

CABINET

Meeting held on Tuesday, 21st April, 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 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 Councillor Gaynor Austin.

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 **5th May, 2026**.

86. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST –**

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

87. **MINUTES –**

The Minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet held on 17th March, 2026 were confirmed and signed by the Chair.

88. **ARMED FORCES DAY NATIONAL EVENT 2026 - UPDATE –**

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

The Cabinet considered Report No. ED2605, which set out an update on progress with planning for the Armed Forces Day National Event 2026, along with a revised budget position that was required to ensure the safe and successful delivery of the event.

Members were reminded that the Council, working in partnership with the Ministry of Defence and local shareholders, had secured the opportunity to host this prestigious event, bringing significant economic, social and community benefits to the Borough. The Cabinet, at its meeting in November, 2025, had agreed to underwrite the cost of the event and had approved proposals for seeking sponsorship to cover the costs of running the event. Members were informed that, as the Council had gained a clearer understanding of the scale, security and specialist infrastructure required to deliver an event of national significance to the expected standard, it had become clear that the budget would need to be updated to more accurately reflect the operational, safety and logistical demands involved. It was confirmed that considerable commercial sponsorship and in-kind support had

already been secured, with further opportunities being actively pursued to close the current funding gap between income and expenditure.

The Cabinet expressed strong support for the hosting of this event, which Members considered would be of significant benefit to the Borough.

The Cabinet RESOLVED that

- (i) the current financial position, as set out in Report No. ED2605, be noted and the underwriting of the current budget gap of £243,250 be approved, to be funded from any remaining balances in the events budget, the community recovery fund and the stability and resilience reserve;
- (ii) the proposals for seeking additional commercial income to cover the remaining costs and to close the budget gap, as set out in the Report, be approved; and
- (iii) the Cabinet should be informed of the projected net cost as the project progresses, with any requests for additional funding being made to the Cabinet before committing expenditure, including how expenditure would be funded.

89. **FARNBOROUGH CIVIC QUARTER - STRATEGIC REVIEW –**
(Cllr Julie Hall, Economy, Skills & Regeneration Portfolio Holder)

The Cabinet considered Report No. REG2602, which set out the background and reasons for carrying out a Strategic Delivery Review of the Farnborough Civic Quarter (FCQ) project.

Members were reminded that, at its meeting in February, 2023, the Council's Development Management Committee had approved an outline permission in relation to the Farnborough Civic Quarter Masterplan. Unfortunately, since that time, a number of underlying parameters had shifted and this had impacted negatively the viability of the scheme in the current economic climate. It was proposed, therefore, that the Council should commission a Strategic Delivery Review to inform regeneration activity on the FCQ. The Cabinet was informed that this proposal was being made to comply with the requirements of the Council's Delivery Plan and that completing the Strategic Delivery Review would enable the Council to manage the risks around the FCQ and would increase the likelihood of successful delivery within the resources available.

During discussions, Members noted the importance of this site in relation to the Council's housing delivery programme and support was expressed for the suggested approach of commissioning a Strategic Delivery Review.

The Cabinet RESOLVED that the provision of a budget of £98,000 to carry out the review be approved, to be funded from the Stability and Resilience Reserve.

90. **STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT ARRANGEMENTS –**
(Cllr Gareth Williams, Leader of the Council)

The Cabinet considered Report No. MD2602, which set out proposed changes to the Council's management arrangements.

Members were informed that these new arrangements would enable the Council to maintain services, ensure that the Council Delivery Plan 2026-28 was delivered and support the delivery of Local Government Reorganisation (LGR). The proposed strategic management structure set out in Appendix 2 of the Report would seek to strengthen capacity and to support the Head of Paid Service and the LGR process and to ensure that the organisation continued to function effectively, recognising the significant draw of resources towards LGR activity. The report set out several proposed changes, which included the establishment of a new director-level role of Chief Operating Officer, to be recruited internally and appointed to by a Member panel.

The Cabinet was satisfied that the proposals set out provided the best option to enable the Council to tackle the significant challenges it faced in the lead-in to the implementation of LGR.

The Cabinet RESOLVED that

- (i) the proposed strategic management arrangements for the Council, as set out in Appendix 2 of Report No. MD2602, be endorsed, noting that these would be reported to the Council on 2nd July, 2026, in line with Section 11.3 of the Council's Constitution;
- (ii) given the demands relating to Local Government Reorganisation, the appointment of the new chief officer post of Chief Operating Officer as soon as practicable, in line with the process set out in Paragraph 2.8, be noted, with an appointment panel consisting of four Members, including the Corporate Services Portfolio Holder and the Leader of the Council, having been established by the Interim Managing Director to undertake this appointment; and
- (iii) at the request of the Leader of the Council, the Licensing and Corporate Business Committee being requested to establish an assessment panel to consider the permanent appointment of the Council's Head of Paid Service be noted, with the panel to include the Leader of the Council, the Corporate Services Portfolio Holder and the Leaders of other political groups.

91. **DECISION MADE UNDER URGENCY PROVISIONS - COUNCIL TAX SECOND HOME PREMIUM –**
(Cllr Gaynor Austin, Finance & Resources Portfolio Holder)

The Cabinet received a Record of Executive Decision, which set out a decision made under urgency powers on 20th March, 2026 by the Executive Director to set aside the implementation of the Council's Council Tax Second Home Premium.

The Record explained that there had been process errors made by officers in the setting of the premium and that statutory guidance had not been followed correctly. It was explained to Members that the decision had been made under urgency powers contained within Part 4 of the Council's constitution and that it was for this reason that the matter had been presented to the Cabinet for noting.

The Cabinet NOTED the action taken, as set out in the Record of Executive Decision dated 20th March, 2026.

The Meeting closed at 7.28 pm.

CLLR GARETH WILLIAMS, LEADER OF THE COUNCIL
