

Public Document Pack



RUSHMOOR BOROUGH COUNCIL

CABINET

*at the Council Offices, Farnborough on
Tuesday, 14th March, 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 7th February, 2023 (copy attached).

3. **BUSINESS RATES - RETAIL DISCOUNT AND HOSPITALITY AND LEISURE RELIEF SCHEME** – (Pages 7 - 22)

(Cllr Paul Taylor, Corporate Services Portfolio Holder)

To consider Report No. FIN2306 (copy attached), which sets out a local policy to award retail, hospitality and leisure relief from business rates.

4. **BUSINESS RATES - SUPPORTING SMALL BUSINESS RATES RELIEF SCHEME** – (Pages 23 - 34)

(Cllr Paul Taylor, Corporate Services Portfolio Holder)

To consider Report No. FIN2307 (copy attached), which sets out a local policy to award supporting small business rates relief from business rates.

5. **ENERGY BILLS SUPPORT SCHEME ALTERNATIVE FUNDING POLICY** – (Pages 35 - 98)

(Cllr Paul Taylor, Corporate Services Portfolio Holder)

To consider Report No. FIN2308 (copy attached), which sets out a policy to deliver the Energy Bill Support Scheme (EBSS) Alternative Funding.

6. **PROPERTY ASSET MANAGEMENT STRATEGY** – (Pages 99 - 126)

(Cllr Martin Tennant, Major Projects and Property Portfolio Holder)

To consider Report No. PG2310 (copy attached), which sets out a refresh of the Council's Property Asset Management Strategy.

7. **FARNBOROUGH LEISURE AND CULTURAL HUB – NEXT STEPS** – (Pages 127 - 210)

(Cllr Martin Tennant, Major Projects and Property Portfolio Holder)

To consider Report No. REG2303 (copy attached), which sets out the latest position in relation to the delivery of a Leisure and Cultural Hub in Farnborough.

8. **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 paragraph of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act, 1972 indicated against such items:

Item Nos.	Schedule 12A Para. No.	Category
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9 and 10	3	Information relating to financial or business affairs
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9. **UNION YARD, ALDERSHOT - IDENTIFICATION OF PREFERRED AFFORDABLE HOUSING PURCHASER** – (Pages 211 - 244)
(Cllr Martin Tennant, Major Projects and Property Portfolio Holder)

To consider Exempt Report No. REG2304 (copy attached), which sets out a proposal to dispose of a leasehold interest for the affordable housing units contained within the Union Yard scheme, subject to the finalisation of terms.

10. **DISPOSAL OF DEVEREUX HOUSE, NO. 69 ALBERT ROAD, FARNBOROUGH** – (Pages 245 - 318)
(Cllr Martin Tennant, Major Projects and Property Portfolio Holder)

To consider Exempt Report No. PG2308 (copy attached), which seeks authority to grant an option for a new long ground lease of Devereux House, No. 69 Albert Road, Farnborough to facilitate the redevelopment of the property.

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CABINET

Meeting held on Tuesday, 7th February, 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 **20th February, 2023**.

46. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST –**

Having regard to the Council's Code of Conduct for Councillors, Cllr P.G. Taylor declared a non-registrable interest in Item 6 (acquisition of land and property at The Meads and Kingsmead Shopping Centre, Farnborough) in relation to his position as the general manager of The Triangle, a Christian bookshop and café in Farnborough and also as the Council's Corporate Services Portfolio Holder. Cllr Taylor removed himself from the meeting for the duration of Item 6 and did not, therefore, take part in the discussions or decision relating to this item.

47. **MINUTES –**

The Minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet held on 17th January, 2023 were confirmed and signed by the Chairman.

48. **COUNCIL PLAN AND RISK REGISTER QUARTERLY UPDATE OCTOBER TO DECEMBER 2022/23 –**

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

The Cabinet received Report No. ACE2302, which set out progress in delivering the Council Business Plan projects during the third 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, an update on the Council's key strategies and plans that underpinned and supported the Council Plan and the Council's Corporate Risk Register. It was reported that, at the end of the third quarter, just over 45% of projects were showing an amber status. A number of those projects were showing as amber due to reporting delays of between one and three months and it was considered that these were still likely to be delivered in 2022/23.

The Cabinet NOTED the progress made towards delivering the Council Business Plan and the updates made to the risk register, as set out in Report No. ACE2302.

49. **BUSINESS RATES - DISCRETIONARY RATE RELIEF APPLICATIONS –**
(Cllr Paul Taylor, Corporate Services Portfolio Holder)

The Cabinet considered Report No. FIN2303, which set out details of applications for rate relief from Anaphylaxis UK (1st and 2nd Floors, No. 1 Alexandra Road, Farnborough), Karuna Action (No. 11 Wellington Street, Aldershot) and the British Gurkha Welfare Society (No. 119 Wren Way, Farnborough).

The Cabinet RESOLVED that

- (i) 20% discretionary relief be awarded to Anaphylaxis UK until 31st March, 2023;
- (ii) 20% discretionary relief be awarded to Karuna Action for the period from 5th June, 2020 to 31st March, 2023; and
- (iii) 100% discretionary relief be awarded to the British Gurkha Welfare Society for the period from 1st April, 2020 to 31st December, 2020, reducing to 50% discretionary relief from 1st January, 2021 to 31st March, 2023.

50. **REVIEW OF TAXI LICENSING POLICY –**
(Cllr Maurice Sheehan, Operational Services Portfolio Holder)

The Cabinet considered Report No. OS2303, which set out proposed changes to the Council's Taxi Licensing Policy.

Members were reminded that the current Taxi Licensing Policy had been in place since 2012. It was explained that there was a requirement on licensing authorities to review policies having regard to measures contained within guidance issued by the Department for Transport. A public consultation, including members of the taxi trade, had been carried out between 5th December, 2022 and 2nd January, 2023 and a total of nine responses had been received, with the comments received leading to some amendments during the preparation of the proposed policy.

The Cabinet expressed strong support for the Taxi Licensing Policy and endorsed the proposed way forward. Appreciation was expressed for the work carried out by the Council's licensing team.

The Cabinet RESOLVED that

- (i) the Taxi Licensing Policy, as set out in Report No. OS2303, be approved, to take effect from 1st April, 2023, with application requirements applying to any new application received or determined on or after that date and for any renewal due on or after that date; and
- (ii) a requirement for existing licence holders to comply with all new requirements by 31st March, 2024 or their renewal date, whichever is sooner, in accordance with the Taxi Licensing Policy, be approved.

51. **REGENERATION PROGRAMME - ACQUISITION OF LAND AND PROPERTY AT BLOCK NOS. 1-4 THE MEADS AND KINGSMEAD SHOPPING CENTRE, FARNBOROUGH –**

(Cllr Martin Tennant, Major Projects and Property Portfolio Holder)

The Cabinet considered Report No. REG2302, which set out the final business case to inform the decision whether to proceed with the acquisition of Block Nos. 1-4 The Meads and Kingsmead Shopping Centre, Farnborough in April, 2023.

Members were reminded that, in August, 2021, the Cabinet had resolved to undertake further negotiations with the current owners, St Modwen, to secure the best price and commercial offer for its land and property interests in Farnborough town centre and to undertake the required due diligence, legal assessment, feasibility study and business case and to prepare an initial town centre strategy. The Cabinet had further considered this matter in January, 2023, when it had been agreed that the business case should be brought forward to this meeting.

In discussing the business case, the Cabinet expressed strong support for the proposed approach for the Council's direct intervention in the regeneration of the Borough's town centres in order to bring forward projects in a timely manner. It was felt that the risks had been identified, along with adequate mitigation.

The Cabinet

(i) **RESOLVED** that:

- (a) the interim due diligence and key points from the business case, as set out in Report No. REG2302, be noted;
- (b) the business case for the acquisition of the land and property during the 2023/24 financial year, as set out in the Report, be approved, at the price, on the terms and subject to the conditions set out in Confidential Appendix A of the Report;
- (c) the Executive Director, in consultation with the Major Projects and Property Portfolio Holder, be authorised to negotiate and complete the acquisition of the land and property, on the terms set out in Confidential Appendix A, subject to the conclusion of all appropriate due diligence and with any minor adjustments in line with this decision; and

(ii) **RECOMMENDED TO THE COUNCIL** that approval be given for the inclusion of the acquisition in the Council's Capital Programme for 2023/24.

52. **REVENUE BUDGET, CAPITAL PROGRAMME AND COUNCIL TAX LEVEL –**

(Cllr Paul Taylor, Corporate Services Portfolio Holder)

The Cabinet considered Report No. FIN2304, which made recommendations on the budget, Council Tax requirement and proposals for budget savings for 2023/24.

The Cabinet was reminded that the budget framework had been approved at its meeting on 15th November, 2022. Members were advised that the Report had been prepared on the basis that there would be no change to the provisional local government finance settlement figure, which was due to be confirmed soon. The Medium Term Financial Strategy continued to provide a risk-based General Fund balance of £2 million being the minimum expected level for total working balances. The Cabinet was advised that, despite the uncertainties around levels of Government funding and the risks around inflation, increasing fuel costs and increasing staff costs, the Council had been able to prepare a balanced budget for 2023/24 and 2024/25, as demonstrated by the Medium Term Financial Strategy. It was confirmed that the budget would also provide a platform for the Council to address future challenges. It was noted, however, that there was a significant and increasing funding gap from 2025/26 onwards.

The Capital Programme of £44.6 million for the period 2023/24 to 2026/27 was set out in Appendix 3 of the Report. It was explained that the Capital Programme was focussed on delivering against the Council's key priority of town centre regeneration, with further schemes aimed at enhancing the delivery of core services through improvement and enhancement of assets. The Cabinet was informed that changes were needed to the Capital Programme figures provided in respect of the Council's play areas. The amended figures had been provided to the Cabinet in the form of an Addendum to the Report and would be reflected in the report that would be considered by the Council. The main areas where the Council would be facing increased levels of risk and uncertainty over the medium term were set out in Section 8 of the Report. In discussing the details of the Report, Members expressed their gratitude for the hard work of the finance team.

The Cabinet

- (i) **RECOMMENDED TO THE COUNCIL** that approval be given to:
 - (d) the Medium Term Financial Strategy, as set out in Appendix 1 of Report No. FIN2304;
 - (e) the Savings and Transformation items for inclusion in the budget, as set out in Appendix 2 of the Report, with the exception of the charge for the replacement of recycling bins (£7,400), the proposed saving in relation to Ward Grants being reduced by £13,000, with a revised arrangement for allocation to be finalised and the removal of the Special Responsibility Allowances payable to the Vice-Chairman positions of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and the Policy and Project Advisory Board;
 - (f) the Council Tax requirement of £7,448,100 for this Council;
 - (g) the Council Tax level for Rushmoor Borough Council's purposes of £225.98 for a Band D property in 2023/24;
 - (h) the Capital Programme, as set out in Appendix 3 of the Report and amended at the meeting in line with the published Addendum to the Report;

- (i) the Strategy for the Flexible Use of Capital Receipts, as set out in Appendix 4 of the Report;
 - (j) the balances and reserves position, including proposed reserve transfers for 2023/24, as set out in Section 5 of the Report; and
- (ii) **RESOLVED** that the Council's Section 151 Officer, in consultation with the Leader of the Council and the Corporate Services Portfolio Holder, be authorised to make any necessary changes to the General Fund Summary arising from the final confirmation of the Local Government Finance Settlement, the Business Rates Retention Scheme estimates and any other final amendments.

53. **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 item to avoid the disclosure of exempt information within the paragraph of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act, 1972 indicated against the item:

Minute No.	Schedule 12A Para. No.	Category
54	3	Information relating to financial or business affairs

**THE FOLLOWING ITEM WAS CONSIDERED
IN THE ABSENCE OF THE PUBLIC**

54. **APPLICATION FOR SECTION 49 REMISSION OF NON-DOMESTIC RATES –**
(Cllr Paul Taylor, Corporate Services Portfolio Holder)

The Cabinet considered Exempt Report No. FIN2302, which set out an application for the remission of non-domestic rates on the grounds of hardship.

Members assessed the application from SBBS Leisure Limited, trading as Jetts Gym, Nos. 40-50 Kingsmead, Farnborough, taking into account the evidence of financial hardship supplied and whether it was in the interests of local taxpayers to subsidise the business. The Cabinet took into account the nature and circumstances of the business and the availability of alternative facilities in the area. The Corporate Services Portfolio Holder and the Council's Local Taxation Manager had met with the proprietor at the business address to understand more about the business, the services offered, the future vision for the business and the impact the business had had on the local economy.

The Cabinet RESOLVED that 100% hardship relief be granted to SBBS Leisure Limited, trading as Jetts Gym, for the current outstanding balance for the period from 1st April, 2022 to 31st March, 2023.

The Meeting closed at 7.50 pm.

CLLR D.E. CLIFFORD, LEADER OF THE COUNCIL

CABINET

COUNCILLOR PAUL TAYLOR
CORPORATE SERVICES PORTFOLIO
HOLDER
REPORT NO. FIN2306

14th March 2023

KEY DECISION?
YES/NO

**BUSINESS RATES – RETAIL DISCOUNT & HOSPITALITY AND LEISURE
RELIEF SCHEME**

SUMMARY:

This report seeks approval to adopt a local policy to enable the council to award retail, hospitality, and leisure relief from business rates with effect from 1 April 2023 to local businesses, as announced in the Chancellor of the Exchequers 2022 autumn statement.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Cabinet are recommended to:

- 1) Establish a local Retail Hospitality and Leisure Business Rates Relief Scheme for reducing business rates liabilities as set out in this report.

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The government recognises that changing consumer behaviour presents a significant challenge for retailers in our town centres and is taking action to help the high street evolve.
- 1.2 Therefore, the Chancellor of the Exchequer announced a new form of Retail, Hospitality and Leisure Business Rates Relief Scheme (RHL) for the financial year commencing 1st April 2023.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 At the Autumn Statement on 17 November 2022 the chancellor announced the introduction of a new business rates relief scheme for businesses in the retail, hospitality, and leisure sector for the year 2023/24. This will help to support the businesses that make our high streets and town centres a success and help them to evolve and adapt to changing consumer demands, and the current cost of living crisis.

- 2.2 The 2023/24 RHL scheme will provide eligible, occupied, retail, hospitality, and leisure properties with a 75% relief, up to a cash cap limit of £110,000 per business.
- 2.3 The Government has provided guidance about the operation and delivery of the relief.
- 2.4 Full details of this guidance can be found at [Business Rates Relief: 2023/24 Retail, Hospitality and Leisure Scheme, local authority guidance - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/business-rates-relief-2023-24-retail-hospitality-and-leisure-scheme)

3. PROVISION OF RELIEF

- 3.1 As the new measures announced will only apply for the financial year 2023/24, the Government is not proposing to change the business rates legislation.
- 3.2 Billing authorities will be expected to use their existing discretionary powers, under S.47 Local Government Finance Act 1988, as amended, to grant this new relief for retail properties.
- 3.3 Billing authorities will be compensated for the cost of awarding this relief through a Section 31 grant from Government.

4 PROPERTIES THAT WILL BENEFIT FROM THE RELIEF

- 4.1 Businesses that will benefit from the relief will be those occupying a property within the retail, hospitality, and leisure sectors.
- 4.2 Full details of the type of businesses that will qualify for this relief are contained in our local policy in Appendix 1 of this report. A summary of these types of businesses are highlighted below: -
 - Properties that are being used for the sale of goods to visiting members of the public.
 - Properties that are being used for the provision of services to visiting members of the public, such as Hair and Beauty services, shoe repairs, travel agents, ticket offices, dry cleaners, launderettes, PC/TV domestic appliance repair, funeral directors, photo processing, tool hire and care hire.
 - Properties that are being used for the sale of food and/or drink to visiting members of the public.
 - Properties that are being used as cinemas.
 - Properties that are being used as live music venues.
 - Properties that are being used for the provision of sport, leisure and facilities to visiting members of the public (including the viewing of such activities).
 - Properties that are being used for the assembly of visiting members of the public, such as public halls, clubhouses, clubs and institutions.
 - Properties where the non-domestic part is being used for the provision of living accommodation as a business, such as hotels,

guest and boarding houses, holiday homes and caravan parks and sites.

4.3 Properties that will not be considered for this relief are as follows: -

- Financial Services (such as banks, building societies, cash points, bureaux de change, short-term loan providers and betting shops),
- Medical Services (such as vets, dentists, doctors, osteopaths, and chiropractors.
- Professional Services (such as solicitors, accountants, insurance agents, financial advisors, employment agencies, estate agents and letting agents.
- Post office sorting offices; and
- Headshops or those selling drugs paraphernalia.

5 IMPLEMENTATION

5.1 The businesses set to qualify for the RHL Relief have already been identified and currently in receipt of the RHL Relief under the 2022/23 scheme.

5.2 All businesses will automatically have their relief increased to 75 per cent, with a cash cap of £110,000 for the year 2023/24. However, these businesses will also be sent a covering letter and asked to advise the Business Rates Team if the award of this relief means they are in breach of cash cap or subsidy control limits.

5.3 The scheme will also be available on the Council's website whereby businesses can apply for this relief if they have not already been identified.

6. IMPLICATIONS

Legal Implications

6.1 Local Authorities are expected to deliver the scheme through the use of their discretionary powers under Section 47 of the Local Government Finance Act 1988.

6.2 The issue of some discretionary rate reliefs and discounts are considered as qualifying as "subsidy" and is of some significance.

6.3 Broadly, any awards of discretionary rate relief or discounts are subject to Subsidy Control. The Subsidy Control Act allows a business to receive £315,000 in a three-year period (consisting of the current financial year and the two previous financial years).

6.4 Expanded Retail Discount granted in 2021/22 does not count towards the £315,000 allowance but any other subsidies such as Covid-19 business grants claimed under the Small Amounts of Financial Assistance limit of the Trade and Cooperation Agreement will be counted.

- 6.5 Therefore, any organisation or business, who is automatically awarded the RHL Relief, will be issued with a letter advising the organisation/business about “Subsidy Controls” and on a self-assessment basis, inform the Business Rates Team if they are in breach of the cash cap or subsidy control limits.

Financial and Resource Implications

- 6.6 If all organisations identified are awarded the RHL, the total value of the award will be approximately £5.1m benefiting 411 businesses.
- 6.7 Government will reimburse billing authorities awarding this relief within the rates retention scheme for the actual cost of this relief. The amount to be reimbursed will equal the total value of the relief awarded.
- 6.8 Therefore, there will be no financial impact on the Council but would have a benefit to certain ratepayers within the borough.

7 CONCLUSIONS

- 7.1 In conclusion, Cabinet are asked to approve the new discretionary RHL Relief policy as attached at Annexe 1 of this report.
- 7.2 The relief will be delivered using existing Discretionary Powers under Section 47 Local Government Finance Act 1988 and the Council will be reimbursed for all discounts awarded under this scheme.
- 7.3 This proposal to assist retail premises in the borough will directly benefit a number of retailers in what is at present a challenging retail sector.

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS:

Discretionary Relief - Retail, Hospitality and Leisure Relief Policy

S47 Local Government Finance Act 1988

Non-Domestic Rating (Discretionary Relief) Regulations 1989 (SI 989 1059).

Business Rates Information Letter (7/2022) – Business Rates Guidance and general information

[7/2022: Business rates guidance and general information - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/business-rates-guidance-and-general-information-7-2022)

DLUHC Business Rates Retail Discount – Guidance

[Business Rates Relief: 2023/24 Retail, Hospitality and Leisure Scheme, local authority guidance - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/business-rates-relief-2023-24-retail-hospitality-and-leisure-scheme-local-authority-guidance)

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**Rushmoor Borough Council
Retail, Hospitality and Leisure Business
Rates Relief Scheme
(2023/24)**

Contents

1.0 Purpose of the Policy	3
2.0 General Explanation	3
3.0 How will the relief be provided?	3
4.0 Which properties will benefit from relief?	3
5.0 How much relief will be available?	4
6.0 The Cash Cap and Subsidy Control	5
7.0 Splits, mergers, and changes to existing hereditaments	6
8.0 Recalculations of relief	6
9.0 Eligibility for the Retail, Hospitality and Leisure Relief Scheme	6
10.0 Effect on the Council's Finances	9
11.0 Administration of Discretionary Relief	9
12.0 Scheme of Delegation	10
Granting, Varying, Reviewing and Revocation of Relief	10
13.0 Reviews	10
14.0 Reporting changes in circumstances	11
15.0 Fraud	11

1.0 Purpose of the Policy

- 1.1 The purpose of this policy is to determine the level of discretionary relief to be awarded in respect of the Retail, Hospitality and Leisure Business Rates Relief Scheme for the financial year commencing 1st April 2023.
- 1.2 This is a government led initiative and the Council is keen to support businesses as far as possible.

2.0 General Explanation

- 2.1. At the Autumn Statement on 17 November 2022 the Chancellor announced the introduction of a new business rates relief scheme for retail, hospitality, and leisure properties worth around £2.1 billion in 2023/24. This will support the businesses that make our high streets and town centres a success and help them to evolve and adapt to changing consumer demands.
- 2.2 The 2023/24 Retail, Hospitality and Leisure Business Rates Relief scheme will provide eligible, occupied, retail, hospitality, and leisure properties with a 75% relief, up to a cash cap limit of £110,000 per business.

3.0 How will the relief be provided?

- 3.1 As this is a temporary measure for 2023/24, Government is not changing the legislation relating to the reliefs available to properties. Instead, Government will, in line with the eligibility criteria set out in this guidance, reimburse the Council if it uses its discretionary relief powers under section 47 of the Local Government Finance Act 1988 (as amended) to grant relief. It will be for the Council to adopt a local scheme and determine in each individual case when, having regard to this guidance, to grant relief under section 47.
- 3.2 Government will fully reimburse the Council and major precepting authorities for their loss of income under the rates retention scheme as a result of awarding the relief that falls within the definitions in this guidance, using a grant under section 31 of the Local Government Act 2003.
- 3.3 The government expects the Council to apply and grant relief to qualifying ratepayers from the start of the 2023/24 billing year.

4.0 Which properties will benefit from relief?

- 4.1 Hereditaments which benefit from the relief will be those which for a chargeable day in 2023/24:
 - (a) meet the eligibility criteria; and

(b) the ratepayer for that chargeable day has not refused the relief for the eligible hereditament. The ratepayer may refuse the relief for each eligible hereditament anytime up to 30 April 2024. The ratepayer cannot subsequently withdraw their refusal for either all or part of the financial year.

4.2 The Council has decided that, for the purposes of section 47 of the 1988 Act, hereditaments where the ratepayer has refused the relief are outside of the scheme and outside of the scope of the decision of which hereditaments qualify for the discount and are therefore ineligible for the relief.

4.3 In line with the legal restrictions in section 47(8A) of the Local Government Finance Act 1988, the Council may not grant the discount to themselves or precepting authorities

5.0 How much relief will be available?

5.1 Subject to the £110,000 cash cap per business, the total amount of government-funded relief available for each property for 2023/24 under this scheme is for chargeable days from 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024, 75% of the chargeable amount.

5.2 The relief will be applied after mandatory reliefs and other discretionary reliefs funded by section 31 grants have been applied, but before those where the Council has used its wider discretionary relief powers introduced by the Localism Act 2011, which are not funded by section 31 grants. However, the former categories of discretionary relief available prior to the Localism Act 2011 (i.e., charitable relief etc.) will be applied first in the sequence of discretionary reliefs and, therefore, before Retail, Hospitality and Leisure relief. Authorities may use their discretionary powers to, at cost to themselves, offer further discounts outside this scheme or additional relief to hereditaments within the scheme. However, where the Council applies a locally funded relief under section 47, this will be applied after the Retail, Hospitality and Leisure relief.

5.3 The ordering **will** be applied in following sequence:

- Transitional Relief
- Mandatory Reliefs (as determined in legislation)
- S.47 Discretionary Relief in the following order:
 - (i) 2023 Supporting Small Business (SSB);
 - (ii) Former categories of discretionary relief available prior to the Localism Act 2011 (i.e., charitable, CASC, rural top up, and not for profit) will be applied first in the sequence of discretionary reliefs, after SSB;
 - (iii) Other discretionary (centrally funded);
 - (iv) 2023/24 Retail Hospitality and Leisure relief scheme; and
 - (v) Other locally funded schemes (such as section 49 hardship).

5.4 Subject to the cash cap, the eligibility for the discount and the relief itself will be assessed and calculated on a daily basis. The following formula will be used to

determine the amount of relief to be granted for a chargeable day for a particular hereditament in the financial year 2023/24:

- Amount of relief to be granted = $V \times 0.75$ where:
- V is the daily charge for the hereditament for the chargeable day after the application of any mandatory relief and any certain other discretionary reliefs in line with 5.3 above.

5.5 This will be calculated ignoring any prior year adjustments in liabilities which fall to be liable on the day.

5.6 Ratepayers that occupy more than one property will be entitled to relief for each of their eligible properties up to the maximum £110,000 cash cap, per business.

6.0 The Cash Cap and Subsidy Control

6.1 Under the cash cap, no ratepayer can in any circumstances exceed the £110,000 cash cap across all of their hereditaments in England.

6.2 Where a ratepayer has a qualifying connection with another ratepayer, then those ratepayers will be considered as one ratepayer for the purposes of the cash caps. A ratepayer shall be treated as having a qualifying connection with another:

- (a) where both ratepayers are companies, and
 - (i) one is a subsidiary of the other, or
 - (ii) both are subsidiaries of the same company; or
- (b) where only one ratepayer is a company, the other ratepayer (the “second ratepayer”) has such an interest in that company as would, if the second ratepayer were a company, result in its being the holding company of the other.

6.3 The Retail Hospitality and Leisure Scheme is likely to amount to subsidy. Any relief provided by the Council under this scheme will need to comply with the UK’s domestic and international subsidy control obligations.

6.4 To the extent that the Council is seeking to provide relief that falls below the Minimal Financial Assistance (MFA) thresholds, the Subsidy Control Act allows an economic actor (e.g., a holding company and its subsidiaries) to receive up to £315,000 in a 3-year period (consisting of the 2023/24 year and the 2 previous financial years). MFA subsidies cumulate with each other and with other subsidies that fall within the category of ‘Minimal or SPEI financial assistance’. Expanded Retail Discount granted in 2021/22 does not count towards the £315,000 allowance but BEIS COVID-19 business grants and any other subsidies claimed under the Small Amounts of Financial Assistance limit of the Trade and Cooperation Agreement will be counted.

6.5 In those cases, where it is clear to the Council that the ratepayer is likely to breach the cash cap or the MFA limit, then the Council will automatically withhold the relief.

- 6.6 MFA subsidies above £100,000 are subject to transparency requirements. This is not cumulated per beneficiary but applies per subsidy award. This means that for every individual subsidy provided of more than £100,000, the Council will include details of the subsidy on the subsidy control database.

7.0 Splits, mergers, and changes to existing hereditaments

- 7.1 The relief will be applied on a day-to-day basis using the formula set out above. A new hereditament created as a result of a split or merger during the financial year, or where there is a change of use, will be considered afresh for the relief on that day.

8.0 Recalculations of relief

- 8.1 The amount of relief awarded will be recalculated in the event of a change of circumstances. This could include, for example, a backdated change to the rateable value or the hereditament. This change of circumstances could arise during the year in question or during a later year.

- 8.2 Under regulations made under section 47 of the Local Government Finance Act 1988 the Council must give at least 12 months' notice of a revocation or variation of a rate relief scheme the effect of which would be to increase rate bills. Such a revocation or variation can only take effect at the end of a financial year (other than to comply with international agreements). But within these regulations, the Council may still make decisions to ensure the scheme is administered in accordance with the extant rules. If a change in circumstances renders a property ineligible, the relevant bill can be amended in the year to reflect the loss of the relief.

9.0 Eligibility for the Retail, Hospitality and Leisure Relief Scheme

- 9.1 The Council uses the following definitions to establish eligibility for the relief:

Hereditaments that meet the eligibility for Retail, Hospitality and Leisure scheme will be occupied hereditaments which meet all of the following conditions for the chargeable day:

- they are wholly or mainly being used:
 - (i) as shops, restaurants, cafes, drinking establishments, cinemas, or live music venues,
 - (ii) for assembly and leisure; or
 - (iii) as hotels, guest & boarding premises, or self-catering accommodation

i. Hereditaments that are being used for the sale of goods to visiting members of the public:

- Shops (such as: florists, bakers, butchers, grocers, greengrocers, jewellers, stationers, off licences, chemists, newsagents, hardware stores, supermarkets, etc)
- Charity shops
- Opticians
- Post offices
- Furnishing shops/ display rooms (such as: carpet shops, double glazing, garage doors)
- Car/caravan show rooms
- Second-hand car lots
- Markets
- Petrol stations
- Garden centres
- Art galleries (where art is for sale/hire)

ii. Hereditaments that are being used for the provision of the following services to visiting members of the public:

- Hair and beauty services (such as: hairdressers, nail bars, beauty salons, tanning shops, etc)
- Shoe repairs/key cutting
- Travel agents
- Ticket offices e.g., for theatre
- Dry cleaners
- Launderettes
- PC/TV/domestic appliance repair
- Funeral directors
- Photo processing
- Tool hire
- Car hire

iii. Hereditaments that are being used for the sale of food and/or drink to visiting members of the public:

- Restaurants
- Takeaways
- Sandwich shops
- Coffee shops
- Pubs
- Bar

iv. Hereditaments which are being used as cinemas

v. Hereditaments that are being used as live music venues:

- Live music venues are hereditaments wholly or mainly used for the performance of live music for the purpose of entertaining an audience. Hereditaments cannot be considered a live music venue for the purpose of business rates relief where a venue is wholly or mainly used as a nightclub or a theatre, for the purposes of the Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987 (as amended).
- Hereditaments can be a live music venue even if used for other activities, but only if those other activities (i) are merely ancillary or incidental to the performance of live music (e.g., the sale/supply of alcohol to audience members) or (ii) do not affect the fact that the primary activity for the premises is the performance of live music (e.g., because those other activities are insufficiently regular or frequent, such as a polling station or a fortnightly community event).
- There may be circumstances in which it is difficult to tell whether an activity is a performance of live music or, instead, the playing of recorded music.

vi. Hereditaments that are being used for the provision of sport, leisure, and facilities to visiting members of the public (including for the viewing of such activities).

- Sports grounds and clubs
- Museums and art galleries
- Nightclubs
- Sport and leisure facilities
- Stately homes and historic houses
- Theatres
- Tourist attractions
- Gyms
- Wellness centres, spas, massage parlours
- Casinos, gambling clubs and bingo halls

vii. Hereditaments that are being used for the assembly of visiting members of the public.

- Public halls
- Clubhouses, clubs, and institutions

viii. Hereditaments where the non-domestic part is being used for the provision of living accommodation as a business:

- Hotels, Guest, and Boarding Houses
- Holiday homes
- Caravan parks and sites

9.2 To qualify for the relief the hereditament should be wholly or mainly being used for the above qualifying purposes. In a similar way to other reliefs (such as charity relief), this is a test on use rather than occupation. Therefore, hereditaments which are occupied but not wholly or mainly used for the qualifying purpose will not qualify for the relief.

- 9.3 The list set out above is not intended to be exhaustive as it would be impossible to list the many and varied uses that exist within the qualifying purposes.

Hereditaments that are being used for the provision of the following services to visiting members of the public:

- 9.4 The list below sets out the types of uses that the government does not consider to be an eligible use for the purpose of this discount. Again, it is for the Council to determine for themselves whether particular properties are broadly similar in nature to those below and, if so, to consider them **not** eligible for the discount under their local scheme:
- Financial services (e.g., banks, building societies, cash points, bureaux de change, short-term loan providers, betting shops);
 - Medical services (e.g., vets, dentists, doctors, osteopaths, chiropractors);
 - Professional services (e.g., solicitors, accountants, insurance agents/ financial advisers, employment agencies, estate agents, letting agents); and
 - Post office sorting offices.

10.0 Effect on the Council's Finances

- 10.1 As this is a government led initiative, grants for the full amount awarded will be available through section 31 of the Local Government Act 2003.

11.0 Administration of Discretionary Relief

- 11.1 The following section outlines the procedures followed by officers in granting, amending, or cancelling discretionary relief and reduction. This is essentially laid down by legislation¹

Applications and Evidence

- 11.2 Retail, Hospitality and Leisure Business Rates relief will be awarded automatically by the Council.
- 11.3 **The Council will provide this service and provide guidance free of charge. Ratepayers are encouraged to approach the Council direct and NOT pay for such services through third parties.**

Granting of relief

- 11.4 In all cases, the Council will notify the ratepayer of decisions via their rates demand and details will include:
- The amount of relief granted and the date from which it has been granted;

¹ The Non-Domestic Rating (Discretionary Relief) Regulations 1989

- The new chargeable amount; and
- A requirement that the applicant should notify the Council of any change in circumstances that may affect entitlement to relief.

11.5 This relief is to be granted from the beginning of the financial year in which the decision is made or when liability begins whichever is the later.

11.6 Variations in any decision will be notified to ratepayers as soon as practicable

12.0 Scheme of Delegation

Granting, Varying, Reviewing and Revocation of Relief

12.1 All powers in relation to reliefs are given under the Local Government Finance Act 1988, the Local Government and Rating Act 1997, the Local Government Act 2003, and the Localism Act 2011. However section 223 of the Local Government Act 1992 allows for delegation of decisions by the Council to Cabinet, Committees, Sub-Committees or Officers.

12.2 For the purposes of this policy, the Revenues and Benefits Service Manager will be able to award, revise or revoke any award of Retail, Hospitality and Leisure Business Rates relief.

12.3 Applications that are refused will, on request, be reconsidered if additional supporting information is provided or the refusal is subsequently considered to be based on a misinterpretation of the application.

13.0 Reviews

13.1 Where the Council receives an appeal from the ratepayer regarding the granting, non-granting or the amount of any Retail, Hospitality and Leisure Business Rates relief, the case will be reviewed by the Revenues and Benefits Service Manager. Where a decision is revised, then the ratepayer shall be informed, likewise if the original decision is upheld.

13.2 Where the ratepayer wishes to appeal the decision, the case will be considered by the Council's Section 151 Officer whose decision on behalf of the Council will be final.

13.3 Ultimately the formal appeal process for the ratepayer is Judicial Review although the Council will endeavour to explain any decision fully and openly with the ratepayer.

14.0 Reporting changes in circumstances

- 14.1 Where any award is granted to a ratepayer, the Council will require any changes in circumstances which may affect the relief, to be reported as soon as possible or in any event within 21 days of the change. This will be important where the change would result in the amount of the award being reduced or cancelled.
- 14.2 Where a change of circumstances is reported, the relief will, if appropriate, be revised or cancelled as appropriate. Where any award is to be reduced, the Council will look to recover the amount from the date the change of circumstances occurred.

15.0 Fraud

- 15.1 Where a ratepayer falsely applies for any relief, or where the ratepayer provides false information, makes false representation, or deliberately withholds information in order to gain relief, prosecutions will be considered under the Fraud Act 2006.

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CABINET

COUNCILLOR PAUL TAYLOR
CORPORATE SERVICES PORTFOLIO
HOLDER
REPORT NO. FIN2307

14th March 2023

KEY DECISION?

YES/NO

**BUSINESS RATES – SUPPORTING SMALL BUSINESS RATES RELIEF
SCHEME**

SUMMARY:

This report seeks approval to adopt a local policy to enable the council to award supporting small business rates relief from business rates with effect from 1 April 2023 to local businesses.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Cabinet are recommended to:

- 1) Establish a local Small Business Rates Relief Scheme for reducing business rates liabilities as set out in this report.

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The purpose of this policy is to determine the level of discretionary relief to be awarded in respect of Supporting Small Business Rates Relief for the financial year commencing 1st April 2023 until 31st March 2026, which coincides with the end of the 2023 Rating List.
- 1.2 This is a government led initiative and the Council is keen to support businesses as far as possible.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 In the Autumn Statement 2022, on 17th November 2022, the Chancellor announced a new scheme of Discretionary Rate Relief to support those Business Ratepayers who are having large increases to their bills following the national 2023 revaluation.
- 2.2 This new relief scheme is known as Supporting Small Businesses Rate Relief (SSBR).
- 2.3 The Government has provided guidance, which sets out the criteria for awarding Supporting Small Businesses Relief. This guidance has been

used in developing the Council's local policy. This guidance does not replace existing legislation or any other relief.

- 2.4 Full details of the guidance can be found at [Business Rates Relief: 2023 Supporting Small Business Relief, local authority guidance - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/business-rates-relief-2023-supporting-small-business-relief-local-authority-guidance)

3. DETAILS OF THE PROPOSAL

General

- 3.1 Full details of SSBR are contained in Annexe 1 of this report. A summary of this relief is outlined in paragraphs 3.2 to 3.3 below.
- 3.2 SSBR is a scheme of relief is to be made available to those ratepayers facing large increases to their business rates bills as a result of the losing some or all of their small business rate relief following the 2023 revaluation.
- 3.3 To support these ratepayers, the SSBR will ensure that the increase per year in the business rates bill is limited to a cash value of £600.00 per year:

4. IMPLEMENTATION

- 4.1 Once the scheme is approved, new software will be applied to the Business Rates system to accurately calculate the business rates bills for all those eligible for SSBR Relief.
- 4.2 The businesses set to qualify for SSBR have already been identified and will automatically have the relief applied to their Business Rates Bills.
- 4.3 The scheme will also be available on the Council's website.

