

Spelthorne Borough Council

Local Plan - Issues & Options Consultation 2018

FAQs



Spelthorne Takes Shape

Contents

Local Plan	1
Consultation	4
Green Belt.....	6
Development.....	9
Infrastructure.....	14
Heathrow	16
Miscellaneous	18

Local Plan

1. What is the Local Plan?

- The Local Plan is a key document which will guide development in Spelthorne borough.
- It is the framework to guide the amount, type and location of development in the borough in a sustainable way over the plan period up to 2035.
- The Local Plan will tell us how many houses we need, how much employment land we need, how much infrastructure we need as well as indications for where it should go and how we can best protect our environment.
- It addresses the current and future needs of our borough and all who live, work and visit us.
- The Government says the Local Plan must be pro-growth.
- The Local Plan is the overarching framework for any Neighbourhood Plans.
- When complete planning applications for both large and small development will be judged by it (along with national policy).

2. What is the NPPF?

NPPF stands for National Planning Policy Framework. It was published in 2012 and is national planning policy against which planning applications are determined. It guides development - for example setting out what can and cannot be built in the Green Belt and the best location for new shopping facilities. An updated NPPF is expected to be published later this year following consultation that has just ended. Many of the changes proposed in the amended NPPF are around housing supply and delivery.

3. What evidence do you have to show Spelthorne's needs? Where can I find this?

The evidence base is the collection of documents we use to inform the development of policy for the Local Plan. It is generally research work, either produced by the Council or others, and uses a clear and established methodology where appropriate so that the conclusions it reaches are transparent.

The evidence base acts as a knowledge bank that we use to help write policy from an informed perspective, alongside other considerations like the results of consultations and national policy.

A number of pieces of evidence have been produced and they are available to view or download on our website:

<https://www.spelthorne.gov.uk/article/10077/New-Local-Plan-Evidence-Base-and-Supporting-Documents>

4. What happens if we don't have a new Local Plan in place?

Without a plan in place, planning applications will be determined against national planning policy. However, if we do not have a five year housing-land supply the 'presumption in favour of sustainable development' is invoked, which mean that the Council and Appeal Inspectors will give greater weight to the need for housing in making the decision. This might

mean that housing need could outweigh concerns over the size, design or location of the development. When the presumption is invoked, this is also known as the 'tilted balance' in reference to how the weight may tip in favour of granting permission.

So having a Local Plan in place and a robust and deliverable supply of housing means that we get to make decisions locally rather than having decisions taken out of our hands and decided at appeal.

5. Do we have a current Local Plan? What is the status of our existing Core Strategy and DM Policies?

Our current Core Strategy and Policies Development Plan Document is our current Local Plan but it was adopted in 2009, which was before the NPPF was adopted in 2011. That means that it is not as up to date as the national policy and in some cases the NPPF will have greater weight in decision making than our local policies. However, most of the policy is still current enough to use when considering planning applications and our record of winning appeals is good. The Core Strategy and Policies DPD will remain the primary source of local policy until the new Local Plan is at an advanced stage of preparation.

6. Will all the existing policies be changed?

We will be reviewing all our existing local policies and it is likely that many will be updated or re-written altogether to reflect more recent national policy and current local circumstances.

7. Who decides if the new Local Plan should be adopted and how?

When we have a final version of the Local Plan it will be considered by a Planning Inspector at Examination. The Inspector will write to Council to tell us if he or she thinks it is 'sound'. To be found 'sound', the Local Plan must be:

- Positively prepared
- Justified
- Effective
- Consistent with national policy

8. What is the role of my Ward Councillor in the Local Plan?

If your Ward Councillor sits on the Local Plan Working Party they will have been involved in the preparation of the evidence and Local Plan documents. However, all of these are approved by Cabinet and made available to view by all councillors so your Ward Councillor will have had chance to read them.

9. If the new Local Plan covers 15 years, why will it have to be reviewed again in 5 years?

The Government requires plans to be reviewed after 5 years so the end date of any Plan will continue to roll forward. In any review of the Plan enough land will need to be identified for future planned growth over the new plan period.

