

**Minutes of the Council
27 February 2025**

Present:

Councillors:

M. Buck	J. Button	M.J. Lee
J.T.F. Doran	J.P. Caplin	S.C. Mooney
M. Arnold	R. Chandler	L. E. Nichols
C. Bateson	D.C. Clarke	K.E. Rutherford
S.N. Beatty	S.M. Doran	D. Saliagopoulos
M. Beecher	R.V. Geach	J.R. Sexton
S. Bhadye	M. Gibson	J.A. Turner
H.S. Boparai	K.M. Grant	B. Weerasinghe
L.H. Brennan	S. Gyawali	H.R.D. Williams
J.R. Boughtflower	K. Howkins	P.N. Woodward

Apologies: Councillors M.M. Attewell, M. Bing Dong, T. Burrell, S.A. Dunn, D.L. Geraci, N. Islam, A. Mathur and O. Rybinski

7/25 Minutes

The minutes of the Council meeting held on 12 December 2024 and the Extraordinary Meeting held on 06 February 2025 were agreed as a correct record of the meetings.

8/25 Disclosures of Interest

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

Councillor Nichols declared that he was on the Board of Directors for Knowle Green Estates.

9/25 Announcements from the Mayor

The Mayor made the following announcements:

“I am now going to report on the highlights of my key public engagements and initiatives undertaken over the past two months.

My first engagement this year started on January 3rd. I joined the residents of Spelthorne and Walking for Health Group for a 3.5-mile walk around Broadwater Lake. Despite the cold weather, there was a good turn- out. As Mayor, participating in the walk was a great way to demonstrate my commitment to promoting health and wellness within our community and also inspiring other residents to embrace a healthier lifestyle. It was wonderful to witness the enthusiasm of walk leaders Colin and David, as well as the participants who engaged in physical exercise, enjoying social interaction while appreciating the beautiful scenery of our Borough.

My next activity was The International Holocaust Memorial Day observed on 27th January to commemorate the victims of the Holocaust. Spelthorne Borough Council marked the 80th anniversary of Holocaust Memorial Day by raising the flag outside the council offices. We gathered in solemn remembrance in this chamber to honour the six million innocent Jews who lost their lives in the most dreadful way. These atrocities must never be forgotten, and we must remain committed to ensuring that history does not repeat itself.

Further to that, I was privileged of attending the Youth Speaks Debate Competition. The participating schools put in a tremendous amount of effort, and the debaters defended their topics with great passion. This event showcased the incredible potential of our young people, and when given the right opportunities, they excel and make our borough proud. I had the honour of presenting certificates and awards to the winning teams, who accepted them with great pride. I would like to thank the Rotary Club of Shepperton Aurora for organising this wonderful competition.

Another activity organised by the Rotary Club of Staines, they gathered several organisations/charities dedicated to improving the lives of people in our borough. I had the opportunity of presenting the funds raised by the Rotary members to support these organisations in their mission to enhance the well-being and quality of life for Spelthorne residents.

Earlier this month, I participated in a cultural celebration, the Saraswati puja organised by Prayash UK at Stanwell Village Hall. This event attracted approximately one hundred residents. It provided an excellent opportunity to celebrate our community's diversity and acknowledge the valuable contributions of The Indian ethnic groups of our borough. I had the honour to present certificates to individuals who excelled in various categories of activities organised by Prayash UK.

Over the next three months, several fundraising events have been scheduled to support my 4 nominated charities.

I am pleased to share details of forthcoming Events aimed to support those charities:

