



Please reply to:

Contact: Karen Wyeth
Service: Committee Services
Direct Line: 01784 446341
E-mail: k.wyeth@spelthorne.gov.uk
Date: 03 September 2025

Notice of meeting

Business, Infrastructure and Growth Committee

Date: Thursday, 11 September 2025

Time: 7.00 pm

Place:

To the members of the Business, Infrastructure and Growth Committee

Councillors:

H.R.D. Williams (Chair)	M. Beecher	M. Gibson
J.R. Boughtflower (Vice-Chair)	S. Bhadye	S. Gyawali
C. Bateson	D.C. Clarke	N. Islam
S.N. Beatty	R.V. Geach	

Substitute Members: Councillors J. Button, J.P. Caplin, D.L. Geraci and L. E. Nichols

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

www.spelthorne.gov.uk customer.services@spelthorne.gov.uk Telephone 01784 451499

Agenda

Page nos.

1. **Apologies and Substitutes**

To receive any apologies for non-attendance and details of Member substitutions.

2. **Minutes**

5 - 6

To confirm as a correct record the minutes of the meeting held on 02 July 2025.

3. **Disclosures of interest**

To receive any disclosures of interest from members in accordance with the Members' Code of Conduct.

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

The Chair, or his 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. **Forward Plan**

7 - 10

To note the Forward Plan for future business.

6. **Spelthorne Business Hub**

11 - 42

Committee is asked to:

1. Agree to the closure of the Spelthorne Business Hub at the Summit Centre, Sunbury by 31 March 2026,
2. Relocate the Business Hub to the Council Offices, Knowle Green, Staines-upon-Thames; and
3. Approve the continuation of the Council's Business Support Service, delivered independently of the Hub premises.

7. **Ashford BID Report**

43 - 104

The Committee is asked to:

1. Agree to progress the development of a Business Improvement District (BID) for Ashford Town Centre proposal to the next stage; and

2. Note the Feasibility Study undertaken on a potential Business Improvement District (BID) in Ashford by consultants Heartflood (Appendix A)

8. HSR/SLR Working Group Recommendation

105 - 186

Committee is asked to:

1. Consider the findings of the all-party working group (The Working Group) set up by the Business Infrastructure and Growth Committee contained in this report; and
2. Recommend to Full Council that this Council supports the Heathrow Southern Rail (HSR) link proposal conditional upon –
 - a) Trains stopping at Staines,
 - b) Evidence that the proposal will not harm Staines Moor nor increase the groundwater flood risk in the area; and
 - c) Reviewing and agreeing detailed terms of the HSR link proposal

9. 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.

10. Ashford Victory Place

Report to follow

11. Thameside House

This page is intentionally left blank

**Minutes of the Business, Infrastructure and Growth Committee
2 July 2025**

Present:

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

Councillors:

C. Bateson	M. Beecher	M. Gibson
S.N. Beatty	S. Bhadye	S. Gyawali

Substitutions: Councillors M. Buck (In place of R.V. Geach)

Apologies: Councillors D.C. Clarke and N. Islam

24/25 Apologies and Substitutes

Apologies were received from Councillor Clarke, Geach and Islam. Councillor Buck attended as Councillor Geach's substitute.

25/25 Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 13 March 2025 were agreed as a correct record.

26/25 Disclosures of interest

Councillors Bateson, Beatty, Beecher, Buck, and Gibson were also members of the Planning Committee.

27/25 Questions from members of the Public

There were none.

28/25 HSR/SLR Working Group Updates

The Committee received an update on the work of the HSR/SLR Working Group from Councillor Bateson.

Councillor Bateson advised that the working group had met to evaluate data on the options. A report would be compiled with aim to bring to the next meeting of the Committee to make a recommendation to Council.

The Committee **resolved** to note the update on the work of the HSR/SLR Working Group.

29/25 Waterfront Development Update

There was no update to provide.

30/25 Updates on Short-Term Priority Development Delivery Sites

The Chair advised that disposals of sites had been temporarily put on hold whilst the Commissioners were reviewing sites for a disposals strategy.

It was proposed by Councillor Boughtflower, seconded by Councillor Bateson and **resolved** to exclude the public and press for part of the discussion of this agenda item in accordance with Paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended) as 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.

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

31/25 Forward Plan

The Committee considered the Forward Plan for future Committee business.

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

Spelthorne Borough Council Services Committees Forward Plan

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.

Spelthorne Borough Council

Service Committees Forward Plan and Key Decisions for 1 July 2025 to 31 May 2026

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
Business, Infrastructure and Growth Committee 11 09 2025	Ashford BID Feasibility Study	Non-Key Decision	Public	Julia Owen, Senior Economic Development Officer, Chris Norrington, Economic Development Manager
Business, Infrastructure and Growth Committee 11 09 2025	HSR/SLR Working Group Recommendation	Non-Key Decision	Public	
Business, Infrastructure and Growth Committee 11 09 2025 Corporate Policy and Resources Committee 13 10 2025	Spelthorne Business Hub	Non-Key Decision	Public	Chris Norrington, Economic Development Manager
Business, Infrastructure and Growth Committee 11 09 2025	Thameside House	Non-Key Decision	Public	Bruce Strong, Investment Asset Manager
Business, Infrastructure and Growth Committee 11 09 2025	Ashford Victory Place	Key Decision	Public	Bruce Strong, Investment Asset Manager

Date of decision and decision maker	Matter for consideration	Key or non-Key Decision	Decision to be taken in Public or Private	Lead Officer
Corporate Policy and Resources Committee 08 09 2025	Sunbury Site Disposals	Non-Key Decision	Part public/part private	Coralie Holman, Group Head - Assets, Bruce Strong, Investment Asset Manager
Business, Infrastructure and Growth Committee 20 11 2025	Budget Report	Non-Key Decision	Public	Ola Owolabi, Interim Chief Accountant
Business, Infrastructure and Growth Committee 20 11 2025	Fees and Charges	Non-Key Decision	Public	Ola Owolabi, Interim Chief Accountant

This page is intentionally left blank



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	Y	04/08/2025
Commissioner engagement (if report focused on issues of concern to Commissioners such as Finance, Assets etc)	Y	Multiple
Relevant Group Head review	Y	19/08/2025
MAT+ review (to have been circulated at least 5 working days before Stage 2)		19/08/2025
This item is on the Forward Plan for the relevant committee	Y	11/09/2025
	Reviewed by	
Risk comments	L. O'Neill	Aug 2025
Legal comments	L. Hiron	Aug 2025
HR comments (if applicable)	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
Monitoring Officer commentary – at least 5 working days before MAT	L. Hiron	26/08/2025
S151 Officer commentary – at least 5 working days before MAT	T. Collier	15/8/2025
Confirm final report cleared by MAT		

Business, Infrastructure and Growth Committee

11 September 2025

Title	Spelthorne Business Hub Closure
Purpose of the report	To make a decision
Report Author	Chris Norrington, Economic Development Manager
Ward(s) Affected	All Wards
Exempt	No
Exemption Reason	N/A
Corporate Priority	Resilience
Recommendations	<p>Committee is asked to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Agree to the closure of the Spelthorne Business Hub at the Summit Centre, Sunbury by 31 March 2026. 2. Relocate the Business Hub to the Council Offices, Knowle Green, Staines-upon-Thames. 3. Approve the continuation of the Council's Business Support Service, delivered independently of the Hub premises.
Reason for Recommendation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Summit Centre is being sold by the Council. • There are limited, financially sustainable alternative sites for operating a business hub from • Relocation and operating costs in some sites are prohibitively high resulting in significant ongoing financial revenue deficits. <p>Council needs to focus on making savings consistent with the recommendations of the S151 Officer to ensure it has a sustainable medium term financial plan and cannot afford to be committing to a significant ongoing level of additional spend.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spelthorne's existing Business Support Service, distinct from the Hub, provides valuable support to a broader spread of around 100 Spelthorne businesses.

1. Executive summary of the report

What is the situation	Why we want to do something
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The home of the Spelthorne Business Hub is being sold (Summit Centre, Sunbury). • The Hub must either close or relocate by 31 March 2026. • The Hub delivers business support services to the wider community, provides affordable accommodation and currently generates a modest annual surplus (£35,000 over the past 4 years). • Alternative venues have been identified in Communications House in Staines-upon-Thames, Elmbrook House and the Council Offices in Knowle Green. These are the only suitable options available in the Council's portfolio. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Council needs to decide whether it represents value for money to provide a physical Hub in either the Council Offices, Knowle Green, Elmbrook House, Sunbury-on-Thames or Communications House, Staines-upon-Thames for a limited number of businesses (13 in Knowle Green, 14 in Elmbrook House or 28 in Communications House). • The Council needs to decide whether to continue to run the Business Support Service which can be delivered virtually and at a much lower cost to a wider business base than the Hub, albeit for a different purpose (£36,000 for 2025/26). • The decision needs to demonstrate responsible financial management.
This is what we want to do about it	These are the next steps
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Close the Hub once Summit Centre is sold. • Relocate the Hub to the Council Offices, Knowle Green. • Do not relocate to Elmbrook House due to one-off relocation costs (£105,000) and ongoing net revenue support estimated at a minimum of £69,500 per annum over the next five years (£347,625 over 5 years). • Do not relocate to Communications House due to one-off relocation costs (£188,000) and ongoing net revenue support estimated at a minimum of £177,280 per annum for the next five years (£1,074,000 over five years including the one-off costs). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Close the Hub at the Summit Centre as a physical venue by 31 March 2026. • Offer desk space in the Council Offices, Knowle Green at a minimal cost. • Do not relocate the Hub to Communications House or Elmbrook House. • Support existing tenants to find alternative accommodation. • Continue to deliver the Business Support Service virtually or via alternative venues.

- 1.1 The Council has reached agreement in principle to sell 33 Hanworth Road, which includes the Spelthorne Business Hub (the Hub), managed on behalf of the Council by CoTribe Incubator Community Interest Company (CIC) located at Summit House, 33 Hanworth Road, Sunbury-on-Thames.
- 1.2 The sale is anticipated to complete during October 2025, with a planning application following shortly after for wholesale redevelopment. The purchaser has agreed a deadline of 31 March 2026 for the premises to be vacated, so the Hub will need to close or move to a new location by that date.
- 1.3 The sale of the Summit Centre makes financial sense, enabling the Council to pay down debt and make ongoing annual budget savings, and this Committee discussed expressing the desire to move the Hub to an alternative location, although this was not a condition of sale in the decision to sell Summit Centre. Officers were asked to investigate alternative locations and report back to the Committee.
- 1.4 The Council has a long-standing commitment to deliver valuable support to the local business community.
- 1.5 The Hub is a discretionary service which the vast majority of Surrey district and borough councils do not provide. The majority of Surrey district and borough councils do provide a similar business support service.
- 1.6 The Hub offers subsidised office and hot desk space to facilitate the growth of start-up and small businesses until they secure suitable sustainable commercial accommodation.
- 1.7 Proportionately the Hub is supporting only a tiny percentage (1.84%) of our 7,500 businesses across the Borough.
- 1.8 Whilst successful in supporting these businesses, the level of onward movement from fledgling businesses has been much lower than expected, a business would normally need support for around two years before moving out to commercial premises.
- 1.9 Since it opened in 2021, 47 businesses have occupied the office space, and 91 businesses have taken up the hot desking space. As stated above, this represents just 1.84% of the business base in Spelthorne and as a result generated a modest annual surplus (c£35k over that 4-year period). The Hub is run by Co-Tribe Community Interest Company on behalf of the Council.
- 1.10 Appendix A provides an overview of the Hub (benefits, financials – income and expenditure, occupancy levels and performance).
- 1.11 The Business Support Service is based in the Hub. It offers tailored advice, workshops, and events to local start-ups and Small/Medium Sized Enterprises (SMEs) and is highly regarded by businesses.
- 1.12 It provides excellent value for money by supporting over 100 Spelthorne businesses. It can function independently, utilising other venues throughout the Borough or operating virtually. Its continuation, which represents better value for money, is already accounted for in the budget for 2025/26 at a cost of £36,000 (and would need a budget of £37,800 in 2026-27).
- 1.13 **Appendix B** provides a summary of the Business Support Service.

2. Key issues

- 2.1 The Committee needs to decide whether it represents value for money to relocate the Hub from the Summit Centre to the Council Offices, Knowle Green, Communications House in Staines-upon-Thames, or Elmbrook House, Sunbury-on-Thames, or not.
- 2.2 The Committee also needs to decide whether it wants to confirm the continuation of the Business Support Service (for which there is a budget in place for 2025/26) and indicate early support for a budget of £37,800 for 2026/27 which can then be put forward for consideration as part of the Annual Budget at Council in February 2026 as an alternative.

2.3 Relocation

2.3.1 Relocating to the Council Offices, Knowle Green

Space has been identified in the Council Offices which will allow up to 14 businesses to be supported at the Council Offices. This space is smaller than the hub in Sunbury.

This Hub will allow the Council to continue to offer start-up and small businesses discounted office space until the business is able to move to standard commercial premises and it also offers the opportunity to link the Business Support Service to businesses that need desk space and wrap-around business support which we can re-establish at Knowle Green.

The Council already pays business rates and maintains the building so there would not be an increase in operating current costs, but a modest income can be achieved to offset some of these ongoing revenue costs.

There are minimal relocation (£5,000) but there will be some internal works to accommodate the business tenants. These are estimated at around £20,000).

2.3.2 Relocating to Communications House, Staines-upon-Thames.

This new Hub in Staines would have rentable space for 18 offices, one meeting room plus co-working space for up to 10 users. To help the Committee decide on this key question, a detailed piece of work has been undertaken to understand all the relocation and running costs so that a fully informed decision can be made. **Appendix C** sets out the estimated 5-year forecast for the Hub in a financial table. **Appendix D** provides more of a narrative around those costs (what they are, why they apply and what is a new cost).

Whilst the current Hub has achieved a modest annual surplus (Appendix A), this would not happen if it relocated to Communications House.

Analysis indicates that relocating to Communications House in Staines would result in a cumulative net deficit of approximately £886,400 over five years, which excludes one-off relocation expenses of £188,000 (set out in **Appendices C and D**). This deficit is solely due to the inclusion of business rates and a service charge:

- (a) increased liabilities for business rates. (A new business rates relief policy adopted by CPR Committee on 24 March 2025 means a Community Interest Company (CIC) running the Hub will no longer receive rate relief due to the rateable value of the office space at Communications House as discretion would not be applied)

- (b) service charges, which are currently exempt at Summit House, will have to be paid from the Hub budget at Communications House. The Council has a contract with Cushman and Wakefield to manage some of its buildings. A tenant would normally pay the service charge, but when void, the liability falls on the Council.
- 2.3.4 If would not be viable to pass these costs onto tenants, as the estimated liability would add approximately £7k pa to the rent for each business. Current rents average at £9,000 (**Appendix D – 3.8**) so would equate to nearly a 78% increase in cost to tenants.
- Appendix C1** sets out a realistic picture assuming 80% occupancy (to account for churn), 5% cost increase year on year plus 10% increase in revenue year on year. When determining the potential income stream, the team looked at the current rents in the Hub, and comparative rents in Staines to ensure the relocated Hub would be competitive.
- 2.3.6 A competitor review has compared the Hub's offer versus local alternatives. The Hub currently offers very competitive rates, and these rates will be similar in the new space if relocated. It is intended to perform a rate review to increase rents, if the relocation is approved. The optimal configuration of the new space is unknown until plans are drawn up (part of the relocation costs).
- 2.3.7 It is clear from the financial figures that if a decision had to be made on these alone, then it would be straightforward based on the ongoing deficit. However, consideration needs to be given to the 'value' that can be attributed to the business community of the Hub. This is more difficult to quantify as the 20 businesses to currently rent space have, and are benefitting, as well as those who have used the mobile workspaces, and those who have moved on. Some of these businesses have used it as an opportunity to grow by providing advice to others in the Hub.
- 2.3.8 The deficit of operating a Hub at Communications House means we would effectively be subsidising 28 (18x office and 10 hot desks per month) businesses to the amount of £31,654, over the 5 year period, for each business. Subsidy control implications may arise and will need to be carefully considered to ensure compliance.
- 2.4 Relocating to Elmbrook House, Sunbury-on-Thames
- 2.4.1 There is 50% unoccupied ground floor space at Elmbrook House, and it has not been easy to let the space.
- 2.4.2 The space is approximately 2,500ft² and can be divided into 4 small offices and a communal area. Hot-desking can be provided at the expense of losing a dedicated office.
- 2.4.3 Similar business rate liabilities and service charge constraints exist. Business rate liability is estimated to be £35,000 and an annual service charge liability of £35,000. This represents half of the liability of Communications House, but Elmbrook House offers less space.
- 2.4.4 Analysis indicates that relocating to Elmbrook House in Sunbury would result in a cumulative net deficit of approximately £347,642 over five years, which excludes one-off relocation expenses of £114,500 (**Appendices C2 and D-4**). This deficit is solely due to the inclusion of business rates and a service charge which do not currently apply at the Summit Centre.

2.5 The continuation of the Business Support Service

2.5.1 **Appendix B** provides detail of the service.

2.5.2 The Business Support Service was introduced in September 2023 to support start-up, and small businesses grow and thrive post – COVID-19. It is considered a valuable service by Spelthorne's start-up and fledgling businesses as the level of support we offer in Spelthorne is far greater than the offer available in Surrey.

2.5.3 This service was funded by the UK Shared Prosperity Fund which ended on 31 March 2025, and a tender process for a new business support service programme commenced. It was subsequently put on hold while an application for £20,000 of town-centre centric business support funding was submitted to Surrey County Council's Growth Fund which if successful will offset some of the service cost.

2.5.4 The Business Support Service was based in the Hub, so tenants had access to the support. Support is also offered to businesses not based in the Hub and the support is offered at the Hub, virtually, via Teams, or at another suitable location. The service is not dependent on being located in any one place.

2.5.5 The Business Support Service is highly valued by start-up and small businesses to provide them with the opportunity to start and grow their business. The service is delivered by a contracted consultant organisation to deliver the following:

- Facilitate and support the growth and sustainability of businesses within Spelthorne.
- Enhance the competitiveness and resilience of local businesses.
- Foster innovation, entrepreneurship, and job creation.
- Provide accessible and tailored support to businesses of all sizes and sectors.
- Strengthen the local business ecosystem and contribute to economic development.

2.5.6 The service will achieve this through:

- One to one business growth sessions for ambitious growth businesses
- Training, workshops and events
- Start-up club
- Mentoring and a peer-to-peer network

3. **Options appraisal and proposal**

3.1 **Option 1:**

Close the Hub at Summit House by 31 March 2026 and relocate to the Council Offices, Knowle Green, Staines-upon-Thames (**Appendix D**) and still operate the Business Support Service. (**Appendix B**).

This **is** recommended because:

- a) It allows the Council to continue to support start-up and small businesses with affordable serviced office space.

- b) There are minimal relocation costs, estimated at around £25,000.
- c) There is a less of an ongoing financial burden to the Council as there would be minimal operational costs as services are already accounted for in the budget and would need to be paid regardless (heating, Wi-Fi, car parking etc.).
- d) The Council will receive a modest annual income from renting the space.
- e) The s106 contribution made by Shepperton Studios can be used to offset costs as the Business Support Service will still incubate start-ups in this space. There are two years of funding remaining - £20k for 2025-26 and £20k for 2026-27.
- f) The Business Support Service can focus on businesses which need wrap-around support and not offer space to businesses seeking cheap office space, reverting to the original objectives of the hub.
- g) The Economic Development Team will be located close by (room 110) to also offer help and advice.
- h) There is no requirement to have a concession contract in place.

3.2 **Option 2:**

Close the hub at Summit House and relocate to Communications House, Staines by 31 March 2026. (**Appendix D**) but continue the Business Support Service (**Appendix B**).

This is **not** recommended because:

- a) Significant financial deficit of approx. £886,400 operational costs over five years plus one-off relocation costs of £188,000. (**Appendix C**) provides a financial operational forecast.
- b) The hub benefits a small fraction of businesses in Spelthorne relative to Spelthorne's total business count (1.84%).
- c) There is currently no identified budget for relocating the Hub, but capital receipts could be used from the sale of the Summit Centre.
- d) Assets will relet the space in Communications House and provide an income stream and current void costs of £168,000 pa would cease.
- e) The Business Support Service can continue virtually or in another location. It will focus on businesses which need wrap-around support.

3.3 **Option 3:**

Close the Hub at Summit House and relocate to Elmbrook House, Sunbury by 31 March 2026. (**Appendix D**) but still operate the Business Support Service (**Appendix B**).

This is **not** recommended because:

- a) Significant financial deficit of approx. £347,642 operational costs over five years plus one-off relocation costs of £115,500. **Appendix C** provides a financial operational forecast.

- b) Relocating to Elmbrook House would only support around 14 businesses (0.18% of the business community) realising an estimated annual deficit of £70,000 (£5,000 per business per annum).
- c) There is currently no identified budget for relocating the Hub.
- d) Assets will relet the space in Elmbrook House and provide an income stream although this has proved difficult.
- e) The Business Support Service can continue virtually or in another location. It will focus on businesses which need wrap-around support.

3.4 **Option 4:**

Close the Hub at Summit House and do not re-locate to the Council Offices, Communications House or Elmbrook House by 31 March 2026. (**Appendix D**) but still operate the Business Support Service (**Appendix B**).

This is not recommended because:

- a) Analysis suggests there are minimal costs to relocate to Knowle Green.
- b) Continuing the Business Support Service ensure the Council will maintain valued support to the business community.
- c) Not relocating provides overall best value for money as there are minimal closing and ongoing costs and still supports inclusive economic growth by continuing the Business Support Service.
- d) Although there will be anticipated costs to closing the Hub in Sunbury, these will be limited to clearing the site once vacant, and potentially some loss of income if tenants move before the closing date.
- e) Current tenants will need to secure alternative accommodation in or outside of Spelthorne.
- f) Extra costs will be avoided as all supplier contracts will be terminated by contractual notice.

3.5 **Option 5:**

Close the Hub by 31 March 2026 and discontinue the business support service.

This is **not** recommended because:

- a) Although by closing the Hub, the Council alleviates some of its financial pressures and avoids additional costs, this results in the cessation of all tailored business support for SMEs.
- b) This will result in the Council not facilitating and supporting the growth and sustainability of businesses within Spelthorne. It will not foster innovation, creativity, entrepreneurship, or job creation. The Council will not support the enhancement of local businesses competitiveness and resilience.
- c) The following services would be discontinued.
 - Start-up support
 - Provide accessible and tailored support to businesses of all sizes and sectors through one-to-one advice sessions and engagement

- Digital skills programmes
- Business sustainability support
- Training, workshops and events

4 Risk implications

4.1 Financial risks - Pressures on Council budgets.

Relocating to Communications House or Elmbrook House.

Over a 5-year period the Council will be investing a total of £1,074,400 (£188,000 one off capital relocation costs and an on-going revenue deficit of £886,400) to assist a maximum of 18 businesses and around 10 co-working businesses per month in Communications House. Although a lesser figure is likely at Elmbrook House, there is less space therefore fewer businesses will be supported as per Option 2.

If the decision is to not relocate, there is a risk that businesses may leave the current Hub in Sunbury before 31 March 2026 which will reduce income for the Hub for 2025-26.

If the Committee decide to relocate the Hub, there is a risk of loss of immediate income as not all tenants will want to move from Summit House, Sunbury to The Council Offices, Communications House or Elmbrook House. Some of this can be mitigated by engaging with the tenants early, obtaining their feedback and potentially offering incentives to move.

Section 106 considerations

Shepperton Studios S106 contribution of £20,000 pa (for 3 more years) is for Incubator support. There is a risk the contribution could be challenged if the Hub were closed, unless we agree with Shepperton Studios to use the s106 monies for a different, but related, purpose, e.g. to fund the Business Support Service.

4.2 Risks to businesses

There are further risks to businesses which can be partially mitigated by continuing the Business Support Service.

There is a risk that businesses may fail to find affordable alternative office space or receive free business support in the Borough and may relocate out of borough.

Small and start-up businesses are traditionally financially strained so closing the Hub could force those 20 businesses renting there to cease trading.

Starting up a business in Spelthorne may be hindered by the lack of assistance given by the Business Surrey service (delivered by Surrey County Council) which is currently under-resourced.

Passing on the additional business rates and service charges incurred by the Council by relocating the Hub to Communications House to tenants will make rents unaffordable and uncompetitive.

4.3 Marketing risk

If the Committee were to agree to relocate the Hub to Communications House, the proposed marketing campaign for the new space will take time to generate new Hub tenants. Occupancy figures and income may fall in the short-term.

This risk may be offset by increased marketing activity.

4.4 **Asset management risks**

The medium to long term future of Council Offices, Elmbrook House or Communications House is not clear. Any potential disposal means the Hub and its tenants would have to move on again

Note 1: If there is a lease in place, the new owners will not be able to terminate it.

4.5 **Operational risks**

If the Committee was to agree to relocate the Hub to either Communications House, Elmbrook House or Knowle Green it may not have capacity to move the equipment when required so a contractor will be required, adding extra costs.

4.6 **Reputational risks**

a) Reputational risk from closure affecting existing users. This is mitigated by early engagement with tenants to find alternative arrangements.

b) Negative perception of business support reduction by the Council.

There is also a reputational risk that the Council is seen as no longer supporting start-up or small businesses. This can be mitigated by engaging early with businesses that the Business Support Service will continue.

c) Reputational risk of financial mismanagement if the Hub was continued. Closure mitigates ongoing deficit and demonstrates responsible financial management.

5 **Financial implications**

5.1 Financially there is little justification in relocating the Hub to Elmbrook House or Communications House. It would be financially sensible to move the hub to the Council Offices.

Communications House

Relocation Costs:	£188,000 (Capital - £161k, revenue £27k)
5-Year revenue forecast net deficit:	£886,400
Total cost:	£1,074,400

The net revenue deficit for Spelthorne Borough Council for 2025 – 2027 is estimated at £236,900 plus relocation costs = £424,900. The future unitary Council will have estimated revenue costs of £461,500 (2027-2030).

Elmbrook House

Relocation Costs:	£115,500 (Capital - £105k, revenue £9.5k)
5-Year revenue forecast net deficit:	£347,645
Total cost:	£463,125

The net revenue deficit for Spelthorne Borough Council for 2025 – 2027 is estimated at £107,425 plus relocation costs = £224k. The future unitary Council will have estimated revenue costs of £240,200 (2027-2030).

5.2 Current performance of the Hub: 20 office-based tenants and 100 hot desk bookings per annum. The Hub generates modest revenue but cannot offset premises costs.

- 5.3 Conversely the Business Support Service is better value for money as:
- The cost of delivery funded within the existing 2025/26 budget - £36,000
 - It has supported over 100 businesses annually (with scope to increase) through tailored 1-to-1 advice, workshops, and events.

6 Legal comments

- 6.1 All contracts that may be required for this project must comply with the Procurement Act 2023 and the Council's Contract Standing Order Procedural Rules. The Council has a duty to deliver best value under the Local Government Act 1999.
- 6.2 Legal support will be required for the termination and / or putting in place property occupation arrangements.
- 6.3 Legal Services (g.legal@spelthorne.gov.uk) will provide advice and assistance on the preparation of the required documentation as necessary.

Corporate implications

7 S151 Officer comments

- 7.1 In the context of Local Government Funding Reform, Business Rates reset, the Council is facing a challenging budget position as was highlighted in the Budget report which went to Council in February 2025. As part of the Improvement and Recovery Plan process, officers are currently firming up the size of the future ongoing Revenue budget gap, but it is clear there is a significant gap to close. This means the Council will need to be focused on making savings, the scale of which will be confirmed once the medium-term budget gaps have been refreshed, consistent with recommendations made by the Section 151 Officer aligned to the Improvement and Recovery Plan.
- 7.2 Whilst any potential one-off capital costs could be funded by top slicing the capital receipt generated on sale of Summit Centre, the on-going revenue deficit costs arising from relocating to either Elmbrook House or Communications House cannot.
- 7.3 In contrast around 14 businesses could be accommodated in Knowle Green Offices. The Council is already covering the associated accommodation costs such as business rates in its budget, the rental/ service charge will be considerably lower.
- 7.4 Therefore, the S151 Officer is supportive of the proposed option of relocating the physical Business Hub to Knowle Green alongside the virtual Business Support Service continuing.

8 Monitoring Officer comments

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

9 Procurement comments

- 9.1 Having consulted with the Procurement team there are no identified procurement implications in relation to closing the Hub. If the decision is to relocate, the relocation and fit out costs for moving to any new premises would need to be procured in accordance with the Council's Contract Standing Orders and internal approval requirements.

10 Equality and Diversity

- 10.1 Closing and relocating the Hub does not disproportionately affect any particular protected characteristic groups. The retained business support service is accessible to all businesses across the Borough, and the Council will continue to work with diverse business communities to ensure equitable access to support.

11 Sustainability/Climate Change Implications

- 11.1 Communications House is currently part of the Council's investment and regeneration assets portfolio. Under our carbon accounting approach, we use a financial control framework to determine which emissions are included in our operational carbon footprint. This means that where the Council has financial and operational responsibility for a building or activity, such as paying the energy bills, the associated emissions are counted under Scope 1 or Scope 2.
- 11.2 Scope 1 includes direct emissions from sources the Council owns or controls, such as gas boilers or Council-run vehicles. Scope 2 includes indirect emissions from the energy we purchase and use, like electricity. Scope 3 covers all other indirect emissions that are linked to Council activities but come from assets or services that we do not directly operate or manage, such as investment properties or third-party suppliers.
- 11.3 As Communications House and Elmbrook House are currently held as investment assets and are not used for day-to-day Council operations, the emissions from these buildings are classed as Scope 3 and are not included in our operational carbon footprint. If the Business Hub or other Council services were to move into either of these buildings, the Council would take on responsibility for occupying and operating them. As a result, the emissions from energy use in these buildings would fall under Scope 1 and Scope 2. These would then be included in the Council's operational carbon footprint, resulting in an increase in our reported emissions.
- 11.4 The Knowle Green Council Offices are already occupied and operated by the Council, with their emissions included in Scope 1 and Scope 2. Moving services into Knowle Green from another building already included in Scope 1 and Scope 2 would not change the overall reported emissions. However, moving services from a Scope 3 building such as Communications House or Elmbrook House into Knowle Green would lead to an increase in Scope 1 and Scope 2 emissions, balanced by a corresponding reduction in Scope 3 emissions.

12 Other considerations

- 12.1 To further support the recommendation. As set out in **Appendix A** The objective of the Hub was initially to incubate start-ups until they could move on to standard commercial premises. This is normally over a 12–24-month period.
- 12.2 The concession contract has not delivered this service. As the agreement is revenue sharing, the priority for the management company is revenue and not the turnover of customers (churn). Some tenants have been in the Hub since it opened in 2021 and have not moved on, they are taking advantage of the low rent offered.

13 Timetable for implementation

13.1 If the decision is to close the Hub and not to relocate, the schedule will likely be as follows:

11 September	Decision sought from the BIG Committee
October 2025	Closing plan commences
Oct – Dec 2025	3 month notice period advised to remaining tenants. Notice period of 1 month served management company. Notice given to all utility contracts
31 March 2026	Empty building handed over to the new owners.

The Business support service will continue to operate until the renewal or end of contract.

