



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, 19th March, 2026 at 7.00 pm** for the transaction of the business set out on the Agenda given below.

A G E N D A

1. **MINUTES** – (Pages 1 - 18)

To confirm the minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of the Council held on 26th February, 2026 (copy attached).

2. **MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS** –

3. **STANDING ORDER 8 - QUESTIONS –**

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

Public Questions

- (2) To answer any questions from the public submitted under Standing Order 9 in accordance with the Procedure Note.

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

1) **Notice of Motion - Rights of Rivers –**

To consider the following Notice of Motion, which has been submitted by Cllr Jules Crossley pursuant to Standing Order 10 (1):

“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.”
- 2) **Extension of Term of Office for the Designated Independent Person –**
(Pages 19 - 22)

To receive a report from the Licensing and Corporate Business Committee (copy attached – Annex 1) which recommends the approval of an extension to the term of office of Mr Matt Smith as the Council’s Designated Independent Person, for the period from July 2026 to the end of April 2028. Cllr Jacqui Vosper, Chair of the Licensing and Corporate Business Committee, will introduce this item.

3) **Report on the work of the Community Engagement Task and Finish Group – (Pages 23 - 44)**

To receive a report from the Community Engagement Task and Finish Group (copy attached – Annex 2), which provides details of the activities delivered to understand and address community concerns following a Council motion in 2024, and setting out plans to support cohesion and integration activity. Cllr Sophie Porter, Portfolio Holder for Healthy Communities and Active Lives, will introduce this item.

5. **NOTICE OF MOTION - PUBLIC ART AND COMMUNITY PROJECTS –**

To consider the following Notice of Motion, which has been submitted by Cllr G.B. Lyon pursuant to Standing Order 10 (1):

“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.”

6. **MAYOR ELECT AND DEPUTY MAYOR ELECT 2026/27 –**

At its meeting on 5th March 2026, the Licensing and Corporate Business Committee considered the nominations for Mayor-Elect and the Deputy Mayor-Elect for 2026/27. The Council is recommended to approve 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.

7. **RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE CABINET AND COMMITTEES –**

To consider the recommendations of the Cabinet and Committees in relation to the following items:

- 1) **Allocation of Capital Budget for Farnborough Leisure Centre –** (Pages 45 - 62)

To receive a Report from the Cabinet (copy attached – Annex 3) which seeks approval for the Executive Head of Finance (Section 151 Officer) to be authorised to put in place a Capital Budget up to £27.5 million for the Leisure Centre project as set out in the Report. Cllr Sophie Porter, Healthy Communities and Active Lives Portfolio Holder, will introduce this item.

- 2) **Pay Policy Statement and Gender Pay Gap and Ethnicity Pay Gap –** (Pages 63 - 78)

To receive a Report from the Licensing and Corporate Business Committee (copy attached at Annex 4) which recommends that approval be given to the Pay Policy Statement 2026/27. Cllr Jacqui Vosper, Chair of the Licensing and Corporate Business Committee, will introduce this item.

- 3) **Updates to the Constitution - Champion Roles –** (Pages 79 - 86)

To receive a report from the Licensing and Corporate Business Committee (copy attached – Annex 5) which recommends updates to the Council's Constitution for new arrangements for Champion roles. Cllr Jacqui Vosper, Chair of the Licensing and Corporate Business Committee, will introduce this item.

- 4) **Update on Designations of Head of Paid Service and Monitoring Officer –** (Pages 87 - 92)

To receive a report from the Licensing and Corporate Business Committee (copy attached – Annex 6) in respect of designations of the Head of Paid Service and Monitoring Officer. Cllr Jacqui Vosper, Chair of the Licensing and Corporate Business Committee, will introduce this item.

8. **REVIEW OF MEMBERS' ALLOWANCES SCHEME –** (Pages 93 - 126)

To receive a report containing the recommendations of the Independent Remuneration Panel, which recently undertook a review of the Members Allowances Scheme (copy attached - Annex 7)

9. **QUESTIONS FOR THE CABINET –**

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

10. **OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - ANNUAL REPORT 2025/26 – (Pages 127 - 130)**

To receive and ask questions on the Annual Report of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee (copy attached – Annex 8) for the 2025/26 Municipal Year. A procedure note for asking questions has been circulated to Members.

11. **REPORTS OF CABINET – (Pages 131 - 142)**

To receive and ask questions on the Reports of the following Meetings (copy reports attached):

Cabinet

15th December 2025
(Held over from 26th February)
3rd March 2026

12. **REPORTS OF OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE AND POLICY AND PROJECT ADVISORY BOARD – (Pages 143 - 148)**

To note the Report of the following meeting (copy report attached):

Overview and Scrutiny Committee

24th February 2026

IAN HARRISON
Managing Director

Council Offices
Farnborough
Hampshire GU14 7JU

Wednesday 11 March 2026

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BOROUGH OF RUSHMOOR

MEETING OF THE BOROUGH COUNCIL held at the Council Chamber, Council Offices, Farnborough on Thursday, 26th February, 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 C.W. Card	Cllr Leola Card
Cllr A.H. Crawford	Cllr Jules Crossley
Cllr Thomas Day	Cllr Keith Dibble
Cllr A.H. Gani	Cllr C.P. Grattan
Cllr Lisa Greenway	Cllr Christine Guinness
Cllr Julie Hall	Cllr Steve Harden
Cllr Rhian Jones	Cllr G.B. Lyon
Cllr Mara Makunura	Cllr S.J. Masterson
Cllr T.W. Mitchell	Cllr Bill O'Donovan
Cllr Sophie Porter	Cllr M.J. Roberts
Cllr Dhan Sarki	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 Diane Bedford
Honorary Alderman Tony Gardiner

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Cllr Abe Allen, Cllr Sue Carter, Cllr Peace Essien Igodifo, Cllr Halleh Koohestani, Cllr Nadia Martin, Cllr M.D. Smith and Cllr Ivan Whitmee.

37. **MINUTES**

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

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of the Council on 4th December 2025 and the Extraordinary Meeting of the Council on 29th January, 2026 (copies having been circulated previously), be taken as read, approved and signed as a correct record.

38. **MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Mayor reported that he had attended the Holocaust Memorial Day Service on 25th January and the 54th Service of Commemoration of the Aldershot Officer's Mess Bombing on 22nd February. He also extended his thanks to all those who had supported his Charity Quiz Night on 6th February at which over £1,000 had been raised.

39. 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) Peter Crerar – Manor Park Ward – **Alfred Burtoo** – “In 1983, Alfred Burtoo was fishing on the Basingstoke Canal and claimed that a UFO landed nearby, and he was examined by two aliens.
I am sceptical about this story for many reasons... particularly that aliens travelled light years across the universe to then visit North Town... why not Manor Park?
Many, however, treat Alfred Burtoo’s story seriously including Reform UK PCC for Leicestershire.
Given that Alfred Burtoo has created an urban myth for Aldershot like the Loch Ness Monster, is it not time that we have the location of this legend on the Basingstoke Canal marked out for heritage?”

Cllr Keith Dibble, Portfolio Holder for Housing and Planning, advised that Alf Burtoo was a man who deserved respect. Alf lived with his wife and son in Pegasus Avenue, Aldershot. He was a friend of Cllr Dibble and had played a very important role when the then Mr Dibble had first won Belle Vue ward, (now North Town), in 1984.

Alf had been convinced it had happened and never doubted it. However, his family and friends were of the opinion that he fell asleep while fishing and had a very deep dream. He believed until his dying day, and he was never mocked by friends and family. The answer was given that a special memorial to Alf Burtoo was not necessary, because every day the diverse and lively North Town community reflected the heritage of Alf and everyone past and present from North Town.

- (2) A resident of North Town – **H-Stop HVM** - “Why are there H-Stop HVM installed at the top of Union St in Aldershot. These things are designed to be rapidly deployed to prevent vehicular attack. Has the Council received such a threat and what is that threat if so, if not, then who has funded these barriers and why?”

Cllr Julie Hall, Portfolio Holder for Economy, Skills and Growth advised that the Council had not received any threat. The bollards controlling access to Union Street and Wellington Street, Aldershot had not been working and during this time the area had been accessed by vehicles which were driven without due care and attention.

The Council had assessed that the risk to pedestrians was significant and the barriers were hired to ensure that, whilst the bollards were out of action, the area could still be quickly secured from uncontrolled vehicles.

The Council would consider whether the barriers had been effective and whether to retain them in the event of future issues with the bollards.

- (3) Caroline Emberson – Aldershot Park Ward – **Lifts in Aldershot Town Centre** - When will lifts providing access to town and in the town be fixed and maintained fully, including Union Yard, Westgate and the Wellington Centre – it is a nightmare for disabled people currently?

Cllr Julie Hall, Portfolio Holder for Economy, Skills and Growth advised that she understood and recognised the frustration with the lifts.

The only lifts for which the Council was responsible in Aldershot Town Centre was the disabled lift at Union Yard. Unfortunately, despite a number of repairs the lift was currently out of action and both short and medium-term actions to get it working were being pursued. Union Yard was still accessible for disabled visitors via other entrances, though it was recognised this was inconvenient.

The owners of the Wellington Centre had recently invested in fixing their lifts, although there remained a few problems currently with one of them. The escalators were posing a more significant problem due to their age and difficulties obtaining parts, but the owners were continuing to seek a solution, and the Council were pressing as much as was possible for a resolution.

The lift at Westgate, again not a Council owned or controlled property, had been raised repeatedly with the agents and owners of Westgate. The Council were pursuing information on its repair and would share news when it became available.

- (4) Maria Hardy – Fernhill Ward – **A331 Litter and Fly Tipping** - Can the Council tell me what they propose to do about the fly tipping and litter on the A331. Over the last 3 years it has become increasingly worse. I often use this road, and I am appalled at the state it is in. I have reported this litter problem many times, but nothing seems to be done about it.

Cllr Christine Guinness, Portfolio Holder for Pride in Place and Neighbourhood Services, advised that the Council was responsible for cleaning a certain section of the A331, which was between the Basingstoke Canal aqueduct and the Farnborough Gate junction. The section to the south of this was maintained by Guildford Borough Council and the section to the north was maintained by Surrey Heath Borough Council. As this was a high-speed road, there were strict health and safety rules in place to allow work to be carried out, including full lane closures. Due to the significant disruption this causes to the public, the highway authorities for the A331 (which were Hampshire County Council and Surrey County Council) carried out maintenance twice per year when they allowed the district authorities to enter their lane closures to carry out litter and fly tip clearance. This was once in the spring (usually April/May) and once in the autumn (usually September/October).

- (5) Darren Brady – Rowhill Ward - **Cost of Supporting Asylum Seekers** - Data published by Taxpayers' Alliance from local authority spending shows that Hampshire Councils spent £31.7 million supporting asylum seekers during the most recent financial year. How much did Rushmoor Borough Council spend supporting 'asylum seekers'?

Cllr Sophie Porter, Portfolio Holder for Healthy Communities and Active Lives, advised that Rushmoor Borough Council did not use council tax to support asylum seekers. There was an asylum seeker grant awarded by the Home Office specifically for asylum and resettlement support.

During the 2024/25 financial year, the Council allocated £85,174 towards supporting asylum seeker support from this government grant, therefore, there was no additional cost to the Council. The majority of this expenditure related to direct staffing costs and casework provision.

Funding was also used for initiatives aimed at supporting the integration of asylum seekers and refugees including English language and cultural classes and the coordination of volunteering opportunities to prepare for working life.

- (6) Michael Mills – North Town Ward - **Scout Hut Lease Renewals** - Are the Council supportive of Scouting or trying to close Scout Groups across Rushmoor? If supportive why has rent gone up 700% at the recent lease renewals? This rise is linked to the council's new Asset Management Plan. It affects 50% of groups in Rushmoor, those who own their huts but lease Council land. Our rent for the land increased from £750 to proposed £5,600. Whilst groups receive rebates this is not guaranteed and needs to be applied for every 3 years. This rise is not sustainable. We fundraise to subsidise maintenance, bills and keep subscriptions affordable to all.

Cllr Julie Hall, Portfolio Holder for Economy, Skills and Growth, advised that the Council was supportive of scout groups and had not implemented the large increases referred to – as part of the 2023 asset management strategy as inherited.

The Council were reviewing the situation and was re-examining the rental valuations and subsidies/rent relief it gave. At present 90% rent relief was provided to all eligible community organisations, and this resulted in very low net rents for a number of organisations. For example, a rent of £750 with 90% relief results in a yearly rent of £75. The Council had a responsibility to ensure good management of its assets and part of this was ensuring that at lease renewal, rents reflected current, not historic levels, and that subsidies given were economic and reflected good value for taxpayers.

However, the Council recognised the concern around the cliff edge that rent increases can cause. It would be bringing forward a revised policy to Cabinet on 17th March 2026 to address this issue alongside the new Asset Management Strategy. Cllr Hall offered to have a conversation on this with Mr Mills.

- (7) Martin Gear - Manor Park Ward - **Scout Hut Lease Renewal – Delays** - Why are the leases for scout huts taking so long to renew? It has so far taken over 7 years to renew the lease of the 2nd Aldershot Scout Hut, and it's still not completed. Last correspondence was 5th June 2025 from the legal team saying they would be in touch. The 14th Aldershot has been delayed from November 2025 to June 2026 so far. Is this a trend with the scouting leases. These need to be sorted as soon as possible especially with the uncertainty of the unitary council on the horizon.

Cllr Julie Hall, Portfolio Holder for Economy, Skills and Growth, advised that the recent delay had been due to the issues mentioned in the previous question with changes to rents. Previously when implementing a new IT system a substantial number of issues, including lease renewals, were identified and the Council had been working through these issues over the last couple of years. We regret these delays and we recognise the timing concern and would ensure these leases were resolved this year (2026), and prior to Local Government Reorganisation (LGR).

40. **RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE CABINET AND COMMITTEES - PART ONE**

a) **Council Delivery Plan 2026-28**

Cllr Gareth Williams introduced the Report of the Cabinet meeting held on 10th February 2026, which set out the Council Delivery Plan 2026-28. The Plan highlighted the priorities, key projects and activities the Council would take over the next two years that would contribute towards the delivery of strategic priorities.

During debate, Cabinet Members summarised activities achieved and stated their commitment to the priorities planned for their areas of responsibility for residents. It was noted that financial resilience was a primary factor to allow for an achievable plan. In opposition, Members expressed a lack of confidence in the Plan.

It was **MOVED** by Cllr Gareth Williams; **SECONDED** by Cllr Sophie Porter – That approval be given to the Council Delivery Plan 2026-28.

There voted **FOR**: 17; **AGAINST**: 0; **ABSTAINED**: 15; and the Recommendations were **DECLARED CARRIED**

b) **Annual Capital Strategy 2026/27**

Cllr Bill O'Donovan introduced the Report of the Audit and Governance Committee meeting held on 28th January, 2026, which recommended the approval of the Capital Strategy 2026/27 to 2028/29, including the Prudential Indicators for capital finance for 2026/27.

It was **MOVED** by Cllr Bill O'Donovan; **SECONDED** by Cllr S. J. Masterson – That approval be given to the Capital Strategy 2026/27 to 2028/29 and Prudential Indicators for 2026/27.

There voted **FOR**: 17; **AGAINST**: 0; **ABSTAINED**: 15; and the Recommendations were **DECLARED CARRIED**.

c) **Annual Treasury Management and Non-Treasury Management Strategy 2026/27**

Cllr Bill O'Donovan introduced the Report of the Audit and Governance Committee meeting held on 28th January, 2026, which recommended the approval of the Treasury Management Strategy and Annual Borrowing Strategy 2026/27, the Annual Non-Treasury Investment Strategy 2026/27 and the Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) Statement.

It was MOVED by Cllr Bill O'Donovan; SECONDED by Cllr S.J. Masterson – That approval be given to the Treasury Management Strategy and Annual Borrowing Strategy 2026/27, the Annual Non-Treasury Investment Strategy 2026/27 and the Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) Statement.

There voted FOR: 17; AGAINST: 0; ABSTAINED: 15; and the Recommendations were **DECLARED CARRIED**.

d) **General Fund Budget 2026/27 and Medium-Term Financial Strategy 2026/27 to 2029/30**

Cllr Gaynor Austin introduced the Report of the Cabinet meeting held on 10th February, 2026, which recommended the approval of the General Fund Budget 2026/27 and Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) up to 2029/30, with the addition of a new recommendation, as set out below:

“7. To adopt the Council Tax Support Scheme as per paragraph 3.18”.

The Report was seconded by Cllr Gareth Williams.

The Council were advised that the Conservative Group wished to propose eight amendments, which would be considered individually. Each amendment would be proposed, seconded, debated and put to a recorded vote.

Amendment 1 –

It was MOVED by Cllr G.B. Lyon and SECONDED by Cllr Steve Harden that an amendment be made, as set out below:

- “To amend the corporate delivery plan, as set out in Appendix 1. to:*
- *add £50,000 for additional street and park cleaning.”*

During debate, concern was expressed about the lack of prior discussion on the proposed amendment, the absence of details about what the additional funding would fund, whether full costings had been carried out, and how the additional funding could be saved elsewhere in the Budget. In support, it was noted that the cleanliness of streets and parks affected how people saw the Borough and it was important to ensure that the overall appearance of streets and parks was positive.

In a recorded vote, there voted FOR: Cllrs Ade Adeola, A. Gani, Steve Harden, G.B. Lyon, Mara Makunura, S.J. Masterson, P.G. Taylor, M.J. Tennant, S. Trussler and Jacqui Vosper (10); AGAINST: Cllrs Gaynor Austin, C.W. Card, Leola Card, A.H. Crawford, Jules Crossley, Thomas Day, Keith Dibble, C.P. Grattan, Lisa Greenway, Christine Guinness, Julie Hall, Rhian Jones, Bill O'Donovan, Sophie Porter, M.J. Roberts, Dhan Sarki, Sarah Spall, Becky Williams and Gareth Williams (19); ABSTAIN: the Deputy Mayor (Cllr P.J. Cullum) and the Mayor (Cllr Calum Stewart) (2) and the Amendment was **DECLARED LOST**.

Amendment 2 -

It was MOVED by Cllr G.B. Lyon and SECONDED by Cllr Steve Harden that an amendment be made, as set out below:

“To amend the corporate delivery plan, as set out in Appendix 1, to:

- *add £105,000 to fund free parking in our town centres and Camp Road Car Park on Sundays.”*

During debate, concern was expressed about the absence of detail to inform a decision on the financial/economic return on the investment to offer free parking on Sundays across the Borough. In support, it was proposed that by offering free parking on Sundays it would encourage more shoppers into the town centres, support traders and residents with the cost-of-living crisis.

In a recorded vote, there voted FOR: Cllrs Ade Adeola, A. Gani, Steve Harden, G.B. Lyon, Mara Makunura, S.J. Masterson, P.G. Taylor, M.J. Tennant, S. Trussler and Jacqui Vosper (10); AGAINST: Cllrs Gaynor Austin, C.W. Card, Leola Card, A.H. Crawford, Jules Crossley, Thomas Day, Keith Dibble, C.P. Grattan, Lisa Greenway, Christine Guinness, Julie Hall, Rhian Jones, Bill O'Donovan, Sophie Porter, M.J. Roberts, Dhan Sarki, Sarah Spall, Becky Williams and Gareth Williams (19); ABSTAIN: the Deputy Mayor (Cllr P.J. Cullum) and the Mayor (Cllr Calum Stewart) (2) and the Amendment was **DECLARED LOST**.

Amendments 3 & 5 -

It was MOVED by Cllr G.B. Lyon and SECONDED by Cllr Steve Harden, that the amendments be made, as set out below:

“To amend the corporate delivery plan, as set out in Appendix 1, to:

- *add £65,000 to fund £5,000 of environmental improvements and anti-fly tipping measures in each ward, and*
- *add £11,000 for discounted bulky waste collection.”*

During debate, concern was again expressed about the absence of supporting details, the financial implications of the amendments and whether these had been fully costed. In support of the amendment, reference was made to a cross-party discussion at the Overview and Scrutiny Committee at which matters relating to bulky waste had been addressed and where there had been a general consensus to look at alternative options to deal with bulky waste. The Portfolio Holder for Pride in

Place and Neighbourhood Services, advised that alternatives had been considered, and it was intended that a revised scheme would be implemented shortly.

In a recorded vote, there voted FOR: Cllrs Ade Adeola, A. Gani, Steve Harden, G.B. Lyon, Mara Makunura, S.J. Masterson, P.G. Taylor, M.J. Tennant, S. Trussler and Jacqui Vosper (10); AGAINST: Cllrs Gaynor Austin, C.W. Card, Leola Card, A.H. Crawford, Jules Crossley, Thomas Day, Keith Dibble, C.P. Grattan, Lisa Greenway, Christine Guinness, Julie Hall, Rhian Jones, Bill O'Donovan, Sophie Porter, M.J. Roberts, Dhan Sarki, Sarah Spall, Becky Williams and Gareth Williams (19); ABSTAIN: the Deputy Mayor (Cllr P.J. Cullum) and the Mayor (Cllr Calum Stewart) (2) and the Amendment was **DECLARED LOST**.

Amendment 4 -

It was MOVED by Cllr G.B. Lyon and SECONDED by Cllr Akmal Gani that an amendment be made, as set out below:

- “To amend the corporate delivery plan, as set out in Appendix 1, to:*
- *add £30,000 to fund mobile CCTV coverage.”*

During debate, concern was again expressed about the absence of supporting details, the financial implications of the amendment, and whether what was intended had been fully costed. In response, reference was made to the overall impact of CCTV on incidents and the prosecution of Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB).

In a recorded vote, there voted FOR: Cllrs Ade Adeola, A. Gani, Steve Harden, G.B. Lyon, Mara Makunura, S.J. Masterson, P.G. Taylor, M.J. Tennant, S. Trussler and Jacqui Vosper (10); AGAINST: Cllrs Gaynor Austin, C.W. Card, Leola Card, Jules Crossley, Thomas Day, Keith Dibble, C.P. Grattan, Lisa Greenway, Christine Guinness, Julie Hall, Rhian Jones, Bill O'Donovan, Sophie Porter, M.J. Roberts, Dhan Sarki, Sarah Spall, Becky Williams and Gareth Williams (18); ABSTAIN: the Deputy Mayor (Cllr P.J. Cullum) and the Mayor (Cllr Calum Stewart) (2) and the Amendment was **DECLARED LOST**.

Amendment 6 -

It was MOVED by Cllr G.B. Lyon and SECONDED by Cllr S. Trussler that an amendment be made, as set out below:

- “To amend the corporate delivery plan, as set out in Appendix 1, to:*
- *add £26,000 to fund a council tax rebate for Band A properties”*

During debate, it was noted that there were around 1,480 Band A properties in the Borough. A query was made as to the percentage of council tax rebate the amount had been based on. In response, it was acknowledged that while the Council were not in a position to help all council taxpayers across all bands, this amendment would help to assist those in most need by giving a small amount back.

In a recorded vote, there voted FOR: Cllrs Ade Adeola, A. Gani, Steve Harden, G.B. Lyon, Mara Makunura, S.J. Masterson, P.G. Taylor, M.J. Tennant, S. Trussler and

Jacqui Vosper (10); AGAINST: Cllrs Gaynor Austin, C.W. Card, Leola Card, A.H. Crawford, Jules Crossley, Thomas Day, Keith Dibble, C.P. Grattan, Lisa Greenway, Christine Guinness, Julie Hall, Rhian Jones, Bill O'Donovan, Sophie Porter, M.J. Roberts, Dhan Sarki, Sarah Spall, Becky Williams and Gareth Williams (19); ABSTAIN: the Deputy Mayor (Cllr P.J. Cullum) and the Mayor (Cllr Calum Stewart) (2) and the Amendment was **DECLARED LOST**.

Amendment 7 -

It was MOVED by Cllr G.B. Lyon and SECONDED by Cllr P.G. Taylor that an amendment be made, as set out below:

- “To amend the corporate delivery plan, as set out in Appendix 1, to:*
- *add £5,000 for the fit-out of a Cop Shop in Farnborough.”*

During debate, it was indicated that the Police and Crime Commissioner for Hampshire, had offered to take on the operational cost of a facility of this nature, with a cash injection of £5,000 from the Council as a set up cost. In response, it was suggested that the police did not have capacity, at this time, to run a “cop shop” facility. Again, the evidence of costing the additional spend had not been clear.

In a recorded vote, there voted FOR: Cllrs Ade Adeola, A. Gani, Steve Harden, G.B. Lyon, Mara Makunura, S.J. Masterson, P.G. Taylor, M.J. Tennant, S. Trussler and Jacqui Vosper (10); AGAINST: Cllrs Gaynor Austin, Leola Card, A.H. Crawford, Jules Crossley, Thomas Day, Keith Dibble, C.P. Grattan, Lisa Greenway, Christine Guinness, Julie Hall, Rhian Jones, Bill O'Donovan, Sophie Porter, M.J. Roberts, Dhan Sarki, Sarah Spall, Becky Williams and Gareth Williams (18); ABSTAIN: Cllr C.W. Card, the Deputy Mayor (Cllr P.J. Cullum) and the Mayor (Cllr Calum Stewart) (3) and the Amendment was **DECLARED LOST**.

Amendment 8 -

It was MOVED by Cllr G.B. Lyon and SECONDED by Cllr Mara Makunura that an amendment be made, as set out below:

- “To amend the corporate delivery plan, as set out in Appendix 1, to:*
- *add £25,000 to support the fit-out of George V Park Cafe.”*

During debate, the benefits of a café as a social/community hub in the park were raised. There was currently no meeting place in the area where residents could gather in a safe welcoming place, strengthening community cohesion and reducing isolation. However, again, it was noted that no details were forthcoming on the financial implications of the additional spend.

In a recorded vote, there voted FOR: Cllrs Ade Adeola, A. Gani, Steve Harden, G.B. Lyon, Mara Makunura, S.J. Masterson, P.G. Taylor, M.J. Tennant, S. Trussler and Jacqui Vosper (10); AGAINST: Cllrs Gaynor Austin, C.W. Card, Leola Card, A.H. Crawford, Jules Crossley, Thomas Day, Keith Dibble, C.P. Grattan, Lisa Greenway, Christine Guinness, Julie Hall, Rhian Jones, Bill O'Donovan, Sophie Porter, M.J. Roberts, Dhan Sarki, Sarah Spall, Becky Williams and Gareth Williams (19);

ABSTAIN: the Deputy Mayor (Cllr P.J. Cullum) and the Mayor (Cllr Calum Stewart) (2) and the Amendment was **DECLARED LOST**.

It was MOVED by Cllr Gaynor Austin; SECONDED by Cllr Gareth Williams – That

- (i) approval be given to the following recommendations as detailed in Annex 4
 - (1) the Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) and the strategy set out in the report to mitigate the 2026/27 and 2027/28 MTFS deficit,
 - (2) the General Fund Revenue Budget Estimates Summary 2026/27 as set out in Appendix 1 of the Council Report,
 - (3) the Council Tax requirement of £8,324,717 for this Council,
 - (4) the Council Tax Level for Rushmoor Borough Council's purposes of £246.87 for a Band D property in 2026/27 (an increase of £7.71)
 - (5) the Capital Programme as set out in Appendix 1 of the Council Report,
 - (6) the Strategy for the Flexible Use of Capital Receipts as per paragraph 3.16 in Annex 4 of the Council Report, and
 - (7) to adopt the Council Tax Support Scheme as per paragraph 3.18.

Following debate, the Recommendations at (i) (1)-(7) above, were put to the meeting. In a recorded vote, there voted FOR: Cllrs Gaynor Austin, A.H. Crawford, Jules Crossley, Thomas Day, Keith Dibble, C.P. Grattan, Lisa Greenway, Christine Guinness, Julie Hall, Rhian Jones, Bill O'Donovan, Sophie Porter, M.J. Roberts, Dhan Sarki, Sarah Spall, Becky Williams and Gareth Williams (17); AGAINST: Ade Adeola, C.W. Card, A. Gani, Steve Harden, G.B. Lyon, Mara Makunura, S.J. Masterson, P.G. Taylor, M.J. Tennant, S. Trussler and Jacqui Vosper (11); ABSTAIN: Cllr Leola Card, the Deputy Mayor (Cllr P.J. Cullum) and the Mayor (Cllr Calum Stewart) (3) and the substantive Motion, with the additional recommendation, was **DECLARED CARRIED**.

41. **THE COUNCIL TAX 2026/27**

It was MOVED by Cllr Gareth Williams; SECONDED by Cllr Gaynor Austin – That:

- (i) it be noted that the overall council tax base be £33,721.50 for the year 2026/27 in accordance with Section 31B (3) of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 as amended by the Localism Act 2011 (the 'Act')
- (ii) the Council Tax requirement for the Council's own purposes for 2026/27 be £8,324,826.71
- (iii) it be noted that the following amounts had been calculated by the Council for the year 2026-27, in accordance with Sections 31 and Sections 34 to 36 of the Act:
 - (a) £46,531,725.10 being the aggregate of the amounts which the Council estimates for the items set out in Section 31A(2) of the Act;

- (b) £38,206,898.39 being the aggregate of the amounts which the Council estimates for the items set out in Section 31A (3) of the Act;
- (c) £8,324,826.71 being the amount by which the aggregate at (iii (a)) above exceeds the aggregate at (iii(b)) above, calculated by the Council in accordance with Section 31A (4) of the Act, as its Council Tax requirement for the year;
- (d) £246.87 being the amount at (iii(c)) above, all divided by the amount in (i) above, calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 31B(1) of the Act, as the basic amount of Council Tax for the year;

(e)

Valuation Band	Rushmoor Borough Council £
A	164.58
B	192.01
C	219.44
D	246.87
E	301.73
F	356.59
G	411.45
H	493.74

being the amounts given by multiplying the amount at (iii)(d) above by the number which, in the proportion set out in Section 5(1) of the Act, is applicable to dwellings listed in a particular valuation band divided by the number which, in that that proportion, is applicable to dwellings listed in valuation band D, calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 36(1) of the Act, as the amounts to be taken into account for the year in respect of categories of dwellings listed in different valuation bands.

