



# FARNHAM TOWN COUNCIL

# D

## Notes

### Strategy & Resources

---

#### **Time and date**

9.30 am on Tuesday 18th July, 2023

#### **Place**

Council Chamber - Farnham Town Hall

---

#### **Strategy & Resources Members Present:**

Councillor David Beaman  
Councillor Mat Brown  
Councillor Alan Earwaker  
Councillor Tony Fairclough  
Councillor George Hesse  
Councillor Andrew Laughton  
Councillor Michaela Martin  
Councillor Kika Mirylees  
Councillor Graham White

#### **Officers:**

Iain Lynch (Town Clerk)  
Jenny de Quervain (Planning and Civic Officer)

#### **1. Apologies**

There were no apologies, all councillors were present.

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

There were no declarations of interest.

#### **3. Minutes of previous meeting**

There were no formal minutes of the first introductory meeting which had been provide an overview of matters overseen by the Strategy & Resources Group and bring councillors up to speed on current projects.

#### **4. Finance Report**

I The Town Clerk introduced the financial reports and briefed Members on the normal month end reporting and review process and the additional emphasiz each quarter. The financial quarterly reports were presented with the agenda and reviewed with attention

drawn to a number of points including those asked of members ahead of the meeting. The following documents were reviewed

- i) Trial Balance to 30<sup>th</sup> June 2023 at Appendix Bi
- ii) Income & Expenditure by Code to 30<sup>th</sup> June 2023 at Appendix Bii
- iii) Income & Expenditure by Committee to 30<sup>th</sup> June 2023 at Appendix Biii

The Town Clerk highlighted the areas where the income budget needed some explanation including: Grant income which was one of the balancing budget items used to keep the Council Tax down in 2023/24. Normally Council is cautious about being too optimistic on grant income, as there was no certainty of success. The precept was at 50% since payments are made twice a year with the second tranche being in October. The CIL income was not planned for since payments were affected by a number of factors. Once received it goes into an earmarked reserve and is moved to a dedicated earmarked reserve when an allocation is made, until drawn down. Interest received is significantly higher than expected given the rapid rise in interest rates. Several other items of income for booking and ticket sales were received later in the year. In terms of sponsorship a number of items were still to be invoiced for events yet to happen, and one key sponsor had to reduce the level of support for the current year.

In terms of expenditure, the town Clerk highlighted the codes for staffing and agency staffing which fluctuated according to vacancies but the aim was to balance the expenditure over the codes. The position over grants and the availability of the fund for environmental and community initiatives was noted.

The trail balance contained the earmarked reserves allocation, and the Working Group noted these were normally reviewed at budget/precept setting and also at the end of the year.

- 2) The Town Clerk advised that whilst councillors approved BACS and cheque payments the documents were always available for inspection.
- 3) The Town Clerk reported on small grants (of £250) to Folly Hill School, and to the Royal British Legion towards their VE/VJ day event.
- 4) The Town Clerk advised that the Pensions Regulator auto-enrolment renewal requirement had been met
- 5) The Working Group noted the current position with the Business Improvement District and the expected recommendation that FTC as a business ratepayer should vote in favour of the new business-led project. The detailed business plan would be considered in September.

## **5. Brightwells Yard Update**

The latest position on Brightwells Yard was noted. The fact that the Section 278 works in East Street were unlikely to take place until the beginning of 2024 (to avoid the Christmas trading period) led to uncertainty about when aspects of the scheme would be completed.

It was noted that discussions between Waverley, Surrey and Crest over the footbridge to Borelli Walk had not been concluded and Surrey was pressing for the bridge to be wider to meet current standards.

## **6. Farnham Infrastructure Programme**

Cllr Beaman updated the Working Group of the outcome of the Surrey Cabinet meeting when it was agreed to allocate £14m of Surrey funding subject to further funding being sought from

Section 106 developer contributions and Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) payments from Farnham and Waverley councils with a total project cost of £17.5 million.

Cllr Beaman had circulated an FIP update, dated 16<sup>th</sup> July, to all councillors setting out the current position and highlighting issues raised at a series of meetings and a number of points where there remained concerns and FTC view should be clarified. The document is attached at Annex I to these minutes.