5. IMPLICATIONS

Legal Implications

- 5.1 Local Authorities are expected to deliver the scheme through the use of their discretionary relief powers under Section 47 of the Local Government Finance Act 1988.
- 5.2 The issue of some discretionary rate reliefs and discounts are considered as qualifying as "subsidy" and is of some significance.
- 5.3 Broadly, any awards of discretionary rate relief or discounts are subject to Subsidy Control. The Subsidy Control Act allows a business to receive £315,000 in a three-year period (consisting of the current financial year and the two previous financial years).
- 5.4 Expanded Retail Discount granted in 2021/22 does not count towards the £315,000 allowance but any other subsidies such as Covid-19 business

grants claimed under the Small Amounts of Financial Assistance limit of the Trade and Cooperation Agreement will be counted.

Financial and Resource Implications

- 5.5 If all businesses identified are awarded SBRR the total value of the award will be approximately £139k in 2023/24 and reducing thereafter.
- 5.6 Central Government will reimburse billing authorities awarding Supporting Small Businesses Relief and Pub Relief within the rates retention scheme for the actual cost of awarding relief.
- 5.7 Therefore, there will be no financial impact on the Council but would have a benefit to certain ratepayers within the Borough.

6 CONCLUSIONS

- 6.1 In conclusion, Cabinet are asked to approve the new discretionary rate relief policy as attached at Annexe 1 of this report.
- 6.2 The reliefs will be delivered using existing Discretionary Relief Powers under Section 47 Local Government Finance Act 1988 and the Council will be reimbursed for all relief awarded these schemes.
- 6.3 The schemes will benefit smaller ratepayers in the Borough by the provision of a transitional scheme that will reduce the burden on small businesses that have fallen out of Small Business Rates Relief due to the 2023 revaluation exercise.

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS:

Discretionary Relief - Supporting Small Business Rate Relief Policy

S47 Local Government Finance Act 1988

Non-Domestic Rating (Discretionary Relief) Regulations 1989 (SI 989 1059).

DLUHC Business Rates Supporting Small Business Rate Relief Guidance

[Business Rates Relief: 2023 Supporting Small Business Relief, local authority guidance - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/business-rates-relief-2023-supporting-small-business-relief-local-authority-guidance)

Business Rates Information Letter (7/2022) – Business Rates Guidance and general information

[7/2022: Business rates guidance and general information - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/business-rates-guidance-and-general-information)

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Rushmoor Borough Council
Supporting Small Business Rates Relief
Scheme
(1 April 2023 to 31 March 2026)

Contents

1.0	Purpose of the Policy	3
2.0	General Explanation	3
3.0	Who is eligible for the 2023 Supporting Small Business Relief (2023 SSB) and how much relief will be available?	3
	Sequence of reliefs	4
4.0	Subsidy control	4
5.0	Recalculations of reliefs	5
6.0	Effect on the Council's Finances	6
7.0	Administration of Discretionary Relief	6
	Applications and Evidence	6
	Granting of relief	6
8.0	Scheme of Delegation.....	6
	Granting, Varying, Reviewing and Revocation of Relief	6
9.0	Reviews.....	7
10.0	Reporting changes in circumstances	7
11.0	Fraud.....	7

1.0 Purpose of the Policy

- 1.1 The purpose of this policy is to determine the level of discretionary relief to be awarded in respect of Supporting Small Business Rates relief for the financial year commencing 1st April 2023 until 31st March 2026.
- 1.2 This is a Government led initiative and the Council is keen to support businesses as far as possible.

2.0 General Explanation

- 2.1 For the financial years 2023/24 to 2025/26, the Government will, in line with the eligibility criteria set out below, reimburse the Council if it uses its discretionary relief powers under section 47 of the Local Government Finance Act 1988 (as amended), to grant 2023 Supporting Small Business relief.
- 2.2 It will be for the Council, which administers the 2023 Supporting Small Business (2023 SSB) relief, to adopt a local scheme and determine in each individual case when, having regard to this guidance, to grant relief under section 47.
- 2.3 Central government will reimburse the Council and major precepting authorities for the actual cost to them under the rates retention scheme of the 2023 Supporting Small Business relief that falls within the definitions in this policy.

3.0 Who is eligible for the 2023 Supporting Small Business Relief (2023 SSB) and how much relief will be available?

- 3.1 2023 SSBR will help those ratepayers who as a result of the change in their rateable value at the revaluation are losing some or all of their Small Business, Rural Rate Relief or 2017 SSBR and, as a result, are facing large increases in their bills.
- 3.2 Charities and Community Amateur Sports Clubs, who are already entitled to mandatory 80% relief, are not eligible for 2023 SSBR.
- 3.3 To support these ratepayers, 2023 SSBR will ensure that the increase in the bills of these ratepayers is limited to a cash value of £600 per year. This cash maximum increase ensures that ratepayers do not face large bill increases in 2023/24 after transitional relief and small business rate relief (as applicable) have been applied. In order to simplify the scheme, the 2023 SSBR will not include minimum percentage bill increases (unlike the 2017 scheme).
- 3.4 Those on 2023 SSBR whose 2023 rateable values are £51,000 or more will not be liable to pay the supplement (1.3p) to fund small business rate relief while they are eligible for 2023 SSBR.

- 3.5 The 2017 SSBR scheme was provided to support small and medium ratepayers who had seen large increases in their bills at the 2017 revaluation. They have, therefore, had 6 years of support to allow them to adjust to their full 2017 bills. Therefore, for those ratepayers receiving 2017 SSB relief in 2022/23, any eligibility for 2023 SSBR will end on 31 March 2024.
- 3.6 The Council will ensure this eligibility criteria is clear in the scheme approved and that relief for these ratepayers is awarded for one year only so that the relief can then be withdrawn on 31 March 2024 without further notice.
- 3.7 A change of ratepayers will not affect eligibility for the Supporting Small Business scheme but eligibility will be lost if the property falls vacant or becomes occupied by a charity or Community Amateur Sports Club.
- 3.8 There is no second property test for eligibility for the 2023 SSBR scheme. However, those ratepayers who during 2022/23 lost entitlement to Small Business Rate Relief (because they failed the second property test) but have, under the rules for Small Business Rate Relief, been given a 12 month period of grace before their relief ended - can continue on the 2023 SSBR scheme for the remainder of their 12 month period of grace.

Sequence of reliefs

- 3.9 Hereditaments eligible for charity or Community Amateur Sports Club relief or hereditaments which are unoccupied are not eligible for 2023 SSBR. For the avoidance of doubt, small business rate relief or rural rate relief will not be applied to further reduce the bill found under 2023 SSBR (to avoid the double counting of relief).
- 3.10 The same principle applies to properties for which a Section 44A certificate has been granted (apportionment of rateable values for partly occupied properties). The presence of a section 44A certificate will not further reduce the bill found under 2023 SSBR.
- 3.11 All other discretionary reliefs, including those funded by section 31 grants, will be considered after the application of 2023 SSBR.

4.0 Subsidy control

- 4.1 The 2023 SSBR is likely to amount to a subsidy. Therefore, any relief provided by the Council under this scheme will need to comply with the UK's domestic and international subsidy control obligations.
- 4.2 To the extent that the Council is seeking to provide relief that falls below the Minimal Financial Assistance (MFA) thresholds, the Subsidy Control Act allows an economic actor (e.g., a holding company and its subsidiaries) to receive up to £315,000 in a three-year period (consisting of the 2023/24 year and the two

previous financial years). MFA subsidies cumulate with each other and with other subsidies that fall within the category of 'Minimal or SPEI financial assistance'. BEIS COVID-19 business grants and any other subsidies claimed under the Small Amounts of Financial Assistance limit of the Trade and Cooperation Agreement should be counted under the £315,000 allowance.

- 4.3 In those cases where it is clear to the Council that the ratepayer is likely to breach the MFA limit then the Council will withhold the relief. Otherwise, the Council may include the relief in bills and ask the ratepayers, on a self-assessment basis, to inform the Council if they are in breach of the MFA limit.
- 4.4 MFA subsidies above £100,000 are subject to transparency requirements. This is not cumulated per beneficiary but applies per subsidy award. This means that for every individual subsidy provided of more than £100,000, the Council will include details of the subsidy on the subsidy control database.

5.0 Recalculations of reliefs

- 5.1 As with other reliefs, the amount of SSBR awarded will be recalculated in the event of a change of circumstances. This could include, for example, a backdated change to the rateable value or to the hereditament. This change of circumstances could arise during the year in question or during a later year.
- 5.2 Under regulations made under section 47 of the Local Government Finance Act 1988 authorities must give at least 12 months' notice of a revocation or variation of a rate relief scheme the effect of which would be to increase rate bills. Such a revocation or variation can only take effect at the end of a financial year (other than to comply with international agreements). But within these regulations, the Council may still make decisions which are conditional upon eligibility criteria. If a change in circumstances renders a property ineligible, the relevant bill can be amended in the year to reflect the loss of the relief.
- 5.3 Therefore, when making an award for SSBR, the Council will ensure the conditions of the award that the relief are subject to the property's continuing eligibility. If the use of the property changes so that it is no longer eligible, the relevant chargeable amount must be recalculated to reflect that fact.
- 5.4 The Council will also ensure that the scheme provides that eligibility for those ratepayers previously in the 2017 SSBR scheme in 2022/23 are eligible for one year of relief only and that the relief will then be withdrawn from those ratepayers on 31 March 2024 without further notice.

6.0 Effect on the Council's Finances

- 6.1 As this is a government led initiative, grants for the full amount awarded will be available through section 31 of the Local Government Act 2003.

7.0 Administration of Discretionary Relief

- 7.1 The following section outlines the procedures followed by officers in granting, amending, or cancelling discretionary relief and reduction. This is essentially laid down by legislation¹

Applications and Evidence

- 7.2 Supporting Small Business rates relief will be awarded automatically by the Council.
- 7.3 **The Council will provide this service and provide guidance free of charge. Ratepayers are encouraged to approach the Council direct and NOT pay for such services through third parties.**

Granting of relief

- 7.4 In all cases, the Council will notify the ratepayer of decisions via their rates demand and details will include:
- The amount of relief granted and the date from which it has been granted;
 - The new chargeable amount; and
 - A requirement that the applicant should notify the Council of any change in circumstances that may affect entitlement to relief.
- 7.5 This relief is to be granted from the beginning of the financial year in which the decision is made or when liability begins whichever is the later.
- 7.6 Variations in any decision will be notified to ratepayers as soon as practicable

8.0 Scheme of Delegation

Granting, Varying, Reviewing and Revocation of Relief

- 8.1 All powers in relation to reliefs are given under the Local Government Finance Act 1988, the Local Government and Rating Act 1997, the Local Government Act 2003, and the Localism Act 2011. However section 223 of the Local Government Act 1992 allows for delegation of decisions by the Council to Cabinet, Committees, Sub-Committees or Officers.

¹ The Non-Domestic Rating (Discretionary Relief) Regulations 1989

- 8.2 For the purposes of this policy, the Revenues & Benefits Service Manager will be able to award, revise or revoke any award of Supporting Small Business Relief.
- 8.3 Applications that are refused will, on request, be reconsidered if additional supporting information is provided or the refusal is subsequently considered to be based on a misinterpretation of the application.

9.0 Reviews

- 9.1 Where the Council receives an appeal from the ratepayer regarding the granting, non-granting or the amount of any Supporting Small Business Relief, the case will be reviewed by the Revenues & Benefits Service Manager. Where a decision is revised, then the ratepayer shall be informed, likewise if the original decision is upheld.
- 9.2 Where the ratepayer wishes to appeal the decision, the case will be considered by the Council's Section 151 Officer whose decision on behalf of the Council will be final.
- 9.3 Ultimately the formal appeal process for the ratepayer is Judicial Review although the Council will endeavour to explain any decision fully and openly with the ratepayer.

10.0 Reporting changes in circumstances

- 10.1 Where any award is granted to a ratepayer, the Council will require any changes in circumstances which may affect the relief, to be reported as soon as possible or in any event within 21 days of the change. This will be important where the change would result in the amount of the award being reduced or cancelled.
- 10.2 Where a change of circumstances is reported, the relief will, if appropriate, be revised or cancelled as appropriate. Where any award is to be reduced, the Council will look to recover the amount from the date the change of circumstances occurred.

11.0 Fraud

- 11.1 Where a ratepayer falsely applies for any relief, or where the ratepayer provides false information, makes false representation, or deliberately withholds information in order to gain relief, prosecutions will be considered under the Fraud Act 2006.

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CABINET

COUNCILLOR PAUL TAYLOR
CORPORATE SERVICES PORTFOLIO
HOLDER
REPORT NO. FIN2308

14th March 2023

KEY DECISION?

YES/NO

ENERGY BILLS SUPPORT SCHEME ALTERNATIVE FUNDING POLICY**SUMMARY:**

This report seeks approval to adopt a policy to deliver the Energy Bill Support Scheme EBSS Alternative Funding. Details on how the scheme will work and who will be eligible is outlined in this report and the policy in appendix 2.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

Cabinet are recommended to:

- 1) Agree the local EBSS Alternative Funding Policy to enable the council to provide financial support to households in the borough who were not eligible for previous funding from electricity suppliers.

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1. The purpose of this report is to seek approval for a local policy to enable the council to make energy payments to households in the borough who were not eligible for funding via their electricity suppliers. The policy is to be called the Energy Bills Support Scheme Alternative Funding (EBSS Alternative Funding).
- 1.2. This is a key decision as the council has been allocated £374,400 in funding from the government to deliver the EBSS Alternative Funding Scheme.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1. The Government's Energy Bill Support Scheme (EBSS) provides a discount on energy bills of £400 for most households in Great Britain. Households receive the £400 in six instalments as a credit to their utility bill between October 2022 and March 2023.
- 2.2. There are, however, a smaller number of households who pay for their energy in a different way, such as through a commercial landlord or intermediary, such as park home residents and some housing association

tenants. The EBSS Alternative Funding has been created to provide a direct payment to these households.

- 2.3 The EBSS Alternative Funding is a one-off non-repayable payment of £400 to eligible households who have not received the main EBSS payment automatically.
- 2.4 The government have provided the council with guidance on how the scheme should work and the council have followed that guidance when creating the policy. Details of the guidance is in Appendix 1 of this report.
- 2.5 The councils EBSS Alternative Funding Policy is in Appendix 2 of this report.

3. DETAILS OF THE SCHEME

- 3.1. The scheme is being delivered jointly by Government and the Council and individuals will need to apply for the EBSS Alternative Funding using a GOV.UK portal. The council is responsible for distributing support payments to eligible applicants within the borough.
- 3.2 The Department for Energy Security and Net Zero (DESNZ) expects eligible households to include those with a commercial landlord or an intermediary, such as park home residents and some housing association tenants. The EBSS alternative funding is also expected to reach a significant number of vulnerable people, including self-funding residents in care homes.
- 3.3 Any household wishing to apply for an EBSS Alternative Funding payment will need to make an application via GOV.UK.
- 3.4 DESNZ will then perform verification and eligibility checks, before passing onto the council to perform some final checks around residency and then distribute payments.

General Principles

- 3.5 The primary principle of the EBSS Alternative Funding Scheme is to provide the equivalent support to those domestic households who have not been eligible to receive the EBSS Support automatically because they do not have a domestic electricity supply contract.
- 3.6 In all cases, the property for which support is being claimed must be the sole or main residence of the applying household and, to be eligible for the scheme, households must be able to provide sufficient proof of that to the council.

Eligibility Criteria

- 3.7 To be eligible for EBSS Alternative Funding applicants must meet the following criteria on the date of their application:
 - The property for which support is being claimed is the sole or main residence of that applicant.

- The resident is responsible for paying for energy used in the property as part of a service charge, rent or other arrangement.
 - The household is not already receiving EBSS payments through the main scheme.
 - The household property is not a business premises.
 - The property is wholly or mainly used for domestic purposes, except for businesses whose main business activity is to provide long term residential accommodation (landlords, care homes etc).
- 3.8 The council will use its local knowledge and the criteria set out in the policy to assist in deciding on eligibility of a household for this scheme.

Households Eligible for EBSS Alternative Funding

- 3.9 The following households could be eligible for EBSS Alternative Funding are as follows:
- Park home residents.
 - Housing association, social and private tenants, leaseholders, supplied via a landlord with a commercial meter.
 - Partly and wholly self-funded care home residents.
 - Households in house boats on residential moorings.
 - Households on a private electricity network, for example those supplied by a heat network.
 - Off-grid households.
 - Traveller households on authorised sites.
 - Households who live in a dwelling on business premises that is used wholly or mainly for domestic purposes.
 - Households in temporary or supported accommodation.

4 IMPLICATIONS

Financial Implications

- 4.1 The council will receive an allocation from Central Government to cover the full cost of supporting eligible households.
- 4.2 The council will receive New Burdens funding to deliver the scheme.
- 4.3 Therefore, there will be no financial impact on the council but will be of significant benefit to a number of households in the borough.

5 CONCLUSIONS

- 5.1 In conclusion, cabinet is asked to approve the EBSS Alternative Funding Policy.
- 5.2 The council will be provided with funds by Government to cover the EBSS Alternative Funding Scheme.

5.3 The Corporate Services Policy Holder has reviewed the policy and is supportive of the policy.

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS:

Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy – Energy Bills Support Scheme Alternative Funding – Guidance for local authorities in Great Britain (Appendix 1 of this report).

Rushmoor Borough Council’s Energy Bills Support Scheme Alternative Funding Policy

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BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS:

List

CONTACT DETAILS:

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Head of Service – Name/email/telephone



Department for
Business, Energy
& Industrial Strategy

Energy Bills Support Scheme Alternative Funding

Guidance for local authorities in Great Britain

The Energy Bills Support Scheme Alternative Funding is aimed at providing support to households not eligible for the automatic [Energy Bills Support Scheme GB](#) (£400 payment paid by energy suppliers). This guidance is to help local authorities, who are providing support to the UK Government in verifying applications and making payments, understand what they need to do with the application data they receive.

Last updated: 21 February 2023



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OFFICIAL

Contents

1. Introduction	5
2. Legal and Regulatory Framework	8
2.1 Legal Basis.....	8
2.2 Subsidy Control Considerations.....	8
2.3 Data Sharing and Data Privacy.....	8
2.4 Searchlight Data.....	9
3. Communicating the Scheme	10
4. Providing the Grant to Local Authorities	11
4.1 Principles.....	11
4.2 The Grant Payment.....	11
4.3 Payment Reconciliation	11
5. Providing the Support Payment to Eligible Households	13
5.1 General Principles.....	13
5.2 Eligibility Criteria.....	13
5.3 Households Eligible for EBSS Alternative Funding.....	14
5.4 Eligible Households on Business Premises	15
5.5 Households in Non-permanent Accommodation.....	15
5.6 Exclusions to EBSS Alternative Funding.....	15
6. Application Process	17
7. Role of BEIS	18
7.2 Application Portal, Assisted Digital Contact Centre and Application Management Portal.....	18
7.3 BEIS Initial Verification Checks	19
7.4 Forwarding Applications to the local authority.....	19
7.5 Communicating the Application Status	20
8. Role of Local Authorities	21
8.1 Local authorities in Great Britain are responsible for eligibility checks and payment processing.	21
8.2 Data Access and Management	21
8.3 Local authority checks	21
8.4 Local Authority Correspondence with Applicants	25
8.5 Appeals, Objections and Complaints.....	26
8.6 Local Authority Pre- and Post- Payment Assurance	26

OFFICIAL

8.7 Providing the Payment to Eligible Applicants.....27

9. Fraud and Error29

10. Assurance.....30

 10.6 BEIS Post Payment Assurance.....30

 10.7 Debt Recovery.....31

11. Monitoring and Reporting Requirements32

Annex A: Minimum Assurance Criteria to be Evidenced by Local Authorities33

Annex B: Public Sector Equality Duty39

Annex C: Legal Gateway that allows LAs to access DWP’s Searchlight data for the purposes of the EBSS Alternative Funding administration, but only for applications where there is a qualifying DWP benefit claim.40

Annex D: Contact details41

1. Introduction

- 1.1 This Guidance is provided by the Department for Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) to support local authorities to deliver the Energy Bills Support Scheme Alternative Funding (EBSS Alternative Funding) to eligible households (by household we mean the collective occupants of a premises which is their sole and main residential address).
- 1.2 Households should visit the scheme application page for more information on the EBSS Alternative Funding. Information on wider energy support schemes can be found at <https://helpforhouseholds.campaign.gov.uk>.
- 1.3 Beware of scams. Most households will automatically be provided with Energy Bills Support Scheme payments and will not need to apply for the scheme. Households will never be asked to apply for EBSS Alternative Funding by email or text.
- 1.4 The government will never provide a link to reach the online application portal. Instead, this can be found by searching for “**Apply for energy bill support if you do not get it automatically**” into the Gov.UK webpage search bar, or through an online search engine.

Rationale

- 1.5 The Energy Bills Support Scheme (EBSS) provides a discount on energy bills of £400 for most households in Great Britain. This scheme is being delivered through domestic electricity suppliers in six instalments from October 2022 to March 2023. However, there are a number of households who pay for their electricity in a different way, such as through a commercial intermediary, and so will not receive support through EBSS. The Energy Bills Support Scheme Alternative Funding (EBSS Alternative Funding) was set up to provide the payment to these households.
- 1.6 The EBSS Alternative Funding is a one-off £400 non-repayable discount to eligible households who have not received the main EBSS payment automatically to help with their energy bills between 1 October 2022 and 31 March 2023, but are still facing increased energy costs. Individuals will need to apply for the EBSS Alternative Funding via a Gov.UK portal. Local authorities will be responsible for distributing support payments to eligible applicants.
- 1.7 The Department for Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) expects eligible households to include those with a commercial landlord or intermediary, such as park home residents and some housing association tenants. The EBSS Alternative Funding is expected to reach a significant number of vulnerable people, including self-funding residents in care homes. BEIS is expecting approximately 900,000 households in Great Britain (around 3%) to be eligible for EBSS Alternative Funding. No household will be eligible for both the EBSS payment and an EBSS Alternative Funding payment.

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Role of Local Authorities

- 1.8 This Guidance is provided by BEIS to support local authorities to deliver the EBSS Alternative Funding to eligible households.
- 1.9 Households wishing to apply for an EBSS Alternative Funding payment should search for “apply for energy bill support if you do not get it automatically” on Gov.UK and follow the instructions there. All applications must be made via this central application route. No applications from other routes can be accepted or processed.
- 1.10 BEIS will then perform a number of verification and eligibility checks, before passing applications onto local authorities to perform some final checks and distribute payments. BEIS will reimburse local authorities for the cost of making the EBSS Alternative Funding payments through grants under section 13 of the Energy Prices Act 2022.
- 1.11 While EBSS Alternative Funding is available across the United Kingdom, this guidance applies only to the scheme delivered by local authorities in Great Britain (England, Scotland and Wales).
- 1.12 No support payments made by a local authority outside of the above scheme start and end dates (outlined in the table below) will be considered as eligible expenditure by BEIS regardless of the reason. Should a local authority choose to make a support payment outside of these dates it will be responsible for funding the payment.
- 1.13 When dealing with applications for funding, local authorities are encouraged to adopt the following principles as needed:
- use the eligibility criteria guidance and principles in this document to verify those who are eligible, taking into account a wide range of information
 - work together with other local authorities and, where appropriate, organisations such as charities that support local vulnerable people

Scam awareness

- 1.14 BEIS is ensuring that scam awareness messaging is prominent in public communications. This includes highlighting the differences between the main EBSS scheme, which is delivered automatically without the need for an application, and the Alternative Funding, where individuals have to actively make an application to receive the payment. BEIS is working with relevant stakeholder groups to cascade messaging about how EBSS Alternative Funding works and advise consumers how to respond when faced with a scam. If a local authority is approached by an applicant or other about a potential scam then please report details to the scheme using the contact details in Annex E, and the following advice should be provided:

“If you have received a scam message in relation to the EBSS Alternative Funding please report it. It is very important that this is reported promptly. Please send a screen shot of the message to report@phishing.gov.uk so that action can be taken.

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Forward text messages to 7726, and report websites via the National Cyber Security Centre at <https://www.ncsc.gov.uk/section/about-this-website/report-scam-website>.”

Scheme Timescales

KEY DATES	
Scheme 'go live'	27 February 2023
Scheme closes to new applications	31 May 2023
Final date for payments to be posted in the local authority financial system	30 June 2023
Final date for payments to be defrayed from the local authority bank account	7 July 2023
Final date for scheme reconciliation data to be sent by a local authority to BEIS	31 July 2023

1.15 Further details on the Energy Bills Support Scheme can be found at:
<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/getting-the-energy-bills-support-scheme-discount>.

2. Legal and Regulatory Framework

2.1 Legal Basis

- 2.1.1 The EBSS Alternative Funding is underpinned by the Energy Prices Act 2022. That Act allows for the government to issue support for energy costs (section 13) and enables government to empower delivery partners to provide the support to recipients (section 15). The Act, and subsequent regulations, also provides for delivery of the funding through local authorities in Great Britain as Local Welfare Provision (see also Annex C). The Energy Prices (Designated Domestic Energy Price Reduction Schemes for Great Britain and Designated Bodies) Regulations 2022 (also in force) extends this designation to all district councils in England.
- 2.1.2 The support is intended to help households with their energy costs. The funds should not be used for any economic undertaking.
- 2.1.3 BEIS has confirmation from the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) that receiving EBSS Alternative Funding does not affect people's ability to claim other benefits, as well as confirmation from the Home Office that those with No Recourse to Public Funds can be recipients.

2.2 Subsidy Control Considerations

- 2.2.1 For the subsidy control rules to be engaged, various tests must be met one of which is that support from a public authority must be given to an economic actor, which means, a person or company placing goods or services on a market.
- 2.2.2 EBSS Alternative Funding is intended to be delivered to households across Great Britain through local authorities. Unlike EBSS or other energy bills schemes recently announced by HM Government, no businesses will be involved in either delivering or receiving this support.
- 2.2.3 Therefore, BEIS does not consider there to be subsidy control issues for EBSS Alternative Funding.

2.3 Data Sharing and Data Privacy

- 2.3.1 Local authorities, BEIS and contracted organisations will share personal and non-personal data in the form of reporting data, necessary for the purpose of enabling monitoring and to enforce compliance. This data sharing is governed by a Data Sharing Agreement between BEIS and local authorities.
- 2.3.2 The EBSS Alternative Funding data privacy notice is published online: <https://ebss.apply-for-energy-bill-alternative-funds.service.gov.uk/s/gb-privacy->

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notice. It sets out how BEIS will use the personal data collected from local authorities, consumers, contracted organisations and the rights of consumers. It is made under Articles 13 and 14 of the UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR).

- 2.3.3 Local authorities must have appropriate data protection arrangements in line with the UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR) and the Data Protection Act 2018. Local authorities must make clear to applicants that this data will be shared with BEIS.
- 2.3.4 Local authorities must ensure they meet the “Accountability” principle which makes it clear that they are responsible for complying with and demonstrating compliance with the UK GDPR. This includes keeping a record of processing activities under Article 30. For instance, records of any personal data breaches. Where the breach relates to the scheme, please notify BEIS through the contact details in Annex D.
- 2.3.5 Applicants are advised that they may be contacted for research purposes, and that their data will be shared with BEIS and appointed BEIS contractors for counter fraud, research and evaluation purposes. Their details will be held in a secure data system and they will not be contacted by any other third parties as a result. **All research is voluntary** and is not linked to the outcome of their application. They may withdraw their consent at any time if they change their mind. All contact details will be securely deleted from contractors’ systems after 2 years.

2.4 Searchlight Data

- 2.4.1 For the purposes of administering the scheme local authorities are permitted to utilise data held in DWP’s Searchlight data share, where there is a legitimate and proportionate case to do so. This can be for qualifying benefit claimants only, who will need to identify themselves as such during the application process.
- 2.4.2 Use of Searchlight is not mandatory, nor does it prohibit the use of other means to verify applications.

3. Communicating the Scheme

- 3.1 Local authorities must, as appropriate and practical, reference that the support payment is funded by HM Government in any publicity material, including online channels and media releases.
- 3.2 It is important to keep messaging consistent across the scheme. Local authorities should refer to the scheme as “EBSS Alternative Funding”. Any local communications concerning the scheme should include the need to make an application and provide guidance on how applicants can find the scheme on Gov.UK or through an internet search.
- 3.3 When publishing information on the scheme, local authorities should show due regard to the accessibility of the information to ensure different groups are reached.

4. Providing the Grant to Local Authorities

4.1 Principles

- 4.1.1 Where support payments have been provided to eligible recipients in line with this guidance and the scheme grant determination letter, BEIS will reimburse local authorities for the cost of providing EBSS Alternative Funding payments to eligible recipients.
- 4.1.2 Grant payments will be made under section 13 of the Energy Prices Act 2022.
- 4.1.3 All funds must be used for the sole purpose of providing EBSS Alternative Funding to eligible customers.
- 4.1.4 New Burdens funding will be provided to local authorities to cover the expected reasonable additional costs associated with the implementation of the scheme.

4.2 The Grant Payment

- 4.2.1 Initial grant payments will be made to local authorities in the week commencing 20 February.
- 4.2.2 Funding allocations will be based on BEIS estimates of the number of eligible households in each local authority.
- 4.2.3 Local authorities will be provided with eighty percent of the estimated cost of funding in a lump sum payment.
- 4.2.4 As part of the end of scheme reconciliation process local authorities will be provided with a balancing figure for remittance or recovery payment, reflecting the final true cost of making payments under the scheme.

4.3 Payment Reconciliation

- 4.3.1 Following the deadline for defrayal of payment to individual applicants on the 7 July 2023, a final payment reconciliation will take place.
- 4.3.2 To enable BEIS to complete the payment reconciliation, the local authority must submit the following detail to BEIS via email no later than the 31 July 2023 (full instructions will be sent to the LAs no later than 31 May 2023):
 - An excel spreadsheet showing (a) the value of each individual support payment;
 - (b) the Applicant Reference Number of the support payment (as detailed on Salesforce); (c) the date the individual support payment was posted in the local

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authority finance system; (d) the date the individual support payment was defrayed from the local authority bank account

- A written statement from the local authority's Section 151 Local Government Act / Section 95 Local Government (Scotland) Act Officer confirming the final payment date and amount
- A word table confirming the documentation provided and detailing the reason for any discrepancy in the figures. It is expected that the values on the Section 151 / 95 letter will match the value on the grant payment list, if they do not match then the local authority is required to explain why

4.3.3 Template documents for the above will be provided to all local authorities no later than the 31 May 2023.

4.3.4 The information provided will be used by BEIS to fully reconcile actual EBSS Alternative Funding payments made under the scheme against estimated allocations provided to suppliers. There will be a dialogue between BEIS and local authorities if required to agree the final reconciled figures.

4.3.5 Following the completed reconciliation BEIS will write to local authorities confirming:

- The total allocation of grant made to the local authority
- The value of eligible EBSS Alternative Funding payments delivered
- The balancing figure for remittance or recovery

4.3.6 Where a balance is due to local authorities BEIS will aim for this to be paid to the local authority in full within 30 working days of the reconciliation notification.

4.3.7 Any undispersed funding resulting from monies which exceed the total sum of payments delivered will need to be returned to BEIS in full within 30 working days of the receipt of the reconciliation notification. The notification will provide full details of how to make any payment.

5. Providing the Support Payment to Eligible Households

5.1 General Principles

- 5.1.1 The primary principle of the EBSS Alternative Funding scheme is to provide equivalent support to domestic households who have not automatically received EBSS support as they do not have a domestic electricity supply contract.
- 5.1.2 The scheme targets households who are responsible for paying for energy used in their primary dwelling as part of a service charge, rent or other arrangement, for example via a commercial electricity supply contract. Households who are not responsible for paying for their energy use are not in scope of the scheme.
- 5.1.3 In all cases the dwelling for which support is being claimed must be the sole or main residential address of the applicant. To be eligible for the scheme households must be able to provide sufficient proof of address to allow confirmation that the dwelling is their sole or main domestic residence.
- 5.1.4 Households must be resident at the eligible premises on the date they apply for the scheme.
- 5.1.5 Only one payment may be made per eligible domestic premises. Where an address comprises two or more separate eligible occupied domestic premises, each premises must demonstrate eligibility for an EBSS Alternative Funding payment.
- 5.1.6 All eligible applicants must receive the payment in full. For example, the support payment cannot be used to offset Council Tax arrears.

5.2 Eligibility Criteria

- 5.2.1 To be eligible for EBSS Alternative Funding applicants must meet the following criteria on the date of their application:
- The dwelling for which support is being claimed is the sole or main residential address of the applicant
 - The household is responsible for paying for energy used in the dwelling as part of a service charge, rent or other arrangement, and may, through these charges increasing have the impact of increased energy bills costs passed on to them between 1 October 2022 and 31 March 2023
 - The household is not eligible for or already receiving EBSS payments, either through the main EBSS scheme or the EBSS Alternative Funding, in whole or in part
 - The household dwelling is not a business premises or other form of non-domestic premises, is used wholly or mainly for domestic purposes, with the exception of

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businesses whose main business activity is to provide long term residential accommodation (landlords, care homes etc). Only households, and not the businesses themselves, may apply for EBSS Alternative Funding

- 5.2.2 These criteria apply to the address that is receiving payment. It is possible that an individual may move from an EBSS-eligible address to an EBSS Alternative Funding-eligible address. In this case, as long as the applicant meets the other eligibility criteria when applying for EBSS Alternative Funding, they will be considered to be eligible to receive the payment.
- 5.2.3 Local authorities should use their local knowledge and the definitions and criteria set out in this guidance to assist in making a decision on eligibility of a household for this scheme.

5.3 Households Eligible for EBSS Alternative Funding

- 5.3.1 Provided they can provide sufficient proof of address and are not otherwise ineligible, households eligible for EBSS Alternative Funding include:
- park home **residents**
 - housing association, social and private **tenants, and leaseholders, supplied via a landlord with a commercial meter**
 - partly and wholly self-funded care home residents (where they make any contribution to their costs, as opposed to NHS funded residents)
 - households in house **boats on residential moorings**
 - households on a **private electricity network, for example those supplied by a heat network**
 - off-grid households
 - **traveller households on authorised sites**
 - households in **non-permanent /supported accommodation**
- 5.3.2 In some circumstances, households may have been paid in part under the main EBSS scheme, but due to a change in circumstances (e.g. they had to move out of their own home and into non-permanent accommodation) are eligible to apply under EBSS Alternative Funding. Local authorities are not asked to check that change in circumstances, however they must still be otherwise eligible in order to apply.
- 5.3.3 Where one of these categories does not apply or where it is not materially clear whether a household falls into one of the eligible categories, the decisions on the eligibility of each household will be at the local authorities' discretion, provided the application is consistent with the scheme eligibility criteria set out in section 5.2.
- 5.3.4 If the premises contains more than one eligible household as defined in this guidance, for example care home residents, each of the households will be eligible for the payment. This does not include houses in multiple occupation (HMO) as they would only be eligible for one payment for the whole property in line with main EBSS scheme, rather than one payment per person.

5.4 Eligible Households on Business Premises

- 5.4.1 All businesses and other non-domestic premises are excluded from directly receiving EBSS Alternative Funding, except:
- Residents of businesses providing long term residential accommodation including landlords and care homes
 - Farmers living in domestic farmhouses on a farm
- 5.4.2 Where a small part of a domestic premises is used by a home-based business (for example a bedroom used as an office) this will not exclude a household as eligible, provided the other eligibility criteria have been met.

5.5 Households in Non-permanent Accommodation

- 5.5.1 Households in non-permanent accommodation (e.g. sheltered accommodation or caravans in holiday parks), where they are responsible for paying utilities, and have been resident for over 1 month prior to application, should be eligible subject to fulfilling other criteria. Households are asked to select that they live temporary accommodation as part of the application process. Local authorities will need to confirm their status, including requesting evidence.
- 5.5.2 Where a local authority is aware that a household has already received an EBSS Alternative Funding payment at a previous non-permanent address, the second application must be refused.

