



RUSHMOOR BOROUGH COUNCIL

CABINET

*at the Council Offices, Farnborough on
Tuesday, 17th January, 2023 at 7.00 pm*

To:

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

Enquiries regarding this agenda should be referred to Chris Todd, Democratic Support Officer, on 01252 398825 or e-mail: chris.todd@rushmoor.gov.uk

A G E N D A

1. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST –

Under the Council's Code of Conduct for Councillors, all Members are required to disclose relevant Interests in any matter to be considered at the meeting. Where the matter directly relates to a Member's Disclosable Pecuniary Interests or Other Registrable Interest, that Member must not participate in any discussion or vote on the matter and must not remain in the room unless they have been granted a dispensation (see note below). If the matter directly relates to 'Non-Registrable Interests', the Member's participation in the meeting will depend on the nature of the matter and whether it directly relates or affects their financial interest or well-being or that of a relative, friend or close associate, applying the tests set out in the Code.

NOTE:

On 27th May, 2021, the Council's Corporate Governance, Audit and Standards Committee granted dispensations to Members appointed by the Council to the Board of the Rushmoor Development Partnership and as Directors of Rushmoor Homes Limited.

2. MINUTES – (Pages 1 - 6)

To confirm the Minutes of the meeting held on 15th November, 2022 (copy attached).

3. COUNCIL TAX SUPPORT SCHEME 2023/24 – (Pages 7 - 32)

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

To consider Report No. FIN2301 (copy attached), which sets out the work undertaken by the Council Tax Support Task and Finish Group to review the Council's Council Tax Support Scheme.

4. SUPPORTING COMMUNITIES REFRESH – (Pages 33 - 48)

(Cllr Sue Carter, Democracy, Strategy and Partnerships Portfolio Holder)

To consider Report No. ACE2301 (copy attached), which sets out a refresh of the Council's Supporting Communities Strategy and Action Plan.

5. UPDATE ON PLANNING POLICY MATTERS – (Pages 49 - 56)

(Cllr Adrian Newell, Planning and Economy Portfolio Holder)

To consider Report No. PG2304 (copy attached), which sets out an update on various matters relating to the Council's Planning Policy function.

6. EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC –

To consider resolving:

That, subject to the public interest test, the public be excluded from this meeting during the discussion of the undermentioned items to avoid the disclosure of exempt information within the paragraphs of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act, 1972 indicated against such items:

Item Nos.	Schedule 12A Para. No.	Category
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7, 8 & 9	3	Information relating to financial or business affairs
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7. REPORT OF URGENCY DECISION - GRANT OF A LEASE FOR NO. 14-40 VICTORIA ROAD, ALDERSHOT – (Pages 57 - 64)

(Mrs Karen Edwards, Executive Director)

To note an urgency decision made by the Executive Director, in consultation with the Leader of the Council and the Major Projects and Property Portfolio Holder, in relation to the granting of a lease for No. 14-40 Victoria Road, Aldershot (Exempt Record of Executive Decision and supporting information attached).

8. **REPORT OF URGENCY DECISION - FARNBOROUGH LEISURE CENTRE DEMOLITION FINAL ACCOUNT SETTLEMENT AND PAYMENT** – (Pages 65 - 68)
(Mrs Karen Edwards, Executive Director)

To note an urgency decision made by the Executive Director, in consultation with relevant Portfolio Holders, in relation to the Farnborough Leisure Centre demolition final account settlement and payment (Exempt Record of Executive Decision attached).

9. **REGENERATION PROGRAMME - REGENERATION ACQUISITION FARNBOROUGH TOWN CENTRE** – (Pages 69 - 308)
(Cllr Martin Tennant, Major Projects and Property Portfolio Holder)

To consider Exempt Report No. REG2301 (copy attached), which sets out a proposal to progress the acquisition of land and property to enable the progression of regeneration in part of Farnborough town centre.

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CABINET

Meeting held on Tuesday, 15th November, 2022 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 **28th November, 2022**.

30. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST –**

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

31. **MINUTES –**

The Minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet held on 11th October, 2022 were confirmed and signed by the Chairman.

32. **BUDGET STRATEGY 2023/24 –**

(Cllr Paul Taylor, Corporate Services Portfolio Holder)

The Cabinet considered Report No. FIN2234, which set out the budgetary framework to support the preparation of the Council's 2023/24 budget.

The Report set out a summary of the Council's financial position and explained how Members would be kept informed of material changes in the forecast over the medium term for financial planning purposes. Members were informed that the final decision on the overall budget and Council Tax level would be made by the Council at its meeting in February, 2023. It was confirmed that the Council, along with most local authorities, faced a significant and immediate set of financial challenges, many of which would continue over the medium term. Members were informed that a number of proposals were contained within the Report as a suggested way forward in delivering the reductions in expenditure required. Included in this was a recommendation that the Council should move to a system of Outcomes Based Budgeting as the primary methodology for addressing the budget gap for 2023/24 and future years.

The Cabinet was supportive of the approaches set out in the Report, including the move to Outcomes Based Budgeting, as the most effective way for the Council to proceed in facing the financial challenges at this time.

The Cabinet RESOLVED that

- (i) the revised budget gap contained within this Budget Strategy update for 2023/24, as set out in paragraph 4.7 of Report No. FIN2234, be noted;
- (ii) the endorsement of the budget principles, as set out in paragraph 5.2 of the Report, be approved; and
- (iii) the intended approach to developing new savings and income proposals to close the projected gap, as set out in paragraph 5.8 of the Report, be noted.

33. COUNCIL PLAN AND RISK REGISTER QUARTERLY UPDATE JULY TO SEPTEMBER 2022/23 –

(Cllr Sue Carter, Democracy, Strategy and Partnerships Portfolio Holder)

The Cabinet received Report No. ACE2206, which set out progress in delivering the Council Business Plan projects during the second quarter of 2022/23. Members were informed that progress against key activities and projects was included in the Report, along with the Council's business performance monitoring information and the Council's Corporate Risk Register. It was reported that, at the end of the second quarter, just over 50% of projects/activities were showing an amber status. Many of these projects were showing as amber due to reporting delays of between one and three months and most were still on track to be delivered in 2022/23.

The Cabinet NOTED the progress made towards delivering the Council Business Plan, as set out in Report No. ACE2206.

34. REVIEW OF LICENSING FEES –

(Cllr Maurice Sheehan, Operational Services Portfolio Holder)

The Cabinet considered Report No. OS2219, which set out a proposed revised scheme of fees for the Council's Animal Licensing and Scrap Metal Dealer Licensing fees.

Members were informed that the fees were being reviewing in the context of the financial pressures being experienced by the Council at the present time. It was reported that the new fee structure had been prepared on the basis of full cost recovery and the details of the process in each case were appended to the Report.

The Cabinet RESOLVED that the new Animal Licensing and Scrap Metal Dealer Licensing fees, as set out in Report No. OS2219, be approved.

35. CONSERVATION AREA APPRAISALS AND MANAGEMENT PLANS –

(Cllr Adrian Newell, Planning and Economy Portfolio Holder)

The Cabinet considered Report No. EPSH2234, which set out proposed Conservation Area appraisals and management plans, following a review of the St.

Michael's Abbey, Farnborough Hill / Farnborough Street and Aldershot West Conservation Areas. The Chairman welcomed Mr George Britton, who was representing local residents in the Highgate Lane and Chingford Avenue area and had requested to address the Cabinet on the proposed boundaries of the new Farnborough Street and Farnborough Hill Conservation Areas.

Members were informed that it was proposed that the former Farnborough Hill Conservation Area should be split to form the separate Farnborough Hill and Farnborough Street Conservation Areas. It was confirmed that consultation exercises had been carried out on the draft appraisals and management plans and that the responses received were summarised within the Report. It was proposed that, in the case of each of the Farnborough Conservation Areas, properties and roads that were not considered to justify conservation area designation by virtue of special architectural or historic interest should not be included within their boundaries.

The Cabinet heard from Mr Britton, who was speaking on behalf of local residents from Highgate Lane and Chingford Avenue. Mr Britton considered that the appraisal process had been flawed and that no satisfactory definition of 'historic or architectural significance or character' had been provided. It was the view of the residents that areas and many of the properties proposed to be removed from the new Conservation Areas were of such significance and that properties built in the 20th Century should be recognised as worthy of protection. It was not felt that residents had been sufficiently involved in the review process.

The Cabinet considered the representations made and discussed the role and advice of Historic England in the process. It was confirmed that Historic England had responded to consultation on the proposed appraisals and reviews of Conservation Areas but had not offered a view on the merits of the inclusion or otherwise of the individual houses or groups of houses under discussion. Historic England had commented that it is outside its remit to provide an opinion on what should or should not be in a conservation area as this is legally identified as the role of the Local Planning Authority.

The Cabinet was advised that the process and recommendations had been informed by advice within the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and Historic England's Advice Note 1 on Conservation Area Designation, Appraisal and Management.

In response to a question, it was confirmed that no tree worthy of preservation would go unprotected as a result of being removed from a Conservation Area and that new Tree Preservation Orders were in preparation to ensure this. Members felt that, when considering all of the available information, it was right to make the changes proposed in the Report to demonstrate a consistent approach to Conservation Areas across the Borough.

The Cabinet RESOLVED that

- (i) the adoption of the St. Michael's Abbey Conservation Area appraisal and management plan, as set out in Appendix 1 of Report No. EPSH2234, be approved;

- (ii) the adoption of the Farnborough Hill Conservation Area appraisal and management plan, as set out in Appendix 2 of the Report, be approved;
- (iii) the undertaking of an exercise to reconsult on the revised appraisal for the Farnborough Street Conservation Area, solely to seek views on whether it should be extended to include the Station Master's House, as set out in Appendix 3 of the Report, be approved, with the Head of Economy, Planning and Strategic Housing, in consultation with the Planning and Economy Portfolio Holder, being authorised to make any necessary final amendments to the boundary in the light of consultee comments received before being finally adopted;
- (iv) the undertaking of an exercise to consult on a draft Aldershot West Conservation Area appraisal and management plan, as set out in Appendix 4 of the Report, be approved, with the Head of Economy, Planning and Strategic Housing, in consultation with the Planning and Economy Portfolio Holder, being authorised to make any minor revisions to the text of the appraisal in the light of consultee comments received before being finally adopted.

