



RUSHMOOR BOROUGH COUNCIL

CABINET

*at the Council Offices, Farnborough on
Tuesday, 8th July, 2025 at 7.00 pm*

To:

Cllr Gareth Williams, Leader of the Council
Cllr Sophie Porter, Deputy Leader and Healthy Communities & Active Lives Portfolio Holder

Cllr A.H. Crawford, Finance & Resources Portfolio Holder
Cllr Jules Crossley, Policy, Performance & Sustainability Portfolio Holder
Cllr Keith Dibble, Housing & Planning Portfolio Holder
Cllr Christine Guinness, Pride in Place / Neighbourhood Services Portfolio Holder
Cllr Julie Hall, Economy, Skills & Regeneration Portfolio Holder

Enquiries regarding this agenda should be referred to Chris Todd, Democratic Support Officer, on 01252 398825 or e-mail: chris.todd@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 - 6)

To confirm the Minutes of the meeting held on 3rd June, 2025 (copy attached).

3. **BUDGET MANAGEMENT - OUTTURN 2024/25** – (Pages 7 - 26)
(Cllr Alex Crawford, Finance & Resources Portfolio Holder)

To consider Report No. FIN2512 (copy attached), which sets out the Council's unaudited outturn position for 2024/25.

4. **FILM STUDIO RATE RELIEF POLICY** – (Pages 27 - 32)
(Cllr Alex Crawford, Finance & Resources Portfolio Holder)

To consider Report No. FIN2511 (copy attached), which sets out a new scheme to limit the amount of business rates payable by film studios.

5. **LOCAL GOVERNMENT REORGANISATION - UPDATE** – (Pages 33 - 54)
(Cllr Gareth Williams, Leader of the Council)

To consider Report No. ED2504 (copy attached), which sets out an update on Local Government Reorganisation.

6. **RUSHMOOR TOGETHER** – (Pages 55 - 82)
(Cllr Sophie Porter, Deputy Leader and Healthy Communities & Active Lives Portfolio Holder)

To consider Report No. ED2503 (copy attached), which sets out the priorities and plan for the new partnership plan, 'Rushmoor Together'.

7. **COMMUNITY RECOVERY FUND** – (Pages 83 - 96)
(Cllr Sophie Porter, Deputy Leader and Healthy Communities & Active Lives Portfolio Holder)

To consider Report No. ED2502 (copy attached), which sets out the spend so far relating to the Community Recovery Fund.

8. **RENEWAL OF THE ALDERSHOT PUBLIC SPACES PROTECTION ORDER** –
(Pages 97 - 138)
(Cllr Christine Guinness, Pride in Place / Neighbourhood Services Portfolio Holder)

To consider Report No. OS2508 (copy attached), which sets out a proposal for the renewal of the Aldershot Public Spaces Protection Order.

9. **FARNBOROUGH LEISURE CENTRE - UPDATE AND NEXT STEPS** – (Pages 139 - 268)
(Cllr Sophie Porter, Deputy Leader and Healthy Communities & Active Lives Portfolio Holder)

To consider Report No. REG2503 (copy attached), which sets out an update and the next steps in relation to the delivery of a leisure centre in Farnborough town centre.

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CABINET

Meeting held on Tuesday, 3rd June, 2025 at the Council Offices, Farnborough at 7.00 pm.

Voting Members

Cllr Gareth Williams, Leader of the Council
Cllr Sophie Porter, Deputy Leader and Healthy Communities & Active Lives Portfolio Holder

Cllr A.H. Crawford, Finance & Resources Portfolio Holder
Cllr Jules Crossley, Policy, Performance & Sustainability Portfolio Holder
Cllr Keith Dibble, Housing & Planning Portfolio Holder
Cllr Julie Hall, Economy, Skills & Regeneration Portfolio Holder

An apology for absence was submitted on behalf of Cllr Christine Guinness.

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 **16th June, 2025**.

1. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST –

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

2. MINUTES –

The Minutes of the meetings of the Cabinet held on 8th April, 2025 and 22nd April, 2025 were confirmed and signed by the Chairman.

3. COUNCIL PLAN, PERFORMANCE AND RISK REGISTER QUARTERLY UPDATE AND YEAR END 2024/25 –

(Cllr Jules Crossley, Policy, Performance and Sustainability Portfolio Holder)

The Cabinet received Report No. ED2501, which set out the performance monitoring information for the Council Plan and key service measures for the fourth quarter and end of year 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. The Cabinet heard that the Council's Corporate Risk Register identified factors that could impact on the Council's wider operations and the future delivery of the Council's key priorities. A summary of those risks that had become issues, new risks and those risks that had seen a significant change in the risk gap was provided in the report for discussion.

In discussing the Report, Members were satisfied that the amended format of the document had continued to help Portfolio Holders to better track performance within their areas of responsibility and provided a more balanced and transparent view of the Council's activities.

The Cabinet NOTED

- (i) the progress made towards delivering the Council Plan and the latest performance information in relation to Council services, as set out in Report No. ED2501; and
- (ii) the changes highlighted in the Corporate Risk Register, as set out in paragraphs 4.4 – 4.7 of the Report.

4. NEW NEONATAL CARE POLICY –

(Cllr Alex Crawford, Finance & Resources Portfolio Holder)

The Cabinet considered Report No. PEO2505, which set out a new Neonatal Care Policy within the Council's Special Leave Policies.

Members were informed that the new policy reflected a recent legislative change brought about by the Neonatal Care (Leave and Pay) Act 2023, that had come into effect on 6th April, 2025. The new law had introduced the right for parents to have additional time off to be with a baby who was receiving neonatal care.

In discussing this, Members expressed their strong support for the introduction of this new policy and the exercising of discretionary powers to support staff in this situation as extensively as possible.

The Cabinet RESOLVED that the adoption of the Neonatal Care Policy, as set out in Appendix A of Report No. PEO2505, be approved.

5. REVIEW OF THE COUNCIL'S GAMBLING LICENSING STATEMENT OF PRINCIPLES –

(Cllr Christine Guinness, Pride in Place / Neighbourhood Services)

The Cabinet considered Report No. OS2509, which set out changes to the Council's Gambling Licensing Statement of Principles.

It was advised that a review of the Statement of Principles had been carried out in light of changes to legislation and guidance and that a public consultation exercise had been carried out, as required by the legislation. Comments received as a result of the exercise had been considered and, where appropriate, amendments had been made to the proposed Statement of Principles.

In discussing the proposed changes, a query was raised as to whether comments made by the Police should be considered in respect of any of the licensing objectives and not just one licensing objective, as was indicated in the proposed change of wording at paragraph 2.12. It was agreed that this would be investigated and that any minor changes of this nature would be delegated to the Executive Head of Operations, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder.

The Cabinet RECOMMENDED TO THE COUNCIL that the proposed Gambling Licensing Statement of Principles, as set out in Appendix C of Report No. OS2509, be approved, subject to any minor amendments being agreed by the Executive Head

of Operations, in consultation with the Pride in Place / Neighbourhood Services Portfolio Holder.

6. APPOINTMENTS TO CABINET WORKING GROUPS 2025/26 –

The Cabinet RESOLVED that

- (i) the following Cabinet Working Groups be appointed for the 2025/26 Municipal Year based on the memberships as set out below:

(1) Strategic Housing and Local Plan Working Group

Cabinet Member with responsibility for the Local Plan
(Cllr Keith Dibble)

Chairman of Development Management Committee
(Cllr Gaynor Austin)

Chairman or Vice-Chairman of Policy and Project Advisory Board
(Cllr Abe Allen)

One Labour Member
(Cllr Jules Crossley)

Two Conservative Members
(Cllrs Sue Carter and S.J. Masterson)

One Liberal Democrat Member
(Cllr C.W. Card)

One vacancy

(2) Union Yard Project Board

Finance & Resources Portfolio Holder
(Cllr A.H. Crawford)

Economy, Skills & Regeneration Portfolio Holder
(Cllr Julie Hall)

Two Conservative Members
(Cllrs P.G. Taylor and M.J. Tennant)

(3) Member Development Group

Portfolio Holder with responsibility for Member development
(Cllr Sophie Porter)

Three Labour Members
(Cllrs Thomas Day, Bill O'Donovan and Sarah Spall)

Two Conservative Members
(Cllrs Sue Carter and Peace Essien Igodifo)

One Liberal Democrat Member
(Cllr C.W. Card)

(4) Financial Recovery Working Group

Chairman of Corporate Governance, Audit and Standards
Committee
(Cllr Bill O'Donovan)

Finance & Resources Portfolio Holder
(Cllr A.H. Crawford)

Two Labour Members
(Cllr Thomas Day + one vacancy)

Two Conservative Members
(Cllrs A.H. Gani and S.Trussler)

One Liberal Democrat Member
(Cllr C.W. Card)

(5) SERCO Waste Contract Extension Group

Pride in Place / Neighbourhood Services Portfolio Holder
(Cllr Christine Guinness)

Cabinet Champion for Pride in Place
(Cllr Lisa Greenway)

One Labour Member
(Cllr C.P. Grattan)

One Conservative Member
(Cllr M.J. Tennant)

One Liberal Democrat Member
(Cllr Leola Card)

(6) Pathways to Work Working Group

Policy, Performance & Sustainability Portfolio Holder
(Cllr Jules Crossley)

Two Labour Members
(Cllrs Thomas Day and Ivan Whitmee)

One Conservative Member
(Cllr S.J. Masterson)

One Liberal Democrat Member
(Cllr T.W. Mitchell)

- (ii) the Corporate Manager - Democracy, in consultation with Group Leaders, be authorised to finalise the appointments to the Groups as required.

7. 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
8	3	Information relating to financial or business affairs

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

8. ALDERSHOT SKI CENTRE - PROPOSED NEW OPERATIONAL ARRANGEMENTS –

(Cllr Sophie Porter, Healthy Communities & Active Lives Portfolio Holder)

The Cabinet received Exempt Report No. OS2510, which set out urgent action that had been taken to allow the Aldershot Ski Centre to reopen following the failure of the previous operator.

Members were informed that the Centre had been closed since 2nd April, 2025. Since that time, the Council had been assessing its options for the facility, including bringing the operation in-house, contracting a new operator or closing the Centre. Following engagement with the Council's incumbent leisure operator, Places Leisure, a temporary arrangement had been proposed to enable the centre to reopen, also providing a period to consider more permanent arrangements. It was explained that the decisions set out in the Exempt Report had been urgent in nature due to the imperative to reopen the facility as soon as possible, to retain the staff and to maintain access to necessary booking systems and had been taken in consultation with the Leader of the Council, in accordance with the Access to Information Procedure Rules within the Constitution and would be considered, for the reasons of urgency, to be exempt from the call-in process.

In discussing the Report, Members expressed satisfaction that the facility had been well used since reopening.

The Cabinet ENDORSED the urgent decisions to

- (i) terminate the contract with Active Nation for the operation of the Alpine Snowsports Centre due to a material breach of contract by the contractors, as set out in Exempt Report No. OS2510;
- (ii) reopen the facility through a temporary contract to enable a full options appraisal to be brought forward;
- (iii) enter into an interim contract for up to twelve months and financial arrangements with Places Leisure for the operation of the Alpine Snowsports Centre on the basis set out in the Exempt Report, in order that the facility reopened as soon as possible;
- (iv) accept the financial implications outlined in Section 4 of the Exempt Report and resultant impacts on budget;
- (v) accept the risks in Section 4 of the Exempt Report on the basis of the Council not holding all of the relevant information from Active Nation relating to financial, health and safety and employee matters; and
- (vi) approve the budget provision set out in the Exempt Report, funded from the Stability and Resilience Reserve, to support the decision to reopen the facility.

The Meeting closed at 7.52 pm.

CLLR GARETH WILLIAMS, LEADER OF THE COUNCIL

CABINET

COUNCILLOR ALEX CRAWFORD
FINANCE PORTFOLIO HOLDER
REPORT NO. FIN2512

8 JULY 2025

KEY DECISION? YES

BUDGET MANAGEMENT – OUTTURN 2024/25

SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

The Council approved the 2024/25 Budget with a deficit of £5.379m partly mitigated by a savings target of £740k to be achieved in-year resulting in a £4.639m drawdown from the £12.075m available reserves. By year end, 31st March 2025 the council had made an overall saving of £5.155m resulting in only £224k required from reserves, this is particularly good news as it means the Council has £10.931m of useable reserves to support its financial recovery work after drawing £920k for one off matters. This strong financial management has continued into 2025-26 where there is a £1.784m savings target that has already been achieved, with £2.1m of identified savings. Of the saving, £1m resulted from the government extending a policy decision on the treatment of book losses on pooled fund investments. Work will continue as planned to identify long term sustainable savings to achieve financial sustainability. This report sets out the unaudited outturn position for 2024/25.

CABINET is recommended to:

Note the following:

- i. Note the 2024/25 unaudited budget outturn drawing £224k from reserves, which may change with further due diligence and audit;
- ii. Note the revenue budget carry forward schedule and capital slippage as details in para 2.09;
- iii. Note that an updated MTFS will be presented to Cabinet in September;

Approve the following:

- iv. The supplementary estimates for Property, Legal and Crematorium Project;
- v. The additional Capital projects as detailed in para 3.4 to be funded by S106 funding;
- vi. The Savings Review proposals as detailed in para 3.8.

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 the outturn position against approved budget for the last financial year 2024/25 ended 31 March 2025. The Outturn has a further impact on the 4-year medium term financial strategy (MTFS) so commentary is provided regarding this ahead of a more detailed update.
- 1.2. This is a key decision because it is likely to result in the Council incurring expenditure or making savings which are significant in as much as they will

have a material effect on the level of council tax or balances or contingencies in relation to the Council's overall budget.

2. BACKGROUND AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 2.1. Full Council on 22nd February 2024 approved the 2024-25 revenue and capital budget and the 2025-28 Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS). The budget projected a £5.379m deficit before mitigation and a cumulative £16.651m deficit over 4 years.
- 2.2. The budget included a £740k savings target to mitigate the revenue deficit leaving £4.396m remaining to be funded by useable reserves. By the end of January 2025, the target was overachieved with a total of £926k savings removed from the budget and reported to Cabinet, along with a further £1.064m forecast savings not adjusted in the budget.
- 2.3. The final outturn (subject to audit) for 2024-25 shows a reduction of £4.229m of the budgeted £4.396m deficit, resulting in only £224k to be drawn from reserves. A detailed outturn summary is presented on **appendix 1**.
- 2.4. The 2024-25 budget projected £12.075m of useable reserves available to fund the planned £4.396m reserve drawdown. However, only £224k was required and in addition, during the year £920k was drawn from useable reserves under delegated authority summarised in the table below. All the delegated drawdown of reserves are one off. The net useable reserve at year end (March 2025) is therefore £10.931m.

Purpose	£'000
Technical accounting capacity	(114)
Financial advice	(75)
Governance support	(64)
Property consultancy	(93)
IT application support	(74)
Leisure procurement	(42)
Corporate support	(46)
Capital funding	(13)
Rent deposits write off	<u>(398)</u>
Delegated reserve drawdown	<u>(920)</u>
2024-25 revenue deficit	<u>(224)</u>
Total movement	<u>(1,144)</u>

- 2.5. The Council also sets aside reserves for specific purposes, mostly ringfenced government grants carried forward for future service provision. The budget projected £2.594m with a planned in year net drawdown of £119k. Due to higher-than-expected grant funding these reserves have increased by a net £464k to £3.058m. A schedule of reserves is provided on **appendix 2**.

- 2.6. The 2024-25 revenue outturn is good news; however, a significant number of the budget adjustments have already been considered for the 2025-26 budget and therefore will not represent additional unbudgeted ongoing savings. Work is underway to review the implications of the outturn against the current MTFS along with up to date borrowing and service cost information. This information will be brought to September Cabinet.
- 2.7. The Council's capital programme planned expenditure for 2024-25 was £22.154m with an outturn total expenditure of £14.710m resulting in a variance of £7.444m. Capital projects by their nature are mostly delivered across several financial years and each project total approval will have expenditure budgets profiled to represent planned delivery. Of the £7.444m variance, £3.698m is slippage of the budget profiling to 2025-26 due to delays in projects. The capital programme is presented on **appendix 3**.
- 2.8. The Union Yard project completed in 2024-25 showing an overspend of £1.674m against the 2024-25 budget profile, a project closure summary and financial reconciliation will be brought forward separately to Cabinet. The crematorium refurbishment is underway and delayed due to technical matters. A detailed paper will be brought to Cabinet setting out the full position. The Galleries scheme is no longer proceeding with the Homes England funding and therefore the passporting of £3.4m grant will not be going ahead.
- 2.9. Within the revenue and capital budgets are several projects underway that have not completed by year end resulting in budget underspending. These underspends need to be carried forward and added to the 2025-26 budget to enable project completion. The full list is provided the table below.

Capital Programme by Scheme	Slippage to 2025-26 £'000	Funding
Union Yard commercial units fit out	175	Capital receipts
Southwood Park (s106)	286	S106 developer contributions
Crematorium	1,636	CAMEO Reserve and Capital Receipts
Ashbourne House	74	Capital Receipts
CQ Pinehurst Car Park Demolition	605	Homes England OPE
Aldershot Pools Solar panels	71	Grant
ICT Services Capital Schemes	650	Borrowing
Various S106 projects (s106 funded)	115	S106 developer contributions
Ceremonial Asset Construction	13	Grant
Total: capital slippage	3,624	
Revenue Carry Forward		
Local Plan Preparation completion of works by Strategic Leisure for Stages C & D	13	Included in earmarked reserves
IDOX Cloud software update	49	Included in earmarked reserves
Leisure Operator Procurement	39	Included in earmarked reserves
Total: revenue budget carry forward	101	

- 2.10. In compliance with the Constitution, Financial Procedure Rules (E60), debts that have been agreed for write off require reporting to Cabinet. As can be seen in the table below, debts relating to the homelessness service have been reviewed and approved for write-off as they are no longer economical to pursue.

Value Range	Number of Debts	Total Value (£)
£0-£999	445	210,395
£1,000-£1,999	75	92,341
£2,000- £2,999	6	13,719
£3,000-£3,999	1	3,037
Total	527	319,491

These irrecoverable debts had been included within the debt provision and is a cost to the General Fund, but they should have been funded from the homelessness grant. In addition, there remains a provision of £79k of Homelessness debts. This has now been corrected by utilising the homelessness grant carried forward from previous years that is held within earmarked reserves.

3. Budget matters for 2025-26

Supplementary Estimates

- 3.1. The council has invested in a significant commercial property portfolio primarily to generate revenue to fund public services, it has also purchased the Meads and the Civic Quarter assets to support regeneration in Farnborough. Many council services are also operated from a wide variety of properties across the borough. The current MTFS adopted on 27th February this year documented the challenges and risks that this complex property holding poses to the council's financial stability and resources. Due diligence has been completed on the technical capacity and capability and tasks required to improve the governance, management of the property asset base and delivery of strategic priorities. There are several one off strategic and technical tasks that need to be completed at speed, and the ongoing management capacity will be resolved in the management and service review work. It is proposed to earmark £200k of the Stability and Resilience reserve to fund the immediate work with delegated authority to utilise by the Executive Head of Property and Growth with approval of the Portfolio Holder Finance and Section 151 officer.
- 3.2. An Executive Director was the designated the Monitoring Officer, a statutory role. Resulting from the promotion of the Executive Director to the interim Managing Director role and the departure of the Corporate Manager Legal Services, there is a reduction of director capacity, no legal services management and no Monitoring Officer. The Monitoring Officer role will be resolved in the wider management structure due to be brought forward by the Interim Managing Director. In the interim period, monitoring Officer and legal services management has been recruited to on a 6-month temporary basis at

an estimated cost of £108k, with the corporate manager legal services budget is being used to fund additional legal capacity. Cabinet is asked to approve this supplementary estimate to be funded from the Stability and Resilience reserve.

- 3.3. The council has recently lost a key project manager on the crematorium project and the Head of Regeneration. This has left a significant capacity gap and high risk of projects stalling, at significant cost. The council can secure the services of a project manager for up to one year that will mitigate these risks. It is proposed that cabinet approve a supplementary estimate of up to £120k to be funded from the Stability and Resilience reserve. It is likely that a high proportion of this cost can be capitalised against projects and expensed against the income from asset disposal, to minimise impact on revenue reserves.
- 3.4. Cabinet is requested to approve the addition of the following projects to the 2025-26 capital programme. These projects are funded from developer contributions (S106 monies) alongside other external funding, as shown in the table below:

	S106	3rd Party	Revenue	Total
Scheme	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
RBC Football Pitch Improvements	£50			£50
Blunden Road Rec Footpath Refurbishment	0	£21	£1	£22
King George V Playing Fields Car Park Improvements	£83			£83
Queen Elizabeth Park Footpath Refurbishment	£50			£50
Rectory Road Recreation Ground flood mitigation works	£50			£50
Manor Park Footpath Reconstruction/Refurbishment	£50			£50
Queens Road Rec Playground Refurbishment	£60			£60
Total:	£343	£21	£1	£365

2025-26 Savings Target

- 3.5. Council approved the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) at its [meeting on 27 February 2025](#). Section 2.14 described an immediate project to identify a schedule of actions to deliver budget reductions for 2025-26 that contributed to achieving the required £1.784 million with a final proposal to be presented to Cabinet for approval.
- 3.6. This service cost review aimed to achieve temporary budget reduction by identifying where expenditure can be held back during 2025-26. The focus was on expenditure that could be stopped in year without a significant or immediate impact on services received by residents. The process has resulting in £1.095m being identified and Cabinet is requested to approve the virement to net down the savings target.
- 3.7. Many of the proposed reductions are not categoric with some activity expected to be unavoidable or already in progress. Some of the temporary budget reductions may be released back to services through a cost control gateway managed by the Executive Leadership Team during the financial year based on business criticality and availability of alternative savings. Heads of Service will

have access to budget for small contingencies reflecting the removal of the smaller budget lines.

- 3.8. The 2025-26 budget also included a one off £1m provision for book losses on Treasury Management long term pooled fund investments. The government delayed the requirement to make this provision until April 2029. Therefore, the full £1.784m savings requirement for 2025-26 has been achieved, as shown in the table below. Work will continue as planned to identify long term sustainable savings to achieve financial sustainability and resolve the £2.784m savings requirement for 2026-27 and £3.781m for 2027-28 as set out in the MTFS. Work is also ongoing to revise the February 2025 MTFS with the latest available information and update the savings requirement based upon the latest information to achieve financial sustainability. This will be brought to the September Cabinet.

Revised 2025-25 budget removing identified savings	Budget 2025/26	Savings	Revised budget
Community & Residents	2,238	(80)	2,158
Development & Economic Growth	1,092	(112)	979
Enabling Services	5,226	(65)	5,161
Finance	1,909	(19)	1,890
Neighbourhood Services	5,534	(114)	5,420
Policy, Climate & Sustainability	849	(31)	818
Property	(6,840)	(602)	(7,442)
Regeneration	615	(73)	542
Contract inflation	362	0	362
Insurance	356	0	356
Union Yard disposals	(197)	0	(197)
EMR movement	587	0	587
Total: services budgets	11,730	(1,095)	10,635
Corporate items:			
Pooled Fund capital loss	1,000	(1,000)	0
MRP	2,133	0	2,133
Net interest	5,450	0	5,450
Government support grants	(1,568)	0	(1,568)
Retained Business Rates Income	(5,071)	0	(5,071)
Council Tax	(8,069)	0	(8,069)
Vacancy Savings	(400)	0	(400)
Savings target	(1,784)	1,784	0
Deficit funded from reserves	3,421	(311)	3,110

Alternative Options

- 3.9. 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.

- 3.10. 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.
- 3.11. The council must produce and keep under review a MTFS that by its nature includes several assumptions and options to deal with a range of transactions and service delivery strategy.

Consultation

- 3.12. 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. A large proportion of the Councils borrowing requirement for 2025/26 has now been put in place, but some further borrowing will be required later in the financial year. Interest rates have fluctuated in the beginning of the year, and opportunities have been taken where lower than anticipated rates have been achieved. The council's borrowing has been all repayable within one year, this has exposed the council to interest rate changes. Opportunities have been taken over the last year to reborrow for longer periods to provide cost certainty over the life of the MTFS.
- 4.2. Additionally, external borrowing has been minimised throughout the 2024/25 year through close cashflow management. However, the value of borrowing the council holds remains high.
- 4.3. There is an unsecured loan to Farnborough International Limited (FIL) of £6.482m due for repayment in tranches in the next three years. The financial stability of FIL is reviewed quarterly to understand their trading and cashflow position and the risk to the council.
- 4.4. 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.
- 4.5. Delays to projects such as the Crematorium is having a negative ongoing impact on the revenue position of the council due to loss of income. Some of these impacts are already felt in 2024/25, however the risks remain for 2025/26 until the project is completed.
- 4.6. The Waste collection contract with Serco (circa £5m) must be retendered or extended by 2027 with the work commencing in 2024/25. There are some

significant cost and capital commitment risks associated with this contract that must be engaged with and understood as early as possible to enable any potential mitigation to be effective, more detail will be provided at the October budget update.

- 4.7. The financial impacts of Local Government Reorganisation and Devolution remain unknown with no expectation of additional funding from government to help fund the transition.

Legal Implications

- 4.8. 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 the Monitoring Officer.

Financial and Resource Implications

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

Equalities Impact Implications

- 4.10. No direct impact.

Other

- 4.11. 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 2024-25. The outturn position shows this has been achieved.
- 5.2. 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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Appendix 1

Outturn review

2024-25 Financial Year

Projected deficit and planned use of reserves for 2024-25

	February 2024 Approved Budget £'000	January 2025 (P10) forecast £'000	March 2025 (P12) Outturn £'000
Budget deficit - February 2024 MTFS	5,379	5,379	5,379
Deficit reduced by savings removed from budget	(740)	(926)	(926)
Budgeted use of reserves:	4,639	4,453	4,453
Budget variances	0	(1,064)	(4,229)
Reserve drawdown to fund deficit	(4,639)	(3,389)	(224)
Reserves			
Reserves available to fund deficit 31/3/2024	(12,075)		(12,075)
Reserve drawdown to fund deficit	4,639		224
In year use of reserves	0		920
Reserves available to fund deficit 31/3/2025	(7,436)		(10,931)
Reserves supporting specific initiatives	(1,766)		(1,766)
In year use of reserves	119		(767)
Reserves supporting specific initiatives 31/3/2025	(1,647)		(2,533)
Total useable reserves 31/3/2025	(9,083)		(13,464)
Working Balance:	(2,000)		(2,000)

The 2024-25 budget projected a £5.379m deficit funded by 740k savings to be achieved and £4.639m reserve drawdown. In January 2025 £926k of savings achievement were reported to Cabinet and removed from the budget, with an additional £1.064m of favourable variances forecast to year end (March 2025). At the end of March, the in-year forecast variance (£1.064m) became the outturn variance to budget (i.e. reality: £4.229m) and this was a significant improvement resulting in a £224k drawdown from reserves for 2024-25 instead of the budgeted £4.639m.

