



# FARNHAM TOWN COUNCIL



## Notes

### Strategy & Finance Working Group

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#### **Time and date**

9.30 am on Tuesday 26th July, 2022

#### **Place**

Council Chamber - Farnham Town Hall

#### **Attendees:**

Members: Councillors Pat Evans (Lead Member), David Attfield, David Beaman, Carole Cockburn, Sally Dickson (via Zoom) , Alan Earwaker (ex-Officio); George Hesse (via zoom) and Mark Merryweather

Other Members in attendance: Cllr MacLeod and Cllr Ward

Officers: Iain Lynch (Town Clerk), Jenny de Quervain (Planning and Civic Administrator) via Zoom, Iain McCready (part)

#### **1. Apologies**

Apologies were received from Cllr Blishen, Cllr Mirylees and from Cllr Cockburn for late arrival.

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

Cllr Merryweather declared an interest as the relevant portfolio holder at WBC for financial and property matters

#### **3. Minutes of the last meeting**

The minutes of the meeting held on 14<sup>th</sup> June were agreed as a correct record.

#### **4. Finance report**

The Working Group reviewed the quarterly finance papers attached at Appendix B including the Income and Expenditure reports by code and committee to 30<sup>th</sup> June and the Trial Balance. There were no matters which were of cause for concern.

The Working Group also noted that BACS documentation was available for inspection.

## 5. Farnham Infrastructure Programme

Cllr Beaman introduced his draft report in response to the Farnham Infrastructure Programme consultation which had been circulated to all councillors. He said this was an important stage of the consultation process and so he had raised a number of questions for consideration. The consultation had now been extended until 3<sup>rd</sup> October, and as such the Working Group could prepare an initial response now and have a further discussion in September.

In terms of the points in Cllr Beaman's paper the following issues were raised.

- 1) Extending 20MPH zone across Farnham. This was supported.
- 2) Regularising traffic measures in Downing Street. Supported
- 3) Widening footways in Castle Street and narrowing carriageway. Supported but widening footways did not have the same degree of urgency as Downing Street.
- 4) Concern was expressed over the different surface colour with some councillors favouring the same colour as it created uncertainty in the minds of motorists and had a calming effect.
- 5) There was concern over the provision of bus stops in the Borough and Downing Street (by the lost Boy) as these were in the new carriageways which would cause congestion and pollution. An off-carriageway bus stop for these areas should be recommended by FTC and should be achievable given that there are three lanes available in both areas at present.
- 6) There were pavement widening proposals in some areas, such as Bear Lane, which were not such a priority with a limited funding pot.
- 7) High quality materials in the conservation area was essential. The Working Group considered that the on-street parking revenue generated in Farnham should be used for this purpose (as previously agreed).
- 8) The Link to the Upper Hart car park was reaffirmed and had been formally requested by the Town Council to be included in option B. It should not be withdrawn just because Surrey did not like it. It was very disappointing that the Surrey officers had unilaterally proposed rejecting this option without discussion. Cllr Dickson and Hesse said the Link had the support of a lot of people. The view of the Working Group was that the initial link should be for car park access to reduce traffic from the north travelling around town but any such link should not exclude a further connection to West Street if circumstances allowed in the future. If this option were not to progress removing it should be justified by Surrey CC and not just on cost grounds for a bigger project.
- 9) There was concern over the amount of traffic lights proposed and felt a solution that minimised the number of light-controlled crossing was more appropriate for the historic core. Traffic lights at the bottom of Castle Street could not be supported under any circumstances. It was suggested that if there was the need for lights, these should be used at peak times only.
- 10) The removal of the gyratory system was generally supported but there were concerns about some of the proposed vehicle movements.
- 11) There was concern over the modelling which did not seem fit for purpose as it did not include developments outside the area. Some of the changes proposed to 2043 seemed wholly unrealistic.
- 12) The idea of two way traffic from Waggon Yard was supported (previously suggested) to be included.
- 13) The suggestion of pedestrianising East Street, or giving restricted access (from the new Threadneedle Street to South Street) was favoured by some, with two way along Woolmead Road. However others felt this could cause turning issues for some delivery vehicles and would make accessing Bear Lane more difficult when turning right into it.
- 14) Cllr Ward suggested the detail should be left to officers at Surrey, but the principle of achieving smooth flowing traffic from the Royal Deer Junction was essential with improved access to Brightwells and Woolmead.
- 15) The Working Group did not support the concept of closing West Street on a permanent basis, but supported its occasional closure for events.

