

**Minutes of the Council
11 December 2025**

Present:

Councillors:

J.T.F. Doran	M. Buck	M.J. Lee
S.A. Dunn	J.R. Boughtflower	G. Neall
M. Arnold	J. Button	L. E. Nichols
M.M. Attewell	J.P. Caplin	K.E. Rutherford
L. Barker	D.C. Clarke	D. Saliagopoulos
C. Bateson	S.M. Doran	J.R. Sexton
S.N. Beatty	R.V. Geach	B. Weerasinghe
M. Beecher	M. Gibson	H.R.D. Williams
M. Bing Dong	K.M. Grant	P.N. Woodward
H.S. Boparai	S. Gyawali	
L.H. Brennan	K. Howkins	

Apologies: Councillors S. Bhadye, T. Burrell, R. Chandler, D.L. Geraci, N. Islam, A. Mathur, S.C. Mooney and J.A. Turner

122/25 Minutes

The minutes of the Council meeting held on 23 October 2025 and the Extraordinary Council meeting held on 17 November 2025 were agreed as a correct record.

123/25 Disclosures of Interest

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

124/25 Announcements from the Mayor

The Mayor advised Council of Civic Events that he had attended since the last meeting of Full Council as follows:

List of Events November:

Annual Community Diwali Celebration 2025 in Stanwell

Spelthorne In Bloom Awards Evening – Notcutts

Staines-upon-Thames Library Hub VIP opening

SØSTRENE GRENE GRAND OPENING - Cutting ribbon and speech supplied

Remembrance Sunday Stanwell

Youth Speaks competitions

Remembrance Day 2025 - VE Day | VJ Day Council Offices

Annual Dinner on Friday 14th November 2025 at Oatlands Park Hotel, Weybridge

Xmas Wreath Making

Philip Southcote School

398 (Staines & Egham) Squadron RAF Air Cadets

Christmas with The Salvation Army - Salvation Army

December Events:

Ashford Christmas light switch on.

Kempton Races Christmas

Veterans Hub

The Patient Cancer Support Group

Shepperton Big Tree Night

Christmas Party celebrations at the Staines Community Centre

Christmas Jumper Day

Shepperton Community Christmas Day Lunch

The Leader made the following announcements:

Following last month's Full Council approval of key elements of our Improvement and Recovery Plan, we have refinanced a significant portion of our debt, reducing its outstanding loan debt by 32% to £715 million. This means the average debt per resident decreases from £10,000 to £7,000 and aligns the value of our assets with the remaining debt. I want to reassure the residents of this borough that we are working diligently to strengthen our finances and residents will be updated on these decisions.

As I am sure you are aware, I have repeatedly asked Central Government for clarity on the asylum accommodation in Spelthorne, but we still have no meaningful answers. Despite multiple letters and follow-ups, we lack the information needed to address residents' concerns. While we remain committed to working together with the Home Office, our community deserves a prompt and full response, and you can be assured I will continue to pursue the government for answers on your questions.

Alongside these wider issues, I and many of my fellow Councillors are repeatedly being contacted by residents worried about the impacts of Houses in Multiple Occupation in their area. While well-managed HMOs have their place, properties that harm communities or fail to protect tenants will not be tolerated. An Article 4 Direction is now in place in key wards to limit new HMO developments, and from March 2026 this will be borough wide. Landlords must maintain high standards or face consequences.

Turning to consultations, the final opportunity to have your say on the Local Plan is now open, focusing on retaining a Green Belt site no longer available for development at the old Ashford fire station. Two other consultations are also open: our annual Crime and Safety Survey, which shapes Safer Stronger Partnership priorities, and feedback on a new children's playground in Memorial Gardens, Staines. Both close on 11 January.

In parallel with this work, we are working with Surrey County Council and the Environment Agency to clarify how all flood risks, including groundwater, are considered in planning. Early next year, we will prepare a Flooding Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) with expert guidance for building in flood-risk areas. A consultation will take place to agree the document once the Local Plan is adopted.

Looking ahead to the changes coming for local government, in October the Government confirmed that Surrey will be replaced with two new unitary authorities and Spelthorne will be part of the new West Surrey authority. Rest assured, this Administration is fully committed to placing the boroughs needs at the heart of this transition.

Lastly, as this is our final meeting before Christmas, Cllr Bateson and I want to warmly thank all Councillors and Officers for their dedication and hard work

in 2025. To all our residents, we send our heartfelt wishes for a peaceful Christmas and a happy, healthy New Year.