5.6 Exclusions to EBSS Alternative Funding

- 5.6.1 Premises that have a primary domestic supply contract (or deemed contract) are eligible for funding through the main EBSS scheme and are therefore excluded from receiving EBSS Alternative Funding. This includes:
- where a landlord rather than a tenant holds the domestic electricity supply contract, and therefore the landlord is eligible for the EBSS payment (and should have passed the benefit through to their tenants)
 - premises who have previously received one or more EBSS payments, including where a premises has multiple
 - unrelated meter points which have been excluded from EBSS eligibility
- 5.6.2 Second or holiday homes are excluded from EBSS Alternative Funding. The dwelling must be the sole or main residential address of the applicant.
- 5.6.3 The following groups are excluded from the scheme:
- households without a fixed address, for example house boats without a permanent mooring
 - students living in purpose-built student accommodation (PBSA)

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- seasonal workers living in associated accommodation
- service occupiers – such as security, building caretakers, property guardians
- fully publicly-funded care home residents who do not contribute to their costs as these are covered by the NHS

5.6.4 The following circumstances would also not be eligible:

- the individual submits an application that is not within the appropriate timescales (e.g. after it ends)
- the applicant does not have a valid bank account (all Post Office card accounts (POca) have been closed as of December 2022 so the applicant will not be supplying POca details)
- somebody else in the property has applied – duplicate application
- address mismatch (e.g. wrong flat or house number)
- invented address or residents in address
- duplicate application but with different bank account details

6. Application Process

- 6.1 An application process is required for all applicants for the EBSS Alternative Funding payment. The application process for this scheme will be jointly administered by BEIS and local authorities.
- 6.2 BEIS has built a digital system using Salesforce to manage the application process. This will be accessed via an internet browser at [address]. The system will be used for:
- applicants to check their eligibility
 - applicants to apply
 - applicants to upload documentation needed for evidence
 - local authorities to receive applications
 - local authorities to access applicant information and related documentation
 - local authorities to process applications, including uploading of further information gathered
 - local authorities to provide data to BEIS on the status of applications
 - BEIS and local authorities to share applicant information and data through the system
 - local authorities to upload screenshots of evidence for assurance purposes
- 6.3 At all stages of the application process, both BEIS and local authorities must make clear to applicants that data may be shared between the organisations. The BEIS privacy notice, setting out how BEIS will handle personal data will be published as part of the application website.
- 6.4 The application process should enable local authorities to carry out the required checks (see section 8 “Role of Local Authorities”) as well as to comply with the minimum data reporting requirements (see section 11 “Monitoring and Reporting Requirements”).
- 6.5 The application process may be completed by a third-party where necessary, for example an individual with power of attorney can complete an application on behalf of an eligible applicant in a care home.
- 6.6 Applicants will not be able to re-access an application on the portal once it has been submitted. Therefore, they will not be able to change or add to their application once it is submitted. After submission, they will get a reference number through via email, if they did not provide an email address, they will get a notification by post produced through gov.notify.

7. Role of BEIS

7.1 BEIS is responsible for the scheme policy and design, administering the application process, conducting initial eligibility checks and scheme communications.

7.2 Application Portal, Assisted Digital Contact Centre and Application Management Portal

7.2.1 BEIS is responsible for administering the digital application systems and assisted digital call centre. All applications must be made through these routes and local authorities must not establish other routes for making an application.

7.2.2 The application system is accessed via an internet browser on Gov.UK. The system will be used for:

- applicants to check their eligibility
- applicants to apply
- applicants to upload documentation needed for evidence

7.2.3 BEIS is responsible for gathering application evidence related to bank details, address, and eligibility during the application stage of the scheme. BEIS will not verify uploaded documentation before it is passed to local authorities.

7.2.4 For applicants without a Council Tax record, a scan or photograph of a physical document, or a digital copy of at least one of the following documents should have been uploaded by the householder to Salesforce:

- valid UK driving licence (provisional or full driving licence)
- utility bill dated no earlier than 3-months before the application date (mobile phone bills and credit card statements are not accepted)
- benefits entitlement letter from within the last 6 months
- a current tenancy agreement - If an in-date agreement is not provided, local authorities should request written confirmation that the tenancy is current (e.g. an email from the landlord or Managing Estate Agent confirming the tenancy). Other relevant types of evidence, for example occupation certificates in Wales, could be used
- for permanent residents of a boat: a signed, dated (no earlier than 3-months before the application date) letter from a boat mooring provider that states the applicants name and address and that they live permanently on a long-term home mooring is also acceptable evidence.
- For any application from a care home resident, Salesforce should include a copy of an invoice in the name of the applicant for care home fees, or a letter on headed paper from the care home owner / management, to confirm the named applicant is partly or wholly self-funded. These documents must be dated no earlier than 3-months before the application date and include the name and address of the care home.

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- 7.2.5 Assisted digital phone support is available for applicants who are not able to make an online application- The freephone telephone number for the centre is 0808 175 3287. The contact centre is open Monday to Friday, 08.00 to 18.00.
- 7.2.6 The contact centre can, where required, support applicants through the application process, provide support with eligibility questions complete the online form on behalf of the applicant and provide applicants with details on their application status. If evidence is required as part of these applications, this evidence will be sent (either electronically or by post) to the call centre, who will upload it to the case.
- 7.2.7 The application portal and contact centre will close to new applicants at 23:59 on Wednesday 31 May 2023.
- 7.2.8 The digital application management system, Salesforce, will be used by BEIS and local authorities to:
- manage all applications
 - access applicant information and related documentation
 - process applications and manage checks
 - report data
 - provide assurance evidence

7.3 BEIS Initial Verification Checks

- 7.3.1 BEIS is responsible for conducting initial verification checks on all applications made and for retaining assurance evidence against these checks. BEIS will conduct the following checks:
- initial applicant eligibility checks
 - checks against eligibility for an EBSS payment
 - bank account verification
 - checks that the applicant has not already applied for EBSS Alternative Funding or has an application in progress
- 7.3.2 In the small number of cases where bank account verification not been possible, BEIS will request alternative bank account evidence at application stage.
- 7.3.3 Local authorities are not required to re-conduct the checks made by BEIS.

7.4 Forwarding Applications to the local authority

- 7.4.1 On a daily basis, applications which have passed the initial BEIS checks will be sent to the relevant local authority. This information will be available through the Salesforce system as a case management portal that would allow local authorities to see all applications for their area and update the central database in real time with progress. Local Authority Portal Guidance for local authority officials has been developed and provides a step-by-step guide for using the system. This is based on

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the user journey for local authority case workers and shows them, plus call centre staff, what screens they will see as they go through the process of logging in, viewing cases and moving cases along the built-in workflow. This is a more traditional user manual based on the specific set up BEIS has for the project. The Local Authority Portal Guidance also includes links to general Salesforce content where appropriate.

- 7.4.2 Applications which have passed BEIS checks will be passed to local authorities to complete final eligibility checks and if appropriate process payment. BEIS has designed the process with the aim of reducing to a minimum the number of occurrences where local authorities might be required to exercise discretion on issuing a payment.

7.5 Communicating the Application Status

- 7.5.1 Applicants who are deemed ineligible at the initial application stage will be informed by BEIS using gov.notify.
- 7.5.2 Once processed by local authorities, applicants will be informed in writing (paper or electronic) when an EBSS Alternative Funding payment has been provided or when an application has been rejected. These notifications will be issued centrally by BEIS using gov.notify. Information used to send these communications (successful, cancelled or rejected and the possible reasons why) will be supplied using the information that local authorities include in the Salesforce system, using the provided drop-down menu. It is important that local authorities ensure the system is kept up to date and a clear record of the basis for the local authority decision is uploaded. If the status is not correctly updated, this will prevent notifications being sent.

8. Role of Local Authorities

8.1 Local authorities in Great Britain are responsible for eligibility checks and payment processing.

8.2 Data Access and Management

8.2.1 Local authorities will manage access to and processing of applications through the Salesforce case management system. Full details of how local authority case workers will use this system are detailed in the Local Authority Portal Guidance issued to all participating authorities.

8.2.2 Local authorities will be able to download bank detail data for successful applications in the form of a .csv file from Salesforce. This is enabled to assist local authorities with managing payments to successful applicants.

8.2.3 No other information will be able to be downloaded from Salesforce.

8.3 Local authority checks

8.3.1 Local authorities are responsible for completing the following checks on all applications.

8.3.2 All checks must be completed for each application.

8.3.3 Records of the checks made and their outcomes must be retained for all applications.

8.3.4 It should be noted that there is a distinction between cancelling and rejecting an application on Salesforce. If the application is cancelled, another application for the same address can be made, whereas if the application is rejected, the BEIS duplicate check will not allow another application at the same address. The local authority portal guidance details when an application should be cancelled and when it should be rejected.

(a) Duplicate Application Check

8.3.5 The local authority should carry out a duplicate check, to determine whether a previous application at the same address has been cancelled. This check can be performed by searching within the Salesforce system.

8.3.6 If the application is a duplicate of a cancelled case, you should use the comments field to link the two cases (by reference number). The information provided in both applications should then be used to confirm identity and eligibility for payment. This is because, if you could not verify information, BEIS has asked the applicant to

OFFICIAL

reapply and provide further information to help provide a clearer picture on whether payment is appropriate or not.

(b) Address check

- 8.3.7 The address check must confirm that the applicant lives at the eligible property.
- 8.3.8 Local authorities may use their discretion to confirm a match where there is a small discrepancy between names (for example a clear abbreviation).
- 8.3.9 Where the applicant has put an incorrect answer to "describe where I live", but all other checks and information that the local authorities hold on them show that they are eligible, the local authority can proceed with verifying the application as this information is mainly used for monitoring. In all cases, local authorities must make a clear comment to explain the difference and the basis for the final decision on eligibility reached.
- 8.3.10 Where possible, the address check should validate the applicant's address against Council Tax records. Where local authorities hold Council Tax exemption certificates (or other evidence for such an exemption) for addresses, these could also be taken into account.
- 8.3.11 If an application is submitted where the applicant's name conflicts with the Council Tax records the local authority must cancel the application. The applicant will be notified the person on the Council Tax record should apply instead.
- 8.3.12 Where there is no Council Tax record for the property, local authorities must assess the address evidence that has been submitted by the applicant at the application stage. If the evidence is unclear or missing details, local authorities should contact the applicant and request further evidence. If the address cannot be confirmed, the application must be cancelled.
- 8.3.13 Local authorities should rely on the uploaded material for verification of care home residents even where it holds evidence that a care home resident is partly or wholly self-funded. Other checks should only be used if the authority has access to the relevant information and the uploaded material does not suffice. If provided evidence and checks using locally held data are inconclusive, local authorities should contact the applicant and request further evidence. If the evidence shows the applicant is not eligible, the application must be rejected.
- 8.3.14 People living in purpose-built student accommodation (PBSA) are not eligible for the scheme. Local authorities should seek to identify all PBSA developments (university halls of residence) in their area and conduct an address check against these properties. Where a property is not included on this list the declaration from the application can be accepted as confirmation of eligibility.
- 8.3.15 If a local authority is aware that any application comes from any excluded premises or applicant (see section 5.6), for example where the address details indicate that

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the application is ineligible, the application must be rejected and treated as suspected fraud as per the process set out in section 9. If rejected, the comments box must be used to clearly state the reasons why.

- 8.3.16 If the applicant has selected that they live in non-permanent accommodation, local authorities must request proof that the household has been in residence for 1 continuous month (e.g. via confirmation from relevant housing authority), or if this information is not available can contact the applicant to ask for proof. This can be a temporary housing provider letter. The document must:
- be dated from the application date and no later than 1 month after
 - confirm the name and address of the accommodation
 - confirm the applicant name and address
 - confirm the applicant has been resident for a minimum of 1 continuous month prior to the date of application.
- 8.3.17 For all applications any information which is relied on by a local authority must either be uploaded to Salesforce or retained by the local authority for 7 years and provided to government as and when requests for assurance sampling.
- 8.3.18 A statement detailing how the Council completed the address check and why it is satisfied on eligibility. For assurance purposes, BEIS requires that any information which is relied on by a local authority must either be uploaded to Salesforce or retained by the local authority for 7 years and provided to government as and when requests for assurance sampling.
- 8.3.19 If Searchlight provides evidence used to make the decision, the comments section must be used to detail what the evidence was and how it helped confirm eligibility or otherwise. Sufficient information must be captured to allow the same search to be re-run if required for later assurance sampling.

(c) Second home check

- 8.3.20 The EBSS Alternative Funding support is only payable to householders on their primary residence – secondary or holiday homes are not eligible to receive this payment.
- 8.3.21 BEIS accepts that for many local authorities there is no clear way to verify whether a home is a primary residence and unless the local authority has a system in place which records whether a home is the primary residence (such as coding on the Council Tax system) then the self-declaration from the application can be accepted as confirmation of eligibility with no further check required by the local authority.
- 8.3.22 For any local authority that does record whether a home is the primary residence, then the local authority should where possible complete a cross check on any information regarding second homes to verify the self-declaration and upload evidence of that check to Salesforce for future assurance purposes.

OFFICIAL

8.3.23 If at any stage in the future the local authority is made aware that property was not the primary resident of the application at the time of the application to EBSS Alternative Funding, then this must be treated as suspected fraud and the process set out in section 9 (Fraud and Error) of this guidance must be followed.

8.3.24 A statement detailing how the local authority completed the primary residence check and why it is satisfied on eligibility, along with copies of any evidence relied upon that has not already been uploaded to Salesforce, must be uploaded by the local authority to Salesforce system for assurance purposes.

(d) Empty Property

8.3.25 The EBSS Alternative Funding support is only payable to properties that are occupied at the date of application – empty properties are therefore not eligible to receive a payment.

8.3.26 BEIS accepts that for many local authorities there is no clear way to verify whether a home was occupied at the date of application and unless the local authority has a system in place which records whether a property is empty, or the property is known to the local authority to be empty (such as coding on the Council Tax system) then the self-declaration from the application can be accepted as confirmation of eligibility with no further check required by the local authority.

8.3.27 For any local authority that does record whether a property is empty, then the local authority should complete a cross check to verify the self-declaration and upload evidence of that check to Salesforce for future assurance purposes.

8.3.28 If at any stage in the future the local authority is made aware that property was empty at the time of the application to EBSS Alternative Funding, then this must be treated as suspected fraud and the process set out in section 9 (Fraud and Error) of this guidance must be followed.

8.3.29 A statement detailing how the local authority completed the empty property check and why it is satisfied on eligibility, along with copies of any evidence relied upon that has not already been uploaded to Salesforce, must be uploaded by the local authority to Salesforce system for assurance purposes.

(e) Bank account checks

8.3.30 Bank account checks will be conducted by BEIS using Paypoint at the initial verification stage and local authorities are not required to conduct further digital bank account checks.

8.3.31 Local authorities must conduct a check on all applications to ensure that the name on the bank account matches the name on the application. This is required because Paypoint verifies the banks details but not that the bank details align with the name on the application. Only bank accounts in the name of the applicant can be accepted currently. We understand that this may not be possible in some cases, for example where there is a local authority appointee. We are working to understand how the

OFFICIAL

journey would look for these cases, and further guidance will be included when this document is reissued on 10 March. If you receive cases where the applicant name does not match the bank account, please place this on hold and inform your relationship manager of the case number. This will not count towards the 30 working days processing target.

- 8.3.32 In the case of a joint bank account the applicant name must match the name of at least one of the account holders.
- 8.3.33 Local authorities may use their discretion to confirm a match where there is a small discrepancy between names (for example a clear abbreviation).
- 8.3.34 In some cases, bank account details will not be verified at the application stage. In these cases the applicant is required to upload a bank statement to progress their application.
- 8.3.35 An application will not be shared with a local authority until requested evidence has been provided, and the data share will indicate that the bank account details remain unverified, and the local authority will carry out verification using the uploaded bank statement, including to confirm that this applicant has provided personal account details, rather than business account details.
- 8.3.36 In these cases the local authority must conduct the following verification checks on the uploaded bank statement:
- the bank statement was issued in the past three months
 - the bank account is in the name of the applicant
 - the bank account is personal and not a business account
 - the account number and sort code match those inputted by the applicant
- 8.3.37 For all applications local authorities may choose to use a bank account verification tool, such as Spotlight, if they wish to undertake further bank account checks. This is not mandated. If an application fails the additional verification it may be cancelled. If the result of this check is inconclusive, the bank statement check must be used as the source for confirmation.
- 8.3.38 If the bank details cannot be verified the application must be cancelled.
- 8.3.39 In all scenarios a statement detailing how the local authority completed the bank account check and why the eligibility decision was made must be submitted. Copies of any evidence relied upon that has not already been uploaded to Salesforce (such as a screenshot from Spotlight), must be retained for assurance purposes.

8.4 Local Authority Correspondence with Applicants

- 8.4.1 The only correspondence undertaken by local authorities will be relating to checks that require further information from the applicant, e.g. bank account name does

OFFICIAL

not match the name on the application form. Also, to confirm in each instance when an application from a household in non-permanent accommodation has been resident for at least 1 month.

- 8.4.2 BEIS will provide a template for this correspondence and it will be issued using local authorities' own systems. The Salesforce system cannot be used for this.

8.5 Appeals, Objections and Complaints

- 8.5.1 The scheme is designed to limit the discretion that local authorities are required to exercise. The application process will minimise applications from ineligible households. An automated check against a database of EBSS recipients will prevent those who have benefitted from that scheme from applying for the EBSS Alternative Funding. Applications that pass this check and have confirmed they believe they are eligible through the Gov.UK portal will then be sent to local authorities.
- 8.5.2 Where there is uncertainty in relation to information passed to local authorities to support an application and authorities make a judgement, BEIS will support the decision reached.
- 8.5.3 Any applicant objections or queries that are related to local authority validation, will initially be directed to the call centre to try and resolve.
- 8.5.4 If the call centre receives a query about why someone has been rejected/cancelled, they will look into the case and provide the information to the applicant. They will have access to Salesforce to be able to do this check in real time. If someone wants to challenge that decision, they are told to contact their local authority.
- 8.5.5 Where a complaint is made to a local authority about how a decision is reached, that relates to a decision made by a local authority, this must be handled through the local authority's standard complaints procedures and timescales.
- 8.5.6 If someone is enquiring about why they have not been paid or when they will be paid, they will be told that they need to wait 6 weeks / 30 days from making the application, then contact their local authority. There is no situation where the call centre will need to contact a local authority to pass on information or a complaint.
- 8.5.7 BEIS is ultimately responsible for the overall policy of the scheme, and so any complaint submitted to a local authority regarding criteria and objectives of EBSS Alternative Funding should be referred to BEIS (notifying that complainant) via the contact details at Annex D.

8.6 Local Authority Pre- and Post- Payment Assurance

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- 8.6.1 All local authorities are required to follow this guidance and conduct activity to provide assurance that all support payments have been paid out to eligible applicants in line with the eligibility conditions for this scheme.
- 8.6.2 Assurance checks must only consider eligibility at the point of award, any change in a recipient's circumstance after the support payment does not mean a payment was non-compliant or irregular.
- 8.6.3 The requirement to complete assurance on all support payments made by a local authority is set out in the Grant Determination Letter. The general principle also applies that local authorities are responsible and accountable for the lawful use of funds under Section 151 of the Local Government Act 1972 and Section 95 of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973. The Section 151 / 95 Officer within the local authority is required to exercise their duties in line with the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) guidance, ensuring their oversight of the proper administration of financial affairs within the local authority, including these support payments.
- 8.6.4 The process must cover the checks prior to support being paid, which are outlined in section 5 (Providing the Support Payment to Eligible Households) of this guidance, but also the post-payment assurance checking regime that the local authority will introduce to identify irregular payments which is outlined in section 9 (Fraud and Error) in this guidance.
- 8.6.5 The Section 151 / 95 Officer must also be satisfied that within their local authority appropriate action has been followed to reduce and challenge the risk of fraud. This includes managing the award of support payments in line with existing local authority policy. A Section 151 / 95 Officer Declaration confirming that the local authority has taken appropriate action in relation to fraud will be requested from all Local Authorities as part of the minimum assurance sample check completed by BEIS.
- 8.6.6 Local authorities may want to use their own pre-payment assurance processes. Such processes must align with the scheme eligibility criteria and the evidence collected is either uploaded to Salesforce (recommended) or retained for 7 years for assurance purposes.

8.7 Providing the Payment to Eligible Applicants

- 8.7.1 All eligible customers must receive a single £400 EBSS Alternative Funding payment – no pro-rated or other amount can be paid.
- 8.7.2 Local authorities should seek to ensure that eligible applicants receive payments within 30 working days of receiving the application from BEIS.
- 8.7.3 In all cases payments must be posted in the local authority financial system by the scheme closing date of 30 June 2023 and defrayed out of the local authority bank

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account by close of play on 7 July 2023. Any payments made after these dates, no matter the reason why, will not be reimbursed by BEIS.

- 8.7.4 The EBSS Alternative Funding payment must be paid by the local authority by bank transfer to the eligible bank account as submitted by the applicant at the initial application stage and verified as part of the application process. Payments must not be made to any other account.
- 8.7.5 At least one person in each local authority will have access to download the payment details to use in your own payment systems. The report should be run as frequently as required. You should be aware that the report will only pick up items that have been tagged for payment for 24 hours or more. This is to prevent payments being missed or accidentally tagged as paid when they have not. Once you have completed the download, you must run the “payment management” task. This will automatically convert all those cases downloaded into “paid” on the system and trigger the notifications. You must not run this option until after the download.
- 8.7.6 If the payment fails, for example because the account has been closed, the application must be cancelled and the applicant will be told to reapply with different bank details.

9. Fraud and Error

- 9.1 The government will not accept deliberate manipulation and fraud. Applicants found to be providing false information to gain support payments will face prosecution and any funding issued will be recovered, as may any payments paid in error.
- 9.2 Local authorities must ensure the safe administration of support payments and that appropriate measures are put in place to mitigate against the risks of both fraud and payment error. In this respect, local authorities are required to supplement existing controls with the digital tools for the scheme to support efficient, appropriate and accurate support payment awards.
- 9.3 If, at any stage in the process, a local authority detects any actual or suspected fraud related to EBSS Alternative Funding it must carry out the following minimum steps:
- investigate the fraud in line with its own anti-fraud procedures and may wish to pursue referral of the case to police, however referral is at the local authority's discretion
 - notify BEIS of the actual or suspected fraud through Salesforce
 - instigate recovery of any grant paid in line with the EBSS Alternative Fund Debt Recovery Guidance
- 9.4 Where local authorities identify that a fraudulent payment has been made the case record must be amended to record the following information:
- Payment Fraud: Type of fraud (Type of Fraud selections provided in dropdown)
 - Payment Fraud: £ amount
 - Fraud Money recovered: £ amount
- 9.5 Where local authorities identify that a payment has been made in error the case record must be amended to record the following information:
- Payment Error: Type of error
 - Payment Error: £ amount
 - Error Money recovered: £ amount
- 9.6 As monies are recovered the local authority must update the record accordingly.
- 9.7 Debt recovery should not wait until the outcome of any fraud investigation unless the local authority is specifically advised not to pursue recovery by the Police. If the local authority is unable to recover a debt related to actual or suspected fraud, then this can be referred to BEIS in line with process set out in the Debt Recovery Guidance.

10. Assurance

- 10.1 Post payment assurance will be carried out by BEIS to ensure the effective management of public money. BEIS will undertake detailed assurance checks on a subset of payments to assess whether appropriate and robust processes were in place to complete the minimum assurance for operating the EBSS Alternative Funding Scheme.
- 10.2 For all EBSS Alternative Funding payments made, at a minimum, local authorities must be able to evidence:
- The date the EBSS Alternative Funding payment was made
 - Evidence of the name of the bank account to which the EBSS Alternative Funding was paid
- 10.3 It is expected that evidence to support household eligibility checks completed by the local authority (detailed at 8.3 of this guidance) will have been uploaded to Salesforce at the point of application and/or checking. If it is not possible for a local authority to upload all evidence it has relied upon when completing its check (such as evidence from the Council Tax register) then the local authority must retain this for assurance checking.
- 10.4 The requirement to retain any evidence not uploaded to Salesforce applies to grant applications approved and rejected.
- 10.5 Local Authorities must retain all documentary evidence for a minimum of 7 years from the date of award of grant to evidence the award of grant and the assurance checks completed.

10.6 BEIS Post Payment Assurance

- 10.6.1 BEIS will undertake a sample review of Pre- and Post-Payment Assurance System (PPAS) on this grant scheme. The PPAS check will assess whether both BEIS and the local authority had an appropriate and robust process in place to complete the minimum assurance checks at the two stages of application.
- 10.6.2 A subset of payments will be selected to be assured will cover different applicant types and will be chosen proportionally to the number of payments delivered by a local authority and the potential risk BEIS identifies in the payments.
- 10.6.3 Local authorities will capture assurance evidence as they process each application. Checks on the selected PPAS samples will therefore be undertaken without routinely requesting further information from local authorities.
- 10.6.4 PPAS will not recomplete the assurance check for the local authority but if any issues are identified then these will be communicated back to the local authority with a

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recommendation that its assurance process is revisited to ensure compliance with scheme eligibility.

- 10.6.5 PPAS checks will be completed after a local authority has agreed a scheme reconciliation¹ with BEIS and full detail² on providing the requested PPAS sample will be sent to the local authority following the issue of a Scheme Reconciliation Letter.

10.7 Debt Recovery

- 10.7.1 Where assurance checks discover that payments have been made in error, noncompliance, or have been claimed as a result of fraud, initial recovery action must be undertaken by the local authority. Local authorities must notify BEIS of any error, noncompliance or fraud through Salesforce.
- 10.7.2 BEIS has published Debt Recovery Guidance specific to the EBSS Alternative Funding and this must be followed. All recovered funds must be notified to BEIS within 30 working days of receipt in line with the process set out in the Debt Recovery Guidance.
- 10.7.3 A local authority must follow the Debt Recovery Guidance to demonstrate that it has acted in a reasonable and practicable manner in attempting to recover funds.

¹ DESNZ completes a reconciliation of actual spend by Local Authority against the funds paid to that Local Authority on the Energy Bills Support Scheme Alternative Funding grant.

² This will confirm the individual grants to be sampled, the detail to be submitted and the scheme specific Section 151 / 95 Officer Declaration.

11. Monitoring and Reporting Requirements

- 11.1 Use of the Salesforce application portal facilitates scheme monitoring and reporting and removes the need for local authorities to provide delivery reporting submissions to BEIS. As part of the application process local authorities must input data to the application portal and BEIS will undertake regular data collection directly from this source.
- 11.2 Data sharing and data privacy information is set out in section 2.3 of this guidance.
- 11.3 BEIS will use scheme data to support monitoring, evaluation and assurance of the scheme. This includes providing high-level performance reports including summaries of the number of payments made and total amount spent. We do this for a number of different reasons, including:
- Accountability – to provide a clear and transparent basis for why this policy has been implemented, and its progress over time
 - Efficiency – ensuring that we are maximising the value delivered from this public spending and ensuring opportunities for analysis and learning for the future
 - Effectiveness – ensuring that policy makes a positive impact and understanding the context of when that happens.
- 11.4 By using the case management system local authorities should continuously maintain up to date records including on the following data fields:
- open applications
 - applications for payment
 - closed applications
 - application outcomes
 - payment issue dates
- 11.5 For reporting purposes, data should be up to date by 12.00 on a Monday for data processed the previous week, or Tuesday if the Monday is a public holiday.

Annex A: Minimum Assurance Criteria to be Evidenced by Local Authorities

NOTES:

1. **BEIS will have completed an initial assurance check on an application to verify that it was not eligible to receive a grant through the EBSS main scheme prior to the local authority assurance checks**
2. **BEIS will require data to confirm individual payment date as part of the scheme reconciliation, this will not be requested through or detailed on Salesforce**

Beneficiary Type	Minimum eligibility criteria to be evidenced by local authorities – <i>evidence should already be uploaded to Salesforce by the applicant but if insufficient local authorities must obtain / upload appropriate evidence to satisfy all eligibility criteria</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In a rented property • in a home that has a heat network, communal or district heating • in a residential park home • on a farm • in a caravan or mobile home 	<p>1) Duplicate application check The local authority must record that it does not have a record of a previous application matching the name and address of the case they are processing. If there is a previous application then the reference number must be added.</p> <p>2) Bank Account Checks (where necessary) An electronic bank account verification check is conducted by BEIS at the point of application and if successful local authorities are not required to re-conduct this check. Where this initial check is unsuccessful the applicant is required as part of the application to upload a bank statement from the past three months – this will require checking by the local authority. The local authority check is to verify that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the bank account is personal and not a business account • the bank account is in the name of the applicant • the account number and sort code match those inputted by the applicant <p>The local authority must confirm where required that the check has been completed. Copies of any evidence relied upon that has not already been uploaded to Salesforce (such as a screenshot from Spotlight or any other digital tool used) must be uploaded by the local authority to Salesforce. A statement detailing how the Council completed the check and why it is satisfied on eligibility must be added.</p> <p>3) Address Check The local authority must verify that the applicant lives at the address as entered on Salesforce.</p>

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• the address must first be verified against the current Council Tax record<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ If the address can be verified against the Council Tax record then no further checks on the address are required but a copy of the Council Tax screenshot should be uploaded by the local authority to Salesforce (<i>if the local authority is unable to upload the evidence then a record of the evidence must be retained in the local authority system for a minimum of 7 years and must be made available to BEIS for checking if requested to support future audit</i>)○ If an application is submitted where the applicant's name conflicts with the Council Tax records the local authority must cancel the application• If the address cannot be verified against the current Council Tax record then the local authority must assess the evidence that has been submitted at the application stage <p>The address as recorded on at least one of the following documents must be verified by the local authority, and confirmed against the bank account address as recorded on Salesforce and verified by BEIS:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• a valid UK driving licence (provisional or full driving licence)• a utility bill dated no earlier than 3-months before the application date• a benefits entitlement letter from within the last 6 months• a current tenancy agreement• other relevant types of evidence, for example occupation certificates in Wales <p>If address verification is not possible from either the Council Tax record or the documents uploaded as part of the application then the local authority must cancel the application. The applicant will be notified the person on the Council Tax record should apply instead. Copies of any evidence relied upon that has not already been uploaded to Salesforce (such as a screenshot from Spotlight or any other digital tool used) must be uploaded by the local authority to Salesforce</p> <p>A statement detailing how the Council completed the check and why it is satisfied on eligibility must be added</p> <p>If Searchlight provides evidence used to make the decision, the comments section must be used to detail what the evidence was and how it helped confirm eligibility or otherwise. Sufficient information must be captured to allow the same search to be re-run if required for later assurance sampling.</p> <p>4) Second home check</p>
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	<p>BEIS accepts that for many local authorities there is no clear way to verify whether a home is a primary residence and unless the local authority has a system in place which records whether a home is the primary residence (such as coding on the Council Tax system) then the self-declaration from the application can be accepted as confirmation of eligibility with no further check required by the local authority.</p> <p>For any local authority that does record whether a home is the primary residence, then the local authority should complete a cross check on their systems to verify the self-declaration and upload evidence of that check to Salesforce for future assurance purposes. A statement detailing the additional check completed and why it answered the eligibility question, along with copies of any evidence relied upon that has not already been uploaded to Salesforce (such as a screenshot from the Council Tax system) must be uploaded by the local authority to Salesforce <i>(if the local authority is unable to upload the evidence then a record of the evidence must be retained in the local authority system for a minimum of 7 years and must be made available to BEIS for checking if requested to support future audit)</i></p> <p>5) Empty Property</p> <p>BEIS accepts that for many local authorities there is no clear way to verify whether a home was occupied at the date of application and unless the local authority has a system in place which records whether a property is empty, or the property is known to the local authority to be empty (such as coding on the Council Tax system) then the self-declaration from the application can be accepted as confirmation of eligibility with no further check required by the local authority.</p> <p>For any local authority that does record whether a property is empty, then the local authority should complete a cross check on their systems to verify the self-declaration and upload evidence of that check to Salesforce for future assurance purposes. A statement detailing the additional check completed and why it answered the eligibility question, along with copies of any evidence relied upon that has not already been uploaded to Salesforce (such as a screenshot from the Council Tax system) must be uploaded by the local authority to Salesforce <i>(if the local authority is unable to upload the evidence then a record of the evidence must be retained in the local authority system for a minimum of 7 years and must be made available to BEIS for checking if requested to support future audit).</i></p>
In a care home	<p>Checks 1 and 2 as per the first row</p> <p>3) Address Check</p>

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	<p>The local authority must verify that the applicant lives at the address as entered on Salesforce by completing the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • LA must validate the address eligibility against a copy invoice in the name of the applicant for care home fees or a letter on headed paper from the care home owner / management. The evidence must confirm the named applicant is partly or wholly self-funded, include the name and address of the care home and documents must be dated no earlier than 3-months before the application date. If evidence fails to include all the specified detail then the local authority should contact the applicant directly to request this evidence <p>Local authorities should rely on the uploaded material for verification of care home residents even where it holds evidence that a care home resident is partly or wholly self-funded. Other checks should only be used if the authority has access to the relevant information and the uploaded material does not suffice.</p> <p>Copies of any evidence relied upon that has not already been uploaded to Salesforce (such as a screenshot from the Council Tax records system) must be uploaded by the local authority to Salesforce (<i>if the local authority is unable to upload the evidence then a record of the evidence must be retained in the local authority system for a minimum of 7 years and must be made available to BEIS for checking if requested to support future audit</i>)</p> <p>A statement detailing how the Council completed the check and why it is satisfied on eligibility must be added.</p> <p>If Searchlight provides evidence used to make the decision, the comments section must be used to detail what the evidence was and how it helped confirm eligibility or otherwise. Sufficient information must be captured to allow the same search to be re-run if required for later assurance sampling.</p> <p>Checks 4 and 5 as per the first row should be confirmed as “No”.</p>
On a boat	<p>Checks 1 and 2 as per the first row</p> <p>3) Address Check –</p> <p>The address as recorded on at least one of the following documents must be verified by the local authority, and confirmed against the bank account address as recorded on Salesforce and verified by BEIS:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a valid UK driving licence (provisional or full driving licence) • a benefits entitlement letter from within the last 6 months • a signed, dated (no earlier than 3-months before the application date) letter from a boat mooring provider that

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	<p>states the applicants name and address and that they live permanently on a long-term home mooring</p> <p>If evidence fails to include all detail then the local authority should contact the applicant directly to request this evidence</p> <p>Copies of any evidence relied upon that has not already been uploaded to Salesforce (such as a screenshot from the Council Tax records system) must be uploaded by the local authority to Salesforce (<i>if the local authority is unable to upload the evidence then a record of the evidence must be retained in the local authority system for a minimum of 7 years and must be made available to BEIS for checking if requested to support future audit</i>)</p> <p>A statement detailing how the Council completed the check and why it is satisfied on eligibility must be added.</p> <p>Checks 4 and 5 as per the first row should be confirmed as “No”.</p>
<p>Non-permanent accommodation</p>	<p>Where a residence is known to be non-permanent accommodation but checks do not confirm this, additional evidence can be requested from applicants including those who can satisfy the evidence of name and address check</p> <p>Evidence of residence for 1 continuous month</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Temporary housing provider letter. The document must: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ be dated from the application date and no later than 1 month after ○ confirm the name and address of the accommodation ○ confirm the applicant name and address ○ confirm the applicant has been resident for a minimum of 1 continuous month prior to the date of application.
<p>Eligible households on business premises</p>	<p>Evidence of eligibility</p> <p>Evidence must be provided to demonstrate that the applicant is eligible against the following criteria. Acceptance of self-certification evidence will be at a local authorities discretion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The applicant is responsible for paying for energy used as part of a service charge, rent or other arrangement. • The household dwelling is distinct and separate from any business premises that shares the supply • The dwelling for which support is being claimed is the sole or main residential address of the applicant.
<p>Somewhere that does not fit into any of these categories</p>	<p>Evidence of eligibility</p> <p>Evidence must be provided to demonstrate that the applicant is eligible against the following criteria. Acceptance of self-certification evidence will be at a local authority's discretion:</p>

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The applicant is responsible for paying for energy used as part of a service charge, rent or other arrangement.• The dwelling is used wholly or mainly for domestic purposes, and is not a business premises or other form of non-domestic premises.• The dwelling for which support is being claimed is the sole or main residential address of the applicant. <p>Evidence of name and address check</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• address verified against Council Tax register• or where this is not available, address was verified against one of the following documents. The document must clearly show the applicant name, address and date:• full current UK driving licence (not a provisional driving licence)• utility bill from the past 3 months (cannot be a mobile phone bill or credit card statement)• bank statement from the past 3 months• current tenancy agreement• Council Tax exemption proof such as a bill or letter
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Annex B: Public Sector Equality Duty

- B1. As public bodies local authorities must consider equality in all decisions being made to comply with the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) under the Equality Act 2010, and publish information to show compliance with the PSED.
- B2. The aim of the PSED is to have due regard to the need to achieve the objectives set out under section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 to:
- eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Equality Act 2010
 - advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it
 - foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it
- B3. For the purposes of this scheme BEIS has completed a PSED assessment, a copy of which can be sent out on request. Local authorities should consider PSED when developing any local delivery decisions but do not need to complete an assessment on the scheme.

Annex C: Legal Gateway that allows LAs to access DWP's Searchlight data for the purposes of the EBSS Alternative Funding administration, but only for applications where there is a qualifying DWP benefit claim.

Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) lawyers have determined that the EBSS Alternative Funding support payments can be classed as Local Welfare Provision, as defined in the Welfare Reform Act 2012. As such, and subject to local authority adherence to Data Protection legislation, local authority staff administering the EBSS Alternative Funding can utilise data held in DWP Searchlight data share, where there is a legitimate and proportionate case to do so, and where the application relates to an individual with a qualifying DWP benefit claim who has identified themselves as such during the application process.

Annex D: Contact details

BEIS

If you have any queries about the content of this guidance or the operation of the scheme, you can contact BEIS at the Business Grants mailbox: businessgrantfunds@beis.gov.uk

Assisted Digital Call Centre

The freephone telephone number for the centre is 0808 175 3287. The contact centre is open Monday to Friday, 08.00 to 18.00.

The expectation is that the call centre can complete the online form using the applicant's details. If evidence is required as part of these applications, this evidence will be sent to the call centre, who will upload it to the case before it is passed to local authorities. This option is available for local authorities and support workers who are supporting those who are unable to apply themselves.

