

APPENDIX B - CPRC GOVERNANCE AREA REPORT – ORGANISATIONAL RESILIENCE 8 SEPTEMBER 2026

ASSURANCE AREA					
Organisational Resilience					
ASSURANCE DESCRIPTION					
The effective and efficient delivery of Council services and responsibilities relies significantly on our workforce at every level. At all times, but especially in periods of significant pressure and uncertainty, it is critical that we have the appropriate policies, procedures, practices and interventions in place to support our workforce, to maximise its capacity and capability and to maintain high levels of morale and commitment. As well as our duties to deliver critical services, the Council has a duty of care to our workforce. The Council continues to see major problems regarding the retention and recruitment of staff and a rise in wellbeing issues leading to increased absence. Whilst this is a problem that many Councils face, we have a series of significant challenges that requires a supported and resilient workforce. As LGR progresses along with the IRP programme staff may seek to leave (to other roles, retirements) or due to pressures there is an increase in sickness levels.					
ASSURANCE ASSESSMENT					
Maintaining staff resilience, wellbeing and motivation at all levels is critical to support the Council's challenging next few years and transition with LGR and the Improvement and Recovery Plan. With a challenging employment market, ensuring staff retention is key as well as providing a welcoming supportive environment for new employees. A culture where staff wellbeing is considered important is paramount. Such a culture relies on openness and staff empowerment to ensure matters are raised properly and promptly, and managers and leaders are trained to recognise potential issues and respond appropriately.					
ASSURANCE OWNER	Sandy Muirhead	FOCUS/ISSUE/CONCERN	Focus	LEVEL OF ASSURANCE (High/Medium/Low)	Medium

	Assurance Action	Action Owner	Current RAG status	Performance Update	Next steps (including completion/review date)
1	Maximising workforce capacity Ensure the Council has arrangements in place to continuously consider how we maximise workforce capacity.	Debbie O'Sullivan- Human Resources Manager		Services continuing to work with HR to fill vacancies, with interims used where there are difficulties recruiting to key areas. Vacancy control panel continuing to scrutinise any staffing requests. Pressure of both Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) and Improvement and Recovery Plan (IRP) continuing to present challenges retaining staff. Interims used to cover key areas but despite measures being in place to help retain staff and fill vacancies, it may be more difficult to maximise workforce capacity. As vesting day comes closer there will be an October cut off point for recruiting staff. Staff not formally contracted before 31 March 2027 cannot be transferred to West Surrey. With recruitment requirements it can take some months to undertake the process and the successful applicant to give	HR involvement in the vacancy control panel is now established, and HR will continue to input into staffing issues and approval to recruit reports. The staffing panel will continue beyond any cut-off date for general recruitment to agree agency or interim posts if required. If staff leave, given the short time to vesting day there may, in key areas, be a need to recruit further interims or seek greater assistance from other West Surrey designated authorities. Review date: November 2026

				notice. There will be flexibility for "emergency recruitment" in key posts. Guidance is required from West Surrey on ability (or not) to extend some key interim roles beyond 31 March 2027.	
2	Recruitment and retention Ensure the Council has effective arrangements in place for the recruitment and retention of staff.	Debbie O'Sullivan- Human Resources Manager		Continuing to monitor staff turnover and where vacancies exist best routes to market assessed for each post. Challenges and uncertainties presented by LGR likely to have an effect on Council's ability to recruit and retain staff, and we are already seeing a number of key officers leaving to seek posts with other organisations, including the private sector. Exit interviews undertaken where staff agree to this, utilising the information from these to look for any improvements in how we manage staff. This is a voluntary process and information only collated from those who complete forms / undertake exit interviews. Staff turnover to be kept under review with LGR and included in KPI's.	A cut-off date for starting recruitment processes has been agreed for early October 2026 (and there is also likely to be confirmation from West Surrey as to when we need to stop recruitment). However, there will need to be flexibility to fill certain key posts, but it may be necessary to fill those roles with agency or interim staff. Retention will be carefully monitored as move towards vesting day. Review date: November 2026

