

CABINET

Meeting held on Tuesday, 8th July, 2025 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 A.H. Crawford, Finance & Resources 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 Jules Crossley and Councillor Julie Hall.

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 **21st July, 2025**.

9. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST –

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

10. MINUTES –

The Minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet held on 3rd June, 2025 were confirmed and signed by the Chairman.

11. BUDGET MANAGEMENT - OUTTURN 2024/25 – (Cllr Alex Crawford, Finance & Resources Portfolio Holder)

The Cabinet considered Report No. FIN2512, which set out an update on the Council's budget outturn position for 2024/25.

Members were reminded that the Council had approved the 2024/25 budget with a deficit of £5.379 million, partly mitigated by a savings target of £740,000 to be achieved in year, resulting in a £4.639 million drawdown from the £12.075 million of available reserves. It was reported that, by year end on 31st March, 2025, the Council had made an overall saving of £5.155 million, resulting in only £224,000 being required from reserves. A savings target of £1.784 million had been set for 2025/26 and this had already been achieved, with £2.1 million of savings identified.

The Cabinet was pleased with the progress that had been made in addressing the Council's challenging financial position and expressed gratitude to the finance team for its work in this respect. It was noted that prudent financial management would continue to be required for the foreseeable future.

The Cabinet RESOLVED that

- (i) the unaudited budget outturn position for 2024/25, currently drawing £224,000 from reserves but subject to further due diligence and audit, as set out in Report No. FIN2512, be noted;
- (ii) the revenue budget carry forward schedule and capital slippage, as set out in paragraph 2.9 of the Report, be noted;
- (iii) the future presentation of an updated Medium Term Financial Strategy at the Cabinet meeting in September, 2025 be noted;
- (iv) the supplementary estimates for Property, Legal and the Crematorium project, as set out in the Report, be approved;
- (v) the additional Capital projects, to be funded by S106 funding, as set out in paragraph 3.4 of the Report, be approved; and
- (vi) the Savings Review proposals, as set out in paragraph 3.8 of the Report, be approved.

12. FILM STUDIO RATE RELIEF POLICY –
(Cllr Alex Crawford, Finance & Resources Portfolio Holder)

The Cabinet considered Report No. FIN2511, which set out a new scheme of relief that had been announced by the Government in relation to business rates payable by film studios.

Members were informed that the scheme would provide up to 40% relief on net rates payable. It was intended that the scheme would be in place for a limited period only, so instead of introducing legislation in this respect, the Government was asking authorities to award relief using discretionary powers. It was confirmed that the Government would reimburse any film studio relief awarded.

The Cabinet RESOLVED that the Film Studio Relief Policy, as set out in Appendix A of Report No. FIN2511, be approved.

13. LOCAL GOVERNMENT REORGANISATION - UPDATE –
(Cllr Gareth Williams, Leader of the Council)

The Cabinet considered Report No. ED2504, which provided an update on work carried in respect of the ongoing Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) process.

Members were reminded that the interim LGR plan had been submitted by the deadline of 21st March, 2025, with the final business case to be submitted to the Government by 26th September, 2025. The interim plan had been drawn up collaboratively by all authorities in the Hampshire and Isle of Wight area and had expressed the Council's preference, taking into account sense of place and the economic geography of the area, for the formation of a unitary council formed from Rushmoor Borough Council, Hart District Council and Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council. KPMG had been appointed to support Councils across Hampshire

and the Isle of Wight to prepare the necessary evidence base and support the development of a business case to enable final proposals to be agreed and submitted to the Government. The Report also set out the arrangements for engagement with residents, businesses, partners and voluntary organisations. This engagement would include seeking residents' views on the establishment of parish councils and/or Neighbourhood Area Committees, as part of a Community Governance Review.

In discussing the Report, the Cabinet expressed strong support for the LGR process and felt that this would enable better, joined-up services to be delivered to local residents. Members also considered it was important to allow residents to express views on subjects such as the formation of parish/town councils before the Council's view was formed.

The Cabinet RECOMMENDED TO THE COUNCIL that

- (i) the update on the LGR programme to date and the continuing collaboration with eleven other councils on options that would replace the current fifteen councils with four new unitary councils on the mainland, keeping the Isle of Wight as its own unitary Council, as set out in Report No. ED2504, be noted;
- (ii) confirmation that the formation of a unitary council based on the areas of Rushmoor, Hart and Basingstoke and Deane continued to be the preferred option for Rushmoor, be approved, based on the assessment criteria and representing the best balance of a Council large enough to deliver high quality services and value for money but small enough to be connected to the place and the needs of the people the council would serve;
- (iii) the programme of engagement being undertaken to ensure that all residents, businesses and partners had an opportunity to feed into the process, as set out in the Report, be noted; and
- (iv) the endorsement of the Corporate Governance, Audit and Standards Committee's recommendation to the Council to approve the Terms of Reference for the Community Governance Review, as set in Report No. LEG2510, be approved.

