

CABINET

Meeting held on Tuesday, 14th January, 2025 at the Council Offices, Farnborough at 7.00 pm.

Voting Members

Cllr Gareth Williams, Leader of the Council and Finance Portfolio Holder
Cllr Sophie Porter, Deputy Leader and Community & Residents Portfolio Holder

Cllr Abe Allen, Enabling Services Portfolio Holder
Cllr Jules Crossley, Policy, Climate & Sustainability Portfolio Holder
Cllr Keith Dibble, Development & Economic Growth Portfolio Holder
Cllr Christine Guinness, Regeneration & Property Portfolio Holder

An apology for absence was submitted on behalf of Councillor Becky Williams.

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 **27th January, 2025**.

47. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST –**

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

48. **MINUTES –**

The Minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet held on 26th November, 2024 were confirmed and signed by the Chairman.

49. **YOUNG PEOPLE PLAN –**

(Cllr Sophie Porter, Deputy Leader and Community & Residents Portfolio Holder)

The Cabinet considered Report No. ACE2501, which set out a Council led plan to deliver structured support and opportunities for young people in the Borough.

Members were advised that the plan outlined a proposed approach to supporting young people, up to the age of 24, to help improve opportunities and support them to live happy, healthy and rewarding lives. The plan would focus on four key priorities for 2025/26:

1. Raising young voices
2. Providing safe spaces and trusted relationships
3. Raising aspirations and opportunities
4. Supporting better physical and mental health

During discussion, Members commented on the level of consultation, as set out in Section 3.7 of the Report, and the presence of representatives of Rushmoor Youth Voice (RYV) at the meeting. RYV had requested to ask questions of the Cabinet

around young peoples' engagement with Council initiatives, policy and decisions making and the preferred model for a youth hub in the Borough. In response, it was advised that the Council were looking to consult wider across the Borough, in particular with young people. The Cabinet welcomed ideas from RYV on how to better engage through platforms such as social media and targeted surveys and would provide a space to allow young people to come and be heard. In respect of a youth hub provision, again the Cabinet would welcome input from young people, to ensure any space provided met the needs of the users.

The Cabinet RESOLVED that

- i. the plan and associated approach to supporting and engaging with all young people, with a concerted effort to reach young people who experience disadvantage, be endorsed,
- ii. the longer term approach to developing further iterations of the plan (post 2026) which seeks to increase young peoples' role in influencing the work of the Council, be endorsed, and;
- iii. the exploration of longer term delivery models, specifically the concept of a hub for young people, be supported.

50. RECOMMENDATIONS FROM OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY - CITIZENS ADVICE RUSHMOOR - SERVICE LEVEL AGREEMENT –
(Cllr Halleh Koohestani, Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee)

The Cabinet considered Report No. ACE2503, which set out recommendations for the Council's Overview and Scrutiny Committee in relation to Citizens' Advice Rushmoor (CAR) and its Service Level Agreement with the Council. The Chairman welcomed Cllr Halleh Koohestani, Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, who was attending to report on the Committee's considerations and recommendations.

Members were informed that the Overview and Scrutiny Committee had held a meeting on 12th December, 2024 where Citizens Advice Rushmoor (CAR) had attended and had given a presentation on its 2023/24 Annual Report, in line with the Service Level Agreement with the Council. The Committee had considered the representations made by CAR in respect of the challenges and risks it faced as an organisation. The following were the recommendations of the Committee to the Cabinet:

- To consider a multi-year funding agreement, taking account of any inflationary increase measure from 2025/26 alongside a clear set of KPI's to measure performance, and;
- review the rental and service charges associated with the places occupied by Citizens Advice Rushmoor in both Aldershot and Farnborough.

The Cabinet expressed gratitude both to Citizens Advice Rushmoor for the excellent work carried out by them in the local area and to the members of the Overview and

Scrutiny Committee for their diligence in producing these recommendations. It was confirmed that these would be considered fully during the budget setting process in the following months, taking account of the recent Local Government re-organisation proposals. The Cabinet also committed to engaging with both Rushmoor Voluntary Services and Citizens Advice Rushmoor to consider future working arrangements.

The Cabinet RESOLVED to consider the recommendations of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, as set out in Report No. ACE2503, as part of the 2025/26 budget setting process.

51. **COUNCIL TAX SUPPORT SCHEME - RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE COUNCIL TAX SUPPORT GROUP –**

(Cllr Halleh Koohestani, Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee)

The Cabinet considered Report No. FIN2501, which set out considerations and recommendations in respect of the work undertaken by the Council Tax Support Task and Finish Group to review the Council Tax Support Scheme. The Chairman welcomed Cllr Halleh Koohestani, Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and member of the Council Tax Support Task and Finish Group, who was attending to report on the Group's considerations and recommendations.

The Cabinet were advised that the Group had met on 16th October and 4th December, 2024, where they had considered data regarding Council Tax support and the ongoing impacts of the change to 100% maximum support for those on the lowest incomes, introduced in April 2024. The Group had taken account of several factors, including collection rates, caseload data, scheme costs, comparable data from other local authorities in Hampshire, economic indicators and exceptional hardship support. It was reported that since the schemes introduction, current collection rates were at 72%, for those in receipt of Council Tax Support, compared to 62% at the same time in the previous year. It was also noted that the funds allocated to the Exceptional Hardship Fund, which had been reduced by £20k the previous year, had had very little claim against it during 2024/25. The Group felt that the scheme had worked well and committed to keeping a watching brief on its performance.