Slide 3

2024-25 Outturn key variation to budget

Summary of key variations:

Variances to budget with likely ongoing impact:

Services net favourable budget variances	(1,751)
Favourable net interest on borrowing budget variance	(1,314)

One off adjustments: limited ongoing impact:

Capitalised interest on Union Yard and Crematorium due to delays in completion	(1,568)
Balance sheet post audit adjustments to debtor and creditor values	(608)
Unrecoverable housing rent deposit debts write off funded from housing grant	(398)
One Public Estate contribution towards civic quarter enabling costs incurred in prior years	(300)
Recovery of Southwood SANG set up costs	(205)
EY additional audit fee - back stop work to clear outstanding audits	137
Budgeted interest on planned £17m loan to RHL not achieved: units sold to Prime	880
Closure of UBS and CCLA Pooled Funds loss in value of original cash investment	898

Total savings against budget

(4,229)

Most of the service savings have already been accounted for in the 2025-26 budget, further work is needed to identify the full impact. Net interest on borrowing results from improvement in cashflow management mostly built into the 2025-26 budget, there is likely to be further improvement. The one-off adjustments are all single year items that have no further impact on the MTFS beyond 2024-25. These items are mostly resulting from balance sheet detailed audit and due diligence work and technical accounting interpretation of funding rules.

Slide 4

Services net budget variances

Services:	Budget	Outturn	Variance
	£'000	£'000	£'000
Community & Residents	1,360	1,337	(23)
Development & Economic Growth	1,095	1,126	31
Enabling Services	5,751	5,230	(521)
Finance	1,968	1,565	(403)
Neighbourhood Services	5,406	4,732	(674)
Policy Climate & Sustain	879	830	(48)
Regeneration	574	362	(212)
Property	(6,406)	(6,094)	311
Property Meads Business Center	(37)	(46)	(9)
Property Meads Block 1&2	(774)	(787)	(14)
Property Meads Car Park	22	(83)	(105)
Property Meads Shopping Center	384	351	(32)
Property Union Yard Commercial	28	117	88
Property Union Yard Energy	10	61	51
Property Union Yard PRS	0	46	46
Property Union Yard Student	(157)	(226)	(69)
Service-related grants	0	(168)	(168)
Total: services	10,105	8,354	(1,751)

A detailed review is required to confirm the impact of the 2024-25 service variances on the 2025-26 MTFS. The lines of enquiry conducted through the Financial Recovery Plan (FRP) were based upon the 2023-24 outturn and 2024-25 forecast outturns to inform the 2025-26 budget and MTFS. More budget accuracy can be achieved based upon this outturn.

Slide 5

Service budget variances by nature

	Budget	Actuals	Variance
Services outturn by nature	£'000	£'000	£'000
Staff	14,286	13,541	(745)
Staff - non pay	2,210	1,994	(216)
Transport	70	53	(17)
Premises	3,214	2,581	(633)
Supplies and Services	11,211	10,693	(518)
Third Party Payments	7,237	6,926	(311)
Income	(28,123)	(27,434)	689
Total	10,105	8,354	(1,751)

Table presents the service budgets and outturn by type of income and expenditure. Further detail of each line is given in the following slides.

Slide 6

Premises budget variances

	Budget	Actuals	Variance
Services premises variances	£'000	£'000	£'000
Gas	395	121	(274)
Repairs and Maintenance	1,186	1,037	(149)
Electricity	573	483	(90)
Business Rates	997	922	(75)
Water	62	18	(44)
Total	3,214	2,581	(633)

Most of the variances have already been considered in the 2025-26 budget and reflected in the budget presented to Full Council in February 2025.

Slide 7

Supplies and Services budget variances

	Budget	Actuals	Variance
Supplies and Services variances	£'000	£'000	£'000
Enabling Services	1,431	1,226	(205) £150k of IT software upgrade projects to be carried forward to next year
Property Commercial	399	268	(130) Over budgeting of commercial property services charges
Property	356	290	(66) Over budgeting property management costs
Property Union Yard Student	406	349	(58) Underspend on mobilisation of student accommodation
Development & Economic Growth	572	515	(57) Over budgeting planning policy consultancy
Other minor variances	6,803	6,773	(30)
Property Union Yard Energy	51	20	(31) Delayed completion of Union Yard.
Policy Climate & Sustain	171	151	(20) Underspend on procurement service with Portsmouth Council
Property Union Yard Commercial	100	111	12 Marketing costs for vacant units
Property Meads Shopping Center	922	953	31 Service charges
RHL property development	0	36	36 Councils 50% share of feasibility costs
Total:	11,211	10,693	(518)

Slide 8

Third Party budget variances

	Budget	Actuals	Variance
Third Party Payments	£'000	£'000	£'000
Rent allowance recovery	(135)	(295)	(160) Allowances above rent cap recovered from housing grant
Serco contract	5,460	5,328	(127) Budget underspend on contract variations
Discretionary Council Tax relief	64	40	(24) Demand for Ukrainian council tax relief is reducing
Property management contract	145	125	(20) Over budgeting
Other payments	858	858	(6)
Community grants	845	870	25 CAB and leisure grant overspend
Total:	7,237	6,926	(311)

Slide 9

Income budget variances

	Budget £'000	Actuals £'000	Variance £'000
Service income variances			
Finance	(1,233)	(1,404)	(171) Improved debt recovery on revenues and housing benefits
Neighbourhood Services	(10,809)	(10,952)	(143) Net small over and under achievements, nothing stands out
Property Meads car park	(259)	(322)	(63) Back dated car park income from managing agent
Property Meads Shopping Center	(678)	(716)	(38) Back dated rental income from managing agent
Property Union Yard Commercial	(110)	(13)	97 Delayed completion of Union Yard – units not let.
Property Union Yard Energy	(279)	0	279 Delayed completion of Union Yard – no energy charges.
Development & Economic Growth	(2,023)	(1,728)	295 Development and Building Control income reduction – lower demand
Property Commercial	(8,763)	(8,165)	599 Mostly a one-off impact from splitting quarter 4 rents to correct year
Total:	(24,154)	(23,300)	854

Slide 10

Net interest on borrowing budget variance

	2024-25 Budget £000	2024-25 Outturn £000	2024-25 Variance £000
Interest Outturn			
Interest Payable	8,673	6,997	(1,676) Overall level of borrowing has reduced, utilising more of the councils cashflow. Interest rate has also reduced.
Interest receiveable	(2,056)	(1,686)	370 More cash used to delay external borrowing has reduced the interest earned on investment.
Service loan	(294)	(301)	(7) Farnborough International Limited loan £6.8m - Covid support for cancelled airshow
Net interest on borrowing	6,323	5,009	(1,314)
Capitalised interest	(381)	(1,949)	(1,568) Additional capitalised interest due to the delay in completion of Union Yard
RHL interest	(1,045)	(165)	880 Budget assumed Union Yard 82 Private units would be sold to RHL for a £17m loan from the Council, the units are being purchased by Prime.
Total: Net Interest	4,897	2,895	(2,002)

() represent income

APPENDIX 2

Earmarked Reserves Appendix 2	At 31 March 2024 £'000	Transfers out £'000	Transfers in £'000	At 31 March 2025 £'000
Reserves available to fund deficit				
Working balance surplus	(1,133)	224	0	(909)
Stability & Resilience Reserve	(5,700)	518	0	(5,182)
BR equalisation reserve	(3,892)	0	0	(3,892)
Flexible Hou Grant	(812)	398	0	(414)
Regeneration Reserve	(257)	0	0	(257)
Custom Build Grant	(75)	0	0	(75)
Civil parking enforcement surplus	(206)	4	0	(202)
Total: Revised useable reserves	(12,075)	1,144	0	(10,931)
Reserves supporting specific initiatives				
Mercury abatement	(528)	0	(25)	(553)
Community Recovery Fund	0	0	(489)	(489)
Homes for Ukraine support A	(320)	52	(94)	(362)
Asylum Dispersal	(144)	18	(172)	(298)
Other grants (below £45k)	(154)	37	(108)	(225)
Tennis Court Sink Fund	0	0	(168)	(168)
Budget carry forwards	0	0	(129)	(129)
Deprivation reserve	(106)	22	(2)	(86)
LAHF	(42)	0	(38)	(80)
Climate emergency reserve	(124)	57	0	(67)
Afghan relocation scheme	(24)	0	(9)	(33)
Cyber security	(27)	10	0	(17)
Homes for Ukraine support B	(19)	8	0	(11)
Supp & Temp Accom Work	(7)	0	0	(7)
A331 Air Quality Project	(213)	208	0	(5)
Control outbreak	(8)	5	0	(3)
Covid Council tax hardship	(43)	43	0	0
UK shared prosperity fund	(7)	13	(6)	0
Total: Reserves supporting specific initiatives	(1,766)	473	(1,240)	(2,533)
Reserves legally restricted - commuted sums				
Insurance Reserve	(253)	0	0	(253)
Commuted sums	(5,934)	85	(2,119)	(7,968)
Pipeline env imp res	(134)	21	(25)	(138)
Farnborough airport environment Fund	(129)	0	(5)	(134)
Workforce Reserve	(312)	312	0	0
Total: Reserves legally restricted - commuted sums	(6,762)	418	(2,149)	(8,493)
Total	(20,603)	2,035	(3,389)	(21,957)

Appendix 3

Capital Programme by Scheme	2024/25 Current budget	2024/25 Outturn	2024/25 Variance	Slippage to 2025-26	Comment
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	
Union Yard commercial units fit out lease contributions	175	-	(175)	175	Two units provisional leases to complete in 2025/26
Union Yard construction	5,929	7,604	1,675	-	Delay in completion, extra salary and interest capitalised
RHL development of private rented units	-	36	36	-	50% RHL property development feasibility written off to revenue
Leisure and Civic Hub (CQ Plot B)	333	333	-	-	Costs 100% funded by LUF to RIBA stage 3
Civic Quarter (All other Plots - exc Pinehurst CP)	65	65	-	-	Costs 100% funded by HE OPE Brownfield Site funds
Southwood Park (s106)	450	164	(286)	286	Restoration works ex Esso - project to complete in 2025/26
Crematorium	4,781	3,145	(1,636)	1,636	Delays in construction works - to complete in 2025/26
Temporary Housing	742	-	(742)	-	Scheme no longer proceeding
Hawley Lane	351	78	(273)	-	Site planning completed - April 2025 - site now marketed for sale
Frimley Business Park Plots 4.2 and 4.3	226	132	(94)	-	Project completed - site sold April 2025
Ashbourne House	74	-	(74)	74	Provision for dilapidations - now expected in 2025/26
CQ Pinehurst Car Park Demolition	1,660	1,055	(605)	605	Pinehurst Demolition completed - other works relating to CQ utilities to complete
The Galleries	3,400	3	(3,397)	-	Scheme no longer proceeding with RBC / Homes England funding
CCTV	185	79	(105)	-	Project completed in March 2025
Food Waste	7	5	(2)	-	Annual spend project complete
Wheeled Bins	120	108	(12)	-	Annual spend project complete
Disabled Facilities Grants	1,632	1,040	(592)	-	Annual spend project complete
Aldershot Pools Solar panels	208	138	(71)	71	Partially complete - grant funded project to complete in early 2025/26
Asset Management Capital expenditure provision	109	-	(109)	-	Provision not utilised in 2024/25
ICT Services Capital Schemes	775	45	(730)	650	Renewal of IT infrastructure systems currently underway
Meads block 4 contract costs UKSPF	399	399	0	-	Additional works funded by virement from revenue grant
Council Offices	-	(60)	(60)	-	Reversal of previous year's provision no longer required.
Various S106 projects (s106 funded)	397	282	(115)	115	Partially completed schemes to complete in 2025/26
LTA Tennis Court Refurbish	33	32	(0)	-	Grant funded Project complete
Ceremonial Asset Construction	25	12	(13)	13	Aldershot Beacon - project completed in April 2025.
Princes Hall Lighting Desk	13	13	0	-	Project completed and funded from revenue budget
Total:	22,089	14,710	(7,379)	3,624	-
Funding					
S106: Developer contribution to Wheeled bins	(20)	(20)	-	-	
HIF (Union Street)	(3,400)	(3)	3,397	-	
S106/ Grant(Southwood Play Area)	(450)	(164)	286	(286)	
S106 (Play Areas etc) + LTA	(429)	(315)	115	(115)	
LAHF Funding + Ukraine +S106 Commuted	(742)	-	742	-	
UKSPF	(399)	(399)	(0)	-	
Swimming Pool Grant	(208)	(138)	71	(71)	
Homes England OPE	(1,725)	(1,120)	605	(605)	
Beacon funding	(25)	(12)	13	(13)	
Revenue Funding	(13)	(49)	(36)	-	
LUF	(333)	(333)	-	-	
DFG	(1,632)	(1,040)	592	-	
Existing capital receipts: ICT Services	(650)	-	650	(650)	
Capital receipts reserve: UY lease contributions*	(175)	-	175	(175)	
Union Yard Capital receipt	(2,200)	(2,506)	(306)	-	
Borrowing	(9,687)	(8,611)	1,077	(1,710)	
Total Financing:	(22,089)	(14,710)	7,379	(3,624)	
Borrowing by scheme for the MRP schedule update:					
Crematorium	(4,781)	(3,145)	1,636	(1,636)	will be partially funded from capital receipts in 2025-26
Union Yard construction	(3,729)	(5,098)	(1,369)	-	
Food Waste	(7)	(5)	2	-	
Wheeled Bins	(100)	(88)	12	-	
Asset Management Capital expenditure	(109)	-	109	-	
ICT Services Capital Schemes	(125)	(45)	80	-	
Hawley Lane	(351)	(78)	273	-	
Frimley Business Park Plots 4.2 and 4.3	(226)	(132)	94	-	
Council Offices	-	60	60	-	
Ashbourne House	(74)	-	74	(74)	will be funded from capital receipts in 2025-26
CCTV	(185)	(79)	105	-	
Total: Borrowing	(9,687)	(8,611)	1,077	(1,710)	

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CABINET

COUNCILLOR A.H. CRAWFORD
FINANCE & RESOURCES PORTFOLIO HOLDER

8th July 2025

KEY DECISION? YES/NO

REPORT NO. FIN2511

FILM STUDIO RATE RELIEF POLICY

SUMMARY:

The Government has announced a new scheme of relief to limit the amount of business rates payable by Film Studios to 60% of their net rates payable for any financial year, backdated to 1st April 2024.

As the scheme is designed for a limited period only, the Government is not making changes to legislation, but instead providing detailed guidance, and asking local authorities to use their discretionary powers under S47 of the Local Government Finance Act 1988, to award this relief.

To enable the council to use its discretionary powers, a Film Studio Rate Relief policy needs to be adopted by the council.

There are no financial implications in awarding film studio relief. Government will reimburse billing authorities awarding this relief within the rates retention scheme for the actual cost of this relief. The amount to be reimbursed will equal the total value of the relief awarded.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

Cabinet are recommended to approve the Film Studio Rate Relief Policy as set out in Appendix A of this report.

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1. The purpose of this report is to introduce a new business rates relief, introduced by Government to support Film Studios, for a period of 10 years, covering the period 1 April 2024 to 31 March 2034.
- 1.2. This is a government led initiative and the Council is keen to support certain businesses within this sector.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1. The 2025-26 Film Studio Relief scheme will provide all business premises identified as a Film Studio by the Valuation Office Agency (VOA) with a 40% relief. This relief will be provided until 2034 and will be backdated to 1st April 2024.
- 2.2. The film studio sector is uniquely placed in comparison to other sectors. Film studios are responsible for the production of a significant quantity of economic spillovers, but are also a lynchpin for film production, which is one of the UK's most important exports, and brings with it significant cultural benefits to UK society, as well as strengthening the UK's soft power and global standing abroad. However, although film studios themselves are immovable, film productions are highly internationally mobile, which means that they can readily move wherever is cheapest.
- 2.3. In order to absorb the increased business rates liabilities which have arisen for the sector, the government's assessment is that (in the absence of this subsidy scheme) studios in England would be required to pass through the costs charged to productions, thereby significantly increasing the cost of filming in England. This passthrough of costs would reduce the competitiveness of the UK as a filmmaking destination, and lead to more films moving abroad. The consequence of this would be a weakening of the UK's film output, and of the economic spillovers and cultural benefits which accompany the production of UK film.
- 2.4. The scheme is available to any properties assessed as "film studios" for valuation purposes by the VOA. The government estimates that around 40 properties (one in Rushmoor), will be eligible for this scheme.
- 2.5. Rushmoor Borough Council will be fully compensated by government for the loss of income because of this relief. The scheme will be backdated to 1 April 2024.

3. DETAILS OF THE PROPOSAL

General

- 3.1. At the Budget on 6 March 2025, the government announced a new scheme of relief and eligible film studios in England will receive a 40% reduction on gross business rates bills until 2034.
- 3.1. This is a government led initiative, but billing authorities are expected to deliver the scheme using their discretionary powers under Section 47 of the Local Government Act 1988, and as such a policy needs to be adopted by Cabinet, to deliver this relief.
- 3.3. The proposed policy is contained in Appendix A of this report and is called "Rushmoor Borough Council - Film Studio Relief (2025-26)".

The council has followed guidance provided by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) when devising this policy. The guidance can be found at the following link.

[Business rates: Film studio relief - local authority guidance - GOV.UK](#)

- 3.4. The purpose of the scheme is to limit business rates liability to 60% of the business rates payable for any financial year beginning 1 April 2024, factoring in any other reliefs the film studio may already be entitled to.
- 3.6. There are no occupation conditions for film studio relief. Relief is available irrespective of whether the property is occupied or not.
- 3.5. There is one film studio in the Rushmoor area, which is located on the Farnborough Airport Site.
- 3.6. The scheme works by fixing a maximum level of business rates which can be charged for any financial year at 60% (maximum chargeable amount) of the gross rates calculated based on the rateable value and relevant multiplier. If the account is also subject to transitional relief following a revaluation, then the level of film studio is adjusted to reflect this.

For example, if transitional relief is awarded which is the equivalent to 10% of the gross rates payable, then the film studio would be awarded for 30%, bringing the total bill to 60% of the gross rates payable.

If transitional relief is the equivalent to 40% or more of the gross rates payable, then no film studio relief will be awarded.

- 3.6. An example of how film studio relief is calculated for the financial years 2024/25 and 2025/25 is illustrated below: -

	2024/25	2025-26
Gross Rates Bills before reliefs	551,235.62	610,500.00
Less Transitional Relief	- 259,975.92	- 137,153.89
Net Rates Payable	291,259.70	473,346.11
Calculation of Film Studio Relief		
Gross Rates Payable	551,235.62	610,500.00
Maximum Chargeable Amount (60% of gross rates payable)	330,741.37	366,300.00
Film Studio Relief Entitlement (Net Rates Payable minus Maximum Chargeable Amount)	-	107,046.11

- 3.7. For the financial year 2024/25 there is no entitlement to film studio relief as their net rates payable is less than 60% of the gross rates payable when factoring in Transitional Relief.

- 3.8. For the financial year 2025/26 film studio relief is awarded to the value of £107,046 when factoring in Transitional Relief.

Alternative Options

- 3.9. The only alternative option is not to introduce the scheme. However, this would cause a financial risk to the film studio and the risk of reputational damage to the Council.

4. IMPLICATIONS (of proposed course of action)

Legal Implications

- 4.1. Local Authorities are expected to deliver the Retail, Hospitality and Leisure discount using their discretionary powers under Section 47 of the Local Government Act 1988.
- 4.2. The issue of some discretionary rate reliefs and discounts are considered as qualifying as “subsidy” and is of some significance.
- 4.3. Broadly, any awards of discretionary rate relief or discounts are subject to Subsidy Control. The Subsidy Control Act 2022 allows a business to receive £315,000 in a three-year period (consisting of the current financial year and the two previous financial years).
- 4.4. Therefore, any organisation or business, who is automatically awarded the Film Studio Relief, will be issued with a letter advising the organisation/business about “Subsidy Controls” and on a self-assessment basis, inform the Business Rates Team if they are in breach subsidy control limits.

Financial Implications

- 4.5. There are no financial implications in awarding film studio relief. Government will reimburse billing authorities awarding this relief within the rates retention scheme for the actual cost of this relief. The amount to be reimbursed will equal the total value of the relief awarded.

Equalities Impact Implications

- 4.6. An equality check found that this proposal is likely to have a neutral impact on people with protected characteristics. However, some potential indirect impacts have been identified – particularly in relation to age, disability, sex, race and pregnancy/maternity. We would recommend monitoring of these by the studio, and to consider the impact once relief has been awarded.

As a result, a full equality impact assessment is not required at this stage.

5. CONCLUSIONS

- 5.5. In conclusion, Cabinet are asked to approve the Film Studio Relief policy as laid out in Appendix 1 of this property.
- 5.6. The Film Studio Relief will be delivered under Section 47 Local Government Finance Act 1988 and the council will be reimbursed for all reliefs awarded under this scheme.

LIST OF APPENDICES/ANNEXES:

Appendix 1 – Film Studio Relief (2025-26)

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS:

Section 47 Local Government Finance Act 1988

[Business rates: Film studio relief - local authority guidance - GOV.UK](#)

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CABINET

CLLR GARETH WILLIAMS
LEADER OF THE COUNCIL8TH JULY 2025

KEY DECISION: NO

REPORT NO. ED2504

LOCAL GOVERNMENT REORGANISATION**SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS:**

In March 2025 Cabinet approved the submission of an interim plan prepared on behalf of all 15 Councils across Hampshire and the Isle of Wight (HIOW) in line with Government timescales for the Devolution Priority Programme and associated Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) (Report ACE2506).

The report set out, taking into account sense of place and the economic geography of the area, that a unitary council formed from Rushmoor BC, Hart DC and Basingstoke and Deane BC was the favoured option for this Council. KPMG were subsequently appointed to support Councils across HIOW to prepare the necessary evidence base and support the development of a business case to enable final proposals to be agreed and submitted to Government by 26 September 2025.

The purpose of this report is to provide an update on that work, set out the arrangements for engagement with residents, business, partners and voluntary organisations. The report also brings Cabinet's attention to the proposal to commence work on a Community Governance Review with a view to seeking resident views on the establishment of Parish Councils and/or Neighbourhood Area Committees, and invites their endorsement.

Finally, the report sets out the timetable for the remaining work to enable submission of final proposals to Government. It also sets out the proposed arrangements maintaining the involvement of Members and the associated decision-making timetable.

RECOMMENDATIONS**That the Council be RECOMMENDED to**

- (1) Note the update on the LGR programme to date and the continuing collaboration with 11 other Councils on options that would replace the current 15 councils with four new unitary councils on the mainland, keeping the Isle of Wight as its own unitary council.
- (2) Confirm that a unitary council based on the areas of Rushmoor, Hart and Basingstoke and Deane continues to be the preferred option for Rushmoor as, in line with the assessment criteria, it represents the best balance of a Council large enough to deliver high quality services and value for money, but small enough to be connected the place and the needs of the people the council serves.

- (3) Note the programme of engagement being undertaken to ensure that all residents, business and partners have an opportunity to feed into the process.
- (4) Endorse the recommendation to Council to approve the Terms of Reference for a Community Governance Review as set out in the report LEG2510 to the Corporate Governance, Audit and Standards Committee.

1. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

- 1.1 The Government selected all councils in the HIOW area, including Rushmoor Borough Council, to be part of its Devolution Priority Programme (DPP). A requirement of the DPP is that Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) should be taken forward with district and the current unitary councils joining together with other councils to create larger, unitary councils. An interim LGR plan was agreed by all 15 Councils across HIOW and was submitted on 21 March 2025.
- 1.2 Unitarisation will see the transfer of the Council's powers, duties, staff, assets etc. to a new unitary council by April 2028, following which Rushmoor Borough Council, the County Council, the current unitary councils and all other District Councils in Hampshire will no longer exist.
- 1.3 As set out in report ACE2506, the next stage of the LGR process is the development of a business case or 'case for change' which has to be submitted by 26 September 2025. Following the final business case submission, it is intended that Ministers will decide their preferred option/options for LGR in Hampshire, consult on this and then lay legislation in Parliament leading to new councils taking legal effect from 1 April 2028.
- 1.4 The Government has linked the process of LGR to the separate process of devolution, under which powers and funding would be transferred from central government to a completely new 'strategic authority' covering Hampshire and Isle of Wight, headed by a directly elected Mayor. This authority would be responsible for setting the key strategic vision for the area as well as having powers and responsibilities for areas such as transport, economic development, skills and employment support. Government consultation on the proposal to form a Mayoral Combined County Authority for the local government areas in Hampshire County Council, Portsmouth City Council, Isle of Wight Council, and Southampton City Council now referred to as Hampshire and the Solent was undertaken between 17 February and 13 April. The intention is that the elections for the Mayoral Strategic Authority (known as a Mayoral Combined Authority or MCA) will take place in 2026.
- 1.5 Once the Mayoral Strategic Authority (known as a Mayoral Combined Authority or MCA) is established local government in Hampshire and the Solent will be as follows:

- An MCA covering Hampshire and the Isle of Wight controlling powers and funding passed down from central Government (with potential for some powers including strategic planning to be drawn upwards from councils);
- New unitary councils covering areas within Hampshire and the Isle of Wight and exercising all current county and district powers;
- Parish and town councils where they exist or are created prior to unitarisation.

2. FEEDBACK ON THE INTERIM PLAN

- 2.1 Feedback was received from government on the interim plan on 7 May 2025 and is included in full at Appendix 1. In summary the main comments in the response are as follows:

Single Tier of Local Government: Proposals should aim for a single tier of local government for the entire area and further detail on proposed geography and expected outcomes is needed.

Isle of Wight Exceptional Circumstances: More detail and data required to support the rationale for an 'Island deal'

Decisions on specific unitary solutions: Decisions will be made based on full proposals, not at this point.

Deadline for Proposals: The deadline for final proposals is 26 September 2025 and Extensions are not possible due to the need to maintain the planned timeline for LGR.

Population Criteria: Proposals should consider populations of 500,000 or more, but flexibility is allowed (a guideline, not a hard target). A clear rationale for any deviations from this guideline should be provided.

Collaboration and Data Sharing: Effective collaboration between councils is crucial and final proposals should use consistent data sets and assumptions. 1

Boundary Changes: Proposals involving boundary changes should provide strong justification and clear identification of proposed boundaries is necessary as part of final proposals (proposals should include maps). There are a number of mechanisms to achieve boundary changes dependent upon how fundamental they are.

Critical Service Demand: Detailed financial positions and risk modelling should be included in final proposals. Consideration of council tax harmonisation and financial sustainability is important.

