Group. This will enable appropriate actions and interventions to be identified in conjunction with the Police, including the serving of anti-social behaviour contracts and, as a last resort, anti-social behaviour orders. A formal Anti-Social Behaviour Order (ASBO) Protocol for Spelthorne has already been adopted, in line with Home Office advice.

The Partnership will also be reviewing with Housing Associations, the overall impact of the security packages for the elderly scheme and considering options to reduce residential burglaries.

Airways Housing Society are also developing their own anti-social behaviour strategy and the Council recognises the efforts of Airways in order to consult extensively with the Council on this strategy, enabling officers from housing services, the Crime and Disorder Partnership and the community warden team themselves to contribute to and help shape the strategy. We hope to ensure such plans complement each other in the future.

Working with the North Surrey Primary Care Trust to reduce health inequalities

The housing strategy supports the local health improvement plan, which is based on the West Surrey HImP. This is currently being developed and steered by the new North Surrey PCT. Current housing activity is assisting the HImP through:

- Operating a priority system for carrying out aids and adaptations to peoples homes, to facilitate the prompt discharge of patients who no longer need to stay in hospital
- Enabling a greater number of older people to live independent lives in their choice of accommodation through the provision of grants
- Combating fuel poverty to ensure adequate heating within the home, with particular activity directed at vulnerable older people

A recent workshop organised by North Surrey PCT, including Surrey County Council, local borough councils, and voluntary sector representatives identified the need for a PCT/HImP based planning forum for all agencies and informed by the Borough Client Groups. Through this mechanism the Council will be involved in Joint Investment Plans designed to address intermediate and rehabilitative care needs. Discussions are already underway with Ashford & St Peters Hospital Trusts and Surrey Social Services Commissioning team for Older People concerning the contribution extra-care sheltered housing can make to delayed discharge from hospital.

Social and Probation Services

The Council continues to work closely with other agencies to ensure a joined up approach to service delivery. A good example of such working can be seen with the Spelthorne Accommodation Referral Panels, which are in place for Mental Health, Learning Disability, and most recently for Ex-Offenders which allow a more planned approach to rehousing people with additional needs.

Discussions have taken place on setting up Accommodation Referral Panels for young people ceasing to be accommodated by Social Services, and for people with physical disabilities. Discussions have also taken place with Social Services with regard to improving liaison on young people ceasing to be accommodated by Social Services, and homeless 16/17 year olds.

Working with Housing Associations and the Housing Corporation

The Council has set up a Joint Commissioning framework in collaboration with the Housing Corporation. This involves working closely with the Apex Group, Thames Valley Housing, Threshold and Airways Housing Society to deliver affordable housing in Spelthorne. The Council also works with the Housing Corporation in determining priority schemes funded by the Corporations Annual Development Programme.

The *Spelthorne Housing Register* is run jointly with all the Housing Associations with properties in the borough. In addition to helping people gain a single point of registration for all social landlords in the area it is an open register to reflect the wider eligibility criteria of the Council's HA partners. The joint register is overseen by the Allocations Review Group, which comprises representatives from the Council and Housing Associations, and takes the lead in developing our joint working, for instance by the development and implementation of a Joint Transfer List within the Register. In light of the current concern about increasing choice for applicants, the Council was pleased that the peer review commended the joint register as already providing a good standard of information about stock availability for applicants. The Council has also entered into a strategic partnership with

Ability Housing Association (who are based in Staines) to manage homes and to help identify solutions for users living in unsuitable housing.

In regard to Apex Group (the LSVT association) a quarterly management meeting deals with more domestic issues and occasional problems. Twice a year a "summit" meeting between the Council's Management Team and the Apex Group management team is held to maintain a strategic connection and assist the Council in planning to meet its statutory responsibilities.

Although no longer a stock owning authority it is very much part of the Council's philosophy and Community Strategy to involve itself in all quality of life issues affecting the community. A Housing Association Forum meets twice yearly to discuss and raise matters of common interest and we work closely with and our "preferred partner" housing associations in key areas, while the Housing Corporation acts as the regulatory body for housing associations.

Working with tenants and residents

We actively encourage Housing Associations to develop tenant participation, and there are now at least 15 tenant and resident groups - with others on the way. There has also been formed an Amenity Fund Committee administering a revenue budget of tenant generated estate improvements, a Leasehold Forum and Tenants' Forum.

It is important that the Council maintains its links with tenants and residents, or their views on the future of housing provision in the Borough. The Council aims to consult with them via their formal structures, through consulting on this strategy, and through officers attending occasional tenant and resident meetings. The Council has recently attended meetings with tenants and residents of the Forest Drive estate at Sunbury Cross to discuss improvements to their estate. The Council recently awarded a grant to the tenants group there - to enable them to enhance play areas on the estate.

Working with the voluntary sector

The voluntary sector plays a key role in delivering services in the Borough. The Council provides support to key groups, such as Spelthorne Rentstart who greatly assist work with single people in housing need – providing advice and assistance in helping people resolve housing problems. Rentstart also operate a rent deposit guarantee scheme. The Council recently commissioned Rentstart to study the housing needs of street-drinkers in the Borough to determine the extent of homelessness within this group.

A recent peer review was very complimentary about Rentstart's work and their partnership working with the Council. This includes Rentstart having nomination rights on behalf of the Council to the homeless hostel in Walton. The Council also works closely with Surrey Community Development to provide supported accommodation for young homeless people and care leavers.

We are also working in Partnership with Age Concern (Spelthorne), and Help the Aged through the SEPIA (Spelthorne Energy Partnership in Action) meetings, which works with the most elderly residents to promote warm homes for those most at risk.

Assessing and meeting housing needs

Housing Needs and Stock Condition Survey 2001

In 2001 the Council commissioned a joint Housing Needs and Stock Condition Survey by David Coutie Associates (DCA). This was to ensure a robust and pro-active approach towards investigating, researching and interpreting the current and future needs of its local community. Response to the survey was good. In total (postal & interviews) 3,519 questionnaires were returned. Over 9% of all resident households in Spelthorne took part in the survey. The overall response level was 41.9%.

The findings will assist the Council to:

- Review the Local Plan, helping ensure all future housing developments are sustainable and include consideration of other policies – such as the Community Plan
- Target assistance and intervention effectively – for example, through the use of grants, and through advice on how to raise housing standards across tenures
- Seek contributions from developers or landowners towards meeting the need for housing
- Ensure that activities of Registered Social Landlords can be focused on meeting identified need
- Develop our understanding of the local housing and employment markets, identify shortfalls in future provision, and plan to meet emerging needs

The findings from the survey are set out below.

The regional context

The annual rate of house price inflation in the South East region in the year to 30th September 2001 was 9.8%, lower than the UK average of 12%. The average price for all dwellings in Spelthorne during the year was around £185,613. House prices in the South East continue to rise.

Spelthorne's housing market

Approximately 45% of households in Spelthorne are owner-occupiers with a mortgage, 37% own their homes outright - a total of 82% in owner occupation. 13% are renting from a housing association and 4% are in privately rented homes. Of these households, some 18% of households live in flats, maisonettes or bedsits, nearly 20% are in terraces and over 61% are in semi-detached or detached houses or bungalows.

Some 90% of households say that their accommodation is adequate for their needs. 10% (3,860 implied) say that it is inadequate. The largest single issue for those reporting a problem was that the dwelling was too small (81%, 2,300 implied). 14% or so mentioned that their rent / mortgage was too expensive.

Household composition and housing costs

Single adult households make up nearly 30% of all households in Spelthorne, very similar to the 1991 Census figure for the UK average (31%). Couples constitute almost 65% of Spelthorne households compared to 60% for the UK as a whole.

The incidence of single parent households (under 6%) was slightly lower than the UK average of 9%. Under-occupation affects approximately 15% of all households in Spelthorne and over-occupation affects only 5%. 37% of tenant households pay less than £70 per week in rent.

Of owner-occupiers with a mortgage, 26% pay less than £500 per month, 8% pay in excess of £800 per month. 47% or so owned their home outright. 19% or so of households were in receipt of financial support (7,270 implied), of whom over 43% (3,148 implied) were in receipt of Housing Benefit.

Population growth and household formation

The survey projected that:

- The population is projected to decrease by 1,975 people, 2.2% over the 15 years to 2011
- The most significant change is the major reduction of 4,278 people aged between 30-44
- Most of the decrease happens between 2006 and 2011
- The 45 to 64 age group grows by 2,007 people (9% more) to 2011

Future housing requirements

19% or so of all households (7,380 implied) are currently seeking to move or will do so in the next three years. This implies an average of around 6.4% per annum which is higher than in other DCA surveys (average 5%).

Around 3,220 households plan to leave Spelthorne in the next three years: Some 30% due to employment, some 26% due to family reasons. 2,800 existing households and 1,620 new households will be moving within the Borough. However, 29% (962 households) plan to leave the Borough due to lack of affordable housing.

Affordable housing requirements in Spelthorne

There is an affordability problem in Spelthorne for lower-income households. The survey highlighted a need, based on current projections, over the next five years of 3,125 homes. The House Price Survey revealed that any household with an income below £35,000 per annum would struggle financially to access the local housing market depending on location. Access to home ownership is beyond the reach of around 87% of the new / concealed households identified in the survey, and it's within the concealed households that the bulk of future demand lies.

Findings of new or concealed households wishing to move:-

- 87% of concealment relates to "children" of the existing household. The data suggests that 86% of concealment related to adults below 30 years of age
- 68% or so would prefer owner-occupation; over 14% indicated a preference for Housing Association rented accommodation, 9% in shared ownership
- Over 61% require flats / maisonettes, 31% require semi-detached houses or terraced houses. There was no demand for detached houses or bungalows
- 38% need one bedroom accommodation, 56% two bedrooms and 6% three bedrooms
- Some 40% could afford a weekly rent of no more than £70
- 83% could not afford a mortgage of more than £600 per month

The housing market excludes many families and single person households who are currently seeking access to local market housing. Around 45% of all households have incomes below the national average household income of £22-23,000 and 19% or so of households have incomes below £10,000, which is much lower than for the UK as a whole (33%).