13.1 If the decision is to relocate to either Council Offices, Communications House, or Elmbrook House the schedule will be as follows:

11 September	Decision sought from BIG Committee
13 October	Funding recommendation sought from CPRC.
23 October	Funding approval sought from Full Council.
November	Relocation plan initiated
April 1 st	Space available for new tenants

14 Contact

Chris Norrington, Economic Development Manager
c.norrington@spelthorne.gov.uk

Background papers: There are none.

Appendices:

Appendix A – Spelthorne Business Hub Overview

Appendix B – Business Support Service overview

Appendix C – Spelthorne Business Hub 5-year revenue forecast.

Appendix D – Relocation of the Spelthorne Business Hub.

1. The Spelthorne Business Hub

- 1.1 The Spelthorne Business Hub, initially named the Incubator, opened in August 2021 during the pandemic. The Hub has 20 offices across two floors, a co-working space with 12 desks, a training room and 3 meeting rooms.
- 1.2 Since the Hub opened, 47 businesses have occupied the office space, and 91 businesses have taken up the hot desking space. This represents just 1.84% of the business base in Spelthorne.
- 1.3 The Hub's objective is to provide dynamic incubation space for start-ups and pre-starts. It offers a vibrant co-working office space with below market rates, flexible terms, and outstanding business support.
- 1.4 A Cabinet report dated 24 February 2021, it is noted that the incubator was to support businesses with an objective to maximise revenues and there was confidence that, "the incubator is not only likely to be self-sufficient but could also potentially provide a small revenue stream which could further sustain additional economic support for businesses" which was achieved in the current location in 2024-25.

2. The benefits of sustaining a business hub in the borough.

There are many benefits in being a tenant in the Hub which is unique in Spelthorne.

- a. A vibrant community of start-up businesses providing opportunities to network and build valuable business contacts and leads.
- b. Coaching, mentoring, and training programmes provided by local business coaches and through our partnerships.
- c. A regular programme of seminars and workshops focussed on the topics which are important to businesses.
- d. Membership of the Spelthorne Business Forum which provides businesses with up-to-date local business news. Access to their events and networking opportunities, plus promotion of your business through the online directory show-cased on their site.
- e. A lower, subsidised rental model is in place to help start-ups and new businesses financially while they become established. After a period, businesses are asked to move on when financially viable.
- f. The Council's support of businesses, in turn supports residents by promoting jobs and prosperity.

3. 4 Year overview

- 3.1 2021 – 2022.
The ground floor of Summit House became the Spelthorne Business Hub in August 2021 after an approximate Council investment of £85,000 to fit-it out the space. As it was in the middle of the Covid pandemic it is not surprising that occupancy levels were initially low at 17%. CoTribe were awarded the concession contract in September 2021 for 5 years.

All income mentioned in this report is split 60% - 40% due to the concession given to CoTribe. CoTribe started marketing the Hub from November 2021.

Income was achieved from a customer base of 6. Leatherick Ltd moved in in Sept 2021 and are still in occupancy. The income budget was set at £29,000 which was clearly over cautious.

3.2 2022 – 2023.

The Income budget was set at £43,500 and actual income achieved was £49,000. The surplus figure of £31,500 is somewhat skewed as Assets were likely to have picked up the utilities and building/ facility costs.

3.3 2023 – 2024.

Income increased by 72.5% as part of the 1st floor became available for rent. The S106 contribution from Shepperton Studios of £20,000 was received, this is part of a total contribution of £100,000 over 5 years. Occupancy also increased by 32.5% on the ground floor and the Hub achieved 67% on the first floor. Expenditure included utilities and building/ facility costs hence a deficit of £7,000.

3.4 2024 – 2025.

Using some UK Shared Prosperity Fund monies, we were able to convert the remaining areas of the 1st floor into office space. This resulted in record income showing a healthy surplus and good occupancy levels. 39 individual co-working and 28 office customers.

3.5 Occupancy levels

2024-25 occupancy levels were affected by the loss of a tenant who occupied ground floor room 1 for most of 23-24 and 24-25. It has been difficult to re-let it due to its size and was due to be split into two smaller units which has now been cancelled. We have moved a client from Floor 1 to room 1 and are negotiating with a new occupier.

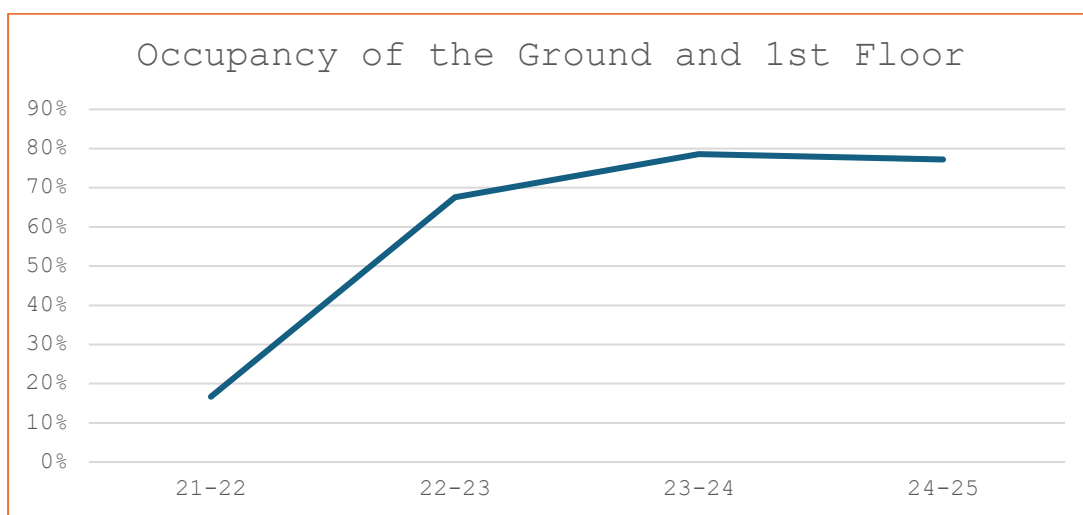


Figure 1 - Occupancy Levels 2021-25

3.6 Feedback from the current tenants

Initial feedback from 50% of the existing hub tenants have expressed an interest in moving to Communications House (if the committee were to agree to relocation rather than closure). The remaining tenants will be consulted to ensure that a high percentage will agree to move. The Economic Development Manager has spent time with each tenant to discuss moving options and allow them time to digest and ask questions.

3.7 Financial overview 2021-25

	21-22	22-23	23-24	24-25	Total
	£	£	£	£	£
Expenditure					
Buildings	88,000	16,000	81,000	78,000	263,000
Supplies/ Services	18,000	1,500	10,500	14,000	44,000
Total Expenses	106,000	17,500	91,500	92,000	307,000
Income					
Office	(4,000)	(44,000)	(54,000)	(77,000)	(179,000)
Co-working desks	(1000)	(5,000)	(10,000)	(16,000)	(32,000)
Other	-	-	(20,000)	(28,000)	(48,000)
Total Income	(5,000)	(49,000)	(84,000)	(121,000)	(259,000)
Total deficit/ surplus	101,000	(31,500)	7,000	(29,000)	48,000

3.8 Occupancy 2021-2025

Ground Floor	21-22	22-23	23-24	24-25	Total
Room 1	67%	92%	75%	50%	71%
Room 2	58%	83%	92%	50%	71%
Room 3	8%	92%	100%	50%	63%
Room 4	17%	58%	100%	100%	69%
Room 5	0%	17%	92%	92%	50%
Room 6	0%	8%	75%	92%	44%
Room 7	0%	58%	100%	100%	65%
Room 8	0%	100%	100%	100%	75%
Room 9	0%	100%	75%	100%	69%
Total	17%	68%	90%	81%	64%
1st Floor	21-22	22-23	23-24	24-25	Total
Room 1			86%	92%	89%
Room 2			57%	92%	74%
Room 3			57%	83%	70%
Room 4			86%	100%	93%
Room 5			71%	100%	86%
Room 6			57%	100%	79%
Room 7			57%	67%	62%
Room 8				50%	50%
Room 9				58%	58%
Room 10				67%	67%
Room 11				33%	33%
Room 12				33%	33%
Total			67%	73%	70%
Occupancy	17%	68%	79%	77%	67%

3.9 Supported businesses and churn (the turnover of customers).

The Hub's operating model and concession contract have hindered running the Hub as an incubator. Businesses should only receive support until they are able to move on to commercial office space. This would free up space for new start-

ups or small businesses to benefit from the subsidised rents. This would result in lower occupancy levels and high churn rates.

The concession contract included conditions which have not been delivered by CoTribe. The wrap-around support and mentorship service did not come to fruition. In 2023, we used some Shared Prosperity Fund to deliver the business support.

Therefore, two factors have influenced performance:

1. CoTribe have a revenue sharing agreement, therefore have strived to deliver as high an occupancy level as possible with a target of a serviced office rental rate for £40/sqft. This results in little churn and a high percentage of customers benefiting from low rents.
2. Nearly all of the businesses who have rented an office do not require much in the way of business support. The types of businesses currently occupying space are:
 - i) Accountants
 - ii) Media companies
 - iii) 2 care home suppliers
 - iv) A carbon off-setting business
 - v) A roofing company
 - vi) An engineering raining company
 - vii) Recruitment company
 - viii) An electrician
 - ix) A Fire Risk specialist.
 - x) A leather goods business

It would be preferable to have helped many more businesses, but the balance between having a management company to manage tenants and provide support versus the income agreement in place has made this challenging. The Council's criteria of helping as many start-ups and small businesses as possible receiving support in terms of subsidised office space has not been realised.

3.10 4-year breakdown of expenditure and income

Spelthorne Business Hub	Actual	Actual	Actual	Actual	TOTALS
	21-22	22-23	23-24	24-25	21-25
	£	£	£	£	£
RUNNING EXPENSES - BUILDINGS					
SC Building Works				13,951	13,951
Electrical works				1,648	1,648
Air Conditioning	206			-	206
Building Works	80,205	(4,839)	-	19,928	95,294
Electricity			61,084	25,000	86,084
Gas			9,834	6,885	16,719
Management fees		10,804	-	-	10,804
Water charges			1,545	2,500	4,045
Fixtures & Fittings	3,523	3,839	570	-	7,932
Cleaning Materials	527	145	-	622	1,294
Window cleaning	455	660	895	665	2,675
Trade Waste Collection		195	423	-	618
Contract cleaning			1,692	2,494	4,186
Collection of Rubbish	1,096	1,611	982	3,911	7,600
Cleaning General	1,711	3,701	3,899	480	9,791
	87,723	16,116	80,924	78,083	262,846
RUNNING EXPENSES - SUPPLIES/SERVICES					
Operational Equipment	1,560	-	-	200	1,760
Op Equip mats				413	413
Kitchen & Canteen Equipment				6	6
Office Equipment Purchase				363	363
Office Equipment Supplies				85	85
Office Furniture Purchase			150	61	211
Printers consumables			-	64	64
Food purchases				1,471	1,471
Catering supplies - non food				57	57
Tea trolley provisions			400	105	505
Printing Artwork & Design	3,360		-	-	3,360
Office stationery				29	29
Consultant Fees	249		-	-	249
TV License			-	170	170
Networking	5,660	1,350	9,033	8,656	24,699
Subsistence-food expenses	779		-	-	779
Subscriptions General			159	-	159
Marketing	350		-	-	350
Transaction costs				2,114	2,114
Other Misc Expenses	6,330	55	726	37	7,148
	18,289	1,405	10,467	13,828	43,989
TOTAL EXPENDITURE	106,012	17,521	91,391	91,911	306,836
INCOME					
Other reimbursements			(20,000)	(28,000)	(48,000)
Incubator Desk Hire	(755)		-	(15,818)	(16,572)
Incubator Office Hire	(4,199)	(48,766)	(64,140)	(76,869)	(193,975)
Grant - UKSPF for refurb				(13,386)	(13,386)
TOTAL INCOME	(4,954)	(48,766)	(84,140)	(134,073)	(271,933)
NET (SURPLUS) / DEFICIT	101,058	(31,245)	7,251	(42,161)	34,903

This page is intentionally left blank

1. Business Support in Spelthorne.

Strategic business support is an integral part of the support offered to businesses in Spelthorne, provided by experts in business growth and sustainability. This service is based in the hub. There is a cost in the current budget of £36,000 to fund this support. Previously this was funded by the UK Shared Prosperity Fund which expired on 31 March 2025.

The Economic Development Team have prepared a tender document to procure a new business support programme – The Spelthorne Business Growth Service. This was due to commence in June.

The tender process was paused as an Expression of Interest (EOI) has been submitted to Surrey County Council's Economic Growth Fund, on behalf of all boroughs and districts in Surrey, for cross-county business support funding an answer expected at the beginning of August. If the bid is unsuccessful, we shall seek permission to publish the tender.

The Spelthorne Business Growth Service is highly valued by start-up and small businesses to provide them with the opportunity to start and grow their business.

1.1 Objectives

- Facilitate and support the growth and sustainability of businesses within Spelthorne
- Enhance the competitiveness and resilience of local businesses
- Foster innovation, entrepreneurship, and job creation
- Provide accessible and tailored support to businesses of all sizes and sectors
- Strengthen the local business ecosystem and contribute to economic development

1.2 The Business support programme focusses on 4 main areas of support.

I. Start Up Spelthorne

Open to pre-start and start-ups or if the business is in its first 24 months of trading. This programme focuses on the A-Z of how to start a business and take you through the critical steps to fast track growth.

Training is delivered through 8 workshops to take you through each of the steps, which include topics such as how to access finance and funding, sales and marketing strategies, business strategy and planning and more.

II. Business Growth

This is for ambitious business owners who want to grow by 20%+ in the next twelve months. This programme is open to all with a specific focus on digital, tech, and creative businesses.

A business receives one-to-one business growth sessions focusing on key barriers to growth which include business strategy, technology, leadership and management, operations, import/ export or any other challenges a business may have.

III. Digital Skills

It is essential that every business owner has the digital skills to ensure their survival. A business receives a digital assessment that helps focus on the technology that will allow a business to do more in less time and access the data and insights allowing informed decisions.

The programme upskills teams to thrive to help the business survive in a digital-first world. The programme puts digital at the heart of a business strategy, to realise success. A free online digital health check is completed to help you answer these questions and get digitally fitter.

IV. Sustainability

Helping a business to embark on a journey to create a zero-carbon footprint. There are a series of 4 workshops designed to assist a business in creating a strategy and implementing it. This enables a business to open new markets. The programme helps a business calculate its carbon footprint, develop a clear net zero strategy and plan, communicate your net zero ambitions, identify your carbon hotspots, and think about the impact of the business' products or services.

Opportunities to collaborate and review supply chains. This segment is supported by Surrey County Council's decarbonisation scheme which is part funded by Spelthorne Borough Council.

Also linked to this is the Sustain Spelthorne programme. which ended on 31 March 2025, to help businesses save money on business costs. This included savings on new contracts, advice on navigating the cost-of-doing-business crisis, and how to achieve the best value on essential services like gas, water, insurance, electricity, telecoms and merchant fees.

2. General Support provided by the service (as part of i-iv)

- 2.1 The service will support the sustainability of start-ups, early-stage, micro and small businesses in Spelthorne to grow and become more resilient. The priority of this is to support businesses who have ambitious growth plans, who need the support and guidance to develop and execute their growth plans.
- 2.2 It will offer coaching to help businesses to develop business growth plans. One to one support would comprise of a diagnostic of the business, support with developing the business growth plan and reviewing progress.

It will provide strategic, practical advice and information on subjects such as:

- Business diagnostic and analysis
- Access to funding and financial support
- Marketing and communications
- Digital and artificial intelligence
- Net zero
- Increasing sales and identifying new customers
- Business planning and strategy
- Pre-start and start up advice

- Innovation, growth and scale up advice
- 2.3 Deliver a startup club. This club will provide an identity for startups in Spelthorne. It will focus on providing a specific growth program. 4 events will be delivered specifically for startups.
 - 2.4 Deliver lunch & learn or other workshops on a monthly or two-monthly basis. These will be on topics such as cyber security, marketing, AI, finance and financing. These will be based in the hub and designed for the programme's participants.
 - 3. Mentoring & Peer to Peer Network - Adopt an Entrepreneur Scheme**
 - 3.1 A peer-to-peer network is growing. This is comprised by representatives from businesses who wish to give time and expertise to start-up or small businesses to assist in their growth strategies. The service provider will nurture this network and assign mentors to businesses.
 - 4. Collaboration**
 - 4.1 Refer businesses to further support from Surrey County Council's Business Surrey support service or other government funded programmes where applicable.
 - 4.2 Develop partnership work with the Royal Holloway University of London and the CoStar programme to provide access for businesses to support from the university with research and innovation especially in the Createch sector.
 - 5. Environmental support**
 - 5.1 The service will support businesses to take steps to reduce their carbon footprint, by providing advice and guidance on sustainability and referrals to specialist organisations which can provide sustainability audits and funding to enable businesses to become greener.
 - 6. Economic and Social**
 - 6.1 It will support the local economy through promoting local purchasing and the recruitment of local people.
 - 6.2 **Sponsors & Mentors**

Shepperton Studios are now associated with the Hub in Sunbury as a benefactor through S106 contributions, £100,000 (in annual instalments of £20,000) over a five-year period ending in 2028. In broader terms, this funding is to be used for funding an incubator supporting Spelthorne's businesses, there is a requirement to specifically fund an incubator. The intention was to collaborate with local entrepreneurs to mentor tenants and contribute to the development of the centre and its businesses.

From the funds received from Shepperton Studios, it was proposed that some of the office space is ring-fenced for "createch" businesses (where creativity meets technology – where technology enables the creative sector to produce new products, services or experiences).

It was intended to promote the Hub with our involvement with the Createch Cluster group, led by Surrey County Council. Through this group, we shall have access to Royal Holloway University's incubator and createch support as a resource Spelthorne businesses can use. We will continue to support the cluster through other means.

This page is intentionally left blank

Appendix C – Spelthorne Business Hub 5-year revenue forecast

C1 - Revenue budget if relocated to Communications House

Business support contract, 100% business rates liability and service charges included. (applying a 5% per annum uplift across all costs)

	2025-26	2026 - 2027	2027 - 2028	2028 - 2029	2029 - 2030	2025 - 2030
	80% Occupancy 0% Business Rate liability No service charge Concession contract in place	80% Occupancy 100% Business Rate liability Assume 5% cost increase Assume 5% revenue increase	80% Occupancy 100% Business Rate liability Assume 5% cost increase Assume 10% revenue increase	80% Occupancy 100% Business Rate liability Assume 5% cost increase Assume 10% revenue increase	80% Occupancy 100% Business Rate liability Assume 5% cost increase Assume 10% revenue increase	80% Occupancy 100% Business Rate liability Assume annual 5% cost increase Assume annual 10% revenue increase
Expenditure	£	£	£	£	£	£
Electricity	30,000	31,500	33,100	34,800	36,500	165,900
Gas	16,300	17,200	18,000	18,900	19,900	90,300
Business rates	-	78,000	81,900	86,000	90,300	336,200
Water charges	2,600	2,800	2,900	3,100	3,200	14,600
Fixtures & Fittings	3,100	3,300	3,500	3,600	3,800	17,300
Cleaning Materials	500	600	600	600	700	3,000
Window cleaning	600	600	700	700	700	3,300
Trade Waste Collection	700	700	800	800	800	3,800
Contract cleaning	2,300	2,500	2,600	2,700	2,800	12,900
Collection of Rubbish	1,000	1,100	1,200	1,200	1,300	5,800
Cleaning General	4,000	4,200	4,500	4,700	4,900	22,300
Facilities management	10,000	10,500	11,100	11,600	12,200	55,400
Service Charge	21,600	86,200	90,500	95,000	99,800	393,100
Kitchen & Canteen Eq	500	600	600	600	700	3,000
Food purchases	1,300	1,400	1,500	1,600	1,600	7,400
Catering supplies - non food	1,400	1,500	1,600	1,700	1,800	8,000
Printing Artwork & Design	1,000	1,100	1,200	1,200	1,300	5,800
Consultant Fees	36,000	37,800	39,700	41,700	43,800	199,000
TV License	200	200	200	200	300	1,100
Networking	10,100	10,700	11,200	11,700	12,300	56,000
Transaction costs	3,000	3,200	3,400	3,500	3,700	16,800
Total Expenditure	146,200	295,700	310,800	325,900	342,400	1,421,000
TOTAL INCOME	(100,000)	(105,000)	(113,500)	(102,900)	(113,200)	(534,600)
NET EXPENDITURE	46,000	189,000	195,500	220,500	228,000	886,400

Appendix C – Spelthorne Business Hub 5-year revenue forecast

C2 - Revenue budget if relocated to Elmbrook House

Business support contract, 100% business rates liability and service charges included. (applying a 5% per annum uplift across all costs)

	2025-26	2026 - 2027	2027 - 2028	2028 - 2029	2029 - 2030	2025 - 2030
	80% Occupancy 0% Business Rate liability No service charge Concession contract in place	80% Occupancy 100% Business Rate liability Assume 5% cost increase Assume 5% revenue increase	80% Occupancy 100% Business Rate liability Assume 5% cost increase Assume 10% revenue increase	80% Occupancy 100% Business Rate liability Assume 5% cost increase Assume 10% revenue increase	80% Occupancy 100% Business Rate liability Assume 5% cost increase Assume 10% revenue increase	80% Occupancy 100% Business Rate liability Assume annual 5% cost increase Assume annual 10% revenue increase
Expenditure	£	£	£	£	£	£
Electricity	30,000	7,875	8,275	8,700	9,125	33,975
Gas	16,300	4,300	4,500	4,725	4,975	18,500
Business rates	-	35,000	36,750	38,500	40,500	150,750
Water charges	2,600	700	725	775	800	3,000
Fixtures & Fittings	3,100	825	875	900	950	3,550
Cleaning Materials	500	150	150	150	175	625
Window cleaning	600	150	175	175	175	675
Trade Waste Collection	700	175	200	200	200	775
Contract cleaning	2,300	625	650	675	700	2,650
Collection of Rubbish	1,000	275	300	300	325	1,200
Cleaning General	4,000	1,050	1,125	1,175	1,225	4,575
Facilities management	10,000	2,625	2,775	2,900	3,050	11,350
Service Charge	21,600	35,000	36,750	38,500	40,500	150,750
Kitchen & Canteen Eq	500	150	150	150	175	625
Food purchases	1,300	350	375	400	400	1,525
Catering supplies - non food	1,400	375	400	425	450	1,650
Printing Artwork & Design	1,000	275	300	300	325	1,200
Consultant Fees	36,000	37,800	39,700	41,700	43,800	163,000
TV License	200	50	50	50	75	225
Networking	10,100	2,675	2,800	2,925	3,075	11,475
Transaction costs	3,000	800	850	875	925	6,450
Total Expenditure	146,200	131,225	137,875	144,500	151,925	711,725
TOTAL INCOME	(100,000)	(70,000)	(75,100)	(58,000)	(61,000)	(364,100)
NET EXPENDITURE	46,200	61,225	62,775	86,500	90,925	347,625

1. Relocating to the Council Offices, Knowle Green

- 1.1 The preferred option is to offer space to businesses based in the Hub at the Council Offices in Knowle Green. This will allow the Council to support start-ups without the burden of capital or revenue costs. The space offered will have its own access.
- 1.2 This offer will give businesses the opportunity to sign-up to the business support program which will focus on assisting them to grow and prosper. It will not be a space offering cheap office accommodation to any business. This offer is about supporting businesses who need more than cost efficiency assistance.
- 1.3 Office space
Officers have identified room 101 at the Council Offices which will cater for up to 12 businesses including a 2-3 desk office.
- 1.4 Carparking
We will offer carparking to a business using the space in the Council carpark.
- 1.5 IT
It is proposed to offer both wired and wireless internet access that already exists in the building. Separate pathways will need to be designated to the space.
- 1.6 Service charge & business rates
As the Council is already paying business rates and maintains the area, there wouldn't be any additional cost to the Council.
- 1.7 Rental income
The space is not of a high standard and therefore rents of around £50 per desk per month would be considered. This would equate to around £500 per month income if an average of 10 businesses were using the space.
- 1.8 S106
The s106 contribution from Shepperton Studios is to provide an incubator in Staines (was allowed to be in Sunbury). There is £40k remaining to be paid which will off-set costs.
- 1.9 Legal expenses
Colleagues in Legal will endeavour to include the issuing of agreements to tenants.
- 1.10 Concession contract
This would not be required as managed in-house.
- 1.11 Additional works
A scope of works will need to be drawn up for internal alterations to ensure that Council staff are separated from the business tenants. Initially this means secure doors on the ground and first floors will need to be upgraded.

One-off revenue costs

i)	Transfer of office/ white goods	£2,000
ii)	Clear building of all furniture	£3,000
iii)	Modifications to access and security at Knowle Green	£20,000

Estimated Sub-total

£25,000

2. Additional budgetary considerations for 2026-27 to 2029-30

See Appendix C – Spelthorne Business Hub 5 year estimated forecast

There are some new revenue line items that are not currently an expense for the Hub at the Summit Centre but would be at Communications House and Elmbrook House – business rates and a service charge.

2.1 Business rates

CoTribe, as a Community Interest Company (CIC) receives 100% rate relief for managing the Hub in Sunbury. Due to the new business rate relief policy approved by Corporate Policy & Resources Committee on 24 March 2025, from 1 April 2026 a CIC will no longer receive rate relief at the time of occupation if the rateable value of the space is £24,000 or above.

Link to : [SBC Non-Domestic Rates Section 47 \(LGFA\) Policy](#)

2.2 Service Charge

This is charged at £14/ft² and has a significant impact on costs that can't be justifiably passed on to tenants.

3. Relocating to Communications House

3.1 Office space

Officers have identified space on the 4th and 5th floors of Communications House, Staines-upon-Thames. There will be associated costs - the majority will be one off capital costs (fit-out).

3.2 ICT communications and internet.

The space is over 2 floors. There is a comms room on each floor but no connection between each. ICT colleagues will move the existing equipment from Summit House to ensure connectivity. A second mains switch would also need to be installed.

ICT servers and racks.

The servers and racks are all in place at the at the Summit Centre with recent license renewals. ICT propose that the best solution for the servers and racks is to move over a Friday and a Monday. The businesses at the Hub will be asked to work from home on those days. ICT colleagues have the capacity to lift the equipment from Sunbury and install it at Communications House over that period. They need 90 days of lead time for the move.

3.3 Office space configuration plan.

Curve, an office configuration planning and construction company, and current supplier, have provided a quote for providing an office space configuration plan.

Once the office space configuration plan is approved, the fit-out of the two floors will need to be procured via a tender process. The space in

Communications House should accommodate approx. 18 offices, 1x meeting room, co-working space for 6-8 users and communal use areas.

The fit out will take approximately 3-5 months to complete.

Moving small items and white goods could be combined with ICT moving costs but is itemised separately.

Legal costs will be incurred for CoTribe Incubator CIC entering a new lease of the new demise at Communications House together with any supporting documentation required, including a new service contract.

3.4 Health & safety costs

A new fire risk assessment, security cameras and access controls will need to be installed prior to occupation.

3.5 Parking

Tenants will expect parking as part of their lease. They would need 20 approximately parking spaces. Some spaces (number to be confirmed) will be demised with 4th and 5th floors east. Additional spaces could be obtained at the nearby Tothill Car Park or the Elmsleigh car park.

3.6 Utilities.

Cushman and Wakefield have the utilities contract for the common areas at Communications House and Elmbrook House. An apportionment is included in the service charge. It is the tenant responsibility to procure utility services within their demise.

3.7 Facilities Management

Cleaning is carried out by a council-wide contract, where the locations are listed. The cleaning at Summit House would be transferred to Communications House and Elmbrook House. YBC Cleaning services will be asked to quote. A contract variation will be required.

3.8 Impact of business rates and service charges

Business rates

The rateable value of the 4th and 5th Floor Communications House's is £147,000. This will incur additional costs to the Council (taken from the Hub budget) of approx. £78,800 (£8.75 per sqft) per annum which will have to be paid either by the assets team (if the space is empty) or by the Hub if they occupy the space. Although there is very limited discretion available in the policy, this applies to the criteria in the policy, and it is the view of business rate colleagues is that discretion would not be applied.

Service Charge

The Council (through its assets function) is currently paying the service charge while the space is unoccupied. This is a cost to cover public area cleaning, heating, lighting and front desk resource. This is a cost that would be met by the Hub if the Hub relocated (£14/ft² or £86,152 per annum). This will also rise year on year, and this has been reflected in **Appendix C** on the estimated 5-year forecast costs.

Implications of adding business rates and service charge to tenant's rents.

If a decision was made to pass the costs of business rates and the service charge to tenants, it would add a further (on average) £7,156 per office. Rents are likely to range from £3,600 to £12,000 pa. Clearly this would not be sustainable for the tenant so rents will be very difficult to achieve.

3.9 Estimated relocation costs (**£188,000**)

One-off capital costs

i)	Fitout*	£150,000.00
	- Partitioning	
	- Decorating	
	- Carpets	
	- Electrical works	
	- Kitchen equipment	

*Although we have an approximate estimate from Curve of £75,000 for a basic fit-out, a survey has not taken place, and the Mechanical & Electrical (M&E) equipment has not been assessed. This figure of £150,000 could reduce.

ii)	ICT equipment (capital cost)	£6,000
iii)	Security equipment (capital cost)	£5,000
	Sub-total	£161,000

One-off revenue costs

iv)	Office space configuration design	£6,500
v)	Transfer of office/ white goods	£2,000
vi)	Legal costs	£15,000
vii)	Fire risk assessment	£500
viii)	Clear building of all furniture	£3,000
	Sub-total	£27,000

4. Relocating to Elmbrook House

4.1 Office space

The Council has approximately 2,500ft² of unoccupied office space in Elmbrook House, Sunbury-on-Thames.

It is possible to convert the space to a mix of individual or hot-desking space and could accommodate around 14 businesses.

4.2 ICT communications and internet.

The space is over 1 floor. There is no comms room. ICT colleagues will move the existing equipment from Summit House to ensure connectivity.

4.3 ICT servers and racks.

The servers and racks are all in place at the at the Summit Centre with recent license renewals. ICT propose that the best solution for the servers and racks is to move over a Friday and a Monday. The businesses at the Hub will be

asked to work from home on those days. ICT colleagues have the capacity to lift the equipment from Sunbury and install it at Elmbrook House over that period. They need 90 days of lead time for the move.

4.4 Health & safety costs

A new fire risk assessment, security cameras and access controls will need to be installed prior to occupation.

4.5 Parking

Parking is required at Elmbrook House for office and hot-desk customers.

4.6 Utilities.

Cushman and Wakefield have the utilities contract for the common areas at Elmbrook House. An apportionment is included in the service charge. It is the tenant responsibility to procure utility services within their demise.

4.7 Facilities Management

Cleaning is carried out by a council-wide contract, where the locations are listed. The cleaning at Summit House would be transferred to Communications House and Elmbrook House. YBC Cleaning services will be asked to quote. A contract variation will be required.

4.8 Impact of business rates and service charges

Business rates and service charges are applicable and an extra cost to the Council. These equate to approx. £70k pa (£35k business rates and £35k service charge). The average rent would be approx. £10,000 pa and an extra £17,750 added to the rent if tenants are required to pay for these. Clearly, as this is more than double the rent, it is extremely unlikely tenants would pay this, leading to a fall in income.

