

MINUTES OF THE SPELTHORNE BOROUGH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Council Meeting of Spelthorne Borough Council held in the Council Chamber, Council Offices, Knowle Green, Staines-upon-Thames on Thursday, 22 February 2018 at 7.30 pm

Present:

Councillors:

M.M. Attewell	K. Flurry	S.C. Mooney
R.O. Barratt	M.P.C. Francis	D. Patel
I.J. Beardsmore	A.E. Friday	J.M. Pinkerton OBE
J.R. Boughtflower	N.J. Gething	O. Rybinski
S.J. Burkmar	A.C. Harman	D. Saliagopoulos
R. Chandler	I.T.E. Harvey	A. Sapunovas
S.M. Doran	N. Islam	J.R. Sexton
S.A. Dunn	A.T. Jones	R.A. Smith-Ainsley
Q.R. Edgington	J.G. Kavanagh	B.B. Spoor
T.J.M. Evans	A.J. Mitchell	H.R.D. Williams

Councillor V.J. Leighton, The Mayor, in the Chair

In Attendance

Miss Sue Faulkner, Vice-Chairman of the Members' Code of Conduct Committee

Apologies: Apologies were received from Councillors C.B. Barnard, S. Capes, C.A. Davis, P.C. Edgington, A.L. Griffiths, M.J. Madams, R.W. Sider BEM and H.A. Thomson

30/18 Minutes

The minutes of the Council meeting held on 14 December 2017 were agreed as a correct record.

31/18 Disclosures of Interest

There were no disclosures of interest.

32/18 Announcements from the Mayor

The Mayor reported that since the last meeting of this Council she had attended a number of functions and fund raising events including Reigate & Banstead Holocaust Memorial Evening, Shepperton Studios Film Evening, and Sunbury Cricket Club Music Night.

The Mayor announced some forthcoming events: a Horse Racing event at Kempton Park on 21st March; the Annual Charity Ball at BP on 7th April and St.George's Day Ladies Lunch on 23rd April at London Irish.

33/18 Announcements from the Leader

The Leader made the following announcements:

Heathrow has launched a ten-week public consultation regarding expansion at Heathrow, which runs until 28th March. The Council has publicised the consultation and drop-in events in the Borough Bulletin, on our website and social media, and has also published an online summary explaining the potential impact of the airport expansion on the local area.

The Old Market Square in Staines was recently used as a filming location for the 'we buy any car.com' television advert. The Council was paid a fee.

The first Spelthorne Means Business Awards were launched on 6 February. Held at Caffe Gusto in Staines, local businesses and Council representatives gathered to open the competition which is designed to celebrate the achievements of local companies and showcase the 'best of the best' in Spelthorne.

A leaflet is being designed to accompany the Council Tax bills which will give residents information about how the bill is divided between the Police, Surrey County Council and Spelthorne.

Cedars Recreation Park in Sunbury-on-Thames is to under-go refurbishment, thanks to funding from London Irish Rugby Club.

Registration has opened for the Staines 10K race taking place on 13 May.

Work to build eight new flats has started on the site of the former Bugle Pub in Upper Halliford and three two-bedroom homes on the site of the former Churchill Hall in Sunbury. Both projects are expected to be completed in September.

The Council recently announced the purchase of a landmark commercial property. '12 Hammersmith Grove' is in a prime location with outstanding transport infrastructure adjacent to Hammersmith Underground Station. The building was purchased for a sum in the region of £170m and is fully let on long leases. This will generate an ongoing net annual revenue surplus of approximately £2.1m and has made a major contribution towards balancing the 2018-19 Budget and providing services for our residents.

He thanked all councillors who had responded to the challenge to see Every Ward at its Best and asked them to continue to submit ideas and to work across party in their wards.

He had two pieces of sad news:

Firstly, he was very sorry to report that a much respected former Mayor and Leader, and an Honorary Freeman, Gerry Ceaser remained seriously ill in hospital. He and his family are in our thoughts and prayers.

Secondly, he was sorry to announce that we were saying goodbye to Sue Faulkner who served as the Vice-Chairman of the Members' Code of Conduct Committee, and formerly the Standards Committee, for 10 years. He thanked Sue on behalf of the Council for her many years of service and wished her well for the future.