126/25 Announcements from the Chief Executive

The Interim Chief Executive made the following announcements:

As we approach the end of the year, I want to take this opportunity to express my sincere gratitude to all staff colleagues, partners, volunteers, and councillors who have worked tirelessly throughout 2025 to support our residents, businesses, and communities across the borough. Your dedication and commitment have made a real difference, and I and my senior management colleagues are immensely proud of the efforts of our teams across the organisation.

Looking ahead, we recognise that the coming year will bring significant challenges. The local government reorganisation process is a major undertaking, and as we move towards becoming part of West Surrey, our shared focus must remain on achieving the best possible outcomes for our residents. This will require collaboration, resilience, and a continued commitment to public service values. After this Christmas, we will have just one more festive season before Spelthorne ceases to be an independent sovereign authority—a milestone that underscores the importance of working together during this transition.

To conclude, on behalf of all staff, I would like to wish our residents, councillors, commissioners, and partners a very happy Christmas and a peaceful New Year. I hope everyone has the chance to recharge and spend quality time with loved ones over the festive break.

Thank you once again for your hard work and dedication”

127/25 Questions from members of the public

The Mayor reported that, under Standing Order 14, no questions had been received from a member of the public.

128/25 Reserves Strategy 2026-27

Council resolved to:

1. Be informed and assured by the draft Reserves Strategy noting that the forward projected figures will change when a Detailed Budget Report is brought to the Corporate Policy and Resources Committee in January 2026,

2. Acknowledge the proposed repurposing of the earmarked Sinking Fund reserves as a revenue budget equalisation reserve; and
3. Recognise the inconsistencies in how the Council's reserves are presented across various reports and the draft accounts and require that a standardised format be agreed with the Financial Working Group before the next budget is submitted.

129/25 Medium-Term Financial Strategy 2026-27

Councillor Howkins requested that a recorded vote be taken for all remaining items on the agenda.

For	Councillors J Doran, Dunn, Arnold, Barker, Bateson, Beatty, Beecher, Boparai, Button, Caplin, S Doran, Geach, Gibson, Grant, Gyawali, Neall, Nichols, Rutherford, Sexton, Williams – 20 votes
Against	Councillors Attewell, Bing Dong, Boughtflower, Brennan, Buck, Clarke, Howkins, Lee, Saliagopoulos, Weerasinghe, Woodward – 11 votes
Abstain	0 votes

Council **resolved** to:

1. Be informed and assured by the Draft Medium Financial Strategy set out in the report and that an updated strategy (reflecting impact of actual debt discount and refinancing rates achieved, and the outcome of the Fair Funding Review), as part of a Detailed Budget Report will come to the Corporate Policy and Resources Committee in January 2026 for consideration and approval; and
2. Approve the proposed Flexible Use of Capital Receipts Strategy.

130/25 Treasury Management Annual Outturn 2024/25

A recorded vote was taken.

For	Councillors J Doran, Dunn, Arnold, Barker, Bateson, Beatty, Beecher, Boparai, Button, Caplin, S Doran, Geach, Gibson, Grant, Gyawali, Neall, Nichols, Rutherford, Sexton, Williams – 20 votes
Against	Councillors Attewell, Bing Dong, Boughtflower, Brennan, Buck, Clarke, Howkins, Lee, Saliagopoulos, Weerasinghe, Woodward – 11 votes
Abstain	0 votes

Council **resolved** to approve the Treasury Management outturn position for 2024/25.

131/25 Treasury Management Half Yearly Report

A recorded vote was taken.

For	Councillors J Doran, Dunn, Arnold, Barker, Bateson, Beatty, Beecher, Boparai, Button, Caplin, S Doran, Geach, Gibson, Gyawalil, Neall, Nichols, Rutherford, Sexton, Williams – 20 votes
Against	Councillors Attwell, Boughtflower, Buck, Clarke, Howkins, Lee, Saliagopoulos, Weerasinghe, Woodward – 9 votes
Abstain	Councillors Bing Dong and Brennan – 2 votes

Council **resolved** to note the performance of the Treasury Management Team during the first six months of 2025/26.

132/25 Asset Rationalisation to underpin the revised Medium-Term Financial Strategy

A recorded vote was taken.

