

## **Chief Executive's Introduction and Welcome – 28 Jan 2025**

I am Daniel Charles Mouawad, Chief Executive of Spelthorne Borough Council. On behalf of the Council, I would like to offer a warm welcome the Inspector, Mr Jameson Bridgwater, and all those attending these hearing sessions. We are very pleased to be restarting the Hearing sessions and thank the Inspector for his patience and perseverance.

I will shortly hand over to Wayne Beglan, our barrister representing Spelthorne Borough, to provide the commencement opening statement on behalf of the Council but first I would like to take this opportunity to thank those who have participated in the examination by submitting their views on our Local Plan and those who have come along to watch the proceedings. I would also like to extend our gratitude to Charlotte Glancy, the Programme Officer from Banks Solutions, for managing the examination process so far in such a capable manner.

Mr Beglan will be leading for the Council for these hearing sessions, with Jane Robinson and Laura Richardson, Joint Interim Service Leads for Strategic Planning, as lead officers. Other members of the Strategic Planning team, Hannah Bridges, Martin Horn, Gillian Bernadt, Laura Waters and Blair Leung, will respond on aspects of the Plan they have led on.

We are also supported by our colleagues from Surrey County Council and our partners from the Environment Agency and thank them all for taking time to be with us today. In addition input will be provided from specialist consultants as and when you invite the Council to respond or to assist in your exploration of matters and issues through these sessions. The examination is being run in a hybrid format with most participants and officers here in person in the Council Chamber while some are joining us via Teams.

I am proud of the hard work our Strategic Planning team have put into this Plan over the many years it has taken to reach this crucial stage. Some of the officers here have been working on this Local Plan for over seven years... and here we are today. The Local Plan has full corporate support as a vital tool to deliver for our residents, businesses and visitors. Our five corporate priorities are echoed in the Local Plan objectives, which in turn also support policies and strategies across the Council, helping us to bring forth much needed affordable homes, stronger environmental protections and new facilities for our communities.

I am grateful for the time and effort everyone has taken to prepare for the examination and to attend the hearings. I trust that the proceedings will run smoothly and professionally in order to provide Mr Bridgwater with all the necessary information he requires.

Thank you once again and I will now hand over to Mr Beglan for the Council's opening statement.