



**Spelthorne
Borough Council**

Council Meeting
Thursday, 9 December 2021



1 December 2021

Please reply to:

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To the Councillors of Spelthorne Borough Council

I hereby summon you to attend a meeting of the Council to be held at The Council's Offices, Knowle Green, Staines-upon-Thames on **Thursday, 9 December 2021** commencing at **7.00 pm** for the transaction of the following business.

Daniel Mouawad
Chief Executive

Councillors are encouraged to wear their badge of past office at the Council meeting.

For those Councillors wishing to participate, prayers will be said in the Mayor's office, starting at 6.45pm. Please email mayor@spelthorne.gov.uk if you wish to attend.

Councillors are reminded to notify Committee Services of any Gifts and Hospitality offered to you since the last Council meeting so that these may be entered in the Gifts and Hospitality Declaration book.

AGENDA

Description	Page nos.
1. Apologies for absence To receive any apologies for non-attendance.	
2. Minutes To confirm as a correct record the minutes of the Council meeting held on 14 October 2021.	9 - 34
3. Disclosures of Interest To receive any disclosures of interest from Councillors in accordance with the Council's Code of Conduct for Members.	
4. Announcements from the Mayor To receive any announcements from the Mayor.	
5. Announcements from the Leader To receive any announcements from the Leader.	
6. Announcements from the Chief Executive To receive any announcements from the Chief Executive.	
7. Questions from members of the public The Leader, or his nominee, to answer any questions raised by members of the public in accordance with Standing Order 13.	35 - 36
8. Petitions To receive any petitions from members of the public.	
9. Replacement of Spelthorne Leisure Centre To consider the proposed replacement of Spelthorne Leisure Centre.	37 - 46

Appendix A to this report contains exempt information within the meaning of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972, as amended by the Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985 and by the Local Government (Access to information) (Variation) Order 2006 Paragraph 3 – Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information) and in all the circumstances of the case, the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information because, disclosure to the public would prejudice the financial position of the authority and potentially the preferred bidder in a competitive procurement process by allowing other bidders to know the

financial position of the Council and the preferred bidder. This in turn prejudices the Council by (i) distorting the procurement process and (ii) prejudicing the opportunity for the Council to achieve a competitive price and good value for money and (iii) might dissuade organisations bidding for the Council's tenders if their commercial information was put into the public domain.

10. Referral of a decision of the Development Sub-Committee on 15 November 2021

Thameside House - Staines Ward Councillors Development Meeting - Update 47 - 94

Councillors C Bateson, M Beecher and S Mooney have referred the following decision for consideration by the Council, in accordance with the Council's Reservation Scheme.

The committee agreed to proceed on the basis of Block A being 11, 9 and 7 storeys in height and Block B being 8, 6 and 5 storeys in height.

Appendices 2 to 4 of the report contain exempt information within the meaning of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972, as amended by the Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985 and by the Local Government (Access to information) (Variation) Order 2006 Paragraph 3 – Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information) and in all the circumstances of the case, the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information because, disclosure to the public would prejudice the financial position of the authority in the bidding process for future construction works by allowing other bidders to know the position of the Council. This in turn prejudices the Council by (i) distorting the bids process and (ii) prejudicing the opportunity for the Council's future regeneration in the Borough.

11. Corporate Plan 2021-2023

The Corporate Policy and Resources Committee has recommended that the Council adopt the proposed Corporate Plan for 2021-23. 95 - 116

12. Re-tender of External Audit Contract - opt in of National Public Sector Audit Appointments scheme

To consider the recommendation of the Audit Committee. 117 - 132

13. Appointments

- a) Appointment of Independent Person for the Audit Committee
To consider the appointment of Mr Sandeep Sehmi as the independent person on the Audit Committee, following the recent interview panels.
- b) Appointment of Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Development Sub-Committee for the remainder of the municipal year

Councillor R Noble has been nominated as Chair of the Development Sub-Committee.

Councillor R Smith-Ainsley has been nominated as Vice-Chair of the Development Sub-Committee.

- c) Appointment of a representative Trustee
None.

14. Report from the Leader of the Council

To receive the report from the Leader of the Council on the work of the Corporate Policy and Resources Committee at its meetings on 19 October 2021 and 29 November 2021. 133 - 134

15. Report from the Chair of the Administrative Committee

To receive a report from the Chair of the Administrative Committee on its work at the meetings on 7 October 2021. 135 - 136

16. Report from the Chair of the Community Wellbeing and Housing Committee

To receive a report from the Chair of the Community Wellbeing and Housing Committee on its work at the meeting on 23 November 2021. 137 - 138

17. Report from the Chair of the Economic Development Committee

To receive the report from the Chair of the Economic Development Committee on its work at the meeting on 16 November 2021. 139 - 140

18. Report from the Chair of the Environment and Sustainability Committee

To receive a report from the Chair of the Environment and Sustainability Committee on its work at the meetings on 3 November 2021 and 9 November 2021. 141 - 142

19. Report from the Chair of the Neighbourhood Services Committee

To receive a report from the Chair of the Neighbourhood Services Committee on its work at the meeting on 11 November 2021. 143 - 144

20. Report from the Chair of the Audit Committee

To receive a report from the Chair of the Audit Committee on its work at the meeting on 25 November 2021. 145 - 146

21. Report from the Chair of the Licensing Committee

There have been no meetings of the Licensing Committee since Council met on 14 October 2021.

22. Report from the Chair of the Planning Committee

To receive a report from the Chair of the Planning Committee on its work at the meetings on 10 November 2021 and 8 December 2021.

147 - 148

23. Report from the Chair of the Standards Committee

To receive a report from the Chair of the Standards Committee on its work at the meeting on 20 October 2021.

24. Motions

To receive any motions from Councillors in accordance with Standing Order 16.

Motion 1

Proposed by Councillor Smith-Ainsley
Seconded by Councillor Malcolm Beecher

There has been real concern amongst residents and councillors about the lack of a Vision for Spelthorne. In order to create one, three important Visioning sessions were held and the councillors attending worked hard to produce a Vision. An opportunity has been given to all councillors to review it and it has also been checked by officers to ensure it is sound.

I therefore move that:

Council incorporate the Vision into the new Local Plan and from the next meeting of the Local Plan Task Group use it to review existing policies and inform future ones.

Motion 2

Proposed by Councillor Sandra Dunn
Seconded by Councillor Malcom Beecher

This Council seeks to clarify its position in respect of the Local Green Spaces' consultation. This consultation is designed to give extra protection to the Local Green Spaces where possible.

Our current scheme for this - Protected Urban Open Space (PUOS) has failed completely to offer any extra protection. After we introduced PUOS the government produced a new standard to add protection to smaller Green Spaces 'Local Green Space'. (LGS). LGS can only be protected as part of the local plan process, such as we are undertaking currently.

This Motion therefore urges all Councillors to support the following:

1. That all existing PUOS sites be submitted for possible inclusion in the list of proposed new Local Green Spaces sites
2. That after consultation held with Spelthorne residents finishes that

further individual sites are discussed through the Local Plan Task Group as potential LGS sites

25. General questions

The Leader, or his nominee, to answer questions from Councillors on matters affecting the Borough, in accordance with Standing Order 15.

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26. Mayor's Christmas message

**Minutes of the Council
14 October 2021**

Present:

Councillors:

I.T.E. Harvey	J.T.F. Doran	A.J. Mitchell
S.M. Doran	R.D. Dunn	S.C. Mooney
M.M. Attewell	S.A. Dunn	L. E. Nichols
C.F. Barnard	T. Fidler	R.J. Noble
C.L. Barratt	N.J. Gething	O. Rybinski
R.O. Barratt	M. Gibson	J.R. Sexton
C. Bateson	K.M. Grant	R.W. Sider BEM
I.J. Beardsmore	H. Harvey	V. Siva
M. Beecher	N. Islam	R.A. Smith-Ainsley
J.R. Boughtflower	T. Lagden	B.B. Spoor
A. Brar	V.J. Leighton	J. Vinson
S. Buttar	M.J. Madams	
R. Chandler	J. McIlroy	

Apologies: Councillors A.C. Harman

439/21 Disclosures of Interest

There were no disclosures of interest.

440/21 Minutes

The minutes of the Council meeting held on 15 July 2021 were agreed as a correct record.

441/21 MoD Employer Recognition Gold Award

Canon Peter Bruinvelds presented the Armed Forces Covenant, Employer Recognition Scheme Gold Award to Councillor R Sider BEM.

442/21 Presentation of Chaplain's badge

The Mayor's Chaplain was presented with the badge of office by his Worshipful the Mayor of Spelthorne Borough Council, Councillor I Harvey.

443/21 Announcements from the Mayor

The Mayor made the following announcements:

Due to the volume of business tonight I will keep my Mayor's announcements brief.

The Mayoress and I have attended numerous events since the last Council meeting in July, and a list of these has been published.

Of particular note is that the weekend before last the Mayoress and I attended the annual twinning event with our French twin town of Melun, for their "Brie Fete". We were joined by representatives of their other twin districts from Stuttgart, Germany and Crema, Italy. It was an excellent but busy weekend and we were made to feel very welcome. Whilst there we all signed a "reaffirming of friendship" accord between the districts, but given that at the time French fishermen were threatening to blockade our return journey, we were slightly sceptical. Overall, it was a thoroughly enjoyable weekend and it is a shame that more Members did not join us; hopefully Cllr Doran, in her Mayoral year will lead a larger contingent.

I wish to thank the Mayors' Trustees for confirming the prime Mayoral charities are East to West and Ashford Youth Club which are entirely consistent with my previously announced focus on young people and their mental health. We can now finalise fund raising for these. I should also point out that we will also be hosting events in support of those suffering and their families, that may be practical, confidential and supportive rather than just fund raising. I have support from education and other professionals for these practical initiatives.

In the next week or two we also expect to announce the date of the Mayors' Ball and the Mayors Church Service, which will have a Christmas theme.

We are also finalising dates for a pre Christmas film show at Shepperton Studios and a visit to the James Bond set at Pinewood in the spring.

I would ask that as many as possible support these events for these worthy causes.

444/21 Motion to Replace the Leader and Deputy Leader of the Council

This motion was withdrawn prior to the commencement of the meeting.

445/21 Announcements from the Leader

The Leader made the following announcements:

In August the Council announced that the inquiry into the Waterfront Hotel scheme would commence in September after the appointment of an independent investigator via the Local Government Association. We can now update that, Yinka Owa, the appointed investigator has already completed her background work and is now at the stage where she will begin interviewing the initial list of individuals that she has selected. As the inquiry continues Yinka will be seeking wider input from interested persons. Yinka Owa, has over 22 years' experience of working in Local Government legal and governance roles including being a Director of Law and Governance and Monitoring Officer for a London Borough.

Following the decision of the Community Wellbeing and Housing Committee, Spelthorne will be welcoming up to five families under the Afghan Relocations and Assistance Policy scheme, providing medium-term support and accommodation for people who had been working with UK forces in Afghanistan. The accommodation will be sourced through private landlords and the scheme is being fully funded by Central Government.

The Mayor officially opened the White House, the Council's new homeless facility in Ashford which provides specialist accommodation for single homeless people. The development comprises 27 en-suite rooms with shared kitchens, four self-contained studio flats, as well as outside space. Social housing provider Metropolitan Thames Valley Housing have been appointed to manage the facility, providing an experienced team of staff with 24-hour on-site cover.

As part of the Local Plan process, we are asking residents and other stakeholders to suggest areas they would like considered for protection as

Local Green Space. Spaces that achieve the LGS designation will be protected in the new Local Plan in a similar way to Green Belt. The consultation will run for at least six weeks and won't close before the 15th of November.

We are welcoming applications for funding through the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) for local projects and improvements. CIL is money raised from new development to help fund the infrastructure needed to alleviate the impacts of extra homes. CIL funds are used for either local infrastructure or wider strategic infrastructure. We expect applications to come from statutory infrastructure providers and not-for-profit organisations such as state schools, community groups and registered charities. The deadline for this round of applications is the 31st March 2022. Decisions will be made by local spending boards, made up of ward councillors for each area in the Borough.

The seventh annual Spelthorne Business Plan Competition final was held on the 23rd of September at BP's headquarters in Sunbury-on-Thames. Six finalists pitched in a Dragons' Den style final for a chance to win £3,500 and a year's package of business support to help them get their business started. The standard of the presentations was extremely high and after much deliberation first place was awarded to Shannon McBride for her business idea 'Magic Elephant Ltd', a wellbeing consultancy.

Our continued efforts to create a cleaner, greener and more colourful Borough were recognised as this year's South & South East in Bloom Awards. The ever-popular Sunbury Walled Garden struck gold in the Small Park category for the third year running, and Sunbury, Ashford and Staines Cemeteries all picked up gold awards in the Small Cemetery category.

446/21 Announcements from the Chief Executive

Three weeks ago I spoke at a national Excellence in Local Government conference. My presentation centred on the adaptation Spelthorne has undergone to survive the pandemic to keep residents at the very heart of everything we do.

Delegates heard how Spelthorne, having secured a national transformation award for efficiency and effectiveness, rapidly mobilised colleagues and resources to ultimately support more than 17,000 of our most vulnerable residents - throughout the gruelling past 18 months of Covid.

What astonished delegates was our ability to sustain a 99% rent collection rate for our commercial portfolio income stream throughout the most profound economic shock this country has ever experienced - securing the authority over £51 million, preserving and enhancing service provision that our residents rely on with a net contribution to frontline services of over £10.6 million per annum.

Whilst the impact of the pandemic is far from over - with demand for support forecasted to rise with the end of the furlough scheme and tenancy evictions now permitted - I'm nevertheless pleased to report that a good number of services are already operating at near pre-covid levels including our community centres Older People Actively Living (OPAL) services. The resumption of full-time reception opening hours heralds a degree of post-covid normality giving added choice for our residents to access those services.

As we embark on our 10th major resident's consultation since early 2020, this time to garner input into the formulation of our budget for 2022/23, it is a timely reminder that our residents first focus has never ebbed.

Earlier this week, our purpose built single homeless facility welcomed its first temporary resident. It was immensely humbling to hear colleagues describe this momentous occasion as the highlight of a career in local government housing spanning over 30 years.

I cannot be prouder of the astonishing commitment, care and compassion our authority displays day-in, day-out in pursuit of keeping our residents safer, healthier and supported.

To all in this chamber and to colleagues rank and file, I thank you for your part in making Spelthorne a truly special place.

447/21 Questions from members of the public

The Mayor reported that, under Standing Order 14, eleven questions had been received from a member of the public.

1. Question from Mr A McLuskey

Why, given that the Building Regulations department have passed the cladding at West Plaza as being in conformity with national rules, is the insurance company unwilling to cover the flat dwellers in the development?"

Response from the Leader, Councillor L Nichols

Thank you for your question Mr McLuskey.

The responsibility of Spelthorne Building Control, like all Building Control bodies, is to ensure that developments comply with the necessary legislation, principally the Building Regulations 2010 and the Building Act 1984.

As you have been advised by the Council's Building Control Manager, the works carried out on site to construct the West Plaza development complied with the relevant legislative requirements at the time of the development process, as well as those which apply today.

The Council's Environmental Health team routinely provide information to the Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government about tall buildings which may be of concern with regards to their external cladding. They also liaise with the Surrey Fire and Rescue Service, who are responsible for the enforcement of Fire Safety Orders.

Surrey Fire and Rescue Service carried out an inspection of the West Plaza in February 2021 and found the fire safety provisions to be adequate, based on the information available to them at that time. They did, however, request further documentation regarding the cladding and insulation from the managers of the building. Since receiving this information, the Fire Officer has required the West Plaza management to make amendments to the fire safety system (which have been completed) and future works to be undertaken to the cladding and insulation system.

Your question as to why insurance companies are unwilling to cover flat dwellers in these circumstances is, I'm afraid, something I cannot answer. This is a matter for their own underwriters and any questions in this regard should therefore be addressed directly to the companies concerned.

2. Question from Mr A McLuskey

Why did the Environmental Health department give permission for an Industrial Kitchen (sic) to operate on the top floor of the block with all the attendant fire risks that involves?

Response from the Leader, Councillor L Nichols

Thank you for your question, Mr McLuskey.

As you have previously been advised, the Council's Environmental Health Officers have no powers to prevent a retail food business from preparing food in a residential premises, provided they comply with food safety and hygiene regulations. All food businesses are required under the Food Safety Act to register their business with the local Environmental Health Services, so that local authorities can ensure they are inspected. The Council cannot refuse such a registration application, although in certain circumstances such businesses may separately require planning permission. When undertaking an inspection of any such food businesses, our Environmental Health team would also enforce any health and safety requirements. However, any fire safety risks associated with any part of the West Plaza block would be a matter for the Surrey Fire and Rescue Service, as I've outlined in my answer to your previous question.

The food operation you refer to is a home-based catering business rather than an industrial kitchen as you have suggested. The owners have now relocated this to a different premises in the borough, which has since been inspected by one of our Environmental Health team.

3. Question from Mr A McLuskey

Does the Council think it has fully learned the lessons of the Grenfell Tower tragedy in 2017?

Response from the Leader, Councillor L Nichols

Thank you for your question, Mr. McLuskey. Spelthorne takes the safety of its residents very seriously. Following the Grenfell tragedy, this Council took immediate steps to start identifying all high-rise buildings in the Borough which could be of a similar construction to Grenfell Tower and we have continued to work closely with Surrey Fire and Rescue Service to follow up on those that required further investigation.

There will clearly be many lessons to be learned from this tragedy and we await the findings of the ongoing Inquiry. Spelthorne will of course take account of any guidance arising from the Inquiry and as a Council we will fulfil our responsibilities for implementing any requirements arising from the Building Safety Bill, which is currently going through Parliament.

4. Question from Mr G Lock

When will the identity of the investigator be announced, and will full details of his/her background and experience with similar such politically sensitive independent investigations as well as his/her independence from Spelthorne Borough Council (including from its current and former staff and Councillors) be included in the announcement?

Response from Councillor C Barnard

The Waterfront Inquiry Review Group issued a statement on 11th October to update councillors and the public on the progress to date. It contains the name of the independent investigator, her background and experience in this type of work, and that she has had no contact with any officer or councillor prior to taking on this investigation.

5. Question from Mr J de Pear

Why did the Chief Executive (Daniel Mouawad) not recuse himself from any involvement in the establishment and/or administration of the investigation into the provenance of and contract for the Waterfront Development Project, given

- a) the clear inappropriateness of such involvement because of his central role in this “officer led” project and
- b) Declared intent of the investigation originally announced on 28 April to “explore the possibility of misconduct and/or fraud?”

Response from the Leader, Councillor L Nichols

In May this year the Council moved to a committee system of governance. Under this system, decisions cannot be delegated to individual Councillors or groups of councillors, decisions can only be made by the Council, Committees, Sub-Committees, and officers.

The decision taken by the Corporate Policy and Resources Committee sought to initiate the Inquiry into the Waterside Hotel development without further delay. To achieve this, it was decided to delegate the finalisation of the terms of reference (and amendments) and the appointment of the investigator (and possible replacement) to the Chief Executive in consultation with the Review Group. Without this delegation there would have been considerable delay in commencing the inquiry, as the appointment of the investigator and any adjustments to the terms of reference would have had to be referred to a meeting of the Corporate Policy and Resources Committee.

The Chief Executive was named as the officer who was to hold the delegated power. This delegation can only be exercised in consultation with the Review Group. It was the members of the Corporate Policy and Resources Committee who agreed the terms of reference. In

practice it was the Review Group who approved the appointment of the independent investigator. The Chief Executive has only used his delegated authority to give effect to these decisions. Subsequent discussions with Yinka Owa, the Investigator, have been held without the Chief Executive being involved. There is no need for the Chief Executive to recuse himself, this is already the case in practice, but there remains a requirement for someone to hold the delegated authority to enact any further decisions.

The Review Group have been clear in all discussions that the investigation should cover any and all relevant areas without restriction. There are no “no go” areas and all requested documents are being made available.

In regards to your reference to the “Declared intent of the investigation originally announced on 28 April”, please note that the document to which you refer was released by an external third party via social media, not from the Council.

6. Question from Mr J de Pear

Was any attempt made to persuade the Chief Executive to recuse himself?

Response from Councillor R Noble

The appointment of an independent investigator to undertake the Waterfront Enquiry required the actions of a senior officer under the governance system that the council operates. The Corporate Policy and Resources Committee, through the appointed Review Group, requested the Chief Executive to exercise the delegation under their direction to issue the initial terms of reference and seek support from the Local Government Association to provide recommendations for an Independent Investigator. Nothing more.

The Review Group chose and appointed the Independent Investigator. The Review Group met with the Independent Investigator to ensure the initial terms of reference were sufficient for her to begin her inquiries.

The Chief Executive was not involved in the agreed appointment nor any discussions on the initial terms of reference.

The Chief Executive has not taken part in any meetings with the Independent Investigator subsequently, has had no contact with the Independent Investigator either in the past or currently, nor has he been involved with the additional terms of reference that have been added since the investigation began.

There has been no need for the Chief Executive to recuse himself and neither the Corporate Policy and Resources Committee, nor the

appointed Review Group, feel the need for him to undertake such a step given his total lack of involvement apart from ensuring that requests for all information, either via written documentation or via future interviews required with any staff members, are facilitated.

7. Question from Mrs M Geraci

What role did the Chief Executive (Daniel Mouawad) and/or the Leader of the Council at the time (Cllr Ian Harvey) have in drafting the scope of the investigation into the Waterfront Development Project (essentially draft terms of reference) as set out with the draft minutes of the Policy and Resources Committee of 5 July 2021 and announced on 20 August 2021, and what role do either have currently in briefing the investigator?

Response from Councillor C Barnard

The Chief Executive played no role in the preparation of the terms of reference presented to the Corporate Policy and Resources Committee. He was made aware of the content just prior to the meeting as is normal practice in disseminating the information between the officers and Management Team.

The former leader, Cllr Ian Harvey, played no part in drafting the terms of reference. They were drafted by the Group Head of Corporate Governance and presented to the Corporate Policy and Resources Committee on the 5th of July.

The briefing of the investigator is entirely in the remit of the Review Group. The Chief Executive or former leader do not play any part in the review meetings and do not attend those meetings.

The Chief Executive's only role has been to request the Local Government Association to provide an experienced investigator, who was interviewed and selected by the Review Group. He was also requested to instruct the administrative support team to compile the information requested by the investigating officer.

8. Question from Mr P Bower

Terms of Reference for an independent investigation into the "officer led" Waterfront Development Project announced in April had a declared intent to "explore the possibility of misconduct and/or fraud". Key elements of these Terms of Reference are either absent altogether from those announced in August or have been rephrased to narrow significantly the context in which the issues can be investigated.

