

CABINET

Meeting held remotely on Tuesday, 8th December, 2020 at 7.00 pm.

Voting Members

Cllr D.E. Clifford, Leader of the Council

Cllr K.H. Muschamp, Deputy Leader and Customer Experience and Improvement Portfolio Holder

Cllr A.R. Newell, Democracy, Strategy and Partnerships Portfolio Holder

Cllr M.L. Sheehan, Operational Services Portfolio Holder

Cllr P.G. Taylor, Corporate Services Portfolio Holder

Cllr M.J. Tennant, Major Projects and Property Portfolio Holder

An apology for absence was submitted on behalf of Councillor Marina Munro.

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 **21st December, 2020**.

36. MINUTES –

The Minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet held on 10th November, 2020 were confirmed by the Chairman.

37. REVENUE BUDGET MONITORING AND FORECASTING 2020/21 - QUARTER 2 – (Cllr Paul Taylor, Corporate Services Portfolio Holder)

The Cabinet considered Report No. FIN2031, which set out the anticipated financial position for 2020/21, based on the monitoring exercise carried out during October and November, 2020. Members were informed that the Covid-19 pandemic had continued to have a widespread impact on local authority budgets, particularly in relation to a significant loss of income from services. In Rushmoor, the greatest impacts had been seen in relation to car parking income, planning fees and income from events and performances at the Princes Hall, Aldershot. It was reported that the Council had agreed to defer interest payments on loans to provide cashflow support to Farnborough International Limited, following the cancellation of the 2020 Airshow. Since this time, Barclays, as primary creditor, had proposed to capitalise interest in line with the Intercreditor Agreement. This would mean that, unless a compromise could be agreed with Barclays, the Council would not receive the deferred interest until 2026 at the earliest. Included in the other information contained in the Report were the risks and uncertainties faced by the Council at this time.

The Cabinet RESOLVED that

- (i) the latest revenue forecasts and financial impact from Covid-19, as set out in Report No. FIN2031, be noted; and
- (ii) the establishment of a Local Elections reserve, noting the reserve movement proposed to support the General Fund in 2020/21, be approved.

38. **CAPITAL PROGRAMME MONITORING AND FORECASTING 2020/21 - QUARTER 2 –**
(Cllr Paul Taylor, Corporate Services Portfolio Holder)

The Cabinet received Report No. FIN2029, which provided the latest forecast regarding the Council's Capital Programme for 2020/21, based on the monitoring exercise carried out during September, 2020. The Report advised that the Capital Programme for 2020/21, allowing for slippages from the previous financial year and additional approvals, totalled £56,299,000. It was noted that projects of major financial significance to the Council in the Capital Programme included the Aldershot Town Centre Integration and Union Street developments, the Farnborough Civic Quarter development, the replacement of cremators at the Rushmoor Crematorium, the conversion of Voyager House, the establishment of a housing company and the further acquisition of investment properties. It was explained that, of the approved capital budget of £56.3 million, only £33.3 million was forecast to be spent by the end of 2020/21. It was reported that the variance and increase in approved budget since its approval at the Council meeting on 20th February, 2020 were due to delays in capital projects being completed in the 2019/20 financial year.

The Cabinet RESOLVED that

- (i) the latest Capital Programme monitoring position, as set out in Tables 1 and 2 of Report No. FIN2029, be noted;
- (ii) the virement of £15,000 budget from Telephony Call Centre Upgrade to Ice Programme – Modernising Corporate and Service Systems be approved;
- (iii) the virement of £40,000 budget from App development of Love Rushmoor to Ice Programme – Modernising Corporate and Service Systems be approved; and
- (iv) the additional capital funding requests, as set out in paragraph 3.9 of the Report, be approved.

39. **MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY 2021/22 TO 2024/25 - UPDATE –**
(Cllr Paul Taylor, Corporate Services Portfolio Holder)

The Cabinet received Report No. FIN2032, which set out an update on the key factors influencing the preparation of the Council's 2021/22 budget. The Report also provided an update on the financial position of the Council and set out how Members would be kept informed of changes in the forecast over the medium term for financial planning purposes.

Members were informed that the Council, along with many other local authorities, continued to face significant financial challenges over the medium term. Risks and uncertainties, particularly around Brexit, Covid-19 and the global economy made it difficult for the Council to accurately predict its medium term financial position. The Report set out details of the 2021/22 Spending Review by the Government and the prospects for local government funding in 2021/22. The Cabinet was informed that all of the factors listed in the Report would make the budget setting process difficult

this year but Members were assured that, despite these pressures, it would be possible to set a balanced budget. The Cabinet expressed gratitude to Council officers that had contributed to the Council continuing to provide its core services in unprecedented circumstances.

