

MINUTES OF THE SPELTHORNE BOROUGH COUNCIL MEETING

The Meeting of the Borough Council held in the Council Chamber, Council Offices, Knowle Green, Staines on Thursday 21 July 2011 at 7.30pm

Present:

Ayers F.	Forbes-Forsyth P.C.	Napper Mrs I.
Ayub A.	Forsbrey G.E.	Patel D.
Bannister Mrs C.A.	Francis M.P.	Patterson A.C.
Beardsmore I.J.	Frazer C.M.	Pinkerton Mrs J.M. (Deputy Leader)
Budd S.E.W. (The Mayor)	Friday A.E.	Rough Mrs M.W.
Bushnell Ms M.	Gething N.	Sider R.W.
Colison-Crawford R.B.	Gohil D.	Smith-Ainsley R.A. (Deputy Leader)
Davis C.A.	Grant Mrs D.L.	Spencer Mrs Caroline
Dunn R.D.	Harman A.C.	Strong C.V.
Dunn Mrs S.A.	Leighton Mrs V.J. (Leader)	Taylor S.
Evans T.J.M.	Madams Ms M.	Watts R.
	Mitchell A.J.	Webb Mrs S.

Mr M. Litvak, Chairman of the Standards Committee
Miss S. Faulkner, Vice-Chairman of the Standards Committee

Councillor S.E.W. Budd, the Mayor, in the Chair

195/11 APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Ms P.A. Broom, Mrs C.E. Nichols and Ms J.R. Sexton.

196/11 MINUTES

The minutes of the Annual meeting held on 26 May 2011 were approved as a correct record, subject to the inclusion of Mr M. Litvak, Chairman of the Standards Committee and Ms S. Faulkner, Vice-Chairman of the Standards Committee in the list of those in attendance.

197/11 SOUTH EAST EMPLOYERS CHARTER FOR MEMBER DEVELOPMENT

The Mayor, Councillor S.E.W. Budd, called upon the Leader, Councillor Mrs V.J. Leighton, the Deputy Leader of the Liberal Democrats, Mrs S.A. Dunn, and the Chief Executive Roberto Tambini, to re-sign the Statement of the Council's Commitment to the South East Employers Charter for Member Development to signify the Borough Council's commitment to the principles of the Elected Member Development Charter. This was then signed in the presence of the Council.

198/11 ANNOUNCEMENTS FROM THE MAYOR

Making a Difference Award

The Mayor announced that Spelthorne Council had received a Making a Difference Award at a ceremony held on 13 July 2011 at Surrey County Council.

The Making a Difference Awards were given by the County Council's Employability service to employers who had shown exceptional commitment to supporting people in the workplace who had learning difficulties and autism.

Spelthorne Council was recognised for providing work placements for people with learning difficulties, at its day centres in Ashford, Shepperton, Staines and Sunbury. The Council gave individuals the opportunity to work in a variety of roles which helped them to gain practical skills and experience whilst also improving their social skills and self confidence. In a number of cases the experience had led to paid work for the people concerned.

The Mayor presented an award to Jan Kinsella, manager at Fordbridge day centre, Ashford, on behalf of the Council and in particular, the Independent Living Team.

Flame Awards

Sports and Leisure Management Ltd. (SLM), who run the Spelthorne and Sunbury Leisure Centres, were named Leisure Centre Operator of the Year at the Fitness Industry Association Flame awards on 13 July 2011.

This was the second year running that they had received the award and it was a fantastic accolade and recognition of the great work that was going on in the company.

In their absence the Council joined the Mayor in congratulating them on their achievement and showed its appreciation in the usual way.

Planned Mayoral Events

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

- Charity Golf Day at Ashford Manor – 2 August 2011. Non-players were welcome to attend a dinner in the evening;
- Dining Club at Mama Mia's restaurant in Staines – 22 September 2011.

199/11 ANNOUNCEMENTS FROM THE LEADER

The Leader, Mrs V.J. Leighton informed the Council of some supplementary estimates which she had made in relation to items of expenditure which were not in the budget.

