

CORPORATE RISK REGISTER – JUNE 2025

Risk Category: 1 - Housing – Delivering targets for housing development and affordable housing requirements

Risk Subject Area: a. Addressing affordable housing supply and demand to meet local need

Corporate Priorities: Addressing Housing Need

Risk Owner(s): Coralie Holman/Karen Sinclair

Date of update: 12 June 2025

Previous Risk Score:

12

Current Risk Score:

12

Future Risk Score:

9

Risk description

Cost of living crisis, shrinking private rented sector, insufficient number of affordable housing units, migration (refugees and asylum seekers) and rising costs of rent will continue to result in increasing demand for affordable units whilst the supply of suitable accommodation has reduced.

Impact on residents and their housing need due to the Council stepping back from direct housing delivery. This means that the Council is now reliant on 3rd party developers/Registered Providers to come forward with proposals that meet the Council's objectives.

Risk that Council development sites that are sold/developed by 3rd parties do not deliver the desired level of affordable housing, e.g. due to viability issues.

Registered Providers (RPs) not developing in the area or taking on S106 units from developers. Wider viability challenges have meant that private developers and RPs have historically not provided sufficient affordable units to meet local demand.

Lack of affordable housing supply increases homelessness with increased demand for temporary or social housing. Demand has increased significantly over the last few years and is likely to increase further.

The cost of temporary accommodation sourced on the private market, grows as the demand increases. ¹

The impact of Renters' Rights reform may lead to landlords exiting the market adding further pressure. ²

The types of housing units that are available on the market may not meet local resident needs or address client special needs for accommodation.

Any delay in adopting the Local Plan would not assist in progressing a wide spread of units for differing needs.

Uncertainty over future of external funding for homeless clients with complex needs requiring intensive support, whilst demand and resource requirements are growing for this service. ³

Geopolitical factors continue to present increased demand in supporting refugee communities and consequently managing the provision of suitable and secure housing.

Increased rate of determination of asylum seekers claims is resulting in more residents at the Asylum Seekers initial accommodation hotel in the Borough presenting to the Council seeking housing support. ⁴

NOTES:

¹At present the average annual cost of a placement in temporary accommodation is approximately £20,000 per annum.

² Update 21/05/25 - Renters Rights reform expected in late summer 2025; local estate agents confirm increased number of instructions for sale of rented properties.

³ Without the support, clients are unable to maintain a tenancy, which even if placed, will lead to reoccurring homelessness].

⁴ This is an external pressure which has led to increased service demand, which is continuing. Consistent demand from asylum hotel in the area. Some funding now received from the Government, but demand continues, plus some pressure from central government to accept more refugee families and assist with housing. The Council has responded confirming the lack of current capacity to assist further. Also, central government asked local authorities for support with future asylum housing pilot schemes, SBC have responded confirming lack of current capacity.

Housing Register Numbers: The Council undertakes an automatic review of circumstances every 6 months to keep the register up to date.

	Jan 2025	May 2025	12 June 2025
Total on Housing Register	2,495	2,581	2,526
Excluding Category D ("Low housing need and no "deemed need")	1,533	1,607	1,579

Current control actions:

Council owned regeneration/development sites:

Although a Development Delivery Strategy and site prioritisation was agreed by Full Council, any decision-making around Council-owned regeneration/development sites will now be taken forward working in collaboration with the Commissioners as part of the broader Improvement and Recovery Plan.

Professional advice, expertise and input from officers, and sources of expertise to be agreed with the Commissioners to guide and support on the implications of any proposed routes put forward. Established policies and framework, plus governance and reporting arrangements to be kept under review to ensure effectiveness.

Scrutiny of decisions is embedded within the Committee system of governance, and a 'call in' procedure can be invoked, if required.

Managing housing need:

The review process for S106 agreements with developers aims to capture additional affordable housing.

Use of commuted sums to deliver additional affordable units.⁵

Quarterly Strategic Action Plan monitoring and review relating to Housing and Homelessness Strategies. Member approved tenancy strategy.⁶

More robust eligibility criteria now applied in determining applicants for the Social Housing Register, to reflect Allocation Policy.⁷

Homelessness Reduction Act incorporates proactive and preventative measures to support those at higher risk of homelessness.

Collaborative working with Registered Social Landlords and Partners to pursue delivery of affordable housing need and manage pipeline of units.⁸

Use of Local Authority Housing Fund (LAHF) capital funding programme (Rounds 1, 2 and 3) to acquire properties to house homeless refugees, as well as delivery of temporary accommodation.⁹

Delivering further Locata upgrades to improve data management and reporting, as well as more effective service delivery.

NOTES:

⁵ Update 21/05/25 - s.106 agreements have been reviewed. A commuted sum has been secured for developments in Spelthorne, the usage of the sum is being reviewed with a range of options including purchase of affordable housing units which would improve opportunities to most vulnerable families on the Council's housing register. In addition, the Ashford Cemetery Lodge property is proposed to be used for long term affordable housing use. This property was renovated with the use of commuted sum funding. Also, some

progress in discussions with Metropolitan Thames Valley Housing (MTVH) Registered Provider who intend to purchase the site at Hazelwood Drive in Sunbury for 100% affordable housing delivery - 63 units of various sizes with proposed start on site in Oct 2025 and completion within 20 months.

⁶ Update 21/05/25 - all actions now incorporated into Spelthorne Housing, Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy and delivery monitored by SHG

⁷ Update 12/06/25 - we observe positive impact of the regular circumstances review with Housing Register information being kept up to date

⁸ Update 21/05/25 - the delivery of housing at Hazelwood Drive in Sunbury is an example of positive and proactive engagement with RPs.

⁹ Update 21/05/25 – properties for latest funding round agreement now identified, approved by Members and in the process purchasing 4 units (3 TA and 1 settlement.

Current mitigating actions:

Council owned regeneration/development sites:

The Commissioners review will consider all Council sites to determine those which are suitable for disposal and which should form part of a comprehensive disposals strategy across all Council owned land and property assets. This may result in timings for the disposal of Ashford MSCP, Oast House (in Car park), Benwell Phase 2 and the Whitehouse residential development site all being re-prioritised in terms of disposal timing. Additional work is being undertaken to accelerate the delivery of housing outcomes on these sites, as part of the Improvement and Recovery Plan.

Assessment of options incorporating mitigation of holding costs on development sites.

Following a productive session between Administration, Group Leaders and Professor Morphet a range of suggestions were generated as to strategies which could be explored to help address provision of affordable housing. Community Wellbeing and Housing has approved a refreshed Housing, Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy which, as part of the delivery plan, incorporated actions relating to the suggestions made. Progress against the agreed actions being reviewed on a quarterly basis by Strategic Housing Group.

Council continues to lobby for additional funding support in recognition of the resourcing and financial impact of more asylum seekers presenting in need of housing support. - additional funding now received from government which helps to cover the cost of temporary accommodation for asylum seekers.

Applying Home Office funding and implementing wider schemes to provide additional support to refugees. – ongoing.

Future actions:

Type: Mitigation

Timeline: Commence April 2024

Description: Identification and rigorous assessment of alternative Development Delivery Options for Council Owned Development Sites, to ensure they represent financially viable and sustainable solutions in delivering development targets. Finalisation and implementation of Member driven strategy for delivering housing outcomes across sites owned by the Council as approved by Business Infrastructure and Growth (BIG) Committee on 12th September 2024 and Council October 2024.

Status: In Progress

Comments: Despite the guidance of the strategy, there are still differing views about the approach to progression of the sites. There is an aspiration to deliver affordable housing, however this is impacting the level of disposal receipts that can be obtained for the sites. This will now be taken forward in collaboration with the Commissioners as part of the broader Improvement and Recovery Plan.

Type: Mitigation

Timeline: June 2025

Description: Once strategy routes have been confirmed, monitoring mechanisms to be pursued with revised timelines for delivery of targets.

