



**Spelthorne
Borough Council**

Annual Council Meeting
Wednesday, 20 May 2026



6 May 2026

Please reply to:

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To the Councillors of Spelthorne Borough Council

I hereby summon you to attend the annual meeting of the Council to be held at The Council's Offices, Knowle Green, Staines-upon-Thames on **Wednesday, 20 May 2026** commencing at **7.00 pm** for the transaction of the following business.

Gordon Mitchell
Interim Chief Executive

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

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

AGENDA

Description	Page nos.
<p>1. Election of the Mayor (a). To elect the Mayor of the Borough for the Municipal Year 2026-2027. (b). The Mayor to make the Declaration of Acceptance of Office.</p>	
<p>2. Apologies for absence To receive any apologies for non-attendance.</p>	
<p>3. Minutes To confirm as a correct record the minutes of the Council meeting held on 30 April 2026.</p>	7 - 12
<p>4. Disclosures of Interest To receive any disclosures of interest from Councillors in accordance with the Council's Code of Conduct for Members.</p>	
<p>5. Election of the Deputy Mayor (a). To elect the Deputy Mayor of the Borough for the Municipal Year 2026-27. (b). The Deputy Mayor to make the Declaration of Acceptance of Office.</p>	
<p>6. Announcements from the Mayor To receive any announcements from the Mayor.</p>	
<p>7. Election of Leader of the Council To elect the Leader of the Council for the Municipal Year 2026-27.</p>	
<p>8. Announcements from the Leader To receive any announcements from the Leader.</p>	
<p>9. Election of Deputy Leader To elect the Deputy Leader of the Council for the Municipal Year 2026-27.</p>	
<p>10. Announcements from the Chief Executive To receive any announcements from the Chief Executive.</p>	
<p>11. Establishment of Committees and Sub-Committee 2026-27 Council is asked to appoint committees and to agree the representation of the different political groups on Committees.</p>	To Follow

a) **Allocation of Seats on Committees and Sub-Committee**

Pursuant to Section 15 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989, Council is asked to agree the representation of the different political groups on committees.

b) **Appointment of Members to Committees and Sub-Committee**

In accordance with the Council's Constitution, to appoint the members to serve on the Committees and Sub-Committee.

c) **Appointment of Chairs and Vice-Chairs to Committees and Sub-Committee**

In accordance with the Council's Constitution, to appoint Chairs and Vice-Chairs to serve on the above mentioned Committees and Sub-Committee.

d) **Appointment of Named Substitutes to Committees and Sub-Committee**

In accordance with the Council's Constitution, to appoint the Substitute Members to serve on the Committees on Sub-Committee.

12. Agreement of Nominations for Commercial Assets Sub-Committee

Members of the Corporate Policy and Resources Committee will be asked to agree proposed members of the Commercial Assets Sub-Committee.

13. Nomination to Outside Bodies

Council is asked to appoint representatives to the following bodies:

1. South West Middlesex Crematorium Board – for 2026-27
(1 representative and 1 deputy)
2. Surrey Police and Crime Panel – for 2026-27
(1 representative)

14. Independent Remuneration Panel Review of Councillors' Allowances

Council is asked to:

1. Note the report and recommendations of the Independent Remuneration Panel (IRP) report dated March 2026;
2. Approve the continuation of Special Responsibility Allowances for the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Audit Committee at 40% and 20% respectively of the Leader's allowance, with no requirement for backdating;
3. Approve the application of indexation to the Basic and Special Responsibility Allowances for 2026/27 in line with the 4% staff salary increase agreed by the Council, applying from 1 April 2026 for one year.

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, 30 April 2026 at 7.00 pm

Present:

Councillors:

S.A. Dunn	L.H. Brennan	K.M. Grant
M. Arnold	T. Burrell	M.J. Lee
L. Barker	J.R. Boughtflower	G. Neall
C. Bateson	J. Button	L. E. Nichols
S.N. Beatty	D.C. Clarke	K.E. Rutherford
M. Beecher	S.M. Doran	J.R. Sexton
M. Bing Dong	R.V. Geach	J.A. Turner
H.S. Boparai	M. Gibson	H.R.D. Williams

Apologies: Apologies were received from Councillors J.T.F. Doran, M.M. Attewell, S. Bhadye, M. Buck, J.P. Caplin, R. Chandler, D.L. Geraci, S. Gyawali, K. Howkins, N. Islam, A. Mathur, S.C. Mooney, D. Saliagopoulos, B. Weerasinghe and P.N. Woodward

Councillor Dunn , The Deputy Mayor, in the Chair

174/26 Minutes

The minutes of the Council meeting held on 26 February 2026, and the extraordinary Council meetings held on 29 January 2026, 19 February 2026, 26 February 2026, and 17 March 2026 were agreed as correct records.

