

MINUTES OF THE COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 18 OCTOBER 2007

BOROUGH OF SPELTHORNE

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

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

Councillor A.P. Hirst, The Mayor, in the Chair

322/07 APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Ms P.A. Broom, T.W. Crabb, Mrs J.M. Pinkerton, Mrs M.W. Rough and Mr. Murray Litvak.

323/07 MINUTES

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the Council Meeting held on 19 July 2007 and the Special Council Meetings held on 26 July 2007 and 27 September 2007 be approved as a correct record.

324/07 ANNOUNCEMENTS FROM THE MAYOR

(1) Civic Pride – Great Tree Race

The Mayor reported that he was looking to form a Councillor's team to take part in the Great Tree Race being organised by Civic Pride. If any Member was able to take part in this event they should either contact the Mayor direct or Jill Stephens, the Chairman of Spelthorne Civic Pride, for more information.

(2) 2007 Spelthorne Civic Pride Environmental Awards

The Mayor introduced Jill Stephens who had been connected with Spelthorne Civic Pride for over 18 years since its inauguration in 1989 and welcomed some of the Civic Pride volunteers who were in attendance at the meeting. The Mayor reported that it was a privilege to be involved with the Spelthorne Civic Pride Environmental Awards Scheme which had started in 1992 to acknowledge the work of its volunteers. Civic Pride had five on going community projects which included the Black Ditch Walk, Splash Pond and the Millennium Wood project as well as organised litter picks.

The Mayor recalled that the Spelthorne Civic Pride Volunteers received The Queen's Award for Voluntary Service, presented by Mrs. Sarah Goad JP, Her Majesty's Lord-Lieutenant of Surrey, at a Special Ceremony on 27 July 2006.

The Mayor then invited Jill Stephens the Chairman of Spelthorne Civic Pride to address the Council, before he presented the awards to the successful winners in each category. Jill Stephens in addressing the Council outlined the significant contributions and long term dedication of the Civic Pride volunteers. She reported that the Spelthorne Civic Pride Environmental Awards were now in their 15th year and since 1992 they have been given to a wide variety of individuals and groups. The environmental awards covered two categories. The first was the Junior Award for those under 18, and the second award was for the more mature volunteers.

The Mayor and Jill Stephens then presented the Junior Environmental Award to representatives from the Chennestone Primary School in recognition of their work in caring for the environment. The type of projects undertaken by the school included each class maintaining a vegetable allotment as well as recycling car tyres into attractive flower tubs. They then presented the Senior Environmental Award to Shirley and Tom Proud in recognition of over 15 years continuous voluntary work to improve the environment in Spelthorne such work included refurbishment of the floating island at Laleham Pond and the Funky Footprint nature reserve.

(3) Queens Diamond Wedding Anniversary – 20 November 2007

The Mayor reported that to celebrate the Queens Diamond Wedding anniversary arrangements were being made for a service to be held at Guilford Cathedral on 18 November 2007. Residents of the Borough who would also be celebrating their diamond wedding anniversary were invited to attend the Service. The Mayor asked for Members help in identifying those residents who qualified to attend the Service.

325/07 ANNOUNCEMENT FROM THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE

Code of Conduct

The Chief Executive reminded Councillors about the need to meet the requirements of the new Code of Conduct for members by returning their completed Register of Financial and Other Interest forms by 28 October 2007. He also reported that a further training event on the requirements of the Code of Conduct would be arranged as soon as possible.

326/07 QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

The Mayor reported that under Standing Order 13 two questions had been received from members of the public. He invited each person to put their question in turn, and for responses to be given by the Leader of the Council, Councillor J.D. Packman.

(1) Question from Michael Wakefield - Sunbury Area Forum

"I am writing on behalf of Kempton Residents' Association with regard to the forthcoming Sunbury Area Forum which is due to be held on 30 October and to be chaired by Councillor Smith-Ainsley.

Our Association is by obligation both a-political and non-party political, so it is, of course, of no consequence to us as to the party affiliation of the Chairman for the evening. However we do expect that the selected Chairman would be from one of our 9 (Conservative and Liberal-Democrats) democratically elected Sunbury Councillors –This has always been the case hitherto.

The Forums are obviously also non-party political events and, indeed, one of the past Chairmen, Councillor. Hirst, is still a Sunbury Councillor. He is an excellent and fair-minded Chairman and we cannot understand why neither he nor one of the other 8 local Councillors have not be chosen as Chairman for this particular Forum".

