

SPELTHORNE JOINT COMMITTEE 13 MARCH 2019



OPEN FORUM IN ADVANCE OF FORMAL MEETING VERBAL PUBLIC QUESTIONS

Question 1: Mrs Geraldine Lewin

Mrs Lewin – who has volunteered as a Tree Warden for many years – made the point that too many trees were being felled in the borough, including those covered by Tree Preservation Orders; could anything be done to reduce this number? She congratulated the borough on the planting of the Centenary Wood in Laleham.

Response

The Group Head Neighbourhood Services at Spelthorne Borough explained that responsibility for trees varies according to whether they are growing on private, highway or borough land; she offered to liaise with Mrs Lewin over the felling of trees on private land. Over 850 trees would be planted across the borough during this and the next financial year.

The Divisional Member for Staines South & Ashford West congratulated the Tree Wardens for the hard work they do across the borough.

Question 2: Mr Jeremy Spencer and Mr Lee Belston

Can the borough contact the county council to express concerns among local firefighters that proposals for revised levels of night-time cover would mean crews are unable to intervene in incidents at high-rise buildings within their 1-hour fire-rating?

Response

On behalf of the committee members and local residents, the vice-chairman paid tribute to the Spelthorne firefighters and the work they carry out.

The Divisional Member for Staines South and Ashford West who is also Cabinet Member for Community Safety, Fire & Resilience stated that the proposals were designed to help prevent incidents happening rather than concentrating on response times. There were no redundancies being considered as a result of the proposals. Changes to night-time cover had been proposed as a result of scientific examination of risk profile with the aim of releasing capacity and providing prevention and protection.

The vice-chairman asked the borough to draft a letter to the County outlining the committee's concerns about the potential implications of the proposed changes to levels of cover.

The Divisional Member for Sunbury Common & Ashford Common agreed to meet Mr Spencer to hear his concerns and would relay these to the Cabinet Member.

Question 3: Mr John Seaman

Where can information be found giving minimum sizes that potholes have to reach before they will be eligible for repair? Mr Seaman referred to a particular pothole in Sunbury Common.

Response

Information can be found on the County website under 'Highway Safety Inspection Standards and Procedures'. Potholes have to be at least 40mm deep and at least 150mm in diameter to be considered for repair; this meets the national code of practice.

The Divisional Member for Sunbury Common & Ashford Common stated that she had sent a report about the pothole in question to the Cabinet Member for Highways and would if necessary make a contribution from her highways allocation towards its repair.

Question 4: Mr Andrew McLuskey

Will the Joint Committee communicate with Heathrow Airport Ltd (HAL) to the effect that it must withdraw the harassing letters sent to local people demanding details of their property and effectively threatening further harassment in the event people do not comply?

Response:

A number of members confirmed that they too had received the same letter from HAL and described the language in it as bullying and threatening. The vice-chairman asked the borough to draft a response to HAL and agreed to keep Mr McLuskey updated.

Question 5: Mr Robert Clarke

The 'Making Surrey Safer' consultation currently taking place is poorly worded as it mentions neither of the borough's existing fire stations but does include Fordbridge, which has yet to be completed and is not widely known to the public. Can this be rectified?

Response:

The vice-chairman offered to look into this with the County. He thanked those members of the fire service who had attended the meeting.

Question 6: Divisional Member for Staines

A petition had been received asking for the County Council to repair a section of Leacroft, Staines that is currently unsurfaced. This section is not publically maintained and therefore the petition was rejected; the Divisional Member asked the borough if anything could be done to help sort out the situation for the residents.

Response

The borough agreed to carry out some searches to help the residents establish ownership of the land in question.

Question 7: Cllr Leighton

Councillor Leighton asked the committee to introduce new parking restrictions along Ferry Lane, Shepperton as quickly as possible so that they were in place in time for summer river events. A member of the local canoe club reiterated the view that parking was very difficult along the lane and presented problems for club members and competitors.

Response

The vice-chairman referred the councillor to Item 10 on the agenda (Parking review).

Comment from Vice-Chairman

At the end of the meeting the vice-chairman read out a letter from the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs concerning the continued closure of footpath 18 where it crosses the Staines to Windsor railway line. He asked the deputy chief-executive to write another letter to DEFRA to reiterate the committee's view that the footpath should be re-opened.