



# FARNHAM TOWN COUNCIL

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## Notes Strategy & Finance Working Group

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### Time and date

9.30 am on Tuesday 2nd March, 2021

### Place

Remote meeting by Zoom

### Attendees:

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

Officers: Iain McCready (Business and Facilities Manager) and Iain Lynch (Town Clerk)

### 1. Declarations of interest

POINTS	ACTION
<p>In addition to declarations of interest by double and triple hatted councillors the following declarations were made:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1) Councillor Cockburn in relation to the item on Gostrey Meadow as a Trustee of the Ridgeway School</li><li>2) Cllr Beaman in relation to grants for Hoppa, Creative Response, Homes for Farnham and Hale Recreation Ground Committee</li><li>3) Cllr Merryweather as Portfolio holder for Assets at Waverley Borough Council in relation to Gostrey Meadow and Tice's Meadow.</li><li>4) The Mayor in relation to grants for Hale Community Centre and the Farnham Maltings</li><li>5) Cllr Hesse in relation to a grant for Homes for Farnham.</li></ol>	

### 2. Minutes of the last meeting

POINTS	ACTION
<p>The minutes of the meeting held on January 12<sup>th</sup> were agreed.</p>	

### 3. Finance report

POINTS	ACTION
<p>1 The Town Clerk introduced the Finance report. The Budget Comparison at Appendix B was discussed, noting the outturn would be in surplus as a result of the additional grants received, the management of activity budgets to reduce expenditure during the year along with reduced activity because of Coronavirus, and the management of vacancies. Discussion took place on options to invest further in the Local Authority Property Fund or a longer term savings investment but it was agreed not to recommend doing so at this time. The Town Clerk would be keep the investments under review to ensure risk was managed.</p> <p>2 The Working Group received and discussed the Investment Strategy 2021/22 at Annex I to these Minutes and agreed to recommend it for adoption to Full Council.</p> <p>3 The list of Direct Debits for approval was deferred to the next meeting.</p> <p>4 The Working Group received a request from the Trustees of the Wrecclesham Community Centre to waive the second half of the year's rent given the ongoing closure as a result of Covid-19. It was agreed to recommend this to Council and to remind the Community Centre about the potential for a grant via WBC for the Business Rates.</p> <p>5 The Working Group noted the latest BACS and cheque payments were available for inspection</p>	<p><b>Recommendation to Council:</b></p> <p><b>i) The Investment Strategy 2021/22 at Annex I to these Minutes be adopted.</b></p> <p><b>ii) The 2020/21 rent for the Wrecclesham Community Centre be waived.</b></p>

### 4. Grants 2021/22

POINTS	ACTION								
<p>The Working Group received the Grants Report at Appendix F to its agenda and discussed elements of the proposals. It was noted that there were some remaining funds in the 2020/21 budget allocation for projects that had not gone ahead as a result of Coronavirus.</p> <p>The funding proposed was as follows:</p> <table data-bbox="284 1487 869 1621"> <tr> <td>Service level agreements:</td> <td>£52,500</td> </tr> <tr> <td>In year community grants:</td> <td>£17,500</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Small Grants (in year allocation)</td> <td>£2,000</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Grants funded from other budgets:</td> <td>£4,500</td> </tr> </table> <p>It was also noted that where there were proposals for contributions to projects with significant costs, these would be pledges contained within the earmarked reserves until the funds were required (as happened with the TS Swiftsure allocation). As a result of a query from Cllr Edmonds, it was agreed that the listing of the allocated grants on the website should be reviewed.</p> <p>In discussion about the larger grants allocated under light touch Service Level Agreements, it was agreed that these should be reviewed in 2021. These relate to the following organisations:</p>	Service level agreements:	£52,500	In year community grants:	£17,500	Small Grants (in year allocation)	£2,000	Grants funded from other budgets:	£4,500	<p><b>Recommendation to Council:</b></p> <p><b>1) The 2021/22 Grants at Annex 2 be approved;</b></p> <p><b>2) Any pledges for projects not yet confirmed be retained in earmarked reserves;</b></p> <p><b>3) The Town Clerk allocate funding from 202/21 to maximise support for the agrees applications; and</b></p> <p><b>4) A review of the organisations supported by Service Level Agreements be undertaken in 2021.</b></p>
Service level agreements:	£52,500								
In year community grants:	£17,500								
Small Grants (in year allocation)	£2,000								
Grants funded from other budgets:	£4,500								

Farnham Maltings (£13,000), Citizens' Advice (£17,500), 40 Degreez (£2,000), Hale Community Centre (£1,000), Hoppa Community Transport in Farnham (£10,000), Brightwells Gostrey Centre (£10,000).

The Working Group agreed that to recommend to Council that the Community Grants (totalling £20,350) and specific grants funded from other budgets (totalling £4,000) attached at Annex 2 to these minutes be approved.

**5. Appointment of Internal Auditor for 2021-2024**

<b>POINTS</b>	<b>ACTION</b>
<p>The Working Group received a report at Appendix G to its Agenda on the appointment of a new Internal Auditor following an external tender. The purpose of internal audit is to review and report to the authority on whether its systems of financial and other internal controls over its activities and operating procedures are effective. The internal audit function must be independent from the management of the financial controls and procedures of the authority which are the subject of review and be competent.</p> <p>Farnham Town Council contacted seven Internal Auditors, four of whom were unable to take on new clients and three provided quotations. After assessment, the Working Group agreed to recommend the appointment of Mike Platten of Farsight Consulting for an initial period of three years. The Internal audit process would be driven by the 12 controlled objectives of the internal audit section of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) and take place over three or four visits each year.</p>	<p><b>Recommendation to Council:</b>  <b>Mike Platten of Farsight Consulting be appointed as Internal Auditor for an initial period of three years.</b></p>

**6. Risk Management Report**

<b>POINTS</b>	<b>ACTION</b>
<p>The Risk Management report at Appendix H to the agenda was discussed and agreed for adoption by Council. Each year, the Council reviews a range of risks affecting the organisation in each of the service areas and as a corporate body. It is assisted in its task by a number of advisors including the Internal and External Auditor and by Ellis Whittam the Council's HR and Health and Safety advisors. This report deals with the whole range of risks and builds on work already undertaken by the individual Working Groups in the autumn cycle. One additional element addressed during the year related to extra precautions and requirements for Covid-19 precautions. The revised report for Council is attached at Annex 3 to the Strategy &amp; Finance Notes.</p> <p>It was noted that the latest Ellis Whittam Risk Assessment visit had taken place and that there was only one action highlighted.</p> <p>The Working Group also reviewed the Fire Safety Policy, Health &amp; Safety Policy and Environmental Policy and agreed to recommend them to Council for re-adoption.</p>	<p><b>Recommendation to Council:</b>  <b>1) The Risk Management report for 2020/21 at Annex 3 be adopted.</b>  <b>2) The Updated Fire Safety, Health &amp; Safety and Environmental Policies at Annex 3 b, c, d be adopted.</b></p>

## 7. Review of Council Policies i) Standing Orders

POINTS	ACTION
<p>1) The Working Group considered a report at Appendix I which was the regular review of Standing Orders and a proposal to streamline the Governance arrangements of how the Council operates in terms of the Working Group Structure and the number of meetings.</p> <p>2) The Standing Orders had been reviewed in 2019 based on the National Model Standing orders published by the National Association of Local Councils. In the review, matters which had emerged as a result of remote meetings and issues raised by councillors, such as the timescale for Members' Questions and the volume of meetings were considered.</p> <p>3) The Working Group noted that there had been numerous examples around the country where members of the public or councillors have had to be excluded from meetings where offensive, defamatory or political material has been shown or where disruption to meetings has taken place. As a result, it agreed to recommend an amended Standing Order 11.1, to allow the temporary (or if required) permanent exclusion of a disruptive participant and the invoking of Standing Order 7.1(s).</p> <p>4) In terms of Questions by Members, it was noted that there many opportunities during a meeting for Councillors to raise Questions during a meeting. As a result, after discussion on the relevant merits of a shorter notice period, it was agreed on the recommendation of the Leader and seconded by Cllr Hesse that the current Standing Order 9 should be retained without change.</p> <p>5) The Working Group was aware that questions over the role of the Mayor in Chairing meetings of all councillors and the role of the Leader had been raised. It was noted that the responsibilities of the Mayor are defined in legislation whereas the role of Leader is a non-Executive and has the same responsibility as any other councillor in a Town or Parish Council without the ability to be given individual delegation. It was further noted that the Executive arrangements applicable in Principal authorities did not apply.</p> <p>6) Councillors highlighted that the original split of the Mayor and Leader model at Farnham, where the Mayor carries out a civic and ceremonial role and is the impartial Chairman of Council, was initially for one year whilst the Leader (if appointed) is the link with the Town Clerk on emerging policy matters. If a Leader were not appointed, the Council's Spokesperson would be the Lead Councillor for Strategy &amp; Finance. It was agreed to clarify in the Standing Orders that the Leader did not have an executive role.</p> <p>7) During the current Council there have been several discussions on the number of meetings and effective communication. The Working Group considered the current structure whereby all decisions were</p>	

<p>made by Full Council without delegation to individual committees. It was noted that if this were to change and there were Committees decisions could be delegated and full public access would be required in accordance with legislation. There was concern that this would mean councillors would be less aware of decisions being made and that communication may be more problematic.</p> <p>8) A potential revised structure was considered by the Working Group, which would have reduced the number of Working Groups by one and shared Task Groups between the new Working Groups. After discussion, on a proposal by Cllr Beaman, seconded by Cllr Attfield, it was agreed to defer consideration of a change in the Governance Structure for twelve months and that the Lead Members of the Working Groups review the structure in the new municipal year. It was agreed that apart from Strategy &amp; Finance which would meet each cycle, the other Working Groups would meet quarterly, allowing for Task Groups to meet and progress projects in between.</p> <p>9) It was agreed to recommend to Council that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i) The Working Groups should continue to operate as they are with all decisions made at Full Council;</li> <li>ii) The Planning &amp; Licensing Consultative Group continue to meet fortnightly to prepare the Council's response on application for submission to the Planning or Licensing Authority under delegated authority;</li> <li>iii) A review of the governance structure be undertaken in the forthcoming municipal year with a Task Group that includes the Lead Members of the Working Groups;</li> <li>iv) The draft revised Standing orders at Annex 4 be adopted.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Recommendation to Council:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i) <b>The Working Groups should continue to operate as they are with all decisions made at Full Council;</b></li> <li>ii) <b>The Planning &amp; Licensing Consultative Group continue to meet fortnightly to prepare the Council's response on application for submission to the Planning or Licensing Authority under delegated authority;</b></li> <li>iii) <b>A review of the governance structure be undertaken in the forthcoming municipal year with a Task Group that includes the Lead Members of the Working Groups;</b></li> <li>iv) <b>The draft revised Standing orders at Annex 4 be adopted.</b></li> </ul>
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**8. Review of Council Policies ii) Comments, compliments and concerns Procedure**

<b>POINTS</b>	<b>ACTION</b>
<p>The Working Group reviewed the current documentation on how members of the public can raise concerns, make compliments, or provide comments about Council services. Cllr Edmonds said that receiving complaints can be very valuable in measuring quality of services and it should be easy to make representations.</p> <p>The Policy at Annex 5 is recommended for adoption.</p>	<p><b>Recommendation to Council:</b> <b>The Comments, Compliments and Concerns Procedure at Annex 5 be adopted.</b></p>

**9. Reports from Task Groups I) Assets**

<b>POINTS</b>	<b>ACTION</b>
<p>I. The Working Group considered the report at Appendix K from the Assets Task Group receiving an update on a range of current projects including village gateways, the Hale Chapels, the Gostrey</p>	

<p>Play area remedial repairs, the improvement works to the War Memorial, the allotment mapping project and the Green Flag submission for Gostrey Meadow.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2. In terms of the public conveniences refurbishment, it was noted that Drake &amp; Kannemeyer had prepared detailed costings for replacement toilets in Central Car park at £300,000. The Working Group agreed that improving the existing toilets across the town and promoting the Community Toilet Scheme was the current priority and that a refresh from within the existing 2020/21 budget allocation should be taken forward.</li> <li>3. The Working Group noted that the repairs following the leak in the Council Offices were almost complete and awaiting the loss adjuster decision on replacement carpets. The opportunity was being taken to replace the ceiling lighting with more efficient units that produced less glare. The cost for these was being met from the 2020/21 budget at a cost of £2,500 plus fitting.</li> <li>4. The Working Group noted that the IT Support and Mobile Phone contracts were being reviewed and that the Contract Cleaning contract currently let to Waverley Borough Council was being reviewed with the potential of bringing it back to be carried out by Farnham Town Council employees.</li> <li>5. The Working Group noted that the Ridgeway School architects had put forward a proposed alternate site for the café. The matter was deferred for further discussion between the Assets Task Group and the school.</li> </ol>	
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#### 10. Reports from Task Groups 2) Infrastructure Planning Group

POINTS	ACTION
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The Working Group discussed the latest position on the Government's Consultation on the National Planning Policy Framework and the proposed Design Code. Jenny de Quervain was compiling the Council's response which would be submitted after the next IPG meeting on Thursday 4<sup>th</sup> March.</li> <li>2. The Working Group also received an update on the FTC Design Statement and its latest consultation.</li> <li>3. The Leader updated the Working Group on the Farnham Infrastructure Programme and the consultation on the draft Optimised Infrastructure Plan which was being consulted on until the 14<sup>th</sup> March. The Leader agreed to draft a proposed response for the Town Council which would be considered by Full Council on 11<sup>th</sup> March.</li> <li>4. Cllr Cockburn reported on the Farnham Conservation Area management Plan meeting on 25<sup>th</sup> February advising that locations were still being sought to reinstall the Farnham Flame.</li> </ol>	

### 11. Reports from Task Groups 3) HR Panel

POINTS	ACTION
The Working Group endorsed a decision had been made under the Scheme of delegation (Town Clerk, Leader, Mayor and Chair of HR Panel) to 'buy back' leave for some staff who have continued to run services and support the coronavirus response under the unusual circumstances of 2020/21. This would avoid issues for staff and the Council (with many staff potentially being absent at the same time) with the cost will be met from within the 2020/21 staffing budget.	

### 12. Reports from Task Groups 4) Cultural Task Group

POINTS	ACTION
The Working Group noted progress on the Cultural Task Group for an iconic attraction for Farnham and recommends that Council agrees i) to match fund the Surrey County Councillors' contribution (£3,000) from the 2020/21 Community Initiatives budget and seeks a similar contribution from WBC to appoint consultants to prepare the scoping report; and ii) to waive Standing Orders Contracts to allow the Town Clerk to appoint suitably qualified consultants up to the value of £7,000.	<b>It is recommended that:</b> <b>1) FTC agrees to match fund the Surrey County Councillors' contribution of £3,000) and seeks a similar contribution from WBC to appoint consultants to prepare the scoping report.</b> <b>2) FTC waives Standing Orders Contracts to allow the Town Clerk to appoint suitably qualified consultants up to the value of £7,000 to carry out the scoping report.</b>

### 13. Coronavirus update

POINTS	ACTION
The Working Group noted the Government's latest position on lifting lockdown restrictions over the coming months and the implications for Farnham Town Council. It was agreed to open the Council offices after Easter (Step 2 the Covid-19 Roadmap); and the impact on forthcoming events was noted. The centenary of the Gostrey Meadow War Memorial and its rededication on April 10 <sup>th</sup> was being postponed to Remembrance Sunday.	

