

CABINET

Report of the meeting held on Tuesday, 3rd March, 2026 at the Council Offices, Farnborough at 7.00 pm.

Voting Members

Cllr Gareth Williams, Leader of the Council
Cllr Sophie Porter, Deputy Leader and Healthy Communities & Active Lives Portfolio Holder

Cllr Gaynor Austin, Finance & Resources Portfolio Holder
Cllr Keith Dibble, Housing & Planning Portfolio Holder
Cllr Christine Guinness, Pride in Place / Neighbourhood Services Portfolio Holder
Cllr Julie Hall, Economy, Skills & Regeneration Portfolio Holder

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 **16th March, 2026**.

68. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST –

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

69. MINUTES –

The Minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet held on 10th February, 2026 were confirmed and signed by the Chair.

70. LOCAL PLAN TIMETABLE AND NOTICE TO COMMENCE PLAN-MAKING – (Cllr Keith Dibble, Housing & Planning Portfolio Holder)

The Cabinet considered Report No. PG2602, which set out matters relating to the production of a new local plan for Rushmoor.

Members were informed that the Local Development Scheme, containing the local plan timetable, was now out of date. The purpose of this item was, therefore, to present an updated timetable for the production of Rushmoor's Local Plan, along with seeking approval of a notice to commence plan-making, which was required to be published four months before the Council intended to commence the 30-month plan preparation period for the new local plan.

In discussing the report, Members expressed support for the proposed approach, which would enable the Council to progress Rushmoor's local plan as far as possible prior to the vesting of the new unitary authority. It was confirmed that the adoption of the final local plan would need to be undertaken by the unitary council covering the Rushmoor area.

The Cabinet RESOLVED that

- (i) the publication of the Local Plan Timetable be approved, with the Executive Head of Property and Growth, in consultation with the Housing & Planning Portfolio Holder, being authorised to amend or add any information to the timetable to ensure compliance with guidance and/or regulations; and
- (ii) the publication, in May 2026, of the Notice to Commence Plan-Making be approved, with the Executive Head of Property and Growth, in consultation with the Housing & Planning Portfolio Holder, being authorised to make any changes to the wording to ensure compliance with guidance and/or regulations.

71. NEW ENGAGEMENT OF AGENCY WORKERS AND CONSULTANTS POLICY AND PROCEDURE –

(Cllr Gaynor Austin, Finance & Resources Portfolio Holder)

The Cabinet considered Report No. PEO2603, which set out details of a new Engagement of Agency Workers and Consultants Policy and Procedure for adoption.

It was explained that the Council's use of agency workers and external consultants played an important role in maintaining service delivery, especially where specialist expertise was required. Members were informed that the policy would help to ensure that these engagements were consistent, transparent and compliant with organisational and legislative requirements.

The Cabinet RESOLVED that the proposed Engagement of Agency Workers and Consultants Policy and Procedure, as set out in Appendix 1 of Report No. PEO2603, be approved.

72. FARNBOROUGH LEISURE CENTRE - CONSTRUCTION CONTRACT AWARD –
(Cllr Sophie Porter, Deputy Leader and Healthy Communities & Active Lives Portfolio Holder)

The Cabinet considered Report No. REG2601, along with appendices, some of which were exempt, which provided an update on the Farnborough Leisure Centre Project and sought approval to enter into a Development Management Agreement for RIBA Stage 5 (construction and handover) onwards for the delivery of a new leisure centre.

The report set out in detail the background to the project and a summary of the decisions that had been taken to date. Members were informed that the total cost to deliver the new leisure centre, playground and surface car park was £27.5 million. £18.5 million of this would be provided by the successful Levelling Up (now known as the Local Regeneration Fund) bid. This would mean the Council would need to borrow an additional £8.8 million to deliver the project. This borrowing would have a revenue implication of interest costs and Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) charges. The revenue implications of additional borrowing and other revenue costs of operating the site detailed in the report were intended to be funded from the leisure centre operator income, following the successful award of the operator

contract, as approved by the Cabinet on 10th February, 2026. The financial modelling and implications were set out in Section 5 of the report and in the Exempt Appendix A.

The Cabinet was advised that this matter had been considered by the Council's Overview and Scrutiny Committee at its meeting on 24th February, 2026. The Committee had asked for four matters to be reported to the Cabinet, relating to the early circulation of papers, the environmental impacts of the development, protections for the Council in the event of contractor insolvency and the reinvestment of surpluses. Members thanked the Committee for its input and these factors were considered as part of the discussion of the item.

Information relating to the contract, risks and mitigations were set out in Section 7 of the report and the key milestones for the project were contained in Section 8, with a detailed current programme at Appendix E. Section 10 set out more information regarding the risks, along with the legal, financial, resource and equalities impact implications.

In discussing the report, Members expressed strong support for the proposal, which was considered to offer an excellent facility that was shown to be affordable and funded, despite the considerable financial challenges faced by the Council at this current time.

