

Economic Development Service – Update Report – June to August 2026

1. Introduction

1.1 The Economic Development Service plays a central role in supporting sustainable economic growth and strengthening economic prosperity across the borough. Our work directly contributes to Spelthorne Borough Council's Corporate Priorities by:

- Driving economic recovery and growth: supporting vibrant town centres, encouraging business start-ups and enabling business expansion.
- Supporting local people: improving access to employment and skills for residents, including young people and those furthest from the job market.
- Championing sustainability and innovation: helping businesses adopt more sustainable practices and use digital technologies effectively.

1.2 The 2026/27 Service Plan sets out key performance indicators aligned with these priorities. Targets include:

- Providing direct support to at least 200 businesses and engaging 760 more indirectly
- Delivering 25 business events (with partners) with a combined attendance of 500
- Maintaining a minimum 80% occupancy rate at the Spelthorne Business Hub
- Supporting over 750 economically inactive residents through the Jobs & Skills Hub

During this reporting period, the team concentrated on delivering the Spelthorne Jobs & Skills Hub, increasing occupancy at the Spelthorne Business Hub and finalising plans for the Spelthorne Business Awards, which is now fully booked, while continuing engagement with local businesses and strategic partners, such as Surrey County Council and Heathrow Airport.

2. Spelthorne Business Hub

2.1 The Hub moved from Sunbury to the Council offices in April. Before the move, the Hub supported an average of 12 businesses using the co-working space.

2.2 There are currently 11 businesses being supported, with a further two businesses considering the offer.

Current tenant list

Business	Industry/ Sector
Belovd Memorial	Funeral service start-up
CPG	Consultancy
Companionship Services Ltd	Care sector
DMS Property Solutions	Refurbishment start-up
ECFIO	Health & Safety Training
EJ HR Solutions Ltd	Professional Services
Palkighor	ITC
Singularity Insights	ITC

The Last Hoorah	Celebration of Life Event Company
Visit Staines	BID Company
ZAAR LTD	Creative Industries

Table 1: Current tenants

2.3 Pending tenants

Zynka Technologies Limited	ITC
Brighter Career	Recruitment start-up

Table 2: Prospective tenants

- 2.4 The Hub has continued to deliver added-value support to its users and local businesses, in conjunction with the Spelthorne Business Growth Service.

3. Business Growth Service

- 3.1 Delivered by CPG Executive Consulting Ltd, under the Council's Business Spelthorne brand, the Business Growth Service launched in December 2025 to support freelancers, start-ups, micro-businesses and SMEs at every stage of their journey – from developing an idea to scaling an established business.
- 3.2 Support includes one-to-one mentoring, start-up accelerators, environmental, social and governance masterclasses, networking opportunities and access to the MyGrowthPod® digital learning platform. Sessions are delivered through a mix of in-person events, webinars and personalised coaching across the borough.
- 3.3 The Business Growth Service maintained strong delivery momentum across the June–August 2026 quarter, despite the summer period. The programme continued to focus on one-to-one business support, mentoring, workshops, participant engagement and KPI evidence collection.
- 3.4 The programme is performing well and remains on track. It is delivering practical, tailored support that is helping local businesses strengthen their foundations, improve performance and move towards sustainable growth.
- 3.5 Key highlights:

The programme reached **86 overall sign-ups** by the end of August and delivered **160 one-to-one support sessions**, including **90 sessions during this quarter**.

- Support increasingly moved from initial diagnostics and planning into **practical implementation**, helping businesses improve growth plans, sales, finance, marketing, websites, automation, AI, pricing and operational efficiency.
- **Workshop activity continued**, with sessions on pricing and packaging, sales and leads, finance and funding, sustainability, import/export and website conversion.
- The **website conversion workshop** in August generated positive engagement, while the **import/export webinar attracted no registrations**, suggesting this topic was less relevant to the current cohort of mainly smaller businesses.
- **Environmental sustainability and ESG support progressed**, with delivery partners in place and practical guidance offered around efficiency, cost reduction and resilience.
- Participant demographics were broadly balanced by gender, with August showing the strongest new participant activity in the quarter.

- **Word of mouth and local council referrals** were strong sources of new participants, indicating positive participant satisfaction and effective local promotion.
 - Participating businesses came from a wide range of sectors, with notable representation from **professional services, marketing/digital/media, healthcare, education, construction, retail and IT**.
 - The Business Growth element had supported **62 businesses** by the end of August, including **16 businesses engaged during this reporting period**.
 - The Start Up programme had **39 entrepreneurs registered** by the end of August, with **10 joining during the quarter** and a further **three-day Start Up Accelerator planned for September**, already with **12 participants registered**.
- 3.6 The next quarter will focus on maintaining one-to-one support, delivering the September Start Up Accelerator, running a new SEO workshop with Bright Click, expanding mentoring, continuing ESG support, recruiting new participants and collecting outstanding KPI evidence.