Support for Implementation: £7.6 million will be available for proposal development across 21 areas. Further detail on transformation costs and financial sustainability is needed.

- 2.2 The Government also asked that, if possible, councils in Hampshire submit a single agreed proposal that was supported by all. KPMG who supported the

development of the interim plan were jointly appointed to take this forward. However, during recent weeks Hampshire County Council and East Hampshire District Council have withdrawn to develop their own proposals and Gosport Borough Councils has also withdrawn from the partnership approach but currently is not developing alternative options.

- 2.3 The remaining 12 Councils which include all the other Hampshire Districts, Portsmouth and Southampton City Council's and Isle of Wight Council continue to work together to develop a shared business case and proposal.

3. DEVELOPING THE BUSINESS CASE

- 3.1 The Government set out a number of criteria for LGR proposals as follows:

- A proposal should seek to achieve for the whole of the area concerned the establishment of a single tier of local government.
- Unitary government must be the right size to achieve efficiencies, improve capacity and withstand financial shocks.
- Unitary structures must prioritise the delivery of high quality and sustainable public services to citizens.
- Proposals should show how councils in the area have sought to work together in coming to a view that meets local needs and is informed by local views.
- New unitary structures must support devolution arrangements.
- New unitary structures should enable stronger community engagement and deliver genuine opportunities for neighbourhood empowerment.

- 3.2 An assessment methodology has been agreed between the councils based on the criteria for use in how options will be developed and then evaluated to form the final proposal. A defined analysis approach has been adopted, to ensure that the development of options are aligned to the government criteria. The consideration of options with this analysis aims to provide sufficient information for a compelling case for change as part of the full proposal submission. All options are to be evaluated against a common dataset. The creation of the dataset which has been supported by all Councils, including those no longer part of the KPMG work.

- 3.3 The analysis, in addition to the government's criteria, utilises the guiding principles agreed in the interim plan, financial and service demand analysis, and economic market assessments. It will in due course also be informed by public stakeholder engagement, the plans for which are set out in section 6 below.

- 3.4 On 19 May 2025, the Leaders of 13 councils across the region met to consider 7 LGR options which had been refined from a long list of 12 options. The rationale for the shortlisting of options included the robust assessment methodology explained above. The key decision taken by the leaders at this meeting, was to progress the development of three options to a full case for change. These options are shown in figure 1 below. All the options being progressed propose 4 Unitary Councils covering the mainland Hampshire area. All options are consistent in relation to Rushmoor, combining the area of our borough with the areas covered by Hart District and Basingstoke and Deane Borough Councils.

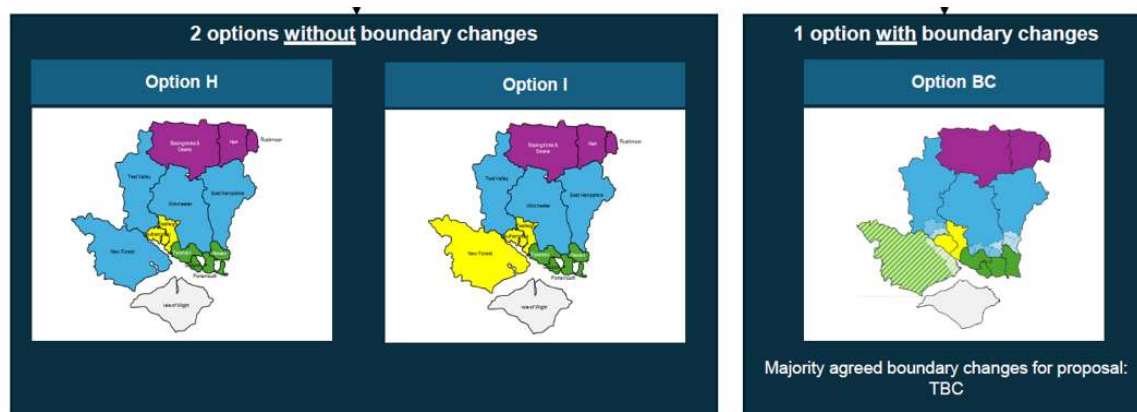


Figure 1. Proposed options

- 3.5 The next phase of work to be facilitated by KPMG is the preparation of a case for change that takes forward these three options with a single submission to Government from the 12 Councils being the desired outcome.
- 3.6 This work with other councils and KPMG has been discussed regularly with the Leaders working group which has been established to support this work. The Leader, Interim Managing Director and officer programme team continue to work at a significant pace to pursue the council's priorities for LGR. This has involved the collective work with KPMG above, working with Hart and Basingstoke and now supporting a significant programme of stakeholder engagement (described below) including meetings with MHCLG, the District Councils' Network, key businesses, partners, and voluntary and community organisations.
- 3.7 The process for developing the case for change has a number of workstreams covering:
- Leadership and Programme
 - Data
 - Finance
 - Governance
 - Service design – including Adult Service, Children's Services, Education, Waste, Housing and Homelessness, Highways and Transport, Economy & Planning and Customer and Digital
 - Democratic and Community representation
 - Engagement
 - Alignment with the devolution process and (eventually) implementation

The Council is represented directly by the Leader, the Interim Managing Director, or a member of ELT on the majority of workstreams. Where the council is not directly involved, we are represented by colleagues from Basingstoke or Hart, or by expert consultants.

- 3.8 Once a final proposal is agreed by full Council and submitted, the Government will then decide on the structure of new unitary councils they wish to create in Hampshire. Looking beyond the period from September 2025, the Council will need to influence Government decision-making and respond to the Government

consultation. This phase will be critical in shaping the final outcome of the LGR programme. Following the Government decision, the Council will be required to step up implementation along with the other Councils affected, ensuring a smooth transition and effective execution of the programme to deliver new unitary councils.

- 3.9 Inevitably the workload across the Council associated with LGR will continue to increase and it will be necessary for additional capacity and backfill arrangements to be put in place to prevent significant impact on services and delivery of other priorities. The Council has agreed an initial reserve of £100,000 to support LGR and spend on additional resources will be drawn from this reserve.

4. RELATED MATTERS – COMMUNITY GOVERNANCE REVIEW

- 4.1 One of the key criteria for the Case for Change requires the demonstration of how the new authority will enable stronger community engagement and deliver genuine opportunities for neighbourhood empowerment. The Minister of State for Local Government and Devolution Local Government has emphasised that Local Government Reorganisation should facilitate better and sustained community engagement and needs a clear and accountable system of local area-working and governance.
- 4.2 In other areas of Hampshire, including Hart and Basingstoke, part or all of the district Council's area is also covered by Town and Parish Councils. The [English Devolution White Paper](#) acknowledges that residents value community scale governance, and stated a desire to see stronger community engagement arrangements and strengthened community voice. The [Government's feedback on interim plans](#) acknowledged the value that town and parish councils offer to local communities.
- 4.3 Cabinet is aware of the report of the Monitoring Officer (LEG2510) to CGAS. The report recommends a Community Governance Review, which is the mechanism via which parish councils may be created, is undertaken, during which residents will be asked if they have a preference for Neighbourhood Area Committees, Parish Councils, or the status quo (as far as community representation is concerned).
- 4.4 The first stage of the Review process is for the Council to agree terms of reference that sets out the scope, principles, responsibilities, consultation activity, and schedule. Cabinet are invited to endorse the recommendation in the CGAS report that the Council approve the Terms of reference to commence the review.

5. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

- 5.1 The principal alternative option to engaging the Local Government Review work is for the Council not to proceed to support the work on LGR with the 12 councils. In that case, there would be a high probability of other councils in Hampshire submitting proposals which could lead to an LGR outcome that the council does

not support, and/or over which it has no influence. This is not a recommended option.

6. CONSULTATION

- 6.1 A Leaders Working Group has been established to advise the Leader on matters relating to LGR and Devolution. This group has met three times to date and the Interim Plan and supporting evidence has been shared for comment. It is expected that the Working Group will be meeting more regularly as the development of the full business case progresses. Members are kept up to date with the process through regular all-member on-line briefings.
- 6.2 A letter setting out details about the devolution and LGR process has been sent to over 180 partners, which includes a commitment to a period of engagement as LGR proposals are developed further. A dedicated page on the topics has been established on the Council's website and communications channels are being used to update residents, stakeholders and businesses on progress. Members and staff are being updated on a weekly basis on the topic. Staff and all member briefings have taken place and will continue to be held regularly until the case for change is submitted.
- 6.3 It is essential that our residents, businesses, towns and parishes and all stakeholders have the opportunity to have their say at this stage in the process. A Hampshire wide consultation, supported by all 12 councils working collectively with KPMG commenced on 30 June and will run until 27 July. In addition, Basingstoke BC, Hart DC and Rushmoor BC have commissioned face to face survey work with an on-line option to give residents the opportunity to provide views specifically on services they experience and the North Hampshire Unitary option.
- 6.4 The Council is also offering residents a range of face to face 'drop-in' opportunities across the borough during July where officers will respond to questions about LGR and the Community Governance Review. Finally, there are a range of events for partners, other key stakeholders, and businesses.

7. IMPLICATIONS

Risks

- 7.1 The key risks at this stage of the process relate to timescales and local participation. There is also a longer-term risk that the Council-supported business case is not approved by Government and an alternative option is pursued.
- 7.2 Neither of these risks are fully controllable, but the best mitigation is for the Council to play an active role in discussions, influence and support the submissions to Government, and make the case of what it sees as the best options for Rushmoor residents, businesses, staff, and services while doing the most to support local democracy. This is best achieved by submitting proposals, ideally with full local support, as requested by Ministers.

- 7.3 Once Ministers have made their decision, there will be a number of project risks arising around continuity of services, retention of staff, completion of projects etc. These will be recorded through the Council's risk management process and appropriate mitigations will be identified.

Legal Implications

- 7.4 There are no specific legal implications arising from the recommendations in this report.

Financial Implications

- 7.5 The 2025-26 budget adopted at Budget Council on 27th February 2025 assumes business as usual and recognises the need to continue the efforts to resolve the MTFS budget deficit through the agreed savings programme.
- 7.6 There are significant resource requirements to progress the LGR work and the 2025-26 approved budget now includes a supplementary estimate of £100,000 funded from available reserves for this purpose as approved by Cabinet March 2025.
- 7.7 Where possible work will begin to explore how LGR will enable access to service sharing to assist with achieving the savings challenge and harness the opportunities where there are clear advantages and benefits to Rushmoor to progress joint service provision as early as possible. The LGR process and likely outcomes need to progress to a more mature state before a financial assessment can be made on the likely impact on Rushmoor residents.
- 7.8 An allocation of Funding from Government was made to all Council's in Hampshire. The distribution of this funding has now been agreed by all Council's and will be used to offset costs in preparing the interim plan and business case.

Resource Implications

- 7.9 The implementation of the local government reorganisation proposals will have significant staffing resource implications and work is already underway to prepare for these, including an 'ask' of Government for capacity funding to support this work. Given the increasing workload and resource pull for this work the initial programme governance arrangements are being reviewed and will be shared with the Leaders Working Group and all members in the coming weeks.

Equalities Impact Implications

- 7.10 An Equality Impact Assessment will be prepared as part of the submission of the case for change.

8. CONCLUSIONS

- 8.1 Engaging in the Local Government Reorganisation across Hampshire is a priority in the Council's Delivery Plan. The Council continues to support an approach of four unitary councils on the mainland with the Isle of Wight continuing as a Unitary Council as current.

- 8.2 The preferred option for the Rushmoor council area is to be part of a Unitary authority combined with the areas currently covered by Hart District Council and Basingstoke Borough Council.
- 8.3 Significant engagement with residents, businesses and local partners will be taking place over the coming months to help inform the case for change. The Council will continue to work as part of the group of 12 Councils supported by KPMG to ensure the submission of robust proposals by 26 September 2025 in line with the Governments timetable.

LIST OF APPENDICES/ANNEXES:

Appendix 1 – Response to Interim Plan

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS:

English Devolution White Paper
CGAS report LEG2510
Cabinet report ACE2506

CONTACT DETAILS:

Report Author – Karen Edwards, Executive Director



Ministry of Housing,
Communities &
Local Government

7 May 2025

LOCAL GOVERNMENT REORGANISATION

INTERIM PLAN FEEDBACK: HAMPSHIRE, ISLE OF WIGHT, PORTSMOUTH AND SOUTHAMPTON

To the Chief Executives of:

Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council

East Hampshire District Council

Eastleigh Borough Council

Fareham Borough Council

Gosport Borough Council

Hampshire County Council

Hart District Council

Havant Borough Council

New Forest District Council

Rushmoor Borough Council

Test Valley Borough Council

Winchester City Council

Isle of Wight Council

Portsmouth City Council

Southampton City Council

Overview:

Thank you for submitting your interim plan. The thought from all councils is clear to see. For the final proposals, each council can submit a single proposal for which there must be a clear single option and geography and, as set out in the guidance, we expect this to be for the area as a whole; that is, the whole of the area to which the 5 February invitation was issued.

Our aim for the feedback on interim plans is to support areas to develop final proposals. This stage is not a decision-making point, and our feedback does not seek to approve or reject any option being considered.

The feedback provided relates to the following interim plan submitted by Hampshire, Isle of Wight, Portsmouth and Southampton councils:

- the Hampshire and the Solent, Local Government Reorganisation Plan, 21 March 2025, signed by all councils in Hampshire and the Solent

We have provided feedback on behalf of central government. It takes the form of:

1. A summary of the main feedback points;
2. Our response to the specific barriers and challenges raised in your plans; and
3. An annex with more detailed feedback against each of the interim plan asks.

We reference the guidance criteria included in the invitation letter throughout, a copy of which can be found at [Letter: Hampshire, Isle of Wight, Portsmouth and Southampton – GOV.UK](#). Our central message is to build on your initial work and ensure that final proposal(s) address the criteria and are supported by data and evidence. We recommend that final proposal(s) should use the same assumptions and data sets or be clear where and why there is a difference.

We welcome the work that has been undertaken to develop Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) plans for Hampshire, Isle of Wight, Portsmouth and Southampton. This feedback does not seek to approve or discount any proposal, but provide some feedback designed to assist in the development of final proposals. We will assess final proposals against the guidance criteria provided in the invitation letter and have tailored this feedback to identify where additional information may be helpful in enabling that assessment. Please note that this feedback is not exhaustive and should not preclude the inclusion of additional materials or evidence in the final proposals. In addition, your named area lead, Jesse Garrick, will be able to provide support and help address any further questions or queries.

We are providing written feedback to each invitation area.

Summary of Feedback:

We have summarised the key elements of the feedback below, with further detail provided in Annex A.

1. The criteria asks that a proposal should seek to achieve for the whole area, the establishment of a single tier of local government (see criterion 1). **We recognise that plans are at an early stage and further analysis is planned in the run up to submitting the final proposal(s). Further detail on a proposed geography for new unitary authorities and evidence on the outcomes that are expected to be achieved for the whole area would be welcome.**
2. As set out in the invitation letter, the interim plan process is designed to help support you to develop final proposals. We note your argument regarding the Isle of Wight's exceptional circumstances and request for an 'Island deal'. As you know, **interim plans are not a decision-making point; decisions will be made on the basis of full proposals, and so any decision on a specific unitary solution for**

the Isle of Wight would need to be taken at that point too. More detail on the rationale would be helpful, and you may wish to support existing narratives with data. We have provided more information on addressing the population criteria below.

3. You asked if it was possible to extend the timeframe for providing LGR proposals until November. **As per your invitation, the deadline is the 26 September. The deadline for submitting a proposal has been designed to give areas as much time as possible to develop their final proposals. The timescales for submission are generally more generous than in previous reorganisation exercises. Ministers have set clear timelines, which were determined in the context of decisions to postpone elections, that were not taken lightly. It is important that final proposal(s) are submitted by 26 September 2025 to allow for LGR to take place as planned.**
4. In some of the options you are considering populations that would be below 500,000. As set out in the Statutory Invitation guidance and in the English Devolution White Paper, we outlined a population size of 500,000 or more. This is a guiding principle, not a hard target – we understand that there should be flexibility, especially given our ambition to build out devolution and take account of housing growth, alongside local government reorganisation. **All proposals, whether they are at the guided level, above it, or below it, should set out the rationale for the proposed approach clearly.**
5. We welcome steps taken to come together, as per criterion 4:
 - a. **Effective collaboration between all councils will be crucial; we would encourage you to continue to build strong relationships and agree ways of working, including around effective data sharing. This will support the development of a robust shared evidence base to underpin final proposal(s).**
 - b. **It would be helpful if final proposal(s) use the same assumptions and data sets.**
 - c. **It would be helpful if your final proposal(s) set out how the data and evidence supports all the outcomes you have included and how well they meet the assessment criteria in the invitation letter.**
 - d. **You may wish to consider an options appraisal that will help demonstrate why your proposed approach best meets the assessment criteria in the invitation letter, compared to any alternatives.**

Response to specific barriers and challenges raised

Please see below our response to the specific barriers and challenges that were raised in your interim plan:

1. Principle of boundary changes

We note your desire to develop unitary councils that reflect the current major economies and communities of Hampshire and the Solent and that some of your proposals may lead to boundary changes.

As the Invitation sets out, boundary changes are possible, but that “existing district areas should be considered the building blocks for proposals, but where there is a strong justification more complex boundary changes will be considered.”

The final proposal must specify the area for any new unitary council(s). If a boundary change is part of your final proposal, then you should be clear on the boundary proposed, which could be identified by a parish or ward boundary, or if creating new boundaries by attaching a map.

Proposals should be developed having regard to the statutory guidance which sets out the criteria against which proposals will be assessed (including that listed above). If a decision is taken to implement a proposal, boundary change can be achieved alongside structural change. Alternatively, you could make a proposal for unitary local government using existing district building blocks and consider requesting a Principal Area Boundary Review (PABR) later.

Such reviews have been used for minor amendments to a boundary where both councils have requested a review – such as the recent Sheffield/Barnsley boundary adjustment for a new housing estate. PABRs are the responsibility of the Local Government Boundary Commission for England who will consider such requests on a case-by-case.

2. Isle of Wight exceptional circumstances

You asked for an early decision on the position of the Isle of Wight and to discuss an ‘Island deal’. As set out above this is not a decision-making point so we cannot make any judgments at this time.

We welcome the additional thinking conducted regarding the Isle of Wight. If pursuing this option, it would be helpful to build on the existing rationale and provide a full assessment against each criterion in your final proposal(s).

3. Critical service demand

We note your demand pressures, your different council tax bases, the levels of deprivation and challenges posed by climate change and coastal flooding. It would be helpful if detail on the councils' financial positions and further modelling on risks is set out in detail in the final proposal(s).

With regards to council tax, restructured councils often inherit different council tax levels from their predecessors. There is an established flexible system in legislation for the harmonisation of council tax levels over seven years.

4. Support for implementation and ongoing financial stability

We note the financial pressures in Hampshire and the Solent, plus your request for support on transformation opportunities, autonomy to be flexible around council tax and desire to agree multi-year financial arrangements.

£7.6 million will be made available in the form of local government reorganisation proposal development contributions, to be split across the 21 areas. Further information will be provided on this funding.

In terms of transitional costs as per invitation letter, we expect that areas will be able to meet transition costs over time from existing budgets, including from the flexible use of capital receipts that can support authorities in taking forward transformation and invest-to-save projects. We would welcome further detail on your estimated transformation costs against full proposals. This may be something you wish to pick up with your MHCLG LGR area lead, Jesse Garrick.

We also note your points around the financial pressures councils are facing. It would be helpful if detail on the councils' financial positions and further modelling could be set out in detail in the final proposal(s).

5. Timeline

You have asked for an extension to the 28 November 2025 to provide proposals. As set out above, it is important that final proposal(s) are submitted by 26 September 2025 to allow for LGR to take place as planned.

ANNEX A: Detailed feedback on criteria for interim plan

Ask – Interim Plan Criteria	Feedback
<p>Identify the likely options for the size and boundaries of new councils that will offer the best structures for delivery of high-quality and sustainable public services across the area, along with indicative efficiency saving opportunities.</p> <p>Relevant criteria:</p> <p>1 c) Proposals should be supported by robust evidence and analysis and include an explanation of the outcomes it is expected to achieve, including evidence of estimated costs/benefits and local engagement.</p> <p>&</p> <p>2 a-f) Unitary local government must be the right size to achieve efficiencies, improve capacity and withstand financial shocks.</p> <p>&</p> <p>3 a-c) Unitary structures must prioritise the delivery of high quality and sustainable public services to citizens.</p>	<p>We welcome the initial thinking that has gone into this interim plan and recognise that it is subject to further work. We note the local context and challenges outlined. We appreciate you will be undertaking further analysis, significant further detail that addresses the criteria in the invitation letter and for this to be provided by 26 September would be welcomed.</p> <p>As per criterion 1, the final proposal(s) in accordance with the guidance should put forward a preferred single tier model for the whole invitation area, including describing all the single tier local government structures you are putting forward.</p> <p>Where there are proposed boundary changes, the proposal should provide strong public services and financial sustainability related justification for the change.</p> <p>For the final proposals, each council can submit a single proposal for which there must be a clear single option and geography and, as set out in the guidance, we expect this to be for the area as a whole; that is, the whole of the area to which the 5 February invitation was issued.</p> <p>Given the financial pressures you identify it would also be helpful to understand how efficiency savings have been considered alongside a sense of place and local identity.</p> <p>We recognise that the options outlined in the interim plans are subject to further development. In final proposal(s) it would be helpful to include a high-level financial assessment which covers transition costs and overall forecast operating costs of the new unitary councils.</p> <p>We will assess final proposals against the criteria in the invitation letter. Referencing criteria 1 and 2, you may wish to consider the following bullets:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • high level breakdowns, for where any efficiency savings will be made, with clarity of assumptions on how estimates have been reached and the data sources used,

	<p>including differences in assumptions between proposals</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • it would be helpful to understand how efficiency savings have been considered alongside a sense of place and local identity • information on the counterfactual against which efficiency savings are estimated, with values provided for current levels of spending • a clear statement of what assumptions have been made if the impacts of inflation are taken into account • a summary covering sources of uncertainty or risks, with modelling, as well as predicted magnitude and impact of any unquantifiable costs or benefits • where possible, quantified impacts on service provision as well as wider impacts <p>We recognise that financial analysis will start once options for the geography have been fully identified. The bullets below indicate where information would be helpful. As per criterion 1 and 2, it would be helpful to see:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • data and evidence to set out how your final proposal(s) would enable financially viable councils across the whole area, including identifying which option best delivers value for money for council taxpayers • further detail on potential finances of new unitaries, for example, funding, operational budgets, potential budget surpluses/shortfalls, total borrowing (General Fund), and debt servicing costs (interest and MRP); and what options may be available for rationalisation of potentially saleable assets • clarity on the underlying assumptions underpinning any modelling e.g. assumptions of future funding, demographic growth and pressures, interest costs, Council Tax, savings earmarked in existing councils' MTFS • financial sustainability both through the period to the creation of new unitary councils as well as afterwards • as criterion 2e states, and recognising that Southampton City Council has received
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	<p>Exceptional Financial Support, proposals must additionally demonstrate how reorganisation may contribute to putting local government in the area as a whole on a more sustainable footing, and any assumptions around what arrangements may be necessary to make new structures viable</p> <p>We would welcome further details on how services can be maintained if you are proposing fragmentation of services, such as for social care, children's services, SEND, homelessness, and for wider public services including for public safety. Under criterion 3c, you may wish to consider:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • how will high quality and sustainable services be maintained for a proposed Isle of Wight or other proposed unitaries, for example, what shared services do you have in mind, how will housing or social care needs be met? • what would proposals mean for local services provision? For example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ impact on SEND services and distribution of funding and sufficiency planning to ensure children can access appropriate support, and how will services be maintained? ○ what is the impact on adults and children's care services? How will risks to safeguarding to be managed? ○ what partnership options have you considered for joint working across the new unitaries for the delivery of social care services? ○ what is the impact on schools, support and funding allocation, and sufficiency of places and how will impacts on school be managed? Will the Isle of Wight's support from Hampshire continue? ○ what is the impact on safeguarding? How will risks be managed? ○ what is the impact of LGR and devolution on skills funding? ○ what are the implications for public health, including consideration of socio-demographic challenges and health inequalities within any new
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	<p>boundaries and their implications for current and future health service needs. What are the implications for how residents access services and service delivery for populations most at risk?</p> <p>Further detail would also be welcomed on what opportunities for wider public service reform are enabled by the options.</p>
<p>Include indicative costs and arrangements in relation to any options including planning for future service transformation opportunities.</p> <p>Relevant criteria: 2d) Proposals should set out how an area will seek to manage transition costs, including planning for future service transformation opportunities from existing budgets, including from the flexible use of capital receipts that can support authorities in taking forward transformation and invest-to-save projects.</p>	<p>We note the estimation that costs will likely be above £20 million. In the final proposal, we would welcome further clarity on the assumptions and data used to calculate the transition costs and efficiencies (see criterion 2d).</p> <p>As per criterion 2, the final proposal(s) should set out how an area will seek to manage transition costs, including planning for future service transformation opportunities from existing budgets, including from the flexible use of capital receipts that can support authorities in taking forward transformation and invest-to-save projects.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • within this it would be helpful to provide detailed analysis on expected transition and/or disaggregation costs and potential efficiencies of proposals. This could include clarity on methodology, assumptions, data used, what year these may apply and why these are appropriate • detail on the potential service transformation opportunities and invest-to-save projects from unitarisation across a range of services -e.g. consolidation of waste collection and disposal services, and will different options provide different opportunities for back-office efficiency savings? • where it has not been possible to monetise or quantify impacts, you may wish to provide an estimated magnitude and likelihood of impact. • summarise any sources of risks, uncertainty and key dependencies related to the modelling and analysis • detail on the estimated financial sustainability of proposed reorganisation and how debt could be managed locally.