She had agreed to the replacement of the PA (public announcement) system in the Goddard Room which would be an improvement on the existing poor acoustics and enable those with hearing problems to clearly hear what was being said in meetings. It was also likely that the equipment could be made available to community organisations using the Council's meeting rooms. The outlay for this new system was just under £15k.

She had also agreed to the installation of temporary toilets in Laleham Park over the summer, for a modest expenditure of £5,000, which would be a significant improvement to one of the Borough's most popular attractions. Additionally, the ladies toilets on the first floor west wing of the Knowle Green building were inadequate for the current number of staff they served and were in need of

refurbishment, so she had agreed to additional facilities and £18,000 being spent on this.

200/11 ANNOUNCEMENTS FROM THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE

Roberto Tambini, the Chief Executive, announced to the Council that Nigel Lynn, his Deputy Chief Executive, would be leaving on 3 October 2011 to take up the post of Chief Executive with Arun District Council. He had started with Spelthorne Borough Council in April 2003 as Strategic Director, progressing to Deputy Chief Executive in June 2008. Mr Tambini said he had many achievements to be proud of during his time with the Council and invited the Council to join him in wishing Nigel Lynn well in his new position. On behalf of the Conservative Group, the Leader Councillor Mrs V.J. Leighton congratulated Nigel on his appointment, noting that it would be a smooth transition for him from Spelthorne to Arun DC because he was going from one Conservative council to another. The Leader of the Liberal Democrats, Councillor I.J. Beardsmore, also offered Nigel his congratulations. Councillor Beardsmore added that he was sorry to see him go; he had a great deal of respect for Nigel, who could be relied upon for his conscientious, hard working attitude and over the years he had built up a track record of consistency and reliability and of always giving of his best.

201/11 QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

The Mayor reported that under Standing Order 13, one question had been received from a member of the public; Mr A. McLuskey of 17 Diamedes Avenue, Stanwell. A response was given by the Deputy Leader of the Council, Councillor R.A. Smith-Ainsley who confirmed that a copy would be sent to Mr. McLuskey.

Question from Mr A. McLuskey:

“Is the Council happy that Spelthorne Planning Committee has given planning permission for a development in Diamedes/St Anne’s Avenues in Stanwell where the approach roads are approximately **a yard** short in respect of width regulations for fire tender access and relating to which there are still a number of other important and unresolved issues?”

Response by the Deputy Leader, Councillor R.A. Smith-Ainsley:

“Thank you for your question Mr. McLuskey. As you know, the Planning Committee has authority to determine any planning application which comes before it, and I understand that the schemes you refer to were approved by the Committee in 2009. The Committee, in making their decision, considered all the relevant planning issues and I am confident that they made their decision on this basis. The issue of fire tender access is covered under building regulations. It was not a matter which the Planning Committee needed to consider.

A building regulations full plans application was submitted to this Council on 10 June 2011. In line with government legislation, the developer (in this case A2D) is only required to give a minimum of 48 hours advance notice that they wish to start building. However, A2D’s architect has already been in discussions with the Council’s building control service, who have consulted with Surrey Fire and Rescue to ensure adequate fire tender access is provided. I understand that, following these discussions, revised plans have been submitted which address this matter.

A building control approval was conditionally passed on 15 July 2011. 12 conditions were imposed one of which requires full details to be provided of the construction and surface finishes to vehicular access routes for fire brigade vehicles. Inspections will be carried out at certain stages of the work.

Although this is a national building regulation issue, and the planning department did what was expected of it in reference to the national norm, as a result we have decided that in future, planning will check all applications with a new access and consult building control for their professional advice where appropriate, and highlight to developers if there is a fire access issue at the earliest opportunity in the process, so developers resolve the issue at the design stage before any planning permission is granted.

Regarding this matter, planning and building control have been liaising regularly since the building control application was submitted.

Your question to Council also refers to a number of other important and unresolved issues without specifying what these are. However, I am aware that discussions have been taking place between residents and A2Dominion regarding the refurbishment of existing storage sheds on the site. We have already advised this is not a matter for the Council and the planning department, as permission is not required for this. I understand that if residents do not wish for their sheds to be refurbished (e.g. new roofs) then they do not have to have this done.