4.9 Estimated relocation costs (£115,500)

One-off capital costs

i)	Fitout*	£95,000.00
	- Partitioning	
	- Decorating	
	- Carpets	
	- Electrical works	
	- Kitchen equipment	
ii)	ICT equipment (capital cost)	£6,000
iii)	Security equipment (capital cost)	£5,000
	Sub-total	£106,000

One-off **revenue** costs

iv)	Transfer of office/ white goods	£2,000
v)	Legal costs	£4,000
vi)	Fire risk assessment	£500
vii)	Clear building of all furniture	£3,000

Sub-total

£9,500

5. General Operational considerations

5.1 Concession contract*

CoTribe has a concession contract to manage the Business Hub's day-to-day operations including marketing and leasing offices and co-working desks. They are responsible for tenant leases and collection of rents and deposits. The operation contract expires on 3 September 2026. An extension of up to 1 year can be exercised and the notice period is 1 month.

5.2 Management arrangements

The 2025-26 service plan and budget assumed the operation would be managed in-house to save costs. A subsequent analysis of external management costs versus managing the operation in-house concluded that it was more cost effective to lease the space to CoTribe and continue the contract with CoTribe to operate the space on the Council's behalf at Communications House.

* The concession contract would not be required at Elmbrook House or the Council Offices as the operation can be managed in-house.



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	23/6/2025
Commissioner engagement (if report focused on issues of concern to Commissioners such as Finance, Assets etc)	Yes	23/06/2025
Relevant Group Head review	Yes	23/06/2025
MAT+ review (to have been circulated at least 5 working days before Stage 2)	Yes	20/05/2025
This item is on the Forward Plan for the relevant committee	Yes	11/09/2025
	Reviewed by	
Risk comments		
Legal comments	Jo Clare	14/08/2025
HR comments (if applicable)		

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
Monitoring Officer commentary – at least 5 working days before MAT	DMO J. Clare	15/8/25
S151 Officer commentary	T. Collier	15/8/25
Confirm final report cleared by MAT		

Business, Infrastructure and Growth Committee

Date of meeting: Thursday 11 September 2025

Title	Ashford Business Improvement District (BID) Feasibility Study
Purpose of the report	To make a decision
Report Author	Julia Owen, Senior Economic Development Officer
Ward(s) Affected	Ashford Common Ashford East Ashford North and Stanwell South Ashford Town
Exempt	No
Corporate Priority	Resilience Services
Recommendations	Committee is asked to: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Agree to progress the development of a Business Improvement District (BID) for Ashford town centre proposal to the next stage. 2. Note the feasibility study undertaken on a potential Business Improvement District (BID) in Ashford completed by consultants Heartflood (Appendix A).
Reason for Recommendation	A BID in Ashford would support revitalising the town centre by empowering local businesses to collaboratively invest in improvements, drive footfall, and enhance economic resilience.

1. Executive summary of the report

What is the situation	Why we want to do something
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ashford town is identified as a location where additional investment would be beneficial following local concerns about Anti-Social Behaviour, empty shops, and low footfall. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To support our local retail centres and implement measures that can improve their vitality, increase footfall and prosperity and make residents feel safe and secure.
This is what we want to do about it	These are the next steps
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Progress the development of a Business Improvement District (BID) proposal for Ashford town centre with the local business community, working towards a ballot of local businesses in Summer 2026. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gain approval from Business, Infrastructure and Growth (BIG) Committee to take forward the recommendation in the feasibility report and move the BID proposal to the next stage of development, leading on to a ballot in summer 2026.

2. Key issues

A Business Improvement District (BID) is an independent, business led partnership focused on improving and enhancing a defined commercial area. BIDs are established through a formal ballot and funded by a levy on eligible businesses, calculated based on the rateable value of their premises. Once approved, a BID operates independently of the local authority, delivering a business-led programme of services and initiatives for a fixed term—typically five years.

Place management consultants Heartflood were commissioned in January 2025 to undertake a feasibility study to support the consideration of a BID in Ashford, as a possible measure to improve the vitality of the town. The Feasibility Study (Appendix A) recommends that there is ample viability for Ashford to further consider the next stage of BID development.

This section outlines the main criteria upon which the decision to progress with a BID in Ashford should be based, expands on the recommendations of the feasibility study and highlights the key considerations that must be addressed before moving to the next stage.

2.1 Main Criteria for Decision-Making

Economic Vitality and Resilience

Ashford town centre faces persistent challenges including high street decline, vacant units, and limited local promotion. A BID offers a structured business-led mechanism to deliver targeted investment and initiatives that could improve the town's vitality and long-term economic resilience.

Stakeholder Support and Engagement

The feasibility study conducted by Heartflood revealed moderate support among local businesses, with 61% of respondents to an engagement survey being in favour of testing a BID proposal through a formal ballot. This suggests a promising level of interest, but further extensive engagement is required to build consensus and explore key considerations—particularly around the affordability of the levy and its potential impact on smaller businesses.

Financial Viability and Levy Structure

Ashford's relatively low total rateable value limits the income potential of a BID unless a higher levy is applied. The Feasibility Study recommends a 2.9% levy which could generate approximately £80,000 annually, but it exceeds typical BID levy rates and was not tested in the consultation.

Businesses showed strongest support for a 1.75% levy, which would generate around £40,950 budget (of which a proportion is required to cover the cost of a part time BID Manager salary).

NB: Levy calculations based on NNDR list with an exemption threshold for properties with a Rateable Value under £5,000 and an estimated levy collection rate of 95% applied.

Strategic Fit and Precedent

Nearby towns such as Staines-upon-Thames, Walton and Twickenham have successfully implemented BIDs, demonstrating the potential benefits of these place-based mechanisms. However, Ashford's context differs, particularly in terms of business density and rateable value, requiring a tailored approach for the town.

2.2 Key Considerations to Address

Affordability and Fairness of the Levy

While the proposed 2.9% levy could generate a more meaningful delivery budget, it significantly exceeds first-term BID levies (1.53%). This level was not tested with businesses during consultation and raises affordability concerns, particularly for smaller independent retailers. Officers advise that this levy rate would require robust business engagement and modelling before progressing to ballot.

Boundary Definition and Inclusion

The proposed BID boundary focuses on the linear town centre encompassing approximately 240 businesses. This area was selected based on the concentration of commercial activity that would likely benefit from any BID interventions, as well as limited interest shown by businesses outside of the core area. Further engagement and modelling as part of the next phase should consider whether the boundary map is extended to include specific businesses and areas that would benefit and be interested in a local BID and increase levy potential.

Administrative and Financial Risk

Developing the BID to ballot stage is estimated to cost £40,000–£50,000, with Spelthorne Borough Council bearing the full financial risk. While a £40,000 growth bid has been approved, careful planning is needed to ensure value for money and to mitigate risk.

Service Delivery Expectations

Businesses would develop a Business Plan as part of the next stage of BID development, setting out key priorities and actions for the area. This could include enhanced street cleaning, marketing, events, and security enhancements. Lower levy rates may present challenges in meeting these expectations, which could affect confidence in the BID model, so careful forecasting of costs is important.

Governance and Independence

Once established all eligible businesses within the BID area are required to pay a levy. Whilst the BID levy is billed by the local authority the funding is remitted to the BID company to deliver agreed services and initiatives outlined in its Business Plan. Whilst the Council may have representation on the BID board it does not direct BID priorities and budgets.

3. Options appraisal and proposal

3.1 Option 1 – Progress development of the BID proposal (Recommended)

Progress the development of a Business Improvement District (BID) proposal for Ashford to the next stage, as recommended by the feasibility study.

Advantages

- This recognises the potential for a Business Improvement District to deliver targeted support to the town centre and support local regeneration
- Could deliver a steady, business led investment stream annually empowering Ashford businesses to shape and lead improvements, increasing accountability and long-term sustainability.
- Aligns with BID best practise seen in neighbouring towns such as Staines, Twickenham and Kingston.

Disadvantages

- Levy income would also need to cover administrative costs (including BID manager and levy collection) leaving limited budget for visible improvements.
- Risk of ballot failure concerns, resulting in reputational damage and unrecovered costs (£40,000 to £50,000 to take proposal to ballot stage).
- Proposed BID timing interacts with wider local government reform in Surrey creating governance uncertainty.

3.2 Option 2 – Do not pursue the BID proposal but support Ashford through a coordinated multi-agency approach

Advantages

- Allows for the design of quick-win, visible interventions (for example, small scale events or security initiatives) supports collaborative working with partners and sharing costs
- Demonstrates the Council's ongoing commitment to Ashford despite not proceeding with the BID currently.
- Responds directly to feedback from Ashford businesses during the engagement phase while avoiding the cost of developing a BID proposal.

Disadvantages

- Would not provide a formal mechanism for business led governance of longer-term investment, alternative funding may be more limited in scale and duration than what a BID could provide, reducing the scope of interventions.

3.3 Option 3 – Decide not to pursue a BID proposal for Ashford at this time.

Advantages

- Acknowledges the financial pressures currently faced by local businesses, including reduced rates relief and increased national insurance contributions.
- Enables the Council to redirect focus and resources toward alternative ways of supporting the town centre, without being constrained by BID ballot timelines or governance requirements.

- Avoids committing £40,000 - £50,000 of Council funding to a BID development process and ballot with no guarantee of success.

Disadvantages

- Businesses that supported the BID proposal may feel disappointed or lack of support for Ashford.
- Missed opportunity to establish a sustainable, business-led organisation with private sector investment.

4. Risk implications

4.1 Option 1– Risks and Mitigations

Financial Risk: Up to £50k could be spent with no return if the BID ballot doesn't achieve a 'yes' vote.

Mitigation: Ensure extensive engagement with business community on BID benefits to encourage a yes vote, particularly if resulted in a BID levy is proposed at a lower rate than 2.9%

Delivery Risk: Once core costs (such as a BID Manager) are accounted for limited funding may remain for local projects and interventions

Mitigation: Careful planning during a BID proposal stage, including a robust costed Business Plan with clearly prioritised delivery options.

Operational Risk: Levy collection may require additional council resources.

Mitigation: Plan for dedicated support and streamline processes early, normally the additional resources required would be covered by a small administration charge for collecting the levy.

Engagement Risk: Possible low turnout or rejection of proposal at ballot.

Mitigation: Strengthen engagement and build consensus before ballot.

Reputational Risk: A failed ballot could damage trust and future engagement.

Mitigation: Communicate openly and manage expectations throughout.

4.2 Option 2 – Risks and Mitigations

Governance Risk: No formal structure for long-term business governance.

Mitigation: Set up a local business forum to guide and monitor progress.

Financial Risk: Funding may be limited or short-term.

Mitigation: Leverage external grants and align with existing public sector initiatives.

Coordination Risk: Coordination across agencies may be slow or inconsistent.

Mitigation: Establish clear roles, timelines, and regular review meetings.

Expectation Risk: Expectations may exceed delivery capacity.

Mitigation: Prioritise quick wins and communicate transparently with stakeholder.

4.3 Option 3 Risks and Mitigations

Reputational Risk: Businesses that support the BID proposal may feel overlooked or disengaged.

Mitigation: Maintain regular communication and involve business community in alternative improvement initiatives.

Strategic Risk: Loss of opportunity to establish a long-term, business-led investment model.

Mitigation: Explore other collaborative funding approaches, such as town centre partnerships or grant programmes.

Perception Risk: Perception that Ashford is being deprioritised compared to neighbouring towns with BIDs.

Mitigation: Publicly commit to a multi-agency action plan and deliver visible improvements to demonstrate support.

Future Planning Risk: Reduced momentum for future BID consideration.

Mitigation: Keep BID as a future option and monitor business sentiment through ongoing engagement.

5. Financial implications

There is budget one-off provision, for 2025-26 to cover the cost of moving onto the next stage of engagement, this provision will fall away in 2026-27 Budget. If the decision. If Committee decided not to proceed this would mean either the one-off expenditure on the proposal would not be incurred or alternatively some of this could be re-directed to exploring other ways to support the Ashford town centre.

6. Legal comments

- 6.1 Establishment of a BID is subject to statutory procedure within Local Government Act 2002 and the Business Improvement Districts (England) Regulations 2004 (BID Regulations). Any BID proposal must be approved by the ratepayers in the BID area on a vote in a ballot. The Council has an obligation to ensure that any ballot is operated in accordance with BID Regulations.

Corporate implications

7. S151 Officer comments

- 7.1 In principle the S151 is very supportive of encouraging viable BIDs within the Borough as if they are successful and encourage prosperity and footfall, they are good for residents, businesses and for the Council's taxbase. The BID in Staines-upon-Thames has made a very positive impact.
- 7.2 The risk as set out in this report is due to the constrained size of the BID footprint (in part driven by a focus on retail businesses within the centre of the town more likely to vote for a BID) that compared to other BIDs a relatively high percentage BID levy percentage would be required. In the context of the pressures the business community are currently under and given that only 2% of businesses responding to the consultation said that they would support a

lower levy of 2.25% the risk is that a BID ballot would not achieve a majority in favour, and the costs of up to £50,000 would prove abortive to the Council.

- 7.3 Therefore, it could be a lower risk and better value for money for the Council to explore other avenues for addressing the concerns around Ashford town centre and how to lever in additional funding into the area.
- 7.4 Additionally, £80,000 as an annual BID budget, once administrative costs, cost of levy collection and factoring in non-collection rate for the levy would, compared to other BID's budgets, be quite small and the BID would therefore be constrained as to what additional impact it could achieve for local businesses.
- 7.5 However, the S151 Officer, recognises that that it is potentially possible that a successful campaign and extensive engagement could persuade local businesses to support a BID and associated levy. In that context, this is a decision for the Committee to make as to whether to proceed with the proposal to engage with businesses to put forward the case for the BID, especially as the Budget provision is in place on a one-off basis.
- 7.6 If that engagement process resulted in a proposed levy rate lower than 2.9% that would increase the chances of a yes vote by businesses. If Committee decided not to proceed with the proposal for promoting a BID, the S151 Officer assumes the one-off Budget provision built into the 2025-26 budget could be used to pump prime progressing alternative proposals and that then the focus would be on leveraging in funding from other sources.

8. Monitoring Officer comments

All relevant legal implications have been taken into account and are set out in Legal comments paragraph 6 above.

9. Procurement comments

- 9.1 If option 1 is preferred, then a tender exercise for preparing the BID for ballot will need to be conducted. Any procurement exercise will be undertaken in accordance with the Procurement Act 2023 and the Council's Contract Standing Orders.

10. Equality and Diversity

No impact identified

11. Sustainability/Climate Change Implications

- 11.1 The implications of forming a BID in Ashford on sustainability and climate change are twofold. The BID would be a focal point for local sustainable development as they can promote greener spaces, pedestrian access and cycling infrastructure to support green business growth.
- 11.2 However, a BID's primary function is to increase economic activity. This will lead to further resource consumption and increased emissions. Particularly, some prioritise short term business growth over climate goals.

12. Other considerations

- 12.1 The proposed implementation timeline for a BID in Ashford would coincide with the creation of new unitary authorities in Surrey from April 2027. This level of

change introduces a level of uncertainty regarding future governance arrangements, levy collection responsibilities and long-term support, representing an additional risk to a newly established BID.

- 12.2 In June 2025 Ashford was designated a 'hot spot' area by Surrey Police. As such the town centre will benefit from Home Office funding to support improvements in the area, including enhanced foot patrols by officers. There is a planned stakeholder workshop in September to discuss support for Ashford and to develop an operational plan.

13. Timetable for implementation

- 13.1 The implementation timetable will need to be confirmed once a preferred option is selected. If Option 1 is chosen, the feasibility study outlines a 12 - 14 month timeline to include:

- the appointment of a BID consultant to project manage the process
- the creation of a BID shadow board of local businesses and business groups
- extensive consultation with the business community around the BID boundary
- the potential levy change and the priority projects for a Business Plan to focus on
- the formal ballot organisation (see Appendix A Feasibility Study, page 32)

14. Contact

Contact Name: Julia Owen j.owen@spelthorne.gov.uk

Background papers: Background papers: MHCLG : Information and guidance on Business Improvement Districts.

Appendices: Appendix A – Ashford Feasibility Study produced by Heartflood June 2025

Guidance

Business Improvement Districts

Information and guidance on Business Improvement Districts.

From: **Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government**
(/government/organisations/ministry-of-housing-communities-local-government)
and **Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities**
(/government/organisations/departments-for-levelling-up-housing-and-communities)

Published 8 November 2014

Applies to England

Contents

- 1. Overview
- 2. What is a Business Improvement District?
- 3. How is a Business Improvement District established?
- 4. Who pays the levy?
- 5. How long will a Business Improvement District last?
- 6. Who manages the Business Improvement District?
- 7. Appeals
- 8. What if I am unhappy with a Business Improvement District?
- 9. Enquiries or general information about Business Improvement Districts

1. Overview

Business Improvement Districts are business led partnerships which are created through a ballot process to deliver additional services to local

businesses.

They can be a powerful tool for directly involving local businesses in local activities and allow the business community and local authorities to work together to improve the local trading environment.

2. What is a Business Improvement District?

A Business Improvement District is a defined area in which a levy is charged on all eligible business rate payers in addition to the business rates bill. This levy is used to develop projects which will benefit businesses in the local area.

There is no limit on what projects or services can be provided through a Business Improvement District. The only requirement is that it should be something that is in addition to services provided by local authorities. Improvements may include, but are not limited to, extra safety/security, cleansing and environmental measures.

Typically, a Business Improvement District is within a local authority boundary but in April 2013 government introduced Cross Boundary Business Improvement Districts enabling Business Improvement Districts to operate across local authority boundaries.

3. How is a Business Improvement District established?

A Business Improvement District can be set up by the local authority, a business rate payer or a person or company whose purpose is to develop the Business Improvement District area, or that has an interest in the land in the area.

The Business Improvement District proposer

The Business Improvement District proposer is required to develop a proposal and submit this to the local authority, along with a business plan.

The proposal should set out the services to be provided and the size and scope of the Business Improvement District. It will also set out who is liable for the levy, the amount of levy to be collected and how it is calculated.

At least 84 days before submitting proposals, the ballot proposer should notify the local authority and the Secretary of State of their intention to put the BID proposal to ballot.

At least 42 days before the final ballot date, the ballot holder should publish a notice stating the date of the ballot, and send a copy of this to the Secretary of State.

These notices should be sent to the Secretary of State at NDR@communities.gov.uk or via post to:

The Secretary of State
c/o Local Taxation Division
Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government
2nd Floor, Fry Building
2 Marsham Street
London, SW1P 4DF

The ballot

Businesses that are subject to the levy, as set out in the proposals, vote in a ballot. This determines whether the scheme goes ahead.

A successful vote is one that has a simple majority both in votes cast and in rateable value of votes cast. Each business entitled to vote in a Business Improvement District ballot is allowed one vote in respect of each property occupied or (if unoccupied) owned by them in the geographical area of the Business Improvement District.

Once the Business Improvement District is in operation the levy is charged on all businesses within the Business Improvement District area (regardless of whether or how that business voted in the ballot).

See further [guidance on how to establish a Business Improvement District](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/business-improvement-districts-guidance-and-best-practice) (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/business-improvement-districts-guidance-and-best-practice>).

The local authority

The local authority will manage the ballot process. However, if the local authority is of the opinion that the Business Improvement District arrangements are likely to conflict to a significant extent with an existing policy, place a financial burden on rate payers or the burden from the levy is unjust, it can decide to veto the proposals.

The local authority can only veto proposals within 14 days from the date of the ballot.

If it appears that a significant breach of the rules has occurred during the ballot process a [request to declare the ballot void](https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2004/2443/regulation/9/made) (<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2004/2443/regulation/9/made>) may be

submitted to the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities within 28 days of the result of the ballot being published.

Find further [guidance on the local authority's role within the establishment of a Business Improvement District](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/business-improvement-districts-technical-guide-for-local-authorities) (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/business-improvement-districts-technical-guide-for-local-authorities>).

4. Who pays the levy?

The Business Improvement District proposal must set out who is liable for the levy, the amount of levy to be collected and how it is calculated.

The proposal should also provide details of any [relief from the Business Improvement District levy](https://www.gov.uk/apply-for-business-rate-relief) (<https://www.gov.uk/apply-for-business-rate-relief>) that may apply and who is eligible. The amount and type of relief is dependent on local circumstances but could typically include charity relief.

Usually Business Improvement Districts charge a levy rate of between 1% and 4% of rateable value.

However, this is dependent on local circumstances and there is also an increasing number of Business Improvement Districts that charge using a banded system. (Businesses are grouped together according to their rateable value. The levy charged will be a percentage of this rateable value.)

5. How long will a Business Improvement District last?

The maximum period that a Business Improvement District levy can be charged is for 5 years.

Once the term is completed the Business Improvement District will automatically cease. If the Business Improvement District Company wants to continue its activities it must hold a new ballot.

6. Who manages the Business Improvement District?

A Business Improvement District is managed by a Business Improvement District body. This is often a private company but can be a partnership with the local authority. Most Business Improvement District bodies are not-for-profit companies.

The Business Improvement District body is responsible for developing and implementing the proposal which sets out how the Business Improvement

District will operate.

They will provide the local authority with this proposal along with the business plan (including the estimated cash flow and predicted revenue to be generated by the Business Improvement District) along with the financial management arrangements for the Business Improvement District body.

The local authority will manage billing and the collection of the levy and will hold the levy in a ring-fenced revenue account on behalf of the Business Improvement District body.

7. Appeals

Legislation allows for appeals to be made against the establishment of a Business Improvement District. The Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities can only consider an appeal if it appears that material irregularities have occurred during the ballot process.

The Secretary of State cannot consider questions surrounding the nature or merit of the Business Improvement District or Business Improvement District policy.

Material irregularity

This is defined in [regulations](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2004/2443/regulation/9/made) (<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2004/2443/regulation/9/made>) as:

- (a) a contravention of any requirement in the regulations which, in the Secretary of State's opinion, means that it is likely that voting in the ballot or renewal ballot has been affected to a significant extent
- (b) persons other than those that are entitled to vote have voted in the ballot or renewal ballot and, in the Secretary of State's opinion, it is likely that the result has been affected to a significant extent
- (c) persons entitled to vote have been prevented from voting or hindered from voting freely in accordance with their own opinion and, in the Secretary of State's opinion, it is likely that this has affected the result of the ballot or renewal ballot to a significant extent

Valid appeals

A request must be made in writing to the Secretary of State within 28 days of the result of the ballot being published and can only be made by the Business Improvement District proposer, the Business Improvement District

Company, at least 5% of the number of persons entitled to vote in the Business Improvement District ballot or the relevant local authority.

The Secretary of State must ensure the request is valid. Evidence should be submitted that a material irregularity, within the definition set out above, occurred in the ballot process.

If the request is made by 5% of those entitled to vote, the evidence should include a list of names of all the persons submitting the request along with the addresses of their businesses and supporting signatures. Without this evidence the Secretary of State will be unable to consider the request.

The process

On receipt of a valid appeal, the Secretary of State will notify the person that submitted the appeal and (if different), the relevant local authority and the Business Improvement District body, in writing that he has received a request and send a copy of this to each of them.

Each party will be given 28 days to provide a written response. These will be copied to the other parties involved and a further 14 days will be given.

Once all responses have been received they will be considered, and the Secretary of State will write to all parties with his decision. If he considers a material irregularity has occurred, he may declare the ballot void and the relevant local authority will be required to arrange a re-ballot.

The result of the ballot will be valid unless and until the Secretary of State declares the ballot void. This means that if the commencement date of the Business Improvement District arrangements (which must be set out in the proposals) occurs before the appeal has been determined; the levy may be collected and held by the local authority.

It is for the local authority to decide whether they will pass the levy to the Business Improvement District body or hold it in the revenue account in these circumstances.

Appeals should be sent to the Secretary of State at NDR@communities.gov.uk or via post to:

The Secretary of State
c/o Local Taxation Division
Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government
2nd Floor, Fry Building
2 Marsham Street
London, SW1P 4DF

8. What if I am unhappy with a Business Improvement District?

The Secretary of State has no formal supervisory role. The development and operational arrangements of a Business Improvement District are therefore a matter for the relevant local authority or Business Improvement District proposer.

Any complaint about the activities of the Business Improvement District proposer/company or the local authority should be taken up with them first.

If necessary, a complaint against the local authority can be pursued by contacting the [Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman](https://www.lgo.org.uk/contact-us) (<https://www.lgo.org.uk/contact-us>).

9. Enquiries or general information about Business Improvement Districts

You can contact us [via our webform](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/contact-the-ministry-of-housing-communities-and-local-government) (<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/contact-the-ministry-of-housing-communities-and-local-government>).

Alternatively, you can write to:

Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government
1st Floor, Fry Building
2 Marsham Street
London, SW1P 4DF

General enquiries: if you are a member of the public, you can call 030 3444 0000.

Published 8 November 2014

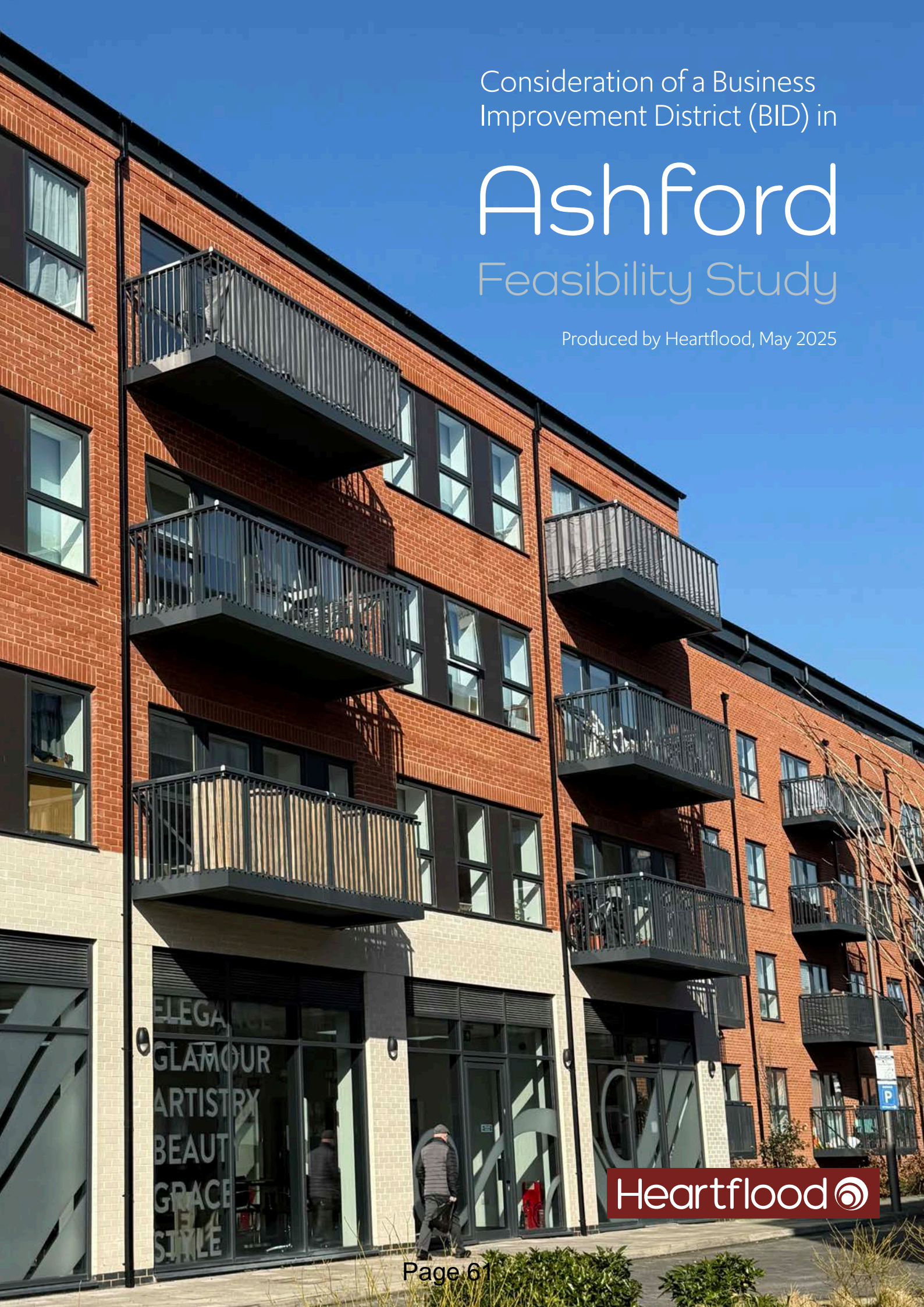
This page is intentionally left blank

Consideration of a Business
Improvement District (BID) in

Ashford

Feasibility Study

Produced by Heartflood, May 2025



Heartflood 

Contents

Executive summary	X
--------------------------------	---

Section 1

Introduction	X
1.1 Project background and outline	XX
1.2 Business Improvement Districts	XX

Section 2

Study area	XX
2.1 Ashford town centre overview	XX

Section 3

Survey analysis	XX
3.1 Survey overview	XX
3.2 Recent business performance	XX
3.3 Anticipated business performance	XX
3.4 Business perceptions of Ashford	XX
3.4.1 Perceptions of main visitor uses	XX
3.4.2 Economic barriers	XX
3.5 Views regarding a possible Business Improvement District	XX
3.5.1 Possible benefits of a Business Improvement District	XX
3.5.2 Possible Business Improvement District projects	XX
3.5.3 Possible Business Improvement District levy	XX
3.5.4 Possible Business Improvement District boundary	XX
3.5.5 Willingness to support the process of developing a Business Improvement District	XX
3.5.6 Overall support for a Business Improvement District	XX

Section 4

Key considerations	xx
4.1 Possible BID levy options and financial income modelling	xx
4.2 Possible levy exemptions	xx
4.3 Comparison with established BIDs	xx
4.4 Likely voting patterns in Ashford	xx
4.5 The creation of a Development Board	xx
4.6 Next steps and risks	xx

Section 5

Overall study recommendations	xx
--------------------------------------	----

Appendix 1

Further survey feedback	xx
--------------------------------	----

Prepared by Heartflood Ltd for Spelthorne Borough Council 2025.

This document is for general informative purposes only and, whilst all efforts have been made to ensure that the information contained herein is correct, no express or implied representation or warranty is made by Heartflood as to its accuracy or completeness. Reliance should not therefore be placed upon the information for any purpose and no responsibility or liability is accepted by Heartflood for any loss arising from any use of this document or its contents or otherwise arising in connection with this document. All rights are reserved and no part of this document may be transmitted or reproduced in any material form by any means, electronic, recording, mechanical, photocopying or otherwise, or stored in any information storage or retrieval system of any nature, without the prior written permission of Heartflood Ltd.





Executive summary

Heartflood were recently commissioned to support the consideration of the introduction of a Business Improvement District (BID) in Ashford.

BIDs are now widespread and are considered by most within the industry to be the pre-eminent model of management and operational investment within town and city centres.

A feature of this study has been a survey of a sample of business representatives within central Ashford in order to identify their collective stance on a possible BID proposal for the town centre. Responses were received from 76 businesses, which expressed a good degree of support towards the concept of a BID in Ashford at this stage, with 61% of the respondents agreeing that, subject to a great deal more business consultation, a BID should be tested in a business vote, 31% undecided, and only 8% disagreeing with the concept of a BID for Ashford.