For	Councillors J Doran, Dunn, Arnold, Barker, Bateson, Beatty, Beecher, Boparai, Button, Caplin, S Doran, Geach, Gibson, Grant, Gyawali, Neall, Nichols, Rutherford, Sexton, Williams – 20 votes
Against	Councillors Attwell, Bing Dong, Buck, Clarke, Howkins, Saliagopoulos, Weerasinghe, Woodward – 8 votes
Abstain	Councillors Boughtflower, Brennan, Lee – 3 votes

Council **resolved** to:

1. Consider and agree the principle of Asset Rationalisation as set out in the report,
2. Approve the commencement of the procurement of a specialist adviser through an appropriate framework.
3. Delegate authority to the s.151 Officer and Group Head of Assets, in consultation with the Leader and Deputy Leader, the Chair of the Commercial Assets Sub-Committee and Chair of the Business Infrastructure and Growth Committee, to appoint the preferred bidder from the above procurement to assist in the implementation of an Asset Rationalisation Strategy; and

4. Delegate authority to the Group Head of Corporate Governance to enter into a contract with the proposed advisers.

Councillor Geach left the chamber at 10pm

133/25 Revised Proportionality Figures for Committees

A recorded vote was taken.

For	Councillors J Doran, Dunn, Arnold, Attewell, Barker, Bateson, Beatty, Beecher, Boparai, Brennan, Buck, Button, Caplin, S Doran, Gibson, Grant, Gyawali, Lee, Neall, Nichols, Rutherford, Sexton, Weerasinghe, Williams, Woodward – 25 votes
Against	0 votes
Abstain	Councillor Bing Dong, Boughtflower, Clarke, Howkins, Saliagopoulos – 5 votes

Council **resolved** to:

1. Approve the revised allocation of seats on Committees; and
2. Approve the revised allocation of Chairs and Vice-Chairs of Committees following a change in the make-up of the political groups.

134/25 Q2 Capital Programme Monitoring 2025-26

A recorded vote was taken.

For	Councillors J Doran, Dunn, Arnold, Barker, Bateson, Beatty, Beecher, Boparai, Button, Caplin, S Doran, Gibson, Grant, Gyawali, Neall, Nichols, Rutherford, Sexton, Williams – 19 votes
Against	0 votes
Abstain	Councillors Attewell, Bing Dong, Boughtflower, Brennan, Buck, Clarke, Howkins, Lee, Saliagopoulos, Weerasinghe, Woodward – 11 votes

Council **resolved** to approve a supplementary capital estimate to the Capital Programme for 2025/26 of up to £1.9m, for acquiring housing units to be part funded by Local Authority Housing Fund Grant funding. This would create a borrowing need of £1.05m and an annual financing requirement of about £70k per annum.

135/25 Voluntary Joint Committee

A recorded vote was taken.

For	Councillors J Doran, Dunn, Arnold, Bateson, Beatty, Beecher, Button, Caplin, S Doran, Gibson, Grant, Neall, Nichols, Rutherford, Sexton, Williams – 16 votes
Against	Councillors Buck and Woodward – 2 votes
Abstain	Councillors Attewell, Barker, Bing Dong, Boughtflower, Brennan, Gyawali, Lee, Saliagopoulos – 8 votes

Councillors Arnold, Attewell, Barker, Boughtflower, Boparai, Howkins, Weerasinghe left the Chamber before the vote was taken to approve all the recommendations in the report.

Council **resolved** to:

1. Note the updates for Local Government Reorganisation in Surrey, particularly the decision and relevant information from the Ministry of Housing Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) in Appendix A of the report,
2. Agree to the establishment of a voluntary West Surrey Joint Committee, effective immediately, that shall be constituted and be established under the provisions of Section 101(5) (arrangements for discharge of functions by local authorities) of the Local Government 1972 Act and pursuant to the requirements of the draft Surrey (Structural Changes) Order 2026,
3. Note the Terms of Reference in Appendix B,
4. Appoint Councillor Sexton as the Spelthorne Borough Council appointed representative on the voluntary West Surrey Joint Committee and Councillor Nichols as their substitute; and
5. Note that upon enactment of the Surrey (Structural Changes) Order 2026 the voluntary West Surrey Joint Committee shall become the joint committee required to be established under the provisions of that legislation and that this will be constituted and established under the provisions of Section 101(5) (arrangements for discharge of functions by local authorities) of the Local Government 1972 Act and pursuant to the requirements of the Surrey (Structural Changes) Order 2026.

136/25 Reports from the Committee Chairs

This item was not considered by Council.

137/25 Motions

In accordance with Standing Order 16, the Council had not received any motions.

138/25 General questions

The Mayor reported that no general questions had been received.

139/25 Exclusion of Public and Press (Exempt Business)

Council **resolved** to move the exclusion of Public and Press for the following item 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 Act (Access to Information) Act 1985 and by the Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) Order 2006.

Councillors Bing Dong, Brennan, Buck, Saliagopoulos and Woodward left the chamber before the next item was discussed.

140/25 Sunbury Leisure Centre

Council **resolved** to agree the recommendations of the Corporate Policy and Resources Committee.