

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, 25 April 2024 at 7.00 pm

Present:

Councillors:

E. Baldock	J.R. Boughtflower	K. Howkins
M. Arnold	J. Button	N. Islam
M.M. Attewell	J.P. Caplin	M.J. Lee
C. Bateson	D.C. Clarke	A. Mathur
S.N. Beatty	S.M. Doran	L. E. Nichols
M. Beecher	S.A. Dunn	K.E. Rutherford
S. Bhadye	R.V. Geach	O. Rybinski
M. Bing Dong	D.L. Geraci	J.R. Sexton
H.S. Boparai	A. Gale	J.A. Turner
L.H. Brennan	M. Gibson	B. Weerasinghe
M. Buck	K.M. Grant	H.R.D. Williams
T. Burrell	S. Gyawali	P.N. Woodward

Apologies: Apologies were received from Councillors R. Chandler and J.T.F. Doran

Councillor D. Saliagopoulos, The Mayor, in the Chair

23/23 Minutes

The minutes of the Council meeting held on 22 February 2024 and the Extraordinary Meeting held on 27 March 2024 were agreed as a correct record of proceedings.

24/23 Disclosures of Interest

Councillors Attewell, Boparai, Sexton and Weerasinghe advised they were also Surrey County Councillors.

25/23 Announcements from the Mayor

The Mayor made the following announcements:

“I want to thank Reverend Bradbury who has been a steadfast friend and advisor throughout my term as Mayor.

I would also like to thank my Mayoral Committee members, Alderman Robin Sider BEM, Councillors M Gibson, D Clarke, M Attewell and Phillipa Broome.

Thank you to all Council staff that have supported me in raising money for my nominated charities. Fundraising has proved difficult throughout this year due to the cost of living crisis that we currently face. Volunteers have helped tirelessly throughout the Borough for which I give my thanks.

The Civic Award Ceremony was held last week which honoured those within the Borough that have provided exemplary service to organisations throughout the Borough for more than 12 years.

I had a lot of fun this year meeting the children of the Borough, both at their schools and during visits to the Council offices.

I attended the Cycle Day event that was organised by the Council’s Leisure Department and it was a great success with many people querying if it would take place next year as they had enjoyed it so much.

Spelthorne in Bloom was, as always a fantastic success and I was invited to Manor Mead School in Shepperton to present awards to two pupils which I really enjoyed.

I lastly want to thank businesses throughout the Borough that have supported me during my term as Mayor and helped me raise money for my nominated charities”.

26/23 Announcements from the Leader

The Leader and the Deputy Leader made the following announcements:

The Leader

Spelthorne Council has been awarded £994,883 by the Government and Sport England to decarbonise Sunbury Leisure Centre by adding solar panels to the roof and replace the old gas boilers with heat pumps. Gas usage at the centre will be reduced to zero as a result of the work, helping meet the Council's carbon reduction targets. The award for Spelthorne Council represents the highest grant of any authority in the South East. This, combined with the progress of Eclipse Leisure Centre next door to the Council Offices means we will have facilities for our residents that we can be truly proud of.

Last Wednesday I had the privilege of attending the Civic Trust Awards where 16 volunteers were honoured for their service in the Borough. This year's winners have given more than 200 years of service to the Borough and

represent the best of our communities and their work is truly inspiring. During the evening, the Civic Trust presented this authority with a special plaque to recognise its 50th anniversary which you can see at the back of this chamber to the left of public gallery.

The achievements of 47 very special young people, aged 5 - 19, were celebrated with an awards ceremony held at Kempton Park Racecourse on Friday 19 April. The bi-annual Spelthorne Youth Awards recognises the outstanding talents and achievements of local young people and the contributions they make to their communities. I would like to congratulate all the young people who were nominated for a Spelthorne Youth Award and wish them every success in the future.

The Deputy Leader

We welcome the progress of the Shepperton Studios expansion programme with Amazon MGM Studios and Netflix taking residence within Shepperton's world class facilities. Generating thousands of jobs, the new expanded studios provide a fantastic opportunity to inspire and nurture local talent in the film and TV industry that will ensure the continued success of our UK film industry. Shepperton without doubt helps put our Borough on the world stage and will stimulate further investment into Spelthorne.

