

Listed below are a set of detailed Member questions and actions asked at Committee and needed a detailed response following the meeting:

AGENDA ITEM 4 – PERFORMANCE AND RISK REPORT (Minute 5/26)

1. **Risk PR3:** A Member reported that this risk had come to fruition three times now and had cost the council dearly. He stated that the remedy was not sufficient and wanted to know what actions would be put in place to prevent this happening again. The Assistant Director for Corporate Services explained that this was a backward looking report and the issue to which the councillor referred had not happened to the extent it has at the time of writing the report. He undertook to ensure that PR3 be updated but could not guarantee that it would not happen again and that was why it was a risk.

Another Members stated that the residual risk was rated 12 for PR3, with the approach listed as 'treat' yet the commentary said no change to the risk profile and listed challenging economic consequences. He asked, if the approach was to treat the property portfolio risk, why had the residual score remained unchanged at 12 and what active treatment or sustainability measures had actually been deployed this quarter to prevent rent defaults from commercial tenants. The Assistant Director for Corporate Services would include this with previous questions and ensure the risk was updated.

Response:- An updated risk commentary will be provided in the Quarter 1 2026/27 Performance and Risk report which will address this point. It should also be noted by members that the risk is applicable to the whole of the Council's property portfolio and not just the one property referenced by members in the meeting.

2. **Risk HR11:** A Member asked how it could be that HR11 is about lack of leadership and skills to deliver strategic objectives and is an amber risk, but then in a later audit report on the agenda where there is an item on leadership, the Council has said that there's nothing to improve. The Assistant Director for Corporate Services explained that it's always possible that a risk may come to pass. The fact that it isn't an issue the council is having to deal with now is fortunate, but it still doesn't negate the fact that if there were to be change in leadership or people leave for example, there could be a risk posed to the Council. Would also add that the pull of LGR on leadership resource is significant, although currently managed.

Response:- An updated risk commentary will be provided in the Quarter 1 2026/27 Performance and Risk report which will address this point.

3. **Risk PR14 - not delivering a value for money result regarding the future of the current Town Hall site.** A Member asked if the member working group was still meeting and if they had decided or recommended anything since April when this risk was last updated.

Response: The future of the current Town Hall site was reported to 11 November 2025 Strategy & Resources Committee (Agenda Item 7: EEBC 2025-2027 Strategic Priorities 3 & 4). Due to LGR, it was agreed that the Town Hall would remain in operational use and pursuing a Joint Venture

development of the site at this time, would not be a prudent approach. In view of this decision, the member working group's term had expired.

4. Risk AP24/5.17 – modular homes programme: There were several questions to this risk:

- a. What was the realistic vesting date for the three properties and why was this land risk not foreseen earlier

Response:- Due to the passage of time, we are having to go back out to tender for Modular Homes. We are hopeful that the project will complete in 2027, but we shall have to advise further once the procurement process is complete. We did not expect the challenge to access, as we believed and as we were able to prove, that we had access rights.

- b. Since all the sites were deemed unviable, what alternative rapid delivery housing options were being actively pursued to mitigate the absolute lack of affordable housing. The Chair stated that a response would be sought after the meeting.

Response:- We are progressing an innovative and cost-effective solution using land that we have. If this is successful, the East Surrey Council may consider an expansion of the scheme.

5. Risk AP24/5.3 ICT Strategy and cybersecurity: There were several questions to this risk.

- a. Why has the cybersecurity response plan review slipped to September 2026

Response:- AGS24/5.2 explains that the review has been re-phased to align with Surrey-wide LGR planning and the development of future operating models.

- b. what interim controls were in place to manage risk vulnerability?

Response:- AGS24/5.2 and IT6 both confirm that existing cyber security, incident response, business continuity and disaster recovery controls remain in place.

- c. How much of the delay in executing the 2024-25 ICT roadmap was due to the upcoming local government reorganisation?

Response:- AP24/5.3 explains that roadmap activity has been impacted by LGR-related priorities and has been re-prioritised to align with future authority requirements.

- d. Were the council spending resources on hardware and software that may become redundant under the new unitary authority estate?

