



Borough of Gosport

A MEETING of the **COUNCIL OF THE BOROUGH OF GOSPORT** was held in the Council Chamber at the **TOWN HALL, GOSPORT** on **WEDNESDAY**, the **TWENTY NINTH** day of **NOVEMBER 2006** at **6.00PM**.

The Mayor (Councillor Mrs Cully) (P) (in the Chair);

The Deputy Mayor (Councillor Gill);

Councillors Allen (P), Ms Ballard (P), Burgess (P), Carr (P), Carter (P), Mrs Champion (P), Champion (P), Chegwyn (P), Clinton (P), Cully (P), Davis (P), Dickson (P), Edgar (P), Farr (P), Foster (P), Foster-Reed (P), Hicks (P), Hook (P), Jacobs (P), Kimber (P), Langdon (P), Mrs Mudie (P), Philpott (P), Redrup (P), Rigg (P), Mrs Salter (P), Smith (P), Taylor (P), Train (P), Ward (P), Mrs Wright (P) and Wright (P).

Also in attendance: Honorary Aldermen Mrs Bailey, Foster and O'Neill.

APOLOGY

An apology for inability to attend the meeting was submitted on behalf of Councillor Gill.

MINUTES

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the Ordinary meeting of the Council held on 4 October 2006 be confirmed and signed.

MAYOR'S COMMUNICATIONS

(A) FAIRTRADE COFFEE MORNING

The Mayor thanked those councillors who had attended her Charity Event, the Fairtrade coffee morning, in the Town Hall on Saturday, 25 November 2006.

(B) CIVIC CAROL SERVICE

The Mayor invited councillors to attend her Civic Carol Service at 3.00pm on Sunday, 17 December 2006 at Holy Trinity Church, Gosport.

(C) 'ARMING THE FLEET', THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE ROYAL ORDNANCE YARDS

The Mayor referred to a copy of a book which would be deposited in the Members Room on 'Arming The Fleet', The Development of the Royal Ordnance Yards 1770 – 1945. The book, donated by David Evans, was jointly supported by the Explosion! Museum and English Heritage.

DEPUTATIONS

Mrs J Upperton and Mr E Bone had requested permission to address the Council on behalf of a number of residents concerning the Ann's Hill Cemetery Memorial Testing.

The salient points from Mrs Upperton's Deputation are detailed as follows:

- I have no personal involvement with a memorial, the stone I had erected stands firm.
- I was appalled to read the Council was planning to 'Topple Test' the memorials in our cemetery. I know decisions are difficult and responsibilities are heavy but a cemetery and its contents should be treated with care and respect.
- To pay a firm £50,000 of ratepayers' money to come in and push stones over struck me as an outrage.
- I have read the Health and Safety Commission's and Ombudsman's reports and they advise Burial Authorities to consider the possibility of accidents – there have been so few and none reported at Gosport. It was not a panic situation. Many more people are killed by bee stings and possibly by falling trees or branches, shall we push all the trees over?
- Memorials are bought at considerable expense and mean a great deal to the grieving relatives. There is no way the Council should damage them, they are private property.
- The damage appears to be random, why one grave and not another? How could a stone 2' high – broken off deliberately ever fall on someone. There is a large marble stone which has stood over 100

years broken clean off. No doubt the owner long gone! This cannot be right.

- Our cemeteries contain history which is being lost to cremations – they are of great interest not least because of the war graves.
- Not all Councils are doing this. And what of church yards? – especially the old country ones. It's ridiculous to think of 'Topple Testing' these. Are they also a hazard?
- We do so well here with our parks and open spaces – but this action, in this way, is a huge mistake. It must be put right and any further action given very careful thought to avoid further damage and distress.
- I ask you to agree to right the wrong and not to repeat this awful action in this way.
- Other Councils have dealt with it differently, both Southampton and Fareham have found different ways of dealing with this problematic area.
- Don't do this type of testing again in five years time! The Council should put right the wrong it has done.

The salient points from Mr Bone's Deputation are detailed as follows:

- At previous meetings the officers concerned have said that in their opinion they did all that they could to advertise the testing of the headstones – this is laughable as we go to the cemetery on a regular basis and not once did we see a sign on the gate in Wilmott Lane or any where else until the tests had been carried out and The News had got involved, then they were every where on all taps, posts and gates.
- As for the testing itself we are told it was a three stage test – visual, manual and then meter. If you do a manual test on anything of this nature it will depend on who does the test and how zealous they do it. After all someone my size will by the very nature of my strength do it a lot heavier than some one a lot smaller. It seems to me that the only way to carry out these tests is to push them with a meter only.
- What does done to 35 mean? What is 35, 35 kilograms? I don't believe these tests needed to be done. The way it was carried out I believe is nothing but legalised vandalism and therefore the Council has no other course of action but to put right all the headstones in the cemetery that they have damaged straight away and compensation to those who have already put theirs right and issue an apology to everyone concerned.
- Also an assurance that no headstones will be removed even if people cannot be contacted, after all when the headstone was erected people put them up as a memorial to their loved ones.

QUESTION PURSUANT TO STANDING ORDER 3.4

- (A) Question No 1 standing in the name of Councillor Mrs Wright on the Warden recently appointed at The Leisure was answered by the Chairman of the Housing Board.

