

Public Document Pack



RUSHMOOR BOROUGH COUNCIL

CABINET

*at the Council Offices, Farnborough on
Tuesday, 14th January, 2025 at 7.00 pm*

To:

Cllr Gareth Williams, Leader of the Council and Finance Portfolio Holder
Cllr Sophie Porter, Deputy Leader and Community & Residents Portfolio Holder

Cllr Abe Allen, Enabling Services Portfolio Holder
Cllr Jules Crossley, Policy, Climate & Sustainability Portfolio Holder
Cllr Keith Dibble, Development & Economic Growth Portfolio Holder
Cllr Christine Guinness, Regeneration & Property Portfolio Holder
Cllr Becky Williams, Neighbourhood Services Portfolio Holder

Enquiries regarding this agenda should be referred to Chris Todd, Democratic Support Officer, committeeservices@rushmoor.gov.uk

A G E N D A

1. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST –

Under the Council's Code of Conduct for Councillors, all Members are required to disclose relevant Interests in any matter to be considered at the meeting. Where the matter directly relates to a Member's Disclosable Pecuniary Interests or Other Registrable Interest, that Member must not participate in any discussion or vote on the matter and must not remain in the room unless they have been granted a dispensation (see note below). If the matter directly relates to 'Non-Registrable Interests', the Member's participation in the meeting will depend on the nature of the matter and whether it directly relates or affects their financial interest or well-being or that of a relative, friend or close associate, applying the tests set out in the Code.

NOTE:

On 27th May, 2021, the Council's Corporate Governance, Audit and Standards Committee granted dispensations to Members appointed by the Council to the Board of the Rushmoor Development Partnership and as Directors of Rushmoor Homes Limited.

2. **MINUTES** – (Pages 1 - 8)

To confirm the Minutes of the meeting held on 26th November 2024 (copy attached).

3. **YOUNG PEOPLE PLAN** – (Pages 9 - 30)
(Cllr Sophie Porter, Deputy Leader and Community & Residents Portfolio Holder)

To consider Report No. ACE2501 (copy attached), which sets out a Council led plan to deliver structured support and opportunities for young people in the Borough.

4. **RECOMMENDATIONS FROM OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY - CITIZENS ADVICE RUSHMOOR - SERVICE LEVEL AGREEMENT** – (Pages 31 - 34)
(Cllr Halleh Koohestani, Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee)

To consider Report No. ACE2503 (copy attached), which sets out recommendations from the Council's Overview and Scrutiny Committee in relation to Citizens Advice Rushmoor and its Service Level Agreement with the Council.

5. **COUNCIL TAX SUPPORT SCHEME - RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE COUNCIL TAX SUPPORT GROUP** – (Pages 35 - 76)
(Cllr Halleh Koohestani, Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee)

To consider Report No. FIN2501 (copy attached), which sets out considerations and recommendations in respect of the work undertaken by the Council Tax Support Task and Finish Group to review the Council's Council Tax Support Scheme.

6. **RISK MANAGEMENT POLICY** – (Pages 77 - 102)
(Cllr Jules Crossley, Policy, Climate & Sustainability Portfolio Holder)

To consider Report No. ACE2502 (copy attached), which sets out the revised and updated Risk Management Policy.

7. **BUDGET MANAGEMENT - MONTH 8 REPORT** – (Pages 103 - 110)
(Cllr Gareth Williams, Leader of the Council and Finance Portfolio Holder)

To consider Report No. FIN2421 (copy attached), which sets out the forecasted financial position for 2024/25 as at the end of November 2024.

8. **RENEWAL OF BUILDING CONTROL PARTNERSHIP WITH HART DC** – (Pages 111 - 116)
(Cllr Keith Dibble, Development & Economic Growth Portfolio Holder)

To consider Report No. PG2501 (copy attached), which sets out a proposal to renew the Hart and Rushmoor Building Control Partnership.

9. **MICROSOFT ENTERPRISE LICENSING AGREEMENT** – (Pages 117 - 120)
(Cllr Abe Allen, Enabling Services Portfolio Holder)

To note Report No. IT2501 (copy attached), which sets out an urgent key decision taken by the Corporate Manager – IT Service Delivery relating to a three-year Microsoft Enterprise Licensing Agreement.

10. **EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC** –

To consider resolving:

That, subject to the public interest test, the public be excluded from this meeting during the discussion of the undermentioned item to avoid the disclosure of exempt information within the paragraphs of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act, 1972 indicated against such items:

Item No.	Schedule 12A Para. No.	Category
11	3	Information relating to financial or business affairs

11. **LONG LEASEHOLD EXTENSIONS (EXEMPT ITEM)** – (Pages 121 - 134)
(Cllr Christine Guinness, Regeneration & Property Portfolio Holder)

To consider Exempt Report No. PG2502 (copy attached), which seeks authority to grant long leasehold extensions in respect of the Arrow Industrial Estate, Farnborough.

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CABINET

Meeting held on Tuesday, 26th November, 2024 at the Council Offices, Farnborough at 7.00 pm.

Voting Members

Cllr Gareth Williams, Leader of the Council and Finance Portfolio Holder
Cllr Sophie Porter, Deputy Leader and Community & Residents Portfolio Holder

Cllr Abe Allen, Enabling Services Portfolio Holder
Cllr Jules Crossley, Policy, Climate & Sustainability Portfolio Holder
Cllr Keith Dibble, Development & Economic Growth Portfolio Holder
Cllr Christine Guinness, Regeneration & Property Portfolio Holder
Cllr Becky Williams, Neighbourhood Services Portfolio Holder

The Cabinet considered the following matters at the above-mentioned meeting. All executive decisions of the Cabinet shall become effective, subject to the call-in procedure, from **9th December, 2024**.

35. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST –**

Having regard to the Council's Code of Conduct for Councillors, the following declarations of interest were made:

Item No.	Member	Interest	Reason
44	Cllr Jules Crossley	Personal and non-pecuniary	Trustee of Rushmoor Voluntary Services
44	Cllr Sophie Porter	Personal and non-pecuniary	Council appointed representative on Rushmoor Voluntary Services

36. **MINUTES –**

The Minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet held on 15th October, 2024 were confirmed and signed by the Chairman.

37. **STRATEGIC PRIORITIES –**

(Cllr Gareth Williams, Leader of the Council and Finance Portfolio Holder)

The Cabinet considered Report No. ACE2416, which set out the strategic priorities of the administration that had taken control of the Council in May, 2024.

Members were reminded that the Council's Vision had been approved in July, 2019. Since then, the Borough had faced significant challenges, including the Covid-19 pandemic, the cost-of-living crisis and significant pressures on the Council's budget. The new administration was now in a position to set out its strategic priorities, along with a proposed Council Delivery Plan to cover the following civic year from April,

2025. The Report also set out a programme of work to develop a new Council Vision and Council Plan by December, 2025.

The Cabinet welcomed the opportunity to present its strategic priorities document and considered that this would enable the Council to continue to improve in many areas of service delivery.

The Cabinet RESOLVED that the strategic priorities, as set out in Annex 1 of Report No. ACE2416, and the process for developing a delivery plan for the coming year, alongside a new Council Plan by December, 2025, be approved.

38. **BUDGET MANAGEMENT AND MTFS STRATEGIC REVIEW –**
(Cllr Gareth Williams, Leader of the Council and Finance Portfolio Holder)

The Cabinet considered Report No. FIN2416, which set out an update on the Council's latest budget position and details of a strategic review of the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy.

Members were reminded that the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS), which had been approved on 22nd February, 2024, had presented a cumulative £16.651 million budget deficit over the four years to 2027/28, before mitigation through a savings programme. The budget estimates had included several significant assumptions and risks and a set of savings targets to mitigate the deficit to bring the Council back to financial sustainability by 2027/28. The Cabinet had previously committed to updating the Council on these assumptions and on progress against the savings targets. It was reported that there was now a significant variation in the potential outcomes on the various matters that were set out in the Report. It was explained that this would give rise to the delivery of a detailed MTFS update at the Council meeting in February, 2025. Additionally, in relation to the Water Lane playground project, the Cabinet was being asked to accept a grant of £55,000 from the Prospect Estate Big Local and to authorise the equivalent uplift to the budget for the expenditure on this project, which would be delivered from January, 2025.

The Cabinet was supportive of the suggested approach and expressed gratitude to the finance team for its work in this respect.

The Cabinet RESOLVED that

- (i) the position to date and the Medium Term Financial Strategy assumptions, as set out in Report No. FIN2416, be noted; and
- (ii) the acceptance of the Prospect Estate Big Local contribution of £55,000, to be spent on the Water Lane playground project, along with an equivalent uplift in the expenditure budget, be approved.

39. **FINANCE SERVICE DEVELOPMENT –**
(Cllr Gareth Williams, Leader of the Council and Finance Portfolio Holder)

The Cabinet considered Report No. FIN2415, which set out matters relating to the Council's Finance Team's management structure and the provision of internal audit services.

Members were informed that the 2024/24 budget report had identified a need to rebuild financial capability, capacity and resilience within the Council and specifically within the finance team. The Report set out a series of proposals that would help to focus on improving financial management, governance and decision making. Included in this was a proposal for internal audit services to be provided by the Southern Internal Audit Partnership through a five-year Service Level Agreement. Members were informed that, additionally, changes were proposed to the senior management structure and capacity of the Council's finance team. It was confirmed that the Corporate Governance, Audit and Standards Committee had been consulted on the proposals and had recommended approval.

The Cabinet RESOLVED that

- (i) the repurposing of the internal audit and financial services budgets, in accordance with the Council's Financial Procedure Rules – Part 4, C10 virements: above £50,000 reserved for Cabinet, be approved, to achieve the finance service development plan, as set out in Report No. FIN2415; and
- (ii) the Council entering into an inter authority agreement for the provision of the internal audit service by the Southern Internal Audit Partnership through a five-year Service Level Agreement, including the provision of the Chief Internal Audit function, as set out in the Report and in line with the Scheme of Delegation Part 3, Section 3, paragraph 3.5.26: agreeing agency agreements with other local authorities for the delivery of services, be approved, subject to the agreement of the Corporate Governance, Audit and Standards Committee.

40. **COUNCIL PLAN, PERFORMANCE & RISK REGISTER QUARTERLY UPDATE JULY TO SEPTEMBER 2024/25 –**
(Cllr Jules Crossley, Policy, Climate & Sustainability Portfolio Holder)

The Cabinet received Report No. ACE2412, which set out the performance monitoring information for the Council Plan and key service measures for the second quarter of 2024/25. Members were informed that key projects and activities from the Council Plan and key service indicators and measures used by the Council to monitor how the Council runs were included in the Report. Members were informed that the monitoring document had been updated and refreshed for quarter two, to give a better picture of performance across the Council. The Cabinet heard that the Council's Corporate Risk Register tried to identify factors that could impact on the future delivery of the Council Plan and the Council business performance. It was confirmed that, at the request of the Cabinet, the new performance monitoring information was now laid out under Cabinet portfolios.

In discussing the Report, Members were satisfied that the changes to the document would help Portfolio Holders to better track performance within their areas of responsibility.

The Cabinet NOTED the progress made towards delivering the Council Plan and Council services and the changes highlighted in the Council's Corporate Risk Register, as set out in Report No. ACE2412.

41. **NEW PREVENTION OF SEXUAL HARASSMENT POLICY –**
(Cllr Abe Allen, Enabling Services Portfolio Holder)

The Cabinet considered Report No. PEO2402, which set out a new Prevention of Sexual Harassment Policy.

Members were informed that the new policy reflected a recent legislative change known as the Worker Protection Act that had come into force in October 2024. The new law had introduced enhanced responsibilities for employers to proactively prevent workplace harassment, specifically in relation to sexual harassment and strengthened protections for all employees.

In discussing this, Members expressed their strong support for the introduction of this new policy as a vital step in the improvement of the workplace for all employees.

The Cabinet RESOLVED that the adoption of the Prevention of Sexual Harassment Policy, as set out in Appendix 1 of Report No. PEO2402, be approved.

42. **PROCUREMENT STRATEGY 2025-2028 –**
(Cllr Abe Allen, Enabling Services Portfolio Holder)

The Cabinet considered Report No. ACE2413, which set out an update to the Council's Procurement Strategy.

Members were informed that the current Procurement Strategy covered the period 2020 to 2024 and that the new Strategy would set out the Council's strategic vision and priorities for procurement for the period from 2025 to 2028. It was confirmed that the Strategy would support and promote the use, wherever possible, of local businesses and SMEs and would place more emphasis on wider social value and sustainability. Upon agreement of the new Procurement Strategy, the Council would next develop its revised Contract Standing Orders.

The Cabinet expressed support of the revised Strategy and welcomed the increased emphasis on social value and sustainability.

The Cabinet RESOLVED that the adoption of the Procurement Strategy 2025-2028, as set out in Annex A of Report No. ACE2413, be approved, including the introduction of new performance measures from 1st April, 2025.

43. **REVIEW OF CHARGES FOR PRE-APPLICATION ADVICE –**
(Cllr Keith Dibble, Development & Economic Growth Portfolio Holder)

The Cabinet considered Report No. PG2431, which set out proposed changes to the Council's level of charges for pre-application planning advice.

Members were reminded that the charges were to potential planning applicants and developers for discussion and advice before the submission of planning applications and had been introduced for the first time in February, 2017. Recently, an exercise had been carried out to benchmark the levels of charges levied by neighbouring local authorities. It was confirmed that the proposed level of charges reflected the cost of

staff time involved in giving the advice and that the Council was not permitted to make a profit from this area of work. The Report set out the full results of the benchmarking exercise and the rationale for the proposed changes to the levels of charges.

The Cabinet RESOLVED that

- (i) the continuation of the practice of charging for pre-application planning discussions be approved;
- (ii) the setting of the level of charges as set out in Section 7 of Report No. PG2431, to take effect from 1st December, 2024, be approved; and
- (iii) the continuation of the application of the minimum householder/minor development charge for requests for pre-application advice, irrespective of the proposal type, made by community/charity groups be approved, subject to the organisation meeting the following criteria:
 - a registered charity
 - headquarters in Rushmoor
 - involved in activity which serves the people of Rushmoor
 - not part of a national charity with multiple UK or international offices.

44. **REPORT OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE REGARDING RUSHMOOR VOLUNTARY SERVICES (RVS) SERVICE LEVEL AGREEMENT –**
(Cllr Halleh Koohestani, Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee)

The Cabinet considered Report No. ACE2415, which set out the work carried out by the Council's Overview and Scrutiny Committee in respect of support for Rushmoor Voluntary Services. The Chairman welcomed Cllr Halleh Koohestani, Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, who was attending to report on the Committee's considerations and recommendations.

Members were informed that the Overview and Scrutiny Committee had held a meeting on 24th October, 2024 where Rushmoor Voluntary Services (RVS) had attended and had given a presentation on its performance during quarters one and two of 2024/25 and on the 2023/24 Annual Report, in line with the Service Level Agreement with the Council. The Committee had considered the representations made by RVS in respect of the challenges and risks it faced as an organisation. The following were the recommendations of the Committee to the Cabinet:

- To consider a multi-year settlement agreement from 2025/26
- To consider bridging the gap in funding as a result of any withdrawal of the Hampshire County Council grants to RVS from 2025/26
- To consider waiving the rent of £20,000 due to Rushmoor Borough Council through 100% rent relief

The Cabinet expressed gratitude both to Rushmoor Voluntary Services for the excellent work carried out by them in the local area and to the members of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee for their diligence in producing these

recommendations. It was confirmed that these would be considered fully during the budget setting process in the following months.

The Cabinet RESOLVED to consider the recommendations of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, as set out in Report No. ACE2415, as part of the 2025/26 budget setting process.

45. **EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC –**

RESOLVED: That, taking into account the public interest test, the public be excluded from the meeting during the discussion of the under mentioned item to avoid the disclosure of exempt information within the paragraph of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act, 1972 indicated against the item:

Minute No.	Schedule 12A Para. No.	Category
46	3	Information relating to financial or business affairs

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

46. **LONG LEASEHOLD EXTENSIONS - FARNBOROUGH INDUSTRIAL ESTATE –**
(Cllr Christine Guinness, Regeneration & Property Portfolio Holder)

The Cabinet considered Exempt Report No. PG2432, which sought approval to enter into long leasehold extensions in relation to two premises on the Farnborough Industrial Estate.

Members were informed that the Council's Financial Resilience Plan had identified the need for the Council to realise capital receipts whilst minimising income loss. Long leasehold extensions were a means of achieving a capital receipt without sacrificing income. In the case of each of these two properties, there had been a period of negotiation which had now concluded and the Exempt Report set out the resulting proposed terms of the transactions.

The Cabinet RESOLVED that

- (i) the granting of new 150-year leases in respect of the two properties, on the terms set out within Section 3 of Exempt Report No. PG2432, be approved; and
- (ii) the Executive Head of Property and Growth, in consultation with the Corporate Manager – Legal, be authorised to agree the final terms of the respective leasehold extensions, including modernisation of the leases.

The Meeting closed at 8.16 pm.

CLLR GARETH WILLIAMS, LEADER OF THE COUNCIL AND FINANCE
PORTFOLIO HOLDER

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CABINET

COUNCILLOR SOPHIE PORTER
COMMUNITY & RESIDENTS PORTFOLIO HOLDER14th January 2025

Key Decision No

Report No ACE2501

YOUNG PEOPLES' PLAN**SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS:**

This plan outlines a proposed approach for how the council can help improve opportunities for children and young people in Rushmoor and support them to live happy, healthy and rewarding lives. For the purpose of the plan, a young person is someone aged up to and including 24 years old.

The plan focuses on 4 priorities for 2025/26:

1. Raising young voices.
2. Providing safe spaces and trusted relationships.
3. Raising aspirations and opportunities.
4. Supporting better physical and mental health.

It identifies a range of projects and work, some of which specifically targets disadvantaged young people or those from deprived areas.

The plan has been developed following a PPAB meeting on 23rd July 2024 where Members took part in a workshop to discuss and inform the formulation of a plan. In a follow-up meeting on 24th September 2024 Members requested further work to refine the draft plan and recommended that it proceed for Cabinet approval.

Cabinet is recommended to:

Endorse the plan and associated approach to supporting and engaging all young people, with a concerted effort to reach young people who experience disadvantage.

Endorse the longer-term approach to developing further iterations of the plan (post 2026) which seeks to increase young peoples' role in influencing the work of the council.

Support the exploration of longer-term delivery models, specifically the concept of a hub for young people.

