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Date: 20 March 2023

## **Notice of meeting**

### **Community Wellbeing and Housing Committee**

**Date:** Tuesday, 28 March 2023

**Time:** 7.00 pm

**Place:** Council Chamber, Council Offices, Knowle Green, Staines-upon-Thames TW18 1XB

#### **To the members of the Community Wellbeing and Housing Committee**

Councillors:

M.M. Attewell (Chairman)	J. Button	R.W. Sider BEM
O. Rybinski (Vice-Chairman)	S.A. Dunn	J. Vinson
C.L. Barratt	N.J. Gething	S.J. Whitmore
C. Bateson	H. Harvey	

Substitute Members: Councillors J.T.F. Doran, R.D. Dunn, K.M. Grant, R.O. Barratt, M. Beecher, A. Brar, R. Chandler, I.T.E. Harvey and V. Siva

*Councillors are reminded that the Gifts and Hospitality Declaration book will be available outside the meeting room for you to record any gifts or hospitality offered to you since the last Committee meeting.*

**Spelthorne Borough Council, Council Offices, Knowle Green**

**Staines-upon-Thames TW18 1XB**

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## Agenda

### Page nos.

**1. Apologies and Substitutes**

To receive apologies of absence and notification of substitutions.

**2. Minutes**

**5 - 10**

To confirm the minutes of the meeting held on 17 January 2023 as a correct record.

**3. Disclosures of Interest**

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

**4. Questions from members of the Public**

The Chair, or her nominee, to answer any questions raised by members of the public in accordance with Standing Order 40.

At the time of publication of this agenda no questions were received.

**5. Ward Issues**

To consider any issues raised by ward councillors in accordance with Standing Order 34.2

At the time of publication of this agenda no ward issues were received.

**6. Review of Tenancy Strategy**

**11 - 42**

To approve the proposed amendments to the Tenancy Strategy.

**7. Six Days A Week Community Centre Offer**

**To Follow**

To consider extending the Spelthorne Winter Warmer Project.

**8. Lawn Tennis Association**

**43 - 66**

To consider the opportunity to apply for funding from the Lawn Tennis Association.

**9. Verbal Update on Deferred Items from the Grants Panel**

**Verbal  
Report**

To receive a verbal update on deferred items from the Grants Panel.

**10. Forward Plan**

**67 - 68**

To consider the Forward Plan for committee business.

**11. Exclusion of Public and Press (Exempt Business)**

To move the exclusion of the Press/Public for the following items, in view of the likely disclosure of 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.

**12. Verbal Update on The Local Authority Housing Fund**

**Verbal  
Report**

To receive a verbal update on The Local Authority Housing Fund following the decision approved by Corporate Policy and Resources Committee in February 2023.

**13. Verbal update on Longford Village Temporary Accommodation**

**Verbal  
Report**

To receive a verbal update on Longford Village Temporary Accommodation.

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**Minutes of the Community Wellbeing and Housing Committee  
17 January 2023**

**Present:**

Councillor M.M. Attewell (Chairman)  
Councillor O. Rybinski (Vice-Chairman)

**Councillors:**

C.L. Barratt	S.A. Dunn	J. Vinson
C. Bateson	H. Harvey	S.J Whitmore
J. Button	R.W. Sider BEM	

**Substitutions:** Councillors R.O. Barratt (In place of N.J. Gething)

**Apologies:** Councillors N.J. Gething

**In Attendance:** Councillors M. Beecher

**1/23 Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held on 20 September 2022 were considered by the Committee.

Councillor Harvey requested that the minutes be amended to include an agreed action from discussion on the Afghan Citizens Resettlement Scheme (ACRS). The Committee **resolved** to agree the proposed amendment.

The minutes of the meeting held on 20 September 2022 were approved as a correct record of proceedings subject to the agreed amendment.

**2/23 Disclosures of Interest**

Councillor Button declared he was trustee of a charity which had received a grant from the Annual Community Grants panel in 2022.

**3/23 Questions from members of the Public**

There were none.

#### **4/23      Ward Issues**

There were none.

#### **5/23      Review of Spelthorne Winter Warmer Project**

The Committee received a verbal update on the Spelthorne Winter Warmer Project from the Strategic Lead Independent Living. The Fordbridge and Greeno Community Centres had successfully opened on alternate Saturdays, and this would continue until February 2023. Surrey County Council and local churches had made further contributions to provide extra warm hubs across the borough. The Council had promoted opening hours of these hubs and other organisations which offered similar support to residents.

The Committee queried how this project was publicised other than through the website. It was confirmed that communications were publicised through delivery of papers across borough organisations, word of mouth and through social media channels.

The Committee noted the success of this project and anticipated a need for this service to be available for the duration of February due to cold weather. The Committee **resolved** to agree extension of this project to cover Saturday opening hours for the month of February.

The Committee **resolved** to note the update and extended thanks to all staff who volunteered at the Community Centres on Saturdays.

#### **6/23      Household Support Fund Phase 3**

The Committee considered a report on the Household Support Fund Phase three from the Strategic Lead Independent Living which sought approval of the recommendations outlined in the report.

The Committee were advised that the allocation for phase three was £244,000. In this round of funding there had been additional emphasis to ensure those with disabilities received support, alongside working-age families in receipt of benefits, pensioners, and those in receipt of funding from phases one and two. An estimated 150 new applicants would be newly eligible to apply for phase three. The Committee were advised that option 2.1 was the preferred option as this would be the fairest way of distributing funds without excluding those already eligible in phase two.

The Committee queried the overall cost of implementing this scheme and were informed based on a previous phase administration, there were

estimated costs of £14,000. If the budget was not spent, funds would be put in a general allocation pot.

The Committee **resolved** to agree option 2.1 and approve the five recommendations outlined in the report.

### **7/23      Urgent Item- Cost of Living Crisis**

The Chair agreed to the consideration of this item, in accordance with paragraph (4)(b) of section 100B of the Local Government Act 1972 for the following reason:

“Due to the cycle of committee meetings this item needs to be discussed and approved at tonight’s meeting in order to progress distributing first tranche of support to families in need as quickly as possible”.

The Committee considered a verbal report from the Deputy Chief Executive on application of the £200k Cost of Living Crisis Fund agreed by councillors to be set aside to support residents and communities across the borough through the current cost-of-living crisis.

The Committee were asked to consider allocating a cash grant for children and families identified as having high energy costs for both heating and medical equipment usage. 25 families identified by the children’s locality team could receive support in the region of £1000, with an option to increase this. The Deputy Chief Executive raised another aspect of utilising the Cost-of-Living Crisis Fund which concerned continuing discussions with foodbanks across the borough to provide additional funding.

The Committee queried the number of foodbanks being considered to receive additional funding and were advised this included at least six of the main foodbanks across the borough.

The Committee **resolved** to agree allocation of £1500 per household to the families (approximately 25) and supported continued discussion with foodbanks for additional funding.

### **8/23      Annual Community Grants Report**

The Committee considered a report from the Strategic Lead for Leisure and Community Development that sought approval for the Grants Awards for 2023/24. The report outlined funding recommendations for applications received following consideration by the Grants Panel. Following final determination of the annual budget by Council, the grants awards would be allocated to charities and voluntary sector organisations operating in the borough. The Committee were also asked to consider transferring their unallocated Better Neighbourhood Grant monies to the Grants budget for distribution.

Councillor Sider raised concern that the Shepperton Village Fair had not received Grant funding for 2023/24 as the Fair was an important community event which gave opportunity for charities to raise funds. Any Grant funding would help with building of infrastructure, safety, and security. It was proposed by Councillor Sider and seconded by Councillor C Barratt and **resolved** that the Shepperton Village Fair be awarded a grant of £1000.

The Committee requested that newly elected Councillors be reminded of their Better Neighbourhood Grants during training in May 2023.

**Resolved:**

1. Approve the grants awards for 2023/24,
2. To note all other support Spelthorne Borough Council provides to the voluntary/charity sector and;
3. To transfer unallocated Councillors Better Neighbourhood Grant monies for 2023/24 are transferred to the Grants budget for allocation.

**9/23      23/24 Budget**

The Deputy Chief Executive presented the draft budget, fees and charges, growth bids, savings bids, and capital bids for the Committee's areas of responsibility.

The Deputy Chief Executive introduced the Net Expenditure Budget and highlighted items where significant changes between the current and previous year were reflected. Overall, the draft budget for the Committee had been reduced by £150,000.

The Deputy Chief Executive presented the Detailed Budget, noting that following the move to a new financial system the presentation would be refined in future. The Committee requested clarification on the high salary costs and miscellaneous costs recorded within the budget. The Committee was provided with a detailed budget breakdown and there were some specific queries. The Committee questioned the budget of Benwell Day Centre which no longer officially operated and requested that savings in this area be considered. This would be reviewed and raised at the Council Budget meeting.

The Committee queried the figure on projects within the homelessness prevention category. A written note on this would be provided to the Committee.

The Deputy Chief Executive presented the Savings Bids which had been reviewed by Officers and would be incorporated into the net budget. The Deputy Chief Executive further presented the Growth Bids and explained both staffing posts were fully funded by external sources.

The Deputy Chief Executive presented the Fees and Charges and explained that these had been increased by at least 5% in accordance with instruction



from the Corporate Policy and Resources Committee. The Committee raised concern about the impact of this increase on particular services such as Meals on Wheels. The Committee requested that the Deputy Chief Executive explore options to not increase the fees for the Meals on Wheels service.

The Committee **resolved** to recommend that Corporate Policy and Resources Committee approve the draft 23/24 budget with respect to the Committee's Budget.

#### **10/23 Feedback on 23/24 Budget Setting Process**

The Committee provided feedback on the 23/24 Budget Setting Process during discussion of the previous item.

#### **11/23 Leisure Centre Update**

The Committee received an update from the Strategic Lead for Leisure and Community Development on the Leisure Centre project. The project was progressing as planned. Request for approval of the preferred leisure operator bidder would be presented to the Committee in June to make a recommendation to the Corporate Policy and Resources Committee and Council in July 2023.

The Committee **resolved** to note the update.

#### **12/23 Forward Plan**

The Committee considered the Forward Plan for the Community Wellbeing and Housing Committee.

The Committee requested that the Review of the Tenancy Strategy be moved to the meeting scheduled 28 March 2023.

