



## RUSHMOOR BOROUGH COUNCIL

# OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

*at the Council Offices, Farnborough on  
Thursday, 30th January, 2025 at 7.00 pm*

**To:**

Cllr Halleh Koohestani (Chairman)  
Cllr Nadia Martin (Vice-Chairman)  
Cllr S. Trussler (Vice-Chairman)

Cllr Leola Card  
Cllr A.H. Crawford  
Cllr P.J. Cullum  
Cllr Thomas Day  
Cllr C.P. Grattan  
Cllr G.B. Lyon  
Cllr Bill O'Donovan  
Cllr M.J. Tennant

**Standing Deputy**

Cllr C.W. Card  
Cllr S.J. Masterson  
Cllr T.W. Mitchell

Cllr Sarah Spall  
Cllr Jacqui Vosper  
Cllr Ivan Whitmee

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 - 4)**

To confirm the Minutes of the Meeting held on 12th December, 2024 (copy attached).

2. **FINANCIAL RECOVERY PLAN - UPDATE –**

To receive an update on the current position of the Financial Recovery Plan and the operational arrangements of the Financial Recovery Working Group from the Leader, Cllr Gareth Williams, and Executive Head of Finance, Peter Vickers.

3. **WORK PLAN – (Pages 5 - 14)**

To consider the Work Plan for the 2024/25 Municipal Year (copy attached).

## **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, 12th December, 2024 at the Council Offices, Farnborough at 7.00 pm.

## Voting Members

Cllr Halleh Koohestani (Chairman)  
Cllr S. Trussler (Vice-Chairman)

Cllr Leola Card  
Cllr A.H. Crawford  
Cllr P.J. Cullum  
Cllr Thomas Day  
Cllr G.B. Lyon  
Cllr M.J. Tennant

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Cllr C.P. Grattan and Cllr Bill O'Donovan.

Cllr Nadia Martin joined the meeting online and was therefore unable to vote on any recommendations taken.

Cllr Sarah Spall attended the meeting as a Standing Deputy.

## 23. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the meetings held on 28th November, 2024 were agreed as a correct record, subject to two minor amendments on page 3.

## 24. CITIZENS ADVICE RUSHMOOR - SERVICE LEVEL AGREEMENT - ANNUAL REPORT

The Committee welcomed Calum Stewart, Chief Executive Officer, Sue Dowell, Head of Service and Quality and Andrew Levey, Board of Trustees Chair, at Citizens Advice Rushmoor (CAR), who were in attendance to report on their 2023/24 Annual Report, in line with the Service Level Agreement with the Council. In addition, Emma Lamb, Community and Partnership Service Manager was also in attendance to support the item on behalf of the Council.

It was advised that Citizens Advice Rushmoor (CAR) were a local charity who had been providing free, confidential, and impartial advice, in the Borough, since 1940. Part of the Citizens Advice network, CAR were one of over 200 independent charities operating across the country. The volunteer-led charity, with a Board of Trustees and over 50 volunteers, helped deliver services to Rushmoor's residents, ensuring clients were at the heart of what their work.

Mr Stewart, provided an overview of a case which had presented to the team. The case involved a vulnerable adult with learning difficulties who struggled to live independently. The client had received a letter threatening action from bailiffs, if an energy bill wasn't settled. The CAR adviser contacted the energy company and was able to ensure the debt was written off. During the period of contact with the client, the adviser established that the individual was eligible for benefits, which resulted in them being £1,000 better off per month. This was an example of work carried out by CAR, and showed how one issue could result in additional work being undertaken to enhance clients lives and wellbeing. It was noted that 8 out of 10 issues presented, were solved through the advice and intervention provided by CAR advisers. In 2023/24, 5,000 individuals had been supported on over 16,000 issues.

CAR aimed to provide the advice clients needed for the problems they faced, and worked to improve the policies and practices that affected people's lives. Advisers helped clients with a range of problems, through face to face contact, telephone, email and webchat or through outreach activities in the local community. Problems/issues dealt with, included, benefits, debt and money matters, housing, consumer issues, work, family and immigration.

It was noted that, more people were contacting CAR with multiple or complex issues. Most concerns could be dealt with by the team, but sometimes signposting to other services was required. The support provided ranged from brief one off intervention, to in-depth casework, with services tailored to meet individual needs. The high quality, complex and detailed service provided by CAR allowed for a unique insight into the challenges people face in today's society. CAR provided a service that made a difference to people's lives and in addition, generated savings for the government to a value of at least £1.67 for every £1 invested in CAR, alongside, economic and social benefits (£24.22 for every £1 invested in CAR), and value to clients (£7.10 for every £1 invested in CAR). Through partnership working with the Council on the Council Tax Support Scheme it was estimated that 4,800 households in Rushmoor would be better off by over £760,000 in total, in 2024/25. Other partners, which CAR has worked with, and been provided funding from, for specific projects to provide benefits to residents include, the Brain Tumour Charity, the Armed Forces Covenant Fund Trust, the Office for the Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC) for Hampshire, the Community Grub Hub and Farnborough Food Bank.

