



## RUSHMOOR BOROUGH COUNCIL

# OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

*at the Council Offices, Farnborough on  
Wednesday, 27th March, 2024 at 7.00 pm*

**To:**

Cllr M.D. Smith (Chairman)  
Cllr Mrs. D.B. Bedford (Vice-Chairman)  
Cllr K. Dibble (Vice-Chairman)

Cllr Gaynor Austin  
Cllr D.E. Clifford  
Cllr Jules Crossley  
Cllr Mara Makunura  
Cllr S.J. Masterson  
Cllr Sophie Porter

**Standing Deputy**

Cllr Abe Allen  
Cllr Peter Cullum  
Cllr Nem Thapa  
Cllr Gareth Williams

Enquiries regarding this agenda should be referred to the Administrator, Adele Taylor, Democratic Services, Tel. (01252) 398831, Email. [adele.taylor@rushmoor.gov.uk](mailto:adele.taylor@rushmoor.gov.uk).

# **A G E N D A**

1. **MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING – (Pages 1 - 6)**

To confirm the Minutes of the Meeting held on 8th February, 2024 (copy attached).

2. **PUBLIC HEALTH - HEALTH PROTECTION ANNUAL REPORT 2022-23 – (Pages 7 - 24)**

To receive a presentation on the recent Public Health report from Simon Bryant, Director of Public Health and Johanna Jefferies, Associate Director of Public Health, Hampshire County Council. A copy of the Health Protection Annual Report 2022-23, is attached for reference. Mr Bryant and Ms Jefferies will be joining the meeting virtually.

3. **CABINET CHAMPIONS – (Pages 25 - 42)**

To receive reports from the two Cabinet Champions on their work during the 2023/24 Municipal Year (copy attached). The Champions are as follows:

- Equality - Cllr Jib Belbase
- Armed Forces – Cllr Nem Thapa

Cllr Sue Carter, (Democracy, Strategy and Partnerships Portfolio Holder), Jill Shuttleworth (Corporate Manager – Democracy) and Emma Lamb (Community and Engagement – Service Manager) have been invited to the meeting to support the item.

4. **WORK PLAN – (Pages 43 - 60)**

To consider the Work Plan for the 2023/24 Municipal Year (copy attached).

A requirement of the Committee is to provide an annual report on its work and activities throughout the Municipal Year. A draft on the 2023/24 Annual Report, for review by the Committee, is attached for comment.

## **MEETING REPRESENTATION**

Members of the public may ask to speak at the meeting on any of the items on the agenda by writing to the Committee Administrator at the Council Offices, Farnborough by 5.00 pm two working days prior to the meeting.

Applications for items to be considered for the next meeting must be received in writing to the Committee Administrator fifteen working days prior to the meeting.

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# OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Meeting held on Thursday, 8th February, 2024 at the Council Offices, Farnborough at 7.00 pm.

## Voting Members

Cllr M.D. Smith (Chairman)  
Cllr Mrs. D.B. Bedford (Vice-Chairman)  
Cllr K. Dibble (Vice-Chairman)

Cllr Gaynor Austin  
Cllr Jessica Auton  
Cllr Jules Crossley  
Cllr Mara Makunura  
Cllr S.J. Masterson  
Cllr Sophie Porter

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Cllr D.E. Clifford and Cllr S. Trussler.

Cllr Peter Cullum attended the meetings as Standing Deputy.

## 26. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the meetings held on 2nd January, 2024 were agreed as a correct record.

## 27. CLIMATE CHANGE STRATEGY

The Committee welcomed Rachel Barker, Assistant Chief Executive and Sophie Rogers, Climate Change Officer, who were in attendance to provide an update on the Climate Change Action Plan and to report on the latest carbon footprint data. Cllr Martin Tennant, Major Projects and Property Portfolio Holder responsible for Climate Change, was also in attendance.

The Committee reviewed the progress made on the twelve actions within the Action Plan. The Actions were as follows:

- Action 1 – **Transition electricity across the Council’s sites to 100% renewable tariffs** – It was noted that the contracts needed to be reprocured by October 2024, and work to identify options for the Council had commenced in January 2024.
- Action 2 – **Switch the Council’s car fleet to electric vehicle alternatives and investigate options for other Council vehicles** – It was noted that the Place Protection Officer (PPO) vehicles, of which there were two, were both hybrid, however the Committee were advised that the majority of the patrols

were now carried out on foot. Further work was required on scoping the best alternatives for the larger Council vehicles used by the Maintenance Team

- **Action 3 – Achieve 5% annual reduction in overall travel from employee-owned vehicles for business purposes and refresh the Council’s Workplace Travel Plan** – It was noted that work was underway to refresh the Workplace Travel Plan in 2024, the Plan would include signposting to relevant resources. It was advised that the reduction did not include the commuting of staff from home to the workplace but the staff travel plan would include a reference to staff commuting.
- **Action 4 – Consider opportunities arising from a relocation of the Council’s offices to reduce gas consumption and/or increase renewable energy generation onsite** – It was advised that the proposed new council offices within the Leisure and Cultural Hub, would be the first Net Zero Carbon building in the Borough and was being designed to achieve PassivHaus certification, which would significantly reduce operational carbon by at least 70%.
- **Action 5 – To continue to engage young people on climate change through the schools’ programme** – It was noted that the Winchester Science Museums’ Wonderseekers outreach programme was now running in four local schools, for years 4 and 5 children. The Climate Trackers scheme was aimed at raising climate awareness, whilst developing an interest in Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths (STEM). For 2024 the scheme would continue to be funded through the climate change allocation fund with the aim of seeking other funding sources going forward to ensure sustainability and possible expansion. It was suggested that the programme could be extended to all levels of school aged young people and funding could be sought from businesses with a STEM link.
- **Action 6 – To use the Council’s communications channels to promote opportunities for residents and local businesses to reduce their own carbon footprint and improve energy efficiency** – It was noted that a number of schemes for both residents and businesses had been shared during 2023/24.
- **Action 7 – To hold an Eco Fair to allow residents to find out more about climate change and opportunities to reduce their carbon footprint** – It was noted that an Eco Fair had been held in the Southwood Country Park Visitors Centre in September 2023, and the aim was to make this an annual event.
- **Action 8 – To work with Hampshire County Council (HCC) to improve access to EV charging facilities across Rushmoor** – It was advised that the Council continued to work with HCC on EV infrastructure, and it was noted that HCC were currently applying for Local Electric Vehicle Infrastructure (LEVI) funding. The Council would continue to support this work. In response to a query, it was noted that the Jet garage on the Farnborough Road were looking to install EV charging points to include a

substation to boost charging times, this could benefit the EV points at the Meads car park. In addition, the Committee noted that an upgrade to the National Grid was due in 2025.

- **Action 9 – To refresh the Council’s procurement strategy to ensure that the goods and services that the Council buys support the aims of the Council being carbon neutral by 2030** – It was reported that work was underway to refresh the strategy and consideration would be given to the reforms arising from the Procurement Act during this process.
- **Action 10 – To review the processes for the Council’s capital programme so that environmental impacts are incorporated into business case development and whole life cycle carbon assessments are undertaken** – The Committee noted that this was now being implemented with environmental impacts embedded into the development of the Leisure and Cultural Hub. A specialist piece of work on the carbon footprint of the Crematorium refurbishments had also been commissioned. The approach would be reviewed during 2024.
- **Action 11 – to develop the Council’s offsetting approach with the view of ensuring that any offsetting has a local impact** – It was advised that this project would be actioned nearer to 2030 when offsetting may be required and to take account of the latest opportunities and best practice.
- **Action 12 – To review, update and publish the Council’s carbon footprint on an annual basis and to publish an annual report detailing what has been achieved in relation to the Action Plan** – It was noted that the report would be published in Spring 2024 and include the updated carbon footprint calculations.

The Committee reviewed the latest carbon footprint data and noted that the Council’s footprint had reduced since the previous year. A number of key actions had been taken, within the council offices, to reduce the footprint, these included the replacement of the ceiling lights to energy efficient LED lighting, the reduction in the number of and replacement of printers and the introduction of food waste bins.

The Committee discussed the report and were advised that the Policy and Project Advisory Board (PPAB) would be looking at the Climate Change Action Plan at its March meeting, the main purpose of which would be to refresh the documents.

In response to a query, regarding the climate change reserve allocation and the option to allow community groups/organisations to draw on the fund for projects, it was noted that as a reserve fund, it had a limited life span and the Council were looking to external funding to ensure current and future projects were sustainable. Alternative funding streams were available to groups to apply for funding.

In regard to the A331, it was noted that the 50mph speed limited introduced before the junction with the M3 had been successful in improving air quality. It was advised that consideration was currently being given to retaining the speed limit and extending it to other parts of the A331, in particular the junction with the A31.

**ACTION:**

| <b>What</b>   | <b>By Whom</b>                              | <b>When</b>      |
|---|---|------------------|
| To request that PPAB consider the following, as part of the refresh process: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• the option of pool cars for business use</li><li>• provision of pool bicycles for staff use to travel to local meetings</li><li>• consider a commitment to have no single use plastic at events and for use in Council owned buildings, in particular the Princes Hall</li></ul> | Rachel Barker,<br>Assistant Chief Executive | 21st March, 2024 |
| To provide more data on take up of schemes and activities in future reports.  | Sophie Rogers,<br>Climate Change Officer    | Ongoing          |
| To consider a refresh of the climate change page on the Council's website to make more user friendly (examples to consider included HCC and Bracknell Forest websites)  | Sophie Rogers,<br>Climate Change Officer    | ??               |

The Chairman thanked Cllr Tennant, Ms Barker and Ms Rogers for their presentation.

**28. ASSET MANAGEMENT**

The Committee welcomed Tim Mills, Executive Head of Property and Growth who was in attendance to give a presentation on the Asset Management Strategy future delivery and a review of the portfolio and principles for disposal in light of the current budget position. Cllr Martin Tennant, Major Projects and Property Portfolio Holder was also in attendance.

The Committee were apprised of the reasons for asset management planning and the purpose of the meeting, which had been to:

- update on progress since September 2022, when the Committee had last considered Asset Management,
- to consider the next steps in implementing the Asset Management Plan and portfolio review, and,
- to outline the proposed approach to the review.

Since September 2022, it was advised that a number of activities had taken place, these included:

- An audit on Asset Management and Health and Safety of Council Properties – both achieving “Substantial Assurance”.



- The purchase of The Meads, Farnborough, in June 2023 and procurement and mobilisation of new managing and letting agents for the site and the Union Yard, Aldershot, site.
- Forfeiting of the lease at No. 168 High Street, Guildford, and the agreement of a short term let whilst longer term interest was secured.
- Energy Performance Certification (EPC) Plus on a number of Council properties to inform investment going forward.
- Improvements at Princes Hall, Aldershot and the Aldershot Indoor Pools (part funding through a grant) based on a five year time horizon for savings. Lighting at Princes Hall would also be considered going forward.
- Ongoing discussions on rent and rent relief levels with community groups. It was advised that an increase in levels would be implemented.
- Planning submitted for the development of Frimley Business Park, Units 4.3 and 4.4.

The next steps were to:

- Deliver the letting of Union Yard over the next 12-18 months.
- Continue to seek letting opportunities for vacant properties, in particular the Wilko unit in The Meads, Farnborough and No. 168 High Street and Ashbourne House, Guildford.
- Review service charge costs at The Meads to increase sustainability and to maximise ancillary income.
- Plan repair and maintenance projects at sites such as The Meads and Aldershot Indoor Pools.
- Plan energy efficiency investment.
- Continue the rent and rent relief review in line with the Asset Management process and principles.
- Continue the review of the property portfolio to achieve £40 million from the disposal of land and property whilst maintaining a property income stream.

