



Notice is hereby given that a **MEETING** of the **COUNCIL OF THE BOROUGH OF GOSPORT** will be held in the **TOWN HALL, GOSPORT** on **WEDNESDAY** the **SIXTH DAY** of **FEBRUARY 2008** at **6.00PM** AND **ALL MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL ARE HEREBY SUMMONED TO ATTEND TO CONSIDER AND RESOLVE THE FOLLOWING BUSINESS –**

1. To receive apologies from Members for their inability to attend the Meeting.
2. To confirm the Minutes of the Ordinary and Extraordinary Meetings of the Council held on 28 November and 12 December 2007 (copies herewith).
3. To consider any Mayor's Communications.
4. To receive Deputations in accordance with Standing Order No 3.5 and to answer Public Questions pursuant to Standing Order No 3.6, such questions to be answered orally during a time not exceeding 15 minutes.

(NOTE: Standing Order No 3.5 requires that notice of a Deputation should be received by the Borough Solicitor NOT LATER THAN 12 O'CLOCK NOON ON MONDAY 4 FEBRUARY 2008 and likewise Standing Order No 3.6 requires that notice of a Public Question should be received by the Borough Solicitor NOT LATER THAN 12 O'CLOCK NOON ON MONDAY, 4 FEBRUARY 2008).

5. Questions (if any) pursuant to Standing Order No 3.4.

(NOTE: Members are reminded that Standing Order No 3.4 requires that Notice of Question pursuant to that Standing Order must be received by the Borough Solicitor NOT LATER THAN 12 O'CLOCK NOON ON TUESDAY, 5 FEBRUARY 2008).

6. Consideration of recommendations by the Boards of the Council:-

BOARD	DATE
(i) Housing Board	23 January 2008
(ii) Policy & Organisation Board	*29 January 2008

* The Chairman of the Policy and Organisation Board's report on this meeting is 'To Follow'.

7. To receive the following Part II minutes of the Boards of the Council:

- Policy and Organisation Board: *29 January 2008
- Community and Environment Board: 21 January 2008
- Housing Board: 23 January 2008

* These Minutes are 'To Follow'

8. Corporate Equalities Policy.

To consider the report of the Chief Executive (copy herewith).

9. Race Equality Scheme 2007 – 2010.

To consider the report of the Chief Executive (copy herewith).

10. Authorisation of Officers, Part 15 Gambling Act 2005

To consider the report of the Environmental Services Manager (copy herewith).

11. Election of Mayor and Deputy Mayor 2008/2009.

In accordance with Standing Order No 2.4 the Borough Solicitor has written to Group Leaders and Members of the Council inviting them to submit Member nominations for the selection of Mayor-Elect and Deputy Mayor-Elect for the next Municipal Year. One nomination each has been received by the Borough Solicitor, Councillor D R Kimber for Mayor-Elect and Councillor J Train for Deputy-Mayor Elect for the 2008/2009 Municipal Year.

**IAN LYCETT
CHIEF EXECUTIVE**

**TOWN HALL
GOSPORT**

29 January 2008

NOTE: (1) MEMBERS ARE REQUESTED TO NOTE THAT IF THE COUNCIL WISHES TO CONTINUE ITS BUSINESS BEYOND 9.30PM THEN THE MAY MUST MOVE SUCH A PROPOSITION IN ACCORDANCE WITH STANDING ORDER 4.11.18

AGENDA ITEM NO. 6 (i)

REPORT TO: COUNCIL

DATE OF MEETING: 06 FEBRUARY 2008

REPORT BY: COUNCILLOR MRS WRIGHT (CHAIRMAN OF THE HOUSING BOARD)

At its meeting on 23 January 2008, the Housing Board considered a report on the following item and made the following recommendation to Full Council.

i) COUNCIL DWELLING RENTS 2008/2009 (APPENDIX HO1)

RECOMMENDATION: That with effect from 7th April 2008:

- a) The average weekly Council Dwelling rents increase by 5.37%; and
- b) Garage, carports and parking lot rents increase by 5.00%.

APPENDIX HO1

Board/Committee:	Housing Board
Date of Meeting:	23 January 2008
Title:	Council Dwelling Rents 2008/2009
Author:	Financial Services Manager and Housing Services Manager
Status:	For Decision

Purpose

This report considers the Board's revised 2007/2008 budget and the 2008/2009 budget for the Housing Revenue Account and makes recommendations on rent levels for next year.