1. **Annual Mayor's Charity Night** at Sunbury Cricket Club which will be held on the 14th of March, It will be an evening of music and entertainment with the famous Chain Gang Band, They played at Cricket club's for previous Mayor's Charity Night. I encourage everyone to join in for a night of fun.
2. **Mayor's Afternoon Tea** at Squire's Garden Centre will be celebrated on 21 March. This event, taking place at 2pm, will be another excellent opportunity to raise funds for the charities while enjoying an afternoon of socialising and community spirit.
3. On the same evening, to mark the **World Poetry Day**, the Surrey Poet Laureateship will organise a poetry competition to commemorate Spelthorne's 50th Anniversary. The theme of the competition is Spelthorne 50 years of memories. The competition is open to all secondary schools and residents, and I look forward to hearing creative expressions of our borough's rich history and culture.
4. Another fantastic Charity event on 22nd march, Please Join us for an **Elvis Night at Stanwell Village Hall** in support of our nominated charities. Please come and enjoy a night of rock and roll with our famous Elvis Impersonator Jonny Quattro in a wonderful community atmosphere.
5. **Mayor's Banquet Ball** – On 26th April, will take place at Holiday Inn Shepperton. This year's theme is Bond 007, and our team is working tirelessly to make this a memorable evening. I encourage all of you to book your tickets as soon as possible and join us for a night of elegance, entertainment, and excitement.
6. And finally another exciting evening on 15th of May , please join us for the **Mayor's Race Night at Kempton park race course**. You will have the opportunity to enjoy the thrill of live horse racing followed by delicious dinner and drinks at the Panoramic Restaurant while supporting the charities. Book your ticket now to be part of this special night.

Details of all the forthcoming activities will be emailed to all members, and I look forward to seeing many of you, your family and friends at these events as we continue working together for the benefit of our community

To conclude, the past two months have been an enriching and active period in my role as Mayor of Spelthorne. From promoting healthy lifestyle to recognising our youth and engaging in cultural events and my focus has been on fostering community unity and promoting Spelthorne's values. As we move forward, I remain committed to representing our borough with dignity and pride and ensuring that our community are supported and celebrated".

10/25 Announcements from the Leader

The Leader made the following announcements:

The Government has decided to change the way local government is structured by replacing the current two-tier system of district and county councils with unitary councils. We know that Surrey will be in the first wave of the reorganisation which means that, together with the other Surrey councils, we will need to submit an interim business case for reorganisation in March and a full business case in May. Unfortunately, as part of this, the Surrey County Council elections in May have been cancelled. Like many, I am disappointed by this decision as I wanted residents to have the chance to exercise their democratic vote. But please be assured we are firmly focused on representing the interests of this Borough and will endeavour to do everything within our power to deliver the best possible outcome for Spelthorne's residents and businesses.

You will soon be receiving your Council Tax bills. To keep costs down, we have decided to stop sending the leaflet that used to accompany the bills but all the information can be found in the spring Bulletin magazine and on our website. We collect Council Tax on behalf of Surrey County Council and the Police, as well as ourselves. The Spelthorne element of the bill represents just over 9% of the total bill (£4.40 per household per week, based on a band D property) and I hope you agree that Spelthorne's services represent excellent value for money.

The public hearings of the Spelthorne Local Plan Examination have now finished, this is the achievement of a significant milestone, but there is still work to do. Any changes to the Local Plan, agreed by the Examiner, will have to go out for a six-week public consultation before he can start writing his report. Issues involving heights and massing will be subject to our Design Code development.

The Spelthorne Business Plan Competition 2025 has launched. Now in its 11th year, this exciting competition offers aspiring entrepreneurs the opportunity to shine. Applications must be submitted by 14 April so don't miss this chance to take your business idea to the next level. Continuing our commitment to economic growth and business support in the Borough, this

year's Spelthorne Business Awards are now open to enter. With categories to suit every enterprise – there really is something for everyone.

We have signed an agreement for lease with the Arora Group for the regeneration of a riverside site in Staines-upon-Thames. Subject to planning permission, the plans are for a 4-star hotel development and regeneration of the site currently occupied by Bridge Street car park and Hanover House. In the meantime, it will continue to be used by the Council as a public car park. The Arora Group has indicated their commitment to fully engage with a pre-application public consultation and ensure the design of the new development fits well with its surroundings and the conservation area. The terms of the agreement for lease specify that the new building cannot exceed 25m in height.