A MEETING OF THE POLICY AND ORGANISATION BOARD

WAS HELD ON 8 NOVEMBER 2006

The Mayor (Councillor Mrs Cully) (ex-officio); Chairman of the Policy and Organisation Board (Councillor Hook) (P); Councillors Burgess (P), Carter (P), Chegwyn (P), Cully (P), Gill (P), Langdon (P), Smith (P), Taylor (P) and Wright (P) .

PART I

27. ADOPTION OF A GAMBLING POLICY FOR GOSPORT BOROUGH COUNCIL

Consideration was given to a report of the Environmental Services Manager (a copy of which is attached in the Minute Book as Appendix "PO1"), which sought the introduction of a Gambling Policy for use by the Licensing Board in connection with applications received under the Gambling Act 2005 and to establish a fee structure for such applications based on regulations issued by the Department of Culture, Media and Sport.

Members expressed concern regarding the report's recommendation that the Environmental Services Manager, in consultation with the Chairman of the Policy and Organisation Board, be given delegated authority to adopt the most appropriate suitable fee structure for licences. Members felt that the Council should be recommended to approve the adoption of the highest banding permitted under the regulations.

RECOMMENDED: That:

- a) the Gambling Policy, which formed part of the report of the Environmental Services Manager, be adopted; and
- b) Council adopt the highest fee banding permitted for licences issued under the Gambling Act 2005, having regard to the Department of Culture, Media and Sport Regulations.

RESOLVED: That the recommendations contained in Minute No 27 be approved and adopted.

A MEETING OF THE COMMUNITY AND ENVIRONMENT BOARD

WAS HELD ON 30 OCTOBER 2006

The Mayor (Councillor Mrs Cully)(ex-officio); Chairman of the Policy and Organisation Board (Councillor Hook)(ex-officio)(P), Councillors Ms Ballard (P), Carr (P), Champion (P), Clinton (P), Dickson (P), Edgar (P), Kimber (P), Smith, Wright (P) and Mrs Wright (P)

In accordance with Standing Orders, it was reported that notice had been received that Councillor Foster-Reed would replace Councillor Smith for this meeting.

PART I

21. ANN'S HILL CEMETERY – MEMORIAL TESTING RESULTS

Members had received a report of the Leisure and Cultural Services Manager, (a copy of which is attached in the Minute Book as Appendix "CE1"), which informed the Board of the outcome of the memorial testing procedure that had been conducted at Ann's Hill Cemetery earlier this year.

The Council had conducted a survey to assess the stability of all memorials in the Cemetery and it was reported that the work had addressed the health and safety concerns and the risk assessment had identified the issues that the Council would need to consider. The report outlined the options available to the Council for remedial action.

The costs of the initial survey and interim works had exceeded the original estimated budget and at present there was no capital or revenue budget provision for any future works. The capital programme included a budget of £30,000 in respect of this matter against which £59,000 had been spent to date. The remedial cost options available to the Council outlined in the report were all unbudgeted and, if approved, would impact on the Council's capital resources and revenue budget.

The legal considerations for the Council and powers as the Local Burial Authority, under the Local Authorities Cemeteries Order 1977, were also detailed in the report.

A Member expressed the view that consideration of this matter should be debated by Council and that this Board should refer any recommendations to full Council. The majority of Members of the Board felt that a resolution was within their terms of reference and therefore consideration should be given to advising officers of recommendations for action. Under Standing Order 6.10 (Minority Order), two Members requested that the matter be referred to full Council.

Notwithstanding the Minority Order and that the Borough Solicitor had not

received any requests for deputations, Members agreed that Mr Bone, a local resident, could address the Board. Mr Bone made the following points:

- headstones were the ownership of families concerned;
- it would be theft if the Council removed them;
- if headstones were not replaced or repaired would they be taken away?
- it was emotional blackmail to suggest they would be removed and tantamount to vandalism.

The Chairman read out to the Board the contents of a letter received from Mrs B Sharp, a local resident, referring to the manner in which the procedure had been carried out.

The Leisure and Cultural Services Manager explained in detail the reasons, on health and safety grounds and the Council's duty as owners of the cemetery, for undertaking the memorial testing, the extensive consultation that had ensued and the comprehensive methods of communication, how the work had been undertaken with sensitivity, and the number of memorials tested and of those repaired.

A Member proposed a recommendation, which was duly seconded, as follows:

‘That, on this occasion, the Council pays for the cost of reinstatement of gravestones laid down or temporarily staked as a result of this process.’

The recommendation was put to the meeting and declared LOST.

Two Members reiterated their wish that this matter be referred to full Council under Standing Order 6.10 (Minority Order).

RECOMMENDED: That Council be requested to consider the outcome of the memorial testing procedure that was conducted at Ann's Hill Cemetery earlier this year and advise officers of its recommendation for action.

With the approval of the Council, the Chairman of the Community and Environment Board moved -

MOTION: On behalf of this Council the Chairman of the Community and Environment Board write to the Health and Safety Executive requesting the Health and Safety Executive meet the cost of repair to the 758 supported memorials and reinstatement of the other 331 memorials laid down at the Ann's Hill Cemetery.

