

# Refreshing Rushmoor:

Rushmoor Conservatives' Record of Achievement and Plan of Action 2024



## Our Vision for Rushmoor – and our plan to get us there!

Since December 2023 when I took over as the Leader of Rushmoor Borough Council I have been deeply honoured to meet many amazing people making Aldershot and Farnborough even better places to live.

There are so many good and capable people in our local charities and community groups, in our local businesses and in Rushmoor Borough Council itself who share our positivity and love for our towns.

When you spend as much time as I have acquainting yourself with all the hard work which is going on it is impossible to be anything other than optimistic and positive about our towns' potential.

We have seen in recent years huge progress made in regenerating Aldershot Town Centre, with the exciting new Union Yard development, bringing in high quality shops and services as well as good, decently priced housing for local people.

There's also been an incredible amount of work done to prepare Farnborough for a similar level of regeneration. In 2023 Rushmoor bought The Meads, meaning that our town centre will no longer suffer from neglect from landlords outside of the area – and that instead we can take an ambitious long-term view of what our town centre needs. As a result we've got lots of interest from high quality restaurants and leisure operators queuing up to go in.

One of my priorities since taking over as Council Leader has been to move on at pace with Farnborough Leisure Centre and Cultural Hub, and as a result this has now moved to its final pre-application stage with planning permission to be applied for this year and work to start later this year. **We will get our town centres done!**

Another key priority for myself and my group has been **caring for our parks and neighbourhoods** – setting ourselves the goal of improving the care and upkeep of our green spaces, grassed verges and streets – we have already made great strides in this and are set to do even more over the coming months.

Finally, we want to build a stronger community, where more support, like mental and physical health services are available for those who need it and where everyone has the opportunity to get involved and shape the life of our towns.

All of this is underpinned by strong financial management and a willingness to make the tough decisions and to improve the efficiency and customer-orientation of local services.

I hope that with your support our local Conservative team can go on delivering for you.

Our vision is for this to be YOUR borough, responsive and supportive of you and your family. Building a Rushmoor we can be even more proud of .

If you would like to join our amazing and committed team please get in touch – and I hope to meet you in person some time soon.

Best wishes

*Gareth Lyon*



## Strong and effective financial management



### **Our record of strong and effective financial management:**

- Conservative-led Rushmoor delivers good value for money. We have amongst the lowest council taxes in the region with some of the highest rated services.
- We have delivered year-on-year real terms tax cuts (by ensuring that council tax rises are always lower than the rate of inflation).
- We have built up a strong investment portfolio which is paying for council services and keeping Rushmoor in a strong financial position
- We have delivered tax cuts for the least well off and taking care leavers out of council tax – to ensure that the costs of local government do not become a burden for those struggling most.
- We have ensured very high levels of financial transparency – we publish our quarterly financial performance and all spending over £250.
- We have secured £1m in UK Shared Prosperity Funding secured from the UK Government to help fund local town centre improvements and community support.

### **Our plan to Refresh Rushmoor's finances**

- Introducing a Rushmoor Rebate – effective freezes to council tax by returning this to you as we meet our financial performance targets. Starting with Band A then Band B then progressively extending this to all taxpayers.
- Dedicated voluntary contribution funds so that people can choose to contribute to improvements in arts, culture, the environment and leisure.
- Our financial transformation and managed programme which is cutting out back office cost to provide more funding to local services. We are the only party with a plan!
- A digital first programme to improve customer service

## Transparency and accountability



### **Our record of improving transparency and accountability**

- Conservative-led Rushmoor publishes all papers, decision and financial reports in a timely manner to facilitate resident scrutiny.
- We have improved the searchability of the Rushmoor website to make it easier to find what you want.
- We introduced a new, more robust, governance and scrutiny process, giving councillors from all parties the opportunity to scrutinise decisions and call them in – despite this opposition councillors rarely use scrutiny powers available.
- We have started to broadcast council meetings online.
- The council's social media has become more responsive to questions asked.
- Recently we have introduced recent Facebook Live sessions to give any Rushmoor resident the opportunity to raise any local issue with the Council Leader and senior councillors.

### **Our plan for even more transparency and accountability**

- We will set up more forums for local residents to call in senior councillors and get answers to questions.
- This will include monthly in-person townhall style events featuring the Council Leader alternating between Aldershot and Farnborough.
- We will encourage all wards to run monthly residents drop-in surgeries as many Conservative-represented wards do already.