10. What does ‘sustainability’ mean and what is a Sustainability Appraisal?

A sustainability appraisal is an appraisal of the economic, environmental, and social effects of a plan from the outset of the preparation process to allow decisions to be made that accord with sustainable development.

The Local Plan is required by law to promote sustainable development through the balancing of social, environmental and economic considerations to achieve the best overall outcome. This is done through assessing these documents at each stage of their preparation to consider potential social, environmental and economic impacts. This process, and the resulting report, is called Sustainability Appraisal (SA).

SA incorporates Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) which is also required by law. SEA assesses potential significant environmental impacts of the plan being prepared, and in some cases may recommend mitigation measures.

Consultation

1. What statutory stage of consultation is this?

We are at Regulation 18 stage. Under the Town & Country Planning (Local Planning) Regulations 2012, we are required to consult various bodies and stakeholders, including the local community, that we are preparing a new Plan.

2. What are the next stages of consultation?

We will carry out another Regulation 18 consultation when we develop 'preferred options' after the current 'issues and options' consultation. Once we have drafted a new Local Plan to submit to the Planning Inspectorate for examination, we will consult on the document. That is known as the Regulation 19 consultation.

3. What is the timetable for the new Local Plan process?

The timetable is set out in the Local Development Scheme (LDS): https://www.spelthorne.gov.uk/media/17469/Local-Development-Scheme-2017-2020/pdf/LDS_17-20_-_Report.pdf

4. What happens if the plan is not approved?

The Planning Inspector appointed to examine our new Local Plan will set out for us whether or not it should be adopted. If it is not found 'sound', he or she will set out what is wrong and what we need to do to amend the Plan so it can be found 'sound'. This can happen after the Examination in Public has taken place but usually Inspectors will alert the Council beforehand if there are fundamental issues that need addressing before proceeding to the examination.

5. To what extent will people's responses be taken into account?

We have set out four strategic options for how we might meet our development needs in Spelthorne and are asking the public which option they prefer. However, this consultation is not a referendum. There are various issues we need to take into account when selecting a 'preferred option' to develop further. We will, of course, take into account the preferences identified by members of the public, community groups and stakeholders but we cannot guarantee that the most popular option will be selected. We also need to take account of sustainability objectives to ensure that the strategy we take forward has the most benefit and least impact on environmental, economic and social grounds. We will also need to take account of the expert advice we receive from statutory consultees and other professional bodies on technical matters. However, we want to develop a new Local Plan that our residents, businesses and stakeholders support so we will do our best to ensure the option we take forward has as much backing as possible.

6. What happens to my comments and how can I see what others have said?

We will review all the comments made during the consultation and include them in a schedule of representations, with a summary of the options

selected and addressing specific comments as necessary. This will be published as we continue to the next stage of preparing our Local Plan.

7. Where can I get more information and ask questions?

There will be a number of information sessions being held during the consultation and you can find details of these on our website:

www.spelthorne.gov.uk/localplan.

You can also call the Strategic Planning Team on 01784 451499.

8. What comments won't be considered?

We will not accept comments that include abusive, racist or other discriminatory or inflammatory language. Please consider that a human being will be reading your representation and that it will eventually be made available for public inspection so we ask that you are respectful in your language. We will also not be able to accept anonymous comments.

Green Belt

1. What is Green Belt?

The broad concept of the Green Belt was introduced as a means to halt the outward sprawl of London and the merging of other large urban areas. The full extent of the Green Belt in Spelthorne was defined in the County Development Plans approved in the 1950s. Since then Green Belt policy has been used to ensure that land within the Green Belt is kept permanently open and free of development so that the spread of urban development is contained.

The NPPF defines five purposes of the Green Belt:

1. To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built up areas
2. To prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another
3. To assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment
4. To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns, and
5. To assist in urban regeneration by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land.

2. What percentage of the Borough is Green Belt/reservoir?

The Green Belt in Spelthorne covers 3320 hectares which represent 65% of the total area of the Borough. The major reservoirs in Spelthorne are all located within the Green Belt and cover some 870 hectares which is 26.2% of the Green Belt area. Other large areas of the Green Belt have been subject to mineral working and have subsequently been restored for agricultural use or retained as large lakes used for recreation.

