

COUNCIL MEETING – 4TH DECEMBER 2025

AGENDA ITEM NO. 3 (2) - PUBLIC QUESTIONS

| No | Question from | Question | Response from | Response |
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| 1 | Peter Crerar, Manor Park Ward | <p>Council Tax rise <i>In 2023, Keir Starmer said: "If there was a Labour government, you could take that council tax rise you just got and rip it up".....Yes you heard it right, not a penny more on your council tax"</i></p> <p>The Labour government has allowed councils to raise council tax by up to 5% without a local referendum for the 2025-2026 financial year, including Rushmoor. Does the Leader of the Council believe that Keir Starmer was making empty promises and is the leader of the council happy for the residents of Rushmoor to rip up their council tax bills as Keir Starmer suggested?</p> | <p>Portfolio Holder for Finance & Resources</p> <p>Cllr Gaynor Austin</p> | <p>Council tax is important for providing the essential services on which residents rely, and although Rushmoor is responsible for collecting the Council Tax, the Council only keeps around 12% of it.</p> <p>The context of the quote from 2023 was about how a windfall tax on energy firms would have been used in that year to support people through cost-of-living pressures and not a commitment to scrap council tax forever. This was not a policy that was implemented by the government at that time. Local council taxation increased as a response to austerity.</p> <p>In the latest announcement for local council funding, there is a longer-term funding commitment from government. However, Rushmoor Borough Council has only been allowed a 3% increase in its rate (not 5%) and will be limited to this again in 2026. The 5% increase was applicable to County Councils – 3% + 2% specifically for Adult Social Services. Rushmoor Borough Council's allowable Council Tax increase for the 2025/26 financial year was 2% without referendum.</p> |

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| 2 | Vince Bramley, Rowhill Ward | Location of Howitzer Could the Council update on plans for the Howitzer that was outside Aldershot train station roundabout. It was donated by the army many years ago but removed for much-needed restoration. I was informed last year that a possible new position was the roundabout by Burger King. But funds are not available, and HCC would have to take over the works as it would be on the highway. May I suggest that a fitting and visible location for it would be next to the WW2 memorial beside the Princes Hall steps – where is the Howitzer and how much longer will it be missing? | Portfolio Holder for Economy, Skills and Regeneration Cllr Julie Hall | The Council finished refurbishment of the Howitzer earlier this year and it is currently stored at one of the Council's depots. The intention was to site the howitzer at Gun Hill. Unfortunately, Hampshire County Council are concerned that this may prejudice future improvements identified in the Local Cycling and Walking Strategy. Further work is required to try and resolve the issue, and it is intended to pursue the matter in January and alternative locations will be considered. A location close to the WW2 memorial can be included in that exercise. |
| 3 | A resident of Cove and Southwood Ward | Councillors Social Media Should councillors be using their council social media accounts to promote their own businesses? | Deputy Leader of the Council Cllr Sophie Porter | Councillors are subject to the Code of Conduct when using social media accounts which identify them as members, and promoting a business via such an account may be a breach of the Code. Where members need guidance on the use of social media the advice of the Monitoring Officer should be sought. Where members or residents consider Councillors may be breaching the Code, they should contact the Monitoring Officer. |

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| 4 | Dean Llewellyn, St Marks Ward | Grounds Maintenance - Lynchford Rd and Napier Gardens Can you arrange better up-keep and maintenance of Lynchford Road verges, roundabouts and Napier Gardens car park? | Pride in Place and Neighbourhood Services Cllr Christine Guinness | These areas are contractually maintained in accordance with standards of maintenance applied across the entire borough of Rushmoor, therefore, it is not feasible, practical or affordable to permanently enhance maintenance in one specific area. However, the Council did recently coordinate the Community Payback Team visiting the area for a general clear-up and some leaf removal. |
| 5 | Craig Sinclair, Cherrywood Ward | Elections 2026 Will Rushmoor council be holding democratic elections in May 2026? | Deputy Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Healthy Communities and Active Lives Cllr Sophie Porter | <p>The Council is currently planning for Local Rushmoor Borough Elections and Hampshire County Council Elections to take place on Thursday 7th May 2026.</p> <p>However, it was announced today that the planned inaugural Mayoral Election for the Combined County Authority of Hampshire and the Solent that was also to take place in the coming May will now not take place until 2028.</p> |

