



BOROUGH OF RUSHMOOR

To the Mayor and Members of the Council,

YOU ARE HEREBY SUMMONED to attend a Meeting of the Council to be held at the Council Offices, Farnborough on **Thursday, 5th December, 2024 at 7.15 pm** for the transaction of the business set out on the Agenda given below.

A G E N D A

1. **MINUTES –** (Pages 1 - 10)

To confirm the Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of the Council held on 7th November 2024 (copy attached).

2. **MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS –**

3. **STANDING ORDER 8 - QUESTIONS –**

To receive any questions by Members submitted in pursuance of Standing Order 8 (3).

4. NOTICE OF MOTION - SECTION 106 AGREEMENTS –

To consider the following Notice of Motion, which has been submitted by Cllr Peter Cullum pursuant to Standing Order 9 (1):

“This Council believes that residents should receive the infrastructure and amenities they are promised when they buy a new home or when new development takes place nearby and that developers and this Council should be held accountable for their legal obligations within S106 agreements.

This Council will produce a quarterly report detailing performance against financial, programme and other obligations of all parties within S106 agreements of which this Council is a party and a breakdown of this by ward.

The report will be issued to all members of this council and ward members will be given regular opportunities to engage with and a shape the use of S106 funds in their wards.

Increasing transparency on performance against commitments will provide confidence to communities that promises will be delivered on while local councillor input will help target available funds more effectively.”

5. QUESTIONS FOR THE CABINET –

To receive any questions by Members to Cabinet Members submitted in accordance with the Procedure Note.

6. REPORTS OF CABINET AND COMMITTEES – (Pages 11 - 16)

To receive and ask questions on the Report of the following Meeting (copy report attached):

Committees

Corporate Governance, Audit and Standards

21st November, 2024

7. REPORTS OF OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE AND POLICY AND PROJECT ADVISORY BOARD – (Pages 17 - 22)

To note the Reports of the following meetings (copy reports attached):

Overview and Scrutiny Committee
Policy and Project Advisory Board

24th October, 2024
19th November, 2024

P. SHACKLEY
Chief Executive

Council Offices
Farnborough
Hampshire GU14 7JU

Wednesday 27 November 2024

This page is intentionally left blank

BOROUGH OF RUSHMOOR

MEETING OF THE BOROUGH COUNCIL held at the Council Chamber, Council Offices, Farnborough on Thursday, 7th November, 2024 at 7.00 pm.

The Worshipful The Mayor (Cllr Mara Makunura (Chairman))
The Deputy Mayor (Cllr Calum Stewart (Vice-Chairman))

Cllr A. Adeola	Cllr Abe Allen
Cllr Gaynor Austin	Cllr A.H. Crawford
Cllr Bill O'Donovan	Cllr Steve Harden
Cllr Ivan Whitmee	Cllr Lisa Greenway
Cllr Thomas Day	Cllr Leola Card
Cllr Rhian Jones	Cllr Julie Hall
Cllr C.W. Card	Cllr Jules Crossley
Cllr P.J. Cullum	Cllr Keith Dibble
Cllr Peace Essien Igodifo	Cllr A.H. Gani
Cllr C.P. Grattan	Cllr Christine Guinness
Cllr Halleh Koohestani	Cllr G.B. Lyon
Cllr Nadia Martin	Cllr S.J. Masterson
Cllr T.W. Mitchell	Cllr Sophie Porter
Cllr M.J. Roberts	Cllr Dhan Sarki
Cllr M.D. Smith	Cllr Sarah Spall
Cllr P.G. Taylor	Cllr M.J. Tennant
Cllr S. Trussler	Cllr Jacqui Vosper
Cllr Becky Williams	Cllr Gareth Williams

Honorary Alderman Terry Bridgeman
Honorary Alderman Tony Gardiner
Honorary Alderman John Marsh

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Cllr Sue Carter.

Before the meeting was opened, the Mayor's Chaplain, Coleen Kusi-Agyapong, led the meeting in prayers, which included a one minute silence for Honorary Alderman John Debenham.

19. **TRIBUTE TO HONORARY ALDERMAN JOHN DEBENHAM MBE**

The Mayor paid tribute to Honorary Alderman John Debenham MBE who sadly passed away on 29 September, 2024.

John had served as a Councillor for 28 years, having first been elected to Farnborough Urban District Council. He had been Mayor of Rushmoor when the new Council was formed in 1974. John served until 2002 representing Knellwood ward and was an active member of the Council, Cabinet and Chairman of numerous bodies and Committees during his time on the Council.

His loyal and distinguished service was recognised in 2002 when he was made an Honorary Alderman, this was further acknowledged when he was awarded an MBE for services to the community.

John would be long remembered for having left a lasting legacy through his contribution to community life in the Borough.

Cllrs Crawford, Masterson and Card also paid tribute to Alderman Debenham, all of whom recognised his dedication and desire to support the community and his encouragement of other to do the same. John had been well respected and would be greatly missed by all who knew him. A Service of Thanksgiving would be held the following day at St Marks Church, Farnborough and the Council's thoughts were with John's wife, family and friends at this difficult time.