The Council considered and approved the following Addendum to the Motion which was proposed by Councillor Mrs Wright and seconded by Councillor Wright:

If the Health and Safety Executive refuse to pay the costs of reinstatement of gravestones laid down or temporarily staked as a result

of this process, the matter shall be brought back to the next meeting of full Council following receipt of such HSE decision.

The Motion was accordingly put to the meeting and duly RESOLVED.

The Mayor, at the conclusion of the debate on Minute No 21 of the Community and Environment Board, apologised to relatives for the distress caused by the Memorial Testing at Ann's Hill Cemetery.

NOTICES OF MOTION

(A) It was reported that Councillor Hook had given notice of the following Motion in accordance with Standing Order 3.3:

“That the Council suspend Standing Orders 4.6 and 4.14 for the purposes of considering the following three Motions on (A) Car Park Charges, (B) Gosport Festival Working Group and (C) Holbrook Recreation Centre Working Group.”

The Motion was accordingly seconded by Councillor Langdon.

The Motion was put to the meeting and duly RESOLVED.

(B) It was reported that Councillor Philpott had given notice of the following Motion in accordance with Standing Order 3.3:

“A.(i) That the Council notes with regret that the Car Park Charges Working Group appointed at the Extraordinary Meeting of the Council on 11th September 2006 has not met.

(ii) That the Council regrets the refusal by the Leader of Gosport’s Liberal Democrat Group to discuss his charging policy with the Council’s Policy Scrutiny Committee and to ignore the invitations of that Committee.

(iii) That the Council agree that any removal of car parking charges would have the effect of increasing harmful carbon emissions.

(iv) That the Council now considers the objections to the Borough of Gosport (Off Street Parking Places) (Gosport and Lee-on-the-Solent) (Amendment) (No 3) Order 2006.

The Council has complied with the statutory requirements to consult certain bodies and to advertise their intention to make the Order, a copy of the advert is attached. The Council have also placed the attached documents on deposit as required by the regulations.

The period for objections closed on 18 October 2006. No objections were received from the statutory bodies.

4 written objections have been received in response to the advert, copies of which are attached as Appendix A. The addresses of individuals have been removed and the objections are open to public inspection.

(v) In light of the objections the Council resolves not to proceed with making the Borough of Gosport (Off Street Parking Place) (Gosport and Lee-on-the-Solent) (Amendment) (No.3) Order 2006.”

(NOTE: A copy of the documents accompanying the Notice of Motion had been sent to each Member and placed on the Website and in the Members Room.)

The Motion was accordingly seconded by Councillor Kimber.

Upon the Motion being put to the meeting, in accordance with Standing Order 4.12.4, it was requisitioned that the voting on each part of the Motion be recorded. A recorded vote was thereupon taken and the names of the Members voting for and against each part of the Motion were read to the Council as follows:

FOR MOTION A (i): Councillors Allen, Burgess, Carter, Mrs Champion, Champion, Clinton, Dickson, Edgar, Foster, Hook, Jacobs, Kimber, Langdon, Philpott, Rigg, Taylor and Ward (17)

AGAINST MOTION A (i): The Mayor and Councillors Ms Ballard, Carr, Chegwyn, Cully, Davis, Farr, Foster-Reed, Hicks, Mrs Mudie, Redrup, Mrs Salter, Smith, Train, Wright and Mrs Wright (16)

Motion A (i) was declared CARRIED.

Motion A (i) was accordingly put to the meeting and duly RESOLVED.

FOR MOTION A (ii): Councillors Allen, Burgess, Carter, Mrs Champion, Champion, Clinton, Dickson, Edgar, Foster, Hook, Jacobs, Kimber, Langdon, Philpott, Rigg, Taylor and Ward (17)

AGAINST MOTION A (ii): The Mayor and Councillors Ms Ballard, Carr, Chegwyn, Cully, Davis, Farr, Foster-Reed, Hicks, Mrs Mudie, Redrup, Mrs Salter, Smith, Train, Wright and Mrs Wright (16)

Motion A (ii) was declared CARRIED.

Motion A (ii) was accordingly put to the meeting and duly RESOLVED.

FOR MOTION A (iii): Councillors Allen, Burgess, Carter, Mrs Champion, Champion, Clinton, Dickson, Edgar, Foster, Hook, Jacobs, Kimber, Langdon, Philpott, Rigg, Taylor and Ward (17)

AGAINST MOTION A (iii): The Mayor and Councillors Ms Ballard, Carr, Chegwyn, Cully, Davis, Farr, Foster-Reed, Hicks, Mrs Mudie, Redrup, Mrs Salter, Smith, Train, Wright and Mrs Wright (16)

Motion A (iii) was declared CARRIED.

Motion A (iii) was accordingly put to the meeting and duly RESOLVED.

FOR MOTION A (iv): The Mayor and Councillors Allen, Ms Ballard, Burgess, Carr, Carter, Mrs Champion, Champion, Chegwyn, Clinton,

Cully, Davis, Dickson, Edgar, Farr, Foster, Foster-Reed, Hicks, Hook, Jacobs, Kimber, Langdon, Mrs Mudie, Philpott, Redrup, Rigg, Mrs Salter, Smith, Taylor, Train, Ward, Wright and Mrs Wright (33)

Motion A (iv) was declared CARRIED.