3. What type of land won't be considered for development?

We have carried out an assessment of the Green Belt in Spelthorne and the extent to which it fulfils the five purposes of the Green Belt as defined in the NPPF (see above). This will help us decide which land, if any, could be released from the Green Belt for development purposes. However, some land in the Green Belt is subject to absolute constraints such as land liable to serious flooding, common land, or national and international nature conservation designations. These would preclude development even if the land were no longer to be included in the Green Belt.

4. Why haven't you identified specific sites for development in this consultation?

This consultation is about general principles and broad issues and options. Once this first stage of consultation is complete we will develop the most appropriate strategy and policies to deliver the necessary levels of growth and as part of this second stage will identify possible sites for development. Further consultation will follow to ensure that there is every opportunity for all interested parties to comment on the emerging policies and any allocated sites.

5. Why are we considering options to release Green Belt for development?

It is clear that the quantity of housing that we are required to deliver during the period covered by the Local Plan cannot be fully accommodated on existing urban land outside the current Green Belt boundary unless the density of development on urban sites is significantly increased to include much higher, larger buildings. This may result in changes to the character of the borough that might not be acceptable. It is therefore necessary to consider the option of developing some Green Belt sites if we are to achieve the identified levels of growth necessary to produce a “sound plan”.

6. If we lose all areas of weakly performing Green Belt, what percentage will be left?

Consultants have initially identified a number of sites which are considered to perform weakly against the five main purposes of Green Belt as identified in the NPPF. The sites together total some 111 hectares which would represent a loss of just 3.34% of the existing area of Green Belt if they were all released for development.

7. Won't developing Green Belt land destroy local wildlife?

Many sites, whether in the Green Belt or in the urban area, have the potential to provide habitats for local wildlife. Sites with national or international nature conservation designations will not be identified for development but all other sites will be subject to careful appraisal so as to ensure that wildlife interests are protected or any detrimental impacts are fully mitigated.

8. Does Green Belt land have to be ‘green’? What about unattractive areas of Green Belt with buildings already on it?

For Green Belt to fulfil its purpose it has to be open and free from development, but it does not have to be “green”. The existence of buildings, particularly any which pre-date the Green Belt designation, does not necessarily devalue the function or purpose of the Green Belt. Land which is derelict or degraded can still meet the purposes of the Green Belt. However, the value of Green Belt is greater where it is in beneficial use and provides an attractive landscape for recreation or nature conservation.

9. Will the Green Belt boundary change even if no land within it is released for development?

The boundary of the Green Belt was defined in the Spelthorne Local Plan 2001 and the Council is required to demonstrate “exceptional circumstances” to alter the boundary at the time of a review of the Local Plan. If no Green Belt land was to be released for development there would be no reason to change the current boundary.

10. What does ‘safeguarding’ land for development in the Green Belt mean?

“Safeguarding” is a way of ensuring that land in the Green Belt which is identified as being suitable for development, but which is not needed at present, can remain open and undeveloped until it is required for

development at some time in the future, usually at a time beyond the timescale of the current plan.

11. What happens after 15 years at the end of the Local Plan period if all weakly performing Green Belt land has been developed? Will more have to be released?

The Government requires plans to be reviewed after 5 years so the end date of any Plan will continue to roll forward. In any review of the Plan enough land will need to be identified for future planned growth over the new plan period. This may involve consideration of a number of options and further Green Belt releases cannot be ruled out.

12. What about Kempton Park? Is development proposed and is this likely to come forward?

Kempton Park is a large tract of Green Belt land which forms part of the important strategic gap between London and the settlements of Sunbury and Ashford. The owners of Kempton Park have indicated their intention to close the racecourse and to develop the site for housing although the Council is on record as being opposed to the loss of this site from the Green Belt. The Green Belt Assessment we have carried out identifies the land where Kempton Park is located as 'strongly performing' against the purposes of Green Belt. At this stage in the plan making process no sites have been identified for development and none of the options in the consultation would consider release of strongly performing Green Belt for development.

Development

1. How is housing need calculated?

Local housing need is set by central government for each local authority using a standardised methodology. This has 3 steps: firstly official household growth projections are taken based on an annual average over 10 years. This is then followed by an uplift in the number of homes that are needed in less affordable areas. The third step sets a cap on the level of increase (40%) that local authorities should plan for.