	<p>We note the financial challenges highlighted in your response. It would be helpful if detail on the councils' financial positions and further modelling is set out in detail in the final proposal.</p> <p>We welcome the joint work you have done to date and recommend that all options and proposals should use the same assumptions and data sets or be clear where and why there is a difference (linked to criterion 1c).</p>
<p>Include early views as to the councillor numbers that will ensure both effective democratic representation for all parts of the area, and also effective governance and decision-making arrangements which will balance the unique needs of your cities, towns, rural and coastal areas, in line with the Local Government Boundary Commission for England guidance.</p> <p>Relevant criteria: 6) New unitary structures should enable stronger community engagement and deliver genuine opportunity for neighbourhood empowerment.</p>	<p>New unitary structures should enable stronger community engagement and deliver genuine opportunity for neighbourhood empowerment.</p> <p>Additional details on how the community will be engaged specifically how the governance, participation and local voice will be addressed to strengthen local engagement, and democratic decision-making would be helpful.</p> <p>In your final proposal(s) we would welcome detail on your plans for neighbourhood-based governance, the impact on parish councils, and thoughts about formal neighbourhood partnerships and area committees.</p>
<p>Include early views on how new structures will support devolution ambitions.</p> <p>Relevant criteria: 5a-c) New unitary structures must support devolution arrangements.</p>	<p>Further detail would be welcome in all plans on how the proposed new structures would support arrangements for the proposed Hampshire and the Solent Mayoral Strategic Authority (MSA).</p> <p>We welcome the area's commitment to devolution, and the adoption of the principle that governance arrangements in a future MSA should continue to equally represent all areas following LGR. Across all proposals, looking towards a potential future MSA, it would be beneficial to provide an assessment that outlines if there are benefits and disadvantages in how each option would interact with an MSA and best benefit the local community, including meeting devolution statutory tests.</p>

	<p>More detail would also be welcome on the implications of the various LGR options for the timelines and management of devolution across the Hampshire and the Solent geography. While we cannot pre-judge devolution decisions, we are happy to discuss further any eventual transition period as the new unitary authorities and potential MSA are established.</p> <p>We would welcome continued engagement with the Police and Crime Commissioner, Members of Parliaments and wider local stakeholders as you continue to develop your proposal(s).</p> <p>To note, an MSA is the same as a Mayoral Combined Authority or Mayoral Combined County Authority.</p>
<p>Include a summary of local engagement that has been undertaken and any views expressed, along with your further plans for wide local engagement to help shape your developing proposals.</p> <p>Relevant criteria: 6a-b) new unitary structures should enable stronger community engagement and deliver genuine opportunity for neighbourhood empowerment.</p>	<p>We welcome your interim update against criterion 6, the engagement undertaken so far and your plans for the future. It is for you to decide how best to engage locally in a meaningful and constructive way with residents, voluntary sector, local community groups, neighbourhood boards, parish councils, public sector providers, such as health, police and fire, and local businesses to inform your proposals.</p> <p>You may wish to engage in particular with those who may be affected by any proposed disaggregation of services. It would be helpful to see further detail of your engagement plans and to provide detail that demonstrates how local ideas and views have been incorporated into any final proposal(s).</p>
<p>Set out indicative costs of preparing proposals and standing up an implementation team as well as any arrangements proposed to coordinate potential capacity funding across the area.</p> <p>Relevant criteria: 2d) Proposals should set out how an area will seek to manage transition costs, including planning for future service transformation</p>	<p>We would welcome further detail in final proposal(s) over the level of cost and the extent to which the costs are for delivery of the unitary structures or for transformation activity that delivers benefits (see criterion 2d).</p> <p>£7.6 million will be made available in the form of local government reorganisation proposal development contributions, to be split across the 21 areas. Further information will be provided on this funding.</p>

<p>opportunities from existing budgets, including from the flexible use of capital receipts that can support authorities in taking forward transformation and invest-to-save projects.</p>	
<p>Set out any voluntary arrangements that have been agreed to keep all councils involved in discussions as this work moves forward and to help balance the decisions needed now to maintain service delivery and ensure value for money for council taxpayers, with those key decisions that will affect the future success of any new councils in the area.</p> <p>Relevant criteria: 4 a-c) Proposals should show how councils in the area have sought to work together in coming to a view that meets local needs and is informed by local views.</p>	<p>We welcome the ways of working together you have outlined in the interim plan (see criterion 4).</p> <p>Effective collaboration between all councils will be crucial; areas will need to build strong relationships and agree ways of working, including around effective data sharing.</p> <p>This will enable you to develop a robust shared evidence base to underpin final proposals (see criterion 1c). We recommend that final proposals should use the same assumptions and data sets or be clear where and why there is a difference.</p>

CABINET

COUNCILLOR SOPHIE PORTER
HEALTHY COMMUNITIES & ACTIVE LIVES
PORTFOLIO HOLDER

JULY 8TH 2025

KEY DECISION NO

REPORT NO. ED2503

RUSHMOOR TOGETHER

SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

This report set outs the priorities and plan for 'Rushmoor Together' - the new partnership plan for 2025/26 for supporting communities and tackling inequality in Rushmoor.

The plan is a collaborative approach to addressing the challenges facing local communities and is focused around three priority areas:

- Physical and Mental Health
- Economic Wellbeing
- Community Belonging

The Cabinet is recommended to:

- Endorse Rushmoor Together – A partnership plan for supporting Communities for 2025/6

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1. This report seeks Cabinet endorsement for 'Rushmoor Together' – the new partnership plan for supporting communities and tackling inequality in Rushmoor.
- 1.2. Rushmoor Together is a follow up to the existing Supporting Communities Plan (SCP) 2021– 24 and builds on the foundations and success the plan delivered.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1. The Supporting Communities Plan was approved by the Council in 2021. It focused on four priorities: Economic Wellbeing, Young People, (Resilience and Aspirations) Physical and Mental Health and Connecting Communities.
- 2.2. Refreshing the existing Supporting Communities plan provides an opportunity to review changes in data and local context and change the priorities where relevant. Rushmoor Together reflects the need to be agile and responsive to

changing community needs such as we have seen with the cost-of-living crisis, our work to support new communities arriving in the borough and the impact of Hampshire County Council funding cuts to voluntary sector partners.

- 2.3. The community and voluntary sector play a vital role in supporting or delivering some of the projects identified in this plan. The sector is under increasing financial pressure following the loss of infrastructure funding grants from Hampshire County Council.
- 2.4. The Council has longstanding, positive relationships with the voluntary sector. However, the Council should be mindful of the long-term impact on organisations following significant funding challenges. A strong, resilient, and resourceful community and voluntary sector is critical to ensuring our communities are well placed to respond to any challenges ahead.
- 2.5. Health partners are also in a period of uncertainty and financial challenge. The Health and Care Act, introduced in 2022, made Integrated Care Systems statutory organisations, empowering them to improve population health and reduce inequalities. This led to the creation of the Integrated Care Board (ICB) who have a critical role to facilitate joint action to improve health and care outcomes and influence the wider determinants of health.
- 2.6. On 13 March the Government announced it would be abolishing NHS England and rolling its functions into the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC). ICB leaders have been instructed to reduce their budgets by 50% by October 2025. Cuts to ICBs will mean they have less power and funding to deliver the government's vision of a more preventative, community-focused approach to health and reduce health inequalities.
- 2.7. There is a strong desire from the partner working group to continue working together and respond to changing demand and challenges in a collaborative way. This is increasingly important for the local area ahead of the impending Local Government reorganisation and devolution.
- 2.8. Following the protests and unrest in the summer of 2024 the Council was awarded funding from the Community Recovery Fund. The Council commissioned the Belong Network, an organisation experienced in social cohesion and connecting communities, to facilitate community conversations and deliver workshops. Belong has since provided a report and is working with the Council to deliver a further programme of work with local communities. This work is reflected throughout 'Rushmoor Together' but specifically in the Community Belonging priority.

3. RUSHMOOR TOGETHER

Priorities

- 3.1. Rushmoor Together has three priority areas: Physical and Mental health, Economic Wellbeing and Community Belonging.

- 3.2. The priorities are largely unchanged from the SCP with Physical & Mental Health and Economic wellbeing remaining as two of the three priority areas. The significant difference with Rushmoor Together is the inclusion of Community Belonging as a priority and the focus on young people cutting across all priorities rather than a stand-alone priority area in itself.
- 3.3. The addition of Community Belonging reflects the importance of residents, and relationships. Its focus is supporting all residents and harnessing the skills of residents to foster kindness and greater participation and engagement within communities to essentially build a greater sense of belonging to the area.
- 3.4. Over the last two years, we have seen changes to the local community that have raised community tensions and created divisions. This is often referred to as community cohesion. Rushmoor Together uses the term community belonging because we think it best describes the importance of strong social relations, across differences of race and geography to foster a stronger, kinder and more resilient Rushmoor.
- 3.5. The Community Belonging priority reflects the need to work together to increase and empower community engagement to build trust, social connections and strong community relations that can resist the pull of division. A more socially connected and 'together' Rushmoor can bring individual and community benefits; including levels of individual subjective wellbeing, increased levels of volunteering and active social engagement.
- 3.6. Rushmoor Together is for everyone in the borough and for that reason it does not have a specific priority for young people. It should, however, be noted that through the Councils Young People plan, approved in March 2025, there is work taking place to sustain longer term engagement with young people to give them a greater voice on local issues and action and to support young people who, through deprivation and inequality may have less opportunities and more challenges.
- 3.7. Physical and Mental Health remains a priority and reflects its role in wider preventative health in general. Local data shows high levels of obesity and inactivity, and mental health challenges remain and so it is imperative that there is an increased emphasis on physical and mental health.
- 3.8. The plan acknowledges that there are some areas in the borough where the need is greater and inequalities are more prevalent. For that reason, the plan identifies focused projects in specific locations in line with the most common challenging issues and needs for the area.
- 3.9. Rushmoor Together purposely does not reference the areas of deprivation in the borough. Over time different strategies and plans have frequently referred to our three areas of deprivation and whilst they are well known and driven by data, constantly reinforcing these areas as deprived can lead to stigma, stereotyping and poor reputation.

- 3.10. Rushmoor Together compliments the Councils Delivery plans and supports the priorities of Pride in place and Community Wellbeing - Active Lives, Healthier and stronger Communities in particular.

Funding

- 3.11. Some projects identified in the action plan will be supported by The Supporting Communities Fund (£20K) and Pride in Place (£10k - Government funding) Other projects will be delivered by partners or external funding that has been secured. There will be an emphasis on joint funding bids to strengthen applications and reduce local competition for funds.
- 3.12. It is proposed that the Council will also allocate a proportion of the Community Recovery Fund to support community led projects and activities in relation to the three priorities but specifically Community Belonging. This will be in the form of a new grant called Rushmoor Together (£80k)

Alternative Options

- 3.13. Not endorse the plan and risk undermining partner engagement and the value of partnership working.

Consultation

- 3.14. Rushmoor Together has been prepared following regular meetings with the partner working group and consultation with wider partners as follows:
- Collection of data and evidence from partners
 - Survey to partners groups including community and faith groups
 - Follow up meetings with partners and groups to discuss needs, challenges and plans for them individually
 - Draft plans presented to partner groups at the Partnership meeting
 - Draft plan circulated to Members for comment and feedback
 - Member briefing session in June
- 3.15. Rushmoor Together plan was presented to all Members at a briefing session on Monday 9th June.
- 3.16. Feedback and recommendations from the consultation and meetings have been incorporated into the plan where applicable.

4. IMPLICATIONS (of proposed course of action)

Risks

- 4.1. This is a partnership plan, and the responsibility is with all partners. Many of the projects identified are being directly delivered by partners, rather than the Council, and have been externally funded. Projects have been costed and/or are subject to project and performance management arrangements. The key activities are also subject to challenge from the partner group. There are no

risks identified to the Council and the relative cost to the Council against the benefits this work brings is considered very low.

Legal Implications

- 4.2. There are no anticipated implications arising from the plan.

Financial Implications

- 4.3. The costs of this one-year project are funded by existing budgets or external funding. There is no ongoing financial impact of this proposal. If any further funding is required to support further initiatives, and further approval would be sought.

Rosie Plaistowe-Melham - Financial Services Manager & Deputy S151

Resource Implications

- 4.4. The Community & Partnerships Team lead the coordination and delivery of Rushmoor Together plan including the chairing of the partner meetings. The team is also responsible for managing the Service Level Agreements with key local partners which may include commissioned work to deliver projects relating to the plan.

Equalities Impact Implications

- 4.5. An Equality Impact Assessment has been completed for Rushmoor Together. The action plan focuses on supporting more vulnerable and disadvantaged members of the community. As individual projects, activities will be subject to their own equality impact assessment and measures where appropriate.

5 CONCLUSIONS

- 5.1 'Rushmoor Together' is a partnership plan for supporting communities and tackling inequality in Rushmoor. The plan is a collaborative approach to addressing the challenges facing local communities and reflects the strength of local partnership and the desire to work together to support Rushmoor residents. The plan is low cost to the Council and supports and enhances the Council's delivery plan priorities.
- 5.2 The Cabinet is recommended to endorse Rushmoor Together – A partnership plan for supporting Communities for 2025/6
- 5.3 The plan has the full support of the partner working group and identifies key projects and action to be delivered over the next 12- 18 months. The Plan also has the full support of the Council's Portfolio Holder for Community & Wellbeing.

LIST OF APPENDICES/ANNEXES:

Rushmoor Together Plan

CONTACT DETAILS:

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Executive Director – Karen Edwards - Karen.edwards@rushmoor.gov.uk

Rushmoor Together: Supporting Communities Plan 2025/26 – a partnership approach to improving outcomes for people across Rushmoor

Executive Summary

There is so much to be proud of about Rushmoor. For most people it is a happy, healthy and safe place to live. Rushmoor has grown in recent years and with that has come new jobs, skills, housing and opportunities. The population change has seen us benefit from the rich, vibrant cultures that new and existing communities have brought with them.

However, whilst the increasing and changing population creates great opportunities, it also brings challenges, including the sense of belonging for many and an increased demand on local services during a time of constrained public spending. This is on top of existing challenges from the impact of international events, local and national protests and unrest, lasting impacts of Covid and the national cost of living crisis. Whilst many of our residents live happy, comfortable lives, many others face daily challenges and inequalities that impact their quality of life and opportunities.

Strong partnerships are essential to the success of the borough and working together to support one another is more important than ever. 'Rushmoor Together' sets out how we plan to work in partnership to strengthen our communities and build resilience and community relations. This is not just the responsibility of the Council and partners in voluntary, faith and community organisations. It is the responsibility of us all.

'Rushmoor Together' is a partnership effort to work together and support all residents but especially those who face inequalities.



INTRODUCTION

‘Rushmoor Together’ is about working in partnership to improve opportunities for residents.

The plan is a follow up to the Supporting Communities plan 2021 - 24 and an opportunity to build on the foundations and success that has delivered. Through the Supporting Communities plan we have developed effective partnership working across public, business, voluntary, community and faith sectors and delivered projects that support our communities.

We recognise the strength in working collectively to address community challenges and needs where we can. ‘Rushmoor Together’ is an opportunity to adapt and reflect the changing needs of residents and partners and work collectively to benefit all communities in Rushmoor.

There are many organisations already delivering on the priorities set out here but by coordinating and aligning our efforts more we can ensure we meet the needs and aspirations of our residents and especially those most in need.

Priorities

The 3 priorities for Rushmoor Together are:

1 Physical and Mental Health

2 Economic Wellbeing

3 Community Belonging

The plan has been developed with the following partners:

NHS Frimley Health and Care ICS	Citizens Advice Rushmoor	Rushmoor Borough Council	Hampshire Public Health	Hampshire Libraries
Step by Step	Hampshire County Council	Rushmoor Voluntary Services	Rushmoor Accessibility Action Group	Vivid Housing
Aldershot Garrison	The Source for Young People	The Vine Centre	Local Colleges and Schools	Police & Fire Service

Objectives & Approach

Rushmoor Together is about achieving more by working together in a targeted way, whilst being agile enough to adapt to changing circumstances and needs.

Our objectives

- To work in partnership and deliver projects that support residents and positively impact their lives
- To strengthen collaboration and work effectively for the good of Rushmoor residents
- To increase levels of community engagement and help to build strong, resilient, active communities
- To make the best use of available resources, including any new funding identified, by focusing planned actions on agreed priorities

The plan takes an action-based approach and has been developed with the following principles:

- Data and gaps: As partners we agree to share data to help understand where inequalities currently exist, may emerge, or widen, in order to achieve our overall aims and work more effectively.
- Lived experience: Work together to understand and empower communities and those with lived in experience to be at the heart of decision making
- A partner approach: Value and appreciate that we can achieve much more together.

OUR APPROACH TO DEVELOPING THE PLAN



The following has also helped to shape the plan.

- **The Council's Delivery plan priorities** which are: Skills, economy and business; Homes for all; community & wellbeing: Active life, healthier and stronger communities; Pride in place; and, Vision for the future and financial sustainability.
- **The Council's Young People's Plan**, agreed in 2025. This plan focuses specifically on action to support young people. Given that, young people is not a standalone priority theme in Rushmoor Together, as it was in the previous Supporting Communities Plan. Instead, children and young people activities and projects run throughout this plan as appropriate.
- **Pathways to Work**, a Government consultation setting out plans and proposals to reform health and disability benefits and employment support. The plan considers how this will impact on our local communities specifically in relation to health and economic wellbeing.



EVIDENCE AND CHALLENGES

We understand that some of our residents face greater challenges than others. Rushmoor has three areas of deprivation and living in a deprived area can impact health, aspirations and life expectancy. (ONS.gov.uk) Recent rises in the cost of living have further impacted deprived communities and widened the inequalities gap between areas of deprivation and the more affluent areas of the borough.

Inequalities are fundamentally unfair and they have a significant impact across all areas of life. For many communities that have experienced deprivation for some time, the causes are complex and multi-faceted and this makes sustained progress and change difficult.

Through 'Rushmoor Together' we are committed as a partnership to tackling the wide range of inequalities in order to deliver positive and lasting change in the borough. We are doing this by providing targeted support in areas of most need.

The three priorities of this plan have been selected based on data and partner input. They are also where the need is greatest and where we believe that together, we can have the biggest impact.

Physical and mental health challenges

Good physical and mental health is integral to our quality of life. Unfortunately some Rushmoor residents face some significant health challenges.

Some of our health challenges:

64.7% of adult residents are classed as overweight or obese

24.8% of reception year children are overweight or obese and 40.7% of children are overweight or obese by year 6

23.9% of adults in Rushmoor are physically inactive (< 30 minutes of exercise per week)

Only four out of ten young people are reaching the recommended levels of physical activity of an average of one hour per day.

This falls to three in ten for girls and is lower still for young people who identify as LGBTQ+

18% of children estimated to have a probable mental health disorder

Emergency hospital admissions for Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD) is significantly worse than the average

Smoking prevalence of 18.4% - higher than Hampshire (10.5%) and England (12.7%)

Higher than average TB incidence (the third highest rate in the South East)

Emergency hospital admissions for intentional self-harm is significantly worse than England

Nearly 4 in 10 veterans report having a mental health problem

Life expectancy is 8.7 years lower for men and 6.7 years lower for women in the most deprived areas of Rushmoor than in the least deprived areas

Deprived areas at greatest risk of poor mental health and wellbeing

*Active lives Survey Data, Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA, Hampshire County Council). Military Health BMJ Journals, Mental health and wellbeing index, Beewell survey

Economic wellbeing challenges

Economic Wellbeing is about the ability of individuals, families and communities to consistently meet their basic needs. We know that the cost of living crisis has impacted many people and some families are finding it difficult to manage.

Some of our economic wellbeing challenges include:

Average weekly earnings for those who live in Rushmoor is much lower than for those who live in neighbouring local authorities

3 out of the 4 secondary schools have results below the Hampshire average, and three have a well below average Progress 8 score (DfE 2024)

The majority of Rushmoor's secondary schools have absence rates above the Hampshire and England average

Compared to Hampshire and the South East, Rushmoor has a higher percentage of residents with no qualifications

CA Rushmoor reported that between Jan-March 2025 the top 3 areas where people sought help were: Benefits, charitable support & foodbanks and debt.

There are very high rates of income deprivation affecting older people in areas within Wellington ward

About 11.2% (2,125) of children live in low income families

Grub Hub supporting an average of 260 residents every week in 2025, up from 240 in 2024

During Covid the number of people who were unemployed rose, and is still not at the level it was before (NOMIS)

3 areas of deprivation in the 20% top deprived nationally

Young people from low income families more likely to feel they don't have much of a chance in life (ONS.gov.uk)

2024 Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings, 22/23 Local Health Profile, Department for Education, Census 2021, NOMIS

Community Belonging challenges

We want to build connections between people in local communities where population change has impacted their sense of community and we want people to feel safe in their communities.

Some of our community challenges include:

Residents' feelings of safety outside during the day and at night as not as high as we would like

Anti social behaviour in town centres impacting the reputation and perception of the town centres

At 95.5 crimes per 1,000 population, in 2022/23 Rushmoor had the highest crime rate in Hampshire

Wider social issues including cost of living pressures and issues of economic and social disparity identified as a contributing factor in unrest

Protests and opposition to use of migrant hotels and asylum seekers

Levels of loneliness in Aldershot young people are double the national average.

The score is lower still for females, those on free school meals, and those with special educational needs. It is considerably lower for LGBTQ+ young people.

4 out of 10 young people have been made to feel bad because of their race, skin colour, gender, sexual orientation, disability or religion

Rushmoor is the most ethnically diverse population in Hampshire, with a large Nepali population 10.6%

- Hampshire #BeeWell survey 2024, Census 2021, Hampshire JSNA, RBC Residents Survey, Rushmoor Voices Report



BUILDING ON SUCCESS

There are many great examples of partnership working in Rushmoor with dedicated community leaders and partners. The 2021-24 Supporting Communities Plan delivered a number of successful projects and outcomes across four themes. Some examples of success include the following:

Young people - Resilience and aspirations

- *New weekly Youth Café for young people in Aldershot*
- *Support to Lighthouse project for young people and families in Aldershot*
- *Community Safety detached youth work across the borough*
- *Kickstart young people access to work programme - supporting young people locally*
- *Delivery of Climate Change Schools projects*
- *North Hampshire Youth Hub employability workshops*

Mental and physical health

- *Delivery of local health checks*
- *Wellbeing Walks programme delivered in 6 locations*
- *Delivery of Men's mental health day promoting mental health support*
- *Potters Hotel physical activity programme for children and families*
- *Delivery of Safe Cycling programme*
- *Support to Mental health groups including Talk Mental men's group*
- *Green social prescribing programme*
- *Talk plus and CA joint mental health support*

Economic hardship

- *Virtual Job Club*
- *Get ready for winter campaigns - funding for warm and welcome community hubs*
- *Community Grub Hub - supporting 200 people every week*
- *Fuel poverty support and food vouchers*
- *Holiday activity and food (HAF) programmes*
- *Men's Shed and Repair Café established*

Connected communities

- *Established Rushmoor Link community directory at www.rushmoorlink.org*
- *Asylum seeker and Ukraine guests support*
- *Keep Well and Stay Connected digital inclusion project for older people*
- *Nepali community champions*
- *Pride in Place grants scheme delivered 17 local projects including Rushmoor Pride.*



PRIORITY THEMES FOR RUSHMOOR TOGETHER

Building on the success so far and adapting the plan based on data and feedback from partners the three priority for 'Rushmoor Together' are:

1 Physical and Mental Health

We want to ensure people have access to opportunities to support their physical and mental health.

2 Economic Wellbeing

We want to make it easier for people to develop skills and support people with cost of living challenges.

3 Community Belonging

We want to ensure people feel safe and build connections between people in local communities where population change has impacted on their sense of community.

The Plan

1. Physical & Mental Health

Mental and emotional health, physical health and a healthy lifestyle all contribute to our health and wellbeing and ultimately our quality of life.

We want to support everyone to thrive and make healthy choices. We will help to remove barriers that prevent people from being active and develop projects to encourage a wide variety of physical activities, especially for those people who might currently be less active and for those where physical activity can support independent and healthy living.

Research also shows that physical activity can impact your mental health. Good mental health is integral to overall wellbeing and we will work in partnership to promote and increase opportunity to access more mental health support. We understand that cost of living, housing challenges and employment concerns, to name just three, can impact your mental

health. We also know that that residents living in our more deprived communities face greater challenging social and economic conditions which widens health inequalities. We will work in targeted areas to provide increased support where it is most needed.

“ Whatever your age, there’s strong scientific evidence that being physically active can help you lead a healthier and happier life.

— NHS Website

”

Projects for 2025-26 to support Physical and Mental Health

- ‘Active in Rushmoor’ campaign to promote physical activities across the borough in the summer
- Live Longer Better programme to support independent living
- ‘Steady and Strong’ classes for older adults in Farnborough and Aldershot
- Wellbeing Walks programme of weekly volunteer-led walks across Rushmoor
- ‘Blooming Minds’ project - mental health nature-based community activity
- Increasing level of physical activity in schools with high obesity rates
- Men’s Health Day event to promote physical and mental health in men
- ‘Active Travel’ safe cycling sessions in schools and a family group
- Community Health Workers targeting residents with health needs in areas of deprivation
- Research possibility of a mental health practitioner to support health needs of vulnerable residents and street drinkers
- Healthy weights programme to encourage healthy weights in adults and children
- Carers Champions Carers programme
- Blood Pressure Checks volunteer Champions trained in giving BP checks and guidance in the community
- Outreach health events for hotel based migrants
- Support for and promotion of Mental Health groups and providers
- Connect to Work Scheme assisting people with health conditions and disabilities into sustainable work
- Targeted advice and guidance support to Talkplus clients in Rushmoor
- Mental health and wellbeing and resilience workshops delivered to young people at the Youth Cafe

2. Economic Wellbeing

Economic wellbeing refers to the overall standard of living and quality of life for individuals and households. Having economic wellbeing means having enough income to get by in life. It also implies employment opportunities, access to basic goods and services, social support, and overall satisfaction with life. Our action plan includes projects supporting people into employment, raising skills and confidence and aspirations. We will also support people with cost of living challenges and help to access services and advice.

Projects for 2025/26 to support Economic Wellbeing

- Employment and Skills partnership offer including job fairs and website, the SEEDL training platform,
- Bespoke young people's work experience programme at the Council
- Bespoke Nepali community employment support
- Get Ready for Winter support of warm and welcome spaces and targeted information, advice and guidance to residents challenged by cost of living pressures
- Debt, benefits and housing expert advice supporting those with severe and enduring mental health needs
- Specialist advice service pilot project for victims of domestic abuse
- 'Advice in Crisis' complementary advice services to clients using local foodbanks and pantries.
- 'Money Matters' financial capability workshops and 1-1 support
- 'Green Doctor' targeted service to support those in poor health and at risk of fuel poverty.
- 'Work Well' social prescribing service supporting the signed off sick back into work

“ We see further evidence of deepening poverty in the increasing number of food bank users, with more emergency food parcels being delivered than ever before

– UK Poverty 2025: The essential guide to understanding poverty in the UK, Joseph Rowntree Foundation

”

3. Community Belonging

We want to develop resilient communities where people support and respect one another.

Community belonging is concerned with how well people from different backgrounds meet and get along together. It relates to levels of trust between individuals, different groups and communities, and the local organisations that serve them. Community belonging is about developing our communities and social spaces where difference is welcomed and celebrated, and where empathy and curiosity about people is encouraged. When this happens, we create strong and safe communities, with community resilience, good relations and a sense of community pride and belonging for all.

