



---

## RIVERSIDE RESIDENTS NEWSLETTER

2 August 2022

---

### **NEW 'ZONE BUSTING' ARORA SCHEME AND AGREEMENT RUSHED THROUGH TO BEAT MIDNIGHT DEADLINE**

MAJOR CONCERNS AND UNANSWERED QUESTIONS were swept aside by Spelthorne Borough Councillors last night to wave through an essentially new scheme and development agreement for a riverfront hotel and apartment complex in the Conservation area by Staines bridge. Councillors were told the existing agreement with Arora Hotels, signed in April 2020, would expire at midnight and the consequences of not voting through the new development agreement for the new scheme would be dire: the possibility of being sued, Arora walking away and the site left undeveloped for years to come, and the loss of income needed to help fund the new Staines Leisure Centre. As one Councillor explained, the decision they had to consider was a financial one and protecting the Council's reputation with developers. The detail of the new scheme (a smaller hotel but more apartments compared with the original scheme) would be settled later.

Several Councillors complained about being rushed into the decision. Four hundred pages of new documents relating to the evening's agenda (100 of which for the new arrangements with Arora) had been sent to Councillors late afternoon on Friday last week. The issue of most concern to many Councillors was the size and height of the scheme. In the words of one Councillor it "drives a coach and horses through" the zoning proposals in the Council's own draft Local Plan to limit the height of new developments in the Conservation Area and other sensitive sites. The Arora scheme was the first test of the proposed zoning plan, and the Council itself breaking it sets a precedent that predatory commercial developers for other sensitive sites in the town will simply exploit.

"A four-star hotel in Staines will certainly be a welcome asset for the town, but it is the much larger blocks of more than 200 flats that come with it that are the elephants in the room," says a spokesperson for the Riverside Residents (Staines) Coalition. "Not only will this render the Council's own proposed new zoning plans virtually worthless, it makes a mockery of the Council's statutory obligation to 'preserve or enhance' the Conservation Area. The Arora company will now be encouraged to present the detail of their new scheme to the community. Hopefully this will be a 'consultation' to take some account of community views and not just 'here it is, like it or lump it'. It will in any event be subject to planning approval in due course."

[Click here](#) for a 'quick and easy' questionnaire on the Council's plans for Staines.  
[Click here](#) for a virtual flight around a specially commissioned 3D digital model of the 'Staines of the future' including the proposed Arora development.

**Riverside Residents (Staines) Coalition** – a working group of six residents' organisations serving the interests of residents on both sides of the river. Supported by other residents' organisations across Staines.

[www.ourstainesfuture.org.uk](http://www.ourstainesfuture.org.uk)

email [riverside.residents.staines@gmail.com](mailto:riverside.residents.staines@gmail.com)

FB Riverside Residents Staines