The survey responses therefore suggest that there is ample viability for Ashford to further consider the next phase of BID development, within the town centre area based on the following recommendations:

- Ashford moves towards further detailed consultation and ultimately the production of a draft BID Business Plan
- A timescale is adopted with a view to a BID ballot taking place in May 2026 and a BID operating from August 2026, subject to a positive vote
- Further extensive consultation is carried out with the town centre business community around the following outline proposals:
 - a) The BID boundary to cover the designated area defined on page 25
 - b) A 2.9% BID levy
 - c) A BID term to be proposed to cover the maximum period of five years
 - d) An exemption level of £5,000 Rateable Value to be set, meaning that listings with a Rateable Value of less than £5,000 would not be liable for the BID levy

- e) Priority projects for a draft Business Plan to focus on the following initial themes, although to be subject to far greater business consultation to provide a refined final Business Plan:

1. Improving the appearance of empty shops.

2. Security improvements, possibly to include more Policing.

3. CCTV improvements.

4. Car parking promotions.

5. Schemes to save your business money on overheads.

6. Street markets.

7. Street cleansing & street washing, including chewing gum removal.

8. Physical improvements to paving, landscaping or street furniture.

9. Improvements to problem areas, such as graffiti or fly-tipping removal.

10. Projects to encourage new businesses into the town centre.

The report recommendations would result in the following:

- Approximately 240 eligible business premises being part of a BID
- Annual BID levy income of approximately £80,000
- Total BID income over a five-year term of approximately £396,000

Section 1 Introduction

Section 2 Study area

Section 3 Survey analysis

Section 4 Key considerations

Section 5 Overall study recommendations

Appendix 1 Further survey feedback



↑ Reception
← Car Park
← Dismantling
← Sports Hall
← JCC Pitch

Our Environmental Policy
Beyond the Gate

Section 1

Introduction

1.1 Project background and outline

Heartflood were recently commissioned by Spelthorne Borough Council, to support a Feasibility Study on the introduction of a Business Improvement District (BID) in central Ashford, to include an initial response from a sample of town centre businesses & organisations.

The study began in January 2025, with this report published in May 2025 and the main requirements of the project were based on the following:

- A summary of what a BID entails and the identification of existing BIDs in the surrounding area
- A profile of Ashford town centre, to include reference to the current business mix
- Identification of the possible scope of work which could be carried out by a BID in addition to any current activities or initiatives
- Detailed financial modelling of a potential BID, including one or more proposals for the possible boundary of a potential BID area, with reference to the number of businesses which might be included and any possible BID levy thresholds
- An outline of any risks associated with the BID process

This report has been produced by Heartflood Ltd and the project team involved can point to over 25 years of combined experience within Place Management, including considerable expertise in the field of BIDs since their introduction in the UK.

1.2 Overview of Business Improvement Districts

Since their introduction in the UK in 2004, over 340 Business Improvement Districts have been created across Britain. BIDs operate through the levy of a small percentage on Business Rates, with the actual levy percentage in most towns and cities tending to lie between 1.5% and 2%, meaning that a business or organisation would pay an annual levy of between 1.5% and 2% of the rateable value of their premises.

All BIDs have a clear and focused role, contained within a Business Plan, which all eligible businesses & organisations are invited to vote upon in a ballot. The development of the plan will almost always have been led by the business community within the area in question and will have involved extensive consultation. In this way, the BID Business Plan should include the priority improvement actions identified by local businesses and also be financially robust.

Under current legislation, any BID needs to be established through a ballot of those eligible businesses and organisations listed on the rating database held by the local Billing Authority, in this case Spelthorne Borough Council, and the vote is conducted entirely by post. For any BID to be successful, there needs to be a majority of positive votes within the total number of votes cast and these positive votes also need to form a majority of the total aggregate rateable value of all the votes cast.

It is important to note that the purpose of a BID is to add projects and activities to a town or city over and above those which are already taking place. A BID is not, therefore, a mechanism for any public or private sector body to cease to provide established activities.

The maximum term covered by a BID Business Plan is 5 years and the continuation of any BID beyond their initial term is reliant on the production of a new Business Plan and a subsequent ballot of those within the BID area. The growth in the number of BIDs continues to rise and those already operating in centres local to Ashford include Staines upon Thames, Twickenham, Slough and Kingston-upon-Thames.

Section 1
Introduction

Section 2
Study area

Section 3
Survey analysis

Section 4
Key considerations

Section 5
Overall study
recommendations

Appendix 1
Further survey feedback



Section 2

Study area

2.1 Ashford town centre overview

Ashford is located approximately 15 miles south of central London, within the Borough of Spelthorne, and lies approximately 8 miles southeast of Slough and 9 miles northeast of Guildford, the County town of Surrey. With a population of approximately 25,000, Ashford is served by a town centre which takes a relatively linear form, predominantly straddling Church Road, and occupies the role of a District Centre, serving the day to day needs of the immediate catchment. The area is an attractive place to live, being situated only 2 miles east of the primary Borough town of Staines-upon-Thames, and also being served by a railway station, which provides good connectivity to central London. The town is served by both national & independent retail, has a reasonable food, drink & leisure offer and contains a range of services, such as banks, a library, a medical centre and a range of professional businesses, such as solicitors and accountants. The emerging local plan for Spelthorne, aimed to cover the next decade or so, identifies a range of measures to maintain the vitality of Ashford, which include bringing unused retail units back into occupation, encouraging expansion of the primary retail area and undertaking improvements to the public realm.

Although Ashford exhibits a range of strengths, it is not currently considered to be meeting its full potential in economic terms, as characterised by car parking pressures, as well as problems with crime & antisocial behaviour. Whilst, as with many areas of the UK, Ashford is still recovering from the recent pandemic, the vitality of the town centre has also experienced challenging times over the past 2 years or so. The recent Borough Council Town Centres Strategy identifies approximately 160 businesses within central Ashford, clustered within seven main streets, comprised of Church Parade, Church Road, Fir Tree Place, New Parade, Station Approach, Station Road and Woodthorpe Road, and the document also highlights the top three recent business concerns as being car parking, cleanliness and a lack of promotion of the town. Having undertaken visits to the town centre, our on-site assessments resulted in the following observations:



CONSIDERABLE SPACE
DEVOTED TO CAR PARKING IN
SERVICE ROADS, WHICH MAKES
PAVEMENTS FEEL NARROW



GOOD BUSINESS MIX,
WITH RELATIVELY
HIGH PROPORTION OF
INDEPENDENT BUSINESSES



ADVERTISING BANNERS ON
SOME LAMP COLUMNS



WELCOME TO
ASHFORD SIGNAGE



RELATIVELY MODERN
ARCHITECTURE



ATTRACTIVE NEW
CENTRAL SQUARE AREA



LIMITED PUBS OR
RESTAURANTS



OVERALL LOW VACANCY
RATE, ALTHOUGH TWO LARGE
LANDMARK VACANT UNITS



LARGE CENTRAL LIBRARY



GOOD NUMBER OF CAR
PARKING SPACES, ALTHOUGH
FEELS UNMANAGED



FEELING OF SECURITY



WAR MEMORIAL SCULPTURE
AND PUBLIC CLOCK FEATURE



EVENTS & VIBRANCY



GOOD TRANSPORT LINKS,
INCLUDING RAILWAY STATION

Source Heatflood Limited

Section 1
Introduction

Section 2
Study area

Section 3
Survey Analysis

Section 4
Key considerations

Section 5
Overall study
recommendations

Appendix 1
Further survey feedback



Section 3

Survey analysis

3.1 Survey overview

Business feedback was captured in the form of a structured questionnaire, which gathered a number of key pieces of information and which was available to businesses both as a hard-copy questionnaire and as an online form. Responses were also encouraged via links with Ashford Wide.

The survey took place over a 10 week period and ran between 3rd February and 14th April 2025. The survey yielded a total of 76 responses, with the survey responses being considered to form a representative sample of the town centre area, in that they consist of a balance in terms of both the of type of organisation responding to the survey and the geographical spread of the location of responses. The results of the survey are summarised as follows.

3.2 Recent business performance

The survey responses indicated relatively poor business performance over the preceding 12 months, with 42% reporting that turnover had remained static, and almost three times as many businesses reporting reduced, rather than increased turnover.

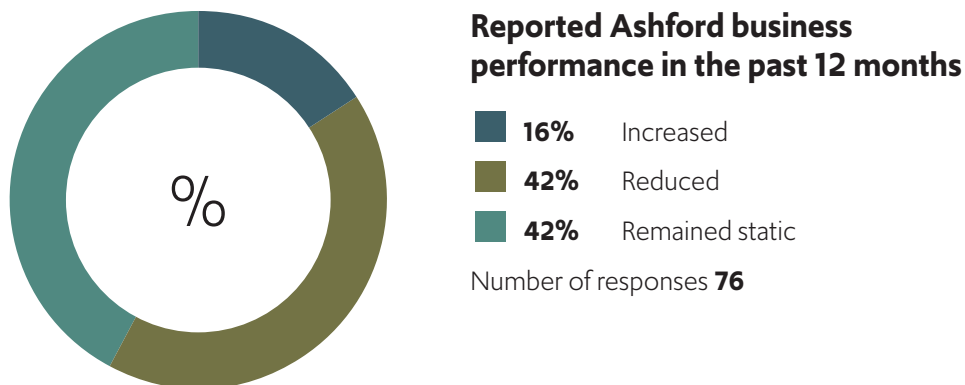


Figure 1 – Reported Ashford business performance in the past 12 months

3.3 Anticipated business performance

The survey responses indicated that the respondents are relatively optimistic regarding business performance for the coming 12 months, with almost a third predicting that turnover will increase, almost a half predicting that turnover will remain static and approximately 20% predicting that turnover will reduce.

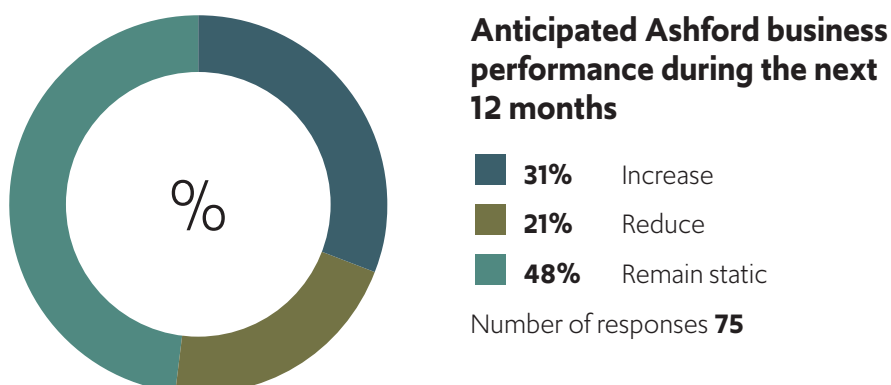


Figure 2 – Anticipated Ashford business performance during the next 12 months

3.4 Business perceptions of Ashford

3.4.1 Perceptions of main visitor uses

In general terms, Ashford is seen by businesses as an average place to dine out and as a relatively poor centre in terms of retail and professional services. It is however considered to be very poor as both a location for leisure and as a destination for a day trip, shown as follows.

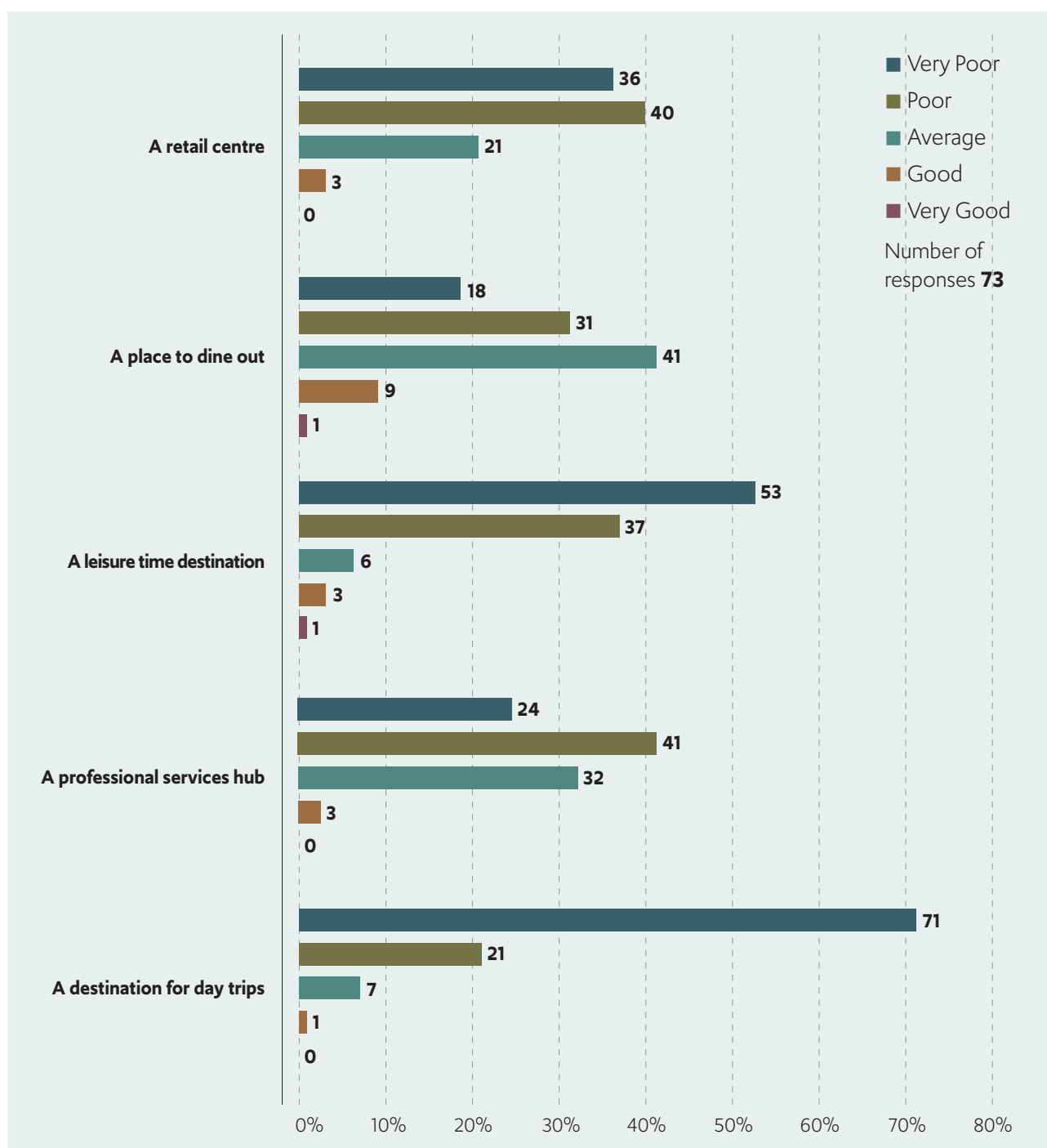


Figure 3 – Business perceptions of Ashford for main visitor uses

3.4.2 Economic barriers

The survey indicates the respondents consider that the factors which are currently preventing Ashford from achieving its full potential are shown in the following table, which indicates the ranked order of the perceived economic barriers:

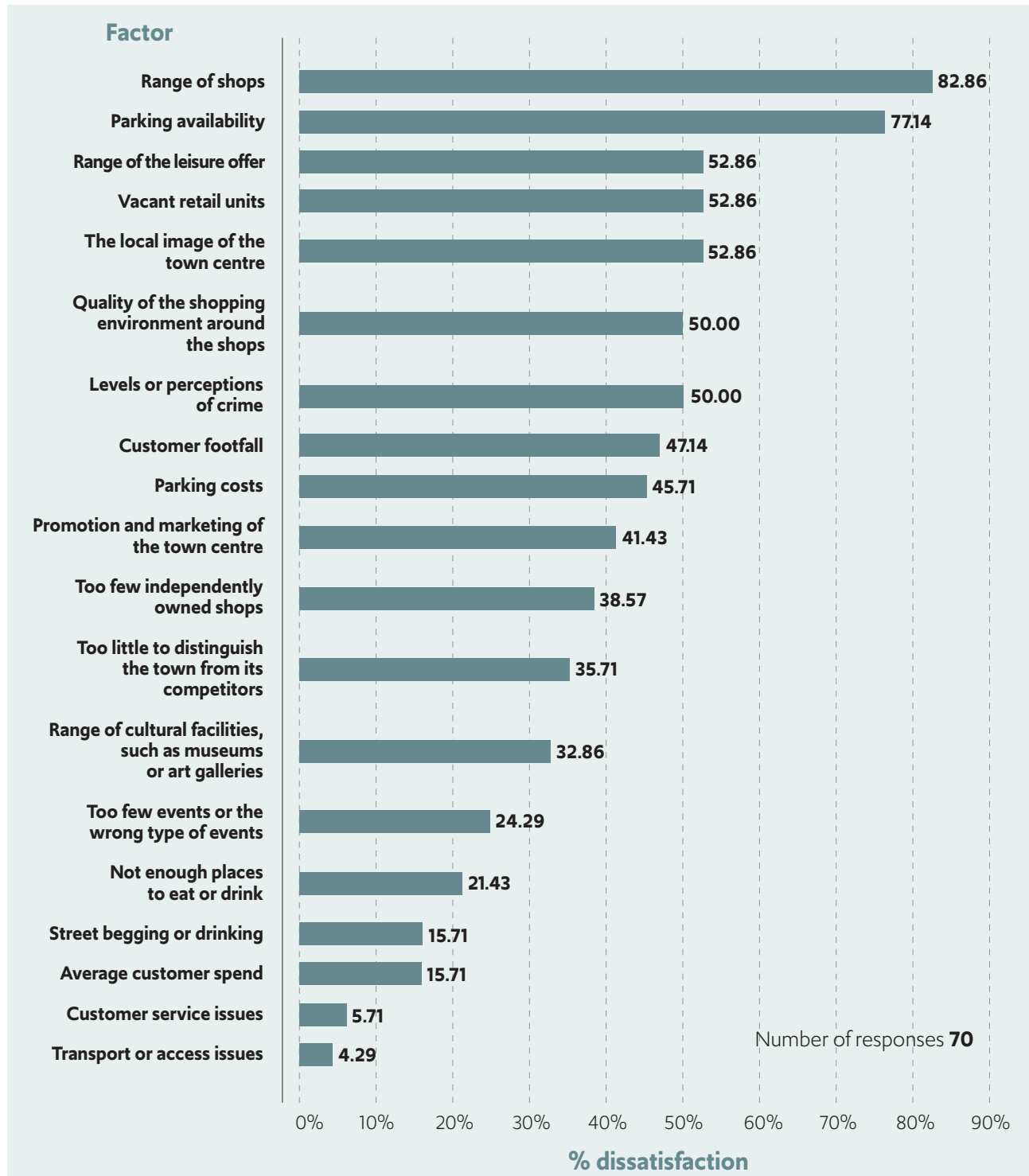


Figure 4 – Ranked factors considered to be preventing Ashford from achieving its full potential

3.5 Views regarding a possible Business Improvement District

3.5.1 Possible benefits of a Business Improvement District

Feelings are very clear on this question, with high support for the concept of a BID, reflected by 92% of respondents considering that Ashford would benefit and only 8% considering that it would not, as demonstrated by the following:

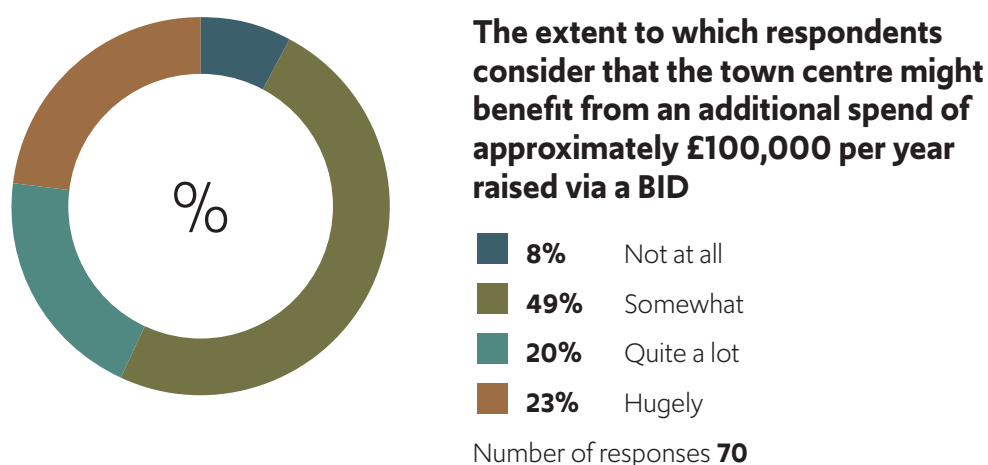


Figure 5 – The extent to which respondents consider that the town centre might benefit from an additional spend of approximately £100,000 per year raised via a BID

3.5.2 Possible Business Improvement District projects

Survey respondents were asked to prioritise the main areas where they felt BID income could be spent by selecting the projects they considered to be most important from a list of options, with the following being ranked in order of perceived priority:



Figure 6 – Ranked priority areas for possible BID income spend

We would also recommend that the further information, as outlined in Appendix 1 of this report should also be considered during any subsequent BID development stage and would emphasise that any subsequent BID development project should include a great deal more business consultation, to ensure that any improvements being proposed reflect business priorities.

3.5.3 Possible Business Improvement District levy

If a BID is established, all eligible businesses within the defined BID boundary pay a levy based on the current rateable value of their property and, in response to the question about the percentage levy which might be considered in Ashford, the following responses were received:

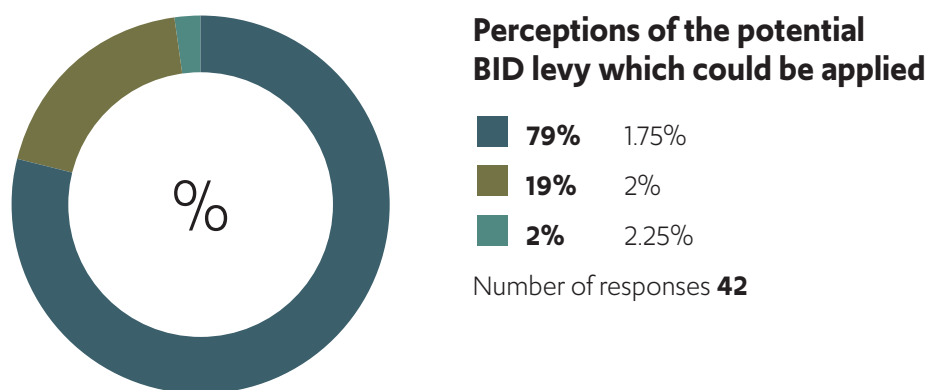


Figure 7 – Perceptions of the potential BID levy which could be applied

3.5.4 Possible Business Improvement District boundary

Following analysis from a variety of sources, including the business survey, and based extensively on our BIDs experience, we have suggested what we consider to be the most appropriate BID boundary for Ashford. This is shown within the red boundary line of the map on page 25 and covers all expected business sectors, from small specialist independent premises to significant national multiple operators.

The proposed boundary covers what we would consider to be the natural core of the town centre, which takes a relatively linear format incorporating the main commercial area of Church Road corridor between approximately the Railway Station and St Matthew's Church, whilst also including the business cluster surrounding Station Road & Woodthorpe Road.

Within this boundary there are approximately 240 rateable business listings with individual rateable values of up to £74,000 and we would always recommend that the consideration of any final BID boundary should be assessed further during any subsequent BID consideration process. In this case, would advise that this would need to be combined with at least the following:

- Extensive business liaison to ensure that significant support for a BID is embedded throughout the area in question
- Detailed work to ensure that any range of possible BID projects would impact sufficiently positively on all eligible voters
- A more refined assessment of likely voting patterns across the boundary area, especially to consider the effect of any very large rateable values on possible voting outcomes

3.5.5 Willingness to support the process of developing a Business Improvement District

The survey included a question regarding whether or not respondents would be willing to attend meetings to become part of the development process, and this highlighted 16 such individuals who would be prepared to do so.

3.5.6 Overall support for a Business Improvement District

Feelings around this key question show a good degree of support towards a BID, with over 60% of respondents agreeing with the concept of a BID, 8% of respondents disagreeing with the concept of a BID and 31% of respondents currently being undecided, as demonstrated by the following:

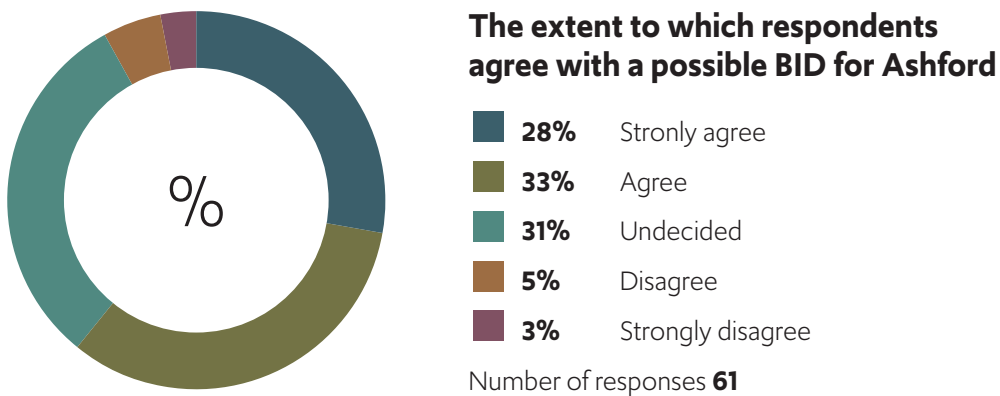


Figure 8 – The extent to which respondents agree with a possible BID for Ashford

Map to be inserted here

Figure 9 - Possible BID boundary for Ashford

Section 1
Introduction

Section 2
Study area

Section 3
Survey analysis

Section 4
Key considerations

Section 5
Overall study
recommendations

Appendix 1
Further survey feedback



Section 4

Key considerations

4.1 Possible BID levy options and financial income modelling

In recent years, given the effects of periods of significant inflation, average BID levies have increased, and it is now increasingly common for levies of up to, or over, 2% to be approved. In Ashford, the total rateable value of commercial premises within the central area is very low and therefore the BID levy would only generate a modest BID income. When modelling the levy options for Ashford, we have therefore chosen to model scenarios in the range of 2.5% to 3% as these are considered to form the most appropriate levy income range. Whilst, therefore, the levy range we have chosen to model, is higher than referenced within the survey, we consider that this is the most appropriate solution for the following main reasons:

- The very low level of total rateable value means that a relatively high percentage would need to be applied in order to generate a meaningful level of annual income to enact improvement projects
- Current industry guidance supports the use of a relatively high percentage level in smaller areas, such as Ashford, which would otherwise not result in sufficient BID income
- The core town centre of Ashford is considered to represent the most appropriate boundary for a BID and attempts to engage businesses and organisations beyond this area were met with only limited interest, implying that the appetite for business participation in a BID diminishes quickly beyond the confines of the proposed BID area shown on page 25

Using the ratings information provided to us, which are based on 2023 valuation figures, the range of possible levies and corresponding incomes are shown as follows:

% Rateable value	Annual levy income	5-year total
2.5%	£68,250	£341,250
2.6%	£70,950	£354,750
2.7%	£73,700	£368,500
2.8%	£76,400	£382,000
2.9%	£79,150	£395,750
3.0%	£81,900	£409,500

Figure 10 – Indicative BID levy incomes

We would emphasise the following with regard to the above table:

- The table assumes a possible exemption level of £5,000
- An estimated levy-collection rate of 95% has been applied
- Further factors would need to be considered further during any BID development stage, which would include but not be limited to 1) The effect of any changes to the proposed boundary area following business feedback 2) The costs which may be applied to any BID, such as any levy collection costs 3) The effects of any Business Rates revaluation, such as that due to apply from April 2026

The range of activities which a BID would usually expect to carry out, including the employment of staff to oversee the activities, means that a BID generally needs a critical mass of income to effectively operate. We therefore consider that a levy of 2.9% would be most appropriate, which would raise approximately £80,000 per year and so provide a platform for an effective BID. We would however always emphasise that further detailed consultation and liaison should take place with businesses regarding the proposed BID levy.

4.2 Possible levy exemptions

There are a number of considerations when establishing a BID levy, including a decision on any exempted listings. It is usual for any rateable value listings below a certain level to be exempted from the BID levy, which has the purpose of removing anomalies such as telecommunications masts and advertising hoardings, as well as providing levy relief for micro businesses, some of which may not gain extensive benefits from BID activities.

The illustrations within this report are based on the assumption of a £5,000 exemption level being adopted, meaning that any business listings with a Rateable Value below £5,000 would not be liable for the BID levy. In this scenario, approximately 50 businesses in the proposed area would fall under the threshold, although their annual income would have only generated approximately an additional £3,000 per year. Furthermore, we would expect a number of these businesses to voluntarily contribute towards any BID and so setting such a threshold does not exclude any business from being part of a subsequent BID.

If the proposal for a £5,000 exemption were adopted, this would therefore create a group of approximately 240 businesses, who would become liable to pay a total BID levy of approximately £80,000 per year. If a decision were taken to proceed with further BID development, any subsequent considerations on levy, boundary and exemptions should however be subject to further testing and refinement through further detailed business consultation.

4.3 Comparison with established BIDs

The following BIDs are considered to represent a good comparable sample range to Ashford in terms of size, geographical spread, BID levy percentage and overall income.

BID	% RV levy	Levy number	Indicative levy income
Billericay	2%	400	£130,000
Horsham	1.5%	330	£301,000
Ilkley	1.5%	330	£133,000
Okehampton	2%	270	£132,000
Penge	2%	244	£138,740
Penzance	2%	400	£161,000
Ashford (subject to decision)	2.9%	240	£80,000
Spalding	2%	400	£170,000
Average of the above	2%	325	£156,000

Figure 11 – Comparison with established BIDs

4.4 Likely voting patterns

Whilst it is difficult to anticipate the voting patterns of all the businesses in the likely BID area, the survey suggests that there is reasonable support for a BID in Ashford although, if a BID is pursued, we would strongly advise that a great deal of further work is undertaken to try to increase the required business engagement and to establish how a number of the premises with higher rateable values are likely to vote in any subsequent ballot.

4.5 The creation of a Development Board

BIDs generally involve the creation of a Company Limited by Guarantee, which limits the financial liability of any Company Director and a Board of between 10-12 Company Directors is usually formed from BID levy paying organisations to create a representative and business-led group of Directors to oversee the financial, managerial and operational

arrangements for the BID. The development of a BID requires the fundamental support of a number of businesses & organisations and, whilst it is common for any BID process to be professionally supported, meaning that the business group are not required to carry out all of the required tasks, there would be a requirement for this group to attend planning meetings and to assist with the required campaigning for a positive BID vote.

