



BOROUGH OF RUSHMOOR

To the Mayor and Members of the Council,

YOU ARE HEREBY SUMMONED to attend a Meeting of the Council to be held at the Council Offices, Farnborough on **Thursday, 2nd December, 2021 at 7.00 pm** for the transaction of the business set out on the Agenda given below.

A G E N D A

1. **MINUTES – (Pages 1 - 4)**

To confirm the Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of the Council held on 7th October (copy attached).

2. **MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS –**

3. **THE RUSHMOOR COMMUNITY AWARD 2021 –**

The Mayor to present the Rushmoor Community Award 2021 to Beryl Yeomans for over 70 years' service to the community. A posthumous award will also be made to Judi Page for providing mental health support to the community. The presentation of the Award to Judi Page's family will be made at a separate event in the New Year.

4. **STANDING ORDER 8 - QUESTIONS –**

To receive any questions by Members submitted in pursuance of Standing Order 8 (3).

5. **RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE CABINET –**

To consider the recommendations of the Cabinet in relation to the following items:

1) **Funding Contribution for Tices Meadow – (Pages 5 - 6)**

To receive a report from the Cabinet (copy attached – Annex 1) which recommends approval of a contribution towards the purchase of Tices Meadow from capital receipts. Cllr P.G. Taylor, Corporate Services Portfolio Holder, will introduce this item.

2) **Southwood Country Park - Business Case for Repurposing Existing Buildings – (Pages 7 - 50)**

To receive a report from the Cabinet (copy attached – Annex 2), which recommends approval of capital funding for the Southwood Country Park Visitor Centre and Café. Cllr M.J. Tennant, Major Projects and Property Portfolio Holder, will introduce this item.

6. **QUESTIONS FOR THE CABINET –**

To receive any questions by Members to Cabinet Members submitted in accordance with the Procedure Note.

7. **REPORTS OF CABINET AND COMMITTEES – (Pages 51 - 74)**

To receive and ask questions on the Reports of the following Meetings (copy reports attached):

Cabinet	19th October 2021 16th November 2021
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Committees

Corporate Governance, Audit and Standards	27th September 2021
Development Management	13th October 2021
Development Management	10th November 2021

8. **REPORT OF OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – (Pages 75 - 80)**

To note the Report of the following meeting (copy reports attached):

Overview and Scrutiny Committee	28th October, 2021
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A.E. COLVER
Head of Democracy and Community

Council Offices
Farnborough
Hampshire GU14 7JU

Wednesday 24 November 2021

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BOROUGH OF RUSHMOOR

MEETING OF THE BOROUGH COUNCIL held at the Council Chamber, Council Offices, Farnborough on Thursday, 7th October, 2021 at 7.00 pm.

The Worshipful The Mayor (Cllr B.A. Thomas (Chairman))
The Deputy Mayor (Cllr J.H. Marsh (Vice-Chairman))

Cllr Mrs. D.B. Bedford
Cllr T.D. Bridgeman
Cllr Sue Carter
Cllr M.S. Choudhary
Cllr A.K. Chowdhury
Cllr P.I.C. Crerar
Cllr K. Dibble
Cllr A.J. Halstead
Cllr S.J. Masterson
Cllr Marina Munro
Cllr A.R. Newell
Cllr M.J. Roberts
Cllr M.D. Smith
Cllr C.J. Stewart
Cllr M.J. Tennant
Cllr Nem Thapa

Cllr Jib Belbase
Cllr J.B. Canty
Cllr Sophia Choudhary
Cllr R.M. Cooper
Cllr P.J. Cullum
Cllr Christine Guinness
Cllr L. Jeffers
Cllr Nadia Martin
Cllr T.W. Mitchell
Cllr K.H. Muschamp
Cllr Sophie Porter
Cllr M.L. Sheehan
Cllr Sarah Spall
Cllr P.G. Taylor
Cllr Jacqui Vosper

Honorary Alderman A. Gardiner
Honorary Alderman R.J. Kimber

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Cllr Gaynor Austin, Cllr Jessica Auton, Cllr D.E. Clifford, Cllr Michael Hope, Cllr Prabesh KC and Cllr Mara Makunura.

Before the meeting was opened, the Mayor's Chaplain (Reverend Malcolm Cummins) led the Council in a period of prayers.

24. MINUTES

It was **MOVED** by Cllr Marina Munro; **SECONDED** by Cllr P.G. Taylor and

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of the Council held on 29th July 2021 (copy having been circulated previously) be taken as read, approved and signed as a correct record.

25. MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

- (1) The Mayor thanked the Deputy Mayor for attending the Raising of the Merchant Navy Day flag at the Council Offices on his behalf on 3rd September 2021.

- (2) The Mayor reported that there had been an official opening of the Post Office at the Wellington Centre, Aldershot on 16th September 2021.
- (3) The Mayor reported that he had attended the Bula Festival on the Queen's Parade, Aldershot on 18th September 2021, which had been an integration event showcasing Fijian culture and traditions.
- (4) The Mayor reported that, on 19th September 2021, he had attended the Battle of Britain Remembrance Service at North Camp Methodist Church and march past of RAF Association members and representatives from the local Air Training Corps Squadrons.
- (5) The Mayor reported that he had attended the unveiling of the statue of Rifleman Kulbir Thapa VC, the first Gurkha soldier to receive the Victoria Cross, at Princes Gardens on 24th September 2021.
- (6) The Mayor reported that he had attended the Parachute Regimental Association service of remembrance at the Royal Garrison Church on 3rd October 2021 for those members of the Association who had lost their lives during the Covid-19 pandemic.

26. **STANDING ORDER 8 - QUESTIONS**

The Mayor reported that no questions had been submitted under Standing Order 8.

27. **RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE CABINET AND COMMITTEES**

(1) **Regeneration Programme – Potential Acquisitions in Farnborough Town Centre**

The Portfolio Holder for Major Projects and Property (Cllr. M.J. Tennant) introduced the Report of the Cabinet meeting held on 10th August 2021, which sought approval of funding to enable the progression of potential land and property acquisitions in part of Farnborough Town Centre.

It was **MOVED** by Cllr M.J. Tennant; **SECONDED** by Cllr K.H. Muschamp – That the Council agree an initial budget of up to £250,000 to enable the progression of the associated due diligence, legal assessment, feasibility study, development options and preparation of a detailed business case for the acquisition and development of the land and property set out in the exempt appendix to the Report, as part of the ongoing regeneration of the town.

There voted **FOR**: 31; **AGAINST**: 0; **ABSTAINED**: 0 and the Recommendation was **DECLARED CARRIED**.

(2) Aldershot Crematorium – Proposal to Undertake Feasibility Study to Inform Future Investment Options

The Operational Services Portfolio Holder (Cllr M.L. Sheehan) introduced the Report from the Cabinet which sought funding to deliver a feasibility study to inform future investment options in relation to the Aldershot Crematorium.

It was MOVED by Cllr M.L. Sheehan; SECONDED by Cllr K.H. Muschamp – That approval be given to a budget of £75,000 to deliver a feasibility study to inform future investment options in relation to the Aldershot Crematorium.

There voted FOR: 30; AGAINST: 0; ABSTAINED: 0 and the Recommendation was **DECLARED CARRIED.**

(3) Variation to Capital Programme

The Operational Services Portfolio Holder (Cllr M.L. Sheehan) introduced the Report of the meeting of the Cabinet held on 21st September 2021 which sought approval for funding to amend the Capital Programme to enable the Council to purchase vehicles required for the food waste service.

It was MOVED by Cllr M.L. Sheehan; SECONDED by Cllr K.H. Muschamp – That approval be given to the addition of £235,000 to the Capital Programme in 2021/22 to enable the Council to purchase the vehicles required for the Food Waste Service.

There voted FOR: 32; AGAINST: 0; ABSTAINED: 0 and the Recommendation was **DECLARED CARRIED.**

(4) Appointment of Independent Member to the Corporate Governance, Audit and Standards Committee

The Chairman of the Corporate Governance, Audit and Standards Committee (Cllr Sue Carter) introduced the Report of the Committee meeting held on 27th September 2021, which recommended the Council to confirm the appointment of Mr. Tom Davies as an Independent Member of the Corporate Governance, Audit and Standards Committee for a period of three years.

It was MOVED by Cllr Sue Carter; SECONDED by Cllr P.J. Cullum – That the appointment be confirmed of Mr. Tom Davies as the Independent Member of the Corporate Governance, Audit and Standards Committee for a period of three years.

There voted FOR: 31; AGAINST: 0; ABSTAINED: 0 and the Recommendation was **DECLARED CARRIED.**

28. QUESTIONS FOR THE CABINET

The Mayor reported that a question had been submitted by Cllr Christine Guinness for response by the Planning and Economy Portfolio Holder (Cllr Marina Munro) relating to rough sleepers and associated policies.

In response, Cllr Marina Munro stated that, during the previous four years, there had been the following placements under the Severe Weather Emergency Plan (SWEP):

- 2017/18 – 17 placements of rough sleepers
- 2018/19 – not recorded/no placements
- 2019/20 – 4 placements
- 2020/21 – No SWEP placements due to ‘Everyone In’

It was noted that SWEP was triggered when the temperature was forecast at zero degrees or below for three consecutive days. The Council had recently used bed and breakfast accommodation and other temporary accommodation to house rough sleepers during SWEP. Throughout SWEP the Housing Options Team took the opportunity to help rough sleepers to find a more permanent housing solution so not to return to the streets.

29. **REPORTS OF CABINET AND COMMITTEES**

RESOLVED: That the Reports of the following meetings be received:

Cabinet	28th July 2021
Cabinet	10th August 2021
Cabinet	21st September 2021
Development Management Committee	21st July 2021
Corporate Governance, Standards and Audit Committee	27th July 2021
Development Management Committee	18th August 2021
Development Management Committee	15th September 2021

30. **REPORTS OF OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE AND POLICY AND PROJECT ADVISORY BOARD**

RESOLVED: That the Reports of the meetings of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 22nd July and 24th August 2021 and Policy and Project Advisory Board held on 22nd September 2021 be received.

The meeting closed at 8.30 pm.

COUNCIL MEETING – 2ND DECEMBER 2021

AGENDA ITEM NO. 5 (1)

FUNDING CONTRIBUTION FOR TICES MEADOW

A report from the meeting of the Cabinet held on 19th October, 2021.

SUMMARY

Surrey County Council is seeking to purchase the land known as Tices Meadow (formerly Farnham Quarry) with funding contributions from other local authority partners, including the Council, to secure its future as a protected nature reserve for use by the community.

The Council is recommended to agree a contribution of up to £50,000 towards the purchase of Tices Meadow by Surrey County Council to be funded from anticipated capital receipts.

1. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

- 1.1 At its meeting on 19th October, the Cabinet considered and approved [Report No. FIN2122](#) which set out the Budget Strategy for 2022/23, including details of the current forecast for capital receipts.
- 1.2. As detailed in the Report, the Council is expected to receive capital receipts from the Parsons Barracks scheme and asset sales in the latter half of the financial year. The level of anticipated capital receipts for the year is likely to be £1.25m at the lower end of expectations and £2.25m at the higher end depending on the timing of receipts.
- 1.3. The emerging policy position is to pool all receipts from the sale of all assets sold to support the Capital Programme in line with funding the Council's priorities (as published in the Council Business Plan) which will include the potential sale of any investment properties or other property assets.
- 1.4. As part of its consideration of the budgetary framework, the Cabinet agreed to recommend to Council that a contribution of up to £50,000 is made to Surrey County Council for the purchase of Tices Meadow to be funded from anticipated capital receipts.

2. TICES MEADOW

- 2.1 The land known as Tice's Meadow (formerly Farnham Quarry) is a restored sand and gravel site owned and operated by Hanson Aggregates. The site area is approximately 55 hectares and was formally opened in May 2019 and is now subject to a 20-year aftercare and long-term Management Plan, pursuant to the Section 106 Agreement of the extraction permission.
- 2.2 The site has been restored to a nature conservation end use, with permissive public access along the northern boundary. It also afforded the opportunity to incorporate a realignment and enhancement of the River Blackwater by the Environment Agency. The restoration and long-term management is overseen by a Management Group comprising Hanson, Surrey County Council (SCC), Tice's Bird Group, Blackwater Valley Countryside Partnership, and Farnham Residents Association.
- 2.3 Hanson put the site on the market in late 2019 but, despite several bids, the site remains unsold to date. Following a number of meetings with local authority partners it was decided to purchase the site to secure its future as a protected nature reserve for use by the community. The area is heavily used by Rushmoor residents despite the site not being in the Borough.
- 2.4 Longer term there remains the scope to create wider opportunities to link Tice's Meadow with SCC's adjacent lands at Tongham Pools.

3. PROPOSED FUNDING PACKAGE

- 3.1 Following discussions with Hanson an agreement has been reached allowing SCC to purchase the site for £425,000 including tax and costs with contributions from other local authority partners including the Council. SCC will own the site and will be responsible for its management and liabilities moving forward. The funding package is proposed as follows (note the contributions shown in the table below were based on an assumed purchase value of £475,000):

Surrey County Council	£250,000
Guildford Borough Council	£50,000
Waverley Borough Council with Farnham Town Council	£75,000
Rushmoor Borough Council	£50,000
Hampshire County Council	£50,000

- 3.2 It is recommended that a contribution of up to £50,000 is made to Surrey County Council for the purchase of Tices Meadow as outlined above; to be funded from anticipated capital receipts. The estimated contribution from Rushmoor based on the lower purchase price of £425,000 is £45,075 (being 10%).

