

To Councillors: J Aldridge, A Baker, S Compton, M Gemmell Smith, A Layland, N Martindale, M McArthur, S McGregor (Chairman), V Parker, A Read, J Streets, S Sumner, B Todd.

Notice is hereby given of a Forward Planning Steering Group to be held in Rickards Hall on 23 October 2023 at 7:30 pm, which Councillors are summonsed to attend.

Town Clerk
18 October 2023

To assist in the speedy and efficient dispatch of business members wishing to obtain factual information on items included on the Agenda are asked to enquire of the Town Clerk prior to the day of the meeting. Council Meetings may be recorded.

Any person intending to make recordings is advised to notify the Clerk in advance so that appropriate arrangements can be made

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Meeting Papers & Report


1 **To appoint the Chair/Chairman for the meeting and ensuing year for the Forward Planning Steering Group**

2 **Apologies for Absence**

3 **Declarations of interests or predetermination**

The disclosure must include the nature of the interest. If an interest becomes apparent to a member during the course of a meeting that has not been disclosed under this item, the member must immediately disclose it.

4 **To receive the minutes of the Forward Planning Steering Group meeting held on 31 October 2022, pages 9797-9802**

 Forward Planning | 31 October 2022 v.1 - Minutes (Pages PRE-098/-)

5 **Matter arising from the previous minutes for report, and not elsewhere in the agenda.**

5.1 **To receive an update previously proposed projects**

5.1.1 **Band Stand for Stangrove Park**

Last year, Members supported the aspiration for a Band Stand and included on its Forward Plan. There has been no progress with this currently, though it sits as a short-to-medium goal.

5.1.2 **Concrete Skate Park for Edenbridge**

Discussion for the potential of a concrete skate park started back in 2021, last year FSPG supported investigating the viability of fundraising and project management outsourcing for leisure and sports facilities and how to best use this methodology. At January Council, Members appointed a 'Task and Finish' Group (T&FG) to explore the viability for externally funded projects, initially looking at a new concrete skate park including location, is there community appetite, compliance with Council procurement procedures, best way to proceed and viability. T&FG Group members: Cllrs Aldridge, Baker, Gemmell Smith, Layland, McArthur, and Sumner (added at AMTC).

The T&FG have met and have also received a presentation from a company called Maverick who built Swanley's Skate Park, to discuss how they manage projects, work with and can advise councils. However, before all this, Council has to decide to potentially commit to a skate park project, planning permission (if required), have the funding in place, preparing a specification and then going to public tender (as per the procurement procedures).

The T&FG will provide an update at the meeting, Members will be asked to consider if to include the potential concrete skate park project on its Forward Plan. As part of the Plan review they will then consider the potential time frame – short, medium or long term.

5.1.3 **Neighbourhood Plan**

At the July Council, Members resolved to investigate costs and funding resources to develop an Edenbridge Neighbourhood Plan, and make recommendation to the Visioning/Forward Planning in September to consider as part of the Council's future projects, time scales and budgets.

5.1.4 **Cyber security and compliance service improvements and upgrade**

At the September Council meeting, Members considered upgrading its IT managed service to include complete support with cyber security and compliance service. The monthly cost £957.10 (annual expenditure of £11,485.20 incs MS Business Premium 365 x 10 licenses). Council currently pays £6,881.58 (inc MS 365), so the additional annual expenditure would be £4,603.62.

There are several steps the Council would need to do to be compliant, it is not just a case of handing over to PS Tech. Whilst the move to Microsoft 365 Sharepoint was a positive step in the right direction, hackers and scammers are becoming more and more sophisticated hence the need for better cyber and compliance service e.g. 24/7 eye on screen monitoring, rapid detection for response to cyber-attacks, managed risk and compliance with wide range of global standards and early detection reduces time to response and reputational losses. The .gov website also encourages organisations to sign up to the cyber essentials scheme, which would provide an appraisal and actions.

The Council's insurance had advised the Council to consider taking out cyber insurance, but without the above being completed, the Council would not meet the insurance criteria requirements, so compliance and improved processes are necessary before meeting any insurance criteria.

Members at full September Council unanimously supported carrying out an appraisal, and for this to form part of the Forward Plan, but not to proceed with the insurance currently. The budget would need to consider factoring the potential additional costs to a full managed service (£4,603) in addition to staff time.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/cyber-essentials-scheme-process-evaluation/cyber-essentials-scheme-process-evaluation#introduction>

5.1.5 **Land outside the old Police Station**

Council has supported taking on this area where the flagpole sits and to create a garden area/feature at this part of the town. £5k has been allocated in the current budget (code 1011). There has been a delay with the legalities of this, should this not happen in the current budget year, the funds can be moved the earmarked reserves.