- (iv) it be noted that, for the year 2026-27, Hampshire County Council, the Police and Crime Commissioner for Hampshire, and Hampshire and Isle of Wight Fire and Rescue Authority have stated the following amounts in precepts issued by the Council, in accordance with Section 40 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, for each of the categories of the dwellings shown below:

Precepting Authority	Precept Amount £
Hampshire County Council (HCC)	56,993,044.37
Police & Crime Commissioner for Hampshire (PCCH)	9,794.746.89
Hampshire & Isle of Wight Fire & Rescue Authority (HIWFRA)	3,130,704.06

Valuation Band	Hampshire County Council	Police & Crime Commissioner for Hampshire	Hampshire & Isle of Wight Fire & Rescue Authority
	£	£	£
A	1,126.74	193.64	61.89
B	1,314.53	225.91	72.21
C	1,502.32	258.19	82.52
D	1,690.11	290.46	92.84
E	2,065.69	355.01	113.47
F	2,441.27	419.55	134.10
G	2,816.85	484.10	154.73
H	3,380.22	580.92	185.68

(v) having calculated the aggregate in each case of the amounts at (iii)(e) and (iv) above, the Council, in accordance with Sections 30 and 36 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, hereby set the following amounts as the amounts of Council Tax for the year 2026-27 for each of the categories of dwellings shown below:

(vi)

Valuation Band	Total £
A	1,546.85
B	1,804.66
C	2,062.47
D	2,320.28
E	2,835.90
F	3,351.51
G	3,867.13
H	4,640.56

(vii) the Council determine that the Council's basic amount of Council Tax for 2026-27 is not excessive, in accordance with principles approved under Section 52(ZB) of the Local Government Finance Act 1992.

In a recorded vote, there voted FOR: Cllrs Gaynor Austin, A.H. Crawford, Jules Crossley, Thomas Day, Keith Dibble, C.P. Grattan, Lisa Greenway, Christine Guinness, Julie Hall, Rhian Jones, Bill O'Donovan, Sophie Porter, M.J. Roberts, Dhan Sarki, Sarah Spall, Becky Williams and Gareth Williams, (17); AGAINST: Cllrs A. Adeola, A. Gani, Steve Harden, G.B. Lyon, Mara Makunura, S.J. Masterson, M.J. Tennant, S. Trussler and Jacqui Vosper (9); ABSTAINED: Cllrs, C.W. Card, Leola Card, the Deputy Mayor (Cllr P.J. Cullum) and the Mayor (Cllr Calum Stewart) (4) and the Recommendations were **DECLARED CARRIED**.

42. **STANDING ORDER 16 – CLOSURE AND ADJOURNMENT OF MEETING**

Due to the late running of the Council meeting past eleven o'clock, the Mayor called over the outstanding items of business which remained to be transacted to identify the opposed business which remained on the agenda.

The Mayor PROPOSED; and Cllr Gareth Williams SECONDED that, under Standing Order 16 (1), the sitting would continue to determine the Notice of Motion on the National Year of Reading on the understanding that it would not need a full debate due to cross-council support for the motion.

The Motion to continue the sitting for this item was put to the meeting. There voted FOR: 29; AGAINST: 0; ABSTAIN: 2; and the Motion was **DECLARED CARRIED**.

In accordance with Standing Order 16, the following items of opposed business would be adjourned to the next Ordinary meeting of the Council on 19th March:

- Notice of Motion – Rights of Rivers
- Extension of Term of Office for the Designated Independent Person
- Report on the work of the Community Engagement Task and Finish Group
- Report of the Cabinet Meeting – 15th December 2025 (to enable a question)

Questions for the Cabinet would be dealt with via written responses following the meeting.

43. **NOTICE OF MOTION – NATIONAL YEAR OF READING**

The Council were asked to consider a Notice of Motion submitted by Cllr Steve Harden under Standing Order 10 (1) on National Year of Reading, as set out below:

“This Council notes that:

1. 2026 has been designated the National Year of Reading, UK-wide initiative encouraging people of all ages to engage with reading for pleasure and learning.
2. Reading improves educational attainment, mental wellbeing, social connection and lifelong learning, yet national evidence shows a decline in reading for pleasure, particularly among children and young people.
3. Local councils have an important role in supporting literacy through libraries, schools, community groups and cultural activities.

This Council believes that:

1. Promoting reading supports the Council's wider priorities around education, wellbeing, inclusion and opportunity.
2. Rushmoor's libraries, schools, councillors and community organisations are well placed to help residents “go all in” on reading.

This Council resolves to:

1. Formally endorse the National Year of Reading 2026.
2. Request that the Council Leader writes to the campaign organisers confirming Rushmoor's support and interest in promoting reading.
3. Encourage Council services, libraries and partner organisations to promote and participate in reading-related activities during 2026.
4. Invite Members, schools, voluntary organisations, and community groups to feedback on sustainable and viable options for implementing community book sheds and informal book sharing initiatives within the Borough to help maximise local participation."

In PROPOSING the Motion, Cllr Harden highlighted the issues some individuals had with basic literacy skills and the opportunities of working with local libraries and organisations to help promote reading in the Borough. In SECONDING the Motion, Cllr S.J. Masterson endorsed the Motion and expressed the importance of being able to read. It was highlighted that reading was a fundamental skill that underpinned education and activities in everyday life. Working with partners would provide an opportunity to engage with individuals through activities such as book exchanges and the establishment of community book sheds.

The Motion was put to the meeting. There voted FOR: 29; AGAINST: 0; ABSTAIN: 2; and the Motion was **DECLARED CARRIED**.

44. **QUESTIONS FOR THE CABINET**

Due to the late running of the meeting, Questions for the Cabinet were all answered in writing by the appropriate Cabinet Member following the meeting.

The responses are recorded in these minutes for reference:

- (1) Cllr Steve Harden had submitted a question for response by the Pride in Place and Neighbourhood Services Portfolio Holder, (Cllr Christine Guinness), on a request for quarterly reporting detailing letter levels, complaints, response and enforcement action.

Cllr Guinness advised that the Council already published local environmental survey results (NI195) for litter and detritus three times per year, which showed how the Council was performing boroughwide, year on year. Whilst the data could be broken down by ward, only five wards were targeted at each inspection period and therefore, the data would not be comparable by ward as the number of samples per land use type and per ward varied year on year. Regarding enforcement action for littering, as previously advised, the Council focused more enforcement action on higher level environmental crimes and chose to focus on education and behaviour change in the first instance.

- (2) Cllr Leola Card had submitted a question for response by the Economy, Skills and Regeneration Portfolio Holder, (Cllr Julie Hall), on the impacts of increased traffic movements since the exhibition centre opened.

Cllr Hall advised that the Exhibition Centre was a fantastic local asset, and we were lucky to have it in Farnborough. The centre was restricted to 50 days for ticketed events, (apart from the airshow) and it was required to comply with all travel rules and regulations established as part of its planning consent.

The centre brought visitors and businesses into the local economy throughout the year. In 2024, it attracted more than 300,000 visitors to the area, with the Airshow attracting 100,358 visitors.

The venue hosted several events that were popular with the local community including Screwfix Live (26,000 visitors) and The British Motor Show (10,000 visitors) as well as a series of defence related events that supported our Armed Forces, including Warfare, JOSCAR Live and Security and Policing.

The venue contributed to local employment in several ways:

- Direct Employment - event management, operations, logistics, sales, digital, publishing marketing, hospitality and catering
- Event-Related Staffing: temporary and contracted staff in areas such as catering, technical services and visitor support.
- Indirect Jobs: Supporting the local supply chain, including hotel and accommodation providers, local restaurants and catering suppliers, transport and taxis.

The Centre also gave back to the community through hosting events, making donations and providing free event space, for example:

- Hosting free of charge networking space industries, e.g. creative catalyst
- Supporting Farnborough Men's shed by donating materials
- Working with local teachers (nearly 40) on pupil careers support and students from Farnborough College of Technology (FCOT) on skills enhancement
- Hosting women in film events, and skills bootcamps from which some participants had secured employment in the sector
- Each Christmas, the Centre hosted and funded 'One Day at Christmas' - A celebration three course meal, drinks and dance, for 300 local people who might not otherwise have had the opportunity to take part in festivities, with many community support and volunteer heroes attending with their service users.

A formal economic impact study specific to the Exhibition Centre was not currently held by the Council and there were no plans to commission one, partly due to the disproportionate cost of a study. However, the Council would be exploring, with the Exhibition Centre, how to quantify its outcomes and impacts during the course of fulfilling our Delivery Plan and, in their role as a member of the Aldershot and Farnborough Growth Partnership.

- (3) Cllr G.B. Lyon submitted a question for response by the Leader of the Council (Cllr Gareth Williams), on consideration of a business rate rebate for traders impacted by the sink hole on Victoria Road, Aldershot.

Cllr Gareth Williams advised that the Council sympathised with traders in Victoria Road and it was keen to see the issue resolved as soon as possible. Local Labour Councillors, Council Officers and the Portfolio Holder for Economy, Skills & Regeneration had all engaged with local traders to support the businesses, including consideration of compensation from the utility company responsible.

Members will appreciate that the Council was not in a position to compensate all businesses for the impact of planned or unplanned roadworks. However, businesses that were suffering from economic hardship could apply to the Council for business rates relief through existing schemes.

- (4) Cllr A.H. Crawford submitted a question for response by the Housing and Planning Portfolio Holder, (Cllr Keith Dibble), on the prevention and relieving of homelessness in the Borough by the Housing Options Team.

Cllr Dibble advised that the Housing Options Team applied themselves to support homeless households, across all needs, to a high standard every day. In 2025, the Team had been able to stop cases of homelessness and find new homes for households in 69% (322 households) of homeless cases. This achievement had been based on supporting people, whatever their situation, to the provision of sustainable homes, including, helping rough sleepers to get off the streets, helping new families find their first home and assisting families who had lost a home through no fault of their own. It was their commit to help, advise and support the wide spectrum of needs and vulnerabilities, that had been identified as exceptional.

At a recent meeting with the Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG), this level of success was highlighted as exceptional, and MHCLG were considering how they could learn from the work of the Council's Team, to improve the national response to homelessness.

- (5) Cllr A.H. Crawford submitted a question for response by the Leader of the Council on how the Council's aim to promote social cohesion, diversity, equality and inclusion is compatible with the decision by Hampshire County Council to allow widespread fixing of illegal attachments to local street lighting and state what action would be taken to defend its values and argue for their removal.

Cllr Gareth Williams advised that this matter was debated at length by Council in December, when a motion asking Hampshire County Council (HCC) to remove the illegal attachments was not adopted. Given the stance adopted by the Leader of HCC, that he would not prioritise the removal of these attachments over other highways works, the Leader did not believe that arguments from the Council, would influence a change in this approach in the short term.

The Leader appreciated that some residents wished to display their feelings of national pride. He also understood the feelings of other residents that the display of these flags, although themselves part of our shared national heritage, had been accompanied by intimidatory behaviour and were associated with groups that had shown hostility to people of colour or those who had recently arrived in the UK.

The Leader had made it clear, previously, that the Council needed to ensure pride in our nation was not exclusive to any one group or community, and he was determined that the Council would continue 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 the Borough's diverse community as part of Armed Forces Day 2026.

45. **REPORTS OF CABINET AND COMMITTEES**

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

Cabinet	25th November 2025
	13th January 2026
	20th January 2026
	10th February 2026

Committees

Audit and Governance	26th November 2025
Special Audit and Governance	11th December 2025
Licensing and Corporate Business	15th January 2026
Audit and Governance	28th January 2026

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

RESOLVED: that the Reports of the Policy and Project Advisory Board meeting held on 9th December and the meetings of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 11th December, 2025 and 5th February 2026 be noted

The meeting closed at 11.34 pm.

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COUNCIL MEETING – 19TH MARCH 2026**AGENDA ITEM NO. 4 (2)****EXTENSION OF TERM OF OFFICE FOR DESIGNATED
INDEPENDENT PERSON**

A report from the meeting of the Licensing and Corporate Business Committee held on 15th January 2026.

SUMMARY

This report recommends an extension to the term of office for the Council's Designated Independent Person (DIP), Mr Matt Smith, up to the end of April 2028. This is a role which is required under the Localism Act to assist the Council in promoting and maintaining high standards of conduct amongst its elected Members. The Licensing and Corporate Business Committee supported the extension, and a copy of the role description is attached as Appendix 1.

RECOMMENDATION

The Council is recommended to approve an 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.

1. BACKGROUND

1.1 Mr Matt Smith was appointed by the [Council in July 2023](#) as the Council's Designated Independent Person for a three-year term from July 2023 to July 2026. The appointment followed a public advertisement, application and interview process which included Member representation.

1.2 The Statutory functions of the DIP are: -

- They must be consulted by the Authority before it makes a finding as to whether a Member has failed to comply with the Code of Conduct or decides on action to be taken in respect of that Member.
- They may be consulted by the Authority in respect of a standards complaint at any other stage; and

- They may be consulted by a Member or co-opted member of the Council against whom a complaint has been made.

2.3 A person is considered not to be “Independent” if: -

- They are, or have been within the last five years, an elected or co-opted member or an officer of the Council.
- They are, or have been within the last five years, an elected or co-opted member of any Committee or Sub-Committee of the Council; or
- They are a relative or close friend of a current elected or co-opted member or officer of the Council.

2.4 There is no payment for the role, however a small annual retainer allowance is paid which is the same amount allowed for a co-opted committee member (currently £604 per annum). This reflects the need for the Independent Person to maintain up to date knowledge, attend training and to be available to the Council as and when required.

2.5 It is recommended that the Council extend Mr Smith’s term of office from July 2026 to April 2028 to align with the current timescale for vesting day for a new unitary authority. It would be open to the Council to carry out a fresh recruitment; however, there is precedence for a two-year extension and since his appointment, Mr Smith has attended regular update meetings with the Monitoring Officer, engaged diligently and ensured his availability, and developed an excellent understanding of the ethical framework as it operates within Rushmoor Borough Council.

2.6 Members have been canvassed to establish that there are no close personal relations with Mr. Smith.

Candidate Details

2.7 Mr. Matt Smith has over 20 years’ experience working for Housing Associations in the public sector, preceded by eleven years’ experience working for local authorities. During this time, Mr Smith has built significant experience in investigating issues, and has led numerous HR investigations including disciplinaries, grievances and formal consultation meetings. Mr Smith also has qualifications in life coaching and mentoring and is a member of the Association for Coaching. He has lived in and around the Rushmoor area for most of his life and has a keen interest in public life having been involved with several community organisations and projects over the years.

CLLR JACQUI VOSPER
CHAIR OF LICENSING AND
CORPORATE BUSINESS COMMITTEE

ROLE OF INDEPENDENT PERSON (STANDARDS) – RUSHMOOR BOROUGH COUNCIL

ROLE DESCRIPTION

Responsible to: The Council

Liaison with: Monitoring Officer, Deputy Monitoring Officers, Licensing and Corporate Business Committee, Officers and Members of the Council and key stakeholders within the community.

1. To assist the Council in promoting high standards of conduct by elected and co-opted members of Rushmoor Borough Council and in particular to uphold the [Code of Conduct](#) adopted by the Council and the seven principles of public office, namely selflessness, honesty, integrity, objectivity, accountability, openness and leadership.
2. To be consulted by the Council through the Monitoring Officer as part of an initial assessment of a complaint that a councillor has failed to comply with the Code of Conduct, before a decision is taken as to whether to carry out an investigation or that other action should be taken e.g., informal resolution.
3. To be consulted by the Council through the Monitoring Officer and/or via a Standards Hearing before it makes a finding as to whether a member has failed to comply with the Code of Conduct or decides on action to be taken in respect of that member.
4. To be available to attend meetings of a Standards Hearing Panel appointed by the Licensing and Corporate Business Committee.
5. To be available for consultation by any elected member, who is the subject of a standards complaint.
6. To develop a sound understanding of the ethical framework as it operates within Rushmoor Borough Council.
7. To participate in training events to develop skills, knowledge and experience and in networks developed for Independent Persons operating outside the Borough Council's area.
8. To attend any relevant training events organised and promoted by the Council.
9. To act as advocate and ambassador for the Council in promoting ethical behaviour.

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COUNCILMEETING – 19TH MARCH 2026

AGENDA ITEM NO. 4(3)

REPORT ON THE WORK OF THE CROSS-PARTY COMMUNITY
ENGAGEMENT TASK AND FINISH GROUP**SUMMARY**

This report outlines the work undertaken by the cross-party Community Engagement Task and Finish Group. The Group was established following a Council motion in 2024 to understand and address community concerns following protests and instances of social unrest.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Consider the report and note the achievements and effective cross party working of the Task and Finish Group.
- Confirm the work of Task and Finish Group is now concluded and that improving cohesion and integration is embedded in business as usual within service planning and day to day operations
- Continue to receive updates on cohesion activity through regular all Member Briefings and written updates.

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1. This report outlines the work overseen by the Members Community Engagement Task and Finish Group.
- 1.2. It provides details of the activities delivered by the Belong Network and the Council's Community & Partnership team and recommends a future approach to supporting cohesion and integration activity.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1. In August 2024 an extraordinary meeting of the Council was called to consider a Notice of Motion relating to the increasing tensions in the community. The Motion received unanimous support.
- 2.2. Members acknowledged that Rushmoor was a welcoming Borough in which no individual or group should feel unheard and/or fearful and it was important to ensure the concerns of the whole community were listened to and heard.
- 2.3. A cross-party Member Community Engagement Task and Finish Group was set up with an overall purpose *to work with local community groups and*

leaders to better understand and address community concerns. Remit of the group included:

- To be open and transparent.
- To understand concerns by facilitating constructive engagement with community groups and residents.
- To create a safe environment to discuss issues of concern including hate crime, safety and wellbeing.
- To work with community groups and develop an enhanced programme of community events and activity.

(Full Terms of Reference at Appendix One)

- 2.4. The Group was allocated a budget of £50k from the Asylum Dispersal Fund, to carry out their work, supported by officers from the Council's Community and Partnerships Service.

3. DETAILS OF THE WORK OVERSEEN BY THE MEMBER TASK & FINISH GROUP

Working with the Belong Network

- 3.1. In October 2024 the Task and Finish Group unanimously agreed to commission the support of the Belong Network, a national organisation specialising in community cohesion and inclusion. Belong acted as an independent body working with community groups and leaders supporting the Council to better understand community issues and concerns.
- 3.2. Between November 2024 and March 2025 Belong delivered a programme of activity in the local community focused predominantly on listening, understanding concerns, engaging, and creating safe environments. This work became known as 'Rushmoor Voices' and included the following activities:
- Facilitating a public meeting on 20th November for approximately 40 participants, including members of Rushmoor People First, anti-racist campaigners, voluntary sector groups, community members and Councillors from the Task and Finish Group.
 - Delivering a workshop for all Councillors about conflict and tensions.
 - Hosting a series of informal local meetings with community members to explore and address key issues, emotions and experiences.
 - Conversations with local agencies: Including Rushmoor Councillors and officers, Police, MP, voluntary, community and faith sector representatives, housing providers, youth workers, educationalists, and MHCLG colleagues.
 - Facilitated workshops for partner groups – developing an understanding of local issues and exploring hopes, frustrations and ambitions and exploring opportunities for change.

- 3.3. The total cost of this work was £18k and was funded from the Council's Asylum Dispersal budget.
- 3.4. In April 2025, the Task and Finish Group received a report on the Rushmoor Voices programme. The report presented key findings and set out a range of options for the Council's consideration, including the continuation of work with Belong and an outline of proposed further activities (Appendix Two).
- 3.5. Key findings:
- Wider social issues including economic disparity, cost of living pressures and health inequalities contribute to a feeling of unjust unfairness and are a factor in community tensions
 - There is a perceived lack of trust by some residents with the Council and the democratic process
 - Misinformation and disinformation can create additional tensions
 - A need for clear communications to promote the Borough as a great place to live and to nurture and celebrate shared identities.
 - A need for a plan or programme of work for the Council to promote social cohesion and build strong and resilient communities.
- 3.6. A further meeting between Belong and the Task and Finish Group took place in May 2025 to review the report and the options for additional work. Following this, the Group agreed to continue its partnership with Belong for a further 18 months. To date the following has been delivered:
- Continued community engagement through the Rushmoor Voices programme – working with local groups, faith groups and partners
 - Working with young people in youth clubs to talk about what is important to them and what concerns they have
 - Facilitating local community meetings in specified locations to see what improvements local communities would like to see for their areas
 - Specialist consultancy support for the Council to consider a broader cohesion approach
 - Delivery of Partner Workshops – 3 skills workshops on conflict awareness, positive messaging and countering misinformation
- 3.7. The cost of this work is up to £55k and will continue for the remainder of 2026. This is funded using the remaining £32k from the original £50k Asylum Dispersal allocation, and a contribution of £23k from the Community Recovery Fund (CRF). The CRF is £600K grant money received from Government as a direct result of the community unrest in the Borough.

Cohesion & Integration

- 3.8. In addition to the Rushmoor Voices programme and working with Belong, the Council has implemented a range of initiatives to support cohesion and integration. This work specifically aligns to the following objectives of the Task and Finish Group: *Work with community groups, develop an enhanced programme of community events and activity and being open and transparent.*

3.9. Cohesion activity is now co-ordinated by the Council's cohesion and integration team of two, a Resettlement Manager and a Cohesion and Integration Officer (two year fixed term post). During 2024 and 2025 the team, supported by the Communities and Partnerships Service and Service Manager, delivered the following:

- Prepared the Rushmoor Together Partnership Plan, which was endorsed in July 2025 [Rushmoor Together Plan - Rushmoor Borough Council](#) The plan includes a Community Belonging priority and seeks to develop strong, resilient communities where people support and respect one another.
- Creation and delivery of a Rushmoor Together Grant programme to fund partner projects that support and encourage cohesion and community belonging.
- A monthly written Member briefing on resettlement and cohesion to ensure transparency and help prevent the spread of misinformation across the Borough. The briefing includes feedback from Elected Members on what answers residents need
- Dedicated Community Engagement pages on the Council website providing regular updates on the Rushmoor Voices programme [Rushmoor Voices - Rushmoor Borough Council](#),
- Regular updates to the resettlement and cohesion pages [Resettlement and asylum schemes - Rushmoor Borough Council](#) on the Council website in a bid to be transparent about Council support and data and to counter misinformation
- Allocated funding to partners to help deliver local projects aimed at strengthening community cohesion. This includes funding for a mediation service, to be delivered by Citizens Advice, providing a free service for residents to resolve community disputes. (A summary of other projects can be found at Appendix Three)
- Co-ordination of regular partner meetings to disseminate local offers of support for all residents including refugees and asylum seekers.

3.10 In addition, work outside the scope of the Task and Finish Group has also been delivered to support the Council's approach to cohesion including;

- Introduction of a new housing portfolio lead overseeing all aspects of housing
- Planning for an Armed Forces Covenant Conference for the North East and Hampshire to celebrate and strengthen the partnership between armed forces and civilian communities
- Successful bid to secure the hosting of Armed Forces Day celebrations in June 2026 with a strong focus on inclusive communities
- Developed a process inviting residents to ask questions at Council meetings to improve engagement and transparency of Council decision making.

Embedding Cohesion and Integration Work – Approach for 2026/7

- 3.11 On 3rd September, Council officers and the Police delivered a confidential briefing to all Members on asylum, resettlement, and cohesion. The briefing provided an overview of cohesion and integration activities to date, a summary of the work delivered through the Task and Finish Group, and a proposal outlining plans for cohesion for the next 6–9 months
- 3.12 The proposal outlined work including, delivering community place-based meetings in identified neighbourhoods where engagement is low and establishing multi agency strategic officer meetings.
- 3.13 The proposed approach to cohesion and integration, alongside work on asylum and resettlement, for 2026/27 will form part of the Community and Partnerships Service Plan and become fully embedded as business as usual. Members will continue to receive monthly briefings keeping them regularly informed and ensuring prevention of misinformation where possible. Work will include, but not be limited to the following:
- Homes for Ukraine Programme of activity including case work and outreach activity
 - Delivery of community place-based meetings in areas of low engagement
 - Rushmoor Together and pride in place grant applications to support local community led activity
 - Workshops and skills sessions for partner groups
 - Partnership approach to reducing street drinking and supporting mental health
 - Regular all Member briefings including an opportunity for Members to feedback about what answers residents need
 - On going communications – through website pages including countering misinformation
- 3.14 This work will be delivered by the Council, with the support of Belong in line with the agreement in place. There will be no additional costs to the Council

4 IMPLICATIONS (of proposed course of action)

Risks

- 4.1 This is a sensitive area of work that carries some reputational risk. Whilst the Council must support resettlement activity as required by the Government, it also needs to balance this responsibility with an awareness of local perception and the potential impact on local services. The Council recognises it needs to provide clear information and assurance to residents.

Legal Implications

- 4.2 There are no legal implications directly associated with this report.

Financial and Resource Implications

- 4.3 Resettlement and cohesion resource and activity is currently funded through Government Asylum Dispersal grants, Homes for Ukraine and the Community Recovery Fund Grant. This funding is ringfenced with strict criteria.
- 4.4 Funding for these grants is held in the Council's reserves and drawn down as required for resettlement and cohesion purposes/activity. This includes the cost of the Resettlement Manager and the Cohesion and Integration Officer.
- 4.5 The current status of the reserves is as follows. These figures may fluctuate due to any unspent funds or further Government funding received.
- Asylum Dispersal: £231, 528
 - Homes for Ukraine: £413, 543

This funding will be used to deliver cohesion and integration activity highlighted in 3.20. This includes work that benefits the wider settled community (where it is in line with grant criteria), and costs of the Resettlement and Cohesion posts.

- 4.6 The Community Recovery Grant has been fully allocated as outlined in the report to Cabinet in July 2025 [Microsoft Word - Community Recovery Fund - Report No. ED2502](#)). No further CRF funding is available.

The work identified in this report will be carried out using existing resources in the Community and Partnership Service and the funding already allocated to Belong. Where possible Asylum Dispersal funding will be used to support the community place meetings. There is no other broader cohesion funding available.

Equalities Impact Implications

- 4.7 An impact assessment will be carried out against any future cohesion work. The nature of cohesion and integration activity is that it focuses on individuals who may already face discrimination and inequality.

5 CONCLUSIONS

- 5.1 Members of the Member Task and Finish Group have been consulted on this report and ask that Council note that the Group has worked well together and delivered a programme of community engagement in line with its Terms of Reference. Whilst there is still work to be done, the Group is satisfied with the progress made to date and recognises that work is now fully embedded in service plans and day to day operations.
- 5.2 The Council is therefore recommended to (a) note the work of the group and the plans for ongoing activity and (b) confirm that the work of the Task and

Finish Group is concluded on the basis that work is now embedded in business as usual.

LIST OF APPENDICES/ANNEXES:

Appendix One: Terms of Reference

Appendix Two: Belong Report

Appendix Three: Programme of current Cohesion Activity

SOPHIE PORTER
PORTFOLIO HOLDER
HEALTHY COMMUNITIES & ACTIVE LIVES

Community Engagement Task and Finish Group

Terms of Reference

Scope and Purpose

The Community Engagement Task and Finish group has been set up following a Council motion. The motion agreed that the Council would:

Establish a cross-party working group to work with local community groups and leaders to better understand and address community concerns.

Objectives of the group

- To work together to mitigate community tensions.
- To understand concerns by facilitating constructive engagement with community groups and residents to ascertain their views and experiences.
- To work with community and voluntary groups to develop an enhanced programme of community engagement events and activities.
- To identify and learn from external speakers who have experience in community cohesion.
- To create a safe environment to discuss matters of concern and wellbeing, such as hate crime and personal safety.
- To encourage respectful participation in civic life and interaction between different community groups.
- To be open and transparent about the work and progress of the group and ensure frequent communication updates on cohesion related issues are shared.

Membership

Cllr Sophie Porter (Chair)
Cllr Craig Card
Cllr Sue Carter
Cllr Alex Crawford

Cllr Halleh Koohestani

Cllr Sarah Spall

Cllr Stuart Trussler

Meetings

Frequency of meetings to be agreed.

Accountability

There is a budget of £50,000 to support this work.

The group will report back to the Council on the findings, progress and allocation of funding.

