



**Spelthorne
Borough Council**

Council Meeting
Thursday, 30 April 2026



22 April 2026

Please reply to:

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To the Councillors of Spelthorne Borough Council

I hereby summon you to attend a meeting of the Council to be held at The Council's Offices, Knowle Green, Staines-upon-Thames on **Thursday, 30 April 2026** commencing at **7.00 pm** for the transaction of the following business.

Gordon Mitchell
Interim Chief Executive

Councillors are encouraged to wear their badge of past office at the Council meeting.

Councillors are reminded to notify Committee Services of any Gifts and Hospitality offered to you since the last Council meeting so that these may be entered in the Gifts and Hospitality Declaration book.

AGENDA

Description	Page nos.
1. Apologies for absence To receive any apologies for non-attendance.	
2. Minutes To confirm as a correct record the minutes of the extraordinary Council meetings held on 29 January 2026, 19 February 2026, 26 February 2026, 17 March 2026, and the Council meeting held on 26 February 2026.	7 - 30
3. Disclosures of Interest To receive any disclosures of interest from Councillors in accordance with the Council's Code of Conduct for Members.	
4. Announcements from the Mayor To receive any announcements from the Mayor.	
5. Announcements from the Leader To receive any announcements from the Leader.	
6. Announcements from the Chief Executive To receive any announcements from the Chief Executive.	
7. Questions from members of the public The Leader, or their nominee, to answer any questions raised by members of the public in accordance with Standing Order 13.	
8. Improvement and Recovery Plan Progress Update Council is asked to approve the Improvement and Recovery Plan Progress Report for onward submission to the Commissioners.	31 - 56
9. Amendments to the Financial Regulations Council is asked to: 1. Approve the proposed amendments to the Financial Regulations (Part 4d of the Constitution) as detailed in Appendix A; and 2. Adopt the revised Financial Regulations and for the Constitution to be amended accordingly.	57 - 108
10. Reports from the Committee Chairs To receive and agree the reports from the Committee Chairs.	109 - 140

11. Motions

To receive any motions from Councillors in accordance with Standing Order 16.

12. General questions

The Leader, or their nominee, to answer questions from Councillors on matters affecting the Borough, in accordance with Standing Order 14.

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**Minutes of the Council
29 January 2026**

Present:

Councillors:

S.A. Dunn	J.P. Caplin	M.J. Lee
M. Arnold	R. Chandler	S.C. Mooney
M.M. Attewell	D.C. Clarke	G. Neall
C. Bateson	S.M. Doran	L. E. Nichols
S.N. Beatty	R.V. Geach	K.E. Rutherford
S. Bhadye	D.L. Geraci	D. Saliagopoulos
M. Bing Dong	M. Gibson	J.R. Sexton
M. Buck	K.M. Grant	J.A. Turner
T. Burrell	S. Gyawali	H.R.D. Williams
J.R. Boughtflower	K. Howkins	P.N. Woodward
J. Button	N. Islam	

Apologies: Councillors J.T.F. Doran, L. Barker, M. Beecher, H.S. Boparai, L.H. Brennan, A. Mathur and B. Weerasinghe

141/25 Disclosures of Interest

Councillors Attewell, Mooney, Sexton and Weerasinghe advised they were also Surrey County Councillors.

142/25 Determination of Council Tax Base for Council Tax Setting

Council **resolved** to approve that:

1. The existing Council Tax Reduction Scheme is retained for 2026/27,

2. In accordance with the Local Authorities (Calculation of Tax Base)(England) Regulations 2012 the Council Tax Base for 2026/27 calculated as Band D equivalents, is determined at 41,278.13, an increase of 1.62%; and
3. The estimated Council Tax surplus for 2025/26 is £6.478m, of which £0.614m relates to Spelthorne Council (£5.515m of the surplus is a one-off and is due to an adjustment to the 2024/25 bad debt provision)

143/25 Social Value Strategy

Councillor Boughtflower requested a recorded vote.

For	Councillors Dunn, Arnold, Attewell, Bateson, Beatty, Bhadye, Bing Dong, Boughtflower, Buck, Burrell, Button, Caplin, Chandler, S Doran, Geach, Geraci, Gibson, Grant, Lee, Mooney, Neall, Nichols, Rutherford, Sexton, Turner, Williams – 26 votes
Against	Councillors Clarke, Saliagopoulos, Woodward – 3 votes
Abstain	Councillors Boughtflower, Howkins, Islam – 3 votes

Council **resolved** to:

1. Agree to adopt the Social Value Strategy for the regeneration site disposals following the recommendation by the Corporate Policy and Resources Committee on the 19 January 2026; and
1. Note that by adopting the Strategy the relevant housing and regeneration sites will be marketed to include a requirement for third parties to provide social value provision within their offers, which may reduce the highest financial value being achieved.

**Minutes of the Council
19 February 2026**

Present:

Councillors:

S.A. Dunn	J. Button	A. Mathur
M. Arnold	J.P. Caplin	S.C. Mooney
M.M. Attewell	R. Chandler	G. Neall
L. Barker	D.C. Clarke	L. E. Nichols
C. Bateson	S.M. Doran	K.E. Rutherford
S.N. Beatty	R.V. Geach	D. Saliagopoulos
M. Bing Dong	D.L. Geraci	J.R. Sexton
H.S. Boparai	M. Gibson	B. Weerasinghe
L.H. Brennan	K.M. Grant	H.R.D. Williams
M. Buck	S. Gyawali	P.N. Woodward
T. Burrell	K. Howkins	
J.R. Boughtflower	M.J. Lee	

Apologies: Councillors J.T.F. Doran, M. Beecher, S. Bhadye, N. Islam and J.A. Turner

144/26 Disclosures of Interest

Councillors Attewell, Boparai, Mooney, Sexton and Weerasinghe advised they were also Surrey County Councillors.

145/26 Exclusion of Public and Press

Council **resolved** to move the exclusion of the Press/Public for the following items, in view of the likely disclosure of exempt information within the meaning of Part 3 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972, as amended by the Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985 and by the Local Government (Access to information) (Variation) Order 2006.

146/26 Disposal of a Commercial Office Asset

Council was asked to:

1. Approve the proposed disposal on the terms set out in the report,
2. Delegate authority to the Chief Finance Office and Group Head of Assets, in consultation with the Chair and Vice Chair of the Corporate Policy and Resources Committee and the Chair and Vice Chair of the Commercial Assets Sub-Committee to agree minor variations to the Heads of Terms and the sale price within a tolerance of 10% of the agreed price; and
3. Delegate authority to the Group Head of Corporate Governance to enter into a transfer to complete the disposal and any ancillary legal documentation required in relation to the proposed disposal.

Councillor Saliagopoulos requested a recorded vote.

For	Councillors Dunn, Attewell, Barker, Bateson, Beatty, Boparai, Boughtflower, Burrell, Button, Caplin, S Doran, Geach, Geraci, Gibson, Grant, Gyawali, Lee, Mooney, Neall, Nicholas, Rutherford, Sexton, Weerasinghe, Williams – 24 Votes
Against	Councillors Buck, Clarke, Howkins, Saliagopoulos – 4 votes
Abstain	Councillors Bing Dong, Brennan, Chandler, Howkins, Saliagopoulos – 5 votes

Council **resolved** to:

1. Approve the proposed disposal on the 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 the Corporate Policy and Resources Committee and the Char and Vice-Chair of the Commercial Assets Sub-Committee, to agree minor variations to the Heads of Terms and the sale price within a tolerance of 10% of the agreed price; and
1. Delegate authority to the Group Head of Corporate Governance to enter into a transfer to complete the disposal and any ancillary legal documentation required in relation to the proposed disposal.

**Minutes of the Extraordinary Council Meeting
26 February 2026**

Present:

Councillors:

S.A. Dunn	J.R. Boughtflower	S.C. Mooney
M. Arnold	J. Button	G. Neall
M.M. Attewell	J.P. Caplin	L. E. Nichols
L. Barker	D.C. Clarke	K.E. Rutherford
C. Bateson	S.M. Doran	D. Saliagopoulos
S.N. Beatty	D.L. Geraci	J.R. Sexton
M. Beecher	M. Gibson	J.A. Turner
S. Bhadye	K.M. Grant	B. Weerasinghe
M. Bing Dong	S. Gyawali	H.R.D. Williams
H.S. Boparai	K. Howkins	P.N. Woodward
M. Buck	M.J. Lee	
T. Burrell	A. Mathur	

Apologies: Councillors J.T.F. Doran, L.H. Brennan, R. Chandler, R.V. Geach and N. Islam

147/25 Disclosures of Interest

Councillors Attewell, Boparai, Mooney, Sexton and Weerasinghe advised they were also Surrey County Councillors.

148/25 Exclusion of Press and Public (Exempt Items)

Council **resolved** to move the exclusion of the Press/Public for the following items, in view of the likely disclosure of exempt information within the meaning of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972, as amended by

the Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985 and by the Local Government (Access to information) (Variation) Order 2006.

149/25 Appointment of Interim Chief Executive

Council considered a report that sought approval of the recommendation of the Appointments and Appeals Committee to appoint the preferred candidate to the role of Interim Chief Executive and Head of Paid Service for the period from 02 March 2026 to 31 March 2027.

A recorded vote was requested.

For	Councillor Dunn, Arnold, Attewell, Barker, Bateson, Beatty, Beecher, Bhadye, Boparai, Boughtflower, Buck, Burrell, Button, Caplin, S Doran, Geraci, Gibson, Grant, Gyawali, Lee, Mooney, Neall, Nicholas, Rutherford, Sexton, Turner, Weerasinghe, Williams – 28 votes
Against	Councillors Clarke, Woodward – 2 votes
Abstain	Councillors Bhadye, Howkins, Lee, Saliagopoulos – 4 votes

Council **resolved** to approve the recommendation of the Appointments and Appeals Committee to appoint the preferred candidate to the role of Interim Chief Executive and Head of Paid Service for the period 02 March 2026 to 31 March 2027 on the terms set out in the report.

**Minutes of the Council
26 February 2026**

Present:

Councillors:

S.A. Dunn	J.R. Boughtflower	A. Mathur
M. Arnold	J. Button	S.C. Mooney
M.M. Attewell	J.P. Caplin	G. Neall
L. Barker	D.C. Clarke	L. E. Nichols
C. Bateson	S.M. Doran	K.E. Rutherford
S.N. Beatty	R.V. Geach	D. Saliagopoulos
M. Beecher	D.L. Geraci	J.R. Sexton
S. Bhadye	M. Gibson	J.A. Turner
M. Bing Dong	K.M. Grant	B. Weerasinghe
H.S. Boparai	S. Gyawali	H.R.D. Williams
M. Buck	K. Howkins	P.N. Woodward
T. Burrell	M.J. Lee	

Apologies: Councillors J.T.F. Doran, L.H. Brennan, R. Chandler and N. Islam

150/26 Minutes

The minutes of the Council meeting held on 11 December 2025 and the Extraordinary Council meeting held 11 December 2025 were agreed as a correct record.

151/26 Disclosures of Interest

Councillors Attewell, Boparai, Mooney, Sexton and Weerasinghe advised they were also Surrey County Councillors.

Councillor Nichols declared that he is on the Knowle Green Estates Board of Directors and Councillor Woodward is on the Spelthorne Direct Services Board.

152/26 Announcements from the Mayor

The Deputy Mayor made the following announcements on behalf of the Mayor:

“Since the Council meeting held in December 2025, I have visited the Queen Mary Sailing Club where I saw the great work that they do for the residents of Spelthorne and held a Bingo and Biryani Night at Stanwell Rose Community Centre that raised an amazing sum of £700 with the help of the Surrey Care Trust which is one of my charities.

I would like to remind members about three forthcoming events that are to be held to help raise money for his nominated charities.

The first event is a History Talk with Nick Pollard that is being held tomorrow at the Staines Methodist Church.

The second event is the Mayor’s Soiree that is to be held on 6 March at the beautiful Hazelwood Centre in Sunbury.

There are some tickets still available so if you are interested in a night of great company, entertainment and a delicious buffet please speak to the Mayor’s P.A, Maxine Cole.

My third event is an elegant afternoon tea on Friday 20 March that is to be held at Squire’s Garden Centre, Upper Halliford from 2.30-4.30pm.

All proceeds from both events will go directly to support the Mayor’s chosen charities, helping make a real difference in our local community”.

153/26 Announcements from the Leader

The Leader made the following announcements:

“Local government reorganisation is well underway, with West Surrey councillors holding their second Joint Committee meeting last week. We reaffirmed our commitment to creating a strong, modern council that delivers high-quality services whilst ensuring a smooth transition. During the meeting I also asked about renaming the council to West Surrey and South Middlesex; however, the Chair confirmed that “West Surrey” is set out in the Structural Change Order and any change would be for the newly elected shadow cabinet to consider.

The government is asking areas across the country that are changing how their local councils are organised to say whether they are interested in creating a new type of joint authority. The government sees this as a first step towards having a mayor in the future. Councils in Surrey will look at this idea before the government's deadline of 20 March.

On the 7 May, elections will be held for residents to elect councillors who will operate as a shadow authority and there will be 14 councillors in Spelthorne, across 7 *Spelthorne divisions*. More information about the elections will be available in the spring Bulletin magazine, which *will be* delivered at the end of March. This election is an important opportunity for residents to have their say so please make sure you are registered to vote no later *than* 20th of April.

While HMOs provide important housing options, an excessive concentration in one area or poorly designed properties can create issues. From 13 March, a borough wide Article 4 Direction will be in place, which means the automatic right to convert a normal house into a small HMO is removed and any conversion for 3 or more unrelated people must have planning permission.

This administration is dedicated to ensuring that HMOs do not negatively affect our borough and in addition to the above legislation, we also launched a public consultation on planning guidance for Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs) which closed yesterday. We will keep residents updated on the results of the consultation and any further actions that the Council will take.

The Public Spaces Protection Order introduced in May 2024 is making a real difference in Stanwell and Stanwell Moor. Over 2,000 warnings, 450 Fixed Penalty Notices, and five prosecutions have cut mini cab parking, noise, and anti-social behaviour. Thanks to our enforcement team!

Regarding the Stanwell Hotel, I continue to press the Home Office on residents' concerns. Yesterday I wrote to Alex Norris, the Minister of State for Border Security and Asylum asking for clarification on a number of points. Including, confirmation in writing, when the Home Office asylum accommodation contract with the owners of the hotel is due to expire. I am committed to keeping residents informed and ensuring their voices are heard. Updates will follow as progress is made.

Councillors have agreed to move the Ashford BID forward to the next stage. Consultants have been appointed and work on the project has now begun. Funding options are being developed to make sure the BID is affordable and delivers clear benefits for local businesses, alongside early discussions with key partners and businesses. Wider consultation will start at the end of March. A provisional ballot is planned for November to December 2026, with the BID expected to begin in April 2027".

The Interim Chief Executive made the following announcements:

“I would like on behalf of Management Team express my thanks to staff colleagues across the organisation who are stepping up to contribute towards the Council’s response and input to the Surrey Local Government Reorganisation transition across nearly 30 different workstreams. Ensuring a safe and legal transition to West Surrey is of key importance. The work activity is beginning to become significant. Equally I would like to thank those colleagues involved in helping to deliver the Improvement and Recovery Plan.

I would also like to highlight that on Monday we will be launching the annual Spelthorne Business Awards. This is particularly significant as probably our last one and will be the biggest event to celebrate Spelthorne’s thriving business sector”.

155/26 Questions from members of the public

The Mayor reported that, under Standing Order 14, one question had been received from a member of the public.

Preamble and Question from Mr R O’Brien:

Preamble

As a Lender of monies, it is Westminster’s responsibility to run due diligence and underwriting activities, of any loans made to Spelthorne Borough Council. With the anticipated use of these funds being well documented and publicly available, over the years.

Spelthorne Borough Council (up to now), have a sound credit relationship, meeting their annual debt repayment obligations, for the past 8 years.

A Lender holds the risk for default and manages this through interest fees on the principal loan amounts. If similar actions were taken by a Mortgage Lender or Bank seeking to change fixed and agreed loan interest rates, there would be FCA (Financial Conduct Authority) or other Watchdog authorities, protecting the rights of the borrower.

Local Government serves as a vital check and balance on overt Central Government control. With the Courts playing their role to inspect legislation and it’s legal interpretations.

Independent treasury advice was sought from Arlingclose to interpret the legislation and this has seemed fit for purpose these past 8 years. Under these circumstances it should be the Courts to decide grey areas of Government legislation. Not the Government marking their own homework, especially as the financial ramifications for Spelthorne Residents, are so great!!

The Risks to Reward ratio are asymmetrical, (costs of seeking legal counsel are miniscule when compared to the monies and impacts saved from changes to loan repayments).

Question:

Would the Leader of the Council please explain how they've decided to abandon all financial responsibility to their Residents, by not engaging with Legal advice or seeking a judicial review into mid-term loan changes from the PWLB funds?

We have seen the highly unusual approach of Westminster assigned Commissioners interpreting the legal framework of Loans and subsequently imposing an increase per year, of loan repayments, from £22.9million to £56.1million. A rise of 144% and exposing Spelthorne Residents to incredible debt risks.

Response from the Leader of the Council:

Thank you for your question. It relates to two main issues:

- How the Council sets money aside each year to pay off its debts (this is called Minimum Revenue Provision, or MRP), and
- A decision made in November 2025 to reorganise and reduce the Council's loans.

Spelthorne Council borrowed around £1.1 billion to buy investment properties. The plan was that rent and income from these properties to help pay for local services, especially services that the Council are not legally required.

This level of borrowing was extremely high. It works out at over £10,000 of debt per resident, compared with an England average of about £1,300 per person. To make this work, the investments needed to earn at least 8.5% every year just to cover the cost of the loans.

In reality, the property investments performed badly. From 2016/17 to March 2025, they made losses overall and fell in value by about 43%. Councils are legally required to protect public money, so losses of this scale meant the situation could not continue without action.

In February 2023, the previous government formally raised concerns about the Council's level of debt.

Then, in May 2025, the Secretary of State issued a legal instruction (called a *Statutory Direction*) requiring the Council to produce an Improvement and Recovery Plan. This required the Council to:

- set aside the correct and lawful amount of money each year to cover its debts (MRP),
- reduce borrowing as quickly as reasonably possible, and
- sell assets where appropriate.

MRP is not a loan repayment. Instead, it is money councils must legally set aside each year from their budget (funded by council tax and other income) to make sure borrowing is being properly dealt with over time. By law, it must be set at a prudent level and follow government guidance.

Independent reviews including those by CIPFA, government inspectors, and the Council's external auditors all reached the same conclusion:

- the debt was too high,
- the amount being set aside for MRP was too low, and
- the situation threatened the Council's long-term financial stability.

In November 2025, the Council restructured its loans, in line with established Public Works Loan Board rules. This reduced total debt by £342 million, nearly one-third of what was owed. Although the new loans have higher interest rates, this will fall accordingly as and when we dispose of the assets.

At the same time, the Council changed its MRP policy so that it now fully meets legal requirements and government guidance.

This approach was discussed with government officials, CIPFA, and the external auditor. The refinancing was carried out using normal processes through the Public Works Loan Board, which any council can use. This means the risk of legal challenge is very low.

Although the refinancing increases costs in the short term, much of this is offset by the £342 million debt reduction, which is spread over ten years (around £34 million a year credited to the budget). As more assets are sold, the financial position will continue to improve.

Overall, these actions do not increase risk for residents. They reduce debt, fix past problems, and put the Council on a more stable and sustainable financial footing for the future.

156/26 Pay Award 2026/27 and Pay Award 2025/26 (back dated award)

Council **resolved** to approve the Pay Award 2026/27 and the Pay Award 2025/26 (backdated award) as set out in the report.

157/26 Pay Policy 2026/27

Council **resolved** to approve the Pay Policy 2026/27.

158/26 Annual Grant Awards 2026/27

A recorded vote was requested on this item.

Councillors Bateson and Doran declared that they would both abstain from voting on this item as they had been members on the Annual Grants Panel.

For	Councillors Dunn, Arnold, Barker, Beecher, Boparai, Burrell, Button, Caplin, Geraci, Gibson, Grant, Gyawali, Neall, Nicholas, Rutherford, Sexton, Turner, Williams – 18 votes
Against	Councillors Attewell, Buck, Clarke, Howkins, Mathur, Mooney, Saliagopoulos, Weerasinghe, Woodward – 9 votes
Abstain	Councillors Bateson, Beatty, Bhadye, Bing Dong, Boughtflower, S Doran, Geach, Lee – 8 votes

Council **resolved** to:

1. Approve the recommendation of the Community Wellbeing and Housing Committee regarding the proposed recipients of the 2026/27 Community Grants,
2. Note the significant decrease in grant budget for 2026/27,
3. Note the other support that Spelthorne Borough Council provides to the voluntary/charity sector,
4. Note that any underspend from the Council Grants budget and Better Neighbourhood Grants will not be carried forward to the next financial year; and
5. Note that the Community Wellbeing and Housing Committee recommended that there will be no award to sport and arts agencies due to the budget cut.

159/26 Detailed Budget and Medium Term Financial Strategy

As required by the Local Authorities (Standing Orders)(England) Regulations 2001 (as amended), the Council was required to hold a recorded vote on the substantive Revenue Budget.

For	Councillors Dunn, Barker, Bateson, Beatty, Beecher, Boparai, Burrell, Button, Caplin, S Doran, Geach, Geraci, Gibson, Grant, Gyawali, Lee, Neall, Nichols, Sexton, Turner, Williams – 21 votes
Against	Councillors Clarke, Howkins, Saliagopoulos, Woodward – 4 votes
Abstain	Councillors Arnold, Attewell, Bhadye, Bing Dong, Boughtflower, Buck, Mathur, Mooney, Rutherford, Weerasinghe – 10 votes

Council **resolved** to:

1. Approve the General Fund Revenue Budget for 2026/27 including:

- a) The General Fund Budget Requirement of £19.318m for 2026/27
 - b) Growth and pressures of £1.252m for 2026/27 and
 - c) Proposed savings of £5.752m for 2026/27
2. Approve an increase in the Council's element of the Council Tax for a band D property by £6.64 per annum for 2026/27 (2.90%), giving a band D Council Tax of £235.50 per year, excluding the precepts from Surrey County Council and the Surrey Police and Crime Commissioner.
3. Notes the following Council Tax increases and precepts as detailed in Appendix I:
- a) Surrey County Council has increased Council Tax for a band D property to £1,938.42 per annum, a 4.99% increase on 2025/26, resulting in a precept of £80,014,295.
 - b) The Police and Crime Commissioner for Surrey has increased Council Tax for a band D property to £352.57 per annum, a £15 or 4.4% increase on 2025/26, resulting in a precept of £14,553.420.
 - c) This results in an overall band D Council Tax of £2,526.49 for Spelthorne residents, an increase of £113.71 (4.5%) per annum.
 - d) The Spelthorne Borough Council element of the Council Tax is 9.3% of the total bill for Spelthorne residents
4. Approve the calculations for determining the Council Tax requirement for the year 2026/27 in accordance with the Local Government Finance Act 1992 as set out in the Council Tax Resolution in Appendix I,
5. Approve the Fees and Charges for 2026/27 as set out in Appendix H. Please note that the 2026/27 Annual Charge for a 240ltr Green Waste Bin shown on Page 115 of the report should be £80.00 as was agreed at the E & S Committee.
6. Approve the continuation of the complete disregard of war pensions/armed forces pension income from benefit calculations as set out in paragraph 2.22 of the report

160/26 Capital Strategy and Capital Programme 2026-2027 to 2029-30

A recorded vote was requested on this item.

For	Councillors Dunn, Barker, Bateson, Beatty, Beecher, Boparai, Burrell, Button, Caplin, S Doran, Geach, Geraci, Grant, Gyawali, Neall, Nichols, Rutherford, Sexton, Turner, Williams – 20 votes
Against	Councillors Boughtflower, Clarke, Howkins, Mathur, Saliagopoulos, Woodward – 6 votes
Abstain	Councillors Arnold, Attewell, Bhadye, Bing Dong, Buck, Lee, Mathur, Weerasinghe – 8 votes

Council **resolved** to approve the proposed Capital Strategy and Capital Programme for 2026/27 to 2029/30 as set out in the report.

