

**Minutes of the  
Policy and Resources Scrutiny Panel  
(to be confirmed at the next meeting)**

**Date:** Monday, 22 January 2024

**Venue:** Collingwood Room - Civic Offices

**PRESENT:**

**Councillor** Mrs S M Bayford (Chairman)

**Councillor** N J Walker (Vice-Chairman)

**Councillors:** M R Daniells, S Dugan, D J Hamilton, Miss T G Harper and Mrs K Mandry

**Also Present:** Councillor Mrs K K Trott, Councillor R Bird (Items 6 & 8), Councillor Ms C Bainbridge and Councillor Mrs T L Ellis



**1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

There were no apologies of absence.

**2. MINUTES**

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Policy and Resources Scrutiny Panel meeting held on 18 September 2023 be confirmed and signed as a correct record.

**3. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

There were no Chairman's announcements.

**4. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND DISCLOSURES OF ADVICE OR DIRECTION**

There were no declarations of interest made at this meeting.

**5. DEPUTATIONS**

There were no deputations made at this meeting.

**6. HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT BUDGET AND CAPITAL PLANS 2024-25**

The Panel considered a report by the Assistant Chief Executive Officer on the Housing Revenue Account Budget (HRA) and Capital Plans for 2024-25.

At the invitation of the Chairman, Councillor R Bird addressed the Panel on this item.

Councillor Bird asked questions in respect of void properties and commented on the recent progress made on decreasing the void turnaround times as part of the Opportunities Plan. He expressed a desire for the figure to continue to decrease in line with the national average of 25 days. This would result in more income generation into the HRA through rental income and council tax costs.

Members also touched on the work of the empty homes strategy and enquired as to whether the upfront costs of an empty homes management order could be funded from the HRA. The Finance Manager addressed the Panel to confirm that any initial outlay would be from the General Fund, but there would be financial costs to the HRA if a property was purchased and transferred to the HRA.

RESOLVED that the Panel recommends that the Executive endorses the recommendations contained within the report being presented to the Executive at its meeting on 5 February 2024.

## **7. FEES AND CHARGES**

The Panel considered a report by the Assistant Chief Executive Officer on the Fees and Charges for 2024-25.

Members asked questions regarding fly-tipping fines and whether they are appropriately set. The Finance Manager confirmed to the Panel that some fees and charges are statutory charges and therefore the Council is unable to amend them. However, there are other charges that the Council can levy against someone they prosecute for fly-tipping which is not a set fee.

RESOLVED that the Panel has no comments to pass to the Executive in respect of the Fees and Charges for 2024-25.

## **8. CAPITAL PROGRAMME AND CAPITAL STRATEGY 2024-25**

The Panel considered a report by the Assistant Chief Executive Officer on the Capital Programme and Capital Strategy 2024-25.

The Panel were provided with a verbal update regarding updated figures that would be presented to the Executive at its meeting on 5 February.

Councillor Hamilton asked questions regarding the Civic Offices improvement plan and requested that the Panel have an update on this at a future meeting. The Finance Manager confirmed that an update on the Civic Offices is programmed for a future meeting of the Panel, with a date yet to be confirmed as the review still needs to be progressed.

At the invitation of the Chairman, Councillor R Bird addressed the Panel on this item. He posed questions to officers in respect of the budget for the Leisure and Community Buildings and requested whether any further funds could be made available in respect of the Cams Alders improvement works, for works such as better drainage on the site.

RESOLVED that the Panel: -

- (i) Note the content of the report; and
- (ii) Request the Executive to note the comments made from Councillor Bird.

## **9. FINANCE STRATEGY, REVENUE BUDGET & COUNCIL TAX 2024-25**

The Panel considered a report by the Assistant Chief Executive Officer on the Finance Strategy, Revenue Budget and Council Tax for 2024-25.

Members expressed their frustration at the governments cap of 2.99% rise increase in Council Tax given the funding cuts that local authorities are receiving from central government but were pleased to hear that there had been some core funding allocated to the Council in the provisional financial settlement.

RESOLVED that the Panel recommends that the Executive endorses the recommendations as set out the report for the Executive at its meeting on 5 February.

#### **10. OPPORTUNITIES PLAN 2023-24 PROGRESS UPDATE**

The Panel considered a report by the Policy, Research and Engagement Manager giving a progress update on the Opportunities Plan for 2023-24.

