

BOROUGH OF RUSHMOOR

MEETING OF THE BOROUGH COUNCIL held at the Council Chamber, Council Offices, Farnborough on Thursday, 7th December, 2023 at 7.00 pm.

The Worshipful The Mayor (Cllr C.P. Grattan) – In the Chair
The Deputy Mayor (Cllr Mara Makunura)

Cllr A. Adeola
Cllr Gaynor Austin
Cllr Jib Belbase
Cllr C.W. Card
Cllr D.E. Clifford
Cllr P.J. Cullum
Cllr A.H. Gani
Cllr Christine Guinness
Cllr Peace Essien Igodifo
Cllr G.B. Lyon
Cllr Nadia Martin
Cllr Marina Munro
Cllr M.J. Roberts
Cllr M.L. Sheehan
Cllr Sarah Spall
Cllr P.G. Taylor
Cllr Nem Thapa
Cllr Jacqui Vosper
Cllr Gareth Williams

Cllr Abe Allen
Cllr Mrs. D.B. Bedford
Cllr J.B. Canty
Cllr Sue Carter
Cllr Jules Crossley
Cllr Keith Dibble
Cllr C.P. Grattan
Cllr Michael Hope
Cllr Halleh Koohestani
Cllr Mara Makunura
Cllr S.J. Masterson
Cllr Sophie Porter
Cllr Dhan Sarki
Cllr M.D. Smith
Cllr Calum Stewart
Cllr M.J. Tennant
Cllr S. Trussler
Cllr Becky Williams

Honorary Alderman T.D. Bridgeman
Honorary Alderman A.E.A. Gardiner
Honorary Alderman J.H. Marsh

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Cllr Jessica Auton and Cllr T.W. Mitchell.

Before the meeting was opened, the Mayor's Chaplain, Mr David Betts, led the meeting in prayers.

27. **MINUTES**

It was MOVED by Cllr S.J. Masterson; SECONDED by Cllr M.J. Tennant and

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the Extraordinary Meeting of the Council held on 5th October 2023 and the Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of the Council held on 5th October 2023 be taken as read, approved and signed as correct records of the proceedings.

28. **MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

- (1) The Mayor reported that events he had attended since the previous meeting of the Council had included:
 - a visit to Rushmoor's twinned town of Sulechów from 12th to 15th October 2023, a highlight of which had been attending the Chopin Festival at which one of the Council's Officers, Diane Highet, had played;
 - the Rushmoor Rose Bowl on 22nd October;
 - an event to mark the 30th Anniversary of the formation of Farnborough Air Sciences Trust (FAST) on 23rd October;
 - the switching on of the Christmas lights in Aldershot on 18th November at the Christmas Cracker event. The event had also been attended by the Oberursel Fountain Queen;
 - the switching on of the Christmas lights in Farnborough at the Farnborough Frost Fair event on 25th November;
 - the Hampshire Business Awards held at Farnborough International Exhibition and Conference Centre on 30th November; and
 - Farnborough Library's 50th birthday celebrations on 2nd December.
- (2) The Mayor reported that he and the Deputy Mayor had attended several wreath-laying services and Services of Remembrance on Sunday, 12th November. The Mayor said that he was pleased to have seen such a large number of residents who had attended the Royal British Legion/Civic Service at the Aldershot Cenotaph, including a D-Day Veteran. He thanked all Members and Officers who had attended the Borough's Remembrance Sunday services.

The Mayor also reported that he had attended the Greater Rushmoor Nepali Community Remembrance Service on 11th November and the Aldershot Town Football Club Remembrance football match on 11th November.
- (3) The Mayor placed on record the Council's thanks to Councillor David Clifford for his service as Leader of the Council since May 2016. Cllr Clifford was standing down as Leader later in the meeting due to personal commitments. Cllr Clifford would continue as a councillor for the Manor Park Ward in Aldershot until the local elections in May 2024.
- (4) The Mayor also wanted to place on record the Council's thanks to two members of staff who had given enormous support to the Mayoralty and civic events over many years and who would be leaving Rushmoor in December 2023. The Mayor thanked Kathy Long (formerly Platt), Democratic Support Officer, who had served for 28 years in the Democracy Team and Yvonne Pyne, Executive Assistant, who was retiring after 40 years' service.

29. **STANDING ORDER 8 - QUESTIONS**

The Mayor reported that no questions had been accepted under Standing Order 8.

30. **APPOINTMENT OF THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL**

It was MOVED by Cllr M.L. Sheehan; SECONDED by Cllr M.J. Tennant - That Cllr G. Lyon be appointed Leader of the Council to hold office until the Annual Meeting of the Council in 2024.