You received a letter today from Miss Morgan, Head of Planning and Housing Strategy, which states that the Council takes the view that all the matters you have raised have been properly addressed.

Therefore, the Council does not intend to enter into any further correspondence or discussion with you on this matter.”

202/11 RECOMMENDATION FROM THE AUDIT COMMITTEE

The Council considered a recommendation from the Audit Committee on an amendment to the Antifraud and Corruption Strategy to incorporate the Bribery Act 2010 which came into effect on 1 July 2011. This Act reformed the criminal law to provide a new scheme of bribery offences and was applicable to both private and public sector organisations.

The Audit Committee also recommended an amendment to paragraph 15 of the Strategy in relation to informing Cabinet members of disciplinary action taken and cases referred to the police.

RESOLVED that Council approves the changes to the Antifraud and Corruption Strategy to incorporate the Bribery Act 2010 and other minor amendments.

203/11 REPORT FROM THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL

The Leader of the Council, Councillor Mrs V.J. Leighton, presented her report which outlined the various matters the Cabinet had decided since the last Council meeting.

She gave an update on the item concerning Combined Heat and Power. On clarification of the tender it had become clear that the savings expected by the Council might not be delivered and the contract had been withdrawn. There were many other options open to the Council and the Leisure Centre which might produce greater savings in terms of cost and energy consumption. An options appraisal was being prepared. It was considered that a re-tendering process would better secure the Council's desired outcomes.

204/11 REPORT FROM THE CHAIRMAN OF THE AUDIT COMMITTEE

The Chairman of the Audit Committee, Councillor Mrs M.J. Madams, presented her report, which outlined the matters the Committee had decided since the last Council meeting.

205/11 REPORT FROM THE CHAIRMAN OF THE LICENSING COMMITTEE

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

206/11 REPORT FROM THE CHAIRMAN OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

The Vice-Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, Councillor Mrs M.W. Rough presented the report, which outlined the matters the Committee had decided since the last Council meeting.

207/11 REPORT FROM THE CHAIRMAN OF THE PLANNING COMMITTEE

The Chairman of the Planning Committee, Councillor G.E. Forsbrey, presented his report, which outlined the matters the Committee had decided since the last Council meeting.

208/11 GENERAL QUESTIONS

One General question had been submitted by Councillor C.M. Frazer in accordance with Standing Order 14. The question and answer were read aloud at the meeting.

Question from Councillor Frazer

“Will the Leader re-affirm the opposition of the Council's new administration to Surrey County Council's scheme to introduce on-street parking charges in Ashford and Shepperton, and could she update the Council as to the current position following Surrey County Council's deferment of any decision until the autumn?”

Response by the Leader, Councillor Mrs V.J. Leighton

“Yes, I can confirm that we have already robustly responded to the County on this matter and will continue to strongly oppose on-street charging in Ashford and Shepperton local shopping areas.

Wide consultation during the recent election period revealed the universal public objection to parking charges and that shoppers would be encouraged to take

advantage of the proximity of supermarkets with free off-street parking for all their shopping needs.

We will continue to represent the overwhelming opposition of residents to these proposals and the concerns of local shops. The potentially detrimental effect any such charging could deliver on their businesses is especially important in these challenging economic times.

I am pleased to inform the Council that, at a meeting held at our request with the County Cabinet Member, relevant County ward Members and Officers on 20 June, Surrey County Council has agreed to review the proposals. In particular they have agreed to:-

- Look at the business case for Shepperton and Ashford to see how an initial one hour free period would work. Previous proposals have been for no free period, then half an hour.
- To re-evaluate existing spaces in Ashford and Shepperton, as these are considered to already have high turnover of cars, often referred to as 'churn', thus encouraging shoppers. We argue, therefore, that parking charges would not encourage further 'churn', which is suggested in the business case that charging would encourage.
- To check the extent of highway ownership in Station Approach, Ashford and look at the parking needs of the local Church.
- To look at additional locations in Staines, and
- To share financial assumptions with us when proposals have been reviewed.
- We expect Surrey County Council to provide us with answers to these points in early September 2011."