175/26 Disclosures of Interest

Councillors Boparai and Sexton advised they were also Surrey County Councillors.

176/26 Announcements from the Mayor

The Deputy Mayor made the following announcements on behalf of the Mayor:

“In March, I was delighted to host the Spring Soirée at London Irish and attend a number of successful fundraising and community events, including the Music Night at Sunbury Cricket Club and a Rotary event in Shepperton.

My thanks go to all who supported these occasions and helped to raise valuable funds for my chosen charities.

I was also pleased to attend the Spelthorne Youth Awards which was a wonderful evening celebrating the achievements and contributions of our young people.

Other highlights included events at Kempton Park, a delightful afternoon tea at Squires Garden Centre, and the reopening of Thames Court in Shepperton. At the end of the month, I was pleased to support the launch of this year's Spelthorne in Bloom competition which recognises the residents and businesses who are keeping the Borough vibrant and colourful.

This month I attended the Civic Awards, where we recognised the hard work of our local volunteers. Many congratulations to all the recipients. I also had the pleasure of attending a Weybridge Choir performance and an afternoon tea at St Mary's in Thorpe.

It remains a great privilege to represent Spelthorne at these events and to witness the strong community spirit across the Borough."

177/26 Announcements from the Leader

The Leader made the following announcements:

"Seventeen residents were recognised at the Spelthorne Civic Awards Trust ceremony held at the Council offices for their outstanding voluntary service. The awards celebrate individuals who often work quietly behind the scenes, giving their time and energy to support the community, help those in need, and strengthen life across the borough. Congratulations were extended to all recipients for their valuable contribution.

The Spelthorne Business Hub has now relocated from Sunbury to the Council offices at Knowle Green. Funded by the Council, the Hub supports local start-ups and small businesses by providing affordable coworking space, expert advice, networking opportunities, coaching, training, and events designed to help businesses grow and succeed. The move reflects the Council's ongoing commitment to making Spelthorne a great place to start and develop a business.

The Spelthorne Business Awards have returned for their eighth year, continuing to celebrate the talent and achievements of the local business community. The awards highlight a wide range of organisations, from innovative start-ups and sole traders to established employers, creative businesses, and high-growth companies. Entries are open until Friday 19 June.

Meanwhile, Surrey Local Government Reorganisation is progressing, with residents due to vote on 7 May to elect councillors to the new West Surrey Council. These councillors will initially serve as a shadow authority, preparing for the new council to take over all local services in April 2027. Their

responsibilities will include setting budgets and priorities, establishing governance structures, and ensuring a smooth transition, while day-to-day services for residents continue as normal. Further information is available on the Council website and in the Spring Bulletin published in March.”

178/26 Announcements from the Chief Executive

The Interim Chief Executive gave the following announcements:

“I would like to say something about the Council’s role in relation to Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs). I am doing so in light of questions and speculation following the serious incident in Laleham earlier this month.

In general, the Council’s powers in relation to HMOs are limited to the regulation of property, not the selection or placement of occupants.

However, with regard to private sector HMOs, the Council’s regulatory powers primarily sit in two distinct service areas: **Planning** and **Environmental Health**.

Planning controls apply to whether a property may **lawfully be used** as an HMO. Since 13 March 2026, a borough-wide Article 4 Direction has been in force. This removes permitted development rights for change of use to small HMOs and means that planning permission is now required for all new HMOs anywhere in Spelthorne.

In addition, the Council adopted a **Supplementary Planning Document (SPD)** on 17 March which provides detailed guidance on how planning applications for HMOs will be assessed, including policies to manage and prevent over-concentration of HMOs within local areas, taking account of cumulative impacts on communities.