The Committee **resolved** to add the following items to the forward plan following discussion throughout the meeting:

- 1) Review of Community Wellbeing and Housing Committee's Policies and Strategies that Impact on Knowle Green Estates.
- 2) Capital Funding for Afghan and Ukrainian Homes
- 3) An Update on Deferred Items From The Grants Panel
- 4) Presentation from Surrey Officers on Youth Initiatives

The Committee **resolved** to note the forward plan subject to the agreed amendments.

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# Community Wellbeing and Housing Committee



28 March 2023

<b>Title</b>	Tenancy Strategy
<b>Purpose of the report</b>	To make a Key Decision
<b>Report Author</b>	Marta Imig, Strategic Lead, Housing
<b>Ward(s) Affected</b>	All Wards
<b>Exempt</b>	No
<b>Exemption Reason</b>	N/A
<b>Corporate Priority</b>	Affordable Housing
<b>Recommendations</b>	Committee is asked to: Approve the Tenancy Strategy
<b>Reason for Recommendation</b>	This Strategy is a review of the existing Tenancy Strategy, following a request from a Councillor.

## 1. Summary of the report

- 1.1 The Tenancy Strategy was reviewed and approved in March 2022 by the Community Wellbeing and Housing Committee. Following the approval, the Community Wellbeing and Housing Committee agreed to review the strategy in light of concerns from some of its members, namely, to remove all references to Knowle Green Estates (KGE) – further revised version with tracked changes is enclosed in Appendix A.
- 1.2 The proposed changes to the strategy were discussed with Knowle Green Estates Board at its February Board meeting.

## 2. Key issues

- 2.1 The aim is to ensure that the strategy applies to all Registered Providers (RP) and so that KGE can maintain flexibility when setting rent levels. However, this is already the case as RPs must only have regard to the Tenancy Strategy (it is not enforced).
- 2.2 When KGE becomes an RP, the strategy will apply to KGE again.

## 3. Options analysis and proposal

### Option 1: To reject the amendments to the Tenancy Strategy

The revised Strategy will not apply, and the existing Tenancy Strategy will remain in force.

### Option 2: To adopt the proposed amendments to the Tenancy Strategy (recommended)

The adoption of the amendments to the Tenancy Strategy will remove all references to KGE from the strategy, thus KGE will not need to have regard to the provisions within the strategy when setting their rent.

Option 3: Adopt an alternative Tenancy Strategy

There remains the possibility of adopting an alternative Tenancy Strategy, should Committee consider it appropriate.

**4. Financial implications**

- 4.1 The revised Tenancy Strategy proposes to retain affordable rent levels at a maximum of up to 80% of market rental, or Local Housing Allowance rate, whichever is the lowest, for Registered Providers (RPs), therefore no change to the rent setting for RPs, but KGE will not specifically be mentioned as having to have regard to the strategy. However, should all or part of KGE later achieve registered provider status, this would change.

**5. Risk considerations**

- 5.1 There is a risk that RPs may perceive this move as unfair that the Council's own company does not follow the same rent setting guidelines, thus some reputational risk.

**6. Procurement considerations**

- 6.1 Not applicable.

**7. Legal considerations**

- 7.1 None identified.

**8. Other considerations**

- 8.1 None identified.

**9. Equality and Diversity**

- 9.1 An Equality and Diversity Impact Assessment has been carried out and is provided in Appendix B.

**10. Sustainability/Climate Change Implications**

- 10.1 The proposed Strategy itself does not have any impact on the Council's sustainability / climate change position.

**11. Timetable for implementation**

- 11.1 Once adopted, the Strategy will be put into effect immediately.  
11.2 This Strategy will be comprehensively reviewed every 5 years.

**12. Contact**

- 12.1 Marta Imig – [marta.imig@spelthorne.gov.uk](mailto:marta.imig@spelthorne.gov.uk)

**Background papers: None.**

**Appendices:**

*Appendix A: Revised Tenancy Strategy*

*Appendix B: Equality Impact Assessment for Tenancy Strategy*



# **SPELTHORNE TENANCY STRATEGY**

**July 2021**

## 1. Introduction and background

1.1. The Localism Act 2011 (the Act) requires local authorities to publish a Tenancy Strategy setting out the matters which registered providers of social housing (RPS) should have regard to when formulating their policies or their own housing stock relating to: .

- (a) The types of tenancies they grant
- (b) The circumstances in which they will grant a particular type of tenancy
- (c) Where there are fixed term tenancies the length of the term granted
- (d) The circumstances in which they will or will not grant a further tenancy on the termination of an existing fixed tenancy

1.2. The Act introduced a number of new options for RPs including:

- (a) fixed term tenancies rather than secure or assured tenancies
- (b) flexible tenancies which can be for a minimum fixed term of two years
- (c) 'affordable rent' which permits rents to be set at up to 80% of market rent (inclusive of service charges). The introduction of affordable rent made building more new homes possible, allowing more people in housing need to have access to a good quality home at a reduced rent.

1.3. The Act required local authorities to keep the Tenancy Strategy under review. This strategy replaces the Council's Tenancy Strategy, published in 2012 ~~and now includes and applies to Knowle Green Estates Limited (KGE), the Council's housing delivery company.~~

~~1.4. Knowle Green Estates Limited whilst not currently a registered provider has agreed to have regard to the Tenancy Strategy in formulating any of its policies relating to its affordable housing stock.~~

~~4.5.1.4.~~ The strategy sets out all types of tenancies that all RPs operating in Spelthorne ~~and KGE~~, must consider when they draw up their own individual policies on the types of tenancies, they will grant. The Council does not own its own housing stock and is reliant on its RP partners ~~and~~

~~KGE~~ for properties to allocate to households on the Council's Housing Register.

~~4.6.1.5.~~ All RPs operating in Spelthorne ~~and KGE~~ must have regard to the Council's Tenancy Strategy, when meeting their duty to state clearly what types of tenancies they will grant and in which circumstances these different types of tenancies will be granted, also the length of any fixed-term tenancies they will grant and in what circumstances a new tenancy will be given should any fixed-term tenancy expire.

~~4.7.1.6.~~ This strategy is the result of the review and consultation with RPs operating within Spelthorne Borough ~~and KGE~~, their views have informed this strategy review. We will continue to work in partnership to ensure that this Tenancy Strategy and local RPs ~~and KGE~~ policies meet local housing needs.

## **2. Local Context**

2.1 Spelthorne is an attractive borough with excellent schools, attractive open spaces, and good transport links. The Borough benefits from scenic river walks along the banks of the River Thames and is in close proximity to Heathrow which offers good and varied employment opportunities for residents. As such, the demand for housing in the borough is high and like most areas in the South East, property prices are high. Levels of home ownership are high<sup>1</sup> at approximately 72.5%, 25.5% rent their home with 13.1% of these renting from the private sector. Further 2% either lives with family or has other living arrangements.

2.2 Access to the private rented sector for those on low incomes and benefits remains difficult and has become more difficult due to welfare reform changes.

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<sup>1</sup> Source: UK Census of 2011

2.3 The supply of affordable rented homes is limited, and it is important that the stock that is available is used to its full potential to provide homes for those in the highest housing need who require assistance from the Council.

### 3. Objectives of the Tenancy Strategy

3.1 The purpose of this Tenancy Strategy is to provide guidance to RPs ~~and KGE~~, informing their policies and practices to ensure that they meet housing need across the whole of the Spelthorne Borough. This Strategy clarifies to housing applicants the type of tenancy they can expect.

3.2 The Strategy has the following aims:

- a) **Make best use of social housing stock** - to ensure that affordable homes are used as effectively as possible to meet the housing needs of Spelthorne residents where their needs are not met by the private sector. This can be achieved by supporting and enabling existing social housing tenants to move on from affordable housing once they are able to sustain an alternative housing option, such as home ownership or the private rented sector.
- b) **To meet local housing needs and prevent homelessness** - The use of fixed term tenancies provides an opportunity to address under-occupation. It gives affordable housing providers greater opportunity to move people into a smaller property when their current accommodation is larger than their actual housing need (i.e. occupying a three bedroom property when their need is only for a two bedroom property). This will release larger properties for those who need them, including overcrowded households or families facing homelessness. RPs ~~and KGE~~ will not be obliged to renew a fixed term tenancy at the end of the term and will support tenants who are under occupying an affordable property to find a more suitable alternative in this situation.



- c) **To enable a range of tenure options** - maximising the potential of existing affordable housing enables the balance of the wider housing market in the Borough. Getting a better balance between the different housing sectors ensures that residents can access the homes with a suitable tenure that they need, when they need them, at an affordable cost. RPs will prepare tenants for independence once their circumstances have improved by making it clear from the start of their tenancy that the arrangement is not necessarily a permanent one/assured lifetime tenancy.

People's needs may change over time and different tenure options may be more suitable subject to their circumstances, including accessing home ownership and the private rented sector. Flexible tenancies should encourage people to make flexible choices about their housing options, rather than assuming that limited social rented housing is their only effective choice.

3.3 The strategy has been drafted to support the Council's current strategic priorities of:

- Enabling the delivery of more affordable homes
- Promoting independence and wellbeing
- Preventing homelessness and rough sleeping

## 4. The Strategy

4.1 The Strategy sets out guidance to RPs ~~and KGE~~ for their own individual Tenancy Policies.

4.2 The following tenancy types are recognised as being permitted:

- Probationary Tenancies
- Flexible/Fixed Term Tenancies
- Secure/Assured Tenancies
- Licences – limited use

- Assured Shorthold Tenancies – limited use

4.3 This Strategy aims to define the types of tenancies and will apply to all RPs ~~and KGE~~ providing social and affordable rented properties in Spelthorne Borough. In addition, it also sets out standards expected of all RPs ~~and KGE~~, who have been consulted during its development. All local RPs ~~and KGE~~ must give due regard to the guidelines set out in the strategy, upon completion of the review consultation.

4.4 RPs are required by Homes England and the Regulator of Social Housing, acting as their regulatory body, to let their homes in a fair, transparent and efficient way, which takes into account the housing needs and aspirations of tenants and potential tenants whom they serve. RPs ~~and KGE~~ are expected to demonstrate how their lettings:

- make the best use of available housing
- are compatible with the purpose of the housing
- contribute to the Local Authority's strategic housing function and sustainable communities.

4.5 RPs ~~and KGE~~ are also required to publish clear and accessible policies setting out the term of the tenancies, when they will be renewed and the approach to management, including interventions to sustain tenancies and to prevent unnecessary evictions and tackle tenancy fraud. The Council expects RPs ~~and KGE~~ to positively engage with counter-fraud initiatives to pro-actively manage any tenancy fraud.