Status: In progress

Comments: One site disposal has been completed in the form of an agreement for lease being granted on the Waterfront site. Extraordinary Council on 18th March 2025 approved the disposal of Ashford Victory Place with an obligation for at least 30 affordable rental units to be provided. There is a risk that the purchaser is unable to follow through with a Registered Provider and deliver the affordable housing units, Officers are liaising with Commissioners as to steps which can be taken to mitigate this risk. Business, Infrastructure & Growth Committee (March 2025) approved the marketing without encumbrances of Thameside House. Planning Committee 2nd April approved planning application for mixed use scheme for Ashford Multi-Storey Car Park site. Any further actions will now be taken forward in collaboration with the Commissioners as part of the broader Improvement and Recovery Plan.

Type: Mitigation

Timeline: June 2025

Description: Targeted exercise to identify potential tenancy fraud, with a view to freeing up social housing. Ongoing project – aim to complete by June 2025.

Status: In progress. A tender exercise is underway to extend counter fraud arrangement to beyond the potential vesting day and creation of a new unitary.

Comments: None

Type: Mitigation

Timeline: November 2025

Description: Officers plan to deliver a Landlord Forum for landlords to share information, promote Spelthorne Rent Assured service and to engage with the community. The Forum will also cover the impact of the Renters Reform Bill

Status: In progress

Comments: None

Risk Category: 1 - Housing – Delivering targets for housing development and affordable housing requirements

Risk Subject Area: B. Local Plan

Corporate Priorities: Addressing Housing Need

Risk Owner(s): Heather Morgan, Jane Robinson

Date of update: 9 June 2025

Previous Risk Score:

4

Current Risk Score:

4

Future Risk Score:

2

Risk Description

Delays in the examination and adoption of the Local Plan are likely to continue to adversely impact on the ability to bring forward the appropriate quantum of housing development (currently 618 dwellings pa). This lack of certainty means that the Council is not able to strategically direct where housing should be built and instead relies on schemes coming forward on an ad hoc basis. Some of these decisions may be taken out of our hands and dealt with by appeal. The lack of a plan does not give the landowners and developers the necessary confidence to bring forward sites for housing – our housing delivery is around 60 - 65% each year of what it should be.

The Local Plan process needs to be subject to robust independent challenge via Examination, to determine if it can be found 'sound'. There is a risk that post Examination, the Inspector does not find the Local Plan sound (with or without Modifications).

If the Local Plan cannot be found sound and adopted, then we will have to immediately produce a new Local Plan under the new NPPF with a higher housing number (755 pa) plus a 20% buffer for under-delivery bringing it closer to 1,000 per annum. This would mean considering options now around the release of more grey and green belt, more infill sites within the developed area or increasing the level of development in our town centres.

Current control actions:

Planning regulatory framework.

Planning Committee, Officer presentations/professional advice and Member decision making.

Planning policies and guidelines.

Council is working with Commissioners to deliver a realistic plan to deliver housing numbers outlined in its Local Plan, as part of the broader Improvement and Recovery Plan.

Current mitigating actions:

The Local Plan relies on several significant sites within the Council's ownership coming forwards in Staines over the plan period. All schemes progressed on Council owned land will be considered against the flood risk to ensure appropriate mitigation is included within the scheme design. This will only apply where the Council has direct control. If a site is disposed of, it will be for the subsequent owner to ensure flood mitigation is in place. Flood risk mitigation will be integral to all decisions by councillors on joint ventures/partnerships on sites within Staines-upon-Thames.

Future actions:

Type: Control

Timeline: adoption of the Local Plan by end of 2025.

Description: Preparation and adoption of the new Local Plan to meet future housing need and strengthen policies around housing delivery (including via site allocations) and affordable housing.

Status: In progress

Comments: Examination held Jan/Feb 2025 with robust justification for the Plan put forward, alongside some suggested Modifications to overcome any areas of debate. The Council is currently undertaking a formal six-week consultation period on the Proposed Main Modifications. Responses will go directly to the Inspector, who will then decide whether the Plan is sound or not. The final decision on whether to adopt will sit with Council.

Update 09.06.25 – Main Modification responses have gone to the Inspector for his consideration. Groundwater concerns being raised by residents' groups, which Inspector has advised does not form part of his considerations on whether the Plan can be found sound or not.

Risk Category: 2 - Economy

Risk Subject Area: National and regional threats to local economic prosperity

Corporate Priorities: Resilience

Risk Owner(s): Heather Morgan

Date of update: 9 June 2025

Previous Risk Score:

9

Current Risk Score:

9

Future Risk Score:

6

Risk Description

Risk of shrinkage of local economy.

Risk of increased local unemployment.

Risk of reduction in Business Rates and Council Tax income.

NOTES:

NB.[The potential for increased level of business failures amidst the growing 'Cost of doing business crisis' has led to closure of some retail and business units across the borough because of wider economic instability (inflationary pressures and increase in borrowing) and the need to pass on increased costs (e.g. increased employer National Insurance contributions and high energy costs) to the consumer. These factors combined have placed additional burdens on SME's in particular, who run on tight margins. This impacts the economic prosperity of the borough and affects collections rates for business rate income, with reduced levels likely to impact the Council's finances and services available. Whilst Council actions aim to support businesses and the local economy, these actions alone can only have a limited impact due to the overarching effects and long-term uncertainty of the macroeconomic environment, market volatility and geopolitical factors over which the Council has no influence].

Current control actions:

An Economic Prosperity Strategy (2023 – 2028) which was updated via an internal review in 2024, addresses the key actions which face the borough. It incorporates a detailed strategy action plan detailing performance management measures and anticipated outcomes. This will need to be refined if the decision is made to close the Business Incubator.

Monthly monitoring of Collection fund - Business Rates and Council Tax collection rates. There is regular reporting of these to Corporate Debt Group and as part of quarterly KPI's to Councillors. As at end of 2024-25, the business rates collection rate was 97.9% compared to outturn for 2023-24, which was 99.1%. As at end of 2024-25 the Council Tax collection rate was 97.4% compared to outturn for 2023-24 which was 97.5%.

All the Shared Prosperity Fund projects to support economic regeneration have now been delivered (04.25), including (1) climate change audits (2) consultancy support to ensure businesses can be sustained (3) funding for employment and skills hub.

Current mitigating actions:

Local mitigating measures taken by the Economic Development team include several measures to strengthen the resilience of local businesses in the face of future challenges - e.g. website design and increasing social media presence, energy efficiency measures, business networking and business to business support

The Spelthorne Jobs and Skills Hub relocated to its new location (old Argos unit) in mid-August 2024. Considerable strides have been made to extend multi-agency working with other partners to assist residents getting back into work (best use of pooled resources)

Growth bids were approved by the BIG Committee (December 2024) to ensure the ongoing operation of the very successful Jobs and Skills Hub (supporting people back into work) and the Business Incubator (supporting fledgling businesses).

Future actions:

Type: Mitigation

Timeline: End March 2026

Description: : Potential re-location of the Business Incubator from Sunbury (Hanworth Road) to Staines

Status: In progress (report on whether to relocate scheduled for BIG committee in July 2025).

Comments: Project team has been set up

Update 23.06.25 – Discussions in progress regarding future of the Business Incubator once Summit Centre is sold.

Type: Mitigation

Timeline: End March 2026

Description: Securing a Business Improvement District for Ashford

Status: In progress (report on whether to proceed with the process of voting for a BID in Ashford scheduled for BIG committee in July 2025)

Comments: Initial work/business engagement undertaken in March/April 2025.

23.06.25 –business engagement has finished and consultant's report received. Report to be taken to September BIG committee.

Type: Mitigation

Timeline: End June 2025

Description: Apply for bid funding from Surrey County Council (SCC) for a Countywide one stop shop for employability support for all ages and circumstances (133,000 economically inactive across the County).

Status: In progress

Comments: Staines would be the main hub with others across Surrey to deliver employment and skills training, workshops, skills courses, bespoke careers fairs etc. It will help to sustain the Hub with an ongoing revenue stream. Cross borough project team has been set up

Update 09.06.25 – Expression of Interest (EOI) has been accepted by SCC. Business Case to be submitted by end June 2025.

