

MINUTES OF THE COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 21 FEBRUARY 2008

BOROUGH OF SPELTHORNE

**AT THE MEETING OF THE SPELTHORNE BOROUGH COUNCIL HELD IN THE
COUNCIL CHAMBER, COUNCIL OFFICES, KNOWLE GREEN, STAINES ON
THURSDAY 21 FEBRUARY AT 7.30PM**

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

Mr Murray Litvak – Chairman Standards Committee

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

45/08 APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors M.J. Collis and C.V Strong.

46/08 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 13 December 2007 were approved as a correct record.

47/08 DISCLOSURES OF INTEREST

Councillor J.D. Packman disclosed, on behalf of all members present, their personal interest in Agenda Item 9(10) Members' Allowances, under Section 4 of the Members' Code of Conduct

Councillor R.A. Smith-Ainsley disclosed a personal interest in Agenda Item 9(1) Adding Capacity at Heathrow, as he was an airline employee.

Councillor O'Hara disclosed a personal interest in Agenda Item 8a on the revised agenda in respect of the Notice of mMotion on Airtrack, as he was a Commoner of Staines.

Councillor C.A. Davis disclosed a personal interest in Agenda Item 8a on the revised agenda, in respect of the Notice of Motion on Airtrack, as he was the outgoing Chairman of Moor Lane Residents Association.

48/08 ANNOUNCEMENTS FROM THE MAYOR

Mayor's Charity Events

The Mayor announced that tickets were still available for both the Gardeners' Question time taking place at Stanwell Village Hall on 29 February and the Curry Evening at Kouchin Restaurant on 4 March 2008.

Order of Business

The Mayor announced that he was amending the order of business by taking all airport related matters including the two Notices of Motion prior to consideration of the recommendations from the Executive. A revised agenda setting out the new order of business was circulated at the meeting..

49/08 QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

The Mayor reported that under Standing Order 13 four questions had been received from members of the public. As three of the questions related to expansion of Heathrow Airport and Airtrack, these were taken together and the Leader, Councillor J.D. Packman gave one response. In the absence of Ms Valerie Howes, the Head of Corporate Governance read out her questions. In the absence of Mr Keith Johnson, Mr George Rushbrook read out his two questions. Councillor J.D. Packman confirmed that a copy of his response would be sent to Ms Howes and Mr Johnson.

(1) Question from Mr Tony Davis

"I am very concerned that, as part of Airtrack, BAA are now proposing to put overhead line electrification across Staines Moor and past the Moormede estate into the new station by the iron bridge or possibly to the existing station.

What does the Leader of the Council think of this proposal and what does he intend to do to protect Staines Moor and local residents from this visual intrusion?"

(2) Question from Mr Keith Johnson - In his absence Mr George Rushbrook asked the following question

"Please would the Leader explain how he arrived at the decision to remove Spelthorne Council from the 2M Group of councils who are objecting on behalf of their 2 million residents to the expansion of Heathrow Airport. Who did the Leader consult before making his decision and was the decision ratified by Spelthorne Council's Executive?"

(3) Question from Ms Valerie Howes – In her absence the Head of Corporate Governance asked the following questions:

"I am a resident of Waters Drive and along with my neighbours would like to put the following question to the Leader of the Council:-

What does the Leader of the Council think about the platform that would run alongside our houses and what protection and compensation would the Council press BAA to give us?

I would also like to ask, although understand that a written reply might be given, to the following:-

1. BAA have not announced anything about times of service but Claire the consultation manager indicated that it could be the same as the Heathrow Express. Currently we get 4 trains an hour between roughly 06.00 and midnight. They are planning an extra 16 trains an hour. Heathrow Express runs between 05.00 and 03.00. What does the Leader of the Council think of the proposals and what limits would he think reasonable for number of trains per hour and operating times?

2. Airtrack have indicated that they do not propose including any car parking. I would ask the Leader of the Council what his proposal is to protect the Residents concerning this especially as there is a continued problem concerning parking for residents?"

Response by the Leader of the Council, Councillor J.D. Packman

"I trust that Mr Davis is aware that BAA is currently out to public consultation on 'preferred options' for certain elements of the new Airtrack route. This covers 4 possible routes across Staines Moor, 4 alternative options for a new Staines High Street Station, 3 possible alignments of Staines Chord and 3 options for a third platform at the existing Staines Station.

In addition, the consultation material explains that there are three options for where the change over to third rail pickup can take place and the overhead pickup can stop. One of these options would be before the track gets to Staines Moor. This was clarified by BAA in their Consultation Brochure first Addendum which was circulated to all concerned parties soon after the public consultation started. Hence, no decision has been made on overhead line electrification at this time.

As a result of this additional information, the public consultation period has been extended to 25 April. A full report and the Council's proposed response will be considered by the Executive prior to the end of this consultation period.

As everybody will be aware, there are a number of environmental, social and economic impacts associated with the Airtrack proposal and the Council will need to consider how these potential impacts can be adequately mitigated or even avoided. The visual impact of overhead lines is only one of them. There are also opportunities which may arise as a result of the proposed Airtrack development which need to be considered.

I trust that Mr Davis will understand that we are still in the very early process of giving all aspects of the current consultation very careful consideration and I would respectfully suggest, it would therefore be inappropriate to make comment before we have completed our assessment.

With regard to the decision to join the pressure group 2M, this decision was taken by the last administration of this Council. It was not a formal decision of the Executive or the Council because joining 2M at that time did not imply any policy consequences for the Council. At that time it was merely an informal group of authorities with an interest in the development of Heathrow Airport. 2M has no legal standing or powers and the Council did not in anyway take a formal position by being associated with it.

When it became clear to me as Leader that our continued association with 2M may have policy implications for the Council, in that it might pre-empt or be seen to bind Council policy, I decided to review our association with the group.

The current consultation for Heathrow expansion is on the agenda today and through democratic debate the councillors in this chamber will decide upon a policy and this Council must decide for itself what position it should take. Therefore continued association with 2M may not necessarily equate with the best interests of the people of Spelthorne.

Therefore, in response to the question from Mr Johnson, the Council has only ever had a loose and informal association with 2M and I made the decision to withdraw from it. There was no need for me to get an endorsement from Council or Executive. At all times I have been aware that the proper place for the democratic decision making about Council policy is in this chamber and not in Town Halls elsewhere.

In relation to the possible platform as a result of Airtrack, I am sure Ms Howes is aware that BAA are currently out to public consultation on 'preferred options' for certain elements of the new Airtrack route as stated earlier in my response to Mr Davis

The consultation material does not provide any detailed information on the design of the various station options, access and parking arrangements, hours of operation of the services, or details about protection and compensation if it applies.

I hope the questioner will understand we are still in the process of giving all aspects of the current consultation very careful consideration and it would therefore be inappropriate to make comment on these matters before we have all the information and completed our assessment.

On a more positive note, I met with BAA on Wednesday this week and they agreed that following the first part of the consultation on 25 April, they will publish all the issues raised as well as any answers to questions if they are in a position to provide any answers at that time."

(4) Question from Mr Keith Johnson – In his absence Mr George Rushbrook asked the following question

"I live just south of Sunbury Cross where we had regular summer visitations of bats. It has been significant that these protected species have been completely absent throughout 2007. I should like to know whether this is due to:

- a) the loss of mature trees due to overdevelopment, particularly at Kempton Park and Green Street, or
- b) the excess light pollution created by the Kempton Park all weather track; or
- c) whether the Council has any other explanation?

Response by the Leader of the Council, Councillor J.D. Packman

"I understand that bats and their roosts are protected by the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, and are listed as a European protected species of animal. The Council is fully aware of its legal requirements. Where the Council consider there may be wildlife implications arising from development proposals we will consult with the Surrey Wildlife trust. They will then consider the potential impact of the proposal on wildlife, including bats. If there is an indication of a bat roost then we will often require a bat survey to be undertaken. The Council is then able to assess the outcome of the survey before reaching a decision on an application. There are a number of cases where we have required bat boxes to be provided as a condition on a planning permission.

