

**Roberto Tambini
Chief Executive**

For this Council meeting, please telephone: Richard Powell on Tel: (01784) 446240 or e-mail him at: r.powell@spelthorne.gov.uk

18 February 2009

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 26 FEBRUARY 2009 beginning at 7.30pm**, for the purpose of transacting the business specified in the Agenda **set out on the next page**.

ROBERTO TAMBINI
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, Staines. 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 IN PERSON AT COUNCIL MEETINGS

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(1) Public Question Time

Public "Question Time" is near the start of Council meetings. This is an opportunity for any person to ask the Leader of the Council, or his nominee, a question about matters in which the Council has powers or duties or about issues that affect the Borough.

(2) 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.

(3) Representations on Recommendations

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

Anyone wishing (1) to ask a question at "Public Question Time", (2) to present and speak to a petition, or (3) make verbal representations on a recommendation, must notify the Chief Executive's office by 12 Noon three working days prior to the day of the Council meeting. [That is 12 Noon on the preceding Monday for a Council meeting on a Thursday].

IMPORTANT PUBLIC NOTICE

MOBILE TECHNOLOGY – ACCEPTABLE USE

Use of mobile technology (e.g. mobile telephones, Blackberries, XDA's etc.) in meetings can:

- Interfere with the Public Address and Induction Loop systems;
- Distract other people at the meeting;
- Interrupt presentations and debates;
- Mean that you miss a key part of a decision taken.

PLEASE:

Either switch off your mobile telephone etc. **OR** switch off its wireless/transmitter connection and sound for the duration of the meeting.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR CO-OPERATION IN THIS MATTER.

A G E N D A

1. DEATH OF FORMER COUNCILLOR FRED GORE

The Mayor to ask all Members and Officers present to stand in silence as a token of respect.

2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

To report that apologies for absence have been received from Councillors Mrs. V.J. Leighton and R.W. Sider and from Miss Sue Faulkner and to receive any other apologies for non-attendance.

3. MINUTES – COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 18 DECEMBER 2008
[Pages 3 to 15]

To confirm as a correct record the Minutes of the Council Meeting held on 18 December 2008.

4. DISCLOSURES OF INTEREST

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

5. ANNOUNCEMENTS FROM THE MAYOR

To receive any announcements from the Mayor.

6. ANNOUNCEMENTS FROM THE LEADER

To receive any announcements from the Leader.

7. ANNOUNCEMENTS FROM THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE

To receive any announcements from the Chief Executive.

8. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

The Leader or his nominee to answer any questions raised by members of the public *[providing notice has been given in accordance with the procedures laid down in the Council's Constitution]*.

9. PETITIONS

To receive any Petitions submitted to the Council. *[Notice of petitions and persons wishing to speak to the Council on them must be given in accordance with the procedures laid down in the Council's Constitution]*.

10. RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE EXECUTIVE **[Pages 16 to 23]**

To consider the recommendations of the Executive on the following matters:-

(1) Detailed Budget 2009/2010

*(A Budget Book **[green cover]** **[to be circulated under separate cover]** will reflect the recommendations made by the Executive on 17 February 2009.)*

(2) Members' Allowances

(A copy of the report from the Independent Remuneration Panel is attached as Appendix A to these recommendations.)

(3) Environmental/Street Scene Enforcement

(4) The Spelthorne Local Development Plan Core Strategy and Policies Development Plan Document [DPD]

Note: Members of the public may make representations in person not exceeding 3 minutes on individual recommendations before they are discussed *[providing notice has been given in accordance with the procedures laid down in the Council's Constitution]*.

11. REPORT FROM THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL
[Pages 24 to 26]

To receive the report from the Leader of the Council on the work of the Executive.

12. REPORT FROM THE CHAIRMAN OF THE IMPROVEMENT AND DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE
[Pages 27 to 28]

To receive the report from the Chairman of the Improvement and Development Committee on the work of his Committee.

13. REPORT FROM THE CHAIRMAN OF THE LICENSING COMMITTEE
[Page 29]

To receive the report from the Chairman of the Licensing Committee on the work of his Committee.

14. REPORT FROM THE CHAIRMAN OF THE PLANNING COMMITTEE
[Pages 30 to 31]

To receive the report from the Chairman of the Planning Committee on the work of his Committee.

15. MOTIONS

Under Standing Order 16.3, the Council has received Notice of the following Motion:

"This Council notes the transfer of post offices facilities in Staines Town to the local branch of W.H. Smith and requests that Post Office Counters Ltd. consider raising the number of staff there to provide a service which avoids the very long queues currently experienced."

Proposed by: Councillor Miss M.M. Bain

Seconded by: Councillor S.E.W. Budd

16. QUESTIONS ON WARD ISSUES

The Leader or his nominee to answer any questions from Members on issues in their Ward, *[providing notice has been given in accordance with the procedures laid down in the Council's Constitution]*.

17. GENERAL QUESTIONS

The Leader or his nominee or relevant Committee Chairman to answer any questions from Members on matters affecting the Borough or for which their Committee has responsibility, *[providing notice has been given in accordance with the procedures laid down in the Council's Constitution]*.

18. URGENT BUSINESS

To consider any urgent business.

MINUTES OF THE COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 18 DECEMBER 2008

BOROUGH OF SPELTHORNE

**AT THE MEETING OF THE SPELTHORNE BOROUGH COUNCIL HELD IN THE
COUNCIL CHAMBER, COUNCIL OFFICES, KNOWLE GREEN, STAINES ON
THURSDAY 18 DECEMBER AT 7.30PM**

Ayers F.	Forsbrey G.E.	Pinkerton Mrs J.M.
Beardsmore I.J.	Grant Mrs D.L.	Pinkerton Jack .D.
Bell Mrs E.	Hirst A.P.	Rough Mrs M.W.
Bhadye S. (Mayor)	Hyams Ms N.A.	Rough S.J.
Broom Ms P.A.	Kuun C.D.G.	Royer M.T.
Budd S.E.W.	Leighton Mrs V.J.	Sider R.W.
Chouhan K.	McShane D.L.	Smith-Ainsley R.A. (Deputy Leader)
Colison-Crawford R.B.	Napper Mrs I.	Spencer Mrs C.L. (Deputy Mayor)
Collis M.J.	Nichols Mrs C.E.	Strong C.V.
Crabb T.W.	Nichols L.E.	Thomson H.A.
Davis C.A.	O'Hara E.	Trussler G.F.
Dunn Mrs S.A.	Packman J.D. (Leader)	
Flurry K.E.		

Miss Sue Faulkner – Vice-Chairman of the Standards Committee

Councillor S. Bhadye, The Mayor, in the Chair

389/08 APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Miss M.M. Bain, M.L. Bouquet, H.R. Jaffer and Mr M. Litvak.

390/08 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 30 October 2008 were approved as a correct record.

391/08 ANNOUNCEMENTS FROM THE MAYOR

(1) Planned Mayoral Events

The Mayor reminded Members of the following forthcoming Mayoral events:-

- Weybridge Male Voice Choir – 24 January 2009;
- Mayor's Charity Valentines Ball – 14 February 2009; and
- St. George's Day Charity Lunch – 23 April 2009.

(2) The Great Tree Race

The Mayor reported on the successful outcome of the Great Tree Race held on 29 November 2008 in Sunbury with the winners being the Council's Environment Services Team. The Mayor went on to express his thanks and appreciation to Councillor M.T. Royer who had paid for over 500 trees to be planted.

392/08 ANNOUNCEMENTS FROM THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE

The Chief Executive reported on the recent changes to the fire evacuation procedures for Councillors attending Council, Executive and Committee meetings in the various meeting rooms on the second floor of Knowle Green council offices which had been identified as Fire Zone 10.

393/08 ANNOUNCEMENTS FROM THE LEADER

(1) Budget Update

The Leader of the Council, Councillor J.D. Packman, gave a verbal update on the Council's budget. He reported that this was one of the most challenging budgets this Council had faced particular in light of the current financial downturn and the fact that the Government had only increased its general grant support to the Council by ½%. Currently due to the hard work of the Officers and the Executive the forecast for balancing the budget for 2009/2010 was looking good with Fees and Charges being set at a reasonable level. The Executive at its meeting in January 2009 would be considering the matter further.

(2) VAT savings

The Leader of the Council, Councillor J.D. Packman, reported that the Council had matched the savings from the reduction in the VAT of £11,000. This funding totalling £22,000 had enabled much needed funding to be made available immediately to the Voluntary Sector of the Community and included CAB receiving £12,000, Relate and Age Concern each receiving £2500 and Cross Roads receiving £1500.

(3) Airtrack

The Leader of the Council, Councillor J.D. Packman, reported on the meeting held with BAA on 17 December 2008 when concerns had been raised at the lack of information publicly available on the Airtrack scheme. At the meeting particular concern was expressed at the loss of the new High Street Station which was seen as being a benefit to the Borough. He went on to report that further meetings would be held with the first of such meetings being held in the new year with Colin Matthews the Chief Executive at BAA.

(4) Rotary Clubs – Usborne Illustrated Dictionary

The Leader of the Council, Councillor J.D. Packman, placed on record his thanks and appreciation to the Rotary Clubs of Ashford, Shepperton, Shepperton Aurora and Staines who had provided by way of a gift a copy of the Usborne Illustrated Dictionary to all Year 5 pupils in the Borough Schools. He placed on record the Council's special thanks to the Mayor, Councillor Simon Bhadye, Councillor H.R. Jaffer and Councillor Robin Sider who had been instrumental in bringing about the excellent initiative between the Rotary Clubs and the Borough Schools.

394/08 RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE EXECUTIVE

Outline Budget – 2009/2010 – 2012/2013

The Council considered the recommendation of the Executive on the Outline Budget – 2009/2010 – 2012/2013.