34/18 Announcements from the Chief Executive

The Chief Executive made the following announcement:

He was pleased to announce that as part of the Council's plans to work more efficiently and effectively, detailed plans have been drawn up for staff to consolidate and occupy a smaller space within Knowle Green.

This work, which is called Project Lima, will enable us to reduce our operating costs, deal with the backlog of maintenance issues and prepare to generate a sustainable income stream from the office space vacated. The existing civic space within Knowle Green, including the Council Chamber, will be retained.

The project team have been engaged in full consultation with staff and existing tenants within Knowle Green, and the first phase of work is due to commence towards the end of April.

The plans would be available for councillors to view in the Members' Room from Friday 23 February 2018.

35/18 Questions from members of the public

The Mayor reported that no questions had been received from members of the public.

36/18 Petitions

There were none.

37/18 Treasury Management Strategy Statement 2018-2019

The Council considered the recommendation of Cabinet from its meeting held on 21 February 2018 on the Treasury Management Strategy Statement 2018-2019.

The proposed Strategy represented an appropriate balance between risk management and cost effectiveness.

Resolved to approve the Treasury Management Strategy Statement for 2018-2019.

38/18 Revenue Budget 2018/19

The Council considered the recommendation of Cabinet on the detailed Revenue Budget for 2018-19 and the proposed Council Tax for 2018-19. The Mayor referred councillors to the Budget Book (green cover) reflecting the decisions and recommendations made by Cabinet on 21 February 2018, including the precepts being levied by Surrey County Council and the Surrey Police.

The Mayor asked the Council to agree, in accordance with Standing Order 20.4, that the respective Budget speeches of the Group Leaders may each exceed 10 minutes in length if necessary.

Resolved to agree that the respective Budget speeches of the Group Leaders may each exceed 10 minutes in length if necessary.

The Leader of the Council, Councillor I.T.E. Harvey and the portfolio holder for Finance, Councillor H.R. Williams, made a joint statement on the Budget and the Council Tax and moved and seconded the recommendations on the detailed Budget for 2018-19 as set out in the report circulated in the Budget Book. The Leader of the Ashford and Staines Residents' Group then made a statement. Councillor Beardsmore, Leader of the Liberal Democrats declined the opportunity to make a speech.

A copy of Councillor Harvey's speech is attached to these minutes as **Appendix A**.

At the conclusion of the debate on the Revenue Budget, the Mayor explained it was a legal requirement to record in the minutes of the proceedings the names of the persons who cast a vote for the decision or who abstained from voting.

Councillor Burkmar was absent from the Chamber for the vote on Item 38/18.

The voting was as follows:

FOR (23)	Councillors I.T.E. Harvey (Leader); A.C. Harman (Deputy Leader); M.M. Attewell; R.O. Barratt; J.R. Boughtflower; R. Chandler; T.J.M. Evans; K. Flurry; M.P.C. Francis; A.E. Friday; N.J. Gething; N. Islam; A.T. Jones; J.G. Kavanagh; V.J. Leighton; A.J. Mitchell; S.C. Mooney; D. Patel; J.M. Pinkerton; O. Rybinski; A. Sapunovas; R.A. Smith-Ainsley; H.R.D. Williams
AGAINST (3)	Councillors D. Saliagopoulos; Q.R. Edgington; J. Sexton
ABSTAIN (4)	Councillors I.J. Beardsmore; S.M. Doran; S.A. Dunn; Spoor

Resolved:

1. To participate in the Surrey wide 2018/19 Business Rates Retention pilot scheme;

2. To continue the Council's Local Council Tax Support Scheme with the current rules and regulations;
3. To continue the complete disregard of war pension /armed forces pension income from benefit calculations;
4. The growth and savings items as set out in the report's appendices;
5. The Council Tax Base for the whole council area for 2018-19. [Item T in the formula in Section 31b(3) of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, as amended (the "act")] should be 39,280.00 band D equivalent dwellings and calculate that the Council Tax requirement for the Council's own purpose for 2018-2019 is £197.44 Per Band D equivalent dwelling;
6. To approve a £5 or 2.6% increase on Band D in the Spelthorne Borough Council element of the Council Tax for 2018-19. Moreover: The revenue estimates as set out in Appendix 1 be approved.
 1. No Money, as set out in this report is appropriated from General Reserves in support of Spelthorne's local Council tax for 2018/19;
 2. To agree that the Council Tax base for the year 2018/19 is 39,280.00 band D equivalent dwellings calculated in accordance with regulation 3 of the Local Authorities (Calculation of Council tax base) Regulations 1992, as amended, made under Section 35(5) of the Local Government Finance Act 1992.

That the following sums be now calculated by the Council for the year 2018/19 in accordance with Section 31 to 36 of the Local Government Act 1992.

A	87,047,100	Being the aggregate of the amount which the council estimates for the items set out in Section 31A(2) of the Act taking into account all precepts issued to it by Parish Councils.
B	79,291,700	Being the aggregate of the amount which the Council estimates for the items set out in Section 31A(3) of the Act
C	7,755,400	Being the amount at 3(c) above (Item R), all divided by Item T (2 above) calculated

		by the Council in accordance with Section 31B(1) of the Act, as the basic amount of its Council tax for the year (including Parish precepts)
D	197.44	Being the amount at 3(c)above(item R), all dividend by item T(2above) calculated by the Council in accordance with Section31B(1) of the act, as the basic amount of its Council Tax for the year(including Parish precepts)
E	0	Being the aggregate amount of all special items (Parish precepts) referred to in Section 34(1) of the Act.
F	197.44	Being the amount at 3(d) above less the result given by dividing the amount at 3 (e) above by Item T(2 above), calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 34(2) of the Act, as the basic amount of its Council Tax for the year for dwellings on those parts of its area to which no Parish precept relates.

That the following amounts be calculated for the year 2018/19 in accordance with Sections 31 to 36 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 as amended by the Localism Act 2011.

A £	B £	C £	D £	E £	F £	G £	H £
131.63	153.56	175.50	197.44	241.32	285.19	329.07	394.88

Being the amounts given by multiplying the amount at (e) above by the number which in the proportion set out in Section 5(1) of the Act, is applicable to dwellings listed in a particular valuation band divided by the sum which in that proportion is applicable to dwellings listed in valuation band 'D', calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 36(1) of the Act, as the amounts to be taken into account for the year in respect of categories of dwellings listed in different bands.

That it be noted that for the year 2018/19 Surrey County Council and Surrey Police and Crime Commissioner have stated the following amounts in precepts issued to Spelthorne Borough Council in accordance with Section 40 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 for each of the categories of dwellings shown below:

Precepts issued to the Council

	A £	B £	C £	D £	E £	F £	G £	H £
Surrey County Council	940.86	1,097.67	1,254.48	1,411.29	1,724.91	2,038.53	2,352.15	2,822.58
Surrey Police & Crime Commissioner	157.71	184.00	210.28	236.57	289.14	341.71	394.28	473.14

That, having calculated the aggregate in each case above the Council in accordance with Sections 30 and 36 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 as amended by the Localism Act 2011, hereby sets the amounts as the amounts of Council tax for the year 2018/19.

The Council has determined that its relevant basic amount of Council Tax for 2018/19 is not excessive in accordance with the principles approved under Section 52ZB Local Government Finance Act 1992.

As the billing authority, the council has not been notified by a major precepting authority that its relevant basic amount of Council Tax for 2018/19 is excessive and that the billing authority is not required to hold a referendum in accordance with Section 52ZK Local Government Finance Act 1992.

39/18 Capital Programme and Strategy 2018/19 to 2021/22

The Council considered the recommendation of Cabinet from its meeting held on 21 February 2018 on the Capital Programme and Strategy 2018/19 to 2021/22 and the Prudential Indicators for 2018/19 to 2021/22.

Resolved to:

1. Approve the Capital Programme for 2018/19 to 2021/22;
2. Approve the Prudential Indicators for 2018/19 to 2021/22.

40/18 Pay Policy Statement 2018/19

The Council considered the recommendation of Cabinet from its meeting held on 21 February 2018 on the Pay Policy Statement 2018/19.