Over 42% of households in Spelthorne have incomes above £30,000. The data suggests that first-time buyers need household incomes of £50,000 p.a. to access the market through terrace houses and £35,000 to purchase a flat.

Rents in the private sector start from £500 - £675 a month for a one bedroom flat, the smallest unit. Even for this accommodation an income of at least £25,000 would be needed to be able to access the private rented sector, based on rent at 25% of gross income. Additionally, the private rented sector makes a very limited contribution to accessing affordable housing and this contributes significantly to the problem of concealment that exists in Spelthorne.

Meeting the need for more affordable housing

The Council is committed to ensuring balanced, healthy and sustainable communities but this is unlikely to be achieved if the need for affordable housing goes unmet. However, with a total affordable housing need annually of 981 units, the Council will be unable to meet this need. Based on current programme projections (including current affordable housing development and anticipated new lets) this will result in an unmet need of 3,125 units over a five year period to 2006.

The Council has considered the research findings and has analysed various options that can assist in meeting this need. However, in doing this the Council has considered:

- The financial impact on the Council
- The impact on the market
- The contribution of the planning system in delivering affordable housing, through scoping the future supply of likely sites
- Possible contributions of land towards meeting the need for affordable housing

The Council has now reviewed the options on developing a revised five year programme for new affordable housing. This has resulted in the Council estimating a realistic and achievable programme of 100 units per annum purchased from the market and the likely contribution of 65 units (estimated) towards meeting need through the planning system.

To help ensure the planning system continues to contribute effectively, the Council will be preparing supplementary planning guidance to assist developers in understanding the Council's requirements for affordable housing.

Table 0-1
Revised programme to meet need

Total annual need	981pa
Need met from estimated annual re-lets	- 256pa
Need met purchasing market homes @ 100units pa	- 100pa
Possible need met via homes delivered through planning system	- 65pa
Net annual outstanding need	575

Revising the programme in light of the findings from the survey, the Council will be reducing the anticipated shortfall of affordable homes from 3125, to 2300 units, through providing 825 homes over the five year period 2003 - 2008. The aim to meet housing need will be reviewed at appropriate intervals.

Sustainability and mix of new housing provision

Developing mixed, balanced and sustainable communities is a priority for this Council. Simply identifying aggregate need for affordable housing should not be a rationale for providing housing 'at any cost in any location'. A balance needs to be drawn to also ensure safe, desirable living environments that people wish to live in, and wish to continue to live in.

There are various ways to help achieve this, for example improved street design and promoting mixed communities, and the Council uses various indicators to assist in steering the Council's investment and planning activities (eg data from the Housing Needs Survey, demand data for different areas from the joint housing register).

The Authority is currently working with housing associations to improve the tenure balance in certain areas of the Borough. For example, the Council part funds housing associations to purchase properties from the market, but for the foreseeable future, no such properties will be purchased in Stanwell (an area of high density social housing almost adjoining Heathrow airport).

This is to encourage and sustain owner occupation in the area and to reduce the risk of the area becoming difficult to let. Where new development opportunities come forward, across the Borough, the Council will work carefully with planners and developers to ensure such issues continue to be considered.

The housing needs survey has revealed a need for one, two and three bed units to meet affordable housing requirements. In ensuring that a suitable mix (size and location) is developed through the social housing investment programme, the Council is aware of a particular shortage of some types of properties available on the open market, especially some of the smaller units (e.g one bedroom properties). It is not in the interests of those looking to meet their own housing needs through the market for the Council to purchase these smaller units, which would aggravate the shortage further.

Future grant funded programmes that purchase homes direct from the market are likely to concentrate on two or three bed properties. However, new social and market housing developed through the planning system will need to support and encourage the need for smaller units, to reflect the future housing needs of the Borough.

Delivering affordable housing

Affordable housing is currently funded both by the Council and the Housing Corporation, and delivered through the joint commissioning of four preferred housing associations. This ensures investment decisions and outcomes can be better aimed at meeting the development objectives of the Housing Strategy.

Joint Commissioning also increases the opportunities for ensuring other priorities can be considered, including:-

- An improved dialogue on the quality of design on future developments
- Developing resident involvement in decision making
- Community involvement on new developments where appropriate
- Ensuring that future housing development is provided in a sensitive manner in line with best practice
- Development funded by LA Social Housing Grant is Egan compliant

The Council has been satisfied with the current joint commissioning arrangement, which formally ended in April 2002, and will be extending such arrangements for another three years.

However, the priority for the Council will be to continue to ensure future programme priorities are met, along with other corporate priorities, such as including an element of Housing Plus (social and economic benefits) within the programme.

In delivering housing solutions, the Council recognises the need for a choice of housing options. In addition to the provision of rented housing, the Council also supports those looking to own, or part-own, their own home.

The Council will continue to support this through: providing nominations to the Homebuy scheme (funded by the Housing Corporation), reviewing the DIYSO programme, and developing new shared-ownership schemes. The table below demonstrates the Councils past success in delivering new homes for people to buy or rent.

Table . Affordable Housing Completions 1997-2001

NEW HOMES	1997/8	1998/99	1999/00	2000/01	2001/02
New Build	0	38	71	78	45
Bought Not Built	50	51	27	45	45
<u>Sub Total</u>	50	89	98	123	90
Low-Cost Home Ownership	16	6	13	30	

<u>TOTAL</u>	66	95	111	153	
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The Council, through the work of its partners, has enabled an average of almost 100 homes for rent and low cost home ownership in previous years, a significant contribution towards meeting the need for affordable housing.

Private sector contributions and adjustments to grant rates

Given the acute shortage of housing land in the Borough, ensuring that developers and landowners contribute towards affordable housing, where appropriate, is essential. This Council will seek a contribution on sites of 15 or more dwellings or 0.5 hectares or more (irrespective of the number of dwellings).

Figure
Photo Section 106 site in

Where affordable housing is provided on any site, the Council will ensure that it is maintained in perpetuity for the benefit of those in housing need. In the last few years the Council has successfully achieved almost 50% of affordable housing on above threshold sites.

To offer developers certainty on the grant rate payable for on site provision, developers are encouraged to note the advice outlined in the Supplementary Planning Guidance to be issued by this authority in December 2002.

Developing sustainable communities

The Council recognises the need to continually monitor and identify emerging needs, and develop strategies to meet them. We are initiating changes to Council policy to ensure that wherever possible, the Council can address needs as they occur, while looking also to continually improve the services offered by the Council.

Homelessness and advice services

Homelessness is recognised as being the most acute form of housing need and as such is the Council's first priority. The Council places important emphasis on preventative work and provides a dedicated Housing Advice Centre, which offers late night opening and outreach work in Stanwell. Some 6,000 callers use the Council's housing and advice services each year.

In addition to this we work closely with Rentstart who provide advice and financial assistance to single people. Nevertheless homelessness continues to be a problem in Spelthorne with acceptances totalling 50 - 60 per year, and there is evidence that the numbers will increase with the new vulnerability categories introduced by the Homelessness Act.

The Best Value Review focussed particularly on the homeless service and found it to be lacking in several aspects especially with regard to homeless people in non-priority need. Other problems highlighted were the relative poor performance on the statutory performance indicators and the management of the temporary accommodation. Of particular concern is the number of families and the length of time they spend in bed and breakfast. The consultation with those people accepted as homeless also highlighted a number of issues.

The Council proposes to address the problems in the following ways:

- Transfer the management of the temporary Housing stock to a specialist provider
- A review of the way Apex Housing implement the agreement with respect to rent arrears
- Reduce the time taken to house homeless households to 1 year by increasing the number of affordable homes available and by reviewing the allocations to homeless applicants
- Increasing the supply of temporary accommodation and looking at other options available such as the use of mobile homes with a view to reduce the time families spent in bed and breakfast to 10 weeks by the end of 2002/03 and 6 weeks by the end of 2003/04.
- Monitor the quality of the bed and breakfast accommodation used with a view to improving customer satisfaction ratings.

Improving housing options

The Council will be reviewing its Allocation Scheme in the light of the Homelessness Act 2002, and looking for further ways to improve choice for applicants. This will include reviewing the success and best practice of other authorities that have piloted or implemented choice based letting schemes, prior to changing our own scheme.

The statutory requirement to carry out a review of homelessness in the area and then publish a Homelessness Strategy is welcomed by the Council as an ideal opportunity to build on the work already undertaken. We believe that we are well placed to make a success of the process because of our existing strong partnership arrangements such as with Spelthorne Rentstart, and would hope to draw in other agencies such as social services, health agencies, housing associations and probation.

Supporting key workers

There is already assistance for key workers (defined by the government as teachers, those working in the health services, and police officers) through the Government's Starter Home Initiative, which offers to subsidise the cost of housing to key workers in London and the South East via interest free loans.

Locally, the scheme has been administered by:

- 1) Thames Valley Housing Association - which has received an allocation to assist teachers and health workers across the County, including Spelthorne.
- 2) The Apex Group - which has been allocated funding to assist Police Officers throughout the County, including those in Spelthorne.
- 3) Airways Housing Society - which has been allocated £700,000 towards developing 38 homes at Ashford Hospital for health workers.