If we are unable to meet our housing need figure we will be required to work with our neighbours under the “Duty to Cooperate” to help meet that need. If we fail to find enough land for housing, there is a risk that our Local Plan will not be found “sound” by the independent planning inspector at examination.

2. What is a five year housing land supply position and where can I find it?

The Council needs to have an up to date Local Plan which identifies sufficient land to meet the agreed housing need over a 15 year period. Every year it also must be able to show that it has enough ‘deliverable’ housing land to meet the next five years’ housing needs of the Borough.

If we cannot demonstrate this, there is a risk that decisions on how much new housing is built and where could be taken away from the local community and dealt with by the government through the planning appeal system.

The latest five year housing land supply position is set out in the Council's Authority Monitoring Report 2016/17:

https://www.spelthorne.gov.uk/media/17479/Authority-Monitoring-Report-2017/pdf/Annual_Monitoring_Report_2017.pdf

Officers are currently updating the housing land supply figure for 2018.

3. What is affordable housing?

Affordable housing is social rented, affordable rented and intermediate housing, provided to eligible households whose needs are not met by the market. Eligibility is determined by local incomes and local house prices.

- Social rented housing is owned by local authorities and private registered providers and rent is determined through the national rent regime.
- Affordable rented housing is let by local authorities or private registered providers of social housing to households who are eligible for social rented housing. Affordable rent controls mean that rent is charged at no more than 80% of the local market rent.
- Intermediate housing is homes for sale and rent provided at a cost above social rent, but below market levels.

4. When will the Council allocate sites for housing?

The Council will set out its preferred sites at the preferred options stage which will also be subject to public consultation. Sites will be allocated once the plan has been examined by the Planning Inspectorate.

5. What are our housing needs compared to other local authorities nearby in Surrey, Berkshire and London?

Spelthorne has a target of providing 590 new homes per year, whilst the adjoining local authorities have the following targets:

- Runnymede: 557
- Elmbridge: 612
- Slough: 913
- Windsor and Maidenhead: 778
- Hounslow: 1,151
- Hillingdon: 595
- Richmond upon Thames: 1,709

6. What about additional housing, employment and infrastructure needs created by an expanded Heathrow Airport?

There is uncertainty at the present time as to the impacts of an expanded airport on the Borough, however modelling is being developed to determine how Spelthorne will be impacted. Spelthorne Borough Council is working with Heathrow Airport Limited through the Heathrow Strategic Planning Group to reach the best possible outcome for the wider area.

7. If we meet our housing needs in full, how many additional residents would that mean? What are the existing population numbers for the borough as a whole and individual towns and villages? How will these change?

Over the 15 year plan period we are expected to provide 8850 new homes in Spelthorne. The average household size in the 2011 Census was 2.4, therefore this could equate to 21,240 additional residents.

Current populations are as follows, with the projected proportionate population increase over the next 15 years:

Settlement	Population (2011 Census)	Projected proportionate population increase
Ashford	26,547	+5803
Shepperton	10,992	+2403
Staines	25,156	+5499
Stanwell	10,694	+2337
Stanwell Moor	1,371	+300
Sunbury	20,143	+4403
Upper Halliford	2,257	+493

**These figures are indicative only as we cannot assume that the population increase will be spread evenly across the borough.*

8. Who will live in these new houses? Will they be local people?

Houses will be built to accommodate population growth in the Borough which will be derived from natural population growth and household migration. National Government policy indicates that we should try and meet our housing need within our Housing Market Area, which Spelthorne shares with Runnymede. This is because the two authorities share the same geographical area over which people who move will generally move within.

9. Why can't neighbouring authorities take our housing growth?

Under the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), all local authorities are required to plan for and meet their own housing need. If all other avenues of search have been exhausted, a local authority can request neighbouring authorities help out under the Duty to Cooperate, but they too have a housing need to meet and their own constraints (such as Green Belt and flood risk) so it is unlikely that they will be able to accommodate much, if any, of our need. The Council can, however, co-operate with neighbouring authorities to make infrastructure improvements to support housing growth in both districts.