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1. The Young Peoples' Plan outlines a proposed approach for how the council can help improve opportunities for children and young people in Rushmoor and support them to live happy, healthy and rewarding lives. For the purpose of the plan, a young person is someone aged up to and including 24 years old.
- 1.2. The plan recognises the importance of young peoples' voices in shaping the work of the council and valuing their contribution to the community. It is rooted in empowering young people and supporting them to fulfil their potential.
- 1.3. The plan outlines what the council will do to directly support and engage young people. This has been developed with an understanding of key partners experiences and focus, to best identify where the council could and should add value.
- 1.4. The plan has been developed as an iterative plan, with an initial one-year focus for 2025/26, although some work is already underway. This allows the development of key engagement routes and the establishment of a corporate approach to elements of the plan.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1. At the 2021 Census, Rushmoor has a population of 99,800, with 28,513 children and young people aged 0-24 (29% of the local population). 41% live in Aldershot and 59% live in Farnborough.
- 2.2. Cherrywood, Aldershot Park and Wellington are in the top 20% most deprived wards in England. 7% of all children and young people living in Rushmoor live in one of these areas of multiple deprivation.
- 2.3. There are significant levels of deprivation throughout the borough in relation to income, health inequalities and education, all of which add to the challenges young people face, such as:
 - 2.3.1. According to the 2021 Census, 6% of children aged 15 and under are considered disabled under the Equality Act. This data includes young people who have been identified as neurodiverse, although it is widely recognised that the actual number of neurodiverse people is likely be under-reported.
 - 2.3.2. The Department of Health and Social Care's Obesity Profile shows that nearly a quarter of all reception-aged children in Rushmoor are overweight, with nearly 11% classed as obese.
 - 2.3.3. The Census also recorded 131 children in Rushmoor aged 5-15 who are providing unpaid care, 44 of whom provide in excess of 20 hours unpaid care each week.
 - 2.3.4. Rushmoor has low educational attainment levels, with the majority of its state-maintained secondary schools below the Hampshire average.
 - 2.3.5. Whilst the cost of living crisis, fuel poverty and food insecurity have impacted most people in some way, it has disproportionately impacted

families with a low-income. In 2022/23 2,712 children were living in low-income households in Rushmoor (around 12% of all local children), and in the same period Rushmoor was recorded by the End Child Poverty Campaign as having 5,000 children living in poverty.

- 2.4. Whilst the council recognises the challenges that these statistics represent for local young people, the plan seeks to steadfastly recognise and support their potential. It also recognises the universal value of all young people, regardless of their background and/or experience.
- 2.5. The approach to the plan has been informed by the council's new set of priority themes and reflects the drive to put sustainability, diversity and inclusion at the heart of all council activity. These themes are:
 - Skills, economy and business.
 - Homes for all: quality living, affordable housing.
 - Community and wellbeing: active life, healthier and stronger communities.
 - Pride in place: clean, safe and vibrant neighbourhoods.
 - Vision for the future and financial sustainability.The Young Peoples' Plan promotes the importance of young peoples' voices throughout these priorities.
- 2.6. The council is working in partnership to tackle health inequalities and deprivation through several routes, including: The Supporting Communities Strategy; Whole Systems Approach to Tackling Obesity; and Increasing Physical Activity Working Group.
- 2.7. In recognition of the local and national contexts, the plan seeks to balance an increasingly challenging financial backdrop for local authorities with a renewed ambition to make a positive impact on young peoples' lives. This balance necessitates strong partnership work and clearly identified ways for local young people to raise up and engage with the council on the things that matter to them most.

3. DETAILS OF THE PROPOSAL

About the plan

- 3.1. The Young Peoples' Plan sets out how the council will work to **help improve opportunities for children and young people in Rushmoor and support them to live happy, healthy and rewarding lives**
- 3.2. The plan outlines 4 priorities: raising young voices; providing safe spaces and trusted relationships; raising aspirations and opportunities; and supporting better physical and mental health. These priorities have been identified to balance the priorities of the council's new administration, experiences of existing work to date, and feedback from valued partners and Rushmoor Youth Voice.

- 3.3. The plan seeks to benefit a broad range of young people but also highlights opportunities where disadvantaged young people could be prioritised.
- 3.4. The plan and the work within it are intended to reinvigorate the council's relationship with young people, putting in place some initial structures that will allow us to recommence a dialogue about what matters to them locally. It has been developed as an iterative plan with an initial one-year focus to allow these structures to be put in place, with future iterations of the plan being more firmly driven by local young people themselves.
- 3.5. The work contained within the plan will be monitored and measured via service plans and quarterly monitoring. Specific outcomes will be developed with Rushmoor Youth Voice, in consultation with local young people.

Alternative Options

- 3.6. Continue to support children and young people on an ad-hoc basis, without developing a Young Peoples' Plan with them.

Consultation

- 3.7. As agreed at PPAB on 24th September 2024, the council has engaged with a range of partners who have provided valuable feedback and insights from their experiences working with young people. In total, 18 organisations were invited to take part in a survey designed to understand their experience of working with and for young people. 11 responses were received, and 9 organisations requested follow-up meetings for further discussion. These organisations are:
 - Alderwood School
 - Bohunt School
 - Hart & Rushmoor Early Help Hub
 - Headroom Young Peoples Charity
 - Local Childrens Partnership
 - Police Young Peoples Education Partnership Team
 - Step by Step Young Peoples Charity
 - TalkPlus
 - The Source Young Peoples Charity
 - Turnstyle
 - Youth Independent Advisory Group
- 3.8. The council has also delivered a workshop for Rushmoor Youth Voice to invite their views and amendments, which have been incorporated into the plan.

4. IMPLICATIONS

Risks

- 4.1. Both council-run youth clubs, including youth worker salaries, and outreach work are wholly funded by external grants. There is no core funding to continue the delivery of aspects of this work from as early as summer 2025. In addition to this, both areas of work have low staffing resilience which present an ongoing risk.
- 4.2. These represent a reputational risk to the council should it not be able to continue these aspects of service delivery. Regular reporting is key to ensure that outcomes are improving, risks are identified, and remedial action is taken to mitigate those risks.
- 4.3. In addition to the ongoing management of risk we will utilise a vacant youth worker position to recruit an adapted role that will include youth work (in council-run youth clubs), community engagement and outreach.

Legal Implications

- 4.4. The Council is required by section 10 of the Children Act 2004 to co-operate with Hampshire County Council with a view to improving the well-being of children in the Borough. The Young Peoples' Plan will help the Council to continue meeting this obligation.
- 4.5. Many of the projects have limited funding. It is likely that if further funding is required the Council may be required to enter into contractual relationships with organisations which may place further obligations on the Council which may have implications for staffing and resourcing. This will be reviewed on a case by case basis to ensure that the Council can meet any contractual requirements and that procurement law is followed correctly.
- 4.6. The Young Peoples' Plan requires officers to interact directly with children and young people. The Council will ensure that the correct safeguarding provisions are in place to protect children and young people from harm. The Council will ensure that where relevant officers have DBS checks and data protection legislation is complied with.

Financial Implications

- 4.7. Many projects outlined in the plan are already funded via external grants or existing budgets. There is no additional request for funding from the council, other than officer time to support and facilitate the delivery of the plan.
- 4.8. Pending further information about the UKSPF, the council could allocate further funding where needed.

- 4.9. Projects involving children and young people in the borough to improve health, happiness and opportunities may lead to reduced financial requirements from the public sector in the future.
- 4.10. Any further budget requests would be presented through the committee process on a case-by-case basis.

Resource Implications

- 4.5 The success of the plan will require ongoing engagement and work from across the council, notably: Community & Partnerships; Community Safety; Economy & Growth; Democratic Services; and the People Team.
- 4.6 The plan requires a corporate commitment from the council to support the priorities and demonstrate our role as a community leader.

Equalities Impact Implications

- 4.5 The plan will advance the equality of opportunity for children and young people, with a focus upon those who are experiencing, or at increased risk of experiencing vulnerability and/or deprivation.

5 CONCLUSIONS

- 5.1 The Young Peoples' Plan is a council-led plan to deliver structured support and opportunities for young people in Rushmoor.
- 5.2 Cabinet is recommended to endorse the plan and associated projects/work to support all young people, but with a concerted effort to reach young people who experience disadvantage.

LIST OF APPENDICES/ANNEXES:

Young Peoples' Plan

CONTACT DETAILS:

Report Author – Emma Lamb emma.lamb@rushmoor.gov.uk

Head of Service – Rachel Barker rachel.barker@rushmoor.gov.uk

Young Peoples' Plan 2025/6.

Foreword.

I am pleased to introduce the Council's Young Peoples' Plan for 2025/26. This plan captures our ambition for local young people as we know if we get it right for them, we are building a better future for us all.

The Council's priorities place sustainability, diversity and inclusion at their very heart, and the Young Peoples' Plan will establish and develop ways for young people to get involved with and influence the work we do for our community. Their voices, regardless of background or experience, matter.

Our new Council priorities are really reflected in this plan that delivers opportunity and growth for the future generation of Rushmoor. We will develop more opportunities for young people to build their skills and career pathways, helping them become economically active adults in the future. The plan promotes better physical and mental health for young people, focused on rooting them in our communities, which will strengthen communities longer term. We want young people to feel a sense of ownership of where they live, have a safe place to belong and one they can feel proud of. All of these things recognise that investing in young people is an investment for the future, and we have engaged with young people to develop this plan and their longer-term vision of how they would like to see things.

We recognise that improving opportunities for young people takes consistent and sustained effort, and we are immensely grateful for the work of our statutory and non-statutory partners, many of whom engaged so positively with us in shaping this plan. We are grateful also to the many council teams who have worked collectively to develop a plan which focuses on our organisation's role as a community leader. The Young People's Plan reflects Rushmoor Borough Council's commitment to helping young people be the best that they can be.

Councillor Sophie Porter.

Deputy Leader and Community & Residents Portfolio Holder.

Context.

The Young Peoples' Plan is designed to improve opportunities for children and young people in Rushmoor and support them to live happy, healthy and rewarding lives. For the purpose of the plan, a young person is someone aged up to and including 24 years old.

The plan has been developed to outline how the Council will directly support the improvement in opportunities for young people in Rushmoor and actively engage young people who experience disadvantage within this.

It has been developed at the same time as the Council's new set of priority themes and reflects the drive to put sustainability, diversity and inclusion at the heart of all council activity – we recognise that young people have a key role in how we deliver the council's priorities. In addition to this, by developing our connection to them we can engage and develop our future workforce, acknowledging the importance of having local people working within their own communities.

The plan aligns to the Council's Supporting Communities Strategy, which has an overarching priority to support young people, raise aspirations and reduce inequalities. This strategy is due to be refreshed in 2025.

In working with partners, this plan seeks to identify and strengthen where the council can play a role that adds value to the lives of young people. Consideration and development of this has been informed by the work and experiences of a range of partners who have long-standing and respected experience in this field. Their feedback has highlighted a number of key themes:

- Consistent increase in poor mental health for young people, with specific concerns for those not regularly attending school and lack of support for neurodiverse young people.
- Importance of safe/trusted places for young people to grow that aren't linked to school or home.
- Careers work highlighted as a real route to inspire, encourage and support young people to navigate moving from education to work.
- Importance of adults in organisations listening to young people and working with them to develop initiatives.
- Increase in needs/complexity of needs against a backdrop of depleted/at-capacity services. Accessing services and thresh-holds were identified as barriers to getting help. As a result, demand for partner services is increasing, with many being signposted/referred to as alternatives to primary care.

In recognition of the local and national contexts, this plan seeks to balance an increasingly challenging financial backdrop for local authorities with a renewed ambition to make a positive impact on young peoples' lives. This balance necessitates strong partnership work and clearly

identified ways for local young people to raise up and engage with us on the things that matter to them most.

Given this context and intent, this plan has been established as an iterative plan with an initial one-year focus for 2025/2026. This will allow the opportunity to test out the projects within it and, more critically, allow time to develop and embed a variety of ways for young peoples' experiences, views and ambitions to inform how we work as a council, and future iterations of this plan.

Outcomes.

In developing this plan, we recognise the council is part of a wider system that supports local young people. Many organisations have longstanding work and positions within the field and there are a range of long-term measures already in existence within the health, education and employment sectors. Whilst these capture specific outcomes, we want to better understand how young people assess the quality of their own lives. Part of this plan's work will be to support Rushmoor Youth Voice to lead and shape the questions young people want to be asked, which we can use to develop a local set of young peoples' outcomes.

Our priorities.

In identifying the priorities for this plan, we have drawn on a range of sources of information. Recognising the importance of both quantitative and qualitative information, we have striven to ensure the focus of this plan is reflective of the needs of young people as we currently understand them – for 2025/26 our priorities will be:

- 1. Raising young voices.**
- 2. Providing safe spaces and trusted relationships.**
- 3. Raising aspirations and opportunities.**
- 4. Supporting better physical and mental health.**

Each priority overarches a range of work and/or projects which the council is committed to for the forthcoming year – **a summary of these can be found at Appendix 1**. These will be monitored and reported on through the council's usual service planning and quarterly monitoring, as well as via the Supporting Communities Partnership.

Priority 1: Raising young voices.

We believe it is important to raise young voices. A big part of this is about helping young people understand how they can use their voice and have a say in the things that matter to them most or that affect them the most.

Under this priority we want to offer a range of specific opportunities alongside developing a longer-term approach to enabling youth-led work in the borough. This is important because we hear that young peoples' wellbeing can be significantly improved when they feel part of something, whether that be at school, a club, or their wider community.

Council Open Day.

We understand the importance of helping young people learn about democracy and their role within it from a young age. Recognising this, we will commit to holding up to 2 open days per year for junior schools, where pupils can experience the workplace and engage with a diverse group of council officers and politicians.

The day will include participating in fun activities designed to offer them an interactive experience in how to use their voice, while getting an insight into the range of work within the council. Elements of the day might include:

- Scavenger hunt – a fun, active way to learn more about the council's democratic and civic history and role.
- Meet the Mayor – learning about the role of the civic figurehead of the council with chance to ask questions.
- Design a playground – a fun, interactive challenge to design a playground that balances budget and imagination.

This opportunity will be offered to junior schools, with priority given to those located in areas of deprivation. This is important because we know young people who experience disadvantage are often in greater need of opportunities to be inspired when thinking about their futures.

Young Peoples' Debate.

Building on the work to help young people learn about democracy at an annual open day, we also want to provide an annual opportunity for secondary school and college-aged young people to take part in a debate about the issues that matter most to them.

We want this to be designed and led by young people, so we will work with Rushmoor Youth Voice to identify the topics for debate and structure of the event. In time, we see this as one of the routes for young people to influence the council, with the potential for this annual event to be aligned with the priority setting cycle of the council and its Cabinet.

Young Peoples' Survey.

Each year the council surveys residents to help the council understand how people feel about living in the borough, council services or to help shape the council's priorities – each year the focus of the survey will alter slightly. Historically, younger residents, 34 years old and under, are underrepresented in responses, despite promotion on social media channels where the minimum age requirement is 13.

As part of our commitment to increasing engagement with and providing opportunities for young people to share their experiences and views, we want to find ways to make this survey more accessible and/or relevant. For 2025/26 we want to invite Rushmoor Youth Voice to work with us in experimenting with different ways to feed-in younger residents' views to what we already do. This might range from tailoring the survey to a younger audience to running engagement workshops in schools, colleges and youth clubs. We want to be open to young peoples' thoughts on how to do this and will work with Rushmoor Youth Voice to take this forward.

Climate Ambassadors.

Following the declaration of a climate emergency in Rushmoor in 2019, we have been working to make the council carbon neutral and to make Aldershot and Farnborough greener and more sustainable. Through running our Climate Trackers programme for schools and engaging with Rushmoor Youth Voice, we've heard that climate change is an issue that many young people care deeply about.

We want to build on this work and develop a network of Climate Ambassadors through schools and colleges. This recognises the importance of involving young people in how we respond to the challenges and opportunities presented by climate change, and to future-proof our collective response.

Rushmoor Youth Voice.

Rushmoor Youth Voice is an informal, open forum for young people to have their own say on community issues and projects that directly impact them. It aims to empower young people to voice their views, influence the council and act as a catalyst for change.

We recognise the immense strengths and passions many young people have and want to help them raise up issues that are important to them by engaging in the political process that takes place at Full Council. Rushmoor Youth voice could play a pivotal role in this, acting as the connector between local young people, council officers and elected members.

We want to keep supporting them to play a role in connecting local young people to the work that we do so it is important that Rushmoor Youth Voice reflects the diversity we have in our wider young population. In order to support and develop this we will specifically support introductions to the group from partner organisations who, via working on this plan, have identified young people who want to get involved. We will also support the group to establish

its own social media presence, enabling them to raise awareness and promote opportunities for their peers to get involved in community discussions and decision-making processes.

Priority 2: Providing safe spaces and trusted relationships.

We believe in the importance of spaces for young people to connect and grow that are different to home and education environments. We've heard that these alternative spaces are critical as they centre on young peoples' autonomy to attend and engage, whilst being supported safely by trusted adults.

Under this priority we will seek to strengthen local youth clubs, outreach work, and the Legacy Project pilot beyond direct delivery and through developing a more networked approach. This is important because we hear that young people who need support and a place to belong can often fall down the cracks when their relationship with one organisation ends.

Local Youth Clubs.

The council currently operates two youth clubs: the Youth Café in Aldershot funded by a grant from the National Lottery and the Prospect Youth Club in Farnborough funded by a grant from the Police and Crime Commissioner. These provide a space with trusted adults, activities, food and support. Both are located in areas of multiple deprivation and elevated levels of anti-social behaviour.

The Youth Café in Aldershot opened in May 2024 and as a newly established project, youth workers are collaborating with young people to define the club's identity and offer, supporting them to feel a sense of ownership. The Prospect Youth Club has been running for over 15 years and is a well-established resource in the local area, offering young people a safe and supportive environment where they can engage in various activities while receiving support and guidance based on their individual needs. We want to keep running both youth clubs and work with young people who attend to promote them to encourage increased and broader attendance.

We also want to strengthen our partnership working with expert organisations in the borough to deliver tailored support within youth club settings. We know youth clubs often become familiar and safe environments for young people, and this offers the opportunity to explore and support a range of issues. To enable this, we want to pull together youth clubs from across the borough, not just those run by the council, so youth workers can share their experiences, challenges and successes in supporting young people. We hope that by creating a networked approach we can identify ways to collectively support young people, including sourcing external funding to commission expert organisations to run dedicated sessions across all youth club settings, based on young peoples' needs.

Outreach work.

Since October 2023 the council has been delivering targeted outreach work, funded to summer 2026 by Police Crime Commissioner ASB Taskforce and the Safer Streets 5 Home Office Fund.

The focus of this work is to engage young people in public spaces and places across the borough, guided by reports of antisocial behaviour to the council and Police, and forming trusted connections to young people, some of whom might be at-risk, rather than approach them from an enforcement perspective. Outreach workers focus on engaging young people, addressing issues and providing guidance (including targeted signposting via a QR code resource), which also allows the relay of critical information about at-risk young people to other statutory services for safeguarding purposes.