The **Residential team** in **Environmental Health** regulates HMOs through the statutory licensing regime and enforcement of property condition and management standards.

Licensing focuses exclusively on:

- physical standards of accommodation,
- fire safety,
- amenities,
- overcrowding limits, and
- management arrangements.

It does not extend to approving or assessing individual occupiers.

Asylum accommodation and the Home Office

Questions have also been raised regarding the specific HMO used to accommodate asylum seekers where the individual involved in the recent incident was living.

It is important to be clear that:

- Decisions to use properties for asylum accommodation are taken by the **Home Office**, not the Council.
- The Home Office operates through contracted Property Agents and Accommodation Providers, who identify and manage properties.
- The placement of asylum seekers, and the assessment of any risk or vulnerability of individuals, is entirely a Home Office function.

Where a property is proposed for use as asylum any accommodation in an HMO, the Council's involvement alongside partners is limited and defined:

- The Home Office's Property Agent notifies the Council's Housing Options team about proposed properties, specifically to confirm basic suitability and compliance with housing standards.
- These notifications do not constitute Council approval of the occupants or control over who is placed in the accommodation.

Correction of earlier statement

Members are entitled to accurate information, and I want to address an error that was made previously.

In response to a question about knowledge of the Home Office plans last year a response was prepared.

Initial internal consultation suggested that the Council had not been contacted when the Home Office planned to acquire or use the property in question last year. A statement to that effect was made in good faith on Friday 17 April. Subsequent and more detailed checks – including with partner organisations – demonstrated that this information was incorrect, and a correcting statement was issued on Friday 24 April. That earlier statement should not have been made.

Councillors necessarily rely on officers for accurate advice. In this context, this was a significant error. I have therefore commissioned an external review to understand how this occurred and what lessons must be learned to prevent a recurrence. The findings will be considered and reported appropriately.

Information for residents and members

Following the Council's adoption of new HMO powers earlier this year, an information page was published on the Council's website explaining:

- what constitutes an HMO,
- the respective roles of Planning and Environmental Health, and
- the limits of the Council's powers.

In light of recent events and public concern, this guide has now been updated into a clear question-and-answer format, including an explanation of the Home Office process for asylum accommodation and the Council's statutory role. This is expected to be published on the website tomorrow."

The Deputy Chief Executive made the following statement:

“In my capacity as the Deputy Returning Officer for the Spelthorne ward to the West Surrey Election process, I would like to say a few words, but firstly to clarify in terms of responsibility.

Andrew Pritchard, the Runnymede Chief Executive is the Returning Officer for the West Surrey Elections with overall responsibility for the elections. On behalf of the team, and on behalf of the Returning Officer, I personally apologise for the fact that we had an issue last week with postal votes for the Stanwell, Stanwell Moor and North Ashford Ward. I would like to briefly set out the steps that Spelthorne and Runnymede team have agreed.

To clarify what the issue was, the beginning of the week commencing 20th April, the Spelthorne Elections team identified that the ballot papers in the 937 postal packs which were issued for this ward were instructing voters to mark their preference for no more than once candidate rather than that should have been stated for two candidates.

The Spelthorne and Runnymede team have agreed the following actions:

1. To cancel all the original postal votes for the ward concerned and re-issue ballot papers on different coloured paper to clearly differentiate the votes.
2. To ensure that when the revised ballot papers are returned in the postal vote packs, that the window of the envelope it clearly states that they are re-issued papers. This enables at the postal vote opening process for the team to different and only open the reissued papers.
3. That all returned original papers will be securely retained and quarantined and in case required post the election result.

Candidates and agents were made aware of the issue. We issued communications across our full range of channels, including our website, social media channels, engaged with two resident associations within the ward, and with other local organisations such as a Stanwell Events in order to maximise awareness amongst voters that we were reissuing the ballot papers. In the ballot paper revised packs, we have inserted an information sheet explaining to the voter that they need to vote on the new papers and to either destroy securely the original papers on the white paper or return the papers to the council. We immediately engaged the printers of the ballot papers to get them to set up as a priority a new set of Stanwell papers. This resulted in the new batch being printed and collected for delivery by first class on Monday the 27th April. We have had confirmation that households have received the new postal votes packs on Tuesday 28th this week, and we have started to receive back new postal vote packs from voters in the ward.