According to the draft Minutes of the Policy and Resources Committee of 5 July 2021 the Chief Executive was authorised by the Committee to finalise the Terms of Reference and appoint the investigator, to modify

the Terms of Reference “as considered appropriate”, and appoint a replacement investigator if needed. The Minutes also say the Review Group of Councillors overseeing the investigation will “receive updates from officers on the progress of the inquiry and next steps to be taken”.

1. Given the above preamble and his central role in the “officer led” Project, on what basis does the Policy and Resources Committee consider it appropriate for the Chief Executive (or any other officer) to have any role in determining the Terms of Reference for the investigation, or the appointment of the investigator, or indeed any role in the conduct of the investigation itself (other than to give evidence to it)?
2. Will the more specific Terms of Reference of 28 April 2021 be incorporated into the new Terms of Reference for the investigation?

Response to question one from the Leader, Councillor L Nichols

I would refer you to the answer given in response to a question from Mr de Pear earlier in this meeting, which covers similar issues.

The original terms of reference reflected the requirements of members for a comprehensive inquiry. The drafting of the document was undertaken by officers to formalise what members had requested. The terms of reference were formally agreed by the Corporate Policy and Resources Committee. The intent has always been to allow an inquiry to take place which was not unnecessarily restricted in its scope.

The Review Group have asked the investigator if she is prepared to incorporate additional points as raised by Staines councillors and local residents’ groups, and she has indicated that she is happy to have these points included in the terms of reference. The formal terms of reference will be revised to incorporate the additions, and these will be re-published.

The terms of reference for this inquiry are unambiguously owned by councillors and not by the Chief Executive or any other officer.

Response to question two from Councillor R Noble

The authority did not release terms of reference for this inquiry on the 28 April 2021, this relates to a document issued by an external third party on social media.

The Corporate Policy and Review Committee established at the outset of the inquiry that the Review Group could amend the terms of reference as considered appropriate as the inquiry developed, or as recommended by the Independent Investigator. The Review Group and the Independent Investigator have agreed that additional terms of reference as referred to in the motion for this council should be added to the original terms.

9. Question from Mr R Neville

The land in Feltham Road, Ashford known as Ashford Clumps has been used for allotments for over 100 years. Some current tenants have been gardening there for decades. There are three charities utilising plots at Ashford Clumps to support those with specific needs. Out of the blue allotment holders received a letter from Spelthorne Council dated 15th September 2021 giving 12 months notice to quit due to the lease expiring in March 2020 and not being renewed. The letter was abrupt and legalistic, with no apparent consideration for its impact on people. Allotments have been a sanctuary for many people across the borough during the pandemic, and provide many benefits, both for health & wellbeing and the environment.

a) What discussions and meetings took place to consider the impact of this situation and the notice to quit letter, on both the residents who rent plots at Ashford Clumps and the loss of the allotment land on Spelthorne's ability to provide allotments? The loss of this site will be an 8% reduction (62 plots) in allotment plots in Spelthorne, leaving the borough short of plots to meet demand.

b) Why was the expiry of the lease, eviction and loss of allotments not discussed at The Environment and Sustainability Committee, a meeting of which was held on 14th September 2021, the day before the notice to quit letters were dated?

10. Question from Ms J Clements

Did Spelthorne council consider any options and try and negotiate a new lease for the Ashford Clumps Allotments land to support its residents not just current plot holders but for people in the future. Or did Spelthorne Council, as it seems just accept the termination of the lease at face value, send the plot holders letters and move on.

11. Question from Ms S Mason

1. The custodians of the land on which Ashford Clumps Allotments are situated are Ashford Relief in Need Charities (ARIN) & The Charities Commissioners. Spelthorne has been leasing this land from them. The lease ended in 2020 and is not being renewed.

When were Spelthorne Council first notified that the lease was not going to be renewed and why if the lease ended in March 2020 was the notice to quit not sent until September 2021?

2. The Clumps Allotments have been used for growing fruit and vegetables by the community for many years. Council records show it being leased by them since at least 1982, however local people know it has been used by the people of Spelthorne for far longer. This land

having been appropriated by Spelthorne Council by means of a lease for at least 39 years is classed as Statutory Allotment Land. This brings certain responsibilities for a Council. These are published by the Government in a document titled 'Allotment disposal Guidance: Safeguards and Alternatives.' Are Spelthorne Council aware of these responsibilities and have they carried them out in relation to the disposal of The Clumps Allotments in September 2022?

Response from the Chairman of the Environment and Sustainability Committee, Councillor I Beardsmore to questions 9-11

I would like to thank Mr Neville, Ms Clements and Ms Mason for their questions.

The Ashford Clumps allotment site, which is located outside our Borough boundary, was last leased to Spelthorne Borough Council in 2011 by the owners, Ashford Relief in Need Charities (ARIN). This lease was for 9 years expiring on 24 March 2020. The Council was notified of ARIN's intention to terminate the lease on 20 December 2020 and the charity has since served notice on Spelthorne to quit the land and provide vacant possession under the terms of the lease by September 2022.

Since becoming aware of ARIN's intention to end our lease, Council officers have had ongoing discussions with representatives of the charity's Trustees. Our understanding from those discussions was that the charity intended to dispose of the land, rather than having any new or extended lease for the site.

The decision to issue 'notices to quit' to allotment holders was not a decision which was taken lightly by the Council. We fully appreciate the implications this will have for users of the site, who will undoubtedly have put many years of hard work and passion into maintaining their plots. Officers have discussed this issue with the Leader and Deputy Leader of the Council on several occasions at briefings relating to the Council's assets but having received a termination notice from ARIN, and no confirmation of any option to extend the lease, the Council was obliged to begin the process of giving 'notice to quit' to allotment holders.

Since the service of these notices, the Council has continued to actively engage with ARIN in the hope of finding a suitable solution which would enable a satisfactory outcome for all parties concerned. Spelthorne would positively support the Ashford Clumps site remaining as allotments and if this is also ARIN's intention, we would be happy to consider options to take this forward.

We will continue our dialogue with ARIN in the hope of resolving this difficult situation and will ensure that all relevant parties are kept advised of any further developments in these discussions.

Addressing the other points raised in the questions:

This matter was not discussed at the Environment and Sustainability Committee on 14th September as the authority to issue 'notices to quit' in such circumstances is contained within the officer 'scheme of delegation', and the report being presented at that Committee related only to an update in the terms and conditions for all allotment sites.

I would apologise that the contents and tone of the letter and 'notice to quit' to allotment holders may have seemed abrupt and legalistic. I am sure that this will have come as a shock to many plot holders, but unfortunately the Council is required to use the formal legal wording expected by the courts in such circumstances.

In relation to the timing of these notices, under the 1922 Allotments Act the Council has a limited window to serve notice, which is either before April or from September onwards (effectively outside the main growing season). Ongoing discussions with representatives of the Trustees meant that the Council was not in a position to serve notice before April 2021, so the service of notices had to be delayed until September this year. This has at least given the allotment holders a further growing period over this summer.

The requirements for Statutory Allotment Land are not applicable to this site. The Clumps was leased to Spelthorne Borough Council by ARIN charity and was not purchased or appropriated by the Council for use as allotments. Therefore, it is not classed as a statutory allotment site. The Clumps is instead classed as 'temporary' allotment land and is therefore not covered by Section 8 of the Allotments Act 1925. As such, there is no requirement for the Council to follow the Allotment Disposal Guidance to obtain the Secretary of State's consent to close.

Spelthorne currently has 756 allotments available for residents of the Borough. Although the loss of The Clumps would reduce this number, the remaining plots available, together with the plots on self-managed sites at Shepperton and Shortwood North, would enable Spelthorne to continue to provide the recommended number of plots to meet demand for the number of properties in the borough.

20:00 Councillor M. Madams left the meeting

448/21 Petitions

Council considered the following petition, which had received over 1,000 signatures in accordance with Standing Order 15.

“Prevent tower-block developments in the Staines Conservation Area or overlooking the riverfront, and spread the planning housing growth target more evenly across the borough.”

Resolved that the petition be referred to the Environment and Sustainability Committee for further consideration.

Council agreed to adjourn the meeting at 20:27

The meeting reconvened at 20:40

449/21 Adoption of revised Members' Code of Conduct

Council considered the adoption of the Local Government Association Model Code of Conduct, as recommended by the Members' Code of Conduct Committee on 4 February 2021.

It was proposed by Councillor R. Sider BEM and seconded by Councillor T. Fidler and

resolved that adopt the Local Government Association Model Code of Conduct.

450/21 Amendment to the Members' Allowances Scheme for 2021-22

The Council considered the following amendments to the Members' Allowances Scheme 2021/22:

1. To pay a Special Responsibility Allowance of £2000 each, to the members of the Development Sub-Committee; and
2. To remove the 'one Special Responsibility Allowance only' rule from the Scheme.

It was proposed by Councillor L. Nichols and seconded by Councillor H. Harvey that the Council only vote on Part 1 of the recommendations and defer a decision on Part 2. This was agreed.

Councillor Boughtflower asked for a recorded vote on the motion to pay the Special Responsibility Allowance of £2000 each to the members of the Development Sub-Committee.

Councillor	For	Against	Abstain
Harvey I	X		
Doran S	X		
Attewell		X	
Barnard	X		
Barrett C		X	

Barrett R		X	
Bateson	X		
Beardsmore			X
Beecher	X		
Boughtflower		X	
Brar	X		
Buttar	X		
Chandler		X	
Doran J	X		
Dunn R	X		
Dunn S	X		
Fidler		X	
Gething		X	
Gibson	X		
Grant			X
Harvey H	X		
Islam		X	
Lagden			X
Leighton		X	
McIlroy		X	
Mitchell		X	
Mooney	X		
Nichols	X		
Noble			X
Rybinski	X		
Sexton	X		
Sider	X		
Siva			X
Smith-Ainsley	X		
Spoor	X		
Vinson	X		

For – 20
Against – 11
Abstain – 5

Resolved that a Special Responsibility Allowance of £2000 to be paid to each member of the Development Sub-Committee.

451/21 Annual Review of Complaints

The Council considered a report from the Monitoring Officer on an annual review of complaints investigated by the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman.

It was proposed by Councillor T. Fidler and seconded by Councillor R. Smith-Ainsley and **resolved** to note the report.

452/21 Committee appointments

It was proposed by Councillor L. Nichols and seconded by Councillor H. Harvey and

resolved to appoint Councillor S. Mooney and Councillor S. Buttar to the Development Sub-Committee, following their nomination at the Corporate Policy and Resources Committee on 4 October 2021.

453/21 Appointment of a representative Trustee

1. The Council considered a request from Margaret Pope Education Charity (MPEC) to appoint a representative trustee.

It was proposed by Councillor J. Boughtflower and seconded by Councillor T. Mitchell and

resolved that Councillor S. Mooney be appointed as a Council representative trustee to serve on the Margaret Pope Education Charity.

2. The Council considered a request from the Ashford Relief In Need Charities (ARIN) to withdraw the Council's appointed trustees.

It was proposed by Councillor R. Sider BEM and seconded by Councillor C. Barnard and

resolved that the Council withdrew their appointed trustees after the current appointments of Councillor R. Sider BEM and Councillor T. Harman ended.

It was proposed by Councillor T. Fidler and seconded by Councillor N. Gething and

resolved that a letter be issued from the Council to the Ashford Relief in Need Charities expressing the Council's continued support.

454/21 Update on joint arrangements - Spelthorne Joint Committee

The Council considered a report on proposed amendments to the Spelthorne Joint Committee Constitution following decision by Surrey County Council.

It was proposed by Councillor L. Nichols and seconded by Councillor J. Sexton and

resolved that the amendments to the Spelthorne Joint Committee Constitution as set out in the report be approved.

455/21 Counter-Fraud, Bribery and Corruption Strategy

The Council considered the recommendation of the Audit Committee to adopt the proposed changes to the Counter Fraud, Bribery and Corruption Strategy for adoption.

It was proposed by Councillor J. Boughtflower and seconded by Councillor T. Fidler and

resolved that the proposed changes to the Counter Fraud, Bribery and Corruption Strategy be adopted.

456/21 Report from the Leader of the Council

The Leader of the Council, Councillor L. Nichols, presented the report of the Corporate Policy and Resources meeting held on 04 October 2021, which outlined the matters the Committee had decided since the last Council meeting.

457/21 Report from the Chair of the Community Wellbeing and Housing Committee

The Chairman of the Community Housing and Wellbeing Committee, Councillor S. Dunn, presented the report of the Community Housing and Wellbeing Committee meeting held on 28 September 2021 which outlined the matters the Committee had decided since the last Council meeting.

Councillor H. Harvey asked that the report be amended to the following:

At present the Council has no policy in place to enable the purchase of properties for specific local needs such as large properties or properties adapted to meet the needs of the disabled. Knowle Green Estates will be responsible for any acquisitions.

Councillor S. Mooney asked a question of Councillor S. Dunn in respect of the Search Moves Partnership Review.

Councillor S. Dunn advised that she would answer in writing as this was a Part II exempt report.

458/21 Report from the Chair of the Administrative Committee

The Chairman of the Administrative Committee, Councillor T. Mitchell, presented the report of the Administrative Committee meeting held on 7 October 2021 which outlined the matters the Committee had decided since the last Council meeting.

459/21 Report from the Chair of the Economic Development Committee

The Economic Development Committee only noted the reports that were put before them at the meeting held on 21 September 2021, so there was no Chairman's report to note.

460/21 Report from the Chair of the Environment and Sustainability Committee

The Chairman of the Environment and Sustainability Committee, Councillor I. Beardsmore, presented the report of the Environment and Sustainability Committee meetings held on 23 August 2021, 14 September 2021 and 6 October 2021, which outlined the matters the Committee had decided since the last Council meeting.

461/21 Report from the Chair of the Neighbourhood Services Committee

The Chairman of the Neighbourhood Services Committee, Councillor A. Brar, presented the report of the Neighbourhood Services Committee meeting held on 9 September 2021 which outlined the matters the Committee had decided since the last Council meeting.

Councillor R. Barrett asked if Councillor A. Brar could advise Council on the current level of fly tipping instances recorded and whether they had reduced following lock down for COVID-19.

Councillor A. Brar advised that she would put her answer in writing to Councillor R. Barrett.

Councillor R. Barrett asked if Councillor A. Brar would be able to update Council on the performance of the Commercial Trade Waste Company.

Councillor A. Brar advised that she would put her answer in writing to Councillor R. Barrett.

Councillor R. Barrett asked if Councillor A. Brar could advise Council on the joint working between Surrey Environment Partnership and the Joint Waste Solutions Team.

Councillor A. Brar advised that she would put her answer in writing to Councillor Barrett.

Councillor S. Mooney asked Councillor A. Brar if she shared her concern over the issue of domestic abuse and would she ensure, moving forward, that this would be included in the Community Safety Report.

Councillor A. Brar advised that she would put her answer in writing to Councillor Mooney.

It was proposed by Councillor R. Smith-Ainsley and seconded by Councillor I. Beardsmore that Standing orders be suspended until close of business and this was agreed by Council.

The meeting was adjourned.

Councillor T. Mitchell left the meeting

462/21 Report from the Chair of the Audit Committee

The meeting was reconvened

The Chairman of the Audit Committee, Councillor J. Boughtflower, presented the report of the Audit Committee meeting held on 29 July 2021 which outlined the matters the Committee had decided since the last Council meeting.

463/21 Report from the Chair of the Licensing Committee

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

464/21 Report from the Chair of the Planning Committee

The Chairman of the Planning Committee, Councillor T. Lagden, presented his report of the Planning Committee meetings held on 15 September 2021 and 13 October 2021, which outlined the matters the Committee had decided since the last Council meeting.

465/21 Report from the Chair of the Standards Committee

The Chairman of the Standards Committee, Mr. Ian Winter, presented his report which outlined the matters the Committee had decided since the last Council meeting.

466/21 Motions

In accordance with Standing Order 16 the Council received three written Notices of Motions.

Motion 1 – Government planning reforms

In the forthcoming government planning reforms, this council believes that planning works best when developers and the local community work together to shape local areas and deliver necessary homes, and therefore calls on the government to protect the right of communities to object to individual planning applications.

Proposer: Councillor R Sider BEM

Seconder: Councillor C Barnard

The motion was carried

Motion 2 – Decision of the Corporate Policy and Resources Committee on 5 July 2021, as detailed in minute 214/21.

This motion is in relation to the decision by Corporate Policy and Resources Committee on 5 July quoted from the Publicly available Minutes Point 214/21, title “Establishment of Task Group” with related announcement in a Spelthorne News Release on 20 August titled “Update on Waterfront Inquiry” the following Points being subject of this motion:

- “3. in consultation with the Review Group, to authorise the Chief Executive to finalise the terms of reference for the inquiry which are to be based upon the terms of reference set out in the report at Appendix B;
4. in consultation with the Review Group, to authorise the Chief Executive to amend the terms of reference as considered appropriate as the inquiry develops or as recommended by the investigator;
5. in consultation with the review group, to authorise the Chief Executive to appoint the investigator; and
6. in consultation with the Review Group, to authorise the Chief Executive to appoint any replacement investigator if the original investigator appointed can no longer act.”

This motion is in three parts, with the request that each part be subject to a recorded vote:

- a) The Terms of Reference for the independent investigation that formed part of the announcement on 20 August 2021 are not comprehensive enough to guarantee that all possible aspects are

fully investigated. The Review Group, comprising Cllrs Nichols, Barnard and Noble, are instructed to revise the Terms of Reference to incorporate all the points requested by the Councillors for Staines, Staines South and Riverside and Haleham and detailed in their email dated 24 September 2021. The Council further notes that the Independent Investigator is prepared to accept these additions and requires that the revised Terms of Reference are published without delay.

- b) The Review Group are instructed to ensure that the Chief Executive shall have no involvement in the conduct of the Inquiry or its Terms of Reference, and will ensure that the Principal Lawyer undertakes the cooperation with all requests for information and cooperation from Council staff. The Council notes the public concern that is associated with the Chief Executive having any involvement in the Inquiry, other than to give evidence to it, given his central role in the Waterfront Development Project which is the subject of this Waterfront Inquiry.
- c) The person appointed to conduct the independent investigation shall have access to any or all documentation and/or personnel he/she feels would be relevant to his/her investigations without encumbrance.

Proposer: Councillor S Mooney

Seconder: Councillor V Siva

Supported by (in accordance with Standing Order 20.1): Councillor M Beecher, Councillor C Bateson, Councillor J Vinson, Councillor D Saliagopolous, Councillor M Gibson, Councillor I Beardsmore, Councillor J Boughtflower, Councillor N Islam, Councillor M Attewell and Councillor T Lagden.

Council agreed to accept the alterations to the motion as advised by Councillor Mooney.

Councillor H. Harvey left the meeting.

It was proposed by the Mayor and agreed by Council that one vote would be taken to cover all three parts of the Motion.

Councillor	For	Against	Abstain
Harvey I			X
Doran S	X		
Attewell	X		
Barnard	X		
Barrett C	X		
Barrett R	X		
Bateson	X		
Beardsmore	X		
Beecher	X		
Boughtflower	X		

Brar	X		
Buttar	X		
Chandler	X		
Doran J	X		
Dunn R	X		
Dunn S	X		
Fidler	X		
Gething	X		
Gibson	X		
Grant	X		
Islam	X		
Lagden	X		
Leighton	X		
McIlroy	X		
Mooney	X		
Nichols	X		
Noble	X		
Rybinski			X
Sexton	X		
Sider	X		
Siva	X		
Smith-Ainsley	X		
Spoor	X		
Vinson	X		

For – 32

Against – 0

Abstain – 2

The motion was carried

Motion 3 – WHO guidelines for air pollutants

“Spelthorne Borough Council shall advocate the new World Health Organisation guidelines for maximum average annual levels of air pollutants, that is to say, for PM2.5 a maximum level of 5 microgrammes per cubic-metre, for PM10 a maximum level of 15 microgrammes per cubic-metre, and for Nitrogen Dioxide (NO2) a maximum level of 10 microgrammes per cubic-metre, in all council air quality measurements, reviews and assessments.”

Proposer: Councillor M Beecher

Seconder: Councillor V Siva

Council agreed to accept the alterations to the motion as advised by Councillor M. Beecher.

The motion was carried.

467/21 General questions

The Mayor reported that three general questions had been received, in accordance with Standing Order 14, from Councillors R.W. Sider BEM, N Gething and R Barratt.

1. Question from Councillor Robin Sider BEM

The South and South East in Bloom awards attract hundreds of entries each year in this prestigious competition, and once again Spelthorne has achieved gold awards for Sunbury Walled Garden in the small park category, with the judge commenting ‘ How impressed I was with by the amazing, beautiful and very attractive gardens, maintained to a very high standard ‘, and the Staines, Ashford and Sunbury Cemeteries receiving similar accolades for their work in their respective category. That said, will the Leader join me in congratulating Head of Neighbourhood Services and her team for these outstanding achievements, and agree with me, that these awards demonstrate the passionate care that employees have in portraying the borough at its very best for the benefit of its residents.

Response from the Leader, Councillor L Nichols

Thank you Cllr Sider., I would certainly like to join you in congratulating the Neighbourhood Services Team for their hard work and commitment in achieving these prestigious awards, and I am sure that our fellow Councillors will wish to do the same.

I am aware that these awards are not easily achieved and when you consider that the borough achieves these year-on-year this clearly demonstrates the passionate care that employees have in presenting the borough at its very best.

The high standards seen by those judging the Sunbury Walled Garden and our Cemeteries are there for our residents and visitors to enjoy all year round and do, as you have said, improve our environment for all to enjoy.

Well done to all who have made a difference and made Spelthorne a Gold winner again in the South & South East in Bloom Awards.

2. Question from Councillors N Gething and R Barratt

Can the leader please tell this chamber and the residents of Spelthorne, when the five Independent Disciplinary Committee members will be announced?

Can the leader also announce a date when this public committee will first meet to cover its responsibilities, although it may not have matters at this time to discuss?

Lastly can the leader inform us of how Spelthorne residents will be informed of the workings of this committee and its purpose, as it is a platform for our residents to make complaints if required.

Will the Leader agree that this should be announced in the next edition bulletin magazine?

Response from the Leader, Councillor L Nichols

In accordance with the terms of reference of the Investigations and Disciplinary Committee, as set out in the Council's Constitution, all Councillors form a panel and are eligible to serve on the Committee. As and when a committee is required to sit a panel of five councillors will be selected by Group Leaders on a proportional basis.

As there is currently no business for this committee no selections have been made and no meeting will be called until there is business within the committee's remit to undertake.

Residents can find full details of this committee in the terms of reference section in the Council's Constitution. The Council's Monitoring Officer is liaising with the Committee Service's team to add this to the committee section of the Council's website and to make it clear where complaints should be directed if this concerns the Chief Executive, Section 151 Officer or Monitoring Officer (Statutory Officers).

This committee is not a platform for residents to make complaints. This committee conducts initial assessments of allegations against the Statutory Officers, considers suspension of such officers and decides whether to appoint an Independent Investigator and consider their report.