161/26 Treasury Management Strategy 2026/27

A recorded vote was requested on this item.

For	Councillors Dunn, Barker, Bateson, Beatty, Beecher, Boparai, Burrell, Button, Caplin, S Doran, Geraci, Grant, Gyawali, Neall, Nichols, Rutherford, Sexton, Turner, Williams – 19 votes
Against	Councillors Bing Dong, Boughtflower, Buck, Clarke, Howkins, Mathur, Saliagopoulos, Woodward-
Abstain	Councillors Arnold, Attewell, Bhadye Geach, Lee, Mooney, Turner – 7 votes

Council **resolved** to approve the proposed Treasury Management Strategy for 2026/27 including:

1. The Annual Investment Strategy for 2026/27,
2. The Minimum Revenue Provision Policy Statement for 2026/27; and
3. The Prudential Indicators for 2026/27.

162/26 Amendments to the Constitution

Councillors Arnold, Attewell, Beatty, Bhadye, Boughtflower, Geach, Gibson, Howkins, Mathur, Mooney, Saliagopoulos, Weerasinghe left the Council Chamber before the remaining items were considered.

Council **resolved** to:

agree the proposed changes to the Constitution as set out in Appendices 1 and 2 as follows:

1. Updated Contract Standing Orders (Part 4e),
Updated Terms of Reference for the Audit Committee (part 3b),

Amendment to the Terms of Reference for the Standards Committee (part 3b),

Amendment to Delegations to Officers (Part 3d); and

Amendment to Access to Information Rules (Part 4g) and

2. To authorise the Monitoring Office to update the Constitution as outlined in the report?

163/26 Counter Fraud, Bribery and Corruption Strategy

Council **resolved** to:

1. Agree the updated Counter Fraud, Bribery and Corruption Strategy (part 5f of the Constitution); and
2. Authorise the Monitoring Officer to update the Constitution.

164/26 Reports from the Committee Chairs

Council considered reports which outlined the matters the committees had considered since the last Council meeting.

Council **resolved** to note the Chair's reports.

165/26 Motions

There were none.

166/26 General questions

The Mayor reported that two general questions had been received, in accordance with Standing Order 15, from Councillor Buck.

Question 1:

Will the Leader of the Council set out what specific actions Spelthorne Borough Council has taken to alleviate the fear and anxiety felt by residents in Stanwell since Home Office announced plan to place about 100 undocumented young males at Stanwell Hotel, and what concrete steps have been taken to prevent Home Office from placing unchecked young males Stanwell Hotel?

Response from the Leader:

As Leader of the Council, I have repeatedly written to the relevant Ministers requesting that the decision be reconsidered, that the hotel revert primarily to

family use, and that a face-to-face meeting be arranged to discuss these matters in detail. To ensure transparency, the Council has openly published this correspondence on our website and shared updates via social media to keep residents fully informed.

Senior Council officers have met regularly with the Police at the highest level to review policing arrangements and to ensure that the local community is appropriately protected. Instances of criminal activity have involved individuals travelling into Stanwell from outside the area; and these matters have been addressed by the Police and the Courts.

The Government has stated its commitment to ending the use of hotels for asylum seekers. The Home Office is responsible for placing residents in the hotel, and the Council does not have legal authority over its use for this purpose. However, I can confirm that the number of residents currently accommodated at the hotel is at its lowest level and is nowhere near the figure of 100 that has been quoted.

Yesterday, I wrote to Alex Norris, Minister of State for Border Security and Asylum, seeking clarification on a number of important points, including written confirmation of when the Home Office asylum accommodation contract with the hotel's owners is due to expire.

I remain committed to keeping residents informed and ensuring their voices are heard and further updates will be provided as progress is made.

In accordance with Standing Order 14.2, Councillor Buck asked the following supplementary question:

"I sent a letter to the Minister and received a direct reply from the Home Office. Can the Leader tell us why my letter has been answered and hers has not?"

Response from the Leader:

Councillor Buck, this is very difficult to answer but at the time of you writing your letter you were a Labour Councillor so maybe this was the reason.

Question 2:

The Council contributes 14% of Council Tax Revenue contributed by hard working taxpayers of Spelthorne to Surrey Police. The latest crime statistics in Spelthorne are shocking:

Serious Sexual Offences – up 11%

Assaults on police officers – up 24%

Drug offences – up by 30%

Possession of knives and blades – up by an alarming rate of 79%

Does the Council have an up to date Community Safety Strategy to protect our residents and what concrete actions has the council actually taken to protect our residents and where is the evidence that any of it is working?

Response from the Leader:

Thank you for your question. While most of the crimes you mention are dealt with by the police, the Council also takes practical steps to help keep residents safe and reduce crime and anti-social behaviour.

We work closely with the police and other partners and have a clear Community Safety Partnership Plan that sets out our priorities. Each year, we also ask local residents for their views on crime and anti-social behaviour, and we use this feedback alongside crime data to decide what to focus on.

The Council coordinates local safety partnerships and holds regular meetings with the police and other services to identify problem areas and take action.

Some of the key things we do include:

- Enforcing rules in public spaces to tackle anti-social behaviour, which are already showing positive results.
- Running and monitoring CCTV cameras to support investigations, prosecutions, and public reassurance.
- Working with the police on targeted operations in areas with higher crime.
- Delivering education and awareness campaigns on issues like domestic abuse, scams, water safety, and youth safety.
- Supporting youth projects that steer young people away from anti-social behaviour, with plans to expand these further.

These are just some of the ways the Council helps prevent crime and keep our communities safe. More detail is available in our Community Safety Plan on the Council's website.

In accordance with Standing Order 14.2, Councillor Buck asked the following supplementary question:

“Staines is now declared the most dangerous place in Surrey. Since submitting my questions, there has been two instances of stabbings in Stanwell and given that the crime figures are rising at an alarming rate, when can residents expect an integrated plan that generally tackles crime in the Borough?”

Response from the Leader:

“This question does need to be submitted to the Borough Commander. I will forward your question onto him and advise you of his response.”

Meeting concluded 22.52

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**Minutes of the Council
17 March 2026**

Present:

Councillors:

S.A. Dunn	J.R. Boughtflower	S.C. Mooney
L. Barker	J.P. Caplin	G. Neall
C. Bateson	D.C. Clarke	L. E. Nichols
M. Beecher	S.M. Doran	K.E. Rutherford
S. Bhadye	R.V. Geach	D. Saliagopoulos
M. Bing Dong	M. Gibson	J.R. Sexton
H.S. Boparai	K.M. Grant	J.A. Turner
L.H. Brennan	S. Gyawali	H.R.D. Williams
M. Buck	K. Howkins	
T. Burrell	N. Islam	

Apologies: Councillors J.T.F. Doran, M. Arnold, M.M. Attewell, S.N. Beatty, J. Button, R. Chandler, D.L. Geraci, M.J. Lee, A. Mathur, B. Weerasinghe and P.N. Woodward

167/26 Disclosures of Interest

Councillors Boparai, Mooney, Sexton and Weerasinghe advised they were also Surrey County Councillors.

Councillor Nichols declared that he was a Director on the Knowle Green Estates Board.

Councillors Gibson and Saliagopoulos declared a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest under The Relevant Authorities (Disclosable Pecuniary Interests) Regulations 2012 in respect of Item 3, Adoption of the Spelthorne Local Plan, and both advised that they would remain in the Council Chamber whilst this was being discussed but would not take part in the debate nor vote on this item.

168/26 Adoption of the Spelthorne Local Plan

Council considered a report that sought the adoption of the Spelthorne Local Plan.

A recorded vote was requested.

For	Councillors Dunn, Barker, Bateson, Beecher, Bhadye, Bing Dong, Boparai, Boughtflower, Brennan, Buck, Burrell, Caplin, Clarke, S Doran, Geach, Grant, Gyawali, Howkins, Islam, Mooney, Neall, Nichols, Rutherford, Sexton, Turner, Williams – 26 votes
Against	0 votes
Abstain	0 votes

Council **resolved** to:

1. Note that the Council is still under Direction 3 as set out in the letter from the Minister of State for Housing and Planning dated 14 September 2003 (Appendix A) that requires on conclusion of the examination of the Plan that consideration is given to adopting the Plan, including any main modifications recommended by the Planning Inspector,
2. Note the contents of the Inspector’s Report on the Examination of the Spelthorne Local Plan (included as Appendix B1 and B2),
3. Adopt the Spelthorne Local Plan 2024-2039/40 (as set out in Appendix C), which incorporates the Main Modifications, as set out in the Inspector’s Report on the Examination of the Spelthorne Local Plan, and other Additional (minor) Modifications (as set out in Appendix D),
4. Subject to recommendation 3, adopt the Policies Map (included as Appendix E) and agree to publish it alongside the Spelthorne Local plan 2024-2039/40,
5. Subject to recommendation 3, note the Spelthorne Local Plan 2024-2039/40 replaces the following documents and by adopting the Spelthorne Local Plan 2024-2039/40 they no longer form part of the Council’s development plan:
 - a) Core Strategy and Policies Development Plan Document (adopted 26 February 2009),
 - b) Spelthorne Allocations Development Plan Document (adopted 17 December 2009); and
 - c) Spelthorne Borough Local Plan 2001 Saved Policies and Proposals as at 28 September 2007 (updated December 2009)

6. Subject to recommendation 3, give delegated authority to the Deputy Chief Executive, in agreement with the Chair of the Environment and Sustainability Committee, to agree any further (non-material) Additional Modifications to the Plan and its accompanying Policies Map before its publication,
7. Subject to recommendation 3, accept the content of the Sustainability Appraisal/Strategic Environmental Assessment (SA/SEA) Report (as set out in Appendix F) and Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA):Addendum of Proposed Modifications (as set out in Appendix G) and agree to publish them in accordance with Regulation 16 of the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004.

169/26 Adoption of the Spelthorne Design Code

Council **resolved** to:

1. Agree that the Spelthorne Design Code be adopted; and
2. Subject to Recommendation 1, give delegated authority to the Deputy Chief Executive, in agreement with the Chair of the Environment and Sustainability Committee, to agree any non-material amendments to the Design Code.

170/26 Managing the Development of Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMO) Supplementary Planning Document

Council **resolved** to:

1. Adopt the Houses in Multiple Occupation Supplementary Planning Document (HMO SPD) as set out at Appendix 1; and
2. To delegate authority to the Deputy Chief Executive in consultation with the Chair of the Environment and Sustainability Committee to make minor amendments prior to publication including a summary and glossary in the final version of the SPD.

171/26 Urgent Item - Foundation Strategic Authority (Expression of Interest)

Councillors Brennan and Saliagopoulos left the Chamber at 21.10

Council **resolved** to agree that the formal Expression of Interest letter be signed by the Leader of the Council and returned to the Parliamentary Under Secretary.

It was proposed and Council **resolved** to suspend Standing Order 5.2 to allow the meeting to continue beyond 3 hours until all items on the agenda had been discussed and resolutions made.

172/26 Exclusion of Press and Public (Exempt Item)

Councillor Geach left the Chamber

Council **resolved** to move the exclusion of the Press/Public for the following items, in view of the likely disclosure of exempt information within the meaning of Part 3 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972, as amended by the Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985 and by the Local Government (Access to information) (Variation) Order 2006

173/26 Urgent Item - Sunbury Site Sale, Sunbury on Thames

Council considered an urgent item report.

Council **resolved** to approve the amended terms for the sale of the Sunbury Site.



Committee Report Checklist

Please submit the completed checklists with your report. If final draft report does not include all the information/sign offs required, your item will be delayed until the next meeting cycle.

Stage 1

Report checklist – responsibility of report owner

ITEM	Yes / No	Date
Councillor engagement / input from Chair prior to briefing	Yes	07/04/2026
Relevant Group Head review	N/A	
MAT+ review (to have been circulated at least 5 working days before Stage 2)		
This item is on the Forward Plan for the relevant committee	Yes	
	Reviewed by	
Finance comments (circulate to Finance)	A.Bozhani	07/04/2026
Risk comments (circulate to Lee O’Neil)	L.O’Neil	15/04/2026
Legal comments (circulate to Legal team)	LH	15/04/26
HR comments (if applicable)		

For reports with material financial or legal implications the author should engage with the respective teams at the outset and receive input to their reports prior to asking for MO or s151 comments.

Do not forward to stage 2 unless all the above have been completed.

Stage 2

Report checklist – responsibility of report owner

ITEM	Completed by	Date
Monitoring Officer commentary – at least 5 working days before MAT	L Heron	03/04/3036
S151 Officer commentary – at least 5 working days before MAT	T.Collier	16/04/2026
Commissioner Engagement	Yes	14/04/2026
Confirm final report cleared by MAT		

Council

30 April 2026

Title	Improvement and Recovery Plan Progress Report
Purpose of the report	To make a decision
Report Author	Gordon Mitchell, Interim Chief Executive
Ward(s) Affected	All Wards
Exempt	No
Exemption Reason	NA
Corporate Priority	Community Addressing Housing Need Resilience Environment Services
Recommendations	Council is asked to: (i) Approve the Improvement and Recovery Plan Progress Report for onward submission to the Commissioners.
Reason for Recommendation	As part of the response to the statutory Directions of the Secretary of State the Council is required to provide a progress report every six months to the Commissioners. Consideration of the report supporting the original Improvement and Recovery Plan, approved by Council in October 2025, formed the initial progress report. This progress report is presented to Council for submission to Commissioners in order to formally track the Council's progress from recovery towards sustained improvement.

1. **Executive summary of the report** (*expand detail in Key Issues section below*)

What is the situation	Why we want to do something
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This report sets out the progress made against the Improvement and 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> It is a requirement for the Council to submit a progress report every six months.

Recovery Plan to address the Directions of the Secretary of State.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The report provides assurance to Commissioners, Government, the new West Surrey Shadow Council and our Councillors and employees of the progress the Council has made and its continuing improvement towards being self-governing, fulfilling its best value duty in the shortest time possible.
This is what we want to do about it	These are the next steps
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Seek agreement that Council submits the progress report to Commissioners to record improvement progress made to date on leadership, culture, service delivery and the governance and financial management environment. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Once approved this will be formally submitted to the Commissioners.

2. Key issues

- 2.1 The Council's response to the Secretary of State's Best Value Directions, issued in May 2025, was the creation of a single Improvement and Recovery Plan (IRP). This plan was intended to provide the organisation with a clear direction for its improvement journey and a single framework for ensuring that all the Directives were addressed.
- 2.2 The original plan was approved by Council on 23 October 2025 and the supporting report formed the initial progress report to Commissioners with a commitment to provide a further update six months later.
- 2.3 Authority was delegated to the Corporate Policy and Resources Committee (CPRC) to approve any changes to the IRP as part of regular reporting arrangements. A revised version of the Improvement and Recovery Plan (IRP) was agreed by CPRC on 17 February 2026 to reflect the transition from recovery into sustained improvement and the focus on ensuring a successful transition to the new West Surrey Council.
- 2.4 The Progress Report attached at Appendix A sets out the progress made against the Improvement and Recovery Plan since its approval in October 2025 to address the Directions of the Secretary of State.
- 2.5 The Improvement and Recovery Plan Progress Report was considered by the Corporate Policy and Resources Committee at their meeting on 20 April 2026.
- 2.6 The Corporate Policy and Resources Committee resolved to recommend to Council approval of the Improvement and Recovery Plan Progress Report for onward submission to the Commissioners.

3. Options appraisal and proposal

- 3.1 Option 1:** The preferred option is for the Progress Report at Appendix A to be approved by Council enabling it to be submitted to Commissioners within the agreed timescales. This will provide assurance to Commissioners, Government, the new West Surrey Shadow Council and our Councillors and employees that the Council has made progress against its Improvement and Recovery Plan.
- 3.2 Option 2:** An alternative option is to not approve the Progress Report for submission at this stage if the Council consider that further revisions or additional work are required. This would, however, risk delaying submission to Commissioners against the agreed timescales and may reduce assurance levels regarding progress against the Plan.
- 3.3 Option 3:** Doing nothing is not an option if the Council is to fulfil its best value duty in the shortest time possible, as it has committed to providing an update to Commissioners.

4. Risk implications

- 4.1** Risks relating to the IRP are managed through the Council's new governance assurance arrangements with *'Ensuring there are effective governance arrangements in place to deliver the IRP'* and *'Ensuring and maintaining organisational resilience'* forming two of the Governance Assurance areas which will be monitored and reported on through the Council's new Governance Assurance Register.
- 4.2** Risk 1: Failure to submit the required progress report within agreed timescales may constitute non-compliance with the terms of the intervention which could lead to further escalation of intervention measures.

Mitigation: As part of the governance process an Improvement and Recovery Board has been set up to monitor progress monthly and therefore Commissioners are being kept updated on activity.
- 4.3** Risk 2: If the progress report submitted to Commissioners does not provide sufficient evidence of improvement, realism about challenges or clear direction of travel there is a risk of erosion of stakeholder confidence and damage to future relationships and partnerships

Mitigation: In parallel to this report, progress made has been subject to an internal audit review and a deep dive review by an independent organisation. This has led to early engagement with Commissioners on fundamental priorities for 2026/2027.

5. Financial implications

- 5.1** The current yearly Budget forecast for financial implications of the IRP with respect to the direct improvement activities under the remit of the Improvement and Recovery Board (there is other business as usual activity, such as works on the accounts which also contribute to IRP outcomes which

are within operational budgets) are shown in Table 1 below, including the funding split between priorities. There will be no intervention beyond the end of the end of 2026/2027 as West Surrey Council will have responsibility.

Table 1 : IRP Spend per year

Priorities	25/26 £'000	26/27 £'000
Governance	8	0
Programme	82	114
Grand Total	90	114

5.2 In 2026-27 there will be in place monthly monitoring and reporting of IRP budget.

6. Legal comments

6.1 The Council has a statutory Best Value Duty, and more particularly a duty to secure continuous improvement under the Local Government Act 1999. Submission of the progress report demonstrates that the Council is taking steps to address areas of concern identified in the Secretary of State’s Best Value Directions.

Corporate implications

7. Commissioners’ comments

7.1 No issues

8. S151 Officer comments

8.1 The need to incur additional expenditure across the IRP Priorities to bring in additional resource and expertise to ensure that the IRP outcomes are delivered remains unchanged from the original Plan. Each theme has a supporting resource budget worked up which has fed into the 2026-27 Budget, with £566k of this expenditure capitalised and funded through the application of the Flexible use of capital receipts strategy. The Budget for direct improvement activities being monitored by the Improvement and Recovery Board totals £114,000 for 2026-27. Continuing to make progress against the IRP is fundamental to passing across a sustainable medium term financial position to West Surrey Council.

9. Monitoring Officer comments

9.1 The Monitoring Officer confirms that all relevant legal implications have been taken into account.

10. Procurement comments

10.1 All contracts associated with and ancillary to the workstreams under the Improvement and Recovery Plan must be procured in accordance with the Council’s Contract Standing Orders and the applicable legislation.

11. Equality and Diversity

11.1 The successful delivery of the Improvement and Recovery Plan will require the continued development and review of many of the Council’s services. These will include an Equality Impact Assessment where appropriate prior to decisions being made.

12. Sustainability/Climate Change Implications

12.1 As highlighted when the original Plan was considered maximising the use of our assets provides opportunities for financial, social and environmental considerations in our actions especially with increasing risks of climate change and the need to adapt. Evaluating and improving our actions and gaining efficiencies in terms of operations can result in carbon savings. Therefore, actions within the IRP should take account of the future impacts of climate change as well as taking mitigating actions.

13. Other considerations

None.

14. Timetable for implementation

30 April 2026	Consideration at Council
1 May 2026	Submission to Commissioners

15. Contact

Gordon Mitchell, Interim Chief Executive
g.mitchell@spelthorne.gov.uk

Please submit any material questions to the Committee Chair and Officer Contact by two days in advance of the meeting.

Background papers:

- Secretary of State for Housing, Local Government and Communities Best Value Directions dated 8 May 2025

- Council report dated 25 October 2025 seeking approval of Improvement and Recovery Plan including IRP Board Terms of Reference
- [Decision - Improvement and Recovery Plan Progress Update - Spelthorne Borough Council](#)

Appendices:

A: Improvement and Recovery Plan Progress report

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Improvement and Recovery Plan Progress – October 2025-April 2026

Chief Executive Position Statement

Introduction

I am pleased to present the second of Spelthorne Borough Council's (SBC) Improvement and Recovery Plan (IRP) progress reports, providing an update on how the Council has responded to the Government Best Value Directions. The first report was presented 23rd October 2025, being the formal response to the Directions through the adoption of our first IRP. This report sets out progress since October 2025 to April 2026. This position statement recognises the continued progress of the Council, whilst also highlighting the continuing key challenges and risks our Council faces.

Our situation is quite unique in that the Council is in the early stages of delivery of the Improvement Plan, whilst simultaneously seeking to play a full and active part in the reorganisation of local government in Surrey (LGR) and ultimately in the closure of SBC. The requirement to change the culture of a Council, improve governance, improve our commercial and financial acumen and find budget savings has the added challenge of this backdrop of accelerated sectoral change.

We acknowledge that we are positively supported in this by the Commissioners, who are advising and being pragmatic in their approach to what can be achieved whilst being demanding of the progress we need to actively and consistently demonstrate.

I accepted the position of Chief Executive in March 2026 and will continue to lead our improvement as an authority until we pass responsibilities to West Surrey Council in April 2027.

Background

On receiving the Directions, the priority was to focus on addressing our debt position. We have restructured our debt (in November 2025) reducing outstanding debt by 32%, corrected the disparity in our MRP, and repurposed our reserves to support the medium-term financial strategy transitional process of putting the Council on a more financially stable basis. We have commenced the process of rationalisation of our commercial properties and regeneration assets to implement a programme that generates capital receipts from disposals whilst simultaneously leveraging other assets to achieve desired outcomes and social value for residents.

The initial phase was to diagnose what we needed to do, understanding the options open to us to make immediate progress and implement the urgent recovery actions. This report highlights the achievements in this recovery phase.

The medium- and longer-term phases of evidencing sustained improvement will form subsequent progress reports.

The initial IRP plan was divided into five themes; we have recently consolidated this into four themes. Our six-monthly report sets out in detail the achievements and plans for the next phase. I shall report on each of these briefly.

Previous IRP Themes	Revised IRP Priorities
Local Government Reorganisation	Strengthening and Improving Leadership
Financial Recovery	Improving Financial Sustainability
Governance	Improving Governance and Assurance
Commercial	Improving Commercial, Regeneration and Housing
Regeneration and Housing	

Theme 1: Strengthening and Improving Leadership

This theme originally was solely focused on Local Government Reorganisation. In the amendment to our plan, we have broadened the scope of the theme to better reflect the cultural and leadership improvement we collectively need to demonstrate in addition to ensuring we transition well to West Surrey Council. Our LGR work commenced in earnest following confirmation on 28th October 2025, of the preferred option for Surrey reorganisation. Since this point we have played an active role in the Future Surrey partnership in the preliminary work to scope the programme of work, provide dedicated resource and assume strategic leadership of one of the theme areas (Procurement and Contracts). We have subsequently set up our response to LGR as a separate strand to reflect this evolving work, and to regulate the competing demands for scarce resources.

Theme 2: Improving Financial Sustainability

The initial priority was to stabilise our financial base by refinancing our debt and making prudent and compliant Minimum Revenue Provision for debt. This we achieved in November 2025. Our position now requires us to realise significant additional capital receipts from asset rationalisation and to make budgetary part year savings of £1m in 2026/27. Alongside continuing our work to restructure and to strengthen our financial service and continuing on the journey towards obtaining a clean audit opinion on our statement of accounts.

There remains work to do to improve the internal culture of budgetary management, ownership and accountability. This is a priority as we move from the *diagnose and recover phase* of our improvement planning and into the *improve and embed phase* of the IRP and seek to ensure the savings.

Theme 3: Improving Governance and Assurance

The governance theme is one where change will take time before we experience and observe the tangible evidence of improvement. This said, in the period since

adoption of the IRP we have put in place foundational governance improvement work.