The Cabinet NOTED the impact from Covid-19 on the financial planning process and associated risks and uncertainties, as set out in Section 7 of Report No. FIN2032.

40. **COUNCIL TAX SUPPORT SCHEME 2021/22 –**

(Cllr Diane Bedford, Chairman of the Council Tax Support Task and Finish Group)

The Cabinet considered Report No. FIN2030, which set out the work carried out by the Council's Council Tax Support Task and Finish Group in respect of potential changes to the Council Tax Support Scheme. The Chairman welcomed Cllr Mrs. D.B. Bedford, Chairman of the Council Tax Support Task and Finish Group, who was attending to report on the Group's recommendations.

The Council Tax Support Task and Finish Group had met on 2nd March, 2020 and 6th October, 2020 to consider its recommendations to the Cabinet. The Group had considered the on-going impact of Covid-19 and had paid specific attention to a number of matters during its deliberations and these were set out in paragraph 2 of the Report. Having considered all relevant factors, the Group recommended that no changes should be made to the Council Tax Support Scheme for 2021/22. This would mean that the minimum contribution would remain at 12%. Additionally, it was recommended that the fundamental review of the Scheme, that had been previously agreed to commence in 2020, should be deferred until 2021/22.

The Cabinet expressed gratitude to the Council Tax Support Task and Finish Group for its work in producing these recommendations.

The Cabinet

- (i) **RECOMMENDED TO THE COUNCIL** that the current Council Tax Support Scheme for working age customers be retained for 2021/22, with the usual alignment to Housing Benefit Rates; and
- (ii) **RESOLVED** that:
 - (a) in light of the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic, the deferral until 2021/22 of the fundamental review of the Council Tax Support Scheme be approved;
 - (b) the use of any remaining funds from the Covid-19 Council Tax Hardship Fund to continue to support recipients of Council Tax Support, alongside the Council's own Exceptional Hardship Fund, be approved;

- (c) the deliberations and considerations of the Council Tax Support Task and Finish Group in arriving at its recommendations, as set out in Report No. FIN2030, be noted; and
- (d) the Council Tax Support Task and Finish Group's views on Hardship Funds and Government funding in 2021/22, as set out in paragraphs 1.12 and 1.13 of the Report, be noted.

41. RENEWAL OF BUILDING CONTROL PARTNERSHIP –
(Cllr Marina Munro, Planning and Economy Portfolio Holder)

The Cabinet considered Report No. EPSH2036, which set out a proposal to renew the Hart and Rushmoor Building Control Partnership as a shared service between the two authorities to discharge the statutory building control functions for both areas until 31st March, 2025.

Members were reminded that Hart District Council and Rushmoor Borough Council had formed the Partnership in July, 2015. Since this time, the Partnership had performed well and now held an estimated 70% of local building control work. The Report set out how fees and costs had been split previously. It was proposed that, in future, the split would be proportionate to the amount of work carried out for each authority. The Report made reference to renewing the Partnership until 31st March 2026 but it was explained that Hart District Council had only received agreement for the period to 31st March, 2025. For this reason, agreement was now being sought for the same period. The Cabinet expressed strong support for the continuation of the Partnership and acknowledged the high quality of work carried out by the Partnership since its formation.

The Cabinet RESOLVED that the renewal of the Hart and Rushmoor Building Control Partnership, to provide a shared building control service until 31st March, 2025, unless terminated earlier in accordance with the provisions of the agreed deed, be approved.

42. APPLICATION FOR RENT RELIEF BY ALDERSHOT TOWN FOOTBALL CLUB –
(Cllr Martin Tennant, Major Projects and Property Portfolio Holder)

The Cabinet considered Report No. RP2017, which set out details of an application by Aldershot Town Football Club Limited for relief from rental payments due to the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic and the Club's inability to raise income.

Members were informed that the Club had been prohibited from playing games in front of crowds from March, 2020 until the end of the second national lockdown on 2nd December, 2020. It was reported that the Club was now allowed a prescribed number of spectators at home games, subject to strict Covid-secure requirements. Further discussions were taking place in respect of what this meant for the Club's ability to pay rent. In expressing support for the approval of the application for rent relief, Members made reference to the considerable amount of work that the Club and the Chairman, in particular, did in the local community. This was considered to be a reasonable step to help to support the Club at this difficult time.

The Cabinet RESOLVED that the granting of rent relief to Aldershot Town Football Club Limited, for the financial year 2020/21 or until such time as the Club would be able to operate and raise income through gate receipts, be approved.

The Meeting closed at 8.01 pm.

CLLR D.E. CLIFFORD, LEADER OF THE COUNCIL