Recommendations

It is recommended that with effect from 7th April 2008.

- 1.1 The average weekly Council Dwelling rents to increase by 5.37%
- 1.2 Garage, carports and parking lot rents to increase by 5.00%.

1.0 Background

- 1.1 This report considers the revised budget for 2007/2008 and the budget for 2008/2009 for the Housing Revenue Account (Appendix 1).
- 1.2 The report makes recommendations on rent levels for next year. A schedule detailing proposed rent levels is attached at (Appendix 2).

2.0 Housing Revenue Account (HRA)

- 2.1 The HRA revised council house maintenance budget for 2007/2008 is £2.741M, a decrease of £0.186M on the Original budget. The principle cause of this is a need to restore the balance of the HRA reserve to a level in line with the medium term financial strategy. The council house maintenance budget for 2008/2009 is £2.524M representing a £0.217M reduction on the 2007/2008 revised estimate.
- 2.2 It is anticipated that HRA balance level will increase to £583,000 from the current balance of £168,000 by the end of the financial year 2007/08. This is primarily due to a reduction in revenue contributions to the capital programme and a reduction in management costs. It is predicted that the HRA balance will remain the same at £583,000 at the end of the financial year 2008/09. This will be achieved by once again reducing revenue

contributions to the capital programme and by making significant cuts to housing management costs.

- 2.3 The draft housing subsidy settlement for this authority is particularly disappointing and an increase of £1,080,000 payable to the Government is budgeted for 2008/09. This is primarily due to guideline rents increasing by 5.37% and management and maintenance allowances by only 0.66%. Last year showed similar differentials between the guideline rent and the management and maintenance allowances but this was offset by the rental constraint allowance. This has been removed from the subsidy formula for this year. A 5.37% rent increase is assumed within the formula which, if approved, will reduce the subsidy deficit to approximately £650,000 but in order to retain an adequate level of reserve significant savings have needed to be found.

3.0 HRA Capital Programme

- 3.1 The Capital Programme for 2007/2008 to 2012/2013 is shown on page 46 of the draft budget book. The HRA Capital Programme totalling approximately £4.366M in the revised budget for 2007/08 is funded from the Major Repairs Allowance (MRA) £2.165M and capital receipts and borrowing of £2.202M. The Capital Programme for 2008/09 is £3.676M as we work to achieve the Decent Homes Standard by December 2010.
- 3.2 The expenditure for 2008/09 of £3.676M is to be financed from MRA £2.161M and the remainder of £1.515M would be funded by capital receipts and prudential borrowing.

4.0 HRA Subsidy

- 4.1 There has been a slight increase in the formula for Management and Maintenance allowances, but the overall allowance for this authority has actually decreased. This is due to the anticipated reduction in stock numbers as a result of Right to Buy. The allowance will drop from £5.141M to £5.124M. This represents a decrease of around 0.33%.
- 4.2 The Major Repairs Allowance (MRA) has increased from £660 per property in 2007/08 to £663 in 2008/09, an increase of 0.45%. The MRA provides the Council with the resources to maintain the condition of our housing stock over the long term and keep on track to achieve the Decent Homes Standard to 2010.
- 4.3 There are further changes in the methodology for calculating formula rents as some of the larger authorities have struggled to reduce their rents to meet the deadline for rent restructuring which was originally set for 2012. Authorities have now been given flexibility with regard to rental convergence with the date now pushed out to 2016/17 to enable those authorities to have a greater chance of achieving it.

- 4.4 The HRA subsidy settlement is a one year settlement for 2008/09 as opposed to the two year settlement that was expected. A new settlement will be released for 2009/10 as wider reforms of the HRA subsidy system are explored.
- 4.5 Although the DCLG have decided to remove the Rental Constraint Allowance for 2008/09 they have indicated that they will compensate authorities in 2009/10 through caps and limits calculations. This would be an allowance calculated on an individual property basis. It would be based on the difference between a rent that could have been charged if an authority had increased its rents purely on the basis of guideline rents and not taken into consideration the additional constraints recommended in the relevant years determination. There is a possibility that this allowance will be able to be accrued back at the end of 2008/09, although confirmation has not been received to date.

