

# CABINET

Meeting held on Tuesday, 17th January, 2023 at the Council Offices, Farnborough at 7.00 pm.

## **Voting Members**

Cllr D.E. Clifford, Leader of the Council  
Cllr M.L. Sheehan, Deputy Leader and Operational Services Portfolio Holder  
Cllr M.J. Tennant, Deputy Leader and Major Projects and Property Portfolio Holder

Cllr J.B. Canty, Customer Experience, Digital and Transformation Portfolio Holder  
Cllr Sue Carter, Democracy, Strategy and Partnerships Portfolio Holder  
Cllr A.R. Newell, Planning and Economy Portfolio Holder  
Cllr P.G. Taylor, Corporate Services Portfolio Holder

The Cabinet considered the following matters at the above-mentioned meeting. All executive decisions of the Cabinet shall become effective, subject to the call-in procedure, from **30th January, 2023**.

### **37. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST –**

Having regard to the Council's Code of Conduct for Councillors, no declarations of interest were made.

### **38. MINUTES –**

The Minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet held on 15th November, 2022 were confirmed and signed by the Chairman.

### **39. COUNCIL TAX SUPPORT SCHEME 2023/24 –**

(Cllr Diane Bedford, Chairman of the Council Tax Support Task and Finish Group)

The Cabinet considered Report No. FIN2301, which set out the work carried out by the Council's Council Tax Support Task and Finish Group in respect of potential changes to the Council Tax Support Scheme. The Chairman welcomed Cllr Mrs. D.B. Bedford, Chairman of the Council Tax Support Task and Finish Group, who was attending to report on the Group's recommendations.

The Council Tax Support Task and Finish Group had met on 18th August, 2022, 19th October, 2022 and 22nd November, 2022 to consider its recommendations to the Cabinet. The Group had considered the on-going impact of Covid-19 and the cost of living crisis and had paid specific attention to a number of matters during its deliberations and these were set out in paragraph 2 of the Report. Having considered all relevant factors, the Group recommended that no changes should be made to the Council Tax Support Scheme for 2022/23, except for the usual alignment with Housing Benefit rates in the calculations. This would mean that the minimum contribution would remain at 12%. Additionally, it was recommended that a fundamental review of the Scheme should be carried out in early 2023/24.

The Cabinet expressed gratitude to the Council Tax Support Task and Finish Group for its work in producing these recommendations.

### **The Cabinet**

- (i) **RECOMMENDED TO THE COUNCIL** that the current Council Tax Support Scheme for working age customers be retained for 2023/24, with the annual uplift to rates within the calculation mirroring that applied to national Housing Benefit rates; and
- (ii) **RESOLVED** that:
  - (a) the allocation of a further £20,000 for 2022/23 and 2023/23 to the Exceptional Hardship Fund from existing Council reserves, to support residents in hardship, be approved;
  - (b) the Council Tax Support Task and Finish Group be authorised to undertake a detailed review of the Council Tax Support Scheme, including the potential for the scheme to provide up to 100% support to the most vulnerable residents, to be carried out early in 2023/24 to consider the increasing cost of the scheme and its local impact on scheme recipients and other local Council Tax payers and also to consider the compatibility of the current scheme with the Government's Universal Credit Scheme; and
  - (c) the deliberations and considerations of the Council Tax Support Task and Finish Group in arriving at its recommendations, as set out in Report No. FIN2301, be noted.

40. **SUPPORTING COMMUNITIES REFRESH –**  
(Cllr Sue Carter, Democracy, Strategy and Partnerships Portfolio Holder)

The Cabinet considered Report No. ACE2301, which set out a refresh of the Council's Supporting Communities Strategy and Action Plan.

Members were reminded that the Support Communities Strategy and Action Plan had been adopted in January, 2021 and was a collaborative approach to addressing the challenges facing local communities. It was confirmed that the purpose of the refresh was to review progress and achievements and to ensure that the strategy and its priorities were still relevant. The Supporting Communities Working Group had agreed that the four priorities of Economic Hardship, Young People (resilience and aspirations), Physical and Mental Health and Connecting Communities remained the most prevalent but had recognised the need to include the rising cost of living as a key area to address. It was also reported that there would be an increased emphasis on health and wellbeing in recognition of the wider impact this had on supporting communities.

The Cabinet expressed strong support for the Supporting Communities Strategy and Action Plan and endorsed the proposed way forward.

**The Cabinet RESOLVED** that the Supporting Communities Strategy and Action Plan refresh for 2023, as set out in Report No. ACE2301, be approved.

41. **UPDATE ON PLANNING POLICY MATTERS –**  
(Cllr Adrian Newell, Planning and Economy Portfolio Holder)

The Cabinet considered Report No. PG2304, which set out various matters relating to the work of the Council's Planning Policy team.

Members were informed that the Council has an obligation to review its Local Plan by April 2024 and that this review would need to take into account the Council's declaration of a Climate Emergency and the development of the Hampshire Local Transport Plan (LTP4). Given the significance of the Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill, which was due to become law in early 2023, it was proposed that the review would not be completed until around September, 2023. During the transitional period, the Civic Quarter Planning Application had been developed and had been supported by Hampshire County Council, which had adopted a local policy for Farnborough. The County Council was now seeking assurance that Rushmoor Borough Council supported the policy. Members were informed that the Council could provide this reassurance and help to meet its shared commitment to addressing the Climate Emergency by expressing its policy support and reviewing its Car and Cycle Parking Standards Supplementary Planning Document (SPD).