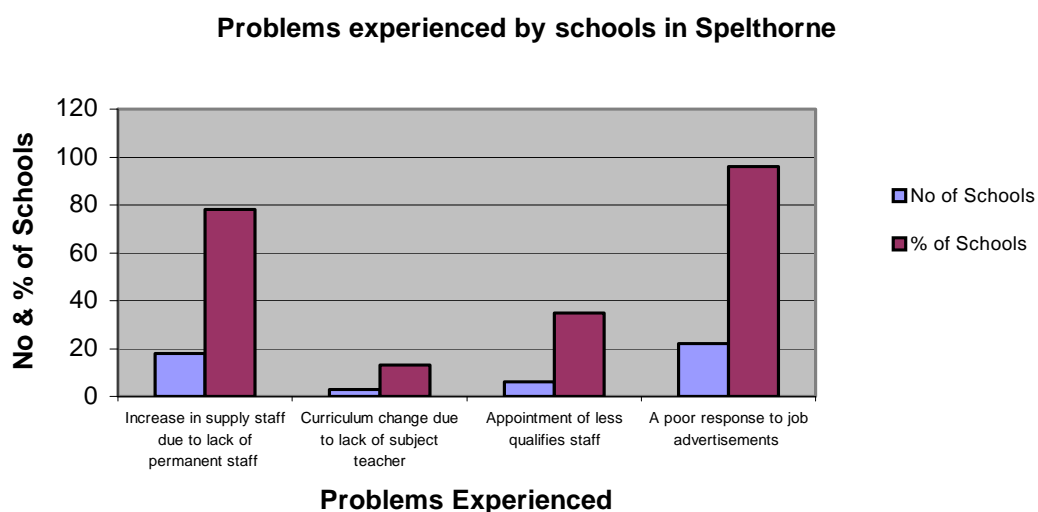
During the last year, the Council carried out research to determine the extent of the problem that local employers are facing in recruiting appropriate staff, and how such problems may be affected by local house prices. The Education Authority, local schools, Surrey Police, the local hospital trust and various other local employers were approached.

Spelthorne Borough Council also held a key worker housing workshop on 22nd March 2002, to discuss the findings and possible solutions. Representatives attended the seminar from Apex Housing, Airways Housing Society, Threshold Housing and Support, Metropolitan Home Ownership, an NHS representative, Rentstart and planning and housing officers of the Council.

There was no doubt that recruitment of key workers was a problem for employers. The local health sector, and to a lesser extent the police service were experiencing recruitment problems. The survey found that recruitment and retention poses a very significant problem for schools, with 38% of local schools reporting serious recruitment problems, while 25% are experiencing severe recruitment and retention problems.

This meant that schools had to struggle to meet the national curriculum. In other words, schools had no choice but to rely on supply teachers, or lowered the academic experience / quality of staff to fill a post. The survey was able to identify that local schools were experiencing significant retention problems, as outlined below.

Figure



Future action

After discussion around the seminar, and debating the issues with members, the Council has agreed the following:

- facilitate a local key worker housing forum of all interested organisations to bring employers together to become stakeholders – to help them use their own assets to provide accommodation in partnership with other accommodation providers and consider the range of options. The forum would also be able to monitor the local situation and changing needs.
- assist local state schools by developing, as part of a wider review of its allocation policy, a scheme to enable up to 10 units of accommodation per annum, to be allocated to teachers in the Borough otherwise unable to obtain accommodation. (However, such an arrangement should not impinge on the ability of the Council to discharge its priority duty to homeless persons).

Black and ethnic minority housing needs in Spelthorne

The Council commissioned primary research into the needs of BME groups within the Borough as part of the Housing needs and stock condition survey. This was in acknowledgement that such groups, especially in areas with relatively small BME populations, could be hard to reach.

To help overcome this problem, the Council increased the sample size of the survey and hoped that sufficient numbers of BME households would then be represented within the overall response rate. This has worked with 278 households represented within the response rate. The Council now has statistical data to help inform the Supporting People team in planning support needs, and a context in which to assess its other policies and priorities, especially housing.

The Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) households in the sample represent 6.5% of the Borough household population. Eight specific groups were identified, the largest groups were: Irish (21%), Indian (19.9%) and 'other' (also at 19.9%) and Bangladeshi (13.2%).

The BME respondents were asked about their current housing status, and the survey found that:

- 57% are living in detached (37%) housing or semi-detached (19.3%) housing
- The majority of respondents are living in 2 or 3 bedroom accommodation, 22% and 47% respectively.
- 16.4 % are living in 4-bed accommodation.
- Less than 1% are living in bedsits or mobile homes.

Respondents were asked to indicate if any member of the household had a disability or long term limiting illness. 15% of the BME sample had a member of their household with a disability or long-term illness, lower than in the main DCA survey (15.6%).

In the majority of cases only one person was affected, in 6 cases 2 members of the household had a disability or long-term illness.

Respondents were asked to indicate the reasons which prevented them from moving. 29 respondents indicated that they wished to move but could not.

A total of 42 responses were given, an average of 1.4 per respondent. Respondents were also asked to indicate the reasons for moving out of the Borough, and these are listed in figure over page..

Reason for Moving Out of the Borough

Fig...

BME HOUSEHOLDS	N ^{os}	% cases (24)	All H/Holds %
Employment	6	25.0	29.8
Family	6	25.0	26.2
Lack of suitable shops / leisure	1	4.2	5.4
Education	3	12.5	10.1
Lack of affordable housing	8	33.3	28.9
Safety / fear of crime	0	0.0	7.3
Poor quality neighbourhood	2	8.3	13.3
Anti social behaviour/neighbour problems	4	16.7	9.3
Lack of high quality housing facilities	1	4.2	7.5

Main findings from the survey

- The majority of BME households who responded to the DCA survey are living in 2 and 3 bedroom accommodation, 22% and 47% respectively.
- BME households appear to have access to a wide range of facilities.
- 16% of BME households said their was inadequate (as compared to 10% in the general population). Of those 65% said there housing was inadequate because it was too small (as compared to 81% of the general population).
- There were only 2 cases where 5 people were living in 2 bedroom accommodation and 4 cases where 6 people were living in 3 bedroom accommodation indicating a low instance of over-crowding amongst BME households.
- A lower proportion of BME households (36.7%) are on the lowest incomes, i.e. below £20,000, compared to all households (40.7%).
- Lack of affordable housing was indicated by 33.3% of BME households responding, a slightly higher level than the 28.9% in the main DCA survey.

Future action

BME groups in Spelthorne are slightly higher paid, on average, than other households. However, BME households fared just slightly worse than general households (identifying lack of affordable housing as their number one reason for leaving the Borough) in housing terms, and slightly higher numbers of BME households felt their home was inadequate.

There seems no real justification to make special provision for these groups within the allocation scheme. However, it will be necessary to ensure the stock profile can meet the family requirements of those on the register, and to ensure that those in need are registered with the Council. The Council has reviewed the number of BME households registered with the Council, and this accurately reflects the size of the local BME population (6% of applicants on the Spelthorne Housing Register are from BME households).

The Council has also reviewed the qualifications for registration and nomination to social housing in the area, but feels there are no directly discriminatory eligibility criteria for joining the register (for example there is no length of previous residency qualification) for those currently living in the Borough. However those working (but not living) in the Borough are not eligible for council nominations - unless they have previously lived in the Borough for at least 15 years. This may lead to discrimination, and this policy is being reviewed.

The Council will continue to monitor nominations to BME households (current applications on the joint housing register reflect the size of the local BME population), and the Council will consider implementing the Commission for Racial Equality's Code of Practice in Rented Housing and will comply with level 1 of the equality standard for local government (which sets out a framework for tackling equality issues).

Supporting People

The Council is committed to meeting the needs of those least able to help themselves, and of monitoring the situation of different groups as they reach different stages of need. We are also looking to improve the services that we offer to ensure the needs of the community are met across the borough, and that the focus of our work is directed at ensuring a place where service users, particularly those who are more difficult to engage (e.g. people that have dependency problems or complex needs) are respected and fully engaged within a safe inclusive environment.

'Supporting People' is a government initiative, which aims to place the funding, and development of housing support services, on a more secure and co-ordinated level.

The main aim of Supporting People is to:

- Focus on local need
- Improve the range and quality of housing support services for vulnerable people
- Integrate "support" with wider local strategies
- Monitor and inspect quality and effectiveness
- Introduce effective decision making and administration

Spelthorne Council is working closely with the County Council as the Supporting People Administering Authority - helping to put in place the new arrangements to deliver the programme as from the 1st April 2003. To help co-ordinate the Supporting People agenda, the Council facilitates the Spelthorne Supporting People Forum, which brings together providers, the Council and the Supporting People team at a local level to discuss issues and needs, share information and promote best practice. It is the Council's aim that this forum should become key to considering future needs in the Borough and to ensure the forum works closely with other community planning forums. Some of the prominent issues are listed below.

Physical Disability

The Council will be working closely with the Supporting People team, Social Services and Health and other providers to ensure sufficient homes are able to meet the needs of wheel-chair users. There is already a number of wheelchair units in the general stock, and six wheelchair units in the sheltered stock.

Figure Types of Adaptations Required for Current Households

Adaptations	% households	N ^{os} implied (all choices)
Bathroom adaptations	42.6	1,155
Ground floor toilet	30.7	831
Handrails / grabrails	24.7	670
Stairlift / Vertical lift	16.9	457
Extension	12.8	346
Access to property	9.5	258
Wheelchair adaptations	7.4	201
Other	8.8	238
Total	153.4	

The Council will be reviewing all new social housing developments in the Borough to ensure that all new schemes consider the need for wheel-chair accessible homes, whilst also promoting lifetime homes. In the more recent housing needs survey (2001), the Council found there were 524 households that did not live in a suitably adapted home.

In the Housing needs survey, 2,710 implied households responded to a question on what facilities were still needed to be provided to meet the needs of a current member of the household. Respondents made around 1.5 choices on average.

Future action

The Council has recently entered into a strategic partnership with Ability Housing Association (who are based in Staines) to manage homes and to help identify solutions for users living in unsuitable housing. This will also complement the work of the Home Improvement Agency, which works to provide advice and access to services that can enable people to have their homes adapted to enable them to remain in the community. The Council will continue working with providers to identify solutions for future needs and ensuring effective use of disabled facilities grants (DFGs).

