



FARNHAM TOWN COUNCIL

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Notes

Strategy & Resources

Time and date

2.00 pm on Tuesday 16th April, 2024

Place

Council Chamber - Farnham Town Hall

Strategy & Resources Members Present:

Councillor David Beaman
Councillor Mat Brown
Councillor Alan Earwaker (ex-Officio)
Councillor Tony Fairclough
Councillor Andrew Laughton
Councillor Graham White (Lead Member)

In attendance:

Councillor Chris Jackman
Cllr George Murray

Officers:

Iain Lynch (town Clerk), Jenny de Quervain (Civic and Planning Officer (part))

1. Apologies

Apologies were received from Councillors Hesse, Martin and Mirylees.

2. Declarations of interest

Cllr Fairclough and Cllr Murray made a declaration as Portfolio holders as Waverley Borough Council.

3. Minutes

The Notes of the meeting held on March 5th were agreed.

4. Finance Report

Cllr White introduced the 2023-24 finance report highlighting the End of Year Finance papers at Appendices B to J on the agenda.

- 1) The Working Group noted the activities of a busy year set out in Appendix B and that there had been a positive outturn in the accounts with the overall income position at £1,809,072 (against a budget of £1,623,750) whilst expenditure was £1,667,867 (against a budget of £1,643,750) resulting in a small positive surplus of £34,254 of income over expenditure after specific funding (eg CIL) had been allocated to the earmarked reserves.
- 2) The Working Group noted the position on Debtors set out at Appendix D noting and that none were cause for concern.
- 3) The Working Group received the Internal Auditor's letter and report at Appendix H following the end of year audit and received the draft Report and Financial Statements which included the detail of earmarked reserves and grants distributed during the year noting that the General Reserve stood at £505,765 representing about 36% of the precept level, within acceptable levels for a Council of the size of Farnham.
- 4) The Governance Statement was agreed and the Draft Annual Return for 2023-24 was agreed for recommendation to Council.
- 5) The list of Standing Orders and Direct Debits for 2024/25 attached at Appendix K to the agenda was agreed for approval by Council.
- 6) The request for continued support for the Children's Business Fair through the provision of gazebos and tables was agreed, noting that the level was above the normal approval in the Small Grants Scheme (with an internal transfer made between the grants and income budget to reflect the support given) but the application for Sight for Surrey was not supported on this occasion although a future application would be welcomed.
- 7) Cllr White proposed a vote of thanks to the Responsible Financial Officer and the finance team (Sarah Cross and Claire Connell) for the thorough and efficient way in which the accounts were managed and for the detailed papers provided.
- 8) Cllr Fairclough observed that the year ahead would be challenging with some £360K of income to be achieved (in addition to the precept).

Recommendations to Council

It is recommended that:

- 1) The report on the 2023-24 finances be adopted;**
- 2) the 2023-24 Outturn be welcomed;**
- 3) the Annual Governance Statement (Section I of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return, page 4) be approved;**
- 4) The Internal Auditor's report be welcomed and the recommendations agreed;**
- 5) The updated Asset Register be approved;**
- 6) The Report and Financial Statements including the general and earmarked reserves for 2023-24 be adopted for signature;**
- 7) The variances list for the Annual Return be agreed;**
- 8) The Annual Governance and Accountability Return and associated papers be approved for signature and submission to the External Auditor.**

5. Timetable of meetings for 2024-2025

There were no changes proposed to the draft Timetable of Meetings for 2024-25. It was noted that timings may be adjusted to suit the new Task Group and Working Group memberships. Members were reminded that only the official invitations to meetings from Customer Services should be circulated since the staff team could not remove invitations sent by other councillors if dates or times changed.

6. Contracts & Assets update

The Working Group considered a number of Contracts and Assets matters.

1. A Hands Turn.

Councillors noted the current position with the planning application for the *A Hand's Turn* installation and discussed representations that had been raised by local residents. It was noted that the planning application was submitted because of the uncertainty of the planning position following earlier complaints by residents at Hawthorn Lodge. The intention had always been that it would be a temporary installation but it had not been possible to submit a temporary application.

The Working Group confirmed that, irrespective of the outcome of the planning application, the location of the Installation would be further reviewed, noting that any future location was also going to require a further planning application. The Working Group also noted that the artists' information about the sculpture had been circulated to all councillors and submitted to Waverley as supplementary information explaining that the work was designed specifically for that location following a public competition.

There were clearly mixed views on the installation in terms of the design and location and Councillors also considered the noise issues that had occurred and that there were suggestions for muffling the sound in future and for more informative signs about the installation. The Working Group considered whether it was appropriate to recommend withdrawing the planning application but felt on balance it was better to let the application run its course and then review the next steps for the temporary installation.

2. Gostrey Meadow

The Working group noted that the Gostrey Gates were with the blacksmith and the non-highway works were underway. The dropping of the kerb in Union Road would be dependant on getting highway space and approval from Surrey County Council.