20. **MINUTES**

It was **MOVED** by Cllr Keith Dibble; **SECONDED** by Cllr Sarah Spall and

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the Meeting of the Ordinary Meeting on 25th July, 2024 (copy having been circulated previously) and the Minutes of the Extraordinary Meeting on 15th August, 2024 (copy having been circulated previously) be taken as read, approved and signed as a correct record.

21. **MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

(1) The Mayor reported that events she had attended since the previous meeting of the Council had included:

- The Bula Festival – 3rd August
- The 44th Commemoration of Defense Forces Day – 15th August
- Africa Day at the Carnival – 24th August
- Merchant Navy Flag Raising – 3rd September
- Rushmoor Community Lottery Anniversary event – 11th September
- Battle of Britain Service – 15th September
- Rushmoor Community in Bloom and Rushmoor Schools in Bloom Awards Evening – 16th September & 19th September
- Rushmoor Pride 2024 – 28th September
- Diwali in Rushmoor – 18th October
- Black History Month performance event at Princes Hall – 22nd October

(2) In addition, the Mayor had visited two of the Council's twin towns, Meudon in France during the Paris 2024 Olympic Games and Oberursel in Germany to mark the 35th Anniversary of Rushmoor's twinning with Oberursel.

(3) The Mayor thanked the Deputy Mayor who attended the Step by Step charity 'Sleep Out' on 11th October, in her place whilst she was away in Germany. The event raised funds to support young people facing homelessness.

- (4) It was also reported that the Mayor would be hosting a Charity Fashion and Beauty Show on Friday 8th November. Tickets were available in advance or on the door and all were welcome to attend.

22. **STANDING ORDER 8 - QUESTIONS**

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

23. **NOTICES OF MOTION**

(1) **Winter Fuel Payments**

The Council were asked to consider a Notice of Motion submitted by Cllr Sue Carter under Standing Order 9 (1) on Winter Fuel Payments. The Motion was proposed by Cllr Peace Essien-Igodifo on behalf of Cllr Carter, who had been unable to attend the meeting.

“Noting:

- The Government’s decision to restrict Winter Fuel Payments to pensioners in receipt of benefits like Pension Credit.
- Criticism from AgeUK which says 2 million pensioners needing the money to stay warm this winter will not receive it.
- The significant role the payments play in helping many older people in Rushmoor afford heating.
- The additional strain this will place on vulnerable pensioners, many of whom do not claim Pension Credit, for reasons including administrative barriers and perceived stigma.
- The short notice and lack of adequate compensatory measures.

Council resolves to:

- Write to the Chancellor urging review and asking Government to ensure that vulnerable pensioners not claiming Pension Credit are protected.
- Sign the ‘Save the Winter Fuel Payment’ petition being run by Age UK.
- Promote Pension Credit through council services and partnerships including a special meeting of the Senior Citizens Forum.
- Urgently review options for our Hardship Fund and council tax support to help those hardest hit.
- Explore keeping council buildings including the Council Offices and Princes Hall open for older people who may not have anywhere warm to go and maintaining a directory of local facilities where people can stay warm.”

Cllr Essien-Igodifo emphasised the high level of pressure and worries about keeping warm faced by many residents during the winter months. She asked Members to stand together in unity to defend older people and protect those in need from illnesses linked to colds and the cold weather and highlighted the impacts for the NHS and other support services.

In seconding the Motion, Cllr Lyon reserved his right to speak.

It was MOVED by Cllr C.W. Card and SECONDED by Cllr T.W. Mitchell – That the Motion be amended (*in italics*) as follows:

“Noting:

- *The Council notes the recent announcement by the Government to end universal winter fuel payments and restrict eligibility to those in receipt of Pension Credits. Pensioners on lower and middle income will not receive the payments. Across England and Wales the number of people eligible for winter fuel payments will fall by 10 million to 1.5 million people.*
- *This Council believes the threshold has been set too low at £218.15 a week for a single person or £332.95 for a couple.*

Council resolves to:

- *Group Leaders within Rushmoor Council to sign a joint letter to the Chancellor of the Exchequer for the winter fuel payment policy to be suspended and reviewed to ensure that vulnerable pensioners are protected.*
- *Urgently commence a significant awareness campaign to maximise uptake of pension credits. This will include social media council noticeboards, targeted letters and local media.*
- Urgently review options for our Hardship Fund and council tax support to help those hardest hit.
- Explore keeping council buildings including the Council Offices and Princes Hall open for older people who may not have anywhere warm to go and maintaining a directory of local facilities where people can stay warm.”

Cllr Card believed that by suspending and reviewing the threshold levels for winter fuel payments it would provide more time to gather information and assess the impacts of the current restrictions.

In discussing the amendment, it was noted that the Government’s Household Support Fund had been extended to help those most in need with cost-of-living pressures during the colder months. The point was made that the take-up of Pension Credit needed to be improved, and that support was needed to help those not yet claiming Pension Credit but who were eligible to do so.