Risk Category: 3 – Financial Resilience and Commercial Assets

Risk Subject Area: Commercial investment portfolio

Corporate Priorities: Resilience

Risk Owner(s): Coralie Holman

Date of update: 11 June 2025

Previous Risk Score:

9

Current Risk Score:

9

Future Risk Score:

6

Risk Description

Loss of rental income and increased costs. ¹

There are additional risks in years when a number of leases across the portfolio may be up for renewal. If key commercial asset leases are not maintained or renewed this may have implications for maintaining flow of rental income.

Where asset holdings are aligned to a specific sector or location this could be impacted by wider externality factors and potentially present limitations in deriving optimal value.

Risks that costs of refurbishment and upgrades over time will cost more than anticipated. Longer term risks around ensuring assets continue to meet high environmental standards.

This may impact on the future financial sustainability of the Council, and our ability to deliver discretionary services, leading (worst case scenario) to the Council becoming financially unsustainable with associated reputational damage.

A key risk would be if sinking funds are not built up sufficiently to address potential future dips in rental income. ²

Risk to delivery of services due to need to significantly reduce net subsidy from asset income. ³

NOTES:

¹ *[Externalities i.e. economic factors which impact individual Business's accommodation strategies, plus inflation and subsequent geopolitical and trade turbulence, continue to increase the Council's exposure to financial risk, resultant from vacant property holding costs in the form of Service Charge and Business Rates liabilities with possible implications for the investment portfolio, including loss of anticipated rental income and increased costs from vacant space].*

² *[The Council has a period of between 41 and 43 years before the debt finance associated with the acquisition of the investment assets is fully paid off. Over this period the Council is looking for the assets to deliver an ongoing income stream, to support the Council's Revenue Budget (currently that is about £10m per annum, although this is now planned to be stepped down in future years). In order to manage the risk of there being dips in the rental income in future arising from voids and rent free periods the Council has been building up sinking funds reserves to act as a safety net].*

³ *[Longer-term modelling has indicated that current levels of setting aside into sinking funds needs to be steadily increased by 2031 to cope with the risk of significant tenant churns at certain points in the future. This will require the Council to halve the current net subsidy of services from £10m to £5m over that period. This will require comprehensive transformation programme. In collaboration with the Commissioners, further modelling, working with external experts, is being undertaken to evaluate the risk].*

Current control actions:

A new overarching Asset Management Strategy (AIS) & Asset Management Plan has been approved for the 24/25 - 27/28 financial year period. It is expected this will be supplemented with a new 3-year disposal strategy resulting from work being directed by MHCLG via appointed Commissioners to undertake a portfolio rationalisation to generate capital receipts which can be used to reduce the Council's level of borrowing.

Individual Business Plans for all assets, with a summary portfolio level AIS focused on the coming 12-month period. New Business Plans for 25/26 exit strategies for all the investment assets have been produced and taken to the Commercial Assets Sub-Committee and approved in advance of an overarching Asset Investment Strategy for 2025/26 to be presented to Corporate Policy and Resources Committee in May 2025. These exit strategies feed into the Sinking Funds modelling. The Council is working with Commissioners to develop a comprehensive commercial strategy, with clear approaches to its investment and regeneration portfolios, including prioritised exit strategies for the commercial investments and realistic and deliverable strategies for the regeneration sites.

Approved Capital Strategy includes key performance indicators with a particular focus on the investment portfolio. The investment portfolio has its own bespoke KPIs and Risk Register. Performance management measures – KPIs are reviewed annually and benchmarked against external, regional property indicators i.e. vacancy rates, market rentals, occupier demand. Governance reporting - Investment performance reported regularly to Councillors at Commercial Assets Sub-Committee, Business and Infrastructure Growth Committee and Corporate Policy and Resources Committee.

Implementation of the Council's Transformation Programme, which was agreed by CPRC in December 2024 as part of the Outline Budget for 2025/26. The Transformation Programme is currently on hold whilst additional evaluation of the Budget gaps is coordinated by the Commissioners. Moving forwards this will become part of the Improvement and Recovery Plan.

Current mitigating actions:

An evaluation of sinking fund reserves strategy is being progressed to assess whether the funds can support future periods of tenancy voids and offset dips in rental income. Monitoring of contributions and overall amount of sinking fund balance held.

An initial major refresh of the Sinking Funds modelling has been undertaken which suggests that over time the Council will need to set aside more of the rental income into the Sinking Funds Reserves, to build up those balances sufficiently rapidly to have sufficient funds to meet future pressure points. In turn this will mean over time the Council will need to halve the current net level of subsidy of services from the investment assets from £10m per annum to £5m by 2031. This will require a significant transformation programme across the organisation, adapted to take into account which elements are deliverable within the time constraints of Local Government Reorganisation, which will mean that Spelthorne will no longer exist as a sovereign authority by April 2027. The Council is engaging with Commissioners to agree how the Sinking Funds model can be further refined, and is exploring the opportunity for independent experts to review the model. One additional review with an external consultant has been commissioned and the Council is currently awaiting the report. To improve the resilience of the model and make sensitivity analysis the Council is considering moving the model on to Argus software.

Sinking Funds modelling has been refreshed over a 50-year period, with ability to input and flex a range of parameters. Refreshed sinking fund model was reported to Corporate Policy and Resources on 20th January 2025, and once a user specification has been agreed there will be a demonstration of the model to members of that Sub-Committee and members of the Commercial Assets Sub-Committee before a further report is brought back to Corporate Policy and Resources Committee. Additional external advice is being sought to provide additional scrutiny and assurance. As outlined above the appointed MHCLG Commissioner team are reviewing all commercial assets to inform a 3-year disposal strategy and suitability of assets to be owned longer term.

Ongoing management of voids with a view to reducing the portfolio void rate. Assets team proactively working to fill voids quickly using external lettings agents, understanding market demand and the size of accommodation needed.

On 8th May 2024 DLUHC (now MHCLG) announced a Best Value Inspection process to review how the Council mitigates risk. The Best Value Inspection report was published in February and the Council are now working with MHCLG appointed Commissioners. The Council will work with the Commissioners 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 the regeneration sites.

A Consolidated Action Plan, tracking progress of actions relating to the CIPFA and BVI reports went to Audit Committee on 8th May 2025. At the request of the Commissioners the update reports have been put on pause.

Implemented Public Interest Report (PIR) Action Plan - reported to July 2024 Audit Committee and accepted by Councillors. A Consolidated Action Plan tracker including PIR actions presented to Audit Committee on 8th May 2025.

Proactive monitoring of key lease renewals to secure ongoing rental income or pursue options for alternative use. Assets team engage with tenants ahead of lease ends/breaks coming up. Two new team members recruited.

Future actions:

Type: Mitigation

Timeline: End of September 2025

Description: : Following publication of the Best Value Inspection report the Council is actively addressing the recommendations and working with Commissioners 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 the regeneration sites. An Improvement and Recovery Plan to be agreed with the Commissioners by end of September 2025.

Status: In progress

Comments: None

Risk Category: 4– Financial Resilience and Supporting Communities

Risk Subject Area: A. Managing increased costs and demands for services

Corporate Priorities: Resilience

Risk Owner(s): Daniel Mouawad, Terry Collier, Lee O’Neil

Date of update: 24 June 2025

Previous Risk Score:

9

Current Risk Score:

9

Future Risk Score:

9

Risk Description

Increased revenue costs due to external factors. ¹

Equally the housing crisis is increasing the need to spend on temporary accommodation to support residents and higher interests impacting on landlords and rent levels. This coincides with increased demands in other service areas, particularly with respect to homelessness and the need to provide Temporary Accommodation, leading to further growth bids for resourcing which are not financially sustainable or affordable unless these can be offset by savings.

Reduced council tax and business rates income due to external factors. ²

Risk that the Government in addressing national public expenditure pressures reduces funding available for local government adding to the challenge of providing discretionary services. ³

There is a risk that the current budget gaps will increase:

- i. Following the Spending Review,
- ii. As the outcomes of local government funding reform and business rates reset becoming clearer, and
- iii. Following analysis being undertaken with the Commissioners to review accounting treatment of issues such as Minimum Revenue Provision.