Report on ‘Rushmoor Voices’ project

April 2025

About this document

This note sets out

- Information on work carried out by Belong between November 2024 and March 2025 in line with a commission from Rushmoor Council to support the delivery of the workplan of the Community Engagement Task and Finish Group, which has the aim of ‘working with local community groups and leaders to better understand and address community concerns’
- Information on issues which have been raised during our work, with brief observations on those issues
- Suggestions and proposals about further work that the council could do – often with partners. Belong proposes making inputs and providing support to some strands of this work, on the basis of a further commission

This note is intended as a working document for Rushmoor Council officers and elected members involved in the Community Engagement Task and Finish Group, rather than as a public document or as the content of a report to committee/s.

Following feedback from the Community Engagement Task and Finish Group, Belong will be happy to contribute to formal reporting to council committees as appropriate.

Work carried out by Belong

A small team¹ from the charity Belong has worked on the Rushmoor Voices project, by making in-person visits to the borough, taking part in Teams meetings, and having multiple phone conversations and email exchanges. We have carried out the following work:

Supporting council officers in preparing for and running a public meeting (20 November 2024) which attracted around 40 participants, including members of Rushmoor People First, anti-racist campaigners, voluntary sector groups and community members

Regular liaison with key council officers

¹ Belong’s practice was led by Jon, with support from Mike and practice inputs from Chrissie and Laura.

A briefing session / interactive workshop with council officers as part of gathering views and perspectives (27 January)

Meetings, conversations and email exchange with workers and volunteers from a range of organisations, including an informal group made up of disabled people, groups of asylum seekers / refugees, a litter-picking group and:

- Aldershot Football Club
- Citizens Advice Bureau
- Grub Hub
- Hampshire Constabulary
- Holy Trinity Church
- Nepali Women's Group
- Potters International Hotel
- Resettlement Team (CAB)
- Rushmoor Voluntary Service
- Shiva Cultural Centre

Meetings, conversations and email exchange with members of a range of campaigning organisations:

- Friends of the Earth
- Rushmoor People First
- Rushmoor Welcomes Refugees
- Stand Up To Racism

In some cases, our meetings, conversations and email correspondence with members of these groups has been recurrent.

We have met the local MP and have regularly engaged with local councillors:

- Update (online) to Community Engagement Task and Finish Group (17 December)
- Evening briefing and seminar open to all members (16 January)
- Meeting (online) with those members of the Conservative Group who were unable to attend evening briefing and seminar (5 March)
- Meetings (online and in person) with individual councillors as appropriate

We have liaised with other agencies working in the borough or with a direct interest in the borough, including local arts and culture organisations who want to deliver events and

activities that support community cohesion and celebrate integration and diversity; the Thinking Place consultancy; and Civil Service colleagues from the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government.

We have also spoken with many diverse members of the public in informal settings including cafes and pubs.

Issues and observations

In this section, we highlight the issues in respect of which views and feelings which were shared recurrently through our work. Team members can provide verbally a great deal of additional information, including specific quotes and particular observations which have been put to us: when sharing information in this way, it is our definite practice to respect the commitments we have made to people who have spoken to us in respect of confidentiality.

Given the context of our commission, our conversations have often taken in views and feelings about the protests over and opposition to ‘migrant hotels’; the disorder in summer 2024; a meeting at Holy Trinity Church on 6 December which was disrupted by ‘counter-protestors’; issues to do with behaviour at and the handling of issues at an Extraordinary Council meeting on 5 February; a protest planned outside the Potters Hotel on 12 March, and a planned counter-protest; and other altercations between people with different views on issues around migration.

It should be noted that we have not always ‘steered’ people towards such topics, especially when talking to members of community groups, and to residents in general, so as to help us ascertain the extent to which issues around migration and race are – or are not - key concerns for Rushmoor community members overall.

Impact of / perceptions around immigration

- Concern over migrants / asylum seekers being housed in particular locations, some of which are seen as ‘high profile’
- Antipathy towards migrants
- Racism and Islamophobia
- Activity of an anti-migrant campaigning group
- Activity of pro-migrant campaigning groups
- Support offered by some to residents of Potters Hotel
- Experience of Nepali community members / integration of Nepali people into Aldershot

- Protest / counter-protest dynamic: meetings and disruption of meetings
- Extent to which political actors from outside Rushmoor are involved in / encouraging / orchestrating dynamics of protest and counter-protest
- Role of social media in relation to these issues: ‘misinformation’; ‘disinformation’
- Sense of vulnerability on the part of campaigners (expressed in particular forms by both pro-migrant and anti-migrant campaigners)

Wider relevant social issues

- Cost of living pressures
- Issues of economic and social disparity
- A sense of competition (‘are others getting what we should be getting?’)
- Community safety (especially at night, especially in Aldershot)
- Physical improvements promised but not delivered? ‘Landscape’ / appearance of urban centres seems ‘stuck’ (though the recent unveiling of Union Yard shows that things have been happening behind hoardings, and this development has been well-received)

Trust in / responsiveness of council and other agencies; health of democratic process

- Some evidence of lack of trust in / distance from / alienation from ‘council’ (referring both to the council and to public sector agencies more generally)
- Uneven understanding of council role and powers
- Desire by police to further improve links with council / councillors and to build increased public trust and confidence in the police
- Questions about quality and effectiveness of communication (episodic rather than regular, responsive rather than sustained?)
- Political disagreement about extent to which council is open / secretive’ / engaged
- Questions about extent to which ‘the council’ and other agencies are ‘fluent’ and confident in respect of race and equalities issues
- Political disagreement has sometimes been expressed in polarised and hostile terms: local expressions of wider shifts in political culture / culture wars’?
- Issues about ‘terms of engagement’ during political debate / disputes over social issues: what are the levels of ‘tolerance’ for dissent expressed in blunt terms? What language is appropriate / inappropriate?
- Concern on part of some elected representatives about personal safety / well-being given context of polarisation

Potential future directions

- Most people express a desire to get ‘back to normal’
- Reaction against the idea that disturbances of summer 2024 or campaigns against migrants do or should define the borough
- Interest from a range of people and organisations in taking steps to build links and connections across lines of difference: ‘a desire to forge more useful dynamics’
- Interest from a significant number of people in taking steps to increase capacity to have difficult conversations / handle contention well

Suggestions and proposals for practical steps to address issues

In this section, we propose some further work that the council could do – often with partners. Belong proposes making inputs and providing support to some strands of this work, and this would be on the basis of a further commission. The work areas listed below cannot and should not all be done ‘at once’: prioritisation and sequencing is appropriate, as is alignment with other plans and processes.

Overall cohesion approaches

There should be a process of identifying the approaches and actions which the council and its partners are taking and could take to promote social cohesion in the coming years. In settled circumstances, this could take the form of developing a cohesion strategy which would not replace or rework existing strategies, plans and intentions, but complement them and sit alongside them, confirming and looking to maximise the extent to which these contribute to good relations and cohesion. Such a strategy or framework might cover:

- The case for building strong and resilient communities²
- Acknowledging and addressing social issues and concerns – specific local issues and those which are expressions of wider national and international developments

The process would include focus groups and design lab process on specific issues and particular areas of work to maximise the extent to which these can contribute to cohesion; and to ensure that services activities are appropriately coordinated and publicised.

² More socially connected, cohesive local areas generate individual and community level benefits: higher levels of individual subjective wellbeing; increased levels of volunteering / active social engagement / more extensive participation; cohesive communities have increased resilience against problems / crisis / shock; improved capacity to anticipate, manage and make the best of social change (handling its negative aspects, maximising its positive opportunities).

The resulting document would guide the work of the council, working through both mainstream services and future plans and initiatives to look at how to

- Deliver and promote these well
- Deliver and promote them in ways which attend to the specific needs of particular groups of people (including but not limited to the needs of people with protected characteristics in equalities legislation)
- Deliver and promote them in ways which attend to everybody's interests

Rushmoor's current position in the context of proposed local government reorganisation should be taken into account in scoping and managing such processes: the ambitions formed on the basis of Rushmoor Council's assessment of needs and possibilities should inform a partnership approach and become central to the shaping of future local governance arrangements. This is corporate management and governance work which Belong is not placed to lead, but in respect of which we could provide substantial specialist consultancy and peer support.

Respond to the need / desire for shared community spaces

In the future development of public space and facilities, attention should be given to maximising the extent to which these can be shared spaces, facilitating interaction between people from different backgrounds. Belong is not placed to lead on this work, but members of our network – both local councils and particular organisations – have relevant expertise. Related issues in respect of public space include the need to address community safety issues through design.

Developing skills, capacity and confidence – addressing contested issues and building good relations

A range of skill-sharing sessions and training programmes could be delivered so as to increase the extent to which contention and disagreement in the borough can be handled well, and to increase the extent to which relationships can be made, developed and strengthened across lines of difference. These sessions and programmes would combine established approaches with bespoke material and sessions which would be specifically tailored to Rushmoor.

The quote set out below is for a comprehensive programme, comprising a variety of types and formats of sessions which would be delivered so as to suit different potential participants:

- Elected councillors
- Council officers (from senior level to ‘front line’) and workers from partner organisations
- Residents and volunteers involved with community, voluntary and faith organisations
- Members of campaigning organisations

The content of these sessions and programmes would cover

- Sharing skills in conflict awareness and in having difficult conversations on potentially divisive issues, including – for council members, political activists and campaigners – identifying the basis for some (possibly partial) agreements about behaviours and appropriate use of language in relation to democratic process and debate
- Skills to initiate positive encounters and build links and develop stronger connections across lines of difference, between people from varied backgrounds
- Skills to run dialogue programmes, including through development of skills to facilitate dialogue
- Confirming appropriate means to work through democratic process on conflicted issues, including in respect of language use
- Further developing relationship mapping, tension monitoring and community sentiment analysis systems and mechanisms
- Partnership work between agencies and community organisations to identify and develop appropriate and effective approaches to countering misinformation, challenging prejudices and stereotypes, and building trust, including through work to develop and promote critical thinking in relation to social media

Belong would propose leading this programme, whilst working closely with some local people who we see as having a great deal to offer the borough as potential practitioners.

Belong would then work with some of those who have taken part in the training to run appropriate ‘exemplary’ sessions, such as live ‘community dialogue’ evenings using the skills and confidence acquired. A key overall aim of the comprehensive programme would be to build capacity amongst some workers in agencies and some people involved in voluntary groups so that there is a basis for using and sustaining these approaches going forward. There is significant capacity and interest on the part of a number of people in the borough to take this kind of initiative, as part of the wider work of contributing to positive change, and to handling change well, thus making the most of what the borough can be going forward.

Positive communications

Communications work both to underpin cohesion and to promote the borough as great place to live, work and invest is needed around the long-term promotion of Rushmoor, its towns and its places, and the nurturing and celebration of shared identities. This should take place in the context of changing structures of local governance, but the basis for this work could be laid now.

More immediately, there is a need for a review of the language and key points in council communications, including promoting agreed and clear messaging on some controversial issues on which residents and campaigning groups have raised concerns and questions, and which could be answered. Specifically, and as an example, some of the queries and concerns that have been raised about issues to do with migrants being allocated places in local hotels could be answered with accurate information which the council holds, and which can be put into the public domain, and this would be a response to requests from members of campaigning groups which are perceived as both ‘anti-migrant’ and ‘pro-migrant’. Such work would form part of effectively responding to misinformation and divisive disinformation detailed above.

Future possibilities and visibility

Whilst there is the need to hold further discussion about the specific details of initiatives envisioned within this proposal, there is clear value in now progressing a range of activities, which could be implemented and would evolve in line with the Council’s priorities and policies and would be visible by stakeholders and the public (when both appropriate and possible).

These activities and initiatives could include but are not limited to

- Programmes of effective communications in relation to Rushmoor Borough Council’s core services, new and planned initiatives and one-off events
- Facilitated ‘have your say’ sessions for groups of people on topics raised as important by members, officers, stakeholders, groups which have been consulted or members of the public (e.g. discussions on personal safety in town centres). These could take the form of facilitated Town Hall meetings, with training in facilitation provided by Belong to co-facilitators from the council and partner organisations
- Facilitated ‘community dialogue’ events which invite members of the public into RBC buildings, or in which RBC representatives and people from partner organisations hold events in community venues to share views, feelings and suggestions about a range of

issues

- Sessions and ‘training’ workshops on messaging and communication

The above proposals are offered as realistic and useful possibilities which could be delivered from April 2025 and into the first part of 2026. Delivery and timetabling would be shaped by consultation with relevant members and officers.

Further details on work proposed by Belong over coming period

The aspects of work indicated above which Belong proposes contributing to would be carried out by a team of Belong associates led by Jon, supported by Laura, with ongoing overview, support and inputs from Mike, and with inputs from other colleagues from the charity as appropriate. This would ensure continuity with work already carried out, so as to make use of personal insights and connections already made, and also to utilise specialist skills of a range of Belong’s consultants, researchers and trainers as relevant to the work.

Initiative / support	Timeline	Cost
Ongoing community engagement and peer support so as to build on the ‘Rushmoor Voices’ work	April 2025 to March 2026	£8, 000 plus VAT
Specialist consultancy support contribution to developing cohesion approaches as central to future local governance	April 2025 to summer 2026	£8,000 to £12,000 (plus VAT) depending on level of input determined
Comprehensive programme of skill-sharing sessions and training courses: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conflict awareness • Having Difficult Conversations • Skills in democratic process on conflicted issues • Promoting positive encounters • Dialogue initiatives, including through ‘Town Hall meetings’ • Language use and promoting positive messages / countering misinformation 	April 2025 to March 2026	£35, 000 (plus VAT) Should the cost proposed be judged too high, particular aspects of the proposed programme could be run at a smaller cost
Total cost of programmes detailed in this proposal if delivered in full		£55, 000 plus VAT

For more information on the content of this report, please contact Jon or Mike, Belong:

jon@belongnetwork.co.uk / mike@belongnetwork.co.uk

**For issues re contracting further work from Belong, please contact James Williams,
Director of Partnerships and Products, Belong: The cohesion and integration network -**

james@belongnetwork.co.uk

Appendix 3: Summary of RBC funded projects supporting cohesion

Project	Summary of Activity
CA	Community Mediation Service – providing free mediation support for community disputes.
RVS Buddying	Project delivered by RVS providing ‘buddies’ to residents at Potters. Buddies provide individual support and confidence, attending local services with residents to enable support integration into the local community.
ESOL projects	Delivering English lessons to support integration and future employability.
Roots in Community	Volunteering Project with Karuna coffee – Supporting refugees, Ukrainians and asylum seekers to earn a formal, qualification as baristas, improve English skills and become part of the local community
A Taste of Rushmoor	A community-led project celebrating the borough’s rich cultural heritage through food accumulating in a cookbook ‘A Taste of Rushmoor’. Residents, local restaurants, and community groups will share recipes and personal stories, collected via outreach in Aldershot, Farnborough, and North Camp. Catering students from The Vine Centre will recreate the dishes for a showcase while photography and graphic design students from Farnborough Sixth Form College will design and photograph the cookbook which will celebrate the diversity and traditions of Rushmoor.
Gift of Winter Tales	A Gift of 7 fairy tales for children from 7 different cultures. Winter Tales is an inclusive storytelling and art initiative promoting intercultural understanding among local primary schools. Each child will receive a winter-themed booklet of cultural stories alongside a teacher support pack for class discussions. The project culminates in a Wintertime Gift Box display on Sunday, 7 December in Farnborough town centre, featuring live storytelling from the booklet. There will be a display of large decorated wooden gift boxes which pupils have decorated that represent different winter traditions from around the world.
Pilot Community Meeting - November	An informal meeting for residents of Aldershot Park with the hope to gain a clearer understanding of local needs, foster pride in the neighbourhood, strengthen connections between residents and the Council, and identify small community-led actions that can make a positive difference through a small budget. The meeting will be facilitated by Belong along with support from RBC officers.
Famous & Inspiring People - H4U	A project led by a Ukrainian Guest to create mini clay figurines of famous and inspiring people from Rushmoor and Ukraine to develop a sense of community and belonging amongst the community. The aim of the activity is to identify people who are notable to the area, create a short story of their journey along with a headshot taken so the public can be inspired by the everyday people who

	have had a transformative journey and see how diverse their community is. Pictures painted by Ukrainian guests of local streets of Rushmoor will also be exhibited.
Together we Thrive	A volunteering/work experience scheme to enable asylum seekers and refugees to join a structured volunteering cohort within CA Rushmoor, where they will have the opportunity to work with the team, improve their English, learn about the system in the UK, and give back to the community.
Seeking Sanctuary	Project in partnership with CA – providing a case worker for 4 days a week to support those with new refugee status e.g. UC application, homelessness referrals, etc.
New Directions' employability	A pilot to support asylum seekers and refugees with English, CV writing, interview training, and applying for job opportunities.
Creative Response' Art Therapy	A weekly session led by 2 Ukrainian artists to support those who are affected by war; the pilot will run for 6 months.
Aldershot Cricket Club	Supported the club with funding to enable 4 asylum seekers to join the team and play during the summer of 2025.

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COUNCIL MEETING – 19TH MARCH 2026

AGENDA ITEM NO. 7 (1)

ALLOCATION OF CAPITAL BUDGET FOR THE LEISURE CENTRE

A report from the meeting of the Cabinet held on 3rd March, 2026.

SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

In February 2025, the Cabinet approved a revised approach for the delivery of a Leisure Centre in Farnborough town centre. In April 2025, the Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government (MHCLG) gave full approval for the Council to deliver the revised scheme utilising the remaining £18.5m Levelling Up grant (now known as the Local Regeneration Fund). At the time, the Cabinet noted that the scheme would also require some borrowing that would be funded by operator income payments.

At its meeting on 3rd March 2026, the Cabinet considered [Report No. REG2601](#) (copy attached as Appendix A) with an update on the Farnborough Leisure Centre Project and agreed approval to enter into a Development Management Agreement for RIBA stage 5 (Construction and handover) onwards for the delivery of the new Farnborough leisure centre.

The Cabinet:

- 1) Noted the progress with the design of the leisure centre and changes made as a result of feedback during the leisure operator procurement process.
- 2) Noted the progress of the planning submission for the new Farnborough Leisure Centre.
- 3) Agreed that subject to planning permission being granted and review of the contractors proposals, authority be delegated to the Executive Director, in consultation with the Executive Head of Finance (S151 officer), the Interim Monitoring Officer and Corporate Manager Legal Services and Portfolio Holder for Healthy Communities & Active Lives, to enter in a Development Management Agreement with Alliance Leisure Services Ltd as set out in section 6.3 of the report, for the delivery of a new leisure centre and surface car park in Farnborough town centre.
- 4) Confirmed that revenue capacity funding received from MHCLG continued to be utilised against revenue costs associated with the project.
- 5) Delegated authority to the Executive Head of Finance (S151 officer) to update the Capital Strategy and Treasury Management Strategy in line with the approval of capital budget and funding as above.

- 6) Authorised the use of the Council's powers to appropriate the Queensmead Car Park, Farnborough and the site of the previous Pinehurst Car Park, as set out in the plan at Appendix K Farnborough for planning purposes under section 122 of the Local Government Act 1972.
- 7) Authorised the use of Section 203 of the Housing and Planning Act 2016 to remove any legal constraints to development and delegated authority to the Interim Monitoring Officer and Corporate Manager Legal Services and Section 151 Officer in consultation with the Executive Head of Property and Growth to agree any compensation payable to beneficiaries of rights under section 204 of the Housing and Planning Act 2016 following due diligence of their claim; and
- 8) Noted the decision of the Interim Corporate Manager Legal Services as to protective measures and authorised her, in consultation with the Executive Head of Finance (Section 151 Officer) to negotiate the terms of the protective measures to not exceed £100,000, and noted the £100,000 does not appear in projected costs as the outcome of the negotiations was not yet known.

In considering the capital costs as set out in [para 4 of the Report](#), the Cabinet was advised that the project cost to deliver the new leisure centre, playground and surface car parking was projected to be £27.5m, and endorsed the funding approach for the capital elements of the scheme as set out in para 4.2, Table B. This comprised £18.5m from the remaining Levelling up grant (now known as the Local Regeneration Fund) with a funding extension to March 2028, £200,000 of S106 funding for the playground and borrowing of £8.8m.

Therefore, this report now recommends the Council to delegate authority to the Executive Head of Finance (Section 151 Officer) to put in place a Capital Budget to ensure the delivery of the new Leisure Centre within the Levelling Up funding timelines and a much-needed facility for local people.

RECOMMENDATION

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 funds and borrowing as set out in section 4.2 of Report No. REG2601 (attached at Appendix A to this Report)

CLLR SOPHIE PORTER
CABINET MEMBER FOR HEALTHY COMMUNITIES
& ACTIVE LIVES

CABINET

COUNCILLOR SOPHIE PORTER
HEALTHY COMMUNITIES & ACTIVE LIVES
PORTFOLIO HOLDER

03 MARCH 2026

KEY DECISION? YES

REPORT NO. REG2601

FARNBOROUGH LEISURE CENTRE – CONSTRUCTION CONTRACT AWARD**SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS:**

This report provides an update on the Farnborough Leisure Centre Project and seeks approval to enter into a Development Management Agreement for RIBA stage 5 (Construction and handover) onwards for the delivery of the new leisure centre.

A. It is **RECOMMENDED** that Cabinet:

- 1) Notes the progress with the design of the leisure centre and changes made as a result of feedback during the leisure operator procurement process.
- 2) Notes the progress of the planning submission for the new Farnborough Leisure Centre.
- 3) Subject to planning permission being granted and review of the contractors proposals that authority be delegated to the Executive Director, in consultation with the Executive Head of Finance (S151 officer), the Interim Monitoring Officer and Corporate Manager Legal Services and Portfolio Holder for Healthy Communities & Active Lives, to enter in a Development Management Agreement with Alliance Leisure Services Ltd as set out in section 6.3 of this report, for the delivery of a new leisure centre and surface car park in Farnborough town centre.
- 4) Confirm that revenue capacity funding received from MHCLG continue to be utilised against revenue costs associated with the project.
- 5) Delegates authority to the Executive Head of Finance (S151 officer) to update the Capital Strategy and Treasury Management Strategy in line with the approval of capital budget and funding as above.
- 6) Authorises the use of the Council's powers to appropriate the Queensmead Car Park, Farnborough and the site of the previous Pinehurst Car Park, as set out in the plan at Appendix K Farnborough for planning purposes under section 122 of the Local Government Act 1972.

- 7) Authorises the use of Section 203 of the Housing and Planning Act 2016 to remove any legal constraints to development and delegates authority to the Interim Monitoring Officer and Corporate Manager Legal Services and Section 151 Officer in consultation with the Executive Head of Property and Growth to agree any compensation payable to beneficiaries of rights under section 204 of the Housing and Planning Act 2016 following due diligence of their claim.
- 8) Notes the decision of the Interim Corporate Manager Legal Services as to protective measures and authorises her, in consultation with the Executive Head of Finance (Section 151 Officer) to negotiate the terms of the protective measures to not exceed £100,000. Cabinet should note the £100,000 does not appear in projected costs below as the outcome of the negotiations is not yet known.

B. That the **COUNCIL BE RECOMMENDED** to 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 funds and borrowing as set out in section 4.2 of this report.

1. BACKGROUND AND SUMMARY OF DECISIONS

- 1.1. In February 2025, Cabinet (REG2501) approved a 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 existing leisure facilities within the borough and the proposed new leisure centre.
- 1.2. The Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government (MHCLG) gave full approval in April 2025 for the Council to deliver the revised scheme utilising the remaining £18.5m Levelling Up grant (now known as the Local Regeneration Fund). At that time the Cabinet noted that the scheme would also require some borrowing that would be funded by operator income payments.
- 1.3. The proposed facility includes two swimming pools (a 25m 6-lane main pool, 10m x 8m learner pool with moveable floor), 100+ station fitness suite including provision of specialist equipment for people who are less mobile or active, 2 x studios plus a dedicated spin studio, a café and active play for children. A new surface car park and play park will also be delivered as part of the scheme. Plans for the scheme are included in the RIBA 3 report attached at Exempt Appendix B.
- 1.4. The new Farnborough Leisure Centre replaces the previous facility demolished in 2022 and will play a significant role in reducing health inequalities - both physical and mental - and increasing levels of physical activity in the Borough. These are key priorities identified in the Council Delivery Plan 2026-27.

1.5. This report

- Provides the latest position with the design and development of the Leisure Centre and the work underway to reduce and mitigate risk.
- Sets out the forecast financial profile of the project, affordability and impact on the Council's medium term financial position.
- Requests delegated authority to enter in the necessary agreements to enable the construction of the Leisure Centre subject to the total contract cost being less than £25.3m inclusive of 5% contingency
- Requests budget for client-side costs of £2.2m as set out in Exempt Appendix C.
- Taking into consideration the current forecast budget, financial sensitivity modelling and outstanding provisional sums, recommends the Council delegate authority to the Executive Head of Finance (S151 officer) to put in place a total capital budget not exceeding £27.5m on completion of the contract. The final budget to be confirmed in the first budget monitoring period after contract commencement.

2. NEW LEISURE CENTRE DESIGN AND DEVELOPMENT

Background to the project for a new leisure centre in Farnborough

- 2.1. The initial business case and rationale for a new leisure centre for Farnborough was developed to support the Council's levelling up bid (now known as the Local Regeneration Fund) for a Leisure and Cultural Hub. In October 2023 (report REG2307) the Cabinet agreed to commence work on that project.
- 2.2. In February 2024 (report REG2402) it was agreed that the RIBA 3 designs (Pre-planning) should be shared with the public and at the same time Cabinet agreed that work be undertaken to provide cost certainty on the project. A market tested cost plan was commissioned to ensure the estimated project costs were clear before the decision to move to the next stage of delivery. That work, alongside work by the Councils cost consultant, confirmed that costs has increased significantly, and the Leisure and Cultural Hub project as designed would be completely unaffordable given the Councils financial position at the time.
- 2.3. The Council's project team then engaged with a team of specialist consultants, known as Delivery Associates, provided by Government as part of the levelling up delivery programme to look at how the project could be adjusted to achieve the most important outcomes for local people whilst being affordable for the Council.
- 2.4. In February 2025 (REG2501) the Cabinet considered the outcome of the work undertaken with the support of the Delivery Associates. The report proposed a revised project, which would deliver a Leisure Centre in Farnborough, within the time parameters of the Levelling Up Fund (now known as the Local Regeneration Fund) and would be affordable for the Council given the Council's wider funding pressures. The community need and rationale for a replacement leisure centre facility remained unchanged from the bid but the cultural elements of the scheme were removed and facilities mix scaled back to ensure affordability

but taking into account the key resident priorities of replacement swimming pools and fitness.

- 2.5. At the same time the location of the new facility was changed to the Queensmead car park site which has advantages of being closer to the town and public transport and provides future flexibility for the regeneration of the wider Civic Quarter. The wider Civic Quarter is now subject to a strategic review of the Civic Quarter Masterplan and the outcomes of this review will come forward later this year.
- 2.6. In Feb 2025 (REG2501) the Cabinet agreed work would continue on the revised scheme and planning be submitted on completion of RIBA stage 3 (detailed design). In July 2025 (REG2503) Cabinet approved the budget to take the project to the end of RIBA Stage 4 (technical design) which would enable a final estimated cost to be confirmed before the decision to move to the construction phase was agreed. That work is now complete and the design update set out in section 3 below. The planning application submitted in October is due to be considered in March.
- 2.7. Subject to planning permission being approved the final key decisions for the Council to make in order to progress to construction of the leisure centre relate to the financial viability and affordability of the project and the decision to enter into contract.
- 2.8. Affordability of the scheme and the delivery of future leisure services offered by the Council is intrinsically linked to the outcome of the leisure operator procurement and the Council's financial position. Now that the operator procurement has been concluded (Report OS2603) the full financial implications of the new Leisure Centre have been modelled and are set out in section 5 of this report and Exempt Appendix A.

3. DESIGN UPDATE

- 3.1. The detailed design phase (RIBA stage 3) was completed in October 2025, and the stage 3 report can be found at Exempt Appendix B to this report. The purpose of the Stage 3 Report is to provide a developed and tested design so that the project can be developed into the technical detail in RIBA stage 4 in readiness for the delivery stages.
- 3.2. Following completion of RIBA 3 and pre planning public consultation, the planning application for the scheme (25/00583/FULP) was submitted on the 27th October 2025. The consultation period ended on the 18th November 2025 and the application is due to be determined by Development Management Committee during March.
- 3.3. Throughout the process of procuring an operator for the new leisure centre, feedback has been requested from bidders on the proposed designs. As a result, a number of changes have been made, including a reduction in dry change provision to facilitate the addition of a 100sqm second studio / multiuse space on the first floor of the building.

- 3.4. As set out in the July cabinet report (REG2053), consultation was undertaken with the BMX and skate community to seek their views on the proposed skate park provision. As a result of this consultation, it became clear that the area available was not sufficient and would not be suitable for a replacement provision. A decision has therefore been made that the reprovision of the skatepark will be taken forward as part of the wider Civic Quarter development.
- 3.5. As a result of the above, a new children's play area, reflecting the aviation heritage of Farnborough, has now been incorporated into the scheme, funded by S106 contributions.
- 3.6. The July cabinet report indicated that following the preliminary market engagement sessions with operators, all operators indicated that they would welcome additional spaces over and above those that can be provided via a surface carpark.
- 3.7. A transport assessment, including a parking study was undertaken for the scheme which identifies the parking requirements generated from the scheme and takes into consideration the existing parking available within the town centre. This information together with the additional costs to provide a multi-storey car were considered and given the financial position of the Council the decision was made to proceed with a surface car park.