P.G. TAYLOR
PORTFOLIO HOLDER
CORPORATE SERVICES

ANNEX 2

COUNCIL MEETING – 2ND DECEMBER 2021

AGENDA ITEM NO. 5 (2)

SOUTHWOOD COUNTRY PARK – BUSINESS CASE FOR REPURPOSING
EXISTING BUILDINGS

A report from the meeting of the Cabinet held on 16th November 2021

SUMMARY

This report requests the approval of capital funding for detailed design and development of the Southwood SANG Visitor Centre and Café.

RECOMMENDATION

The Council is recommended to approve that £901,000 be added to the Capital Programme for the Southwood Country Park Visitor Centre and Café and noting the capital financing implications set out in paragraph 4.14.

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to seek approval to proceed with delivery of the SANG Visitor Centre and Café at Southwood Country Park, following completion of the feasibility study and initial design development.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 In 2017, Cabinet resolved that Southwood Golf Club be closed to provide Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANG) in order to create natural open space and to mitigate the impact of new housing on the Special Protection Area (SPA). The new SANG would be called Southwood Country Park and the creation and management of the SANG would be funded through developer contributions.
- 2.2 Officers have been working with the Portfolio Holders and Deputy Leader to consider options for the former Golf Club buildings which could include a visitor centre, toilets, rangers' office, and education space, funded through developer contributions. The original SANG budget allocated £200,000 for SANG related accommodation but it is considered that up to £600,000 could be made available within the overall funding for the SANG.

- 2.3 There is an aspiration to enhance this with a café. This element would not be funded by developer contributions as it is not an eligible cost and therefore any capital investment would be based on a business case which demonstrates the return-on-investment for this aspect.
- 2.4 Following a market campaign, multiple offers were received from local Café Operators indicating the rent they would offer and expected turnover from ongoing operations. Detailed analysis has been conducted to determine the financial viability of the cafe investment and value created for the Council.

3. DETAILS OF THE PROPOSAL

General

- 3.1 Detailed designs have been undertaken by the appointed architects and full refurbishment costs subsequently established. Environmental sustainability has been considered throughout the scheme and includes several green credentials (e.g., green roof, ground source heating, PV Panels etc) and re-use the existing building, avoiding the need for demolition. From an equality perspective, the café/Visitor centre is fully accessible and incorporates level entrances, wider doors etc.
- 3.2 The scheme also includes a Changing Places facility. A funding application to support this was made but was unsuccessful, however it was felt that this would significantly enhance the offer at the Country Park and increase accessibility and user numbers.
- 3.3 The latest detailed designs have been circulated with and approved by local members.
- 3.4 In July 2021, £126,000 feasibility funding was approved for detailed design development and identification of an operator for the proposed Café. This was based on an outline Business Case estimate of project cost at £1,200,000 (which included the £126,000 feasibility study allocation).
- 3.5 Revised costs for the café and visit centre are £901,000 with £461,000 attributed to the visitor centre (and funded by SANG contributions - see section 3.8 and 3.9) and £440,000 attributed to the café. The total project cost including initial design and development costs is £1,074,000 a reduction of £173,000 on the original estimate.
- 3.6 A Full Business Case (Appendix 1) has been developed based on a return-on-investment model of 5% per annum return on capital investment with time for scaling-up (i.e.,30 year pay back). This includes a notional revenue cost of capital to demonstrate the project is able to cover-off any interest on external borrowing and other costs such as Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP).
- 3.7 The potential running costs of the Visitor Centre and Café have been assessed and are approximately £38,000 p.a.

	<u>SUB TOTAL</u>
Business Rates *	£10,000
Cleaning	£20,000
WiFi	£1,200
Utilities **	£350
CCTV, Fire Alarm, Legionella etc	£355
Insurance	£4,000
Maintenance	£2,000
TOTAL	£37,885

*This is based on discussion with Revenues and allows for an increased value considered likely

**The design includes PV and Ground Source Heat Pumps so the utility costs assume service charge and a contingency in case the occasional draw on mains exceeds the feed in tariff

- 3.8 Elements of these costs will form part of the service charge to the operator of the Café who is aware that there will be a charge. The exact allocation of costs will form part of finalising the lease negotiation and needs to be balanced with ensuring the assumed rent is achieved. The breakdown of the costs and assumptions and a notional split is included within Appendix 2. However, the modelling of the SANG has been reviewed and can accommodate an annual cost of up to the full £38,000 p.a. [Financing Charges are illustrative].

	Yr 0	Yr1	Yr2	Yr3	Yr4	Yr5	Yr6	Yr7	Yr8	Yr9
	Part Year *									
Financing Charges – 30 years	6300	25100	25100	25100	25100	25100	25100	25100	25100	25100
Total Income	23500	48000	53000	54750	56600	58500	61800	63300	64800	64800
Net surplus / deficit after financing	- 17200	- 22900	- 27900	- 29650	- 31500	- 33400	- 36700	- 38200	- 39700	- 39700

(*Part year has been assumed to be 66%)

- 3.9 The SANG Visitor Centre elements are funded via developer contributions up to a maximum of £600,000. This money has not been received by the Council due to delays in development. It was originally anticipated that a substantial proportion of this funding would be received in 2022/23. However, the Union St development that will contribute £962,526 of the SANG funding is now due to be occupied in 2024 prior to which the SANG payment must be made.
- 3.10 To date, £59,701 from another development has been received with a further £84,499 expected in the current financial year. Further allocations and receipts are expected between now and 2024 on smaller developments, totalling £266,440. The total of all these receipts is £410,640. However, these SANG payments must fund not only SANG accommodation but also the environmental improvement, management, and maintenance of the park. Therefore, the funding of the SANG visitor centre elements are likely to require a significant element of forward funding until 2024

Alternative Options

- 3.11 There is an option to develop the SANG Visitor Centre facilities within the allocated £600,000 funding from developer contributions albeit without a café. While this would reduce Capital investment and risk to the Council, the combined Visitor Centre and Café is identified as a priority for Place within the Council Business Plan and generally this type of facility supports a café.
- 3.12 The creation of Southwood Country Park is a significant amenity for residents across the Borough and has already attracted considerable visitor numbers without any facilities. There is an aspiration to maximise visitor numbers and enhance the visitor experience by offering a high-quality café on the site subject to business case.
- 3.13 There are several SANG/SPA facilities which have a similar offer who have seen a significant uptake in visitor numbers following investment in an on-site café and an overall enhancement to the value of the local amenity.

4. IMPLICATIONS

Risks

- 4.1 There is a risk that the Café will not achieve the turnover projected in the business case. However, based upon the turnover received at a similar SANG establishment, the projected turnover is considered conservative and therefore the risk is perceived to be low.
- 4.2 The substantial developer contributions from Union Street, which will fund the development of the SANG Visitor Centre have been delayed until 2024 and there remains the risk that there could be further delay. This means that the Council may need to forward-fund this element if the project proceeds.
- 4.3 The agreement to lease has not yet been signed by the café operator. There are several exclusions in the project cost estimate (e.g. fit out of café) and agreement as to how these will be met will form part of the letting terms negotiation, as will site security.
- 4.4 Planning for the café/visitor centre has not yet been formally agreed, this is due in January 2022.
- 4.5 Following Covid, there is a shortage of key materials and consequently costs are rising. Contingency has been allocated within the proposed costs.
- 4.6 The risks set out in 4.1 and 4.2 above could materialise and impact on the payback period for the capital outlay thus increasing borrowing costs.
- 4.7 A detailed Final Business Case is included with this report (Appendix 1).

Legal Implications

- 4.8 There is an agreement for lease that needs to be signed with the café operator, within the project timescales. Draft heads of terms can be found in Appendix 3.

Financial and Resource Implications

- 4.9 The Capital Programme approved by Council in February 2021 did not include any budgetary provision for the Southwood Country Park scheme although it was recognised in the Revenue Budget, Capital Programme and Council Tax Level report ([FIN2106](#)) that

“there will be a continued review of capital spending requirements as the Council regeneration, new Property and Major Works programmes, and other schemes are brought forward in more detail, with affordability and deliverability will be a key consideration in this regard” [Para 7.7]

- 4.10 Council approved an allocation of £126,000 from the Stability and Resilience reserve at their meeting on 29 July 2021 to facilitate the design development and planning application for the Visitor Centre and Café ([RP2105](#)). This report sets out a revised cost of £60,000.
- 4.11 Members were advised that the SANG Visitor Centre elements are funded via developer contributions up to a maximum of £600,000. To date, the level of SANG contributions received is significantly behind initial expectations with material receipts not expected until 2024.
- 4.12 This report and associated appendices set out the business case for the Southwood Country Park Visitor Centre and Café. Whilst the business case sets out the financial viability of the scheme, this section of the report highlights the revenue and capital financing implications of approving this scheme.
- 4.13 The Council will need to finance the full cost of the Visitor Centre and Café as SANG contributions have not been received to date to cover the cost of the SANG elements of the scheme. There is a risk that these contributions are not received within the expected time period. An appropriate internal borrowing cost associated with this forward funding will be charged to the SANG.
- 4.14 The assumption within the financial implications is that the Council would need to undertake borrowing to support the scheme in the short-term. There is an opportunity cost to the Council financing the scheme in advance of SANG receipts. The Council's capital programme is predominantly financed from prudential borrowing and the overall level of external borrowing the Council is forecast to undertake to support its Capital Programme is significant. The Council currently has £102m of external debt and is forecast to increase to £154m (Treasury Management Strategy 2021/22 [FIN2014](#)) and will be revised in January 2022 to reflect the anticipated borrowing profile for the Union Yard scheme approved by Council in July 2021. Other things being equal, approval

of the capital scheme can be expected to increase the forecast level of borrowing.

- 4.15 It is worth noting that there are likely to be future sources of financing that can be applied to the scheme once received but at the time of writing this report the timing and scale of receipt is uncertain.
- The Council is in contract to deliver the Union Yard scheme. As outlined in paragraph 3.8 of this report, SANG receipts of £962,526 arise prior to occupation of the Union Yard residential units. The Council has already forward-funded works associated with the establishment of the SANG and would be the first call on SANG receipts.
 - The Council will, subject to adequate SANG receipts being generated, receive a capital receipt of £1m for the land at Southwood.
- 4.16 Whilst the Council does have capital receipts available to mitigate the impact of external borrowing, these are limited and will be allocated against the wider capital programme or to use flexibly in accordance with the approved Strategy for Flexible Use of Capital Receipts. Other capital receipts are likely to be generated from the sale of surplus assets in future years.
- 4.17 Therefore, members should be mindful of the total level of borrowing undertaken to support the capital programme and the impact this may have on the affordability of the wider capital programme as it is revised over the coming months. Members will consider the Capital Programme for 2022/23 to 2025/26 in February 2022.
- 4.18 This report sets out the revised estimate for the scheme is £901,000. Therefore, members are requested to approve a capital budget of £901,000 (£301,000 in 2021/22 and £600,000 in 2022/23) to enable the scheme to be delivered as set out in the report and business case.
- 4.19 A SANG contribution of up to £600,000 is available to fund the Visitor Centre elements only. On current estimates, £491,000 will be utilised (£460,000 to complete the build and 50% contribution towards the feasibility costs i.e. £30,000).

Equalities Impact Implications

- 4.20 A draft equalities Impact Assessment has been undertaken (Appendix 4). This highlights the benefits of easy access into the building for wheelchairs and the incorporation of a "Changing Room" style toilet (an upgrade from a disabled toilet).

5. CONCLUSIONS

- 5.1 Development of a Visitor Centre and Café at Southwood Country Park is identified as a priority for Place in the Council Business Plan. A Full Business Case has been developed to determine the capital investment required to fund the Café element of the scheme and the return-on-investment that would be achieved.

- 5.2 The total project costs to complete the scheme are £901,000. Of which £460,000 (excl. £30,000 Feasibility funding) is forward funding for SANG contribution which will be repaid by 2024 and £440,000 (excl. £30,000 feasibility funding) which will be repaid through rental and revenue contributions from the Café Operator.
- 5.3 The full business case has demonstrated a 13-year return on investment model based on an initial capital investment of £470,000 (total Capital funding cost of £727,900 (£25,100 for 30 years)) and projected income of £60,000 per annum.

M.J. TENNANT
PORTFOLIO HOLDER
MAJOR PROJECTS AND PROPERTY

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***Full Business Case –
Southwood Country Park Visitor Centre
and Cafe, Farnborough***

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1 Strategic Overview and Background

This business case is organised around a five-case structure designed to systematically ascertain that each investment proposal:

- i is supported by a compelling case for change – the ‘strategic case’
- ii optimises value for money – the ‘economic case’
- iii is commercially viable – the ‘commercial case’
- iv is financially affordable – the ‘financial case’, and
- v is achievable – the ‘management case’.

