

**Minutes of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee
15 March 2016**

Present:

Councillor A.E. Friday (Chairman)

Councillors:

S. Capes	A.T. Jones	O. Rybinski
R. Chandler	S.C. Mooney	
A.L. Griffiths	A. Neale	

Apologies: Councillors S.J. Burkmar and K. Flurry

In attendance: Councillors C.A. Davis and I.T.E. Harvey

57/16 Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 19 January 2016 were approved as a correct record.

58/16 Disclosures of Interest

There were none.

59/16 Call-in of Cabinet decisions

No Cabinet decisions had been called in for review.

60/16 Proposal to form a Spelthorne Joint Committee

The Head of Corporate Governance outlined draft proposals to replace the current Surrey County Council Local Committee in Spelthorne with a Spelthorne Joint Committee which would be a true partnership between the County and Borough Councils with decision making delegated from both organisations.

The Joint Committee's expanded remit would help deliver the following aims:

- Increase the involvement of residents, local communities, businesses and partners
- Improve decision making and speed up processes
- Support Members in their role as community leaders and champions

- Promote greater accountability and local scrutiny.

He explained the general remit of the Joint Committee and detailed the specific, proposed, County and Borough functions which would become the responsibility of the Spelthorne Joint Committee. He informed the Committee that the County was open to considering alternating the chairmanship of the Joint Committee between the two councils. If the proposal was agreed by both the County and Borough Councils, it was envisaged that the Joint Committee would be operational from 1 June 2016.

The Committee had before it the draft Terms of Reference and Standing Orders for the Joint Committee.

In response to a question, the Head of Corporate Governance clarified that this Committee would still have responsibility for the scrutiny of Joint Committee executive decisions which related to functions delegated by Spelthorne Borough Council only.

Resolved to note the draft proposals to form a Spelthorne Joint Committee in place of the Local Committee in Spelthorne and the executive and non-executive functions to be delegated to the Joint Committee.

61/16 Support to local businesses and the unemployed

The Economic Development Manager outlined some of the key activities that the Council either initiates or supports to achieve a better environment for businesses and provide opportunities for the unemployed, which included:

- An economic assessment and action plan adopted in 2013
- Free business advice web-chat service - 'my incubator ventures'
- Spelthorne Business Forum
- Participation in annual Heathrow Business Summit
- Training sessions for businesses
- Key Account Management strategy
- Introduction of a Business Improvement District in Staines-upon-Thames
- Funding to support improvements to four of our secondary shopping centres
- Support for unemployed including: Heathrow Academy opportunities and support for annual jobs and careers fair
- Close working with Enterprise M3

He concluded that these activities and opportunities had contributed to Spelthorne's achievement in 2015 of Staines-upon-Thames being identified as the number one town in the entire UK to set up and start a new business.

The Leader, Councillor Harvey, reinforced the importance of economic development to the success of the Borough. He was setting up an Economic Development Select Committee, comprising one councillor from each major

town, to work alongside officers and liaise with the business community and partners to drive forward this priority. He also referred to the Council's work with Heathrow to help long-term unemployed back into employment.

Members of the Committee asked detailed questions about start-up businesses to which the Economic Development Manager was unable to respond, explaining the constraints of the limited resources at Spelthorne (only 1.5FTE posts in the Economic Development Team undertaking all the work detailed above), compared to Woking Borough Council who had a team of 5FTE.

The Committee raised concerns about inhibitors for business and economic development due to existing transport infrastructure including the provision of car parks and access by train. The Economic Development Manager advised that Surrey County Council had recently undertaken a transport study to review access to Staines-upon-Thames and this report would be available soon. Spelthorne was also working with Surrey CC and the Local Economic Partnership to identify infrastructure projects and bid for grants to undertake improvement works. He said the Council could potentially invest in decking over the Elmsleigh surface car park if required to offset any identified parking pressures.

In relation to train access to Staines-upon-Thames, Councillor Rybinski updated the Committee on the campaign to include Spelthorne railway stations in the Oyster card zone 6.

Resolved to:

1. note the report and endorse the progress made in supporting local businesses and residents to enhance their economic prosperity;
2. urge the Cabinet to continue to invest in the resources made available for Economic Development at Spelthorne and to support the campaign for the extension of Zone 6.

62/16 Leader's Task Groups update

The Committee received updates on progress with the work of the Leader's Task Groups looking at the Towards a Sustainable Future programme and all other assets.

Members asked for reassurance about the review undertaken on the Towards a Sustainable Future Programme by Councillor Barnard and asked him to report to the Committee on the review process he undertook and how he reached his conclusions.

Resolved to:

1. note the work undertaken to date by the Leader's Task Groups and
2. ask Councillor Barnard to attend a future meeting of the Committee to discuss his review and conclusions of the Towards a Sustainable Future programme.

63/16 Cabinet Forward Plan

The Committee considered the current Forward Plan of Cabinet items.

Resolved to note the Cabinet Forward Plan.

64/16 Work Programme

The Committee noted items identified on the Work Programme to be scheduled for future meetings.

Resolved to note the Work Programme of outstanding items, subject to the inclusion of a report from Councillor Barnard at the next meeting of the Committee.

65/16 Chairman's Thanks

As this was the last meeting of the municipal year, the Chairman thanked the members of the Committee for their contribution and the officers for their support, during the past year.