Committee Report Checklist

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

Stage 1
Report checklist – responsibility of report owner

ITEM	Yes / No	Date
Councillor engagement / input from Chair prior to briefing	Y	24/12/25
Commissioner engagement (if report focused on issues of concern to Commissioners such as Finance, Assets etc)	Y	18/12/25
Relevant Group Head review	Y	18/12/25
MAT+ review (to have been circulated **at least 5 working days before Stage 2**)	Y	18/12/25
This item is on the Forward Plan for the relevant committee	Y	
	Reviewed by	
Finance comments	Y	24/12/25
Risk comments	LO	12/12/25
Legal comments	LH	08/01/26
HR comments (if applicable)		

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

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

Stage 2
Report checklist – responsibility of report owner

ITEM	Completed by	Date
Monitoring Officer commentary – at least **5 working days before MAT**	L Heron	08/01/26
S151 Officer commentary – at least **5 working days before MAT**	TC	06/01/26
Confirm final report cleared by MAT	Y	06/01/26

Corporate Policy and Resources Committee

19 January 2026

Title	Governance Assurance (Risk Management) Framework and Policy
Purpose of the report	To make a decision
Report Author	Lee O'Neil, Deputy Chief Executive
Ward(s) Affected	All Wards
Exempt	No
Exemption Reason	
Corporate Priority	Community Addressing Housing Need Resilience Environment Services
Recommendations	**Committee is asked to:** a. Approve the new Governance Assurance Policy and Framework (as outlined in **Appendix A**), which focuses on the Council's governance and control arrangements to ensure effective management of risks. b. Authorise the Deputy Chief Executive, in conjunction with the Chair of the Audit Committee to make any adjustments to the Policy and Framework to ensure that it is updated to reflect any future changes in the Council's governance arrangements.
Reason for Recommendation	To ensure that the Council has effective systems and processes for ensuring that risk is managed effectively and that the Council has a positive risk management culture.

1. Executive summary of the report

What is the situation	Why we want to do something
• As part of ongoing improvements to the Council's Risk Management arrangements, the authority is moving to a governance	• Improvements are needed to the way the Council manages risk to address recommendations in External/Internal Audits and to deliver the relevant outcomes

assurance based Risk Management Policy and Framework.	required as part of the Council's Improvement and Recovery Plan.
This is what we want to do about it	**These are the next steps**
• Implement a Policy and Framework based on a governance assurance approach to ensure that the Council is managing risk more effectively and embed a positive risk management culture throughout the organisation.	• The Committee is asked to approve the new Policy and Framework outlined in **Appendix A.** Any necessary changes to processes and governance arrangements, including adapting all the authority's risk registers, will then be implemented as outlined in the report.

2. Key issues

2.1 In response to recommendations made in the Best Value Inspection and Grant Thornton's External Audit of this authority, the Council has been making a range of improvements to the way it manages risk, moving to a governance assurance-based risk management Policy and Framework.

2.2 This approach focuses on the effectiveness of the Council's governance and control arrangements, ensuring that this authority can deliver its objectives and corporate and service responsibilities in a more positive way, and that stakeholders receive sufficient assurance that appropriate arrangements are in place. This will also ensure that the Council delivers the required outcomes specified in the authority's Improvement and Recovery Plan.

2.3 The new Governance Assurance Framework and Policy outlined in **Appendix A** specifies how the Council will capture and manage its key areas of assurance (risks) under this new approach; outlining the assessment process, roles and responsibilities, how and where this will be reported and the training resources required.

2.4 One of the outcomes of this change in approach will be to place a greater responsibility on the various service Committees of the Council to scrutinise the detailed risk / governance assurance registers of the respective departments and services under their remit.

2.5 In contrast, the Audit Committee's key role in relation to risk management will be to consider the effectiveness of the Council's arrangements for risk, governance and internal control. This will include overseeing the relevant policies and strategies and crucially being assured that:

(a) Key risk / governance areas are owned and managed appropriately, and

(b) That this authority's governance arrangements for managing risk are effective, implemented and being monitored (with departments and services held accountable for delivering their governance responsibilities).

2.6 The Corporate Risk Register (which is being adapted to the new approach and will in future be called the 'Governance Assurance Register') will continue to be reported to the Corporate Policy and Resources Committee on a regular basis under the new arrangements.

3.   Options appraisal and proposal

3.1   **Option 1 (Recommended)** – The Committee is asked to:

    (a)   Approve the new Governance Assurance Framework and Policy (as outlined in **Appendix A**), which focuses on the Council's governance and control arrangements to ensure effective management of risks.