These interactions are often short in timeframe, but repeated over several weeks, allowing the opportunity for outreach workers to build relationships with young people who might not otherwise engage with the council. We want to secure funding to continue this work further into 2025/26 as we believe that these interactions can help young people connect to other sources of support or interest, which safeguards in the longer term.

The Legacy Project.

The Legacy Project launched in September 2024, funded by the Police and Crime Commissioner as a 1-year pilot, run by Hampshire-based organisation Yellow Brick Road Projects. It seeks to provide 13 mentoring sessions to up to 25 young people aged 11-18 at risk of exploitation or exclusion.

Via a nominations process that centers the young person and their needs, applications are considered by a diverse panel drawn from statutory and non-statutory organisations, who work collectively to consider the best route to offer support. Nominations that cannot be taken forward are supported via other routes, whilst those that are accepted are given 13 mentoring sessions to understand and begin to address the challenges they face. Part of this work involves developing a practical action plan together, aimed at fostering longer-term, sustainable change for the young person. At the end of the programme, the young person is supported to access further opportunities tailored to their specific needs – these may include work placements, referrals to services, or participation in youth groups, etc.

We will continue working with Yellow Brick Road to facilitate delivery of the Legacy Project and help connect local organisations into it. As well as measuring the impact of the Legacy Project itself (and any consideration to apply for further funding to extend it), we are committed to learning about the issues that at-risk young people face and how well equipped we are locally to support them with this.

Exploration of a hub model for the future.

In developing this plan we've heard that many young people need a (safe) place to go, and often when they successfully access help or support, it's hard when they need to move

between organisations. We've also heard from partners that demand for their services is growing as pressures on statutory services increase – all of which can make it hard for young people to get the help they need. Demand for community-based support is, in places, growing in a way that necessitates bigger and/or more flexible spaces for partners to work from, and contained within these considerations are potential opportunities for us to collectively think about what we can offer young people in the longer-term.

We recognise increasing openness in partners to work in collaboration, not only with the council, but with each other, based on mutual respect for the range of expertise respective organisations hold. In light of this, and as part of our longer-term work with and for young people, we want to commit to exploring the concept of a young peoples' hub by the end of the year.

Priority 3: Raising aspirations and opportunities.

We recognise the potential in every young person but understand that there are many factors, often outside young peoples' control, that might affect their aspirations and achievements. We also recognise that the council has a unique and significant role in the borough. With our diverse range of services, employees and relationships with other statutory, non-statutory, charity, community and business organisations we are uniquely placed/connected to facilitate and deliver different opportunities for young people.

Under this priority, we want to continue our support to careers work in schools, as well as offering high-quality work experience placements, develop an internship programme and explore what young people want and need from volunteering opportunities. This is important because we hear that young people want adults to see and support their potential, helping to inspire and support them in their chosen career.

Supporting careers work in schools.

Alongside many local businesses and community organisations, we understand the value of supporting schools/colleges and their students with their careers work. We know that young people really welcome the chance to work 121 with an adult at mock interview, and we also want to keep promoting the council as an employer at careers fairs because we believe there is great strength in local people working for their local council.

For 2025/26 we are committed to broadening and embedding our support of these activities more corporately within the council, particularly around supporting local secondary schools with their mock interviews. Guided by an employee volunteering policy that grants every employee 2 volunteering days per annum, we will encourage council officers to use these days to support mock interviews in schools. We think this is important because our collective time and expertise is something we can all contribute freely.

In addition to this broader work, we will pilot a 1-year project for young people who are refugees, asylum seekers, or where English isn't their first language. Funded by the Hampshire Career's Hub and the UKSPF, the Pathways to Success Careers Programme will support up to 20 pupils across 2 secondary schools.

Work experience.

We recognise that work experience is an invaluable opportunity for young people to get out of their comfort zones in a supported environment, helping them to work alongside adults, develop skills and feel (re)inspired about their future career options. We also know that for many young people, work experience can be hard to secure or too daunting to face.

For 2025/26, we are committed to delivering a reshaped in-house work experience programme. In order to best support local schools within Rushmoor we will:

1. Align our programme to local secondary schools' work experience timetables.
2. Offer a dedicated number of placements, per work experience period, per school.
3. Encourage schools to put forward students who might otherwise struggle to get or maintain a work experience placement.
4. Liaise with Step by Step ahead of each cohort to facilitate and provide spaces for young people they work with.

We want students who come on work experience with us to have a positive, supported experience, both with council officers and amongst their peers. To enable this we want to offer flexible placements where students can either request time with a specific team or opt to have a mixed placement covering a range of different services. We'll also offer opportunities for each work experience cohort to come together during their week with us to share experiences and learning, as well as take part in workshops to support development of the softer skills employers have fed back that young people can struggle with.

By trialing a different, more corporate approach to work experience in 2025/26, we want to learn from students and schools experience of this to keep refining our offer, so we make sure it has the biggest impact. We will also look to learn from this to consider developing an internship programme for older young people, which could support those not in education, employment, or training (NEETs).

Exploring volunteering for young people.

Volunteering can have benefits for young peoples' personal development; build self-esteem and confidence and provide a real sense of achievement and personal satisfaction from being a part of something meaningful and helping others.

We will work in partnership with Rushmoor Voluntary Services (RVS) to identify and develop volunteering opportunities for young people that are both accessible and varied and to highlight the benefits of volunteering including improving wellbeing, contributing to the community and supporting pride in place and gaining skills (and often accreditations)

We will work with local schools and colleges to engage young people and promote different volunteering opportunities. We will promote opportunities for Council led projects such as the 'Binfluencers' Litter Collection, promote suitable community activities that support initiatives such as the Duke of Edinburgh scheme, and support Rushmoor Voice to lead and develop a promotional project to secure more young volunteers in Rushmoor.

Youth Markets.

We will explore the concept of developing a youth market. Working with local schools and colleges we will provide young people with the opportunity to set up their own market stalls and sell their own products. This will give young entrepreneurs the platform and opportunity to learn new skills and gain confidence in a supported environment.

Priority 4: Supporting better physical and mental health.

We are committed to helping support active, healthier and stronger communities. We want to help support all young people to be physically active and adopt and maintain behaviours that are good for their health and wellbeing. This is not just about playing sport – although taking part in regular sport confers a range of physical and mental health benefits - it is about being active in the community, volunteering, and connecting to local life. These are all important contributing factors to enabling young people to be healthy and resilient.

Supporting better mental health and wellbeing is a priority across all the activities in this plan, but there are a number of specific activities we will lead on in 2025/26 to directly support better physical and mental health.

Mental health support for youth clubs.

We recognise that young people can feel the pressure of societal expectations - online, school/college, work and peer pressures can all impact their mental health. We've heard that young people need a space that isn't home or school, and we value the different youth clubs we have across the borough, providing space, support and guidance to a diverse group of young people. Working with a local mental health organisation and young people across all youth clubs (council and community-run) we will offer tailored sessions to support positive mental health around mood and anxiety, resilience and healthy relationships.

Healthy schools.

We want to do all we can to encourage young people to look after their physical health. In partnership with Energise Me, we will continue working with schools with the highest levels of obesity rates and develop a targeted programme to increase physical activity offers and reduce sugar intake in school. This work will be supported and monitored through the Healthy

Weights Programme which involves the NHS, Hampshire County Council and Rushmoor Borough Council.

Active Rushmoor.

We understand the importance of active lifestyles for all, and in particular for young people, the lifelong benefits of being active from a young age. In addition to the physical benefits, we know that young peoples' mental health is improved by physical activity and also the social connection that it can bring. We will work with local sports clubs and providers to develop activities at an affordable cost that will get people into clubs and sustain regular activity sessions. We will deliver a summer campaign to encourage partners to host open days and taster sessions and give young people the opportunity to try new sports and activities.

Alongside this, we will continue to enable Balance, Glide and Ride and Bikeability sessions in all primary schools, as well as a targeted after-school family cycle club in Cherrywood, one of the wards with the highest levels of childhood obesity. We will continue to work with the Healthy Weights Programme to develop the Active Schools Project which develops physical activity plans with schools in areas with high childhood obesity, as well as expand a pilot of active school uniforms which enable greater physical activity throughout the school day.

Community Connections.

Through working with Rushmoor Youth Voice, we understand the importance of young people being able to engage in their local community. We want to increase the number of opportunities for young people to do this, and for these opportunities to be appropriate for younger residents. We will promote opportunities and actively engage young people to get involved and influence local decisions, by sharing tailored opportunities to volunteer and join groups such as Rushmoor Climate Community and Rushmoor Youth Voice.

Report authors:
Emma Lamb
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APPENDIX 1 - Young Peoples' Plan 2025/26 at a glance.

Priority 1: Raising young voices	
Council Open Day	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Design, launch and trial up to 2 annual open days per year for local junior schools.
Young Peoples' Debate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Design, launch and trial an annual young peoples' debate for local secondary schools and colleges. • Explore how Rushmoor Youth Voice could use this to contribute to the councils' annual priority setting.
Annual Young Peoples' Survey	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support Rushmoor Youth voice to experiment with developing different and more engaging ways to feed in young peoples' views alongside the annual residents' survey, including the development of youth-led outcomes.
Rushmoor Youth Voice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engage more and more diverse young people in Rushmoor Youth Voice. • Develop Rushmoor Youth Voice as the connector between local young people and the council's political process.
Priority 2: Providing safe spaces and trusted relationships	
Local Youth Clubs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue running council-run youth clubs and work with young people attending to promote and increase attendance. • Recruit a Deputy Youth Worker in Charge. • Develop a network for all local youth clubs.
Outreach work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue outreach work in antisocial behaviour hotspots and use feedback from this work to develop longer-term ways of supporting young people and tailor provision to identified needs • Secure funding to continue this work beyond summer 2025.
The Legacy Project	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to support and promote delivery of this project and facilitate signposting to other services and provision. • Review impact of the pilot and decide whether to secure additional funding to extend the project beyond September 2025.
Hub model	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with relevant partners to explore the longer-term concept and feasibility of a young peoples' hub.
Priority 3: Raising aspirations and opportunities	
Supporting careers work in schools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue supporting careers fairs at local schools and colleges. • Introduce and embed a corporate approach to staff volunteering at secondary school mock interviews. • Support the delivery of the Pathways to Success Careers Programme and seek further funding to extend this if successful.
Work experience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduce and embed a corporate approach to a work experience programme for secondary schools. • Use learning from this to explore the feasibility of an internship programme for older young people.
Volunteering for young people	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with Rushmoor Voluntary Services to develop and promote volunteering opportunities suitable for young people and increase the number of young volunteers in the borough. • Work with schools to engage young people and promote volunteering opportunities for Council initiatives such as the Binfluencers litter collection and other Pride in place related projects.

Youth Markets

- Explore the opportunity to develop a Youth Market to support young enterprise.

Priority 4: Supporting better physical and mental health

Mental health support for youth clubs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with Fortify to deliver tailored sessions in youth settings that support positive mental health around mood and anxiety, resilience, and healthy relationships.
Healthy schools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with schools with the highest levels of obesity rates to develop a targeted programme to increase physical activity offers and reduce sugar intake in school.
Active Rushmoor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with local sports clubs and providers to develop activities at an affordable cost that get people into clubs and sustain regular activity sessions, including a summer campaign to encourage partners to host open days and taster sessions. • Continue to support the delivery of specific cycling programmes within schools and develop the Active Schools Project more broadly.
Community Connections	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase the number of opportunities for young people to engage in volunteering and local community activity.

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Cabinet

**COUNCILLOR HALLEH KOOHESTANI
CHAIRMAN OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY
COMMITTEE**

14th January 2025

Key Decision No

Report No. ACE2503

**REPORT OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE REGARDING
CITIZENS ADVICE RUSHMOOR (CAR) SERVICE LEVEL AGREEMENT**

SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

At the Overview and Scrutiny meeting (OSC) on 12th December 2024, Citizens Advice Rushmoor (CAR) gave a presentation to Members reporting on their performance in line with the Service Level Agreement with the Council.

The Committee recommended that the Cabinet:

- Consider a multi-year funding agreement, taking account of an inflationary increase measure from 2025/26 alongside a clear set of KPI's to measure performance, and
- Review the rental and service charges associated with the places occupied by Citizens Advice Rushmoor in both Aldershot and Farnborough.

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1. At the Overview and Scrutiny meeting (OSC) on 12th December, Citizens Advice Rushmoor (CAR) gave a presentation to Members reporting on their performance, in line with the Service Level Agreement with the Council.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1. The Council has a Service Level Agreement with CAR and provides them with an annual core grant. The existing grant is £189,960
- 2.2. The grant was reduced by 10% in 2021 with a further 5% reduction in 2022. The grant has not accounted for inflationary pressures.

3. DETAILS

- 3.1. The presentation from CAR included the following:
- A summary of the services they provide.
 - Key projects and activities they deliver including advice trends and case studies of individuals who they have helped.
 - Impact of CAR on the local community including number of clients supported and the value of RBC investment.

- Organisational information including clarity on the roles that the RBC grant part funds and the impact on the organisation and its structure following a reduced level of RBC funding in recent years
- The financial challenges to the organisation

Challenges identified by CAR

- 3.2. **Reduced Funding** Due to financial pressures the Council reduced the grant to CA by 10% in 2021 with a further 5% reduction in 2022. This created additional pressure on CAR which led to the need for an organisational restructure. The reduced funding and the increased inflation pressures have been challenging at a time when the demand for services has increased.
- 3.3. **Length of Service Level Agreement:** The Council provides CA with a one-year funding agreement. CAR confirmed that a multi-year funding agreement would help their long-term financial planning and future sustainability.
- 3.4. **Rent Relief:** CAR currently pay £32,652 to lease space at the Council offices, including the reception and £20,250 for the Aldershot premises. The rental cost is placing an increasing pressure on the organisation given the existing financial challenges outlined above.

4. IMPLICATIONS

Legal Implications

- 4.1. In recognition of the Council's financial position and on-going financial challenges the Council's legal advice to date has been to provide a Service Level Agreement for one year only which is reviewed on an annual basis.

Financial Implications

- 4.2. An increase in the core grant or provision of 100% rent relief would have a significant financial impact on the Council.

Equalities Impact Implications

- 4.3 An equalities impact assessment has not yet been undertaken and will follow (if necessary) following consideration of this report.

5. CONCLUSIONS

- 5.1 The Committee recommend that the Cabinet:

- Consider a multi-year funding agreement, taking account of an inflationary increase measure, from 2025/26 alongside a clear set of KPI's to measure performance, and
- Review the rental and service charges associated with the places occupied by Citizens Advice Rushmoor in both Aldershot and Farnborough

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CABINET
14th January 2025

CHAIRMAN, COUNCILLOR CLIVE GRATTAN
COUNCIL TAX SUPPORT TASK AND FINISH GROUP

Key Decision: NO

Report No. FIN2501

COUNCIL TAX SUPPORT SCHEME - 2025/26

SUMMARY:

This report sets out the work undertaken by the Council Tax Support Task and Finish Group, to review the Council's Council Tax Support Scheme (CTSS) and recommend action as follows:

RECOMMENDATIONS:

Cabinet are requested to:

- a) Recommend to Council that the current Council Tax Support Scheme for working age customers continues for 25/26 with the annual uplift to rates within the calculation mirroring that applied to national benefit rates.
- b) The budget for Exceptional Hardship relief be maintained at £12,000.
- c) To make minor changes in accordance with the annual uprating amounts applied by the Department of Work and Pensions

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to present to Cabinet the proposed CTSS for 2025/26, prior to consideration by full Council on 20 February 2025.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 Since 1 April 2013, local authorities have been providing their own CTSS to replace the previous national Council Tax Benefit Regulations, which had supported residents with their Council Tax costs.
- 2.2 Whilst local authorities have the freedom to set their own schemes, based on local circumstances and needs, local authorities are required to provide pensioners with the same level of support received under the previous national Council Tax Benefit arrangements.
- 2.3 Accordingly, most local authorities have devised hybrid schemes, whereby those of pensionable age receive up to 100% of their Council Tax bill in support, whilst the maximum level of support for working age customers can be typically lower and a range of other local adjustments have been made.
- 2.4 In Rushmoor we are in our eleventh year of operating our local scheme, which has been overseen by a cross-party Member Welfare Group, superseded in 2018

by the Council Tax Support Task and Finish Group, convened by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

- 2.5 In previous years Rushmoor's scheme awarded maximum awards of CTS at 92%, 90% and 88% of a person's council tax liability, subject to a means test to determine the amount of CTS they could receive. In all cases a CTS recipient would pay a minimum contribution to their Council Tax.
- 2.6 Evidence showed that people were struggling to pay their minimum contribution of 12% (in the 2023/24 scheme) towards their Council Tax where they are on the lowest incomes and these small balances are disproportionately costly for the Council to collect.
- 2.7 However last year, the Council agreed to amend the Working Age scheme for 24/25 to allow a maximum award of up to 100% of the Council Tax liability for people on the lowest incomes.
- 2.8 Collection rates for recipients of CTS do tend to be lower than those of the overall collection rate. The way these are calculated is slightly different to the main rates as CTS is awarded at the start of the year for up to the full annual charge. Main collection rates are calculated as a % of the Council Tax due in the year to date. The only date we are 100% sure of the actual figures is at 31 March when we have comparable figures.
- 2.9 Council Tax collection rates to date show a 72% collection rate for people in receipt of CTS, which is up on the same date last year of 62%. Previously reported figures for Working Age recipients in November 23 were reported incorrectly at 88%. This was the correct figure for the Pensioner collection rate.
- 2.10 This improvement in the collection rate for CTS working age recipients is mirrored in the main council tax rates which at the end of November 24 were 94.01% against 93.93% in November 23. We expect to see this increase maintained through the remaining months of the year, resulting in an overall increase in council tax in year collection for 24/25.

3 DETAILS OF THE PROPOSAL

General

- 3.1 The Group met on the 16 October 2024, and 4 December 2024 to make their recommendations.
- 3.2 The Group considered all the data regarding the CTSS and the on-going impact of the change to 100% maximum support for those on the lowest income introduced in April 2024.
- 3.3 The Group weighed up several factors and paid specific attention to the following matters during their deliberations:

- Current collection rates for Council Tax payments in Rushmoor and those of CTS recipients, and how they compare to previous years
- Council Tax Support caseload data
- Council Tax Support scheme costs
- Comparable data relating to CTS schemes for other local authorities in Hampshire
- Other general economic indicators
- Claims for exceptional hardship support

TABLE 1: Overall Council Tax Collection Rates

Month and Year	% Collected of in year charge due to date
November 22	94.18%
November 23	93.93%
November 24	94.01%

TABLE 2: Council Tax Support - Caseload Data

Date	Working Age	Pensioner	Total
November 22	2802	1956	4758
November 23	2774	1953	4727
November 24	*2830	1941	4771

**Caseload figures show an increase in CTS claims due to UC taking over from Housing Benefit*

Presently expenditure on the CTS scheme is £6,115,270, the table below shows the comparative position.

