

**CABINET**

**COUNCILLOR SOPHIE PORTER  
HEALTHY COMMUNITIES & ACTIVE LIVES  
PORTFOLIO HOLDER**

**JULY 8TH 2025**

**KEY DECISION NO**

**REPORT NO. ED2502**

## **COMMUNITY RECOVERY FUND**

### **SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS:**

Following the public disorder that took place in July and August 2024 the Council received £600k from the Community Recovery Fund (CRF), made available by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG)

This report outlines the Council spending so far and identifies plans to allocate the remaining funding available.

The Cabinet is asked to:

- Note the spend so far and how this has supported wider community cohesion and resilience.
- Endorse the remaining allocation of funding
- Note how the spending aligns to the Council's Delivery Plan priorities as well as the priorities of Rushmoor Together – a partnership plan for tackling inequalities and supporting the local community.

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1. This report sets out the Council spend against the Community Recovery Fund (CRF) so far and outlines how the remaining funding will be allocated.

## **2. BACKGROUND**

- 2.1. In September 2024 the Government introduced a £15 million Community Recovery Fund to support communities impacted by the public disorder that took place in July and August 2024.
- 2.2. The Ministry for Housing, Communities, & Local Government (MHCLG) identified 20 Local Authorities across the country, including Rushmoor, that had been significantly affected by the public disorder.

- 2.3. Rushmoor Council received £600k (£510k revenue and £90k capital) The Fund was designed to offer maximum flexibility, allowing each local place to respond to their circumstances to deliver support.
- 2.4. Broadly speaking the funding could be used for activities that involved:
- Immediate clean up and repair
  - Security and safety
  - Communications
  - Activity to rebuild social trust and promote cohesion between communities
- 2.5. Following the protests, in August 2024, a Motion to Council was considered that acknowledged Rushmoor as a welcoming and inclusive Borough but recognised local community tensions; with residents feeling unheard, fearful or both. The motion called upon all involved in protests to do so in a peaceful manner. Members were unanimous in their support of the motion and agreed to engage together to tackle the issues and ensure that the concerns of the whole community were listened to.
- 2.6. Following the motion, Members agreed to ‘Establish a cross-party working group to work with local community groups and leaders to better understand and address community concerns.’ The group was allocated a budget of £50k from a separate fund, prior to the CRF allocation. A total of £18k has been spent against the budget to commission the Belong Network, an organisation experienced in social cohesion and connecting communities, to work with local groups and community leaders and listen to concerns and issues. This work was called Rushmoor Voices.
- 2.7. A final report, including recommendations, on Rushmoor Voices was received in April 2025. The Council has agreed to continue working with Belong for a further 9 months. Recommendations from the report have been considered in the development of ‘Rushmoor Together’ – a partnership plan for tackling deprivation and inequality with a new priority on community belonging reflecting the need to focus on integration and togetherness. The report has also been used to help identify the best use of the Community Recovery Fund.

### **3. COMMUNITY RECOVERY SPEND**

#### **Spent or Allocated**

- 3.1. To date the Council has either spent or allocated £345k (323k revenue and 22k capital) of funding on a range of initiatives aimed at strengthening community safety, increasing communication and engagement, and promoting cohesion.
- 3.2. **Strategic Communication & Media Training** £10k for Members and officers to attend bespoke communication training.
- 3.3. **Safety and Security** - £10k on security at Rushmoor Council meetings to ensure the safety of residents, Members and staff.