4.6 Most RPs operate across more than one local authority boundary. Therefore, they may need to acknowledge and have regard to several tenancy strategies, which will then be tailored to suit a borough or district's particular circumstances.

4.7 The Council considers that prospective tenants should have fair access to the available social housing in the Borough and not be confused by various

landlords offering different tenancies or terms. Without broad compatibility between the policies of the RPs operating in the same borough or district the choices made by housing applicants could be affected and this may affect our ability to meet their housing need. We therefore expect that RPs ~~and KGE~~ engage with and consult with the Council to ensure their policies are in line with the principles of this strategy.

4.8 The legal status of the Tenancy Strategy is such that it does not override existing agreements regarding tenure.

### **Probationary Tenancies**

4.9 Probationary or Trial tenancies provide an effective housing management tool, to ensure that new tenants understand their obligations under their tenancy agreement and can sustain that tenancy.

4.10 Where a RP uses a Probationary Tenancy, they should normally be entered into for a 12-month period, which may be extended to a maximum of 18 months, where reasons for extending the probationary period have been given and where the tenant has had the opportunity to request a review.

4.11 New tenants may be offered a starter tenancy, known as 'probationary tenancy'. These usually last 12 months and are a 'trial' period. The tenant becomes a fixed term tenant after 12 months, unless the RP has either:

- Started an action to evict the tenant
- extended the starter tenancy

4.12 Probationary tenancies were created by the Housing Act 1996. They are intended to allow RPs to decide if a tenancy is granted to a suitable tenant. At the end of the starter tenancy, the tenant will be offered either:

- an assured tenancy - meaning the tenant can remain in the property for the rest of their life
- a fixed-term tenancy - usually lasting for at least 5 years (the RP will decide whether it's renewed based on individual circumstances)

4.13 Upon successful completion of the probationary period, tenants should graduate to the relevant tenancy as set out within the individual RPs tenancy policy.

### **Fixed Term Tenancies**

4.12 The Council considers that fixed-term tenancies provide opportunities to make best use of the limited stock available, as well as opportunities at tenancy renewal to review the existing housing need. Although these tenancies do not offer lifetime security of tenure, in other respects tenants will have similar tenancy rights to assured tenants.

4.13 It is desirable that all new affordable tenancies across the Borough are offered on similar fixed terms, rather than there being a range of terms, which may create confusion for those households relying upon the social housing sector to meet their housing need.

4.14 The Council expects a fixed-term tenancy of five years to be granted to new social housing tenants, after probationary period, with few exceptions. In the authority's view, five-year tenancies give adequate security to most households, as they provide a balance between residents having stability and feeling settled in an area, with the ability to help make tenancies work and be sustainable, as well as making the best use of housing stock retained by the landlord.

4.15 All such tenancies will be subject to review towards the end of the fixed term and, subject to the circumstances of the tenant at that time, a decision will be made as to whether to renew the tenancy for a further fixed-term period, not to renew or to offer an assured tenancy.

4.16 It is essential that RPs clearly communicate renewal terms to new tenants when they are offered fixed-term tenancies, so that they understand that in most circumstances tenancies will be renewed. This will help people, particularly those who are vulnerable, feel connected and settled and contribute to their local areas and to invest in their homes.

4.17 Social housing also comes with responsibilities and there should be a link between expected behaviour and tenancy renewal, which needs to be strongly communicated at the start of the tenancy.

### **Two-year flexible tenancies**

4.18 Although five-year flexible tenancies are recommended as the usual minimum term, two-year tenancies may be offered in certain circumstances. The Council considers that shorter fixed terms may be desirable in a number of exceptional circumstances, as follows:

- Where a short tenancy is being offered for a fixed period and there is no intention to renew
- An offer of accommodation to someone who has lived with a tenant who has died, but is not entitled to succeed to the tenancy, to provide them with some transitional protection<sup>2</sup> to overcome their bereavement where they are likely to be able to meet their own housing needs in the longer term.

4.19 Shorter tenancies may also be considered in certain circumstances, where an existing five-year tenancy is coming to an end and there is uncertainty about the future needs of the tenant, for example:

- a family where children have been taken into care, and where it is not known if those children will return home
- a family where there is a relationship breakdown and there are ongoing negotiations about residence arrangements for the children that could affect the household's future social housing requirements

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<sup>2</sup> The period of transitional protection would be for two years.

- a family with adult children at university or living away from home where it is uncertain as to whether the adult children will return to live at home permanently.

4.20 In some instances, a further shorter tenancy may be more appropriate where a tenant has a history of not keeping to the terms of their tenancy agreement.

4.21 These examples do not necessarily cover all types of exceptional circumstance that might arise. Further advice will be available to RPs in the use of discretion for shorter tenancies, if required.

### **Assured tenancies**

4.22 Assured tenancies must be retained for those tenants who held them on the day that section 132 of the Localism Act 2011 came into force.

4.23 The Localism Act requires RPs to offer Secure or Assured tenancies to applicants that were already social tenants before the provisions were enacted, and this applies to mutual exchanges reciprocal moves or moves as a result of major works or regeneration.

4.24 The Council expects that existing Secure and Assured tenants will retain their security of tenure when they choose to move to another social rented home.

4.25 In transfers between tenants with different levels of security, Secure or Assured tenants keep their security of tenure if they swap with a Fixed-term tenant or an Affordable rent tenant. However, it is not guaranteed they will keep the same rent or other tenancy conditions.

4.26 Older people who have reached state retirement age and will occupy a general needs property will always be granted assured tenancies. The terms

of sheltered housing and extra care tenancies will remain the same as they are and will be let as assured tenancies.

4.27 Assured tenancies can be used in circumstances where the tenant will require long term affordable housing. This can be due to long term physical or mental ill health.

4.28 Assured tenancies are designed to provide security of tenure and stability to the household in need.

4.29 Assured tenancies for new tenants should be used after a successful probationary tenancy period.

### **Other tenancies and licences**

4.30 There are other types of tenancies and licences that may be used by RPs ~~and KGE~~ in appropriate circumstances. The Council supports the continued use of such tenancies, as set out here, below:

- **Non-Secure Tenancies/ licences** are used for households provided with accommodation under the Council's statutory homelessness duties. They do not offer security of tenure. They last until the Council has discharged its duty to provide temporary accommodation and may be used by the RPs if they provide temporary accommodation for this purpose at the request of the Council.

- **Assured Shorthold Tenancies (ASTs)** are generally used for private sector rented homes, but RPs ~~and KGE~~ may also use them in some circumstances. They are frequently used in supported housing schemes or in general needs accommodation, which is intended for short-term use, for example to help prevent immediate homelessness or where properties are leased for a fixed period and the landlord needs to be able to offer up vacant possession at the end of the term.

## **Overview**

4.31 Tenants who were awarded their assured tenancy prior to the Localism Act 2011 introduction, will not be affected by any changes brought by the Act and will continue their tenancies under their existing terms and conditions, including the right to buy/right to acquire, succession rights and the right to exchange their tenancy with another assured tenant.

4.32 Where fixed-term tenancies are awarded they should be for at least 5 years and any 'probationary' tenancies should initially be for 12 months, with a possible 6-month extension.

4.33 The flexible tenancy supports the government's aim to move away from the 'tenancy for life' approach and, instead, provide social housing at a time of need and throughout the time of need, rather than permanently. This approach recognises that social housing tenancies are prioritised for those with the greatest current need, such as those who are overcrowded or those facing homelessness.

4.44 The Government's intention is to assist RPs to maximise effective use of their housing stock, and to help more people move on from affordable housing, should their circumstances change, and they become in a position to sustain alternative housing, such as home ownership or accessing the private rented sector.

## **5. Affordable rent**

5.1 Affordable Rented (AR) housing is a model of social housing that can be let at up to 80% of local market rents. This is in contrast to social rented housing, which has to be let at 'target rents' which are set by the Government and are usually between 40 % and 50 % of market rents. Any increase in rent is to be used to fund new social housing development.



5.2 AR housing is not directly linked to tenancy – it can be offered as a lifetime tenancy or a flexible tenancy. It is important that tenants and prospective tenants understand the difference between AR and social rents. The Council expects RPs to set out their intentions to use ARs in their individual tenancy policies, which may relate household income to eligibility for AR housing.

5.3 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) defines AR housing as: “rented housing let by registered providers of social housing to households who are eligible for social rented housing. Affordable Rent is not subject to the national rent regime but is subject to other rent controls that require a rent of no more than 80 per cent of the local market rent (including service charges, where applicable).”

5.4 All RPs that have entered into development contracts with Homes England and receive grants are required to charge Affordable Rents. It also recommends that when setting rents, RPs take into account the local market context (including the relevant Local Housing Allowance) and wider Benefits’ policy.

5.5 Private rents are extremely high in the Borough. Therefore, the Council wants to ensure that affordable rent levels in Spelthorne remain affordable. The affordable rent model will enable affordable housing providers to set affordable rents for new build properties as well as re-let of existing properties at up to a maximum of 80% of the market rent for a comparable property within the same locality<sup>3</sup>. Spelthorne’s market rent levels vary between localities, these variations will be reflected in the affordable rents calculated for each locality. However, in no instance will the rents charged for affordable rented properties, exceed the relevant Local Housing Allowance (LHA) rate that is applicable for that property size at the time of

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<sup>3</sup> Due to introduction of the Localism Bill 2011

rent setting. This is to avoid excessively high affordable rents in high value areas.

5.6 The Council accepts that the AR model will help secure new housing supply.

However, we expect developers, ~~KGE and~~ RPs to follow the guidance laid in the Supplementary Planning Document on S.106 sites. This indicates that we expect Affordable rents across the borough to be at a maximum of 80% of a market rent, or LHA rate, whichever is the lowest. Developments with planning permissions granted prior to the review of this Tenancy Strategy, where viability was assessed at up to 80% of market rent, will be permitted to offer AR tenancies up to 80% of market rent.

5.7 Although this guidance is for S.106 sites the Council expects RPs ~~and KGE~~ developing any site, or converting their rents, to abide by the principles set out in this guidance.

5.8 Given the importance of homes being affordable for tenants, the Council considers it essential that RPs ~~and KGE~~ develop approaches to financial inclusion and capability for tenants, ensuring that prospective tenants will be allocated a home they are able to afford in the longer term and financial issues will be addressed at an early stage. Likewise, tenants likely to be affected by welfare reform changes should be given appropriate advice and information.

