

APPENDIX A – The Council’s risk exposure to wider externalities and impact - Risk Assessment

(February 2023 Coordinated and analysed by Internal Audit Manager, Punita Talwar)

The Risk Assessment focuses on wider externalities each representing significant risk impact to the Council, its operations, and local communities. The extent to which these risks can be effectively reduced and mitigated continue to be significantly impacted by evolving externalities. Spelthorne’s operations remain influenced by these external challenges and pressures, as is the case for other Councils. Due to these externalities, there are many activities that the Council cannot directly control/mitigate, or influence and continued recognition is important. The current controls and mitigation measures are in the risk assessment. RC refers to risk category e.g., RC.A = Risk category A

The main externalities considered and highlighted in the risk assessment include:

Macro-economic environment *This focuses on the aggregate changes in the economy as a whole such as unemployment, growth rate, GDP, and inflation. References to the Cost-of-Living crisis link directly to inflationary pressures.*

Geo-Political risk – *The risk associated with wars, terrorist acts, tensions between states that affect the normal course of international relations.*

For the purpose of this reporting, we are focussing on those externalities that carry the most significant impact for the Council and the communities it serves. (Externalities can be wide ranging) Please refer to next page for the ‘Risk Scoring Matrix’ and plotting of these risks to determine relative significance and prioritisation. Elements of risk categories A, B and C are also referred to in the Council’s Corporate (strategic) risk register. **Direction of Travel** - Our assessment demonstrates that for the current review taken place at February 2023 risks are assessed and ranked at the same level across all three broad risk categories (RC.A Economic Activity, RC.B Financial Sustainability & Resilience and R.C. C Housing and Communities) i.e., there has been no movement from the previous review of November 2022. There are no changes to report in terms of RAG (Red/Amber/Green) ratings or positioning of risks on the risk matrix below.

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Evaluating risks and Risk Matrix
(In accordance with the Risk Management Policy)

The Council evaluates its risks on a four-point scale on the likelihood of the risk occurring and the impact caused should the risk occur. Risks are evaluated with their current controls and current mitigations in place. Risks are plotted on a risk matrix (see below) and prompt management action should be taken on those risks that fall into the red zone. Planned management action is considered for “amber” risks while “green” risks are regarded as acceptable. The risks associated with wider externalities have been plotted on the graph below.

Impact	4 (Catastrophic)				
	3 (Major)			Housing, Homelessness, and Food Supply chain RC.C (i,ii,iii) Macro-economic climate, lack of control over global situation etc RC.A (i) (ii) (iv)(v) (vi)	Financial Sustainability and resilience risks RC.B (i) (ii) (iii)(iv) Geopolitical & refugees R.C (iv) Inflation and risk of business failure RC.A (iii)
	2 (Medium)				
	1 (Trivial)				
		1 (Rare)	2 (Unlikely)	3 (Likely)	4 (Almost certain)
		Likelihood			

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<p>A. ECONOMIC ACTIVITY</p> <p>RED AND AMBER RISKS</p> <p>AMBER(i) <u>Risk</u>: Challenges of the macro-economic environment on local economic activity compounded by the Cost-of-Living Crisis continues to place demands on a range of Council Services and impacts the Council’s financial position (the impact on the Council’s finances is highlighted under section B).</p> <p>AMBER (ii) <u>Risk</u>: Whilst Council actions aim to support and influence sustained local economic recovery and growth, these actions alone can only have a limited impact in controlling outcomes due to the overarching effects and long term uncertainty</p>	<p>(i)3</p> <p>(ii)3</p>	<p>(i)3</p> <p>(ii)3</p>	<p>(i)Local economic recovery measures are referred to below at A(ii) and A(iii).</p> <p>(ii)An Economic Prosperity Strategy has been developed (2023 - 2028) which addresses the key actions facing the borough. It incorporates a detailed strategy action plan detailing performance management measures in anticipating outcomes. The draft was agreed at Economic development Committee on 29 September</p>	<p>The following actions are relevant for all the risks identified under the broader risk category A “Economic Activity”</p> <p>ONGOING ACTION: The local economic situation is regularly reviewed and reported, considering the inflationary pressures, increased borrowing costs due to rising interest rates and Cost of Living crisis.</p> <p>ONGOING ACTION: Reviewed February 2023 Regular reporting on actions and tasks completed / in progress takes place at the Economic Development Committee.</p>