If a resident wants to make a complaint about the Chief Executive, this should be made to the Monitoring Officer or Section 151 Officer. If it is a complaint about the Monitoring Officer or Section 151 Officer this should be made to the Chief Executive.

This will not be announced in the Bulletin as suitable information will be provided on the Council's website.

3. Question from Councillor N Gething

At the Environment and Sustainability Committee meeting when it was agreed (with some reluctance by some) to proceed with the vision alongside the existing process, I assumed it would help us make progress with our plan. I went to the last session expecting to see some positive outcomes and get an idea of what this process was going to contribute. What I got was an aimless wish list that still did not seem anywhere near completion.

Who wrote and supervised the brief for this process? Who signed it off?

Response from the Leader, Councillor L Nichols, and Deputy Leader, Councillor J Sexton

Thank you for your question.

The purpose of this exercise was to create a vision to give both context and some ownership to the objectives of the Local Plan. In our view, the lack of any view on what we wanted would mean that we would have no way of assessing if the Local Plan would deliver what we wanted for our borough.

As it stands, the Local Plan is all about how we deliver the excessive number of homes that the Conservative government is forcing us to build in the coming years. We all know that this level of house building is unsustainable and will entirely change the character of some parts of the borough. We also know that the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (the MHCLG as was) are not interested in recognising our unique circumstances.

In this context we sought to engage with a national expert to help us develop a view of what we might want Spelthorne to be like in future. The brief was drafted by Leader and Deputy Leader in consultation with the Chair of the Environment and Sustainability Committee and refined following discussion with the consultant.

Council – 9 December 2021

Questions from members of the public

Question 1 – Kath Sanders

“Regarding the Local Green Space assessment being carried out as part of the Local Plan process, I understand that the current 71 Protected Urban Open Space (PUOS) sites will go forward for assessment (together with any others suggested in response to Q5 of the Issues & Options consultation in June 2018).

As part of the Call for Green Spaces and given the importance of Open Space identified in the Council's own Open Space Assessment (Nov 2019), will the Council themselves be proposing some or all of the sites with the outgoing Protected Urban Open Space designation for the new Local Green Space designation OR perhaps certain 'functional' categories (such as allotments, cemeteries and churchyards, school playing fields and public parks and recreation grounds), regardless of ownership status? This would hopefully ensure that current levels of provision are at least maintained.

Failing that, and to give many valuable sites the best chance of success, please could the Council make the 'long list' of potential LGS sites public once the Stage 1 "Desktop review and first sieve" has been completed with the opportunity for the community to provide any further evidence required to successfully complete the Stage 2 "Detailed Analysis"? This would again help to ensure that communities don't inadvertently lose out.”

Question 2 – Kath Sanders

“It was really encouraging to see the Spelthorne response to the Climate Emergency and consideration of projects for the Green Initiatives Fund presented at the Environment & Sustainability Committee meeting on 30th June 2021. Please could residents get an update specifically about the 2021/22 Green Initiatives Fund of £747k, how much of the £39k Green Better Neighbourhood Grant element has been allocated as of 30th September and what progress has been made since the June paper in terms of a plan for utilising the remaining funds?”

Question 3 – Kath Sanders

“As you are no doubt aware Michael Gove gave evidence to the House of Commons Housing, Communities and Local Government Committee on Monday 8th November 2021 (Qs 78-87). His answers included the following statements:

- Q80: "We absolutely want to hit that target [of 300,000], but we also want to take account of beauty, the environment, quality, decency, local democratic control and infrastructure"
- Q84: "There is a legitimate concern on the part of local government that the resources have not always been there to help. That is why some of the changes that we can make, not just to provide the resource but to simplify the process, are important"
- Q85: "Yes. My colleague Chris Pincher has made it clear that in developing a plan a local authority can say, "Right, this is the number to which we have been working. However, in this community, in this area, you have to take account of the

fact that we have AONBs here, SSSIs here, green belt there and so on. It would be unrealistic to expect us, consistently with all those factors, to meet the figure that has been produced."

He also answered questions from MPs on planning rules on 25th October 2021 where he said that he was still considering all the responses to the consultation on the "Planning for the future" White Paper and would make an announcement on next steps in due course. I understand this will be before Christmas.

Michael Gove also stated, "As we take forward our proposals for planning reform, we will be balancing the need for new housing with environmental concerns and also the vital importance of listening to local people."

Given Michael Gove's answers, what further work is now being done internally to either take stock or to build a case for a reduction in the housing target in Local Plan proposals to reduce the imperative to build on Green Belt and to build blocks of tiny flats in Staines?"

Council

9 December 2021



Title	Replacement of Spelthorne Leisure Centre
Purpose of the report	To make a decision
Report Author	Lee O'Neil, Deputy Chief Executive Richard Mortimer, Development Advisor
Ward(s) Affected	All Wards
Exempt	Main report – No Confidential Appendix A - Yes
Exemption Reason	Appendix A contains exempt information within the meaning of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972, as amended by the Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985 and by the Local Government (Access to information) (Variation) Order 2006 Paragraph 3 – Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information) and in all the circumstances of the case, the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information because, disclosure to the public would prejudice the financial position of the authority and potentially the preferred bidder in a competitive procurement process by allowing other bidders to know the financial position of the Council and the preferred bidder. This in turn prejudices the Council by (i) distorting the procurement process and (ii) prejudicing the opportunity for the Council to achieve a competitive price and good value for money and (iii) might dissuade organisations bidding for the Council's tenders if their commercial information was put into the public domain.
Corporate Priority	The contents of this report relate to the following proposed new priorities of the Council: Community Recovery Environment Service delivery
Recommendations	Council is asked to: 1. Note progress to date with the Pre-Construction Services Agreement (PCSA) with the preferred bidder as the main contractor for the construction of the proposed new Spelthorne Leisure Centre.

	2. Delegate authority to the Deputy Chief Executive in conjunction with the Chairs of the Corporate Policy & Resources and Community Wellbeing & Housing Committees to agree the fixed contract sum and award the contract to build the new leisure centre to the preferred bidder as the main contractor, provided that the final price for construction is within the Capital Programme provision agreed by Council on 29 October 2020 and reflected in the 2021-22 Capital Programme.
Reason for Recommendation	To enable the Council to fix the construction contract price and commence construction of the new Spelthorne Leisure Centre as soon as possible, to minimise the risk of escalating costs.

1. Key issues

- 1.1 The current Spelthorne Leisure Centre in Staines-upon-Thames has served the borough well, but this facility is nearing the end of its useful life.
- 1.2 Following a consultation exercise in February-April 2020, Spelthorne's Cabinet agreed on 24 September 2020 to proceed with plans for developing a new leisure centre ('the New Centre') on the open space between the current Spelthorne Leisure Centre site and the Knowle Green Council Offices, with the existing leisure centre location being used for parking for the New Centre.
- 1.3 On 29 October 2020, the Council approved a supplementary capital estimate for the construction of the New Centre, details of which are outlined in the **confidential Appendix A**. This included an additional capital provision to design and construct the New Centre to the full Passivhaus standard, which will result in a facility built to strict environmental/energy efficiency requirements.
- 1.4 Planning permission for the New Centre was granted on 23 June 2021.
- 1.5 On 5 July 2021, the Corporate Policy and Resources Committee approved the award of a Pre-Construction Services Agreement (PCSA) to the preferred bidder as the main contractor for the construction of the proposed New Centre.
- 1.6 On 15 July 2021, the Council confirmed approval of the award of the PCSA to the preferred bidder and the expenditure for this appointment.
- 1.7 Since that date the preferred bidder has been working with their supply chain/sub-contractors to complete the detailed design and firm up on final sum/price for constructing the New Centre. This is taking longer than was originally anticipated due to ongoing fluctuations in material and labour costs within the construction sector. The preferred bidder also had to build in additional time for the Passivhaus Institute to review the technical design and validate each design stage as being compliant with their stringent air tightness and energy efficient requirements. In order for the preferred bidder to finalise their contract sum, they need to have the final pre-construction design detail (RIBA Stage 4b) signed off and this is likely to happen at the beginning of January 2022.
- 1.8 The preferred bidder has advised of ongoing challenges in getting fixed quotations from sub-contractors for specific materials due to these market

fluctuations. For example, some are reporting steel prices can only be held for 5-7 working days at this moment in time. These issues are likely to continue for a number of months due to the continued pressures associated with the COVID-19 pandemic and other factors, such as Brexit. In view of these continuing problems and the possibility of cost inflation in the new year, there would potentially be significant benefits if the Council could fix the construction contract sum as soon as possible with the preferred bidder. This would enable the contractor to commit to placing orders for long lead-in items and materials where cost fluctuation and availability is at its greatest. Additionally, the Assets Team are seeking to reduce provisional sums to below 2% which will further reduce the Council's exposure to increases in costs. This will give the Council optimal certainty over development costs and enable construction to commence as soon as possible.

- 1.9 It is anticipated that the preferred bidder will be able to confirm their final build price for the New Centre early in January 2022. In the report to the Corporate Policy and Resources Committee on 5 July 2021, the timetable indicated that a report would be brought back to Full Council in January 2022 to seek approval for the contract sum. However, with the next scheduled Council meeting not scheduled until 24 February 2022, there could be a delay of over a month in being able to get agreement to fix the contract sum for the construction of the new centre, which could result in further adjustments to the price and the risk of potentially inflated costs. Even if an Extraordinary Council could be arranged for January 2022 there would still be a risk that the construction costs could rise in the weeks leading up to that meeting, particularly if the preferred bidder does, as anticipated, can submit their proposed build costs for the New Centre at the beginning of January.
- 1.10 In order to minimise the risk of future cost inflation for this project, this report requests Council's approval to delegate authority to proceed with fixing the contract sum and awarding the contract for the construction of the New Centre, provided that the price is within the agreed Capital Programme provision agreed by Council on 29 October 2020 and reflected in the 2021-22 Capital Programme (as outlined in **confidential Appendix A**).
- 1.11 If the price is higher than the agreed Capital Programme Provision, the matter would be brought back to the Council at the earliest opportunity to seek a decision as to whether to proceed with the award of the contract.

2. Options analysis and proposal

2.1 Option 1 (preferred option) – Council is asked to:

- A. Note progress to date with the Pre-Construction Services Agreement (PCSA) with the preferred bidder as the main contractor for the construction of the proposed new leisure centre.
- B. Delegate authority to the Deputy Chief Executive in conjunction with the Chairs of the Corporate Policy & Resources and Community Wellbeing Committees to agree the fixed contract sum and award the contract to build the new leisure centre to the preferred bidder, provided that the final price for the construction is within the agreed Capital Programme Provision agreed by Council on 29 October 2020 and reflected in the 2021-22 Capital Programme.

- 2.2 **Option 2** – Council could decide that it should make the final decision as to whether to proceed with the award of the contract irrespective of whether the final contract sum for the construction of the centre is within the Capital Programme Provision agreed by Council on 29 October 2020. As outlined above, this would require a delay in fixing the price of the contract until the February 2022 Council meeting or until an Extraordinary Council meeting can be arranged before that date. This would present a significant risk that the price of the contract could rise as a result of inflationary pressures in the construction market.

3. Financial implications

- 3.1 The Council has already approved Capital Programme provision to the level outlined in **confidential Appendix A** for the construction of the new centre.
- 3.2 If delegated authority is given as outlined in Option 1, the Council can be reassured that should the final contract sum proposed by the preferred bidder be above the current budget allocated, the matter would be brought back to Council for a decision as to whether to proceed.
- 3.3 The income which will be generated from any new operator contract will not fully cover the costs of constructing the New Centre. It is therefore in the Council's interests to minimise construction and borrowing costs if possible. Any delays in getting the final contract price agreed with the preferred bidder would present a significant risk of this budget gap being extended due to possible construction cost inflation and rising interest rates.

4. Other considerations

- 4.1 There is a possibility that construction costs could stabilise during the next year as supply chain issues are overcome. However, with continuing uncertainties over COVID-19 variants, Brexit impacts and the threat of rising inflation, it is considered unlikely that this will happen for the foreseeable future, and that these factors are more likely to lead to higher prices in the short to medium term.
- 4.2 As the current Spelthorne Leisure Centre is nearing the end of its useful life and the new centre will not be operational until early 2024, it is essential that we progress with this project as soon as possible in order to ensure continuity for users of the centre and maintain its customer base.

5. Equality and Diversity

- 5.1 An Equality Impact Assessment has been completed by the Council's Leisure Services team and this has been fully considered in designing the New Centre. Some of these issues will be the responsibility of the operator and this would be taken into account in drafting any future operator contract.

6. Sustainability/Climate Change Implications

- 6.1 The Leisure Centre proposals will deliver the first fully Passivhaus compliant multi-functional leisure centre in the UK (there is one other centre in the UK which partly meets those standards). By delivering a centre which meets such high environmental standards, the Council would demonstrate its commitment to sustainability and minimising climate change impacts. This should also act as an exemplar to other Councils and local businesses/developers.

6.2 Typically, leisure centres consume significant levels of energy in order to deliver appropriate climate-controlled environments for the activities which take place in them. Being mindful of these impacts on the environment and the rising costs of energy consumption, the design team have sought to actively mitigate these impacts by designing the New Centre to meet the Passivhaus standard.

7. Timetable for implementation

7.1 If delegated authority given:

- (a) Approval of contract sum - early January 2022
- (b) Start on site Q1 (calendar year) /2022
- (c) Practical Completion Q1(calendar year) /2024

7.2 If Full Council approval for the final contract sum is required:

- (a) Approval of contract sum – Full Council meeting 24 February 2022 (possibly sooner if an ECM could be arranged for January 2022)
- (b) Start on site likely to slip to Q2/2022 as preferred bidder would need at least 4 weeks to mobilise and start works
- (c) Practical Completion Q1/2024 (may slip into Q2/2024)

Background papers: There are none.

Appendices:

Appendix A – Confidential – Summary of Estimated Costs and Budget Provision for the proposed new Spelthorne Leisure Centre (as reported to Council 29 October 2020)

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By virtue of paragraph(s) 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A
of the Local Government Act 1972.

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Referrals made under the Council's reservation scheme

The Council's reservation scheme provides a mechanism for councillors to refer decisions to Council for determination. Referrals must be made in writing, shortly after the notice of committees' decisions have been published.

Details of the referred decision are stated later in this paper.

Recommendation

The Council is requested to agree one of the following resolutions:

- **Note the decision of the committee/sub-committee (i.e. the decision stands)**
- **Refer the decision back to the committee/sub-committee for further consideration**
- **Withdraw the decision of the committee/sub-committee (i.e. the decision is not taken)**

In order to provide a structured approach to considering the referred decision, the following process applies:

1. A representative of the councillors who have referred the decision to speak on the reasons for their referral. New reasons may not be introduced. Time limit of five minutes.
2. Chair of the committee/sub-committee that made the decision to respond to the reasons for the referral. Time limit of five minutes.
3. Views from councillors, made in accordance with the rules of debate.
4. A representative of the councillors who have referred the decision to make closing remarks on the referral. Time limit of five minutes.
5. Closing remarks from the chair of the committee/sub-committee. Time limit of five minutes.
6. Votes on the options listed above.

Details of the decision

Meeting: Development Sub-Committee, 15 November 2021

Item: Thameside House - Staines Ward Councillors Development Meeting - Update

Resolution: The committee agreed to proceed on the basis of Block A being 11, 9 and 7 storeys in height and Block B being 8, 6 and 5 storeys in height.

Reasons for referral

Councillors Bateson, Beecher and Mooney have provided the following reasons for referring the decision of the Development Sub-Committee to Council:

Purpose of referral

To discuss and decide by recorded vote whether the full Council endorses the decision taken by the Development Sub-Committee regarding the Councils development, Thameside House. The Cllrs making this referral hold the view that decision reached by the Sub-Committee did not give due consideration to the following:

a) Governance and audit: To ensure the full Council has a complete understanding of the business case set out that sought approval for purchasing Thameside House (i.e. to refurbish the building for affordable housing only) and how, since the acquisition approval was given, the Councils intentions for Thameside House have changed. Ensuring there is a complete audit trail and timeline of ALL decisions taken before and after the purchase (including when and by whom these decisions were taken). This is critically important given the current Waterfront inquiry reference.

b) Officers of the Council did not provide reasonable consideration to a counter proposal for the site: Dismissal of a counter suggestion put forward by the majority number of Staines cllrs, on the grounds that this was not financially viable, with no explanation, discussion or debate by officers.

c) Lack of clarity of information from Officers of the council: Finance and asset departments have provided conflicting information to Staines Cllrs regarding the financial aspects of Thameside house, affordable housing calculations and floor sizes

	Thameside House (Potential Design Revisions) Part 1 report
Purpose of the report	To make a Key Decision
Report Author	Richard Mortimer (Development Advisor)
Wards affected	Staines Town
Exempt	Part exempt.
Exempt reason	<p>Appendices 2 to 4 contain exempt information within the meaning of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972, as amended by the Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985 and by the Local Government (Access to information) (Variation) Order 2006 Paragraph 3 – Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information) and in all the circumstances of the case, the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information because, disclosure to the public would prejudice the financial position of the authority in the bidding process for future construction works by allowing other bidders to know the position of the Council. This in turn prejudices the Council by (i) distorting the bids process and (ii) prejudicing the opportunity for the Council's future regeneration in the Borough.</p>
Corporate Priority	Housing & Regeneration
Recommendations	<p>The Sub Committee were asked to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Note this planning application was submitted in March 2020, has been amended post submission and has been on hold since the Moratorium was put in place in January 2021. 2. Authorise further revisions to the planning submission in respect of energy efficiency, massing, residential mix and use as set out in this report. 3. Authorise commencement of negotiations with an International Company for office space within the scheme. 4. Authorise the progression of a flexible planning application that allows the Council to build either the 12 storey amended residential scheme or the increased office option (same height) should

	<p>acceptable terms be agreed with an International Company</p> <p>Under the referrals scheme in the constitution the Council are to review the decision made by the Development Sub-Committee.</p>
Reason for Recommendation	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The Council's objectives have changed, and the scheme now seeks to maximise the number of affordable units (the housing register has increased from 2,200 up to over 3,000) and to deliver 2 bedroom units (the area of greatest need). 2. Whilst the scheme already exceeds planning policy requirements in terms of energy efficiency, there are opportunities to make further improvements to achieve greater CO2 reductions. 3. Options for a lower scale scheme have been developed in response to concerns from councillors (moratorium) and public sentiment. 4. The Moratorium continues to place an unnecessary holding cost burden upon the Council during this period of inactivity. If it is not lifted in the near future there is also a possibility that our auditors may not allow the Council to capitalise costs resulting in an adverse hit on the Revenue budget. There are currently £1.13m fees at risk. 5. Continual delay will lead to the project costing more to deliver than it would have done earlier in the year as a result of the pandemic coupled with Brexit (materials and lead in times). Scheme costs for the submitted planning scheme have increased in the last 9 months. 6. Retaining an International Company not only contributes to the economic vitality and vibrancy of Staines town centre and its regeneration but also ensures we retain several hundred high value jobs within Spelthorne.

Set out below is the original report which was considered by the Development Sub-Committee on 15 November 2021 with a few minor amendments to remove all commercially sensitive or financial information. This is to enable the main report to be publicly available to ensure openness and transparency. All Councillors are still able to view the full Part 2 report which went to the Development Sub Committee on Mod.Gov.

Development Sub Committee Report

1. Background

- 1.1 Thameside House was acquired in May 2018. The acquisition was based on high level feasibility targets approved by Cabinet at the time that assumed 100 apartments and ground floor commercial uses. Through design development, pre application engagement with the Local Planning Authority (LPA) and the South-East Design Review Panel (an independent assessor), a scheme of 140 apartments and approximately 21,000 sq ft offices over 15 storeys was agreed as being appropriate for the site. Five s106 affordable units have been agreed through the planning viability appraisal process.
- 1.2 Planning was submitted in March 2020. Partly as a consequence of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Housing Options Team has witnessed a significant increase in demand for affordable homes. As a result, the new Administration (which took control in June 2020) switched the Councils' focus in its development portfolio from private rented sector apartments (PRS) to maximising affordable homes to meet this need. Therefore, Assets in consultation with Housing and Cabinet Members at the time made changes by swapping some of the PRS units (58 two 2 beds and 7 one1 beds) for affordable occupations. The mix now stands at 50% PRS and 50% affordable (70 apartments with 90% two beds).
- 1.3 In October 2020, Spelthorne declared a Climate Emergency. In January 2021, the Moratorium was imposed and remains in existence for all Council schemes with Staines town centre. The previous Administration had requested that the scheme did not go before the Planning Committee until the Moratorium was lifted. The three conditions for lifting the Moratorium were: (1) the formation of the Development Sub-Committee (2) the consultation exercise on the Objectives and Options Consultation had been undertaken on the Staines Development Framework - this has been done and (3) That the viability of all the developments were reviewed by the Assets Team. In consultation with the Development Sub Committee, proposed amendments to the scheme have been made in order to ensure it more closely aligns with current stakeholder aspirations.
- 1.4 Very recently, an international company within the town have enquired about the possibility of taking a pre-let for office space in the new redevelopment. Subject to agreeing acceptable terms, this would require the second floor of residential to be replaced with additional office accommodation. This would result in the loss of 14 apartments taking the provision from 96 units to 82 units. However, if a deal can be done with them then it would enable Staines-upon-Thames to have an important high-profile international company with several hundred staff that would otherwise relocate out of the borough.
- 1.5 This report is the first in a series that will track development progress through the key gateway stages post planning submission as set out in the approved terms of reference for the Development Sub-Committee.

Current budget position on proposed development

- 1.6 At the Extraordinary Council Meeting (ECM) on 21 January 2021, Full Council approved the scheme in the Council's Capital Programme. This was confirmed by Council in February 2021 when it further approved the Capital Programme 2021/21 – 2024/25 with a Budget provision of £47.9m. Cabinet approved a budget (19 July 2018) for design fees which could be used to

cover the costs of these changes if approved. A separate budget will need to be sought in the future for construction costs.

2. Options analysis and proposal

Option 1: Do Nothing

- 2.1 There is the option to mothball the site and do nothing. This is a poor use of valuable resources where the Council already committed over £10m in land costs and fees. Doing nothing will mean that the council will continue to bear monthly holding costs in the order of £19,500pcm. This includes interest assumed at 1% (short term rate) and 24/7 security at £10,000pcm. Business rates, where they cannot be exempted run at approximately £348,000pa (£29,000pcm). Doing nothing also delays the time from which the scheme could make a revenue contribution to the Council's Revenue Budget through the net margin KGE will be paying on the loan financing relating to the PRS units. Doing nothing runs the risk of auditors requiring that we reallocate these to the Council's Revenue Budget with an inevitable adverse impact on the Council's finances adding additional pressures to an already challenging Budget context.