Risk of not achieving planned savings targets.

Risk that required savings will impact on areas where there is the greatest demand.

Risk that savings identified are not sufficient, or are not fully delivered.

Risk of increased demand for services. ⁴

Ongoing financial pressures, in worst case scenario, could lead to the Council becoming financially unsustainable or leave a sustainability challenge for a successor unitary council.

Risk of holding costs for development sites continuing to put pressure on the revenue budget. ⁵

NOTES:

¹ *Significantly increased financial pressures faced by the Council, similar to other councils, arising from the recent inflationary pressures on fuel, gas and electricity, staff pay pressures, increased housing pressures, which are now anticipated to fall more slowly in 2025 than previously anticipated.*

² *Potential risk as housing and cost of living crises continue to impact on households more of them will struggle to pay council tax bills. Similarly, cost of doing business crisis may affect business rates income*

³ *The Government announced on 20th June a consultation on local government funding reform and a business rates reset to be phased in from 2026-27 this is a significant risk for councils in Surrey as funds are likely to be diverted to other parts of the country.*

⁴ *Combined with reduced fee income and potential for lower collection rates of Business Rates and Council Tax, exacerbated further by the continuing cost-of-living crisis; this could have an impact on the Council's ability to deliver services as well as creating greater demands on community services, leading to a negative impact on the Borough's residents and communities (economic, social, physical and mental wellbeing).*

⁵ *£1.6m per annum relating to the housing delivery schemes are continuing to be incurred until outcomes are delivered on the sites. This continues to have a significant financial impact on the Council's budgetary position. Moving forwards in 2025-26 the Council has ceased to capitalise interest costs so these costs will impact the Revenue Budget.*

Current control actions:

Financial impact assessment modelling undertaken as proactive measure.

Annual budget process incorporates review and scrutiny at several stages including the informal all councillors budget briefings. All Councillor Budget Briefings, undertaken 3 times a year setting out financial risks in context of budgetary position, informing budgetary process.

Annual budget process incorporates Officer and Member review and scrutiny at several stages with measures to support production of balanced budget. Service planning process integrates with annual budget process. Medium term financial strategy providing a framework for managing financial resources.

Current mitigating actions:

Budget put forward for making efficiency savings over the next 4 years to further safeguard the authority. Progress against this target is currently being re-assessed, and additional measures put in place to maintain clear focus on cashable savings.

Maintaining income streams through maximising the Council Tax base and inflationary increases to fees and charges where possible.

Following the Best Value Inspection report, the Council is working with Commissioners to develop a Improvement and Recovery 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). This includes a robust multi-year savings plan that reflects the costs and risks identified in the BVI report and by external auditors. As a result of the Best Value Inspection (BVI) report, the Council will implement its Transformation Programme and work with Commissioners to develop our Improvement & Recovery Plan to reconfigure the Council's services commensurate with the authority's available financial resources.

Transformation Programme agreed by CPRC in December 2024 as part of Outline Budget. Councillor led Reorganisation and Transformation Board set up. The Board is currently on pause, whilst the Commissioners evaluate whether its terms of reference are appropriate for assisting with addressing the Improvement and Recovery Plan.

Following the Best Value Inspection report the Council is working with Commissioners to implement 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.

Impact of any proposed savings on service delivery to be evaluated and considered prior to prioritisation and implementation. Any proposals to be agreed with Commissioners prior to presentation to Councillors.

Procurement Projects Board set up to ensure focus on delivering value for money from procurement. Use of Local Authority Housing Fund. ⁶

Governance and reporting arrangements. ⁷

The Council maintains a Reserves Strategy, refreshed and reviewed every year by Corporate Policy and Resources Committee. ⁸

Inflationary pressures contingency reserve to assist with any anticipated budget deficit. Earmarked revenue reserves with forecast for the next four years. Financial Reserves strategy subject to regular review, with annual review and approval of the Reserves Strategy by Corporate Policy and Resources Committee.

Monitoring levels of reserves used at SBC and key financial performance indicators. Benchmarking and analysis of other Surrey Boroughs and districts use of reserves. Also benchmarking through LG Improve.

Medium term financial strategy (Outline Budget) providing a framework for managing financial resources, in a planned and pro-active way. ⁹

NOTES:

⁶ Enabled purchase of 82 (as of 16.01.25), with a further 4 in process of being purchased. Temporary Accommodation with near 50% grant funding and transferring the units to the Council's Housing Company.

Having direct control of such units will save the Council approximately £3m per annum compared to the alternative of placing in private bed and breakfast. This is significantly mitigating the housing pressures on the Council's Revenue Budget.

⁷ Examples include progress reporting of Property Development projects to officer and Member groups. Specific reports are referred to BIG Committee to seek approval for progressing marketing to identify delivery partners most recently Ashford Victory Place and Thameside House.

⁸ One aspect of this strategy is to ensure that sufficient cash backed revenue reserves are maintained to assist in offsetting any write-off of capital losses/capitalised costs to Revenue. In consultation with the Commissioners and the External Auditors the Council will be writing off accumulated capitalised costs as part of the 2024-25 accounts closure process. Further work in collaboration with the Commissioners is being undertaken to review and refine the Sinking Funds reserves model This will inform the rate at which further funds need to be put into the Reserves. Further work, in collaboration with the Commissioners, is being undertaken to review and refine the Sinking Funds reserves model This will inform the rate at which further funds need to be put into the Reserves.

⁹ Enables measures to be implemented which may take time to deliver results ahead of when required. For example, the Council is expecting additional pressures in 2026-27 if a Fair Funding Review and Business Rates reset happens then.

Future actions:

Type: Mitigation

Timeline: September 2025

Description: Following the DLUHC review a Best Value Inspection was undertaken with a report published in February 2025. The Council will actively address the recommendations and work with the Commissioners. An Improvement and Recovery Plan will be agreed by end of September 2025.

Status: In progress

Comments: None

Type: Mitigation

Timeline: December 2025

Description: Progressing medium term financial strategy and efficiency savings plan.

Status: Council is working with the Commissioners and expert consultants to do a major refresh of the budget gap projections, and in parallel is undertaking a further review of MRP treatment

Comments: None

Type: Mitigation

Timeline: Up to April 2027

Description: Implementation of the Council's Transformation Programme

Status: In progress. Whilst the work of the Reorganisation and Transformation Board has currently been put on pause by the Commissioners, some initial work has been undertaken to identify savings which could be implemented across services as part of the 2026-27 Budget.

A more robust process for evaluating filling of vacant posts has been put in place which is resulting in the deletion of a number of vacant posts which will deliver ongoing savings

Comments: None

Type: Mitigation

Timeline: Up to April 2027

Description: Monitoring and periodically reporting on outcomes of 4-year efficiency savings plan, implementing additional measures if savings targets are not being achieved.

Status: In progress. An internal audit of the lessons learned from 2024-25 has been commissioned and additional measures are now in place to track progress of savings, with savings identified by budget code and reported on a monthly basis to MAT and quarterly to CPRC. An annual report on actual savings delivered will be produced.

Comments: None

Risk Category: 4 – Financial Resilience and Supporting Communities

Risk Subject Area: B. Reducing debt

Corporate Priorities: Resilience

Risk Owner(s): Ola Owolabi

Date of update: 24 June 2025

Previous Risk Score:

9

Current Risk Score:

9

Future Risk Score:

9

Risk Description

NB. The Council has a clear Best Value Directive to significantly reduce its outstanding external debt.

Risk that the scale of disposals of regeneration assets does not deliver the level of capital receipts anticipated resulting in less debt being paid off and lower reduction in financing costs.

Risk that discount rates on early repayment of PWLB loans could fall due to changes in gilt rates, reducing the level of debt that can be paid off, resulting in a smaller contribution to closing the budget gaps.

Risk that the required level of debt reduction/disposal of assets will reduce income generated for revenue budget and affect Council service delivery.

Risk that the Council cannot respond to unexpected events or factors presenting uncertainty, due to potential inability to borrow.