In quarters 3 and 4 of 2025/ 2026, we commenced work to improve our approach to risk management. This work, being led by a sector expert, has led to a fundamental overhaul in our approach. We are focused more broadly on improving confidence in our governance assurance processes. We have trained Group Heads, team members and Councillors, and work to embed this approach is continuing.

We reviewed, and the Audit Committee agreed, a new framework of assurance governance and how it interacts with other committees and the Council.

In July 2025, we commissioned training to improve our committee papers and processes. The training on its own has proved insufficient to realise the improvements required and we continue with actions to build internal accountability for developing high-quality committee papers, particularly prioritising the focus on the Forward Plan and Committee Paper processes at Management Team meeting (MAT).

MAT has restructured its meeting agenda, to include a monthly assurance focus, to cover budget monitoring, performance management, audit recommendations and completion and complaints. We have also stood up a Staffing (vacancy control) Panel and strengthened oversight of procurement with a refreshed Procurement Board

We have learned from other councils in intervention, where Councillors expressed the need to receive targeted training and support. In response in January 2026, we shared an outline development programme, for Councillor consideration, to ensure we are supporting any needs and requirements. Realising engagement in the programme is proving challenging in the context of Future Surrey and the closure of the council.

Theme 4: Commercial, Housing and Regeneration

Good progress is being made within the Commercial Theme of the IRP. In the six months since adoption of the IRP, we have reviewed our asset base, updated valuations and are close to implementing an overarching Commercial Strategy (which is subject to Committee and Council approval in late April 2026). This is in parallel to work to implement an asset rationalisation plan to further assist the reduction of debt during 2026/27.

We are mindful of the importance of this work and of the need to rationalise our assets to generate capital receipts. We have appointed a disposal advisor to advise on a phased strategy and to market our investment assets approved for disposal. Asset rationalisation is critical to our financial plan for 2026/2027 and to West Surrey for 2027/28 and beyond; we will maintain a strong focus on reducing our commercial and debt exposure in our next phase.

In contrast to the commercial asset rationalisation programme our regeneration approach is to maximise social value and to deliver affordable housing across the

Borough. We have introduced a Social Value strategy, which sets out an assessment framework to support our decision making on the Council's regeneration assets.

We have strengthened our internal capacity, commissioning external expertise to support our regeneration and housing programmes. We have after eight and half year's work achieved in March 2026 an approved a Local Plan, and are developing a Staines Masterplan, considering options for Knowle Green Estates housing assets and for future housing planning.

A major risk identified by Commissioners was in the cost of and our strategy for temporary accommodation. We received a positive deep dive from MHCLG on the manifestation of how we work with families but fundamentally there is more to do in our next phase to reduce the cost and time spent in all temporary accommodation, particularly nightly paid accommodation (B&Bs).

Final reflections

The work required to be active in LGR alongside developing and embedding the cultural change and operational practices and protocols, required to improve is challenging. We are very much alive to the fact that our resources will be stretched, and we are building our case to secure additional resource from the shared Future Surrey pot to enable us to meet these demands.

We must navigate a challenging and competing set of priorities and are prioritising our focus for the remaining 12 months of the Councils sovereignty. As a team of Officers and Councillors our focus must be to deliver the improvements we need to make to ensure we close our Council in a way that we, collectively as Councillors and Officers, can be proud of and transition in the strongest possible position to West Surrey.

Improvement and Recovery Plan Six Month Progress Report

October 2025 – April 2026

1. Government Intervention

Concerns regarding the financial, commercial and governance of Spelthorne Council led the Secretary of State, to commission a Best Value Inspection. The Best Value Inspection Report published in March 2025 highlighted significant deficits across a breadth of responsibilities, underpinned by poor member officer relationships, and a perception of a lack of openness to scrutiny, challenge and learning. The Report described *a culture of mistrust and broken relationships and a hostile environment*.

The Council was required to prepare and agree its Improvement and Recovery Plan (IRP) to the satisfaction of the Commissioners, within 6 months of receipt of Directions. The initial IRP was adopted in October 2025 and focused principally on diagnosis and recovery actions.

2. Improvement and Recovery Plan

The first iteration of the IRP (October 2025) was structured around five workstreams:

- Financial Recovery,
- Commercial,
- Housing and Regeneration,
- Governance, and
- Local Government Reorganisation.

Following a review of the IRP, the decision was made by CPRC in February 2026 to reframe the plan around four themes. A new theme of Strengthening Leadership and Culture includes the LGR strand and Commercial and Housing and Regeneration have been brigaded under a single area, whilst retaining their distinct emphasis.

Previous IRP Themes	Revised IRP Priorities
Local Government Reorganisation	Strengthening and Improving Leadership
Financial Recovery	Improving Financial Sustainability
Governance	Improving Governance and Assurance
Commercial	Improving Commercial, Regeneration and Housing
Regeneration and Housing	

Table 1: Aligning previous plan, revised plan and the Corporate Plan

3. Progress since October 2025

This section describes the progress that the Council has made since the adoption of the IRP in October 2025, reporting our progress against the relevant Secretary of State Direction.

Direction 1a: A plan to achieve financial sustainability and to identify and close any short and long-term budget gaps across the period of its medium-term financial strategy (MTFS), including a robust multi-year savings plan that reflects the costs and risks identified in the BVI report and by external auditors.

Our success measure is to instigate a savings programme of £1m (full year value approx £2m) to be delivered in 2026/2027.

Within the period October 2025 to April 2026 the following has been achieved:

- 26.02.2026: Following the recommendations of CPRC, Council approved a balanced budget (without reliance on any Exceptional Financial Support), approved the Capital Strategy and Capital Programme and approved a Treasury Management Strategy for 2026-27. The 2026/27 Budget includes a £1m savings target.
- We have also continued to change and strengthen our finance function, bringing in improved expertise to manage specific issues including treasury management and the final accounts.
- We have undertaken a skills audit and a team restructure to strengthen business partnering and internal accountability.
- We have worked closely with our External Auditor, and our last external audit had significant reduction in audit recommendations.

Direction 1b: A plan to ensure the Authority's capital, investment and treasury management strategies are sustainable and affordable, including an asset rationalisation programme for assets and commercial investments.

Our success measures to receive confirmation by External Audit of their assurance of our strategies and ensure capital programme financing does not require any additional borrowing.

Within the period October 2025 to April 2026 the following has been achieved:

- Completed an independent review of the single entity and group accounts in June 2025.
- November 2025 Council approved a revised Treasury Management Strategy for 2025/26 and a new Minimum Revenue Provision Policy for 2025/26.
- December 2025 Council approved a revised Reserves Strategy.
- The External Audit Report of Audit Findings report for 2024/25 presented to Audit Committee in January 2026 included significantly fewer audit recommendations than the previous 2023/24 report and the External Auditor provided the Audit Committee in February 2026 with confirmation of their assurance of the 24/25 accounts.

Direction 1c: A comprehensive and strict debt reduction plan, demonstrating how overall capital financing requirement and external borrowing will be reduced over a realistic but expedient timescale, reducing debt servicing costs.

Our success measures to reduce outstanding debt by £342m in November 2025 and to realise c£175M in 2025/26 2026/27 from the sale of commercial assets.

Within the period October 2025 to April 2026 the following has been achieved:

- November 2025: CPRC and Council agreed debt restructure.
- November 2025: CPRC approved the procurement of asset rationalisation advisors.
- February / March: CPRC and Council agree to progress the disposal of two commercial property assets (estimated receipt value approx. £20m)- the sale of one of these was completed on 30th March 2026.
- Comprehensive analysis including valuations of commercial assets, and marketing to seek to realise the value. We have trained the finance team in the use of the Argus property system to ensure accuracy in recording and reporting information and more joined up use of data between Assets and Finance.
- February 2026: Appointed Agent to market investment properties.
- February/March 2026: Approval received to progress the sale of two commercial properties.
- March 2026: Engaged disposal Agents to oversee and manage the disposal process.

Direction 1d: A plan to overhaul the governance arrangements within the authority with regards to decision-making, capacity and skills, aiming to increase transparency, scrutiny and effectiveness of the committee system to ensure that collective responsibility is taken for the Authority's decision-making.

Our success measure is to experience demonstrable improvement in governance practices leading to improved assurance and confidence of Leaders, Commissioners and Councillors.

Within the period October 2025 to April 2026 the following has been achieved:

- November 2025: the Council's internal auditor undertook an audit of the Council's Decision Making and Accountability and returned overall Reasonable Assurance.
- November 2025: Feedback on reports from Councillors and Commissioners incorporated into revised Report templates.
- Council on 17 July 2025: A new protocol on relations between members was agreed.

- July 2025: Report writing training provided with twenty officers attending and video accessible.
- December 2025: Commenced revision to the internal decision-making process through MAT and MAT+ to focus on strategic issues.
- February 2026: Updates to the Constitution include:
 - Climate Change Working Group Terms of Reference
 - Review of the Members Code of Conduct
 - Changes to Contract Standing Orders
 - Audit Committee Terms of Reference
 - Standards Committee Terms of Reference
 - Delegations to Officers
 - Access to Information Rules
- A Vacancy Control Panel has been established to process decisions relating to staffing issues including recruitment, honorarium and market supplements.

Direction 1e: A plan to review and update the sinking fund, taking a long-term view of potential risks and financial consequences with accurate income and expenditure forecasts, and with adequate provisions made for future costs.

Our success measure was to review and repurpose our reserves, following a robust forecast of requirements for assets.

Within the period October 2025 to April 2026 the following has been achieved:

- December 2025: Council agreed removal of the sinking fund provision as part of the approval for a revised Reserves Strategy.

Direction 1f: A plan to ensure the Authority is complying with all relevant rules and guidelines relating to the financial management of the Authority, including updating the minimum revenue provision (MRP) policy.

Our success measure was to reset the MRP Policy to ensure the Council is fully compliant with regulations.

Within the period October 2025 to April 2026 the following has been achieved:

- November 2025: Following the independent assessment of our investment properties, alongside advice from our External Auditors and utilising CIPFA guidance, Council approve revised MRP policy.
- December 2025: Council approve revised MTFS.
- February 2026 Council approved balanced Budget and Treasury Management Strategy for 2026/27.

Direction 1g: A plan to reconfigure the Authority's services commensurate with the Authority's available financial resources.

Our success measure was to set a balanced budget for 2026/27 with supportive plans to achieve savings.

Within the period October 2025 to April 2026 the following has been achieved:

- February 2026: Council approved a balanced budget without reliance on Exceptional Financial Support. The 2026/27 Budget, includes £1m of savings to be delivered in year.
- February 2026 Council approved a significantly reduced Capital Programme which does not require any additional borrowing.
- The Revenue Budget incorporated £5.7m of savings and reflected budget prioritisation including additional resourcing for tackling Houses in Multiple Occupation, continuing the Jobs and Skills Hub.
- Skills development programme undertaken that covers training of the finance team, budget holders, Councillors.

Direction 1h: A plan to strengthen the Authority's financial and commercial functions, and to secure improvements in risk management, governance and the internal audit function, with the guidance and to the satisfaction of the Commissioners.

Our success measure is to implement a revised Governance Assurance Framework supported by a comprehensive internal audit programme to test improvement.

Within the period October 2025 to April 2026 the following has been achieved:

- October 2025: Expertise commissioned to design and support the implementation of the new Governance Assurance Framework. The Governance Assurance Framework agreed by CPRC.
- October 2025: The s151 and MO meet quarterly with Internal Audit, and the Audit partner attend quarterly MAT meeting to focus on improvement as a response to Internal Audit recommendations.
- March 2026 Officers and Councillors trained in the new approach to governance assurance.
- 27th November 2025: New framework for Audit Committee governance agreed by the Committee.

Direction 1i: A plan to develop a comprehensive commercial strategy, with clear approaches to its investment and regeneration portfolios, including exit strategies for the commercial investments and realistic and deliverable strategies for regeneration sites.

Our success measure for our investment sites is to prepare and seek approval for a comprehensive strategy supported by an individual plan for each commercial asset, leading to the realisation of capital receipts following divestments. For our regeneration sites we are seeking to maximise social value outcomes and develop

plans for each site that maximise outputs and puts in place actions to commence mobilisation.

Within the period October 2025 to April 2026 the following has been achieved:

- Updated the data bluebox for all assets, including for energy performance (EPC) (October 2025).
- November 2025: CPRC approved appointment of advisers for assets rationalisation.
- November 2025: Agreed a Social Value Framework / Criteria.
- November 2025: Appointed experts to develop the Staines Masterplan.
- December 2025: Conducted portfolio analysis and obtained updated valuations.
- January 2026: Adopted a Social Value Strategy.
- February 2026: Appointed Agent to prepare Commercial Strategy

Direction 1j: A realistic plan to deliver housing numbers outlined in its Local Plan and assess the viability of Knowle Green Estates, developing a business case and future options for the company and the housing it currently manages.

Our success measure is to have clear plans to deliver the housing numbers alongside a tangible and deliverable plan to reduce spend on temporary accommodation.

Within the period October 2025 to April 2026 the following has been achieved:

- December 2025: Appointed experts to develop the Affordable Housing SPD.
- 2025/6: Advisors appointed who evaluated financial options for Knowle Green Estates and who are undertaking Stock Condition Survey and Red Book valuation.
- March 2026: Council approves new Local Plan, judged as 'sound' by the Inspector.

Direction 1k: A fully costed programme of cultural change to rebuild trust between officers and members and ensures both Members and Officers understand their respective roles and the way in which the Authority and its activities are regulated and governed.

Our success measure is to build more effective relationship between councillors and officers and to prepare people well for the expectations of the new unitary council.

Within the period October 2025 to April 2026 the following has been achieved:

- January 2026: Councillors surveyed on prioritisation of the development programme.
- March 2026: Political skills programme designed for delivery to officers.

Direction 11: A plan to ensure that the Authority has sufficient skills, capabilities and capacity to deliver the Improvement and Recovery Plan, within a robust officer structure, including appropriate commercial expertise and capacity.

Direction 3: initiate a full and open recruitment exercise for a suitable permanent appointment to lead the improvement work in the Authority and progress against these Directions.

Our success measure is to grow Commissioners' confidence in the improvement programme increases leading to a positive report to the Secretary of State and ultimately progress towards exiting intervention.

Within the period October 2025 to April 2026 the following has been achieved:

- October 2025: Stood up a PMO function to manage the day-to-day delivery of the programme, overseeing monitoring arrangements and to provide first line of assurance.
- November 2025: Support the Improvement and Recovery Board (IRB), including providing Highlight reports for each theme, a PMO report and supporting the Deep Dive discussion into one of the Themes.
- December 2025: Administer the Chief Executive's internal SRO meeting to gain leadership assurance.
- December 2025: Established a change control process to track slippage and risk escalation.
- February 2026: Stood up a Communications and Engagement Plan.
- February 2026: CPRC approved a revised IRP to pivot the plan from the recovery phase to more sustained improvement and embedding phase.
- November 2025-February 2026: Participated in an Internal Audit review of early set up of Governance arrangements.

Direction 2: To actively work with Commissioners on the work with other councils in the Surrey area for unitary local government and on implementing any such proposals later agreed upon.

Our success measure is to do what is required to contribute as an active partner in the arrangements for West Surrey Council and to end SBC well, and with pride.

Within the period October 2025 to April 2026 the following has been achieved:

- Nominated SBC leads identified for all LGR workstreams.
- Commenced an early engagement programme with SBC employees on the Future Surrey programme, including development of a communications plan and information exchange.
- Commenced the creation of SBC LGR action plan.
- Leading work on the Procurement Theme on behalf of Future Surrey.

- Engagement with the initial request for information (RFI) process to supply information to the Future Surrey PMO.
- Participated in the joint committee for West Surrey.

4. Priority actions for the next review period

With less than 12 months remaining until Vesting Day, when Spelthorne Borough Council transitions into the new West Surrey Council, it is important that the Council focus on the improvement activity that will deliver the greatest benefit for the residents of Spelthorne and West Surrey Council. This will help make best use of resources, which will also be required to support the delivery of LGR (Local Government Reorganisation) in Spelthorne whilst also continuing to delivery services to Spelthorne residents and businesses.

The following is the Council's proposed list of priorities for the period up to 31 March 2027, grouped under the 4 Themes of the latest IRP (Improvement and Recovery Plan).

Theme 1: Strengthening and Improving Leadership

- To fully engage with and support the Surrey LGR programme though to Vesting Day (1 April 2027), by providing the requested information and undertaking the activities assigned to the Council in the forthcoming Surrey LGR plan. This will include continuing to lead the Procurement and Contracts Theme.

Theme 2: Improving Financial Sustainability

- To produce an updated MTFFS (Medium Term Financial Strategy) for the period FY27/28 to FY29/30 to be approved by the Council by the end of December 2026. The updated MTFFS will reflects the latest forecast financial position at the time of being developed.
- Develop and agree a savings plan for the current financial year (FY26/27) and then deliver the plan to achieve a minimum of £1m of in-year, recurring annual savings (rather than one-off savings) this financial year.
- Develop and agree a savings plan for the financial year (FY27/28) aligned to West Surrey and agreed with the West Surrey Section 151 Officer (once appointed).
- Produce final accounts for the last financial year (FY25/26) that when audited will address the 5 key recommendations highlighted by the External Auditors follow a review of the FY2425 annual accounts.

- Develop and agree a plan with the West Surrey Section 151 Officer (once appointed) to produce the accounts for the current financial year (FY2627).

Theme 3: Improving Governance and Assurance

- Develop and implement an effective Governance and Assurance framework, that includes risk management.

Theme 4: Commercial, Housing and Regeneration

- Develop an updated Commercial asset disposal strategy and programme to include timeline and target values to be achieved, and delivery of the disposal programme to achieve financial targets quarter by quarter.
- Develop and agree a Commercial strategy for the Council with CPRC by end April 2026.
- Complete a review / appraisal of options/issues/liabilities for BP site by end of FY2627.
- Develop and deliver a plan with the aim of disposal of the Council's regeneration sites by the 31 March 2027.
- Develop and get approval for the Staines Master Plan that will help shape the future of Staines and deliver high-quality development. Staines Master Plan to be agreed by Council in Autumn 2026.
- Demonstrate a clear reduction in spend on temporary accommodation quarter on quarter over the next 12 months and aim to reduce by at least half the use of nightly paid accommodation by the end of the current financial year (FY2627).
- Get agreement on the future of Knowle Green Estates (KGE) by the end of December 2026.
- Develop and agree a 3-year plan to deliver the housing number agreed in the Local Plan. Plan to be approved by Council in October 2026.

Programme level next steps

- To support the delivery of these priorities, once agreed, we are refreshing our programme management arrangements and clarifying the associated

programme governance to drive delivery, including identifying key risks early so suitable mitigations can be implemented.

- In addition to reporting progress in relation to key deliverables, we will develop and agree a set of outcomes measures that will track and demonstrate the resulting improvement (outcomes).

Secretary of State Directions

The actions to be taken by the Authority are:

1. Prepare and agree an Improvement and Recovery Plan to the satisfaction of the Commissioners, within 6 months, with resource allocated accordingly. This should integrate relevant contents and recommendations of the Best Value Inspection, published on 17 March, the Grant Thornton 2023/24 audit report and July 2023 CIPFA Capital assurance review. The plan should feature a comprehensive performance management framework that sets out measures to be undertaken, together with milestones and delivery targets against which to measure performance, to deliver rapid and sustainable improvements in governance, finance, property, housing, and commercial functions, thereby securing compliance with the best value duty. This programme should build on existing work to reset the culture of the organisation. The Improvement and Recovery Plan should include at a minimum:
 - a. A plan to achieve financial sustainability and to identify and close any short and long-term budget gaps across the period of its medium-term financial strategy (MTFS), including a robust multi-year savings plan that reflects the costs and risks identified in the BVI report and by external auditors.
 - b. A plan to ensure the Authority's capital, investment and treasury management strategies are sustainable and affordable, including an asset rationalisation programme for assets and commercial investments.
 - c. A comprehensive and strict debt reduction plan, demonstrating how overall capital financing requirement and external borrowing will be reduced over a realistic but expedient timescale, reducing debt servicing costs.
 - d. A plan to overhaul the governance arrangements within the authority with regards to decision-making, capacity and skills, aiming to increase transparency, scrutiny and effectiveness of the committee system to ensure that collective responsibility is taken for the Authority's decision-making.
 - e. A plan to review and update the sinking fund, taking a long-term view of potential risks and financial consequences with accurate income and expenditure forecasts, and with adequate provisions made for future costs.
 - f. A plan to ensure the Authority is complying with all relevant rules and guidelines relating to the financial management of the Authority, including updating the minimum revenue provision (MRP) policy.
 - g. A plan to reconfigure the Authority's services commensurate with the Authority's available financial resources.

- h. A plan to strengthen the Authority's financial and commercial functions, and to secure improvements in risk management, governance and the internal audit function, with the guidance and to the satisfaction of the Commissioners.
 - i. A plan to develop a comprehensive commercial strategy, with clear approaches to its investment and regeneration portfolios, including exit strategies for the commercial investments and realistic and deliverable strategies for regeneration sites.
 - j. A realistic plan to deliver housing numbers outlined in its Local Plan and assess the viability of Knowle Green Estates, developing a business case and future options for the company and the housing it currently manages.
 - k. A fully costed programme of cultural change to rebuild trust between officers and members and ensures both Members and Officers understand their respective roles and the way in which the Authority and its activities are regulated and governed.
 - l. A plan to ensure that the Authority has sufficient skills, capabilities and capacity to deliver the Improvement and Recovery Plan, within a robust officer structure, including appropriate commercial expertise and capacity.
2. To actively work with Commissioners on the work with other councils in the Surrey area for unitary local government and on implementing any such proposals later agreed upon.
 3. Within one month of the date of these Directions, initiate a full and open recruitment exercise for a suitable permanent appointment to lead the improvement work in the Authority and progress against these Directions. For the avoidance of doubt, an existing employee of the Authority may be appointed to the position provided that such person is a suitable permanent appointment to that position.
 4. To publicly report to the Commissioners on the delivery of the Improvement and Recovery Plan after three months, six months and thereafter at six-monthly intervals, or at such intervals as Commissioners may direct.
 5. To undertake in the exercise of any of its functions any action that the Commissioners may reasonably require to avoid, so far as practicable, incidents of poor governance, poor financial governance or financial mismanagement that would, in the reasonable opinion of the Commissioners, give rise to the risk of further failures by the Authority to comply with the best value duty.
 6. To allow Commissioners to appoint, where necessary, independent external advisors and to procure independent external advice.
 7. To allow the Commissioners at all reasonable times, such access as appears to the Commissioners to be necessary:

- a. to any premises of the Authority;
 - b. to any document relating to the Authority; and
 - c. to any employee or member of the Authority.
8. To provide the Commissioners, at the expense of the Authority, with such reasonable amenities and services and administrative support as the Commissioners may reasonably require from time to time to carry out their functions and responsibilities under these Directions.
9. To pay the Commissioners reasonable expenses, and such fees as the Secretary of State determines are to be paid to them.
10. To provide the Commissioners with such assistance and information, including any views of the Authority on any matter, as the Commissioners may reasonably request.
11. To co-operate with the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government in relation to implementing the terms of these Directions

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Committee Report Checklist

Please submit the completed checklists with your report. If final draft report does not include all the information/sign offs required, your item will be delayed until the next meeting cycle.

Stage 1

Report checklist – responsibility of report owner

ITEM	Yes / No	Date
Councillor engagement / input from Chair prior to briefing		
Relevant Group Head review	Yes	16/3/2026
MAT+ review (to have been circulated at least 5 working days before Stage 2)		
This item is on the Forward Plan for the relevant committee	Yes	10/03/2026
	Reviewed by	
Finance comments (circulate to Finance)	Yes	25/03/2026
Risk comments (circulate to Lee O’Neil)	LO	01/04/26
Legal comments (circulate to Legal team)	LH	26/03/26
HR comments (if applicable)		

For reports with material financial or legal implications the author should engage with the respective teams at the outset and receive input to their reports prior to asking for MO or s151 comments.

Do not forward to stage 2 unless all the above have been completed.

