

APPENDIX A

Draft Council Transitional Plan

Introduction

In February 2024 Spelthorne Borough Council approved a new 5-year Corporate Plan '*Putting our residents at the heart of everything we do*'. Although the Council has completed a wide range of actions under that Plan, the context in which the authority is operating has changed significantly and the Council is going through a period of major transition.

Government intervention has introduced a series of Directions requiring the Council to reduce debt, strengthen governance, accelerate housing delivery, and improve financial management in line with Best Value expectations.

Increasing demand for some services has created additional pressures, including anti-social behaviour, the rapid growth of Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs), and the rising demand (and associated costs) for temporary accommodation.

Local Government Reorganisation in Surrey means that Spelthorne Borough Council has a limited window in which to focus on what matters most to its residents, while also managing significant additional organisational pressures. With the 1 April 2027 vesting day for the new West Surrey Council fast approaching, the Council no longer has the time or capacity to deliver all the actions set out in the previous five-year Corporate Plan, 2024-28.

A new streamlined approach is therefore needed, focusing on the work that matters most for residents and supporting staff, whilst ensuring the authority is well-positioned to become part of a financially sustainable and resilient West Surrey Council.

This transitional delivery plan sets out a clear, streamlined and focused framework for the Council's final phase as an authority. It is built around deliverable actions, all rooted in the original CARES corporate priorities but sharpened to reflect current realities. The plan is designed to:

- Deliver the Council's Improvement and Recovery Plan, responding directly to government Directions,
- Secure the best possible outcomes for Spelthorne within the new West Surrey Council, and
- Maintain and strengthen core service delivery, with particular focus on emerging pressures.

This is a pragmatic and delivery-led plan, recognising the resourcing and time constraints the Council faces, whilst ensuring continued focus on residents, communities and our staff. Above all, it is intended to provide clarity, confidence and direction during a period of significant change, ensuring Spelthorne Borough Council leaves a strong and sustainable legacy as it transitions into the new authority.

COMMUNITY

Aim: To place the needs of the borough at the heart of everything we do by supporting residents to live healthier lives and empowering communities to feel supported and safe.

	Action	Deliverables
1	Take a proactive, partnership-led approach to reducing anti-social behaviour (ASB), ensuring residents feel safe in their communities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Issues will be addressed effectively and consistently, in a timely manner, using the full range of available enforcement powers including Public Spaces Protection Orders, Community Protection Notices and injunctions. • Work with partners to establish a data sharing agreement with the Home Office to manage risks effectively.
2	Provide additional community facilities which support more active lifestyles and improved health and wellbeing for residents of all ages to provide a lasting legacy into the new West Surrey Council.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Progress plans for a Multi-Use Games Area and deliver a new, inclusive playground in Staines-upon-Thames. • Complete installation of new play areas in Halliford Recreation Ground and Staines Park, and upgrading play areas in Orchard Meadow, Spelthorne Grove and Greenfield Recreation Ground.
3	Support communities to take pride in where they live by encouraging residents to help protect and care for the borough.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deliver a further phase of the <i>Love Where You Live</i> campaign. • Encourage groups to respect their place and act to look after their neighbourhood. • Promote the 'report it' tool on the website.
4	Promote awareness and understanding of the needs, opportunities and contribution of Spelthorne's communities to West Surrey Council.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prepare information material which describes Spelthorne's features and distinctive issues. • Design and deliver a promotional campaign featuring issues and proposals to West Surrey Council to inform future plans.

ADDRESSING HOUSING NEED

Aim: To support the delivery of high-quality housing and address challenges relating to availability, affordability and homelessness across the borough.

	Action	Deliverables
1	Accelerate housing delivery to meet identified local need	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop an affordable housing supplementary planning document (by 30 June). • Review the future of Knowle Green Estates (KGE) as a housing provider. • Ensure the Council’s 5-year land supply is robust and develop a five-year programme to deliver the housing numbers set out in the adopted Local Plan. • Develop and implement a plan to deliver affordable housing, including use of the Council’s regeneration sites and surplus sites. • Strengthen partnership working with Registered Providers and ensure nominations agreements are put in place and fully accessed.
2	Regulate the quality and spread of Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Following the implementation of the new HMO Supplementary Planning Document (SPD), and borough-wide licensing, ensure that robust enforcement action is taken where necessary. • Review progress and operations by September 2026. • Review options for further development of the Council’s HMO licensing scheme to provide greater alignment with the Council’s HMO SPD.
3	Reduce reliance on temporary accommodation and associated costs by taking a proactive and preventative approach to homelessness.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase access to sustainable housing solutions. • Reduce the number of households in nightly paid temporary accommodation to 50.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduce the average number of days for households in temporary accommodation from 215 days to 120 days by the end of 2026/27.
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RESILIENCE

Aim: To secure the Council's financial sustainability while creating the conditions for businesses to grow and thrive.