My question is "**why not?**"

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

“Mr Wakefield my apologies for turning my back to you but I need to formally address the Mayor. Thank you for the question which gives me an opportunity to emphasis that all Area Forum meetings are non political and are organised by the Council to communicate and consult on important issues with our residents. The popularity of such meetings have increased over the years and have given us the opportunity to communicate a wide range of topics/issues as well as to receive information from our residents and for them to raise issues of concern.

As Leader of the Council I appoint a Chairman to each of the Area Forums (which is ratified at the Council AGM) and those Councillors appointed are able to respond to any questions raised by residents. It is not unusual to appoint a Chairman from outside of a Ward it has happened in the past and will more than likely happen in the future.

I hope that the message will go out that Area Forum meetings are non political. I have every confidence in Councillor R.A. Smith-Ainsley to Chair the Sunbury Area Forum meetings. Our current Mayor, Councillor A.P. Hirst, has in the past chaired the Staines and Laleham Area Forum meetings (which is outside of his ward) and will hopefully in the future, again be Chairman of the Sunbury Area Forum.”

(2) Question from Andrew McLuskey

“Why, given that Stanwell Moor is as integrally involved in the Airtrack project as Staines Moor, has SBC so steadfastly refused to consult the residents of the area-or their association-on the proposals now being put forward?”

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

“Thank you for your question Mr McLuskey. In answering, the background needs to be clarified for the benefit of all concerned.

BAA announced, in November 2006, that it would fund an application for a Transport and Works Act Order to authorise the construction of Airtrack. However, BAA only announced its programme for consultation in September 2007. This involves two stages of consultation starting with initial options in early 2008, with the second stage on the preferred option in late 2008 or early 2009.

The BAA project is, therefore, still at a very early stage. Officers have, and will continue to meet BAA to keep abreast of the situation.

Furthermore, we will be holding meetings with all groups potentially affected by the scheme. We have already held a meeting with Staines Moor interested parties (28 September 2007) and we will also be meeting business interests in Staines town centre. We will also meet residents organisations, both from the Stanwell Moor area and elsewhere.

These meetings will enable local concerns to be heard and help to identify measures to minimise potential impacts on local communities. The timing of the meetings over the next few months will enable the issues raised and potential solutions to be put to BAA well before the preferred option for the detailed scheme is totally finalised.

Therefore, I totally refute the suggestion that we have refused to consult residents on this very important matter. This Council is, and will continue to work as a responsible authority, with all interested local groups, as well as BAA, to ensure the process is fully transparent.”

327/07 OUTLINE BUDGET 2008/2009 – 2011/2012

The Council considered the recommendation of the Executive seeking approval on an Outline Budget covering the next four financial years from 2008/2009 to 2011/2012. The recommendation covered three main aspects: (1) a framework for the detailed Budget for the next financial year (2) set a maximum expenditure level for the financial year 2008/2009; and (3) provide a guideline Council Tax increase for 2008/2009.

RESOLVED that the Executive recommendation as set out below be approved.

1. That the net budgeted expenditure for 2008/2009 be set at a maximum level of £13.787m.
2. That, in order to reach this level, the Strategic Director (Support) identifies a package of options by which the budget can be balanced both in 2008/2009 and over the next 3 years of the outline period.
3. That, subject to the assumptions in this report being valid, a guideline Council Tax increase be set at 5%.
4. That use of reserves policy to support budget policy be reviewed with consideration to extending by one year to 2008-09 use of general revenue reserves to support the general budget and that the 2007-08 figure of £290k be used.
5. That an agreed total reserves target minimum level (as measured on 31st March each year) be set at a level of £31m
6. Approve the intention to increase the size of the Business Improvement Reserve to support the implementation of ongoing savings
7. That financial health indicators be set as follows:
 - (i) Revenue outturn against original budget target: +/- 1.5%
 - (ii) Capital outturn against original budget target: +/- 10%
 - (iii) Council Tax collection target: 98.8%
 - (iv) Business rates collection target: 99.3%
 - (v) Sundry debts aged more than 90 days overdue no more than 10% of total debts
 - (vi) Payment of creditors within 30 days target: 97.5%
 - (vii) Year total aggregate value of reserves £31m

328/07 REVIEW OF POLLING DISTRICTS, POLLING PLACES AND POLLING STATIONS

The Council considered the recommendations of the Executive on the review of the current polling arrangements which had been made following consideration of the representations received in response to the consultation. The representations received related to the proposals for (a) Laleham and Shepperton Green Ward – Polling District LSG3; (b) Sunbury Common Ward – Polling District SC; and (c) Ashford North and Stanwell South Ward – Polling District ANS3.