The lighting at Kempton Park racecourse is provided by 42 floodlights. These have the potential to be used on the 110 race days (but are generally limited to 2 nights per week). As part of the proposals an additional new native woodland has been planted, along with 300 new trees across the site. This offers the potential for new habitats for bat colonies in the area.

Both English Nature and Surrey Wildlife trust were consulted on the original application. Neither raised an objection, subject to the implementation of the mitigation measures set out in the Environment Statement which accompanied the application. These have been implemented, and included the provision of bat boxes. Conditions also required the floodlighting to be directed and screened to reduce light spillage to a minimum.

I have also been made aware that during the summer of 2007, the wet weather conditions put many bats under threat. The wet weather coincided with the birth of baby bats, and the rain meant there were fewer insects to feed on."

50/08 PETITIONS

The Mayor invited Mrs. Karen Smale to present a Petition regarding car parking charges and invited her to address the Council.

Mrs. Smale presented the Petition, which the Mayor duly received, and she outlined her reasons for submitting it.

She indicated that residents and shopowners of Lower Sunbury were strongly opposed to the introduction of car parking charges in Orchard Meadow and other named car parks. They unanimously feared the loss of trade at local shops when customers could park for free at other locations such as Sunbury Cross. The local service was vital to the community and was in danger of decline if the passing trade were lost.

The Petition requested the Council to reconsider its proposal for the introduction of car park charges to the Orchard Meadow and other named car parks and to allow them to remain free. It also stated that the petition of 44 signatures was in addition to 422 which were submitted to the Council by registered post on 30 January 2008 and approximately another 60 also recently sent by post. As we continue to receive more signatures we will submit them by the consultation closing date of 29 February 2008

The Leader of the Council advised that due to the objections received in relation to the lower Sunbury car parks the matter would be considered by the Executive at its March meeting and at that time consideration would be given to the petition submitted by Mrs Smale.

RESOLVED that in accordance with Standing Order 15.4 (c) the Petition stood referred to the next meeting of the Executive, without discussion.

51/08 MOTIONS

Under Standing Order 16.3, two Notices of Motion had been received. The first concerned Airtrack and the second concerned the Government's White Paper for a third runway at Heathrow.

1) Notice of Motion - Airtrack

Councillor I.J. Beardsmore proposed and Councillor Mrs C. Nichols seconded the following motion:

“Council notes the recent revelation that the proposed Airtrack route across Staines Moor will have overhead power cables supported by highly visible gantries.

Council resolves to oppose any Airtrack route across Staines Moor utilising overhead power cables and urges the use of the 3rd rail method to protect the visual amenity of the Moor.”

The deputy Leader of the Council, Councillor R.A. Smith-Ainsley responded:

“BAA is currently out to public consultation on the ‘preferred options’ for the new Airtrack route. This covers 4 possible routes across Staines Moor, 4 alternative options for a new Staines High Street Station, 3 possible alignments of Staines Chord and 3 options for a third platform at the existing Staines Station. In addition, the consultation material explains that there are three options for where the change over to third rail pickup can take place and the overhead pickup can stop. One of these options would be before the track gets to Staines Moor. This was clarified by BAA in their Consultation Brochure, first Addendum which was circulated to all concerned parties soon after the public consultation started.

As a result of this additional information, the public consultation period has been extended to 25 April. A full report and the Council's proposed response will be considered by the Executive prior to the end of this consultation period.

It is clear that the Council will need to give careful consideration to a wide number of environmental, social and economic impacts associated with the Airtrack proposal. It will also need to consider how these potential impacts can be adequately mitigated. The visual impact of overhead lines is only one of these. It is therefore inappropriate to make a resolution on this aspect at this early stage of the process. There are also a clear number of opportunities which arise as a result of the proposed Airtrack development which need to be considered.

There will be a further opportunity to comment on the 'proposed route' when a further round of public consultation takes place in autumn 2008. Full consideration can be given to all the issues at this point in time."

In accordance with Standing Order 18.6 (iii), Councillor J.D. Packman proposed and Councillor R.A. Smith-Ainsley seconded the following amendment:

"In principle we are concerned about overhead power lines but we will wait for the outcome of the consultation before coming to a decision on this proposal. Information regarding the height of cables etc must be provided by BAA."

The amendment was carried.

The amendment was then put as the substantive motion and again carried.

RESOLVED that

"The Council in principle has concerns about overhead power lines for the proposed Airtrack route across Staines Moor, but will wait for the outcome of the consultation before coming to a decision on this proposal. Information regarding the height of cables etc must be provided by BAA."

2) Notice of Motion – Heathrow

Councillor J.D. Packman proposed and Councillor Miss P.A. Broom seconded the following motion:

"This Council supports the Government's White Paper for a third runway at Heathrow subject to:

Compliance with mandatory EU air quality limits. No increase in the area affected by aircraft noise.

Surface transport improvements. Oppose mixed mode runway operation. Market value compensation for loss of property."

In accordance with Standing Order 21.4, a request was made by the deputy Leader of the opposition, Councillor I.J. Beardsmore, for the voting on the above matter to be recorded. The vote was as follows:

FOR (24)	Councillors F. Ayers, Miss M.M. Bain, S. Bhadye, M.L. Bouquet, Miss P.A. Broom, S.E.W. Budd, K. Chouhan, C.A. Davis, K.E. Flurry, G.E. Forsbrey, Mrs D.L. Grant, Miss N.A. Hyams, H.R. Jaffer, C.D.G. Kuun,
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	Mrs V.J. Leighton, D.L. McShane, E. O'Hara, J.D. Packman, Mrs J.M. Pinkerton, Mrs M.W. Rough, R.A. Smith-Ainsley, Mrs C.L. Spencer, H.A. Thomson and G.F. Trussler
AGAINST (9)	Councillors I.J. Beardsmore, Mrs E.M. Bell, R.B. Colison-Crawford, T.W. Crabb, Mrs S.A. Dunn, Mrs C.E. Nichols, L.E. Nichols, M.T. Royer and R.W. Sider
ABSTAIN (4)	Councillors A.P. Hirst, Mrs I. Napper Jack D. Pinkerton and Mrs P. Weston

The motion was carried.

RESOLVED that:

“This Council supports the Government's White Paper for a third runway at Heathrow subject to;

Compliance with mandatory EU air quality limits. No increase in the area affected by aircraft noise.

Surface transport improvements. Oppose mixed mode runway operation. Market value compensation for loss of property.”

52/08 ADDING CAPACITY AT HEATHROW: RESPONSE TO GOVERNMENT CONSULTATION

The Council considered the recommendation of the Executive on the Council's response to the Department for Transport consultation on Adding Capacity at Heathrow.

In accordance with Standing Order 11.1, Mrs Anne Damerell made a Statement to the Council, expressing her views on this recommendation, which is set out below:

“Your response to the DfT's questions is very reasonable and no doubt forms the basis for the qualified support of the third runway in your second recommendation. But Heathrow history is littered with broken promises and discarded conditions, as the T5 Inquiry inspector has been discovering. Qualified support is just support. So may I remind you of what you are supporting?

You are supporting the obliteration of Sipson and the destruction of over 700 families' homes. As County Councillor Burrell said, we would be up in arms if the runway was on the south side and wiped out Stanwell — does it make it all right if the victims live in Hillingdon?

You are supporting the exposure of more people to more noise, which spoils their lives and affects their health. As you say, there is no guarantee that planes will become quieter, and even if they do it won't compensate for being disturbed 150 times instead of 100 by planes going over. More Spelthorne people will be affected as the flight paths widen out to fit more planes in.