#### 14. Town Clerk update

POINTS	ACTION
<p>The Town Clerk advised that:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1) The presentation for the Annual Meeting of electors (brought forward to 18<sup>th</sup> March because of Purdah for the County Council elections) was being prepared for discussion with Working Group Lead Members.</li><li>2) The Annual Meeting of Council was provisionally being rescheduled for 20<sup>th</sup> May to fit with Step 3 of the Covid-19 Roadmap and potentially allow for a physical meeting to be held.</li><li>3) The Services to Farnham Awards may potentially be held in week commencing 17<sup>th</sup> May if the Roadmap progression allows.</li></ol>	

#### 15. Date of next meeting

POINTS	ACTION
<p>The next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday 20<sup>th</sup> April at 9.30am.</p>	

The meeting ended at 1.15 pm

Notes written by Town.Clerk@farnham.gov.uk



## **Investment Strategy 2020/21**

Farnham Town Council acknowledges the importance of prudently investing all funds held on behalf of the community by the Council.

This Strategy complies with the revised requirements set out in the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy's Treasury Management in Public Services: Code of Practice and Cross Sectoral Guidance Notes and takes account of the Section 15(1)(a) of the Local Government Act 2003 and follows guidance in the Practitioners' Guide (2016) and MHCLG's Guidance on Local Government Investments. (Revised 2018).

### **Investment objectives and practice**

In accordance with Section 15(1) of the Local Government Act 2003 Act, the Council will have regard (a) to such guidance as the Secretary of State may issue, and (b) to such other guidance as the Secretary of State may by regulations specify.

- The Council's investment priorities are first the security of reserves, second the liquidity of its investments and thirdly the rate of return or yield.
- The Council will aim to achieve the optimum return on its investments commensurate with proper levels of security and liquidity.
- All investments will be made in sterling
- Normally investments will be short term with a maturity of 12 months or less.

The Ministry of Housing Communities and Local Government maintains that borrowing of monies purely to invest or to lend and make a return, is unlawful and Farnham Town Council will not engage in such activity.

The Council will monitor the risk of loss on investments by reviewing credit ratings on institutions in which it is investing on a regular basis. The Council will only invest in institutions of high credit quality. Reference will be made in the assessment of credit worthiness to the general economic and political environment in which institutions operate. All significant sources of information will be considered including information from the main credit rating agencies including as appropriate, Fitch or Moody's.

It is recognised that the assessment of risk has changed as a result of the recent economic climate but that the Council should aim for ratings (eg Fitch or equivalent short term F1 – long term rating A- and viability rating A-).

Investments will be spread over different providers where appropriate to minimise risk although it is recognised that the Council is not eligible to receive protection offered by the Financial Services Compensation Scheme. Significant changes in credit ratings will be immediately reported to the Town Council and the Town Clerk/Responsible Financial Officer will take action within delegated powers to protect Town Council assets.

The investment position will be reviewed monthly by senior officers and quarterly by the Strategy and Finance Working Group.

Where external investment managers are used, they will be contractually required to comply with the Strategy.

The Town Council will encourage specific staff training for treasury management appropriate to the Council's circumstances.

The Town Clerk/Responsible Financial Officer is the Council's designated person in investing on behalf of the Council and is authorised to deal with administrative matters and give instructions on behalf of the Council. Any investments created or returned must be linked directly to the Council's current account.

### **Specified investments**

Specified Investment are those offering high security and high liquidity, made in sterling and with a maturity of no more than a year. Such short term investments made with a body or investment scheme of high credit quality (including the UK Government or a local authority or town or parish council) will automatically be Specified Investments. The Council will only invest in institutions with the good credit ratings from approved credit rating organisations.

For the prudent management of its treasury balances, maintaining sufficient levels of security and liquidity, the Council will use:

- Deposits with banks, building societies, local authorities or other public authorities
- The CCLA Public Sector Fund – a mutual fund investing in appropriately rated institutions
- Institutions permitted by specific legislation (eg the Local Authorities Property Fund managed by CCLA)

### **Non-specified investments**

These investments have greater potential risk – examples include investment in the money market, stock and shares. Given the unpredictability and uncertainties surrounding such investments, the Council will not use this type of investment.

### **Liquidity of investments**

The Town Clerk/Responsible Finance Officer will determine the maximum periods for which funds may prudently be committed so as not to compromise liquidity.

Investments will be regarded as commencing on the date the commitment to invest is entered into, rather than the date on which the funds are paid over to the counterparty.

### **Long term investments**

Long term investments are defined in the Guidance as greater than 36 months.

The Council does not currently hold any long term investments and no long term investments are currently envisaged.

### **End of year investment report**

Investment forecasts for the coming financial year are accounted for when the budget is prepared. At the end of the financial year, the Town Clerk/Responsible Financial Officer will report on income from investment activity to the Strategy and Finance Working Group.

### **Review and amendment of regulations**

The strategy will be reviewed annually and at other times as necessary. The Annual Strategy for the financial year will be prepared by the Town Clerk/Responsible Financial Officer and presented for approval at Strategy and Finance Working Group and the full Town Council.

## **Publication**

The Investment Strategy will be published and available in hard copy and on the Town Council's website.

## **Farnham South Street Trust**

As Trustee of the Farnham South Street Trust, the Council considers the principles of prudent management of its finances, are of paramount importance. The Council will follow the same principles for the South Street Trust, and the Investment Strategy will be formally submitted to the South Street Trust for adoption.

The bank account of the South Street Trust is also with HSBC, and investments are with Blackrock.

## **2021/22 investment plan**

HSBC is the Town Council's banker. The majority of funds not required for immediate use are currently invested in HSBC Fixed Rate Interest Moneymarket accounts. Rates may vary from day to day and have generally been reasonably comparable with other providers of similar products although currently the rates are lower matching the Bank of England Base rate at 0.01% and more will be held in the Public Sector Deposit Fund and other institutions with slightly better rates. Amounts will be invested for up to one year with some funds kept in a call account. During the forthcoming year, the Council will keep under review its banking arrangements and whether a move to another provider is advantageous.

It is considered prudent to plan to spread the financial risk by obtaining facilities at least one other major high street bank or building society with high credit ratings in the year ahead. Currently investments are held with The Cambridge and Counties Bank; HSBC, Nationwide Building Society and CCLA. In addition, the Council invests in the Local Authorities Property Fund, managed by CCLA. Although this is technically not a long term fund, it is envisaged that funds will be invested for a longer period of time in order to recoup the costs of investments. Dividends are repaid to the Council as received in accordance with guidance, any investment is treated as expenditure and recorded in the accounts as such. Any receipt will be treated as income in the year it is repaid.

In relation to the South Street Trust, it is proposed that the fund managers are reviewed to ensure that the income for South Street Trust is optimised.

The Town Council and senior officers will review the position on a regular basis as set out above and take action as appropriate to deal with any change in circumstances.

The Council has not planned to borrow monies in advance of specific spending needs for 21/22. However, a number of projects are proposed where this may be considered if the financial benefits are advantageous and, if required, borrowing approval would be sought from the Public Works Loan Board (PWLB). It should be noted that the lead times for PWLB approval have increased over the past twelve months.

Given the level of funds to be invested and the low level of interest rates it is not anticipated that the use of private sector treasury management advisors would be utilised.

Officers responsible for Treasury Management will receive training from time to time as offered by the National Association of Local Councils and other appropriate bodies.

## **March 2021**

## Annex 2

Organisation	Project	Project Cost	Amount Requested	FTC Proposal	Project Description	Officer Comment
Ist Rowledge Guides	Post Covid!	£1,000	£1,000	£500	The grant would provide the ability to return to face-to-face meetings outside. It would be used to purchase equipment for running meetings outside, including an outdoor table, benches, patio heater and party tent/marquee. They received no income in 2020 and they have an earmarked reserve of £2k set aside for storage and camping equipment.	Grant would enable the group to help reinstate face-to-face meetings. Some virtual meetings have taken place in 2020 but it is difficult to offer guiding online.
Aldershot and Farnham Hockey Club	First aid kits for hockey teams	£1,553.76	£756.96	£500	39 kits are required but they are applying for funding to purchase 19 at £39.84 each. The right kit is needed at each match and contain consumables that need replacing. They try to make each kit last two seasons so replacing all the kits for the new season would ensure they have the kit they need until the end of the next season. The Club does not have its own pitches and it hires them for training and matches. They are in discussion with a Farnham school to use their land for a new club house and pitch. An earmarked reserve of £38k is set aside for this purpose which they will need to increase through fundraising to cover costs.	80% of members are from Farnham.
Andrew Windsor Almshouses	Jubilee Rose Arch	£650	£450	£450	The grant would be used to create a Jubilee rose arch to celebrate Queen Elizabeth II Platinum Jubilee. It would enhance the communal garden, be of benefit to the residents who enjoy their garden and be visible from Castle Street. The items would be purchased from British suppliers. They aim to leave the main blue door open more often and provide the draw of a long flowering scented rose arch.	The almshouses are a central feature of Farnham. The project would also help the charity raise its profile locally.
Badshot Lea Tennis Club	Tennis Club Project Improvements	£64,171	£2,000	£2,000	The project aims to provide better tennis and clubhouse facilities for the local community. With good facilities, local tennis players would no longer have to travel long distances for the facilities they need. The grant would be put towards either a new accessible friendly clubhouse or installation of LED floodlighting to allow play into the early evening throughout the year.	The planning application for the Tennis Club is on the Waverley Planning Portal, ref WA/2020/1888.

Organisation	Project	Project Cost	Amount Requested	FTC Proposal	Project Description	Officer Comment
Creative Response Arts	Re-connect art sessions	£3,190	£1,597	£750	The grant would help provide 11 weeks (May to July 2021) of the Creative Response remote service 're-connect' for 20 vulnerable adults with mental health issues, learning difficulties and substance misuse problems. The online sessions would help participants ease back to a 'normal' way of life following Covid-19 restrictions. Participants would receive an art pack and weekly online arts sessions to help them feel less isolated, connect with friends and benefit from the arts to aid their wellbeing. Due to health issues, the participants are not able to join Covid-secure events at the studio.	Of a total membership of 87, approx. 70% are from Farnham. The applicant has also applied for a South Street Trust Grant for the same project where it is recommended to award £1500. This would give a combined total of £2,250.
Enterprise 19	E19 retail space and café	£100,000	£2,000	£2,000	Following the successful application for funding last year, they would like to develop a retail and café space offering retail work experience for young adults with learning disabilities (YALD). They are now producing work to sell and would like to develop a supportive and community selling space. The grant would be used to buy materials and tools to enable YALD to design and construct display units to gain experience in using tools and completing a project. It would also purchase furniture for YALD to refurbish for use in the café. Provides a supportive environment to learn with a view to progression to external job opportunities in the local community.	Supporting those with disabilities and provide opportunity to develop work skills. The project would benefit 20-25 members of a total of 40. 30% live in Farnham.  It is noted that the total project cost is £100,000 but the application states the total cost of the display units would be £3,000.
Farnham Biodiversity Group CIC	Biodiversity Starter Packs	£775.74	£775.74	£750	To provide a mix of bird boxes, feeders and other wildlife accessories to encourage wildlife into community spaces. Whiteboards will be provided so sightings can be shared between different community groups to generate interest and education. To provide certain parishes with starter packs, including Space2Grow, Farnham Museum, Farnham Community Farm and others. This is expected to be a 2-year project ending in December 2022.	Recommended that the Town Council purchases the items on their behalf so that the VAT element can be reclaimed to support the organisation and allow best use of funds.

Organisation	Project	Project Cost	Amount Requested	FTC Proposal	Project Description	Officer Comment
Frensham Pond Sailability	Activity Centre	£130,000	£2,000	£2,000	Contribution towards the construction of an activity centre building at Frensham Pond Sailing Club. This comprises a fully accessible multifunctional training, welcome reception, communications, shelter and safety area for disabled sailors and volunteer helpers; plus two much needed accessible toilets. Provides supported sailing for people with a wide range of disabilities or long-term illness.	Supporting those with disabilities. The project is expected to be completed by December 2021.
Hale Recreation Ground Management Committee	Goalpost storage	£1,700	£850	£850	The grant would be used to provide a new secure storage box for goalposts in a more accessible location for users of the recreation ground. New goalposts acquired in 2016 with support from Farnham Town Council are currently stored at Hale Institute but this space will soon on longer be available. New accessible storage facilities outside Hale Institute are proposed. The goalposts are used by a number of youth teams of Badshot Lea Football Club and improve storage facilities would make use of the recreation ground/goalposts more attractive to potential new users.	There are 100 existing users. Supports youth sport and a project previously supported.
Helen Arkell Dyslexia Charity	Dyslexia Support in Farnham	£5,700	£1,900	£1,000	The grant would support a project to run throughout 2021 to provide free specialist dyslexia assessments and tuition for disadvantaged children and adults in Farnham and surrounding area from lower-income backgrounds, enabling them to build skills, confidence and self-esteem to unlock potential to succeed in life. The grant would support local 12 families and every year they support 1000 people with dyslexia. More applications for support received than they have funds available and seeing increased numbers from low-income families in financial difficulty during the pandemic.	48% of members live in Farnham. Third year that the Town Council has provided grant support. Over last two years, supported 21 individuals from Farnham.
Homes for Farnham	Publicity and Marketing for Co-Housing Project (MHOS)	£2,000	£1,000	£300	To produce a professionally designed A4 trifold leaflet to describe the concept of a co-housing co-operative and how it can meet the housing needs of those in the 'affordability gap'. There will be information about how this will work, including a call-out to local people to register their interest.	The cost of leaflet design/print is considered to be expensive. Amount proposed would cover costs.

Organisation	Project	Project Cost	Amount Requested	FTC Proposal	Project Description	Officer Comment
Making Matters	Another Brick in the Wall	£4,050	£2,000	£1,000	Aim to bring community together after a challenging year to create a large-scale public art project and a series of installations around Farnham. The grant would extend the project to harder to reach groups within the community delivering 18 more brick workshops in a range of settings, including sports clubs, care homes, special education needs schools, sixth form colleges, and the UCA. Each maker creates one brick, together the bricks make a whole. Enables local people to participate in creative activities to produce a large-scale public art project.	The application states that 400 residents would take part, 7,500 would view the work and 33% live in Farnham (100% work in Farnham).
Museum of Farnham	Museum of Curiosity - outreach stand	£2,000	£1,000	£1,000	The grant would be used to develop an outreach stand that presents the museum's collection in a modern and eye-catching way. It would be a portable stand that could be used at local events or other sites. The grant would be spent developing and delivering the content for this outreach stand. Themed around curiosity, 10-20 museum objects would be displayed in unique and interactive ways. No immediate information would be provided, with people being encouraged to become curious about what an object might be, how it was used or who it was used by.	The application states that 2,000 + people would benefit, with 20% living in Farnham.  Taking the museum out to the community would help share displays and encourage more visitors to the museum.
New Ashgate Gallery	Carnival Crafts	£4,004	£1,672	£1000	The grant would be used to provide two events in June 2021 (on a Saturday/Sunday) to coincide with the Farnham Carnival weekend in June. Take away activity bags would allow families to produce carnival crafts at home. The activities aim to enrich creative learning by facilitating interactions between Farnham families and local makers; generate excitement and education local families about the Farnham Carnival and Craft Town status; and engage, inspire and challenge participants to develop their creative style by introducing them to a variety of paper crafts. Carnival craft activities would provide hands-on craft sessions to experience a variety of craft materials while learning about the carnival and craft worn through fun creative activities.	200 residents would be able to attend the two activities and further 50 residents would receive a takeaway craft bag. 50% are from Farnham.  Dr Outi Remes would still like to run the craft sessions even though the carnival is not taking place in 2021. Another theme is being considered.

