



RUSHMOOR BOROUGH COUNCIL

CABINET

*Tuesday, 10th January, 2017 at 7.00 pm
at the Council Offices, Farnborough*

Councillor D.E. Clifford, Leader of the Council
Councillor K.H. Muschamp, Deputy Leader and Business, Safety and
Regulation Portfolio

Councillor Sue Carter, Leisure and Youth Portfolio
Councillor Barbara Hurst, Health and Housing Portfolio
Councillor G.B. Lyon, Concessions and Community Support Portfolio
Councillor P.G. Taylor, Corporate Services Portfolio
Councillor M.J. Tennant, Environment and Service Delivery Portfolio

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 **24th January, 2017**.

76. **MINUTES –**

The Minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet held on 13th December, 2016 were confirmed and signed by the Chairman.

77. **COUNCIL TAX SUPPORT SCHEME 2017/18 –**
(Concessions and Community Support)

The Cabinet considered the Head of Financial Services' Report No. FIN1701, which set out the outcome of the recent public consultation exercise and the recommendations and comments of the Council's Welfare Reform Task and Finish Group in respect of potential changes to the Council Tax Support Scheme.

Members heard how the Council had developed its own Council Tax Support Scheme, which had run since 1st April, 2013, to replace the previous national Council Tax Benefit Regulations. The Scheme had been well received and had operated successfully but, in light of the Government's ongoing reform of the welfare system, the Cabinet had agreed, at its meeting on 18th October, 2016, to carry out a

public consultation on options to make changes to the Scheme. The changes were largely of a technical nature, bringing the Council's scheme in line with changes to other welfare benefits such as Housing Benefit and Universal Credit. The public consultation exercise had run for just over five weeks, starting on 4th November, 2016, and had been carried out, primarily, using an online survey. A total of 84 responses had been received and a detailed consultation report was set out in Appendix 1 to the Report.

The Welfare Reform Task and Finish Group had continued to meet during 2016 and its work had included monitoring the impact of welfare reform and the Council Tax Support Scheme in particular. The Group had recommended four changes to the Scheme, summarised as:

- To reduce the time a person could be absent from Great Britain to four weeks at one time and still be in receipt of Council Tax Support
- To remove the work related activity payment for new claimants of Employment and Support Allowance (ESA) when calculating Council Tax Support
- To remove the Severe Disability Premium (SDP) from Council Tax Support calculations when the claimant was being looked after by someone in receipt of the carer's element of Universal Credit
- To disregard 70% of the new postgraduate student loan when calculating entitlement to Council Tax Support

The Cabinet RECOMMENDED TO THE EXTRAORDINARY MEETING OF THE COUNCIL ON 25TH JANUARY, 2017 that the changes to the Council Tax Support Scheme for 2017/18, as set out in the Head of Financial Services' Report No. FIN1701, be approved.

78. **FOLLOW UP FROM AUDIT RESULTS REPORT –**
(Corporate Services)

The Cabinet received the Head of Financial Services' Report No. FIN1702, which set out the Council's response to an issue raised by the Council's appointed auditor, Ernst & Young LLP, in their annual Audit Response Report. It was confirmed that the matter had been considered by the Licensing and General Purposes Committee in September, 2016.

The Cabinet was informed that Ernst & Young had identified a sum that had needed to be written back to the General Fund and that this action required Cabinet approval. It was reported that this debt had been created prior to 1999 and appeared to relate to the Large Scale Voluntary Transfer of Rushmoor's housing stock in 1995. It was confirmed that the amount would have represented a tiny fraction of the total sums involved in the transfer. It was proposed to put in place a robust process to review regularly the recoverability of all debtors on the Council's balance sheet in future.

In response to a question, it was confirmed that the Council had carried out extended testing and that no further historical errors had been identified.

The Cabinet RESOLVED that

- (i) the actions proposed in response to the Audit Results Report, as set out in the Head of Financial Services' Report No. FIN1702, be noted; and
- (ii) the sum of £76,405 be written back to the General Fund.

79. **APPLICATIONS FOR DISCRETIONARY RATE RELIEF –**
(Concessions and Community Support)

The Cabinet considered the Head of Financial Services' Report No. FIN1703, which set out details of applications for rate relief from The Source Young People's Charity (Suite No. 3, Wesley Chambers, Queens Road, Aldershot) and Boro FC Limited (Farnborough Football Club, Cherrywood Road, Farnborough). In relation to the Boro FC application, a proposal was set out in the Report to harmonise the treatment of Aldershot Town and Farnborough Football Clubs. It was confirmed that, under the proposal, relief for both clubs would expire concurrently at the end of March 2017. At that time, a wider review of financial support to both clubs would be carried out.

The Cabinet RESOLVED that

- (i) 20% top-up discretionary relief be awarded to The Source Young People's Charity for part-year 2015/16 and for year 2016/17; and
- (ii) 50% discretionary relief be awarded to Boro FC Limited for years 2015/16 and 2016/17.

