

BOROUGH OF RUSHMOOR

MEETING OF THE BOROUGH COUNCIL held at the Council Chamber, Council Offices, Farnborough on Thursday, 19th March, 2026 at 7.00 pm.

The Worshipful The Mayor (Cllr Calum Stewart (Chairman))
The Deputy Mayor (Cllr P.J. Cullum (Vice-Chair))

Cllr A. Adeola
Cllr Gaynor Austin
Cllr Leola Card
Cllr Jules Crossley
Cllr Keith Dibble
Cllr C.P. Grattan
Cllr Julie Hall
Cllr Rhian Jones
Cllr G.B. Lyon
Cllr Mara Makunura
Cllr Bill O'Donovan
Cllr Mike Roberts
Cllr Sarah Spall
Cllr Jacqui Vosper

Cllr Abe Allen
Cllr C.W. Card
Cllr A.H. Crawford
Cllr Thomas Day
Cllr A.H. Gani
Cllr Lisa Greenway
Cllr Steve Harden
Cllr Halleh Koohestani
Cllr Nadia Martin
Cllr Steve Masterson
Cllr Sophie Porter
Cllr Dhan Sarki
Cllr P.G. Taylor
Cllr Gareth Williams

Honorary Alderman Tony Gardiner

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Cllr Sue Carter, Cllr Peace Essien Igodifo, Cllr Christine Guinness, Cllr T.W. Mitchell, Cllr M.D. Smith, Cllr M.J. Tennant, Cllr S. Trussler, Cllr Ivan Whitmee and Cllr Becky Williams.

47. MINUTES

With the support of the Mayor and the Managing Director, some minor amendments had been requested by the Conservative Group which related to the minuting of the 8 Amendments to the Budget and Medium-Term Financial Strategy.

Under Amendment 1 (page 6), it was agreed to update the wording from 'concern was expressed' to 'some of those opposing expressed concern about..' and that this change would be applied to the minuting of each amendment up to Amendment 8.

It was **MOVED** by Cllr Gareth Williams; **SECONDED** by Cllr Sophie Porter and

RESOLVED: That, subject to the amendment as set out above, the Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of the Council on 26th February, 2026 (copies having been circulated previously), be taken as read, approved and signed as a correct record.

48. **MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Since the last Council Meeting, the Mayor had attended an event for International Women's Day on 7th March, and the North Hampshire Armed Forces Covenant Conference at the Princes Hall, Aldershot on 10th March.

Earlier in the day, the Council had hosted a countdown event to mark 100 days until the National Armed Forces Day event in June. At the event, the Mayor awarded Caroline and Michael (Mick) Mills with a Mayor's Award for Community Service for their exceptional contribution to the local community in Rushmoor over more than twenty years. This included their leadership in scouting and work with the Royal British Legion and the Royal Naval Association and wider support to veterans and their families.

49. **QUESTIONS**

(1) Standing Order 8 – Questions

The Mayor reported that no urgent questions had been submitted under Standing Order 8 (3).

(2) Public Questions

Further to the scheme for public questions at full Council meetings, the questions that had been accepted had been circulated to Members in advance. Each question was received as set out below, and the Mayor invited a response to each in turn:

- (1) Sean – Wellington Ward - **Armed Forces Champion** - Rushmoor is the home of the British Army and previously had an Armed Forces Champion. Can the Council explain why this role is currently vacant, how long it has been unfilled, and whether the Council will commit to appointing a new Armed Forces Champion?

Cllr Sophie Porter, Portfolio Holder for Healthy Communities and Active Lives advised that, the Armed Forces Champion was Cllr Nadia Martin, and later in the meeting, during item 7.3, the Council would debate changes to the role to become a Council appointed role for two years.

During the period that the champion post was vacant, Cllr Porter had fulfilled the role as part of her Cabinet portfolio responsibility for Community. During this time the Council had submitted an application for the Gold Employment Recognition Scheme, hosted the first Armed Forces Covenant Conference and won the bid to host the National Armed Forces Day (NAFD). The NAFD event would bring together the whole community to thank our Armed Forces for protecting us as a country and community. Earlier that day (19 March) the Council and its partners came together to celebrate the 100-day countdown until the event in June 2026.