The Committee were advised of the principles for the review of the property portfolio, these included:

- ensuring that the retained portfolio provided an income return that enabled the Council to afford the related borrowing and wider financial requirements and provide an improved rate of return
- consideration of the impact on the Council's balances/reserves and need for provisions
- that the retained portfolio (post disposal) continued to allow the Council to meet its strategic objectives
- the Council retaining assets that could release value or allow for capital to be raised through long leasehold agreements
- the portfolio continuing to offer diversification to manage risk
- that properties with known significant capital expenditure in the short term/medium term be considered for disposal
- the ease of which significant capital could be realised through disposal without a lengthy sales process

The Committee discussed the presentation and raised a number of issues:

- Union Yard, Aldershot – it was advised that there was some serious interest in two of the retail units and considerable interest in the container units as part of the markers yard. An open day for the containers would be held in April, 2024 and a promotional video of the spaces was also being created.
- The Meads – it was advised that the Meads car park was not currently covering its costs and increased charges would be implemented in February, 2024. Residents using parking spaces would also have their charges gradually increased, to bring them in line with other similar facilities. Blocks 1 and 2 were realising a good income, however work was required to ensure that the other developed elements delivered the necessary income, and costs were reduced. Single lettings or vacancies could make a substantial difference.
- Disposal of Assets – it was important that each property was looked at as a whole when being considered for disposal. The ease of letting, sustainability of tenants and saleability of a site, where all things to consider as part of the review process.

The Chairman thanked Cllr Tennant and Mr Mills for their presentation.

## 29. **WORK PLAN**

The Committee noted the current work plan.

The Chairman reported that he had recently been in attendance at a meeting with County Councillor Rob Humby, Leader of Hampshire County Council and Cllr Gareth Lyon, Leader of Rushmoor Borough Council, at which the matter of the local County Councillors attending a future meeting of the Committee was addressed. It was noted that Cllr Humby would reconsider the response in his last letter.

An update would be sought regarding the schedule for the next meeting of the Farnborough Airport Task and Finish Group and reported to Members of the Group.

The meeting closed at 9.19 pm.

CLLR M.D. SMITH (CHAIRMAN)

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**HAMPSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL**

**Report**

|                     |   |
|---------------------|---|
| <b>Committee:</b>   | Hampshire Health and Wellbeing Board        |
| <b>Date:</b>        | 07 December 2023                            |
| <b>Title:</b>       | Health Protection Annual Report 2022 - 2023 |
| <b>Report From:</b> | Simon Bryant, Director of Public Health     |

**Contact name:** Simon Bryant

**Tel:** 02380 383326

**Email:** [Simon.bryant@hants.gov.uk](mailto:Simon.bryant@hants.gov.uk)

**Purpose of this Report**

1. The purpose of this report is to present the Director of Public Health's Health Protection Annual Report, ahead of publication. It describes the work to protect the health of the people of Hampshire and the future focus of health protection activities in the year to come.

**Recommendation(s)**

That the Hampshire Health and Wellbeing Board:

2. Notes and agrees the 2022-2023 Health Protection Annual Report of the Director of Public Health.
3. Supports the future focus of health protection activities for 2023-2024.

**Executive Summary**

4. This is the second health protection annual report produced by Hampshire County Council's Public Health team covering the period from April 2022 through to March 2023, with a forward look on planned activities for the following year.
5. The Health Protection Board (HPB), led by the Director of Public Health, has provided a forum for oversight and assurance on health protection matters across the Hampshire and Isle of Wight geographies. It has enabled discussion on priority areas identified in the previous annual report and continues to be

the route by which partners across the health protection system can collectively address health protection issues and incidents.

6. This year's report reflects a period of transition and renewed direction, as we safely exit the COVID-19 pandemic. Work by the Council's Public Health team during 2022 and early 2023 can be broadly summarised across three areas:
  - Living with COVID-19
  - Responding to other emerging health protection issues
  - Renewing focus on vaccination, helping shape the National Vaccination Strategy
7. The above three areas of activity were underpinned by a communications strategy designed to address inequalities in the uptake of health protection behaviours, with a specific focus on vaccination.
8. Looking ahead to a future where COVID-19 is no longer considered a Public Health Emergency of International Concern (PHEIC<sup>1</sup>), the Public Health team will continue to focus on supporting system recovery and responding to emerging health threats. Some of this work will be facilitated through the Contain Outbreak Management Fund (COMF)<sup>2</sup> to help address health impacts and inequalities which have arisen as a result of the pandemic.

### **Contextual Information**

9. Hampshire County Council (HCC) has a critical role in protecting the health of its population, both in terms of planning to prevent threats from arising, and in ensuring appropriate responses when things do go wrong.
10. The 2012 Health and Social Care Act placed a statutory duty on local authorities to improve and protect the health of their residents.
11. This duty to deliver the health protection function is fulfilled by the Council's Public Health team, who provide 'information and advice' to ensure that threats to health are understood and seek assurance that these threats are properly addressed.

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<sup>1</sup> [Statement on the fifteenth meeting of the IHR \(2005\) Emergency Committee on the COVID-19 pandemic \(who.int\)](#)

<sup>2</sup> [Contain Outbreak Management Fund: 2021 to 2022 - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

12. The Council's health protection team works with the UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA), the NHS, and District and Borough Council Environmental Health teams as part of the local health protection system.

## **Performance - Health protection activities in 2022 – 2023**

### 13. Living with COVID-19:

- 13.1. Embedding the UK Government's 'Living with COVID-19' strategy in day-to-day functions to manage the virus and support health protection system recovery was a key piece of work. The Council's Public Health team:

- Supported COVID-19 outbreak management.
- Provided public health intelligence to inform equitable vaccine delivery.
- Developed bespoke testing and outbreak management guidance.
- Advised the Council's Safety Advisory Group (SAG) on event plans.
- Delivered communications on the importance of continued safe behaviours.

### 14. Responding to other emerging health protection issues

#### 14.1. **Post-pandemic surge in infections**

The post-pandemic surge in infections required a heightened response in terms of monitoring levels of infection and meeting competing demands to support outbreak management in the context of:

- An increase in Group A Streptococcus (GAS) infections.
- Norovirus activity that surpassed the 5-season average.
- Intensified circulation of influenza and other seasonal respiratory infections.

#### 14.2. **Monkeypox/ mpox incident**

In response to the wide-scale outbreak of mpox infection in May 2022, the Public Health team worked collaboratively with national teams, the NHS and third sector organisations to reduce spread.

#### 14.3. **National health protection incidents**

Throughout the year, the Council's Public Health team maintained situational awareness of the likely impact of several national incidents on Hampshire residents, such as the detection of poliovirus in London sewage.

#### 14.4. **Infections in migrant populations**

The Council's Public Health team also contributed to the cascading of advice and the health protection response to incidents involving migrant populations across our local area.

#### **14.5. Tuberculosis (TB) and Antimicrobial Resistance (AMR)**

Several communication and collaborative activities were undertaken to progress work on TB and AMR. This included system working to respond to complex TB incidents and exploring the impact of changing clinical pathways on antibiotic prescribing.

#### **15. Renewing focus on vaccination, helping shape the National Vaccination Strategy:**

- 15.1. A key focus of activity during 2022/23 has been on supporting delivery of seasonal influenza vaccination and recovery of routine childhood vaccination programmes, including MMR vaccination (with the latter being part of the national effort to re-instate the UK's 'measles-free' status).
- 15.2. The Public Health team have also been involved in the development of the new national vaccination strategy, working with partners across the system.

#### **Governance - The Health Protection Board (HPB)**

16. Oversight of health protection matters over the past year has been provided by the HPB, which is chaired by the Director of Public Health. The Hampshire HPB met for the first time in September 2022, with the main areas of focus being communicable diseases and vaccination.
17. The Board has brought together Council departments and external partners key to protecting the health of our local population and has been a forum to jointly plan and coordinate activity on health protection issues. Each meeting includes time for a deep dive on a specific health protection topic. Over the course of 2022-2023, these topics have included: health protection matters related to new entrants to the UK (including asylum seekers); TB service delivery; Vaccinations in pregnancy and childhood (opportunities and challenges); Healthcare Associated Infections (HCAIs); AMR and Health Protection issues related to adverse weather.
18. Board administration has been supported by the Council's Public Health team.

#### **Co-Production**

19. Co-production activities and processes are integral to the delivery of the Council's health protection duty. Some of the areas of work where co-production principles have been used include:

- 19.1. Gaining insight through public engagement activities that informed the communications strategy to address health protection actions in response to shifts in government policy on COVID-19.
- 19.2. Co-producing the development of communication frameworks with partners to show how they interrelate and communicate with each other across the local health protection system.

### **Future focus**

20. Over the course of the coming year, the Council's Public Health team will continue to retain a strong focus on supporting the health protection system recover from the COVID-19 pandemic and respond to emerging threats.
21. Public Health team activities will be geared up to achieving the health protection ambitions set out in the new Hampshire County Council Public Health Strategy 2023 - 2026.
22. The team will build on public health actions to address the impact of COVID-19 on health outcomes and health inequalities. Projects undertaking this work will be funded using the COVID Outbreak Management Fund (COMF).
23. Council health protection priorities for 2023-2024 are set out below:
  - Support the preparedness for, response, and recovery from health protection incidents.
  - Contribute to the continued recovery of screening and vaccination programmes with a focus on reducing inequalities.
  - Work with the NHS to support national priorities and actions outlined in the Tuberculosis (TB): action plan for England, 2021 to 2026, using local intelligence to inform how we should act.
  - Contribute to AMR programmes and achievement of the 5-year UK AMR Action Plan objectives.

### **Conclusions**

24. The 2022-2023 Health Protection Annual Report has presented a wide range of activities to protect the health of the people of Hampshire over the past year.
25. It sets out future priorities for delivery through joint work with partners across the health protection system with oversight by the Health Protection Board.
26. The report will be published once it has been agreed by the Hampshire Health and Wellbeing Board.

**REQUIRED CORPORATE AND LEGAL INFORMATION:**

**Links to the Strategic Plan**

|   |     |
|---|-----|
| <b>Hampshire maintains strong and sustainable economic growth and prosperity:</b> | yes |
| <b>People in Hampshire live safe, healthy and independent lives:</b>              | yes |
| <b>People in Hampshire enjoy a rich and diverse environment:</b>                  | yes |
| <b>People in Hampshire enjoy being part of strong, inclusive communities:</b>     | yes |

**Other Significant Links**

| <b>Direct links to specific legislation or Government Directives</b> |             |
|--|-------------|
| <u>Title</u>   | <u>Date</u> |
| The Health and Social Care Act 2012                                  | 2012        |
| The Health and Care Act 2022   | 2022        |

**Section 100 D - Local Government Act 1972 - background documents**

**The following documents discuss facts or matters on which this report, or an important part of it, is based and have been relied upon to a material extent in the preparation of this report. (NB: the list excludes published works and any documents which disclose exempt or confidential information as defined in the Act.)**

| <u>Document</u> | <u>Location</u> |
|-----------------|-----------------|
| None            |                 |

**EQUALITIES IMPACT ASSESSMENT:**

**1. Equality Duty**

The County Council has a duty under Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 ('the Act') to have due regard in the exercise of its functions to the need to:

- Eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation and any other conduct prohibited by or under the Act with regard to the protected characteristics as set out in section 4 of the Act (age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation);



- Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic within section 149(7) of the Act (age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation) and those who do not share it;
- Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic within section 149(7) of the Act (see above) and persons who do not share it.

Due regard in this context involves having due regard in particular to:

- The need to remove or minimise disadvantages suffered by persons sharing a relevant protected characteristic that are connected to that characteristic;
- Take steps to meet the needs of persons sharing a relevant protected characteristic that are different from the needs of persons who do not share it;
- Encourage persons sharing a relevant protected characteristic to participate in public life or in any other activity in which participation by such persons is disproportionately low.

