

Minutes of a meeting of the Oversight Committee

Wednesday 23 October 2024, 7pm
Frome Town Hall and Zoom

Present:

In the Town Hall: Fiona Barrows, Mark Dorrington (Chair), Anne Hills, Steve Tanner

In attendance:

Paul Wynne (Town Clerk), Rachel Griffin (Marketing and Communications Manager), Sarah Williams (Business Manager), Laura Flaherty (Executive Assistant to the Town Clerk and Mayor), Hannah Stopford (Engagement Lead), Nikki Cox (Partnership Lead)

o members of the public was in attendance at Frome Town Hall

o member of the public in attendance on Zoom

To watch the discussion in full visit: www.youtube.com/watch?v=g82BIRKtEsc

Minute Ref	Agenda Item	Action
2024/40/OS	<p>The meeting started at 7pm</p> <p>1a. Apologies for absence Fiona Barrows proposed to accept apologies from Nick Dove, Andy Jones and Ben Still, seconded by Anne Hills, agreed unanimously.</p> <p>1b. Declaration of members' interests None was received.</p> <p>c. Minutes from the last meeting on 11 September 2024 The minutes of the Oversight Committee meeting held on 11 September 2024 were approved as a true record of the meeting and signed by the Chair.</p> <p>Proposed by Anne Hills, seconded by Fiona Barrows, agreed unanimously. Steve Tanner abstained.</p>	
2024/41/OS	<p>2. Questions and comments</p> <p>None was received</p>	
2024/42/OS	<p>3. For decision - Making improvements to the structure of Frome Town Hall</p> <p>Rachel Griffin presented the report on improving the Town Hall's structure and energy efficiency. Two reports had been commissioned: a retrofit report and a condition and maintenance report.</p>	

	<p>The condition report highlighted immediate repairs that were needed, including external stonework, roof, and internal areas, with an estimated cost of £53,000. Further discussions with builders revealed potential cost savings by combining year two to five repairs into a single year, reducing costs by more than half.</p> <p>Rachel Griffin explained the importance of the retrofit report, which assessed the building's energy performance and suggested enhancements like insulation, heating system upgrades, and ventilation. The retrofit plan aligned with the condition report, particularly in ventilation to prevent dry rot.</p> <p>Anne Hills questioned the potential for reducing costs by combining retrofit and maintenance work, which Rachel acknowledged but noted the need for a detailed plan.</p> <p>Steve Tanner suggested hiring a facilities manager to manage all buildings and facilities, highlighting the growing responsibility.</p> <p>The rat problem was discussed, with suggestions for more frequent visits from the Rat Man. Fiona Barrows said that getting rid of rats should be a priority, despite the challenges posed by composting and other factors.</p> <p>Rachel Griffin clarified that the Town Hall maintenance budget covered legal compliance and small checks, while the EMR budget was for larger repairs.</p> <p>The recommendations were:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Recommend to Council that £100k is allocated in next year's work programme for works to the Town Hall and a retrofit plan (£56k use of existing Town Hall EMR & £44k General Reserves) and divided in the following way: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. £90k for immediate repairs as detailed in the Condition Report. b. Commission a planning consultant to draft a five-year implementation plan for the retrofit, with proposals to be presented at the next appropriate committee meeting, estimated cost £10k 2. Delegate to the Business Manager and the Marketing and Comms Manger to implement points 1 and 2 above through to completion. <p>Proposed by Steve Tanner, seconded by Anne Hills, agreed unanimously.</p>	SW/ RG
2024/43/OS	<p>4. For information - Progress report on the Communities elements of the work programme 2024-25</p> <p>Nikki Cox and Hannah Stopford presented the report, highlighting their work with displaced people and the wider community.</p>	

	<p>Nikki explained the Welcome Hub supported 150+ displaced people through various services, including food, work, transport, housing, and education. Whereas the Community Hub offered support for all residents, working with local organisations to provide early help services and address health inequalities. The Citizens Advice service at the Town Hall had seen increased demand, and the Community Hub had become a referral point for the food bank.</p> <p>Hannah Stopford discussed the focus on neighbourhood and street-level work, emphasising the importance of local connections and support. Hannah and her team had identified two main neighbourhood areas, St John's and the Mount, each with specific needs and ongoing projects.</p> <p>The Mount area was highlighted for its energy and potential for community development, with various local initiatives already in place.</p> <p>Hannah explained the support for community organisation. It included regular networking sessions and a big lunch event to address key priority areas for local groups.</p> <p>Anne Hills and Fiona Barrows discussed the challenges of measuring the impact of community engagement work and the importance of early help responses.</p> <p>The conversation also touched on the over-reliance on volunteers and the need for more paid staff to support community organisations.</p> <p>Steve Tanner spoke about integrating new developments like Edmund Park and Sandy Hill Lane into the community. Also, of the importance of community engagement and networking to bring together local initiatives and address broader community needs.</p> <p>Mark Dorrington asked Hannah how she was prioritising work/areas to engage? Hannah explained it was a mix of secondary data and what the team had picked up from being in the community. She noted there was value on focusing on one area at a time, so capacity wasn't spread too thin.</p>	
2024/44/OS	<p>5. For decision - Finance report to Oversight Committee to mid-year, 30 September 2024</p> <p>Sarah Williams thanked the rest of her team for their hard work in preparing the audit report.</p> <p>Paul Wynne highlighted that the external auditors report came back with full approval and noted the huge amount of high quality work done by Sarah and Hannah, ably supported by Becca.</p>	

	<p>The recommendations were:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Note the External Auditors Notice of Conclusion at Appendix 5.1 2. Approve the Internal Auditors report of 5 September 2024 at Appendix 5.2 3. Approve Appendix 5.3 the Income & Expenditure report at 30 September 2024 4. Approve Appendix 5.4 the Balance Sheet including Earmarked Reserves at 30 September 2024 5. Approve Appendix 5.5 General Ledger - payments over £100 July to September 2024 <p>Proposed by Steve Tanner, seconded by Anne Hills, agreed unanimously.</p> <p>Fiona Barrows raised the idea of proactive training for staff and Cllrs, suggesting a conversation about specific training needs.</p> <p>Laura Flaherty and Paul Wynne discussed the current training process and the potential for joint training sessions for staff and Cllrs. The conversation highlighted the need for training in areas like facilitation, gender equality, and business skills.</p>	
2024/45/OS	<p>6. For information – Update on staff starters and leavers, health and safety matters and safeguarding</p> <p>Laura Flaherty noted a safeguarding issue had been brought to FTC’s attention by the Probation service and in response an amendment had been made to the way bookings were considered in the Town Hall.</p>	
2024/46/OS	<p>7. For decision – planned items for Oversight Committee agendas for the remainder of 2024/25</p> <p>Paul Wynne provided a brief summary of the report.</p> <p>There was a discussion about the use of RAG (Red, Amber, Green) rating of work programme progress. It was decided to discuss different reporting options internally and then bring some alternative options to the next meeting for decision.</p> <p>The recommendation was to approve the upcoming items for the remaining Oversight Committee meetings for 2024/25.</p> <p>Proposed by Mark Dorrington, seconded by Anne Hills, agreed unanimously.</p>	PWy
2024/47/OS	<p>The next meeting will be at 7pm on Wednesday 11 December 2024, Frome Town Hall and Zoom</p>	

The Chair closed the meeting at 8.15pm