

# POLICY AND PROJECT ADVISORY BOARD

Report of the meeting held on Tuesday, 9th December, 2025 at the Council Offices, Farnborough at 7.00 pm.

## Voting Members

Cllr S.J. Masterson (Chair)  
Cllr Lisa Greenway (Vice-Chair)

Cllr A. Adeola  
Cllr Steve Harden  
Cllr Rhian Jones  
Cllr Mara Makunura  
Cllr M.J. Roberts  
Cllr Dhan Sarki

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Cllrs Abe Allen, T.W. Mitchell and Ivan Whitmee.

Cllr C.W. Card attended the meeting as a Standing Deputy.

## 24. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 18th November, 2025 were agreed as a correct record.

## 25. FREE PARKING FOR SHOPPERS

The Board welcomed Mr Lee McQuade, Economy and Growth Service Manager, who provided information that had been established in response to the approval of a Motion at the October, 2025 Council meeting that had called upon the Board to consider whether free or discounted car parking might be offered to shoppers in Aldershot and Farnborough town centres. The wording of the agreed Motion was attached to the agenda and requested that officers, under guidance from PPAB, should develop a suitable method of consulting residents, local businesses and potential investors about the likely impact of free or discounted parking and how it might work best. Furthermore, it was requested that the Portfolio Holder should present the findings to PPAB to allow it to make recommendations to the Cabinet in time for next year's budget.

The Board was advised that the evidence showed that parking cost could influence behaviour and that high charges could discourage short visits, impulse shopping and the use of cafes and other hospitality outlets but it was also acknowledged that cost was not the only factor. In terms of cost, charges in Aldershot and Farnborough town centres appeared to be comparable to or lower than those levied in Camberley, Basingstoke and Guildford town centres. Research showed that visiting shoppers valued a range of factors including:

- Retail and leisure offer
- Ease of parking / availability of spaces
- Proximity to shops
- Safety and attractiveness of the town
- Cost - though evidence suggested that convenience, relative to what the visitor wanted to purchase or experience, mattered more than price of parking

Mr McQuade explained that the Welsh Government had commissioned a report called 'Assessing the impact of car parking charges on town centre footfall' and that this had concluded that parking cost was only 'one aspect of a complex interplay' influencing visitor behaviour and that the evidence linking changes in parking charges to changes in footfall was 'very weak'. The report added that towns performed best when parking policy was combined with:

- Strong retail and leisure mix
- Events and animation
- Attractive public spaces
- Market and place branding

Other evidence had come to similar conclusions; that parking costs were a factor in town centre performance but not the main one. In concluding his presentation, Mr McQuade explained that some parking in town centres was already free, such as the privately owned car park at Morrisons' in Aldershot. It was also pointed out that any reduction in car parking income would have a negative impact on the Council's revenue position, which would need to be evaluated and considered. The proposed approach to progress this matter was to;

- Assess the impact of limited / targeted changes e.g. time limited offers at specific car parks
- Test those approaches with businesses and residents (would require resources)
- Come back to PPAB with options, possibly at the meeting in March

In discussing the content of the presentation, the Board raised the following points:

- Promotion to local resident and visitors of any parking offers would be key
- Infrastructure within town centres would also need to be in place, such as working escalators and lifts at the Wellington Centre in Aldershot

- Should consider reducing cost of parking at periods before and after school run / work, such as 9am to midday and 3pm to 6pm
- Must remember the green agenda and encourage alternative forms of transport, such as busses, ensuring that public transport services are joined up
- Recall that free parking was offered in High Street Multi Storey in Aldershot in late 90s/early 00s – thought to have had some effect on footfall but not much
- If wanting to support local businesses, should the Council look at rent and rates instead? It was considered that these would be likely to have a greater impact in supporting businesses than changes to parking costs and it was important to consider what outcomes any policy changes were trying to achieve
- PPAB would need to understand revenue implications of free parking to make an informed recommendation
- Requested that Mr McQuade should share the data used for presentation with PPAB members
- Important that PPAB focusses on the wording of the Motion in relation to free parking as opposed to other initiatives, such as the suggested refund of parking charges as a result of spending a certain amount in town – the motion requested that only changes to parking charges be considered, not any other interventions to support town centre businesses
- Should Council be encouraging residents to park outside of town centres and walk in, whilst protecting blue badge holders?
- ‘Pop in bays’ appeared to work well elsewhere
- What events / special days could be hosted / supported to bring footfall into town centres?
- Could any initiatives be advertised on Council Tax bills?