Developing older persons services

The older retirement group, those 75 and over grows, by 36% (2,365 more people) by 2011. This group increases to a total of 8,955 people by 2011, 10.4% of the whole population. This group are much more likely to have care and support needs which need to be assessed.

Apex provides 213 units of sheltered accommodation (with on-site warden), with other shared ownership and private leasehold schemes across the Borough. There are also 71 units of extra care and a further 398 properties with an alarm served by two peripetic wardens.

Spelthorne Housing Association has now carried out a review of its sheltered housing stock, and made plans to meet the requirements of Supporting People, and to improve homes that currently fail to meet older people's accommodation expectations. The Council recently grant-funded the extension of one of these schemes to increase provision and two schemes have been targeted for conversion and adaptation.

Two Apex schemes provide 50 'extra care' sheltered units, and Apex are party to the discussion with the Ashford and St Peters Trusts and Social Services (referred to under supporting the PCT HImP). There is likely to be a developing need for extra care or very sheltered housing, which the Council will be discussing issues with its partners, both directly and through the Spelthorne Supporting People Housing Forum.

Future action

The Council has already obtained provisional Housing Corporation support for social housing grant funding for physical works to improve sheltered services in the Borough. The Council will also be working towards developing a co-ordinated strategy for meeting older peoples needs, at a corporate level.

Learning disabilities

The National Care Framework for mental health sets out the need to promote independence. This identifies the need for safe, sound and supportive services.

Spelthorne has eight shared group homes and 28 self-contained one-bed units for people with learning disabilities. The majority of provision is in the Ashford area. There is also a service offering outreach support to people with learning disabilities in the community.

Future Action

There is also a requirement for a high support scheme for another seven people. A joint (Housing and Social Services) referral panel arrangements already exist for mental health and learning disability clients.

Mental Health

There are currently three shared housing schemes and 22 self-contained flats for people with mental health needs in Spelthorne. In addition, 1.5 (full-time equivalent staff) are employed to offer outreach support to people in the Borough with mental health needs.

Future action

There is a further need for the development of eight self-contained cluster flats with low levels of support to meet the need of those presenting to Council with significant mental health and housing needs.

Young people and rough sleepers.

Most young people are able to live independently at home with family, or find a home in a planned way. Others need support to make the transition to independence. Protocols are being developed between social services and housing to develop a seamless service for those aged 16 and 17 who present as homeless and are vulnerable, to help achieve this.

There is currently no specific provision for those aged 16 –17, but they are eligible to access the supported accommodation in the Borough that is provided by Surrey Community Development Trust.

There is also a need to review accommodation for this group, and the move on strategy (to be developed in conjunction with the Housing Advice Centre and Supporting People) to ensure such schemes do not silt-up, e.g. through young people being unable to move on to independence when they are ready.

The *Teenage Pregnancy Unit* (DTLR) has identified teenage pregnancy as a priority need and have stated that by 2003, all single parents unable to live safely at home should be provided with appropriate supported accommodation. Currently, there is no specific support for this group in Spelthorne.

The Council works with Rentstart who advise the Council on the numbers of people who may sleep rough (rough sleepers) on any night. They estimate the incidence of Rough Sleeping to be very low (29 people stated they had spent rough throughout 2001/02) but this issue will be reviewed as part of developing the homeless strategy.

Future action

Housing support for vulnerable single people placed in B&B is being considered with funding under Supported People arrangements. The Council will also be reviewing its move on strategy for more vulnerable groups.

The Council aims to put in place a floating support service for teenage parents placed in temporary accommodation, and a suitable provider is being sought. The best approach for this group will also be considered with key players locally and will be further discussed at the Local Supporting People Forum

Photo – hostel – Elmbridge.

Improving the quality and suitability of the housing stock

A decent home for all

The Government has set a target to ensure that all social housing meets decency standards by 2010. The Borough supports this goal and is working to try and ensure that all residents regardless of tenure, live in a decent home. A decent home is one that is wind and weather tight, warm and has modern facilities.

The Council's adopted definition of a decent home is based on the following four criteria:

- It meets the current statutory minimum standard for housing.
- It is in a reasonable state of repair.
- It has reasonably modern facilities and services.
- It provides a reasonable degree of thermal comfort.

One of the particular aims of the Borough's Community Strategy is that Spelthorne should be a place where people choose to live. As the majority of the housing stock in the Borough is owner-occupied, it is of real importance that the Council has clear policies in place to encourage and where necessary assist owners to carry out any necessary repairs and improvements to their houses.

To assist the Council in developing its private sector policies a comprehensive joint housing needs and house condition survey was undertaken in November/December 2001 and results were presented to Members in April 2002.

Following the survey and a rigorous Best Value review of the private sector housing service, an improvement plan has been adopted and the private sector strategy is being reviewed. This will help the Authority meet its long-term aims and objectives.

This Chapter sets out how the authority will work in partnership to continually improve the condition of housing in the area.

Preventing unfitness and further decline

Spelthorne has a housing stock of approximately 38,400 properties. Of these, almost 80% is owner-occupied, 15.1% of homes are owned by Registered Social Landlords and the remainder (5.4%) is privately rented. The recent house condition survey has estimated that there are a small number of unfit properties (1.4% or approximately 532 houses).

The survey identified that approximately 2,550 (6.7%) properties are seriously defective. These are properties that without intervention and significant expenditure have the potential to descend into unfitness.

The survey estimates the costs to remedy unfitness in the Borough as £2.4m and to remedy serious disrepair as £18.41m. The survey found that the highest cost of repair is for older properties, pre- 1919, and also highlights significant costs to remedy defects in houses constructed between 1919 and 1945.

The House Condition Survey highlights the highest level of unfitness and serious disrepair within properties in the private rented sector (approximately 410 properties). Although only a small percentage of the overall stock is in the private rented sector, the Council considers it a priority to help and if necessary take action to ensure that landlords provide houses of a reasonable standard.

Although the level of unfitness is low compared to the national rate of unfitness for all housing stock (which is 7.6%), the authority is committed to improving these properties that are unfit for habitation and have made this a priority area. The Authority recognises that additional intervention to prevent further decline into unfitness is now necessary.

Improving homes for the elderly and disabled

The Survey identifies that 2799 households in the Borough contain one disabled person and a further 314 households a second disabled resident.

The number of residents in the 45-64 age group is projected to rise by 2,007 people (9% more) by 2011. The number of people in the 65-74 age group is projected to remain static during this period but the "older" retirement groups; residents aged 75 and over are projected to rise. This group of residents aged 75 and over, who are much more likely to require care and support, is estimated to be a total of 8,955 people by 2011 or 10.4% of the population. The Authority recognises that there will be an increased need for adaptations over this period and will plan to meet this need in conjunction with its partners.

Older and disabled residents continue to be a priority group for assistance as identified by Members in 1999. The Authority's strategy is to assist disabled residents to adapt their homes to promote independence and will achieve this through ensuring access to Disabled Facilities Grants and other assistance.

Apex Home Improvement Agency

The Authority will continue to work with Surrey County Council and the Apex Home Improvement Agency to provide disabled facilities grants for residents. The Authority will work to assist in the implementation of the Supporting People initiative, which may result in beneficial changes to the operation of the Home Improvement Agency.

Current service provision

The Council currently has a number of initiatives in place to address poor conditions found in the private sector stock and to meet the needs of disabled residents who require adaptations to their homes.

These include:

- Providing a comprehensive information pack to residents whose properties are unfit or in serious disrepair, supported where appropriate by the provision of renovation grants.
- Home repair assistance grants to assist residents repair defects or inadequacies in their homes that if left untreated, would affect the health, safety and welfare of occupants.
- Security package schemes to assist older homeowners ensure their homes are secure. (nb. This scheme is being revised to ensure it supports the Crime and Disorder Strategy).
- The use of mandatory and discretionary disabled facilities grants to assist disabled residents to adapt their home to meet their needs and promote independence.

The Council also visits private rented properties to assess conditions, offer advice, and take enforcement action if necessary to bring properties up to a satisfactory standard.

The Council also works closely with the Apex care and repair Home Improvement Agency who assist homeowners and private tenants who (because of age, disability or low income) have difficulty maintaining their properties.

Continuous improvement in private sector housing

Spelthorne Borough Council recognises that in order to significantly improve conditions in the private sector stock, it will be necessary to review our current policies relating to private sector renewal. This will require a new strategy on private sector housing renewal – and we will commence this in consultation with relevant stakeholders and in line with the regulatory Reform Order 2002 (once government guidance has been issued). Although the Authority recognises that responsibility to maintain homes to a decent standard lies primarily with the owner, we will continue to intervene to assist owners who cannot afford to carry out necessary work. In order to prepare for the implementation of the new strategy, consultation with local residents has already been carried out to try to determine how best assistance could be used.

The results identified strong support for maintaining the current system of providing grant assistance for the most vulnerable residents, but found that there is also scope and support for providing other forms of assistance – such as equity release loans.

The Best Value service review highlighted a number of improvements to the current service and also the operation of the Home Improvement Agency. These improvements are outlined in detail in the Action Plan at the back of this document. The review also raised a number of innovative schemes to promote private sector renewal which the Council will be pursuing. These are outlined below.

Equity release for home improvements

The Authority is in the process of setting up a Scheme to administer equity loans for Private Sector Home Owners. The Authority supports the government's opinion of equity release scheme as an innovative way of using the debt-free equity value of owner-occupied homes to provide repairs, improvements and adaptations at minimal public sector cost. The proposed scheme will be set up in partnership with a number of other Local Authorities and in conjunction with the Home Improvement Trust (a not for profit agency). Residents would take out a loan secured against the value of their home, repayable usually on sale of the home; the loan being capital-and-interest repayment, interest only, or interest roll-up.