Following further discussion, the Amended Motion was put to the meeting. In a recorded vote, there voted FOR: Cllrs A. Adeola, C.W. Card, Leola Card, P.J. Cullum, A.H. Gani, Steve Harden, Peace Essien-Igodifo, G.B. Lyon, S.J. Masterson, T.W. Mitchell, M.D. Smith, P.G. Taylor, M.J. Tennant, S. Trussler and Jacqui Vosper (15) AGAINST: Cllrs Abe Allen, Gaynor Austin, A.H. Crawford, Jules Crossley, Thomas Day, Keith Dibble, C.P. Grattan, Lisa Greenway, Christine Guinness, Julie Hall, Rhian Jones, Halleh Koohestani, Nadia Martin, Bill O’Donovan, Sophie Porter, M.J. Roberts, Dhan Sarki, Sarah Spall, Ivan Whitmee, Becky Williams and Gareth Williams (21) ABSTAIN: The Deputy Mayor (Cllr Calum Stewart), The Mayor (Cllr Mara Makunura) (2) and the Amended Motion was **DECLARED LOST**.

It was then MOVED by Cllr Gaynor Austin and SECONDED by Cllr Abe Allen – That the Motion be amended as follows:

“This Council:

- Notes the Government’s decision to means test Winter Fuel Payments and Age UK’s estimate that around 2.5 million pensioners will struggle to pay energy bills this winter, some of whom will be Rushmoor residents,
- Welcomes the increase of up to £472 to state pensions coming in April 2025 (almost double inflation), but also recognises the need to support Rushmoor pensioners in need this winter,

Resolves to:

- i. Continue to use council communication channels and partnerships to promote Pension Credit, the Household Support Fund and Warm Homes Discount,
 - ii. Explore the possibility of becoming an approved SGN Partner and promote any projects which can help vulnerable residents,
 - iii. Investigate options to provide help to people to claim Pension Credit,
 - iv. Review options for council tax support and the Hardship Fund to help those most in need, whilst ensuring other vulnerable groups continue to be supported,
 - v. Maintain a directory of local ‘warm banks’ and explore the use of council-owned buildings for this purpose,
 - vi. Write to the Chancellor seeking government support to help protect any vulnerable pensioners not claiming Pension Credit.
- Commits to the portfolio holder updating members in due course.”

In proposing the amendment, Cllr Austin acknowledged that the Motion was an emotive subject and stressed the importance of supporting Rushmoor residents to ensure that they received the support they needed to heat homes and protect health. She commented that public funds were limited, and prioritisation was needed to ensure that those who were most in need were supported. Cllr Austin believed that the measures taken would help to ensure the sustainability of Winter Fuel Payments for the future and provided a practical solution to support those most in need.

In seconding the amendment, Cllr Allen emphasised the need to focus on the practical actions to be taken at a local level to support the most vulnerable residents, and to be inclusive to all people facing hardship in the community.

During discussion on the amendment, the point was made about the critical importance of publicity, community networks and support to ensure that all those who were eligible for pension credit received the help that they needed and were signposted to all the support that was available, including warm hubs. It was advised

that DWP could help with the completion of residents' applications for pension credits and benefits by phone, and Rushmoor Citizens Advice was also a hub for those seeking advice and support.

The view was also expressed that a staged approach to the Government's new policy could have enabled more time to help people to access the benefits they were entitled to, and concerns were raised about the strain on the NHS and negative impacts for peoples' health.

Following further discussion, the Amended Motion was put to the meeting. In a recorded vote, there voted FOR: Cllrs Abe Allen, Gaynor Austin, A.H. Crawford, Jules Crossley, Thomas Day, Keith Dibble, C.P. Grattan, Lisa Greenway, Christine Guinness, Julie Hall, Rhian Jones, Halleh Koohestani, Nadia Martin, Bill O'Donovan, Sophie Porter, M.J. Roberts, Dhan Sarki, Sarah Spall, Ivan Whitmee, Becky Williams and Gareth Williams (21) AGAINST: Cllrs A. Adeola, C.W. Card, Leola Card, P.J. Cullum, A.H. Gani, Steve Harden, Peace Essien-Igodifo, G.B. Lyon, S.J. Masterson, T.W. Mitchell, P.G. Taylor, M.J. Tennant, S. Trussler and Jacqui Vosper (14) ABSTAIN: The Deputy Mayor (Cllr Calum Stewart), The Mayor (Cllr Mara Makunura) (2) and the Amended Motion was **DECLARED CARRIED**.

The Amended Motion became the Substantive Motion.

It was then MOVED by Cllr G.B. Lyon and SECONDED by Cllr C.W. Card – That the Substantive Motion be further amended to include an insertion asking that representations be made that 'the policy be suspended, and the restrictions reviewed'.

In proposing the amendment, Cllr Lyon emphasised the need to ensure older vulnerable residents were protected from additional hardship and in SECONDING the Motion, Cllr Card expressed the opinion that the Council should act further to challenge the Government's winter fuel policy in the interests of residents.

Following discussion, the amendment was put to the meeting. In a recorded vote, there voted FOR: Cllrs A. Adeola, C.W. Card, Leola Card, P.J. Cullum, A.H. Gani, Steve Harden, Peace Essien-Igodifo, G.B. Lyon, S.J. Masterson, T.W. Mitchell, P.G. Taylor, M.J. Tennant, S. Trussler and Jacqui Vosper (14) AGAINST: Cllrs Abe Allen, Gaynor Austin, A.H. Crawford, Jules Crossley, Thomas Day, Keith Dibble, C.P. Grattan, Lisa Greenway, Christine Guinness, Julie Hall, Rhian Jones, Halleh Koohestani, Nadia Martin, Bill O'Donovan, Sophie Porter, M.J. Roberts, Dhan Sarki, Sarah Spall, Ivan Whitmee, Becky Williams and Gareth Williams (21) ABSTAIN: The Deputy Mayor (Cllr Calum Stewart) and The Mayor (Cllr Mara Makunura) (2) and the Amended Motion was **DECLARED LOST**.

