Minutes of the Corporate Policy and Resources Committee
12 October 2026

Present:

Councillor G. Neall (Chair)
Councillor C. Bateson (Vice-Chair)

Councillors:

M.M. Attewell	D.C. Clarke	D. Saliagopoulos
J.R. Boughtflower	S.M. Doran	J.R. Sexton
M. Buck	R.V. Geach	J.A. Turner
J. Button	M.J. Lee	H.R.D. Williams

Substitutions: Councillors L. E. Nichols (In place of S. Gyawali)

In Attendance: Councillors K. Howkins

96/26 Apologies and Substitutes

Apologies were received from Councillor Gyawali. Councillor Nichols attended as his substitute.

97/26 Disclosures of Interest

Councillors Attewell, Bateson and Sexton declared that they were also West Surrey Shadow Authority Councillors.

Councillors Attewell and Sexton declared that they were also Surrey County Councillors.

98/26 Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 8 September 2026 were agreed as a correct record.

99/26 Questions from members of the Public

There were none.

100/26 Write Offs - Sundry Debts and Housing Benefits

Committee considered a report that sought approval for sundry debt and housing benefits write-offs in the sum of £52,026. The Group Head Commissioning and Transformation confirmed that all possible avenues for recovery had been undertaken.

The Committee acknowledged this was part of a series of reports requesting debt write-offs. This was due to the Council adopting changes to the Corporate Debt Policy to reduce aged debt and introducing processes to manage service debts. The number of cases requiring write-off were a small percentage compared to debts that had been recovered.

The Committee **resolved** to approve the write-offs set out in the appendices to the report for Sundry Debt and Housing Benefits which totalled £52,026 and which related to irrecoverable debt relating to Sundry Debts and Housing Benefits.

101/26 Proposed ICT Server Procurement

The Committee considered the commencement of a procurement process for the purchase of new ICT servers. The Council's existing servers were past end-of-life, and the new unitary authority had no plans to provide a centralised server infrastructure for the next 3-5 years which meant replacement servers needed to be purchased. Cloud options had been explored, but storage was not required and would not be economically viable.

Some members of the Committee felt the existing servers should continue to be used and replaced by the successor authority. Others acknowledged the servers would not continue to support the software required to continue to operate the Council, and agreed the servers should be replaced. Support and maintenance were included in the anticipated cost. The retired kit would be sold to recuperate costs.

The Committee **resolved** to:

1. Authorise the Council's ICT Manager to commence a procurement process for the purchase of new ICT servers for a maximum total contract value of £150,000;
2. Authorise the Group Head of Commissioning and Transformation to select the preferred supplier of new ICT servers and award a contract not exceeding the available budget; and
3. Authorise the Group Head of Corporate Governance to enter into the contract and necessary legal documentation to purchase the new servers.

102/26 Governance Assurance Update - EDI and Financial Management

The Committee considered a report that sought to inform and assure members on the “Ensuring we meet our EDI duties and responsibilities” and ”Ensuring the Council’s financial management and long-term planning arrangements are effective to secure financial sustainability” sections of the Council’s Governance Assurance Register.

The Committee **resolved** to:

1. Note the current overall assurance level for the Governance Assurance Areas under the remit of the Corporate Policy and Resource Committee which form part of the Council’s Governance Assurance Register; and
2. Acknowledge the key areas of focus concerning the Governance Assurance Areas relating to “Ensuring we meet our EDI duties and responsibilities” and “Ensuring the Council’s financial management and long-term planning arrangements are effective to secure financial sustainability.”

103/26 Annual Commercial Property Report for Financial Year 2025/26

The Committee received the Annual Commercial Property Report for Financial Year 2025/2026.

The Asset Manager summarised the performance of the portfolio for the last financial year and set out how this compared to the market. The report included 12 assets, as one was sold before year-end. The vacancy rate amongst the portfolio was below the industry norm, and the Elmsleigh Shopping Centre had 100% occupancy rate which was above average. Rent collection had improved since the Council had taken over rent collection. Overall, the property values had fallen due to shortening lease lengths, office vacancies, and the need for capital expenditure on aging buildings. During the financial year, as a result of Statutory Directions issued by the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, the property strategy shifted to focus on debt reduction and asset rationalisation. Focus on asset rationalisation would continue, as well as continuing to let space.

The Commercial Assets Sub-Committee had considered the report at their meeting on 5 October 2026 and had resolved to not recommend to the Committee to approve the report as they could not find consensus on how the report should represent the status of the property portfolio and the future of the assets.

The Committee noted the positive performance of the Elmsleigh Centre in comparison to other retail centres in the region.

The Committee **resolved** to:

1. Approve the Annual Commercial Property Report for the year ending 31 March 2026; and
2. To publish the Annual Commercial Property Report as attached at Appendix A on the Council’s website.

104/26 Procurement of resource to support the LGR transition and transformation process

The Committee considered the procurement of resource to support the Local Government Reorganisation transition and transformation process beyond November 2026. A number of West Surrey senior officers had been confirmed and preparation was underway for Vesting Day. Additional resource was required to relieve pressure on existing staff on strands of work on change and transformation plans for the new authority. The post would be funded within the current budget.