Motion A (iv) was accordingly put to the meeting and duly RESOLVED.

FOR MOTION A (v): Councillors Allen, Burgess, Carter, Mrs Champion, Champion, Clinton, Dickson, Edgar, Foster, Hook, Jacobs, Kimber, Langdon, Philpott, Rigg, Taylor and Ward (17)

AGAINST MOTION A (v): The Mayor and Councillors Ms Ballard, Carr, Chegwyn, Cully, Davis, Farr, Foster-Reed, Hicks, Mrs Mudie, Redrup, Mrs Salter, Smith, Train, Wright and Mrs Wright (16)

Motion A (v) was declared CARRIED.

Motion A (v) was accordingly put to the meeting and duly RESOLVED.

(C) It was reported that Councillor Kimber had given notice of the following Motion in accordance with Standing Order 3.3:

“B. (i) That the Council notes that the Gosport Festival Working Group has failed to submit any recommendations to full Council for the Gosport Waterfront Festival for 2007 and that it is disbanded with immediate effect.

(ii) To ensure a successful Waterfront Festival, that the Council agree that the Gosport Waterfront Festival decisions are taken by the Community Events Sub-Board who have delegated powers to make decisions on behalf of the Council.”

The Motion was accordingly seconded by Councillor Burgess.

The Motion was put to the meeting and duly RESOLVED.

(D) It was reported that Councillor Hook had given notice of the following Motion in accordance with Standing Order 3.3:

“C. (i) That the Council notes that the Holbrook Recreation Centre Working Group have failed to submit any recommendations to full Council and that therefore it is disbanded with immediate effect.

(ii) That the 3 companies who expressed an interest in providing new leisure facilities for Gosport be invited to make a presentation to Full Council to enable a decision on the way forward to be made.”

The Motion was accordingly seconded by Councillor Taylor.

The Motion was put to the meeting and duly RESOLVED.

A MEETING OF THE POLICY AND ORGANISATION BOARD

WAS HELD ON 8 NOVEMBER 2006

The Mayor (Councillor Mrs Cully) (ex-officio); Chairman of the Policy and Organisation Board (Councillor Hook) (P); Councillors Burgess (P), Carter (P), Chegwyn (P), Cully (P), Gill (P), Langdon (P), Smith (P), Taylor (P) and Wright (P) .

25. APOLOGY

An apology for inability to attend the meeting was submitted on behalf of the Mayor.

26. MINUTES

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the Board meeting held on 13 September 2006 be approved and signed by the Chairman as a true and correct record.

PART II

28. BUDGET MONITOR

Consideration was given to a report of the Borough Treasurer which advised Members on forecast revenue and capital expenditure compared to the revenue budget and capital programme for 2006/07 and sought formal approval of the use of reserves to fund the projected net overspend.

Concerns were raised regarding the recommendation to write off £50,000 promised by Berkeley Homes towards the running costs of the Explosion! Museum. Members felt that officers should pursue this promised contribution and decided that it should not be written off at this stage.

RESOLVED: That:

- a) the contents of the Borough Treasurer's report be noted;
- b) approval be given to the net additional expenditure incurred in 2006/07 being met by a supplementary estimate from reserves;
- c) it be noted that variations in projected capital expenditure and funding resources will be reported as part of the capital programme in the budget process; and
- d) officers be requested to pursue again the outstanding £50,000 promised by Berkeley Homes towards the running costs of the Explosion! museum.

29. CROSS REFERENCE FROM THE CIVIC AND COMMEMORATIVE EVENTS SUB-BOARD (26 OCTOBER 2006): ROYAL HOSPITAL HASLAR – FREEDOM OF THE BOROUGH

Consideration was given to a cross reference from the Civic and Commemorative Events Sub-Board, which, at its meeting on 26 October 2006, had considered proposals for the extension of the Freedom Rights granted to the Royal Hospital Haslar on 11 March 1998 to include the Ministry of Defence Hospital Unit (Portsmouth). The Sub-Board had subsequently supported these proposals and accordingly recommended them to this Board.

RESOLVED: That:

- a) the extension of the Freedom Rights granted to the Royal Hospital Haslar to include the Ministry of Defence Hospital Unit (Portsmouth) be referred to an Extraordinary Council meeting to be held at 5.30 p.m. on 29 November 2006; and
- b) approval be given to a ceremony being held on 28 March 2007 in the Timespace in order to hand over the scroll of honour to the Ministry of Defence Hospital Unit (Portsmouth) and be followed by a parade along the High Street.

30. FUNDING OF COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PROJECT: ROWNER (ACCESS POINT)

Consideration was given to a report of the Chief Executive, which requested a further two years of ongoing funding for the Community Development Project in Rowner.

Members were advised that Gosport Voluntary Action had requested Hampshire County Council and Portsmouth Housing Association, who were partners to the project, to consider making financial contributions for 2007/08 and 2008/09. A favourable response had been received from Hampshire County Council although it was not known what level of contribution would be made.

RESOLVED: That, subject to budgetary provision being made, the Council provide £15,000 per annum for 2007/08 and 2008/09 to support the Community Development Project – Rowner.

