

FAREHAM

BOROUGH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Council

Date: Thursday, 12 December 2024

Venue: Council Chamber - Civic Offices

PRESENT:

Mrs P K Hayre
(Mayor)

Mrs L E Clubley
(Deputy Mayor)

Councillors: C A Bainbridge, I J Bastable, Mrs S M Bayford, R N Bird, F W Birkett, Mrs L M Birkett, Mrs P M Bryant, Miss J Burton, M R Daniells, S Dugan, Mrs T L Ellis, J M Englefield, D G Foot, M J Ford, G Furnivall, D J Hamilton, Miss T Harper, Mrs C L A Hockley, S P Ingram, Mrs K Mandry, S D Martin, A M J Murphy, Mrs J Needham, P M Nother, A West, L J Whittle, P W Whittle, D P Wiltshire and K Wiltshire



1. PRAYERS

The meeting commenced with a service of prayers led by Reverend Richard England.

2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

An apology of absence was received from Councillor F L Burgess.

3. MINUTES

RESOLVED that the Mayor be authorised to sign, as a correct record, the minutes of the meeting of the Council held on 17 October 2024.

4. MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Mayor made the following announcements:

It was very kind of the Duke of Edinburgh to accept our invitation to visit Fareham Live and I am very proud that we have had 2 royal visits to Fareham this year. I had a great conversation with the Duke of Edinburgh and discussed his impressions of Fareham including our plans for the Fareham Town Centre Regeneration programme.

I would also like to thank the Deputy Mayor for attending the Christmas Lights Switch on in my absence whilst I was volunteering at an eye camp in India with my son who is an ophthalmologist.

5. EXECUTIVE LEADER'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

Disability Confident Employer's Scheme

Tonight, Members have before them the Council's revised Corporate Strategy, and you will have seen in the agenda that we are strengthening our approach to equity, diversity and inclusion for our community and our staff. With this in mind, I am pleased to be able to advise Members that we have recently been certified under the Government's Disability Confident Employer Scheme.

This scheme is about encouraging employers to think differently about disability and take action to improve how they recruit, retain and develop disabled people. Councillor Daniells brought this to my attention and has shared with the Chief Executive his first hand experience of promoting this scheme within the workplace. This month, the Chief Executive published his People Strategy for the organisation with Equality Diversity and Inclusion being one of the key pillars, I was pleased to see that we will be embedding the Disability Confident scheme as part of this.

Councillor Daniells has kindly agreed to become the Member Champion for the Disability Confident employer scheme, ensuring that we do all we can to make the Council fully inclusive and accessible to all talent, and especially those with a disability.

Winter Fuel Allowance

Following the motion presented to this Council in October, I can confirm that I have written to the Chancellor of the Exchequer on behalf of the Council to express our concern on the impact to our vulnerable pensioners in Fareham following the Government's decision to end winter fuel allowance.

Despite my hope that the government will change their position on this within the budget, unfortunately this is not the case and unsurprisingly I have not even received an acknowledgement to my letter, which potentially sums up the general approach by the government to those in need.

As a result of this cruel and uncaring policy and given the onset of winter, I've asked officers to stand ready to help the most vulnerable in our communities who will be directly affected by this cut.

We have issued a press release to inform all residents of the welfare options available to them and continue to promote the pension credits right up until the deadline set by the government. However to ensure that we are responding to those suffering from severe hardship we have allocated specific funding for this scheme and it has already been a very positive response by the public judging by the applications which have already been received.

Tree Preservation Orders

In relation to the Council's position in relation to tree preservation orders the council has been lobbying the government throughout the year to make changes to the legislation around tree preservation orders. This is so that the felling of trees implicated in subsistence cases should be considered as a last result rather than one of the first options.

To date the government has indicated it doesn't intend to review existing legislation around tree preservation orders. We have sent through further correspondence requesting clarification and providing further evidence which has had no response.

In relation to planning applications, the council has had no alternative but to agree to fell one lime tree and six oak trees which have been identified as causing structural damage. Whilst repairs to the properties will be covered by home insurance, far more extensive structural works would be needed if the trees were to cause damage by remaining in place and those increased costs would fall on the council purse if we didn't allow those trees to be removed. We will be continuing to press the government and the insurance companies to change their position on this matter.

6. EXECUTIVE MEMBERS' ANNOUNCEMENTS

Executive Member for Planning and Development

The Executive Member for Planning and Development made the following announcement:

National Planning Policy Framework

Following a consultation during the Summer, the Government published the revised National Planning Policy Framework earlier today.

The revised NPPF introduces a number of changes to the national planning system. These include changes to the way in which the number of new houses local authorities need to plan for are calculated, introducing mandatory housing targets and changes to decision making on planning applications for new houses.