## **2. Equalities Impact Assessment:**

This report considers some of the health protection issues that are relevant to Hampshire residents. It does not directly impact on people and communities as would a specific proposal or project. It identifies the current situation, including any activities already in place, which address these health protection issues, and explores future work areas which will further impact positively on Hampshire's population and future health protection requirements.

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# Hampshire County Council Health Protection Annual Report April 2022 – March 2023



# Outline

- Introduction
- Health protection activities in 2022 – 2023
- Governance
- Future focus



# Introduction

- Second annual report describing the health protection activities of the Council's Public Health team
- Covers the period from April 2022 – March 2023
- Reports on activity in three areas:
  1. Living with COVID-19
  2. Responding to other emerging health protection issues
  3. Renewing focus on vaccination, helping shape the National Vaccination Strategy
- Above activities underpinned by a communications strategy to address inequalities with a specific focus on vaccinations

# Health protection activities in 2022 / 2023

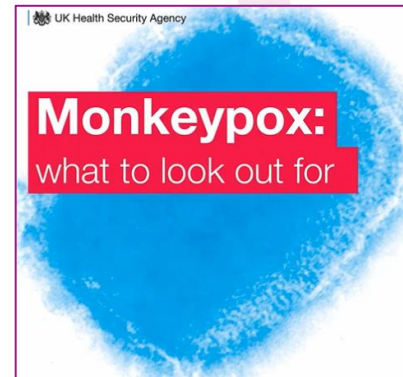
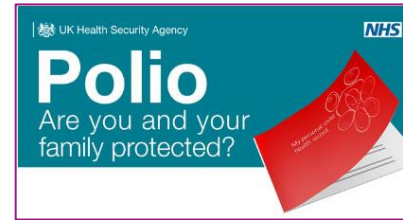
## 1. Living with COVID-19 -

- Supported COVID-19 outbreak management working with UKHSA and ICB IPC teams
- Provided PH intelligence to support vaccination delivery plans to reach Hampshire's most vulnerable, at-risk populations
- Cascaded guidance for settings around testing and outbreak management, adapted during transition in testing policy
- Worked with the Council's Safety Advisory Group to provide guidance to event organisers for safe gathering
- Developed communication campaigns to maintain awareness of safe behaviours, informed by insights and engagement

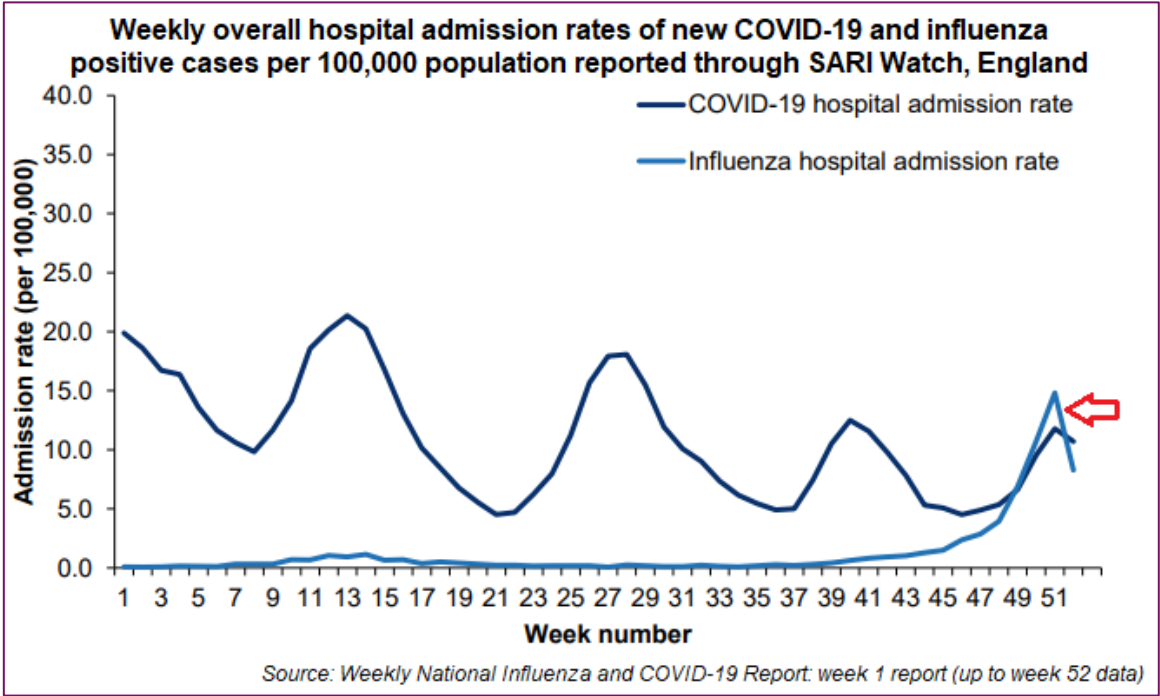
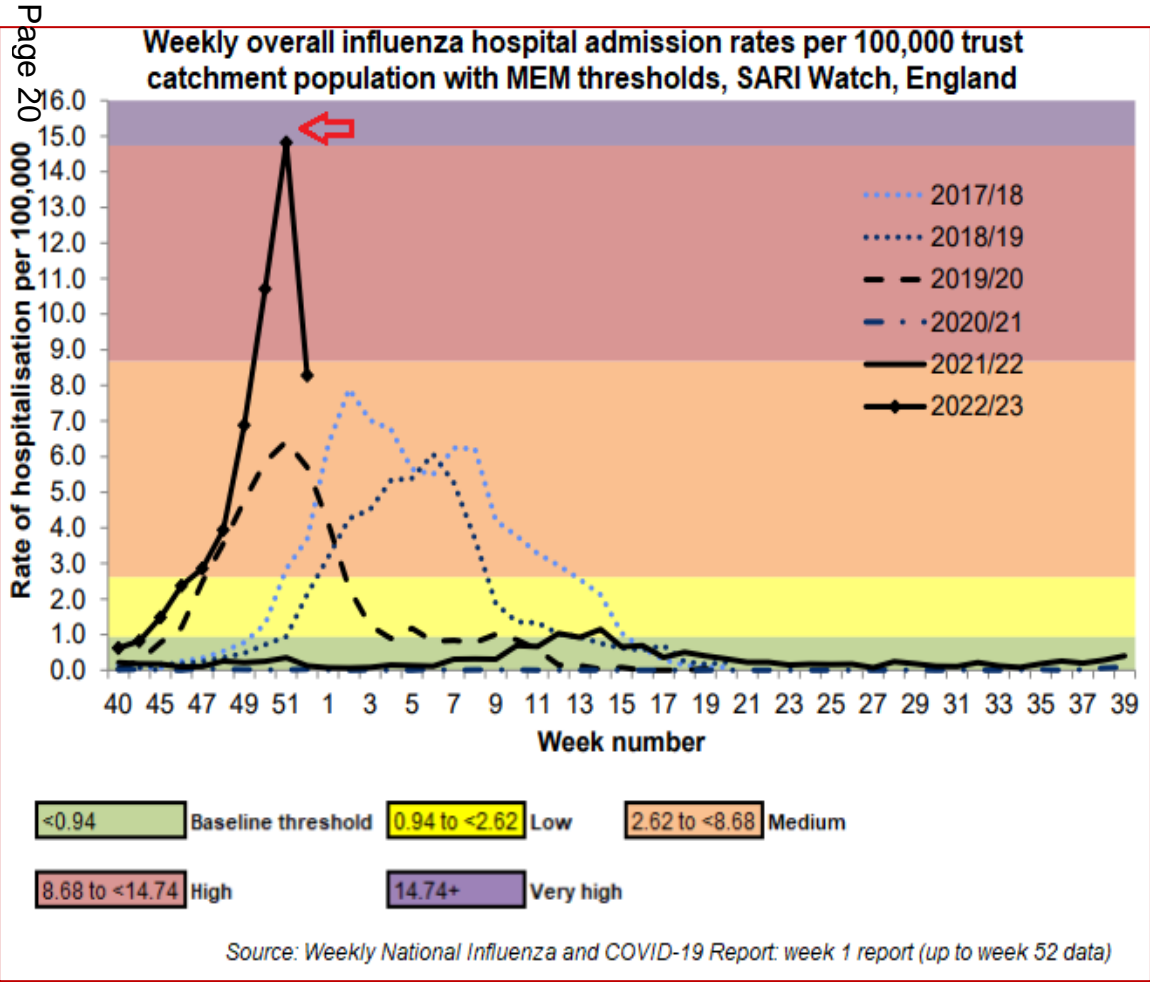
## 2. Responding to other emerging health protection issues –

- Situational awareness of, and local response to **national health protection incidents**, e.g. detection of Vaccine Derived Polio Virus type 2 (VDPV2) in London sewage, rise in Measles, outbreak of listeria monocytogenes linked to Baronet semi-soft cheese, outbreak of salmonella linked to certain Kinder products, avian influenza.
- Monitored and supported response to **rebound in infections** - Group A Strep, norovirus, influenza, respiratory syncytial virus (RSV) following the removal of COVID-19 mitigation measures, and C.difficile (possibly due to overuse and/or misuse of antibiotics).
- Coordinated effort with sexual health services on **mpox** response.
- Supported response to health protection **incidents involving the migrant population** - diphtheria, scabies, tuberculosis (TB).
- Public health messaging and system working around **TB and antimicrobial resistance (AMR)**
  - Communications - AMR awareness week, Nov'22; World TB day, Mar'23
  - Input to HLOW TB Network and Regional TB Control Board meetings
  - Themed discussion at Health Protection Board (HPB) - health protection matters related to new entrants to the UK ,TB service delivery; Vaccinations in pregnancy and childhood; Healthcare Associated Infections (HCAs); AMR and health protection issues related to adverse weather

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# Intensified influenza activity in winter 2022/23

