

Departure of 6 Councillors ends 45 years of Conservative Majority Rule in Spelthorne

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Six of Spelthorne Council's most senior Councillors have quit the Conservative Party today, following their AGM last night. This means that for the first time in Spelthorne's history, the Conservatives no longer have majority control of Spelthorne Council. The Conservative Group now have only 17 councillors and the other Groups collectively 22 councillors.

Council Leader Ian Harvey, Deputy Leader Olivia Rybinski, Cabinet members Jo Sexton, Amar Brar and Helen Harvey, along with long serving Cllr Richard Smith-Ainsley have been instrumental in delivering financial security for the borough.

"It is with regret that we had to leave the Conservative Group. Increasingly over the past 6 months we have witnessed and endured torrid levels of bullying, misogyny, hounding and intimidation which has escalated during the lockdown. This has made our continuing membership untenable. Efforts to seek assistance from the Party, at all levels, including CCHQ, to resolve this, have fallen on deaf ears" said Cllr Rybinski.

"This faction clearly believe that whilst the Council is still at Amber Standing; it is a good time to cause massive disruption and distraction within the Council Executive by seeking a change in the Leadership Team, furthermore what is most upsetting is that this divisive faction within the conservatives have put party politics and their own personal ambitions over and above the best interests of Spelthorne Residents" said Cllr Sexton.

Leader of the Council for the past 4 ½ years Cllr Ian Harvey said: "When I took over as Leader of the Council in 2016, the Borough was facing a severe financial crisis due to swingeing cuts to government and Surrey County Council grants, compounded by historic poor financial decisions. Our renowned investment strategies have re-invigorated Spelthorne finances to the extent that we have now embarked on our ambitious second stage of regeneration and have commenced a building program which will deliver over 1200 homes within 5 years. We have delivered a balanced budget with increases below inflation for the last 4 years; the lowest Council Tax increases in Surrey this year. I am proud of what has been achieved under my leadership."

Our new group, to be known as United Spelthorne Group, will continue to put the needs of Spelthorne residents first.

INFORMATION FOR EDITORS

to find out more about the new group visit www.unitedspelthorne.org

To find out more about our Borough's transformation over the past 4 ½ years visit <https://www.theparliamentaryreview.co.uk/organisations/spelthorne-borough-council>

NEW: *Spelthorne United Group Press contact Cllr Ian Harvey 07774255406 ian@ian4sunbury.org*

Newly appointed Conservative Group Leader Cllr John Boughtflower 07711661315

Newly appointed Conservative Deputy Leader Cllr Jim McIlroy 07794632750