10. Will we have to help other neighbouring authorities meet their housing need?

We have to work with neighbouring authorities on an ongoing basis under the Duty to Cooperate on strategic issues like housing. Neighbouring authorities may request assistance from Spelthorne to help meet their need, however the Borough is heavily constrained and we have our own need that we must strive to meet.

11. Will Spelthorne have to take London's growth?

The housing need figure does not specifically allow for any shortfall in the ability of London to provide for its own need. At present there is a lot of uncertainty around how many additional homes will need to be accommodated outside London to help them meet their need, if at all. The most recent consultation on the new London Plan stated almost all its housing need can be accommodated within London itself.

12. Who will build this new development?

Developers and registered social housing providers will build new development. This will be on a mix of privately owned and council owned land.

13. When will it be built?

The plan period extends to 2035 therefore development will be built out over this period. We are required to have a five year housing land supply with 'deliverable sites' as well as a supply of 'developable sites' which will be built out in years 6-15 of the plan period. Our housing trajectory which is currently being developed will indicate when we expect specific sites to be delivered.

14. Can developers or landowners propose further additional sites for development at this stage?

The Council's Call for Sites is currently closed, however we anticipate opening this again towards the end of the year. We will update our Strategic Planning webpages when more information becomes available.

15. What land does the Council own in Spelthorne and will it be considered for development?

The Council owns a range of assets throughout the Borough. Details on this can be found at <https://www.spelthorne.gov.uk/article/9753/Land-and-property>

Through the Strategic Land Availability Assessment (SLAA) officers have explored the suitability and availability of specific sites to help meet development needs and these have been included in the SLAA where appropriate. Where Council owned land has been included, current uses will be relocated if required.

16. What is a Masterplan?

A Masterplan is a plan that describes and maps an overall development concept, including present and future land use, urban design and landscaping, built form, infrastructure, circulation and service provision. It is based upon an understanding of place and it is intended to provide a structured approach to creating a clear and consistent framework for development.

17. Why do we need to provide pitches for Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople?

We are required to assess the accommodation needs of our travelling community in order to comply with the Government's Planning Policy for Traveller Sites (DCLG, 2012) and Section 225 of the 2004 Housing Act.

18. How tall will buildings be if densities are increased on brownfield land?

Due to Heathrow Airport safeguarding restrictions, development in the Borough cannot go beyond 67.95m above sea level. As Staines is approximately 15m above sea level, 18 storeys (residential) would be the maximum height of a building. Each site however will be judged on its own individual merits and will be assessed separately.

19. Why do you want to build high rise developments? They look ugly and there's nowhere for families, amenity space etc.

Spelthorne has a housing need for 590 new homes each year, as identified by the Government's standard methodology for calculating needs. In order to meet this level of need we will be required to maximise development in sustainable locations, particularly those that are close to key transport nodes and are located within town centres.

We will be appraising each of the options to consider the impacts on issues such as amenity space and infrastructure in order to produce the best possible outcome for the Borough.

When we come to allocating sites within the new Local Plan we will be looking at what infrastructure will be required to support each individual development and building this in to our future plan for the Borough.

20. Will development be permitted in the Floodplain?

Development is considered inappropriate in the functional floodplain (flood zone 3b) where it is not water compatible development or essential infrastructure. Development in flood zones 2 and 3a will also be subject to flood risk mitigation measures and will require a flood risk assessment, in line with national guidance.

21. Will there be enough jobs to support planned housing growth?

Through our Employment Land Needs Assessment we have assessed the future demand for employment floorspace over the Local Plan period. This will help us to plan for new employment land in the Borough to support growth.

22. How do the constraints facing the Borough (flood risk etc.) impact the housing need figure?

The assessment of development needs is an objective assessment based on facts and unbiased evidence. National planning guidance sets out that local authorities shouldn't apply constraints to the overall assessment of need, however these considerations will need to be addressed when bringing evidence bases together to identify specific policies within development plans.

23. What is the Borough's population and how is it expected to grow over the plan period?

Spelthorne has a population of approximately 98,000, with this expected to increase to 116,000 by 2035.