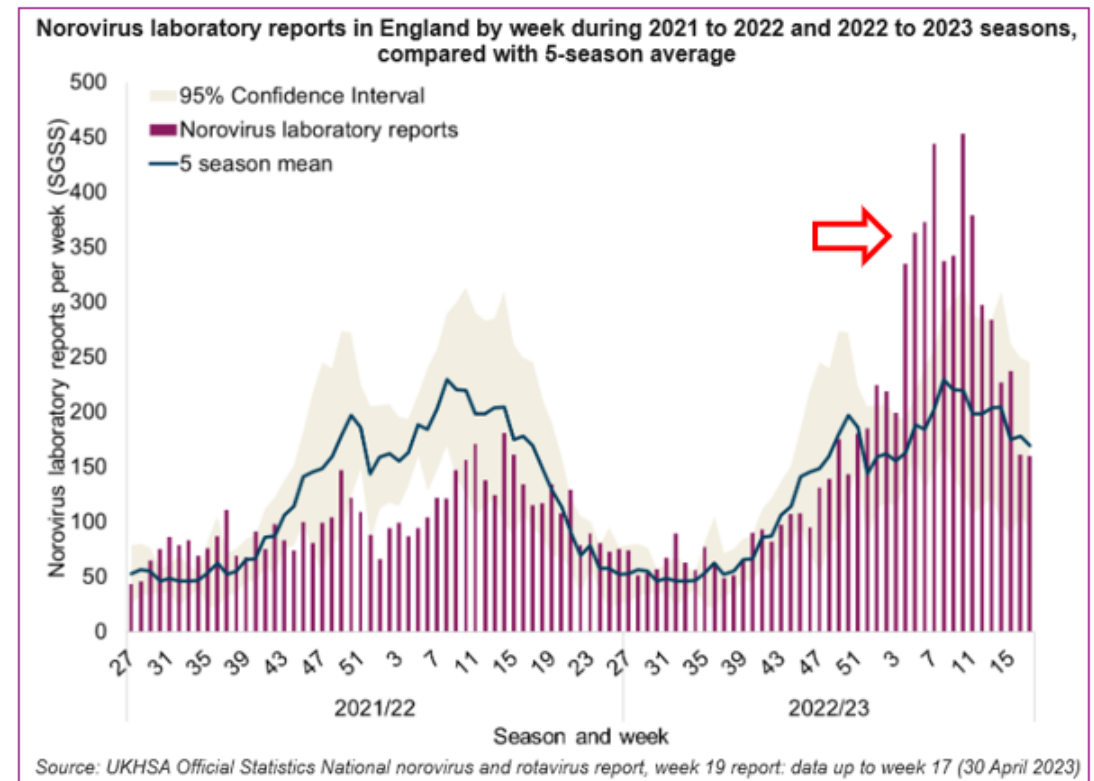
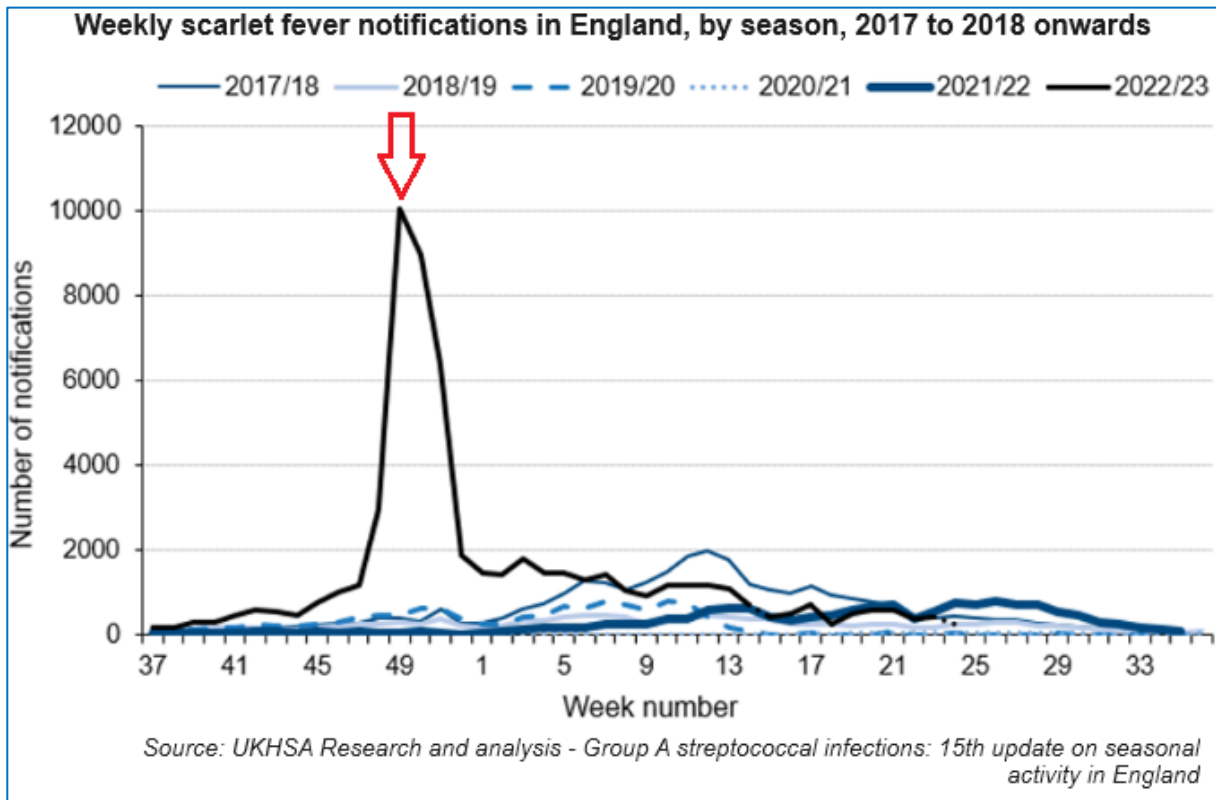


Influenza hospitalisations exceeded COVID-19 admission rates last winter!

Note peak influenza hospitalisation activity, and in the 'very high' threshold. Activity surpassed previous five years!



# Surge in scarlet fever and norovirus activity in 2022/23



Page

Higher than expected scarlet fever activity seen during the early part of summer 2022. But increased to exceptional levels during the early part of 2022/23 season (season being from mid-September in one year to the next, or from week 37 to week 36 in the following year)!

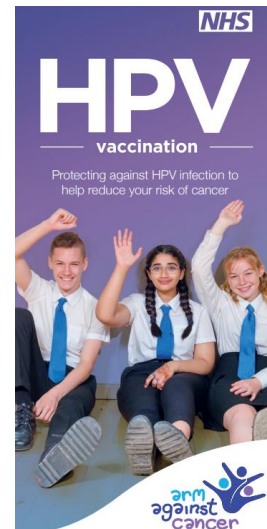
Surge in winter peak norovirus activity in 2022/23 compared to 2021/22 reporting period!

### 3. Renewing focus on vaccination, helping shape the National Vaccination Strategy

- Supported COVID-19 and seasonal influenza vaccination roll out.
- Promoted adolescent vaccinations in response to a decrease in uptake following the impact of the pandemic (Human Papilloma Vaccine (HPV), Teenage booster (Td/IPV) and Men ACWY, and MMR)
- Strategic involvement in the development of a new NHS National Vaccination Strategy
- Sector led improvement work around childhood immunisations in preparation for the proposed delegation of vaccine-related functions from NHSE to ICBs in 2024/25



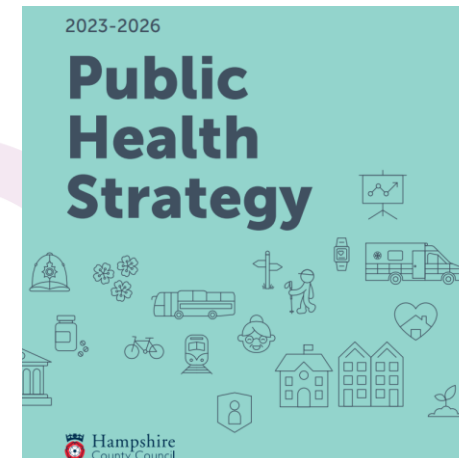
NHS Vaccinations Strategy Programme



# Governance

- Internal governance:
  - Internal procedure documents updated with learning from the response to the pandemic and other local health protection incidents
    - Health Protection Standard Operating Procedure
    - Public Health team's overarching Incident Response Plan
    - Communication framework
- Wider governance of health protection matters:
  - Oversight of health protection issues and leadership assurance provided by the HPB, chaired by DPH – first meeting Sept 2022. Area of focus – communicable diseases
  - Board brings together Council departments and key partners to protect the local population
  - Hampshire and Isle of Wight Health Protection Boards merged in January 2023

# Future Focus – for HHWB agreement



- Continued strong focus on supporting the recovery from the pandemic. Building on actions to reduce the COVID-19 driven negative impact on health and health inequalities using the Control Outbreak Management Fund.
- Health protection activities aligned to ambitions set out in the new Hampshire County Council Public Health Strategy 2023 - 2026.
- Health protection priorities for 2023 -2024
  - Support the preparedness for, response, and recovery from health protection incidents
  - Contribute to the continued recovery of screening and vaccination programmes with a focus on reducing inequalities
  - Work with the NHS to support priorities and actions outlined in the national TB: action plan for England, 2021 to 2026, using local intelligence to inform how we should act.
  - Contribute to Antimicrobial Resistance (AMR) programmes and achievement of the 5-year UK AMR Action Plan objectives.

## Tackling antimicrobial resistance 2019–2024

The UK's five-year national action plan

Published 24 January 2019



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Policy paper

## Tuberculosis (TB): action plan for England, 2021 to 2026

Updated 15 March 2023

## **EQUALITIES & DIVERSITY CABINET CHAMPION 2023/24**

This Annual Report of the Cabinet Equalities and Diversity Champion Cllr Jib Belbase, provides an overview of the role and expectations for the year, key activity achieved in 2023/24 and recommendations for 2024/25.

### **1. BACKGROUND**

- 1.1 This report sets out the work of the Equalities & Diversity Cabinet Champion for 2023/24 in taking forward the activities and priorities listed at Appendix A as agreed by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.
- 1.2 I would like to thank Council Officers who have worked with me over the last year to support the activity listed below.

### **2. SUMMARY OF ACHIEVEMENTS AND ACTIVITY IN 2023/24**

#### **Increase Engagement with underrepresented groups**

- 2.1 One of my main priorities was to reach out and engage with underrepresented groups that had little existing engagement with other communities or the Council. I have invested significant time to establish and strengthen links with community leaders from Asian communities, including Afghan and Keralan, and European communities, including Bulgarian and Ukrainian.
- 2.2 Through ongoing engagement with these groups and their community leaders, I have supported them to integrate into local society. This has included involving them in local events and encouraging community participation such as volunteering. It has also involved understanding their needs, especially those who are new arrivals to the UK and face a significant culture change.
- 2.3 By working with the Community Leaders and the Council's Community and Partnerships team, I developed the concept of a Cultural Awareness Event, organised by the Council and delivered on 13th March at the Princes Hall.
- 2.4 This was a targeted, informal event aimed specifically at minority communities I had engaged, including Afghan, Hong Kong, Ukrainian, Keralan and Bulgarian residents. Members of those communities attended alongside a range of key partners including Police, Council, Fire & Rescue, Citizens Advice and local charities. The event helped the community to feel valued and to learn and understand more about UK Culture including:
  - Accessing benefits
  - How to report a crime or ask for help
  - Fire safety at home
  - Local Mental health support
  - Cost of Living support
  - Volunteering opportunities

- It also provided the opportunity for Council officers and partners to learn about other cultures and build networks with previously unknown communities.

2.5 In March 2024 the Council delivered an accessibility workshop, regarding the proposed Cultural & Leisure Hub, engaging residents with physical or mental disabilities to ensure their needs are considered as part of the design plans. Members of Rushmoor Accessibility Access Group (RAAG), including Cllr Mara Makunura, the previous Equalities and Diversity Champion, and local Mental health charities were invited. The Council received positive feedback on the session. Cllr Makunura has maintained an active role in RAAG throughout my year as Champion.

2.6 I have also attended the Rushmoor Cohesive Communities group (RCC) which contributes to the action in the Council's Equality and Diversity Action Plan to broaden engagement with communities across Rushmoor.

### **Training to Increase Understanding & Awareness**

2.7 I recognised a gap for Officers and Members in Gender Identity training. This is an emotive subject that often attracts media attention and I feel that understanding gender identity and being equipped with adequate knowledge is important so that we can continue to support people to the best of our ability.

2.8 I have been working closely with the Community & Partnerships Team and the Council's People team to deliver a tailored programme. Training has been secured to start in summer 2024 for Members and Officers and will be delivered by a charity specialising in Gender Identity, who have experience working with Councils and Parliament. I would actively encourage all Members to take part.

2.9 In December 2023 I also arranged for Council officers to receive neurodiversity training. Neurodiversity awareness training is equality and diversity training designed to help, understand and appreciate the differences in neurodevelopmental conditions such as Autism and ADHD. I felt that it was important for the Council to understand neurodiversity better to help create a work environment that enables neurodivergent people to feel safe and perform at their best.

2.10 The training was delivered by Mustard Seed, a key partner in our borough, and was oversubscribed. Feedback from officers was very positive. An additional Neurodiversity training session for line managers ran on Wednesday 20<sup>th</sup> March and I have requested a further session for Members.