Organisation	Project	Project Cost	Amount Requested	FTC Proposal	Project Description	Officer Comment
Rowledge Cricket Club	Disability Cricket	£3,818	£1,500	£1,500	The grant would be used to fund disability training sessions that would be run in local schools. The grant would assist with funding the purchase of specialist equipment, pay for training for the coaches, and also towards both venue hire and coaches fees. Disability cricket helps to learn how to share, build friendships and to play and compete in a sport.	To support young people with disabilities. 50-200 local residents would benefit. 80% of the membership is from Farnham. No other organisations offers disability cricket to the local community in Farnham.
Rowledge Tennis Club	Junior Tennis Programme 2021	£4,500	£2,000	£2,000	The grant would be used to purchase a Rebowall - a tennis rebounder to be used by all club members - and secure storage unit and tennis ball stock. The club would like to grow its junior tennis membership and participation in 2021. Encouraging new members to join, use the facilities and play an outside sport is important, particularly in a lockdown situation.	200-300 local residents would benefit.
Space2Grow	Veg Club	£3,600	£1,800	£750	The grant would support a project run over a year and divided into the four seasons of 12 weeks each. Some participants may want to attend for just one season, or due to mental health issues may struggle to commit to regular attendance, whilst others may wish to attend for the entire year. They work closely with referrers to make sure individual participants needs are always held in mind, whilst making sure that sessions are full and funders' contributions are not taken for granted. Previous attendees have spoken about the benefit of being part of a welcoming group, learning new skills (both social and horticultural) and the satisfaction of watching the fruits of their labours grow into food they can then share. It gives people the space to grow themselves, sometimes from isolation, loneliness, despair or lack of confidence, is the most important aspect of the project.	Up to 15 local residents would benefit every week. Would expect to reach 50 local residents over the course of the year, possibly more. 95% live in Farnham.



Organisation	Project	Project Cost	Amount Requested	FTC Proposal	Project Description	Officer Comment
VC Meudon Community Amateur Sport Club	Farnham Town Centre Cycle Races 2021	£12,724	£2,000	£2,000	They are seeking funding to help cover the costs of publicising and staging the 2021 Town Centre Races. For 2021 they would like to extend the reach of the event to include races for U16 boys and girls, giving three children's races - U8; U10 & U12; and U14 & U16 – plus senior men, women and an elite race. This would enable more riders of different ages and abilities to participate and would increase the spectacle for Farnham residents. Most of the expenditure would be for mandated traffic management and spectator safety barriers. They would link a funder to each of the races, e.g. 'The Children's Town Centre Cycle Races sponsored by Farnham Town Council'.	Anticipate 200 riders, possibly 33% from Farnham. Would like to exceed the estimated 1200 spectators who attended in 2019. FTC have 'sponsored' the Children's races to date.
<b>Total</b>				<b>£20,350</b>		
Hale Community Centre	Hale Community Centre	£12,518	£2,000	£1,000	The grant would go towards the cost of an Assistant Centre Manger to provide essential support to deliver objectives. Covid-19 brought new challenges and need to seek funding opportunities to continue to deliver a service for the community.	£1k is earmarked for the organisation as a Service Level Agreement. Views of the Working Group are sought.
Farnham Maltings	24 Days of Giving	£4,060	£2,000	N/A	The grant be used towards the costs of a professional artist to work with the group and the group facilitator to produce a knitted or crocheted piece(s) for public display around the theatre. They aim to increase and diversify membership of Nimble Fingers (voluntary knitting and crochet group) to enable participants to learn new skills, encourage them to work as a collective, rather than individual pieces, and create a piece which highlights to organisations and groups to the local community with a new organisation celebrated each day for 24 days.	A service level grant is provided and additional funding is not normally awarded to projects from the same organisation.

Organisation	Project	Project Cost	Amount Requested	FTC Proposal	Project Description	Officer Comment
Virtual Farnham	Virtual Farnham Website Development	£6,912	£2,000	£2,000	The grant would support the redesign and redevelopment of the Virtual Farnham website which provides a free service for local businesses. The website showcases local shops/retailers, provides virtual tours of Farnham and drives business and tourism to Farnham and its surrounding villages. Developing the website would help to attract future sponsorship.	Recommended to fund as part of the Town Council's business support work from this financial year's high streets fund. This would be a contribution to a private business that provides a community service in the context of Covid-19.
The Sands Church	The Shepherd's Rest Community Café	£60,000	Match funding if possible	N/A	To raise the total cost so as to commence the building early in 2021 and to extend café opening times by the spring. To organise the offer of community participation with interior and exterior tasks. To build a new kitchen, install gas boiler and central heating, an accessible toilet.	Does not meet criteria as not in the Farnham Town Council area

The Following have also applied for the Farnham South Street Trust: Creative Response Arts.

Applications to be funded from other budgets: Virtual Farnham (website development).

Organisation	Fund from	Provisional allocations
Virtual Farnham, website development	High Streets fund as part of work to support local businesses	£2,000
VC Meudon Community Amateur Sport Club	Tourism and Events	£2,000



# FARNHAM TOWN COUNCIL

## Report Council

MARCH 2021

## Risk Management Review 2020-21

### Introduction

- 1 As part of the Accounts & Audit Regulations and Health & Safety At Work Legislation, the Town Council is required to maintain an effective programme of risk management and ensure that all policies and procedures in place are subject to regular review
- 2 Each year, the Council reviews a range of risks affecting the organisation in each of the service areas and as a corporate body. It is assisted in its task by a number of advisors including the Internal and External Auditor and by Ellis Whittam the Council's HR and Health and Safety advisors. This report deals with the whole range of risks and builds on work already undertaken by the individual Working Groups in the autumn cycle.

### Background

- 3 Risk is an uncertain event or condition that, if it occurs, will have an effect on the achievement of an authority's objectives. Risk management is the process whereby authorities methodically address the risks associated with what they do and the services which they provide. The focus of risk management is to identify what can go wrong and take proportionate steps to avoid this or successfully manage the consequences. Good risk management allows stakeholders to have increased confidence in the authority's corporate governance arrangements and its ability to deliver its priorities.
- 4 Risk management is not just about financial management; it is about protecting the achievement of objectives set by the authority to deliver high quality public services. The failure to manage risks effectively can be expensive in terms of litigation and reputation, and can impact on the ability to achieve desired outcomes. The Council generally and members individually are responsible for risk management alongside the Town Clerk and staff.
- 5 Risk management is an ongoing activity that comprises four elements:
  - identifying risks;
  - assessing risks;
  - addressing risks; and
  - reviewing and reporting.

### Identifying risks

- 6 In order to manage risk, an authority needs to know what risks it faces. Identifying risks is therefore the first step in the risk management process.
- 7 The specific risks which individual authorities and service areas face varies in accordance with the range, nature, complexity and scale of the organisation. For this reason, each Working Group reviews its own risks in the autumn cycle of meetings to identify any key risks to achieving successfully priorities and service objectives.

- 8 There are some overall categories of risks which are covered by Strategy & Finance and Council as a whole.
- financial – loss of money;
  - security – fraud, theft, embezzlement;
  - property – damage to property;
  - legal – breaking the law or being sued;
  - IT – failure of IT systems or misuse; and
  - reputational – actions taken could harm the authority's public reputation.

### Addressing risks

- 9 Risk is unavoidable, and every organisation needs to take action to manage risk in a way which it can justify to a level which is tolerable. The response to risk within the organisation, is called internal control and may involve one or more of the following standard responses:
- **Tolerate** the risk - for risks where the downside is containable with appropriate contingency plans; for some where the possible controls cannot be justified (e.g. because they would be disproportionate); and for unavoidable risks, e.g. terrorism.
  - **Treat** the risk - a common response which can mean imposing controls so that the organisation can continue to operate; or setting up prevention techniques.
  - **Transfer** the risk – buying in a service from a specialist external body or taking out insurance. Some risks cannot be transferred, especially reputational risk.
  - **Terminate** the activity giving rise to the risk - it may be best to stop (or not to start) activities which involve intolerable risks or those where no response can bring the risk to a tolerable level.
- 10 During 2020-21, Farnham Town Council has undertaken a number of activities to minimise risk. These include erecting additional fencing in West Street cemetery, regular inspections of cemeteries and allotments, continuing to invest in pathway repairs, removal of dangerous trees, investment in training and personal protective equipment for staff and steps to minimise reputational risk with the advent of online meetings.
- Farnham Town Council has undertaken significant work in the reduction of risk of infection in relation to the Covid-19 pandemic with increased cleaning regimes in the Council Offices, public conveniences and the Council Depot, remote working were possible and separation of the officers within the building to reduce the risk of infection. A policy of wearing face coverings was adopted for Officers moving around the building and remote meeting were possible was also adopted. The Outside Workforce adopted a policy of only having two members of staff in a vehicle at any one time and face coverings to be worn whether inside the vehicles or outside if in close proximity to other members of staff or members of the public. In addition, there have been new risks managed as part of the response to the pandemic supporting both volunteers and the wider community, and an increase in precautions with covid-compliant events.

### Assessing risks

- 11 Through the Working Groups the potential consequences of a risk occurring (the impact) and the likelihood are reviewed in a matrix with a Scoring range 1-3 (Low, medium, high). The two factors are multiplied to create a combined risk value and specific attention is given to any risk scoring six or above.

### Managing risk

- 12 Some risks are managed through the Council's Insurance policies:
- The protection of physical assets owned by the authority – buildings, furniture, equipment, etc. (loss or damage).
  - The risk of damage to third party property or individuals as a consequence of the authority providing services or amenities to the public (public liability).

- The risk of consequential loss of income or the need to provide essential services following critical damage, loss or non-performance by a third party (consequential loss).
- Loss of cash through theft or dishonesty (fidelity guarantee).
- Legal liability as a consequence of asset ownership (public liability).

- 13 Areas where risk is managed by working with third parties include the following:
- Security for vulnerable buildings, amenities or equipment (eg Shield Security)
  - Maintenance of buildings, amenities or equipment.
  - The provision of services being carried out under agency/partnership agreements with principal authorities.
  - Banking and investment arrangements
  - Ad hoc provision of amenities/ facilities for events to local community groups.
  - Equipment lease or hire where needed
  - Professional services (planning, surveying, arboricultural, accountancy, legal etc.).
  - Health and safety (Contract with Ellis Whittam for an annual inspection and advice, external training for first aid, evac chair etc;

### Workplace Health and Safety

- 14 Health & Safety risk assessments are an examination of anything in the workplace that could cause people to suffer injury or ill health whilst they are at work. Staff and councillors have individual responsibility to avoid risk and report matters or unsafe practices that may give cause to a risk.

All employers have a legal obligation to carry out risk assessments under *The Management of Health & Safety at Work Regulations 1999*. As well as complying with the legal requirement and having the potential to save money, risk assessments are useful in determining:

1. training programmes
2. the adequacy of information available
3. personal protective equipment needs
4. health surveillance levels

- 15 Farnham Town Council has an annual General Risk Assessment Report commissioned from Ellis Whittam. This report is based on a day-long examination of the systems in place at the Council. The key findings of the report after the most recent visit by Jonathan Ely, the Ellis Whittam Safety Advisor, on 27<sup>th</sup> August 2019 are set out below. They include a SWOT analysis and a Safety Action Plan with suggested completion dates and a named member of staff responsible for completing the item.

The number of 'Actions required' as a result of the eight surveys since 2011/12 is as follows:

	No. of Action Points	No. requiring immediate or short term action.
2011/12	72	5
2012/13	39	2
2013/14	13	0
2014/15	7	1
2015/16	18	1
2016/17	29	5
2017/18	3	0
2018/19	3	2
2020/21	1	1

2020 (Chart below) shows the 1 point from the current inspection. Work on this point is being undertaken.

Date	Priority	Sub Point	Comment	Action	Completed date
27/10/2020	Low	Risk Assessment	To annually review Risk Assessments.	Risk Assessment review has been scheduled and will be undertaken before date of 1/05/2021 as set down by Ellis Whitam	

16 External contractors undertake the following on behalf of the Council:

1. **Electrical Installations** – All buildings are tested every five years for the condition of its fixed electrical wiring. The Council Offices and the Depot are due in 2021, Wrecblesham Community Centre, West Street Chapel, Victoria Gardens, Gostrey Meadow toilet block, the Hart toilet block and the Central Car Park toilet block are scheduled to be tested again early in 2020. Portable Electrical Appliance Testing is undertaken annually for those items that require testing and periodically in accordance with the type of item as required.
2. **Gas Installations** – the boilers at the Council Offices and Wrecblesham Community Centre are safety-checked every year.
3. **The Lift** at the Council offices is inspected quarterly in accordance with insurance requirements.
4. **Fire** – A fire risk assessment was undertaken by an external consultant in December 2011 and subsequently in house.
5. **Legionella** Testing takes place annually
6. **Asbestos.** As required
7. **Risk.** The Council reviews risks regularly with its insurers (Zurich) when new areas/activities are introduced (eg supporting vaccination testing and the new playground inherited from WBC).

### Financial risks and related Issues

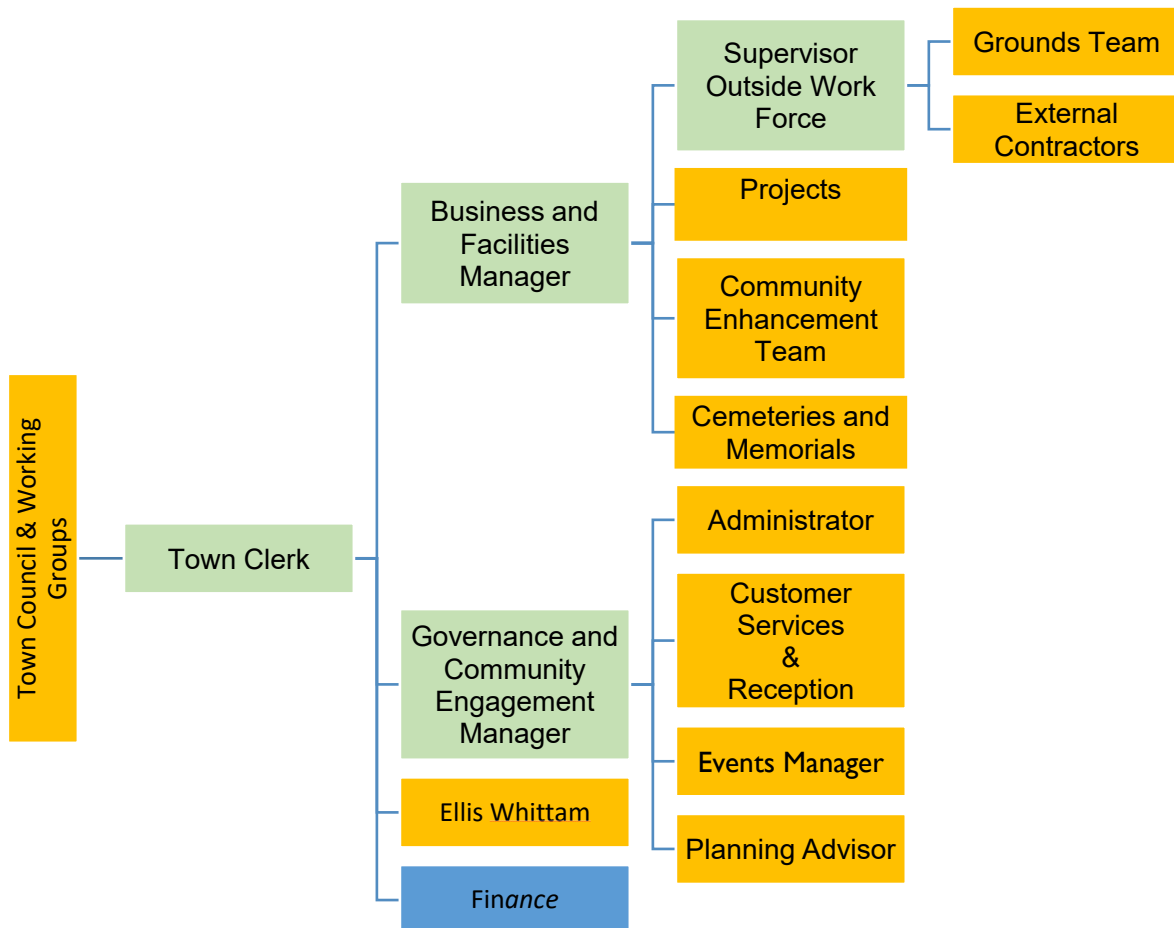
- 17 The new General Data Protection Regulation has brought in new duties on protecting personal data and reporting where lapses occur. Any such breach is reported to Council.
- 18 The financial risks of the organisation are considered as part of the independent Internal Auditor's work. The most recent visit was in December 2019 with the Internal Auditor's Interim report reported to Council in January 2020. The Internal Auditor uses as a basis for his work the latest edition of *Governance and Accountability – a Practitioners' Guide* to proper practices, and the related checklists therein. Potential loss of income is managed by having adequate reserves in accordance with audit guidelines and effective fidelity insurance cover. There is effective separation of duties to ensure that more than one person is involved in financial transactions to minimise the potential risk for fraud. Risks of absence of key personnel for an extended period are covered by the creation of process manuals on main areas of activity and work shadowing so other staff are aware of work requirements wherever possible and some key personnel insurance cover. In the event of an extended absence of the Town Clerk, locum support is available through the Surrey Association of Local Councils and elsewhere. In recent years, Cyber security has been an increasing issue and additional precautions have been implemented both with the Council's IT support company and insurers.
- 19 The Financial Regulations were reviewed in 2020 and Standing Orders in March 2021.
- 20 In underpinning the Council's approach, Farnham Town Council has, attached at Annex B for reoption:
  - Health and Safety Policy Statement
  - Fire Safety Management Policy Statement
  - Environmental Policy Statement

**Recommendations to Council**

- i) The Risk Management report be welcomed and recommended for adoption;
- ii) The work done by the Working Groups in managing risk be noted.
- iii) The Health and Safety Policy, Fire Safety and Environmental Policy Statements be readopted.