The Working Group received some outline sketches for the new toilets and playground in Gostrey Meadow, using the Borelli Shelter as part of the playground and the old toilets as the storage area. There were some comments to feed back to the architect for detailed drawings to be prepared for the June meeting.

3) Library Gardens

The Working group were advised that some progress had been made and the Town Clerk was awaiting the draft Heads of Terms for a Lease from Surrey County Council.

4) Wrecclesham Community Centre Rent Review.

The Working Group heard the current position of the Trustees on the Rent Review for a phased increase and noted that the Leader and Town Clerk would be meeting with the trustees to discuss further.

5) Other matters

The Town Clerk advised a bid for FTC to maintain the green space in Brightwells Yard had been submitted and a further discussion was expected in the near future. Members felt that FTC managing the space was beneficial.

7. Farnham Infrastructure Programme

Cllr Beaman provided an update on the Farnham Infrastructure Programme. Councillors had reviewed the materials with the consultant and officers from Surrey County Council prior to the meeting and a consensus had been reached. A plan summarising the detail was expected ahead of Council.

8. Reports of Task Groups

1) Infrastructure Planning group

The Working Group reviewed the notes of the Task Group attached at Appendix M and in particular the information on the Local Plan Timetable and its impact on the Neighbourhood Plan. A meeting on housing numbers with Waverley officers was awaited. The new meetings timetable included regular monthly Monday meetings (alternating with the Planning & Licensing Consultative Group) which would enable momentum to be maintained when there was information emerging.

Members were keen that the Neighbourhood Plan was seen to be at the forefront as the community want to see results.

The timetable for the section 278 works in East Street (now expected to be in May) was noted which could have knock on impact in the Brightwells Yard completion.

The Working Group received an update on the Waverley Lane Statutory Challenge hearing, noting that the defendant had requested it be 1.5 days. There was also another matter that had arisen that would be discussed in Council in Exempt after the Town Clerk had taken further advice.

Cllr Laughton left at this point.

2) Younger People Task Group.

The Working Group welcomed the progress that had been made with draft Service Level Agreements (SLAs) prepared and expected to be in place by the end of April. 40 Degreeez were recruiting a youth worker and assistant. The Working Group noted that the Jubilee Hub in Wrecclesham had submitted a proposal to increase outreach and add an additional evening of activity. It was noted that the YPTG meeting on 24th April was expected to confirm the details for the initial year, and agreed that the SLA would include a specific condition, for transparency purposes, about the outreach being open to all and non-judgemental as it was a faith-based organisation.

Cllr White suggested that one councillor take the lead in liaising with each of the partner organisations (Cllr Earwaker with 40 Degreeez, Cllr Murray with the Jubilee Hub, and Cllr White with Hale Community Centre) to feed back to the YPTG. This was considered a good idea.

9. Review of Council Policies

- 1) Cllr White advised that the co-leaders, Mayor and Town Clerk had met with David Carden (the Strategy Workshop facilitator) who was preparing the outline Business Plan. The aim was to have a draft of the detailed plan for consideration at the June meeting.
- 2) The draft Dependant Carers Support Scheme policy at Appendix N was deferred to the June meeting.

10. Consultations

There were no consultations for review.

11. Town Clerk update

- 1) Members discussed the arrangements for the Annual Town Meeting of electors, noting that officers were preparing slides for the five minute presentations for Lead Members and would be briefing them individually. There would be a display on Farnham Infrastructure matters with the County Councillors responding to questions and available during the interval. Cllr Fairclough offered to respond to Waverley related questions, and it was noted that Cllr Paul Follows was also hoping to attend.
- 2) The Town Clerk provided an update on staffing matters and of the online discussion on Grantfinder which could potentially be a tool to be used by community groups or the funding officer, depending on cost. A further report would be made.
- 3) The Working Group noted that the website survey was underway for users of the website, and councillors were encouraged to complete it when they accessed the website.
- 4) The Town Clerk advised on the D-Day 80th commemoration on 6th June which had also been discussed at the Community Working Group.
- 5) The Working group noted arrangements for the visit of the Farnham Andernach Friendship Association visit from 18th to 21st July which involved the Burgermeister of Andernach.
- 6) The Working Group noted that an experience Business Improvement District Manager had been recruited by the Farnham BID manager with further details expected shortly.

12. Reports for future meetings

The Working Group noted that the following items would be on future agendas:

- Report on whether a Farnham Town Lottery should be implemented
- Draft Town Council Business Plan 2024-2028
- Dependant Carers' Support Scheme
- Website and Communications Review Update
- Gostrey Meadow proposals

13. Date of next meeting

The date of the next meeting was agreed as Tuesday 4th June at 2pm.

The meeting ended at 5.25pm

Notes written by town.clerk@farnham.gov.uk

Date of next meeting 4 June 2024

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