5.0 2008/2009 Rent Level Proposals

- 5.1 The Government policy of rent restructuring came into effect in 2002/03 and a review of the policy took place during the summer of 2004. This was discussed in detail in the HRA Council dwellings report for 06/07.
- 5.2 In order to maintain the move towards target rents in equal annual steps, a national average increase of 7% would be needed. However the DCLG has estimated by using the RPI+0.5%+£2 rule this will limit the increases to an average of 5.5% nationally, if necessary by using the tolerances within the system. The guideline rent is a major factor in determining the level of subsidy an authority receives. The guideline rent, set by the DCLG, for this authority has increased by 5.37% in 2008/09 and the impact of this when input in subsidy calculation is a net loss of subsidy to this Council of £1,060,000 for 2008/09.
- 5.3 The introduction of the new proposals have meant target rents have increased significantly and actual rents will have to increase by £3.32 (5.37%) on average in order for Gosport to achieve rent convergence by 2012 for the majority of its properties. It was a Government requirement that we achieved rent convergence by 2012, but as mentioned in paragraph 4.4 this has now been rebased and the legislation gives authorities the choice of either 2012 or 2017 as its target date for rent convergence.
- 5.4 In 2001 changes were made to the way that the Government subsidised the Housing Revenue Account (HRA), by introducing Rent Restructuring. Under a process known as 'convergence', the rents of Gosport Borough Council properties will be increased incrementally each year, so as to reach the restructured levels by 2011/12.
- 5.5 This process requires Local Authorities and housing associations to set their rents based upon a range of factors, including average wages, property size and location and condition.

5.6 The Government's reasons for Rent Restructuring are:

- To ensure social rents should remain affordable and well below those in the private sector
- To ensure social rents should be fairer and less confusing for tenants
- To provide a closer link between rents and the qualities which tenants value in properties

5.7 This process is intended to achieve a 'harmonisation' of rents, so that similar properties in the same area should have similar rents. Rent restructuring is also about clarity and transparency. It aims to bring some coherence to the rather haphazard picture across the social rented sector.

5.8 This Council has made excellent progress towards compliance with a valuation of stock consisting of a number of beacon valuations further divided into variants where necessary.

5.9 This Authority has applied property specific rent restructuring from 2003/04 and using the Government's prescribed formula it is calculated that an average increase of 5.37% is required this year. In addition to helping achieve rent convergence this increase is required to at least partly offset the loss in subsidy as a result of the rental constraint allowance no longer being granted. The proposed 5.37% increase is equal to the 5.37% guideline rent increase imposed through the subsidy mechanism.

5.10 It is proposed to increase rent levels for garages, carports and parking lots by 5.00% from April 2007.

6.0 HRA Balance Levels

6.1 A report was taken to Housing Board 7 November 2007 concerning the restoration of HRA balances which estimated that a balance of £507,000 would be achieved by 31.3.07. The current revised estimate indicates this will be exceeded and a balance level of £583,000 will be achieved.

6.2 It was also recommended that the HRA budget for 2008/09 be prepared with a view of achieving the minimum acceptable level as detailed in the Medium Term Financial Strategy (currently £650,000) which is equivalent to £200 per property. Although this may decrease by 31.03.09 due to falling stock numbers it is not considered feasible as a result of the subsidy loss to increase the balance further during 2008/09.

6.3 Should it be possible to accrue for further subsidy as a result of the Caps and Limits adjustment (paragraph 4.5) and additional funds are available the objective of restoring the balances will be treated as a priority.

7.0 Other Properties

- 7.1 There are a small number of other committee properties where the rent levels are assessed in line with HRA properties. The proposal is to also increase these by 5.37%.

8.0 Comparisons with the Private Sector

- 8.1 The Local Government and Housing Act 1989 requires local housing authorities to 'have regard in particular to the principle that the rents of houses of any class or description should bear broadly the same proportion to private sector rents as the rents of houses of any other class or description'. The Government's policy for social rents that are fair, affordable and less confusing for tenants was set out in the Dec 2000 policy statement, "The way forward for Housing". Further details were given in "A Guide to Social Rent Reforms" which was issued at the same time.

9.0 Conclusions

- 9.1 The Government's rent restructuring policy came into effect in 2002/03 although Authorities had been given the option not to implement the restructuring on an individual property basis until 2003/04. This authority agreed to the implementation of rent restructuring for 2003/04. In order for rent convergence to be achieved by 2012 and an effective service can continue for the tenants of Gosport it is necessary that the proposed average rental increase of 5.37% is approved.