It was suggested that during 2025/26 consultation could be done with organisations, such as Step by Step and Citizens Advice Rushmoor, to assess the impacts of the scheme on their services.

The Cabinet **RECOMMEND TO THE COUNCIL** that

- i. the current Council Tax Scheme for working age customers continue for 2025/26, with the annual uplift to rates within the calculation mirroring that applied to national benefit rates,
- ii. the budget for Exceptional Hardship relief be maintained at £12,000, and;
- iii. minor changes, in accordance with the annual uprating amounts applied by the Department of Work and Pension, be made.

52. **RISK MANAGEMENT POLICY –**
(Cllr Jules Crossley, Policy, Climate & Sustainability Portfolio Holder)

The Cabinet considered Report No. ACE2502, which set out the revised and updated Risk Management Policy.

It was advised that the current risk management policy and procedures had been agreed in 2021, and had, since then, been reported on, on a quarterly basis alongside performance management information. Since 2022, the policy and procedures had been reviewed and changes to processes and approaches had been made, to five out of six recommendations from an internal audit. The purpose of the Report was to seek approval for these revisions which incorporated the final recommendation for the Council, to develop an overall strategic risk appetite.

The Council was required to have effective arrangements in place to assess risk. The revised policy and procedures required training for risk owners and managers to provide clarity on reporting. Portfolio Holders would also be required to discuss risk regularly with Service Managers to ensure any issues were identified quickly and mitigated against appropriately.

The Cabinet RESOLVED that the Risk Management Policy, as set out in Annex A of Report No. ACE2502, be approved.

53. **BUDGET MANAGEMENT - MONTH 8 REPORT –**
(Cllr Gareth Williams, Leader of the Council and Finance Portfolio Holder)

The Cabinet considered Report No. FIN2421, which set out the forecasted financial position for 2024/25 as at the end of November 2024.

The Cabinet were reminded that this was the first monthly report received, which provided an update on the forecasted outturn position against approved budget for the current financial year, 2024/25. The Council had set a balanced budget with planned reserve drawdown of £4.639m and a saving target of £740k of net budget reduction in 2025/26, supported by £12.229m of available reserve. The latest forecast, as set out in the Report, showed this had been achieved, however, it was acknowledged that there were still challenges ahead to provide a balanced budget going forward.

The Cabinet RESOLVED that

- i. the revenue budget forecast as set out in Section 3.1 of Report No. FIN2421, be noted, and;
- ii. the virement listed in Section 3.12 of Report No. FIN2421, be approved.

54. **RENEWAL OF BUILDING CONTROL PARTNERSHIP WITH HART DC –**
(Cllr Keith Dibble, Development & Economic Growth Portfolio Holder)

To consider Report No. PG2501, which set out a proposal to renew the Hart and Rushmoor Building Control Partnership.

The Cabinet were advised that Hart District Council had approved the renewal of the Partnership at its meeting in December 2024, following a meeting of the Steering Group who oversaw the working arrangements of the Partnership. The renewal of the Partnership would ensure that the service continued to run well and meet regulatory requirements.

The Cabinet RESOLVED that the renewal of the Hart and Rushmoor Building Control Partnership to provide a shared building control service for a further five years until 31st March, 2031, unless terminated earlier in accordance with the provisions of the agreed Deed, be approved.

55. **MICROSOFT ENTERPRISE LICENSING AGREEMENT –**
(Cllr Abe Allen, Enabling Services Portfolio Holder)

The Cabinet considered Report No. IT2501, which set out an urgent key decision taken by the Corporate Manager – IT Service Delivery, relating to a three-year Microsoft Enterprise Licensing Agreement, for noting.

It was advised that the current licensing agreement for the use of Microsoft products ended on 30th November, 2024. The new agreement needed to be placed by the same date to enable continued use of Microsoft products and services to continue to deliver critical Council services.

The Cabinet RESOLVED that the urgent decision taken by the Corporate Manager – IT Service Delivery be noted.

56. **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 items to avoid the disclosure of exempt information within the paragraph of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act, 1972 indicated against the items:

Minute Nos.	Schedule 12A Para. No.	Category
57	3	Information relating to financial or business affairs

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

57. **LONG LEASEHOLD EXTENSIONS (EXEMPT ITEM) –**
(Cllr Christine Guinness, Regeneration & Property Portfolio Holder)

The Cabinet considered Exempt Report No. PG2502, which sought authority to grant long lease extensions in respect of the Arrow Industrial Estate, Farnborough.

Members were informed that the Council's Financial Resilience Plan had identified the need for the Council to realise capital receipts whilst minimising income loss. Long leasehold extensions were a means of achieving a capital receipt without

sacrificing income. In the case of this property, there had been a period of negotiation which had now concluded and the Exempt Report set out the resulting proposed terms of the transactions.

The Cabinet RESOLVED that

- i. a new 150-year lease for the Arrow Industrial Estate, on the basis of the terms set out within Section 3 of Exempt Report No. PG2502, be approved, and;
- ii. authority be delegated to the Executive Head of Property and Growth, in consultation with the Legal Corporate Manager, to agree the final terms of the respective leasehold extensions, including modernisation of the leases.

The Meeting closed at 8.23 pm.

CLLR GARETH WILLIAMS, LEADER OF THE COUNCIL AND FINANCE
PORTFOLIO HOLDER
