



# FARNHAM TOWN COUNCIL

## D Notes

### Strategy & Resources

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#### **Time and date**

2.00 pm on Monday 14th October, 2024

#### **Place**

Council Chamber - Farnham Town Hall

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

Councillor David Beaman  
Councillor Mat Brown  
Councillor Tony Fairclough  
Councillor Andrew Laughton  
Councillor Brodie Mauluka (ex-Officio)  
Councillor Kika Mirylees  
Councillor George Murray  
Councillor Graham White (Lead Member)

Officers: Iain Lynch (Town Clerk), Iain McCReady (Business & Facilities Manager), Jenny de Quervain (Planning & Civic Officer).

#### **1. Apologies**

Apologies were received from Cllr Martin.

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

There were no declarations of interest.

#### **3. Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held on 4<sup>th</sup> September were agreed.

#### **4. Farnham Infrastructure Programme**

Cllr Beaman provided an update on the latest position with the Farnham Infrastructure Programme including the phasing programme, street furniture (including CCTV and bus stops) and SurreyCC-led communications.

The Working Group noted the two options for bus stops (the one proposed by FTC and a similar one) were being assessed for robustness and fixings. The phasing plan had still not been

shared with FTC apart from an initial draft, and there were discussions ongoing over CCTV locations with the removal of the traffic islands.

Cllr Beaman advised that there was likely to be consideration of the Farnham Board being disbanded once the implementation phase commenced in the new year, but there was a need to have an oversight of the highways work.

The Working Group noted that the communications teams of Waverley, Surrey and FTC had been working together and the Business Improvement District was involved. Cllr Beaman advised it was important that the messages were clear and realistic ie they should be note that there may be longer journey times during the works and people should plan their journeys but Farnham would still be open for business.

Councillors discussed the importance of using every means to advise residents and businesses of the works and timetable (when it was shared) and to signpost people to the latest information. There was concern that neither FTC nor the county councillors were fully informed about the latest position.

On a separate note, councillors sought clarification of the Section 278 works in East Street which were part of the Brightwells Yard Scheme. Officers advised that a site visit was scheduled by SCC on 15th October to review any outstanding points such as barriers or planters and cycle parking on the wider areas to prevent inappropriate parking. It was also understood SCC were still reviewing the need for a bus shelter in East Street on one of the widened footways.

It was also suggested that the replaced hoardings on the Woolmead site should be used, if possible, to share news about the town centre works, or promote craft in the town etc. Officers advised they were offering Home England to manage the graffiti removal on the hoardings if that would be helpful.

## **5. Reports of Task Groups**

### **1) Neighbourhood Plan Task Group**

The Working Group noted that despite further requests there has been no information supplied by Waverley Borough Council on agreed topics including the Infrastructure scoping document; Farnham Park SANG data; the consultees' contact list and email addresses. Frustratingly despite agreeing to include FTC in a Moor Park SANG meeting, the meeting had taken place without inviting FTC. Although WBC has advised the SANG at Farnham Park is full, the details of which applications are allocated for it have still not been released. It was agreed that the FTC Planning officer would advise Cllr Fairclough and Mirylees so they can raise further at Waverley.

Cllr Murray reported that Steve Tilbury had done a brilliant job at the public meeting on the Neighbourhood Plan and had come across very well.

- b) The Working group discussed the Waverley Lane decision (included at Appendix G to the agenda) and next steps. The Judge had dismissed the appeal based on both the late delivery and the merits of the case. This was disappointing as it meant the potential candidate area and its special landscape quality was lost forever. The Town Clerk advised that the judge had written a very thorough report and the opportunity for taking the case further was limited. It was agreed to recommend to Council not to continue with the challenge. Councillors felt that the decision to make a Statutory Challenge was the right one in upholding the landscape issues and the Neighbourhood Plan but the odds were stacked against local communities. This case had also drawn out the tactics used by the developers with the offer of funding to the Bourne Club if FTC withdrew its challenge.

The Town Clerk outlined the expected costs which would be faced by the Town Council from pursuing the challenge and proposed mitigation with a claim to be made against the Council's solicitors for the late delivery of papers. This would be amplified in the Exempt session at Council.

**Recommendation to Council: It is recommended that FTC does not pursue the Statutory Challenge further.**

- c) The Working Group noted the appeal lodged (APP/R3650/W/24/3350600) for the Farnham Park Cemetery application. There was surprise at how quickly this was moving forward and the number of days allocated for the appeal hearing. It was noted that the applicant had also now withdrawn the community benefit aspects of the original proposal (parking for St John's Church) and also had two different 'red lines' defining the application site.

