

MINUTES OF THE SPELTHORNE BOROUGH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Council Meeting of Spelthorne Borough Council held in the Council Chamber, Council Offices, Knowle Green, Staines-upon-Thames on Thursday, 22 February 2024 at 6.30 pm

Present:

Councillors:

E. Baldock	J.P. Caplin	S. Gyawali
M. Arnold	D.C. Clarke	A. Mathur
C. Bateson	J.T.F. Doran	L. E. Nichols
S.N. Beatty	S.M. Doran	K.E. Rutherford
M. Beecher	S.A. Dunn	O. Rybinski
H.S. Boparai	M.J. Lee	J.R. Sexton
L.H. Brennan	R.V. Geach	J.A. Turner
M. Buck	D.L. Geraci	B. Weerasinghe
T. Burrell	A. Gale	P.N. Woodward
J. Button	K.M. Grant	

Apologies: Apologies were received from Councillors M.M. Attewell, S. Bhadye, M. Bing Dong, J.R. Boughtflower, R. Chandler, M. Gibson, K. Howkins and N. Islam and

Councillor D. Saliagopoulos, The Mayor, in the Chair

1/24 Minutes

The minutes of the Council meeting held on 14 December 2023 were agreed as a correct record.

2/24 Disclosures of Interest

Councillors Boparai, Sexton and Weerasinghe advised that they were also Surrey County Councillors.

Councillor Boparai declared that he was Spelthorne Borough Council's representative on the Surrey Police and Crime Panel.

Councillor Nichols declared that he was on the Knowle Green Estates Board of Directors.

3/24 Announcements from the Mayor

The Mayor made the following announcements:

“Christmas was a very busy time for the Mayor and my consort. We visited community centres and joined in the Santa Fun Run. After Christmas we went to Ashford and St Peters Trust open day; it was good to see other Councillors there, and I would recommend that all members try and go there next year. My consort and I attended the opening of the new B&Q in Staines High Street. We attended the recent pancake race and a big thanks must go to Staines Rotary. We attended the Council Offices for Holocaust Memorial Day on 26 January.

I attend the Council’s budget breakfast at Jaguar Landrover Synteer. I also went to Laleham School to talk to them about a giant who had apparently set up a beanstalk in Staines High Street, and what was the Council going to do about it. I visited Ashford Park Primary School where more than 100 children attended. We treated them as Councillors and they were just terrific. Thank you so much to the Councillors Geach, Beatty and Caplin who came with me..

I also attended the Youth Speaks here in the Council Chamber where we had some very clever young people debating really well. I did attend the memorial for Zane Gbangbola, but I did not attend as the Mayor as I was advised that it was not appropriate to wear the Mayoral robes.

Councillors, I want to talk to you about the Mayor’s Ball that has been arranged for Saturday 13 April at the Holiday Inn in Shepperton. The funds that I raise will go purely to my charities, and that’s respite for those residents who are looking after their loved ones day after day. For those of you who have no idea but I’m sure many of you do, you need to know how hard this can be and I would be very grateful if you could, sometime before the term ends, go and make friends with your local care home and try and spend some time with people with dementia. Unfortunately dementia is sadly at crisis stage. My other charity, is for the breast cancer unit at Ashford and St Peter’s hospital. Sadly, again, most of us have been touched or know someone who has been affected by this. The Ball is the biggest fundraiser of my Mayoral year. I need to tell you tonight that if we have not managed to sell enough tickets by the end of next week, I have been advised that we will have to cancel this event. Between all the Councillors here this evening and the Leadership, could you easily fill five tables? And the question is, will you? Thank you very much”.

4/24 Announcements from the Leader

The Leader and the Deputy Leader made the following announcements:

The Leader

“We are helping residents and businesses affected by flooding after Storm Henk to apply for government funding to help them recover. This support is available through a scheme called the Flood Recovery Framework which is used in exceptional circumstances to support councils and communities following severe flooding. We are writing to those who we believe have been

affected and information is also on our website and social media channels. Please help spread the word as the deadline to apply is 20 March.

We are busy working through different options to make some changes to the Local Plan. These will be considered at the Extraordinary Environment & Sustainability Committee on 29 February. The agenda has just been published for the E&S committee and I invite residents, businesses and councillors alike to read the report, and attend the meeting (in person or online). The aim is to ensure that the Local Plan better reflects what our residents want, particularly around reducing the number of homes to be delivered, recognising the pressures of flood risk on key areas within the Borough and considering what is appropriate for our Green Belt. We hope that this means we will be able to resume the Local Plan examination later this year, but this will be ultimately decided by the Planning Inspector.