RESOLVED:-

1. That the net budgeted expenditure for 2009/2010 be set at a maximum level of £14.446m.
2. That, in order to reach this level, the Management Team identifies a package of options by which the budget can be balanced both in 2009/2010 and over the next 3 years of the outline period.
3. That, subject to the assumptions in the report of the Chief Finance Officer to the Executive meeting of 18 November 2008, being valid, a guideline Council Tax increase be set close to the maximum allowed by the Government whilst having regard to the level set by other authorities in Surrey. For the purposes of the Outline Budget an annual increase of 4% has been assumed.
4. That the Council's use of reserves policy be reviewed with the aim of the council seeking to maximise the level of its reserves whilst taking account of the reduced potential for capital receipts and the need to maintain a capital programme.
5. That an agreed total reserves target minimum level (as measured on 31st March each year) be set at a level of £20m for 31/3/10.
6. That financial health indicators be set, subject to the future financial climate as follows:
 - i Revenue outturn against original budget target: +/- 1.5%
 - ii Capital outturn against original budget target: +/- 10%
 - iii Council Tax collection target: 98.7%
 - iv Business rates collection target: 98.0%
 - v Sundry debts aged more than 90 days overdue no more than 15% of total debts
 - vi Payment of creditors within 30 days target: 97.5%

In light of the developing economic situation, the financial health indicators will be kept under regular review in case they are required to be revised.

395/08 REPORT FROM THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL

The Leader of the Council, Councillor J.D. Packman, presented his report, which outlined the various matters the Executive had dealt with since the last Council meeting.

396/08 AUDIT COMMITTEE

The Chairman of the Audit Committee, Councillor M.T. Royer, presented his report, which outlined the matters the Committee had dealt with since the last Council meeting.

397/08 LICENSING COMMITTEE

The Chairman of the Licensing Committee, Councillor R.W. Sider, presented his report, which outlined the matters the Committee had dealt with since the last Council meeting.

Councillor Sider placed on record his thanks and appreciation to the Officers and members of the committee for their assistance and support in dealing with numerous licensing applications over the last twelve months.

398/08 PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT AND REVIEW COMMITTEE

The Chairman of the Performance Management and Review Committee, Councillor Ms P.A. Broom, presented her report, which outlined the matters the Committee had dealt with since the last Council meeting.

399/08 PLANNING COMMITTEE

The Chairman of the Planning Committee, Councillor E. O'Hara, presented his report, which outlined the matters the Committee had dealt with since the last Council meeting.

400/08 QUESTIONS ON WARD ISSUES

Under Standing Order 14, Councillor I.J. Beardsmore asked the following question:

“What is happening with the Area Investment Programme particularly in respect of the Sunbury Cross Project?”

The Portfolio Holder for Regeneration, Councillor Colin A. Davis responded as follows:

“Thank you Councillor Beardsmore for the question.

Following the decision of the Executive to approve this programme, initial feedback was taken earlier this year. In all three areas, plans will be put in place to consult with relevant stakeholders to ensure that the Council has a range of views which represent the different needs of residents, businesses and shoppers.

We are currently establishing project teams for Ashford, Shepperton and Sunbury, which will consist of a lead officer, an Executive Councillor and a local ward Councillor in each of the three areas. In January, the Executive will announce the framework for managing these projects by a Programme Board.

I think this is a real opportunity, during these difficult financial times, for the Council to invest in these area programmes and I am confident that any changes made over the three year programme will benefit our residents. However, I would ask all Councillors not to raise residents' expectations beyond what we hope to achieve with limited funding."

Councillor Beardsmore thanked the Portfolio Holder for his response and confirmed he would look forward to receiving the consultation information that would be sent to the local residents.

Under Standing Order 14, Councillor T.W. Crabb asked the following question:

"What particular benefit to the residents of Sunbury East is envisaged by the proposed twinning of Spelthorne with the Grand Port/ Savanne District Council in Mauritius, and how much officer time and its value will be required to progress and service the new proposed twinning link for the year 2009/10?"

The Portfolio Holder for Communications and Engagement, Councillor Andrew Hirst, responded as follows:

"The report to the Executive identified themes for the proposed link with Grand Port/Savanne District Council in Mauritius based on the exchange of knowledge, information and ideas around:-

- democracy
- economic development
- waste management and links between schools

We hope that this will for example, lead to exchanges of best practice in service delivery that could benefit the whole Borough, and a greater understanding by young people of another country's way of life.

It is not expected that this link will incur significant costs; where possible we will seek sponsorship for any travel and hospitality that will be necessary over the years.

There will clearly be a need for some staff time to be spent on establishing this new link, but whilst this may be intensive in the first months of the relationship we expect that it should reduce considerably in the longer term.

We will use the opportunity of the new link to review the condition, location and wording of the "Welcome to Spelthorne" signs, again exploring possibilities for Sponsorship."

Councillor Hirst responded to a supplementary question from Councillor Crabb to advise that at this stage it was too early in the exploration to give costings and officer time needed, but referred councillor Crabb to the report that was considered by the

Executive on 9 December 2008 and confirmed that members would be kept informed of progress.

Under Standing Order 14, Councillor L.E. Nichols asked the following question:

“Both Runnymede and Mole Valley Councils are supporting residents in their vigorous opposition to the proposed thermal waste disposal sites in their Boroughs. At the Surrey Waste Plan examination hearing Spelthorne’s position was stated as being not against incineration in principle at the Charlton site, provided it was not visually intrusive and did not generate significant additional traffic.

Does this remain the Council’s position or, should Charlton be chosen, will it oppose the principle of the use of the site for incineration or other thermal treatment?”

The Portfolio Holder for the Environment, Councillor G.E. Forsbrey, responded as follows:

“This issue was previously raised in a question at Full Council in July last year and it was confirmed that a report had been agreed by Executive on 18 July 2006 which set out the Council’s concerns about the submitted Surrey Waste Plan 2006. For the record, this Council had objected to the ‘soundness’ of the Plan on a number of matters.

The County Council’s draft Waste Plan did not expressly propose an incinerator at Charlton Lane, but they did refer to ‘thermal treatment’ which encompasses a range of technologies.

We objected to any large scale facility at Charlton Lane because of its significant potential adverse impact on landscape, amenity and traffic. We also objected that the draft plan failed to assess the impact of smaller scale facilities and their suitability, or otherwise, at any of the sites identified in the plan – including Charlton Lane and the lack of acknowledgement in the plan of the constraints each site has.

We made it clear that any proposal at Charlton Lane, was likely to give rise to landscape, amenity and traffic impacts greater than the existing development. This would not be acceptable to the Council.

The Waste Plan was adopted on 6 May 2008 in accordance with the Inspectors’ binding report. It identifies Charlton Lane as a potential site for the thermal treatment of waste, subject to any proposal having to demonstrate “very special circumstances” because of the Green Belt location and to satisfy other criteria including to landscape and traffic impacts. The Inspector took the view that, due to a number of factors, the scope to locate a large scale thermal treatment facility at Charlton Lane was more limited.

Therefore, the Council’s position with regard to the thermal treatment of waste remains unaltered, but our view on any detailed proposal coming forward at Charlton Lane would need to be formulated in the light of the policies and proposals in the adopted Waste Plan and a careful assessment of the likely impact of any specific proposals”.

Councillor Forsbrey in response to a supplementary question from Councillor L.E. Nichols confirmed that the Council's position with regard to the thermal treatment of waste remains unaltered, but our view on any detailed proposal coming forward at Charlton Lane would need to be formulated in the light of the policies and proposals in the adopted Waste Plan and a careful assessment of the likely impact of any specific proposals.

401/08 GENERAL QUESTIONS

Under Standing Order 14, Councillor Mrs I. Napper asked the following question:

"Following the Government's u-turn on the future of the Post Office Card Account it would appear that part of the rationale for closing many of this country's Post Offices is void.

Would the Leader therefore agree with me that the case for closing the Post Office's in Spelthorne, which are not particularly strong in any case, is now significantly weaker?

Furthermore, would he also write to the Minister and to the Royal Mail asking them to reconsider their closure programme?"

The Leader of the Council, Councillor J.D. Packman, responded as follows:

"The Post Office decisions for closure are based on Government criteria which includes:

- the population within a three mile radius
- the population within deprived areas within on 1 mile radius.

The Post Office 'state' that they also include the availability of public transport, local demographics and the impact on local economies.

You will be aware that we have previously responded in a robust manner to any consultation which has led to the removal of any Post Office. We have also acted behind the scenes to establish the Ashford Post Office once again. In addition you will be aware that residents' pressure groups, including the local Conservative Party, have organised petitions to be presented to the Post Office and the Government.

I think the case for closures was always very weak, and I would be happy to also write to the Post Office Programme Director asking them to reconsider the closures which have taken place in Spelthorne, such as that at Woodthorpe Road, Ashford".

Under Standing Order 14, Councillor I.J. Beardsmore asked the following question:

"Between 2001 and 2006 Spelthorne had a target set by government of building 860 new dwellings. Spelthorne actually built 1292. 432 or one third too many.

Between 2006 and 2026 Spelthorne has to build 3320 new dwellings. Spelthorne is already a year in front of that target and is predicting a total over build of more than 1000 dwellings between 2006 and 2026.

In the 25 years from 2001 to 2026 Spelthorne's over build is 1500 dwellings.

Why is Spelthorne building 30% more houses than the government wants?"

The Portfolio Holder for Planning and Housing, Councillor R.A. Smith-Ainsley, responded as follows:

"Spelthorne has a need for more housing and previously the Surrey Structure Plan, and now the South East Plan, set us specific targets.

The Surrey Structure Plan (2004) set a target for the period 2001 to 2016 of 2580 dwellings. By 2006 we had built 1292 – around half. We had always expected to build more in the first half of the period and that any so surplus would contribute to the requirement overall.

Unfortunately, the South East Plan has now set us a new target for 2006 to 2026 of 3320 dwellings. The Plan does not allow Councils to take account of house building progress prior to 2006. For the purposes of our LDF we have to show we have what is called 'flexibility' to meet the target in case any identified sites do not come forward. The Government has imposed this upon us.

I can confirm, however, that, contrary to what the Member has stated in his question, we are not already one year ahead of the South East Plan requirements. It requires an average of 166 a year and after two years we are only 36 ahead. Whilst our officers' technical work for the Local Development Framework has shown a potential capacity or 'flexibility' of some 1000 over our target that is not the same as saying 1000 extra houses will actually be built.

Some sites might not come forward and all of us are aware of the current serious down turn in the housing market. However, I welcome the fact that this flexibility will ensure that we do not have to build in the Green Belt, and, I trust, you too Councillor Beradsmore would support us in our continued determination to protect our Green Belt?"