Financial Implications:	As set out in the report
Legal Implications:	The council is under a duty to set a budget which prevents a debit balance arising on the Housing Revenue Account
Service Improvement Plan Implications:	The meeting of the Decent Homes Standard by 2010 is a key Service Improvement Plan (SIP) objective of the Housing Service
Corporate Plan:	More effective performance management, which includes making the best use of our assets, is a strategic priority in the Corporate Plan.
Risk Assessment:	As set out in the report
Background Papers:	Draft Budget Book and Fees & Charges
Appendices/Enclosures:	Appendix 1: HRA 2007/08 Revised budget & HRA 2008/09. Appendix 2: A schedule detailing proposed rent levels
Report Author/Lead Officer:	Tim Hoskins & Julian Bowcher

	ORIGINAL 2007/2008 £000	REVISED 2007/2008 £000	ESTIMATE 2008/2009 £000
Income			
Dwelling Rents	9,570	9,719	10,002
Shops & Garages	223	225	236
Service Charges	484	383	399
	<u>10,277</u>	<u>10,327</u>	<u>10,637</u>
Expenditure			
Management	2,775	2,764	2,608
Maintenance	2,927	2,741	2,524
Rents, Rates, Taxes, Other Charges	99	73	77
Cost Of Capital/Impairment/Deferred Charges	6,118	0	0
Depreciation	2,163	2,165	2,161
Transitional Contribution for Rent Rebates	0	0	0
HRA Subsidy(including MRA)	2,039	2,111	3,172
	<u>16,121</u>	<u>9,854</u>	<u>10,542</u>
Net Cost Of Services	<u>5,844</u>	<u>(473)</u>	<u>(95)</u>
TFR AMRA			
(Difference between cost of capital and impairment/ deferred charges and HRA interest costs)	(6,108)	0	0
Item 8 debit	0	110	130
HRA Investment income/mortgage interest	(49)	(53)	(35)
	<u>(6,157)</u>	<u>57</u>	<u>95</u>
Net Operating Expenditure	<u>(313)</u>	<u>(416)</u>	<u>0</u>
Appropriations			
Revenue Contributions to Capital	400	0	0
Housing Revenue Account Balance			
Surplus/(-)Deficit at beginning of Year	901	168	584
Surplus/(-)Deficit for Year	(87)	416	0
Surplus(-)/Deficit at end of Year	814	584	584

Appendix 2

TYPE	Bedroom	Count	Weekly Total Rent Income	Weekly Average Rent	Maximum Rent Charge	Minimum Rent Charge
Bedsit	1	12	525	43.71	49.99	42.56
Bungalow	1	316	18573	58.78	70.03	51.56
Bungalow	2	63	4402	69.87	73.54	57.54
Bungalow	3	11	886	80.54	83.05	72.58
Flat	1	953	55356	58.09	67.05	46.33
Flat	2	59	4274	72.44	75.73	61.55
Flat	3	17	1306	76.85	82.78	69.62
House	1	10	616	61.56	63.86	61.30
House	2	305	20278	66.49	74.81	57.28
House	3	921	68794	74.70	83.80	49.47
House	4	83	6713	80.88	90.42	69.27
House	5	1	78	77.60	77.60	77.60
Maisonette	1	24	1575	65.63	72.81	60.53
Maisonette	2	109	7265	66.65	83.80	59.16
Maisonette	3	58	3933	67.80	76.64	62.28
Maisonette	4	2	170	84.98	84.98	84.98
Sheltered Bedsit	1	13	586	45.05	46.16	44.85
Sheltered Bungalow	1	50	2810	56.21	61.84	41.71
Sheltered Flat	1	126	7070	56.11	72.46	46.61
Sheltered Flat	2	2	144.85	72.425	80.15	64.7

Please Note: The above average weekly rental charge includes the service charge element

Rental Increase By Amount

89	Properties will have a nil increase
1025	Properties will have an increase of between £2-£3
1961	Properties will have an increase of £3 and over
60	Properties will have an increase of £4 and over

PART II MINUTES OF THE COMMUNITY AND ENVIRONMENT BOARD HELD ON 21 JANUARY 2008

38. BOARD BUDGET 2008/2009

Consideration was given to a report of the Financial Services Manager which considered the Board's revised 2007/08 and 2008/09 budgets, including the Board's fees and charges for 2008/2009 and capital programme, and recommended thereon to the Policy and Organisation Board for inclusion in the Council's overall budget proposals.