Response:- AP24/5.3 and IT6 both state that investment and procurement decisions are being reviewed against future authority requirements to minimise duplication and avoid unnecessary expenditure.

6. **Annual Governance Statement Actions:** A Member pointed out a discrepancy between the main committee report and the appendix details on actions that are closed, slipped or complete and asked for all future reports to undergo tighter quality assurance. The Corporate Governance & Strategy Manager noted the question and would provide a response after the meeting.

Response:- This is acknowledged.

7. **OS20 and OS30 – retiring risks:** A Member asked why the council proposed to downgrade or retire these risks because of a transition to a unitary authority and how will the council ensure that these operational pressures are transparently handed over to the shadow authority without a drop in oversight. The Corporate Governance & Strategy Manager noted the question and would provide a response after the meeting.

Response:- OS20 (commercialisation) has been deescalated and now sits on the divisional/service level risk register. These risk registers will be available for the new East Surrey authority to review. After review at Quarter 1 OS30 will remain on the Environment Committee Risk Register.

8. **HC9 and HC13 – homelessness budget overspend:** This item received some response at committee but either needs to be expanded upon or pick up on what was not included in the verbal response.

A member asked why the residual score of 16 for the homelessness budget overspend was the same as the inherent risk score despite a long list of controls. He asked about the effectiveness of internal controls in mitigating the risk. He stated that the council could not rely on unexpected windfall treasury yields or late lease completions so wanted to know what structural accommodation. The Assistant Director for Corporate Services explained that the risk remained unchanged at 16 as it reflected the homelessness rising numbers over the past 2-3 years, the additional activities and staff mitigation measures but despite that the numbers were not getting better. If they were, then there would be a lower residual risk. The second part to the question would need a more detailed response after the meeting.

Another Member spoke about the work that had been done to try to reduce numbers of homelessness including strategies and action plan which apart from modular homes was either green or blue yet the numbers and costs were rising exponentially. He went on to say that the financial outturn allocation of funding for temporary accommodation was significantly short of the money spent last year and therefore questioned whether a balanced budget was set in February.

Response:- The Council has invested £750k in Housing, including preventative officers to reduce demand for Temporary Accommodation (TA). Whilst TA pressures remain a national issue and are not unique to EEBC,

wider structural challenges continue to drive increases in demand and cost across the sector. Current controls, together with the Council's corporate contingency budget, help manage immediate financial pressures; however, longer-term sustainability will depend on addressing these underlying structural issues. Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) may provide opportunities to explore alternative service delivery models and more sustainable approaches to managing TA demand and costs. The position will continue to be closely monitored throughout the year and reported to Members. We are aware there is a high level of interest in this area, so officers are presenting a report to October Community and Wellbeing Committee as well as a briefing to the Chair and Vice-Chair of Community & Wellbeing, and Strategy & Resources and an update to Audit & Scrutiny Committee this Autumn.

AGENDA ITEM 7 – AGS (Minute 7/26)

See minutes for any actions needed – there was one promise of further information recorded:

1. **Member Training:** A Member asked why the 2023/24 councillor training review and enhancement programme due at end of October 2025 was entirely cancelled given that elected members will remain in office until the end of March 2027 and the programme was meant to enhance member capability during the most complex constitutional transition. The Assistant Director for Corporate Services stated that the council was a member of the Local Government Association (LGA) and any councillor wanting training had free access to a considerable amount of training through the LGA, however a fuller response would be sought for the member.

Response:- This was a Corporate Peer Challenge recommendation, but when it was discussed at the Group Leaders meeting there was no appetite to progress this, so it was closed.

AGENDA ITEM 8 - USE OF URGENT DECISIONS ANNUAL REPORT (Minutes 8/26)

See minutes for any actions needed – one unanswered question recorded:

1. A Member asked questions around the specifics of urgent decision 158 and exactly what was authorised. The Chair encouraged the member to email his questions as they were outside the scope of this committee and there were no officers present to answer them. The Member requested that responses to committee member question be made public.

Response:- Any answers provided to written questions submitted after the meeting will be made public other than those that are categorised as 'exempt' under Annex 4.4 - Access to Information Procedure Rules of the Council's Operating Framework.