The Town Clerk advised that the Surrey Infrastructure Programme Team had written to the Council advising that all communications had to go via the Programme Team and not from individual councillors direct to the consultants who were funded from the Programme budget as this had direct impact on expenditure.

The Working Group noted progress on the Wayfinding Scheme which would be completed once the Brightwell's Scheme was further forward. The Surrey Coalition of Disabled People walk-round of the town centre to identify areas that needed improvement in the final designs was welcomed, as was the consultation with businesses on loading and delivery requirements.

The Working Group discussed options that might be considered for a temporary two way arrangement on Woolmead Road during the Section 278 works but the likelihood of this was not known.

Cllr Beaman reminded councillors of the LCWIP (Local Cycling and Walking Improvement Programme) consultation events taking place and encouraged involvement.

Cllr Fairclough left at this point.

## **7. Local Plan, Neighbourhood Plan and recent appeals**

### **1) Potential Judicial Review of Waverley lane decision**

The Working Group noted a discussion that had been held with Planning advisor Steve Tilbury to consider next steps following the Inspector's decision to allow homes to be built on the site at Waverley Lane. This decision was very surprising given other recent appeal decisions. Members and Officers felt that there was a significant omission in that the Inspector had seemingly ignored the fact that this was a candidate area for the AONB extension and that there was a specific policy (10c) in the Neighbourhood Plan giving additional protection to such areas. Insufficient weight appeared to have been given to the Farnham Neighbourhood Plan allocations policy FNP 14 and the fact that this site was of rural character outside the Built Up Area Boundary. Although the AONB had not yet concluded the fact that the site was one of a few chosen from a significant number and had been assessed means that it is acceptable because of its landscape quality to be part of the AONB.

The Working Group also noted that this site was one of those previously subject to an unsuccessful Judicial Review by developers before the Neighbourhood Plan was Made.

(Cllr Mauluka left at this point.)

The Working Group agreed that there was merit in challenging the decision, and that support of Waverley Borough Council in doing would be pursued. It was agreed that to avoid double costs, it would be preferable if Waverley and Farnham Town Council could share legal advice with FTC contributing if required.

It was noted that a call in to the Secretary of State was not possible once a decision had been made, and a Judicial Review of the decision was the only way forward. It was agreed to pursue advice from the Surrey Hills AONB, Natural England and seek Counsel's opinion on the likelihood of success on these points which seemed to have significance for other candidate areas for special landscape areas across the country.

**Recommendation:**

**It was agreed to recommend to Council that a Judicial Review on the Inspector's Decision on Waverley Lane be considered.**

The Town Clerk advised that this decision would need to be made in Exempt in order that the Council could consider confidential legal advice. It was also noted that a Special Council meeting would need to be provisionally set for 7<sup>th</sup> or 8<sup>th</sup> August in case a decision making meeting was required if a Judicial Review were to be pursued as the deadline for making a claim was 14<sup>th</sup> August.

Cllr Mirylees and Cllr Brown left at this point.

**2) Design Statement**

Jenny de Quervain advised that a response was Waverley was still awaited.

**3) Local Plan and Neighbourhood Plan**

The Working group noted the Local Plan was being proposed for a 20 year timeframe, and that the latest housing numbers likely to be imposed were awaited. The Farnham Infrastructure Plan Group would meet in the near future to consider implications for the Farnham Neighbourhood Plan Review once more information was received from Waverley.

**8. Consultations received**

Cllr Beaman had circulated details of a very short consultation on the proposed closure of the ticket office at Farnham railway station. This was part of a programme to close ticket offices across the country but there were concerns for safety of passengers and the availability of tickets for people unable to use the ticket machines or book tickets online. It was agreed that Cllr Beaman and the Town Clerk would draft a response for submission by the closing date of 26<sup>th</sup> July, and recommend it to Council for adoption or any additions.

[The response is attached at Annex 2 to these minutes].

**9. Property & Assets**

The Town Clerk provided an update on a range of property and assets matters.