Site Surveys - issues arising and impact on budget

- 3.8. Following initial site investigations, concerns were flagged around potential issues with high groundwater and associated flood risk, indicating a potential increase to the building finished floor level height, requiring further site investigations.
- 3.9. Further site investigations were undertaken impacting the RIBA 3 programme by circa 7 weeks. Following further investigations, the building height was raised by 300mm to manage ground and surface water risks which impacted budget.
- 3.10. Due to initial ground investigations uncovering a small area of contamination within Queensmead car park, further ground investigations were carried out in January 2026 to determine the extent of the contamination. These investigations confirmed that the contamination was widespread throughout the car park. Although there were already provisional sums within the budget for contamination this was no longer sufficient and the sums have been adjusted accordingly and the revised figures set out in Exempt Appendix C - under contract sum analysis from Pellikaan.
- 3.11. There are certain items within the contract sum that will be undefined provisional sums. This is an allowance in a construction contract for work that cannot be fully determined until work starts on site, such as ground conditions. These items are derisked via site investigations and the information available is used to determine a realistic sum for the work as well as a wider project contingency to cover any unforeseen circumstances.
- 3.12. The following items are provisional sums within the contract:

- Site risks: Ground contamination incl. asbestos & obstructions
- Dewatering (removal of excess ground water from site)
- Civil works Play area
- External services and temporary services connections (water/gas etc)

3.13. It is worth noting that the risk for these items sits with the Council in regard to any claims for delays and associated costs by the contractor.

Current design status

3.14. RIBA stage 4 (technical design) and pricing is currently concluding with final contractor's proposals due mid-March 2026.

4. PROJECT COSTS AND FUNDING

Capital Costs

4.1. The project cost to deliver the new leisure centre, playground and surface car parking is £27.5m. As set out in 3.11 it should be noted that the contract costs include provisional sums as set out in section 3.12 above. A high-level breakdown is set out in the Table A below. The detail behind Table A is included in Exempt Appendix C which includes the client-side cost breakdown.

Table A:

Project Cost	£
Contract cost	25,256,457
Client side costs	1,479,991
S106 funded playground	200,000
Capitalised interest	555,960
Project Cost Total	27,492,408

4.2. The funding approach for the capital elements of the scheme utilises the remaining Levelling up grant (now known as the Local Regeneration Fund) of £18.5m with a funding extension to March 2028, £200,000 of S106 funding for the playground and borrowing of £8.8m as detailed in Table B below.

Table B:

Funding	£
Levelling Up Funding	18,500,000
S106	200,000
Borrowing	8,792,408
Project Funding Total	27,492,408

4.3. The additional borrowing has a revenue implication of interest costs and Minimum Reserve Provision (MRP) charges. The revenue implications of additional borrowing and other revenue costs of operating the site detailed below are intended to be funded from leisure centre operator income following the successful award of the operator contract as approved by Cabinet 10 February

2026. The financial modelling and implications are set out in section 5 below and in the Exempt Appendix A.

Revenue costs

- 4.4. In addition, to the borrowing costs above, there will be additional revenue implications for the Council. Whilst the operator will be providing the key leisure services for the Council/new unitary council there will be a number of ongoing revenue costs related to the operation of a new leisure centre, playground and car park. These are set out in Exempt Appendix A and include additional staffing resource to manage a larger leisure contract portfolio, ANPR running costs and playground maintenance costs.
- 4.5. Reduction in available car parking in a prime Farnborough town position is also anticipated to reduce current car parking income levels. The modelling provided in Exempt Appendix A builds in an assumption that car park income loss is 50% of current income at the Queensmead car park. Officers will work to mitigate this impact by redirecting users to alternative council owned sites, however loss of this income is an anticipated negative impact from the redevelopment of the site.

5. AFFORDABILITY AND MODELLING

- 5.1. The proposed scheme will require the Council to borrow £8.8m in addition to utilising the levelling up funding (now known as the Local Regeneration Fund). This has a direct impact on the council's revenue budget alongside the other revenue implications covered in the project costs section above.
- 5.2. A number of scenarios have been modelled to consider costs and income changes to the MTFs due to the proposed investment in the site and are provided in Exempt Appendix A as listed below:
 - i) Main business case
 - ii) A loss of all car parking income
 - iii) A 1% increase in interest rate assumption
 - iv) A £0.5m increase in capital costs
 - v) A £1m increase in capital costs
 - vi) A 1% increase in discount rate
- 5.3. Other assumptions included in these investment business case calculations include;
 - contingency levels
 - capitalisation of interest during the construction period
 - a 50 year building life assumption
 - a standard borrowing interest rate of 5.43%
- 5.4. Consideration of these scenarios help to show the impact of some of the potential financial impacts of project risks to the council.

6. DELIVERY

Development Partner

- 6.1. The delivery approach for the project was approved at Cabinet on the 11th February 2025 (REG2501). The approved approach is to deliver the project via the direct appointment of a Development Partner utilising the UK Leisure Framework, leading to the appointment of Alliance Leisure Services Ltd (ALS) for the provision of project management, design and professional services required for the completion of RIBA stages 2 & 3 and proceed with a direct appointment of the Principal Contractor as identified by ALS.
- 6.2. As set in report REG2501, the UK Leisure Framework is a single supplier framework. At that time Cabinet considered how best value is achieved for the Council via this route and this is summarised below:
- **Supply Chain Leverage:** The framework has a well-established and pre-procured supply chain developed over many years. With the potential of repeat business, as part of a larger potential pipeline, this keeps contractor costs most competitive, quality high and the ability to quickly overcome challenges. This leverage is powerful and helps the Council get the best results.
 - **Gateway Process:** The pre-construction process is aligned with the RIBA stages. An End of Stage report, inclusive of a value for money assessment, is issued by Alliance for review by the Council and validated independently, prior to approval being given to move to the next stage.
 - **Sub-contractors:** The sub-contractors available through the Framework consists of building contractors, architects, project managers and equipment providers with a proven track record in delivering high quality projects, on time and on budget in both the public and private leisure sectors.
 - **Evaluation:** The Framework has an evaluation procedure for engaging with its architects, contractors, professional teams, and equipment supply chain ensuring that projects meet the standards required.
 - **Design team:** The selection of the design team will be made by Alliance Leisure Services Ltd, thus enabling them to manage the delivery risk for the project and protecting the Council. This route provides the quickest method to progress pre-construction work for the project and shortens the programme providing some mitigation towards inflation risk.
 - **Early contractor engagement** ensures 'buildability' from the outset and avoids unwanted surprises in later stages.
 - **Single point of contact:** Alliance manage multiple appointments helping to relieve additional time and resource required by the Council.

- 6.3. What this means in practice is that the Council will enter into a Development Management Agreement with Alliance Leisure Services Limited for the project total, less client side costs. Alliance Leisure will enter into a Design & Build JCT contract with the build contractor, Pellikaan. Alliance will oversee the contractor on a day-to-day basis meeting regularly with the Council's client-side project team. Alliance are procuring a clerk of works whose role is to ensure the scheme is built in accordance with the plans and is compliant with legislation. The Council is employing a technical construction consultant who will work independently of Alliance. He will visit the site regularly to ensure the project is being delivered in accordance with the design specification and the relevant Health and safety regulations.
- 6.4. As part of the Council's due diligence on suppliers it has undertaken financial checks on both Alliance Leisure and Pellikaan, even though the construction risk is with Alliance. Both companies are considered low risk and stable. In addition, a review of previous statements of accounts has been undertaken and this confirms the stability of Pellikaan's financial position.

Rushmoor Project Arrangements

- 6.5. Project governance arrangements are in place to ensure project oversight by senior management and members, including fortnightly portfolio holder briefings. The Project governance diagram is set out at Exempt Appendix D.
- 6.6. The Senior Leadership Team (SLT) has acted as the project board to date and provide steer as required on 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. Oversight of the build project will be through the same arrangements with reporting to Members through the quarterly performance reports.

7. CONTRACT, RISKS AND MITIGATION

- 7.1. The Council will entering into a Development Management Agreement with Alliance leisure. The DMA forms the contractual arrangement by and between Alliance and the Council. Alliance then enters into a series of contracts with its suppliers comprising both the builder and professional consultants, for which Alliance will be paid a fee to manage them. Alliance will ensure that the builder engages with specialist sub-contractors. Thus there will no direct contractual relationship between the Council and Alliance's team of builders and professionals.
- 7.2. In order to mitigate the Council's risks, the builders, its sub-contractors and the professional consultants are required to enter into collateral warranties in favour of the Council. The Council is also requesting Alliance Leisure to retain professional indemnity insurance for 12 years from practical completion.
- 7.3. The contract being used by Alliance Leisure with Pellikaan is a JCT design and build contract (2016) with amendments. This has been reviewed by counsel who

confirmed that the terms of the contract have been thoroughly drafted to protect the Council's position and that no significant risks for the Council were identified.

7.4. The Council is also choosing to include the costs of Latent defects insurance in the project costs. Latent defects are hidden problems which may only be discovered over time, such as structural or waterproofing envelope issues. They are not those defects obviously found upon normal inspection.

7.5. The final set of protections being put in place are set out in exempt appendix L.

8. PROGRAMME

8.1. A detailed current programme can be found at Appendix E and the build period is 18 months. The key milestones for the project are set out below:

Project Stage	Milestone
Planning Approval	March 2026
Completion of RIBA Stage 4 Design & Cost	March 2026
Award of construction contract	March 2026
Pre-commencement activity	April – June 2026
Contractor full Site Commencement	June 2026
Facility Open	Winter 2027

8.2. 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.

9. Alternative Options

9.1. There is an option not to deliver a new facility and retain the existing Queensmead car park and find an alternative use for the other land for other purposes. This is not in line with Council priorities and would likely be unpopular with residents.

9.2. 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

- 9.3. Between 30 June and 25 July 2025, the council undertook a programme of public consultation, comprising three in-person events. Approximately 350 residents attended the in-person sessions, with further feedback collected through the physical survey forms, and digital engagement channels.
- 9.4. A dedicated public consultation microsite was launched on 20 June 2025. The site hosted digital versions of the consultation boards and provided direct access to the online survey. The microsite will remain live throughout the development process to support ongoing engagement.
- 9.5. The consultation gave multiple opportunities for the community to review the draft proposals and share their views.
- 9.6. A broad range of stakeholder groups were engaged through stakeholder engagement meetings throughout the design process to ensure the proposals reflect the needs of users, operators and the wider community. Engagement focused on organisations and direct users, with feedback sought on accessibility, operational requirements and key community priorities. Feedback from these engagement meetings were used to inform the evolving design.
- 9.7. Stakeholders consulted included:
- Local sports clubs and interest groups, including scuba training providers, artistic swimming groups, Rushmoor Royals Swimming Club, BMX and skateboarding representatives, and GKR Karate
 - Community and accessibility groups, including Henry Tyndale School and the Rushmoor Accessibility Action Group (RAAG)
 - National Governing Bodies (Sport England, Swim England, Badminton England, England Netball, England Basketball, England Volleyball)

A full summary of engagement activities and feedback is provided in the Statement of Community Involvement in Appendix F.

10. IMPLICATIONS

Risks

- 10.1. The Council will be accepting a number of risks in opting to proceed with delivery of this project. These include 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.

- 10.2. In entering into the Development Management Agreement with Alliance the Council will be accepting a number of these risks. The live risk register is attached at Exempt Appendix G and sets out the current risk ownership. Prior to entering into contract this will be agreed and finalised with input from legal and used as a core project document.
- 10.3. The risk of the scheme to the Council's overall financial position is set out in section 5. While the Council has the residual £18.5m grant funding to employ against the scheme, if it is to proceed to construction, it will be accepting the financial risks associated with the funding approach including the additional borrowing required and the associated financial risks such as interest rate risk and other risks as identified, evaluated and scenario tested.
- 10.4. As part of our obligations for the Levelling up funding (now known as the Local Regeneration Fund) a risk register is maintained for the project with the top 10 risks reported to MHCLG as part of the monitoring return requirement. These reported risks are attached at Exempt Appendix H.

Legal Implications

- 10.5. As set out in section 7 and Appendix L of this report, the Council will enter into a Development Management Agreement with Alliance Leisure Services Limited and Alliance will enter into a Design & Build JCT contract with the build contractor.
- 10.6. The key legal risk relates to the issue of contractor failure in terms of delivery (in whole or in part) of the contract and the impact of that on the wider organisational finances. As set out in the recent budget report the MTFs shows a projected situation of not being able to set a legal budget in 2028-2029. There is therefore no capacity within the organisational finances to absorb the impact from contract failure.
- 10.7. The scheme of delegation delegates the decision as to the appropriate mitigation of that risk to the Corporate Manager Legal Services. Due to the commercial nature of the matters she has considered, and due to negotiations being ongoing, details are set out in Exempt Appendix L.
- 10.8. There are a number of legal constraints to the development of the leisure centre by way of third-party rights and covenants over the sites. Having received Report LEG2505 at its meeting on 14th October 2025, the Cabinet delegated how best to deal with these constraints to the Executive Director in consultation with the Interim Monitoring Officer and Corporate Manager Legal Services. They decided the best method was to carry out public consultation for the appropriation of the sites for planning purposes and use of section 203 of the Housing and Planning Act 2016 to override third party rights.

- 10.9. No objections or comments have been received and the Officers recommend that Queensmead and Pinehurst Car Parks are appropriated to planning purposes, and section 203 of the HPA is used to override the third party rights necessary to carry build and operate the Leisure centre subject to the receipt of planning permission for the development.
- 10.10. Compensation may be payable if valid claims are received by owners of the third-party rights and further information concerning this is contained in the Exempt Appendix I.

Financial Implications

- 10.11. The project has previously had approvals to proceed to RIBA stage 4, funded fully by the Levelling Up Fund (now known as the Local Regeneration Fund).
- 10.12. The Council was awarded £20m of Levelling up Fund (now known as the Local Regeneration Fund) from government to deliver a leisure and cultural hub in Farnborough in 2023. £18.5m of this funding is to be utilised to deliver the Farnborough Leisure Centre. This funding had a requirement to be spent by 31 March 2025. However, the Council has achieved an extension to this deadline, and funding must be utilised by 31 March 2028.
- 10.13. The Council will be required to borrow an additional £8.8m to enable this project. In the past three Council approved budgets, the Council has been seeking to reduce the debt levels of the council to reduce the revenue implications down to a more sustainable level for the Council.
- 10.14. This project, however, does enable some positive cashflows to the council through the operator management fee. In the initial years following project completion whilst membership numbers are built up to maturity, revenue costs outweigh this income. As the leisure centre site reaches a position in years 4-onwards, the site will have a net positive revenue position to enable debt costs of the project to be covered, provide additional income to the council whilst providing a leisure asset to the public.
- 10.15. In the interim years whilst construction is taking place and initial 3 years following the site opening, the council will have revenue impacts that are not offset by a leisure operator management fee. Therefore, the Council will need to fund the net cost from reserves in the short to medium term. This does increase pressure on the MTFS. Forecasts for these costs have been included in the 2026/27 budget & MTFS subject to approval by Council on 26 February 2026.
- 10.16. The main business case shows the projected NPV of the project, which is positive for the council, therefore delivering value to the council as well as the community.
- 10.17. During the construction interest rate costs can be capitalised. This enables the council to mitigate the revenue impact of these costs to be covered through the life of the asset, funding them with the leisure operator management fee.

- 10.18. Whilst the modelling provided in Exempt Appendix A uses current PWLB rates and rate forecasts from the councils treasury consultants to assess financial feasibility. The Council may not borrow for the capital costs over the 50 year life of the asset due to anticipated changes with LGR. The unitary council that will be in place from April 2028 may not require borrowing to fund this cost, therefore it may tie the new council into a debt position it does not require. It is more likely short term borrowing will be utilised until the new unitary council is in place. Therefore, we have utilised the MTFS interest assumption of 4.5% for the capitalisation of interest during the construction phase.
- 10.19. The Council continues to have a financial deficit within its MTFS (medium-term financial strategy) period which requires resolution. Any decision to take on a project needs to be considered in the context of this deficit.
- 10.20. Ernst & Young LLP, the Council's Financial Statements Auditors, raised a growing concern on the matter as part of the 2025/26 audit findings report regarding the council's high level of short-term borrowing and budgeted shortfalls within the MTFS that do not currently have recurrent savings identified to bring into balance. Therefore, progression of this project to construction stages, and therefore committing the council to over £20m of capital expenditure requires confidence that it will achieve appropriate income to mitigate additional borrowing costs.
- 10.21. 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. The 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. One of the key triggers for issue of a notice which could be relevant may be concerns over financial sustainability in a Councils MTFS or concerns regarding value for money regarding this project.

Resource Implications

- 10.22. 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.
- 10.23. A Client side technical construction consultant is required for the duration of the project as set out in section 6.3 of this report and this has been included for within the client side project costs.

10.24. Once the new Farnborough Leisure Centre is open, an additional internal resource is anticipated to be required to manage the main phase of the new leisure operating contract. A full-time G4 position has been costed into the financial implications but would require a justification consideration closer to the completion of the project due to the anticipated changes in staffing of the Council in the months prior to LGR (Local Government Reorganisation) and implications in this period on other staff.

Equalities Impact Implications

10.25. The project addresses significant Health inequalities and seeks to improve access to leisure facilities in Farnborough. The design proposals have evolved significantly to better reflect local identity, improve accessibility, and provide flexible and inclusive spaces

10.26. An Equality Impact Assessment screening tool has been completed and can be found in Appendix J which details how the Design proposals will have a positive impact on a number of groups with protected characteristics, as well as disadvantaged groups.

11. CONCLUSIONS

11.1. The delivery of a new leisure centre for Farnborough is a significant priority for local people and the Council's Cabinet. Entering into the development agreement with Alliance for the construction phase is considered the most effective and least risk option for delivery with the protections in place as set out in the report.

11.2. The report seeks delegations to officers to enable contracts to be entered into once planning permission is granted and ensure delivery of a new facility within the Levelling Up funding (now known as the Local Regeneration Fund) timelines and to ensure a much need facility for local people.

LIST OF CONFIDENTIAL APPENDICES

Appendix A - Exempt Financial Modelling
Appendix B - Exempt RIBA Stage 3 Report & Design
Appendix C - Exempt Detailed Project Costs
Appendix D – Exempt Project Governance Diagram
Appendix E - Delivery Programme
Appendix F - Statement of Community Involvement
Appendix G - Exempt Risk Register
Appendix H - Exempt MHCLG Risk Register
Appendix I - Exempt S203 - Third Party Rights
Appendix J - Equalities Impact Assessment
Appendix K - S203 Appropriation Redline Plan.
Appendix L – Exempt Financial Protections

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS:

Cabinet Report REG2501
Cabinet Report REG2503
Cabinet Report LEG2505
Cabinet Report OS2603

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COUNCIL MEETING – 19TH MARCH 2026

AGENDA ITEM NO 7 (2)

PAY POLICY STATEMENT, GENDER PAY GAP AND ETHNICITY PAY GAP

A report from the meeting of the Licensing & Corporate Business Committee held on 5th March, 2025.

SUMMARY:

Under the Localism Act 2011, the Council is required to consider and approve a pay policy statement for the financial year. The statement requires a recommendation to Council for the statement covering 2026/27.

Under the Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties and Public Authorities) Regulations 2017, the council are also required to publish gender pay gap calculations annually based on data as at 31 March 2025. In addition, the Council is reporting on its ethnicity pay gap. This information is for noting.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- (1) The Council is recommended to agree the Pay Policy Statement for 2026/27 as set out in **Appendix A**.
- (2) The Gender Pay Gap and Ethnicity Pay Gap calculations for 2025 are for noting.

1. BACKGROUND & INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Under the Localism Act 2011, the Council is required to consider and approve a pay policy statement for the financial year. The Council's pay policy statement for 2026/27 is set out in **Appendix A**.
- 1.2 The Act requires that taxpayers can access information about how public money is spent on their behalf. It translates this into a requirement for improved transparency over both senior council officer pay and that of the lowest paid employees. To support this, the Act requires publication of an annual pay policy statement.
- 1.3 The Act sets out specific information that must be included in the Pay Policy Statement as follows:
 - the pay framework, level and elements of remuneration for Chief Officers
 - the pay framework and remuneration of the 'lowest paid' employees

- the relationship between the remuneration of the Chief Officer and other officers
- other policies relating to specific aspects and elements of remuneration such as pay increases, other allowances or payments, pension and termination payments.

1.4 Under the Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties and Public Authorities) Regulations 2017, the council are also required to publish gender pay gap calculations annually. The Council's Gender Pay Gap Report is set out in **Appendix B**.

1.5 Currently there is no legal requirement for organisations to calculate and publish an annual ethnicity pay gap report. However, the Council has decided to voluntarily publish an annual Ethnicity Pay Gap Report which is set out in **Appendix C**.

2. THE PAY POLICY STATEMENT

2.1 The Pay Policy Statement contains two main components. It sets out the framework within which pay is determined in Rushmoor Borough Council and it provides an analysis comparing the remuneration of the Managing Director with other employees of the authority.

2.2 The comparisons included within the paper look at the ratio between the Managing Director and the full-time equivalent salary for a permanent member of staff employed in the lowest grade within the structure. The ratio for 2026/27 is 1:5.07.

2.3 The second ratio included within the analysis, looks at the relationship between the median remuneration of all staff compared to the Managing Director. The ratio for 2026/27 is 1:2.96.

2.4 The recommendation of the Hutton Report (2010) is that public sector organisations should comply with a maximum multiple of 1:20. Rushmoor is well within this multiple.

2.5 The Pay Policy Statement is forward looking and based on pay as anticipated for the following financial year.

3. THE GENDER PAY GAP

3.1 The Equality Act requires the publication of the Council's Gender Pay Gap (mean and median values), Gender Bonus Gap (mean and median values), proportion of men and women receiving bonuses, proportion of men and woman in each quartile of the organisations pay structure. The council does not pay Bonus payments and therefore there is nothing to report in those categories.

3.2 The Gender Pay gap is reported retrospectively as at the 31st March in any year.

- 3.3 The mean gender pay gap equates to 16.04% with the female average salary being lower than the male average salary. The gap has increased from 12.75% in the previous year.
- 3.4 The median gender pay gap equates to 13.17% with the female median rate being lower than the male median rate. The gap has increased from 9.84% reported in the previous year.
- 3.5 To address the gender pay gap, the new People Plan for 2026-2028 includes further initiatives to encourage and support the personal development of employees, such as upskilling and mentoring opportunities as well as secondments, cross council project working and flexible working.

4. THE ETHNICITY PAY GAP

- 4.1 Whilst it is currently not mandatory to provide a yearly ethnicity pay gap report we have decided this year to voluntarily provide a report to demonstrate our commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion in the Council and, as we have a gap, set a baseline for improvement. The Ethnicity Pay gap will be reported retrospectively as at the 31st March in any year.
- 4.2 The ethnicity pay gap is calculated by comparing the average pay of our White employees with that of our employees from the Black and Minority Ethnic groups (BAME).
- 4.3 The mean ethnicity pay gap equates to 9.5% with the non-white average salary being lower than the white average salary which represents a decrease of 3.2% from last years measurement.
- 4.4 The median ethnicity pay gap equates to 0.2% with the non-white median rate being lower than the white median rate which represents a decrease of 5.1% from last year's measurement.
- 4.5 Whilst both the mean and medium ethnicity pay gaps have decreased we will continue to review the ways we work to encourage a more diverse and inclusive workforce. In particular, we will continue to review our recruitment, secondment and development processes and opportunities to address our commitment to be a more inclusive organisation.

CLLR JACQUI VOSPER
CHAIR OF LICENSING & CORPORATE BUSINESS COMMITTEE

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS:

Communities and Local Government Openness and Accountability in Local Pay: Guidance under Section 40 of the Localism Act

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/5956/2091042.pdf

Communities and Local Government Openness and Accountability in Local Pay: Guidance under Section 40 of the Localism Act Supplementary Guidance

[https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/85886/Final Supplementary Pay Accountability Guidance 20 Feb.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/85886/Final_Supplementary_Pay_Accountability_Guidance_20_Feb.pdf)

Rushmoor Borough Council
Pay Policy Statement for the Financial Year 2026-2027

1. Purpose and Definitions

- 1.1 The purpose of this pay policy statement is to set out Rushmoor Borough Council's (RBC's) policies relating to the pay of its workforce for the financial year 2026 - 27, in particular:
- a) the remuneration of its Chief Officers
 - b) the remuneration of its "lowest paid employees"
 - c) the relationship between
 - the remuneration of its Chief Officers
 - the remuneration of its employees who are not Chief Officers

Definitions

- 1.2 For the purpose of this pay policy statement, the following definitions will apply: -

"Chief Officer" refers to the following roles within RBC:

- Interim Managing Director as Head of Paid Service
- Executive Directors
- Executive Heads of Service
- Heads of Service

The **"lowest paid employees"** refers to permanent or fixed-term staff employed at Grade 1 of the pay scale. Grade 1 is the lowest grade.

An **"employee who is not a Chief Officer"** refers to all permanent or fixed-term staff who are not within the "Chief Officer" group above, including the "lowest paid permanent employees" i.e., staff on Grade 1.

2. Remuneration of the "lowest paid employees" and "all other employees who are not Chief Officers"

Pay framework

- 2.1 Pay for the "lowest paid employees" and "all other employees who are not Chief Officers" is determined by the National Joint Council for Local Government Services and in line with the council's Pay and Reward Policy.
- 2.2 Not included in the definitions referred to above, there is a small and fluctuating number of 'casual' staff, some of whom receive lower salaries in accordance with minimum wage legislation.

- 2.3 The employment of casual staff recognises the need to have a small team of trained and available workers who can be deployed at short notice to assist with seasonal and emergency requirements. This approach enables the organisation to have an efficient and economic response to workload demands but without the need to incur unnecessary costs or to rely upon employment agencies. The use of casual contracts is regularly reviewed and staff engaged in this way are encouraged to apply for permanent roles when they become available.
- 2.4 The only other group employed by the Council who are excluded from the pay comparison data are apprentices. The apprentices are employed for a designated period during which time they are provided with on and off job training alongside the opportunity to gain valuable experience within a working environment. For this reason, the salary comparison would not be relevant.
- 2.5 The Pay and Reward Policy was last updated in 2023. The policy is in line with national guidance, with the grade for each role being determined by a consistent job evaluation process.
- 2.6 The Council's grading structure is based on the NJC terms and conditions using the national spinal column points with the addition of a number of spinal column points at the top of the scale. There are 9 Employee and Manager grades (1 – 7, Service Manager and Corporate Manager) and 4 Chief Officer grades (Head of Service, Executive Head of Service, Executive Director and Managing Director) in the pay framework, grade 1 being the lowest and Managing Director being the highest. Each employee is allocated a grade based on the job evaluation of their role.
- 2.7 Each grade has a number of incremental steps and employees can progress along the salary range to the maximum of their grade, subject to assessment of their performance.
- 2.8 Pay awards for those staff up to and including Corporate Manager are determined directly from the negotiations held between the Local Government Employers and the recognised Trades Unions under the NJC agreement. Pay Awards at Chief Officer level are determined by the negotiations held between Local Government Employers and recognised Trade Unions under the JNC for Chief Officers and similarly the pay awards for the Managing Director is negotiated nationally with ALACE (Association of Local Authority Chief Executives).
- 2.9 The NJC negotiated pay award for 2025/26 was 3.2% for all grades including Chief Officers and Chief Executive.
- 2.10 The analysis used for this report draws upon the pay rates expected as at 1st April 2026.
- 2.11 The remuneration of the "lowest paid employees" includes the following elements:

- Salary
- Any allowance or other contractual payments in connection with their role

Salary

- 2.12 Each “lowest paid permanent employee” is paid within the salary range for Grade 1. Details of the Council’s grades and salary ranges are available on the website. The normal starting salary for new employees will be at the entry point for the grade. However, at the appointing managers discretion, based on their assessment of skills and experience employees may commence at a higher-grade point.

Other payments and allowances

- 2.13 Any allowance or other payments will only be made to staff in connection with their role or the patterns of hours they work and must be in accordance with the Pay and Reward Policy. In a small number of roles where significant recruitment difficulties are experienced, a market supplement is paid. Market supplements are reviewed every three years to ensure they are still required. Further details of such allowances and payments are available on request.

Progression within the salary scale

- 2.14 The Council has a performance management and development review scheme in place. This embraces a number of elements including a joint review of performance, sharing organisational/team goals and agreeing future plans. Progression through the incremental scale appropriate to the grade is dependent upon performance being assessed as satisfactory by the staff member’s line manager.
- 2.15 In exceptional cases where staff members have consistently delivered exceptional performance, more than one incremental point may be awarded, with the approval of the relevant Chief Officer.

Pension

- 2.16 All Rushmoor Borough Council staff are eligible to join the Local Government Pension Scheme. There is automatic enrolment procedure in place to encourage membership of the scheme.

Severance Payments

- 2.17 Any severance payments will be in line with the Council’s adopted policies on Organisational Change and MARS (Mutually Agreed Resignation Scheme). Further details are available on request.

3. Remuneration of Chief Officers

Pay framework

- 3.1 “Chief Officers” refers to the Managing Director, Executive Director, Executive Head of Service and Heads of Service.
- 3.2 As set out above this group of “Chief Officers” are paid on locally determined pay scales outside of the NJC agreement. These pay scales were created by extending the NJC spinal column points, in the financial year 2025/26 the pay award for all Chief Officers was agreed at an increase of 3.2% on the base salary.