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Rushmoor Borough Council Energy Bills Support Scheme Alternative Funding Policy



Department for
Energy Security
& Net Zero

Contents

1.0	Purpose of the scheme and background,	4
2.0	Role of the Council.....	4
3.0	Eligibility criteria	5
4.0	Households Eligible for EBSS Alternative Funding	6
5.0	Application Process	8
6.0	Roles within the application process	8
7.0	Providing the Payment to Eligible Applicants.....	11
8.0	Communicating the Application Status	12
9.0	Local Authority Pre- and Post- Payment Assurance	12
10.0	Subsidies	13
11.0	Scheme of Delegation.....	13
12.0	Appeals, Objections and Complaints	13
14.0	Managing the risk of fraud.	14
14.0	Recovery of amounts incorrectly paid.....	14
15.0	Data Protection and use of data	15

Definitions

The following definitions are used within this document:

‘Department for Energy Security and Net Zero (DESNZ)’ (or the Department); means the Government department responsible for the scheme and guidance;

‘Eligibility Criteria’; means the criteria defined within this scheme which will enable a payment to be made;

‘Eligible Households’; mean the households that are eligible to claim the EBSS Alternative Funding;

‘End Date’; the end date of the scheme is 31 May 2023. Applications must be made by that date;

‘Energy Bills Support Scheme Alternative Funding or EBSS Alternative Funding’ means the scheme as defined by this policy and operated jointly between the Council and the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero (DESNZ);

‘Sole or main residence’; means the residence determined by the Council as the applicants only or main residence;

‘Start Date’; the start date of the scheme is 27 February 2023

‘Subsidies’; means the Government’s subsidy scheme – the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero (DESNZ) is of the opinion that this will not apply to this scheme; and

‘Timeframe’; means the scheme timescale as shown within paragraph 2.5.

1.0 Purpose of the scheme and background,

- 1.1 The purpose of this document is to determine eligibility for a payment under the Energy Bills Support Scheme Alternative Funding (EBSS Alternative Funding).
- 1.2 The Government's Energy Bill Support Scheme (EBSS) provides a discount on energy bills of £400 for most households in Great Britain. This scheme is being delivered through domestic electricity suppliers in six instalments from October 2022 to March 2023.
- 1.3 There are, however, a number of households who pay for their electricity in a different way, such as through a commercial intermediary or supply, and so will not receive support through EBSS. The Energy Bills Support Scheme Alternative Funding (EBSS Alternative Funding) has been created to up to provide a direct payment to these households.
- 1.4 The EBSS Alternative Funding is a non-repayable one-off payment of £400 to eligible households who have **not** received the main EBSS payment automatically to help with their energy bills between 1 October 2022 and 31 March 2023 but are still facing increased energy costs.
- 1.5 The scheme is being delivered jointly by Government and the Council and individuals will need to apply for the EBSS Alternative Funding using a GOV.UK portal. The Council is responsible for distributing support payments to eligible applicants within its area.
- 1.6 The Department for Energy Security and Net Zero (DESNZ) expects eligible households to include those with a commercial landlord or an intermediary, such as park home residents and some housing association tenants. The EBSS Alternative Funding is also expected to reach a significant number of vulnerable people, including self-funding residents in care homes.
- 1.7 Government is expecting approximately 900,000 households in Great Britain (around 3%) to be eligible for EBSS Alternative Funding. No household will be eligible for both the EBSS payment and an EBSS Alternative Funding payment.

2.0 Role of the Council

- 2.1 Any household wishing to apply for an EBSS Alternative Funding payment will need to make an application via GOV.UK <https://www.gov.uk/apply-energy-bill-support-if-not-automatic> and follow the instructions.
- 2.2 All applications must be made via this central application route. There are **no** other routes for applications.
- 2.3 The Department for Energy Security and Net Zero (DESNZ) will then perform a number of verification and eligibility checks, before passing applications onto the Council to perform some final checks and distribute payments. Government will reimburse the Council for the cost of making the EBSS Alternative Funding payments through grants under section 13 of the Energy Prices Act 2022.

- 2.4 The Council will only receive funding for payments made within the strict start and end dates as shown below. Should the Council make a payments outside of these dates it will be responsible for funding.

Scheme Timescales

- 2.5 The following key timescales have been set by Government and the Council will operate the scheme strictly in accordance with the dates given below:

Scheme 'go live'	27 February 2023
Scheme closes to new applications	31 May 2023
Final date for payments to be posted in the Council's financial system	30 June 2023
Final date for payments to be defrayed from the Council's bank account	7 July 2023
Final date for scheme reconciliation data to be sent by the Council to DESNZ	31 July 2023

3.0 Eligibility criteria

General Principles

- 3.1 The primary principle of the EBSS Alternative Funding scheme is to provide the equivalent support to domestic households who have not automatically received EBSS support as they do not have a domestic electricity supply contract.
- 3.2 The scheme targets households who are responsible for paying for energy used in their primary dwelling as part of a service charge, rent or other arrangement, for example via a commercial contract. Households who are not responsible for paying for their energy use are not in scope of the scheme.
- 3.3 In all cases, the dwelling for which support is being claimed must be the sole or main residence of the applying household and, to be eligible for the scheme, households must be able to provide sufficient proof of that to the Council. Households **must** be resident at the eligible premises on the date they apply for the scheme.
- 3.4 Only **one** payment will be made per eligible domestic premises and where an address comprises two or more separate eligible occupied domestic premises, **each** premises must demonstrate eligibility for an EBSS Alternative Funding payment.

Eligibility Criteria

- 3.5 To be eligible for EBSS Alternative Funding applicants must meet the following criteria on the date of their application:
- The dwelling for which support is being claimed is the sole or main residence of the applicant;
 - The applicant or resident is responsible for paying for energy used in the dwelling as part of a service charge, rent or other arrangement, and may, through these charges

increasing have the impact of increased energy bills costs passed on to them between 1 October 2022 and 31 March 2023;

- (c) The household is not already receiving EBSS payments, either through the main EBSS scheme or the EBSS Alternative Funding, in whole or in part; and
- (d) The household dwelling is;
 - (i) not a business premises or other form of non-domestic premises; and
 - (ii) is used wholly or mainly for domestic purposes, with the exception of businesses whose main business activity is to provide long term residential accommodation (landlords, care homes etc).

3.6 The above criteria apply to the address that is receiving payment. It is possible that an individual may move from an EBSS eligible address to an EBSS Alternative Funding eligible address. In this case, as long as the applicant meets the other eligibility criteria on the date of application for EBSS Alternative Funding, they will be considered to be eligible to receive the payment.

3.7 The Council will use its local knowledge, the definitions and criteria set out in this policy to assist in making a decision on eligibility of a household for this scheme.

4.0 Households Eligible for EBSS Alternative Funding

4.1 The following households **could** be eligible for EBSS Alternative Funding providing that they provide sufficient evidence to support their application to meet the eligibility criteria:

- park home residents;
- housing association, social and private tenants, and leaseholders, supplied via a landlord with a commercial meter;
- partly and wholly self-funded care home residents;
- households in house boats on residential moorings;
- households on a private electricity network, for example those supplied by a heat network;
- off-grid households;
- traveller households on authorised sites;
- households who live in a dwelling on business premises that is used wholly or partly for domestic purposes; and
- households in temporary or supported accommodation.

4.2 It will be the Council's decision as to whether the eligibility criteria is met in full.

Eligible Households on Business Premises

4.3 It should be noted that all businesses and other non-domestic premises are **excluded** from directly receiving EBSS Alternative Funding, except for households who live in a dwelling on business premises that is used wholly or partly for domestic purposes, including:

- Residents of businesses providing long term residential accommodation including landlords and care homes; and
- Wholly residential premises served by a commercial meter on a wider commercial site where the applicant is able to provide proof that the household dwelling is distinct and separate from any business premises that shares the supply.

- 4.4 Where a small part of a domestic premises is used by a home-based business (for example a bedroom used as an office) this will not exclude a household as eligible, provided the other eligibility criteria have been met.
- 4.5 Farmers living in domestic farmhouses on a farm could be considered eligible, subject to fulfilling the other eligibility criteria.

Households in Non-permanent Accommodation

- 4.6 Households in non-permanent accommodation (e.g., temporary accommodation or holiday parks), where they are responsible for paying utilities, and have been resident for over 1 month prior to application, may be eligible subject to fulfilling other criteria.
- 4.7 If the Council is aware that the address is likely to be non-permanent, then we will ask for additional proof that the household has been in residence for 1 continuous month.
- 4.8 Where the Council is aware that a household has already received an EBSS Alternative Funding payment at a previous temporary address, any second or subsequent application will be refused.

Exclusions to EBSS Alternative Funding

- 4.9 Any premises that have a primary domestic supply contract (or deemed contract) are eligible for funding through the main EBSS scheme and are therefore excluded from receiving EBSS Alternative Funding. This includes:
- where a landlord rather than a tenant holds the domestic electricity supply contract, and therefore the landlord is eligible for the EBSS payment (and should have passed the benefit through to their tenants); and
 - premises who have previously received one or more EBSS payments, including where a premises has multiple unrelated meter points which have been excluded from EBSS eligibility.
- 4.10 Second, holiday homes and empty dwellings are excluded from EBSS Alternative Funding. The dwelling must be the sole or main residence of the applicant.
- 4.11 Households who are not responsible for paying for energy used are not in scope of the scheme. Therefore, the following groups are **excluded**:
- (a) Students living in purpose-built student accommodation (PBSA);
 - (b) Seasonal workers living in associated accommodation;
 - (c) Service occupiers – such as security, building caretakers and property guardians; and
 - (d) Fully publicly-funded care home residents.
- 4.12 All of the above cases should be excluded from making an application through the GOV.UK portal.
- 4.13 As Government has determined that the payment is to be used for the purpose of energy, the amount will not be offset against any debt owed to the Council unless specifically requested by the applicant.

5.0 Application Process

- 5.1 An application for an EBSS Alternative Funding is required and the application process for this scheme will be jointly administered by Department for Energy Security and Net Zero (DESNZ) and the Council.
- 5.2 The initial application must be made via the GOV.UK online portal that has been made available by the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero (DESNZ). The portal will be used for the following purposes:
- To allow applicants to check their eligibility and make an application for the payment;
 - Allow applicants to upload documentation and evidence needed to support their application;
 - To allow the Council to have access to the applications and all related documentation; and
 - To allow the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero and the Council to share all relevant data and to review the status of the application.
- 5.3 Both the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero and the Council have developed privacy notices which comply with the minimum data reporting requirements. The privacy notice for the Department is shown on the application website. The Council's privacy notices are available on the Council's website.
- 5.4 Applications may be made and completed by a third part such as an individual with power of attorney.
- 5.5 Once submitted, an applicant will not be able to re-access an application via the portal. However, if an email is provided during the application process, an electronic notification will be provided. Where no email address has been provided, the applicant will be notified by post by Government.

6.0 Roles within the application process

Department for Energy Security and Net Zero

- 6.1 The Department for Energy Security and Net Zero is responsible for the initial application stages of the scheme. This will include establishing initial eligibility and the actual application process. No other process for making an application is available.
- 6.2 Where a customer experiences difficulties making the initial application, the Department provides freephone 'Assisted Digital' phone support on 0808 175 3287. The contact centre is open Monday to Friday, 08.00 to 18.00.
- 6.3 The application portal will close to applicants at 23:59 on Wednesday 31 May 2023 and final applications will be provided to local authorities by 23:59 on Friday 2 June 2023.
- 6.4 The Department is responsible for conducting initial verification checks and gathering all information for the scheme . The Department will check:
- (a) that the applicant has self-certified that they are eligible for the scheme;

- (b) that the applicant has not already applied for EBSS Alternative Funding or has an application in progress;
- (c) that the address is not eligible for an EBSS payment through the main scheme; and
- (d) bank account verification

6.5 Where the initial checks are made and the application meets those requirements, the relevant data will be passed to the Council.

6.6 Where applications fail the initial application process, the Department will notify applicants that they are not eligible for EBSS Alternative Funding and the reason why the application failed.

6.7 Applications which have passed Department's checks, will be passed to the Council in order for the final eligibility checks to be completed and where appropriate payment made.

Role of the Council

6.8 Once an application is received by the Council, it is responsible to complete a range of household eligibility checks **prior** to the award of any payment. All checks undertaken will be recorded using the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero's software system (Salesforce).

6.9 Government requires the following checks to be made by the Council:

Duplicate Application Check

6.10 The Council will check that there is no other record of a previous application being made by the applicant. Duplicate applications will not be processed. There may be occasions where the original application was cancelled by the Department. Where such situations occur, the Council will consider whether a payment is appropriate or not.

Address check

6.11 The Council is required to ensure that an applicant has their sole or main residence in the eligible property and will cross check information provided by the applicant against its relevant records including council tax.

6.12 Where the premises, or the applicant's residence at the property cannot be determined from the Council's own records, the Council will assess the evidence provided by the applicant at the application stage.

6.13 Where the Council is unable to verify the applicant's residence, the application will be cancelled and the applicant notified.

6.14 As part of the application process, all applicants will be required to scan or photograph a physical document, or a digital copy (but not a screenshot) of at least one of the following documents. These should have been uploaded by the householder together with the application:

- a valid UK driving licence (provisional or full driving licence);
- utility bill dated no earlier than 3-months before the application date (mobile phone bills and credit card statements will not be accepted);
- a benefit entitlement letter issued by the Council, His Majesty's Revenues and Customs or the Department for Work and Pensions within the last 6 months; or
- a current tenancy agreement - If an in-date agreement is not provided, the Council will request written confirmation that the tenancy is current (e.g., an email from the landlord or Managing Estate Agent confirming the tenancy).

6.15 For **permanent residents of a boat**, the Council will require a signed, dated (no earlier than 3 months before the application date) letter from a boat mooring provider that states the applicants name and address and that they live permanently on a long-term home mooring is also acceptable evidence.

6.16 For any application from a **care home resident**, the application must include a copy of an invoice in the name of the applicant for care home fees, or a letter on headed paper from the care home owner / management, to confirm the named applicant is partly or wholly self-funded. These documents must be dated no earlier than 3 months before the application date and include the name and address of the care home.

6.17 In the case of care home residents, the Council will only endeavour to use other evidence if the information provided together with the application is insufficient.

6.18 The Council is obliged to confirm to the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero where it has used other information to confirm the applicant's address where the information uploaded with the application is not used.

Primary residence (sole or main residence).

6.19 The EBSS Alternative Funding support is only payable to householders on their primary residence. Secondary, empty or holiday homes are not eligible to receive this payment.

6.20 The Council will undertake checks to ensure that it is satisfied that the premises are the applicant's sole or main residence. Council staff are experienced in determining the sole or main residence of taxpayers and as such will use that experience to determine whether the premises are the sole or main residence of the applicant.

6.21 Where this cannot be proven from information supplied by the applicant as part of the application process, the Council will make relevant enquiries. If at any time the Council is of the opinion that incorrect or false information has been provided by the applicant, or where the information conflicts with information previously provided by the applicant to the Council, no payment will be made and relevant action will be taken in line with this policy.

6.22 In such cases the Council will inform the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero of actions taken.

Empty Property.

- 6.23 The EBSS Alternative Funding support is only payable to properties that are the applicant's residence at the date of application. Empty properties are therefore not eligible to receive a payment.
- 6.24 Both the Council and the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero accept that there may be a delay in knowing that an applicant has taken up residence at an empty premises. Where the applicant can prove to the Council's satisfaction that they were in residence at the date of the application, the Council will take this into consideration.
- 6.25 In such case, and where payment is made, the Council is required to notify the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero.
- 6.26 If at any stage in the future the Council is made aware that property was unoccupied at the time of the application to EBSS Alternative Funding, then this will be treated as suspected fraud and action taken accordingly.

Bank account checks.

- 6.27 Bank account checks will be conducted by the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero at the initial verification stage and the Council is not required to re-conduct these checks.
- 6.28 In some cases, evidence checks completed by Department for Energy Security and Net Zero will be unable to verify the bank account details provided and, in these cases, the Department will request the applicant to upload a bank statement from the past three months.
- 6.29 However, the Council **must** conduct a check to ensure that the name on the bank account matches the name on the application. Where names do not match, the Council will cancel the application and include that as the reason for rejection of the application. There are exceptions where a third party has completed the application on behalf of the applicant, for example where the applicant is a care home resident. In such cases the Council will need to have evidence of the fact that the third party is acting on the applicant's behalf. In those cases, full details of the third party's status with the applicant must be provided.
- 6.30 In all cases, the Council is required to confirm with the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero as to why it is satisfied that the required checks have been met.

7.0 Providing the Payment to Eligible Applicants

- 7.1 All eligible customers who meet all of the required eligibility criteria and checks will receive a single £400 EBSS Alternative Funding payment. No pro-rated or other amount will be paid.
- 7.2 The Council will endeavour to make payments within 30 working days of receiving the application from the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero.
- 7.3 Whilst the scheme closes on 31 May 2023, all payments must be made and posted to the Council's financial system by 30 June 2023. As any payments made after that date will not

be recompensed by the Government, the Council will ensure that all payments are made on time.

7.4 All payments will be made by the Council by bank transfer and only to bank accounts that are held within Great Britain. These must be a current or joint account. The EBSS Alternative Funding can currently only be paid by the Council into the verified bank account.

7.5 Where an applicant does not have a bank account, the application portal will advise the applicant that they open one in order to receive the support payment. If the applicant has previously attempted to open a standard current account but not been able to do so, the portal will signpost them towards opening a basic bank account as this does not have the same credit check requirements.

8.0 Communicating the Application Status

8.1 Applicants who are deemed ineligible at the initial application stage will be informed of that fact by Department for Energy Security and Net Zero.

8.2 Once processed by the Council, applicants will be informed in writing (paper or electronic) when an EBSS Alternative Funding payment has been provided or when an application has been rejected. These notifications will be issued centrally by Department for Energy Security and Net Zero.

9.0 Local Authority Pre- and Post- Payment Assurance

9.1 The Council is required to follow all guidance issued by the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero and provide the necessary assurance that;

(a) all pre-payments and post payment checks have been made;

(b) all eligibility criteria have been undertaken; and

(c) the applicant is entitled to the payment.

9.2 The Council's Section 151 Officer will certify that the processes undertaken by staff fully meet the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero's requirements.

9.3 Where, at any time the Council established that payments have been made in error, full recovery of the amount from the applicant will be required.

9.4 Where fraud is suspected, the Council may undertake a full investigation and may look to prosecute the applicant with powers under the Fraud Act 2006.

10.0 Subsidies

- 10.1 EBSS Alternative Funding is intended to be delivered to households across Great Britain through local authorities.
- 10.2 Unlike EBSS or other energy bills schemes recently announced by Government, no businesses will be involved in either delivering or receiving this support. Therefore, the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero does not consider there to be subsidy control issues for EBSS Alternative Funding.

11.0 Scheme of Delegation

- 11.1 Officers of the Council will administer the scheme and the Section 151 Officer is authorised to make technical scheme amendments to this policy to ensure it meets the criteria set by Government through the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero's guidance.

12.0 Appeals, Objections and Complaints

- 12.1 The scheme is designed to limit the discretion that the Council is required to exercise. The application process will minimise applications from ineligible households and an automated check against a database of EBSS recipients will prevent those who have benefitted from that scheme from applying for the EBSS Alternative Funding.
- 12.2 Applications that pass this check and have confirmed they believe they are eligible through the GOV.UK portal will then be sent to the Council.
- 12.3 The Council is required to make decisions based on the information it has to verify these applicants. The circumstances of individual applicants will vary and some judgement may be required in certain cases, such as where the information held by the Council is not conclusive and additional evidence must be supplied by the applicant.
- 12.4 The Department for Energy Security and Net Zero considers therefore that such ambiguous cases should be decided by the Council.
- 12.5 Where there is uncertainty in relation to information passed to the Council to support an application, the Council is responsible for seeking additional information to resolve the uncertainty.
- 12.6 In such cases, where the Council makes a judgement, the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero will support the decision reached.
- 12.7 Any objections or queries that are related to the Council's validation, will initially be directed to the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero call centre to try, and resolve.
- 12.8 The call centre will be able to inform the user why they were rejected but not be able to change any status.

12.9 Where a complaint is made about how a decision is reached that relates to a decision made by the Council, this will be handled through the Council's standard complaints procedures and timescales which are available on the Council's website.

12.10 The Department for Energy Security and Net Zero is ultimately responsible for the overall policy of the scheme, and so any complaint submitted to a Council regarding criteria and objectives of EBSS Alternative Funding scheme will be referred to the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero.

14.0 Managing the risk of fraud.

14.1 Neither the Council, nor Government will accept deliberate manipulation of the schemes or fraud. Any applicant caught falsifying information to gain grant money or failing to declare entitlement to any of the specified grants will face prosecution and any funding issued will be recovered from them.

13.2 For the avoidance of doubt, the Council is required to undertake pre-payment checks and post-payment checks for all payments. This is a strict position and will include access to and cross-checking with Government data as well as data already held by the Council.

13.3 If, at any stage in the process, the Council detects any actual or suspected fraud related to a support payment from the EBSS Alternative Funding it must carry out the following minimum steps:

- It will take the lead in investigating fraudulent activity where the fraud is local (rather than organised, large scale, systematic or crosses local authority boundaries). The Council is expected to instigate the recovery of the support payment itself where a payment has been made in fraud/error;
- It must investigate the fraud in line with its own anti-fraud procedures and may wish to pursue referral of the case to local police, however referral is at the Council's discretion;
- It must instigate recovery of any grant paid; and
- It must notify the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero of the actual or suspected fraud.

13.4 It should be noted that debt recovery will not wait until the outcome of any fraud investigation.

14.0 Recovery of amounts incorrectly paid.

14.1 If it is established that **any** payment has been made incorrectly due to error, misrepresentation or incorrect information provided to the Council or the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero by an applicant or their representative(s), the Council will look to recover the amount in full.

14.2 Where assurance checks discover that payments have been made in error, non-compliance, or have been claimed as a result of fraud, initial recovery action will be undertaken by the Council and the Council will notify the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero.

15.0 Data Protection and use of data

- 15.1 All information and data provided by applicants shall be dealt with in accordance with the Council's Data Protection policy and Privacy Notices which are available on the Council's website.
- 15.2 The Department for Energy Security and Net Zero's Energy Bills Support Scheme Alternative Funding data privacy notice is published online: at GOV.UK. It sets out how the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero will use the personal data collected from local authorities, consumers, contracted organisations, and the rights of consumers. It is made under Articles 13 and 14 of the UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR).
- 15.3 Local authorities, the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero and contracted organisations will share personal and non-personal data in the form of reporting data, necessary for the purpose of enabling monitoring and to enforce compliance. This data sharing is governed by a Data Sharing Agreement between DESNZ and local authorities.

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CABINET

COUNCILLOR MARTIN TENNANT
MAJOR PROJECTS AND PROPERTY
PORTFOLIO HOLDER

14 MARCH 2023

REPORT NO. PG2310

KEY DECISION: YES

PROPERTY ASSET MANAGEMENT STRATEGY**SUMMARY:**

This report requests the approval of the overarching principles and key objectives set out in the attached Asset Management Plan document. The core principle is that all council owned assets/buildings need to be maintained at nil net cost to the Council on a revenue basis with specific exceptions where the Council/Community benefit in other ways.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

CABINET is RECOMMENDED to:

1. Approve the Asset Management Plan and in particular the three key principle objectives that enable the Council to govern the approach to how individual assets are managed.
2. Approve the following policy changes:
 - a) Garden land to be disposed of based on a valuation rather than a standard charge of £6 per sqm. Valuation and legal costs to be met by the purchaser as set out at paragraph 3.8.a
 - b) A revised approach to rent relief given to Community, Sporting and Charitable organisations as set out at 3.8.b
 - c) A revised process and charge for licences which provide residents permitted access rights across Council owned land for domestic purposes, such as access to and from their gardens as set out at 3.8.c.
 - d) Approve a change in approach to new/renewal leases for Voluntary Community Sector (VCS) Assets such that the agreed rent ensures that the Council at least breaks even to cover costs as set out at 3.8.d.

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to seek approval to a number of key policy principles relating to the management of key Rushmoor property Assets. These principles are documented in the overarching Asset Management Plan (AMP)
- 1.2 The AMP details the high-level objectives that the Council wish to deliver to support its wider Policies and Plans. Upon approval of the AMP key objectives, the Council will develop individual Asset Management Plans that will look at how each Asset can be managed to support the wider portfolio.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 Rushmoor Borough Council (RBC) has a typical Local Authority Property Portfolio which consists of a mixture of physical buildings that are Operational, Community, Regeneration and Investment properties. The Council also has Open spaces, Parks and other parcels of land.
- 2.2 The last Asset Management Plan has been fully refreshed to incorporate all RBC asset holdings.
- 2.3 The council recently implemented a property management system. This holds significant Asset Information, providing a full operational, compliance and financial overview for each individual asset.

3. DETAILS OF THE PROPOSAL

General

- 3.1 The AMP seeks to adopt 3 key objectives and apply these, as appropriate, to each individual asset. The key principles are:
 - I. Support communities & enhance place making
 - II. Enhance environmental sustainability
 - III. Achieve income to deliver the Council's priorities
- 3.2 If an Asset does not deliver the above objectives, it should be considered for disposal. Where an asset may deliver more than one objective, there will need to be consideration of the overall balance of objectives to be achieved. This will need to be considered in the context of the portfolio, individual asset and Council's financial needs and priorities.
- 3.3 The Asset Management Plan sets out the approach to achieving the key objectives at section 2.3. This recognises that while most assets are held for the above purposes some assets will be held and managed for a period within the portfolio for regeneration purposes and that in these cases the application

of the objectives will need to be modified based on regeneration objectives and length of time of the planned management.

- 3.4 The bringing forward of development proposals for some assets will be necessary to achieve the appropriate revenue and capital as required by the Council.
- 3.5 The aim for the Portfolio except for those elements identified above is to optimise the financial outcomes for the Council taking account of the other objectives relating to supporting communities, placemaking and enhancing environmental sustainability.
- 3.6 The Asset Management Plan sets out the work that has been done to assess stock condition, and energy performance of assets and maintain compliance. This work has identified significant maintenance and improvement requirements and the need to develop a long term maintenance and improvement schedule. While costs have been identified, at this stage the confidence in their accuracy is limited and this will be addressed over the life of the Asset Management Plan.
- 3.7 In taking a longer term view of the Asset Portfolio extensive work has been undertaken to forecast income over the next seven years. A baseline assuming all property events were to occur and making prudent provision for costs relating to them was developed. Following this a most probable model was evolved and this has informed the Outcome Based Budgeting undertaken for the 2023/24 budget. This approach enables the consideration of actions necessary to optimise and smooth income over the period, the opportunities for revenue growth and key risks.
- 3.8 As part of the AMP, it is proposed that a number of existing policies and processes are reviewed and updated.
 - a. Move away from a standard charge of £6 per sqm, where council land is disposed enabling Garden extensions to private home owners. A review of this policy suggests that this approach is unlikely to usually be consistent with the Council's duty to achieve best consideration for any disposal. It is therefore proposed that garden land disposals should be undertaken on a case by case basis with valuations obtained as appropriate at the cost of the purchaser.
 - b. Undertake a review of rent relief given to Community, Sporting and Charitable organisations. Currently there is a policy of providing a blanket 90% rent relief to such organisations. This policy does not take account of the rent charged, the service(s) provided to the local community and how it achieves the Council's objectives or the financial means of the organisation. So for example two organisations of a similar type could due to historical factors have very different rents. One may be paying a few hundred pounds and the other a few thousand pounds which could not be adjusted as they have long leases. Yet each will receive the same percentage of rent relief which will amount to very

different actual financial support. Similarly you can have an organisation with a turnover of £500K and another with a turnover of £10K both receiving 90% relief even though their rents are similar. So within the resources agreed by the Council through its budget process, it is proposed that a more sophisticated approach is taken. In future rent relief will be given due consideration based on the following factors:

- The extent to which the organisations meet the Council's priorities,
- Provides services which mitigate cost to the Council,
- Turnover and ability to generate income including activities of other parties within its demise
- Size of any new or renewal rent (recognising that where rents have increased significantly it may be appropriate to provide greater relief for a transitional period).
- Securing of investment in assets in the Borough
- Community reach
- Council's overall financial situation.

c. Standardise the charges for licences which provide residents permitted access rights across Council owned land for domestic purposes, such as access to and from their gardens. It is intended to more consistently regulate such arrangements and ensure formal licence agreements are in place. The proposed fee in future is £250 subject to an annual RPI uplift. Discretionary is to be provided to the Executive Head of Property and Growth to vary this in exceptional circumstances.

d. Implement a change in approach to new/renewal leases for Voluntary Community Sector (VCS) Assets such that the agreed rent is usually the passing rent or the rateable value. If a lower rent is agreed it must ensure that the Council at least breaks even to cover costs.

3.9 Revised policies and principles will be applied for all new/future lease/licence agreements. They will not be retrospectively applied.

3.10 Data held on the Property Management System will be used to support development of each individual asset management plan, aligned to the key objectives. The asset data will provide the necessary information to identify future activities upon which RBC can make assumptions about future income/expenditure (next 5-7 years). Further development of the Property Management System will enhance the effectiveness of property management and the extent and quality of data held.

3.11 The conglomeration of these individual asset management plans will provide the information and financial requirements of the portfolio at a strategic level.

Alternative Options

- 3.12 Do nothing – this will have adverse financial implications for the Council. Many of the current asset management approaches and practices that are in place have not been reviewed for a number of years. Subsequently, they are inconsistently applied and mis-aligned to the current economic/regulatory climate.
- 3.13 Delay – the Council is required to fund all regeneration activity from capital receipts. Therefore, any delay in establishing which assets fall within the strategic principle disposal category will impact the speed and extent of regeneration that can be achieved.

4. IMPLICATIONS

Risks

- 4.1 Some of the proposed policy and principles may be met with challenge from the local community as the Council seeks to take a more professional and sustainable approach to asset management.
- 4.2 From 1st April 2023, MEES regulation will prohibit landlords from leasing out commercial buildings with an EPC rating of F or G. There is currently one Council Asset that falls within this category. However, under a current Green Paper, the Government has proposed that the minimum EPC will rise to C by April 2027. There are currently 56 assets with a D or E rating. Consequently, without investment to upgrade, the Council may be unable to let impacting revenue income.
- 4.3 Data on building material costs shows that there has been significant cost inflation, as well as supply chain issues, following Covid and Brexit. This may consequently impact the Council's ability to maintain a timely and cost-effective maintenance/improvement schedule for portfolio assets.
- 4.4 Deteriorating economic conditions, a downturn in the property market and changing consumer/business habits may lead to a significant loss of income from the Council's property portfolio.

Legal Implications

- 4.5 Legal input will be required in order to review and update new lease and licence agreements in line with revised principles.

Financial and Resource Implications

- 4.6 The budget for 2023/24 is based upon the development of the Asset Management Plan and associated financial modelling. It includes initial investment to improve Energy Performance Certificates (EPCs) for Council owned assets, to meet the minimum regulatory requirement enforced by the government. The ongoing development of the Asset Management Plan will enhance the understanding of financial income, costs and risks.
- 4.7 Implementation of revised asset management principles will ensure that moving forward, assets no longer operate at a loss and as a minimum break even. This will positively support the overall revenue position of the Council.
- 4.8 The review of existing policies and practices currently in place and application of updated principles will require both property and legal resource support.

Equalities Impact Implications

- 4.7 There are no known Equalities Impact Implications arising from this report.

5. CONCLUSIONS

- 5.1 A review of the current processes and policies with respect to the Council owned assets has established that, in some instances, they are outdated and inconsistently implemented.
- 5.2 Development and application of the proposed AMP in line with the key objectives will support the Council to meet revenue targets while also ensuring consistent and fair practices are applied. Consequently, each asset will have its own asset management plan.

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS:

Appendix 1: RBC Asset Management Strategy

CONTACT DETAILS:

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RBC ASSET MANAGEMENT PLAN 2023-2030

CONTENTS

1.	INTRODUCTION	2
1.1	Council Priorities	2
1.2	Council Policy, Plans & Strategies	2
2.	ASSET MANAGEMENT PLAN OBJECTIVES	3
2.1	Key objectives	3
2.2	Definition of objectives	3
2.3	Approach to achieving objectives	4
3.	EFFECTIVE INDIVIDUAL ASSET MANAGEMENT PLANS.....	6
3.1	Property Management System Asset Data	6
3.2	Stock Condition Information.....	7
3.3	Property Compliance	7
3.4	Energy Performance Certificates	7
3.5	Void Costs.....	8
3.6	Cost of Borrowing	8
4.	FORECASTING INCOME	10
4.1	Occupation Termination	10
4.2	Break Options.....	10
4.3	Rent Reviews.....	10
4.4	Lease Regears.....	10
4.5	Forecasting.....	10
5.	FORECASTING EXPENDITURE	11
6.	PORTFOLIO RISKS	11
7.	POLICY & PROCESS CHANGES	12
7.1	Garden Land Disposals.....	12
7.2	Licences Approach	12
7.3	Voluntary Community Sector (VCS) Assets Approach	12
8.	APPENDIX 1: Property Management System Data Field.....	14
8.1	SITE.....	14
8.2	BLOCK.....	14
8.3	RENTABLE UNIT.....	14
8.4	OCCUPATIONS.....	15
9.	APPENDIX 2: Key Asset Overviews	16
10.	APPENDIX 3: Individual Asset Plan Output (Example)	20

1. INTRODUCTION

Rushmoor Borough Council has a typical Local Authority Property Portfolio which consists of a mixture of physical buildings that are Operational, Community, Regeneration and Investment properties. Further the Council has Open spaces, Parks and other parcels of land.

The Council has transferred its Council Housing as part of a stock transfer in 1995 which is now owned by Vivid Housing. The few remaining residential properties held by the Council are being transferred to a wholly owned subsidiary “Rushmoor Homes Limited” and as such these elements are not covered by this Asset Management Plan.

The Asset Management Plan (AMP) details the high-level objectives that the Council wish to deliver to support its wider Policy Objectives. As a result of the overarching AMP the Council will develop individual Asset Management Plans (AMPs) that will look at how each Asset can be managed to support the AMP. The plan is designed to ensure that the professional approach to property developed by the Council is consistently embedded across all the Council’s assets and ensure a corporate approach is applied. The plan will support that corporate and professional culture which enables effective and efficient management.

In preparation for the AMP the Council implemented a new Property Management Software System that went live in the Spring of 2022. The software supports data clarity, accuracy and accessibility. In readiness for the implementation of the software a collaborative multi-department led comprehensive validation of data was undertaken.

1.1 Council Priorities

The AMP has been developed to support the following Council priorities: -

People

Empowering and connecting communities and enabling people to live healthy and sustainable lives to fulfil their aspirations.

- Strong communities, proud of our area
- Healthy and green lifestyles
- Opportunities for everyone – quality education and skilled local workforce

Place

Ensuring our towns are family-friendly, safe, vibrant, and sustainable places - now and in the future.

- Housing for every stage of life
- Vibrant and distinctive town centres
- A thriving local economy - kind to the environment



1.2 Council Policy, Plans & Strategies

The AMP has been developed to support the Councils following Policies, Plans & Strategies

- [Business Plan 2021-2024](#)
- [Capital Strategy 2023-24](#)
- [Medium Term Financial Strategy 2023-2026](#)
- [Climate Change Strategy 2020-2030 and Climate Change Action Plan 2020-2030](#)
- [Council Plan 2022-25](#)

2. ASSET MANAGEMENT PLAN OBJECTIVES

In response to the Council's Priorities, Policy, Plans & Strategies the AMP has developed 3 key objectives. These are focused on the properties/land held for asset, organisational or community purposes and it is not intended to address properties within the regeneration portfolio. In developing these objectives consideration has been given to the Council's declaration of a Climate Emergency and enhancing environmental sustainability.

2.1 [Key objectives](#)

Support communities & enhance place making:

Maintain and enhance Assets that provide community inclusion, place make and support a green and healthy lifestyle

Enhance environmental sustainability:

Create a portfolio that has Environmental & Sustainability credentials and helps reduce the Borough's impact on the environment & response to the Climate Crisis

Achieve income to deliver the Council's priorities:

The portfolio will deliver a mixture of revenue income to ensure the assets are financially sustainable and underpin the Council's operational priorities and capital receipts to support delivery of the capital programme in particular regeneration.

2.2 [Definition of objectives](#)

The Council's Assets will fit within at least one of the criteria of the 3 Objectives. These are detailed below.

2.2.1 [Support communities & enhance place making](#)

- ✓ Community facility
- ✓ Promotes healthy or green lifestyle
- ✓ Provides opportunity for everyone
- ✓ Regeneration opportunity
- ✓ Place Making

2.2.2 [Enhance environmental sustainability](#)

- ✓ Investment required - (EPC, Stock Condition related)
- ✓ Meets Economic Development and Climate Change Policy
- ✓ Provides green credentials

2.2.3 [Achieve income to deliver the Council's priorities](#)

- ✓ Dispose of for capital receipt achieving best value
- ✓ Investment required prior to disposal
- ✓ No s-term action required
- ✓ Management required (lease extension, renewals, voids etc)
- ✓ Change of Use / planning opportunity
- ✓ Investment required to enhance the asset and generate greater revenue income

If an Asset does not deliver the above objectives, it should be considered for disposal. Where an asset may deliver more than one objective, there will need to be consideration of the overall balance of objectives to be achieved. This will need to be considered in the context of the portfolio, individual asset and Council's financial needs and priorities.

2.3 [Approach to achieving objectives](#)

2.3.1 Financial Performance

All asset decisions pertaining to the generation of one-off capital receipts versus ongoing revenue and the investment required to achieve these decisions, should be made in the context of the Council's wider Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS). As such, the financial performance of an asset should be aligned to the MTFS objectives and strategy.