The Pay Policy Statement must set out the Council's policies on a range of issues relating to the pay of its workforce, particularly its senior staff and the lowest paid employees, including:

- Remuneration of its Chief Officers
- Remuneration of its lowest paid employees
- The relationship between the remuneration of its Chief Officers and the remuneration of those employees who are not Chief Officers
- The publication of and access to information relating to remuneration of Chief Officers.

Resolved to approve the Pay Policy Statement 2018/19.

41/18 Report from the Leader of the Council

The Leader of the Council, Councillor I.T.E. Harvey, presented the reports of the Cabinet meetings held on 24 January 2018 and 21 February 2018, which outlined the matters the Cabinet had decided since the last Council meeting.

42/18 Report from the Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee

The Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, Councillor S.C. Mooney, presented her report which outlined the matters the Committee had decided since the last Council meeting.

43/18 Report from the Chairman of the Planning Committee

The Chairman of the Planning Committee, Councillor R.A. Smith-Ainsley, presented his report which outlined the matters the Committee had decided since the last Council meeting.

44/18 Motions

There were no motions.

45/18 Questions on Ward Issues

There were no questions on Ward issues.

46/18 General questions

The Mayor reported that five general questions had been received, in accordance with Standing Order 15, from Councillors Sider, Sexton and Saliagopoulos.

1. Question from Councillor R.W. Sider BEM:

“Will the Leader and Members of this council join me in congratulating Freeman of the Borough Colin Squire on his being awarded the OBE in Her Majesty’s New Year’s Honours List?”

Response from the Leader, Councillor I.T.E. Harvey:

“Thank you for your Question Councillor Sider. Yes I am delighted to congratulate Freeman of the Borough and good friend of this Council, Colin Squire on being awarded the OBE in Her Majesty’s New Year Honours List. I am sure all Members join me in expressing our warm congratulations to Colin and thank him for all his charity work that has so richly earned him this accolade.”

2. Question from Councillor J. Sexton:

“Once again earlier this month I had to alert the Council to the dire cleaning regime carried out at Knowle Green Leisure Centre. Members of the public had alerted me to the public areas which were obviously not cleaned for weeks. Their photographs proved it. Officers of the Council have been sent these photographs. I was astounded to find out that there is still no record keeping of cleansing of the public areas - something when I was in position as Cabinet Member, was set up. The officer in charge informed me that this would be put in place for the future. Why was this slippage allowed - it is surely mandatory to inspect the public areas for cleanliness? Our residents need to have confidence that the Leisure Centre is clean and well kept.

Whilst I thank the Cabinet Member for her intervening to once again try and sort this out, how can the users of the Leisure Centre have confidence that this will continue? Are we now leaving it to residents to have to make complaints? If a proper regime of inspection had been put in place this would not be an issue here today. Officer need to ensure that there are proactive measures at the Leisure Centre and not continual reactive ones.”

Response from Cabinet member for Community and Wellbeing, Councillor M. Attewell:

“I can confirm that there are cleaning checklists for the public toilets and changing areas in place and have never ceased to be available. Regular

monitoring of these checks are undertaken both by the Everyone Active management and Spelthorne Leisure Services staff.

Detailed cleaning schedules are in place for all areas of the Centre. Both contract cleaners and in house teams undertake the cleaning regularly. The location and task being undertaken will determine the frequency of cleaning. There are checklists for these and managers also undertake regular spot checks.

The contract cleaner at the Centre has recently been changed and the Everyone Active is working with the contractor to ensure continual improvement. Monthly contractor cleaning audits are carried out by Everyone Active.

Officers from the Council visit the Centre weekly and report the issues they have noted. The contract monitoring officer has monthly meetings with management where the issues identified are discussed. Officers and senior managers undertook two unannounced visits on 14 and 15 February 2018. Over the two visits the whole Centre was inspected. The general cleanliness of the centre was good, however, there is clearly an issue with the high level cleaning (including cobwebs) and cleaning of the vents in the swimming pool area.