RESOLVED: That:

- i) the Board recommend to the Policy and Organisation Board its requirements for:
 - the revenue budget (revised 2007/08 and estimate 2008/09)
 - the fees and charges for 2008/09
 - the capital programme 2007/08 to 2012/13; and
- ii) Subject to the above, Officers be authorised to proceed with the necessary variations to the parking order to increase parking fees and charges as included in the report.

39. WATERFRONT ZONING WORKING GROUP

Consideration was given to a report of the Borough Solicitor which advised the Board of the recommendations made by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee regarding waterfront zoning at Stokes Bay and Lee-on-the-Solent.

The draft information leaflets for Lee-on-the-Solent Water Activity Zones and Stokes Bay Water Activity Information were discussed. Certain grammatical improvements and the inclusion of the Gosport Borough Council website beneath its logo were requested by the Board.

Concern was expressed that, in the past, Jet Ski users had moved buoys and reconfigured their user zone. Members were advised that, subject to the Board's approval of the zones, the correct positioning of the buoys would be shown on a notice to be placed on the Daedalus slipway, making it plain to users the exact boundaries of the different zones.

Members were also concerned that fuel canisters were being left on the Daedalus slipway. Barbeques were being used close to where craft were being refueled and in close proximity to fuel cans. Also, disposable barbeque trays were being left lying around after use or, in some cases, being buried in the sand which last year had caused a burn injury to a child who fell on one.

It was pointed out that the Daedalus slipway was owned by SEEDA and that this type of activity should be drawn to their attention. Should fuel be ignited by the use of a barbeque then SEEDA, not Gosport Borough Council could be liable for any claim arising from such an incident. There was also concern that traders were gaining vehicular access to the beach area from this slipway.

Officers advised that the draft text before the Board had been prepared with guidance from the Safety Officer and additional rules could be included concerning the use of barbeques and the correct stowage of fuel canisters.

Members requested clarification on procedures for the enforcement of the rules and correct zone usage. It was confirmed that the MOD Police patrolled the water on behalf of the Queen's Harbour Master, as did the Waterborne Division of Hampshire Constabulary. Streetscene Enforcement Officers would liaise with ACSOs and the Community Police Support Officers in carrying out enforcement duties on the ground.

The importance of legally correct and informative signage on beaches was reinforced by the Council representative on Solent Sea Rescue. He advised that at a recent inquest, the Coroner had examined the information signs on the beach in question. He had requested confirmation as to whether the existing signs along Stokes Bay would be upgraded. The developing partnership with the Queen's Harbour Master in enforcing safe usage of the waters off Lee-on-the-Solent and Stokes Bay was very welcome and a representative from QHM now attended the Solent Sea Rescue meetings. He also congratulated Council Officers on effecting a successful prosecution of a jet skier who had flouted the rules.

Information was also requested on the legal situation regarding the gate across the road by Stokes Bay Sailing Club. The slipway was marked as a public slipway on the map but it could not be accessed unless the gate was opened.

The Leisure and Cultural Services Officer confirmed that as part of the Service Management Plan, the existing signs at Stokes Bay were due to be upgraded. Regarding the gate across the road by the Stokes Bay Sailing Club, he understood that this land had been leased to the Sailing Club by Gosport Borough Council. He would investigate the precise legal position regarding the gate and access to the slipway, although there was public access to the slipway via a ramp in the car park.

A Member stated that there was a sign near the GAFIRS slipway with an arrow pointing towards Gilkicker Point informing people that swimming was hazardous in this area. This was not made clear on the draft map. It was confirmed by the Leisure and Cultural Services Officer that the draft map would be altered to show this information.

RESOLVED: That approval be given to the recommendations made by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee regarding waterfront zoning at Stokes Bay and Lee-on-the-Solent subject to the following:-

- i) grammatical errors in the leaflets be corrected;
- ii) an approach be made to SEEDA regarding activities on and in close proximity to the Daedalus Slipway;
- iii) the use of barbeques, especially near to fuel sources, and their safe disposal be investigated and reflected in the information leaflets;
- iv) The legal situation regarding the gate over the road by Stokes Bay Sailing Club be investigated; and
- iiiv) the Stokes Bay map to show that swimming is hazardous beyond the GAFIRS slipway around Gilkicker Point.

40. HAMPSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL ABANDONED VEHICLE CONTRACT

Consideration was given to a report of the Environmental Services Manager that sought the Board's approval for Gosport Borough Council to sign up to the Hampshire County Council Countywide Abandoned Vehicle Contract.

In answer to a Member's question, it was confirmed that under the current contract a vehicle must be removed within 24 hours except at weekends. Under the new contract a vehicle must be removed within 4 hours except at weekends.

RESOLVED: That Gosport Borough Council be included in the Countywide Abandoned Vehicle Contract.

41. INTRODUCTION OF 20 MPH SPEED RESTRICTIONS

Consideration was given to a report of the Borough Solicitor requesting the Board to consider the evidence obtained by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee regarding the introduction of 20 mph speed restrictions.

The Chairman advised that Hampshire County Council had recently submitted a list of approximately 30 villages to the Police with the recommendation that 20 mph speed limits be introduced. The Police had supported the scheme for only 3 of the villages proposed.

Members were of the opinion that, although it was beneficial to slow traffic near schools when pupils were arriving and leaving the premises, the increase in traffic in the vicinity at these times often had the effect of slowing traffic anyway. There was no great need to slow traffic below 30 mph when pupils were in school. Also, in order to achieve 20 mph restrictions, it was usually a requirement to install other traffic calming measures such as speed humps which were expensive to install.

A motion was proposed and seconded not to adopt 20 mph speed restrictions in the Borough. The Chairman thanked the Overview and Scrutiny Committee

for its work on this issue.

RESOLVED: That 20 mph speed restrictions be not introduced in the Borough of Gosport.

42. WASTE MANAGEMENT STRATEGY

The Chairman advised Members that he had an urgent item to put before the Board concerning the extension of the existing Refuse Collection contract. In view of this it was agreed not to consider the Waste Management Strategy at this meeting.

RESOLVED: That consideration of the Waste Management Strategy be deferred to a future meeting of the Board.

43. CHAIRMAN'S URGENT ITEM – EXTENSION OF THE EXISTING REFUSE COLLECTION CONTRACT FOR A FURTHER 2 YEARS

By reason of special circumstances, the Chairman determined that this item be considered at this meeting notwithstanding the fact that the item had not been available for public inspection in accordance with the provisions of Section 100B(4)(a) of the Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985.

The special circumstances were created by the fact that if the contract were not extended then work would need to begin immediately on the necessary procurement processes in order to re-let the contract by March 2009.

Members were advised that the current refuse collection contract was due to end in March 2009. Officers had been considering the options open to the Council for the provision of this and other services and the Council had set up a Members' Working Group to consider such options.

As part of the shared services work currently being undertaken in Hampshire via Project Integra, a number of authorities had indicated a willingness to consider a joint contract for refuse collection. Work was currently underway to consider the benefits and financial implications of such a proposal.

The difficulty was that all the other authorities involved had contracts that were due to end in 2011. Therefore, if this Council were to award a new contract, even for a minimum period of 5 years, it would miss the opportunity to pursue this shared service option.

The present contractor had advised that they would be interested in a 2 year extension to March 2011 on the same terms and conditions as the existing contract. Whilst this would provide greater certainty for the Council in terms of costs, opportunities to improve recycling rates would be more limited. It would also be necessary to waive Contract Standing Orders in order for this extension to be agreed.

In answer to a question as to how consideration would be given to the

Countywide contract, the Chairman advised that he understood a series of workshops would be organised for this purpose.

RESOLVED: That:

- i) the requirements of Contract Standing Orders be waived; and
- ii) the current contract for refuse collection be extended for a further 2 years.

The meeting commenced at 6.00 pm and concluded at 6.35 pm

PART II MINUTES OF THE HOUSING BOARD HELD ON 23 JANUARY 2008

39 HOUSING NEEDS ASSESSMENT 2007

The Board considered the report of the Housing Services Manager informing Members of the key findings of the 2007 Housing Needs Assessment and to note the issues that were presented for the development of the Housing Policy by this Assessment.