The meeting commenced at 6.00 p.m. and concluded at 6.45 p.m.

RESOLVED: That Minute Nos 25 and 26 and 28 – 30 of the meeting of the Policy and Organisation Board held on 8 November 2006 be received.

A MEETING OF THE COMMUNITY AND ENVIRONMENT BOARD

WAS HELD ON 30 OCTOBER 2006

The Mayor (Councillor Mrs Cully)(ex-officio); Chairman of the Policy and Organisation Board (Councillor Hook)(ex-officio)(P), Councillors Ms Ballard (P), Carr (P), Champion (P), Clinton (P), Dickson (P), Edgar (P), Kimber (P), Smith, Wright (P) and Mrs Wright (P)

In accordance with Standing Orders, it was reported that notice had been received that Councillor Foster-Reed would replace Councillor Smith for this meeting.

16. APOLOGIES

Apologies for inability to attend the meeting were submitted on behalf of The Mayor and Councillor Smith.

17. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

18. MINUTES

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the Board meeting held on 4 September 2006 be approved and signed by the Chairman as a true and correct record.

19. DEPUTATIONS

It was reported that no deputations had been received.

20. PUBLIC QUESTIONS

No questions had been received from the public.

PART II

22. TEMPORARY HEALTH CENTRE, JUNCTION ROWNER LANE AND GRANGE LANE

The Board considered a report of the Development Services Manager seeking approval for the renewal of a lease of land at the junction of Rowner Lane and Grange Lane for a period from 31 October 2005 to 31 December 2010.

The Hampshire (formerly Fareham and Gosport) Primary Care Trust had approached the Council with a request to renew the lease to enable continued use of the accommodation at temporary health centre buildings in order to decant some of the facilities from Gosport War Memorial Hospital whilst works were taking place at the hospital.

The Board were reminded that the PCT had originally proposed using the building for a limited period only whilst the Rowner Health Centre was being built. A Member expressed the view that, as this was situated in a conservation area, the land should be returned to an open space and that an extension to the lease should not be granted. He commented that, rather than further developing the Gosport War Memorial Hospital, better use of the excellent facilities at the Royal Hospital Haslar should be encouraged.

Members were mindful of the Council's vote of 'no confidence' in the PCT at its meeting on 20 January 2005 and confirmed their view that Haslar should be promoted at every opportunity, in compliance with the wishes of the community.

Following a vote on the recommendation, the Board were unanimously against approving an extension to the lease.

RESOLVED: That the proposed granting of a lease of land at the junction of Rowner Lane and Grange Lane to the Hampshire Primary Care Trust for a period commencing on 31 October 2005 and terminating on 31 December 2010 be not approved.

23. ELSON AND LEESLAND ALLOTMENTS

The Leisure and Cultural Services Manager submitted a report seeking approval for the use of funding received by the Council from the sale of land at Camden Allotments in order to upgrade the existing perimeter boundary fencing at both Elson and Leesland Allotments.

The Allotment Stakeholders Consultative Group had identified that the existing perimeter fencing at those locations was in need of urgent improvement and provided only a low level of security for the sites. As the Group did not have any delegated authority, it was necessary to submit any proposals requiring funding to the Board for approval.

RESOLVED: That the expenditure of £12,400 from the funding received from the sale of land at Camden Allotments be approved, in order to upgrade fencing at Elson and Leesland Allotments.

24. IMPROVEMENTS TO LEE-ON-THE-SOLENT PLAY AREA, LEESLAND PARK AND ROWNER BOWLING CLUB

Consideration was given to a report of the Leisure and Cultural Services Manager seeking approval for the use of Developer Contributions in order to undertake a range of improvement works to leisure facilities at the locations identified above.

The report outlined the proposed improvements and identified how they would address any risks that had been assessed with the current provision. Each of the proposals set out in the report sought to enhance and upgrade equipment and security, contributing to an improved quality of facilities for residents local

to the areas identified. As such, the schemes were within the permitted use of planning developer contributions.

A Member expressed disappointment at the lack of developer contributions that were available for the Bridgemary area and suggested that Groundwork Solent be invited to a future meeting of the Board to inform Members of progress on work being undertaken in the Borough.

RESOLVED: That:

(a) the use of £48,600 from Developer Contribution funding for improvements to Lee-on-the-Solent Recreation Ground Play Area, Leesland Park and Rowner Bowling Club be approved.

(b) Groundwork Solent be invited to attend a future meeting of the Board to update Members on work being carried out in the Borough.

25. FORTON RECREATION GROUND

The Board considered a report of the Leisure and Cultural Services Manager seeking approval for the use of additional Developer Contributions in order to continue the upgrade of the open space facility at Forton Recreation Ground by providing an additional pathway and a Teenshelter.

The route of the additional proposed pathway, as shown in the report, would overcome concerns of an informal pathway being formed over the existing grassed area and would facilitate the current users of the recreation ground.

The installation of the Teenshelter would assist in providing a recognised meeting place for youngsters using the recreation ground facilities.

RESOLVED: That the use of £22,000 from the East Gosport Children's Playing Space fund, which currently has a balance of £34,177 of which £12,210 related to sites where development has not yet started, be approved.

