

Appendix A - Inclusive Economy GAA update for BIG Committee 1 October 2026

ASSURANCE AREA					
Inclusive Economy					
ASSURANCE DESCRIPTION					
An inclusive, prosperous local economy is critical for a thriving community. The Council works closely with local businesses to support their sustainability and helps those looking for work to improve their skills and find employment. The Council therefore needs to ensure it has effective partnership working arrangements in place to maximise its contribution to the sustainable growth of the local economy. The BIG Committee will monitor the details of the how the various initiatives are working.					
ASSURANCE ASSESSMENT					
Without clear and transparent governance, businesses and residents could lose confidence in the support provided by the Council. Trust is key to inclusive growth. This can mean • There are inadequate safeguards to monitor the distribution of resources to those in need. • Residents of marginalised communities are excluded from opportunities to improve their skills and employment prospects • Oversight, scrutiny and accountability frameworks fail to provide effective mechanisms of resource distribution, resulting in a failure to deliver best value.					
ASSURANCE OWNER	Chris Norrington	FOCUS/ISSUE/CONCERN	Focus	LEVEL OF ASSURANCE (High/Medium/Low)	High

Theme 1 – Supporting Business Sustainability

	Assurance Action	Action Owner	Current RAG status	Performance Update	Next steps (including completion / review date)
1	Establish a Business Engagement Framework A formal business engagement framework is a structured way to manage how Economic Development interacts with its stakeholders. By engaging directly with businesses, we gain insight into the challenges and opportunities they face and can provide targeted support, either by helping to identify solutions or by signposting them to appropriate organisations. Many businesses are not fully aware of how the Council can support them in realising growth and development opportunities.	Chris Norrington		A draft Business Engagement Strategy incorporating the Corporate and Transitional Plan KPIs has been produced. The strategy is more relevant for transition to West Surrey and officers will commence engagement based on the priorities of the strategy. The team is engaging with businesses through its work with the business growth service, Visit Staines, Ashford Wide and the Spelthorne Business Forum as well as directly in its work with Spelthorne Business Awards. The team are also engaging with stakeholders associated with the Ashford BID.	Due to resource restrictions, the strategy is yet to be presented to Management Team or the BIG Committee. Next review by: 31/12/2026
2	Provide a comprehensive support service for the business community Deliver business support and advice through the Business Spelthorne platform and partners.	Chris Norrington		- Supporting 10 businesses in the Business Hub and a further 80 in the Business Growth Service. 80/180 Businesses were supported in applying for the Business Awards. 120 hours of consultancy has been provided to start-up businesses.	Next review by: 31/12/2026

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				Monthly newsletter sent communicating support opportunities to businesses. 1,500 contacts are on the database with an average of 850 open clicks.	

Theme 2 - Improving Skills & Employment

3	Promote local supply chains Work with Procurement & "Source in Surrey" to promote local supply chains to local businesses. Promoting local supply chains makes economies stronger, fairer, and more resilient, especially at the community level - and helps to: - Boost the local economy - Improve resilience and reliability - Supports small and medium-sized businesses - Reduce environmental impact - Strengthen community relationships - Keep skills and knowledge local - Enhances economic inclusion - Increase economic sovereignty Promoting local supply chains keeps value, jobs, and expertise close to	Chris Norrington		- Working with Source in Surrey (an AI driven Business to Business procurement platform), we supported events in Spelthorne in March and April. - Working with Procurement colleagues to prioritise Council spend is local, measured and consistent between departments. - Promotion of Source in Surrey as the platform for local procurement has commenced via social media and newsletters. - In March and April, 2 events jointly held with Source in Surrey attended by approx. 60 businesses. A third event, a buyer/ supplier exchange event was held on 20 May in Staines. Heathrow Airport, Royal Holloway, Runnymede & Spelthorne and Vision	Continue to promote the service Liaise with Procurement colleagues to align future local procurement to the platform. Next review by: 31/12/2026
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	home while making the economy more resilient and sustainable.			Engineering procurement professionals were present.	
4	Skills partnerships Work with colleges, universities, and training providers to align courses with local employer needs. A skills partnership with colleges, universities, and training providers matters because it connects education to real jobs and thereby: • Closes the skills gap • Improves employability and job outcomes • Strengthens the local economy • Keeps education responsive and future-focused • Creates clearer career pathways • Maximizes public and private investment • Supports equity and inclusion Effective Skills Partnerships turn education into a strategic tool for workforce development—benefiting students, employers, and the entire community at the same time.	Chris Norrington		The Council is represented on the Brooklands College Skills Board to identify local business skills needs that the college will seek to supply. We also have a Jobs & Skills Partnership Board that considers training demand from residents. Training can be accessed via our training provider, Step Surrey (Surrey County Council employability support). We are also represented on the Local Skills Improvement Partnership working group to discuss business skills gaps with training providers and colleges. We attend the Brooklands College Skills Board once per quarter and agreed to a joint partnership with Ashford's Campus to engage with businesses to promote apprenticeships. The Jobs & Skills Partnership Board meet quarterly. Provides metrics to show a wider picture of support in Spelthorne.	Attend future board meetings and align engagement to skills provision. Next review by: 31/12/2026
5	Employment Support Programmes Offer job fairs, apprenticeships, and targeted schemes for NEETs (16–24-	Julia Owen		Year to date: 168 new cases (residents) supported 116 are 16–24-year-olds. 18 are 25-44 years old	Continue to provide support and meet targets. Next review by: 31/12/2026

