

## **Brooklands College**

**Dear Sirs,**

Spelthorne Council is very aware of the recent coverage on the proposed closure of the Ashford site of Brooklands College and the impact this will have on Church Road and perhaps, more importantly the learning opportunities for many of our local community. It is disappointing that the spotlight has been focussed on the Principal of the College. This was not of his doing. That spotlight must be directed at the government which withdrew the funding from the Learning Skills Council who backtracked on a proposed £96 million expansion of both the Ashford and Weybridge sites and left the college about £10m out of pocket. Responsibility for the 16-19 education programme will be taken over by Surrey County Council next April who are wanting to meet ministers over concerns about the effect of cuts in government funding for vocational education here in Spelthorne. The County Council is understandably alarmed that up to 1000 students in an area with the third highest number of people not in employment, education or training in Surrey are affected by Brooklands College's planned closure of the Ashford campus in July.

I wish to assure our residents that the Council has been working hard with the College itself and Surrey County Council over several months to resolve both issues. Urgent meetings have been held with the Principal and representatives from the College to find out the exact position regarding closure and possible plans for the future. Such meetings have looked at the development potential of the site and also how we can deal with the likely shortfall in learning opportunities especially vocational in Spelthorne.

As I have said, Spelthorne Borough Council is in close contact with Brooklands and the County Council, mindful of the impact this will have on the local community in many varying ways. This is a very sensitive situation for all of us and careful consideration must be given not only in regard to the site but also the education requirement, and it will be some time before we have a clear picture on the best way forward.

**Councillor John Packman**  
**Leader, Spelthorne Borough Council.**