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<p>of the macroeconomic environment, market volatility, global drivers, and geopolitical uncertainty such as conflicts in Ukraine and political sanctions – over which as a whole the Council has incredibly little influence.</p> <p>RED (iii) <u>Risk</u>: Uncertainty and volatility for global economy. UK inflation accelerated to 10.5% in the year to December 2022 , (with predictions for steady decrease after March 2023), putting increased pressure and strain on businesses, households, and the Council’s budget. This presents the threat of an increased level of business failures as a result of wider economic</p>	(iii)4	(iii)3	<p>2022 and the final document has been approved on 12 January 2023.</p> <p>The Town Centres and Shopping Parades Strategy 2023 was approved January 2023 and sets out a series of key actions for our smaller shopping areas and parades. These will provide targeted support and interventions, with timescales and measures of success clearly identified.</p> <p>The Council has a well-established business incubator to support entrepreneurs and start-up businesses are able to book/rent space on a flexible basis (and assisting with cost of high energy bills which might otherwise result in businesses folding), and receive mentoring/advice from other businesses.</p> <p>The Council has received funding for a further 12 months from DWP for a Skills and Employment Hub (to provide support into employment / training / education for younger and the older age groups). The ‘offer’ is being expanded from a Youth Hub (as was) to reflect the need to address an</p>	

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<p>instability (elevated inflationary pressures and increase in borrowing costs due to rising interest rates) and the need to pass on increased costs to the consumer.</p>			<p>identified need to bring older talent back into the workplace.</p> <p>Shared Prosperity Fund Investment Plan(SPFIP) submitted to government in August 2022 highlighting local priorities and projects to assist with economic regeneration (£1m to spend over three years but with 88% backloaded to 2024/25). On 10 October 2022, Corporate Policy and Resources Committee approved frontloading of Shared Prosperity Fund schemes from the retained business rates retention reserve. This is to ensure that projects can be delivered in the immediate future (when they are needed) rather than waiting for government funding to come forward in 2024/25.</p> <p>Government approved the SPF Investment Plan January 2023 (awaiting 2022/23 payment). Projects to be delivered: Skills and Employment Hub (see above/earlier reference) Business coaching, support growth through innovation grants Community gardens</p>	

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<p>AMBER (iv) <u>Risk:</u> Ongoing disruptions to supply chains caused by a range of factors (changes in migration and trading regimes following Brexit; surges in consumer demand; continued labour shortages; international political sanctions). This has led to shortages of certain</p>	(iv)3	(iv)3	<p>Climate audit and energy saving for businesses Upskilling voluntary sector for external funding opportunities Cultural kick starter – Oast House and outreach across the community</p> <p>At the January 2023 meeting of the Economic Development Committee, a business support consultancy set out assistance provided to small business owners via 1- 2-1 support, seminars at the Spelthorne Business Hub, advice on strategy, planning and sales, budgeting forecasting, and profit and loss control.</p> <p>(iv) Supply chain resilience measures to report are as follows: Soft market testing Framework agreements - a number of construction contractor and professional services framework agreements to provide greater reliability and cost certainty in development schemes. Supplier Due Diligence undertaken as part of tendering process via the standard</p>	<p>NEW ACTION AT FEBRUARY 2023: Corporate Procurement team to review contract performance and understand the measures providers put in place to ensure supply chain resilience – regarding labour and materials.</p>

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<p>goods, services, consumables, materials, commodities, and subsequently surging prices, placing increased strain on local businesses, household budgets, Council Services, Council budgetary and financial position.</p> <p>AMBER (v) <u>Risk</u>: Challenges around the full recovery of the aviation sector remains significant for the prosperity of Spelthorne’s local economy and communities due to its proximity to Heathrow as a major employer in the area, facilitating business activity.</p> <p>AMBER (vi) <u>Risk</u>: The continued cost-of-living crisis impacts economic</p>	<p>(v)3</p> <p>(vi)3</p>	<p>(v)3</p> <p>(vi)3</p>	<p>Selection Questionnaire and Method Statement questions. In planning procurement projects , Gantt chart used with list of procurement projects. This will help to consider the best time to go to market, including whether other authorities are also going to market at the same time.</p> <p>(v)Please refer to control measures set out under A (ii) in particular Economic Prosperity strategy. There are a number of specific actions which set out how SBC will work with HAL on training, skills and employment opportunities (Heathrow Academy, Job and Skills Fairs). A cross cutting internal officer group shares intelligence on various issues and wider community impacts. The aim is to ensure coordinated and effective response to Heathrow to protect our communities.</p> <p>(vi)Fortnightly monitoring of Business Rates and Council Tax collection rates as part of</p>	