There was consideration of Farnham participating as a Rule 6 party in the Inquiry and whether FTC should be legally represented given the complexity of some of the matters. It was not a requirement that FTC was legally represented but given the importance of the site adjacent to Farnham Park which had landscape importance, it was agreed that the Town Clerk obtain further estimates of the costs and process, and how FTC could best support WBC and the community at the appeal hearing. The Working Group were advised that costs would not be awarded against the Council as a Rule 6 participant unless the Council pursued spurious issues and wasted the time of the Inspector.

Time was of the essence as it appeared that a Statement of Case had to be lodged by 24th October, prior to Council. As such it was agreed this may need to be an urgency decision delegated to the Town Clerk in consultation with the Mayor, Leader and Lead Member of Planning & Licensing. The legal aspects would be reported to Council in Exempt session.

**Recommendations:**

- 1) **FTC should be a Rule 6 participant (subject to not being liable for any costs award) supporting Waverley Borough Council;**
  - 2) **Council determine the level of representation at the hearing**
  - 3) **The Town Clerk obtain further details of the costs and benefits of legal representation;**
  - 4) **A delegated decision be made if required on urgency grounds.**
- 2) **Younger People Panel**  
The Leader advised of the progress on the research undertaken by Westco, and that the findings were to be presented to the Panel on the 17th October. The number of responses (over 900) had been well above expectation and the researchers advised they had also been quality responses. They had also held discussions with 15 partner agencies. The responses had shown most things were ok for most young people living in Farnham but there were concerns for the health and well-being for a minority of people. There were also opportunities for better engagement with civic life based on feedback from the focus groups. Further information would be shared in the presentation.
- It was agreed to co-opt Cllr Murray onto the Younger People Panel, as the link with Jubilee Hub and the South Farnham project.
- 3) **Conservation Areas Advisory Group**  
The Working Group noted the matters progressed at the recent meeting held on 1st October.

## **6. Review of Council Policies**

### **1) Standing Orders**

Cllr White advised that following the reduction in councillors from 18 to 16, the number of councillors in Working Groups was reduced from 6 to 5. At the time there was concern that this could have an impact on the ability to fulfill the quorum (of 3 councillors plus an officer) at times of holidays, sickness and because of other commitments of double or triple hatted councillors. In the past year two Working Groups had to be postponed or curtailed and at the meeting of the Environment Working Group on 25th September, it was agreed to recommend increasing all the Working Group numbers back to six as had already been agreed for the Strategy & Resources Working Group and the Younger People Panel. This will require adjusting the Terms of Reference/Standing Orders.

### **Recommendation to Council:**

- 1) The number of Members of the Working Groups be increased to six.**
- 2) Additional councillors be appointed to the Environment Working Group and the Community & Culture Working Group. Cllr Earwaker has offered to join the Environment Working Group.**

### **2) Business Plan/Strategic Workshop**

- i) The Working group considered the arrangements for the Strategy Workshop on Thursday 28th November 2024 at 6pm. It was agreed that a facilitator would again be used.

*[Subsequent to the meeting, David Carden who facilitated the 2023 workshop has confirmed his availability to support the workshop and write a summary of the matters raised.]*

Cllr White said this was an opportunity to update the Business Plan agreed by Council in 2023 and re-circulated recently to all councillors. There was concern that there were only four hours for the Workshop and Cllrs White and Fairclough offered to go through the Business Plan and prepare an initial prioritisation document which would be circulated ahead of the event for consideration at the Workshop.

Cllr Fairclough commented that the initial capital projects for the forthcoming period were based in two wards, although the Working Group noted projects had recently been completed in other areas.

## **7. Town Clerk update**

- 1) The Working Group noted the appointment of Helen Goode as the new Literary Festival Co-ordinator and Olwen Dennis-Jones as Fundraising and Sponsorship Officer on an initial 6 month contract.
- 2) The Town Clerk advised that during his absence on leave (end of October to 25th November) Iain McCready would be deputising.
- 3) The Town Clerk advised that there had recently been an inter-agency group reviewing anti-social behaviour issues that had been occurring in the town centre and elsewhere. Some specific actions had been agreed for the short term. It was noted that most of the issues were fuelled by alcohol or drugs, or professional shoplifting gangs. It had been noted that the number of incidents involving younger people had not been a feature in recent times.