In addition, the Council had also looked at the housing policies for the Armed Forces community, strengthened ties with local Cadet units and connected with many associated organisations. The Armed Forces community were very important to the

current administration, and they would continue to develop close ties with the community, ensuring they do not face disadvantage. The strategic priorities for the Armed Forces Covenant Champion would be set by this Council.

- (2) Mr Bailey – Empress Ward – **Unauthorised and Illegal Attachments** – HCC has allowed unauthorised and illegal attachments to street lighting throughout Rushmoor for the past seven months. Does RBC accept that these have undermined community cohesion, are divisive by design, politically provocative and been accompanied by abuse, intimidation and threats of violence and thereby undermine its core values of social cohesion, diversity, equality and inclusion?

Cllr Gareth Williams, Leader of the Council advised that, as was recorded in his reply to Cllr Crawford's question from the last meeting in February, it was understood how the display of flags, without consultation within the communities where they have been installed, had left some residents feeling intimidated and less safe. Given the intimidatory behaviour of some who have attended this council meeting, who have identified themselves in part as responsible for the flags, the Leader could certainly empathise with those feelings.

On the other hand, not everyone who supported the displays would make a link to the historical precedent this movement reminded many of, and therefore many would perceive them to be a simple expression of national pride.

The Leader had made it clear previously that, collectively, we needed to ensure pride in our nation was not exclusive to any one group or community, and he was determined that this Council continued to demonstrate its commitment to social cohesion, equality and inclusion through positive action and communications to residents. This would include the promotion and celebration of our diverse community as part of Armed Forces Day 2026, which was now just 100 days away, and would be the occasion to display our national flag in a fit and proper manner, on behalf of the whole community.

- (3) A resident of Cove and Southwood Ward – **Farnborough Leisure Centre** – Can you please explain what is going on with our promised leisure centre, wasteland sat empty for months on end and not one bulldozer in sight... Surely the costs are going to spiral out of control before it's even started.

Cllr Sophie Porter, Portfolio Holder for Healthy Communities and Active Lives advised that, planning permission for the new leisure centre in Farnborough town centre had been approved, subject to S106 legal agreement. Work was due to start on site in the summer of 2026 with the new centre opening in late 2027.

- (4) Peter Crerar – Manor Park Ward – **Vape Shops / Lithium-ion Batteries** – A 175-year-old listed building in Glasgow's historic City Centre that survived Luftwaffe air raids and Modernist city centre redevelopment was destroyed by lithium-ion batteries in a Vape Shop. The growing number of lithium-ion pose a threat to people's lives and historic buildings that form our rich architectural heritage.

Lithium-ion batteries are found in Vapes, e-bikes, e-scooters laptops and smart phones and cause rapid, intense fires, toxic fumes and explosions. What action is Rushmoor Borough Council taking to manage the growing numbers of dangerous lithium-ion batteries...many being in counterfeit sub-standard devices and keeping our residents and historic buildings safe.

Cllr Gareth Williams, Leader of the Council advised that, Hampshire Trading Standards governed the matter of poor quality, imported or counterfeit goods. Whilst Rushmoor did not have a direct remit, the Council's Officers do work closely with colleagues at Hampshire County Council and with the Fire service on a range of related issues and passed on intelligence that came to Officers' attention in the course of other duties.

- (5) Stirling Robertson – Knellwood Ward – **Speeding Vehicles** – When is there going to be action taken with regards to speeding drivers on our roads, particularly on Boundary Road which now sounds like a racetrack?

Cllr Gareth Williams, Leader of the Council advised that, keeping roads safe across the Borough remained everybody's business whether it be driving safely, reporting concerns and offences, or by taking more formal approaches to design out or enforce road traffic offences. The primary agency with the delegated power to address offences on the Borough's roads was the police and these should be reported direct to them.

The Police and Crime Commissioner for Hampshire and IOW promoted road safety on her website and provided links to different themes within road safety as well as a specific link to report dangerous driving. Hampshire County Council also had some enforcement powers and maintained the majority of the roads in the Borough. Residents could report a number of road related problems directly to them.