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<p>prosperity of the borough with adverse impact on recovery and growth, also taking into account rising unemployment. It consequently affects collections rates for business rate income, with reduced levels impacting finances and services available</p> <p><i>(Economic news sources: The Bank of England announced interest rates (bank rate) are currently 4% (increased by 0.5% on 2nd February 2023). There could be little to no economic growth in the UK for the next three years and the International Monetary Fund forecast the UK economy to shrink in 2023, with likely rises in unemployment . Average</i></p>			<p>monitoring the effect of current pressures such as the Cost-of-Living crisis on the collection fund. Regular reporting on collection rates to Corporate Debt Group and as part of KPI’s to Councillors. Cost of Living crisis and Household Support Fund allocations in helping local communities. Other community measures are referred to under risk category C.</p>	

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<p><i>UK wages are still falling in real terms due to very high inflation with demands for wage increases and industrial action across some professions/public sector contributing to labour shortages. Job vacancies may remain unfilled for key public services).</i></p>				
<p>B. FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY AND RESILIENCE – <i>The following risks arising from wider externalities are highly likely or almost certain to lead to an adverse impact on the Council’s financial position thereby impacting sustainability and resilience.</i></p> <p>RED RISKS RED (i) <u>Risk</u> - Significant financial cost implication for the Council associated with the macro-economic</p>	(i)4	(i)3	(i)Medium term financial strategy. Budget process for 2023/24 as set out in Outline Budget report approved by CPRC in January. Inflationary pressure contingency reserve to assist with the predicted budget deficit.	<p>ONGOING MONITORING: Reviewed February 2023 : Significant fiscal shortfall in the overall public finances – Autumn Statement of 17 November confirmed government direction. In December 2022 DLUHC issued a statement of principles making clear that there will be no business rates reset of fair funding review outcome until after the general election. This gives councils some short term funding certainty until 2025. Also indicated that Councils will be provided with some additional</p>

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<p>environment, in particular the impact of elevated inflationary pressures such as pay, energy, fuel and household costs on balancing the budget, as well as rising base rate interest rates, significantly increased PWLB borrowing rates, and financial impact of ongoing challenging geopolitical situation.</p>			<p>Monitoring tax base and collection fund deficits and assessing impacts on the current/future budgets. Currently business rates and Council tax collection rates are up slightly on a year ago. As at end of January 2023 - Council Tax collection rate is at 95.51% which is up on last years by 0.61% and business rates are 91.90% which is also up on last years by 5.29%. Fully refreshed Reserves Strategy going to February CPRC for approval. Financial impact assessment modelling and governance reporting of budgetary pressures . Employer pension contributions for next three years confirmed in November 2022. £0.5m increase in employer contributions built into the 2023-24 draft Budget. Officers keep under ongoing review with Treasury Management advisors the borrowing strategy. Cashable savings working group set up to target efficiencies and savings. Set the task of generating £800k cashable savings over 4 years and have already identified some savings.</p>	<p>funding to offset financial impacts of implementing new waste management arrangements in 2024. ONGOING MONITORING (Reviewed February 2023): Previously reported there is no medium-term funding certainty for Councils. Local Government funding settlement announced just before Christmas 2022. More generous than anticipated with the Council benefitting form a new £1.5m Core Spending Power, 3% increase guarantee grant and a small amount of Revenue Support Grant (£91k) for the first time since 2016/17. ACTION COMPLETED : (Reviewed February 2023) Outline Budget report of January 2023 to CPRC for 2023/24 to 2026/27 provides updated medium term budget projections , anticipated budget deficits , and sets out options for refreshed medium term financial strategy. This has been</p>