The proposed scheme, the House Proud scheme is aimed primarily at older home owners who are equity rich but income poor in order to assist them in accessing finance to undertake necessary works with the knowledge that their home is not at risk as there is a guarantee of no repossession and that they will be helped throughout the process. Those under 60 with disabilities would also be eligible for assistance. The scheme has a particular attraction in the South East of England, where very high property values (both now and in the foreseeable future) mean that repayment of capital and interest on sale of the property will still leave a large amount of equity for other uses such as health care, legacy for relatives, etc

The system is not aimed to replace the renewal grants system, as many properties and people may fall outside the criteria. But it could provide an essential supplement that levers in private sector money, enabling scarce public sector resources to be specifically targeted. Indeed there will be occasions where the loan may represent a client's contribution towards a grant particularly with Disabled Facilities Grants.

In order to inform the decision regarding whether or not to take part in an equity release scheme, 1500 households in Spelthorne with a house member over the age of 50, and a list of residents provided by Age Concern were contacted to try to determine eligibility for and interest in this type of scheme. 377 responses to the questionnaire were received. The results showed support for the current system of providing grants for renewal and disabled adaptation and support for alternative forms of assistance.

Working with private landlords

Accreditation for Private Landlords – The Council will be developing a voluntary scheme where local private landlords are given advice and information to enable them to bring their properties to a high standard of repair and safety. This will cover key health and safety issues, and if landlords reach a certain standard, they will receive accreditation. The landlord is then free to promote a home to both estate agents and tenants as being accredited by the local Authority.

Landlord and Tenant Surgeries -This is a service being developed by the Council whereby local landlords and private sector tenants can obtain advice and information in relation to housing conditions. This will help highlight problems in this sector that have been difficult to reach in the past. As this sector has a higher proportion of unfit and seriously defective dwellings than in the owner occupied sector, such surgeries will promote understanding of tenants rights and obligations, and also of landlord's responsibilities.

Developing a landlord's forum - The Council over April and May 2002, advertised widely in the local press and the Borough Bulletin to determine the support from private sector landlords for a local forum. Approximately 20 landlords expressed an interest in this initiative. The Council is currently reviewing the options on taking this

forward. The numbers expressing an interest are low and the Council is considering a further advertising campaign. Other options include the possibility of working with Runnymede on a joint forum, or possibly providing an on-line service for landlords.

Licensing Houses in Multiple Occupation -This is a scheme whereby all houses in multiple occupation (including flats, hostels and bed and breakfasts) will be licensed by the Council, and where conditions relating to the safety of the residents, management of the property and condition of the property are monitored. Benefits to the community will be improved safety of those living in such accommodation.

Tackling empty homes

In 2001, the Council carried out research to identify the number of empty homes in the Borough. This was to review how many there were and what impact such properties were having. The main sources of data used were Council Tax records.

The research found that there were approximately 750 empty homes across the Borough – representing 1.9 % of all homes. The Council has now formally adopted an empty homes strategy, and set a target to bring back into occupation 10 homes per year.

Photo – empty home in..

Reducing fuel poverty

The Council undertook a detailed representative energy survey of dwellings in the Borough as part of the house condition survey (2001). The final report revealed some interesting new information about the energy performance of the housing stock and also specifically addressed the issue of fuel poverty.

The survey estimated the **total number of homes to be at risk of fuel poverty to be 4,648**, or 12.1% of the total number of households in the Borough. The ageing population was contributing significantly to this statistic, with older householders tending to live in homes that were less energy efficient. Some 1900 elderly households had a SAP rating of less than 30 and are at risk of fuel poverty.

In order to address the issue of fuel poverty for elderly households, the 'Access Warmer Home Scheme' was developed in conjunction with Age Concern Spelthorne and with the support of British Gas, Apex Housing Group and Help the Aged. The Spelthorne Energy Partnership in Action (SEPIA) has also been formed to promote this and other initiatives to vulnerable households.

Promoting energy efficiency

This is being undertaken in line with our HECA responsibilities. We are assisted in this by the Surrey and East Sussex Energy Efficiency Advice Centre, with whom we have a formal agreement to undertake appropriate promotion to social landlords, tenants groups, health professionals, day centre users and helpers, as well as undertaking training of Council staff and in local schools etc.

A number of individual initiatives to raise community awareness have been adopted. These include:

- actively participating in Energy Efficiency week
- giving talks and presentations to groups of elderly people at local day centres
- direct contact with members of the public through local road shows

In 2001 we launched a condensing boiler scheme, in partnership with other District Councils in Surrey. This was identified in the energy survey mentioned above as being the biggest single initiative necessary if we are to achieve a 30% improvement in energy efficiency throughout the Borough.

A number of opportunities already exist to achieve the promotion of energy conservation and many of these have already been successfully used as described above. We need to build on these successes and continue to develop a message of how important energy conservation is to both present and future generations. Fun events, such as the local village fair, can successfully get the message across to the public. We will continue to promote energy efficiency to householders through both the press and the Borough Bulletin which is distributed to all households throughout the Borough. A Fuel Poverty Strategy has now been prepared, with action points, and these points are outlined in the report appended to this document.

FINANCIAL STRATEGY

On selling the housing stock in 1996 the Council gave a commitment to spend £21m on affordable homes and social housing over a 5-year period. The chapter sets out the financial position to underpin the strategy. The Council still retains its policy to

Principles of housing investment

The Council has adopted criteria used in evaluating and guiding capital investment decisions. These are to:

- remain debt free, and not make use of Basic Credit Approvals.
- meet the aims of the Community Plan and develop sustainable communities
- meet the objectives as set out in the Housing Strategy.
- facilitate enabling and partnership working.
- work with other funders to make effective use of limited resources.
- satisfy the principles of Best Value.

The Housing Investment Programme is funded in the following ways:

- Investment of the remaining part of the LSVT proceeds via local authority social housing grant
- Capital receipt income generated via the sale of land and our share of the "Right to Buy" proceeds
- Grant allocation from the Housing Corporation
- Specified capital grant from central government for disabled facilities grants
- Revenue reserves arising on the closure of the Housing Revenue Account, which have been retained for housing purposes.

The objective of the Council's housing strategy is aimed at meeting housing need within the Borough by working in partnership with a small number of Registered Social Landlords (RSL's). There is a massive shortage of affordable housing within the Borough and priorities are influenced by the findings of the recent housing needs survey and other related research including homelessness statistics.

As the Council no longer has a housing stock of its own, investment in housing is generally provided via housing improvement grants to householders for private sector renewal and social housing grants to local RSL's working within the Borough. Land resources are very scarce within the Borough and the Council plays an important role

in enabling RSL's to get access to sites for the provision of affordable housing via purchase and resale of land and property, and via planning regulations.

Over the past three years the Council has invested in excess of £19 million in the provision and improvement of housing, financed as follows;

Figure Past Performance.

Capital Expenditure	1999/00	2000/01	2001/02
Improvement Grants	718,532	520,687	455,759
Land/Dwelling Purchases	99,743	101,297	3,723,039
Social Housing Grant	2,668,353	4,756,229	6,098,585
Total Expenditure	£3,486,628	£5,378,213	£10,277,383

Figure Financing of past programme

Credit Approvals	£386,000	£551,198	
Capital Receipts	£2,679,336	£4,546,144	£10,064,461
Capital Grant (SCG)	£421,292	£280,871	£212,922
Total Financing	£3,486,628	£5,378,213	£10,277,383

At the current level of capital investment the Council is able to enable the provision of approximately 100 units per year and it is proposed to increase this to 165 units by 2003/04. Achievement of the programme relies heavily upon the continued use of capital receipts generated by the purchase and resale of houses and land.

The Council provides revenue funding for other initiatives including Rentstart, Care and Repair and Home Improvement Agencies (supported by government grant) all of which are covered elsewhere in this strategy. In addition, approximately £275,000 is spent each year on homelessness in particular the placing of families in bed and breakfast accommodation. With an increasing revenue deficit the Council needs to be constantly looking at ways of reducing these costs.

Over the next four years the Council has allocated a further £26 million for capital investment in housing in the Borough. Details of the programme for the next four years are set out shown below including available resources.

Future housing investment

	2002/03	2003/04	2004/05	2005/06
PROGRAMME	£	£	£	£
HOUSING RENEWAL PURCHASE OF LAND/DWELLINGS	500,000	500,000	500,000	500,000
SOCIAL HOUSING GRANT SCHEMES IN PROGRESS	1,683,000	-	-	-
NEW SCHEMES	2,500,000	2,500,000	2,500,000	2,500,000
TOTAL PROGRAMME	5,683,000	6,500,000	6,500,000	6,500,000

AVAILABLE RESOURCES:

CAPITAL RECEIPTS B/F AT 1.4.2002	10,218,500	-	-	-
REVENUE RESOURCES B/F AT 1.4.2002	8,317,500	-	-	-

NEW CAPITAL RECEIPTS -				
RTB SHARES ETC	525,000	525,000	525,000	525,000
LAND AND DWELLINGS BOUGHT AND RESOLD	1,000,000	3,500,000	3,500,000	3,500,000
CAPITAL GRANT (SCG)	200,000	200,000	200,000	200,000
SURPLUS RESOURCES B/F	-	14,578,000	12,303,000	10,028,000
AVAILABLE RESOURCES	20,261,000	18,803,000	16,528,000	14,253,000
PROGRAMME RESOURCES	5,683,000	6,500,000	6,500,000	6,500,000
BALANCE OF RESOURCES	20,261,000	18,803,000	16,528,000	14,253,000
NOTES AND ASSUMPTIONS	14,578,000	12,303,000	10,028,000	7,753,000

The housing capital programme is drawn up and considered as part of the Councils overall capital programme and in the context of its Capital Strategy. The Housing and Environmental services programme, including financing, are considered by members and officers within a single report and common criteria are used. Quarterly monitoring of progress are reported to the management team and the Council's Executive.

RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE STANDARDS COMMITTEE

1. PLANNING CODE

- 1.1 The Committee reviewed the Council's current Planning Code, which gives clear practical guidance to members dealing with planning applications, in the light of revised guidance issued by the Local Government Association.
- 1.2 It was felt the Code had worked well for members and no substantial changes were needed. However the Committee felt that the code could be updated to fall in line with the arrangements contained in the Council's Constitution and its Code of Conduct. These proposed changes are set out below:
- a. Paragraphs 4, 5 and 23 be amended to reflect the existence of the local Code of Conduct, particularly in respect of interests being identified as Prejudicial or Personal rather than Pecuniary and Personal;
 - b. Reference to Substitute members in Paragraph 7 and 24 be deleted;
 - c. The following be added after Paragraph 21 'any member of the Planning Committee who is also a member of the Executive should carefully consider their position and whether it is appropriate for them to vote on any application which has been initiated by the Executive'; and
 - d. Paragraph 25 be amended to read 'arrangements will normally be made annually for Members to visit a sample of sites where planning permissions have been implemented to assess the quality of the built development/respective schemes'

1.3 **The Standards Committee recommend that the Council:**

Approve the revised Planning Code attached at the [Annex](#) to this recommendation.

Murray Litvak
Chairman of the Standards Committee

25th July, 2002

COUNCIL MEETING – 25TH JULY 2002

REPORT BY THE DIRECTOR OF COMMUNITY SERVICES ON THE DRAFT SURREY SPATIAL STRATEGY

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to set out the background to the current public consultation exercise by Surrey County Council on its Draft Spatial Strategy and comment on the content of the Draft and make recommendations.

2 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 In January 2001 Surrey County Council published a Draft Deposit Structure Plan to set out strategic planning guidance for the County of the period up to 2016. This included policies to meet a housing provision of some 22,000 in the period 2001-2016. Whilst Spelthorne had a number of detailed comments on this draft it supported the overall strategy of the Plan, in particular the housing distribution which was based on an assessment of the capacity of urban areas to accommodate further development.
- 2.2 This document was, however, very quickly overtaken by the Government's publication in March 2001 of its Regional Guidance for the South East (RPG9). This proposed a housing allocation for Surrey of 35,400 – some 13,000 above what the Draft Structure Plan had considered feasible to absorb within the existing urban area.
- 2.3 Whilst the County Council contemplated proceeding with the Draft Structure Plan and thereby not providing for housing required in Regional Guidance, it was recognised that such an approach was likely to result in the Secretary of State intervening and directing the Council to adopt the higher figure and impose allocations among the Districts. The Secretary of State has statutory powers to enable him to do this. In September 2001 the County Council initiated two actions:-
- i) a public debate on future development in Surrey under the title "Lets Talk About Surrey"
 - ii) technical work to assess the implications of taking a higher housing allocation
- 2.4 The public response to the "Lets Talk About Surrey" exercise revealed a consensus in support of providing for the additional housing in full. It was recognised this was necessary to meet the needs of the economy, key workers and give increased opportunity for young people in Surrey. There was a general public concern that Surrey should not have housing allocations forced on it and thereby remove from local authorities control over where new housing should be built.
- 2.5 The technical work undertaken by the County Council recognised a number of pressures/factors which needed to be addressed if additional housing was to be accommodated:-
- i) Hitherto additional housing has been provided by 'spreading' it across the urban areas of the County but this has resulted, for example, in a mismatch in some areas between housing and necessary infrastructure and service provision, and the areas of particular economic growth.
 - ii) The reliance wholly on urban areas to deliver most of the development has resulted in what is considered as 'immense' pressure in the northern part of the County adjoining London on roads, community facilities and the Green Belt.
 - iii) The provision of housing in an incremental way on relatively small sites limits the ability of the planning system to deliver infrastructure and services required to support development and affordable housing. Developments need to be at least 1000 houses to enable properly planned communities with supporting infrastructure.

- 2.6 In addition to the consultation process and its own technical work the County has also had regard to the Draft Regional Transport Strategy (published in June 2002). That document has recognised:-
- i) Guildford and Woking as key transport hubs in the region.
 - ii) The M25, M3, A3, A23/M23 and North Downs Rail Link as key transport corridors but with key bottlenecks on the A3 and to the south at Hindhead.
 - iii) Heathrow and Gatwick as regional 'gateways'.
 - iv) Guildford as an increasingly important regional administrative centre.
- 2.7 SEEDA's Draft Regional Economic Strategy (April 2002) has identified the following key spatial issues:-
- i) Gatwick and Blackwater Valley as areas of economic success.
 - ii) Guildford's role as a 'strategically significant urban area' and Woking as an 'important free standing town'.
 - iii) Importance of certain key transport proposals to economic success in particular improvements on the A3 at Hindhead and rail proposals such as Airtrack.
 - iv) The development and investment needs of Guildford, the Blackwater Valley and the M23/A23 corridor.
- 2.8 The County Council's conclusion from this work was the recognition of the need for a clear spatial strategy for the County, which, subject to public consultation and support, would provide the context in which a revised Draft Structure Plan could be proposed.

3 THE STRATEGY

- 3.1 The aim of the spatial strategy is to set out a proposed pattern of development for Surrey to 2026 and beyond and the priorities for managing development and infrastructure and services required to deliver it. It is intended that the Strategy will provide not only a context for land use planning but also Local Transport Plans and strategies produced by Local Authorities and other agencies for necessary social and community facilities.
- 3.2 Its key principles may be summarised as follows:-
- i) Major additional development and the focus of important services and functions to be based on major centres, which are important transport interchanges, and where substantial growth is already taking place.
 - ii) The Green Belt to be strongly defended except where limited extensions are justified to existing urban areas (these areas are covered by 1 above)
 - iii) The pattern of land use change and development to reflect the different priorities and characteristics of the five sub-areas of the County.
 - iv) In urban areas the specific priorities are to improve the management of such areas, ensuring that:-
 - a) the rate of development reflects the provision of supporting infrastructure and services; and
 - b) development is more integrated and community focused, with a strong commitment to improving urban areas.

The key spatial and land-use priorities to achieve this are to (in no priority order):-

- a) protect and enhance open land, both in urban areas and on the urban fringe;
 - b) improve the quality of urban design for aesthetic and environmental reasons, and to deter crime;
 - c) support higher density developments where it can make a positive contribution to enhancing local character, but otherwise maintain distinctive qualities of Surrey's established residential areas;
 - d) ensure that new housing development provides a mix of size and type and addresses local needs;
 - e) ensure that development is supported by all necessary infrastructure, and community facilities and services;
 - f) maintain the roles of town centres and invest in improvements to make them more attractive locations for housing, employment and service provision;
 - g) adopt a more flexible approach to mixing different land-uses.
- v) In rural areas the aim is to protect the openness of the countryside whilst meeting the needs of the rural community.

vi) It accepts the provision of 35,400 additional houses in the period 2001-2016 and which would be made up in the following way:-

a)	from existing urban areas as identified in the County Housing Capacity Study	22,400
b)	urban reserve – an additional amount from urban areas based on more detailed assessments of housing capacity to be undertaken by District.	7,000
c)	Urban extension to be built as new communities With supporting infrastructure and services	
	North-east Guildford (post 2006) 2,000	
	North-west Guildford (post 2006) 2,000	
	South Woking (post 2011) 2,000	6,000

vii) The strategies for the 5 sub-areas of the County are as follows: (I quote in detail from the strategy the aims and priorities for North Surrey within which Spelthorne is located):-

a) North Surrey:-

“The Aim: To resist the outward spread of London and further urbanisation by preventing the coalescence of towns and villages in the area.

The Priorities: North Surrey is the most pressurised in the County. Nowhere is it more important to resist further urbanisation and slow down the rate of development within the existing urban areas, whilst enhancing the quality of the urban fringe. The key spatial and land-use priorities to achieve this are to (in no priority order):

- i) protect the areas of Metropolitan Green Belt separating communities;
- ii) restrict development to the re-use of previously developed land and buildings;
- iii) improve the quality of all urban open land and urban fringe areas;
- iv) encourage restoration of mineral workings in the lower Thames Valley;
- v) enhance the role of Staines and Epsom as major centres;
- vi) invest in other centres, particularly the continuing revitalisation of Addlestone, Chertsey and Leatherhead, to maintain their role in providing local services;
- vii) support investment in public transport infrastructure to improve orbital movement, access to London and to Heathrow Airport”.

b) North West Surrey – to support the continuing role of Guildford and Woking as strategic centres within the County and the South East Region.

- c) South East Surrey – to support the sustainable economic growth of Redhill and growth associated with Gatwick Airport by meeting development needs within the M23/A23 corridor, allied to improvements to public transport.
- d) South West Surrey – to protect the countryside resource in its widest sense, reflecting the innate qualities of much of the countryside and support the long-term viability of rural communities.
- e) Blackwater Valley – to plan the area in an integrated way, focussing on improvements to the quality of the built environment and the transport network.