You are supporting the exposure of more people to more air pollution, from planes and from surface traffic, contrary to your own air quality management strategy. Air

pollution is damaging our lungs already, and needs to be reduced not increased — and again, as you say, the promised technological improvements are not guaranteed.

You are supporting adding about 25 million cars a year (ref page 109) to our roads, which are too full already, and Terminal 5 traffic still to come. 25 million a year is about 70 thousand extra passenger trips a day, plus more for staff and freight. How can all these extra cars be fitted in? And don't forget the workers. Yet more airport jobs are not such a bonus in a labour-shortage area: if expansion creates ten thousand jobs (ref page 147) then nine thousand of those workers will be driving in every day from elsewhere, making the traffic even worse.

You are supporting a substantial increase in carbon emissions, just when it is becoming clear that climate change is so serious and so urgent that we must do everything possible to reduce carbon emissions, not increase them. Our children, facing the threat of famine, flood and war, will hardly be able to believe that we just let all this happen and threw away their future.

So, ask yourselves, do you want to go down in the records as people who had a chance to oppose this, and didn't take it?"

The Leader of the Council thanked Mrs Damerell for the Statement but advised that a full and comprehensive debate on this matter had just been completed.

RESOLVED to:

1. Endorse the response to the Department for Transport Consultation on Adding Capacity at Heathrow, as set out at Appendix A to the report of the Deputy Chief Executive to the Executive on 12 February 2008;
2. Endorse making a qualified response in support of the third runway; and
3. Oppose mixed mode runway operation.

53/08 DETAILED BUDGET 2008/2009

The Council considered the recommendation of the Executive on the detailed Budget for 2008/2009 and a formal proposal on a Council Tax for 2008/2009.

The Mayor referred Members to the Budget Book [green cover] reflecting the decisions and recommendations made by the Executive on 12 February 2008 and the precepts being levied by Surrey County Council and the Surrey Police which had been circulated to all Members.

The Mayor gave consent under Standing Order 18.4 for the budget speech of each of the Group Leaders to exceed five minutes but not to exceed 10 minutes.

The Leader of the Council, Councillor J.D. Packman made a statement on the Budget and Council Tax and moved the recommendations set out in the Budget Book (green cover). This was seconded by Councillor M.L. Bouquet. The deputy Leader of the Opposition Group, Councillor I.J. Beardsmore also made a statement.

A copy of the Leader's and the opposition deputy Leader's statements were made available for other Members, the press and public at the meeting and are **attached at Appendices A and B to these Minutes respectively.**

The Leader of the Council, Councillor J.D. Packman moved and Councillor M.L. Bouquet seconded, the recommendations set out in the Budget Book (green cover).

- "1. To consider and approve the growth items, as set out in the report of the Chief Finance Officer.
2. To approve in support of an increase of 12p per week (3.9%) in the Spelthorne element of the Council Tax for 2008-2009 the following proposals:
 - a) The Revenue Estimates as set out in the report of the Chief Finance Officer be approved.
 - b) An amount not exceeding £237,600 be appropriated from General Reserves to support Spelthorne's local Council Tax for 2008-2009.
 - c) To note that the council tax base for the year 2008-2009 is 40,030 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 amounts be now calculated by the Council for the year 2008-2009, in accordance with Sections 32 and 33 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992.

(a)	£44,041,700	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)	£29,236,900	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)	£11,877,690	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)	£5,480,825	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)	£159.80	Being the sum (c) above less the amount at (d) above, all divided by the amount at 2(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. That the following amounts be now calculated by the Council for the year 2008-2009 in accordance with Section 36 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992.

Valuation Bands

A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£
106.53	124.29	142.04	159.80	195.31	230.82	266.33	319.60

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.

5. That it be noted that for the year 2008/2009 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 1992, for each of the categories of the dwellings shown below.

Precepting Authority	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£
Surrey CC	705.36	822.92	940.48	1058.04	1293.16	1528.28	1763.40	2116.08
Surrey Police	125.28	146.16	167.04	187.92	229.68	271.44	313.20	375.84

6. That, having calculated the aggregate in each case of the amounts at 3. and 4. above the Council, in accordance with Section 30 (2) of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, hereby sets out the following amounts as the amounts of Council Tax for the year 2008/2009 for each of the categories of dwellings shown below.

A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
937.17	1093.37	1249.56	1405.76	1718.15	2030.54	2342.93	2811.52

Under Standing Order 18.6 (iii), Councillor Mrs C.E. Nichols proposed and Councillor L.E. Nichols seconded the following amendment:

“In 2.2.2 on page 15 of the Blue Book Agenda, add at d)

That Appendix 2 (page 10 of the green cover Budget book) be amended in the following way:

Grounds Maintenance – Reduce the Budget by £20,000 to £1,4,13,200

Technical Projects – Reduce the Budget by £15,000 to £196,800

Reduce the income figure within Car Parks down to £623,200

to reflect the non implementation of new car parking charges.”

The amendment was lost.

The Mayor, Councillor A.P. Hirst, indicated that the meeting had lasted for 3 hours and in accordance with Standing Order 5.1, Councillor R.A. Smith-Ainsley moved and Councillor J.D. Packman seconded that the meeting continue to complete the business on the agenda.

RESOLVED that the meeting continue to consider the remaining items of business.

In accordance with Standing Order 21.4, a request was made by the deputy Leader of the opposition, Councillor I.J. Beardsmore, for the voting on the original motion to be recorded. The vote was as follows:

FOR (30)	Councillors F. Ayers, Miss M.M. Bain, S. Bhadye, M.L. Bouquet, Miss P.A. Broom, S.E.W. Budd, K. Chouhan, C.A. Davis, K.E. Flurry, G.E. Forsbrey, Mrs D.L. Grant, A.P. Hirst, Miss N.A. Hyams, H.R. Jaffer, C.D.G. Kuun, Mrs V.J. Leighton, D.L. McShane, Mrs I. Napper, E. O'Hara, J.D. Packman, Jack Pinkerton, Mrs J.M. Pinkerton, Mrs M.W. Rough, M.T. Royer, R.W. Sider, R.A. Smith-Ainsley, Mrs C.L. Spencer, H.A. Thomson, G.F. Trussler and Mrs P. Weston
AGAINST (7)	Councillors I.J. Beardsmore, Mrs E.M. Bell, R.B. Colison-Crawford, T.W. Crabb, Mrs S.A. Dunn, Mrs C.E. Nichols and L.E. Nichols,

The motion was carried.

RESOLVED:

1. To consider and approve the growth items, as set out in the report of the Chief Finance Officer.
2. To approve in support of an increase of 12p per week (3.9%) in the Spelthorne element of the Council Tax for 2008-2009 the following proposals:
 - a) The Revenue Estimates as set out in the report of the Chief Finance Officer be approved.
 - b) An amount not exceeding £237,600 be appropriated from General Reserves to support Spelthorne's local Council Tax for 2008-2009.
 - c) To note that the council tax base for the year 2008-2009 is 40,030 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 amounts be now calculated by the Council for the year 2008-2009, in accordance with Sections 32 and 33 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992.

(a)	£44,041,700	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)	£29,236,900	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)	£11,877,690	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)	£5,480,825	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)	£159.80	Being the sum (c) above less the amount at (d) above, all divided by the amount at 2(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. That the following amounts be now calculated by the Council for the year 2008-2009 in accordance with Section 36 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992.

Valuation Bands

A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
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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.

7. That it be noted that for the year 2008/2009 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 1992, for each of the categories of the dwellings shown below.

Precepting Authority	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£
Surrey CC	705.36	822.92	940.48	1058.04	1293.16	1528.28	1763.40	2116.08
Surrey Police	125.28	146.16	167.04	187.92	229.68	271.44	313.20	375.84

8. That, having calculated the aggregate in each case of the amounts at 3. and 4. above the Council, in accordance with Section 30 (2) of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, hereby sets out the following amounts as the amounts of Council Tax for the year 2008/2009 for each of the categories of dwellings shown below.”

