



# FARNHAM TOWN COUNCIL

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## Notes Strategy & Resources

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### **Time and date**

9.30 am on Tuesday 5th September, 2023

### **Place**

Council Chamber - Farnham Town Hall

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

Councillor David Beaman  
Councillor Alan Earwaker (ex-Officio)  
Councillor Tony Fairclough  
Councillor Andrew Laughton  
Councillor Graham White (Lead Member)

Councillor Brodie Mauluka (in attendance)  
Councillor Sally Dickson (In attendance via zoom)

Officers: Iain Lynch (Town Clerk), Iain McCready (Business and Facilities Manager - part); Jenny de Quervain (Planning and Civic Officer – part).

### **1. Apologies**

Apologies were received from Cllrs Brown, Hesse, Martin, and Mirylees.

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

The Town Clerk advised that he had formerly been a Director of the Surrey Save Credit Union, now part of the Boom Credit Union and had a savings account in relation to agenda item 4 iii.

### **3. Minutes**

The Minutes of the meeting held on 18<sup>th</sup> July were agreed as a correct record.

### **4. Finance Report**

I The Working group reviewed the Income and Expenditure reports by Account Code and by Committee at Appendices Bi and Bii. The Town Clerk drew attention to the lower income for the Burials and Cemeteries service which was normal at this time of year and the lower levels of sponsorship income which was a challenge in the current economic

climate. Ticket sales were down for the Gin Festival as expected with the new location, but the event itself had been very successful with positive feedback. A debrief on the whole event was yet to be held.

The Working Group noted that overall, income was running at 51.7% and expenditure at just under 34.7 % but there were no matters of concern at this stage. A more detailed look at the accounts would take place at the October meeting with the six-month figures.

- ii) The Working Group noted the current position on grants, and agreed to **recommend the following to Council be agreed:**
  - 1) **A new radar gun be purchased for Community speedwatch at a cost of £516.50;**
  - 2) **A contribution of £450 be made to celebrate the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Farnham Sports Council;**
  - 3) **Grants for 2024-2025 applications for both the Community Grants and the South Street Trust be open from 1<sup>st</sup> October to 4<sup>th</sup> December.**

It was noted that a request for additional funding for the space2grow parenting courses was expected and that a second request would normally be outside the funding criteria.

- iii) The Town Clerk advised that a request from the Boom Credit Union (which specifically covers Surrey and Farnham) attached at Appendix C to the agenda sought an investment by the Town Council to sustain its lending of small loans locally to those in hardship. The Town Clerk had asked for statistics on those being assisted in Farnham prior to a decision being made. It was agreed to invite the Chairman and Chief Executive of Boom to present its new No Interest Loans Scheme to a wider meeting of Town and Parish Councils in Waverley which would be hosted by FTC prior to a decision being made.
- iv) The Town Clerk advised that the FTC complaint to the Financial Ombudsman was now being considered by the Ombudsman after the Investigator had said it had no jurisdiction for complaints by councils.
- v) The Working group noted the BACS payment documentation was available for review.

## 5. **Contracts & Assets update**

The Working Group received a summary of matters discussed at the Assets Task Group meeting held on 4<sup>th</sup> September referring to the agenda which had been circulated to councillors.

The Task Group had discussed in detail current and future projects and made a number of proposals for consideration.

- i) The recent improvements to sound in the Council Chamber had improved the experience for hybrid meetings, but it was noted there were still some improvements that could be made for in-person meetings. It was agreed to commission a second opinion to review potential options.
- ii) The recent improvements to the playground as a result of vandalism and wear and tear were noted with over £20,000 invested since the Town Council had taken responsibility for the Gostrey Meadow pending wider improvements as part of the proposed café, toilets and playground scheme. Officers advised that there were plans to repaint the equipment to give it a fresh look, and prices were being sought. It was noted that the pre-planning application had been with Waverley since July and it had been suggested FTC should pay an additional £600 fee to obtain heritage advice because of the War Memorial. It was agreed that the additional advice (and high fee on top of the £850 already paid) was unnecessary at this stage given the proposed location.