The Chair thanked Mr McQuade for his input and confirmed that this item would be programmed to be discussed again at the Board’s meeting on 24th March, 2026.

## 26. **WORK PLAN**

The Board noted the current Work Plan. Further to Minute No. 25 above, it was agreed that ‘Free Parking for Shoppers’ would be added to the agenda for the meeting on 24th March, 2026.

It was further agreed that the work plan would be updated following the next meeting of the Programme Management Group. The Chair invited Board members to submit any items for consideration by email.

## 27. 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:

<b>Minute No.</b>	<b>Schedule 12A Para. No.</b>	<b>Category</b>
28	3	Information relating to an individual, financial or business affairs and labour relations

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

## 28. COUNCIL BUDGET 2026/27 - SERVICE REVIEWS

The Board welcomed Mr Ian Harrison, Interim Managing Director, Mr Peter Vickers, Executive Head of Finance and Section 151 Officer and Mr Alex Shiell, Service Manager – Policy, Strategy and Transformation, who provided a briefing on the options under consideration by the Cabinet to improve the Council's financial sustainability, with a view to enabling the Board to make recommendations to the Cabinet if it wished. Cllr Gareth Williams, Leader of the Council had also been invited to attend the meeting for this item.

The Board was advised that work to set the Council's budget for 2026/27 was well underway, with final proposals going to the Council meeting on 26th February, 2026. There were a number of areas of uncertainty, such as the impact of Fairer Funding arrangements this year, along with a reset of business rates. After many years of finding ways of delivering sufficient savings to deliver a balanced budget without cutting services, it was felt that it would now be necessary to review expenditure on staffing, being a major cost centre that had not shown much change over the previous decade. It was explained that the Cabinet had worked through the base budget on a line-by-line basis with a view to a redesign in the new year that would look to identify savings of £2 million. The Board was informed that, given the influence of local government reorganisation, the need for financial sustainability and the achievement of political priorities, the Council would need to:

- Refocus budgets to support political priorities
- Reduce budgets to achieve a prudent minimum reserves balance
- Achieve financial sustainability

- Have a clear Council Delivery Plan that focussed activity on the most desired outcomes to produce improvements in residents' lives and places, with a framework for accountability and performance monitoring

The Cabinet had provided the following steer in relation to the service review process in the context of its political priorities:

- **Grow** – relevant to services producing a net income
- **Sustain** – services or activity that would not provide any financial benefit from review
- **Refocus / retreat** – services where there were options to achieve a budget reduction and / or improved value for money through doing something different or less
- **Stop** – services or activity that had no statutory implication and were not a political priority or offered poor value for money

It was noted that growth in base budget cost, namely the expansion of a service, would be dealt with outside of this process. The Cabinet had provided a list of areas to grow income from current net income and this was included in the presentation. Also listed within the presentation were cost centres where it was recommended to sustain at the current budget level and areas where it was recommended to refocus to achieve either a budget reduction or better outcomes.

The Board was being asked for its views on:

- Approach to service reviews
- Categorisation of service budgets – grow income / sustain / refocus
- Implementation priority order
- Strategy to get to unitary council vesting day

In discussing the content of the presentation, the Board raised the following points:

- Will continue to be a challenge to explain the Council's complex financial challenges to the public
- Acknowledged that staffing reductions would have an effect on service delivery
- Council is ensuring services are provided to a required standard by benchmarking with neighbouring authorities
- Clarified that this would be a managed process over time, with the opportunity to reshape as the process goes on and, dependent on the budget position and

savings requirement at the time, compulsory redundancy would be a last resort

- Councillors suggested some areas where more information would be required before a view could be taken
- Where areas had been identified for reduce/refocus, teams have been asked to carry out their own review and bring forward proposals for how the service could be delivered in future – no targets for reductions set at this stage of the process
- Could maintenance of Council assets, including skateparks, be incorporated into one budget?

In thanking Mr Harrison, Mr Vickers and Mr Shiell for their contributions to the meeting, the Chair asked Members to submit any further views on this subject to Mr Shiell via email.

The meeting closed at 9.00 pm.

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# OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Report of the meeting held on Thursday, 11th December, 2025 at the Council Offices, Farnborough at 7.00 pm.