- 16) In terms of the A31 proposals, the Working group felt the initial consultation was not particularly helpful or convincing. The key desired improvement of the junction with Water Lane had been omitted. The Working group could not see the added value of additional lanes at Coxbridge and Shepherd and Flock which would increase speeds through the town but not include the North South connectivity which was a key objective and priority for FTC.
- 17) The least worst proposal would have been the changes at the Firgrove junction, but it was noted these would have significant engineering challenges. The underpass concept would be incredibly disruptive for the town for many years. Option 2 was considered to be a cheaper option and could perhaps include the funding for the Link Road on environmental grounds.

**Recommendation to Council:**

**The revised document at Annex 1 be agreed as the current Council approach to the Options Consultation subject to any new issues emerging as part of the consultation which will be considered by Council at its September meeting.**

Cllr Cockburn arrived at this point.

- 18) In terms of the Wrecclesham Relief Road and bridge strikes it was noted that Transport for the South East had a consultation currently and FTC should press the case for a Western Relief Road and Wrecclesham Bypass to be kept on the list recognising that there may need to be housing additions if either scheme were to progress. The next Local Plan should also be used to support the case.

**Strategy & Finance Recommend to Council that FTC:**

- 1) deplores the latest bridge strike in Wrecclesham
- 2) supports the local community in pressing the need for a Wrecclesham Relief Road; before a death occurs especially given the significant amount of development taking place;
- 3) Supports the actions being taken by Surrey County Council to implement effective measures to prevent bridge strikes;
- 4) Seeks support again for the case for a relief road from SCC , WBC, the local MPs and Transport for the South East.

Cllr Blishen arrived at this point.

The Working Group noted the latest position on the Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure plan (no response received to FTC comments) and on the Wayfinding project.

Cllr MacLeod left the meeting at this point.

A revised copy of the recommendations and Cllr Beaman's paper is attached at Annex 1 to these minutes.

## **6. Contracts and assets update**

The Business and Facilities Manager provided a verbal update on contract matters. It was noted the WBC cleaner of the public toilets had resigned and FTC were now employing an additional cleaner through an agency prior to recruiting a longer term solution. There had been some issues with the cleaning of the new facility and it was hoped these would be resolved soon.

The refurbishment of the West Street Cemetery Gates was progressing well. Projects relating to the Council offices had not progressed with the staff focus on Farnham in Bloom judging.

## **7. Hale Chapels**

The designs for the Hale Chapels were reviewed and discussed. It was felt Graduate Landscapes had interpreted the design brief very well and both options were creative and appropriate (copy attached at Annex 2). The option favoured by the Working Group, and by Geoff Wallis who had been the Chair of the Hale Chapels Trust, was Option A – The Folly. The Hale Coffee morning would have the designs on display at its next coffee morning and this would provide a further opportunity for community input ahead of the tender brief going ahead after Council. It was expected that tenders would be returned in September for consideration at the October Strategy & Finance Working Group and Council. It was noted that both options retained the footprint of the chapels and could include space for columbaria if considered appropriate. There would also be an option for a water feature as a watering system would be included for ease of ongoing maintenance.

**It was agreed to recommend to Council that:**

**The Graduate Landscapes design of the Folly (option A) be worked up into a tender document with a view to commencing a formal tender process.**

## **8. Design Statement Update**

The Working Group reviewed the responses to the Design Statement consultation exercise and minor changes that did not conflict with the Waverley advice would be incorporated (a list of points raised is attached at Annex 3). Some additional points that had been raised and could not be incorporated without knowing that they would be adopted would be passed on to Waverley.