Councillor Beardsmore responded by confirming his endorsement of the Council's position in protecting the Green Belt but expressed concerns that the Local Development Framework identified the building of more dwelling than was required by the government. . Councillor R.A. Smith Ainsley advised that there was a need to await the full report from the Inspectorate on the Local Development Framework.

Under Standing Order 14, Councillor L.E. Nichols asked the following question:

"Circumstances in the housing market have depressed prices to the extent that the affordable housing contributions from smaller developments have effectively reduced to nothing. Planning applications that only a year ago would have made a significant financial contribution, are now being assessed as not reaching the threshold of profitability needed to trigger a payment under the current method of calculation.

Given the shortfall in affordable housing stretching back over a number of years, this is a highly undesirable situation.

Developers who obtain permission under current circumstances are not obliged to develop for up to three years and can therefore wait until market conditions improve before building. It is likely that when sold these developments will yield higher prices than those assessed for S106 purposes.

Does the Council accept that the current method of contribution assessment is likely to result in an undesirable loss of contribution to affordable housing? Will the Council give urgent consideration to changing the basis of developer contribution to one that assesses profitability on the basis of final selling price?"

The Leader of the Council, Councillor J.D. Packman, responded as follows:

"Securing affordable housing from private housing developments has always involved tough negotiations and firm grasp of the economics of each development. I am pleased that this Council has a good track record in securing a higher proportion of affordable housing than most authorities, particularly in Surrey.

However, we cannot avoid the impacts of the current recession and officers are already looking at how to maximise affordable housing contributions in these very difficult times. Their work may have prompted this question. However, I can confirm no options have been ruled out at this stage and that I, as the Leader of the Council, have already raised this subject with senior officers and requested a report to be presented to the Executive in the New Year."

Under Standing Order 14, Councillor T.W. Crabb asked the following question:

"Most Surrey Boroughs and districts are successfully claiming the Planning Infrastructure Contribution. Those Boroughs and Districts are between them gaining hundreds of thousands of pounds to help their residents.

Why isn't Spelthorne raising funds in a similar manner to help its residents?"

The Chairman of the Planning Committee, Councillor John O'Hara, responded as follows:

"Spelthorne has secured significant sums of money by way of section 106 agreements and through the Local Development Framework [LDF] policies will continue to do so. This will fund infrastructure needed as a result of development including highway improvements, provision of open space and various environmental and community needs.

Over the last 10 or so years more than £2 million has been secured and already spent in the Borough and a further £3.5 million has been agreed and will be paid to the Council on commencement of the respective developments.

This adds up to £5.5 million, which is in addition to 208 affordable dwellings built on private housing sites and given over to Registered Social Landlords [RSL's], plus a further 68 affordable units which had planning permission as at 1 April 2008. The affordable housing has secured a value in the tens of millions.

Whilst Councillor Crabb refers to other Surrey Districts claiming hundreds of thousands, I am delighted to confirm that Spelthorne can count its contributions in millions”

Under Standing Order 14, Councillor C.V. Strong asked the following question:

“Following a recent meeting with officers I am concerned that there appears to be no progress on the issue of providing a community facility as part of the Stanwell New Start regeneration project.

Could the Portfolio Holder please outline his thinking on this very important issue.

Could he also provide the likely timetable for this Council, A2 Housing and other partners to reach a final decision both on the community facility and on the overall project?”

The Portfolio Holder for Health and Independent Living, Councillor Mrs V.J. Leighton responded as follows:

“The issue of a community facility is part of the Stanwell agenda and is viewed as very important. However the exact location/nature of the facility depends to some extent on the final agreed location of the extra care facilities within the scheme. It has been agreed following a Steering Board meeting held on 9 December 2008 that the issue of both extra care and provision of community facilities will be discussed in a meeting with A2Dominion in January 2009. These will then be incorporated into the planning application for later phases. The community facility was never intended to be provided in the first phase of work, which phase is, by the way, expected to go to Planning Committee in February 2009.

It is anticipated that the community facility will be available for the local people, and the Officers will be working hard with the local community to ensure that it is sustainable.

With regard the timetable, the Council has received the outline planning application for the whole scheme and now it is anticipated that this will go to Planning Committee in February/March. However, much depends on information currently being sought from the District Valuer regarding disposal of open spaces and on comments to the application being received by external bodies. Thereafter, the Council is, to a large extent, dependent on A2Dominion for submitting detailed planning applications for each of the remaining three phases.

Furthermore the current economic climate will also have a bearing on A2Dominion's ability to deliver each of the phases, although at this stage they are confident that they can complete all four phases.

Under Standing Order 14, Councillor R.B. Colison-Crawford asked the following question:

“The Capital Monitoring Report for September indicated that the criteria for eligibility for Home Repair Assistance Grants had been too tightly drawn and very little grant had been awarded so far.

What progress has the Head of Service made in revising the criteria and how much grant is now expected to be given out this financial year?

If the budget will not all be spent this year, will the balance be carried forward and added to next year's grant fund?"

The Portfolio Holder Planning and Housing, Councillor R.A. Smith-Ainsley, responded as follows:

"This year Spelthorne has been offering a Decent Homes Grant which replaced our previous Renewal Grant which was based on the old fitness standard. Our Decent Homes Grant is designed to enable Spelthorne to assist vulnerable people to bring their properties up to the Decent Homes Standard. In introducing this new grant it was important to ensure that the grant would be attractive to applicants in most need of assistance in improving their homes, whilst at the same time, ensuring that we operate within our existing budget and do not overload the work of the Environmental Health team.

Having operated these grants for around six months of this year it was apparent that many people were falling just outside the grant criteria, although they clearly needed assistance with improvements to bring their properties up to the Decent Home Standard. In September 2008 the Executive agreed to modify the scheme to improve matters and the decent homes grant criteria was therefore modified to try to enable more people to qualify for the grant. The Environmental Health team is working hard to try and progress some of these grants. As it can take several months to progress a grant from application to completion, some grants approved over the next few months may not be completed in this financial year. It is currently estimated that the total spend from the Decent Homes Grant budget will be around £75,000 for this financial year. Any housing grant budgets which are under spent are not normally carried over into the next financial year.

The Head of Environmental Health and Building Control will continue to monitor uptake of these grants and further modifications to our eligibility criteria may be necessary. He is, however, confident that once the grant criteria is pitched at the right level the decent homes grant budget will be fully utilised in future years."

Under Standing Order 14, Councillor Mrs S.A. Dunn asked the following question:

"The Revenue Accounts published for September show significant staff under spends, due to vacancies, in Environmental Services Administration and Environmental Health and Building Control. What impact has this had on service provision to date, what impact is expected over the full financial year and what expectation is there of filling the outstanding vacancies?"

The Portfolio Holder for the Environment, Councillor G.E. Forsbrey, responded as follows:

The reasons for the significant underspend in this year's salaries budget for the Environmental Health and Building Control Service are twofold. Firstly there was delay of around four months in recruiting a vacant Environmental Health Manager post whilst a review was undertaken to assess whether any changes should be made to the management structure of the service. Secondly, a number of vacant part-time posts have been held open pending completion of the Service's Business Improvement Programme review.

Whilst we recruited a new Environmental Health Manager, the work of this post was covered by the Head of Environmental Health and Building Control, with assistance from another one of the service's managers. This impacted more on the workload of the Head of Service than the rest of the team. The replacement Environmental Health Manager started work with Spelthorne at the end of September 2008.

The vacant posts within the Service which are currently under review are two part-time Environmental Health Officer posts and one part time administration post within the Building Control Team.

It was essential to leave these vacancies open during the Business Improvement Programme review in order to consider whether any changes were needed to these posts and to assess whether any savings could be made. In order to minimise the effects of these vacancies whilst the review is completed, consultants and temporary staff have been employed to cover some of the work of these posts.

This review is now nearing completion. Although improvements have been made to the way the environmental health team works, the high volume of service requests and other work received by environmental health has caused some difficulties for the Service this year. The Head of Environmental Health and Building Control is therefore currently in the process of deciding the best way of providing additional resources for the team, using the vacant part-time Environmental Health Officer posts to create a new full-time officer post at reduced costs. An administration review is also being undertaken at this time. It is envisaged that both of these reviews will be completed by the end of January 2009."

Under Standing Order 14, Councillor Mrs C.E. Nichols asked the following question:

"The draft strategy for Older People's Services (Growing Older in Spelthorne) restricts itself to commenting on the next four years (2008 -2012). Included in the section 'Housing and Home' is a reference to increasing extra-care housing over the next ten years. No other detail is provided except reference to the two agreed schemes in Sunbury and Stanwell which fall within the four years to 2012.

Four hundred extra-care homes are envisaged in the new Spelthorne Development Plan. This would require as many as nine or ten separate schemes. Bearing in mind that large sites are at a premium, what is the Council doing to identify and secure appropriate sites and how many schemes are expected to come forward for development in the next ten years?"

The Portfolio Holder for Health and Independent Living, Councillor Mrs V.J. Leighton, responded as follows:

"As Councillor Mrs. Nichols rightly observes, we have a 20-year strategy in the new Spelthorne Development Plan to provide 400 extra care houses. This will be secured by negotiating for such schemes on all appropriate sites as they become available. The two new schemes referred to mean we are in fact slightly ahead of where we need to be at the moment, but I am certainly not complacent about the continued efforts needed in making this important contribution to the needs of elderly residents in the Borough.

Surrey County Council will also be an important partner, in securing provision for Extra-care housing as it is a key priority for them too and they are also landowners in Spelthorne.

The Older Peoples Strategy makes reference to the intentions of the Development Plan but the purpose of that document is the equally important task of providing appropriate support services for the elderly, these being services for which we as a Borough Council are all entitled to be very proud."

Councillor Mrs Leighton in response to a supplementary question from Councillor Mrs Nichols advising that the Executive had identified Stanwell and Ashford as priority areas. Currently Stanwell was being dealt with and once resources were available would set out to achieve the regeneration of Ashford and that all members would be advised at the appropriate time.