## **Voting Members**

Cllr Halleh Koohestani (Chair)  
Cllr Thomas Day (Vice-Chair)  
Cllr M.J. Tennant (Vice-Chair)

Cllr Leola Card  
Cllr C.P. Grattan  
Cllr Steve Harden  
Cllr G.B. Lyon  
Cllr Bill O'Donovan  
Cllr M.J. Roberts  
Cllr S. Trussler

Cllr Nadia Martin joined the meeting online and was therefore unable to vote on any of the items.

## **21. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING**

The minutes of the meetings held on 23rd October, 2025 were agreed as a correct record.

## **22. REGISTERED PROVIDERS TASK AND FINISH GROUP**

The Committee welcomed Zoe Paine, Strategy and Enabling Officer who was in attendance to advise the Committee of the work undertaken to review the Terms of Reference and working arrangements of the Registered Providers Task and Finish Group since the meeting in June 2025.

The Committee were being asked to agree a name change for the Group to the Housing Oversight Group and agree new Terms of Reference.

The Committee discussed the Terms of Reference and agreed both changes, subject to the following additions/changes to the Terms of Reference:

- An increase in the regularity of meetings, three a year wasn't considered enough
- Inclusion of a process for the Portfolio Holder to report back to the Committee
- A greater number of Members on the Group, which currently had five Members, seven was suggested and political balance would need to be considered

- Confirmation that Private Rented Housing would be included in the Group's remit
- Inclusion of a mechanism in the Terms of Reference to ensure that the widening of the Group did not affect the ability to hold Registered Providers to account - this was considered a priority.

Mrs Paine, agreed to rework the Terms of Reference to incorporate the changes/additions. The revised Terms of Reference would then be shared via email with Members for agreement.

The Chair thanked Mrs Paine for her time.

### 23. **SERCO ANNUAL REPORT 2024/25**

The Committee welcomed Ruth Whaymand, Environmental Contracts Manager and Aaron Straker, Serco Contracts Manager, who were both in attendance to report on the Serco Annual Report 2024/25.

The Committee received a presentation from Ms Whaymand which provided an overview of the Serco contract, including a background to the procurement, how the contract was audited, service changes, new legislation timetables and the introduction of 'Simpler Recycling'. Mr Straker then gave a presentation which covered details on the workforce, the services delivered in Rushmoor (Collections, Street Cleansing and Grounds Maintenance), contract management and compliance, whitespace, Supatrak and onboard CCTV, health and safety and wellbeing, recycling, innovation, added value and the future.

The Committee discussed the presentations and raised the following issues:

- Street Cleansing changes in some areas were considered to not be successful, in particular in the North Camp area, and as a gateway into the Borough for the forthcoming 2026 Airshow and Armed Forces Day, a request was made for attention to be given to all gateways into the Borough to ensure all were well maintained and clear of rubbish for these important events.
- Food waste KPIs and what targets were considered realistic? - Mr Straker advised that work was underway to set realistic targets for food waste collections and advised he hoped these would be fairer in the future.
- Simpler Recycling – how would residents understand what could and could not be recycled? – it was noted that the new recycling rules aimed to make it easier for residents, as all counties would be aligned with the same recycling requirements. It was reported that metals, plastics and glass would be co-collected, and paper and card would be collected separately to avoid co-contamination. Consideration was being given, by the Working Group, to the receptacle to collect paper and card, and a wheeled bin was thought to be most appropriate to avoid any cross contamination or manual handling issues.

Members requested that the Group thought about space for wheeled bins, from a residents' point of view, when deliberating the matter.

The Portfolio Holder advised that the cost of any new bins and vehicle infrastructure, due to changes as a result of Simpler Recycling, were currently being discussed with Hampshire County Council, as the disposal authority. Should the County Council order local authorities to make changes, they would be responsible for the additional cost, but at present the cost would be the responsibility of the local authorities.

In response to a query regarding the income from PackUK, the Government's chosen administrator for the UK's Extended Producer Responsibility for packaging programme, in relation to Simpler Recycling, it was estimated that the Council were expected to receive around £1m for 2025/26, however only £615k was guaranteed as it was dependent on the funds being collected from manufacturers by PackUK. The funds would be ringfenced for waste and recycling services.