4 COMMENT ON THE STRATEGY

- 4.1 Acceptance of the full 35,400 allocation of houses is realistic given the experience of West Sussex County Council who sought to resist an allocation only to have it imposed on them by the Secretary of State. It also gives greater scope to help meet the extent of housing demand that exists including from key workers.
- 4.2 The 22,400 houses identified in the County Housing Capacity Study has been arrived at following joint work between the County and Districts. Background papers to the Strategy recognise that more urban sites are now coming forward than originally anticipated in the capacity study and, in line with more recent Government advice, schemes at higher densities are also coming forward. It is therefore recognised that urban areas might be able to take more than the current total for them of 29,400 (22,400 + 7,000). However, this has in part to be balanced by the limitation in certain parts of the County of areas liable to flooding – particularly Spelthorne. Districts will be required to undertake detailed local capacity studies as part of their local plan work to demonstrate how they will meet both the baseline allocation (their share of the 22,400) and contribute towards the urban reserve (7,000). If the reserve cannot be fully allocated it is agreed the balance should be reallocated in line with the Spatial Strategy in a review of the Structure Plan.
- 4.3 The Secretary of State normally expects County Councils to fully allocate their County housing allocation. Currently the unallocated 7,000 could pose the risk of an allocation by the Secretary of State being imposed via the Structure Plan. Whilst there is currently insufficient information available to confidently allocated this remaining amount, the County Council is asked to continue to work with Districts on this issue to see to what extent an appropriate distribution of the figure could be arrived at prior to the Structure Plan going into Examination in Public in May/June 2003 and thereby give greater local control on this issue.
- 4.4 The allocation of 1500 houses to Spelthorne to be built between 2001 and 2016 is in line with our own broad assessment of the rate at which opportunities for new housing development is likely to emerge and is supported. Such an allocation amounts to 150 units a year whereas in the period 1991-2001 Spelthorne has seen average build rates of 175 per year. The recognition of the likely constraint of flood policy generally is welcomed given Spelthorne's position where up to 25% of the Borough could be flooded in a 1:100 year event. However, because of the need to maintain the Green Belt and the limitation of flood policy on land availability, there is no currently available evidence to show that Spelthorne has capacity to accommodate any of the unallocated 7,000 dwellings.
- 4.5 If the County Council is satisfied that it is not possible to allocated all of the 35,400 to existing urban areas then the strategy of allocating some 6,000 in the form of urban extensions at major centres of economic activity and growth is appropriate. Whilst involving some loss of Green Belt between Woking and Guildford the Draft Spatial Strategy has acknowledged the critical importance of maintaining the inner edge of the Green Belt in North Surrey in containing the outward spread of London.
- 4.6 The County Council is asked to emphasise in the Spatial Strategy the particular problems of housing affordability facing the County and ways in which this may be eased including the provision of further guidance within the Strategy.
- 4.7 The Strategy does not consider the extent to which a balance needs to be struck between housing provision and employment growth. The County has a shortage of houses and yet an

acknowledged significant level of in-commuting and low levels of unemployment. Continued unchecked employment growth could serve to exacerbate the problems of housing supply and transport congestion. In North Surrey the Terminal 5 project at Heathrow will result in 5,000 jobs during construction and some 16,000 jobs on completion, thereby further adding to the problem of labour supply/housing demand. The publication on Tuesday 23 July of options for further runway capacity in the South East, including at Heathrow, have highlighted the extent to which there are pressures which if allowed, could lead to further massive additional employment growth at the airport. The Strategy needs to take account of the impact of major employment growth close to the Surrey boundary and its impact on the housing/employment balance in the County and its sub-areas.

- 4.8 Spelthorne has seen a continued increase of employment floor space over many years by intensifying the use of space in town centres for example. At the same time it has seen many older and redundant employment sites go for housing. It may be that in the County as a whole more housing within urban areas might be possible by using the more marginal employment sites when they come forward for redevelopment and still maintain a satisfactory level of economic growth and vitality. For those authorities in North Surrey such as Spelthorne, which are closer to Heathrow, such a rebalancing of land use over time may not only be a justified way of securing appropriate additional housing but ameliorating to some degree the severe transport problems arising from the high level of economic activity in the area. The Council's recent decision to encourage housing on the former Windmill Trading Estate at Sunbury is a local example where such thinking has been applied. The Surrey Spatial Strategy should give consideration to whether the correct balance between employment and housing is being secured and in turn whether the Structure Plan should allow for such rebalancing of land uses either generally or locally to occur where justified.
- 4.9 The extent of existing housing demand, economic buoyancy and traffic congestion (Spelthorne is the most congested District in Surrey) is such that the Spatial Strategy should make clear that further major expansion at Heathrow is unsustainable and should be opposed.
- 4.10 The County Council is asked to consider how the Spatial Strategy can emphasise more clearly the particular congestion problems in Spelthorne and the priority for increased funding through the Local Transport Plan for the Borough.
- 4.11 The Spatial Strategy should give particular recognition of the need to ensure that whilst efficient use should be made of available housing land the aim should be to ensure a high quality of life and densities should be appropriate to the suburban context of Surrey and thereby give the house-building industry scope to provide housing of an appropriate size to meet needs.
- 4.12 Staines is identified in the Strategy as a major centre in North Surrey whose role needs to be enhanced. The town has undergone significant redevelopment and renewal in recent years and the scope for further additional development, beyond that already identified in the Council's Local Plan, is quite limited. It is strongly recommended that the word "enhance" be replaced by "consolidate" to more accurately reflect the current role of the town and needs of the wider area.

5 RECOMMENDATION

- 5.1 That the County Council be informed that the Borough Council supports the Draft Spatial Strategy, subject to the comments set out in paragraphs 4.1 to 4.12 above.**

Contact: John Brooks 01784 446346 e-mail: j.brooks@spelthorne.gov.uk

Background Papers:

SCC leaflet entitled "Shaping Surrey's Future - Our Strategy"

REPORT OF THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL ON THE WORK OF THE EXECUTIVE

The Executive has met four times since my previous report to the Council. This report is an overview of the main items considered. We have made recommendations to the Council on various issues and these appear separately on tonight's agenda. I set out below a brief summary of some of the significant issues we have been discussing.

STAINES TOWN CENTRE ISSUES

Opening Events in Staines – We have underwritten the cost, estimated at about £30,000, for the various events being organised to celebrate the opening of the Memorial Gardens, the High Street pedestrianisation and the Community Centre in Staines. We have agreed that contributions towards these costs be sought from appropriate organisations in the town and the various contractors involved.

ARTS, HERITAGE, LEISURE AND RECREATION ISSUES

Contract Arrangements with SLM – We have agreed the transfer of the Leisure Centres contract from SLM to SLM Community Limited and that should SLM apply for discretionary rate relief, in principle up to 90% would be awarded. We also agreed that Officers prepare detailed proposals for capital development at the Spelthorne and Sunbury Leisure Centres in accordance with the Best Value Improvement Plan.

English Federation of Disability Sport - Inclusive Fitness Initiative (IFI) – We have agreed the award of funding of the sum of £14,000 from the New Schemes Fund for the purpose of the IFI application, subject to a successful lottery application.

Tourism Action Plan – We have adopted the Tourism Action Plan for Spelthorne as presented in order to meet the commitment to tourism in the Borough made in the Council's current Leisure and Culture Strategy.

CORPORATE ISSUES

Appointment of Representatives to Serve on Outside Bodies – We have appointed Members to various Strategic and Community based Outside Bodies and have made nominations to key Outside Bodies on which the Surrey Local Government Association (SLGA) has representation.

Various Accommodation Leases at Knowle Green – We have considered the various accommodation leases at Knowle Green and approved revised rentals for accommodation leased to Voluntary Action in Spelthorne (VAIS), Spelthorne Chamber of Commerce and Surrey County Council, in respect of their Highways and Transportation staff.

Equality and Diversity – We have approved the Race Equality Scheme and revised Equality and Diversity Policy as presented, including agreeing a commitment that the Borough Council will reach level 1 of the new equality standard by March 2003.

Internet Policy for Members – We have adopted a revised Internet Policy for Members and agreed that in view of the Borough Council Elections in May 2003, the original policies relating to the provision of IT facilities for Members be reviewed and updated, including speed of access.

Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2002 – We have noted the requirements of this Act and have approved the Surveillance Policy and Procedure as presented.

Corporate Risk Management – Draft Policy Statement and Strategy – We have noted the progress made on the development of a corporate approach to Risk Management and have approved the Corporate Risk Management Policy and Strategy Statements as presented.

CRIME AND DISORDER ISSUES

Crime and Disorder Issues in Staines – We have noted the action taken to date on issues in Staines and agreed that a further report be submitted following receipt of advice from the Crime Prevention

Officer and the meetings referred to in the Chief Executive's report. We have granted the request by the petitioners, for a lockable gate be installed at the entrance to Staines Park in Gordon Close.

ENVIRONMENT ISSUES

Health and Safety at Work Service Plan 2002/2003 – We have adopted the revised Health and Safety at Work Service Plan 2002/2003 as presented, for immediate implementation as recommended by the Community Committee.

Food Safety Service Plan 2002/2003 – We have adopted the revised Food Safety Service Plan 2002/2003 as presented, for immediate implementation as recommended by the Community Committee.

FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE TO LOCAL ORGANISATIONS

Grant Application – Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB) – We have awarded a grant of £10,500 to the Spelthorne Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB), subject to the CAB receiving matching funding from other sources.

Grant Applications – Matthew Arnold School and Bishop Wand School – We have awarded a grant of £10,000 each to both the Matthew Arnold School and the Bishop Wand School in support of special projects.

FINANCIAL ISSUES

Spelthorne Grants Review – We have approved the changes to the Grants procedure as presented, except that any Leisure Capital Partnership Grant awarded and not claimed within 2-years should be cancelled. We have agreed that a requirement be introduced for appropriate acknowledgement to be arranged in respect of any Grant approved by the Council.

HIGHWAYS ISSUES

Alterations to Car Parking Charges 2002/2003 – Consideration of Objections – We have agreed that for 2002/2003 no restriction be placed on the number of Season Tickets issued for the upper floors of the Tothill multi-storey car park. The policy in regard to issuing of Season Tickets will be revisited within the Best Value Review prior to next year's fees and charges being reviewed.

We have agreed the new charges in Appendix A to the report, including extending the short stay period in Short Stay Car Parks to 5 hours.

Best Value Review of Car Parks – We have noted the progress to date on the Best Value Review of Car Parks and adopted the Improvement Plan set out at Appendix B to the report.

HOUSING ISSUES

Equity Release Scheme for Private Sector Housing Renewal – We have agreed that the Council take part in an Integrated Partnership with other local authorities in London and the South East to promote Private Sector Housing Renewal through an Equity Release Scheme and that Spelthorne participate in this scheme.

