

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	05/05/26
Relevant Group Head review	Y	12/05/26
MAT+ review (to have been circulated at least 5 working days before Stage 2)	Y	11/05/26
This item is on the Forward Plan for the relevant committee	Y	28/04/26
	Reviewed by	
Finance comments (circulate to Finance)		
Risk comments (circulate to Lee O’Neil)	LO	06/05/26
Legal comments (circulate to Legal team)	LH	14/05/26
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 rec’d
Monitoring Officer commentary – at least 5 working days before MAT	L Heron	14/05/26
S151 Officer commentary – at least 5 working days before MAT	T.Collier	12/5/26
Commissioner engagement	Y	14/05/26
	Delete as applicable:	Comments in S. 7
Confirm final report cleared by MAT		

Corporate Policy and Resources Committee

26 May 2026

Title	Proposed Council Transitional Plan 2026/27
Purpose of the report	To make a decision
Report Author	Gordon Mitchell, Chief Executive Lee O'Neil, Deputy Chief Executive
Ward(s) Affected	All Wards
Exempt	No
Exemption Reason	Not applicable
Corporate Priority	Community Addressing Housing Need Resilience Environment Services
Recommendations	<p>Committee is asked to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. To endorse the proposed Council Transitional Plan 2026/27 for consultation with the Council's Service Committees (as shown in Appendix A), b. For the results of the consultation exercise to be reported back to this Committee with recommendations for any amendments to the proposed Transitional Plan arising from the consultation process. c. Note progress with actions under the existing Corporate Plan 2024-28 (as shown in Appendix B).
Reason for Recommendation	To ensure that the Council has a focused strategic plan which is deliverable before the transition to a West Surrey unitary authority.

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

What is the situation	Why we want to do something
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spelthorne previously adopted a 5-year Corporate Plan ('the current plan') for 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is a need to review and refine our Corporate Plan to reflect significant

<p>2024-28 which outlined the key actions it would take under 5 priority areas.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • With Local Government Reorganisation coming into effect from 1 April 2027, it is not possible to deliver all the planned actions under the current Plan. It is therefore necessary to decide where this Council needs to focus its resources in the period leading up to the formation of the West Surrey unitary authority, whilst also delivering the objectives of the Council's Improvement and Recovery Plan. 	<p>changes since 2024, including government intervention, increased service demand, and Local Government Reorganisation. This will ensure our priorities remain focused, deliverable, and aligned with current financial and organisational constraints</p>
<p>This is what we want to do about it</p>	<p>These are the next steps</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To respond to these challenges, we propose adopting a focused Council Transitional Plan 2026/27 ('the Transitional Plan') that prioritises essential activity, supports delivery of the Improvement and Recovery Plan, and ensures continued services for residents within available resources 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Committee is asked to endorse the proposed Transitional Plan for consultation with service committees. • Feedback from the service committees will be used make any changes required to the transitional plan prior to reporting back to this Committee, with a recommendation for approval by Full Council.

2. Key issues

2.1 Spelthorne adopted its current Corporate Plan '*Putting our residents at the heart of everything we do*' in February 2024. This 5-year Plan ('the current Plan') covered the period 2024-28 and contained a wide range of planned actions under 5 priority areas:

- Community
- Addressing housing needs
- Resilience
- Environment
- Services

2.2 Since launching the current Plan, the Council has delivered a wide range of the planned actions. **Appendix B** outlines some of the key actions delivered to date.

2.3 Since the adoption of the current Plan, several significant developments have occurred which materially affect the Council's ability to deliver all the original planned actions:

2.4 Best Value Directions / Commissioner Intervention

In May 2025, the Secretary of State issued a series of Best Value Directions requiring the Council to take action to reduce debt, strengthen governance

arrangements, accelerate housing delivery, and improve financial management. In response, the Council has developed an Improvement and Recovery Plan (IRP) which provides a comprehensive and coordinated framework for delivering the required improvements and ensures that all Directions are addressed in a consistent and transparent manner.

Delivery of the IRP requires robust financial control and strict adherence to budgetary limits to support the reduction of debt and the delivery of agreed savings targets. This will necessitate prioritisation of essential expenditure, identification of efficiencies across all service areas, and ongoing monitoring to ensure financial sustainability.

- 2.5 **Increasing demand for some services** - This has created additional pressures including a rise in the need to tackle anti-social behaviour, increased regulatory activity in response to the growth of Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs) within the borough, and a significant escalation in demand for temporary accommodation. The latter has resulted in higher associated costs which is one key driver of budgetary pressure.