5.9 Applicants who are officially ineligible for housing, for example foreign nationals who are subject to immigration control and other people from abroad excluded by statute or regulation and do not therefore, have recourse to public funds, will not be nominated for housing by the Council or local providers of affordable housing.

## **6. Succession**

6.1 In some circumstances and depending on the tenancy type, a spouse, partner or any other household member may be entitled to succeed the tenancy. The Localism Act has introduced only one statutory right of

succession, to a spouse, partner, or any other household member. Any other successions will be entirely at the discretion of the affordable housing provider in consultation with the Council. All applications to succeed a tenancy will be assessed on a case-by-case basis by RPs.

6.2 All successions to a flexible tenancy will only be for the remainder of the life of that tenancy, and subject to a full review as set out below when the end of the tenancy is due.

## **7.Tenancy Reviews**

7.1 No less than six months before a flexible tenancy is due to end, it will be subject to a review using the criteria detailed below. If it is decided, as a result of the tenancy review, that a tenancy will not be renewed, written notice advising the tenant of such will be served. The notice must contain the reasons for the decision and also notify the tenant of their right to appeal. Should a tenant appeal and fail to have the decision overturned, the landlord will be able to seek possession of the property. The landlord's right of possession may then be challenged in the County Court only on the grounds that the landlord has made a legal error or a material error of fact.

## **8. Review Criteria**

8.1 The tenancy review criteria could include the continuing needs of tenants, any assets they might have accrued or inherited during the period of the tenancy, attitude to work/training opportunities that might have presented themselves during the period of the tenancy and pressures on social housing.

8.2 Tenancies will not normally be extended where one or more the following apply:

- The financial capacity of the tenant/s to secure alternative market accommodation or affordable tenures, under the financial criteria as

set out in the Allocation Policy. However, any assessment of financial capacity must be managed in such a manner that ensures it does not act as a disincentive to work.

- The conduct of the tenant throughout the fixed term. This includes any anti-social behaviour issues, rent arrears, or property management issues. In instances that the affordable housing provider wants to refuse a further tenancy due to the conduct of the tenant, they will be expected to provide a detailed record of support and engagement with the tenant to assist them in maintaining their tenancy.

- The property is under-occupied by one bedroom or more.

- The property has been extensively adapted for someone with a disability who no longer lives with the tenant (this allows the property to be released for someone who will benefit from the adaptations).

8.3 The Council recognises that there may be circumstances in which it would be unreasonable to expect someone to move even if the above criteria applied, and would want a tenancy to continue if:

- The tenant is a care leaver and still receiving support from social services because of this.

- The tenant is participating in a family intervention programme or an equivalent programme.

- Other circumstances as deemed appropriate by the RP ~~and KGE~~

## **9. Termination of a flexible/fixed term tenancy**

9.1 Once the tenancy review is completed, if it is decided that the tenancy will not be renewed, the RP ~~and KGE~~ must serve a written notice advising the

tenant of their decision. The notice will contain the reasons for the decision and formally notify the tenant of their right to appeal and the appeal process. It is a legal requirement for the notice to be issued at least six months before the expiry of the tenancy so that the tenant has time to seek advice about their options.

9.2 The RPs have the statutory duty to provide housing advice/support to tenants in this situation. Before a tenancy being terminated, the RP will assist the tenant to explore their options for alternative housing. Such options could include home ownership, a privately rented home or a more suitable affordable rented home. The Council's Housing Options team will also offer housing advice to tenants in this situation if requested.

9.3 The housing officers in the Council Housing Options team will assist tenants with a wide range of advice to help them resolve the issues arising from the termination of their tenancies. This will include signposting to other Council departments where appropriate and to voluntary organisations that may help support people with resolving their housing issues.

9.4 RPs ~~and KGE~~ are asked to notify the Council without delay about tenancies that will not be renewed, subject to the consent of the tenant, as this will help any offer of further assistance if necessary.

9.5 If the tenant refuses to move when the notice period expires, the normal possession procedure will take effect.

## **10. Appeals**

10.1 If a tenant disagrees with the decision reached by their affordable housing provider to terminate their tenancy, they may use the appeal process as follows.

- All applicants have the right to request general information about their tenancy review, including the facts that have been taken into account and the reasons for terminating their tenancies.

- An applicant who is unhappy with a decision made under this policy should in the first instance contact their affordable housing provider, area housing officer to explain why they think that the decision is unreasonable.
- If an applicant wishes to pursue the matter further, they should obtain a copy of their affordable housing provider's appeal process and ensure that they submit an appeal within the stated time limit.
- Where an applicant wishes to appeal the termination of a tenancy and the notice period expires during the period of the appeal, the tenant will be permitted to stay in the property where this is not likely to lead to an unreasonable delay in the property being vacated.
- If the appeal review upholds the decision, the tenant then has recourse to the County Court.
- Should the County Court uphold the decision, the tenant will be obliged to leave the property.

## **11. Strategy review & monitoring**

11.1 The Tenancy Strategy has been developed and reviewed through consultation with RPs ~~and KGE~~ operating within the Borough.

11.2 This strategy may be updated from time-to-time to ensure that any information and links remain relevant and will be further reviewed as circumstances require at regular intervals of not less than every five years. Any material revision to the strategy will be considered in consultation with all relevant parties, who will be given a reasonable timescale to respond and comment as appropriate.

11.3 The responsibility for monitoring the implementation of this strategy is delegated to the Council's Strategic Housing Group (SHG), with periodic updates provided to the Community Wellbeing and Housing Committee. SHG exists to ensure that Spelthorne Borough Council has a focussed strategic approach on housing matters, in order that Spelthorne's housing need is identified and met.

## **12. Equalities and diversity**

12.1 The Tenancy Strategy will be subject to an Equality and Diversity Assessment and the Council expects RPs to carry out their own Equality and Diversity Assessment for their individual tenancy policies.

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## Equality Analysis

<b>Directorate:</b> Community Wellbeing <b>Service Area:</b> Housing Strategy & Policy	<b>Lead Officer:</b> Marta Imig <b>Date completed:</b> 08 February 2023
<b>Service / Function / Policy / Procedure to be assessed:</b>  Tenancy Strategy	
<b>Is this:</b> New / Proposed <input type="checkbox"/> Existing/Review <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Changing <input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Review date:</b> The strategy is to be comprehensively reviewed not later than every 5 years

**Part A – Initial Equality Analysis to determine if a full Equality Analysis is required.**

**What are the aims and objectives/purpose of this service, function, policy or procedure?**

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**Please indicate its relevance to any of the equality duties (below) by selecting Yes or No?**

	Yes	No
Eliminating unlawful discrimination, victimisation and harassment		✓
Advancing equality of opportunity	✓	
Fostering good community relations	✓	

**If not relevant to any of the three equality duties and this is agreed by your Head of Service**, the Equality Analysis is now complete - please send a copy to **NAMED OFFICER**. **If relevant**, a Full Equality Analysis will need to be undertaken (PART B below).

## PART B: Full Equality Analysis

### Step 1 – Identifying outcomes and delivery mechanisms (in relation to what you are assessing)

<b>What outcomes are sought and for whom?</b>	<p>The main outcome of the strategy is to ensure that all registered providers operating in the borough of Spelthorne have due regard to the Council's tenancy strategy, when meeting their duty to state what types of tenancies they will grant, in which circumstances these different types of tenancies will be granted, the length of any fixed-term tenancies they will grant, and in what a circumstances a new tenancy will be given should any fixed-term tenancy expire. Furthermore, the strategy aims to ensure that affordable housing is available and delivered in Spelthorne to meet local housing need.</p> <p>Affected groups will include (not exhaustive):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Partners involved in the delivery of affordable housing in Spelthorne, such as Registered Providers, property developers, health and social care providers;</li> <li>• Those who are unable to access the housing market locally due to high property prices and increasing rents;</li> <li>• Housing Options Staff at Spelthorne Borough Council.</li> </ul>
<b>Are there any associated policies, functions, services or procedures?</b>	<p>Housing Act 1996 (as amended by various)</p> <p>Housing Strategy 2020-2025</p> <p>Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2020-2025</p> <p>Corporate Plan</p> <p>Capital Strategy</p> <p>Local Plan</p> <p>Economic Development Strategy</p> <p>Asset Management Plan</p>
<b>If partners (including external partners) are involved in delivering the service, who are they?</b>	<p>Whilst partners have a role in delivering affordable housing in Spelthorne, the overall strategy and it's implementation is the responsibility of Spelthorne Borough Council.</p>

### Step 2 – What does the information you have collected, or that you have available, tell you?

**What evidence/data already exists about the service and its users?** (in terms of its impact on the ‘equality strands’, i.e. race, disability, gender, gender identity, age, religion or belief, sexual orientation, maternity/pregnancy, marriage/civil partnership and other socially excluded communities or groups) and **what does the data tell you?** e.g. are there any significant gaps?

#### General Spelthorne context

According to the Indices of Deprivation 2019, the most deprived borough in Surrey is Spelthorne. Spelthorne has the highest number of lone parent families and the highest level of child poverty in Surrey; it also has the highest under-18 conception rate in the county. That said, residents are largely healthy, with life expectancy for both males and females slightly above the national average.

Spelthorne has a low rate of unemployment: 1.4% of those economically active aged 16 to 64, compared to the South East (2.2%) and UK as a whole (3.5%). Heathrow Airport is a significant local employer, with 8.3% of Spelthorne’s working population employed there. Significantly, 21.5% of those in work in Stanwell North are in low level employment compared to an average of 11.6% in Surrey. Average wages are slightly above regional averages at £630 per week for full-time employees.

Whilst house prices remain well above the national average, most residents are owner-occupiers (73%), followed by private rented (13%) and social rented (12%).

We’re awaiting the full release of the 2021 census data so existing data is based on the 2011 census. First release of the new census data highlights a population increase in Spelthorne by 7.7%, from around 95,600 in 2011 to 103,000 in 2021. Spelthorne is the 14<sup>th</sup> most densely populated of the South East’s 64 local authority areas with 2,295 of residents per square kilometre. Initial data also provides updates to both categories of age and sex as outlined below.

#### Gender / gender identity

Census data from 2021 shows that 50.9% of residents in Spelthorne were female, with the remaining 49.1% being male. There is no data known to be held in relation of other gender identities.