The Cabinet

(i) RESOLVED that

- (a) the progress with the design of the leisure centre and changes made as a result of feedback during the leisure centre operator procurement process, as set out in Report No.REG2601, be noted;
- (b) the progress of the planning submission for the Farnborough Leisure Centre, as set out in the Report, be noted;
- (c) subject to planning permission being granted and review of the contractor's proposals, the Executive Director, in consultation with the Executive Head of Finance, the Interim Monitoring Officer and Corporate Manager – Legal Services and the Healthy Communities & Active Lives Portfolio Holder, be authorised to enter into a Development Management Agreement with Alliance Leisure Services Limited, as set out in Section 6.3 of the Report, for the delivery of a new leisure centre and surface car park in Farnborough town centre;
- (d) the continuation of the utilisation of the revenue capacity funding received from MHCLG against revenue costs associated with the project be approved;
- (e) the Executive Head of Finance be authorised to update the Capital Strategy and Treasury Management Strategy, in line with the approval of capital budget and funding set out above, be approved;

- (f) the use of the Council's powers to appropriate the Queensmead Car Park, Farnborough and the site of the previous Pinehurst Car Park, as set out in the plan at Appendix K of the Report, for planning purposes under Section 122 of the Local Government Act 1972 be approved;
 - (g) the use of Section 203 of the Housing and Planning Act 2016 to remove any legal constraints to development be approved, with the Interim Monitoring Officer and Corporate Manager – Legal Services and Section 151 Officer, in consultation with the Executive Head of Property and Growth, being authorised to agree any compensation payable to beneficiaries of rights under Section 204 of the Housing and Planning Act 2016, following due diligence of their claim;
 - (h) the decision of the Interim Monitoring Officer and Corporate Manager – Legal Services as to protective measures be noted, with the Interim Monitoring Officer and Corporate Manager – Legal Services, in consultation with the Executive Head of Finance, being authorised to negotiate the terms of the protective measures to not exceed £100,000 (Cabinet noted the £100,00 did not appear in the projected costs set out in the Report as the outcome of the negotiations was not yet known); and
- (ii) **RECOMMENDED TO THE COUNCIL** that the Executive Head of Finance and Section 151 Officer be authorised to put in place a Capital Budget up to £27.5 million for the project to be funded by external funding (Levelling Up Programme/Local Regeneration Fund), S106 funds and borrowing as set out in Section 4.2 of Report No. REG2601.

73. **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
74 & 75	3	Information relating to financial or business affairs

THE FOLLOWING ITEMS WERE CONSIDERED IN THE ABSENCE OF THE PUBLIC

74. **DISPOSAL OF NO. 168 HIGH STREET, GUILDFORD –** (Cllr Julie Hall, Economy, Skills & Regeneration Portfolio Holder)

The Cabinet considered Exempt Report No. PG2603, which sought approval to dispose of the freehold interest in No. 168 High Street, Guildford, subject to the finalisation of terms.

Members were informed that this disposal would contribute to the delivery of the Council's Financial Recovery Plan and was, therefore, a key priority. It was confirmed that the likely disposal value either met or exceeded that set out in the Financial Recovery Plan and had been tested through a competitive market exercise. The Exempt Report set out the process that had been carried out so far and Members were informed that a preferred purchaser had been selected.

The Cabinet expressed strong support for the proposed approach as making a significant contribution towards improving the Council's financial position.

The Cabinet RESOLVED that

- (i) the agreement, in principle and subject to final legal due diligence, to the disposal of the freehold interest in No. 168 High Street, Guildford, as set out in Exempt Report No. PG2603, be approved; and
- (ii) the Executive Head of Property and Growth, in consultation with the Executive Head of Finance, the Interim Monitoring Officer and Corporate Manager – Legal Services and the Economy, Skills & Regeneration Portfolio Holder, be authorised to confirm the final terms of the disposal.

75. NOS. 16-18 THE MEADS, FARNBOROUGH - BUDGET APPROVALS –
(Cllr Julie Hall, Economy, Skills & Regeneration Portfolio Holder)

The Cabinet considered Exempt Report No. REG2504, which set out a proposal to consider increasing the capital budget allocation to enable the proposed building works at Nos. 16-18 The Meads, Farnborough to be successfully delivered.

Members were informed that this approach was in accordance with the recommendations outlined in Exempt Report No. REG2504, which the Cabinet had approved at its meeting on 16th September, 2025. It was also explained that the current exempt report detailed the Council's proposed approach to financial risk mitigation in respect of the preferred contractors for the works.

The Cabinet was supportive of the proposed approach to deliver this important project as part of the Council's ongoing priority to regenerate Farnborough town centre.

The Cabinet RESOLVED that

- i) an increase to the project's capital budget of up to the sum set out in Exempt Report No. REG2602 to enable the works to be successfully delivered be approved, to be funded from capital receipts allocated to commercial lettings in the 2025/26 Capital Programme; and
- ii) the risk mitigation strategy, as set out in Section 4 of the Exempt Report, be noted.

The Meeting closed at 7.57 pm.