



FARNHAM TOWN COUNCIL

D

Notes

Strategy and Finance Working Group

Time and date

9.30am Tuesday 5th May 2020

Place

Remote via Zoom

Attendees:

Members: Cllr John Neale (Lead Member), Cllr David Attfield, Cllr David Beaman, Cllr Roger Blishen, Cllr Brian Edmonds, Cllr Mark Merryweather, Cllr Carole Cockburn, Cllr Sally Dickson, Cllr Alan Earwaker.
(Cllr Pat Evans (ex-Officio).

Officers: Iain Lynch (Town Clerk) and Iain McCready.

1. Apologies

All councillors were in attendance

2. Declarations of Interest

Cllr Merryweather declared a pecuniary interest in view of his role as Portfolio Holder for property matters at Waverley Borough Council in relation to agenda item 6(i) and left the meeting for this item.

3. Notes of Meeting held on 3rd March 2020

POINTS	ACTION
The notes of the previous meeting were agreed.	
Cllr Cockburn confirmed that the reviewed Farnham Neighbourhood Plan had been adopted (Made) by Waverley Borough Council and again carried full weight.	

4. Finance Report

POINTS	ACTION
1) <u>2019/20 Outturn Accounts for Audit</u> Members received and considered the following documents (which had been circulated to all councillors) in relation to the end of year accounts 2019/20 in preparation for External Audit. <ul style="list-style-type: none">i. Summary Income and expenditure by Committeeii. Summary Income and Expenditure by account codeiii. Detailed Income and Expenditure by Committee	

- iv. Variances by account code
- v. The Cash and Investment Reconciliation at 31st March 2020
- vi. The Trial Balance 2019/20
- vii. The updated Asset Register as at 31st March 2020
- viii. The draft Report and Financial Statements for 2019/20 and the reserves at 31st March 2020
- ix. The end of year Internal Audit letter 2019/20 and Officers' responses
- x. A copy of the Annual Governance Statement (section 1 of Annual Return)
- xi. Draft Annual Return for 2019/20 for submission to Council
- xii. An explanation of variances between box 7 and 8 on the Annual Return.

The 2019/20 outturn accounts for audit were reviewed and noted as follows:

1. Summary Income and Expenditure by Committee

The summary by Committee and the outturn showing a contribution to general balances after receipts in advance and agreed transfers had taken place of £19,063 was welcomed.

2. Summary Income and Expenditure by account code

Each code was reviewed and the explanation of variances was outlined in detail by the Town Clerk. The Working Group noted the additional income received and previously reported, some of which was offset by specific project activity during the year. The Working Group noted the areas of increased expenditure which were largely due to decisions made during the year, and the underspend on some areas (eg public conveniences) some of which related to delaying projects as a result of the awaited land transfers. It was noted that the combined expenditure on staffing, contracted and agency staff was just £6,000 below budget overall. In response to specific questions, the Town Clerk advised that any overtime payable was paid at plain time and that expenditure in preparation for Covid19 had been met from the revenue budget (eg additional IT cost) but some was now being funded from the agreed reserve.

It was noted that additional equipment for remote meetings was likely to be required to enable the council chamber to be used for remote meetings during the recovery phase of the pandemic if some councillors were able to be present and others still had to self-isolate.

It was noted that the Secretary of State had written advising that Town and Parish Councils should be included in the grant allocations made to Principal Authorities for the additional costs of responding to the pandemic. Further details were awaited.