1.1 Project Description

In 2017, Cabinet resolved that Southwood Golf Club be closed to provide Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANG) in order to create natural open space and to mitigate the impact of new housing on the Special Protection Area (SPA). The new SANG would be called Southwood Country Park and the creation and management of the SANG would be funded through developer contributions.

Officers have been working with the Portfolio Holders and Deputy Leader to consider options for the former Golf Club buildings to include a visitor centre, toilets, ranger’s office, and education space, funded through developer contributions. There is an available funding pot of £600,000 for delivery of the SANG-related accommodation.

Several iterations of a design concept have been considered, culminating in a scheme which demonstrates that it is possible to deliver the SANG-related accommodation within the available £600k SANG contribution.

There is an aspiration to enhance this with a café. This element would not be funded by developer contributions as it is not an eligible cost and therefore any capital investment would be based on a business case which demonstrates the return-on-investment for this aspect.

The return-on-investment model is based on a 5% per annum return on capital investment (i.e., 20 year pay back). Work has been undertaken to understand the costs of developing the wider scope of the project and this Full Business Case provides the rationale for progressing the café build as part of the overall scope for delivery.

Soft market testing has been undertaken with several Café Operators including two with experience of running facilities in Country Parks to understand the financial model and viability of the investment. The most experienced operator that we engaged with advised that, in order to ensure the quality of the provision and offer and to secure a long-term relationship with a provider, a turnover-based rent will be necessary.

Following a process where a number of café operators were invited to submit bids a total of 8 bids were received. Analysis of the bids has been undertaken covering several factors including; reputation, experience & credibility, financials (rent and income projections), depth and quality of submission. This has enabled a full business case to be modelled.

The scope of the full business case only includes work required to progress an operational café/visitor centre and does not include other activity related the site development, for example, paths for the east side, a children's play park or a road crossing.

1.2 Project Objectives and Case for Change

The creation of Southwood Country Park is a significant amenity for residents across the Borough and has already attracted considerable visitor numbers without any facilities. There is an aspiration to maximise visitor numbers and enhance the visitor experience by offering a high-quality café on the site subject to business case.

There are several SANG/SPA facilities which have a similar offer who have seen a significant uptake in visitor numbers following investment in an on-site café and an overall enhancement to the value of the local amenity.

There is already funding for the SANG facilities which means that there is an opportunity to achieve better value for money by developing the café at the same time in a single building and let this to an experienced operator.

1.3 Internal and External Factors

The project will deliver significant community benefit for users across the Borough. The site is already widely used by dog-walkers and other users.

There is significant Member support for the delivery of the scheme.

1.4 Strategic Fit

Development of a Café and Visitor Centre at Southwood Country Park is identified as a priority for Place within the 'Council Business Plan 2021-2024 documented and agreed in June 2021. Specifically, it aligns with key objectives that include;

- Mitigating against climate change by implementing carbon neutral and sustainable schemes
- Maintaining financial resilience and generating additional ongoing income streams for the council
- Continue to develop parks and playgrounds that support the well-being of local residents

1.5 Options Appraisal

A number of options were presented in the outline business case. In summary, these included:

- Demolish existing building and leave the site cleared
- Refurbish the existing (former golf club) buildings with a residential dwelling
- Refurbish the existing (former golf club) buildings without a residential dwelling
- Demolish the existing buildings and construct brand new Visitor Centre and café

Detailed analysis of these options can be found in the outline business case document. The preferred option by the Council was to refurbish the existing building to create a new café/visitor centre without a residential dwelling.

The rationale behind this decision included the overall cost position as well as environment considerations, for example, reuse of the existing buildings means that the Council can minimise the carbon impact.

The scheme has not changed since the outline business plan proposals. The visitor centre will offer a cafe, a ranger's office, education space and new Changing Places accessible public toilets. There will be indoor and outdoor seating areas, a covered outdoor space, and disabled parking at front of the centre.

Plans for other facilities in and around the café and visitor centre include a children's play area and a dog wash, although costs for these are not included within this business case.

1.6 Environmental Sustainability and Climate Action Considerations

Environmental sustainability has been considered throughout the design phase. Where possible, all labour and material will be sustainably sourced.

The following elements are being reviewed as part of design and build as well as ongoing operations:

1.6.1 Waste

All waste arising from the site both through strip out and construction will be recorded and recycled where appropriate

1.6.2 Energy / insulation

The new building will predominantly run “off grid”, it is proposed that it will receive the majority of its electricity from solar energy, heating via a combination of ground source heat pump and regenerated extraction energy.

Rainwater harvesting will be used to provide water for toilet flushing and the dog wash facility, which will include solar powered pumps. It is intended that a storage tank will be located beneath the disabled parking bays.

The new roof surfacing will green using either moss or a similar CO2 high absorbing natural material.

The building structure will be upgraded to include improved wall and roof insulation replacement windows with reflective triple glazed glazing. A register of material source and its environmental credentials will be retained throughout the build in line with industry standards, every effort will be made to ensure the green credentials of the site are maintained.

All lighting will be low energy with sensor switches in rooms where irregular use takes place, for example, toilets.

1.6.3 Operations

Without gas, there is an expectation that the cafe operator will use low energy electrical appliances.

Implementation of an extraction heat recovery system will enable to be recycled into room and water heating. An emphasis on waste and recycling including food waste has been discussed with potential café operators with a recommendation that they should sign up to food recycling website or app

1.7 Equality and Diversity Impact Assessment

The proposed scheme will meet equality and diversity considerations by:

- Ensuring that the new café/visitor centre is fully DDA compliant
- Inclusion of a “changing places” fully accessible toilet/washroom *

There are no known Equalities Impact Implications arising from this report.

*A funding application to support this was made but ultimately unsuccessful. However it was felt that this would significantly enhance the offer at the Country Park and increase accessibility and user numbers.

2 Economic Case

2.1 Economic Appraisal

The estimated costs of building the café and visitor centre are as follows:

- Café £ 440,000
- Visitor Centre £ 461,000
- Total Costs £901,000

The costs for the visitor centre are slightly higher than the café due to an increased footprint and larger roof space and inclusion of the toilet facilities.

These costs include all build costs and fees and a 30% contingency on material costs, which are currently increasing due to the knock-on impacts of COVID. These costs have decreased from the estimated £1,074,000 that were produced in the outline business case. The saving can be attributed to delivering the project in house rather than via a third-party main contractor. Also, the project has strived to utilise as much of the existing building as possible to reduce costs.

A SANG contribution of up to £600k is available to fund the Visitor Centre elements only. On current estimates £491,000 will be utilised including a 50% - £30,000 - contribution to feasibility costs. The total cost to the Council will therefore be the £440,000 for the café plus a £30,000 contribution to feasibility costs, a total of £470,000 to be funded from Council resources / borrowing.

At current estimated borrowing rates, the cost would be fixed at 2% over a period of 30 years with MRP estimated at £15,700 pa and interest of £9,400 pa

In order to achieve a pay back over a maximum of 30 years and a 5% return on initial investment of £470,000 the project would require an income stream of approximately £23,500 per annum for 20 years.

Based on soft market testing it has been established that most Country Park operators consider the provision of a café on added amenity value terms rather than business case viability. Accordingly, there are no external benchmarks available. However, we have established that the café at Heather Farm in Horsell has been let on terms which provide for a base rent of £12,000 pa plus a further contribution based on 5% of turnover.

As can be seen in Section 3 the estimated annual income, based on responses received during the marketing campaign, would be around £65,000 per year once the café is established. Based on an average of £60,000 per year total income the payback period

would be reduced to approximately 13 years. The payback period is the number of years taken for the gross income received to match the capital outlay.

The return on investment is c7.7%. This measures in percentage terms, the amount of return on a particular investment, relative to the investment's cost.

If the borrowing requirement was over 40 years, the minimum revenue provision would be £11,750 and interest would remain at £9,400. Therefore, the total capital funding payment equates to £21,150 per year. This is a reduction of £3,950 per year compared to a borrowing requirement over 30years.

The build cost estimate excludes fit out costs and any additional infrastructure costs required by the SANG manager and Café Operator. It has been confirmed that these costs will be funded directly by the operator.

2.2 Additional Benefits

Based on discussions with other Country Park operators, the addition of a Café offers additional benefits to users of the facility enhancing the offer. These include:

- Increasing the length of time people spend at the SANG
- Attracting more visitors and different types of users/ age groups
- Enhancing visitor experience
- Creates a community meeting space and enables other activities to take place in the park
- Likely to attract users other than those visiting the park e.g., informal meetings, morning coffee stop etc.

The addition of a café and visitor centre will also create employment opportunities in the local area. These will include:

- Short-term construction jobs during the duration of the build
- Long-term jobs within the café/visitor centre to support day to day operations

2.3 Value for Money

The total costs of the project have decreased from the estimated £1,074,000 that were produced in the outline business case to approximately £901,000 currently. In addition, the feasibility costs initially expected to be around £126,00 are now estimated at £60,000. The saving can be attributed to delivering the project in house rather than via a third-party main contractor. Also, the project has striven to utilise as much of the existing building as possible to reduce costs.

The estimated pay back of the project costs were anticipated to be around 20 years at a Return on Investment (ROI) of 5%. Based on the latest projections of costs and income generation the project will achieve pay back within 13 years at a ROI of approx. 7.7%

3 Financial Case

3.1 Scheme Cost

Following the approval of the Outline Business Case funding of £126,000 was approved to complete a Feasibility Study on the design and build concept of the Café and Visitor Centre.

It is now anticipated that due to efficiencies in the procurement and delivery of the feasibility study that an amount of £60,000 will be expended on the study resulting in a saving of £66,000 on the original estimate.

As part of the feasibility study, the café and visitor centre architectural designs have been completed and shared with members for review and approval. The designs, along with a series of land and building surveys have enabled further cost analysis to be undertaken.

The estimated costs of building the café and visitor centre are as follows:

- Café £ 440,000
- Visitor Centre £ 461,000
- Total Costs £901,000

These costs include all build costs and fees and a 30% contingency on material costs, which are currently increasing due to the knock-on impacts of COVID. A full breakdown is outlined in the table below:

	Cafe	Visitors Centre
Building control fees	£280	£280
Structural designs	£1,270	£1,270
Site set up/welfare	£12,500	£12,500
scaffolding	£14,000	£14,000
Remove Chimney	£571	
External cladding	£25,000	£45,000
Roofing inc. green covering	£15,500	£19,500
Roof Insulation	£3,500	£6,000
Windows and doors	£45,000	£35,000
Structural beams openings	£2,500	£2,500
Internal first fix	£6,000	£6,000
Electrics	£25,000	£23,000
Plumbing	£15,000	£20,000

Internal 2nd fix	£53,000	£50,000
Security	£12,000	£12,000
Green energy	£50,000	£50,000
Landscape	£42,000	£42,000
	<u>£323,121</u>	<u>£339,050</u>
30% contingency	£96,936	£101,715
	<u>£420,057</u>	<u>£440,765</u>
Sub Total	<u>£420,057</u>	<u>£440,765</u>
Internal Labour Costs	£20,000	£20,000
TOTAL	<u>£440,057</u>	<u>£460,765</u>

A SANG contribution of up to £600k is available to fund the Visitor Centre elements only. On current estimates £491,000 will be utilised including a 50% - £30,000 - contribution to feasibility costs. The Council will need to forward fund this element as SANG contributions are profiled to be received over the next 18 months. The internal borrowing cost associated with this forward funding will be re-charged to the SANG.

The costs for the visitor centre are slightly higher than the café due to an increased footprint and larger roof space and inclusion of the toilet's facility.

The total net funding requirement from the Council therefore equates to £901,000.00 of which approximately £440,000 will be repaid through revenue from the Café and £460,000 from SANG contribution once received.