The supplementary report tabled at the Executive meeting held on 11 September 2007 was circulated with the Council agenda for the benefit of all Members.

It was moved by the Leader, Councillor J.D. Packman and seconded by the Deputy Leader, Councillor R.A. Smith-Ainsley that the following recommendation of the Executive be approved.

- (1) To create a new Polling Place in the Laleham and Shepperton Green Ward, and within that Place to establish a polling station to serve electors in International Way, Windmill Close, Lincoln Way and Cedar Way, Sunbury to be located on the Tesco store site in Escot Road, Sunbury; and
- (2) To make no other changes as part of the current review.

An amendment was moved by Councillor C.V. Strong and seconded by Councillor I.J. Beardsmore that a new recommendation (2) be added to read:

- (2) To create a new Polling Place in the Sunbury Common Ward [see map attached], and within that Place to establish a polling station to serve those electors living south of the Staines Road West, namely, in Castle Close, Mill Farm Avenue, Percy Bryant Road, Spelthorne Grove, Forest Drive and Crossways Sunbury to be located on the Tesco store site in Escot Road, Sunbury; and
- (3) Renumber existing recommendation (2) as (3) to read “To make no other changes as part of the current review”.

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

“As detailed in the Supplementary Report presented to the Executive on 11 September 2007, the comments of the Liberal Democrats and Labour Party were taken into consideration.

The Consultation period was from 29 August to 11 September 2007 during which time the views of both the Liberal Democrats and the Labour Party were received and considered.

The current site of Kenyngton Manor School provides excellent facilities for all those within Sunbury Common Ward and within a fair distance from home. The furthest an elector needs to travel to vote at Kenyngton Manor School is 0.86miles, which is not considered far.

The cost of providing a portacabin would be an extra £2,500 and is an unnecessary cost when adequate facilities are already provided.

We have not received any complaints or representations to date concerning the current arrangements from electors in the area of Sunbury Common referred to.

A new polling station for those in International Way and within that locality was felt necessary due to the fact the allocated polling station of Charlton Village Hall is nearly 2 and a half miles from International Way.

Providing a second portacabin on the Tesco site would cause great confusion to electors.”

The amendment was lost.

RESOLVED that the Council agree to:

1. create a new Polling Place in the Laleham and Shepperton Green Ward, and within that Place to establish a polling station to serve electors in International Way, Windmill Close, Lincoln Way and Cedar Way, Sunbury to be located on the Tesco store site in Escot Road, Sunbury; and
2. make no other changes as part of the current review.

Councillor I.J. Beardsmore informed the Council that the location of the polling station on the Tesco store site in Escort Road, Sunbury was not possible as it was outside the Ward. The Head of Corporate Governance agreed to look into the matter.

329/07 AMENDMENTS TO THE COUNCIL’S SCHEME OF DELEGATIONS

RESOLVED that the recommendation of the Executive to amend the Scheme of Delegation to Officers as set out below be approved.

8 ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH MATTERS		
8.8	To exercise the Council's powers under the Smoke-free (Premises and Enforcement) Regulations 2006; the Smoke-free (Signs) Regulations 2007; the Smoke-free (Exemptions and Vehicles)	Head of Environmental Health & Building Control or Licensing Manager, Licensing Enforcement Officer, Active Lifestyles Officer and all other Environmental Health staff of the Council identified as so authorised in the Environmental

	Regulations 2007; the Smoke-free (Penalties and Discounted Amounts) Regulations 2007; and the Smoke-free (Vehicles and Operators & Penalty Notices) Regulations 2007	Health and Building Control Enforcement Policy (to the extent permitted by such policy)
8.9	Serve statutory notices in relation to contaminated land responsibilities under the Environmental Protection Act 1990 and any regulations made under it	Head of Environmental Health & Building Control, Principal Pollution Control Officer, Pollution Control Officers and all other Environmental Health staff of the Council identified as so authorised in the Environmental Health and Building Control Enforcement Policy (to the extent permitted by such policy)
8.12	To issue, vary, transfer, refuse, suspend or revoke permits under the Pollution Prevention and Control Act 1999 and any regulations made thereunder	Head of Environmental Health & Building Control or Principal Pollution Control Officer, Pollution Control Officers and all other Environmental Health staff of the Council identified as so authorised in the Environmental Health and Building Control Enforcement Policy (to the extent permitted by such policy)
8.13	To exercise the Council's powers and duties under the Control of Pollution Act 1974 and any regulations made thereunder	Head of Environmental Health & Building Control or Principal Pollution Control Officer, Pollution Control Officers and all other Environmental Health staff of the Council identified as so authorised in the Environmental Health and Building Control Enforcement Policy (to the extent permitted by such policy)
8.43	To issue a Waste Transfer Notice under the Environmental Protection (Duty of Care) Regulations 1991	Strategic Director (Community)
13 PLANNING MATTERS		
13.19	To authorise proceedings under Section 224 of the Town and Country Planning Act, 1990, in respect of any breaches of the Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) Regulations 1992.	Head of Corporate Governance
13.38	To withdraw an enforcement notice where there is an technical or procedural error with such notice under Section 173A (1) (a) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990	Head of Planning and Housing Strategy

