

BOROUGH OF RUSHMOOR

EXTRAORDINARY MEETING OF THE BOROUGH COUNCIL held at the Council Chamber, Council Offices, Farnborough on Thursday, 18th June, 2026 at 7.00 pm.

The Worshipful The Mayor (Cllr P.J. Cullum (Chair))
The Deputy Mayor (Cllr Jib Belbase (Vice-Chair))

Cllr Gaynor Austin
Cllr Kevin Betsworth
Cllr Leola Card
Cllr Thomas Day
Cllr Uttar Gurung
Cllr Julie Hall
Cllr Sharon Harvey
Cllr Halleh Koohestani
Cllr Mara Makunura
Cllr Rob Matthews
Cllr Thomas Mitchell
Cllr Sophie Porter
Cllr Dhan Sarki
Cllr Nicky Slater
Cllr Calum Stewart
Cllr M.J. Tennant
Cllr Gareth Williams

Cllr Dave Bell
Cllr Craig Card
Cllr Sue Carter
Cllr Lisa Greenway
Cllr Christine Guinness
Cllr Steve Harden
Cllr Rhian Jones
Cllr G.B. Lyon
Cllr Steve Masterson
Cllr Sally McGuinness
Cllr Bill O'Donovan
Cllr Mike Roberts
Cllr Ian Simpson
Cllr Sarah Spall
Cllr Paul Taylor
Cllr Ivan Whitmee

Honorary Alderman Tony Gardiner

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Cllr A. Adeola, Cllr Keith Dibble and Cllr Becky Williams.

Before the meeting was opened, the Mayor had invited his Chaplain, Stephen Mourant, to say prayers.

9. **LOCAL GOVERNMENT REORGANISATION**

a) **Local Government Reorganisation Interim Warding Arrangements**

Cllr Sarah Spall introduced the Report of the Licensing and Corporate Business Committee held on 16th June, 2026, as set out in Updated Annex 1. The Committee had considered the distribution of councillors across the proposed North Hampshire Council and options for interim warding arrangements in response to the Government and preparations for local government reorganisation.

It was **MOVED** by Cllr Sarah Spall; **SECONDED** by Cllr Bill O'Donovan – That the Council:

- 1) submit a proposal based on a 108-councillor interim warding arrangement and agree the proposed number of councillors for each North Hampshire district as follows:
 - Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council – 53 councillors
 - Hart District Council – 29 councillors
 - Rushmoor Borough Council – 26 councillors
- 2) Agree the proposed interim warding arrangements as set out in Table 1 of the Report in updated Annex 1.

In presenting the recommendation it was emphasised that the strong view of the Committee was to maintain the existing ward boundaries in Rushmoor until a review could be carried out by the Boundary Commission, and that this was a key principle on which the 108-councillor option had been proposed, together with fair electoral representation across the whole area based on elector numbers.

In considering the proposal, it was highlighted that maintaining the existing ward boundaries would help provide continuity and trust in the process for residents until the Boundary Commission could carry out an independent and full boundary review of the new authority area once the new Council had formed.

During debate, it was **MOVED** by Cllr Gareth Williams and **SECONDED** by Cllr Sophie Porter that the Recommendation be amended to insert the following words (text in bold):

- 1) Submit a proposal based on a 108-councillor interim warding arrangement and agree the **preferred** proposed number of councillors for each North Hampshire district as follows:
 - Basingstoke and Deane - 53 councillors.
 - Hart - 29 councillors.
 - Rushmoor - 26 councillors.
- 2) Agree the **preferred** proposed interim warding arrangements as set out in Table 1
- 3) **Agree as a second preference, an 88-councillor distribution and interim warding arrangements, as per option 88c in Appendix 1**
- 4) **Agree as a third preference, an 85-councillor distribution and interim warding arrangements, as per option 85c in Appendix 1**

In proposing the amendment, Cllr Williams advised that he was fully supportive of the proposal for 108 councillors, but felt that backstop options needed to be identified, from within the 85 and 88 councillor options, as set out in the report, should the Minister not approve the higher number of councillors. In seconding the amendment, Cllr Porter advised that options 85c and 88c had been identified because these options brought together West Heath and Cherrywood wards as

communities with a link and interest in the Pride in Place Government funding programme for Cherrywood.

During debate on the amendment, an oppositional view was expressed that by putting forward a backstop option the Council was weakening its position on the 108-councillor proposal as recommended by the Licensing and Corporate Business Committee.

The Leader advised that he had spoken with the Leaders at both Hart District Council and Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council about the backstop options and confirmed that they would both be submitting responses based on 88 councillors.

In a recorded vote on the amendment, there voted FOR: Cllrs Gaynor Austin, Thomas Day, Lisa Greenway, Christine Guinness, Uttar Gurung, Julie Hall, Rhian Jones, Halleh Koohestani, Bill O'Donovan, Sophie Porter, Mike Roberts, Dhan Sarki, Nicky Slater, Sarah Spall, Calum Stewart, Ivan Whitmee and Gareth Williams (17); AGAINST: Cllrs Dave Bell, Kevin Betsworth, Craig Card, Leola Card, Sue Carter, Steve Harden, Sharon Harvey, G.B. Lyon, Mara Makunura, Steve Masterson, Rob Matthews, Sally McGuinness, Thomas Mitchell, Ian Simpson, Paul Taylor and M.J. Tennant (16); ABSTAIN: Cllrs Jib Belbase and P.J. Cullum (2), and therefore the amendment was **DECLARED CARRIED** and the recommendation as amended became the Substantive Motion.