There voted FOR: 21; AGAINST: 0; ABSTAINED: 13 and the Motion was **DECLARED CARRIED**.

31. **NOTICES OF MOTION**

(1) **Defibrillators and Bleed Kits**

The Council was asked to consider a Motion which had been submitted by Cllr Marina Munro in accordance with the provisions of Standing Order 9 (1):

“This Council recognises the importance of having defibrillators and bleed kits accessible across Rushmoor – especially in public spaces and sports grounds.

To date, this Council has funded several defibrillators through Ward grants, and would like to build on this provision across our Borough by working in collaboration with the voluntary and community sector, businesses and partner organisations.

This Council also acknowledges the benefits of the roll-out of defibrillators by the Government to all state-funded schools this year, and notes that they will be installed at Aldershot and Farnborough train stations.

Going forward, this Council commits to working with the local community to find suitable places for defibrillators and bleed kits.

Therefore, this Council asks the Policy and Project Advisory Board to:

- Produce a report into the current accessibility and maintenance of defibrillators and bleed kits in Rushmoor
- Assess the cost commitments in expanding provision of defibrillators and bleed kits in Rushmoor
- Make recommendations for expanding the provision of defibrillators and bleed kits across Rushmoor.”

In proposing the Motion, Cllr Marina Munro stated that each year, 100,000 deaths were caused by Sudden Cardiac Arrest in the UK and there were around 60,000 incidents that took place in community settings. Using a defibrillator within three minutes of a cardiac arrest could improve a person’s chances of survival by as much as 70%. Cllr Munro acknowledged that several Councillors and community groups had secured funding through ward grants and other sources for defibrillators to be installed in public places, such as pubs, community halls and sports fields. Another

example was at Farnborough North Station where local residents had raised funds for a defibrillator at the station and the funding had been matched by the Council.

Cllr Munro also stated that the Government had been taking steps to expand the number of defibrillators in local communities and had launched the £1 million Automated External Defibrillators Fund earlier in 2023. The Government had also ensured that every state school had at least one defibrillator. Members noted that organisations like the Premier League had also been funding defibrillators at football clubs around the country.

Cllr Munro believed there was more that Rushmoor could do to ensure that defibrillators were available in as many public places as possible. She referred to research that had been undertaken by the Community team into existing provision, however more work was needed to understand where the gaps were across Rushmoor and how these could be filled. Cllr Munro said that Policy and Project Advisory Board would also be able to look at the costs of expanding provision, as well as how existing defibrillators were maintained and training to use them.

In seconding the Motion, Cllr Mrs D.B. Bedford referred to defibrillators which had been supplied in her Ward by North Camp Matters Association and was keen to see more defibrillators provided around the Borough.

Under Standing Order 9 (10), the Mayor directed that the Motion should be referred to the Policy and Project Advisory Board and not debated further at the Council meeting.

(2) Housing Policy

The Council was asked to consider a Motion which had been submitted by Cllr Gareth Williams in accordance with the provisions of Standing Order 9 (1):

“This Council notes increasing demands to provide accommodation for those who are homeless, caused by the cost-of-living crisis, the high level of refugees and others who have legitimately moved to the UK in recent years, coupled with historically low house building rates.

RBC’s Housing and Homelessness Policy states that:

- as of October 2022, there were 1,680 households waiting for affordable housing in Rushmoor;
- families are typically waiting up to 8 years to secure 3-bedroom homes for affordable rent;
- partners and housing teams are receiving an increasing number of reports of housing cases.

Despite positive measures in the Chancellor’s Autumn Statement such as restoring the LHA to its previous level of 30%, it offered far too little support for local government to address the growing deficits in council budgets or provide the affordable homes that are needed.

Given the pressures on the Council's budget for 2024/25, the Council calls on the RBC Chief Executive and Council Leader to write to the Chancellor outlining the need for a long-term commitment to funding for:

- more affordable and social rent housing for local people, including larger family homes;
- homes for British Army veterans;
- a proportionate number of homes for refugees, including those from Afghanistan."

In proposing the Motion, Cllr Williams stated that, over the previous ten years, 1,353 affordable homes had been built in Rushmoor. This equated to an average of 135 affordable homes each year, yet the target set by RBC in its Housing and Homelessness Prevention Strategy was 150 each year. With reference to the Strategy, Cllr Williams commented that Rushmoor had over 1,600 households waiting for a home they could afford to live in. He pointed out that, even if no more households were added to that list, it would take another ten years before those residents currently living in over-crowded, unsuitable or precarious accommodation could find a home for their families. The same Strategy highlighted that families looking for 3-bedroom homes were typically waiting eight years for their needs to be addressed.