36. **SAVINGS AND TRANSFORMATION AND DELIVERING COUNCIL PRIORITIES - ORGANISATIONAL REDESIGN –**
(Mr Paul Shackley, Chief Executive)

The Cabinet considered Report No. CEX2202, which set out the Chief Executive's update on progress in relation to the Council's Transformation and Savings Programme and proposed changes to the Council's staffing structures, arising as a result of a consequential review of organisational design.

Members heard that a number of measures were being proposed, including the deletion of two Head of Service posts, the acceptance of two resignations under the Mutually Agreed Resignation Scheme (MARS) and the redundancy of the Council's existing Technical Services Manager. The Report set out full details of these and the other changes that were being proposed. It was reported that the changes would result in ongoing annual savings to the Council's revenue budget of between £167,000 and £179,000, with a net transition cost in 2022/23 of £41,000, which would be met from existing budgets.

The Cabinet was supportive of the suggested approach, as part of the Council's response to the financial challenges currently being faced.

The Cabinet RESOLVED that

- (i) the progress to date of the ICE Transformation Programme and the establishment of the Saving and Transformation Programme (STP), as set out in Report No. CEX2202, be noted;
- (ii) the new senior management arrangements, as set out in the Report, be noted;

- (iii) the proposed changes to the staffing establishment to enable the delivery of key priorities, as set out in the Report, be noted;
- (iv) the taking forward of further staffing and other service changes through the Saving and Transformation Programme, by the Chief Executive, in line with the requirement outlined in the new Medium Term Financial Strategy, the 2023/24 budget and as a result of any further joint working with Hart District Council, be noted;
- (v) the revised Chief Officers Pay Scales in line with the new senior management arrangements, as set out in paragraph 5.12 of the Report, be approved;
- (vi) an interim amendment to the current pay policy to allow a market supplement of up to £10,000 per annum for specific hard to recruit roles, for the duration of a review of recruitment and retention, as set out in the Report, be approved; and
- (vii) the Interim Executive Head of Finance be authorised to amend in year budgets as required, in line with the financial implications set out in the Report.

The Meeting closed at 8.18 pm.

CLLR D.E. CLIFFORD, LEADER OF THE COUNCIL

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CABINET
17th January 2023

COUNCIL TAX SUPPORT TASK & FINISH GROUP
COUNCILLOR DIANE BEDFORD (CHAIRMAN)

REPORT NO. FIN2301

KEY DECISION: NO

COUNCIL TAX SUPPORT SCHEME – 2023/24

SUMMARY:

This report sets out the work undertaken by the Council Tax Support Task and Finish Group, to review the Council's Council Tax Support Scheme (CTSS) and recommends action as follows:

RECOMMENDATIONS:

Cabinet is requested to:

- a) Recommend to Council that the current CTSS for working age customers continues for 2023/24 with the annual uplift to rates within the calculation mirroring that applied to national Housing Benefit rates.
- b) Approve a further £20k for the current year (22/23) and for next year (23/24) be allocated to the Exceptional Hardship Fund from existing Council reserves to support residents in hardship.
- c) Commission the Council Tax Support Task and Finish Group to undertake a detailed review of the CTSS in early 2023/24 to consider the increasing cost of the scheme and its local impact on scheme recipients and other local Council Taxpayers and to consider the current schemes compatibility with the Government's Universal Credit Scheme, specifically to ensure that both Universal Credit and legacy benefit claimants are treated equally. In conducting the review, the Group should report back on the potential for the local CTSS to be able to provide up to 100% support for the most vulnerable residents (within a similar financial envelope to the present scheme arrangements) as well on proposals for scheme simplification.
- d) Note the deliberations and considerations of the Council Tax Support Task and Finish Group in arriving at recommendation a) and b) above as set out in Appendix 1.

1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 Since 1 April 2013, local authorities have been providing their own Council Tax Support Scheme (CTSS) to replace the previous national Council Tax Benefit Regulations, which had supported residents with their Council Tax costs.

- 1.2 Whilst local authorities have the freedom to set their own local schemes, based on local circumstances and needs, local authorities are required to provide pensioners with the same level of support received under the previous national Council Tax Benefit arrangements.
- 1.3 Accordingly, most local authorities have devised hybrid schemes, whereby those of pensionable age receive up to 100% of their Council Tax bill in support, whilst the maximum level of support for working age customers is typically lower and a range of other local adjustments have been made.
- 1.4 In Rushmoor we are in our tenth year of operating our local scheme, which has been overseen by a cross-party Member Welfare Group, superseded in 2018 by the Council Tax Support Task and Finish Group, convened by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.
- 1.5 In previous years, Rushmoor's local scheme has proved effective and Council Tax collection rates remained high but for 2019/20 the collection rate was 97.8%, slightly lower than the previous year, and for 20/21 lower again at 96.8% due to the impact of Covid-19.
- 1.6 Due to a gradual recovery from the impact of furlough and job losses caused by the impact of Covid-19 on people's financial circumstances, there was a slight improvement in the overall collection rate of Council Tax for 21/22 which was 97.8%. For this financial year so far, the collection rate at the end of November 22, was 94.18% in comparison to 94.15% at the end of November 2021. The cost-of-living crisis continues to have a significant impact of resident's ability to pay their council tax. We are closely monitoring the situation to understand where the main issues are and adapt recovery processes accordingly.
- 1.7 Collection rates for recipients of CTS are lower than those of the overall collection rate. The way these are calculated is slightly different to the main rates as CTS is awarded at the start of the year for up to the full annual charge. Main collection rates are calculated as a % of the Council Tax due in the year to date. The only date we are 100% sure of the actual figures is at 31 March when we have comparable figures.
- 1.8 For Working age recipients, the collection rate in terms of the amount of Council Tax paid for the full year and being paid in the current month (November 2022) was 83%. Same time in November 2021 it was 73%. Current rates have been helped by the number of £150 Energy Rebates that residents chose to have credited to their Council Tax accounts. For pension age recipients the collection rate is currently 98% which is slightly higher than pre-Covid. This is helped mainly by the pensioner CTS scheme allowing 100% support in most cases, due to it mirroring the previous national Council Tax Benefit scheme and a significant number of the remaining residents paying their instalments regularly.
- 1.9 It is assumed at the time of writing, that there will not be any additional financial

support from the Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) for 2023/24 to fund additional pressures on the local CTSS in England, on top of those in 2020/21.

2. WORK OF THE COUNCIL TAX SUPPORT TASK AND FINISH GROUP

- 2.1 A Council Tax Support Task and Finish Group was established in 2019, as a sub-group of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee (OSC) and has been working to the previously agreed terms of reference.
- 2.2 The Group met on 18th August 2022, 19th October 2022, and 22nd November 2022 to make their recommendations.
- 2.3 The Group considered the on-going impact of Covid-19 and cost of living crisis and associated data regarding the CTSS.
- 2.4 The Group weighed up several factors and paid specific attention to the following matters during their deliberations:
 - Current collection rate for Council Tax payments in Rushmoor amongst CTS recipients
 - How collection rate last year compares in Rushmoor this year, as opposed to previous years
 - Council Tax Support caseload data
 - Comparable data relating to CTS schemes for other local authorities in Hampshire and across England.
 - Early collection rate for the main Council Tax data following the ending of furlough schemes and the gradual return to work for many who lost their jobs or suffered reduced hours.
 - Energy Rebate and Cost of Living funding
 - ONS data and local employment statistics
 - Evidence and data presented by Citizens Advice
 - Changes to national welfare benefits such as Universal Credit
 - Options to change the scheme were presented such as reviewing the Banding Cap level, considering a reduction in the maximum amount of council tax liability eligible for support and reducing the savings threshold
 - The impact of likely Council Tax increase in 2023/24 on residents and the prioritisation of cost reductions and savings
- 2.5 The on-going position because of the cost of living crisis in respect of Council Tax collection and payments, presents financial impacts on both the council and its residents. The current CTSS is familiar to customers and is relatively stable. The group agreed that this is not the right time to make fundamental changes, and indeed maintaining the current scheme for 2023/24 would help those of working age maintain a consistency at a time when they may be facing other personal and financial changes and challenges. Also, any scheme modelling and forecasting at this time using current data and information would be unlikely to provide a reliable picture of the longer-term claimant profile and caseload.

- 2.6 It is difficult to forecast the CTSS costs in 2023/24 with any degree of certainty due to the cost of living crisis. This creates a continuing level of uncertainty with the current economic climate. We have seen a small drop in people claiming CTS, which we can assume is due to an increase in their financial resources as they recovered from the impact on employment of Covid 19, but it is a little early to be clear how this might play out for the remaining months of 2022/23 and into the new year.
- 2.7 Having considered all the data available to answer the lines of enquiry set out in 2.4, and recognising that there were factors that could support changes in 2023/24 and also bring into question the timeliness of a change, the Group on balance considered that the best option to recommend to Cabinet was one of no immediate change but keep the scheme under close review and undertake a more fundamental review in 2023/24.

Option put forward by the Group

- 2.8 To maintain the CTSS for 2023/24, as an identical scheme to the current year, whilst the Council Tax Support Task and Finish Group continue to monitor the financial recovery from the impact of the cost-of-living crisis on people's ability to pay the Council Tax. With this level of current financial difficulties being unprecedented it is not possible to forecast with any degree of certainty what will happen. However, early indicators do show that it would be reasonable to anticipate further decreases in CTS caseload and expenditure for the remainder of the financial year.