3. The Working Group considered and recommended the following for approval by Council.

- 1. Cash & Investment reconciliation and Reserves Reconciliation 2019/20

<p>2. <u>Asset Register as at 31st March 2020</u> The Town Clerk provided an explanation about how the Asset register is compiled in accordance with the JPAG Practitioners Guide and legislation.</p> <p>3. <u>Draft Report and Financial Statements for 2019/20</u> Members reviewed and approved the Draft Report and Financial Statements for 2019/20, including outturn on reserves at 31st March 2020, as shown in Appendix F. The Town Clerk advised Members that the document was not a legal requirement but helped promote transparency for residents. Members noted the Council's General Reserves Policy to hold 6 months operating income & expenditure which could be adjusted if required. It was advisable to hold earmarked reserves for any large projects on the horizon. The proposed adjustments to the earmarked reserves were agreed and a copying error on page 5 was noted for correction.</p> <p>4. <u>Internal Audit interim letter 2019/20 and response</u> The Internal Auditor's 2019/20 End of Year letter was delayed because of the inability to have a personal visit but the relevant documents had been sent electronically for review. The final report would be presented to Council. The Working Group discussed the matters raised and the officer's response which were agreed for submission to Council.</p> <p>5. <u>Annual Governance Statement (section I of Annual Return)</u> The Working Group reviewed and agreed the Annual Governance Statement (section I of Annual Return).</p> <p>6. <u>Annual Return for 2019/20</u> The Working Group agreed the Draft Annual Return at Appendix I and the explanation of variances at Appendix Iii for 2019/20 for submission to full Council, noting there was a rounding error of £1 which would be corrected.</p> <p>7. <u>Additional Questions Raised for the 2019/20 External Audit</u> The Town Clerk informed the Working Group that the additional questions were ones that Councils of Farnham's size regularly submitted.</p> <p>2) <u>Other relevant financial matters</u> In response to a question from Cllr Edmonds about payments above £100 and the budget summary not being available on the website, the Town Clerk advised that the latest ones may have been omitted as an oversight and he would ensure they were updated.</p> <p>The Working Group commended the work on the end of year accounts particularly under the context of the pandemic, and noted the figures and documents were both accessible and transparent.</p> <p>It was noted that the Grants payments were about to be paid but that some further reviews would be undertaken to check that funding was still required as a result of cancellations and changes necessitated by the pandemic restrictions.</p>	<p>Recommendations to Council</p> <p>1) The Annual Governance Statement (Section I of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return) be approved;</p> <p>2) The Internal Auditor's report and officers' comments be agreed;</p> <p>3) The updated Asset Register be approved;</p> <p>4) The Report and Financial Statements for 2019/20 be adopted for signature; and</p> <p>5) The variances list for the Annual Return be agreed;</p> <p>6) The Annual Governance and Accountability Return and associated papers be approved for signature and submission to the External Auditor.</p>
--	--

5. Coronavirus Update

POINTS	ACTION
<p>i) Decisions under delegated authority The Working Group received a verbal update on the regular meetings held between the Town Clerk, Mayor and Leader in accordance with the delegation agreed at the last Council meeting. It was noted that notes of these meetings had been taken and the decision circulated to all councillors. The Mayor advised that all decisions had been unanimous. A summary list of the decisions made was in course of preparation.</p> <p>ii) Actions to support the community The successful partnership between Farnham Town Council and the Farnham Maltings spearheading several community focussed projects in conjunction with a range of Farnham organisations and individuals was discussed. These included the Farnham and Villages Coronavirus Helpline; a weekly community Zoom meeting to update those involved; a new Coronavirus Support fund to help those in Hardship; a new Community store (Share Farnham) and the assessment/treatment centre at the Farnham Hospital being supported by volunteers.</p> <p>a. It was noted that the helpline based in the Council Offices (with appropriate social distancing and cleansing) had been very successful allowing for sharing of learning and resilience with almost 900 request for help dealt with and every person helped receiving a call back.</p> <p>b. The Working Group discussed the work officers had begun to prepare for the recovery phase and in particular supporting local businesses as the restrictions begin to be eased noting that the Council's summer programme and bigger events and festivals would need to be cancelled until at least October. Alternate activities were being researched. It was noted that the Town Council's website was promoting, alongside the Farnham Herald, businesses that were open or offering deliveries during the lockdown.</p> <p>iii) Proposed deferment of Annual Meeting until 2021 It was noted that a decision had been made under delegated authority to defer the Annual Meeting of Council whilst the Council was unable to meet for the formal ceremony. As the Regulations have now been published and there remains uncertainty over the length of time restrictions remain in force, the Working Group agreed to propose to Council that the Annual Meeting be deferred until May 2021 and that the existing postholders (Mayor, Deputy Mayor and Leader) and Working Groups continue until that date.</p> <p>iv) Implications for the Council programme of activities</p> <p>a. The Working Group noted that the events programme was deferred and that launch event and other activities for Farnham in Bloom where gatherings were held had been cancelled or deferred. It was noted that the judging for Farnham in Bloom would be held remotely for 2020. The Outside Workforce team had continued to work in separate locations wherever possible, maintaining the cemeteries and preparing plants and hanging baskets as the plants were received. There were a number of</p>	<p>Town Clerk</p> <p>Updates to future meetings.</p> <p>Recommendation to Council that: the Annual Meeting be deferred until May 2021 with the extension of the terms of office of The Mayor, Deputy Mayor and Leader along with members of the Working Groups, Task Groups and Panels.</p>