Source: ONS Census, 2021 – Population and household estimates, England and Wales: Census 2021

A White Paper published in December 2018 (Help shape our future: the 2021 Census of population and housing in England and Wales) set out the ONS recommendation for what the census should contain and how it should operate. The White Paper recommended that the census in 2021 include a question about gender identity, asking respondents whether their gender is the same as the sex they were registered as at birth. The question is separate from the question about sex (i.e., whether the respondent is male or female), which is phrased in the same way as previous years. There is currently no official data about the size of the transgender population (the word ‘transgender’ is used here to describe people whose gender identity does not match the sex they were assigned at birth). The Government Equalities Office (GEO) has said that there may be 200,000 to 500,000 transgender people in the UK, but stresses that we don’t know the true population because of the lack of robust data. The ONS has identified user need for official estimates in order to support policy-making and monitor equality duties and has added a voluntary question on gender identity for people age 16 years and over. The 2021 data set has not yet been published by the ONS.

Source: <https://researchbriefings.parliament.uk/ResearchBriefing/Summary/CBP-8531>

### Age

Spelthorne has a slightly lower population of under-30s (33%) compared to the rest of the country (36%), and a slightly higher population of 30-69 year olds (53%) compared with the national average of (51%). The number of 70+ is 14%, which is broadly in line with the rest of the nation. Source: ONCS Census, 2021 – Population and household estimates, England and Wales: Census 2021.

### Ethnicity

The ethnic make-up of Spelthorne is largely in line with the UK average, although we have more residents who identify as Asian and fewer residents who identify as Black than the national average.

Ethnic group	Spelthorne		Region	UK
	Number	%	%	%
White	83,455	87.3%	90.7%	87.2%
Mixed	2,382	2.5%	1.9%	2.0%
Asian	7,295	7.6%	5.2%	6.9%
Black	1,545	1.6%	1.6%	3.0%
Other	921	1.0%	0.6%	0.9%
Total	95,598	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Source: <https://commonslibrary.parliament.uk/home-affairs/communities/demography/constituency-statistics-ethnicity/>

### Disability

*As of July 2019 there were around 2,020 PIP claimants in Spelthorne constituency. In comparison, there was an average of 2,500 claimants per constituency across the South East. Within Spelthorne, psychiatric disorders were the most common reason for claiming PIP. They accounted for 37% of awards, compared to 36% in Great Britain. 'Psychiatric disorders' include anxiety and depression, learning disabilities and autism. The second most common reason for awards was musculoskeletal disease (general), which accounted for 17% of awards within the constituency and 21% in Great Britain. Musculoskeletal disease (general) includes osteoarthritis, inflammatory arthritis and chronic pain syndromes.*

Source:

<http://data.parliament.uk/resources/constituencystatistics/personal%20independence%20payment/PIP%20claimants%20in%20Spelthorne.pdf>

### Religion

Residents of Spelthorne predominately identify themselves as either Christian or having no religion. There is a smaller Muslim population compared with the national average, but a larger Hindu and Sikh population.

	Constituency		Region	UK
	Number	%	%	%
<b>Has religion</b>	<b>67,392</b>	<b>70.5%</b>	<b>65.0%</b>	<b>66.7%</b>
of which				
Christian	60,954	63.8%	59.8%	58.8%
Muslim	1,808	1.9%	2.3%	4.5%

Hindu	2,332	2.4%	1.1%	1.4%
Buddhist	420	0.4%	0.5%	0.4%
Jewish	206	0.2%	0.2%	0.4%
Sikh	1,325	1.4%	0.6%	0.7%
Other	347	0.4%	0.5%	0.4%
<b>No religion</b>	<b>21,511</b>	<b>22.5%</b>	<b>27.7%</b>	<b>26.1%</b>
<b>Not stated</b>	<b>6,695</b>	<b>7.0%</b>	<b>7.4%</b>	<b>7.2%</b>

Source: <https://commonslibrary.parliament.uk/home-affairs/communities/constituency-data-religion/>

### Sexual orientation

*There is no accurate dataset which can be used to reflect solely Spelthorne. The White Paper recommends asking a new question about sexual orientation. The ONS has identified a user need for better data on sexual orientation – particularly for small areas – to inform policy-making and service provision, as well as monitoring equality duties. The ONS has previously used the Annual Population Survey (APS) to estimate the size of the lesbian, gay and bisexual (LGB) population in the UK. According to these estimates, just over 1 million people identified as LGB in 2016 (around 2% of the population). However, the sample population used in the APS isn't big enough to provide robust estimates of the LGB population in smaller areas.*

Source: <https://researchbriefings.parliament.uk/ResearchBriefing/Summary/CBP-8531>

### Marriage / Civil Partnership

More people in Spelthorne are married compared to the rest of England and Wales, and fewer people identify as single.

<b>Marital Status</b>	<b>Spelthorne</b>		<b>England and Wales</b>	
All usual residents aged 16+	78,089		45,496,780	
Single (never married or never registered a same-sex civil partnership)	24,562	31%	15,730,275	35%
Married	38,984	50%	21,196,684	47%
In a registered same-sex civil partnership	153	0%	104,942	0%
Separated (but still legally married or still legally in a same-sex civil partnership)	2,042	3%	1,195,882	3%
Divorced or formerly in a same-sex civil partnership which is now legally dissolved	6,870	9%	4,099,330	9%
Widowed or surviving partner from a same-sex civil partnership	5,478	7%	3,169,667	7%

**Has there been any consultation with, or input from, customers / service users or other stakeholders?** If so, with whom, how were they consulted and what did they say? If you haven't consulted yet and are intending to do so, please list which specific groups or communities you are going to consult with and when.

Advised Knowle Green Estates about proposed changes to the strategy.

Are there any complaints, compliments, satisfaction surveys or customer feedback that could help inform this assessment? If yes, what do these tell you?

None

### Step 3 – Identifying the negative impact.

#### a. Is there any negative impact on individuals or groups in the community?

##### **Barriers:**

What are the potential or known barriers/impacts for the different 'equality strands' set out below? Consider:

- **Where** you provide your service, e.g. the facilities/premises;
- **Who** provides it, e.g. are staff trained and representative of the local population/users?
- **How** it is provided, e.g. do people come to you or do you go to them? Do any rules or requirements prevent certain people accessing the service?
- **When** it is provided, e.g. opening hours?
- **What** is provided, e.g. does the service meet everyone's needs? How do you know?

\* Some barriers are justified, e.g. for health or safety reasons, or might actually be designed to promote equality, e.g. single sex swimming/exercise sessions, or cannot be removed without excessive cost. If you believe any of the barriers identified to be justified then please indicate which they are and why.

##### **Solutions:**

What can be done to minimise or remove these barriers to make sure everyone has equal access to the service or to reduce adverse impact? Consider:

- Other arrangements that can be made to ensure people's diverse needs are met;
- How your actions might help to promote good relations between communities;
- How you might prevent any unintentional future discrimination.

Equality Themes	Barriers/Impacts identified	Solutions (ways in which you could mitigate the impact)
<b>Age</b> (including children, young people and older people)	<p>Young people aged 16-17 cannot hold tenancies and so housing options are severely limited.</p> <p>Older people may be less likely to access our services when needed.</p> <p>Those aged 18-39 may have reduced access to social or affordable housing as a result of welfare policies as well as local landlord policies (age restrictions)</p>	<p>Young people aged 16-17 receive enhanced services via the Surrey Joint Protocol. They have access to specialist young peoples homelessness accommodation.</p> <p>Older people have greater access to social housing via age restrictions across the A2Dominion stock. Spelthorne Borough Council has a Discretionary Housing Payment pot which this group can access in case of hardship. Under the Spelthorne Borough Council Housing Strategy 2020-25, A2Dominion have agreed to a comprehensive review of age restrictions in Spelthorne.</p>
<b>Disability</b> (including carers)	<p>Anecdotally we know that physically disabled people accessing settled accommodation in Spelthorne have much more limited options available to them in relation to settled accommodation due to potential property adaption requirements.</p>	<p>See action 1.3 of the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2020-2025 – we will review the availability of accessible accommodation options for this affected group. Spelthorne Borough Council also has a disposal protocol which to help inform an acquisition delivery programme. If this policy is approved, it will ensure that the Council maximises opportunities to support physically disabled people into affordable settled adapted accommodation that meets their needs. Equally, those who may not have a physical disability but are instead impacted by severe anxiety, depression or poor mental health may have specific property requirements, such as, the need for homes on lower floor levels, sound proofing rooms or homes within a quieter part of the Borough. With a disposal protocol and property acquisition policy, the Council will be able to secure dispersed affordable homes that will potentially meet with some of these more specialised needs.</p>
<b>Gender</b> (men and women)	No negative impacts have been identified.	n/a



<b>Race</b> (including Gypsies & Travellers and Asylum Seekers)	Accommodation for people seeking asylum is the responsibility of the Home Office. Provision for pitches for gypsies and travelling showpeople are dealt with under the Local Plan.	n/a
<b>Religion or belief</b> (including people of no religion or belief)	No negative impacts have been identified.	n/a
<b>Gender Re-assignment</b> (those that are going through transition: male to female or female to male)	No negative impacts have been identified.	n/a
<b>Pregnancy and Maternity</b>	No negative impacts have been identified.	n/a
<b>Sexual orientation</b> (including gay, lesbian, bisexual and heterosexual)	No negative impacts have been identified.	n/a

### Step 4 – Changes or mitigating actions proposed or adopted

Having undertaken the assessment are there any changes necessary to the existing service, policy, function or procedure? What changes or mitigating actions are proposed?

No changes required.

### Step 5 – Monitoring

How are you going to monitor the existing service, function, policy or procedure ?

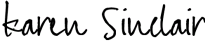
The Housing Strategy 2020-25 including the action plan and tasks within it will be monitored by the Council's Strategic Housing Group who meet monthly.