Detailed costs and funding requirements are shown below:

		CAFE	Visitors Centre		TOTAL
Estimated Build Costs		£323,121	£339,050		
30% contingency		£96,936	£101,715		
Total		£420,057	£440,765		
Fees (Council)		£20,000	£20,000		
		£440,057	£460,765		£900,822

The estimated build costs include supplier costs, professional fees (e.g. architects and building control), materials, security, and management fees. However, they exclude:

- Café fit-out costs (these will be funded by the operator)
- Specific infrastructure required by the SANG Manager and Café Operator
- The cost of ancillary retail kiosk units

3.1.1 Project Development Cost

	2021/22		2022/23		2023/24		2024/25	
Item	Capital	Revenue	Capital	Revenue	Capital	Revenue	Capital	Revenue
Feasibility	60,000							
Total	60,000							

3.1.2 Project Implementation Cost

Capital Elements

	21/22	22/23	23/24	24/25	Total (cumulative)
Visitor Centre	161,000	300,000			461,000
Cafe	140,000	300,000			440,000
Total	301,000	600,000			901,000

Total (Capital and Revenue)

	21/22	22/23	23/24	24/25	Total (cumulative)
Total	361,000	600,000			961,000

3.2 Spend Profile and Funding Sources

3.2.1 Project Development Cost

	21/22	22/23	23/24	24/25	Total
Feasibility approved budget	60,000				60,000
Total	60,000				60,000

3.2.2 Project Implementation Cost

	21/22	22/23	23/24	24/25	Total
SANG	161,000	300,000			461,000
Council Borrowing	140,000	300,000			440,000

<i>Total</i>	<i>301,000</i>	<i>600,000</i>			<i>901,000</i>

3.2.3 Capital Spend

	<i>21/22</i>	<i>22/23</i>	<i>23/24</i>	<i>24/25</i>	<i>Total</i>
<i>SANG</i>	<i>161,000</i>	<i>300,000</i>			<i>461,000</i>
<i>Council Borrowing</i>	<i>140,000</i>	<i>300,000</i>			<i>440,000</i>
<i>Feasibility</i>	<i>60,000</i>				
<i>Total</i>	<i>361,000</i>	<i>600,000</i>			<i>961,000</i>

3.2.4 Revenue Spend

	<i>21/22</i>	<i>22/23</i>	<i>23/24</i>	<i>24/25</i>	<i>Total</i>
<i>Total</i>					

3.2.5 Total Spend (Capital and Revenue)

	<i>21/22</i>	<i>22/23</i>	<i>23/24</i>	<i>24/25</i>	<i>Total</i>
<i>SANG (inc. 50% of Feasibility costs)</i>	<i>191,000</i>	<i>300,000</i>			<i>491,000</i>
<i>Council Borrowing</i>	<i>140,000</i>	<i>300,000</i>			<i>440,000</i>
<i>Feasibility – Council funded (50%)</i>	<i>30,000</i>				<i>30,000</i>
<i>Total</i>	<i>361,000</i>	<i>600,000</i>			<i>961,000</i>

Note: Of the £961,000 total costs a sum of £126,000 is already approved within the Capital Programme so an additional £835,000 would be required to be approved. Of this £491,000 would be funded by the SANG contribution leaving an additional £344,000 to be funded from the Council borrowing requirement.

The total Capital costs and funding implications are shown below:

		CAFE	Visitors Centre		TOTAL
Feasibility (SANG)			£ 30,000		£30,000
Feasibility (Council)		£30,000			£30,000
Estimated Build Costs		£323,121	£339,050		
30% contingency		£96,936	£101,715		

Total		£450,057	£470,765		
Fees Council		£20,000	£20,000		
		£470,057	£490,765		£960,822
SANG Contribution			-£490,765		-£490,765
Net Cost to the Council					£470,000*
Interest @ 2% per annum					£9,400
MRP - 30 Years					£15,700*

*Rounded

- Borrowing Costs for the £470,000 equate to the following annual charges based on a 30 Year payback model. (MRP)
- Annual Cost from year after build completion = £15,700
- Interest charges @2% per annum = £9,400
- Total annual financing charges amount to £25,100 per annum

3.2.6 SANG Funding and Timing Implications

The SANG Visitor Centre elements are funded via developer contributions up to a maximum of £600,000.00. This money has not been received by the Council due to delays in development. It was originally anticipated that a substantial proportion of this funding would be received in 2022/23. However, the Union St development that will contribute £962,525.80 of the SANG funding is now due to be occupied in 2024 prior to which the SANG payment must be made.

The Council will need to forward fund this element as SANG contributions are profiled to be received over the next 18 months. The internal borrowing cost associated with this forward funding will be re-charged to the SANG.

Currently £59,701 from another development has been received with a further £84,499 expected in the current financial year. Further allocations and receipts are expected between now and 2024 on smaller developments, totalling £266,440. The total of all these receipts is £410,640. These SANG payments must fund not only SANG accommodation but also the environmental improvement, management, and maintenance of the park. Therefore, the funding of the SANG visitor centre elements are likely to require a significant element of forward funding until 2024.

4 Commercial Case

4.1 Operation and Financial Viability

The property team marketed the availability of the cafe and invited rental offers through several channels.

Twenty-one parties responded to the marketing campaign and eight bids were received from potential operators indicating the rent they would offer, and, in some cases, the likely turnover expected from operations.

The Council will receive the full rental income and a 5% contribution of total annual turnover, after allowing for any rent-free period requested by the operators.

The following analysis is based on the preferred bidder's offer.

	Yr1	Yr2	Yr3	Yr4	Yr5	Yr6	Yr7	Yr8	Yr9	Yr10
Total	-48000	-53000	-54750	-56600	-58500	-61800	-63300	-64800	-64800	-64800

Based on annual rental and 5% contribution from total turnover the estimated income would amount to approximately £48,000 in the first full year rising to £65,000 by year 9 after allowing for a CPI rent increase on review in Year 6.

	Yr 0	Yr1	Yr2	Yr3	Yr4	Yr5	Yr6	Yr7	Yr8	Yr9
	Part Year *									
Financing Charges – 30 years	6300	25100	25100	25100	25100	25100	25100	25100	25100	25100
Total Income	-23500	-48000	-53000	-54750	-56600	-58500	-61800	-63300	-64800	-64800
Net surplus / deficit after financing	-17200	-22900	-27900	-29650	-31500	-33400	-36700	-38200	-39700	-39700

(*Part year has been assumed to be 66%)

The full financial effects of funding the building costs of the café and the income from the operator result in a revenue contribution of £22,900 in the first full year rising to £39,700 by year 10.

On a total Capital funding cost of £753,000 (£25,100 * 30 yrs.) the payback period would equate to approximately 13 years with income estimated at an average of £60,000 per year.

In addition, other potential sources of income have yet to be explored which could include the following and further increase the commercial opportunity for the Southwood SANG:

- Seasonal kiosk retail units close to the visitor centre
- Hiring of the visitor centre space with catering options
- Hiring of the penned area for dog users/ dog training
- Alternative uses of the Bungalow / storage area.

4.1.1 Ongoing Maintenance Costs

The café lease will incorporate a service charge mechanism through which the café operator will be charged a due proportion of cleaning, maintenance, and external decorations.

The balance of the remaining costs will be shared by the SANG operator and potentially, a small element to be met by the council, as Landlord.

The potential running costs of the Visitor Centre and Café have been assessed and are approximately £38,000 p.a. The exact allocation of costs will form part of finalising the lease negotiation and needs to be balanced with ensuring the assumed rent is achieved.

The breakdown of the costs and assumptions is included in the table below. However, the modelling of the SANG has been reviewed and can accommodate an annual cost of up to the full c.£38,000 p.a.

	<u>SUB TOTAL</u>
Business Rates *	£10,000
Cleaning	£20,000
WiFi	£1,200
Utilities **	£350
CCTV, Fire Alarm, Legionella etc	£355
Insurance	£4,000
Maintenance	£2,000
TOTAL	£37,885

*This is based on discussion with Revenues and allows for an increased value considered likely

**The design includes PV and Ground Source Heat Pumps so the utility costs assume service charge and a contingency in case the occasional draw on mains exceeds the feed in tariff

4.2 Procurement and Legal Considerations

Delivery of the project will be led by Principal Engineer, John Trusler, with client-side oversight and the Council acting as lead contractor, appointing the relevant design and delivery team as required. Procurement of the various works packages will be carried out in accordance with council procurement rules and is likely to involve use of frameworks as well as traditional tendering and evaluation.

A detailed construction procurement strategy and programme will be developed as part of the next stage of delivery. This will mainly be through existing frameworks however specialist suppliers will be required for certain elements, and these may require more detailed procurement processes to be adopted.

4.3 Social Value

The creation of Southwood Country Park is a significant amenity for residents across the Borough and has already attracted considerable visitor numbers without any facilities. There is an aspiration to maximise visitor numbers and enhance the visitor experience by offering a high-quality café on the site subject to business case.

There are several SANG/SPA facilities which have a similar offer who have seen a significant uptake in visitor numbers following investment in an on-site café and an overall enhancement to the value of the local amenity.

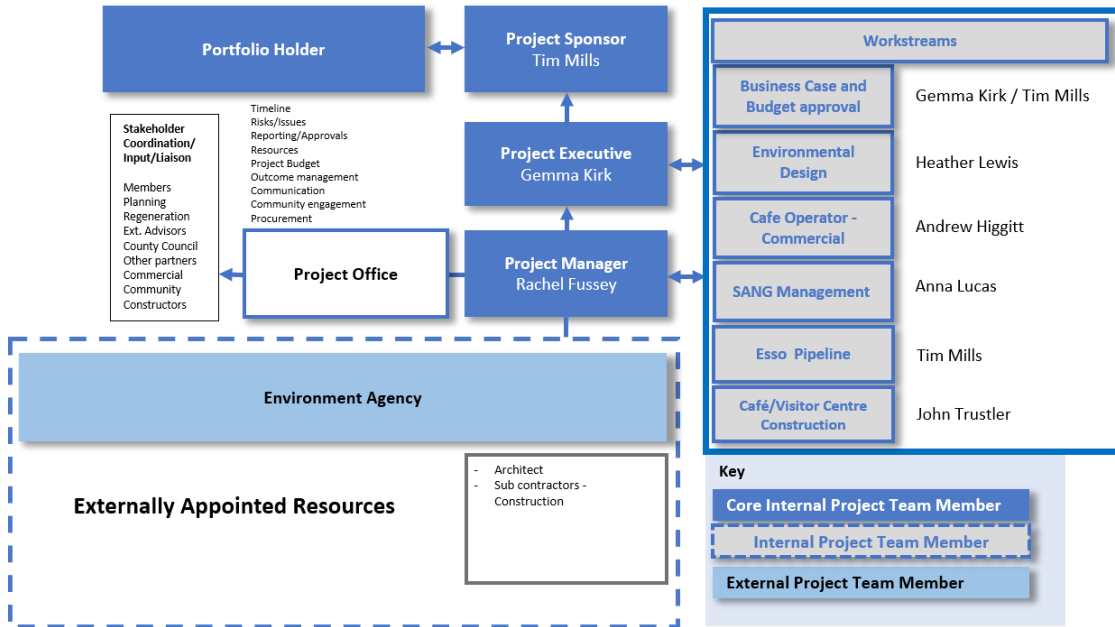
The project will deliver significant community benefit for users across the Borough. The site is already widely used by dog-walkers and other users, once permanent facilities are in place, we are confident, based upon the success of similar facilities elsewhere, that user numbers will increase, and that the facility will attract a range of users.

The addition of a Café offers additional benefits to users of the facility enhancing the offer. These include:

- Increasing the length of time people spend at the SANG
- Attracting more visitors and different types of users/ age groups
- Enhancing visitor experience
- Creates a community meeting space and enables other activities to take place in the park
- Likely to attract users other than those visiting the park e.g., informal meetings, morning coffee stop etc.

5 Management Case

5.1 Project Governance and Delivery



5.2 Resources

Role	Name
Sponsor	<i>Tim Mills</i>
Project Executive	<i>Gemma Kirk</i>
Project Manager	<i>Rachel Fussey</i>
Project office support	<i>Charlie Heavens</i>
Internal Technical (Surveyor)	<i>John Trusler</i>
Finance Lead	<i>Steve Ward</i>
Legal Lead	<i>Julia Hutley-Savage</i>
Property Lead	<i>Paul Brooks</i>
Commercial Lead	<i>Andrew Higgitt</i>
Procurement Lead	<i>John Trusler with support from Procurement Department (Portsmouth Council)</i>

5.3 Programme/ Project Plan

<i>Deliverable/ Milestone</i>	<i>Date</i>
ELT approval to progress scheme delivery and capital budget allocation subject to Cabinet approval	<i>27th October 2021</i>
Cabinet Approval to progress scheme delivery and capital budget allocation	<i>16th November 2021</i>
Council Approval	<i>2nd December 2021</i>
Full Planning Submission	<i>26th November 2021</i>
Planning approval	<i>19th The January 2022</i>
Sub-Contractors Appointment	<i>21st January 2022</i>
Café operator (Agreement for Lease)	<i>31st January 2022</i>
Construction Completes	<i>25th July 2022</i>
Café Operational (12 week fit out)	<i>1st October 2022</i>

5.4 Land acquisition, Planning, and other Consents

Planning for the café and visitor centre will be submitted end November following public consultation which is taking place from 18th October to 12th November.

The planning submission will include the designs for the new café/visitor, design and access statement and a summary of the consultation and responses provided. The architects will be responsible for undertaking the full submission with all appropriate documents.

An Agreement for Lease will be entered into with the café operator, through which the operator will contract to lease the café on completion of construction and handover. Based on a full commercial lease, the café operator would be fully responsible for the running and maintenance costs associated with that part of the building. VAT will be included in the lease agreement with the café operator.

5.5 Stakeholder Engagement and Consultation

Status meetings are held with Counsellor Martin Tennant every 3 weeks in his role as Major Project and Property Portfolio Holder.

Discussions have been undertaken with the Member Steering Group, plans have been shared and feedback incorporated.

Southwood Ward councillors have also seen and agreed the scheme proposals.

5.6 Project Assurance

Regular project updates are provided to the Property Programme Board in the form of a monthly status highlight report. When necessary and on an exception basis, issues are escalated through this route.

Fortnightly project meetings are undertaken with the full project team.

5.7 Monitoring and Evaluation

Project spend will be monitored and reported via Monthly Highlight Report to Property Programme Board.

The technical team responsible for delivery of the proposed scheme will be subject to quality assurance and delivery sign off. All invoices will be reviewed prior to approval.

The café operator procurement process will be managed by the Property Team and normal governance procedures will apply.