Under Standing Order 14, Councillor Mrs E. Bell asked the following question:

"I understood that audio recording of council meetings was to be introduced commencing with the last planning meeting, however I understand that no announcement was made at the meeting. As it would be unethical to record a meeting without external speakers being made aware, can I assume that the meeting wasn't recorded, and if so can you give me a timetable for when these recordings will be made and when they will be available on the council website for residents to hear?"

The Portfolio Holder for Communication and Engagement, Councillor A.P. Hirst, responded as follows:

"As stated at the last Council Meeting on 30 October 2008, we are currently looking at the feasibility of giving greater access to a wider audience to Committee meetings, possibly by providing web casting which will enable Members of the public to view and hear Committee meetings via our web site. Investigations are still at the preliminary stage and we are in the process of looking at the various packages available on the market and associated costs of these. If this formally is adopted, then we will, of course, have to inform people attending the meetings that they are being recorded. Obviously, we would not want to spend much money on the recording process as the interest may be of course limited, so we are investigating the most cost effective way of doing this.

You will be aware that we, inadvertently, have a very limited recording facility through our camera system used at the Planning Committee meetings. However, a quality reproduction of the Planning Committee meeting did not take place and we will, of course, be making an appropriate announcement before the relevant Committee, should we find a cost effective way of doing this in the near future.

SEASON'S GREETINGS

The Mayor, Councillor Simon Bhadye, wished those present at the meeting a Merry Christmas and a happy, prosperous and peaceful New Year.

RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE EXECUTIVE

1. DETAILED BUDGET 2009/2010

- 1.1 The Executive have considered a report by the Chief Financial Officer seeking Members consideration of the detailed Budget for 2009/2010 and a formal proposal on a Council Tax for 2009/2010 for recommendation to the Council for approval.
- 1.2 The Council is required by law to set a balanced Budget.
- 1.3 **The Executive recommend that the Council approve the following:-**
 1. **To consider and approve the growth items as set out in the report.**
 2. **To approve in support of an increase of 14p per week (4.69%) in the Spelthorne element of the council tax for 2009/10 the following proposals:**
 - a) **The Revenue Estimates as set out be approved.**
 - b) **An amount not exceeding £175,000 as set out in this report be appropriated from General Reserves in aid of Spelthorne's local Council Tax for 2009/10.**
 - c) **To agree that the council tax base for the year 2009/10 is 40,164.1 calculated in accordance with regulation 3 of the Local Authorities (Calculation of Council Tax Base) Regulations 1992, as amended, made under Section 35(5) of the Local Government Finance Act 1992.**
 3. **That the following sums be now calculated by the Council for the year 2009/10 in accordance with Sections 32 and 33 of the Local Government Act 1992.**

[Please see the next page.]

Agenda Item: 10

(a)	£47,655,718	Being the aggregate of the amount which the council estimates for the items set out in Section 32 (2)(a) to (e) of the Act
(b)	£33,237,200	Being the aggregate for the amounts which the Council estimates for the items set out in Section 32 (3)(a) to (c) of the Act.
(c)	£12,349,818	Being the amount by which the aggregate at (a) above exceeds the aggregate at (b) above, calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 32(4) of the Act, as its budget requirement for the year.
(d)	£5,630,195	Being the aggregate sums which the Council estimates will be payable for the year into its general fund in respect of redistributed non-domestic rates, revenue support grant or additional grant, increased by the sum which the Council estimates will be transferred in the year from its Collection Fund to its General Fund in accordance with Section 97(3) of the Local Government Finance Act 1988 (Council Tax surplus) and increased by the sum which the council estimates will be transferred from its collection Fund to its General Fund pursuant to the collection Fund (Community Charges) Directions under Section 98(4) of the Local Government Finance Act 1988 made on 7 th February 1994 (Community Charge surplus).
(e)	£167.30	Being the sum (c) above less the amount at (d) above, all divided by the amount at (c) above, calculated by the Council in accordance with Section 33(1) of the Act, as the basic amount of its Council Tax for the year.

That the following amounts be now calculated by the Council for the year 2009/2010 in accordance with Section 36 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992.

VALUATION BANDS

A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£
111.53	130.12	148.71	167.30	204.48	241.66	278.83	334.60

Being the amounts given by multiplying the amount at (e) above by the number which, in the proportion set out in Section 5(1) of the Act, is applicable to dwellings listed in a particular valuation band divided by the sum which in that proportion is applicable to dwellings listed in valuation band 'D', calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 36(1) of the Act, as the amounts to be taken into account for the year in respect of categories of dwellings listed in different band.

2. MEMBERS' ALLOWANCES

- 2.1 The Executive have received a report regarding the Independent Remuneration Panel on Members' Allowances, following the meeting of the Panel held on 5th February 2009, and have received the Panel's recommendation on Members' Allowances to be made to the Council on 26th February 2009, when the Council will be considering the report of the Panel.

[A copy of the report from the Independent Remuneration Panel is attached as APPENDIX A to these recommendations.]

- 2.2 **The Independent Remuneration Panel's recommendations on Members' Allowances, for consideration by the Council, are as follows:-**

- (a) **That a new special responsibility allowance be approved for the Independent Standards Committee Chairman of £1,000 per annum from 1 January 2009.**
- (b) **That a new special responsibility allowance be approved for the Independent Standards Committee Vice-Chairman of £500 per annum from 1 January 2009.**
- (c) **That a new special responsibility allowance be approved for the Audit Committee Chairman of £3,012 per annum from 1 April 2009.**
- (d) **That, in light of the economic downturn, no increase in Members' existing basic and special responsibility allowances be made in 2009/2010.**

3. ENVIRONMENTAL/STREET SCENE ENFORCEMENT

- 3.1 The Executive have considered a report on proposals for the Council to introduce a formal Fixed Penalty Notice (FPN) scheme, in relation to the enforcement of the provisions of the Clean Neighbourhood and Environment Act 2005 in respect of various environmental and street scene issues.

- 3.2 **The Executive recommend that the Council be recommended to amend the Scheme of Delegations to Officers, as set out in Part 3 (Responsibility for Functions) of the Council's Constitution, to authorise Street Scene Officers and the Stanwell Community Warden [or such other Officers who may be appointed at any future time to discharge similar functions] to exercise the Council's functions in respect of investigations and enforcement under the Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Act 2005 (CNEA 2005).**

4. THE SPELTHORNE LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN CORE STRATEGY AND POLICIES DEVELOPMENT PLAN DOCUMENT [DPD]

- 4.1 The Executive have considered and endorsed the recommendations of the Local Development Framework Working Party from its meeting held on 29 January 2009.

- 4.2 **The Executive recommend that the Council adopt the Spelthorne Local Development Plan Core Strategy and Policies Development Plan Document [DPD], incorporating all the Inspector's recommendations.**

**DETAILED BUDGET 2009-2010
COUNCIL - 26 FEBRUARY 2009**

Resolution Required

Report of the Chief Finance Officer

Executive Summary

How does the contents of this report improve the quality of life of borough residents

By accurately planning and managing its financial resources the Council can maximise the services it provides to the public.

Purpose of Report

To consider and approve the net Revenue Expenditure Budget for 2009-10 and to consider and formally propose a Council Tax for 2009-10

Key Issues

- Significant savings exercises have been undertaken to enable a balanced Budget for 2009-2010
- Tight three year grant settlement for district councils
- Economic downturn
- Credit crunch and falling investment returns
- Concessionary Fares
- Need to balance budget for future years- need to maximise savings in 2009-10 and have in place longer term strategies for balancing budget

Financial Implications

As detailed in the report

Corporate Priority All

Officer Recommendations

The Executive is asked to make the following recommendations to the Council:

1. **To consider and approve the growth items as set out in the report.**
2. **To approve in support of an increase of 14p per week (4.69%) in the Spelthorne element of the council tax for 2009/10 the following proposals:**
 - a) **The Revenue Estimates as set out be approved**
 - b) **An amount not exceeding £175,000 as set out in this report be appropriated from General Reserves in aid of Spelthorne's local Council Tax for 2009/10.**
 - c) **To agree that the council tax base for the year 2009/10 is 40,164.1 calculated in accordance with regulation 3 of the Local Authorities (Calculation of Council Tax Base) Regulations 1992, as amended, made under Section 35(5) of the Local Government Finance Act 1992.**
3. **That the following sums be now calculated by the Council for the year 2009/10 in accordance with Sections 32 and 33 of the Local Government Act 1992.**

(a)	£47,660,600	Being the aggregate of the amount which the council estimates for the items set out in Section 32 (2)(a) to (e) of the Act
(b)	£33,242,200	Being the aggregate for the amounts which the Council estimates for the items set out in Section 32 (3)(a) to (c) of the Act.
(c)	£12,349,747	Being the amount by which the aggregate at (a) above exceeds the aggregate at (b) above, calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 32(4) of the Act, as its budget requirement for the year.
(d)	£5,630,308	Being the aggregate sums which the Council estimates will be payable for the year into its general fund in respect of redistributed non-domestic rates, revenue support grant or additional grant, increased by the sum which the Council estimates will be transferred in the year from its Collection Fund to its General Fund in accordance with Section 97(3) of the Local Government Finance Act 1988 (Council Tax surplus) and increased by the sum which the council estimates will be transferred from its collection Fund to its General Fund pursuant to the collection Fund (Community Charges) Directions under Section 98(4) of the Local Government Finance Act 1988 made on 7 th February 1994 (Community Charge surplus).
(e)	£167.30	Being the sum (c) above less the amount at (d) above, all divided by the amount at (c) above, calculated by the Council in accordance with Section 33(1) of the Act, as the basic amount of its Council Tax for the year.

THAT THE FOLLOWING AMOUNTS BE NOW CALCULATED BY THE COUNCIL FOR THE YEAR 2009/10 IN ACCORDANCE WITH SECTION 36 OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT FINANCE ACT 1992.

VALUATION BANDS

A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£
111.53	130.12	148.71	167.30	204.48	241.66	278.83	334.60

Being the amounts given by multiplying the amount at (e) above by the number which, in the proportion set out in Section 5(1) of the Act, is applicable to dwellings listed in a particular valuation band divided by the sum which in that proportion is applicable to dwellings listed in valuation band 'D', calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 36(1) of the Act, as the amounts to be taken into account for the year in respect of categories of dwellings listed in different band.