It was noted that the Council's funding contributed, in part, to eight posts within CAR's organisational structure. In 2022/23, the Council reduced its funding to CAR by 10%, this was cut by a further 5% in 2023/24. Taking account of inflation, these reductions equated to a 30% loss in spending power since 2021, compared to a year on year increase of 44% in levels of crisis support being provided. It was advised that, CAR had undergone a restructure as a result of these reductions and other increased costs, which had included a number of redundancies, causing a further strain on the services provided. A team of volunteers supported the paid service, and it was noted that they had given an average of 270 hours per week, which equated to £363,877 worth of volunteering hours in 2023/24.

The Committee reviewed CAR's strategic priorities and were apprised of projects and activities for 2024/25, which included work with asylum seekers and refugees, mental health projects and meeting the needs of young people.

During discussions, the Committee requested that the information provided in the SLA report going forward, clearly stated where the need was coming from and key concerns identified on a ward basis. What the Council's grant funded, was also raised, and a request was made for more detail on this and engagement with the Council on how, and on which, projects the funds were used for.

In response to a query regarding the use of English, it was advised that the position had worsened and fewer people were using English as their first language. It was noted that, fortunately CAR had Nepali speakers and advisers but other organisations did not. Language Line was used as a resource to assist with enquiries when English wasn't the first language, but this extended the time of appointments further impacting resources.

In response to a query regarding alternative funding streams, it was noted that funding was sought from other sources, but often was for specific projects/support with limitations on what it could be used for.

Following a discussion on premises costs, it was noted that the lease on the spaces occupied by CAR, owned by the Council, had not been reviewed for four years. The Committee felt it appropriate that a recommendation be made to review the current arrangements with regard to rent and service charges.

With regard to average waiting times on the helpline, it was advised that a new arrangement had been entered into to pool resources across other Citizens Advice offices, to spread the load across volunteers over a wider geographical area. Current waiting times could be up to 30-45 minutes. In addition, it was noted that, in Rushmoor, 12-15% of contact was made via face to face meetings.

During a discussion on funding and how the Council could assist CAR moving forward, it was suggested that a multi-year funding agreement would assist with planning for the future and offer a greater level of certainty for the organisation. In addition, stronger partnership working with the Council would add additional value to the relationship beyond monetary contributions.

In relation to volunteers, it was advised that the process to become a volunteer for CAR was not simple. Volunteers needed to undergo an 11 week training programme, which required commitment from the individual and support from trained supervisors. Working with the local higher education establishments to reach potential volunteers at an early stage was suggested, and CAR would welcome any offers to work with the colleges.

In response to a query regarding Pension Credits, it was advised that should the resources and information be available, a targeted approach could be taken to assist those in need, however data sharing protocols made this difficult.

Whilst discussing the recommendation to the Cabinet, the Committee acknowledged the Council's current financial position and the fact that the funding provided was not a statutory requirement of the Council. The Committee also appreciated that if organisations such as CAR and Rushmoor Voluntary Services (RVS) did not exist,

the Council could feel the impacts of additional support to residents from lost services.

The Committee RECOMMENDED that the Cabinet:

- consider a multi-year funding agreement, taking account of inflationary increases, from 2025/26 alongside a clear set of KPIs to measure performance
- review the rental and service charges associated with the places occupied by Citizens Advice Rushmoor in both Aldershot and Farnborough.

The Chairman thanked, Mr Stewart and Mr Levey and Ms Dowell for their presentation.

## 25. **WORK PLAN**

The Committee noted the current Work Plan and the items for the meeting on 30th January, 2025 which included, updates on the Financial Recovery Plan progress and Cultural Compacts. Also, on 8th January a remote meeting would be held to discuss the issues that would be raised in a letter to Hampshire County Council.

The meeting closed at 9.19 pm.