The Council did not have any powers to stop drivers of vehicles on the highway acting either dangerously or in an antisocial manner, however the Council worked closely with partner agencies to improve road safety where the opportunity presented, this included placement of SIDS (Speed Indicator Devices) and sharing the results on the Council's website and with Hampshire County Council colleagues.

- (6) Derek Middleton – Empress Ward – **Farnborough Leisure Centre** – Will your plan for the new Farnborough Leisure Centre include courts for the fastest (currently) growing sports in the world i.e. Pickle and Padel?

Cllr Sophie Porter, Portfolio Holder for Healthy Communities and Active Lives advised that, there were no plans to include any provision for Padel or Pickleball within the current scheme. The funding available for the scheme meant that the Council could not provide all the activities local people might want within the new Leisure Centre. However, the Council were investigating options to provide additional facilities at the Aldershot Indoor Pools and Lido, which might include Padel in the future. In the meantime, there were multiple sports halls and activity halls available for community use within the Borough with sufficient capacity.

- (7) Arezoo Gholizadeh – Empress / Knellwood Ward – **Farnborough Town Centre Promotion** – Why do all my local clients say Farnborough town centre is so bad and they prefer to go to other towns to spend their time with friends or to go shopping - could the Council promote the quality of businesses, shops and services in Farnborough, more?

Cllr Julie Hall, Portfolio Holder for Economy, Skills and Regeneration advised that, Farnborough, like many town centres nationally, had faced challenges in recent years with changes in shopping habits which had seen the closure of national retail and hospitality chains. The Council was actively supporting and promoting the great businesses and services that were present in Farnborough. It was noted that vacancy rates in Farnborough were lower than the national average (9% vs 14%) but the Council were working hard to fill empty units and drive rates lower.

The Council worked closely with local traders and centre managers to run and promote events, encourage footfall and, through the Council's Communications channels (Town Centre Facebook pages), highlighted what Farnborough had to offer. Upcoming events included a Young Business Showcase (28 March), a free Easter Story Trail (29 March) and Farnborough Craft Fayre with over 30 local traders (4 April). This was a small sample of the upcoming events in the town centre and the Council encouraged residents to populate and promote the Council's new events calendar (What's on in Aldershot and Farnborough) which would help to demonstrate all the activities that take place in our towns and community.

Looking forward, the new Aldershot and Farnborough Growth Partnership would help take this even further by bringing together the Council, businesses and other partners to actively champion the town and attract new investment and activity. Significant regeneration was also underway, which would further improve the town centre experience:

- The new Loungers restaurant would bring a popular national brand into the town
- The new Farnborough Leisure Centre, would provide high quality facilities and a major draw for families, young people and local residents
- Bringing forward the empty development site adjacent to the Meads

These investments, alongside ongoing partnership work with local businesses, aimed to improve the overall experience in the town centre and encourage more people to choose Farnborough as a place to meet friends, shop and spend leisure time. While challenges remained, the Council were working hard with partners to promote Farnborough and deliver the improvements that would make it a more vibrant and attractive place to spend time.

- (8) A resident of Manor Park Ward – **Naming of Future Landmarks** – Following public consultation, the Bank of England has recently taken the decision to replace historical British figures on banknotes with wildlife including Otters, as per the practice adopted by Scottish banks.

While there has been much discussion in the media about this being 'woke' its preferable to historical figures being replaced by other historical figures whom suit

the diametrically opposed political agenda. Will Rushmoor be adopting a similar policy by removing all politicians from future local landmarks and that in new housing developments will people find themselves living in Gareth Williams Street or Gareth Lyon Avenue?

Cllr Gareth Williams, Leader of the Council advised that, he was not clear what agenda was advanced previously on banknotes with images of Jane Austen, Michael Faraday, Charles Dickens or Charles Darwin, to name a few from memory, or what politics they had in common. However, as far as Rushmoor was concerned the long-standing policy was to not name streets after living persons. The Leader thought however, that it was reasonable to wish to honour those who had given long and distinguished service to the Borough or the country when an opportunity arose, as had happened occasionally in the past, and that he couldn't fetter any future authority on its choices.

- (9) Madeleine Peck – Fernhill Ward – **Farnborough Leisure Centre** – Please can you advise on the facilities mix for the new Farnborough Leisure Centre and when we can expect the facility to be open to the public?