Risks

- 2.2 Doing nothing means an opportunity to deliver much needed housing will be missed that will not only contributes towards meeting increasing demand for affordable and PRS housing but also makes a considerable contribution to the LPA's own Housing Delivery Targets. The Council would also be failing on housing delivery, one of its own key objectives.
- 2.3 Mothballing a prominent prime riverside site would also be detrimental to the future regeneration of Staines Town Centre. The Council could also be criticised for "land banking" an expensive asset which has high monthly holding costs.
- 2.4 Since Brexit and the ongoing pandemic, build costs have started to rise since early Q2/21 and this trend is likely to continue in the short term. Doing nothing would result in the council having to pay more to build the same product if planning permission were to be granted.
- 2.5 This option is not recommended.

Option 2: keep the scheme as is

- 2.6 The scheme could be kept as is, with no additional amendments to the existing planning application, which has been supported by the LPA (at officer level) and South-East Design Review Panel and is ready for determination. However, notwithstanding the above, it is highly probable that if the scheme remains at 15 storeys then the prospects of obtaining planning approval from the planning committee are very slim.

Risks

- 2.7 If the option of staying with the existing planning submission is authorised by the Development Sub Committee, then the prospects of refusal are far greater than if the scheme were amended. As the Council cannot appeal its own decision (if refused by the LPA) we would be back in a position of Do Nothing with all the risks as set out above.

This option is not recommended.

Option 3: Sell the site

- 2.8 The site could be sold without planning, but this sends the wrong message regarding delivery of affordable housing being a key priority to this Council.

Risks

- 2.9 Firstly, it is likely to be developed for private housing with minimal affordable housing (the current application shows only five sS106 units are viable). Secondly, the Council will lose an opportunity to deliver 140 much-needed homes for rent as a developer would most likely seek market sales. Thirdly, a 3rd party owner is unlikely to make the same height concession and would seek a 15 storey development to maximise the site. If refused by the LPA they would undoubtedly go to appeal and may succeed at that level (using arguments around shortfall in housing delivery, SHLAA allocation for 140 units, presumption in favour of development etc). Fourthly, a 3rd party developer's borrowing costs and profit requirements are greater than those of the Council's, meaning the amount they could afford to pay for the site would be significantly less. Finally, there would be a further cost to the Council as design fees and other holding costs would need to be written off as Revenue not Capital. Furthermore, the Council could not easily repay the associated Public Work Loans Board loan it took out when it acquired the site due to the early repayment penalties.
- 2.10 For these reasons, this option is not recommended.

Option 4: Amend the current scheme

- 2.11 Recent public and Planning Committee sentiment towards tall buildings up to 15 storeys has not been favourable. Furthermore, whilst the Thameside House public consultation in 2019 received mixed feedback, there has been over 300 coordinated objections since the planning application was submitted. These are primarily focused on height. Significant height concerns have also featured in consultation responses to the recent Objectives and Options consultation on the Staines Development Framework.
- 2.12 In order to address this, Assets are proposing that the main tower is reduced from 15 to 12 storeys. This loss of units can be mitigated by increasing the rear block from 7 to 10 storeys. Imagery is attached at **Appendix 1**. This option will result in an overall loss of approximately 14 apartments subject to further rights of light and daylighting/sunlighting tests for the part increased from 7 to 10 storeys. Reducing the height to a maximum of 12 storeys differentiates the revised proposal from other taller schemes which have recently been refused by committee but recommended for approval by the LPA.
- 2.13 For the purposes of this report, there are two options (a) with the international company (b) without the international company.

Option a

- 2.14 In this option it is assumed that the international company will take c32,000 sq ft which leaves 82 apartments.

Option b

- 2.15 This assumes the international company do not occupy. In this instance, the same number of units in the current planning submission (96 apartments) can be maintained alongside c20,500 sq ft of offices. This aligns with the current planning submission although it is contained within revised 12 and 10 storey massing.
- 2.16 If the principle of the revised massing is approved, there would be an opportunity to review whether the number of two bed apartments in the proposed 10 storey wing can be increased to align with Housing's greatest area of need (2 bed apartments) if greater affordable occupations are preferred.
- 2.17 If the Development Sub Committee agree to revise the scheme then it is proposed that the current scheme is amended to incorporate these revisions, and that Assets seek agreement with the LPA to revise the current application for flexible uses. This will include provision for the primarily residential scheme with reduced heights and greater energy efficiency but with the option to convert the second floor of residential to offices should a deal proceed with the international company.
- 2.18 Enhanced green initiatives have also been considered as an important part of the current scheme. Whilst the scheme's energy efficiency significantly exceeds policy requirements, it is proposed that additional air source heat pump capacity is added to include space heating and increased u-values (thermal efficiency) for all windows. This will increase energy efficiency which stands at 17% in the current submission (against Part L 2013) to at least 30% improvement against Part L 2021 and SAP10.1 standards. These have superseded Part L 2013 which assumes gas whereas latest 2021 standard assumes all electric which is more environmentally friendly.
- 2.19 Financial appraisals that are attached to the part 2 report which were presented to the Development Sub-Committee shows the developments performance based on current estimates of costs and values for both options. They include an option with the international company taking c32,000 sqft and one that assumes they don't take a pre-let.

Risks

- 2.20 Whilst these revisions will result in an increase in costs, it is likely to increase the prospects of the revised scheme being approved as it differentiates this scheme from those which have been recently refused by the planning committee. More detail on the financial position is set out below.
- 2.21 There is also the prospect that the LPA may consider the changes to be too great thereby requiring a new application. This would set the timescale back by a minimum of 13 weeks assuming it is determined within the statutory period. Design is a subjective matter, and the LPA may consider the revised proposals to be too bulky. Therefore, the Council could end up in a position where the LPA are no longer supportive of the design changes which have been made to make the scheme more attractive to the Planning Committee.
- 2.22 Notwithstanding these risks, this option is recommended.

3 Financial implications

- 3.1 Councils are in a strong financial position to invest and develop property due to their ability to access long term fixed rate capital financing at historically low

interest rates, although with rising inflations there are risks that these rates may start to rise. SBC can access that funding via the Public Works Loan Board as this housing led scheme falls within the category of housing regeneration and economic development within the borough. There are risks that interest rates could rise in the future which would make financing of the scheme more challenging. However presently the Council's advisers are anticipating that long term interest rates will remain relatively stable.

- 3.2 The financial objective of undertaking the development directly will be to ensure the scheme provides a suitable rental surplus over and above Knowle Green Estate's (KGE) borrowing costs. It also provides savings over and an average above payments to third party landlords. The Council would potentially make revenue saving of on average £6.5k pa per family placed from the Housing Register. Tight control of the contractor, regular meetings, and strong project management will ensure the build is kept to budget. Once completed, KGE will take on responsibility for rent collection and managing the residential accommodation.
- 3.3 The February 2021 Full Council meeting approved a Capital Programme Budget of £47.9m for the scheme. There is also a Cabinet approved budget for design fees which could be utilised to accommodate approved design changes.
- 3.4 It was agreed at the Extraordinary Overview and Scrutiny on February 9th 2021 that Term Sheets should be developed for each of the development projects the Council is undertaking. It is accepted that this is a "living document" that will evolve through the design development process and will be updated if and when substantive changes such as these are approved by the Development Sub-Committee.
- 3.5 As part of the design change process, the Assets team have been working with our Finance Team to establish rental viability with KGE.

4 Other Considerations

- 4.1 A Public Contracts Regulations compliant tender process was originally undertaken as part of the Cabinet approval process for design fees using the Perfect Circle Framework. All consultants have been appointed using this compliant framework.

5. Equality and Diversity

- 5.1 The Assets Team are working hard to create environments which celebrate diversity and welcomes difference, a place where everyone's rights and dignity are respected. We're striving to provide comfortable, fit for purpose living environments free from discrimination, prejudice, intimidation and all forms of harassment and bullying. We want to achieve this culture for all those that live and work in our communities. By demonstrating our commitment in equality and diversity through our day-to-day actions and our design objectives, we aspire to be a welcoming landlord creating environments where individual differences are celebrated in the places we create.

6. Sustainability/climate change implications

- 6.1 From the outset, our approach has always looked to reduce the energy consumption and therefore carbon emissions by taking a fabric first approach

and we have looked to improve the building fabric performance beyond the minimum Building Regulation and SBC policy compliance. We have adapted an all-electric strategy to ensure that we are taking advantage of the decarbonisation of the grid. The overall energy strategy was developed with the new Part L 2021 and Future Homes standard in mind and we have utilised an air source heat pump system and heat recovery ventilation system to reduce the overall energy demand.

- 6.2 We have re-assessed the energy demand based on the latest carbon factors that have been published and widely used within multiple London boroughs (Standard Assessment Procedure 10.1), and this indicates that Thameside House is circa 40% better than the current Part L 2013 assessment compared to our previous assessment of 17%, this is above the minimum requirements that will be needed within the new Part L regulations which are due to come into effect next year. This is something we will raise with the LPA as Part L 2021 and SAP10.1's acceptance is now widespread and seen as a better alternative to the outdated Part L 2013 which is part of our current Local Plan.

7. Timetable for implementation

- 7.1 If these changes are approved, iterations will be made and further consultation with the LPA will need to be undertaken to establish whether the planning application can be amended or needs to be resubmitted. This will impact on the overall timescales.
- 7.2 Subject to planning being granted, we anticipate that a further report will be submitted in Q1/22 for the Development Sub Committee, Corporate Policy and Resources and Council to formally agree the costs of post planning, detailed design and construction.
- 7.3 A report will go to the Knowle Green Estates Board at the appropriate time
- Instruct changes to design team – October 2021
 - Agree LPA consultation on changes/new application – Dates TBC
 - Planning Determination – Dependent on above. TBC

Appendices - Development Sub Committee report

- 1** Revised levels options study
- 2** Confidential - Development appraisal 1
Confidential - Development appraisal 2
- 3** Confidential - Term Sheet 4.10.21
- 4** Confidential - Financial viability Thameside House 14.10.21
- 4a** Confidential - Financial viability assumptions Thameside House 14.10.21
- 4b** Confidential - Financial viability projections Thameside House 14.10.21

A detailed historical map of Staines-upon-Thames, showing the River Thames, various streets, and buildings. The map is rendered in a light blue color scheme. The title 'THAMESIDE HOUSE' is prominently displayed in a dark blue box in the upper right quadrant. The subtitle 'Staines-upon-Thames' is also in the same box. The text 'Block A Massing Study' is located below the subtitle. The text 'Allies and Morrison' and 'September 2021' are in the same box. The text 'Allies and Morrison' is located in the bottom left corner. The text '85 Southwark Street', 'London SE1 0HX', '+44 20 7921 0100', 'alliesandmorrison.com', and 'studio@alliesandmorrison.com' are located in the bottom left corner. The text 'Page 57' is located in the bottom right corner.

THAMESIDE HOUSE

Staines-upon-Thames

Block A Massing Study

Allies and Morrison
September 2021

Allies and Morrison

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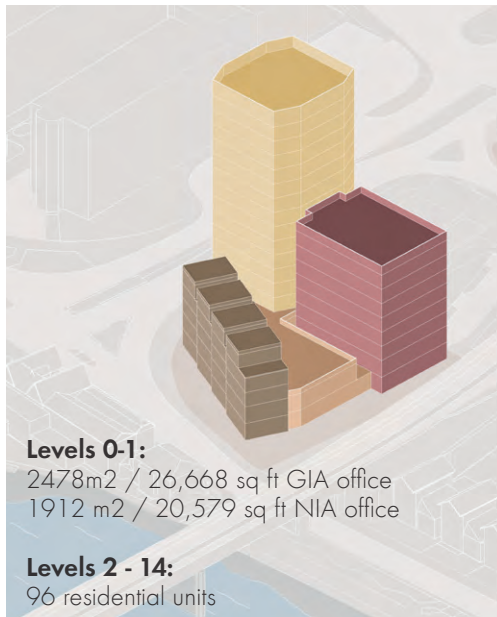
Thameside House - Block A

MASSING STUDIES

September 2021

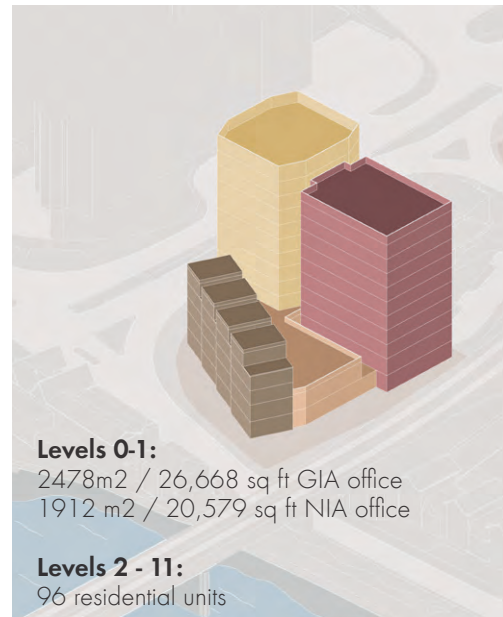
Planning Scheme

The current Planning scheme includes a 15 storey tall building linked to an 8 storey 'pavilion' building



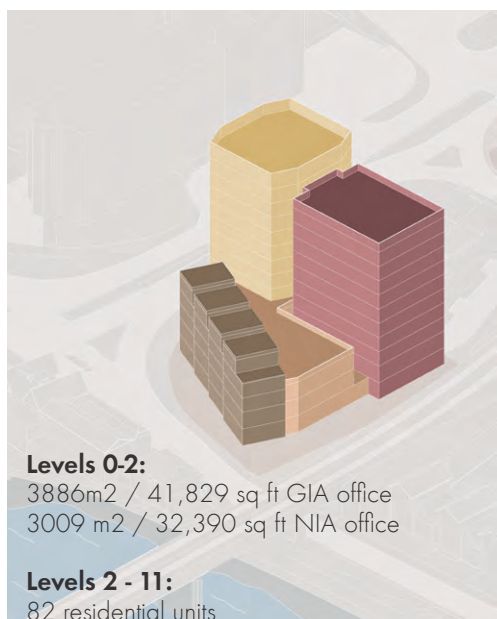
Option 1

Reduce the 15 storey building to 12 storeys and increase 'pavilion' building to 10 storeys
Maintain current 21,579 sqft NIA office space



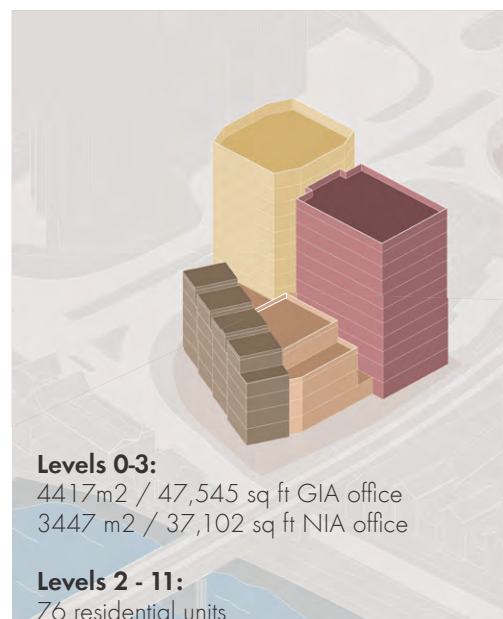
Option 2

Reduce the 15 storey building to 12 storeys and increase 'pavilion' building to 10 storeys. Additional storey to plinth: Additional 11,800 sf NIA office



Option 3

Reduce the 15 storey building to 12 storeys and increase 'pavilion' building to 10 storeys.
Additional 16,500 sf NIA office to levels 2 & 3



Allies and Morrison

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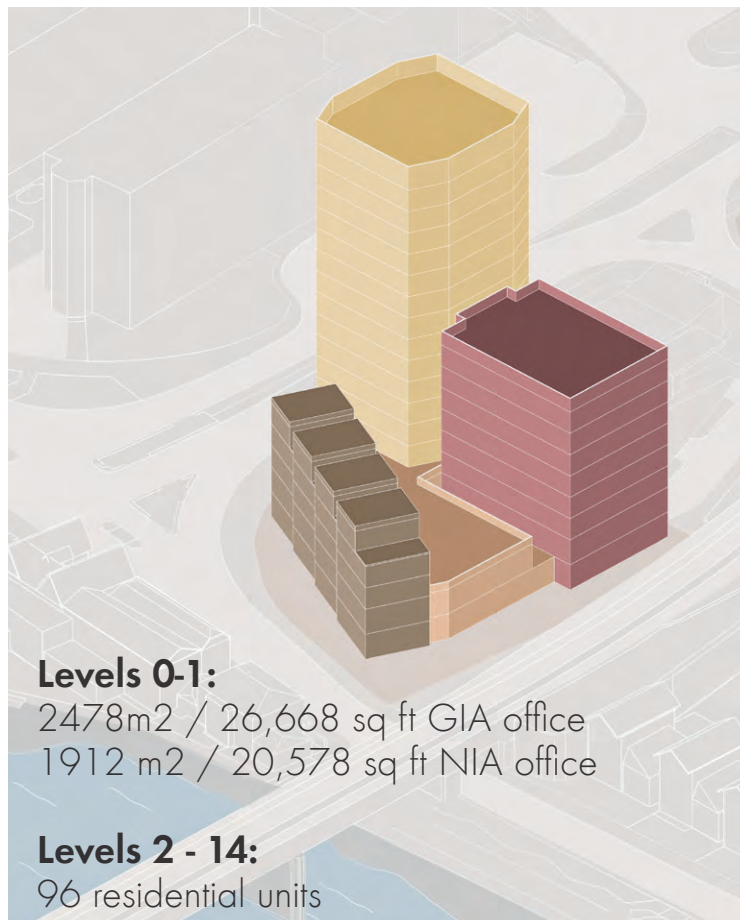
project name **Thameside House**

project number 18132_00_2Q&A

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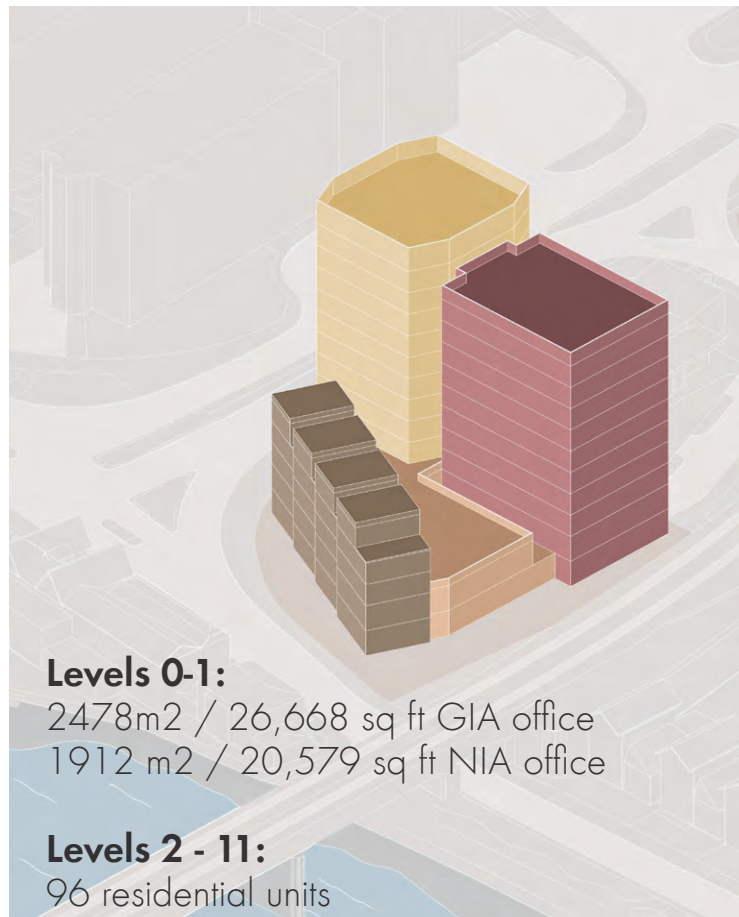
PLANNING SCHEME

		GEA		GIA		NIA		UNITS				TOT
		m2	sqft	m2	sqft	m2	sqft	1b/2P	2b/ 3P	2b/ 4P	3b/ 6P	
A												
Office												
	Level 00	1102.1	11862.9	1027	11054.8	771.6	8306.1					
	Level 01	1589.8	17112.9	1450.5	15613.6	1140.1	12272.5					
	Office Total	2691.9	28975.8	2477.5	26668.4	1911.7	20578.6					
Residential												
	Level 00	218.1	2347.4	201.2	2165.7							
	Level 02	1186.1	12766.3	1015.1	10926	766.9	8252.8	12	1	1		
	Level 03	1196.6	12879.8	1030.8	11096.7	1041.8	11211.8	6		4	4	
	Level 04	1097.6	11813.8	917	9870.6	600.6	6462.6	6		4		
	Level 05	866.8	9329.8	759	8170.6	600.6	6462.6	6		4		
	Level 06	866.8	9329.8	759	8170.6	600.6	6462.6	6		4		
	Level 07	866.8	9329.8	759	8170.6	600.6	6462.6	6		4		
	Level 08	437.3	4706.5	368.7	3968.8	274	2948.8			4		
	Level 09	437.3	4706.5	368.7	3968.8	281.6	3029.6			4		
	Level 10	437.3	4706.5	368.7	3968.8	281.6	3029.6			4		
	Level 11	437.3	4706.5	368.7	3968.8	281.6	3029.6			4		
	Level 12	437.3	4706.5	368.7	3968.8	281.6	3029.6			4		
	Level 13	437.3	4706.5	368.7	3968.8	281.6	3029.6			4		
	Level 14	437.3	4706.5	368.7	3968.8	281.6	3029.6			4		
	Residential Total	9359.9	100742.2	8022	86352.4	6174.7	66441.4	42	1	49	4	96

