

CABINET

Meeting held on Tuesday, 7th February, 2023 at the Council Offices, Farnborough at 7.00 pm.

Voting Members

Cllr D.E. Clifford, Leader of the Council
Cllr M.L. Sheehan, Deputy Leader and Operational Services Portfolio Holder
Cllr M.J. Tennant, Deputy Leader and Major Projects and Property Portfolio Holder

Cllr J.B. Canty, Customer Experience, Digital and Transformation Portfolio Holder
Cllr Sue Carter, Democracy, Strategy and Partnerships Portfolio Holder
Cllr A.R. Newell, Planning and Economy Portfolio Holder
Cllr P.G. Taylor, Corporate Services 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 **20th February, 2023**.

46. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST –

Having regard to the Council's Code of Conduct for Councillors, Cllr P.G. Taylor declared a non-registrable interest in Item 6 (acquisition of land and property at The Meads and Kingsmead Shopping Centre, Farnborough) in relation to his position as the general manager of The Triangle, a Christian bookshop and café in Farnborough and also as the Council's Corporate Services Portfolio Holder. Cllr Taylor removed himself from the meeting for the duration of Item 6 and did not, therefore, take part in the discussions or decision relating to this item.

47. MINUTES –

The Minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet held on 17th January, 2023 were confirmed and signed by the Chairman.

48. COUNCIL PLAN AND RISK REGISTER QUARTERLY UPDATE OCTOBER TO DECEMBER 2022/23 –

(Cllr Sue Carter, Democracy, Strategy and Partnerships Portfolio Holder)

The Cabinet received Report No. ACE2302, which set out progress in delivering the Council Business Plan projects during the third quarter of 2022/23. Members were informed that progress against key activities and projects was included in the Report, along with the Council's business performance monitoring information, an update on the Council's key strategies and plans that underpinned and supported the Council Plan and the Council's Corporate Risk Register. It was reported that, at the end of the third quarter, just over 45% of projects were showing an amber status. A number of those projects were showing as amber due to reporting delays of between one and three months and it was considered that these were still likely to be delivered in 2022/23.

The Cabinet NOTED the progress made towards delivering the Council Business Plan and the updates made to the risk register, as set out in Report No. ACE2302.

49. **BUSINESS RATES - DISCRETIONARY RATE RELIEF APPLICATIONS –**
(Cllr Paul Taylor, Corporate Services Portfolio Holder)

The Cabinet considered Report No. FIN2303, which set out details of applications for rate relief from Anaphylaxis UK (1st and 2nd Floors, No. 1 Alexandra Road, Farnborough), Karuna Action (No. 11 Wellington Street, Aldershot) and the British Gurkha Welfare Society (No. 119 Wren Way, Farnborough).

The Cabinet RESOLVED that

- (i) 20% discretionary relief be awarded to Anaphylaxis UK until 31st March, 2023;
- (ii) 20% discretionary relief be awarded to Karuna Action for the period from 5th June, 2020 to 31st March, 2023; and
- (iii) 100% discretionary relief be awarded to the British Gurkha Welfare Society for the period from 1st April, 2020 to 31st December, 2020, reducing to 50% discretionary relief from 1st January, 2021 to 31st March, 2023.

50. **REVIEW OF TAXI LICENSING POLICY –**
(Cllr Maurice Sheehan, Operational Services Portfolio Holder)

The Cabinet considered Report No. OS2303, which set out proposed changes to the Council's Taxi Licensing Policy.

Members were reminded that the current Taxi Licensing Policy had been in place since 2012. It was explained that there was a requirement on licensing authorities to review policies having regard to measures contained within guidance issued by the Department for Transport. A public consultation, including members of the taxi trade, had been carried out between 5th December, 2022 and 2nd January, 2023 and a total of nine responses had been received, with the comments received leading to some amendments during the preparation of the proposed policy.

The Cabinet expressed strong support for the Taxi Licensing Policy and endorsed the proposed way forward. Appreciation was expressed for the work carried out by the Council's licensing team.

The Cabinet RESOLVED that

- (i) the Taxi Licensing Policy, as set out in Report No. OS2303, be approved, to take effect from 1st April, 2023, with application requirements applying to any new application received or determined on or after that date and for any renewal due on or after that date; and
- (ii) a requirement for existing licence holders to comply with all new requirements by 31st March, 2024 or their renewal date, whichever is sooner, in accordance with the Taxi Licensing Policy, be approved.

51. **REGENERATION PROGRAMME - ACQUISITION OF LAND AND PROPERTY AT BLOCK NOS. 1-4 THE MEADS AND KINGSMEAD SHOPPING CENTRE, FARNBOROUGH –**

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

The Cabinet considered Report No. REG2302, which set out the final business case to inform the decision whether to proceed with the acquisition of Block Nos. 1-4 The Meads and Kingsmead Shopping Centre, Farnborough in April, 2023.

Members were reminded that, in August, 2021, the Cabinet had resolved to undertake further negotiations with the current owners, St Modwen, to secure the best price and commercial offer for its land and property interests in Farnborough town centre and to undertake the required due diligence, legal assessment, feasibility study and business case and to prepare an initial town centre strategy. The Cabinet had further considered this matter in January, 2023, when it had been agreed that the business case should be brought forward to this meeting.

