



# FARNHAM TOWN COUNCIL

# B

## Notes Strategy & Resources

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### **Time and date**

2.00 pm on Tuesday 4th June, 2024

### **Place**

Council Chamber - Farnham Town Hall

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### **Strategy & Resources Members Present:**

Councillor Andrew Laughton  
Councillor Michaela Martin  
Councillor Kika Mirylees  
Councillor Graham White (Lead Member)

Councillor David Beaman (via Zoom)  
Councillor Tony Fairclough (via Zoom)

#### In attendance:

Councillor George Hesse  
Councillor George Murray

#### Officers:

Iain Lynch (Town Clerk), Iain McCready (Business and Facilities Manager – Part); Jenny de Quervain (Planning & Civic Officer)

### **1. Apologies**

Apologies were received from Cllr Brown.

### **2. Declarations of interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

### **3. Minutes**

The Minutes held on 16<sup>th</sup> April were agreed.

### **4. Finance Report**

- 1 The Working Group received the finance papers including the income and expenditure reports and the trial balance to 30 May 2024 noting the full update would be considered in the July meeting.
- 2 The Working Group reviewed the charges for the hire of equipment by community groups at weekends and bank holidays, noting the cost and imposition on staff time. It was agreed **to recommend to Council that a new charge be introduced for community groups at a rate of £75 for delivery and collection of equipment**, noting that this cost would often be met by a grant from the small grants fund, if the organisation had not already received a community grant. It was also agreed that the rate for businesses should be on actual cost if higher.
- 3 The Working Group considered an informal request for a contribution towards the Heath End School Astro following the increase in costs. The Working Group agreed that it would not be right to allocate funds from CIL for an individual community project without opening a formal CIL application round (not expected until 2025 subject to further income being received) but agreed that an ad hoc community grant application could be considered if received and could potentially be supported from the Younger People earmarked reserve.
- 4 The Working Group noted the position on a potential change of bankers with discussions having taken place with Handelsbanken. The Town Clerk advised this would be a combination of investment and the current account but no formal recommendation was being made at this stage whilst discussions were taking place. Any change would not take place before the autumn.
- 5 The Town Clerk advised that the discussion with the Wrecclesham Community Centre for the new lease and rent review had concluded and it was agreed to **Recommend to Council that the rate be £9,000 plus VAT in 2024/25, and an increase of £1,000 per annum over the following three years up to £12,000.**
- 6 The Working Group received an update on the Farnham No Interest Loan Scheme run by Boom Community Bank and **recommended to Council that the range of loans would be from £300 to £1,500 to provide greater opportunity for debt consolidation if required.**

## 5. Contracts & Assets update

The Working group received the Notes of the Assets Task Group and a verbal update on a number of contract matters.

- 1) Gostrey Meadow toilets and playground. Members discussed the proposed layout and revised drawings and provided several points for discussion with the architect prior to a more detailed drawing being supplied. The concept of the covered area and toilets being shuttered at night time to minimise the potential for vandalism was welcomed. There was discussion on: the merits of the toilets being facing the playground or the refreshment area; on the nature of the 'labels' on individual toilets with a strong view that there should be some which were specifically for women; and on the possibility of introducing a ground source heat pump. All these elements would be discussed with the architect. It was agreed that the consultation on the playground layout/equipment should take place in parallel with the planning application to reduce delays in the process, and that advice of Waverley who had recently undertaken a similar consultation would be sought.
- 2) Gostrey Meadow Gate widening. It was noted that the gates were with the blacksmith, and that the contractor was seeking the right matching bricks in case the existing ones could not be re-used. The Working Group noted that the planning advice was that the work was within permitted development and that the final connection to the road would be done at a later date as highways had booked the road space for the Infrastructure programme works.
- 3) Goupil. The Working Group noted that a replacement second hand Goupil had been found and it was awaiting road registration and vinyl wrapping. The cost was well within the agreed purchase price.
- 4) Library Gardens. The Working group noted that progress had been made but that officers were awaiting an on-site visit by Colin Galletly. The proposed payment for maintaining the

gardens for the ten year lease was acceptable. It was noted that there were some elements to be finalised including whether there could be padel tennis or pickle ball courts installed on the tennis court if funding were available. The Working Group noted that interest had been expressed by Space2 Grow and local primary schools to use the garden, but it was agreed that FTC had to acquire the lease first. It was agreed that the retention of the green space for the town longer term was the ambition.

- 5) Land encroachment. The Working group considered land encroachment that had taken place on an access road adjacent to the depot and also on Gostrey Meadow, including the placing of a bench. It was agreed that the owner should be asked to remove the bench and the unauthorised accesses should be regularised with a licence or a fence would be considered.

