

### 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         | 14/4/2026 |
| Relevant Group Head review   | yes         | 14/4/2026 |
| MAT+ review (to have been circulated <b>at least 5 working days before Stage 2</b> ) | Yes         | 14/4/2026 |
| This item is on the Forward Plan for the relevant committee                          | yes         | 14/4/2026 |
|  | Reviewed by |           |
| Finance comments (circulate to Finance)  | A.Sood      | 14Apr.26  |
| Risk comments (circulate to Lee O'Neil)  | LO          | 01/05/26  |
| Legal comments (circulate to Legal team)   | LH          | 19/04/26  |
| HR comments (if applicable)  |             | n/a       |

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 <b>5 working days before MAT</b> | L Heron               | 19/04/26   |
| S151 Officer commentary – at least <b>5 working days before MAT</b>       | T.Collier             | 14/4/26    |
| Commissioner engagement   |                       | 14/4/26    |
|   | Delete as applicable: | No issues  |
| Confirm final report cleared by MAT                                       | MAT                   |            |

# Environment & Sustainability Committee

Thursday 18 June 2026

|                                  |   |
|----------------------------------|---|
| <b>Title</b>                     | <i>Tree maintenance on Spelthorne land</i>  |
| <b>Purpose of the report</b>     | To make a decision  |
| <b>Report Author</b>             | <i>Jackie Taylor Group Head Neighbourhood Services</i>  |
| <b>Ward(s) Affected</b>          | All Wards   |
| <b>Exempt</b>                    | No  |
| <b>Exemption Reason</b>          | Not applicable  |
| <b>Corporate Priority</b>        | Community<br>Environment<br>Services  |
| <b>Recommendations</b>           | <p><b>Committee is asked to:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Authorise the Group Head Neighbourhood Services (GHNS) to commence a joint open tender procurement exercise with Runnymede Borough Council (RBC) and Surrey Heath Borough Council (SHBC) for the provision of tree maintenance services for a period of two (2) years, with an option to extend for a further one (1) year.</li> <li>• Approve a maximum contract value that does not exceed a total annual budget of £65,000, and in accordance with the appropriate level of delegation as set out in the Spelthorne Borough Council Constitution.</li> <li>• Authorise the Group Head Corporate Governance to enter contracts and all ancillary documentation with the successful tenderer.</li> </ul> |
| <b>Reason for Recommendation</b> | A joint procurement exercise with partner authorities is proposed to achieve economies of scale, improve value for money, and ensure consistent standards of tree maintenance across participating councils. This approach will also support efficient service delivery during the transition to Local Government Reorganisation.   |

## 1. Executive summary of the report

| What is the situation   | Why we want to do something  |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Council, in collaboration with Runnymede Borough Council and Surrey Heath Borough Council, currently requires a reliable and cost-effective tree maintenance service to</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A joint procurement approach is expected to generate cost savings through economies of scale, ensure consistent standards of tree maintenance across the participating</li> </ul> |

|   |  |
|---|--|
| ensure the safety, health, and aesthetic quality of its public spaces.  | councils, and simplify contract management.  |
| This is what we want to do about it   | These are the next steps   |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>It is proposed that we enter a joint procurement process for a period of two (2) years, with an option to extend for a further one (1) year with the partner councils RBC &amp; SHBC.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Once approved, the procurement will proceed in line with Council rules, with submissions evaluated jointly by SHBC, RBC, and SBC officers, contracts awarded, and ongoing performance managed by the Spelthorne Parks team to ensure required standards are met.</li> </ul> |

## 2. Key issues

- 2.1 The Council has a statutory duty to maintain trees on public land to ensure public safety, preserve biodiversity, and maintain the visual quality of the local environment.
- 2.2 An audit conducted in 2024/2025 identified risks in the recording and management of tree maintenance activities. In response, the Council implemented a tree management software system in 2025, which is currently being populated.
- 2.3 Completion of this system requires comprehensive tree surveys across all areas, which will generate an increased volume of maintenance work.
- 2.4 Funding to support additional maintenance requirements has been identified through internal budget adjustments, including the deletion of a post within the Parks team.
- 2.5 Due to the anticipated increase in expenditure, a competitive procurement process is required in accordance with the Council's procurement regulations and statutory obligations.
- 2.6 Collaboration with Runnymede Borough Council and Surrey Heath Borough Council provides an opportunity to deliver a cost-effective and consistent tree maintenance service across multiple authorities.
- 2.7 The proposed delegation to the Group Head Neighbourhood Services and the Business Development Manager ensures that technical and operational expertise informs the evaluation and selection of successful suppliers.
- 2.8 Partnering with RBC and SHBC offers several advantages.
  - **Economies of scale:** Combining procurement requirements can reduce costs per council through shared tendering and consolidated contracts.
  - **Consistency of service:** A joint approach ensures similar maintenance standards across participating councils, which can improve efficiency in monitoring and management.
  - **Simplified supplier management:** Engaging a smaller pool of qualified contractors reduces administrative overhead and improves accountability.