These demand-led pressures are placing further strain on already constrained resources and will require ongoing management, prioritisation, and mitigation actions to ensure that service delivery remains within the financial limits set out in the Improvement and Recovery Plan (IRP) and the Council's Medium Term-Financial Strategy (MTFS).

2.6 **Local Government Reorganisation (LGR)**

The Government's decision to progress with Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) in Surrey will result in the establishment of a new West Surrey unitary authority from 1 April 2027. Consequently, Spelthorne Borough Council will cease to exist as a sovereign authority from that date.

- 2.7 The transition to the new authority presents a significant organisational challenge within a compressed timeframe. With the vesting day fast approaching, the Council has a limited window in which to focus on the priorities that matter most to residents, while also managing the additional demands associated with transition and reorganisation.
- 2.8 As a result of these constraints, it is no longer feasible to deliver the full programme of activity set out in the existing Corporate Plan 2024–2028. The scale of change, combined with resource and capacity pressures, requires a more focused and pragmatic approach.
- 2.9 A streamlined, Transitional Plan has therefore been developed. This plan concentrates on key priorities, ensuring continued delivery for residents and support for staff, whilst positioning the Council to play an active role in shaping a financially sustainable and resilient West Surrey unitary authority.
- 3.0 The Transitional Plan provides a clear and focused framework for the Council's final phase as an independent authority. It is built around a defined set of deliverable actions, aligned to the original CARES corporate priorities, but refined to reflect the current operating context and the ongoing need to provide statutory and discretionary services.
- 3.1 This approach is intentionally pragmatic and delivery-focused, recognising the significant resourcing and time constraints facing the Council. It seeks to

maintain a strong focus on residents, communities, and staff, whilst providing clarity and direction during a period of significant change.

- 3.2 Overall, the Transitional Plan aims to ensure that Spelthorne Borough Council will leave a stable, well-managed, and sustainable legacy, supporting a smooth transition into the new unitary authority.

3. Options appraisal and proposal

Option 1 (preferred option):

- a. To endorse the proposed Transitional Plan 2026/27 for consultation with the Council's Service Committees (as shown in **Appendix A**),
- b. For the results of the consultation exercise to be reported back to this Committee with recommendations for any amendments to the proposed Transitional Plan arising from the consultation process.
- c. Note progress with actions under the existing Corporate Plan 2024-28 (as shown in **Appendix B**).

3.1 Option 2

To propose changes to the proposed Transitional Plan.

3.2 Option 3

To propose an alternative approach.

4. Risk implications

- 4.1 The Council has established a comprehensive governance assurance framework to identify, monitor, and manage the key risks faced by the Council and to give assurance that controls are in place to address any areas of focus, concern and any issues that may arise.
- 4.2 **Time constraints.** There is a risk associated with the delivery of the Transitional Plan within the limited timeframe available. This will be managed through the development of a streamlined package of deliverables, aligning resources, and regular performance monitoring and review to ensure progress remains on track.
- 4.3 **Failure to deliver the IRP and comply with the Best Value Directions,** could result in further government intervention, loss of autonomy, and reputational damage. This risk is being actively managed through strong programme governance arrangements overseen by the Improvement and Recovery Board, with regular reporting to Members and Commissioners.
- 4.4 **Financial sustainability** continues to present a significant risk, particularly in relation to the Council's ability to achieve required savings and reduce debt. This is mitigated through robust budget management, delivery of the savings outlined in the 2026/27 budget, and regular financial monitoring, with a clear focus on protecting statutory services. This Transitional Plan will provide a framework for corporate prioritisation of resources.
- 4.5 **Demand-led pressures,** including temporary accommodation, anti-social behaviour, numbers presenting as homeless, and the growth in Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs), represent a significant and increasing risk to both service capacity and budgets. These risks are being mitigated through

demand management and service reviews. In some instances, additional resourcing has been allocated (e.g. for dealing with HMOs) in the 2026/27 budget.

- 4.6 **Workforce and capacity constraints** also pose a risk to the delivery of corporate priorities. This is being managed through clear prioritisation of activity, workforce planning, targeted use of temporary or specialist resources, and ongoing staff engagement and support. However, this risk may increase as the year unfolds with limited ability to mitigate, so further constraints may be unavoidable.
- 4.7 **Transition to the new West Surrey unitary authority** introduces a significant risk to organisational stability and service continuity. This is being mitigated through active participation in the structured West Surrey LGR process, support and training for staff and clear and consistent communications.
- 4.8 **Reputational risks** could arise from financial pressures or service performance challenges. These are being mitigated through a commitment to transparent reporting, a proactive communications strategy, and clear demonstration of progress against the IRP and agreed priorities.