I often hear from residents who are concerned on the impact of Houses in Multiple Occupation or 'HMOs' on their community. The Council recently agreed to an important positive change which affects HMOs across the Borough. We will be implementing an Article 4 Direction for all wards in Spelthorne, which means that smaller sized Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMO's) will require planning permission. This comes into effect in around 12 months' time (end of March 2026), although for Staines Ashford North & Stanwell South, and Stanwell North wards, it will come into effect earlier, on 29 August. It will ensure that issues such as parking, noise, and impact on the character of the area are considered before a planning decision is made. A separate licencing process already exists under Environmental Health legislation to ensure these properties are of the right quality and managed effectively by a suitable landlord. If you are aware of any issues with an HMO, please report via the website Report It forms or contact your ward councillor.

And finally, applications are open for funding through the 2024-2025 Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) for local projects and improvements. Last year projects such as playground equipment in local schools and sports clubs, to community building improvements and investment in CCTV to tackle anti-social behaviour were funded. There is information on our website on how to apply and the closing date is the 31 March.

11/25 Announcements from the Chief Executive

The Chief Executive made the following announcements:

"Our 2024 Annual Report contains an assessment of how we have delivered against our commitments as set out in our Corporate Plan. I am incredibly proud of our track record of delivering tangible outcomes: in one year, Spelthorne opened the world's largest Passivhaus Leisure Centre in tandem with providing the largest Local Authority Housing Fund programme of any district or borough council in the country.

We are a small authority, though we are innovative, resilient and ambitious. From supporting nearly 3,000 residents with hospital discharges to helping

over 900 residents into employment at our Jobs and Skills Hub, Spelthorne continues to punch above its weight, advocating for the services and resources that our communities need for a stronger, healthier and safer Borough.

I believe one of the factors that makes Spelthorne special is our teams; our enthusiasm, optimism, expertise and dedication in supporting our communities. This was reaffirmed following the publication of our 2024 residents survey where we far exceeded the Local Government Association own national benchmarks for service satisfaction, trust and delivering best value for money. The 1,700 responses received, aligned with the LGA/Kenetic UK 2024 Spelthorne staff survey which recorded the highest result for overall satisfaction obtained from any Council since the research programme started in 2012.

So, we must be doing something right, and this includes securing financial stability for Spelthorne which has always been at the forefront of our priorities. Our prudent management of our assets, even through the most economically turbulent period during the Covid pandemic, means that Spelthorne residents continue to benefit from many local services that other authorities no longer afford to provide.

Delivering services for over 50 years means we know Spelthorne, its needs, its quirks and its people. But we now face our biggest challenge of them all, following the government plan for reorganisation here in Surrey. The impact on our staff and residents is unparalleled to anything that this authority has faced, and I know that the Leader and I will do everything in our powers to deliver the best outcome for all our communities in Spelthorne.

As Chief Executive, I would like to personally thank everyone, Mr Mayor, Members of this Chamber and Council officers alike, for your contribution and for making a real difference for Spelthorne and its residents”.

12/25 Questions from members of the public

The Mayor reported that, under Standing Order 14, no questions had been received from members of the public.

13/25 Pay Policy 2025/26

Council **resolved** to approve the Pay Policy Statement for 2025/26.

14/25 Capital Strategy 2025-2026

Council **resolved** to approve the Capital Strategy for 2025/26 to 2026/27.

15/25 Estimated 2025/26 to 2028/29 Capital Programme

Council **resolved** to approve the Capital Programme for 2025/26 to 2028/29.

16/25 Treasury Management Strategy 2025/26

Council **resolved** to:

1. Approve the Treasury Management Strategy for 2025/26 as set out in the report; and
2. Acknowledged that by approving the report, they were agreeing the Treasury Management Practices, Council's Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) Statement, Operational Boundary and Authorised Limits

17/25 Detailed Revenue Budget for 2025/26

Under the Local Authorities (Standing Orders) (England) Regulations 2001 (as amended) the Council was required to hold a recorded vote on the Detailed Revenue Budget and any proposed amendments.

