



RIVERSIDE RESIDENTS NEWSLETTER

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THREE-MONTH MORATORIUM ON TOWER BLOCKS "A HALF-STEP IN THE RIGHT DIRECTION"

No new high-rise developments where Spelthorne Borough Council is the developer will be considered for Staines at least until May while the Council takes a fresh look at the former administration's plans to pepper the town with new tower block developments for more than 3,000 flats.

This was decided by Spelthorne Borough Council's Cabinet yesterday evening, meeting the commitment made by the current administration to be more focused on the views and needs of residents. The three-month 'time-out' follows unanimous support for a motion at last month's full Council calling on the Cabinet to impose a moratorium on *all* new tower blocks. The extra half-step now depends on the Council persuading private developers to delay their applications. One, for a two-tower development (13 and 15 storeys for 200 flats on a site next to Debenhams), is already due for consideration by the Council's planning committee soon.

"We believe the fact that the Cabinet has imposed a moratorium on considering all high-rise developments where the Council is the developer, and that a Council Task Group is in any event in the middle of reviewing the draft Staines Masterplan from the previous administration, creates solid grounds to ensure a postponement of considering all high-rise developments," says a spokesperson for the Riverside Residents Coalition. "The Council has grounds to postpone consideration of such applications if granting permission would prejudice the outcome of its plan making process, which is clearly the case in these circumstances. We will be pressing the Council to pursue this aggressively, and given the unanimous vote for a full moratorium by the full Council we believe they must and will do so."

In the meantime, the three-month moratorium will be used for:

- a public consultation to determine residents' views on how Staines should be developed, and
- a full review of the amenity, infrastructure and financial aspects of revisions to the former administration's 'vision' for Staines to become a mini-Woking of tower-blocks for shoe-box flats.

"We had proposed to the Cabinet a six-month moratorium with broader and more independent input and oversight than appears to be planned. That said, we broadly welcome the Cabinet's decision yesterday evening as a potentially important half step in the right direction towards a development plan for Staines that will improve its amenity and appearance as an attractive town to live, work and visit," said a spokesperson for the Riverside Residents (Staines) Coalition. "However, a lot of detail has yet to be decided in relation to both the public consultation and the review, and we have a major concern about the legwork on both being undertaken by the Council's Officers. To date, they have made every effort to insist the former administration's 'vision', in which we believe they are very heavily and personally invested, should be implemented without delay. This is not a good omen for an unbiased contribution to the purpose of the moratorium. We will be making a full proposal on both the consultation and review to the Council in the next few days."

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