



RUSHMOOR BOROUGH COUNCIL

CABINET

*Tuesday, 3rd April, 2012 at 4.30 p.m.
at the Council Offices, Farnborough*

Councillor P.J. Moyle (Leader)
Councillor R.L.G. Dibbs (Deputy Leader and Environment Portfolio)

Councillor Mrs. D.B. Bedford (Leisure and Youth Portfolio)
Councillor M.S. Choudhary (Concessions and Community Support Portfolio)
Councillor S.J. Masterson (Safety and Regulation Portfolio)
Councillor P.G. Taylor (Corporate Services Portfolio)
Councillor D.M. Welch (Health and Housing Portfolio)

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 **25th April, 2012**.

103. **MINUTES –**

The Minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet held on 13th March, 2012 were confirmed and signed by the Chairman.

104. **FARNBOROUGH TOWN CENTRE –**
(Leader of the Council/Environment)

The Cabinet welcomed Mr. Steve Walker of Allies and Morrison Urban Practitioners, the consultants which had undertaken the consultation exercise on the masterplan. The consultants had also developed the scheme for the refurbishment of Queensmead, Farnborough.

(1) **Masterplan Consultation –**

The Cabinet received the Head of Planning's Report No. PLN1218, which summarised the responses received to the consultation exercise on the masterplan for Farnborough Town Centre.

This prospectus would act as a companion document for the Farnborough Town Centre Supplementary Planning Document and provide an alternative illustrative plan for the town with the aim of acting as a catalyst for development.

The consultation exercise had taken place between 31st January, 2012 and 2nd March 2012 with the public and key stakeholder groups. Public engagement had been undertaken in parallel with consultation on the Council's proposals to revamp the public realm in Queensmead. It was noted that a total of 294 responses had been received on the two consultations. A majority of the responses related to the prospectus and wider town centre issues.

The key issues raised in the consultation process included the following points:

- Concerns about loss of parking
- Support expressed for the cinema
- Support for improved pedestrian links into the town centre
- Desire to see more/better shops
- General support for the proposals and action
- Desire to see more restaurants and cafes
- Desire to see the Tumbledown Dick public house brought back into use
- Desire to see smaller/independent shops supported through low rents
- Desire to see larger stores/department stores
- Request for clarification over the future of Westmead House

Other issues raised expressed support for a theatre or cultural venue, more leisure options and better community facilities and improved cycle parking.

The Cabinet was advised that all comments were now being analysed in detail to see what changes should be made to the prospectus to reflect the consultation. A further report would be submitted to the Cabinet with suggested changes and seeking approval of the final document for publication.

During discussion, it was recognised that the prospectus needed to be practical and deliverable to take the town centre into the longer term with the support of stakeholders and landowners.

The Cabinet RESOLVED that the Head of Planning's Report No. PLN1218 be noted.

(2) **Refurbishment of Queensmead, Farnborough –**

The Cabinet considered the Director of Community and Environment's Report No. DCE1209, which sought approval to: vary the Capital Programme in 2012/13 by £840,000 for the refurbishment of Queensmead; enter into a

Section 278 Highway Act, 1980 agreement with Hampshire County Council; increase the revenue budget from 2013/14 onwards by £10,000 to allow for the enhanced maintenance of the land, furniture and fittings to a high standard; and, review the planning process and consent street requirements for the placing of tables and chairs adjacent to café premises and to allow for a limited number of stalls to be placed in Queensmead.

The Report advised that, as part of its wider strategic planning and economic development work and, as mentioned in the previous item, the Council had recently commissioned a town centre prospectus and the refurbishment of Queensmead was a significant project within the prospectus and one which demonstrated the Council's commitment to and confidence in Farnborough. It also fitted well with the impetus of the Government's recently commissioned Portas report on town centres. Allies Morrison Urban Practitioners had been commissioned to develop, design and cost a refurbishment project for Queensmead which complemented and built on the existing works carried out by KPI.

Mr. Steve Walker of Allies Morrison Urban Practitioners gave a short presentation on the design principles and key features of the scheme. It was noted that extensive consultation on the scheme had taken place in parallel with the Masterplan prospectus. This had included meetings with Ward Councillors and the County Councillor, presentations to the Farnborough Society, Rushmoor Access Group and the Pedestrian Forum and a public display in Princes Mead and at the Council Offices. The Cabinet was advised that, generally, there had been a high degree of public support for the proposals.

Details were given of the proposed work to be carried out on refurbishment of Queensmead. The first phase would be works to the existing public highway. The second phase would be works to the land currently under the control of Aon. If approval was given, works could commence in April 2012 for completion during 2012/13. It was intended that the works would be procured and managed by the Council, working in co-operation with Hampshire County Council and with input where required from Allies Morrison Urban Practitioners. This would require additional resources in Community Services on a temporary basis, the cost for which had been included in the capital estimate.

