



FARNHAM TOWN COUNCIL



Report Full Council

25th May 2023

Election of Working Groups 2023/24

- 1 Councillors have identified preferences for the Working Groups for 2023/24 in accordance with Standing Order 15. These are attached at Annex 1, in order of preference for each Working Group as indicated by each councillor.
- 2 Some councillors expressed a preference for only the Working Groups for which they were interested whilst others have given a priority listing for all the Working Groups. This does not mean they are expected to serve on every Working Group and may wish not to take up a provisional allocation as the workload would be high.
- 3 Standing Order 15.1 f states that the overall membership of the Working Groups will reflect as closely as possible the political make-up of the Council with the intention that as broad a range of councillors as possible is represented. By convention, the Mayor is not appointed to Working Groups and can attend any Group ex-officio.
- 4 There are three Working Groups plus two Standing Task Groups (HR Panel and Services to Farnham Awards) and the Planning and Licensing Consultative Group. Standing Order 15 f suggests (not mandatory) how places are to be allocated to ensure that those who are not members of the majority group are fairly represented. As such, with currently 2 out of 16 councillors, those who are not part of the majority group should have as a priority [at least] 12.5% of the available places or two places between the three Working Groups and representation on the Panels and Task Groups where possible. In practice, the Council has normally chosen councillors willing to serve rather than managing places proportionately. If a Task Group has more councillors wishing to serve than places available one place will be prioritised for a councillor not part of the majority group.
- 5 Councillors are invited to opt for or nominate for the remaining places, or withdraw if this is appropriate where there are more places than candidates. If there are more candidates than places available an election will take place for the vacant places only.
- 6 If a councillor wishes to fill a vacancy, this will still be considered by Council so that any further late additions may also be considered. In determining vacancies, the intention is usually to avoid overloading individual councillors with too many groups, and allow for as many councillors as possible to be part of Task Groups or Working Groups.

Working Groups

- 7 As a result of the preference exercise, thirteen councillors expressed an interest in the Strategy & Resources Working Group, ten of whom 10 (Cllrs Beaman, Brown, Fairclough, Hesse, Laughton, Martin, Merryweather, Murray, Ward and White) put the Working Group as a first

preference. It is proposed that four of the five majority group councillors should be appointed and one of the two non-majority group be appointed. Council agreed that Cllr White will be the Lead Member for Strategy & Resources. It has been agreed that Cllr Brown will be the non-majority Group representative. As a reminder, Lead Members of the Environment & Community Working Groups are also Members of Strategy & Resources ex officio if not previously appointed. There will be an election to appoint three of the remaining first choice preferences.

- 8 In relation to the remaining Working Groups the following expressions of interest were received.
- **Community Working Group** – Nine preferences for five places four of whom made it their first preference and would be deemed elected (Cllrs Dickson, Jackman, Mauluka, and Mirylees with one of the three second preferences being selected from either Cllr Laughton, Martin or Woodhouse.
 - **Environment Working Group** – There are eight preferences for five places. There is one first preference (Cllr Woodhouse) and five second preferences (Cllrs Brown, Dickson, Hesse, Jackman and Merryweather, one of which would be prioritised for a councillor from the minority group.
 - **Planning & Licensing Consultative Group** – Seven councillors have expressed a preference for the eight places available. These are Cllr Murray (Bourne), Cllr Hesse (Castle), Cllr White (North West), Cllr Mauluka (Shortheath & Firgrove), Cllr Brown (Weybourne) and Cllr Laughton (Weybourne) and Cllr Woodhouse (Wrecclisham & Rowledge).. This means there are vacancies for Badshot Lea and Moor Park, and Hale & Heath End). The aim is, if possible, to have one councillor from each ward. Council may wish to appoint the seven councillors who have expressed a preference to be on the Consultative Group or elect one councillor per ward. All councillors are requested to review applications in their own wards and feed in to the fortnightly meetings.
 - **HR Panel** – There are six preferences for six places. These are Cllr Brown, Jackman Mirylees, Ward, White, Woodhouse. (The HR Panel has previously requested that the panel (as far as possible) retains consistency during the life of the Council. The six councillors would be deemed elected.
 - **Services to Farnham Awards Panel.** The Panel meets to agree awards and to review nominations to external Trusts (such as the Dempster Trust, the Isabella Schroder Trust, and the Farnham Parochial Charity) as and when vacancies occur for which the Council is to make appointments. The Mayor and Deputy Mayor are ex-officio members and there are places for two (normally) other councillors. Colin Channon is on the panel representing the Tindle News Group as the Awards were the Inspiration of Sir Ray Tindle CBE DL. There is also provision for an additional independent representative.

Preferences have been received from Cllrs Brown, Jackman, Laughton, Mirylees and Woodhouse. It is proposed that two councillors are appointed.

- 9 Following the election to the Working Groups and Panels it is proposed that Council is adjourned briefly so that each Working Group can elect its Lead Member to confirm the composition of the Strategy & Resources Working Group.