6 **Visioning Training - To receive the summary report and consider recommendations**

The Visioning event was provided by James Corrigan of Council HR & Governance and took place on 2 September. The session looked at the role of parish/town councils, the council's current Forward Plan and how to revise and make this a Plan which also has community support. The day was attended by seven councillors and two officers. A summary report is attached.

Comments on the report:

Recommendation 3: Refuse bag sales solutions - although a number of residents visit the offices to purchase waste bags, this does allow an opportunity for residents to engage with the

Council. The group did discuss this at length during the session, which is why it is included in the report. However, the Council does purchase garden refuse bags, and sale of all the waste bags does generate a small income for the Council, last year this was £2,281.

Recommendation 4: to review Council office hours - staff hours, time management was already being reviewed by Personnel Committee, following Personnel and Council September meetings, new office hours are currently being piloted.

I refer Members to section 4 - Summary (page 14) and section 5 - list of full recommendations (page 15) and the following appendices:

Appendix 1 - Pages 17 to 23 includes the Council's current Forward Plan (2022) *also published on the website (link below); and an updated one for review is with agenda item 7.*

Appendix 2 - Pages 24 to 26 article on Developing and Delivering the Council's Strategic Plan

Appendix 2 - Pages 29 to 31 shows an example for a revised Strategic Plan layout which members may like to consider adopting.


Do Members have any comments?

Do Members support the recommendations 1 to 12 (as listed page 15)?

Do Members support an adaption of the example Strategic Forward Plan incorporating its own Forward Plan but with information to include:

- **project costs and financial implications**
- **reason/objectives of the project**
- **dates for starting and completion**
- **how to measure its success**
- **officers running project**
- **to categorise projects into Community Enhancement, Council Operations, and External Influence**
- **to size the projects - small, medium, large**

<https://www.edenbridgetowncouncil.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/11/221031-FPSG-minutes-FPlan.pdf>

 Confidential Annex 1 (omitted from public documents):

7 **To review the 2022 Forward Plan and update the Council's projects and aspirations for the Council term 2023-27, and the longer view**

A copy of the current Plan with updates is attached.

Members are asked to consider the projects, its priorities and aspirations for the future.

 Annex 2: 231017 updated FP 221031 - Forward Plan.pdf

7.1 **To receive an update on the Forward Plan** **Do members have any comments?**

7.2 **To review the projects, include any additional projects and aspirations, and to prioritise projects**

Members are asked to consider and agree on the projects and targets, which should all be SMART - Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Time constrained.

These will be presented to full Council to support.

Consideration should also be given to budgeting implications including the 2024-25 budget,

and longer term.

Other projects raised previously for consideration and including on the Strategic Forward Plan:

- To allocate a budget for a sound system for Rickards Hall. **Do Members support this?**
- To allocate a budget to allow for cyber security increases (see agenda item 5.1.4). **Do Members support the additional budget to enable better compliance and cyber security?**
- For Council to provide for an annual event for the community, annually, and to allocate an annual budget for an annual community event. **Do Members support this?**
- The bridge was deemed not safe and had to be removed earlier this year, the costs for replacement Bridge were in excess of £16k, Open Spaces Committee agreed that this was not a project that could be funded currently. **Do Members want to add this to the Plan for future consideration?**

Are there any changes to the current Forward Plan, any additions, removal or time scale changes?

7.3

To consider public consultation on Council Plan and its projects?

Members are asked to consider the need to consult on its Plan, to consult on the full Plan or just the larger/significant projects to help prioritise projects?

8

To make recommendation to the Finance Committee any additional increases to the budget and Precept to cover any proposals from the Forward/Strategic Plan

How do Members want to proceed with its recommendation to Finance Committee?

9

Date of next meeting

The annual meeting to review the Plan and consider impact on budget and Precept, is usually around October, next year's is **14 October**. However, in view that there are potentially going to be changes to the format of the Strategic Forward Plan, consultation to gauge support for the Plan or certain projects helping to prioritise and set realistic targets, an interim meeting to confirm the Council's Strategic Forward Plan would be a good idea.

There are limited Mondays available next year so it may need to be a different week evening. Monday availability: 22 January BUT can only accommodate in Doggetts Barn; 19 February after CIL Board; 18 March after Planning; 08 or 29 April after Planning; 17 or 24 June.

Do Members support an interim meeting?