

## Focus on Farnborough: An Audience with Paul Shackley

18<sup>th</sup> October 2017

We were delighted that Paul, Rushmoor Borough Council's new CEO, agreed to continue with our annual update on all things Farnborough, especially as it was only six months since he had taken up his post.



*Rushmoor's CEO Paul Shackley with the Leader, Cllr David Clifford*

He began by acknowledging that his predecessor, Andrew Lloyd, was a hard act to follow, so he felt he should begin by telling us a little about himself, both personally and professionally. And what a rich body of experience he brings to the borough, including a spell in the RAF as an air traffic controller, time with Cheshire Police and with a number of

local authorities and, not least, as a competitive swimmer who competed in the 1986 Commonwealth Games. As his first slide told us, he is most definitely 'not Andrew'.

What he brings to Rushmoor, significantly at this time, is experience of town centre regeneration, gained as Corporate Director for Growth at Wycombe District Council in High Wycombe, where he still lives.

He has been given three priorities by the Leader of RBC: to deliver town centre regeneration; to listen to customers and the community; to get things done quicker. How will these be achieved? By aiming to exceed customer and community expectations every time, by providing inspirational community leadership and excellent services and by adopting a flexible approach with changing focus and priorities.

Over the past few months, Paul has been reviewing the council's organisation from top to bottom with a fresh, critical eye, and considering ways to improve effectiveness and efficiency. His four key strategic issues are:

- Emphasis on growth, housing and regeneration
- Attracting and retaining the right people, in the right roles
- Effective management of the RBC's budget amid challenging financial pressures
- Developing an operating model for the future, based on customer need and using technology effectively

A proposal for this new operating model is under development and one of the key features will be to achieve as much as possible for customers at the very first point of contact, reducing

the need to repeat appointments, saving time and making customer journeys smoother and less stressful.

Paul went on to give an overview of the national picture with the latest Bank of England update and explaining what impact it might potentially have on Rushmoor.

He then presented key data on Rushmoor, including population, education levels, business and house prices. One startling fact is that the borough's population density is 24 people per hectare (compared to 3.6 in Hampshire, 4.5 in the South East and 4.1 in England), which graphically illustrates how untypical our entirely urban borough is of our area generally, and our immediate neighbours particularly.

Overall, Rushmoor has a younger age profile than average, fewer residents with the highest level of qualifications, under-performing secondary schools, two pockets of multiple deprivation (in the 20% most deprived in the country) and health issues related to inequalities. Rushmoor has a lower unemployment rate than Hampshire, the South East or the UK, however many of the jobs are poorly paid or zero-hours contracts.

The Council faces six key challenges:

- Regeneration of the town centres
- Tackling antisocial behaviour in Aldershot town centre
- Tackling our serious housing shortage, especially affordable and social housing
- Improving health, by tackling problems such as obesity and mental health issues
- Improving educational attainment, so that local children can succeed in the workplace
- Tackling deprivation, wherever it is found

Having laid out the Rushmoor picture, Paul moved onto Farnborough specifically. New



*Farnborough's new Conference Centre, scheduled to open in 2018*

businesses that have moved to the town include Decathlon, Smyths Toys, Dunelm, Hobbycraft and 360. The new conference centre is scheduled to open in 2018 and bookings are already being taken. Plans are being drawn up to complete The Meads, with a mixed-use development of shops, leisure and housing. And the Master Plan

for the Civic Quarter redevelopment is taking shape, seeking to incorporate as many features as possible from an extensive wish-list. There have been setbacks due to a change in requirements by the North East Hampshire and Farnham CCG, who originally hoped to locate a sizeable health hub on the site, and a recent decision by Hampshire County Council to keep

the library in its present building. Aecom, who are drawing up the Master Plan, certainly have a challenge on their hands.

There are significant challenges ahead for Rushmoor's new CEO, too, but he came across as ambitious for our borough, highly competitive, possessed of a keen sense of humour and with the kind of experience we need: exactly the right man at this critical time.