**Recommendations:**

- I. **a fence be installed at the Morley Road allotments (from existing grounds budgets) where flytipping was taking place;**
  - II. **Officers contact the properties accessing Gostrey Meadow with a view to issuing licences;**
  - III. **Officers contact the owners on the depot access road to seek the re-instatement of the correct fence line.**
- 6) Land Transfers. The Working Group revisited the potential areas of land transfer from Waverley Borough Council noting the timing with the Waverley Grounds maintenance contract up for renewal. The Working Group noted that officers had met with Matt Lank at Waverley Borough Council to discuss the areas previous discussed by Farnham Town Council including land that supported operational delivery (eg allotments and cemeteries, and which connected key areas of land eg Borelli Walk along the riverside and potentially the green space at Brightwell Yard). Officers had proposed a further two-phased approach with land which needed more detailed risk and resource assessments (such as the recreation grounds where there were more complex arrangements or playgrounds that needed a careful assessment in terms of investment needed) being in a third phase. The three phases are set out in the draft Business Plan (at Annex 3) with the three phases being I) Current year; phase two 2024-26, and phase three being 2026-28.

The Working Group considered the new investment in equipment and staffing that would be required and noted that the Assets Task Group had suggested that there could be the potential for income generation with the shortage of football pitches. The Contracts and Facilities Manager advised that these were also expensive to maintain and that income currently went to the recreation grounds committees whilst the expenditure was borne by the Borough Council.

- 7) The Working Group discussed an approach by Waverley Borough Council for Farnham Town Council to be transferred the green space in Brightwell Yard and the land that connected to the Farnham Riverside and 40 Degreez. Officers advised that there should be some requirement for the developer to guarantee the planting for an initial period, and it was agreed further details should be sought, together with any requirements attached to the land. The Working Group agreed that the bridges, with their inherent liabilities would not be taken on even if the land were transferred. **It was agreed to recommend that officers further discussions with Waverley and report back.**
- 8) Wrecclesham Gateway. The Working Group noted that the Wrecclesham Gateway funded by Section 106 funding was being progressed, and agreed a minor change to the approved design to fit with other villages along the A325.
- 9) Wey Valley House and Riverside pathway improvements. The design for the widening of the riverside pathway between Brightwells and the Riverside Car Park had been produced and the work was expected to be done in November/December. It was agreed that the request for an extension to the garden of Wey Valley house adjacent to the path could not be considered until the works were completed.
- 10) The Working Group noted that the Christmas Lights tender was being prepared with a view to having some elements potentially implemented in 2024 but the bulk in 2025. **It was**

**agreed to recommend that a representative of the Farnham BID be invited to join a member Task Group to help shape the design and review tenders.**

## **6. Legal update**

- 1) The Town Clerk provided an update on the Waverley Lane Statutory Challenge, the recent discussion with the Council's barrister and correspondence with a local sports club. It was noted that Waverley Borough Council had not responded to the court documents. Cllr Fairclough requested details in order that he could take up with the relevant officers.
- 2) The Town Clerk reported that the removal of dangerous trees in Gostrey Meadow and Haren Gardens had led to a request for information from Waverley's arboricultural officer and officers were providing details. It appears that FTC may inadvertently have not formally advised the tree officer and the Business and Facilities Manager was providing the requested information.
- 3) The Working Group noted the latest position on the claim for damage to a neighbouring property on riverside land now in FTC ownership and the management action taken.

## **7. Farnham Infrastructure Programme**

Cllr Beaman provided an update on the FIP works and the latest update meeting with the programme team. The Town Council had responded on the materials and a further meeting of the heritage officers was planned after others raised the same concerns as the Town Council. The proposed meeting of the Conservation Areas Task Group would take place after this. It was agreed that it was better not to hold a meeting unless there was something to share.

The Working Group noted that a draft phasing plan for the works had just been produced with zones of work identified rather than specific timeframes. The three county councillors had concerns over the impact on the town during the Christmas period and were suggesting some adjustments which the Working Group welcomed. It was noted a meeting was planned to discuss the phasing with representatives of the business community. Once the document had been revised a timing schedule would be prepared.

**Recommendation: With implications for town centre retail and residential areas, Farnham Town Council should seek to be involved in the phasing plan with a further report to the July Strategy & Resources meeting.**

Members noted that what had been agreed was that the resurfacing/widening of the footpath from Hatch Mill to the Brightwell's Yard scheme would be carried out by the SCC contractors during the November/December period. FTC had requested sensor lighting along the path. The path along Borelli Walk would be done by Crest earlier. Cllr Hesse commented on his disappointment with the bridge across the river. It had not been as desired by the town council. He was also concerned about the proposed colour saying galvanised would be better and he hoped they would think again.