A communications update was issued on the day that the revised ballot papers were printed, highlighting that the ballot papers were due to be delivered the following day, and we will continue to issue further communications to raise awareness.

At the count, we will explain to observers why the Stanwell, Stanwell Moor and North Ashford ballot papers are in a different colour to those of the other wards.

Any formal concerns about this issue can be raised with the Returning Officer. I would also like to remind people that it is not necessary to take your polling card to the polling station when you are voting as the staff at the station will establish your details. People do not need to worry if they have mislaid their polling cards.”

179/26 Questions from members of the public

There were no questions from the members of the public.

180/26 Improvement and Recovery Plan Progress Update

Council considered the Improvement and Recovery Plan Progress report for onward submission to the Commissioners.

Council **resolved** to approve the Improvement and Recovery Plan Progress Report for onward submission to the Commissioners.

181/26 Amendments to the Financial Regulations

Council considered adoption of proposed amendments to the Financial Regulations in the Council’s Constitution.

Council **resolved** to:

1. Approve the proposed amendments to the Financial Regulations (Part 4d of the Constitution) as detailed in Appendix A; and
2. Adopt the revised Financial Regulations and for the Constitution to be amended accordingly.

182/26 Reports from the Committee Chairs

The Chairs of the Committees presented reports which outlined the matters their Committees had considered since the last Council meeting.

Council **resolved** to note the Chair’s reports.

183/26 Motions

There were no motions considered at this meeting.

184/26 General questions

There were no general questions submitted for this meeting.



Committee Report Checklist

Please submit the completed checklists with your report. If final draft report does not include all the information/sign offs required, your item will be delayed until the next meeting cycle.

Stage 1

Report checklist – responsibility of report owner

ITEM	Yes / No	Date
Councillor engagement / input from Chair prior to briefing	Yes	12/05/2026
Relevant Group Head review	Yes	29/4/2026
MAT+ review (to have been circulated at least 5 working days before Stage 2)	Yes	29/4/26
This item is on the Forward Plan for the relevant committee	Yes	13/4/26
	Reviewed by	
Finance comments (circulate to Finance)	AS	30/4/26
Risk comments (circulate to Lee O’Neil)		
Legal comments (circulate to Legal team)	LH	29/04/26
HR comments (if applicable)	n/a	n/a

For reports with material financial or legal implications the author should engage with the respective teams at the outset and receive input to their reports prior to asking for MO or s151 comments.

Do not forward to stage 2 unless all the above have been completed.

Stage 2

Report checklist – responsibility of report owner

ITEM	Completed by	Date rec’d
Monitoring Officer commentary – at least 5 working days before MAT	L Heron	29/04/26
S151 Officer commentary – at least 5 working days before MAT	T.Collier	30/4/26
Commissioner engagement	J. Kingston	11/05/2026
		No issues
Confirm final report cleared by MAT		12/05/2026

Council

20 May 2026

Title	Independent Remuneration Panel Review of Councillors' Allowances
Purpose of the report	To make a decision
Report Author	Christeen Abee, Senior Democratic Services Officer
Ward(s) Affected	All Wards
Exempt	No
Exemption Reason	N/A
Corporate Priority	This item is not in the current list of Corporate Priorities but still requires a Council decision.
Recommendations	<p>Council is asked to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Note the report and recommendations of the Independent Remuneration Panel (IRP) report dated March 2026 (Appendix A); 2. Approve the continuation of Special Responsibility Allowances for the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Audit Committee at 40% and 20% respectively of the Leader's Allowance, with no requirement for backdating; 3. Approve the application of indexation to the Basic and Special Responsibility Allowances for 2026/27 in line with the 4% staff salary increase agreed by the Council, applying from 1 April 2026 for one year as set out in Appendix B.
Reason for Recommendation	The Council is required to make a scheme of allowances and the Independent Remuneration Panel is appointed by the Council to advise on the type of its allowances and the amounts to be paid.