Stage 2

Report checklist – responsibility of report owner

ITEM	Completed by	Date rec’d
Monitoring Officer commentary – at least 5 working days before MAT	L Heron	26/03/2026
S151 Officer commentary – at least 5 working days before MAT	T.Collier	20/03/2026
Commissioner engagement	J. Kingston	20/03/2026
	Delete as applicable:	No issues
Confirm final report cleared by MAT		

Council

30 April 2026

Title	Amendments to the Financial Regulations
Purpose of the report	To make a decision
Report Author	Nina Diton Project Management Officer
Ward(s) Affected	All Wards
Exempt	No
Corporate Priority	Services Resilience
Recommendations	<p>Council is asked to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Approve the proposed amendments to the Financial Regulations (Part 4d of the Constitution) as detailed in Appendix A; and 2. To adopt the revised Financial Regulations and for the Constitution to be amended accordingly.
Reason for Recommendation	Internal Audit highlighted some limitations within our current operational debt processes. To address these, a number of processes driven updates are required to the Financial Regulations. These refinements do not represent fundamental policy changes, but rather practical adjustments designed to strengthen financial controls, promote consistency across services, and further reduce risks associated with income recovery.

1. Executive summary of the report *(expand detail in Key Issues section below)*

What is the situation	Why we want to do something
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Internal Audit findings showed some inconsistencies in credit note approval, reminder letter timeframes, hold case monitoring, debt ownership, payment plans, invoice cancellation documentation, and write-off- records. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Council must ensure strong internal controls to manage income effectively, reduce financial risk, and comply with audit expectations.

This is what we want to do about it	These are the next steps
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Update the Financial Regulations in line with the recommendation from Corporate Policy & Resources Committee, Internal Audit recommendations, and confirmed operational practice. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Once approved by Council, the updated documents will be issued, staff guidance provided, and processes updated across all service areas.

2. Key issues

- 2.1 In 2025 an internal audit of sundry debt processes identified several areas requiring further improvement. While resourcing enhancements and improved engagement with services had strengthened overall performance certain financial control issues remained. Addressing these require formal amendments to the Corporate Debt Policy and Financial Regulations.
- 2.2 The amendments to the Corporate Debt Policy were approved by the Corporate Policy & Resources Committee at their meeting on 20 April 2026, but it is for Council to approve the amendments to the Financial Regulations as they form part of the Constitution.
- 2.3 **Appendix A** shows the full schedule of all recommended amendments mapped directly against each Internal Audit recommendation as required for the Financial Regulations. Appendix A shows the audit observation, previous wording, required change, and the revised policy or regulation text.
- 2.4 The principal changes to the **Financial Regulations** are summarised below:
- Credit notes must now be approved by a manager who is independent from the original decision, with a clear record showing who approved what and why.
 - Reminder letters for unpaid invoices will follow the same standard timescales everywhere based on a 28-day payment cycle.
 - Debt reports will now clearly show how old debts are, including whether any are close to, or have reached, the legal time limit for recovery.
 - Accounts that been put on hold (for example due to disputes) will be formally reviewed each month.
 - Invoice requests must follow clearer steps, so it is easy to track who requested them and when they were confirmed.
 - Responsibility for debts is now clearer: the service that raised the invoice keeps overall responsibility, supported by central teams who help recover the debt.
 - Payment plans must now be based on what the customer can realistically afford, using the same affordability form across all services.
 - Cancelled invoices must be properly justified, fully documented and recorded so the decision can be checked later.
 - Write offs will use a standard digital form, with regular checks to make sure decisions are correct and consistent.
- 2.5 The revised financial regulations (Part4d of the Constitution) showing all amendments in tracked changes (in red) accompanies this report in **Appendix B**.

- 2.6 The report was considered by the Corporate Policy & Resources Committee at their meeting on 20 April 2026.
- 2.7 The Corporate Policy & Resources Committee resolved to:
- (a) Approve the amendments to the Corporate Debt Policy required following the Southern Internal Audit Partnership audit conducted in October 2025.
 - (b) Approve the proposed amendments to the Financial Regulations (Part 4d of the Constitution) as detailed in Appendix A; and
 - (c) Subject to the comments from the Committee System Working Group, to recommend to Council to adopt the revised Financial Regulations and for the Constitution to be amended accordingly.
- 2.8 The amendments have been circulated to the Committee System Working Group for comment, and no issues or comments have been raised.
- 2.9 The Council is now asked to consider adopting the revised Financial Regulations to be included in the Constitution.

3. Options appraisal and proposal

3.1 Option 1: Approve all amendments

This option involves approving: All amendments to the Financial Regulations (as set out in **Appendix A**), noting that **Financial Regulations** form part of the Constitution and adopting amendments to the Constitution is a function reserved to Council.

Financial Regulations – Benefits

Embeds strengthened financial governance controls into the Constitution, including segregation of duties, age-banded debt reporting, monitoring of held accounts, and defined approval thresholds.

Ensures corporate consistency by aligning Financial Regulations with the updated Corporate Debt Policy.

Improves audit compliance and provides stronger assurance through enhanced documentation and mandatory digital processes.

Financial Regulations – Disbenefits

Approximately eight members of staff will require time to review and familiarise themselves with the amendments. As the changes mainly formalise and standardise existing practice, significant training is not expected. Limited adjustments to local workflows may be required to ensure alignment with the updated processes.

3.2 Option 3: Approve no amendments

Benefits

No immediate staff time or operational change required.

Existing processes and workflows remain unaffected.

Disbenefits

Audit findings remain unaddressed, and known weaknesses persist.

Income management, documentation standards, and compliance controls remain at risk.

Processes such as invoice cancellations, payment plans, or write-offs would continue.

This is against the recommendation of the Corporate Policy & Resources Committee that the suggested amendments be adopted.

4. Risk implications

- 4.1 **Operational Risk:** Without the changes, delays, errors, and inconsistent practices may continue across services **Mitigation:** Updated processes introduce clearer controls, standardised procedures, and defined monitoring requirements to reduce these risks.
- 4.2 **Financial Risk:** Weak segregation, incomplete tracking, and inadequate write-off controls increase the risk of income loss. **Mitigation:** Strengthened approval processes, improved audit trails, and digital forms provide better oversight and protect income.
- 4.3 **Compliance Risk:** Without amendments the Council would not be able to demonstrate assurance against the audit findings **Mitigation:** The proposed changes address the issues identified and help ensure alignment with required standards across all services.
- 4.4 **Reputational Risk:** Non-compliance with financial regulations may undermine governance credibility. **Mitigation:** More consistent, processes, better documentation, and greater transparency help reinforce assurance.
- 4.5 **Overall Mitigation:** The controls introduced through the amendments would collectively reduce operational, financial, compliance, and reputational risks for all services, improving governance assurance.

5. Financial implications

- 5.1 The strengthened controls for services (credit notes, write-offs, tracking, monitoring, reporting) ensure:
- Better protection of income streams
 - Reduced risk of uncollected debt
 - Improved accuracy of financial monitoring and reporting
- 5.2 All improvements relate to existing operational processes and do **not** create new budget pressures.

6. Legal comments

- 6.1 The Council is required to recover outstanding debt where possible. Subject to existing legislation, the method of enforcement is at the discretion of the Council. Up to date and robust policies and regulations assist the Council in discharging this responsibility.

Corporate implications

7. Commissioners' comments

7.1 Commissioner's content with this report overall.

8. S151 Officer comments

8.1 The S151 Officer confirm that all financial implications have been taken into account and that the recommendations are fully funded from within the 2026-27 budget. The S151 Officer fully supports the proposed improvements.

9. Monitoring Officer comments

9.1 The Monitoring Officer confirms that the relevant legal implications have been taken into account.

10. Procurement comments

10.1 Not required — no procurement activity involved.

11. Equality and Diversity

11.1 No negative impact identified. Improved consistency may enhance fairness in the recovery process.

12. Sustainability/Climate Change Implications

12.1 No direct implications.

13. Other considerations

13.1 None identified

14. Timetable for implementation

14.1 As the Financial Regulations form part of the Council's Constitution, once Council approves the suggested amendments, the Constitution will be updated and published on the Council's website.

15. Contact

15.1 Nina Diton n.diton@spelthorne.gov.uk / Sandy Muirhead
s.muirhead@spelthorne.gov.uk

***Please submit any material questions to the Committee Chair and Officer
Contact by two days in advance of the meeting.***

Background papers: [Decision - Amendments to the Corporate Debt Policy and Financial Regulations - Spelthorne Borough Council](#)

Appendices:

Appendix A - Audit findings and Financial Regulation Amendments

Appendix B - Revised Part 4d Financial Regulations (Amendments to Section D)

APPENDIX A

"This appendix provides a full crosswalk between each audit recommendation, the previous policy position, and the amended wording."

Audit Observation Corporate Debt report	Financial Regulations Section	Audit Report Comments	Financial Regulations Policy Text	Required Amendment/Action	Suggested Amendment
1. Credit Notes – Segregation of Duties and Approval Process	D22A - Income and Expenditure	No segregation of duties between raising invoices and issuing credit notes.	N/A	Add D22A – Credit Note & Invoice Cancellation Process (approval thresholds, justification, audit trail, independent approval).	D22 A Credit Note and Invoice Cancellation Process. All credit notes and invoice cancellations must follow the Council’s Scheme of Delegation, include justification and support documentation, and maintain an auditable trail. A Stage 2 validation step is mandatory for credit notes, requiring independent managerial approval.
2. Reminder Letters – Inconsistent Timeframes	New Part of D7	Reminder letters are not issued in line with the Corporate Debt Policy.	N/A	Add reminder-letter compliance clause after D7 (must follow Corporate Debt Policy timelines; require monitoring).	D7 Services must ensure that all reminder letters are issued in accordance with the timeframes set out in the Corporate Debt Policy, and must retain an auditable record confirming when each reminder was generated and sent.
3. Aged Debt Reporting – Lack of Analysis	New D19 A	Reports lack breakdowns by age and actionable insights.	N/A	Add D19A – Aged Debt Reporting Requirements (age bands, service review, annual statute-barred report).	D19 A Aged debt reports must include defined age bands and be reviewed by service areas prior to Corporate Debt Meetings, with Finance providing an annual summary of statute-barred or near-barred debt.
4. Hold Cases (Suppressions) – No Monitoring Process	New D14 A	No formal review process for accounts on hold.	N/A	Add D14A – Monitoring of Hold/Suppression Cases (monthly report; holds lifted promptly).	D14 A) A monthly review of all suppressed accounts must be carried out by the Debt Recovery Officer. Holds must be lifted promptly once disputes are resolved or balances cleared.
5. Invoice Requests – Risk of Loss During Manual Transfer	New D19B	No confirmation process for invoice requests.	N/A	Add D19B – Invoice Request Controls (log vs invoice reconciliation; confirmation to services).	D19 B) Customer Services maintain a centralised, auditable spreadsheet logging all credit note numbers against the relevant accounts, ensuring traceability and compliance with internal controls.
6. Debt Ownership – Lack of Clarity	New D7A	Unclear whether debt ownership lies with service areas or central recovery.	N/A	Add D7A – Debt Ownership Clarification (define service vs recovery responsibilities).	D7A Roles and responsibilities are defined within the Council’s Scheme of Delegation and operationalised through the Sundry Debt Corporate Debt Process Map (Appendix B), ensuring a structured and transparent approach to debt recovery and write-offs.
7. Payment Plans – No Defined Parameters	New D7B	No formal guidance on payment plans.	N/A	Add D7B – Payment Plan Governance (minimum payments, duration, approval levels).	D7B Payment plans must include defined timeframes, minimum instalments, and approval thresholds. These arrangements must be documented and reviewed quarterly by the Corporate Debt Group.

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Audit Observation Corporate Debt report	Financial Regulations Section	Audit Report Comments	Financial Regulations Policy Text	Required Amendment/Action	Suggested Amendment
8. Invoice Cancellations – No Documented Process	New D22A	No rules for invoice cancellations (credit notes).	N/A	Add D22A – Credit Note & Invoice Cancellation Process (approval thresholds, justification, audit trail, independent approval).	A) Credit Note and Invoice Cancellation Process. All credit notes and invoice cancellations must follow the Council's Scheme of Delegation, include justification and support documentation, and maintain an auditable trail. A Stage 2 validation step is mandatory for credit notes, requiring independent managerial approval.
9. Write-Offs – Incomplete Approval Records	D20-22	Inconsistencies in write-off documentation.	N/A	Add D22 – Write-off Documentation Standards (digital forms, mandatory fields, monthly QA checks).	<p>D20 All write-off requests are required to be submitted exclusively through the Council's secure digital workflow system. The form must include mandatory fields capturing justification, supporting documentation, and delegated authority approval. Automated routing will ensure segregation of duties and compliance with the Scheme of Delegation. In addition, a formal, independently verified reconciliation of all write-off transactions against authorised approval lists will be performed at defined intervals, with results reported to the Chief Finance Officer and Audit Committee to maintain transparency, accountability, and full audit traceability.</p> <p>D22 The Chief Finance Officer must maintain a comprehensive, up-to-date record of all income written off. In addition, an independent reconciliation of all write-off transactions against the approved authorisation lists will be conducted on a scheduled basis to ensure accuracy, compliance with delegated authority, and full audit traceability.</p>

FINANCIAL REGULATIONS

INTRODUCTION

Background

1. The Local Government Act 1972 section 151 requires the Council to make arrangements for the proper administration of its financial affairs. Together with the Contract Standing Orders, they regulate the conduct of Council business.
2. These Financial Regulations must be available to and apply to every councillor and employee of the Council and anyone acting on its behalf. They will apply to agents and consultants acting for the Council and to services carried out under agency arrangement, unless specifically excepted by the relevant Group Head and the Chief Finance Officer.
3. They will also apply to all arms-length organisations, wholly owned companies, agencies and partnerships with whom the Council does business and for whom the Council is the relevant accounting body. Where the Council is not the relevant accounting body, but is a responsible partner, staff must ensure that the accounting body has in place adequate Regulations and proper schemes of delegation and ensure that the arrangements are agreed with the Section 151 Officer.
4. Copies of Financial Regulations are provided to the Chief Executive, Deputy Chief Executives, Chief Finance Officer, all Group Heads and Service Managers and are included in the Council's Constitution.
5. To help you understand the terminology used in Financial Regulations, a Glossary of Terms is attached at the end.

Scope & Review

6. It is the responsibility of the Chief Executive, Deputy Chief Executives, Chief Finance Officer and Group Heads to ensure Financial Regulations are followed.
7. Group Heads are responsible for ensuring that all staff in their departments are aware of the existence and content of the Financial Regulations and that they comply with them. Equally, staff have a reciprocal responsibility to comply with the regulations.
8. All councillors and employees have a general responsibility for taking reasonable action to provide for the security of the assets under their control, and for ensuring that the use of these resources is legal, is properly authorised, provides value for money and achieves best value. In doing so, proper consideration must be given at all times to matters of probity and propriety in managing the assets, income and expenditure of the Council.
9. Failure to follow Financial Regulations and Contract Standing Orders will be reported to the Chief Finance Officer immediately and may, in consultation with Human Resources, be treated as a disciplinary offence.

10. Financial Regulations should be reviewed in line with inflation every two years by the Chief Finance Officer in consultation with the Chair and Vice Chair of Corporate Corporate Policy and Resources Committee.

Financial Regulation A – Financial Accountabilities and Management

- A1 Financial management covers all financial accountabilities in relation to the running of the Council including the policy framework and budget and should be read in conjunction with the Council's Constitution and in particular the Budget and Policy Framework Procedure Rules.

COUNCIL

- A2 The Council has the general responsibility for setting the Council's policy and budget framework.
- A3 The Council is responsible for:-
- a. adopting and changing the Council's Constitution and Members' Code of Conduct;
 - b. approving the policy framework, including the Capital Strategy, the Treasury Management Strategy and the Revenue Budget and Reserves Strategy within which the Council operates;
 - c. approving and monitoring compliance with the Council's overall framework of accountability and control. The framework is set out in the Council's Constitution;
 - d. monitoring compliance with the agreed policy, related strategy decisions by Corporate Policy and Resources Committee and Local Code of Corporate Governance; and
 - e. approving procedures for recording and reporting decisions taken. This includes those key decisions delegated by and decisions taken by the Council and its committees. These delegations and details of who has responsibility for which decisions are set out in the Constitution.

Corporate Policy and Resources Committee

- A4 The Council is responsible for delegating the following functions to the Corporate Policy and Resources Committee in accordance with the the Constitution:
- a) proposing the policy framework, its overall community and corporate strategies and budget strategy to the Council; and
 - b) monitoring the performance of Services, projects and programmes; and
 - c) discharging its functions and responsibilities as set out in the Council's Constitution and in accordance with the Policy Framework and Budget approved by Council.

The Corporate Policy and Resources Committee can delegate its decision making powers to a formally constituted sub-committee of the Committee, a staff member or a joint committee in accordance with the scheme of delegation as set out in the Council's Constitution.

ROLE OF OFFICERS

STATUTORY OFFICERS

Chief Executive (Head of Paid Service)

- A5 The Chief Executive as Head of Paid Service for the purposes of the Local Government Act 1989 is responsible for overall corporate and strategic management and has operational responsibility for the management of the Council as a whole. They must report as necessary to the Council and to the Corporate Policy and Resources Committee (and other strategic committees). They are responsible for provision of professional advice to all parties in the decision making process. The Chief Executive is also responsible together with the Monitoring Officer, for the system of record keeping in relation to all the Council's decisions.

Group Head of Corporate Governance (Monitoring Officer)

- A6 The Group Head of Corporate Governance as the Monitoring Officer will contribute to the promotion and maintenance of high standards of conduct through provision of support to the Standards Committee. The Group Head of Corporate Governance will provide advice on the scope of powers and authority to take decisions, maladministration, financial impropriety, probity and budget and policy framework issues to all councillors. He/she is also responsible for reporting any actual or potential breaches of the law or maladministration to the Council and/or to Corporate Policy and Resources Committee, and for ensuring that procedures for recording and reporting key decisions are operating effectively.
- A7 The Group Head of Corporate Governance will ensure that relevant staff reports and background papers are made publicly available as soon as possible. He/she must also ensure that councillors are aware of decisions made by committees and employees who have delegated responsibility in accordance with the Council's Constitution.

Deputy Chief Executive (Chief Finance Officer)

- A8 Under Section 151 of the Local Government Act 1972 and the general direction of the Corporate Policy and Resources Committee, the Chief Finance Officer is responsible for the proper administration of the Council's financial affairs.
- A9 Under Section 114 of the Local Government Act 1988, the Chief Finance Officer (CFO) is also responsible for reporting to the Council if councillors or staff make or are about to make a decision involving unlawful expenditure, loss or deficiency, or if proposed expenditure is likely to exceed available resources.
- A10 The Chief Finance Officer, as defined in the Constitution has statutory duties in relation to the financial administration and stewardship of the Council. This statutory responsibility cannot be overridden. The statutory duties arise from:
- a) Section 151 of the Local Government Act 1972
 - b) Local Government Finance Act 1988
 - c) The Local Government and Housing Act 1989

- d) The Accounts and Audit Regulations (England) 2015
- e) The Local Government Act 2003

A11 The CFO is responsible for:

- a) the proper administration of the Council's financial affairs
- b) setting and monitoring compliance with accounting and financial management procedures and standards
- c) maintaining an effective and adequate internal audit and all audit arrangements
- d) advising on the corporate financial position
- e) key financial controls necessary to secure sound financial management providing financial information
- f) preparing and controlling forward financial plans, budget strategies, the Revenue Budget, the Capital Strategy and Capital Programme
- g) treasury management and banking arrangements financial and related IT systems
- h) procedures and controls for ordering services, supplies and works
- i) payment of accounts and collection of income
- j) pay and pensions;
- k) providing advice and training to budget holders including advice on financial and operational controls.

A12 Section 114 of the Local Government Finance Act 1988 requires the Chief Finance Officer to report to the Council and External Audit if the Council or its staff:

- has made, or is about to make a decision which involves or would involve unlawful expenditure
- has taken or is about to take a course of action which if pursued to its conclusion would be unlawful and likely to result in a loss or deficiency by the Council; or
- is about to make an unlawful entry in the Council's accounts

A13 The Chief Finance Officer must also make a report under this section if it appears that the expenditure of the authority (including expenditure it is proposing to incur) in a financial year is likely to exceed the resources (including sums borrowed) available to meet that expenditure. In preparing a report the Chief Finance Officer shall consult as far as practicable with the Chief Executive, as the Head of the Council's Paid Service, and with the Group Head of Corporate Governance under the Local Government and Housing Act 1989.

A14 Section 114 of the 1988 Act also requires that the Deputy Chief Finance Officer performs these functions in the absence of the Chief Finance Officer. The Chief Accountant is the Council's statutory Deputy Chief Finance Officer.

- A15 The Council is required to provide the Chief Finance Officer with sufficient staff, accommodation and other resources – including legal advice where this is necessary – to carry out the duties under section 114.
- A16 The Chief Finance Officer is responsible for advising the Corporate Policy and Resources Committee or the Council about whether a decision is likely to be considered contrary or not wholly in accordance with the budget. Actions that may be ‘contrary to the budget’ include:
- a) initiating new policies and financial commitments
 - b) committing expenditure in future years above budget
 - c) budget or spending transfers above virement limits
- A17 The Chief Finance Officer is responsible for considering and approving requests to waive the regulations and will consult the Chief Executive and councillors where they consider this appropriate. All waivers will be reported by the Chief Finance Officer to the Corporate Policy and Resources Committee.
- A18 **Delegated Authorities**
- Under delegations to officers authority to make financial transactions is delegated to the Chief Executive, Deputy Chief Executives and Chief Finance Officer. However, some delegation to other staff is necessary for practical purposes. These delegations form lines of accountability which should be clear, well communicated and regularly reviewed. They also provide control through appropriate levels of authorisation, limited numbers and separation of duties.
- A19 Deputy Chief Executives will keep a list of their staff authorised to make financial transactions, copy that list to Chief Finance Officer for entry onto the financial system, and review it regularly.
- A20 An authorised signatory matrix is available to record delegated authorities. Essential details are staff member’s name, grade, specimen signature, transaction type, value limit of authority and evidence of approval by the Deputy Chief Executives, Management Team and the CFO.
- A21 In an emergency the Chief Executive, Deputy Chief Executives or Chief Finance Officer may authorise such expenditure as is necessary, to be later ratified by the Corporate Policy and Resources Committee.
- A22 A Group Head is a staff member fully responsible to a Deputy Chief Executive or Chief Executive (as applicable), for the management and provision of an identifiable service in accordance with service plans and strategies.
- A23 Group Heads are responsible for:
- a) ensuring that the Corporate Policy and Resources Committee or relevant strategic committee is advised of the financial implications of all proposals and that the financial implications have been agreed by the Chief Finance Officer;
 - b) operating financial processes within their departments. To do this they must ensure that adequate operational controls are in place;

- c) controlling expenditure and income, monitoring performance and taking the necessary action to remain within budgets and cash limits;

A24 It is the responsibility of Group Heads to consult with the Chief Finance Officer and seek approval regarding any matters which are liable to affect the Council's finances materially, before any commitments are incurred.

MANAGING EXPENDITURE: SCHEME OF VIREMENT (BUDGET TRANSFERS)

A25 The Scheme of Virement is intended to enable the Corporate Policy and Resources Committee, Chief Executive, Deputy Chief Executives and Group Heads and their staff to manage budgets with a degree of flexibility within the overall policy framework determined by the Council and therefore, to optimise the use of resources.

A26 The Council is responsible for agreeing procedures for virement of expenditure between budget headings.

A27 Virements are the temporary transfer of surplus budget provisions between 'estimate' headings. These do not affect the base budgets for future years.

A28 Group Heads are responsible for agreeing in-year virements within delegated limits, in consultation with the Chief Finance Officer where required.

