

CABINET

Meeting held on Tuesday, 8th April, 2025 at the Council Offices, Farnborough at 7.00 pm and concluded on Monday 14th April, 2025, following an adjournment.

Voting Members

Cllr Gareth Williams, Leader of the Council (present on 8th April only)
Cllr Sophie Porter, Deputy Leader and Healthy Communities & Active Lives Portfolio Holder (present on 8th April only)

Cllr A.H. Crawford, Finance & Resources Portfolio Holder
Cllr Jules Crossley, Policy, Performance & Sustainability Portfolio Holder
Cllr Keith Dibble, Housing & Planning Portfolio Holder
Cllr Christine Guinness, Pride in Place / Neighbourhood Services Portfolio Holder

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillor Julie Hall, Sophie Porter (absent on 14th April only and Gareth Williams (absent on 14th April only).

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 May, 2025**.

79. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST –

Having regard to the Council's Code of Conduct for Councillors, the following declaration of interest was made:

Item No.	Member	Interest	Reason
82	Cllr Sophie Porter	Non-registrable	NHS employee – Code of Conduct Appendix B, paras 8 and 9 applied. Accordingly, Cllr Porter remained in the meeting held on 8th April and participated in the discussion. Cllr Porter was absent when the meeting was reconvened on 14th April.
82	Cllr Gareth Williams	Non-registrable	Director of Rushmoor Housing Limited – dispensation granted by CGAS Committee on 27th May, 2021 so Cllr Williams remained in the meeting during this item, participated in the discussion and took part in the voting process.

80. **MINUTES –**

The Minutes of the meetings of the Cabinet held on 11th March, 2025 and 20th March, 2025 were confirmed and signed by the Chairman.

81. **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
82	3	Information relating to financial or business affairs

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

82. **UNION YARD, ALDERSHOT – APPROACH TO DISPOSAL OF RESIDENTIAL APARTMENTS (SEACOLE PLACE AND BURTON HOUSE) –**
(Cllr Gareth Williams, Leader of the Council)

The Cabinet considered Exempt Report No. REG2502, which set out options for the disposal of 82 residential units contained within the Union Yard scheme in Aldershot town centre.

Members were informed that a Cabinet report in July, 2021 had set out an ‘exit strategy’ for the different components of the scheme. It was agreed at that time that the 82 apartments for private rent would be subject to disposal on completion to the Council’s Housing Company, Rushmoor Homes Limited (RHL). Members heard that the scheme had now reached practical completion, with all elements having been handed over to the Council following an opening event in March, 2025.

The Chairman brought the Cabinet’s attention to the draft minutes of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 27th March, 2025 and Members considered the comments contained therein.

The Cabinet considered and discussed the risks of each option, as set out in the updated risk table, and decided that Option 1, disposal to RHL, now demonstrated a significant short-term risk to the Council’s revenue account that meant that this option was the least favourable in terms of short-term financial risk. The Cabinet therefore agreed to discount this option. Option 2 was for the direct sale of the units to the open market but it was felt that this would carry a high risk in terms of potential delays in receiving the capital receipts when compared to the other options. There was a further risk in respect of the future sales of the units not achieving the same value as agents had forecasted. This option was, therefore, also discounted. Option 5 was for the sale of the units to private investors. The highest offer received was not

competitive when compared against the other proposals under consideration. Option 5 was, therefore, also discounted at this point.

Option 4(b), whilst having a higher value than option 4(a), was also discounted as the proposed leaseback value for the commercial properties represented an additional risk to the Council, outweighing the higher value.

Members discussed the remaining two options, which were Option 3 to a named registered housing provider and Option 4(a), which was to a provider of sub-market rental accommodation for key workers. It was noted that Option 3 would provide increased affordable housing whilst Option 4(a) would provide key worker accommodation. The Cabinet agreed that both the provision of social housing and the provision of key worker accommodation fitted with the Council's priorities. In discussing the options in detail, the Cabinet felt it needed more information in relation to the two options and the two operators to be able to make an informed choice. It was proposed, therefore, that the meeting should be adjourned until this further information could be obtained, at which point the meeting would be reconvened and the decision made.

At 8.38pm on 8th April, 2025, **the Cabinet RESOLVED** that the Cabinet meeting be adjourned for further information on the two options and operators to be obtained. The meeting would be reconvened at the first opportunity once this had been completed.

At 6.45pm on 14th April, 2025, the Cabinet meeting of the 8th April, 2025 was reconvened in private session.

At the start of the meeting, in the absence of the Leader of the Council (Cllr Gareth Williams), **the Cabinet RESOLVED** that Cllr Jules Crossley be appointed Chairman for the remainder of the meeting.

It was confirmed that, since the adjournment of the original meeting, the Cabinet had received presentations from each of the parties involved in Options 3 and 4(a) to obtain further information regarding the details of each option. This had assisted the Cabinet in assessing the relative benefits of providing affordable housing compared with key worker accommodation and helped the Cabinet to understand how each organisation would manage the property. The Cabinet agreed that reducing the housing waiting list was a key priority of the administration. In this regard, the Cabinet noted that the operator in respect of Option 4(a) had agreed to receive nominations from the Council's waiting list that fulfilled the relevant key worker criteria for a proportion of the units.

On an initial vote the preferences of the members of the Cabinet were equally balanced for each option. Following further discussion and given that it would be possible to accommodate qualifying persons on the Council's housing waiting list in the development under Option 4(a), it was proposed that the Cabinet's preferred option would be Option 4(a).

At this point, **the Cabinet RESOLVED** that

- (i) the disposal of the residential apartments at Union Yard (Seacole Place and Burton House) to the organisation making the offer set out in Option 4(a) in Exempt Report No.REG2502, be approved;
- (ii) the Executive Head of Property and Growth, in consultation with the Economy, Skills and Regeneration Portfolio Holder, the Executive Head of Finance and the Corporate Manager – Legal Services, be authorised to enable the disposal of the 82 residential apartments in line with the approach set out for Option 4(a), subject to any further due diligence and any further valuations considered necessary by the Corporate Manager – Legal Services or Executive Head of Finance; and
- (iii) the disposal would also be subject to revised Heads of Terms, enabling local people on the Council’s housing waiting list who were employed by the local hospital to be eligible for housing within the development.

The Meeting closed at 7.09pm on Monday 14th April, 2025.

CLLR GARETH WILLIAMS, LEADER OF THE COUNCIL