330/07 REPORT FROM THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL

The Leader of the Council, Councillor J.D. Packman, presented his report giving an overview of some of the key issues that the Executive had dealt with since the last ordinary meeting of the Council. Councillor Packman responded to various questions raised by Members including responding to questions on the Housing Green Paper – Homes For the Future – More Affordable More Sustainable.

331/07 REPORT FROM THE CHAIRMAN OF THE AUDIT COMMITTEE

The Chairman of the Audit Committee, Councillor J.D. Pinkerton, presented his report which outlined matters the Committee had dealt with since the last ordinary meeting of the Council. Councillor Pinkerton responded to a question relating to Payroll Transactions.

332/07 REPORT FROM THE CHAIRMAN OF THE IMPROVEMENT AND DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

The Chairman of the Improvement and Development Committee, Councillor Mrs P. Weston presented her report which outlined matters the Committee had dealt with since the last ordinary meeting of the Council. Councillor Mrs Weston responded to a question relating to the appointment of members to serve on the Joint Outline Budget Task Group.

The report of the Chairman had been circulated to all members of the Council under separate cover.

333/07 REPORT FROM THE CHAIRMAN OF THE LICENSING COMMITTEE

The Chairman of the Licensing Committee, Councillor R.W. Sider, presented his report which outlined matters the Committee had dealt with since the last ordinary meeting of the Council. Councillor Sider responded to a question relating to the application considered by the Licensing Sub Committee on 3 October 2007.

The report of the Chairman had been circulated to all members of the Council under separate cover.

334/07 REPORT FROM THE CHAIRMAN OF THE PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT AND REVIEW COMMITTEE

The Chairman of the Performance Management and Review Committee, Councillor F. Ayers presented his report which outlined matters the Committee had dealt with since the last ordinary meeting of the Council.

335/07 REPORT FROM THE CHAIRMAN OF THE PLANNING COMMITTEE

The Chairman of the Planning Committee, Councillor E.J. O'Hara, presented his report which outlined matters the Committee had dealt with since the last ordinary meeting of the Council. Councillor O'Hara responded to a question relating to the date of the first stage of the Examination covering the core strategy and policies DPD.

336/07 QUESTIONS ON WARD ISSUES

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

“Could the Portfolio Holder explain how Chennestone School should continue its efforts at being a ‘Green’ school when AWC has removed its arrangements for recycling? How can Chennestone and other schools in my Ward work with the Council to encourage the next generation and their parents to maximise their recycling?”

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

“Thank you for your question Councillor Nichols. I am sure you are aware that it is Surrey County Council who are the education authority.

Historically, schools within the Borough were served by a mixture of trade waste collections, whilst some, but not all, were part of the blue box scheme for paper.

We have recently written to all local schools suggesting that they may wish to be part of an independent paper retriever scheme. This is a much more beneficial scheme for schools as they receive some income for the paper collected which they did not on a blue box scheme, which will assist the school.

Since schools were recently reclassified as domestic waste we can now collect them as domestic waste but this will have to occur at the end of March, due to current contracts. At that time, we will then be able to take cardboard, cans and plastic bottles. If schools are part of the paper retriever scheme, then it is better they stay on this scheme for paper alone.

As the education authority, Surrey County Council also have a collection scheme, which they are currently piloting. The whole issue needs to be examined carefully by the school to ensure the school has a service that meets its needs for the future."

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

"Following the repair work to the riverbank at Kings Lawn in Lower Sunbury the railings have not been replaced. This risks public safety. When will the railings be put back? "

Councillor Mrs D.L. Grant, The Portfolio Holder for Children and Young People,, replied as follows:

"Thank you for your question Councillor Mrs Bell.