Cllr White left at 4.20pm

## **8. Contracts & Assets update**

The Working Group received an update on a number of contracts and assets issues including:

- 1) A report on the Gostrey Meadow Meadow Project and considered the updated design for the public conveniences and storage (attached at Appendix F to the Working Group agenda) prepared by Plan A architects based the wishes of Council for a curved design.

The new version was endorsed to be finalised for submission for Planning approval. The Working Group noted that comparative prices for the technical reports required for the Planning application submission were also being sought. These include: a topographic survey and GPR (below ground) survey; an Energy Statement; tree protection and flood risk and sustainable drainage. Officers advised the estimated costs for the supporting surveys are expected to be in the region of £7,000.

- 2) Gostrey Playground

The Working Group received details of the initial consultation for the online survey which had achieved 452 responses (with 262 interested in taking part in the second stage consultation) and with views of 75 children separately at the playground. The features most desired included a multi play tower (91%) swings (89%), waterplay (65%), a roundabout (55%) and sensory play/musical boards (41%).

The preferred style was for wooden equipment (86%). These details have been shared with one of the potential contractors who have designed an initial drawing to be used in the tender for the playground design and construction. The tender is scheduled to be advertised imminently. The aim is to allow a smaller playground as an initial phase to be in operation whilst the construction works for the building takes place (subject to planning). Funding applications for the two phases would be run in parallel with the planning application, and the next stage of the consultation on the preferred design would commence once the tenders had been evaluated. The estimated costs (subject to tender) are in the region of £500-£750K for the public conveniences and storage, and £200 to £250k for the playground area.

- 3) Website Tender. The tender specification is prepared and scheduled to be advertised in week commencing 14 October. Once tenders are received, a decision will be made on whether interviews are required or bids can be considered in the December cycle of meetings.

## **9. Finance Report**

The Town Clerk introduced the six month finance papers at Appendices B, C, D and E on the agenda. The Working Group went through the Income and Expenditure noting that income was running at just over 60% as a result of Section 106 and CIL funding received but not budgeted for, and better than expected interest on investments with higher than expected interest rates continuing. Expenditure was running at around 50% with legal and professional fees being higher than budgeted, the purchase of the replacement Goupil and the widening of the Gostrey Meadow gates included. Overall, the Working Group noted there were not any issues of concern at this stage of the year.

The Working Group considered the Trial Balance and the Statement of Investments and the Outstanding Debtors at 30<sup>th</sup> September with no issues of note.

## **10. Consultations**

The Town Clerk advised that the Dempster Trust, to which the Council appoints Trustees, had proposed that a vacancy filled by the retirement of Mr Peter Jeans, be filled by a co-opted Trustee Mrs Jacqui Thomas and that her role as a co-opted Trustee be filled by Mr Keith Harris.

Strategy & Resources agreed to recommend this to Council.

## **Recommendation**

**Mrs Jacqui Thomas be confirmed as a new Trustee on the Dempster Trust and Mr Keith Harris be co-opted onto the Trust.**

### **11. Matters for future meetings**

- 1) In addition to the items listed (Risk management; Martyn's Law (and FTC preparedness for anti-terrorism obligations); and the Business Plan Update) it was agreed that an updated report on asset transfers and the Wagon Yard lock up garages be prepared.
- 2) Further to Cllr Jackman's suggestion for a Mayor's Cadet, the Working Group received an update from the Chief Executive of South East Reserve Forces Cadet Association advising "Ministry of Defence policy was to not encourage the appointment of Cadets to any role other than as a Lord Lieutenant's Cadet. The main reasons for this policy was safeguarding and duty of care. When supporting the Lord Lieutenant, Cadets are published as being on official duty and therefore covered in the event of any problems. The wearing of uniform is also governed by strict policies as is the need for Cadets to be supervised". Brigadier Paul Evans OBE DL, Chairman Joint Service Cadet and Youth Committee, had also advised the Lord Lieutenant would similarly not encourage the appointment of Cadets to other roles, including Cadets supporting Mayors. He remained very keen to maintain the status of the Lord Lieutenant's Cadets within the County and, at the same time, avoid any confusion at events involving the Lord Lieutenant or a Deputy Lieutenant.

The Working Group therefore agreed not to pursue this proposal further noting that Farnham Town Council provided several civic opportunities each year for cadets to play a role and attend civic events including Remembrance services, the Civic Service, Commonwealth day and Armed Forces Day.

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

The date of the next meeting was agreed as Tuesday 10<sup>th</sup> December at 2pm.

The meeting ended at 4.54 pm

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