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	year-olds Not in Education, Employment, or Training). Establishing an employment support programme that offers job fairs, apprenticeships, and targeted schemes for NEETs is important for economic and social reasons and especially for supporting individuals at risk of exclusion from the labour market. Employment support programmes for NEETs transform disengagement into opportunity—benefiting individuals, employers, and society as a whole.			34 are 45 or over 9 training events were held at the hub 19 referrals made to partners No. of residents reporting increased employability skills: 153 No. of residents gained employment following support: 62 37 referrals made between partners	
6	Upskilling Initiatives Support digital skills, green jobs, and vocational training to meet future workforce demands. As skills demands in the workforce are changing faster than people can keep up without support, upskilling initiatives	Julia Owen		Year to date Update 33 training events held We host and refer to the Digital dippers course we have alongside DWP	Continue to run vocational training courses Next review by: 31/12/2026

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	are one of the most effective ways to future-proof workers, employers, and the economy and is especially important for digital skills, green jobs, and technological and vocational skills. • Technology is reshaping jobs (digital skills) • The green transition needs new skills fast (green jobs) • Vocational training aligns education with real jobs • It boosts employability and job mobility • It supports inclusive and sustainable growth • Providing upskilling initiatives is essential because it: • Prepares workers for future jobs • Helps businesses stay competitive • Supports a fair green transition - Aligns education with real labour market needs			Vocational training in Construction. Health and Education	
7	Inclusive employment Collaborate with Jobcentre Plus and community organisations to reach disadvantaged groups. Collaboration seeks to: • reach disadvantaged groups	Julia Owen		The group works with the Aghan Resettlement group offering employability support. The group delivers out of the hub for the mothers and preschool children. Clean referral pathways with Surrey care trust enable us access to their resilience	Continue to run vocational training courses Next review by: 31/12/2026

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	- Community groups have established relations with disadvantaged groups providing trust and local knowledge - Partners can provide tailored support and reduce barriers and produces better outcomes. Inclusive employment opens doors, and collaboration ensures those doors actually reach the people who need them most. Working with Jobcentre Plus and community organisations turns good intentions into real, sustainable employment opportunities.			work in the community- such as the allotments. We work alongside A2 in their monthly employment workshops in the Rose Centre in Stanwell- now in its 4th meeting Our outreach at Sunbury Library recognises the area as one with high levels of deprivation in addition to poor transport links into Staines where the main hub is based This work continues across all named partners though revisiting the relationship with Brooklands College is a priority in September. MIND offer additional support in the hub for those with mental health needs We have also developed closer understanding with FEDCAP around opportunity sharing.	

Theme 3 - Effective Partnership Arrangements

8	Regular Evaluation Regular evaluation instils effective partnership arrangements and by implementing and monitoring KPIs (Key	Julia Owen		KPIs are collated on a monthly basis. Currently on course to meet targets. Total cases serviced by Jobs and Skills Hub (year to date):	Continue to meet targets Next review by: 31/12/2026
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	Performance Indicators) turns collaboration into measurable, accountable results. • Makes partnership performance measurable • Demonstrates economic impact • Improves decision-making& performance and outcomes • Strengthens accountability and governance • Identifies under-performance early • Enhances transparency and trust • Supports continuous improvement and long-term sustainability Regular evaluation through well-designed KPIs ensures partnership arrangements remain effective, deliver measurable economic impact, and provide a strong basis for accountability, improvement, and long-term success.			Cases: 247/250 (98%) DWP Cases: 82/51 (159%) No. of Events: 33/33 (100%) Event attendees: 282/333 (85%) No. of people reporting increased employability Skills: 153/166 (92%) Number of people in employment, including self-employment, following support: 62/40 (155%)	
9	Shared Data & Intelligence Develop an economic dashboard to monitor local economy performance and inform decisions. Shared data and intelligence play a vital role in supporting a local economy by enabling more informed, coordinated, and timely decision-making.	Chris Norrington		A draft economic report is being compiled which will analyse and monitor the local economy and inform decisions especially relating to West Surrey. This is managed jointly alongside the business engagement strategy.	Next review by: 31/12/2026

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	When councils, partners, and support organisations share insights, they gain a more accurate understanding of local business needs, economic trends, and emerging risks or opportunities. Shared data and intelligence create a stronger evidence base, allowing local authorities and partners to respond proactively and strategically to support business growth, resilience, and long-term economic prosperity.				

Related Improvement and Recovery Plan Theme High Priority Outcomes:

N/A

Corporate KPIs					
	KPI description	Frequency	Target	Corporate priority	Progress update
E1	Number of supported businesses through direct engagement.	Quarterly	50	Resilience	Year to date: 160/200
E2	Number of supported businesses through indirect engagement.	Annual	750	Resilience	Year to date: 430/750

E3	Number of new businesses supported on our business support program	Annual	80	Resilience	Year to date: 86/80
E4	Number of Small businesses supported (non-financial support) in the Business Hub	Annual	40	Resilience	Year to date: 31/40
E5	Number of people supported to access basic skills in the Jobs & Skills Hub.	Annual	90	Resilience	Year to date: 153/90
E6	Number of people supported to engage in job-searching / gain employment in the Jobs & Skills Hub.	Annual	250	Resilience	Year to date: 62/250