

CABINET

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

Voting Members

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

Cllr J.B. Canty, Customer Experience, Transformation and Corporate Portfolio Holder

Cllr G.B. Lyon, Planning and Economy Portfolio Holder
Cllr P.G. Taylor, Finance Portfolio Holder

An apology for absence was submitted on behalf of Cllr Sue Carter.

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

Before the meeting started, a minute's silence was observed in respect of the ongoing conflict in Israel and Palestine.

29. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST –

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

30. MINUTES –

The Minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet held on 3rd October, 2023 were confirmed and signed by the Chairman.

31. COUNCIL TAX SUPPORT SCHEME - REPORT FROM THE COUNCIL TAX SUPPORT TASK AND FINISH GROUP –

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

The Cabinet considered Report No. FIN2316, which set out the work carried out by the Council's Council Tax Support Task and Finish Group in respect of potential changes to the Council Tax Support Scheme. The Chairman welcomed Cllr Mrs. D.B. Bedford, Chairman of the Council Tax Support Task and Finish Group, who was attending to report on the Group's recommendations.

The Council Tax Support Task and Finish Group had met on 24th July, 2023, 30th August, 2023 and 26th September, 2023 to consider its recommendations to the Cabinet. The Group had considered the on-going impact the cost of living rises and had paid specific attention to a number of matters during its deliberations and these were set out in paragraph 2 of the Report. Having considered all relevant factors, the Group had recommended that a consultation should be undertaken regarding the

removal of the 88% maximum liability used to calculate awards. This would mean that working age residents on the lowest incomes would no longer be expected to pay a 12% contribution.

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

The Cabinet RESOLVED that

- (i) the undertaking of a public consultation on options around the Council's Council Tax Support Scheme regarding a scheme change to remove the 88% maximum liability used to calculate awards, as set out in Report No. FIN2316, be approved;
- (ii) the presentation of a report on the outcome of the consultation and any subsequent proposals to amend the Council Tax Support Scheme at the Cabinet meeting on 6th February, 2024 be noted; and
- (iii) the deliberations and considerations of the Council Tax Support Task and Finish Group in arriving at its recommendation in resolution (i) above, as set out in the Report and in Appendix 1 of the Report, be approved.

32. LAWN TENNIS ASSOCIATION (LTA) INVESTMENT INTO PUBLIC TENNIS COURTS IN PARKS –

(Cllr Maurice Sheehan, Operational Services Portfolio Holder)

The Cabinet considered Report No. OS2314, which set out the Lawn Tennis Association's (LTA) programme of investment into public tennis courts in parks.

In introducing the Report and the LTA's proposals, the Operational Services Portfolio Holder informed the Cabinet that a representation had been received from Cllr Calum Stewart that had not been included in the Report or appendices. Cllr Stewart had raised concerns over the affordability, particularly to families, of the proposed charging structure. The Portfolio Holder also referred to photographs he had taken on Friday, 13th October to show the current condition of the tennis courts at Cove Green, Rectory Road and Manor Park. These photographs were now published on the Council's website.

Members were informed that the proposed agreement would result in the LTA funding renovation works to the value of £114,043 across the tennis courts at the above three sites. The scheme would involve the Council appointing an operator to run the booking system and other administration regarding the courts. Any surplus from the fees collected would be held in a sinking fund for the future maintenance of the tennis courts. The Report contained the full details of the LTA's proposals. In discussing the proposals, Members expressed concern that the fees should be set at as low as possible, whilst still making the scheme and the future maintenance of the courts viable. In that respect, it was decided to delegate the finalisation of the charging structure to the Executive Head of Operations, in consultation with the Operational Services Portfolio Holder.

The Cabinet expressed strong support for the scheme and considered that this would provide residents with excellent facilities for playing tennis.