- Apprenticeships – in response to a question regarding apprenticeships leading to permanent positions, it was advised that this was not always possible but there was a potential to transfer to other sites in the area.
- Bin Contamination – It was noted that the Serco Communications Team worked with the Council to help educate residents in relation to contamination of waste and recycling bins. It was understood that the Team thoroughly investigated bins, that were not collected due to contamination, to inform residents what the issue was so it could be avoided going forward. Tools were available to help with education, including posters, stickers, reusable bags and mailshots. Issues relating to food waste contamination could be from the use of thick or black plastic sacks instead of small thin bags. It was hoped that the new Simpler Recycling would help reduce contamination rates, as residents were already putting some of the new items into their recycling bin, which was contributing to contamination, for example, currently approximately 6% of contamination was plastic pots, tubs and trays which would be excepted for recycling under the new legislation.
- Tracking data – a request was made for vehicle tracking data to be made more publicly available to residents. It was noted that the system could not be accessed until after 15:00hrs and the info was shared with the Council's Customer Services Unit, and the Contracts Team, so was available when residents called to report missed bins.
- Electric vehicle maintenance costs – it was advised that the two vehicles in use currently were only on trial and any decisions to use electric vehicles permanently, going forward, would be for the Working Group to discuss and would ultimately be dependent on the details of the contract extension.
- Business waste – in response to a query relating to waste from businesses being blown on people's driveways/gardens, it was noted that it would be

unrealistic to ask the street cleansing teams to litter pick on private property and many residents would not welcome it.

- Bulky waste – it was commented on that the cost of bulky waste collections was not reasonable. The Portfolio Holder advised that consideration was being given to the cost depending on the number of items being collected.
- Electrical waste – it was noted that the limiting factor for electrical waste was size. The pink bins had a limited size opening for items, and the kerbside vehicles only had a small cage to collect items in. It was advised that if the item fit in a standard supermarket bag the item should be accepted. With regard to laptops, mobile phones, tablets, etc. these were disposed on at the owners' risk and the owner should be aware of potential data protection risks.
- Clinical waste – It was noted that clinical waste collections could only be arranged if referred by a medical professional who would provide details on how to dispose of the clinical waste to the disposal authority. In cases where a medical professional referral was not possible, items should be able to be returned to the individuals GP.

Other issues raised included, broken wheelie bins, legionella flushing, commercial waste, proposed road tax increases, the Human Rights Bill and co-funded pay increases.

The Committee discussed the management of shrub beds since changes, driven by the climate emergency and cost savings were introduced in 2022. It was noted that the weeds had gone from being controlled with chemicals to stopping any kind of control. As a result, the brambles had now taken hold and were well established in the shrub beds. During discussions, it was suggested that a one-off intensive programme could be put in place to clear the weeds and brambles. However, this was considered to be a costly, significantly difficult and challenging manual task. The Committee also discussed pockets of grassland that had been left unmown to encourage biodiversity and data had been requested on the overall size of such areas.

The Portfolio Holder confirmed that the existing Cabinet Working Group was proposing to review the weed treatment of the Borough's shrub beds, that had been reduced in 2022.

The Committee voted unanimously to support this review and RECOMMENDED that the reinstatement of a greater focus on weed treatment in beds should be prioritised in the Council's contract negotiations with Serco.

**ACTION:**

<b>Detail</b>	<b>By Whom</b>	<b>When</b>
Provide data on the size of land left unmown (conservation grass) to encourage biodiversity.	Andy Ford, Parks Manager	January, 2026

The Chair thanked, Mr Straker, Mrs Whaymand and Cllr Guinness for their contribution to the discussions.

#### 24. **WALK THIS WASTE PILOT**

Environmental Contracts Manager, Ruth Whaymand gave a presentation on the Walk this Waste Pilot which aimed to reduce fly-tipping in the Borough. Fly-tipping had a significant impact, especially in deprived areas, and encouraged crime and anti-social behaviour.

The Pilot, to provide a free bulky waste collection, was aimed at reducing fly-tipping in the most deprived areas and targeted residents with no access to transport or funds to dispose of their own bulky waste. A mobile collection vehicle undertook nine events, each with multiple stopping points, and was limited to collecting three items per household. It was reported that, 178 residents used the service and 333 items were collected, totalling 8.34 tonnes of waste. It was noted that the Pilot did not have the desired effect of reducing incidents of fly-tipping and overall, a slight increase was recorded. The Pilot had cost approximately £5,700.

The Portfolio Holder advised that the Pilot had been well received by residents, and the choice to use a mobile vehicle had been more positive than the original choice to use a static skip. However, despite the service not reducing incidents of fly-tipping during the pilot, it was felt that should the service be extended to include one event in each ward per year at a cost of £7,970 (7p per resident a year), an impact could be achieved. The Pilot had also had a positive impact on the communities where it had been carried out.