The Police and Crime Commissioner election takes place on Thursday 2 May 2024. It is important that all residents have a voice and vote. There are different ways to vote - by post, or in person – polling stations open at 7am and close at 10pm. Electors will need to provide photo ID at polling stations. There are some national changes in place when handing in postal votes. If you are hand delivering a postal vote either at the Council Offices or at your polling station, you will need to fill in a form.

We have launched this year's Spelthorne in Bloom competition which celebrates the work of Spelthorne's green-fingered residents and businesses who are helping make the Borough a brighter, cleaner, greener place to live. If you are interested in sponsoring flower baskets in Spelthorne this summer which will be maintained, cared for and watered throughout the summer months, adding colour to our Borough, please get in touch.

27/23 Announcements from the Chief Executive

The Chief Executive made the following announcements:

“The Leader and Deputy Leader have related a number of recent initiatives that can make us feel very proud of our Borough in this our 50th Anniversary year – including the Civic Trust Awards for volunteering, Spelthorne in Bloom, and The Youth Awards for which I thank a whole host of colleagues for their unstinting support. Tonight, I have the added pleasure to reflect on two further achievements.

Legal Services were recently assessed externally for a full LEXEL accreditation. This is the Law Society's quality mark for legal practice and is a symbol of excellence in legal practice management and client care. The assessment considers various areas of legal practice management including case management, risk management, financial management, and compliance with regulation and standards. The accreditation secured by the legal services will last for 3 years with annual maintenance visits. Thank you to the legal team and to Linda, our Deputy Monitoring Officer for her key role in securing this accreditation.

Spelthorne Borough Council was recently also identified in the top 3% of Local Planning Authorities (LPAs) for performance – being one of only 10 Authorities out of 352 which would meet prospective new thresholds being proposed by Government. We pride ourselves on being responsive as a Council and work hard to serve the interests of our residents and businesses, in meeting and exceeding operational targets”.

28/23 Questions from members of the public

The Mayor reported that, under Standing Order 14, two questions had been received from members of the public.

Question 1 from Mr Andrew McLuskey:

“Given the current issues affecting Ashford Town Centre (including particularly Anti-Social Behaviour) can the Leader indicate when a new Town Centre Manager for the area is to be appointed?”

The Leader gave the following response:

“I recently attended a very constructive councillor/officer meeting (Spelthorne and Surrey) to discuss the key challenges facing Ashford, plus some initial thoughts on possible practical solutions. This approach is bringing together a range of services at both Borough and County level (breaking down silo working) to ensure we all work collectively to deliver what is best for Ashford – known as place making or place shaping.

The project has ambitions to improve the centre of Ashford, to bring about a high-quality high street which is attractive, safe, economically buoyant, socially vibrant and enables & encourages social interaction via an extended range of activities. As part of this project, consideration will be given to the best way of supporting businesses”.

Question 2 from Emma Pattinson, Shepperton Splash Ltd

“Will Spelthorne Council now write a letter in support of an application for bathing water status for Shepperton Open Water”?

The Chair of the Environment and Sustainability Committee, Councillor Beecher gave the following response:

“Thank you for your question, Ms Pattinson. The River Thames Scheme is a Nationally Significant Infrastructure project which will provide future flood protection for thousands of Spelthorne’s residents and businesses. The recent flooding incidents which occurred in some areas of our Borough have been a timely reminder of the vital importance of this project.

When you submitted your previous question to the Council, the Scheme was moving towards gaining planning permission through the Development Consent Order Process, but in view of concerns raised over how the proposed design could potentially affect open water swimming, a feasibility exercise was progressing to investigate the possibility of re-routing the Spelthorne section of the flood alleviation channel, to avoid fully or partially connecting through Ferris Meadow Lake.

Although we anticipated the publication of the results of this exercise in the first quarter of 2024, the Scheme has not yet completed its evaluation of options for potential alternative designs to address the effects of the Scheme on Ferris Meadow Lake. A number of other potential alternative solutions to address this issue were suggested as part of the recent statutory consultation and these are now also being assessed by the Scheme in terms of cost, technical complexity and environmental impact. At this stage we have no indication how long this will take.

