



# FARNHAM TOWN COUNCIL



## Notes Strategy & Finance Working Group

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### Time and date

9.30 am on Tuesday 20th April, 2021

### Place

Town Clerk's Office - Town Offices

### 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 Lynch (Town Clerk), Iain McCready (Business and Facilities Manager) and Katie Knowles (Governance and Community Engagement Manager)

### 1. Apologies

POINTS	ACTION
There were no apologies for absence received. All Councillors were present.	

### 2. Declarations of interest

POINTS	ACTION
In addition to declarations of interests by double and triple hatted councillors the following declarations were made: 1) Cllr Merryweather as Portfolio holder for Assets at Waverley Borough Council in relation to Gostrey Meadow and Tice's Meadow. 2) Cllr Edmonds in relation to Plastic Free Farnham	

### 3. Minutes of the last meeting

POINTS	ACTION
The minutes of the meeting held on 2 <sup>nd</sup> March were agreed.	

### 4. Finance Report

POINTS	ACTION
<p>i) The Working Group reviewed the 2020/21 outturn accounts for audit at Appendix B i, ii, iii.</p> <p>The Town Clerk introduced the Financial Year End Report at Appendix B iii. 2020-21 had been a challenging year against the backdrop of the coronavirus pandemic. Expenditure was significantly reduced with fewer events and activities able to take place. Working alongside community partners and volunteers the Coronavirus Hardship Fund had operated as separate part of the Town Council accounts and a range of new initiatives were undertaken.</p> <p>Additional costs had been incurred that enabled staff to work from home alongside additional measures that made the Town Hall and Depot a covid-safe environment. The adoption of Zoom meetings for decision making and consultation events had enabled transparency and engagement to continue in what would otherwise have been challenging circumstances.</p> <p>The Town Clerk explained the outturn for the Year ended 31<sup>st</sup> March set out at page 20 of Annex Biii. Whilst expenditure had significantly reduced this had resulted in a surplus of income over expenditure of £184,312. However, after income received for specific purposes (such as the Hardship Fund and Community Infrastructure Levy) and Council decisions that had not yet been able to be implemented were accounted for, the net income over expenditure was £64,120 to move to reserves.</p> <p>ii) The Working Group reviewed the cash &amp; Investment reconciliation 2020/21 at Appendix C. The Town Clerk confirmed the Council's investments were not protected by the Government's Financial Services Compensation scheme since the Council had investments in excess of £500k.</p> <p>Cllr Edmonds asked if additional measures could be taken to protect Council investments. The Town Clerk advised the Council's Investment Strategy mitigates against risk. Investments would only be made in low risk, high liquidity, triple A rated investments.</p> <p>The Town Clerk introduced the explanation for significant variances at page 16 of Annex B iii to assist Members in understanding the 2020/21 Outturn. An explanation of variances that must accompany the Annual Governance and Accountability Return.</p> <p>Cllr Dickson asked that the increase in CCTV expenditure be explained (code 4190). The Town Clerk advised the increase was because of a move from analogue to digital cameras, additional traffic counting software and new cameras for traffic management purposes. These costs were be offset against a contribution from Surrey County Council.</p> <p>Cllr Cockburn asked for an update on the planters for social distancing. The Town Clerk covered the update under item 9, Town Clerk's update.</p> <p>iii) The Working Group noted the position on Debtors detailed at Appendix D and that there none were cause for concern.</p>	<p><b>Recommendation to Council:</b></p> <p><b>i) The Annual Governance Statement at section I; and</b></p> <p><b>ii) The Accounting Statements 2020/21 at Section 2 of the Annual Return be approved and signed by the Chairman.</b></p>

iv) The Working Group reviewed and agreed the Asset Register as at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2021 at Appendix E. It was noted that the 2019/20 Asset value would be restated to include assets worth £5,069 omitted in the year end calculation.

v) The Working Group reviewed and agreed the Draft Report and Financial Statements for 2020/21 including the outturn on reserves at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2021 and grant allocations during the year at Appendix F.

vi) The Working Group reviewed and agreed the earmarked reserves. The Town Clerk explained Councils should review their earmarked reserves as part of the year end process.

Whilst some reserves must be retained, Council had made specific proposals for the year end. These included the proposed creation of a new reserve for Youth facilities (£25k); an increase of £25k for Environmental projects; the addition of £40k into the Public conveniences budget as the project had slipped; the World Craft Town reserve increased by £5k and the tourism development by £20k to provide a contribution to a new destination centre or arts project if one were to emerge. The standard budgeted amounts would be added to their codes as expected and the Council Chamber earmarked reserve would reduce by £10k following the work undertaken in the year.

The Working Group considered and agreed to undertake a review of the earmarked reserves in the Autumn 2021.

vii) The Working Group noted the end of year Internal Auditor letter 2020/21 had not been received in time for the meeting but would be presented to Full Council for consideration.

viii) The Working Group reviewed and agreed:  
The Annual Governance Statement at section 1 and The Accounting Statements 2020/21 at Section 2 of the Annual Return, for submission to Council.

ix) The Working Group reviewed and agreed the list of direct debits and standing orders at Appendix I.