3	Maximising workforce capability Ensure the Council has in place the arrangements to maximise workforce capability.	Debbie O'Sullivan- Human Resources Manager		Continuous performance management (CPM) system used for quarterly review of targets, performance and personal development needs, although some inconsistency still exists in completion of CPMs. The Council has a wide range of development opportunities available including access to apprenticeships, Surrey Learn Partnership training programme open to staff, and in-house training to support skill development in preparedness for LGR. Additionally West Surrey are undertaking focus groups on culture for the future authority. Managers are also being encouraged to provide support for staff and manage resources and capabilities,	Staff are regularly reminded to ensure CPMs and 1:1's are undertaken on a quarterly basis with informal meetings monthly. This is ongoing and it is likely once the TUPE consultation process starts, staff may ask quite detailed questions at CPM meetings, but FAQs will be provided. The Council is also looking at further specific training to ensure staff are fully prepared and ready for LGR. Review date: September 2026
4	Workload management Ensure the Council has effective arrangements in place to ensure staff workloads are managed appropriately.	Debbie O'Sullivan- Human Resources Manager		Group Heads and other managers continuing to monitor service needs and prioritising resources as required. Interims used to fill significant gaps with support from Management Team. This is kept under constant review Some areas such as Environmental Health continuing to face workload	All managers to keep Group Heads/Deputy Chief Executive/Corporate Director up to date with any staffing pressures so they can be discussed corporately at Management Team with appropriate support considered. Will be key during LGR transition period and

				capacity issues due to high volumes of work (particularly in relation to HMOs) and new areas of responsibility (such as the Renter's Rights Act).	may see other issues arising such as greater sickness. Review date: December 2026
5	Monitoring the morale and wellbeing of staff at all levels Ensure the Council has effective arrangements in place to monitor the morale and wellbeing of staff at all levels.	Debbie O'Sullivan- Human Resources Manager		Monthly staff 1:1s and manager's open-door policies or staff comments are used to identify the morale of the organisation and address it appropriately. Regular staff meetings and manager's briefings are used to help address any morale issues raised. Staff Employee Assistance Programme scheme in place to assist and Occupational Health where appropriate.	Staff surveys (pulse surveys undertaken at regular intervals) in place to gauge morale undertaken on a regular basis. There are increased staff communications on LGR/IRP. HR have held drop-in staff sessions at all SBC sites to answer general concerns and queries. Recent surveys and reporting to HR suggest there has been a recent dip in morale. As mentioned above further courses/training are being put in place to help ensure staff are ready for vesting day Review date: November 2026
6	Minimising staff absence Ensuring the Council's absence management policy and procedures are in place and effective to minimise staff absence.	Debbie O'Sullivan- Human Resources Manager		The Council has an Employee Assistance scheme through Optima Health. Wellbeing. Staff issues are also covered in 1:1s. The Council has a structured management process in place to address staff absences including sickness. Staff sickness is reported quarterly to CPRC via the KPI report (and more	Sickness management processes are clear, and managers are reminded to clearly follow the processes involved. Managers must complete monthly sickness returns. Review date: November 2026

				detail to MAT monthly). Occupational Health provision is in place to support staff where appropriate.	
7	Managing change Ensure the Council's arrangements for managing change are effective.	Debbie O'Sullivan- Human Resources Manager		The Council has already undertaken and encourages staff to attend any change management courses available via Surrey Learn, Surrey CC and internal provision with courses already provided. These will continue to be run until vesting day on 1 April 2027. Uptake of these courses is kept under constant review and future course provision assessed in line with feedback evaluation. Courses concerning change are also being held at Knowle Green Managers are also being encouraged to provide support for staff and manage resources and capabilities.	Further change management/other training to prepare staff for West Surrey transition will be required over the coming months and the requirements will be kept under review. Additionally West Surrey are undertaking focus groups on culture for the future authority. Review date: October 2026
8	Mental health support Ensuring the Council's arrangements to provide mental health support are in place and effective.	Debbie O'Sullivan- Human Resources Manager		Able Futures provide a counselling service which we ensure staff are aware of. Some staff have been trained as mental first aiders. Ongoing wellbeing and resilience training will also provide support in this area and Occupational Health intervention where appropriate.	Managers are aware of the strain caused by workload, LGR and the IRP and there is an open-door policy for staff to talk to their managers or HR to obtain assistance. Review date: November 2026