A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
937.17	1093.37	1249.56	1405.76	1718.15	2030.54	2342.93	2811.52

54/08 CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2008/2009 – 2011/2012

The Council considered the recommendation of the Executive on the proposed Capital Programme for 2008/2009 – 2011/2012, in the light of the available resources and the Corporate Priorities.

RESOLVED that the Capital Programme for 2008/2009 – 2011/2012, as set out in the report of the Deputy Chief Executive to the Executive on 15 January 2008 be approved.

55/08 TREASURY MANAGEMENT STRATEGY STATEMENT AND ANNUAL INVESTMENT STRATEGY 2008/2009

The Council considered the recommendation of the Executive on the current Treasury Management position and on the setting of the Annual Investment Strategy and Prudential Indicators for 2008/2009 to 2010/2011.

RESOLVED that

1. the current Treasury Management position be noted; and
2. the setting of the Annual Investment Strategy and the Prudential Indicators for 2008/2009 to 2010/2011, as set out in the report of the Deputy Chief Executive(Chief Finance Officer) to the Executive on 15 January 2008 be approved.

56/08 CORPORATE PLAN 2008-2011 AND EXECUTIVE ARRANGEMENTS

The Council considered the recommendation of the Executive for a Corporate Plan 2008-2011 and for the appropriate Executive arrangements to be put in place, in order to achieve the aims and objectives of the Council.

RESOLVED to:

1. Adopt the Corporate Plan 2008-2011, as attached at Annex A to the report of the Chief Executive to the Executive on 12 February 2008; and
2. Agree to appropriate amendments being made to the Council's Constitution to adopt and reflect the Executive Portfolio arrangements, as attached at Annex B to the report of the Chief Executive to the Executive on 12 February 2008.
3. Authorise the Head of Corporate Governance to make the necessary amendments to the Council's Constitution.

57/08 LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK [LDF]

The Council considered the recommendation of the Executive on the Minutes and Recommendations from the Local Development Framework Working Party held on 16 January 2008.

Under Standing Order 18.6 (iii), Councillor I.J. Beardsmore proposed and Councillor Mrs C. E. Nichols seconded the following amendment:

Add to the recommendation at 6.2 d) on page 18 of the Blue Book agenda:

“ iv) To the Spatial description of the borough add the following at 2.321

Charlton Village

A compact and distinct linear community either side of the busy Charlton Road with strong sense of its own identity. Though most of the built environment is post war it features the oldest Public house in Spelthorne. The village is almost entirely surrounded by Green Belt associated with Mineral, Waste and Water Industries.

Re-word 6.13a of the Core LDF DPD to read:...

Between 2001 and 2006 Spelthorne built 431 dwellings in excess of its target. This alongside the Allocations DPD, outstanding planning permissions and other large sites identified in the Housing Trajectory, ensures the Council has approximately 12.5yrs of completed builds or identifiable sites from the adoption of this DPD (2008 to 2028). Housing sites included in the Allocations DPD will accord with the spatial strategy and policies of this DPD.

Current Paragraph...

6.13a The Allocations DPD will make a significant contribution to ensuring that, with outstanding planning permissions and other large sites identified in the Housing Trajectory, the Council has approximately 10 years worth of identifiable sites from the adoption of this DPD (2008 to 2028). Housing sites included in the Allocations DPD will accord with the spatial strategy and policies of this DPD.”

The amendment was lost.

In accordance with Standing Order 21.4, a request was made by the deputy Leader of the opposition, Councillor I.J. Beardsmore, for the voting on the original motion to be recorded. The vote was as follows:

FOR (20)	Councillors F. Ayers, Miss M.M. Bain, S. Bhadye, C.A. Davis, K.E. Flurry, G.E. Forsbrey, Mrs D.L. Grant, H.R. Jaffer, C.D.G. Kuun, Mrs V.J. Leighton, D.L. McShane, J.D. Packman, Jack Pinkerton, Mrs J.M. Pinkerton, Mrs M.W. Rough, R.W. Sider, R.A. Smith-Ainsley, Mrs C.L. Spencer, H.A. Thomson and G.F. Trussler
AGAINST (6)	Councillors I.J. Beardsmore, E.M. Bell, R.B. Colison-Crawford, T.W. Crabb, Mrs S.A. Dunn and Mrs C.E. Nichols
ABSTAIN (4)	Councillors M.L. Bouquet, A.P. Hirst, L.E. Nichols and M.T. Royer

RESOLVED that:

- a. Those who have made representations that have been deemed invalid be advised they will now be accepted and put before the Inspector.
- b. All existing representations to both Development Plan Documents [DPDs] remain as valid and the people be advised accordingly.
- c. The Core Strategy and Policies DPD, the Allocations DPD and the submission Proposals Map, be re-advertised following the same consultation arrangements as at the 'submission' stage.
- d. The Core Strategy and Policies DPD be amended as shown in the copy of the document set out in Appendix C to the LDF agenda report [16 January 2008] by:
 - i) 'saved' Local Plan policies being removed along with associated Appendices and references in the Implementation and Monitoring chapter.
 - ii) the following changes be identified in a 'tracked-changes' format:
 - additional text in Chapter 4 to further explain the spatial strategy
 - additional paragraph after paragraph 6.13 to confirm the role of the Allocations DPD
 - amendments to paragraphs 9.3 to 9.5 to clarify the role of Policy CO2 'Provision of Infrastructure for New Development'
 - factual or typographical corrections
 -
 - iii) amendments to the Advice Note on the Submission of the Core Strategy and Policies DPD – page i – to reflect:
 - the re-advertising process
 - changes being proposed
 - to confirm existing representations remain valid
 - those wishing to propose development of sites in the Green Belt make these to the Allocations DPD
 - those wishing a different strategy to the one of placing all development in the urban area, or supporting it, to make representation to Policy SP1.

- e) The Inspector be requested to assess the soundness of the 'submitted' documents taking account of the proposed amendments.
- f) The authority of officers to agree or advance alterations to the 'examination' of the DPDs to overcome objections or concerns, so long as they are in line with what the Council is seeking to achieve overall, be re-affirmed.
- g) The Council continue to use the 'submitted' documents for determining all planning applications subject to the amendments that are proposed.
- h) The Officers to keep the LDF Working Party informed on progress.

58/08 CHANGE IN PARKS BYELAWS

The Council considered the Executive recommendation on a review of the 1992 Byelaws.

RESOLVED that:

- 1. The new set of model byelaws shown at Appendix 6 to the report of the Deputy Chief Executive to the Executive on 12 February 2008 be approved; and
- 2. The Head of Corporate Governance be authorised to advertise these byelaws and forward them to the Secretary of State for confirmation.

59/08 CRIME AND DISORDER REDUCTION PARTNERSHIP - PARTNERSHIP PLAN 2008-2011

The Council considered the recommendation of the Executive on the Partnership Plan 2008-2011 of the Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership.

RESOLVED that the Partnership Plan 2008-2011, as attached at Appendix A to the report of the Chief Executive to the Executive on 12 February 2008 be approved by the Council in its capacity as a statutory member of the Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership.

60/08 CHOICE BASED LETTINGS [CBL] - DELEGATIONS TO OFFICERS

The Council considered the recommendation of the Executive on the cross boundary Choice Based Lettings [CBL] project requiring the assessment criteria for clients in housing need to be changed from points to banding in preparation for the introduction of CBL at the end of 2008 and as outlined in the report to the Executive on 12 February 2008.

RESOLVED that the appropriate amendments be made to the Council's Constitution, Delegation to Officers, to cover the following new delegated authority to the Deputy Chief Executive:

"To delegate authority to the Deputy Chief Executive, in consultation with the Housing Portfolio Holder, for the following:

- a. To approve the partnership agreement between the five partners;
- b. To approve changes that may need to be made to the banding scheme and the lettings policy; and

- c. To tender for the CBL IT package and approve the select list or appropriate number of suppliers.”