The Spelthorne Design Code will play an important role in delivering high quality development in the Borough. Work on the project is progressing well (having been agreed by E&S committee in January) with the tender process to find a specialist consultant to work with the Council on developing the code underway. The plan is to have consultants on board in March. As the project progresses, we will be reaching out to residents to ensure we have the views of all sections of the community before we develop a Vision for the Borough which will underpin the Design Code. The current intention is to have a completed design code in place by the end of 2024”.

The Deputy Leader

“The Council hosted an Apprenticeship Fair in partnership with Kwasi Kwarteng MP at the Job & Skills Hub in Staines on Friday 9 February. The event coincided with National Apprenticeship Week and connected young people with over 20 local employers from a range of industries. The students were able to find out about the benefits of doing an apprenticeship, the types of roles on offer and how to apply for the right opportunity. The feedback from both the employers and students was extremely positive so well done to everyone who helped with the organisation.

We will be launching a ‘Keep Spelthorne Clean’ campaign in June, working with residents and businesses to tidy up some of the unsightly areas in the Borough. Like you, we hate to see things like litter, graffiti and dog fouling and are determined to crack down on these issues. We have reached out to primary schools to ask for their help to get the message across by creating impactful posters that will encourage people to show more respect for the Borough. Thank you to all the children who have taken part in this exercise. We will include some of their posters in the next edition of the Bulletin magazine together with an article which explains more about the campaign”.

5/24 Announcements from the Chief Executive

The Chief Executive made the following announcements:

“Spelthorne was significantly impacted by flooding following recent heavy rain and staff from across the Council worked tirelessly to support those residents affected. In partnership with Local Resilience Forum and Spelthorne Food & Welfare Network, practical support was provided to over 120 residents directly affected by flooding whilst maintaining welfare checks on over two hundred other residents deemed to be vulnerable.

To all colleagues involved in evacuating residents, standing up rest centres, providing community transport, emergency hotel accommodation and meals on wheels, I should like to place on record our thanks for their unwavering commitment to public service in putting our communities at the heart of our everything we do.

On tonight’s agenda there are some significant items for Councillors to consider, including our Budget and Corporate Plan. I should therefore also like to take this opportunity to acknowledge the considerable work and effort of both Councillors and Officers in preparing these important items that direct our future priorities and service delivery capacity”.

6/24 Questions from members of the public

The Mayor reported that, under Standing Order 13 no questions had been received from members of the public.

7/24 Parking Order Revision (Tariff and Charges update) 2024

Council **resolved** to:

1. Authorise the Group Head Neighbourhood Services to proceed with the proposals made in this report and to implement the Spelthorne Borough Council Off-Street Parking Places (Amendment) Order 2024,
2. Authorise the Group Head Corporate Governance to publish all notices required to implement the Spelthorne Borough Council Off-Street Parking Places (Amendment) Order 2024; and
3. Authorise the Group Head Neighbourhood Services in consultation with the Group Head Corporate Governance, the Chair of the Corporate Policy & Resources Committee and a nominated member of the Corporate Policy & Resources Committee to consider and address any objections and to amend the proposals if necessary, following the public consultation.

8/24 Pay Award 2024/25 and Pay Award 2025/26

Council **resolved** to approve a two year pay aware for 2024/25 and 2025/26 as follows:

Pay Award 2024/25

- 1) A consolidated award of 2.8% on all spinal points and personal salaries (across the board increase); and
- 2) An additional 2 days special paid leave (pro rata for part time staff) to cover the Christmas closure period 2024. This was in addition to the 1 day special paid leave already in place for 2024. Front-line operational staff who were required to work to provide vital services to residents over the Christmas week would be compensated and paid for this time.

Pay Award 2025/26

- 1) A consolidated award of 2.8% on all spinal points and personal salaries (across the board increase); and
- 2) An additional 3 days special paid leave (pro rata for part time staff) to cover the Christmas closure period 2024. This was in addition to the 1 day special paid leave already in place for 2024. Front-line operational staff who were required to work to provide vital services to residents over the Christmas week would be compensated and paid for this time.

With compounding across the two years this equated to an aggregate consolidated increase of 5.7% over the period.

