

**A MEETING OF THE COMMUNITY AND ENVIRONMENT BOARD
WAS HELD ON 7 SEPTEMBER 2009**

The Mayor (Councillor Mrs Searle); Chairman of the Policy and Organisation Board (Councillor Hook) (ex-officio) (P); Councillors Beavis (P), Burgess (Chairman) (P), Cully (P), Edgar (P), Mrs Forder (P), Forder (P), Kimber (P), Mrs Mitchell-Smith (P), Murphy (P) and Wright (P).

19. APOLOGIES

An apology for inability to attend the meeting was received from the Mayor.

20. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Hook declared a personal and prejudicial interest in agenda item 9, Improvements to Privett Park Enclosure/ Gosport Borough Football Club.

Councillor Edgar declared a personal and prejudicial interest in agenda item 9 Improvements to Privett Park Enclosure/ Gosport Borough Football Club.

21. MINUTES

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the meetings of the Board held on 15 June 2009 be approved and signed by the Chairman as true and correct records.

22. DEPUTATIONS

No deputations had been received.

23. PUBLIC QUESTIONS

Mr J More asked the following Public Questions:

a) Why funds which are protected by the Small Holdings and Allotments Act 1908 are being used to pay for a replacement to the skip service the Council has failed to provide for three years.

(Councillors are requested to note that the Act permits these reserve funds can only be used for”acquiring, adapting, and improving other land for allotments”. In effect, these reserved funds are not to be used for services that the Council routinely provides).

The Chairman replied that:

The proposed use of the funds is considered to achieve an improvement to the Brockhurst facility and will bring more allotment plots into use.

b) Why the list of Allotment projects funded by the “Camden Fund” (Appendix 1) does not include the £52800 approved by this Board on 3 Nov 2008 when that work is in progress or committed and thus affecting the balance remaining.

The Chairman replied that:

The omission of the sum of £52,800 was an oversight when the report was drafted and will be corrected when the report is presented at the meeting.

c) Is the Board aware of how many plots will released when the accumulated groundwork material mentioned in this report is removed, also expressed as a percentage of the total number of plots available at the site?

The Chairman replied that:

The work is designed to bring more land back in to allotment use. It is difficult to accurately estimate the exact space to be re-provided until the area is cleared. However, given that many new plot holders request smaller size plots, as they are more manageable, it is hoped to accommodate a couple of new plot holders, improve access to that area of the site and address the vermin concerns.

d) Is the Board aware of how many other plots remain unavailable for use at the Brockhurst Site (i.e. plots overgrown by bramble/trees) and how many other plots are unallocated or safeguarded as they are reserved exclusively for badgers?

The Chairman replied that:

There were a total of 318 plots of which 58 were not usable due to severely overgrown vegetation and badger use. As requested by Members at the meeting of the Board in June 2009, the 58 plots have now been deducted from the calculation of plots which are available, resulting in a total of 260 plots. This creates a more accurate indicator of use of the plots available on the site.

As a matter of interest, utilisation on all sites has now reached 98.8% (874 out of 884 plots).

e) Will the Board ensure that officers are guided that “reserved funds” may not be used to make good shortcomings in routine Council services?

The Chairman replied that:

The funds received from the sale of land at Camden Allotments are only used for improvement schemes at allotments identified in consultation with the Stakeholder Group and approved by this Board. The scheme at Brockhurst was discussed and approved by the Stakeholder Group for submission to this Board.

PART II

24. BROCKHURST ALLOTMENTS

Consideration was given to a report Leisure and Cultural Services Manager which sought approval for the use of £8750 from the funds received by the Council for the sale of land at Camden Allotments to remove and dispose of surplus ground work material, address a problem with vermin and, subsequently, to create further allotment plots.

Members acknowledged the importance of the allotments to the Borough and recognised that the demand for them was increasing.

It was hoped that long term planning for the provision of and funding for allotments could be undertaken.

RESOLVED: That the use of £8750 from the funds received by the Council for the sale of land at Camden Allotments to remove and dispose of surplus ground work material be approved.

25. PRESENTATION –COASTAL PARTNERSHIP

A presentation was given by Lyall Cairns Coastal Defence Partnership Manager (attached in the minute book as appendix A).

Members were advised of the role of the Combined Coastal Partnership and the work that they had undertaken.

In answer to a Member's question, the Board were advised that the Environment Agency and neighbouring authorities were consulted when planning permission was sought for a development and that the work of the Coastal Partnership helped to inform these responses. It did not supersede any planning permission granted.

Members were advised that the Environment Agency assessed areas for the risk of flooding. If an area was determined as being at a high risk of flooding, it would not be recommended to build high risk properties, i.e. residential, on that site.

Members were advised that sequential testing took place to ensure that any developments were suitable for the area in which they were planned. It considered factors such as raising living accommodation and electrical fittings within the property, in high risk areas. In addition it considered whether there was sufficient egress in the event of flooding.

The Coastal Partnership had undertaken strategic flood risk assessments and had secured Government funding to undertake coastal improvements.

The Coastal Partnership was able to use a number of different methods to identify trends in shingle movement and erosion patterns.

The Board were advised that private land owners were responsible for the flood and erosion defence of their own land.

26. NORTH SOLENT SHORELINE MANAGEMENT PLAN

Consideration was given to a report of Leisure and Cultural Services Manager which sought approval in principle of the North Solent Shoreline Management Plan

Bret Davis of the Coastal Partnership gave a presentation to the Board detailing the North Shoreline Management Plan for the coastline of Gosport.

Members were advised that the plan was a non-statutory document that assessed the long term risks associated with coastal processes and aimed to reduce risks to people, and the developed and the natural environment.

Each section of the coastline was assessed using a multi-criteria analysis scoring system to compare non-monetary impacts for each policy area.