**Planning Scheme**

OPTION 1 - REDUCED HEIGHT - 12 + 10

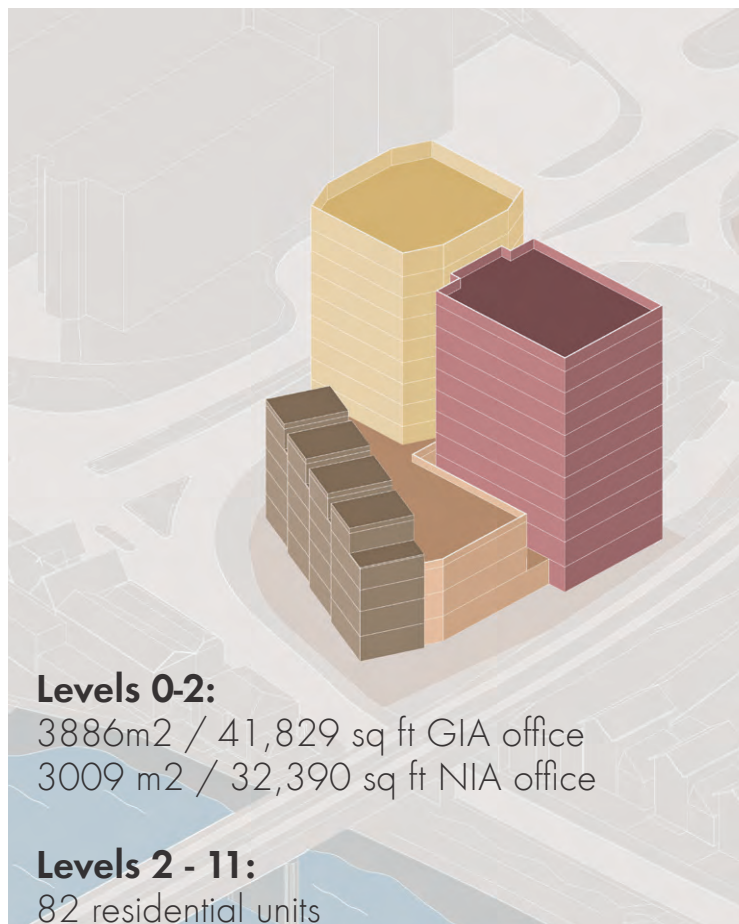
		GEA		GIA		NIA		UNITS				TOT
		m2	sqft	m2	sqft	m2	sqft	1b/2P	2b/ 3P	2b/ 4P	3b/ 6P	
A												
Office												
	Level 00	1102.1	11862.9	1027	11054.8	771.6	8306.1					
	Level 01	1589.8	17112.9	1450.5	15613.6	1140.1	12272.5					
	Level 02											
	Level 03											
	Office Total	2691.9	28975.8	2477.5	26668.4	1911.7	20578.6					
Residential												
	Level 00	218.1	2347.4	201.2	2165.7							
	Level 02	1186.1	12766.3	1015.1	10926	766.9	8252.8	12	1	1		
	Level 03	1196.6	12879.8	1030.8	11096.7	1041.8	11211.8	6		4	4	
	Level 04	1097.6	11813.8	917	9870.6	600.6	6462.6	6		4		
	Level 05	866.8	9329.8	759	8170.6	600.6	6462.6	6		4		
	Level 06	866.8	9329.8	759	8170.6	600.6	6462.6	6		4		
	Level 07	866.8	9329.8	759	8170.6	600.6	6462.6	6		4		
	Level 08	866.8	9329.8	759	8170.6	600.6	6462.6	6		4		
	Level 09	866.8	9329.8	759	8170.6	600.6	6462.6	6		4		
	Level 10	437.3	4706.5	368.7	3968.8	281.6	3029.6				4	
	Level 11	437.3	4706.5	368.7	3968.8	281.6	3029.6				4	
	Level 12											
	Level 13											
	Level 14											
	Residential Total	8907.0	95869.3	7696.5	82849.0	5975.5	64299.4	54	1	37	4	96



Option 1

OPTION 2 - REDUCED HEIGHT - 12 + 10 PLUS ADDITIONAL OFFICE AREA

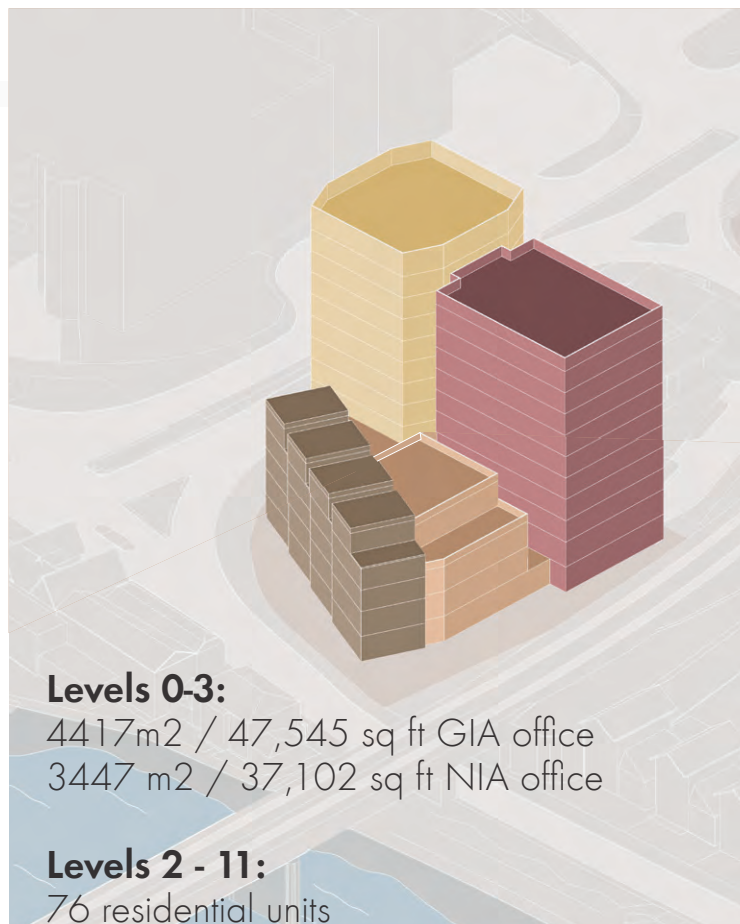
		GEA		GIA		NIA		UNITS				TOT
		m2	sqft	m2	sqft	m2	sqft	1b/2P	2b/ 3P	2b/ 4P	3b/ 6P	
A												
Office												
	Level 00			1027	11054.8	771.6	8306.1					
	Level 01			1450.5	15613.6	1140.1	12272.5					
	Level 02			1408.5	15161.0	1097.3	11811.2					
	Level 03											
	Office Total			3886	41829.4	3009	32389.8					
Residential												
	Level 00			201.2	2163.7							
	Level 02											
	Level 03			1030.8	11096.7	1041.8	11211.8	8	1	1	4	
	Level 04			917	9870.6	600.6	6462.6	6		4		
	Level 05			759	8170.6	600.6	6462.6	6		4		
	Level 06			759	8170.6	600.6	6462.6	6		4		
	Level 07			759	8170.6	600.6	6462.6	6		4		
	Level 08			759	8170.6	600.6	6462.6	6		4		
	Level 09			759	8170.6	600.6	6462.6	6		4		
	Level 10			368.7	3968.8	281.6	3029.6			4		
	Level 11			368.7	3968.8	281.6	3029.6			4		
	Level 12											
	Level 13											
	Level 14											
	Residential Total	0.0	0	6681.4	71923.6	5208.6	56046.6	44	1	33	4	82



Option 2

OPTION 3 - REDUCED HEIGHT - 12 + 10 PLUS MAXIMUM ADDITIONAL OFFICE AREA

		GEA		GIA		NIA		UNITS				TOT
		m2	sqft	m2	sqft	m2	sqft	1b/2P	2b/ 3P	2b/ 4P	3b/ 6P	
A												
Office												
	Level 00			1027	11054.8	771.6	8306.1					
	Level 01			1450.5	15613.6	1140.1	12272.5					
	Level 02			1408.5	15161.0	1097.3	11811.2					
	Level 03			531	5715.6	437.8	4712.4					
	Office Total			4417	47545.0	3446.8	37102.3					
Residential												
	Level 00			201.2	2165.7							
	Level 02											
	Level 03			670.8	7220.4	508.9	5477.7	2	1	1	4	
	Level 04			917	9870.6	600.6	6462.6	6		4		
	Level 05			759	8170.6	600.6	6462.6	6		4		
	Level 06			759	8170.6	600.6	6462.6	6		4		
	Level 07			759	8170.6	600.6	6462.6	6		4		
	Level 08			759	8170.6	600.6	6462.6	6		4		
	Level 09			759	8170.6	600.6	6462.6	6		4		
	Level 10			368.7	3968.8	281.6	3029.6			4		
	Level 11			368.7	3968.8	281.6	3029.6			4		
	Level 12											
	Level 13											
	Level 14											
	Residential Total	0.0	0	6321.4	68047.32	4675.7	50312.5	38	1	33	4	76



Option 3

STREET ELEVATIONS PLANNING SCHEME

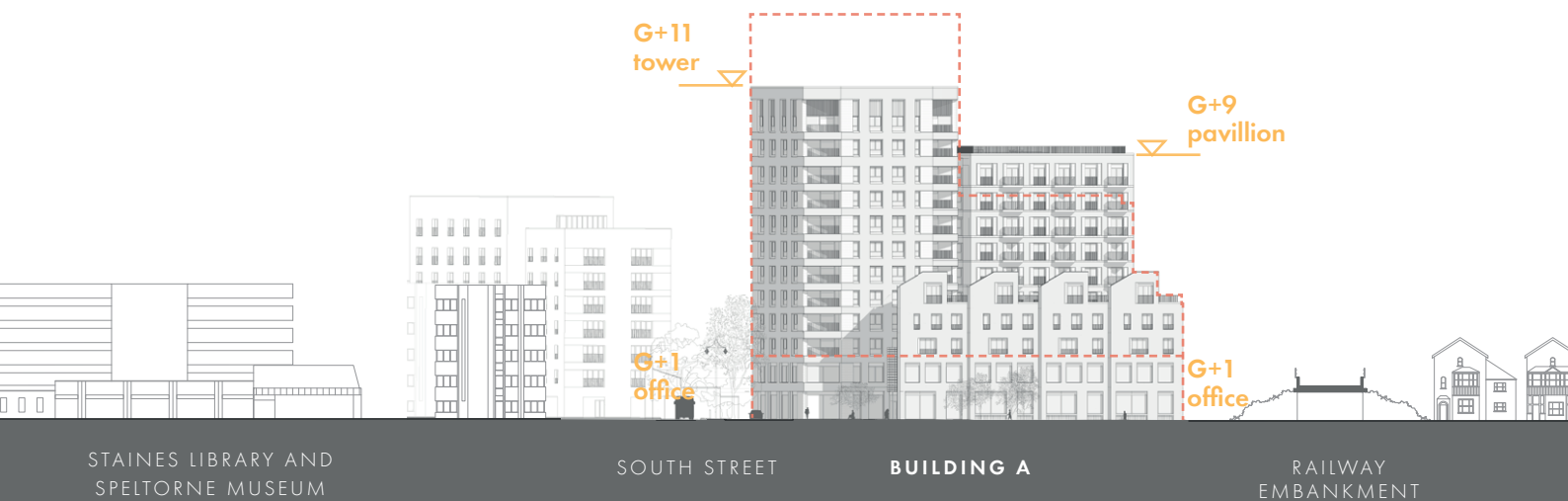


Section AA



Section BB

STREET ELEVATIONS REDUCED HEIGHT SCHEME Option 1

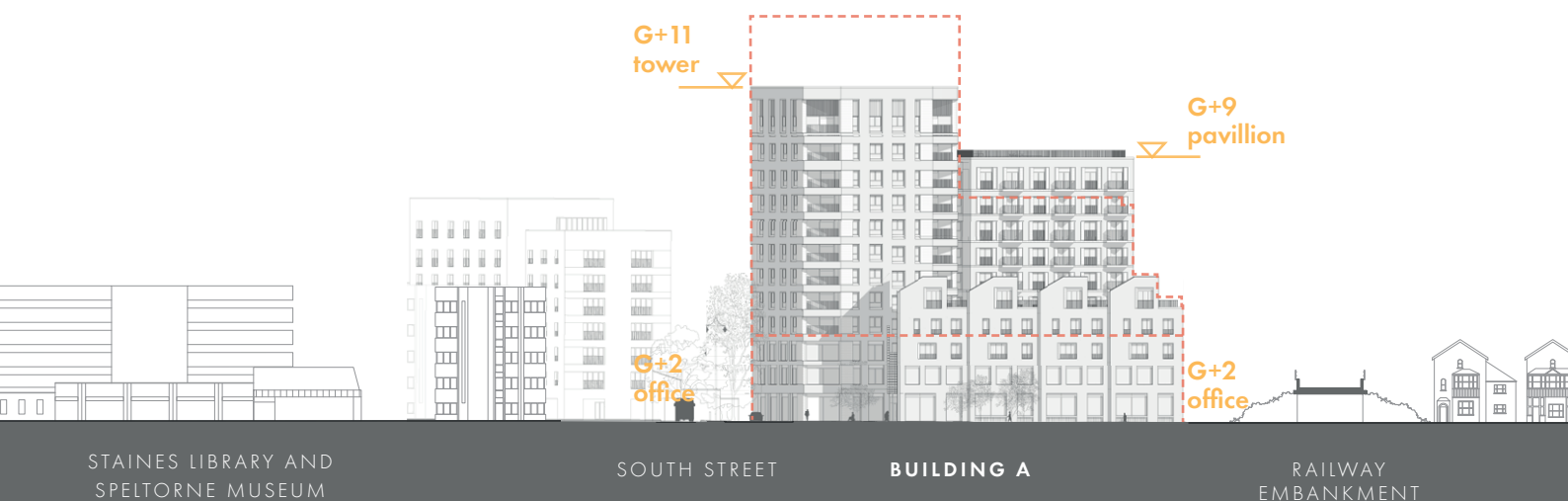


Section AA



Section BB

STREET ELEVATIONS REDUCED HEIGHT SCHEME Option 2 - increased office space

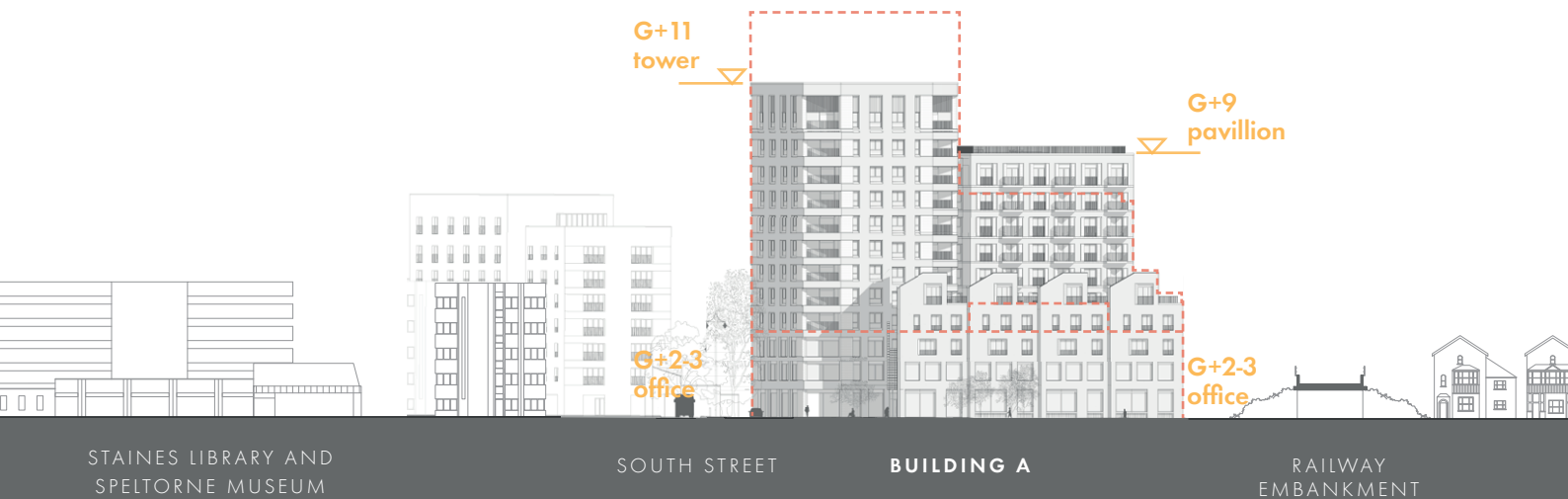


Section AA



Section BB

STREET ELEVATIONS REDUCED HEIGHT SCHEME Option 3 - maximum office space



Section AA



Section BB



Block A Section A-A

Planning scheme:

- Tall building: G+14 storeys
- Pavilion building: G+7 storeys
- Office accommodation at Levels 0-1: 20,579 sq ft NIA



Block A Section A-A

Massing option 1:

- Tall building reduces to G+11 storeys
- Pavilion building increases to G+9 storeys
- Retained office accommodation at Levels 0-1: 20,579 sq ft NIA



Block A Section A-A

Massing option 2:

- Massing of tall building and pavilion as option 1
- Additional office accommodation totalling 32,390 sqft NIA across Levels 0 - 2
- See plans



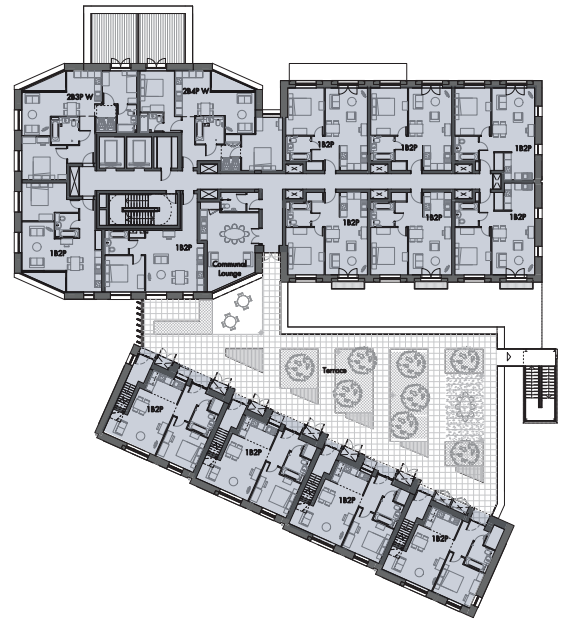
Block A Section A-A

Massing option 3:

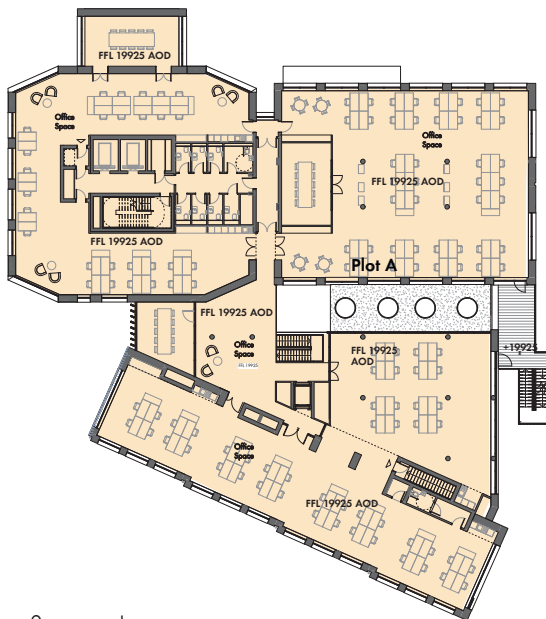
- Massing of tall building and pavilion as option 1
- Additional office accommodation totalling 37,100 sqft NIA across Levels 0 - 3
- See plans



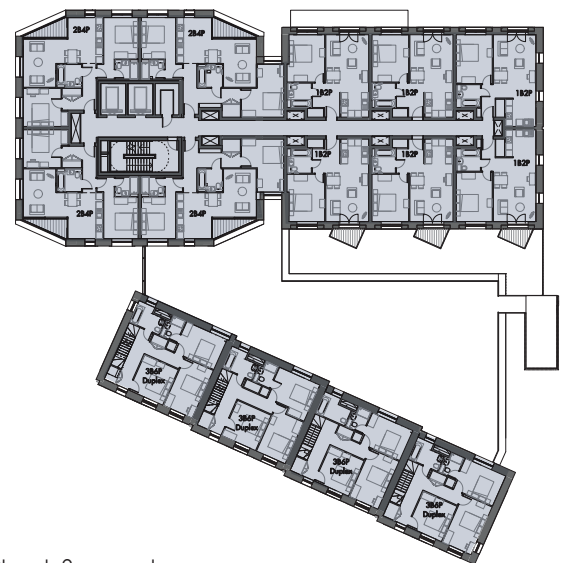
Ground floor plan



Second floor plan



First floor plan



Third floor plan

Planning scheme
No change for Option 1

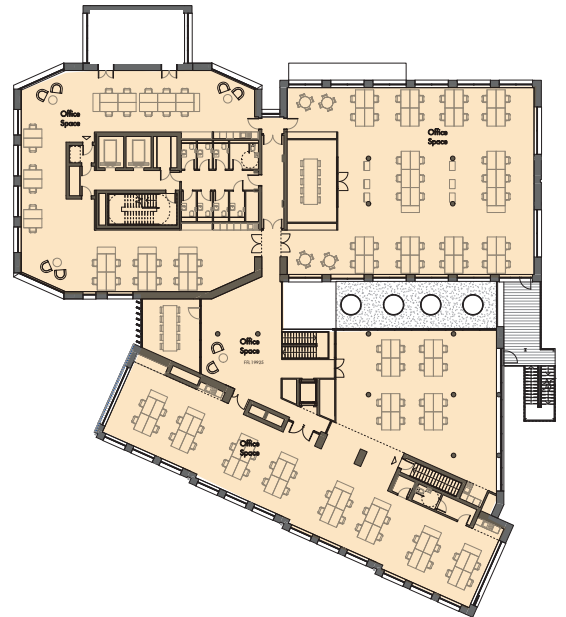
KEY

OFFICE - 20,579 sq ft NIA - Planning and Option 1
Ground + First

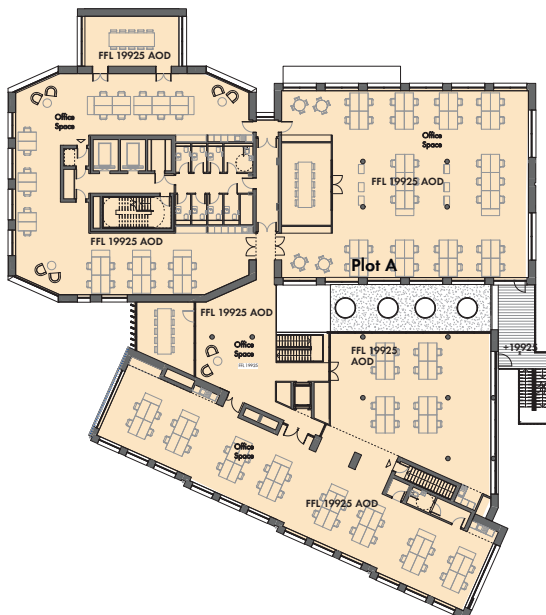
RESIDENTIAL - 96 units - Planning and Option 1
(NB. unit mix changes)



Ground floor plan



Second floor plan



First floor plan



Third floor plan

Option 2

Increased office provision

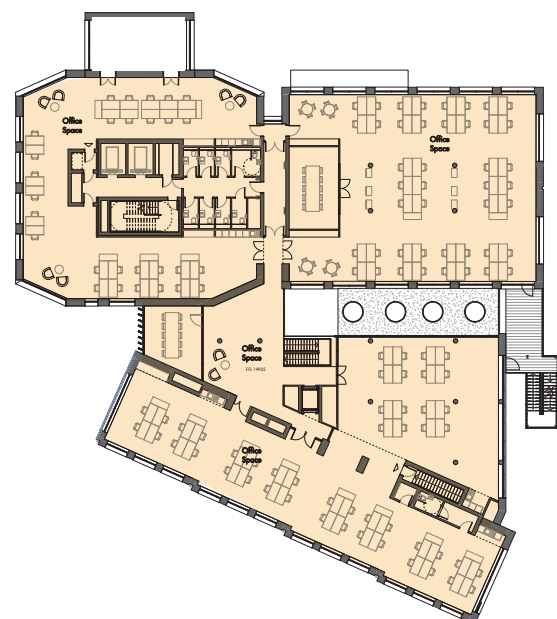
KEY

OFFICE - 32,390 sq ft NIA
Ground + First + Second

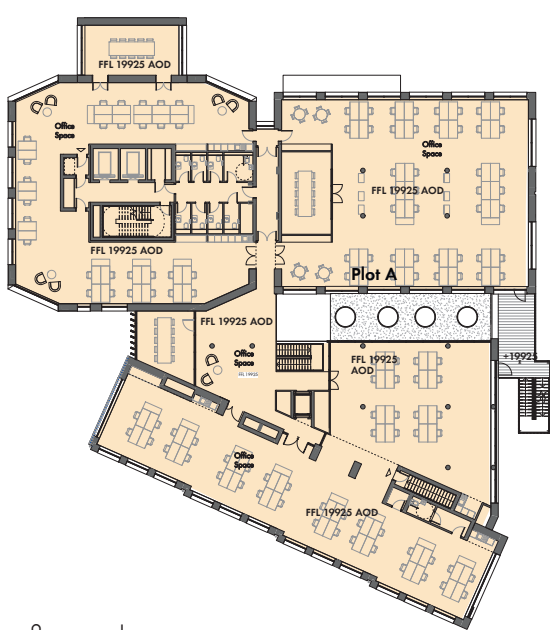
RESIDENTIAL - 82 units - Planning and Option 1
Ground, Third - 11th



Ground floor plan



Second floor plan



First floor plan



Third floor plan

Option 3 Increased office provision

KEY

- OFFICE** - 37,100 sq ft NIA
Ground + First + Second + part of Third
- RESIDENTIAL** - 76 units - Planning and Option 1
Ground, Third - 11th



View from Thames Street facing south



View from Thames Street from railway bridge



View from Thames Street facing south



View from Thames Street from railway bridge



View from Thames Street facing south



View from Thames Street from railway bridge



View from Thames Street facing south



View from Thames Street from railway bridge



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of the Local Government Act 1972.