The site has been surveyed by our Health and Safety Officer. The towpath work itself is now complete. You will be aware that most of the towpath does not have railings whatsoever. However, this small section is deemed appropriate and the railings will be put back along the stretch where they previously were, as soon as possible."

337/07 GENERAL QUESTIONS

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

"The Deputy Leader will recall that a revised Emergency Plan was issued to members at the July Council meeting.

Subsequent to this Councillors Strong and Beardsmore highlighted serious flaws in the document requiring a further review.

Can the Deputy Leader please take note that the information regarding Rest Centre contacts for Beechwood Court and Sunna Lodge are incorrect?

Can the Deputy Leader give an assurance that in future the Emergency Plan will be kept up-to-date and also an assurance that he has now, finally, taken ownership of this issue?"

The Deputy Leader, Councillor R.A. Smith-Ainsley, replied as follows:

"Thank you for your question Councillor Colison-Crawford.

The Council's Emergency Planning Officer does not believe that there were any "serious flaws" although some amendments were needed and people explained in previous correspondence the document is a living document, which is continually updated as staff change.

Issue 3.3 does contain the correct information for Beechwood Court and Sunna Lodge. This Council has dealt with a number of emergencies over the years in an appropriate way and I am confident that the document will continue to be updated and that we are prepared for all emergencies."

Councillor Smith-Ainsley in responding to a further confidential concern expressed by Councillor Colison-Crawford agreed that he would ensure the officers would re check the document and rectify if necessary.

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

"As the Leader will recall, I tabled a motion at the Council meeting in June concerning the highways authority.

This motion was subsequently amended by the Leader and Deputy Leader and the motion as amended was passed by all members of this Council.

The amended motion resolved to refer the matter of highways maintenance improvement to the Surrey County Council Local Committee for their consideration.

As the Leader is the Borough Council's Lead Member on the Surrey local committee, could he please report the outcome of the Surrey local committee's consideration of this Council's motion?"

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

"Under Minute 05/07 (3) - Chairman's Announcements - of the Spelthorne Local Committee held on 2nd July 2007 it states that "The Chairman, Councillor Mrs. Denise Saliagopoulos, made the following announcement: That a motion had been received from Spelthorne Borough Council on transportation matters. The issues raised in the motion would be discussed at the Highways Seminar on 24 July 2007, which is being organised by County Councillor David Munro.

The Highways Seminar was held in the Council Chamber at Spelthorne on 24 July 2007 and the transportation issues raised in the motion by Councillor Strong were discussed. Councillor Strong was present at the Seminar and the presentation slides shown that evening by Surrey County Council were made available to all Members via our Members' Area on our Web Site."

Councillor Strong then asked that the Leader of the Council give an assurance that the matter would receive a full debate at a future meeting of the Spelthorne Local Committee. The Leader in his response suggested that Councillor Beardsmore being a member of Surrey County Council would be in a better position to process this matter through the County Council.

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

"I recognise that the LDF is a process we must go through but how much has it cost the borough so far and how much is it expected to cost to the end of next April?"

The Leader, Councillor J.D. Packman, replied as follows:

"Thank you for your question Councillor Beardsmore.

The cost of the Local Development Framework from 1 April 2004 to 31 March 2008 will be approximately, £1,140,457. This includes the cost of the evidence base, consultation exercises and staff time associated with the LDF.

It is evident that the cost of delivering the LDF is considerable. However, we are very largely bound by the statutory legislation and the steps it requires us to take. It is critical to ensure that adequate resources are set aside to ensure we have a robust and sound plan, which will help us deliver the future of Spelthorne to 2026"

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

"The draft Annual Monitoring Report for 2006-2007 shows that the average density of new dwellings was more than 100 per hectare for developments of more than 10 units. Does the Leader regard this "century" as something to celebrate or, like me, believe it is a cause for regret? What does the Leader intend to do to reduce the density of new housing developments in Spelthorne?"

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

“Thank you for your question Councillor Nichols.

You ask whether the density figures quoted in the draft Annual Monitoring Report are cause for “celebration” or “regret”. I would say neither, but then I would look for the full story and the bigger picture.