# Farnham Town Council Organisation Chart for the Management of Health and Safety 2021

(Health and Safety Management Leads highlighted)





# Farnham Town Council

## Health & Safety Policy Statement

Farnham Town Council recognises that it has a legal duty of care towards protecting the health and safety of its employees and others who may be affected by the Council's activities, and that managing health and safety is a business critical function.

In order to discharge its responsibilities Farnham Town Council will:

- bring this Policy Statement to the attention of all employees;
- carry out and regularly review risk assessments to identify proportionate and pragmatic solutions to reducing risk;
- communicate and consult with employees on matters affecting their health and safety;
- comply fully with all relevant legal requirements, codes of practice and regulations at International, National and Local levels;
- eliminate risks to health and safety, where possible, through selection and design of materials, buildings, facilities, equipment and processes;
- encourage staff to identify and report hazards so that all contribute towards improving safety;
- ensure that emergency procedures are in place at all locations for dealing with health and safety issues;
- maintain premises, provide and maintain safe plant and equipment;
- only engage contractors who are able to demonstrate due regard to health & safety matters;
- provide adequate resources to control the health and safety risks arising from work activities;
- provide adequate training and ensure that all employees are competent to do their tasks;
- provide an organisational structure that defines the responsibilities for health and safety
- provide information, instruction and supervision for employees;
- regularly monitor performance and revise policies and procedures to pursue a programme of continuous improvement;
- where risks cannot be eliminated they will be minimised by substitution, the use of physical controls or, use of personal protective equipment or, as a last resort, through safe systems of work

This Health and Safety Policy will be reviewed at least annually and revised as necessary to reflect changes to the business activities and any changes to legislation. Any changes to the Policy will be brought to the attention of all employees.

**Signed:**

**Dated: 1/02/2021**

**Position: Town Clerk**

## **Farnham Town Council Fire Safety Management Policy Statement**

It is the policy of Farnham Town Council to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, that the Council provides and maintains safe and healthy working conditions and protects employees, visitors and others so far as is reasonably practicable against the risk of fire within our premises.

We believe that this document when combined with individual fire risk assessments, emergency plans and evacuation procedures sets out best practice standards for an organisation such as ours.

Although the ultimate responsibility for fire safety management rests with the Council's Leader and the Town Clerk, the Organisation's Health and Safety Adviser provides competent advice to the managers of operating units who are responsible for the implementation and day to day fire safety management of operations within the premises under their control.

Advice on any fire safety management matters can be sought from the Safety Adviser, who can also be consulted in the event of an employee being faced with a conflict between the demands of fire safety and commercial or operational demands. If such a conflict cannot be resolved by agreement the final decision will rest with the Town Clerk.

All employees, volunteers and contractors are reminded that they have a personal responsibility for ensuring that fire safety procedures are followed and not to obstruct fire exit routes or fire equipment at any time. They must therefore adhere to the fire safety practices of the organisation and co-operate fully with any appropriate instructions on any matter relating to fire safety management in the workplace.

This policy statement is reviewed annually.

Signed:

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**Town Clerk**

**Date: 1 February 2021**

## Farnham Town Council Environmental Policy Statement

Farnham Town Council recognises that the day-to-day operations can impact both directly and indirectly on the environment. The Council aims to protect and improve the environment through good management and by adopting best practice wherever possible. Farnham Town Council will work to integrate environmental considerations into our business decisions and adopt greener alternatives wherever possible, throughout our operations.

In order to discharge its responsibilities the management will:

- bring this Environmental Policy Statement to the attention of all stakeholders
- carry out regular audits of the environmental management system
- comply fully with all relevant legal requirements, codes of practice and regulations at International, National and Local levels
- eliminate risks to the environment, where possible, through selection and design of materials, buildings, facilities, equipment and processes
- ensure that emergency procedures are in place at all locations for dealing with environmental issues
- establish targets to measure the continuous improvement in the Council's environmental performance
- identify and manage environmental risks and hazards
- improve the environmental efficiency of the Council's transport and travel
- involve customers, partners, clients, suppliers and subcontractors in the implementation of these objectives
- minimise waste and increase recycling within the framework of the Council's waste management procedures
- only engage contractors who are able to demonstrate due regard to environmental matters
- prevent pollution to land, air and water
- promote environmentally responsible purchasing
- provide adequate resources to control environmental risks arising from work activities
- provide suitable training to enable employees to deal with their specific areas of environmental control
- reduce the use of water, energy and any other natural resources
- source materials from sustainable supply, when practicable
- where risks cannot be eliminated they will be minimised by substitution, use of physical controls or, as a last resort, through systems of work

This Environmental Policy will be reviewed at least annually and revised as necessary to reflect changes to the business activities and any changes to legislation. Any changes to the Policy will be brought to the attention of all stakeholders.

**Signed:**

**Position:      Town Clerk**

**Dated: 1 February 2021**



## Farnham Town Council

# Standing Orders

- Notes:
- 1) Those Standing Orders printed in ***bold italic type*** are compulsory and laid down in Acts of Parliament and Regulations. Standing Orders in ***bold italic type*** cannot be suspended.
  - 2) Words of a masculine gender (eg he/his) also relate to a feminine gender (eg she/her) throughout this document

Revised and Adopted ~~January 2019~~ March 2021

# FARNHAM TOWN COUNCIL

## STANDING ORDERS

### **1 Application, Variation, Revocation and Suspension of Standing Orders**

- 1.1 All meetings of the Council and its Committees, sub-Committees, Working/Task or other Groups shall be governed by these Standing Orders and the Council's Code of Conduct unless the Council resolves otherwise.
- 1.2 ***Any or every part of the Standing Orders except those printed in bold italic type can be suspended in relation to any specific item of business by resolution of the Council. Standing Orders in bold type should not be substantially amended unless legislation changes.***
- 1.3 A resolution permanently to add, vary or revoke any Standing Order when proposed and seconded will stand adjourned without discussion to the next ordinary meeting of the Council but Council may review them in total at the last meeting of the Council year or when a new set of Model Standing Orders is published.

### **2 Meetings - General**

- 2.1 **(FREQUENCY) - In addition to the statutory Annual Meeting of the Council, at least three other Ordinary Meetings shall be held in each year on such dates and times as the Council directs.** Other meetings of the Council may be held during each year on such dates and times and in a place that the Council decides but Council will normally adopt a schedule of meetings for itself and its Committees and Working Groups as early as possible. The Council will normally meet up to 9 times a year.
- 2.2 **(NOTICES) - It is mandatory that 3 clear days notice of meetings shall be given to Councillors and the public,** but the council has decided that formal Notices, Agenda and supporting papers should normally be dispatched to Councillors one (1) week before all Council Meetings. **When calculating the 3 clear days for notice of a meeting to Councillors and the public, the day on which notice was issued, the day of the meeting, a Sunday, a day of the Christmas break, a day of the Easter Break or of a Bank Holiday or a day appointed for public thanksgiving or mourning shall not count.** *Agendas and supporting papers may be sent electronically provided the councillor has consented to service by email with hard copies sent to members of each meeting and on request to other councillors.*
- 2.3 The Agenda for each Full Council meeting may also be sent, together with an invitation to attend, to the County and Borough Councillors for the appropriate divisions or wards.
- 2.4 **(ACCESS) - Meetings shall be open to the public unless their presence is prejudicial to the public interest by reason of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted or for other special reasons. The public's exclusion from part or all of a meeting shall be by a resolution which shall give reasons for the public's exclusion.**
- 2.5 **(RECORDING) –**
- 2.5.1 **Subject to standing order 3(m), a person who attends a meeting is permitted to report on the meeting whilst the meeting is open to the public. To “report” means to film, photograph, make an audio recording of meeting proceedings, use any other means**

***for enabling persons not present to see or hear the meeting as it takes place or later or to report or to provide oral or written commentary about the meeting so that the report or commentary is available as the meeting takes place or later to persons not present.***

- 2.5.2 ***A person present at a meeting may not provide an oral report or oral commentary about a meeting as it takes place without permission.***
- 2.5.3 ***The press shall be provided with reasonable facilities for the taking of their report of all or part of a meeting at which they are entitled to be present subject to Standing Order 2.4 above.***
- 2.5.4 The filming, reporting, photographing or other reporting of children and vulnerable people may only be done with the consent of a responsible adult which in the case of a vulnerable adult is a medical professional, his carer or guardian, and in the case of a child is his parent, legal guardian or teacher.
- 2.5.5 Any person participating in the public questions or public statements section of the Council meeting may be filmed, photographed or included in a report of the meeting.
- 2.5.6 Any person reporting proceedings is bound by the Data Protection Act 1998 and subsequent legislation as it applies to personal data of individuals.
- 2.5.7 Meetings may be recorded by the Council for internal purposes.
- 2.6 ***(LOCATION) - Meetings shall not take place in premises, which at the time of the meeting, are used for the supply of alcohol unless no other premises are available free of charge or at a reasonable cost.*** Except where the Council decides otherwise, all meetings will be held in the Council Chamber, at The Town Hall, South Street, Farnham. Remote or hybrid meetings may also be held providing details have been published to allow public access.
- 2.7 ***(TIMING) - All meetings of the Council will begin after 6pm.*** If no other time is fixed, meetings will start at 7.00pm and will normally end no later than 10.00pm unless Standing Order 11.9 is invoked. Any unfinished business will be included in the agenda of the next meeting unless dealt with in the interim.
- 2.8 ***(QUORUM) - No business may be transacted at a Council Meeting unless at least one third of the whole number of Members of the Council; i.e. 6 Councillors; are present. In no case shall the Quorum of any meeting*** (including Committees and Working Groups) ***be less than 3.*** The Council has decided that, for a Council Meeting, a minimum of 10 Councillors shall make a Quorum. ***If a meeting is or becomes inquorate no business shall be transacted and the meeting shall be adjourned.*** Any outstanding business of a meeting so adjourned shall be transacted at a following meeting which shall be the next scheduled Council Meeting or on a day that the Town Mayor/Chairman agrees with the Council's Proper/Responsible Officer (Town Clerk).
- 2.9 ***(CHAIRMAN) –***
- 2.9.1 ***Subject to standing orders which indicate otherwise, anything authorised or required to be done by, to or before the Mayor (Chairman of the Council) may in his absence be done by, to or before the Deputy Mayor (Vice-Chairman) of the Council (if there is one).***

2.9.2 ***The Town Mayor, if present, shall preside at a meeting of all councillors. If the Mayor is absent from a meeting, the Deputy Mayor of the Council if present, shall preside. If both the Mayor and the Deputy Mayor are absent from a meeting, a councillor as chosen by the councillors present at the meeting shall preside at the meeting.*** The Town Clerk shall call for a nominee from the floor to take the chair. If discussion arises on this motion the Town Clerk shall exercise the powers of the person presiding to regulate that discussion, and to maintain order at the meeting. In that event, for the avoidance of doubt, the Town Clerk shall **not** have the right to vote on any nomination or matter.

2.10 **(AGENDA)** – The Council Agenda will be split into three (3) Parts as below:

- Part One – Items for Decision
- Part Two – Items to Note
- Part Three – Confidential Items

2.11 The minutes of a meeting shall include an accurate record of the following:

- i. the time and place of the meeting;
- ii. the names of councillors who are present and the names of councillors who are absent;
- iii. interests that have been declared by councillors and non-councillors with voting rights;
- iv. the grant of dispensations (if any) to councillors and non-councillors with voting rights;
- v. whether a councillor or non-councillor with voting rights left the meeting when matters that they held interests in were being considered;
- vi. if there was a public participation session; and
- vii. the resolutions made.

### **3 Meetings of the Council – Annual (Mayor Making), Ordinary & Extraordinary**

3.1 ***In addition to the annual meeting of the council, at least three other ordinary meetings shall be held in each year on such dates and times as the council directs.***

3.2 **Procedure - Annual Town Council Meeting (Mayor Making)**

- a) ***In an election year, the Annual Town Council Meeting shall be held on or within 14 days following the day on which the Councillors elected take office and***
- b) ***In a year which is not an election year the Annual Town Council Meeting shall be held on such day in May as the Council may direct.***
- c) ***The Mayor/Chairman of the Council, unless he has resigned or becomes disqualified, shall continue in office and preside at the Annual Meeting until his successor is elected at the next Annual Meeting of the Council.***
- d) ***The Deputy Mayor/Vice-Chairman of the Council, if any, unless he resigns or becomes disqualified, shall hold office until immediately after the election of the Mayor/Chairman of the Council at the next Annual Meeting of the Council.***
- e) ***In an election year, if the current Mayor/Chairman of the Council has been re-elected as a member of the Council, he shall preside at the Annual Meeting until a new Mayor/Chairman of the Council has been elected. He may exercise an original vote in respect of the election of the new Mayor/Chairman of the Council***

**and must give a casting vote in the case of an equality of votes. Except that, when an existing Town Mayor/Chairman is put forward for re-election to that position, he must vacate the Chair prior to the election taking place and a Councillor not put up for election must take over the Chair until after the election.**

- f) ***In an election year, if the current Mayor/Chairman of the Council has not been re-elected as a member of the Council, he shall still preside at the meeting until a successor Mayor/Chairman of the Council has been elected. The current Mayor/Chairman of the Council shall not have an original vote in respect of the election of the new Mayor/Chairman of the Council but must give a casting vote in the case of an equality of votes.***

### 3.3 Order of Business - Annual Town Council Meeting (Mayor Making)

***At each Annual Town Council Meeting the first business shall be to elect a Town Mayor (by show of hands).***

Following the election of the Town Mayor at the annual meeting of the council, the business of the annual meeting shall include:

- a) ***To receive the Town Mayor's declaration of acceptance of office or, if not then received, to decide when it shall be received.***
- b) ***In the ordinary year of election of the Council to fill any vacancies left unfilled at the election by reason of insufficient nominations.***
- c) ***To decide when any declarations of acceptance of office which have not been received as provided by law shall be received.***
- d) To elect a Deputy Town Mayor (by show of hands).
- e) To receive the Deputy Town Mayor's declaration of acceptance of office or, if not received, to decide when it shall be received.
- f) To appoint a Leader or Spokesperson for the Council.
- g) To appoint Committees and/or Working/Task groups.\*\*
- h) To appoint Representatives to Outside Bodies.\*\*
- i) In a year of elections, if a Council's period of eligibility to exercise the *Power of General Competence* (as set out in The Parish Councils (General Power of Competence) (Prescribed Conditions) Order 2012, expired the day before the Annual Meeting, to review and make arrangements to reaffirm eligibility.\*\*
- j) To review any Regalia, Property, Deeds and Trust Investments in the custody of the Council as required.\*\*
- k) Approve a Risk Analysis of the Council's activities.\*\*
- l) Review and confirm arrangements for insurance cover in respect of all insured risks.\*\*
- m) Review the Council's Financial Regulations and Arrangements.\*\*
- n) Review the Council's procedures for handling requests made under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and the Data Protection Act 1998. \*\*



- o) Review the Council's policy for dealing with the press/media.\*\*
- p) Set the dates, times and place of meetings of the full Council and its Committees and/or Working Groups for the year ahead.\*\*
- q) Review of arrangements, including any charters and agency agreements, with other local authorities and review of contributions made to expenditure incurred by other local authorities.\*\*

\*\* These items may be considered at a different meeting but must be done at least once in any Council year. The Council normally holds the appointment meeting in April except in election year when it will take place after the largely ceremonial Annual Meeting.