Members of the Committee felt the cost of the post did not represent best value and the work should be undertaken by existing officers. Some suggested central government should be asked to provide support.

A recorded vote was requested by Councillor Clarke.

For	Councillors Neall, Nichols, Turner – 3 votes
Against	Councillors Attewell, Boughtflower, Buck, Clarke, Lee, Saliagopoulos, Sexton, Williams – 8 votes
Abstain	Councillors Bateson, Button, S Doran, Geach – 4 votes

The Committee **resolved** to **not** approve the procurement to modify the contract of the Head of LGR and Special Projects to support Spelthorne's transition into West Surrey and contribute towards the required transformation process.

105/26 Procurement of resource to support the preparation of an evidence-based Housing Delivery Plan

The Committee considered the procurement of resource to support the preparation of an evidence-based Housing Delivery Plan. Following the adoption of the Local Plan with target delivery numbers and the issue of statutory Best Value directions, the Council was required to put in place a realistic plan to deliver housing numbers outlined in its Local Plan. The Council had limited resources to support this work due to competing pressures with the Staines Masterplan and the Local Plan Immediate Review. A short-term specialist commission would assist with this work, and the suggested firm had a proven track record of supporting Councils to progress Housing Delivery.

The Committee noted SMART objectives were set out to ensure effective evaluation of what would be delivered. Some members of the Committee expressed concern that report was being brought forward so close to Vesting Day, but acknowledged the pressures on staff across the delivery of the Improvement and Recovery Plan and progression towards Local Government Reorganisation. Other members of the Committee noted the lack of housing being built in the borough, and encouraged the progression of the work.

A recorded vote was requested by Councillor Clarke.

For	Councillors Bateson, Button, Geach, Neall, Turner, Nichols – **6 votes**
Against	Councillors Clarke, Williams – **2 votes**
Abstain	Councillors Attewell, Boughtflower, Buck, S Doran, Lee, Saliagopoulos, Sexton – **7 votes**

The Committee **resolved** to approve the procurement of Inner Circle Consulting to deliver an evidence-led Housing Delivery Plan which can be taken forward by the West Surrey Authority.

106/26 Procurement of Environmental Health Senior Management Support

The Committee considered the procurement of an extension of a contract for the Interim Head of Environmental Health. The Deputy Chief Executive set out the achievements of the individual since filling the role, and the continued risk to the service if the role was not filled.

The Committee acknowledged the positive work being undertaken by the Environmental Health team and were supportive of the recommendation.

The Committee **resolved** to approve to procure an extension to the contract for the Interim Head of Environmental Health to 31 March 2027 to provide continued management resilience, support the delivery of key service priorities and ensure operational stability during the transition to the new West Surrey Authority arrangements.

107/26 Disposal of Communications House, Staines

Meeting adjourned 21:15

Meeting reconvened 21:22

The Committee considered the proposed disposal terms for Communications House, Staines. A targeted marking approach was adopted with parties who did not partake in competitive tendering processes. The proposed purchaser was supported by a recommendation form Knight Frank and the Independent Red Book Valuation, and was expected to be the highest price the Council would receive for the asset.

Some members of the Committee expressed concern that the Staines Masterplan was not referenced and suggested the Masterplan should be adopted before disposal of the asset.

A motion was proposed by Councillor Boughtflower and seconded by Councillor Williams to defer any decision on the disposal of Communications House until the Staines Masterplan has been agreed.

The Committee **resolved** to make a recommendation to Council to:

Defer any decision on the disposal of Communications House until the Staines Masterplan has been agreed.

108/26 Disposal of 12 Hammersmith Grove, London W6

It was proposed by Councillor Bateson, and seconded by Councillor Turner to extend the meeting beyond 10pm. The motion fell.

The Committee considered the disposal of 12 Hammersmith Grove. The site had been fully marketed, with the suggested price in excess of the target price range.

It was proposed by Councillor Sexton, and seconded by Councillor Boughtflower to exclude the public and press for part of the consideration of this item in accordance with paragraph 3 of part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government 1972 (as amended) because it was likely to disclose information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information) and in all circumstances of the case, the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information because the disclosure to the public would prejudice the financial position of the authority in being able to undertake even handed negotiations and finalising acceptable contract terms.

A recorded vote was requested by Councillor Clarke.

For	Councillors Bateson, Button, S Doran, Geach, Neall, Nichols, Sexton, Turner, Williams – **9 votes**
Against	Councillors Boughtflower, Buck, Clarke, Lee, Saliagopoulos – **5 votes**
Abstain	Councillor Attewell – **1 vote**

Committee **resolved** to make a recommendation to Council to:

1. Approve the disposal terms set out in this report,

2. delegate authority to the Chief Finance Officer and Group Head of Assets, in consultation with the Chair and Vice Chair of Corporate Policy and Resources Committee to agree minor variations to the Heads of Terms and adjustments to the sale price; and

3. Delegate authority to the Group Head of Corporate Governance to enter into a transfer to complete the disposal and nay ancillary legal documentation required in relation to the proposed disposal.

109/26 Forward Plan

The Committee **resolved** to note the contents of the Forward Plan.

110/26 Urgent Actions

The Committee received the urgent action which had been taken since last meeting.

The Committee **resolved** to note the urgent action.