Cllr Williams considered that the Strategy adopted by the Council fell short of what was required to address the problem, and that wider economic and social issues were aggravating the crisis (e.g., increased mortgage interest rates and increased rents). Added to this was the duty to house refugees from conflicts around the world. In this way, demands on the Council for affordable homes were expected to increase and the Council's ability to meet this demand was inadequate.

Cllr Williams urged the new Leader of the Council to highlight to the Chancellor, in a very clear and public way, that the Council needed support from the government to address this crisis and that policy had to change to enable local authorities to meet the needs of all residents.

During debate, comments were raised about the legacy of the Right to Buy policy, the need to accelerate house building, and the effects on mental health of living in cramped living space while waiting for appropriate affordable housing.

The view was also expressed that demand for accommodation in Rushmoor also reflected the Borough's well-connected location and thriving economy which supported many local people in well paid employment. It was also pointed out that the Leader of the Council and the Operational Services Portfolio Holder had already written several weeks previously to the Chancellor highlighting the difficulties and pressures on housing in the Borough.

In seconding the Motion, Cllr Gaynor Austin stated that, in the 1950s, councils were building an average of 147,000 homes per year. By the 1960s a quarter of the country's housing was council housing, and in the 1970s councils built 40% of all new housing. Cllr Austin reported that during her teaching career she had seen first-hand the negative effect that insecure and inadequate housing could have on

children's physical and mental health and attainment, thus leading to reduced life chances and the inability to buy a home of their own. Cllr Austin emphasised that Rushmoor needed more decent, affordable, and social rent housing and that the support of Government should be sought with a long-term, stable funding commitment. She urged Members to support the Motion.

Following further discussion, the Motion was put to the meeting. There voted FOR: 13; AGAINST: 22; ABSTAINED: 0 and the Motion was **DECLARED LOST**.

32. **RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE CABINET AND COMMITTEES**

Variation to the Capital Programme – Lawn Tennis Association Investment into Public Tennis Courts in Parks

Cllr M.L. Sheehan, Operational Services Portfolio Holder, introduced the Report of the Cabinet meeting held on 17th October 2023 which recommended a variation to the Capital Programme to enable improvement and fencing works in public tennis courts in parks.

It was **MOVED** by Cllr M.L. Sheehan and **SECONDED** by Cllr M.J. Tennant – That approval be given to the addition of £216,500 into the Capital Programme for 2023/24, funded from a combination of Lawn Tennis Association grant (£114,043) and Section 106 contributions (£102,457), as identified in the Report.

In a Recorded Vote, there voted **FOR**: Cllrs A. Adeola, Mrs D.B. Bedford, J. Belbase, J. Canty, Sue Carter, D.E. Clifford, P.J. Cullum, Peace Essien-Igodifo, A. Gani, M. Hope, G.B. Lyon, S.J. Masterson, Marina Munro, M.L. Sheehan, M.D. Smith, C. Stewart, P.G. Taylor, M.J. Tennant, N. Thapa, S. Trussler, Jacqui Vosper and the Deputy Mayor (Cllr Mara Makunura) (22); **AGAINST**: Cllrs Abe Allen, Gaynor Austin, Jules Crossley, K. Dibble, Christine Guinness, Halleh Koohestani, Nadia Martin, Sophie Porter, M.J. Roberts, D. Sarki, Sarah Spall, Becky Williams and G. Williams (13); **ABSTAINED**: Cllr C.W. Card and the Mayor (Cllr C.P. Grattan) (2) and the Recommendation was **DECLARED CARRIED**.

33. **QUESTIONS FOR THE CABINET**

- (1) Cllr M. Hope had submitted a question for response by the Operational Portfolio Holder (Cllr M.L. Sheehan) about the Prostate Cancer UK's campaign "Boys Need Bins".

In response, Cllr Sheehan stated that he recommended all Members to research the campaign. He felt that there was a case for sanitary bins to be provided at Southwood Country Park, the Council Offices and Princes Hall. Cllr Sheehan also stated that private establishments (e.g., restaurants, cafes) would be asked to consider providing sanitary bins and publicity would also be given to the "Boys Need Bins" campaign.

- (2) Cllr S. Trussler had submitted a question for response by the Planning and Economy Portfolio Holder (Cllr G. Lyon) about a Habitat Bank.