4.6 Next steps and risks

We would expect that a BID proposal would create a workload of approximately 85 days over a period of approximately 12 months and an additional budget of approximately £7,500 would need to be established to cover the costs of various & extensive communication activities, as well as designing and printing the BID proposal. It is considered that the following timetable could be adopted in Ashford, assuming that a decision is taken to pursue a BID for the area:

Dates	Component
August 2025	Decision taken to develop a BID proposal
August 2025 to April 2026	Business liaison and consultation on proposed Business Plan, to include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Creation of Shadow Board ■ Business liaison ■ Newsletters ■ Open meetings ■ Digital communications ■ Draft business plan ■ Refinement of business plan ■ Liaison with ballot organisation ■ Liaison with SBC departments ■ Creation of ballot spreadsheet
December 2025	Statutory notification to government
April 2026	Launch of Business Plan
April 2026	Ballot notification and ballot packs dispatched
May 2026	Extensive business voter liaison
May 2026	Ballot Day and announcement of ballot
June 2026 to August 2026	Formation of Board of Directors, appointment of staff and BID begins operation – subject to a successful ballot outcome

The inherent risk in any BID process is that the ballot is rejected – by failing to gain the required majority of votes cast or failing to gain the majority of the aggregate rateable value of votes cast. The majority of BID ballots have been successful, although we would point out that the risk always exists of a BID ballot being unsuccessful, which can result in:

- No return on the significant investment in developing the BID proposal
- Loss of reputation and credibility of the BID proposer
- An informal requirement for a cooling-off period of at least 1-2 years before any attempt is made to repeat the attempt to develop a BID within the town

Given all of the factors which we have examined, we would advise that there is reasonable viability for Ashford to enter the next phase of BID development.

Section 1
Introduction

Section 2
Study area

Section 3
Survey analysis

Section 4
Key considerations

Section 5
Overall study
recommendations

Appendix 1
Further survey feedback



The
**JOLLY
BAKER**

THE JOLLY BAKER

£1
sausage
roll
SALE

£1
sausage
roll

Section 5

Overall study recommendations

In considering all of the information available to us, our key current recommendations for Ashford are as follows:

- Ashford moves towards further detailed consultation regarding a Business Improvement District and ultimately the production of a draft BID Business Plan
- A timescale is adopted with a view to a BID ballot taking place in May 2026 and a BID operating from August 2026, subject to a positive vote
- Extensive consultation is carried out with the town centre business community around the following outline proposals:
 - a) The BID boundary to cover the designated area defined on page 25
 - b) A 2.9% BID levy
 - c) A BID term to be proposed to cover the maximum period of five years
 - d) An exemption level of £5,000 Rateable Value to be set, meaning that listings with a Rateable Value of less than £5,000 would not be liable for the BID levy
 - e) Priority projects for a draft Business Plan to focus on the following initial themes, although to be subject to far greater business consultation to provide a refined final Business Plan:

1. Improving the appearance of empty shops.
 2. Security improvements, possibly to include more Policing.
 3. CCTV improvements.
 4. Car parking promotions.
 5. Schemes to save your business money on overheads.
 6. Street markets.
 7. Street cleansing & street washing, including chewing gum removal.
 8. Physical improvements to paving, landscaping or street furniture.
 9. Improvements to problem areas, such as graffiti or fly-tipping removal.
 10. Projects to encourage new businesses into the town centre.
-

These recommendations would result in the following:

- Approximately 240 eligible business premises being part of a BID
- Annual BID levy income of approximately £80,000
- Total BID income over a five-year term of approximately £396,000

Section 1
Introduction

Section 2
Study area

Section 3
Survey analysis

Section 4
Key considerations

Section 5
Overall study
recommendations

Appendix 1
Further survey feedback



Milestone
RESIDENTIAL EST 1890

01784 800322

milestone-residential.com

Branches at
Ashford | Whitton | Twickenham | Teddington

Sales & Lettings | Valuations | Mortgage Advice

Milestone
RESIDENTIAL

22 Church Road

Appendix 1

Further survey feedback

In addition, the survey asked for any further comments which respondents wished to make and those received were as follows:

Additional comments

1. Council Tax Relief.
2. General improvement to the High Street is needed. Ashford has slipped a long way in the past few years.
3. Get landlords to consider fair rents to encourage new units to open.
4. Bring back banks and multistorey car park and keep free street parking.
5. Businesses should not be expected to pay for the councils shortcomings. Spelthorne Council should be funding improvements not private companies.
6. Control the distribution of industries entering the shops so that the town is not saturated with Takeaways, Convenience shops and Coffee shops.
7. Fix the clock.
8. I don't think Ashford will ever be a purely commercial town center again. It needs to offer retail but also a place for residents to use in the evening.
9. I have my doubts as to how well this could work in Ashford - but on the whole and at a 2% levy I would be happy to give it a go..
10. I'm confused as to how the funding is raised now after reading through this survey! Not so sure anyone will go for it if it increases their costs!

Additional comments

11. If you fix the parking, you will fix the town.

12. Improved parking facilities and reduced charges.

13. In my opinion, the parking situation in Ashford is killing the High Street. Almost every client that comes in mentions the parking.

14. In the past there were offices in the town, by having these, the staff would spend money in the shops. There is very little commercial offices, so maybe attract more office workers.

15. More parking.

16. More parking - there is nowhere for our customers to park, resulting in less trade.

17. Need more variety in trade. Need men's shop shoe shop. Craft shop. No more food / take away shops.

18. Parking!

19. Really difficult to use 100k wisely as it's too little to make a difference. Hard to market & promote a town that has very little to offer. Need to encourage more welcomed businesses/entertainment to the area. Unfortunately that has more to do with the landlords.

20. Shop directory and map. Pop up shops, cultural use of empty shops, youth activities and places to eat drink and socialize.

21. Stop any more nail shops , hairdressers, barbers opening up There are far too many as it is. We need a couple of different shops.

22. The parking in Ashford is killing the high street ,we need more parking so people will continue to come to Ashford.

23. The town needs a car park facility with fair charges.

Additional comments

24. To have the mechanism of guiding and help new small businesses that coming to the area like us with maybe a welcome letter from the council and the support in case there's any after opening on the additional licences or things that the new businesses need to know. In our case we wasn't aware that we needed to notify the council within 4 weeks been here, as we done some licences through third party and also we just find out that to get a discount on our business rate we need to apply for small businesses rate relief but now I'm on it to filling the form and submit to the BR department.
25. Town planners need to keep an eye on who retail units are let to as there are too many of the same type of shops and the town needs to attract diverse businesses.
26. We are the forgotten end of Ashford on Woodlands Parade. Many empty shops owned by one Landlord who is increasing rents above market value. Recycling centre is misused and looks so untidy. Ashford main town on Church Road has so few decent independent shops, it is filling up with ethnic supermarkets. If I were to eat out during the day or evening, I would not consider Ashford town. Parking is a huge problem with overzealous wardens - getting a space on the slip roads is virtually impossible.
27. We need joined up thinking and talking as to what businesses can come into the town. How do we get better restaurants, and cafe's with outside tables and chairs to give a more continental feel, and a traditional English Tea shop as well as a decent Pub! We have enough Salons, too many barber and vape shops and cheap take away's. we need to reduce the amount of Pound shops and charity shops! We need more varied shops e.g ladies dress shop, menswear shop, gift shop. Designer shops. Dunelm or The Range type shops. Craft shops etc.

Heartflood Limited

info@heartflood.co.uk

www.heartflood.co.uk



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	Y	
Commissioner engagement (if report focused on issues of concern to Commissioners such as Finance, Assets etc)	Y	Just starting now
Relevant Group Head review	N	
MAT+ review (to have been circulated at least 5 working days before Stage 2)	Y	20/08/25
This item is on the Forward Plan for the relevant committee	Y	
	Reviewed by	
Risk comments		
Legal comments	JC	20/08/25
HR comments (if applicable)		

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
Monitoring Officer commentary – at least 5 working days before MAT	L Heron	27/08/25
S151 Officer commentary – at least 5 working days before MAT	T. Collier	27/8/25
Confirm final report cleared by MAT		

Business Infrastructure and Growth Committee

11 September 2025

Title	<i>Heathrow Southern Rail link proposal</i>
Purpose of the report	To make a decision
Report Author	<i>Councillor Chris Bateson</i>
Ward(s) Affected	All Wards
Exempt	<i>No</i>
Exemption Reason	Not applicable
Corporate Priority	This item is not in the current list of Corporate Priorities but still requires a Committee decision.
Recommendations	<p>Committee is asked to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Consider the findings of the all-party working group (“the Working Group”) set up by the Business Infrastructure and Growth Committee contained in this report; and 2. Recommend to Full Council that this Council supports the Heathrow Southern Rail (“HSR”) link proposal conditional upon:- <ol style="list-style-type: none"> (a) Trains stopping at Staines; (b) Evidence that the proposal will not harm Staines Moor nor increase the groundwater flood risk in the area; and (c) Reviewing and agreeing detailed terms of the HSR link proposal
Reason for Recommendation	<p><i>HSR will provide a direct link from Staines to Heathrow airport, promoting economic growth in the Borough and providing a sustainable method of travel to the airport for passengers from within and outside the Borough.</i></p> <p><i>Of the two options presented (HSR and the “Southern Light Rail” (SLR) alternative), HSR is the least damaging to the environment and streetscene, most practicable, supported by Heathrow Airport Limited and least intrusive in terms of privacy for local residents</i></p> <p><i>The HSR proposal places far fewer demands on the already overstretched resources of the Council</i></p>

1. Executive summary of the report (expand detail in Key Issues section below)

What is the situation	Why we want to do something
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Council has to decide whether to support the Heathrow Southern Rail (“HSR”) consortium’s plan to build a “heavy rail” link between Staines town centre and Heathrow Airport or to support an alternative consortium (Southern Light Rail “SLR”) or to support neither. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>The Government has given the green light to the further expansion at Heathrow. Heathrow is obliged to increase sustainable travel routes. A rail link from London and beyond, via Staines, has been proposed. The Council is being asked to support that proposal.</i>
This is what we want to do about it	These are the next steps
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>The proposal is that the Council engage fully with HSR, support its plans, and work with HSR to deliver the best possible outcome for the Borough’s residents.</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Council to make a public declaration of support – with conditions – for the HSR plans.</i> <i>Thereafter, Council to continue the working group links with Heathrow and HSR.</i>

2. Key issues

Introduction

Heathrow Airport has a mandate from the UK government to expand its operations and to build a third runway, in both cases using finance that has been secured from the private sector. At the same time, Heathrow Airport has undertaken to reduce the impact of road traffic (congestion, air pollution, car parking spaces) to the Airport by means of a rail link from the south. Previous attempts to provide this rail link have failed because of geographical constraints, especially those posed in Runnymede and Spelthorne (Egham Hythe rail crossing closure frequency, the Staines Moor Site of Special Scientific Interest or “SSSI”, M25 boundary constraints). Nonetheless, all consultees* now support this latest proposal from Heathrow Southern Rail, except Spelthorne Borough Council. HSR is now again seeking the Council’s support for its proposed southern rail link to Heathrow airport.

Early iterations of the proposal to link the broader Surrey/Sussex areas to Heathrow Airport did not include a stop in Spelthorne, so Spelthorne would have borne the brunt of the disruption and environmental damage but without any benefits for our residents.

The new proposal from Heathrow Southern Rail seeks to address that issue by including a stop at Staines. HSR has also implied that TfL might create a link to the Elizabeth Line from Staines although this is not within the gift of HSR.

In response to the proposal from HSR, a new consortium including the Chief Executive of Spelthorne Borough Council, who has experience of delivering light rail schemes to cities in various countries, has proposed an alternative scheme. The group involved in this SLR consortium also includes the Council’s Head of Place, Protection and Prosperity.

This alternative scheme would be similar to the Docklands Light Railway in East London (“DLR”) and could run at very short intervals 24 hours a day. There would be a direct DLR-style overhead link from Staines to Heathrow.

The respective advantages and disadvantages of each scheme are explained later in this document.

Due to the obvious potential conflict of interest created by the involvement of very senior council officers in one of the schemes, the Business Infrastructure and Growth (“BIG”) Committee decided to exclude *all* council officers from any involvement in the Council's process of evaluating these schemes and making a recommendation to full Council.

The BIG Committee set up an all-party working group to study the proposals, seek further information and evidence, and to make a recommendation to the BIG committee.

The all-party Working Group is now reporting to the BIG committee and making its recommendation to Council in this report.

Options available to the Council

3. Options appraisal and proposal

3.1 The Working Group considers that there are four potential recommendations but of these two can be immediately discounted. (More on that later.)

The four options are:

- 1) Support the HSR scheme
- 2) Support the SLR scheme
- 3) Support both schemes
- 4) Oppose both schemes

Key considerations

First and foremost, the Council acknowledges the potential benefits to Surrey, Sussex, Heathrow Airport and UK plc of these schemes, but our priority is putting *our* residents at the heart of everything we do. Therefore, the Working Group strongly recommends that Council approach this matter purely in terms of what this means to our community in Spelthorne.

In making its recommendation to the Council, the Working Group has, inter alia, considered the following points:

- Environmental impact
 - Of particular concern is the impact on Staines Moor, which is a Site of Special Scientific Interest. This issue is addressed separately in this report.
 - Some will also argue that any moves to increase air traffic will contradict the Council's declaration of a climate emergency and that both schemes should therefore be opposed.
- Economic impact

- Both schemes suggest that increased footfall in Staines as a result of their link would boost economic growth and prosperity in the town.
- Street scene
 - A major concern about the SLR scheme is that it would run on an elevated track from the current railway station, through the town centre and across Staines Moor. The HSR scheme would use the existing Staines to Windsor and Eton Riverside track then branch off to cross under Staines Moor via a tunnel.
 - Both schemes have so far failed to demonstrate how increased car traffic to the new station would be accommodated without causing severe congestion in the neighbouring roads, which are largely residential in nature.
- Social impact
 - Neither scheme fundamentally improves access for residents other than those with easy access to the existing railway station. Specifically, neither route makes it easier for Stanwell residents, many of whom work at the airport, to commute to and from Heathrow.

Considerations that are out of scope

Some aspects of these proposals, and the evaluation thereof, are considered “out of scope” in terms of the working group’s evaluation and recommendation.

These include:

- The cost of the respective scheme (which only matters to the Council and our residents in terms of deliverability and the risk that the Borough might end up with the residue of an incomplete or otherwise failed scheme).
- The economic viability of the respective schemes (neither scheme is proposing a profit share with the Borough, so their profitability is not our concern (subject to the previous note)).
- Heathrow expansion. The Council cannot veto the expansion of Heathrow, whether that is delivered by a third runway or other means.
- The Council cannot veto the progress of either scheme. They can both submit their proposals to the UK government with or without our support.
- The potential extension of the Elizabeth line to Staines (which is beyond the remit of HSR)
- The impact of the Local Government Reorganisation of Surrey. (Regardless of this restructure, councillors in the new authority who represent the “ex-Spelthorne” area will still want to prioritise their residents and ensure that local considerations are given sufficient weight.)

- 3.1 The option to support SLR is not recommended because of:
- 3.2 the detrimental impact on the street scene in Staines of having overhead track in the town centre,
- 3.3 the loss of privacy to residents along its path (running potentially every 5 minutes, 24/7 at bedroom height, overlooking gardens, etc).,

the detrimental effect on Staines Moor of constructing and operating an overhead rail track,

- 3.4 the diversion of senior officers' time and attention away from the core task of running the Council
- 3.5 This also therefore precludes the option of supporting both schemes.
- 3.6 There is the option to oppose both schemes but the Working Group considers this impractical because there is so much Government support for Heathrow expansion and there is so much support from all other consultees for HSR that the working group believes the Council would be overruled anyway and is better placed to influence the scheme to the benefit of our residents if we support and engage with HSR.

4. Risk implications

- 4.1 Environmental damage, especially to Staines Moor, is a major risk and could have irreversible consequences
- 4.2 This would also potentially harm the reputation of the council
- 4.3 Changes to the route, such as not stopping in Staines, would remove any benefit to Spelthorne residents
- 4.4 Congestion in the town centre caused by passengers driving to the railway station, either to park long term or drop off or pick up
- 4.5 The financial collapse of either scheme could leave Spelthorne with an unfinished construction project blighting Staines in particular
- 4.6 It is difficult to see how any of these risks can be mitigated.

5. Financial implications

- 5.1 The recommended course of action places no financial burden on the Council at this time. If the HSR proposal progresses financial implications will be considered in detail.

6. Legal comments

- 6.1 There are no immediate legal implications arising from this report. If the HSR proposal progresses legal advice will be taken.

Corporate implications

7. S151 Officer comments

- 7.1 The S151 Officer notes that as the Council will not be directly involved in the progression of either proposed rail link scheme that there are no direct financial implications for the Council and that there are no budgetary implications. Longer term depending on how any proposal is progressed, there will be potential impacts for the Council's successor authority in terms

prosperity of the town and borough and possibly on Council assets holdings adjacent to the station. No further comments from the S151 Officer

8. Monitoring Officer comments

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

9. Procurement comments

- 9.1 There are no immediate procurement implications arising from this report.

10. Equality and Diversity

- 10.1 The recommendation does not have any equality and diversity implications.

11. Sustainability/Climate Change Implications

- 11.1 Staines Moor is a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), has been left unworked for 1,000 years other than for grazing, is home, amongst rare flora and fauna, to some unique ecological features, such as the oldest anthills in Britain (200 years old). Both schemes would traverse the Moor, SLR on raised pylons, HSR via a tunnel.
- 11.2 Both schemes potentially increase groundwater flood risk and we have yet to see scientific evidence that either scheme can be built without increasing that risk and causing permanent, irreversible harm to the Moor and surrounding area, including homes.
- 11.3 For these reasons, we expect both schemes will face opposition from a sizeable number of residents and other interested parties.

12. Other considerations

- 12.1 HSR has suggested that a link to the Elizabeth line could also be constructed and this is an attractive notion, but:
- 12.2 Construction of such a link is the responsibility of TfL, not HSR and HSR cannot make such a commitment
- 12.3 It is unclear what the route of such a link would be.
- 12.4 The Working Group recommends that this notion be discounted, since it would not even be a condition that HSR could commit to.

13. Timetable for implementation

- 13.1 Working Group to confirm.

14. Contact

- 14.1 Councillor Chris Bateson Bateson Cllr.Bateson@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: There are none.

Appendices:

Appendix A: HSR presentation 02/04/2025

Appendix B: SLR presentation

This page is intentionally left blank

Heathrow Southern Railway

Meeting with Spelthorne Borough Council 26th March 2025

© Copyright Heathrow Southern Railway Ltd. March 2025

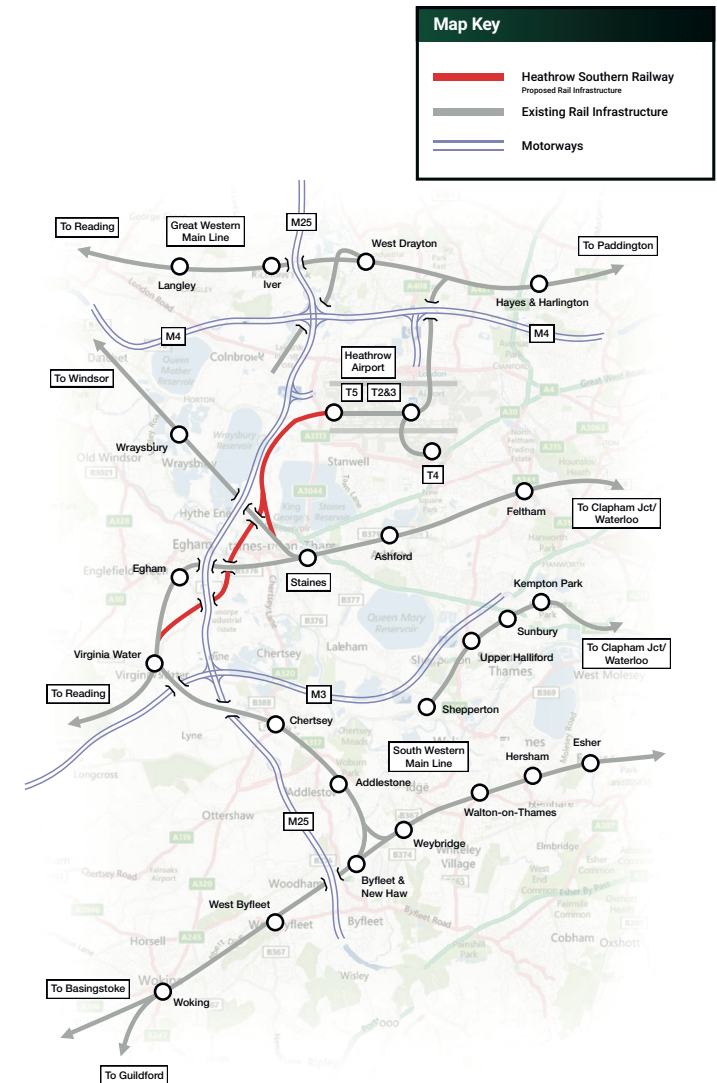
HEATHROW
SOUTHERN
RAILWAY

Introduction

Thank you for the opportunity to meet again, following our previous discussion in September 2024.

I'd like to:

- Briefly remind you of the Heathrow Southern Railway scheme discussed at our last meeting in September 2024
- Provide an update of what has changed
- Answer questions you've asked in advance – and any others
- Propose some further topics for discussion



Questions

Q1 - How do you plan to access the site to carry out installation work to install the new rail line without harming Staines Moor?

Q2 – Re 1 above will this not require closure of the anti clockwise lanes of the M25 to do so for lengthy periods. How will this massive disruption be overcome?

Q3 - Is there, or will there be an impact assessment carried out to gauge how it will affect Staines residents?

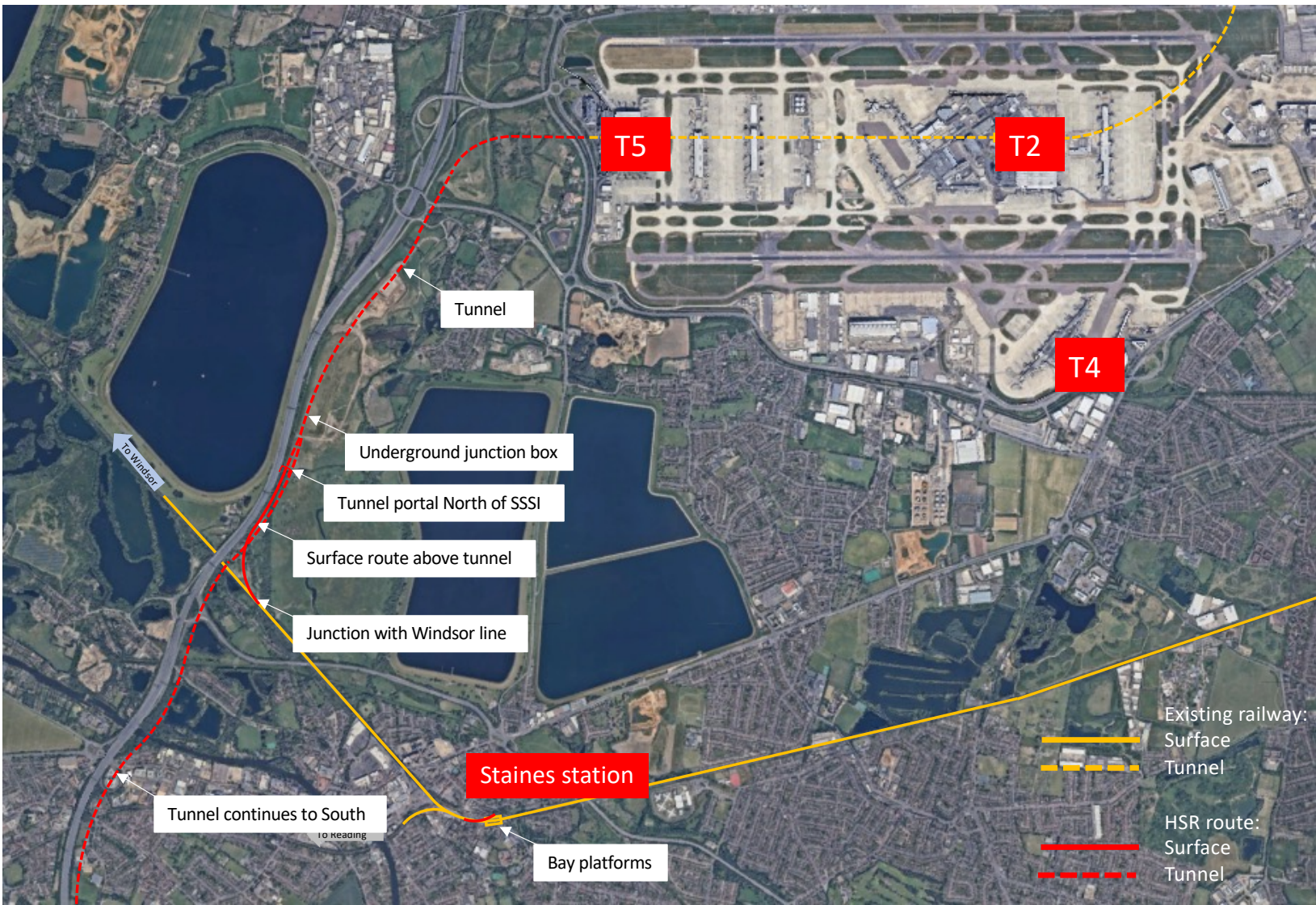
Before answering these, the following pages explain a significant change to Heathrow Southern Railway's proposal as a result of our recent meetings with National Highways.

National Highways are the Government company (as successor to Highways England) with statutory responsibility for planning, designing, building, operating and maintaining England's motorways and major A roads - the Strategic Road Network (SRN).

Heathrow Southern Railway - September 2024 scheme



Heathrow Southern Railway - September 2024 scheme



HSR extends in tunnel from west end of T5 station box.

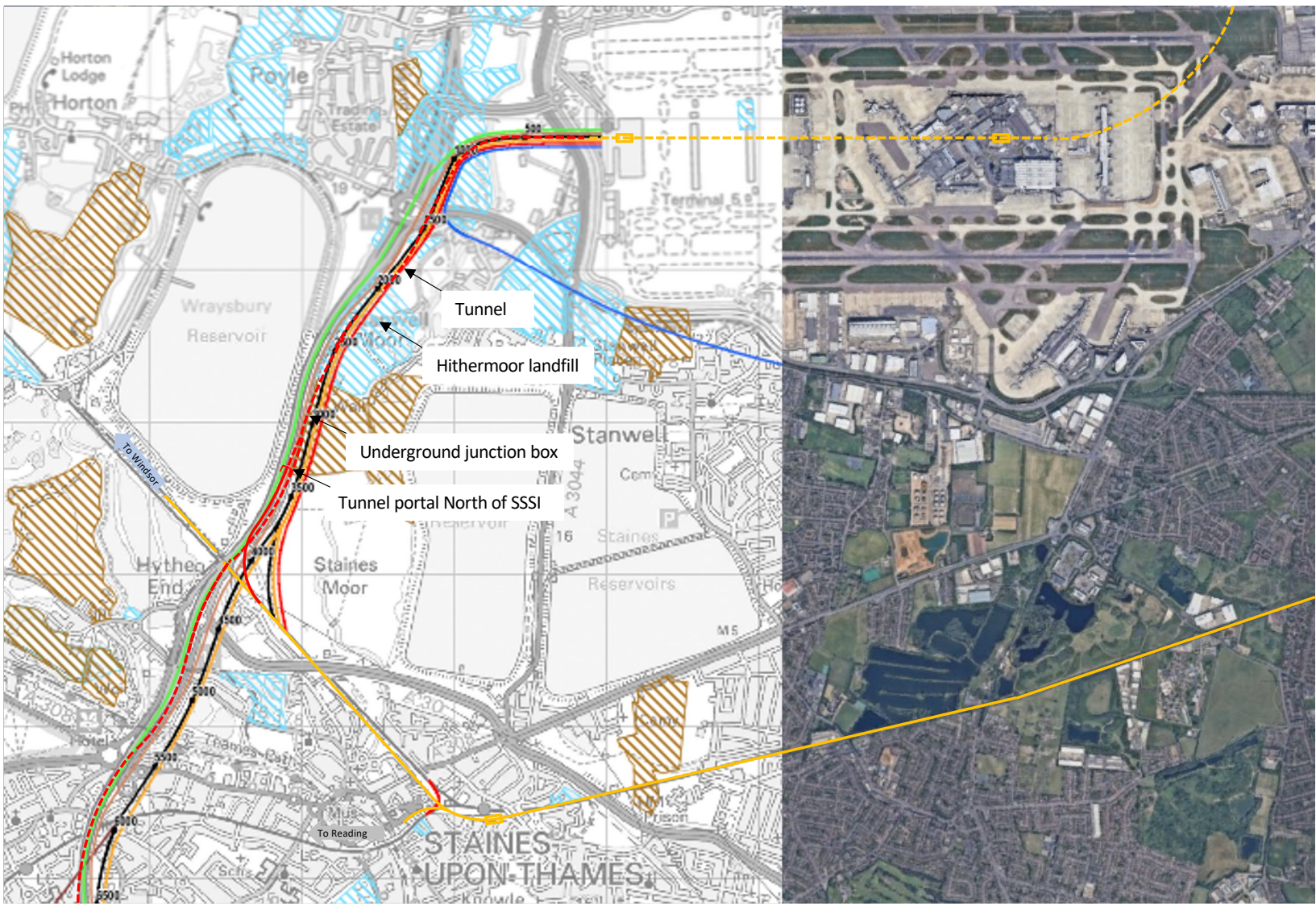
Underground grade separated junction box North of Staines Moor.

Surface line emerges from junction box, runs alongside M25 to an at-grade connection with the existing Windsor line.

Waterloo services continue through Staines, while Elizabeth Line trains terminate at new bay platforms.

Main HSR route to Woking continues in tunnel to south.

Heathrow Southern Railway - September 2024 scheme



Plan also shows alternative alignments studied as part of original options appraisal.