Thereafter the business will follow the order set out below for an Ordinary Meeting of the Council.

### 3.4 Order of Business - Ordinary Council Meetings

- 3.4.1 Prior to the start of the formal business, the Council may say prayers and receive a presentation by local organisations or those whose activities affect the town. Such organisations shall be approved by the Mayor and invited by the Town Clerk.
- 3.4.2 ***At every meeting other than the Annual Town Council Meeting the first business shall be to appoint a Chairman if the Town Mayor and Deputy Town Mayor be absent and to receive such declarations of acceptance of office (if any) and undertaking to observe the Council's code of conduct as are required by law to be made or, if not then received, to decide when they shall be received.*** After the first mandatory business has been completed, the order of business, unless the Council otherwise decides on the ground of urgency, shall be as follows:-
  - a) To receive apologies for absence.
  - b) Disclosures of interests by councillors and employees on items on the agenda.
  - c) To read and consider the previous Minutes; provided that if a copy has been circulated to each councillor with the agenda there shall be no need to read them out.
  - d) ***After consideration, to approve the signature of the Minutes by the person presiding as a correct record.*** There shall be no discussion about the draft minutes of a preceding meeting except in relation to their accuracy. A motion to correct an inaccuracy in the draft minutes shall be moved in accordance with standing order 7.1c.
  - e) Public Questions and Statements on items on the agenda or other matters.
  - f) ***To deal with business expressly required by statute to be done.***
  - g) To deal with any matters remaining from the last meeting.
  - h) To receive the Mayor's Announcements or any communications as the person presiding may wish to lay before the Council.
  - i) To receive Petitions (if any have been received).
  - j) To answer questions from Councillors.
  - k) To receive and consider the minutes, notes and reports of Committees, Working/Task

Groups and to determine recommendations made by Committees or Working Groups.

- l) To receive and consider resolutions or recommendations in the order in which they have been notified.
- m) To authorise the sealing of documents.
- n) If necessary, to authorise the signing of orders for payment.
- o) Once a year - no later than when the estimates for the following year are agreed - the Council will review pay and conditions of service of existing employees.
- p) To receive information from council representatives on outside bodies and information from Borough or County Councillors on matters affecting the town.
- q) Confirm the date of the next Council Meeting.

### 3.5 **Extraordinary Meetings**

- a) ***The Mayor/Chairman of the Council may convene an extraordinary meeting of the Council at any time.***
- b) Any two members of the Council can request an extraordinary meeting of the Council if a request for such a meeting has been signed by those councillors and has been presented to the Town Clerk/ Proper Officer.
- c) If any Councillors wish to call an extraordinary meeting, the Town Clerk must be informed of that wish with a clear description of the important business. The Town Clerk, after consultation with the Mayor/Chairman, will then make sure that the notices and summonses giving the required notice of the extraordinary meeting are published and sent as soon as practical.
- d) ***If the Mayor/Chairman of the Council does not, or refuses to, call an Extraordinary Meeting of the Council within 7 days of having been requested to do so by two Councillors, those two Councillors may convene an Extraordinary Meeting of the Council. The statutory public notice giving the time, venue and agenda for such a meeting must be signed by the two councillors.*** The only items to be considered at an extraordinary meeting will be those for which it was specifically called and which were put on the agenda.

## 4 **Leader of Council or Spokesperson**

4.1 A Leader or Spokesperson of the Council can be appointed at the Annual Council Meeting but if no appointment is made, the role of Spokesperson for the Council will be undertaken by the Lead Member of the Strategy and Finance Working Group.

4.2 The Leader/Spokesperson of the Council has no Executive power but will have the following approved responsibilities

- a) To act as the liaison between the members of the Council and the Town Clerk in indicating the priorities and programmes for inclusion in Council business and the Council's likely reaction to new policies or projects.
- b) To be the first point of contact for the Town Clerk when an issue arises that requires a political or policy response from the Council and the issue does not naturally fall within the existing policy or as a matter of urgency.
- c) To be the spokesperson for the Council when responding to the Press and Media.

## 5 **Proper/Responsible Officer**

- 5.1 The Proper Officer shall be either (i) the clerk or (ii) other staff member(s) nominated by the Council to undertake the work of the Proper Officer when the Proper Officer is absent. The Proper Officer and the person appointed to act as such during the Proper Officer's absence shall fulfil the duties assigned to the Proper Officer in Standing Orders.
- 5.2 The Town Council has adopted a scheme of delegation to the Town Clerk/Responsible Financial Officer/Proper Officer for the management of the Town Council.
- 5.3 The Council's Proper Officer shall do the following:-
- i. ***at least three clear days before a meeting of the council, a committee or a sub-committee,***
    - ***serve on councillors by delivery or post at their residences or by email authenticated in such manner as the Proper Officer thinks fit, a signed summons confirming the time, place and the agenda (provided the councillor has consented to service by email), and***
    - ***Provide, in a conspicuous place, public notice of the time, place and agenda (provided that the public notice with agenda of an extraordinary meeting of the Council convened by councillors is signed by them).***
  - ii. subject to standing order 6, include on the agenda all motions in the order received unless a councillor has given written notice at least 5 days before the meeting confirming his withdrawal of it;
  - iii. ***convene a meeting of the Council for the election of a new Chairman of the Council, occasioned by a casual vacancy in his office;***
  - iv. ***facilitate inspection of the minute book by local government electors;***
  - v. ***receive and retain copies of byelaws made by other local authorities;***
  - vi. hold acceptance of office forms from councillors;
  - vii. hold a copy of every councillor's register of interests;
  - viii. assist with responding to requests made under freedom of information legislation and rights exercisable under data protection legislation, in accordance with the Council's relevant policies and procedures;
  - ix. liaise, as appropriate, with the Council's Data Protection Officer (if there is one);
  - x. receive and send general correspondence and notices on behalf of the Council except where there is a resolution to the contrary;
  - xi. assist in the organisation of, storage of, access to, security of and destruction of information held by the Council in paper and electronic form subject to the requirements of data protection and freedom of information legislation and other legitimate requirements (e.g. the Limitation Act 1980);
  - xii. arrange for legal deeds to be executed;
  - xiii. arrange or manage the prompt authorisation, approval, and instruction regarding any payments to be made by the Council in accordance with its financial regulations;

- xiv. record every planning application notified to the Council and the Council's response to the local planning authority in a book for such purpose;
- xv. refer a planning application received by the Council to the Chairman or in his absence the Vice-Chairman (if there is one) of the Planning and Licensing Consultative Group/Committee within two working days of receipt to facilitate an extraordinary meeting if the nature of a planning application requires consideration before the next ordinary meeting;
- xvi. manage access to information about the Council via the publication scheme; and
- xvii. retain custody of the seal of the Council (if there is one) which shall not be used without a resolution to that effect..

## **6 Motions requiring written Notice**

- 6.1 No Motion can be moved and no matter can be discussed unless the business to which it relates has been put on the Agenda by the Town Clerk or the mover has given notice in writing of its terms and has given notice to the Town Clerk at least 10 clear working days before the next meeting of the Council, except as stated in these Standing Orders.
- 6.2 The Town Clerk will date every notice of Motion or recommendation when received and will number each notice in the order received.
- 6.3 If the wording or nature of a proposed motion is considered unlawful or improper, the Town Clerk shall consult with the Chairman of the forthcoming meeting or, as the case may be, the Councillors who have convened the meeting, to consider whether the motion shall be included or rejected in the agenda.
- 6.4 The Town Clerk will include in the summons for each meeting, all notices of motion or recommendation given in the order in which they have been received unless the member giving a notice of motion has stated in writing that they intend to move it at some later meeting or that they will withdraw it. The Town Clerk may correct obvious grammatical or typographical errors in the wording of the motion before including it on an agenda.
- 6.5 If a motion or recommendation listed on the agenda is not moved either by the councillor who gave notice of it or by any other councillor, it will, unless postponed by the Council, be withdrawn and not be moved without new notice.
- 6.6 If a motion comes under the Terms of Reference of a Committee, or Working/Task Group of the Council, it may, once it has been proposed and seconded, be referred without discussion to a Committee, Working/Task Group determined by the Council for report; provided that the Chairman of the Committee, Working/Task Group agrees.
- 6.7 Every motion and resolution shall relate to the Council's statutory functions, powers and lawful obligations or shall relate to an issue which specifically affects the Council's area or its residents.

## **7 Motions not requiring written Notice**

- 7.1 Motions dealing with the following matters may be moved without notice:-
  - a) To appoint a Chairman of the meeting in the absence of the Mayor and Deputy Mayor.
  - b) To approve the long-term absences of councillors.

- c) To correct any inaccuracies in the Minutes of a previous meeting and to approve them.
- d) To note the minutes of a meeting of a Committee, Working Group or Task Group.
- e) To dispose of business, if any, remaining from the last meeting.
- f) To alter the order of the business agenda for reasons of urgency or expedience.
- g) To proceed to the next business on the agenda.
- h) To move to a vote.
- i) To close or adjourn the debate.
- j) To refer a matter to a Committee, Working/Task Group or an Officer.
- k) To appoint a Committee, Working/Task Group or any members thereof.
- l) To adopt a report and or recommendations made by a Working Group, officer or professional advisors.
- m) To authorise the sealing of documents.
- n) To amend a motion.
- o) To give leave to withdraw a motion or amendment.
- p) To extend the time limit for speeches.
- q) To exclude the press and public for all or part of a meeting.
- r) To not hear further from a councillor or a member of the public;
- s) To exclude councillor or member of the public named for disorderly or improper conduct.
- t) To give the consent of the Council where such consent is required by these Standing Orders.
- u) To answer questions from councillors.
- v) **To suspend any Standing Order except those which are mandatory by law (in bold italic type).**
- w) To appoint representatives to outside bodies and to make arrangements for those representatives to report back the activities of the outside bodies.
- x) To adjourn the meeting.

7.2 If a motion falls within the terms of reference of a Committee or Working Group or within the delegated powers conferred on an employee, a referral of the same may be made to such Committee or Working Group or employee provided that the Mayor/Chairman may direct for it to be dealt with at the present meeting for reasons of urgency or expedience.

## 8 **Petitions**

- 8.1 Petitions may be received at (Ordinary) meetings of the Council provided that the petition is received by the Town Clerk no later than midday five working days before the day of the meeting and is signed by at least twenty (20) registered electors within the Town.
- 8.2 Petitions may only be about a matter for which the Council has a responsibility or which directly affects the Town.
- 8.3 Petitions will not be received by the Council which are in furtherance of a person's individual circumstance or which are about a matter where there is a right of appeal to the courts, a tribunal or government minister.
- 8.4 A Petition will not be received by the Council where the issue it concerns has been the subject of a Petition in the last six months or a decision of the Council in the last six months.
- 8.5 One signatory to the Petition may speak on the Petition and for no more than three minutes. The Petition may be answered at that meeting by the Mayor or by a person designated by the Mayor but will more usually be the subject of a written answer.
- 8.6 No discussion shall take place on the Petition at that meeting. A councillor may move that

the Petition be referred to the next meeting or to a Committee or to a body. Once the motion has been seconded, it will be voted on without discussion.

8.7 No more than three Petitions may be received at one meeting.

## 9 **Questions by Members**

9.1 At a Council meeting, any member of the Council may ask a question of the Town Mayor/Chairman or the Town Clerk which relates to a matter which affects a function of the Council or its area or the inhabitants of the area or some of them, provided proper notice has been given.

9.2 Notice of the question must be given in writing and delivered to the Town Clerk at least five clear working days before the meeting, signifying to whom the question is put.

9.3 A reply to the question can be given verbally at the meeting or by written reply or by indicating that the question will be referred to a future meeting of the Council or of a Committee, Working/Task Group

9.4 Questions not connected with business under discussion will not be asked except during the part of the meeting set aside for questions.

9.5 Each question will be put and answered without discussion but the person questioned may decline to answer.

## 10 **Public Questions and Statements**

10.1 A standard item, will appear on all agendas of Ordinary meetings of Council and Standing Committees to allow, at the discretion of the Town Mayor/Chairman, those members of the public, residing or working within the Town Council's boundary, to make representations, ask or answer questions and give evidence at a meeting which they are entitled to attend in respect of the business on the agenda or other matters not on the agenda.

- a) The period of time designated for public participation at a meeting in accordance with standing order 3.3.2 (e) above shall not exceed 20 minutes unless directed by the chairman of the meeting.
- b) A member of the public shall not speak for more than 3 minutes on any matter or at any one time.
- c) Only one person is permitted to speak at a time. If more than one person wants to speak, the chairman of the meeting shall direct the order of speaking.
- d) A question shall not require a response at the meeting nor start a debate on the question. The chairman of the meeting may direct that a written or oral response be given. If a matter raised is one for Principal Councils, the person making representation will be informed of the appropriate contact details.
- e) A person shall raise his hand when requesting to speak and stand when speaking (except when a person has a disability or is likely to suffer discomfort). The chairman of the meeting may at any time permit a person to be seated when speaking.
- f) A person who speaks at a meeting shall direct his comments to the Mayor/Chairman of the meeting.

## 11 **Meeting Etiquette & General Procedures**

11.1 A Councillor shall remain seated while speaking unless requested to stand by the Town Mayor/Chairman.

- 11.2 Councillors shall address all comments to the Town Mayor/Chairman. If two or more Councillors wish to speak the Town Mayor/Chairman shall decide the order of speaking and whom to call upon.
- 11.3 The ruling of the Town Mayor/Chairman on a point of order or on the admissibility of a personal explanation shall be final and shall not be discussed.
- 11.4 Whenever the Town Mayor/Chairman stands or speaks during a debate, all other Councillors shall be silent.
- 11.5 Minutes of a previous meeting will not be discussed except upon the accuracy of their content, corrections to those minutes will be made by inclusion in the minutes of the meeting which approves such minutes with the corrections appended. Upon a resolution which confirms the accuracy of the minutes of a meeting, the draft minutes or recordings of the meeting for which approved minutes exist shall be destroyed.
- 11.6 Motions included in an agenda shall be considered in the order that they appear on the agenda unless the order is changed at the Mayor/Chairman's direction for reasons of urgency or by vote of the Council for expediency.
- 11.7 Urgent business can only be placed on the Agenda by the Town Clerk with where business is required by law to be done and was omitted from the agenda. Other urgent business may be placed on the Agenda by the Town Clerk with the permission of the Mayor/Chairman in the case of emergencies or when it is considered that delay might be prejudicial to the Council's interests.
- 11.8 A motion to vary the order of business on the ground of expediency can be proposed by the Town Mayor/Chairman or by any other councillor and, if proposed by the Town Mayor/Chairman, can be put to the vote without being seconded, and in all cases will be voted on without discussion.
- 11.9 Meetings of the Council should normally finish by 10pm but at a convenient time before then, the Town Mayor/Chairman shall put to the meeting the options of:
- a) Agreeing to a half hour extension to 10.30pm, at which time the meeting shall stand adjourned; or
  - b) Continuing the meeting until the Council has concluded its consideration of the Agenda; or
  - c) Adjourning the meeting.