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Corporate Policy and Resources Committee



29 November 2021

Title	Corporate Plan 2021-23
Purpose of the report	To make a recommendation to Council
Report Author	Lee O'Neil, Deputy Chief Executive
Ward(s) Affected	All Wards
Exempt	No
Exemption Reason	
Corporate Priority	This report outlines the proposed new priorities for the Council
Recommendations	Committee is asked to: Recommend that Council adopts the proposed Corporate Plan for 2021-23 as appended to this report.
Reason for Recommendation	The Corporate Plan is a key policy document which outlines the proposed strategic priorities for the Council for the period of the Plan, and the values the Council will abide by in conducting its activities.

1. Key issues

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is for the Committee to agree the content of Spelthorne's proposed Corporate Plan for 2021-23 and to recommend its adoption by Council.
- 1.2 Spelthorne's previous Corporate Plan covered the period 2016-2019. Work on the development and implementation of a new Plan had to be put on hold whilst the Council focused on the enormous task of responding to the COVID-19 pandemic.
- 1.3 Earlier this year, the previous administration and Management Team undertook some work with IESE to help firm up on some ideas for a new set of priorities for the Council, which became known as the 'CARE' priorities. This work also included developing a new set of Corporate Values for the Council, which were based around the acronym PROVIDE.
- 1.4 On 5 July 2021, the Committee received an update on progress around the development of a new Corporate Plan ('the Plan'). At that meeting, the Committee agreed the broad direction of the Plan's development but suggested that an additional priority around service provision should be

added to the proposed priorities. The Committee also agreed that having a common set of values to work with was helpful and needed to be communicated to all Councillors as soon as possible.

- 1.5 Following this meeting, further extensive work has been undertaken developing the Plan. The proposed Plan outlined in **Appendix 1** of this report specifies five priorities; areas where the Council will target some of its resources during the term of the Plan. These are:
- **Community**
 - **Affordable housing**
 - **Recovery**
 - **Environment**
 - **Service delivery**
- 1.6 The Plan outlines the key aims for each priority, what the Council wants to deliver under each priority area (based on a number of key themes), and the support we will provide to deliver our objectives.
- 1.7 A separate Action Plan will be developed for each priority area, outlining a list of key projects and other actions which will be undertaken during the term of the Plan. This will build on the Recovery Action Plan relating to the 'Recovery' priority, which has already been developed and was presented to the Committee on 5 July 2021.
- 1.8 It is recognised that the priorities and associated Action Plans may need to change from time to time to take account of the changing environment and economic circumstances in which the Council operates, and the changing needs of Spelthorne's communities. The COVID-19 pandemic demonstrated the need for the Council to rapidly adapt to the challenges this has presented, and in light of the continuing uncertainties the pandemic presents, we must remain willing to adapt our plans accordingly.
- 1.9 The Plan also proposes a new set of values, which outline to our staff, Councillors and external stakeholders how the Council intends to undertake its functions and activities. These are:
- **Pride in our Council, communities and Borough**
 - **Responsive and flexible**
 - **Open and accountable**
 - **Value for money**
 - **Integrity**
 - **Dependable**
 - **Empowering communities**
- 2. Options analysis and proposal**
- 2.1 It is proposed that the Committee agree the content of the Corporate Plan as appended to this report and recommend its adoption by Council (**Preferred Option**).

- 2.2 The Committee could, however, recommend that changes be made to the Plan. Should this be the case, the adoption of the Plan by Council would need to be deferred until the new year to enable these changes to be made.

3. Financial implications

- 3.1 The Corporate Plan outlines the priority areas where some of Spelthorne's resources will be targeted to achieve the key actions listed. These priorities will therefore be closely linked to the Council's future budget planning process.

4. Other considerations

- 4.1 The Council's new priorities will be used to inform the individual and team objectives for staff through the appraisal and service planning process, and the values outline the desired behaviours for officers and Councillors in undertaking their roles.

5. Equality and Diversity

- 5.1 The proposed Plan outlines how the Council will ensure that we continue to deliver services that cater for all sections of our communities, how we will ensure that individuals and sections of the community are not excluded, and how we will support those most in need.

6. Sustainability/Climate Change Implications

- 6.1 One of the priorities outlined in the Plan is 'Environment'. This outlines how Spelthorne will aim to work with communities and partners to minimise the Council's impact on the environment, play our part in tackling climate change and maintain a clean, green and attractive Borough.

7. Timetable for implementation

- 7.1 If agreed by Committee, the Plan will be presented to Full Council on 9 December 2021 for adoption.
- 7.2 If adopted by Council, the Plan will take immediate effect and a communication plan will be implemented to ensure that all relevant stakeholders are aware of Spelthorne's new priorities and values.
- 7.3 Action Plans for the priority areas will then be developed for implementation, and progress on these will be reported back to the Committee at regular intervals.

Background papers:

There are none.

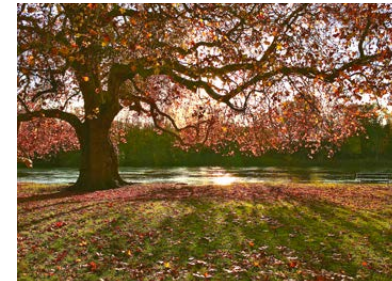
Appendices:

Appendix 1 – Proposed Corporate Plan for 2021-23

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Spelthorne Borough Council Corporate Plan 2021-2023



Foreword



Welcome to Spelthorne Borough Council's Corporate Plan for the period 2021 to 2023. We want our Borough to be somewhere we can all be proud of, a great place to live and work and where our communities flourish.

The plan sets out our five overarching 'CARES' priorities and the 15 more specific themes which we want to focus on. At the same time, we want to ensure that our values,

ethos and ways of working inform and underpin everything that we do.

The coronavirus pandemic has had far reaching effects on our communities and the Council has had a pivotal role in responding to the crisis. The management and staff in the Council have gone the extra mile to provide practical assistance to the most vulnerable residents and financial support to businesses in the Borough.

It is still uncertain what the long-term impacts of the pandemic will be, and therefore the priorities in this plan provide a framework for our response – on communities, affordable housing, recovery, the environment and service delivery. We believe these are the right and necessary priorities to make real improvements to the lives of Spelthorne residents, whilst demonstrating the aspirations this Council has for the future of the Borough.

This plan sets out our priorities so that they are clear and understandable to everyone. In tandem we have published a more specific recovery action plan which shows how the priorities and objectives have been adapted to deal with the consequences of the pandemic.

This Corporate Plan provides the framework for delivering our core vision and aspirations. We believe that we are building on a very strong base, and we will work hard to ensure the organisation and its people continue to have the leadership and resources needed to deliver for residents.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'L. Nichols'.

Cllr Lawrence Nichols, Leader
of Spelthorne Borough Council

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Daniel Charles Mouawad'.

Daniel Charles Mouawad,
Chief Executive



@spelthornebc



@spelthornebc



@spelthorneboroughcouncil



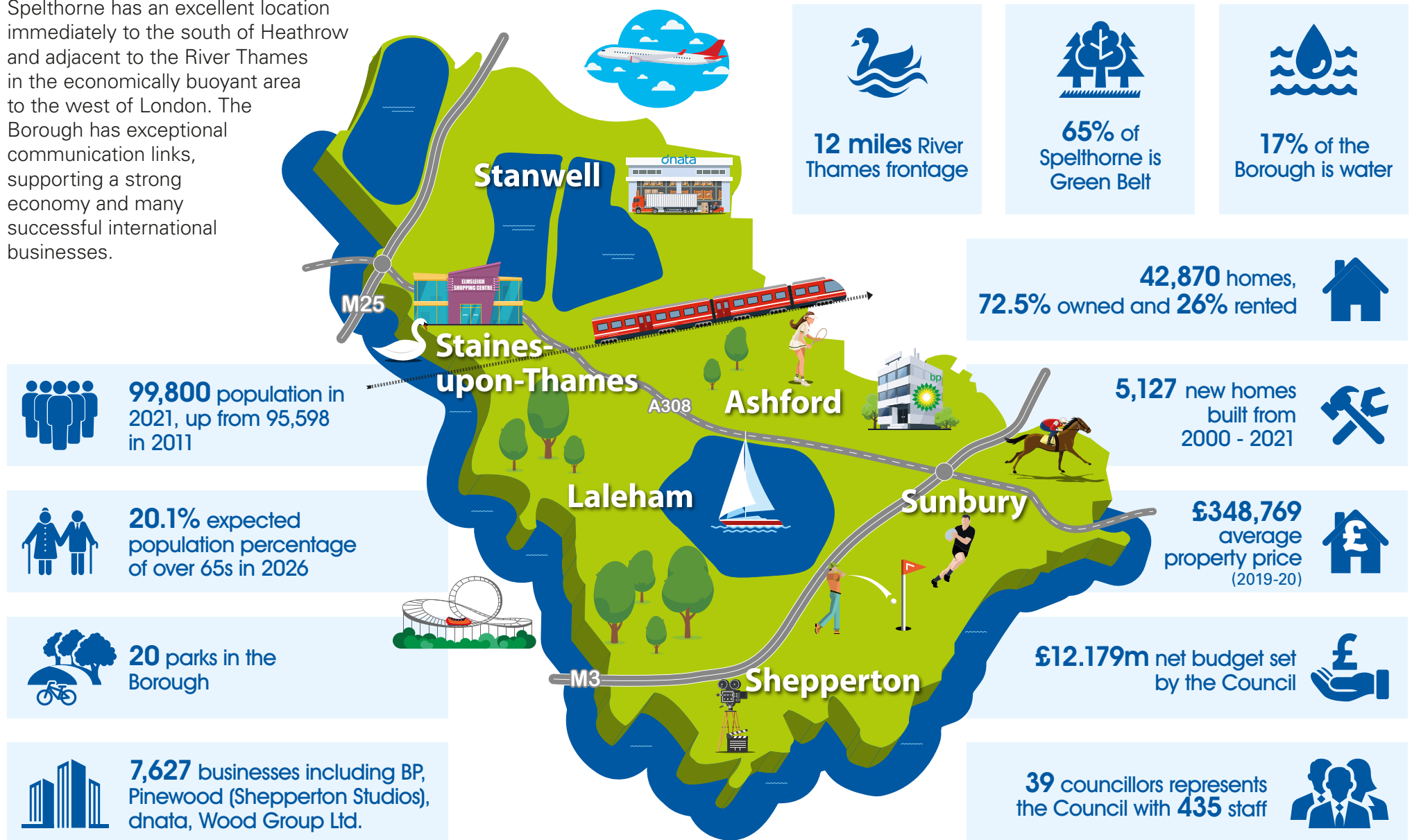
www.spelthorne.gov.uk



Spelthorne in numbers

Spelthorne has an excellent location immediately to the south of Heathrow and adjacent to the River Thames in the economically buoyant area to the west of London. The Borough has exceptional communication links, supporting a strong economy and many successful international businesses.

Page 101



Services

 Recycling	 Community centres	 Leisure services	 Community grants	 Rough sleepers	 Verge and grass cutting
 Business grants	 Allotments	 Customer services	 Street naming	 Electric Vehicle charging points	 Community transport
 Food parcels	 Community safety	 Public toilets	 Staines market	 Support4Spelthorne	 Legal enforcement powers
 Playgrounds and parks	 High street recovery	 Independent Living	 Street cleaning	 Environmental health	 Moorings
 Affordable housing	 Planning	 Waste collection	 Volunteering	 Business support	 Building control
 Memorials	 Swimming pools and sports grounds	 Communications	 Resident forums	 Licensing	 Community helpline
 Local jobs	 Tackling fly tipping	 Local democracy	 supplement street light provision	 Meals on wheels	 Town Centre management

Our Priorities



To put our communities at the heart of everything we do, building strong relationships with our residents and businesses, and helping to forge links within those communities, so that they feel empowered, included, supported, safe and healthy.



To deliver housing which meets the needs of all sections of our communities, building new homes, helping people to stay in their existing accommodation and ensuring that none of our residents are homeless.



To provide support and guidance to our residential and business communities to enable them to recover from the significant effects of the COVID-19 pandemic.



To work with our communities and partners to minimise our effects on the environment, play our part in tackling the threat of climate change and to maintain a clean, green and attractive Borough, which recognises and protects biodiversity.



To deliver efficient and effective services which meet the changing needs of our communities, adapting to meet new challenges, new ways of working and different ways of interacting with our communities.

CARES

Our Values



Page 104

PROVIDE

Community

Key aim: To put our communities at the heart of everything we do, building strong relationships with our residents and businesses, and helping to forge links within those communities, so that they feel empowered, included, supported, safe and healthy. We will deliver this through four key themes.

Themes: strong communities, safe communities, healthy communities and developing community infrastructure.



Strong communities

We want:

To work with our partners to deliver more services for all the communities in Spelthorne, and ensure that people are included in the decisions we make.

We will support this by:

- Engaging with residents' associations and other community groups so that they are better informed and can input into local initiatives.
- Seeking residents' views on the Council's plans.
- Ensuring individuals and sections of the community are not excluded and supporting those most in need.
- Supporting local businesses, signposting them to support networks/funding and working with key partners, such as the Staines Business Improvement District.

Safe communities

We want:

Safe places to live, visit and do business, with safe streets and open spaces and for residents to feel secure in their own homes.

We will support this by:

- Further developing the strong partnership working between our Community Safety/Joint Enforcement Teams and Surrey Police, supporting the police in tackling issues such as anti-social behaviour, gang-culture and serious organised crime.
- Working with Surrey County Council to make our roads safer for pedestrians and cyclists, with new cycle lanes/walkways and reduced speed limits where needed.



Community

Healthy communities

We want:

Communities to stay healthy for longer.

We will support this by:

- Working with our healthcare, voluntary and community partners to improve residents' health and wellbeing, promoting active and healthy lifestyles and tackling health inequalities.
- Ensuring the most vulnerable have access to the support they need and assisting people to make new connections/friends.
- Providing a range of leisure facilities to enable people to stay fit and healthy, including parks, community gym equipment and leisure centres.

Developing community infrastructure

Working with partners we will:

Provide the right infrastructure to meet our communities' changing needs and the demands of a growing population, working with partners to help deliver the necessary health, educational, leisure and cultural infrastructure to meet local needs using the Local Plan process and Community Infrastructure Levy.

Our new 'state of the art' Spelthorne Leisure Centre, which is due for completion in early 2024, is designed to provide facilities to meet current and future needs in a healthier internal environment, with low-chemical pools and a dementia friendly design.



Affordable Housing

Key aim: To deliver housing which meets the needs of all sections of our communities, building new homes, helping people to stay in their existing accommodation and reducing homelessness.

Themes: Delivering new homes, helping people to stay in their own homes and tackling homelessness.



Delivering new homes

We want:

To provide real solutions to the Borough's housing challenges to meet the growing demands and needs of our residents.

We will support this by:

- Continuing to build our own housing to assist those most in need, focusing on affordable units and key worker accommodation.
- Acting as a model landlord, managing our residential properties through Knowle Green Estates Ltd.
- Working with Registered Providers and private sector partners to promote the development of housing that meets the needs of all our communities.
- Using the development of our new Local Plan to set a deliverable target for new housing in the Borough, protecting the Green Belt wherever we can.

Helping people to stay in their own homes

We want:

To help vulnerable people live full lives.

We will support this by:

- Assisting those with disabilities to adapt their properties through our in-house home improvement agency and handyman services.
- Working with partners to develop an efficient hospital discharge programme.
- Ensuring that landlords keep their properties in a safe condition.



Affordable Housing

Tackling homelessness

We want:

All our residents to have a safe and secure home.

We will support this by:

- Providing early interventions to help prevent evictions.
- Working with partners to tackle homelessness, helping residents find a suitable and safe home. Our newly constructed White House single person homeless facility and Harper House temporary accommodation units will help people get back on their feet.

The White House Hostel in Ashford, will provide specialist accommodation for single homeless people with multiple or complex needs.



Recovery

Key aim: To provide support and guidance to residents and businesses to help them to recover from the economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Themes: Borough recovery and Council recovery.











Borough recovery

We want:

To deliver the actions set out in our detailed Recovery Plan to address the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic.

We will support this by:

 1. Supporting community recovery	 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Providing leadership within our communities • Supporting vulnerable people to help them stay safe and healthy • Preventing debt/financial hardship, preventing homelessness and rough-sleeping • Promoting and increasing leisure activities
 2. Supporting economic recovery	 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minimising unemployment • Developing skills and getting people back in work • Assisting future business growth and adaptation • Placemaking, regeneration and developing infrastructure • Attracting visitors to the Borough
 3. Supporting a green recovery	 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Climate change policy • Reduce the carbon footprint of Council operations • Increase use of clean energy • Encourage greater use of cycling and walking • Improve and increase provision of public open spaces and enhancement of biodiversity • Improve energy efficiency of housing stock
 4. Keeping people informed	 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communicate regular updates using a range of different media

A detailed Action Plan has been developed which outlines the measures the Council will be taking under each of these areas. Full details of this plan can be found at: www.spelthorne.gov.uk/recoveryplan

Council recovery

We want:

To ensure that the Council can continue to support the wider Borough recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic.

We will support this by:

- Managing our commercial investments and assets in the most efficient and effective way possible to provide a consistent income stream which will support Council services on a sustainable basis.
- Stimulating a robust economic recovery (through our Economic Recovery Plan) to help build back other key income streams, such as Business Rates, Council Tax and income from car parking.
- Refreshing our medium-term financial projections and strategy to address projected budget gaps.
- Continuing to delivery key services by:
 - Building more resilience
 - Workforce development
 - Protecting staff and clients
 - Maintaining mobile and flexible working
 - Offering new ways to access services



Environment

Key aim: To work with communities and partners to minimise our impact on the environment, play our part in tackling climate change and maintain a clean, green and attractive Borough.

Themes: Responding to the climate emergency, sustainable Council and sustainable communities.



Responding to the climate change emergency:

We want:

To recognise the effects that climate change is having on our planet and how this could affect our Borough. Having declared a climate emergency, we recognise the need to lead by example and work with residents and businesses to achieve cleaner and greener lifestyles.

We will support this by:

- Developing a Climate Change Strategy to deliver carbon neutrality for the Council and lower the Borough's carbon emissions.
- Working with the Environment Agency and other partners to deliver the River Thames (Flood Relief) Scheme and other flood mitigation initiatives.
- Considering opportunities to create and support carbon sink initiatives within the Borough, including landscaping and more tree planting.
- Conserving our urban open spaces and green infrastructure which are a contributor to managing surface water run-off and holding floodwaters.





Environment

Electric vehicles and bicycles have been introduced as part of Spelthorne Borough Council's plan to improve air quality and reduce carbon emissions.

Sustainable Council:

We want:

Safe places to live, visit and do business, with safe streets and open spaces and for residents to feel secure in their own homes.

We will support this by:

Sustainable buildings	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Incorporating sustainable building design and infrastructure for new developments, e.g. our new Spelthorne Leisure Centre will be the first of its kind in the UK to fully meet the ultra-low energy efficient Passivhaus standard.• Incorporating energy efficiency measures (e.g. solar panels) into conversions and refurbishments of Council buildings and on housing developments.
Minimising the Council's carbon emissions	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Using clean energy and increased use of electric vehicles.• Reducing the need for unnecessary travel by some of our staff through hybrid-working.• Sustainable procurement of goods and services.• Delivering the Climate Change Strategy (training our staff to 'think green').• Developing a future financial treasury management strategy that considers the environment, social governance and responsible investments.• Making budget provision to accelerate green initiatives.





Environment

Sustainable communities:

We want:

Sustainable communities – which manage their social, environmental, and financial resources to meet current needs, while ensuring that adequate resources are available for future generations.