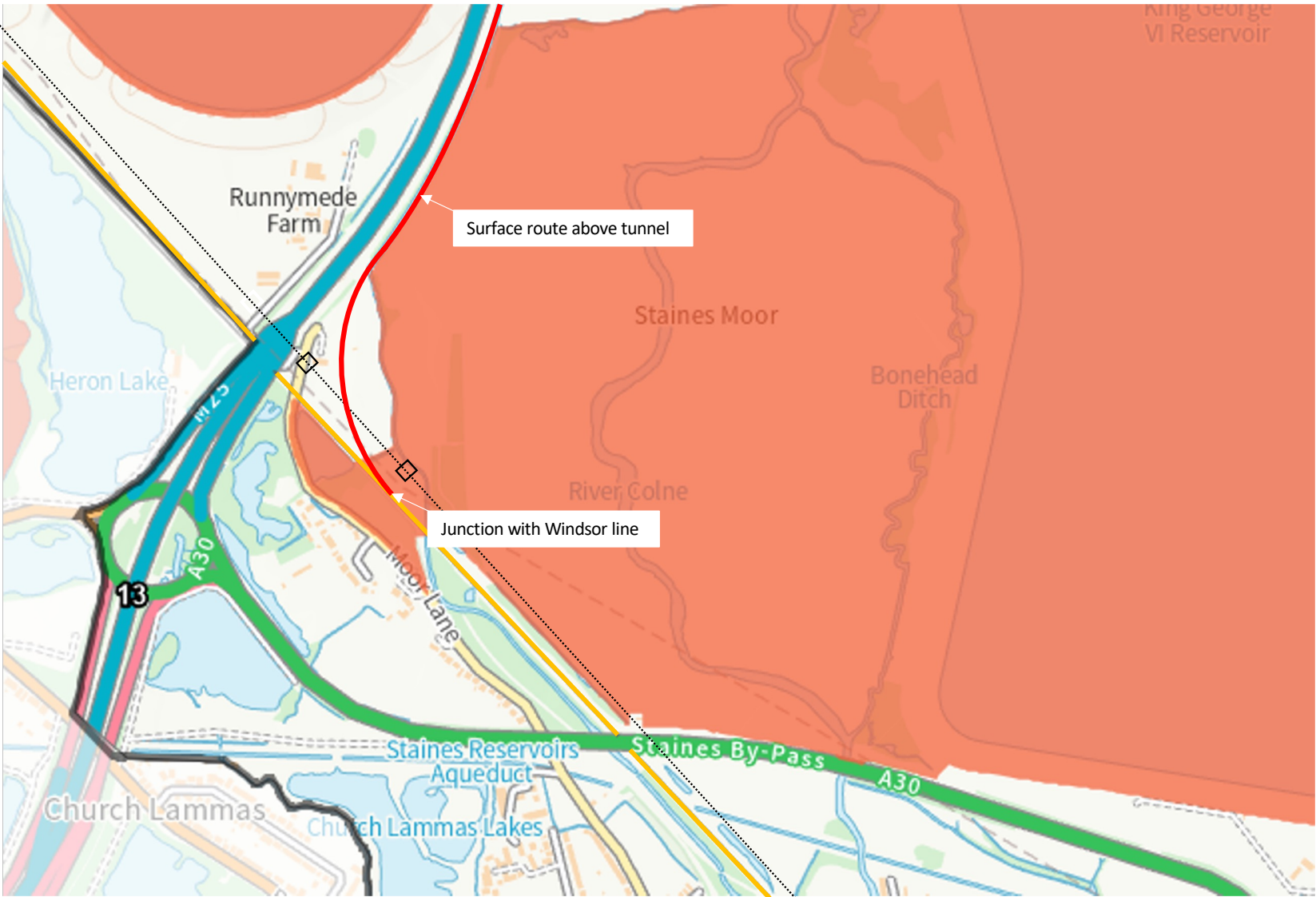
- Authorised landfill sites
- Historic landfill sites
- Existing Network Rail/HAL infrastructure
- Proposed HSR infrastructure (at grade)
- Proposed HSR infrastructure (tunnelled)

Junction with Windsor Line - September 2024 scheme



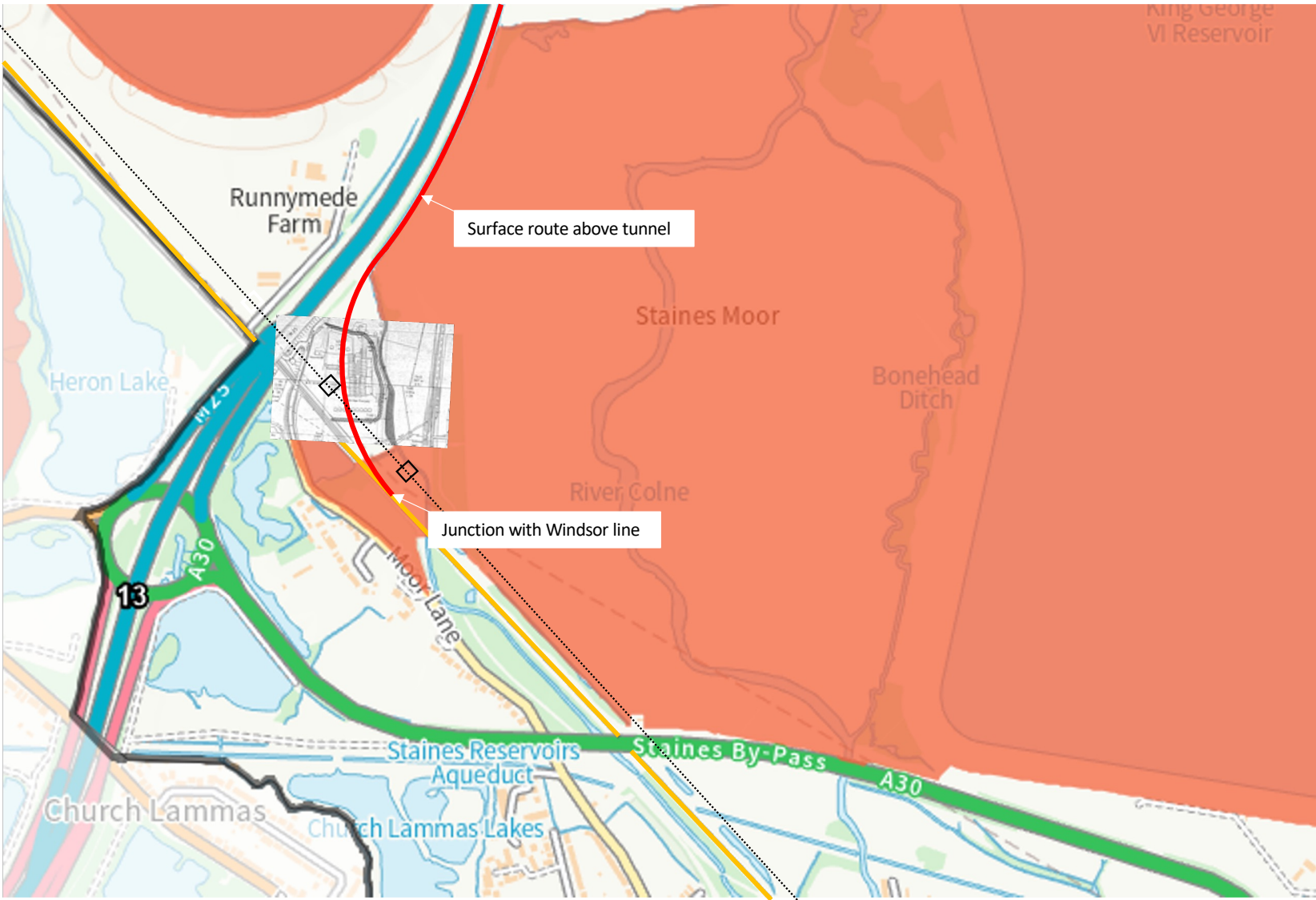
SSSI

Junction with Windsor Line and Staines Moor SSSI - September 2024 scheme



SSSI

Junction with Windsor Line and The Willows - September 2024 scheme



Council Ref 24002/0133M

IMPORTANT - THIS COMMUNICATION AFFECTS YOUR PROPERTY
TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING ACT 1990
(As amended by the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004)

TEMPORARY STOP NOTICE

SERVED BY: Spelthorne Borough Council, hence after referred to as 'the Council'

To: Mr Sean McDermott, The Willows, Moor Lane, Staines, TW19 9EG

1. The Council considers that there has been a breach of planning control on the land described in paragraph 4 below. The breach of planning control is the imposition of a temporary stop notice.

2. This temporary stop notice is issued by the Council, as local planning authority in exercise of its power under section 171(2) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) and the Council considers that it is expedient to issue this notice in order to prevent the carrying out of the activity specified in paragraph 4 below. The Council now prohibits the carrying out of the activity specified in the notice. Important additional information is given in the annex to the notice.

THE REASONS FOR ISSUING THIS NOTICE

The activity specified in paragraph 4 below has been carried out without planning permission and the Council considers that it is expedient to issue this notice in order to prevent the carrying out of the activity specified in paragraph 4 below. The land also includes a scheduled monument of a Roman villa and is also a site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and the issuing of this notice is necessary to protect the SSSI and the scheduled monument.

THE LAND TO WHICH THIS NOTICE RELATES

Land at The Willows, Moor Lane, Staines, TW19 9EG (the Land) shown edged red on the attached plan.

ACTIVITY TO WHICH THIS NOTICE RELATES

The construction of a large amount of earthwork and an engineering operation to create a large trench, without planning permission.

WHAT YOU ARE REQUIRED TO DO

Stop all or any of the activity specified in paragraph 4 above and do not allow any other person to carry out the activity specified in paragraph 4 above. If you are required to do so, you must stop the activity immediately.



SSSI

M25 corridor - September 2024 scheme assumptions

M25 South West Quadrant Strategic Study

Stage 3 Report



- *"The M25 South West Quadrant has consistently been the busiest section of the UK motorway network since it opened in the late 1980s. Nine of the ten busiest sections of the SRN are in this area. Today the busiest section (between J14 and J15) carries more than 220,000 vehicles every day. Severe congestion is a regular occurrence with a 12 hour 'peak period' effectively lasting from 6am to 6pm*
- *This study recommends that the focus of future work should not be on widening the existing road. Instead, attention should be given to how to reduce pressures and provide parallel capacity to relieve the motorway network. This should work first to find alternatives to travel, or to move traffic to more sustainable modes.*
- *Particular emphasis should be given to improving orbital public transport connections and enabling more rail journeys to be made without the need for interchange in central London.*
- *Options include creation of new or improved rail links, such as to Heathrow from the south."*

M25 corridor - September 2024 scheme assumptions



Problems, issues, opportunities

Issues and opportunities

Rail – Factors influencing choice of M25SWQ use over rail

Generic factors:

- Trip chaining, the need to carry heavy luggage, or personal preferences

Specific to study area:

- Predominantly radial network focused on trips to/from central London
- Orbital journey times by rail are not competitive, limited frequency, need to interchange in London or use bus for part of the journey.
- Peak period crowding on some routes, particularly those involving Central London interchange
- Some residential areas and some key destinations are remote from the rail network.

Initial work

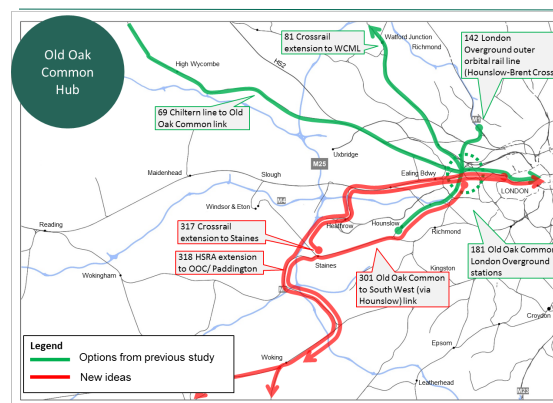
Conclusions of study to date:

- ▶ Directly adding capacity to the M25 SWQ not feasible
- ▶ Road pricing rejected due to lack of capacity away from the M25 to absorb diverted trips
- ▶ Conditions better where alternative capacity exists away from M25

Recommendation:

- ▶ Instead of widening the existing M25, attention should be given to reducing traffic demand and providing parallel capacity to relieve the pressure on the M25.

Options – rail



Early Draft –
Work in
progress

All options are shown
indicatively. No
specific alignment is
implied, except
where existing rail
routes are used. No
specific
service/calling
pattern is implied,
unless inherent in the
description.

- In October 2016, Government announced it had accepted the Airports Commission's to support a third runway at Heathrow.
- During 2018, after considering Heathrow Airport Ltd's (HAL) detailed proposals, Highways England restated their policy position, which assumed:
 - No widening of the M25
 - Prioritising alternative transport options, including Southern Rail Access, to relieve pressure on this section of the M25.
- Parliament voted to designate the Airports National Policy Statement in June 2018.

Heathrow Southern Railway - March 2025 revised scheme

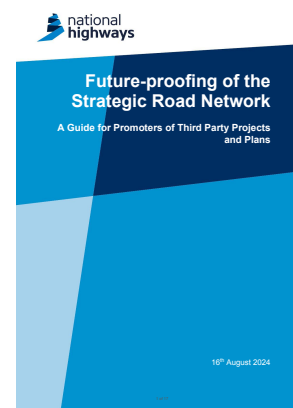


<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MGyQjZozOkg#:~:text=Once%20built%2C%20new%20collector%2Fdistributor,f or%20non%2Dairport%20M25%20traffic.>

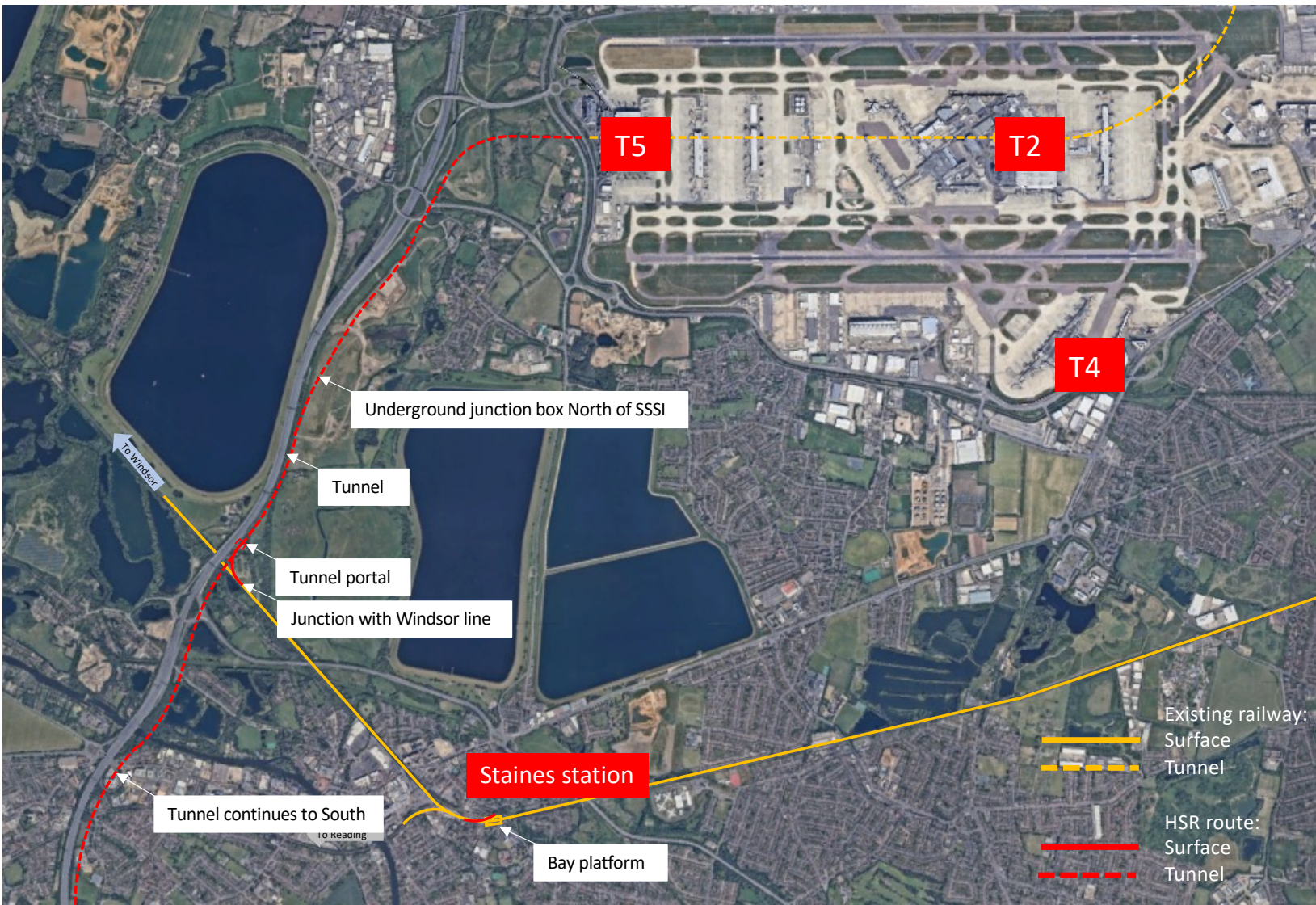
However, National Highways have subsequently “developed wider safeguarding policy guidance on futureproofing, updated to reflect the significant impact of HS2 and EWR on structures over/under the Strategic Road Network. Heathrow Southern Railway should therefore assume passive provision for M25 widening, whether additional running lanes and/or collector distributor roads (as included in HAL’s NWR proposal)” – HSR/National Highways Meeting 2nd December 2024

National Highways must now “work collaboratively with third parties from the earliest stages of a plan or project to ensure that suitable future-proofing provisions are included in order to allow us to fulfil our statutory direction, as set out in the Licence” –Future-proofing policy, August 2024

This would therefore require the HSR surface alignment proposed in September 2024 to shift East, encroaching onto Staines Moor.



Heathrow Southern Railway - March 2025 revised scheme



The HSR alignment has therefore been revised to avoid impacting the SSSI and allow for future M25 widening.

The tunneled connection with T5 now continues past Staines Moor.

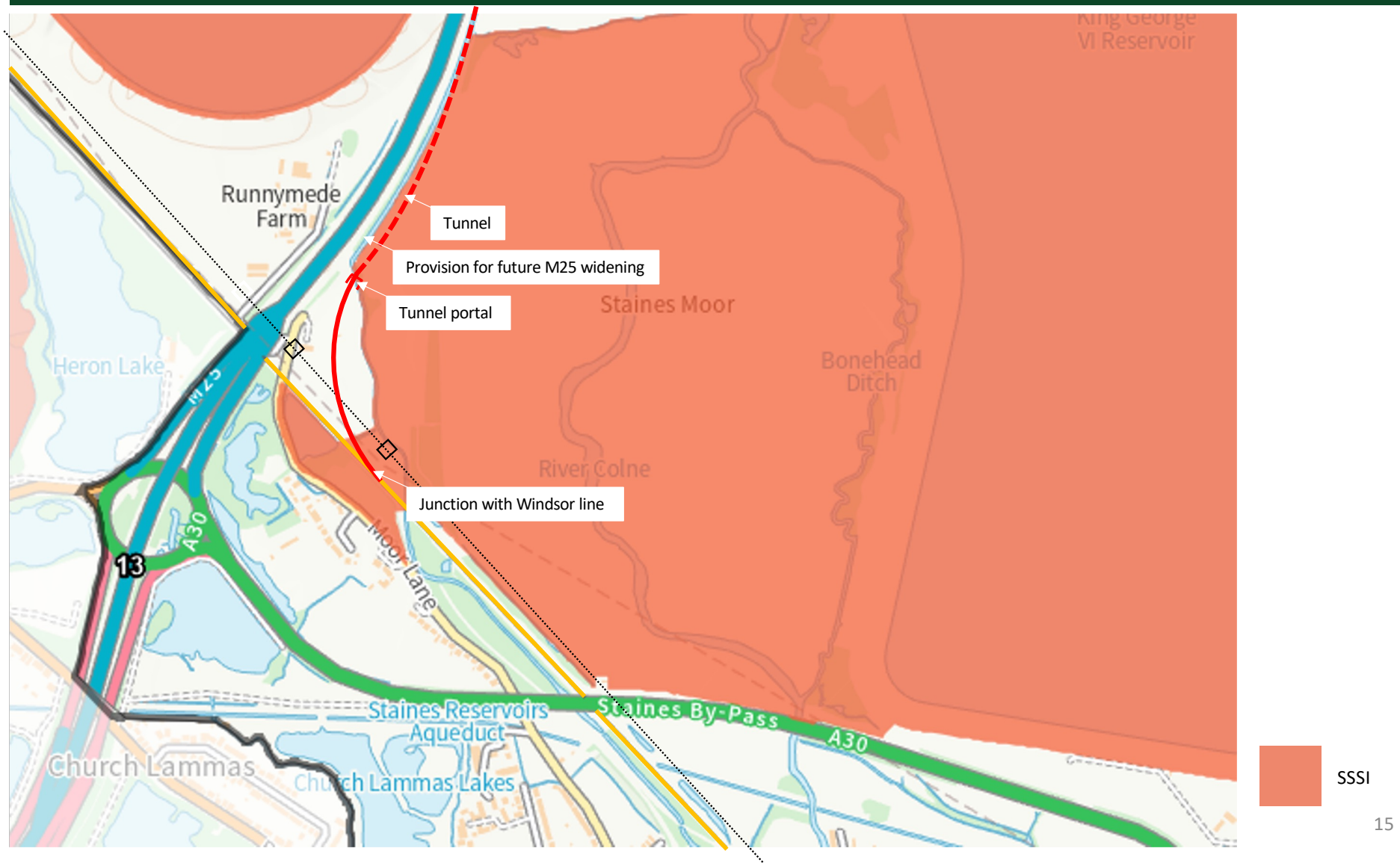
The route for Elizabeth Line and Waterloo services then emerges from the tunnel on the Willows site, South of the SSSI, to join the Windsor line.

The HSR main line continues South in tunnel.

Junction with Windsor Line - March 2025 revised scheme



Junction with Windsor Line and SSSI - March 2025 revised scheme



Construction access - March 2025 revised scheme



Construction access - March 2025 revised scheme



Network Rail land ownership

Construction access - March 2025 revised scheme



Plan of Staines West
– Colnbrook – West
Drayton branch line
c.1935

Construction access - March 2025 revised scheme



1 - View to South from Moor Lane bridge over Windsor Line with The Willows to left – location of proposed HSR junction



2 - View from Moor Lane to The Willows

Questions

Q1 - How do you plan to access the site to carry out installation work to install the new rail line without harming Staines Moor ?

A - The revised alignment allows all construction access and site establishment to be located outside Staines Moor SSSI. A proposed temporary reinstatement of the former Staines West – Colnbrook – West Drayton branch line will provide a railhead for construction materials

Q2 – Re 1 above will this not require closure of the anti clockwise lanes of the M25 to do so for lengthy periods. How will this massive disruption be overcome?

A – The revised alignment avoids any impact on the M25, and provides the necessary passive provision for proposed future widening in connection with Heathrow expansion

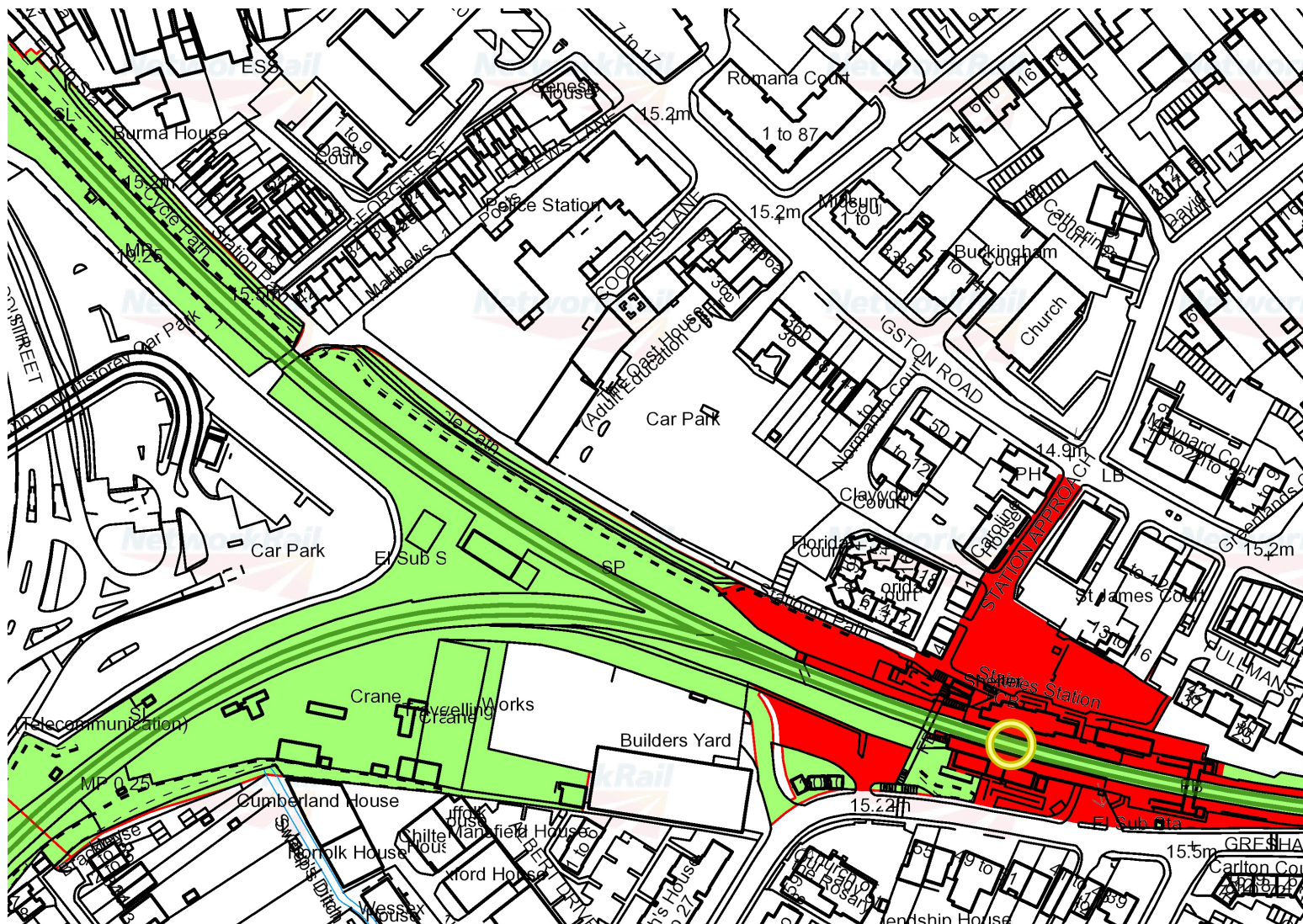
Q3 - Is there, or will there be an impact assessment carried out to gauge how it will affect Staines residents ?

A – A proposed construction methodology and all necessary environmental assessments will be carried out and made available for comment in the future public consultations on Heathrow Southern Railway.

Questions

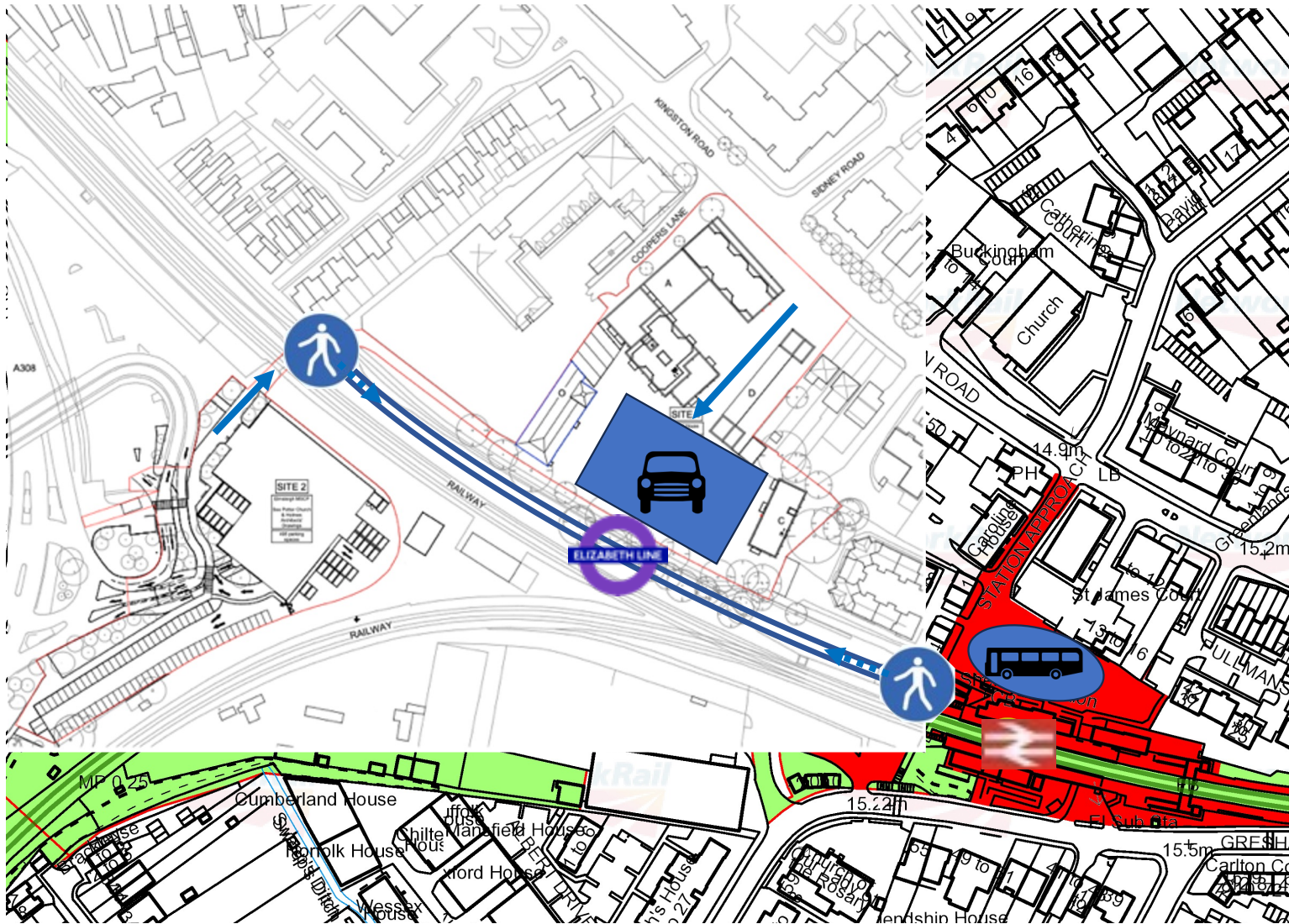
Q4 - If the line is built what plans are being drawn up to ensure there is adequate parking at Staines Station? Currently there is very little public parking there available.

Staines station - Existing Network Rail ownership



- Staines station and the adjacent railway land is constrained, with little opportunity to provide additional car parking within the site boundary.
- We propose to redesign the station forecourt to provide a more attractive setting for the (locally listed) station building.
- This will also include improved bus turning, passenger waiting and disabled parking facilities.

Staines station - Proposed Heathrow Southern Railway development and wider opportunities



- New bay platforms will be constructed within the existing Network Rail boundary to allow Elizabeth Line trains to terminate and turn back.
- These will be fully accessible from both the existing station and a new Northern gateline closer to the town centre, with improved pedestrian and cycle access.
- We understand the planning application for the Council's Kingston Road car park site has been withdrawn.
- There may therefore be an opportunity to provide new decked car parking as part of a wider commercial and/or residential development to capture value created by Elizabeth Line services.

Questions

Q4 - If the line is built what plans are being drawn up to ensure there is adequate parking at Staines Station? Currently there is very little public parking there available.

A – We will work with the Council to develop integrated design proposals for both Staines station and the adjoining land in the Council's ownership, to include detailed assessment of traffic impacts, car parking requirements, public transport improvements and active travel measures.

Questions

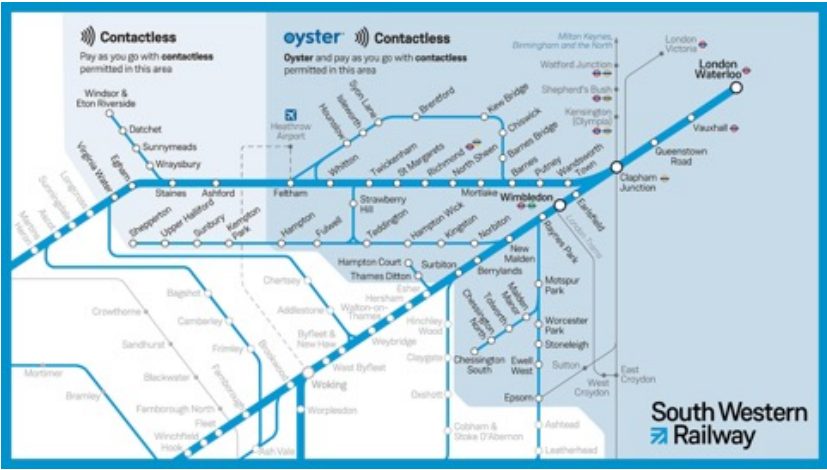
Q5 - Whilst appreciating commercial confidentiality can you give us some idea of how the project will be financed ? Will it be 100% private funding or a Govt/Private arrangement?