Contact: Terry Collier, Chief Finance Officer on Tel: (01784) 446296

Portfolio Holder: Councillor Michel Bouquet

REPORT

1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 In November 2008 the Executive considered a report on the outline budget for the period 2009-10 to 2012-13 and noted the estimated deficit of £0.9million for 2009-10. Note this was a net deficit taking account of various counter measures. The underlying deficit we have been facing for 2009-10 is approximately £1.7m which is not dissimilar to the scale of deficits faced by other Surrey districts. Considerable work has since been undertaken in order to get to the point of presenting a balanced budget proposal for 2009-10.
- 1.2 The budget process for 2009-10 has been particularly challenging because of the developing impact of first the credit crunch and property downturn then the broader economic downturn on the Council's financial position. These have impacted in a number of ways:
- (a) Reduced capital receipts
 - (b) Base rates falling from a peak of 5.75% to 1% (with possible further reductions expected in early 2009) reducing the investment income the Council will earn in 2009-10 and 2010-11.
 - (c) Reduction in income streams particularly car parking and land charges.
 - (d) Additional service pressures in areas such as Benefits, Revenues, Housing Options.
 - (e) Initially rising inflation and energy prices, although these pressures are now easing off and will help in the forward projections.
- 1.3 The economic downturn is continuing to develop and with this there are risks that it will impact more adversely than the assumptions have anticipated. The outline budget planning process tried to build in prudent provision to anticipate the possible impact of the above factors.

2. KEY ISSUES

Detailed Budget

- 2.1 [Appendix 1](#) summarises the current draft detailed budget. [Appendix 2](#) provides a summary of the individual cost centre detailed budget totals and compares them to the original 2008-09 estimates. [Appendix 3](#) shows a summary of the budget by expenditure type (employees, premises etc) broken down by portfolio groups.

Grant Settlement

- 2.2 As notified last year as part of the three funding settlement, the Government has confirmed that Spelthorne will receive just a 0.5% (£28k) increase in general grant support for 2009-10. This is equivalent to a mere additional 31 pence per resident to spend next year on each of our residents. With the Consumer prices index currently at 3% this clearly represents a real terms inflation cut and even if inflation does significantly fall back in 2009 the additional grant will only meet a small fraction of the additional costs the Council is facing in 2009-10. Officers, in liaison with the Leader and Portfolio holder for Corporate Resources, wrote in response to the grant consultation to protest at the inadequate level of grant the Council is receiving.

Level of Grant Support

- 2.3 Spelthorne receives £63.48 per head of population of general government grant (revenue support grant and redistributed business rates) for 2009/10. This is 18% below the national average of £77.81 per head for English shire districts. Within in Surrey we are the third highest funded district, on a per head of population basis. Spelthorne, in common with almost forty percent of districts in England and all but one of the Surrey districts, are on the “floor” (the mechanism by which the government ensures a minimal increase in grant for each council) hence our funding has only increased this year by 0.5%, which is significantly less than the rate of inflation.

Council Tax and Capping

- 2.4 The government has clearly stated that it is prepared to cap if necessary and that they are looking for an *average* council tax increase to be *substantially below 5 per cent*. Most Surrey local authorities have already set their council tax rates and we know that seven Surrey districts are setting higher percentage increases than we are proposing. Surrey Police have set their Council tax with a 4.89% increase. Whilst the Government made similar comments last year about looking for the average council tax increase to be substantially below 5%, in practice those authorities which set council tax up to 5% avoided capping.
- 2.5 There was a discussion at the scrutiny Outline Budget Task Group on 3rd February 2009 around the importance of maximising the Council’s taxbase in order to place its finances in the best possible position for future years. The Task Group recommended that an increase of 4.69% be set which results in a £7.50 (or 14 pence per week) increase on the Band D headline tax. This report is therefore suggestion that to help reduce the use of reserves and to help increase the taxbase for 2010-11 the Council should increase council tax by 4.69%. Compared to the original 4% proposal, the additional 0.69% generates an additional £44k which has helped reduce use of general reserves.

Basis Of Preparation Of Detailed Budget

- 2.6 **Service levels** – the estimates have been prepared on the basis of maintaining existing service levels except where variations have been approved by the Executive and/or the Council
- 2.7 Pay and price levels –the estimates have been prepared at pay and price levels ruling at November 2008 including an increase of 1.75% for salaries and wages from 1 April 2009). If the national pay award is higher savings will be found from the salaries budget to fund the difference under our obligation to match the national award added in respect of salaries and wages). Inflation has been included in respect of contracts where appropriate.
- 2.8 Fees and charges - all fees and charges have been reviewed. See report to February Executive meeting.
- 2.9 Contingencies – no provision has been made for any general contingencies. The General Fund reserve exists as a source of contingency funds should a need arise which can be addressed through offsetting savings.
- 2.10 Interest – the interest rate that will be earned on the maturing investments next year has been assumed to be in the range of 1% to 1.5%. The overall average rate of return is expected to be 3.6% and this reflects some fixed deposits which either mature towards the end of 2009-10 or do not mature for up to three years.
- 2.11 Use of reserves –it is proposed to use £175k of general reserves. This is a reduction on the £238k use of general reserves built into the 2008-09 budget. This represents a modification to the Outline Financial Strategy in response to the dramatic change of circumstances the Council is now facing. The medium term strategy did not foresee the

credit crunch and the impact of the recession, particularly the dramatic impact on the Council's investment income. The change in the financial landscape means it will be unrealistic to eliminate entirely use of general reserves in 2010-11 and instead it proposed a phased reduction in use of reserves over the life of the outline period. On current projections our best estimate of likely use of reserves is as set out below. However, this may be subject to change in light of changing circumstance. Indicative Use of General Reserves:

2010-11 £150k

2011-12 £100K

2012-13 £50K

Nil thereafter

2.12 **Appendix 4** shows the use of earmarked reserves.

2.13 The Council as a participant in the Surrey Local Public Service Agreement (LPSA) for 2005-2008 is anticipating to receive a total of £503k in grant to be split 50:50 between revenue and capital. It is proposed to set aside the revenue component into reserve and then use £100k in 2009-10 and £80k in 2010-11 to support the overall budget. Additionally as previously agreed by Executive 50% of the waste management element of the reward grant will be ringfenced to fund Surrey waste management projects.

Investment Income

2.14 The Executive has on the agenda of this meeting the Annual Investment Strategy report. We are now in a climate of rapidly falling interest rates, in eighteen months base rates have fallen from a peak of 5.75% to 1% and are expected to fall to possibly 0.5% in the first quarter of 2009. Ahead of the full impact of the reduction in base rates, officers have invested before (within the parameters of the Treasury Management Policy) £6m in triple A rated European Investment Bank bonds for three/four years at an overall average of 4.17% which has helped provide some protection against the fall rates. The combination of no prospect of a receipt for the Bridge Street site in the short term and the fall in interest rates means that assumed investment income available to support the revenue budget has dropped from £1.9m as per original 2008-9 budget to £1m for 2009-10 and £06.m for 2010-11.

	Estimated Investment income to support general revenue budget
2008-09 Original	£1.880m
2009-10 Estimate	£1.020m
2010-11 Estimate	£0.567m
2011-12 Estimate	£0.605m

We have deliberately erred on the side of caution and it is possible that as we move into 2010 the markets will start to factor in expectations of rising interests which will mean that we will during that period start to be able to earn higher rates of interest on longer term deposits. Clearly the reduction of £0.86m in investment income for 2009-10 has had a major impact on increasing the size of the budget deficit we faced.

Growth items

- 2.15 The revenue growth list was reported to the February meeting of the Executive. The list totalled £371.5k. The details were provided to the Outline Budget Task Group. It proposed that some of the growth items are financed for 2009-10 from specific reserves for example the cost of transport study supported by matched funding from SEEDA and employment of consultants to assist the Council to respond to the Airtrack proposals. Additional resource (£50k) is recognised for Housing Options, but it is anticipated that this will be offset by increased benefits overpayments recovery.

Savings

- 2.16 The proposed savings, which including grounds maintenance contract savings total £1.3m for 2009-10. All services areas were asked to scrutinise their budgets to identify possible savings.
- 2.17 Reflecting the Outline Budget Task Group's recommendation that Neighbourhood grants be reduced to £750 per member producing a saving of £9.75k this has been put into the saving list.

Income generation

- 2.18 The budget forecasts have taken into account that there has been some decline in income streams in areas such as land charges and car parking arising from the impact of the economic downturn. As part of the 2008-09 budget monitoring officers have been keeping under continuous review the council's various income streams, and we have had to reduce further in recent weeks a number of the income estimates for 2009-10 including building control; land charges; and development control. After taking account of the impact of reduced economic activity it is estimated that the net movement income to be raised from fees and charges for 2009-10 is a reduction of £97k.
- 2.19 The Outline Budget Task Group considered the budget position at a meeting on the 3rd February 2009 including the savings proposals. The Task Group as reported on this agenda made three recommendations.
- That in order to maximise the Council's taxbase and protect its financial position for future years the rate of increase in council tax should be 4.69% resulting in a £7.50 increase in band D council tax (14p per week).
 - That there should be no increase in Members allowance for 2009-10
 - That Neighbourhood grants should be reduced to £750 per Member resulting in a £9.75k saving.
- 2.21 The Outline Task Group will reconvene in June 2009 to review the actions underway to address the 2010-11 budget position,

3. OPTIONS ANALYSIS

- 3.1 The council is required to set a balanced budget and in the light of the detailed budget prepared, a council tax increase of 4.69% is recommended.

Inflation

- 3.2 If we move into a period of low inflation/deflation this will help ease the 2010-11 deficit with respect to supplies and services contracts.

Sensitivity analysis

- 3.3 Pay increase – the projected deficit for 2010-11 may ease if the prevailing inflation in a year's time means that it would be possible to offer considerably lower pay settlement but still provide an increase in purchasing power to staff. Each 1% reduction in the 2010-11 pay award would reduce the deficit for that year by £113k.
- 3.4 Recycling credits - One consequence of the worldwide recession is that the demand for raw materials has reduced which has fed through into falling prices for recycled materials. Whilst at present, we are continuing to receive recycling credits there is a potential risk that the scale of recycling credits could reduce in future. Currently we are budgeting to receive £530k worth of recycling credits.
- 3.5 The largest element of the council's fees and charges income relates to car parking charges. If the economic downturn were to prove more sustained and deeper than currently assumed this would increase the deficit. An additional 5% reduction in car parking income would add approximately £80K to the deficit.