## 3. Options appraisal and proposal

### 3.1 Options Appraisal

#### Option 1 Joint Open Tender Procurement with Runnymede BC and Surrey Heath BC (Recommended)

| Description  | Advantages  | Disadvantages   |
|--|---|---|
| Collaborate with the partner councils to jointly procure tree maintenance services through a competitive tender process. | Economies of scale<br>reduce costs<br>Consistent service standards across councils<br>Improved and simplified supplier management<br>Stronger market engagement | Requires coordination between Councils.<br><br>More complex procurement process |

#### Option 2 Individual Procurement (Council-only)

| Description   | Advantages   | Disadvantages  |
|---|--|--|
| The council conducts its own separate procurement exercise for tree maintenance services. | Full control over contract terms and standards<br>Simpler decision-making within one council | Potentially higher costs due to smaller scale<br>More limited supplier engagement<br>Risk of duplication of effort across councils |

#### Option 3 Do Nothing / Minimal Maintenance

| Description  | Advantages             | Disadvantages  |
|--|------------------------|--|
| Continue with reactive or minimal tree maintenance without formal procurement. | Short-term cost saving | Increased public safety risk<br>Failure to meet statutory obligations<br>Potential reputational damage |

3.2 Option 1 (preferred option) delivers best value for money and operational efficiency and will support smooth transition under LGR by harmonising service standards and ensuring contract continuity.

#### 4. Risks and mitigations

4.1 The proposed procurement and delivery of a joint tree maintenance contract present several potential risks across strategic, operational, financial, legal, and reputational areas.

4.2 From a **strategic perspective**, there is a risk that the joint arrangement may not fully align with future Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) requirements, although it should be noted all three councils will form part of the new West Surrey Council. This will be mitigated by ensuring contract flexibility, including appropriate break clauses and review points, to allow for adaptation as governance structures evolve.

4.3 In terms of **operational risk**, there is potential for delays in completing tree surveys and fully populating the management system, which could impact the timely delivery of maintenance works. This will be mitigated through careful

project planning, phased implementation, and ongoing monitoring by officers to ensure progress remains on track.

- 4.4 **Financial risks** include the possibility of increased costs arising from a higher volume of required tree works than initially anticipated. This will be managed through robust budget monitoring, prioritisation of works based on risk, and the use of competitive tendering to secure best value for money.
- 4.5 From a **legal and compliance perspective**, there is a risk of non-compliance with procurement regulations or statutory duties relating to tree safety. This will be mitigated by adhering strictly to the Council's procurement procedures, seeking appropriate legal and procurement advice, and ensuring that all contractors meet required standards and qualifications.
- 4.6 Finally, **reputational risks** may arise if tree maintenance is not delivered effectively, leading to public dissatisfaction or safety concerns. This will be mitigated through the appointment of competent contractors, clear performance standards within the contract, and regular monitoring and communication to ensure high-quality service delivery.

## **5. Financial implications**

- 5.1 The proposed joint procurement arrangement is expected to deliver cost efficiencies through economies of scale, while also ensuring consistent service standards and more streamlined supplier management. Proceeding at this stage will also support continuity of service and ensure compliance with statutory safety and environmental requirements during the transition to Local Government Reorganisation.
- 5.2 A budget of £65,000 has already been approved by Council for 2026/27. A comprehensive programme of tree surveys and associated maintenance works has been developed by Neighbourhood Services officers and costed accordingly.
- 5.3 Spelthorne's anticipated expenditure for the current budget year is £65,000, within a wider contract value of approximately £195,000 over a 2+1-year term.
- 5.4 Ongoing expenditure will be subject to robust budget monitoring and financial controls to ensure alignment with the Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) and to mitigate the risk of any cost pressures.

## **6. Legal comments**

- 6.1 The Council has appropriate statutory powers to enter the proposed contract pursuant to the general power of competence under section 1 of the Localism Act 2011.
- 6.2 The proposed contract must comply with the Council's Contract Standing Orders, all applicable rules, and regulations, as well as must be aligned with the approved principles for procurement within the context of Surrey Local Government Reorganisation and should not unduly incumber the new Unitary Council.
- 6.3 The Council is subject to the best value duty under section 3 of the Local Government Act 1999 which requires continuous improvement in the delivery of the Council's functions, having regard to economy, efficiency, and effectiveness. The proposed contract must be in line with this obligation.