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<p>RED (ii) <u>Risk</u>: Rising inflationary pressures have led to significant increases in construction costs (materials, fuel, shipping and labour) which continue to accelerate, therefore adversely impacting the overall cost, and financial viability of residential property development schemes. This has led to further assessments to determine how the authority should proceed in supporting delivery of the Housing Delivery Programme and development targets.</p>	<p>(ii)4</p>	<p>(ii)3</p>	<p>(ii)Development Sub Committee of Corporate Policy and Resources and Assets Portfolio Working Party receive regular monitoring reports for scrutiny including on the performance of the Investment portfolio and progress with development schemes.</p> <p>Financial monitoring and reporting; quantifying the impact of delayed property schemes on the Council’s budgetary position as well as outlining mitigating actions moving forward. Issue tackling accumulating capitalized costs and risk of abortive costs of £9m being written off to Revenue was addressed at ECM on 2nd February which agreed a new strategic approach to ensure housing delivery pipeline remains viable for the Council and Knowle Green Estates, this includes maximizing Homes England grant support for affordable and keyworker units, a capital injection into KGE, retaining Thameside and Benwell on SBC balance sheet for private rental and bringing forward Tothill regeneration scheme.</p>	<p>considered alongside the refreshed Reserves Strategy. A draft balanced budget is being put forward to CPRC and Council in February 2023 for approval</p> <p>ONGOING ACTION (Reviewed February 2023): Monitoring of Business Rates and Council Tax collection levels as part of monitoring the effect of current pressures such as the Cost-of-Living crisis on the collection fund. Regular reporting on collection rates to Corporate Debt Group and as part of KPI’s to Councillors.</p> <p>ACTION ADDED AT FEBRUARY 2023: Draft Treasury Management Strategy for 2023-24 going to February CPRC for Councillor approval.</p>

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<p>RED (iii) <u>Risk</u>: The Cost-of-Living crisis has wide reaching implications for the borough, its residents and businesses including lower living standards, challenges in paying bills (such as Council Tax and Business Rates) leading to reduced taxbase income for the Council. This coincides with increased costs for the Council such as provision of financial support for leisure centres. There are also increased risks of crime, fraud and theft during periods of economic challenge, as well as greater levels of anti-social behaviour leading to</p>	(iii)4	(iii)3	<p>Viability assessments for development schemes required to take account of accelerating costs to determine ongoing financial viability.</p> <p>(iii)Please note earlier reference at B (i)to monitoring of the collection fund and collection rates for 2022/23, as well as various financial/budgetary control measures.</p> <p>Energy rebate scheme completed in 2022 to support households with increased cost of living. Household Support Fund Phase 3 scheme approved by CWHC in January with £244k of funds being distributed to households in need across the Borough. Longer term modelling to assess impact of stock market and pensions.</p> <p>Counter Fraud, Bribery and Corruption strategy for the Council.</p>	

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<p>financial losses/reputational damage and diversion of Council scarce resources. This also adds greater pressure to Council services.</p> <p>RED (iv) <u>Risk</u> - Significant negative impact on residents, businesses and local communities if Council Services are unable to meet need in delivering services due to financial pressures, constraints and a requirement to generate further savings against a wider backdrop of likely public spending cuts.</p>	(iv)4	(iv)3	<p>Sinking funds reserves set aside for commercial investments as a prudent measure and funds increased from £26m to £34m at the end of 21-22. Anticipated balance at end of 2022-23 will be approximately £37m. Outline and detailed budget modelling highlights a significant dip in investment asset income in 2023-24 which will be offset by use of £6m of sinking funds reserves.</p> <p>Financial impact assessment /scenario modelling is undertaken regularly. Ten year worst and best case sinking fund scenario projections are reviewed on a fortnightly basis and will be shortly extended to a 20-year time frame.</p> <p>Investment performance is monitored bi-monthly at weekly Councillor Assets Portfolio Working Group, and an annual</p>	<p>ACTION COMPLETED at February 2023 : A review of sinking fund policy, methodology and strategy has been undertaken. Corporate Policy and Resources Committee approved Sinking Funds strategy on 28 November 2022.</p> <p>ACTION IN PROGRESS (Reviewed February 2023): A number of investment assets have had their plans approved by Development Sub-Committee. A further batch of business plans will be taken in due course to Development Sub-Committee.</p>

