

**Minutes of the Business, Infrastructure and Growth Committee
16 January 2025**

Present:

Councillor H.R.D. Williams (Chair)
Councillor J.R. Boughtflower (Vice-Chair)

Councillors:

C. Bateson	T. Burrell	A. Mathur
M. Beecher	D.C. Clarke	S.C. Mooney

Substitutions: Councillors J. Button (In place of S.N. Beatty)
J.P. Caplin (In place of S. Gyawali)

Apologies: Councillors S.N. Beatty, M. Gibson and N. Islam

1/25 Apologies and Substitutes

Apologies were received from Councillor Beatty, Councillor Gibson, Councillor Gyawali and Councillor Islam. Councillor Button attended as substitute for Councillor Beatty, Councillor Caplin substituted for Councillor Gyawali.

2/25 Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 05 December 2024 were confirmed as a correct record.

3/25 Disclosures of interest

Councillors Clarke, Mooney and Williams declared that they were members of the Spelthorne Business Forum.

4/25 Questions from members of the Public

There were none.

5/25 Forward Plan

The Committee **resolved** to note the Forward Plan.

6/25 HSR/SLR Working Group Updates

The Committee received a verbal update from the Chair of the HSR/SLR Working Group.

Councillor Bateson advised that he would be organising a visit for members of the Working Group, to Terminal 5 at Heathrow Airport to examine the existing infrastructure there. Members of the Working Group were asked to provide Councillor Bateson with their availability for the last week of January and the first two weeks of February. A visit would also be scheduled to view the monorail at Luton Airport.

An In-depth study on the benefits of the proposed Elizabeth line extension had been circulated to all members of the group.

It was agreed that Councillor Mooney would be added as a member of the Working Group.

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

7/25 Waterfront Development Update

The Committee received a verbal update from the Principal Asset Manager.

The Committee were advised that lawyers had been instructed in early December, with a view to the exchange happening by the end of January.

The Committee asked what would happen to the lease if the proposals for a unitary went ahead, and were advised that all obligations would transfer to the new body.

The Committee queried what the next steps would be and were informed that Arora would have two years in which to obtain planning permission.

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

8/25 Business, Infrastructure and Growth Draft Detailed Budget

The Committee considered a report on the draft budget for this Committee.

The Joint Financial Service Manager introduced the report and advised members that a simplified version of the budget had been provided as a supplementary document.

The Committee queried the increase in salaries listed under the Planned Maintenance Programme and were advised that a written explanation would be provided to members.

The Committee requested clarification as to why some cost centres were valued at zero in 24/25 but not for 25/26. The Economic Development Manager advised that this was due to the zero-based budget approach and that for 24/25 some items had been grouped together under one cost code whereas for 25/26 those items had individual cost codes.

The Committee queried the Consultants fees listed under the Spelthorne Youth Hub and were advised this reflected the management arrangement with the Ashford Youth Centre who provide a Manager, an Operations Lead and Skills Coaches and that these staff provide experience and contacts. The Chair echoed the Committees concern over the use of consultants and suggested a review of all consultants should be considered.

The Committee requested information on how the Business Incubator was performing and were advised that it had exceeded the targets set by the Department for Work and Pensions and that quarterly progress reports would be presented to the Committee, with the first due in June.

The Committee requested information on the Staffing Budget for Business, Infrastructure and Growth as well as for the Council as a whole. The Committee were advised that a written response would be provided on the first point, while the second point would be address as part of the wider budget reports being presented to Council on 27 February 2025.

The Committee **resolved** to:

1. Agree they had reviewed the draft detailed budget for 2025/26 for Business, Infrastructure & Growth Committee and agreed any amendments
2. Recommend to Corporate Policy and Resources Committee to approve the proposed budget.

9/25 Grant Application by the Spelthorne Business Forum

The Committee considered a report on a grant application made by the Spelthorne Business Forum.

The Economic Development Manager introduced the report and highlighted that the money would fund two members of staff enabling them to provide networking events, maintain an online directory and send out communications.

The Committee queried whether there were other options such as a loan instead of a grant and were advised that the Business Forum is not able to apply for other sources of funding and that the amount was accounted for in the Economic Development Service Plan for 2025/26.

The Committee **resolved** to recommend to Council to approve the grant application made by the Spelthorne Business Forum.

10/25 Exclusion of Public and Press (Exempt Business)

It was proposed by Councillor Boughtflower, seconded by Councillor Bateson and **resolved** to exclude the public and press for the following agenda items, in accordance with paragraph 3 of part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended) because it was likely to disclose information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information) and in all the circumstances of the case, the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information because disclosure to the public would prejudice the financial position of the authority in being able to undertake even-handed negotiations and finalising acceptable contract terms.

11/25 Summit Centre, Sunbury-on-Thames, Site Sale

The meeting was adjourned at 19:56

The meeting reconvened at 20:05

The Committee considered a report on the proposed disposal of the Summit Centre site.

Councillor Clarke requested that it be noted that he did not agree with the recommendation.

The Committee **resolved** to agree to the recommendations as set out in the report.

Meeting ended at 20:40