**The Cabinet RESOLVED** that

- (i) the timescales for the review of the Rushmoor Local Plan and the commitment to supporting the principles of LTP4 in the development of a future Local Plan, as set out in Report No. PG2304, be noted;
- (ii) the supporting of the principle of reallocating road space in order to enable the development of the Farnborough Civic Quarter Masterplan and the policy adopted by Hampshire County Council, as set out in the Report, be approved; and
- (iii) the undertaking of a review by the Strategic Housing and Local Plan Working Group of the Council's Car and Cycle Parking Standards SPD be approved, to reflect the priorities of LTP4, the lessons from the development of the major Town Centre Regeneration Schemes in Rushmoor and developments in mobility that were currently underway.

42. **EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC –**

**RESOLVED:** That, taking into account the public interest test, the public be excluded from the meeting during the discussion of the under mentioned items to avoid the disclosure of exempt information within the paragraph of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act, 1972 indicated against the items:

<b>Minute Nos.</b>	<b>Schedule 12A Para. No.</b>	<b>Category</b>
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43, 44 & 45	3	Information relating to financial or business affairs
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**THE FOLLOWING ITEMS WERE CONSIDERED  
IN THE ABSENCE OF THE PUBLIC**

43. **REPORT OF URGENCY DECISION - GRANT OF A LEASE FOR NO. 14-40 VICTORIA ROAD, ALDERSHOT –**  
(Mrs Karen Edwards, Executive Director)

The Cabinet considered a Record of Executive Decision, which set out an urgent decision made on 23rd December, 2022 by the Executive Director, in consultation with the Leader of the Council and the Major Projects and Property Portfolio Holder, to enter into an agreement for the lease of Nos. 14-40 Victoria Road, Aldershot. The reasons for urgency had been the cancellation of the December meeting of the Cabinet and the requirement for notice to be given.

**The Cabinet RESOLVED** that the action taken, as set out in the Record of Executive Decision dated 23rd December, 2022, be noted and endorsed.

44. **REPORT OF URGENCY DECISION - FARNBOROUGH LEISURE CENTRE DEMOLITION FINAL ACCOUNT SETTLEMENT AND PAYMENT –**  
(Mrs Karen Edwards, Executive Director)

The Cabinet considered a Record of Executive Decision, which set out an urgent decision made on 13th December, 2022 by the Executive Director in relation to the Farnborough Leisure Centre demolition final account settlement and payment. The reason for urgency had been to enable the payment of the December invoice in accordance with the contract arrangements and to avoid penalties.

**The Cabinet RESOLVED** that the action taken, as set out in the Record of Executive Decision dated 13th December, 2022, be noted and endorsed.

45. **REGENERATION PROGRAMME - REGENERATION ACQUISITION FARNBOROUGH TOWN CENTRE –**  
(Cllr Martin Tennant, Major Projects and Property Portfolio Holder)

The Cabinet considered Exempt Report No. REG2301, which set out a proposal to progress the acquisition of land and property to enable the progression of regeneration in part of Farnborough town centre.

Members were reminded the Cabinet had resolved to undertake further negotiations to secure the best price and commercial offer and to undertake the required due diligence, legal assessment, feasibility study and business case and to prepare an initial town centre strategy. It was likely that the Cabinet and the Council would consider the final business case in February, 2023, with completion currently scheduled for April, 2023. The purpose of this Report was to update the Cabinet on the due diligence process to date and to enable a number of actions to be taken to

allow the final proposal to be progressed.

In discussing the proposals, the Cabinet expressed strong support for the suggested approach in bringing forward this important project in delivering the regeneration of Farnborough town centre.

**The Cabinet RESOLVED** that

- (i) the review of the due diligence and key points from the business case, as set out in Exempt Report No. REG2301, be approved;
- (ii) the bringing forward of the business case and decision to acquire to the Cabinet and the Council for consideration in February, 2023, as set out in the Report, be approved;
- (iii) the allocation of a budget, in the sum set out in the Report, for the mobilisation of a property management company in January, 2023 be approved, to commence the required 90-day handover prior to exchange and completion and enabling identification and resolution of any remain issues not identified as part of due diligence to date;
- (iv) the allocation of an additional budget, in the sum set out in the Report, for the completion of due diligence, be approved, noting that the costs associated with the purchase would be included in the acquisition budget;
- (v) the revised offer price and the rationale for this, as set out in the Report, be noted; and
- (vi) the issuing of a draft form of contract to the vendor be approved, detailing the timeline for exchange and completion in April, 2023.

**NOTE:** Whilst not a declarable interest under the Code of Conduct, as this decision did not directly relate to his registered disclosable pecuniary interest, nor directly relate to or affect his financial interests or well being, Cllr P.G. Taylor advised, in the interests of transparency in respect of this item, that he was currently a tenant of one of the properties within the site under discussion. He remained in the meeting during the discussion and voting thereon but elected not to vote himself.

The Meeting closed at 7.36 pm.

CLLR D.E. CLIFFORD, LEADER OF THE COUNCIL

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