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		
Relevant Group Head review	Y	13/08/26
MAT+ review (to have been circulated **at least 5 working days before Stage 2**)	Y	13/08/26
This item is on the Forward Plan for the relevant committee		
	Reviewed by	
Finance comments (circulate to Finance)		
Risk comments (circulate to Lee O'Neil)	LO	13/08/26
Legal comments (circulate to Legal team)	LH	14/08/26
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	14/08/26
S151 Officer commentary – at least **5 working days before MAT**	T.Collier	14/08/26
Commissioner engagement	L.O'Neil Delete as applicable:	14/08/26 Comments in S. 7
Confirm report signed off for publishing for MAT by relevant member of Management Team	L.O'Neil	20/08/26
Confirm final report cleared by MAT		

Environment and Sustainability Committee

10 September 2026

Title	Governance Assurance update – Meeting the Council's Zero Carbon Targets and Wider Environmental Responsibilities
Purpose of the report	To inform and assure
Report Author	Lee O'Neil, Deputy Chief Executive Sandy Muirhead – Group Head Commissioning and Transformation
Ward(s) Affected	All Wards
Exempt	No
Exemption Reason	N/A
Corporate Priority	Environment Services
Recommendations	**Committee is asked to:** a. Note the current overall assurance level for the Governance Assurance Area *'Meeting the Council's zero carbon targets and wider environmental responsibilities'* included in the Council's Governance Assurance Register. b. Consider the key focus areas, concerns and issues relating to this Governance Assurance Area, as outlined in **Appendix A.**
Reason for Recommendation	To enable Members to review progress and scrutinise performance for one of the Council's key governance areas which falls under this Committee's remit.

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

What is the situation	Why we want to do something
• The Council continues to implement and embed its Governance Assurance (GA) Framework as part of ongoing improvements to the way the authority manages risk. • The 12 Governance Assurance Areas (GAAs) which form the Council's Governance Assurance Register continue to be reviewed by the Audit Committee to	• Under the GA Framework, Service Committees, including the Environment and Sustainability Committee (E&SC), have an opportunity to consider and scrutinise the areas of focus, concerns and issues for governance areas within their remit.

provide assurance that effective arrangements are in place to manage key issues, concerns and areas of focus for the Council.	
This is what we want to do about it	**These are the next steps**
• To update the E&SC on the GAA under its remit, relating to '*Meeting the Council's zero carbon targets and wider environmental responsibilities*'.	• Address any questions and concerns from the Committee concerning delivery of actions relating to this GAA.

2. Key issues

2.1 The Council continues to embed changes to the way it manages risk as part of its Improvement and Recovery Plan, implementing the Governance Assurance Policy and Framework ('the Framework') previously agreed by the Corporate Policy and Resources Committee on 19 January 2026.

2.2 This approach focuses on the effectiveness of the Council's governance and control arrangements, ensuring that this authority can deliver its objectives and corporate and service responsibilities in a more positive way, and that stakeholders receive sufficient assurance that appropriate arrangements are in place.

2.3 Under the Framework, the Council's Audit Committee considers the effectiveness of the Council's arrangements in relation to risk management, governance and internal control, including overseeing the relevant policies and strategies, with a view to being assured that key governance areas are owned and managed appropriately. The Audit Committee are therefore receiving regular updates on arrangements relating to the 12 Governance Assurance Areas (GAA) that form the Council's Governance Assurance Register.

2.4 The Framework also specifies how relevant Service Committees have a key role in considering and scrutinising performance relating to the areas of focus, concerns and issues for GAAs within their remit. In order to facilitate this process individual senior managers are invited to attend those Committees to discuss their assurance areas, specific matters and key risks in their services.

2.5 One of the 12 GAAs that form the Council's Governance Assurance Register falls within the remit of the Environment and Sustainability Committee (E&SC). This relates to '*Meeting the Council's zero carbon targets and wider environmental responsibilities*'.

2.6 **Appendix A** provides an update on progress with implementing the actions relating to this GAA, which currently has an **overall assurance level** of medium.

3. Options appraisal and proposal

3.1 Committee is asked to:

(a) Note the current overall assurance level for the Governance Assurance Area *'Meeting the Council's zero carbon targets and wider environmental responsibilities'* included in the Council's Governance Assurance Register.

(b) Consider the key focus areas, concerns and issues relating to this Governance Assurance Area, as outlined in **Appendix A.**

4. Governance and risk considerations

4.1 The Council's Governance Assurance Register outlines the authority's governance arrangements in place to provide assurance that key corporate and strategic risks impacting the authority are effectively managed. The change to a governance assurance approach through the Council's Governance Assurance Framework, together with training and monitoring, will ensure that effective governance is embedded within the culture of the organisation.

5. Financial implications

5.1 The development and implementation of the new Governance Assurance Framework and the Governance Assurance Register can be delivered within existing resources. Any minor costs relating to ongoing staff training, development of supporting documentation, and updates to reporting systems will be met from current service budgets. Over time, strengthening the Council's governance assurance arrangements is expected to support more effective financial planning and help mitigate the likelihood of unanticipated financial pressures arising from weakness or failures in governance.

6. Legal comments

6.1 There are no legal implications arising directly from the recommendations in this report.

Corporate implications

7. Commissioners' comments

7.1 The Commissioners have no comments on this report.

8. S151 Officer comments

8.1 The S151 Officer notes no direct financial implications arising from this report. However, having an appropriate governance and assurance framework plays a key role in underpinning value for money, and mitigating financial risk. Both organisational resilience and cyber resilience and security risks if crystallised potentially have significant financial consequences.

9. Monitoring Officer comments

9.1 Considered and functional Governance Assurance arrangements, underpinned by the appropriate and timely actions, are essential for maintaining a strong framework for risk management and internal control.

9.2 This report supports the Committee in its scrutiny of these actions and seeks to provide assurance that the risks are being managed effectively and in accordance with the Council's statutory responsibilities.

10. Procurement comments

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

11. Equality and Diversity

11.1 The revised Governance Assurance Register incorporates a specific Governance Assurance Area specifying how the Council ensures the effective discharge of the Council's responsibilities and duties relating to Equality, Diversity and Inclusion.

12. Sustainability/Climate Change Implications

12.1 As outlined in this report, the Council's Governance Assurance Register incorporates a specific GAA covering how the Council discharges its responsibilities with respect to its zero carbon targets and wider environmental responsibilities.

13. Other considerations

13.1 As with adopting and embedding the governance assurance approach for the Audit Committee, it will inevitably take some time to fully integrate the new processes across all Committees. An audit of progress and compliance with the new Governance Assurance arrangements will be undertaken by the Council's external Governance Assurance/Risk Management advisor (now likely to be completed in September 2026).

14. Local Government Reorganisation Implications

14.1 It is important that the Council continues to develop and implement its Governance Assurance arrangements to ensure that strategic and operational risks are managed effectively in the run up to vesting day for the new West Surrey Council.

15. Timetable for implementation

15.1 A further update on this GAA will be provided at the E&SC meeting on 7 January 2027.

16. Contact

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

16.2 Sandy Muirhead – Group Head Commissioning and Transformation (s.muirhead@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: None

Appendices:

Appendix A: Governance Assurance update for E&SC relating to '*Meeting the Council's zero carbon targets and wider environmental responsibilities'*.