80. **HOUSING AND HOMELESSNESS STRATEGY –**
(Health and Housing)

The Cabinet considered the Head of Environmental Health and Housing's Report No. EHH1701, which set out the Council's proposed new Housing and Homelessness Strategy, which would, subject to the Cabinet's approval, be submitted for adoption by the Council at its meeting on 23rd February, 2017.

Members heard that the current Housing and Homelessness Strategy would expire at the end of March 2017. It was proposed that the new Strategy would be a rolling document, which would make it easier to update in the future. It was confirmed that the proposed Strategy would support the Council's priorities and reflected the contents of the Notice of Motion agreed by the Council on 8th December, 2016. The Report set out the details of the consultation exercise that had taken place.

The Cabinet was supportive of the proposed new Strategy and discussed areas including how to encourage owners to let empty properties, the viability of Rushmoor residents seeking housing being signposted to suitable accommodation outside of the Rushmoor area and the importance of providing more larger-sized family homes.

The Cabinet RECOMMENDED TO THE COUNCIL that approval be given to the Housing and Homelessness Strategy, as set out in the Head of Environmental Health and Housing's Report No. EHH1701.

81. **GRANTS TO VOLUNTARY ORGANISATIONS –**
(Concessions and Community Support)

The Cabinet received the Head of Community and Environmental Services' Report No. COMM1702, which set out details of applications for grants from voluntary organisations. In accordance with the agreed procedure for the allocation of grants, the Cabinet Member for Concessions and Community Support had approved three grants for £1,000 or less. Three awards had also been made under the Ward Community Grant scheme. It was also recommended that Young Enterprise should receive an award of £2,000 towards the delivery of employability skills to schools in Rushmoor.

The Cabinet

- (i) **NOTED** that the following grants totalling £1,900 had been approved by the Cabinet Member for Concessions and Community Support:

Aldershot Civic Society	£300
Farnborough Bowling Club	£1,000
Mustard Seed Autism Trust	£600

- (ii) **NOTED** that the following Ward Community Grants totalling £1,270 had been approved by the Cabinet Member for Concessions and Community Support:

St. John's Church (St. John's Ward)	£270
Farnborough Bowling Club (Knellwood Ward)	£500
Towards replacement of community noticeboards (North Town Ward)	£500

- (iii) **RESOLVED** that a grant of £2,000 to Young Enterprise be approved.

82. **RENT RELIEF TO VOLUNTARY ORGANISATIONS –**
(Concessions and Community Support)

The Cabinet considered the Head of Community and Environmental Services' Report No. COMM1701, which set out details of a review of the rent relief provided to the 27 organisations that leased land and/or buildings from the Council.

Members heard that rent relief of up to 100% was awarded on a three-yearly basis and that the current reliefs were due to expire at the end of March 2017. The Cabinet Member for Concessions and Community Support felt that all organisations should make some contribution towards the rent payable in future and it was, therefore, proposed that from 2018/19, a maximum relief of 90% would be applied. In 2019/20, the maximum would be reduced to between 80% and 90%, following further consideration by the Cabinet Member. The Cabinet Member was also arranging to meet these organisations to develop more proactive partnership arrangements to ensure their longer term sustainability.

The Cabinet RESOLVED that

- (i) rent relief be awarded for 2017/18 to 2019/20, as set out in the Head of Community and Environmental Services' Report No. COMM1701; and
- (ii) approval be given for the identification of ways of developing more proactive partnership arrangements with these important organisations.

83. **COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT - STAFF CHANGES AND REVIEW OF PLAYSCHMES** –
(Leisure and Youth)

The Cabinet considered the Head of Community and Environmental Services' Report No. COMM1703, which set out proposed changes to staffing within the Community Development Team and also made recommendations relating to the provision of the Council's playschemes.

The Report set out a number of changes to the staffing structure which were intended to provide greater resources to the priority area of skills and employment. It was reported that the Council currently provided playschemes at the Wavell Community Campus and the Connaught Leisure Centre. It was explained that there was capacity at the Connaught Leisure Centre to provide places for all potential participants and, with Connaught being the most cost effective option, it was proposed to stop providing a playscheme at the Wavell Community Campus in future.

In response to a question, it was explained that there was alternative provision in Farnborough and that the Connaught Leisure Centre was accessible by public transport. Research had shown that playscheme users already travelled a reasonable distance, with some coming from outside of the Borough.

The Cabinet RESOLVED that

- (i) the staff changes set out in the Head of Community and Environmental Services' Report No. COMM1703 be approved; and
- (ii) approval be given for the Council's playschemes provision being concentrated at the Connaught Leisure Centre in future.

The Meeting closed at 7.43 pm.

D.E. CLIFFORD
LEADER OF THE COUNCIL