Progression within the salary scale

- 3.3 Progression through the incremental scale appropriate to the grade is dependent upon performance being judged as satisfactory or higher at the end of the review year.

Pension

- 3.4 All employees are eligible to join the Local Government Pension Scheme, but the value of these benefits has been excluded from the figures used for pay comparison purposes.

Severance Payments

- 3.5 Any severance payments will be in line with the Council’s policy for Organisational Change or MARS scheme and further details are available on request.
- 3.6 Salaries of all the Council’s Chief Officers are published on the council’s website in line with statutory requirements. The Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 (Statutory Instrument 2015/234) 2 3 (A&A regs) require local authorities to publish the following information about staff whose annual remuneration is at least £50,000:
- the number of employees whose remuneration in that year was at least £50,000 in brackets of £5,000
 - details of remuneration and job title of certain senior employees whose salary is at least £50,000, and
 - employees whose salaries are £150,000 or more must be identified by name.

4. Other allowances or payments

- 4.1 Any allowance or other payments will only be made to staff in connection with their role or the patterns of hours they work and must be in accordance with the Council’s Pay and Reward policy.
- 4.2 The Managing Director is appointed by the Council to act as the Returning Officer at the election of councillors for the Borough and as acting Returning Officer at Parliamentary Elections. The additional fees associated with these functions will be paid in accordance

with those set nationally or locally through the Hampshire and Isle of Wight Elections Fees Working Party.

- 4.3 Within the fees structure for elections, provision is made for payments to staff for specific duties. These payments are also made in accordance with nationally set rates or locally through the Hampshire and Isle of Wight Election Fees Working Party. Details are available on request. Further details of such allowances and payments are available on request.

5. The relationship between remuneration of highest and lowest paid employees of the Council.

- 5.1 There are a number of different ways of presenting this information to provide a rounded picture of pay comparisons within the organisation. The lowest, median and highest FTE salaries as at 1st April 2025 are as follows:

Lowest: £24,413
Median £41,771
Highest £123,840

- 5.2 By taking the salary of those permanently appointed employees paid on the lowest grade of the council's pay structure and comparing this with the Managing Director a pay ratio of **1:5.07** emerges. This is a slight reduction on the previous year's ratio which was 1:5.9
- 5.3 The Hutton Report (2010) that looked at the relationship between pay levels in the public sector recommended that organisations should comply with a maximum pay multiple of **1:20**. Rushmoor is well below that ratio.
- 5.4 An alternative approach is to compare the Managing Director's salary against the median salary. This equates to a ratio of **1:2.96** which is a slight reduction on the previous year's ratio which was 1:3.5.

6. Conclusion

- 6.1 There has been no significant movement over the last 12 months. These results indicate that there is no cause for concern regarding the ratio between the pay rates for staff and the Managing Director.

Rushmoor Borough Council Gender Pay Gap Report 2025

1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 The Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties and Public Authorities) Regulations 2017, requires employers with 250 or more employees to publish statutory gender pay gap calculations annually. This includes the following:
- Gender pay gap (mean and median values)
 - Gender bonus gap (mean and median values)
 - Proportion of men and women receiving bonuses
 - Proportion of men and women in each quartile of the organisation's pay structure.
- 1.2 The Council is required to publish this data on its website and the governments dedicated page for Gender Pay Gap reporting - <https://gender-pay-gap.service.gov.uk>. The report must be published by 30th March 2026.
- 1.3 The legislation requires the organisation to choose a 'snapshot' date and base the Gender Pay Report on all relevant employees employed at that date. Rushmoor Borough Council's Gender Pay Gap is based on analysis of data as at 31st March in a year. This year's calculations are based on data as at 31st March 2025.
- 1.4 Using a common calculation formula, organisations can determine whether there is a difference in pay for its male employees when considered against its female employees. The calculation takes account of all allowances paid to staff as recommended under the regulations, but excludes all overtime pay, whether at flat or enhanced rates.
- 1.5 This exercise provides organisations with an opportunity to consider whether they have a gap in the average pay rates for male and female employees and allows the organisation to consider how that has occurred and to put in place actions to address this. The difference between the pay rates for male and female employees is referred to as the 'Gender Pay Gap'.

2. RUSHMOOR DATA

- 2.1 Based on the data snapshot date of 31st March 2025, there were 256 permanent employees and 36 casual employees included in the data. Therefore, the total number of 292 employees has been used for the data source for this year's calculation.

2.2 The gender breakdown of Rushmoor's workforce is 191 female employees (65%) and 101 male employees (35%).

2.3 Average Pay Calculations

The average female hourly rate is £20.04 per hour. The average male hourly rate is £23.87 per hour. This means that on average male employees within Rushmoor Borough Council earn £3.83 per hour more than female employees. The calculation method that is used to calculate Gender Pay Gap is as follows:

$$\frac{(\text{£highest rate}) - (\text{£lowest rate})}{\text{£highest rate}} \times 100 = \text{Gender Pay Gap \%}$$

For Rushmoor Borough Council the following applies:

$$\frac{\text{£23.87 (male average)} - \text{£20.04 (female average)}}{\text{£23.87}} \times 100 = 16.04 \%$$

16.04 % difference between male salaries and female salaries

This equates to a 16.04 % difference (or 'gap') in pay rates, with the female average salary being lower than the male average salary.

Comparison with 2024 data:

In 2024, the average female hourly rate was £19.51 per hour and the average male hourly rate was £22.36 per hour.

This equated to a percentage difference of 12.75%, with the average female salary being lower than the male average salary.

The difference / gap has increased from the previous year.

2.4 Median Pay Calculations

- The female median hourly rate is £19.65 per hour.
- The male median hourly rate is also £22.63 per hour.
- Using the above method, the difference in median wages is:

$$\frac{\text{£22.63} - \text{£19.65}}{\text{£22.63}} \times 100 = 13.17 \%$$

Comparison with 2024 data

In 2024, the median female hourly rate was £19.34 per hour and the median male hourly rate was £21.45. This year we see an increase in both of these figures. The gap has increased from 9.84% to 13.17%

2.5 **Distribution of male and female employees within Rushmoor Borough Council across 4 quartiles.**

	Total Count	Female Actual	Male Actual	Female %	Male %
Quartile 1 – Lower	73	57	16	78% <i>(71%)</i>	22% <i>(29%)</i>
Quartile 2 - Mid Lower	73	50	23	69% <i>(69%)</i>	31% <i>(31%)</i>
Quartile 3 - Mid Upper	73	46	27	63% <i>(68%)</i>	37% <i>(32%)</i>
Quartile – Upper	73	38	35	52% <i>(50%)</i>	48% <i>(50%)</i>
Total Workforce	292	191	101	65% <i>(65%)</i>	35% <i>(35%)</i>

(figures shown in italics are the % figures for 2024 to enable easier comparison).

The table above shows a significant change in the distribution of male and female employees within the Lower Quartile with a 6% increase in the number of females, whilst there has been a 7% decrease in the number of males in this category. In the Mid Upper Quartile there has been a 5% decrease in the number of female employees and a 5% increase in the number of male employees.

Bonus Pay

2.6 Rushmoor Borough Council does not have payments such as performance related pay, one off incentive payments for recruitment and retention or monetary payments for long service awards, therefore within the guidelines for Gender Pay Gap reporting there are no payments within the “bonus” categorisation.

2.7 No bonuses were paid in Rushmoor Borough Council during this period, so there is no pay gap to report in relation to bonus payments.

3. CONCLUSION

3.1 At Rushmoor Borough Council the average difference (or ‘gap’) in pay rates between male and female salaries has increased from 12.75% to 16.04%. As last year both the median female hourly rate and the median male hourly rate has increased and the median gap has increased from 9.84% to 13.17%.

3.2 To address the gender pay gap, the new People Plan for 2026 -2028 includes further initiatives to encourage and support the personal development of employees, such as upskilling and mentoring opportunities as well as secondments, cross council project working and flexible working. We are committed to facilitate positive shifts in the Council’s gender pay gap.

Rushmoor Borough Council Ethnicity Pay Gap Report 2025

1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 Whilst there is currently no legal requirement for ethnicity pay gap reporting we have decided to voluntarily provide a report to demonstrate our commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion in the Council and measures to address to close the gap as appropriately.
- 1.2 The Ethnicity Pay Gap data includes the following:
- Ethnicity pay gap (mean and median values)
 - Ethnicity group proportion in each quartile of the organisation’s pay structure

2. RUSHMOOR DATA

- 2.1 Based on the data snapshot date of 31st March 2025, a total number of 240 employees have been included in this data source (which includes permanent and fixed-term employees). This equates to 93% of the organisation. This is an increase of 9 employees from last year's report which included the data of 231 employees which equated to 91% of the organisation at the time.
- 2.2 Please note that 16 employees were not included in this year's report as they chose not to share their ethnicity. This is a drop of 4 from last year's report as 20 employees chose not to share their ethnicity.
- 2.3 **Mean Ethnicity Pay Gap**

To calculate the mean pay gap, we add together all the hourly pay rates that people from Black, Asian, mixed race or other ethnic (BAME) groups received. We divide the total by the number of people from these groups in our workforce. We then repeat this calculation for white people. The difference between these figures is the mean ethnicity pay gap.

Mean Hourly Rate	White	Black, Asian, mixed race, other	Pay Gap
31 st March 2025	£23.00	£20.82	9.5%
31 st March 2024	£22.31	£19.48	12.7%

2.4 Median Ethnicity Pay Gap

To calculate the median pay gap, we first rank all our people by their hourly pay. We identify what the person in the middle of the pay range for employees from Black, Asian, mixed race or other ethnic groups received. Then we compare it with what the person in the middle of our white population pay range received. The difference between these figures is the median ethnicity pay gap.

Median Hourly Rate	White	Black, Asian, mixed race, other (BAME)	Pay Gap
31 st March 2025	£21.36	£21.32	0.2%
31 st March 2024	£20.43	£19.34	5.3%

2.5 Pay Quartiles

Each pay quartile represents a quarter or 25% of our total workforce ranked by pay:

31 st March 2025	Number		%	
	White	Black, Asian, mixed race, other (BAME)	White	Black, Asian, mixed race, other
Upper quartile	58	2	96.7% <i>(96.5%)</i>	3.3% <i>(3.5%)</i>
Upper – middle quartile	53	7	88.3% <i>(89.7%)</i>	11.7% <i>(10.3%)</i>
Lower – middle quartile	57	4	93.3% <i>(94.8%)</i>	6.7% <i>(5.2%)</i>
Lower quartile	56	5	91.7% <i>(87.9%)</i>	8.3% <i>(12.1%)</i>
Total Workforce	222	18	92.5% <i>(92.2%)</i>	7.5% <i>(7.8%)</i>

(figures shown in brackets / italics are the % figures for 2024 to enable easier comparison)

3 CONCLUSION

3.1 At Rushmoor Borough Council the average difference (or 'gap') in pay rates between White and BAME groups is **9.5%** on 31st March 2025. This has decreased since this was last measured on 31st March 2024 by **3.2%**. This can be attributed to the percentage decrease of BAME staff in the lower quartile by 3.8% on 31st March 2025. In addition to this, the percentage of BAME staff in the upper middle quartile has increased by 1.4%. Therefore 2 of the 4 quartiles have decreased and increased favourably for BAME staff. The number of BAME staff in the upper quartile has contrastingly decreased, but not significantly (only by 0.2%). The median pay gap between White

and BAME groups was **0.2%** on 31st March 2025. This has **decreased** since this was last measured on 31st March 2024 by **5.1%**.

- 3.2 Whilst both the mean and median ethnicity pay gaps have decreased we will continue to review the ways we work to encourage a more diverse and inclusive workforce. In particular, we will continue to review our recruitment, secondment and development processes and opportunities to address our commitment to be a more inclusive organisation.

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COUNCIL MEETING – 19TH MARCH 2026**AGENDA ITEM NO. 7 (3)****UPDATES TO THE CONSTITUTION – CHAMPION ROLES**

A Report from the meeting of the Licensing and Corporate Business Committee held on 5th March 2026

SUMMARY

At the Council Meeting in December 2025, councillors agreed a Notice of Motion committing to the principle that the Champion roles should be non-executive, non-political roles, open to all councillors, with appointments made by the Council or a non-executive committee.

At its meeting in January, the Constitution Working Group developed some core principles and procedures for revised arrangements for Champions as set out in Paragraph 4.1, and on 5th March the Licensing and Corporate Business Committee considered the proposed revised arrangements for Champions, and the linked updates that would be required to the Constitution to effect this change.

The Committee proposed additional provisions which are summarised in para 4.2 and endorsed the proposals which are now recommended to the Council.

RECOMMENDATION

The Council is recommended to approve the updates to the Constitution as described in paragraph 2.1 to 2.5 in this report, including the Guidance Note as attached at Appendix 2.

1. BACKGROUND AND INTRODUCTION**Current arrangements for Cabinet Champions**

- 1.1 The arrangements for Cabinet Champion roles were first established by the Cabinet in 2018 as part of a review of portfolios carried out by the Leader at that time. The Champion roles were intended to enable capacity to 'champion' council plan priorities which were crosscutting of portfolios. Also, to provide leadership development opportunities for Members who are not on the Cabinet. The Constitution does not state a requirement for Cabinet Champions to be members of the administration, albeit historically it has always been the case.
- 1.2 The change to the make-up of the Council to no overall control has prompted further consideration about the Champion roles, and at its meeting on 4th December 2025, the Council agreed a Notice of Motion committing to the principle that the Champion roles should be non-executive, non-political roles,

open to all councillors, with appointments made by the Council or a non-executive committee (copy attached at Appendix 1).

1.3 At its meeting on 12th January, the Constitution Working Group considered the constitutional arrangements that would be needed to effect the changes to the Champion Roles. The following points reflect the outcome of that discussion, together with some additional feedback from Group Leaders who supported the approach recommended by the Constitution Working Group.

1.4 The key principles to be incorporated in the Constitution were recommended as:

- That **full Council will have responsibility for determining which champion roles** the Council will have, **and their terms of reference**.
- That the Council will have a 'standing' Champion for "**Armed Forces Covenant**" appointed for two years for continuity, and that further Champion roles may be agreed by the Council. Proposals for additional champion **roles** should start with a recommendation from the Leader of the Council. There will be a maximum limit of three paid champion roles at any one time.
- The Council will confirm appointments to Champion roles, **on the recommendation of the Licensing and Corporate Business Committee** (LCB). The LCB Committee will be responsible for considering nominations and recommending terms of reference to accompany the roles.
- Champions will be accountable to the Licensing and Corporate Business Committee and be asked to update to the Committee periodically.
- Champions will be expected to engage with the Leader of the Council/relevant portfolio holder, and to discuss activities that require budget allocation.
- A Guidance Note to be added to the Constitution on Champions (as set out in Appendix 2).
- A distinction to be recognised between the role of the Mayor in respect of civic/military duties and the Armed Forces Covenant Champion for military covenant responsibilities.

1.5 At its meeting on 5th March, the Licensing and Corporate Business Committee made the following additional points:

- Full Council should have powers to dismiss, as well as appoint, Champions

- There should be no Shadow Champions
- When expressions of interest in a Champion role are invited, interested Members should be encouraged to say how they see the role and their ideas to enable an individual element and enthusiasm to be brought to the role.
- Members should be able to make suggestions for Champion roles, which they believe they could fulfil, for initial consideration by the Licensing and Corporate Business Committee.
- Champions should not be Cabinet Members or the Mayor, or Deputy Mayor, or the Chair of the Licensing and Corporate Business Committee.

2. PROPOSED CHANGES TO THE CONSTITUTION

It is proposed that the points set out in para 1.4 and 1.5 above are incorporated with the following amendments made to the Constitution:

- 2.1 It is proposed that the reference to Cabinet Champion roles set out in Part 3 – Section 2 (Executive Functions), para 2.12, be deleted.
- 2.2 A new paragraph be inserted in Part 2 - The Constitution and how the Council Operates, para 3, to state the information that the Council appoints Champions and that the Council will have responsibility for determining which champion roles the Council will have and will confirm the champion appointments on the recommendation of the Licensing and Corporate Business Committee. Also, that the Council will have a ‘standing’ Champion for “Armed Forces Covenant”.
- 2.3 A new bullet point added to Part 3, Section 5, Role of the Council, to confirm that the Council will have responsibility for determining which Champion roles the Council will have, their terms of reference, appointments to the roles, and to dismiss appointees if necessary. A reference to be made to the Guidance Note in Part 5.
- 2.4 The terms of reference of the Licensing and Corporate Business Committee, at Part 3, Section 6, to be updated to include responsibility for proposing nominations for appointments to Champion roles to the Council and recommending terms of reference to accompany the roles. Also, that Champions will be accountable to the Licensing and Corporate Business Committee and asked to update the Committee periodically. A reference made to the Guidance Note in Part 5.
- 2.5 A new Guidance Note for Champions be added to Part 5 of the Constitution describing further details of the arrangements and provisions for champions. A draft Part 5 Guidance Note is attached at Appendix 2.

3. NEXT STEPS

3.1 Following the approval of the new provisions by Council, arrangements will be followed to enable the appointment of Champions for 2026/27:

- Discussion with the Leader and Group Leaders as to potential roles for Champions for 2026/27 in addition to the standing champion for armed forces covenant; this may need to be revisited following the elections.
- Expressions of interest to the Champion roles invited as part of the annual appointments process 2026/27
- Nominations to roles and draft plans will be considered by the Licensing and Corporate Business Committee at its first meeting of the new municipal year on 4th June 2026.

CLLR JACQUI VOSPER
CHAIR OF LICENSING AND
CORPORATE BUSINESS COMMITTEE

NOTICE OF MOTION – CHAMPION ROLES

“This council notes that Cabinet Champion roles exist to support and promote key areas of importance to the Borough, and that these roles should operate in a way that best serves residents across the community.

This council further notes that the current arrangements for appointing Cabinet Champions are set out in the Constitution, and that these arrangements place the responsibility for appointments with the Leader of the Council. Council recognises that there is a desire among members for these roles to operate on a non-party political basis, with transparent and cross-party appointment processes.

This council will therefore:

- (1) Commit to the principle that Cabinet Champion roles should be non-executive, non-political positions, open to all councillors, with appointments made by Full Council or the appropriate committee rather than by the Leader, and that the Constitution should be amended to reflect this.
- (2) Request that the Licensing and Corporate Business Committee urgently prepare the necessary constitutional amendments, including role descriptions and accountability arrangements, and bring these proposals to the next available meeting of Full Council.
- (3) Enable Full Council to vote on the revised arrangements for Cabinet Champion roles at the earliest opportunity.”

CHAMPIONS GUIDANCE NOTE

1. Introduction

“Champions” are elected members of the Council appointed to act as advocates or spokespeople for particular themes or communities which should be of interest to the Council in delivering its functions.

The Council will have a standing ‘Champion for Armed Forces Covenant’ who shall be appointed for a two-year period or until vesting day in the case of local government reorganisation falling within two-years from the date of appointment.

Other additional Champion Roles appointed in any year should be:

- discussed first with the Leader of the Council taking account of Council priorities and Portfolio responsibilities
- cross cutting and represent a sustainable corporate priority which supports the Council’s Delivery Plan
- clearly defined: not open-ended

The Council shall have a maximum of three Champion roles, in receipt of a special responsibility allowance, at any one time.

2. Responsibility for appointment of Champions

The full Council has responsibility for approving which champion roles the Council will have, and Champions’ terms of reference/objectives.

The Council will confirm appointments to Champion roles, on the recommendation of the Licensing and Corporate Business Committee (LCB). The LCB Committee will be responsible for considering nominations and recommending terms of reference to accompany the roles.

The Council shall also have powers to dismiss Champions.

Shadow Champions shall not be appointed.

3. Nominations – Expressions of Interest

Nominations for roles to be sought in advance and discussed with Group Leaders and Managing Director and Monitoring Officer in advance of a report to the Licensing and Corporate Business Committee.

When expressions of interest in a Champion role are invited, interested Members should be encouraged to say how they see the role and their ideas to enable an individual element and enthusiasm to be brought to the role.

Members can make suggestions for Champion roles, which they believe they could fulfil, for consideration by the Licensing and Corporate Business Committee.

4. Purpose and remit of the Champion role

The Champion acts in an advocacy and advisory capacity and has no decision-making powers. The Champion will ensure that any recommendations for actions arising from the role are referred to the relevant Cabinet Member or Committee Chair and supporting officers.

The Champion will be supported by a lead officer as well as the Senior Leadership Team and will be provided with sufficient access to information, briefings and meetings to enable them to make a meaningful contribution in their Champion role.

The following is a general role description for Champions. In addition, topic specific plans may supplement this:

- To raise the profile of the area of interest/issue with elected members, officers and local communities
- To provide positive support in driving forward the Council's objective on the issue
- To promote effective communication and positive working relationships both within the Council and with community groups and other stakeholders
- To foster cross-party co-operation on the issue

Champion for Armed Forces Covenant and Mayor

The focus of the Champion for the Armed Forces Covenant is to promote the Armed Forces Covenant and actions to deliver the covenant, which is distinct from the role of the Mayor who represents the Borough at civic military/community functions and events.

5. Eligibility and term of office

Champion roles are open to all Members but should not be Cabinet Members or the Mayor, or Deputy Mayor, or the Chair of the Licensing and Corporate Business Committee.

Roles should be allocated based on 'best fit' based on previous experience, skills and interest for the role, and with reference to the person specification in para. 7 below.

The Armed Forces Covenant Champion will be appointed for two years.

Other Champions will be appointed for one year (or for the remainder of a civic year) and may be re-appointed the following year.

6. Reporting and accountability

Champions shall be asked to provide the Licensing and Corporate Business Committee with a periodic summary report of their activities.

Champions will be expected to engage with the Leader of the Council/relevant portfolio holder, and to discuss activities that require budget allocation.

7. Person Specification

Within the Council:

Understanding of the area of interest being championed in terms of council strategies and policy, good practice, improvement and national agendas and the needs of the client group.

Ability to engage with a range of members and officers around the issue and listening to requirements.

Ability to advocate on behalf of the issue/area of interest within the Council

In the Community:

Understanding of the needs of the community in relation to the topic

Ability to engage with residents and community groups in matters related to the topic

Ability to lead and support local initiatives related to the interest

Ability to represent the position of the council to the community in relation to the interest.

COUNCIL MEETING – 19TH MARCH 2026

AGENDA ITEM NO. 7 (4)

UPDATE ON DESIGNATIONS OF HEAD OF PAID SERVICE
AND MONITORING OFFICER

Report of the Licensing and Corporate Business Committee held on 18th March 2026

SUMMARY

At its meeting on [25th September 2025](#) the Council extended the appointment of Ian Harrison as the Council's Interim Managing Director and associated designation as Head of Paid Service until the Annual Council Meeting in May 2026, or until alternative arrangements were agreed by the Council, arising from the conclusion of work on the management restructure if that is sooner.

This report updates on the current position and recommends that the appointment and designation relating to the Interim Managing Director are further extended, and recommends permanent arrangements for the post of Monitoring Officer.

In accordance with the updated Constitution the appointment of the Head of Paid Service is made by the Licensing and Business Committee, subject to confirmation by the Council. The Council is responsible for confirming the designations of the Monitoring Officer and Head of Paid Service.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Subject to consideration by the Licensing and Corporate Business Committee at its meeting on 18th March:

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

BACKGROUND

- 1.1 At its meeting on 25 September 2025, the Council approved a recommendation from the Corporate Governance, Audit and Standards Committee for the extension of the appointment of Ian Harrison as the Council's Interim Managing Director and Head of Paid Service until the Annual Council Meeting in May

2026, or until alternative arrangements are agreed by the Council arising from the conclusion of work on the management restructure if that is sooner.

- 1.2 At that time Mr Harrison had fully expected to be in a position to have proposed new management structure arrangements in order to enable sufficient time to provide the basis for Group Leaders to collectively consider the arrangements for the permanent appointment of a Head of Paid Service for the Council before the pre-election period. Given the expected timing of the LGR decision so close to the elections it is now considered appropriate to wait until the council has that certainty before confirming management arrangements to the end of the Council's existence. This requires a further extension of the Interim period for the Managing Director Role.
- 1.3 Further details about the background to the recommendations are set out in the exempt report to the Licensing and Corporate Business Committee attached at **Appendix 1**.

2. IMPLICATIONS

Legal Implications

- 2.1 No specific legal implications other than the requirement to ensure the Council has a continued designation of the Head of Paid Service and Monitoring Officer which are statutory roles under the Local Government and Housing Act 1989.

Financial Implications

- 2.2 This proposal has no additional costs outside the budget agreed in February and the permanent appointment of a Monitoring Officer should result in ongoing cost reductions for this role when compared to interim rates.

Resource Implications

- 2.3 No additional implications

Equalities Impact Implications

- 2.4 No additional implications

3. CONCLUSION

- 5.1 This report ensures continued arrangements for the Head of Paid Service and Monitoring Officer.

JACQUI VOSPER
CHAIR OF LICENSING AND CORPORATE BUSINESS COMMITTEE

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

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COUNCIL MEETING – 19TH MARCH 2026**AGENDA ITEM NO. 8****REVIEW OF MEMBERS' ALLOWANCES SCHEME****1. INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 Under Regulations relating to the preparation and review of members' allowances schemes, Rushmoor's Independent Remuneration Panel (IRP) reviewed Rushmoor's scheme in December 2025. The remit of the Panel was to undertake a complete general review of the Scheme to ensure that it continues to be fit for purpose, including a review of the basic and special responsibility allowances in the context of the Council's financial position, and taking account of benchmarking information. In addition, the Remuneration Panel was asked to examine the special responsibility allowances for Chairs of Committees in the light of changes to the committee structure, the allowances for Member Champions, to check the basic allowance continues to make appropriate provision for IT and phones and that the allowances for the Designated Independent Person are appropriately paid at the co-opted Member rate.
- 1.2 A copy of the Remuneration Panel's report is attached and set out below is a summary of the outcomes. The Council is being asked to adopt the recommendations of the Remuneration Panel in full.

2. INDEPENDENT REMUNERATION PANEL – PROPOSALS**(1) Background and Context**

- 2.1 Rushmoor's Remuneration Panel has examined all parts of the current scheme and benchmarked the provisions against similar authorities regionally, locally and nationally through a range of indices. As in previous reviews, the Remuneration Panel recognised the importance of obtaining the views of Members and an essential part of this review was to receive this evidence. The Panel met with 13 Councillors in person across all political groups and a range of roles and received one written submission.
- 2.2 In carrying out the review, the Remuneration Panel was also conscious of the need to take account of the Council's current financial position and budgetary constraints facing the Council.
- 2.3 The Report advises that the Panel did not receive a great deal of feedback that the allowances scheme needed fundamental reform; the broad view was that the allowances scheme and levels of allowance were appropriate, with some exceptions. In this way, the main task of the IRP has been to address anomalies arising in the current scheme.

(2) Review of Main Elements of the Allowances

- 2.4 The Remuneration Panel tested the robustness of the 2025/26 Basic Allowance (£6,813) by replicating the original methodology that forms the basis of the current basic allowance (paras 21 to 29 of the Report), and by carrying out a benchmarking exercise (paras 30 to 31 of the Report). The panel determined that the outcome of the recalibration activity showed there was not a case to revise the Basic Allowance, and that the current allowance would not represent a barrier to public service for most people.
- 2.5 Overall, the Remuneration Panel did not see a strong case to alter the Special Responsibility Allowances (SRA). The principal anomaly for the IRP to address was to recommend an appropriate SRA for the Chairs of the Audit & Governance Committee and the Licensing and Corporate Business Committee. The background to this was the outcome of the committee review which discontinued the Corporate Governance, Audit and Standards Committee and split its functions across the two new committees.
- 2.6 The Panel also identified an anomalous situation whereby Opposition Group Leaders receive the same level of SRA regardless of group size, and benchmarking showed that it is typical practice to make a distinction. The view usually taken by IRPs is that the Leader of the Main Opposition Group has the primary responsibility to provide challenge to the ruling administration, and this was generally supported in the representations received. The Report also made provision in the case of two or more main opposition groups of equal size.
- 2.7 The Panel noted the planned changes to the appointment of Champion Roles and was content that the role continued to be above and beyond what is required for an ordinary Member. It was proposed that the allowance for Champions be maintained at current levels and up to a maximum of three payable at any one time.
- 2.8 There was representation to the Panel that the SRA paid for the role of chairing the full Council was too low in the current circumstances, and the IRP concluded that given the current composition of the Council (NOC), the extent of public feeling round a variety of contentious issues and the large variation in the SRA paid to the Council Chair compared to benchmarked averages, that a small increase in SRA was merited.
- 2.9 The Panel also received no evidence that the annual remuneration of the Independent Person for Rushmoor, paid at the same level as co-optees, required revision.