TABLE 3: Council Tax Support – Award Data

CTS paid by group	November 22	November 23	November 24
Pensioner	£2,221,024	£2,319,064	£2,417,282
Working age	£2,889,591	£3,028,816	£3,697,988
Total	£5,110,615	£5,347,880	*£6,115,270

**The scheme costs are shared with the major preceptors. RBC share is 11% of the total.*

At the meeting of the Member Working Group in December 2024 the Group were advised that no payments to customers on the grounds of hardship had been made to date during 24/25 and that this was primarily attributable to the scheme enhancements made with effect from 1st April 2024.

Option put forward by the Group

- 3.4 Having considered all the data available and recognising that the scheme change in 24/25 is still settling in, the Group, on balance considered the best option was

one of no immediate change to the scheme but to continuing monitoring performance and keep it under review.

Alternative Options

3.5 No alternative options were considered.

Consultation

3.6 No public consultation was necessary as the CTS Task and Finish Group has recommended the scheme remain unchanged for 25/26.

4 IMPLICATIONS

Risks

4.1 There are not considered to be any risks associated with the implementation of the recommendations of this report.

Legal Implications

4.2 The Local Government Finance Act 2012 provided the introduction of the localisation of CTS by making changes to the Local Government Finance Act 1992. These require that:

“For each financial year, each billing authority must consider whether to revise its scheme or replace it with another scheme.”

Financial Implications

4.3 It is assumed at the time of writing, that there will not be any additional financial support from the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) for 25/26 to fund additional pressures on the CTSS in England.

4.4 The Group considered the data relating to the cost of the scheme to date. The estimated cost of the scheme for 25/26 will be included in the estimate for calculating the total amount of Council Tax income for the year.

Resource Implications

4.4 None. Revenue and Benefits staff will continue to administer the scheme within existing staff and budget resources.

Equalities Impact Implications

4.5 An Equalities Impact Assessment is not needed in this instance. This is because the scheme is unchanged from the previous year where the changes included in the 24/25 scheme, meant no individuals were detrimentally affected.

Other

4.6 None.

5 CONCLUSIONS

5.1 Following careful analysis of the CTSS, by the Council Tax Support Task and Finish Group, they propose that Cabinet should make recommendations to the Council as set out at the head of the report.

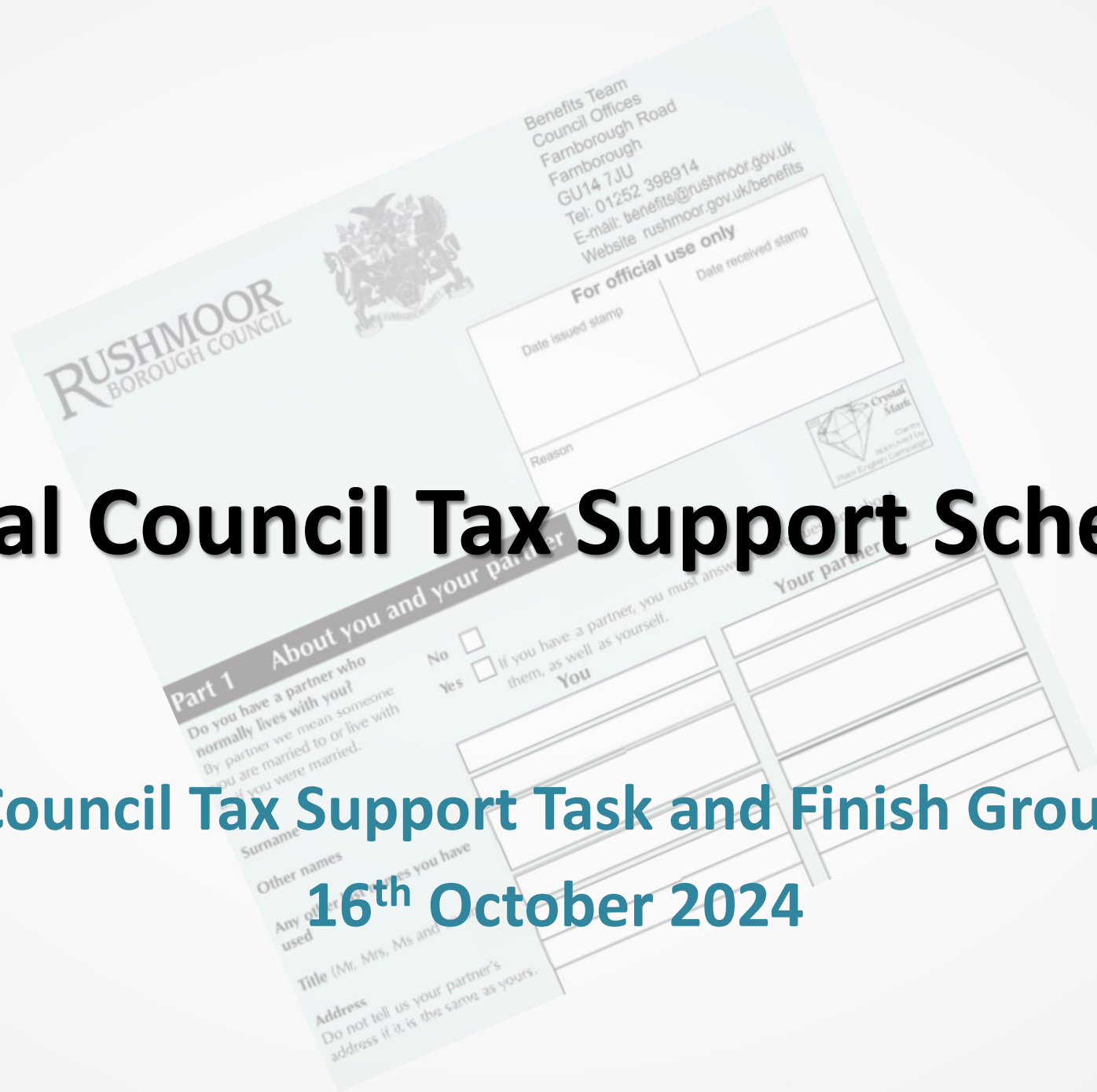
LIST OF APPENDICES/ANNEXES:

- Appendix 1
 - October 24 presentation to Council Tax Support Members Task and Finish Group
- Appendix 2
 - December 24 presentation to Council Tax Support Members Task and Finish Group

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS: None

CONTACT DETAILS:

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Head of Service: Peter Vickers / Section 151 - peter.vickers@rushmoor.gov.uk



Local Council Tax Support Scheme

Council Tax Support Task and Finish Group

16th October 2024



Agenda

1. Role of the Group
2. Background to the Scheme
 - a) What is Council Tax Support (CTS)?
 - b) Drivers for changing the Scheme in 24/25
3. Council Tax Support Scheme(CTSS) 2024/25
 - a) Cabinet Report 6 Feb 24
 - b) 24/25 CTS Scheme
4. Latest Data
5. Sector View
6. Key Measures
7. HCC Consultation
8. Members Priorities
9. In Summary
10. Timeline
11. What next Members?

Role of the Group

Purpose

- To carry out the annual review of the CTSS

Terms of Reference and Responsibilities

- Review the operation of the current CTSS
- Assess the impact and consider changes to the scheme
- Undertake appropriate consultation with recipients and residents
- Make recommendations to the Cabinet for the local scheme

Background to the Scheme



In April 2013, help for low-income households with paying their Council Tax bills moved from a single national scheme (Council Tax Benefit) to a devolved system. Local authorities (LAs) in England now run their own local CTS schemes, paying the costs of, administering and setting the rules for help to local citizens.



Over the past 11 years a wide variety of different local rules have been adopted by councils.



In setting CTS schemes for this year (2024/25), LAs had to balance the competing claims of protecting their own council budget with protecting citizens in financially difficult times.

What is Council Tax Support?

- CTS provides financial assistance to people on low incomes, helping them manage their Council Tax bills.
- Every year, the Council reviews the scheme for working-age applicants in the area to determine if any changes are necessary.
- The current working-age scheme is means tested where entitlement is calculated by comparing the money coming into a household with the amount the Government says the household needs to live on.
- Two schemes are available, one for Working Age residents and another for Pension Age residents. The pensioner scheme is protected by legislation and cannot be changed locally.
- Discount can be up to 100% for people on the lowest incomes in both schemes. *
- The annual cost of the scheme is shared with all preceptors
- Must set our scheme by end of March each year at Full Council
- Cabinet report in February 24 recommended the Council accept the new scheme from April 24

* *RBC calculation is based on a maximum liability for Band D property*

Drivers for Changing the Scheme in 24/25

The members Council Tax Support Task and Finish Group were clear about their priorities for the scheme in 24/25

- Giving more support to the most vulnerable
- Simplifying the Scheme for customers by making it work better with Universal Credit
- Reduce administrative costs and time

24/25 Council Tax Support Scheme

- 6 February 2024 Cabinet report '**Council Tax Support Scheme 24/25**'

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- That Cabinet recommend to Council the following changes to its CTSS for 24/25, to be effective from 1st April 2024:
- To increase the maximum Council Tax liability used to calculate CTS from 88% to 100%
- The budget for Exceptional Hardship Relief be reduced in 24/25 by £20,000 to £12,000
- To make minor changes in accordance with the annual uprating amounts applied by the Department of Work and Pensions

Council Tax Support Scheme (CTSS) 24/25

Working Age Scheme only

- Rushmoor's local CTSS for Working Age claimants can award support of up to 100% of a person's Council Tax liability, but capped at a Band D
- Since 2013 previous Rushmoor schemes have included a minimum contribution from 8.5% to 12% of the eligible Council Tax liability for all working age CTS recipients
- The scheme costs are reflected in the Council Tax base as the scheme is fully funded from Council Tax payments. Rushmoor shares these costs with the other major preceptors.

24/25 so far...impact of the 100% change

April 24 saw 2,835 working age recipients of CTS

Of those, 2,040 (71%) receive 100% CTS and 795 received partial CTS

With less queries because of the change, we have increased capacity to work on the 'won't payers' rather than chasing small debt cases for people who can't pay.

Signs of reductions in administrative costs in terms of multiple bills and staff time

Approach to Collection from April 2024 for CTS Customers

75% of working age caseload are on 100% award

If they have arrears, we will work with them to make payments

We will obtain Liability Orders for the higher balances and would use the Bailiffs where appropriate

Costs are £20 for CTS customers but £75 for others

We suggest Exceptional Hardship payments where we think the customer meets the criteria

Sector View

On balance steady state

For the first year since localisation, offering 100% maximum support is the most common approach – ***Entitled to May 24***

Direction of travel – what do you think of what you have seen/heard?

What information do you need for next time?

Our Task – Key Measures

Is the scheme working for the residents and for the Council?

What is the local/national picture?

How do the finances add up?

Relationship with other preceptors – *main preceptor HCC agreed happy to allow us to determine local priorities for the scheme*

What economic conditions exist now?

Hampshire County Council

Hampshire and Isle of Wight Fire and Rescue Authority

Joint response to Council Tax Support Scheme consultation

Thank you for consulting us about a change to the Council Tax Support Scheme.

The change involves making the scheme more generous, with maximum support for working age recipients increased from 88% to 100%. The consultation states that the cost of the scheme is expected to remain about the same, due to only relatively small amounts of Council Tax being collected from vulnerable people.

We believe that Rushmoor Borough Council, as the authority responsible for running the scheme, will best know the circumstances of existing recipients. This should guide the design of the scheme, so without holding this detailed data we do not wish to comment on exactly where the support threshold should be set. We believe that a good scheme should though follow two general principles. Firstly, support should be prioritised for the most vulnerable. Secondly, the cost of the scheme needs to be carefully managed, as it reduces the amount of Council Tax income received to fund vital services.



What are your priorities Members?



In Summary

National Changes

- Remaining Working Age Housing Benefit caseload being migrated to Universal Credit in 24/25
- LAs still receiving Household Support Funding for food vouchers and Exceptional Housing Crisis payments
- Pensioners on Pension Credit will not lose their Winter Fuel Allowance
- September 24 Government push through LAs to increase Pension Credit take-up
- Plans to merge Housing Benefit and Pension Credit by 2028

Local issues

- The 24/25 current scheme appears effective and delivers against the Council's main objective: giving extra support to those with the lowest incomes.
- Collection rates in 23/24 increased for first time in four years
- Decreased draw on the Exceptional Hardship Fund seems to be due to the increased support now available through the CTS scheme and our approach to supporting people with arrears to engage with us and make affordable repayment plans

Timeline

Future Meeting

Continue to monitor payments and impact

Report to Cabinet to reflect the groups recommendation on the scheme for 25/26



What can we do for you before next meeting?

Local Council Tax Support Scheme

Council Tax Support Task and Finish Group
4th December 2024

RUSHMOOR BOROUGH COUNCIL

Benefits Team
Council Offices
Farnborough Road
Farnborough
GU14 7JU
Tel: 01252 398914
E-mail: benefits@rushmoor.gov.uk
Website: rushmoor.gov.uk/benefits

For official use only

Date issued stamp	Date received stamp
Reason	

Part 1 About you and your partner

Do you have a partner who normally lives with you?
By partner we mean someone you are married to or live with if you were married.

No
Yes If you have a partner, you must answer this question as well as yourself.


You	Your partner

Surname

Other names
Any other names you have used

Title (Mr, Mrs, Ms and so on)

Address
Do not tell us your partner's address if it is the same as yours.





Agenda

1. Latest collection rate data
2. Exceptional Hardship Fund and Discretionary Housing Payments:
 - a) Backgrounds
 - b) RBC Policy
 - c) Case examples
3. In summary
4. Date of Next Meeting

Collection Rates

	Council Tax Collection Rates	Council Tax Support Collection Rates
23/24 (@ 30/11/23)	94.38%	62.5%
24/25 (@ 30/11/24)	94.58%	72.5%
		No further data but will update at end of the year

Exceptional Hardship Fund - Background

- Local authorities are required to have a hardship policy as part of the council's Council Tax Support (CTS) scheme.
- The operation of the policy is totally at the discretion of the council
- The scheme allows for people who may need additional support beyond CTS and who are facing 'exceptional hardship' to get an additional reduction in their Council Tax liability
- Support is considered under Section 13(A) of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 - where an applicant is in receipt of CTS. This is called 'exceptional hardship'



Exceptional Hardship Fund - Policy

- The policy was written in 2013 and has been reviewed as the Scheme has changed
- Purpose remains that it provides guidance for making decisions on Exceptional Hardship applications with some key objectives:
 - A payment for a short period to help someone to manage their finances and pay their Council Tax
 - To help those who are struggling but trying to help themselves financially
 - Help those people who are financially vulnerable
 - Assisting customers where they or their family members are sick or disabled
 - Other reasons or circumstances where they are exceptional or severe

Exceptional Hardship Fund - Exceptions

An EHF cannot be awarded for the following circumstances:

- For any other reason than to reduce Council Tax Liability
- Where the council considers that there are unnecessary expenses/debts etc. and that the customer has not taken reasonable steps to reduce these
- To cover previous years council tax arrears where there wasn't an entitlement to CTS
- A shortfall caused by a Department of Work and Pensions sanction or suspension that has been applied because a customer has turned down work/interview/training opportunities

Awarding an Exceptional Hardship Payment

Some of the things factors we consider when we decide on an award. This list isn't exhaustive.

- Changing payment methods, re-profiling Council Tax Instalments or setting alternative payment arrangements to make them affordable
- The personal and financial circumstances of the customer and others in the home.
- The difficulties being experienced by the customer, which is stopping them from being able to meet their Council Tax liability, and the likely length of time this difficulty will exist
- Shortfalls due to non-dependant deductions
- Other debts outstanding for the customer and partner
- Whether the customer has already accessed or is engaging with third parties for assistance with budgeting and financial/debt advice.
- The exceptional nature of the customers and/or their family's circumstances that impact their finances

EHF examples



Customer LK

Application Details

- 49-year-old - single, living in Band B property alone
- Only income was Universal Credit with Housing Allowance element
- Outstanding Council Tax liability of £2876.32 between 2019 and 2024 liability years.
- Applied for EHF stating that could not afford to pay what was owed and was now subject to Social Sector Size Criteria (SSSC) Deduction from her Housing Allowance element as son had moved out.

Outcome

- Council Tax Support start date was reviewed and an additional amount of £189.28 was awarded.
- EHF was refused as customer was now receiving 100% Council Tax Support and the outstanding liability was predominantly due to not paying the outstanding liability over the previous six years for a non-dependant deduction for her son that had now moved out.
- Customer was advised what further information to provide for a DHP to be considered to help with the SSSC deduction.
- Customer has made payments since of £650.

Customer TU

Application Details

- Family of four - Father (43), Mother (43), daughter (17) and son (3) in a three bed, Band E property.
- Income of Universal Credit with the Standard, Child and Housing Allowance elements, Child Benefit and self-employed earnings.
- Outstanding Council Tax liability of £2840.59 across 2023 and 2024 liability years.
- Applied for EHF stating that could not afford to pay their liability as there were difficulties with their work.

Outcome

- EHF was refused as customer had just applied for and received Council Tax Support based on their current circumstances.
- Outstanding liability was predominantly due to them not having made a payment for six months despite income being too high for Council Tax Support.
- Customer was advised what further information to provide for a DHP to be considered to help with any shortfall in rent.
- Customer's Universal Credit changed one month after EHF application and no longer qualified for Council Tax Support due to increase in income.
- Customer only made a payment of £200 following this, despite returning to work and Council Tax Support ending.
- Was summonsed to court on 26 September 2024, has made further payments totalling £300 since and offered to pay £250 per month following the 14-day letter, which has been accepted for a special arrangement.

Customer BG

Application Details

- Single parent (43) with one non-dependant (18), who recently changed from a dependant when they left full-time education in summer 2024.
- Band C, two-bedroom property.
- Current income of Universal Credit Standard and Housing Allowance elements.
- Applied for EHF stating that they were “behind on rent, gas and electric” and that due to the reduction of UC due to dependant becoming a non-dependant and not working, they can no longer afford the instalments.

Outcome

- Council Tax Support was assessed, and account was updated reducing outstanding liability.
- EHF was refused as the bill had been reduced significantly meaning instalments had reduced from £117 to £69.86.
- Customer had highlighted that they were struggling to bridge the gap due to dependant becoming a non-dependant so was awarded a DHP of £525.39 to cover the shortfall in UC for one month.

Customer AC

Application Details

- Single parent (33) with dependant (9) in two-bedroom, Band C property.
- Current income of Universal Credit Standard Allowance, Housing Allowance and Child Allowance elements and Earnings.
- Outstanding Council Tax liability of £1396.86 in current year.
- Applied for EHF stating had high debts and sickness meant less wages.

