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## RIVERSIDE RESIDENTS NEWSLETTER

### 20 DECEMBER 2020

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### **HIGH-RISE TOWER BLOCKS IN THE PIPELINE ON AND CLOSE TO STAINES RIVERFRONT**

The main initial focus of the Riverside Residents (Staines) Coalition has been to oppose plans for the massive 14-storey Arora hotel/apartment complex on the Bridge Street Car Park and Hanover House site by Staines bridge. While maintaining this as a key priority because of its size, location in the riverside Staines Conservation Area, and its provenance, we are now looking more broadly at the Council's other current proposals that would wreck the town's riverfront.

**The Council's *Spelthorne Local Plan – Preferred Options Consultation* and other documents identify several sites for residential tower blocks (up to 15 storeys) on or close to the riverfront. Two of them are already the subject of Planning Applications.**

The sites identified for high-rise redevelopment include Debenhams, a large site (for two tower blocks of 13 and 15 storeys) next to Debenhams in Elmsleigh Road, Thameside House by the railway line, Thames Lodge Hotel just in front of it and the riverside car park next to the hotel.

At 192 pages, the *Preferred Options Consultation* document is a fairly dense read and is misleading in some key aspects. For example, in its opening summary it specifies "Net number of homes (75) over the plan period" for the Bridge Street Car Park and Hanover House site. This appears to have been published at about the same time as the Council invited potential bidders to discuss developing a large hotel/apartment complex on the site, resulting in the contract for the Arora scheme (300+ hotel rooms with large conference and banqueting facilities, retail outlets, and 200+ residential apartments).

**Fortunately, the new Leadership of Spelthorne Borough Council has created two Task Groups to review and revise the draft 'Spelthorne Local Plan' and 'Staines Masterplan'. Backed by a motion that had no votes against it at the last full Council meeting, the Council's Cabinet will meet early in January to consider how to implement a moratorium on all new high-rise developments until these Task Groups have completed their work and a new Staines Masterplan is approved.**

We are challenging every aspect of the proposed high-rise hell and the impact it would have on the appearance and amenity of Staines as a place to live, work and visit. Its impact on residents on both sides of the river would be devastating. Our efforts to date have wide cross-party support among Spelthorne's elected Councillors – we have corresponded with most and met with several. We are also corresponding with the Leaders and relevant Councillors of Surrey County Council and Runnymede Borough Council, and with the MPs for both Spelthorne and Runnymede. We continue to chase the Council's officers for more information via Freedom of Information requests and will meet with them early in the new year.

**Our campaign will move up a gear in 2021!**

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**Riverside Residents (Staines) Coalition** – a Working Group of residents' organisations serving the interests of some 600 residents on both sides of the river.

Thames Edge Management Ltd

Colnebridge Close Residents Association

Staines Village Residents and Traders Association

Friends of The Hythe

Waterside Place (Staines) Residents Management Ltd

**FB: Riverside Residents Staines**

Supported by: Staines Town Society