We will support this by:

Clean and attractive Borough	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improving the urban environment, keeping our Borough clean and litter free. • Enhancing the environmental and social value of our parks, providing clean, accessible, outdoor spaces with access to nature for education and well-being purposes. • Reducing pollution, improving local air quality where possible and reducing the Borough's indirect greenhouse gas emissions.
Supporting biodiversity:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Restoring and protecting nature, managing our land to provide greater biodiversity to encourage wildlife and insect populations. • Developing Local Plan policies to encourage new developments to have a positive biodiversity impact.
Sustainable living:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encouraging waste prevention and recycling. Increase facilities and services for participation in domestic and business recycling, composting and reduction and re-use schemes. • Promoting sustainable travel, including actively supporting improvements to public transport access to Heathrow. • Promoting and supporting reduction in energy use in the Borough, assisting residents and business with access to relevant funding and information. • Increasing opportunities for exercise through walking and cycling and improving air quality by reducing car dependency, working with the relevant highways authorities.
Sustainable development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promoting residential development that is sustainably located with access to existing services and transport hubs. • Encourage sustainable design and construction. • Promoting energy efficiency for new buildings and refurbishments.

CLEANER GREENER SPELTHORNE



Service Delivery

Key aim: To deliver the full range of services that our communities need as efficiently and effectively as possible.

Themes: Accessible services, financially sustainable services and well-trained, motivated workforce.

Accessible services

We want:

To continue to deliver services that cater for all sections of our communities.

We will support this by:

- Ensuring that residents receive a consistent level of service.
- Introducing a Customer Charter to outline what residents should expect when dealing with the Council.
- Where appropriate, introducing innovative, cost-effective service delivery models to ensure the best possible service.
- Monitoring the performance of key services and making sure that we maintain the expected standards.
- Increasing the range of services people can access remotely.
- Continuing to offer residents the option to visit the Council offices.
- Ensuring that working arrangements with our partners in the public, private and voluntary sectors are coordinated and effective. Ensuring that our staff have the systems and equipment to enable them to do their jobs efficiently.
- Looking for opportunities for partnership working/shared service provision with other local authorities which would benefit residents.
- Resisting any change in local authority structure which would erode the quality of service available to communities.





Service Delivery

Vehicles from Spelthorne Borough Council's
Neighbourhood Service's fleet.

Financially sustainable services

We want:

To continue to provide the essential services that our residents and businesses rely on.

We will support this by:

- Closely monitoring the Council's finances and ensuring services can be provided in the long-term.
- Delivering efficient services and providing value for money.
- Managing our assets to generate a long-term sustainable income to fund key services.

Well trained and motivated workforce

We want:

To retain and recruit suitably qualified officers and support staff as we recognise they are core to the functioning of every aspect of the Council's work.

We will support this by:

- Continuing to invest in training and developing our staff, including training our own professional staff, where appropriate, to address the shortage of qualified officers coming into local government.
- Ensuring that we understand and address staff pressures and needs.
- Providing the tools to enable staff to undertake their roles effectively.
- Upholding the core behavioural values we expect as an organisation.



@spelthornebc



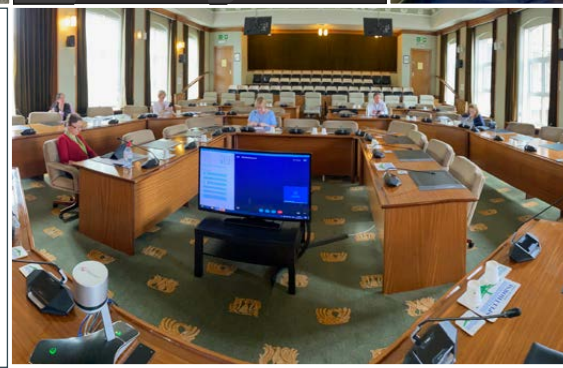
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**RECOMMENDATION OF AUDIT COMMITTEE TO COUNCIL
FOLLOWING MEETING HELD ON 25 NOVEMBER 2021**

Appointment of External Auditor to the Council

The Audit Committee considered a report setting out the options available to the Council for the appointment of an external auditor for the five-year period 2023/24 to 2027/28. The Council had previously opted into the 'appointing person' national audit appointment arrangements established by the Public Sector Audit Appointments (PSAA).

The options available to the Council are to:

- (a) Arrange their own procurement and make the appointment themselves
- (b) Arrange the procurement in conjunction with other bodies
- (c) Join and take advantage of the national collective scheme administered by the PSAA.

The Committee considered that the sector-wide procurement by the PSAA (option c) would be likely to produce the best outcome and result in reduced costs compared to the other options, avoid the need to oversee a local auditor procurement and contract management process, and provide a better opportunity to secure the appointment of a qualified auditor.

Under the local audit regulations full Council are required to make the decision. The Audit Committee therefore recommend to Council to opt into the national scheme managed by Public Sector Auditor Appointments as the "Appointing Person".

Councillor J. Boughtflower
Chair of Audit Committee

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Audit Committee

25th November 2021



Title	Decision to opt into the national scheme for audit appointments managed by Public Sector Audit Appointments as the “Appointing Person”
Purpose of the report	To make a recommendation to Council
Report Author	<i>Terry Collier, Chief Finance Officer</i>
Ward(s) Affected	All Wards
Exempt	No
Exemption Reason	N/A
Corporate Priority	Financial Sustainability
Recommendations	Committee is asked to: To approve making a recommendation to Council to opt into the national scheme managed by Public Sector Auditor Appointments as the “Appointing Person”
Reason for Recommendation	This report sets out proposals for appointing the external auditor to the Council/Authority for the accounts for the five-year period from 2023/24.

1. Key issues

- 1.1 The current auditor appointment arrangements cover the period up to and including the audit of the 2022/23 accounts. The Council opted into the ‘appointing person’ national auditor appointment arrangements established by Public Sector Audit Appointments (PSAA) for the period covering the accounts for 2018/19 to 2022/23. See letter of invitation to Spelthorne, appendix A.
- 1.2 PSAA is now undertaking a procurement for the next appointing period, covering audits for 2023/24 to 2027/28. During Autumn 2021 all local government bodies need to make important decisions about their external audit arrangements from 2023/24. They have options to arrange their own procurement and make the appointment themselves or in conjunction with

other bodies, or they can join and take advantage of the national collective scheme administered by PSAA.

- 1.3 The report concludes that the sector-wide procurement conducted by PSAA will produce better outcomes and will be less burdensome for the Council than a procurement undertaken locally because:

collective procurement reduces costs for the sector and for individual authorities compared to a multiplicity of smaller local procurements;

if it does not use the national appointment arrangements, the Council will need to establish its own auditor panel with an independent chair and independent members to oversee a local auditor procurement and ongoing management of an audit contract;

it is the best opportunity to secure the appointment of a qualified, registered auditor - there are only nine accredited local audit firms, and a local procurement would be drawing from the same limited supply of auditor resources as PSAA's national procurement; and

supporting the sector-led body offers the best way of ensuring there is a continuing and sustainable public audit market into the medium and long term.

- 1.4 If the Council wishes to take advantage of the national auditor appointment arrangements, it is required under the local audit regulations to make the decision at full Council. The opt-in period starts on 22 September 2021 and closes on 11 March 2022, therefore it is proposed that a recommendation goes to February Council. To opt into the national scheme from 2023/24, the Council/Authority needs to return completed opt-in documents to PSAA by 11 March 2022.

2. Options analysis and proposal

- 2.1 There are three options available, either opt in to the national arrangement managed by PSAA or procure ourselves either by setting up our own arrangements in partnership with other councils.

- 2.2 **Option 1:** Paragraph 1.3 above sets out the benefits of opting in, last time round 98% of councils in the country opted in. It should be commented that both this council and others have not always been comfortable with the regime set up by the PSAA which does not seem to have been very effective in constraining firms from seeking to increase their fees above the base fees agreed. We will continue to work through the Society of District Council Treasurers to engage with PSAA to influence them to set a more predictable fee regime in the future. What has not helped in recent years has been the additional requirements of the Financial Reporting Council increasing the amount of work audit firms have to undertake particularly around assets and pensions.

- 2.3 PSAA is specified as the 'appointing person' for principal local government under the provisions of the Act and the Local Audit (Appointing Person) Regulations 2015. PSAA let five-year audit services contracts in 2017 for the first appointing period, covering audits of the accounts from 2018/19 to 2022/23. It is now undertaking the work needed to invite eligible bodies to opt in for the next appointing period, from the 2023/24 audit onwards, and to complete a procurement for audit services. PSAA is a not-for-profit organisation

whose costs are around 4% of the scheme with any surplus distributed back to scheme members.

2.4 In summary the national opt-in scheme provides the following:

the appointment of a suitably qualified audit firm to conduct audits for each of the five financial years commencing 1 April 2023;

appointing the same auditor to other opted-in bodies that are involved in formal collaboration or joint working initiatives to the extent this is possible with other constraints;

managing the procurement process to ensure both quality and price criteria are satisfied. PSAA has sought views from the sector to help inform its detailed procurement strategy;

ensuring suitable independence of the auditors from the bodies they audit and managing any potential conflicts as they arise during the appointment period;

minimising the scheme management costs and returning any surpluses to scheme members;

consulting with authorities on auditor appointments, giving the Council the an opportunity to seek to influence which auditor is appointed;

consulting with authorities on the scale of audit fees and ensuring these reflect scale, complexity, and audit risk; and

ongoing contract and performance management of the contracts once these have been let.

2.5 Much has changed in the local audit market since audit contracts were last awarded in 2017. At that time the audit market was relatively stable, there had been few changes in audit requirements, and local audit fees had been reducing over a long period. 98% of those bodies eligible opted into the national scheme and attracted very competitive bids from audit firms. The resulting audit contracts took effect from 1 April 2018.

2.6 During 2018 a series of financial crises and failures in the private sector year led to questioning about the role of auditors and the focus and value of their work. Four independent reviews were commissioned by Government: Sir John Kingman's review of the Financial Reporting Council (FRC), the audit regulator; the Competition and Markets Authority review of the audit market; Sir Donald Brydon's review of the quality and effectiveness of audit; and Sir Tony Redmond's review of local authority financial reporting and external audit. The recommendations are now under consideration by Government, with the clear implication that significant reforms will follow. A new audit regulator (ARGA) is to be established, and arrangements for system leadership in local audit are to be introduced. Further change will follow as other recommendations are implemented.

2.7 The Kingman review has led to an urgent drive for the FRC to deliver rapid, measurable improvements in audit quality. This has created a major pressure for audit firms to ensure full compliance with regulatory requirements and expectations in every audit they undertake. By the time firms were conducting 2018/19 local audits during 2019, the measures they were putting in place to respond to a more focused regulator were clearly visible. To deliver the necessary improvements in audit quality, firms were requiring their audit teams

to undertake additional work to gain deeper levels of assurance. However, additional work requires more time, posing a threat to the firms' ability to complete all their audits by the target date for publication of audited accounts. Delayed opinions are not the only consequence of the FRC's drive to improve audit quality. Additional audit work must also be paid for. As a result, many more fee variation claims have been needed than in prior years.

- 2.8 This situation has been accentuated by growing auditor recruitment and retention challenges, the complexity of local government financial statements and increasing levels of technical challenges as bodies explore innovative ways of developing new or enhanced income streams to help fund services for local people. These challenges have increased in subsequent audit years, with Covid-19 creating further significant pressure for finance and audit teams.
- 2.9 None of these problems is unique to local government audit. Similar challenges have played out in other sectors, where increased fees and disappointing responses to tender invitations have been experienced during the past two years.
- 2.10 It should be commented that both this council and others have not always been comfortable with the regime set up by the PSAA which does not seem to have been very effective in constraining firms from seeking to increase their fees above the base fees agreed or ensure audits are delivered on a timely basis (nationally 9% of audit opinions for the 2020-21 accounts met the national target date). However we acknowledge the factors set out above which have made the audit sector more challenging. We will continue to work through the Society of District Council Treasurers to engage with PSAA to influence them to set a more predictable fee regime in the future. What has not helped in recent years has been the additional requirements of the Financial Reporting Council increasing the amount of work audit firms have to undertake particularly around assets and pensions.
- 2.11 **Option 2:** To procure ourselves would require setting up a panel ourselves or jointly. The Council may elect to appoint its own external auditor under the Act, which would require the council to;
- Establish an independent auditor panel to make a stand-alone appointment. The auditor panel would need to be set up by the Council itself, and the members of the panel must be wholly or a majority of independent members as defined by the Act. Independent members for this purpose are independent appointees, excluding current and former elected members (or officers) and their close families and friends. This means that elected members will not have a majority input to assessing bids and choosing to which audit firm to award a contract for the Council external audit.
- Manage the contract for its duration, overseen by the Auditor Panel
- 2.12 Whilst PSAA has struggled to constrain costs and ensure timely delivery of audits, if the Council were to procure ourselves we would have very limited market influence and audit firms would be aware of the complexities associated with our investment assets portfolio, which may lead to lack of interest in bidding.

- 2.13 **Option 3:** Alternatively, the Act enables the Council to join with other authorities to establish a joint auditor panel. Again, this will need to be constituted of wholly or a majority of independent appointees. Further legal advice would be required on the exact constitution of such a panel having regard to the obligations of each Council under the Act and the Council would need to liaise with other local authorities to assess the appetite for such an arrangement. We have enquired of other councils across Surrey to see if any interest in a joint panel but none appear to be open to considering. Through the Society of District Council Treasurers we are not aware of any other county area considering opting out and making their own arrangement, Given the intense pressures officers are already working under we do not believe opting out is a realistic option.
- 2.14 Options 2 and 3 would be more resource-intensive processes to implement for the council, and without the bulk buying power of the sector-led procurement would be likely to result in a more costly service. It would also be more difficult to manage quality and independence requirements through a local appointment process. The council is unable to influence the scope of the audit and the regulatory regime inhibits the council's ability to affect quality.
- 2.15 The Council and its auditor panel would need to maintain ongoing oversight of the contract. Local contract management cannot, however, influence the scope or delivery of an audit.
- 2.16 The national offer provides the appointment of an independent auditor with limited administrative cost to the council. By joining the scheme, the Council would be acting with other councils to optimise the opportunity to influence the market that a national procurement provides.
- 2.17 The recommended approach is therefore to opt into the national auditor appointment scheme. (Option 1)

3. Financial implications

- 3.1 The auditor appointed at the end of the procurement process will undertake the statutory audit of accounts and Best Value assessment of the Council in each financial year, in accordance with all relevant codes of practice and guidance. The appointed auditor is also responsible for investigating questions raised by electors and has powers and responsibilities in relation to Public Interest Reports and statutory recommendations.
- 3.2 The auditor must act independently of the Council and the main purpose of the procurement legislation is to ensure that the appointed auditor is sufficiently qualified and independent.
- 3.3 The auditor must be registered to undertake local audits by the Financial Reporting Council (FRC) employ authorised Key Audit Partners to oversee the work. As the report below sets out there is a currently a shortage of registered firms and Key Audit Partners.
- 3.4 Auditors are regulated by the FRC, which will be replaced by a new body with wider powers, the Audit, Reporting and Governance Authority (ARGA) during the course of the next audit contract.
- 3.5 Councils therefore have very limited influence over the nature of the audit services they are procuring, the nature and quality of which are determined or overseen by third parties.

- 3.6 The prices submitted by bidders through the procurement will be the key determinant of the value of audit fees paid by opted-in bodies. PSAA will:
- seek to encourage realistic fee levels and to benefit from the economies of scale associated with procuring on behalf of a significant number of bodies;
 - continue to pool scheme costs and charge fees to opted-in bodies in accordance with the published fee scale as amended following consultations with scheme members and other interested parties (pooling means that everyone within the scheme will benefit from the prices secured via a competitive procurement process – a key tenet of the national collective scheme);
 - continue to minimise its own costs, around 4% of scheme costs, and as a not-for-profit company will return any surplus funds to scheme members. In 2019 it returned a total £3.5million to relevant bodies and in 2021 a further £5.6million was returned.
- 3.7 PSAA will seek to encourage market sustainability in its procurement. Firms will be able to bid for a variety of differently sized contracts so that they can match their available resources and risk appetite to the contract for which they bid. They will be required to meet appropriate quality standards and to reflect realistic market prices in their tenders, informed by the scale fees and the supporting information provided about each audit. Where regulatory changes are in train which affect the amount of audit work suppliers must undertake, firms will be informed as to which developments should be priced into their bids.
- 3.8 The scope of a local audit is fixed. It is determined by the Code of Audit Practice (currently published by the National Audit Office) , the format of the financial statements (specified by CIPFA/LASAAC) and the application of auditing standards regulated by the FRC. These factors apply to all local audits irrespective of whether an eligible body decides to opt into PSAA's national scheme or chooses to make its own separate arrangements. The requirements are mandatory; they shape the work auditors undertake and have a bearing on the actual fees required.
- 3.9 There are currently nine audit providers eligible to audit local authorities and other relevant bodies under local audit legislation. This means that a local procurement exercise would seek tenders from the same firms as the national procurement exercise, subject to the need to manage any local independence issues. Local firms cannot be invited to bid. Local procurements must deliver the same audit scope and requirements as a national procurement, reflecting the auditor's statutory responsibilities.
- 3.10 There is a risk that current external audit fee levels could increase when the current contracts end. It is clear that the scope of audit has increased, requiring more audit work. There are also concerns about capacity and sustainability in the local audit market.
- 3.11 Opting into a national scheme provides maximum opportunity to ensure fees are as realistic as possible, while ensuring the quality of audit is maintained, by entering into a large scale collective procurement arrangement.
- 3.12 If the national scheme is not used some additional resource may be needed to establish an auditor panel and conduct a local procurement. Until a

procurement exercise is completed it is not possible to state what, if any, additional resource may be required for audit fees from 2023/24.

4. Other considerations

4.1 Under the Local Government Audit & Accountability Act 2014 (“the Act”), the council is required to appoint an auditor to audit its accounts for each financial year. The council has three options;

- To appoint its own auditor, which requires it to follow the procedure set out in the Act.
- To act jointly with other authorities to procure an auditor following the procedures in the Act.
- To opt in to the national auditor appointment scheme administered by a body designated by the Secretary of State as the ‘appointing person’. The body currently designated for this role is Public Sector Audit Appointments Limited (PSAA).

In order to opt in to the national scheme, a council must make a decision at a meeting of the Full Council.

4.2 **Risks:** The principal risks are that the Council/Authority:

- fails to appoint an auditor in accordance with the requirements and timing specified in local audit legislation; or
- does not achieve value for money in the appointment process.

These risks are considered best mitigated by opting into the sector-led approach through PSAA.

4.3 **Legal Issues:** Section 7 of the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014 requires a relevant Council/Authority to appoint a local auditor to audit its accounts for a financial year not later than 31 December in the preceding year.

4.4 Section 8 governs the procedure for appointment including that the Council/Authority must consult and take account of the advice of its auditor panel on the selection and appointment of a local auditor. Section 8 provides that where a relevant Council/Authority is a local Council/Authority operating executive arrangements, the function of appointing a local auditor to audit its accounts is not the responsibility of an executive of the Council/Authority under those arrangements.

4.5 Section 12 makes provision for the failure to appoint a local auditor. The Council/Authority must immediately inform the Secretary of State, who may direct the Council/Authority to appoint the auditor named in the direction or appoint a local auditor on behalf of the Council/Authority.

4.6 Section 17 gives the Secretary of State the power to make regulations in relation to an ‘appointing person’ specified by the Secretary of State. This power has been exercised in the Local Audit (Appointing Person) Regulations 2015 (SI 192) and this gives the Secretary of State the ability to enable a sector-led body to become the appointing person. In July 2016 the Secretary of State specified PSAA as the appointing person.

5. Equality and Diversity

- 5.1 The PSAA will address equality and diversity issues in its contract specification

5. Sustainability/Climate Change Implications

- 5.1 PSAA current contract includes a clause in relation to 'Co-operation with PSAA on environmental issues'. This states that "Throughout the Contract the Supplier shall co-operate with PSAA in seeking reasonable and practical ways to improve the sustainability of the delivery of the Services", so PSAA do require its contracted firms to consider environmental issues. Whilst PSAA have yet to finalise the contract terms to be used in its 2022 procurement, PSAA intends to retain this contractual provision.
- 5.2 In addition to the above general contractual provision, PSAA will determine 5% of the bidders' tender evaluation score by the additional social value that they will deliver from the contract. In direct response to PSAA June consultation on the draft scheme prospectus PSAA have broadened the scope of social value that a bidder could provide in its response. The scope now includes sustainability and environmental concerns, and equality, diversity and inclusion, alongside apprenticeships and long term development opportunities.
- 5.3 PSAA intend to ask bidders to describe how their delivery of social value will be measured and evidenced to PSAA so that it will form part of their contract management arrangements.
- 5.4 It is also worth mentioning that when PSAA develops its auditor appointment proposals following contract award to successful firms, one of the factors that PSAA consider is the location of the audit in relation to the locations of the contracted firms' local audit resources. There is the possibility that one of the outcomes from the remote working enforced by C19 is that auditors will travel less to clients, taking advantage of the significant improvements in video conferencing, but it will be some time before that can be assessed with any clarity.

6. Timetable for implementation

- 6.1 Regulation 19 of the Local Audit (Appointing Person) Regulations 2015 requires that a decision to opt in must be made by a meeting of the Council (meeting as a whole), except where the authority is a corporation sole. As highlighted above it is proposed to take this to the February Council meeting
- 6.2 The Council then needs to respond formally to PSAA's invitation in the form specified by PSAA by the close of the opt-in period (11 March 2022).
- 6.3 PSAA will commence the formal procurement process in early February 2022. It expects to award contracts in August 2022 and will then consult with authorities on the appointment of auditors so that it can make appointments by the statutory deadline of 31 December 2022.
- 6.4 PSAA has until November 2022 to set the fees for audits for 2023-24.

Background papers: There are none.

Appendices: Appendix A - Letter of Invitation

22 September 2021

To: Mr Mouawad, Chief Executive
Spelthorne Borough Council

Copied to: Mr Collier, S151 Officer
Mr Nichols, Chair of Audit Committee or equivalent

Dear Mr Mouawad,

Invitation to opt into the national scheme for auditor appointments from April 2023

I want to ensure that you are aware the external auditor for the audit of your accounts for 2023/24 has to be appointed before the end of December 2022. That may seem a long way away but, as your organisation has a choice about how to make that appointment, your decision-making process needs to begin soon.

We are pleased that the Secretary of State has confirmed PSAA in the role of the appointing person for eligible principal bodies for the period commencing April 2023. Joining PSAA's national scheme for auditor appointments is one of the choices available to your organisation.

In June 2021 we issued a draft prospectus and invited your views and comments on our early thinking on the development of the national scheme for the next period. Feedback from the sector has been extremely helpful and has enabled us to refine our proposals which are now set out in the [scheme prospectus](#) and our [procurement strategy](#). Both documents can be downloaded from our website which also contains a range of useful information that you may find helpful.

The national scheme timetable for appointing auditors from 2023/24 means we now need to issue a formal invitation to you to opt into these arrangements. In order to meet the requirements of the relevant regulations, we also attach a form of acceptance of our invitation which you must use if your organisation decides to join the national scheme. We have specified the five consecutive financial years beginning 1 April 2023 as the compulsory appointing period for the purposes of the regulations which govern the national scheme.