1. Executive summary of the report

What is the situation	Why we want to do something
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Independent Remuneration Panel has reviewed specific elements of the Members' Allowances Scheme. • A summary of the Panel's recommendations can be found in Appendix A. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Council is required to make a scheme of allowances and cannot make any changes to its Scheme of Members' Allowances without first considering the Independent Remuneration Panel's advice on issues involved.

This is what we want to do about it	These are the next steps
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> It is a matter for the Council to decide the level of members' allowances under the Spelthorne Members' Allowances Scheme, having given proper consideration to the Panel's report. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Subject to Council approval, the recommendations of the Panel in regard to the level of allowances for 2026/27 will be effective immediately. Details of the Scheme will be published on the Council's website and included in the Constitution.

2. Key issues

- 2.1 Elected Members are not salaried employees of local authorities but are entitled to receive allowances. These allowances are not intended to serve as a salary or an inducement to seek election, but to recognise the scale of the responsibilities of councillors and the extent of their time and commitment to their local communities. This would cover time in meetings, briefings and calls, and other council work.
- 2.2 The Council's Scheme of Members Allowances provides for both a Basic Allowance payable to all elected Members and Special Responsibility Allowances (SRAs) which are additionally payable to Members who undertake a variety of leadership roles such as Committee Chairs with additional responsibilities. It also establishes the level of allowances for Independent Members of committees. The last full review of councillors' allowances was undertaken by the Council in February 2024.
- 2.3 The Panel's remit for this review included considering whether adjustments should be applied to allowances for 2025/26 and 2026/27 and the method of indexation, and reviewing the Special Responsibility Allowance payable to the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Audit Committee.
- 2.4 The Panel held a detailed meeting and produced a report, as required, attached at **Appendix A**. The report details the membership of the IRP, the range of information and data which they considered and how recommendations had been reached.
- 2.5 The Panel has made clear recommendations, which are advisory only. The responsibility for determining the final scheme remains with Council. Any alternative proposals would need to be considered in light of the legislation surrounding allowances and whether the budget is available to accommodate changes.

Indexation

- 2.6 Included within the Panel's remit was consideration of indexation to be applied to allowances since this was last considered for the 2023/24 financial year. Although it is within the powers of the IRP to recommend indexing to cover a period of four years they chose not to do this at their previous review.
- 2.7 Due to staffing capacity with Democratic Services and Panel members' availability this particular issue was not considered and recommended in time to be implemented for the 2025/26 financial year that the adjustment would have been proposed for.

- 2.8 Although the Panel agreed with the principle of indexing in line with staff pay rises in 2025/26 this recommendation cannot be taken forward as it contradicts The Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003 10 (6) which states

“Where an amendment is to be made which affects an allowance payable for the year in which the amendment is made, the scheme may provide for the entitlement to such allowance as amended to apply with effect from the beginning of the year in which the amendment is made.”

- 2.9 Guidance is clear that changes cannot be backdated beyond the beginning of the financial year.
- 2.10 The Panel's recommendation, at 3.3 of the attached report, relating to the proposal to apply increases in line with staff salary increases for the 2026/27 financial year can be implemented. Should the proposed 4% increase be accepted this would increase basic allowances to £7123, an annual increase of £274 per Councillor. This would be applied from 1 April 2026 and any back payments would be resolved as soon as possible.

SRAs for Audit Committee

- 2.11 The Panel considered the current Members' Allowances Scheme and the responsibilities and workload associated with the Audit Committee roles considering the increase from an average of three meetings per year to six or more per year. Comparative information from neighbouring district and borough councils, including other Surrey authorities, were considered. The panel concluded that no changes were required based on the increased frequency of meetings alone.

3. Options appraisal and proposal

- 3.1 The Council has to have regard to the Independent Remuneration Panel's report when making a new Allowance Scheme but does not have to agree with all or any of the elements of the report. As a result, the Council has the options to:
- 3.2 Option 1: Adopt recommendations 1 and 3 as set out in the report (this is the preferred option). Adopting recommendations 1 and 3 complies with Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003. Approving these recommendations demonstrates transparency and adherence to statutory guidance, relies on independent advice, and supports consistency and comparability with other councils.
- 3.3 Option 2: Not to adopt the IRP recommendations, resulting in councillor allowances remaining at their current level. Although this would deliver budget savings of £14,174, it is acknowledged that, given the ongoing cost of living pressures, this option could negatively affect some councillors' wellbeing.
- 3.4 Option 3: Adopting the recommendations of the IRP in full has not been considered as adjusting and backdating the allowances into a previous financial year is in breach of the regulations.