In response, Cllr Lyon stated that a public consultation exercise had been held on a Draft Biodiversity Supplementary Planning Document (SPD). A report would be considered by the Cabinet seeking the adoption of the SPD, the launch of a Rushmoor Habitat Bank and the adoption of a Rushmoor Habitat Bank Procedure Note.

- (3) Cllr Mrs D.B. Bedford had submitted a question for the Planning and Economy Portfolio Holder (Cllr G. Lyon) about support for Lynchford Road traders.

In response, Cllr Lyon confirmed that support was being given to North Camp traders (rates relief) and referred to work on promotional campaigns for the shops in North Camp.

- (4) Cllr M.D. Smith had submitted a question of the new Leader of the Council regarding his priorities for the Council.

In response, Cllr Lyon outlined his priorities for the Council, including the regeneration of the town centres, caring for neighbourhoods and parks, strengthening communities, developing a robust Financial Strategy and Digital Strategy and a well-run Council. In addition, Cllr Lyon confirmed that he had asked Cllr Calum Stewart to work with the migrant community going forward.

- (5) Cllr S.J. Masterson had submitted a question for the Major Projects and Property Portfolio Holder (Cllr M.J. Tennant) about the number of trees planted in the Borough in recent years.

In response, Cllr Tennant stated that the following number of trees had been planted:

Year	RBC	HCC	Other	Total
2020-21	10	unknown		10
2021-22	49	71		120
2022-23	1,199	48		1,247
2023-24	39	84	464	587

- (6) Cllr D.E. Clifford had submitted a question for the Democracy, Strategy and Partnerships Portfolio Holder (Cllr Sue Carter) about marking Holocaust Memorial Day in January 2024.

In response, Cllr Sue Carter stated that Holocaust Memorial Day (HMD) was marked each year on 27th January to remember the millions of victims of the Holocaust and subsequent genocides across the world since World War Two and was supported by the Holocaust Memorial Day Trust. She confirmed that, in January 2024, the Council would mark Holocaust Memorial Day with a week-long exhibition of display information at the Council Offices and the Princes Hall which would be linked to the theme for 2024 - 'Fragility of Freedom'. Arrangements were also being made for a public Holocaust Memorial Day Church Service at the Royal Garrison Church of All Saints in Aldershot on Sunday 28th January 2024 to which the Mayor and all councillors would be invited to attend.

- (7) Cllr M.J. Roberts had submitted a question for the Leader of the Council (Cllr G.B. Lyon) regarding a planning application which had been submitted by McDonalds for a site near Tongham/Farnham but on the border of Rushmoor's boundary adjacent to Tices Meadow, Aldershot.

In response, Cllr Lyon confirmed that the planning application was within the Borough of Guildford and that Rushmoor had not received an adjoining borough consultation. However, Rushmoor had provided advice to partners on how they and individuals could submit their comments to Guildford as the Local Planning Authority for the planning application submitted by McDonalds, and that he would be happy to make representations.

- (8) Cllr Gaynor Austin had submitted a question for the Corporate Services Portfolio Holder (Cllr P.G. Taylor) regarding the Council's Financial Strategy, in particular to enable the delivery of the Farnborough Leisure and Cultural Hub and the wider civic quarter development.

In response, Cllr Taylor stated that the Council had borrowed to fund investment in the Borough and to support service delivery. He said that borrowing was always done with due diligence and in line with the Capital and Investment Strategy approved by the Council each February. These strategies included the identification of risk and appropriate mitigations. The unprecedented turmoil in financial markets and resulting rise in the Bank of England base rate from 3% last December to the current rate of 5.25% had put pressure on the Council's finances. The rapid increase interest cost had triggered the mitigation measures built into the underlying approved Capital and Investment Strategies to be expedited. The full detail of how these Strategies were being implemented would be provided as part of the overall budget proposals due to come to the Council meeting in February 2024.

34. **REPORTS OF CABINET AND COMMITTEES**

RESOLVED: That the Reports of the following meetings be received:

Cabinet	3rd October 2023
Cabinet	17th October 2023
Cabinet	21st November 2023
Corporate Governance, Audit and Standards Committee	27th September 2023
Development Management Committee	11th October 2023
Development Management Committee	8th November 2023

35. **REPORTS OF OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE AND POLICY AND PROJECT ADVISORY BOARD**

RESOLVED: That the reports of the of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee meetings held on 21st September 2023 and 9th November 2023 and the Policy and Project Advisory Board meeting held on 26th September 2023 be noted.

The meeting closed at 8.58 pm.