Our action plan will inevitably focus activities on those parts of our borough where people feel less sense of community belonging. It includes projects that encourage communities to come together, and help people find out about and get involved in their communities. It is also about ensuring all residents feel safe and heard. We will work in partnership to ensure our town centres are safe and welcoming places.

Projects for 2025/26 to support Community Belonging

- Development of a community mediation service
- Development of 'Rushmoor Voices' community engagement group
- Growth of 'Rushmoor Youth Voice' young people led community engagement group
- Annual 'Think Safe' activities for Year 6 pupils in Rushmoor schools
- Detached youth work positively engaging with young people in 'hotspot' areas
- Partnership approach to reducing street drinking and supporting mental health of street drinkers
- 'Legacy Project' mentoring project for referred young people at risk of exploitation
- 'Rushmoor Link' community signposting website continually promoted and expanded
- Cohesion support project to address challenges faced by migrant community members settling in Rushmoor
- Pride in Place grants scheme supporting pride in place local community projects
- Development of Rushmoor Together Grants to enable communities to develop and deliver inclusive events and projects.

“ Building community cohesion where trust and sense of belonging are paramount is imperative to help communities and place thrive

— Newlocal.org.uk

”

Funding

The following Council grants are available for partner and other local organisations to apply for to deliver projects that support the delivery of Rushmoor Together priorities:

- Supporting Communities Grants £20k
 - Pride in Place grants £10k
 - Rushmoor Together Grants £80k
-

Monitoring Impact and Challenging Progress

The Partner Steering Group meet at least every two months to review progress against the plan and identify any changing needs or challenges. At each meeting partners will provide an update on projects and, when needed, seek the support of the wider group.

The group will provide an impact report to the Council at the end of the year.

Supporting Communities Action Plan

Summary of Projects to be delivered in 2025-26

Physical and Mental Health			
Project Outline	Impact	Status	Notes / Support Needs
<p>Active in Rushmoor Summer campaign to promote sport and physical activity for all. The programme will include free taster sessions to try across the borough during the summer at local community events including Victoria Day, Donkey Derby and Moorfest. Moorfest - 13th July - stalls for clubs and groups and 'have a go' sessions.</p>	<p>Increased physical activity levels</p> <p>Communities are more aware of the local sports and activities offer, and the benefits of staying active. Venues and providers offering discounts and offers for new users.</p>	<p>Showcasing in community events - May - July</p>	<p>£5,000 funding Lead: Rushmoor BC</p>
<p>Live Longer Better activities - Young at heart The production of a hard copy guide highlighting the the Live Longer Better campaign - <u>Live Longer Better Health and social care Hampshire County Council</u>. To be translated into Nepali.</p> <p>Face to face engagement with our elderly population Delivered by Rushmoor Healthy Living who will take the Live Longer Better information and appropriate activities out to local communities and groups</p> <p>Nepali social and physical activity group to be set up in Farnborough by Rushmoor Healthy Living, supported by Rushmoor BC.</p>	<p>Embracing the County wide Live Longer Better campaign, supporting our growing number of older adults.</p> <p>Increase activity and social support among older residents, including the Nepali community through translated materials. Elderly residents will be better informed of the support and activities available to them.</p> <p>Improved social interaction and physical activity levels by this group. The Live Longer Better principles will be explored and shared appropriately with this group.</p> <p>The improvement of knowledge of Live Longer Better principles is key.</p>	<p>Two years to March 2027</p>	<p>£15,500 funding from Hampshire County Council.</p> <p>Funding ideas delivered by a Live Longer Better Community of Practice, Delivered by Rushmoor Healthy Living.</p>
<p>Steady and Strong classes Working with Hampshire County Council Falls Prevention service and NHS Frimley Health & Care (physios). Two classes set up in Farnborough, one further class to be set up in Aldershot.</p>	<p>Older adults have increased strength and balance to mitigate against falls.</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>	<p>Self-funded by customer charges, therefore sustainability is vulnerable. Shortage of trained instructors in the borough. £300 for additional Aldershot class set up, funded from Live Longer Better. Lead: Rushmoor BC</p>
<p>Wellbeing walks programme Volunteer led healthy walks programme, linking in with GP's, social prescribers, leisure and community venues. 6 walks organised across the borough</p>	<p>Reaching out to different target groups, including those who are most physically inactive and need extra support. The programme supports mental and physical wellbeing. Combatting issues including depression, stress, isolation and weight loss.</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>	<p>Funded to April 2026 by Rushmoor BC. Lead: Rushmoor Voluntary Services</p>

Project Outline	Impact	Status	Notes / Support Needs
Blooming Minds A ten-week programme delivered by Rushmoor Voluntary Services Community Support Workers, for people referred by clinical or professional colleagues, which supports people to engage in a nature based, community activity.	Person-centred care to improve mental and physical health.	On going Two pilot programmes have been completed.	NHS funding agreed Lead: Rushmoor Voluntary Services
NHS Develop Physical Activity group Partner group to identify opportunities to increase physical activity in the borough. Activity includes: Targeted work with schools to help children learn the importance of staying active and eating healthily; while providing schools with the tools they need to support their students' physical wellbeing.	Increased physical activity in schools. Increased use of green space. Empowering school communities by encouraging them to take an active approach in their health and wellbeing.	Ongoing	Lead: Rushmoor BC
Men's Health Day Annual event to promote Men's Mental Health and showcase local support and activities in the borough - linked to Men's mental health month.	Rushmoor men more aware of the importance of good mental and physical health and the local support services. Stigma reduced.	November campaign and event. Date TBC	Lead: Rushmoor BC
Active Travel Sessions to increase awareness of safe cycling routes for residents to ride their bikes for pleasure and walking routes including heritage trails. Balance, Glide and Ride sessions in schools for very young cyclists. Delivery of Bikeability sessions in schools. Delivery of a family after school club, based at Farnborough Grange Infant School.	More active travel by residents, increased physical activity and safer cycling. All year R pupils in the Borough having the opportunity to learn to ride a balance bike.	Ongoing	Lead: Public Health Hampshire
Community Health Workers – Recruitment of 4 community health workers (3 in Aldershot, 1 in Farnborough) to work within PCNs in deprived areas targeting residents with health needs. Workers will link with Rushmoor BC, social prescribers and other partners.	Targeted programme to support residents with health needs and provide a range of support.	3 Community Health & Wellbeing Workers are in post.	Funded by Public Health Hampshire, based at Aldershot PCN (Salus), 12-month pilot project to the end of 2025. Lead: NHS Frimley
Whole Systems Approach to healthy weights Partner led programme to support healthier weights in Rushmoor adults and children.	Focus on physical health and also mental health, (i.e. confidence and self-image)	Ongoing	Lead: Public Health Hampshire

Project Outline	Impact	Status	Notes / Support Needs
Partnership @ Place Health Forum A partner meeting organised at least three times per annum for statutory and community health providers – agenda follows NHS Frimley strategic priorities of CVD / Hypertension, healthy weights, and smoking cessation.	Rushmoor health partners meeting regularly to help inform strategy and to be better informed of local projects and activities	Ongoing	Lead: NHS Frimley
Health and Wellbeing Events in Carers Hubs Events will include access to services including Drug and Alcohol specialist, Smoking Cessation, Weight Management, Cancer Screening service, Vaccination Team and Blood pressure checks. Blood Pressure monitor loan scheme to be introduced after the initial sessions.	Carers are better informed of the range of health and wellbeing support.	These events are ongoing, most recently 24th April and 27th May.	Lead: NHS Frimley
Carers Champions Champions acting as a central point of contact to carers, promoting awareness, and facilitating access to resources and information.	Better outcomes for both carers and those they care for.	Currently being rolled out	GP Practices are being encouraged to nominate Carers Champion in their Practice. Lead: NHS Frimley
Blood Pressure Checks Champions Volunteers from the community being trained in giving BP checks. This is to support with raising awareness in the community about the importance of BP checking and accessing services available for BP checks and monitoring.	Raising awareness about the risk of Cardiovascular Disease Empowering local population to be able to check their Blood Pressure.	Training is being rolled out.	Training is being led by Public Health Hampshire. Lead: NHS Frimley
Outreach Events in Migrant Hotels. Partner led events to deliver activities and information related to physical activity, sexual health team and primary care.	Raising awareness of services available locally to promote health and wellbeing.	Dates TBC	Citizens Advice Rushmoor
Supporting Vulnerable Residents - Assessment of need across Aldershot & Farnborough town centres in order to identify appropriate interventions. Profile of needs will enable partner organisations to respond by providing co-ordinated, targeted support to vulnerable residents including street drinkers	Detailed understanding of individuals needs and intervention required. Increased mental health support for vulnerable residents Reduction in number of people who perceive the town centres not to be safe	In development	RBC: Community Safety/Operations Service

Project Outline	Impact	Status	Notes / Support Needs
General Support to Mental Health groups/providers Ongoing support to and promotion of local health groups including Talk Mental, SUGS and Branches (currently using Rushmoor BC offices), SEEDL <u>Rushmoor Wellness</u> online platform	Provide direct mental health support to residents	Ongoing	UKSPF funded Lead: Rushmoor BC
HIV Testing support – Cohorts targeted for testing (Aldershot pilot). Support commissioned by Rushmoor Voluntary Services	Practical and emotional support of clients targeted for testing	Ongoing	NHS funded. Lead: Rushmoor Voluntary Services
Connect to Work scheme Government programme to help disabled people, those with health conditions and people with complex barriers to employment, to find sustainable work.	Supporting people with disabilities into work, providing workplaces with the support needed to accommodate those with disabilities.	Waiting for update on programme contents/delivery partners.	Lead: Hampshire County Council
Supporting Communities grants Up to £1,000 funding for projects by local community groups focused on Supporting Communities priorities.	42 different projects supported in the 2024 funding round. The majority of activities benefitted physical and mental wellbeing.	Ongoing	Total Supporting Communities fund 2025-26 is £20,000 Lead: Rushmoor BC
Non-emergency patient transport This is a limited resource made available for free to those who meet specific medical mobility needs, including the need to travel by stretcher, wheelchair or have regular visits to renal dialysis.	Support to vulnerable residents	Service transferred from SCAS to EMED on 1st April.	NHS Funded. Rushmoor Voluntary Services understand that this is not being promoted and enquirers will be directed to try voluntary services first. Farnborough Neighbourcare is established in Farnborough. There is currently no voluntary car service in Aldershot.
Mental health clients support Targeted information, advice and guidance to Talkplus clients	Targeted support to Talkpls clients	Ongoing	UKSPF funded with Talkplus Lead: CA Rushmoor
Mediation work Development of a Community mediation service	Community service to support local neighbourhood disputes	In development	Proposal being developed for initial 2 year pilot Lead: CA Rushmoor

Project Outline	Impact	Status	Notes / Support Needs
Think Safe Annual project teaching Year 6 pupils valuable safety messages including personal safety, antisocial behaviour, healthy relationships, fire safety etc.	Valuable safety messages given to Year 6 pupils ahead of transition to Year 7 and secondary school.	Annual project – taking place 28th April – 2nd May 2025	Funded by Rushmoor BC, subsidised by schools. Lead: Rushmoor Borough Council Community Safety

Economic Wellbeing

Project Outline	Impact	Status	Notes / Support Needs
Employment and Skills offer: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rushmoor Jobs Website Job and Employment Support Fairs SEEDL training platform Council Work Experience Programme (Young People's Plan) Signposting to free support programmes Partnership work to support targeted groups such as Military, NEETs, women, etc. Employment and Skills Plans (ESPs) 	<p>Easier access to local jobs for residents, free training and upskilling, raising awareness of opportunities locally, raising aspirations and confidence, providing local people with an opportunity to experience the workplace.</p> <p>ESPs – Planning application requirement of developer contributions to social value including local jobs, schools visits, careers guidance, donations, and apprenticeships.</p>	Ongoing	<p>Website is UKSPF funded. Lead: Rushmoor BC</p>
Nepali Employment Support Bespoke support for the Nepali community led by Greater Rushmoor Nepalese Council (GRNC) with Rushmoor BC	Easier access to local employment opportunities for Nepali community	Ongoing	Lead: GRNC
Get Ready for Winter Campaign / Support Partnership effort to prepare for increasing winter pressures and support for Rushmoor residents. Signposting residents to the range of existing resources around finance / benefits / budgeting, welfare, housing, wellbeing, etc. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promoting a network of welcoming spaces/venues where people can access warmth and social interaction. Use social and physical media to promote support and advice available – webpages, leaflets, social media, etc. 	Support to combat negative impact on residents impacted by cost of living challenges	Ongoing	<p>Regular discussion among partners about targeted support to provide relevant cost of living support provision. Standing agenda item at Supporting Communities meetings into Winter 2025/6. No direct cost. Lead: Rushmoor BC</p>
Mental Health Project Longstanding specialist mental health advisory service, run by Citizens Advice Rushmoor, working with the NHS and other partner organisations from within the local health and VCSE sectors to support those with severe and enduring mental-ill health with expert advice in areas such as debt, benefits, and housing. Expansion currently being explored to extend service permanently to those under NHS Talking Therapies.	Helping improve client's quality of life, maintain independence, and prevent relapse.	Ongoing	<p>Funded by NHS Frimley and Broadhurst, with support from UKSPF and Innovation Fund to support TalkPlus extension during 2024/25. Partners include Andover Mind etc. Lead: CA Rushmoor</p>

Project Outline	Impact	Status	Notes / Support Needs
Domestic Abuse – specialist advisory service Looking to launch a pilot project across the North Hampshire Community Safety Partnership area (Basingstoke & Deane, Hart, and Rushmoor), to offer a specialist advice and casework service for victims/survivors of domestic abuse, to complement other commissioned DA services. This builds on existing Nepali Domestic & Sexual Abuse Service, based within Citizens Advice Rushmoor.	Supporting victims of DA with complex advice needs	Proposed launch in October	Exploring bid to OPCC’s Safer Communities Fund. Lead: CA Rushmoor
Advice in Crisis Complementary advice provision for those in food poverty who are accessing local food banks and pantries. Building on existing partnerships with the Community Grub Hub, Farnborough Foodbank (Cove Church and St Peter’s Church), and Kerith Community Pantry.	Support to combat negative impact on residents impacted by cost of living challenges	Ongoing	Lead: CA Rushmoor
Money Matters Bolstering financial capability offer locally, including workshops and 1-to-1 support. Activities include ‘Cook and Budget’ workshops in collaboration with Farnborough College of Technology, as well as a similar arrangement with Hart & Rushmoor Young Carers. Look to improve number of volunteer financial capability advisers within existing Citizens Advice Rushmoor services.	Improve community’s financial resilience/capability, i.e. money management skills		Lead: CA Rushmoor
Green Doctor Service available to support those at risk of fuel poverty. A targeted approach via connected care data is being used for those in properties with a low EPC rating and those living with respiratory conditions. Accepts self-referral and referrals from professionals.	Vulnerable residents supported with debt reduction and associated physical and mental health.	Ongoing	Groundworks is the current provider. Lead: NHS Frimley
Work Well An eight-week, social prescribing modelled service which aims to support people back into work from being signed off as unwell. Triggered by the issuing of a second fit-note, referrals will be made into Work Well.	Rushmoor Voluntary Services based support staff will connect with individuals to identify the barriers to being fit to work and to utilise a personal budget to respond to this, e.g. to pay for gym access, physio appointments etc.	Contract pending.	This is a DWP funded project to be delivered by Rushmoor Voluntary Services via Frimley ICB. Lead: Rushmoor Voluntary Services

Community Belonging

Project Outline	Impact	Status	Notes / Support Needs
Rushmoor Voices Community engagement group. Task and Finish Group on Community Cohesion is working to engage with local communities to strengthen social cohesion in Rushmoor.	The project intends to address community tensions and create safe spaces for dialogue.	Planning	Lead: Rushmoor BC
Rushmoor Youth Voice A forum for young people to engage with experts and discuss important issues that affect them and their community. The issues include health, education, aspirations, climate change, safety, and drug/alcohol awareness. Meets at least six times a year.	Young people engage with local issues and participate in debates, workshops, and social media discussions.	Ongoing	Lead: Rushmoor BC
Aldershot Youth Café A safe space for young people, with activities to support mental health and well-being.	Increased engagement for young people Provision of a safe space for young people	Ongoing	Lead: Rushmoor BC
Reduction of Anti Social Behaviour in Town Centres Development of a partner led approach to reduce street drinking and anti social behaviour in town centres. Approach to consider the potential for a mental health practitioner to provide dedicated support.	Reduction in anti social behaviour and increase in perception of feeling safe	In development	Lead: Police, RBC and health partners
Detached Youth Work Grant funded youth outreach work aiming to engage with young people in potential hotspot areas – offering advice and signposting. Visible engagement at hotspot areas across the borough.	Provide reassurance to public and young people as well as signposting as and when appropriate.	Ongoing limited funding likely to be exhausted Summer 2025.	Funded by OPCC and Safer Streets 5 Home Office Fund. Further funding being applied for to extend. Lead: Rushmoor Borough Council Community Safety
Yellow Brick Road Legacy Project Grant funded mentoring project, working one to one with young local people at risk of exploitation and falling out of mainstream education.	Vulnerable young people tackle the issues they are facing and improve life chances.	Ongoing funding until September 2025.	Funded by OPCC Safer Communities Fund. Further funding being applied for to extend. Lead: Yellow Brick Road
Rushmoor Link Community website Maintained by Rushmoor Voluntary Services, continued effort to promote this community signposting website both to community groups and to Rushmoor residents.	Residents and community providers / professionals can access information about local services in one place. 28 categories of support and information. Find local support in Rushmoor - Rushmoor Link	May 2025 – Presentation to Nepali community groups	Set up funded by Rushmoor BC and Hart & Rushmoor Local Children's Partnership. Lead: Rushmoor Voluntary Services

Project Outline	Impact	Status	Notes / Support Needs
Volunteer Buddy Support To recruit and train volunteers (Buddies), to support migrant communities to engage in social and volunteering opportunities.	Fosters an inclusive and connected community and sense of belonging. Support’s migrant communities to participate in local life and increase integration.	Ongoing	Funded by Rushmoor BC- resettlemetrn Lead: Rushmoor Voluntary Services
Asylum seeker and Ukraine guests support Ongoing support of Ukrainians and their host families. Support towards independent living and the promotion of the Ukrainian community and activities in Rushmoor.	Ensures appropriate support is provided to asylum seekers and good links maintained with officials responsible for their upkeep. Ukrainian guests feel supported in Rushmoor. Ukrainian guests feel welcomed and given opportunities for cohesion and integration.	Ongoing	Lead: Rushmoor BC
Pride in Place grants scheme Grants up to £1,500 supporting projects that increase pride in our local community, e.g. community integration, access to physical and cultural activities, access to local amenities and green spaces, building capacity of community groups.	Community led projects that enhance a sense of pride and belonging across Rushmoor.	In progress	£10,000 total fund in 2025-26 Lead: Rushmoor BC
Mediation work Community support for neighbourhood disputes disputes	Community service to support local neighbourhood disputes	October/Nov start	Lead: CA Rushmoor

CABINET

**COUNCILLOR SOPHIE PORTER
HEALTHY COMMUNITIES & ACTIVE LIVES
PORTFOLIO HOLDER**

JULY 8TH 2025

KEY DECISION NO

REPORT NO. ED2502

COMMUNITY RECOVERY FUND

SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

Following the public disorder that took place in July and August 2024 the Council received £600k from the Community Recovery Fund (CRF), made available by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG)

This report outlines the Council spending so far and identifies plans to allocate the remaining funding available.

The Cabinet is asked to:

- Note the spend so far and how this has supported wider community cohesion and resilience.
- Endorse the remaining allocation of funding
- Note how the spending aligns to the Council's Delivery Plan priorities as well as the priorities of Rushmoor Together – a partnership plan for tackling inequalities and supporting the local community.

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1. This report sets out the Council spend against the Community Recovery Fund (CRF) so far and outlines how the remaining funding will be allocated.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1. In September 2024 the Government introduced a £15 million Community Recovery Fund to support communities impacted by the public disorder that took place in July and August 2024.
- 2.2. The Ministry for Housing, Communities, & Local Government (MHCLG) identified 20 Local Authorities across the country, including Rushmoor, that had been significantly affected by the public disorder.

- 2.3. Rushmoor Council received £600k (£510k revenue and £90k capital) The Fund was designed to offer maximum flexibility, allowing each local place to respond to their circumstances to deliver support.
- 2.4. Broadly speaking the funding could be used for activities that involved:
- Immediate clean up and repair
 - Security and safety
 - Communications
 - Activity to rebuild social trust and promote cohesion between communities
- 2.5. Following the protests, in August 2024, a Motion to Council was considered that acknowledged Rushmoor as a welcoming and inclusive Borough but recognised local community tensions; with residents feeling unheard, fearful or both. The motion called upon all involved in protests to do so in a peaceful manner. Members were unanimous in their support of the motion and agreed to engage together to tackle the issues and ensure that the concerns of the whole community were listened to.
- 2.6. Following the motion, Members agreed to 'Establish a cross-party working group to work with local community groups and leaders to better understand and address community concerns.' The group was allocated a budget of £50k from a separate fund, prior to the CRF allocation. A total of £18k has been spent against the budget to commission the Belong Network, an organisation experienced in social cohesion and connecting communities, to work with local groups and community leaders and listen to concerns and issues. This work was called Rushmoor Voices.
- 2.7. A final report, including recommendations, on Rushmoor Voices was received in April 2025. The Council has agreed to continue working with Belong for a further 9 months. Recommendations from the report have been considered in the development of 'Rushmoor Together' – a partnership plan for tackling deprivation and inequality with a new priority on community belonging reflecting the need to focus on integration and togetherness. The report has also been used to help identify the best use of the Community Recovery Fund.

3. COMMUNITY RECOVERY SPEND

Spent or Allocated

- 3.1. To date the Council has either spent or allocated £345k (323k revenue and 22k capital) of funding on a range of initiatives aimed at strengthening community safety, increasing communication and engagement, and promoting cohesion.
- 3.2. **Strategic Communication & Media Training** £10k for Members and officers to attend bespoke communication training.
- 3.3. **Safety and Security** - £10k on security at Rushmoor Council meetings to ensure the safety of residents, Members and staff.

- 3.4. **Town Centre Events and Arts Programme** £150k allocated for a programme of work to rebuild social trust and promote cohesion between communities. This includes an enhanced town centre events programme to support ongoing UKSPF projects.
- 3.5. **Development of Rushmoor Youth Voice** – £4k Engage with young people through Rushmoor Youth Voice to seek views about what interventions young people feel would add value, address issues with mis/disinformation. Work is in progress but could include youth mentoring support programmes for those at the greatest risk of violence/disorder/criminality who need additional support in developing resilience to exploitative relationships and making positive decisions. The Council to explore suitable partners to deliver this intervention.
- 3.6. **Ceremonial Beacon** (Capital spend 22k, Revenue 2k) The Beacon was officially lit for the first time at the VE Day commemorations in the park on 8 May. It features the Rushmoor crest and is an important new symbol of unity for the local community. It will serve as a focus for residents to come together on special occasions for many years to come.
- 3.7. **St Georges Day Celebrations:** £1k A celebration event at the Council offices to mark St. Georges Day. Celebrations included flag raising and speeches, music from a local brass band, singing from a local choir and a range of refreshments.
- 3.8. **Grants Programmes** £30k including Pride in Place, Shop fronts and supporting communities grant funding.
- 3.9. **Supporting Communities Plan** £20k To support the delivery of the Supporting Communities work programme.
- 3.10. **Communication & Engagement Resources** £96k Resources to further enhance community engagement efforts to better reach disadvantaged populations. Includes the continuation of a dedicated Community Engagement resource and an additional communications resource within the communications team.
- 3.11. A summary of expenditure either spent or agreed to date is as follows:

Programme of activity – Allocated* or spent to date	Funding Amount
Security at the Council offices	10
Strategic Communications and media training	10
Ceremonial Beacon in Manor Park (<i>Capital</i>)	22
Ceremonial Beacon (Revenue costs)	2
St Georges Day Celebration and event	1
Resources to further enhance community engagement efforts to better reach disadvantaged populations including the continuation of a dedicated	96

Community Engagement resource and an additional communications resource within the communications team	
Development of Rushmoor Youth Voice/engagement with young people	4*
Events and arts programme of activity	150*
Grants Programmes	30*
Supporting Communities Programme of work	20*
Total	345

Planned Spend for the remaining budget

- 3.12. There is currently £187k remaining in the Community Recovery Fund. The Council, together with input from partners, has identified the following projects to be delivered in 25/26.
- 3.13. **Continuation of work with Belong Network** £25k. To deliver a programme of work with local community groups, partners and Elected Members building on the Rushmoor Voices project. This will include tension monitoring and effective approaches to countering misinformation, challenging prejudices and stereotypes, building trust and cohesive communities.
- 3.14. **Community Mediation Service** Up to £80k. Development of a free and impartial mediation services delivered by Citizens Advice, to help enable the resolution of a range of everyday conflicts and disputes in the community.
- 3.15. **Rushmoor Together Grant** - £80k Development of a Rushmoor Together fund for local charities, partners and community groups to apply for. Projects will be considered against set criteria including the need to demonstrate how projects will: build connections between communities, help to address tensions in the community, enhance critical thinking skills and resilience against misinformation, particularly among young people. All applications will be subject to assessment and a decision will be made at the grants panel.
- 3.16. There is an outstanding capital balance of £68k and £2k revenue remaining from the fund. This must be spent before March 2026. The Council is working with partners to consider further options for this spend.

Programme – Future Allocation proposed	Funding Amount
Community Mediation Service delivered by the CA (18 month – 2 year project)	80
Continuation of work with the Belong Network	25
Creation of a Rushmoor Together Grant Fund	80
Total	185

Alternative Options

- 3.17. Not to continue working with the Belong Network.
- 3.18. Not to fund the Mediation Service on the basis that there is similar, but limited, support from other partner organisations and take up of some mediation is low. However, this project was widely supported by Elected Members.
- 3.19. An option to not use a contribution from the Community Recovery Fund towards the UKSPF programme was previously considered. This was rejected on the basis that it would result in reduced activity across the UKSPF programme. This would negatively impact the ability of the Council to rebuild social trust and promote cohesion between communities.
- 3.20. Alternative approaches, including a more limited grant programme were considered. However, the suggested proposals offer the greatest flexibility, responsiveness to local needs and direct benefit to the community.

Consultation

- 3.21. The Council established a cross-party Community Engagement Task & Finish group to work with local community groups and leaders to better understand, and address community concerns.
- 3.22. As part of this work the Council commissioned the Belong Network to support the delivery of the workplan of the Community Engagement Task and Finish Group, with the aim of working with local community groups and leaders to better understand, listen to and address community concerns. This work involved individual and group meetings with community groups and individuals which we called 'Rushmoor Voices'.
- 3.23. Council officers, partners and the cross-party Community Engagement Task & Finish group, have been engaged in developing the approach to identify the best use of community recovery funding.