Following a Member's question it was explained that the reason the 2007 Housing Needs Assessment covered a smaller number of households as compared to a similar survey in 2003 was that it had been possible to use existing statistical data and information.

Members welcomed the consultant's comments regarding a higher level of preference for two bedroom rather than one bedroom units. Reference was made to a previous DTZ housing market survey for South Hampshire which appeared to favour one bedroom units. Officers explained that the assessments from the two consultants were likely to work in tandem.

RESOLVED: That Members of the Board note the key findings and recommendations of the 2007 Housing Needs Assessment which would be used to develop policy on future Housing Strategy.

40 PARTNERING ARRANGEMENT (REACTIVE REPAIRS) PROGRESS REPORT

The Board considered the report of the Housing Services Manager reporting to Members progress of the Partnering Arrangement for the delivery of day-to-day and the voids service.

Officers explained the background to the figures, that standards would continue to be monitored and that regular updates to Housing Board members were planned as part of the performance management regime.

It was clarified that the increase in response times to 24 hour emergency calls could be due to more accurate time recording on behalf of the current contractor. The difference in any event was very small, a matter of 2 hours longer to complete.

Members requested that attention be given to those residents who had been dissatisfied with the overall repairs service and that the higher costs associated with two of the benchmarked costs should be further investigated.

Members were pleased with the progress that had been made in providing the right service to tenants and at the same time achieving benefits and savings.

RESOLVED: That Members note the key findings of the review.

41 HOUSING GENERAL FUND BUDGET 2008/2009

The Board considered the report of the Housing Services Manager the purpose of which was to consider the Board's revised 2007/08 and 2008/09 budgets, including the Board's fees and charges for 2008/09 and capital programme, and to recommend thereon to the Policy and Organisation Board for inclusion in the Council's overall budget proposals.

RESOLVED: That the Board recommends to the Policy and Organisation Board its requirements for the Revenue Budget (revised 2007/08 and estimate 2008/09); the Fees and Charges for 2008/09 and the Capital Programme 2007/08 to 2012/13.

The meeting commenced at 6pm and concluded at 6.26pm



CORPORATE EQUALITIES POLICY

Gosport Borough Council is committed to equal opportunities for all.

If you need this document in large print, on tape, in Braille or in other languages, please ask.

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CONTENTS

Heading	Page no.
Policy Statement	4
1.0 Introduction	4
2.0 Purpose	4
3.0 Scope	4
4.0 Development of this Policy	5
5.0 Links to Other Plans, Policies and Strategies	6
6.0 The Council's Statutory Duties under this Policy	6
7.0 Designation of Key Responsibilities under this Policy	8
8.0 Consultation with Stakeholders	11
9.0 Equalities Implementation	12
10.0 Service Delivery and Policy Monitoring and Review	14
11.0 Review of this Policy	17
Appendix A List of Relevant Legislation and Codes of Practice	18
Appendix B Linked Plans, Policies and Strategies	21

Document control:

Draft published for consultation: August 2007

Final draft published: 1st November 2007 (subject to Board Approval after which a final version will be published)

POLICY STATEMENT

Gosport Borough Council is committed to equal opportunities for all and recognises the value of diversity.

As both a service provider and employer, the Council aims to mainstream fairness and equality into every aspect of its services and employment practices, and to remove barriers to ensure equal opportunity.

It aims to ensure that no person receives less favourable treatment on the basis of race, disability, gender, marital status, sexual orientation, age, religion or belief.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

The Corporate Equalities Policy is a framework document that sets out how the Council intends to meet its duties under relevant anti-discrimination legislation and Codes of Practice listed in Appendix A.

2.0 PURPOSE

The purpose of this Policy is to ensure Gosport Borough Council is addressing its legal obligations under anti-discrimination laws which prohibit discrimination in the delivery of services and employment and promote equality of opportunity.

This Policy will achieve this by integrating consistent equality practices in all aspects of Council activity.

3.0 SCOPE

The Council is committed to a comprehensive policy that mainstreams equality practices within human resource processes, service planning and delivery and democratic activity.

This Policy applies to all employees, volunteers and placements and will be reflected in arrangements with contractors. Members of the Council have to comply with the Code of Conduct which covers equalities issues and by following this policy Members will be able to demonstrate compliance with the Code of Conduct.

