



RIVERSIDE RESIDENTS NEWSLETTER

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SPELTHORNE MP BACKS RESIDENTS' OPPOSITION TO OVER-DEVELOPMENT IN STAINES

SPELTHORNE'S MP KWASI KWARTENG backs residents' opposition to the currently planned over-development and uncontrolled high-rise in Staines. This was one of several comments and commitments he made at a two-hour meeting yesterday with representatives of Spelthorne residents' associations and Councillors. He undertook to press government colleagues for a lower housing target for the borough. He urged the Council to produce a Local Plan based on a housing target it believed it could justify, taking account of the special circumstances and constraints in Spelthorne. He also said "democratic accountability is important and this means making an effort to implement plans with the agreement and consent of residents." About a dozen residents associations attended including six representatives from the Riverside Residents (Staines) Coalition.

"Most who attended the meeting left encouraged by what they had heard, and a lot of hopes now rest on Mr Kwarteng's shoulders. The extent to which Staines might benefit from a lower housing target for the borough, if one is achieved, is not yet clear, and this will be a decision for Spelthorne Council. But Mr Kwarteng has made his feelings on this clear," says a spokesperson for the Coalition. "We must accept there will be high-rise in Staines, in large part because of decisions and Council policy failures of the past. But there are still battles to be fought to mitigate its worst excesses – particularly over developments such as those currently proposed for the Debenhams building and Thameside House.

"You wouldn't think so from the Council's behaviour, but its constitution requires it 'to work in partnership with residents to make Spelthorne a place where people are fully engaged, and to encourage the active involvement of the community in the decisions that affect them'", continued the Coalition spokesperson. "Hopefully Mr Kwarteng's comments on democratic accountability will add to pressure from our Coalition and others over the past several months for the Council and its Officers to live up to this. A good start would be for the Council to tell the community what conclusions it has drawn from its consultation last summer on the future of Staines and to make a commitment to respect and reflect the views of residents in the emerging plan for the town. The community is long overdue an explanation of the general vision the Council has for Staines – warts and all. We would welcome an opportunity to work with Officers and Councillors on this."

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

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