

# Environment and Sustainability Committee



27 February 2024

<b>Title</b>	Spelthorne Design Code Task Group
<b>Purpose of the report</b>	To make a decision
<b>Report Author</b>	Laura Richardson, Principal Planning Officer (Strategic Planning)
<b>Ward(s) Affected</b>	All Wards
<b>Exempt</b>	No
<b>Exemption Reason</b>	<i>n/a</i>
<b>Corporate Priority</b>	Community Environment Service Delivery
<b>Recommendations</b>	<p><b>Committee is asked to:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Agree the establishment of the Spelthorne Design Code Task Group</li> <li>2. Agree the Terms of Reference (Appendix A) for the Spelthorne Design Code Task Group</li> <li>3. Agree the appointment of the members of the task group and the Chair</li> </ol>
<b>Reason for Recommendation</b>	<p>The Committee is asked to agree the terms of reference to ensure councillors understand more fully the role of the Task Group.</p> <p>This will enable the Task Group members to be fully involved, informed, input their views and act as a conduit to feed back to the main committee.</p>

## 1. Summary of the report

What is the situation	Why we want to do something
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Spelthorne Design Code Project is a key project for guiding the future of development in the Borough. Stakeholder involvement is key to its successful development.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>As a Key Stakeholder group, Elected Members will play a critical role in the development of the Spelthorne Design Code.</li> <li>Setting up a Design Code Task Group will be important in enabling continuing Member involvement in the process.</li> </ul>

This is what we want to do about it	These are the next steps
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Establish a Design Code Task Group.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Agree the Terms of Reference for the Design Code Task Group.</li> <li>Agree the method of appointing members to the Task Group.</li> </ul>

- 1.1 This report sets out the proposed Terms of Reference (ToR) for the Design Code Task Group. Developing a Design Code is a requirement of the Levelling Up and Regeneration Act 2023 (LURA). In addition to regulatory requirement to produce a Design Code, delivering high quality design in development is a matter of particular concern for both our residents and Elected Members.
- 1.2 Fundamental to the successful development of the Design Code is effective and ongoing engagement with the stakeholders, including Elected Members as a Key Stakeholder group. Setting up a cross party Task Group for this project will facilitate ongoing engagement with Members outside of formal engagement sessions throughout the project and allow Members on the panel to develop a deeper understanding of the process of Design Coding, offering them the opportunity to champion the project with their colleagues and the wider community. The proposed Design Code Task Group will report to the Environment and Sustainability Committee.

## 2. Key issues

- 2.1 This report sets out at Appendix A the proposed ToR for the group. The details of the role of the Task Group are included in the draft ToR. It is intended that the Task Group has cross party membership, though there is no requirement for political proportionality.
- 2.2 The timescale for the Spelthorne Design Code project is ambitious and as such work is already underway, with the Tender for a specialist consultant to support the Council on this project closing on 4 March 2024. Setting up the Task Group as soon as is practicable, which will allow the members of the Task Group to be brought up to speed quickly to allow for them to participate in the interviews of the prospective consultants soon after.

## 3. Options analysis and proposal

### Option 1 – Agree the proposed ToR and the Appointment of Members

- 3.1 In order for the Task Group to be involved in the project at the earliest opportunity, it is recommended that the Committee agree the proposed ToR and the appointment of Members. This will allow for them to be brought up to speed on the progress of the project as soon as possible and play an active role from the outset.

### Option 2 – A Task Group for the Project is not considered necessary

- 3.2 If the decision is made that a Task Group is not required for the Design Code Project, this will not impact on the engagement with Members in the project, nor will it impact on project reporting to keep Members up to date on progress. However, the development of a Design Code is a complex process and the Task Group offers the opportunity for greater involvement of

Members on an ongoing basis, giving the members of the task group the opportunity to develop a deeper understanding and act as Design Code Champions among their colleagues and communities.

#### **4. Financial management comments**

4.1 No comments at this time.

#### **5. Risk management comments**

5.1 No comments at this time.

#### **6. Procurement comments**

6.1 The Project Lead for the whole Design Code project is fully engaged with the Corporate Procurement team, to ensure the best outcomes from the procurement of the Design Code consultant.

6.2 The establishment of the Task Group will further ensure positive outcomes for this project.

#### **7. Legal comments**

7.1 Legal Services has had input into development of the terms of reference of this Task Group which will report to the Environment and Sustainability Group as appropriate.

#### **8. Other considerations**

8.1 There are none.

#### **9. Equality and Diversity**

9.1 The Engagement Strategy for the SDC project will seek to be as inclusive as possible and include, among a wide range of engagement opportunities, setting up a Citizens' Panel, based on the RB of Kingston example.

#### **10. Sustainability/Climate Change Implications**

10.1 Delivering sustainable development is the cornerstone of the Planning process and as such all planning policies must contribute to meeting this aim. With specific regard to the Design Codes, the incorporation of the appropriate measures set out in the emerging Climate Change Supplementary Planning Document into the Spelthorne Design Code will be explored. There are however no specific issues for consideration regarding this report.

#### **11. Timetable for implementation**

11.1 The Spelthorne Design Code project is progressing at pace, with the tender returns for a specialist Consultant due on the 4 March 2024. It is anticipated that the Task Group would have an initial briefing prior to the Consultant interviews followed by regular meetings as set out in the draft ToR. The Task Group will run for the length of the Spelthorne Design Code Project.

#### **12. Contact**

12.1 Laura Richardson [l.richardson@spelthorne.gov.uk](mailto:l.richardson@spelthorne.gov.uk)

**Background papers:** There are none.

#### **Appendices:**

Appendix A: Draft Design Code Task Group Terms of Reference