These issues have been raised with the contract manager. He has informed us that a high level clean will be undertaken next month and then regularly twice a year, or more frequently if required. Specialist equipment is hired in for this task. The vents in the swimming pool area have been cleaned and will continue to be cleaned weekly.

The leisure teams monitoring will continue and monitoring of the high level cleaning will be a priority.

The leisure team regularly review customer comments. In the last 3 months 137 comments were received. 6 of these were negative comments referring to cleaning. Considering that there are approximately 47,000 visits to Spelthorne Leisure Centre each month, the number of complaints received are very small.

Due to these findings, officers are confident that the leisure centre is being well managed. Whilst accepting that there are some issues that need to be addressed, the usage of the Centre and the customer feedback confirms an overall satisfaction in this facility.”

In accordance with Council Standing Order 15.2, Councillor J. Sexton asked the following supplementary question:

“I will send photographs that I took yesterday showing that there are still issues to be addressed. Can the Leader confirm that a robust monitoring regime will be put in place to avoid the need for "panic visits" by officers?”

Councillor M. Attewell responded at the meeting as follows:

“I believe that this is a request to the Leader rather than a question but will ask officers to respond further. I did ask Councillor Sexton if she was happy with the officers’ response and she indicated that she was not. If she would like to send details to me then I will pass that on.”

Councillor M. Attewell responded further after the meeting as follows:

“A comprehensive monitoring regime is in place for both centres. Monthly meetings are held between SBC and centre management and monitoring information including customer comments, bacterial water test results, cleaning tasks completed, attendance figures and the number of accidents occurring is sent monthly to the client officer. Any issues of concern are raised and addressed. In addition to this, energy consumption, marketing and communication plans, Quest improvement plans, deep cleaning programmes and staff training records are monitored quarterly and among other things safe systems of work and health and safety inspections are reviewed bi-annually. Every 6 months there is a strategic review meeting with senior management from both SBC and SLM. The cabinet member is also invited.

Quarterly meetings are held with Sunbury Manor School who share the dual use site to monitor how things are viewed from the school’s point of view.

Ad hoc visits occur regularly and members of the leisure team and group heads visit the centres both in an official capacity and as users of the centres. The client officer is in almost daily contact with the centres and feeds back any comments or concerns in between meetings.

Many SBC staff members are also users of the facilities and any comments received are fed back to the client officer so they can be addressed.”

3. Question from Councillor D. Saliagopoulos:

“At the request of Councillor Colin Davis, the then Chairman of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee, the Council was put to extra expense on a so called security issue; can I please be advised as to the extra cost incurred to the Council on this whim? Can the Leader assure me that tax payers’ monies were protected at all times? it would appear that the said Councillor for Staines Town is no longer the Chairman of the Overview & Scrutiny - which may I add is an excellent move on the part of the Leader - and indeed no longer a member of the ruling Conservative group - can the Council please be assured that the Committee will now run as a proper scrutiny committee rather than a platform which was used to belittle and dismiss the opposition? As the Leader is aware, scrutiny is something that is vital to any Council. Unfortunately it has been stifled continuously by the above named individual (and only the above named individual) due to his own personal agenda. I

believe the local taxpayer needs to be aware of this and that indeed I would seek the Leader's assurance that this individual will no longer be in any position of authority on this Council."

Response from the Leader, Councillor I.T.E. Harvey:

"Thank you for what are actually four questions within this Question.

Firstly I can confirm that there are currently 10 Members actively using the Lone Worker alarms, including myself. Two other councillors took and then returned them. I personally resisted taking one initially, however as many Members know I was physically attacked on the front steps of this very building in the presence of my nine year old son. I was thereafter prevailed upon to take and use one. Given the fact that those in public office are now seemingly the frequent targets of various forms of assault and abuse I do not accept that the use of these is a "whim". I commend all Members to use one, in particular if you consider yourself in any way vulnerable or are in difficult situations from time to time. The cost of each alarm is approximately £12 per month and I do not believe the residents of the Borough begrudge this, especially given our much improved financial basis under my leadership. I will certainly support any Member, including opposition, using one.