- 3.4. **Town Centre Events and Arts Programme** £150k allocated for a programme of work to rebuild social trust and promote cohesion between communities. This includes an enhanced town centre events programme to support ongoing UKSPF projects.
- 3.5. **Development of Rushmoor Youth Voice** – £4k Engage with young people through Rushmoor Youth Voice to seek views about what interventions young people feel would add value, address issues with mis/disinformation. Work is in progress but could include youth mentoring support programmes for those at the greatest risk of violence/disorder/criminality who need additional support in developing resilience to exploitative relationships and making positive decisions. The Council to explore suitable partners to deliver this intervention.
- 3.6. **Ceremonial Beacon** (Capital spend 22k, Revenue 2k) The Beacon was officially lit for the first time at the VE Day commemorations in the park on 8 May. It features the Rushmoor crest and is an important new symbol of unity for the local community. It will serve as a focus for residents to come together on special occasions for many years to come.
- 3.7. **St Georges Day Celebrations:** £1k A celebration event at the Council offices to mark St. Georges Day. Celebrations included flag raising and speeches, music from a local brass band, singing from a local choir and a range of refreshments.
- 3.8. **Grants Programmes** £30k including Pride in Place, Shop fronts and supporting communities grant funding.
- 3.9. **Supporting Communities Plan** £20k To support the delivery of the Supporting Communities work programme.
- 3.10. **Communication & Engagement Resources** £96k Resources to further enhance community engagement efforts to better reach disadvantaged populations. Includes the continuation of a dedicated Community Engagement resource and an additional communications resource within the communications team.
- 3.11. A summary of expenditure either spent or agreed to date is as follows:

<b>Programme of activity – Allocated* or spent to date</b>	<b>Funding Amount</b>
Security at the Council offices	10
Strategic Communications and media training	10
Ceremonial Beacon in Manor Park ( <i>Capital</i> )	22
Ceremonial Beacon (Revenue costs)	2
St Georges Day Celebration and event	1
Resources to further enhance community engagement efforts to better reach disadvantaged populations including the continuation of a dedicated	96

Community Engagement resource and an additional communications resource within the communications team	
Development of Rushmoor Youth Voice/engagement with young people	4*
Events and arts programme of activity	150*
Grants Programmes	30*
Supporting Communities Programme of work	20*
<b>Total</b>	<b>345</b>

### Planned Spend for the remaining budget

- 3.12. There is currently £187k remaining in the Community Recovery Fund. The Council, together with input from partners, has identified the following projects to be delivered in 25/26.
- 3.13. **Continuation of work with Belong Network** £25k. To deliver a programme of work with local community groups, partners and Elected Members building on the Rushmoor Voices project. This will include tension monitoring and effective approaches to countering misinformation, challenging prejudices and stereotypes, building trust and cohesive communities.
- 3.14. **Community Mediation Service** Up to £80k. Development of a free and impartial mediation services delivered by Citizens Advice, to help enable the resolution of a range of everyday conflicts and disputes in the community.
- 3.15. **Rushmoor Together Grant** - £80k Development of a Rushmoor Together fund for local charities, partners and community groups to apply for. Projects will be considered against set criteria including the need to demonstrate how projects will: build connections between communities, help to address tensions in the community, enhance critical thinking skills and resilience against misinformation, particularly among young people. All applications will be subject to assessment and a decision will be made at the grants panel.
- 3.16. There is an outstanding capital balance of £68k and £2k revenue remaining from the fund. This must be spent before March 2026. The Council is working with partners to consider further options for this spend.

Programme – Future Allocation proposed	Funding Amount
Community Mediation Service delivered by the CA (18 month – 2 year project)	80
Continuation of work with the Belong Network	25
Creation of a Rushmoor Together Grant Fund	80
<b>Total</b>	<b>185</b>

### Alternative Options

- 3.17. Not to continue working with the Belong Network.
- 3.18. Not to fund the Mediation Service on the basis that there is similar, but limited, support from other partner organisations and take up of some mediation is low. However, this project was widely supported by Elected Members.
- 3.19. An option to not use a contribution from the Community Recovery Fund towards the UKSPF programme was previously considered. This was rejected on the basis that it would result in reduced activity across the UKSPF programme. This would negatively impact the ability of the Council to rebuild social trust and promote cohesion between communities.
- 3.20. Alternative approaches, including a more limited grant programme were considered. However, the suggested proposals offer the greatest flexibility, responsiveness to local needs and direct benefit to the community.

## **Consultation**

- 3.21. The Council established a cross-party Community Engagement Task & Finish group to work with local community groups and leaders to better understand, and address community concerns.
- 3.22. As part of this work the Council commissioned the Belong Network to support the delivery of the workplan of the Community Engagement Task and Finish Group, with the aim of working with local community groups and leaders to better understand, listen to and address community concerns. This work involved individual and group meetings with community groups and individuals which we called 'Rushmoor Voices'.
- 3.23. Council officers, partners and the cross-party Community Engagement Task & Finish group, have been engaged in developing the approach to identify the best use of community recovery funding.

