

FAREHAM

BOROUGH COUNCIL

Report to the Executive for Decision 11 July 2016

Portfolio:	Policy and Resources
Subject:	Future of Fareham Town Centre Management Partnership
Report of:	Director of Planning and Regulation
Strategy/Policy:	Corporate Strategy
Corporate Objective:	Maintain and extend prosperity

Purpose:

This report updates the Executive on recent discussions relating to the future of the Fareham Town Centre Management Partnership and recommends that the Partnership is formally dissolved, with the programme of town centre management activity delivered directly by the Council.

Executive summary:

The Fareham Town Centre Management Partnership has been strongly supported by the Council since its formation in 1997 in delivering an extensive programme of town centre management activities to support the attractiveness of Fareham town centre as a shopper and visitor destination. Following the departure of the previous Town Centre Manager post-holder in late 2014, discussions have been held between the Council and key members of the Fareham Town Centre Management Partnership over the last 18 months to explore revised arrangements for delivering the programme of town centre management activities. The outcome of these discussions is that it has been concluded by all parties that the Partnership should be dissolved and that the programme of town centre management activity within Fareham be delivered directly by the Council.

Recommendation:

That the Executive:

- a) agrees that the Fareham Town Centre Management Partnership is formally dissolved;
- b) agrees that the programme of Fareham town centre management activity be delivered directly by the Council as part of the Executive's Leisure and Community portfolio;
- c) confirms that the Fareham Town Centre Management Reserve of £208k continues to be held for future investment to support Fareham town centre activities; and
- d) thanks the members of the Partnership for all their hard work and dedication over the years of the life of the Fareham Town Centre Partnership.

Reason:

Following discussions between the Council and key members of the Fareham Town Centre Management Partnership over the past 18 months to explore revised arrangements, it has been concluded by all parties that the Partnership should be dissolved.

Cost of proposals:

There are no additional financial implications to the Council associated with either the dissolution of the Fareham Town Centre Management Partnership or the direct delivery of the programme of town centre management activity by the Council.

Appendices: None

Background papers: File of correspondence

Reference papers: Executive report: Fareham Town Centre Management Partnership – Business Plan 2011-14

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BOROUGH COUNCIL

Executive Briefing Paper

Date:	11 July 2016
Subject:	Future of Fareham Town Centre Management Partnership
Briefing by:	Director Planning and Regulation
Portfolio:	Policy and Resources

BACKGROUND

1. Fareham Town Centre Management Partnership was first instituted in 1997, through an informal partnership between the Borough Council, the Southampton and Fareham Chamber of Commerce and Industry and a number of principal retail businesses. Each partner has contributed, either financially or in kind, to providing a working budget to assist in funding actions and projects for Fareham town centre, in pursuit of the Partnership Business Plan, which is agreed by the Partnership Steering Group. All partners on the Partnership Steering Group are represented by one appointed member, and this has included member representation from the Borough Council.
2. The Partnership Steering Group has until recently been serviced by the Fareham Town Centre Manager, whose primary role has been liaison with the partners and other users of the town centre and includes organising events, managing the markets, fund raising, promoting the town centre through the media and other outlets, and maintaining the public areas. The Fareham Town Centre Manager has effectively run the operational activities of the Fareham Town Centre Management Partnership.
3. The Partnership Steering Group has worked to a three-year Partnership Business Plan, which the Council has endorsed, and these have been in place for the periods 2008-11 and 2011-2014.

DISCUSSIONS OVER FUTURE OF PARTNERSHP

4. Following the departure of the previous Fareham Town Centre Manager in late 2014, the Council has taken the view that there was an opportunity to reframe the working arrangements for the Fareham Town Centre Partnership going forward. To this end, Council officers have had extensive discussions with key members of the Partnership since early 2015.
5. In particular, the Council has sought to explore ways in which the Partnership could more effectively be represented and 'acted as a voice' for all town centre interests,

particularly the retailers and businesses which operate within the area. In addition, the Council has seen the benefit in ensuring a clearer demarcation of responsibilities between the Partnership (and its constituent members) and the Council, notwithstanding the significant role that the Council would continue to play in support.

6. Unfortunately, these discussions over changes to the way the Partnership works became protracted, in part as a consequence of a number of changes in Partnership Chairman over this period. However, discussions have now been completed and both the Council and key members of the Partnership have concluded that the Partnership should be dissolved.