With regard to the change of Chairmanship of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, I can confirm that I expect all Members of my Group, and I am sure all Group Leaders will endorse this, to perform their function to the highest standards and with honesty, integrity, courtesy and impartiality within non-political roles. I would like to think that I and my colleagues set a good example in this. I have every confidence in Councillor Mooney and am sure that she will henceforth Chair the Overview and Scrutiny in the appropriate manner.

You will appreciate that I cannot give an undertaking regarding the former Chair of Overview and Scrutiny but as he is no longer a member of the controlling Conservative Group I have no anticipation of appointing him to any specific position, however as was famously observed by Harold Wilson, "a week is a long time in politics"

Whilst these are three answers I hope they address your four points adequately."

4. Question from Councillor D. Saliagopoulos:

"Would the Leader please give consideration to the questioning of individual Cabinet Members in full Council? Questions relating to individual portfolio holders are always answered by the Leader. Of course the opposition is aware that the leadership of the Council is only as good as their team. Of course scrutiny of Cabinet Members can be carried out in other committees - with their officers in attendance. If the Leader is not prepared to agree to this - why? At a recent Overview and Scrutiny I asked a question to the portfolio

member for housing - a very important brief to the Council - he did not answer the question and left it to the officer - as opposition we want to pursue this further. Whilst on this issue, any questions ever put to Cllr Howard Williams have been answered with expertise and thorough knowledge. If the Leader has such confidence in the remaining Cabinet members he will surely allow them to answer questions on their portfolios in the future? If not, why not?"

Response from the Leader, Councillor I.T.E. Harvey:

"The Constitution already permits councillors to put questions to the Leader, his nominee or a member of the Cabinet about an issue in the councillor's ward; or in which the Council has powers or duties or which affects the Borough.

I am very happy for Cabinet members to answer fair questions that fall within the remit of their portfolios at Council meetings. However, I am sure Councillor Saliagopoulos will appreciate from personal experience that Cabinet members cannot always have every fact at their fingertips and it is entirely right that they should refer to officers to assist with responses at meetings or in writing afterwards where appropriate."

In accordance with Council Standing Order 15.2, Councillor D. Saliagopoulos asked the following supplementary question:

"Do you agree that it is not terribly clear how we might question individual Cabinet members?"

Councillor I.T.E. Harvey responded at the meeting as follows:

"If you send any questions to Committee Services then they will forward those on to the appropriate portfolio holder for a response"

5. Question from Councillor D. Saliagopoulos:

"What are the Leader's thoughts on the recently announced high Council Tax rise by Surrey County Council - indeed some of the Councillors here are also on Surrey and voted for the 6% increase! As the Leader is working to ensure the future viability of Spelthorne by acquiring properties - something which the opposition have supported - surely this is a kick in the teeth. Is there something he could teach the leader of Surrey? How will the Leader now explain to the residents of Spelthorne that they are going to have to pay more once again?"

Response from the Leader, Councillor Ian Harvey:

"I am unable to comment on the Council Tax increase at Surrey County Council as I do not sit on it and have no control or influence over it. I am sure Cllr Saliagopoulos has a much better understanding of their finances than I do as she was a Surrey Councillor until May 2017. I try to concentrate, with my

colleagues, on doing the best for the residents of Spelthorne on matters over which we do have control.

I have the greatest of admiration and respect for my colleague and good friend, the Leader of Surrey and I know that he is doing his very best, in very difficult circumstances and through no fault of his own or his administration to minimise the impact of central government cuts upon Surrey's budget. I would not have the audacity to try to teach him how to run a council!

I believe that I and Cllr Williams have already given a very good and detailed explanation tonight of the Spelthorne Council Tax precept and it is not for me to explain the precept set by others."

In accordance with Council Standing Order 15.2, Councillor D. Saliagopoulos asked the following supplementary question:

"There has been a lot of talk about how Surrey County Council cuts, devastating to this authority, are to continue and get worse. Would you agree that we are, to an extent, dependent on what comes down to us from Surrey County Council via central government?"

Councillor I.T.E. Harvey responded at the meeting as follows:

"Yes"