CLLR HALLEH KOOHESTANI (CHAIRMAN)

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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 2024/25)	CURRENT WORK
To monitor the performance and activities of <b>Registered Providers</b> working in the Borough.	Cllrs Gaynor Austin, Halleh Koohestani (Chair), S.J. Masterson, Bill O’Donovan and M.D. Smith.	<p>The Review and Planning meeting for the Registered Providers Group will be rescheduled to accommodate Member availability.</p> <p>At the meeting on 18 December, the Group updated the terms or reference to reflect the new Council priorities. Vivid and Metropolitan Thames Valley will be invited to review meetings between Jan- May 25. Other RPs operating in the borough will have Social Housing Regulator and Housing Ombudsman reports collated and be asked to complete the standard questionnaire used at the review meetings.</p>
To review the <b>Council Tax Support</b> Scheme	Cllrs P.J. Cullum, C.P. Grattan, Lisa Greenway, M.J. Roberts and Stuart Trussler (Vice-Chair)	<p>At its meeting on 16 October, members noted the information presented by officers on the performance of the current CTS scheme as well as the Council Tax and Business Rates collection data.</p> <p>Members asked to be taken through some examples of Exceptional Hardship payments and Discretionary Housing Payments at the next meeting. They also expected to be able to make a recommendation to Cabinet about the scheme for 25/26.</p> <p>On 4 December, following careful analysis of the CTS scheme, by the Group, they proposed that Cabinet should make recommendations to the Council, that the scheme remain unchanged for 25/26.</p>

ISSUE (PURPOSE OF REVIEW)	TASK AND FINISH GROUP (MEMBERSHIP 2024/25)	CURRENT WORK
		A report will be presented to the Cabinet at its meeting on 14 January, setting out the Groups recommendations.
To consider further the economical and environmental impacts of <b>Farnborough Airport</b> on the Borough.	Cllrs Craig Card, A.H. Crawford, P.J. Cullum, Halleh Koohestani (Chair), G.B. Lyon and Bill O'Donovan with Cllr Jules Crossley (Policy, Climate & Sustainability Portfolio Holder) as an invitee as required.	Reached out to officers and will provide an update when available.

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

ISSUE	CURRENT WORK
Arts and Culture	At its November 2024 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.
Asset Management	At its meeting 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 would be maintained on progress during the 2024/25 Municipal Year.
Cabinet Champions	The two Cabinet Champions attended the meeting in March to provide a report on their work and activities during 2023/24. The work of both Champions was noted and the recommended priorities for 2024/25 endorsed.

## OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

WORKFLOW – June 2024- March 2025

DATE	ITEMS
13th June 2024	Registered Providers T&F Annual Report Housing and Homelessness Prevention Strategy
1st August 2024	SERCO
12th September 2024	Financial Matters/CIPFA Report
19th September 2024	Police and Community Safety
24th October 2024	Rushmoor Voluntary Services - Annual SLA Report – Donna Bone
<i>18th November 2024</i>	<i>All Member Seminar to provide an update on Union Yard</i>
<i>20th November 2024</i>	<i>Risk Management Briefing for CGAS Committee (open to all)</i>
28 November 2024	Leader Priorities – GW Risk Register Review – GW/RS
12th December 2024	Citizens' Advice - Annual SLA Report – Calum Stewart
<i>8th January 2025 (Informal meeting)</i>	<i>Online meeting to discuss items to be included in a letter to Hampshire County Council</i>
30th January 2025	Financial Recovery Plan – Review – Invited GW & PV
27th March 2025	Property – Disposals Update & Union Yard – Lettings
Potential Future Items for the Committee in 2024/25	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Highways issues (condition of roads, speeding and road safety issues) – HCC</li> <li>2. Housing and Homelessness Prevention Strategy (Session 2)</li> <li>3. Climate Change Action Plan (inc. water quality) (Currently going to PPAB in November for a refresh) – Spring 2025</li> <li>4. Community and Youth Engagement</li> <li>5. Stagecoach</li> <li>6. Champions Annual Report (x2)</li> </ol>

## OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Progress Meetings 2024/25

**Membership:** Cllr Leola Card, P.J. Cullum, Thomas Day, Halleh Koohestani (Chair), Nadia Martin (Vice Chair), Bill O'Donovan and Stuart Trussler (Vice Chair)

Click [here](#) to view the latest Action Tracker

(Please refresh the page when opening to ensure the latest version is available)

DATE	ITEM	NOTES
02.07.2024	SERCO – scoping of item for 1 August	Annual report will be finalised – a summary of the report will be presented at the meeting Areas of concern include, <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- grass cutting changes and impacts (rewilding)</li> <li>- Waste Management – what are the %'s and how can we improve? Consider national changes due in 2027</li> <li>- Focus on key services provided - how can we improve? / cost / effectiveness / performance against KPI's</li> <li>- Renewal of contract</li> <li>- Benchmarking against other councils</li> </ul>
	Housing and Homelessness Prevention Strategy – request to Cabinet to review the strategy (June 13 meeting)	Important to review the data requested at the meeting prior to making a decision on a review of the strategy by the Cabinet. Data will provide context to those carrying out a review to determine if the strategy is achievable/objectives realistic. Cabinet Member minded to review anyway, is it better to wait until any changes have been made? Could offer engagement services from the Committee as part of the review.