9	Monitoring Key Performance Indicators Ensuring the Council has the appropriate key performance indicators in place to support the necessary interventions and actions.	Debbie O'Sullivan- Human Resources Manager		Staff sickness absence is monitored and reported quarterly to CPRC via the quarterly KPI reports. More detailed reports go monthly to management team from May 2026. HR record number of grievances/ disciplinaries and address these in line with policies and procedures. Support and interventions are put in place as required depending on circumstances along with any recommendations. HR work closely with managers to support the employee internal policies and procedures to manage employee relations from informal to formal stages and appeals.	Staffing KPIs are reported monthly to MAT+ and headline sickness and turnover form part of corporate KPI reporting. Managers have access via iTrent to manage sickness absences in their service. Measures are in place to address any issues raised. Review date: October 2026
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Related Improvement and Recovery Plan Theme High Priority Outcomes:

Improving Governance and Assurance

Performance monitoring through KPIs has been strengthened because of best value directions. Three key ones relate to organisational resilience as listed in the table below.

Corporate KPIs					
	KPI description	Frequency	Target	Corporate priority	Progress update
HR1	Quarterly staff turnover managed	Quarterly	comparison	IRP	April 1.3% May 0.44% June 1.11%
HR2	Average days lost per employee to short term sickness	Quarterly	comparison	IRP	April 0.59 May 0.22 June 0.21
HR3	Average days lost per employee to long term sickness	Quarterly	comparison	IRP	April 0.85 May 0.56 June 0.75

Quarterly staff turnover managed.

Over the quarter there was a dip in May but a slight increase in turnover in June. Turnover in June was predominantly voluntary, with employees leaving due to resignation, retirement, securing higher-paid roles, and promotion to another authority. These reasons suggest that turnover was largely driven by career progression, external employment opportunities, and natural attrition as well as a managed departure. Overall, the pattern indicates that most turnover was employee-led in comparison to the month of May which was largely led by retirement.

Average days lost per employee to short term sickness

Short term sickness is consistent over last two months and is usually due to colds or sickness bugs.

Average days lost per employee to long term sickness

Below is a summary of the main reasons for long term sickness: -

- Anxiety, stress and mental health-related absences account for 11.3% of all sickness absence cases recorded (6 of 53 cases).

These absences have a significant long-term impact, with 83.3% of cases falling into the long-term sickness category (21 days or more) and

16.7% short term, demonstrating that whilst mental health absences are relatively low in volume, they contribute disproportionately to overall days and hours lost.

- Musculoskeletal conditions and surgery-related absences account for 9.4% of all cases (5 of 53 cases). This category includes knee surgery, shoulder injury, surgery recovery, nerve block recovery and body pain. Approximately 80% of cases are long term, with only 20% short term, indicating a substantial contribution to overall absence days lost despite relatively few cases.
- Other medical conditions (including malaria, dizziness under investigation, shortness of breath, pulmonary embolism, eye and ear conditions, heat exhaustion, rash, bereavement-related sickness and other complex medical conditions) account for 24.5% of all cases (13 of 53 cases). Approximately 54% of these absences are long term and 46% short term, making this category one of the largest contributors to overall sickness absence and days lost. Managers proactively manage long term sickness via the steps required in our management of absence policy.