MODERNISATION ISSUES

Appointment of Members to Best Value Review Panels – As approved by the Council, a meeting of the Democracy Committee was held on 15th July 2002 to consider and review issues relating to future Best Value Reviews and the work of the Council's Scrutiny Committees. We agreed that pending this review, the membership of the existing Car Parks Best Value Review Panel be increased to 7 (i.e. 4 Conservative, 2 Labour and 1 Liberal Democrat), and the membership of the new Best Value Review Panels for Internal Audit, People Management, Risk, Health and Safety and Insurance and for Leisure and Recreation / Young People's Services be increased to 7 (i.e. 4 Conservative, 2 Labour and 1 Liberal Democrat).

Successor Group to the Local Government Review Group (LGRG) – We have agreed that Spelthorne will join the successor Group to the Local Government Review Group (LGRG) including meeting the annual subscription of £10,000. We have endorsed the need for such a Group to be established as soon as possible.

Councillor Frank Davies
Leader of the Council

25th July 2002

REPORT OF THE CHAIRMAN ON THE WORK OF THE COMMUNITY COMMITTEE

The Community Committee met on 13th June, 2002 to consider the following matters:-

Report By Vice Chairman On Day With Meals On Wheels Service

The Committee received a report from its Vice-Chairman about her working day spent with the Spelthorne Meals on Wheels Service.

Health And Safety At Work Service Plan 2002/2003

The Committee considered a draft Health and Safety at Work Service Plan for 2002/3 and recommended it to the Executive for approval and implementation.

Food Safety Service Plan 2002/2003

The Committee considered a draft Food Safety Service Plan for 2002/2003 and recommended it to the Executive for approval and implementation.

Work Programme 2002/2003

In accordance with Corporate Target 10, the Committee has agreed its Work Programme for 2002/03. It also agreed its working arrangements and the broad outlines and purpose of each area of work on the programme.

Councillor G.F. Trussler
Chairman of the Community Committee

25th July, 2002.

REPORT OF THE CHAIRMAN ON THE WORK OF THE ECONOMIC COMMITTEE

The Economic Committee has met once since the last Council meeting and this report gives an overview of the issues considered by the Committee.

Best Value Action Plans – Progress Reports

The Committee discussed the progress made to date on implementing two of the Best Value Action Plans, which followed on from the completion of the Best Value reviews undertaken last year. The first plan was for Revenue and Benefit Services which included Council Tax, Housing Benefits and Revenue Support. The second action plan was for Financial Services. The Committee noted from both actions plans that a considerable amount of progress had been made.

Audit Services

The Committee considered two reports from Audit Services, which covered the work undertaken last year and the annual work plan for this year. It was noted that the service, this year, would be actively involved in the introduction of a Corporate Risk Management Policy, overseeing the IT outsourcing contract and the implementation of Document Image Processing.

Financial Monitoring

The Committee discussed various financial monitoring reports. The first was on the annual Treasury Management Report, which highlighted key activities in the borrowing and investment market in 2001/2002. It also gave details on an initial strategy for 2002/2003. The second report was on the general fund budget monitoring for April to May 2002. The Committee noted that to the end of May the Revenue Budget showed a £71,600 underspend. The third report was on the progress and costs of schemes being financed from the New Schemes Fund since September 1996.

Single Capital Pot – Capital Strategy and Asset Management Plan

The Committee received a presentation from the Director of Resources on the draft Capital Strategy that outlined the Council's approach to capital investments for both existing and new capital assets. This was followed by a presentation by the Head of Asset Management on the draft Asset Management Plan that outlined a strategy on how the Council managed its properties.

Following a discussion on both documents the Committee recommended to the Executive that the draft strategy and plan be endorsed for submission to GOSE (The Government Office for the South East).

Year 2/3 Planned Maintenance

The Committee discussed the report from the Head of Asset Management on the costs and progress on years two and three of the five year rolling programme of planned maintenance to Council owned buildings. Detailed discussion took place on whether or not to increase the budget by £350,000 to enable all the works identified in year three of the programme to be undertaken. It was felt that to maintain the integrity of the five year rolling programme the Executive be asked to approve a supplementary estimate of £350,000.

Councillor Mrs Martine Hyams
Chairman of the Economic Committee

25th July, 2002

REPORT OF THE CHAIRMAN ON THE WORK OF THE ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

The Environment Committee met on the 20th June, 2002 and considered the following matters:

Developments In Staines Town Centre

Prior to the meeting, members of the Committee toured Staines Town centre to review the various developments that had been completed or were in the process of being carried out.

Work Programme 2002/2003

In accordance with Corporate Target 10, the Committee considered and agreed a Work Programme for 2002/03. It also approved its working arrangements and the outline and purpose of the September meeting.

During the discussion on the Work Programme, Members expressed their concern about the standard of grass cutting and maintenance of highway verges and asked the Portfolio Holder to convey these concerns to the Executive.

The Committee also called for a report to a future meeting identifying the authority responsible and duties in relation to "hedgerows" in Spelthorne.

Councillor A.P. Hirst
Chairman of the Environment Committee

25th July, 2002

REPORT OF THE CHAIRMAN ON THE WORK OF THE PLANNING COMMITTEE

The Planning Committee has met three times since the previous report was prepared for the Council Meeting on 25 April 2002. This report therefore gives an overview of the key applications considered by the Planning Committee at its meetings on 24 April, 22 May and 19 June 2002. It also gives a brief update on other related matters.

The Planning Committee meeting on **24 April 2002** dealt with 11 items in total.

It was presided over by the previous Planning Chairman, Councillor Gerry Ceaser.

Public speaking took place on six of the items with a total of six people taking the opportunity to address the Committee as part of the Council's public speaking arrangements.

The most notable items on the agenda related to:-

- (a) The approval of 10 new residential units in the form of 2 detached houses and 8 maisonettes on land at 11-13 Chertsey Road, Ashford.
- (b) The approval of a number of extensions to the Stanwell Hall Hotel in Town Lane, Stanwell.
- (c) The raising of strong objections to a development of 204 dwellings on land within Runnymede Borough Council at Bridge Wharf, Chertsey.

The Planning Committee meeting on **22 May 2002** dealt with fifteen items in total. It was presided over by the new Chairman, Councillor Smith-Ainsley.

Public speaking took place on five of the items with a total of seven people taking the opportunity to address the Committee.

The most notable items on the agenda related to:-

- (a) The approval of a four-storey office building at the junction of High Street and Fairfield Avenue, Staines.
- (b) The refusal of a proposed hot food takeaway at Church Parade, Ashford.
- (c) The Planning Committee also resolved to raise no objections to a Bailey Bridge and a Twin Rivers Channel diversion associated with the development of Terminal 5 at Heathrow.

The Planning Committee meeting on **19 June 2002** dealt with 13 items in total.

Public speaking took place on just one of the items with a total of two people taking the opportunity to address the Committee. The most notable items on the agenda related to:

- a) The approval of a replacement dwelling at 12 Thames Meadow, Shepperton.
- b) The refusal of a change of use to create a unit for motorcycle sales and servicing at 18/19 Thurlestone Parade, High Street, Shepperton.
- c) The Committee also resolved to confirm an unopposed Tree Preservation Order at the former Council Depot, Commercial Road, Staines.

Other Matters of Interest

Performance figures for Development Control

In terms of recent/current targets for processing planning applications, Council is advised that new criteria have been introduced since 1 April 2002. Instead of the single target figure of all performance

measured against the 8 week period, there are now three separate indicators in force. These are as follows:

- (a) 60% of all "major" commercial/residential applications to be dealt with within 13 weeks
- (b) 65% of all "minor" commercial/residential applications to be dealt with within 8 weeks
- (c) 80% of all "other" applications to be dealt with within 8 weeks

I am pleased to confirm that appropriate monitoring processes have been put in place and for the first two months of the current financial year, the figures for Spelthorne under the three new indicators are as follows:

	(a)	(b)	(c)
April	50%	83%	92%
May	-	33%	85.5%

Chelsea FC Appeal

The Council is advised that the Public Inquiry into the appeal by Chelsea Village Plc concluded (on schedule) on Thursday 30 May. The formal site visit(s) by the Inspector took place over two days on 17/18 June. At the close of the Inquiry, the Inspector announced that the Government timetable for appeals required him to submit his report to the Deputy Prime Minister's office by Friday 19 July 2002. He appeared confident that he would meet the deadline, however, there is no indication when the final decision will be made known, but it is unlikely to be for several months after the 19 July 2002.

Councillor Richard Smith-Ainsley
Chairman of the Planning Committee

25th July, 2002

RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE STANDARDS COMMITTEE

1. PLANNING CODE

- 1.1 The Committee reviewed the Council's current Planning Code, which gives clear practical guidance to members dealing with planning applications, in the light of revised guidance issued by the Local Government Association.
- 1.2 It was felt the Code had worked well for members and no substantial changes were needed. However the Committee felt that the code could be updated to fall in line with the arrangements contained in the Council's Constitution and its Code of Conduct. These proposed changes are set out below:
- a. Paragraphs 4, 5 and 23 be amended to reflect the existence of the local Code of Conduct, particularly in respect of interests being identified as Prejudicial or Personal rather than Pecuniary and Personal;
 - b. Reference to Substitute members in Paragraph 7 and 24 be deleted;
 - c. The following be added after Paragraph 21 'any member of the Planning Committee who is also a member of the Executive should carefully consider their position and whether it is appropriate for them to vote on any application which has been initiated by the Executive'; and
 - d. Paragraph 25 be amended to read 'arrangements will normally be made annually for Members to visit a sample of sites where planning permissions have been implemented to assess the quality of the built development/respective schemes'

1.3 **The Standards Committee recommend that the Council:**

Approve the revised Planning Code attached at the [Annex](#) to this recommendation.

Murray Litvak
Chairman of the Standards Committee

25th July, 2002