Outcome

- Council Tax Support was assessed but customer did not qualify. EHF was refused as no entitlement to CTS.
- Customer was given a food voucher and given payments to make moving forward which appeared affordable based on the income and expenditure provided.
- Customer had a total income of over £2500 per month living in a Band C, Housing Association property to pay an instalment of £167 per month.
- Customer has paid £396.86 over the three months since it was refused.

Customer CH

Application Details

- Single parent (32) with dependants (10 and 3) in a Band C.
- Current income totalled £3678.47 of Universal Credit Standard Allowance, Housing Allowance, Child Allowance, Childcare Allowance and Carers Element, Disability Living Allowance and Self-employed earnings.
- Outstanding Council Tax liability of £2139.81.
- Applied for EHF stating the payments had spiralled and explaining the disabilities of the three residents.

Outcome

- Council Tax Support was reviewed from earliest possible date and £646.78 was awarded.
- Customer's instalment date was amended to ensure payments were being made and therefore could not "spiral".
- Customer was awarded DHP totalling £299.76.
- Customer has paid £357.46 on this account since EHF was refused.

Customer CS

Application Details

- Single parent (32) with dependants (11 and 10) in a Band C.
- Current income Universal Credit Standard Allowance, Housing Allowance, Child Allowance, and Carers Element, Carers Allowance, Disability Living Allowance and earnings.
- Outstanding Council Tax liability of £1675.39 for current year.
- Applied for EHF stating had been paying bill and did not understand why owed money.

Outcome

- Customer did not understand how the bill was produced so this was explained and the instalments sorted out so that she could pay moving forward.
- Customer was awarded an immediate DHP of £375.82 for the latest Universal Credit award period, with the promise of further payments for the next four monthly UC award periods.
- Customer was given a £50 food voucher.
- Customer has paid £750 since EHF was refused.

Exceptional Hardship Payments 24/25 so far

CTS group members agreed to make some funds available to provide additional support to people receiving Council Tax support who were still suffering financial hardship.

This fund has decreased by £20k to £12k as it was expected that demand would decrease due to the change to 100% support.

- Budget is £12k
- We haven't spent any of the money as of 30th November 24. All 5 applications refused either because they haven't produced any evidence of their financial situation, or we consider they have sufficient income to be able to pay something towards their arrears.
- Main reasons for granting an award would be:
 - Health issues
 - Financial hardship
 - Serious debt issues
 - Cost of Living impact

Discretionary Housing Payment - Background

- Since April 2013, the government has provided annual funding to ease the impact of the Welfare Reform changes like the household benefit cap, the size criteria in the social rented sector or 'bedroom tax' and the Local Housing Allowance
- Where people are struggling to pay their rent because of these changes or where there are other difficulties someone can make a claim to the Council for a Discretionary payment.
- Rushmoor uses the DWP guidance to assist with making decisions
- To get a discretionary payment towards a person's rent they must either:
 - be entitled to some Housing Benefit from the Council; or
 - be getting Universal Credit that includes something towards the housing costs.



Discretionary Housing Payments – Who Might Claim

Many people on benefits have difficulty paying their rent. Among these are:

- Those whose benefit is restricted because their rent is considered too high and/or the property is considered too large
- Those whose benefit is reduced by deductions for non-dependants who may not contribute adequately to cover those deductions
- Those who don't get maximum benefit
- Those who for all sorts of reasons have other calls on their income (additional expenses or outstanding debts) which they prioritise ahead of rent
- Those who have general difficulty managing the income they have, including those who are subject to the household benefit cap
- Those who are returning to work after a long period of unemployment who have difficulty in managing finances during the transition from benefit to a stable in-work income

Discretionary Housing Payments - Guidance

Factors to consider when deciding to make an award. This list is not exhaustive:

- The claimants personal and financial circumstances and those of the people living in the home
- Are there any special circumstances such as fleeing domestic violence; children with disabilities and additional home care needs; parents with access to children through custody arrangements; extra bedroom needs for caring reasons
- Is there a likelihood of imminent eviction and will the DHP prevent homelessness
- Is it realistic to ask the customer to move
- Awards are normally expected to last for a fixed period of between four weeks and up to 52 weeks depending on the individual circumstances.
- Awards to residents with high rents will usually be below the maximum possible so that the resident makes some contribution to the shortfall
- Discretionary funding does not cover the cost of deposits and advance rent. The funding is limited and there is a risk of landlords asking for the payment, where they can waive them or ask for a deposit bond.
- As Universal Credit replaces Housing Benefit the Council will continue to have powers to make Discretionary Housing Payments to help with housing costs and receives government funding for this. Payments can only be made towards eligible housing costs.
- The discretionary nature of the Discretionary Housing Payments scheme means that there is no right of appeal to an Appeal Tribunal but there is an internal review process.

Discretionary Housing Payments 24/25 so far

- These payments are made from a cash limited fund provided by the government to support people who need additional help with housing costs not covered by Housing Benefit or Universal Credit
- We have awarded £51,703 to 137 recipients from the allocated funds of £160,572. We usually spend more in the second half of the year
- We have also spent £42k to date from an Exceptional Housing Payment fund allocated by HCC

Reasons for request	Number	£
HB - Financial Hardship and Debt issues	10	7,105
Universal Credit DHP award	127	44,597
Refusals	61	

In Summary Members



The scheme is performing well. The collection rate is robust and up monthly on last year's position.



Our sense is that you want to keep an eye on the scheme but no radical change for 25/26



To continue with the Exceptional Hardship Fund amount of £12k in 25/26 with a review of the amount remaining after 6 months



Prepare report for Cabinet on 14th January 25 and Full Council on 20th February 25



Meeting of the group in March 25 to review latest scheme data

CABINET

**COUNCILLOR JULES CROSSLEY
POLICY, CLIMATE AND SUSTAINABILITY
PORTFOLIO HOLDER)**

14 January 2024**Key Decision? No****Report No. ACE2502****RISK MANAGEMENT POLICY AND PROCEDURES****SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS:**

The Council's risk management policy and procedures set out the Council's approach to the assessment and management of corporate risk.

The current risk management policy and procedures were agreed in 2021 and have been used since this date and have been subject to minor updates. They have now received a more significant refresh in order to take account of internal audit recommendations and actions identified within the CIPFA report (CEX2406).

Cabinet is asked to approve the revised risk management policy as set out in Annex 1 of this report.

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1. The Council's risk management policy and procedures were agreed in 2021 and since this date the Council's risk register has been published on a quarterly basis alongside performance management information. During this time the policy and procedures have been reviewed and changes to processes and approaches have been made to incorporate five out of six recommendations from an internal audit conducted in 2022. This report seeks Cabinet approval for a revised risk management policy and procedures which incorporates the final of these recommendations which is for the Council to develop an overall strategic risk appetite.

2. DETAILS OF THE PROPOSAL**General**

- 2.1. The updated risk management policy and procedures document at Annex 1 of this report includes a number of changes from the existing policy. The most notable of these is the process for developing a strategic level risk appetite policy (appendix 3 of the risk management policy and procedures).

2.2. A number of other changes are proposed and these include:

- Further development of the processes used to identify opportunities as well as threats when identifying risks (section 6.1 of the revised risk management policy and procedures)
- Amendments to give further clarity on what must be discussed, agreed and recorded when the risk register is reviewed (throughout the revised risk management policy and procedures)
- Alignment with the Council's agreed priorities (Appendix 2 of the revised risk management policy and procedures)
- Give further clarity on the arrangements for reporting when risks become issues (section 6.2 of the revised risk management policy and procedures)

Alternative Options

2.3. The alternative option would be to continue to operate with the existing risk management policy and procedures but this would not offer the opportunity to introduce process improvements and to address Member feedback received as part of the consultation and the recommendations made by internal audit, CIPFA and the Corporate Peer Challenge.

Consultation

2.4. The revised Risk Management Policy and Procedures has been subject to consultation with Members during November and December 2024. This has included an all Member training session on risk management procedures and a briefing on the proposed changes to the policy. The Council's Overview and Scrutiny Committee examined the Council's current risk management arrangements at their meeting in November 2024 and also received and update on the proposed changes.

2.5. Given that the Corporate Governance, Audit and Standards Committee (CGAS) hold the responsibility to monitor the effective development and operation of risk management in the Council, a draft of the revised policy and procedures was shared with them in December 2024 for comment. The comments received have been incorporated into the revised draft.

3. IMPLICATIONS (of proposed course of action)

Risks

3.1. There are no significant risks associated with the revised Risk Management Policy and Procedures. Greater risk implications would exist should the Council not have in place an updated risk management approach which reflects the recommendations from internal audit and the CIPFA report.

Legal Implications

- 3.2. The Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 (as amended), provide at regulation 3 that a local authority must ensure that it has a sound system on internal control which includes effective arrangements for the management of risk. Regulation 4 provides that a local authority's financial control systems must include measures to ensure that risk is appropriately managed.
- 3.3. The updated Corporate Risk Management Policy will allow risk to be managed and mitigated consistently across the Council which contributes to the Council's legal obligations on risk management.

Financial Implications

- 3.4. Having a robust risk management strategy that the organisation operates by is an important measure of financial assurance and resilience. A strong risk management strategy and process gives assurance to the Council, the general public and auditors that the Council is managed appropriately.
- 3.5. Strong risk management enables good decision making and therefore value for money for council tax payers.

Resource Implications

- 3.6. The changes to the risk management policy and procedures will require training for risk owners and managers which will take place in 2025 and be delivered by the Corporate Risk Manager. The changes to the policy will also require staff and Member input into the development of the strategic risk appetite in early 2025. It is expected that this will all be delivered within existing Council resources.

Equalities Impact Implications

- 3.7. The equality impact assessment screening tool guidance indicates no negative impact on the community.

4. CONCLUSIONS

- 4.1 The Council is required to have effective arrangements for the management of risk. The revised and updated Risk Management Policy and Procedures are regularly reviewed and updated and the document at Annex 1 incorporates the final recommendation from the internal audit conducted in 2022 and addresses the action set out in the CIPFA Review (CEX2406) and Corporate Peer Challenge (CEX2405) to review risk management processes.
- 4.2 The revisions and amendments also incorporate feedback following Member engagement in November and December 2024. Cabinet is asked to approve the Risk Management Policy and Procedures attached to this report as Annex 1.

LIST OF APPENDICES/ANNEXES:

Risk Management Policy and Procedures V2.10

CONTACT DETAILS:

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Rushmoor Borough Council
Corporate Risk Management Policy and Procedures
v2.10 10/12/24

1. Introduction and Overview

This document describes the Council's policy and procedures for the assessment and management of corporate risk.

What is Risk?

Risk management in this context considers the effect of uncertainty on the delivery of the Council's objectives. Risk can be further defined as the combination of the probability of an adverse event occurring and its potential consequences. In this context it is used to define a matter/incident/issue that may prevent the Council from meeting its core objectives or that may result in the critical failure of all or part of the Council or its functions.

There is however the potential for risk to present the opportunity for benefit as well as threats to success. Therefore, the goal will not always be to eliminate risk, as the Council may seek out risk in order to receive benefit e.g. investment in the development of a digital application in order to seek service efficiency.

Why does the Council need to manage risk?

The Council's employees manage risk every day without describing it as 'risk management'. Employees consider what might go wrong and take steps to reduce the likelihood or impact if it does. However, the Council cannot rely entirely on informal processes. As a public body, the Council must provide assurance to the elected members and the public they serve that it is recognising and managing risk effectively.

Responsibilities for managing risk within the Council

Everyone at the Council is responsible to some degree in the management of risk in their day-to-day activities, from front line staff to Service Managers, Heads of Service (HoS), Directors and the Chief Executive.

Significant risks must however be formally identified, assessed and appropriately managed in order to mitigate their likelihood and/or their adverse impacts, such as on the continued operation of the Council, compliance with legal obligations or achieving strategic objectives.

Ultimately the responsibility to ensure that the Council's risk management process is effective lies with the Executive Leadership Team (ELT), the Chief Executive and elected members. The overall responsibility to manage this process is delegated to the Assistant Chief Executive (ACE) as the Senior Risk Officer, with day-to-day management provided by the Service Manager for Risk, Performance and Procurement (referred to as the risk manager in this document – RM).

2. Scope & Purpose

Senior employees with overall managerial responsibility for the majority of risks, predominately HoS, are referred to in this process as 'risk owners'. They act a single point of contact responsible for taking the lead in ensuring that the risk(s) and any mitigations are managed appropriately, including compliance with this policy.

The Council oversees the management of risk through the work of its Corporate Management Team (CMT). All significant risks will be periodically reviewed by CMT. The determination as to whether a risk is deemed 'significant' is set out in section six and

assisted through the use of a common risk management procedure, to ensure consistency in approach.

The Council will record and assess its work to manage risk through the use of risk registers. These will be split into individual Service Risk Registers (SRR) and a single central Corporate Risk Register (CRR). Corporate risks will also be further categorised as 'standing corporate', 'escalated service' or 'strategic' risks. All of these processes and terms are described in full later in this document.

These risk registers are not intended to be used as a means of managing **all** risk to the Council, or the management of its day-to-day business activities, but to summarise significant corporate risks to ensure that they are being effectively managed.

Given its nature, the risk management process will provide a regular periodic snapshot of the current level of risk to the Council in each case and any additional mitigation planned for those risks.

The Council will ensure that its arrangements follow the general principles of good practice as laid out by industry guidance, such as the Orange Book published by the UK Government.

3. Leadership and Management

The risk management process is overseen by the Assistant Chief Executive (ACE). The day-to-day management and maintenance of the risk management system is the responsibility of the RM. To ensure that the RM role itself does not become a single point of failure, the ACE and the RM will ensure that the process can be temporarily administered by other Officers in the RM's absence, with an appropriate level of training and understanding to deliver this function.

Risk owners, predominately HoS, will be ultimately responsible for the management of risks and the maintenance of associated processes such as Service Risk Registers. Service Managers may however be delegated the role of 'risk manager', with the responsibility of managing risks and updating registers.

Risk will be on the CMT (or ELT) agenda at least every 3 months to ensure that regular routine collective oversight is given to risk at a senior level. This will also assist in the consistency of approach and determining the Council's tolerance for risk, including the natural determination of what the Council's management team consider to be a 'significant' risk. The way in which the risk management process is highlighted to elected members is detailed later in this policy.

4. Training

The RM and any staff providing assistance will be provided appropriate information, instruction and training to ensure that they are able to effectively fulfil this role.

The RM will provide appropriate training, guidance and advice to all staff that routinely carry out risk management activities in line with this policy, such as HoS and Service Managers. All staff requiring training must be identified by HoS.

Training will take place at least every two years, upon significant change to the policy or risk register template(s)/methodology, or upon the identification of any significant concerns in competence.

An overview of risk management is provided to all new starters to the Council during their induction by the RM, as arranged by the People Team.

In addition, the RM will provide advice, support and guidance on the Council's risk management process to all levels upon request.

5. Meetings and Minutes

HoS will be responsible for ensuring that their Service Risk Register is updated at least monthly, and that risk is a standing agenda item on their service meetings.

The ACE, with the assistance of the RM, will ensure risk is on the CMT (or ELT) agenda at least every 3 months.

The RM will ensure that the Corporate Risk Register is updated prior to this meeting and that a copy is provided to the ACE for presentation at CMT (or ELT).

Minutes from this CMT (or ELT) meeting will be circulated and stored for future reference.

6. Methodology

6.1. Risk Identification

Risks will be identified by a number of methods, for example (but not limited to):

Business Planning Assessments – Corporate Level

Strategic analysis tools can be used to identify and analyse the current status and position of an organisation and the environment in which it operates. Tools such as this are used to provide a context for the organisation's role in relation to the external environment and the impact of external issues.

As the Corporate Risk Register and Service Risk registers are updated quarterly and identify the most important risks to the Council they will be used strategically in the overall corporate planning process for the Council. To facilitate this the Council's Performance Management and Policy teams will have full access to all Service Risk Registers and the Corporate Risk Register.

Business Planning – Service Level

Heads of Service will identify any significant risks to their service during the business planning process, including ongoing matters and new and emerging threats foreseen for the year ahead.

Audit

Risk identification and analysis work takes place routinely within the Councils' Internal Audit team. Any new/emerging or increased risks will be brought to the attention of the appropriate risk owner and the ACE/RM. Where appropriate, these risks/updates must be included in the Service risk register by the risk owner.

Audit will routinely share reports that highlight or assess the management of risk in the Organisation in order that any gaps or inaccuracies are identified and resolved – in conjunction with the risk owner.

The Council's Audit team will have full access to all Service risk registers and the Corporate risk register.

Horizon Scanning

Service Mangers, HoS and ELT should routinely be horizon scanning to identify future risks.

In addition, the RM will ensure that industry publications and other sources of best practice guidance are periodically reviewed, to identify any new and emerging risks that may affect the Council.

Such publications/sources of information will include:

- Allianz Risk Barometer: Top Business Risks (annual)
- Hampshire County Council: Community Risk Register
- Cabinet Office: National Risk Register of Civil Emergencies
- World Economic Forum: The Global Risks Report (annual)
- Government and public body publications
- Third party journals and publications
- ALARM risk association membership – conferences and publications.

The ACE team will also routinely monitor Government publications and other sources of information in order to identify new and emerging risks as early as possible.

New and Emerging Risks

It is clear that new/emerging risks will be identified via a number of routes. It is important to recognise that they may be identified during the day-to-day operation of Services, where new (and sometimes unexpected) risks can arise/become apparent during the course of their work. Once identified, these risks must be appropriately incorporated into the Council's risk management processes.

Capturing & Tracking Risks/Opportunities Identified

During the process of risk identification and horizon scanning, opportunities may also be identified, such as those to apply for funding or grants. Opportunities and threats can also arise when there are local/national policy changes and associated consultations. These are also tracked by the wider ACE team.

In general terms, opportunities will be recorded and tracked on the Council's Policy & Funding tracker, administered by the ACE team. Threats will predominately be recorded through the risk register process described in this policy. It is recognised that there may be some crossover in this process, where for instance there are risks to the Council associated with pursuing an opportunity. Any duplication will be minimised by the ACE team to ensure end users are clear as to what is required of them and that they are not unnecessarily burdened.

Once an opportunity has been identified by the ACE team and added to the tracker, the appropriate Service(s) will be notified. The decision then as to whether to take any action lies with the Service(s), including keeping the tracker up to date.

6.2. Risk Assessment Method

Each risk managed by this process will be assessed and given a risk category based upon the probability of the risk arising and the impact on the Council if it does arise. The same method of rating/scoring will be used throughout.