A29 Key controls for the Scheme of Virement are:

- a) It is administered by the Chief Finance Officer within guidelines set by the Council. Any variation from this scheme requires the approval of the Corporate Policy and Resources Committee.
- b) The overall budget is agreed by the Corporate Policy and Resources Committee and approved by the Council. The Deputy Chief Executives, Group Heads and budget managers are therefore authorised to incur expenditure in accordance with the estimates that make up the budget. The rules below cover virement. For this purpose, a service comprises a separate page or column in the published budget.
- c) Virement does not create additional overall budget liability. Virements are not permitted on the following revenue expenditure heads unless the Chief Finance Officer has approved their use:
 - a) Business rates resulting from revaluation
 - b) Insurance
 - c) Capital financing charges
 - d) Members' allowances
 - e) Government grants
 - f) And any others identified by the Chief Finance Officer

A30 The Chief Executive, Deputy Chief Executives and Group Heads are expected to exercise their overall discretion in managing their budgets

reasonably and prudently. For example they should aim to avoid supporting recurring expenditure from on-off sources of savings or additional income of creating future commitments, including full-year effects of decisions made partway through a year for which they have not identified future resources.

- A31 The Chief Executive, and Deputy Chief Executives may transfer or "vire" funds between revenue budget heads within their services, subject to the following general parameters:
- (a) All corporate guidelines and policies will be followed;
 - (b) Conditions of Service will be complied with;
 - (c) A single 'one-off' budget may not be transferred to fund a new ongoing item of expenditure; and
 - (d) Budgets not under effective control of the budget holder may not be vired eg rates and insurance.
- A32 Any such transfer will be agreed with the Group Head and discussed with the service accountant before implementation and agreed by the Chief Finance Officer.
- A33 Any proposal to transfer funds between services requires the approval of the Management Team (MAT) and the Corporate Policy and Resources Committee.
- A34 Any revenue virement with a value greater than £100,000 must be approved by the Corporate Policy and Resources Committee.
- A35 Any capital virement must be approved by the Corporate Policy and Resources Committee.

(Note to officers - all numbering hereafter needs adjusting)

Supplementary Estimates

- A36 If an essential increase in spending cannot be contained within existing budgets through the transfer arrangements described above, the relevant Deputy Chief Executive will consult with the Chief Finance Officer and report to the Corporate Policy and Resources Committee (where applicable), to obtain a supplementary estimate. No expenditure may be incurred until the supplementary estimate has been approved.
- A37 The Chief Finance Officer in consultation with the Chair and Vice Chair of Corporate Policy and Resources Committee is authorised to approve a total supplementary expenditure in a year not exceeding **5%** of the approved Net Revenue Budget, and **£20,000** on any approved capital scheme.
- The Corporate Policy and Resources Committee is authorised to approve a total supplementary expenditure in a year not exceeding **10%** of the approved Net Budget, Requirement of the Council and **£1,000,000** on any approved capital scheme.
- A38 The Chief Finance Officer shall maintain a record of all supplementary estimates approved.

- A39 If a claim is made against the Council which is not recoverable under an insurance policy, the Leader has authority to spend as necessary in resisting the claim, and/or in deciding and meeting the terms of any settlement made in the best interests of the Council. The Chief Executive is authorised to decide the terms of any settlement involving expenditure not exceeding £30,000, and to spend such amounts subject to report on the circumstances of the claim and settlement to the next meeting of the Corporate Policy and Resources Committee.

Treatment of year-end balances

- A40 The Chief Finance Officer is responsible for agreeing procedures for the carrying forward of underspendings on budget headings.
- A41 The rules below cover arrangements for the transfer of resources between accounting years, i.e a carry-forward. For this purpose, a budget head is a line in the estimates report or, as a minimum, at an equivalent level to the standard service subdivision as defined by the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) in its Service Expenditure Analysis.

Responsibilities of the Chief Finance Officer

- A42 To administer the scheme of carry forward.
- A43 To report all major underspendings (£50k) on services estimates to the Corporate Policy and Resources Committee
- A44 To report all major overspends (£50k) service estimates to the Corporate Policy and Resources Committee and to the Council.
- A45 To monitor the spending of any carry forwards and report to Management Team.

Responsibilities of the Corporate Policy and Resources Committee

- A46 To consider and approve as appropriate the items put forward on the carry forward list.

Responsibilities of Deputy Chief Executives and Group Heads

- A47 Any overspending on service estimates in total on budgets under the control of the Chief Executive, Deputy Chief Executive or Group Heads must be explained to the Chief Finance Officer. The Chief Finance Officer will report the extent of major over and under spendings to the Corporate Policy and Resources Committee and in the case of major overspendings also to the Council.

ACCOUNTING POLICIES

- A48 The Chief Finance Officer is responsible for determining accounting policies and financial systems and ensuring that they are applied consistently. The Chief Finance Officer is responsible for the preparation of the Council's Statement of Accounts, in accordance with proper practices as set out in the format required by the Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom: A Statement of Recommended Practice (CIPFA/LASAAC)

for each financial year ending 31 March, and the Accounts and Audit (England) Regulations 2015.

- A49 The key controls for accounting policies are:
- a) Systems of internal control are in place that ensure financial transactions are lawful;
 - b) Suitable accounting policies are selected and applied consistently;
 - c) Proper accounting records are maintained; and
 - d) Financial statements are prepared which present fairly the financial position of the Council and its expenditure and income.
 - e) External audit of these financial statements.

Responsibilities of the Chief Finance Officer

- A50 To select suitable accounting policies and to ensure that they are applied consistently.
- A51 To exercise supervision over financial and accounting records and systems with a view to ensuring their uniformity, co-ordination and compatibility.
- A52 To prepare and publish reports containing the statements on the overall finances of the Council, including the Council's Annual Report and Accounts.
- A53 To make proper arrangements for the audit of the Council's accounts in accordance with the provisions of the Accounts & Audit Regulations Act 1996 (as amended and updated);
- A54 To prepare and publish the audited accounts in accordance with the statutory timetable for the approval of the Audit Committee before the national target date; and
- A55 To ensure Services have in place suitable arrangements for compiling and submitting all claims for funds, including grants, by the due date.

Responsibilities of the Deputy Chief Executives and Group Heads

- A56 To adhere to the accounting policies and guidelines approved by the Chief Finance Officer.
- A57 To obtain the approval of the Chief Finance Officer before introducing any books, forms or procedures or other records relating to cash, stores or other accounts of the Council which may affect the Council's finances.
- A58 To submit to the Chief Finance Officer any information as the latter considers necessary for accounting and costing purposes and allow the Chief Finance Officer access at all reasonable times to all accounting records and documents which may affect the Council's finances.
- A59 To consult the Chief Finance Officer when preparing publications containing financial information.

ACCOUNTING RECORDS AND RETURNS

- A60 The Chief Finance Officer is responsible for determining the accounting procedures and records for the Council.

- A61 All accounting procedures and records will be approved by the Chief Finance Officer.
- A62 All accounts and accounting records will be compiled by the Chief Finance Officer or under their direction. The form and content of records maintained in other services will be approved by the Chief Finance Officer.
- A63 The following principles will apply in accounting procedures:
- a. calculating, checking and recording of sums due to or from the Council will be separated as completely as possible from their collection or payment;
 - b. staff responsible for examining and checking cash transaction accounts will not process any of these transactions themselves;
 - c. reconciliation procedures are carried out to ensure transactions are correctly recorded;
 - d. procedures are in place to enable accounting records to be reconstituted in the event of systems failure; and
 - e. prime documents are retained in accordance with legislative and other requirements.
- A64 The Chief Finance Officer is responsible for ensuring financial management and accounting information is available for all services administered by the Council, in either electronic or hard copy format.
- A65 The need to balance speed and accuracy with cost in producing accounting statements will be considered and determined by the Chief Finance Officer, after consulting the Group Head concerned.

The Annual Statement of Accounts

- A66 The Audit Committee is responsible for approving the annual statement of accounts, which have to be signed by the Chief Finance Officer and the Chairman of the Audit Committee. The Chair of Corporate Policy and Resources Committee and Chief Executive also to sign off the Annual Governance Statement incorporated into the Statement of Accounts

FINANCIAL REGULATION B: FINANCIAL PLANNING

B1 The Council is responsible for agreeing the Council's policy framework and budget, which will be proposed by the Corporate Policy and Resources Committee. . In terms of financial planning, the key elements are:

- the corporate strategy in the form of the Corporate Plan;
- service plans;
- the medium term financial strategy;
- the Outline Budget;
- the Revenue Budget;
- the Reserves Strategy
- Treasury Management Strategy
- the Capital Strategy and
- the Capital Programme.

THE BUDGET PROCESS

Introduction

B2 Each year, the Chief Finance Officer and Chief Accountant will prepare timetables for the preparation, submission and approval of the Outline Budget, Capital Budget and detailed Revenue Budget. These budgets will comply with the Code of Practice on a Prudential Approach to Local Authority Commitments.

B3 The order of paragraphs in this section roughly follows the order in which the budget process is carried out.

Capital Programme

B4 The Chief Executive, and Deputy Chief Executives will prepare provisional estimates of income and expenditure on capital schemes for each of their services, for each of the next four financial years, together with details of any revenue implications. The Chief Finance Officer will specify the form these estimates should take and the timetable for their submission.

B5 Capital expenditure differs from revenue expenditure in several ways, and falls into the following general categories:

- a) purchase or construction of an asset;
- b) enhancement of an asset; and
- c) grants for capital purposes.

B6 Council assets include land, buildings, vehicles, plant and equipment. The Council makes grants for capital purposes such as improvement grants and grants to housing associations which are classed as capital expenditure.

B7 Capital expenditure is often of high value and the benefit is expected to be spread over a number of years. Revenue expenditure is the annual running costs in relation to the provision of a service.

- B8 Provisional estimates will distinguish between committed and uncommitted expenditure. A scheme can only be included in provisional estimates after detailed evaluation by Management Team in accordance with agreed criteria.
- B9 Management Team will consider the provisional capital programme. After making any necessary amendments, the Chief Finance Officer will submit the summarised programme and estimated resources to the the Corporate Policy and Resources Committee, together with a report on the revenue implications of the programme and any other relevant information.
- B10 The programme recommended by services and a report by the Chief Finance Officer will be submitted to the Corporate Policy and Resources Committee, for final consideration in the context of the Council Tax to be levied.

Outline Budget Forecast

- B11 Management Team will prepare information needed to produce an Outline Budget Forecast for each of their services. The Chief Finance Officer will specify the form this Forecast should take and the timetable for its submission.
- B12 This information will include :-
- i. an indication of the continued need for the service at its current level and in its current form;
 - ii. the impact on the service of known or likely legal or contractual changes over the next four years;
 - iii. the impact over the next four years of any policy changes already approved by the Management Team
 - iv. The impact other changes on service levels and net income such as anticipated population growth, state of the economy
- B13 Management Team will consider the initial Outline Budget Forecast. After making any necessary amendments, the Chief Finance Officer will submit it to the Corporate Policy and Resources Committee, together with a report on the possible central government funding levels as set out in the Local Authorities Provisional Settlement ,other grant funding and anticipated retained business rates income, availability of reserves and implications for the Council Tax.
- B14 The Corporate Policy and Resources Committee will consider this and determine the overall level of resources to be made available, and the limits within which detailed budgets can be prepared.

Detailed Revenue Budget

- B15 Management Team will prepare provisional detailed estimates of income and expenditure on the revenue account in accordance with the Corporate Plan for each of their services for the next financial year. The Chief Finance Officer will specify the form these estimates should take and the timetable for their submission.
- B16 These estimates will reflect the Outline Budget Forecast and the decisions of the Corporate Policy and Resources Committee detailed at paragraph B13 above.
- B17 All revenue budgets will be prepared at current costs, and converted to outturn prices by Financial Services. The forecast for inflation will be decided by the Chief Finance Officer.

- B18 Each budget head will be cash limited, and any minor variations in spending will be met from the approved budget. A budget head is an individual sum specified in the published service budget.
- B19 The Chief Finance Officer will submit the detailed draft Revenue Budget to Management Team for consideration and approval and subsequently submit it to the Corporate Policy and Resources Committee.

Approval of the Annual Revenue Budget

- B20 By 1 March at the latest each year, the Corporate Policy and Resources Committee will submit to the Council estimates of income and expenditure on the revenue account which it recommends for the next financial year, together with statements of precepting authorities' requirements, and its recommendation for the Council Tax necessary to meet the expenses of both the Council and precepting authorities.
- B21 The Council will meet by 1 March each year to consider the total budget proposals submitted by the Corporate Policy and Resources Committee and decide the amount of Council Tax to be levied for the next financial year.
- B22 Once approved by the Council, amounts detailed in the Annual Budget may only be applied to the objects specified under their relevant budget head, or "voted". See paragraph A31 above for procedures to vary these approvals.

BUDGETARY CONTROL

- B23 Budgetary control ensures that once budget has been approved by the Council, resources allocated are used for their intended purposes and are properly accounted for. Budgetary control is a continuous process, enabling the Council to review and adjust its budget targets during the financial year. It also provides the mechanism that calls to account managers responsible for defined elements of the budget.

CAPITAL

Authorisation of Capital Expenditure

- B24 Capital expenditure on a scheme not included in estimates or budgets may only be incurred after full evaluation of that scheme by the Corporate Policy and Resources Committee and/or its Development sub-committee (as appropriate) (if under £1 million). Any proposed capital expenditure over £1 million must be evaluated and agreed by majority of Council Members. This will include a statement explaining the scheme's purpose, the need for it and a detailed analysis of capital costs involved. Exceptions are any payments authorised under paragraph A35 above. If the estimated expenditure is expected to cover more than one financial year, the estimate will show:
- i. the total estimated expenditure, and
 - ii. the proposed levels of spend for each financial year involved.

This paragraph (B24) shall take priority over any other clause or paragraph within this Constitution that may be, or appear to be, in conflict.

- B25 The scheme evaluation will also include a statement of estimated revenue expenditure and income generated by the scheme:
- (a) during the construction period, and
 - (b) for the first three years following the completion of the project.
- B26 The Deputy Chief Executives can authorise reasonable expenditure on necessary preliminary works, fees and salaries on schemes for which they are responsible, within the approved capital programme.
- B27 Accountability for each capital project is to be accepted by a named manager.

Capital Expenditure Monitoring

- B28 No Group Head responsible for the implementation of a capital scheme may incur capital expenditure greater than the approved budget for that year.
- B29 As soon as a staff member becomes aware of a likely overspend on a Capital Scheme, they must report to Management Team and the Corporate Policy and Resources Committee (as applicable), requesting a supplementary estimate in accordance with A35 and expenditure under A36.
- B30 The Group Head for Neighbourhood Services is authorised to purchase new equipment other than programmed replacements, provided such purchases are contained within Neighbourhood Services' revenue plan as agreed in advance with the Chief Finance Officer.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE CHIEF FINANCE OFFICER

- B31 To prepare capital estimates jointly with the Chief Executive, Deputy Chief Executives and Group Heads and to report them to the Corporate Policy and Resources Committee for approval. The Corporate Policy and Resources Committee will make recommendations on the capital estimates and on any associated financing requirements to the Council.
- B32 To prepare and submit reports to the Corporate Policy and Resources Committee on the projected income, expenditure and resources compared with the approved estimates.
- B33 To issue guidance concerning capital schemes and controls, for example on project appraisal techniques.
- B34 To approve the re-phasing of capital schemes within the approved capital programme between financial years, subject to the availability of resources to make the most effective use of those resources.

Responsibilities of Chief Executive, Deputy Chief Executives and Group Heads

- B35 To comply with guidance concerning capital schemes and controls issued by the Chief Finance Officer.
- B36 To ensure that all major capital proposals have undergone a project appraisal in accordance with the Council's project management methodology.
- B37 To ensure that adequate records are maintained for all capital contracts.

- B38 To proceed with projects only when there is adequate provision in the capital programme.
- B39 To prepare and submit reports jointly with the Chief Finance Officer to the Corporate Policy and Resources Committee on any variation in contract costs greater than the approved limits.
- B40 To ensure all credit arrangements such as leasing arrangements, are not entered into without the prior approval of the Chief Finance Officer.

Prudential Code

- B41 Under the Local Government Act 2003 the Council is required by regulation to have regard to the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy's (CIPFA) Prudential Code for Capital Finance in Local Authorities (the Code). The key objectives of the Prudential Code are to ensure that within a clear framework, the capital investment plans of local authorities are affordable, prudent and sustainable. A further objective is to ensure that treasury management is undertaken in a manner that supports prudence, affordability and sustainability.
- B42 The Council is responsible for approving prior to the commencement of the financial year the prudential indicators for the forthcoming financial year and at least the two subsequent financial years required by the Code. The indicators required as a minimum are:

For the three year period:

Estimates of the ratio of financing costs to net revenue stream;
Estimates of the Council Tax that would result from the totality of the authority's plan;
Estimates of capital expenditure;
Estimate of capital financing requirement (underlying need to borrow for a capital purpose);
Authorised limit for external debt;
Operational boundary for external debt; and
aAny locally determined indicators considered appropriate

After the year end actual values are to be calculated for:

Ratio of financing costs to net revenue stream;
Capital expenditure;
Capital financing requirement; and
External debt.

Responsibilities of the Chief Finance Officer

- B43 The Chief Finance Officer is responsible for establishing procedures to both monitor performance against all forward looking prudential indicators and for ensuring that net external borrowing does not exceed the capital financing requirement. The Chief Finance Officer will report to Council any significant deviations from expectations. The Chief Finance Officer will ensure that regular monitoring is undertaken in year against the key measures of affordability and sustainability, by reviewing estimates of financing costs to revenue and the

capital financing requirement. Significant variation in the estimates used to calculate these prudential indicators, for example caused by major overruns of expenditure on projects or not achieving in-year capital receipts, will require a report to Council setting out management action.

REVENUE

Authorisation of Revenue Expenditure

B44 Subject to Financial Regulations, Contract Standing Orders and any other specific limitations, the Chief Executive, and each Deputy Chief Executive is authorised to spend those sums voted to their areas of responsibility for the financial year. With the exception of Regulations B47-B52 below, revenue expenditure may only be incurred for purposes specified in the Annual Budget, and is strictly limited to the amounts voted under relevant budget heads.

Key Controls

B45 The key controls for managing budgets are:

There is a nominated budget manager for each cost centre heading;

Budget managers accept accountability for their budgets and the level of service to be delivered and understand their financial responsibilities;

Budget managers follow an approved certification process for all expenditure; and

Income and expenditure are properly accounted for.

Responsibilities of the Chief Finance Officer

B46 To establish an appropriate framework of budgetary management and control that ensures that:

- a) Budget management is exercised within annual cash limits;
- b) Each Deputy Chief Executive and Group Head has available timely information on receipts and payments on each budget which is sufficiently detailed to enable managers to fulfil their budgetary responsibilities;
- c) Ensure each cost centre has a single named Manager determined by the, relevant Deputy Chief Executive or Group Head. As a general principle, budgetary responsibility should be aligned as closely as possible to the decision making processes that commits expenditure;
- d) To be responsible for providing appropriate financial information to enable budgets to be monitored effectively;
- e) To administer the Council's scheme of virement; and
- f) To prepare and submit reports on the Council's projected income and expenditure compared with the budget to Management Team, Group Heads and Corporate Policy and Resources Committee on a regular basis.

Responsibilities of the Chief Executive, Deputy Chief Executives and Group Heads

- B47 The Chief Executive, Deputy Chief Executives are responsible for supervising income and expenditure within their services. Similarly Group Heads are responsible for supervising income and expenditure within their departments.
- B48 To control income and expenditure within their areas and to monitor performance taking account of financial information provided by the Chief Finance Officer. They should take any action necessary to avoid exceeding their budget allocation and alert the Chief Finance Officer to any problems.
- B49 To maintain budgetary control within their services and to ensure that all income and expenditure is properly recorded and accounted for.
- B50 To ensure that spending remains within a services's overall cash limit and that individual budget heads are not overspent by monitoring the budget and taking appropriate corrective action where significant variations from the approved budget are forecast.
- B51 To ensure compliance with the scheme of virement.
- B52 To agree with the relevant Chief Executive, Deputy Chief Executive or Group Head where it appears that a budget proposal, including a virement proposal may impact materially on another service area.

REPORTS WITH FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- B53 The Chief Finance Officer will be consulted on any report on any matter affecting or likely to affect the Council's finances.
- B54 This consultation will take place as early as possible, before any meeting of staff or councillors at which the report is first considered.
- B55 Any Committee report with financial implications will first be submitted to Management Team.

FINANCIAL REGULATION C: CONTROL OF RESOURCES

INTRODUCTION

- C1 It is essential that robust systems are maintained for identifying and evaluating all significant operational risks to the Council on an integrated basis. This includes the active participation of all staff associated with planning and delivering services

Risk management

- C2 Risk Management is the whole process of identifying, and evaluating and controlling the strategic and operational risks of the Council. A risk is the chance or possibility of loss, damage, injury or failure to achieve objectives by an unwanted or uncertain action or event. This includes the risk of 'missed opportunities'.
- C3 As the Council is the custodian of public funds risk management is particularly significant and the level of risk that can be tolerated in its activities will need to be carefully considered with risks and reward carefully evaluated.
- C4 The sections below outline key components of the Council's adopted risk management framework.
- C5 The key controls for risk management are:-
- a) establishing clear roles, responsibilities and reporting lines within the Council for risk management;
 - b) maintaining a clear Corporate Risk Register and Policy;
 - b) incorporating risk management considerations into all operations and decision making processes;
 - c) maintaining documented procedures for the control of risk and the provision of suitable information, training and supervision;
 - d) maintaining an appropriate incident reporting and recording system with investigation procedures to establish cause and prevent recurrence;
 - e) offering a framework for allocating resources to identified priority risk areas;
 - f) operating appropriate project management methodologies proportionate to the scale of projects;
 - g) reinforcing the importance of effective risk management as part of the everyday work of employees by offering training;
 - h) maintaining effective communication and the active involvement of every councillor and employee of the Council;
 - i) including risk management as an agenda item at meetings as appropriate and holding Corporate Risk Management Group meetings;
 - j) providing opportunities for shared learning on risk management across the Council; and
 - k) preparing contingency plans in areas where there is a potential for an occurrence having a catastrophic effect on the Council and its business capability.

- C6 The Chief Finance Officer is responsible for ensuring regular corporate assessments of risk and Group Heads for reviewing risks annually.
- C7 The Chief Finance Officer is responsible for developing specific programmes and procedures for establishing and maintaining risk management activities and to ensure the dispersal of vital information and, where appropriate, provide guidance, interpretation and understanding of the systems involved.
- C8 The Chief Finance Officer has implemented a risk management structure involving the Management Team, a Corporate Risk Management Group, Internal Audit and Group Heads to support their responsibilities.
- C9 Group Heads will take responsibility for risk management in their department having regard to advice from the Chief Finance Officer and other specialist staff (e.g. health and safety, internal audit).

INSURANCE

- C10 The Chief Finance Officer will arrange all insurance cover, keep a register of insurances and ensure the Council's insurance arrangements are reviewed each year.
- C11 Before the annual renewal of insurance cover, the Chief Finance Officer will provide the Deputy Chief Executives as necessary with a summary of all current insurances to check and review their adequacy.
- C12 Each Group Head will provide the Chief Finance Officer immediately with details of all new risks to be insured, and of any alterations affecting existing insurable risks.
- C13 Each Deputy Chief Executive will forward any new or renewal contract terms to the Chief Finance Officer for risk analysis before any contract is let and appropriate insurance cover arranged.
- C14 Each Deputy Chief Executive will ensure that any proposals for new buildings or alterations to existing buildings are copied to the Chief Finance Officer before any tenders are requested, for risk analysis and arrangement of appropriate insurance cover.
- C15 The appointment of insurance brokers to act on behalf of the Council will be reviewed every three years by the Chief Finance Officer.
- C16 Any event which may result in an insurance claim will be immediately notified to the Chief Finance Officer, to make all claims on the Council's Insurers. Where an incident has occurred Group Heads must take steps to mitigate any future incident, but where a repair is required should first take a photograph for evidence purposes.
- C17 No staff member will admit liability, take any action or enter into any correspondence admitting liability on behalf of the Council.
- C18 All staff and voluntary workers on Council business are included in a suitable fidelity guarantee policy.