2.10 Taking account of the evidence provided, the Remuneration Panel is proposing:

- the overall Basic Allowance remain at £6,813 for 2026/27, subject to any applicable indexation going forward
- the current Basic Allowance continues to cover Members personal Information Technology & Telecommunications costs
- the special responsibility allowance for the Chair of the Audit & Governance Committee is reset at £4,726 to be backdated to the date the post was established on 26th November 2025
- the special responsibility allowance for the Chair of Licensing and Corporate Business Committee is set at £2,835 to be paid from the date the post was taken up on 21st October 2025
- the special responsibility allowance for the Leader of the Main Opposition Group is reset at £4,726, and the SRA for the Leader of a Minority Opposition Group is reset at £2,835
- the special responsibility allowance for the Chair of the Council is reset at £2,835
- the special responsibility allowance for the Leader is maintained at £18,900, and the allowance for the Deputy Leader role is maintained at £10,878
- the special responsibility allowance for Cabinet Members is maintained at £9,395
- the special responsibility allowance for the Chair of the Development Management Committee is maintained at £6,374
- the special responsibility allowance for the Chairs of the Policy and Project Advisory Board and the Overview and Scrutiny Committee is maintained at £4,726
- the allowance for Champions is maintained at £1,923
- the allowance for Members attending at least four licensing hearings per year is maintained at £549
- the co-optees allowance is maintained at £604

(3) Travel and Subsistence and Dependent Carers Allowances

2.11 The Remuneration Panel also reviewed the arrangements for the other allowances in the scheme and recommended:

- no revisions to the travel and subsistence scope, terms and conditions and maximum rates
- the dependant carers' allowance continue to be paid in respect of childcare at the National Living Wage or, for other care, capped at the hourly wage charged by Hampshire County Council Social Services for a carer. However, a clarification was needed to the policy to confirm that where a Member seeks to claim reimbursement for childcare costs, that they are able to claim for informal childcare upon the production of a receipt. Also, that Schedule 2 of the Allowances Scheme should be amended to state that it also includes the approved duties for which the allowance is claimed within the Borough.

(4) **Indexation**

- 2.9 The current arrangements where members allowances are reviewed each year using indices applied nationally or through the local government system are to be retained for a further four-year period (or until vesting day of a new unitary authority).

3. **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 3.1 The recommendations as set out in the Independent Remuneration Panel's Report are within current budgets for Members Allowances. Most allowances are proposed to be maintained with no change, and where adjustments are proposed to increase an allowance, they are relatively minor.
- 3.2 Allowances will continue to be indexed for four years (the maximum period permitted under regulations).

4 **CONCLUSIONS**

- 4.1 Rushmoor's Independent Remuneration Panel's review of the Members' Allowances Scheme has involved a fundamental examination of each element of the scheme. The main outcome has been to address anomalies arising in the current scheme, and most allowances remain unchanged.

5. **RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 5.1 The Council is recommended to adopt the proposals set out in the Remuneration Panel's Eighth Report (attached to this report) for implementation from the date of the Annual Meeting on 26th May 2026.
- 5.2 The recommended changes to special responsibility allowances for the Chair of the Audit & Governance Committee and Chair of Licensing & Corporate Business to be backdated as set out in the report.

A Review of Members' Allowances

For

Rushmoor Borough Council

**The Eighth Report by the Independent
Remuneration Panel**

**Stuart Elsdon
Dr Declan Hall (Chair)
Alan Thorpe**

January 2026

Executive Summary: Recommendations

Rushmoor BC Review 2026	Basic Allowance and SRAs:			
	Recommended Maximum Payable 2026/27			
POSITION	Nos. Paid	Basic Allowance	Total P/Member (BA+SRA)	Sub Total Per Category
BASIC ALLOWANCE	39	£6,813	£6,813	£265,707
Special Responsibility Allowances	Standing SRAs	SRAs 2026/27		
Leader of Council	1	£18,900	£25,713	£18,900
Deputy Leader of Council	1	£10,878	£17,691	£10,878
Cabinet Members	4	£9,395	£16,208	£37,580
Chair Development Management Committee	1	£6,374	£13,187	£6,374
Chair Audit & Governance Committee*	1	£4,726	£11,539	£4,726
Chair Overview & Scrutiny Committee	1	£4,726	£11,539	£4,726
Chair Policy & Project Advisory Board	1	£4,726	£11,539	£4,726
Chair Licensing & Corporate Business Committee**	1	£2,835	£9,648	£2,835
Cabinet Champions	3	£1,923	£8,736	£5,769
Chair of Council (Mayor)	1	£2,835	£9,648	£2,835
Main Opposition Group Leader	1	£4,726	£11,539	£4,726
Other Opposition Group Leader[s] If have >3 Members	1	£2,835	£9,648	£2,835
Licensing Members serving > 4 Sub-Committees per year	Variable	£549	NA	Variable
Sub Total - Basic Allowance	39			£265,707
Sub Total - Standing SRAs	17			£106,910
Total (BA + SRAs)				£372,617
* SRA to be paid from 26 November 2025				
** SRA to be paid from 21 October 2025				

Other Recommendations: The IRP also recommends that:

Basic Allowance – continuing to include Information Technology & Telecommunications (ITT) costs

The current Basic Allowance continues to cover Members personal Information Technology & Telecommunications costs.

Where there are two or more Main Opposition Groups of equal size

Where there are two Main Opposition Groups of equal size then the SRAs paid to the Leader of Main Opposition Group and Leader of the Minority Opposition Group are aggregated and then divided by two, equating to £3,781 apiece. The same principle should also apply where there are three or more Main Opposition Groups of the same size. In this scenario the qualifying criteria of having a minimum of four Group Members does not apply.

SRAs considered but not recommended

The following roles are not paid an SRA:

- **To the Group Whips.**
- **To the two Vice-Chairs of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and two Vice-Chairs of the Policy and Project Advisory Board**

Co-optees' Allowances

The Co-optees' Allowance is maintained at £604, subject to any applicable indexation going forward.

Remuneration for the Independent Person (IP)

The annual remuneration of the Independent Person for Rushmoor Borough Council remains at £604, subject to any applicable indexation going forward.

The Allowances for expenses: Travel and Subsistence Allowances

The conditions and maximum rates under which the Travel and Subsistence Allowances can be claimed are maintained, subject to any applicable indexation going forward.

The Dependants' Carers' Allowance (DCA)

The DCA is maintained at the current rates and terms and conditions subject to any applicable indexation going forward and the following amendments:

- That the DCA should be clarified that where a Member seeks to claim reimbursement for childcare costs that they are able to claim for informal childcare upon the production of a receipt

- That Schedule 2 of the Allowances Scheme is amended to state that it also includes the approved duties for which the DCA is claimed within the Borough

Confirmation of Indexing

The following allowances are indexed for four years (the maximum period permitted under the 2003 Regulations before the Council has to seek further advice from the IRP) from 2025/26 to 2028/29, as follows:

- **Basic Allowance, SRAs and Co-optees' Allowances:**
 - Updated annually in line with the annual percentage pay increase given to Rushmoor Borough Council employees (and rounded to the nearest £) as agreed for each year by the National Joint Council for Local Government Staff as agreed at SCP 43.
- **Out of Council Area Mileage Allowance:**
 - Indexed to the Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs (HMRC) Approved Mileage Allowance Payments (AMAP) mileage rates.
- **Out of Council Area Other Travel and Subsistence:**
 - Reimbursement of actual costs taking into account the most cost effective means of transport and/or accommodation available and the convenience of use with the maximum rates indexed to the same periodic percentage increase that may be applied to Officer Subsistence Allowances.
- **Dependants' Carers' Allowance (DCA):**
 - The maximum hourly rates to be indexed to the government's national living wage applicable to the age of the carer (childcare) and Hampshire County Council's hourly rate for a Home Care Assistance (care of other dependants).

Implementation

The new scheme of allowances based on the recommendations contained in this report is adopted from the date of the Annual Meeting on 26th May 2026 with the following exceptions:

- The recommended SRA for the Chair of the Audit & Governance Committee – to be implemented from the date the Chair took up the post of this Committee on 26 November 2025
- The recommended SRA for the Chair of the Licensing & Corporate Business Committee – to be implemented from the date the Chair took up the post of this Committee on 21 October 2025

Independent Remuneration Panel:
The Eighth Report of Members' Allowances
For
Rushmoor Borough Council
January 2026

Introduction: The Regulatory Context

1. This report contains the recommendations arising out of the independent review, December 2025, of Members' Allowances for Rushmoor Borough Council by the Council's statutory Independent Remuneration Panel ('IRP' or 'Panel'). It also lays out the deliberations of the IRP to show elected Members, Officers and the public the rationale for the Panel's recommendations.
2. The Panel was convened under The Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003 (SI 1021) (the 2003 Regulations). These regulations, arising out of the relevant provisions in the Local Government Act 2000, require all local authorities to maintain an independent remuneration panel to review and provide advice on the Council's Members Allowances. This is in the context whereby the Council retains powers to determine the scope and levels of Members' Allowances.
3. All Councils are required to convene their IRP and seek its advice before they make any changes or amendments to their Members' Allowances Scheme. They must 'pay regard' to their IRP's recommendations before setting a new or amended Members' Allowances Scheme. On this particular occasion, the IRP has been reconvened under the 2003 Regulations [10. (5)], which states:

Where an authority has regard to an index for the purpose of annual adjustment of allowances it must not rely on that index for longer than a period of four years before seeking a further recommendation from the independent remuneration panel established in respect of that authority on the application of an index to its scheme.

4. It is this mechanism, known as the '4 year rule', that ensures IRPs are convened at least every four years if a council wishes to continue indexing their allowances. It also provides an opportunity for IRPs to publicly scrutinise their councils' allowances schemes and enhance public accountability. It is under this requirement that the

Panel has undertaken this review of members' allowances for Rushmoor Borough Council.

Terms of Reference

5. In accordance with the requirements of 2003 Members' Allowances Regulations Rushmoor Borough Council has reconvened its statutory Independent Remuneration Panel (IRP) to review the Council Members' Allowances Scheme. Specifically the Panel has been asked to make recommendations to the Council on the following:
 - a) The amount of the Basic Allowance that should be payable to elected Members;
 - b) The responsibilities or duties for which should lead to the payment of a Special Responsibility Allowance (SRA) and as to the amount of such an allowance;
 - c) The responsibilities or duties for which travelling and subsistence allowances can be paid and as to the amount of such allowances;
 - d) whether a Co-optees' Allowance should be paid and as to the amount of such an allowance;
 - e) Whether a Dependants' Carers' Allowance should be payable to elected Members, and as to the amount of such an allowance;
 - f) Whether, in the event that the scheme is amended at any time so as to affect an allowance payable for the year in which the amendment is made, payment of allowances may be backdated in accordance with regulation 10(6);
 - g) Whether adjustments to the level of allowances may be determined according to an index and if so which index and how long that index should apply, subject to a maximum of four years, before its application is reviewed;
6. In addition the IRP has been asked to consider a number of Rushmoor Borough Council Specific requirements, namely:
 - a) To consider the level of allowances within the Scheme in the context of the need for financial sustainability requiring reductions to base budget over time
 - b) To review the SRAs for Chairs of Committees particularly in light of changes to the committee structure

- c) To review the allowances for Member Champions
- d) To benchmark the existing allowances scheme including special responsibility allowances.
- e) To check that the Basic Allowance continues to make appropriate allowances provision for IT and Telecommunications
- f) Review the allowance provision for IT and telecommunications and to consider the implications for the Members' Allowances scheme if the Council introduces an arrangement to provide Members with IT equipment.
- g) To check that allowances for the Co-opted Members of the Audit & Governance Committee and Designated Independent Person (IP) are appropriately paid at the Co-opted Member rate.

The IRP

7. Rushmoor Borough Council reconvened its IRP and the following Members were appointed to carry out the independent review of allowances, namely:
- Stuart Elsdon: Owner of a local IT company and a former trustee of a number of local charities
 - Dr Declan Hall (Chair): A former academic at the Institute of Local Government, The University of Birmingham, now an independent consultant specialising in Members' Allowances and support with experience of reviews across the United Kingdom
 - Alan Thorpe: Chartered Accountant by profession, worked mainly for British Aerospace and Computer Sciences Corporation in various finance roles and currently Treasurer for Rushmoor Voluntary Services
8. Logistical and practical support to the Panel was provided by Jill Shuttleworth, Corporate Manager – Democracy and Deputy Monitoring Officer and Adele Taylor, Team Leader – Members Services, at Rushmoor Borough Council.

Process and Methodology - Evidence Reviewed by the IRP

9. The IRP met at the Council Offices, Farnborough on 10th and 11th December 2025. The meetings were in private session to enable the IRP to meet with Members and Officers and conduct deliberations in confidence. In accordance with the terms of

reference, in arriving at its recommendations, the IRP took into account a wide range of evidence, both oral and written. All Members who wished to meet with the IRP were accommodated as far as practically possible. In addition all Members were sent a short questionnaire so that no Member was denied a voice in the course of review. The IRP received one written response. The questionnaire was also used as the template for Member interviews to ensure a common set of questions were being asked.

10. The IRP also met with relevant Officers for factual briefings on the Council, governance structures and challenges facing the Council.
11. The IRP also reviewed relevant written information, such as council and committee meetings schedules, relevant reports and information on the new governance arrangements, the 2006 Statutory Guidance on Members' Allowances, etc.
12. For full details of whom the IRP met and full range of information reviewed see:
 - Appendix 1: for Members who met with the IRP
 - Appendix 2: for Officers who provided factual briefings to the IRP
 - Appendix 3: for a list of the full range of evidence considered by the IRP
 - Appendix 3: for more details on the Basic and Special Responsibility Allowances (2025/26) paid in the 11 Hampshire District Councils and the three District Councils adjacent to Rushmoor BC referred to by the IRP for benchmarking purposes, referred to as the benchmarking group.¹

Key Messages and Observations – Case for change - limited

13. A case can be made to revise most the allowances currently payable, albeit not an overwhelming case. However, by and large the IRP did not receive a great deal of feedback that the allowances scheme was in need of fundamental reform. The broad view was that the allowances scheme and levels of allowance were appropriate, with some exceptions. The IRP also received the message that even where there was a case for change now was not the time to do so due to the budgetary constraints facing the Council, and the need to find savings going forward. Indeed the IRP notes that the need to be cognisant of the broader financial context is in its terms of reference. While the IRP has not been driven by financial constraints, indeed the recommendations will marginally increase the cost of allowances by just

¹ The IRP has maintained its benchmarking group consisting of the 11 Hampshire District Councils and three District Councils adjacent to Rushmoor BC as the most relevant comparator group or peer councils. The South East Employers annual survey of allowances was not fully utilised for this review, partly due to the unreliability of some of the data, which in turn arises out of the survey being filled in by the districts with no cross referencing for veracity.

over £2k, it has reinforced the key message that now is not the time to fundamentally revise all the allowances currently payable.

Minority view expressed to the IRP – abolish or drastically reduce all SRAs

14. The IRP acknowledges a minority view expressed, namely that the financial context meant that all SRAs currently payable should be abolished or at least drastically reduced by over 50-70 per cent. The IRP has not taken this view on board. To do so would automatically lead to recommending lower SRAs which would undermine the whole purpose of a Members' Allowances scheme, which is to support the roles that all elected Members are required to undertake. It would in effect put in place a financial barrier to being a Member who holds a post of responsibility.
15. This IRP has always sought to work on the guiding principle that allowances should seek to minimise financial barriers to being and remaining a Member while not standing for or remaining on Council for financial gain. By and large the Basic Allowance and majority of SRAs payable are not for most people a barrier to public service.

Questioning the roles in place

16. The IRP did receive a number of comments that questioned the necessity of certain posts. It is beyond the remit of the IRP to comment on how the Council has set up its political governance structures. All it can do is make recommendations regarding the posts that are in place.

Prime Function of this review – to address anomalies

17. Despite the recommendations leading to a marginal increase on the total spend on Members' Allowances, the IRP feels that its recommendations are justifiable, defensible and fair and equitable which in turn was another key message emerging from the representations received.
18. As such the main task of the IRP has been not to fundamentally restructure the allowances scheme but to address anomalies arising in the current scheme.

Recommendations – recalibrating the Basic Allowance

19. To test the robustness of the 2025/26 Basic Allowance (£6,813) the IRP has recalibrated the Basic Allowance by replicating the original methodology that forms the basis of the current Basic Allowance. This methodology is laid out in the 2006 Statutory Guidance (paragraph 67) which states:

Having established what local councillors do, and the hours which are devoted to these tasks the local authorities will need to take a view on the rate at which, and the number of hours for which, councillors ought to be remunerated.

20. The Statutory Guidance (paragraphs 68-69) expands on the above statement by breaking it down to three variables for Panels to consider in arriving at a recommended Basic Allowance, namely time taken to fulfil all the roles of a backbench Member, an element of public service to be recognised in the Basic Allowance and a rate of remuneration. The IRP has recalibrated the Basic Allowance by bringing the three operative variables up to date as set out below.

Time required in carrying out duties associated with the Basic Allowance

21. The Basic Allowance is primarily a time-based payment (see 2006 Statutory Guidance paragraph 10). Obviously Members work in different ways and have varying commitments and the time spent on council duties varies. Yet, the Basic Allowance is a flat rate allowance that must be paid equally to all Members in the first instance so the time assessment is typically taken to be that which is deemed necessary at a minimum to carry out all those duties for which the Basic Allowance is paid, including preparing for and attending meetings of the Council and its committees/panels (formal and informal), addressing constituents' concerns, representing and engaging with local communities, external appointments and other associated work including telephone calls, emails and meetings with Officers.
22. Historically, based on Member feedback, for the purposes of recalibrating the Basic Allowance in line with the 2006 Statutory Guidance the IRP has adopted 12.5 hours per week, or 650 hours per year, as the expected time input from Members in return for the Basic Allowance. The LGA 2022 Councillor Census shows that on average Members of district councils who hold no positions of responsibility put in 15.2 hours per week on "Council business". The IRP has decided to maintain the expected time input at 12.5 hours per week as the Councillors Census figure of 15.2 hours per week would be bumped up by those individuals who choose to put in more time than was necessarily required. Thus, this average figure is inflated by those who have the capacity and wherewithal to put in more time than demanded.
23. Moreover, in the feedback from Members to the IRP on this issue the reported time requirement while ranging from anywhere from 6-20 hours per week, with the majority view being between 10-15 hours per week. By maintaining a time expectation of 12.5 hours per week, it represents the mid-point of the main range expressed by Members to the IRP.
24. Thus, for the purposes of recalibrating the Basic Allowance the IRP has maintained the time assessment of 12.5 hours per week as the required minimum input per week on average for a Member to fulfil all duties associated with the Basic Allowance. This equates to 650 hours per year.

The Public Service Discount (PSD)

25. The 2006 Statutory Guidance advises that not all the time expected from Members should be remunerated to recognise there is a public service element to being an elected Member. To recognise the public service principle an element should be unpaid, known as the Public Service Discount (PSD). The normal range for this public service discount is between 35% - 40%, largely on the basis this is broadly in line with the proportion of time backbenchers spend dealing with constituents and ward issues and local and community matters. The historical PSD that has been applied in Rushmoor Borough Council is 40%. The IRP received no evidence to revise this historical figure.
26. Thus, of the expected time input of 650 hours per year 40% of that time, or 260 hours per year, are deemed to be public service and not paid, leaving 390 remunerated hours per year.

The rate for remuneration

27. This variable refers to the worth of a Councillor's time. The IRP has historically based the rate for remuneration on the average earnings of the full time employed residents of the Borough as the figure that is the most robust and readily defensible. The most recent data available shows that in 2024 the median hourly earnings (excluding overtime) of Borough residents who are in full time employment is £17.85.²
28. Following the methodology as set out in the 2006 Statutory Guidance with the updated variables produces the following recalibrated Basic Allowance:
- 650 annual hours minus 40% PSD (260 hours)
 - = 390 remunerated hours multiplied by £17.85 per hour
 - = £6,962
29. Thus, by recalibrating the Basic Allowance which arrives at a figure of £6,962, while slightly above the current Basic Allowance payable (£6,813), the IRP considered the difference so marginal as not to be of significance.

Benchmarking the Basic Allowance

30. As a further test of the current validity of the current Basic Allowance (£6,813) the IRP carried out a benchmarking exercise, against all 11 Hampshire Boroughs/Districts and the three geographically adjacent Districts as well as the

² This is based on median weekly earnings of £713.80 which equates to £17.85 per hour when divided by 40 working hours in a week. See Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings (ASHE), Table 8.2a, Weekly pay – excluding overtime – for full time employee jobs (home geography), Office of National Statistics, provisional results 2024. The ONS advises that the median rather than the mean figure is a better measure of the average due handful of very high earners which skews the statistical mean.

summary of the South East Employers (SEE) annual survey of allowances, 2025. This benchmarking exercise showed the following:

• Benchmarking group Basic Allowance mean	£7,528
• Benchmarking group Basic Allowance median	£7,684
• SEE Basic Allowance mean	£6,522
• RBC current Basic Allowance	£6,813

31. The benchmarking presents a somewhat mixed picture – when compared against other Hampshire/geographically adjacent Districts the current Rushmoor Basic Allowance is somewhat on the low side. However, when looking across all Districts in the South East the opposite is true. However, the SEE mean Basic Allowance comes with a caveat – a great many of the district councils in this benchmarking group while having a comparatively lower Basic Allowance will pay a great many more SRAs, effectively raising the baseline remuneration for the majority of their Members whereas in Rushmoor the SRA is schedule is tight with only 16 standing SRAs payable for 39 Members. Elsewhere it is not unknown for over 75 per cent of Members to be paid an SRA.
32. A Basic Allowance somewhat below that paid to peers is not necessarily a compelling reason to recommend an increase to the Basic Allowance. In the past the Rushmoor Basic Allowance was significantly below that paid in peer councils – the difference is not so great now. Moreover, recalibration shows there is not a strong case to revise the Basic Allowance. Finally, because the representation received made it clear that there was no appetite to increase the Basic Allowance at this time. The compelling argument for the IRP was the general view that the current Basic Allowance did not represent a barrier to public service for most people.
33. **The IRP recommends that the Basic Allowance for 2026/27 remains at £6,813, subject to any applicable indexation going forward.**

Basic Allowance – continuing to include Information Technology & Telecommunications (ITT) costs

34. At the time of the 2022 review all Members received an Information Technology and Telecommunications (ITT) Allowance of £392 as a contribution to cover such council related costs incurred by Members such as
- Use of personal landline and mobile telephones
 - Broadband
 - IT hardware, peripherals and consumables
 - Other ICT related costs
35. This allowance was discontinued following a recommendation from the IRP in the 2022 review. The rationale behind this this recommendation was twofold:

- The Council was going to provide all Members the option of having a Council provided laptop
 - These days with broadband and telephone packages the additional cost for telecommunications on Members was marginal
36. Consequently, in the context of an increased Basic Allowance in 2022, the ITT allowance was discontinued and the Basic Allowance was deemed to cover any associated ITT costs incurred by Members. There was no representation to change this approach. Moreover, this is now the common approach across English local authorities. The only council in the benchmarking group where a similar separate allowance could be identified was Hart (£250 per year). Consequently, the IRP concluded that the Basic Allowance should continue to be deemed to cover such costs.
37. **The IRP recommends that the current Basic Allowance continues to cover Members personal Information Technology & Telecommunications costs.**

Special Responsibility Allowances – addressing anomalies and where raised

The Chairs of the Audit & Governance and Licensing & Corporate Business Committees

38. The principal anomaly for the IRP to address was to recommend an appropriate SRA for the new Audit & Governance and Licensing & Corporate Business Committees. Currently, their respective Chairs receive the following SRAs:
- | | |
|---|------------------|
| • Chair of Audit & Governance Committee | £6,374 |
| • Chair of Licensing & Corporate Business | To be determined |
39. The background to this issue was that in October 2025 the Council discontinued the Corporate Governance, Audit & Standards (CGAS) Committee and split its functions across two new Committees – Audit & Governance plus Licensing & Corporate Business Committees. The SRA (£6,374) previously paid to the Chair of CGAS was simply transferred to the Chair of the new Audit and Governance Committee, while the Chair of the Licensing & Corporate Business Committee was not paid an SRA as the Council wanted to hear from the IRP in light of an imminent review.
40. The starting point for the IRP was that the Chair of the new Audit & Governance Committee simply did not have same responsibility as the former Chair of CGAS, as the new committee has a lesser remit and set of responsibilities. Therefore the current SRA of £6,374 was inappropriate. In the representation received this conclusion was overwhelmingly supported.
41. Benchmarking shows the following average SRAs paid to Chairs of similar Committees
- | | |
|--|--------|
| • Benchmarking group Chair of Audit mean SRA | £4,425 |
|--|--------|

- | | | |
|---|--|--------|
| • | Benchmarking Group Chair of Audit median SRA | £4,282 |
| • | SEE Chair of Audit mean SRA | £3,883 |
42. Benchmarking clearly shows that the current SRA (£6,374) paid to the Rushmoor BC Chair of Audit and Governance is significantly on the high side. However, the IRP has decided not to be wholly driven by the benchmarking figures. Unlike in some councils, the Chair has a dual remit – Audit plus Governance. In some of the other councils the Audit Committee is a single function committee. For instance, Guildford has a separate Corporate Governance Committee with the Chair receiving an SRA of £4,290, in addition to their Chair of Audit also receiving the same level of SRA.
43. The IRP has arrived at the recommended SRA for the Chair of the Audit & Governance Committee by following its historical methodology utilised to arrive at recommended SRAs namely the ‘pro rata’ approach. In effect, the Leader’s role and therefore their SRA, is adjudged to be at 100 per cent – no other role is larger. Nearly all other roles attracting an SRA are assessed at a proportion of the Leader’s role/SRA. The pro rata approach is also set out in the 2006 Statutory Guidance paragraph 76 for IRPs to follow when arriving at recommended SRAs.
44. Due to the enhanced importance of the Audit function in local government in recent years and the dual nature of the Audit & Governance Committee the IRP has decided to reset the SRA for the Chair of the Audit & Governance Committee at 25 per cent of the Leader’s SRA (18,900) which equates to £4,726.³ This places the SRA for the Chair of the Audit & Governance Committee on a par with the SRA currently paid to the Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.
45. **The IRP recommends that the SRA for the Chair of the Audit & Governance Committee is reset at £4,726, to be backdated to the date the post was established on 26 November 2025 and subject to any applicable indexation going forward.**

The Chair of the Licensing and Corporate Business Committee

46. Clearly, there is a case to pay the Chair of the Licensing & Corporate Business Committee an SRA; to not remunerate such a post would be extremely unusual to say the least. It is a post of significant responsibility. Benchmarking shows the average SRA paid to equivalent posts:
- | | | |
|---|--|--------|
| • | Benchmarking group Chair of Licensing mean SRA | £3,939 |
| • | Benchmarking group Chair of Licensing median SRA | £3,792 |
| • | SEE Chair of Licensing mean SRA | £2,835 |
47. The IRP considered whether it should simply take the old SRA (£6,374) that was paid to the Chair of CGAS; subtract the recommended SRA (£4,726) for the Chair

³ The figures arrived at by the pro rata approach do not exactly reflect the exact percentages used due to rounding up.

of the Audit and Governance Committee, leaving a residue of £1,648 for the Chair of Licensing and Corporate Business. This approach has an attraction as the remit of the two new Committees is not any larger than that of the old CGAS Committee. However, the IRP has not taken this simplistic approach for two reasons:

- To do so would leave the Rushmoor BC Chair of Licensing & Corporate Committee significantly adrift from peers
- The SRA (£6,374) paid to the Chair of the old CGAS Committee was in all reality probably on the low side for a Committee that had developed over the years to take on a multitude of functions

48. The IRP has decided that the SRA for the Chair of the Licensing & Corporate Business Committee should be judged on its own merits. It has not been driven by the mean/median SRA in the Hampshire/adjacent councils benchmarking group largely on the grounds that the Licensing function in Rushmoor has additional support through the payment of an SRA of £549 to Members of Licensing who attend four or more Licensing Sub Committees in any one year, which does not occur elsewhere in the benchmarking group. It is noted that the Licensing and Corporate Business Committee in Rushmoor also has the Standards remit but over the past 12 years this element has been very limited with nearly all complaints against Members resolved informally between the Monitoring Officer and Independent Person in accordance with the intent behind the Localism Act 2011.
49. The IRP decided to set the SRA for the Chair of the Licensing & Corporate Business Committee at 15 per cent of the Leader's current SRA (£18,900) which equates to £2,835 – this is exactly in line with the mean SRA for equivalent posts in the SEE allowances survey 2025.
50. **The IRP recommends that the SRA the Chair of the Licensing and Corporate Business Committee is set at £2,835 to be paid from the date the post was taken up on 21 October 2025 and subject to any applicable indexation going forward.**

Leaders of Opposition Groups – Main and Minority Opposition Groups

51. Currently, the Leaders of all Opposition Groups are paid an SRA of £3,846, historically set at 20 per cent of the Leader's SRA, regardless of group size as long as they meet the qualifying criteria of having four Members. This is an anomaly; it is typical practice to distinguish between the Leader of Main Opposition Groups and Minority Opposition Groups. Benchmarking shows the following:
- Benchmarking group Leader Main Opposition Group SRA mean £6,278
 - Benchmarking group Leader Main Opposition Group SRA median £6,502
 - SEE Leader Main Opposition Group SRA mean £4,915

 - Benchmarking group Leader Minority Opposition Group SRA mean £2,954

- Benchmarking group Leader Minority Opposition Group SRA median £3,080
 - SEE Leader Minority Opposition Group SRA mean £1,889
52. The anomalous situation in Rushmoor whereby Opposition Group Leaders receive the same level of SRA regardless of group size arose because it was never a particular issue in the past. It was extremely rare for more than one Opposition Group to reach the qualifying criteria. Nonetheless, as benchmarking shows, it is typical practice to make such a distinction. The view usually taken by IRPs is that the Leader of the Main Opposition Group has the primary responsibility to provide challenge to the ruling administration; such an expectation is not so compelling on a Leader of a Minority Opposition Group. This distinction was also generally supported in the representation received.
53. Consequently, the IRP has decided to reset the SRA for Leaders of Opposition Groups as follows:
- Leader Main Opposition Group SRA – reset at 25 per cent of the Leader’s current SRA (£18,900) = £4,726 – putting it on a par with the current SRA for the Chair of Overview & Scrutiny and recommended SRA for the Chair of the Audit & Governance Committees
 - Leader Minority Opposition Group(s) SRA – reset at 15 per cent of the Leader’s current SRA (£18,900) = £2,835
54. **The IRP recommends that the SRA for the Leader of the Main Opposition Group is reset at £4,726 and the SRA for the Leader of a Minority Opposition Group is reset at £2,835 subject to any applicable indexation going forward.**
55. **The IRP also recommends that the qualifying criteria of having at least four Group Members is removed for the payment of the SRA for the Leader of the Main Opposition Group but remains in place for Leaders of Minority Opposition Groups.**

Where there are two or more Main Opposition Groups of equal size

56. To future proof the allowances scheme the IRP has decided to make a recommendation for a scenario where they may be two or more Main Opposition Groups of equal size. Where this situation may arise the IRP simply decided to aggregate the recommended SRAs for the Leader of the Main Opposition Group (£4,726) and the Leader of the Minority Opposition Group (£2,835), which equates to £7,561, and divide by two, which would equate to £3,781 apiece, If there were three Main Opposition Groups of the same size then the recommended SRA for a Leader of a Minority Opposition Group should be doubled and then aggregated with the recommended SRA for the Leader of the Main Opposition Group, which equates to £10,396. This figure should then be divided by three, which equates to £3,465, and so on if there was more than three Opposition Groups of the same size.