24. What about affordable housing, including key worker housing?

The new Local Plan will set out how new development sites should make a provision for affordable homes. The current Core Strategy requires 40% of all net additional dwellings completed to be affordable and this will be reviewed in due course through the new Local Plan.

The NPPF is clear that a Local Plan should meet all local housing need for market and affordable housing, as far as is consistent with the policies in the NPPF.

Infrastructure

1. If all our growth is directed to Staines-upon-Thames, where will all the infrastructure go?

Improving and providing new infrastructure is key to supporting new development. An Infrastructure Delivery Plan will be prepared as part of the Local Plan process. This is prepared in consultation with all the relevant stakeholders including Surrey County Council (Highways and Education), water companies and the Environment Agency and the North West Surrey Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG). It is the responsibility of these stakeholders to identify new infrastructure needs and ensure delivery of the required infrastructure. This consultation allows the opportunity for new infrastructure to be identified.

2. How will the roads cope with all the extra residents and workers in the borough?

As part of the Local Plan process, the Council will work closely with Surrey County Council to provide detailed assessments identifying impacts on the road network. This will be in the form of a Transport Strategy which will inform the Local Plan. The impacts of additional housing must be proven as 'severe' however the word 'severe' is not defined. This must be interpreted locally by local planning authorities. The NPPF reference to severe states 'Development should only be prevented or refused on transport grounds where the residual cumulative impacts of development are severe.'

3. What will happen with parking in town centres if they are to take more development?

This issue is not being assessed at this stage however the following consultation on Preferred Options will fully consider all infrastructure requirements to meet development needs once a preferred option has been identified.

4. Who will pay for additional infrastructure such as school places, healthcare provision, roads, etc?

The County Council, working with the Borough Council, is responsible for providing some of these types of infrastructure such as education and highways. The funding of such infrastructure is primarily the responsibility of the service provider, however the use of developer contributions and Community Infrastructure Levy receipts will be essential in ensuring that the necessary infrastructure is provided.

5. What involvement will other organisations, agencies and stakeholders have, such as utilities?

All key stakeholders with an interest in the Borough will be consulted as part of the Local Plan process. This will allow them to make comments as required with regards to issues such as capacity. These stakeholders include Affinity Water, Thames water, Southern electric & gas and the Environment Agency.

6. Will existing schools and doctor surgeries be expanded or will new ones be built?

In assessing future needs, the Council use national targets to understand if there is a deficit of provision. This applies to schools and doctor's surgeries in particular. For example the requirement for school class sizes determines how many extra classes are needed to support a growth in population.

7. Why are you considering removing the Protected Urban Open Space designation? Will that mean these spaces will be built on?

The Protected Urban Open Space designation is a local one which is applied to areas considered to meet the required criteria. An Open Space Assessment will be carried out by the Council to identify existing and future needs. This will allow a full assessment of existing provision and where additional provision is required. This Assessment will be completed in time for the Preferred Options stage of the Local Plan.

8. Poor state of roads. When will these be fixed as they are not fit for purpose in their current state?

The Local Plan considers strategic planning in the Borough over the next 15 years. The state of the current road network is a matter for Surrey County Council as the highway authority.

9. Traffic in Staines – the Crooked Billet roundabout, when is this going to be improved? It cannot manage the current flow of traffic so development in Staines will effectively bring the town to gridlock.

Although the need to deliver housing growth will be a key focus of the new Local Plan, it is vital that other needs are not overlooked. We recognise that new development will also require new infrastructure to support it. As this plan progresses, an 'Infrastructure Delivery Plan' will be produced to identify these new infrastructure needs. This will seek to address issues such as parts of the local road network where improvements are required and such decisions will be taken in consultation with the County Council and Highways England.

Heathrow

1. What will happen to Stanwell Moor if the Heathrow Plans go ahead? If we lose homes this will impact on the housing figure.