Cllr Sophie Porter, Portfolio Holder for Healthy Communities and Active Lives advised that, the new centre would offer a 25-metre swimming pool and learner pool with moveable floor, a gym with more than 100 fitness stations and specialist power-assisted exercise equipment for people who were less mobile, studio space, a spin studio, soft play area and a café. Start on site was due to begin in the summer (2026) with the new centre opening in late 2027.

50. **CONCLUSION OF BUSINESS FROM THE COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 26TH FEBRUARY**

a) **Notice of Motion - Rights of Rivers**

The Council were asked to consider a Notice of Motion submitted by Cllr Jules Crossley under Standing Order 10 (1) on Rights of Rivers as set out below:

“This Council notes that Basingstoke and Deane Council agreed to recognise the rights of the River Loddon, which the Blackwater is a tributary of, in May 2025, and committed to developing a ‘Declaration on the Rights of the River’ by Spring 2026.

The Council recognises that environmental laws and regulations have failed to protect the quality of our rivers and further protections are needed.

This Council will:

- 1) Consult with Basingstoke and Deane, Hart Council and other relevant stakeholders with the aim of mutual support in the implementation of the Rights of Rivers.
- 2) Write to the Environment Agency to express the Council's concerns about the poor ecological and chemical health of the Blackwater and Cove Brook,

requesting that the EA explain how they have been, and how they plan to further protect and enhance our local rivers.

- 3) Ensure that within the scope of existing law and agreed policy, officers and the development control process shall, where they are able, take account of the Rights of Rivers within individual planning decisions, including consideration of the imposition of planning conditions to have no adverse impact on the health, water quality or ecological integrity of the Blackwater River and Cove Brook.”

In PROPOSING the Motion, Cllr Crossley spoke of the poor ecological health of the Borough’s rivers and detailed the threats which contributed to this, including urban run-off from industrial sites and roads. By working with partners to protect the bodies of water in the Borough, solutions could be found to improve their health. In SECONDING, Cllr Crawford stressed that the cost of inaction was no longer acceptable and their declining health showed that the rivers were struggling to cope with the demands put on them.

During debate, some Members expressed concern regarding the legal interpretation and implications of the detail in the Motion. In response, it was emphasised that the Motion was not a legal move, but a statement of intent on an operational level to protect the rivers from polluters and pollutants and to improve the water that flowed through the Borough. The Motion was intended as a call to action to collaborate and cooperate to protect the waterways.

The Motion was put to the meeting. There voted FOR: 24; AGAINST: 0; ABSTAIN: 5; and the Motion was **DECLARED CARRIED**.

b) **Extension of Term of Office for the Designated Independent Person**

Cllr Jacqui Vosper introduced the Report of the Licensing and Corporate Business Committee on 15th January 2026, which recommended an extension to the terms of office for the Council’s Designated Independent Person, Mr Matt Smith, up to the end of April 2028.

It was MOVED by Cllr Jacqui Vosper; SECONDED by Cllr Sarah Spall – That approval be given to the extension to the term of office of Mr Matt Smith as the Council’s Designated Independent Person (DIP), for the period from July 2026 to end of April 2028.

There voted FOR: 24; AGAINST: 2; ABSTAINED: 3; and the Recommendations were **DECLARED CARRIED**.

c) **Report on the work of the Community Engagement Task and Finish Group**

Cllr Sophie Porter introduced the Report on the work of the Community Engagement Task and Finish Group established following a Council Motion in 2024 to understand an address community concerns following protests and instances of social unrest.

In PROPOSING the Report, Cllr Porter advised of the Group's intention to be open and transparent and work together in a respectful way for the whole community. By embedding improved integration and cohesion into business as usual, the newly appointed Community Cohesion Officer, alongside the Belong Network, could continue the work started. In SECONDING the Report, Cllr Koohestani endorsed the strong foundation established as a result of the work of the Group and welcomed the inclusion of cohesion and improved integration into the Council's priorities.

During debate many welcomed the approach to embed improving cohesion and integration into business as usual for the Council, however, some expressed the view that the work of the Group needed greater visibility and hadn't gone far enough to address the concerns for some residents.