26. DEDICATION OF LAND ALONG HOWE ROAD

The Board considered a report of the Leisure and Cultural Services Manager seeking approval for the dedication of the area of land along Howe Road to Hampshire County Council for the use of the public as a public highway.

It was proposed that the portion of land incorporating the footway verge and street lighting, referred to in the report and shown on the plan, be dedicated as public highway. Hampshire County Council had expressed its willingness to undertake maintenance of the land within its role as highway authority.

If approved a Deed of Dedication would be drawn up as a formal recognition of this arrangement.

RESOLVED: That the area of land along Howe Road, referred to in the

Leisure and Cultural Services Manager's report, be dedicated for use by the public as a public highway.

The meeting commenced at 6.00pm and concluded at 7.12pm

RESOLVED: That Minute Nos 16 – 20 and 22 – 26 of the meeting of the Community and Environment Board held on 30 October 2006 be received.

A MEETING OF THE HOUSING BOARD

WAS HELD ON 1 NOVEMBER 2006

The Mayor (Councillor Mrs Cully) (ex-officio) (P), Chairman of Policy and Organisation Board (Councillor Hook) (P), Councillors Allen (P), Burgess (P), Cully (P), Foster (P), Foster-Reed (P), Gill (P), Philpott (P), Mrs Mudie (P), Rigg and Mrs Wright (P).

Also in attendance: Tenant Representative – Mrs Janne Carter

It was reported that, in accordance with Standing Orders, notice had been received that Councillor Hook would replace Councillor Rigg for this meeting.

14 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Mrs Wright declared a personal and prejudicial interest during Minute No 21 (Early Stage Review of the Choice Based Lettings Scheme), left the meeting room and took no part in the discussion on homelessness or voting thereon.

NOTE: The Chairman acknowledged the need to alter Councillor Mrs Wright's declaration to refer to the Fareham and Gosport Supported Housing Panel under homelessness when the Minutes are signed as a true and correct record.

15 APOLOGIES

Apologies for inability to attend the meeting were received on behalf of Councillor Rigg.

16 MINUTES

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the meeting held on 14 June 2006 be approved and signed by the Chairman as a true and correct record.

17 DEPUTATIONS

There were no deputations.

18 PUBLIC QUESTIONS

There were no public questions.

PART II

19 DELIVERING DECENT HOMES 2010 AND BEYOND

The Board considered the report of the Housing Services Manager setting out the plans to enable the Council to meet the Decent Homes Standard (DHS) for its owned properties by 2010 and setting out the need for investment in

council homes, above the Decent Homes Standard, to ensure the long-term viability of the Council's housing assets.

Members were advised that at present there is limited scope for moving the Decent Homes programme beyond 2010 following information from the Department of Communities and Local Government.

Members were concerned about a potential shortfall of £2.056M by 2010/11.

Officers gave a detailed explanation of the figures contained in the report and confirmed that the shortfall of £2.056M was needed for improvement works above the DHS.

Members were given an update as to the current housing stock position and although they were keen to maximise the potential for carrying out improvement works to the housing stock were concerned about the effect this might have on any potential funding gap. The Housing Services Manager confirmed that the external funding position would be clearer on publication of the Housing Revenue Account subsidy, determined on an annual basis in December, and that funding from external sources such as the Regional Housing Board were excluded from the figures presented. Officers confirmed that leaseholders were excluded from making any payments in 'like for like' replacement circumstances but that their potential contributions were not taken into account for the purpose of the calculations.

Members wished to aspire to the enhanced DHS with improvement works, but not at the expense of jeopardising the investment in, and retention of, the housing stock to which the Board was committed. In the event of a deficit in funding, the goals of the DHS should be achieved.

In conclusion Members expressed their concern regarding the recommendation to approve the improvements programme subject to consultation with the Housing Forum. The Tenant Representative confirmed that this matter had already been discussed at the Housing Forum, therefore the words 'subject to consultation with the Housing Forum.' should be deleted from the recommendation.

RESOLVED: That

- (a) the Capital Investment plans for Decent Homes set out in paragraph 2.11 of the Housing Service Manager's report be approved;
- (b) the Annual Decent Homes return to GOSE (Government Office for the South East) be made on the basis of a shortfall of £2.056M;
- (c) an improvements programme as detailed in paragraph 2.13 of the report be approved; and
- (d) that officers prepare an Asset Management Strategy, in partnership with PCA Management Consultants for presentation to the Housing

Board in 2007.

20 PERFORMANCE INFORMATION EXCEPTION REPORT 2006/07

The Board considered the report of the Housing Services Manager informing Members of progress by the Housing Service in meeting performance targets and the proposed remedial action where appropriate. Members were given an update as to information received for the second quarter of 2006/07.

Empty Properties

There was Member concern that adequate recording of tenant satisfaction was being made for those moving into Council properties. The officer confirmed that the recording of satisfaction in this area had been in place for several months and that sufficient data should be available by the end of this financial year. A further way to ensure that standards were being maintained was an analysis of empty property expenditure although directly comparable figures with previous years was not possible, as there had been a change of main contractor in March 2006. The next performance report to Members would cover these two areas. It was also confirmed that the Empty Property Standard for properties was set at a higher level than that of the DHS, and had remained essentially unaltered in recent years.