Heathrow Airport Limited recently consulted on a range of options for their proposed third runway expansion. This included potential sites for airport related development in the Stanwell Moor and Stanwell areas. They are all in the Green Belt and will require Heathrow to demonstrate 'very special circumstances' to be released for development. If this goes ahead there will be very few homes lost in our borough and possibly none at all. However, these areas will be significantly affected if these large areas of open land are developed for offices, car parks, hotels, cargo uses and temporary construction sites. Our borough is also likely to become the new 'gateway' to the airport from the M25, with associated additional vehicle movements and parking. Spelthorne Council has produced a comprehensive response to Heathrow's consultation, highlighting these issues and making a number of demands that need to be met by Heathrow in order to mitigate and compensate for the impact on our residents. More information on the expansion proposal and how it may affect the borough can be found at: <https://www.spelthorne.gov.uk/heathrow>

2. Are there going to be improved transport links to Heathrow – public transport links for those who work there? More development will lead to higher car usage – ultimately resulting in poorer air quality.

Heathrow have stated that they intend their expansion plans to result in no additional vehicles on the road. This would require a significant shift towards passenger, employee and other journeys being made by public transport. Heathrow needs to do this so that they can show their plans will not result in poorer air quality. The consultation included a section on the surface access strategy and there are discussions over the introduction of rail access to the south of the airport. This would be beneficial to Spelthorne as many of our residents who work at Heathrow and surrounding businesses travel by private car. Spelthorne Council considers southern rail access to be an essential element of the expansion and included this in our consultation response to Heathrow. Whilst the options for a new rail link focus on 'heavy rail' by extending the existing network, we are also considering a light rail scheme that would link Staines-upon-Thames to the airport.

3. Will air quality be considered in the Local Plan process?

Yes, air quality is an important environmental issue that we will consider in the Local Plan process, including expert advice from officers in our Environmental Health team. Nitrogen dioxide (NO₂) is the principal pollutant of concern for Spelthorne and mainly arises from vehicle emissions, particularly on larger roads and where there is slow moving or stationary traffic. The new Local Plan will lead to an increase in developments that will result in an increase in residents and employees so it is likely there will be extra cars on the road. As we look at options for meeting our development needs, we need to consider how best to do so without causing air quality to worsen.

4. Is Spelthorne going to end up being an extension of London? If this is the case why can't we be banded as a 'Zone' and benefit from cheaper transport into London?

Spelthorne has an identity that is distinct from its London neighbours and is very much a part of Surrey. Our residents and workers benefit from the proximity to London and Heathrow Airport but also enjoy its green spaces, access to the River Thames and attractive towns and villages. There will need to be more development in the borough to meet our housing, employment and infrastructure needs but we want to ensure Spelthorne grows in a way that does not spoil its character. Given our links to London and the airport, we are campaigning to be included in Zone 6 and the Oyster card scheme and have asked Heathrow to back us in the list of measures we feel need to be met in order to reduce the impact of expansion on our residents and businesses.

Miscellaneous

1. **What are neighbourhood plans and does the Borough have any?**

Neighbourhood Plans allow communities to shape development within their parish or designated local area. Neighbourhood Plans become part of the Local Plan once they have been 'made' following independent examination and a referendum. Once 'made', they are used to determine planning applications when affecting the area subject to the NP. To date, Spelthorne does not have any 'made' Neighbourhood Plans.

2. **What have Community Infrastructure Levy contributions been spent on to date? Are there any plans?**

So far, £365,000 of CIL funds have been spent on the Wider Staines sustainable transport package to improve cycling, pedestrian and public transport facilities in the Staines and Stanwell area.

We are considering how to spend the current CIL fund and will look at schemes that deliver infrastructure improvements in proximity to recent or planned developments.

3. **How will the plan protect the built and natural environment?**

The Local Plan will contain policies which deal with issues such as conserving the built and natural environments. In terms of the built environment, this is usually done through designated conservation area policies to regulate development proposals more closely as well as through listed buildings, which require a specific listed buildings consent for works affecting them.

Conserving the natural environment is achieved through policies to minimise impacts on biodiversity and enhance this where possible. The Local Plan policies will also seek to reduce pollution to preserve the natural environment and an appropriate assessment would be required where proposed development impacts on habitats under the Birds and Habitats Directives.

4. **Can I see a map of proposals/planned developed?**

There is a proposals map as part of the current Local Plan and this will be updated when the new Local Plan has been formally adopted. This map shows where the Local Plan policies apply and which areas have been allocated for development.