4. Spelthorne Jobs & Skills Hub

4.1 Overview

August was a busy month for the Spelthorne Jobs & Skills Hub, with delivery continuing across core employment support, partnership activity and targeted provision for residents facing barriers to work.

The Hub remains a well-used and trusted source of support for residents, with a particular focus on young people and those aged over 45. It provides tailored advice on CVs, employability skills and job searching, helping residents access practical, responsive support.

4.2 Performance and casework

Performance against DWP casework targets has remained strong throughout the year, with the Hub consistently meeting expectations. Core one-to-one support continued alongside this work, with 150 resident appointments delivered during August.

4.3 Wellbeing and mental health support

The Hub continued to run two monthly wellbeing sessions with Surrey Care Trust, aimed at adults seeking to build resilience and communication skills. The August sessions were well attended and demonstrated the value of the Hub's partnership approach.

For residents requiring more intensive one-to-one mental health support, the Hub strengthened its partnership with MIND to improve access to affordable provision. This has secured a subsidised rate for residents on Universal Credit, with Midas Plus providing additional subsidy for six residents most in need of support.

4.4 Employment pathways and partnership work

Heathrow Academy continued to attend the Hub every other Tuesday, giving Spelthorne residents direct access to airport employment opportunities and advice on suitable pathways into work.

The Hub also continued to support Jobcentre Plus through its Youth Offer and maintained its position as the most successful Youth Support Hub in the area for outcomes and engagement.

4.5 Jobs & Skills Hub KPI Summary

Target Description	Target	April	May	June	July	Aug	Total	% Complete
Client Engagement and Caseload								
Active Cases carried over from previous months		166	155	149	146	121		
Number of new cases (in the month)	750	52	36	26	54	29	363	48%
Number of closed cases (in the month)		63	42	29	79	36	249	
Number of DWP youth claimants supported (number of starts)	155	23	20	9	30	13	95	61%
No. of Events	100	6	9	15	3	2	35	35%
No. of Attendees	1000	52	105	89	36	17	299	30%
Demographic and geographic breakdown - open this month								
Clients in 16-24 age group (includes outside of DWP grant)	155	30	24	17	42	22	135	87%
Clients in 25-44 age group		5	5	4	4	3	21	
Clients over 45 age group		17	7	5	8	4	41	
Clients in location TW15		10	8	6	11	4	39	
Clients in location TW16		10	4	6	5	3	28	
Clients in location TW17		3	4	0	2	1	10	
Clients in location TW18		12	16	10	23	13	74	
Clients in location TW19		14	7	2	9	6	38	
Progress and employment outcomes - on closure								
Number of people reporting increased employability skills	500	45	25	26	57	36	189	38%
Number of people in employment, including self-employment, following support	120	16	12	10	24	8	70	58%
Number of people contacted after 3 months and still in employment	120	5	5	10	10	4	34	28%
Partner and business engagement - in month								
Number of referrals made between partners	50	10	9	15	3	4	41	82%
Number of employers engaged (new and returning)	35	5	6	6	7	7	31	89%
Quality and Experience								
Number of customer satisfaction surveys received	120	11	1	6	7	8	33	28%
Average customer satisfaction score	4	4.9	5	4.9	5	4.7	4.9	

Table 3: Jobs & Skills Hub KPIs

5. Ashford BID Project

5.1 The **Ashford BID project** remains **on track and RAG rated Green**, with strong progress through the Business Planning and Engagement Phase and preparations now moving toward campaign and ballot activity.

5.2 Key achievements include:

- **More than 250 business visits** completed across the proposed BID area.
- **142 eligible businesses contacted**, achieving full coverage of the current BID engagement database.
- **70 eligible voters identified**, with further voter verification still underway.
- **62 verified business email addresses** secured for consultation, campaign and ballot communications.
- The draft **BID Business Plan** has been completed and submitted for professional design and publication.
- Draft **Baseline and Operating Agreements** have been prepared and substantially reviewed.
- **Civica has been appointed** to administer the ballot, with onboarding and canvassing preparations progressing.
- KPI evidence collection is largely complete, including sustainability and social value evidence.
- The revised BID boundary map is close to completion.

5.3 The main focus for September and October is securing Steering Group approval, completing governance and committee processes, finalising the voter list, issuing statutory notifications and preparing ballot documentation. While overall delivery remains Green, **milestone delivery is rated Amber** because the next phase depends on several critical approvals and statutory deadlines being met.