A discussion took place on the issue of design codes/design guides and design statements and whether or not this document could be adopted by Waverley as a basis for updating the Neighbourhood Plan. It was noted that it may be necessary to follow the new national Design Code framework with a Design Code for each of the Neighbourhood Plan designated sites and this was being investigated. It was noted that one of the directors of Aecom had provided positive feedback on the FTC Design Statement. It was agreed that officers should take advice (potentially IPE of Urbed)

**Recommendations to Council:**

**It is recommended that**

- 1) The comments at Annex 3 be incorporated into the FTC Design Statement and submitted to the Local Planning Authority for adoption;**
- 2) Design codes for the designated development sites in the Neighbourhood Plan be incorporated with professional support where needed;**
- 3) Waverley be asked to adopt the Design Statement/Design Code with a view to strengthening the Neighbourhood Plan.**

## **9. Ukrainian National Day August 24th**

The Town Clerk advised the Working Group of plans to celebrate the National Day of Ukraine on 24<sup>th</sup> August, working with Ukrainian visitors and the local Rotary Clubs. The plan was for a flag raising ceremony in the morning and for family activities in the afternoon in Gostrey Meadow and including Ukrainian food cooked by families staying here with informal music organised by FTC. Plans were being prepared in conjunction with Ukrainian visitors.

**Recommendation to Council:**

**Farnham Town Council works with Homes for Ukraine, Farnham Stands with Ukraine, the Farnham Rotary Clubs, Farnham Hedgehogs and other partners in marking the National Day of Ukraine, with costs met from the Community Initiatives budget and a contribution**

from the farnham Rotary.

#### **10. Reports from Task Groups**

- i) The Working Group noted plans underway for two events for young people in Gostrey Meadow on 10<sup>th</sup> and 31<sup>st</sup> August, with costs totalling approximately £6,000 met from the Young People's budget.
- ii) The Working Group received details of the successful design for the Riverside Sculpture and that it would incorporate a community involvement event hopefully during October Craft month.
- iii) The Working Group noted that Waverley had been successful in the first round of the MEND application for Farnham Museum and Farnham Town Council was now asked to reaffirm its pledge of £10,000 and write a letter of support. This was in hand.
- iv) It was noted that the IPG Group had not met with the change of date for Strategy & Finance meaning discussion could take place at the Working group. However it was noted that progressing the Design Code would require a meeting over the summer.

#### **11. Consultations**

- 1) It was noted that comments on Waverley's Climate Change & Sustainability SPD were being drafted by Jenny de Quervain based on previous discussions and would be submitted to Waverley.
- 2) The Dempster Trust had written seeking confirmation of a nomination to the Trust by the Council in accordance with the Trust Deed. **It was agreed to recommend the nominee to Council.**

#### **12. Gostrey Meadow Gates**

The Working Group noted that this item had appeared again on the agenda at the request of Cllrs Blishen and Hesse, despite being discussed at the June Council, following a further incident in Gostrey Meadow with a vehicle scraping the wall as it entered. Cllr Hesse had subsequently circulated a drawing mock up of replicating the current gates on Longbridge.

Cllr Evans advised that the decision made at the last Council was that the matter did not proceed further at this stage until there was more clarity over the café or playground refurbishment.

The item was deferred to the next meeting of the Assets Task Group.

#### **13. Town Clerk update**

The Town Clerk advised that:

- i. He had written again to the Waverley solicitors about the lack of accurate documents to complete the transfers;
- ii. The outcome of the Waverley Governance Review that had put forward the preferences of the Town Council to the Boundary Commission and its response was awaited. It was anticipated that there would be 16 councillors in the 2023 elections across 8 wards;
- iii. The concept of the Farnham Flame being installed as part of the Brightwells was progressing.

#### **14. Date of next meeting**

The date of the next meeting was agreed as 6<sup>th</sup> September at 9.30 am.

The meeting ended at 1.07 pm

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

