

APPENDIX B – Example of change in approach from previous Corporate Risk Register information vs. new Corporate Assurance Register information

PREVIOUS CORPORATE RISK REGISTER INFORMATION ON CLIMATE CHANGE

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: 22 September 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. Royal Meteorological Society has recently highlighted (14.07.25) that *'Record breaking and extreme weather has become increasingly commonplace in the UK as our climate has changed over the last few decades'* and that, *'the latest assessment of the UK's climate shows how baselines are shifting, records are becoming more frequent, and that temperature and rainfall extremes are becoming the norm'*.

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. The Met Office have recently issued a statement saying 2025 was the hottest summer on record.

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 by 2030.

The 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 and delivering this in as cost-effective way as possible.

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 joint service projects are being developed.

Officers are continuing to roll out Carbon Literacy training days and participating staff have committed to a range of carbon saving pledges. 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 unitary authority successor are net zero by 2030. The Council will continue to seek alternative funding to continue to develop schemes to meet net zero targets and these are being worked up in terms of carbon sequestration within the Borough to help define how close we can get to the zero target by 2030.

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 have been 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.

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.

Future actions:

Type: Control

Timeline: Amended to May 2026 (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: November 2025

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

Status: In progress

Comments: Adaptation strategy development in progress and will be taken to Committee in autumn 2025.

Type: Mitigation

Timeline: Continuing through to March 2027

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: 5 – Climate Change

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

Corporate Priorities: Environment

Risk Owner(s): Sandy Muirhead

Date of update: 22 September 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 continue to 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:

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 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

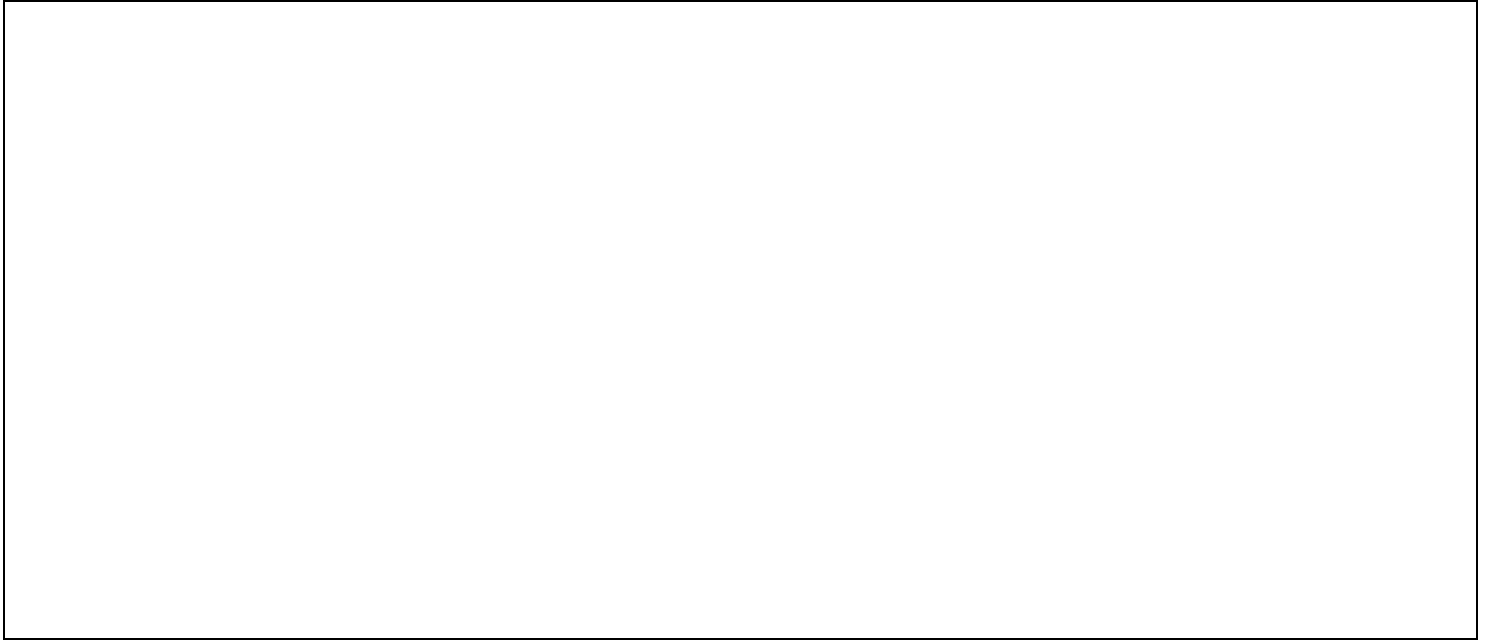
Type: Mitigation

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 autumn. 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.



NEW CORPORATE ASSURANCE REGISTER TEMPLATE EXAMPLE

(NB. for illustrative purposes only – content may be subject to further change)

Assurance Area: Meeting our zero carbon targets and wider environmental responsibilities			Date of update:
Assurance Description: Climate change poses a significant risk to society as well as the Council. It is well documented that the likelihood of severe and extreme weather events is increasing. It is therefore the Council's duty to do what it can to directly and indirectly minimise our environmental impact and ready ourselves in the event of a serious weather event. Assurances are needed therefore that appropriate strategies and policies are in place and effective, they are understood and complied with, and our emergency resilience and business continuity arrangements are in place and tested.			
Assurance Owner: Group Head - Commissioning and Transformation		Focus	Assurance Level: L / M / H
Action/ RAG	Description	Action	Latest Update
1	Climate Change Strategy & Action Plan	Review the CC Strategy and progress of the action plan to ensure it remains appropriate and achievable.	
2	Awareness and training	Review the arrangements to ensure all staff and members are aware of the Council's strategy and policies in relation to zero carbon and general environmental awareness.	
3	Oversight by E&S Committee	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.	

4	Business and service planning	Review the process for business and service plans to ensure they adequately reflect opportunities to reduce our carbon and meet other environmental targets.	
5	Maximise funding	Review opportunities to attract external funding to support our carbon neutral target.	
6	Influence property development	Subject to the approval of the Local Plan, implement the proposed supplementary planning guidance (SPD) to assist in future properties being better adapted to both heat and cold.	
7	Greener Futures Strategy	To build on Greener Futures climate adaptation strategy and incorporate actions into our climate change strategy.	
8	Wider emergency resilience & business continuity plans	Review the corporate emergency resilience and business continuity polices and plans to ensure they adequately reflect the implications of climate related issues.	