Task Groups

- 10 All Task Groups cease at the end of a Council year. Council needs to confirm if the Task Groups are to be reconvened. The HR Panel (technically a Task Group of both Strategy and Resources and Council) and the Services to Farnham Awards Panel are Standing Panels and are expected to continue whilst the remaining Task Groups need a formal resolution to be re-established. There are a number of new Task Groups/advisory Groups proposed to

formalise activity that is already undertaken or to fit with the new Working Group structure. Where it is decided that a Task Group or Advisory Group is not needed, or there are insufficient members, the work of the group will be undertaken by its 'parent' Working Group.

It is recommended that

1) the following be re-established as there is work to be done:

- **Assets Task Group**
- **Cemeteries Appeals Panel**
- **Community Infrastructure Levy/Section 106 Task Group**
- **Conservation Areas Advisory Group (with external involvement)**
- **Farnham in Bloom Community Group (with external involvement)**
- **Infrastructure Planning Task Group**
- **Young People Task Group (with external involvement)**
- **Allotment Group (with allotment representatives).**

2) the following be created/formalised to fit with the Council's priorities

- **Craft Town Advisory Group (with external involvement)**
- **Business Advisory Group (with external involvement)**
- **Literary Festival Advisory Group (with external involvement)**
- **Well-being Task Group (with external involvement)**

11 Subject to Council's decision on Task Groups, the appointment to Task Groups will need to be agreed. In accordance with Standing Order 15 (f) membership of task groups does not need to conform to the political make-up of the council although in practice there should always be a space for the non-majority group on each Task Group. Other people outside the Council can be appointed to or co-opted onto Task Groups.

12 Subject to the decision on paragraph 10:

- **The Infrastructure Planning Group** has seven councillors offering to fill five places. Four first preferences (Cllr Beaman, Hesse, Martin, and Merryweather) with Cllr Loughton and Cllr Murray making second preferences making up the places. It is proposed either Cllr Loughton or Murray are elected for the fifth place with third preferences (Cllrs Dickson and Woodhouse) being discounted.
- **The Assets Task Group** has eight councillors for five places. There are three first preferences and two second preferences meaning Cllrs Brown, Dickson, Fairclough, White & Woodhouse would be deemed elected and Cllrs Loughton, Martin and Merryweather discounted.
- **The CIL/Section 106 Task Group** has eight preferences for the five places. With five second preferences, the following would be deemed elected (Cllrs Dickson, Fairclough, Hesse, Martin and White) with Cllrs Loughton, Merryweather and Woodhouse discounted.
- **Conservation Areas Advisory Group** has three councillors expressing a preference (Cllrs Loughton, Merryweather and Woodhouse). The expectation is that councillors who have a conservation area within their ward may wish to be part of this group. The Group is supplemented by external organisations. Ideally there will be a minimum of three councillors so all councillors are deemed elected, with scope for others if appropriate.

- **Young People Task Group.** Seven councillors for five places. Cllrs Brown, Jackman and Mauluka put this as their first preference with Cllrs Laughton, White, and Merryweather also including it as a top six preference. It is proposed that Cllrs Brown, Jackman, and Mauluka, are deemed appointed with two appointed from Cllrs Laughton, Merryweather and White. Cllr Woodhouse would be discounted.
- **Literary Festival Advisory Group.** Cllrs Jackman and Merryweather and Mirylees included this in their priority preferences and as such are deemed appointed with Cllrs Laughton discounted
- **Business Advisory Group.** Cllrs Brown, Laughton, Martin, Merryweather, Murray and Woodhouse expressed this as a priority preference. Five of the six priority preferences should be chosen with Cllr Jackman discounted.
- **Craft Advisory Group.** Cllrs Hesse, Woodhouse, Jackman, Laughton, Merryweather and Mirylees expressed an interest. Three should be appointed.
- **Wellbeing Task Group.** Only Cllr Jackman gave this a top 5 priority and it is proposed that the work of the Task Group be covered by the Community Working Group initially and that the Task Group be considered for appointment later in the year.
- **Allotment Liaison Group.** Cllrs Mauluka, Jackman and Woodhouse gave this a top three preference. It is proposed that a Lead Councillor and reserve councillor be appointed to attend.
- **Farnham in Bloom Community Group.** Cllrs Hesse, Jackman and Mauluka expressed interest in joining the Farnham in Bloom Community Group with first or second preference. It is proposed all three be appointed.

Annex I has the proposals for each Task Group for consideration by Council.

Recommendation

It is recommended that:

- 1) the candidates for the **Strategy & Resources, Community and Environment Working Groups** be appointed as set out in Annex I along with any additional councillors to fill the remaining vacancies as set out in paragraph 7-9 above;
- 2) Council determine if the councillors willing to be on the **Planning and Licensing Consultative Group** be appointed or whether one councillor per ward is appointed;
- 3) the **Working Groups** elect their **Lead Members** (in order to do which the meeting be adjourned briefly) in order to confirm the complement of **Strategy and Resources Working Group Members**; and
- 4) Council determines which **Task Groups and Advisory Groups** be appointed and the suggested size and membership of each **Task Group or Advisory Group** as set out in Annex I.