In discussing the business case, the Cabinet expressed strong support for the proposed approach for the Council's direct intervention in the regeneration of the Borough's town centres in order to bring forward projects in a timely manner. It was felt that the risks had been identified, along with adequate mitigation.

The Cabinet

(i) **RESOLVED** that:

- (a) the interim due diligence and key points from the business case, as set out in Report No. REG2302, be noted;
- (b) the business case for the acquisition of the land and property during the 2023/24 financial year, as set out in the Report, be approved, at the price, on the terms and subject to the conditions set out in Confidential Appendix A of the Report;
- (c) the Executive Director, in consultation with the Major Projects and Property Portfolio Holder, be authorised to negotiate and complete the acquisition of the land and property, on the terms set out in Confidential Appendix A, subject to the conclusion of all appropriate due diligence and with any minor adjustments in line with this decision; and

(ii) **RECOMMENDED TO THE COUNCIL** that approval be given for the inclusion of the acquisition in the Council's Capital Programme for 2023/24.

52. **REVENUE BUDGET, CAPITAL PROGRAMME AND COUNCIL TAX LEVEL –**

(Cllr Paul Taylor, Corporate Services Portfolio Holder)

The Cabinet considered Report No. FIN2304, which made recommendations on the budget, Council Tax requirement and proposals for budget savings for 2023/24.

The Cabinet was reminded that the budget framework had been approved at its meeting on 15th November, 2022. Members were advised that the Report had been prepared on the basis that there would be no change to the provisional local government finance settlement figure, which was due to be confirmed soon. The Medium Term Financial Strategy continued to provide a risk-based General Fund balance of £2 million being the minimum expected level for total working balances. The Cabinet was advised that, despite the uncertainties around levels of Government funding and the risks around inflation, increasing fuel costs and increasing staff costs, the Council had been able to prepare a balanced budget for 2023/24 and 2024/25, as demonstrated by the Medium Term Financial Strategy. It was confirmed that the budget would also provide a platform for the Council to address future challenges. It was noted, however, that there was a significant and increasing funding gap from 2025/26 onwards.

The Capital Programme of £44.6 million for the period 2023/24 to 2026/27 was set out in Appendix 3 of the Report. It was explained that the Capital Programme was focussed on delivering against the Council's key priority of town centre regeneration, with further schemes aimed at enhancing the delivery of core services through improvement and enhancement of assets. The Cabinet was informed that changes were needed to the Capital Programme figures provided in respect of the Council's play areas. The amended figures had been provided to the Cabinet in the form of an Addendum to the Report and would be reflected in the report that would be considered by the Council. The main areas where the Council would be facing increased levels of risk and uncertainty over the medium term were set out in Section 8 of the Report. In discussing the details of the Report, Members expressed their gratitude for the hard work of the finance team.

The Cabinet

- (i) **RECOMMENDED TO THE COUNCIL** that approval be given to:
- (d) the Medium Term Financial Strategy, as set out in Appendix 1 of Report No. FIN2304;
 - (e) the Savings and Transformation items for inclusion in the budget, as set out in Appendix 2 of the Report, with the exception of the charge for the replacement of recycling bins (£7,400), the proposed saving in relation to Ward Grants being reduced by £13,000, with a revised arrangement for allocation to be finalised and the removal of the Special Responsibility Allowances payable to the Vice-Chairman positions of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and the Policy and Project Advisory Board;
 - (f) the Council Tax requirement of £7,448,100 for this Council;
 - (g) the Council Tax level for Rushmoor Borough Council's purposes of £225.98 for a Band D property in 2023/24;
 - (h) the Capital Programme, as set out in Appendix 3 of the Report and amended at the meeting in line with the published Addendum to the Report;

- (i) the Strategy for the Flexible Use of Capital Receipts, as set out in Appendix 4 of the Report;
 - (j) the balances and reserves position, including proposed reserve transfers for 2023/24, as set out in Section 5 of the Report; and
- (ii) **RESOLVED** that the Council's Section 151 Officer, in consultation with the Leader of the Council and the Corporate Services Portfolio Holder, be authorised to make any necessary changes to the General Fund Summary arising from the final confirmation of the Local Government Finance Settlement, the Business Rates Retention Scheme estimates and any other final amendments.

53. **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
54	3	Information relating to financial or business affairs

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

54. **APPLICATION FOR SECTION 49 REMISSION OF NON-DOMESTIC RATES –**
(Cllr Paul Taylor, Corporate Services Portfolio Holder)

The Cabinet considered Exempt Report No. FIN2302, which set out an application for the remission of non-domestic rates on the grounds of hardship.

Members assessed the application from SBBS Leisure Limited, trading as Jetts Gym, Nos. 40-50 Kingsmead, Farnborough, taking into account the evidence of financial hardship supplied and whether it was in the interests of local taxpayers to subsidise the business. The Cabinet took into account the nature and circumstances of the business and the availability of alternative facilities in the area. The Corporate Services Portfolio Holder and the Council's Local Taxation Manager had met with the proprietor at the business address to understand more about the business, the services offered, the future vision for the business and the impact the business had had on the local economy.

The Cabinet RESOLVED that 100% hardship relief be granted to SBBS Leisure Limited, trading as Jetts Gym, for the current outstanding balance for the period from 1st April, 2022 to 31st March, 2023.

The Meeting closed at 7.50 pm.

CLLR D.E. CLIFFORD, LEADER OF THE COUNCIL
