

LICENSING AND CORPORATE BUSINESS COMMITTEE

Meeting held on Thursday, 15th January, 2026 at the Concorde Room, Council Offices, Farnborough at 7.00 pm.

Voting Members

Cllr Jacqui Vosper (Chair)
Cllr Sarah Spall (Vice-Chair)

Cllr C.W. Card
Cllr Sue Carter
Cllr Jules Crossley
Cllr P.J. Cullum
Cllr Lisa Greenway
Cllr Rhian Jones
Cllr Bill O'Donovan

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Cllrs A.H Crawford and P.G. Taylor.

Cllrs C.P. Grattan and S.J. Masterson attended the meeting as Standing Deputies.

5. MINUTES

The Minutes of the Meeting held on 21st October, 2025 were approved and signed as a correct record of proceedings.

6. COMMUNITY GOVERNANCE REVIEW

The Committee considered the Monitoring Officer's Report No. LEG26/01, which set out the outcome and recommendations following the second-round consultation on the Council's community governance review (CGR) for consideration in advance of a report to the Council on 29th January, 2026.

The Committee noted that, following approval by the Council of the Terms of Reference for a Community Governance Review (CGR) (report LEG25/10) in July 2025, the CGR process had commenced, and the first-round consultation had demonstrated some public support for an additional tier of local governance. On 25th September 2025, Council approved a recommendation for a second-round consultation and agreed that the Committee should consider the results, in order to make recommendations to Council, on 29th January 2026.

The Committee were advised that those who had responded to the consultation demonstrated some support for an additional tier of community governance in Rushmoor. However, the number of such respondents was so low that it could not be said there had been public support for it. The findings were particularly important

when balanced with the fact that the creation of parish councils would bring with it a council tax precept.

During discussion, Members raised a question regarding council tax precepts. It was noted that, if Parish Councils were introduced in 2026/27, the Council tax precept would be approximately £30 per year, in the first year. After that, the precept amounts would not be in the control of the Council. Members sought assurance about the Council’s capacity to set up parish councils and were advised that there were large financial and staffing implications. Regarding a question concerning the possibility of setting up parish councils once the unitary authority had been formed, Members were advised that they could petition to set them up. It was noted that, if parish councils were set up, and there were not enough candidates to stand, there would need to be another Community Governance Review (CGR) to dissolve the parish councils.

ACTION:

What	By Whom	When
Investigate what rights a Parish Council has to borrow funds.	Amanda Bancroft – Monitoring Officer	Before the Council meeting – 29th January
Check with the Finance Team what the implications would be should a Parish Council run out of funds.	Amanda Bancroft – Monitoring Officer	Before the Council meeting – 29th January

The Committee **RECOMMENDED TO THE COUNCIL** that there should be no change in the community governance arrangements across the Borough.

7. EXTENSION OF TERM OF OFFICE FOR DESIGNATED INDEPENDENT PERSON

The Committee considered the Corporate Manager – Democracy’s Report No. DEM0601, which recommended an extension to the term of office for the current Designated Independent Person (DIP) until end of April 2028.

The Committee noted that the Designated Independent Person (DIP) role was required under the Localism Act to assist the Council in promoting and maintaining high standards of conduct amongst its elected Members. Mr Matt Smith was appointed by the Council in July 2023 as the Council’s DIP 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. It was 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. The Council had the option of carrying out a fresh recruitment; however, there was precedence for a two-year extension and since his appointment, Mr Smith had 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 operated within Rushmoor Borough Council.

During discussion, Members acknowledged that Mr Smith had been an excellent appointment and they were happy to extend the term. It was noted that Members

who had joined the Council since 2023, had not been canvassed as to any personal relationship with Mr Smith, and arrangements should be made to undertake this piece of work by officers.

- (i) **RESOLVED** that the Committee 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, subject to all new Members being canvassed to ensure there were no personal relationships with Matt Smith; and
- (ii) **RECOMMENDED TO THE COUNCIL** 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.

The meeting closed at 9.08 pm.

CLLR JACQUI VOSPER (CHAIR)