### **Equality and Diversity Action Plan**

2.11 Over the course of the year, I have met with the Community and Partnerships Team to brief and support them on my work and ensure that the activity listed above has been in support of the Council's Equality and Diversity Action Plan.

## **3. RECOMMENDATIONS AND NEXT STEPS**

- 3.1 Over the last year I have worked hard to connect with a range of minority communities, many of whom have recently arrived in Rushmoor under challenging circumstances. I would recommend that the Council continues to prioritise engaging with all members of the community and support integration to sustain a cohesive community.
- 3.2 I recommend that the Council continues to review the Equality and Diversity Action Plan taking into consideration the independent work of RAAG. The Council should continue to provide Officer support to RAAG and work closely with the Group.
- 3.3 We have a wonderful, diverse community. In my role as Champion, I have supported underrepresented groups to amplify their voices and advocate for issues that affect them. I am proud that Rushmoor is an inclusive and diverse place to live but we must continue to maximise opportunities and choices of everyone to live fulfilled lives. I recommend that the Council promotes and celebrates our diversity as part of our events programme.
- 3.4 I recommend that the Council prioritises a comprehensive training programme with an emphasis on Equality and Diversity issues for officers and Members.

**BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS:**

Appendix A - Equality and Diversity Champion Roles and Responsibilities for 2023/24



## **Equalities & Diversity Cabinet Champion**

**Purpose:** Support the delivery of the Equality and Diversity Action Plan and work with partners to promote and celebrate Equality and Diversity in the Borough.

**Roles:**

1. Increase engagement with under – represented groups across the Borough
2. Work with the Council's Community & Partnerships and Communications teams to identify and promote cultural, religious and heritage festivals and events in the Borough
3. Monitor the Equality and Diversity Action Plan and influence proposals for further phases of its delivery
4. Work to improve awareness of Members and Officers of equality, diversity and disability issues in the Borough
5. Report back regularly to the Council, and especially the Cabinet, on plans, projects and activities

### **Champion Priorities in 2023/24**

1. To represent the Council and Chair the Rushmoor Cohesive Communities (RCC) group.
2. To assist with the development and delivery of RCC priorities – specifically around increasing engagement with under represented groups. To promote the group and share knowledge on culture, issues and barriers to engagement.
4. Support the delivery of the agreed projects from the Equalities and Diversity Action Plan
5. Support the Council's engagement work to improve understanding of satisfaction levels within and needs of minority groups within the Borough
6. Encourage minority communities to be involved with local events organised by the Council and other bodies
7. Arrange appropriate training for Members and Staff to increase understanding and awareness of Equality and Diversity





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## **ARMED FORCES CABINET CHAMPION – ANNUAL REVIEW OF ACTIVITIES 2023/24**

This Annual Report of the Cabinet Champion for Armed Forces, Cllr Nem Thapa, provides an overview of the year which summarises the role and expectations for the year, key activity achieved in 2023/24 and recommendations for 2024/25.

### **1. ROLE AND PRIORITIES – EXPECTATIONS FOR THE YEAR**

- 1.1 The role of the Cabinet Champion for Armed Forces is to promote the objectives of the Armed Forces Covenant on behalf of the Council through local action and by building connections between the Military and civilian communities. The Armed Forces Act 2021 has now brought the Covenant principles into law to help protect military personnel, their close family, and veterans from being disadvantaged due to service life when accessing essential public services like healthcare, education, and housing.

Priorities this year:

- (1) Increase the visibility of the veteran community in the Borough and continuing to promote and develop connections with, and between, veterans' clubs.
- (2) Continue to support the development of the armed forces covenant arrangements and re-examine the criteria and possibility for Rushmoor Borough Council to work towards the Gold Award standard of the Defence Employer Recognition Scheme
- (3) Contribute to support the programme of joint military/civilian events in 2023/24 and actively support the events to encourage community cohesion and integration.
- (4) Develop the Armed Forces Covenant webpages on the Council's website with information that the Champion has curated through their networks.
- (5) Work with service families and supporting organisations to encourage engagement with local health and wellbeing services through the Primary Care Network and Clinical Commissioning Group

A full copy of the roles and responsibilities as agreed at the beginning of the year is attached as an Appendix.

### **2. SUMMARY OF ACHIEVEMENTS AND ACTIVITY IN 2023/24**

#### **Veterans and Armed Forces Community**

- 2.1 In early September I submitted evidence and contributed to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee's review of support for the local armed forces community and British Gurkha Veterans and highlighted the issues currently facing armed forces and Gurkha veterans arising from cost-of-living pressures.

Following the Committee's review, I wrote a letter jointly with the Leader of the Council to the Prime Minister, the Minister of Defence and the local Member of Parliament on behalf of the Borough's disadvantaged citizens and highlighting the issues arising from the Committee's assessment that:

- the Borough's most deprived areas are the same areas which are home to large numbers of former Gurkhas. The Indices of Multiple Deprivation show that part of the Wellington Ward in Aldershot has the highest proportion of income deprived older people in the County, and one of the highest in the country. A very high proportion of those affected are claiming Pension Credit at the lowest level. Rushmoor has a relatively large population of Gurkha veterans who are finding their circumstances challenging and are living in poor circumstances as they suffer the financial differential from pension disparity. This is a clear disadvantage.
- for those making the transition from military to civilian life, the many agencies providing support are complex to navigate, and that there would be a clear benefit from the creation of a single and coherent point of entry for advice for veterans and our armed forces community living within the Borough, and which would provide improved co-ordination between organisations. The letter offered to work with the Government on a funded pilot arrangement with our local Garrison to create a single gateway for advice for the armed forces community from the Borough that is the historic home of the British Army.

A copy of the response to the letter from the Ministry of Defence is attached at **Appendix 1** to this Report. This indicates that the Government is looking at options to increase the capacity of the Gurkha Welfare Advice Centre.

It is proposed that a key action for the Champion to take forward, as part of the Council's continued promotion of the Armed Forces Covenant is the holding of a network event with invitations to the key stakeholders and organisations that provide advice and support to Service Leavers and military families in the Borough to understand more about the strengths and focus for each provider and to develop a clearer overall understanding of which organisations to signpost to for different types of support.

### Veterans

- 2.2 In addition to this, I have continued to take steps to attend and develop connections with the veterans' hubs in Aldershot and Farnborough and to seek to facilitate connections between clubs, which includes several coffee morning style clubs for example at the Aldershot Football Club, and Ramillies Park, Aldershot. I have also held a monthly surgery for veterans at the Prospect Community Centre in Farnborough. During the year, I have sought to investigate the possibility of establishing a single hub/venue which would bring together veterans from across the Borough. Looking ahead, there is a role for the Armed Forces Champion to continue to help facilitate links between veterans' organisations, and to facilitate links between veterans' clubs and local support organisations.

### Website

- 2.3 Work is also underway to update the Council's Armed Forces Community Covenant webpages with the links, organisations, and information that I have curated during my time as Armed Forces Champion for Rushmoor.

## **Employer Recognition Scheme**

- 2.4 One of my priorities this year was to investigate the possibility for Rushmoor to achieve the Gold Award standard in the Defence Employer Recognition Scheme. In November 2023, I met with the South-East Regional Employer Engagement Director and attended a Going for Gold Workshop in January 2024 to understand more about the application process, criteria for Gold and evidence required to be submitted.

Since January, some additional actions have been taken to move the Council towards closing the gap and meeting the criteria:

- the development of a draft new HR Policy on Reservists for the organisation which provides a framework and procedures for staff who may become Reservists in the Armed Forces, making provision for special leave for training purposes. This is planned to be formally approved by the Cabinet in April 2024.
  - Signing up to the Career Transition Partnership (CTP) and the Forces Families Jobs (FFJ) portal for the advertising of job vacancies at the Council.
  - Item in Council Communications news email to residents dated 7/3/24 promoting the signing of the covenant and the Employer Recognition Scheme.
- 2.5 There is still some work to do around understanding current staff connections to the Armed Forces, internal promotion and understanding of forces friendly policies, support for Cadets and advocacy for the signing of the Armed Forces Covenant to our networks.

A summary of the requirement and the plans to take the Council forward to make an evidenced based submission for a Gold Award is set out in **Appendix 2**.

## **Community Hub and 'Meet and Greet' Network Meetings**

- 2.6 As part of my role to build connections between military and civilian communities, and to support service families I have attended and assisted the quarterly family liaison events held at the Aldershot Garrison Community Hub which bring together a range of welfare and advice organisations to support families, both military and non-military. I have also participated at Network Meet and Greet events at the Hub on a regular basis this year. Through our support to these events, the Shadow Champion and I have picked up and followed through on a range of casework during the year.

## **Events**

- 2.7 Throughout the year, the Shadow Champion and I have played a key role in supporting military events which have focused on promoting integration and cohesion. These included:
- Garrison & Community Health Fairs
  - Hampshire Civilian Military Partnership Conference – May 2023
  - Sounding the Retreat at the Army Cricket Ground – June 2023
  - Armed Forces Day Celebration – June 2023
  - Bula Festival which focused on the role of the Fijian community – August 2023

- Service Families Christmas Party, supporting regiments while families are away – December 2023
- Community Carol Service – December 2023
- Commemorative event of the 52nd Anniversary of the IRA bombing of the Officers' mess in Pennefathers Road in 1972 – February 2024

### 3. **RECOMMENDATIONS AND NEXT STEPS**

Looking ahead to 2024/25 and building on the work that has been achieved in my first year as Armed Forces Champion, it is recommended that the following actions be incorporated into next year's priorities for the role:

- i) Progress plans for achieving the Gold Award standard of the Defence Employer Recognition Scheme and make evidence-based submission in 2024/25
- ii) Hold a stakeholder event bringing together organisations that provide advice and support for Service Leavers and military families in the Borough.
- iii) There is an important and meaningful role for the Champion in helping to increase the visibility of the veteran community in the Borough, which can help to facilitate and improve links between veterans and support services. It is recommended to continue to promote and develop connections with, and between, veterans' clubs (including the British Legion and informal breakfast clubs and coffee mornings).
- iv) Continue to advocate for the Armed Forces Covenant and support the covenant partnership arrangements in North Hampshire
- v) Support the programme of military community events planned to encourage community cohesion in 2024/24.

Cllr Nem Thapa  
Cabinet Champion for Armed Forces 2023/24



# Ministry of Defence

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Email: [People-DPTHub-Sec-ParliBox@mod.gov.uk](mailto:People-DPTHub-Sec-ParliBox@mod.gov.uk)

Ref: TO2023/14101

Cllr David Clifford / Cllr Nem Thapa  
Rushmoor Borough Council  
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Farnborough Road  
Hants  
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[caroline.forbes@rushmoor.gov.uk](mailto:caroline.forbes@rushmoor.gov.uk)

18 December 2023

Dear Cllr. Clifford and Cllr. Thapa,

Thank you for your letter dated 20 November 2023, to the Prime Minister the Rt Hon Rishi Sunak MP, regarding your concerns about pensions and welfare issues for Gurkha Veterans. Your letter has been passed to the Defence People Secretariat within the Ministry of Defence (MOD), and I have been asked to reply.

The Government greatly values the unique contribution that the Gurkhas have made and continue to make to the UK and remains committed to providing Gurkhas with a fair pension, including uplifts determined by formal review processes. The Gurkha Pension Scheme (GPS) is a very good scheme and suits the career pattern for most Gurkhas who retired after 15 years' service with an immediate pension. Comparisons conducted by the Government Actuary's Department show that around 80% of Gurkhas receive more over their lifetime from the GPS than British personnel with the same length of service do from the Armed Forces Pension Scheme.