FUTURE FAREHAM TOWN CENTRE ARRANGEMENTS

7. Notwithstanding these on-going discussions over the future of the Partnership, the Council has continued to directly deliver a successful programme of town centre events over the last 18 months, in agreement with the Partnership, through the Council's Leisure and Community Service.
8. Given the success of these arrangements, it is now recommended that the programme of town centre activities becomes part of the responsibilities of the Leisure and Community Executive portfolio. This will enable a series of well managed town centre events and activities to continue to be provided throughout the year. Additionally, the Council will ensure that Fareham town centre shoppers and visitors are surrounded by a festive scene at Christmas due to well-designed lights and decorations provided throughout the town centre. The Council will therefore continue its significant level of annual investment to make Fareham town centre an attractive and entertaining place to visit.
9. It should be highlighted that the Council already provides many related services to enhance the overall experience of shoppers and visitors to Fareham town centre as follows:
 - provides floral displays throughout the summer months;
 - the provision of safe, well managed markets in the town centre on a weekly basis; and
 - ensures that the town centre is safe, clean and well maintained at all times.
10. In addition, the Council will continue to undertake appropriate communication activity with retailers and businesses on major initiatives undertaken by the Council which may affect the town centre. Such activity will include 'breakfast briefings' which the Council has successfully organised and held over the last few years, and their continued use will ensure that the voices of retailers and businesses can be heard. Future briefing topics are likely to include the forthcoming Fareham Town Centre Regeneration Vision and associated parking proposals.

COUNCIL'S FINANCIAL SUPPORT FOR TOWN CENTRE MANAGEMENT

11. The Council has been the largest single contributor to the Fareham Town Centre Management Partnership since it began in 1997. When the Partnership was first set up in 1997, the indicative budget was agreed as being a net annual cost to the Council of £44,240. Following the Executive decision in October 2007, the cost to the Borough Council of the Partnership increased to reflect the full costs associated

with the employment of the Fareham Town Centre Manager, which was approximately £52,000.

12. Since the departure of the Fareham Town Centre Manager the extensive programme of town centre events and activities has been carried out predominately by the Leisure and Community Manager within that Service. In addition, further support has been provided to assist with administration, publicity and promotion, finance and other support by other Officers at various levels within the Council, equivalent to the budget that was set aside for the Fareham Town Centre Manager.

EXTERNAL FUNDING FOR TOWN CENTRE MANAGEMENT

13. The operational budget for the Partnership has in recent years been wholly funded from external sources, including event sponsors and advertisers, with other income from special markets and activities also secured.
14. Under the conditions of their lease with the Borough Council, the owners of Fareham Shopping Centre and Market Quay Shopping Centre pay an annual sum towards the Fareham Town Centre Management Partnership.
15. In addition, during 2010/11 a £100k contribution from Tesco was made as part of their development agreement with the Council towards the Town Centre activities. A draw down of £5k is made each year to represent Tesco's contribution to Town Centre support over a 20 year period.
16. Some Steering Group Members made voluntary contributions up to 2014/15, but this was put on hold in 2015/16, pending the outcome of discussions on the future of the Partnership.
17. From 1 April 2011 to 31 March 2016, the actual operational income was:

Partnership Funding Source	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16
Development Agreements	26,548	26,548	29,065	29,065	29,181
Steering Group Members	6,600	6,300	7,518	2,000	0
Income Generated	60,871	54,719	51,986	43,153	27,042
TOTAL	94,019	87,567	88,570	74,218	56,223

FAREHAM TOWN CENTRE – FINANCIAL RESERVE

18. The Council has for a number of years managed a fund on behalf of the Partnership which holds financial surpluses that have been built up in previous years through operational income received exceeding expenditure by the Partnership on the programme of town centre management activities.
19. The balance of the Fareham Town Centre Management Reserve is currently £208,279. It is envisaged that this reserve can be made available in the future for significant investments to support town centre events and activities such as the purchase of Christmas street decorations. It is therefore recommended that the Executive confirms that the financial reserve continues to be held to support for Fareham town centre activities. Any significant expenditure proposals would clearly need an appropriate Individual Executive Member Report and Decision assuming that the sum involved was under £150k.

CONCLUSION

20. The outcome of recent discussions between the Council and key members of the Fareham Town Centre Management Partnership is that it has been concluded by all parties that the Partnership should be dissolved, and this is now recommended to the Executive for consideration and decision. It is also recommended that the programme of town centre management activity with Fareham be delivered directly by the Council, and that the existing Fareham Town Centre Management financial reserve be retained for these purposes.

Enquiries:

For further information on this report please contact Richard Jolley, Director of Planning and Regulation (Ext 4388).