61/08 MEMBERS' ALLOWANCES

The Council considered the recommendation of the Executive to support the recommendations of the Independent Remuneration Panel appointed to consider Members' Allowances. The report from the Independent Panel had been circulated to all Members of the Council.

RESOLVED that with effect from 1st April 2008, the following Members' Allowances be paid:-

Basic Allowance		
Payable to all Members		£3938
Special Responsibility Allowances		
Leader		£9037
Deputy Leader		£6001
Other Executive Members (4 at present)		£3012
Chairmen of Overview and Scrutiny Committees (2)		£3012
Chairmen of Planning and Licensing Committees (2)		£3012
Opposition Group Leader		£3012

62/08 APPOINTMENT OF INDEPENDENT MEMBER

The Council considered the recommendation of the Independent Member Selection Panel on the appointment of an Independent non -elected member.

The Chairman of the Standards Committee, Mr Murray Litvak, thanked the Councillors who were members of the Panel for their contribution and the officers for their work in arranging the interviews.

RESOLVED:

- (a) To approve the appointment of Miss Sue Faulkner as independent non-elected member to the Standards Committee;
- (b) That the appointment be for a period to expire at the Council AGM in May 2009, when consideration would be given for a further four year term; and
- (c) To appoint Miss Sue Faulkner as Vice Chairman of the Standards Committee.

63/08 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.

64/08 AUDIT COMMITTEE

The Chairman of the Audit Committee, Councillor Jack .D. Pinkerton, presented his report, which outlined the matters the Committee had dealt with since the last Council meeting.

65/08 IMPROVEMENT AND DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

The Chairman of the Improvement and Development Committee, Councillor Mrs P. Weston, presented her report, which outlined the matters the Committee had dealt with since the last Council meeting.

66/08 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.

67/08 PLANNING COMMITTEE

The Vice-Chairman of the Planning Committee, Councillor H.R. Jaffer, presented his report, which outlined the matters the Committee had dealt with since the last Council meeting.

68/08 STANDARDS COMMITTEE

The Chairman of the Standards Committee, Mr Murray Litvak, presented his report, which outlined the matters the Committee had dealt with since the last Council meeting.

69/08 QUESTIONS ON WARD ISSUES

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

“The installation of CCTV in Kenyngton Manor Park has resulted in an intermittent service. Can you advise the current status of the CCTV service being provided and future plans to secure continuous coverage in the park?”

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

“The intermittent service from the CCTV at Kenyngton Recreation Ground has been entirely due to the equipment being stolen from Cedar House, Sunbury. This has resulted in pictures being unable to be transmitted.

It is obviously not sensible to highlight park security issues in a public meeting and, therefore, I know that officers have spoken to you separately on this issue. However, in order to improve security, we are currently working with a company to install a new CCTV system at Kenyngton Recreation Ground which will allow for several users to access the recorded footage via an internet link to the camera site. The footage could also be linked to the Control Centre at Safer Runnymede. We anticipate that this work should be completed in approximately three weeks.”

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

“In response to Spelthorne Borough Council's tender, the plan for extra-care homes on the Benwell Day Centre site is at a density approaching 200 per hectare, and with no amenity space. Bearing in mind that the Borough's first extra-care development - Beechwood Court - was built at half this proposed density, and Housing Corporation extra-care standards favour lower densities, why does the Portfolio Holder believe 200 homes per hectare is acceptable?”

The Portfolio Holder for Adult and Elderly Services, Councillor Mrs V.J. Leighton, responded as follows:

“For accuracy, the actual density of the proposed Benwell Day Centre is 170 dwellings per hectare. When flats are being built they will inevitably be at a much higher density than for houses. What also needs to be borne in mind, is that Extracare housing is a different concept, with the key issue being that the project is built to Department of Health Guidelines.

With respect to the amenity space, half of the flats have some form of balcony or patio and there will be a communal outdoor area which will be of high quality. In addition to the outdoor amenity space, there will also be a resident's lounge on the ground floor.

The Beechwood Court development was a replacement for sheltered housing on an existing site. It should be noted that the facilities are not the same and Beechwood does not have a day centre for the community.

In summary, the Benwell project is for the older person. Research shows that the facility is likely to be occupied by over 75's with differing care needs, and, as the facility will be built specifically to Department of Health Guidelines, the Benwell will not follow traditional planning guidance. Therefore, the Benwell will indeed be the Borough's first extra care facility and will be different from sheltered housing, nursing homes and residential homes. I have no doubt that the proposed building will provide an alternative choice and will enable older people, who would not otherwise be able to do so, to live independently, in their own home with their own front door.”

In accordance with Standing Order 14.2, Councillor Mrs C.E. Nichols asked the following supplementary question:

“Can I take it that in future, extra care homes (as in LDF 6) are going to be at a higher density?”

The Portfolio Holder for Adult and Elderly Services, Councillor Mrs V.J. Leighton, responded as follows:

“The figures have been calculated by the officers. Extra care housing is short in this part of Surrey. This is the first one. It is noted that extra care housing has to have a core number of units to work and a day centre element under Government guidelines. The A2 project has plans for another facility which will have a day centre. Residents are overjoyed at the size and amenity of the apartments afforded in this development.”

70/08 GENERAL QUESTIONS

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

“Will the Leader join me in congratulating the Headteacher, the staff and students of The Matthew Arnold School in being accredited as the most improved school in the country over the past three years in their GCSE results and Thamesmead School on achieving a second specialist status, that of mathematics and computing, and to Thomas Knyvett College on their progress over the past 2 to 3 years in coming out of special measures. And will he also agree that this is an accolade not only for the schools, but for the Borough of Spelthorne, and in doing so request that this Council forward a congratulatory letter to the Headteacher, Staff and Pupils”.

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

“I am very grateful to Councillor Sider for asking this particular question, which demonstrates the continuing improvement and high level of attainment of schools within the Borough.

As he rightly says The Matthew Arnold School has been named the most improved school in the country based on the past 3 years GCSE results. This has been recognised nationally at government level and it was also pleasing to see the school featured on regional television recently.

The change around has been remarkable and reflects the dynamism and leadership of the Headteacher, Jackie Pearson. Jackie joined the school as Head in 2001 and set out with a vision for the school to become the best in the country – as she says ‘being the most improved is a great step on the journey’.

She has gathered around her a formidable team of teachers and non teaching staff to ensure that the school improves on the lines the Governing Board and her required. Very many congratulations.

I would also like to take the opportunity to congratulate the Headteacher, staff and pupils at Thamesmead School who have achieved a second specialist status of mathematics and computing to add to its Performing Arts status. They are the first school in the Borough to do so.

Thirdly I would like to commend Thomas Knyvett College for the positive advances it has made over the last few years since being on special measures.

Indeed, we must congratulate all of the schools in the Borough who are all working hard to prepare our young people for the adult life and world of work. All 6 of our Secondary Schools have achieved a specialist status in one of the several disciplines, all of which will benefit the Spelthorne community. Bishop Wand has recently been re-designated as a Sports College as well as obtaining its best ever GCSE results.

Louise Duncan at Sunbury Manor School recently won a Regional Award for Headteacher of the Year. The school has recently achieved specialist status in Humanities. St. Paul’s College as well as being the first Spelthorne school to

achieve specialist status has been very prominent in the installation of VLEs (Virtual Learning Environments). The College has also struck up a partnership with the London Irish Rugby Academy to co-host the club's Advanced Apprenticeship in Sporting Scheme.

Young People are a key priority for the Council and the LSP and it is essential they are given a positive learning experience at school. Spelthorne is lucky in the calibre of teaching and non teaching staff we have at our schools.