At the time of publishing the AMP the Portfolio creates a Gross Revenue of approximately £8M per annum in 22/23. The Council has identified a substantial deficit per annum and as such the quantifiable objective is to grow the net revenue income of the retained Portfolio by 5% per annum.

The Council has ambitious plans to Regenerate both town centres and carry out various Capital Projects over the term of the AMP. It is currently adopting a principle that in general Capital Expenditure will be funded through the generation of capital receipts. An ongoing review of the Portfolio will therefore be necessary to determine the appropriate strategy for disposal that enables the Council to meet its regeneration ambitions without undermining its revenue income and taking account of the impact of any disposal on the risk profile of the Portfolio and the Council's risk tolerance in this regard.

2.3.2 Regeneration & Acquisition

There are a number of assets that are being purchased/constructed to support regeneration ambitions. Some of these will be managed within the property portfolio on a short or long term basis and the objectives will be applied as appropriate based on timescales

2.3.3 Property Development

Development and Redevelopment of existing land and assets such as Hawley Lane, Frimley Business Park and Belle Vue provide opportunities to generate a combination of Revenue and Capital. Further information can be found in the Appendix.

2.3.4 Asset & Property Management

Proactive asset and property management across the existing portfolio will help ensure that all income opportunities are optimised. This includes confirming all lease events (expiry, rent reviews and breaks) are considered ahead of the event and negotiations are entered into at the appropriate time. Equally, all lettable units should be in an optimum position to let, if currently vacant.

2.3.5 Enhance Environmental Sustainability

In line with Government objectives the Council will aim to improve the Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) to a minimum of a C by 2027 and a B by 2030. Where achievable, based on the scope of works; any major refurbishment projects will aim to achieve a Grade B and new build properties, not currently under construction will aim to achieve an A rating. Further any major refurbishment or new build projects that are eligible will engage in the BREEAM process and look to achieve a Minimum of "Good."

The extent to which the Council can achieve its objectives will be limited by the terms of lease. Where leases are on a full repair basis the occupiers have no obligation to improve the property nor to allow the Council to do so during occupation. The Council may seek to negotiate improvements but has no power to require it. In seeking to optimise the environmental sustainability of its assets the Council will have regard to the value for money of any proposals.

2.3.6 Support communities & enhance place making

The property Assets held by the Council should enhance the Community and Placemaking of the Borough. However, these assets also need to be financially sustainable and generate sufficient income to cover their running and investment costs. Typically, assets that fall within this category will:

- Support the Council's priorities (directly or indirectly)
- Provide services which mitigate cost to the Council,
- Achieve community reach to significant demographic groups or have a substantial impact

Organisations that are providing significant Community and Placemaking benefit, that also lease Council property should be given lease terms that are commensurate with their needs to ensure longevity. Many sports clubs won't meet their relevant sporting associations criteria for grant funding, unless they have a reasonable period of certainty within their lease and therefore extension of leases will be considered to enable this to be achieved on appropriate terms.

3. EFFECTIVE INDIVIDUAL ASSET MANAGEMENT PLANS

- Each asset will have its own individual Asset Management Plan. The Plans will detail the approach for each asset and will categorise them under the 3 Principal Objectives. Some assets may achieve multiple objectives, this will be the case with the financial objectives as an income producing asset could be held for revenue or disposed of for capital.
- Where the qualitative objectives are strongest these are most likely to be retained for income rather than disposal.
- Some “Community Assets” may not support the financial objectives of the Council but will support the qualitative objectives and will be retained as such.
- As part of the individual Asset Management Plans, a cross-section of data will be collated to inform wider financial and strategic decision making on each asset. A confidence rating has been provided against each data category in order to provide an indicative view around the data reliability. For example, where information is definitively known, the confidence level will be high. However, where data is based on a series of assumptions and predictions to create estimates, the data will be less reliable and subsequently the confidence level is likely to be significantly lower.

3.1 [Property Management Asset Data](#)

The Council’s Property Management System holds significant Asset Information. The Estates Team has a dedicated Property Systems Administrator who manages the data within Property Management System. Much of the data required to prepare the individual Asset Management Plans at a Property level can be extracted.

The information held on the individual Asset Management Plans will provide an Operational overview of that Asset. The conglomeration of these Plans will provide the information and financial requirements of the portfolio at a strategic level.

The following Information is currently available on Property Management System and will be used to inform the individual AMPS. Field level data held can be found in Appendix 1.

SITE

The Site relates to an Asset as identified on the Asset Register. Data includes the asset number, site name and address information.

BLOCK

A Block relates to a separate entity within an Asset as identified on the Asset Register. As an example, Frimley Business Park is a single Asset, but each building is a Block.

RENTABLE UNIT

A Rentable unit relates to a separate lettable entity within a Block. As an example, Frimley Business Park Building 4.3 is a Block, but has multiple units. The EPC information is held at this level.

OCCUPATIONS

An occupation is the details of individual rental agreements, these are held against a rentable unit and will include data around rent rates/renewal dates and maintenance obligations

3.1.1 Confidence Level

- The confidence level for data held on Property Management System is 1 HIGH (GREEN). Data has been verified by Surveyors and cross referenced against existing financial records.

3.2 [Stock Condition Information](#)

- For all assets, where RBC are responsible for maintenance a Stock Condition Survey has been prepared. A five-year maintenance schedule will be determined, using these surveys as the key input. The schedule will provide high-level indicative timing and cost of works on an annual forecast basis between 2023 and 2030. This will be a time-consuming exercise so the immediate focus will be on the c.35 properties where RBC have maintenance and repair responsibilities
- Stock Condition Surveys are used to create PPM (Planned Preventative Maintenance) Schedules, these are used to predict future expenditure, however not all expenditure can be predicted, and a suitable “reactive” budget will be provided to capture unforeseen repairs.

3.2.1 Confidence Level

- The confidence level for costs is 3 LOW (RED). Costs will be estimated internally for the majority of assets and where individual feasibility studies have been prepared / or quotes obtained these figures will be utilised.

3.3 [Property Compliance](#)

- In order to ensure the Council meets its statutory and regulatory responsibilities, a global view of Statutory, non-statutory and insurance compliance levels will be provided for each asset. This will be supported with required funding estimates to improve the status, where the asset is not deemed to currently be at the desired level of compliance.
- A 5-year forecast will be produced linked to the annual cost of compliance works.

3.3.1 Confidence Level

- The confidence level for costs is 2 MEDIUM (AMBER). Costs will be estimated internally for the majority of assets and where individual feasibility studies have been prepared / or quotes obtained these figures will be utilised.

3.4 [Energy Performance Certificates](#)

- Energy Performance Certificates (EPCs) were established for property in the UK in 2007 and have continued to evolve over the years. There remain differences between the non-domestic (commercial property) and domestic (residential) EPCs and the rules implementing these EPC standards for each part of the property market.
- Minimum Energy Efficiency Standards (MEES) are minimum requirements for EPC ratings enforced by the government. These regulations are being extended in April 2023.
- From 1st April 2023, MEES regulation will prohibit landlords from leasing out commercial buildings with an EPC rating of F or G, (though there is a slight loophole which is not closed until 2025).
- Under a current Green Paper, the Government has proposed that the minimum EPC will rise to C by April 2027
- The 2020 Energy White Paper confirmed that the future trajectory for the MEES Non-domestic will be an EPC B by 2030.
- Steps 2 & 3 are still awaiting confirmed Government policy decision, but we have assumed the deadlines are likely to become mandatory.
- The Council as landlord has to bear the direct cost of improving a buildings energy performance to the required EPC standard and bearing in mind: -
 - the size of Rushmoor’s commercial property portfolio (over 220 properties)
 - the time it takes to organise and complete the bespoke building works at each property
 - the easy (and reduced costs) of doing the works if the property is vacant)
 - the impact on each tenant,
 - the increased cost of doing the improvement works twice in smaller steps.

- There is likely to be a financial saving over time, to Rushmoor to implement the required works to bring each property straight up to the EPC B and a reduction on climate impact in doing the works early.
- The existing EPC score for all properties will be captured. However, at a high-level, the table below summarises the current position

EPC Rating	Number of Corresponding Assets
A	5
B	16
C	29
D	31
E	26
F	1
No EPC Available	1 – Southwood Visitor Centre and Café

3.4.1 Confidence Level

- The confidence level for costs to improve EPC ratings is 3 LOW (RED). Costs will be estimated internally for the majority of assets and where individual feasibility studies have been prepared / or quotes obtained these figures will be utilised.

3.5 Void Costs

Where an asset is likely to be vacant RBC will be responsible for void or “holding costs” these include, but are not limited to Service Charge contributions, Business Rates & Utilities. In addition, there may be higher maintenance costs (due to vandalism), cost of statutory compliance and insurance inspections and security related costs. As a general rule, we have applied a rate of 50% of the estimated rental value for a property to be the average cost of holding a property empty. The reality is that the costs may be higher or lower, but at this stage this is a conservative best guess as there are many external factors that will influence the actual cost.

In addition, there will usually be a cost to repair/improve the property in order to achieve a new letting at the desired rental level. While the previous occupier will have a responsibility to repair the property to the standard at which it was let initially due to the length of leases this is rarely the standard required for the new letting.

Occupiers are often willing to make payment rather than undertake the dilapidations and this is usually in the Council’s interests. Such payments are held in reserve and applied to achieve improvements to secure lettings at the appropriate time.

3.5.1 Confidence Level

- The confidence level for costs is 3 LOW (RED). Costs will be estimated internally for the majority of assets and where individual feasibility studies have been prepared / or quotes obtained these figures will be utilised.

3.6 Cost of Borrowing

Where an asset has been purchased or improved using borrowing, RBC will need to make appropriate provision as part of its overall Capital Strategy.

3.6.1 Confidence Level

- The confidence level for costs is 1 HIGH (GREEN). Costs will be estimated internally by the finance team.

4. FORECASTING INCOME

The data held on the Property Management System will provide the necessary information to identify future activities upon which RBC can make assumptions about future income.

4.1 Occupation Termination.

- When a Lease or licence comes to an effluxion of time there are a number of options that the parties of the occupation will have, as follows: -
- Hold over – Allow the existing Ts and Cs to continue
- Renewal – Negotiate new terms this may see a rental increase or indeed a decrease depending on the macroeconomics of the sector that the asset falls within.
- Termination – The occupation may come to a natural end.
- An agreement may also terminate prematurely for a number of reasons, by mutual agreement or financial failure of one party.
- In each of the scenarios it is possible that the rental income may go up, down or cease. Assumptions will be made as to what is the most likely scenario. Further If the agreement terminates there will be a void period and assumptions will be made about how long the property will be empty and any incentives required to relet.

4.2 Break Options.

- A number of leases contain Break Options, in which the landlord and/or Tenant have the right to terminate the agreement.
- Assumptions will be made about the likelihood and financial implications of these.

4.3 Rent Reviews

- Many agreements have a provision to review the rent. These provisions are generally made for longer term leases (rather than licences). There are various considerations such as the methodology which may include: -
 - Upward and downward reviews, where the rent can go up or down,
 - Index linked reviews, where the rent is linked to a particular price index, typically RPI.
 - Or a number of other factors.

4.4 Lease Regears

- A lease regear is the process of extending the terms of occupation. Where a known event is due such as a termination or rent review.

4.5 Forecasting

- Based on the potential lease/ licence events RBC will make assumptions factoring in the current estimated rental value (ERV) and industry expected voids and incentives (where applicable)
- It is also possible that RBC can risk rate its major income based on company strength and likelihood of failure utilising a credit scoring system (Such as Dun and Bradstreet)

5. FORECASTING EXPENDITURE

- The information held within the Stock Condition Surveys, PPMs, Property Compliance, EPCs and Void likelihood will enable RBC to forecast future expenditure.
- Similar to the forecast income the expenditure will be consolidated to a portfolio wide annual expenditure, for the period 2023 -2030

6. PORTFOLIO RISKS

The Property Service holds a risk register which is reviewed monthly and any appropriate risks escalated to the Council's Corporate Risk Register. The most significant risks currently identified for the portfolio are:

- Data on building material costs shows that there has been significant cost inflation, as well as supply chain issues, following Covid and Brexit. This may consequently impact the Council's ability to maintain a timely and cost-effective maintenance/improvement schedule for portfolio assets
- Deteriorating economic conditions, a downturn in the property market and changing consumer/business habits may lead to a significant loss of income from the Council's property portfolio.
- There are changes to MEES Regulations which come into effect from 1st April 2023, alongside EPC regulation changes proposed for 2030. Combined, these changes may impact lease renewals and lettings of commercial premises.

7. POLICY & PROCESS CHANGES

As part of the AMP, it is proposed that a number of existing policies and processes are reviewed and updated.

7.1 [Garden Land Disposals](#)

The Council has previously had a policy of disposal of Garden land (only to be used as a garden extension i.e., no building) at £6 per sq. ft where such land is deemed surplus since c. 2017. A review of this policy suggests that this policy may not always be consistent with the Council's duty to achieve best consideration for any disposal. In any case the value will vary and will require updating on an ongoing basis and therefore is out of date.

It is therefore proposed that garden land disposals should be undertaken on a case-by-case basis with valuations obtained as appropriate at the cost of the purchaser. Where appropriate a standard value per sqm may be applied provided this is based on up-to-date evidence and advised as appropriate by a qualified surveyor. Any disposal will be an Executive Decision by the Head of Service or Corporate Property Manager and will contain the appropriate information to justify the valuation decision.

7.2 [Licences Approach](#)

There are several instances where residents are permitted access rights across Council owned land for domestic purposes, such as access to and from their gardens. Historically, these agreements have been somewhat irregular in their documentation and remuneration.

Going forward, the Council will look to regularise such arrangements by putting in place a formal Licence agreement. The licence will afford the resident access rights over the Council land and in exchange the licensee will be pay an annual fixed standard fee of £250 (paid annually in advance). The annual cost of the licence fee will usually be increased in line with RPI on an annual basis unless the Council determines otherwise as part of its annual review of fees and charges.

It is envisaged that all access licences will be subject to the same standard fee across the board unless specific circumstances exist to justify a higher or lower fee.

7.3 [Voluntary Community Sector \(VCS\) Assets Approach](#)

Like many other boroughs, the Council has a variety of Voluntary Community Sector (VCS) organisations that currently occupy council owned assets in order to carry out their work. At the time of writing, the Council has approximately 25 such occupations.

It is envisaged that VCS tenants are effectively custodians of Council assets for the benefit of the residents of the Borough. VCS tenants will typically occupy property by way of a formal lease for a period of 5-25 years, depending on the nature of the organisation's work and the level of capital expenditure committed. Leases will typically offer both parties the flexibility to terminate the agreement early. The exception to this may be when a tenant is proposing to invest significant levels of capital expenditure to improve the property and is required to amortise their costs over a longer period or has the need to secure external grant funding.

For any **new or renewal leases** or where the rent is due for review, the level of rent to be charged for a VCS lease will be the higher of either the passing rent or the Rateable Value as at the time of review. In determining the rent, the Council will seek to ensure that these properties at least break even in terms of the

cost to the Council. The Council will separately consider whether to provide subsidy for the rent payable, by way of an annual 'Rent Relief' grant. This has previously been 90% funding of the rent. However, the Council will in future review rent relief grant on an organisationally specific basis taking account of:

- The extent to which the organisations meet the Council's priorities,
- Provides services which mitigate cost to the Council,
- Turnover and ability to generate income including activities of other parties within its demise
- Size of any new or renewal rent (recognising that where rents have increased significantly it may be appropriate to provide greater relief for a transitional period).
- Securing of investment in assets in the Borough
- Community reach
- Council's overall financial situation.

The tenant will usually be responsible for all internal and external repairing liabilities however this will be assessed on a case-by-case basis. Tenants will be expected to demonstrate that they have taken all reasonable measures to assess and budget for the proper maintenance of the properties that they occupy, throughout their lease term.

As part of their repairing obligations, tenants will be required to keep the property in a health and safety compliant condition, ensuring that all statutory regulations are adhered to. These might include commissioning and maintaining an Asbestos Register, regular fixed electrical wiring tests, gas safety tests, water legionella tests and minimum compliance for EPC ratings. Where the Council undertakes these functions for the organisations it will seek to recover its costs in managing and undertaking the work.

Tenants will be responsible for all property related outgoings, which may include but are not limited to rent, rates, buildings insurance, service charge (where applicable) and utilities. The tenant should ensure that all necessary business insurances are in place, such as contents cover and public liability.

The tenant will not be permitted to assign their lease. The tenant will not be permitted to sublet their property unless specifically agreed with the Council at commencement of their lease.

The lease will not in general permit the use of the property for any other purpose other than that specified. From time to time, the tenant may apply to the Council to vary such use, however, the Council will assess each application on a case-by-case basis and will be under no obligation to grant such consent.

8. APPENDIX 1: Property Management System Data Field

The following field level data is held on Property Management System:

8.1 SITE

The Site relates to an Asset as identified on the Asset Register

- **Site UPRN** – This is the Asset Number identified on the Asset Register and used by finance.
- **Site Name** – Self explanatory
- **Site Address** – Self explanatory
- **Site Status** – Current/ not current – This defines if the Asset is currently under RBC Control. As an example, Union Yard would be defined as “Not current” as it is currently with the Regeneration Team and under construction.
- **Site Tenure** – RBC’s ownership relationship to the property i.e., RBC owns freehold or is leasing from another 3rd party
- **Site Category** – Commercial, Community, Operational, Regeneration, (Residential – for RHL), Unknown
- **Site Subcategory** – Each of the site categories are split into more detailed categories
- **Site Area** – Total area of the land
- **Site Easting** – To generate a map location
- **Site Northing** – To generate a map location
- **Site Client** – Rushmoor, LSHIM or RHL – Used to identify who controls the Asset.
- **Site Region** – Farnborough, Aldershot or Out of Borough (various listed) to allow detailed reporting on a regional basis.
- **Site Photograph** – Image of the Asset

8.2 BLOCK

A Block relates to a separate entity within an Asset as identified on the Asset Register. As an example, Frimley Business Park is a single Asset, but each building is a Block.

- **Block Ref** – This is the Site UPRN (Asset Number) followed by a decimal point. I.e., A0001.01
- **Block Name** – Self explanatory

8.3 RENTABLE UNIT

A Rentable unit relates to a separate lettable entity within a Block. As an example, Frimley Business Park Building 4.3 is a Block, but has multiple units.

- **Unit Ref** – This is the Site UPRN (Asset Number) followed by a decimal point identifying the block number, followed by a decimal for the lettable unit A0001.01.01. This is the lowest denomination
- **Unit Name** – Self explanatory
- **Unit Area** – Total area of the unit
- **Estimated Rental Value** -What a willing and able tenant would be prepared to pay in an open market transaction
- **Estimated Rental Value (per sq. ft.)** -What a willing and able tenant would be prepared to pay in an open market transaction on a per sq. ft. basis.
- **Current Rent**-What the current rent passing is (Only applicable if let)
- **Rent (per sq. ft.)** - What the current rent passing is (Only applicable if let) on a per sq. ft. basis.

- **Status** – This identifies if the unit is lettable or not. Lettable units can be let to a 3rd party for a rent, unlettable units may be required for operational purposes (such as a plant room or facilities office) or may be unlettable due to condition (non-complaint EPC, works being undertaken etc)
- **Let?** – If the unit is Lettable this is to identify if it is let or not.
- **Rateable Value** – The Rateable Value of the Rentable unit.
- **EPC Rating Grade** – Alphabetical Energy Performance Certificate Grade
- **EPC Rating Number** – Numerical Energy Performance Certificate Grade
- **EPC Assessment Date** – Self explanatory
- **EPC Expiry Date** – Self explanatory
- **EPC Assessment Date** – Self explanatory
- **EPC Recommendations** – Recommendations made by the EPC Assessor to improve the EPC Rating.
- **EPC Estimated Cost** - Anticipated costings linked to recommendations. NOTE – From April 2023 ALL properties leased or on the market for lease will require an EPC rating of E or better. There are White and Green Government Papers seeking to move to a Grade C by 2026 and a Grade B by 2030.

8.4 OCCUPATIONS

An occupation is the details of rental agreement, these are held against a rentable unit.

- **Other Party Code** – This is the customer code used in integra and is one of the cross-referencing criteria.
- **Other Party Name** – Tenant or Landlord name.
- **In/out** – This defines who the landlord is, it means that RBC are the tenant and Out RBC is the landlord.
- **Agreement Start Date** -The date the agreement started
- **Agreement Termination Date** -The date the agreement will finish
- **Current Rent**-What the current rent passing is (Only applicable if let)
- **Rent (per sq. ft.)** - What the current rent passing is (Only applicable if let) on a per sq. ft. basis.
- **Next Rent Review Date** – The next date the rent can be reviewed.
- **Next Break Date** – The next date the agreement can be terminated early.
- **54 Act Protection** – If the tenant has a right to renewal.
- **Repairing Obligations** – Who is responsible for repairs
- **Insurance Obligations** – Who is responsible for insurance

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By virtue of paragraph(s) 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A
of the Local Government Act 1972.

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**CABINET 14th March
2023**

**COUNCILLOR MARTIN TENNANT
MAJOR PROJECTS AND PROPERTY
PORTFOLIO HOLDER**

REPORT NO. REG2303

KEY DECISION? YES

FARNBOROUGH LEISURE AND CULTURAL HUB – NEXT STEPS

SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

This report sets out work undertaken since the announcement that the Council's bid for Levelling Up funding to support the delivery of a Leisure and Cultural Hub had been successful. It identifies the next steps to be taken to enable acceptance of the grant funding. Finally, the report proposes that work to finalise the brief and design work commence as soon as possible and identifies funding required from the approved Capital Programme.

Recommended that Cabinet

- 1) Note the work undertaken to progress the development of the Leisure and Cultural Hub project
- 2) Note that the scope of the project will include a mobility hub, skatepark and play area in lin with the approved Civic Quarter Masterplan
- 3) Agree officers enter into the necessary Memorandum of Understanding and any other grant funding agreement associated with the Levelling Up Fund
- 4) Approve allocation of up to £900,000 funding to enable the project to proceed to the end of RIBA stage 2 and to commence work on RIBA stage 3 subject to outputs from RIBA 2.
- 5) Approve a new revenue budget of £65,000 in 2023/24 to enable the Leisure operator procurement to commence

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to seek Cabinet approval to proceed with detailed design development for a Leisure, Library and Cultural Hub within the Civic Quarter regeneration scheme in Farnborough town centre.
- 1.2 This is a key decision as it will require use of £900,000 funding for detailed design development and project delivery in financial year 23/24 and create a new budget of £65,000 for leisure operator procurement.

- 1.3 The report request approval to enter into the Memorandum of Understanding with Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) to access £20,000,000 funding allocated for the scheme. As part of this, the Council will need to commit to funding the remaining elements of the project.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 Since 2019, the site of the former Farnborough Recreation Centre, Plot B on the Civic Quarter Masterplan (See Figure 1 below) has been identified for the development of a new leisure centre.

- 2.2 In 2020 (RP2009) an Outline Business Case was approved to develop a feasibility study for the development of a combined Leisure & Civic Hub including a new library and office space. The feasibility work considered a range of options including the relocation of the current Council offices alongside other public and voluntary sector uses. The relocation of the Council would enable the development of the Council's current site (Plot J) for housing in line with the Masterplan aspirations.

- 2.3 In progressing this work, the project team also considered other known and emerging needs that came forward from stakeholders and public engagement activities associated with the development of the Masterplan. This led to a wide range of service and facility combinations being evaluated at high level including:

- a) Leisure Centre only
- b) Leisure & Library – baseline option to enable existing library demolition for Civic Quarter development
- c) Leisure, Library, Council Offices, Doctors Surgery
- d) Leisure, Library, Culture and Health
- e) Leisure, Library, Culture, Health, and Council Offices (discounted due to alternative Health Hub option which is in development)
- f) Leisure, Library and Culture (plus skate park/ play area and Plot A mobility hub) –Levelling Up Project scope

- 2.4 In February 2021 (Report OS2101), Cabinet took the decision not to re-open the existing Farnborough Leisure Centre due to the significant cost implications to the extension of the leisure contract because of the COVID-19 pandemic. Following an interim use as a community testing venue, the building was demolished, and the site cleared ready for development of the new facility.

- 2.5 The closure of Farnborough Leisure Centre resulted in a further contract extension with Places Leisure for Aldershot Pools and Fitness Centre only for 2 years. To ensure the continued operation of the indoor facilities and the seasonal opening of the Lido, this short-term contract will be further extended to cover the period of operator re-procurement and mobilisation.

- 2.6 In September 2022 it became clear that the Council's medium term financial position was unlikely to enable the Council to undertake further borrowing to support the early delivery of any of the options in paragraph 2.3 above. Option selection and associated development work was put on hold pending the expected decision in the Autumn of the application to the Levelling Up Fund. The decision was deferred on 2 occasions, but in January 2023 confirmation was received that the Council's application for £20,000,000 funding had been successful. The project has now been re-mobilised and will need to progress at pace to meet funding spend requirements and deliver the facility as soon as possible.
- 2.7 The project, if delivered as set out in the bid, would deliver co-located Leisure, Library and Cultural facilities including a 6-court sports hall, 8 lane swimming pool, fitness and spin studios, soft play and clip and climb facilities. The Library and Cultural spaces include dedicated library area, digital lab, and a range of multi-purpose community rooms. There would be dedicated gallery and community gallery space as well as collaborative spaces for art projects. Spaces will wherever possible be flexible and multipurpose. The sports hall would include an area for tiered seating as well as acoustic separation to create performance space. A large café would also be located on the ground floor.
- 2.8 Alongside the Hub would be a Mobility Hub as well as a skate park and play area as part of the public realm elements of the Masterplan.



Figure 1 Civic Quarter Development Plots

- 2.9 Alongside the development the Council will need to commence procurement of a new leisure operator in Autumn 2023 to ensure that a new operator is in place to run both the new facility but also current facilities across the Borough.

3. THE CASE FOR INVESTMENT IN LEISURE AND CULTURAL FACILITIES IN FARNBOROUGH

- 3.1 Leisure and Culture are not statutory services for the Council. Given the challenging financial position of local authorities, a project of this scale needs to be considered carefully before the Council commits to move forward. This section of the report seeks to provide information to inform decision making at this point in the project and looks at the strategic and economic benefits of the project. Section 4 of the report then sets out the 'case for change' included in the bid.

Strategic Context

- 3.2 Delivery of the project will address a range of challenges and strategic objectives in the Borough and will be one of the first sites to come forward as part of the Civic Quarter Masterplan which received outline planning permission in February 2023.
- 3.3 It will support local economic growth as part of the wider Civic Quarter regeneration, creating active green spaces in the heart of the town centre which will also support new housing. Links with the established business park create an opportunity to create a distinctive retail, business, leisure, and cultural offer that is a popular destination for both residents and visitors.
- 3.4 This will deliver an increase in social and institutional capital, leading to an increase in community cohesion, boosting the satisfaction and wellbeing for residents and the pride in place that they have.
- 3.5 Delivery of this scheme will act as both a catalyst and anchor point for the wider regeneration of the Civic Quarter. The Leisure and Cultural Hub is incorporated within the approved Outline Planning Application which, in addition, seeks to provide up to 1,000 residential units and non-residential floorspace comprising of the following mix of uses:
- Hotel [Use Class C1];
 - Office floorspace [Use Class E];
 - Retail, commercial, healthcare, entertainment floorspace [Use Class E/Sui Generis];
 - Two transport mobility hubs, associated infrastructure, and highway works;
 - Creation of new publicly accessible open spaces including replacement skate park and associated access, servicing, landscaping and works.

- 3.6 The Civic Quarter encompasses an ambitious vision to create a place that embraces 21st Century, sustainable thinking and leaving a health and well-being legacy that delivers wide reaching benefits for the people and place of Farnborough.
- 3.7 The vision for the Civic Quarter is to create a 15-minute place, meaning that most or almost everything you could need will be in reach within a 15-minute walk or bike ride. This is an exciting new way to think about placemaking and the future of Farnborough; a concept that provides possibilities for town centre living, and allows people to celebrate their community, shop local, access services, work collaboratively and socialise with friends.
- 3.8 The Leisure and Cultural Hub will have a positive impact on footfall within the area. This will help to retain and increase the levels of economic activity and spending within the local economy, which has the potential to create knock-on supply chain impacts in the form of increased employment and incomes for local residents. Increased footfall and more local residents staying and spending their free time in the area also further enhances the sense of community heart.
- 3.9 Significantly contributing towards realising the regeneration vision for the Civic Quarter, this project will unlock a sequence of development phases across the wider Civic Quarter site. Through the disposal of development parcels a range of alternative uses can be delivered that support the vitality and vibrancy of the town centre in line with the Civic Quarter Masterplan.

Policy Alignment

- 3.10 Regeneration of Farnborough town centre is a key priority for the Council and aligns with a number of Council and partner strategies and plans including:
- Your future, your place - a vision for Aldershot and Farnborough 2030 – Vibrant and Distinctive Town Centres - a vision document for Rushmoor developed in 2018/19 which continues to inform and shape the development of the Council Plan. Informed by resident engagement and consultation, this vision prioritises the delivery of vibrant and distinctive town centres.
 - Rushmoor Local Plan - regeneration vision for the Civic Quarter as adopted in the Rushmoor Local Plan (2019) and the Civic Quarter Masterplan Supplementary Planning Document.
 - Council Business Plan (2021-2024) which prioritises town centre regeneration for Rushmoor.
 - Rushmoor's Investment Plan for the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (signed off by Government in December 2022) focused investment in the town centres, supporting planned regeneration with a programme of events and further opportunities for arts, culture, heritage, and events. The focus for this planned investment will be in Farnborough Town Centre. UKSPF will see

£1,000,000 available over the next 3 years to help support the following outcomes:

- Increasing economic growth by maximising footfall in the town centres and enabling them to operate in a far more integrated manner to take full advantage of the ambitious regeneration plans for both Aldershot and Farnborough.
 - Supporting healthy lifestyles by promoting walking and increasing physical activity.
 - Increasing community pride in the area by promoting the attractiveness and vibrancy of the town centres, supporting outdoor events, and community projects and engaging new audiences in the cultural life of the area.
- Enterprise M3 LEP's Strategic Economic Plan (SEP) objective of unlocking housing and accelerating housing delivery alongside the emerging Local Industrial Strategy (LIS) objective of promoting mixed use developments 'that put homes alongside jobs and services. The SEP also encourages investment in the future of town centres to create dynamic places that draw in young people, support flourishing communities, and address the needs of an ageing population. Enterprise M3 had identified Farnborough as a Growth Town, identifying it as a priority place for the Local Growth Fund.
 - Positively contributing towards the Government's overarching agenda to rebuild the UK in response to COVID-19 with the sector not only protecting jobs but also supporting local economic activity, productivity, and social value.
 - Rushmoor Borough Council Farnborough Leisure Centre Needs Analysis 2019 and 2021 – which has directly informed the facilities mix and design brief for the scheme. This will be finalised as part of the next a stage of design and development. (Appendix A)
 - Hampshire County Council's vision for Libraries to 2025 sets out the following priorities which will be fully supported by the development of the new facility:
 1. Promoting reading, with a focus on children's literacy and the Early Years
 - i. Providing a service for everyone
 - ii. Developing children's literacy, particularly within the Early Years (0-5 years).
 - iii. Investing in Hampshire's Digital Library.
 2. Supporting healthy, creative communities
 - i. Establishing council-run libraries as 'community hubs.
 - ii. Taking the Library Service into communities.
 - iii. Delivering a programme of learning and activities that meet the needs of library users.
 3. Investing in digital services.
 - i. Providing access to technology and prioritising those at risk of digital exclusion.

- The project supports the health priorities of the Frimley Integrated Care Board NHS Frimley - Our priorities (icb.nhs.uk) and Hampshire Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy A Strategy for the Health and Wellbeing of Hampshire (modern.gov.co.uk) and the Emotional Wellbeing and Mental Health Strategy for Children and Young People in Hampshire EmotionalWellbeingChildrenYPStrategy.pdf (hants.gov.uk)

Delivering our vision and meeting Community needs

- 3.11 Regeneration of the town centre has been a key priority for the Council for a number of years. In 2019 detailed consultation was undertaken with the public and key community stakeholder groups to understand how they felt about the existing town centre and their aspirations for the future of the Civic Quarter. As part of this initial engagement, five 'Vision Workshops' were carried out with council members and local stakeholders, including members of the Farnborough Society, Heart of Farnborough, and Farnborough Civic Group.
- 3.12 This activity generated a set of core community priorities and design principles for the future regeneration of Farnborough. The top priority identified by consultees was the need to create a community heart. Further aspirations focused on developing a strong identity and sense of place for Farnborough, encouraging community cohesion, improving health and wellbeing, and developing arts & cultural facilities as detailed in Figure 2.



Figure 2– Core Community Priorities

- 3.13 In the most recent residents survey, town centres were identified by all groups as the number one area of dissatisfaction, with two-thirds of respondents reporting that they are either very or fairly dissatisfied with the quality of Rushmoor's town centres.
- 3.14 Through co-location, the Hub will deliver an offer which blends key services for our community with state-of-the-art leisure and cultural activities for families and users of all ages.

3.15 The Leisure and Cultural Hub will;

- Increase participation in physical activity across all age groups.
- Increase participation in cultural activity across all age groups.
- Improve the health and happiness of local communities.
- Provide a sustainable solution for leisure, culture, and wellbeing in the heart of the town centre with a focus on tackling social and economic inequalities.
- Support Sport England's 'Uniting the Movement' key outcomes for sport and physical activity, improving the health and wellbeing of Rushmoor residents.
- Deliver long term better public health outcomes for the community throughout the whole life of the asset, bringing about a generational change in behaviour.
- Act as a catalyst for wider economic development and regeneration including 700 new homes.
- Support statutory agendas of adult social care and children's services.
- Deliver a sustainable building with a target of achieving net zero carbon in operation.

3.16 The public realm improvements associated with Farnborough Leisure and Culture hub will help create a greater sense of pride in Rushmoor, enhancing community wellbeing and providing a strong, cohesive community for its members. Not only this, but the inclusion of the Leisure and Cultural Hub will help the Council provide its strategic priorities, namely creating the opportunity for health and green lifestyles, and providing a growing local economy.

3.17 The scheme will deliver place-based infrastructure through which services and support can be delivered across the most deprived communities in the Borough. Delivering physical infrastructure in sport, leisure and cultural facilities are increasingly recognised as a significant factor in a local community's prosperity, sense of belonging and pride of place.

3.18 This project was identified as a direct result of public consultation and engagement which highlighted the need to create a community heart as a top priority for the future regeneration of the town. Further aspirations identified were:

- developing a strong identity and sense of place for Farnborough.
- encouraging community cohesion; and
- improving health and wellbeing.

4. Case for change

- 4.1 Rushmoor benefits from a strong and vibrant economy and a positive narrative around growth and productivity. This often means that the barriers, challenges, and inequalities that the area and our residents experience are not as visible or recognised as other locations with similar issues. The reality locally is that Rushmoor underperforms not just against South East averages but also national averages on a range of indicators.

Health and Wellbeing

- 4.2 Rushmoor has a younger than average population, 65.6% of the population is under 50, compared to 57.2% in Hampshire and 62.3% in England (2020 mid-year population estimates) and is the most ethnically diverse area in Hampshire.
- 4.3 This is combined with pockets of substantial deprivation, according to the 2019 Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD), Rushmoor has three LSOAs in the 20% most deprived in England and 11.2% of children live in low-income families.
- 4.4 Rushmoor's health outcomes provide a significant challenge and, in a number of specific areas, require intervention to 'level up' to both the national and regional average. The Leisure and Cultural Hub will aim to respond to the following specific challenges:
- 24.5% of children were classed as overweight or obese by the time they started reception. This is higher than the percentage for Hampshire (22.0%) and notably worse than the percentage for England (22.6%).
 - 64.3% of adults are overweight or obese and only 62.4% of adults in Rushmoor are physically active, which is the 4th lowest in the whole of the South East.
 - Sport England Active Lives Survey (May 2021) identifies that 31% of adults in Rushmoor undertake less than 30 minutes physical activity a week. This is higher than both the region (27.2%) and England (24.4%). Of those that do less than 30 minutes activity a week, 64.3% said they do no activity at all.
 - 29.4% of females in Rushmoor are inactive and this again is worse than the regional 23.7% and national average of 27.6%.
 - 43.6% of Rushmoor residents with a limiting disability are inactive. Again, this is worse than for the region (37.1%) and England (42.5%).
 - 36% of 65 – 74-year old's in Rushmoor are inactive which is higher than the region (29.6%) and England (31.1%).

- 4.5 There are also higher levels of mental illness, falls in older people and injuries resulting from self-harm amongst the Borough's population.

Cultural Gaps

- 4.6 In September 2021, Rushmoor was identified as one of 11 Priority Places in the South West region by Arts Council England in need of cultural investment. The Borough had the lowest annual investment per capita for the years 2017/18 to 2019/20 at £1.12 per head. Rushmoor was also scored lowest on the Active Lives Survey with only 43% having any arts or museum engagement 3 or more times in a 12-month period. Priority Place status from the Arts Council England recognises the need for increased development, investment and time to grow cultural investment in the area and is intended to give more people the opportunity to participate in creative activities and enjoy excellent cultural experiences.
- 4.7 Public sector investment is required as there is under-investment in leisure and cultural activities from the private sector. The public leisure and cultural sector deliver services to specific demographics (including key disadvantaged groups) that are unable to access private provision, as well as delivering facilities for activities that are not well-served by the private sector, for example swimming pools. To underline this point, Sport England data shows that swimming is the single most frequent activity that people take part in – 42% of all visits. This is given further weight when considering that nearly two-thirds (61%) of visits by non-members to leisure centres are to swim, highlighting that this is one of the easiest options for getting people active.