4. IMPLICATIONS (of proposed course of action)

Risks

- 4.1. There are no direct risks to the Council. There is a reputational risk if the Council does not spend the money to benefit the local community.

Legal Implications

- 4.2. The terms of the grant are set out in "Community Recovery Fund: Guidance" published by MHCLG on 18 September 2024. This requires that the expenditure of the grant falls outside the scope of what the Council would "normally expect to incur" and is used to support measures taken in response to the public

disorder that occurred in the Borough in August 2024. The aims of these measures must be to:

- Safeguard life or property
- Prevent suffering or inconvenience
- Reduce the risk of further disorder in the future; and
- Rebuild social trust and promote cohesion between communities

4.3. The incurred and proposed expenditure of the grant outlined by the report is consistent with the terms set out in the Guidance.

4.4. The Council is responsible for ensuring that the funding is managed in accordance with the UK's subsidy control regime and that any funding is spent (including by third parties) in compliance with the appropriate public contract legislation. The appropriate public contract legislation is the Procurement Act 2023 and the Procurement Regulations 2024.

Financial Implications

4.5. The Community Recovery Grant is ringfenced money the Council has received directly from the Government for a specific purpose.

Resource Implications

4.6 The success of the work funded by CRF will require ongoing engagement and work across the council, notably: Community & Partnerships; Community Safety; Resettlement Manager and Community Engagement Officer as well as key partner organisations. The Council will monitor the success and progress of the projects and most importantly, the impact they have on local communities as part of its monitoring and performance process.

Equalities Impact Implications

4.7 The work will advance the equality of opportunity for all residents with a focus on minority communities' and those who are experiencing, or at increased risk of experiencing vulnerability.

5 CONCLUSIONS

5.1 Cabinet is recommended to endorse the spend as outlined in the report.

5.2 The projects identified in this report will support existing UKSPF projects and the delivery of Council priorities, most notably the priorities of Pride in Place – safe and vibrant communities and Community & Wellbeing – Active Lives, Healthier and stronger communities. This relates to creating stronger, cohesive, and more confident communities in which people feel safe, welcome and connected.

- 5.3 The projects and spend identified in the report also align to the Rushmoor Together partnership plan and specifically the priority of Community Belonging – which is about strong, safe resilient communities, with a sense of community pride and belonging for all. An allocation of funding towards the community mediation service and the Community Together grant fund will provide direct support to residents and partners and empower local communities to support one another.

Appendix: CA Mediation Proposal

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North Hampshire Mediation Partnership – outline project proposal

1. OVERVIEW

- 1.1. A new project, offering free and impartial mediation services, would help Rushmoor Borough Council (RBC) to enable the resolution a range of everyday conflicts and disputes in our local community, utilising part of its allocation from the Community Recovery Fund to directly promote cohesion and improve social trust.
- 1.2. This proposal builds upon Citizens Advice Rushmoor's (CAR) experience as one of our area's largest and most enduring local charities, providing free, independent, and confidential advice and advocacy services to the Rushmoor community for the last 85 years. Underpinning our charity's success is a continued ambition to maintain high quality, tailored services free at the point of use to all residents. As the people's champion, we give people the knowledge and confidence they need to find their way forward – whoever they are, and whatever their problem.
- 1.3. As an existing partner of RBC, CAR already delivers a range of advice services with a strong track record of impact and value that supplement the Council's statutory duties. That work, coupled with efforts to support the Council achieve its wider strategic priorities, would make us uniquely placed to establish such a partnership and further advance our shared vision of a society where people face fewer problems.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1. In our fast-paced world, we can all face challenges in our daily lives. Maybe we live in communities with other people close by and sometimes we don't get on. Doing our best to settle down and bring up a family, it doesn't always work out. Even at our workplace, we can become involved in disputes which we can't easily fix. These disputes will, most often, be left unsettled to escalate and cause tension, damage relationships and community cohesion, and reduce our wellbeing, with seemingly our only option to undertake antagonistic, destructive, lengthy, and expensive court litigation.
- 2.2. Mediation, however, is a powerful and underutilised tool for people to resolve disputes through managed communication. Approaching a dispute as a problem to be solved rather than as a battle to be won by one side or the other, mediation is collaborative rather than adversarial. Experts at helping parties work together to reach a fair solution, not just arguing a particular point of view – mediators will likely help you make progress more quickly and at much lower cost than through the traditional solicitor and court route, and much more effectively than without any support at all.
- 2.3. Evidence suggests that the overall success rate of mediation continues to be very high, with [recent data from the Centre for Effective Dispute Resolution \(CEDR\)](#) showing an

aggregate settlement rate of 92%. Although not Community Mediation-specific, it provides a strong indication of the broad efficacy of the process.

- 2.4. Neutral, qualified and experienced mediators listen and help people to hear one another, dealing with the needs of each individual or group. Mediators enable people to make points or ask questions in a safe environment. Agreements reached by mutual consent can also pave a way to improved future communication.
- 2.5. Many local councils already advocate the use of mediation, either by providing in-house services as seen in [Gosport and Fareham councils](#), funding not-for-profit services in as in [Brighton & Hove](#), or simply recommending the practice via private providers as [Hampshire County Council](#) currently do.
- 2.6. There is, nevertheless, a distinct lack of mediation services across our local area. Although a small number of providers exist, all are private, fee-paying services and almost exclusively practice only family mediation for separating couples.
- 2.7. However, further afield - albeit unavailable to us locally - are some fantastic examples of free-to-access Community Mediation services. [Mediation Surrey](#), [Portsmouth Mediation Service](#), and others provide excellent blueprints for how a local mediation service could be delivered successfully and sustainably by a VCSE partner.

3. SERVICE DELIVERY

- 3.1. The North Hampshire Mediation Partnership (NHMP) would offer free, impartial, unbiased support to help residents explore ways to resolve their conflict. This service would be designed, developed, and managed by CAR.
- 3.2. The Partnership would begin by focusing on providing Community Mediation services, be that on housing, community safety, health, or other issues. All too often conflict can arise in the community between neighbours due to issues such as noise nuisance, anti-social behaviour, parking or boundary disputes, misunderstandings, and breakdowns in communication. It is vital we do not underestimate the impact of something like a noise dispute and how it permeates into someone's life. People need help to communicate, and failure to resolve a problem can lead to poor mental health and people not feeling safe or happy in their homes. Mediators can, however, quickly and constructively address such disputes involving neighbours, family members, young people, or groups of people, in circumstances where each side is willing to participate.
- 3.3. Community Mediation can also help support local authorities with statutory responsibilities flowing from legislation such as the Homelessness Reduction Act. For example, mediation can help resolve intergenerational disputes where conflict has arisen between parents and adult children who reside together and where parents want a child to leave the family home. It can assist in facilitating communication, and in supporting individuals and familial relationships, so that the conflict can be resolved or at least managed until a planned move can take place, thus helping to reduce homelessness and preventing a crisis intervention from becoming necessary.

- 3.4. Brexit, the pandemic, the mass stabbings in Southport last summer; all are, amongst others, referenced as catalysts for the growing level of hate crime we see in our communities. They demonstrate how varied and often unforeseeable the triggers can be, which provokes a suggestion that if Community Mediation were better embedded, it could assist with the de-escalation of tension and support future crime prevention.
- 3.5. The scope for Community Mediation to provide a safe space for discussion and dialogue, and for individuals and communities to come together and resolve their differences, is broad and brings into sharp focus the importance of responding to local needs. Having a central space for inter-community discussion is wider but just as vital as that offered by a standard mediation process.
- 3.6. Services would principally be delivered by a team of trained volunteer mediators. A clear benefit of the volunteer model is the cost-effective way that mediation can be delivered, although that is not to say that there isn't a cost, reflecting the cost of premises, a small staff team, IT support, insurances, venue hire, DBS checks, volunteer expenses and so on. A particular feature of the volunteer model is the ethos of services provided by the community for the benefit of the community. The fact that volunteers give their time to help others often leads to respect for the service from its beneficiaries. In terms of the efficacy of mediation, arguably the greatest benefit of the volunteer model is its independent nature.
- 3.7. Those volunteers would work under the supervision and management of a paid Service Manager (0.6FTE), with administrative support from a paid Administrator (0.1FTE):

- **Service Manager (0.6FTE)**

Role Purpose: to manage the day-to-day operations of the Partnership, ensuring the provision of quality services for all clients

Duties:

- *act as Project Lead for the NHMP within CAR and externally*
- *line manage paid staff and volunteers within the Partnership, including performance appraisals, observations, and ongoing supervision*
- *lead on quality assurance to ensure that all services are delivered in accordance with professional and internal standards, ensuring all mediators complete required training (including refreshers) as required*
- *monitor appointment schedules to ensure efficient allocation of resources*
- *provide mediation services as and when required*

- **Administrator (0.1FTE)**

Role Purpose: to provide administrative support to ensure the efficient and effective delivery of NHMP's services

Duties:

- *respond to and manage incoming referrals effectively via telephone and online systems, to meet agreed service standards*
- *support the management of appointments and diary systems*
- *provide wider administration support, including client data, summary documents, and associated tasks as required*
- *provide practical and technical administrative support to mediators to ensure efficient service delivery*

3.8. As with our existing advice services, a holistic and wraparound approach would be taken to supplement any mediation, with service users referred and signposted, where appropriate, to other support and organisations to best meet their needs.

4. TRAINING

- 4.1. Mediators would, as a minimum, be expected to complete a basic level of external training, such as the [Mediation Skills for Facilitated Conversations course \(UK Mediation\)](#). This would be supplemented by a programme of internal learning and development, arranged by the Service Manager. Recruitment is likely to take place in regular cohorts – following CAR's existing and successful volunteer training model - to ensure a steady supply of new mediators.
- 4.2. The Service Manager would hold a more formal professional mediation qualification, such as the [Interpersonal Mediation Practitioner's Certificate \(UK Mediation\)](#). They, too, would undertake their own programme of ongoing learning and development.

5. SUSTAINABILITY

5.1. CAR are confident that, working with other public, private, and charitable partners, we could over time unlock substantial opportunities for funded and/or income-generating mediation services. This may include expanding areas of practice, for example:

- **Workplace Mediation**
Navigating interpersonal conflict between individuals or within a team, preventing misunderstanding escalating into costly disputes.
- **Education Mediation**
Helping parents, young people and local authorities reach agreements about arrangements for SEN and disabled young people.
- **Family Mediation**
Working with families in conflict, especially those divorcing or separating, stay in control of arrangements over children, property, and finance.

5.2. Many mediation services are utilising the availability of the [Family Mediation Voucher Scheme](#) – although currently still time-limited – to provide funding to support people

with family law disputes. Additionally, some providers have secured funding from their local Police & Crime Commissioner, as [in Thames Valley](#), where services help to prevent the escalation of anti-social behaviour.

- 5.3. Expansion in these areas would not only improve our offer to the community, but increase the Partnership's long-term financial sustainability; enabling us to retain the Community Mediation services after the Council's initial investment was exhausted.

6. REPORTING

- 6.1. Full, confidential case records and history will be kept, in line with CAR's own internal requirements and quality standards. Reports may be prepared to illustrate the impact and value of the service, including:

- *projected and actual outcomes, including proportion of agreements reached*
- *service user demographics*
- *types of issue mediated on*
- *level and format of support offered*
- *other measures to be agreed*

7. CONCLUSION

- 7.1. This proposal offers RBC an exciting opportunity to develop a lasting legacy from the horrendous public disorder our communities experienced in Summer 2024.
- 7.2. Many people still, sadly, feel unheard. Yet, more readily available mediation services to address a range of community disputes could encourage greater communication within our communities, serving to support not only those in disagreement, but help us all to become more aware, receptive, and flexible – improving social trust.
- 7.3. Building on the strength of our existing partnership, as well as the models of efficacy and success seen elsewhere, we believe the services of the North Hampshire Mediation Partnership have a transformative potential for Rushmoor.

Chief Executive Officer
February 2025

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CABINET

COUNCILLOR CHRISTINE GUINNESS
CABINET MEMBER FOR PRIDE IN PLACE /
NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES

8th July 2025

KEY DECISION? YES

REPORT NO. OS2508

RENEWAL OF THE ALDERSHOT PUBLIC SPACES PROTECTION ORDER**SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS:**

This report provides an update on Aldershot Town Centre antisocial behaviour and seeks approval for the renewal of the Aldershot Public Spaces Protection Order (PSPO).

Recommendation:

That Cabinet is recommended to:

1. Approve the renewal of the Aldershot PSPO

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1. This report recommends the renewal of the current Public Spaces Protection Order (PSPO) to address antisocial behaviour concerns in Aldershot Town Centre and the nearby Municipal Gardens. The existing PSPO has been in place since July 2022 and data demonstrates the ongoing need for the order. Consultation has confirmed that the community agree that the order is still necessary and supported.
- 1.2. This is a key decision as the PSPO area covers Wellington, Rowhill and Manor Park wards.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1. The Antisocial Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014 introduced simpler, more effective powers to tackle antisocial behaviour that provide better protection for victims and communities. This includes the introduction of PSPOs to control individuals or groups that are engaging in activities which have a detrimental effect on others.
- 2.2. Aldershot Town Centre has experienced street based antisocial behaviour for a number of years, often centred around the Victoria Road area near The George public house and Ozone restaurant. The antisocial behaviour is committed by a large and often transient group of individuals who chose to spend their time consuming alcohol and drugs during the day and gathering in

groups. The consequent behaviour is rowdy and inconsiderate and has a detrimental effect on the wider community.

2.3. A PSPO was introduced in July 2022 in order to tackle alcohol related antisocial behaviour and public urination/defecation and to complement the council business plan in terms of Aldershot Town Centre regeneration and ensuring that we look to ensure our towns are “family-friendly, safe, vibrant and sustainable places...”.

2.4. The current conditions of the PSPO are as follows:

- Failing to comply with a direction not to consume, in breach of this order, alcohol, or anything which an Authorised Officer reasonably believes to be alcohol where the Authorised Officer reasonable believes that a person has engaged in antisocial behaviour
- Failing to surrender a container of alcohol (whether open or not) when asked to do so by an Authorised Officer
- Urinating or defecating other than when making use of facilities designed for such use

2.5. PSPOs must be reviewed every three years with a decision based on evidence whether to renew, vary or remove the order. The area that the PSPO covers should also be reviewed to ensure that it is necessary and proportionate.

3. DETAILS OF THE PROPOSAL

General

3.1. The PSPO is well used as a means of engagement with regard to street based antisocial behaviour in Aldershot Town Centre. Compliance is at high levels when officers attend and engage. It is well regarded by council officers and partner agencies as a useful tool in responding to levels of antisocial behaviour.

3.2. With ongoing town centre regeneration schemes it is even more important to ensure officers have a full range of tools available.

Data

3.3. Compliance with the PSPO is generally positive – available data and anecdotal feedback when uniformed officers are present is that when asked to stop drinking or to move on, groups in the town centre are generally compliant.

3.4. Council data from the period July 2002 to December 2023 shows 81 engagements under the PSPO from council officers, with 98% compliance and 1 Fixed Penalty Notice (FPN) issued for non-compliance

- 3.5. A further 2 FPNs have since been issued for non-compliance in relation to alcohol related antisocial behaviour. The low level of FPNs indicates compliance with uniformed offices enforcing this order.
- 3.6. Police recorded incidents across the three years that the PSPO has been in force paint a varied picture. From April – December 2022, there were 113 reports of antisocial behaviour in the town centre area. For the same period in 2023 this increased to 168 (a 39% increase) before dropping to 105 reports during 2024.
- 3.7. Reports of drug use have decreased whilst reports related to alcohol and combined alcohol and drug use have increased, including during the daytime.
- 3.8. Crime reports in the area have decreased, with a significant drop in theft offences. There has however been an increase in daytime public order offences within the town centre ward

Consultation

- 3.9. This report has been prepared having sought the views of the Portfolio Holder for Pride in Place / Neighbourhood Services.
- 3.10. Public consultation requirements for a renewal of a PSPO are less onerous than when implementing a PSPO. Residents were asked to email their views to Community Safety following a website and Facebook post on 13th March 2025 with responses accepted until 3rd April 2025.
- 3.11. 28 responses were received from members of the public with all in favour of the renewal or strengthening of the PSPO. A number of comments also mentioned the need for increased officer presence and enforcement in the area as well as extending the area of the PSPO to include Manor Park.
- 3.12. Key partner agencies were asked for their views including Hampshire and Isle of Wight Constabulary, Office of the Police and Commissioner, Aldershot Civic Society, Inclusion (drug and alcohol support) and Two Saints (supported accommodation provider).
- 3.13. Partner responses were received from District Commander Chief Inspector Gillian Cox and Temporary Detective Chief Inspector Battersby, Police Liaison to the Police and Crime Commissioner, with both supporting the renewal of the PSPO. No objection was received from Inclusion.
- 3.14. Details of the renewal were also sent to local faith leaders for comment. No comments or questions were received.

4. IMPLICATIONS (of proposed course of action)

Risks

Risks of implementing a PSPO include the risk of challenge through the High Court of Judicial Review. It should be noted that there were no challenges raised to the PSPO when originally granted in 2022.

Legal Implications

- 4.1. The power and requirements for extending a PSPO are set out within Part 4 of Chapter 2 of the Act and is supplemented by the Anti-social Behaviour Crime and Policing Act 2014 (Publication of Public Space Protection Orders) Regulations 2014 and statutory guidance issued by the Secretary of State.
- 4.2. The basic requirements for extending a PSPO are set out in the body of this report, in particular, the need to be satisfied on reasonable grounds that the two statutory conditions in Section 60(2) of the Act that doing so is necessary to prevent—
 - (a) occurrence or recurrence after that time of the activities identified in the order, or
 - (b) an increase in the frequency or seriousness of those activities after that time.
- 4.3. In deciding whether to extend a PSPO The Council must have the same considerations as if it were first making one.
- 4.4. In determining restrictions should be included, by Section 72 of the Act, the Council must have particular regard to the rights of freedom of expression and freedom of assembly set out in Articles 10 and 11 of the Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms 1950 (“the Convention”). The restrictions imposed by the PSPO are not considered to engage these Articles and are considered compatible with rights under the Convention. In the event however that the Articles are considered to be engaged, it is considered that the restrictions are permitted by paragraphs (2) of both those Articles. This is on the basis that the restrictions on those rights imposed by the PSPO are lawful, necessary and proportionate. This conclusion is reached given the nature of the restrictions, their imposition in accordance with the relevant statutory provisions and Guidance and having regard to the evidence and detrimental affect the behaviours concerned is having or is likely to have on those who use the areas.
- 4.5. Under Section 66 of the Act any challenge to the validity of a PSPO must be made in the High Court by an interested person within six weeks of it being made or extended. The order will be treated as having been “made” on the day when the Council approves it (namely the date of this meeting). The Council can choose to nominate a different (later) date from which the PSPO will have effect.
- 4.6. An interested person is an individual who lives in, or regularly works in, or visits the restricted area. This means that only those who are directly affected by the

restrictions have the power to challenge. The PSPO can be challenged on two grounds:

1. That the Council did not have power to make the order, or to include particular prohibitions or requirements imposed, or
 2. That the procedural requirements for making the PSPO (e.g. consultation) were not complied with.
- 4.7. On any application to the High Court challenging the validity of an Order the Court may suspend its operation or any of the prohibitions or requirements imposed by it until the final determination of the proceedings. If the Court is satisfied the Council did not have the power to make the PSPO, or it did but the Council failed to comply with the procedural requirements and, the applicant has been substantially prejudiced by that failure, it may quash the order, or any of the prohibitions or requirements imposed by it.
- 4.8. All proposals to make, vary, discharge or extend PSPOs, regardless of the method of authorisation will be made in accordance with the statutory provisions and guidance.

Financial Implications

- 4.9. There are no direct financial implications of this report or renewing of the PSPO in its current form.

Resource Implications

- 4.5 Council officers are already expected to engage, educate and enforce the PSPO and this will continue should it be renewed.
- 4.6 Any visible engagement or enforcement action will come with resource implications for staffing in terms of general staff time, case file building, taking statements, gathering evidence and potential court attendance. The majority of this can be managed with current staffing levels although some external legal advice may be required.

Equalities Impact Implications

- 4.6 Public authorities have a Public Sector Equalities Duty under the Equality Act 2010 to consider and address equality issues in all their functions, insofar as is relevant and proportionate. The Equality Impact Assessment has been reviewed and updated to consider the impact of the extended Public Space Protection Order on the protected characteristics groups and its implications for the Public Sector Equality Duty. The conclusion of the assessment remains that the order would be generally positive for all protected characteristic groups.
- 4.6 Those who are alcohol dependant or have other identified issues will be signposted to appropriate support agencies, if not already engaged with them.

The consultation for this proposal has been made accessible to all key stakeholders, and groups, as well as statutory consultees

- 4.6 A copy of the Equality Impact Assessment is attached as **Appendix B**.

5 CONCLUSIONS

- 5.6 The Aldershot PSPO has proved a valuable tool for council officers and Police when responding to drink related antisocial behaviour in Aldershot Town Centre. It's renewal will allow this work to continue in tandem with further work to help and support vulnerable individuals in Aldershot.

LIST OF APPENDICES/ANNEXES:

Appendix A – Aldershot Town Centre PSPO

Appendix B – Equality Impact Assessment

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS: N/A

CONTACT DETAILS:

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Head of Service – James Duggin – Executive Head of Operations,
James.Duggin@rushmoor.gov.uk, 01252 398543

ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR, CRIME AND POLICING ACT 2014

SECTION 59

PUBLIC SPACES PROTECTION ORDER

This order is made by the Rushmoor Borough Council (the 'Council') and shall be known as the **Public Spaces Protection Order (Aldershot Town Centre) 2022**.

PRELIMINARY

1. The Council, in making this Order is satisfied on reasonable grounds that:

The activities identified below have been carried out in public places within the Council's area and have had a detrimental effect on the quality of life of those in the locality,

and that:

the effect, or likely effect, of the activities:

is, or is likely to be, of a persistent or continuing nature,

is, or is likely to be, such as to make the activities unreasonable, and

justifies the restrictions imposed by the notice.
2. The Council is satisfied that the prohibitions imposed by this Order are reasonable to impose in order to prevent the detrimental effect of these activities from continuing, occurring or recurring, or to reduce that detrimental effect or to reduce the risk of its continuance, occurrence or recurrence.
3. The Council has had regard to the rights and freedoms set out in the European Convention on Human Rights. The Council has had particular regard to the rights and freedoms set out in Article 10 (right of freedom of expression) and Article 11 (right of freedom of assembly) of the European Convention on Human Rights and has concluded that the restrictions on such rights and freedoms imposed by this Order are lawful, necessary and proportionate.

THE ACTIVITIES

4. The Activities prohibited by this Order are:

- i. failing to comply with a direction not to consume, in breach of this order, alcohol, or anything which an Authorised Officer reasonably believes to be alcohol where the Authorised Officer reasonably believes that a person has engaged in anti-social behaviour.
- ii. failing to surrender a container which an Authorised Officer reasonably believes to contain alcohol (whether open or not) when asked to do so by an Authorised Officer.
- iii. urinating or defecating other than when making use of facilities designed for such use.

THE PROHIBITION

5. A person shall not engage in any of the Activities anywhere within the Restricted Area as shown shaded on the attached map labelled "The Restricted Area".
6. This Prohibition is subject to the Exceptions stated below.

THE REQUIREMENT

7. A person who is believed to have engaged in a breach of this Order is required to give their name and address to a police officer, police community support officer or other person designated by the Council.

THE EXCEPTION

8. Nothing in this order shall apply to a person who a person who is consuming alcohol on premises listed in section 62 of the 2014 Act, the full text of section 62 appears at the end of this Order.
9. No offence is committed if the person has a reasonable excuse for engaging in the behaviour in question.

DEFINITIONS

10. In this Order the following words or phrases are defined as follows:

'Alcohol' has the same meaning as in section 191 of the Licensing Act 2003, the full text of s.191 appears at the end of this Order.

‘Anti-social behaviour’ means conduct that has caused or is likely to cause nuisance, annoyance, harassment, alarm or distress to any person.

‘Authorised Officer’ means an employee or agent of the Authority who is authorised for the purpose of giving directions under this Order or a Police Officer.

‘Council’ means Rushmoor Borough Council.

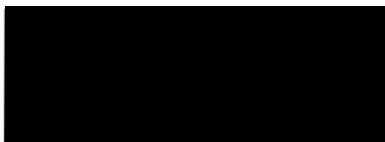
‘Restricted Area’ means anywhere within the area marked with a red boundary line and which is labelled ‘Restricted Area’ on the map attached to this order.

‘2014 Act’ means the Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014.

PERIOD FOR WHICH THIS ORDER HAS EFFECT

11. This Order will come into force at midnight on **19 July 2022** and will expire at midnight on **19 July 2025**.
12. At any point before the expiry of this three-year period the Council can extend the Order by up to three years if they are satisfied on reasonable grounds that this is necessary to prevent the activities identified in the Order from occurring or recurring or to prevent an increase in the frequency or seriousness of those activities after that time.

Executed as a Deed by affixing the Common Seal
of RUSHMOOR BOROUGH COUNCIL
this 14th day of July 2022
The Common Seal of the Council was affixed
to this Order in the presence of:-



Authorised Signatory

13/1/2022

WHAT HAPPENS IF YOU FAIL TO COMPLY WITH THIS ORDER?

ALCOHOL

Section 63 of the Anti-Social Behaviour Crime, and Policing Act 2014 provides that where a constable or authorised person has reason to believe that a person has been consuming alcohol in breach of this

PSPO or intends to consume alcohol in circumstances which would be a breach of this PSPO, the constable or authorised person may require that person not to consume alcohol or anything which is reasonably believed to be alcohol and/or surrender anything believed to be alcohol or a container for alcohol. Failure to comply without having a reasonable excuse is an offence. A requirement is not valid if, when asked to do to, the constable or authorised person, fails to show evidence of their authorisation. **Section 62** (set out in full below) contains a list of exceptions where the ban on consuming alcohol does not apply).

CRIMINAL OFFENCE

Section 67 of the Anti-Social Behaviour Crime, and Policing Act 2014 says that it is a criminal offence for a person without reasonable excuse:

- (a) to do anything that the person is prohibited from doing by a public spaces protection order, or
- (b) to fail to comply with a requirement to which the person is subject under a public spaces protection order.

PENALTY

A person who is guilty of an offence under this Order shall be liable to a £100.00 Fixed Penalty Notice, or upon summary conviction to a fine not exceeding level 3 (currently £1000) on the standard scale.