The Report set out the financial implications for the scheme, totalling £990,000. These costs could be offset by £150,000 through Section 106 funding, which resulted in a net scheme cost of £840,000. In terms of on-going maintenance, the basic costs would be met by Hampshire County Council as highways authority but, reflecting Queensmead's prominence in the town centre, a further variation to the town centres maintenance budget of £10,000 was recommended in the Report to allow for upkeep by the Council to a higher standard.

The Cabinet noted that the proposed scheme would have a total revenue impact of £52,000 per annum, which comprised of an estimated loss

of interest of £42,000, together with the £10,000 for additional maintenance. At Council Tax level this equated to an increase of £1.64. The Cabinet was advised that there was a possibility of securing an income from the market stalls proposals forming part of the refurbishment. Additionally, the Council as freeholder of Kingsmead, could potentially benefit from any increase in trading under the terms of the lease.

The Cabinet noted that the Council would be entering into a Section 278 agreement with Hampshire County Council which would set out the proposals for alterations or improvements to the public highway in order to facilitate the development. There were also some land ownership issues which would also need to be addressed as part of the drafting.

In discussing these proposals the Cabinet gave consideration to the considerable revenue impact of capital expenditure of this magnitude, especially at a time when the Council had to find further revenue savings of around £1.5 million in the medium term. The refurbishment of Queensmead was a significant project in the context of the Farnborough Town Centre prospectus and the future of the town's economy and development. It was felt that the proposals had received considerable public support and the backing of local elected members, the County Council, shop keepers and KPI. It was also considered appropriate for the Council to demonstrate leadership and its commitment to the refurbishment of Farnborough by proceeding with the scheme. The scheme would significantly improve Farnborough's image and attraction as a shopping centre and location of choice. It would also be more in keeping with the quality of the adjoining area being developed by KPI as well as the adjoining employment area at IQ Farnborough.

The Cabinet RESOLVED that

- (i) approval be given to vary the Capital Programme in 2012/13 by £840,000 to allow for the works to refurbish Queensmead, as set out in the Director of Community and Environment's Report No. DCE1209;
- (ii) the Solicitor to the Council be authorised to enter into an agreement pursuant to Section 278 of the Highways Act, 1980 with Hampshire County Council;
- (iii) approval be given to increase the revenue budget from 2013/14 onwards by £10,000 per year to allow for the maintenance of the land, furniture and fittings to a high standard; and
- (iv) planning and consent street requirements be reviewed for the placing of tables and chairs adjacent to café premises and to allow for a limited number of stalls to be placed in the Mead.

105. **FINANCIAL MATTERS –**
(Leader of the Council)

(1) **Revenue Budget Monitoring and Forecasting 2011/12 – Position as at March, 2012 –**

The Cabinet received the Head of Financial Services' Report No. FIN1204, which advised Members of the Council's anticipated financial position for 2011/12, based on the monitoring exercise carried out during March, 2012.

It was noted that budget officers had identified a net underspend of approximately £355,000 against non-salary budgets, in addition to any planned long term savings from the original savings programme and the short term savings identified by the Wider Leadership Team. This exceeded the expected further £200,000 savings that had been assumed as part of the revised budget process. The main variances were set out in the Report. The staff monitoring exercise had identified a net projected underspend of £158,000 from salary savings, which was also in excess of the revised estimate of £80,000. Minor variations in grants received, together with National Non-Domestic Rates refunds relating to prior years, had resulted in further income of approximately £30,000. It was noted that the Council had now been returned the majority of its investments in Glitnir Bank. Due to movements in exchange rates since they had been agreed by the Icelandic courts, the amounts now expected were £83,000 lower than previously anticipated. As a result of these variations and taking into account the actual level of balances at 1st April 2011, the general fund forecast showed a projected year end balance of £1.7 million, which was comfortably within the top half of the current approved range of balances of £1 million - £2 million.

The Cabinet was advised that, provided the improvement in the Council's position materialised in the outturn position, it might be prudent for the Council to provide against potential risks to the Council's financial position or to earmark funds to implement invest-to-save schemes and/or service reviews in order to support the level of savings that were required in the 2012/13 budget.

The Cabinet RESOLVED that the Head of Financial Services' Report No. FIN1204 be noted.

(2) **Capital Programme Monitoring 2011/12 – Position as at March, 2012 –**

The Cabinet received the Head of Financial Services' Report No. FIN1205, which advised Members of the position regarding the Capital Programme for 2011/12, based on the monitoring exercise that had been carried out during March, 2012.