In light of the implications for this Borough, Officers will be arranging to brief Members on the changes to the NPPF shortly.

I want to express my profound disappointment and frustration with the Government's continued pursuit of its housing target of over million new homes in the next five years.

As part of the consultation process, Fareham Borough Council submitted a detailed and robust response outlining the serious concerns shared by our residents, councillors, and neighbouring authorities. We joined thousands other councils across the country in highlighting the significant issues these proposals present.

Despite our efforts, the Government has chosen to press ahead. In addition to responding to the consultation, the Executive Leader also wrote to the Secretary of State to express our concerns.

While we did receive a response, it is disheartening to report that, despite the Executive Leader's invitation for an official visit to the borough for the Secretary of State to see the challenges we face first-hand, she has declined. Angela Rayner's refusal to engage with local authorities like ours demonstrates the lack of respect this government has.

Here in Fareham, we already have a Local Plan in place. Our plan represents years of hard work, careful thought, and engagement with our community to strike the right balance between meeting housing needs and protecting our borough's character and environment. We have already allocated a significant portion of the borough for development, with some difficult decisions made to ensure we do our part.

Today's announcement is a great shame. It undermines our Local Plan, and jeopardises Fareham remaining a desirable place to live.

Labour's changes to the NPPF appears to prioritise targets over thoughtful, sustainable development, bulldozing through the countryside and undermining the hard work councils have put into developing their Local Plans.

We in Fareham have always been clear: we are not against development. We understand the need to provide homes for future generations, but this must be done in a way that is reasonable, respects our local environment and infrastructure. Our Local Plan was created with these priorities in mind. Yet, under this Government, it feels as though our plans are being overridden and our voice silenced.

A very disappointing day.

Executive Member for Leisure and Community

The Executive Member for Leisure and Community made the following announcements:

Play Area Upgrades

I am pleased to announce that improvements to Course Park Play Area, Elsanta Play Area and Laurels Gardens Play Area are now complete. Improvements include new items of equipment chosen by residents, as well as floor graphics, a communication board and the existing equipment and surfacing tidied up. This is part of the ongoing rolling programme to improve our play areas.

Fareham Park Vision

The Vision for Fareham Park is progressing well. Works to the new play area, outdoor gym, MUSA (Multi-Use Social Area) and running track are underway and expected to be completed by the Spring.

The outline planning application for Fareham Park's new community centre has been submitted and Money Tree, a company specialising in bid writing, is preparing information ready to start submitting funding applications in January.

Westbury Manor

Many of you will be aware that Westbury Manor Museum has now closed to the public and Hampshire Cultural Trust are making the necessary arrangements to properly manage the removal of the collections currently housed within the building – most items are being returned to storage after they have been cleaned and documented on site.

The history folders that were in the Library Room have been relocated to Crafty Makery to help ensure they remain accessible to the public and I would like to say a special thank you to Lesley for helping to facilitate this with Officers. The location of the history folders will be promoted in the New Year so that current and new users of the historical folders will be aware of how and where to access them.

With regards to the future of the building, the Council's Asset Management Team and Regeneration Lead are reviewing interest in the building. Savills will continue to market the property with the hope of generating additional interest to try and ensure the best possible tenant is secured to provide a use that will align with the wider town centre aspirations. In the meantime, Officers have agreed terms with Café Zero 5 who operated the café at Solent Airport, regarding the continuation of the café at Westbury Manor until a longer-term

tenant is found. Given our existing relationship, Officers believe that Café Zero 5 are well placed to oversee the short-term operation of the café.

7. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest made at this meeting.

8. PRESENTATION OF PETITIONS

There were no petitions presented at this meeting.

9. DEPUTATIONS

A deputation was received from local resident, Christopher Watson, in respect of item 14(1) – Motion on Right of Local Supply for Community Energy Projects.

The item was brought forward on the agenda and discussed after the deputation was heard.

A deputation was received from representatives of Y-Services for Young People in respect of item 15 – Annual Review of the Corporate Strategy 2023-2029.

This item was brought forward on the agenda and discussed after the deputation was heard.

10. REPORTS OF THE EXECUTIVE

(1) Minutes of meeting Monday, 4 November 2024 of Executive

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting of the Executive held on Monday, 4 November 2024 be received.

(2) Minutes of meeting Tuesday, 3 December 2024 of Executive

RESOLVED that the Council:

(a) approves the Corporate Strategy 2023-2029, subject to any further amendments.

(b) The minutes of the meeting of the Executive held on Tuesday, 3 December be received.