The group were clear that they would recommend a fundamental review of the scheme in early 2023 using robust data and future consultation with the public and the major preceptors. The introduction of Universal Credit and with the financial challenges facing the council, the current CTS scheme may no longer be fit for purpose as the current CTS scheme is not compatible with the Governments Universal Credit scheme. As more people receive Universal Credit, it is important the scheme is adapted to ensure both UC and legacy benefit claimants are treated equally. This means tested scheme is also complex and costly to administer. Multiple bills are produced as a person's income changes, sometimes monthly, which makes recovery of council tax difficult as people receive so many bills with differing amounts to pay.

This review of the scheme will ensure that we introduce a long-term sustainable scheme that is affordable and fair to both council taxpayers and to those people who also benefit from Council Tax support.

- 2.9 **TABLE 1:** Council Tax collection rates within Rushmoor, for those of Working Age receiving CTS - % of those where full year paid and paying in November 22 23 (Previous pension age data not reliable but current estimate is 98% for November 22)

CTS collection Rates at date stated	Collection rate for those of Working age
November 19	92.3%

November 20	85.5%
November 21	73.4%
November 22	83.2%

2.10 **TABLE 2:** Overall Council Tax collection rates

Month and Year	% Collected of in year charge due to date
November 2019	95.11%
November 2020	93.69%
November 2021	93.85%
November 2022	94.18%

2.11 Presently expenditure on the CTS scheme is £5,173,766. The table below shows the comparative position.

2.12 **TABLE 3:** Council Tax Support – award data

CTS paid by group	November 19	November 20	November 21	November 22
Pensioner	£2,101,678	£2,144,227	£2,184,110	£2,221,024
Working age	£2,283,954	£2,578,267	£2,997,827	£2,889,591
Total	£4,385,632	£4,722,495	£5,181,938	£5,110,616

2.13 At 30 Nov 2022, the cost of CTS was £5.11m. As you can see from Table 3, the cost at the end of November 21 was £5,18m a decrease of £71k.

2.14 The cost of the scheme is slightly lower than at the same time in 2021, although difficult to attribute this to a specific reason. Previous reductions we believed were due to the caseload beginning to reduce as people come off furlough and go back into work after Universal Credit. We may see a continued reduction for the remaining months of the year in terms of people receiving CTS but the impact of the cost of living crisis will certainly be an important factor in peoples ability to pay their council tax liability

3. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

3.1 There are no specific legal implications resulting from this report. The Council has already had an established CTSS and does not wish to make any changes for 2023/24.

4. EQUALITIES IMPACT IMPLICATIONS

4.1 It would be normal practice to undertake a detailed equality impact assessment (EIA) in the event that there is a major change to the CTSS. However, as the recommendations indicate a largely status quo approach for 2023/24, no EIA is attached to the report on this occasion and there are no specific equalities

impact matters that should arise as a result of adopting the recommendations.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 The only financial implications arising directly from this report, relate to the creation of a larger reserve to deal with hardship applications, both during 2022/23 and 2023/24. However, these funds will be provided by transfers from an existing reserve. The total estimated cost of the Council Tax Support Scheme for 2023/24 will be included when calculating the total amount of Council Tax income for the year, reflecting estimates around current and future numbers of applicants and levels of Council Tax charges.
- 5.2 Members will need to consider the financial implications of the scheme when considering the Budget for 2023/24 at the Council meeting in February 2023.

6. CONCLUSIONS

- 5.1 Cabinet are asked to consider the issues raised in this report and the Group's recommendations as set out at the top of the report.

Councilor Diane Bedford
Chairman of Council Tax Support Task and Finish Group

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS:

- 18th August 2022 presentation to Council Tax Support Members Task and Finish Group
- 19th October 2022 presentation to Council Tax Support Members Task and Finish Group
- 22nd November 2022 presentation to Council Tax Support Members Task and Finish Group

CONTACT DETAILS:

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Council Tax Support Members Group

22nd November 2022

Agenda

- Citizens Advice (Alex Hughes)
- Latest Welfare News and Data
- Latest Local Employment Data
- Latest Revenues and Benefits Data
 - Caseload
 - CTS award data
 - Collection rates
 - Discretionary Housing Payments
 - Exceptional Hardship Payments
- Overall view of the data
- Review of Council Tax Support Scheme (CTSS) for 23/24
- Members recommendation for Cabinet



Rushmoor

Council Tax Support Group

- Update on data and trends
- Focus for the coming year

Citizens Advice Issues

- Citizens Advice has a **unique insight** into the cost of living pressures faced, because of the range and type of issues local people approach us for help with.
- Our **holistic** approach, means issues are not seen in isolation – so for instance a problem with energy, may trigger additional help, ranging from benefits entitlement to crisis support – as shown here.
- Our **detailed data** includes demographic and ward based data, which we can extract and share to respond to different situations.
- We are currently working on an update to the “**Cost of Living in Rushmoor**” report which we produced in 2020.



Cost of Living Topline Figures for Rushmoor

People in Rushmoor asking Citizens Advice for help in the last 3 months - Top 5 Cost of Living issues only

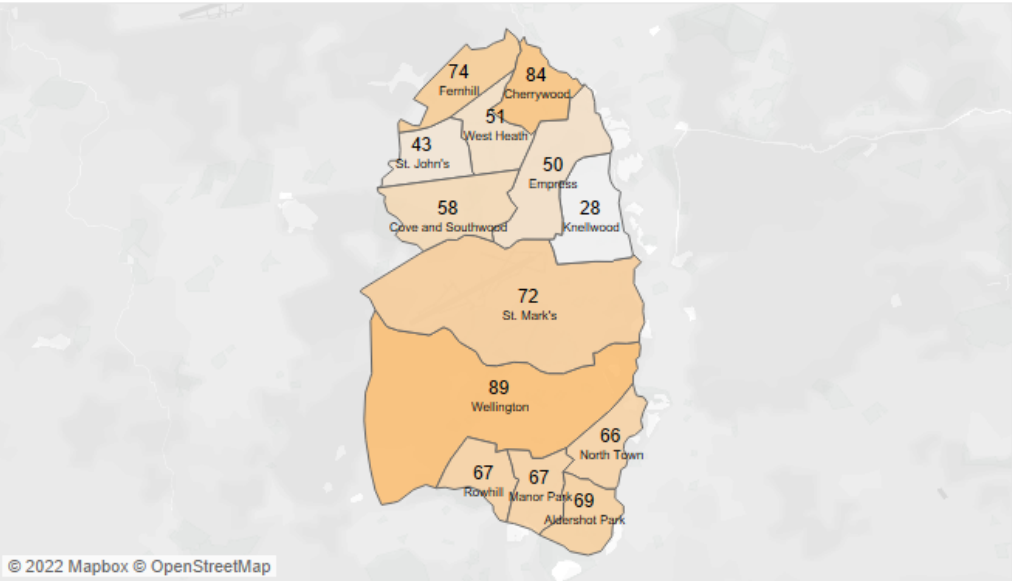
Top 5 cost of living issues

In the last three months to October 2022, the top 5 cost of living issues that clients saw us about in this Local Authority were:



All cost of living issues by ward

Click icons above to see the selected issue by ward, click wards to see issues or click the name the top 5 table to filter the report. Click the same item again to reset the view.



Click the home icon on the map to recentre the view
As clients can be helped on more than one issue, manually summing numbers will be greater than the unique counts shown on the map. Click the home icon on the map to recentre the view

Top issues - latest 3 months to previous 3 months

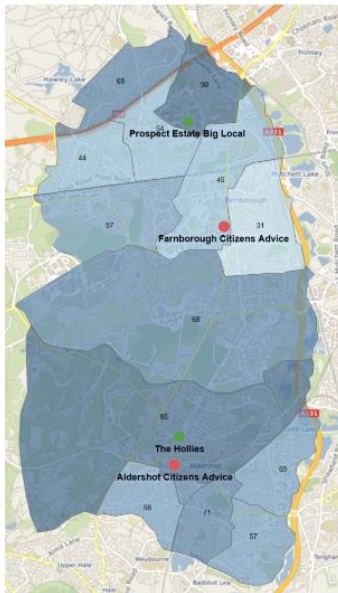
Top 5	Cost of Living Issues	Latest 3 Months	Previous 3 Months	Change	% Change
1	Energy	205	113	92	81%
2	Personal independence payment	128	138	-10	-7%
3	Charitable support & Food Banks	63	72	-9	-13%
4	Council tax arrears	26	17	9	53%
5	Financial capability	26	19	7	37%
Total of all Clients with a COL issue		494	388	106	27%

The total is for all clients with any cost of living issue, not just the Top 5

So what?" - how can we best use the data we have?

One example is Local Councillors (or others) using our data to target activity in your wards – eg higher level of need/ LSOA areas – see [Citizens Advice In Your Ward](#)

Click on the links below to see the work Citizens Advice has been doing in your ward during Q2 of 2022-23:



Aldershot Park
Cherrywood
Cove & Southwood
Empress
Fernhill
Knellwood
Manor Park
North Town
Rowhill
St John's
St Mark's
Wellington
West Heath

Ward Dashboard

St. John's

citizens advice

In this Ward we helped

Clients	44
Issues all	192

Top Issues

Debt	63
Benefits Universal Credit	32
Benefits & tax credits	24
Housing	16
Utilities & communications	15

Top 5 benefit issues

01 Initial claim	17
21 Personal independence payment	6
23 Council tax reduction	5
03 Housing element	4
03 Pension Credit	3
04 Limited capability for work elements	3
28 General Benefit Entitlement	3

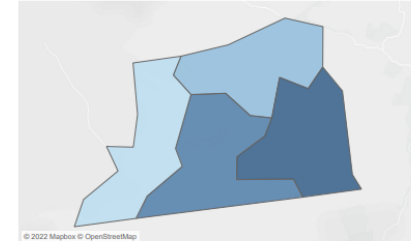
Top 5 debt issues

09 Council tax arrears	15
04 Fuel debts	8
13 Credit, store & charge card debts	7
16 Water supply & sewerage debts	4
07 Rent arrears - housing associations	3
15 Catalogue & mail order debts	3
30 Mobile phone debt	3
32 Debts to friends and family	3
60 Debt Assessment	3