Given the very challenging local audit market, we believe that eligible bodies will be best served by opting to join the scheme and have attached a short summary of why we believe that is the best solution both for individual bodies and the sector as a whole.

I would like to highlight three matters to you:

1. if you opt to join the national scheme, we need to receive your formal acceptance of this invitation by Friday 11 March 2022;

2. the relevant regulations require that, except for a body that is a corporation sole (e.g. a police and crime commissioner), the decision to accept our invitation and to opt in must be made by the members of the authority meeting as a whole e.g. Full Council or equivalent. We appreciate this will need to be built into your decision-making timetable. We have deliberately set a generous timescale for bodies to make opt in decisions (24 weeks compared to the statutory minimum of 8 weeks) to ensure that all eligible bodies have sufficient time to comply with this requirement; and
3. if you decide not to accept the invitation to opt in by the closing date, you may subsequently make a request to opt in, but only after 1 April 2023. We are required to consider such requests and agree to them unless there are reasonable grounds for their refusal. PSAA must consider a request as the appointing person in accordance with the Regulations. The Regulations allow us to recover our reasonable costs for making arrangements to appoint a local auditor in these circumstances, for example if we need to embark on a further procurement or enter into further discussions with our contracted firms.

If you have any other questions not covered by our information, do not hesitate to contact us by email at ap2@psaa.co.uk. We also publish answers to [frequently asked questions](#) on our website.

If you would like to discuss a particular issue with us, please send an email also to ap2@psaa.co.uk, and we will respond to you.

Yours sincerely

Tony Crawley
Chief Executive

Encl: Summary of the national scheme

Why accepting the national scheme opt-in invitation is the best solution

Public Sector Audit Appointments Limited (PSAA)

We are a not-for-profit, independent company limited by guarantee incorporated by the Local Government Association in August 2014.

We have the support of the LGA, which in 2014 worked to secure the option for principal local government and police bodies to appoint auditors through a dedicated sector-led national body.

We have the support of Government; MHCLG's Spring statement confirmed our appointment because of our "strong technical expertise and the proactive work they have done to help to identify improvements that can be made to the process".

We are an active member of the new Local Audit Liaison Committee, chaired by MHCLG and attended by key local audit stakeholders, enabling us to feed in body and audit perspectives to decisions about changes to the local audit framework, and the need to address timeliness through actions across the system.

We conduct research to raise awareness of local audit issues, and work with MHCLG and other stakeholders to enable changes arising from Sir Tony Redmond's review, such as more flexible fee setting and a timelier basis to set scale fees.

We have established an advisory panel, which meets three times per year. Its membership is drawn from relevant representative groups of local government and police bodies, to act as a sounding board for our scheme and to enable us to hear your views on the design and operation of the scheme.

The national scheme for appointing local auditors

In July 2016, the Secretary of State specified PSAA as an appointing person for principal local government and police bodies for audits from 2018/19, under the provisions of the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014 and the Local Audit (Appointing Person) Regulations 2015. Acting in accordance with this role PSAA is responsible for appointing an auditor and setting scales of fees for relevant principal authorities that have chosen to opt into its national scheme. 98% of eligible bodies made the choice to opt-in for the five-year period commencing in April 2018.

We will appoint an auditor for all opted-in bodies for each of the five financial years beginning from 1 April 2023.

We aim for all opted-in bodies to receive an audit service of the required quality at a realistic market price and to support the drive towards a long term competitive and more sustainable market for local audit. The focus of our quality assessment will include resourcing capacity and capability including sector knowledge, and client relationship management and communication.

What the appointing person scheme from 2023 will offer

We believe that a sector-led, collaborative, national scheme stands out as the best option for all eligible bodies, offering the best value for money and assuring the independence of the auditor appointment.

The national scheme from 2023 will build on the range of benefits already available for members:

- transparent and independent auditor appointment via a third party;
- the best opportunity to secure the appointment of a qualified, registered auditor;
- appointment, if possible, of the same auditors to bodies involved in significant collaboration/joint working initiatives, if the parties believe that it will enhance efficiency;
- on-going management of any independence issues which may arise;
- access to a specialist PSAA team with significant experience of working within the context of the relevant regulations to appoint auditors, managing contracts with audit firms, and setting and determining audit fees;
- a value for money offer based on minimising PSAA costs and distribution of any surpluses to scheme members - in 2019 we returned a total £3.5million to relevant bodies and more recently we announced a further distribution of £5.6m in August 2021;
- collective efficiency savings for the sector through undertaking one major procurement as opposed to a multiplicity of smaller procurements;
- avoids the necessity for local bodies to establish an auditor panel and undertake an auditor procurement, enabling time and resources to be deployed on other pressing priorities;
- updates from PSAA to Section 151 officers and Audit Committee Chairs on a range of local audit related matters to inform and support effective auditor-audited body relationships; and
- concerted efforts to work with other stakeholders to develop a more sustainable local audit market.

We are committed to keep developing our scheme, taking into account feedback from scheme members, suppliers and other stakeholders, and learning from the collective post-2018 experience. This work is ongoing, and we have taken a number of initiatives to improve the operation of the scheme for the benefit of all parties.

Importantly we have listened to your feedback to our recent consultation, and our response is reflected in [the scheme prospectus](#).

Opting in

The closing date for opting in is 11 March 2022. We have allowed more than the minimum eight-week notice period required, because the formal approval process for most eligible bodies is a decision made by the members of the authority meeting as a whole [Full Council or equivalent], except police and crime commissioners who are able to make their own decision.

We will confirm receipt of all opt-in notices. A full list of eligible bodies that opt in will be published on our website. Once we have received an opt-in notice, we will write to you to request information on any joint working arrangements relevant to your auditor appointment, and any potential independence matters which may need to be taken into consideration when appointing your auditor.

Local Government Reorganisation

We are aware that reorganisations in the local government areas of Cumbria, Somerset, and North Yorkshire were announced in July 2021. Subject to parliamentary approval shadow elections will take place in May 2022 for the new Councils to become established from 1 April 2023. Newly established local government bodies have the right to opt into PSAA's scheme under Regulation 10 of the Appointing Person Regulations 2015. These Regulations also set out that a local government body that ceases to exist is automatically removed from the scheme.

If for any reason there is any uncertainty that reorganisations will take place or meet the current timetable, we would suggest that the current eligible bodies confirm their acceptance to opt in to avoid the requirement to have to make local arrangements should the reorganisation be delayed.

Next Steps

We expect to formally commence the procurement of audit services in early February 2022. At that time our procurement documentation will be available for opted-in bodies to view through our e-tendering platform.

Our recent webinars to support our consultation proved to be popular, and we will be running a series of webinars covering specific areas of our work and our progress to prepare for the second appointing period. Details can be found on [our website](#) and in [the scheme prospectus](#).

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Report of the Chairman on the work of the Corporate Policy and Resources Committee

The committee met on 19 October 2021 and 29 November 2021. This report gives an overview of the key items considered by the Committee.

19 October 2021

The committee received an update on proposals for the Staines Health and Wellbeing Centre. This report contained exempt information, so questions will need to be taken in a closed session of Council.

29 November 2021

1. The committee welcomed the directors of Knowle Green Estates who presented their annual report.
2. The committee decided to retain the existing Tenancy Strategy pending further consideration of the financial viability of Knowle Green Estates.
3. The committee received updates on the capital and revenue budgets. As part of its considerations, it agreed that the borough's pay award for 2021/22 should be revised in the light of the national settlement.
4. The outline budget for 2022/23 was discussed. The committee is proposing that a graduated council tax premia be applied to empty residential properties. It was agreed that the budget should be drawn up on the assumption that council tax will be increased by the maximum permitted amount, whilst also requesting that savings and efficiencies be identified to close budget gaps.
5. The council tax base for next year was reviewed.
6. A mid-year report on the council's treasury management strategy was noted. The committee requested that the inclusion of sustainability measures/scores for investments be explored with the council's treasury management advisers.
7. A tendering exercise for fire alarms systems and emergency lighting installations was agreed. The committee requested that smaller local companies be encouraged to submit bids by enabling the contract to be divided into lots.
8. A corporate plan for 2021-23 is being recommended to Council for adoption.
9. Updates on Staines Library Hub and Museum, and the 5th Floor of Communications House in Staines were received. These reports contained

exempt information, so questions will need to be taken in a closed session of Council.

10. A proposal for considering options for collaborative with other boroughs was agreed, with a joint member and officer Working Group being formed. Some of the information in this report was exempt, so questions may need to be taken in a closed session of Council.
11. The committee heard that service committees had been reviewing their elements of the corporate recovery plan. The committee will be receiving a full update early next year.
12. The committee agreed to hold an additional meeting on Wednesday 19 January 2021 at 7.00pm.

Councillor L Nichols

Leader of the Council

Chair of the Corporate Policy and Resources Committee

Report of the Chairman on the work of the Administrative Committee

This report gives an overview of the main issues considered at the meeting held on 7 October 2021.

1. Capital Monitoring Report Q1 April – June 2021

- 1.1 The Committee noted the report.

2. Revenue Monitoring Report Q1 April – June 2021

- 2.1 The Committee noted the forecast outturn for the financial year 2021-22 as at 30 June.
- 2.2 The Committee congratulated the Chief Finance Officer and the finance team for the Council's strong, healthy financial position despite the pressures of the past two years.

3. Corporate Procurement Strategy, Policy and Procedures

- 3.1 The Committee considered and agreed the proposed Corporate Procurement Strategy, Policy and Procedures which outlined the Council's approach to procurement.
- 3.2 The Committee agreed that consideration be given at their next meeting to raising the threshold from £5,000 to £10,000 for the mandatory use of local suppliers. An issue will be added to the Forward Plan to be put on the agenda for the next meeting of the Administrative Committee.

4. ICT Storage and Back-up Hardware Refresh

- 4.1 The Committee considered the proposal to replace the ICT storage and backup target devices which were past end of life.
- 4.2 The Committee approved the replacement of the ICT Storage as per the preferred option in the report and backup target infrastructure and gave delegated power to the Group Head of Commissioning and Transformation to appoint a supplier once all the prices had been returned.
- 4.3 The Committee thanked the ICT team for their support.

5. Elections Update

- 5.1 The Committee considered a report a report reviewing the steps taken to implement the Polling Station review and to ensure that Covid secure elections took place.
- 5.2 The Committee noted the report and thanked officers for their work to ensure the safety of all involved in the elections.

6. Forward Plan

- 6.1 This was not discussed as the incorrect plan had been attached to the agenda. The correct Forward Plan was circulated to the Committee Members on Friday 08 October 2021 for their comments.

Councillor Tony Mitchell

Chairman of the Administrative Committee

14 October 2021

Report from the Chairman on the work of the Community Wellbeing and Housing Committee

This report gives an overview of the main issues considered at the meeting held on 23 November 2021.

1. Step Down Service Partnership

The Council are currently in a partnership with A2Dominion, Elmbridge BC, Runnymede BC, Woking BC and The Whitely Homes Trust that provides short term accommodation for a maximum of six weeks for patients that are ready to leave hospital but need some additional support before returning home. It can also provide support for people to prevent hospital admissions.

It was anticipated that by the end of the year 50-60 residents will have benefited from this service.

The Step Down Service and Partnership Agreement is due to end April 2022 so approval was sought from the Committee to extend this for an additional 12 months.

The Committee **resolved** to extend the agreement by a further 12 months.

2. Capital and Revenue Monitoring Reports

The Committee received reports from the Chief Accountant outlining the Capital and Revenue situation for the Community Wellbeing and Housing Committee as of 30 September 2021.

3. Oast House – Bid for Cultural Grant Update

The Committee received a verbal update from the Deputy Chief Executive who advised that a bid for a Cultural Grant had been submitted and that the decision would be made by the Cultural Development Fund on 22 February 2022.

A public consultation had taken place and 187 responses had been received with 87% stating that they would like to see more cultural activities within the Borough.

If the Council's bid was successful, we would be looking at cultural activities that would create jobs, be financially beneficial to the Council and would bring additional footfall into Staines.

4. Household Support Fund

The Committee were advised that the Council has received £307k Central Government funding allocated via Surrey County Council to use to support vulnerable residents with food and utility bills. All of this funding has to be allocated by the end of March 2022 as any remaining will be taken back by Surrey County Council.

A local scheme had been agreed that would be in the form of a one-off payment for those applicants on a qualifying benefit. It was anticipated that approximately 4400 people in the Borough could be helped under this scheme.

The scheme is being publicised extensively throughout the Borough in order to reach as many residents as possible.

5. Shared Ownership Strategy

The Committee were advised that the Council's Shared Ownership Strategy had not been reviewed since 2019 and that it now required updating.

A new model of shared ownership has recently been introduced by Central Government that will operate alongside the Affordable Homes Programme for the next five years. The revised Shared Ownership Scheme will be administered by a local agent and not the Council.

A provision has been written into the revised scheme that requires a developer to concentrate marketing of shared ownership properties within the Borough for the first three months to attract Spelthorne residents first.

The Committee **resolved** to approve the adoption of the revised Shared Ownership Scheme.

6. Refugee Settlement Update

The Committee were advised that the number of people in temporary accommodation was 73. 14 families have now found permanent housing elsewhere in the country and have now moved out of the Borough.

7. Leisure Operator Procurement Project Update

The Committee received an update on the Leisure Operator Procurement Project.

Report of the Chairman on the work of the Economic Development Committee

The committee met on 16 November 2021. This report gives an overview of the key items considered by the Committee.

- The committee heard from the Town Centre Manager on the work that has been taking place to engage with businesses. The committee was pleased to hear that many businesses were benefiting from in various ways, including receiving help in identifying the cheapest available energy tariffs.
- The committee was pleased to hear that the Spelthorne Business Awards event had been well received and enjoyable. The committee lauded the vibrancy of the commercial activity in the borough.
- An update on renewing the Staines Business Improvement District was received.
- There was discussion about the Additional Restrictions Grant and ensuring that businesses were able to access it and make best use of it now that they were entering a phase of recovery from the pandemic.
- The local economic assessment was reviewed. It will be used to inform the drafting of a borough economic strategy.
- The committee also received updates on its areas of financial responsibility.

Councillor Colin Barnard

Chair of the Economic Development Committee

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Report of the Chairman on the work of Environment and Sustainability Committee

The Environment and Sustainability Committee has met on two occasions since the previous report to Council. This report gives an overview of the main items considered by the Committee at its meetings on 3 and 9 November.

1. Extraordinary meeting 3 November 2021

- 1.1 This meeting was held at the request of the Committee, following potential new evidence relating to the death of Zane Gbangbola, to consider how the Council could progress a site investigation of the land to the rear of Thames Side.
- 1.2 The Committee considered a report setting out historical information and details of action taken or intended, to obtain and analyse relevant information and to establish whether the Council had any legal powers to instigate a site investigation.
- 1.3 The Committee noted the report and requested a further verbal update was provided at their next meeting in January 2022.

2. Meeting 9 November 2021

- 2.1 The Committee agreed the proposal that the Council should re-join as members of the Colne Valley Regional Park.
- 2.2 The Committee discussed the proposed Housing Delivery Test Action Plan and agreed to:
 - Approve the Housing Delivery Test Plan subject to the changes outlined during discussion of this item at the meeting.
 - Delegate authority to the Planning Development Manager to approve the changes in consultation with the Chair and Vice Chair of the Environment and Sustainability Committee.
 - Publish the agreed final version of the Housing Delivery Test Plan on the Council's website.
- 2.3 The Committee agreed to delegate the decision on the tendering exercise for the provision and installation of Outdoor Gym equipment for 10 sites in the Borough to the Group Head of Neighbourhood Services in consultation with the Chair and Vice Chair of the Committee.
- 2.4 The Committee received and noted the revenue and capital monitoring reports for the period July to September 2021.
- 2.5 The Committee received updates on the work of the following task/working groups:
 - The Local Plan Task Group

- The Staines Development Framework Task Group
- The CIL Local Spending Boards
- The Climate Change Working Group

2.6 Council had referred the petition “Prevent tower-block developments in the Staines Conservation Area or overlooking the riverfront and spread the planning housing growth target more evenly across the borough” to this Committee for consideration.

The issue was discussed at length, and it was agreed that as the Local Plan Task Group and Staines Development Task Group were currently assessing these matters it would be appropriate to refer the petition to those task groups to consider as part of their work.

Report from the Chairman on the work of the Neighbourhood Services Committee

This report gives an overview of the main issues considered at the meeting held on 11 November 2021.

1. Parking Services Update

- 1.1 The Committee resolved to note the Parking Services Update from the Parking Services Operational Manager.

2. Revenue Monitoring Report (Qtr. 2 July – Sept)

- 2.1 The Committee resolved to note the forecast outturn for 2021/22 as at 30 September 2021 and the aggregate variances by cost centre reported in Appendix A of the report.

3. Cemetery Capacity

- 3.1 The Committee noted the update on cemetery capacity within the borough given by the Group Head of Neighbourhood Services.

4. Litter Poster Campaign – Verbal Update

- 4.1 The Committee noted a verbal update from the Group Head of Neighbourhood Services on the litter poster campaign.

5. Forward Plan

- 5.1 The Committee noted the forward plan for future committee business with the following amendments:
- (a) Parking Services Update be amended to reflect that it was not a key decision;
 - (b) Cashless Parking be amended to reflect that it is a Key Decision
 - (c) Electric Vehicle Charging Points in Car Parks to be scheduled for the 3 March 2022 meeting;
 - (d) Committee Services to circulate an updated version of the Forward Plan with the minutes.

Councillor Amar Brar

Chair of the Neighbourhood Services Committee

9 December 2021

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Report of the Chairman on the work of the Audit Committee

The Audit Committee held a meeting on 25 November 2021 and considered the following items of business:

1. Risk Appetite Framework

- 1.1 Elizabeth Humphrey, Local Governance Consultant, spoke to the Committee about the rationale for a Risk Appetite Framework. It was agreed that an informal discussion with both officers and members taking part would be useful prior to any formal meeting.
- 1.2 A more detailed update and draft will be provided to the Committee at their next meeting in March 2022.

2. Corporate Risk Management

- 2.1 The Committee considered the report and accompanying Corporate Risk Register. The report had been updated following feedback from the Audit Committee to identify where risk mitigation measures may be limited due to external factors beyond the Council's control.
- 2.2 The Committee agreed to note the report.

3. Covid-19 Risk Considerations

- 3.1 The Committee considered a report setting out the most significant risks and opportunities to the Council in relation to the pandemic.
- 3.2 The Committee agreed to note the report.

4. CIPFA Financial Management Code Self-Assessment and Peer Action Review Plan

- 4.1 The Committee considered an update on progress made with the Peer Review Action Plan and an updated self-assessment against the principles set out in the CIPFA Management Code which identified the level of compliance and the areas where improvements could be made.
- 4.2 The Committee noted the reports.

5. Retender of External Audit Contracts

- 5.1 The Committee considered the options available to appoint an external auditor for the period 2023/24 to 2027/28.
- 5.2 The Committee agreed to make a recommendation to Council to opt into the national scheme managed by Public Sector Auditor Appointments as the "Appointing Person".

6. Confidential Reporting Code

- 6.1 The Monitoring Officer reported that a review of the Confidential Reporting Code had been conducted and it was still considered fit for purpose. It was agreed to retain the current policy.

7. Internal Audit Services half-yearly report 2019/20

- 7.1 The Committee noted the report which summarised the work undertaken by internal audit in the period April to early October 2021.

8. Appointment of Independent Person to Audit Committee

- 8.1 The Committee were given an update on progress made in the recruitment of an Independent Person to the Audit Committee.

9. External Auditors update

- 9.1 The Council's current external auditors, BDO, advised that they were still awaiting the conclusion of the KPMG audit. They had been working on grants work and expected to produce a report on that for the next Audit Committee meeting.
- 9.2 The Chief Finance Officer advised that Knowle Green Estates had been independently audited. The auditors had confirmed that there were no issues but had not yet delivered a formal opinion letter.
- 9.3 The Committee noted the update.

10. Committee Forward Plan

- 10.1 The Committee noted the forward plan subject to the addition of the Risk Appetite Framework for March 2022.

11. Value for Money Working Group (VFMWG) Update

- 11.1 The Chief Finance Officer advised the Committee that KPMG had agreed to meet with the VFMWG the week commencing 6 December. It was hoped that they would share their findings, on a confidential basis, to the group before they were made public and the Statement of Accounts signed off.

Councillor J. Boughtflower

Chairman of the Audit Committee

9 December 2021

Report of the Chairman on the Work of the Planning Committee

The Planning Committee has met on two occasions since the previous report to Council. This report gives an overview of the key items considered by the Committee at its meetings on 13 October and 10 November 2021. The meeting on the 10 November reconvened on 17 November 2021 to continue discussing the items on the agenda.

1. Planning Committee Meeting – 13 October 2021

1.1 The Committee considered one application.

1.2 Application No. 19/01211/FUL Benwell House, Green Street, Sunbury-on-Thames – This application was for the erection of a 5 storey residential block to provide 39 residential units, with a mix of 12 x 1 bed, 24 x 2 bed and 3 x 3 bed units together with associated parking, landscape and access. The application was **refused**.

2. Planning Committee Meeting – 10/17 November 2021

2.1 The Committee considered four applications.

2.2 Application No. 19/01567/FUL Florida Court, Station Approach, Staines-upon-Thames – This application was for the creation of an additional floor above the existing building to create 7 x 1 bedroom units and 2 x 2 bedroom units and the creation of 2 additional car parking spaces. The application was **refused**.

2.3 Application No. 20/00780/FUL Hitchcock and King Retail Warehouse, Stanwell Road, Ashford – This application was for the sub-division of existing retail warehouse and the change of use to create two Class E ‘commercial units’ with reconfiguration of the site car park, elevational changes, installation of plant equipment and other ancillary works. This application was **approved**.

2.4 Application No. 20/00802/FUL Car Park to Rear of Tesco, London Road, Ashford – This application was for the development of a surplus hospital car park for 127 residential units comprising 123 flats and 4 terraced houses in buildings ranging from 2 to 5 storeys in height, with associated access, parking, services, facilities and amenity space. This application was **approved**.

2.5 Application No. 21/00614/OUT 36 & 38 Minsterley Avenue, Shepperton – This application was for outline planning permission with appearance and landscaping reserved for the erection of 5 detached dwellings, comprising 4 x 4 bedroom dwellings and 1 x 5 bedroom dwelling with associated parking and amenity space following the demolition of 36 Minsterley Avenue. This application was **refused**.

Councillor T Lagden
Chairman of Planning Committee

23 November 2021

Council – 9 December 2021

Questions from councillors

Question 1 – Councillor Helen Harvey
“In view of the opposition to bringing forward the Council’s planned developments and the consequential impact on revenue streams; can the Leader advise this chamber where exactly the revenue stream to cover the £17 million unfunded element of the capital cost of the new Spelthorne Leisure centre, will come from?”

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