### Part C - Action Plan

Barrier/s or improvement/s identified	Action Required	Lead Officer	Timescale
n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a

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Equality Analysis approved by:

Group Head:	<div><div>DocuSigned by:</div><div> BB3EBC3BDA2B47D...</div></div>	Date:	13 February 2023   4:06 PM GMT
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# Community Wellbeing & Housing Committee



**28 March 2023**

<b>Title</b>	Tennis Court Capital Funding Opportunity
<b>Purpose of the report</b>	To decide whether to apply for capital funds from the Lawn Tennis Association.
<b>Report Author</b>	Kamal Mehmood - Strategic Lead Leisure & Community
<b>Ward(s) Affected</b>	All Wards
<b>Corporate Priority</b>	Community, Environment and Service Delivery.
<b>Recommendations</b>	<p>The Committee is asked to consider the 3 options and confirm which they would like to pursue:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Option 1: Agree to apply for the funding as soon as possible and forecast the future maintenance costs into the Council budget, keeping all tennis courts free of charge to the whole community.</li> <li>• Option 2: Agree to apply for the funding as soon as possible and forecast the future maintenance costs into the Council budget, but introducing a fee structure for some members of the community.</li> <li>• Option 3: Decline the opportunity to apply for funding from the LTA and finance the tennis court refurbishments from the Council's on going repair and maintenance budget.</li> </ul>
<b>Reason for Recommendation</b>	To increase the opportunity for our communities to play outdoor tennis both now and in the future through the potential securing of external capital funding for tennis court refurbishment.

## 1. Summary of the report

- 1.1 This report seeks views on the opportunity to apply for capital funding from the Lawn Tennis Association (LTA).
- 1.2 The LTA are offering the Council the opportunity to apply for approx. £140k to refurbish its park tennis courts and implement a booking system that allows for tennis participation to be measured.
- 1.3 The LTA originally confirmed the opportunity to apply expires at the end of March 2023. However, a recent update from the LTA confirms that higher construction costs mean the overall pot is depleting more quickly than they anticipated, and therefore, if the Council is interested, it is advised to apply as soon as possible.

- 1.4 MAT are asked to consider the benefits of applying this funding vs the disbenefits.

## **2. Key issues**

- 2.1 Spelthorne BC has 20 outdoor tennis courts over 6 sites. The courts are currently free to use for the community. The courts at Fordbridge Park are self managed by a private coaching company on a lease basis. A 10 year programme of tennis court refurbishment was completed in 2014, but some courts were not included at this time. The LTA suggest that there is an immediate need for investment of £60k at Ashford Recreation Ground for the courts to remain playable. There is no recent audit of the current condition of all courts other than the monthly safety inspections undertaken by a contractor. It is observed that the courts are fairly well used, although as there is no booking or entry process to the courts, this view cannot be supported with data.
- 2.2 There have been no recent customer surveys to indicate why some courts are more frequently used than others and whether this is affected by the condition of courts.
- 2.3 The Lawn Tennis Association (LTA) has received £30 million from the Department for Culture Media and Sport (DCMS) and the LTA Trust to refurbish 4,500 tennis courts across the country to support a new generation of players into the sport. The funding is to refurbish playing surfaces and fencing where necessary, update nets and install new access gates.
- 2.4 The LTA are offering the Council the opportunity to apply for £140k to refurbish its park tennis courts and introduce a gate access system to measure participation. This would raise the profile and culture of tennis within the borough and quality of facilities within our parks. Appendix D outlines in the detail, the reasons why the LTA would like to do this.
- 2.5 This opportunity meets the Council's Corporate Plan Priorities by:
- putting our communities at the heart of this opportunity by improving facilities to encourage healthy lifestyles both now and in the future;
  - maintaining a clean, green and attractive borough;
  - adapting services to meet new challenges, new ways of working and different ways of interacting with our communities.
- 2.6 The Council's neighbouring boroughs of Slough, Hounslow, Hillingdon, Runnymede and Windsor & Maidenhead have all submitted successful application forms and are approved in principle for this LTA funding. These boroughs have chosen to charge for tennis bookings; however, this is not mandatory. It is the Council's choice whether they remain free or become chargeable. There is however a requirement that accepting funding means committing to future sustainability of all sites.
- 2.7 Elmbridge Borough Council installed the tennis court gate system and charges for court use in 2017. Later that year charges were removed due to

customer comments/changes in political administration. A new free tennis membership with free court access all year round, for 2 hours every weekday, at every venue was introduced. In April 2021 Elmbridge then re-introduced a charging structure for tennis courts which is proving to be successful. (Appendix E). Elmbridge are very happy to provide tours of their facilities or further information if we would like this.

## 2.8 Requirements of the LTA funding:

- A booking system and gate entry system must be in place. This would be the LTA'S own 'ClubSpark' system. Setting up as a new member of the public on ClubSpark takes a couple of minutes. Once an account is made, free or chargeable courts can be booked within one minute. A code is sent to the person's email account and they are required to enter that code on the keypad on the gate.
- A booking system does not automatically mean a cost to the public. Customers can still access courts for free - they simply book their free slot using the online ClubSpark booking system which provides assurance that their court time is theirs.
- That the Council confirms its commitment to budget for the bookings system, future maintenance and court repairs. These are set out in Appendix A.

## 2.9 Operational Considerations

- Accepting the funding would mean that the tennis courts are locked via the gate system and children/adults could not go and have a casual game without booking online – the counter argument for this is that by booking online the risk of all courts being used when a customer turns up is mitigated. Free tennis coaching for adults and children as part of the community tennis offer would take place. This has been done in previous years and it has worked well.
- Vandalism could be a risk as the outdoor Spelthorne courts experienced this during Covid when they were locked – the counter argument for this is that there will be a booking system in place and court signage. The unauthorised use of locked courts would have to be enforced. This type of enforcement is usually undertaken by the JET team although this would have to be confirmed if this project was approved.
- The court signage will make it clear a code only works 10mins before the booking starts and will also provide a phone number for players to call if a code doesn't work, to be issued an override code, which CIA (the gate company) update regularly.
- Leisure & Community Development would field calls relating to complaints.
- ClubSpark has an in-built payment platform, Stripe. This Stripe account then be monitored by the Local Authority to see income. The Local

Authority can then decide how regularly this money moves from Stripe into the LA's designated bank account.

- Lewisham Borough Council, which has a similar socio-economic profile to Spelthorne, has recently adopted a gate entry system. We have approached them for feedback but unfortunately haven't received this. Elmbridge Borough Council, as mentioned earlier, now have a successful scheme and charge for playing tennis. Woking Borough Council have also been successfully operating a chargeable gate entry system for many years as have Bracknell Forest Council.

### **3. Options analysis and proposal**

3.1 Option 1: Agree to apply for the funding as soon as possible and forecast the future maintenance costs into the Council budget, keeping all tennis courts free of charge to the community.

3.2 The benefits of this option include:

- receiving in the region of £140k from the LTA to resurface and refurbish the Council's outdoor tennis courts where needed;
- raising the profile of tennis in Spelthorne and the quality of outdoor tennis court facilities in our parks;
- allowing the community free access to good quality community tennis courts both now and in the longer-term future i.e., beyond their current useful court life;
- bookable access to tennis courts for the community i.e., no longer the risk of turning up and not being able to play on a free court;
- it will help us to track tennis court usage. This will enable us to target tennis development work in the right areas;
- maximising the opportunity to receive external funding for the Council to upgrade the quality of leisure facilities;
- ensuring the useful life of the current tennis courts is extended to 12 years;
- improving the courts to provide further free community tennis coaching programmes;
- increasing usage of the tennis courts as quality increases;
- securing the infrastructure to charge for tennis court usage in the future should Council circumstances warrant.

3.3 Disbenefits of this option include:

- Increasing the Council's own level of revenue investment in community tennis courts over the next 12-15 years to maintain the high standard and raised profile of the sport. The LTA estimate this would require investment of £24k per year totalling up to £288k over 12 years. There would also be additional annual revenue oncosts of £5k per year. See Appendix A for full details.

- Limiting free access to tennis to those living in our least advantaged wards. Some residents will struggle to find £2 to play tennis.
- The likelihood of vandalism to the gates. During COVID when the courts were locked, members of the public were breaking the fences to get onto the courts.
- The perceived inconvenience to the public in having to book a court via ClubSpark rather than walking onto a court at any time. This is a change that could be managed with notice and guidance to our community, alongside communicating the benefit that there is no longer a risk of turning up and not being able to get onto a tennis court.
- Some residents may not have a mobile phone/credit to book courts, although there would be plans in place to run accessible sessions if this project was approved.

3.4 Option 2: Agree to apply for the funding and introduce a nominal hourly court fee to offset the estimated maintenance and repair costs over the next 12 years. The Council would have to fund the remaining costs. Those living in disadvantaged areas would still receive free access through access code provision. Disadvantaged communities would be identified via local demographic statistics and approved via the community wellbeing and housing committee. The nominal fees would be £2 per hour and £15 per year for a season ticket. This would provide a predicted income of £15.5k per year. This income figure has been predicted using LTA insight from live data at other similar LA park sites. This would require a reduced capital sinking fund of £8.5k per year totalling up to £102k over 12 years. The annual revenue costs of £4k per year would still need to be found. See appendix B for more information.

3.5 The benefits of this option include:

- All the cultural, social and health benefits of increasing the profile of tennis in the borough – as listed in point 3.2
- A reduced annual repair and maintenance expenditure of £8.5k per year.
- Self-sustainable outdoor tennis courts over the next 12-years at lower cost to the Council.
- A new income stream for the Council, some of which could go back into supporting free community tennis development.

3.6 The disbenefits of this option include:

- limiting free access to tennis to those living in our least advantaged wards. Some residents will struggle to find £2 to play tennis.
- As in 3.3 there may be perceived inconvenience to the public in having to book a court via ClubSpark rather than walking onto a court at any time. This could be managed as stated in 3.3.
- The likelihood of vandalism to the gates. During COVID when the courts were locked, members of the public were breaking the fences to get onto the courts.

- Some residents may not have a mobile phone/credit to book courts, although there would be plans in place to run accessible sessions if this project was approved.

3.7 Option 3: Decline the opportunity to apply for funding from the LTA and finance the tennis court refurbishments from the Council's on-going repair and maintenance budget over the next 12 years.

3.8 The benefits of this option include:

- Not having to ask the community to pay nominal fees or book online for tennis courts. i.e., accessible unlocked courts.

Not having the increased risk of vandalism to court fences due to people breaking in when the gate is locked.

The disbenefits of this option include:

- the Council having to find ongoing tennis court refurbishment costs to keep the courts playable to a good standard over the next 12 years. The LTA envisage that this would include immediate need for investment of £60k at Ashford Recreation Ground for the courts to remain playable. The LTA estimate the total cost of refurbishment over 12 years is 280k. This is broken down in Appendix C.
- the Council would have no opportunity to track usage, increase participation or improve the infrastructure to generate a potentially new income stream for the future.