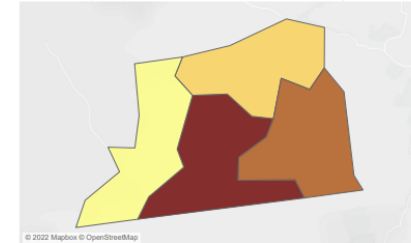
Homelessness

03 Threatened homelessness	2
02 Actual homelessness	1

Clients seen



Index of multiple deprivation

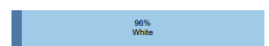


The darker colours on the IMD map show higher levels of deprivation

Gender



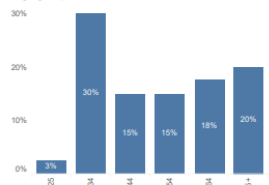
Ethnicity



Disabled or Long term health



Age group



Citizens Advice Rushmoor - Choices

Our Challenges

- Increasing demand - and need for service
- Reducing grant
- Fewer volunteers
- Staff recruitment

Our Choices

- **Volume** - allocating resource to phone and email services to respond to more people
- **Reach** - developing outreach services / engaging with partners: “hard to reach” communities
- **Specialism** – providing in depth casework for vulnerable people, who are unable to act on the advice they are given
- **Other ideas?**



Autumn Budget 22 – Welfare support and Benefits

Welfare Support

- Vulnerable households on means tested benefits will get an extra £900 cost of living payment in 23/24
- Household Support Fund to continue in 23/24 – delivering support to households to help with cost essentials
- State Pension uprated by inflation
- Social Housing rent increase restriction to 7% maximum in 23/24
- Increasing support for households using alternative fuel to £200

Benefits

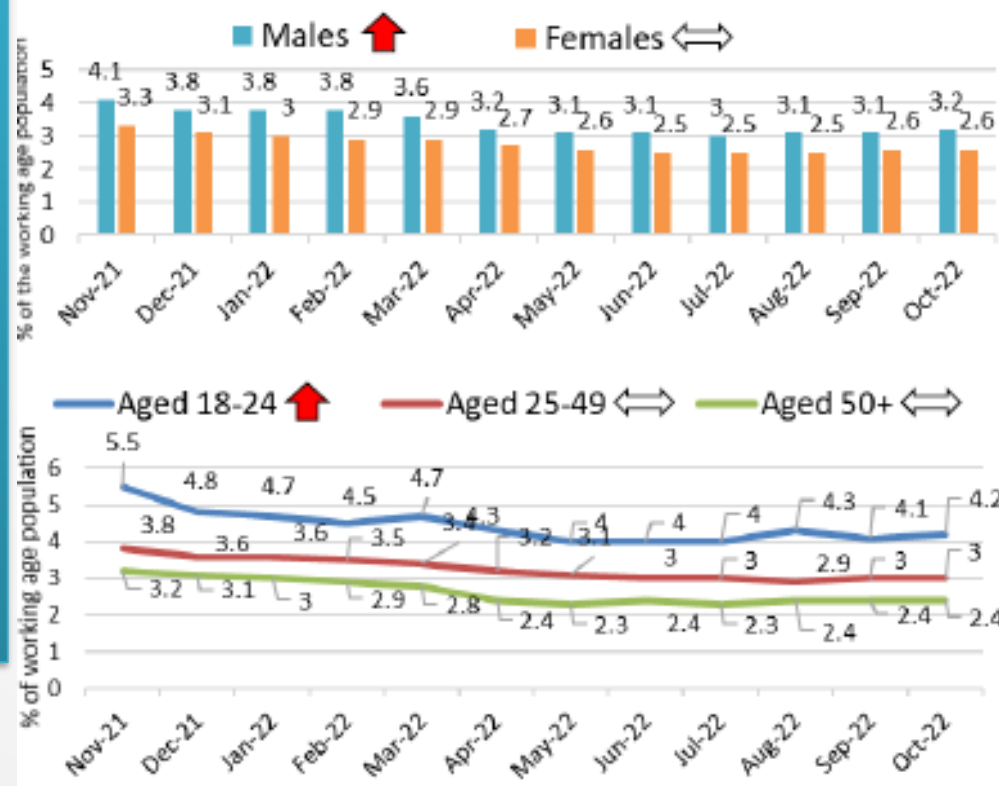
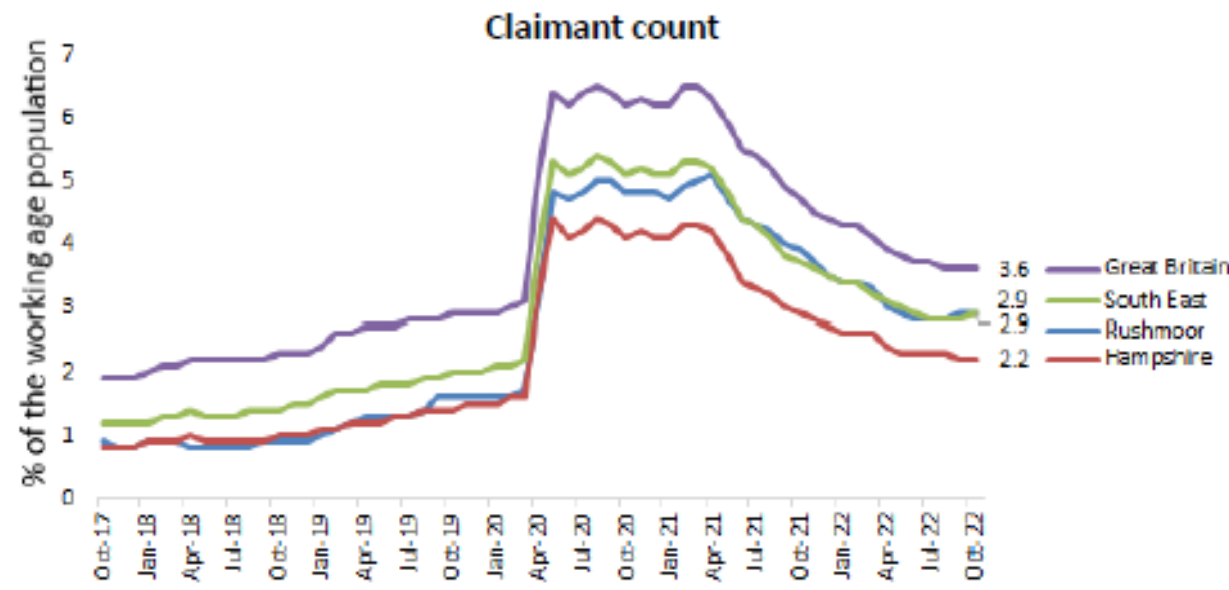
- Benefits will be increased by 10.1% in April 23 (CPI)
- The merger date for Housing Benefit to Pension Credit has been moved back to 2028/29
- Universal Credit tightens rules around recipients in and out of work
- Additional investment in tackling Fraud and Error
- Delay move from Employment Support Allowance to Universal Credit to 2028

Monthly Claimant Count Data

October 2022

Unemployment

The Claimant count is the number of people claiming benefit principally for the reason of being unemployed. In October 1,750 Rushmoor residents were claiming (up slightly from September's revised figure of 1,745) which accounts for 2.9% of the working age population, this lower percentage than Great Britain (3.6%), the same percentage as the South East (2.9%) but a higher percentage than Hampshire (2.2%).



	Claimant count	Claimants as a proportion of residents aged 16-64	Change in numbers from last month (September's revised numbers)
October 2022			
Cherrywood	220	4.1	Up
Aldershot Park	180	3.8	Same
Wellington	200	3.7	Up
North Town	150	3.3	Up
Rowhill	145	3.3	Down
Manor Park	170	3.0	Down
West Heath	120	2.8	Same
Fernhill	110	2.7	Same
Empress	95	2.5	Up
St Mark's	120	2.3	Up
Cove and Southwood	100	2.2	Down
St John's	75	1.7	Same
Knellwood	70	1.5	Down
Total	1,750	2.9	Up

Source: <https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/reports/lmp/la/1946157308/report.aspx?#wab>

Council Tax collection rates

Collection rate for Council Tax – current position and comparison:

October 19 95.86%

October 20 93.59%

October 21 94.19%

October 22 94.45%*

* Affected by the Energy Rebate credits of £299,025

Below pre-covid levels but up slightly on this time last year

	19/20	20/21	21/22
Overall Collection Rate achieved by end of year	97.8%	96.8%	97.8%

CTS caseload data

Date	Working Age	Pensioner	Total
March 19	2552	2085	4637
March 20	2493	2063	4556
March 21	2972	2003	4975
March 22	2905	1948	4853
October 22	2821	1957	4778

Latest Council Tax Support payments by type – cash values

	Oct 20	Oct 21	Oct 22	
Pensioner	£2,138,248	£2,187,654	£2,217,125	Pension age
Working Age - Other	£930,973	£1,150,104	£1,019,927	All out of work benefits or occupational pensions but not pension age
Working Age - Vulnerable	£1,211,030	£1,337,935	£1,445,998	Disability Premiums in play ESA Income Related
Working Age - Employed	£140,361	£213,861	£153,438	Working more than 16 hours
Working Age - Vulnerable Household	£264,834	£303,137	£278,889	Where a child under 5 in the household
CTS Total	£4,685,448	£5,192,691	£5,115,379	Drop of £77k from Oct 21

Council Tax Support Claims (Working Age only) – Council Tax account balances October 22

Working age	Credit or zero balance	Owe less than £200	Owe between £200 and £500	Owe more than £3000
2804 (59% of total CTS caseload of 4751)	509 (18%) *In July 22 this was 6%	1726 (62%)	369 (13%)	200 (7%)
		1385 owe less than £100 (80%)	203 (55%) owe less than £300	No one owes more than £3000
		341 owe less than £200 (20%)	86 (23%) owe between £300 and £500	4 owe between £2k and £3k (1%)
			80 (22%) owe between £400 and £500	29 owe between £1k and £2k (15%)
CTS recovery rate Working Age				167 owe between £500 and £1k – 84%
18/19 84% 19/20 83% 20/21 85%				
21/22 73% 22/23 Oct 22 78%*	* Improved by £150 Energy Rebate where credited to CT account	Calculated by taking into account what is owed to date for current year to end Oct 22		