9/24 Pay Policy Statement 2024/25

Council **resolved** to approve the Pay Policy Statement 2024/25.

10/24 Procurement of Bureau Service and Energy (Gas & Electricity) Contract

Council **resolved** to:

1. Approve the Council entering into a contract for the provision of a Bureau Service and Supply of Energy (Gas and Electricity) with Kent County Council (KCC) LASER for a period from October 2024 to September 2028; and
2. Authorise the Group Head of Assets to agree terms in respect of any necessary contract arrangements with KCC LASER and authorise the Group Head of Corporate Governance to enter a contract with the KCC LASER.

11/24 Capital Strategy 2024 to 2025

Council **resolved** to approve:

1. The Capital Strategy as set out in the report,

2. That all development and investment projects, along with all significant projects follow the previously approved business case governance process as set out in Section 11 of the report,
3. That no financing sources, unless stipulated in regulations or necessary agreements are ringfenced,
4. The Council plans to continue its use of capital receipts to fund the costs of eligible proposals (subject to full business case for each project),
5. The financing of the Capital Programme and revenue implications as set out in Section 14 of this report; and
6. The financing of the Capital Programme being delegated to the Corporate Policy & Resources Committee to provide sufficient flexibility to allow for the most effective use of the Council resources.

12/24 Estimated 2024/25 to 2027/28 Capital Programme

Council **resolved** to approve the proposed Capital Programme for 2024/25 to 2027/28.

13/24 Treasury Management Strategy Statement 2024/25

Council **resolved** to:

1. Approve the Treasury Management Strategy for 2024/25; and
2. Note that by approving the report that they would be agreeing to the Treasury Management Practices (TMP) MRP Statement, Operational Boundary and Authorised Limits.

14/24 Detailed Budget for 2024/25

Councillor Williams joined the meeting at 19.12 and left at 19.24.

As required by the Local Authorities (Standing Orders) (England) Regulations 2001 (as amended), Council held a recorded vote on the Revenue Budget 2023/24.

For (22):	E. Baldock, M. Arnold, C. Bateson, S. Beatty, M. Beecher, H. Boparai, M. Buck, T. Burrell, J. Button, J. Caplin, J. Doran, S. Doran, S. Dunn, A. Gale, R. Geach, D. Geraci, K. Grant, S. Gyawali, L. Nichols, K. Rutherford, J. Sexton, J. Turner
Against (1):	D. Saliagopoulos
Abstain (7):	L. Brennan, D. Clarke, M. Lee, A. Mathur, O. Rybinski, B. Weerasinghe, P. Woodward

Council **resolved** to approve the following:

1. To approve a 2.9% increase on the Spelthorne Borough Council element of the Council Tax for 2024/25. Moreover:
 - a. The Revenue estimates as set out in Appendix 1.
 - b. £3,115k as set out in the report to be appropriated from General Reserves in support of Spelthorne’s local Council Tax for 2024/25.
 - c. That the Council Tax Base for the year 2024/25 is 39,241 Band D equivalent dwellings calculated in accordance with Regulation 3 of the Local Authorities (Calculation of Council tax base) Regulations 1992, as amended, made under Section 35(5) of the Local Government Finance Act 1992.
2. Continuing the Council’s Local Council Tax Support Scheme with the current rules and regulations,
3. Continuing the complete disregards of war pension/armed forces pension income from benefit calculations,
4. To note the Chief Finance Officer’s commentary in Section 4 of the report on the robustness of budget estimates and levels of reserves under Sections 25 and 26 of the Local Government Act 2003,
5. The Council Tax Base for the whole Council area for 2024/25 (Item T in the formula in Section 31b(3) of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, as amended (the “act”)) should be 39,241 Band D equivalent dwellings and calculate that the Council Tax requirement for the Council’s own purpose for 2024/25 is £222.41 Per Band D equivalent dwelling.