Councillor Miss Harper requested that an update be given to each Panel on the progress made following the suggestions of each Panel in 2023. The Policy, Research and Engagement Manager confirmed that an Annual Update is to be programmed for all Scrutiny Panels in 2024-25.

Members enquired as to whether staff cuts have been considered as part of the plans to bridge the budget gap. Officers responded that the plan's projects so far were focused on service cost savings and income generation. However, there were other longer-term projects in the Plan which could involve changes to the establishment in the future.

RESOLVED that the Panel note the progress made to date with the Opportunities Plan 2023-24.

#### **11. EXECUTIVE BUSINESS**

The Panel considered the Executive items of business which falls under the remit of the Policy and Resources Portfolio, including Executive Member decisions and Officer delegated decisions, that have taken place since the last meeting of the Panel 18 September 2023.

The Panel also considered an additional table item of Executive Business at Item 11(15) of the agenda and that has been appended to these minutes.

##### **(1) Corporate Strategy 2023-2029**

There were no comments received.

##### **(2) Annual Review of Corporate Strategy 2017-2023 and Local Service Agreements 2022-23**

There were no comments received.

##### **(3) Capital Programme and Capital Strategy 2024-25**

There were no comments received.

##### **(4) Fees and Charges 2024-25**

There were no comments received.

**(5) Finance Monitoring 2023-24**

There were no comments received.

**(6) Finance Strategy, Revenue Budget & Council Tax 2024-25**

There were no comments received.

**(7) Irrecoverable Debts**

There were no comments received.

**(8) Irrecoverable Debts - Quarter 2**

There were no comments received.

**(9) Opportunities Plan**

There were no comments received.

**(10) Osborn Road Multi Storey Car Park**

There were no comments received.

**(11) Purchase of Strategic Land at Faraday Business Park (South)**

There were no comments received.

**(12) Sale of Development Land at Faraday Business Park (South)**

There were no comments received.

**(13) The Council Tax Support Fund**

There were no comments received.

**(14) Treasury Monitoring and Capital Monitoring 2023-24**

There were no comments received.

**(1) Fareham Town Centre Draft Regeneration Strategy Action Plan**

There were no comments received.

**12. SCRUTINY PRIORITIES**

The Head of Finance and Audit addressed the Panel on this item and gave members the opportunity to put forward any further suggestions for the Scrutiny Panel Priorities. No further suggestions were put forward. She also confirmed that the item on the Council's Procurement processes has been scheduled in the work plan for March.

(The meeting started at 6.00 pm  
and ended at 7.08 pm).

..... Chairman

..... Date

# FAREHAM

## BOROUGH COUNCIL

2023/24  
Decision No.  
2505

### Record of Decision by Executive

Monday, 8 January 2024

<b>Portfolio</b>	Policy and Resources
<b>Subject:</b>	<b>Fareham Town Centre Draft Regeneration Strategy and Action Plan</b>
<b>Report of:</b>	Director of Planning and Regeneration
<b>Corporate Priority:</b>	Promote Economic Development; Provides Housing Choices

#### **Purpose:**

To consider the outcome of engagement with residents, businesses and visitors on their views and ideas about the future of Fareham Town Centre and to endorse the proposed programme for the development of the Regeneration Strategy and Action Plan.

The Council's Corporate Strategy 2023-2029 includes a clear commitment to the regeneration of Fareham Town Centre. The Town Centre Member Working Group has developed a programme for the development of the Regeneration Strategy and Action Plan by Summer 2024. Specialist advice and expertise has been commissioned to support the development of the strategy and initial community engagement has been undertaken. The results of this community engagement, set out in Appendix A to the report, will inform the identification of options and initiatives in the New Year.

#### **Options Considered:**

As recommendation.

#### **Decision:**

RESOLVED that the Executive:

- (a) notes the outcome of the Council's engagement with residents, businesses and visitors on the future of Fareham Town Centre; and
- (b) endorses the "Four Pillars" and Strategic Objectives that have been established to inform and guide the Fareham Town Centre Regeneration Strategy and Action Plan as it is developed through the first half of 2024.

**Reason:**

To produce a Fareham Town Centre Regeneration Strategy and Action Plan in line with the Corporate Strategy and to inform the next steps for the Council following the acquisition of Fareham Shopping Centre.

To attract investment, guide new development and public spaces and ensure that the town centre meets changing needs.

**Confirmed as a true record:**

Councillor SDT Woodward (Executive Leader)

Monday, 8 January 2024