Benefit caseload

**Reduction in Housing Benefit cases due to transfer to Universal Credit
increase in cases for Council Tax support only**

	Total Caseload	Type of Benefit	Caseload
Oct 20	6173	Housing Benefit Only	1420
		Housing Benefit & Council Tax Support	3101
		Council Tax Support	1652
Oct 21	6203	Housing Benefit Only	1200
		Housing Benefit & Council Tax Support	2868
		Council Tax Support	2135
Oct 22	5763	Housing Benefit only	1014
		Housing Benefit and Council Tax Support	2657
		Council Tax only	2092

Discretionary Housing Payments 22/23 so far

Welfare Reform	Number	£
Not affected by reforms – Financial Hardship	112	£46,159.14
Social Sector Size Criteria ('bedroom tax')	67	£13,022.00
Benefit Cap –	12	£6,232.67
LHA Reform – rent shortfalls	58	£24,789.68

- We have awarded to £90,203 to 249 recipients from the allocated funds of £160,572
- We have also spent £42k from the Housing Support Fund for Housing Crisis cases, given to us by HCC

Exceptional Hardship Payments 22/23

- Budget is £22K. £12k was base budget and a further £10k was added from the Council Tax Hardship fund as recommended by the Group to Cabinet last year
- We have spent £16,505 to date on 60 applications, leaving £5,495 in the budget. Expecting higher level of applications as we get into the Christmas period and new year
- Average award is £280
- Main reasons for granting an award are:
 - Health issues
 - Financial hardship
 - Serious debt issues
 - Cost of Living impact
- Refusals to date - four

Overall view of the data

National changes

- Cost of Living and Household Support due to impacts of increased energy; food and other living costs
- No core changes to Housing Benefit but uplifted with inflation
- Universal Credit families lost the additional £20 they received as a result of the pandemic
- Ending or rolling out of the Covid arrangements
- More household support funding

Local issues

- CTS recipients – rates of payments down
- General collection rates remain at around Covid levels
- Likely to continue to be an increased draw on Exceptional Hardship and Discretionary Housing Payment budgets

Council Tax Support review of existing scheme

- Focus this year has been on government funding initiatives to support cost of living
- Other LA's report that they are looking at increasing support not taking it away. Some are looking at giving the most vulnerable 100% support. Some of these LAs do have higher minimum contributions than us – for example, IOW 35%
- A number of Hampshire authorities retained the old CTB feature of 100% support for lowest income groups
- Our scheme figures show that the majority of people are able to pay some or all of their council tax after CTS. We do have an Exceptional Hardship Fund to help them and can use the regulations to write-off small debts that are uncollectable.
- Overall evidence continues to show a balanced scheme – however, considerable financial pressure and uncertainty this year

Bringing it all together

- Members have been very keen to assess the cost of living impact for this year
- Government has provided a lot of direct support to assist energy bills and has uplifted main welfare in line with inflationary pressure
- Comprehensive overview provided previously – this is now being widely distributed and shared by the Council and other partners [Cost of living help - Rushmoor Borough Council](#)
- Sense of the group's feedback so far is that this may not be the year for significant change to the Council's own CTS system
- Members haven't asked us to model any new CTS schemes this year
- Members have indicated a desire to ensure that protection is offered to the more vulnerable customers
- The Exceptional Hardship fund may not be adequate this year
- Likely that CT for all preceptors will increase at a greater rate than last year
- CTS customers will receive some protection if current minimum contribution levels are maintained and allowances in the calculation are raised in line with Government levels
- Potential to leave CTS Scheme the same but do the uprating and harmonisation and a fundamental review for 24/25

Next Steps

- Report to Cabinet setting out
 - Work of the group this year
 - Current performance of the CTS Scheme and collection rates of Council Tax
 - Partnership work undertaken around cost of living
 - Broader information taken into account from CA and others
 - Recommend that allowances within the Rushmoor CTS Scheme are lifted in line with Government figures announced in the 17th November fiscal statement
 - Recommend that the Exceptional Hardship Fund be enhanced by a further £20k for the current year and for next year by transferring monies from the CT Hardship reserves to ensure protection for the vulnerable and target / prevent CT arrears
 - Recommend that the Council continue to work with partners in the locality to ensure sustainable solutions to assist cost of living measures
 - Recommend that the Group further explore options for a more fundamental examination of the CTS Scheme in the next financial year
- Next meeting proposed - February 2023

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CABINET

17TH JANUARY 2023

**COUNCILLOR SUE CARTER
DEMOCRACY, STRATEGY & PARTNERSHIPS
PORTFOLIO HOLDER
REPORT NO ACE2301**

KEY DECISION: NO

SUPPORTING COMMUNITIES REFRESH

SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

This report proposes a refresh of the Supporting Communities Strategy (SCS) & Action Plan approved by the Council in January 2021. The plan is a collaborative approach to addressing the challenges facing local communities and is focused around four priority areas:

- Economic Hardship
- Young People – (Resilience and Aspirations)
- Physical and Mental Health
- Connecting Communities

The purpose of the refresh is to review progress and achievements and ensure the plan and its priorities are relevant.

The Supporting Communities Working group has agreed that the four priorities remain the most prevalent but recognise the need to include the rising cost of living as a key area to address. Furthermore, there will be an increased emphasis on health and wellbeing in recognition of the wider impact this has on supporting communities to be resilient and strong.

The Cabinet is recommended to:

Approve The Supporting Communities Strategy and Action Plan refresh for 2023

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1. This Report outlines the Council's proposals for the Supporting Communities Strategy and Action plan refresh – a strategy for tackling inequality and deprivation in the Borough.
- 1.2. The purpose of the refresh is to ensure that the plan is adaptable, and the priorities remain relevant, reflecting any changes in data or local context. The plan reflects the need to be agile and responsive to community needs

such as we have seen with the vaccination programme and work to support asylum seekers.

- 1.3. There is a clear desire from the Supporting Communities working group to continue to harness the energy created in the past two years, to respond to changing demand and challenges in the future.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1. The Strategy and Action Plan was approved in January 2021. It is the Council's overarching strategic document to tackle inequalities and deprivation in the borough.
- 2.2. The Plan identified four priority areas: Economic Hardship, Young people (resilience and aspirations), Physical and Mental Health and Connecting Communities.
- 2.3. A range of opportunities and projects have been developed by the Council and partners in support of the four priorities. These projects range in size and many are delivered by partners. Further details on the projects and achievements so far can be viewed in the appendix.
- 2.4. The community and voluntary sector play a vital role in supporting or delivering some of the projects identified. The sector has demonstrated, through the Covid-19 pandemic especially, the ability to respond flexibly to provide longer term support to people in need.
- 2.5. The Council has good relationships with the sector and together we have delivered, or facilitated, some key projects from the Supporting Communities Plan. Discussions are in place to strengthen continued collaborative working through new service level agreements but this is sensitive given the review of grants taking place.
- 2.6. The Covid-19 pandemic, while having a significant impact on individuals and the community and voluntary sector, also highlighted the strengths that exist within communities, and the value of enabling people to quickly come together to respond to local need. A strong, resilient, and resourceful community and voluntary sector is critical to ensuring our communities are well placed to respond to any challenges ahead.
- 2.7. The pandemic also highlighted the need to continue close collaboration with the health sector, who increasingly recognise the role the Council and our communities play to improve health and well-being and reduce health inequalities.
- 2.8. Until recently, Frimley Integrated Care System has been working to bring NHS, social care, local authority and other sectors together to work more closely with each other for the benefit of the communities they serve. For Rushmoor, this has meant working as part of North East Hampshire & Farnham CCG.

- 2.9. Since the approval of the SCS in 2021, the Health and Care Act has been passed. The Act made Integrated Care Systems statutory organisations, further empowering them to better join up health, to improve population health and reduce inequalities. This has led to the creation of the Integrated Care Board (ICB) who has inherited all of the statutory duties and functions previously discharged by NHS Frimley CCG, and the Integrated Care Partnership (ICP). The ICB will have a critical role to facilitate joint action to improve health and care outcomes and influence the wider determinants of health.
- 2.10. The Frimley System will continue to work across the five geographies, and Rushmoor remains part of North East Hampshire & Farnham Place. Closer working with health partners at place level should provide an improvement for local people in accessing and benefiting from health and well being.

3. DETAILS OF THE PROPOSAL

General

- 3.1. As a refresh, the plan is largely unchanged and the four priority areas remain. However, based on data and feedback from the Supporting Communities Working group, there are two main amendments:
- 3.2. (1) Recognition of the cost-of-living crisis - in particular the rising cost of inflation and utility bills. The cost of living continues to impact many residents and presents additional financial, health and wellbeing challenges.
- 3.3. The Council and partners are already providing ongoing help for households, but the crisis may increasingly affect more people and there may be a disproportionate impact on equalities groups and those already disadvantaged.
- 3.4. On 28th April 2022, Council agreed an overarching motion to consider the impact of the current cost of living pressure on local residents. Furthermore, Council recommended that the matter be referred for consideration via the Overview and Scrutiny Committee to its existing Council Tax Support Working Group. The Group has recently met to plan its' work with a view to making recommendations to Cabinet both in respect of Rushmoor's own Council Tax Support Scheme and broader options. The Group have considered a wide range of data and evidence from both the Council and local partners and recommend that the Council continue to work with partners to co-ordinate and promote activity, and available support, and ensure sustainable solutions to assist cost of living measures. Any work undertaken will link to the Supporting Communities Strategy where appropriate.
- 3.5. (2) Greater emphasis to develop projects to support Physical and Mental Health. This is a pre-existing priority but its potential to impact and influence across all the priority areas and wider preventative health in general is

widely recognised. Given the current economic climate, recovery from the Pandemic, and local data on high levels of obesity and inactivity it is imperative that there is an increased emphasis on physical and mental health in the borough.