5. Constraints and dependencies

- 5.1 This is a complex multi-stakeholder project and as such there are a number of constraints and dependencies which will need to be managed as part of project delivery.

Funding

- 5.2 Whilst the grant of £20m is significant the Council will need to decide how it will find the balance of funding given the agreed strategy to utilise capital receipts where possible and minimise borrowing. Work is currently underway to identify options to bring forward for consideration during the spring/early summer.

Hampshire County Council

- 5.3 The scheme will include Library facilities which will replace the existing library in the town centre. As part of the brief, we will look at how the facility can maximise the use of shared spaces within the new Hub to provide an exciting offer for our residents.
- 5.4 Work is underway with Hampshire County Council (HCC) to agree the transfer of the existing library into the Civic Quarter scheme in exchange for the new

library facility. Given HCC's funding constraints this needs to be based on a cost neutral solution for HCC i.e., same, or less revenue costs to deliver the future library service. The project will work with HCC to agree the vision, brief and area requirements for the library facilities and will work jointly with them to deliver the project.

Cultural Offer Delivery

- 5.5 The new facility will also include a range of cultural facilities. We are liaising with Hampshire Cultural Trust (HCT) to develop options for the cultural offer will work and develop an affordable funding model.

Land Assembly

- 5.6 Work is underway to conclude the required land assembly to deliver the scheme and a further report will come forward on this in the coming months.

Operator Procurement

- 5.7 Delivery of the project will require procurement of a new Leisure Operator. This will take place during design development and the appointed operator will be responsible for running the new building and maintaining shared spaces.
- 5.8 To support the operator procurement, process a new budget of £65,000 is required to cover the cost of specialist leisure and legal consultancy during the 23/24 financial year.

Civic Quarter Masterplan Delivery

- 5.9 Project delivery is intrinsically linked with the delivery of the wider Civic Quarter Masterplan which achieved outline planning approval in February 2023. Work is underway to understand how delivery of the wider masterplan will be progressed and the project team will work as part of the wider regeneration team to manage wider dependencies and project interfaces as well as inputting to the overall strategic capital programme position.
- 5.10 The project team will ensure alignment with wider Masterplan delivery. This is particularly important when looking at finance and funding for the constructions of the scheme as any recommendation to Members will need to sit within the wider Masterplan funding and finance context.

6. Procurement Strategy and route

- 6.1 In the initial design stage, the Council will appoint a Design Team to develop the project up to RIBA Stage 3. This means that the Council will retain control of the design in the early stages prior to the team novating to the appointed contractor. During this period, a detailed set of employers' requirements will be

developed to ensure that key project principles are delivered as part of the scheme.

- 6.2 As part of the client-side team a multi-disciplinary Technical Advisor Team will be appointed to provide support throughout the project. This team will work alongside officers to ensure the successful delivery of the scheme and to provide specialist technical knowledge, input and scrutiny of designs and contractors proposals as well as cost consultancy and contract negotiation support.
- 6.3 During feasibility, the preferred contractor (Willmott Dixon) was identified using an existing framework (Procurement Hub) which has already been competitively tendered allowing for the appointment of a single supplier by the Council. This was approved by Cabinet in August 2020 (RP2102).
- 6.4 An assessment of available procurement options has been undertaken to validate that this is still the preferred delivery route for the project, prior to final confirmation of the framework that will be used to appoint the contractor.
- 6.5 Given the scope and complexity of the scheme, it is considered essential that the Council retains control of the design development and delivery as well as a direct contractual relationship with the delivery team. The Council has assembled a team of professionals with a track-record in delivering leisure schemes to ensure that we have the right expertise and will be working with prospective operators during the procurement to get their input into the design development.
- 6.6 Use of a framework means that a competitive process has already taken place to appoint a single contractor to the framework with fixed core costs and overhead and profit. Framework users are then able to work directly with this framework and contractor to deliver their project without needing to undertake a wider OJEU tender or competitive process.
- 6.7 Having fixed the core costs and overhead and profit, remaining project costs are sub-contracted work packages that are locally tendered on an open book basis to a managed supply chain. This ensures that all work is competitively tendered and benchmarked to achieve value for money. It also evidences that 100% of cost on any project is market tested to achieve value for money.
- 6.8 Using this approach has allowed the Council to work with Willmott Dixon from the early stages of the project feasibility development and has streamlined the process of appointment.
- 6.9 Early contractor involvement and contractor support/advice on brief development, budget costing, project programming and buildability is provided at no cost at feasibility stage. This ensures that the key project information is sufficiently developed before preconstruction services commence. This option was not available to the Council if a mini competition was engaged with.

- 6.10 Wilmott Dixon will formally be appointed at RIBA Stage 3, however have committed to continuing to be involved during RIBA Stage 2 design development to ensure a seamless transition into the Pre-Construction Services Agreement with scheme delivery through a two stage Design & Build process.
- 6.11 This early engagement allows the collaborative development of the scheme from the outset ensuring that all parties are involved in key decisions and have a shared understanding of project delivery, parameters, and risk share. This also allows for core design team partners to transfer to the contractor upon appointment which means the Council works with the contractor to agree the team that it will work with to deliver the scheme.
- 6.12 The framework offers maximum flexibility in relation to types of contracts, subcontractor appointments and value of contracts. It is fully managed and monitors a range of core KPIs as well as Contractor financial viability.
- 6.13 The framework has a range of key deliverables which the Contractor must deliver including:
- Guaranteed minimum 20% spend of overall project value within 10 miles of the project location.
 - Guaranteed minimum 40% spend of overall project value within 20 miles of the project location.
 - Guaranteed minimum 75% spend of overall project value within 40 miles of the project location.
 - Minimum 85% of spend is with SMEs.
 - Social Return on Investment (SROI) of 10-15% of overall project value. By maximising local spend, there is a significant social return on investment and Wilmott Dixon have advised that they believe they will significantly exceed this target (they achieved 69% on their most recent scheme).

7. Financial Position

- 7.1 The indicative project cost for delivery of the Leisure & Cultural Hub is £42,890,127 of which £20,000,000 will be funded through Levelling Up money. This figure excludes delivery of the Mobility Hub, Skate Park and Play Area which have an estimated cost of £8,850,000. Work is underway to finalise the overall budget, however, it is likely that the Council will need to identify in the region of £32,000,000 for delivery of the whole scheme.
- 7.2 Based on the current outline delivery programme, funding for the circa £32m above will be required in financial year 25/26 and 26/27 as Levelling Up grant will be used to fund the first phases of project delivery.
- 7.3 Work is underway to understand options as to this how this could be financed. The general approach to financing the Council's capital projects was set out in the Budget Strategy report considered by Cabinet in November and the subsequent Capital Strategy approved by Cabinet in February as follows:

“The most credible and sustainable way of bringing forward a new capital investment is both to consider the most appropriate way of funding and to carefully think through sequencing of investment, as such the business case is based on the following capital principles:

- All new capital investment priorities should be funded from either capital receipts or external sources (grants)*
- The financing of new capital investment should focus on ensuring borrowing is limited to the lowest possible value*
- Schemes should be sequenced credibly and added each year through only the Budget Setting report – single decision point for investment.*
- The approach to new capital investment will be based around the following process to ensure that all new investment is prudent, affordable, and sustainable:*
- Create a hierarchy of new capital investment priorities (officers and Members)*
- Develop a pipeline of asset disposals ringfenced to fund the new capital investment – timing and value need to be accurate*
- Complete a global view of cashflows and funding need of the hierarchy.*
- Determine any resultant borrowing need and test affordability vs. MTF5 budget gap”*

Project Budget

- 7.4 Funding commitment for delivery of the first stage of the project in financial year 23/24 is estimated at £900,000 which has been included in the recently approved capital programme budget for the project of £1.6m. If the project does not go ahead or the Council cannot fund the wider scope of the project as outlined in the funding bid, this spend is potentially abortive.
- 7.5 The Council has also been provided with £300,000 of funding from the One Public Estate Programme (OPE) to support the feasibility studies required to meet RIBA Stage 2. This budget should be sufficient to cover all resource, design, and planning costs for the scheme in this financial year including the appointment of all consultants and associated activity outlined in Section 6.

Project Financing and Affordability

- 7.6 Confirmation of the total costs of the project currently estimated at £42.89m for the Leisure and Cultural Hub and a further £8.85m for the Mobility Hub, Skate Park and Play Area will follow once the initial stage of the project work is completed. At that stage details of how the costs are to be funded in line with the Council's approved Capital Strategy will need to be determined and approved and the full capital programme budget agreed.
- 7.7 In addition, a detailed business case identifying all the relevant Capital and Revenue costs and income estimates will be prepared to determine how the

ongoing running costs of the facility will be funded between all the parties, including details of the proposals relating to the Leisure Operator.

Operator Income

- 7.8 As part of the scheme delivery, the Council will be procuring a new Leisure Operator Contract to deliver leisure services across the Borough. Detailed modelling has been undertaken to inform the scope of the contract as well as the facilities mix. As part of this, financial modelling and sensitivity analysis has been undertaken to understand potential income generation.
- 7.9 The leisure sector has been hit hard in the last three years, initially due to the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic driving down income with only partial support from government to assist. The industry has been subsequently hit by a significant escalation in costs and particularly those relating to energy. The impact of these factors in combination has worsened the financial performance of facilities across the country.
- 7.10 However, the new borough-wide contract is expected to perform significantly better than the Council's current contract and is expected to provide a surplus to the Council. This revenue will be used to service any prudential borrowing undertaken to support the project and to fund delivery of the council's wider leisure and cultural offers. In years 1-4 the Council's Medium- Term Financial Strategy will need to include provision for operational and project costs where these cannot be funded from other resources.

8. Levelling Up Funding and Memorandum of Understanding

- 8.1 In order to access the £20,000,000 Levelling Up funding, it will be necessary to enter a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with DLUHC. The MoU covers the funding commitments from DLUHC and the delivery, financial expenditure, agreed milestones, reporting and evaluation, communication, and branding expectations between the Parties.
- 8.2 The MoU underpins the agreement to deliver the agreed scope outlined in the bid in return for the funding contribution. As such, it commits the Council to the provision of the remaining project funding currently estimated at £22,890,127.
- 8.3 The MoU will be need to signed by the relevant officer(s) and approval is sought to allow the council to enter into the MoU, acknowledging the need to confirm affordability and funding approach for the scheme over the next few months.
- 8.4 The draft MoU is still to be provided by DLUHC for detailed review although it is anticipated that this will need to be signed by the end of March 2023.

9. Project management and governance arrangements

- 9.1 The Council has robust assurance processes for its regeneration programme and clearly defined project governance to ensure sign off at various stages of the project. These existing arrangements will be used to provide governance to the Leisure and Cultural Hub project.

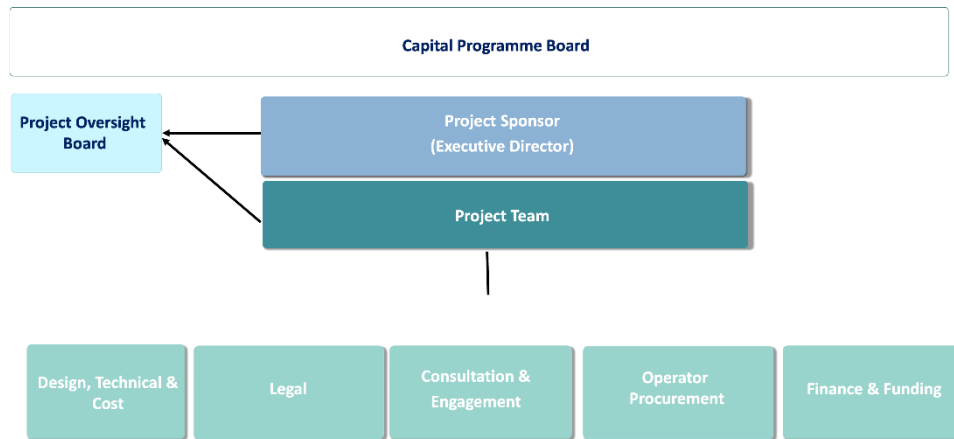


Figure 3 Project Governance and Reporting

- 9.2 The operational project team will include representatives from Hampshire County Council and Hampshire Cultural Trust and will meet every 2 weeks to manage project delivery progress and coordinate outputs from the various delivery workstreams. The operational team includes a project finance and legal lead.
- 9.3 A Joint Member and Officer Project (Oversight) Board will be established at the end of RIBA 2 and will meet every 6 weeks. In the meantime regular updates will be provided to cabinet and as part of the ongoing all-member briefings on the regeneration programme.
- 9.4 The project will be reported to the Capital Programme Board (officers approx. every 6 weeks.)
- 9.5 The Council are appointing a professional delivery team made up of a range of internal and external professionals, all of which have been appointed using existing framework arrangements to provide the optimum intelligent client function. These include:
- A Multi-Disciplinary Technical Advisor and Cost Consultant.
 - Specialist sustainability advice regarding achievement of net zero carbon who will novate to the contractor at RIBA Stage 3.
 - GT3+ and design team to include all disciplines- Expert architect and wider design team specialising in leisure scheme delivery who will novate to the contractor at RIBA Stage 3.

- Wilmott Dixon Construction – Highly experienced contractor with track record in leisure delivery and located in Farnborough.

9.6 Should further specialist resource be required e.g., legal then these will be appointed by the project team.

Alternative Options

9.7 Other options considered during feasibility are set out in paragraph 2.1 of this report.

9.8 There is also an option not to deliver a new facility and use the land for other purposes. This is not in line with Masterplan or political or community aspirations.

Consultation

9.9 As outlined in section 3 detailed public consultation and engagement has been undertaken to determine the proposed facilities mix as well as community aspirations for the town centre. A detailed piece of young person consultation was also undertaken to support the Levelling Up bid and is included at Appendix B.

9.10 Members have been fully involved in formal and informal consultation activity including a range of workshops and other activities to inform the feasibility study and brief development.

10. IMPLICATIONS

Risk management

10.1 The Council will be accepting a number of risks in proceeding with delivery of this project. These include the usual risks associated with the development and delivery of a capital project of this scale and the associated stakeholder management. While we have secured £20,000,000 funding towards the scheme, the Council will be accepting the risk of identifying the remaining funding for the project and the wider scheme as well as the wider revenue implications of delivering the cultural offer.

10.2 A detailed project and technical risk register have been developed for the project and is included at Appendix C. This is a live document which has been developed during feasibility with input from the Project Team, Technical Advisor and Wilmott Dixon Construction. This will continue to be managed and updated throughout project delivery with risks being closed out as the scheme progresses.

10.3 Procurement risks have been mitigated with OJEU-compliant frameworks with core project, contractor, and design team appointments already in place.

- 10.4 Top five risks are reviewed at fortnightly project team meetings as well as Programme Board with any significant changes to risk or new risks arising being escalated between meetings if necessary.
- 10.5 Alongside the Risk Register, the Council have an established change management procedure in place. This will document any changes requested during the design phases of the project, assess the cost impact of this and assess the impact to the programme. Any change requests will need formal sign off through a change control form by the Client before any of these can be implemented.
- 10.6 The highest scoring wider project risks include:
- Insufficient funding available to proceed with the project
 - Lack of resource and capacity across the council to support delivery of the project
 - Wider Civic Quarter delivery alignment and dependencies unresolved delaying the scheme
 - Supply chain, labour and materials shortages resulting in price and programme uncertainty

Legal Implications

- 10.7 External legal assistance and budget will be required on various aspects of the project, including property, planning and contractual matters. Work will include (but is not limited to) reviewing of consultancy appointments, carrying out necessary due diligence and drafting contractual agreements.

Financial and Resource Implications

- 10.8 £1.6m has been included in the recently approved capital programme with the estimated cost of delivering the first stages of the project being circa £900,000. The spend Council has also been provided with £300,000 of funding from the One Public Estate Programme (OPE) to support the feasibility studies required to meet RIBA Stage 2.
- 10.9 If the project does not go ahead or the Council cannot fund the wider scope of the project as outlined in the funding bid, this spend could be abortive.
- 10.10 Further details and confirmation of the total costs of the project, currently estimated at £42.89m for the Leisure and Cultural Hub and a further £8.85m for the Mobility Hub, Skate Park and Play Area will follow once the initial stage of the project work is completed.
- 10.11 It is currently envisaged that The Levelling Up Fund grant of £20m will be utilised in full as part of the initial stages of the project during 23/24 and 24/25 with the additional £32m to be funded from other sources yet to be determined during 24/25 and 25/26. Details of how these costs are to be

funded in line with the Council's approved Capital Strategy will need to be determined and approved prior to any further commitment being made.

Equalities Impact Implications

10.12 The project addresses significant Health and Cultural inequalities as set out in the case for change.

11. CONCLUSIONS

11.1 This project is a significant priority for the Council, and it is important that all reasonable actions are taken to ensure the project can be delivered in line with the levelling up timelines. The focus of the project over the next few months is to undertake design work at pace and to develop options for funding in the context of the delivery of the Civic Quarter Masterplan.

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS:

Report No. RP2009 - proposal to carry out a detailed feasibility study for the potential development of a combined leisure centre and civic hub, within the proposed Farnborough Civic Quarter.

Report No. OS2101 - options for the future provision of leisure services across the Borough

Appendix A Leisure Centre Needs Analysis

Appendix B Youth Engagement Analysis

Appendix C Project Risk Register

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Rushmoor Borough Council

Farnborough Leisure Centre

Headline Needs Analysis

Final Report – August 2021

by Strategic Leisure Limited



Headline Needs Analysis

Rushmoor Borough Council

Contents

1. Introduction	1
Local Strategic Context	1
Rushmoor Borough Council 'Your Future, Your Place'	1
Rushmoor Council Business Plan 2021 – 2024	1
Farnborough Civic Quarter Masterplan Supplementary Planning Document (June 2015)	1
Sustainable Community Strategy Plan – Vision	1
Enterprise M3 Strategic Economic Plan 2018 - 2030	1
Rushmoor Borough	2
Covid 19	6
Summary	8
2. Farnborough Leisure Centre and Aldershot and Lido - Existing Facilities	9
Farnborough Leisure Centre (now Closed)	9
Aldershot Pools	10
Aldershot Lido	11
Review of Existing Operation	12
SLL Visual Assessment- Farnborough Leisure Centre	13
3. Consultation Feedback	14
Clubs who used Farnborough Leisure Centre	14
National Governing Bodies (NGB)	19
Feedback from other Consultees	26
4. Facility Analysis	28
5. Future Facility Provision	34
Summary	37

Appendices

Appendix 1: Sports Club Questionnaire Results

Headline Needs Analysis

Rushmoor Borough Council

1. Introduction

- 1.1. Rushmoor Borough Council (RBC) is currently working to regenerate the two town centres of Farnborough and Aldershot. In February 2019 RBC appointed GT3 Architects and Strategic Leisure Limited (SLL) to look at the options for the future provision of Farnborough Leisure Centre as part of the wider development context.
- 1.2. In May 2019, an initial Headline Needs Analysis was undertaken of the existing Farnborough Leisure Centre facilities and included consultation feedback from the public, existing operator, clubs and existing users to inform the initial facilities' brief. The analysis was also informed by a visit to the facility and visual assessment of the existing provision, plus a review of income/expenditure and throughput over the last three years.
- 1.3. The following report provides an updated position statement, and checks and challenges the data from the May 2019 report, to help inform the final facility mix for the replacement Farnborough Leisure Centre. It also makes some comment on the facilities in Aldershot, but their investment needs are being covered in more detail in separate, but related, supplementary work.

Local Strategic Context

- 1.4. In February 2019 Rushmoor Borough Council (RBC) adopted its Local Plan. This sets out the planning policies and principles to guide the location, scale and type of future development in Rushmoor Borough up to 2032 and provides detailed development management policies to be used in determining planning applications.
- 1.5. The Local Plan replaces the Core Strategy (adopted in 2011) and saved policies from the Rushmoor Local Plan Review (adopted in 2000).
- 1.6. The Local Plan reflects the wider strategic context for the Borough:

Rushmoor Borough Council 'Your Future, Your Place'

This document sets out the Council's future ambitions for Aldershot and Farnborough to 2030, using information from a residents' survey carried out in 2018.

The Vision: **To focus on issues that matter to residents**, with the improvement of our town centres, enabling opportunities for high quality education and skilled local jobs top of the list.

The vision focusses on six key priorities for the Borough:

- Vibrant and distinctive town centres;
- Housing for every stage of life;
- Strong communities, proud of our area;
- Healthy and green lifestyles;
- A growing local economy – kind to the environment;
- Opportunities for everyone – quality education and a skilled workforce.

Headline Needs Analysis Rushmoor Borough Council

Rushmoor Council Business Plan 2021 – 2024

People Priorities:

- Improve the health and wellbeing of residents;
- Encourage volunteering and help people become more connected with their communities;
- Help residents and businesses become more sustainable – reducing waste, recycling more and making more sustainable transport choices like cycling;
- Provide high quality services and in ways that do not exclude anyone.

Place Priorities:

- Continue to drive forward regeneration of Aldershot and Farnborough town centres;
- Maintain and develop excellent leisure and community facilities;
- Grow the local economy in a green and sustainable way;
- All Council-led projects are designed and delivered in a green and sustainable way;
- Ensure there are enough homes and types of housing in Aldershot and Farnborough.

The Plan highlights the impact of the Coronavirus pandemic, and the need for financial resilience, maintaining and building a strong local economy, improving residents health and improving community engagement.

Farnborough Civic Quarter Masterplan Supplementary Planning Document (June 2015)

This document makes reference to the opportunity for the re-provision of the leisure centre on its current site as part of the overall Masterplan and that the site could provide a foundation for the enhancement and clustering of other leisure activities.

Sustainable Community Strategy Plan – Vision

Rushmoor 2026 will be: **A thriving, innovative and attractive Borough, proud of its heritage. Rushmoor, a place**, where people are happy, healthy, safe and have a bright future; Which is green, open and bright; Which is easy to get around; Which has great places to go and lots to do; and With a prosperous and sustainable economy.

Enterprise M3 Strategic Economic Plan 2018 - 2030

Since the adoption of the Core Strategy, the Enterprise M3 Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) has made significant progress in setting out the economic direction for the Enterprise M3 area. In 2014, it produced a Strategic Economic Plan (SEP) which sets out future economic growth targets and aspirations for specific places within the LEP area. Those relevant to Rushmoor are as follows:

1. The Rushmoor Sustainable Community Strategy
2. The Enterprise M3 LEP Strategic Economic Plan

Aldershot: identified as a '**Step-Up Town**', which is an area of latent economic potential and which currently experiences barriers to growth that impact upon the performance of the Enterprise M3 area.

Farnborough: identified as a '**Growth Town**', along with Basingstoke, Guildford and Woking. Together, the 'Growth Towns' are expected to deliver about one-third of the jobs and GVA in the Enterprise M3 area. Ensuring their continued success is therefore fundamental to the economic growth of the LEP area as a whole.

Headline Needs Analysis

Rushmoor Borough Council

Rushmoor Borough

- 1.7. Rushmoor Borough is an urban area, located 30 miles south-west of London. It is in north-east Hampshire, adjacent to the Surry and Berkshire Borders. The Borough is relatively small at 3,905 ha but is densely populated.
- 1.8. There are two main urban communities:
- **Farnborough (north of the Borough) – 57,468 population¹. Farnborough is recognised internationally for British aerospace research work, its airfield (the first in Britain) and the Farnborough airshow.**
 - **Aldershot (south of the Borough) – 37,131 population². Aldershot is a garrison town; it lies to the north of Aldershot Town Centre and is known as the 'home of the British Army'. The Garrison comprises around 11,500 people, including resident troops, soldiers in transit on courses, civil servants, contractors and dependents.**
- 1.9. Key relevant demographic statistics for the Borough in relation to the future provision of sport and physical activity include:

Table 1.1: Summary of Factors relevant to future sport and leisure facility provision

Population Profile	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The population of Rushmoor is forecast to increase from 97,000 to 108,550 by 2025.³ • The 65-90+ age group increases in size by 3,868 people by 2032 and beyond.
Ethnicity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rushmoor has the largest non-white British population in Hampshire at 19.5%. • The Asian ethnic group accounts for 10.4% of its overall population. • 6.5% of Rushmoor population are Napalese in the 2011 Census. This is largely as a result of legislation surrounding Ghurkha Armed Forces personnel and the settlement in the district of them and their families. • National data reveals that people from Black and South Asian groups are less likely to be active than those from White and Mixed race ethnic groups.

¹ Source: ONS Mid 2019 Ward Level Population Estimates

² Source: ONS Mid 2019 Ward Level Population Estimates

³ Source: Hampshire County Council's 2018 based Small Area Population Forecasts (SAPF)

Headline Needs Analysis

Rushmoor Borough Council

Housing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There is forecast to be a 14% increase in dwellings by 2025, up from 39,640 in 2018. 7,850 new homes projected by 2032, the end of the Local Plan period. New housing will be in the following areas: Aldershot Town Centre Regeneration (The Galleries, Union Street East), Farnborough Town Centre Regeneration (Civic Quarter) and Wellesley (Blandford House), Hartnald Village, Sun Park and Hawley Park Farm.
Deprivation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rushmoor is ranked of 205 on Indices of Deprivation. Rushmoor has three small areas of multiple deprivation – Lower Super Output Areas (LSOAs) that are in the 20% most deprived in the country⁴: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Part of Aldershot Park ward (LSOA 108 ranked 4,053) Part of Cherrywood ward (LSOA 119 ranked 3,693) Part of Wellington Ward (LSOA 142 ranked 5,123) 11.2% of children live in low income families There is poor GCSE attainment (43.3%) compared to the averages for Hampshire and England Rushmoor residents take home more in wages than the average for Hampshire, the South East and the average for Great Britain. Due to the Covid-19 crisis, there has been a large a rise in the number of people claiming out-of-work benefits principally for the reason of being unemployed. In March 2021, 5.1% of Rushmoor’s working age population were claiming this compared with 1.7% in March 2020.⁵
Car Ownership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The urban nature of the Borough means that residents are better able to access a range of facilities by walking and public transport than most Hampshire Districts and Hampshire as a whole, with the exception of access to hospitals. Car ownership levels⁶ are 1.3 per household.

⁴ Source: RBC Website, Index of Multiple Deprivation data sheet updated January 2020

⁵ Source: RBC Website, unemployment data sheet updated April 2021

⁶ Source: RBC SPD 2017

Headline Needs Analysis

Rushmoor Borough Council

Health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are high levels of mental health, falls in older people and injuries resulting from self-harm amongst the Borough population. • 67.8% of adults are categorised as overweight this is higher than both the regional (60.3%) and national (62%) averages⁷ • 22% of children aged 4-5 are classed as obese lower than the regional (23%) and higher than national (19.1%) averages⁸. • 35% of children aged 10-11 are categorised as overweight this is higher than both the regional (30%) and national (34%) averages⁹ • Total Health costs due to physical activity are £1,334,261 per annum.
Physically Active / Inactive	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sport England Active Lives 2019/20 data shows: • Adults <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ 30.7% of Rushmoor adults do less than 30 minutes exercise per week. This is worse than both the regional (23.5%) and national average (27.1%). ➤ Of those adults in Rushmoor who said they did less than 30 minutes activity a week, 64.3% said they did no activity at all. This is again higher than for the region (60%) and England (63.4%) ➤ 11.8% of Rushmoor adults are fairly active (30 – 149 mins per week) which is again worse than the regional average (12.9%) but better than the national average (11.5%) ➤ Only 57.5% of Rushmoor adults undertake more than 150 mins of activity a week which is worse than the regional average (63.6%) and national average (61.4%) ➤ The trend for inactive appears to be slowly increasing (getting worse)* • Females: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ 29.4% of females in Rushmoor are inactive. This is worse than averages for the region (23.7%) and England (27.6%) ➤ There is also a lower proportion of females in Rushmoor who are active (59.1%) compared to the region (61.9%) and England (60.1%). However, the numbers of those who are active in Rushmoor appear to be increasing year on year. There is very little difference between levels of inactivity between males (30%) and females (29.4) in Rushmoor. There are marginally more active females (59.2%) than males (57.6%) in Rushmoor.

Headline Needs Analysis Rushmoor Borough Council

- **Disability or Long Term Health Condition:**
 - 43.6% of Rushmoor residents with a limiting disability are inactive. This is worse than for the region (37.1%) and England (42.5%). Rushmoor is ranked 2nd among 6 nearest neighbours in terms of the size of the proportion of people with limiting disability that are inactive
 - While the proportion of people with a limiting disability that are inactive is high the smaller size of this group in the local population means that around 5,000 are inactive
 - There are a higher proportion of Rushmoor residents with a limiting disability who are active (48.4%) compared to England (45.4%), but activity levels are still worse than for the region (49.2%)
 - There is a large inequality between the proportions of inactive people with a limiting disability (43.6%) and those without (25.8%). The trend data suggests that this gap is getting wider (worse)
- **Age**
 - 36% of 65 – 74 year olds in Rushmoor are inactive, higher than the region (29.6%) and England (31.1%)
- **Males:**
 - Almost 3 in 10 males are inactive (30%). This is considerably worse than England (26.4%), the regional average (23%) and worse than all nearest neighbours
 - There are also fewer active males (57.6%) compared to England (63%) and the region (65.7%).
- **People in Middle Social Grades (NS SeC 3-5):**
 - Over 3 in 10 of this group (35.4%) are inactive. This is considerably worse than England (26.5%) and worse than the region (22.4%) and 4 out of 5 nearest neighbours
- **Young adults aged 16-34:**
 - Only 60.4% of this group are active in Rushmoor compared to 67.6% nationally and 68.9% across the region..
 - Walking and Cycling Statistics
 - The percentage of adults in Rushmoor walking for leisure has increased between 2015/16 and 2019/20. However, the numbers of adults cycling for leisure has actually decreased during the same period.

Headline Needs Analysis

Rushmoor Borough Council

Covid 19

- 1.10. On 21 March 2020, the UK Prime Minister announced that leisure centres were to close as part of the Covid – 19 lock down measures. There have been three subsequent national lockdown periods between March 2020 and April 2021 in which Rushmoor leisure centres have been closed, with income reduced to zero.
- 1.11. RBC agreed a package of financial support with the operator Places Leisure (PL) to help meet losses incurred as a result of the pandemic and help get the facilities back open.
- 1.12. The leisure management contract for Farnborough Leisure Centre, Aldershot Pools and Lido was due to end on 31 March 2021. RBC had started the procurement process back in December 2019 but the process was halted as a result of the Covid pandemic and the uncertainty of the leisure market at the time.
- 1.13. With the ongoing uncertainty and the financial issues created by the pandemic, RBC agreed at Cabinet on 23 February 2021 to allow Farnborough Leisure Centre to permanently close on 31 March and bring forward the proposals to build a new leisure centre on the site. A 3 year short term agreement was negotiated with PL for the ongoing management of Aldershot Pools and Aldershot Lido, to allow the sector to recover before re-starting the procurement process. It was also agreed that the continued opening of Aldershot Lido would be reviewed on an annual basis.
- 1.14. The pandemic has had a significant impact on participation levels both nationally and at a local level. The latest findings of the Sport England Moving Communities platform (July 2021) are as follows:

86% of respondents report that they prefer exercising in a leisure centre to a more informal environment such as at home or in a park. Only 10% responded that they do not miss their centre when it was shut, whilst 77% feel that the staff at the centre gave them the guidance, they needed to be more active.

The role that centre staff play in keeping people active is further reflected in the way in which respondents keep active when outside of facilities, or don't as the case may be.

People who were exercising at a moderate intensity between one and four days a week were more likely to be doing it within the leisure centre environment than outside, however those people exercising seven days a week were over three times more likely to be exercising outside of the leisure centre than inside.

Headline Needs Analysis Rushmoor Borough Council

This early data also suggests an intention of respondents to keep centre-based activity at the heart of their activity habits. People felt strongly that their centre was important to them, with 97% stating that they intended to exercise at least once a week at the facility over the next six months and 82% stated that they intended to exercise more at the centre than in an informal setting (e.g., at home or outdoors). Only 9% stated that they felt their local centre did not play a significant role in the lifestyle they wanted to live.

People who were exercising at a moderate intensity between one and four days a week were more likely to be doing it within the leisure centre environment than outside, however those people exercising seven days a week were over three times more likely to be exercising outside of the leisure centre than inside.

Analysis has revealed a direct correlation between people's preference for exercising in a leisure centre as opposed to exercising in a more informal setting (e.g., at home/in a park etc.), and the IMD band that corresponds with their postcode. The data shows that the more deprived the area the more people prefer to exercise in a leisure centre. This aligns directly with weekly recovery statistics showing that a higher percentage of those returning to centres are from more deprived areas. This is perhaps unsurprising given quality of space likely to be available to people from more deprived areas to exercise in – whether indoors at home, or outdoors in public spaces - but it does serve to re-enforce the role these facilities play in communities.

The previous Moving Communities In Focus article (May 2021) investigated the strong return to facilities of participants from more deprived areas and the more balanced distribution of participation across deprivation groups.

- 1.15. In Rushmoor, there has been a significant increase in swim participation at Aldershot Pools and Lido with numbers reaching 4,716 in June 2021, higher than pre-Covid figures for the same month in June 2019 (3,088). Swimming lesson participation has also increased significantly with 2,557 attending in June 2021 compared to 2,244 in June 2019. Finally, gym participation also showed a marked increase of 1,830 in June 2021 compared to 1,302 in June 2019. The participation trends are therefore encouraging for Rushmoor.
- 1.16. Rushmoor's latest National Promoter Score in May 2021 (NPS - measure of customer loyalty) is also very positive, achieving an NPS score of 89 compared to the national average of 52. Cleanliness also scored 97% compared to the national average of 86%.

Summary

1.17. It is clear from the above that key factors to reflect in terms of future leisure provision include:

- **A growing population;**
An aging population
- **A population that is growing in ethnic diversity;**
- **A population with key groups of inactive people, impacted further by the Covid pandemic;**
- **The need to provide facilities and activities which encourage and support increased levels of physical activity, and behaviour change in the inactive; and**
- **A specific need to provide activities for those with life limiting disabilities, males, females, young people aged 16-34, older people aged 65+, and those in middle social grades.**

Farnborough Leisure Centre and Aldershot and Lido - Existing Facilities

Farnborough Leisure Centre (now Closed)

- 2.1. A report went to a meeting of RBC's Cabinet on 23 February 2021 in which it was recommended that, due to the current position with the leisure market and the increased costs and other risks associated with the ongoing operation of the Farnborough Leisure Centre, that the facility would remain closed at the end of the existing contract (31 March 2021) and the Council take action to bring forward the demolition and re-provision of a new leisure facility on the Civic Quarter site.
- 2.2. The facility mix for the replacement leisure centre had been agreed at a previous meeting of Cabinet on 16 December 2019. The facility mix would incorporate the following facilities:
- **New Farnborough Leisure Centre**
 - 1 x 25m x 8 lane main pool.
 - Spectator provision – limited permanent poolside seating, with the ability to bring in seating for competitive events as needed.
 - Village change conforming to safeguarding guidance; fully inclusive; Changing Places room. Village style changing, plus group changing rooms.
 - 1 x 20m x 4 lane intermediate pool with a movable floor.
 - Fitness Suite - 150-170 stations.
 - 1 x 6 or 8 court main sports hall.
 - 2 x multi- purpose sprung floor studios
 - 1 x permanent spinning studio
 - 2 x squash courts with moving wall so can be converted into multi-purpose activity space
 - 1 x 10 pin bowling alley.
 - 1 x Café with 60 + covers.
 - Clip and climb adjacent to café/soft play
 - Beauty/physio rooms etc if on rental income basis.
 - Retail space of 50 sq. m.
 - Vending machine space
 - 1 x sauna and steam suite.
- 2.3. The facility mix did not include the re-provision of indoor bowling for financial reasons. RBC is in the process of reviewing alternative options for Rushmoor Indoor Bowls Club. The previous Headline Needs Analysis (May 2019) identified that as an alternative, indoor bowls could be provided as a standalone facility.

Headline Needs Analysis

Rushmoor Borough Council

2.4. The above facility mix does include the re-provision of a 10 pin bowling alley. However, RBC is now considering providing this as a separate standalone facility within the Civic Quarter site.

Aldershot Pools

2.5. The centre is located in a densely populated area less than a mile from Aldershot town centre. There is a large public park to the rear. A 2 court Floodlit 3G pitch is located in the 170 space coach and car park. The entrance to the 80 year old Lido is located in the car park. To the rear of the Lido, and in a separate building is the Rushmoor Gymnastics Academy. There is on street parking locally.

