

FAREHAM

BOROUGH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Council

Date: Thursday, 13 October 2016

Venue: Council Chamber - Civic Offices

PRESENT:

Mrs C L A Hockley
(Mayor)

G Fazackarley
(Deputy Mayor)

Councillors: K A Barton, B Bayford, Mrs S M Bayford, Miss S M Bell, Mrs M Brady, Mrs P M Bryant, J E Butts, T M Cartwright, MBE, Mrs L E Clubley, S Cunningham, P J Davies, Mrs T L Ellis, J M Englefield, K D Evans, M J Ford, JP, Miss T G Harper, Mrs C Heneghan, L Keeble, A Mandry, Mrs K Mandry, S D Martin, Ms S Pankhurst, R H Price, JP, D L Steadman, Mrs K K Trott, N J Walker, C J Wood and S D T Woodward



1. PRAYERS

The meeting was opened with prayers from Reverend Paul Bedford of Fareham United Reformed Church.

The Mayor invited all Members of the Council and members of the public present to observe a minute's silence as a mark of respect for former Councillor Francis Devonshire who passed away on 8 September 2016.

2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor F W Birkett.

3. MINUTES

RESOLVED that the Mayor be authorised to sign as a correct record the minutes of the Council meeting held on the 28 July 2016.

4. MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

Holly Hill Leisure Centre

The Mayor wished her thanks to be placed on record to all Officers and Members who were involved with the Holly Hill Leisure Centre which was officially opened this week, for their hard work.

Mayor's Tea Parties

The Mayor announced that Tea Parties will be held on Thursday 3rd November and Thursday 1st December 2016. These will be held in the Mayor's Parlour at the Civic Offices and start at 2.30pm with an admission of £4.00.

At the Tea Party on 3rd November Tea there will be a talk on the background and aspirations of Locks Heath Football Club and on the 1st December the Fareham Flowers Club will be showing "Flowers of Christmas".

Other Charity Events

The Mayor announced that the Spinnaker Brass will be playing Last Night of the Proms will be held at Ferneham hall on Saturday 22nd October. This will start at 7.30pm with a tickets cost of £12 and £10 for concessions.

On the 17th November there will be a Glitz and Glamour event at Ferneham Hall between 7–10pm. Guests can enjoy an evening of fashion, shopping and pampering. Tickets for this event are £10.

On Sunday 27th November, commencing at 12noon, Chris Lubb will be speaking on "My Journey from Apartheid to Truth & Reconciliation". This lunch takes place at Portchester Parish Hall and tickets are £10. Please bring your own drinks.

On Saturday 3rd December there will be a Christmas Concert with the Warsash Band. This will start at 7.30pm and is being held at Holy Rood Church in Stubbington. Tickets for this concert are £7.50.

5. EXECUTIVE LEADER'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

There were no Executive Leader announcements at this meeting.

6. EXECUTIVE MEMBERS' ANNOUNCEMENTS

Councillor T M Cartwright, Executive Member for Public Protection

Tenancy Intervention

The Executive Member for Public Protection announced that, as the Members' Champion for Vanguard, he has been following the intervention in tenancy services and recently spent some time with the team, learning about their actions to date.

Last year a successful Vanguard intervention was completed in Housing to match customers to appropriate properties and to help people with their housing needs. The Vanguard method looks at designing services from the customer's perspective, rather than using a "one size fits all" approach, and because of this, customer satisfaction is high.

The Executive Member for Public Protection stated that Tenancy Services are now undertaking an intervention looking at tenant demand when living in a council owned property. With 50% of tenant demand relating to rent payments and arrears, the team began by looking at this area.

Issues found with the current system were that complex letters are often sent out to customers, which they don't understand, court action is taken and unaffordable costs are added, our own policies don't encourage officers to help people make where they live more affordable, which often ends up with a confrontational relationship with our tenants. When tenants are evicted, 75% of them contact the Council again as they are homeless, proving that eviction is not always the best solution.

Of the Councils 2,300 tenants, only 800 of them pay their rent by direct debit because we don't make it easy for them by only offering one payment date. From next month we will be offering weekly, fortnightly and monthly payment options, and on any day of the month.

Housing Officers are now meeting with tenants in their homes, talking with them to understand their individual situation and helping them to stay on track with rent payments.

Of the 9 test cases completed using this new approach, all made a payment after the visit, 8 have remained up to date and 6 produced useful information which we would have been unaware of under the old method. In addition no letters needed to be sent.

