
RIVERSIDE RESIDENTS NEWSLETTER

14 October 2025

SOLVING SPELTHORNE'S MANY PROBLEMS

... a 'Plan' to make a plan ...

SPELTHORNE COUNCIL'S IMPROVEMENT AND RECOVERY PLAN will be recommended to the borough's full Council for approval when it meets next week. The recommendation was endorsed by the Council's Corporate Policy and Resources Committee yesterday evening. The Plan focuses on the Council's five key problem areas: Commercial, Regeneration and Housing, Finance, Governance, and Local Government Reorganisation. The Chief Executive has been handed lead responsibility for the Plan's implementation, working with senior staff and Councillors with oversight from government-appointed Commissioners.

The problems that need to be resolved, particularly in Finance (including potential debts equivalent to £5,000 for every borough resident) but also in Regeneration and Housing (the need for an "immediate review" of the borough's Local Plan), are complex and long-term. The Commissioners aside, to the outside observer it appears that the people now charged with fixing the problems are essentially those who created them and watched them grow over recent years. It must also be noted that Spelthorne Borough Council will cease to exist long before the problems are resolved. The Council and all its problems will be absorbed into a new and much larger unitary authority with a distracting build-up to elections scheduled for next May, and then an even more distracting and demanding process of integration and amalgamation.

For the Chief Executive's report on the Plan [click here](#). On Regeneration and Housing, it says "*Financial constraints including limited borrowing capacity and high holding costs limit direct housing development and affordability and reinforce the need to achieve outcomes on sites being held for housing purposes. Planning challenges surfaced around the need for effective Masterplans, insufficient family-friendly designs, and community opposition, particularly in Staines. Internal delivery capacity was stretched by staff shortages, skills gaps, and conflicting priorities. Engagement with Registered Providers and access to affordable housing funding remain limited. Environmental constraints such as flood risk and green belt protections reduce viable development opportunities. Market conditions and rising homelessness increase demand pressures, intensifying the complexity of meeting housing needs*".

The 'Plan' is essentially a plan to make a plan. According to the Chief Executive's report, next steps will "*include assessing the viability of key sites, designing a community engagement programme in connection with an immediate Review of the Local Plan and any Masterplans, developing Masterplan delivery models, and producing a comprehensive options appraisal for Knowle Green Estates along with a long-term financial viability assessment. Ultimately the programme aims to move towards meeting housing targets with the right mix of provision, make strong progress on the Immediate Review of the Local Plan, be moving towards adoption of any Masterplans and effectively manage the transition of KGE in line with broader local government changes*".