A – May I give a verbal summary in view of commercial and other sensitivities.

Questions

Q6 - Can you give us some idea of whether you will welcome and encourage the Oyster System to be a pre-condition for this line being built ?

A – Following extension of London’s contactless zone, we - and Heathrow - fully support the extension of TfL’s fare zones to Spelthorne. Fares policy is TFL’s responsibility but their - and the Mayor’s – support for taking Elizabeth Line services to Staines makes it highly likely that zonal fares would also be extended.



SURREY

Home > Council and democracy > Councillors and committees

Councillors and committees

Decision details

CAMPAIGN TO BRING SPELTHORNE'S TRAIN STATIONS INTO TfL ZONE 6

- Find out more about this issue
- Share this item

Decision Maker: Spelthorne Joint Committee

Decision status: **Recommendations Approved**

Is Key decision?: No

Is subject to call in?: No

Patti Taylor, representing the campaign team:

"Is the Spelthorne Joint Committee willing to endorse the campaign for bringing Staines, Ashford, Sunbury and Shepperton stations into TfL's Zone 6, in order that Oyster card payments can be used into and out of London?"

We believe that this would benefit not only our residents but Spelthorne's businesses, schools and workers, meaning less expensive rail fares and facilitating easier travel. Anyone travelling out of or into London from our stations can use Oyster up to Feltham but need to exit the train to purchase an onward ticket. This is inconvenient to say the least, and an expensive extra cost that deters visitors and workers in and out of our towns."

The Spelthorne Joint Committee resolved to AGREE to:
Fully support the campaign for bringing Staines, Ashford, Sunbury and Shepperton stations into TfL's Zone 6. The Joint Committee Chairman will write letters of support to the Secretary of State for Transport and the new train operator.

Publication date: 19/07/2017
Date of decision: 17/07/2017
Decided at meeting: 17/07/2017 - Spelthorne Joint Committee

change.org Start a petition My petitions Browse Subscription

Petition details Comments Updates

Make Spelthorne Zone 6 (Ashford, Staines, Sunbury, Shepperton)

16,224 have signed. Let's get to 25,000!

At 25,000 signatures, this petition becomes one of the top signed on Change.org!

Sign this petition

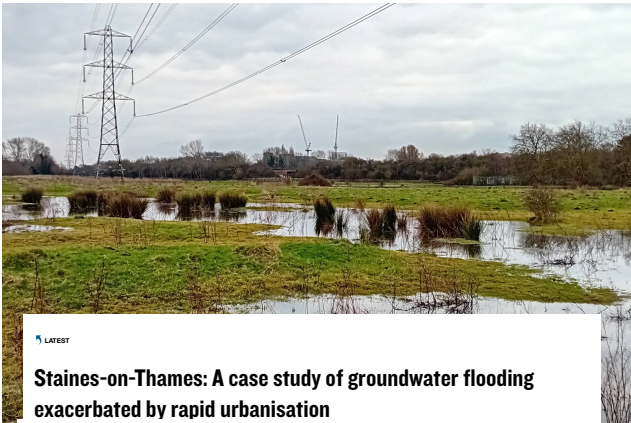
First name

The 'Spelthorne in the Zone' movement wants to see Staines, Ashford, Sunbury and Shepperton included in Zone 6 so that Oyster cards can be used, and the group says they are "pleased" smart ticketing will be included in the bidding process.

The campaign group held its inaugural public meeting last Thursday (July 7), with a panel of councillors, Spelthorne Business Forum leaders and borough MP **Kwasi Kwarteng** discussing the economic impacts for the train user and businesses in the area.

This was the first public meeting held by Spelthorne in the Zone

Groundwater flooding



Royal Holloway University, University of London is in Egham, less than 10 minutes' drive from Staines-on-Thames.

Royal Holloway senior lecturer in earth science Dr Jonathan Paul – who trained as a geophysicist – has been studying the groundwater flooding in Staines. His studies have attracted the attention of local groups who are trying to fight further development and he has held multiple town halls to explain his findings to people who live in Staines.

"It's a super interesting part of the world," he told *NCE*. "It's peppered with old gravel pits and landfill sites that have been backfilled with rubbish and loads of clay."

Further exacerbating the issue is that the aquifer layer in the area is close to the surface. The area is covered in a layer of gravel that is 3-4m thick, and thinner in some places, he said.

"The water flowing through it is quite extensive," he said. "So, if you construct a huge basement through it, it basically blocks that flow of water and tends to make it rise to the surface and cause groundwater flooding."

Additionally, Paul has found that the area around Staines and as far as Windsor and Feltham is "pretty weird" because "the pattern of flooding isn't what you'd expect – it doesn't really follow the River Thames or smaller surface rivers".

"If you look at it on a map, it's basically discrete patches that don't correlate with rivers or topography," he said.

He and his research group have done tests using geophysical equipment on the gravel both in the field and in the lab.

"What we think is happening is the pattern of flooding that you see at the surface is a consequence of groundwater flow," he said. "The chemistry of the water that comes out has more of an affinity to the aquifer than to the River Thames."

Ultimately, this means "it's going to get worse", according to Paul.

"It's been getting worse for quite some time," he continued. "There were places flooding last winter that have never flooded before and I think that's basically because they're building on the floodplain."

He has been studying the groundwater situation in Staines for a few years, but he has heard from locals that the issue has been prominent in the area since 2014.

However, early 2024 when there were a series of named storms in England saw the situation reach new levels. For the first time people were realising the Thames hadn't burst its banks but properties a quarter or half a mile from the river were experiencing flooded basements, Paul said.

"[People realised] the water was rising vertically; coming out of drains, coming out of cracks in people's basements – and it was far more widespread and potentially dangerous than river flooding because you can't stop it with sandbags," he recalled.

The issues arising from groundwater flooding can be far worse than just flooded basements, too.

"What often happens is you get variable subsidence and foundering of the surface," Paul said. "So we've had buildings whose roofs are bowing and we've had sewage pipes that have broken because of the upward pressure on them."

He has been working in a street in south Staines where the sewage water has mixed with the foul lines, meaning the flood water brings sewage up out of the drains. "We've tested the water [in the street] and the levels of salmonella and E. coli are off the scale – way beyond World Health Organisation thresholds," he said.

He believes that groundwater flooding is "not being taken seriously" by the government because "there's nobody whose job is to look at groundwater flooding – they're only concerned with river flooding".

His team is trying to help by modelling it and "delineating the risk areas where the council and the Environment Agency might put resources in and try to mitigate the problem".

However, he accepts that there is not a lot of easy mitigation for groundwater flooding.

"I think probably the best thing they could do is – if they know the direction that groundwater is flowing – try and divert it," he said. "You can put in barriers like sheet piling in the subsurface and try to take it away from basements and channel it towards the Thames or water meadows.

"But I get asked this question all the time and it's super tricky – it's basically down to the decision-makers and how much disruption they would allow."

Paul said that this could be even more difficult in Staines, judging by what he and his team have uncovered through their studies, which shows that the water table in the area is "doing some pretty wacky things".

"We spent a couple of days using ground penetrating radar, which allowed us to map the water table pretty clearly to a really good spatial resolution," he said.

They found that the water table is usually around 3m below the surface but that this varied from 0.5m to 5m in depending on where they were standing.

"The water table is warped up and down on really fine spatial scales," he said.

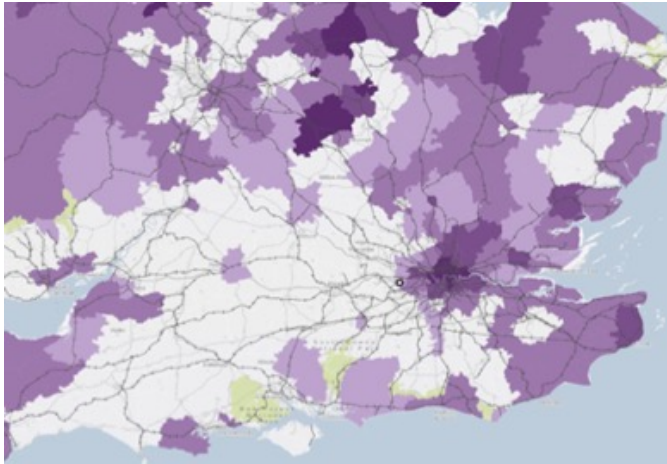
It's also "bouncing up and down on temporal scales" he added.

"Over the course of a week last summer we saw the water table in Staines drop by about half a metre," he said. "This might not sound like a lot, but an average figure for how much a water table might go up and down might be 10cm a year, so for it to jump half a metre in a week just indicates that there's something beneath the surface that is causing these water flows to fluctuate quite a lot in very short timescales."

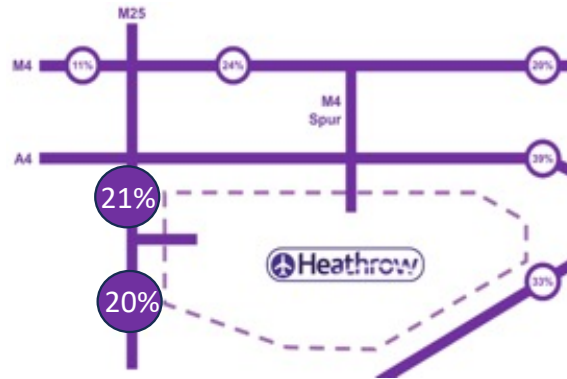
***‘Dear Steve
I thought I would update you with an article in the New Civil Engineer, which came out today, about the Staines aquifer and flooding. I expect that the peer-reviewed scientific journal article will be published this month, which contains a lot more detail about our results and implications. I will send you the link as soon as it is published,
Best wishes
Jonny’***

Dr Jonathan Paul (jonathan.paul@rhul.ac.uk) – Senior Lecturer, Department of Earth Sciences, Royal Holloway University of London (RHUL)

The need for new, direct rail access to Heathrow from across the region



Heathrow rail served catchment, Rail Projects Update, HAL April 2018



% Heathrow related traffic on roads around the airport – Surface Access Proposals, HAL 2019

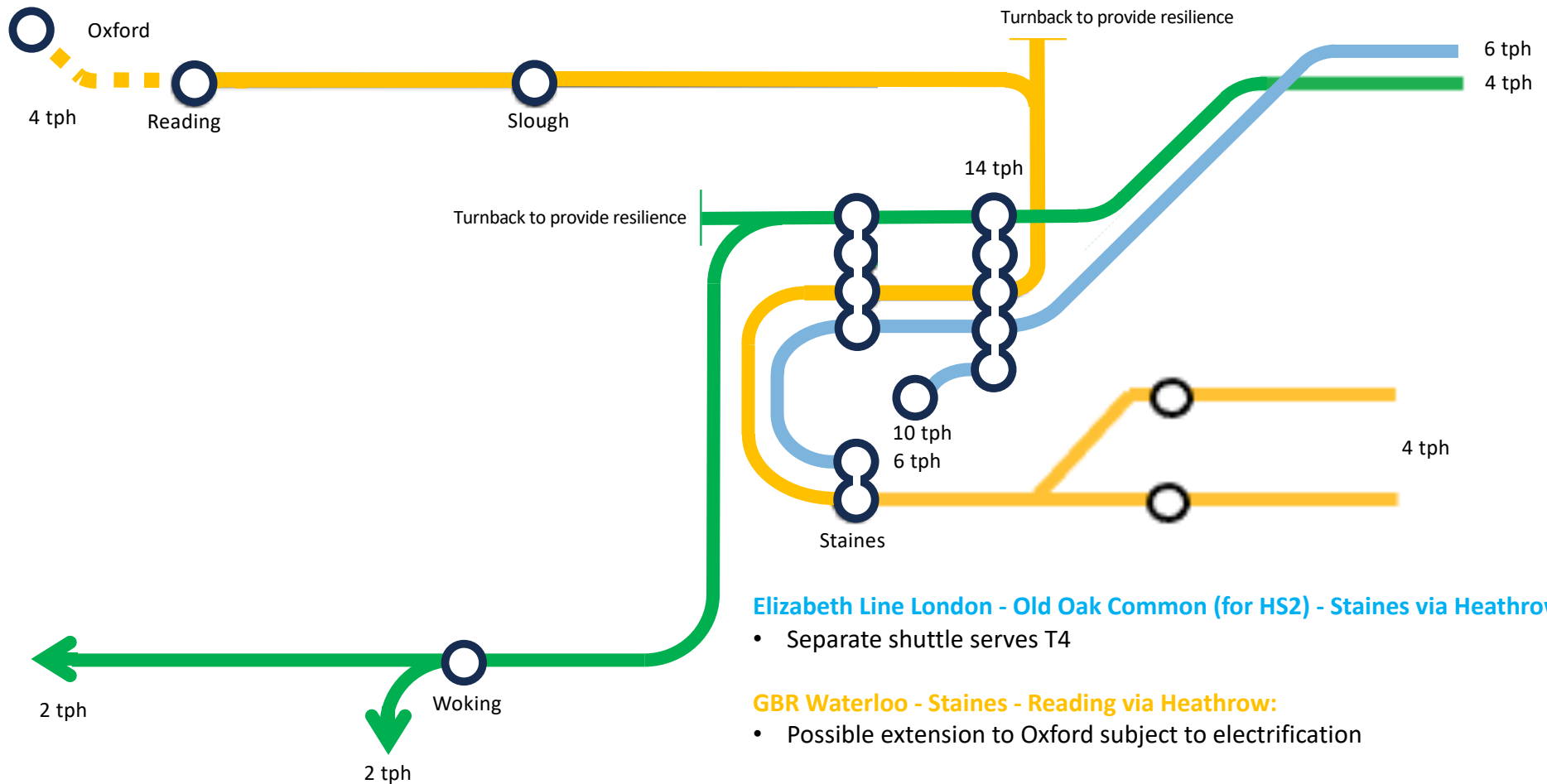
- 2023 data confirms the M25 between J13 & J14 - in Spelthorne - had an average daily flow of 209,000 vehicles and the M4 around J3 of c.130,000 vehicles per day.
- c.80% of Heathrow related traffic uses the M25 and M4, equivalent to c.54,000 and 36,000 vehicles/day, or c.26% and 28% of total flows.
- Even constrained to two runways and a 480,000 ATM cap, Heathrow's passenger numbers continue to increase, from 80.9m in 2019 (pre-Covid) to 83.9m in 2024.
- Alongside this, transfer/transit passenger numbers continue to decline, reflecting increasing competition from Middle Eastern hubs, and create even greater surface access demand.
- HAL's two runway masterplan envisages increasing capacity to c.100mppa through both terminal and apron development with continued increases in aircraft size and load factors.
- In January 2025 Government reconfirmed policy support for HAL's North West Runway scheme, further increasing capacity to c.140mppa.

		% mode share	% sub-division	Pax/day	Vehicle occupancy	Trips/day	Multiplier adjustment	Total trips/day
63m O&D passengers (2024)				173,000				
Mode share (2024)	Private	55		95,150				
	Public	45		77,850				
	Total	100		173,000				
Sub-mode share (2017 % adjusted)	Car: Park & Fly	26	7	12,110	÷ 1.5	8,073		8,073
	Car: Kiss & Fly		19	32,870	÷ 1.5	21,913	X 2	43,826
	PHV: Backfilled	29	7	12,110	÷ 1.5	8,073		8,073
	PHV: Not backfilled		22	38,060	÷ 1.5	25,373	X 2	50,747
Total		55	55	95,150				110,719

Proposed further discussion – ‘Statement of Common Ground’

Proposals	Requirements	Results	Benefits	Impacts
Extend Elizabeth Line services from Heathrow to Staines	Construct Windsor line junction and bay platforms at Staines	Direct, fast and frequent connectivity with Heathrow, OOC (for HS2) and London	Access to wider education and employment opportunities. Transforms inward investor perceptions.	New Staines station infrastructure (within railway boundary). Additional (electric) rail services over Windsor line.
Extend Waterloo services from Staines to Heathrow	Construct Windsor line junction	Direct, fast and frequent and connectivity with Heathrow, Thames Valley, Reading and potentially Oxford	Increases value of development sites. Enhances Staines potential for airport passengers & crew accommodation & hospitality	Additional (electric) services over Windsor line
Local transport integration	Staines station public realm	Provide bus/taxi interchange	Improved local transport facilities and accessibility	
Urban realm improvements	Enhance pedestrian/cycle links between station and town centre		More attractive and accessible public realm	
Construction plan	Site establishment	Temporary railhead for materials/waste transport	Minimise HGV construction traffic	Potential local noise/dust/traffic during construction
Ecology and environmental plan	Environmental assessment and ground surveys	Mitigate groundwater flooding risk. Opportunity for environmental works	Improve local footpath network consistent with SSSI protection measures	

Proposed further discussion – Integrated Western and Southern Rail Access



Elizabeth Line London - Old Oak Common (for HS2) - Staines via Heathrow:

- Separate shuttle serves T4

GBR Waterloo - Staines - Reading via Heathrow:

- Possible extension to Oxford subject to electrification

GBR Paddington – Woking – Guildford/Basingstoke via Heathrow:

- Possible extension to Portsmouth/Southampton

Heathrow Airport Ltd.

Sophie, Tim, James and colleagues apologise that Heathrow isn't represented tonight but have provided the following statements:

'Heathrow Southern Railway will benefit Staines residents in creating an intermodal hub, because the airport will continue to support with local bus connectivity, active travel links and minimising the impact of parking issues' – Tim Leech, Head of Surface Access Strategy

'HSRL is Heathrow's preferred southern rail scheme, and we are working with local authorities to understand how these benefits can be maximised and to ensure the project will deliver for local communities' - Nigel Milton, Chief Communications & Sustainability Officer

Thank you

May I also comment on the alternative Southern Light Rail proposal?

© Copyright Heathrow Southern Railway Ltd. March 2025

HEATHROW
SOUTHERN
RAILWAY

Southern Light Rail - 1



Southern Light Rail, Presentation to Heathrow Area Transport Forum November 2022



Example of rail viaduct construction, Thame Valley viaduct

SLR propose construction of a viaduct from Staines station, crossing the railway junction to the West and extending through the town centre.

A viaduct would have significant adverse local impacts, both in construction and operation.

Spelthorne BC's 2002 Airtrack Planning Brief concluded the similar viaduct then proposed would be *"a prominent elevated feature ... with the potential to be an intrusive feature having a damaging impact on the environment of the town centre."*

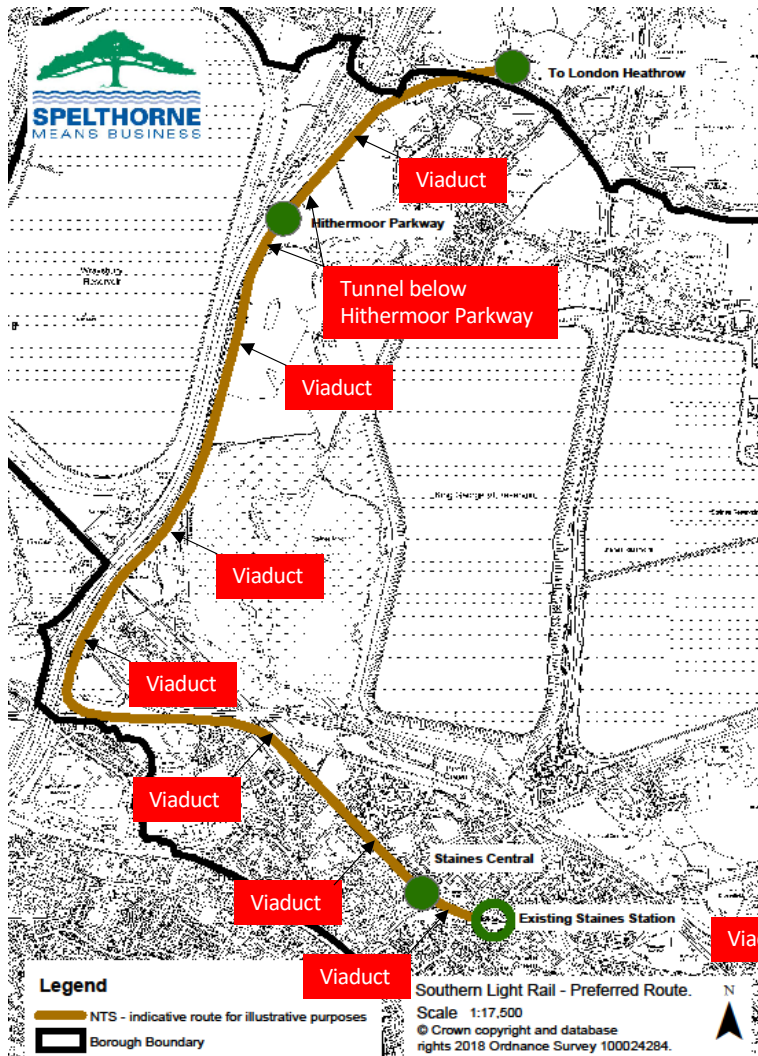


Southern Light Rail, Presentation to Heathrow Area Transport Forum November 2022



Submission to Airports Commission, Interlinking Transit Solutions July 2013

Southern Light Rail - 2



Southern Light Rail, presentation to Heathrow Area Transport Forum, Spelthorne BC, November 2022



LARTS Rapid Rail trains on the twin track guideway, Submission to the Airports Commission, Interlinking Transit Solutions Ltd, 2013



Elevated Rapid Transit at Beijing, Submission to Inquiry on Surface Transport to Airports, Interlinking Transit Solutions, 2015



Park and Ride interchange, Stanwell Moor, Submission to Inquiry on Surface Transport to Airports, Interlinking Transit Solutions, 2015

- SLR propose an elevated viaduct structure continues through the SSSI and Green Belt.
- The route tunnels below 'Hithermoor Parkway,' a large 'Park & Ride' car park located in the Green Belt.
- "A new station at Hithermoor Parkway is proposed where the light rail would serve a new Heathrow car park with a proposed 5,000 spaces for cars and access from the M25" – HSR/SLR Compare and Contrast, Arup for HSPG/HATF, June 2024
- North of the car park, SLR climbs to another viaduct structure, crossing Stanwell Moor and the A3113 towards Heathrow.

Southern Light Rail - 3

- The SLR scheme promoters propose the viaduct would be constructed using a launching girder. However, this requires a complex and costly bespoke system, economically justified only where a lengthy structure is to be constructed with relatively little variation in horizontal and vertical geometry – for example on the HS2 Colne Valley viaduct. It also requires road access for the large pre-cast spans, presenting significant challenges in an urban location.
- On leaving Staines station, the Southern Light Rail route would first cross the existing rail infrastructure west of Staines station, then be threaded through Staines town centre before curving sharply to join the M25 corridor. This is fundamentally unsuited to a launching girder methodology.
- Once the route joins the motorway corridor, only a very short section is above ground before it enters a tunnel north of Stanwell Moor.



- The viaduct construction would therefore be likely to require craneage of each pre-cast section from ground level, typical examples of which are shown above.



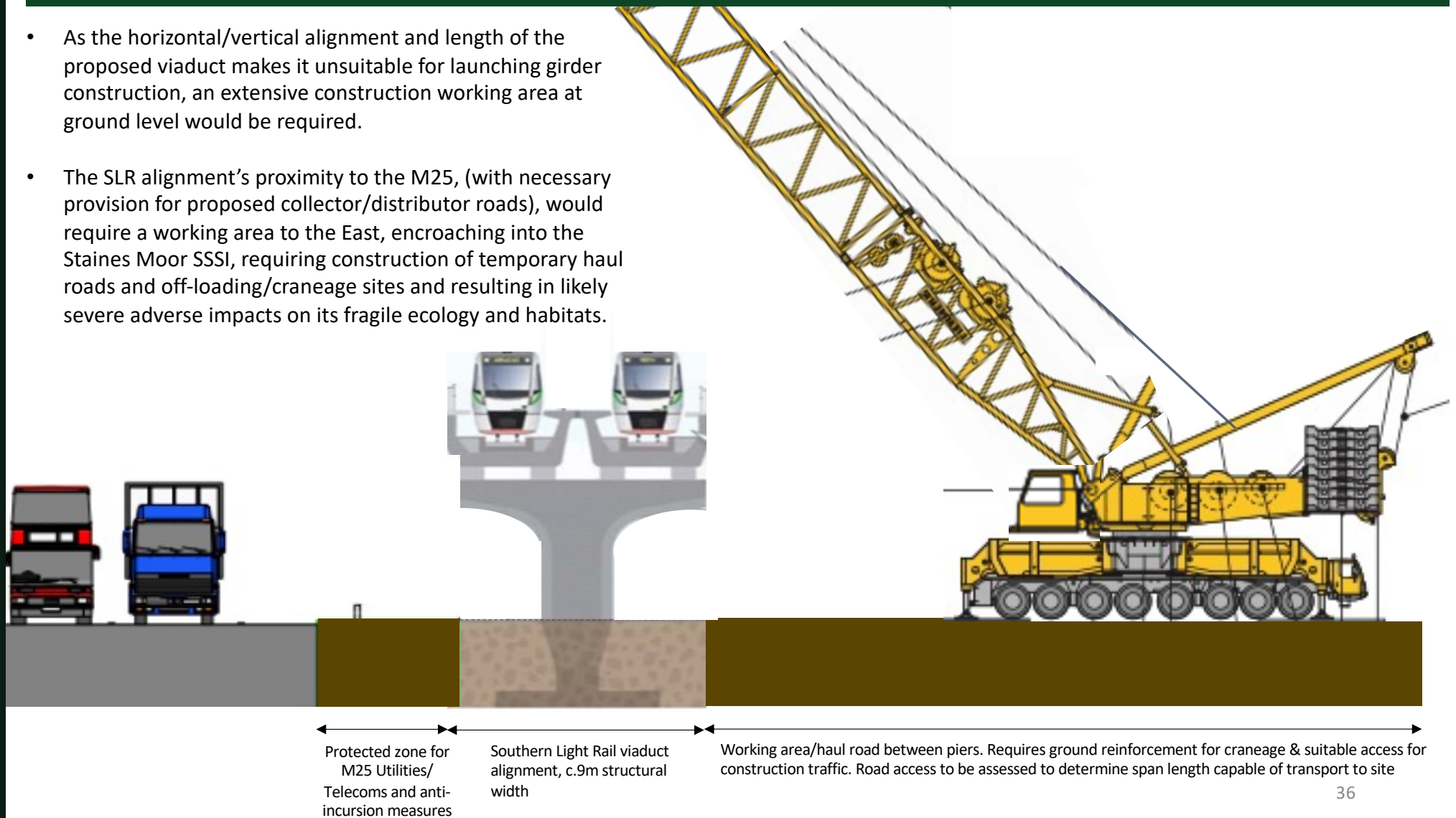
Launching girder construction technique - Submission to ORR Inquiry on Charging Framework for Heathrow, LARTS March 2016



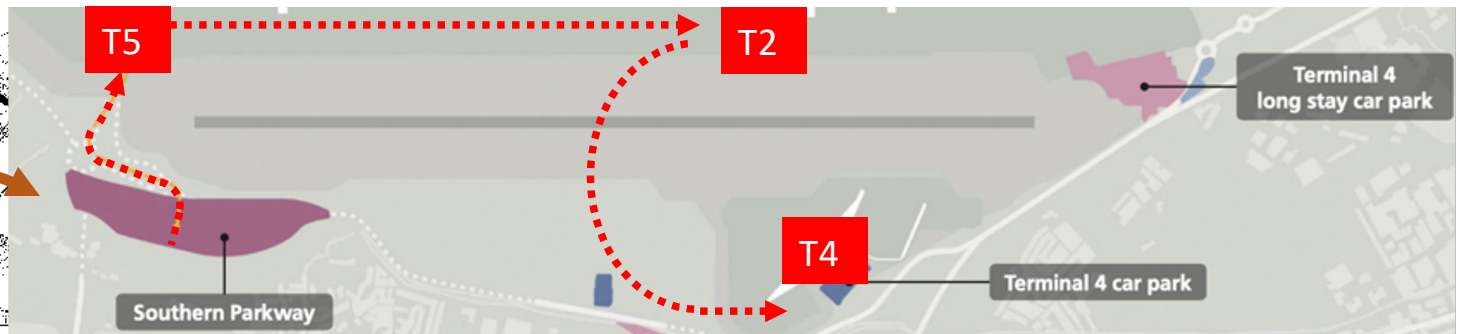
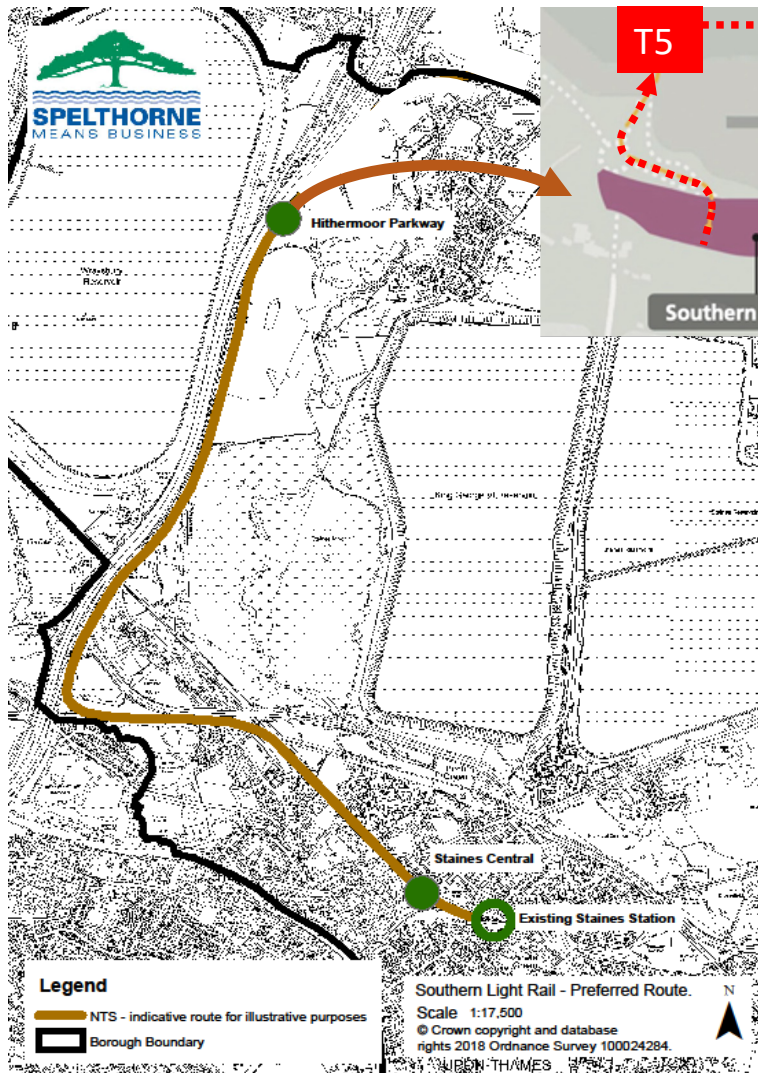
2.1 miles HS2 Colne Valley viaduct, each pre-cast span 80m, constructed with 700 tonne launching girder shipped from Hong Kong and assembled on site

Southern Light Rail - 4

- As the horizontal/vertical alignment and length of the proposed viaduct makes it unsuitable for launching girder construction, an extensive construction working area at ground level would be required.
- The SLR alignment's proximity to the M25, (with necessary provision for proposed collector/distributor roads), would require a working area to the East, encroaching into the Staines Moor SSSI, requiring construction of temporary haul roads and off-loading/craneage sites and resulting in likely severe adverse impacts on its fragile ecology and habitats.