A vote shall be taken without discussion and no business other than that set out in the Agenda shall be discussed at any adjourned meeting.

11.10 The host (normally the Clerk) or co-host (normally the Chair) of a remote or hybrid meeting may take action to i) mute, block or remove a disruptive member of the public or ii) mute, block or place a disruptive councillor acting in breach of standing orders into the virtual 'waiting room' pending discussion of Standing Order 7.1(s)".

## 12 **Rules of Debate**

### 12.1 **Discussion**

A motion or amendment shall **not** be discussed unless it has been Proposed and Seconded, and, unless proper notice has already been given, it shall, if required by the Town

Mayor/Chairman or Town Clerk, be put in writing and handed to him/her before it is discussed or put to the meeting.

#### 12.2 Speeches

- a) A speech by a mover of a motion shall not exceed 5 minutes and no other speech shall exceed 3 minutes except by the consent of the Council.
- b) A speech must be directed solely to the matter under discussion, or to a question of order or a personal explanation.
- c) A councillor when seconding a motion or amendment may if he declares their intention to do so, reserve their speech until later in the debate.

#### 12.3 Other Motions

When a motion is being debated the only other motions which may be moved (either singly or combined) are:

- a) To amend the Motion.
- b) To withdraw the Motion.
- c) To proceed to the next business.
- d) To adjourn the debate.
- e) To adjourn the meeting.
- f) That the question be now put to the vote.
- g) That a named Councillor not be heard further.
- h) That a named Councillor leave the meeting.
- i) That the Motion be referred to a Committee or Working/Task Group.
- j) That the meeting continues beyond 10pm.
- k) To exclude the Press and Public from the meeting under Section 100A (4) of the local Government Act 1972 as amended.
- i) to suspend any standing order, **except those which are mandatory statutory or a legal requirement (In bold italic type).**

#### 12.4 Alteration and Withdrawal

- a) A Councillor may alter a Motion of which he has given notice with the consent of the meeting. The Meeting's consent will be signified without discussion.
- b) A Councillor may alter a Motion which he has moved without notice with the consent of both the meeting and the Secunder. The meeting's consent will be signified without discussion.
- c) A Councillor may withdraw a Motion which he has moved only with the consent of the Secunder and the Meeting. The meeting's consent will be signified without discussion. No Councillor may speak on the Motion after the mover has asked permission to withdraw it unless such permission is refused.

#### 12.5 Right of Reply

- a) The mover of a motion has the right to reply, not exceeding 3 minutes, at the end of the debate on the motion, immediately before it is put to the vote.
- b) If an amendment is moved, the mover of the amendment has the right of reply at the close of the debate on the amendment and to speak last but one for that purpose, the final right of reply to remain with the mover of the original motion.
- c) In exercising his right of reply, a Councillor shall strictly confine himself/herself to answering statements or arguments made in the course of debate and shall not introduce any new material.

#### 12.6 Speaking Again

A councillor who has spoken on a motion may not speak again whilst it is the subject of debate, without the permission of the Mayor/Chairman, except:



- a) to speak once on an amendment moved by another councillor.
- b) to move a further amendment if the motion has been amended since he last spoke.
- c) if his first speech was on an amendment moved by another councillor, to speak on the main issue whether or not the amendment was carried.
- d) to exercise a right of reply.
  - e) on a point of order.
  - f) by way of a personal explanation.
  - g) on a Procedural Motion.

#### 12.7 Points of Order

- a) During the debate of a motion, a Councillor may interrupt only on a Point of Order or a Personal Explanation in which case the Councillor who was interrupted shall stop speaking. A Councillor raising a point of order shall identify the Standing Order which he considers has been breached or specify the irregularity in the meeting he is concerned by. A Personal Explanation shall be confined to some material part of a former speech by him/her which may have been misunderstood.
- b) Any Point of Order shall be decided by the Mayor/Chairman and this decision shall be final.

#### 12.8 Content of an Amendment

An amendment must be relevant to the Motion and either:

- Refer a matter to (or back to) a Committee or Working/Task Group
- leave out words and insert or add other words as long as the amendment shall not have the effect of negating a motion before the Council.

#### 12.9 Debate on Amendments and Procedural Motions

- a) Only one amendment may be moved and discussed at any one time.
- b) No further amendment may be moved until the amendment under discussion has been disposed of unless in the opinion of the Town Mayor/Chairman of the Council this would help the Council conduct its business. Where the Town Mayor/Chairman of the Council permits this the combined amendments will be discussed (but not voted on) together.
- c) If an amendment is lost a further different amendment may be moved.
- d) If an amendment is carried, the Motion as amended takes the place of the original Motion and becomes the substantive Motion on which any further amendments may be moved.
- e) After an amendment has been moved, the Mayor/Chairman will read out the amended motion before accepting any further amendments, or if there are none, put it to the vote.
- f) On a motion that the question be now put:  
If a motion that "The question be now put" is seconded and the Town Mayor/Chairman thinks the item has been sufficiently discussed, he will put the procedural motion to the vote. If it is passed he will give the mover of the original motion a right of reply or to waive his right of reply before putting his motion to the vote.
- g) On a motion to adjourn the debate or the meeting:  
If a motion "to adjourn the debate" or "to adjourn the meeting" is seconded and the Town Mayor/Chairman thinks that the item has not been sufficiently discussed and cannot be reasonably so discussed on that occasion he will put the procedural motion to the vote without giving the mover of the original motion the right of reply.
- h) On a motion to proceed to the next business:  
The Town Mayor/Chairman shall first put the formal motion to the vote without discussion and if it is passed then the Council shall immediately proceed to the next item

of business and any motions or amendments relating to item under discussion shall be lost.

- i) The adjournment of a debate or of the Council shall not prejudice the right of reply at the resumption.

### 13 **Voting**

13.1 ***Subject to a meeting being quorate, all questions at a meeting shall be decided by a majority of the councillors and non-councillors with voting rights present and voting.***

13.2 ***Unless standing orders provide otherwise, voting on a question shall be by a show of hands, acclamation or by electronic voting or on a ballot paper. At the request of a councillor, the voting on any question shall be recorded by the Town Clerk so as to show whether each councillor present and voting gave his vote for or against that question or abstained. Such a request shall be made before moving on to the next item of business on the agenda.***

13.3 ***The Town Mayor/Chairman may give an original vote on any matter put to the vote, and in any case of an equality of votes may give a casting vote whether or not he gave an original vote.***

### 14 **Rescission of previous Resolutions**

14.1 A decision (whether positive or negative) of the Council will not be reversed within six months except by a Special Resolution, the written notice of which must be signed by at least 10 members of the Council and be given to the Town Clerk at least ten days before a meeting at which it is to be considered. Such Special resolution, when voted on, must receive the backing of at least 10 members of the Council to reverse a previous decision.

14.2 When a Special Resolution or any other resolution has been agreed under the provisions of paragraph 14.1 of this Order, no similar resolution may be moved within a further six months.

### 15 **Committees and Working/Task Groups**

- a) Unless the council determines otherwise, a Committee/~~Working Group~~ may appoint a sub-Committee whose terms of reference and members shall be determined by the Committee.
- b) ***The members of a Committee may include non-councillors unless it is a Committee which regulates and controls the finances of the council.***
- c) Unless the council determines otherwise, all the members of an advisory Committee and a sub-Committee of the advisory Committee may be non-councillors.

#### 15.1 **Appointment & Membership**

- a) The Council may appoint Standing Committees and/or Working/Task Groups with specific Terms of Reference which will meet according to the schedule adopted by the Council but may hold additional meetings as and when required. An Officer delegated by the Town Clerk will attend every meeting.

- b) The membership of any Committee and/or Working/Task Group shall be determined by full Council which will not appoint any member of a Committee and/or Working/Task Group so as to hold office later than the next Annual Meeting.
- c) Council may appoint persons other than Members of the Council to any Committee and/or Working/Task Group. Such persons shall have the right to speak and vote but will not form part of the Quorum.
- d) The Town Mayor/Chairman and the Deputy Mayor/Vice-Chairman, ex-officio, shall be members of every Committee and/or Working/Task Group but will have no voting rights or the ability to propose motions on the Committees, Working/Task Groups on which their membership is ex-officio. They will not therefore form part of the Quorum as ex-officio members.
- e) The overall membership of all Standing Committees/Working Groups will reflect, as closely as possible, the political make-up of the Council. It is intended that as broad a range of Councillors as possible shall be represented on the Committees and/or Working Groups.
- f) When considering membership of *Working Groups* the Council will take account of the political make-up such that those who are not members of the majority party are fairly represented. It is suggested (but shall not be mandatory) that non-members of the majority party shall be entitled to a proportionate share ( $1/18^{\text{th}}$  per member) of the total places available on the Standing Working Groups, evenly spread over those Groups. Within this entitlement, at least one place on the main policy Working Group (Strategy and Finance Working Group) shall be available to those who are not part of the majority party. *In the case of there being four Working Groups of six members each (24 places available), this would mean that those who are not members of the majority party would normally be offered 1.33 places (24/18) i.e. 1 member = 1 place; 2 members = 3 places; 3 members = 4 places and 4 members = 5 places.* Task Groups and the Planning Consultative Group will not be required to adhere to this.
- g) All Councillors will be asked to submit annually to the Town Clerk an indication of the Committees/Working Groups on which they wish to serve, listed in order of their preference, together with a list of Outside Bodies on which they would like to represent the Council. The process of appointments will be as follows:
  - 1) The Town Clerk will attempt to fill the available spaces by initially allocating Councillors their first preferences and then filling the remaining spaces by allocating second and third preferences etc.
  - 2) Where there are not enough nominations to fill all the required positions on either Committees/Working Groups or positions on Outside Bodies, the Town Clerk will bring the matter to the attention of Council by asking for more nominations.
  - 3) Where more Councillors have indicated a first preference for a particular position than there are places available, the Town Clerk may try to negotiate an acceptable outcome with the nominees. Where this is not possible the Town Clerk will bring the matter to Council at which a vote will be taken.
- h) Notwithstanding Standing Order 15.1.b, the appointments for Committees and Working Groups for the forthcoming year will normally be agreed by Council at the last meeting of the Council year. In an election year, the appointments will take place at the first meeting after the Annual Meeting. This will enable the Annual Meeting to be a ceremonial meeting for the appointment of the Mayor.

- i) Voting on appointments to Committee and Working Groups shall normally be by ballot administered by the Town Clerk unless Council decides otherwise. Where there is a tie for the last place or places there will be a run-off vote between those tying for the last place(s). Any further tie may be settled by the Mayor/Chairman's casting vote.

## 15.2 Types of Committees/Working Groups and Task Groups

- a) **Standing Committees** will normally have delegated powers and as such will meet in public and observe the same rules of debate as the full Council. Every Committee may appoint sub-Committees for the purposes to be specified by the Committee with the Terms of Reference specified by the Committee. As more formal meetings, Committees will set the direction and strategy for officers to implement. Councillors have a policy setting role.
- b) **Working Groups** will generally be appointed on an annual basis to consider various areas of the Council's responsibility. They will not, unless specifically delegated by Council, have any decision making powers but will report back with recommendations to full Council which will be the decision making body for their areas of responsibility. Since they are not decision making bodies they will not be required to meet in public. On Working Groups, Councillors determine the higher level objectives and direction for services with officers advising on and implementing the detail. Councillors should be prepared to assist in the implementation as requested.
- c) **Task Groups** will be set up for a limited time to consider specific items and also report back to Working Groups or Council with their findings. Since they are not decision making bodies they will not be required to meet in public. On Task Groups, officers and councillors work side by side to develop projects and issues to achieve the Task Group's aims.
- d) **The Planning and Licensing Consultative Group** will be appointed to consider planning and licensing applications and related matters. It will ideally consist of nine councillors (one from every Ward). The Town Clerk will have delegated authority to submit observations to Waverley Borough Council or Surrey County Council, as appropriate, following consideration of matters by the Planning and Licensing Consultative Group. The Group may refer a planning application to Full Council or an appropriate Committee/Working Group to consider and make observations. The quorum of the Planning Consultative Group shall be three councillors with one officer in attendance. On the Planning and Licensing Consultative Group, councillors determine applications and advise officers on the relevant comments they wish to be included in the Council's responses to the relevant Planning or Licensing Authority.

## 15.3 Procedures

- a) Every Committee or Working Group will at its first meeting, unless the appointment was made at the last Council meeting when membership of the Working Group was determined, before proceeding to any other item on the agenda, elect a Chairman/Lead Member (and can elect a Vice-Chairman) who will normally hold office until the next Annual Meeting of the Council. ~~He~~**The Lead Member** will chair meetings of the Committee or Group, act as spokesperson for the Committee or Group and shall be responsible for reporting its activities to full Council.
- b) Ordinary meetings of Working Groups will be held on the dates adopted by Council and

at a time agreed between the Lead Member and the Town Clerk. The quorum shall be 3 councillors accompanied by an officer.

- c) The Chairman/Lead Member of a Committee or Working Group or the Town Mayor/Chairman of the Council may summon an additional meeting of that Committee, Working/Task Group as appropriate at any time by requesting the Town Clerk to issue a summons for the meeting.
- d) Committee and Working Group agendas will be assembled in three parts:
  - i. Part 1 – Items for decision/recommendation,
  - ii. Part 2 – Items for information
  - iii. Part 3 – Confidential items.
- e) Any Committee or Working Group desiring to incur expenditure shall give the Town Clerk a written estimate of the expenditure recommended for the coming year no later than October.
- f) Every Committee and or Working Group shall present a report of its activities to the next Council Meeting.
- g) A member who has proposed a resolution, which has been referred to any Committee and/or Working/Task Group of which he is not a member, may explain his resolution to the Committee, Working/Task Group but shall not vote.
- h) Any member of the Council who is not a member of a Committee and/or Working/Task Group shall nevertheless be entitled to attend any meeting of that Committee, Working/Task Group but he shall not be entitled to vote, and he shall not take part in the consideration of any business save by leave of the Chairman of the meeting.
- j) Any Council member attending in accordance with Standing Order 15.3-h, may be invited to speak on matters under discussion of which he may have special knowledge, such an invitation would be at the discretion of the Chairman.
- k) Members of Committees and Working Groups will address remarks/observations to the Chair but will not be bound by the Standing Order preventing them from speaking more than once.
- l) Members of Committees and Working Groups entitled to vote, shall vote by show of hands.
- m) ***The ~~Mayor/Chairmen/Lead Members of Committees and Working~~Chair of a meeting Groups shall in the case of an equality of votes have a second or casting vote whether or not they have exercised their original right to vote.***

## 16 **Resolutions on Sealing & Expenditure**

- 16.1 Other than in the case of an Emergency, any resolution which, if carried, would in the opinion of the Town Mayor/Chairman, substantially increase the budgeted expenditure upon any service which is under the management of the Council or substantially reduce the revenue at the disposal of any Committee, Working/Task Group, or which would involve unbudgeted capital expenditure, will, when proposed and seconded, stand adjourned without discussion to the next ordinary meeting of the Council.
- 16.2 The Council shall approve written estimates for the coming financial year at a meeting

before the end of the month of December and set its Precept before the end of January.