Those Gurkhas who left the Army before 1 July 1997 qualified for an immediate pension under the GPS after only 15 years' service. In contrast, most British personnel who did not serve for the 22 years necessary to qualify for an immediate pension under the terms of their pension scheme instead had a preserved pension payable at the age of 60. Whilst Gurkha pension rates seem low, they are paid from as early as age 33 so most Gurkhas are receiving a pension for up to 27 years before their British equivalent receives a preserved pension at the age of 60.

The legal basis for Gurkha pensions has been upheld by three Judicial Reviews since 2003. The MOD's position has been upheld at Judicial Review, including at the Court of Appeal, and at the European Court of Human Rights in 2018. The grievance was also not supported by the All Party Parliamentary Group Inquiry, nor by Parliament during the debate on the APPG Inquiry in 2014. Gurkha pensions are different but are objectively and reasonably justified.

Those Gurkha veterans who regularised their immigration status on discharge from the Brigade of Gurkhas or the wider UK Armed Forces residents have the same access to state benefits, the NHS and other veterans' charitable organisations as any other Service veterans of the UK forces. We do however recognise that there will always be challenges for those settling from overseas with limited understanding of the British culture, system and language.

It was for these reasons that the Gurkha Welfare Advice Centre (GWAC) was established in November 2009 to support the Gurkha veteran community, with offices in Salisbury and Aldershot. The GWAC is managed between the Gurkha Welfare Trust and Ministry of Defence who provide several key staff. The Centre works closely with Government Departments, Local Bodies and Service Charities who are dedicated to supporting all veterans. Managed by retired Gurkha officers with Nepalese speaking staff, the GWAC supports Gurkha veterans and their families settling in the UK. It also provides advice and signposting to the wider Gurkha veteran community already settled, and on access to state benefits, employment and living expense grants.

The UK Government recognises the essential role the Gurkha Welfare Advice Centre plays and is looking at options to increase their capacity to ensure continued support to all Gurkha veterans living across the UK.

I hope this information is helpful and explains the position.

Yours sincerely,

Defence People Secretariat



## REQUIREMENT AND PLANNING FOR ERS GOLD AWARD RECOGNITION

|   | Essential Criteria  | Current Position/Evidence   | Actions to progress   |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Signed Armed Forces Covenant  | The Covenant was originally signed in October 2012  | It is recommended that the Council could re-sign as the Covenant has since been updated.  |
| 2 | Relationship with Account Manager/Regional Employer Engagement Director (REED)  | Contact and meeting with Armed Forces Champion held with Andrew Gibbs on 29th November 2023<br><br>Attendance at a going for gold workshop on 19th January to find out more about the criteria and application process.   | Maintain relationship and update Account Manager REED on progress   |
| 3 | ERS Silver Award Holder   | The Council was awarded a Silver Employee Recognition Award in 2019   |   |
| 4 | The employer must proactively demonstrate their Forces-friendly credentials as part of their recruiting and selection processes. Where possible, they should be engaged with Career Transition Partnership (CTP) in the recruitment of service leavers and have registered for the Forces Families Jobs (FFJ) portal. | In February 2024 the Council's People Team has signed up to the Forces Families Jobs portal and CTP<br><br>Recent example of role posted to the FFJ portal:<br><br><a href="#">Committee and Member Services Team Leader, Farnborough, Hampshire – Forces Families Jobs</a> | Vacancies in the organisation to continue to be posted to CTP and Forces Families Jobs  |
| 5 | Employers must employ at least one individual from an AFC category (Reservist, Veteran, Military spouse/partner, Cadet Force Adult Volunteer (CFAV).  | It is understood that the organisation employs staff and there are elected Members with links to the military, however work to understand this further to be carried out.   | Further understanding of the number of people in the organisation for defence people categories (military spouses/partners, veterans, reservists, cadet force adult volunteers) |

|   |  |   |   |
|---|--|---|---|
| 6 | Employers must actively ensure that their workforce is aware of their positive policies towards Defence People issues (e.g., an internally publicised and positive HR policy on Reserves)  |   | To promote internal organisational awareness of the proposed HR policy on Reserves and forces friendly recruitment following anticipated Cabinet approval in April 2024   |
| 7 | The employer must be an exemplar within their market sector, advocating for the Covenant and the Armed Forces community to partner organisations, suppliers and customers with tangible positive results. For example, demonstrate proactive steps/activity and clear success in encouraging partner organisations and their supply chain to sign the AFC. | <p>Multiple examples required as submission evidence.</p> <p>North Hampshire Armed Forces Covenant Partnership Conference held 25/11/22.</p> <p>The Council organises an Annual <a href="#">Armed Forces Day Prom in the Park</a></p> <p>Appointment of Armed Forces Champion who has carried out work to promote and support veterans clubs and represent the Council at Garrison community events.</p> <p>Advocacy article in email news to residents issued 7/2/24.</p> <p>Council participation in a range of civic and community events led/shared with the Aldershot Garrison</p> | <p>Further advocacy e.g.</p> <p>Article submitted for the Council's email business newsletter to be published in April edition.</p> <p>Banners at civic events during the summer to promote AFC and ERS e.g. D-Day 80, Armed Forces Day, Victoria Day, opportunities at Public Open Meetings.</p> <p>Planned stakeholder conference for Autumn 2024.</p> <p>Plans to extend the length of the discount scheme for Armed Forces in Aldershot shops linked to the month of Armed Forces Day</p> |
| 8 | The employer must actively encourage a positive environment for Reservists by ensuring that positive policies in support of Reservists within the workforce are communicated to line managers.   | A framework for reservists has been incorporated into a draft new Reservist Policy to be recommended to Cabinet on 16th April 2024  | Presentation and sharing of Policy content with Service Manager/Corporate Manager Group following elections in June/July 2024   |

|    |   |  |  |
|----|---|--|--|
| 9  | The employer must provide at least 10 days' additional leave, fully paid, for reserves to attend training.  | This provision is incorporated in the current Special Leave Policy and will be included in the proposed new Reservists Policy for the Council.     |  |
| 10 | The employer should be an exemplar in demonstrating support to the Cadet movement. This could, for example, be through mentoring cadets in key employment skills, by providing guaranteed interviews for cadets, by direct investment in equipment and infrastructure for a local cadet unit, or by funding and sponsoring competitions, events, and specific activities for cadets such as overseas expeditions. | Councillor representative appointed to Air Cadets squadron in Farnborough  | Follow up contact with local Cadets                                |
| 11 | The employer promotes volunteering with the cadet forces from their workforce, by providing additional leave for employees who are Cadet Force Adult Volunteers (CFAVs)   | There is flexibility for employees who are Cadet Force Adult Volunteers (CFAV) to take additional leave through the Council's Special Leave policy | Internal opportunity to promote volunteering with the cadet forces |
| 12 | The employer must not have been the subject of any negative PR or media activity that could cause embarrassment to Defence.   |  |  |

Desirable Criteria – linked to Reservists Employees in the organisation

## **Armed Forces Champion Roles and Responsibilities**

**Purpose:** Promote the objectives of the Armed Forces Covenant on behalf of the Council through local action and by building connections between the Military and civilian communities.

### **Roles:**

- (1) Ensure that Council services reflect the principles of the Armed Forces and Military Community Covenants
- (2) Provide a conduit for all parts of the military community, including veterans, who are looking for assistance from the Council
- (3) Understand the needs of the local military community and act as a signpost and interface between the military and the community
- (4) Brief and raise awareness of Council Members and staff on the role of the champion and the objective of the Covenant
- (5) Establish effective lines of communication between military organisations and the Council, to include meetings with Unit Armed Forces Champions
- (6) Support events held by and for the military community
- (7) Report back regularly to the Council, and especially the Cabinet on plans, projects and activities

### **Champion Priorities in 2023/24**

- (1) Develop the Armed Forces Champion webpage on the Council's website with signposting and relevant links, informed by information that the Champion has curated through their networks.
- (2) Increase the visibility of the veteran community in the Borough, to help facilitate and improve links between veterans and support services. Continue to promote and develop connections with, and between, veterans' clubs (including the British Legion and informal breakfast clubs and coffee mornings).
- (3) Continue to support the development of the covenant partnership arrangements for North Hampshire and plans for a community partnership conference in 2023/24.

- (4) Re-examine the criteria and possibility for Rushmoor Borough Council to work towards the Gold Award standard of the Defence Employer Recognition Scheme.
- (5) Support the programme of military community events planned to encourage community cohesion in 2023/24.
- (6) Work with service families and supporting organisations to encourage engagement with local health and wellbeing service through the Primary Care Network and Clinical Commissioning Group

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# OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE WORK PLAN

The purpose of the work plan is to plan, manage and co-ordinate the ongoing activity and progress of the Council's Overview and Scrutiny Committee. It will be updated regularly and presented to each meeting of the Committee. It will include issues that are currently being actioned as well as those that will be subject to future work.

The Committees Terms of Reference are as follows:

- to perform all overview and scrutiny functions on behalf of the Council;
- to appoint such formal sub-committees and informal task and finish groups as it considers necessary to assist it in discharging its functions;
- to prepare and approve the overview and scrutiny work programme so as to ensure that the Committee's time is effectively and efficiently utilised;
- to undertake investigations into such matters relating to the Council's functions and powers as:
  - (1) may be referred by the Council, Committees, the Cabinet, or the Leader; or
  - (2) the Committee may consider appropriate; or
  - (3) have been referred to the Committee pursuant to the "call-in" procedure set out in the Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rules in Part 4 of this Constitution. (These can be decisions taken by the Cabinet, a Cabinet Member, key decisions taken by an officer or under joint arrangements).
- to monitor and review the performance of the Council and services against relevant performance indicators and adopted plans;

- to review and/or scrutinise decisions proposed to be made (pre-decision scrutiny) or actions taken in connection with the discharge of any of the Council's functions;
- to review existing policy and strategy with a view to securing continuous improvement in the way in which the Council's functions are exercised, having regard to a combination of economy, efficiency and effectiveness;
- to make reports and/or recommendations to the full Council and/or the Cabinet in connection with the discharge of any functions;
- to review and/or scrutinise any matter affecting the area or its inhabitants;
- to discuss initiatives put forward for consideration by individual members of the Committee and any relevant 'call-for-action' in accordance with the Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rules set out in Part 4 of this Constitution; and
- to consider petitions referred to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee in accordance with provisions set out in the Petition Scheme set out in Part 4 of this Constitution.