5.4 Overall, the project is in a strong position, with excellent business engagement, core documentation completed, and ballot readiness progressing well.

5.5 Key risks and challenges for the **Ashford BID project** are:

- **Milestone delivery risk:** Although the project is overall rated Green, milestone delivery is Amber because several critical steps must be completed in September and October.
- **Approval dependencies:** Progress depends on Steering Group consideration, committee approval and sign-off of the final Business Plan and supporting documents.
- **Voter list completion:** Further work is still needed to verify eligible voters; delays could affect statutory processes and ballot readiness.
- **Statutory timetable pressure:** Notifications, ballot documentation and governance requirements must be completed in sequence, leaving limited flexibility if deadlines slip.
- **Business engagement conversion:** Engagement levels are strong, but the project still needs to convert awareness and contact into positive ballot support.

- **Boundary and documentation finalisation:** The revised BID boundary map, Baseline Agreement and Operating Agreement need to be finalised and aligned before the ballot phase.
 - **Ballot delivery readiness:** Civica has been appointed, but onboarding, canvassing and ballot administration still need close monitoring to avoid operational delays.
- 5.6 Overall, the main challenge is less about current progress and more about maintaining momentum through a tightly sequenced approval and ballot timetable.
- 5.7 Upcoming critical milestones for the **Ashford BID project** are:
- **17 September 2026:** Steering Group consideration of the draft BID Business Plan.
 - **September 2026:** Complete final voter verification and confirm the eligible voter list.
 - **September–October 2026:** Finalise the revised BID boundary map.
 - **September–October 2026:** Complete and agree the Baseline Agreement and Operating Agreement.
 - **October 2026:** Secure committee approval and formal sign-off for the BID Business Plan and supporting documents.
 - **October 2026:** Issue statutory notifications required for the BID ballot.
 - **October 2026:** Complete Civica onboarding, canvassing arrangements and ballot administration setup.
 - **18 November 2026:** Issue of ballot papers.
 - **18 December 2026:** Ballot ends.
 - **21 December 2026:** Result announced.
- 5.8 The most critical dependencies are the **Business Plan approval, voter list completion, statutory notifications, and ballot administration readiness.**

6. Economic Development KPIs

Overall performance across the Economic Development KPIs is positive, with several areas showing strong progress by the end of August. Direct business engagement has effectively reached the annual target, indirect engagement is progressing towards target at 69% complete, and event delivery is close to achieving the annual target. The Business Growth Programme is performing strongly, while the Business Hub continues to provide measurable support to local businesses.

The strongest performance areas are direct business engagement, Business Growth Programme activity and event delivery. Indirect engagement has reached 524 businesses against the annual target of 760, and further activity will be needed over the remainder of the year to close the gap. Event delivery is progressing well and is close to achieving the annual target.

Alongside this positive performance, some areas require continued monitoring. These include general engagement, newsletter engagement, Business Hub occupancy, SBF attendance, low levels of other direct engagement and elements of Jobs & Skills Hub performance.

Economic Development KPIs	KPI	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Total	% Complete
Number of businesses supported through direct engagement	200	108	32	18	15	26	199	100%
- Business Hub (occupiers)	60	5	11	10	9	11	46	77%
- SBA No of people attending workshops	40	40	5	0	0	0	45	113%
- Business Growth Programme - 121 support	80	12	16	8	4	15	55	69%
- Other (direct visits or enquiries)	20	0	0	0	2	0	2	10%
Number of businesses supported through indirect engagement	760	150	177	72	64	61	524	69%
- Source in Surrey	100	60	40	0	0	0	100	100%
- Networking	250	35	55	0	0	50	140	56%
- SBA attendance	260	0	0	0	0	0	260	100%
- General engagement	150	5	10	10	9	11	45	30%
- clicks (newsletters)	1200	50	72	62	55	0	239	40%
- open rate (newsletters)	18,000	2165	2349	2200	1604	0	8318	46%
Number of events delivered	25	11	4	2	2	2	21	84%
- Business Growth Service	17	7	2	2	2	1	14	82%
- Partnership with Surrey Chambers	4	1	1	0	0	1	3	75%
- Partnership with SBF (SBGS networking and Riverboat)	1	1	0	0	0	0	1	100%
- Partnership with Source in Surrey	3	2	1	0	0	0	3	100%
Number of attendees at events	500	149	118	14	21	62	364	73%
- Business Growth Service	136	41	18	14	21	13	107	79%
- Partnership with Surrey Chambers	144	24	60	0	0	34	118	82%
- Partnership with SBF	100	24	0	0	0	0	24	24%
- Partnership with Source in Surrey	120	60	40	0	0	0	100	83%

Table 4: Economic Development KPIs