- 3.6. Changes to NHS Frimley and the introduction of the Frimley Integrated Care Board recognises the role Rushmoor and partners can have in supporting health and wellbeing at place level. The creation of the North East Hampshire & Farnham 'place working groups' has identified three priorities
 - The prevention, detection and management of high blood pressure
 - Whole system approach to obesity
 - Mental health
- 3.7. Physical activity plays a significant role in supporting all three priorities areas and a specific working group to complement place-based system action is being developed and will be chaired by the Council.
- 3.8. The SCS complements the health approach and is already supporting the work around hypertensions and mental health. Furthermore, the SCS aligns with the priorities identified in the UK Shared Prosperity Fund Investment Plan – to address health in areas of deprivation, facilitate physical activity and access to green space.
- 3.9. The two amendments outlined above should not detract from the importance of the existing priorities of the plan. All the priorities are cross cutting and young people are at the heart of them all. It should be noted that there is significant work taking place to sustain longer term engagement with young people to give them a greater voice on local issues and action.
- 3.10. The Supporting Communities Deprivation Monies, allocated by the Council, will support some of the projects identified in the action plan. It is expected that external funding will also be secured. Furthermore, Councillors have been encouraged to consider the priorities of the SCS when supporting local ward grants for some of the smaller projects.

Consultation

- 3.11. The refresh has been prepared following regular meetings with the Supporting Communities Working group and wider partners. This includes reviews of evidence and updates on issues and concerns from Partners. Individual update meetings have also taken place during the summer months of 2022 to review achievements and discuss new and upcoming projects.

4. IMPLICATIONS

Risks

- 4.1. Projects identified have been costed and/or are subject to project and performance management arrangements. The key activities are also subject to a range of future monitoring. There are no risks identified.

Legal Implications

- 4.2. No legal implications

Financial and Resource Implications

- 4.3. The Community & Partnerships Team lead the coordination and delivery of the Supporting Communities Strategy and action plan. The team is also responsible for managing the Service Level Agreements with key local partners which may include commissioned work to deliver projects relating to the Supporting Communities Plan.

Equalities Impact Implications

- 4.4. The Supporting Communities Plan focuses on supporting more vulnerable and disadvantaged members of the community. As individual projects, activities will be subject to their own equality impact assessment and measures where appropriate.

5. CONCLUSIONS

- 5.1. The refreshed plan reflects the ambitions set out in the Supporting Communities Strategy & Action Plan. It identifies key projects and action to be delivered over the next 12- 18 months.
- 5.2. The Plan has the full support of the wider Supporting Communities Working group.

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS:

Key Projects & Achievements. Appendix One

CONTACT DETAILS:

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APPENDIX 1

Supporting Communities Action Plan – Summary of Projects and Achievements 2021/22

Physical and Mental Health	
Project	Achievement
Talk Mental Walk and talk mental health group for men	Support to establish and expand a resident-led project delivering mental health support to men.
Delivery of local Health Checks	Council and partners working with PCNs to establish initiatives to provide health checks for local residents, particularly with those at risk or showing the symptoms of hypertension. PEBL wellbeing day – 150 health checks completed with 18 health checks of which were Prospect Estate residents Garrison health fairs – RBC supported alongside health partners Know Your Numbers Week – Health checks by partners across Aldershot venues.
Be Healthy Be You Weight & Activity Programme	6-month programme supporting people, some who have health conditions, to manage their weight, become more confident in themselves and be more motivated to participate in activity. Group and one-to-one support offered.
ORCA Befriending	Befriending Co-ordinator and volunteers recruited at RVS, incorporating buddy support.

Healthy Walks	Practitioner wellness walks for 3 months. The free weekly walks for local people aimed to increase physical activity, focus on well-being and reduce social isolation. The group became friends and continue to be in touch/walk since the official walks ended.
Funded by HCC Get Going Again Grant	A comprehensive list of local walks has been collated and shared with local PCN's/social prescribers for wider use. Including Aldershot and Farnborough Heritage Trails.
Rushmoor Accessibility Action Group	Group created to bring together people with varied abilities and organisations supporting those with differing abilities, to support access to services, identifying and addressing issues locally. Future meetings to look at transport accessibility and polling stations.
Ward grants supporting physical and mental health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community gardens/planters • Crafty Culture and the Mandala Project at the West End Centre • Men's Shed in Farnborough • Friends of Queen Elizabeth Park conservation work • Resources hub to help autistic young people • Learn to ride sessions in two schools and a wellbeing ride course for adults • Aldershot Heritage trails • Training and supervision for project addressing addictions of army veterans • Sports equipment • Community defibrillator
Economic Hardship	
Project	Achievement
The Community Grub Hub	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Achieved full independence in October 2022. Reaches one year since opening in December. • Current membership stands at 877, made up of roughly 53% households without children and 47% with. Average number of visits per week is 124. • Since opening 58 tonnes of food, household and personal hygiene items have been redistributed. • Community Wardrobe remains popular with approx. 35% of visitors accessing it each week.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Funding from the Connect4Communities Community Grant has helped purchase and distribute slow cookers to 107 residents concerned about fuel and food costs. Further funding will support the provision of warmth items heading into winter. • Partnership with CA has developed further with the start of a CA Advisor on-site fortnightly, funded by an Aviva crowdfunding campaign. Partnership working between the CGH and CA continues to ensure fuel support grants are widely distributed. • Further partnerships developing/on-going – Aldershot Social Prescribers, Fleet & Aldershot Lions (IT support) and Energise Me/Public Health colleagues.
RBC Virtual Job Club	<p>Virtual Job club was established to offer support during lockdown and supported 61 residents with 80% moving into known work or training courses.</p> <p>In September 2021 it was agreed to end the service, with physical job clubs now reopened and offering a hybrid service it was felt it no longer represented value money.</p>
Ward grants supporting economic hardship	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community larder • Christmas hampers for families with children and perishables for Vine Dining Covid meals
Connecting Communities	
Project	Achievement
Keep Well & Stay Connected	Digital Inclusion Project for older vulnerable people.
Delivered by RVS and funded NHS/Captain Tom money	32 people digitally connected through the programme – accessing local groups and information via their TV sets. Project helped to connect individuals socially, improve physical and mental health and provided bespoke health related support.
Integration	Working with agencies to support integration and improving aspirations of minority groups, including asylum seekers. Regular liaison and enabling support with local hotel, contractor and local partners.
Ukraine support	

	<p>Support for Ukraine - Partnership event with HCC's Family Support Service delivered in December 2022 to inform support in place in 2023.</p> <p>Event to acknowledge hosts' contributions delivered in December 2022</p> <p>Information on RVS website for guests, hosts and community supporters.</p>
Men's Shed	Men's shed established in Farnborough
Supported through ward grants	
Nepali Community Champions	Recruit, train and support Nepali champions to identify those experiencing hardship, provide interventions. This project aligned closely with the Reaching People Together Hampshire project.
Ward grants supporting connecting communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Memorial benches/trees and seating around the borough • Play equipment for toddler group • Community noticeboard • Community gardens/planters • Men's Shed in Farnborough • Facilities improvements for sports clubs used by other users of the clubs
Repair café	Officially opened in December 2022 – West End Centre. Encouraging people to bring in broken items for repair and not to throw away.
Young People – Aspirations	
Project	Achievement
Climate Change Schools Project	Engaged 70 young people in a schools climate change project involving every school in the borough including Private schools.

North Hampshire Youth Hub	<p>Working with and providing support for young people to improve their employability skills via bespoke Employability resource website.</p> <p>The hub was only able to open once a fortnight due to funding. The young people that engaged found the service helpful, but many were exhibiting mental health and confidence issues that needed addressing before employment could be considered. Surrey Boards mental health team and Richmond fellowship attend to deal with the complex issues</p> <p>Homepage North Hants Employment Skills Zone (esznorthhants.org.uk)</p>
Supporting Families Programme	<p>Coordination of joined-up support by children and family professionals for vulnerable families.</p> <p>Hart & Rushmoor is the best performing Hampshire district for significant and sustainable progress by families nominated to the programme (evidenced in 65% of families, next best was 54%).</p>
Hart & Rushmoor Local Children's Partnership	<p>Parent support & Back 2 Basics programme roll out / CYPP 2022-25 / Community pantries / Holiday Activities and food programme.</p> <p>30K of HCC grant support (+30K pending) for partnership plan activities</p>
Kickstart RBC/CA	<p>Supported 20 young people into employment via the Kickstart programme</p> <p>RBC committed to two rounds of kickstart with placements in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1 x Economy 4 x Maintenance 1 x Community 1 x Licencing <p>Out of the 7 – 1 staying in the Maintenance team till the new year, and 4 moved straight into employment.</p>
Shine project Delivered by the Vine and funded by National Lottery	<p>Delivered a range of targeted projects supporting young people: including Barista Training, cooking courses, media workshops and arts and social projects</p>

My Space Delivered by the Vine, funded by RBC	Digital support project for Young People. The Project helped young people to identify skills, write CVs, using Universal Job Match, apply for jobs online and practise interview skills. Free access to computer and internet access in a dedicated site IT area and a social space to support young people generally.
Friday Night Youth Club	Providing a safe and welcoming place for young people with access to youth workers who support, engage and supervise weekly (term time only). Work done around bullying as this has been highlighted as an issue at school by many of the young people. Average of 15-20 young people attending each week. Christmas present provided to all young people by BMW.
Rushmoor Youth Influence	Forum created to engage with young people. First forum took place on 16 th November. 19 young people attended with the theme of mental health. Presentation and support provided by Fortify and Ahmadiyya Muslim Association. Next session planned for Feb
Schools	60 students from Alderwood visited Gulfstream for an aspirational visit Support provided to Cove and Fernhill careers days 5,629 students across Hampshire attended Pioneers of Tomorrow
Ward grants supporting young people	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facilities improvements at Scouts/Pre-school/sensory room • Equipment/banners for schools and sports clubs • Learn to ride sessions in two schools • Resources hub to help autistic young people