(3) Schedule of Individual Executive Member and Officer Delegated Decisions

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

11. REPORTS OF OTHER COMMITTEES

- (1) Minutes of meeting Wednesday, 11 September 2024 of Planning Committee

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting of the Planning Committee held on Wednesday, 11 September 2024 be received.

- (2) Minutes of meeting Wednesday, 9 October 2024 of Planning Committee

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting of the Planning Committee held on Wednesday, 9 October 2024 be received.

- (3) Minutes of meeting Wednesday, 13 November 2024 of Planning Committee

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting of the Planning Committee held on Wednesday, 13 November 2024 be received.

- (4) Minutes of meeting Monday, 25 November 2024 of Audit and Governance Committee

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting of the Audit and Governance Committee held on Monday, 25 November 2024 be received.

- (5) Minutes of meeting Tuesday, 26 November 2024 of Licensing and Regulatory Affairs Committee

RESOLVED that the Council:

- (a) endorses the final scheme for Polling Places and Polling Districts 2024 for adoption for the next four years, as shown to Appendix C of the report.
- (b) Agrees that the Minutes of the meeting of the Licensing and Regulatory Affairs Committee held on Tuesday, 26 November 2024 be received.

12. REPORTS OF THE SCRUTINY PANELS

- (1) Minutes of meeting Tuesday, 8 October 2024 of Health and Public Protection Scrutiny Panel

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting of the Health and Public Protection Scrutiny Panel held on Tuesday, 8 October 2024 be received.

- (2) Minutes of meeting Monday, 14 October 2024 of Daedalus Scrutiny Panel

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting of the Daedalus Scrutiny Panel held on Monday, 14 October 2024 be received.

- (3) Minutes of meeting Tuesday, 15 October 2024 of Climate Change Scrutiny Panel

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting of the Climate Change Scrutiny Panel held on Tuesday, 15 October 2024 be received.

- (4) Minutes of meeting Monday, 21 October 2024 of Policy and Resources Scrutiny Panel

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting of the Policy and Resources Scrutiny Panel held on Monday, 21 October 2024 be received.

- (5) Minutes of meeting Monday, 18 November 2024 of Policy and Resources Scrutiny Panel

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting of the Policy and Resources Scrutiny Panel held on Monday, 18 November 2024 be received.

- (6) Minutes of meeting Thursday, 24 October 2024 of Housing Scrutiny Panel

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting of the Housing Scrutiny Panel held on Thursday, 24 October 2024 be received.

- (7) Minutes of meeting Tuesday, 29 October 2024 of Streetscene Scrutiny Panel

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting of the Streetscene Scrutiny Panel held on Tuesday, 29 October 2024 be received.

- (8) Minutes of meeting Wednesday, 6 November 2024 of Planning and Development Scrutiny Panel

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting of the Planning and Development Scrutiny Panel held on Wednesday, 6 November 2024 be received.

13. QUESTIONS UNDER STANDING ORDER 2.12

Question by Councillor West:

1. We have question for the Executive Leader for Planning and Development, Councillor Daniells regarding Fareham Borough Council's climate change action plan.

At the last Climate Change scrutiny Panel we raised our concerns that this Council's target to be carbon neutral in its direct operations by 2030 will, on current performance and projections be missed.

The 23% reduction in CO2 emissions over the last 4 years is to be commended but even if this decrease is based on a continuing linear projection it will take at least a further 12 years to reach the target.

We acknowledge that council officers are working hard in this area and initiatives such as expanding the use of HVO rather than diesel in

approximately 20% of the council vehicle fleet, increasing EV's in the fleet, using LED lights in the civic offices and the Hook solar farm project will all bring benefits, they are not enough actions to deliver out target.

The Environment Strategy, first raised a year ago in the December 23 council meeting and discussed in the July council meeting as part of an amendment to a proposed motion has still not started. We were advised that the draft strategy is unlikely to be available until the first half of 2025. We recognised that, to deliver the strategy and the carbon reduction targets, resources need to be dedicated to it.

The town centre regeneration and simpler recycling projects alone are already a signification drain on resources.

Can the executive member give reassurance to the members that there is confidence in delivering both the environmental strategy and out carbon reduction target and that we have sufficient resources in the right place to facilitate that.