The schools themselves are working together much more closely through the Spelthorne Confederation of Schools (Spelthorne Schools Together) to ensure that resources are shared and used more effectively and that high standard learning opportunities are available to all young people in the Borough. The relationship with schools and Spelthorne College has always been good – the opportunity offered through the merger with Brooklands College with a state of the art campus and facilities in Ashford, will add further to the continuous drive for improvement.

I am proud that the Borough Council has developed excellent working relationships with schools/colleges in the Borough over many years at Headteacher, teacher and pupil level and we have seen much collaboration between the schools and council on many community projects. This is unusual I think for a District or Borough Council.

Returning to the 3 schools mentioned in particular - The Matthew Arnold School, Thamesmead School and Thomas Knyvett College, I would agree that the Council should send a congratulatory letter to each school and also suggest that they might be hand delivered officially by the Mayor, the Portfolio Holder for Children and Young People Services and myself.

Having said that, I think the other 3 Secondary Schools mentioned deserve a congratulatory letter as well."

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

"Agenda item 4 (c) of the Executive report dated 23 May 2006 carried a recommendation, which included that

- (1). The Council proceed with a Street Scene Enforcement scheme.
- (2) That approval be given to the appointment of 2 Street Scene Officers to work within Direct Services,
- (3) That dog fouling, dog control and litter be the initial priorities, and that further details as to how those can best be addressed using the new powers be submitted, including the making of necessary orders; and
- (4) That three Members from the Performance Management and Review Committee be appointed to work with Officers in developing and monitoring the scheme.

The report went on to say that there were new powers to replace the previous system of byelaws and repeal the Dogs (Fouling of Land Act) 1996 and cover 5 new offences which included the requirement to make a Dog Control Order to be able to prosecute offences which included failing to remove dog faeces. Paragraph 988 of the minutes of that meeting resolved that approval be given to the appointment of

two Street Scene Officers to work within Direct Services, and that dog fouling, dog control and litter be the initial priorities, and that further details as to how those can best be addressed using the new powers under the Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Act 2005 be submitted, including the making of the necessary orders.

Can the Portfolio Holder inform me what action has been taken by the Council to implement the recommendations of the aforesaid report with regard to dog fouling in Spelthorne Parks, and will he agree with me that such fouling by dogs and litter is a menace to society and all those who use our parks, and can he also inform me whether there have been any prosecutions under the terms of the Act?"

Due to the lateness of the hour Councillor R.W. Sider indicated he was happy to receive a written reply to his question.

For record purposes the response which would have been given by the Portfolio Holder for the Environment, Councillor G.E. Forsbrey is set out below:

"Thank you for your question Councillor Sider. Since they have been appointed, the two Street Scene Officers have concentrated their efforts on visiting areas where there have been problems with fouling on footpaths. They have been encouraging dog owners to be responsible by putting up signs, letters through doors, and personal visits where required. Packs encouraging responsible dog ownership are available and have been widely delivered. This has been generally successful, however, if problem areas are identified in the future, special efforts will be made in those areas to reduce or remove the problems.

I would agree that all the offences identified under the Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Act 2005 can be considered 'a menace to society'. I would also confirm that the Council is using this legislation to improve the street scene in Spelthorne. There have not been any prosecutions as yet, but advising offenders of the potential for prosecution has, we think, been successful in changing behaviour.

I would recommend that the Council continues to take this approach to educate and persuade before we move to more forceful measures in the future."

Councillor R.B. Colison-Crawford had submitted a question regarding on street parking and the criteria for allocating parking wardens to the area but as he had received an answer prior to the Council meeting, he withdrew the question.

Under Standing Order 14, Councillor I.J. Beardsmore asked the following question on behalf of Councillor C.V. Strong:

"The Leader will recall that a question was asked at the December 2007 Council meeting concerning the new national planning application form.

Could the Leader explain whether the Executive will be given the chance to consider the adoption of the national planning application form? Could he also state when the consultation with local residents will start?"

Due to the lateness of the hour Councillor I.J. Beardsmore indicated he was happy to receive a written reply to his question.

For record purposes the response which would have been given by the Leader of the Council, Councillor J.D. Packman is set out below:

“As Councillor Strong will recall, at the last Council meeting I confirmed that officers were in the process of drawing up the ‘local list’ of requirements which applicants will be required to submit along with their planning applications.

This process has now been completed and considered by officers. It is intended that consultation will commence with our planning agents in the week commencing 25 February. The proposed ‘local list’ will also be posted on the Council’s website in draft form for other interested parties to consider.

It is not intended to specifically consult with local residents or one time users of the service on the proposed changes. However, by placing the draft ‘local list’ on the website people will be able to read it and comment. This is because we believe that the additional information will only be of use to professional planning agents, rather than the general public.

The consultation period will last for 14 days, after which officers will consider any comments received, and adapt the ‘local list’ if considered appropriate.

You also ask whether the Executive will be given the chance to consider the adoption of the national planning application form. This new form will be mandatory and the Council has no choice whether to accept it or not. As such, there is little merit in considering whether to adopt the form or not. However, a report will go to Executive in the near future to advise them of the outcome of this process.

I trust this clarifies the issue sufficiently.”

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

“All members are no doubt aware that Spelthorne is adjacent to the new London low emission zone. Currently more than 10% of commercial vehicles fail the EU emissions levels required to enter the zone without charge. Given the concerns within Spelthorne regarding air pollution could the members please be informed if there are vehicles in the Spelthorne Fleet or vehicles belonging to its main contractors (principally grounds maintenance), which currently fail to meet the EU standards. If there are any such vehicles, could members be supplied with the numbers of effected vehicles and the target dates for their replacement.”

Due to the lateness of the hour Councillor Mrs E.M. Bell indicated she was happy to receive a written reply to her question.

For record purposes the response which would have been given by the Deputy Leader of the Council, Councillor R.A. Smith-Ainsley is set out below:

“All Spelthorne Council vehicles meet the levels set in the London low emission zone. Nearly all the fleet currently meet the Euro 4 emission levels and all the fleet will do so by the end of 2009 when we replace our last three oldest vehicles. The next replacement programme will be targeting Euro 5 emission levels during 2010 / 2011 and we would expect that target to also be achieved, as technical advances in diesel engines continue.

The current grounds maintenance contractor's vehicles are less than 3.5 tonnes and would also meet the requirements of the London low emission zone. Furthermore, the new grounds maintenance contract will build in low emission requirements and require consideration of the use of vehicles powered by alternative fuels such as electricity where possible.”

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

“Please would the Portfolio holder provide an update on the latest plans for the Charlton municipal waste site. In particular, how firm is Surrey County Council's plan for a food and green waste processing plant on this site? Will it require extra land, does it preclude an incinerator at Charlton, and how much extra traffic will it generate in the area?”

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

“Councillor Nichols will probably be aware that, just before Christmas, Surrey County Council published the Inspectors' Report on the Examination of the Surrey Waste Plan. In so far as Charlton Lane is concerned the Inspectors noted that, within the existing site boundary, the site could be developed without affecting the openness of the Green Belt any further. They considered the site offers great potential for combining waste management facilities and that further development could be justified on the grounds of very special circumstances. Around 2.5 hectares of the site could be used for composting of kitchen waste. They also concluded there was limited potential for a small scale energy from waste plant. The joint Municipal Waste Management Strategy also identifies Charlton Lane as a possible suitable location for in-vessel composting.

Surrey County Council is, I understand, still considering some specific issues arising from the Inspectors' recommendations and a report is due to be taken to their Executive. This will recommend the approach the Council should take. There is currently no indication when the Plan will be adopted.

The County Council, (as the Waste Disposal Authority) is evaluating the potential for the use of Charlton Lane in the light of the Inspectors' report. No firm decision has been taken and no detailed plans have been published by Surrey County Council for any food or green waste processing at the Charlton Lane site. Planning permission was, however, granted in 2006 for the redesign of the Community Recycling Facility and it is understood that work should start on 19 May 2008 with completion in early September 2008. Any new proposals for processing food or green waste by means

of in-vessel composting at the site would be the subject of a detailed planning application. There would have to be extensive consultation before any decision would be taken.