It was MOVED by Cllr Sophie Porter; SECONDED by Cllr Halleh Koohestani – That:

- the achievements and effective cross party working of the Task and Finish Group, be noted;
- confirmation be given that the work of the Task and Finish Group was now concluded and that improving cohesion and integration was now embedded in business as usual within service planning and day to day operations; and,
- updates will continue to be received on cohesion activity through regular all Member Briefings and written updates.

There voted FOR: 25; AGAINST: 0; ABSTAINED: 3; and the Recommendations were **DECLARED CARRIED**.

51. **NOTICE OF MOTION - PUBLIC ART AND COMMUNITY PROJECTS**

The Council were asked to consider a Notice of Motion submitted by Cllr G.B. Lyon under Standing Order 10 (1) on Public Art and Community Projects as set out below:

"This Council notes:

The incredible historical and cultural importance of Farnborough and Aldershot and the pride which local residents take in that history.

The role which public art and community projects can play in expressing, preserving and deepening that pride.

The relative lack of these in our Borough.

The lack of dedicated existing funds for developing more of these.

This Council therefore resolves to:

Request a relevant cross-party group of councillors to consider proposals for establishing, administering and promoting a public fund which residents and businesses could contribute, or subscribe to, dedicated to public art and community projects related to our local heritage and history."

In PROPOSING the Motion, Cllr Lyon expressed the importance of recognising the Borough's rich heritage and historic past and by doing so, it helped unify residents in a shared pride for their area. It was proposed that the Council could do more to support and enable the provision of public art and projects linked to the area's local history. In SECONDING the Motion, Cllr Harden reported that some residents had expressed an interest in a public fund dedicated to public art and community projects into which residents and businesses could make financial contributions to make their areas better.

During debate, the Leader emphasised the work already being undertaken to enhance pride and recognise the Borough's rich heritage through events such as the National Armed Forces Day and the installation of the beacon in Manor Park. It was also noted that the Arts Council England had shown their support for arts and culture in the area. Reference was made to the success of the poppies and ribbons public art community project in Rowhill and that pride in community should come from the bottom up, starting at a ward/community level. There were some concerns about a top-down approach and the additional resources of setting up and administering a public fund with the timing of Local Government Reorganisation.

The Motion was put to the meeting. There voted FOR: 10; AGAINST: 15; ABSTAINED: 4; and the Motion was **DECLARED LOST**.

52. **MAYOR ELECT AND DEPUTY MAYOR ELECT 2026/27**

The Chair of the Licensing and Corporate Business Committee (Cllr Jacqui Vosper) reported that the Committee had considered the nomination for the Mayor-Elect for 2026/27 and the Deputy Mayor-Elect, at its meeting on 5th March, 2026. The Committee had agreed to recommend that:

- (i) Cllr P.J. Cullum be selected as Mayor-Elect for the Municipal Year 2026/27; and
- (ii) Cllr Akmal Gani be selected as Deputy Mayor-Elect for the Municipal Year 2026/27, subject to re-election to the Council in May 2026.

It was MOVED by Cllr Jacqui Vosper; SECONDED by Cllr Sarah Spall – That the Recommendations of the Licensing and Corporate Business Committee be approved in respect of both the Mayor-Elect and Deputy Mayor-Elect for 2026/27 be noted.

There voted FOR: 28; AGAINST: 0; ABSTAINED: 0; and the Recommendations were **DECLARED CARRIED** unanimously.

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

a) **Allocation of Capital Budget for Farnborough Leisure Centre**

Cllr Sophie Porter introduced the Report of the Cabinet held on 3rd March 2026, which set out a request for the Council to delegate authority to allow a capital budget to enable the Leisure Centre project.

During debate, the view was expressed that the location of the new facility restricted any opportunity for expansion in the future but recognised that a leisure facility was needed in the town.

It was **MOVED** by Cllr Sophie Porter; **SECONDED** by Cllr A.H. Crawford – That the Council delegate authority to the Executive Head of Finance (S151 Officer) to put in place a Capital Budget up to £27.5m for the project to be funded by external funding (Levelling Up Programme), S106 finds and borrowing as set out in section 4.2 of Report No. REG2601.