## Getting our town centres (and Leisure Centre) done!



### Our record of driving regeneration

- In recent years we have consistently been delivering more and better events and markets in our town centres
- The iconic and transformative Union Yard development will open this Summer, bringing in high-quality shops and decently priced homes for local people.
- Farnborough Leisure Centre is set to go in for planning permission this Summer – we are now moving on at pace and are the only party committed to this.
- We bought the Meads in Farnborough to allow us to revive Farnborough shopping centres – we already have strong interest from restaurants and leisure providers.

### Our plan to get our town centres, and leisure centre done!

- We are the only party committed to delivering the Farnborough Leisure Centre plan including arts and performance space and state of the art leisure facilities.
- We will introduce more free parking in our town centres
- We establish a new Mini-Kathmandu in Aldershot modelled on China Town in London.
- We will work with the owner, Shaviram, to get the Galleries done
- We will bring in a major new anchor store for Farnborough Civic Quarter and new leisure offerings including bowling in both town centres.
- We will turn The Meads into a leading culinary and leisure destination and Union Yard into a hub for independent local traders including quality clothing.
- A new Regeneration Board to level-up North Camp
- Even more great cultural events and markets including craft and farmers' markets

## Protecting and improving our green spaces, leisure facilities and environment



### Our record of protecting and improving our parks

- We have invested £885,000 this year in upgrading our play areas including Redan Hill, Irvine Drive, Elles Close and Cove Green.
- We have secured record investment in our tennis courts.
- We have established two excellent new country parks.
- We have established two new Habitat Banks securing more investment in Rowhill Nature Reserve and Southwood Country Park.
- Planting thousands of trees across the borough every year to improve the street scene.

### Our plan for more

- Continue our programme of play area investment in all parts of the borough.
- Two new cafes in parks – Manor Park and George V
- Collecting more materials for recycling and improving the effectiveness of recycling from flats
- Improving biodiversity every year across the borough
- Ensuring that the new Leisure Centre is one of the most environmentally friendly buildings in the country using the innovative PASSIVHAUS scheme.
- Getting thousands more trees planted every year.
- Improving electric car charging provision across our towns.
- Providing secure cycle parking in town centres and key hubs.
- Securing local control of unkempt areas of Crown Land to ensure that fly-tipping can be collected and tree maintenance improved.
- Improving car parking in areas of particular shortage.

## Caring for our Neighbourhoods: cleaner and safer streets



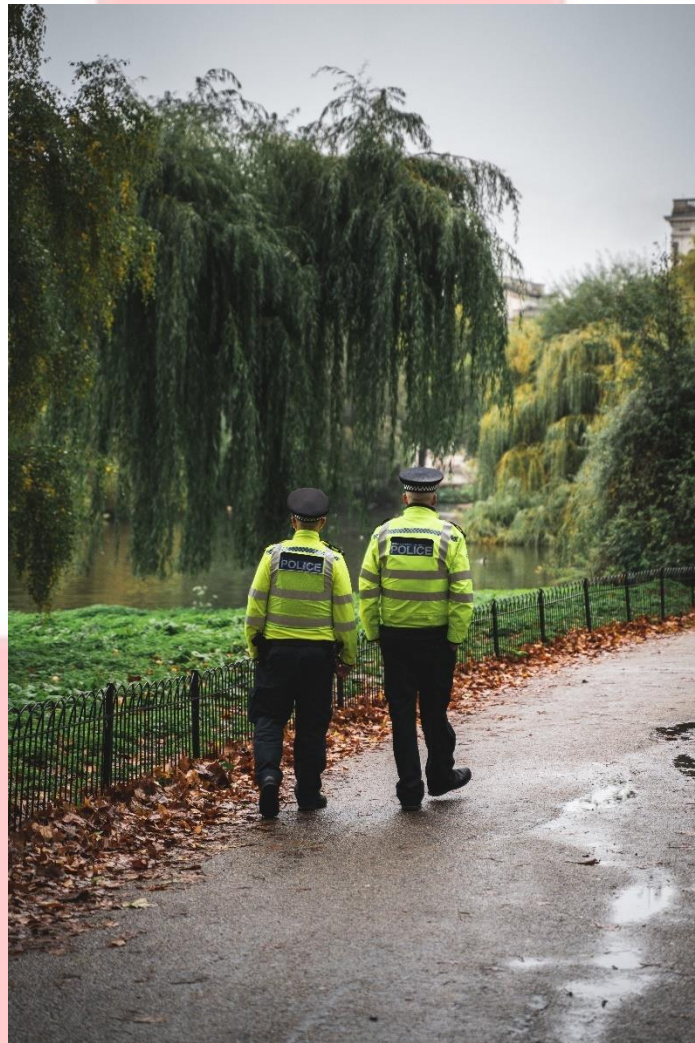
### Our record of caring for our neighbourhoods

- A new 10 Officer Place Protection team to tackle fly-tipping, littering, dog fouling and anti-social behaviour
- More rapid tidy-up of litter and fly-tipping
- Improved grounds maintenance and repairs and maintenance of council owned buildings.
- An identified set of 'hot spots' for more attention and improved signage to deter littering.