2.6. Aldershot Pools and Lido comprises:

- **1 x 25m x 6 lane main pool;**
- **1 x 12.5 x 10m teaching and play pool;**
- **1 x 30 station Fitness Suite with stretching area and free weight rack;**
- **Traditional separate male and female changing areas;**
- **Vending machines in reception area (no café); and**
- **Outdoor Lido (significant scale, horse-shoe-shape).**

2.7. The building is typical of a late 1980s community pool as promoted by the then Sports Council. Timber roof spars are in evidence in the pool hall and the low roof reduces the amount of natural light into the space. Additionally, the fitness suite is located down the left-hand length of the pool hall thus reducing the natural light even more. Limited spectator seating is located at the shallow end of the main pool with a view over to the teaching pool.

2.8. The fitness suite is narrow and does not appear to be purpose built. i.e. it was probably originally designed for another purpose such as a meeting room or management suite. Its overall scale and appeal is limited.

2.9. Internally the building is in good condition. Externally the building has been maintained but its aesthetic appeal is low.

2.10. An extension to the building at ground level is not possible without encroaching into the car park or the Lido area.

Deadline Needs Analysis

Rushmoor Borough Council

1. As the building is single storey the option to build upwards and outwards would require very careful consideration - and probable demolition of the present building as well as encroachment into the car park/Lido.

Aldershot Lido

2.12. The Aldershot Lido was built in 1930 and is the largest outdoor pool in Hampshire. The Lido comprises:

- **A picnic area;**
- **Large outdoor pool (1.5million gallons);**
- **3 fun water slides;**
- **Diving area;**
- **Toddler paddling pool; and**
- **Large sandpit.**

2.13. The Lido operates on a seasonal basis and is open for circa 80 days per annum between July – September, with part-time opening around the May holidays.

2.14. The Lido is in need of significant investment given its age and condition.

2.15. RBC has previously investigated a number of options relating to the Lido including the commissioning of outline refurbishment/redesign drawings (Willmott Dixon; Spring 2017) and an informal discussion with one of the leading Leisure Operators (Everyone Active; Spring 2017).

2.16. The cost of operating a Lido is mainly centred on the capital replacement of plant and machinery/pool tank during the closure period and the revenue costs of lifeguarding a very large swimming pool with flumes and substantial picnic space during the open season, when weather plays a significant part in attendances.

2.17. The nearest Lidos are 15- 20 miles away (Guildford, Petersfield, Hampton Court, London and Arundel) so there is no effective competition for Aldershot Lido in the immediate locality. Anecdotally, the Lido also attracts many people from outside the Borough.

Headline Needs Analysis

Rushmoor Borough Council

Review of Existing Operation

2.18. A summary of the existing Aldershot Pools and Lido annual performance is set out in Table 2.1.

Table 2.1: Annual Performance Aldershot Pools and Lido (NLRF data 2019/20)

Aldershot Pool and Lido Facilities	Visits 2017/18	Visits 2018/19	Visits 2019/20	Income 2019/20 £
Fitness (gym)	21,694	19,719	19,731	315,000
Group workout (aqua only)	10,211	10,259	2,283	2,500
Swimming lessons	34,849	34,699	27,962	269,000
Swimming activities (excluding swim lessons)	43,701	51,453	43,508	353,000
Other activities	5,460	6,980	7,023	69,000
Total	115,915	123,110	100,507	£1,008,500

2.19. An analysis of throughput at Farnborough Leisure Centre (pre-Covid 2017/18, 2018/19 and 2019/20) shows:

2.20. An analysis of throughput at Aldershot Pool and Lido (pre-Covid 2017/18, 2018/19 and 2019/20) shows:

- **Swimming** – decline in both adult and swimming participation, but the latter is now increasing; decline in concession swims 14/15 to 16/17 but now increasing again. There is no tangible reason for the drop in casual swimming. Places Leisure comment that lower swimming numbers have been experienced across all of their facilities, not just the Rushmoor contract.
- **Swimming Lessons** – improvement in lesson participation year on year.
- **Fitness** – growth in fitness suite participation numbers 13/14 to 16/17. Decline in participation numbers 17/18.
- **Lido** – participation levels declined sharply 20 2016/17; numbers almost doubled in 2018 due to the very hot summer in the UK.

2.1. As stated in 1.15 above, the Covid pandemic has had a significant impact on participation levels both at a national and local level. However, following the re-opening of Aldershot Pools and Lido following Lockdown 3, participation levels are beginning to show positive signs of recovery in Rushmoor with higher gym and swim lesson participation levels experienced in June 2021 compared to pre-Covid June 2019. However, the closure of Farnborough Leisure Centre will have impacted on these numbers with customers changing from using one site to another.

SLL Visual Assessment- Farnborough Leisure Centre

2.22. A visual assessment of the existing facilities identifies the following:

Table 2.2: Summary of SLL Visual Assessment – Aldershot Pools and Lido

Aldershot Pools and Lido - Existing Facility	Visual Assessment Observations
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1 x 25 m six lane main pool 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> An attractive pool but the poolhall roof leaks in places, and the overall area is in need of investment.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Changing facilities including family and group changing rooms 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Existing design does not align with modern day safeguarding guidance.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1 x 12.5 m x 10 m teaching pool 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The size is inefficient in that it cannot provide for more than two sets of junior lessons at the same time
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1 x 30 station fitness gym 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The number of stations are constrained by the available footprint. The narrow space and low roof does not provide a modern open fitness environment.

3. Consultation Feedback

- 3.1 Consultation has been undertaken with National Governing Bodies of Sport and Clubs who previously used Farnborough Leisure Centre (excluding Rushmoor Indoor Bowls Club) regarding their facility requirements for the new leisure centre.

Clubs who used Farnborough Leisure Centre

- 3.2 14 clubs who previously used Farnborough Leisure Centre were contacted and consulted with by phone, email or online meeting.. Responses (shown in Green) were received from:

- **Farnborough College of Technology;**
- **Aldershot Dolphins Scuba Club**
- **Farnborough U3A;**
- **Rushmoor Royals;**
- **Funtime Dance and Drama;**
- **Farnborough Swim Club;**
- **Ten pin bowling leagues.**
- **Farnborough Flyers;**
- **Rushmoor Youth Swimming**
- **Henry Tyndale school (special needs);**
- **RSA;**
- **BOC healthcare;**
- **Rushmoor Synchro;**
- **YBC (Youth Bowling Club); and**

- 3.3 Those highlighted in red above were not contactable,. Respondents identified the information shown below in Table 3.1. The full club survey responses are included as Appendix 1.

Headline Needs Analysis

Rushmoor Borough Council

Table 3.1: Summary of Club Consultation

Which club/group are you answering on behalf of?	Approximately, how many members are there in the club/group?	Approximately, how many are active members?	Approximately, how many teams does the club/group have?	Have membership increased over the last 3 years?	Does the club plan to increase its membership numbers?	What facilities are required by the club/group?(E.g. 8 lane pool, 6 badminton courts etc)	What standard of facility is required?
Rushmoor Royals Swimming Club	618 pre-Covid 100 Covid	550 pre-Covid 100 Covid	5	No – due to Covid	Yes	<p>For competitions - a competition standard pool (10 x 25m lanes at 2.5m apart), deck level with raised ends, appropriate depths and moveable floor. SWISS Timing System and Suite. Competition anti-wave lane ropes and Starting blocks (Fina FR 2.7 spec) with wedges and ledges. Backstroke Flags and poles. Pool to be maintained between 27 and 29 degrees Celsius.</p> <p>Alongside a 5 lane x 25m tank with moveable floor to go down to 3 metres could cater for both swimming and syncro. The spectator area including all aspects - timing system and suite (room on balcony), diving blocks, spectator seats (250 – 300) plus 150 additional on poolside for swimmers. During competitions we may also need access to meeting room to house officials briefings, club kit sales etc. Separate male/female group changing, lockers, storage for club equipment. Need bigger pool decks to accommodate more swimmers and enable other side activities (info desk/stall). A bus park for teams arriving by coach. Child welfare to be considered in design i.e. viewing gallery and changing rooms.</p> <p>An office space would be ideal to enable coaches working split shifts to work together.</p>	Regional

Headline Needs Analysis

Rushmoor Borough Council

Which club/group are you answering on behalf of?	Approximately, how many members are there in the club/group?	Approximately, how many are active members?	Approximately, how many teams does the club/group have?	Have membership increased over the last 3 years?	Does the club plan to increase its membership numbers?	What facilities are required by the club/group?(E.g. 8 lane pool, 6 badminton courts etc)	What standard of facility is required?
						<p>Access to water fountains on poolside.</p> <p>Collaboration with any inhouse physio would be beneficial for swimming and other sports.</p>	
Rushmoor Youth Swimming	140	140	1	No	No		Club
Aldershot DOLPHINS' Scuba Club	35	18	0	No	Yes	<p>Pool with area of 3 metres+ depth. Half 25m pool at this depth would be adequate, but larger the area the better. Club also needs access to a shallow end of 1m depth for training and entry purposes.</p> <p>Lecture room for up to 15 people approx. with a projector for safety briefings.</p> <p>Ventilated storage space for storing equipment and allowing it to dry. Storage for approx.. 10 sets of scuba gear required.</p> <p>Access to a side door to the pool due to lots of heavy equipment being brought on site for each session.</p> <p>Club currently leases a large 'lock up' building from RBC for our boat and equipment. Would be nice to have this storage as part of the new facility, but not essential.</p>	N/A

Headline Needs Analysis

Rushmoor Borough Council

Which club/group are you answering on behalf of?	Approximately, how many members are there in the club/group?	Approximately, how many are active members?	Approximately, how many teams does the club/group have?	Have membership increased over the last 3 years?	Does the club plan to increase its membership numbers?	What facilities are required by the club/group?(E.g. 8 lane pool, 6 badminton courts etc)	What standard of facility is required?
Farnborough Swimming Club	170	170	1	No	Yes	<p>6 lane pool at least 25 metres long 3m at the deep section, less than 1 m deep at the shallow section. Preferably a separate teaching pool.</p> <p>Enough space for 20 – 30 people to get changed at the same time.</p> <p>Secure storage space for equipment on poolside.</p> <p>Spectator seating – children under 8 years must be accompanied on poolside by an adult so needs to have close access.</p>	Club
Ten Pin Bowling Leagues	120 pre-Covid 31 Covid	31	30	No due to Covid	Yes	Tenpin Bowling lanes. 60ft lane from foul line to pins, with a further 10ft to seating area. Minimum of 10 lanes needed. Could easily have filled 16 lanes pre-covid.	Regional
Farnborough Flyers	50 Covid	40	1	No due to Covid	Yes	<p>2 badminton courts (6 trampolines); overhead rig, push in safety mats, safety matting for the floor. To host competition, the roof height has to be a minimum of 7m – 10m high. For recreation, the height needs to be a minimum of 5m high.</p> <p>8 trampolines for competition; warm-up area.</p> <p>Large storage for trampolines.</p>	Regional

Headline Needs Analysis

Rushmoor Borough Council

Which club/group are you answering on behalf of?	Approximately, how many members are there in the club/group?	Approximately, how many are active members?	Approximately, how many teams does the club/group have?	Have membership increased over the last 3 years?	Does the club plan to increase its membership numbers?	What facilities are required by the club/group?(E.g. 8 lane pool, 6 badminton courts etc)	What standard of facility is required?
Rushmoor Synchro	50 Covid	50	7	No due to Covid	Yes	<p>6 lane pool at least 25m in length – Sport England minimum depth of 2m, but ideally 3m. Also require use of land training area such as sports hall or studio.</p> <p>Access to space around the pool for participants and registration.</p> <p>Separate group changing.</p> <p>Good acoustics in pool hall.</p> <p>Spectator seating for 120 – 150 people for shows.</p> <p>Lockable storage cupboard 3m x 2m.</p>	Regional

3.4 The above feedback illustrates the need for clubs to have access to both specialist training and competitive facilities, as well as changing facilities, storage, spectator provision and ideally office (swimming coaches) and catering provision.

3 Clubs are an important element of a leisure centre user base, but their requirements need to be balanced with those of the general public, given the facility will be funded through public resources.

Henry Tyndale school (special needs) they have said lots of questions at the start of the survey are related to clubs but because they are a school they didn't think it was for them and their particular setting so answers would be incorrect and wouldn't be helpful to anyone. They would be happy to give feedback if it was more tailored towards them as a school rather than a club.

Headline Needs Analysis

Rushmoor Borough Council

National Governing Bodies (NGB)

3.7 Consultation with NGBs identifies the following:

3.8 National Governing Bodies of Sport (NGB's) have been consulted regarding facility requirements for the replacement Farnborough Leisure Centre. There comments are contained in the table below. Some NGB's are currently planning (some but not all with Sport England) new priorities for the next funding cycle 2017 – 2021. Sport England and NGB's support increased participation in physical activity and sport as a response to the obesity crisis facing our children and young adults along with the increasing mental health issues displayed by many sections of society.

Table 3.2: Summary of NGB Consultation

Organisations	Contact	Current Development and Priorities	Future Development And Priorities
Badminton	Tanya Woodward Relationship Manager at Badminton England.co.uk	<p>1. What are the current priorities in the area covered by Rushmoor BC</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Below average number of sites (11 vs 24) • Below average number of courts available (46 vs 76) • Total unmet demand for courts across the area -0.4 courts • 13.2% of the population of Rushmoor has a disability but we do not currently have a disability club – potential area for development • Average number of coaches in the area which may support future participation growth <p>2. What might be required to support your priorities in the coming years</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are 10 (3+court) sports halls containing 50 courts in Rushmoor. • Two hall(s) are for private use only; thus 42 courts are available for badminton. • The total number of court hours per week (3+ court sports halls) available in Rushmoor during stated peak time is 1,633 • All badminton courts in Rushmoor meet the Badminton England quality threshold (above average/good) which equates to 1,633 court hours . 	<p>Need for disability badminton club in Rushmoor</p> <p>Access to courts at peak hours to address current and latent demand for badminton</p>

Headline Needs Analysis

Rushmoor Borough Council

Organisations	Contact	Current Development and Priorities	Future Development And Priorities
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is a need for 50.89% of the 1,633 good quality peak time court hours, available each week, to service current and latent badminton demand. • Additional court hours required per week in 2030 are 25. <p>3. Who are the key clubs and what do they deliver for your sport?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aloes Badminton Club • Eagles Badminton Club • Hawley Badminton Club • Parkside Badminton Club <p>Key facilities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Farnborough Leisure Centre • Aldershot Garrison Sports Centre • The Sixth Form College Farnborough • Wavell Campus Leisure • Fernhill School • Alderwood Leisure <p>4. What long term plans or developments do you have in mind/ in progress</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No answer given <p>5. Do you have access to funds to support your plans and development in Rushmoor</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In terms of funding being available, we do not currently have our own capital investment programme but it is something that we are currently exploring with Sport England which may result in funds being available from April 2022 onwards. However, this will not be confirmed for a few months yet if it does prove to be the case. 	

Headline Needs Analysis

Rushmoor Borough Council

Organisations	Contact	Current Development and Priorities	Future Development And Priorities
British Gymnastics And Trampolineing	Rob Hardy	<p>1. What are your current priorities in Rushmoor?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The main issue for gymnastic development is having access to sufficient dedicated space – clubs are able to grow and extend their programmes. The other key factor is the availability of coaches qualified at the right level which has become a significant problem during lockdown. <p>2. What might be required to support your priorities in the coming years?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Facilities Strategy highlights the key benefits that BG will work towards to improve facilities for gymnastics particularly by supporting clubs with their plans for improvement of their spaces and to relocate to better and bigger spaces. <p>Dedicated gymnastics facilities allow for a wide range of potential benefits including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased participation opportunities Wider range of equipment Greater diversity of activity delivery Improved governance and operations Additional coaching and other gymnastics careers Venue for local events and competitions Ability to focus on performance pathways Development of social impact <p>Clubs moving into dedicated facilities will be able to increase their membership and diversify their range of activities including to the local community and by working with other organisations offering physical activity opportunities.</p> <p>Currently approximately 1/3 of clubs operate from their own facility, 1/3 in non-dedicated school venues and 1/3 from non-dedicated leisure centres.</p>	<p>Access to dedicated space in Rushmoor.</p> <p>Availability of suitably qualified coaches</p>

Headline Needs Analysis

Rushmoor Borough Council

Organisations	Contact	Current Development and Priorities	Future Development And Priorities
		<p>BG's target is to have 40 clubs per year moving into dedicated spaces.</p> <p>By working with local authorities in the early stages of assessing their sports facility strategy requirements, British Gymnastics will be able advice where clubs have ongoing facility projects and promote the demand and benefits of these to the local council.BG is keen to work with local councils to progress projects and work on joint project.</p> <p>Integrating gymnastics facility requirements into the long-term sports facility planning process is the most effective way to ensure gymnastics is highlighted when leisure facility plans are being considered.</p> <p>3. Who are the key clubs and what do they deliver for your sport?</p> <p>Rushmoor GA – dedicated facility for 20 years plus Fox – local sports hall Steller – based in a local academy – met them a couple of years ago – proposal was to build a new sports centre and lease the old one to the gymnastics club Prestige – based in a country park in a dedicated facility – met them to discuss a project to take over a new sports centre being built by a housing developer Farnborough Flyers – trampoline club based in a sports centre</p> <p>4. What long term plans do you have in mind, or already have in place?</p> <p>https://www.british-gymnastics.org/documents/clubs-schools-and-leisure-centres/8551-facility-strategy-2017-2021/file Link to facility strategy – new facility strategy is being prepared for 2022-2027</p> <p>5. Do you have access to funds to support your plans and development in Rushmoor?</p> <p>New funding streams have been established by Sport England include those focused on older people, deprived communities and to encourage and develop volunteering.</p>	

Headline Needs Analysis

Rushmoor Borough Council

Organisations	Contact	Current Development and Priorities	Future Development And Priorities
		<p>The significant funding stream for Local Delivery Pilots with a budget in excess of £150m has also established focusing on new ways of delivery of sport and physical activity.</p> <p>The key focus now for Sport England is to tackle physical inactivity, particularly among those target groups where inactivity levels are highest.</p> <p>Sport England latest strategy Uniting the Movement is focused on reducing inactivity focusing on key target groups.</p> <p>https://www.sportengland.org/why-were-here/uniting-the-movement</p> <p>The main Sport England funding stream available for capital projects is the Community Asset Fund (CAF) which replaces the Inspired Funding Stream. Some examples of gymnastics clubs that have been successful include Andover with a £60k award and Leatherhead and Dorking who are receiving a £70k grant. Carterton in Oxford have been awarded £100k as have Portsmouth School of Gymnastics who received £50k</p> <p>Sport England although the Improvement Fund has ceased still has the Strategic Facilities Fund which a couple of clubs have advised that they will make an approach. Access to this fund is very challenging and requires significant local authority support.</p> <p>https://www.sportengland.org/funding/</p> <p>There are other funding streams, often local to an area or county and there are sources of information from local authorities, the local voluntary sector as well as County Sports Partnerships (CSPs) who often have search tools to access funding information and advice. Active Sussex have one on their website.</p> <p>One example of other funding streams that could be accessed, provided from landfill tax credits (ENTRUST) are offered via charitable foundations linked with re-cycling organisations such as BIFFA, SiTA and Veolia. Funding eligibility can be established via a postcode checker.</p> <p>https://www.entrust.org.uk/</p>	

Headline Needs Analysis

Rushmoor Borough Council

Organisations	Contact	Current Development and Priorities	Future Development And Priorities
		<p>There are also a number of independent trusts and foundations such as the Peter Harrison and Garfield Weston Foundation who have provided grants to gymnastic clubs for example one recent example is Spelthorne Gymnastics Club for their new build project in 2017.</p> <p><i>The funding landscape has changed significantly in recent years with a new focus on tackling inactivity and developing a wider remit for sport and physical activity within local communities. Key issues to be addressed prior to seeking grants include governance structure, financial background including having a detailed business plan and undertaking research and insight work to understand your membership and potential membership as well as data of your local area including demographic trends.</i></p> <p>British Gymnastics have now established a low-cost loans scheme called Club Capital <i>which</i> has been operating for just over a year with 16 approved projects and 9 currently opened (July 21) Clubs include Croydon who have moved into a former town centre store and some clubs are also considering using modular buildings.</p> <p>https://clubcapital.co.uk/</p>	
NAKMAS National association of Karate and martial arts school	Sandra Beale. Director of Operations	No response received	
Swim England	Ryan Davies Facilities Officer	<p>1. What are your current priorities for the area covered by Rushmoor DC</p> <p>The last few years have been a real challenge for both of these clubs with the army pool being shut until very recently and Farnborough LC shutting permanently, this was a good venue for artistic too as it had deep water in the middle of the pool. They do have Aldershot pool/lido but this is not suitable for synchro as it is very shallow.</p>	Existing supply can meet current demand for swimming in district as long as existing aged facilities are replaced

Headline Needs Analysis

Rushmoor Borough Council

Organisations	Contact	Current Development and Priorities	Future Development And Priorities
		<p>Subsequently the artistic club have been training out of a private school pool in Odium and Guildford Spectrum diving pit, both of which are out of their home borough. Rushmoor Royals have also been utilising private schools out of the borough and the RAF pool in Odium, they have secured time at the new pool in Camberley which has just opened, there is no home club in that area.</p> <p>We feel that the current water provision is able to meet the demand for swimming within the district. Our main priority at this stage would be to make future plans for possible replacements of aged facilities. Both Aldershot Pool and Farnborough LC were both built in the 1970's. The data suggests that facilities of this age have already become or will soon become financially unsustainable.</p> <p>2. What might be required to support your priorities?</p> <p>What size man pool would you recommend for a replacement Farnborough LC? 25m x 8 lane</p> <p>What size learner/teaching pool would you recommend? 10m x 17/20m</p> <p>Would you support the provision of a moveable floor in the training pool? Yes it would provide a diverse pool programme and the deep water needed for the high level artistic swimming club</p> <p>3. Who are the key clubs and what do they deliver for your sport?</p> <p>The main clubs based in Rushmoor are Rushmoor Royals Swimming Club and Rushmoor Artistic Swimming Club. Several other clubs (10+) utilise the 50m army facility in Aldershot either weekly or from time to time but they are primarily based out of that borough. Rushmoor Royals are swimming only from learn to swim upwards, they compete up to British National level, Rushmoor Artistic are one of the leading clubs in the country for Artistic swimming and often have international representation.</p> <p>4. What long term plans or developments do you have in mind?</p>	

Headline Needs Analysis

Rushmoor Borough Council

Organisations	Contact	Current Development and Priorities	Future Development And Priorities
		<p>The re-development or replacement of aging facilities</p> <p>5. Do you have access to funds to support development?</p> <p>No answer given</p>	

Feedback from other Consultees

3.9 Consultation from other stakeholders identifies:

Table 3.3: Summary of Consultation with other Consultees

Consultee	Feedback
Places Leisure, Current Operator	<p>Amount of retail space required in reception area - (8m wall space)</p> <p>Number of café covers / sq meters in main building - (100 covers)</p> <p>Do you consider ten pin bowling to be a financially viable (profitable) proposition in a new centre and if so; with separate entrance to the facility? Yes</p> <p>Would you want a facility specific café in the Bowling alley? Yes, with the bowl reception dealing serving customers at off peak times.</p> <p>You suggested a fitness gym with around 140/150 stations inc group exercise frame, stretching area and free weights. This is significantly more than at present so is this still your preferred option - Fitness Suite c150stations = 750m², 2 x Studios c200m² each (50 capacity each) and a further holistic studio c120m² and a separate Group Cycle Studio c90m²</p> <p>Would you prefer a 4,6,8,10 badminton crt hall assuming that three multi use activity studios are included in the facility mix? Either a 4 or 8 court hall</p>
Energise Me	<p>We Can Be Active physical activity strategy was published in July 2021. It has 5 broad goals:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Positive early experiences for our children and young people 2. Opportunities that meet our needs and interests, and are accessible and easy to find. 3. Places and travel routes where we <i>all</i> feel safe and are encouraged to be active.

Headline Needs Analysis

Rushmoor Borough Council

Consultee	Feedback
	<p>4. Support to help us get started or keep moving when we feel that we can't do it alone.</p> <p>5. Bold leaders working together to create happier and healthier communities.</p> <p>The new FLC can make an important contribution to all these goals. The involvement of the community in helping to determine the facility mix and what else is important to them is crucial.</p> <p>The building and the facility mix are important. Programming, price, the skills of the staff, marketing and communications etc will be important to its success.</p> <p>FLC is an indoor centre at the moment. Consideration should be given to the opportunity to provide outdoor space to make physical activity more accessible and visible? What opportunities does the masterplan for the new civic quarter provide to design a space that can be versatile, welcoming, inviting and where physical activity, in all its forms can be more visible. These spaces could include informal spaces that can be used by personal trainers to take activity outdoors. New Energy Fitness outdoor space. Spaces for play, spaces to cycle and to walk, to scoot and to skateboard. To provide context, here's a quote from IAKS <i>"The individualisation of our society and new ways of working with blurring boundaries between work and leisure are leading to stronger demand for individual sports like swimming, jogging and cycling. These are often performed in public spaces that are not limited by opening hours, e.g. cycling tracks without crossroads like the idea of skycycle in London. This calls for multifunctional and safe public spaces. At the same time, workplaces need to integrate facilities for physical activities. Another opportunity is to open sports facilities (especially sports halls) to the individual, e.g. the Danish idea of sports halls as "indoor commons"</i>.</p> <p>The design should consider the connection to the urban environment and how spaces to play can be extended. There are some images in this publication by IAKS https://www.iaks.org/en/iaks/future-trends.</p> <p>Thinking of the ageing population and those with long term health conditions, consideration will of course need to be given to lighting, stairs, signage etc. New activities are emerging for these potential users and the new facility should take this into account e.g. dance.</p> <p>Building on this, it will be important that the leisure centre has multi-functional spaces that can be flexed to meet different needs and adapted over time to meet new needs. Studios for classes, including dance will be important. Also for individuals, clubs and organisations to hire.</p> <p>If RBC are looking for external investment, consideration will need to be given to the make-up of the facilities e.g. can services be co-located to increase footfall (I know that talks have taken place in the past about the co-location of the library), more importantly can health services be co-located to allow for collaboration on social prescribing and better prevention services?</p> <p>What will set an application apart? How can the new facility innovate to tackle inactivity? The town centre development and co-location of the sports centre present a really exciting opportunity to connect physical activity to indoor and outdoor space for leisure time.</p> <p>Finally, the link to active travel should be considered. From personal experience, Farnborough town centre is poorly laid out and signposted and its connection to the railway station is also difficult to navigate. Can we make it easier for the community to choose to walk or cycle into the town centre for leisure.</p>

4. Facility Analysis

- 4.1 The Rushmoor Open Space, Sport and Recreation Study (2014) examined indoor sports provision within Rushmoor, including quantity, quality and accessibility assessments. In summary, the recommended approach is to protect and enhance existing provision. Overall, existing indoor sports provision is assessed to be adequate for Rushmoor; whilst existing levels of provision should be protected, the 2014 study does not identify the need for additional swimming pools, sports halls or fitness suites, or indeed any other sports facilities.
- 4.2 The 2014 study does support the replacement of existing facilities where there is a need to improve quality; it is in this context, plus that of a growing population, together with what was already known about use of available capacity at the existing Farnborough Leisure Centre that informs the proposed future facility mix.
- 4.3 Table 4.1 identifies other existing facility provision in Rushmoor which needs to be taken into account in planning a replacement for Farnborough Leisure Centre.

Table 4.1: Summary of existing Facility Provision in Rushmoor

Existing Farnborough Leisure Centre	Other Publicly Accessible Facilities
1 x 33m six lane main pool with shallow water (0.9m) at both ends of the pool;	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One of three public pools in Rushmoor, and one of two publicly accessible main pools in the Borough (the other is at Aldershot Pools and Lido). • There are five other pools in the Borough; one is for private use (Farnborough Hill School); three provide for registered membership use only (Pavilion Health and Fitness Club, The Village Gym, Nuffield Health); Aldershot Garrison (MOD) offers a 50m x 8 lane pool and is available at limited times for public access but is subject to close in the event of any security alert.
Mixed village style changing facilities including family and group changing rooms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Changing facilities available in all sport and leisure facilities.
1 x 12.5 m teaching pool;	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One of three learner pools in the Borough (the other publicly accessible learner pool is at Aldershot Pools and Lido). There is a learner pool at Pavilion Health and Fitness Club, but this is accessible by registered members only.

Headline Needs Analysis

Rushmoor Borough Council

Existing Farnborough Leisure Centre	Other Publicly Accessible Facilities
1 x 100 station fitness gym	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The fourth largest fitness suite in the Borough – Pure Gym has 220 stations, Nuffield Health 174 Stations and Anytime Fitness (Aldershot) 125 stations. and one of only three pay and play facilities in the Borough, the others being Studio 1 (Aldershot) and Aldershot Pools and Lido. Of the sixteen fitness suites in the Borough, one is limited public access (Aldershot Garrison), one is for private use only (Farnborough Hill School), one is dual use (Alderwood Leisure Centre)one is open to sports clubs (Farnborough 6th Form College) and the remaining ten are open to registered members only.
1 x 10 badminton court multi sports hall	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Farnborough LC had the largest sports hall in the Borough, and the only one with public pay and play access. There are nine sports halls in Rushmoor; one has limited access for sports clubs (Aldershot Garrison); seven are on education sites with limited access ie evening and weekend for sports clubs; and two are only available for private use (Cove School and Farnborough Hill School).
2 x studios	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There are a total of seven facilities providing twelve studios in the Borough. There were previously two studios in Farnborough Leisure Centre providing pay and play public access. Alderwood Leisure Centre also provides one studio with pay and play public access. Nine studios in four facilities are accessible to registered members only. There is one studio available for limited pay and play access as it is on an education site (Alderwood Leisure Centre); this is available evenings and weekends.
3 x Squash courts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There are eight squash courts in the Borough; These are all located at Aldershot Garrison (MOD) and therefore has limited public access. The courts are all glass backed.. With the closure of the existing Farnborough Leisure Centre, there are now no pay and play accessible courts in the Borough
1 x 10 lane ten-pin bowling alley with coffee bar	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The only 10 pin bowling facilities in the Borough. Nearest facilities are 20-30 minutes' drive.
1 x Coffee bar with children's soft play area.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There are other soft play facilities at pubs in the Borough.
1 x sunbed.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> N/A
1 x beauty therapy room.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> N/A

Headline Needs Analysis

Rushmoor Borough Council

Existing Farnborough Leisure Centre	Other Publicly Accessible Facilities
1 x Sauna and steam suite.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The only pay and play spa facilities in the Borough; others require membership or are purchased on a day package.

- 4.4 The Sports Facility Calculator (SFC) is a facility modelling toolkit, developed by Sport England to calculate the future need for provision of sports halls, swimming pools and indoor bowls, based on a specified population increase in an identified location. The SFC provides a quantitative estimate of future need but it does not identify the specific location of future provision. However, in the absence of any other future demand calculator, the SFC provides an indicator of the level of future provision needed.
- 4.5 Using Hampshire's Small Area Population Forecasts (updated April 2021) which takes into account planned housing growth in each district, a population increase of 8,983 is projected in Rushmoor between 2020 and 2027. On this basis, the SFC identifies the following additional demand for sports halls and swimming pools based on this projected population increase:

Sports Halls

Courts	2.51
Halls	0.63
Vpwpp (visits per week peak period)	740
Cost	£1,639,469

Swimming Pools

Sq. m	93.61
Lanes	1.76
Pools	0.44
vpwpp	569
Cost	£1,754,238

N.B. Calculation uses 2020 population of 98,875 for Rushmoor.

Given the above, the analysis of the existing provision and identified issues to factor into future need are:

Headline Needs Analysis

Rushmoor Borough Council

Table 4.2: Analysis of the existing provision and identified issues to factor into future need

Existing Farnborough Leisure Centre	Need To Provide For Growing Population	Needed To Provide For Ageing Population	Need To Provide For Club Use	Need To Provide For Public Pay And Play Use	NGB Identified Needs	Will Facilitate Increased Usage	Potential To Attract The Inactive If Programmed Appropriately/Provide Specific Activities	Increased Revenue Generation
1 x 33m six lane main pool with shallow water (0.9m) at both ends of the pool;	Yes, but needs to be better quality.	Yes	Yes to enable concurrent club training and public access. Will need to facilitate a depth of 3m for synchro.	Should enable public access at all times.	8 lane competition pool to support two key local clubs.	Larger pool will facilitate increased use; ideally 8 lane x 25m	Yes	Yes
Mixed village style changing facilities including family and group changing rooms	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	TBC	Yes	Should reflect modern guidance on safeguarding and be inclusive access.	Supports usage and therefore income generation
1 x 12.5 m teaching pool;	Yes	Yes – beneficial for use for aqua classes	Yes	Yes	10m x 17/20m teaching pool	10 x 20m with moveable floor suggested as better size for teaching and will better accommodate activities that can be transferred from main pool, to leave that space for public lane swimming and club training and competition use	Yes	Yes
1 x 100 station fitness gym	Yes; capacity is currently limited	Yes; opportunity to maximise daytime use	N/A	Yes	N/A	Yes	Yes; thought needs to be given to layout and design to facilitate use by those who have not previously used a fitness suite	Yes

Headline Needs Analysis

Rushmoor Borough Council

Existing Farnborough Leisure Centre	Need To Provide For Growing Population	Needed To Provide For Ageing Population	Need To Provide For Club Use	Need To Provide For Public Pay And Play Use	NGB Identified Needs	Will Facilitate Increased Usage	Potential To Attract The Inactive If Programmed Appropriately/Provide Specific Activities	Increased Revenue Generation
1 x 10 badminton court multi sports hall	Sports hall definitely needed but could be smaller- 6 or 8 court; new 3G football facilities in the Borough (2 in Farnborough) mean football can be played outside on a better surface.	Yes; opportunity to maximise daytime use	Yes 5.2M height needed for trampolining.	Yes	No specific size of facility identified; state need more courts and more access to existing courts to meet needs of 12 local clubs.	Yes	Yes; specific opportunity for increased disability use, and more informal activities	Yes
3 x studios	Yes; capacity is currently limited	Yes; opportunity to maximise daytime use	N/A	Yes	N/A	Yes	Yes; suggest studio space is increased to provide: A separate spinning studio- virtual and instructor-led classes Two studios for (1) aerobics and yoga/pilates and (2) multi-purpose space for delivery of health and well-being programmes/ activities	Yes
3 x Squash courts	Only pay and play courts in the borough, but squash is now really delivered through clubs.	Not a priority.	No club at the leisure centre. Minimum of two courts needed for a club.	Possibly, but existing usage very low. Potential to provide two courts with a sliding wall so can also be used as multi-purpose space – see above; better overall use of space and will generate more income.	TBC	If designed as a multi-use space	If designed as a multi-use space	If designed as a multi-use space

Headline Needs Analysis

Rushmoor Borough Council

Existing Farnborough Leisure Centre	Need To Provide For Growing Population	Needed To Provide For Ageing Population	Need To Provide For Club Use	Need To Provide For Public Pay And Play Use	NGB Identified Needs	Will Facilitate Increased Usage	Potential To Attract The Inactive If Programmed Appropriately/Provide Specific Activities	Increased Revenue Generation
1 x 10 lane ten-pin bowling alley with coffee bar	The only facility in the Borough. Usage increasing.	Accessible for all ages.	N/A	The only facility in the Borough. Usage increasing.	Minimum 1 x 10 lane bowling alley	Yes.	Yes.	Yes.
1 x Coffee bar with children's soft play area.	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	N/A	Yes	Yes Possibly include Clip and Climb adjacent to the soft play and café – new activity and income stream?	Yes
1 x sunbed.	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No
1 x beauty therapy room.	Yes if franchised; no risk to operator.	N/A	N/A	Yes if franchised; no risk to operator.	N/A	N/A	Possibly	Rental income
1 x Sauna and steam suite.	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	N/A	Yes	Yes	Yes; needs to be included in membership fees or designed to be accessed separately so a fee can be charged.

Headline Needs Analysis

Rushmoor Borough Council

5. Future Facility Provision

5.1 Based on the above research, consultation and identified facility provision in the Borough, the following recommendations are made for the future provision of a replacement Farnborough Leisure Centre.

Table 5.1: Analysis of the existing provision and identified issues to factor into future need

Existing Farnborough Leisure Centre	New Farnborough Leisure Centre
1 x 33m six lane main pool with shallow water (0.9m) at both ends of the pool;	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1 x 25m x 8 lane main pool. The size meets competition requirements but the main benefit is the ability to subdivide it into lanes or widths suitable to maximising activity programming. For example, early morning club training and customer lane swimming or daytime school lessons and casual bathing or after school fun sessions and swimming lessons. Swim participation and lesson attendance has increased significantly at Aldershot Pools since April 2021, which may in part be due to the closure of Farnborough LC and displaced demand. Spectator provision – permanent provision should be limited as it is non-income generating space, but sufficient to cater for swim competitions/galas. Most modern pools provide some limited seating adjacent to the learner pool/or seating in a café area over-looking the pool, and there is the ability to bring in seating for a gala.
Mixed village style changing facilities including family and group changing rooms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Village change conforming to safeguarding guidance; fully inclusive; Changing Places room. Village style changing, plus group changing rooms.
1 x 12.5 m teaching pool	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1 x 20m x 4 lane intermediate pool with a movable floor. Swimming lessons are second in the hierarchy of income generation so all operators are keen to maximise lesson space. The floor can be set at any depth between zero (overnight energy saving pool cover) and 1.6m. Sensible programming makes this pool suitable for non-swimming babies and toddlers, junior learn to swim lessons, improvers lessons, adult aquacise classes, diving, synchronized swim classes and casual or lane swimming. This size pool negates the need to include a separate child splash pad which is a net expense to the operator. With the inclusion of a screen it can be partitioned off to create a private bathing area for a variety of users. e.g. Women only, adult learn to swim classes, exercise for the obese. Pre-Covid, the attendance figures showed a year on year increase in swimming lessons. This is unlikely to diminish as new housing is built in the Borough.
1 x 100 station fitness gym	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A fitness gym of some 700 sqm will supply around 150/170 stations. Direct debit membership is the largest income generator for all operators.