That the following sums be now calculated by the Council for the year 2024/25 in accordance with Section 31 to 36 of the Local Government Act 1992:

A	107,727,200	Being the aggregate of the amount which the Council estimates for the items set out in Section 31A(2) of the Act considering all precepts issued to it by Parish Councils
B	-98,999,600	Being the aggregate of the amount which the Council estimates for the

		items set out in Section 31A(3) of the Act
C	8,727,600	Being the amount by which the aggregate at (A) above exceeds the aggregate at (B) above, calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 31A(4) of the Act, as its Council Tax requirement for the year
D	222.41	Being the amount at (C) above divided by the amount at 5c (above), calculated by the Council in accordance with Section 31B(1) of the Act, as the basic amount of its Council Tax for the year (including Parish precepts)
E	0	Being the aggregate amount of all special items (Parish precepts) referred to in Section 34(1) of the Act
F	222.41	Being the amount at (D) above, less the result given by dividing the amount at (E) above by the amount at 5c (above), calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 34(2) of the Act, as the basic amount of its Council Tax for the year for dwellings on those parts of its area to which no Parish precept relates

That the following amounts be calculated for the year 2024/25 in accordance with Sections 31 to 36 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 as amended by the Localism Act 2011.

A £	B £	C £	D £	E £	F £	G £	H £
148.27	172.99	197.70	222.41	271.83	321.26	370.68	444.82

15/24 Corporate Plan 2024-2028

Council **resolved** to:

1. Adopt the proposed Corporate Plan 2024/28 and associated Action Plan (as appended to the report) which specified the priorities, key themes and values for the Council for the next five years and the actions the Council intended to take to deliver its objectives; and
2. Authorise the Deputy Chief Executive and Head of Communications and Customer Experience, in consultation with the Chair of the Corporate Policy & Resources Committee, to make some minor amendments to the Corporate Plan document.

16/24 Future Resourcing of the Internal Audit Service

The Council **resolved** to:

1. Agree to discharge its Internal Audit function to Hampshire County Council under Section 101 of the Local Government Act 1972 to enable Southern Internal Audit Partnership (SIAP) to provide the Internal Audit Service for the Council from or after 01 April 2024,
2. Delegate to the Council's Section 151 and Monitoring Officers to enter into the Joint Working Agreement by way of a deed of accession with Southern Internal Audit Partnership for a period of 5 years and complete all necessary documentation including any relating to TUPE arrangements,
3. Agree that the Council's Section 151 Officer or nominated Officer represents the Council's interests by becoming a voting member of SIAP's Key Stakeholder Board; and
4. Agree that the Council's Human Resources Team deals with any consequential staffing implications including any TUPE transfer.

17/24 Urgent Item - Annual Community Grants Report

The Council **resolved** to:

1. Approve the recommendations of the Grants Panel regarding the proposed recipients of the 2024/25 Community Grants,

2. Note the other support that Spelthorne Borough Council provides to the voluntary/charity sector,
3. Approve that any underspend from the Council's Grants and Better Neighbourhood Grants budget will be carried forward to the next financial year; and
4. Note the potential changes to the Discretionary Rate Relief Policy as outlined in 4.6 of the report.

18/24 Reports from the Committee Chairs

Council **resolved** to agree the reports from the Committee Chairs.

19/24 General questions

The Mayor reported that in accordance with Standing Order 15, no questions had been received from Councillors.

20/24 Motions

In accordance with Standing Order 16 the Council received one written Notice of Motion. This was carried over from December's Council meeting.

Councillor Nichols moved and Councillor Boparai seconded the following motion:

"The Council noted:

- The efforts of Surrey's Police Officers and PCSOs in keeping local communities safe
- The increased levels of burglary and vehicle crimes and lack of visibility of police on the streets of Spelthorne
- That the office costs of the Police and Crime Commissioner have increased by 50% while the number of PCSOs has been halved

The Council believes that the PCC isn't a necessary role and requires the Leader write to the Home Secretary asking that the role be abolished with the financial savings reinvested into frontline policing and review the role of the Police and Crime Panels".

Councillor Lee requested a recorded vote and the results were as follows:

For (21):	E. Baldock, M. Arnold, C. Bateson, S. Beatty, M. Beecher, H. Boparai, M. Buck, T. Burrell, J. Button, J. Caplin, J. Doran, S. Doran, S. Dunn, R. Geach, D. Geraci, K. Grant, S. Gyawali, L. Nichols, K Rutherford, J. Sexton, J. Turner
Against (7):	L. Brennan, D. Clarke, M. Lee, A. Mathur, O. Rybinski, B. Weerasinghe, P. Woodward
Abstain (2):	D. Saliagopoulos, A. Gale

The motion was carried.

Council **resolved** that The Leader write to the Home Secretary asking that the role of Police and Crime Commissioner be abolished with the financial savings reinvested into frontline policing and review the role of the Police and Crime Panels.

Meeting ended 21:21