This ongoing work means that this Council is not currently in a position to change its stance on this matter. In view of the vital importance of the River Thames Scheme to protect Spelthorne’s residents and businesses from flooding, this chamber must fully understand how any such diversion could affect our wider Borough and whether this would result in any significant additional costs to the Scheme before we can consider whether we can support any application for bathing water status for Shepperton Open Water. Once we have all the necessary information available to Councillors, we will debate this issue and decide whether we can offer support for such an application”.

29/23 Climate Change Supplementary Planning Document

Council **resolved** to approve the adoption of the Climate Change Supplementary Planning Document.

**30/23 2024-25 Treasury Management Strategy - addendum re:
Operational Boundary and Authorised Limit for External Debt**

Council **resolved** to:

1. Note that on 01 April 2024 the approved Operational Boundary for external debt was breached,
2. Approve the Operational Boundary for external debt to be increased from £1,067m to £1,170m; and
3. Approve the Authorised Limit for external debt to be increased from £1,167m to £1,270m

31/23 Amendments to the Constitution - Change to the Structure of the Committee System

Council **resolved** to:

1. Agree a revision to the number and Terms of Reference of Committees established under the Committee System form of Governance, effective from the Annual Council Meeting 2024, as proposed in Appendices E and F of the report,
2. Agree to amend the Terms of Reference of the Investigating and Disciplinary Committee in relation to the power to suspend any relevant officer in an emergency, as detailed at paragraphs 3.19 and 3.24 of the report,
3. Agree changes to the Scheme of Officer Delegation as outlined in Appendix G of the report, in relation to land issues; and
4. Authorise the Monitoring Officer to make consequential changes to the Constitution as a result of the change in committee restructure and Terms of Reference.

32/23 Calendar of Meetings 2024/25

Council **resolved** to approve the Calendar of Meetings for 2024-25 as set out in Appendix B of the report.

33/23 Members' Allowances Scheme 2024-25

Council **resolved** to:

1. Note the findings of the Independent Remuneration Panel and agree the principles of the Panel's report as outlined in Appendix 1 of the report,
2. Adopt the Members' Allowances Scheme for 2024/25,
3. Agree an increase in the Basic Allowance by 2.8%, in line with the staff pay award, with effect from 01 April 2024,

4. Agree increase in the Special Responsibility Allowances by 2.8%, in line with the staff pay award, with effect from 01 April 2024,
5. Agree the recommended changes to the level of allowances for the Planning and Licensing Committee Chairs and Vice-Chairs with effect from 01 April 2024; and
6. Agree the revised Special Responsibility Allowances, as recommended by the Panel at page 12 of its report, with effect from 23 May 2024.

34/23 Reports from the Committee Chairs

Council **resolved** to agree the reports from the Committee Chairs.

35/23 Motions

In accordance with Standing Order 16 the Council received one written Notice of Motions.

Councillor Lee moved and Councillor Boughtflower seconded the following motion:

“Does this council agree that any member appointed to the role of Spelthorne representative to the Surrey Police & Crime Commission/ Police and Crime Panel, should perform the role in accordance with the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011. The role of the appointed member is to represent the interests of all Spelthorne residents and does involve attending the quarterly meetings, scrutinising as well as supporting the role of Surrey PCC.”

A recorded vote was requested by Councillor Boughtflower.

For	Councillors Saliagopoulos, Attewell, Bhadye, Boughtflower, Brennan, Clarke, Howkins, Islam, Lee, Mathur, Rybinski, Weerasinghe & Woodward
Against	Councillors Arnold, Bateson, Beecher, Boparai, Caplin, Gale, Geraci, Gibson, Grant, Gyawali, Nichols, Rutherford, Sexton, Turner & Williams
Abstain	Councillors Baldock, Beatty, Bing Dong, Buck, Burrell, Button, S Doran, Dunn & Geach

The motion **FELL**.

36/23 General questions

The Mayor reported that no general questions had been received.

37/23 Urgent Action

It was proposed by Councillor Gibson, seconded by Councillor Boughtflower and resolved that the public and press be excluded during consideration of the following item, in accordance with paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended) because 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.

Council **resolved** to note the urgent action that had been taken in respect of the Council entering into a new electricity contract commencing 01 April 2024 for the majority of the Council's investment portfolio.