Supporting Communities Action Plan – Summary of Projects to be delivered/continued (by Council and/or Partners) in 2023

Physical and Mental Health	
Talk Mental	Continue to support delivery and development of Talk Mental. Identify local premises for drop-in sessions and provide connections to mental health partners to support targeted workshops for attendees.
Aldershot Health inequalities project	(Primary Care Trust) led project focused on local survey about health needs and wants in Aldershot and Heart of Aldershot engagement and signposting pilot based on measurement and monitoring of hypertension
Whole system approach to obesity	Continue working with public health to support the reduction of obesity levels in Rushmoor – stakeholder workshops been held for interested partners.
Increasing Physical Activity Priority group with NHS	Develop Physical Activity group, identify objectives and outcomes for the group. To include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increasing physical activity in schools • Increase use of green space • Empower communities by encouraging them to take an active approach in their health and wellbeing • Healthy Walks programmes
Increasing Physical Activity	Seek to establish a sports kit 'bank' to support families in reducing costs of clothing, footwear and sports equipment.
Cycling & Walking	Increase awareness of safe cycling routes for residents to ride their bikes for pleasure and walking routes including heritage trails. Support Balance, Glide and Ride with funding/engagement – Working with RVS and Public Health to seek funding for a walks co-ordinator post

Green spaces	Improvement to green spaces – (SPF projects)
Ward grants supporting physical & mental health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MCP 'Stitch it, don't ditch it' classes • Memorial bench • Family therapy • Social outing for older people's group • Special education needs training • TBC Cosy Hub • Military Christmas Fair • Early Years outdoor provision improvements
Economic Hardship	
The Grub Hub	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Apply to the winter C4C grant to fund additional support to visitors over the winter. • Develop the project board more formally to increase skill and number. • Continue to develop connections to partners who can add value to CGH visitors. • Continue to deliver food support and community wardrobe • Maintain and secure delivery of the CGH longer-term, with particular focus on new venue and potential project development this might enable.
Connect for Communities	To provide support to most vulnerable families with food, energy and water bills, food vouchers and holiday playschemes.
Cost of Living Crisis (CA)	Research project on the cost of living crisis - understanding the impact on local residents (to be concluded by Feb 2023).
Cost Of Living – Winter Campaign	<p>Get Ready for Winter Campaign/Support - Work with partners to be as prepared for increasing winter pressures as possible and provide information to people.</p> <p>Focus on signposting residents to the range of existing resources around welfare, housing, finances and wellbeing including:</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> identifying and promoting a network of welcoming spaces/venues where people can access warmth but also get a social connection and interaction. Use social media/arena to promote support and advice available Projects to align with the work/findings of the Council Tax Support group.
Ward grants supporting economic hardship	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> TVC Cosy Hub Family therapy
Connecting Communities	
Rushmoor Community website	Creation of a community website to access all community/partner events and activities for use by professionals and community.
Rushmoor Repair Café Funded by the Armed Forces Covenant Fund Trust.	Repair café opened 17th December 2022 at the West End Centre. This is a volunteer led project with CIO status. First session proved very popular. 2023 will see the continued development of the cafe RBC, RVS, Aldershot Town Football Club and Stoll Housing all supporting the project.
Integration	Continued involvement in regular liaison meetings with local hotel, contractor and partners to ensure appropriate support is proved to asylum seekers.
Ukraine support	Continued involvement with HCC's Family Support Service to support Ukrainians and their host families.
Gardening Clubs	Develop local gardening clubs to encourage social interaction and physical activity
PEBL wellbeing day	Develop PEBL wellbeing day - linking in with health partners/PCN's

Ward grants supporting connecting communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MCP 'Stitch it, don't ditch it' classes • Family therapy • 'Disability confident' job fair • TBC Cosy Hub • Military Christmas Fair
Young People	
Engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue engaging with Young People through the Youth Forum group (Led by Rushmoor Youth Influence & including young people from the climate change event) • Next meeting date is Feb - Young People setting their own agenda • Creation of the Youth Charter • Develop Youth Forum with youth partners
Ward grants supporting young people	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 'Disability confident' job fair • Social outing for older people's group • TBC Cosy Hub • Military Christmas Fair

CABINET

COUNCILLOR ADRIAN NEWELL
 PLANNING AND ECONOMY
 PORTFOLIO HOLDER
 REPORT NO. PG2304

17TH JANUARY 2023

KEY DECISION? NO

UPDATE ON PLANNING POLICY MATTERS

SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

The Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill (LURB) has now passed to the House of Lords and is likely to become law in the early part of 2023. The Council has an obligation to review its Local Plan by April 2024 and this needs to take account of the Council's declaration of a Climate Emergency and the development of the Hampshire Local Transport Plan (LTP4). However, given the significance of the LURB it is wise to wait until this act has become an act and guidance is available. So it is likely the review will not be completed until around September 2023.

During this transitional period the Civic Quarter Planning Application has been developed with the principles of sustainable development which is well located in centrally accessible locations, has high density, is mixed use and which aims through its master planning to make activity travel and public transport journeys the modes of choice not only for the development itself but also for existing land uses nearby and adopting the 15 minute neighbourhood concept. This is in accordance with the yet to be adopted LTP4. In order to facilitate support for the Civic Quarter in principle in October 2022 Hampshire County Council adopted a local policy for Farnborough and is seeking reassurance that Rushmoor Borough Council supports that policy and the principles of rebalancing land use planning towards decarbonisation and place making rather than the functional imperative of movement of cars.

The Council can provide this reassurance and help meet its shared commitment to addressing the Climate Emergency by expressing its policy support and reviewing its Car and Cycle Parking Standards SPD.

Recommendation(s)

1. Note the timescales for review of the Rushmoor Local Plan and commit to support the principles of LTP4 in the development of a future Local Plan
2. Support the principle of reallocating road space in order to enable development of the Farnborough Civic Quarter Masterplan and the policy adopted by Hampshire County Council
3. The Local Plan Strategic Housing Group undertakes a reviews of RBC's Car and Cycle Parking Standards SPD 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 are underway.

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1. The purpose of this report is to update the Cabinet on four areas of planning policy, to seek support for the policy adopted by Hampshire County Council to facilitate the Civic Quarter application and to recommend that the Car and Cycle Parking Standards Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) is reviewed taking into account the principles of the emerging Hampshire Local Transport Plan (LTP4), lessons from town centre regeneration and developments in mobility.

2. BACKGROUND

Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill (LURB)

- 2.1. There have been a number of updates on the LURB in the past months, most notably the letter issued by Michael Gove to MPs on 5th December 2022. The letter sets out the key changes to the planning system which are proposed to be introduced through the LURB and commits the Government to consultation on a number of these issues and on a revised National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).
- 2.2. Michael Gove's letter covered a number of areas of planning including housing need for local plans, design codes, the 'soundness' test, five year housing land supply, national development management policies, the Infrastructure Levy, and the duty to cooperate requirement. There will be some key changes for new local plans, the implication of which is set out below in the Local Plan section. There will also be some financial implications for the Council arising from the changes to planning fees, changes to council tax for empty properties and the Infrastructure Levy. The new planning fees and changes to council tax are likely to provide additional income for the Council but the extent of this is still unknown. At this stage it is unknown how the revenue to support infrastructure delivery under the Infrastructure Levy will differ from the current S106 system.
- 2.3. The LURB has completed its journey through the House of Commons and is now moving through the House of Lords. Provided that there are no further delays, the Bill is expected to reach royal ascension in the first half of 2023 and supplementary guidance and secondary legislation will then follow. In the meantime the Government launched a consultation on a revised NPPF on 22 December 2022 with a closing date for consultation responses of 2 March 2023.

Local Plan

- 2.4. The Rushmoor Local Plan was adopted in April 2019. There is a requirement to review Local Plans every five years and so the Local Plan must be reviewed by April 2024. This review will conclude whether a new Local Plan must be prepared for Rushmoor. Without prejudicing the outcome of such a review, it is likely that the review will conclude a new Local Plan will need to

be prepared for Rushmoor due to existing changes to the NPPF since the original 2012 version and the changes which will come forward as a result of the LURB and revised NPPF.

- 2.5. While the Rushmoor Local Plan is in relative terms up to date, it should be noted that quite apart from the impacts arising from the LURB there has been substantial change in the policy environment since its adoption. Perhaps most significant is the increased emphasis on Climate Change. This applies across a swathe of policy areas including through the legislative changes gradually being implemented from the Environment Act 2022. Transport planning has also undergone a seismic change and new Local Transport Plans are requiring transformational change which will have significant land use implications and need alignment of policy with Local Plans.
- 2.6. The Council has been waiting to understand the impacts of the changes to the planning system coming through the LURB before completing a review of the current Local Plan and beginning preparation of a new Local Plan. The impacts of and timescales for the new planning system are now clearer following the publication of the revised NPPF consultation. Even if work on the new Local Plan starts this year, it is unlikely that the new Local Plan would be adopted until 2026 due to the need to gather evidence and undertake consultation and examination in public. Therefore, it will still be a number of years before the changes to the policy environment will be reflected in Local Plan policies.

Local Transport Plan (LTP4)

- 2.7. Hampshire County Council (HCC) has a statutory requirement to have a Local Transport Plan (LTP) which sets out its vision for future transport and travel infrastructure. The existing Local Transport Plan (LTP3) was developed in 2011 and is no longer relevant to today's challenges and opportunities. Over the last two years HCC have been developing a new Local Transport Plan (LTP4) which sets out the transport vision for 2050. The draft LTP4 was consulted on between April and June of last year (2022). The County Council are awaiting publication of Government guidance on LTPs before formally adopting the plan but anticipate formal adoption being recommended in the Summer of 2023.
- 2.8. The two guiding principles of the LTP4 are to significantly reduce dependency on the private car and to provide a transport system that promotes high quality, prosperous places and puts people first. Compared with the LTP3, LTP4 proposes transformational change which shifts away from planning for vehicles towards planning for people and places. It also focuses on meeting national priorities to decarbonise the transport system, reducing reliance of private car travel, supporting sustainable economic development regeneration and promoting active lifestyles.
- 2.9. The principles set out in LTP4 support the Council's declaration of a Climate Emergency and commitment to address carbon reduction in both its own activities and across the Borough.