6 Risks, Constraints, Issues and Dependencies

A detailed Risk and Issues register is maintained within the full project documentation. A summary of the key Risks is provided below:

6.1 Risks and Project Constraints

Risk	Probability	Impact	Mitigation
The projected income is based on a % of turnover so cannot be guaranteed as there is a risk that the Café will not achieve the turnover projected in the business case.	L	H	Based upon the soft market testing this risk is low due to the visitor numbers already using the Park as well as Southwood Woodland who would also access the Café.
At the moment there is no pedestrian crossing between at Ively Road between the two park areas, which may deter the public as potential café customers.	M	M	Options are being explored and any potential crossing is subject to approval by Hampshire County Council as the highway authority.
The government granted a Development Consent Order in October 2020 for the Southampton to London Pipeline Project ('Esso pipeline') that will replace 90km of aviation fuel pipeline. Part of the new pipeline crosses the western and eastern sections of the park. Work affecting the park is expected to take place between May and October 2022. If this work is delayed, it may impact footfall around the SANG and the café.	M	M	The project team are working with Esso to continuously review and understand timescales so that any mitigating actions can be implemented
Following Covid, there is a shortage of key materials and consequently costs are rising.	H	M	Contingency has been allocated within the proposed costs.
The substantial developer contributions which will fund the development of the SANG Visitor Centre have been delayed until 2024 and there remains the risk that there could be further delay	M	H	The Council will need to forward-fund this element if the project proceeds.

6.2 Issues

- No known issues at the time of writing this report

6.3 Dependencies

- Appointment of preferred café operator and legal position with respect to the lease agreed between both parties
- Fit out of the café is to be undertaken by the café operator who will cover all associated costs, this will form part of the letting terms negotiation.
- Approval of café/visitor designs by Rushmoor Borough Council planning office (Due Jan 2022)

7 Recommendations and Next Steps

7.1 Summary

Delivery of a Café and Visitor Centre at Southwood Country Park is identified as a priority in the Council Business Plan.

The total project costs to complete the scheme are £901,000. Of which £460,000.00 is forward funding for SANG contribution which will be repaid by 2024 and £440,000.00 (excl. £30,000 feasibility funding) which will be repaid through rental and revenue contributions from the Café Operator.

This business case has demonstrated a 13-year payback on borrowing based on an initial capital investment of £470,000.00 (*£440,000.00 + £30,000 feasibility*) and projected income of £60,000 p.a.

7.2 Recommendations

Approve release of a further £374,000 to be funded from the Council's Capital Programme, in financial year 2021/22 for the detailed design and delivery of the Café and Visitor Centre. Of the £126,000 which has previously been approved as part of the Feasibility Study, only £60,000 is expected to be spent, leaving £66,000 available to fund the remaining scheme.

7.3 Conclusion

Work has been undertaken to understand and establish the return-on-investment model for the development of a Café facility as part of Southwood Visitor Centre. Based purely on income generation, this business case outlines a 13-year payback period for an investment based on a total Capital funding cost of £727,900 ($£25,100 * 30 \text{ yrs.}$) with income estimated at an average of £60,000 per year.

The scheme is identified as a deliverable within the Council Business Plan and will add significant amenity value to the facility for the Borough.

Subject to full business case approval, the project team will proceed to detailed design, delivery and implementation of the refurbished café and visitor centre.

<i>Project Approval (Board Decision)</i>	<i>Programme Board</i>
<i>Date</i>	<i>27th October 2021</i>

By virtue of paragraph(s) 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A
of the Local Government Act 1972.

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Full Equality Impact Assessment

Guidance Notes

As a public sector organisation, we have a legal duty (under the Equality Act 2010) to show that we have identified and considered the impact and potential impact of our activities on all people with 'protected characteristics'.

This applies to policies, services and our employees. The level of detail of this consideration will depend on what you are assessing, who it might affect, and how serious any potential impacts might be. We use this Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) template to complete this process and evidence our consideration. The EIAs analyse how all our work as a council might impact differently on different groups, help us make good decisions and evidence how we have reached these decisions.

When to complete an EIA:

- When planning or developing a new service, policy or strategy
- When ending or substantially changing a service, policy or strategy
- When there is an important change in the service, policy or strategy, or in the borough, or at a national level (eg: a change of legislation)

Do you need to complete an EIA? Consider:

- Is the policy, decision or service likely to be relevant to any people because of their protected characteristics?
- How many people is it likely to affect?
- How significant are its impacts?
- Does it relate to an area where there are known inequalities?
- How vulnerable are the people (potentially) affected?

If there are potential impacts on people but you decide not to complete an EIA it is usually sensible to document why.

Equality Impact Assessment Template

Title of EIA	Southwood Country Park - Business Case for Repurposing of Buildings
Date of EIA	01/11/21
Department/Service	Property
Focus of EIA	As part of the Southwood Country Park development the Council is looking to repurpose the existing buildings to accommodate a visitor centre, toilets, rangers' office, and education space. Subject to approval of a business case it is also proposed to use part of the existing structure as a café.

1.Previous EIA and outcomes What actions did you plan last time and what improved as a result? (If there is no previous EIA write Not applicable)
N/A

2.Equality analysis and potential actions Assessment of overall impacts on those with the following protected characteristics and what potential actions could be undertaken to mitigate impact.					
	Positive	Neutral	Negative	What are the positive and negative impacts?	How will benefits be enhanced and negative impacts minimised or eliminated?
Age		Y			
Disability	Y			Changing places facility to be provided. Other facilities to be DDA compliant e.g. wide doorways, ramps provided	
Gender Reassignment			Y	No specific Gender neutral toilet provided	
Marriage or civil partnership		Y			

Pregnancy or maternity	Y			Baby changing facilities to be provided Gates on site are being reviewed to make sure they are pushchair and wheelchair friendly.	
Race		Y			
Religion or belief		Y		Will depend on menu provided by cafe	
Sex		Y			
Sexual orientation		Y			

4.Consultation & community feedback

What consultation has taken place or will take place with each identified group?

Age	A public planning consultation event has taken place both online and face to face at the Southwood site. Collectively, these yielded approx. 400 community responses. Of these, fewer than 2% of the total raised relevant EIP issues. These predominantly concerned the proposed number of disabled car parking bays. Currently, two are proposed directly outside the café building and there are a further 2 within the main Ivey Road carpark (which has a total capacity of c.90 spaces) but this number will be reviewed and possibly extended when the car park is re-surfaced in the next 12-18mths.
Disability	
Gender Reassignment	
Marriage or civil partnership	
Pregnancy or maternity	
Race	
Religion or belief	
Sex	
Sexual orientation	

5. We understand the Council requires this Equality Impact Assessment and we take responsibility for its completion and quality.

Completed by: name and role	Rachel Fussey Property Project Manger	Date 1 st November 2021
Signed off by: Head of Service	Paul Brooks Head of Property, Estates & Technical Services	Date 1 st November 2021

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CABINET

Meeting held on Tuesday, 19th October, 2021 at the Council Offices, Farnborough 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 Marina Munro, Planning and Economy 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

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 **1st November, 2021**.

36. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST –**

Having regard to the Council's Code of Conduct for Councillors, no declarations of interest were made.

37. **MINUTES –**

The Minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet held on 21st September, 2021 were confirmed and signed by the Chairman.

38. **BUDGET STRATEGY 2022-23 –**

(Cllr Paul Taylor, Corporate Services Portfolio Holder)

The Cabinet considered Report No. FIN2122, which set out the budgetary framework to support the preparation of the Council's 2022/23 budget.

The Cabinet was informed that Covid-19 had continued to have a significant impact on the Council's financial position in 2021/22 and that the Council, along with many other local authorities, faced significant financial challenges over the medium term. The Report set out the Council's current financial position and explained how Members would be kept informed of the strategy for addressing the projected core budget deficit highlighted in the Medium Term Financial Strategy, which had been published in February, 2021. The Report, at Section 3 in Appendix A, outlined the approach that would be taken when setting the detailed revenue and capital budgets for 2022/23.

It was reported that Surrey County Council, with contributions from a number of local authority partners, was bidding to purchase Tice's Meadow, Badshot Lea, from Hanson Aggregates. It was recommended that the Council should make a

contribution of up to £50,000. Members heard that the site was heavily used by Rushmoor residents, despite not being located in the Borough.

The Cabinet

(i) **RESOLVED**

- (a) that the Budget Strategy for 2022/23, as outlined in Section 3 of Appendix A of Report No. FIN2122, be approved;
- (b) the forecast for capital receipts and the pooling of capital receipts to support the capital programme, as outlined in Section 5 of Appendix A of the Report, be noted; and

(ii) **RECOMMENDED TO THE COUNCIL** that a contribution of up to £50,000 towards the purchase of Tice's Meadow by Surrey County Council, as set out in Section 5 of Appendix A of the Report, be approved.

39. **FARNBOROUGH LEISURE CENTRE - DEMOLITION UPDATE AND BUDGET –**
(Cllr Martin Tennant, Major Projects and Property Portfolio Holder)

The Cabinet considered Report No. REG2101, which set out a request for additional funding from the approved capital programme to enable the completion of the demolition and clearance of the Farnborough Leisure Centre site.

The Cabinet was reminded that it had agreed the funding for the demolition in June, 2021 and had appointed Willmott Dixon Construction Limited as contractors. Since that time, intrusive demolition and asbestos surveys had been carried out and significant additional asbestos had been found. Members were informed that this, along with additional works that were required to re-route utility cables on the site, had led to the increase in the costs of the demolition. The Council's Technical Advisers and Cost Consultants, Artelia UK, had interrogated the revised figures supplied by Willmott Dixon and had recommended acceptance of the final revised contract sum.

The Cabinet expressed strong support for the progression of the project to provide residents with a new, modern leisure centre on the site.

The Cabinet RESOLVED that

- (i) the update in relation to the revised contract sum and programme for demolition, as set out in Report No. REG2101, be noted; and
- (ii) the release of a further £204,000 funding from the approved Capital Programme, to increase the demolition project budget to £1,339,000 as a result of the removal of the additional asbestos and other additional costs, as set out in the Report, be approved.

40. **EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC –**

RESOLVED: That, taking into account the public interest test, the public be excluded from the meeting during the discussion of the under mentioned item to avoid the disclosure of exempt information within the paragraph of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act, 1972 indicated against the item:

Minute No.	Schedule 12A Para. No.	Category
41	3	Information relating to financial or business affairs

**THE FOLLOWING ITEM WAS CONSIDERED
IN THE ABSENCE OF THE PUBLIC**

41. **PROPERTY ASSET DISPOSAL –**

(Cllr Martin Tennant, Major Projects and Property Portfolio Holder)

The Cabinet considered Exempt Report No. PETS2119, which sought approval to dispose of the freehold interest in a property owned by the Council.

Members were informed that the disposal of the property should be seen in the context of the Commercial Investment Property Strategy. The property had not performed as expected and it was considered that the asset was management intensive and that the income received was risky in comparison to other assets. The Council had received an offer for the purchase of the property and, in answer to a question, it was confirmed that the proposed sale price was higher than the purchase price that had been paid by the Council.

The Cabinet RESOLVED that the sale of the property, on the terms set out in Exempt Report No. PETS2119, be approved.

The Meeting closed at 7.27 pm.

CLLR D.E. CLIFFORD, LEADER OF THE COUNCIL

CABINET

Meeting held on Tuesday, 16th November, 2021 at the Council Offices, Farnborough at 7.00 pm.

Voting Members

Cllr D.E. Clifford, Leader of the Council

Cllr Marina Munro, Planning and Economy 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

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 **29th November, 2021**.

42. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST –**

Having regard to the Council's Code of Conduct for Councillors, no declarations of interest were made.

43. **MINUTES –**

The Minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet held on 19th October, 2021 were confirmed and signed by the Chairman.

44. **COUNCIL BUSINESS PLAN AND RISK REGISTER QUARTERLY UPDATE JULY - SEPTEMBER 2021/22 –**

(Cllr Adrian Newell, Democracy, Strategy and Partnerships Portfolio Holder)

The Cabinet received Report No. ACE2106, which set out progress in delivering the Council Business Plan projects during the second quarter of 2021/22. Members were informed that progress against eighteen key projects was included in the Report, along with the Council's business performance monitoring information and the Council's Corporate Risk Register. It was reported that, at the end of the second quarter, 56% of live projects were on track, with the remainder showing an amber status.

In response to a question, it was confirmed that 172 tonnes of food waste had been collected from households during the first three weeks of operation.

The Cabinet NOTED the progress made towards delivering the Council Business Plan, as set out in Report No. ACE2106, and the risks identified within the Corporate Risk Register in October, 2021.

45. **SOUTHWOOD COUNTRY PARK - BUSINESS CASE FOR REPURPOSING EXISTING BUILDINGS –**

(Cllr Martin Tennant, Major Projects and Property Portfolio Holder)

The Cabinet considered Report No. PETS2120, which set out a request for capital funding for the detailed design and development of the Southwood Country Park Visitor Centre and Cafe in Farnborough.

Members were informed that the feasibility study and initial design development in respect of the Visitor Centre and Café had now been completed successfully. The proposed development would make use of the existing building and would incorporate many environmentally sustainable features, including a green roof, ground source heating and PV panels. Members were informed that the current cost of the scheme was lower than the figure quoted previously. Members were advised that the Report carried an incorrect figure at paragraph 3.5 and that the total cost project cost, including initial design and development costs, was £1,074,000 and not £1,027,000 as stated.