- iii) The Working Group noted the completed works in the town Hall, including the lift refurbishment and audio improvements; and that planned works included the renewal of the door entry system which could be programmed by officers rather than the external contractor. It was agreed to **Recommend to Council that a Paxton Access Control system be installed by Shield Integrated Solutions at a cost of £5,698.**
- iv) The Working Group received an update on the Goupil electric vehicle that had been out of action for months because of difficulty obtaining a part. The vehicle could not pass its MOT because the main battery appeared to have failed in the intervening period. Discussion had taken place over buying a new battery at a cost of around £3,000 but additional spend may also be required if the controller (now obsolete) was required. The alternate option was to purchase a replacement vehicle (a new comparable electric vehicle was around £43,000) or a second hand goupil around £12,000 (plus any import costs as most are available in France, Holland and Germany) with the old one retained for spares or sold. It was agreed to **recommend to Council that a second hand Goupil be purchased via Bradshaws with a budget allocation of up to £20,000 earmarked.**
- v) The Working Group noted that there continued to be problems in resolving the faulty CNG equipment at the depot; and arrangements to install the new polytunnel by the greenhouses and remove the fire-damaged glass house for the space to be used for storage for now.
- vi) The Business and Facilities Manager reported on the energy audit survey of the Council offices and depot by Hazel Hill, the results of which were awaited, and the bid to be part of the reverse auction for solar panels led by Surrey County Council and Solar Together. It was agreed to **recommend to Council that an initial pilot scheme with battery storage for the depot be pursued at an indicative cost of £11,000.** This would be met from the environmental initiatives budget. It was also agreed to discuss whether there was a potential synergy with Waverley for the Town Hall given their refurbishment of Wey Court East with solar.
- vii) The Working Group noted the changes to the external CCTV were being made in Central Car Park (covering the public conveniences) and Longbridge (covering the Hands Turn sculpture) at a combined cost of £1,900 which would be met from the CCTV budget.
- viii) The Working Group noted that there had been squirrel damage to the alarm system at Wrecclesham Community Centre and a wireless solution was proposed to minimise further damage at a cost of £1,152. The external fencing to the centre was long overdue replacement and prices had been sought for tubular steel replacement as illustrated in the agenda. It was agreed to **recommend to Council that i) the front fence at Wrecclesham Community Centre be replaced by Jackson's fencing at an estimated cost of £3,600, and ii) Shield Integrated Solutions install a wireless alarm system at Wrecclesham Community Centre, with the costs met from the Wrecclesham Community Centre budget.**
- ix) The Working Group noted the ongoing works planned for Gostrey Meadow, including the expected visit from officers from Surrey Highways regarding the proposed gate widening onto Union Road; the outstanding 'gateway' signs from approved Section 106 funds; and the storage of the remaining stone from the Hale Chapels project and the bollards from Falkner Road at the Council depot pending re-use.
- x) The Business and Facilities Manager gave an overview of the Christmas Lights for 2023 and the intention to only replace those where the LEDs had failed pending discussion on a new scheme for 2024 (which would be subject to a further report prior to tendering). It was noted the lifespan of the existing scheme (owned by FTC) had been extended for five years as it had been popular with the community.

## 6. Strategy Workshops

The Working Group considered the scope of the two Strategy Workshops being held on 14<sup>th</sup> October and 4<sup>th</sup> November 2023, with the aim being to review first impressions of councillors on the work of the council, including the Council's Vision and any areas which may need a

change of focus for the coming year and the life of this Council. The outcomes would feed into the December Strategy & Resources Working Group meeting and Council and be reflected in the draft budget for 2024-25. It was anticipated the first session would be more of a reflective meeting with the second building on the outcomes and shaping desired objectives and outcomes of the Council administration for 2023-2027. It was agreed to invite an external facilitator to assist with the running of the workshops. Cllr White agreed to send a reminder to councillors on the importance of the workshops and to seek confirmation of attendance.