The Cabinet

(i) **RESOLVED** that:

- (a) the LTA investment to renovate tennis courts at Manor Park, Cove Green Recreation Ground and Rectory Road Recreation Ground, in accordance with its investment in public tennis courts in parks scheme, as set out in Report No. OS2314, be approved;
- (b) the Executive Head of Operations, in consultation with the Corporate Manager – Legal and the Executive Head of Finance, be authorised to enter into the necessary funding agreement with the LTA to facilitate the grant award;
- (c) the appointment of an operator to run the booking system, administration of the parks' tennis courts and an outreach programme, at no cost to the Council, as set out in the Report, be approved;
- (d) the Executive Head of Operations, in consultation with the Operational Services Portfolio Holder, be authorised to research and implement an appropriate charging structure for the use of the parks' tennis courts, considering the comments made during the meeting in relation to the level of charges;
- (e) the use of Section 106 funding to replace the fencing across all three sites, as set out in the Report, be approved; and

(ii) **RECOMMENDED TO THE COUNCIL** that approval be given to the addition of £216,500 into the Capital Programme for 2023/24, funded from a combination of LTA grant and Section 106 contributions, as identified in paragraph 4.7 of Report No. OS2314.

33. **RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - SUPPORT FOR LOCAL ARMED FORCES COMMUNITY AND BRITISH GURKHA VETERANS –**

(Mr Ian Harrison, Executive Director)

The Cabinet considered Report No. DEM2307, which set out the work carried out by the Council's Overview and Scrutiny Committee in respect of support for the local armed forces community and British Gurkha Veterans.

Members were informed that the work had been carried out in response to a Notice of Motion that had been referred to the Committee by the Council at its meeting on 6th July, 2023. The Overview and Scrutiny Committee had held a Special Meeting on 7th September, 2023 to consider these matters and additional parties had been invited to give representations. The Committee had considered the representations that had been made and the information that had been provided. The findings of the

Committee and its recommendations for the Cabinet were set out in the Report under five headings:

- 1) Pensions for Gurkha Veterans
- 2) Disabled Facilities Grants
- 3) Employers Recognition Scheme – Gold Award
- 4) Single point of access in Rushmoor for advice – available to the whole military community
- 5) Build a stronger network between local organisations providing support for the military community

The Cabinet expressed gratitude to, in particular, the Cabinet Champion for the Armed Forces and the Overview and Scrutiny Committee for their work in producing these recommendations.

The Cabinet RESOLVED that the recommendations from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, as set out in Report No. DEM2307, 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'.

34. **FARNBOROUGH LEISURE AND CULTURAL HUB – APPROACH TO SUSTAINABILITY –**

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

The Cabinet considered Report No. REG23087, which set out a proposed approach to sustainability in relation to the Leisure and Cultural Hub project.

The Cabinet was reminded that, at its meeting on 3rd October, it had agreed that it would consider a report at this meeting to agree the approach to sustainability and investment in PassivHaus, based on a detailed piece of work carried out by the Council's architects, GT3, and cost consultants, Artelia, to look at the return on investment. The Report set out three options and, in discussing these, the Cabinet had no hesitation in supporting Option C which would result in full PassiveHaus certification. Members considered that, despite requiring a higher initial outlay, this option would be the best option for the Council in terms of payback period and sustainability credentials.

The Cabinet RESOLVED that

- (i) the proposed approach to design development pursuing full PassiveHaus accreditation, with the associated capital investment of £8,164,000, as set out in Report No. REG2308, be approved;
- (ii) the final decision to proceed with the implementation of the resulting design being subject to the overall affordability assessment, to be considered in June, 2024, be approved; and
- (iii) the additional costs for abortive fees and redesign, estimated at £880,000 (excluding VAT) and the delays to the programme, estimated at 10-12 weeks,

should a decision be taken not to proceed with the full PassivHaus design later in the project, be noted.

The Meeting closed at 8.08 pm.

CLLR D.E. CLIFFORD, LEADER OF THE COUNCIL