## 5. Reports from Task Groups

POINTS	ACTION
<p>I)The Leader updated The Working Group on the Infrastructure Planning Group. The Town Council's response to the Optimised Infrastructure Plan had been submitted and the Town Clerk advised the Programme Team would attend a future informal meeting of the Council, to provide formal feedback to councillors.</p> <p>The Town Clerk updated The Working Group on a number of town centre issues advising that matters had been raised with Surrey County Council and that discussions are ongoing.</p>	

The Working Group considered the Infrastructure Programme's 'quick wins'. Chris Tunstall had advised that the replacement of cobbles in Castle Street would be to a high specification. Further, the Programme Team were receptive to considering relocating the Taxi rank outside Lloyds Bank to the opposite side, which would support the Council's aspirations for a café area at that location.

Cllr Cockburn raised concerns about the lack of consultation or reference to Full Council about changes in the Town. Farnham Conservation Area Management Plan (FCAMP) had been jointly signed up to and sets out expectations in respect of street furniture including signage and bollards etc. A regular dialogue between Members and the Infrastructure Programme was endorsed by the Working Group.

The Working Group discussed the ongoing need for planters following easing of restrictions on 12 April and their impact on increased traffic. The Town Clerk highlighted Council had voiced its aspirations for pedestrianisation and the social distancing measures provided an opportunity to see how it might work. Cllr Merryweather commented the planters were installed because of Covid to facilitate social distancing and if the planters were to be considered as a forerunner to pedestrianisation, this should be communicated in a transparent way.

Following the closure of the consultation period for the HGV ban the Working Group discussed how it might be monitored to ensure compliance. It was noted the outcome of the consultation had not yet been published.

2) The Working Group received the notes of the Younger People Task Group held on 12th March at Appendix J. Katie Knowles reported that the meeting was attended by representatives of youth services that provided an update on their activities and gave feedback on the proposed youth shelter at Borelli Walk and officers are investigating external funding sources.

The Town Clerk advised Cllr Mirylees was looking to develop a project plan in the new council year to provide a clear focus for the Working Group's objectives.

### 3) Assets Task Group

The Working Group received the notes of the Asset Task Group held on 15 April at Appendix K and Annex I and noted an update on the following contracts:

#### 1. Central Car Park Toilets

Farnham Town Council commissioned Drake and Kannemeyer to produce two designs for the refurbishment of the Central Car Park toilets. The Assets Task Group proposed a limited refurbishment. The Working Group reviewed indicative costs set out on page 50 of the report, that included management fees. Cllr Attfield advised Cllr Dunsmore had reviewed the costs and was largely satisfied.

It was agreed to recommend to Council to proceed with the refurbishment of the Central Car Park toilets at a cost of £90,000.

Cllr Dickson recorded her objection to the recommendation on the basis that she felt the proposed solution had not addressed the diversity issue.

**2. The Play Area in Gostrey Meadow**

The Working Group noted the improvements that had been carried out within existing budgets.

**3. Hale Chapels**

The Working Group received and reviewed plans from West Waddy Architects. A meeting of the Assets Task Group with the Cemeteries Working Group would be convened to consider them in detail.

**4. Ridgeway Café**

Officers were still awaiting further scaled drawings from the Ridgeway School.

**5. West Street Cemetery Gates**

Iain McCready had supervised the removal of the cemetery gates that would be taken to a forge in Guildford for cleaning and report on their condition prior to restoration. The Town Clerk advised each gate was listed.

**6. CCTV**

A new CCTV cameras had been installed at Gostrey Meadow and the CCTV cameras situated in South Street outside the Methodist Church, and on Longbridge had been upgraded from analogue to digital.

Cllr Beaman enquired whether there was provision for CCTV at Bishops Meadow. The Town Clerk advised Bishops Meadow was privately owned and that the Town Council had supported Trustee's in pursuing CCTV, with an option incorporate their scheme with the Depot scheme. Trustees had been content with the level of Officer support.

The Working group noted all CCTV cameras were available to the Police via an IP address, although Officers tend to request footage of any incident rather than monitoring in real time.

**6. Public and Community Assets**

<b>POINTS</b>	<b>ACTION</b>
<p>The Leader introduced an item relating to the following public and community assets.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Tice's Meadow</li> <li>2) Farnham Museum</li> <li>3) The Memorial Hall</li> <li>4) Montrose House</li> <li>5) Farnham Library</li> </ul> <p>The Working Group noted the updates received as to the current status of Tice's Meadow and Farnham Museum. After a detailed discussion regarding the other Town and community assets, and the extent to which the Town Council should be involved in assets that were the responsibility of other authorities, the Working Group agreed that a strategic paper should be</p>	

prepared to be considered by the Working Group that clearly set out the potential role of the Town Council in relation to the different public assets.	
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## 7. Review of Council Policies

POINTS	ACTION
There were no Council Policies for review.	

## 8. Consultations

POINTS	ACTION
There were no Consultations to report.	

## 9. Town Clerk update

POINTS	ACTION
The Town Clerk informed the Working Group that a member of the outside work force, was about to complete the rare achievement of 25 years' service with Farnham Town Council. The Working Group endorsed a proposal to mark this and agreed the Town Clerk progress this in consultation with The Mayor and Deputy Mayor.	

## 10. Date of next meeting

POINTS	ACTION
The date of the next meeting will be held on Tuesday 15 June at 9.30am.	

The meeting ended at Time Not Specified

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