**(A) ISSUES CURRENTLY BEING PROGRESSED BY THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE TASK AND FINISH GROUPS**

| ISSUE (PURPOSE OF REVIEW)   | TASK AND FINISH GROUP (MEMBERSHIP 2023/24)  | CURRENT WORK   |
|---|---|--|
| <p>To monitor the performance and activities of <b>Registered Providers</b> working in the Borough.</p> | <p>Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Cllr Mike Smith, Vice Chairmen of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Cllrs Diane Bedford and Keith Dibble and Cllrs S.J Masterson and Sophie Porter</p> | <p>The Annual Report for 2022/23 was presented at the June 2023 meeting.</p> <p>A planning and review meeting was held on 6th September. The Group agreed the terms of reference, and made some changes to the standard questions asked, notably removing the questions around COVID management, and adding questions around Mould Management and Household energy efficiency ratings.</p> <p>The Group agreed that the three providers to be reviewed this year’s would be Vivid Homes, Defence Estates and A2 Dominion. The Group also agreed to add a fourth provider to the review, Riverside Housing, following reports of issues from tenants.</p> <p>In October the Group met with A2 Dominion who reported that they had appointed a new Chief Executive whose priority it was, to ensure better performance as a RP. New work contractors had also been appointed with robust KPIs on performance. Contact details for staff responsible for properties in Rushmoor had been provided, and site visits, were being arranged for 2024.</p> <p>In response to a Housing Ombudsman complaint and changes in the law surrounding damp and mould, A2 had contacted all residents who, had raised a repair mentioning damp and mould, to check if the issue</p> |

| ISSUE (PURPOSE OF REVIEW)                       | TASK AND FINISH GROUP (MEMBERSHIP 2023/24)   | CURRENT WORK   |
|---|--|--|
|   |  | <p>has been resolved. A2 were working to get any unresolved issues fixed.</p> <p>In November, the Group met with the Chief Operating Officer and Group Development &amp; New Business Director at VIVID, who explained their roles as new members of the executive team and their focus on improving the customer experience and preparing for any changes in legislation rising from the Social Housing Regulation Bill due in 2024.</p> <p>It was confirmed that all backlogged repairs were completed by September 2023, however, it was acknowledged that VIVID's repairs performance still needed to be improved. In addition, energy efficiency improvement works to properties in Fernhill Ward was progressing well.</p> <p>Cllr Ade Adeola resigned from the Group following his appointment as the Digital First &amp; Corporate Portfolio Holder.</p> |
| To review the <b>Council Tax Support</b> Scheme | Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Cllr Mike Smith, Vice Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Cllr Diane Bedford) and Cllrs Christine Guinness, S.J. | <p>The first meeting was held on 24<sup>th</sup> July at which options to review the existing Council Tax Support scheme for 2024/25 were discussed by the Group. Members asked Officers for further information and data to be brought to the next meeting on 30<sup>th</sup> August, 2023 to assist in making any recommendations for change.</p> <p>At its meeting in August, 2023, the Group received updated information about the recent performance of the CTS Scheme, implications of</p>  |

| ISSUE (PURPOSE OF REVIEW) | TASK AND FINISH GROUP (MEMBERSHIP 2023/24) | CURRENT WORK  |
|---------------------------|--|---|
|                           | Masterson, M.J. Roberts and S. Trussler,   | <p>reshaping the scheme to an income-based scheme rather than a minimum contribution scheme. The Group also saw the implications of improving the minimum contribution scheme for vulnerable customers. The costs and benefits of the latter scheme are being worked up for the next meeting. The Group also received a broader presentation from Boom Local Community Bank (Credit Union) about sustainable financial products which could form part of a package measures to assist local residents.</p> <p>Following the meeting on 26 September, 2023, the Group will be presenting a report to Cabinet at its meeting on 17 October which will recommend that Cabinet agree to consult on a change to the scheme for 2024/25. The change relates to removing the 88% cap on the maximum level of support that can be awarded to a working age recipient of Council Tax Support.</p> <p>The Cabinet <b>AGREED</b> the recommendations at its meeting on 17 October.</p> <p>The Group met on 11 January, where they considered the results of the public consultation exercise about changing the Council Tax Support scheme for 2024/25. It was a unanimous view of the Group to recommend to Cabinet that the scheme is changed from 1 April 2024 to allow 100% of a person's council tax liability to be used to calculate their Council Tax Support award.</p> |

| ISSUE (PURPOSE OF REVIEW)  | TASK AND FINISH GROUP (MEMBERSHIP 2023/24)   | CURRENT WORK   |
|--|--|--|
|  |  | At full Council on 22 February 2024, the scheme was agreed.  |
| To consider further the economical and environmental impacts of <b>Farnborough Airport</b> on the Borough. | Vice Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Cllr Diane Bedford) and Gaynor Austin, Jess Auton, Jules Crossley, Mara Makunura and Calum Stewart | <p>Terms of Reference were review and agreed at the Progress Group (4th July, 2023).</p> <p>At the meeting on 11 September, 2023 the following actions were agreed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Terms of reference to be revised. Amends to specify what is out of scope.</li> <li>• Key lines of enquiry to be developed i.e., what do Members what to find out. Set these within a programme of work.</li> <li>• Extend deadline of the report.</li> <li>• Set up a shared space for relevant documents inc. FA Annual Report.</li> </ul> <p>At the meeting on 18 January, 2024, the Group received a presentation from Tom Bircham, Economic Development Officer on the work RBC is undertaking with Enterprise M3 LEP on the jet zero cluster. The Group also discussed areas of potential follow up in a meeting with representatives from Farnborough Airport.</p> <p>A meeting was being scheduled for a visit to the Airport.</p> |

**(B) OTHER ISSUES CURRENTLY BEING PROGRESSED BY THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

| ISSUE  | CURRENT WORK   |
|--|--|
| Corporate Customer Contact Indicators                                    | Following the December meeting, the Committee agreed to keep a watch briefing on the work of the Customer Service Unit. Updates would be provided as necessary.  |
| Stagecoach   | <p>Stagecoach attended the meeting in July 2023 following a number of concerns and issues raised with Members by residents. At the meeting a recommendation was made to hold a stakeholder meeting to discuss some of these issues in more detail, in particular related to Aldershot services.</p> <p>The Progress Group would scope a plan for the meeting when it met in early September.</p> <p>The Multi Agency meeting took place on 22 January, 2024, at which partners from South Western Railway, Stagecoach, the Police and Hampshire County Council came together to discuss the issues raised. A report would be made to the Committee’s Progress Group at its next meeting.</p> |
| Council Business Plan  | <p>In July, the Committee received an update on the Council Business Plan. It was requested that the list of items in the work plan be prioritised against the Council Plan and reported back on at the Progress Group.</p> <p>The Q2 monitoring was considered at the December 2023 meeting, at which Members asked for more details on how projects are rated and how risk is assessed. A briefing note was provided at the Progress Group in January and can be found <a href="#">here</a>.</p>   |
| Support for the Local Armed Forces Community and British Gurkha Veterans | <p>In September, the Committee carried out an assessment of ongoing issues and support needs of our local Armed Forces Community, including welfare concerns raised via a Notice of Motion to Council on 6 July, 2023, relating to British Gurkha Veterans.</p> <p>As a result of the meeting, a number of recommendations would be made to the Cabinet.</p>   |

|                                   |   |
|-----------------------------------|---|
|                                   | At the Cabinet Meeting on 17 October, 2023, the Cabinet <b>RESOLVED</b> that the recommendations from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, be approved, subject to any letter from the Council in respect of these matters being signed jointly by the Leader of the Council and the Cabinet Champion for the Armed Forces and the removal of any reference in the recommendations to the 'Shadow Armed Forces Champion'.   |
| Community Safety and Police       | At the meeting on 21 September, the Community Safety Team and Hampshire Police were in attendance to provide an update on current issue in the borough and respond to the Notice of Motion on Youth Crime Prevention referred to the Committee for consideration.   |
| Call-In – Lawn Tennis Association | In November, the Committee had a call-in on a Cabinet decision relating to investment into public tennis courts in parks. The outcome of the meeting had been to not refer the item back to Cabinet for re-decision, therefore the Cabinet's decision became effective from 10 November, 2023.  |
| Arts and Culture                  | At its November meeting the Committee were apprised of the work being undertaken in conjunction with the Hampshire Cultural Trust and Arts Council England on arts and cultural activity on the Borough. A further meeting would be held on this item in 6-12 months.   |
| Climate Change                    | <p>The recently published Climate Change Scorecards were presented to the Committee at its meeting in November.</p> <p>At the meeting in February 2024, the Committee reviewed the progress made on the Climate Change Action Plan at which a number of suggestions were noted to be considered by the Policy and Project Advisory Board at their March meeting. Other suggestions were noted for future reports including the provision of more data on the take up of schemes and activities.</p> |

## OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

### WORKFLOW – June 2023- March 2024

| DATE                                    | ITEMS  |
|---|--|
| 15th June 2023                          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Corporate Customer Contact Indicators (Session 2)</li> <li>• Registered Providers T&amp;F Annual Report</li> </ul>  |
| 20th July 2023                          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Stagecoach</li> <li>• Council Business Plan (Session 1)</li> </ul>  |
| 7th September 2023<br>(Special Meeting) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gurkha Welfare Notice of Motion (Council - July 2023) – Support for the Local Armed Forces Community and British Gurkha Veterans</li> </ul>   |
| 21st September 2023                     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Policing and Community Safety to incorporate the Notice of Motion on Youth Crime Prevention raised at Council (April 2023)</li> </ul>   |
| 9th November 2023                       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Call-In Lawn Tennis Association investment in public tennis courts in parks</li> <li>• Arts and Culture (Cultural Compacts (Lee McQuade))</li> <li>• Climate Change Scorecards (Sophie Rogers/Rachel Barker)</li> </ul>   |
| 2nd January 2024                        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Customer Service – Contact Indicators</li> <li>• Q2 Performance Monitoring</li> </ul>   |
| 8th February 2024                       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Climate Change Strategy</li> <li>• Asset Management – Update (TM)</li> </ul>  |
| 27th March 2024                         | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Health Services</li> <li>• Champion Reports</li> </ul>  |
| Potential Future Items for Committee    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ward Grant &amp; Charitable Support (Summer 2024)</li> <li>• Waste and Recycling</li> <li>• Postal Services – Royal Mail (on hold for now as service improved)</li> <li>• County Councillors – Communications/Engagement (in particular, Highways Issues) – Updates to be provided as necessary.</li> </ul> |

## OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Progress Meetings 2023/24

**Membership:** Chairman (Cllr Mike Smith), Vice Chairmen (Cllrs Diane Bedford and Keith Dibble) and Cllrs Gaynor Austin, S.J. Masterson and S. Trussler

| DATE                             | ITEM   | NOTES   |
|----------------------------------|--|---|
| 3 April 2023<br>Annual<br>Review | OSC Annual Report<br><br>Cabinet Champions<br><br>Private landlords<br><br>June Meeting<br><br>Info/Action follow up | Agreed with some suggested additions<br><br>Going forward - hear from at PG throughout the year or regular written updates<br><br>Scope option to have a private landlords T&F group similar to the RP Group<br><br>Customer Contact Indicators and RP Annual Report<br><br>Produce a Work Tracker to monitor actions/requests for information at meetings  |
| 4 July 2023                      | Council Business Plan<br><br>Highways issues/HCC<br>Communications   | RB attended to give a summary of a proposed item for the meeting on 20 <sup>th</sup> July on the Council Business Plan performance monitoring.<br><br>Cllr Abe Allen attended the meeting to raise an issue in Fernhill relating to Bunds which had been installed in Chapel Lane. The Bunds had been installed as a prevention measure by HCC but had caused concern amongst residents. It was agreed that this issue would be raised at a proposed future meeting with County Councillors regarding communication/engagement with the County Council. |

Last Updated 13/03/2024



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|------------------|--|---|
|                  | <p>Stagecoach</p> <p>Farnborough Airport T&amp;F Group – ToR</p> <p>Cabinet Champions Priorities</p> <p>Youth Crime Prevention</p> | <p>A number of issues had been raised regarding changes and performance levels with local bus services. Contact had been made with Stagecoach who were available to attend the meeting on 20<sup>th</sup> July, 2023.</p> <p>The Terms of Reference were agreed at the meeting.</p> <p>The priorities for 2023/24 for the Cabinet Champion were endorsed at the meeting.</p> <p>Following the Notice of Motion to Council in April, 2023, it was agreed that the focus of the September meeting with the Community Safety Team and the Police would be on Youth Crime Prevention.</p>   |
| 4 September 2023 | <p>Stagecoach</p> <p>Council Plan</p> <p>7 September</p> <p>Action Tracker</p>   | <p>Stakeholder meeting – Focus on safety of travelling on foot between Bus Hubs and the Aldershot Railway Station to continue journey. Lack of a bus service to Aldershot Railway Station. Bus links to Voyager House in Farnborough.</p> <p>Future items had been priorities against the Council Plan and the Work Plan amended accordingly.</p> <p>Good to understand how many Gurkhas are affected by the issues raised. Purpose to make recommendations to Cabinet on findings from the meeting.</p> <p>Focus of discussion on young people and knife crime. Good to understand what is in place to address prevent young people getting involved in criminal activities. Other areas to cover – timescales for new police recruits, from joining the force to being on the ground.</p> <p>Understand the cost of Realtime Information Boards at bus stops and investigate need in the Borough with Stagecoach.</p> |