The Substantive Motion was put to the meeting. In a recorded vote, there voted FOR: Cllrs A. Adeola, Abe Allen, Gaynor Austin, C.W. Card, Leola Card, A.H. Crawford, Jules Crossley, P.J. Cullum, Thomas Day, Keith Dibble, A.H. Gani, C.P. Grattan, Lisa Greenway, Christine Guinness, Julie Hall, Steve Harden, Peace Essien-Igodifo, Rhian Jones, Halleh Koohestani, G.B. Lyon, Nadia Martin, S.J. Masterson, T.W. Mitchell, Bill O'Donovan, Sophie Porter, M.J. Roberts, Dhan Sarki, Sarah Spall, P.G. Taylor, M. J. Tennant, S. Trussler, Jacqui Vosper, Ivan Whitmee,

Becky Williams, Gareth Williams and The Deputy Mayor (Cllr Calum Stewart) (36) ABSTAIN: The Mayor (Cllr Mara Makunura) and the Motion was **DECLARED CARRIED**.

(2) **Sustainability**

The Council were asked to consider a Notice of Motion submitted by Cllr Jules Crossley under Standing Order 9 (1) on Sustainability.

“Recognising the urgent nature of the challenges confronting Rushmoor in terms of the climate crisis, the financial situation, the economic environment, and the inequity that some of our residents continue to face.

Further recognising how challenging it will be to achieve the targets that Council set after declaring a climate emergency in 2019.

Council therefore resolves to:

- Support and deliver sustainability across Council’s policies, projects, operations, and estate, where sustainability includes, but is not limited to, sound financial management, fair and equitable treatment of residents, staff, and organisations within Rushmoor, and have a positive impact on our environment and biodiversity.
- Introduce climate impact assessments for Council Decisions on all new projects.
- Encourage residents, businesses and organisations working within the borough to be responsible and sustainable.
- Be open and transparent in communications with residents and those working or operating in the borough.
- Foster relationships of mutual respect and collaboration with other councils, public authorities, and businesses to ensure sustainability.”

In proposing the Motion Cllr Crossley stated that the Motion had been put before the Council to help galvanise Members support and enhance visibility and success for embedding sustainability into the Council’s activities going forward. She stated that small measures that were taken locally helped to make an impact on global issues and contributed to the achievement of the Council’s ambitions. In **SECONDING** the Motion, Cllr Crawford emphasised the importance of working in partnerships, and engaging with residents and partners to create a sustainable future.

During discussion, there was agreement that embedding sustainability in the Council’s activities would have a positive environmental impact and help to reduce carbon footprint.

Following further discussion, the Motion was put to the meeting. There voted FOR: 37 AGAINST: 0 ABSTAIN: 0 and the Motion was **DECLARED CARRIED**.

24. QUESTIONS FOR THE CABINET

- (1) Cllr Steve Harden had submitted a question for response by the Portfolio Holder for Neighbourhood Services (Cllr Becky Williams) requesting clarity, as a ward councillor, on the process for supporting residents at risk of homelessness.

In response, Cllr Williams advised that data was collected in accordance with requirements and not all personal data may be held on all residents seeking support. Cllr Williams offered to follow up with Cllr Harden following the meeting.

- (2) Cllr Martin Tennant had submitted a question for response by the Portfolio Holder for Regeneration and Property (Cllr Christine Guinness) requesting an update on when the Council would be submitting a planning application for a leisure centre in Farnborough.

In response, Cllr Guinness advised that due to the current financial position, any facility that was provided needed to be affordable - and a scheme was currently being considered. Timescales would be shared with all Members when appropriate, but it was thought that detailed plans would be available within 10 months.

- (3) Cllr Stuart Trussler had submitted a question for response by the Leader of the Council (Cllr Gareth Williams) regarding the impact of the increases to National Insurance Contributions on the Council's payroll when the new regime came into force from April 2025.

In response, Cllr Williams confirmed that no impact would be made on the Council's payroll as local authorities would be compensated. However, there was currently no method to assess any impacts from contracts.

- (4) Cllr Gareth Lyon had submitted a question for response by the Portfolio Holder for Development and Economic Growth (Cllr Keith Dibble) on how the Council were using the £50,000 from the Esso Pipeline project and the £70,000 from the Environment agency associated with Cove Brook.

In response, Cllr Dibble advised that there were three separate funding streams relating to the Cove Brook, Esso Environmental Investment Programme (£23,000), Environmental Agency Water Framework Directive (£90,000 (match funded)) and Environment Agency Collaborative Agreement funding (£70,000).

The funding would be used to improve wildflower corridors, in-stream habitat, and provide technical support for watercourse activities. Restore the ecological function of Cove Brook to achieve Good Ecological Status through the removal of artificial bed/banks, bankside vegetation management, and flow management in Southwood Country Park.