## **4. IMPLICATIONS (of proposed course of action)**

### **Risks**

- 4.1. There are no direct risks to the Council. There is a reputational risk if the Council does not spend the money to benefit the local community.

### **Legal Implications**

- 4.2. The terms of the grant are set out in "Community Recovery Fund: Guidance" published by MHCLG on 18 September 2024. This requires that the expenditure of the grant falls outside the scope of what the Council would "normally expect to incur" and is used to support measures taken in response to the public

disorder that occurred in the Borough in August 2024. The aims of these measures must be to:

- Safeguard life or property
- Prevent suffering or inconvenience
- Reduce the risk of further disorder in the future; and
- Rebuild social trust and promote cohesion between communities

4.3. The incurred and proposed expenditure of the grant outlined by the report is consistent with the terms set out in the Guidance.

4.4. The Council is responsible for ensuring that the funding is managed in accordance with the UK's subsidy control regime and that any funding is spent (including by third parties) in compliance with the appropriate public contract legislation. The appropriate public contract legislation is the Procurement Act 2023 and the Procurement Regulations 2024.

### **Financial Implications**

4.5. The Community Recovery Grant is ringfenced money the Council has received directly from the Government for a specific purpose.

### **Resource Implications**

4.6. The success of the work funded by CRF will require ongoing engagement and work across the council, notably: Community & Partnerships; Community Safety; Resettlement Manager and Community Engagement Officer as well as key partner organisations. The Council will monitor the success and progress of the projects and most importantly, the impact they have on local communities as part of its monitoring and performance process.

### **Equalities Impact Implications**

4.7. The work will advance the equality of opportunity for all residents with a focus on minority communities' and those who are experiencing, or at increased risk of experiencing vulnerability.

## **5 CONCLUSIONS**

5.1. Cabinet is recommended to endorse the spend as outlined in the report.

5.2. The projects identified in this report will support existing UKSPF projects and the delivery of Council priorities, most notably the priorities of Pride in Place – safe and vibrant communities and Community & Wellbeing – Active Lives, Healthier and stronger communities. This relates to creating stronger, cohesive, and more confident communities in which people feel safe, welcome and connected.

- 5.3 The projects and spend identified in the report also align to the Rushmoor Together partnership plan and specifically the priority of Community Belonging – which is about strong, safe resilient communities, with a sense of community pride and belonging for all. An allocation of funding towards the community mediation service and the Community Together grant fund will provide direct support to residents and partners and empower local communities to support one another.

Appendix: CA Mediation Proposal

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## North Hampshire Mediation Partnership – outline project proposal

### 1. OVERVIEW

- 1.1. A new project, offering free and impartial mediation services, would help Rushmoor Borough Council (RBC) to enable the resolution a range of everyday conflicts and disputes in our local community, utilising part of its allocation from the Community Recovery Fund to directly promote cohesion and improve social trust.
- 1.2. This proposal builds upon Citizens Advice Rushmoor's (CAR) experience as one of our area's largest and most enduring local charities, providing free, independent, and confidential advice and advocacy services to the Rushmoor community for the last 85 years. Underpinning our charity's success is a continued ambition to maintain high quality, tailored services free at the point of use to all residents. As the people's champion, we give people the knowledge and confidence they need to find their way forward – whoever they are, and whatever their problem.
- 1.3. As an existing partner of RBC, CAR already delivers a range of advice services with a strong track record of impact and value that supplement the Council's statutory duties. That work, coupled with efforts to support the Council achieve its wider strategic priorities, would make us uniquely placed to establish such a partnership and further advance our shared vision of a society where people face fewer problems.