If a risk (a potential future adverse event) becomes an issue (where the adverse event occurs despite the mitigation put in place), the risk management process will continue to be used to manage that 'risk'. It will however be recorded as such by the risk owner within the

register, with the date that it became an issue being recorded. It will also be appropriately highlighted within the corporate risk register and accompanying reports when processed by the RM for reporting.

A traffic light indicator / RAG rating is used to show the risk category. A Corporate risk matrix, maintained and updated by the RM, is provided to assess the probability and impact of risks. This is provided later within this document.

The assessment of the risk for each register entry will take place three times, as follows:

Inherent Risk

This assessment takes place at the very beginning of the process, it does not take into account any mitigation currently in place or planned in the future. The purpose is to initially assess the significance of the risk to the Council. This risk score is not expected to routinely change unless the risk itself fundamentally changes.

If at this stage risks are assessed as being low and therefore not of significance from a Corporate perspective, Services may still wish to record and monitor them within their Service registers, but it is very unlikely to be appropriate for inclusion in the Corporate Risk Register.

Residual Risk

This assessment takes place once the current mitigation(s) have been identified and recorded. It is an assessment of the current risk to the Council when taking into account any action already taken. It does not take into account the expected effect of any future mitigations planned.

This risk score is likely to change regularly as future mitigation(s) are completed/established and the effects can be assessed.

Target Risk / Risk Appetite

This assessment of risk is based upon the position that the Council aspires to achieve against each risk. It effectively determines the goal that the Council has for the risk – and so also determines whether the mitigations in place and planned are adequate.

The application of a target risk score is one method by which the Council assesses its risk appetite for each specific risk entry, whereby a decision must be taken as to whether the current level of risk is acceptable.

The 'risk gap' between the residual and the target risk are a clear measure of the Council's success or otherwise in the management of its risks to an acceptable level.

Given the breadth of duties and roles that the Council holds, it is foreseeable that some target risks will be higher than others – and that in some cases the target risk will not and will never be low. Although Council's have historically been seen as being predominantly risk averse given their responsibility for the appropriate spending of public funds, some risks may be accepted with appropriate controls in place. Strategic risk appetite is further discussed in the next section of this policy.

6.3. Strategic Risk Appetite & Corporate Objectives

Strategic Risk Appetite

It is important to ensure that the strategic appetite for risk is considered and agreed by Cabinet and CMT, and that it is consistently applied by all risk owners/managers.

The formal definition of a Corporate risk appetite at a strategic level, whilst ensuring it remains applicable to all activities of the Council, can be complex. Whilst some Services are actively engaging in higher risk activities for reward or the delivery of innovation, others are protecting services that are not open to risk. For that reason, strategic appetite is considered at a high level against each of the Council’s priority areas/Corporate Objectives.

The strategic risk appetite policy will be recorded as appendix 3 in this policy. It will be reviewed at least every two years, or whenever the strategic priorities of the Council are updated.

The strategic risk appetite policy will deliver two things (see Appendix 2):

- A general policy statement on risk (where broader attitude towards risk can be described)
- A statement/position on the openness to risk mapped against each strategic priority area of the Council.

Every risk within the Corporate Risk Register will be required to indicate whether the strategic risk appetite policy (parts 1 and 2) has been reviewed against it, and to include narrative that summarises what impact is foreseen and what considerations have been made as a result.

By considering risk appetite both strategically (section 6.3) and line by line (section 6.2), it can be effectively managed and controlled by CMT and elected members.

This will be demonstrated and recorded where appropriate by:

- Services discussing the effect of the strategic risk appetite and line by line target risk with their Portfolio holders for every corporate risk register entry, when first added and when there is a significant change in risk score.
- Discussing the risk appetite (risk gap) for each new risk added to the CRR, at CMT/ELT during each risk cycle, to reach a consensus amongst Officers in order to make a recommendation to Cabinet and for these decisions to be recorded in the minutes.
- For existing risks, using any significant increase in the risk gap (the gap between residual and target risk scores) as an indicator of a significant change – discussing and reviewing the position on the risk appetite for that risk at CMT/ELT – and again to reach a consensus amongst Officers in order to make a recommendation to Cabinet.
- To recommend to Cabinet during each risk cycle, via the Cabinet report – that they discuss the risk appetite for those risks highlighted above and reach a consensus on the risk appetite for each line item.

6.4. Matrix & RAG (Red./Amber/Green) Risk Rating

The risk matrix to be used for the assessment of all risks is as follows:

Severity of Outcome (S)	4					High Risk		Strongly consider further mitigation, tolerating risk is unlikely to be acceptable	
	3						Med. Risk		Tolerable if risk/exposure is acceptable at senior level
	2						Low Risk		Additional action may not be necessary to manage risk
	1								

		1	2	3	4	
	Likelihood of Occurrence (L)					

Rating Consistency Guidance

	Likelihood of Occurrence (L)	Severity of Outcome (S)
1	Very unlikely Very unlikely to occur, (no history or near misses etc). Less than 5% probability.	Minor Risk to specific role. Legal action unlikely. No significant illness or injury. Negative customer complaint. Financial impact negligible.
2	Unlikely Unlikely but may occur (may have happened, but not within past 5 years). Is not expected to happen in next 5 years, less than 25% probability	Moderate Risk to normal continuation of service. Legal action possible but defensible. Short term absence/minor injury. Negative customer complaints widespread. Financial impact manageable within existing Service budget.
3	Likely Likely to occur (or already happened in the past 2 to 5 years). Is expected to happen in the next 2 to 5 years, 25 - 50% probability	Significant Partial loss of service. Legal action likely. Extensive injuries or sickness. Negative local publicity. Significant fine. Financial impact manageable within existing Corporate budget - but not Service.
4	Very likely Very likely to occur (or has already happened in the past year), may occur frequently. Is expected to happen in the next year, more than 50% probability	Major Total loss of service. Legal action likely & difficult to defend. Death or life threatening. Negative National publicity. Imprisonment. Financial impact not manageable within existing funds.

6.5. Risk Control / Mitigation Methods

There are various options for controlling risk, often referred to as the four Ts:

- **Tolerate (retain/accept the risk)** – if the Council cannot reduce a risk (or if doing so is out of proportion to the risk) it can tolerate the risk, i.e. do nothing further to reduce the risk. This option must be taken by informed decision only. It is clear that this option will be more likely in the event of taking risk in order to seek benefit/opportunity.
- **Treat (mitigate the risk)** – if the Council can reduce the risk by identifying mitigating actions and implementing them, it should do so. For many of the risks on the corporate risk register this is the action the Council is most likely to take.
- **Transfer (share the risk)** – risks can be transferred to or shared with other organisations, in whole or in part, for example by use of insurance, shared services with other Authorities or by contracting out an area of work. There will almost always be limitations in this method, it is unlikely to be 100% effective. It is also likely that some risk will be retained, for example to reputation.

- **Terminate (eliminate the risk – stop the work/activity)** – this applies to risks the Council cannot mitigate other than by not doing work in that specific area. For example, if a particular project is very high risk and these risks cannot be mitigated to an acceptable level, particularly with regard to the Corporate risk appetite, the Council may decide to terminate it entirely.

6.6. Risk Types & Records

Service Risks

In order to ensure that key risks are identified, assessed, managed appropriately and recorded consistently a risk register will be updated and maintained by every service. These are known as Service Risk Registers (SRR) and will record all significant Service risks.

All SRRs must be reviewed and updated at least monthly by the risk owner or their delegated Service Managers/Risk Managers.

The RM will provide each Service with an appropriate template for carrying out and recording their risk assessments. This will include an appropriate method of version control and the ability to archive risks that are no longer current.

Service Risk Registers (SRR)

These will contain all significant risks to a service that are key to the organisation in terms of the potential severity of the outcome. It is not the intention to use the SRRs as a means of managing day-to-day work of a service.

It is the responsibility of each HoS to maintain its own SRR and review/update it whenever there is a significant change in circumstances, or at least monthly in their Service meetings.

The SRRs will include a method by which HoS can identify risks to be included in the Corporate Risk Register (CRR) as Strategic, Standing Corporate or Escalated Service risks. These will be identified by virtue of the potential risks to the Council as a whole, or their Council-wide crosscutting nature. They are further described below.

HoS will be expected to have regular update meetings with their respective Portfolio holders, using their risk registers to keep the Portfolio holder aware of the current status of the risks within their service. This update must take place at least quarterly.

Those risks identified as being officially sensitive in nature will be marked to ensure that they can be easily redacted/removed from any publicly available copy of the register.

Services must use the risk register format/template provided by the RM.

Capital Project Risks & Other Significant Interests

Capital projects, such as large-scale regeneration projects, will be treated in a similar manner to Services. Each Project team will hold and maintain a project risk register and manage the day-to-day risks within their teams. The Project Sponsor will be responsible for ensuring that risk register is reviewed on a regular basis.

The ACE and/or members of ELT will sit on the Property, Major Works and Regeneration Programme Board to ensure that any significant risks that should be highlighted in the CRR for wider circulation are identified. The ACE will ensure that the most appropriate risk owner is identified and that the risk is included in the CRR.

In addition, where the Council is a significant stakeholder in other organisations or projects, such as Rushmoor Housing Limited, the Senior Officer of the Council involved in those

arrangements will ensure that the risk management processes in place align with this policy, protect the interests of the Council, and that significant risks are appropriately escalated to the CRR.

Corporate Risks

These are risks that have greater significance for the Council as a whole.

These can be further split down as being 'Escalated Service risks', 'Standing Corporate risks' or 'Strategic Risks'.

Escalated Service (ES) risks are likely to be those that by virtue of the severity of the potential outcome and/or inadequate controls may be considered a single point of failure for the Council, rather than a threat to a single Service alone. It could also include those risks that are newly identified and have little or no mitigation or controls in place, that require wider consideration and support.

These risks will tend to be operational in nature and arise, be resolved/adequately mitigated and then removed from the CRR.

There are a number of tests that can be applied in order to determine whether a Service risk should be escalated but given their nature and to ensure consistency of approach, it may be appropriate to discuss these risks with the RM before escalating them. The application of a high-risk rating is not a reason in its own right to escalate a risk. It would also be inappropriate to escalate a risk in order to simply raise awareness with other Services. Other methods of reporting/communication should be considered if this is the main aim of the risk owner.

The Service should consider whether oversight/discussion is required at CMT or if the risk can be wholly managed within the Service itself. If no Corporate oversight/intervention, etc., is required, it is not expected that they will be escalated.

Standing Corporate (SC) risks may also be considered a single point of failure for the Council, and in most cases, although the Corporate response may be managed by a single Service, they will be cross cutting and longer term in nature. SC risks will tend to remain on the CRR for longer periods of time, if not indefinitely. Examples of these may be the Council's financial position or compliance with data-protection legislation, both of which have a wide impact and involvement from across the Council but are generally overseen or managed by one service.

SC risks, impacting more than one Service, will normally be managed by a single Service with the expertise required, but, if not, they will be assigned to one single risk owner as the lead. This is for practical purposes to avoid duplication and ensure that they are managed overall by a single Officer. Although the day-to-day management of the risk itself may not fall entirely upon that risk owner, they will be responsible for collating and updating CMT and the risk register entry on behalf of the Council.

Strategic (ST) Risks

Strategic risks will be recorded and maintained by the ACE or RM in consultation with the most relevant member(s) of CMT/ELT. These risks will tend to be long term in nature and are more likely to be outside the direct control of the Council, for example the local economy, employment or obesity levels.

As they are longer term in nature, the ST risks will be updated at least every 3 months in order that they can be presented to CMT.

Corporate Risk Register (CRR)

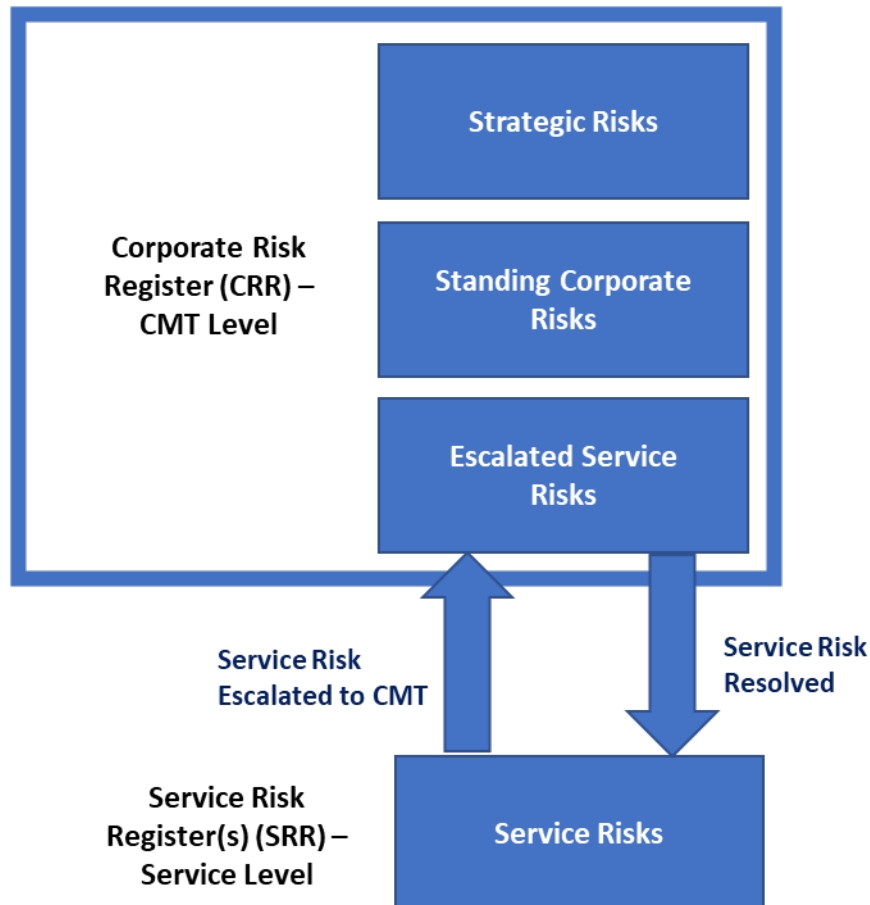
This register contains the key risks to the Council that are considered to be current issues of corporate significance. This will be made up of all of the Council's ST, ES and SC risks identified.

With the assistance of HoS, the CRR will be updated by the RM every 3 months in order that it can be presented to CMT by the ACE for review and discussion.

Those risks identified as being officially sensitive/not suitable for the public register will be marked to ensure that they can be easily redacted or removed from any publicly available copy of the register. This will be the responsibility of the risk owner during the assessment process.

An appropriate method of version control will be kept by the RM to ensure that the most up to date register is in use but that older versions of the register remain accessible.

Diagram: Rushmoor Borough Council Risk Management Process



7. Governance and Targets

CMT/ELT

The ACE will report risk to CMT/ELT at least every 3 months using the CRR to ensure HoS, Directors and the Chief Executive remain aware of the key risks to the Council and the measures being put in place. The risk owners may be required to present their risk entries to CMT/ELT for wider discussion.

CGAS & Cabinet

It is the responsibility of Elected members to maintain oversight on the management processes in place at the Council and to ensure that the risk treatment plan for each risk in the CRR is effective.

The ACE will report risk to elected members via two routes; to CGAS on a twice annual basis, where the role of the Committee is to provide independent assurance of the adequacy of the risk management framework, arrangements and the associated control environment, and to Cabinet via the Quarterly Performance Report, where the CRR and the status of all the risks contained within it will be reviewed. CGAS will also be provided a copy of the published risk register at least quarterly to allow them to have an oversight of the risk management environment and receive an independent assurance opinion on the risk management environment from Internal Audit as part of the audit opinion.

The risk management process is cyclical, running on an annual cycle to complement the existing processes in place, particular those that also identify risk and effect resources – e.g. the business planning process. It is key that these processes work together to produce the greatest benefit for the Council.

Reporting of the CRR may be required more regularly on some occasions, see the table in Appendix 1 at the end of this policy for the full schedule, illustrating the approximate annual cycle of work and the key times for each part of the risk management process. Meeting dates may vary dependent upon other factors, such as elections etc.

Appendix 1: Approximate Risk Management Cycle (subject to meeting date changes)

	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar
Business Planning	New Business Plans and budgets in place for financial year.					Business Planning process for following year begins.			Key risks identified in Corporate Business Planning process provided to HoS.		Budget approval provided for following year Business Plans.	
Internal Audit		Audit Opinion presented to CMT + CGAS. Risks to the organisation considered.	Audit work for the next quarter set. New and emerging risks considered.			Audit work for the next quarter set. New and emerging risks considered.			Audit work for the next quarter set. New and emerging risks considered.		Annual audit plan set.	Audit work for the next quarter set. New and emerging risks considered.
CMT	CRR presented to CMT by ACE			CRR presented to CMT by ACE			CRR presented to CMT by ACE			CRR presented to CMT by ACE		
Cabinet		CRR reported via Quarterly Performance Report			CRR reported via Quarterly Performance Report			CRR reported via Quarterly Performance Report				CRR reported via Quarterly Performance Report
CGAS			CRR Cabinet report provided			CRR Cabinet report provided			CRR Cabinet report provided	Annual Framework Report to CGAS		CRR Cabinet report provided

Appendix 2: Corporate Objectives

The Council's Delivery Plan Priorities for 2024/25 are:

- Skills, Economy and Business
- Homes for All: Quality Living, Affordable Housing
- Community and Wellbeing: Active Lives, Healthier and Stronger Communities
- Pride in Place: Clean Safe and Vibrant Neighbourhoods
- Vision for the future and financial sustainability

Appendix 3: Strategic Risk Appetite

The Council's Strategic Risk Appetite (v1.0 12/11/24)

The purpose of creating a corporate risk appetite at a strategic level is to ensure that the priorities of the Council and its appetite towards risk taking is agreed at a Senior level and appropriately considered throughout the risk management process. Those responsible for strategic direction/policy setting at The Council will be responsible for deciding the risk appetite, including ELT, Cabinet and CGAS.

There will be some common themes in the Council's acceptance of risk. These will vary over time, but it is implicit in the role of CMT and risk owners to recognise and apply them. An example is the Council's financial position. If the Council is in a position where savings must be made – the appetite for any risk where there will be significant costs outside of agreed budgets may be very low. It is expected that this form of cross-cutting broader attitude towards risk will be captured within a single statement, part 1 of the appetite policy.

The council's risk appetite should be considered in conjunction with the risk section of all committee reports when decisions are made.

The Council will also need to take fair, measured and targeted levels of risk to achieve the priority objectives included in its Council Plan. There will likely be opportunities for the Council to be innovative or work differently and any identified risks will need to be considered against the anticipated cost and efficiency benefits. To set the appetite towards risk a statement against each priority will be recorded, this will form part 2 of the appetite policy.

When developing the risk appetite statements in both parts, the Council will consider the parameters around thirteen key areas of risk as per the Orange Book guidance, illustrated in the following table.