57. **The IRP recommends that where there are two Main Opposition Groups of equal size then the SRAs paid to the Leader of Main Opposition Group and Leader of the Minority Opposition Group are aggregated and then divided by two, equating to £3,781 apiece. The same principle should also apply where there are three or more Main Opposition Groups of the same size. In this scenario the qualifying criteria of having a minimum of four Group Members does not apply.**

Member Champions (x3)

58. Currently the Member Champions are paid an SRA of £1,923 which was originally set at 20 per cent of the SRA paid to the Portfolio Holders. They were appointed by the Leader to take a lead on promoting the topic for which they were appointed Champion, originally Armed Forces and Pride in Place. They were seen partly as supporting the executive function and partly as a potential developmental role for future Portfolio Holders.
59. There was some representation questioning the payment of an SRA for these roles, largely on the grounds of lack of transparency regarding their accountability. Yet, by definition as Member (Cabinet) Champions were accountable to the Leader the accountability of these roles would not be apparent to most Members.
60. It is noted that the Council has decided to maintain the Member Champion role but now they are appointed by the Council which should widen out their accountability. Moreover, the Member Champion roles are set out in the Council's Constitution and on balance in the majority of representation received it was felt that they were useful roles to undertake that add to the work of the Council and addressing its priorities. Benchmarking is of limited value in this instance as there is only very limited comparative roles that are similar. The IRP is content the role of Champion is above and beyond what is required from an ordinary Member and merits an SRA. Consequently, the IRP has decided to maintain this SRA at its current level (£1,923).
61. **The IRP recommends that the Member Champions continue to be paid an SRA of £1,923, up to a maximum of three payable at any one time, subject to any applicable indexation going forward.**

The Chair/Mayor of the Council

62. There was some representation to the IRP that the current SRA (£1,813) paid to the Chair of the Council was just too low. The main arguments behind this view were largely twofold:
- I. It was a small SRA for chairing up to seven Council meetings per year, especially now in a situation of no overall control

- II. That there was a great deal of time commitment required by being Mayor of the Council through the necessity to attend civic events and represent the Council at large
63. Indeed benchmarking on the face of it shows that the current SRA paid to the Chair/Mayor of the Council is very low comparatively:
- Benchmarking group Council Chair SRA mean £5,008
 - Benchmarking group Council Chair SRA median £5,012
 - SEE Council Chair SRA mean £3,123
64. The IRP has not been guided by the benchmarking or argument made in the representation in this case. What the benchmarking does not show are those Councils where a Council Chair/Mayor is paid an SRA only, i.e., no other support is provided to a Chair apart from their SRA. In Rushmoor, the Council Chair/Mayor has a separate civic fund of £9,000 they can draw from to support their civic role such as buying tickets to events and reimbursement of donations such as raffle tickets at local fetes, etc. Moreover, the time commitment by being the Civic Head of the Council varies dramatically between Mayors and traditionally this time commitment is seen as voluntary. Finally, the role of chairing Council meetings does not require a great deal of commitment outside the formal meetings unlike say for instance being Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.
65. Nonetheless, given the composition of the Council, the extent of public feeling round a variety of contentious issues at present and the very large variation in the SRA paid to the Council Chair compared to the benchmarked averages the IRP concluded that a small increase in this SRA was merited. Consequently, the IRP decided to reset this SRA at 15 per cent of the Leader's SRA (£18,900), which equates to £2,835.
- 66. The IRP recommends that the SRA the Chair of the Council is reset at £2,835, subject to any applicable indexation going forward.**

SRA for Group Whips

67. Once again, through the representations received, albeit not significant, the IRP was asked to consider recommending an SRA for the Group Whips. The logic behind this submission was that they have an important role to carry out in ensuring the business of the Council is carried out efficiently.
68. The IRP accepts that the Group Whips of both main groups on Council have a role in Council management, in assisting with the allocation of places on committees to ensure political balance. However, the IRP is not making a recommendation in this regard for the following reasons:
- Historically the IRP has eschewed making recommendations for posts that may be deemed primarily political in nature

- They are not paid in any of the councils included in the benchmarking group

69. **The IRP does not recommend that an SRA is paid to the Group Whips.**

Vice-Chairmen of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee (X2) and the Policy and Project Advisory Board (x2)

70. Currently, there is a somewhat unusual arrangement regarding Vice-Chairmen of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and the Policy and Project Advisory Board in that each have two Vice-Chairmen. Historically they each received an SRA set at 30 per cent of their respective Chair's SRA.
71. They were remunerated after the establishment of the single Overview and Scrutiny Committee and a Policy and Project Advisory Board that replaced a more extensive set of scrutiny and policy development arrangements so the new structure actually worked out cheaper than the structure in place prior to 2018. Nevertheless, the IRP recommended that the Vice-Chairmen of Overview and Scrutiny Committee and the Policy and Project Advisory Board were to be paid an SRA on the grounds that, unlike other Vice-Chairmen, they had discrete tasks to undertake mainly through being expected to lead on specific projects and to chair task and finish groups.
72. However, since the last review these SRAs were discontinued as the work of chairing such groups is now primarily done via Cabinet working groups. Moreover, the IRP received no representation that these SRAs should be restored.
73. **The IRP does not recommend that the two Vice-Chairs of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and two Vice-Chairs of the Policy and Project Advisory Board are paid an SRA.**

All other SRAs currently payable

74. In considering all other Rushmoor BC SRAs the IRP noted that in most cases, except the Chair of the Development Management Committee, they were all somewhat below the averages in the benchmarking group, although when compared to the mean SRAs in the SEE allowances survey they are all more or less in line. Regardless, whatever the marginal merits in increasing all other SRAs, in the representations received there was no support to increase them – the general view was that they did not represent a barrier to public service at their current levels.
75. **Therefore the IRP recommends that the following SRAs should be maintained at their current levels subject to any applicable indexation going forward:**

• Leader of the Council:	£18,900
• Deputy Leader of the Council	£10,878
• Other Cabinet Members/Portfolio Holders	£9,395
• Chair of Development Management Committee	£6,374

• Chair of Overview & Scrutiny Committee	£4,726
• Chair of Policy & Project Advisory Board	£4,726
• Members Licensing Sub Committees (if attend at least four meetings per year)	£549

Maintaining the 1-SRA only rule

76. The 2003 Regulations do not prohibit the payment of multiple SRAs to Members. However, since SRAs are not insignificant sums, Councils typically have adopted the '1-SRA only' rule. In other words, regardless of the number of remunerated posts individual Members may hold they can only be paid one SRA. By allowing Members to receive multiple SRAs it obscures the real level of remuneration received by Members therefore lacking transparency. For instance, in some schemes where multiple SRAs are payable, the Leader's SRA may look relatively low but what it may not take into account is where the Leader also is paid a Cabinet Members SRA and in some cases an additional Group Leaders SRA. It can also lead to the counter intuitive situation where a Member might be being paid more than the Leader.
77. Rushmoor Borough Council has adopted a 1-SRA only rule and no evidence was received to change this position. **The IRP recommends that the Council maintains the 1-SRA only rule within the Rushmoor Borough Council Members' Allowances Scheme so that a Member cannot receive more than one SRA.**

Co-optees' Allowances

78. Currently there is a Co-optees' Allowance of £604 per year. This is an allowance specifically permitted by the 2003 Regulations paid to non-voting independent members appointed specific committees, normally for bringing an external expertise to the table. Currently there is provision to appoint three Co-optees to the Audit & Governance Committee. The IRP received no evidence to revise the Co-optees' Allowance, it was not reported to be a barrier.
79. **The IRP recommends that the Co-optees Allowance is maintained at £604, subject to any applicable indexation going forward.**

Remuneration for the Independent Person (IP)

80. Under the relevant provisions of the Localism Act 2011 all English councils are required to appoint at least one Independent Person (IP) whose role is to act as a source of advice to the Monitoring Officer when a complaint is made against a Member and to provide further advice in any subsequent hearings and appeals. The Independent Person has to have some experience in assessing complaints and to be able to exercise objective judgement. They are not formally co-opted Members of the Council or Standards Committee and their remuneration does not fall within

the 2003 Regulations. However, in the absence of any other external validation IRPs are often asked to make a recommendation regarding the remuneration of the IP, as in this case.

81. Currently, the IP in Rushmoor BC is remunerated at the same level as the Co-optees, £604 per year, plus associated travel expenses. The IRP noted that this level of remuneration is comparatively par for the course for a District Council IP (insofar as comparative practice can be discerned). Furthermore, the IRP received no evidence that this sum required revising.
82. **The IRP recommends that the annual remuneration of the Independent Person for Rushmoor Borough Council remains at £604, subject to any applicable indexation going forward.**

The Allowances for expenses: Travel and Subsistence Allowances

83. The IRP received no evidence that the current scope, terms and conditions and maximum rates that are reimbursed under the Travel and Substance Allowances require revision. Currently, Members are unable to claim Travel and Subsistence Allowances for attending in-Borough duties, which is common practice in most district/borough councils now that the Basic Allowance is not an insignificant sum. The IRP took the opportunity to explore whether there was a case to restore in-Borough Travel and Substances but the unanimous view in the representations received was that there was no case to be made. In addition, no evidence or representation was received to alter the terms and conditions and applicable rates for which Members can claim Travel and Subsistence for attending approved duties outwith the Borough.
84. **The IRP recommends that the conditions and maximum rates under the Travel and Subsistence Allowances can be claimed are maintained, subject to any applicable indexation going forward.**

The Dependants' Carers' Allowance (DCA)

85. The Local Government Act 2000 explicitly clarifies the right of local authorities to pay a Dependant Carers' Allowance (DCA), which Members can claim to assist in meeting costs for care of their dependants while on approved Council duties. It is an allowance explicitly designed to enable a wider range of candidates to stand for and remain on the Council. The IRP notes that the vast majority of councils now pay a DCA. Although it is rarely claimed in Rushmoor, in the representations received there was overwhelming support to maintain the DCA largely on the grounds that it helps to reduce barriers to public service for traditionally under-represented groups. No evidence was received to recommend any amendments to the DCA rates that can be claimed, which is paid at two rates: a childcare element paid at the National Living Wage and other care element paid at the hourly rate charged by Hampshire Adult Services for a carer.

86. The only issue that was raised with the IRP was the concern that informal childcare could not be claimed under the DCA. The IRP was informed that if a Member did claim for the cost of informal childcare while undertaking an approved duty that they would be able to make a claim under the DCA as long as a receipt was produced – which is only good practice. Nonetheless, this is not made clear in the allowances scheme and should be rectified.
87. In addition, the IRP noted an oversight in the allowances scheme regarding the approved duties for which the DCA may be claimed. In Part 8, sub paragraph (a) it states that regarding the payment of the DCA that “The approved duties to which the allowance relates are set out in in Schedule 2 to this scheme.” However, the heading for Schedule 2 relates only to “Travel and Subsistence Allowance – Approved Duties.” It does not include the DCA. This is simply a common administrative oversight that should be rectified.
88. **The IRP recommends that the DCA is maintained at the current rates and terms and conditions subject to any applicable indexation going forward and the following amendments:**
- **That the DCA should be clarified that where a Member seeks to claim reimbursement for childcare costs that they are able to claim for informal childcare upon the production of a receipt**
 - **That Schedule 2 of the Allowances Scheme is amended to state that it also includes the approved duties for which the DCA is claimed within the Borough**

Confirmation of Indexing

89. There was general acceptance of maintaining the principle of indexing allowances and the current indices that are in place. By uprating the majority of allowances on the same basis that Officer Salaries are indexed it treats Members and Officers the same and helps ensure that Members’ allowances and expenses do not lose value over time.
90. The IRP notes that in three of the past four years the annual uplift in staff salaries as agreed by the National Joint Council (NJC) for Local Government Services has increased by a flat rate sum, for instance it was of £1,290 in 2024/25, producing a higher percentage increase at the lower pay grades or Spinal Column Points (SCPs) than the higher SCPs. The most common response by IRPs to this situation is to link indexation to the highest SCP, which is currently SCP 43. Thus, where there is a flat rate increase in Officer Salary’s linking increases in Members’ Allowances SCP 43 will result in the lowest percentage increase in Members’ Basic Allowance and SRAs, as such this level of increase is the most justified and cannot be deemed excessive. Members are not receiving a higher percentage increase in their allowances than any member of staff. Lest the same approach occurs in the future regarding the annual cost of living increase in salaries for local government staff and

for clarification purposes the IRP has decided to follow this approach.

91. **The IRP confirms and recommends that the following allowances are indexed for four years (the maximum period permitted under the 2003 Regulations before the Council has to seek further advice from the IRP) from 2025/26 to 2028/29, as follows:**

- **Basic Allowance, SRAs and Co-optees' Allowances:**
 - Updated annually in line with the annual percentage pay increase given to Rushmoor Borough Council employees (and rounded to the nearest £) as agreed for each year by the National Joint Council for Local Government Staff as agreed at SCP 43.
- **Out of Council Area Mileage Allowance:**
 - Indexed to the Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs (HMRC) Approved Mileage Allowance Payments (AMAP) mileage rates.
- **Out of Council Area Other Travel and Subsistence:**
 - Reimbursement of actual costs taking into account the most cost effective means of transport and/or accommodation available and the convenience of use with the maximum rates indexed to the same periodic percentage increase that may be applied to Officer Subsistence Allowances.
- **Dependants' Carers' Allowance (DCA):**
 - The maximum hourly rates to be indexed to the government's national living wage applicable to the age of the carer (childcare) and Hampshire County Council's hourly rate for a Home Care Assistance (care of other dependants).

Implementation

92. **The IRP recommends that the new scheme of allowances based on the recommendations contained in this report is adopted from the date of the Annual Meeting on 26th May 2026 with the following exceptions:**

- The recommended SRA for the Chair of the Audit & Governance Committee – to be implemented from the date the Chair took up the post of this Committee on 26 November 2025
- The recommended SRA for the Chair of the Licensing & Corporate Business Committee – to be implemented from the date the Chair took up the post of this Committee on 21 October 2025

Appendix One: Members who met with the IRP

Cllr G. Austen:	Portfolio Holder for Finance & Resources (Labour)
Cllr C. Card:	Leader of Liberal Democrat (Minority) Opposition Group
Cllr J. Crossley:	Leader of Rushmoor Independent Group (Minority) Opposition Group
Cllr T. Day:	Chair of Development Management Committee (Labour)
Cllr K. Dibble:	Portfolio Holder for Housing & Planning (Labour)
Cllr H. Koohestani:	Chair of Overview & Scrutiny Committee (Rushmoor Independent Group)
Cllr G. Lyon:	Leader of Conservative (Main) Opposition Group
Cllr B. O'Donovan:	Chair of Audit & Governance Committee (Labour)
Cllr S. Masterson:	Chair of Policy & Project Advisory Board (Conservative)
Cllr C. Stewart:	Mayor/Chair of the Council (Independent)
Cllr S. Trussler:	Shadow Portfolio Holder for Finance (Conservative)
Cllr J. Vosper:	Chair of Licensing & Corporate Business Committee (Conservative)
Cllr G. Williams:	Leader of Council, Portfolio Holder for Policy, Strategy & Performance (Labour)

Written Submissions - Elected Members

The IRP received one written submission

Appendix Two: Officers who provided factual briefings to the IRP

Ian Harrison: Interim Managing Director

Jill Shuttleworth: Corporate Manager – Democracy & Deputy Monitoring Officer

Adele Taylor: Team Leader – Members Services

Appendix Three: Information Pack Index

The IRP received an Information Pack containing the following information and data that was referred to in its considerations and deliberations:

1. IRP Terms of Reference
2. Rushmoor Borough Council Members' Allowances Scheme 2025/26
3. Rushmoor Borough Council, statutory publication of allowances and expenses paid to Members, including sub-totals for each category 2024/25
4. "A Review of Members' Allowances for Rushmoor Borough Council" the Seventh Report by the Independent Remuneration Panel, January 2022
5. Rushmoor Borough Council, relevant sections of Part 3 of Constitution showing roles and responsibilities, functions and terms of reference of main committees, namely Section 6
6. Rushmoor Borough Council, Councillor Role Descriptions – Special Responsibility Allowance, Council Constitution Part 3 – Section 10
7. Rushmoor In Numbers paper, August 2025
8. Flow diagram of Rushmoor Borough Council Committee structure and decision making process
9. Calendar of Meetings 2025/26 including
 - Meetings that were cancelled in 2025
 - Licensing Sub-Committee meetings for the last 4 years including who attended
10. Membership of Cabinet, Committees and Panels 2025/26 including membership and who chairs them, October 2025
11. December 2025 IRP Briefing Paper summarising main governance changes and issues for the IRP to consider
12. Hard copies of written submissions by Members (x1)
13. South East Employers (SEE), Annual Survey of Members Allowances 2025 final version:
 - a. Basic Allowances
 - b. SRAs
 - c. Other Allowances
 - d. Extra Information

14. Power point presentation by Panel Chair (Dr Declan Hall), “Reviewing Members’ Allowances: Patterns, Approaches and Issues to Consider”
15. National Census of Local Authority Councillors 2022 (LGA), breakdown of weekly hours by councillors by number of positions held and type of council, in email from S. Richards, LGA 17th May 2023
16. National Employers for Local Government Services: Local Government Pay Agreement 2025/26, showing pay award of 3.2% (on all NJC Pay points 2 and above)
17. New Council Constitutions; Guidance on Regulation for Local Authority Allowances, 5 May 2006, Department of Communities and Local Government (extract)
18. The Local Authorities (Members’ Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003 (SI 1021)
19. Hard copies of allowances schemes from 13 other district councils included in the benchmarking group - Other Hampshire and adjacent District Councils, 2025/26, including summary of benchmarking data
20. Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings (ASHE), Table 8.2a, Weekly pay – excluding overtime – for full time employee jobs (home geography), Office of National Statistics, provisional results 2024, showing median weekly salary of £713.80 or £17.85 per hour (on a 40 hour week)
21. Rushmoor Borough Council Constitution, Part 3 – Section 2 – Executive functions, including Member Champions Role Profiles
22. Rushmoor Borough Council, Report to Council, Constitution and Committee Review Update, Council meeting 10th July 2025

Appendix Four: Rushmoor BC Benchmarking 2025/26

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BM1 Rushmoor - Other Hants/adjacent DCs: BA + Exec + Scrutiny SRAs (2025/26)										
Comparator Council	Basic Allowance	Leader	Leader Total Package	Deputy Leader	Exec Mbers	Deputy Execs or Lead Mbrs	Chair Main O&S	V/Chr Main O&S	Chairs or Lead Scrutiny	Vice Chairs Scrutiny
Basingstoke & Deane	8,511	29,793	38,304	19,365	14,892		7,449	747	7,449	747
East Hants	7,480	22,440	29,920	12,823	9,617	2,671	6,689			
Eastleigh	8,681	25,710	34,391	11,888	10,189		3,395	849		
Fareham (23/24)	8,003	24,008	32,011	13,338	13,338				8,336	1,000
Gosport	8,514	18,206	26,720	NA	committee system					
Guildford	8,579	17,158	25,737	8,579	6,434				4,290	
Hart	5,357	18,753	24,110	9,376	8,439		3,750			
Havant	6,289	20,178	26,467	11,602	9,757	2,824	6,417			
New Forest	7,888	24,453	32,341	14,672	12,227				6,113	
Surrey Heath	5,834	15,168	21,002	7,584	6,067		4,550		3,792	
Test Valley	9,999	22,498	32,497	14,061	12,374		10,124	2,025		
Waverley	6,020	14,735	20,755	11,885	8,420		4,210	2,105		
Winchester	7,426	21,686	29,112	11,928	9,760		9,760		2,168	
Rushmoor	6,813	18,900	25,713	10,878	9,395	1,923	4,726			
Mean	7,528	20,978	28,506	12,152	10,070	2,473	6,107	1,432	5,358	
Median	7,684	20,932	27,916	11,888	9,757	2,671	5,572	1,437	5,202	
Highest	9,999	29,793	38,304	19,365	14,892	2,824	10,124	2,105	8,336	
Lowest	5,357	14,735	20,755	7,584	6,067	1,923	3,395	747	2,168	
Mean Ratios	mean Leaders SRA 2.8 X mean BA	100%		58%	48%	25%	29%		26%	
Rushmoor ratios	2.8	100%		58%	50%	20%	25%			

BM2 Rushmoor - Other Hants/adjacent DCs: Planning & Licensing/Regulatory SRAs (2025/26)									
Comparator Council	Chair Planning	Vice Chair Planning	Chair Licensing &/or Regulatory	Licensing V/Chair	Chair Audit	V/Chair Audit	Chair HR or Employment	V/Chair HR or Employment	Chair Standards
Basingstoke & Deane	8,937	897	7,449	747	7,449	747	7,449	747	7,449
East Hants	6,689	2,671	2,671		4,274		2,671		2,671
Eastleigh	4,247	1,060	2,126		3,395	849			
Fareham (23/24)	12,004	1,000	8,336	1,000	5,002	1,000			
Gosport	6,023	3,012	6,023	3,012	3,012	1,506			3,012
Guildford	6,434	2,145	2,145		4,290				4,290
Hart	5,627	1,810	1,876		2,814		1,876		1,826
Havant	5,802		1,294		6,417		4,219		
New Forest	8,559		2,445		2,445		2,445		
Surrey Heath	5,309	2,123	3,792		4,550		3,792		
Test Valley	7,874	1,575	4,500	900	3,375	675	3,375	675	
Waverley	4,210	2,105	4,210	2,105	4,210	2,105			4,210
Winchester	9,760	3,254	4,337		4,337				
Rushmoor	6,374		TBC		6,374				
Mean	6,989	1,968	3,939	1,553	4,425	1,147	3,690		3,910
Median	6,404	2,105	3,792	1,000	4,282	925	3,375		3,611
Highest	12,004	3,254	8,336	3,012	7,449	2,105	7,449		7,449
Lowest	4,210	897	1,294	747	2,445	675	1,876		1,826
Mean Ratios	33%	28%	19%	39%	21%	26%	18%		19%
Rushmoor Ratios	34%		NA		34%				

BM3 Rushmoor - Other Hants + adjacent DCs: Group & Misc SRAs (2025/26)						
Comparator Council	Main Opposition Group Leader	Minor Opposition Group Leader	Chairs Areas or Local Forums	Chair Council	Council V/Chair	Other or Comment
Basingstoke & Deane	8,937	4,473		7,449	1,866	Vice Chair Standards £747
E. Hants	£481 p Mbr					Chair Planning Policy £4,305, BA inc IT allowance
Eastleigh	6,793		4,247			Area Vice Chairs £1,060, ICT provided direct
Fareham (23/24)	8,003	4,002		5,335	1,000	Opposition Spokespersons £333
Gosport	6,502	1,300				Vice Chair Standards £1,506
Guildford	4,290	2,145		6,434	2,145	Chair Corporate Governance £4,290, Licensing Sub Chairs £71 p/meeting, >1 SRA payable
Hart	2,814	£18 p/group Mbr		4,688		IT Allowance £250 p/yr
Havant	4,107	3,080				
New Forest	9,170	1,834		9,781	2,445	Main Opposition Group Deputy Leader £1,834
Surrey Heath	5,309	2,655		6,067	1,820	
Test Valley	7,874			4,500	900	2 Area Planning Committees ea Chair £7,874 & V/Chair £1,575
Waverley	4,210			756		Vice Chair Standards £12,105, > 1 SRA payable
Winchester	9,760	3,254	2,158	3,254		Group Managers £2,168, Chairs Policy Committees £4,337
Rushmoor	3,846	3,846		1,813		If Chair >4 Licensing Panels £549, If Other Opposition Group has ≥4 Members Leader gets SRA £3,846, Chair Project Advisory Board £4,726
Mean	6,278	2,954		5,008	1,696	
Median	6,502	3,080		5,012	1,843	
Highest	9,760	4,473		9,781	2,445	
Lowest	2,814	1,300		756	900	
Mean Ratios	30%	14%		24%	34%	
Rushmoor Ratios	20%	20%		10%		

COUNCIL MEETING – 19TH MARCH 2026**AGENDA ITEM NO.****OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – ANNUAL REPORT 2025/26****1. INTRODUCTION**

1.1 In accordance with the Council's procedures for monitoring the overview and scrutiny process, this report reviews the work that has been undertaken by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee in 2025/26. The Committee's focus has primarily been to keep a watching brief on the Council's activities, along with service performance and providing comments and ideas. The aim has been to shape the Council's future policy and services. The Report covers the issues discussed, the processes followed, and the outcomes achieved during the year.

2. RESPONSIBILITIES AND WORK PLAN

2.1 The Committee was established as part of the review of the decision making structure which took effect from May 2018. The Committee's breadth of activity includes all Council services and services provided by other organisations which impact on the Borough and its inhabitants.

2.2 Progress Meetings, (consisting of Cllrs. Leola Card, Thomas Day, G.B. Lyon, Nadia Martin, Bill O'Donovan, M.J. Tennant and, myself), had initially been held prior to meetings of the Committee to discuss and consider processes and priorities, monitor the work plan and undertake agenda planning. From December 2025, a Programme Management Group was developed, replacing the Progress Groups, which brings together the Chairs of the four committees, (OSC, PPAB, AGC, LCB) accompanied by other cross-party Councillors and Lead Officers. This Group undertakes an overarching role in monitoring the agenda for each committee meeting, ensuring no duplication of work, and sharing ideas for items for future meetings.

3. COMMITTEE ISSUES

3.1 Over the year, the Committee has endeavoured to ensure that it has kept the Council's activities under review. However, some external scrutiny has been undertaken, in particular, around the SERCO contract and Policing.

3.2 The main areas of focus in 2025/26, detailed by priority of the Council's Delivery Plan, were:

SKILLS ECONOMY AND REGENERATION

- **Union Yard Disposals** – In February 2026, the Committee considered a decision taken by the Cabinet to dispose of units at Union Yard, Aldershot to Vivid Housing. The Committee discussed, in detail, the financial implications for selling to Vivid Housing compared to other options detailed within the exempt papers. No recommendations were made to the Cabinet as a result of this scrutiny.

HOMES FOR ALL: QUALITY LIVING, AFFORDABLE HOUSING

- **Registered Providers / Housing Oversight Group** – In June 2025, the Group received the Annual Report 2024/25 of the Registered Providers Task and Finish Group. At the same meeting appointments were made to the Group (consisting of Cllrs Gaynor Austin, Bill O'Donovan, S.J. Masterson, M.D. Smith and myself). The Group met in September 2025, to discuss and plan the review of Registered Providers for 2025/26, and at the meeting a number of proposed changes to the terms of reference and the approach to the reviews were made. Further discussion with the Portfolio Holder and Chair took place in October and at the December 2025 meeting the Committee reviewed and agreed the proposed changes including a name change, with the group becoming the Housing Oversight Group. Membership of the Group was also adjusted (consisting of Cllrs Leola Card, Steve Harden, Rhian Jones, Steve Masterson, Bill O'Donovan, Ivan Whitmee and myself). The Groups primary purpose is to provide oversight on how the Council is meeting the objectives of the housing priority - Homes for All.
- **Housing and Homelessness Prevention Strategy** – In July 2025, the Committee Reviewed the Housing and Homelessness Prevention Strategy, following a request in June 2024 to carry out a review of the priorities within the strategy, and to track progress since 2024/25. Progress to date was noted, and the Committee would continue to keep a watching briefing on its progress via the Housing Oversight Group.