### 2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1. In our fast-paced world, we can all face challenges in our daily lives. Maybe we live in communities with other people close by and sometimes we don't get on. Doing our best to settle down and bring up a family, it doesn't always work out. Even at our workplace, we can become involved in disputes which we can't easily fix. These disputes will, most often, be left unsettled to escalate and cause tension, damage relationships and community cohesion, and reduce our wellbeing, with seemingly our only option to undertake antagonistic, destructive, lengthy, and expensive court litigation.
- 2.2. Mediation, however, is a powerful and underutilised tool for people to resolve disputes through managed communication. Approaching a dispute as a problem to be solved rather than as a battle to be won by one side or the other, mediation is collaborative rather than adversarial. Experts at helping parties work together to reach a fair solution, not just arguing a particular point of view – mediators will likely help you make progress more quickly and at much lower cost than through the traditional solicitor and court route, and much more effectively than without any support at all.
- 2.3. Evidence suggests that the overall success rate of mediation continues to be very high, with [recent data from the Centre for Effective Dispute Resolution \(CEDR\)](#) showing an

aggregate settlement rate of 92%. Although not Community Mediation-specific, it provides a strong indication of the broad efficacy of the process.

- 2.4. Neutral, qualified and experienced mediators listen and help people to hear one another, dealing with the needs of each individual or group. Mediators enable people to make points or ask questions in a safe environment. Agreements reached by mutual consent can also pave a way to improved future communication.
- 2.5. Many local councils already advocate the use of mediation, either by providing in-house services as seen in [Gosport and Fareham councils](#), funding not-for-profit services in as in [Brighton & Hove](#), or simply recommending the practice via private providers as [Hampshire County Council](#) currently do.
- 2.6. There is, nevertheless, a distinct lack of mediation services across our local area. Although a small number of providers exist, all are private, fee-paying services and almost exclusively practice only family mediation for separating couples.
- 2.7. However, further afield - albeit unavailable to us locally - are some fantastic examples of free-to-access Community Mediation services. [Mediation Surrey](#), [Portsmouth Mediation Service](#), and others provide excellent blueprints for how a local mediation service could be delivered successfully and sustainably by a VCSE partner.

### 3. SERVICE DELIVERY

- 3.1. The North Hampshire Mediation Partnership (NHMP) would offer free, impartial, unbiased support to help residents explore ways to resolve their conflict. This service would be designed, developed, and managed by CAR.
- 3.2. The Partnership would begin by focusing on providing Community Mediation services, be that on housing, community safety, health, or other issues. All too often conflict can arise in the community between neighbours due to issues such as noise nuisance, anti-social behaviour, parking or boundary disputes, misunderstandings, and breakdowns in communication. It is vital we do not underestimate the impact of something like a noise dispute and how it permeates into someone's life. People need help to communicate, and failure to resolve a problem can lead to poor mental health and people not feeling safe or happy in their homes. Mediators can, however, quickly and constructively address such disputes involving neighbours, family members, young people, or groups of people, in circumstances where each side is willing to participate.
- 3.3. Community Mediation can also help support local authorities with statutory responsibilities flowing from legislation such as the Homelessness Reduction Act. For example, mediation can help resolve intergenerational disputes where conflict has arisen between parents and adult children who reside together and where parents want a child to leave the family home. It can assist in facilitating communication, and in supporting individuals and familial relationships, so that the conflict can be resolved or at least managed until a planned move can take place, thus helping to reduce homelessness and preventing a crisis intervention from becoming necessary.

- 3.4. Brexit, the pandemic, the mass stabbings in Southport last summer; all are, amongst others, referenced as catalysts for the growing level of hate crime we see in our communities. They demonstrate how varied and often unforeseeable the triggers can be, which provokes a suggestion that if Community Mediation were better embedded, it could assist with the de-escalation of tension and support future crime prevention.
- 3.5. The scope for Community Mediation to provide a safe space for discussion and dialogue, and for individuals and communities to come together and resolve their differences, is broad and brings into sharp focus the importance of responding to local needs. Having a central space for inter-community discussion is wider but just as vital as that offered by a standard mediation process.
- 3.6. Services would principally be delivered by a team of trained volunteer mediators. A clear benefit of the volunteer model is the cost-effective way that mediation can be delivered, although that is not to say that there isn't a cost, reflecting the cost of premises, a small staff team, IT support, insurances, venue hire, DBS checks, volunteer expenses and so on. A particular feature of the volunteer model is the ethos of services provided by the community for the benefit of the community. The fact that volunteers give their time to help others often leads to respect for the service from its beneficiaries. In terms of the efficacy of mediation, arguably the greatest benefit of the volunteer model is its independent nature.
- 3.7. Those volunteers would work under the supervision and management of a paid Service Manager (0.6FTE), with administrative support from a paid Administrator (0.1FTE):