For	Councillors Bateson, Beatty, Beecher, Buck, Button, Caplin, J Doran, S Doran, Geach, Gibson, Grant, Gyawali, Nichols, Sexton, Turner, Williams – 16 votes
Against	Councillors Arnold, Bhadye, Boparai, Rutherford, Saliagopoulos – 5 votes
Abstain	Councillors Boughtflower, Brennan, Chandler, Clarke, Howkins, Lee, Mooney, Weerasinghe, Woodward – 9 votes

Council **resolved** to approve the following:

1. A 2.9% increase on the Spelthorne Borough Council element of the Council Tax for 2025-26. Moreover:
 - a. The Revenue estimates as set out in Appendix 1 be approved.
 - b. £400,100 as set out in this report is to be appropriated from Earmarked Reserves other than sinking fund reserves in support of Spelthorne's local Council Tax for 2025-26. This does not include funding for aborted capital projects.
 - c. Net use of £5,051,900 of Earmarked Sinking Funds reserves.
 - d. To agree that the Council Tax Base for the year 2025-26 is 40,620 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.

2. Continuing the Council's Local Council Tax Support Scheme with the current rules and regulations.
3. Continuing the complete disregard of war pension/armed forces pension income from benefit calculations.
4. To note the Chief Finance Officer's commentary in Section 4 of the report on the robustness of budget estimates and levels of reserves under Section 25 and 26 of the Local Government Act 2003.
5. The Council Tax Base for the whole Council area for 2025-26 [Item T in the formula in Section 31b (3) of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, as amended (the "Act")] should be 40,620 Band D equivalent dwellings and calculate that the Council Tax requirement for the Council's own purpose for 2025-26 is £228.86 Per Band D equivalent dwelling.

That the following sums be now calculated by the Council for the year 2025-26 in accordance with Sections 31 to 36 of the Local Government Act 1992.

A	121,762,300	The Council's estimated gross expenditure – being the aggregate of the amount which the Council estimates for the items set out in Section 31A (2) of the Act considering all precepts issued to it by Parish Councils
B	-112,446,000	The Council's estimated gross income – being the aggregate of the amount which the Council estimates for the items set out in Section 31A (3) of the Act
C	9,296,300	The Council's estimated net expenditure or budget requirement – being the amount by which the aggregate at (A) above exceeds the aggregate at (B) above, calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 31A (4) of the Act, as its Council Tax requirement for the year
D	228.86	The average Band D Council Tax – being the amount at (C) above divided by the amount at 5c (above), calculated by the Council in accordance with Section 31B (a) of the Act, as the basic amount of tis Council Tax for the

		year (including Parish precepts)
E	0	The sum of the Parish precepts – being the aggregate amount of all special items (Parish precepts) referred to in Section 31(1) of the Act
F	228.86	Being the amount at (D) above less the result given by dividing the amount at (E) above by the amount of 5 (C) 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 dwelling on those parts of tis areas to which no Parish precept relates.

That the following amounts be calculated for the year 2025-26 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 £
152.57	178.00	203.43	228.86	279.72	330.58	381.43	457.72

18/25 Annual Grant Awards 2025/2026

Council **resolved** to:

1. Approve the recipients of the 2025/26 Community Grants,
2. Approve the indicative grant funding for the five core funded organisations for 2026/27,
3. Note the other support that Spelthorne Borough Council provides to the voluntary/charity sector,
4. Note the proposal that any underspend from the Council Grants and Better Neighbourhood Grants budgets will be carried forward to the next financial year; and
5. Note the potential changes to the Discretionary Rate Relief Policy.

19/25 Amendments to the Constitution

This item was deferred to the next meeting of the Council on 24 April 2025.

20/25 Appointment of Monitoring Officer

Council **resolved** to approve the appointment of Linda Heron as the Council's Monitoring Officer.

21/25 Appointment of Vice-Chair Standards Committee

This item was deferred to the next meeting of the Council on 24 April 2025.

22/25 Reports from the Committee Chairs

This item was deferred to the next meeting of the Council on 24 April 2025.

23/25 Motions

This item was deferred to the next meeting of the Council on 24 April 2025.

24/25 General questions

The Mayor reported that no questions had been received.