



RUSHMOOR BOROUGH COUNCIL

CABINET

*Tuesday, 12th January, 2016 at 4.30 pm
at the Council Offices, Farnborough*

Councillor P.J. Moyle
Councillor K.H. Muschamp, Deputy Leader and Business, Safety and
Regulation Portfolio Holder

Councillor Hughes, Health and Housing Portfolio
Councillor Sue Carter
Councillor P.G. Taylor, Corporate Services Portfolio Holder
Councillor R.L.G. Dibbs
Councillor A. Jackman

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 **26th January 2016**.

73. **MINUTES –**

The Minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet held on 15th December, 2016 were confirmed and signed by the Chairman.

74. **COUNCIL TAX SUPPORT SCHEME 2016/17 –**
(Concessions and Community Support)

The Cabinet considered the Corporate Director's Report No. CD1601, 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. Prior to commencing this item, the Cabinet was advised of a request from Cr. A.H. Crawford to address the Cabinet on this issue. However, as Cr. Crawford's representation had already been distributed to all Cabinet Members for consideration during the item, the Cabinet did not support the request.

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 20th October, 2015, to carry out a public consultation on options to make changes to the Scheme. The public consultation exercise had run for a six week period starting on 9th November, 2015 and had been sent to all 2,565 working age Council Tax Support claimants and a randomly selected 3,000 Council Tax payers. The survey had also been available online throughout the consultation period. A total of 791 completed surveys had been returned, which the Welfare Reform Task and Finish Group had considered to be a good rate of return, considering the complexity of the survey. It was reported that a wide range of views had been expressed and these were set out in Appendix 3 to the Report. A clear view had been expressed that residents did not wish for the Scheme to be funded by either an increase in Council Tax or a reduction in service provision.

The Welfare Reform Task and Finish Group had met six times during 2015 and its work had included considering potential changes to the Council Tax Support Scheme, taking into account the results of the public consultation. The Group recommended five changes to the Scheme, summarised as:

- To increase the minimum contribution from 8% to 10%
- To remove the Family Premium for new working age claimants
- To reduce the amount of savings from £16,000 to £6,000 before claiming Council Tax Support
- To limit support at the level applicable for a Band D property, for those living in properties banded higher than Band D
- To reduce the limit of backdated claims to four weeks

Furthermore, the Group considered a number of issues that were raised in the consultation that were not being recommended for adoption and these were set out in the Report.

In endorsing the recommendations of the Welfare Reform Working Group in relation to potential changes to the existing Scheme, the Cabinet expressed satisfaction that the Council's amended Scheme would continue to ensure that residents in Aldershot and Farnborough were treated fairly. In particular, it was noted that the exceptional Hardship Fund would remain in place for those adversely affected by the changes during a period of transition.

The Cabinet

- (i) **NOTED** the information set out in the Corporate Director's Report No. CD1601 and the work and the recommendations of the Welfare Reform Task and Finish Group in relation to potential changes to the Council's Council Tax Support Scheme; and
- (ii) **RECOMMENDED TO THE EXTRAORDINARY MEETING OF THE COUNCIL ON 27TH JANUARY, 2016** that the changes to the Council Tax Support Scheme, as set out in the Report, be approved to take effect from the financial year 2016/17.

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

The Cabinet received the Head of Community and Environmental Services' Report No. COMM1601, 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.

The Cabinet NOTED that the following grants totalling £2,350 had been approved by the Cabinet Member for Concessions and Community Support:

Acornwood Pre-school	£850
Aldershot and Farnborough Festival of Music and Dance	£500
Fleet and District Beekeepers Association	£1,000

NOTE: Cr. K.H. Muschamp declared a personal but non prejudicial interest in this item in respect of his involvement with the Aldershot and Farnborough Festival of Music and Dance and, in accordance with the Members' Code of Conduct, remained in the meeting.

76. **HART LOCAL PLAN - CONSULTATION ON REVISED OPTIONS FOR STRATEGIC NEW HOMES GROWTH AND SITE ALLOCATIONS –**
(Environment and Service Delivery)

The Cabinet considered the Head of Planning's Report No. PLN1601, which sought agreement to submit comments on Hart District Council's Refined Options for Strategic New Homes Growth and Site Allocations document, which was open to consultation until 15th January, 2016. Also included in the consultation was Hart's draft Local Plan Vision and Strategic Priorities document. The Cabinet was reminded that the Council had submitted comments on Hart District Council's consultation on its Housing Development Options in October 2014. It was also explained that Hart, Rushmoor and Surrey Heath Councils were, currently, jointly undertaking an update to the evidence base relating to housing and employment needs to inform the preparation of their respective Local Plans.

The Report set out the context of this consultation in terms of National Planning Policy and explained how Hart, Rushmoor and Surrey Heath Councils together formed the Housing Market Area. It was explained that the Council welcomed the

opportunity to work with Hart District Council on developing a planning strategy to meet the housing needs of the Housing Market Area within the area covered by the three councils. Once the joint evidence had been updated, it would be possible for the three authorities to demonstrate positive outcomes through Plan making, as required by the Duty to Co-operate and reflected in the tests of soundness at Examination of Local Plans.

The Cabinet RESOLVED that the Council make representations on the Hart Refined Options for Strategic New Homes Growth and Site Allocations and the draft Local Plan Vision and Strategic Priorities documents, based on the comments set out in the Head of Planning's Report No. PLN1601.

77. **ALDERSHOT TOWN CENTRE PROSPECTUS SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING DOCUMENT –**
(Environment and Service Delivery)

The Cabinet considered the Head of Planning's Report No. PLN1602, which set out the Aldershot Town Centre Prospectus Supplementary Planning Document for approval. Members were informed that public consultation had taken place for six weeks, commencing on 30th September, 2015. This had been supplemented with a number of consultation events, including staffed exhibition days and a public meeting. The consultation process had attracted 180 representations and the comments received were summarised in the Consultation Report at Annex 2 to the Report. The draft document had been amended to take account of these representations and the key changes were summarised as:

- Executive summary added
- Increased emphasis on accessing the town by a variety of sustainable modes of transport, including additional references to public transport in the town and reference added to improving cycling provision
- Reference to a review of the Council's parking strategy added
- Comment added about the Council investigating the potential to purchase vacant units
- Strengthened statements on the historic environment
- Deleted inaccurate reference to Willow House being of historic significance
- Reference added to the importance of integrating Westgate with the rest of the town centre
- Added explicit reference to refurbishment of the Princes Hall
- Clearer reference to the potential to create a town square as part of the redevelopment of the Union Street and former Marks and Spencer site added

- Information added on potential funding sources

The Cabinet RESOLVED that

- (i) to supplement the existing Core Strategy policies, the Aldershot Town Centre Prospectus Supplementary Planning Document be adopted; and
- (ii) the Head of Planning, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Environment and Service Delivery, be authorised to make any necessary minor amendments to the Supplementary Planning Document, prior to its publication.

The Meeting closed at 5.18 pm.

D.E. CLIFFORD
LEADER OF THE COUNCIL