Response by the Executive Member for Planning and Development:

1. Thank you Madam Mayor,
I would first like to thank Councillor West for her question, and for pointing out the significant progress we have made, in reducing our carbon footprint by just under a quarter since 2019/20.
It's important to point out that our emissions won't reduce year-on-year on a linear basis. This includes the level of use of low carbon fuel, Hydrotreated Vegetable Oil, which has already had such a positive effect on our fleet emissions.
To ensure service resilience and prudent use of Council finances, a considered approach in our transition to low emission vehicles is being taken. This reflects the rapidly changing but emerging nature of the market, particularly for the specialised vehicles which make up much of our fleet. Charging infrastructure is being installed at the depot to help future proof the site and support our transition to EV over the medium term.
Like most other Councils, we have operational buildings that were built before many of today's thermal and energy efficiency technologies were available.

A whole building approach to decarbonising the heating of the Depot, informed a detailed application for funding, which was submitted to the Government's Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme in November.

Our proposal includes air source heat pumps, direct water heating, thermally insulated garage doors in the workshops and improved energy management. If approved, the emissions from gas use at the Depot would be reduced to zero.

Similar proposals will need to be developed for the Civic Offices, once the role it takes within the emerging Town Centre Regeneration Strategy becomes clearer.

Work continues on developing plans for a Solar Farm at Hook Recreation ground. Through the use of innovative agreements with energy suppliers, this project has the potential to fundamentally reduce our electricity emissions.

Focusing our resources on interventions like these, gives us the best chance of achieving our ambitious carbon neutrality commitment, whilst also maintaining service provision and ensuring we can respond to our financial challenges.

Finally, to offer further reassurance a more detailed carbon reduction projections up to 2030 will form part of the new Environment Strategy. To achieve this, we are securing additional external expert resource to develop the Strategy which is scheduled to be presented for public consultation in Spring 2025.

In closing, I want to reaffirm our commitment to achieving carbon neutrality while balancing our financial responsibilities and maintaining high-quality service delivery for our residents. By focusing on impactful, innovative, and sustainable interventions, we are setting a strong foundation for a greener future. I look forward to working together to build on our progress and delivering on our shared environmental goals. Thank you.

14. MOTIONS UNDER STANDING ORDER 2.6

(1) Right of Local Supply for Community Energy Projects

A deputation was received in respect of this item from local resident, Christopher Watson.

A motion was submitted by Councillor Mrs C L A Hockley in respect of the Page 3 Right of Local Supply for Community Energy Projects that requests:

That Fareham Borough Council

- (i) Acknowledges the efforts that this Council has made to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and promote renewable energy;
- (ii) Further recognises
 - that because small-scale renewable energy generation sites receive no guaranteed price certainty for the electricity they generate, it is difficult for sites to finance new generation projects or expand existing ones
 - that enabling small-scale renewable energy generation sites (capacity below 5 megawatts) to export their electricity to an existing electricity supplier on fair terms would provide sites with a guaranteed income which can be used to expand existing projects or establish new ones

- that very large financial setup and running costs involved in selling locally generated renewable electricity to local customers result in it being impossible for community-owned and run renewable electricity generators ('community schemes') to do so,
 - that requiring existing larger suppliers to work with community schemes to then sell the electricity they generate to local customers would mean local households, businesses and public services can access locally[1]generated, clean and affordable electricity
 - that revenues received by such community schemes that chose to become local renewable electricity providers could be used to help improve the local economy, local services and facilities and to reduce local greenhouse gas emissions.
- (iii) Notes that the Government-commissioned Net Zero Review, authored by Rt Hon Chris Skidmore and published on the Government's website on the 14th January 2023, recommends that Government should commit to enabling community energy projects to provide energy directly to local households and businesses.
- (iv) (iv) Accordingly resolves to support a Right to Local Supply, as outlined in the Local Electricity Bill of last year that was supported by a cross-party group of 326 MPs; and
- (v) Further resolves to
- inform the local media of this decision,
 - write to local MPs, asking them to support the establishment of a Right to Local Supply for community energy projects, and
 - write to the organisers of the campaign for the Right to Local Supply, Power for People, (at Camden Collective, 5-7 Buck Street, London NW1 8NJ or info@powerforpeople.org.uk) expressing its support. This item was taken to the Planning and Development Scrutiny Panel on 5th June. The minutes of this meeting can be found [here](#), and a copy of the presentation that was given to the Panel can be found [here](#).

During a debate on this item, Councillor G Furnivall proposed an amendment on this motion to amend the wording of the recommendation (iv) to read:

Resolves to endorse the objective of the Great British Energy Bill (relating to the Local Power plan) currently under consideration on the House of Lords, to facilitate community groups in accessing shares of the £400m of loans available for such initiatives, as well as the £600m allocated to local authorities for local power production projects.

And recommendation (v) to read:

- Continue to update local media on the council's progress on local power projects

- Write to local MP's, asking them to support and advocate for local power projects.

Having been duly seconded by Councillor M Daniells and following a debate on the amendment, it was declared CARRIED unanimously.