Officers confirmed that they would forward a checklist to all Members giving details of the void standard when re-letting Council properties.

Communications: Telephone answering

Officers reported that the performance in 2006-07 year to date for calls answered with 20 seconds was still below the 90% corporate target, but that recent improvements in processes had already seen an improvement in performance. Officers were optimistic that the corporate target could be achieved by the end of the financial year. Officers reported that this performance indicator was taking priority over "percentage of calls engaged", which although also important, was not felt could be addressed until the former performance indicator showed improvement.

In response to Members' questions, officers explained the details relating to telephone answering and how improvements could be made whereby additional staff would be in the office at peak times. It was confirmed that telephone statistics quoted in the report were cumulative, Members were conscious of providing good customer service and requested that staff be encouraged to achieve maximum telephone coverage to maintain a good customer service image.

Communications: Response to General and Councillor correspondence

Members explained how they were at 'the sharp end' as far as enquiries from residents were concerned and would appreciate a quick response from staff in this respect. Officers advised that the importance of this area was recognised as a priority. Members requested that officers undertake further reviews of the

Councillor enquiry process at appropriate intervals and as non-performance may determine.

Members were assured that, regarding the 'percentage of Councillor correspondence answered within 5 working days', this meant that the substantive part of any enquiry would be dealt with within this timescale.

Members expressed their thanks for bringing this report to the Board.

RESOLVED: That the action plans for Communications: Telephone Answering and Response to General and Councillor Correspondence, identified in the report, be approved.

21 EARLY STAGE REVIEW OF THE CHOICE BASED LETTINGS SCHEME

Note: Councillor Mrs Wright declared a personal and prejudicial interest during the discussion on homelessness, and left the room whilst this matter was debated.

The Board considered the report of the Housing Services Manager giving Members an initial overview of the implementation of the Choice Based Lettings scheme (CBL).

Members were advised that further reports would be forthcoming relating to the CBL together with an Allocations Policy review. Regarding a recent publication of posters, making the public aware of the CBL scheme, Members were assured they would, in future, be readily available for public display.

A Member expressed disappointment in the difficulties experienced in accessing information on the CBL website relating to the number of homeless, transfers and the waiting list. It was considered that comparable data between the old and new systems should be available and that a review of CBL should be undertaken and presented to Housing Board in January 2007. There were further concerns regarding the priorities and fairness of the new banding system and it was felt that further development was required. The potential for recording up to date vital information relating to medical conditions and the need for constant monitoring was also requested. There was mixed support from Members of the Board for the new banding system at this stage, although it was understood that there was a need to be flexible and to monitor changes to the new scheme.

Officers confirmed they would undertake to keep scheme advertisements simple. Approaches to local voluntary agencies would be considered so that they could gain access to the CBL system and assist people with learning difficulties.

Officers explained that the new CBL scheme was being continually evaluated, improvements were being made and work was continuing to address the problems as quickly as possible. There were a large number of homeless

people, the problems were complicated and there was a high eviction rate. It was confirmed that further investigations would be carried out regarding policy issues and points' adjustments and the potential for penalties would be addressed. Further reports on this matter would be provided for Members.

Members were advised that homeless customers were underrepresented on the CBL scheme as they had been on the previous scheme, that it was a difficult area regarding permanent lettings and the Gosport and Fareham Supporting Housing Panel, with a multi-agency approach, had been set up to address the problems.

Members were informed that there had been few complaints regarding the new scheme and officers confirmed they would provide detailed customer feedback, a breakdown of lets and refusal details, for debate by Members at Housing Board in January 2007.

RESOLVED: That the Housing Services Manager's report on the Early Stage Review of the Choice Based Lettings Scheme be noted.

22 CHAIRMAN'S CLOSING REMARKS

The Chairman drew attention to the Briefing Note entitled 'Progress Report on Review of Council Garages' distributed to Members of the Housing Board prior to the meeting. It was reported that this item was to be presented to Housing Board in January 2007.

The meeting commenced at 6pm and concluded at 7.47pm

RESOLVED: That Minute Nos 14 – 22 (inclusive) of the meeting of the Housing Board held on 1 November 2006 be received.

STANDING ORDER 4.15.1

The Mayor reported that notice had been received requesting that Standing Order 4.15.1 be moved to enable the Borough Solicitor to present her reports related to the Review of Council Boards, Sub-Boards and Committees and Determination of Allocation of Seats and the Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee's recommendation for a new Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

RESOLVED: That Standing Order 4.15.1 be moved to enable the Borough Solicitor to present her reports related to the Review of Council Boards, Sub-Boards and Committees and Determination of Allocation of Seats and the Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee's recommendation for a new Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

REVIEW OF COUNCIL BOARDS, SUB-BOARDS AND COMMITTEES AND DETERMINATION OF ALLOCATION OF SEATS

Members of the Council had before them a report of the Borough Solicitor (a copy of which is attached hereto as Appendix "C1") in connection with the above.

It was reported that the Council had previously reviewed the allocation of seats and made a determination as to the allocation between the political groups on the Council in May this year. However notice had been given by one member that he was no longer a member of the Labour Group on the Council and therefore a further review was proposed.