Internal control

- C19 Internal Control is a key component in the Council's Risk Management process. It relates to the whole system of policies, processes and checks employed to mitigate risks.
- C20 Internal control refers to the systems of control to ensure that the Council's objectives are achieved in a manner which promotes economical, efficient and effective use of resources, that the Council's assets and interests are safeguarded, and that organisational goals will be achieved.
- C21 The Chief Finance Officer is responsible for advising on effective systems of internal control. These arrangements need to ensure compliance with all applicable statutes and regulations, and other relevant statements of best practice. They should ensure that public funds are properly safeguarded and used economically, efficiently, and in accordance with the statutory and other authorities that govern their use.
- C22 It is the responsibility of Group Heads to establish sound arrangements for planning, appraising, authorising and controlling their operations in order to control risks.

Internal Audit requirements

- C23 The authority of the Internal Audit function is derived from legislation and for local authorities this is implied by Section 151 of the Local Government Act 1972, which requires that authorities shall *'make arrangements for the proper administration of their financial affairs and shall ensure that one of their officers has responsibility for the administration of those affairs'*.

The Accounts and Audit (England) Regulations 2015 more specifically state *'A local government body shall maintain an adequate and effective system of internal audit of its accounting records and of its system of internal control in accordance with proper practices in relation to internal control'*.

All audit work must be conducted in accordance with the Public Sector Internal Audit Standards.

- C24 Significant issues arising from audit reports will be reported to the relevant Deputy Chief Executive, and periodic reports will be made to Management Team and the Audit Committee.
- C25 The Chief Finance Officer and the Chief Internal Auditor provided by Southern Internal Audit Partnership or their authorised representatives shall have authority where necessary in the performance of Council duties to:
- enter any Council premises or land in the occupation of the Council;
 - have access to all records, documents and correspondence relating to any financial and other transaction of the Council;

- require and receive oral or written explanations from any employee as he/she thinks necessary concerning any matter under examination; and
- require any employee of the Council to produce cash, stores or any other Council property under their control.

C26 The Audit Committee is to approve the annual audit plan prepared by the Chief Internal Auditor provided by Southern Internal Audit Partnership to take account of the characteristics and relative risks of the activities involved.

C27 Any suspected fraud or irregularity must be reported to the Chief Finance Officer who will refer the matter to Internal Audit for investigation.

Internal Audit will have organisational independence through direct reporting lines to the Section 151 Officer, the Chief Executive and Audit Committee.

The Audit Committee will approve the Annual Governance Statement

Responsibilities of Chief Executive, Deputy Chief Executives and Group Heads

C28 To ensure that internal auditors are given access at all reasonable times to premises, personnel, documents and assets which the auditors consider necessary for their work.

C29 To ensure that auditors are given any information and explanations they seek in the course of their work.

C30 To consider and respond promptly to recommendations in audit reports.

C31 To ensure that any agreed actions arising from audit recommendations are carried out in a timely and efficient fashion.

C32 To ensure that new systems for maintaining financial records, or records of assets, or changes to such systems, are discussed with and agreed by the Chief Internal Auditor provided by Southern Internal Audit Partnership before implementation.

C33 The Council may, from time to time, be subject to audit, inspection or investigation by external bodies such as HM Revenue and Customs who have statutory rights of access.

Preventing fraud and corruption

C34 The Council is a public body and therefore will not tolerate any fraud and corruption in the administration of its responsibilities, whether from inside or outside the authority. All councillors and employees are expected to lead by example on all aspects of honesty, propriety and accountability. The Council also expects that individuals and organisations with whom it comes into contact (e.g. suppliers, contractors, service providers, and partners) will act towards the authority with integrity.

- C35 The Council's Anti-fraud, Bribery and Corruption policy sets the culture for the organisation to address the risk of fraud and corruption, and summarises the methods of prevention, detection and investigation in place.
- C36 All managers are responsible for developing and maintaining procedures to prevent fraud and corruption.

FINANCIAL IRREGULARITIES

- C37 The Chief Finance Officer will be notified of any irregularity in the financial affairs of the Council or in the exercise of its functions.
- C38 Irregularities will be reported as appropriate to the Chief Executive and councillors.
- C39 Any councillor or staff member who is aware of any suspected fraud, theft, irregularity, improper use or misappropriation of the Council's property, resources or systems, should immediately report it to their Group Head, Chief Finance Officer, Chief Internal Auditor provided by Southern Internal Audit Partnership, Chief Executive, Deputy Chief Executives, Monitoring Officer or External Auditor, having regard to the Council's Anti-Fraud, Bribery and Corruption Policy. Pending investigation and reporting, the Group Head should take all necessary steps to prevent further loss and to secure records and documentation against removal or alteration
- C40 If officers feel they cannot raise their concerns through any of these routes, they may contact Protect (0203 117 2520), a registered charity whose services are free and strictly confidential.
- C41 Where irregularities involve either councillors or staff the Chief Finance Officer, in consultation with the Chief Executive, is responsible for deciding whether to involve the police.

Assets

- C42 Group Heads must ensure that records and assets are properly maintained and securely held. They should also ensure that contingency plans for the security of assets and continuity of service in the event of disaster or system failure are in place.
- C43 Separate registers are maintained for the following fixed assets:
- land and buildings (maintained on the Property Terrier);
 - vehicles and plant;
 - ICT equipment
 - furniture and equipment financed from capital; and
 - infrastructure expenditure.
- C 44 It would be uneconomic and inefficient for the cost of assets to outweigh their benefits. Obsolete, non-repairable or unnecessary resources should be disposed of in accordance with the law and the approval of the Deputy Chief Executives.

- C45 If the Council decides to become involved in the commercial exploitation of inventions, the matter should proceed in accordance with its approved intellectual property procedures.

SECURITY

General

- C46 The Deputy Chief Executives, along with the Group Heads, are responsible for the security of buildings, stocks, stores, furniture, equipment, cash etc under their control. The Chief Finance Officer will be consulted where security may be failing or where special security arrangements may be needed.

Data Protection and Information Security

- C47 The Chief Executive, and Deputy Chief Executives are responsible for the security and privacy of information held within their services and for ensuring compliance with Data Protection, Copyright and Computer Misuse Acts.
- C48 All staff members will be made aware of their obligations under the Acts and the Council's policy regarding data and systems security as set out in the Finance Procedure Manual and on Spelnet. This includes physical security, privacy and passwords, back ups, viruses and software copyright.

Responsibilities of the Chief Finance Officer

- C49 The Chief Finance Officer is responsible through the Group Head for Regeneration and Growth, for strategic management and maintenance issues.
- C50 The Chief Finance Officer is responsible in liaison with Accountancy, ICT Services and Asset Management for maintaining the Council's Asset Register.
- C51 To ensure that asset registers are maintained in accordance with good practice for fixed assets. The function of asset registers is to provide the Council with information about fixed assets so that they are:
- safeguarded;
 - used efficiently and effectively; and
 - adequately maintained.

To ensure that assets are valued in accordance with the Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom: A Statement of Recommended Practice (CIPFA/LASAAC).

- C52 To report to the Corporate Policy and Resources Committee any significant (over £50k) write-off of stocks and stores.

Responsibilities of Chief Executive, and Deputy Chief Executives

C53 The Chief Executive, Deputy Chief Executives and Group Heads are responsible for day to day management of assets used within their services and are accountable for ad hoc maintenance.

Responsibilities of Group Heads

C54 The Group Head for Regeneration and Growth must maintain an Asset Register in a form approved by the Chief Finance Officer for all land and buildings. The Group Head for Neighbourhood Services is to maintain asset registers in a form approved by the Chief Finance Officer for vehicles and plant currently owned or used by the Council. The Group Head for Commissioning and Transformation to maintain an asset register of all ICT equipment in a form approved by the Chief Finance Officer. Any use of property by a department or establishment other than for direct service delivery, with the exception of investment properties, should be supported by documentation identifying terms, responsibilities and duration of the use.

C55 The Group Head for Neighbourhood Services is responsible for organising ad hoc maintenance of Neighbourhood Services' assets.

C56 Group Heads are to ensure the proper security of all buildings and other assets under their control. Investment property let to third parties is their responsibility to secure.

C57 To pass the title deeds to the Group Head of Corporate Governance, who is responsible for custody of all title deeds.

C58 To ensure that the department maintains an inventory of moveable assets in accordance with guidance defined by the Chief Finance Officer.

C59 To ensure that controls are in place to ensure that staff members do not carry out private work in Council time and that staff are aware of an employer's rights with regard to intellectual property.

All assets

C60 To ensure the safe custody of vehicles, equipment, furniture, stock, stores and other property belonging to the Council.

C61 To record all disposal or part exchange of assets and notify the Finance team. Individual assets valued at £1,200 or more should be disposed of or part exchanged by competitive tender or public auction unless the Chief Finance Officer agrees otherwise.

C62 To arrange for the valuation of assets for accounting purposes to meet requirements specified by the Chief Finance Officer.

- C63 To seek advice from the relevant Deputy Chief Executive, or Chief Executive on the disposal of surplus or obsolete materials, stores or equipment, subject to paragraph C61 above.
- C64 To ensure that income received for disposal of an asset is properly banked and coded.
- C65 Assets for disposal should be identified and disposed of:
- a) at the most appropriate time;
 - b) when it is in the Council's best interests; and
 - c) for the best price (taking into account factors such as environmental issues).

Land, buildings and other assets

- C66 To ensure that leaseholders and other prospective occupiers of Council land are not allowed to take possession of or enter the land until a lease or agreement, in a form approved by the relevant Deputy Chief Executive, has been established as appropriate.

Moveable assets

- C67 To ensure that assets are identified, their location recorded and that they are appropriately marked.
- C68 The Deputy Chief Executives and Group Heads are responsible for all furniture and equipment in their departments. Wherever practicable, items will be marked as the property of the Council.
- C69 A central inventory of all furniture, fittings and equipment, plant and machinery will be maintained by the Group Head of Regeneration and Growth , with each Service providing details of all acquisitions and disposals. Services are to liaise with the Finance team
- C70 Council property may not be removed unless on Council business and with the written agreement of the Chief Executive, or Deputy Chief Executive concerned.
- C71 All items on the inventory will be checked annually by Group Heads, and any discrepancies reported to the Chief Finance Officer. As part of the annual check services are to review the condition of assets and take action in relation to surpluses or deficiencies, annotating the inventory accordingly. Attractive and portable items such as laptops, computer equipment, cameras and recording equipment should be identified with security markings as belonging to the Council.
- C72 The Chief Finance Officer will approve write-off of discrepancies, except where the authority of the Corporate Policy and Resources Committee is required under paragraphs D20 to D22 below.
- C73 The Deputy Chief Executives and Group Head for Neighbourhood Services may authorise the disposal of furniture and equipment with an estimated market value of up to £1,200 (per item or collectively). The Chief Finance Officer will approve disposal of more valuable items in writing.

- C74 To make sure that property is only used in the course of the Council's business unless the Chief Executive, or Deputy Chief Executive concerned has given permission otherwise.

Stocks and stores

- C75 The Chief Executive, Deputy Chief Executives and the Group Head for Neighbourhood Services are responsible for all stores held in their services. Wherever practicable, all items will be effectively marked as the property of the Council.
- C76 Stores held will not exceed reasonable requirements.
- C77 All goods received will be checked against the copy order at time of delivery and the supplier immediately notified of rejected goods.
- C78 All receipts, issues and balance of stock items will be properly recorded in a form agreed by the Chief Finance Officer.
- C79 The Chief Executive, Deputy Chief Executives and the Group Head for Neighbourhood Services will regularly check that items are accounted for, and arrange for continuous and independent stocktaking to be carried out. Any material shortfalls will be reported to the Chief Finance Officer. The Chief Executive, Deputy Chief Executives and the Group Head Neighbourhood Services will also arrange for stocktakes and the provision of signed stock certificates as at 31 March each year, as good management and to satisfy external audit requirements.
- C80 The write-off of shortfalls will be approved in writing by the Chief Finance Officer, except where the authority of the Policy and Resources Committee is required under paragraphs D20 to D22 below
- C81 The Deputy Chief Executives and Group Head for Neighbourhood Services may authorise the disposal of stores with an estimated market value of up to £1,200 (per item or collectively). The Chief Finance Officer will approve disposal of more valuable items in writing.
- C82 Where the disposal value is less than £1,200, the Group Head must dispose of the item in a fair and effective manner and keep a record of the disposal.
- C83 Procedures for disposal of such stocks and equipment where their value is over £1,200 should be by competitive quotations or auction unless the Chief Finance Officer advises otherwise in a particular case.

Cash

- C84 Maximum limits for cash holdings will be agreed with the Chief Finance Officer and not exceeded without their permission. Group Heads are to ensure cash holdings on premises are kept within the agreed limits. Group Heads to ensure that keys to safes and similar receptacles are carried on the person of those responsible whilst the site is occupied and removed from the premises when the site is unoccupied and to ensure that access codes, combinations and passwords remain confidential and are made available to the Finance team.

TREASURY MANAGEMENT

- C85 Treasury Management covers all activities associated with any monies borrowed (Loans) or invested (Investments) on behalf of the Council irrespective of the time period covered by the transactions. It also embraces the management and control of the Council's banking arrangements.
- C86 The Council has adopted CIPFA's "Code of Practice for Treasury Management in Local Authorities".
- C87 A Treasury Policy Statement setting out its strategy and procedures has been adopted by the Council, and its implementation and monitoring delegated to the Corporate Policy and Resources Committee.
- C88 All money (as defined in the Treasury Policy Statement) in the hands of the Council will be aggregated for the purposes of Treasury Management and be under the control of the Chief Finance Officer as the officer designated for the purposes of Section 151 of the Local Government Act, 1972.
- C89 The Chief Finance Officer is responsible for reporting to the Council a proposed treasury management and annual investment strategy for the coming financial year at or before the start of each financial year. The report will set out the proposed levels for the prudential treasury management indicators required by the CIPFA Prudential Code for Capital Finance in Local Authorities.
- C90 All executive decisions on borrowing, investment or financing will be delegated to the Chief Finance Officer, who is required to act in accordance with CIPFA's "Code of Practice for Treasury Management in Local Authorities", the Treasury Policy Statement and Systems Documentation.
- C91 All investments of the Council's funds will be made in the name of the Council by the Chief Finance Officer, unless the Council has authorised its investments to be made by an outside agent, when they should be in the name of Trustees for the Council.
- C92 All loans to the Council will be negotiated by the Chief Finance Officer and paid direct by the lender or their agent into the Council's bank account.
- C93 All stocks of interim loan receipts, temporary loan receipts and bond certificates will be controlled by the Chief Finance Officer.
- C94 The Chief Finance Officer is the only primary authorised signatory to any form of loan receipts, including such receipts issued under seal.
- C95 Repayment of loans will, wherever possible, be made through the head office of the Council's bankers in exchange for the original loan receipt.
- C96 The Chief Finance Officer is authorised to borrow temporarily pending receipt of money from Business Rates, loans, Council Tax, Government Grants and other income properly due to the Council, within the limit agreed by the Council each year.
- C97 The Chief Finance Officer will report to the Corporate Policy and Resources Committee twice each financial year on the activities of the Treasury

Management operation, and on the exercise of Treasury Management powers delegated to them. One of these reports will be an Annual Report on Treasury Management to be presented by 30 September of the succeeding financial year.

BANKING ARRANGEMENTS

- C98 The Chief Finance Officer is responsible for operating and supervising the Council's Bank and Giro Accounts, including ordering, custody and issue of all cheques. The Chief Finance Officer will review the Council's banking arrangements at least every 5 years.
- C99 The Chief Finance Officer, the Deputy Chief Finance Officer and the 1st signatory, and others approved in writing by the Chief Finance Officer, each have authority, in accordance with the mandate given to the bank, to sign cheques and be accepted as satisfactory signatories for any other purpose in connection with the Council's Bank and Giro Accounts.
- C100 All payment instructions for amounts of £21,000 and above require two authorising signatures, namely, the Chief Finance Officer or the Deputy Chief Finance Officer as the 1st signatory, and others approved in writing by the Chief Finance Officer as the 2nd signatory.
- C107 Where the Chief Finance Officer's signature or name, or that of their predecessor, is pre-printed on cheques or Giro-cheques, or is printed by computer or by cheque signing machine, adequate security arrangements will be made for the custody and control of both cheques and signature plates.
- C101 All banking accounts will be reconciled with the cash book each month.

PETTY CASH ACCOUNTS

- C102 When there is no easy access to the Cashiers at the Council offices, the Chief Finance Officer will advance petty cash balances to responsible staff members. An account of total petty cash spent with vouchers, certified by the Chief Executive, Deputy Chief Executives or person authorised by them, will be passed to the Chief Finance Officer for reimbursement. The petty cash account will be kept in a form and manner agreed by the Chief Finance Officer.
- C103 Use of petty cash will be kept to a minimum and limited to expenses which are unavoidably or conveniently payable in this manner. They will not include items over £30 unless agreed by the Chief Finance Officer.
- C104 Income received on behalf of the Council will not be paid into a petty cash account, but paid to the Council in accordance with paragraphs D8 –D19 below.
- C105 Officers responsible for petty cash accounts will give the Chief Finance Officer an annual certificate for each account balance by 15 April.
- C106 On returning a petty cash account, a staff member will account to the Chief Finance Officer for the amount advanced to them.
- C107 Petty cash and other floats will be available for inspection by audit.

Credit Cards

C108 Maximum limits for credit card facilities will be agreed by the Chief Finance Officer and these will not be exceeded without their permission. Group Heads and Service Managers are to authorise the monthly expenditure incurred by their staff who are authorised credit card users. No personal expenditure is to be incurred on an authorised council credit card and it is the responsibility of the authorised card holder to keep PIN numbers safe and immediately advise their manager and credit card provider if the card becomes cloned or lost.

Unofficial Funds

C109 Management Team is responsible for ensuring the proper administration of unofficial funds, that is any funds associated with Council business, supervised or managed by Council staff, but not part of the Council's funds, such as social funds in Day Centres.

C110 The Chief Finance Officer will be notified of any unofficial funds and give advice on keeping and auditing them.

C111 Any staff member holding unofficial funds will produce an accurate account in writing of all financial transactions, with associated supporting documentation.

PROTECTION OF PRIVATE PROPERTY IN THE TEMPORARY CUSTODY OF THE AUTHORITY/LOST PROPERTY

C112 The Chief Executive, and Deputy Chief Executives will ensure that details of any lost property is recorded before removal, that two officers certify the accuracy of the record, and that items are held securely until disposal.

C113 The Chief Executive, and Deputy Chief Executives will obtain proof of ownership prior to release of property.

C114 The Chief Executive, and Deputy Chief Executives will agree how to dispose of unclaimed items with the Chief Finance Officer.

SALARIES AND WAGES

C115 The Chief Finance Officer is responsible for the payment of all salaries, wages, compensation and any other sums to current and former employees.

C116 The Chief Executive, and Deputy Chief Executives will notify the Chief Finance Officer immediately of all appointments, resignations, or any other events affecting terms of employment or pay, including all sick absences, accidents on or off duty, or special leave without pay.

C117 Where required, time sheets in a form approved by the Chief Finance Officer will:-

- (a) be completed by the employees themselves unless illiterate, when the supervisor will complete them, with a note of the circumstances;
- (b) be certified by the appropriate supervisor unless otherwise agreed by the Chief Finance Officer; and
- (c) be forwarded to the Chief Finance Officer at a time agreed by them.

C118 Claims for expenses will be in a form approved by the Chief Finance Officer and signed by the Chief Executive, or Deputy Chief Executive concerned or their nominated staff member, to certify their accuracy and reasonableness. Claims must be submitted within seven days of the end of the month in which the expenditure was incurred.

CODE OF CONDUCT FOR EMPLOYEES

C119 The Staff Code of Conduct (Part 5b of this Constitution) applies to and will be followed by all staff members. It covers:

Standards, disclosure of information, political neutrality, relationships, appointments and other employment matters, outside commitments, personal interests, equality issues, separation of roles during tendering, sponsorship, gifts and hospitalit, and use of financial resources.

Financial Regulation D – Systems and Procedures

- D1 Sound systems and procedures are essential to an effective framework of accountability and control.

General

- D2 The Chief Finance Officer is responsible for the operation of the Council's IT systems for financial and business-related purposes, for accounting systems, the form of accounts and the supporting financial records. Any changes made to the existing financial systems or the establishment of new systems must be approved by the Chief Finance Officer. However, Group Heads are responsible for the proper operation of financial processes in their own departments.
- D3 Any changes to agreed procedures by Group Heads to meet their own specific service needs should be agreed with the Chief Finance Officer.
- D4 Group Heads should ensure that their staff receive relevant financial training which has been approved by the Chief Finance Officer.
- D5 Group Heads must ensure that, where appropriate, details of system containing personal data are provided to the Data Protection Officer so that where applicable they are registered in accordance with Data Protection legislation.
- D6 Group Heads must ensure that staff are aware of their responsibilities under the freedom of information legislation and comply with guidance issued by the Group Head of Commissioning and Transformation or the Group Head of Corporate Governance.

Income and expenditure

- D7 It is the responsibility of Group Heads to ensure that a proper scheme of delegation has been established within their area and is operating effectively. The scheme of delegation should identify staff members authorised to act on the Group Heads' behalf in respect of payments, income collection and for placing orders together with the limits of their authority.

The Chief Finance Officer is responsible for specifying the procedure to be followed in ordering, making payments, collecting income and approving procedures for writing off debts as part of the overall control framework of accountability and control.

Roles and responsibilities are defined within the Council's Scheme of Delegation and operationalised through the Sundry Debt Corporate Debt Process Map (Appendix B), ensuring a structured and transparent approach to debt recovery and write-offs.

A) Payment plans must include defined timeframes, minimum instalments, and approval thresholds. These arrangements must

be documented and reviewed quarterly by the Corporate Debt Group.

INCOME

Setting Fees and Charges

- D8 Fees and charges will be reviewed at least annually as part of the budget setting process.
- D9 Any changes or new charges will be agreed by the Corporate Policy and Resources Committee or the Chief Executive or Deputy Chief Executives, as set out in the constitution.

Invoicing and Collection of Income Due

Responsibilities of the Chief Finance Officer

- D10 The Chief Finance Officer is responsible for agreeing arrangements for the collection of all income due to the Council and approving the procedures, systems and documentation for its collection.
- D11 All receipt forms, books, tickets and similar items will be ordered and supplied to Services by the Chief Finance Officer.
- D12 The Chief Finance Officer is responsible for paying all monies received into the Council's bank, normally not later than the next business day.
- D13 To approve all debts to be written-off in accordance with the scheme of delegation.

Responsibilities of Chief Executive, Deputy Chief Executives, and Group Heads

- D14 The Chief Executive, or each of the Deputy Chief Executives will provide the Chief Finance Officer with details of all amounts due.

A) A monthly review of all suppressed accounts must be carried out by the Debt Recovery Officer. Holds must be lifted promptly once disputes are resolved or balances cleared.

- D15 All monies received by a staff member on behalf of the Council will be paid without delay to the Chief Finance Officer as follows, unless direct deposit with the Council's bankers is arranged.

Cash – daily
cheques exceeding £1,000 – daily
cheques not exceeding £1000 – within 3 days

All cheques and postal orders received in any part of the Council will be crossed with "Account Borough of Spelthorne".

- D16 Every sum received by a member of Council staff will be immediately acknowledged by the issue of an official receipt, ticket or voucher, except for cheques where the Chief Finance Officer may agree other arrangements.
- D17 Every transfer of official money from one staff member to another will be immediately acknowledged by the issue of a receipt or, where appropriate, by signature in a cash accounting record.
- D18 The Chief Finance Officer shall be notified of contracts, leases and other agreements and arrangements entered into which involve the receipt of money by the Council.
- D19 The Chief Executive, Deputy Chief Executives and Group Heads will notify the Chief Finance Officer of all income due before the end of the financial year but not yet invoiced, in accordance with the closure timetable prepared each year by the Chief Finance Officer.

A. Aged debt reports must include defined age bands and be reviewed by service areas prior to Corporate Debt Meetings, with Finance providing an annual summary of statute-barred or near-barred debt.

B. Customer Services maintain a centralised, auditable spreadsheet logging all credit note numbers against the relevant accounts, ensuring traceability and compliance with internal controls.