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|--------------------|--|---|
| 19 October<br>2023 | Support for the Local Armed Forces Community and British Gurkha Veterans | The Group discussed the resolution on the Committee's recommendations to the Cabinet following their meeting on 17 October relating to this items. Following a discussion, it was agreed that IH would write to the Leader expressing the Committee's disappointment at the removal of reference to the Shadow Champion and request that the decision be reconsidered.                              |
|                    | Police and Community Safety  | It was noted that an all Member Seminar was being arranged with the Police to address areas of concern. It was hoped that the informal setting and private nature of the seminar would result in more open dialogue with the police.  |
|                    | Arts and Cultural (cultural Compacts)                                    | Lee McQuade was in attendance to scope an item on Arts and Culture. Members requested: data on how the Arts Council identified Rushmoor as a priority place; timeframes; key things to achieve and an update on what the Council is currently doing and how it is advertised to the community   |
|                    | Engagement with County Councillors                                       | The Group were updated on the responses from the five County Councillors in reply to the invite to attend a future meeting. It was suggested that a second letter be sent asking them to identify some dates on which they all (the majority) would be available to attend.   |
|                    | Future Meetings  | It was agreed that the meeting in November would have an item on the Climate Change Scorecards alongside the Arts and Culture Item, and an update on the Registered Providers Group meeting with A2 Dominion from the Members. December would have an item on the Q2 Performance Monitoring and a request was made to invite representatives from Frimley Park Hospital to the March, 2024 meeting. |
|                    | Farnborough Airport T&F Group  | It was noted that the revised Terms of Reference for the Group would be shared with Members alongside the current list of items to be addressed at the Group going forward. It was agreed that the Group would need extra time to carry out the work and the timeframe would be adjusted accordingly.   |

|                        |                                      |  |
|------------------------|--------------------------------------|--|
| 27<br>November<br>2023 | Customer Contact Indicators – Update | The Committee scoped the item for the December meeting, which would include data on, demand, service levels, metrics on call data, front of house activity, changes to phone systems etc. Impacts of the changes would be shown in a visual platform where possible.   |
|                        | Q2 Performance Monitoring            | The Committee scoped the item for the December meeting and requested that data was provided by RAG status (red at the top) and that the team signpost Members to any areas of concern.   |
|                        | Charitable Support                   | It was noted that the support to the major charities (RVS & CA) had been changed in the last 6 months and SLA and KPI's were now in place. A briefing note would be provided to Members in due course and a future date identified for the item to be brought to the Committee.  |
|                        | Postal Services                      | Cllr Masterson raised concerns regarding postal services and proposed a future meeting with representatives from Royal Mail to discuss the local impact on residents of the postal service. It was agreed that contact would be made with Royal Mail to identify the correct representative and a date for a meeting.  |
|                        | County Councillors                   | It was noted that a response had been received from Cllr Rob Humby, Leader of Hampshire County Council, stating that the five Aldershot County Councillors would not be attending a meeting of the Committee and that any County Council issues should be raised in writing and would be responded to, in writing, for use at meetings. Elected Members were welcome to contact individual County Councillors with issues in their area. |
| 18 January<br>2024     | Asset Management                     | The Group agreed the proposed scope for the meeting in February  |
|                        | Climate Change Strategy              | The Group discussed the timing of this item and agreed that taking account of a caveat that some of the figures may not be as robust as they could be in time for the Feb meeting, a presentation would still be provided.   |

|              |                            |  |
|--------------|----------------------------|--|
|              | Postal Services            | It was noted that the service had improved since this had been mentioned at the last meeting and no item would come forward at this time. However, a watching brief would be kept on the situation.  |
|              | Charitable Support         | A briefing paper was provided on the current position and it was proposed that an item could be added to the agenda for Summer 2024.   |
|              | Multi Agency Briefing      | The Group noted that a multi agency meeting would be held on 22 January to discuss the connectivity issues between the Aldershot Train Station and the new bus service network following the closure of the Aldershot Bus Station. Cllr Smith, Dibble and Masterson would be in attendance. An update would be provide to the Group following the meeting. |
|              | County Councillors         | It was noted that a meeting had been arranged between the Leader of HCC (Rob Humby), CC Roz Chadd and Cllrs Lyon and Smith on 19 January, at which the issues raised around engagement with the County Councillors would be discussed. An update would be provided to the Group following the meeting.   |
| 4 March 2024 | Health Services            | The recent Public Health Report was reviewed, and Members asked that representatives from HCC attend the next meeting to provide a detailed overview of the report.  |
|              | Cabinet Champions          | It was noted that the Champion reports were currently being drafted and would be available with the agenda. Both Champions were invited to the meeting along with the Cabinet Member (Cllr Sue Carter).  |
|              | County Councillors         | The Chairman reported that consideration was being given to the possibility of a County Council Cabinet Member attending a future meeting.   |
|              | Climate Change Action Plan | The suggestion made at the last meeting relating to the Climate Change Action Plan would be passed onto the Policy and Project Board to inform their discussion on the refresh of the document.  |

**COUNCIL MEETING – 25TH APRIL 2024**

**AGENDA ITEM NO.**

**OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – ANNUAL REPORT 2023/24**

**1. INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 In accordance with the Council's procedures for monitoring the overview and scrutiny process, this report reviews the work that has been undertaken by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee in 2023/24. The Committee's focus has been to keep a watching brief on the Council's activities and local facilities, along with service performance and providing comments and ideas. The aim has been to shape the Council's future policy and services. The Report covers the issues discussed, the processes followed, and the outcomes achieved during the year.

**2. RESPONSIBILITIES AND WORK PLAN**

- 2.1 The Committee was established as part of the review of the decision making structure which took effect from May, 2018. The Committee's breadth of activity includes all Council services and services provided by other organisations which impact on the Borough and its inhabitants.
- 2.2 The progress meeting (consisting of Cllrs. Gaynor Austin, Diane Bedford, Keith Dibble, Stephen Masterson, Stuart Trussler and, myself) has been used for discussion and consideration of processes and priorities. It also monitors the work plan and undertakes agenda planning.

**3. COMMITTEE ISSUES**

- 3.1 Over the year, the Committee has endeavoured to ensure that it has kept the Council's activities under review. However, some external scrutiny has been undertaken, in particular, around Public Transport links across the Borough, which resulted in a stakeholder meeting being held to discuss keys issues, in particular around connectivity and safety matters in Aldershot town centre. It has also been important to ensure that there is no duplication of work with the Policy and Project Advisory Board and this issue will continue to be monitored during the 2024/25 Municipal Year.

- 3.2 The main areas of focus in 2023/24 were:

**Registered Providers** – Through the Task and Finish Group (consisting of Cllrs. Diane Bedford, Keith Dibble, Sophie Porter, Stephen Masterson and myself) the Committee has continued the review of registered during the 2023/24 Municipal Year. The scrutiny of performance and activities has been

limited to three registered providers (VIVID, A2 Dominion and Defence Estates) for 2023/24. In respect of a meeting with Defence Estates, a number of issues have prevented a meeting taking place, but officers continue to correspond with representatives from Defence Estates to secure a date. The 2023/24 annual report will be considered by the Committee at its first meeting of the Municipal Year (13th June, 2024) at which the recommendations will be considered and endorsement requested to continue with the review programme in 2024/25.

**Council Tax Support Scheme** – A Task and Finish Group (consisting of Cllrs. Diane Bedford, Christine Guinness, Stephen Masterson, Mike Roberts, Stuart Trussler and myself) has carried out a review of the Council Tax Support Scheme. Following an in-depth review of the current scheme, resulting in a recommendation to allow 100% of a person's council tax liability to be used to calculate their Council Tax Support award, a report was submitted to the Cabinet and the Council at their respective meetings in February 2024, where the recommendations of the Group were agreed.

**Cabinet Champions** – The Committee received a presentation from the two Cabinet Champions at its meetings in March 2024 where each Champion reported on their work and activities during the year, the Committee noted the achievements and activities of each Champion....

**Corporate Customer Services Indicators** – Following an initial meeting in the previous Municipal Year, the Committee have continued to receive progress reports on the Customer Services Unit during 2023/24. Feedback has been provided on the evolving working arrangements of the Customer Services Unit at two of its meetings. A watching brief will be maintained on the work of the service and reports provided as necessary.

**Community Safety and Policing** – At the meeting in September 2023, the Committee heard from Police representatives and the Safer North Hampshire team on current issues across the Borough. During the discussion, the Committee addressed issues raised in the Notice of Motion on Youth Crime Prevention which had been referred to the Committee for scrutiny. The Committee were made aware of a number of local initiatives which addressed this issue. A watching brief on community safety and policing matters will be maintained during 2024/25.

**Stagecoach** - At the meeting in July, representatives from Stagecoach addressed the Committee on a number of matters, including service levels, performance and challenges, impacts of recent changes and funding impacts. The meeting resulted in a separate stakeholder meeting involving local transport providers, Hampshire County Council representatives and the Police to further discuss matters of safety and connectivity around the Aldershot town centre, where a number of concerns have been raised. The meeting was productive and had highlighted a number of quick wins and longer term initiatives that would address the concerns.

**Support for the Local armed Forces Community and British Gurkha Veterans** – A special meeting was held in September to carry out an

assessment of ongoing issues and support needs of our local Armed Forces Community, including welfare concerns raised in a Notice of Motion on British Gurkha Veterans – Welfare Issues. A number of recommendations were made to the Cabinet at its meeting on 17 October, 2023, which the Cabinet approved.

**Call-in – Lawn Tennis Association** – In November, 2023, the Committee received a call-in on a Cabinet decision relating to investment in public tennis courts in parks. Following a discussion around the provision of free tennis within the Borough, the Committee voted on the call-in and it was declared that the decision would not be referred back to the Cabinet for review.

**Asset Management Strategy** – In January 2024, the Committee received a presentation detailing progress on the Asset Management Strategy and future delivery, and a review of the portfolio and principles of disposal in light of the budget. A watching briefing will be maintained on the progress of the strategy and the principles for disposals during 2024/25.

**Climate Change Action Plan** – In November 2023 and February 2024, the Committee considered matters relating to Climate Change. In February, a review of the Climate Change Action Plan was undertaken and recommendations/comments made for consideration by the Policy and Project Advisory Board at its meeting in March 2024 when a refresh of the Action Plan would be completed.

**Public Health** – Representatives from Hampshire County Council's Public Health Service attended the meeting in March 2024 to give a presentation on the recently published Public Health Report...

- 3.4 Other items considered during the year included performance monitoring, Arts and Culture and through the platform of a Task and Finish Group, a review of the Farnborough Airport in relation to environmental and economic impacts, the work of this Group continued.

#### 4. CONCLUSIONS

- 4.1 The Committee has worked well during the year and carried out a range of activities, which have a significant impact on the Borough and the Council. The work of the Committee will be reviewed at the start of the 2024/25 Municipal Year to ensure that the Work Plan is realistic, and the focus is on issues where it can make a difference.
- 4.2 Finally, and importantly, I feel that the Committee has worked effectively together during the year, in particular cross-party co-operation and the depth of scrutiny achieved. All Members have contributed at meetings, and I would like to express my thanks for their support and especially the two Vice-Chairmen. In addition, I am also grateful for the support given by the officers to the Committee and myself as Chairman.

**5. RECOMMENDATION**

6.1 The Council is asked to note and endorse the Committee's work.

CLLR. M. SMITH  
CHAIRMAN - OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

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