	Action	Deliverables
1	Deliver financial recovery and long-term sustainability by responding to Government Directions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduce debt by £170m in 2026/27 by implementing a programme of asset rationalisation, in accordance with the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy. • Deliver the savings and efficiencies identified in the budget for 2026/27.
2	Support local economic growth.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assisting 80 start-up and early-stage businesses through the Business Hub and targeted training programmes. • Facilitate the establishment of an Ashford Business Improvement District. • Engage with the major local businesses to facilitate their long-term plans, their continuing support for community and civic activities and the careful transition of key relationships during LGR.
3	Develop an engagement programme to ensure local community groups and business networks are aware of transition issues from SBC to WSC.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote the case for a transitional arrangement to West Surrey Council to ensure continuity of support for community organisations (including the voluntary sector) and small grants schemes.

ENVIRONMENT

Aim: To take practical, deliverable action to protect residents and the borough’s environment, reduce the Council’s environmental impact, and strengthen community resilience to respond to climate challenges.

	Action	Deliverables
1	Support Spelthorne’s long-term interests in the development of Heathrow expansion proposals and the River Thames Scheme.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Effective political and officer engagement with Heathrow Airport Limited. • Ensure sufficient resourcing available to engage and respond effectively to all aspects of the Development Consent Order (DCO) process. • Continue to work with the Environment Agency and other partners to support progress of the DCO for the River Thames Scheme.
2	Commence the required review of Spelthorne’s Local Plan, the Staines Masterplan and other ancillary planning policy documents.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Progress the review of the Local Plan and complete Gateway 1 requirements outlined in Local Plan regulations by mid-October 2026. • Apply for PropTech Innovation Fund Round 6 funding to accelerate the adoption of digital planning tools to fast track the plan-making process. • Complete consultation with residents on Staines Masterplan proposals and deliver site briefs by end of June 2026 with a target of September for adoption of the Masterplan. • To adopt a new Climate Change SPD by end of June 2026.
3	Reduce the Council’s environmental footprint.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transitioning the Council fleet from diesel to biodiesel, reducing fleet emissions by up to 98.5%. • Plant 70 new trees.

SERVICES

Aim: To deliver a wide range of high-quality, accessible services and to be a responsible employer, supporting staff through a successful transition to West Surrey Council.

	Action	Deliverables
1	Continue to deliver high-quality services that meet residents' expectations.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Track, collate, and report on customer satisfaction by analysing data from consultations, feedback exercises, and complaint responses. Use data to inform a structured programme of customer satisfaction and feedback actions, with clear priorities, ownership, and regular monitoring to drive continuous service improvement.
2	Champion Spelthorne's service needs, strengths and partnerships while engaging constructively in Local Government Reorganisation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensuring local priorities are understood and reflected as part of a successful transition to West Surrey Council.
3	Support and prepare staff for transition into West Surrey Council.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rebuilding confidence through training and development, strong leadership, clear priorities and effective, consistent communication.

How we will deliver the Plan

In summary, the Council will deliver this Transitional Plan within the unique and challenging context it faces, through:

- Compliance with the Government's Best Value Directions, through delivery of our Improvement and Recovery Plan.
- Strengthening governance and assurance arrangements, building on recent improvements to ensure robust oversight and accountability.
- Ensuring sufficient financial and workforce capacity to support delivery and maintain service resilience.

- Equipping staff with the right tools, skills, and performance framework to enable effective service delivery, drive continuous improvement, and ensure the efficient and effective use of resources.
- Exercising prudent financial management, including cost control, savings delivery, and disciplined budget management.
- Taking an active role in preparing for the transition to the new West Surrey Council, representing the best interests of our communities and supporting our staff through the change process.