The plan was supported by the statutory planning process and used to identify and recommend a sustainable strategic coastal defence policy.

Members expressed concern about the recommendation of the plan, which stated “no active intervention” on the section of Gosport’s coastline between Gilkicker Point and Lee on the Solent, and felt that this would be irresponsible.

Members debated whether there would be a large number of properties at risk should there be no intervention. There was concern that areas in Gosport that had previously flooded would be put at risk.

Members were advised that the draft policy had been compiled in association with DEFRA and the Coastal Steering Group and that it was now scheduled to be put forward for public consultation.

Members proposed amendments to the recommendations which would read as follows:

- i) the Board approve in principle policies 5B03, 5B01, 5A25 and 5A24 prior to public consultation and oppose policy 5B02 on the grounds that localised coast protection work will be required in order to protect the road infrastructure at Stokes Bay, from No. 2 Battery to Gilkicker
- ii) officers inform and report to this Board on Final SMP policies following public consultation
- iii) officers make representations to the Environment Agency to request that the compensatory habitat requirements identified in the Appropriate Assessment be secured and delivered through the Regional Habitat Creation Programme.

RESOLVED: That:

- i) the Board approve in principle policies 5B03, 5B01, 5A25 and 5A24 prior to public consultation and oppose policy 5B02 on the grounds that localised coast protection work will be required in order to protect the road infrastructure at Stokes Bay, from No. 2 Battery to Gilkicker;
- ii) officers inform and report to this Board on Final SMP policies following public consultation; and
- iii) officers make representations to the Environment Agency to request that the compensatory habitat requirements identified in the Appropriate Assessment be secured and delivered through the Regional Habitat Creation Programme.

27. SALE OF LAND ADJACENT TO 59 HANBIDGE CRESCENT

Consideration was given to a report of the Development Services Manager which sought approval for the sale of the freehold interest of the land shown in the report (attached in the Minute Book), to the owner of 59 Hanbridge Crescent, for the consideration of £2800. The Constitution of the Council requires that where the value of the land exceeds £2000, or where that land is a part of a piece of land worth in excess of £2000, such requests be approved by the Board and referred to the Policy and Organisation Board for final approval.

In answer to a Member's question the Board were advised that no objections to the proposal had been received.

Members queried whether the land had originally been identified for use in any plans for future widening of the A32. The Board were advised that, as planning permission had been granted, the Highway Authority had been consulted with regard to the proposed sale.

Members acknowledged that a covenant was placed on the sale of such land to prevent the erection of any further development on the purchased land but queried how this was enforced as the planning process did not check for such covenants. Officers advised that it would be difficult to overturn any covenant to prevent the erection of additional developments on the site.

RESOLVED: That the sale of freehold interest of the land adjacent to 59 Hanbridge Crescent for the consideration of £2800 be approved, and that the matter be referred to the Policy and Organisation Board.

28. IMPROVEMENTS TO PRIVETT PARK ENCLOSURE / GOSPORT BOROUGH FOOTBALL CLUB

Note: Councillors Hook and Edgar declared personal and prejudicial interests in this item, left the room and took no part in the voting or discussion thereon.

Consideration was given to a report of the Leisure and Cultural Services Manager which sought approval for the use of £98,000 of Capital funds towards the estimated cost of £150,000 for improvements to the Privett Park Enclosure/ Gosport Borough Football Club.

In answer to a Member's question, the Board were advised that discussions had taken place with the Football Stadia Improvement Fund (FSIP) and that they had confirmed that the proposed improvements constituted the type of work they supported.

Members welcomed investment in sporting facilities as it would improve opportunities for healthy living within the Borough. It was also recognised that a large number of volunteers helped to maintain the existing facilities.

Members requested a breakdown of the proposed improvements with detailed costings of the work.

A Member questioned the viability of postponing the proposed development as more funding could be available should the club be promoted.

Members debated the proposed funding allocated from the capital budget. Previous improvements, supported by such funding, had been undertaken at Gosport and Fareham Rugby Club, Gosport Hockey Club and Gosport Cricket Club.

In answer to a Member's question, the Board were advised that the proposed improvements to the entrance were essential and that the other improvements would bring the facility up to a modern day standard.

Clarification was given that the funds would only be awarded if the application to the Football Stadia Improvement Fund was successful. Should any grant awarded by the FSIP be less than anticipated, any shortfall would not be met by Gosport Borough Council.

Members were also advised that, in line with previous schemes, the funds would be held by the Council and the proposed work would be put out to tender. The Football Club would not directly receive the funds.

Members requested confirmation that there was currently no outstanding rent to be paid by the Football Club.

Members agreed to the recommendations contained in the report subject to the following:

- i. Confirmation be sought from the Borough Treasurer that the Football Club has no outstanding debts with Gosport Borough Council
- ii. Detailed costings be provided for each proposed improvement
- iii. In recognition of the improved facility, a review of the rent paid by the Football Club be undertaken at the next rent review, and
- iv. Gosport Borough Council capital funds only be released when the funding from the Football Stadia Improvement Fund has been confirmed.

RESOLVED: That the use of £98,000 of capital funds towards the estimated cost of £150,000 of implementing the proposed ground improvements be approved, subject to the following conditions.

That:

- i. Confirmation be sought from the Borough Treasurer that the Football Club has no outstanding debts with Gosport Borough Council;
- ii. Detailed costings be provided for each proposed improvement;
- iii. In recognition of the improved facility, a review of the rent paid by the Football Club be undertaken at the next rent review; and
- iv. Gosport Borough Council capital funds only be released when the funding from the Football Stadia Improvement Fund has been confirmed.

The meeting commenced at 6.00 pm and concluded at 8.16 pm

CHAIRMAN