Each funding stream would target specific ecological enhancements, with ongoing coordination and flexibility in project design.

- (5) Cllr Paul Taylor had submitted a question for response by the Portfolio Holder for Neighbourhood Services (Cllr Becky Williams) regarding any conversations that had taken place with the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) relating to progress for a Police Community Base in Farnborough Town Centre.

In response, Cllr Williams advised that a date was being sought for a meeting with the PCC to discuss this matter. It was important to understand how the facility would operate and the Leader would be included in any discussions.

Further questions for the Cabinet had been submitted prior to the meeting. However, as the 15-minute threshold for questions had been reached, these would be answered outside the meeting and responses shared with Members.

25. **REPORTS OF CABINET AND COMMITTEES**

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

Cabinet	23rd July, 2024
Cabinet	6th August, 2024
Cabinet	10th September, 2024
Cabinet	15th October, 2024
Corporate Governance, Audit and Standards	31st July, 2024
Development Management	14th August, 2024
Corporate Governance, Audit and Standards	25th September, 2024
Development Management	23rd October, 2024

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

RESOLVED: that the Reports of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee meetings held on 1st August, 12th September and 19th September 2024 and the Policy and Project Advisory Board meetings held on 23rd July and 24th September 2024 be noted.

The meeting closed at 10.12 pm.

This page is intentionally left blank

CORPORATE GOVERNANCE, AUDIT AND STANDARDS COMMITTEE

Report of the meeting held on Thursday, 21st November, 2024 at the Council Offices, Farnborough at 7.00 pm.

Voting Members

Cllr A.H. Crawford (Chairman)
Cllr Bill O'Donovan (Vice-Chairman)

Cllr A. Adeola
Cllr Gaynor Austin
Cllr Rhian Jones
Cllr M.J. Roberts
Cllr M.D. Smith
Cllr Sarah Spall
Cllr Jacqui Vosper

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Cllrs Craig Card and P. G. Taylor.

Non-Voting Member

Mr Tom Davies (ex officio) watched proceedings virtually.

20. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 25th September 2024 were agreed and signed as a correct record of the proceedings.

21. EY AUDIT/STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS UPDATE

The Chairman welcomed Simon Mathers, Director and Kalthiemah Abrahams, Audit Manager, from the Council's external auditors, Ernst and Young (EY), who joined the meeting remotely via Microsoft Teams.

The Committee received the Executive Head of Finance's Report No. FIN2418 which set out the latest position on the local audit delay backstop, and with recommendations to approve the outstanding years financial statements – 2020/21, 2021/22 and 2022/23.

The Committee was advised that three years of statutory annual accounts (as set out in Appendices 1-3 in the Report) needed to be disclaimed, to deal with the national backlog issues in local government audit as previously reported. The process of publishing the accounts, was to have the accounts open for public viewing for a statutory period of 20 days. Two of the sets of accounts, had not been held open for 20 days due to a Bank Holiday not being accounted for. The accounts therefore

needed to be republished with the public scrutiny period to end on the 13th December 2024.

Mr Mathers shared the draft Audit Completion Report from EY, reporting on the limited procedures that they needed to undertake to be able disclaim the historic audits for 2020/21, 2021/22 and 2022/23. The Committee needed to provide EY with letters of management representation for the accounts, with separate letters for each of the three open audit years.

The Executive Head of Finance also advised that the Council had been liaising with EY to arrange the external audit for the 2023/24 accounts. It was noted that the Statement of Accounts Audit for the 2023/24 Financial Year was on track and completion was expected in January 2025.

RESOLVED: That:

- (i) approval of the Statement of Accounts for 2020/21, 2021/22 and 2022/23 be delegated to the Chair of the Corporate Governance Standards and Audit Committee and the S151 Officer;
- (ii) the signing of the Letter of Representation for 2020/21, 2021/22 and 2022/23 be delegated to the Chair of the Corporate Governance, Standards and Audit Committee and the S151 Officer;
- (iii) the accounts be confirmed as having been prepared on a going concern basis;
- (iv) the Auditors Completion Report be noted; and
- (v) the Auditors Value for Money report be noted.

22. PROPOSALS FOR INTERNAL AUDIT

The Committee received the Executive Head of Finance's Report No. FIN2420 setting out proposals to use an external provider, Southern Internal Audit Partnership (SIAP) which was part of Hampshire County Council, to deliver the Council's full internal audit service.

The Committee heard from SIAP's Neil Pitman, who explained that they would act in partnership with the Council. The Council's S151 Officer would also sit on the Partnership Board. The benefits of using SIAP to undertake the work included increased independence from Council staff, increased resilience, a wider skill base including IT and systems expertise, as well as wider experience of other council's processes and procedures.

In response to a question about the effect of the current financial challenges faced by Hampshire County Council and how this could impact on the service provided, it was noted that an inter-authority arrangement with one of the region's largest providers of public sector internal audit would mean improved service resilience with adequate capacity and capability to enable strong internal audit.

RESOLVED: That the proposal to contract the Chief Internal Audit function to SIAP be agreed by the Committee.