The Borough Solicitor in her report made reference to Section 15 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 which referred to proportionality guidelines for seats on Boards and Committees.

The Council had five Boards and on the basis that the recommendation to appoint only one Overview and Scrutiny Committee is approved at tonight's meeting there were 64 seats to be allocated as set out in paragraph 2.2 of the report. However, it was not possible to allocate 64 seats in exact proportion as each Political Group had on the Council, as could be seen from the table below.

	CONSERVATIVE	LABOUR	LIBERAL DEMOCRATS	TOTAL
Seats	17	7	9	34
Proportion	50%	20.59%	26.47%	97.06%

	CONSERVATIVE	LABOUR	LIBERAL DEMOCRATS
Seats	32	13.18	16.94

It was proposed that the allocation of seats on Boards and Overview & Scrutiny Committee be as follows:

	CONSERVATIVE	LABOUR	LIBERAL DEMOCRATS
Number of seats	32	14	18
Percentages	50%	21.88%	28.12%
Differences between percentage of seats on Council and seats on Boards & Committees		+1.29%	+1.65%

	CONSERVATIVE	LABOUR	LIBERAL DEMOCRATS
Policy & Organisation	5	2	3
Community & Environment Board	5	2	3
Housing Board	5	2	3
Regulatory Board	5	2	3
Licensing Board	6	3	3
Overview & Scrutiny Committee	6	3	3
Total	32	14	18

This proposed allocation gave effect to the principles set out in paragraph 2.2 of the report.

In allocating seats on the Sub-Boards of the Council, again, the proportions could not be matched. Furthermore, any “ex-officio” Members of the Sub-Boards without voting rights were disregarded under the Proportionality Rules. The proportions on Sub-Boards were detailed as follows:

	CONSERVATIVE	LABOUR	LIBERAL DEMOCRATS
Seats	24	9.88	12.71
48	50%	20.59%	26.48%

In the circumstances it was proposed that the Council do not change the present allocation of seats on Sub-Boards as this was the allocation closest to the proportion of seats the political groups had on the Council:

	CONSERVATIVE	LABOUR	LIBERAL DEMOCRATS
Number of seats	24	11	13
Percentages	50%	22.92%	27.08%

The proportionality rules did not apply to the Standards and Governance Committee. Therefore it was proposed that the 8 seats should still be allocated as follows:

	INDEPENDENT MEMBERS	CONSERVATIVE	LABOUR	LIBERAL DEMOCRATS
Seats	2	2	2	2

MOTION: That the Council approve the allocation of seats on:

(i) Boards and Committees as set out in paragraph 3.1 of the Borough Solicitor's report;

(ii) the Sub-Boards as set out in paragraph 4.2 of the Borough Solicitor's report, and

(iii) the Standards and Governance Committee as set out in paragraph 5.2 of the Borough Solicitor's report.

The Motion was accordingly put to the meeting and duly RESOLVED.

NEW OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Members of the Council considered a report of the Borough Solicitor in connection with the above.

It was reported that at its meeting on 10 August 2006 the Policy Overview and Scrutiny Committee had given consideration to a review of its Terms of Reference. During the debate a proposal was put forward that the Policy and Services Overview and Scrutiny Committees be amalgamated. The Borough Solicitor was asked to provide, at the next meeting of the Committee, details of scrutiny matters undertaken by the two committees, together with the number of meetings held, since July 2003.

On 11 October 2006, the Policy Overview and Scrutiny Committee considered the information provided by the Borough Solicitor and took the view that the combined workload of the individual overview and scrutiny committees was of a volume that could be undertaken by a single committee. It was felt that this arrangement would also address the problem of unclear demarcation lines regarding the responsibilities of the existing two committees. However, it was felt that the Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee should be given the opportunity to consider this proposal before requesting that any changes be made to the Council's constitution.

The Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee at its meeting on 15 November considered Briefing Notes on this matter. The Committee subsequently recommended that scrutiny matters be undertaken by only one overview and scrutiny committee and that a report be submitted to Council at its meeting arranged for 29 November 2006.

The Terms of Reference of the one Overview and Scrutiny Committee would be an amalgamation of the existing ones. The Constitution would still require the Policy Framework to be considered by Overview and Scrutiny before it was adopted by full Council. It was suggested that the one Overview and Scrutiny Committee be comprised of 12 members to ensure that the one committee was properly resourced.

MOTION: That the Council:

(i) appoints one Overview and Scrutiny Committee to replace the existing committees with Terms of Reference as outlined in Section 2 of the Borough Solicitor's report; and

(ii) authorises the Borough Solicitor to make all necessary and consequential amendments to the Constitution to give effect to the Council's decision.

AMENDMENT: That the Motion be approved and adopted subject to the Independent Councillor being allowed to take one of the Liberal Democrat Group's seats on the new Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

The Amendment was put to the meeting and declared CARRIED.

The Substantive Motion was accordingly put to the meeting and duly RESOLVED.

FAREHAM AND GOSPORT MIND

RESOLVED: That Councillor Allen be nominated as the Borough Council's representative to Fareham and Gosport MIND for the remainder of the Municipal Year.

The Council rose at 9.29pm