COMMUNITY AND WELLBEING: ACTIVE LIVES, HEALTHIER AND STRONGER COMMUNITIES

- **Farnborough Leisure Centre Operator and Build Contract** – In February 2026, the Committee convened two separate meetings to consider the operator and build contracts for the proposed new Farnborough Leisure Centre. Each item was pre-decision scrutiny prior to the Cabinet making their final decision. In considering the operator contract the Committee raised a number of matters but no recommendations were recorded for the Cabinet to consider. However, as a result of the scrutiny on the build contract, a paper was circulated to the Cabinet prior to its meeting in March 2025, raising a number of points for consideration prior to a final decision being taken.

PRIDE IN PLACE: CLEAN, SAFE AND VIBRANT NEIGHBOURHOODS

- **Police and Community Safety** – In September 2025, the Committee met with the Police Chief Inspector, Gillian Cox, and representatives of the Council's Community Safety team, to hear about current issues, challenges and positive news stories within the sector. The Committee discussed the matter at length and raised a number of questions at the meeting. The Committee was again represented on the Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committee for Community Safety (JOSC) along with elected Members from both Hart and Basingstoke. The JOSC worked well and had set priorities for the year which had been noted by the Committee. As in previous years, a date would be sought to invite the new Police Chief Inspector, Alex Reading, and the Council's Community Safety Team to a future meeting of the Committee in the new Municipal Year.
- **SERCO** – In December 2025, the Committee reviewed the Annual Report from SERCO on their activities during the year. The report covered SERCO's purpose, vision, mission and values, alongside details of performance in the key areas of refuse and recycling and management of street cleansing and grounds maintenance. The Committee also received a presentation from internal Operations Officers which highlighted the background to the procurement process, how the contract was managed, service changes, new legislation timetables and the introduction of 'Simpler Recycling'. Full scrutiny was undertaken and a watching brief would be kept on the progress of any extension of the contract with SERCO, as appropriate.
- **Walk this Waste Pilot** – also in December 2025, the Committee reviewed the outcomes of the Walk this Waste Pilot. In discussing the presentation, Members made a number of suggestions which were shared with the Cabinet to consider. However, the proposed Portfolio Holder's Report to Cabinet – recommending a boroughwide roll out of Walk This Waste – did not progress, and instead it is understood that Cabinet are reviewing alternative initiatives that could contribute to reducing fly-tipping.

THE FUTURE AND FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY

- **Local Government Reorganisation** – In September 2025, the Committee reviewed the proposals for Local Government Reorganisation (LGR). Following detailed consideration of the Report, the Committee raised a number of representations to the Cabinet for consideration prior to the full Council agreeing the proposals at its meeting later in September 2025.
- **Community Engagement** – At its October 2025 meeting, the Committee considered how the Council consulted with and understood the views of our residents. Several comments were made, in particular around consultations and surveys and how we can use best practice to inform future engagement with our residents. A watching brief will be kept on the matter.

3.3 A further meeting of the Committee is due to take place on 26th March 2026 for which items are being finalised.

- 3.4 When appropriate, Cabinet Members have been in attendance at meetings to support items and answer the Committee's questions. Cabinet Members who have attended include, Cllr Gareth Williams (Leader) Cllr Sophie Porter (Deputy Leader and Healthy Communities and Active Lives Portfolio Holder), Cllr Christine Guinness (Pride in Place and Neighbourhood Services Portfolio Holder) and Cllr Keith Dibble (Housing and Planning Portfolio Holder).

4. CONCLUSIONS

- 4.1 The Committee has worked well during the year and carried out a range of activities, which have a significant impact on the Borough and the Council. The work of the Committee will be reviewed at the start of the 2026/27 Municipal Year to ensure that the Work Plan is realistic, and the focus is on issues where it can make a difference.
- 4.2 Finally, I would like to highlight the effective and thorough scrutiny the Committee has achieved over the course of the year. Every Member has played an active role in our meetings, and their constructive contributions have been integral to our success. I am sincerely grateful for their commitment and engagement. I would also like to extend my thanks to the officers for the professional support they have provided to both the Committee and to me as Chairman.

5. RECOMMENDATION

- 5.1 The Council is asked to note and endorse the Committee's work.

CLLR. HALLEH KOOHESTANI
CHAIRMAN - OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

CABINET

Report of the meeting held on Monday, 15th December, 2025 at the Council Offices, Farnborough at 6.30 pm.

Voting Members

Cllr Gareth Williams, Leader of the Council

Cllr Gaynor Austin, Finance & Resources 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

An apology for absence was submitted on behalf of Cllr Sophie Porter.

The Cabinet considered the following matters at the above-mentioned meeting. The executive decisions made at this meeting are classified as urgent and exempt from call-in and, therefore, shall become effective immediately.

45. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST –**

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

46. **MINUTES –**

The Minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet held on 25th November, 2025 were confirmed and signed by the Chairman.

47. **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
48	3	Information relating to financial or business affairs

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

48. **UNION YARD, ALDERSHOT – APPROACH TO DISPOSAL OF RESIDENTIAL APARTMENTS SEACOLE PLACE AND BURTON HOUSE (BLOCKS C & D) –**
(Cllr Gareth Williams, Leader of the Council)

The Cabinet considered Exempt Report No. REG2542, which set out options for the disposal of 82 residential units contained within the Union Yard scheme in Aldershot town centre. The Leader of the Council welcomed Cllr M.J. Tennant who had requested to address the Cabinet on this issue.

Members were reminded that, at its meeting held across 8th and 14th April, 2025, the Cabinet had resolved to dispose of the units to Prime Developments Limited. Work had commenced to effect that decision when, on 11th November, 2025, Prime had notified the Council that the company were not in a position to proceed with the acquisition. It was for this reason that the matter was back in front of Members. It was considered that the remaining alternative options had not changed materially since they had previously been evaluated. The Cabinet had previously considered and discussed the risks of each option and had decided that disposal to Rushmoor Housing Limited (RHL) had carried a significant short-term risk to the Council's revenue account, meaning that this option had been the least favourable in terms of short-term financial risk. The Cabinet had agreed, therefore, to discount this option and it was not felt that this option had become any more viable over the following time period. The options relating to the direct sale or rent of the units to the open market had been discounted as it had been considered that this would carry a high risk in terms of potential delays in receiving the capital receipts when compared to the other options. There had been a further risk in respect of the future sales of the units not achieving the same value as agents had forecasted. For these reasons, those options had also been discounted. Although it was acknowledged that, since that time, optimism within the sales and rental market had increased, it was not felt that this was sufficiently substantive to make these options viable in terms of risk at this time. The remaining option was for the disposal of the units to a named registered housing provider. When considered previously, this option had been narrowly ruled out in favour of the Prime Developments key worker option. It was considered that this now offered the most viable option for the disposal of the units.

The Cabinet heard from Cllr Tennant, who expressed concern that the report did not contain new financial information on the impact of this matter on the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS). He suggested that the adversity of the Council's financial position had been exaggerated over the previous two financial years and that each year had ended up in surplus. It was also felt that there was a lack of evidence as to the urgency of the disposal to help to deliver financial sustainability to the Council. Cllr Tennant explained that it was the belief of his Group that there was sufficient time to explore the alternative options more fully, with fresh financial modelling being carried out. In particular, it was suggested that the rental market was more buoyant now and that the Council retaining the units and renting out might provide the best return. Cllr Tennant urged the Council to consider carefully before making a decision that he felt was being unnecessarily rushed.

The Leader thanked Cllr Tennant for his contribution to the meeting and the Cabinet proceeded to discuss the issues.

In discussing the disposal to the named registered provider, Cabinet Members confirmed that constructive meetings had taken place in recent weeks and there was now more confidence that the placemaking aspects of the site management arrangements would be suitably addressed than there was when this option was first considered. A major advantage over this option was that all 82 units would be used to reduce the Council's social housing waiting list, which was one of the Council's most important priorities.

In response to some queries, the Council's Corporate Manager – Legal Services and Interim Monitoring Officer provided the following clarifications:

- The opinion was held that the offer under consideration would satisfy the Best Value requirement.
- The process to obtain the agreement of the Secretary of State was expected to take around six weeks but the Council could carry out work to progress matters during this period.
- It was thought that other parties would not have the opportunity to make representations to the Secretary of State during this process.
- In relation to the Council Constitution's Overview and Scrutiny Committee (OSC) Rules at paragraph 11, this matter was considered to be both a key decision and urgent and, as such, would not be subject to call-in. It was confirmed that the requirements of the Constitution had been fulfilled and that the permission of the Chair of OSC and the Mayor had been obtained, with notice of the decision to be made advertised appropriately. The urgency related to the need of the registered provider to get the matter to its January Board meeting to facilitate completion of the acquisition in the 2025/26 financial year. To achieve this, the registered provider would need the agreement of Heads of Terms by 17th December, 2025.
- Due to the matter not being subject to call-in, a special meeting of the Council's Audit and Governance Committee had been convened for 11th December, 2025 to allow matters in relation to the disposal to be scrutinised in a cross-party setting. The Corporate Manager – Legal Services read out a statement from the Committee Chair that expressed broad approval for the process that had been carried out in relation to the disposal of the units.

Lambert Smith Hampton (LSH) had been commissioned to prepare a short report as to the current state of the market. It was confirmed, however, that more detailed analysis would carry costs that were considered to be prohibitive, especially as it was not considered that this exercise would reveal anything new or of significance in deciding this matter.

LSH had originally been commissioned with the sale of Blocks C&D. The advice given by LSH based upon consultation with its investment business was that the asset would not be of interest to the open market, such as wealth funds, due to being a "disparate" asset and advised of an approach to locally based property companies resulting in a list of bids that were evaluated in the April Cabinet Report. LSH were

approached again to advise on the current marketing conditions. It transpired, as set out in the current Cabinet Report, that there might be, potentially, more interest from the market. I was confirmed, however, that values would not be any different and were described by LSH as “stagnant”, though there was a possible upturn in rental values over the following year.

A red book valuation was obtained, based upon market rent expectation, discounted by 15% for the sale as a block, producing a yield of around 5.5%. The red book valuation rental increase was not materially different from the previous valuation and on a par with the LSH net operating income, after allowing for around 20-25% operating costs at a similar yield.

LSH had advised a market value of between £14m and £15.5m based upon a mix of market rent and affordable rent (i.e.80% of market rent). The red book valuation indicated £16.4m based upon 100% market rent. Effectively the valuations based upon end market tenure were consistent and reasonable.

LSH had advised that pursuing a new buyer on the open market would not see a materially different sale value and this had been confirmed by the red book valuation. Every £1m increase in capital value (i.e. capital receipt) would deliver circa 4.8% saving on the revenue account, namely an annual saving of £48k. By comparison, the annual cost of the units was £1.26million of unrecoverable unbudgeted revenue, at a time when the Council already had a deficit on its revenue account and was relying upon its reserves to fund that deficit and manage risk events and key priorities.

The original offer from RHL was documented in the Cabinet papers and was summarised at the meeting. A sale to RHL would require the Council to loan RHL £16.4m for an indeterminate number of years. This loan would be impaired every year, based upon the overall recoverability determined by the underlying value of RHL as an entity (namely whilst RHL was in negative equity and/or not generating sufficient cash to be self-supporting). This impairment would be set against the future loan balance (a deferred capital receipt). In addition, the Council would at the same time make a financial commitment to support RHL with working capital for 27 years until it generated sufficient operating profit to repay the borrowing interest. This would amount to a total of £10m, also to be impaired every year by around the amount of interest that was accrued by not being paid in cash and set off in the Council’s revenue account, making it a real cost to the Council.

Members were informed that the Council had to take account of its current financial position. The Council’s agreed priority was to preserve its revenue reserves, manage financial risks and preserve services for residents by ensuring it maintained sufficient reserves to manage financial shocks. Property speculation was not one of these priorities.

In summary, the Leader expressed regret that more value could not be extracted from the disposal of the units at this time but reasserted that the offer from the registered provider represented the best value to the Council, a view that was corroborated by the Council’s Corporate Manager – Legal Services and Interim Monitoring Officer and the Executive Head of Finance and S151 Officer. The

Members of the Cabinet expressed support for the suggested approach to dispose of the 82 units to the registered provider.

The Cabinet RESOLVED that

- (i) having revisited the options appraisal for the disposal of Blocks C and D in light of the withdrawal by Prime Developments and considering the Council's current financial position and the current market position, the acceptance of the renewed offer by the registered provider, as set out in Exempt Report No. REG2542, be approved;
- (ii) the Executive Head of Property and Growth, in consultation with the Leader of the Council, the Economy, Skills and Regeneration Portfolio Holder, the Executive Head of Finance and the Corporate Manager – Legal Services, be authorised to enable the disposal of the 82 residential apartments in line with the approach set out in the Exempt Report and subject to agreement being received from the Secretary of State; and
- (iii) the disposal would also be subject to revised Heads of Terms, ensuring that no unreasonable restrictions would be placed on the use of the commercial units involved.

The Meeting closed at 7.47 pm.

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CABINET

Report of the meeting held on Tuesday, 3rd March, 2026 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 Gaynor Austin, Finance & Resources 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

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 March, 2026**.

68. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST –**

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

69. **MINUTES –**

The Minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet held on 10th February, 2026 were confirmed and signed by the Chair.

70. **LOCAL PLAN TIMETABLE AND NOTICE TO COMMENCE PLAN-MAKING –** (Cllr Keith Dibble, Housing & Planning Portfolio Holder)

The Cabinet considered Report No. PG2602, which set out matters relating to the production of a new local plan for Rushmoor.

Members were informed that the Local Development Scheme, containing the local plan timetable, was now out of date. The purpose of this item was, therefore, to present an updated timetable for the production of Rushmoor's Local Plan, along with seeking approval of a notice to commence plan-making, which was required to be published four months before the Council intended to commence the 30-month plan preparation period for the new local plan.

In discussing the report, Members expressed support for the proposed approach, which would enable the Council to progress Rushmoor's local plan as far as possible prior to the vesting of the new unitary authority. It was confirmed that the adoption of the final local plan would need to be undertaken by the unitary council covering the Rushmoor area.

The Cabinet RESOLVED that

- (i) the publication of the Local Plan Timetable be approved, with the Executive Head of Property and Growth, in consultation with the Housing & Planning Portfolio Holder, being authorised to amend or add any information to the timetable to ensure compliance with guidance and/or regulations; and
- (ii) the publication, in May 2026, of the Notice to Commence Plan-Making be approved, with the Executive Head of Property and Growth, in consultation with the Housing & Planning Portfolio Holder, being authorised to make any changes to the wording to ensure compliance with guidance and/or regulations.

71. NEW ENGAGEMENT OF AGENCY WORKERS AND CONSULTANTS POLICY AND PROCEDURE –

(Cllr Gaynor Austin, Finance & Resources Portfolio Holder)

The Cabinet considered Report No. PEO2603, which set out details of a new Engagement of Agency Workers and Consultants Policy and Procedure for adoption.

It was explained that the Council's use of agency workers and external consultants played an important role in maintaining service delivery, especially where specialist expertise was required. Members were informed that the policy would help to ensure that these engagements were consistent, transparent and compliant with organisational and legislative requirements.

The Cabinet RESOLVED that the proposed Engagement of Agency Workers and Consultants Policy and Procedure, as set out in Appendix 1 of Report No. PEO2603, be approved.

72. FARNBOROUGH LEISURE CENTRE - CONSTRUCTION CONTRACT AWARD –
(Cllr Sophie Porter, Deputy Leader and Healthy Communities & Active Lives Portfolio Holder)

The Cabinet considered Report No. REG2601, along with appendices, some of which were exempt, which provided an update on the Farnborough Leisure Centre Project and sought approval to enter into a Development Management Agreement for RIBA Stage 5 (construction and handover) onwards for the delivery of a new leisure centre.

The report set out in detail the background to the project and a summary of the decisions that had been taken to date. Members were informed that the total cost to deliver the new leisure centre, playground and surface car park was £27.5 million. £18.5 million of this would be provided by the successful Levelling Up (now known as the Local Regeneration Fund) bid. This would mean the Council would need to borrow an additional £8.8 million to deliver the project. This borrowing would have a revenue implication of interest costs and Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) charges. The revenue implications of additional borrowing and other revenue costs of operating the site detailed in the report were intended to be funded from the leisure centre operator income, following the successful award of the operator

contract, as approved by the Cabinet on 10th February, 2026. The financial modelling and implications were set out in Section 5 of the report and in the Exempt Appendix A.

The Cabinet was advised that this matter had been considered by the Council's Overview and Scrutiny Committee at its meeting on 24th February, 2026. The Committee had asked for four matters to be reported to the Cabinet, relating to the early circulation of papers, the environmental impacts of the development, protections for the Council in the event of contractor insolvency and the reinvestment of surpluses. Members thanked the Committee for its input and these factors were considered as part of the discussion of the item.

Information relating to the contract, risks and mitigations were set out in Section 7 of the report and the key milestones for the project were contained in Section 8, with a detailed current programme at Appendix E. Section 10 set out more information regarding the risks, along with the legal, financial, resource and equalities impact implications.

In discussing the report, Members expressed strong support for the proposal, which was considered to offer an excellent facility that was shown to be affordable and funded, despite the considerable financial challenges faced by the Council at this current time.

The Cabinet

- (i) **RESOLVED** that
 - (a) the progress with the design of the leisure centre and changes made as a result of feedback during the leisure centre operator procurement process, as set out in Report No.REG2601, be noted;
 - (b) the progress of the planning submission for the Farnborough Leisure Centre, as set out in the Report, be noted;
 - (c) subject to planning permission being granted and review of the contractor's proposals, the Executive Director, in consultation with the Executive Head of Finance, the Interim Monitoring Officer and Corporate Manager – Legal Services and the Healthy Communities & Active Lives Portfolio Holder, be authorised to enter into a Development Management Agreement with Alliance Leisure Services Limited, as set out in Section 6.3 of the Report, for the delivery of a new leisure centre and surface car park in Farnborough town centre;
 - (d) the continuation of the utilisation of the revenue capacity funding received from MHCLG against revenue costs associated with the project be approved;
 - (e) the Executive Head of Finance be authorised to update the Capital Strategy and Treasury Management Strategy, in line with the approval of capital budget and funding set out above, be approved;

- (f) the use of the Council's powers to appropriate the Queensmead Car Park, Farnborough and the site of the previous Pinehurst Car Park, as set out in the plan at Appendix K of the Report, for planning purposes under Section 122 of the Local Government Act 1972 be approved;
 - (g) the use of Section 203 of the Housing and Planning Act 2016 to remove any legal constraints to development be approved, with the Interim Monitoring Officer and Corporate Manager – Legal Services and Section 151 Officer, in consultation with the Executive Head of Property and Growth, being authorised to agree any compensation payable to beneficiaries of rights under Section 204 of the Housing and Planning Act 2016, following due diligence of their claim;
 - (h) the decision of the Interim Monitoring Officer and Corporate Manager – Legal Services as to protective measures be noted, with the Interim Monitoring Officer and Corporate Manager – Legal Services, in consultation with the Executive Head of Finance, being authorised to negotiate the terms of the protective measures to not exceed £100,000 (Cabinet noted the £100,00 did not appear in the projected costs set out in the Report as the outcome of the negotiations was not yet known); and
- (ii) **RECOMMENDED TO THE COUNCIL** that the Executive Head of Finance and Section 151 Officer be authorised to put in place a Capital Budget up to £27.5 million for the project to be funded by external funding (Levelling Up Programme/Local Regeneration Fund), S106 funds and borrowing as set out in Section 4.2 of Report No. REG2601.

73. 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 items to avoid the disclosure of exempt information within the paragraph of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act, 1972 indicated against the items:

Minute Nos.	Schedule 12A Para. No.	Category
74 & 75	3	Information relating to financial or business affairs

**THE FOLLOWING ITEMS WERE CONSIDERED
IN THE ABSENCE OF THE PUBLIC**

74. DISPOSAL OF NO. 168 HIGH STREET, GUILDFORD –
(Cllr Julie Hall, Economy, Skills & Regeneration Portfolio Holder)

The Cabinet considered Exempt Report No. PG2603, which sought approval to dispose of the freehold interest in No. 168 High Street, Guildford, subject to the finalisation of terms.

Members were informed that this disposal would contribute to the delivery of the Council's Financial Recovery Plan and was, therefore, a key priority. It was confirmed that the likely disposal value either met or exceeded that set out in the Financial Recovery Plan and had been tested through a competitive market exercise. The Exempt Report set out the process that had been carried out so far and Members were informed that a preferred purchaser had been selected.

The Cabinet expressed strong support for the proposed approach as making a significant contribution towards improving the Council's financial position.

The Cabinet RESOLVED that

- (i) the agreement, in principle and subject to final legal due diligence, to the disposal of the freehold interest in No. 168 High Street, Guildford, as set out in Exempt Report No. PG2603, be approved; and
- (ii) the Executive Head of Property and Growth, in consultation with the Executive Head of Finance, the Interim Monitoring Officer and Corporate Manager – Legal Services and the Economy, Skills & Regeneration Portfolio Holder, be authorised to confirm the final terms of the disposal.

75. NOS. 16-18 THE MEADS, FARNBOROUGH - BUDGET APPROVALS –
(Cllr Julie Hall, Economy, Skills & Regeneration Portfolio Holder)

The Cabinet considered Exempt Report No. REG2504, which set out a proposal to consider increasing the capital budget allocation to enable the proposed building works at Nos. 16-18 The Meads, Farnborough to be successfully delivered.

Members were informed that this approach was in accordance with the recommendations outlined in Exempt Report No. REG2504, which the Cabinet had approved at its meeting on 16th September, 2025. It was also explained that the current exempt report detailed the Council's proposed approach to financial risk mitigation in respect of the preferred contractors for the works.

The Cabinet was supportive of the proposed approach to deliver this important project as part of the Council's ongoing priority to regenerate Farnborough town centre.

The Cabinet RESOLVED that

- i) an increase to the project's capital budget of up to the sum set out in Exempt Report No. REG2602 to enable the works to be successfully delivered be approved, to be funded from capital receipts allocated to commercial lettings in the 2025/26 Capital Programme; and
- ii) the risk mitigation strategy, as set out in Section 4 of the Exempt Report, be noted.

The Meeting closed at 7.57 pm.

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OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Report of the meeting held on Tuesday, 24th February, 2026 at the Council Offices, Farnborough at 7.00 pm.

Voting Members

Cllr M.J. Tennant (Vice-Chair) (In the Chair)
Cllr Thomas Day (Vice-Chair)

Cllr Leola Card
Cllr C.P. Grattan
Cllr Steve Harden
Cllr G.B. Lyon
Cllr Bill O'Donovan
Cllr M.J. Roberts
Cllr S. Trussler

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Cllr Halleh Koohestani and Cllr Nadia Martin

31. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the Meeting held on 5th February, 2026 were agreed as a correct record.

32. WORK PLAN

The Committee noted the current Work Plan and were provided with an update on matters raised at the meeting of the Committee on 11th December, 2025.

- Housing Oversight Group (formally Registered Providers Task and Finish Group) – The First meeting had been held on 2nd February, 2026 with an increased Membership of seven Members from the original five Members. Meeting frequency had also been increased to quarterly. The work programme included key housing issues which covered all tenures, social housing, leaseholder and private rented housing. It also included the review of any registered provider (RP) performance issues at every meeting, with the ability to escalate any major concerns to individual performance management or scrutiny meeting with an RP if needed. The Portfolio Holder would provide an annual report to the Committee, and this was included in the updated terms of reference. The updated terms of reference and work plan would be shared with the Committee for information.
- Walk this Waste Pilot – it was reported that since the meeting of the Committee in December, where a number of key observations were made, the Cabinet had decided not to continue with the scheme and were

considering other options to address the issue of fly tipping and removal of bulky waste.

- Letter to Hampshire County Council – it was noted that a letter had been sent to the Leader on Hampshire County Council (HCC) on 23rd January, 2026, a copy of which would be shared with Members. Currently, the Council were still awaiting a response.

ACTION:

What	By Whom	When
Share the revised Terms of Reference for the Housing Oversight Group.	David Phillips, Lead Officer	Early March
Share a copy of the letter to the Leader of Hampshire County Council.	David Phillips, Lead Officer	Early March
Provide a summary of each update with the Committee	David Phillips, Lead Officer	Early March

With regard to future meetings, it was noted that an email would be shared with a list of potential items for the meeting in March 2026, and it was noted that a request was made to consider Rough Sleeping at that meeting.

ACTION:

What	By Whom	When
Add a potential Item relating to Rough Sleeping to the Work Plan for March 2026	Adele Taylor, Committee Administrator	February 2026

In response to a query regarding Call-in procedures, it was advised that the Committee would normally consider any decision that had been called in to the Committee within ten working days of the Corporate Manager – Democracy being notified of the request.

33. **FARNBOROUGH LEISURE CENTRE - BUILD**

The Committee welcomed the Portfolio Holder for Healthy Communities and Active Lives, Cllr Sophie Porter, Executive Director, Karen Edwards, Rosie Plaistowe-Melham, Service Manager – Finance and Deputy S151 Officer and Johanna Cohen, Development Manager who were in attendance to advise Members on the detail of Report No. REG2601.

Also in attendance were representatives from development partner Alliance Leisure, Sarah Watts, Chief Executive and Founder and Steve Rose, Project Delivery Manager, who provided an overview of their business model and responsibilities throughout the project.

Members acknowledged that there had been a large amount of information to go through prior to the meeting which had been shared as soon as it had become available. However, following a round table discussion, multiple Members felt they

had had insufficient time to carry out full scrutiny, but the majority felt they could move forward with the support of officers in the room.

Members were provided with a presentation which set out a summary of the decision and key considerations for the Cabinet at its meeting on 3rd March, 2026, and an overview of the content of the Report and Appendices. Key project milestones were also noted, and in response to a query, it was advised that estimated revenue financial implications, of the £8.8m of additional borrowing to enable the project, had been included in the Medium-Term Financial Strategy, which would be presented at the Full Council Meeting on Thursday 26th February, 2026. Key risks and mitigation were also addressed.

During discussion, the Committee noted that in the initial years following project completion, revenue costs outweighed operational income. However, from year four onwards, there would be a net positive revenue position to enable debt costs of the project to be covered and an income for the Council. Payback (breakeven) would be achieved in 2041/42, at the end of the initial 15 year operator contract.

Members reviewed financial modelling criteria carried out on a number of different scenarios. It was noted that the level of external funding available (Levelling Up funding of £18.5m) helped secure the delivery of the project, and without the funding the Council wouldn't be in such a positive position. In addition, it was requested that financial modelling be undertaken on 3-4% increased interest rates and a combination scenario.

ACTION:

What	By Whom	When
Carry out financial modelling for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A 3-4% interest rate increase • Combination scenario 	Rosie Plaistowe-Melham, Service Manager – Finance and Deputy S151 Officer	Early March

A discussion was held on the options for borrowing. The current forecasts accounted for long term borrowing of the £8.8m, however this position may change when the time came to borrow the additional amount. Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) could mean that funds may not need to be borrowed, or alternative short-term borrowing could be considered.

In response to a query regarding a Climate Impact Assessment for this project, it was noted that these assessments were in the process of being introduced and a written response would be provided by the Cabinet Member on the latest position.

ACTION:

What	By Whom	When
Provide a written response on the current status of Climate (Environmental) Impact Assessments	Cllr Sophie Porter, Portfolio Holder for Healthy Communities and Active Lives	Early March

The Committee received a presentation from Alliance Leisure, which advised on their business model of working solely within the public sector. By working in this sector only, Alliance offered a greater understanding of what was important when developing a facility with a local authority. Alliance worked with architects GT3 and contractors Pellikaan, to develop facilities that were affordable and relevant to need.

The Committee discussed the contract structure and were advised that the Council had requested a Clerk of Works, an independent person to oversee the quality of works, as part of the contract with Alliance Leisure. During a discussion on ground condition, it was noted that the area being used for the development was poor, but Alliance had confidence in Pellikaan, and their 80 years of experience.

The Chair thanked Ms Watts and Mr Rose for their presentation.

With agreement of the Committee, it was proposed that the remainder of the meeting be held in private, therefore excluding the public, to allow for scrutiny of the exempt appendices included within the Report.

a) **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
33b	3	Information relating to financial or business affairs

b) **Farnborough Leisure Centre - Build - IN PRIVATE**

During the in private discussion, it was advised that a full review of the financial position of both Alliance Leisure and Pellikaan had been undertaken and the Section 151 Officers had assured that both companies were a low risk to the Council.

The Committee also discussed social value and were advised that Pellikaan would work to add social value but nothing specific had yet been agreed. Any social value would be shaped by the Council and an allocation made to support it. It was suggested that any surpluses generated by the new Farnborough Leisure Centre could be prioritised for reinvestment into improving other leisure provision within the Borough.

The Committee were apprised of the options to protect financial risk within the contract which had been provided by the Council's Contract lawyer and Regeneration and Development Consultant. In response to a query regarding a Parent Company Guarantee (PCG), the Council's Interim Corporate Manager Legal would be asked to whether a PCG could be considered alongside any other offer.

With regard to other risk, it was noted that once the contract had commenced the level of risk to the Council would reduce.

The meeting closed at 9.27 pm.

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