There voted **FOR**: 19; **AGAINST**: 0; **ABSTAINED**: 9; and the Recommendations were **DECLARED CARRIED**.

b) Pay Policy Statement and Gender Pay Gap and Ethnicity Pay Gap

Cllr Jacqui Vosper introduced the Report of the Licensing and Corporate Business Committee held on 5th March 2026, which set out the Council's Pay Policy Statement, gender pay gap and ethnicity pay gap and the positive improvements in these two areas.

It was **MOVED** by Cllr Jacqui Vosper; **SECONDED** by Cllr Sarah Spall – That:

- the Council be recommended to agree the Pay Policy Statement for 2026/27 as set out in Appendix A; and,
- the gender pay gap and ethnicity pay gap calculations for 2025 be noted.

There voted **FOR**: 28; **AGAINST**: 0; **ABSTAINED**: 1; and the Recommendations were **DECLARED CARRIED**.

c) Updates to the Constitution - Champion Roles

Cllr Jacqui Vosper introduced the Report of the Licensing and Corporate Business Committee held on 5th March 2026, which set out updates to the Constitution for new arrangements for Champion roles.

In **PROPOSING** the Report, Cllr Vosper advised that the new proposal for Council Champions would be non-executive and non-political and reflected the views of the Constitution Working Group and the Committee. In **SECONDED**, Cllr Spall acknowledged the great work already undertaken by the current Champions.

It was **MOVED** by Cllr Jacqui Vosper; **SECONDED** by Cllr Sarah Spall – That the Council be recommended to approve the updates to the Constitution as described in paragraph 2.1 to 2.5 of the Report, including the guidance note as attached at Appendix 2.

There voted **FOR**: 28; **AGAINST**: 0; **ABSTAINED**: 1; and the Recommendations were **DECLARED CARRIED**.

d) **Update on Designations of Head of Paid Service and Monitoring Officer**

Cllr Jacqui Vosper introduced the Report of the Licensing and Corporate Business Committee held on 18th March 2026, in respect of designations of the Head of Paid Service and Monitoring Officer.

It was **MOVED** by Cllr Jacqui Vosper; **SECONDED** by Cllr Sarah Spall – That:

- Ian Harrison, Interim Managing Director, continue to be designated as the Council's Head of Paid Service until 31st August, 2026. The role would include the statutory responsibilities of the Electoral Registration Officer and Returning Officer; and,
- the post of Executive Head of Governance and Law be designated as the Council's Monitoring Officer.

There voted **FOR: 27; AGAINST: 0; ABSTAINED: 2;** and the Recommendations were **DECLARED CARRIED.**

54. **REVIEW OF MEMBERS' ALLOWANCES SCHEME**

The Leader of the Council (Cllr Gareth Williams) introduced the Report by the Independent Remuneration Panel which had undertaken a review of the Members' Allowances Scheme, involving a fundamental examination of each element of the Scheme. The new Scheme proposed in the Report reflected the Panel's view in the light of information provided, representations made by Members, and benchmarking data from other authorities.

It was **MOVED** by Cllr Gareth Williams and **SECONDED** by Cllr Bill O'Donovan that the Council adopt the proposals set out in the Independent Remuneration Panel's Eighth Report.

Following debate, the Recommendations of the Independent Remuneration Panel were put to the meeting. There voted **FOR: 21; AGAINST: 0; ABSTAINED: 7;** and the Recommendations were **DECLARED CARRIED.**

55. **QUESTIONS FOR THE CABINET**

- (1) Cllr Steve Harden submitted a question for response by the Portfolio Holder for Pride in Place and Neighbourhood Services (Cllr Christine Guinness), on data relating to fly tipping. In the absence of Cllr Guinness, The Leader of the Council (Cllr Gareth Williams) responded to the question.

In response, Cllr Gareth Williams advised that, where there was strong evidence to identify an individual who had fly tipped, the Council would seek appropriate enforcement action via Fixed Penalty Notice or Prosecution. The Council would also, in the vast majority of cases, require that they clear up the waste if it had not already been removed.

Where there was insufficient evidence, but the Council strongly suspected an individual of fly tipping, the individual would be asked to remove the waste.