## 4. Financial implications

4.1 See below for summary of options and associated capital costs. The LTA have provided guidance regarding costs based on their extensive experience working with other local authorities on this project.

OPTION	Estimated Maintenance cost per year	Capital Cost to Council over 12 years
Option 1: Apply for the LTA funding and keep all courts free of charge	£24k	Up to £288k
Option 2: Apply for the LTA funding and charge nominal fee to offset ongoing costs	£8.5k	Up to £102k
Option 3: Decline the LTA funding	£23k	Up to £280k

## 5. Risk considerations

5.1 With increasing pressures on council budgets, funding for tennis court maintenance may be cut and courts that are in a poor state of repair may have to close. This is an opportunity to take advantage of funding from the LTA which may not come up again.

5.2 Introducing a charge may be unpopular with the public and councillors.



- 5.3 Audit have been consulted and their observations taken on board.
- 6. Procurement considerations**
- 6.1 There are no procurement issues at this stage.
- 7. Legal considerations**
- 7.1 The report was circulated to the Legal Team. We did not receive any comments.
- 8. Other considerations**
- 8.1 TBC
- 9. Equality and Diversity**
- 9.1 The council intend for courts to remain accessible to all, and even with the proposed introduction of fees would include free access to households on low income. Option 1 offers full inclusivity however Option 2 also offers free access to low income households and access to all via a nominal charge of £2.
- 10. Sustainability/Climate Change Implications**
- 10.1 Extending the lifespan and quality of the current courts shows that the Council is committed to maintaining a clean, green and attractive borough – as per the Corporate Plan priorities.
- 11. Timetable for implementation**
- 11.1 The opportunity to apply to the LTA expires at the end of March 2023. However, a recent update indicates the overall grant pot is depleting more quickly than anticipated due to higher construction costs, so a decision to apply or not is required as soon as possible.
- 12. Contact**
- 12.1 The contact for queries relating to this report is Kamal Mehmood – [K.Mehmood@spelthorne.gov.uk](mailto:K.Mehmood@spelthorne.gov.uk)

**Background papers:**  
There are none.

**Appendices:**

**Appendix A: No charge for tennis usage**  
**Appendix B: Charging nominal fees**  
**Appendix C: Declining the LTA funding (do nothing)**  
**Appendix D: LTA Why Gate Entry System**  
**Appendix E: Elmbridge Parks Tennis Review 2022**

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**Appendix A - Option 1- not charging public**

Income per year	
Pay & play	£ -
Season tickets	£ -
Coaching agreement licence fee	£ 1,000.00
<b>TOTAL PER YEAR</b>	<b>£ 1,000.00</b>

Expenditure per year	
Clubspark and payment fees	£ 1,072.00
Gate access maintenance	£ 2,280.00
Gate lock generator	£ 936.00
Vandalism	£ 1,000.00
Annual anticipated maintenance and repair costs	£ 24,000.00
<b>TOTAL PER YEAR</b>	<b>£ 29,288.00</b>


<b>Total costs over 12 years</b>	<b>£ 288,000.00</b>
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<b>Total cost to Council per year</b>	<b>£ 28,288.00</b>
<b>Total cost to Council over 12 years</b>	<b>£ 339,456.00</b>

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**Appendix B - Option 2- charge nominal fees**

<b>Income per year</b>	
Pay & play @ £2 per session	£ 3,783.00
Season tickets @ £15 per year	£ 10,750.00
Coaching agreement licence fee	£ 1,000.00
<b>TOTAL PER YEAR</b>	<b>£ 15,533.00</b>

<b>Expenditure per year</b>	
Clubspark and payment fees	£ 1,072.00
Gate access maintenance	£ 2,280.00
Gate lock generator	£ 936.00
Vandalism	£ 1,000.00
Annual anticipated maintenance and repair costs	£ 24,000.00
<b>TOTAL PER YEAR</b>	<b>£ 29,288.00</b>

<b>Total costs over 12 years</b>	<b>£102,000</b>
----------------------------------	-----------------

<b>Total cost to Council per year</b>	<b>£ 13,755.00</b>
<b>Total cost to Council over 12 years</b>	<b>£ 165,060.00</b>

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## Appendix C

Venue Name	No of Courts	Court Quality	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027
Cedars Park	3	Average			£33,000.00		
Lammas Park	3	Average			£33,000.00		
Bishop Duppas Park	3	Average			£33,000.00		
Ashford Recreation Ground	6	Very Poor		£66,000.00			
Staines Park	3	Good				£9,000.00	
Stanwell Recreation Ground	2	Average			£22,000.00		

Investment required							
2028	2029	2030	2031	2032	2033	2034	Total
			£9,000.00				£42,000.00
			£9,000.00				£42,000.00
			£9,000.00				£42,000.00
	£18,000.00						£84,000.00
				£33,000.00			£42,000.00
			£6,000.00				£28,000.00
							<b>£280,000.00</b>



## **Appendix D: Why Online Booking, Booking Fee & Gate Access?**

### **Context**

Tennis plays a unique role in keeping the nation active, as a sport that can be played by all, no matter their age, gender, background or ability, and as both an entry point to tennis and a hub for regular social play, park courts are central to this.

Park tennis courts are vital in helping open up the sport to more people, with 1.7 million people playing on park courts in the last 12 months and almost half being from lower socio-economic groups.

#### **LTA insight tells us:**

- **Over 1.7 million adults** play tennis on a park court every year
- **44%** of people who play tennis each year do so in a park (in comparison 20% played in a club setting)
- 3.4 million children aged 4-15 played tennis over the course of the year **Over a third (35%) said they had played on a park court**

Despite this significant latent demand, there are a number of barriers for park tennis players to get on court:

- Many Local Authority budgets have not allowed for investment into tennis courts, resulting in over 4,500 park tennis courts being classified as in very poor or unplayable condition.
- Players often have no way of finding and booking a tennis court
- Players cannot always access tennis courts upon arrival i.e. gates often padlocked or being used for non-tennis activity etc.
- Players often have no way of finding someone to play with

Increasingly, potential players want a more simple, convenient and flexible way to play the sport, often without the commitment or cost of joining a club.

With all of this in mind the Government and LTA have identified a need to create more sustainable park tennis facilities, and as such have announced a £30 million package to refurbish more than 4,500 public tennis courts across UK, and support a new generation of players to get into the sport.

### **Why chose a low cost affordable operational model with Gate Access & Online Booking?**

The LTA are supportive of a sustainable operational model that would safeguard the long term future of parks tennis facilities. A mixed operational model that consists of recreational pay & play, targeted free access, affordable family passes and community coaching would achieve that operational balance between sustainability, accessibility, and inclusivity.

A sustainable operational model of this nature would also allow Local Authority partners to explore the feasibility of further developing key park sites to increase playing hours and therefore all year

round participation through additions such as floodlights. This would also provide all year round community accessible tennis facilities and support the LTA's mission to grow tennis by making it relevant, accessible, welcoming and enjoyable.

Please see some further benefits of a sustainable operational model, detailed below:

#### Increasing Participation & Sustainability

- Equitable access i.e. all residents have the same booking rights, and therefore increases participation & improving the health and well-being impact of the sport
- Understand who uses your courts & when to support future development plans
- Ability and confidence to 'sell' dedicated block booked court time to community coaching partners
- Tennis courts require an annual maintenance schedule and to generate a sinking fund of £1,200 per court per annum
- This solution allows the operator to generate an income from tennis, to create a sustainable facility. Ensuring the courts can be maintained to a safe standard and remain a community sporting asset.
- Facilitates different pricing models for distinct groups of people (e.g. offering free/discounted targeted usage/activity to those low income households)
- Places a value on each individual booking and therefore prevents consistent no shows compared to a free booking system

#### Customer Journey

- Provides the customer with an online booking journey (95% of households have a smartphone).
- Players need convenience and simplicity, key barrier to participation is not knowing where/when/how to book a court
- Players want guaranteed booking slots, due to a squeeze on leisure time.
- Provides a platform to promote tennis to the whole community - marketing via database & website – and aligns to LTA national marketing campaigns – again increasing participation
- There is an app that will help people to find others to play with

#### Protect the asset

- Proven to increase usage, therefore footfall, therefore community ownership & self-policing, reducing ASB
- Redirects non-tennis use to designated areas i.e. MUGAs / Green space
- Allows for remote management and confidence of operation
- Supports safeguarding practices – you know who is using the courts and when. Each player agrees to and is made aware of safeguarding, diversity and inclusion policies at the point of booking
- Efficiently monitor unauthorised coaching and commercial usage

## Tennis Court Operation Technology

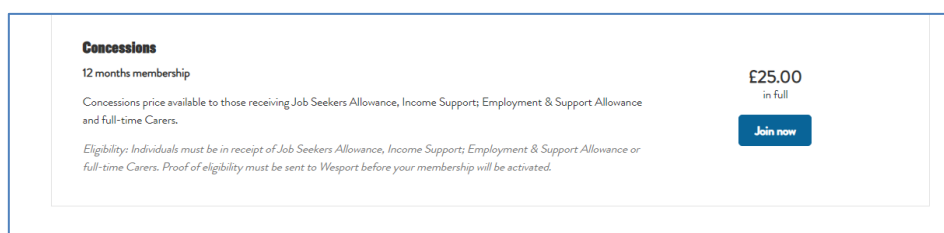
The technology works by a booking online triggering an email to the user with a four-digit PIN code which opens the gate at the time of booking. The gate is self-closing and self-locking. The gates are in place at over two hundred locations across the UK in areas with all the IMD (1-10) classifications.

## Pricing Structure / Eligibility

This model proposes that the main charging method would be for an entire household to purchase a 'pass' to play for 12 months (with no further cost to play). This is the main method of generating the income to sustain tennis courts in parks. The courts can / are also sold per hour for those not wishing to commit to play all year round.

The data from other projects supports that many people who have 'tried' the courts by booking once convert to paying an annual fee for the entire household as it offers better value to those wishing to play more regularly.

Recognising there are some communities where this presents a challenge, councils have introduced a concessions price on the same model (see excerpt from the website below) where those providing proof of receipt of state financial support (in some form) to the court operator were invited to have the same access for £25 (or in some instances, free of charge) rather than the full price of £35 per household per year. Whilst this could be made free to the user, it is recommended to put some value on the concession even if small, so the user has some 'buy in' to the contribution to sustain the courts they use as tennis players.