- 1) Surrey County Council: Library Gardens. The Working Group noted the principle of FTC managing the gardens again had been agreed, but a further meeting was awaited on the details.
- 2) Land at Whitmore Green. The Working Group noted that since Surrey had taken back responsibility for highway grass cutting some community amenity areas such as that at Whitmore Green were no longer being cut. **It was agreed to recommend to Council that officers discuss with Surrey County Council if they wished to transfer it to Farnham Town Council with a further report back to the Assets task Group.**
- 3) The Working Group noted the number of playground repairs undertaken since Farnham took over the management of Gostrey Meadow and that over £15,000 had been spent to date. Unfortunately, as a result of ongoing vandalism and the age of the equipment there

had been a number of parental concerns raised. It was agreed that signage explaining what was planned would be beneficial.

- 4) The Working Group considered the draft drawings for the Gostrey Meadow pre application discussion with Waverley for the café, toilets and playground which were attached at Appendix D to the agenda.
- 5) The Working Group considered again the proposal to widen the Ron Lancaster Memorial Gates (Gostrey Meadow). A draft drawing for further consideration by the Assets Task Group was attached at Appendix E. It was agreed that contact with the Lancaster family be established and advice from Surrey Highways sought re any additional requirements prior to a decision being made.
- 6) The Working Group noted the successful Hale Chapels opening and the completion of the project. The Town Clerk advised that the work had identified some concerns over the deterioration of the Lych gate which needed restoration and **it was agreed to recommend to Council the repair of the Lych gate and earmark up to £20,000 for its repair subject to tenders.**
- 7) The Working Group noted that an insurance claim relating land transferred from Waverley Borough Council for subsidence to properties adjacent to the riverside had been received. This had been referred on to Waverley Borough Council (owners at the time of the claim) but it was agreed that further arboricultural report should be undertaken (from within existing budgets).
- 8) The Working Group noted antisocial behaviour in Green Lane Cemetery and damage caused to memorial benches. Action taken by officers and plans to address this were noted.
- 9) The Working Group noted that the investigation by Waverley Planning for the Riverside sculpture – A hands turn had concluded and Farnham Town Council had been asked if it would now submit a planning application; evidence of permitted development or if the installation was being removed at the end of its display.  
Given the circumstances and that the display would be in situ for longer **Council is recommended to authorise the Town Clerk to submit a Planning application for the area to be used for the sculptural displays.**
- 10) The Working Group heard that the Council's three management plans for Gostrey Meadow, West Street Cemetery and Badshot Lea Cemetery had resulted in Green Flags being awarded.
- 11) The Working Group noted the Farnham Flame repairs had been completed prior to erection on Brightwells Yard and subject to a test of the brackets by a structural engineer.
- 12) The Working Group noted a meeting was to be held with the Trustees of Victoria Garden relating to security and ongoing antisocial behaviour.

## 10. Reports from Task Groups

The Working Group noted the issues arising from the Young People's Task Group which included:

- suggestion for a local lottery to help fund future youth work in Farnham. Councillors to research local lottery schemes/the technicalities of running one and put a report together for a future meeting
- School youth councils to be invited to host their meetings in the Council Chamber again
- Councillors on the Task Group to visit the various organisations responsible for youth provision in Farnham
- 40 Degreez invited questions for inclusion in a survey they are conducting to establish what young people want from local youth provision
- The need to commission a survey (or review existing information/SCC data to determine all existing youth provision in Farnham, the costs, unmet need etc. to be discussed at a future YPTG meeting.

- Events by different organisations over the summer to be collated, ideally on FTC website for ease of finding out what is taking place.

#### **11. Items for future meetings**

This item was deferred.

#### **12. Town Clerk Update**

The Town Clerk provided an update on the 'Treat Yourself in Farnham' campaign; staffing matters; and on the Pauline Baynes display (illustrator for Tolkien and CS Lewis including Lord of the Rings and Narnia) in the Town Hall as part of Heritage Open days.

#### **13. Date of next meeting**

The Working Group noted that the Waverley Executive meetings may be taking place on a Tuesday morning in future, and it was agreed to change the time of Strategy & Resources meeting to 2pm but retaining the option of 9.30 if more suitable.

The next meeting was agreed as being on September 5<sup>th</sup> at 2pm.

The meeting ended at 12.36 pm

Notes written by Iain Lynch