### Our plan for more

- Improved grass maintenance on verges near housing – and turning other suitable sites into more wildflower meadows.
- Better maintained town centres and roundabouts
- More untidy site notices served on badly maintained sites
- More weeding and hedge and tree control

## More police presence in our towns and neighbourhoods



### **Our record of improving policing**

- 650 new police officers for Hampshire
- Including a beat officer in every area
- Significant reductions in almost every measure of crime
- Opening up police careers to people without degrees

### **Our plan for more police presence**

- Protect and expand Aldershot police station
- A cop shop in Farnborough town centre
- A police forum for each ward – opposed by the other parties



## Stronger community



### Our record of strengthening our community

- Unlike other councils Conservative-led Rushmoor has protected grant funding for community groups and organisations which do so much good work in our borough.
- We have set up a youth forum, Youth Club and Rushmoor Youth Influence to give young people ways to get positively involved in our community.
- We have set up heritage trails to showcase our borough's amazing history.
- We have encouraged volunteering, protecting Rushmoor Voluntary Services, setting up the Rushmoor Community Lottery and set up a community directory
- We have expanded mental health initiatives and defibrillator coverage in our area.
- Making Rushmoor a welcoming employer for Armed Forces and reservist personnel.

### Our plan for even stronger community

- Expanding Environmental grants – including securing funding for the Basingstoke Canal.
- Setting up a charity and community hub
- Setting up armed forces and veterans hubs in both towns.
- Building up our cultural offer with more performances and cultural events.
- Build on Rushmoor's links with the Commonwealth and our shared values
- Setting up more Youth Clubs in all parts of Rushmoor
- Rolling out Prostate Cancer UK's Bins for Boys in all public toilets
- Creating a new Heritage Fund bolstering memorials, further heritage trails, cleaning up graves within the Military Cemeteries and building more of a sense of place in both Aldershot and Farnborough.
- Investing in and supporting Mental Health Wellbeing through Mansheds, Sports Clubs, Music for Care Homes and walks.
- Securing a stronger voice for local residents in health and social care provision.

## More good homes for local families



### Our record of delivering good homes

- Consistently building more than our quota of affordable homes
- Preventing bad development when it is not in the community interest eg Fleet Road, Churchill Crescent
- Stopping Home Office plans for migrant accommodation at Hillside – other parties have refused to clarify their position on this issue.
- Delivering good new homes for decent rental prices at Union Yard.

### Our plan for more good homes

- We will conduct a full review of the Local Plan to expand infrastructure and protect local neighbourhoods.
- Using the new Local Plan to expand good reasonably priced private rental options.
- We will categorically rule out ULEZ, LTNs and blanket 20mph zones – restricting 20mph zones to only outside schools for safety reasons.
- Rolling out buy as you go schemes similar to Rent Plus to make it easier to buy your own home.
- Protecting our historical buildings and assets – developing a comprehensive list and survey of condition and future requirements.
- Protecting the identity and character of different areas of our borough.

## Backing local business



### **Our record of making Rushmoor a great place to do business.**

- We have introduced a comprehensive system of business rate support for struggling businesses – including those on Lynchford Road impacted by the recent roadworks.
- We have introduced new SME friendly procurement policies and social value policies.
- We are set to launch new business forums to give local businesses more involvement in local policy making.

### **Our plan to do even more**

- Attracting more investments into the borough from high tech and aviation companies
- Promoting apprenticeships at all major local employers.
- Making Rushmoor the best place to do business in the UK.

## **Get involved and help us to Refresh Rushmoor!**

Do you share our ambition of making Rushmoor an even better place to live for everyone and of making Rushmoor YOUR council – supportive and responsive to you and your family?

If so then please consider joining our team. Our party is open to good people of any background who share our positive ambition for our borough. Everyone has a role to play.

Please get in touch at: [office@aldershotconservatives.com](mailto:office@aldershotconservatives.com) to join our team today.



**Promoted by Dick Brown on behalf of Rushmoor Conservative Councillors and candidates, all C/O 79 Ashley Road, Farnborough, GU14 7HD**