In discussing the proposals, the Cabinet expressed strong support for the development of the new facility and noted that the Park was had proving popular with local residents.

The Cabinet

(i) **NOTED** that

(a) an agreement for lease, with a suitably experienced café operator, would be entered into by 9th February, 2022, as set out in Report No. PETS2120, as amended at the meeting;

(b) planning permission had not yet been granted for the scheme, with an application due to be submitted in January, 2022; and

(ii) **RECOMMENDED TO THE COUNCIL** that £901,000 be added to the Capital Programme for the Southwood Country Park Visitor Centre and Café, noting the capital financing implications set out in paragraph 4.14 of the Report.

46. **REVIEW OF LOCAL LAND CHARGES FEES –**

(Cllr Paul Taylor, Corporate Services Portfolio Holder)

The Cabinet considered Report No. LEG2104, which set out a proposed revised scheme of fees for the Council's Local Land Charges service.

Members were informed that the fees and charges had not been reviewed for some years and that the new fee structure would enable the service to demonstrate full costs recovery.

The Cabinet RESOLVED that the new fees, as set out in Report No. LEG2104, be approved.

The Meeting closed at 7.25 pm.

CLLR D.E. CLIFFORD, LEADER OF THE COUNCIL

CORPORATE GOVERNANCE, AUDIT AND STANDARDS COMMITTEE

Meeting held on Monday, 27th September, 2021 at the Council Offices, Farnborough at 7.00 pm.

Voting Members

Cllr Sue Carter (Chairman)
Cllr P.J. Cullum (Vice-Chairman)

Cllr Jessica Auton
Cllr Jib Belbase
Cllr Sophia Choudhary
Cllr A.K. Chowdhury
Cllr A.J. Halstead
Cllr Sarah Spall

Cllr J.B. Canty (Standing Deputy for Conservative Group)

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Cllr Christine Guinness, Cllr Prabesh KC and Cllr Jacqui Vosper.

15. MINUTES

The Minutes of the Meeting held on 27th July 2021 were signed as a correct record of the proceedings.

16. APPOINTMENT OF INDEPENDENT PERSON (AUDIT)

The Committee considered the Executive Director and Monitoring Officer's Report No. ED2101, which set out the outcome of the process to appoint an Independent Person (Audit) to the Committee and recommended that the Council should be asked to confirm the appointment of Gwilym Davies (known as Tom Davies) as an Independent Member of the Corporate Governance, Audit and Standards Committee.

It was noted that the appointment had followed a public advertisement, written application, and interview panel which had comprised the Chairman of the Committee, the Chief Executive and Executive Director/Monitoring Officer.

The Report set out the background to the appointment, role description and a synopsis of Mr Davies' area of expertise and experience.

The Committee was introduced to Mr. Tom Davies who addressed the Committee on his background and work experience.

The Committee **RECOMMENDED TO THE COUNCIL** that Mr Gwilym Davies (known as Tom Davies) be confirmed as an Independent Person (Audit) on the Corporate Governance, Audit and Standards Committee for a three-year term.

17. ANNUAL OMBUDSMAN COMPLAINT REVIEW LETTER 2021

The Committee received the Monitoring Officer's Report No. IT2175 which updated the Committee on the Annual Review Letter 2021 of the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (LGSCO), which provided an annual summary of statistics on the decisions made by the LGSCO in respect of the Council for the year ending 31st March 2021. It was noted that, at the end of March 2020, the LGSCO had taken the step of temporarily stopping its casework, in the wider public interest, to allow authorities to concentrate efforts on vital frontline services during the first wave of the Covid-19 outbreak. Following feedback from authorities, it had been decided that it would be unnecessary for the LGSCO to pause casework again. Instead, authorities had been encouraged to talk to the LGSCO on an individual basis about difficulties responding to any stage of an investigation, including implementing LGSCO recommendations.

The Report advised that the LGSCO had carried out no detailed investigations on Rushmoor during 1st April 2020 to 31st March 2021 and therefore there were no further recommendations for service improvement. The Report provided the Council with the evidence that the Council was responding well to complaints through the current Complaints Policy without any having had to be escalated to the Ombudsman during the review period in question.

RESOLVED: That the Monitoring Officer's Report No. IT2175 be noted.

18. RUSHMOOR COMMUNITY AWARD 2021

The Head of Democracy and Community reported that the small group of Members from the Committee, which had been appointed at the previous meeting, had met on 2nd September 2021 to consider over 30 nominations for the Community Award 2021. The nominations had been assessed against the criteria for the Community Award.

The Committee was advised that Beryl Yeomans and Judi Page had been selected to receive the Award. It was noted that the Award to Judi Page was a posthumous award and that members of her family would be invited to receive the award. The presentation of the Award would be made at the Council Meeting on 8th December 2021.

It was further noted that those people who had been nominated for their voluntary work during the Covid-19 pandemic would be invited to an event hosted by Rushmoor Voluntary Services and the Council at Princes Hall in November 2021 to recognise volunteers and to say thank you for their work during the pandemic.

RESOLVED: That the Head of Democracy and Community's report be noted.

19. STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS 2019/20 - UPDATE NO. 5

The Committee received the Executive Head of Finance's Report No. FIN2120, which informed Members of audit progress for the Council's Statement of Accounts for 2019/20 and the audit opinion since the Committee meeting on 27th July 2021. The Committee was reminded that the deadline for issuing a final set of audit statement of accounts and audit opinion of 30th November 2020 had not been met.

The Chairman welcomed to the meeting (via Microsoft Teams), Maria Grindley and Justine Thorpe from Ernst & Young (EY).

The Committee was advised that following consideration by the Committee of Audit Results Report at its meeting on 27th July 2021, officers from the Council and EY had held further meetings in July and August to assess progress and resolve audit queries in relation to the 2019/20 audit opinion. It had become clear during August 2021 that there would be no prospect of the outstanding information being provided before the end of the month, preventing the audit reaching a conclusion. It had therefore been agreed to work towards a revised timescale for the audit opinion and this was anticipated to be available during October 2021, subject to outstanding issues having been resolved. The Chief Executive and the Committee Chairman had been made aware of the delay and the consequential impact this would have on the timescale for the 2020/21 audit work.

The Committee was advised that the detailed Disclosure Note that addressed Going Concern issues had been provided to EY during August with a cashflow forecast covering the period required. This set out the updated impact on the Council's finances from Covid-19 and any Post Balance Sheet Event (PBSE) given the ongoing risk Covid-19 posed to the Council's financial standing.

It was also confirmed that all of the outstanding EY queries had been sent over to EY at the end of the previous week and were currently being looked at by EY. Maria Grindley confirmed that the company was pushing to get the audit opinion signed off as soon as possible and, if the answered queries had provided all the information required, every attempt would be made to finalise the audit opinion by the end of October 2021.

During discussion, Members raised questions concerning the reasons for the time taken to respond to information requested by EY and the impact on the 2020/21 audit. In response, Members were advised that staff absence due to sickness and other priority work for the Property Team together with historic information not yet being available digitally had all contributed to the delays. The Committee was also advised that, for the 2020/21 audit, there was a requirement to revalue all of the Council's properties. To ensure that similar issues were not experienced for the 2020/21 audit, steps had been taken to mitigate this including additional staffing resource and the roll out of the new property system.

RESOLVED: That

- (i) the Statement of Accounts Update Report No. FIN2120 be noted;
- (ii) the indicative timetable for approval of the 2019/20 Statement of Accounts and receiving the Audit Opinion be noted; and
- (iii) subject to all Members of the Committee being provided with a copy of the audited Statement of Accounts and the Audit Results Report in advance, the Chairman of the Committee and the Executive Head of Finance be authorised to approval formally and certify the audited Statement of Accounts 2019/20 and to receive the final External Auditor's Report.

20. **ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT - 2020/21**

The Committee considered the Executive Head of Finance's Report No. FIN2117, which presented the Annual Governance Statement 2020/21 (set out in Appendix A to the Report) for review and approval. The Council was required by the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 to prepare and publish an Annual Governance Statement in order to report publicly on the extent to which the Council complied with its Code of Corporate Governance, including how the Council monitored the effectiveness of its arrangements in the year and on any planned changes to the governance arrangements in the coming year.

The Report set out the methodology for compiling the Annual Governance Statement and the requirements of the Committee in reviewing the Annual Governance Statements in order to be satisfied that the Annual Governance Statement reflected the risk environment and any actions required to improve it and demonstrated how governance supported the achievement of the Council's objectives.

During discussion, Members asked for an update on the temporary delegation arrangements currently in place due to the Covid-19 pandemic and when these would be removed.

RESOLVED: That

- (i) the Council's Annual Governance Statement 2020/21 be approved;
- (ii) approval be given to the Chief Executive and the Leader of the Council signing the Annual Governance Statement; and
- (iii) approval be given to the publication of the Annual Governance Statement alongside the Council's Statement of Accounts.

21. **TREASURY MANAGEMENT AND NON-TREASURY INVESTMENT OPERATIONS 2020/21**

The Committee received the Executive Head of Finance's Report No. FIN2121, which set out the main activities of the treasury management and non-treasury

investment operations during 2020/21. This was a statutory requirement under the CIPFA Code of Practice on Treasury Management.

It was noted that the Council's treasury team had continued to concentrate on the security of investments, taking due regard of the returns available. The return on treasury management activity was in line with the revised budget for 2020/21. Pooled funds had proved to be robust and had performed well given the wider economic downturn as a result of Covid-19. The Report advised that, with increased levels of borrowing, the treasury team continually reviewed the Borrowing Strategy, weighing up interest rate levels and risk of refinancing. During the 2020/21 financial year short-term interest rates had remained low and were forecast to remain low. However, borrowing levels had increased, raising refinancing risk. It was confirmed that levels of borrowing would be continually reviewed to mitigate refinancing risk.

The Committee was advised that total borrowing as at 31st March 2021 was £102 million, which was an increase of £12 million from the 2019/20 year-end position. The increased level of borrowing had been offset by reduced interest rate for borrowing. This had resulted in interest cost of borrowing decreasing by £83,000 compared with 2019/20 costs. The Council's non-treasury investments risk exposure as at 31st March 2021 was £155.1 million, of which £91.6 million was funded via external loans. The rate of return across all the Council's investments had been variable. However, the aggregate rate of return on all Council investments was in line with the estimated return for 2020/21 which was due to the cost associated with commercial property being clarified during the financial year and the impact of Covid-19.

During discussion, Members raised questions regarding the Civic Quarter and Union Yard projects, the work of Arlingclose and whether Arlingclose could provide updates and training to the Committee.

RESOLVED: That the Executive Head of Finance's Report No. FIN2121 be noted.

22. **INTERNAL AUDIT - AUDIT UPDATE**

The Committee received the Interim Audit Manager's Report No. AUD2104 which provided: an update on work carried out by Internal Audit in Quarters 1 and 2 2021-22; an update on progress towards the Audit Plan for 2021-22; a schedule of work expected to be delivered in Quarter 3; and, an update on the outstanding audit issues from Internal Audit reports covering 2019-20 and 2020-21 focusing on the high-risk issues and management agreed actions with deadlines.

In discussing the Report, Members raised questions regarding: staffing resources contingency plans in place in respect of both Internal and External Audit work; the possible effect of more flexible working on work to be done; the need for more collaboration with service managers; and, the Section 113 Agreement with Wokingham Borough Council and how effective this had been. Members requested that an updated plan setting out achievable timescales for each of the outstanding actions be provided at the next meeting and were advised that this work was already underway. In some cases, this would require some re-prioritisation and/or additional resources to ensure outstanding work was completed within a reasonable timeframe.

RESOLVED: That

- (i) the audit work carried out in Quarters 1 and 2 be noted;
- (ii) the update to the expected deliverables for Quarter 3 be noted: and
- (iii) a revised plan setting out clear timings for the completion of the outstanding high priority audit issues be provided by the next meeting of the Committee.

23. **INTERNAL AUDIT OPINION 2020/21**

The Committee considered the Audit Manager's Report No. AUD2105 which set out the Internal Audit coverage, findings and performance for 2020/21 and presented the Audit Manager's overall assurance opinion on the adequacy and effectiveness of the Council's framework of governance, risk management and control environment. The Report also covered the self-assessment which had been carried out against the Public Sector Internal Audit Standards (PSIAS) and the progress on the Quality and Assurance Improvement Plan (QAIP) for the year.

The Internal Audit Plan for 2020/21 had been approved by the Committee on 23rd March 2020. Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, changes had had to be made to the Plan as assurances had been required in other areas of the organisation. Subsequent changes to the Audit Plan had been communicated to the Committee within regular update reports. Covid-19 had had an adverse impact on the delivery of audits against the Audit Plan. The Council had prioritised its response to the pandemic and focused on supporting communities and ensuring vital services were provided. This had meant that planned audits had in some cases been deferred as the availability of auditors and Council staff had not necessarily been aligned. Remote working during the pandemic had also had an impact on the scope of audits covered during the year. Appendix A to the Report set out the areas of assurance which had been obtained in order to form the audit opinion.