Police Crime Commissioner

Last Friday, the Executive Member for Public Protection attended the Hampshire Police & Crime Panel meeting where Members were presented with the Police & Crime Commissioner's draft Plan for approval. This Plan (headed "A Plan to Keep us Safer") runs from 2016 to 2021. The main thrust of it covers the Commissioner's vision, mission and priorities, together with the size and scope of the job plus accountability and scrutiny. It also states his Police & Crime objectives.

The Plan was produced following a survey - on line and social media, through local Press and paper copies taken to various events. A total of 2626 Surveys were completed, and it was interesting to note that Fareham were rated the highest return in Hampshire at 12.6%. Congratulations should go to the Community Safety Manager who ensured that Surveys were widely circulated in Fareham. Now having received the Commissioner's Plan, we should shortly be receiving the Delivery Plan which will enable the Panel to scrutinise his actions. Details of the Commissioner's Plan are available on his website.

Councillor Miss T Harper, Executive Member for Streetscene

The Executive Member for Streetscene announced the success of Fareham in the South East in Bloom competition where the Council had received several awards which included a gold award and category winner for the South and South East Region (Small City) category and the Hampshire Life Award for the entry with the highest marks in Hampshire. The Executive Member for Streetscene expressed her gratitude to all Officers for their help.

7. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor C J Wood declared a personal interest for item 16 – Waiver of Standing Order due to the proximity of his parents' house to the Daedalus site.

8. PRESENTATION OF PETITIONS

A petition of approximately 1500 signatures was presented by Councillor G Fazackarley entitled: "We, the undersigned petition the council to preserve the unique identity of Portchester as a village and not simply part of Fareham by lobbying Royal Mail to maintain the name of Portchester in postal addresses".

Councillor G Fazackarley advised that there is both an on-line and paper Petition respectively.

The Mayor advised that the petition would be dealt with in accordance with Fareham Borough Council's petition scheme.

9. DEPUTATIONS

There were no deputations given at this meeting.

10. REPORTS OF THE EXECUTIVE

- (1) Minutes of meeting Monday, 5 September 2016 of Executive

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the Executive meeting held on Monday, 5 September 2016 be received.

RESOLVED that the tabled Schedule of Executive Member and Officer Delegated Decisions be received.

11. REPORT OF THE SCRUTINY BOARD

- (1) Minutes of meeting Thursday, 15 September 2016 of Scrutiny Board

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Scrutiny Board held on Thursday, 15 September 2016 be received.

12. REPORTS OF OTHER COMMITTEES

- (1) Minutes of meeting Wednesday, 20 July 2016 of Planning Committee

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Planning Committee held on Wednesday, 20 July 2016 be received.

- (2) Minutes of meeting Wednesday, 17 August 2016 of Planning Committee

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the Planning Committee held on Wednesday, 17 August 2016 be received.

- (3) Minutes of meeting Wednesday, 14 September 2016 of Planning Committee

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Planning Committee held on Wednesday, 14 September 2016 be received.

- (4) Minutes of meeting Monday, 19 September 2016 of Audit and Governance Committee

RESOLVED that:

- (a) the minutes of the Audit and Governance Committee held on Monday, 19 September 2016 be received; and
 - (b) the recommendations contained in minute 6 be accepted and accordingly the functions of the Audit and Governance Committee, as set out in the Appendix A to the report, be approved.
- (5) Minutes of meeting Tuesday, 27 September 2016 of Licensing and Regulatory Affairs Committee

RESOLVED that:

- (a) the minutes of the Licensing and Regulatory Affairs Committee held on Tuesday, 27 September 2016 be received; and
- (b) the recommendations contained in minute 9 be accepted and accordingly the comments of the Committee be passed to Council for consideration.

The Boundary Commission for England's initial proposals in respect of the Parliamentary Boundary Review will be considered under item 15.

13. QUESTIONS UNDER STANDING ORDER 17.2

There were two questions received from Councillor Mrs K K Trott.

1. Would the Executive Member for Policy and Resources please confirm the number of empty shops within the Town Centre's main commercial areas of High Street and West Street including the covered shopping mall and how many, if any, are owned by this Borough Council?
2. Could he also explain what measures have been and are being planned to maintain the vitality of the shopping areas, given that several stores have closed within the past few months?

Response from the Executive Leader:

1. When the Council undertook the annual town centre 'retail health check' in August 2016 there were 25 units unoccupied retail units within High Street, West Street and the Shopping Centre. This was just before BHS closed. This equates to 9% of the retail units within this area. This is very similar to 2015 when 24 units were vacant and to 2014 when 26 units were vacant. Over the last 3 years the vacancy rate has remained around 8-9%, well below the national average vacancy of 13%. This vacancy rate is significantly less than that in 2013, when 34 units were recorded as being vacant within this area.