APPEALS

Any challenge to this order must be made in the High Court by an interested person within six weeks of it being made. An interest person is someone who lives in, regularly works in or visits the Restricted Areas. This means that only those who are directly affected by the restrictions have the power to challenge. The right to challenge also exists where an order is varied by the Council. Interested persons can challenge the validity of this order on two grounds: that the Council did not have the power to make the order, or to include particular prohibitions or requirements; or that one of the requirements of the legislation has not been complied with. When an application is made the High Court can decide to suspend the operation of the order pending the court's decision, in part or in totality. The High Court has the ability to uphold or quash the order or any of its prohibitions or requirements.

LEGISLATION

Section 62 – Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014

Premises etc to which alcohol prohibition does not apply

- (1) A prohibition in a public spaces protection order on consuming alcohol does not apply to—
 - (a) premises (other than council-operated licensed premises) authorised by a premises licence to be used for the supply of alcohol;
 - (b) premises authorised by a club premises certificate to be used by the club for the supply of alcohol;

(c) a place within the curtilage of premises within paragraph (a) or (b);

(d) premises which by virtue of Part 5 of the Licensing Act 2003 may at the relevant time be used for the supply of alcohol or which, by virtue of that Part, could have been so used within the 30 minutes before that time;

(e) a place where facilities or activities relating to the sale or consumption of alcohol are at the relevant time permitted by virtue of a permission granted under section 115E of the Highways Act 1980 (highway-related uses).

(2) A prohibition in a public spaces protection order on consuming alcohol does not apply to council-operated licensed premises—

(a) when the premises are being used for the supply of alcohol, or

(b) within 30 minutes after the end of a period during which the premises have been used for the supply of alcohol.

(3) In this section—

“club premises certificate” has the meaning given by section 60 of the Licensing Act 2003;

“premises licence” has the meaning given by section 11 of that Act;

“supply of alcohol” has the meaning given by section 14 of that Act.

(4) For the purposes of this section, premises are “council-operated licensed premises” if they are authorised by a premises licence to be used for the supply of alcohol and—

(a) the licence is held by a local authority in whose area the premises (or part of the premises) are situated, or

(b) the licence is held by another person but the premises are occupied by a local authority or are managed by or on behalf of a local authority.

Section 63 - Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014

Consumption of alcohol in breach of prohibition in order

(1) This section applies where a constable or an authorised person reasonably believes that a person (P)—

(a) is or has been consuming alcohol in breach of a prohibition in a public spaces protection order, or

(b) intends to consume alcohol in circumstances in which doing so would be a breach of such a prohibition.

In this section *“authorised person”* means a person authorised for the purposes of this section by the local authority that made the public spaces protection order (or authorised by virtue of section 69(1)).

(2) The constable or authorised person may require P—

(a) not to consume, in breach of the order, alcohol or anything which the constable or authorised person reasonably believes to be alcohol;

(b) to surrender anything in P's possession which is, or which the constable or authorised person reasonably believes to be, alcohol or a container for alcohol.

(3) A constable or an authorised person who imposes a requirement under subsection (2) must tell P that failing without reasonable excuse to comply with the requirement is an offence.

(4) A requirement imposed by an authorised person under subsection (2) is not valid if the person—

(a) is asked by P to show evidence of his or her authorisation, and

(b) fails to do so.

(5) A constable or an authorised person may dispose of anything surrendered under subsection (2)(b) in whatever way he or she thinks appropriate.

(6) A person who fails without reasonable excuse to comply with a requirement imposed on him or her under subsection (2) commits an offence and is liable on summary conviction to a fine not exceeding level 2 on the standard scale.

Offences

67 - Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014

Offence of failing to comply with order

(1) It is an offence for a person without reasonable excuse—

(a) to do anything that the person is prohibited from doing by a public spaces protection order, or

(b) to fail to comply with a requirement to which the person is subject under a public spaces protection order.

(2) A person guilty of an offence under this section is liable on summary conviction to a fine not exceeding level 3 on the standard scale.

(3) A person does not commit an offence under this section by failing to comply with a prohibition or requirement that the local authority did not have power to include in the public spaces protection order.

(4) Consuming alcohol in breach of a public spaces protection order is not an offence under this section (but see section 63).

191 – Licensing Act 2003

Meaning of “alcohol”

(1) In this Act, “*alcohol*” means spirits, wine, beer, cider or any other fermented, distilled or spirituous liquor in any state, but does not include—

(a) alcohol which is of a strength not exceeding 0.5% at the time of the sale or supply in question,

(b) perfume,

(c) flavouring essences recognised by the Commissioners of Customs and Excise as not being intended for consumption as or with dutiable alcoholic liquor,

(d) the aromatic flavouring essence commonly known as Angostura bitters,

(e) alcohol which is, or is included in, a medicinal product or a veterinary medicinal product,

- (f) denatured alcohol,
- (g) methyl alcohol,
- (h) naphtha, or
- (i) alcohol contained in liqueur confectionery.

(2) In this section—

“denatured alcohol” has the same meaning as in section 5 of the Finance Act 1995 (c. 4);

“dutiabale alcoholic liquor” has the same meaning as in the Alcoholic Liquor Duties Act 1979 (c. 4);

“liqueur confectionery” means confectionery which—

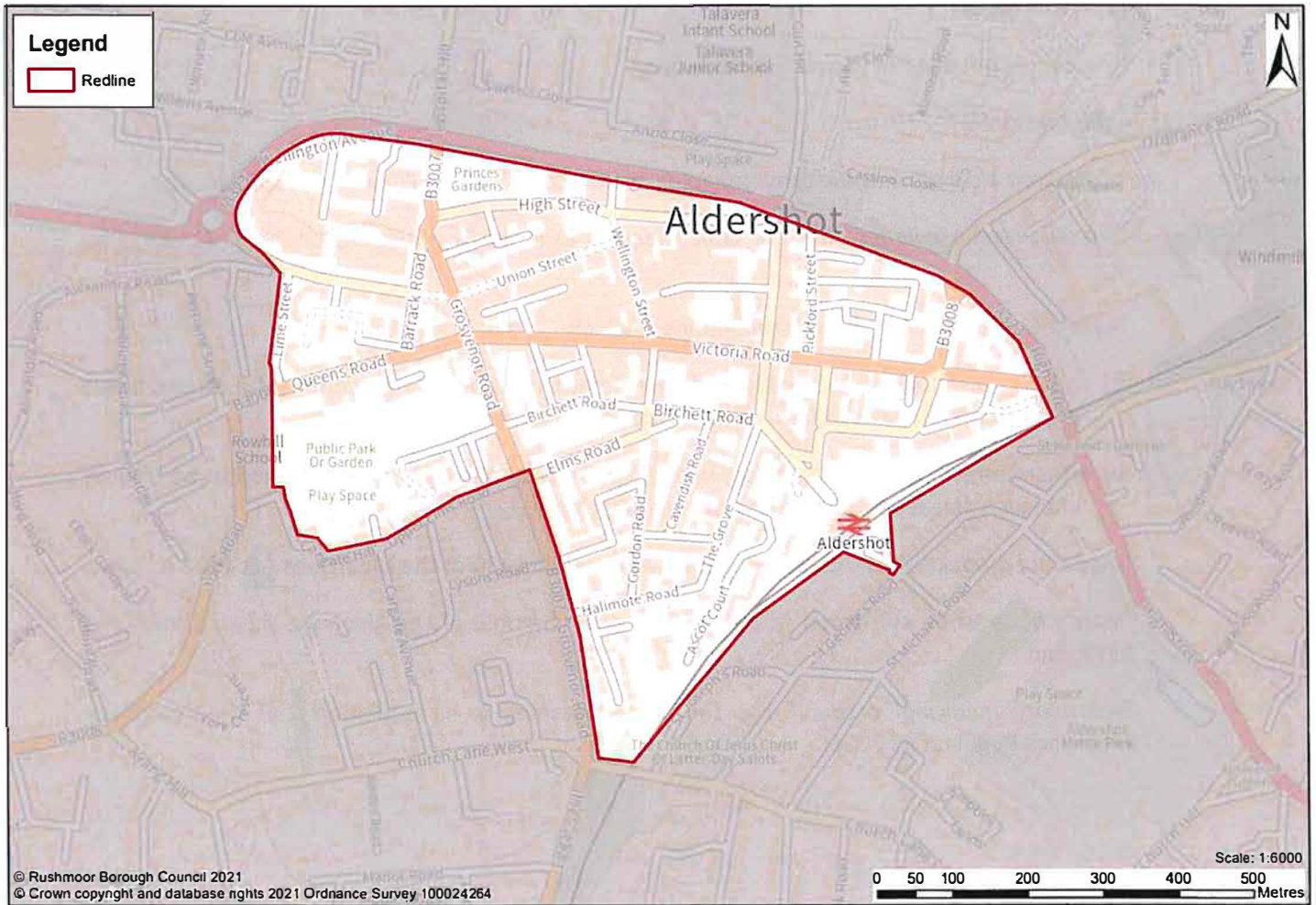
- (a) contains alcohol in a proportion not greater than 0.2 litres of alcohol (of a strength not exceeding 57%) per kilogram of the confectionery, and
- (b) either consists of separate pieces weighing not more than 42g or is designed to be broken into such pieces for the purpose of consumption;

“medicinal product” has the same meaning as in section 130 of the Medicines Act 1968 (c. 67)

“strength” is to be construed in accordance with section 2 of the Alcoholic Liquor Duties Act 1979; and

“veterinary medicinal product” has the same meaning as in regulation 2 of the Veterinary Medicines Regulations 2006.

RESTRICTED AREA – MAPs



131 / 2022

Under section 66 of the Anti-social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014 there is a right to apply to the High Court questioning the validity of this Order within a period of six weeks from the date of the Order.

Equality Impact Assessment: Screening Tool

The **Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) Screening Tool** should be completed for any new proposal. It helps staff check if their proposal will positively, neutrally, or negatively affect residents, staff, or service users. If the impact is positive or neutral, a full EIA isn't needed.

A **full EIA** is required if the screening shows a negative impact on specific groups. We also advise that a full EIA should be completed when a [key decision](#) is being made. Key decisions are executive actions likely to:

- Significantly affect Council tax, budget balances, or contingencies.
- Have a major impact on communities across two or more Borough wards.
- Expenditure or savings over £100,000 qualify as significant, with a £250,000 threshold for property transactions.

Furthermore, for staff, we generally consider the impact on more than 25 people as significant, which would require a full EIA. If you're unsure, you can seek guidance from the Policy Team.

***After screening, if you identify the need for a full Equality Impact Assessment, you can use your existing answers as a foundation for the full assessment.**

Name of Project	Renewal of the Aldershot Town Centre Public Spaces Protection Order (PSPO)
Reference number (if applicable)	
Service Area	Community Safety
Date screening completed	12/05/25
Screening author name	David Lipscombe
Policy Team sign off	Alex Shiell
Authorising Director/Head of Service name	James Duggin

Please provide a summary of the proposal

Please outline:

- What are the aims / objectives of this proposal?
- Will this deliver any savings?
- What benefits or change will we see from this proposal?
- Which key groups of people or areas of the borough are involved?

The proposal seeks the renewal of the Aldershot PSPO to tackle town centre antisocial behaviour. The purpose of the PSPO is to provide the police and authorised officers with powers to tackle town centre antisocial behaviour including public drinking, and public urination and defecation. The PSPO seeks to address the antisocial behaviour of the street attached community as well as any wider alcohol related antisocial behaviour. The PSPO contributes to making the town safer and a more pleasant place to live, work and visit.

Who will the proposal impact? Delete as appropriate.

Group of people	Impacted?
Residents	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes/ <input type="checkbox"/> No
Businesses	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes/ <input type="checkbox"/> No
Visitors to Rushmoor	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes/ <input type="checkbox"/> No
Voluntary or community groups	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes/ <input type="checkbox"/> No
Council staff	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes/ <input type="checkbox"/> No
Trade unions	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes/ <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Other public sector Organisations	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes/ <input type="checkbox"/> No
Others	Please specify: Individuals who have complex needs (e.g. mental health, substance misuse)

What impact will this change have on staff? Please complete where relevant.

Please outline in brief:

- Who will be impacted? For example, which services, teams, or buildings?
- How many staff members?
- What will the impact be? (e.g., changes to structure, staffing levels, responsibilities, relocation, or new working methods)

Any visible engagement or enforcement action will come with resource implications for staffing in terms of general staff time, case file building, taking statements, gathering evidence and potential court attendance. The majority of this can be managed with current staffing levels although some external legal advice may be required.

What consultation or engagement will you be leading (with residents, staff, or other stakeholders) as part of this project?

Please outline in brief:

- Which groups will you consult (residents, staff, other stakeholders)?
- Will you collect personal data?
- How will you engage (e.g., surveys, focus groups)?
- How will you use the feedback?

If no engagement is planned, explain why.

- **Groups consulted:** Residents, ward councillors, businesses, police, partner organisations.
- **Method:** Public consultation via social media (Facebook post on 13 March 2025). Email responses accepted up to 3 April 2025.

1.1. **Feedback:** 28 public responses, all in favour of renewal or strengthening the PSPO. A number of comments also mentioned the need for increased officer presence and enforcement in the area as well as extending the area of the PSPO to include Manor Park. Supportive responses also received from the Police and Inclusion. Partner responses were received from Chief Inspector Gillian Cox and the Police Liaison to the Police and Crime Commissioner, with both supporting the renewal of the PSPO. A response was received from Inclusion, with no feedback or comment on the proposal. Details of the renewal were also sent to local faith leaders for comment. No comments or questions were received.

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- **Original 2022 consultation:** The original public consultation on PSPO was completed between 7th February 2022 and 21st March 2022. 358 people completed the consultation with overwhelming support for the measures outlined. 94% of respondents support the proposed condition on alcohol consumption and 93% of respondents support the proposed condition around public urination/defecation.

What impact will this change have on people with protected characteristics and/or from disadvantaged groups?

For the groups identified earlier, tick the likely impact on people with protected characteristics (e.g., age, disability, race, etc.):

- **Neutral:** No impact.
- **Positive:** Benefits people with protected characteristics.
- **Negative:** Harms people with protected characteristics.
- **Not Sure:** It's unclear how this affects people with protected characteristics, or more information is needed.

Rate the negative impact as **low**, **medium**, or **high**. Also, consider whether the proposal may be seen as controversial or negative by some groups. See the [guidance](#) for help.

Protected characteristic	Positive impact	Neutral impact	Negative impact	Not Sure	Description of the impact (if applicable)
Age (for example, young people under 25, older people over 65)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Choose an item.	<input type="checkbox"/>	Safer town centre for older people, families.
Disability (include people with physical disabilities, people with learning disabilities, blind and partially sighted people, Deaf or hard of hearing people, neurodiverse people. This also includes carers.)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Medium	<input type="checkbox"/>	Potential impact on people with mental health or alcohol dependency.
Gender reassignment and identity (include people who identify across the trans* umbrella, not only those who have undergone gender reassignment surgery. This is inclusive of girls and or/women, men and/or boys, non-binary and genderfluid people and people who are transitioning) *Trans is an umbrella term to describe people whose gender is not the same as, or does not sit comfortably with, the sex they were assigned at birth.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Choose an item.	<input type="checkbox"/>	No direct or indirect impact.
Marriage and Civil Partnership	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Choose an item.	<input type="checkbox"/>	

Protected characteristic	Positive impact	Neutral impact	Negative impact	Not Sure	Description of the impact (if applicable)
Pregnancy and Maternity (include people who are pregnant in or returning to the workplace after pregnancy. Could also include working parents.)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Choose an item.	<input type="checkbox"/>	Pregnant women may not want to visit the town centre if it feels unsafe or unhygienic. The PSPO could have a positive impact by improving the perception of safety and cleanliness.
Race or ethnicity (include on the basis of colour, nationality, citizenship, ethnic or national origins)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Choose an item.	<input type="checkbox"/>	Ethnic Minorities who are statistically more likely to experience hate incidents or discrimination, may feel more confident accessing public spaces.
Religion or belief (include no faith)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Choose an item.	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Sex (Under the Equality Act 2010 and following the 2025 Supreme Court ruling on 15 April, a person's legal sex is defined as their biological sex as recorded at birth. Trans individuals are still protected from discrimination under the characteristic of gender reassignment.)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Choose an item.	<input type="checkbox"/>	Women may feel more intimidated by antisocial behaviour and may benefit from its reduction. The PSPO may have a positive impact

Protected characteristic	Positive impact	Neutral impact	Negative impact	Not Sure	Description of the impact (if applicable)
					from a sex perspective.
Sexual Orientation (Include people from across the LGBTQ+ umbrella, for example, people who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, pansexual or asexual.)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Choose an item.	<input type="checkbox"/>	Creating a safer and more welcoming town centre through the PSPO may benefit LGBTQ+ residents and visitors, who can also be at greater risk of experiencing public harassment or discrimination.
Other (e.g. people on low incomes, people living in poverty, looked after children, people with care experience, people who are homeless, people with mental health problems, people who are prison leavers, people affected by menopause, people affected by menstruation and/or period poverty)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Medium	<input type="checkbox"/>	

Screening Decision	Outcome
Neutral or Positive – no full EIA needed*.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes/ <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Negative – Low Impact – full EIA at the service director's discretion*.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes/ <input type="checkbox"/> No
Negative – Medium or High Impact – must complete a full EIA.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes/ <input type="checkbox"/> No
Is a full EIA required? Service decision:	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes/ <input type="checkbox"/> No

Screening Decision	Outcome
Is a full EIA required? [Policy Team] sign off recommendation:	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes/ <input type="checkbox"/> No
Flag for DPIA (will include engagement that collects personal data). [Policy Team]:	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes/ <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Flag for ethics (high risk / will involve engagement with vulnerable residents):	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes/ <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No

Once you've completed the screening tool and determined that the proposal is likely to have a positive or neutral impact on people with protected characteristics, the following can be included in the 'Equality Impact Assessment' part of the report. ***'An equality impact check found that this proposal would have a positive or neutral impact on people with protected characteristics. Therefore, a full assessment is not required.'***

Please send this completed EIA Screening Tool to Policy@rushmoor.gov.uk for quality checking by the policy team.

If required, please continue to the full assessment below.

Equalities Impact Assessment: Full Assessment

Before completing this form, you should have filled out an Equality Screening Tool and obtained approval from your Head of Service and the Policy Team. This Equality Impact Assessment should be completed if the Screening Tool identifies a potentially negative impact on one or more specific groups or there is a large-scale proposal or impact. It can also be used to highlight positive impacts.

We also advise that a full EIA should be completed when a [key decision](#) is being made. Key decisions are executive actions likely to:

- Significantly affect Council tax, budget balances, or contingencies.
- Have a major impact on communities across two or more Borough wards.
- Expenditure or savings over £100,000 qualify as significant, with a £250,000 threshold for property transactions.

If unsure, contact the Policy Team.

Furthermore, for staff, we generally consider the impact on more than 25 people as significant, which would require a full EIA. If you're unsure, you can seek guidance from the Policy Team.

Summary of proposal

Name of Project	Renewal of the Aldershot Town Centre Public Spaces Protection Order (PSPO)
Reference number (if applicable)	
Service Area	Community Safety
Date assessment completed	

Before completing the EIA, please read the guidance and FAQs. For further help and advice please contact Policy@rushmoor.gov.uk

1. Please provide a summary of the proposal.

Please provide:

- How the service works now (if relevant) and what changes are being suggested.
- Who will benefit from the proposal and what the results will be.
- Any savings the proposal might bring.

The proposal seeks the renewal of the Aldershot PSPO to tackle town centre antisocial behaviour. The purpose of the PSPO is to provide the police and authorised officers with powers to tackle town centre antisocial behaviour including public drinking, and public urination and defecation. The PSPO seeks to address the antisocial behaviour of the street attached community as well as any wider alcohol related antisocial behaviour. The PSPO contributes to making the town safer and a more pleasant place to live, work and visit.

2. What impact will this change have on different groups of people?

This section of the assessment examines the broad impacts of the proposed changes on different groups, such as service users, local communities, and businesses.

2A. Who will your proposal impact?

Please consider:

- Will the impact mostly affect people outside the council, inside, or both?
- Who will be affected – residents, service users, local communities, businesses, visitors, or others? The effect on staff will be looked at separately.
- What will the impact be – for example, less access to services or travel disruptions?

It will mostly impact people outside the council: residents, businesses, and visitors in Aldershot town centre. Key outcomes are increased safety and reduced antisocial behaviour and crime.

2B. What impact will this change have on staff?

Please consider:

- Who will be impacted? For example, which services, teams or buildings? How many staff?
- What will the impact be? For example, changes to structure, reporting lines, staff levels, responsibilities, location, access to services, new working methods, or development opportunities.

Any visible engagement or enforcement action will come with resource implications for staffing in terms of general staff time, case file building, taking statements, gathering evidence and potential court attendance. The majority of this can be managed with current staffing levels although some external legal advice may be required.

3. What impact will this change have on people with protected characteristics and/or from disadvantaged groups?

This section of the assessment looks in detail at the likely impacts of the proposed changes on different sections of our diverse community.

3A. What data have you used to assess impacts?

Please provide:

- Details of the evidence used to check the impact on people with protected characteristics and disadvantaged groups (see guidance for help).
- A breakdown of service user details, if possible.
- A short summary of what the findings mean.

- Consultation Process:
 - For the 2025 renewal of the Public Spaces Protection Order (PSPO), a public consultation took place.
- Public Feedback:
 - A Facebook post on 13 March 2025 invited public comments via email until 3 April 2025.
 - 28 responses were received, all supporting the renewal or strengthening of the PSPO.
 - Several respondents requested:
 - Increased officer presence and enforcement.
 - Extension of the PSPO area to include Manor Park.
- Partner Feedback:
 - Supportive responses came from:
 - Chief Inspector Gillian Cox
 - Police Liaison to the Police and Crime Commissioner
 - Inclusion responded but provided no comments or feedback.
 - Faith leaders consulted with no response.
- Previous Consultation (2022):
 - Out of 358 respondents, 319 answered the disability question.
 - 78.7% reported no health conditions or disabilities.
 - 14.7% reported having health conditions or disabilities, aligning closely with the 2011 census figure of 15.6% for those over 16 with long-term health issues—indicating appropriate representation.

The consultation data and community feedback show strong support for the PSPO from residents and businesses. There is a particular concern about safety, antisocial behaviour, and cleanliness. People with protected characteristics may be affected differently. While many will benefit from a safer town centre, there may be risks of unfair impact on vulnerable individuals, such as those with mental health or substance misuse problems.

3B: Assessing the Impacts on People with Protected Characteristics and Disadvantaged Groups in the table below.

Please first select whether the potential impact is positive, neutral, or negative, and then provide details of the impacts and any mitigations or positive actions you will put in place.

Please use the following definitions as a guide:

Neutral – The proposal has no impact on people with the identified protected characteristics.

Positive – The proposal has a beneficial and desirable impact on people with the identified protected characteristics compared to others.

Negative – The proposal has a negative and undesirable impact on people with the identified protected characteristics compared to others.

Characteristic or group	Positive/ Neutral/ Negative	What are the positive and/or negative impacts?	How will potential benefits be enhanced or negative impacts be eliminated or reduced?
Age (for example, young people under 25, older people over 65)	Positive	<p>Positive Impact</p> <p>Although the PSPO is designed to prohibit certain behaviours it also seeks to make Aldershot a safer and more welcoming place. We know that some sections of the community feel that Aldershot is not a safe and welcoming place which has a negative impact on those individuals and reduces the likelihood on them choosing to visit the town e.g. older people or families with young children. These views are reflected in our annual Community Safety survey. The PSPO could have a positive impact for these individuals.</p> <p>Negative Impact</p> <p>The age of those who are often street drinking in the town centre varies and it is not felt it will disproportionately affect a particular age group. In terms of urination/defecation this is reportedly form a varied age group, including street attached individuals as well as those attending night-time economy venues.</p>	Officers are encouraged to engage with individuals as the first approach, before moving to an enforcement stage if they are not compliant. The authorised Officers who enforce the PSPO will continue to consider the needs of the individuals and their circumstances to make an informed and balanced decision as to the appropriateness of action to take. Officers continue to receive training on equality and diversity.

Characteristic or group	Positive/ Neutral/ Negative	What are the positive and/or negative impacts?	How will potential benefits be enhanced or negative impacts be eliminated or reduced?
<p>Disability</p> <p>(Include people with physical disabilities, people with learning disabilities, blind and partially sighted people, Deaf or hard of hearing people, neurodiverse people. This also includes carers.)</p>	Negative	<p>Positive Impact</p> <p>The PSPO will positively impact those individuals with additional support needs, protected or hidden characteristics and disabilities by making them feel safer when accessing the town centre and other key public locations.</p> <p>Negative Impact</p> <p>The PSPO could adversely impact those with mental health concerns and alcohol dependency, particularly those associated with the street attached community. Adverse impacts could be in terms of displacement to other areas of the borough, inability to pay fines leading to financial concerns and potential further impacts on mental health.</p> <p>Regular street drinkers are often known to local support services and the Council, with some of them in supported accommodation and engaged. Likewise, those with mental health conditions.</p>	<p>In relation to disability, there is a disproportionate impact however this can be justified. Firstly, the continued use of the PSPO would be the least restrictive measures appropriate to address the antisocial behaviour issues in the town centre. There two prohibitions seek to address the main antisocial behaviours of concern. It is hoped that by addressing the two issues of antisocial street drinking and urinating/ defecating in a public place, it will continue to reduce other associated antisocial behaviours without the need to specifically prohibit them in a PSPO .</p>

Characteristic or group	Positive/ Neutral/ Negative	What are the positive and/or negative impacts?	How will potential benefits be enhanced or negative impacts be eliminated or reduced?
<p>Gender reassignment and identity</p> <p>(Include people who identify across the trans* umbrella, not only those who have undergone gender reassignment surgery. This is inclusive of girls and or/women, men and/or boys, non-binary and genderfluid people and people who are transitioning)</p> <p>*Trans is an umbrella term to describe people whose gender is not the same as, or does not sit comfortably with, the sex they were assigned at birth.</p>	Neutral		
Marriage and Civil Partnership	Neutral		

Characteristic or group	Positive/ Neutral/ Negative	What are the positive and/or negative impacts?	How will potential benefits be enhanced or negative impacts be eliminated or reduced?
Pregnancy and Maternity (include people who are pregnant in or returning to the workplace after pregnancy. Could also include working parents.)	Positive	<p>Positive impact A cleaner and safer town centre can benefit pregnant people or those with young children by making public spaces more accessible.</p> <p>Negative impact No direct negative impact identified.</p>	
Race or ethnicity (include on the basis of colour, nationality, citizenship, ethnic or national origins)	Positive	<p>Positive impact While the PSPO is not directly targeted at any particular ethnic group, there is a potential positive indirect impact. Creating a safer, more orderly public environment may improve perceptions of safety for people from ethnically minoritised backgrounds, who are statistically more likely to experience discrimination or feel unsafe in public spaces.</p> <p>Negative impact No direct negative impact identified.</p>	

Characteristic or group	Positive/ Neutral/ Negative	What are the positive and/or negative impacts?	How will potential benefits be enhanced or negative impacts be eliminated or reduced?
Religion or belief (include no faith)	Neutral		
Sex Under the Equality Act 2010 and following the 2025 Supreme Court ruling on 15 April, a person's legal sex is defined as their biological sex as recorded at birth. Trans individuals are still protected from discrimination under the characteristic of gender reassignment.)	Positive	<p>Positive impact Women and girls may feel more comfortable using public spaces if antisocial behaviour is reduced.</p> <p>Negative impact No direct negative impact identified.</p>	

Characteristic or group	Positive/ Neutral/ Negative	What are the positive and/or negative impacts?	How will potential benefits be enhanced or negative impacts be eliminated or reduced?
<p>Sexual Orientation</p> <p>(Include people from across the LGBTQ+ umbrella, for example, people who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, pansexual or asexual.)</p>	Positive	<p>Positive impact</p> <p>The PSPO may offer indirect positive impacts for LGBTQ+ individuals by helping create a town centre that feels safer and more inclusive, particularly during daytime hours when alcohol-related antisocial behaviour is more visible. This may contribute to increased confidence in using shared public spaces.</p> <p>Negative impact</p> <p>No direct negative impact identified.</p>	

Other (e.g. people on low incomes, people living in poverty, looked-after children, people with care experience, people who are homeless, people with mental health problems people who are prison leavers, people affected by menopause, people affected by menstruation and/or period poverty)	Negative	<p>Negative</p> <p>People who have complex needs (mental health issues or alcohol dependency) may be affected by enforcement. There is a risk of things such as increased anxiety or fines they cannot afford.</p>	<p>Where it may affect those with mental health issues or alcohol dependency, there is support in place to assist them and the council will seek to work with those individuals to refer them to appropriate support agencies. The council work with key partners such as Inclusion, Homegroup and Society of St James to provide support to those with addictions as well as ensuring appropriate housing is provided. Positive engagement with this community could mean that this is translated into a positive impact.</p> <p>The Council also have an Outreach Team who engage with street homeless and street attached when needed, as well as a specialist "Housing Navigator" who is able to work one on one with individuals who meet the criteria. Work includes addressing mental health and substance misuse concerns.</p> <p>Officers are encouraged to engage with individuals as the first approach, before moving to an enforcement stage if they are not compliant. The authorised Officers who enforce the PSPO will continue to consider the needs of the individuals and their circumstances to make an informed and balanced decision as to the appropriateness of action to take. Officers continue to receive training on equality and diversity.</p>
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4. How do you plan to mitigate negative impacts?