5. Financial implications

- 5.1 The Council continues to operate within a constrained financial environment, shaped by the requirement to comply with the Best Value Directions and deliver the Improvement and Recovery Plan (IRP). This includes a clear expectation to reduce overall debt, strengthen financial management, and achieve agreed savings targets.
- 5.2 Delivery of the proposed one-year transitional plan will need to be achieved within existing approved budgets, which will require strict financial discipline, robust budgetary control, and a continued focus on prioritising essential expenditure. All service areas will be expected to identify efficiencies and minimise non-essential spend to support the Council's financial sustainability objectives.
- 5.3 Significant demand-led pressures remain, particularly in relation to temporary accommodation, regulatory services, and community safety activity. These areas are experiencing increased costs, which represent a key risk to the Council's financial position and will require careful management, ongoing monitoring, and mitigating actions throughout the year.
- 5.4 The Transitional Plan has been specifically designed to align available resources with a reduced and prioritised set of deliverables. This ensures that activity is focused on statutory services, key resident priorities, and the delivery of the IRP, while avoiding the creation of additional unfunded commitments.
- 5.5 The requirement to prepare for LGR will also place additional demands on Council resources. These costs will need to be managed within existing budgets wherever possible, alongside any specific funding arrangements that may be made available to support transition activities.

5.6 Overall, the financial approach underpinning the Transitional Plan is prudent and risk-aware, recognising the need to maintain financial stability during a period of significant organisational change. The plan seeks to balance the delivery of essential services with the imperative to improve the Council's financial resilience and leave a sustainable position for the new West Surrey unitary authority.

6. Legal comments

6.1 Under the Localism Act 2011 the Council has a general power of competence which enables the Council to update and adopt the Corporate Plan.

6.2 In developing and implementing the updated Corporate Plan the Council must comply with all applicable statutory duties and powers, most notably Best Value Duty under the Local Government Act 1999 and the Public Sector Equality Duty under the Equality Act 2010.

6.3 Legal Services must be consulted in relation to individual programmes and projects arising from the Corporate Plan to ensure that all decisions are made in accordance with the Council's Constitution and all applicable legislation.

6.4 Approval of the Corporate Plan falls within the remit of full Council (Article 4, para 4.1(a) of the Constitution).

Corporate implications

7. Commissioners' comments

7.1 The Commissioners have confirmed that the proposed papers are appropriate in the current context, with the Commissioners' comments taken into account.

8. S151 Officer comments

8.1 The S151 Officer confirms that all financial implications have been taken into account. As the report states above, the Transitional Plan is underpinned by the need to ensure medium-term financial sustainability, requiring strict financial discipline.

9. Monitoring Officer comments

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

10. Procurement comments

10.1 There are no procurement implications arising directly from the recommendations in this report.

10.2 All contracts that may be required for the delivery of the Transitional Plan 2026/27 must comply with the Council's Contract Standing Orders and all applicable rules and regulations.

11. Equality and Diversity

11.1 The proposed transitional plan will ensure that the Council continues to deliver services that cater for all sections of our communities, ensuring that individuals and sections of the community are not excluded.

12. Sustainability/Climate Change Implications

12.1 One of the priorities outlined in the proposed transitional plan is 'Environment', where planned key actions under this priority area are outlined.

13. Other considerations

13.1 The priority actions outlined in the transitional plan will be used to inform the individual and team objectives for staff through the Council's performance management and service planning processes.

13.2 No changes are proposed to the previously approved Council 'PROVIDE' values, which outline the desired behaviours for officers and Councillors in undertaking their roles:

Pride in our Council, communities and Borough

Responsive and flexible

Open and accountable

Value for money

Integrity

Dependable

Empowering and inclusive

14. Timetable for implementation

14.1 If the recommended approach is approved the draft Transitional Plan consultation on the proposals would commence with service committees at their next scheduled meetings in June 2026.

14.2 Feedback and any suggested amendments will then be presented to the Corporate Policy and Resources Committee on 13 July seeking a recommendation for approval by Council.

15. Contact

15.1 Gordon Mitchell – Interim Chief Executive (g.mitchell@spelthorne.gov.uk)

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

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 draft Council Transitional Plan 2026/27

Appendix B – Summary of key actions delivered under the 2024-28 Corporate Plan (*Putting our residents at the heart of everything we do*)