    (b)   Authorise the Deputy Chief Executive, in conjunction with the Chair of the Audit Committee to make any subsequent adjustments to the Framework and Policy to ensure that it is updated to reflect any future changes in the Council's governance arrangements.

3.2   **Option 2** – The Committee could suggest amendments to the Framework and Policy.

3.3   **Option 3** – The Committee could suggest an alternative approach.

4.   Risk implications

4.1   The new Governance Assurance Policy and Framework are designed to ensure that the Council has all the necessary governance arrangements in place to manage corporate, strategic and operational risks effectively, and through training and monitoring will ensure that there is an effective risk management culture embedded within the organisation.

5.   Financial implications

5.1   The development and implementation of the new Governance Assurance Framework and Policy and the associated revision of the Corporate Risk Register can be delivered within existing resources. Any minor costs relating to staff training, development of supporting documentation, and updates to reporting systems are expected to be met from current service budgets. Over time, strengthening the Council's risk management and assurance arrangements is expected to support more effective financial planning and help mitigate the likelihood of unanticipated financial pressures arising from unmanaged or insufficiently controlled risks.

6.   Legal comments

6.1   In accordance with the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015, Regulation 3 the Council is required to have sound system of internal control to ensure effective exercise of its functions, financial and operational management, and arrangements for the management of risk.

6.2   The proposed Risk Management Framework and Policy assist the Council in discharging this statutory duty.

6.3   Approval of the proposed framework and policy is a matter for Corporate Policy and Resources Committee as risk management is within this Committee's terms of reference (part 3(b) of the Constitution).

Corporate implications

7.   S151 Officer comments

7.1 Having an appropriate Corporate Risk Management Framework supports ensuring that the Council governance arrangements is able to effectively gain assurance on arrangements for managing risks including financial risks. Additional budget had been made available to cover the cost of bringing in the consultant to assist officers to develop the new proposed approach to risk management. The proposed approach is consistent with recommendations within the Governance theme of the approved Improvement and Recovery Plan.

8. Monitoring Officer comments

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

9. Procurement comments

There are no procurement implications arising directly from this report.

10. Equality and Diversity

10.1 The Council's risk registers (including the new Governance Assurance Register) will incorporate any governance arrangements required to ensure effective management of any risks faced by the Council in meeting its duties and responsibilities relating to Equality, Diversity and Inclusion.

11. Sustainability/Climate Change Implications

11.1 The Council's risk registers (including the new Governance Assurance Register) will incorporate any governance arrangements required to ensure effective management of any risks faced by the Council in meeting its zero-carbon targets and wider environmental responsibilities.

12. Other considerations

12.1 Initial training for key officers was provided in September 2025 to introduce them to the new governance assurance approach to risk management, with further training planned for both officers and members to embed an understanding of their responsibilities for implementing and maintaining the necessary arrangements specified in the Governance Assurance Policy and Framework.

12.2 The Audit Committee has received updates on progress with this work and given the opportunity to understand and input into the way some of the Council's key risks would be presented within a new Governance Assurance Register.

12.3 In view of the wide-ranging changes which need to be implemented in adopting this new approach to managing risks, it will inevitably take some time to fully integrate the new processes across all Committees.

13. Timetable for implementation

13.1 If the Committee approves the proposed Governance Assurance Policy and Framework, work will commence immediately on incorporating this new approach into the Council's wider governance arrangements. The approach will be applied across all services to ensure a consistent and comprehensive

assurance capture of corporate risks. This is likely to take two or three committee cycles to fully work up.

13.2   In parallel, officers will follow up with the Chairs of the relevant service Committees to incorporate into their Forward Plans a planned approach for incorporating scrutiny of service operational risk arrangements.

13.3   Training on the new arrangements will be provided for the Chairs/Vice Chairs of relevant committees and subsequently for all Councillors. This is likely to be scheduled for the end of February/early March 2026 with dates to be confirmed.

14.   Contact

14.1   Lee O'Neil – Deputy Chief Executive (l.o'neil@spelthorne.gov.uk)

14.2   Rob Winter – ARGC Ltd. (robwinter.argc@gmail.com)

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

Background papers: There are none.

Appendices:
Appendix A – Proposed Governance Assurance Policy and Framework
Appendix B – Illustrative example of change in approach from previous Corporate Risk Register information vs. new Corporate Assurance Register information (TO FOLLOW)