Most of the vacant shops are located outside of the 'Primary Shopping Area' (i.e. High Street and the western end of West Street). This is in our 'Secondary Shopping Area' which accommodates a significant number of smaller/independent retailers and start-up businesses. It is for this reason that this area has always experienced rapid turnovers of occupiers as well as higher levels of temporary vacancies.

The Council wholly owns two retail units, 30/32 West Street, occupied by "Stephen's Barbers" and "Beauty Secrets" and 42/44 West Street, occupied by "Nailz Inc".

2. In terms of measures to maintain the vitality of shopping areas the Executive set up a Member Working Group for Fareham Town Centre to look at ways to regenerate the Town Centre. As the councillor is a member of the working group I would really expect her to be aware that the group is currently in the process of overseeing the preparation of a 'Draft Regeneration Vision'. This is looking at ways for example to direct residential development into the town centre, make efficient use of sustainable urban land and in turn increase footfall into the centre. It is also looking at how this growth is supported by appropriate commercial development. Part of this will be looking at how the retail offer is changing (particularly with the rise of internet shopping) and ways that our Town Centre can adapt and respond to this whilst also looking to support local retailers.

The Executive will be considering the Draft Regeneration Vision for Fareham Town Centre in the New Year, and if approved, this will be consulted upon to ensure that the views of local residents are accounted for within any finalised Regeneration Vision.

14. MOTIONS UNDER STANDING ORDER 15

(1) Notice of Motion received 02 October 2016 from Councillor P J Davies

“That Fareham Borough Council write to Southern Railways and the RMT Union, urging them to reach agreement in the interest of providing a proper rail service to the residents of the Borough of Fareham and that such agreement ensures both guarantees for passenger safety and the full operation of the proper timetabled Southern service”.

Having been duly seconded by Councillor Fazackarley and debated, the motion was CARRIED unanimously.

15. BOUNDARY COMMISSION REVIEW : PARLIAMENTARY BOUNDARIES INITIAL PROPOSALS

The Council considered a report by the Head of Democratic Services, which advised of the Boundary Commission for England's review of all Parliamentary constituency boundaries in England. The report outlines the proposed changes to Fareham which sees the inclusion of the Winchester Ward of Whiteley.

The Council was advised that the recommendation of the report to delegate authority to the Executive Leader, in consultation with the Chief Executive Officer, to submit a response on behalf of the Council was due to the timescales imposed by the Boundary Commission's public consultation deadlines. The Executive Leader invited Members to contribute to the response via the Council's debate in order for him to add comments to his consultation submission.

Members expressed concern that the review had not taken into account future growth which will lead to an increase in elector numbers and Councillor R H Price stated that for the County review which was undertaken previously, it took into account future proposed developments and it wasn't clear why this hadn't happened with this review.

On being put to the vote, it was unanimously RESOLVED that:

1. authority be delegated to the Executive Leader, in consultation with the Chief Executive Officer, to submit a response on behalf of Fareham Borough Council in support of the Boundary Commission for England's proposals on the 2018 Constituency Review; and
2. the Executive Leader and Chief Executive Officer be authorised to attend a Public Hearing (if necessary) to present the Council's response.

16. WAIVER OF STANDING ORDERS

Councillor C J Wood declared a personal interest for this item due to the proximity of his parents' house to the Daedalus site.

Members expressed concern that this could set a precedent for the future and asked for definition of what constitutes a major development.

The Executive Leader said that cases are taken on individual merits. This is of large interest to some of the residents of Gosport and it is only fair that they have their opportunity to express their views. In the future, should a similar situation arise, council may be asked to consider as waiver, as appropriate.

On being put to the meeting the waiver of Standing Orders was CARRIED unanimously.

17. APPOINTMENTS TO COMMITTEES

The Executive Leader welcomed Councillor C J Wood to the Conservative Group.

The Executive Leader explained that the change of political party would not impact on the allocation of seats those seats should the Council agree to keep the existing allocation of seats the same. Under this proposal those seats currently allocated to Councillor C J Wood would remain his, but be counted as part of the Conservative group allocation.

Having been seconded by Councillor T M Cartwright, it was AGREED unanimously that the allocation of seats to committees be unchanged as per tabled item 17, Appendix B.

(The meeting started at 6.00 pm
and ended at 7.05 pm).