- **Service Manager (0.6FTE)**

*Role Purpose: to manage the day-to-day operations of the Partnership, ensuring the provision of quality services for all clients*

*Duties:*

- *act as Project Lead for the NHMP within CAR and externally*
- *line manage paid staff and volunteers within the Partnership, including performance appraisals, observations, and ongoing supervision*
- *lead on quality assurance to ensure that all services are delivered in accordance with professional and internal standards, ensuring all mediators complete required training (including refreshers) as required*
- *monitor appointment schedules to ensure efficient allocation of resources*
- *provide mediation services as and when required*

- **Administrator (0.1FTE)**

*Role Purpose: to provide administrative support to ensure the efficient and effective delivery of NHMP's services*

*Duties:*

- *respond to and manage incoming referrals effectively via telephone and online systems, to meet agreed service standards*
- *support the management of appointments and diary systems*
- *provide wider administration support, including client data, summary documents, and associated tasks as required*
- *provide practical and technical administrative support to mediators to ensure efficient service delivery*

3.8. As with our existing advice services, a holistic and wraparound approach would be taken to supplement any mediation, with service users referred and signposted, where appropriate, to other support and organisations to best meet their needs.

#### 4. TRAINING

- 4.1. Mediators would, as a minimum, be expected to complete a basic level of external training, such as the [Mediation Skills for Facilitated Conversations course \(UK Mediation\)](#). This would be supplemented by a programme of internal learning and development, arranged by the Service Manager. Recruitment is likely to take place in regular cohorts – following CAR’s existing and successful volunteer training model - to ensure a steady supply of new mediators.
- 4.2. The Service Manager would hold a more formal professional mediation qualification, such as the [Interpersonal Mediation Practitioner’s Certificate \(UK Mediation\)](#). They, too, would undertake their own programme of ongoing learning and development.

#### 5. SUSTAINABILITY

5.1. CAR are confident that, working with other public, private, and charitable partners, we could over time unlock substantial opportunities for funded and/or income-generating mediation services. This may include expanding areas of practice, for example:

- **Workplace Mediation**  
Navigating interpersonal conflict between individuals or within a team, preventing misunderstanding escalating into costly disputes.
- **Education Mediation**  
Helping parents, young people and local authorities reach agreements about arrangements for SEN and disabled young people.
- **Family Mediation**  
Working with families in conflict, especially those divorcing or separating, stay in control of arrangements over children, property, and finance.

5.2. Many mediation services are utilising the availability of the [Family Mediation Voucher Scheme](#) – although currently still time-limited – to provide funding to support people

with family law disputes. Additionally, some providers have secured funding from their local Police & Crime Commissioner, as [in Thames Valley](#), where services help to prevent the escalation of anti-social behaviour.

- 5.3. Expansion in these areas would not only improve our offer to the community, but increase the Partnership's long-term financial sustainability; enabling us to retain the Community Mediation services after the Council's initial investment was exhausted.

## **6. REPORTING**

- 6.1. Full, confidential case records and history will be kept, in line with CAR's own internal requirements and quality standards. Reports may be prepared to illustrate the impact and value of the service, including:

- *projected and actual outcomes, including proportion of agreements reached*
- *service user demographics*
- *types of issue mediated on*
- *level and format of support offered*
- *other measures to be agreed*

## **7. CONCLUSION**

- 7.1. This proposal offers RBC an exciting opportunity to develop a lasting legacy from the horrendous public disorder our communities experienced in Summer 2024.
- 7.2. Many people still, sadly, feel unheard. Yet, more readily available mediation services to address a range of community disputes could encourage greater communication within our communities, serving to support not only those in disagreement, but help us all to become more aware, receptive, and flexible – improving social trust.
- 7.3. Building on the strength of our existing partnership, as well as the models of efficacy and success seen elsewhere, we believe the services of the North Hampshire Mediation Partnership have a transformative potential for Rushmoor.

**Chief Executive Officer**  
**February 2025**