4. Recommendations

- 4.1 The calculations of the Council Tax is set out in [Appendix 5](#).
- 4.2 That the following amounts now calculated by the Council for the year 2009-10, in accordance with Sections 32 and 33 of the Local Governance Finance Act 1992.

(a)	£47,660,600	Being the aggregate of the amount which the council estimates for the items set out in Section 32 (2)(a) to (e) of the Act
(b)	£33,242,200	Being the aggregate for the amounts which the Council estimates for the items set out in Section 32 (3)(a) to (c) of the Act.
(c)	£12,349,747	Being the amount by which the aggregate at (a) above exceeds the aggregate at (b) above, calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 32(4) of the Act, as its budget requirement for the year.
(d)	£5,630,308	Being the aggregate sums which the Council estimates will be payable for the year into its general fund in respect of redistributed non-domestic rates, revenue support grant or additional grant, increased by the sum which the Council estimates will be transferred in the year from its Collection Fund to its General Fund in accordance with Section 97(3) of the Local Government Finance Act 1988 (Council Tax surplus) and increased by the sum which the council estimates will be transferred from its collection Fund to its General Fund pursuant to the collection Fund (Community Charges) Directions under Section 98(4) of the Local Government Finance Act 1988 made on 7 th February 1994 (Community Charge surplus).
(e)	£167.30	Being the sum (c) above less the amount at (d) above, all divided by the amount at (c) above, calculated by the Council in accordance with Section 33(1) of the Act, as the basic amount of its Council Tax for the year.

- 4.3 That the following amounts be now calculated by the Council for the year 2009-10 in accordance with Section 36 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992. [Appendix 6](#)

VALUATION BANDS

A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£
111.53	130.12	148.71	167.30	204.48	241.66	278.83	334.60

- 4.4 Being the amounts given by multiplying the amount at (e) above by the number, which in the proportion set out in Section 5(1) of the Act, is applicable to dwellings listed in a particular valuation band divided by the sum which in that proportion is applicable to dwellings listed in valuation band 'D', calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 36(1) of the Act, as the amounts to be taken into account for the year in respect of categories of dwellings listed in different bands.
- 4.4 That it be noted that for the year 2009-10 that the Surrey County Council and Surrey Police Authority have stated the following amounts in precepts issued to the Council, in accordance with Section 40, as amended, of the Local Government Finance Act, for each of the categories of the dwellings shown below.

Valuation Band	A £	B £	C £	D £	E £	F £	G £	H £
Precepting Authority								
i) Surrey County Council	726.12	847.14	968.16	1089.18	1331.22	1573.26	1815.30	2178.36
ii) Surrey Police	131.40	153.30	175.20	197.10	240.90	284.70	328.50	394.20

- 4.5 That having calculated the aggregate in each case of the amounts at 4.2 and 4.3 above, the Council in accordance with Section 30 (2) of the Local Government Act 1992, ([Appendix 7](#)) hereby sets out the following amounts as the amounts of Council Tax for the year 2009-10 for each of the categories of dwellings shown below.

A £	B £	C £	D £	E £	F £	G £	H £
969.05	1130.56	1292.07	1453.58	1776.60	2099.62	2422.63	2907.16

5. CAPITAL PROGRAMME AND PRUDENTIAL CODE OF CAPITAL FINANCE

- 5.1 Each year we are required to formally consider the impact of our capital spending plans on the level of the council tax, and make a judgement about the affordability of those plans. In order to do this a number prudential indicators have been set which we are required to calculate. The details of these are set out in the capital programme item considered by the Executive in February 2009. [Appendix 8](#)

Capital expenditure

- 5.2 The February 2009 Executive report details the capital programme for 2009/10 to 2012/13. The council is intending to finance the programme from capital receipts and considers that it is affordable.

Ratio of financing costs to net revenue stream

- 5.3 The ratio for Spelthorne is negative because the level of investment income far exceeds the cost of borrowing, which in our current circumstances is short term. Thus the financing costs are affordable.

Band 'D' council tax and incremental impact

- 5.4 In the financial strategy the executive have agreed that future council tax increases be set at or above the level assumed in the revenue support grant settlement. For planning purposes we have estimated this to be 4.69%. This would mean that subject to next years council tax being set at the recommended figure, the 2010/11 and 2011/12 band D figures are estimated to be £173.99 and £180.95 respectively.

The incremental effect of the draft capital programme shown is considered to be affordable.

6 PRECEPTS

- 6.1 Surrey County Council at its Council meeting on 10th February set a Band D council tax of £1,089.18 representing a 2.94% increase and has advised us that its precept on the Council for 2009-10 is £43,611,024.
- 6.2 Surrey Police at its tax setting meeting on the 9th February set a band D council tax of £197.10 representing a 4.89% increase, and has advised us that its precept on the Council for 2009-10 is £7,916,344.

7. BENEFITS AND SUSTAINABILITY

- 7.1 As Chief Finance Officer I have a statutory due to ensure that the Budget is sustainable and that the capital programme is affordable. At the time of writing we are close to achieving this. We will review in the coming year the items funded from the New Schemes Fund to help ensure the Council's finances are on a sustainable basis.
- 7.2 Whilst the proposals set out produce a balanced budget for 2009-10 at present the projections indicate a deficit of approximately £400k for 2010-11 which we now need to start working towards addressing. We have identified a number of strategies we can pursue to ensure that we address this including, developing further our business improvement programme, implementing rolling zero based budgeting reviews, reviewing our use of assets; exploration of opportunities for joint working. We are aware that in 2011-12 there will be additional pressures on the Council in the form of additional employers national insurance contributions and probably additional employer superannuation contributions following the next triennial pension fund revaluation.

8. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 Addressed in the body of the of the report

9. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS / OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

- 9.1 Robustness of estimates – the Local Government Act 2003 requires me, as the Council's Chief Finance Officer, to report on the robustness of the estimates made for the purposes of calculating the council tax. I am satisfied that each service budget has been prepared in the context of the council's corporate strategies, and longer-term financial strategy which means that the Council is presented with robust estimates as a basis for making decisions about the level of council tax.
- 9.2 The nature and size of our revenue budget carries a degree of risk as set out at section 10. This is particularly the case at a time of deepening economic recession.
- 9.3 Reserves and provisions – the Local Government Act 2003 requires me to report on the adequacy of the council's financial reserves when consideration is given to the general fund budget requirement for the year. Under the local government finance act 1988, all revenue balances held by the council are at the direct disposal of the general fund with the exception of the collection fund and the investment reserve. Those balances are

expected to total approximately £18.2 m as at 1 April 2009. However, a number of these balances are earmarked specifically for social housing and the new scheme fund. The uncommitted funds will stand at £1.2 million. Taken together with the council's financial strategy to reduce the reliance on revenues to support the council tax, I consider that the reserves and provisions will ensure that the council maintain a reasonably healthy financial position.

9.4 Officers have undertaken an equalities impact assessment of the budget proposals.

10. RISKS AND HOW THEY WILL BE MITIGATED

10.1 The budget has a number of risks and these are set out below:

Outside control	Internally based
Economic Downturn	Achievement of business improvement savings
Interest rates	Delivery of other savings, including vacancy savings
Recycling credits- falling values of recyclable materials	Resource impacts of CAA, Use of Resources and International Financial Reporting Standards implementation
Contaminated land (main impact would be on capital)	
Council tax capping level	
PSL/housing benefit subsidy	
Staines town centre rents	
Staines town centre redevelopment	
Reliance on interest earnings	

10.2 The risks are that the level of savings anticipated do not materialise or that there are additional spending pressures. This will be mitigated by ensuring proposals have been properly evaluated before being built into the final detailed budget for example clarifying any contractual assumptions, and thereafter through careful budget monitoring.

10.3 The UK economy is facing a period of recession, a general slow down in the economy could impact on fee income and parking income. Assumptions have been made within the budget figures as to likely impact, with allowance made for some short term reduction in come parking income, there is a risk that this impact could be greater than anticipated. This will be monitored carefully throughout the year.

11. TIMETABLE FOR IMPLEMENTATION

Full Council to approve Budget on 26th February 2009.

Author:

Terry Collier, Chief Finance Officer on (01784) 446296

Background Papers:

There are none

**REPORT OF THE INDEPENDENT
REMUNERATION PANEL**

**TO THE
SPELTHORNE BOROUGH COUNCIL
ON 26TH FEBRUARY 2009**

**Report on the Panel Meeting held on
5th February 2009**

**REPORT OF THE INDEPENDENT REMUNERATION PANEL TO
SPELTHORNE BOROUGH COUNCIL**

1. Background

- 1.1 The Spelthorne Independent Remuneration Panel was originally established in January 2002. The Panel's general terms of reference and up-to-date membership are recorded in reports to the Borough Council in August 2003 and February 2005, respectively.
- 1.2 When we advised the Council previously in relation to a new Scheme of Allowances under the Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003, we indicated that it would be appropriate in future to consider the level of basic and special responsibility allowances nearer to the start of each new financial year.
- 1.3 To assist us in our review and deliberations on allowances, we considered the up-to-date comparative information on levels of Members' Allowances paid by other Surrey Districts and had access to information on Members' Attendance records.
- 1.4 We have met on 5th February 2009 to consider the main issues, in particular those in relation to basic and special responsibility allowances.

2. INFORMATION AVAILABLE TO THE PANEL

- 2.1 We were provided with a briefing note by the Principal Committee Manager, on behalf of the Deputy Chief Executive, which set out the background details including details of the current allowances.
- 2.2 We were supplied with the up-to-date comparative information on levels of Members' Allowances paid by other Surrey Districts and had access to information on Members' Attendance records.
- 2.3 We noted the budget implications for Members' Allowances in light of the economic downturn.
- 2.4 We are aware that in addition to the basic and other allowances payable, councillors are currently supported by the provision of access to a new package of IT facilities.