Risk appetite level & definition					
	Averse	Minimal	Cautious	Open	Eager
Strategy	Guiding principles or rules in place that limit risk in organisational actions and the pursuit of priorities. Organisational strategy is refreshed at 5+ year intervals	Guiding principles or rules in place that minimise risk in organisational actions and the pursuit of priorities. Organisational strategy is refreshed at 4-5 year intervals	Guiding principles or rules in place that allow considered risk taking in organisational actions and the pursuit of priorities. Organisational strategy is refreshed at 3-4 year intervals	Guiding principles or rules in place that are receptive to considered risk taking in organisational actions and the pursuit of priorities. Organisational strategy is refreshed at 2-3 year intervals	Guiding principles or rules in place that welcome considered risk taking in organisational actions and the pursuit of priorities. Organisational strategy is refreshed at 1-2 year intervals
Governance	Avoid actions with associated risk. No decisions are taken outside of processes and oversight / monitoring arrangements. Organisational controls minimise risk of fraud, with significant levels of resource focused on detection and prevention.	Willing to consider low risk actions which support delivery of priorities and objectives. Processes, and oversight / monitoring arrangements enable limited risk taking. Organisational controls maximise fraud prevention, detection and deterrence through robust controls and sanctions.	Willing to consider actions where benefits outweigh risks. Processes, and oversight / monitoring arrangements enable cautious risk taking. Controls enable fraud prevention, detection and deterrence by maintaining appropriate controls and sanctions.	Receptive to taking difficult decisions when benefits outweigh risks. Processes, and oversight / monitoring arrangements enable considered risk taking. Levels of fraud controls are varied to reflect scale of risks with costs.	Ready to take difficult decisions when benefits outweigh risks. Processes, and oversight / monitoring arrangements support informed risk taking. Levels of fraud controls are varied to reflect scale of risk with costs.

Operations Back Page 96	Defensive approach to operational delivery - aim to maintain/protect, rather than create or innovate. Priority for close management controls and oversight with limited devolved authority.	Innovations largely avoided unless essential. Decision making authority held by senior management.	Tendency to stick to the status quo, innovations generally avoided unless necessary. Decision making authority generally held by senior management. Management through leading indicators.	Innovation supported, with clear demonstration of benefit / improvement in management control. Responsibility for non-critical decisions may be devolved.	Innovation pursued – desire to ‘break the mould’ and challenge current working practices. High levels of devolved authority – management by trust / lagging indicators rather than close control.
Legal	Play safe and avoid anything which could be challenged, even unsuccessfully.	Want to be very sure we would win any challenge.	Want to be reasonably sure we would win any challenge.	Challenge will be problematic; we are likely to win, and the gain will outweigh the adverse impact.	Chances of losing are high but exceptional benefits could be realised.
Property	Obligation to comply with strict policies for purchase, rental, disposal, construction, and refurbishment that ensures producing good value for money.	Recommendation to follow strict policies for purchase, rental, disposal, construction, and refurbishment that ensures producing good value for money.	Requirement to adopt arrange of agreed solutions for purchase, rental, disposal, construction, and refurbishment that ensures producing good value for money.	Consider benefits of agreed solutions for purchase, rental, disposal, construction, and refurbishment that meeting organisational requirements.	Application of dynamic solutions for purchase, rental, disposal, construction, and refurbishment that ensures meeting organisational requirements.
Financial	Avoidance of any financial impact or loss, is a key objective.	Only prepared to accept the possibility of very limited financial impact if essential to delivery.	Seek safe delivery options with little residual financial loss only if it could yield upside opportunities.	Prepared to invest for benefit and to minimise the possibility of financial loss by managing the risks to tolerable levels.	Prepared to invest for best possible benefit and accept possibility of financial loss (controls must be in place).
Commercial	Zero appetite for untested commercial agreements. Priority for close management controls and oversight	Appetite for risk taking limited to low scale procurement activity. Decision making	Tendency to stick to the status quo, innovations generally avoided unless necessary. Decision making authority	Innovation supported, with demonstration of benefit / improvement in service delivery. Responsibility for non-	Innovation pursued – desire to ‘break the mould’ and challenge current working practices. High levels of

	with limited devolved authority.	authority held by senior management.	generally held by senior management. Management through leading indicators.	critical decisions may be devolved.	devolved authority – management by trust / lagging indicators rather than close control.
People	Priority to maintain close management control & oversight. Limited devolved authority. Limited flexibility in relation to working practices. Development investment in standard practices only	Decision making authority held by senior management. Development investment generally in standard practices.	Seek safe and standard people policy. Decision making authority generally held by senior management.	Prepared to invest in our people to create innovative mix of skills environment. Responsibility for noncritical decisions may be devolved.	Innovation pursued – desire to ‘break the mould’ and challenge current working practices. High levels of devolved authority – management by trust rather than close control.
Technology	General avoidance of systems / technology developments.	Only essential systems / technology developments to protect current operations.	Consideration given to adoption of established / mature systems and technology improvements. Agile principles are considered.	Systems / technology developments considered to enable improved delivery. Agile principles may be followed.	New technologies viewed as a key enabler of operational delivery. Agile principles are embraced.
Data & Info Management	Lock down data & information. Access tightly controlled, high levels of monitoring.	Minimise level of risk due to potential damage from disclosure.	Accept need for operational effectiveness with risk mitigated through careful management limiting distribution.	Accept need for operational effectiveness in distribution and information sharing.	Level of controls minimised with data and information openly shared.
Security	No tolerance for security risks causing loss or damage to HMG property, assets, information or people. Stringent measures in place, including:	Risk of loss or damage to HMG property, assets, information or people minimised through stringent security measures, including:	Limited security risks accepted to support business need, with appropriate checks and balances in place: • Adherence to FCDO travel restrictions	Considered security risk accepted to support business need, with appropriate checks and balances in place: • New starters may commence employment	Organisational willing to accept security risk to support business need, with appropriate checks and balances in place: • New starters may commence employment

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adherence to FCDO travel restrictions • Staff vetting maintained at highest appropriate level. • Controls limiting staff and visitor access to information, assets and estate. • Access to staff personal devices restricted in official sites 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adherence to FCDO travel restrictions • All staff vetted levels defined by role requirements. • Controls limiting staff and visitor access to information, assets and estate. • Staff personal devices permitted but may not be used for official tasks. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vetting levels may flex within teams, as required • Controls managing staff and limiting visitor access to information, assets and estate. • Staff personal devices may be used for limited official tasks with appropriate permissions. 	<p>at risk, following partial completion of vetting processes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Permission may be sought for travel within FCDO restricted areas. • Controls limiting visitor access to information, assets and estate. • Staff personal devices may be used for official tasks with appropriate permissions. 	<p>at risk, following partial completion of vetting processes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Travel permitted within FCDO restricted areas. • Controls limiting visitor access to information, assets and estate. • Staff personal devices permitted for official tasks
Project/Programme	<p>Defensive approach to transformational activity - aim to maintain/protect, rather than create or innovate. Priority for close management controls and oversight with limited devolved authority. Benefits led plans fully aligned with strategic priorities, functional standards.</p>	<p>Innovations avoided unless essential. Decision making authority held by senior management. Benefits led plans aligned with strategic priorities, functional standards.</p>	<p>Tendency to stick to the status quo, innovations generally avoided unless necessary. Decision making authority generally held by senior management. Plans aligned with strategic priorities, functional standards.</p>	<p>Innovation supported, with demonstration of commensurate improvements in management control. Responsibility for noncritical decisions may be devolved. Plans aligned with functional standards and organisational governance.</p>	<p>Innovation pursued – desire to ‘break the mould’ and challenge current working practices. High levels of devolved authority – management by trust rather than close control. Plans aligned with organisational governance.</p>
Reputational	<p>Zero appetite for any decisions with high chance of repercussion for organisations’ reputation.</p>	<p>Appetite for risk taking limited to those events where there is no chance of any significant repercussion for the organisation.</p>	<p>Appetite for risk taking limited to those events where there is little chance of any significant repercussion for the organisation.</p>	<p>Appetite to take decisions with potential to expose organisation to additional scrutiny, but only where appropriate steps are taken to minimise exposure.</p>	<p>Appetite to take decisions which are likely to bring additional Governmental / organisational scrutiny only where potential benefits outweigh risks.</p>

Part 1 – Risk Appetite Policy Statement

This statement supports members and officers in decision making by setting out where Cabinet is comfortable accepting different levels of risk, and which levels of risk are unacceptable.

The council's current overall risk appetite is defined below as **TBC** (see table below for definitions and statement).

Risk Appetite	Definitions and Summary Statement (TBC, EXAMPLE ONLY)
Averse	Prepared to accept only the very lowest levels of risk, with the preference being for ultra-safe delivery options, while recognising that these will have little or no potential for reward/return.
Minimal	Willing to accept some low risks, while maintaining an overall preference for safe delivery options despite the probability of these having mostly restricted potential for reward/return.
Cautious	<p>Tending always towards exposure to only modest levels of risk in order to achieve acceptable outcomes.</p> <div data-bbox="534 965 1422 1189" style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px;"> <p>Statement e.g. This means the council remains open to innovative ways of working and to pursue options that offer potentially substantial rewards, despite also having greater level of risks. However, the council's preference is for safe delivery options which have a lower degree of risk, especially for those services required by statute.</p> </div>
Open	Prepared to consider all delivery options and select those with the highest probability of productive outcomes, even when there are elevated levels of associated risk.
Eager	Eager to seek original/creative/pioneering delivery options and to accept the associated substantial risk levels in order to secure successful outcomes and meaningful reward/return.

Part 2 – Risk Appetite by Priority Area

Risk appetite is not a single, fixed concept and there will be a range of appetites for different risks which may vary over time. The council's risk appetite by corporate priority, as a set of guiding principles, are set out below:

Council Plan Priority	Risk Appetite & Summary Statement	
Skills, Economy, and Business	Cautious	e.g. We invest when there is a good likelihood of return and opportunities to grow, choosing innovative options in order to deliver a significant contribution.
Homes for All: Quality Living, Affordable Housing	Cautious	TBC
Community and Wellbeing: Active Lives, Healthier and Stronger Communities	Cautious	TBC
Pride in Place: Clean Safe and Vibrant Neighbourhoods	Cautious	TBC
Vision for the future and financial sustainability	Cautious	TBC

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CABINET

COUNCILLOR GARETH WILLIAMS
FINANCE PORTFOLIO HOLDER
REPORT NO. FIN2421

14 JANUARY 2025

KEY DECISION? NO

BUDGET MANAGEMENT – MONTH 8**SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS:**

This report sets out the forecasted financial position for 2024/25 as at the end of November 2024.

CABINET is recommended to:

- i. Note the Revenue budget forecast as set out in Section 3.1 of the report
- ii. Approve the virements listed in Section 3.12

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1. The Budget is a major decision for the Council and setting and maintaining a balanced budget is a statutory requirement. This report provides an update on the forecasted outturn position against approved budget for the current financial year 2024/25 based upon service manager information as at the end of November 2024 with additional finance due diligence. Heads of Service, Service Managers and the Finance Team work collaboratively to produce robust forecasts and validate forecast assumptions.

2. BACKGROUND AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 2.1. The Council has a statutory obligation to set and maintain a balanced budget. In February the Council identified a significant challenge to its future financial sustainability (as set out at the February 2024 Budget Council).
- 2.2. The forecast outturn for 2024/25 is on track with the full £740k savings requirement achieved for 2024/25. The detail behind the headline shows a more challenging position for the Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS). Key income streams are forecast below budget, however are mitigated by several one off in year favourable variances.
- 2.3. The level of external borrowing has reduced through careful cashflow management delaying and reducing the need to borrow externally. Whilst the council has utilised more of its cashflow to avoid external borrowing, the overall reduction in level of borrowing required in the MTFS can only be achieved through capital receipts.

3. CURRENT YEAR FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE

Revenue Account

- 3.1. The original net General Fund Revenue budget for 2024/25 was approved by Council at their meeting in February 2024. The latest approved budget also includes budget carry forwards of £216k as noted in the July MTFS update. The month 8 forecast outturn is presented in the table below.

	2024-25 Original Budget £'000	2024-25 Approved Budget £'000	2024-25 Forecasted Outturn £'000	2024-25 Forecast Variance £'000
Community & Residents	2,678	2,384	2,407	23
Development & Economic Growth	2,312	2,290	2,398	108
Enabling Services	440	1,433	1,272	(161)
Finance	2,931	3,110	3,068	(42)
Neighbourhood Services	11,167	10,505	10,381	(124)
Policy, Climate & Sustainability	771	511	488	(23)
Regeneration & Property	(4,964)	(5,362)	(5,157)	205
Subtotal	15,335	14,871	14,857	(14)
Less: Reversal of Accounting Entries	(2,957)	(2,944)	(2,944)	-
Net Service Revenue Expenditure	12,377	11,927	11,913	(14)
<u>Corporate Income & Expenditure</u>				
Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP)	1,758	1,758	1,692	(66)
Interest Receivable	(3,776)	(3,776)	(3,487)	289
Interest Payable	8,731	8,729	7,379	(1,350)
Pooled Funds	-	-	979	979
RCCO	-	13	13	(0)
Movement in Earmarked Reserves	119	(248)	(248)	(0)
Net General Fund Revenue Budget	19,210	18,403	18,241	(162)
Funded by:				
Council Tax	(7,706)	(7,706)	(7,706)	-
Business Rates	(5,100)	(5,100)	(5,310)	(210)
New Homes Bonus	(384)	(384)	(384)	-
Feed In Tariff	-	-	(32)	(32)
Services Grant	(14)	(14)	(17)	(3)
Funding Guarantee	(516)	(516)	(516)	0
Revenue Support Grant	(111)	(111)	(111)	(0)
Total Funding	(13,831)	(13,831)	(14,076)	(245)
Core (Surplus)/Deficit	5,379	4,572	4,165	(407)

- 3.2. The Service Reduction Target of £500k in 2024/25 has been achieved and exceeded through review of budgets and service opportunities in year. £433k of the £804k savings achieved in 2024/25 are temporary. The breakdown of how these savings have been achieved is detailed below. Further work to identify permanent savings on top of the £371k achieved to secure the financial security of the council looking forward are being worked on through the Financial Resilience Programme.

		2024-25	2025-26	2026-27	2027-28
		£	£	£	£
Service Opportunities					
Recurrent					
Close North Hants Employment and Skills Zone website	Q1	- 2,390	- 2,390	- 2,390	- 2,390
Increase Princes Hall Venue Levy	Q1	- 20,000	- 20,000	- 20,000	- 20,000
Triage post in CSU to be funded by external	Q1	- 44,800	- 44,800	- 44,800	- 44,800
Contract Inflation update	Q1	- 83,760	- 83,760	- 83,760	- 83,760
Wellesley S106 contributions	Q1	- 7,268	- 7,268	- 7,268	- 7,268
Green Waste Income	Q1	- 35,173	- 35,173	- 35,173	- 35,173
Total Recurrent Savings:		- 193,391	- 193,391	- 193,391	- 193,391
Temporary					
Farnborough College of Technology rental of the Meads	Q1	- 170,091	- 102,542		
Supporting economic development at Hart DC	Q1	- 25,085			
Street cleaning – pause/delaying major projects	Q1	- 10,000			
Anti Social Behaviour External Funding bid successful	Q1	- 60,000			
Recycling glass sales	Q1	- 168,000			
Total non recurrent:		- 433,176	- 102,542	-	-
Total		- 626,567	- 295,933	- 193,391	- 193,391
Budget Adjustments					
Premises Licensing Income	Q1	- 11,872	- 11,872	- 11,872	- 11,872
Taxi Licensing Income	Q1	- 12,700	- 12,700	- 12,700	- 12,700
Princes Hall Car Parking Income	Q1	- 7,000	- 7,000	- 7,000	- 7,000
Business Rates	Q1	- 17,470	- 17,470	- 17,470	- 17,470
Utilities	Q1	- 44,800	- 44,800	- 44,800	- 44,800
Maintenance for site no longer in existence	Q1	- 2,000	- 2,000	- 2,000	- 2,000
Budget Correction	Q1	- 38,500	- 38,500	- 38,500	- 38,500
Budget Correction – Original		3,250	3,250	3,250	3,250
Budget Correction	M8	- 28,840	- 28,840	- 28,840	- 28,840
Additional income at Southwood Café	Q2	- 22,000	- 22,000	- 22,000	- 22,000
Food Hygiene license income ceased	Q2	4,000	4,000	4,000	4,000
Total		- 177,932	- 177,932	- 177,932	- 177,932
Cumulative Summary					
Cumulative Target Savings		- 500,000	- 1,000,000	- 1,500,000	- 2,000,000
Quick Wins		- 626,567	- 295,933	- 193,391	- 193,391
Budget Adjustments		- 177,932	- 177,932	- 177,932	- 177,932
Remaining savings to be found		- 804,499	- 526,135	- 1,128,677	- 1,628,677
Savings achieved beyond target		304,499			

- 3.3. Details of the Month 8 forecast variance by nature is provided below.

	Community & Residents £'000	Developm ent & Economic Growth £'000	Enabling Services £'000	Finance £'000	Neighbour hood Services £'000	Policy, Climate & Sustainabil ity £'000	Regenerat ion & Property £'000	Grand Total £'000
Staff Costs	(8)	(121)	(174)	(24)	(194)	(21)	(119)	(661)
Contracted Services					(17)		(5)	(22)
Utilities & Business Rates	6	(1)	(12)		(45)		(253)	(305)
Professional Consultancy						(5)	10	5
IT		(1)	(63)		2	(3)		(65)
Equipment								-
Maintenance		3			2		(36)	(31)
Other Costs	(14)	(1)	(11)	(12)	(198)		10	(226)
Fees and Charges	(3)	166	26		349			538
Property Related Income			(5)	(3)	(7)		309	294
Property Service Charges							(45)	(45)
Grant								-
Other Income	41	64	79	(2)	(18)	6	335	505
Total	22	109	(160)	(41)	(126)	(23)	206	(13)

Key Service Variations

- 3.4. Each of these variances are being worked through to evaluate the certainty of the forecast and impact on the MTFS budget requirement.
- 3.5. Salary savings of over £661k are forecast to be achieved in year. This has been achieved across all portfolio's, with circa £200k of this saving due to a less than anticipated pay increase agreed nationally.
- 3.6. As per previous reports, fees & charges income in many areas is struggling to hit approved budgets. This includes property, car parking, crematorium, planning, building control and land charges. Where possible, related costs are being minimised to mitigate this loss.
- 3.7. The development of a long term detailed cashflow forecast managed through an officer led treasury management panel has enabled external borrowing to be delayed and aligned to the cashflow needs of the council.
- 3.8. The delayed completion of Union Yard has enabled an additional borrowing interest to be capitalised. Whilst this will impact on the overall borrowing requirement for the project it does remove it from the revenue account and the capitalised value is likely to increase further until practical completion of the site.
- 3.9. In addition, interest costs are to be capitalised for the Crematorium, providing a further £77k income to be achieved in revenue. As above, this will increase the overall cost and borrowing requirement of the project, it enables us to remove the cost from the revenue account.
- 3.10. As previously reports, the UBS Multi-Asset Income Fund - £5 million investment was part of the council's long-term £21m investment in Pooled funds. UBS closed the fund in September giving the council a loss on the original investment. This has been mitigated by the sale of the CCLA fund that is in

surplus. The net effect is a currently estimated at a £978k loss however depends on the final values achieved on the CCLA. It is to be noted that the fund has provided a significant revenue return in previous years more than the loss incurred, a loss provision was not set up to from the enhanced returns due to the dispensation from accounting for book losses on the revenue account.