Current control actions:

The Council is working with Commissioners to agreeing a comprehensive Improvement and Recovery Plan and associated asset disposal/debt reduction programme.

Revised Treasury Management Strategy approved by Council 27/2/25 with amendments to the prudential indicators.

Medium-term financial strategy providing a framework for managing financial resources. Investments with approved institutions as per policy and strategy.

Application of professional (CIPFA) Code of Practice and Prudential and Treasury Management Codes

Regular engagement with the Council's specialist advisors at Officer and Member level to enhance knowledge, subsequently informing decisions. Group Leaders meet Arlingclose on a quarterly basis.

Arlingclose to provide regular training sessions for councillors. *Last session January 2024.*

Approved Treasury Management Strategy for 2024-25. (*Strategy for 2025-26 approved by Council 27/2/25*).

Current mitigating actions:

The Council is actively working with Commissioners who have been appointed by MHCLG to work with the Council in addressing the recommendations from the BVI report. This will include implementing 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.

Working with the Commissioners, the focus, now that the Council has a much-reduced Capital Programme, will be accelerating the current schedule for paying down external debt and not taking on additional debt. In liaison with our treasury management advisers the Council will take advantage of its positive cashflow position to pay down a bit extra debt and then as the asset reduction programme progresses apply the receipts to pay down external outstanding debt. The Council is seeking to taking advantage of the very high discounts available to it at present from the Public Works Loan Board for early repayment of debt.

Council approved in October 2024 drawing down its medium termed pooled investments as an alternative to borrowing and partially accelerating the payment down of debt finance. This has meant that the Council has avoided needing to fix additional long term debt finance to finance the balance of the Eclipse Leisure Centre.

Council participated in a Capital Assurance review with DLUHC and Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) and in the process of taking on board any improvement suggestions. Coinciding with the publication of the final Best Value Guidance, DLUHC notified the Council of a Best Value Inspection process, which resulted in the publication of a Best Value Inspection Report in February 2025.

Future actions:

Type: Mitigation

Timeline: August 2025

Description: Seeking to achieve timely exchange and completion of the two assets disposals approved by Council on 18th March 2025.

Status: In progress

Comments: None – exchange and completion of both expected by end of August 2025

Type: Control

Timeline: End of September 2025

Description: Progressing medium-term financial strategy and efficiency savings plan. The Council is working with Commissioners to identify a programme for assets disposals.

Status: In progress

Comments: None

Type: Mitigation

Timeline: End of September 2025

Description: Council will positively engage with Commissioners to actively address the recommendations of the Best Value Inspection report and agree an Improvement and Recovery Plan by end of September 2025.

Status: In progress

Comments: None

Risk Category: 5 – Climate Change

Risk Subject Area: A. Climate Change threat, impact and response

Corporate Priorities: Environment

Risk Owner(s): Sandy Muirhead

Date of update: 10 June 2025

Previous Risk Score:

12

Current Risk Score:

12

Future Risk Score:

12

Risk Description

Climate change represents a significant global threat driving social and economic disruption with far ranging consequences for socioeconomic stability. Climate change and extreme weather events impact health and safety, food systems, supply chains & procurement, economic productivity, and losses. Recent data has provided further evidence of increasing global temperatures. The UK is equally likely to see weather extremes going forward impacting on the economy and actions required by the Council.

Due to climate change, there is a specific risk to Spelthorne in terms of more extreme heat and increased flooding, besides the more global threats such as severe storms (threat to loss of life and limb) impacting locally, e.g. in times of severe flooding seriously draining the Council's resources.

If the Council is not pursuing measures or seeking positive opportunities to mitigate and adapt to climate change, it could result in criticism / bad press / public demonstration and additional organisational pressures may result in a loss of focus around climate change and green initiatives.

A lack of preparedness for impacts of climate change may lead to Council Services no longer being sustainable or in a suitable position to operate in the future.

Threat of possible increased in excess deaths due to extreme heat.

Current control actions:

Environment and Sustainability Committee developed an action plan as part of the climate change strategy to move the Council towards net zero carbon emissions, aiming to get to Net Zero for Scope 1 and 2 emissions with the aim of reaching net zero by 2030. The strategy was updated in autumn 2024 and since then there has been a focus on making energy and cost savings to meet carbon reduction targets via Project Green Horizon which will go to E&S Committee on 17 June. Updated 3.6.25

Environment and Sustainability Committee will continue to explore ways to meet a carbon neutral target, and to promote climate change as an issue that needs to permeate all Council areas to ensure SBC reduce their carbon footprint and adapt to climate change. As a result, there is a focus through project Green Horizon on reducing emissions from the Council and its operations. Recent work has demonstrated routes for the Council to reduce its emissions in a cost-effective way as possible and this work and data will be presented to the June Environment and Sustainability Committee. This work has also been presented to the climate change working group.

Surrey County Council have developed a strategy on Climate Change referred to as Greener Futures Delivery Plan which the Environment and Sustainability Committee have supported. Spelthorne's Climate Change strategy is linked where appropriate to Greener Futures Delivery Plan.

Collaborative measures are required to support a coordinated approach to strategy implementation across the organisation and the team are looking at joint service projects. The Climate change officer has met with services in early 2025 to review the action plan and identify mitigation opportunities in each service (Reviewed 11.4.25)

Officers are continuing to roll out Carbon Literacy training days and participating staff have committed to a range of carbon saving pledges. Some member Induction training was undertaken in June 2023 and further training on carbon literacy has taken place on 24/25 November but only a few members attended despite training being mandatory. The Council has reached bronze level in the carbon literacy hierarchy and is aiming for silver in 2025/26.

There is a Carbon Footprint section in Service Plans, providing an opportunity for departments to support the Council's commitment to reducing carbon emissions and explain how they intend to adapt elements of their service delivery to achieve this.

Current mitigating actions:

Some funding resources have been secured to support strategy implementation, and these are being allocated and targeted to reduce the carbon footprint of the Council to help ensure SBC and its successor are net zero by 2030. The Council will continue to seek alternative funding to continue to develop schemes to meet net zero targets.

The Corporate Plan has key actions on climate change and is supported by the climate change strategy and associated actions which require services to address the net zero targets the Council has set.

Funding resources secured to support strategy implementation through the Green Initiative Fund. These are being allocated and targeted to reduce the carbon footprint of the Council to help ensure SBC are net zero by 2030. Though many measures are invest-to-save the current Council financial position may limit opportunities but there is a move to bring forward some spending on 'green' projects through Project Green Horizon Updated 3.6.25

The Council within its adverse weather plan and overarching emergency plan lays out how it would cope with drought and heat stress. A multi-agency flood plan covers how we would with other key agencies deal with significant flooding affecting Spelthorne's residents. 10.6.25

Future actions:

Type: Control

Timeline: by September 2025 (subject to local plan agreement)

Description: Within the legal constraints it is intended to implement the proposed supplementary planning guidance (SPD) to assist in future properties being better adapted to both heat and cold. However, for the SPD to move beyond guidance to having more weight in the planning process is dependent on implementation of the Local Plan.

Status: Outstanding as reliant on implementation of the Local Plan

Comments: The guidance is helpful in demonstrating what can be done to improve the resilience of properties to climate change.

Type: Control

Timeline: August 2025

Description: Cllrs were given training to raise awareness and enhance understanding of Climate Change issues across the Council as recently as November 2024. Cllrs have recently agreed that encouragement needs to be given for Cllrs that have not completed the training to do so. Information has been given to Group Leaders. Updated 11.4.25

Status: In progress

Comments: Training of Cllrs has taken place but there are still Cllrs requiring training.

Type: Control

Timeline: September 2025

Description: To build on Greener Futures climate adaptation strategy and incorporate actions into our climate change strategy.

Status: In progress

Comments: Adaptation strategy still to be developed and will be taken in autumn to Committee

Type: Mitigation

Timeline: Review of strategy completed 2024. Timeline of actions in strategy takes the Council to 2028 with another review at that point to ascertain progress and future needs depending on the state of the climate and future predictions. .