In general terms, density is merely a representation of the amount of housing which has been, or could be, achieved on a particular site or group of sites. It can be a useful indicator of whether land is used efficiently but should not be the sole determinant of acceptability. Planning Policy Guidance 3 aims to avoid the inefficient use of land, and Planning Policy Statement 3 confirms that the density of existing development should not dictate that of new housing. Good design is the key to achieving acceptable higher densities and each site needs to be considered carefully on its merits, taking into account factors such as the type of development, its location and its accessibility.

The figures Councillor Nichols quotes are, I assume, from table 14 of the Annual Monitoring Report, which reports the density of larger housing schemes, completed during the past year. The average density quoted relates to just five schemes, all of which involve, primarily, the delivery of one and two bedroom flats, a priority area of housing provision (as set out in policy H5 of the adopted Local Plan) and a type of development in which higher densities will be apparent.

Three of the schemes are all close to an average of 79 dwellings per hectare. Of the other two, one is Station Garage where 37 flats were built on a site adjoining Shepperton Station. The density of this scheme is high, at 168 units per hectare, but that reflects the type of unit, the scale of development and its accessible location. The fifth scheme at 100 units per hectare is Beechwood Court, where redevelopment took place to provide forty high quality self-contained flats for the elderly. Higher densities will, therefore, be found in this type of development because open spaces and car parking requirements are considerably reduced.

As with all major applications over 10 units, the five schemes were carefully considered by the Planning Committee, under the guidance of the Chairman, Councillor E. O’Hara, before being permitted and the issues of density and design were highlighted for Members in the officers’ reports. None of the schemes contained elements which would have justified refusal or which could have been sustained at appeal, given current national guidance.

Clearly, we need to strike the right balance between ensuring that land is used efficiently, with the right type of development in the right location, and at the same time, safeguarding local character and amenities. This will remain an important issue for the Planning Committee as it seeks to apply the Council Policies embodied in the Local Development Framework and the information set out in the Annual Monitoring Report will provide a useful means of keeping progress under review.

On the issue of quality, policy EN1 of the Submission Core Strategy and Policies DPD clearly seeks to ensure that schemes do not have an adverse impact on the environment. This will ensure the correct decisions are reached. The detail implementation of this policy is currently set out in Supplementary Planning Guidance. This will be the subject of a review in the next 18 months as part of the Local Development Framework process.

I trust this provides a more rounded view of the situation with regard density.”

In response to further discussion on this matter the Leader reminded the Council of the huge problem the Council faces in providing accommodation for the homeless compared to other district councils, in particular due to the areas identified in the Borough to flooding. He went on to report on the difficult job members of the Planning Committee have in determining

applications and the need to balance each application on its merit but taking into account legislation and the role of the Planning Inspector.

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

"Concerning the Grundon contract for recycling, can the Portfolio Holder give assurances that the issues which were raised concerning contamination have been satisfactorily addressed and a signed contract is now available to all Members?"

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

"Thank you for your question Councillor Mrs Nichols.

The issues regarding contamination have been dealt with and Grundons have received an amended contract from us. We are awaiting the return of the document in the very near future."

Councillor Forsbrey responded to a supplementary question from Councillor Mrs Nichols by confirming that once the contract had been returned to the Council and if necessary any legal advice obtained he would respond further to the question raised by the Councillor.

Under Standing Order 14, Councillor R.W. Sider asked the following question:

"Will the Leader join me in congratulating the Spelthorne in Bloom Committee for their strenuous efforts in encouraging such magnificent floral displays in the Borough this year, and in particular Stanwell on their being awarded the prestigious Silver Gilt Award in the urban community category for South and South East in Bloom 2007, and for Laleham who were similarly recognised for their floral displays? And can he assure me of continued Officer support for this Committee, whose efforts are for the benefit of the entire Spelthorne community and promote one of the Borough's priorities, that of making Spelthorne a better place?"

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

"Thank you for your question Councillor Sider. I am sure other members of the council will join me in supporting the remarks made by Councillor Sider and congratulate the members of the Spelthorne In Bloom Committee for their continuous good works.

Once again, Spelthorne in Bloom was a great success this summer. The event helped to brighten up the borough and encouraged local communities to get involved in a floral display. I was pleased to hear of the success in Stanwell, which was richly deserved.

Although Spelthorne in Bloom is led by volunteers, it does rely on the generosity of the Council. For example last year we spent nearly £40,000 and this year nearly £45,000.

The Council will shortly be considering its budget for 2008/09 and, although we have saved £5m over the last four years, we still need to save £1.3m next year.

Spelthorne in Bloom is greatly valued by this Council and the community, and we will certainly consider its valuable contribution when the budget is discussed in the New Year."