In the opinion of the Internal Audit Manager, the reduced number and scope of audits meant that it was not appropriate to provide a full overall audit opinion on Rushmoor Borough Council's framework of governance, risk management and management controls. This had been due to a combination of factors including reduced audit resources and diversion of service resources to the Council's response to the pandemic. Where audits had identified areas for improvement, Internal Audit had worked with management to agree appropriate corrective actions and a timescale for improvement. The Report also advised on the reasons for the key areas of non-compliance for the PSIAS.

RESOLVED: That

- (i) the coverage assurance of assurance obtained across the Council be noted;
- (ii) the level of internal control assessed in 2020/21 through opinion-based audit assurance work be noted;

- (iii) the Audit Opinion given for 2020/21, set out in Appendix A to the Report, be noted;
- (iv) the Performance Indicators for the internal audit activity for 2021/22 be endorsed;
- (v) the self-assessment exercise against the Public Sector Internal Audit Standards and the areas of non-conformance with the standards be noted; and
- (vi) the Quality and Assurance Improvement Plan for 2020/21 set out in Appendix 3 to the Internal Auditor's Opinion, which detailed the areas of improvement to reduce the areas where audit activity did not conform to the PSIAS standards be endorsed.

The meeting closed at 9.02 pm.

CLLR SUE CARTER (CHAIRMAN)

DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

Meeting held on Wednesday, 13th October, 2021 at the Concorde Room, Council Offices, Farnborough at 7.00 pm.

Voting Members

Cllr C.J. Stewart (Chairman)
Cllr L. Jeffers (Vice-Chairman)

Cllr Mrs. D.B. Bedford
Cllr P.I.C. Crerar
Cllr Michael Hope
Cllr J.H. Marsh
Cllr Nadia Martin
Cllr S.J. Masterson
Cllr Sophie Porter
Cllr Nem Thapa

Cllr T.W. Mitchell was absent from the meeting.

Non-Voting Member

Cllr Marina Munro (Planning and Economy Portfolio Holder) (ex officio)

35. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest for this meeting.

36. MINUTES

The Minutes of the Meeting held on 15th September 2021 were approved and signed as a correct record of the proceedings.

37. PLANNING APPLICATIONS

RESOLVED: That

- (i) permission be given to the following application, as set out in Appendix "A" attached hereto, subject to the conditions, restrictions and prohibitions (if any) mentioned therein:

21/00608/TEMP	Car Park, Farnborough Leisure Centre, Westmead, Farnborough
---------------	---

- (ii) the following application be determined by the Head of Economy, Planning

and Strategic Housing, in consultation with the Chairman:

- * 21/00645/FULPP Land to the rear of Nos. 162-170 Holly Road, Aldershot

(iii) the applications dealt with by the Head of Economy, Planning and Strategic Housing, where necessary in consultation with the Chairman, in accordance with the Council's Scheme of Delegation, more particularly specified in Section "D" of the Head of Economy, Planning and Strategic Housing's Report No. EPSH2128, be noted;

(iv) the current position with regard to the following applications be noted pending consideration at a future meeting:

20/00400/FULPP Land at former Lafarge Site, Hollybush Lane, Aldershot

21/00271/FULPP Block 3, Queensmead, Farnborough

- * The Head of Economy, Planning and Strategic Housing's Report No. EPSH2128 in respect of these applications was amended at the meeting

38. PLANNING APPLICATION 21/00645/FULPP - LAND TO THE REAR OF NOS. 162-170 HOLLY ROAD, ALDERSHOT

The Committee considered the Head of Economy, Planning and Strategic Housing's Report No. EPSH2128 in respect of Planning Application No. 21/00645/FULPP for the erection of three 3-bedroom 5 person occupancy terraced two-storey houses following the demolition of existing garages; alterations to the side elevation of No. 170 Holly Road and the provision of replacement parking spaces for Nos. 162a, 164, 164a and 170 Holly Road at land to the rear of Nos. 162 to 170 Holly Road, Aldershot.

The Report was updated at the meeting to extend the time for the determination of the application until 30th November 2021 to allow more time for the completion of the required Section 106 planning obligation.

RESOLVED: That, subject to the completion of a satisfactory planning obligation under Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 by 26th November 2021 to secure the SAMMS SPA and Public Open Space contributions, as set out in the Report, the Head of Economy, Planning and Strategic Housing, in consultation with the Chairman, be authorised to grant planning permission subject to the conditions and informatives set out in the Report.

However, in the event that a satisfactory Section 106 agreement is not received by 26th November 2021, the Head of Economy, Planning and Strategic Housing, in consultation with the Chairman, be authorised to refuse planning permission on the grounds that the proposal does not provide a financial contribution to mitigate the effect of the development on the Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area in accordance with the Rushmoor Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area Interim Avoidance and Mitigation Strategy and adopted Rushmoor Local Plan Policy

NE1; and does not make appropriate provision for public open space in accordance with the requirements of the adopted Rushmoor Local Plan Policy DE6.

39. APPEALS PROGRESS REPORT

The Committee received the Head of Economy, Planning and Strategic Housing's Report No. EPSH2129 concerning the following appeal decisions:

Application / Enforcement Case No.	Description	Decision
20/00782/FULPP	Against the refusal of planning permission for rebuilding of the vehicle repair workshop (following fire damage) in the same footprint, other than the previous unauthorised eastern side extension, with associated parking at No. 1 Elms Road, Aldershot	Allowed
	A separate application for an award of costs had been made against the Council relating to the planning merits of the appeal. The appellant had stated that the Council Members had acted unreasonably by failing to take the professional advice of the Council officers without adequate reasons to do so and ignoring the fact that the commercial use was extant.	Refused

RESOLVED: That the Head of Economy, Planning and Strategic Housing's Report No. EPSH2129 be noted.

The meeting closed at 9.00 pm.

CLLR C.J. STEWART (CHAIRMAN)

Development Management Committee

Appendix "A"

Application No. & Date Valid: **21/00608/TEMP** **21st July 2021**

Proposal: Continued use of parking spaces within Farnborough Leisure Centre Car Park for temporary siting of two 3.05 x 2.44 metre (10 X 8 feet) metal storage containers with access ramp for use by SERCO Street Cleaning Team for a period of 3 years at **Car Park Farnborough Leisure Centre Westmead Farnborough**

Applicant: Rushmoor Borough Council

Conditions: 1 The use hereby permitted shall be discontinued, the containers removed, and the land restored to its former condition on or before three years from the date of this permission.

Reason - It is considered inappropriate to permit indefinitely a use of land for the siting of the portable buildings.

2 The permission hereby granted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved drawings Drawing numbers: Site Location Plan; Site Block/Layout Plan; Container Dimensions Plan; Supporting Statement; Tree Report; and Photos of Containers in situ.

Reason - To ensure the development is implemented in accordance with the permission granted.

DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

Meeting held on Wednesday, 10th November, 2021 at the Concorde Room, Council Offices, Farnborough at 7.00 pm.

Voting Members

Cllr C.J. Stewart (Chairman)
Cllr L. Jeffers (Vice-Chairman)

Cllr Mrs. D.B. Bedford
Cllr P.I.C. Crerar
Cllr J.H. Marsh
Cllr S.J. Masterson
Cllr Sophie Porter
Cllr Nem Thapa

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Cllr Michael Hope, Cllr Nadia Martin and Cllr T.W. Mitchell.

Non-Voting Member

Cllr Marina Munro (Planning and Economy Portfolio Holder) (ex officio)

40. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Having regard to the Members' Code of Conduct, the following declaration of interest was made. All Members who had or believed that they had any interest under Rushmoor Borough Council's Councillor Code of Conduct, adopted in April 2021, in any matter to be considered at the meeting disclosed that interest at the start of the meeting or as soon as possible thereafter and took the necessary steps in light of their interest as to any participation in the agenda item:

Member	Application No. and Address	Interest	Reason
Cllr Calum Stewart	21/00742/FULPP New Memorial Square, Pennefathers Road, Wellesley, Aldershot	For noting	No interest to declare under the Code of Conduct for Councillors, however has a non-disclosable interest under test section 8 regarding the application due to living in proximity to the site. However, it was felt that the effect on his wellbeing was not to the

extent that it would affect his judgement to take part in the debate or decision making process.

41. **MINUTES**

The Minutes of the Meeting held on 13th October, 2021 were approved and signed as a correct record of the proceedings.

Arising from the Minutes, it was noted that Cllr T.W. Mitchell had missed three consecutive meeting of the Committee. Reference was made to the Council Procedure Rules which stated that, if any Member was absent from three consecutive meetings of a committee, he or she should cease to be a member thereof, unless he or she shows, in the opinion of the committee, reasonable grounds for his or her absence. The Committee discussed the attendance of Cllr Mitchell and the grounds given for his absences submitted in an email. It was agreed that, in the circumstances, the reasoning given did not justify him continuing as a Member of the Committee.

RESOLVED: That

- i. Cllr T.W. Mitchell be advised of the Committee's decision in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 4(5) to cease his membership of the Committee,
- ii. The necessary arrangements be put in place to fill the vacant position.

42. **PLANNING APPLICATIONS**

RESOLVED: That

- (i) permission be given to the following application, as set out in Appendix "A" attached hereto, subject to the conditions, restrictions and prohibitions (if any) mentioned therein:

* 21/00742/FULPP New Memorial Square, Pennefathers Road, Wellesley, Aldershot.

- (ii) the applications dealt with by the Head of Economy, Planning and Strategic Housing, where necessary in consultation with the Chairman, in accordance with the Council's Scheme of Delegation, more particularly specified in Section "D" of the Head of Economy, Planning and Strategic Housing's Report No. EPSH2130, be noted

- (iii) the current position with regard to the following applications be noted pending consideration at a future meeting:

20/00400/FULPP Land at former Lafarge Site, Hollybush Lane, Aldershot

21/00271/FULPP	Block 3, Queensmead, Farnborough
21/00170/FULPP	Land at former Nos. 1-5 Firgrove Parade, Farnborough
21/00844/FULPP	Southwood Country Park, Ively Road, Farnborough

* The Head of Economy, Planning and Strategic Housing's Report No. EPSH2130 in respect of these applications was amended at the meeting.

43. APPEALS PROGRESS REPORT

The Committee received the Head of Economy, Planning and Strategic Housing's Report No. EPSH2131 concerning the following new appeals and appeal decisions:

NEW APPEALS

Application / Enforcement Case No.	Description
21/00048/REVPP	Against the refusal of planning permission for a variation to the permitted hours of use to 06:00 to 00:00, 7 days per week at McDonalds, No. 1 North Close, Aldershot. GU12 4HA.
21/00516/FULPP	Against the refusal of planning permission for the erection of a two storey side extension, a single storey rear extension, a single storey side extension and a roof extension comprising two rear dormers and four front roof lights and creation of a second vehicular cross over at No. 81 Highgate Lane, Farnborough.
20/00149/FULPP	Against the refusal of planning permission for the refurbishment and amalgamation of existing Units 2A & 3 Blackwater Shopping Park, No. 12 Farnborough Gate, Farnborough.

APPEAL DECISIONS

Application / Enforcement Case No.	Description	Decision
20/00511/FULPP	Against the refusal of planning permission for minor works to facilitate change of use of building to a hair salon (A1 use class) including formalisation of existing parking at Gold Valley Lakes, Government Road, Aldershot.	Allowed

21/00092/FULPP Against the refusal of planning Allowed
permission for the erection of a carport
to the front of the property at No. 74
Ayling Lane, Aldershot.

RESOLVED: That the Head of Economy, Planning and Strategic Housing's Report No. EPSH2131 be noted.

44. **PLANNING (DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT) SUMMARY REPORT FOR THE QUARTER JULY - SEPTEMBER 2021**

The Committee received the Head of Economy, Planning and Strategic Housing's Report No. EPSH2132 which provided an update on the position with respect to achieving performance indicators for the Development Management Section of the Planning Service and the overall workload of the Section for the quarter from 1st July to 30th September 2021.

RESOLVED: That the Head of Economy, Planning and Strategic Housing's Report No. EPSH2132 be noted.

45. **ESSO PIPELINE PROJECT**

The Head of Economy, Planning and Strategic Housing gave an update to the Committee on the position regarding the agreement of all outstanding legal agreements including the Environmental Improvement Plan pursuant to the Development Consent Order for the renewal and partial realignment of the Southampton to London Esso fuel pipeline which crossed the Borough of Rushmoor.

It was noted that vegetation removal work was currently underway in Southwood Country Park with plans to move onto Queen Elizabeth Park in the New Year. Trees which were removed would be re-instated elsewhere in accordance with the Development Consent Order which included a condition of a two year maintain and replacement plan.

The submission of a planning application for the Play Area in Queen Elizabeth Park was expected to have been submitted that day and this would be confirmed or otherwise to Members. Once submitted, it would be added to the list of future items for the Committee.

RESOLVED: that the Head of Economy, Planning and Strategic Housing Report No. EPSH2133 be noted.

The meeting closed at 8.15 pm.

CLLR C.J. STEWART (CHAIRMAN)

Development Management Committee

Appendix "A"

Application No. & Date Valid: 21/00742/FULPP 14th September 2021

Proposal: Construction of new memorial square at Pennefathers (Zone G), Wellesley, Aldershot at **Zone G - Pennefathers Aldershot Urban Extension Alisons Road Aldershot**

Applicant: Grainger (Aldershot) Limited And Secretary Of State For D...