Cllr Harden expressed his thoughts on the Pilot, and it was noted that he felt the funds could be used in a different way by targeting vulnerable or elderly people or those with more items and no ability to dispose of them themselves. He was supportive of the community aspect of the Pilot but felt that the funds shouldn't be spent on a scheme that had been proven not to work.

During discussion, the Committee acknowledged that the Pilot period had been short, and impacts may be seen if the Pilot were allowed to carry on for a longer period. Alternative options were also raised including, using funds from the Bulky Waste scheme to support initiatives around potential reduced rates or ward specific schemes as agreed with ward councillors. It was noted that it was important to reach those that needed the service the most and alternatives needed to be considered.

In summary, the Committee's key observations and recommendations to the Cabinet were:

- There was no evidence that the Pilot had achieved its primary purpose of reducing fly-tipping, although it was acknowledged that this may have followed should the scheme have run over a longer period
- The Pilot clearly helped engage communities in achieving 'Pride in Place'

- Concerns were expressed that the scheme excluded residents who were unable to carry large items to the vehicles
- The Committee requested Cabinet consider the following as alternatives to the Walk This Waste scheme:
  - A review of residents' accessibility to the bulky waste service, employing pricing incentives to encourage participation,
  - bespoke ward specific measures to be agreed in consultation with Ward Councillors, and
  - that both the above options should focus on the wards that experience the highest incidences of fly-tipping.

The Chair thanked Mrs Whaymand and Cllr Guinness for their presentation.

## 25. **WORK PLAN**

The Committee noted the current Work Plan and were advised that the next meeting on 5th February, 2026, would be used to carry out pre decision scrutiny on the Farnborough Leisure Centre.

The meeting closed at 11.00 pm.

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# OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Report of the meeting held on Thursday, 5th February, 2026 at the Council Offices, Farnborough at 7.00 pm.

## Voting Members

Cllr Halleh Koohestani (Chair)  
Cllr Thomas Day (Vice-Chair)  
Cllr M.J. Tennant (Vice-Chair)

Cllr Leola Card  
Cllr G.B. Lyon  
Cllr Nadia Martin  
Cllr Bill O'Donovan  
Cllr M.J. Roberts  
Cllr S. Trussler

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Cllr C.P. Grattan and Cllr Steve Harden.

Cllr Mara Makunura attended the meeting as a Standing Deputy.

## 26. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the meetings held on 11th December, 2025 were agreed as a correct record.

It was also agreed that an update would be provided on the recommendations made at the December meeting on the Walk this Waste Pilot and changes to the new Housing Oversight Group Terms of Reference, at the meeting to be held on 24th February, 2026.

## 27. 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 item:

Minute Nos.	Schedule 12A Para. No.	Category
28 & 29	3	Information relating to financial or business affairs

## 28. FARNBOROUGH LEISURE CENTRE - LEISURE OPERATOR PROCUREMENT

The Committee carried out pre-decision scrutiny on the procurement and approval of an operator for the Aldershot Pools and Lido, Alpine Snowsports Centre and the proposed new Farnborough Leisure Centre prior to consideration by the Cabinet at its meeting on 10th February, 2026.

Report No. OS2603 set out the outcome of the Leisure Operator procurement process which commenced in June 2025 and was assessed to take account of both quality (60%) and cost (40%). Operators had the option to bid on two different lots, a standard concession contract or an agency agreement.

The Committee were provided with some background information to the preferred operator, noting their purpose and values, health and wellbeing programme, investment throughout the contract term, the added social and environmental value, and financial deliverability and sustainability. Members were also apprised of a number of risks, and the mitigations in place to address these.

During discussions the Committee asked a number of questions:

- Can we guarantee that costs won't be put on residents through membership fees – it was noted that the preferred bidder had proposed a pricing model to ensure equity of access and commercial performance. Price increases would be aligned to industry best practice, benchmarked annually against Sport England, comparators, and user feedback. Prices would be reported to the Council for agreement annually.
- What were the implications of targets not being met – it was noted that the Council would retain an agreed minimum financial return that was guaranteed.
- What were the financial implications of a mechanical or plant failure at the Lido – it was advised that responsibility for maintenance of the lido plant would remain with the Council.
- Car parking capacity at the Aldershot Pools and Lido – this was an ongoing issue and was discussed as part of the process. It was noted that additional parking had been made available in recent years with a new lido overflow at the rear of the grounds (100 spaces), utilising a small area of Aldershot Park (up to 100 spaces) and on rare occasions the Crematorium car park (up to 50 spaces) for use in busy periods.
- Due diligence, in particular holding to account over promises of social value at procurement stage – it was noted that provision would be included in the contract terms to cover areas such as social value.
- Procurement process costs – it was noted that the Council had a contract with Portsmouth Council who carried out procurement work with the Council's officers.
- Community outreach – some target areas had been identified, in particular those areas of multiple deprivation, however, it was noted that these were negotiable.