<p>activities being promoted for VE day commemorations that could be done remotely.</p> <p>b. It was agreed that a revised budget would need to be prepared to take account of the loss of income and potential sponsorship and it was anticipated this would be considered at the July meeting.</p>	<p>Town Clerk to draft a revised budget for July meeting.</p>
--	---

6. Contracts and Assets Update

POINTS	ACTION
<p>1. The Town Clerk provided an update of progress on the transfer of land from Waverley Borough Council. Draft transfer documents were available and agreement to use the Council's Seal under delegated authority had been made. There were some queries still being resolved through the Council's solicitor.</p> <p>2. The Working Group endorsed the decision made to waive Standing Orders Contracts and extend the Council's insurance with Zurich for three years in view of the extended cover and reduced fee for the renewal. The Town Clerk advised that the fee now being paid was substantially less than the council paid in 2010 despite significant extensions to cover. Members noted that the current uncertainty over Coronavirus meant it was prudent to do the renewal at this time.</p> <p>Cllr Merryweather left the meeting at this point</p> <p>3. The Working Group noted that exploratory discussions had been held over the possibility of acquiring Montrose House from Waverley Brough Council to assist the development of craft businesses in town. There were varying views on whether this was a good idea given the potential availability of other properties in town, but it was agreed that the Clerk should have further discussions and report back.</p> <p>Cllr Merryweather returned to the meeting.</p>	<p>Town Clerk to progress.</p>

7. Farnham Project Board Terms of Reference

POINTS	ACTION
<p>Cllr Neale introduced the Terms of Reference for the Farnham Project Board and Local Liaison Forum which had been circulated to all Members of Council. The proposed amendments listed were based on the comments received.</p> <p>The Working Group discussed the overall Terms of Reference and specific detailed points with some councillors observing that the content seemed to go beyond the scope by bringing in policy matters that were planning issues that should be dealt with by the planning authority or seemingly determining policy that had not yet been discussed at a local level such as 5G. There was concern that the draft Regenco report had still not been formally circulated to the Town Council for comment but was part of the background documents being taken into account. The document seemed not fit for purpose and the preamble included areas of policy that did not seem to relate to the ten points in the area of activity to be the focus of the Board. There were phrases in the document that were ambiguous or not clear such as 'meaningful co-design' and there was not enough</p>	

<p>reference to other parts of Farnham that would be affected by the three core projects outlined.</p> <p>There was agreement that the emphasis on the three councils working together was to be welcomed, as was the idea of any works being undertaken being exemplary</p> <p>The version circulated with the agenda at Appendix Ji was agreed for consideration by Council with the following amendments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deletion of 5G • Replace 'extant masterplanning' with 'draft masterplanning' at point 10 <p>The revised version is attached at Annex I.</p> <p>The Working Group also noted that as the Regenco project had not been completed the Town Council should ascertain from the Borough Council what element of its contribution should be refunded.</p> <p>It was agreed that the outcomes of the first meeting of the Farnham Board on 22nd would be reported to an Informal meeting of Council on 4th June with an Infrastructure Planning Group meeting on 5th June ahead of Strategy and Finance on 16th June.</p>	<p>Recommendation to Council: The proposed amendments to the Farnham Project Board terms of reference be agreed and forwarded to Surrey County Council.</p> <p>Town Clerk to progress</p> <p>Assistant Town Clerk to arrange</p>
---	---

8. Town Clerk Update

POINTS	ACTION
The Town Clerk reminded the Working Group that as Task Groups had been deferred during the initial period of lockdown, the CIL meeting scheduled for 7 th May would not be taking place and that the Assistant Town Clerk was updating the documents and awaiting further councillor input on potential projects to be funded.	

9. Date and Time of Next Meeting

POINTS	ACTION
Tuesday 16 th June, 9.30am.	

The meeting ended at 12.20am.

Notes written by Iain Lynch

Farnham Board Terms of Reference

Annex I

Membership

Cllr Tim Oliver	Leader Surrey County Council	Chair
Cllr Colin Kemp	Deputy Leader Surrey County Council	
Rt Hon Jeremy Hunt MP	MP for South West Surrey	
Cllr John Ward	Leader Waverley Borough Council	
Cllr Paul Follows	Deputy Leader for Waverley Borough Council	
Cllr John Neale	Leader Farnham Town Council	
Cllr Wyatt Ramsdale	SCC Farnham South/WBC Farnham/Wrecclesham and Rowledge	
Supported by		
Katie Stewart	SCC Executive Director – Environment, Transport and Infrastructure	
Tom Horwood	Chief Executive – Waverley Borough Council	
Chris Tunstall	SCC Infrastructure Planning and Major Projects	
Iain Lynch	Farnham Town Clerk	
Tamara Stone	SCC Leadership Office	Secretariat