Conditions: 1 The development hereby permitted shall be begun before the expiration of three years from the date of this permission.

Reason - As required by Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 as amended by Section 51 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

2 The permission hereby granted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved drawings:

2519-PF-LA-03; 2519-PF-LA-02 Rev P1 and 2519-PP-Grainger-01.

Reason - To ensure the development is implemented in accordance with the permission granted.

3 Notwithstanding the information contained within the application, a revised planting schedule, including replacement semi-mature tree planting and native plant species of known biodiversity benefit, together with other appropriate measures for biodiversity enhancement such as bird nesting and bat roosting provision, shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority within 6 months of the date of this permission. The scheme so approved shall be implemented in full in the first available planting season following approval of such details. Any tree/shrub removed, dying or becoming seriously diseased within five years of planting shall be replaced by trees/shrubs of similar size and species to those originally approved.*

Reason: In the interests of the character and appearance of the area, nature conservation and biodiversity net gain

- 4 Notwithstanding the information contained within the application, full details of the proposed seating features shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority within 6 months of the date of this permission. The scheme shall be implemented in accordance with the details so approved.*

Reason - To ensure satisfactory quality and external appearance for the development and to safeguard the character and appearance of the conservation area and the setting of adjoining heritage assets.

- 5 The development shall be carried out strictly in accordance with the Arboricultural Method Statement ref: JFA9025MS V2 (JFA, November 2021) hereby approved.

Reason - To safeguard retained trees on and adjoining the site in the interests of the character and appearance of the area and nature conservation.

- 6 Construction or demolition work of any sort within the area covered by the application shall only take place between the hours of 0800-1800 on Monday to Fridays and 0800-1300 on Saturdays. No work at all shall take place on Sundays and Bank or Statutory Holidays.

Reason - To protect the amenities of neighbouring residential properties and to prevent adverse impact on traffic and parking conditions in the vicinity.

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OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Meeting held on Thursday, 28th October, 2021 at the Council Offices, Farnborough at 7.00 pm.

Voting Members

Cllr M.D. Smith (Chairman)
Cllr Mrs. D.B. Bedford (Vice-Chairman)
Cllr S.J. Masterson (Vice-Chairman)

Cllr Gaynor Austin
Cllr Jib Belbase
Cllr M.S. Choudhary
Cllr R.M. Cooper
Cllr K. Dibble
Cllr Nem Thapa

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Cllr L. Jeffers and Cllr Mara Makunura

15. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The Minutes of the Meeting held on 24th August, 2021 were **AGREED** as a correct record.

16. COMMUNITY SERVICE ORGANISATIONS

The Committee welcomed Alex Hughes, Chief Executive of Citizens' Advice Rushmoor, and Donna Bone, Chief Executive of Rushmoor Voluntary Services, who were in attendance to give presentations on the services provided by each organisation, funding and governance arrangements, service during the pandemic and future work and challenges. The Cabinet Member for Democracy, Strategy and Partnerships, Cllr Adrian Newell, was also in attendance.

Ms Hughes, gave some background to Citizens' Advice (CA). It was noted that CA had been present in Aldershot since 1940 and was there for everyone, but especially for those that needed the service the most, to help people move forward with their lives. The organisation was a local volunteer led service, routed locally within the Rushmoor community. The national infrastructure of CA benefited the local offer with access to training, information and resource. CA Rushmoor had a Board of Trustees which comprised of a Chair and nine Board Members, two of which were elected Councillors. The staff structure showed different teams offering a variety of help which were funded from different sources. Currently CA Rushmoor had over 100 volunteers that delivered services in a number of different roles from initial contact with clients, discrete advice, detailed advice, casework and administration support.

CA Rushmoor received a diverse range of funding. Pensionwise were the primary funder, providing 37% of the total annual funds, Rushmoor Borough Council provided 29%, Frimley CCG 8% and smaller contributions were received from 13 other organisations, including AFCF Domestic Abuse, the Brain Tumour Charity and the Broadhurst Trust. It was noted that eight of the 13 smaller contributors, had provided sources of funding that would cease at the end of the financial year.

The response to the pandemic had shown a shift from in person engagement with clients to a remote/online offer. Cloud technology had allowed volunteers to work from home and all had adapted to the change quickly. However, it was noted that in person engagement was slowly being re-introduced.

Ms Hughes advised on activities around reaching the most vulnerable in local communities, in particular the Nepali community. At the beginning of the lockdown, 200 leaflet packs had been produced in Nepalese, on health advise, isolation and keeping safe; these had been distributed around the community in appropriate locations to get the message out. A Nepali advice line had been established to cover issues previously dealt with via the Nepali Drop In Service. It was noted that over 1,000 issues had been dealt with through this service.

Monitoring took place across service areas to ensure all in need were being reached, and partners were aware of the services on offer. An Overcoming Barriers Group had been established to address barriers accessing the service provision. As a result, a referral tool was now available on the website to allow partners/agencies to directly refer local individuals in need of help and advice. Direct access to help would be considered further moving forward, to look closely at how in person engagement would continue.

Ms Hughes reported on the types of issues dealt with by CA Rushmoor over the past two years, the main areas included: benefits/tax credits, employment, universal credit, housing, relationships and debt. The change in demand had been mirrored by Government announcements relating to, for instance, furlough scheme, self-employment and Universal Credit.

During 2020/21 CA had made significant impacts financially in a number of areas, these included:

- £6.5 million worth of gain in new/increased benefit awards
- £1.2 million worth of debt written off
- £1.4 million worth of savings to the DWP by keeping people in work
- £2.5 million worth of fiscal benefits to Government
- £8.8 million worth of direct benefits to clients
- £26.8 million worth of value to society as a whole

It was reported that a number of new issues were emerging as a result of the pandemic and the recovery process, these included issues around mental health, debt, housing and benefits. For example, the 12% increase in energy bills and the withdrawal of the £20 uplift on Universal Credit, could have a wider impact on households, which could result in more people becoming in debt.

Moving forward the CA were looking at a redesign of their service model. This would incorporate hybrid working, learning from past experience, a continued focus on core need and building resilience within the team.

The Committee discussed the presentation and raised a number of issues regarding funding, in particular how funding was allocated, potential reductions and impacts on the service. It was noted that some funding was provided for specific projects, for which staff were employed on a short term basis to provide the service. Other funding, such as that provided for the introduction of Universal Credit would have a larger impact on the service provision once it was removed. The implications of reductions in funding were potential staff reductions and a rethink of service provision and accessibility to ensure those most in need got the help they needed.

In response to a query regarding the CA's relationship with the Council, it was noted that relations were positive, in particular with those areas with which the CA worked closely, such as, housing and council tax. There were no formal KPI's in place but a service level agreement (SLA) had been in place between the Council and CA, which outlined how funds could be used, this had been supported by regular meetings with the Council's Head of Democracy and Community.

The Chairman thanked Ms Hughes for her presentation and invited Ms Bone to give her presentation on Rushmoor Voluntary Services (RVS).

Ms Bone advised that RVS was a core service charity that supported other charities and were part of a network of Community Voluntary Sector (CVS) groups across Hampshire. Its mission was to enable residents to play a full and active part in the life of the local community and to provide support, information and guidance to community groups and organisations.

Within Rushmoor a supported volunteering team was in place called Blooming Marvellous. The team provided community gardening work and supported and helped maintain community areas such as the Aldershot Library garden, the A325 flower beds and the incredible edible boxes situated in the town centres. In addition, support was provided, on an ad hoc basis, to individual residents who required support with their gardens, e.g. to meet the requirements of tenancy agreements.

RVS also offered practical assistance, this was delivered via a quarterly Voluntary Sector Forum which the Council regularly attended to provide updates on Council initiatives, such as the food waste collection service, it also gave stakeholders the chance to promote opportunities. Other practical assistance included access to DBS checks, mini bus and driver hire, training courses (such as first aid and safeguarding), equipment loan i.e. collection buckets, hi-vis jackets etc. and access to a pool of ad hoc volunteers.

It was noted that RVS currently had 364 organisations registered of varying types and sizes. These organisations benefited from a variety of resources, including funding events, networking, representation and shared information and best practice.

In addition to the core services, RVS offered client services which were aimed at supporting people to remain in their own homes independently. The services offered

included: home help/household chores, social inclusion/befriending services and Dial-a-Ride/Fleet Link. RVS also sub-contracted a HIV support service in Hampshire and assisted with the Sparko initiative, which allowed socially excluded people to access services and online video conferencing through their televisions. It was noted that RVS volunteers were also involved in supporting the Afghan Evacuee Settlement Programme.

Ms Bone reported on the team structure within the organisation. It was noted that RVS was managed by a Board of Trustees whose role was to ensure effective governance and scrutinise the work undertaken. The Board included one elected Councillor.

In relation to funding, it was noted that some short term funding had been secured in the previous two years as a result of the pandemic, however other funding from services such as Home Help and Dial-a-Ride had reduced during the lockdowns; these were slowly increasing as people were getting out into the community more. The Council's contribution to RVS equated to around 20% of the annual budgeted income.

It was advised that Hampshire County Council (HCC) had decided, early in the pandemic that the work relating to the community response would be lead via the CVS's across Hampshire, in close partnership with local authorities. For RVS, this had resulted in a shift from the day to day running of the service to initially scoping a local helpline service for those needing information, support, food and medication. Being newly located in the Council Offices had allowed collaborative working and access to services which would have not been possible at the previous office space. It was advised that a centralised helpline had been set up by HCC, the number for which had been promoted across the Borough; all calls that could not be dealt with via the centralised number were then referred to the local helpline to be triaged and signposted accordingly. It was noted that Council staff had been redeployed from the start to answer calls seven days a week, as required.

Outside RVS, local groups, within the community, had been established across the Borough to support local communities/neighbourhoods. RVS made the decision to assist these groups to ensure that support was offered safely and well. Operation Rushmoor Community Action (ORCA) had been established to recruit volunteers and produce policies and procedures, training, guidelines and assurances to keep both volunteers and residents safe. It was noted that around 450 volunteers had been maintained throughout the pandemic.

It was advised that a number of partnerships had developed with local organisations, in particular, the Greater Rushmoor Nepali Community who offered translation services, the Vine Centre who offered food delivery and CA Rushmoor. RVS staff and volunteers had been redeployed in various roles, such as shopping and prescription deliveries, town centre ambassadors and marshals and buddying. RVS volunteers had also been involved in the operation of the vaccination and testing sites working with the NHS Clinical Commission Group (CCG).

It was noted that with the move to the recovery stages from the pandemic, RVS had stepped back from some, pandemic related roles, to pick up the day to day work as a

CVS. A number of challenges had arisen from the pandemic for the voluntary sector; these included funding, demand, capacity to manage increased health and safety measures, recruitment of trustees/staff/volunteers, adapting to service delivery/activities post pandemic, digital skills and morale of staff/volunteers.

Learning from the pandemic and the recovery process RVS hoped, moving forward, to work in a more holistic hub type environment, working together with partners to maximise efficiencies.

The Committee discussed the presentation, in particular funding, it was noted that work was underway to invest in client services to maximise income and scope funding opportunities. With regard to the HCC direct grant it was advised that the funding would be secured for the next two years, however, the larger amount from HCC for the Dial-a-Ride service, would be affected if the service went out to tender in the following two years and RVS were not successful.

In response to a query regarding the relationship with the Council, it was noted that regular conversations were held with the Council's Head of Democracy and Community and the need for partnership working during the pandemic had nurtured mutual respect and strengthened knowledge and understanding of each other's services and activities. At present there was no formal SLA in place between the Council and RVS, however discussion were underway to establish one.

A further discussion was held around the provision of food to those in need, it was noted that requests came from a variety of living situations, including families, single people with no alternative support network and those who had lost their jobs. It was advised that getting to the source of the issue was vital to ensure the support required by the individuals was provided. The Council's Portfolio Holder for Democracy, Strategy and Partnerships advised of the Food Strategy and the forthcoming Grub Hub at Windsor Way, Aldershot. The Hub would not only provide food parcels to those in need but offer cooking lessons and a safe place to talk and be signposted to support networks.

In summary, it was noted that Service Level Agreements would be established and updated for both RVS and CA Rushmoor, taking account of the learning from the pandemic and how that could be taken forward. It was also important to have something in place to measure the performance of both organisations. Once the SLA's had been developed it was agreed that the Committee would be given the opportunity to review them.

The Chairman thanked Ms Bone for her presentation and remarked on the essential role both organisations played in the Borough and their significant contributions in tackling the pandemic locally.

17. **WORK PLAN**

The Committee **NOTED** the current Work Plan.

It was noted that the next meeting would include a presentation on the Supporting Communities Strategy and Action Plan and the Grub Hub.

Members also suggested items on the following for future meetings:

- Local Primary Care Networks and doctor services
- Disability - ensuring Council buildings were compliant, engagement with disability advisory groups around the town centre regeneration programmes
- Progress report on climate change work
- Farnborough Airport - activities affecting lives of residents in particular number of flights, noise levels

The meeting closed at 9.05 pm.

CLLR M.D. SMITH (CHAIRMAN)