3. GENERAL APPROACH

- 3.1 We have always considered it important that the scheme of allowances should be fair, easy to understand and straightforward to administer.
- 3.2 We are aware of the desirability of encouraging as wide a range of people as possible to become Councillors. However, we are not aware of any evidence to suggest that the level of allowances payable in Spelthorne has had any direct effect on encouraging or discouraging people from putting themselves forward for election. In fact, we have noted that at the Borough Council Elections in May

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2007 and the Borough Council By-Election in October 2008, respectively, there were overall a total of 17 new Councillors elected and of these 15 were elected to the Council for the first time.

- 3.3 The Panel considered whether it might be appropriate, to assist with its current deliberations, to hold interviews with individual senior councillors or independent members to gather further evidence in relation to the extent of councillors' and independent members' activities and the allowances for this work and the responsibilities involved.
- 3.4 The Panel met with the Leader of the Council to discuss Members Allowances generally, in light of the current economic climate and his desire to demonstrate Community Leadership in suggesting what the Council should do under the present budgetary constraints by way of limiting any increases in allowances. We also heard from the Leader his representations about a Special Responsibility Allowance for the Chairman of the Audit Committee. The Panel also met with the Chairman of the Standards Committee to hear representations about his position and that of his Vice-Chairman in relation to each receiving a Special Responsibility Allowance.
- 3.5 The current basic allowance derives from the original assessment of the reasonable minimum time commitment needed from a Spelthorne councillor to fulfil their role as a councillor. Based on evidence given to the Panel previously by councillors, including the results of the questionnaire survey completed by councillors in 2003, the Panel considers that a councillor needs to spend a minimum of about eight hours or one working day a week on Council related business. The activity involved in being a councillor is a voluntary public service to the community and the Panel feels it appropriate to reflect this voluntary aspect in the allowances paid. For remuneration purposes, it is therefore considered reasonable by the Panel to expect that councillors will give 33% of their time voluntarily without expectation of any payment. The Panel does not believe that there is a need at this stage to look at any other market indicators in relation to the level of allowances available to councillors under the allowances scheme.
- 3.6 Special responsibility allowances are based on an additional percentage of time being added (without further discount to reflect the voluntary principle) to reflect the additional time needed by those fulfilling particularly responsible roles, such as the Leader of the Council, members of the Executive and Committee Chairmen.
- 3.7 The basic allowance, which is payable equally to all councillors, needs to reflect what is a reasonable commitment from all councillors. We appreciate that the time and commitment individual councillors are willing or able to make to Council work will always be different and that some will always be able to or will choose to spend more time than others. That is a matter of personal choice and circumstances for individual councillors.
- 3.8 In regard to the differing levels of attendance by councillors at meetings, whilst attending meetings is certainly one aspect of the work of a councillor, it seems to us that what is important for the local residents is not the number of meetings that a councillor attends, but what he or she actually achieves in added value and measurable outcomes by attending those meetings. We feel that local residents

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are looking for practical and useful outcomes from the work of their elected representatives.

- 3.9 We believe that the underlying approach of the allowances scheme remains sound, (1) by the setting of a basic allowance at a level based on the minimum time reasonably necessary to fulfil the role of a ward councillor, and (2) with the level of the special responsibility allowances based on multiples of this basic allowance, to reflect that those councillors with more significant responsibilities need to spend additional time in fulfilling their more demanding roles.
- 3.10 We considered whether Spelthorne's allowances are out of line with the allowances in other Councils. We felt that the most appropriate comparison was with the other ten Surrey Districts, particularly those that have largely similar Executive and Committee arrangements to Spelthorne. Nothing from this comparison suggests to us that the allowances payable in Spelthorne are out of line with the allowances paid to councillors in other Surrey Districts.
- 3.11 We have during our deliberations focused on being as fair as possible in looking at the allowances, and have taken account of the current economic downturn climate and the on-going budget pressures faced by Spelthorne. We are aware that the Council is seeking to make further on-going savings on the Council's budget for next year and beyond across a wide range of activities, in light of the serious budgetary constraints facing the Authority in future years. We have therefore adopted a more cautious approach this year, on the basis of what the Council can afford to pay on allowances and whether proposals to increase the allowances would be out of kilter with the current challenging budget environment. We acknowledge that this achievement is made possible via the significant value for money contribution made by councillors through their invaluable work for the Council and the local community. We wish to recognise the success of Spelthorne and the valuable high level of activity put in by its councillors.
- 3.12 We recognise that Spelthorne continues to be a "high performing" Council and that there is an enormous value for money contribution made by councillors towards this achievement and towards providing improved services for local residents.
- 3.13 We have looked at special responsibility allowances in relation to the representations made by the Leader of the Council on Members Allowances generally, in view of the economic downturn, and the position of the Chairman of the Audit Committee and his new responsibilities. We have also looked at the situation of the Chairman of the Standards Committee and that of his Vice-Chairman. Our deliberations were made after receiving representations put forward in support of the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Standards Committee receiving Special Responsibility Allowances, for the new responsibilities they are both undertaking in the future with their Committee administering the new Scheme for Local Determination of Complaints.

4. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 4.1 We have, in the light of the current economic climate, undertaken a prudent review of the position in relation to payment of basic and special responsibility

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allowances and make the following recommendation to the Council which we believe are fair and equitable in the present circumstances:

- (a) That a new special responsibility allowance be approved for the Independent Standards Committee Chairman of £1,000 per annum from 1 January 2009.**
- (b) That a new special responsibility allowance be approved for the Independent Standards Committee Vice-Chairman of £500 per annum from 1 January 2009.**
- (c) That a new special responsibility allowance be approved for the Audit Committee Chairman of £3,012 per annum from 1 April 2009.**
- (d) That, in light of the economic downturn, no increase in Members' existing basic and special responsibility allowances be made in 2009/2010.**

The Panel in relation to recommendation (d) above recognises that Spelthorne is a "high performing" Council that continues to provide improved services for local residents. This is made possible via the significant value for money contribution made by Council Members through their invaluable work for the Borough Council and the local Community.

Pauline Hedges
Regional Manager of
the Surrey Chambers of
Commerce

John Knevett
Group Chief Executive
Officer, A2Dominion
Housing Group

Ken Morgan
Chartered Accountant

5th February 2009

LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK WORKING PARTY

Thursday, 29 January 2009

Present: Councillor G E Forsbrey (Chairman), Councillor J D Packman, Councillor Mrs V J Leighton, Councillor H R Jaffer, Councillor L E Nichols, Councillor E O'Hara and Councillor HA Thomson

1 Apologies

None.

2 Report of the Deputy Chief Executive

Core Strategy and Policies DPD – Inspector's Report

The Working Party considered the report of the [Deputy Chief Executive](#) which set out the background to, and the key points arising from, the [Inspector's letter and report](#) which had been received by the Council on 19 December 2008. A [tracked changes version of the Core Strategy](#) was presented which included the Inspector's recommendations and other required consequential changes. Members sought clarification on a number of matters on which the Inspector had made specific recommendations, including Green Belt, affordable housing and infrastructure provision. It was noted that the Inspector's recommendations in her Report are binding on the Council.

It was also noted that, having found the Core Strategy and Policies DPD to be "sound" the Inspector was now proceeding with the examination of the Allocations DPD. A Pre Hearing Meeting (PHM) had been arranged for 11 March with the Examination Hearings programmed to start on 12 May 2009.

In accordance with Standing Order 21.4 a request was made by Councillor J D Packman for the voting on the four recommendations in the Deputy Chief Executive's report to be recorded. The votes were as follows:-

1. That the Inspector's Report and recommended changes to the Core Strategy and Policies DPD is noted.

FOR (7)	Councillor G E Forsbrey (Chairman), Councillor J D Packman, Councillor Mrs V J Leighton, Councillor H R Jaffer, Councillor L E Nichols, Councillor E O'Hara and Councillor HA Thomson
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The recommendation was unanimously agreed.

2. That the Core Strategy and Policies DPD be recommended for adoption by Full Council incorporating all the Inspector's recommendations.

FOR (6)	Councillor G E Forsbrey (Chairman), Councillor J D Packman, Councillor Mrs V J Leighton, Councillor H R Jaffer, Councillor E O'Hara and Councillor HA Thomson
ABSTENTION (1)	Councillor L E Nichols,

The recommendation was agreed.

3. That 'saved' policies RU8 Plotlands and BE14 Protected Urban Open Space cease to have effect from the date of adoption of the Core Strategy and Policies DPD.

FOR (7)	Councillor G E Forsbrey (Chairman), Councillor J D Packman, Councillor Mrs V J Leighton, Councillor H R Jaffer, Councillor L E Nichols, Councillor E O'Hara and Councillor HA Thomson
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The recommendation was unanimously agreed.

4. That a new Proposals Map be prepared to incorporate all the changes set out in the Submission Proposals Map and to incorporate the relevant notations and allocations following the adoption of the Surrey Waste Plan in May 2008.

FOR (7)	Councillor G E Forsbrey (Chairman), Councillor J D Packman, Councillor Mrs V J Leighton, Councillor H R Jaffer, Councillor L E Nichols, Councillor E O'Hara and Councillor HA Thomson
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The recommendation was unanimously agreed.

3 AOB

There was no other business.

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

This is my eleventh report as the Leader to the Council on the work of the Executive.

This report is an overview of some of the more important issues that we have discussed at the Executive.

We have made recommendations to the Council on four items which appear earlier on this Agenda.

1. CHOICE BASED LETTINGS [CBL] PROJECT

We have considered a report on the proposed North Surrey Choice Based Letting (CBL) Scheme which will enable clients in housing need to be informed of all social housing available across the respective Spelthorne, Runnymede and Elmbridge Borough Council areas.

The proposed joint Councils' CBL Scheme will be known as the "Search Moves Partnership." Clients will be able to bid for the properties which will then be offered to the bidder in the greatest housing need. CBL will increase client's awareness and will provide them with both choice and control in relation to the social housing available.

We have authorised the Search Moves Partnership to proceed with Option 1, as set out in paragraph 3 of the report of the Assistant Chief Executive, namely that Search Moves proceeds to instruct Locata to implement and host a Choice Based Lettings [CBL] system for all the partners, as per the specification agreed.