4. Risk implications

- 4.1 Adopting the recommendations in full is not possible under the 2003 Regulations. Failure to properly consider or give due weight to the Panel's recommendations could expose the Council to legal challenge under the 2003 Regulations. Accepting the recommendations mitigates legal, procedural and reputational risk.

5. Financial implications

- 5.1 The current total cost of the scheme is £354,348 per annum.
- 5.2 By adopting the recommended option, this would increase to £368,522 which is an increase of £14,174. This has been budgeted for.

6. Legal comments

- 6.1 In accordance with the Local Authorities (Members' Allowances)(England) Regulations 2003 the Council is required to establish an Independent Remuneration Panel to review and make recommendations on its Members' Allowances Scheme.
- 6.2 The Council is required to give regard to the Panel's recommendations before making any changes to the Scheme.
- 6.3 Approval, amendment, and other changes to the Members' Allowances Scheme is a function reserved to Council (Article 4 para 4.2 of the Constitution).

Corporate implications

7. Commissioners' comments

- 7.1 No issues.

8. S151 Officer comments

- 8.1 The S151 Officer confirms that all financial implications have been taken into account and that the recommendations are fully funded from within the 2026-27 budget.

9. Monitoring Officer comments

- 9.1 The Monitoring Officer confirms that the relevant legal implications have been taken into account.

10. Procurement comments

- 10.1 There are none.

11. Equality and Diversity

- 11.1 The Members' Allowances Scheme applies equally to all Councillors and supports the ability of individuals from a wide range of backgrounds to undertake elected office.

12. Sustainability/Climate Change Implications

- 12.1 There are no impacts on sustainability or climate change arising from the recommendations in the Panel's report.

13. Other considerations

- 13.1 Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003 requires that the amended Members' Allowance Scheme is publicised.

14. Timetable for implementation

- 14.1 Subject to Council approval, the changes to the levels of basic and special responsibility allowances will take effect immediately.
- 14.2 In accordance with the Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003, the Scheme will be made available on the website and a notice published in a local newspaper giving details of the Scheme and the amounts payable in respect of each allowance mentioned in the Scheme.
- 14.3 The agreed Scheme will also be updated in the Council's Constitution (Part 6).

15. Contact

- 15.1 Committee Services (committee.services@spelthorne.gov.uk)

Please submit any material questions to the Committee Chair and Officer Contact by two days in advance of the meeting.

Background papers: [The Local Authorities \(Members' Allowances\) \(England\) Regulations 2003](#)

Appendices:

Appendix A – Report of the Independent Remuneration Panel (March 2026)

Appendix B – Proposed Schedule of Allowances

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**The report of the Independent Remuneration Panel  
appointed to review the allowances paid to Councillors  
of Spelthorne Borough Council**

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March 2026

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1. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

- 1.1 The Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003 ("the 2003 Regulations"), as amended, require all local authorities to appoint an independent remuneration panel (IRP) to advise on the terms and conditions of their scheme of councillors' allowances.
- 1.2 Spelthorne Borough Council formally appointed the following persons to undertake this process and make recommendations on its future scheme.

Sir Ivan Lawrence- Local Resident and Former Member of Parliament (Chair)
Alison Osmond - Local Resident and Business Person
Colin Squires- Local Resident and Business Owner.
Mark Palmer – Director: Development and Governance, South East Employers (Panel Adviser).

- 1.3 Our terms of reference were in accordance with the requirements of the 2003 Regulations, together with "Guidance on Consolidated Regulations for Local Authority Allowances" issued jointly by the former Office of the Deputy Prime Minister and the Inland Revenue (July 2003). Those requirements are to make recommendations to the Council as to:

- *Whether an adjustment to the level of allowances provided in 2025/26 should be applied and, if so, which index should apply and when should this be backdated to;*
- *Whether an adjustment to the level of allowances provided in 2026/27 should be determined according to an index and, if so, which index and how long that index should apply, subject to a maximum of four years before its application is reviewed; and*
- *The level of Special Responsibility Allowance (SRA) for the roles of Chair and Vice-Chair for the Audit Committee and should this be altered, when should this be backdated to.*