It was also noted that the data requested was not tracked and to go through the data to find a numeric answer to the question was a significant manual task.

Cllr Harden asked a supplementary question regarding enforcement action to be taken against those identified of having carried out fly tipping.

In response to the supplementary question, it was advised that any data held would be shared and the Leader would ask Cllr Guinness to follow up.

- (2) Cllr Akmal Gani submitted a question for response by the Portfolio Holder for Pride in Place and Neighbourhood Services (Cllr Christine Guinness), on data relating to fly tipping. In the absence of Cllr Guinness, The Leader of the Council (Cllr Gareth Williams) responded to the question.

In response Cllr Gareth Williams advised that, a bid had been submitted to the Office of the Police Crime Commissioner seeking funding to enhance the Council's current static CCTV provision, to include additional cameras that had mobile capability. If successful, this resource would become a Borough asset and available for deployment in any ward, including Fernhill. This Borough wide bid had been in development for some time and was put on hold whilst the impact of a single ward bid had been explored.

If the bid was successful, the mobile cameras would be solely managed by Officers and could be deployed to both evidenced antisocial behaviour and fly-tip hotspots. Deployment would be based on Council identified problem areas and police reported crime, in consultation with relevant partners.

Rules with regard to use of public space CCTV must be considered and justifiable in terms of collateral intrusion and this was governed by the Biometrics and Surveillance Commissioner and the Information Commissioners Office. These regulations necessitated Officers to invest time and knowledge to ensure compliance with current guidelines including the need to undertake and complete Privacy Impact Assessments and other documentation completed prior to any deployment.

It was advised that the Borough wide bid had been the preferred option to allow for deployment in all areas and not just with a focus on one ward.

- (3) Cllr G.B. Lyon submitted a question for response by the Portfolio Holder for Healthy Communities and Active Lives (Cllr Sophie Porter), on costs and time involved with Climate Impact Assessments.

In response, Cllr Porter advised that, the Equality Impact Assessments had been embedded before any work had been undertaken on the Climate Impact Assessments. However, it was reported that the tool had been designed, and currently work was underway to seek a training provider. At present costings for the training were not available as the procurement process had only just commenced. The Portfolio Holder anticipated that training would be undertaken in May/June 2026, and she agreed to update the Council with the costings when available.

Cllr Lyon asked a supplementary question regarding a request for data on the cost of each assessment and detail on officer time involved in completing them.

In response to the supplementary question, Cllr Porter advised that she would report back to Members following the training. It was felt that the training would help determine how long an assessment would take to complete and over time, as Officers became more used to completing the assessments, the time could shorten depending on the report subject matter.

- (4) Cllr Sarah Spall submitted a question for response by the Portfolio Holder for Housing and Planning on action taken to reduce long term empty homes in the Borough.

In response, Cllr Dibble advised on the outstanding work undertaken by the Private Sector Housing Team. It was reported that prior to the National Empty Homes week, Rushmoor case studies had been submitted to the organiser and had subsequently been identified as best practice and showcased on the official website, as part of the National Empty Homes week.

The Council had a Corporate Empty Property Group that met on a quarterly basis to go through the list of long standing/problematic empty properties. The Group was attended by representatives from the legal, environmental health, private sector housing, council tax and planning services.

It was also reported that Rushmoor had the lowest levels of empty properties in the South East (1 in 5 properties).

56. OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - ANNUAL REPORT 2025/26

The 2025/26 Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, Cllr Halleh Koohestani, presented the Annual Report of the Committee 2025/26.

RESOLVED: That the Annual Report of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee be noted.

57. REPORTS OF CABINET

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

Cabinet
Cabinet

15th December 2025
3rd March 2026

58. REPORTS OF OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE AND POLICY AND PROJECT ADVISORY BOARD

RESOLVED: That the Report of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 24th February 2026, be noted.

59. **VOTE OF THANKS**

The Mayor placed on record the Council's thanks to Cllrs M.D. Smith and Jacqui Vosper who would be retiring from the Council in May 2026, between them, Mike and Jacqui had served over 50 years on the Council. The Mayor expressed the Council's gratitude for their service and wished them both well for the future.

The Mayor also wished all those standing for election the best of luck.

The meeting closed at 10.09 pm.