Description: Reviewing and updating climate change strategy and ensuring fully aligned with corporate plan actions but includes mitigation options for Council assets, enhancement of biodiversity and adaptation. Strategy covers to 2028; agreed by Committee 17.9.24

Status: Complete

Comments: Review of climate change strategy completed but needs resourcing to fully implement and requires cross service input Team are working with services and focusing work into two streams mitigation and adaptation with a focus on effective reduction of carbon within council operations and where feasible cost reductions in energy. Adaptation needs to be addressed further with heat stress and drought increasing risks. .

Type: Mitigation

Timeline: Ongoing

Description: Training of staff continues to raise awareness and enhance understanding of Climate Change issues across the Council (staff and Councillors) so they are embedded into day operations

Status: In Progress

Comments: None

Risk Category: 6 – Climate Change

Risk Subject Area: B. Integration into decision making and targets

Corporate Priorities: Environment

Risk Owner(s): Sandy Muirhead

Date of update: 10 June 2025

Previous Risk Score:

8

Current Risk Score:

8

Future Risk Score:

6

Risk Description

Where integration into wider Council decision-making is not evident this reduces the effectiveness of holistic approaches in delivering Spelthorne's strategy.

Inadequate mechanisms for monitoring and reporting on status provides limited insight regarding keeping on track in pursuing net zero carbon emissions and wider government reporting requirements.

Local Government Reorganisation could impact on delivering net zero targets especially if other councils joining within any future unitary do not have the same ambitions as Spelthorne

Current control actions:

All Committee reports include a section on Sustainability and Climate Change considerations which should be reflected upon by report authors to identify both positive and adverse impact of proposals being put forward by Officers requiring a Member decision.

Through carbon literacy training of staff and the climate change and sustainability officers working with services across the Council, climate change is becoming embedded in service delivery. A Climate Change Working Group made up of a cross-party group of elected Members will focus on monitoring of actions towards carbon neutrality and initial assessment of ideas.

Officer updates to Members on the progress of the Climate Change Action Plan.

Annual Reporting of Carbon Emissions to Surrey County Council.

Annual KPI reporting.

Current mitigating actions:

Through ongoing monitoring of climate change strategy and corporate plan actions can ensure climate change mitigation and adaptation is incorporated into day-to-day Council projects/activities.

To use Project Horizon to channel focus on projects which make a significant contribution to reducing the Council's carbon footprint.

Benchmarking and/or analysis of comparative energy savings achieved across Surrey Districts and boroughs Looked to assess how Councils align in terms of climate change activities in readiness for Local Government Reorganisation.

Ensure delivery of Corporate Plan actions to assist in mitigating climate change and reducing the Council's carbon emissions using the corporate plan action tracker.

Future actions:

Type: Control

Timeline: December 2025

Description: Mandatory Carbon literacy training programme underway across the Council to continue so we can achieve silver accreditation with bronze level already being achieved.

Status: In progress

Comments: None

Type: Mitigation

Timeline: December 2025

Description: To build on Greener Futures climate adaptation strategy and incorporate actions into our climate change strategy.

Status: In Progress

Comments: As the climate changes the Council and residents need to adapt to climate change. A framework for adaptation is currently being put together to take to Committee in the audit. The framework will identify actions which can help the move to adapting to future climatic differences to the historic "traditional English climate". This will be linked to the overarching climate change strategy.

Risk Category: 6 – Corporate Capacity, Resources, Recruitment and Retention

Risk Subject Area: A. Corporate Capacity

Corporate Priorities: Resilience, Services

Risk Owner(s): Sandy Muirhead

Date of update: 10 June 2025

Previous Risk Score:

12

Current Risk Score:

12

Future Risk Score:

9

Risk Description

Increased workloads due to national and local policy decisions. Any additional funding provided may not be sufficient to cover work required and shortage of professionals in marketplace may make it even more difficult to get sufficient staff to cover requirements.

Current areas of work with potential to increase risk include:

- Ongoing pressures on resources due to work associated with Local Government Reorganisation (provision of data and associated transition work),
- Follow up work associated with the Best Value Inspection and external audits,
- Additional work which will be needed following the Government's confirmation of support for a 3rd runway at Heathrow, and
- Specific service area pressures due to increased workloads, e.g. in Environmental Health

Tasks are exceeding ability to deliver in certain areas, especially in services where it is difficult to recruit staff. Corporate capacity remains under strain in 2025.

Overstretched capacity could lead to increased staff fatigue / burnout / sickness levels arising. This may impact further on employee stress levels and mental / physical wellbeing, which may also lead to reductions in expected service delivery and reduced morale especially with pressure to complete more tasks over and above planned work.

Overstretched staff may feel encouraged to leave to move to less demanding roles in other areas including the private sector and this has been recently exacerbated in certain areas by best value work.

Availability of external roles especially better paid roles. The Council struggles to keep up with increased pay in roles in the sector as a whole.

Current control actions:

Management to address workload issues across teams, with continued prioritisation of tasks and redeployment of resources where possible. .

Corporate performance management systems operating across various levels, intended to promote golden thread and support delivery of corporate priorities and objectives.

Annual Service Planning refers to capacity pressures being experienced/foreseen by Service Managers/Group Heads (under risks section), so that any remedial action can be proposed and discussed.

Local Government Reorganisation and Best Value demands will increase pressure on staff which could result in more leaving.

Current mitigating actions:

Various support systems operating in promoting and supporting staff wellbeing e.g. Carefirst.

Corporate performance management systems operate across services with a view to promoting the Corporate Plan and associated actions translated into tasks; but also to ensure staff are managing workloads and priorities. There is a need to build in more performance monitoring following audit action plan. This will be achieved through careful service planning incorporating the “Golden Thread” and quarterly KPI monitoring which can be used with the continuous performance monitoring process for staff for managers and in particular monitor both staff and service performance.

Management and HR monitoring of sickness absence levels related to stress or overstretched capacity provides corporate insight that could indicate any further remedial action required.

Participated in an LGA review in 2022 which raised findings regarding working culture though recent staff survey demonstrates staff feel very positive about their working environment internally but one area that showed red was in relation to Cllrs.

Corporate Establishment Review undertaken in 2023 with some further actions identified and pursued. This also overlaps with the other risks in this category relating to recruitment and retention. See Risk subject area 7b. re recruitment and retention measures.

Future actions:

Type: Control

Timeline: Ongoing

Description: Demand management and developing approaches to measure and monitor demand levels across the Council, but need to recognise that demand management is not always easy due to for example extra people presenting as homeless putting more demand on housing staff or extra Government requirements e.g. productivity plans.

Status: Outstanding

Comments: All managers try to provide some balance in terms of staff workload but there often demand factors which arise from external sources and may be difficult to predict. Recent budget

works and demands from best value process have put extra strain on staff. Local Government Reorganisation and the possible impact of BVI Commissioners will impact workload and morale. Ongoing issue which senior managers are trying to mitigate through reassurance and regular updates on current situation.

Type: Mitigation

Timeline: July 2025

Description: Alternative options for service delivery for building control (due to severe resourcing and resilience issues)

Status: In Progress

Comments: Audits of Building Control Service have been undertaken. Internal audit report received; Building Safety Regulator audit report awaited. Resilience/capacity issues may warrant consideration of separate risk category depending on outcome. 06.06.25

Risk Category: 6 – Corporate Capacity, Resources, Recruitment and Retention

Risk Subject Area: B. Recruitment and Retention

Corporate Priorities: Resilience, Services

Risk Owner(s): Sandy Muirhead

Date of update: 10 June 2025

Previous Risk Score:

12

Current Risk Score:

12

Future Risk Score:

12

Risk Description

Unsuccessful recruitment and ongoing unfilled vacancies in a challenging and competitive labour market leads to reduced availability of technical skills and relevant expertise is spread more thinly across Services. The Council is experiencing increasing difficulties trying to recruit to key roles (e.g. Environmental Health, Building Control, payroll). Staff shortages further exacerbate workload pressures across teams. The consequences of this risk are set out earlier under corporate capacity.