The Inspectors did not consider that traffic generation was, of itself, a limiting factor in considering development of the site. They did consider that highway impacts should be examined during the detailed planning process.

In summary, I suspect Councillor Nichols is aware that Surrey County Council is currently evaluating the Inspectors' report and no decision has been made by the County Council at this time."

Councillor John Packman, Leader of the Council

Council Tax Speech 2008

What a year! The new Council was elected at the beginning of May and the Executive quickly realised the extent of the job of balancing the budget.

Despite all efforts in recent years, which have identified savings of £5,000,000 over four years, the outline budget exercise showed that the estimated deficit for 2008/09 was predicted to be £1,300,000. The early budget planning process was particularly difficult because of three factors, the impact of which has only become clear in the last couple of months – the grant settlement, the new concessionary fare scheme and the valuation of the Pension fund.

Local government had been told on a number of occasions that we had never had it so good – in terms of Central Government funding and given that the replacement to the Gershon 2.5% year on year savings initiative was replaced with a 3% cashable savings, we viewed this year's settlement with some concern. The Government is now giving three year settlements to local authorities, and whilst on the negative side, if it is a very poor settlement, one is stuck with it for three years; on the positive side, it does enable more effective forward planning over the outline period.

In Spelthorne's case, we have been awarded a measly 1% increase in grant for 2008/09, followed by half a % in each of the following two years. In real terms, this represents a **funding cut of 6%** over the three years. Hardly "inflation busting" as the Department for Communities and Local Government

headed its press release confirming the grant settlement to Council Tax payers.

By way of grant funding, we will receive just £63.09 and nine pence per head of population for 2008/09; this is 19% below the national average of £77.94. This means we are losing £1,300,000 against the average Council. Districts did particularly badly in the settlement with 40% limited to a 1% grant increase. I have, of course, protested against the harsh treatment of district councils, but needless to say I have not received a response!

The poor funding settlement which councils receive here in the South East year after year, combined with increasing financial pressures, highlights the need for a shake up of the Council Tax system. Money raised locally should remain locally, making councils less reliant on Government grants, which all too often come with strings attached. Surely the time has come when money spent on local services is accountable to the local community.

Members will be aware of the Government's proposal to introduce changes to the concessionary fares scheme, such that over 60 year olds (and the disabled) will be entitled to travel free on a bus anywhere in the UK. The cost of each journey will ultimately be borne by the local authority in whose area the journey starts. The Government has given some grant funding to cover the additional costs, but it is based on a formula rather than the actual additional cost borne by an authority. This is welcome news for our residents; I just wish this Government could be up front and honest when it announces

with a fanfare of trumpets the financing of such schemes. You will not, I am sure, be surprised when I tell you that in our case we are required to contribute £76,000, which is not covered by the grant.

The other issue, which is out of our control, is Pensions. Actuaries have just completed their review of the Surrey Pension Fund. Whilst the past service deficit has improved, resulting in a £220,000 reduction for the Council, the employers' ongoing contribution rate has increased from 12.3% to 15.8%, adding £250,000 onto the Council's budget and thereby resulting in a net increase of £33,000. An important factor contributing towards the ongoing contribution increase is the impact of the new national Local Government Pension Scheme, commencing on 1st April 2008, with the Government selecting the most expensive of the four options they consulted on. The impact on Spelthorne of the new Pension scheme accounts for roughly a third of the increase (1.1%) in the employer's contribution rate.

The Audit Commission have complimented us on our financial management providing value for money. In their annual Use of Resources assessment, they stated that we continue to have strong arrangements for Financial Reporting and Financial management, and that "the annual budget and medium term financial strategy provide a solid foundation for strategic financial planning processes, which are underpinned by sound budgetary control mechanisms"

Thankfully, we took a very prudent and perhaps pessimistic view of these issues at the outline stage last September, which has stood us in good stead for achieving a balanced budget.

In October 2006 we agreed a new Financial Strategy, which has set a framework for our financial decisions over the outline budget period. A key issue of the last five years has been reducing our dependence on reserves. 2007/08 was to have been our last year of using general reserves. However, in the light of the big challenges we face and the fact that some of the efficiency measures have long lead times, we agreed to relax the policy and allow a small amount to be used in 2008/09. Colleagues will note that we will be using a maximum of £237,000 next year, although I believe it is likely the actual amount used will be a lot less. Thereafter, we will cease to use general reserves to support the revenue budget.

This year we also adopted a Reserves Policy. Given the importance of interest earnings to our budget and the need to ensure that our future financial planning is both robust and sustainable, the policy set out the need to maintain a minimum level of reserves and the treatment of interest earned by those reserves.

The adoption of this policy is an important step in ensuring that our financial future is sustainable.

On this theme, I am also pleased to report that the decision we took just over a year ago to manage our investment portfolio inhouse, using advisors, has really paid off and we are still outperforming the City Managers who used to do it for us!

The Members will be aware that one of the ways we have been achieving savings is the Business Improvement Process. This started in 2006/07 and is looking at all the services provided by the Council with the aim of delivering efficiency savings.

We are over half way through that process and overall the target savings we set ourselves have been achieved.

Some areas, for example, savings on the Ground Maintenance contract, will take a bit longer to achieve, but I am confident that by the end of the process we will be delivering high quality services for Spelthorne residents and at a cheaper price.

A further area I want to mention is the review of our assets. We continue to review our assets to ensure that we make best use of these and that they are not surplus to requirements. Work is still progressing on the sale of Bridge Street; and the Stanwell and Benwell Day Centre sites. 2008 will be a very exciting year. Work will start on the development of the new Health & Community Centre in Stanwell and the Day Centre and Extra Care housing scheme at Benwell is also expected to start in 2008.

A lot has been happening with the Stanwell New Start Scheme and I am anticipating an outline planning application being received very soon. This exciting project will deliver high quality housing and improved community facilities in an area of the Borough which was badly in need of investment.

Perhaps one of the biggest projects for 2007 was the Alternate Weekly Collection. This programme has been an undoubted success. We now have 85% of households fully operational and this has enabled us to increase our recycling rate to around 33%.

The project relied on good working relationships between Members and Officers and good cross working through the Council. The process involved sound financial procurement (of the bins, vehicles and recycling outlet), strategic overview, operation reliability and good communication, both internally and externally. Following on from this success we are now moving to reduce the number of households not on the scheme and to introduce a kitchen waste collection service that will compliment the Alternate Weekly Collection. In all it has cost us £1,300,000 capital (one off costs) and an additional £250,000 more each year – again with no financial help from this Government.

I just want to mention a few projects and challenges that are in the very early planning stages. Staines Town Centre is our primary shopping centre within the borough and in the forthcoming year we will be responding to the

challenges of major development proposals and Airtrack. As community leaders our interest is at all times to safeguard the well-being of our residents by ensuring that we achieve the benefits from development and at the same time mitigating against the drawbacks. Staines' unique location offers many economic opportunities and this party will work to realise a vision for Staines that maximises the prosperity of local people and local businesses. To this end we have set aside £60,000 to promote a vision for Staines as a vibrant place to live, work and visit. Central to this vision is an ambition to overcome the current and future traffic problems in the town and we are setting aside a proportion of this money to commission a transportation study for Staines that will inform future decisions on development in the Town Centre. We already have the support of the County Council and the South East of England Development Agency and we will, over the next year, work with all of our partners in the Town Centre to realise this vision and to make it happen.