The Committee also discussed rebuilding relationships with clubs, in particular the swimming and synchronised swimming clubs. It was advised that the project team had been in contact with key stakeholders, including these clubs, during the process.

## ACTIONS:

<b>What</b>	<b>By Whom</b>	<b>When</b>
Confirm any penalties for contract failure by the operator?	David Phillips – Deputy Head of Operations	ASAP
Confirm whether the Council should ask the preferred operator for a performance bond?	David Phillips – Deputy Head of Operations	ASAP
Confirm that appropriate balance sheet checks had been undertaken for the preferred operator?	David Phillips – Deputy Head of Operations	ASAP

## 29. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

<b>Item No.</b>	<b>Member</b>	<b>Interest</b>	<b>Reason</b>
30	Cllr S. Trussler	Personal and non-pecuniary	Director Rushmoor Homes Limited
30	Cllr Gareth Williams	Personal and non-pecuniary	Director Rushmoor Homes Limited

The Committee agreed that the Directors of RHL could remain and participate in the meeting in line with the previous dispensation provided by the Council's Corporate Governance, Audit and Standards Committee, in May 2021, who had granted dispensations to Members appointed by the Council to the Board of the Rushmoor Development Partnership and as Directors of Rushmoor Homes Limited.

## 30. UNION YARD, ALDERSHOT - DISPOSAL OF BLOCKS C & D

The Committee considered the decision made by the Cabinet at its meeting on 15 December, 2025, to dispose of Blocks C & D at Union Yard, Aldershot to Vivid Housing.

It was noted that since the Cabinet meeting in December, some key dependencies had changed, and it had been confirmed that Vivid's Board decision would now take place in mid-February. The Committee were given the opportunity to speak with Chris Hodgkinson of Lambert Smith Hampton (Investment Management) (LSH) regarding their recent soft market testing on the value of Blocks C & D. Mr Hodgkinson advised that six companies had come forward with offers all of which were under the value being offered by Vivid Housing, therefore, LSH's recommendation was to pursue the sale with Vivid Housing.

The Committee discussed the financial implications of selling to Vivid Housing against the alternative options set out in Exempt Report No. REG2502 and were advised that whilst red book valuations were used as a benchmark a property's actual sale value was that value the market was willing to pay at the time. It was also noted that soft market testing was, in general, a true reflection of value, however, on occasion off market sales could result in over valuation as well as under valuation. Members asked and received responses to a number of questions regarding the detail of the sale.

The Committee also discussed selling the properties individually on the open market and shared views on the difference in income this could provide. In response to a query, it was noted that selling the properties in a piecemeal way, which could take between 14-21 months, would result in additional costs whilst sales were still progressing when compared to a single sale of both blocks. Although the total capital receipt achieved from individual disposals could be higher once all were sold this would need to be 'netted off' against the additional holding costs and was considered a higher risk compared to the immediate benefit of a larger single capital receipt

Executive Director, Karen Edwards advised that Option 4(a), as set out in Exempt Report No. REG2502, had been the original preferred option for disposal on the units back in April 2025. That offer had been withdrawn and the current offer from Vivid Housing was the quickest to progress in line with the Council's Financial Recovery Programme and help minimise further costs associated with holding onto the property for a longer period. In addition, it was noted that the mix of properties and restrictions on the commercial units had also been adjusted as part of the negotiations. With regards to nomination rights, it was noted that affordable housing nominations would sit with the Council's current arrangements and would help address the number of residents currently on the housing list, whereas shared ownership would be managed through Vivid Housing.

In response to a query regarding Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB), and Vivid's perceived inaction on these matters, it was advised that meetings were being held at a strategic level to address such concerns in a timely and effective manner going forward. Members were made aware that 18 units were already occupied by Vivid tenants and no issues of ASB had been reported to date.

The Committee noted the financial implications of not taking forward the current sale to Vivid Housing and what that could mean for the Council going forward.

The Committee had raised and discussed relevant points on both a financial and social level but had no specific recommendations to make to the Cabinet.

The meeting closed at 9.08 pm.

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