Please provide:

- An outline of actions and the expected outcomes
 - Any governance and funding which will support these actions if relevant
-
- Ongoing engagement with street-attached community
 - Outreach services and printed referral information
 - Authorised officers receive equality training and operate using a person-centred approach
 - Partnering with Inclusion, Society of St James, and Homegroup to support vulnerable individuals
 - Regular monitoring of enforcement outcomes to ensure fairness and proportionality

5. Please provide details of your consultation and/or engagement plans.

Please provide:

- Details of what steps you have taken or plan to take to consult or engage the whole community or specific groups affected by the proposal.
- Who has been or will be consulted or engaged with?
- Methods used or that will be used to engage or consult.
- Key findings or feedback (if completed)

If you are planning or completing key strategic participation and engagement work or if you need guidance and support, please get in touch with the communications team communications@rushmoor.gov.uk

If you have **not** completed any engagement activity and do not plan to, you should outline why this decision has been made.

Public consultation requirements for a renewal of a PSPO are less onerous than when implementing a PSPO.

Residents were asked to email their views to Community Safety following a Facebook post on 13th March 2025 with responses accepted until 3rd April 2025. 28 responses were received from members of the public with all in favour of the renewal or strengthening of the PSPO. A number of comments also mentioned the need for increased officer presence and enforcement in the area as well as extending the area of the PSPO to include Manor Park. Partner responses were received from Chief Inspector Gillian Cox and the Police Liaison to the Police and Crime Commissioner, with both supporting the renewal of the PSPO. A response was received from Inclusion, with no feedback or comment on the proposal.

The original consultation in 2022 showed 319 respondents out of 358 completed the age question. There was generally broad representation across age groups 34 and above. The most common age group completing the survey was 35 – 44 years, and there was good representation of those aged 45 and above. There was less representation in the 25 – 34 year old age group, and only one person under 18 completed the survey.

6. Once the proposal has been implemented, how will impacts be monitored and reviewed?



Please provide details in the table below.

Action	Responsible team or officer	Deadline
Monitor PSPO enforcement data	Community Safety	Ongoing
Monitor feedback from public and partners	Community Safety	Ongoing
Refresh officer training on equality	HR / Community Safety	Ongoing

Please send the completed EIA to Policy@rushmoor.gov.uk for quality checking by the policy team. All Equality Impact Assessments must be attached with any report to a decision-making board and should be made publicly available on request.



This Equality Impact Assessment has been completed in accordance with the guidance and using appropriate evidence.

Member	Name	Signed	Date
Staff member completing this form	David Lipscombe Community Safety Manager		12/05/25
Policy Team	Alex Shiell		10/06/25
Director or Head of Service	James Duggin Executive Head of Operations		12/05/25



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CABINET

COUNCILLOR SOPHIE PORTER
HEALTHY COMMUNITIES & ACTIVE LIVES
PORTFOLIO HOLDER

08 JULY 2025

KEY DECISION? YES

REPORT NO. REG2503

FARNBOROUGH LEISURE CENTRE – UPDATE & NEXT STEPS

SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

On the 11th February 2025 Cabinet approved report REG2501 to progress with the revised approach for the delivery of a Leisure Centre in Farnborough town centre, utilising the remaining Levelling Up funding. Approval was given to progress design works to the end of RIBA Stage 3 and planning submission, as well as commencement of the Leisure Operator procurement.

This report provides an up-date on progress with the project and operator procurement. It then sets out next steps in delivering the project within the parameters of the Levelling up Fund timescales.

It is recommended that Cabinet:

- 1) Notes the progress with the design of the leisure centre and changes made as a result of the preliminary market engagement sessions with operators.
- 2) Notes the conclusion of RIBA stage 2 on schedule, the commencement of RIBA stage 3 and the timetable for the project to the conclusion of RIBA stage 4.
- 3) Agrees to extend the current Access Agreement for RIBA stage 4, on the conclusion of RIBA stage 3, subject to the forecast operator income being in line with expectations. Costs for RIBA stage 4 of up to £660K to be funded by the Levelling up Fund.
- 4) Notes the arrangements for the pre planning consultation.
- 5) Notes the revised operator procurement programme.
- 6) Agrees to special meetings of Cabinet and Council as required to enable the concurrent entering into of both the build and operator contracts.

1. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

- 1.1. In January 2025 the Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government (MHCLG) confirmed that the Council could continue to progress the revised scheme to the conclusion of RIBA Stage 3, utilising the residual £18.5m Levelling Up grant.
- 1.2. In February 2025, Cabinet (REG2501) approved the revised approach for the delivery of a Leisure Centre in Farnborough town centre along with the

procurement approach to appoint an operator to run the new and existing leisure facilities within the borough.

- 1.3. The project will deliver 2 swimming pools (a 25m 6-lane main pool, 10m x 8m learner pool), 100+ station fitness suite including specialist power-assisted equipment for people who are less mobile or active, studio space including a dedicated spin studio, a café and active play for children. The revised scope also incorporates the provision of a new surface car park.
- 1.4. The revised approach set out an alternative site to the immediate south of the existing town centre high street on Queensmead car park, directly adjacent to existing public transport nodes which will help to improve access for the local community.
- 1.5. The purpose of this report is to provide Cabinet with an up-date on the project progress, the operator procurement, and next steps to deliver the project.

2. Project Progress

Design Update

- 2.1. As set out in the February cabinet report, the Council have entered into an Access Agreement with Alliance Leisure Services Limited (Alliance), via the UK Leisure Framework, for the provision of project management, design and professional services required for the completion of RIBA stages 2 & 3.
- 2.2. Alliance have now appointed their full design team to progress design to the end of RIBA Stage 3. The output from this stage is detailed design and all documentation required to support a planning application.
- 2.3. RIBA stage 2 (concept design) is now complete, and the stage 2 report can be found at Exempt Appendix A to this report. The report outlines design progress to date, setting out the site constraints and opportunities to inform the building design that is being developed in RIBA stage 3.
- 2.4. Following feedback from operators as set out in section 5 of this report, there were two main areas for consideration for change within the proposed facilities mix set out in February. These related to studio size and provision of a separate area for specialist power-assisted equipment for people who are less mobile or active (Innerva). Having taken that feedback into account it is now proposed that there is one large studio and specialist equipment is incorporated within the fitness suite.
- 2.5. As set out above, the scope of the project includes the provision of a surface car park. Following the preliminary market engagement sessions with operators (see section 5), all operators indicated that they would welcome additional spaces over and above those that can be provided via a surface carpark. Given the proximity of other parking available in the town and other proposed developments, a parking study is underway to identify the parking requirements within the town.

- 2.6. Alongside this, the project team are currently exploring whether there is a business case for additional decks on the new car park. The business case will look at potential additional income and the benefits of providing “off site” parking for developments on the other Civic Quarter plots.
- 2.7. As part of the wider project delivery, an option to construct a new skate park adjacent to the new leisure centre it is being considered. This will be undertaken in consultation with skate park users. Options for funding this provision are being explored.
- 2.8. In accordance with the overall project programme, RIBA stage 3 design development is now underway. The conclusion of this stage will lead to the submission of the planning application.

Planning Approach

- 2.9. As part of the pre-planning work a formal pre-application has been submitted to both the local authority and Hampshire Highways. Discussion are already underway and these discussions will be concluded towards the end of July/early August.
- 2.10. A pre-planning public consultation is taking place between the 30th June and 25th July with three public events being held throughout this period. There will also be a microsite available throughout this period to allow feedback into the proposals via an online survey.
- 2.11. Targeted stakeholder engagement will also be carried out within this period including sports clubs, schools, accessibility groups and skate park users.

3. PROGRAMME & GOVERNANCE ARRANGEMENTS

- 3.1. A detailed current programme can be found at Appendix B, however the key milestones for the project are set out below:

Project Stage	Milestone
Design development to RIBA stage 3	August 2025
Commence RIBA stage 4 (subject to operator income assumptions)	August 2025
Planning submission	September 2025
Planning approval and end RIBA Stage 4 Design & Cost	January 2026
Cabinet approval to enter into contract for the build	January 2026
Award of construction contract	February 2026
Start on Site	Spring 2026

Facility Open	Autumn 2027
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- 3.2. Project governance arrangements are in place to ensure project oversight by senior management and members, including fortnightly portfolio holder briefings.
- 3.3. The Executive Leadership Team (ELT) will provide a steer as required on various project-related issues that may arise throughout the lifecycle of the project as well as review the progress of the project and receive regular updates on progress against programme, budget, and risk through consideration of project highlight reports.
- 3.4. The Project Team will make operational day-to-day delivery decisions within the agreed delegations following Cabinet/Council decisions, in line with the Council's Scheme of Delegation as outlined in the Constitution and Council procedure rules, overseen by the Project Sponsor, currently the Executive Director.

4. PROJECT BUDGET AND FUNDING STRATEGY

- 4.1. As set out in the previous report (REG2501), in dialogue with Alliance, the Council has established a target project budget of £23.5m based on similar projects across the country to deliver the proposed facilities mix and new parking provision on the Pinehurst site (£22.5m towards the Leisure Centre build and £1m towards the car parking provision).
- 4.2. Approval was received from MHCLG to progress the revised scheme with a funding extension to March 2028, utilising the remaining £18.5 grant. Alliance have advised that the costs associated with RIBA stage 4 are £605,600. There are additional fees in relation to external legal advice that are projected at circa £50,000 for this stage. The overall project recommendation for stage 4 is therefore £660,000.
- 4.3. At this stage, there is no requirement for the Council to commit any capital contribution towards the delivery of the project beyond the existing grant funding available. The Council has also received a Local Growth Capacity Support Payment of £40k. As set out in the previous report (REG2501) this can be used towards other project related costs that cannot be drawn down from the Levelling up Fund.
- 4.4. Initial operator income forecasts indicate that the Council would be in a position to repay the estimated £5m borrowing required for the scheme. In order to achieve cost certainty, further financial due diligence will be undertaken in tandem with the operator procurement process. This will be concluded prior to entering into a Development Management agreement (DMA) to deliver the project at the agreed contract sum at the end of RIBA 4 and entering into the DMA will be subject to a final detailed Business Case and the necessary Member approvals.
- 4.5. It is proposed that special Cabinet and Council meetings, as required, be held early in 2026 in accordance with the delivery programme, to seek the necessary

approvals to enter into both the DMA and operator contracts concurrently, providing all parties with the maximum assurance.

5. LEISURE OPERATOR PROCUREMENT

- 5.1. The Council is seeking a partner who shares its vision for the proposed new Farnborough Leisure Centre and will operate to optimise participative opportunities and benefits for the local community. The new facility will play a significant role in reducing health inequalities, physical and mental, and increasing levels of physical activity, which are key priorities identified in the Council Delivery Plan 2025-26.

Procurement process

- 5.2. The Procurement Act 23 introduced the new 'Competitive Flexible Procedure' which enables contracting authorities to design project specific procurement processes to align with project objectives and market norms. The Council are undertaking a procurement process using this competitive flexible procedure.
- 5.3. On 11th February 2025, Cabinet agreed the overall operator procurement and appointment approach, and commencement of the process. Decisions to amend the procurement documentation as required throughout the process was delegated to the Executive Head of Operations in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Healthy Communities & Active Lives, and financial implications in consultation with the Executive Head of Finance (S151).
- 5.4. The operator procurement process started in March 2025 with Preliminary Market Engagement. Following an advert inviting interest from the leisure market, a one-hour MS Teams briefing, with subsequent individual one-to-one meetings took place, providing a chance for operators to ask questions and provide informal feedback on a number of issues, outlined shown below.

DESIGN & FACILITIES MIX <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Proposed design of the new leisure centre - <i>layout, etc</i> Proposed facilities mix Café Operation Parking Provision Experience in reducing carbon emissions? 	FINANCIALS <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Projected Demand Risk allocation - <i>Covid re-occurrence, Utilities</i> Financing Options - <i>likely payment from operator?</i> Cost pressures - <i>NI, Living Wage, etc?</i>
PROCUREMENT & LEGAL <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Legal & commercial structure Contract form & duration Procurement process & programme Timescales – <i>reasonable? Mobilisation timescales?</i> Social Value 	MISCELLANEOUS <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Potential development of Aldershot Facility? Key lessons learnt from other recent projects? Appetite to bid and priority level?

Summary of topics discussed with operators at PME sessions

- 5.5. Operator feedback on the proposed facilities mix was generally positive. As described above a number of suggestions - including provision of a single large studio, (rather than two small ones), incorporating any power assisted well-being equipment within the main fitness suite, and changing the soft-play layout – were

subsequently adopted in updated designs. Views on other issues, including car parking, contract term, profiling and the agency model also proved useful and will be taken forward during the next stage of design. The importance of a significant management fee payable to the Council as an outcome of the procurement was also made clear.

- 5.6. An Invitation to tender (ITT) was issued via the Proactis procurement portal on 24 June 2025. A site visit, accompanied by a MS Teams briefing, for all interested parties will be followed by one-to-one clarification meetings later this month. The deadline for first stage tender returns is 28 August.
- 5.7. An updated programme for the procurement process outlined above is set out below:

Summary Activity	Timescales
Issue Tender Notice & Key Procurement Documents	24 June 2025
Bidders Day - Briefing to all and Aldershot site visit	7/8 July 2025
1 to 1 Clarification meetings (TEAMS)	14 July – 1 Aug 2025
Clarification deadline	8 August
1 st Stage Tender Return Deadline	Thursday 28 August 2025
Tender Evaluation Complete	1 - 19 Sep 2025 (3 weeks)
Moderation	22 - 26 Sept 2025 (1 week)
Down selection / single tender negotiation (if required)	29 Sept 2025 (+ 1 week voluntary standstill)
Undertake negotiation meetings	6 - 17 Oct 2025 (2 weeks)
Agree best & final offers parameters	20 Oct – 7 Nov 2025 (3 weeks)
Best & Final Offer Deadline	10 Nov – 5 Dec 2025 (4 weeks)
Tender Evaluation Complete	8 - 19 Dec 2025 (2 weeks)
Cabinet	Jan 2026 (TBC)
Issue Assessment Summary & Contract Award Notice	Feb 2026
Standstill Period	Feb 2026

- 5.8. Operators may bid on two separate lots for a contract to manage the leisure facilities. Lot 1 is based on a standard leisure operating model, with the operator acting as 'principal' and the Council as client. Lot 2 is based on an 'agency model', with the operator acting as an agent on behalf of the Council (principal). Bidders can submit proposals for either, or both, lots.
- 5.9. As agreed with our procurement advisers the tender award will have a 60% quality and 40% price weighting.
- 5.10. Following evaluation of the detailed tenders, the Council will have the option to instigate an award to the preferred bidder or may enter a final period of negotiation and invite best and final offers from the highest scoring bidder/s if it feels a better outcome may be reached.

- 5.11. As set out above the Council is currently expecting to award the contract to the successful operator by February 2026. The 'Interim Phase' of the Contract is then planned to commence shortly after, (date TBC), at which point the operator will be required to commence delivery of services at the existing Aldershot facilities.
- 5.12. The Council's target date for opening of the new Farnborough facility is Autumn 2027, at which point the contract will enter its 'Main Phase'. The duration of the Interim Phase is dependent upon when the new facility is ready to be opened, but is likely to run for around 18 to 24 months. The 'Main Phase' of the contract will run for an initial 15 year period with an option to extend by a further 5 years on top of this.
- 5.13. The existing contract with Places Leisure for the operation of the Aldershot facility ends on 31 March 2027. A break-clause is included in the agreement.

6. Alternative Options

- 6.1. There is an option not to deliver a new facility and use the land for other purposes. This is not in line with Council priorities.
- 6.2. Not providing a new facility would have a significant impact on the leisure procurement and reduce the attractiveness of the current offer to the market.

Consultation

- 6.3. As set out in sections 2.9 to 2.11 of this report, a public consultation will take place between the 30th June and 25th July with three face- to-face public events being held throughout this period. There will also be a microsite throughout this period to allow feedback into the proposals via an online survey.
- 6.4. Targeted stakeholder engagement will also be carried out within this period with sports clubs, schools, accessibility groups and skate park users.

7. IMPLICATIONS

Risks

- 7.1. As set out in the previous report (REG2501), the Council will be accepting a number of risks in opting to proceed with delivery of this project. These include the usual risks associated with the development and delivery of a capital project of this scale such as site ground conditions, contractor solvency, cost overruns, inflationary increases and associated stakeholder management. As identified in Section 4, while the Council has the residual £18.5m grant funding to employ against the scheme, if it is to proceed beyond RIBA stage 4, it will be accepting the financial risks associated with the funding strategy and the risks fully identified, evaluated and scenario tested in the business case.
- 7.2. There is mitigation in place to manage the financial risks through a gateway process. This Cabinet report does not commit the Council to the construction phase. A further report to Cabinet will need to demonstrate that the Business

Case is financially sound as a pre-cursor to formally entering into a build contract. Any expenditure up to that point is utilising the Levelling Up fund with the agreement of MHCLG. The Council is not obligated by the Framework Agreement to proceed through to build stage.

- 7.3. There is a risk that financial feasibility is not achieved through the operator procurement process, impacting the ability to pay back any borrowing required to deliver the scheme. Possible mitigations are being explored should this risk be realised and in the event that forecast operator income is insufficient, a further report will be made to Cabinet setting out the options available.
- 7.4. A risk register is maintained for the project with the top 10 risks reported to MHCLG as part of the quarterly monitoring return requirement associated with the Levelling Up process. These include risks associated with site, costs and planning. This will continue to be managed and updated throughout project delivery with risks being closed out as the scheme progresses. For reference, the MHCLG risks are attached at Exempt Appendix C. In addition to this Alliance hold a separate project risk register which can be found within the RIBA stage 2 report at Exempt Appendix A.

Legal Implications

- 7.5. The legal implications for the design stages of the project and procurement were set out in the previous report REG2501. There are no additional legal implications as a result of this report.

Financial Implications

- 7.6. The project currently is anticipated to be funded by external funding of £18.5m of Levelling Up Fund Grant, supplemented by £5m borrowing.
- 7.7. Committing to RIBA stage 4 does not commit the Council to construction works, and will be fully funded by the Levelling Up Fund Grant. This report does not commit any Council funding at this stage.
- 7.8. Following RIBA Stage 4, will require a detailed Business Case, including an appropriate funding strategy supported by robust independent due diligence, must be produced prior to consideration by Cabinet and Council on conclusion of the RIBA Stage 4 work.
- 7.9. The Council continues to have a financial deficit within its MTFS which requires resolution. Until this has been resolved and financial sustainability achieved, the Council does not have capacity to take on any further cost or underwrite financial risk of an entirely discretionary nature, such as this project. The Council's MTFS will have to be altered to accommodate project costs beyond RIBA stage 4 that fall outside of the LUF funding and will have to be mitigated by cost reductions elsewhere.
- 7.10. Ernst & Young LLP, the Council's Financial Statements Auditors, raised a Going Concern matter as part of the 2023-24 financial statements audit findings report

regarding the council's high level of short borrowing and affordability. Therefore, progression of the project to construction stages, and therefore committing the council to over £20m of capital expenditure will require the Councils' external auditors to support the proposal.

- 7.11. In addition, MHCLG will need confidence that the council is financially sound and the project will offer financial viability to ensure that the Council does not receive a Best Value Notice. Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government will consider issuing a 'Best Value Notice' to secure compliance with the Best Value Duty, as required by the Local Government Act 1999.

Resource Implications

- 7.12. An internal Project Team is in place comprising existing establishment roles within the Regeneration and Development Service to progress client-side responsibilities associated with the delivery of the scheme. External legal support will be required to support the project and budget has been allocated for this.

Equalities Impact Implications

- 7.13. The project addresses significant Health inequalities and seeks to improve access to leisure facilities in Farnborough. An Equality Impact Assessment will be produced in the next stage of the project and will form part of the business case. Key stakeholders such as Rushmoor Accessibility Action Group are being engaged on the emerging proposals.

8. CONCLUSIONS

- 8.1. The delivery of a new leisure centre for Farnborough is a significant priority for local people and the Council's Cabinet. The focus is to proceed at pace to ensure that the new centre can be delivered within the Levelling Up funding timelines and to ensure a much need facility for local people.

LIST OF APPENDICES/ANNEXES:

Exempt Appendix A – RIBA Stage 2 Report
Appendix B – Detailed Current Programme
Exempt Appendix C – MHCLG Risk Register

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS:

Cabinet Report REG2501

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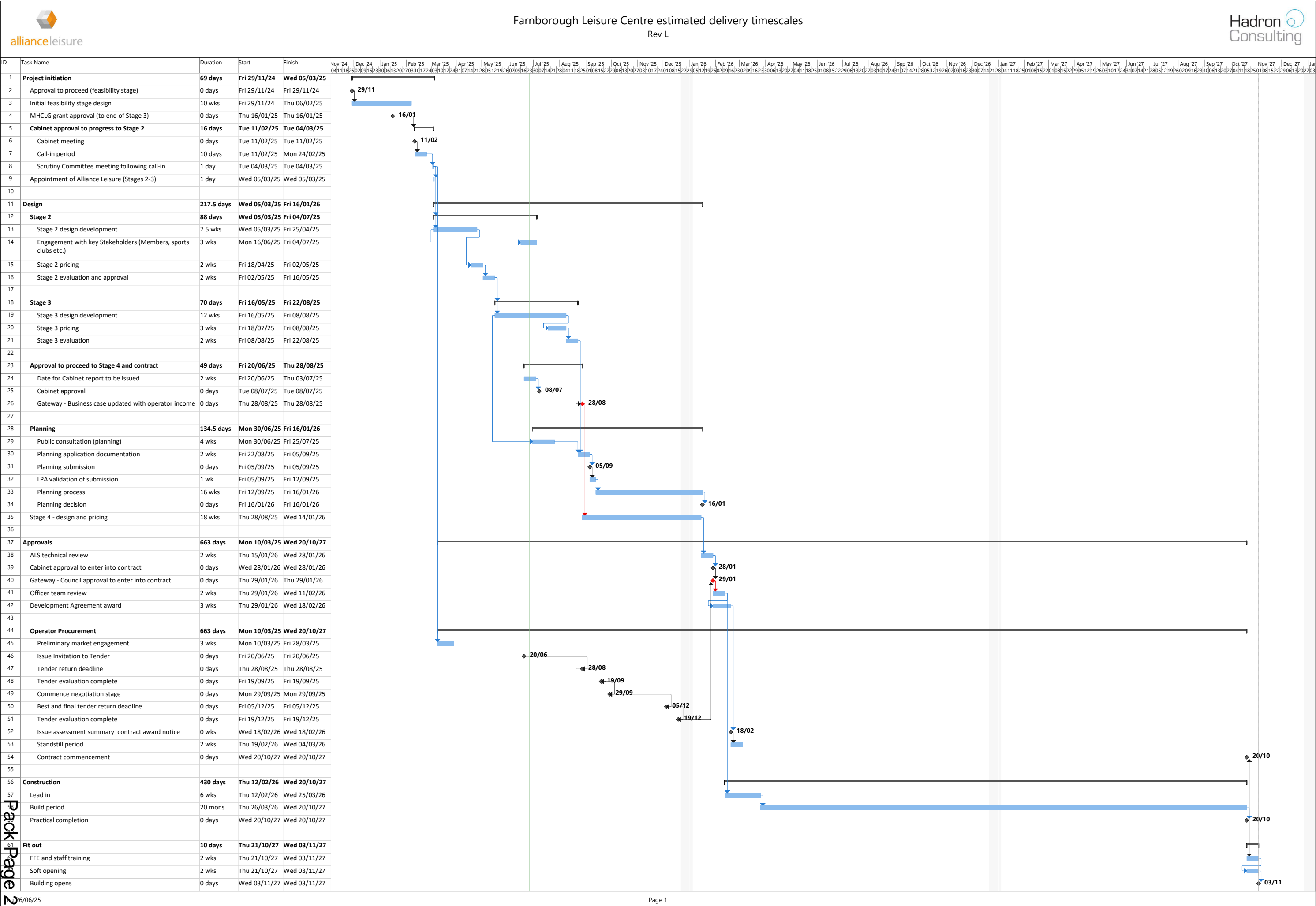
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