## 7. **Business Improvement District**

The Working Group reviewed the Farnham Business Improvement District (BID) Draft Business Plan (attached at Appendix D to its agenda). It was felt to be a good document that would bring important benefits to Farnham at a time of significant change. It was felt that the promotion of Farnham and businesses within the BID area along with proposals to improve access and safety and reduce crime would be key to the continued success of Farnham businesses. It was noted the Council had supported the development of the BID by allocating resource for a co-ordinator to work alongside the business-led board, and the team was thanked for the work done so far. The vote would be held in October. **The Working Group recommend to Council that Farnham Town Council as a business ratepayer within the BID designated area, vote 'Yes' in the forthcoming ballot .**

## 8. **Farnham Infrastructure Programme**

Cllr Beaman gave an update on the FIP projects underway, including the 20MPH scheme (roundels to be put on roads under a rolling road closure in the first half of October); the revised consultation for Upper Hale which concluded on 14<sup>th</sup> September, and the Wayfinding Scheme which now had approval at the railway station. The notes of the Infrastructure Planning Group held on 8<sup>th</sup> August (at Appendix D to the working group agenda) provided further details.

Cllr Beaman advised that the Brightwells Yard Bridge was now likely to be excluded from the scheme to enable final discussions to progress without delaying the project and Surrey CC had proposed an alternate approach to resolve outstanding matters.

A discussion took place on Surrey's request for an indication of support for a CIL contribution from the neighbourhood CIL albeit that no details of the request had yet been received. It was noted that FTC's support could also be in-kind, eg for planting/landscaping, thereby reducing the costs of the contractor elements of the overall project or by purchasing agreed street furniture at a lower cost than the Surrey contractors. It was noted that Surrey, as a signatory to the Farnham Conservation Area Management Plan should be using materials consistent with what had been agreed for the Conservation Area.

It was agreed to **recommend to Council that Farnham Town Council i) welcomes the investment in Farnham through the Farnham Infrastructure Programme; ii) would be pleased to support the project through in-kind support and a financial contribution which would be considered further when the expected application for CIL funding was received.**

Cllr Beaman reminded the Working Group that the next scheduled Board meeting was on 15<sup>th</sup> September.

## 9. **Reports of Task Groups**

- i) The Working Group received updates on the other items discussed at the Infrastructure Planning Group, including the timescale for the review of the Neighbourhood Plan. It was

noted that the NPPF consultation outcomes were still awaited which would have a bearing on the Farnham Review. It was also noted that the Farnham Neighbourhood Plan would be impacted on the uplift in housing numbers and these were still awaited from Waverley. Once more information was received, a sub group of the Infrastructure Planning Group would meet to discuss the next steps.

- ii) Cllr White reported on discussions that had taken place around Young People's issues since the last Task Group including a visit to the Hale Community Centre. He advised that matters from the last Task Group were being further investigated and the platform provided by FTC, under the leadership of Cllr Jackman, for groups to meet together was appreciated.

## **10. Review of Council Policies**

The Working Group considered the letter sent by Waverley Borough Council advising that an Independent Remuneration Panel was to meet in the autumn to review Members' allowances, and that a copy had been sent to all councillors.

It was noted that councillors at FTC had never received individual allowance (only the Mayor for his many official engagements on behalf of the town) and that councillors effectively were volunteers performing a civic duty working alongside many other volunteers for the good of the town but noting the workload of a large Town Council was significantly higher than a smaller parish. It was felt that FTC should await the outcomes of the Independent Review before considering the matter further, but it was important that no-one was prevented from standing as a councillor because they could not afford the costs associated with the role. **It was agreed to recommend to Council that FTC supported a review being undertaken, but was not obliged to adopt it.**

## **11. Consultations**

There were no consultations to report.

## **12. Town Clerk update**

- i) The Town Clerk provided an update on the Waverley Lane Judicial Challenge and further details were awaited from the Council's solicitor after Wates and the Secretary of State had objected to the timing of the delivery of the documents.
- ii) The Working Group noted the arrangements for the reception and display hosted by FTC for the Pauline Baynes Heritage Open Days exhibition courtesy of Alberto Ceccatelli.
- iii) The Working Group noted progress on the potential Residency for World Craft Town and the visit from Kilkenny Craft City during October Craft month.
- iv) The Working Group noted the Deputy Mayor would be visiting Andernach on behalf of the Mayor for the Farnham Andernach Friendship Association visit.

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

The date of the next meeting was agreed as Tuesday October 17th at 9.30am.

The meeting ended at 1.11 pm

Notes written by Iain Lynch