16.3 All payments by the council shall be authorised, approved and paid in accordance with the law, proper practices and the council's financial regulations. The Strategy and Finance Working Group will regularly monitor and review all transactions made and report to Council. All transactions for the previous period will be available ~~at Council meetings~~ for inspection and review by councillors for compliance.

16.4 ***A document shall not be sealed on behalf of the Council unless its sealing has been authorised by a resolution. The Council's Common seal alone shall be used for sealing documents. It shall be applied by the proper officer in the presence of two councillors who shall sign the document as witnesses.***

## 17 **Discussions and Resolutions Affecting Employees of the Council**

17.1 A matter personal to a member of staff that is being considered by a meeting of Council or the Strategy & Finance Working Group or the HR Panel is subject to standing order 22 (confidentiality).

17.2 Any persons responsible for all or part of the management of staff shall treat the written records of all meetings relating to their performance, capabilities, grievance or disciplinary matters as confidential and secure.

17.3 The council shall keep all written records relating to employees secure.

17.4 Only persons with line management responsibilities shall have access to staff records referred to in standing orders 17.2 and 17.3 above if so justified.

17.5 Access and means of access by keys and/or computer passwords to records of employment referred to in standing orders 17.2 and 17.3 above shall be provided only to the Town Clerk and the Mayor.

17.6 Access to relevant records will be provided to the Chair of the HR Panel as required for the conduct of its business.

17.7 If at a meeting a question arises relating to the appointment, conduct, promotion, dismissal, salary or conditions of service, of any person employed by the Council, it will not be considered until Councillors have decided whether the press and public will be excluded.

## 18 **Conduct at Meetings - Code of Conduct**

18.1 ***All councillors must observe the Council's Code of Conduct (as amended), a copy of which is annexed to these Standing Orders.***

18.2 All councillors shall undertake training in the code of conduct within 6 months of the delivery of their declaration of acceptance of office.

18.3 Councillors and any co-opted councillor, must within 28 days of their election or (in the case of a co-opted councillor) their appointment, notify the Town Clerk in writing (for registration in Farnham Town Council's Register of Interests) of any interests they are required to register under the Farnham Town Council Code of Conduct. They must also, within 28 days of becoming aware of any new or change to any interest they are required to register under the Authority's Code, notify the Town Clerk of that new interest or change.

Where a Councillor has an interest that, in accordance with the Farnham Town Council's Code of Conduct and any guidance, procedures or requirements issued by the Town Clerk or Monitoring Officer, precludes that Councillor from:

- (i) participating, or participating further, in any business before a meeting, or
- (ii) participating in any vote, or further vote, taken on the matter at the meeting that Councillor must withdraw from the meeting

- 18.4 ***A councillor or a non-councillor with voting rights who has a disclosable pecuniary interest or another interest as set out in the council's code of conduct in a matter being considered at a meeting is subject to statutory limitations or restrictions under the code on his right to participate and vote on that matter. An interest arising from the Code of Conduct shall be recorded in the minutes.***
- 18.5 At a meeting no person will persistently disregard the ruling of the Town Mayor/Chairman, wilfully obstruct business, or behave irregularly, offensively, improperly or in such a manner as to bring the Council into disrepute or act in such a manner as to breach the Code of Conduct adopted by the Council.
- 18.6 If, in the opinion of the Town Mayor/Chairman, a councillor or member of the public has ignored paragraph 18.5 of these Standing Orders, the Town Mayor/Chairman shall indicate to the Council his opinion and after that, any councillor may move that the councillor or member of the public named be not heard or leave the meeting, and the motion, if seconded, shall be agreed without discussion. *For remote or hybrid meetings, the Town Clerk or meeting host may act in accordance with Standing Order 11.10 and remove the person or place them in a virtual waiting room.*
- 18.7 If either of the motions mentioned in paragraph 18.6 above are ignored, the Town Mayor/Chairman may adjourn the meeting or take such further steps as necessary to enforce them.
- 18.8 The Council will deal with complaints against the Council or any Officer or Councillor in the manner as adopted by the Council's procedures except for those complaints which should be properly directed to the Monitoring Officer or the relevant external body for consideration.
- Dispensations**
- 18.9 The Town Clerk, may authorise a dispensation for Councillors under the Code of Conduct, after consultation with the Monitoring Officer if appropriate, in accordance with Section 33 of the Localism Act 2011. A dispensation granted under section 33 must specify the period for which it has effect, and that period may not exceed four years.
- 18.10 **Dispensation requests shall be in writing and submitted to the Proper Officer** as soon as possible before the meeting, or failing that, at the start of the meeting for which the dispensation is required.
- 18.11 A dispensation request shall confirm:
- i. the description and the nature of the disclosable pecuniary interest or other interest to which the request for the dispensation relates;
  - ii. whether the dispensation is required to participate at a meeting in a discussion only or a discussion and a vote;
  - iii. the date of the meeting or the period (not exceeding four years) for which the dispensation is sought; and
  - iv. an explanation as to why the dispensation is sought.

- 18.12 A decision as to whether to grant a dispensation shall be made by the Proper Officer and that decision is final.
- 18.13 ***A dispensation may be granted in accordance with standing order 18.12 above if having regard to all relevant circumstances the following applies:***
- i. ***without the dispensation the number of persons prohibited from participating in the particular business would be so great a proportion of the meeting transacting the business as to impede the transaction of the business*** (eg the representation of different political groups on the body transacting any particular business would be so upset as to alter the likely outcome of any vote relating to the business) ***or***
  - ii. ***granting the dispensation is in the interests of persons living in the council's area or***
  - iii. ***it is otherwise appropriate to grant a dispensation*** (such as for the setting of the budget or precept).

## 19 **Code of conduct complaints**

- 19.1 Upon notification by Waverley Borough Council that it is dealing with a complaint that a councillor or non-councillor with voting rights has breached the council's code of conduct, the Proper Officer shall, subject to standing order 22, report this to the council.
- 19.2 Where the notification in standing order 19.1 relates to a complaint made by the Proper Officer, the Proper Officer shall notify the Mayor and Leader of Council of this fact, and shall nominate another staff member to assume the duties of the Proper Officer in relation to the complaint until it has been determined and the council has agreed what action, if any, to take in accordance with standing order 19.4 below.
- 19.3 The council may:
- i. provide information or evidence where such disclosure is necessary to progress an investigation of the complaint or is required by law;
  - ii. seek information relevant to the complaint from the person or body with statutory responsibility for investigation of the matter.
- 19.4 ***Upon notification by Waverley Borough Council that a councillor or non-councillor with voting rights has breached the council's code of conduct, the council shall consider what, if any, action to take against him. Such action excludes disqualification or suspension from office.***

## 20 **Management of Information**

- 20.1 ***The Council shall have in place and keep under review, technical and organisational measures to keep secure information (including personal data) which it holds in paper and electronic form. Such arrangements shall include deciding who has access to personal data and encryption of personal data.***
- 20.2 ***The Council shall have in place, and keep under review, policies for the retention and safe destruction of all information (including personal data) which it holds in paper and electronic form. The Council's retention policy shall confirm the period for which information (including personal data) shall be retained or if this is not possible the criteria used to determine that period (e.g. the Limitation Act 1980).***
- 20.3 ***The agenda, papers that support the agenda and the minutes of a meeting shall not disclose or otherwise undermine confidential information or personal data without***



*legal justification.*

20.4 ***Councillors, staff, the Council's contractors and agents shall not disclose confidential information or personal data without legal justification.***

20.5 ***In accordance with freedom of information legislation, the Council shall publish information in accordance with its publication scheme and respond to requests for information held by the Council.***

20.6 ***The Council, shall publish information in accordance with the requirements of the Local Government (Transparency Requirements) (England) Regulations 2015.***

21 **Responsibilities Under Data Protection Legislation**

- a) The Council may appoint a Data Protection Officer.
- b) ***The Council shall have policies and procedures in place to respond to an individual exercising statutory rights concerning his personal data.***
- c) ***The Council shall have a written policy in place for responding to and managing a personal data breach.***
- d) ***The Council shall keep a record of all personal data breaches comprising the facts relating to the personal data breach, its effects and the remedial action taken.***
- e) ***The Council shall ensure that information communicated in its privacy notice(s) is in an easily accessible and available form and kept up to date.***
- f) ***The Council shall maintain a written record of its processing activities.***

22 **Responsibilities to Provide Information**

- a) ***In accordance with freedom of information legislation and the Local Government (Transparency Requirements) (England) Regulations 2015., the Council shall publish information in accordance with its publication scheme and respond to requests for information held by the Council.***

23 **Interests & Canvassing/Recommendations**

23.1 ***If a councillor has a personal interest as defined by the Farnham Town Council Code of Conduct then he shall declare such interest as soon as it becomes apparent, disclosing the existence and nature of that interest as required.***

23.2 Unless he has been granted a dispensation, a councillor or non-councillor with voting rights shall withdraw from a meeting when it is considering a matter in which he has a disclosable pecuniary interest. He may return to the meeting after it has considered the matter in which he had the interest. **Dispensation requests shall be in writing and submitted to the Proper Officer** as soon as possible before the meeting, or failing that, at the start of the meeting for which the dispensation is required.

23.3 ***The Town Clerk may be required to compile and hold a register of councillors' interests in accordance with agreement reached with the Monitoring Officer of the Responsible Authority and/or as required by statute.***

23.4 The obligations and disabilities imposed by this standing order shall also apply to a member of a Committee and/or Working/Task Group who is **not** also a member of the Council who has a personal or prejudicial interest in a matter under consideration at a meeting.

23.5 If a candidate for any appointment under the Council is to his knowledge related to any councillor or to the holder of any office under the Council, he and the person to whom he is

related shall disclose the relationship in writing to the Town Clerk. A candidate who fails so to do will be disqualified from the appointment and, if appointed, will be dismissed without notice. The Town Clerk shall report to the Council or to the appropriate Committee, Working/Task Group any such disclosure. Where a relationship to a councillor is disclosed, the preceding clauses of this Standing Order 20 shall apply as appropriate.

- 23.6 Canvassing of members of the Council or of any Committee, Working/Task Group directly or indirectly, for any appointment under the Council shall disqualify the candidate for such appointment.
- 23.7 A member of the Council or of any Committee, Working/Task Group shall not solicit any person for appointment to or by the Council or recommend any person for an appointment or promotion; but, any such councillor may give a written testimonial of a candidate's ability, experience or character for submission to the Council with an application for appointment.
- 23.8 Standing Order 20 shall apply to tenders as if the person making the tender were a candidate for an appointment.
- 23.9 The Town Clerk shall make known the purpose and importance of the relevant sections of this Standing Order 20 to every candidate for appointment.

## 24 **Inspection of Documents**

- 24.1 ***All Minutes and formal Notes kept by the Council and by any Committee and/or Working/Task Group shall be open for the inspection of any member of the Council.***
- 24.2 ***Minutes and formal Notes shall also be open to the inspection of any local government elector of the parish as required by section 228 Local Government Act 1972.***
- 24.3 Subject to standing orders to the contrary or in respect of matters which are confidential, a councillor may, for the purpose of his official duties (but not otherwise), inspect any document in the possession of the Council or a Committee or a sub-Committee and/or Working/Task Group and request a copy for the same purpose.

## 25. **Confidential Business & Unauthorised Activities**

- 25.1 No member of the Council, a Committee or a Working/Task Group will disclose to any person in any form who is not a member of the Council any business that is declared confidential by the Council, the Committee or the Working/Task Group.
- 25.2 Any councillor who disobeys Standing Order 22.1 may be removed from a Committee and Working/Task Group by resolution of the Council and the matter will be reported to the Monitoring Officer and the relevant Standards Panel or external body.
- 25.3 No member of the Council or of any Committee and/or Working/Task Group shall, unless specifically authorised so to do by Council:
- a) Inspect in the name of or on behalf of the Council any lands or premises which the Council has a right or duty to inspect;
  - b) Issue orders, instructions or directions to organisations or persons, including to Council staff.

## 26 **Planning Applications**

- 26.1 The Town Clerk will, as soon as it is received, record the following information for each planning application notified to the Council:
- (a) the date on which it was received;
  - (b) the name of the applicant and application reference;
  - (c) the place to which it refers.
- 26.2 The Town Clerk shall refer every planning application received to the Planning and Licensing Consultative Group.

## 27 **Financial Matters and Procurement**

- 27.1 The Council shall consider and approve Financial Regulations drawn up by the Responsible Financial Officer. Such Regulations shall include detailed arrangements for the following:
- a) the accounting records and systems of internal control;
  - b) the assessment and management of risks faced by the Council;
  - c) the work of the Internal Auditor and the receipt of regular reports from the Internal Auditor which shall be required at least annually;
  - d) the financial reporting requirements of members and local electors;
  - e) procurement policies (subject to (2) below) including the setting of values for different procedures where the contract has an estimated value less than £50,000 and -whether contracts with an estimated value below **£25,000** due to special circumstances are exempt from a tendering process or procurement exercise”.
- e)f) The Public Tender Regulations (2015) shall apply to contracts in excess of £25,000.
- 27.2 Any proposed contract for the supply of goods, materials, services and the execution of works with an estimated value in excess of £50,000 shall be procured on the basis of a formal tender as summarised in 247.3 below.
- 27.3 Any formal tender process shall comprise the following steps:
- a) a public notice of intention to place a contract to be placed ~~in a local newspaper~~ on the Contract Finder website;
  - b) a specification of the goods, materials, services and the execution of works shall be drawn up;
  - c) tenders are to be sent, in a sealed marked envelope, to the Clerk by a stated date and time;
  - d) tenders submitted are to be opened, after the stated closing date and time, by the Clerk and at least one member of Council;
  - e) tenders are then to be assessed and reported to the appropriate meeting of Council.
- 27.4 Neither the Council, nor any Committee or Working/Task Group, is bound to accept the lowest tender, estimate or quote. Any detailed tender notice shall contain a reference to the relevant portions of Standing Orders 20 & 22 regarding improper activity.
- 27.5 The Financial Regulations of the Council shall be subject to regular review for fitness of purpose, at least once every four years.
- 27.6 ***A public contract regulated by the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 with an estimated value in excess of £25,000 but less than the relevant thresholds in standing order 18(f) is subject to Regulations 109-114 of the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 which include a requirement on the Council to advertise the contract opportunity on the Contracts Finder website regardless of what other means it uses to advertise the***

*opportunity unless it proposes to use an existing list of approved suppliers (framework agreement).*

27.7 **A public contract regulated by the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 with an estimated value in excess of specified thresholds for a public service or supply contract; a public works contract; or public contract in connection with the supply of gas, heat, electricity, drinking water, transport services shall comply with the relevant procurement procedures and other requirements in the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 which include advertising the contract opportunity on the Contracts Finder website and in Official Journal of the EU.**

## 28 **Accounts and Financial Statement**

Proper practices” in standing orders refer to the most recent version of “Governance and Accountability for Local Councils – a Practitioners’ Guide”.

28.1 All payments by the Council shall be authorised, approved and paid in accordance with the law, proper practices and the Council’s financial regulations.

28.2 The Responsible Financial Officer shall supply to each councillor as soon as practicable after 30 June, 30 September and 31 December in each year a statement to summarise the Council’s income and expenditure for each quarter; the Council’s aggregate income and expenditure for the year to date; the balances held at the end of the quarter being reported and which includes a comparison with the budget for the financial year and highlights any actual or potential overspends.

28.3 As soon as possible after the financial year end at 31 March, the Responsible Financial Officer shall provide each councillor with a statement summarising the Council’s income and expenditure for the last quarter and the year to date for information; and to the Council the accounting statements for the year in the form of Section 2 of the annual governance and accountability return, as required by proper practices, for consideration and approval.#

28.4 The year-end accounting statements shall be prepared in accordance with proper practices and apply the income and expenditure accounts for the year to 31 March. The annual governance and accountability return of the Council, which is subject to external audit, including the annual governance statement, shall be presented to the Council for consideration and formal approval before 30 June.