- 6.4 Legal Services will assist in the preparation, negotiation, and the formal completion of the necessary documentation.

## **Corporate implications**

### **7. Commissioners' comments**

- 7.1 Commissioners raise no objection to this report proceeding to committee.

### **8. S151 Officer comments.**

- 8.1 The S151 Officer confirms that all financial implications have been taken into account and that the recommendations are fully funded from within the 2026/27 budget.

### **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 In accordance with the Council's Contract Standing Orders, approval from the relevant service Committee and the Procurement Board is required where the value of the proposed contract exceeds £100,000.00 prior to the commencement of the procurement.
- 10.2 Assistance from the Procurement Team will be required in relation to this project.

### **11. Equality and Diversity**

- 11.1 The Council is committed to promoting equality, diversity, and inclusion in all aspects of its operations and service delivery. The procurement and delivery of tree maintenance services will be undertaken in a manner that ensures fair and equitable access for all suppliers, in line with relevant legislation and the Council's procurement policies. Contractors will be expected to demonstrate their commitment to equality and diversity, including compliance with the Equality Act 2010, and to ensure that their employment practices and service delivery do not discriminate against any individual or group.
- 11.2 There is no direct adverse equality impacts identified because of the proposals outlined in this report. However, maintaining safe and accessible public spaces, including parks and green areas, supports the wellbeing of all residents, particularly those with protected characteristics such as age or disability. The Council will continue to monitor service delivery to ensure that tree maintenance activities do not disproportionately impact any group, and that accessibility and safety are maintained for all members of the community.

### **12. Sustainability/Climate Change Implications**

- 12.1 The Council recognises the significant role that effective tree management plays in supporting sustainability and addressing climate change. Trees contribute significantly to carbon sequestration, air quality improvement, urban cooling, and biodiversity enhancement. The proposed approach to tree maintenance will ensure that the Council's tree stock is managed in a sustainable manner, balancing the need for public safety with the long-term health and retention of trees wherever possible.

12.2 Contractors will be expected to adopt environmentally responsible practices, including minimising waste, promoting recycling of arisings, and reducing carbon emissions through efficient working methods. This approach aligns with the Council's wider environmental objectives and its commitment to mitigating and adapting to the impacts of climate change.

### **13. Other considerations**

#### **13.1 Local Government Reorganisation (LGR)**

The proposed joint procurement with Runnymede Borough Council and Surrey Heath Borough Council aligns with the transition towards Local Government Reorganisation (LGR). Collaborative arrangements of this nature support a more streamlined and efficient service model, promote consistency in service delivery, reduce duplication, and provide a strong foundation for future integration. They also enable the councils to establish effective partnerships and shared practices ahead of formal reorganisation, ensuring continuity and resilience during the transition.

13.2 To support the Council's "safe and legal" objective, it is important to ensure compliant contract arrangements are in place by Vesting Day for transfer to West Surrey. Spelthorne's anticipated spend for the current budget year is £65k, within a wider contract value of approximately £195k over a 2+1-year term. As a result, whilst the Council is not formally bound by the S24 regime, there would be an obligation on us to inform West Surrey Shadow Council of the proposed procurement. This does not preclude approval, provided the proposal demonstrates value for money.

13.3 While Surrey LGR contract extension principles encourage avoiding new procurements ahead of Vesting Day where possible, favouring extensions instead, procurement remains a valid option where suitable contractual arrangements are not already in place.

### **14. Timetable for implementation**

14.1 Subject to approval by the Environment & Sustainability Committee the procurement process will commence immediately thereafter. It is anticipated that the tender documentation will be finalised and issued by late May 2026, with a tender period of 4 to 6 weeks to allow for supplier submissions. Evaluation of bids will take place during July/August 2026, with the intention of awarding the contract in August 2026 following the necessary internal approvals.

14.2 Mobilisation of the successful contractor(s) is expected to take place during September 2026, including finalising schedules, agreeing work programmes, and ensuring system integration with the Council's tree management software. Delivery of the new contract is therefore anticipated to commence from October 2026, allowing for a smooth transition and alignment with the Council's operational requirements.

### **15. Contact**

15.1 Jackie Taylor Group Head Neighbourhood Services  
[j.taylor@spelthorne.gov.uk](mailto:j.taylor@spelthorne.gov.uk)

**Background papers: There are none.**

**Appendices: There are none**