At the same time as this work is ongoing in Staines, we will also be promoting the economic life in our secondary shopping centres. The towns and villages of our borough serve as important local shopping centres and we ignore them at our peril. They face unique challenges of their own, as we have seen with the recent programme of post office closures. The sustainability of local shopping centres will be a key part of our programme of ensuring the continued economic success of the borough. In this year's budget we have committed £100,000 of our capital programme to look at the options for future success and vibrancy of three important local centres - Sunbury Cross, Shepperton and Ashford. Consultation with the community is key to this and

whilst the outcomes for each centre will vary, the feature common to them is the commitment of the Council to discuss the opportunities and constraints in each town or village with the people who live and work there. We will also seek to work in partnership with all the statutory agencies and the voluntary sector so that we can attain the best solution for each area.

Finally Mr Mayor, I would like to turn to our budget and Council Tax proposals for 2008/09. Balancing this budget has presented us with very big challenges. The Council continues to be in a strong financial position, but this is largely due a prudent approach to spending and saving. In reviewing our budget proposals for 2008/09 we have left no stone unturned. At the first cut of the budget we had to look for savings of £1,300,000 and with an amalgam of measure we now have a balanced budget. The focus is on the services we deliver and how we deliver them.

In recommending a Council Tax increase we have had to be cognisant of the risk of capping. This Government has clearly stated that it expects to see average Council Tax levels substantially below 5%. Many authorities have interpreted this as no more than 4.5%. On this basis the Executive is proposing a 3.9% increase, which is consistent with our policy.

Our net expenditure next year is projected to be £14,562,000. Grants of approximately £687,000 and Business Rates of approximately £4,900,000 produce around £5,662,000 and we plan to use £2,400,000 from the interest earnings and reserves. This leaves £6,427,000 to be met from the Council

Tax, which, after taking account of £141,750 deficit from this year's collection fund and a tax base of 40,030 properties at Band D, will require a Band D Council Tax of £160.37 to be levied. This is an increase of 3.9% which equates to 12p per week at Band D.

To our own part of the Band D Council Tax, the precepts from Surrey County Council and the Surrey Police will be added, which are £1,058.04 and £187.92 respectively. This gives a total Band D Council Tax of £1,405.76 - an overall increase of 5.3%, which equates to an increase of £71 per year.

It is recommended that by increasing Spelthorne's element of Council Tax by 3.9%, it would achieve a balance between ensuring we are not capped, and still achieving a reasonable increase in tax base.

In conclusion, I would like to place on record my thanks to all Executive Members and Officers for their support and assistance in preparing this budget.

I now formally move the adoption of Minute No 1283 of the Executive meeting of 12 February 2008, as amended by the Budget Book and the separate paper previously detailing the precepts by the County Council and Surrey Police, which has been circulated to all Members.

Speech by Councillor Colin Strong, Lib Dem Leader of the Opposition In Response to the Budget proposed for 2008/09

I have pleasure in responding to the Leader's speech formally moving the motion to set the Council Tax for the year 2008/2009. But first I would like to comment on the past year.

In my speech 12 months ago I observed that both the Stanwell and Benwell Day Centres had closed in December 2006 even though no planning application had been submitted. I also remarked that residents would be able to express themselves via the ballot box. It is now 14 months since the closures and we are still waiting for the applications. Meanwhile our older residents in Stanwell and Sunbury have been denied use of perfectly good centres.

The original timetable was for the new buildings to be open by late 2008. Under the current Conservative administration this timetable has slipped repeatedly and the latest information is that will both be open in Spring next year

The new administration started badly last May by appointing the chairmen of Stanwell and Sunbury Area Forums from outside the areas. Questions were rightly asked by local residents. Although the area forums are non-political we believe strongly that the chair should be appointed from amongst the members who represent wards within the area concerned.

Then in July the Executive approved and issued the Emergency Response Plan to all members. It was soon apparent to both myself and Cllr Beardsmore that the confidential document had serious errors and flaws. We noticed, for instance, that the two key councillors named to be contacted both lost their seats in May. We worked on locating the errors and passed our views to the relevant officers who subsequently issued revisions.

It should be noted that my e-mail to the Deputy Leader dated July 28th and copied to all members asking what action he was going to take to investigate why the errors occurred has not yet produced a reply. The Emergency plan is typical of Conservative-rule in Spelthorne – approved and issued to interested parties without any prior consultation or scrutiny by knowledgeable Councillors.

Moving on to the Alternate Weekly Collection (AWC).

At the June Council meeting I sought an assurance from the Leader that the final AWC go decision of the Executive would be placed before Council as a recommendation. Unfortunately the Leader declined the opportunity to involve all 39 members in democratic debate. Undeterred we used our powers to call-in the item to scrutiny. Although we support AWC our concern was to ensure that the roll-out of the bins would be successful; that residents could ask for smaller bins and the recycling contract to be signed with Grundon to be properly scrutinised. The call-in meeting on August 1st showed clearly the depth of the differences in attitude between Conservative and Liberal Democrat members.

Scrutiny is about holding the Executive to account and acting as a critical friend. The Conservatives hardly scrutinised the decision at all but instead made party political comments and one Tory Councillor cross-examined me instead. We did, however, manage to resolve a number of areas but the Tories prevented scrutiny of the proposed recycling contract by ending the meeting prematurely. It should be documented that at no time did the proposed recycling contract worth in excess of £300,000 receive the attention it deserved. It was shown to the task group for information only; never considered by a scrutiny committee and the contract never came before the Executive.

We also expressed our concern at the winding up of the waste task group just as the AWC project was rolling out. It is our concern that without this task group the impetus to improve our waste reduction and recycling performance beyond the required 40% will falter and with it the opportunity to improve on the councils performance.

Nevertheless from an operational point of view it should it should be acknowledged that the roll-out of the bins went by and large went smoothly and the Liberal Democrat group would like to place on record its thanks to the officers in undertaking successfully the large project of introducing the new waste and recycling scheme.

The LDF

The then leader of the Council claimed that the LDF was being produced by experts. It is a pity that I can no longer hold the gentleman to account for the shambles that has followed. At the April 2007 Council meeting a number of our amendments were rejected and as the minutes clearly show the debate was curtailed by the Conservatives.

At the time of the meeting the LDF was a document with many tracked changes and I had great difficulty in securing a copy. Many Conservative Councillors voted for the LDF without even reading the document. In contrast the Liberal Democrat group read the document, voted against the LDF and maintains its opposition to this day. The LDF must go through an examination in public (EIP) presided over by a government appointed Inspector. Following the the first LDF pre-examination meeting serious problems were revealed which necessitated a second pre-examination meeting. The Upshot of this is because of serious failings in both Process and Policy our LDF has been delayed by 9 months.

As a result of trying to rush the LDF through and not taking the trouble to listen to advice and get it right first time, the door has been opened to a review of the green belt, which could make it harder to defend in future. This must be a matter of great concern to all of us.

BUDGET

I turn now to the finance proposals as shown in the green book.

Last year the government threatened to cap any authority that increased their element of the Council Tax by more than 5%. This year the warning is for rises substantially below 5%.

The Conservatives like to portray themselves as prudent managers of the Council's purse. In 2005 they had set themselves the target of zero contribution from reserves by the year 2008/09 .

Instead the budget before us has the Council drawing down the reserves to the tune of £1million as shown in Appendix 1 of the green book. The £1million is comprised of the following line items:

Reserves – General	£237,000
Reserves - New Schemes Fund / HIF	£291,000
Direct Services BIP contribution	£300,000
Growth items funded from reserves	£218,000

It should be noted that

The direct service bussiness improvement contribution of 300K is actually the money receive from selling off the commercial waste service. This is yet another example of Conservatives selling the Family Silver to fund currrent revenue. More subtle but in some ways more damaging is the way they are mortgaging the furure by capitalising part of the revenue Account. For example the decision of the executive last november to no longer credit interest to the capital Fund but instead move to the revenue side.

In short this budget is a time bomb of creative accounting. The Liberal Democrats would be irresponsible to support it.

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