

Core Strategy and Policies Development Plan Document

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**Planning and Housing Strategy
Spelthorne Borough Council
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Protecting and Improving the Landscape and Biodiversity

- 10.33 Protecting and improving the landscape and biodiversity are important aspects of Strategic Policy SP6. Spelthorne contains a number of areas of national and international importance which have statutory protection because of their nature conservation value. Spelthorne has sites which are part of a Special Protection Area and other sites designated as Sites of Special Scientific Interest:
- a) The South West London Waterbodies Special Protection Area (SPA). This covers King George VI, Staines, Wraysbury and Kempton Park reservoirs together with the Staines Moor Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and other areas in adjoining authorities. SPA is an international designation reflecting the special value of the area for waterbirds. SPAs are designated under European Union directives and any project or plan that may significantly affect their integrity requires special assessment, known as 'appropriate assessment'.
 - b) Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs). These cover the whole of the SPA and in addition Shortwood Common, Poyle Meadows (near M25 Junction 14) and Dumsey Meadow (near Chertsey Bridge). SSSIs are sites of national importance for nature conservation and there are strict policies governing their protection.
- 10.34 National policy in PPS9 'Biodiversity and Geological Conservation' sets out guidance on the protection of both national and international sites which will be followed by the Council in determining planning proposals and considering enhancement schemes. Relevant sites listed above are shown on the Proposals Map.
- 10.35 Spelthorne also has local designations identified as Sites of Nature Conservation Importance (SNCI). These are covered by 'saved' Local Plan policies.
- 10.36 In addition to protecting existing sites of nature conservation value, the Council will work with other bodies to promote and secure the implementation of improvement initiatives. Specifically it will support:

- a) The Colne Valley Park. The Colne Valley lies in the western part of the Borough and extends north from Staines into Hertfordshire. The park is a joint initiative of various local authorities along the Colne Valley aimed at providing informal recreation in a countryside setting. Environmental enhancement is an important part of the park strategy. Projects that contribute to achieving the objectives of the park will be supported and promoted.
- b) The Green Arc project. This is a joint initiative with other local authorities to improve the environment of the inner Green Belt including both Surrey districts and outer London Boroughs.
- c) Measures to improve poorly restored mineral workings and the timely restoration to a high standard of current and proposed workings. Mineral working has had a substantial impact on the landscape of the Borough and in some areas has resulted in a legacy of poorly restored land. While the County Council is the minerals planning authority Spelthorne Borough Council will support and encourage action to restore current and past workings to a high standard.
- d) Local community initiatives, through organisations such as Civic Pride. Voluntary action can bring about significant improvements and in addition enables communities to be actively involved in improving their own local environment.
- e) Initiatives to protect and where appropriate enhance common land. All commons are shown on the Proposals Map.

10.37 The Council will also look for opportunities to secure landscape enhancement and improvements to biodiversity in association with new development. It will oppose developments that would have a significant adverse impact on the landscape or features of nature conservation value.

10.38 There are extensive areas of common land in the Borough particularly to the north and east of Staines. Many are also of nature conservation importance. A management plan for Staines Moor was produced in 1990 and has recently been updated. The Council will continue to work with all bodies that have an interest in the commons, particularly the Moormasters and the Commoners, to ensure the effective management of the commons. It will oppose development that would result in the loss of Common Land or that would reduce its value.

Policy EN8: Protecting and Improving the Landscape and Biodiversity

The Council will seek to protect and improve the landscape and biodiversity of the Borough by:

- a) safeguarding sites of international and national importance,
- b) working with partners in the public, private and voluntary sectors to develop and secure the implementation of projects to enhance the landscape and create or improve habitats of nature conservation value, and to secure the more effective management of land in the Borough,
- c) ensuring that new development, wherever possible, contributes to an improvement in the landscape and biodiversity and also avoids harm to features of significance in the landscape or of nature conservation interest,
- d) refusing permission where development would have a significant harmful impact on the landscape or features of nature conservation value,
- e) safeguarding the Borough's Common Land and working with other interested parties to protect and where appropriate enhance its nature conservation and recreational value.