## **8. Reports of Task Groups**

- 1) The report of the Neighbourhood Plan Task Group held on 20<sup>th</sup> May and attached as Appendix D to the agenda was taken as read, along with a detailed note by the Council's planning advisor, Steve Tilbury, setting out the timelines for the Waverley Local Plan and the Neighbourhood Plan updates. This showed the timeline for completing the Neighbourhood Plan was realistically the second quarter of 2026 given the strategic importance of Farnham to the overall Waverley Local Plan and the interdependence on data completion and information required from the Borough such as the housing strategy numbers which were not expected until the end of 2024/early 2025. The provisional proposal is attached as Annex I.

- 2) The report of the Younger People Panel and the School Holiday activity grants applications at Appendix E was considered with eleven applications received. Two (Helen's Musical beats and the Weydon School application were considered out of scope). The Bethel Baptist church application was considered in scope given the range of activities being offered. The Working Group agreed with the Panel recommended for the grants listed at Annex 2. With the following specific recommendations.

**Recommendations:**

- 1.) **40 degreerz be awarded £2,000 towards their project costs, but that this be ringfenced for transport for their out-of-area activities.**
- 2.) **The Chantry and Byworth Community Association and The Parish Rooms (on behalf of the Women's Refuge – I Choose Freedom) be offered additional funding (up to £1,500 and £500 respectively) to extend or expand their offering.**
- 3.) **The Maltings to be awarded £3,000 towards their project costs, but that this be ringfenced for their remote projects only in Weybourne, Badshot Lea and Brambleton Hall.**
- 4.) **UCA – funding of £2,000 to supplement a grant from Farnham South Street Trust be awarded subject to the project being specifically targeted at younger people.**
- 5.) **The grants list at Annex 2 be agreed.**

Cllr White provided an update on discussions he had had with the Chantry & Byworth Association which was working hard to re-establish a group in the Chantry. He and fellow Waverley councillors were trying to address some long-standing issues but this was a positive step forward.

- 3) The Working Group considered the report of the Website Development Task Group at Appendix F which had its second meeting following surveys of both councillors and members of the public, facilitated by the FTC Communications Manager and an external website consultant. The Group had recommended a new website be created which was mobile first in its design; had improved accessibility with clear navigation and a more modern design to ensure it remained future proof and facilitated community engagement. The Working group noted that there was an earmarked reserve of £25,000 for website developments which combined with the revenue budget allocation should be sufficient. The next step was for a tender specification to be developed. In response to questions on who would be writing the specification and leading on the review, the Town Clerk advised that the Communications Manager would work alongside the Website Task Group in taking this forward based on the issues already identified.

**Recommendation:**

**A tender for a new website be developed in conjunction with the Website Review Task Group.**

- 4) Infrastructure Planning issues – Cllr Hesse motion referred to Strategy & Resources. The Working Group considered Cllr Hesse's motion for new crossing at locations throughout the town. It was agreed that these would be considered as part of the neighbourhood Plan Infrastructure needs, and should be included on the FTC contribution to the Borough Infrastructure Development Plan which was about to be updated. The Town Council views on the proposed Longbridge crossing had already been passed on to the County Council but it was important that these issues were included in development plans where they could be in order to attract funding.

## 9. Review of Council Policies

- 1) The draft Business Plan at Appendix G to the agenda was agreed as being a useful working document/overview of the Council's aspirations and recommended to Council for consideration. It was agreed that a further discussion was required on the detail of the timescales and resource impacts. The next Strategy Workshop for Council was agreed as being on November 29<sup>th</sup>.
- 2) The report on the Dependant Carer's allowance scheme was agreed for recommendation to Council.

#### **Recommendations to Council**

- 1) **The draft Business Plan at Annex 3 be agreed as the focus for Council in the coming period noting that additional work on timescales and resourcing of the plan was required.**
- 2) **The Dependant Carer's Allowance Scheme at Annex 4 be adopted.**

#### **10. Town Clerk update**

The Town Clerk provided a brief update on staffing matters and details of the new Business Improvement District Manager who had started work and was initially based in the Town Hall.

#### **11. Items for future meetings**

The Working Group noted forthcoming items included: report on potential lottery, website and communications review; and financial regulations review.

#### **12. Date of next meeting**

The next meeting was agreed as being on 9<sup>th</sup> July.

The meeting ended at 5.30 pm

Notes written by [town.clerk@farnham.gov.uk](mailto:town.clerk@farnham.gov.uk)