Committee Report Checklist

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

Stage 1
Report checklist – responsibility of report owner

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

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

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

Stage 2
Report checklist – responsibility of report owner

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

Corporate Policy and Resources Committee

20 April 2026

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

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

What is the situation	Why we want to do something
• This report sets out the progress made against the Improvement and Recovery Plan to address the Directions of the Secretary of State.	• It is a requirement for the Council to submit a progress report every six months. • The report provides assurance to Commissioners, Government, the new West Surrey Shadow Council and our Councillors and employees of the progress the Council has made and its continuing improvement towards being self-governing, fulfilling its best value duty in the shortest time possible.
This is what we want to do about it	**These are the next steps**
• Seek CPRC agreement to recommend that Council submits the progress report to Commissioners to record improvement progress made to date on leadership, culture, service delivery and the governance and financial management environment.	• Once approved this will be considered by Council for formal submission to the Commissioners.

2. Key issues

2.1 The Council's response to the Secretary of State's Best Value Directions, issued in May 2025, was the creation of a single Improvement and Recovery Plan (IRP). This plan was intended to provide the organisation with a clear direction for its improvement journey and a single framework for ensuring that all the Directives were addressed.

2.2 The original plan was approved by Council on 23 October 2025 and the supporting report formed the initial progress report to Commissioners with a commitment to provide a further update six months later.

2.3 Authority was delegated to the Corporate Policy and Resources Committee (CPRC) to approve any changes to the IRP as part of regular reporting arrangements. A revised version of the Improvement and Recovery Plan (IRP) was agreed by CPRC on 17 February 2026 to reflect the transition from recovery into sustained improvement and the focus on ensuring a successful transition to the new West Surrey Council.

2.4 The Progress Report attached at Appendix A sets out the progress made against the Improvement and Recovery Plan since its approval in October 2025 to address the Directions of the Secretary of State.

3. Options appraisal and proposal

3.1 **Option 1:** The preferred option is for the Progress Report at Appendix A to be approved for referral to Council enabling it to be submitted to Commissioners within the agreed timescales. This will provide assurance to Commissioners, Government, the new West Surrey Shadow Council and our Councillors and employees that the Council has made progress against its Improvement and Recovery Plan.

3.2 **Option 2:** An alternative option is to not approve the Progress Report for referral to Council at this stage if the Committee consider that further revisions or additional work are required. This would, however, risk delaying submission to Commissioners against the agreed timescales and may reduce assurance levels regarding progress against the Plan.

3.3 **Option 3:** Doing nothing is not an option if the Council is to fulfil its best value duty in the shortest time possible, as it has committed to providing an update to Commissioners.

4. Risk implications

4.1 Risks relating to the IRP are managed through the Council's new governance assurance arrangements with *'Ensuring there are effective governance arrangements in place to deliver the IRP'* and *'Ensuring and maintaining organisational resilience'* forming two of the Governance Assurance areas which will be monitored and reported on through the Council's new Governance Assurance Register.

4.2 Risk 1: Failure to submit the required progress report within agreed timescales may constitute non-compliance with the terms of the intervention which could lead to further escalation of intervention measures.

Mitigation: As part of the governance process an Improvement and Recovery Board has been set up to monitor progress monthly and therefore Commissioners are being kept updated on activity.

4.3 Risk 2: If the progress report submitted to Commissioners does not provide sufficient evidence of improvement, realism about challenges or clear direction of travel there is a risk of erosion of stakeholder confidence and damage to future relationships and partnerships

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

5. Financial implications

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

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

Table 1 : IRP Spend per year

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

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

6. Legal comments

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

Corporate implications

7. Commissioners' comments

7.1 No issues

8. S151 Officer comments

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

9. Monitoring Officer comments

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

10. Procurement comments

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

11. Equality and Diversity

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

12. Sustainability/Climate Change Implications

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

13. Other considerations

None.

14. Timetable for implementation

20 April 2026	Approved by CPRC
30 April 2026	Consideration at Council
1 May 2026	Submission to Commissioners

15. Contact

Gordon Mitchell, Interim Chief Executive
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Please submit any material questions to the Committee Chair and Officer Contact by two days in advance of the meeting.

Background papers:

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

- Council report dated 25 October 2025 seeking approval of Improvement and Recovery Plan including IRP Board Terms of Reference

Appendices:

A: Improvement and Recovery Plan Progress report