23. PROPOSALS FOR COUNCIL INSURANCE

The Committee received the Executive Head of Finance's Report No. FIN2419 which set out options for the renewal of the Council's insurance. Neil Walker from London Borough of Sutton Insurance was in attendance to provide information on the self-insurance model.

The Committee heard from the Executive Head of Finance, Peter Vickers, that the Council's insurance contractual arrangements were due to expire on 31st March 2025. The Cabinet had previously considered Report No. FIN2414, which set out a proposal in relation to the process by which the Council would procure its insurance services in the future. The Cabinet had subsequently expressed support for the London Borough of Sutton (LBS) approach being progressed.

The Committee heard from Neil Walker and Emma Cotton from the LBS. It was noted that the Council would have increased policy cover and with jointly purchased insurance through a consortium of 9 other London Boroughs would afford significant purchasing power to achieve economies of scale and insurance premium stability well beyond the ability of individual councils to manage premiums through increased excess. LBS would put the council's insurance information out to tender or auto renewal and update information yearly. They would also give advice on events and contracts, as well as providing claims handling for the Council using an in-house dedicated team.

RESOLVED: That the Executive Head of Finance's Report No. FIN2419 be noted and the suitability of the London Borough of Sutton's insurance proposal to satisfy the Council's insurance requirements be confirmed.

24. TREASURY MANAGEMENT AND NON-TREASURY INVESTMENT OPERATIONS 2024/25 QUARTERLY REPORT

The Committee received the Executive Head of Finance Report No. FIN2417, which set out the main activities of the Treasury Management and Non-Treasury Investment Operations during Quarter 2 of the 2023/24 financial year. This was a statutory requirement under the CIPFA Code of Practice on Treasury Management.

The Committee was advised that all treasury activity had been conducted within the approved Treasury Management Practices. The majority of borrowing was short-term and would remain so until the Public Works Loan Board (PWLB) interest rate reduced to a level which would enable longer term affordable borrowing to be secured. The Committee noted that the Council had borrowed substantial sums of money and was therefore exposed to financial risks which included the loss of invested funds and the revenue effect of changing interest rates. The Authority's Treasury Management Strategy included the successful identification, monitoring and control of risks.

During discussion, Members raised questions regarding redeeming pooled funds. Pooled funds were being monitored monthly and consideration would be given to redeeming them as appropriate.

RESOLVED: That the Executive Head of Finance's report No. FIN2417 be noted.

25. **ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT UPDATE**

The Committee received the Audit Manager's Report No. AUD24/08, which gave details of work carried out towards the implementation of the actions identified within the Annual Governance Statement, which had been considered by the Committee in May 2024.

The Committee heard that the new MS List System to support responses to Freedom of Information requests was fully functioning by July 2024.

It was noted that the Council had commissioned a review of some elements of its Committee and Governance arrangements as a result of the Corporate Peer Challenge and the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) Report. The findings of the review would be considered by the Committee in January 2025 with any agreed changes commencing in May 2025.

The Financial Resilience Plan had been agreed and was regularly reviewed by the Executive Leadership Team (ELT). The self-assessment against the CIPFA Financial Management Code was still to be carried out. It did, in part, form the wider review being carried out around Governance and the Financial Resilience Plan. The self-assessment had been reviewed with two high-priority actions being brought for review by ELT and the Corporate Governance Group.

The Committee noted that there had been a delay in the self-assessment against the CIPFA Financial Management Code due to higher priorities within the Finance Team taking precedence. It was advised that some areas of the self-assessment would be incorporated into the work of the wider service. The Financial Management Code reviewed all aspects of Governance, not only Finance.

RESOLVED: That the Audit Manager's Report No. AUD24/08 including the progress towards the implementation of the actions detailed within the Council's Annual Governance Statement be noted.

26. **INTERNAL AUDIT - OUTSTANDING AUDIT RECOMMENDATIONS UPDATE**

The Committee received the Audit Manager's Report No. AUD24/09, which provided an update on the approach taken to review outstanding audit recommendations (prior to 2022/23), given the changes since the recommendations were originally made and showed all outstanding recommendations to date.

The Committee noted that a review of all outstanding audit recommendations had been carried out to re-evaluate them given the evolution of processes and changes over time. The review ensured that resources were specifically utilised on improving

areas of risk, governance and control weaknesses which would be most effective given the current environment. This approach had been taken for the 2019/20, 2020/21 and 2021/22 outstanding audits. The Report set out the changes that were being proposed and the outstanding audit recommendations which would continue to be pursued with progress on their implementation communicated quarterly to the Committee for monitoring.

During discussion, Members raised questions regarding procurement cards and cyber-security.

RESOLVED: That:

- (i) the changes made to recommendations being pursued for implementation to ensure the most effective use of Council resources to improve the overall governance, risk management and control environment be noted:
- (ii) an updated report on cyber-security be presented at the next Committee Meeting;
- (iii) a schedule setting out the target dates for completing the outstanding audit recommendations be prepared for the next update report.
- (iv) the overall audit recommendation which remained outstanding, be noted

27. **UPDATE ON GOVERNANCE REVIEW ACTIONS**

The Committee received a verbal update from Executive Director, Ian Harrison, regarding the Committee Structure Review being led by Ed Hammond from the Centre for Governance and Scrutiny (CfGS).