- 3.11. Retained business rates funding has improved further and in year an £810k improvement has been achieved through levy changes, S31 grant changes and review of provisions. This work was done with our collection fund technical advisors LGFutures to ensure the best outcome for the revenue account.

Virements

- 3.12. In order to proactively manage budgets, a number of budget virements including use and contributions to earmarked reserves have been proposed by officers through the year to date. Cabinet is asked to approve the virements as follows below in line with the virement rules set out in the council's Constitution's Financial Regulations (C10&11) and Delegated Authorities (3.5 Matters Reserved for Cabinet).

Department/Reason	Amount	Notes
Operational Services – tree expenditure funded by grant	£50,023	Farnborough Airport Community Environmental Fund and Urban Tree Challenge Fund bids successful for tree planting projects in the borough.
Farnborough Gate Pitch – women's football team facilities	£75,377	S106 works to improve the facilities of the women's football team including changing facilities. ELT have previously approved a £40k virement for a proportion of the works – this proposed virement is to supplement this and brings the total value to £75,377

Delivery of Target

- 3.13. Full Council on 22nd February 2024 approved the 2024-25 revenue and capital budget and the 2025-28 Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS). The 2024-25 revenue budget projected an unsustainable £5.379m drawdown on reserves before mitigation. Full Council adopted a set of budget savings targets to bring the revenue account sustainably back into balance without the need to draw on reserves over the four-year period. The in year projected use of reserve to balance the revenue position is as below.

	2024-25 Budget £'000	2024-25 Forecast £'000
Savings Target effect on reserves:		
In year saving permanently out of base		
Interest and MRP reduction	-240	0
Services cost reduction	-500	-371
Total recurrent savings:	-740	-371

In year deficit before mitigating savings	5,379	5379
Revised deficit/outturn	4,639	5008
In year temporary savings		-433
In year deficit	4,639	4575
Opening reserve balance:	-12,229	-12,229
Budgeted service movement	-119	248
Revised deficit / Surplus is in ()	4,639	4575
Reserve annual closing balance	-7,709	-7,406

Alternative Options

- 3.14. The Council has a legal obligation to produce a balanced budget and therefore there is not a 'Do Nothing' option. The Council must achieve its revenue and capital receipt targets, through implementation of the Financial Recovery Plan.
- 3.15. Progress on identifying and implementing measures is being financially monitored, the council does have the option to introduce targeted or broader temporary expenditure control to hold back expenditure and reduce the drawdown on reserves if the financial situation warrants. The Executive Head of Finance will consult at the earliest indication of this option being required.

Consultation

- 3.16. No specific consultations have been undertaken outside of the elected member of the council.

4. IMPLICATIONS

Risks and Uncertainties

- 4.1. The cost of borrowing remains a risk to the council at present. Interest rates have begun to fall and were lower than anticipated early in the year, however the interest rate reductions are slower than anticipated for the latter part of the year and are less likely to fall to originally assumed values.
- 4.2. Additionally, external borrowing has been minimised and is currently lower than budgeted levels. However, the value of borrowing the council holds remains high.
- 4.3. Property portfolio rental streams are a sizable contributor to the council's income, supporting the funding of debt costs. Properties remain at risk of vacancies which both prevent income achievement but can incur additional costs of rates, maintenance, and security. The Meads represents the most significant risk in these regards as the centre has a significant backlog of capital repairs and particular challenges of re-orientating the centre to meet current

demands on the high street. This increase the need for capital repair and fit out costs while increasing rental income to match is difficult to achieve.

- 4.4. Delays to projects such as Union Yard and the Crematorium are having a negative ongoing impact on the revenue position of the council. Some of these impacts are already felt in year, however the risks remain.
- 4.5. The sale of the CCLA pooled fund to mitigate the loss on the UBS investment is still subject to three months movements in value. The report includes the latest forecast, however there will be further movements until the end of the financial year when the CCLA sale will go through.

Legal Implications

- 4.6. Under the Council's Finance Procedure Rules, the Executive Head of Finance is responsible for the proper administration of the Council's financial affairs and advising on the corporate financial position. It is the responsibility of Executive Directors, Heads of Service, Corporate Managers and Service Managers to consult with the Executive Head of Finance and seek approval on any matter liable to affect the Council's finances materially, before any commitments are incurred.

Comments approved by Corporate Manager, Legal Services.

Financial and Resource Implications

- 4.7. Financial implications are set out within the report.

Equalities Impact Implications

- 4.8. No direct impact.

Other

- 4.9. There are no further implications of this report to consider.

5. CONCLUSIONS

- 5.1. The council set a 2024-25 balanced budget with a planned reserve drawdown of £4.639m and a savings target of £740k of net budget reduction in 2025-26, supported by £12.229m of available reserve. The latest forecast shows this has been achieved.
- 5.2. If the in-year financial situation determines, cost controls can be implemented to slow down the rate of expenditure until the situation is resolved.
- 5.3. Overall, the financial position continues to be challenging, progress is being made and officers will continue to monitor closely and report updates regularly to councillors.

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS:

- Financial Recovery Plan – Cabinet - REPORT NO. CEX2406 - 15 OCTOBER 2024
- 2024-25 to 2027-28 MTFS strategy update and 2023-24 budget outturn – Council – 25th July 2024
- Revenue Budget, Capital Programme, and Council tax level – Council – 22nd February 2024

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CABINET

COUNCILLOR KEITH DIBBLE
DEVELOPMENT & ECONOMIC GROWTH PORTFOLIO HOLDER

16 JANUARY 2025

KEY DECISION: YES

REPORT NO. PG2501

RENEWAL OF BUILDING CONTROL PARTNERSHIP**SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS:**

This report considers a proposal to renew the Hart and Rushmoor Building Control Partnership as a shared service between the two authorities to discharge the statutory building control functions for both areas for a further five-year period.

The Cabinet is recommended to:

- Approve the renewal of the Hart and Rushmoor Building Control Partnership to provide a shared building control service for a further five years until 31 March 2031, unless terminated earlier in accordance with the provisions of the agreed Deed.

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1. This report provides details of the proposal to extend the Partnership between Hart District Council (DC) and Rushmoor Borough Council (BC) to provide a Building Control service for another five-year term.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1. Hart DC and Rushmoor BC entered into a shared service to form a Building Control Partnership in July 2015. This arrangement was set out in a legal deed with an initial term of five years, ending on 30 June 2020. By exchange of letters in June 2020, the term of the Deed was extended until 31 December 2020, to facilitate a review of the service and the consideration of renewal for a further term. The review found the Partnership had been highly successful, delivering excellent customer service since its inception, winning back a good portion of market share and providing a solid efficient service for the benefit of residents and businesses in both districts. Following the review the Deed was then renewed and extended to 31 March 2025.
- 2.2 The Partnership has worked successfully and has been competitive with an estimated 70% of the local market including work from large developers. It benefits from effective leadership and has been successful in retaining experienced and highly trained and experienced staff, delivering a

consistently good standard of service. The Partnership holds its own in terms of market share and wins work from large developers. The service is continuing to develop with the intention to move to a more mobile and digital approach. This has been delayed due to uncertainty about the IT provider for Hart DC and subsequently the renewal of Rushmoor BC's Idox contract and move to a cloud-based solution.

- 2.3 Building Control faces a changing legislative environment due to the Grenfell tragedy and the introduction of the Building Safety Act. The Health and Safety Executive now runs building control in public and private practice setting up the Building Safety Regulator (BSR) as the controller. It has effectively added more regulations which will impact on the time it takes to carry out the function. The introduction of these regulations led to building control nationally facing a difficult time in sourcing registered and competent staff, now defined and controlled by the BSR, as many people choose the opportunity to leave the sector all together.
- 2.4 The Building Act 1984 puts a statutory requirement on Local Authorities to enforce the building regulations in their area. The Regulator has decided that one way to improve competency in the construction industry is to expand the regulatory framework under which we enforce. The notion of 'Stop Notice' and 'Contravention Notices' has been introduced alongside current powers. The increased enforcement will lead to new burdens on the team with legal notices, court time and follow ups taking Officer time. In addition, the Regulator has also increased the statutory Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) requirement which we are legally required to report on every quarter and have added a need for detailed input into Idox Uniform for every action. The enforcement capability is included in the KPI requirement so will be monitored for performance but will place an additional burden on the team.
- 2.5 As part of the changes, individuals in the team have recently undergone a validation process with the introduction of the new building control regime under the BSR and have completed their competence assessments within the prescribed timescale. Despite the challenges of adapting to this new regime, the service continues to be of a high quality and is responsive to customers' needs. For instance, it is the only local authority building control team in Hampshire that still provides same-day inspections if a request is received before 10am.
- 2.6 The Partnership is governed by a Steering Group comprising the responsible managers and portfolio holders from each Authority. The Group meets biannually, and its last meeting was held in October 2024. Given the Partnership's sustained success, the Steering Group confirmed at that meeting that they wanted the agreement to be renewed for a further term of five years.
- 2.7 This requires approval from both participating Councils. Hart DC considered this matter at their Cabinet on 5th December 2024 and confirmed their intent to extend the partnership.

- 2.8 The Deed has been reviewed by both Hart DC's shared legal service and Rushmoor BC's legal service is considered fit for purpose subject to updating. Some changes will be required, particularly in terms of Schedule 2 which sets out the relevant performance standard. These will change to include reference to the new performance regime instituted and maintained by the BSR.

3. DETAILS OF THE PROPOSAL

General

- 3.1. Building Control provides a range of services to the community centred around the enforcement of the Building Regulations 2010 which is a statutory requirement for all local authorities.
- 3.2. The Partnership has enabled Rushmoor BC to achieve operational resilience and financial stability from a potentially unworkable situation originally. A recent audit review of the service has found that there is a reasonable level of assurance and since then the recommendations of the report have been implemented as far as possible. The situation remains dynamic with Government having amended performance indicators and brought forward elements of the system. IT system providers requiring time to reflect changes. Manual systems are in place in the meantime.
- 3.3. The renewal of the Deed retains the core principles of the original structure, continues to reflect the financial reality of the Partnership and will be updated to ensure performance indicators are aligned with regulatory requirements. The renewal of the Deed will support the Partnership in meeting its obligations and demonstrating such when it is audited in due course by the BSR.

Consultation

- 3.4. The renewal of the Deed has been overseen by Legal and Finance at both Rushmoor BC and Hart DC and is in its final stages of oversight by Hart DC legal team.
- 3.5. The Deed has a Steering Group who oversight the workings of the Partnership and it sets out the agreed approach to oversight. The Steering Group is comprised of both Heads of Service and Portfolio Heads for each Local Authority and the Partnership Manager.

4. IMPLICATIONS (of proposed course of action)

Risks

- 4.1. The proposed renewal of the Partnership represents a continuation of the currently successful working arrangements. The renewal of the Partnership

will ensure that Rushmoor BC have continuing resilience to provide a building control service for the next five years.

- 4.2. The allocations of cost in accordance with workloads and fees rather than by a fixed formula helps ensure that authorities costs and income are aligned, and neither is advantaged or disadvantaged by changes in income and cost.

Legal Implications

- 4.3. No additional legal implications other than identified in the Deed.

Financial and Resource Implications

- 4.4. The continuation of cost allocation in line workloads and fees ensures Rushmoor's costs are aligned with income and the building control service can meet its obligations to achieve a balanced budget over a rolling three-year period.

Equalities Impact Implications

- 4.5. No specific equality implications have been identified.

Other

- 4.6. None

5. CONCLUSIONS

- 5.1 Rushmoor BC must provide a building control function, and the continuation of the Partnership has shown that this is an effective option to discharge our responsibilities. Staffing resilience and the benefit of a shared workspace has given improved financial status to the service. Borough Councils work in a very competitive market where private inspectors chase every application and only good service and customer care result in return business.
- 5.2 Rushmoor BC have duty to provide the service and to make sure it is provided in a modern, commercial manner with good customer care. The renewal of the Partnership will ensure the service is delivered well, meets all regulatory requirements in an ever-changing world and with additional resilience to a provision by a single Council.

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS:

None

CONTACT DETAILS:

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CABINET
14th January 2025

COUNCILLOR ABE ALLEN
ENABLING SERVICES
PORTFOLIO HOLDER

KEY DECISION: YES/NO

REPORT NO. IT2501

MICROSOFT ENTERPRISE LICENSING CONTRACT

SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

The purpose of this report is to inform Cabinet of action taken to commence a contract with Phoenix Software Ltd for a 3-year Microsoft Enterprise Licensing Agreement. This was an urgent key decision taken by the Corporate Manager – IT Service Delivery and arrangements for the decision have been followed under the Access to Information Procedure Rules.

A new contract to continue to use Microsoft licenses was required to be in place by 30th November 2024 when the previous three-year agreement expired. This deadline needed to be met so that the Council would not incur additional costs, and risk not having the right of use of Microsoft products and services.

The Cabinet is recommended to NOTE the decision taken as set out in the record of decision attached at Appendix 1.

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Our three-year licensing agreement for the use of Microsoft products and services ended on 30th November 2024. A new agreement needed to be in place by 30th November 2024 to enable continued use of Microsoft products and services.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 We currently procure all our Microsoft licenses under a three-year Enterprise Agreement via a Microsoft Gold Partner: Phoenix Software Ltd. The Council has had this arrangement in place since 2006.
- 2.2 Pricing for the licensing was only recently released, under the Strategic Partnership Arrangement 2024 (SPA24). This is a new agreement for Microsoft licensing which was negotiated by Crown Commercial Services on behalf of local authorities to obtain best prices.

3. DETAILS OF THE PROPOSAL

- 3.1 Products and services we use via this agreement include:

- Microsoft base licensing that provisions user logins
 - Microsoft 365 products including Email, Teams, SharePoint, One Drive, Excel, PowerPoint, Word, Forms, PowerBI, Project, Visio, etc
 - Full Teams telephony
 - Server Licensing
 - Website hosting
- 3.2 Procuring of Microsoft licensing is done through a Microsoft Gold Partner. All partners are governed by the pricing laid out in the Strategic Partnership Arrangement 2024 (SPA24).
- 3.3 It is beneficial for Rushmoor to continue to work with Phoenix Software Ltd as they are a trusted, strategic partner whom the Council work with on many IT projects and services with an in-depth understanding of the Council's IT infrastructure.
- 3.4 In coming to this decision, consultation has been carried out with the Council's Executive Leadership Team and the Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee was informed in accordance with the Council's Access to Information Procedure Rules, Arrangements for Urgency and Exceptions, and making the decision following Contract Standing Orders.

4. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 A contractual agreement was signed by both parties on 26th November 2024, the content of which has been approved by the Council's legal advisor.

5. FINANCIAL AND RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 The annual cost for the renewal of our Microsoft licenses is £150,205.82 based on license numbers required. License numbers have been reviewed and rationalised where appropriate. The total contract value for the three-year agreement is £450,617.46.
- 5.2 Annual costs for 2023/24 were £144,210 therefore there is an annual increment of £5995.82, 4.2%, for the duration of the agreement.
- 5.3 The forecast increased costs for the new Microsoft Enterprise Licensing were estimated at a 20% increase and the budget was adjusted to reflect this in Quarter 1 24/25 budget monitoring. This budget can now be reduced to reflect the actual increase which is 4.2% annually over the three-year agreement.
- 5.4 It should be noted that if additional licenses for chargeable products and services are required, additional budget to cover this expenditure will need to be approved.

6. RISKS

- 6.1 The Council must have a current Microsoft Enterprise Licensing Agreement otherwise the Council cannot continue to use the suite of Microsoft products and services that are fundamental to support the delivery of Council services.
- 6.2 As the new Microsoft pricing was only recently released and the Council's renewal was due on 30th November 2024, 28 days' notice for this key decision could not be advertised, therefore a Regulation 10 – General Exception Notice had been raised, with the consent of the Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.
- 6.3 If the Council did not contract for a new Microsoft Enterprise Licensing Agreement by 30th November 2024, then a 3% increase in costs will be applied by Microsoft, increasing annual costs to £156,409.50. The total contract value would therefore be £469,228.50.

7 EQUALITIES IMPACT CONSIDERATIONS

- 7.1 There are no equalities impact implications because of this decision.

8. CONCLUSION

- 8.1 The agreement to commence a new contract for the provision of Microsoft Licenses enables the Council to continue to deliver critical Council services support by Microsoft products and services without incurring further price penalties. Cabinet is requested to note the decision made.

CONTACT DETAILS:

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1: Record of Executive Decision



ROED - Microsoft
Enterprise Licensing

RUSHMOOR BOROUGH COUNCIL RECORD OF EXECUTIVE DECISION



Decision taken by individual Officer in consultation with ELT

DECISION MAKER *(Name and designation)*

Debbie Langley, Corporate Manager – IT Service Delivery

DECISION AND THE REASON(S) FOR IT

For the Council to engage into a three-year Microsoft Enterprise Agreement with Phoenix Software Ltd for the provision of Microsoft licensing for Microsoft products and services used across the Council to support the delivery of council services, commencing on 1st December 2024.

Rushmoor Borough Council operates key services to the public, that are supported by Microsoft products and services to conduct the day-to-day business of the Council.

The Council has had a Microsoft Licensing Agreement in place since 2006 that has to be renewed every three years. The previous agreement of Microsoft licensing provision ended on 30th November 2024.

Officer decision –

To proceed with the call-off contract under Crown Commercial Services Framework Contract with the reference number Y23065 – Procurement Services Software Products and Associated Services.

DATE DECISION TAKEN

26th November 2024

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED

The Council must be licensed for the use of Microsoft products and services; therefore, it is not an option not to have a current three-year Microsoft Enterprise Licensing Agreement.

ANY CONFLICTS OF INTERESTS DECLARED

(Conflict of interests of any executive member who is consulted by the officer which relates to the decision. A note of dispensation should be attached).

N/A

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "D Langley".

Signed

Debbie Langley, Corporate Manager – IT Service Delivery
10th December 2024

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

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