Failure to identify 'red flags' in applications for employment and/or through interview process could result in inappropriate recruitment decisions leading to issues during probation.

Ineffective or inappropriate recruitment exacerbated by the skill shortages within the local government market could result in appointments that fail to effectively meet business need leading to reduced service quality and/or periods of ongoing vacancies which puts extra demands on staff and HR resources especially in terms of employment cases.

The Government's plans for Local Government Reorganisation, may lead to loss of some staff and difficulties recruiting to vacant posts, particularly as Spelthorne with Surrey is included in the first wave of the programme. There is also a risk some staff may be lost as a result of the BVI process.

Current control actions:

Several measures have been underway for some time and previously reported. These relate to HR policies, financial enhancements for hard to fill posts, development and upskilling opportunities,

schemes to support staff wellbeing, hybrid working patterns and flexible working arrangements to attract and incentivise staff to modern working practices, staff pay reviews, HR professional networking forums with a view to applying best practice learnt.

Staff and member feedback including commissioning annual surveys to ascertain key concerns, issues and promote continuous improvement measures. A staff survey undertaken in 2024 had a very high participation rate and results reflected a high level of satisfaction with work/values within the services.

Staff communication plan on Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) to be developed and maintained throughout the transition process. CARE first offering to be enhanced with a programme to assist staff on the current establishment to prepare for the opportunities that a larger unitary authority may offer.

Current mitigating actions:

Where recruitment into posts is not possible, appointment of interims or agency staff to ensure continuity in the services and enable continued delivery of the service concerned are undertaken.

Training has been provided for managers who will be involved in recruitment process to enable them to spot 'red flags' on applications/during interviews etc.. Suitably trained manager/member of HR staff to be involved in all interviews. Probation periods are used where possible to enable more effective evaluation of new staff.

There is a possible need to increase the use of agency staff where recruitment issues develop due to LGR. Use of honorariums for existing staff where they are required to step up to cover work of vacant posts.

A training programme is being developed to help staff through Local Government Reorganisation.

As LGR progresses As LGR progresses there may be staff leaving/retiring which may result in posts having to be filled with interim staff.

Future actions:

Type: Mitigation

Timeline: Ongoing

Description: To continue to advertise in all service relevant journals to ensure maximise opportunities for those seeking roles to see relevant adverts.

Status: In Progress

Comments: None

Type: Mitigation

Timeline: Ongoing

Description: Continue to explore new and innovative recruitment and retention strategies in a competitive market. This includes workplace flexibility.

Status: In Progress

Comments: None

Type: Mitigation

Timeline: Ongoing

Description: Continue to draw optimal value from all relevant hubs of expertise including externally conducted research in continuing to facilitate and promote a holistic approach to responding to recruitment and retention challenges and future-proofing the Council's workforce.

Status: In Progress

Comments: Recruitment team and officers are looking at all options for advertising roles but also including opportunities to appoint apprentices and train from within.

Type: Control

Timeline: April 2027

Description: Maintaining an effective communication plan with staff re LGR/BVI and offering enhanced support/development opportunities through the CARE first programme, will assist in retaining some staff as the transition to the new unitary authority progresses.

Status: In Progress

Comments: Action timeline based on Surrey in first wave of Councils undergoing LGR.

Type: Mitigation

Timeline: April 2027

Description: Seek possible partnership opportunities with Councils forming part of new unitary.

Status: To be implemented

Comments: Cannot be implemented until clear which Councils will form new unitary with Spelthorne.

Risk Category: 7 – Equality, Diversity and Inclusivity

Risk Subject Area: Coordinated approach to legislative requirements

Corporate Priorities: Resilience, Environment, Services

Risk Owner(s): Sandy Muirhead

Date of update: 10 June 2025

Previous Risk Score:

6

Current Risk Score:

6

Future Risk Score:

6

Risk Description

If there is a failure to effectively adhere to the Equality Act (2010), this could lead to workplace practices and delivery of services that fail to incorporate necessary principles, standards and requirements in promoting equal opportunities, diversity and inclusivity. This may increase risks of discriminatory practices, and consequentially the Council could be subject to complaints or even claims resulting in reputational damage.

If there is insufficient resource, skills or expertise to develop, promote and support implementation of E, D & I standards, progress in driving change and positive impact through a structured and coordinated approach may be limited.

Current control actions:

Training mechanisms to raise awareness and understanding such as the online Workrite module. Seeking further training options for 2025.

All Committee reports include a section on Equality, Diversity and Inclusivity considerations to ensure this area is embedded into Council decision making. It should be carefully reflected upon by report authors to identify any implications and whether there is any specific impact for proposals being put forward requiring a Member decision.

Communications and engagement with staff, Members and the public to recognise and celebrate diversity.

Champions (Staff reps) to explore further positive approaches relating to E, D & I. Inclusivity Working Group meets regularly.

Corporate Values – (PROVIDE) are incorporated into the Council's equality and diversity objectives together with an internal equality and diversity policy.

An Equality, Diversity and Inclusivity 'Statement of Intent' document has been reported. Internal and external websites have been updated with Equality and Diversity policy and statement published.

Current mitigating actions:

Reminder has been sent out to Group Head to remind staff that if they have not done so in the last year they must complete their workrite training asap. Group Heads will ensure staff complete the annual mandatory training to mitigate the risk of training not being completed.

Equality Impact Assessments are completed as a requirement on initiation of new projects and strategies.

An Equality and Diversity audit was undertaken in November/December 2024 and completed May 2025. The audit identifies further areas of work/actions to be carried out with appropriate timelines. A draft equality diversity and inclusion strategy has been produced for initial comment to address one of the actions. All actions from the audit have clear timelines and the Council is ensuring these are met subject to resource availability.

\Council participated in Race Equality Week (Feb 2024) and promoted important messages to all staff.

Ensure "celebration" of key events, for example PRIDE month, and ensure raised at staff meetings (including relevant presentations on relevant subjects) and flag raised along with further communications.

Section on EDI including reference to LGBT+ community included in induction seminar for new staff completed.

Future actions:

Type: Control

Timeline: October 2025

Description: A draft strategy has been produced and timelines of achieving various milestones associated with the audit report are clear. This strategy needs to be commented on internally and then taken to Committee.

To address key reporting actions in the audit an officer has been assigned to undertake this task in human resources.

An audit has been undertaken which assists in identifying the resource required and better enable allocation of the resource needed.

Status: In Progress

Comments: The audit actions have been noted, a timeline developed, and officers allocated to deliver on the actions within the audit report.

Risk Category: 8 – Local Government Reorganisation

Risk Subject Area: A. Strategic decisions

Corporate Priorities: Resilience, Environment, Services

Risk Owner(s): Daniel Mouawad, Lee O'Neil, Terry Collier

Date of update: 24 June 2025

Previous Risk Score:

16

Current Risk Score:

16

Future Risk Score:

12

Risk Description

The governance structure at Surrey County Council has previously presented limited opportunities for Spelthorne to influence future shaping and direction within the wider Surrey landscape, e.g. in relation to the County Deal. This presented the risk of strategic decisions being made that were not in the best interests of Spelthorne's residents and local communities. With Surrey now confirmed in the first wave of Local Government Reorganisation (LGR), the risk remains that Spelthorne will have very limited ability to influence the future shaping of any new unitary authorities and the level/quality of services that the new unitary Council for our area will provide for our residents and businesses.

Government plans for LGR will mean that Spelthorne potentially no longer exists as a sovereign authority from April 2027. This will fundamentally affect Council's ability to deliver many of its planned actions under the Corporate Plan 2024-28. Failure to engage with the LGR process would increase the risk of not delivering the best outcomes for Spelthorne's residents and businesses.

Current control actions:

Spelthorne will have no control over the implementation of LGR by the national Government. SBC can therefore only seek to mitigate the effects on the borough and its residents/businesses.