During debate on the Substantive Motion, it was MOVED by Cllr G.B. Lyon; SECONDED by Cllr Steve Harden that an amendment be made to replace the second preference with option 88d in Appendix 1, and the third preference with option 85d in Appendix 1.

In proposing the amendment, Cllr G.B. Lyon stated that West Heath was not the same as Cherrywood ward and that there was a stronger connection of communities between Fernhill and West Heath wards, the northern section of which sat within the existing county boundary. In SECONDDING, Cllr Harden referred to the partnership work between schools and councillors in Fernhill and West Heath wards and that options 85d and 88d should be the preferred backstops options.

During debate, the point was raised by some councillors that that differing opinions on backstop options may weaken the Council's position. For clarification, the Leader of the Council advised that only the 108-councillor option would be submitted to the Minister for consideration, and that the backstop options were for the purpose of working together with the other councils including Hampshire, should the 108-councillor submission not be accepted by the Minister.

In a recorded vote on the amendment, there voted FOR: Cllrs Dave Bell, Kevin Betsworth, Jib Belbase, Sue Carter, Steve Harden, Sharon Harvey, G.B. Lyon, Mara Makunura, Steve Masterson, Rob Matthews, Sally McGuinness, Ian Simpson, Paul Taylor and M.J. Tennant (14); AGAINST: Cllrs Gaynor Austin, Craig Card, Leola Card, Thomas Day, Lisa Greenway, Christine Guinness, Uttar Gurung, Julie Hall, Rhian Jones, Halleh Koohestani, Thomas Mitchell, Bill O'Donovan, Sophie Porter, Mike Roberts, Dhan Sarki, Nicky Slater, Sarah Spall, Calum Stewart, Ivan Whitmee

and Gareth Williams (20); ABSTAIN: Cllr P.J. Cullum (1), and therefore the amendment was **DECLARED LOST**.

With reference to Table 1 in the Report, it was acknowledged that the Rushmoor area would have less than a quarter of the seats in a new authority with a membership of 108 councillors, but that aligned with the electorate distribution across the area.

The Substantive Motion was then put to the Council for a final vote.

That the Council:

- 1) Submit a proposal based on a 108-councillor interim warding arrangement and agree the preferred proposed number of councillors for each North Hampshire district as follows:
 - Basingstoke and Deane - 53 councillors.
 - Hart - 29 councillors.
 - Rushmoor - 26 councillors.
- 2) Agree the preferred proposed interim warding arrangements as set out in Table 1
- 3) Agree as a second preference, an 88-councillor distribution and interim warding arrangements, as per option 88c in Appendix 1
- 4) Agree as a third preference, an 85-councillor distribution and interim warding arrangements, as per option 85c in Appendix 1

In a recorded vote, there voted FOR: Cllrs Gaynor Austin, Dave Bell, Kevin Betsworth, Thomas Day, Lisa Greenway, Christine Guinness, Uttar Gurung, Julie Hall, Sharon Harvey, Rhian Jones, Halleh Koohestani, Rob Matthews, Sally McGuinness, Bill O'Donovan, Sophie Porter, Mike Roberts, Dhan Sarki, Ian Simpson, Nicky Slater, Sarah Spall, Calum Stewart, Ivan Whitmee and Gareth Williams (23); AGAINST: Cllrs Craig Card, Leola Card, Sue Carter, Steve Harden, G.B. Lyon, Mara Makunura, Steve Masterson, Thomas Mitchell, Paul Taylor and M.J. Tennant (10); ABSTAIN: Cllrs Jib Belbase and P.J. Cullum (2), and the Substantive Motion was **DECLARED CARRIED**.

b) **Appointments to the North Hampshire Joint Committee**

The Leader of the Council, Cllr Gareth Williams, introduced a report which asked the Council to appoint two councillor representatives to the North Hampshire Joint Committee. Two sets of nominations had been received, and the Council was asked to vote on its preferred option.

Option 1 - It was MOVED by Cllr Gareth Williams; SECONDED by Cllr Sophie Porter – That approval be given to the appointment of Cllrs Gareth Williams and Calum Stewart with Cllr Keith Dibble or another Member appointed by the Leader of the Council to act as standing deputy as required.

Option 2 – It was MOVED by Cllr Steve Harden, SECONDED by Cllr Paul Taylor – That approval be given to the appointment of Cllrs Gareth Williams and M.J. Tennant with Cllr G.B. Lyon as standing deputy for Cllr M.J. Tennant, and Cllr Keith Dibble or another Member appointed by the Leader to act as standing deputy.

Option 1- There voted FOR: 20

Option 2 – There voted FOR: 13

and Option 1 was **DECLARED CARRIED**.

The meeting closed at 8.37 pm.