2. CURRENT SCHEME

- 2.1 The last full review of councillors' allowances was undertaken by Spelthorne Borough Council in February 2024. The scheme of allowances was brought into effect in May 2024.
- 2.2 As part of the last review the Panel recommended that a decision on the indexation of the allowances should be taken on an annual basis. The Panel did not meet in 2025 to determine the indexation rate for 2025/26. The Panel was also asked to consider the indexation rate for 2026/27.
- 2.3 Finally, the Panel was also asked to consider the Special Responsibility Allowance for the roles of Chair and Vice-Chair for the Audit Committee and should this be altered, when should this be backdated to.

3. CONSIDERATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 To determine whether a SRA should be payable to the Chair and Vice Chair of the Audit Committee and the level of that allowance. The Panel reviewed the terms of reference for the committee and considered the frequency of meetings.

- 3.2 Following the consideration by the Panel of the role of the Audit Committee and the frequency of meetings the Panel recommends that the Chair should continue to receive an allowance of 40% of the Leader's Allowance and the Vice Chair 20% of the Leader's Allowance.

WE RECOMMEND: that the Chair and Vice Chair of the Audit Committee should continue to receive an allowance of 40% (Chair) and 20% (Vice Chair) of the Leader's Allowance. Therefore, no backdating in accordance with the 2003 Regulations is required.

- 3.3 The Panel considered the rate of indexation for the Basic and Special Responsibility Allowances for 2025/26 and recommended that for 2025/26 the indexation rate should be at the rate of staff salary increases for 2025/26 (2.8%). In accordance with the 2003 Regulations the Panel recommends that this increase should be back dated to 1st April 2025.

WE RECOMMEND: that the Indexation for 2025/26 should continue to be in line with the staff salary increases, 2.8%. WE FURTHER RECOMMEND: that in accordance with the 2003 Member's Allowances Regulations the increase should be backdated to 1st April 2025.

- 3.4 The Panel considered the rate of indexation for the Basic and Special Responsibility Allowances for 2026/27 and recommended that for 2026/27 the indexation rate should be at the percentage rate of staff salary increases as agreed by the Council. The indexation rate should apply from 1st April 2026 for a year.

WE RECOMMEND: that the indexation for 2026/27 should continue to be in line with the percentage staff salary increases. The indexation rate should apply from 1st April 2026 for a year.

**Mark Palmer (Independent Remuneration Panel, Adviser to the Panel)
March 2026**

Appendix B

The Members' Allowances Scheme operating from 1 April 2026 provides the following:

1. **A Basic Allowance** paid at a flat rate to all members on a monthly basis.
2. **Special Responsibility Allowances** paid to certain roles, agreed by the Council, to recognise significant additional responsibilities. These are also paid on a monthly basis.

Type of Allowance	Current Allowance (£)	Recommended Allowance for 2026/2027 (£)	Number
Basic Allowance payable to all Members	6849	7123	39

Special Responsibility	Current Allowance (£)	Recommended Allowance for 2026/2027 (£)	Number
Leader of the Council and Chair of Corporate Policy & Resources Committee	11,530	11991	1
Deputy Leader and Vice-Chair Corporate Polic & Resources Committee	5,765	5997	1
Service Committee Chairs: Environment & Sustainability Community Wellbeing & Housing Business, Infrastructure & Growth	8,071	8934	3
Planning Committee Chair	8,071	8934	1
Planning Committee Vice-Chair	4,036	4197	1
Licensing Committee Chair	4,612	4796	1
Licensing Committee Vice-Chair	2,306	2398	1
Audit Committee Chair	4,612	4796	1
Audit Committee Vice-Chair	2,306	2398	1
Service Committee Vice-Chairs	4,036	4197	3
Members of Commercial Assets Sub-Committee	2,000	2080	6
Co-optees' Allowances (Chair of Standards Committee)	1,500	1560	1
Co-optees' Allowances (Vice Chair of Standards Committee)	750	780	1

Independent Persons on Audit	750	780	2
Total cost of the scheme	£354,348	£368,522	24 cllrs in receipt of SRAs