	<p>Police and Community Safety - September 19 meeting</p> <p>Future items for consideration</p>	<p><b>ACTION</b> – follow up on request for data – AT/ZP  <b>ACTION</b> – data request – how long are people in temp accommodation? How do we move people from temp to permanent accommodation?</p> <p>Produce list of asks for the Chief Inspector and Community Safety Team at next PG meeting.</p> <p>A list has been added to the Potential items above.</p>
02.09.2024	<p>Financial Matters / CIPFA Report (12 September)</p> <p>Police and Community Safety (19 September)</p> <p>Work Plan</p>	<p>Simon Allsop of CIPFA will be attending online to talk through the recent CIPFA Report. Request for a clear understanding of the recommendations within the report. Establish what OSC can do to provide effective scrutiny, best practice/key lines of enquiry etc. What lessons have we learnt?  Update on current position of the Council in response to the report.</p> <p>Areas to cover at the meeting included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- General overview of Community Safety</li> <li>- Report back from the Joint Crime and Disorder Overview and Scrutiny Committee</li> <li>- What's gone well</li> <li>- Top 5 thing for GC/DL</li> <li>- CPO teams</li> <li>- Challenges</li> <li>- What can be done better</li> <li>- Cops and Coffee</li> <li>- 101/online SLAs</li> <li>- Boundary areas</li> </ul> <p>Members prioritised the work plan as set out above.</p>

03.10.2024	Financial Matters/CIPFA Report	Made some recommendations that would be included in the report to Cabinet on 15 October. The Financial Recovery Action Plan would be reviewed in the New Year, pencilled in for 30 January, Leader and PV invited.
	Police and Community Safety	<b>ACTION</b> – add request for Gillian Cox to attend the Community Engagement T&F to the Action Tracker
	RVS and CA Annual SLA Reports	Ensure copies of the SLA agreements are shared with Members in advance and ask attendees to provide an executive summary with their reports. Pencilled in for the Dec meeting – TBC.
	24 October Meeting	<b>Risk Register</b> – general feel, how mitigating, how managed. Look at critical ones (red) and any emerging risks. Establish where the “real” risks are... <b>Leaders Priorities</b> – invite the Leader to share his priorities for the future.
	HCC – Engagement Process	Set up a remote meeting with all Members of the Committee to consider items for inclusion in a letter to HCC to start the process of engagement with them. Write to all Members in advance of the meeting to ensure all HCC related issues are captured for consideration in the discussion.
	Stagecoach	<b>ACTION</b> - Share minutes of the last meeting at which Stagecoach were present.
18.11.2024	RVS	Report to Cabinet with recommendations – 26 November <b>ACTION</b> - share report and dairy appointment with the Chair
	Risk Register	Date of training rescheduled to 25 November – <b>ACTION</b> - share slides in advance with Members
	Leader’s Priorities	Suggested to request questions in advance of the meeting for the Leader to prepare responses
	Union Yard	Keep a watching brief on the current situation and consider whether a separate item is required on Union Yard following the briefing.

08.01.2025	<p>Leaders Priorities</p> <p>Risk Register Review</p> <p>Citizens Advice Rushmoor – SLA Report</p> <p>Financial Recovery Plan</p> <p>Cultural Compacts</p> <p>March 2025 meeting</p> <p>Additional Items</p>	<p>Noted</p> <p>Noted</p> <p>Noted that the report with the recommendations would be considered at the meeting on 14 January.</p> <p>Following a discussion on the appropriateness of this item, it was felt important to consider the effectiveness of the Plan and governance arrangements in a public setting.</p> <p>Following consideration of the scope of this item it was felt that it would be best place with PPAB to help develop engagement and participation with the wider community.</p> <p>Requirement for a pre scrutiny item on Union Yard disposals. It was advised that Cabinet had an item scheduled on this matter in February (11<sup>th</sup>) and a meeting may need to be scheduled prior to this to allow the Committee the chance to look at it in advance of that meeting. Consideration would be given to some suitable dates following a conversation with KE/TM.</p> <p>Union Yard Project Review – to be held when the project had been completed Re-organisation/Devolution business case</p>
06.03.2025		