Southern Light Rail - 5



Landside connections from Southern Parkway overlaid on Airport Expansion Consultation Document, HAL June 2019

Southern Parkway



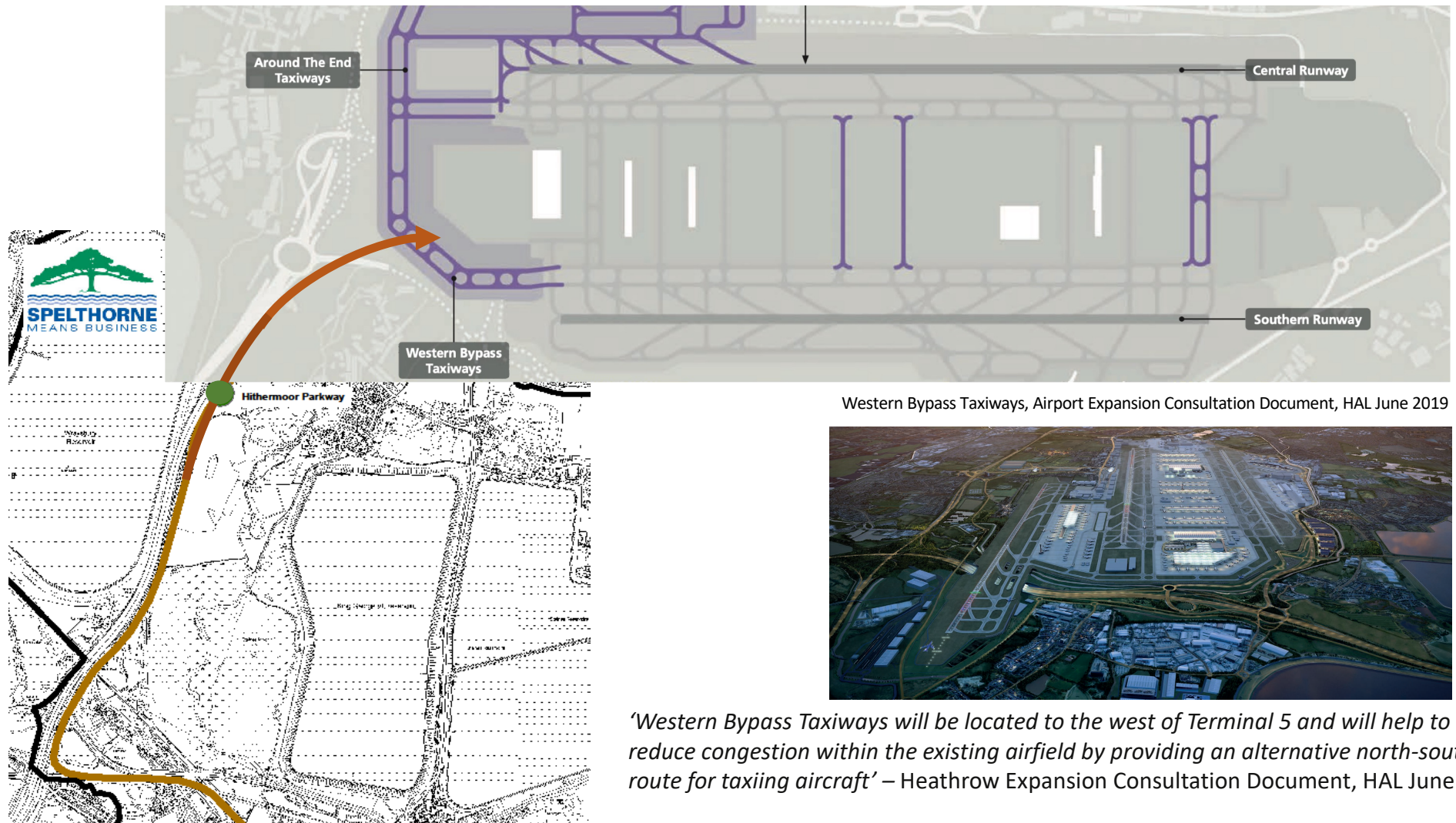
- 22,000 car parking spaces
- Up to 9 storeys spread over multiple blocks
- Up to 60 metres high which is 8 metres higher than Nelson's Column
- Near residential properties
- Situated on about 18 hectares of Green Belt
- Loss of the Oaks Road Biodiversity site

Presentation to Overview & Scrutiny Committee, Spelthorne BC, 3rd September 2019

'Heathrow does not have the physical station infrastructure to incorporate the light rail scheme into Terminal 5' – Nigel Milton, HAL letter to Cllr. Sexton, 21st December 2023.

Southern Light Rail would therefore need to terminate at the proposed Southern Parkway

Southern Light Rail - 6



Western Bypass Taxiways, Airport Expansion Consultation Document, HAL June 2019

'Western Bypass Taxiways will be located to the west of Terminal 5 and will help to reduce congestion within the existing airfield by providing an alternative north-south route for taxiing aircraft' – Heathrow Expansion Consultation Document, HAL June 2019.

Southern Light Rail could not therefore alternatively terminate landside at or near T5

Southern Light Rail - 7

LARTs RapidRail connections around Spelthorne and Heathrow



Fig. A1: LARTs RapidRail plan for connecting Heathrow and Staines-upon-Thames – Submission to the Airports Commission, Interlinking Transit Solutions July 2013

- Southern Light Rail would only provide a link between Staines and an interchange – via the Southern Parkway or similar - outside Heathrow’s perimeter
- Spelthorne BC’s analysis of BAA’s Airtrack scheme in 2009 recognised its business case relied on new rail services connecting Heathrow directly to a wide geographic area

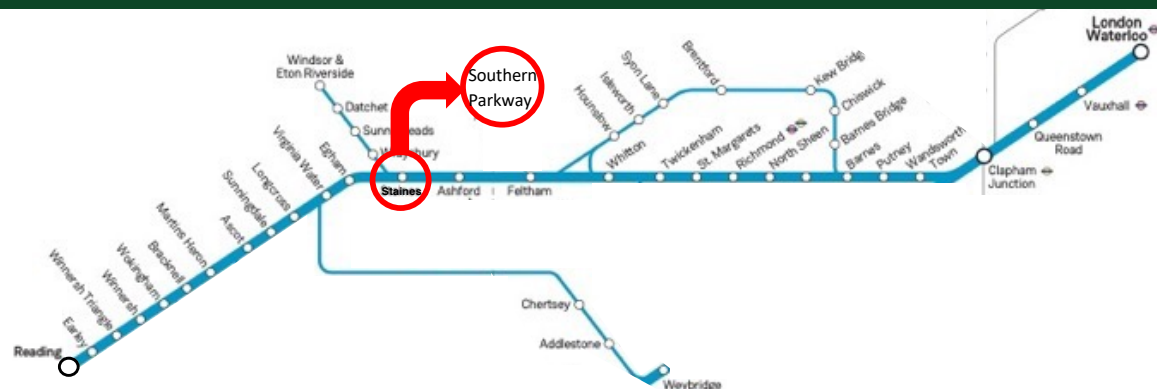
Net additional passenger entry and exits in am peak - 8-9am

	2015	2030
Waterloo	1675	1779
Guildford	353	421
Woking	380	421
Reading	133	177
Chertsey	301	324
Staines	22	30
Ashford	38	40

- “The table (above) shows that the flow to the two main stations in Spelthorne is low, relative to other key destinations. The figures appear to show the business is dependent on passengers being drawn from a wide geographical area”
Report on Airtrack, Appendix A to the Deputy Chief Executive’s Report to the Special Cabinet, Spelthorne BC 17th September 2009
- Southern Light Rail would require the vast majority of passengers to interchange at Staines to reach Heathrow.

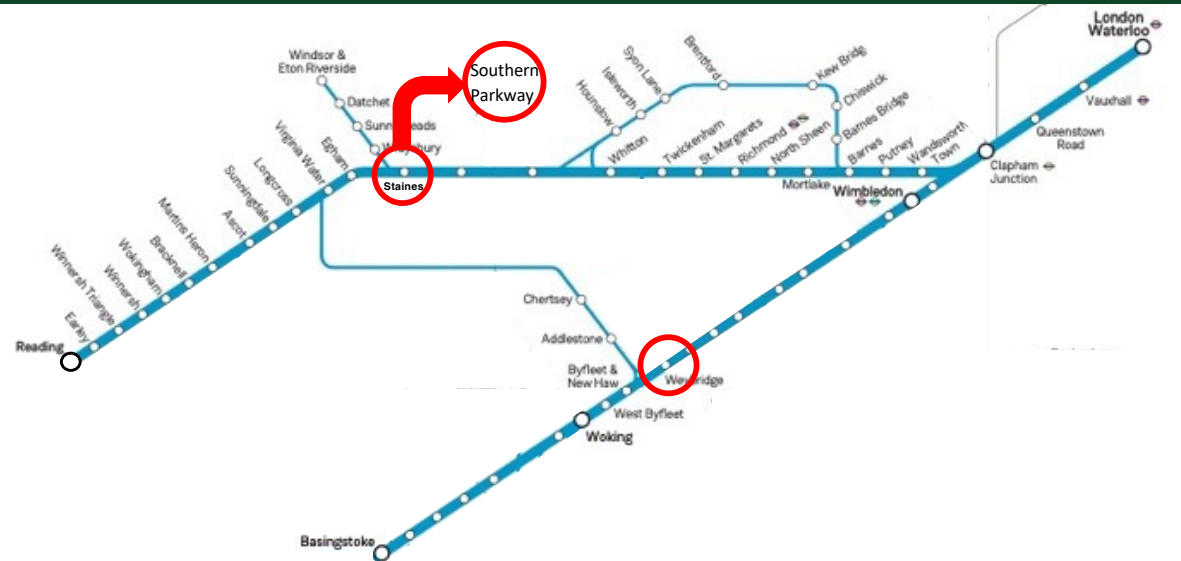
Southern Light Rail - 8

- Southern Light Rail would provide access to the Southern Parkway from Staines itself, and a small number of stations on the SWR network via interchange at Staines.
- *“The (Southern Light Rail) link would act as a standalone shuttle separate to existing rail services and would require passengers and staff travelling from outside Staines to interchange in order to continue with their onward journeys” (Southern Access to Heathrow, Arup for HSPG, August 2021)*
- *“Passengers travelling to or from airports, particularly for international journeys, have particular characteristics that set them aside from other rail users. For example, they are likely to place greater value upon the reliability of the service, especially when accessing the airport. They may be particularly deterred by interchange, partly because of the added risk of delay, but also due to difficulties associated with changing trains while carrying baggage” (Model Development Report, A Report for HS2 Ltd, Atkins February 2010)*



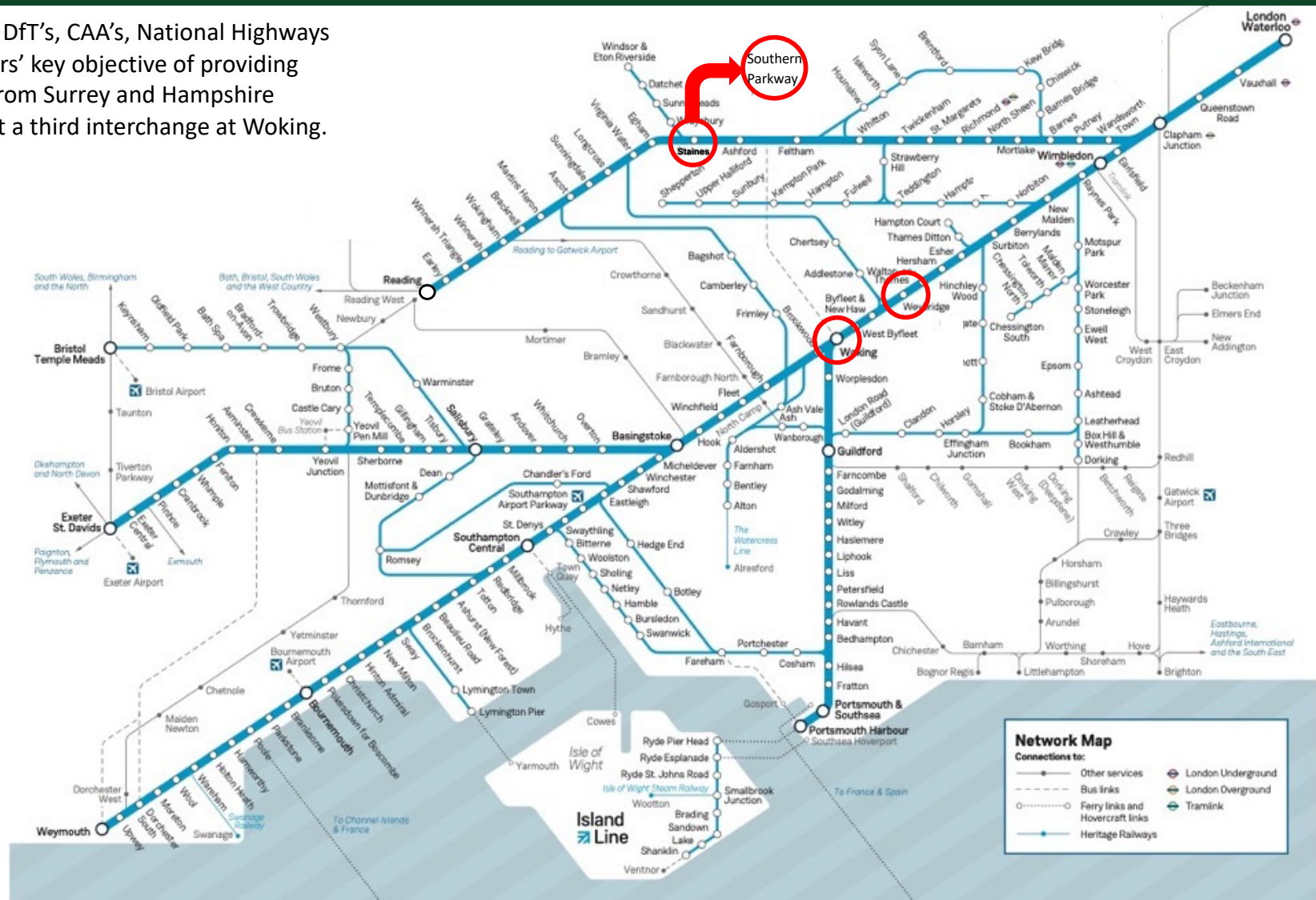
Southern Light Rail - 9

- The Southern Parkway would be accessible from some additional stations with a second interchange - at Weybridge – in addition to Staines itself.
- *“Each time a passenger has to change between trains at each leg of the journey, the total end to end journey time is increased by additional waiting time. The impact of this interchange penalty tends to be greater for passengers who are travelling with luggage, such as air passengers, and is particularly high for foreign travellers and those who are unfamiliar with our transport systems”* (Heathrow Airport Ltd submission to HS2 consultation, July 2010)
- *“Airport surface access trips are uniquely difficult to shift to sustainable modes for a number of reasons, including perceived barriers to using public transport for travellers with children and/or luggage”* (Mayor of London’s response to Government’s - Shirley Rodrigues, Deputy Mayor for Environment and Energy letter to Robert Court MP, 7th September 2021)



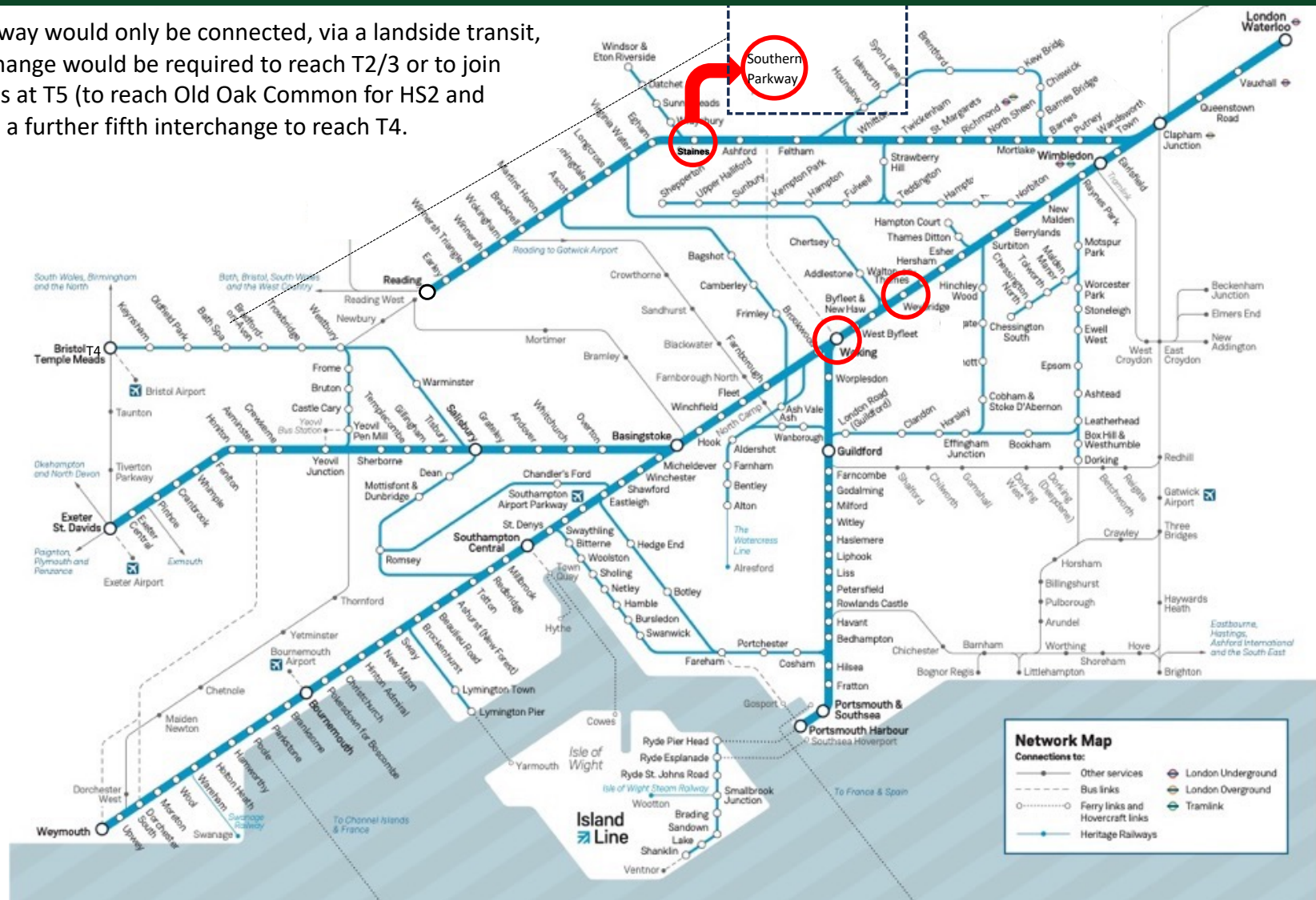
Southern Light Rail - 10

- Meeting Heathrow's, DfT's, CAA's, National Highways and other stakeholders' key objective of providing access to Heathrow from Surrey and Hampshire would require at least a third interchange at Woking.



Southern Light Rail - 11

- As the Southern Parkway would only be connected, via a landside transit, to T5, a fourth interchange would be required to reach T2/3 or to join Elizabeth Line services at T5 (to reach Old Oak Common for HS2 and central London), with a further fifth interchange to reach T4.



Southern Light Rail - 12

District	Total passengers	Private car/taxi passengers
City of Westminster	4,736,782	1,733,436
Kensington & Chelsea	2,052,201	934,942
Camden	1,415,679	532,007
Tower Hamlets	867,747	318,277
Hounslow	797,986	482,252
Ealing	793,276	488,713
Oxford	749,672	315,812
Richmond	741,227	591,323
Hammersmith & Fulham	741,203	325,507
Hillingdon	737,338	519,130
Wandsworth	662,580	409,810
Islington	628,259	192,975
City of London	592,290	162,130
Lambeth	566,488	216,905
Reading	560,935	369,282
Brent	553,634	368,009
Windsor & Maidenhead	550,102	516,166
Southwark	531,788	243,634
Barnet	504,459	373,753
Southampton	478,216	265,561
Bristol	380,590	168,470
Cambridge	375,415	223,953
Hackney	362,485	148,064
Harrow	339,648	306,489
Merton	335,162	233,469
Slough	320,155	298,089
Elmbridge	319,090	309,613
Haringey	302,977	143,034
Wycombe	287,492	256,786
Birmingham	282,024	170,979
Guildford	280,893	255,077
Newham	277,426	109,403
Brighton & Hove	276,675	136,745
Kingston on Thames	276,111	219,275
Lewisham	271,093	157,842
Bromley	259,459	198,552
Cardiff	256,110	113,413
Croydon	246,826	191,607
Dacorum	238,440	225,219
Enfield	235,156	165,055
Greenwich	231,983	114,508
Runnymede	222,487	202,932
Swindon	221,946	186,736
Bournemouth	220,534	97,926
Wokingham	217,696	207,135
Redbridge	216,409	154,422
Leicester	214,275	149,393
Basingstoke & Deane	210,646	193,507
Milton Keynes	204,686	155,727
Total top 50 O&D districts	27,145,751	14,853,051
Total LHR O&D pax 2018 (CAA data)	51,658,000	

- Spelthorne is not in the top 50 Districts measured by total Heathrow O&D passenger numbers (CAA passenger survey 2018).
- Local passenger demand for access to Heathrow is therefore low, although c.3,000 local people (c.5% of total Borough workforce) are employed at Heathrow (Spelthorne Community Investment Programme, HAL 2018).
- Any rail business case is therefore dependent on passenger (& staff) demand from the wider London and SE region, recognising that any interchange in a rail journey suppresses demand but is a particular deterrent for time sensitive air travellers, often carrying luggage and making unfamiliar journeys.
- *“Promoters of surface access schemes (need) to have a clear incentive to promote use by non-airport users to develop a viable business case for their schemes”* (Economic regulation of capacity expansion at Heathrow: policy update, CAP1658, CAA April 2018)
- *“Previous studies have demonstrated that an interchange in a rail access journey to the airport suppressed demand by approximately 50%”* (High Speed Rail Development Programme: Strategic Choices, MVA/Systra for Greengauge 21 2008-09)
- *“Adding an interchange to a rail service, despite journey times remaining the same, can reduce demand for a service by 40%”* (Surface Connectivity: assessing the merits of the Airports Commission’s options for UK aviation, Independent Transport Commission 2014)
- *“Consumers have also told us that they value a wider range of choices and ... that they prefer some public transport options over others – for example direct rail services over complex multi-change journeys or coach”* (Join the Dots, Passenger Priorities, HAL June 2020)
- *“Heavy rail direct access is important for encouraging modal shift (recognising) interchange penalty”* (TfL, Southern Access to Heathrow Engagement Report, Arup May 2021)
- *“Airport passenger point of view – high interchange penalty, key concern of Heathrow Airport”* (HATF, Southern Access to Heathrow Engagement Report, Arup May 2021)

Thank you

© Copyright Heathrow Southern Railway Ltd. March 2025

HEATHROW
SOUTHERN
RAILWAY

This page is intentionally left blank

Larls

Southern Light Rail

Page 161

Cllr Briefing
January 2024

This is how it's done



SLR

we join up
journeys



Vancouver



Kuala Lumpur



New York



Copenhagen

YVR 1985



*...oldest and longest, fully-automated, driverless,
rapid-transit system in the world*



YVR 2017

CPH 29



KUL 52



BKK 56



DXB 90



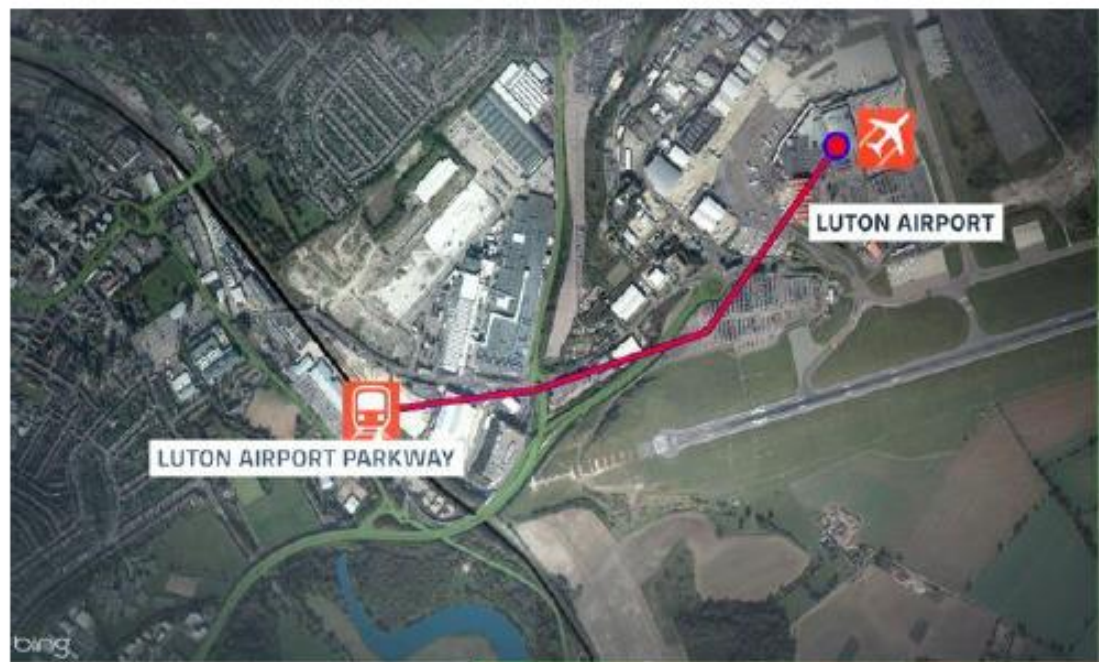


BJS 94

LCY 4.5

44 seconds between Canary Wharf & Heron Quays





LTN 15





Benefits of SLR

- ***SLR** frequency of service enables every existing train service at Staines to be a Heathrow train*
- ***SLR** enables intermediate stations. It is neutral about how Network Rail timetable is scheduled*
- ***SLR** does not add to network track congestion*
- ***SLR** provides greatest frequency to LHR*
- ***SLR** can be privately funded*

'CREAM' principles

Capacity, speed and connectivity

Reduced environmental impact

Effective, reliable and resilient

Affordability and cost effectiveness

Maximising economic prosperity

Capacity, speed and connectivity



Can carry over 14m
passengers pa

Every 6 minutes
7 minutes to Heathrow



Connects without affecting
track capacity

Reduced environmental impact



Over 6% modal share (2 runways)

Minimal footprint (no tunneling/heavy gauge track)



No impact on Staines Moor SSSI



Effective, reliable and resilient



Tried and tested
across the globe

Driverless and 98%
reliability



Modular construction



Affordable and cost effective



Fully privately funded

No premium fares



Less than 1/3 the cost
of heavy rail (c.£400m)



Maximising economic prosperity



Very fast delivery - 54
month build

Regeneration
potential



Housing delivery



SLR – Indicative route

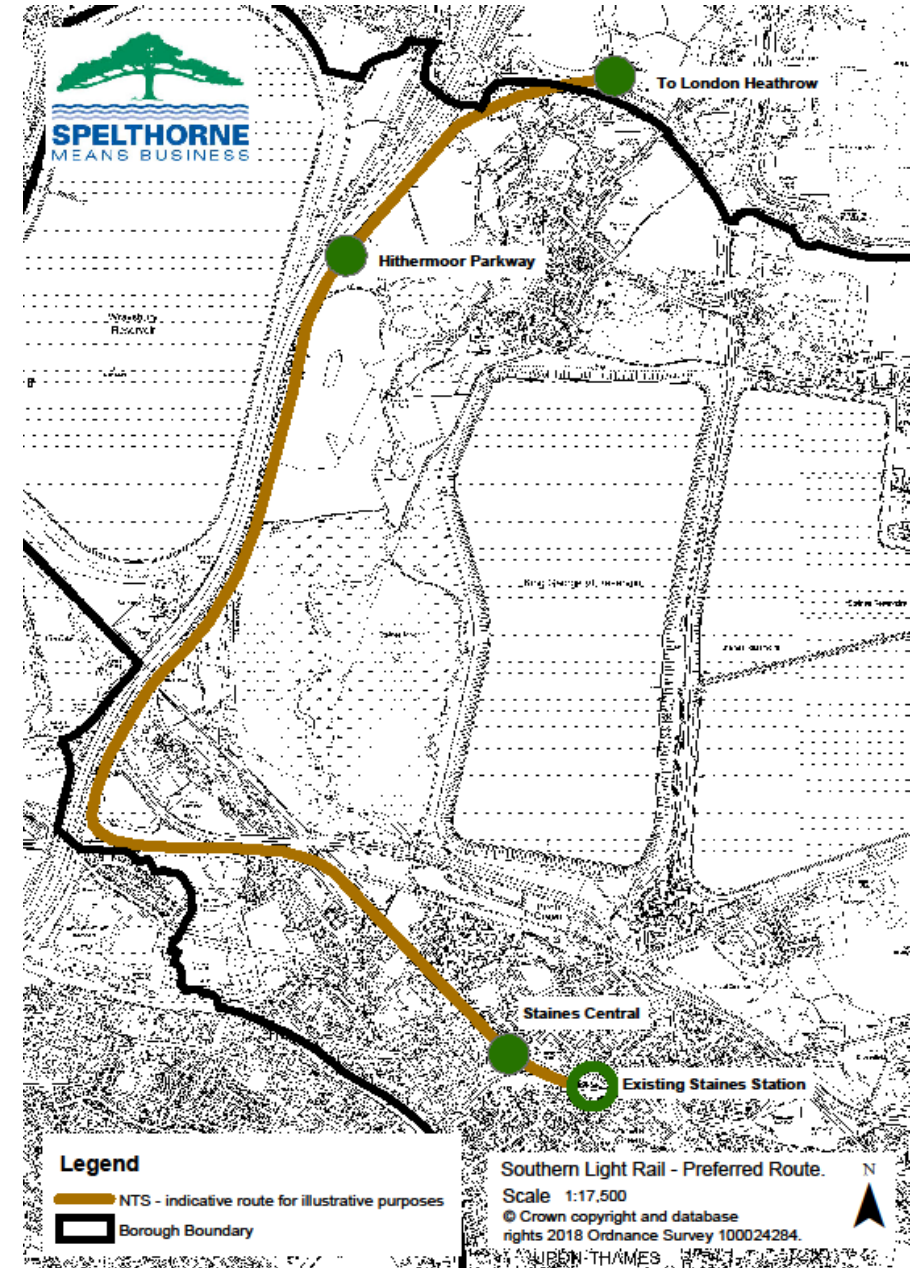
Alongside Windsor Line and aqueduct

Immediately E of M25

Avoids Staines Moor entirely

Hithermoor Parkway ??

Heathrow T5 (HAL to decide)







SLR

we join up journeys

Larls



SLR

we join up journeys









Questions?