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| 6 | Andrew McLeod, Cove and Southwood Ward | <p>Grounds Maintenance - Condition of Road/Footpath Arrow Rd</p> <p>When will attention be given to Arrow Road area of Farnborough? North from the Costco roundabout is breaking up. 5 oak trees on the left side are dead or dying, flooding makes the foot path/cycle path impassable when heavy rainfall. Fly tipping takes place, hedge row out of control, previously, reported to local councillors and HCC Councillor, dead branches fall on verge and foot path.</p> | <p>Place and Neighbourhood Services</p> <p>Cllr Christine Guinness</p> | <p>A number of the points raised in this question fall outside of the responsibility of this Council. The carriageway and footpath or cycle path surface and any highway flooding is the responsibility of Hampshire County Council. The trees along Arrow Road are all owned by the Ministry of Defence. Rushmoor's Tree Officer has previously raised concerns about these trees to HCC, due to the risk of limbs/debris falling onto the adopted highway (which is their responsibility). Rushmoor cut the grass along the west side of Arrow Road, which is in accordance with the agency agreement with the County Council. The hedgerow along the east side of Arrow Road is situated within the adopted public highway and is therefore also the responsibility of the County Council, who are responsible for ensuring it does not encroach the public highway. Flytips that occur along the highway here can be reported to Rushmoor for investigation and removal.</p> |
| 7 | Sally McGuinness, Cherrywood Ward | <p>Prospect Estate Graffiti</p> <p>The graffiti is increasing too much on the Prospect Estate. Can something be done about it other than cleaning it up, which is not being done? Something like a campaign to put posters up saying there is a greater penalty for anyone who is doing graffiti and that council tax is increasing to pay for the cleaning up, so that's less money to spend on the pens and paint.</p> | <p>Place and Neighbourhood Services</p> <p>Cllr Christine Guinness</p> | <p>The Council is seeing an increase in graffiti across the Borough, and the Council has been redirecting resources in order to manage the issue. This week council workers removed a large quantity of graffiti in Moor Road and the surrounding area. We encourage anyone with information about those graffitiing our communities to make contact with our Place Protection Team.</p> |

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| 8 | A resident of North Town Ward | <p>Residents of Potters International</p> <p>By now, many inhabitants of Potter's hotel on the Farnborough Rd will have been granted leave to remain and released into the community. Can the council provide a breakdown of how many people this has been to date, their ethnicities, where they have been actually housed and by which authority and / or organisation? Can the council also provide any information also on the tents that have popped up opposite Potters, who's inside them and what they are going to do about them?</p> | <p>Portfolio Holder for Housing and Planning</p> <p>Cllr Keith Dibble</p> | <p>The question raises a number of points:</p> <p>Asylum and immigration decisions - Decisions about asylum and immigration, including the granting of leave to remain, are made by the Home Office. The council does not hold information about individuals' immigration status, personal data or where they go when they leave the hotel.</p> <p>Housing after leave to remain - When people are granted leave to remain, they are free to move to any part of the country. We have received only a small number of approaches to our housing team. Most people leaving Potters are moving to areas where they have relatives, friends, or established communities.</p> <p>Tents opposite Potters - Our teams are aware that there have been tents opposite Potters. We have visited the site on many occasions and are engaging with any occupants. Where individuals are found to be homeless, advice and support are offered through our outreach services. Our teams will also refer to other agencies in appropriate cases. At this stage, we are aware that there is one tent remaining. We continue to monitor the situation carefully to safeguard individuals and maintain community safety.</p> |

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| 9 | Daz Brady, Rowhill Ward | Assurance on responsibly installed Flags Given the positive relationship between Rushmoor Borough Council and local residents regarding the Union Jack flags displayed on lampposts—particularly those maintained by members of Rushmoor People First—can the Council confirm that this cooperative approach will continue? Specifically, can we be assured that where flags are responsibly installed and maintained by volunteers, and where they cause no safety issues, obstructions, or interference with road signs, the Council will continue allowing them to remain unchallenged? This arrangement has worked well for the community, and we would appreciate confirmation that it will be upheld. | Deputy Leader of the Council Cllr Sophie Porter | The Council realises that this is a very sensitive issue. Many residents have made strong representations to the Council both in support of flags and in opposition to flags. The Council contacted the County Council, which owns lampposts on public highways, for a view and they confirmed that as long as flags were not dangerous or obscuring signage then they would not be taking immediate steps to remove them. Since that time the Council has not taken any further action on this matter. However, this matter is subject to a debate later on this evening's agenda. |
| 10 | Leo Mellet, Rushmoor People First | Military Sites for Housing Migrants Has there been any enquiries or discussions from or with any party regarding the use of any of Rushmoor/Aldershot's military sites for the housing of migrants? If so, and even if not, what is the council's position on these sites being used in this way? | Portfolio Holder for Housing and Planning Cllr Keith Dibble | The Council is not aware of any enquiries or discussions on the use of military sites in Rushmoor to house migrants. The Council would need to consider the situation if and when it arises. |