- 2.10. There is therefore a need to align transport planning (a HCC function) with land use planning (a Rushmoor function). The LTP4 will be a key evidence document for the preparation of a new Local Plan for Rushmoor which will reflect the principals of reducing dependency on the private car and providing a transport system that promotes high quality, prosperous places and puts people first. Of significance for the local plan is the underpinning evidence base which has identified that in order to achieve carbon neutrality and be compliant with the Climate Change Act 2008 not only do all private vehicles need to convert to be electric but there will also need to be a level of traffic reduction of circa 10% (from pre-covid traffic levels). In practice this means the LTP4 is likely to be supportive of sustainable development which is well located in centrally accessible locations, has high density, is mixed use and which aims through its master planning to make activity travel and public transport journeys the modes of choice not only for the development itself but also for existing land uses nearby.
- 2.11. As set out above, the preparation of a new Local Plan is on hold pending the publication of the LURB and its supporting guidance and we are awaiting the next stages of the LTP4 to establish its final form. The Council can therefore only at this stage commit itself to supporting the principles of LTP4 as far as the new Local Plan is concerned. However in the interim, it is proposed that the Council reviews its Car and Cycle Parking Standards SPD to see 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 are underway.
- 2.12. The Local plan will also need to have regard to new guidance released by the DfT <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/strategic-road-network-and-the-delivery-of-sustainable-development>. This also places a significant emphasis on integrating land use and transport planning and demonstrating compliance with carbon pathway reductions leading to carbon neutrality by 2050.

Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP)

- 2.13. The LCWIP for Rushmoor is being prepared by Hampshire County Council (HCC) and charity Sustrans in partnership with Rushmoor. The LCWIP is a strategic approach to identifying walking and cycling improvements required at a local level. It enables a long-term approach to developing walking and cycling networks and will increase the number of trips made on foot or by cycle.
- 2.14. The draft LCWIP was prepared through work with a variety of stakeholders and then consulted on between July and September 2022. Building on the feedback received during the consultation, there has been ongoing work to prioritise the improvements and develop a phased programme for future investment. The prioritisation exercise has identified the top 10 cycles route sections and core walking zone routes for improvement. The top 10 cycle route sections are made up of 6 sections in Farnborough, 1 section in North

Camp and 3 sections in Aldershot. The top 10 core walking zone routes are made up of 6 routes in Aldershot and 4 routes in Farnborough.

- 2.15. The final LCWIP will take account of the consultation feedback and incorporates the prioritisation of cycle and walking routes. It anticipated that the final LCWIP will be adopted in early 2023. It will then form the evidence for the spending of existing funds, bidding for additional funds to improve walking and cycling infrastructure and future requests for contributions from s106 where related to relevant developments in the Borough.

Rushmoor Climate Strategy 2020-2030

- 2.16. The Rushmoor Climate Change Strategy 2020-2030 sets out the borough council's vision for addressing the challenges and opportunities presented by climate change. The strategy is underpinned by four principles, including the ambition that "the built environment and infrastructure reflect sustainability whilst enabling prosperity".
- 2.17. The strategy notes the function that the borough council plays in leading, facilitating, enabling and delivering activities to tackle climate change as well as the importance of the strategy as a framework for aligning the council's activities on climate change.

3. DETAILS OF THE PROPOSAL

General

- 3.1. It is proposed that the Council reviews its Car and Cycle Parking Standards SPD in light of the priorities of LTP4 and the principles developed in developing the Town Centre regeneration in the Borough.
- 3.2. HCC are preparing the LTP4 which was consulted on in 2022. The Plan proposes transformation changes which shift away from planning for vehicles towards planning for people and places, in particular one of the guiding principles is to significantly reduce dependency on the private car. As detailed above, the preparation of the Local Plan is currently on hold and therefore a review of the SPD provides the opportunity to see how far the priorities of LTP4 can be implemented locally in advance of the new Local Plan.
- 3.3. The development of Union Yard and Civic Quarter Schemes have shown how the approach to mobility is developing and changing. In particular it has highlighted the potential for Car Clubs and the potential for shared use of parking space in sustainable locations. This means that for large town centre schemes a more nuanced approach than simple car parking ratios may be the more appropriate approach and that achieving effective land use and off street parking management will be essential to the regeneration of the Town Centres.
- 3.4. In particular in considering the implications of the Civic Quarter scheme Hampshire County Council on 3 October 2022 agreed a report on Transport

Proposals Supporting Economic Development in Farnborough. This report established local policy view in advance of LTP4 which supports the proposed changes to the transport network. This is without prejudice to the detailed development management consideration of specific proposals. It recognised that the intensification of Town Centre uses and greater mixture of land uses aligns well with the decarbonisation agenda.

- 3.5. The historic approach to both A roads which frame Farnborough Town Centre and which form part of the strategic road network, has been to operate and manage the roads with the dominant functional imperative being about facilitating the movement of vehicles. As a result, these roads are not attractive or comfortable to cross on foot or by cycle except at some of the higher quality subway crossing points. The Masterplan proposals are aiming to better connect the town centre with its immediate residential catchment area and to improve the attractiveness of sustainable access options. Of particular note are the junction changes proposed on both A roads. These effectively reallocate road space currently used by vehicles to create new public realm, better development plots or to support other modes of transport. In practice this means reducing capacity for vehicles and giving it over to active modes or regeneration schemes and as such it marks a significant shift in planning and transport policy.
- 3.6. The County Council agreed the following Policy Principle which rebalances transport priorities:

“The County Council supports the principle of reallocating road space in order to enable development of the Farnborough Civic Quarter Masterplan, subject to the conditions of support outlined in the main body of this report.”
- 3.7. In light of the significance of this policy shift the County Council is seeking reassurance that the policy base and practices of both authorities align and that the Borough is committed to discharging its functions such as land use planning and off-street parking operations and practices applying a similar rebalancing principle and approach.
- 3.8. In the development of the Civic Quarter schemes detailed modelling has taken place on the appropriate charging for residential permits. Therefore, in tandem with the development of the SPD and in accordance with work that will be required if the Civic Quarter Scheme is approved a review of the appropriate charging regime for the Town Centres and Farnborough in particular should be undertaken to align the Council's aspirations for regeneration and parking and ensure that the detailed modelling on which the scheme is based is not undermined. For awareness, the modelling is consistent with the emerging LTP4 as it is predicated upon a modal shift being achieved to active travel and public transport which allows the vehicle capacity of the key junctions to be reduced without detrimental impact on congestion levels.
- 3.9. A review of the SPD will also enable the LCWIP to be taken into account which seeks to increase the number of people walking and cycling in Rushmoor (and, conversely, reduce the number of people relying on a

private car for all journeys). An SPD cannot create new policy however officers are satisfied that there is sufficient policy basis to make the exercise worthwhile. It will not need to go through an examination process, so an update of the SPD can be done much quicker than a Local Plan.

- 3.10. The proposal will affect the whole Borough as it sets the car and cycle parking requirements for all new development.

Alternative Options

- 3.11. The Council could choose not to support the local policy adopted by Hampshire County Council with regards to Farnborough Town Centre. However in these circumstances there would not be a basis for the support of the proposals by the County Council.
- 3.12. The other alternative option is not to review the Car and Cycle Parking Standards SPD. This was rejected because it would not allow for any alignment between LTP4 and local planning policy in advance of the preparation of a new local plan and is intrinsic to supporting the policy change for Farnborough Town Centre.

Consultation

- 3.13. No consultation on this report has been undertaken. However, if it is decided that an update to the SPD is required, consultation will be undertaken including formal consultation in line with the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 (as amended).

4. IMPLICATIONS (of proposed course of action)

Risks

- 4.1. There are not considered to be any risks from supporting the policy change proposed by Hampshire County Council. However if the report were not agreed it would have implications for determining the Civic Quarter Planning Application.

Legal Implications

- 4.2. There are no legal implications of the review. If it is decided that an update to the SPD is required, officers will ensure that the legal requirements for preparation of an SPD under the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 (as amended) are met.

Financial and Resource Implications

- 4.3. There are no finance or resource implications as the review will be done within existing officer capacity. When the Local Plan review moves forward a separate report detailing what will be the significant implications of that work will be presented to Cabinet

Equalities Impact Implications

- 4.4. There are not considered to be any equalities impact implications of the review. However, if it is decided that an update to the SPD is required, officers will consider whether an equalities impact assessment is necessary.

Other

- 4.5. There are not considered to be any other implications.

5. CONCLUSIONS

- 5.1. The policy environment is undergoing a generational shift particularly due to climate change. Unfortunately the changes to governing frameworks have been slowed by political events and the time it takes to develop and consult on legislation. During this period it is important to reflect the Council's priorities as far as possible in reviewing its policy and practices. The Civic Quarter Planning Application has provided an opportunity to develop a major regeneration scheme taking account of the key principles of future policy.
- 5.2. Rushmoor Borough Council has declared a Climate Emergency and has supported the development of the Civic Quarter application applying the principles outlined in this report to reflect that ambition. Cabinet and members have been engaged in discussion on the principles underlying the application and have been supportive.
- 5.3. By setting a clear direction and undertaking work that is possible at the present time the Council can move forward with the agenda to which it is committed while awaiting legislation to enable the wider review of the Local Plan.

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS:

Transport Proposals Supporting Economic Development in Farnborough (HCC, October 2022)

[Transport Proposals Supporting Economic Development in Farnborough-2022-10-03-ELMTES Decision Day \(hants.gov.uk\)](#)

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