Background

Surrey County Council, with its partners, agreed its 2030 Community Vision in 2019. We want to ensure:

- ***our residents live in clean, safe and green communities.***
- ***that journeys across the county are easier, more predictable and safer***

and that we support:

- ***connected communities, with effective infrastructure, that grow sustainably***

The UK became the first major economy to pass net zero emissions law in 2019. SCC ~~and~~ WBC ~~and FTC~~ ~~all both~~ declared a climate emergency in 2019 and have plans for radical change.

Purpose

The purpose of the Board is to bring partners and residents together to ensure the above objectives are met and that Farnham maintains its position as a thriving community and town as set out in the adopted Farnham Neighbourhood Plan. We want Farnham's residents to be able live, move and work in ways that promote health and wellbeing, safeguard the environment and enhance economic prosperity. There are currently constraints in delivering these ambitions. We want to address them as a Partnership, with Surrey County Council providing the strategic leadership in collaboration with Waverley Borough Council and Farnham Town Council to accelerate action on the things that matter most to local people.

The Board will do this by setting the following outcome measures:

1. Undertaking meaningful co-design with residents, businesses the public sector and Voluntary Community Faith Sector organisations – supported by knowledge experts – so that solutions are well-designed, owned for the long-term and right for Farnham. This will include residents having a direct voice to the Board.
2. Securing the required inward investment and promoting sustainable growth:
 - Establish Farnham as an exemplar by embracing innovation.
 - Enable businesses to thrive by giving them confidence in access, mobility and 5G-infrastructure whilst recognising the historic fabric of the town and Farnham's leading role in the creative sector particularly in relation to craft.
 - Work in partnership with the UK Government to deliver its transport priorities – e.g. Electric Bus Towns and Rural Mobility.
 - Harness collective capacity to deliver residents' ambition for their community.
3. Investing in progressive and sustainable transport infrastructure:
 - Prioritise connectivity, accessibility and affordability.
 - Deliver long-term modal shift with more opportunities to walk, cycle and use shared solutions with improved facilities.
 - Reduce congestion and improve air quality, with the health and well-being of local people measurably enhanced.
 - Remodel the road network and traffic flow to enable residents to move around the town in an efficient, predictable and timely way and that removes unnecessary journeys through the town and mitigates associated impacts across the town-
4. Safeguarding the environment:
 - Set a nationally recognised benchmark for the implementation of 'Green' technologies and solutions, tackling the causes and effects of climate change and helping Farnham, Waverley and Surrey to become carbon neutral.
 - Require all new developments to leave the natural environment and biodiversity in a better state than before.
 - Maximise opportunities to enhance the natural environment – e.g. planting more trees and rewilding verges.

Status of the Board

The Board will be informal in terms of the respective partner organisation's constitutions and decision making. Any decisions requiring a formal approval by the accountable organisations will remain within the remit of and be taken by those organisations. However, the intent is to respect, balance and take note of the views at the most local level in coming to decisions. It will be supported by an officer project team including a Project Manager, empowered by the Board, to take the action needed to meet the outcomes and priorities agreed.

The Board will meet as and when required but at least every two months. It will meet in public except for those items that are deemed exempt or confidential further to the Local Government Act 1972

The Board will act in a collaborative and consensual way, with pace and focus to get things done.

Specifically, the Board will:

1. Consider the Farnham Town Centre, A31 Hickley Corner and A325 Wrecclesham Schemes.
2. Determine and agree the specific outcomes and objectives for the Schemes.
3. Ensure that the necessary resources from the various partners will be made available in a timely way.
4. Set up specific task and finish working groups as required.
5. Take evidence and advice from members of the community and representative bodies, as well as professional experts.
6. Consider national initiatives and good practice in respect of the proposals to ensure the future prosperity of the town, especially in regard to business, retail, personal wellbeing and climate change.
7. Consider and make recommendations on the projects, plans and resources to achieve the agreed outcomes and priorities.
8. Seek to secure the capital and revenue investment to deliver agreed projects and plans, including from Government, LEP and other sources
9. Oversee the commissioning, procurement, sponsorship and delivery of agreed projects.
10. Take cognisance of other planning and design processes for example the [Farnham Neighbourhood Plan, draft](#) ~~textant~~ Master-planning process and [Waverley](#) Local Plan.