Headline Needs Analysis

Rushmoor Borough Council

Existing Farnborough Leisure Centre	New Farnborough Leisure Centre
1 x 10 badminton court multi sports hall	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 x 6 or 8 court main hall. As a multi-purpose space, it can be divided into useable areas in which different activities can take place at the same time. An 8-court hall can be divided into halves or quarters large enough to accommodate a variety of activities at the same time. e.g. Netball, badminton, trampolining. The six-court hall can be divided into local level Netball and Badminton or Netball and Trampoline or indeed standalone league standard Netball or Basketball. At least one operator would recommend a four-court hall and this is based on income generation per sq. Gymnastics which requires a large space is well catered for at the Academy in Aldershot and at the local Hart Leisure centre Pre-Covid attendance figures showed that the hall was only regularly fully utilised between 18.00 and 21.00 Mon to Fri with usage either side of that time sporadic suggesting that a 6 court hall would be the most cost effective.
3 x studios	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2 x multi- purpose sprung floor studios to host morning and evening group exercise classes which generate further direct debit memberships. These studios will also provide tea time and weekend activity space for children (tumbling, ballet, martial arts, parties) plus afternoon table tennis and social activities for the retired/unemployed. • 1 permanent spinning studio- virtual and instructor-led classes. • A new FLC will generate additional demand but is unlikely to require more than the present 3 studios.
3 x Squash courts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inclusion of two courts but with moving wall so can be converted into multi-purpose activity space to provide more activities on a partnership basis, e.g.health and well-being, and for those who are inactive.
1 x 10 lane ten-pin bowling alley with coffee bar	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 x 10 pin bowling alley. There are no other facility offerings locally catering for both the teenage and the family market. With a dedicated marketing budget this could be a valuable asset within the regeneration of the town centre. The most recent attendance figure showed that the activity was very popular with estimated 18/19 attendances slightly above those anticipated for the year. A new 10 pin bowling alley would not necessarily have to be included as an integral part of the new leisure centre, but could be a stand-alone commercial build within the town centre.

Headline Needs Analysis

Rushmoor Borough Council

Existing Farnborough Leisure Centre	New Farnborough Leisure Centre
1 x Coffee bar with children's soft play area.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1 x Café with 60 + covers. The location and size are the most important aspects of this service. Some operators prefer to engage a branded franchisee; others operate an in-house cafe. However branded or not an optimal shape and size and location is what the operator wants to achieve and to this end early discussion during the design stage is important if the Client is to benefit from what is a high-income generator for the operator. If a ten-pin bowling alley is to be included then further thought would need to be given to the number of Cafes within the building as an opportunity for one to serve the whole of the building would be an option. A visit to a coffee shop is part of an overall experience for both adults and juniors. Clip and climb adjacent to café/soft play; new activity and income stream.
1 x beauty therapy room.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Possibly if on rental income basis.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Retail space of 50 sq. m. "Distress" purchases and branded goods purchases are now an important income generator for an operator. This dedicated space should be highlighted in any outsourcing material as it has a value to both the operator and the client. If it is overlooked during the design process the operator will (once appointed) find space within the centre and the RBC will not benefit from this additional income stream.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Vending machine space should be incorporated into the design of the centre. If this is overlooked during the design process the operator will (once appointed) find space within the centre and the RBC will not benefit from this additional income stream.
1 x Sauna and steam suite.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1 x sauna and steam suite. This is a popular addition at the neighbouring Hart Leisure Centre although it does not generate a great deal of direct income. Its availability is appreciated by the clientele and access to it is marketed as a premium option available through a direct debit membership.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> It would be possible to create a daytime creche in one of the studios thus making best use of space without needing to dedicate a space to an activity often provided for free by competitors (e.g. local family pub restaurants).

Although not part of a leisure centre development per se, the opportunity to provide a loop cycle track should also be considered in the Borough as part of future provision, potentially linked into the formal built facilities. There is no safe off road 2.5km track in the Borough that can be used for cycling training, time trials, speed training etc. All such activity, even for young people is undertaken on the roads.

Headline Needs Analysis

Rushmoor Borough Council

Summary

- 5.3 The analysis above reflects the feedback from the NGBs and specific clubs. Previous public consultation had identified swimming and fitness in the top 5 activities the public would like to see in a new leisure centre and in the town centre; group exercise was identified in the top 10 things people would like to see; ten pin bowling and soft play was identified in the top 15 things the public would like to see in the town centre.
- 5.4 Predominantly, these facilities are also what the clubs already using the existing Farnborough Leisure Centre need in the future. Clearly, clubs using the ten-pin bowling facility, the sports hall and the indoor bowls provision would like to see these areas provided and enhanced in the future. It is important to ensure that facilities that will be used by clubs provide, as far as is possible, the appropriate standard of provision to enable them to compete at, or above their existing level, as per their feedback; these factors have also been taken into account in developing the proposed facility mix.
- 5.5 The priority for a new leisure centre is to provide for community use, and specifically to facilitate increased physical activity by those who are inactive. It also needs to provide for those with a disability, plus use by clubs, education institutions and other groups. Facilitating all these uses there is a need to provide changing spaces conforming to health and safety and safeguarding legislation and guidance, and Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) requirements.
- 5.6 A new leisure centre should also be capable of generating sufficient revenue to be sustainable in the long term. The need to attract new users, and provide more activities for existing users, plus generate increased revenue has also informed the proposed facility mix for a replacement Farnborough Leisure Centre.
- 5.7 Balancing all these needs, and capital affordability is a challenge; there is no doubt that a replacement facility is needed for Farnborough Leisure centre, but this needs to be developed to provide the most efficient space possible, so that the facility meets needs and is cost-effective operationally.
- 5.8 The facilities comprising a new leisure centre need wherever possible to be capable of providing for community use as a priority, and also for other identified uses.
- 5.9 Changing rooms are needed for all activity areas and their design can be developed to provide for both public, club, education and other group use.
- 5.10 Provision of items such as storage are important for clubs, but this needs to be balanced with other needs in the facility as it is a public leisure centre, not a club facility. Provision of office space for clubs is an ideal position, but not a priority for a public leisure centre.
- 5.11 On the basis of the above, and balancing all identified needs, the following is the recommended proposed facility mix for a new Farnborough Leisure Centre:

Headline Needs Analysis

Rushmoor Borough Council

Table 5.2: Proposed Facility Mix for the new Farnborough Leisure Centre

New Farnborough Leisure Centre
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 x 25m x 8 lane main pool.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spectator provision – limited permanent poolside seating, with the ability to bring in seating for competitive events as needed.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Village change conforming to safeguarding guidance; fully inclusive; Changing Places room. Village style changing, plus group changing rooms.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 x 20m x 4 lane intermediate pool with a movable floor.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fitness Suite – 150- 170 stations.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 x 6 or 8 court main sports hall (spectator seating to be included if space is also to provide a performance area). Discussion with market leisure operators identify a preference for an 8 court hall as they feel it provides increased flexibility and therefore scope for income generation; however, they acknowledge that this can also be achieved in a 6 court hall.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2 x multi- purpose sprung floor studios
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 permanent spinning studio
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Two squash courts with moving wall so can be converted into multi-purpose activity space
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 x 10 pin bowling alley. (this could be included in the new Civic hub, or provided as a stand-alone facility. If the later it is unlikely, based on discussions with market leisure operators, that the operator of the physical activity hub facilities will wish to operate it as it will require a separate operational management structure).
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 x Café with 60 + covers.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clip and climb adjacent to café/soft play
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Beauty/physio rooms etc if on rental income basis.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Retail space of 50 sq. m.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vending machine space
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 x sauna and steam suite.

Youth Engagement

Levelling up funding bid for a Leisure and Cultural hub

June 2022

Contents

Introduction

Methodology

Responses

Results

Characteristics of the respondents

Farnborough College of Technology (Focus Group)

Annex:

- A. Survey questions
- B. Engagement Activities
- C. Poster
- D. Focus Group agenda for Farnborough College of Technology

Introduction

The brief: To engage with young people in our community about a new Leisure and Cultural hub in the heart of the Civic Quarter in Farnborough Town Centre. The results of which will then feed into a levelling up funding bid which could secure up to £20m.

The project group: Erin Edwards, Charlie Heavens, Emma Lamb, Alison MacLachlan, Nicky Phillips and Sophie Rogers.

Engagement activities undertaken

- Survey (with prize competition) circulated to schools and known groups in the borough
- Focus Group with Farnborough College of Technology
- Lunch time sessions with Cove School
- Advertisement in local restaurants with target audience

Methodology

The survey was designed as an online survey. A copy of the survey is shown in the annex A.

The survey was introduced via schools/colleges and known groups that fit the target audience characteristics. A copy of this can be seen in the annex B.

The survey ran from 14th June 2022 and remained open until 26th June 2022 (11:59pm), 12 days.

Alongside the survey we held a focus session with students from Farnborough College of Technology and visited Cove School. Those we spoke to face to face also completed the survey.

Responses

396 people completed the survey

6 responses have been removed from analysis due to the age of the respondent falling outside of our target audience. These responses can still be found in the raw data collected.

The results below are based on the total response of 390 (396-6)

Results

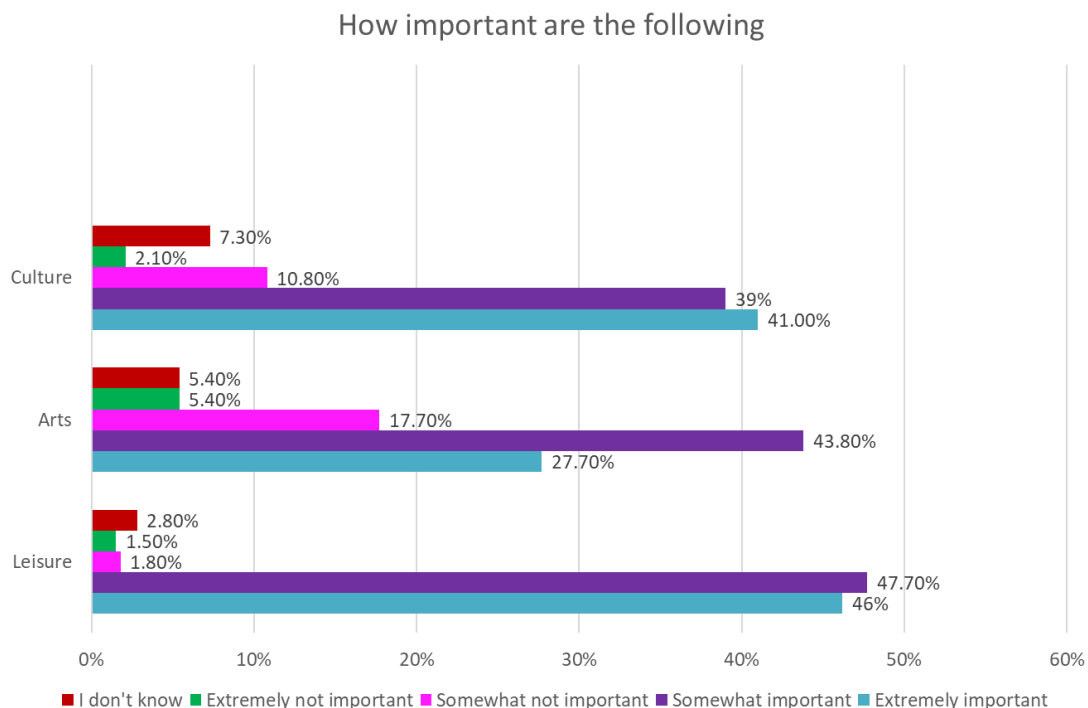
Question 1: When you think about leisure, arts and culture what words come to mind? (free type)

1,007 words were written to describe and have been summarised below in a word cloud, the bigger and bolder the word appears, the more often it was mentioned.



Question 2: How important to you are the following? (rating – Extremely, Somewhat, Somewhat not, Extremely not, I don't know)

Leisure came out as the highest rated of the three with 93.9% (366 respondents) scoring it as extremely/somewhat important. Followed by culture then art.



Question 3: What is the most important thing you'd like to see in a new leisure, arts and culture facility?

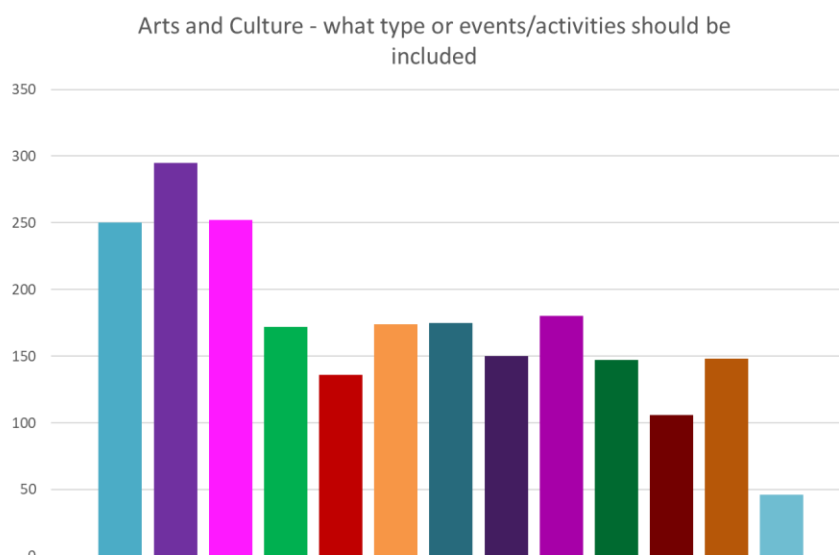
Answers summarised below in a word cloud, the bigger and bolder the word appears, the more often it was mentioned.



Question 4: Thinking about arts and culture, what type of activities/events should be included (Please select all that apply)

All activities/events had high response rates. The highest response was “Experiential activities” with 76% (295 respondents). The lowest response was “Artist studio for hire” with 27% (106 respondents).

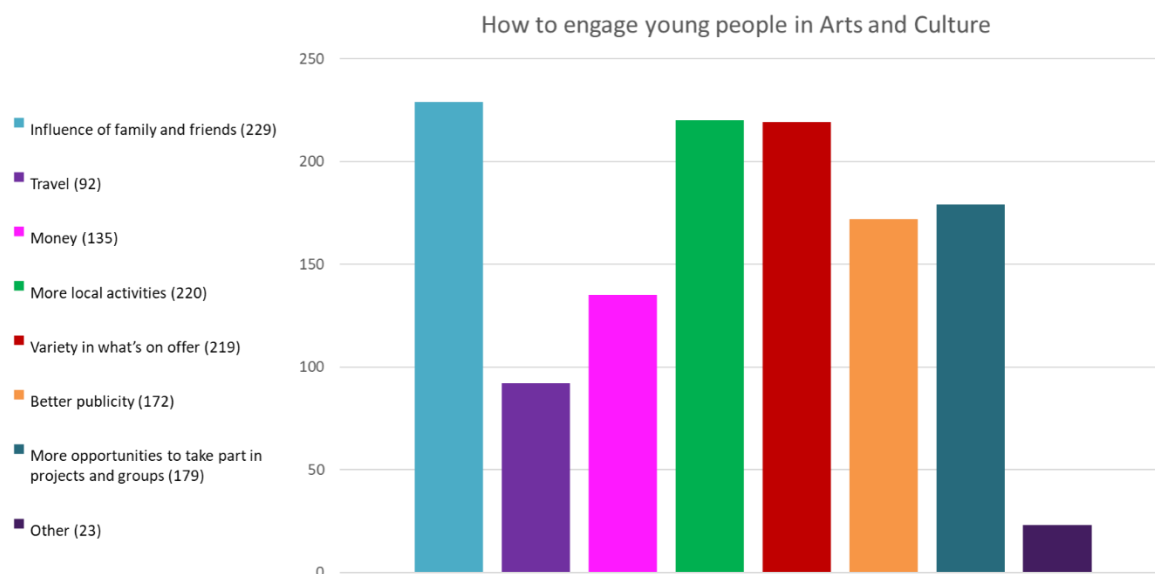
- Digital Arts e.g. gaming, photography, film (250)
- Experiential activities e.g. entertainment with food and drink, escape rooms, VR experiences etc (295)
- Music e.g. concerts/festivals, playing music, writing music, busking (252)
- Street art creation spaces (172)
- A multi-purpose workshop, performance and rehearsal space for the community to hire (136)
- Performance-based arts e.g. dance, theatre, singing (174)
- Visual arts e.g. exhibitions, art gallery, painting, sculpture (175)
- Literature e.g. creative writing workshops, reading groups, local library (150)
- Crafts e.g. pottery, sewing, knitting workshops and groups etc (180)
- Heritage e.g. Museum, heritage exhibitions (147)
- Artist studios for hire (106)
- Opportunities to take part in local arts projects (148)
- Other (46)



Other reasons cited included activities for the whole family, celebrations of cultures and religions.

Question 5: What do you think is needed to engage young people in arts and cultural activities/events? (Please select all that apply)

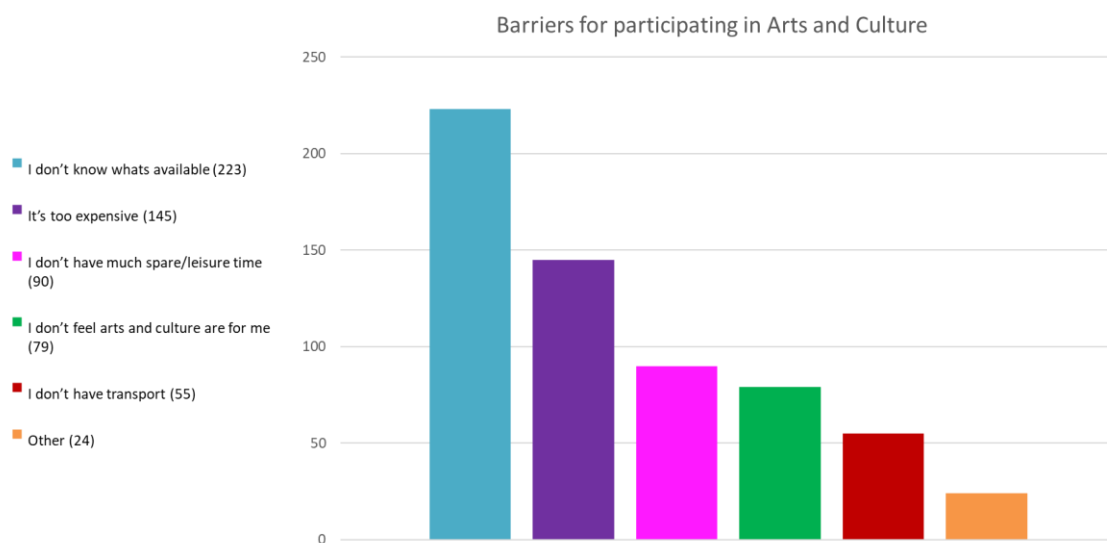
The highest response was “Influence of family and friends” with 59% (229 respondents) followed closely by “More local activities” with 56.4% (220 respondents) and “Variety in what’s on offer” with 56% (219 respondents).



Other reasons cited included having opportunities to learn new skills/ explore hobbies, having opening times that are suitable for young people and providing charging points for electronic devices.

Question 6: Are there any barriers for you participating in art and cultural activities/events? (Please select all that apply)

The highest response was “I don’t know what’s available” with 57% (223 respondents) indicating that as and when activities/events are run further publicity is needed. The second highest response was “it’s too expensive” with 37% (145 respondents), affordability of activities/events will play a crucial role in the young population engaging.



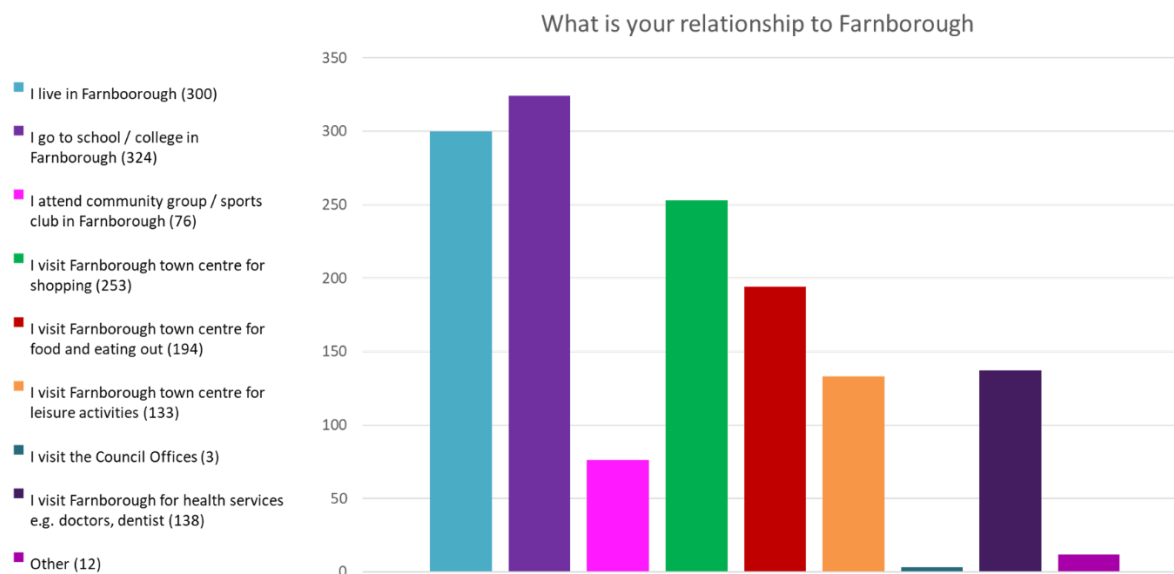
Other reasons cited included age can be a factor and feeling comfortable in social settings.

Characteristics of the respondents

The survey asked the respondents what their relationship is to Farnborough, their age and community groups they might be involved in to give us a better understanding of what young people use the town centre for currently and to get an insight into the activities they already take part in.

Question 7: What is your relationship to Farnborough? (Please select all that apply)

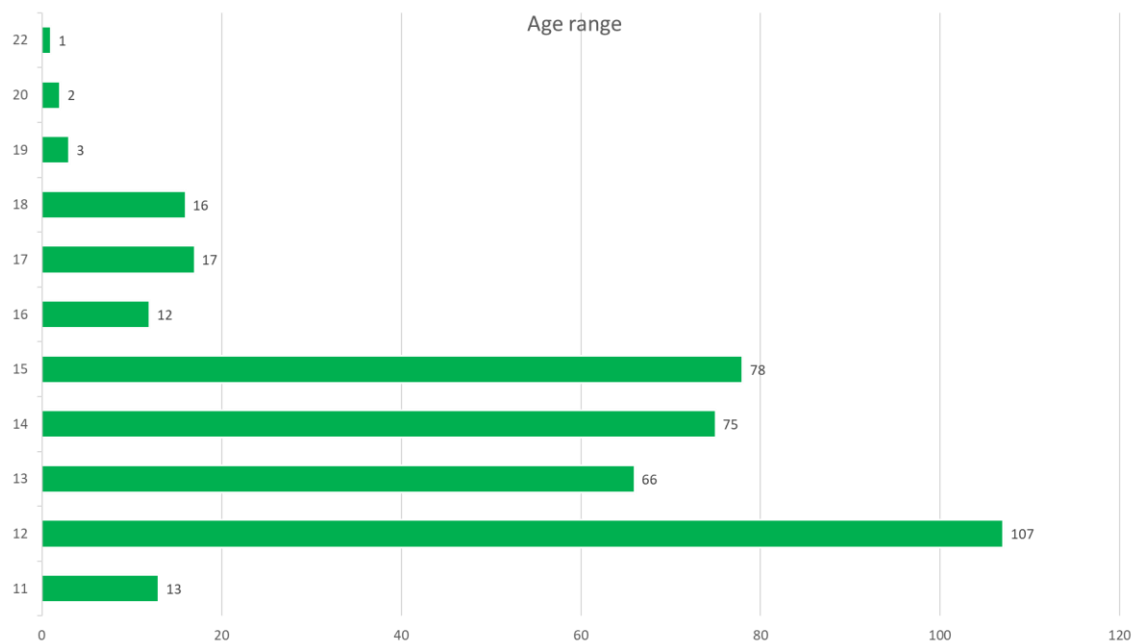
The highest response was “I go to school / college in Farnborough” with 83% (324 respondents)



Other reasons cited included to be with family and friends, to use the skate park. Another comment from one respondent stated that they currently travel to Camberley and Aldershot for leisure / art activities.

Question 8: How old are you (free type)

The age range of respondents was between 11 and 22 years (survey was aimed at 11-25). The most common age was 12 years old (107 respondents).



Question 9: Are you part of any community groups, sports clubs, band, dance groups or extra curriculars?

51% (200 respondents) stated that they took part in extracurricular activities.

Question 10: What are these activities (free type) - only those who indicated Yes in Q.9

These included

- sporting activities – Swimming, hockey, martial arts, gymnastics, netball, basketball, tennis, boxing, rugby, athletics etc.
- community groups – Youth clubs, environment groups, young carers group, volunteering etc.
- performing arts – dance, music, theatre, singing, bands, choir etc.
- youth organisations – Girl Guides, Brownies, Scouts, Duke of Edinburgh, Cadets (army, fire, air) etc.

Question 11: Do you have any ideas for how people your age can be greater engaged with the local community?

Answers similar to those in question 5 around better publicity and variety in what's on offer as well as:

- Representation from people our age at Council meetings / engagement groups 'Young Leaders'
- A way to vote on events/activities
- Support from police/organisers to ensure safety at events (safe areas for socialising)
- Using schools /colleges to support with publicity / learning
- Continued use of surveys / competitions
- Opportunities for volunteering / work experience in the community / learning about the area

Question 12: Rushmoor wants young people to express their views on what is important to them and make sure their opinion and voices are heard. Together, we are creating a group that will enable young people to be more involved and make decisions on matters in Rushmoor. If you would like to be part of it, please provide your email address below (free type).

22% (86 respondents) submitted their email address to take part in a youth engagement group.

Question 13: Would you like to enter our competition to be in with a chance of winning a £50 amazon voucher? Y/N

69% (271 respondents) wanted to take part in the competition.

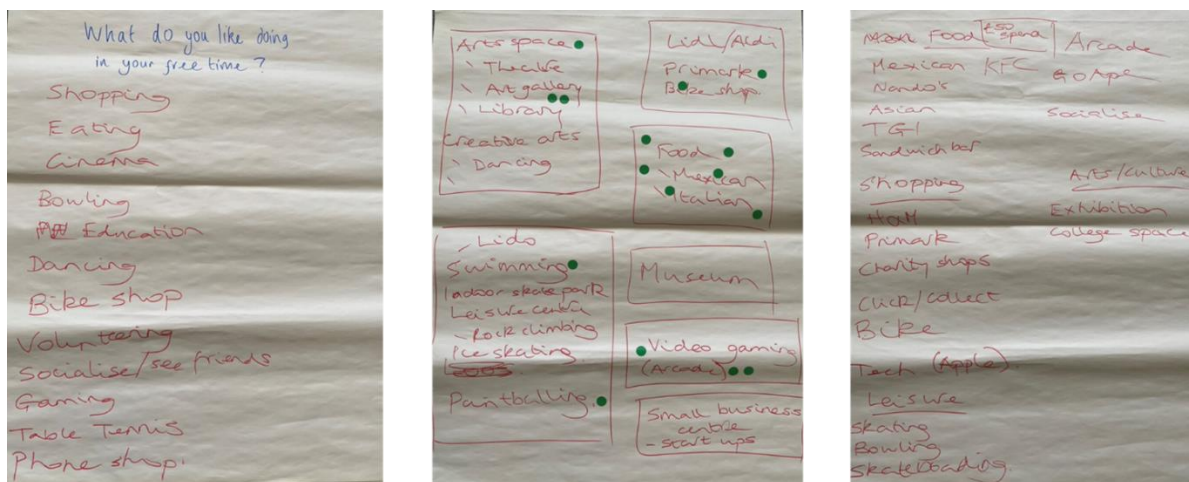
Farnborough College of Technology (Focus Group)

Alongside preparing and distributing the survey we also organised a focussed session with students from Farnborough College of Technology as an opportunity for them to feedback in more detail their thoughts on leisure and culture in Farnborough.

In addition to the students completing the survey, the hour discussion was organised around the following three questions:

- What do you like doing in your free time?
- If we gave you £50, and travel and location wasn't an issue, where would you go? What would you spend it on?
- Looking at the longer collective list - Can you mark (green sticker) what is most important to you.

The results were captured and can be summarised as follows:



Food and beverage uses were ranked as the most important by the students, followed by a flexible creative art space able to support a variety of activities (dance, art gallery, theatre, etc.).

Other comments and issues that came from the Focus group included:

- Farnborough has nowhere for young people to go.
- The layout of the town is poor – ‘there is no real centre’ was a comment made several times
- Poor choices of food and no leisure provision.
- Shops and retail are not the most important thing – it’s about food and something to do.

Annex A. Survey - Your ambitions for a new Leisure Centre and Cultural Hub in the heart of Farnborough (Word version)

The survey will take approximately 4 minutes to complete.

The proposed regeneration of the Civic Quarter in Farnborough provides exciting opportunities for a new building to be used for leisure, arts and culture in the heart of the town centre. We really want to hear from young people in the borough (11 to 25 year olds) about what would you like to see provided, what is important to you - and what you think will make the biggest difference to your town.

You do not have to provide any personal contact information to take part in this survey. There is an option to provide your email address at the end of the survey if you would like to be added to a youth engagement group and/or take part in our competition to win a £50 amazon voucher. Any personal data you do provide will be held securely by the Council and will only be used for these purposes. Your data will be securely destroyed once the youth engagement group is wound up if you have provided information for that purpose or once the competition prize has been claimed if you have provided your information for the competition. Further details about how the council processes personal information, including details of our Data Protection Officer and your rights, can be found in our full privacy notice at:

<https://www.rushmoor.gov.uk/privacypolicy>

For terms and conditions please visit: <https://www.rushmoor.gov.uk/prizecompetitionterms>

Section 1 – the new building will provide a state-of-the-art leisure centre, library and cultural space.

1. When you think about leisure, arts and culture what words come to mind? (free type)
2. How important to you are the following? (rating – Extremely, Somewhat, Somewhat not, Extremely not, I don't know)
 - a. Leisure
 - b. Arts
 - c. Culture
3. What is the **most** important thing you'd like to see in a new leisure, arts and culture facility? (free type)
4. Thinking about arts and culture, what type of activities/events should be included (Please select all that apply)
 - a. Digital Arts e.g. gaming, photography, film
 - b. Experiential activities e.g. entertainment with food and drink, escape rooms, VR experiences etc
 - c. Music e.g. concerts/festivals, playing music, writing music, busking
 - d. Street art creation spaces
 - e. A multi-purpose workshop, performance and rehearsal space for the community to hire
 - f. Performance-based arts e.g. dance, theatre, singing

- g. Visual arts e.g. exhibitions, art gallery, painting, sculpture
 - h. Literature e.g. creative writing workshops, reading groups, local library
 - i. Crafts e.g. pottery, sewing, knitting workshops and groups etc
 - j. Heritage e.g. Museum, heritage exhibitions
 - k. Artist studios for hire
 - l. Opportunities to take part in local arts projects
 - m. Other (free type)
5. What do you think is needed to engage young people in arts and cultural activities/events?
(Please select all that apply)
- a. Influence of family and friends
 - b. Travel
 - c. Money
 - d. More local activities
 - e. Variety in what's on offer
 - f. Better publicity
 - g. More opportunities to take part in projects and groups
 - h. Other (please type)
6. Are there any barriers for you participating in art and cultural activities/events? (Please select all that apply)
- a. I don't know what's available
 - b. It's too expensive
 - c. I don't have much spare/leisure time
 - d. I don't feel arts and culture are for me
 - e. I don't have transport
 - f. Other (please type)

Section 2 – about you

7. What is your relationship to Farnborough? (Please select all that apply)
- a. I live in Farnborough
 - b. Go to school/college in Farnborough
 - c. I attend a community group / sports club in Farnborough
 - d. I visit Farnborough town centre for shopping
 - e. I visit Farnborough town centre for food and eating out
 - f. I visit Farnborough town centre for leisure activities
 - g. I visit the Council Offices
 - h. I visit Farnborough for health services (e.g. doctors, dentist)
 - i. Other (please type)
8. How old are you (free type)?
9. Are you part of any community groups, sports clubs, band, dance groups or extra curriculars? Y/N
- a. If yes, what are these activities (free type)
10. Do you have any ideas for how people your age can be greater engaged with the local community? (free type)

11. Rushmoor wants young people to express their views on what is important to them and make sure their opinion and voices are heard. Together, we are creating a group that will enable young people to be more involved and make decisions on matters in Rushmoor. If you would like to be part of it, please provide your email address below (free type)
12. Would you like to enter our competition to be in with a chance of winning a £50 amazon voucher? Y/N
 - a. If yes, please supply your email address (we will contact the luck winner by email after the survey closing date of 26th June 2022)

Thank you for taking the time to fill out our survey! Your feedback will help shape our future designs of the Civic Quarter in Farnborough.

Annex B. Engagement activities and sample email

School/College	Contact	Survey sent	In person
Cove	J Powell J.Powell@coveschool.uk		16 th and 21 st June
Farnborough College of Technology	Larry l.magee@farn-ct.ac.uk		Focus group 11am 15 th June
Wavell	Karen Gilbert Karen.Gilbert@wavell.hants.sch.uk	14.6.22	
Fernhill	Sarah Palmer	14.6.22	
6 th Form	Catherine Cole ccole@farnborough.ac.uk	14.6.22	
Alderwood	Clare DeSausmarez C.DeSausmarez@alderwood.hants.sch.uk	14.6.22	
Existing Groups consulted with			
Friday Night Youth Club	Dan Conway – Youth Worker danieljoseph1@virginmedia.com	14.6	
YP from CC event	Via Sophie	14.6	
RYI	Via Sue Carter	14.6	
Hart and Rushmoor Young Careers group	Lindsay Graham youngcarers@hartvolaction.org.uk	14.6	
Aldershot Youth Club	Free 16 Youth matt.davis@emmausrd.com info@lighthousewoking.org	14.6	
Shine – The Vine young person programme	Lesley Herniman lesley.herniman@thevinecentre.org.uk	14.6	
Step by Step	Paul Harris Paul.Harris@stepbystep.org.uk	14.6	
VIVID		14.6	

Sample Email

Hello,

As some of you may be aware Rushmoor Borough Council is in the process of planning the regeneration of the Civic Quarter in Farnborough. This provides us with an exciting opportunity for a new building and to consider how best we can include leisure, arts and culture.

We want to create a new vibrant place that people want to use now and in the future and as such it's important that the views of our younger generation are heard. If you are aged between 11 and 25 and live in either Farnborough or Aldershot we really want to know what's important to you. Perhaps you want to see more live music or a greater range of restaurants? Now is your time to be heard.

Please complete this survey - <https://www.rushmoor.gov.uk/helpimprovefarnboroughtowncentre> (it will take no longer than 4 minutes) and tell us what you think. To thank you for your time there is the chance of winning a £50 amazon voucher ([T&C's apply](#)).

If you do not meet the criteria but know someone that does, please help us by encouraging them to complete the survey.

We look forward to reading all your comments.

Kind regards

Annex C. Poster design

The poster was used at events and put on display in the following locations in the town centre:

- MooBoo Bubble Tea
- Kosu Mosu
- Kokoro
- Jetts Gym.



Are you under 25?

Fill us in!
Tell us what matters to you.
Complete this short survey about what you want to see in Farnborough's new civic quarter and be in with a chance of winning...

£50 Amazon voucher

Terms & condition's apply
Closing date 26 June
at 11:59pm

RUSHMOOR
BOROUGH COUNCIL

Annex D. Farnborough College of Technology focus group

15th June 2022. 11 – 12pm

Charlie Heavens, Emma Lamb, Tony McGovern

Time	Duration	Activity	Who	Resources
11	2 mins	Welcome and introductions, Brief purpose of session	EL	None
	5 mins	Civic Quarter Overview: Background and Ambition	CH	Model
11.10	5 mins	Interactive Question: Question to group/s What do you like doing in your free time/What does a typical weekend look like? Additional Q. if needed - Do you go out in Farnborough? If not why and where do you go?	EL	TM/CH to capture comments on Flip chart
11.15	6/7 mins	Interactive Question 2 If we gave you £50 and travel and location wasn't an issue, where would you go? What would you spend it on? Encourage them to be creative – they might get silly but at least they will be talking and some good ideas might come from it	TM	EL/CH To capture comments on Flip chart
11.20	10 mins	What 2 or 3 things would you really like to see in Farnborough? (Group discussion or 2 groups and feedback if needed)	EL	TM/CH to capture on flip chart & Group ideas
11.30	5 mins	Looking at the longer collective list - Can you mark what is most important to you	TM/CH	
11.35/40	10 mins	Questions, thanks and encourage students to complete survey	CH	iPad or phones

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