14. RUSHMOOR TOGETHER –

(Cllr Sophie Porter, Deputy Leader and Healthy Communities & Active Lives Portfolio Holder)

The Cabinet considered Report No. ED2503, which set out the priorities and plan for Rushmoor Together, the new partnership plan for 2025/26 for supporting communities and tackling inequality in the Borough.

Members were advised that Rushmoor Together was a follow up to the existing Supporting Communities Plan 2021-24 and built on the foundations and successes that that plan had delivered. It was a collaborative approach to addressing the challenges facing local communities and was focussed around three priority areas:

1. Physical and mental health
2. Economic wellbeing
3. Community belonging

During discussion, Members stressed the importance of demonstrating best practice in the local area during the future transition to a new, unitary authority. It was felt that a unitary authority would be better placed resolve some of the challenges identified in Rushmoor Together. The Cabinet was supportive of the proposed approach and expressed appreciation for the outcomes that had been achieved as a result of the previous Supporting Communities Plan.

The Cabinet RESOLVED that Rushmoor Together, a partnership plan for supporting communities for 2025/26, as set out in Report No. ED2503, be endorsed.

15. COMMUNITY RECOVERY FUND –

(Cllr Sophie Porter, Deputy Leader and Healthy Communities & Active Lives Portfolio Holder)

The Cabinet considered Report No. ED2502, which set out the Council's spending in relation to the Community Recovery Fund.

Members were reminded that, following the public disorder that took place in July and August 2024, the Council had received the sum of £600,000 from the Community Recovery Fund (CRF), made available by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government. The report outlined the Council's spending so far, which had included strategic communication and media training for Members and officers and the employment of security staff at Council meetings. Also set out were the items planned to utilise the remaining budget, including the development of a Community Mediation Service and a grant to Rushmoor Together.

The Cabinet RESOLVED that

- i) the spend so far and how this supported wider community cohesion and resilience, as set out in Report No. ED2502, be noted;
- ii) the remaining allocation of funding, as set out in the Report, be endorsed; and
- iii) the alignment of the spending to the Council's Delivery Plan, along with the priorities of Rushmoor Together, a partnership plan for tackling inequalities and supporting the local community, be noted.

16. RENEWAL OF THE ALDERSHOT PUBLIC SPACES PROTECTION ORDER –

(Cllr Christine Guinness, Pride in Place / Neighbourhood Services Portfolio Holder)

The Cabinet considered Report No. OS2508, which proposed the renewal of a Public Spaces Protection Order (PSPO) for Aldershot town centre, following a period of public consultation. Members were informed that the purpose of the Order was to assist in managing ongoing antisocial behaviour related to the consumption of alcohol in a public space and other associated behaviours, including public urination and defecation. The existing PSPO had been in place since July 2022 and data,

along with the consultation responses, had demonstrated the ongoing need for the order.

The Cabinet expressed support for the the renewal of the order, which had enabled swift action to be taken to deal with the identified antisocial behaviour in Aldershot town centre, for the benefit of local residents and businesses and visitors to the town.

The Cabinet RESOLVED that the renewal of the Aldershot Public Spaces Protection Order, as set out in Report No. OS2508, be approved.

17. **FARNBOROUGH LEISURE CENTRE - UPDATE AND NEXT STEPS –**
(Cllr Sophie Porter, Deputy Leader and Healthy Communities & Active Lives Portfolio Holder)

The Cabinet considered Report No. REG2503, which set out an update and the next steps in relation to the provision of a new leisure centre in Farnborough.

The Cabinet was reminded that, in February 2025, the Cabinet had agreed to progress with the revised approach for the delivery of a leisure centre in Farnborough, utilising the remaining Levelling Up funding. Approval had been given to progress design works to the end of RIBA Stage 3, to submit a planning application and to commence the procurement of the leisure operator. Members were now receiving an update on progress with the project and with the leisure operator procurements. The report also set out the next steps in relation to delivering the project within the parameters of the Levelling Up Fund timescales. It was confirmed that a planning application was expected to be submitted in September, 2025.

The Cabinet was supportive of the progress to date and felt that this would deliver an important, affordable facility for the Borough.

The Cabinet RESOLVED that

- (i) the progress with the design of the leisure centre and the changes made as a result of the preliminary market engagement sessions with operators, as set out in Report No. REG2503, be noted;
- (ii) the conclusion of RIBA Stage 2 on schedule, the commencement of RIBA Stage 3 and the timetable for the project to the conclusion of RIBA Stage 4, as set out in the Report, be noted;
- (iii) the extension of the current Access Agreement for RIBA Stage 4, on the conclusion of RIBA Stage 3, subject to the forecasted operator income being in line with expectations, be approved, with costs for RIBA Stage 4 of up to £660,000 to be drawn from the Levelling Up Fund;
- (iv) the arrangements for the pre planning consultation, as set out in the Report, be noted;

- (v) the revised operator procurement consultation, as set out in the Report, be noted; and
- (vi) the setting up of special meetings of the Cabinet and the Council, as required, to enable the concurrent entering into of both the build and operator contracts, be approved.

The Meeting closed at 8.15 pm.

CLLR GARETH WILLIAMS, LEADER OF THE COUNCIL