2. DRAFT URBAN DESIGN FRAMEWORK FOR STAINES TOWN CENTRE

We have considered a report on the draft Urban Design Framework which sets out the urban design, planning and movement context for Staines Town Centre and outlines the key urban design constraints and opportunities which will shape the future growth and regeneration of the Town Centre.

We have approved and endorsed the draft Urban Design Framework's content and have fully supported the Framework to be used to inform the development of Supplementary Planning Guidance on urban design issues for Staines Town Centre.

In addition we have agreed, in the interim that the Framework is used as a basis of planning advice on specific sites and projects in the Town Centre, and is used to inform future transportation studies.

3. AREA FORUMS

We have considered a report looking back at the effectiveness of the most recent round of Area Forums and making proposals for future Area Forums.

We have endorsed a number of suggestions made regarding the frequency and timing of future Area Forums, the topics, the arrangements and the publicity, as follows:

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- Combine an Area Forum with a Residents' Association meeting on a pilot basis.
- Only hold Area Forums when there is a significant topic on which the community will attend, but make arrangements to hold one Area Forum per year in each of the 5 Towns in the months of June/July (in the light evenings).
- Consider if the Area Forums could start earlier than 7.00pm (possibly at 4.30pm).
- The Chairmen of the Area Forums to alert the Assistant Chief Executive if there is a 'hot' topic in their particular locality which requires an Area Forum to be called, although there would be need for at least a 6 weeks lead in period.
- Ward Members must let the Assistant Chief Executive know if they are attending an Area Forum.
- Ward Members to sit at the front of the Area Forum meeting facing the audience.
- Consider the possibility of holding an extra Area Forum in Lower Sunbury.
- Need to persuade Partners to stay at Area Forum meetings throughout the whole time of the meeting.

Purchase banners to publicise the Area Forums, although there will be a need to ensure that all necessary planning approvals are agreed in advance.

4. TENNIS COURTS

We have considered a report seeking Capital funding for a programme of refurbishments for the Borough's Tennis Courts to be phased over the next three years period.

We have noted that the refurbishment of the Cedars Tennis Courts is the highest priority with a request for this to be started this financial year.

We have agreed (1) the Capital funding of £20,000 for the refurbishment of the Cedars Tennis Courts in 2008/2009 and (2) the allocation of further funds of £30,000 per year for the refurbishment of the remaining Tennis Courts within the Borough over the next 3 years period.

5. PURCHASE OF THE FORMER SUNBURY RELIEF ROAD, TP26 FROM SURREY COUNTY COUNCIL

We have considered a report presenting to Members the outcome of negotiations with Surrey County Council on the purchase of the area of public open space known as TP26 and seeking approval for the Head of Asset Management to proceed with the purchase and the improvement works on the terms specified in this report.

We have agreed (1) to authorise the Head of Asset Management to proceed with the purchase of the land known as TP26, on the terms outlined in the report of the Deputy Chief Executive.

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We have further agreed (2) to endorse the exemptions to the Council's Contract Standing Orders and to authorise the Head of Asset Management to construct a Cycle-Path at TP26, on the terms outlined in the report of the Deputy Chief Executive.

Councillor John Packman
Leader of the Council

26 February 2009

REPORT OF THE CHAIRMAN ON THE WORK OF THE IMPROVEMENT AND DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

The Improvement and Development Committee met on 15 January 2009 and considered and made decisions on the following items of business:

1. ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN

The Vice-Chairman of the Committee Councillor M.J. Collis was elected Chairman of the Committee.

2. GROUNDS MAINTENANCE CONTRACT

Members of the Performance Management and Review Committee were invited to attend the meeting to jointly scrutinise the report of the Deputy Chief Executive and the recommendations of the Grounds Maintenance Task Group to reduce the areas of grass cutting on specific sites and the TUPE transfer of a post to ensure playground development and maintenance was managed in an holistic and efficient way by the contractor.

The Committee recommended Executive that:-

- the reduced cutting regime be agreed;
- the Transfer of Undertakings Protection of Employment of post number 1124 be agreed;
- the Portfolio Holder be invited to the quarterly contract monitoring meetings to be held with Lotus Landscapes Ltd.

3. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES Older People Strategy 2008-12 (231/08)

Members were informed:-

- the Older People Strategy had been launched in November 2008
- talks between the Borough and County had taken place about Access to Transport for London [TfL] Buses in Spelthorne and the use of drop down steps and a letter had been sent to TfL. Officers had subsequently reported seeing TfL vehicles using the drop down step. Members were urged to feed back any information regarding the drop down step usage.

4. CALL-IN OF EXECUTIVE DECISION 1374 ON PROCUREMENT STRATEGY

The Committee considered a call-in of Executive decision 1374 on Procurement Strategy.

The Committee resolved to support the draft Procurement Strategy and that Executive decision 1374 may be actioned without further consideration or delay.

5. ICT OUTSOURCING CONTRACT EXPIRY – OPTIONS AND ISSUES

The Minutes and recommendations of the ICT Outsourcing Contract Task Group were considered and agreed by the Committee.

The Committee then recommended Executive that:-

- the existing ICT Outsourcing Contract be extended under the Catalyst Framework for a further period of two years to allow the Roadmap to be introduced and to bring Spelthorne into line with other Surrey Districts with a view to partnership and full retendering of services;
- the following issues be investigated:
 - extending and integrating the use of free software into the Council's IT systems; and
 - extending ICT services into the community outside the framework of existing Council Offices and building;
- the life and work of the Task Group be extended to cover the remaining life of the existing Council, to enable the Task Group to continue its detailed investigation of the Council's systems and operations;
- subject to (c) above, the existing Membership and Chairman of the Task Group be retained as far as is reasonably practicable during the remaining life of the Council in order to maintain continuity, develop and increase its knowledge, expertise and experience; and
- subject to (c) and (d) above the Task Group meets at least every six months to receive progress reports and information on the latest developments.

6. EXECUTIVE FORWARD PLAN AND ISSUES FOR FUTURE MEETINGS

The Committee called for:-

- Either a seminar for all Members or presentation to Committee to raise awareness of Fair-trade;
- A report on biodiversity in relation to some of those sites listed in the Report of the Deputy Chief Executive on Grounds Maintenance
- A report on what the Council is doing to address the economic downturn in Spelthorne.

7. WORK PROGRAMME 2008/2009

The Committee considered and agreed its amended Work Programme for the remainder of the Municipal Year 2008/09.

Councillor Michael Collis
Chairman of the Improvement and Development Committee

26 February 2009

REPORT OF THE CHAIRMAN ON THE WORK OF THE LICENSING COMMITTEE

There have been four Licensing Sub-Committee meetings since my last report. Their work and their decisions are set out below.

1. Licensing Sub-Committee - 23 December 2008 Application for a Private Hire Driver Licence

A Licensing Sub-Committee considered and granted an application for a Private Hire Driver Licence.

2. Licensing Sub-Committee - 5 January 2009 Application for a Premises Licence

A Licensing Sub-Committee considered and granted an application for a new Premises Licence for the Jolly Butcher Public House, 174 Kingston Road, Staines.

3. Licensing Sub-Committee - 26 January 2009 Hearing to determine whether a person was a fit and proper person to hold a Hackney Carriage Driver Licence.

A Licensing Sub-Committee heard a case to determine whether a driver was a fit and proper person to hold a Hackney Carriage Driver Licence.

The Sub-Committee resolved to suspend the Hackney Carriage Driver Licence for a period of six months.

4. Licensing Sub-Committee - 11 February 2009 Hearing to determine whether a person was a fit and proper person to hold a Hackney Carriage Driver Licence.

A Licensing Sub-Committee heard a case to determine whether a driver who had been suspended was a fit and proper person to hold a Hackney Carriage Driver Licence.

The Sub-Committee resolved to suspend the Licence for a further period of one month from the date of the hearing.

Councillor Robin Sider
Chairman of the Licensing Committee

26 February 2009

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. This report therefore gives an overview of the key items considered by the Planning Committee at those meetings.

The meeting on **10 December 2008** dealt with 11 items. Public speaking took place on 4 items with 4 people taking the opportunity to address the Committee.

The most notable items on the agenda were:

- An application for the erection of 2 houses at 72 the Avenue Sunbury which was refused on the grounds of its impact on the neighbouring property.
- Permission was also granted for the erection of a block of 8 flats at 56-58 Ferndale Road Ashford following demolition of the existing two properties.
- The Committee also authorised the serving of 4 enforcement notices against unauthorised development on sites across the Borough.

The meeting on **7 January 2009** dealt with 9 items. Public speaking took place on 3 items with 5 people taking the opportunity to address the Committee.

The most notable items on the agenda were:

- The granting of permission for the redevelopment of the Bridge Street Car Park and Sea Cadet Building in Bridge Street, Staines to provide a total of 143 flats in a part four to six storey block. The scheme also provided a replacement facility for the sea cadets and private and public car parking.
- Permission was also granted for the redevelopment of part of the British Telecom Depot site in Poplar Road Ashford to provide 51 dwellings.
- A revised scheme for the redevelopment of the Church Villas site in Church Street Sunbury was given permission which will result in the provision of 13 houses.

The meeting on **4 February 2009** dealt with 10 items. Public speaking took place on 2 items with 3 people taking the opportunity to address the Committee.

The most notable items on the agenda were:

- The granting of permission (subject to the completion of a legal agreement) for the redevelopment of land at Long Lane and Holywell Way, Stanwell for the provision of 52 residential units. This scheme represents the first phase of the Stanwell New Start project.

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- The Committee also considered an application for a new construction training building at Brooklands College Ashford. This was however deferred to enable further consideration to be given to providing alternative facilities for those groups who use the existing building for sport.
- Permission was also granted at the meeting for the conversion of Kempton Point in Staines Road West Sunbury to provide a 104 bedroom hotel. The proposed operator is Premier Inn.
- The Committee raised a strong objection to a consultation from Surrey County Council in respect of an application for the creation of a recycling centre for construction and demolition waste at Land at Oakleaf Farm, Horton Road Stanwell.

Councillor John O'Hara
Chairman of the Planning Committee

26 February 2009