The screenshot shows a website interface for a tennis court membership. It features a section titled 'Concessions' with a sub-header '12 months membership'. The text states: 'Concessions price available to those receiving Job Seekers Allowance, Income Support; Employment & Support Allowance and full-time Carers.' To the right, the price is listed as '£25.00 in full'. Below this is a blue button labeled 'Join now'. At the bottom, a small line of text reads: 'Eligibility: Individuals must be in receipt of Job Seekers Allowance, Income Support; Employment & Support Allowance or full-time Carers. Proof of eligibility must be sent to Wesport before your membership will be activated.'

## Organised Activity

Aside from the pricing model / eligibility the main way of providing the accessibility to the community is through organised activity or coaching. The LTA partners closely with [Tennis for Free](#) who fund a weekly coaching session for all ages where equipment is provided, and a coach facilitates the session. The LTA also has programmes for supporting the development of young people ([SERVES](#)) and a dedicated programmes for those with disabilities ([Open Court](#)) that can be linked into this project.

In addition, those that operate the courts are free to set up community projects at no charge to the end user. For example, in a number of areas across the country, projects with asylum seekers,

underrepresented ethnic groups, those with a disability are all provided at no cost to the user, either through surpluses from those that pay to play or from external funding. These sessions are all organised by the operator, built around income generating model for courts in the Borough. If the operator is external to the council these projects could be made mandatory in the agreement to operate the courts.

## REPORT FOR INFORMATION BULLETIN

<b>Subject:</b>	Elmbridge Parks Tennis Update
<b>Lead Officer:</b>	Tennis Development Officer
<b>Portfolio Holder:</b>	Cllr Janet Turner, Portfolio Holder for Leisure and Culture
<b>Link to Council Priorities:</b>	Covid-19 recovery, Strategic representation and community leadership, Council Budgets
<b>Exempt information:</b>	None
<b>Delegated status:</b>	For Information

### **PURPOSE:**

This report provides a review of the Parks Tennis scheme for the past year 1<sup>st</sup> April 2021 to the 31<sup>st</sup> March 2022.

### **BACKGROUND :**

1. The Elmbridge Parks Tennis scheme was re-launched on the 1<sup>st</sup> April 2021 following the decision to re-introduce a chargeable membership and pay & play across the Council's tennis court facilities. The new Parks Tennis scheme introduced membership options, a booking system and gate technology which has improved the playing experience and ability to book court time.

### **Membership**

2. The annual household Play Tennis Pass costs £36 and 1,372 passes have been sold resulting in 3,323 individual members.
3. Players not wishing to purchase the annual Play Tennis Pass can access the courts on a pay & play basis, which is charged at £5 per hour, per court.
4. Collectively the two schemes have generated £58,036 for the Council which have enabled the tennis community development programme to be successfully delivered.
5. As part of the upgraded Parks Tennis scheme free Play Tennis Passes are also provided to people in receipt of low-income benefits. To date this has attracted 33 members and the Tennis Development Officer continues to promote this.

### **Marketing**

6. As part of the re-launch the Parks Tennis branding and communication was reviewed and upgraded to ensure that the membership passes and booking process were clearly understood.

7. The on-court banners and social media posts were re-designed, and the websites were redesigned to update all information to communicate the Parks Tennis scheme clearly and effectively.

## Court bookings

8. To understand and measure the impact of introducing charging the Sports and Health team have undertaken monthly court booking data analysis across all 12 venues.
9. The table below shows that since the scheme re-launched on the 1<sup>st</sup> April 2021, the courts have seen an increase in court bookings when comparing to 2017, 2018 & 2019. This is a positive trend and indicates that the Parks Tennis scheme is well understood and is attracting a membership of active tennis players.
10. The usage data from May 2020 to December 2020 is much higher due to tennis being one of the first sports to return after each lockdown. As the tennis membership was free of charge at this time, there was a dramatic increase in free members and free bookings as indicated in the table.
11. However, during that period we also had a record number of bookings, where the hirer failed to attend (no shows) which ranged between 49% - 57% of all bookings each month. Officers received consistent complaints of people being unable to book when no-one was using the courts. Since the re-launch and the introduction of a paid membership scheme we have received no complaints of people not turning up for their booking.

**Table 1: Total Court Hours Booked per Month:**

	2017 Paid	2018 Paid	2019 Free	2020 Free	2021 Free - Paid*	2022 Paid
January		484.5	577.5	837	450	1157
February		626.5	708	789	Covid	1034
March		549	962.5	1399	670.5	1457
April		1044.5	1559	Covid	4593*	
May		1570	1977.5	6732	3818	
June	777	1708	2043	11867	3589.5	
July	2219	1835	3409	11691	3656	
August	1462.5	2006.5	2768	8329	3257	
September	999	1368.5	2030.5	5652	2997.5	
October	814	965	1331.5	3623	2082	
November	885	563	833.5	345	1297	
December	902	468	676	2322	901.5	
Year End Totals	8,058.5	13,188.5	18,876	53,586	27,312	3,648

## **Coaching & General Hire**

12. With the re-launch of the Parks Tennis scheme a review was carried out of the coaching providers and third-party access (Netball, PlayBall, filming, etc) to the courts for private coaching or other use. This led to the development and launch of the Coaching Packages and General Hire Passes with a more robust agreement in place and set affordable business rental fees for local qualified and LTA accredited coaches.
13. Currently there are 3 tennis coaching providers operating community programmes across 7 of the Park Tennis sites with an 8<sup>th</sup> site due to start from June 2022. As part of these agreements, the providers have a set number of court hours per week and they provide a free weekly community session during term time at their sites.
  - Surrey Tennis Coaching venues: Churchfields, Cobham, \*Civic Centre, Cricket Way and Oatlands
  - Take Tennis Lessons venues: Elmgrove and Coronation
  - Set Point Tennis Academy: Long Ditton
14. PlayBall Esher have been issued a general hire pass in the summer months at Oatlands and Coronation Recreation Grounds. Claygate Netball Club have been issued a general hire pass at the Esher Civic Centre; this is currently on hold due to the resurfacing works that are currently underway.
15. The coaching packages and general hire pass allow the Council to maintain safeguarding standards in the parks and allow business to operate while ensuring public access is protected.

## **Court improvements**

16. The Council has a 3-year rolling programme of court improvements, which started in 2021 with the repainting of Cobham and Molesey Hurst and the resurfacing of Giggs Hill. (See photos below)

### **Giggs Hill - Resurface and Repaint**



## Molesey Repaint



17. The resurfacing works at Giggs Hill has reduced the puddling problem that is experienced during heavy or prolonged rain. With the drainage having been improved we have seen an increase in bookings.
18. This year refurbishment programme started in late May with the court resurfacing and new fencing at the Esher Civic Centre. Long Ditton is scheduled to be resurfaced in June/July when the ground is more conducive in allowing vehicles on and off the recreation ground site. Finally, Otlands will be resurfaced and re-fenced in early autumn. A communication plan is in place to ensure both local councillors and residents are aware when the works will be taking place and when the courts will not be available.
19. Looking ahead to 2023, four venues are scheduled to be resurfaced: Grovelands, Coronation, Churchfields and Cricket Way, which will also include new fencing.

## Next Steps

20. As well as building on the success of the Parks Tennis programme a key priority is to increase usage on the courts from less active residents. To achieve this the Tennis Development Officer will continue to support Shout & PA Housing events with free tennis during the events where possible and the promotion of the free Play Tennis Pass. This will include looking at how we can provide equipment to encourage more people to play tennis and then sign up to the free Play Tennis Pass as well as work closely with local schools.
21. Future improvements to the Park Tennis courts will include investigations into the possibility of floodlighting sites to increase the opportunities to play year-round.

## Summary

22. The introduction of the tennis development programme has been hugely successful during 21/22. The introduction in charging has not



adversely impacted on the court usage with over 3,000 members using the court facilities as well generating income for the council to reinvest in local sports provision. The coaching programme has grown across the borough which provides high quality and affordable opportunities for children and adults to improve their tennis skills. The tennis courts refurbishment programme is also progressing well with most court sites being improved over the next 3 years.

**Financial implications:**

As contained within the report

**Environmental/Sustainability Implications:**

None

**Legal implications:**

None

**Equality Implications:**

Free tennis passes are promoted to those on low income to ensure access to the courts can be provided.

**Risk Implications:**

None

**Community Safety Implications:**

None

**Principal Consultees:**

Group Services accountant  
Strategic Director Services

**Background papers:**

None

**Enclosures/Appendices:**

None

**Contact details:**

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## **Spelthorne Borough Council Services Committees Forward Plan and Key Decisions**

This Forward Plan sets out the decisions which the Service Committees expect to take over the forthcoming months, and identifies those which are **Key Decisions**.

A **Key Decision** is a decision to be taken by the Service Committee, which is either likely to result in significant expenditure or savings or to have significant effects on those living or working in an area comprising two or more wards in the Borough.

Please direct any enquiries about this Plan to [CommitteeServices@spelthorne.gov.uk](mailto:CommitteeServices@spelthorne.gov.uk).

## Spelthorne Borough Council

### Service Committees Forward Plan and Key Decisions for 1 March 2023 to 31 July 2023

Anticipated earliest (or next) date of decision and decision maker	Matter for consideration	Key or non-Key Decision	Decision to be taken in Public or Private	Lead Officer
Community Wellbeing and Housing Committee 28 03 2023	Lawn Tennis Association	Non-Key Decision	Public	Carolyn Sheppard, Leisure Facilities & Project Manager
Community Wellbeing and Housing Committee 28 03 2023	Review of Tenancy Strategy	Non-Key Decision	Public	Marta Imig, Housing Strategy and Policy Manager
Community Wellbeing and Housing Committee 28 03 2023	Six Days A Week Community Centre Offer	Non-Key Decision	Public	Stephen Mortimer-Cleevely, Strategic Lead, Independent Living
Community Wellbeing and Housing Committee 28 03 2023	Verbal Update on Deferred Items from the Grants Panel	Non-Key Decision	Public	Kamal Mehmood, Strategic Lead for Leisure and Community Development
Community Wellbeing and Housing Committee 13 06 2023  Council 13 07 2023	Leisure Operator Procurements	Non-Key Decision	Public	Hilary Gillies, Interim Corporate Procurement Manager, Carolyn Sheppard, Leisure Facilities & Project Manager
Community Wellbeing and Housing Committee 13 06 2023	Meals on Wheels	Non-Key Decision	Public	Stephen Mortimer-Cleevely, Strategic Lead, Independent Living