The Committee noted that the Review had begun with Mr Hammond inviting Members to join an online workshop with many of the Members of the CGAS Committee in attendance. He had a number of interviews scheduled with individual Members, senior officers, chairs and vice-chairs of committees and any Members who wished to discuss Governance with him, were invited to speak to him personally, on Microsoft Teams or by e-mail, which was to be arranged through Mr Harrison.

Following the Interview and Discovery Stage, which would conclude at the end of December, Mr Hammond would submit a draft report of findings in early January. The CGAS Committee would have significant input into the draft proposals of how to strengthen governance at the Council.

RESOLVED: That the update on the Governance Review be noted.

The meeting closed at 8.52 pm.

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Report of the meeting held on Thursday, 24th October, 2024 at the Council Offices, Farnborough at 7.00 pm.

Voting Members

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

Cllr A.H. Crawford
Cllr P.J. Cullum
Cllr C.P. Grattan
Cllr Bill O'Donovan
Cllr M.J. Tennant

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Cllr Leola Card, Cllr Thomas Day and Cllr G.B. Lyon.

Cllrs S.J. Masterson, T.W. Mitchell and Sarah Spall attended the meeting as Standing Deputies.

16. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the meetings held on 12th September and 19th September, 2024 were agreed as a correct record.

17. RUSHMOOR VOLUNTARY SERVICES - SERVICE LEVEL AGREEMENT - ANNUAL REPORT

The Committee welcomed Rushmoor Voluntary Services' Chief Executive, Donna Bone, Chair of Trustees, Andrew Lloyd and the Council's Community and Partnerships - Service Manager, Emma Lamb, who were in attendance to report on the 2023/24 Annual Report and Quarters 1 and 2 for 2024/25, in line with the Service Level Agreement with the Council.

Ms Bone, gave a presentation which explained that Rushmoor Voluntary Services (RVS) were the umbrella organisation, referred to as a Council for Voluntary Services (CVS), in place to support local voluntary and community groups. Its mission had been to support the people of Rushmoor to play a full and active part in the life of the local community in partnership with the voluntary, statutory, and business sectors. It was noted that RVS provided information, guidance and support to 340 member organisations.

The Committee were advised that RVS had 120 established 'Rushmoor Responder' volunteers who were available to do ad hoc, bite sized volunteering, on a flexible basis. In addition, it was noted that since April 2023, 425 local staff and volunteers

had been trained, 481 volunteers had been placed in local groups and staff had assisted with funding bids worth over £1.4million.

Key activities for RVS included:

- Community Transport – it was noted that an average of 791 passenger journeys were made every month across Hart and Rushmoor and the minibuses were hired out by organisations on average 570 times a year.
- Home Support – it was noted that RVS provided Home Help to over 200 households across the Borough and the befriending/buddying service had been thriving, with 326 telephone calls and 445 visits being made by volunteers.
- Partnership working – It was advised that RVS worked with partners to provide services/initiatives across the Borough. Examples included the Repair Café, Grub Hub, Warm Hubs and Rushmoor Link. In partnership with the NHS, RVS had also supported work on reducing healthcare inequalities for children and young people – the initiative had helped to foster volunteering skills/interest in younger people.

The Committee reviewed RVS's core CVS service budget income which came from grants totalling £134,800 for 2024/25. Looking to the future, it was advised that Hampshire County Council (HCC) would be removing their grant contribution, which had totalled £29,000 in 2024/25, for 2025/26. It was estimated that RVS could operate for one year at a cost of around £650,000 and had been operating at a deficit for the past two years. It was recognised that HCC and the Council were both facing financial challenges, however some growth was required to keep operating going forward.

The Committee discussed the report and presentation and when asked how the Council could assist, Ms Bone advised that a three year funding agreement from the Council would help plan for the future and assistance with a new lease for the space occupied at the Council Offices. A discussion was also held on the demographic of volunteers, it was advised that since the pandemic a number of volunteers with lived experience naturally retired leaving a huge deficit. The Rushmoor Responders, which had been established from the volunteers who had come forward during the pandemic, were a vital database of people who could be called upon for volunteering opportunities. It was also important to foster and continue to engage with young people through the local schools and colleges, creating opportunities for Duke of Edinburgh volunteering and build understanding of what can and can't be done in the sector as a young person.

It was advised that RVS and Hart Voluntary Action (HVA) intended to work jointly going forward, condensing the number of meetings held per year by hosting jointly and using survey data to seek opportunities for more collaborative working.

In response to a query on how key performance indicators (KPI) were measured, Ms Lamb advised that quarterly performance meetings were held with RVS, and the

excellent partnership with the Council had been highlighted in the recent Peer Review. Ms Lamb, was very confident that RVS delivered on its KPIs.

The Committee discussed the implications should RVS cease to exist, and opportunities for funding from alternative sources.

The Committee RECOMMENDED that the Cabinet:

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

ACTION

What	By Whom	When
Provide a spreadsheet of costs showing income and expenses for 2024/25 to date.	Donna Bone, Chief Executive, RVS	November 2024
Share survey results from 2023/24	Donna Bone, Chief Executive, RVS	November 2024

The Chairman thanked Ms Bone, Mr Lloyd and Ms Lamb for their presentation.

