

## Committee Report Checklist

**Please submit the completed checklists with your report. If final draft report does not include all the information/sign offs required, your item will be delayed until the next meeting cycle.**

### **Stage 1**

#### **Report checklist – responsibility of report owner**

<b>ITEM</b>	<b>Yes / No</b>	<b>Date</b>
Councillor engagement / input from Chair prior to briefing	<b>No</b>	
Commissioner engagement (if report focused on issues of concern to Commissioners such as Finance, Assets etc)	<b>Yes</b>	<b>Sent 06/10/25</b>
Relevant Group Head review	<b>Yes</b>	<b>29/09/25</b>
MAT+ review (to have been circulated <b>at least 5 working days before Stage 2</b> )	<b>Yes</b>	<b>29/09/25</b>
This item is on the Forward Plan for the relevant committee	<b>Yes</b>	<b>June 2025</b>
	<b>Reviewed by</b>	
Finance comments	<b>Yes</b>	<b>7/10/25</b>
Risk comments	<b>n/a</b>	
Legal comments	<b>LH</b>	<b>07/10/25</b>
HR comments (if applicable)	<b>n/a</b>	

**For reports with material financial or legal implications the author should engage with the respective teams at the outset and receive input to their reports prior to asking for MO or s151 comments.**

**Do not forward to stage 2 unless all the above have been completed.**

### **Stage 2**

#### **Report checklist – responsibility of report owner**

<b>ITEM</b>	<b>Completed by</b>	<b>Date</b>
Monitoring Officer commentary – at least <b>5 working days before MAT</b>	<b>LH</b>	<b>09/10/2025</b>
S151 Officer commentary – at least <b>5 working days before MAT</b>	<b>T.Collier</b>	<b>9/10/25</b>
Confirm final report cleared by MAT	<b>MAT</b>	<b>14/10/25</b>



# Environment and Sustainability Committee

13 November 2025

<b>Title</b>	Spelthorne Open Spaces and Biodiversity Strategy
<b>Purpose of the report</b>	To make a decision
<b>Report Author</b>	Catherine Munro, Deputy Group Head Neighbourhood Services
<b>Ward(s) Affected</b>	All Wards
<b>Exempt</b>	No
<b>Exemption Reason</b>	n/a
<b>Corporate Priority</b>	Community Environment Services
<b>Recommendations</b>	<b>Committee is asked to:</b>  To consider and approve the updated Open Spaces and Biodiversity Strategy .
<b>Reason for Recommendation</b>	This report is to note and approve the new Strategy.

## 1. **Executive summary of the report** *(expand detail in Key Issues section below)*

What is the situation	Why we want to do something
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The last Parks and Open Spaces Strategy ran out in 2024 and this is a new updated and revised document detailing plans going forward for both the Council's open spaces and biodiversity in the borough.</li><li>• It also includes the Biodiversity reporting duty that is statutory</li><li>• A report has already been approved by Committee</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• A current Strategy enables the Council to bid for external funding to aid in refurbishment of parks and enhance biodiversity</li><li>• A current Strategy will enable us to bid for external funding in light of reduced Council budgets.</li></ul>
This is what we want to do about it	These are the next steps
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• To review and update the Strategy</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The updated Strategy will be considered by this Committee and if</li></ul>

## **2. Key issues**

- 2.1 The last Parks and Open Spaces Strategy ran from 2014 – 2024.
- 2.2 The new proposed Strategy details the current grounds maintenance regime since it was taken back in house in 2017. It also includes a Playground Improvement Plan which will help when applying for funding.
- 2.3 The last Strategy was a long document whereas the new proposed Strategy is more focussed on the day to day management of the Council's open spaces and driven towards improvements for parks and play facilities for Spelthorne residents.
- 2.4 The new proposed document has been written and collated over the last 9 months.
- 2.5 The new Strategy includes sections on the current biodiversity within the borough and the plans to increase it considering the government's Statutory Biodiversity Duty and Planning's Biodiversity Net Gain.
- 2.6 The Strategy also includes an Action Plan and a section on Playgrounds to ensure that play value for young people in the borough will continue to be provided and enhanced. This was absent from the last Strategy.
- 2.7 The document is concise, laying out the current provision and as well as plans to continue to enhance in order to provide good quality open space for residents of the borough.
- 2.8 Open Spaces and Biodiversity Strategies in other local authorities have been reviewed when writing Spelthorne Councils.

## **3. Options appraisal and proposal**

- 3.1 Option 1 - To consider the report and approve the new Strategy (preferred option). This will enable the Council to apply for external funding and details the level of good quality open space in the borough.
- 3.2 Option 2 – to not approve the report and have an out of date Parks and Open Spaces Strategy
- 3.3 This will reduce the number of opportunities available to apply for external funding to enhance the Council's open spaces and biodiversity. This includes but is not exclusive to National Lottery and any other government funding.

## **4. Risk implications**

- 4.1 The main risk is that without a current Open Spaces and Biodiversity Strategy, sourcing and applying for external funding, which is key to maintaining these areas, will be very difficult.

- 4.2 After the Local Government Reorganisation, all existing open spaces and their maintenance, will probably be reviewed and a new Strategy will be commissioned and created.

## **5. Financial implications**

Any works that arise from the Strategy will come from existing grounds maintenance and biodiversity budgets. The current Parks and Biodiversity budget is £121,600 which will be spent maintaining and enhancing the open space.

## **6. Legal comments**

- 6.1 Under section 40 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 (as amended by the Environment Act 2021) the Council has a statutory duty to consider biodiversity in all its functions and determine appropriate policies.
- 6.2 The revised Open Spaces and Biodiversity Strategy assists in discharging this statutory duty.

## **Corporate implications**

## **7. S151 Officer comments**

The S151 officer confirms that the all the financial implications have been taken into account and that all the recommendations are fully funded from budget. Having an updated Strategy may assist in attracting external funding.

## **8. Monitoring Officer comments**

- 8.1 The Monitoring Officer confirms that the relevant legal implications have been taken into account.

## **9. Procurement comments**

There are no procurement implications arising directly from this report.

## **10. Equality and Diversity**

- 10.1 The Strategy takes into account the whole borough.
- 10.2 Access to the Council's open spaces is important for all residents and Spelthorne has a high number of parks and facilities for users from all over the borough.

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

- 11.1 The increase in biodiversity in the borough, as detailed in the strategy will enhance sustainability with respect to grounds maintenance on Council owned sites.

**12. Other considerations**

12.1 There are none.

**13. Timetable for implementation**

13.1 The Strategy will come into immediate effect.

**14. Contact**

14.1 Catherine Munro

14.2 c.munro@spelthorne.gov.uk

***Please submit any material questions to the Committee Chair and Officer  
Contact by two days in advance of the meeting.***

**Background papers:** There are none.

**Appendices:**

Appendix A – Spelthorne Open Spaces and Biodiversity Strategy 2025-2035