WRITE-OFFS OF INCOME, STOCKS, FURNITURE AND EQUIPMENT

- D20 The Chief Finance Officer may write off income or physical items with a value not exceeding £5,000, or an unlimited amount where bankruptcy, liquidation, administration, or receivership proceedings have been instigated. All write-off requests must be submitted exclusively through the Council's secure digital workflow system, including mandatory fields detailing the justification, supporting documentation, and confirmation of delegated authority approval.
- Automated routing within the system will ensure segregation of duties and full compliance with the Scheme of Delegation. In addition, a formal, independently verified reconciliation of all write-off transactions against authorised approval lists will be undertaken at defined intervals, with results reported to the Chief Finance Officer and the Audit Committee to maintain transparency, accountability, and comprehensive audit traceability. ~~The Chief Finance Officer may write off income or physical items with a value not exceeding £5,000 or unlimited where there is bankruptcy, liquidation proceedings, administration or receivership proceedings have been instigated.~~
- D21 Group Heads and the Deputy Group Head for Customer Services and Deputy Chief Executive (Chief Finance Officer) may write off debts for individual outstanding balances up to the following values:
- Council Tax to the value of £5,000
 - Business Rates to the value of £9,000
 - Housing Benefits to the value of £5,000
 - Sales Ledger to the value of £3,000

D22

Updated 27 February 2025

Financial Regulations

The Chief Finance Officer must maintain a comprehensive, up-to-date record of all income written off. In addition, an independent reconciliation of all write-off transactions against the approved authorisation lists will be conducted on a scheduled basis to ensure accuracy, compliance with delegated authority, and full audit traceability.

A) Credit Note and Invoice Cancellation Process. All credit notes and invoice cancellations must follow the Council's Scheme of Delegation, include justification and support documentation, and maintain an auditable trail. A Stage 2 validation step is mandatory for credit notes, requiring independent managerial approval.

~~An up to date record of all income written off will be maintained by the Chief Finance Officer, and an independent reconciliation of write off sums to approved lists for write off will be made periodically.~~

SPONSORSHIP

- D23 Where an outside organisation wishes to sponsor or is asked to sponsor a local government activity, whether by invitation, tender, negotiation or voluntarily, the basic conventions concerning acceptance of gifts and hospitality applies, as detailed in the Code of Conduct for Employees.
- D24 A Gifts, Hospitality and Sponsorship Register is maintained by Corporate Governance, where details of any sponsorship accepted by staff on behalf of the authority will be entered.

ORDERS FOR WORKS, GOODS AND SERVICES

Responsibilities of the Chief Finance Officer

- D25 The Chief Finance Officer will approve the form and control of all official orders.

Responsibilities of Chief Executive, Deputy Chief Executives and Group Heads

- D27 The Chief Executive, Deputy Chief Executives and Group Heads are responsible for the control and use of official orders in their respective services.
- D28 The Chief Finance Officer will be notified in writing of staff authorised to issue orders on behalf of the Chief Executive and Deputy Chief Executives, with specimen signatures and details of authority limits, in accordance with the delegations approved under paragraphs A20-A23 above. Group Heads are to ensure that their department reviews periodically a list of staff members approved to authorise invoices.
- D29 All orders will be issued through the financial system except in agreed circumstances, such as for supplies of gas and electricity services, petty cash purchases or where a formal contract is to be prepared.

- D30 If it is not practicable to issue an official order when an order is placed, one will be completed immediately afterwards by the staff member placing the order, and marked "Confirmation of telephone or verbal order"
- D31 Wherever possible the Council will seek to transmit to suppliers by electronic means official purchase orders.
- D32 Official orders will be goods receipted by the staff member responsible for the works or receiving goods. It is important to provide separation of duties between staff raising and goods receipting orders. The Chief Finance Officer will agree accounts to evidence of receipt before making payment.
- D33 As a general principle and subject to Contract Standing Orders, all purchases will be open to competition wherever reasonable and cost effective.

PAYMENT OF ACCOUNTS

Responsibilities of the Chief Finance Officer

- D34 The Chief Finance Officer is responsible for examining, verifying and certifying invoices and any other payment vouchers or accounts through the financial system. Any exceptions will be returned to originating officers for certification. Details of staff members authorised to sign such records will be sent to the Chief Finance Officer by the Chief Executive and each Deputy Chief Executive, together with specimen signatures and authority limits, in accordance with the delegations described at paragraphs A18-A21 above.
- D35 To ensure that all payments for works, goods, and services are made within the statutory 30 days (Late Payment of Commercial Debts (Interest) Act 1988) unless any other terms or conditions have been agreed in writing. Any interest incurred under that act will be recharged to the cost centre of the original payment.
- D36 The Chief Finance Officer will pay accounts due at set intervals, usually not less than once every week.
- D37 A register of periodical payments will be maintained by the Chief Finance Officer for control and monitoring purposes.

Responsibilities of Chief Executive, Deputy Chief Executives and Group Heads

- D38 The certifying officer will ensure:
- (a) the work, goods or services to which the account relates have been received, carried out, examined and approved;
 - (b) the prices, extensions, calculations, trade discounts, other allowances, credits and tax are correct and agree with the official order or contract;
 - (c) the relevant expenditure has been properly incurred and is within the relevant budget;
 - (d) appropriate entries have been made in inventories, stores records or other records as required;
 - (e) the account has not been previously passed for payment and is a proper liability of the Council; and

- (f) the correct expenditure code has been inserted in respect of each item.

- D39 For purchase of land or property, details of the purchase, the name of the vendor and the purchase price and acquisition expenses will be given in a statement for certification by the Chief Executive. Full details of such purchases will be entered in the official Asset Register, to be kept by the Chief Finance Officer.
- D40 The Chief Executive, and Deputy Chief Executives will notify the Chief Finance Officer of all outstanding expenditure relating to the previous financial year in accordance with the agreed closure timetable prepared each year by the Chief Finance Officer .
- D41 Group Heads are to ensure that invoices are passed for payment promptly to ensure they can be paid within 30 days.

CONTRACTS FOR BUILDING, CONSTRUCTION OR ENGINEERING WORK, ASSOCIATED MAINTENANCE CONTRACTS AND EMPLOYMENT OF CONSULTANTS

Contract Standing Orders

- D42 The Chief Executive, and Deputy Chief Executives will ensure compliance with the Council's Contract Standing Orders.

Tenders

- D43 The Chief Finance Officer will investigate the financial status of tenderers as necessary.
- D44 No contract will be entered into unless the Chief Executive, or relevant Deputy Chief Executive is confident of the tenderer's ability to complete the contract.
- D45 The Chief Executive, and Deputy Chief Executives will provide the Chief Finance Officer and the Corporate Procurement Manager with details of all contracts for entry into the contracts register.

Contract Register

- D46 The Chief Finance Officer will maintain an online up to date register of all contracts with a total value of more than £5,000. Purchase orders which have been properly authorised in accordance with the Contract Standing Orders, will not for this purpose constitute contracts.
- D47 The Deputy Chief Executives and Group Heads will be responsible for notifying the Chief Finance Officer and the Corporate Procurement Manager with details of all new contracts and forthcoming contracts necessary to enable the register to be maintained.

Contract Payments

- D48 Payments on account to contractors will only be made on a certificate issued by the supervising officer and signed by the relevant Group Head.
- D49 The payment certificate will show the total amount of the contract, the sum paid to date, the instalment certified, the balance remaining, the retention monies, and Value Added Tax (VAT).

- D50 The Chief Executive, or Deputy Chief Executive concerned is responsible for obtaining all necessary sub-contractors' tax certificates and forwarding them to the Chief Finance Officer prior to payment.
- D51 Under the Inland Revenue Construction Industry Scheme (IR14/15(CIS)) introduced 1 August 1999, payments cannot be made to sub-contractors unless a tax certificate has been obtained.

Variations

- D52 Where practical changes are necessary which do not alter the essential nature of the original contract, as opposed to additional works, goods or service, the Chief Executive, or relevant Deputy Chief Executive may approve such variations after consultation with the Chief Finance Officer, provided the cost of the proposed variation can be met from within the total budget approved for the contract and such variation also accords to the procedures in Contract Standing Orders.
- D53 Where the approved budget would be exceeded, approval for any variation must be obtained in accordance with the provisions for amendments to budgets within these regulations.
- D54 The reasons for and details, including cost, of every variation must be recorded on the relevant contract file, specifically authorised in writing by the supervising officer and endorsed by the Chief Executive or appropriate Deputy Chief Executive, and a copy supplied to the Chief Finance Officer at the time of issue.
- D55 Documented variation orders are not required where site instructions are issued for routine repairs under a maintenance contract, such as for park seat repairs, street cleaning or clearance of fly tipping, provided a budget is built into the contract to cover such work.

Final Account

- D56 The final certificate of completion will not be issued until the supervising officer has provided the Chief Finance Officer with a detailed statement of account and all relevant documents required.
- D57 The Chief Finance Officer will examine contract final accounts, make all necessary enquiries and receive any information and explanations they require to confirm the accuracy of the accounts.
- D58 Claims from contractors for matters not clearly within the terms of any existing contract will be referred to the Group Head of Corporate Governance to consider the Council's legal liability and, where necessary, to the Chief Finance Officer for financial consideration before a settlement is reached.

Agency Arrangements

- D59 As far as practicable, Financial Regulations apply to works entered into on behalf of a body from whom the Council has accepted delegated powers, or for whom the Council acts as an agent. The requirements of any such body should be followed if they differ from these Financial Regulations or Contract Standing Orders.

Consultants

D60 In the case of contracts entered into by the Council and supervised by consultants, any agreement with the latter should include a requirement to comply with the Council's Financial Regulations.

VALUE ADDED TAX (VAT)

D61 The Chief Finance Officer is responsible for maintaining all records, accounts and claims as directed by the Valued Added Tax Act, 1983.

VAT on Payments

D62 The Chief Finance Officer will take reasonable steps to ensure that the payment documentation provided by all suppliers of goods, works, or services conforms to the requirements of a proper VAT invoice.

VAT on Receipts

D63 Each staff member responsible for raising invoices on behalf of the Council will ensure within reason that the Council has complied with relevant Value Added Tax legislation regarding the supply of its services.

Exempt Supplies

D64 For services where VAT supplies are classified as Exempt under VAT regulations, officers will ensure that all activities are fully evaluated for VAT purposes and any tax implications are identified before any expenditure is committed or contractual arrangements made.

D65 The following are usually classified as Exempt activities under VAT rules:

Land & Buildings (unless have opted to tax)	Social Services	Education	Burial & Cremation
Insurance	Finance	Health	

Payments to employees and Councillors and co-opted members

D66 The Chief Finance Officer is responsible for paying all employees and allowances to Councillors and co-opted members.

MEMBERS' ALLOWANCES

D67 The Chief Finance Officer will make payments to any Members or co-opted members entitled to claim allowances on receipt of the proper form, completed and certified in accordance with the Council's scheme for allowances.

Taxation

D68 The Chief Finance Officer is responsible for advising Management Team/Group Heads, in the light of guidance issued by appropriate bodies and relevant legislation as it applies, on all taxation issues that affect the Council.

D69 The Chief Finance Officer is responsible for maintaining the Council's tax records, making all tax payments, receiving tax credits and submitting tax returns by their due date as appropriate.

Financial Regulation E – External Arrangements

- E1 The Council provides a distinctive leadership role in the community. As part of the Community Strategy it brings together other local public, private, voluntary and community sector organisations in partnership to address local needs.
- E2 A partner can be an organisation undertaking part funding or participating as a beneficiary in a project, or a body whose nature or status give it a right or obligation to support the project, or a body working on a joint venture with the Council for the delivery or acquisition of services.

Partnerships

- E3 The Corporate Policy and Resources Committee is responsible for approving partnership arrangements with other public, private, voluntary and community sector organisations to address local needs.
- E4 The Council and strategic committees can delegate functions – including those relating to partnerships – to staff. These are set out in the scheme of delegation that forms part of the Council's Constitution and any subsequent delegations.
- E5 The Chief Executive is responsible for ensuring the due diligence and legality for all partnership arrangements.
- E6 Group Heads are responsible for informing the Chief Finance Officer and Group Head of Corporate Governance of partnership arrangements entered into so that they can ensure that accounting arrangements adopted relating to partnerships and joint ventures are satisfactory and that the overall corporate governance arrangements are satisfactory when contracts are arranged with external bodies. The Chief Finance Officer must ensure that the risks have been fully appraised before agreements are entered into with external bodies.

External funding

- E7 The Chief Finance Officer is responsible for ensuring that all funding notified by external bodies is received and properly recorded in the Council's accounts.

Work for third parties

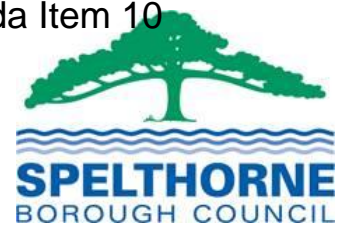
- E8 The Chief Finance Officer and the Group Head of Corporate Governance are responsible for approving the contractual framework for any work for third parties or external bodies.

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Accrual	A sum included in the final accounts to cover income or expenditure attributable to that year but for which payment was not received/made during that year. Local authorities only accrue for revenue expenditure; capital expenditure is recorded on a receipts and payments basis.
Appropriation	The transfer of ownership of land or buildings from one service to another. Transfer of the purpose for holding land from one purpose to another.
Budget	A statement of the authority's plans for revenue and capital expenditure and income over a specified period of time.
Budget Head	A specific area of activity where expenditure may be incurred or income collected.
Capital Discharged	The amount of capital expenditure which has been paid for out of revenue or other sources.
	.
Capital Receipts	Proceeds from the sale of assets and other receipts of a capital nature over £10,000.
Capital Receipts Unapplied	Capital receipts not yet used for repayment of debt, or to finance capital expenditure.
Deferred Capital Receipts	Deferred Capital Receipts are the amounts derived from sales of assets which will be received in instalments over agreed periods of time.
Fidelity Guarantee	Insurance against fraudulent losses.
Government Grants	Sums paid by central Government towards either specific services or in aid of services generally.

Net Revenue Budget	
Outturn	The actual income and expenditure for a period or financial year as disclosed by the quarterly reports or final accounts.
Precept	A rate which the Council is required to levy on behalf of a non-rating authority, e.g. Surrey County Council.
Rateable Value	The annual assumed rental value of a property, to which rate poundages are applied to arrive at rates payable.
Reserves	Funds set aside to meet future revenue and capital expenditure on specific items or as a contingency against future losses.
Revenue Contributions to Capital Outlay (REFCUS)	The financing of capital expenditure directly from revenue, as permitted under statute.
Revenue Expenditure	The day to day costs of providing services, i.e., staff costs and overheads, such as, advertising, subscriptions and vehicle running costs.
Value for Money	<p>The National Audit Office (NAO) uses three criteria to assess the value for money of government spending i.e. the optimal use of resources to achieve the intended outcomes:</p> <p>Economy: minimising the cost of resources used or required (inputs) – spending less;</p> <p>Efficiency: the relationship between the output from goods or services and the resources to produce them – spending well; and</p> <p>Effectiveness: the relationship between the intended and actual results of public spending (outcomes) – spending wisely.</p>
Virement	The transfer of funds between budget heads, once approved by the Chief Financial Officer

Voted	Sums approved by councillors for expenditure against budget heads.
Working Balances	Sum provided within the accounts to meet those expenses which are incurred in advance of the receipt of income as well as for unforeseen contingencies.



Corporate Policy and Resources Committee

Decisions taken at the meeting held on Tuesday, 17 February 2026 and Monday 23 February 2026.

Meeting Time:

7.00 pm

Meeting Venue:

Council Chamber, Council Offices, Knowle Green, Staines-upon-Thames TW18 1XB

PRESENT:

1. APOLOGIES AND SUBSTITUTES

Apologies were received from Councillor Boughtflower. Councillor Howkins was present as Councillor Boughtflower's substitute.

2. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 19 January 2026 were agreed as a correct record.

3. DISCLOSURES OF INTEREST

Councillors Attewell, Mooney and Sexton advised that they were also Surrey County Councillors.

Councillor Nichols advised that he was on the Board of Directors for Knowle Green Estates.

4. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

There were none.

5. UPDATED IMPROVEMENT AND RECOVERY PLAN*

The Committee **resolved** to approve the revised Draft Improvement and Recovery Plan subject to it being amended to reflect the areas that the Committee asked to be addressed.

6. Q2 CORPORATE KPI RESULTS

The Committee **resolved** to agree that they had been informed and assured with regard to the Corporate Key Performance Indicators data for Quarter 2 2025/26.

7. PAY AWARD 2026/27 AND PAY AWARD 2025/26 (BACK DATED AWARD)

The Committee **resolved** to make a recommendation to Council to approve a pay award for 2026/27 and a backdated pay award for 2025/26 as follows:

1. 2026/27 – a consolidated pay award of 4% on all spinal points and personal salaries (across the board increase); and

2. 2025/26 – a consolidated backdated pay award of 0.2% in recognition of the difference between the National Pay Award and Spelthorne Council's pay award of the previous two year period. Payment to be backdated to 01 April 2025.

8. PAY POLICY 2026/27

The Committee **resolved** to make a recommendation to Council to approve the Pay Policy Statement.

9. Q3 REVENUE MONITORING REPORT

The Committee **resolved** to acknowledge the forecast Revenue Outturn that reflected the latest forecast of budget holders.

10. Q3 CAPITAL MONITORING REPORT*

The Committee **resolved** to approve the quarter 3 2025/226 Capital Programme Budget Monitoring Report for 2026/27 for the Council, showing a £0.238m overspend to be covered by earmarked reserves.

11. DRAFT DETAILED REVENUE BUDGET AND MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY

The Committee **resolved** to:

Agree that it had considered the Statutory Section 25 and Section 26 Report of the Chief Finance Officer (Section 151 Officer) in Appendix J in determining:

- A) The proposed budget for 2026/27,
- B) The medium-term financial plans for 2026/27 to 2028/29 and
- C) The robustness of estimates and reserves projections; and

noted the level of earmarked reserves as at 31 March 2026 was £32.2m and available earmarked reserves forecast to be available were £27.1m as set out in Appendix F,

2. make a recommendation to Council to approve the following:

1. the General Fund Revenue Budget for 2026/27 including:

- i) The General Fund Budget Requirement of £19.318m for 2026/27,
- ii) Growth and pressures of £1.252m for 2026/27
- iii) Proposed savings of £5.752m for 2026/27

2. An increase in the Council's element of the Council Tax for a band D property by £6.64 per annum for 2026/27 (2.90%), giving a band D Council Tax of £235.50 per year, excluding the precepts from Surrey County Council and the Surrey Police and Crime Commissioner.

3. Note the following Council Tax increases and precepts as detailed in Appendix I:

- a) Surrey County Council had increased Council Tax for a Band D property to £1,938.42 per annum, a 4.99% increase on 2025/26, resulting in a precept of £80,014,295.
- b) The Police and Crime Commissioner for Surrey had increased Council Tax for a Band D property to £352.57 per annum, a £15 or 4.4% increase on 2025/26, resulting in a precept of £14,553.420.
- c) This resulted in an overall Band D Council Tax of £2,526.49 for Spelthorne

residents, an increase of £113.71 (4.5%) per annum.

d) The Spelthorne Borough Council element of the Council Tax was 9.3% of the total bill for Spelthorne residents

4. The calculations for determining the Council Tax requirement for the year 2026/27 in accordance with the Local Government Finance Act 1992 as set out in the Council Tax Resolution in Appendix I,
5. The Fees and Charges for 2026/27 as set out in Appendix H; and
6. The continuation of the complete disregard of war pension/armed forces pension income from benefit calculations as set out in paragraph 2.22 of this report

12. CAPITAL STRATEGY AND CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2026-2027

The Committee **resolved** to make a recommendation to Council to consider and approve the proposed Capital Strategy and Capital Programme for 2026/27 to 2029 as set out in the report.

13. TREASURY MANAGEMENT STRATEGY 2026/27

This item was considered at the carry-over meeting held Monday 23 February

The Committee **resolved** to make a recommendation to Council to approve the Treasury Management Strategy for 2026/27 including:

1. The Annual Investment Strategy for 2026/27,
2. The Minimum Revenue Provision Policy Statement for 2026/27; and
3. The Prudential Indicators for 2026/27.

14. FORWARD PLAN

This item was considered at the carry-over meeting held Monday 23 February

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

15. EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC & PRESS (EXEMPT BUSINESS)

Proposed by Councillor Bateson
Seconded by Councillor Gibson

The Committee **resolved** to exclude the public and press for the discussion of the remaining items, in view of the likely disclosure of exempt information within the meaning of Part 3 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972 as amended by the Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985 and by the Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) Order 2006.

16. URGENT ACTIONS

This item was considered at the carry-over meeting held Monday 23 February

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

17. AFFORDABLE HOUSING DELIVERY WITH COMMUTED SUM*

This item was considered at the carry-over meeting held Monday 23 February

The Committee **resolved** to:

1. Approve Option 1, as outlined in the report; and
2. Authorise the Strategic Housing Lead, in consultation with the Section 151 Officer and the Group Head of Community Wellbeing and Housing, to negotiate acquisitions based on Option 1, with reference to best value principles.

18. DISPOSAL OF A COMMERCIAL OFFICE ASSET

The Committee **resolved** to:

1. Agree in principle the offer and the proposed disposal,
2. Make a recommendation to Council to:
 - a) Approve the proposed disposal on the terms set out in this report,
 - b) Delegate authority to the Chief Finance Officer and Group Head of Assets, in consultation with the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Corporate Policy and Resources Committee and the chair and Vice-Chair of the Commercial Assets Sub-Committee, to agree minor variations to the Heads of Terms and the sale price within a tolerance of 10% of the agreed price; and
 - c) Delegate authority to the Group Head of Corporate Governance to enter into a transfer to complete the disposal and any ancillary legal documentation required in relation to the proposed disposal.

NOTES:-

- (1) *Members are reminded that the “call-in” procedure as set out in Part 4b of the Constitution, shall not apply to the following matters:*
 - (a) *Urgent decisions as defined in Paragraph 9. of the Call-in Scrutiny Procedure Rules;*
 - (b) *Decisions to award a contract following a lawful procurement process;*
 - (c) *Those decisions:*
 - i. *reserved to full Council*
 - ii. *on regulatory matters*
 - iii. *on member conduct issues.*
- (2) *Those matters to which Note (1) applies, if any, are identified with an asterisk [*] in the above Minutes.*
- (3) *Within three working days of the date on which this decision is published, not less than three members from two or more political groups by submission of the standard call-in pro-forma, may ask for that decision to be referred to a meeting of the Corporate Policy and Resources Committee for review (call-in). The completed pro-forma must be received by the Proper Officer by 5pm three working days after publication of the decision.*
- (4) *The members exercising the right of call-in must not be members of the Committee which considered the matter.*
- (5) *When calling in a decision for review the members doing so must demonstrate the following exceptional circumstances:*

- a. *Evidence which suggests that the decision maker, did not take the decision in accordance with the principles set out in Article 11 (Decision Making); or*
 - b. *Evidence that the decision fails to support one or more of the Council's Corporate Plan priorities to the detriment of the majority of the Borough's residents; or*
 - c. *Evidence that explicit Council Policy or legal requirements were disregarded.*
- (6) *Once the request for 'call-in' has been deemed valid by the Monitoring Officer the matter will be suspended until the call-in procedure has been exhausted.*
 - (7) *The Chief Executive, in consultation with the relevant officer, will determine if the interests of the Council or Borough would be prejudiced by a delay in implementing a decision such that the call-in cannot wait until the next ordinary meeting of the Corporate Policy and Resources Committee.*
 - (8) *Where the call-in cannot wait until the next ordinary meeting, the Monitoring Officer will arrange an extraordinary meeting of the Corporate Policy and Resources Committee to review the decision subject to call-in at the earliest possible opportunity.*
 - (9) *In exceptional cases, where there is clear evidence that a delay to the implementation of a decision would lead to a specific and significant financial or reputational harm to the Council, a call-in request may be refused by the Chief Executive following consultation with the Chair and Vice-Chair of Corporate Policy and Resources Committee.*
 - (10) *In reviewing a matter referred to it under the call-in scrutiny procedure rules, the Corporate Policy and Resources Committee shall follow the procedure for dealing with call-in scrutiny at its meetings as set out in Part 4b of the Constitution.*
 - (11) *The deadline of three working days for "call in" in relation to the above decisions by the Committee is the close of business on 27 February 2026.*

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Report of the Chair on the work of the Audit Committee

This report gives an overview of the key items considered by the Committee at its meetings on 24 February 2026, and 26 March 2026.