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			<p>performance report is produced for the Investment Portfolio.</p> <p>Fortnightly Asset Portfolio Working meetings take place to monitor commercial asset income due/any shortfalls anticipated. (99.98% collection rate for 21/22).</p> <p>Currently 91% of the investment asset portfolio occupied.</p> <p>A number of investment assets have now had their Business Plans approved by the Development Sub-Committee.</p>	
<p>C. HOUSING AND COMMUNITIES</p> <p>AMBER and RED RISKS</p> <p>AMBER (i) <u>Risk</u>: Increased levels of homelessness and greater demands for social housing. Some of the causes include greater threat of eviction due to financial pressures such as high inflation and increased</p>	(i)3	(i)3	<p>(i)Housing Service discuss options with tenants at the outset to minimize risks of landlord eviction.</p> <p>Government funding to assist vulnerable families and tenants that are in rent arrears and at risk of eviction through Homelessness Prevention Grant. Support to most vulnerable tenants is available 24/7 through commissioned intensive floating support service in preparation for independent living and tenancy sustainment. The service includes</p>	<p>Please also refer to the Corporate Risk Register (risk category 1B- Housing – Affordable).</p> <p>ACTION (reviewed February 2023) : The Council has expanded the capacity of the Citizen Advice to provide free advice and support to vulnerable clients and families. However, it is recognised that even with the expanded capacity there is still unmet</p>

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<p>interest rates felt by landlords and households attributed to the worsening Cost of Living Crisis. This is further exacerbated by delays in delivery of the Council’s Housing Delivery Programme impacting the achievement of affordable housing provision, as well as meeting wider housing needs.</p> <p>AMBER (ii) (New Risk added at February 2023) High demand for privately rented accommodation for families moving on from temporary accommodation, Harper House as well as addressing needs for more sustained accommodation to Afghan and Ukrainian refugees. Reduced number of properties available on the market due to the impact of worsening</p>	(ii)3	(ii)3	<p>support with managing addictions and focus on improvement of individual’s wellbeing.</p> <p>(ii)Rents in advance and deposit payments are available through Housing Options to homeless residents and refugees moving into private rented sector.</p> <p>The Council commissioned additional service through Look Ahead to support families moving into privately rented sector to assist with settling in the property and improve tenancy sustainability.</p>	demand for free and reliable advice in the community.

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<p>economy and higher interest rates on mortgages, and therefore many landlords are choosing to sell their rented property.</p> <p>AMBER (iii) <u>Risk</u>: Impact of geopolitical situation and Ukraine crises on food supply chains with reduced availability for some staple food items, leading to consumer price increases impacting all communities and particularly effecting the most financially vulnerable households. Agricultural commodities such as fertilizers to support mass production can no longer be imported from Ukraine, impacting supply chains, food price increases and shortages.</p>	(iii)3	(iii)3	(iii) Foodbank support is available for Spelthorne residents.	<p>Action (reviewed February 2023):Household Support Fund Phase 3 to be issued by the end of March 2023.</p>

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<p>RED (iv) <u>Risk</u>: Geopolitical situation (Ukraine conflict) has led to humanitarian crises. In supporting refugees from Ukraine, the Council along with partners holds a pivotal role in responding to and coordinating essential needs including safe and secure housing provision. This is being further exacerbated by the wider migrant crisis, as the statutory duty to house migrants filters through to local authorities.</p>	<p>(iv)4</p>	<p>(iv)3</p>	<p>(iv) Measures to support Afghan and Ukrainian refugee families under the relocation and assistance scheme (Home Office Funding of temporary accommodation for refugees). Some members of the local community are supporting refugees in their homes. Costs incurred are being monitored and submitted to SCC / Home Office for reimbursement. Surrey Councils have increased the monthly thank you payments to hosts to £600 to reduce the risk of hosts withdrawing from the scheme.</p> <p>Two Ukrainian support workers have been appointed.</p> <p>Families are being supported into privately rented accommodation with rent in advance and deposit payment funded externally by the Home Office.</p> <p>SBC has expressed an interest in receiving £1.26m capital grant from Government to assist in the cost of acquiring 8 homes for Afghans and Ukrainians initially (with the view that in the longer term can be used to accommodate any residents in need)</p>	<p>Action added February 2023: Report relating to acquiring homes for refugees is being put forward to CPRC on 20 February 2023 for approval. The properties are to be managed by KGE.</p> <p>Ongoing Action added February 2023: Officers from Family Support team as well as Housing Options are proactively working to identify any suitable properties on privately rented market to support move on for Afghan refugees staying in the Bridging Hotel under the Find Your Own accommodation scheme.</p>

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