The Administration Group Leaders have reviewed the deliverability of the outstanding planned actions under the Corporate Plan and have advised on those that they propose to cease. They are also currently working with officers on developing any new/revised proposals to be delivered within available resources before Spelthorne ceases to exist as a sovereign authority, prior to discussing options with the Commissioners. Any planned changes will need to be approved by the Corporate

Policy and Resources Committee. Any revised action plan will be kept under review to confirm its deliverability in light of any future resourcing pressures.

Current mitigating actions:

It will be essential for Spelthorne to engage fully with the LGR process on a county-wide basis (initially through the Surrey Leaders' Group) if the Council is to deliver the best possible outcomes for its residents and businesses.

The Council will need to review its priorities and planned actions under the Corporate Plan to ensure any remaining actions are deliverable within the limited timeframes it remains as a sovereign authority.

A Reorganisation Board was established to formulate, co-ordinate and manage the Council's engagement with Surrey Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) and devolution proposals and make recommendations to CPRC/Council. This Board's role also included overseeing the Council's Transformation Programme to ensure that this aligned with that process. Update 06.06.25. A review of the LGR and Transformation board is underway to ensure it is fit for purpose for both LGR work and meets Commissioners' expectations in relation to the wider Improvement and Recovery Plan.

The Council needs to have a clear view on its priorities for any future collaboration (or not) against the backdrop of LGR. Even though Spelthorne will no longer exist as a sovereign authority in April 2027, there will be a need to deliver services and manage budget pressures over the next 2 years. The Outline Budget report presented to CPRC in December flagged up the need to deliver a corporate transformation programme to deliver efficiencies and savings - and collaboration remains one strand of this. New opportunities to collaborate may need to be considered to deliver resilience in some service areas (such as Building Control) and existing partnerships may need to be reviewed. Challenges may exist in finding suitable partners and agreeing suitable collaboration arrangements in such circumstances in view of the timescales for LGR (until Councils forming new unitary are known). The Council's Collaborative Working Review Group has been restarted (Leadership and MAT) to consider any collaborative opportunities that may need to be discussed.

£500,000 budget for reorganisation built into 2025-26 Budget.

Future actions:

Type: Mitigation

Timeline: March 2027

Description: Planning for potential change and ascertaining transitional and future arrangements for service delivery, decision making and strategic direction in light of Local Government Reorganisation (LGR).

Status: In Progress

Comments Leader is in active discussions with other Surrey Leaders to formulate their approach to formation of new unitary authorities for Surrey. SBC Full Council met on 06.02.25 to agree their preferred option for number of unitaries, preferred configuration of authorities to be joined with, and

the Terms of Reference for a new Reorganisation Board. Council met again on 18.03.25 to approve the initial submission to the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) on behalf of the 12 Local Authorities of Surrey; and on 06.05.25 the Council endorsed the submission to the Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government of the preferred proposal for 3 unitary authorities in Surrey.

Surrey CXs continuing to discuss practical implementation pending further guidance from Government.

Risk Category: 8 – Local Government Reorganisation

Risk Subject Area: B. Managing Change

Corporate Priorities: Resilience, Environment, Services, Community, Addressing Housing Need

Risk Owner(s): Lee O’Neil, Terry Collier, Daniel Mouawad

Date of update: 11 June 2025

Previous Risk Score:

16

Current Risk Score:

16

Future Risk Score:

12

Risk Description

If there is a lack of clarity or unified understanding around the wide-reaching implications of Local Government Reorganisation (LGR), this could make the task of planning, managing, communicating and implementing change challenging.

The Council will need to consider how to prioritise work which will be required to feed into the LGR process alongside need to continue delivering services and efficiency savings.

The Government's plans for Local Government Reorganisation present a major risk to the Council's operational activities and planned projects/actions under the Corporate Plan if organisational change is not managed effectively. Additional pressures and uncertainties for staff may result in loss of personnel and difficulties recruiting replacements.

Current control actions:

Ensure the appropriate level of resources (capacity and appropriately skilled staff) are put in place and time is freed up from other parts of the organisation involved in the change management process if no additional financial or staff resources are available. This will require tough decisions on what not to do, or to deliver in another way on a temporary basis. A risk-based approach will need to be applied to this work.

Current mitigating actions:

Although the Council may not be able to control the changes required as part of the LGR process, it can, through development of an effective change management plan/strategy, mitigate the impacts on staff and the wider organisation, minimise the risk of service disruption and maximise the opportunity to deliver a range of planned actions/projects, before the transition into a larger unitary authority.

Collaboration with partners may be necessary to deal with any resilience issues that may arise in the run-up to the unitary authority taking over responsibility for services.

NOTE:

Data collection already underway to support process with Single Point of Contact (SPOC) (Deputy Chief Executive) coordinating this Council's information to be sent through to Borough/District Project Management Office.

Future actions:

Type: Mitigation

Timeline: September 2025

Description Surrey Leaders/Chief Executives discussing options for the number and make-up of unitary authorities for Surrey under LGR.

Status: Completed

Comments: Strategic discussions (Leaders and CXs) re options for new unitary authorities in Surrey completed. Interim LGR plans for Surrey had been developed and submitted (March 2025), with full proposals submitted separately by Surrey County Council and District/Borough Councils in May 2025. Majority of District/Borough Councils favouring 3 unitary model; Surrey County Council favouring 2 unitary model.

Type: Mitigation

Timeline: March 2027

Description: Planning for potential change and ascertaining transitional and future arrangements for service delivery, decision making and strategic direction. Effective change management strategy/plan to be developed/implemented once further information is received on the LGR process/timetable.

Status: In Progress

Comments Initial limited guidance on process contained in Government Ministerial letter of 5 February 2025. Awaiting more detailed guidance.

Risk Category: 9 – Response to External Audit/Best Value Inspection Recommendations

Risk Subject Area: Value for Money/Audit Findings

Corporate Priorities: Resilience, Environment, Services

Risk Owner(s): Terry Collier, Lee O’Neil, Daniel Mouawad

Date of update: 24 June 2025

Previous Risk Score:

12

Current Risk Score:

12

Future Risk Score:

6

Risk Description

NB. Following the publication of the Council’s Best Value Inspection report the Government, in a letter to the Chief Executive dated 8 May 2025, advised that it would appoint Commissioners to Spelthorne Borough Council. The level of Commissioner-led intervention specified in the Directions is outlined in that letter. The Commissioners have been appointed, and the Council is currently working with them to develop an Improvement and Recovery Plan to address the issues raised in the Best Value Inspection report.

Most decisions remain with the Council, but the Commissioners will uphold proper standards and due process, and recommend action where needed.

There is a risk that the Commissioners could directly intervene in any planned decisions which are not compatible with the requirements of Ministerial Directive.

Similarly, failure to respond effectively to address the recommendations in the External Audit Reports could result in statutory recommendations and intervention by the Commissioners which would also risk damaging the reputation of the authority.

Failure to address the recommendations could expose the Council to financial and governance risks.

Current control actions:

A Consolidated Action Plan was presented to 8th May Audit Committee drawing together actions relating to Public Interest Report, CIPFA Capital Assurance review, LGA Corporate Peer Challenge report, External Auditor Annual Report 2023-24, External Auditor Audit Findings report 2023-24 and

Best Value Inspection report. This is to ensure that all recommendations are being addressed, owned by an appropriate officer, with Cllr leads identified, with clear timescales for completion.

The Action Plan was approved by February 2025 Audit Committee and progress against the Action Plans is reported on at every Audit Committee for Committee oversight.

Current mitigating actions:

None

Future actions:

Type: Control

Timeline: September 2025

Description: Actions specified in Action Plans to be completed.

Status: In Various target dates specified in the Action Plans. All actions to have been completed by September 2025

Comments: None

Type: Control

Timeline: June 2025

Description: Improvement and Recovery Plan (IRP) to be developed and agreed by Commissioners

Status: In progress

Comments: A draft IRP has been developed and discussed with the Commissioners. Workshops to commence for each of the five main 'pillars' of the plan commencing w/c 30 June 2025.

Type: Control

Timeline: April 2027

Description: Council to fully engage and work with the Commissioners to implement all aspects of the Improvement and Recovery Plan

Status: In progress

Comments: None