It was noted that the forecast outturn for 2011/12 was approximately £4,938,000, which represented a net reduction in spend of £379,000 against

the approved Capital Programme of £5,317,000. The Report set out details of significant variations to the Programme and areas of slippage identified to date.

The Cabinet RESOLVED that the Head of Financial Services' Report No. FIN12 05 be noted.

106. **FOOD/HEALTH AND SAFETY SERVICE PLAN – 2012/13 –**
(Safety and Regulation)

The Cabinet considered the Head of Environmental Health and Housing's Report No. EHH1207, which sought approval of the draft Food Safety Service Plan and the draft Health and Safety Service Plan for 2012/13 for consultation with local businesses and business organisations. The Licensing and General Purposes Committee had considered the service plans on 2nd April, 2012 and had recommended that the documents should be endorsed for consultation. Any substantial changes requested as a result of the consultation exercise would be brought back to the Cabinet for approval.

The Cabinet RESOLVED that the draft Food Safety Service Plan and the draft Health and Safety Service Plan for 2012/13 be approved for consultation with local businesses and business organisations.

107. **FARNBOROUGH AIRPORT COMMUNITY ENVIRONMENTAL FUND –**
(Environment)

The Cabinet considered the Head of Community's Report No. COMM1208, which sought approval to award grants from the Farnborough Airport Community Environmental Fund to assist projects in the local area. In accordance with the agreed procedure for the allocation of grants, the Cabinet Member for Environment had considered seven applications and had recommended that six awards should be made as follows:

Samuel Cody Specialist Sports College	£1,000
St. John's Church	£1,000
First Wessex	£5,250
Hampshire and Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust	£3,000
Community Matters Partnership	£4,850
The Gaming Zone	<u>£5,000</u>
	£20,100

The Cabinet noted that Aldershot Civic Society and Farnborough Civic Society had submitted a bid to the scheme requesting £10,000 towards 60 Jubilee oak trees for the Borough. The Societies had been advised initially to approach the local landfill tax schemes for grants and, if unsuccessful, to resubmit their application to this Fund.

The Cabinet RESOLVED that approval be given to the six awards from the Farnborough Airport Community Environmental Fund, as set out in the Head of Community's Report No. COMM1208.

108. **GRANTS TO VOLUNTARY ORGANISATIONS**
(Concessions and Community Support)

The Cabinet received the Head of Community's Report No. COMM1207, which set out details of applications for grants from voluntary organisations. In accordance with the agreed procedure for the allocation of grants, the Cabinet Member for Concessions and Community Support had approved seven grants for £1,000 or less.

The Cabinet NOTED that the following grants had been approved by the Cabinet Member for Concessions and Community Support:

Meals on Wheels	£350
North Farnborough Infant School	£500
R-u-Able 2 Community Group and Rushmoor Mallards	£330
Royal British Legion – Corps of Drums	£500
Farnborough Youth Under 12s	£500
Mayfield Youth Partnership	£750
Rushmoor Youth Inclusion Support Panels	<u>£500</u>
	£3,430

109. **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:

Minute No.	Schedule 12A Para. No.	Category
110	3	Information relating to financial or business affairs

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

110. **NO. 98 QUEENSMEAD, FARNBOROUGH –**
(Leader of the Council)

The Leader of the Council had agreed that, pursuant to Section 100(b)(4)(b) of the Local Government Act, 1972, this item should be added to the agenda for the meeting as a matter of urgency.

The Cabinet considered the Solicitor to the Council's Exempt Report No. LEG1204, which sought approval for the Council to invest capital in the purchase of the freehold of No. 98 Queensmead, Farnborough.

The Report advised that the Council had been exploring opportunities to invest in property to achieve a higher return on its capital to invest locally to regenerate the town centres. The owner of No. 98 Queensmead had recently placed the property on the open market for sale as a freehold investment subject to a current lease. The proposal therefore presented an opportunity to achieve both enhanced investment returns in the immediate future and to take active steps to acquire property in preparation for the possible longer-term improvement of the town centre.

The Report set out details of the provisionally agreed purchase price of £3,130,000 (plus VAT) and rental sums, including fixed uplifts for 2015, 2020 and 2025.

The Cabinet considered the issues involved and felt that the proposal would benefit the Council's financial interests and demonstrate its commitment to the town centre.

The Cabinet RESOLVED that

- (i) approval be given to build into the Capital Programme from 2012/13 onwards the sum of £3,313,000 as the cost of the acquisition, including estimated purchase costs, of No. 98 Queensmead, Farnborough; and
- (ii) the Solicitor to the Council be authorised to acquire No. 98 Queensmead, Farnborough on terms to be agreed in consultation with the Chief Executive and the Leader of the Council.

The Meeting closed at 5.50 p.m.

CR. P.J. MOYLE
LEADER OF THE COUNCIL