At the Audit Committee held on 24 February 2026, the following business was considered:

1. Audit Progress Report and Sector Updates from the External Auditor

1.1 The Committee received the Audit Progress Report and sector updates from Grant Thornton.

1.2 The Committee **resolved** to note the Audit Progress Report and sector updates from Grant Thornton.

2. Audited Statement of Accounts

2.1 The Committee received the final Statement of Accounts and Audit Report for 2024-25.

2.2 The Committee **resolved** to approve the Statement of Accounts for 2024/25 and the Letter of Representation; and to accept the external auditors' report and disclaimer opinion.

3. Improvement and Recovery Plan Assurance Report

3.1 The Committee received an update on the assurance work associated with the Improvement and Recovery Plan.

3.2 The Committee **resolved** to note the arrangements for the governance of the Improvement and Recovery Plan; progress made to date on Improvement and Recovery Plan actions and the shift to tracking outcomes; and the recommendation for Improvement and Recovery Plan information coming to Audit Committee as amended to prioritise clarification on roles.

4. Counter Fraud, Bribery and Corruption Strategy

4.1 The Committee received a review of the Council's Counter Fraud, Bribery and Corruption Strategy.

4.2 The Committee **resolved** to acknowledge the annual review of the Council's Counter Fraud, Bribery and Corruption Strategy; to approve the proposed amendments to the Council's Counter Fraud, Bribery and Corruption Strategy; and to recommend to Council that the Constitution be updated with the revised Council's Counter Fraud, Bribery and Corruption Strategy.

5. Governance Assurance Update

- 5.1 The Committee received an update on progress with implementing the Council's new governance assurance approach to risk management.
- 5.2 The Committee **resolved** to note the update.

At the Audit Committee held on 26 March 2026, the following business was considered:

1. Internal Audit Charter and Annual Audit Plan 2026-27

- 1.1 The Committee received the Internal Audit Charter 2026/27 and the Internal Audit Annual Audit Plan 2026/27
- 1.2 The Committee **resolved** that the Internal Audit Charter 2026/27 be approved, and that the Internal Audit Annual Audit Plan 2026/27 be approved.

2. Internal Audit Progress Report

- 2.1 The Committee received the Internal Audit Progress report for February 2026.
- 2.2 The Committee **resolved** to note the Internal Audit Progress Report for February 2026 and to approve the adjustments to the Internal Audit Plan 2025/26.

3. External Quality Assessment – Final Report

- 3.1 The Committee considered a report reflecting the outcome from the External Quality Assessment of the Southern Internal Audit Partnership against the new Global Internal Audit Standards in the UK Public Sector
- 3.2 The Committee **resolved** to note the report of the external assessor, and the associated action plan addressing the suggested opportunities for future development.

4. Governance Assurance Update

- 4.1 The Committee received an update on progress in implementing the Governance Assurance approach to risk management.
- 4.2 The Committee **resolved** to note the update on the Governance Assurance approach to risk management.

Report on the Work of the Licensing Committee and Sub-Committees

This report gives an overview of the key items considered by members of the Licensing Committee and Sub-Committees at their meetings on the following date:

Licensing Sub-Committee – 27 February 2026

The Sub-Committee met to consider an application for a Review of the Premises Licence at Bobby's Food and Wine, 163 High Street, Staines-upon-Thames TW18 4PA. The respondent's agent made a request for the meeting to be adjourned for a period of one month to allow the sale and transfer of the premises licence. The Sub-Committee **resolved** to adjourn the hearing to 27 March 2026 if the premises sale had not taken place.

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Report of the Chair on the Work of the Planning Committee

This report gives an overview of the key items considered by the Committee at its meeting on 4 March 2026.

1. Planning Committee Meeting – 4 March 2026

1.1 The Committee considered two applications.

1.2 **Application No. 25/00642/RVC** - Variation to condition 2 (revised plans), condition 7 (soft and hard landscape) and condition 18 (car parking management plan) imposed upon planning permission 20/01486/FUL for the construction of a new leisure centre, to allow revised parking arrangements, amended location of EV charging points and other associated works to the car park.

1.3 The application was **approved** subject to an informative being added to the decision notice (14. The applicant must ensure that the height-restriction barrier at the car park entrance can be adjusted to permit emergency vehicle access when necessary).

1.4 **Application No. 26/00011/RVC** – Removal of Condition 4 (restricting the use of the extended property to Use Class C3 only) attached to planning permission 25/01088/HOU

1.5 The application was **refused**.

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Decisions taken at the meeting held on Thursday, 12 March 2026.

Meeting Time:

7.00 pm

Meeting Venue:

Council Chamber, Knowle Green, Staines-upon-Thames TW18 1XB

PRESENT: Councillor Howard Williams (Chair), Councillor Sinead Mooney (Vice-Chair), Councillor Chris Bateson, Councillor Sean Beatty, Councillor John Boughtflower, Councillor Jolyon Caplin, Councillor Darren Clarke, Councillor Rebecca Geach, Councillor Suraj Gyawali and Councillor Joanne Sexton

5. UPDATE ON SPELTHORNE BUSINESS GROWTH SERVICE

The Committee **resolved** to note the update on the Spelthorne Business Growth Service.

6. UPDATE ON ASHFORD BID PROJECT

The Committee **resolved** to note the update on the Ashford Business Improvement District project.

7. HSR/SLR WORKING GROUP UPDATES

The Committee **resolved** to note the update on Heathrow Rail.

8. CHAIR'S UPDATE

The Committee **resolved** to note the updates.

NOTES:-

- (1) *Members are reminded that the "call-in" procedure as set out in Part 4b of the Constitution, shall not apply to the following matters:*
- (a) *Urgent decisions as defined in Paragraph 9. of the Call-in Scrutiny Procedure Rules;*
 - (b) *Decisions to award a contract following a lawful procurement process;*
 - (c) *Those decisions:*
 - i. *reserved to full Council*
 - ii. *on regulatory matters*
 - iii. *on member conduct issues.*
- (2) *Those matters to which Note (1) applies, if any, are identified with an asterisk [*] in the above Minutes.*

- (3) *Within three working days of the date on which this decision is published, not less than three members from two or more political groups by submission of the standard call-in pro-forma, may ask for that decision to be referred to a meeting of the Corporate Policy and Resources Committee for review (call-in). The completed pro-forma must be received by the Proper Officer by 5pm three working days after publication of the decision.*
- (4) *The members exercising the right of call-in must not be members of the Committee which considered the matter.*
- (1) *When calling in a decision for review the members doing so must demonstrate the following exceptional circumstances:*
 - a. *Evidence which suggests that the decision maker, did not take the decision in accordance with the principles set out in Article 11 (Decision Making); or*
 - b. *Evidence that the decision fails to support one or more of the Council's Corporate Plan priorities to the detriment of the majority of the Borough's residents; or*
 - c. *Evidence that explicit Council Policy or legal requirements were disregarded.*
- (6) *Once the request for 'call-in' has been deemed valid by the Monitoring Officer the matter will be suspended until the call-in procedure has been exhausted.*
- (7) *The Chief Executive, in consultation with the relevant officer, will determine if the interests of the Council or Borough would be prejudiced by a delay in implementing a decision such that the call-in cannot wait until the next ordinary meeting of the Corporate Policy and Resources Committee.*
- (8) *Where the call-in cannot wait until the next ordinary meeting, the Monitoring Officer will arrange an extraordinary meeting of the Corporate Policy and Resources Committee to review the decision subject to call-in at the earliest possible opportunity.*
- (9) *In exceptional cases, where there is clear evidence that a delay to the implementation of a decision would lead to a specific and significant financial or reputational harm to the Council, a call-in request may be refused by the Chief Executive following consultation with the Chair and Vice-Chair of Corporate Policy and Resources Committee.*
- (10) *In reviewing a matter referred to it under the call-in scrutiny procedure rules, the Corporate Policy and Resources Committee shall follow the procedure for dealing with call-in scrutiny at its meetings as set out in Part 4b of the Constitution.*
- (11) *The deadline of three working days for "call in" in relation to the above decisions by the Committee is the close of business on 18 March 2026.*

Decisions taken at the meeting held on Monday, 16 March 2026.

Meeting Time:

7.00 pm

Meeting Venue:

Council Chamber, Council Offices, Knowle Green, Staines-upon-Thames TW18 1XB

PRESENT: Councillor John Turner (Chair), Councillor John Boughtflower (Vice-Chair), Councillor Laura Barker, Councillor Malcolm Beecher, Councillor Tony Burrell, Councillor Jolyon Caplin, Councillor Darren Clarke, Councillor Sue Doran, Councillor Kathy Grant, Councillor Karen Howkins and Councillor Howard Williams

2. ADOPTION OF THE SPELTHORNE LOCAL PLAN

Committee **resolved** to:

1. Note that the Council is still under Direction 3 as set out in the letter from the Minister of State for Housing and Planning dated 14 September 2023 (Appendix A) that requires on conclusion of the examination of the Plan that consideration is given to adopting the Plan, including any main modifications recommended by the Planning Inspector.
2. Note the contents of the Inspector's Report on the Examination of the Spelthorne Local Plan (included as Appendix B1 and B2).
3. Recommend to Council the adoption of the Spelthorne Local Plan 2024-2039/40 (as set out in Appendix C), which incorporates the Main Modifications, as set out in the Inspector's Report on the Examination of the Spelthorne Local Plan, and other Additional (minor) Modifications (as set out in Appendix D).
4. Recommend to Council that the Policies Map is adopted and published alongside the Spelthorne Local Plan 2024-2039/40.
5. Note the Spelthorne Local Plan 2024-2039/40 replaces the following documents and by adopting the Spelthorne Local Plan 2024-2039/40 they no longer form part of the Council's development plan:
 - a. Core Strategy and Policies Development Plan Document (adopted 26 February 2009),
 - b. Spelthorne Allocations Development Plan Document (adopted 17 December 2009), and
 - c. Spelthorne Borough Local Plan 2001 Saved Policies and Proposals as at 28 September 2007 (Updated December 2009).
6. Recommend to Council that delegated authority is given to the Deputy Chief Executive in agreement with the Chair of the Environment and Sustainability Committee, to agree any further (non-material) Additional Modifications to the Plan and its accompanying Policies Map before its publication.

7. Recommend to Council to accept the content of the Sustainability Appraisal/Strategic Environmental Assessment (SA/SEA) Report (as set out in Appendix F) and Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA): Addendum of Proposed Modifications (as set out in Appendix G), and publish them in accordance with Regulation 16 of the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004.

3. **MANAGING THE DEVELOPMENT OF HOUSES IN MULTIPLE OCCUPATIONS (HMO) SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING DOCUMENT**

The Committee **resolved** to recommend to Council to:

1. Adopt the Houses in Multiple Occupation Supplementary Planning Document (HMO SPD) as set out at Appendix 1; and
2. Delegate authority to the Deputy Chief Executive in consultation with the Chair of the Environment and Sustainability Committee to make minor amendments prior to publication including a summary and glossary in the final version of the SPD.

NOTES:-

- (1) *Members are reminded that the “call-in” procedure as set out in Part 4b of the Constitution, shall not apply to the following matters:*
 - (a) *Urgent decisions as defined in Paragraph 9. of the Call-in Scrutiny Procedure Rules;*
 - (b) *Decisions to award a contract following a lawful procurement process;*
 - (c) *Those decisions:*
 - i. *reserved to full Council*
 - ii. *on regulatory matters*
 - iii. *on member conduct issues.*
- (2) *Those matters to which Note (1) applies, if any, are identified with an asterisk [*] in the above Minutes.*
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 - b. *Evidence that the decision fails to support one or more of the Council’s Corporate Plan priorities to the detriment of the majority of the Borough’s residents; or*
 - c. *Evidence that explicit Council Policy or legal requirements were disregarded.*

- (6) *Once the request for 'call-in' has been deemed valid by the Monitoring Officer the matter will be suspended until the call-in procedure has been exhausted.*
- (7) *The Chief Executive, in consultation with the relevant officer, will determine if the interests of the Council or Borough would be prejudiced by a delay in implementing a decision such that the call-in cannot wait until the next ordinary meeting of the Corporate Policy and Resources Committee.*
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- (10) *In reviewing a matter referred to it under the call-in scrutiny procedure rules, the Corporate Policy and Resources Committee shall follow the procedure for dealing with call-in scrutiny at its meetings as set out in Part 4b of the Constitution.*
- (11) *The deadline of three working days for "call in" in relation to the above decisions by the Committee is the close of business on 20 March 2026.*

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Decisions taken at the meeting held on Monday, 16 March 2026.

Meeting Time:

1.30 pm

Meeting Venue:

Council Chamber, Knowle Green, Staines-upon-Thames TW18 1XB

PRESENT: Councillor Lawrence Nichols (Chair), Councillor Tony Burrell, Councillor Rose Chandler and Councillor Howard Williams

9. INTERIM UPDATE ON ASSET RATIONALISATION PLAN

The Sub-Committee **resolved** to note the update on the Asset Rationalisation Plan.

10. COMMERCIAL PORTFOLIO UPDATE

The Sub-Committee **resolved** to note the updates.

NOTES:-

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- (10) *In reviewing a matter referred to it under the call-in scrutiny procedure rules, the Corporate Policy and Resources Committee shall follow the procedure for dealing with call-in scrutiny at its meetings as set out in Part 4b of the Constitution.*
- (11) *The deadline of three working days for "call in" in relation to the above decisions by the Committee is the close of business on 20 March 2026.*

Decisions taken at the meeting held on Thursday, 19 March 2026.

Meeting Time:

7.00 pm

Meeting Venue:

Council Chamber, Council Offices, Knowle Green, Staines-upon-Thames TW18 1XB

PRESENT: Councillor John Turner (Chair), Councillor Laura Barker, Councillor Malcolm Beecher, Councillor Tony Burrell, Councillor Jolyon Caplin, Councillor Darren Clarke, Councillor Sue Doran, Councillor Kathy Grant, Councillor Karen Howkins, Councillor Anant Mathur, Councillor Denise Saliagopoulos, and Councillor Howard Williams

4. STATUTORY CONSULTATION ON SPELTHORNE AFFORDABLE HOUSING SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING DOCUMENT (SPD) AND CLIMATE CHANGE SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING DOCUMENT (SPD)

The Committee **resolved** to:

1. Agree that the consultation draft version of the Spelthorne Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) be published for a four-week public consultation starting on 8 May 2026, under Regulation 12 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) Regulations 2012.
2. Agree that delegated authority is given to the Deputy Chief Executive in agreement with the Chair of the Environment and Sustainability Committee, to agree any minor revisions to the draft document prior to the consultation.
3. Agree that the delegated authority is given to the Deputy Chief Executive in agreement with the Chair of the Environment and Sustainability Committee, to agree the consultation draft version of the updated Climate Change Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) and that this draft be published for a four-week public consultation starting on 8 May 2026, under Regulation 12 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) Regulations 2012.

5. SPELTHORNE RECYCLING BRING SITES

The Committee **resolved** to authorise the Group Head Neighbourhood Services to close the following bring sites located around the borough:

- Hadfield Road, Stanwell
- White House Depot, Ashford
- Woodlands Parade, Ashford
- High Street, Shepperton

6. PUBLIC CONSULTATION FOR PROPOSED MULTI-USE GAMES AREA (MUGA) AT MEMORIAL GARDENS, STAINES UPON THAMES

The Committee **resolved** to:

1. Authorise the Group Head Neighbourhood Services to commence a public

consultation exercise for the proposed new Multi-Use Games Area to be built in Memorial Gardens, Staines-upon-Thames

2. Subject to the Group Head Neighbourhood Services and the Group Head Corporate Governance, in consultation with the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Environment and Sustainability Committee reviewing the consultation responses and being satisfied that, on balance, the feedback indicates overall support for the proposal and that any issues raised can be appropriately addressed, authorise the Group Head Neighbourhood Services to:
 - a. Appoint appropriately qualified ecological specialists to undertake the necessary ecological appraisals and surveys required to support the planning application for the proposed installation of a new Multi-Use Games Area;
 - b. Undertake a procurement exercise to establish availability of resource and the indicative costs of the works; and
 - c. Submit a planning application for the construction and installation of a new recreation facility, including associated fencing, safety surfacing, and site preparation works at Memorial Gardens, Staines-upon-Thames.
3. Group Head Neighbourhood Services to report back to the Environment and Sustainability committee with feedback from the consultation, procurement exercise, and planning meeting.

7. THE SPELTHORNE BOROUGH COUNCIL OFF-STREET PARKING PLACES (AMENDMENT NO.3) ORDER 2026

The Committee **resolved** to recommend to Corporate Policy and Resources Committee the selected proposed variations to the Spelthorne Borough Council Off-Street Parking Places (Amendment No. 3) Order 2026:

1. Retain the current one-hour nil tariff period in car parks and make no changes to the order or the tariffs;
2. Removal of Abbey Drive, Dumsey Meadow, Old Bathing Station and Green Street from Schedule 1 chargeable tariffs, and addition of same car parks to Schedule 3 with 11 hours maximum stay.
3. Introduce a “no return within the same charging period” in all car parks listed in Appendix 2 Schedule 1.
4. Revise the Parking Order map for Spelthorne Leisure Centre, to accurately reflect the new layout as detailed in Appendix 3.
5. Introduce other minor amendments as detailed in Appendix 1 and 2 and Schedules 1, 2, and 3.
6. Change of the Staines-upon-Thames Short and Long Stay tariffs and introduction of reference to the charges being per parking session, as detailed in Appendix 2, Schedule 4 and Schedule 5.

8. HALLIFORD RECREATION GROUND

The Committee **resolved** to authorise the Group Head Neighbourhood Services to:

1. Relocate the play facility in the recreation ground from its current position in a wooded area to open space within the same park;
2. Undertake all necessary ground works to facilitate the move; and
3. Undertake ground restoration and tree planting in the wooded area once the equipment and fencing have been removed.

NOTES:-

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 - b. *Evidence that the decision fails to support one or more of the Council's Corporate Plan priorities to the detriment of the majority of the Borough's residents; or*
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 - (10) *In reviewing a matter referred to it under the call-in scrutiny procedure rules, the Corporate Policy and Resources Committee shall follow the procedure for dealing with call-in scrutiny at its meetings as set out in Part 4b of the Constitution.*

- (11) *The deadline of three working days for "call in" in relation to the above decisions by the Committee is the close of business on 25 March 2026.*

Decisions taken at the meeting held on Tuesday, 24 March 2026.

Meeting Time:

7.00 pm

Meeting Venue:

Council Chamber, Council Offices, Knowle Green, Staines-upon-Thames TW18 1XB

PRESENT: Councillor Sue Doran (Chair), Councillor Michelle Arnold, Councillor Chris Bateson, Councillor Med Buck, Councillor Rose Chandler, Councillor Sandra Dunn, Councillor Rebecca Geach and Councillor Kathy Grant

1. MINUTES

The Committee **resolved** to agree that the minutes of the meeting held on 13 January 2026 and the extraordinary meeting held 27 January 2026 were a correct record of proceedings.

2. DISCLOSURES OF INTEREST

There were none.

3. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

There were none.

4. FOOD AND HEALTH AND SAFETY SERVICE PLAN*

The Committee **resolved** to adopt both the Food Safety Service Plan for 2026/27 and the Safety Service Plan for 2026/27 as outlined in the report.

5. COMMUNITY SERVICES SOCIAL IMPACT REPORT*

The Committee **resolved** to:

1. Note the findings of the report; that it evidenced the social, health and economic value generated by the Council's Community Centre and Meals on Wheels Service (and associated provision) for residents and public sector partners,
2. Consider how the evidence could be used with partners to support investment and

partnership opportunities, aligned to health and care priorities including prevention and healthy ageing. Agreed for report authors to share the report with the West Surrey Health Board, Neighbourhood Steering Group and The Surrey Health and Wellbeing Board and onward transmission to voluntary joint committees to highlight the positive long-term impact of our services,

3. Approve the request for the authors to develop a mini-series of case studies showcasing the experiences of individuals who access our community services. These will highlight the personal impact of the services and the broader, system wide impacts and cost savings for partner services, to be shared on social media and the Spelthorne Bulletin.

6. FORWARD PLAN

The Committee received the forward plan for future Committee business.

Councillor Bateson proposed that “Eclipse Leisure Centre Monitoring” be added as a regular item on the committee’s agenda for the Committee to receive progress updates. The Committee agreed this proposal.

The Committee **resolved** to note the forward plan, subject to the inclusion of the proposed item.

NOTES:-

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- (11) The deadline of three working days for "call in" in relation to the above decisions by the Committee is the close of business on **Friday 27 March 2026**.*

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Decisions taken at the meeting held on Monday, 20 April 2026.

Meeting Time:

7.00 pm

Meeting Venue:

Council Chamber, Council Offices, Knowle Green, Staines-upon-Thames TW18 1XB

PRESENT: Councillor Joanne Sexton (Chair), Councillor Chris Bateson (Vice-Chair), Councillor Jon Button, Councillor Darren Clarke, Councillor Sue Doran, Councillor Sandra Dunn, Councillor Michele Gibson, Councillor Karen Howkins, Councillor Lawrence Nichols and Councillor Howard Williams

5. IMPROVEMENT AND RECOVERY PLAN PROGRESS UPDATE*

The Committee **resolved** to recommend to Council approval of the Improvement and Recovery Plan Progress Report for onward submission to the Commissioners.

6. ADOPTION OF A COMMERCIAL STRATEGY FOR SPELTHORNE BOROUGH COUNCIL

The Committee **resolved** to approve the adoption of the Commercial Strategy covering all Council commercial activity.

7. THE SPELTHORNE BOROUGH COUNCIL OFF-STREET PARKING PLACES (AMENDMENT NO.3) ORDER 2026*

The Committee **resolved** to:

1. Retain the current one-hour nil tariff period in car parks and make no changes to the order or the tariffs
2. Removal of Abbey Drive, Dumsey Meadow, Old Bathing Station and Green Street from Schedule 1 chargeable tariffs, and addition of same car parks to Schedule 3 with 11 hours maximum stay.
3. Introduce a “no return within the same charging period” in all car parks listed in Appendix 2 Schedule 1
4. Revise the Parking Order map for Spelthorne Leisure Centre, to accurately reflect the new layout, as detailed in Appendix 3.
5. Introduce other minor amendments as detailed in Appendix 1 and 2 and schedules 1, 2 and 3.
6. Change of the Staines-upon-Thames Short and Long Stay tariffs and introduction of reference to the charges being per parking session, as detailed in Appendix 2, Schedule 4 and Schedule 5.

8. AMENDMENTS TO THE CORPORATE DEBT POLICY AND FINANCIAL REGULATIONS*

The Committee **resolved** to:

1. Approve the amendments to the Corporate Debt Policy required following the Southern Internal Audit Partnership audit conducted in October 2025.

2. Approve the proposed amendments to the Financial Regulations (Part 4d of the Constitution) as detailed in Appendix A; and
3. Subject to the comments from the Committee System Working Group, to recommend to Council to adopt the revised Financial Regulations and for the Constitution to be amended accordingly.

9. WRITE-OFF REPORT - TEMPORARY ACCOMMODATION

The Committee **resolved** to approve the Sundry Debt write-off of £50,695 which relates to irrecoverable debt relating to eight Bed and Breakfast temporary accommodation cases and one emergency accommodation case.

10. CORPORATE KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATOR REPORT - QUARTER 3 2025/26

The Committee **resolved** to agree it was informed and assured in relation to the Corporate Key Performance Indicators data for Quarter 3 2025/26.

11. EQUALITY DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION STRATEGY

The Committee **resolved** to approve the Equality Diversity and Inclusion Strategy.

12. SOLAR CANOPY PROJECT CLOSURE REPORT

The Committee **resolved** to agree to formally end the solar canopy project.

NOTES:-

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