(2) Closure of Henry Cort Community College

Notice of Motion dated 14 November 2024 received from Councillor Mrs P M Bryant.

The notice of motion submitted by Councillor Mrs P M Bryant is in respect of the proposed closure of Henry Cort Community College states:

As Members of this Council are aware Hampshire County Council (HCC) have agreed to build a new secondary school in Whiteley which has been required for some years. This will benefit many families in that part of the Borough and relive the need for pupils from Whiteley to be bussed into Henry Cort Community College in Fareham.

At a meeting on the 25 of October 2024, HCC Executive Member for Education Cllr Roz Chadd gave permission for the publication of a Public Notice to relocate Henry Cort Community College to the new North Whiteley Secondary School site with effect from September 2027. This decision was called in and the decision was considered on the 19 November. A planned second consultation on the relocation of Henry Cort to North Whiteley will now go ahead on 10 January until 14 February and the decision will be made in June 2025. The relocation of Henry Cort Community College will result in those pupils living in the catchment area of Henry Cort to be transported to the new school in Whiteley.

The Council Notes:

The decision made by HCC is clearly not in line with the community response received through the initial public consultation, with 72% of the responses preferring to keep both school sites open. In addition to this, concerns have been raised around the decision, relating to potential transportation and environmental impacts, educational need within Fareham, health concerns for parents and children, development in the local area, Welborne impacts, the effect on a disadvantaged area within Fareham and Fareham Borough Council's recent decision to invest in a new community centre site next door to Henry Cort. With the new school in North Whiteley, Henry Cort Community College will see its students relocated from September 2027. Both Fareham Page 5 Academy and Cams Hill School have agreed in principle to increase their catchment areas to potentially include the current Henry Cort catchment area.

This Council strongly believes that:

Henry Cort Community College is best situated in one of the most deprived areas in the Borough, and also has a large percentage of Special Educational Needs pupils which is constantly growing. Retaining these pupils at Henry Cort College or at schools closest to their existing school will result in providing an improved learning experience, minimising travel costs and time which will help

all the children and assist many of these local families to meet the costs of day-to-day living.

This Council resolves to:

- Write to Hampshire County Council asking that they support the families living in this area by retaining Henry Cort College at its current location.
- In the event that the retention of Henry Cort is unsuccessful, strongly urge the County Council to make provisions for those students, and future students, effected by the school move to North Whiteley to be included within the Fareham Academy and Cams Hill school catchment areas.

Having been duly seconded by Councillor F Birkett, the motion was debated with a recorded vote requested by Councillor D Hamilton. Upon being put to the vote the motion was declared CARRIED with 30 votes in favour (Councillors Bainbridge, Bastable, Mrs Bayford, Bird, Birkett, Mrs Birkett, Mrs Bryant, Miss Burton, Mrs Clubley, Daniells, Dugan, Mrs Ellis, Englefield, Foot, Ford, Furnivall, Hamilton, Miss Harper, Mrs Hayre, Mrs Hockley, Ingram, Mrs Mandry, Martin, Murphy, Mrs Needham, West, L Whittle, P Whittle, D Wiltshire and K Wiltshire), 0 votes against and 0 abstentions.

15. ANNUAL REVIEW OF CORPORATE STRATEGY 2023-2029

The comments of the deputies were taken into account when considering this item.

RESOLVED that Council:

- (a) notes the results of the annual review of the Corporate Strategy; and
- (b) approves the updates to the Corporate Strategy 2017-2023.

16. ADDITIONAL AUDIT AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE MEETING

RESOLVED that the Council confirms the additional Audit and Governance meeting to be held on 10 February 2025, if necessary, to allow the Committee the opportunity to consider the Statement of Accounts.

17. APPOINTMENTS TO OUTSIDE BODIES

- (1) River Hamble Management Committee

RESOLVED that, having been duly proposed and seconded, Councillor David Foot be appointed as the deputy member to the River Hamble Management Committee for the remainder of the term of office.

- (2) Hammond Memorial Hall Board of Trustees

RESOLVED that, having been duly proposed and seconded, Roy Parker be appointed to the Hammond Memorial Hall Board of Trustees for a further 4-year term of office.

18. APPOINTMENTS TO COMMITTEES

Councillor Hamilton announced the following change to the Liberal Democrat group's committee nominations:

Councillor David Wiltshire is appointed as a member of the Policy and Resources Scrutiny Panel, replacing Councillor Paul Whittle with Councillor David Hamilton appointed spokesman for that panel.

(The meeting started at 6.00 pm
and ended at 7.35 pm).

..... Chairman

..... Date