## 29 **Standing Orders Generally**

All or part of a standing order, except one that incorporates mandatory statutory or legal requirements, may be suspended by resolution in relation to the consideration of an item on the agenda for a meeting.

- a) A motion to add to or vary or revoke one or more of the Council’s standing orders, except one that incorporates mandatory statutory or legal requirements, shall be proposed by a special motion, the written notice by at least 6 councillors to be given to the Proper Officer in accordance with standing order 6.
- b) The Proper Officer shall provide a copy of the Council’s standing orders to a councillor as soon as possible.
- c) The decision of the chairman of a meeting as to the application of standing orders at the meeting shall be final.

**Date of Adoption**

These Standing Orders were reviewed and adopted by Council in ~~January 2019~~March 2021.

Review Date – ~~January 2021~~March 2023

# I. Comments, compliments and concerns

## Introduction

1.1 Your views help the Town Council improve services and recognise your particular needs. If you think we could do better, we would like to hear more from you. We would also like to know when you think we did something well, and if anything in particular impressed you.

1.2 You can contact the Town Council by:

- Calling: 01252 712667
- Emailing: [customerservices@farnham.gov.uk](mailto:customerservices@farnham.gov.uk)
- Writing to: Farnham Town Council, South Street, Farnham, Surrey. GU9 7RN

More information is available at [www.farnham.gov.uk](http://www.farnham.gov.uk) where you can also report any matters on Farnham or other Council services at [www.farnham.gov.uk/report](http://www.farnham.gov.uk/report)

## Informing the Town Council of a concern

1.3 Complaint procedures are an important part of nearly every commercial or public service organisation. This is because through dealing with and responding to complaints or instances of poor performance or delivery of service an organisation sees its faults and has the opportunity to address and improve them.

1.4 Concerns about procedures or the delivery of services and suggestions of how they can be improved are welcomed, and issues can be reported at [www.farnham.gov.uk](http://www.farnham.gov.uk) or by contacting us using the details above.

1.5 Talking to staff will usually resolve things. Please raise matters with the staff concerned and we hope to be able to put things right straight away or explain why the Town Council is unable to do so. This is often the quickest route to getting an issue resolved and it is generally in the interests of the person raising a concern and the Town Council to try to resolve the matter informally through the normal channels of communication, rather than referring to the Town Council's complaints procedure. However, if you are unhappy with the response provided, you can make a complaint by following our complaints procedure.

## 2. Complaints procedure

2.1 Depending on the nature of the complaint there will be an occasion when the Town Council cannot resolve a complaint and the complainant may wish to take the matter further.

2.2 Some complainants may be angry and aggrieved, sometimes with good cause. A very small minority make complaints that are vexatious, in that they persist unreasonably with their complaints, or make complaints in order to try and make life difficult for the Council rather than genuinely to resolve a grievance. This may involve making several complaints about different matters, or continuing to raise the same or similar matters repeatedly. However, most complaints can be resolved satisfactorily.

2.3 Guidance for dealing with vexatious complainants is set out at paragraph 4.

### 3. The definition of a complaint

A complaint is.....

**“An expression of dissatisfaction about the council’s action or lack of action or about the standard of a service, whether the action taken or the service was provided by the council itself or a body acting on behalf of the Council”.**

**A COMPLAINT IS NOT AN INITIAL REQUEST FOR SERVICE.**

### 4. Complaints Procedure

Farnham Town Council’s procedure for dealing with complaints is as follows:

- 4.1 Stage 1:** In the event of a complaint about Farnham Town Council, the matter should be first reported to the Officer responsible for delivering that service, who will respond to the complaint and attempt to find a resolution.
- 4.2 Stage 2:** In the event that this cannot be resolved by the Officer, the matter will be passed to an independent Officer appointed by the Town Clerk who will investigate the complaint.
- 4.3 Stage 3:** In the event that the complaint cannot be resolved at Level 2 of the complaints procedure or an appeal is lodged against a decision previously taken by the Independent Officer, the complaint will be reviewed by the Town Clerk.
- 4.4 Stage 4: Appeals** If an appeal is made against the decision previously taken by the Town Clerk, the appeal will be reported to the Strategy and Finance Working Group or an appointed panel of 3 Members or the Cemeteries Working Group, depending on the nature of the complaint. The decision of the appointed group is final and will be reported to Full Council.
- 4.5** Complaints about a policy decision made by the Council will be referred back to the Council.

**Note:** This procedure does not cover complaints about the conduct of a member of the Town Council. Any complaint that a Councillor may have breached the Council’s adopted Code of Conduct should be referred to the **Town Clerk or** Monitoring Officer at Waverley Borough Council, The Burys, Godalming GU7 1HR.

- For guidance on how to complain to Farnham Town Council, please refer to **Appendix A**.
- For guidance for Employees on how to deal with a complaint, please refer to **Appendix B**.
- For guidance for Employees on how to record and monitor a complaint, please refer to **Appendix C**.
- For Complaints to be referred elsewhere see **Appendix D**

## 5. Vexatious or Persistent Complainants

Habitual or vexatious complainants can be a problem for Council Staff and Members. The difficulty in handling such complainants is that they are time consuming and wasteful of resources in terms of Officer and Member time and displace scarce human resources that could otherwise be spent on Council priorities. Whilst the Council endeavours to respond with patience and sympathy to the needs of all complainants there are times when there is nothing further that can reasonably be done to assist or to rectify a real or perceived problem.

5.1 The term habitual means 'done repeatedly or as a habit'. Farnham Town Council considers 'habitual' as three times or more. The term vexatious is recognised in law and means 'denoting an action or the bringer of an action that is brought without sufficient grounds for winning, purely to cause annoyance to the defendant'.

### **5.2 When is a complainant not Vexatious?**

5.2.1 It is important to distinguish between people who make a number of complaints because they really think things have gone wrong, and people who are simply being difficult. Complainants will often be frustrated and aggrieved and therefore consideration must be made for the merits of the case rather than the attitude.

5.2.2 Even if someone has made a vexatious complaint in the past, it cannot be assumed that the next complaint is also vexatious. Each complaint must be considered, and a decision made as to whether it is vexatious or genuine.

5.2.3 Each piece of correspondence must be read and evaluated. If the officer dealing with the complaint is concerned that it could be vexatious the complaint must be referred to the Town Clerk who, in consultation with the Town Mayor will decide whether it is vexatious.

### **5.3. Criteria for Determining Habitual or Vexatious complaints**

Complainants (and/or anyone acting on their behalf) may be deemed to be habitual or vexatious where previous or current contact with them shows that they meet **one** of the following criteria:

Where complainants:

5.3.1 Persist in pursuing a complaint where the Council's complaints process has been fully and properly implemented and exhausted

5.3.2 Persistently change the substance of a complaint or continually raise new issues or seek to prolong contact by continually raising further concerns or questions whilst the complaint is being addressed. (Care must be taken, however, not to disregard new issues which are significantly different from the original complaint as they need to be addressed as separate complaints).

5.3.3 Are repeatedly unwilling to accept documented evidence given as being factual or deny receipt of an adequate response in spite of correspondence specifically answering their questions or do not accept that facts can sometimes be difficult to verify when a long period of time has elapsed.

5.3.4 Regularly focus on a trivial matter to an extent which is out of proportion to its significance and continue to focus on this point. It is recognised that determining what is



a trivial matter can be subjective and careful judgement will be used in applying this criteria.

- 5.3.5 Repeatedly do not clearly identify the precise issues which they wish to be investigated, despite reasonable efforts of the Council to help them specify their concerns, and/or where the concerns identified are not within the remit of the Council to investigate.
- 5.3.6 Have threatened, used physical violence or intimidation towards employees or Members of the Council at any time. This will, in itself, cause personal contact with the complainant and/or their representative to be discontinued and the complainant will, thereafter, only be contacted through written communication. The Council has determined that any complainant who threatens or uses actual physical violence towards employees will be regarded as a vexatious complainant. The complainant will be informed of this in writing together with notification of how future contact with the Council is to be made. If an employee or Member is meeting a complainant, the Town Council's Lone Working Policy will apply.
- 5.3.7 Have, in the course of addressing a registered complaint, had an excessive number of contacts with the Council – placing unreasonable demands on employees. A contact may be in person, by telephone, letter, email or fax. Judgement will be used to determine excessive contact taking into account the specific circumstances of each individual case.
- 5.3.8 Have harassed or been verbally abusive on more than one occasion towards employees dealing with the complainant. Employees recognise that complaints may sometimes act out of character in times of stress, anxiety or distress and will make reasonable allowances for this. *Some complainants may have a mental health disability and there is a need to be sensitive in circumstances of that kind.*
- 5.3.9 Are known to have recorded meetings or face-to-face/telephone conversations without the prior knowledge and consent of other parties involved.
- 5.3.10 Make unreasonable demands on the Council and its employees and fail to accept that these may be unreasonable, for example, insist on responses to complaints or enquiries being provided more urgently than is reasonable or within the Council's complaints procedure or normal recognised practice.
- 5.3.11 Make unreasonable complaints which impose a significant burden on the human resources of the Council and where the complaint:
- ◆ Clearly does not have any serious purpose or value; or
  - ◆ Is designed to cause disruption or annoyance; or
  - ◆ Has the effect of harassing the public authority; or
  - ◆ Can otherwise fairly be characterised as obsessive or manifestly unreasonable
- 5.3.12 Make repetitive complaints and allegations which ignore the replies which Council Officers have supplied in previous correspondence.

## 6. Procedure for dealing with Vexatious Complaints

### **Complaints about the same matter**

#### **6.1 (a) no new information**

- 6.1.1 If the complainant has not exhausted the Council's complaints procedure, they should be referred to the next stage of the procedure.

- 6.1.2 If the complainant does not pursue the complaint to the next stage, and continues nonetheless to correspond, the correspondence must be read by the officer who originally dealt with the complaint. If it raises no significant new matters and presents no new information, the earlier advice should be referred to. The complainant should be warned that the Council will not enter into any further correspondence about the matter, other than as set out above. The decision as to whether or not correspondence is continued will be made by the Town Clerk in consultation with the Town Mayor.
- 6.1.3 If the complainant still does not take advice, any further correspondence that does not raise any significant new matters or present any new information should simply be filed with no acknowledgement sent.

## **6.2 (b) New Information**

- 6.2.1 If the complaint contains new information, this must be evaluated by the officer dealing with the complaint. A response should then be sent to the complainant. The letter must include telling the complainant of the next appropriate stage in the complaints procedure.

## **6.3 (c) Complaints about similar matters**

- 6.3.1 The most difficult vexatious complaints to deal with are often complaints that are slightly different from the original complaint, but about the same broad area of activity. A decision will have to be made as to whether or not the matters are sufficiently different to justify being considered as a new complaint.

## **6.4 (d) Complaints about different matters**

- 6.4.1 If a complainant keeps making complaints about different matters, each complaint should normally be considered in the usual way under the complaints procedure.

## **6.5 (e) Trivial complaints**

- 6.5.1 However, if the new complaints are about entirely trivial matters, or matters that have clearly not caused the complainant any injustice, it may be appropriate to close down the complaint at Stage 1. This should only be done with the agreement of Town Clerk in consultation with the Town Mayor. The complainant should be told this, and there is no need to provide any right to appeal. Subsequent complaints should then simply be noted.

## **6.6 Vexatious complaints made by Telephone**

- 6.6.1 A complaint to the Council does not have to be made in writing. The complainant's address and telephone number should be taken, allowing the Council to correspond with the complainant. However, if a complainant keeps telephoning either to discuss an existing complaint or to make a new complaint and this is proving time consuming and disruptive, it may be reasonable to ask them to put their concerns in writing and to discontinue the call. If the problem persists, it may be reasonable to tell the complainant that the Council will, for a set period, not accept telephone calls and only deal with the complainant in writing. This will only be done after discussion with the Town Clerk.
- 6.6.2 If the complainant is told that the Council will only deal with his or her concerns in writing, a letter should be sent to the complainant to confirm this, how long the ban will apply, and the reason for it. At the end of the period the matter should be reviewed, and the ban lifted if appropriate.

- 6.6.3 There will never be a blanket ban for an unspecified period of time.
- 6.6.4 The decision will be made by the Town Clerk in consultation with the Town Mayor/and/or Council.

### **6.7 Vexatious complaints made by Email**

- 6.7.1 A complaint to the Council may be received via email. The complainant's address and telephone number should be taken, allowing the Council to correspond with the complainant. However, if a complainant keeps emailing either to discuss an existing complaint or to make a new complaint and this is proving time consuming and disruptive, it may be reasonable to ask them to put their concerns in a formal letter providing contact details and to discontinue the call. If the problem persists, it may be reasonable to tell the complainant that the Council will, for a set period, not accept emails and only deal with the complainant by letter. This will only be done after discussion with the Town Clerk.
- 6.7.2 If the complainant is told that the Council will only deal with his or her concerns in writing, a letter should be sent to the complainant to confirm this, how long the ban will apply, and the reason for it. At the end of the period the matter should be reviewed, and the ban lifted if appropriate.
- 6.7.3 There will never be a blanket ban for an unspecified period of time.
- 6.7.4 The decision will be made by the Town Clerk in consultation with the Town Mayor/and/or Council.

### **6.8 Co-ordinating dealings with vexatious complainants**

- 6.8.1 Vexatious complainants often contact many different people within the Council including Members of the Council, and can try and take advantage of the differing responses they may receive. It is important to try and ensure that a vexatious complainant has one main contact within the Council. In such circumstances, the Town Clerk will advise on the best approach, usually by identifying a single point of contact.

### **6.9 Dealing with Habitual or Vexatious Complainants**

The options below can be used on their own or in combination depending on the circumstances of the case and whether the complaint process is ongoing or completed.

- 6.9.1 A letter to the complainant setting out responsibilities of the Council so that the Council can process the complaint. If terms are contravened, consideration will then be given to implementing other action as indicated below.
- 6.9.2 Decline contact with the complainant, either in person, by telephone or by email or any combination of these, provided that contact is maintained either by letter or fax. This may also mean that only one named officer will be nominated to maintain contact (and a named deputy in their absence). The complainant will be notified of this person.
- 6.9.3 Notify the complainant, in writing, that the Council has responded fully to the points raised and has tried to resolve the complaint but there is nothing more to add and continuing contact on the matter will serve no useful purpose. The complainant will also be notified that the correspondence is at an end, advising the complainant that they are being treated as

a habitual or vexatious complainant and as such the Council does not intend to engage in further correspondence dealing with the complaint.

- 6.9.4 Inform the complainant that in extreme circumstances the Council will seek legal advice on habitual or vexatious complaints.
- 6.9.5 Temporarily suspend all contact with the complainant, in connection with the issues relating to the complaint being considered habitual or vexatious, while seeking advice or guidance from its solicitor or other relevant agencies.

## 7. Complaints that cannot be resolved by the Council

- 7.1 Complaints that cannot be resolved by the Council and the complainant wishes to take the matter further include the following:
  - Breaches of the Members Code of Conduct for the Council may result in an allegation being made to the Monitoring Officer at Waverley Borough Council. This may be in respect of financial wrongdoing, pecuniary interests, not complying with equality legislation and so on.
  - Any matter that raises a suspicion of criminal wrongdoing can, of course, be referred to the police
  - Local electors have a statutory right to object to a Council's audit of accounts (s. 16 Audit Commission Act 1998)
  - Where the Council carries out functions on behalf of another authority, such as litter picking or crime and disorder measures under an agency agreement with the Borough Council, the complaint can be referred to them.
  - Complaints under the Freedom of Information legislation, that the Council has not released information in the manner that person believes it should have done, can be referred to the Information Commissioner.