18. **WORK PLAN**

The Committee noted the current Work Plan and the items for the meeting on 28 November, which included the Leaders Priorities and the Risk Register.

The Committee discussed a recent Record of Executive Decision which related to the delayed release of Union Yard. It was agreed that the option of an additional meeting would be considered to look at the situation in more depth.

The meeting closed at 8.56 pm.

POLICY AND PROJECT ADVISORY BOARD

Report of the meeting held remotely on Tuesday, 19th November, 2024 at 7.00 pm.

Voting Members

Cllr M.J. Roberts (Chairman)
Cllr Julie Hall (Vice-Chairman)

Cllr Sue Carter
Cllr A.H. Gani
Cllr Lisa Greenway
Cllr Steve Harden
Cllr Rhian Jones
Cllr Halleh Koohestani
Cllr T.W. Mitchell
Cllr Ivan Whitmee

An apology for absence was submitted on behalf of Cllr S.J. Masterson.

14. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 24th September, 2024 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

15. CLIMATE CHANGE ACTION PLAN

The Chairman welcomed Ms Sophie Rogers and Ms Emma Lamb from the Council's Community and Partnerships team, who presented the Council's Climate Change Action Plan. Also present was Cllr Jules Crossley, Policy, Climate & Sustainability Portfolio Holder, who had been invited to attend for this item.

The Board was reminded that the Council had declared a Climate Emergency in 2019 and had set a target of the Council's operational emissions being carbon neutral by 2030. To monitor progress towards this target, the latest version of the Climate Change Action Plan covered the period 2023 – 2026. The current action plan had twelve actions of focus, namely:

Action 1: Transition electricity across the Council's sites to 100% renewable tariffs.

Action 2: Switch the Council's car fleet to electric alternatives and investigate options for other Council vehicles.

Action 3: Achieve a 5% annual reduction in overall travel from employee-owned vehicles for business purposes and refresh the Council's Workplace Travel Plan.

Action 4: Consider opportunities arising from a relocation of the Council's offices to reduce gas consumption and/or increase renewable energy generation on site.

Action 5: To continue to engage young people on climate change through the schools' programme which is now running in four junior schools within Rushmoor.

Action 6: To use the Council's communications channels (including through Member engagement) to promote opportunities for residents and local businesses to reduce their own carbon footprint, including promoting schemes to improve energy efficiency of their home or business.

Action 7: To hold an eco-fair in September 2023 at Southwood Country Park and Field Centre to allow residents to find out more about climate change and opportunities to reduce their own carbon footprint and to hold an event for local businesses on low carbon opportunities.

Action 8: To work with Hampshire County Council to improve access to EV charging facilities across Rushmoor.

Action 9: To refresh the Council's procurement strategy to ensure that the goods and services that the Council buys support the aim of the Council being carbon neutral by 2030.

Action 10: To review processes for the Council's capital programme so that environmental impacts are incorporated into business case development and whole life cycle carbon assessments are undertaken.

Action 11: To develop the Council's offsetting approach with a view to ensuring that any offsetting undertaken by the Council has a local impact.

Action 12: To review, update and publish the Council's carbon footprint on an annual basis, publish an annual report detailing all that the Council has achieved in relation to its climate action plan and associated strategies (e.g. Green Infrastructure Plan).

The update paper that had been circulated with the agenda proposed a number of changes to the existing actions and the addition of three new actions around the development and use of Climate Change Impact Assessments, the reduction of the use of single-use plastics across Council sites and measures around Active Travel.

In considering the presentation and the proposal in the update paper, Members made the following comments and observations:

- Action 4 in respect of the relocation of the Council Offices should be removed/merged due to the uncertainty over the timescales/logistics of this move
- Insurance costs in respect of electric vehicles can be prohibitive
- Consider scheme to use people's drives to charge electric vehicles
- Encourage establishment of more 'school buses'
- Instead of reducing the use of single-use plastic – can we remove the use of it completely?

- Action 12 – can the report be more often than annually? Confirmed some measures can be reported quarterly but other measures, such as charting emissions, too resource intensive to be reported that frequently
- Can we publicise community grants better re; green initiatives?
- Action 5 – can this be extended to more schools? School travel plans – can we help more local schools?
- Twelve actions seem too many – not clear which are likely to have the most impact
- Within actions, do we need to categorise ‘must do’, ‘could do’ and ‘should do’?
- Good we are branching out to secondary schools as well as primary schools
- Action 7 – events come and go – can we do something more permanent for businesses, such as a business network?
- Good to involve infant-aged children in the process as well as older children
- Action 7 – Eco Fair is a good initiative – could we hold more? Confirmed that a Eco and Sustainability Fair being planned for Princes Hall, Aldershot in July, 2025
- Active Travel – to be included in action plan

The Chairman encouraged Members to provide any further comments or questions by email and thanked Ms Rogers and Ms Lamb for their contributions to the meeting.

It was agreed that the Board would receive a further, written update on the redraft of the action plan.

16. **WORK PLAN**

The Board noted the current Work Plan.

It was agreed that the agenda for the January Board meeting would be discussed at the next Progress Group meeting on 3rd December, 2024.

The meeting closed at 8.14pm.