4.0 DEVELOPMENT OF THIS POLICY

This Corporate Equalities Policy replaces the Council's previous Equality Plan by setting out a more comprehensive approach to equality and diversity through explicit recognition of the Council's current statutory duties and commitments.

Initial development of this policy included the analysis of local baseline demographic information collected in 2006 to support the latest Sustainable Community Strategy for Gosport produced by the Gosport Partnership. It also included analysis of data collected by the Council through its General Surveys, service monitoring processes, customer complaint procedures, workforce profiling and staff recruitment and development functions.

A consultation event was held in 2006 to collect and better understand the needs of local people with disabilities. Hosted in partnership with other public authorities, the event resulted in the development and launch of Gosport Council's Disability Equality Scheme in 2007. This scheme contributed to this policy through ongoing partnership working with the Gosport Access Group and Disability Forum.

Further evidence gained from survey responses on the accessibility of Council services and independent research into the views of Black and Minority Ethnic individuals living or working in Gosport in 2006, further contributed to this policy.

Liaison with the Portsmouth Race and Equality Network Organisation and the EU Welcome Project has assisted the Council in its understanding of the views and needs of culturally diverse communities and improved opportunities for direct consultation. Both organisations have contributed to the development of the Council's updated Race Equality Scheme for 2007-2010 and to this Corporate Equalities Policy.

Ongoing participation in the Hampshire Race and Equality Network, the Gosport Hate Crime Forum, the Gosport Access Group and Disability Forum and other groups contributes to local knowledge of equality issues and assists in developing co-ordinated and effective responses with public and voluntary sector partners.

The contributions of local knowledge and expertise from voluntary and community sector organisations operating in Gosport have also assisted in the development of this policy. Aided by the One Compact for Hampshire, the Council has developed good working relationships with many organisations providing services to people who are particularly vulnerable or feel isolated in the community.

The Council's Equality and Diversity Steering Group developed the draft Corporate Equalities Policy. This group is composed of representatives from each service area and from Unison. The draft was approved by the Corporate Management Team and circulated to Elected Members for comment.

The policy was then posted for consultation in August 2007 on the Council's web site and on its staff Infonet. Feedback was invited from the partners in the Gosport Partnership, the Borough's Local Strategic Partnership, partners in the Compact through Gosport Voluntary Action and other relevant stakeholder groups and forums. Consultation informed the final scheme which was formally adopted by the Council in January 2008.

5.0 LINKS TO OTHER PLANS, POLICIES AND STRATEGIES

This policy underpins the Council's Corporate Plan core values:

- **People** - *"to ensure equal treatment and access for all and recognise the value of diversity. To invest in staff, using best employment practices to recruit, retain and develop staff."*
- **Participation** - *"to be a listening organisation which is responsive to community needs and provides a focus for community leadership. To value customer and public opinion and to deliver customer centred services to clear standards."*
- **Performance** – *"to provide sustainable, efficient, effective, quality services whilst making best use of limited resources and maximising income streams. To underpin this with good performance management, clear priorities and a well developed approach to risk management."*
- **Partnership** – *"to work with other service providers and our community to share expertise, increase co-ordination, and access funding to achieve improved service and project delivery."*
- **Political Processes** – *"to use the political processes to constructively debate and develop sustainable solutions to long term problems and strategic issues which face the community and Council."*

This policy is linked to the other policies, plans, strategies and systems listed in Appendix B which demonstrate the Council's commitment to mainstreaming equalities into all of its activities (human resource processes, service planning and delivery and democratic activity). It will also inform all future Council plans, policies and strategies and systems.

6.0 THE COUNCIL'S STATUTORY DUTIES UNDER THIS POLICY

Gosport Borough Council, as a public authority, has a statutory duty to promote race equality, disability equality and gender equality within its Corporate Equalities Policy.

Public authorities have a general duty to create a separate Race Equality Scheme, Disability Equality Scheme and Gender Equality Scheme and have specific duties that are summarised in this policy. The full schemes are stand-alone documents separate to this policy but are explicitly linked to it.

Although there are no specific duties to create a separate equality scheme for age, religion or belief and sexual orientation, the Council is committed to integrate these principles within its overall equality and diversity promotion work.

6.1 The Duty to Promote Race Equality - Summary

The Race Relations Act 1976 places a general obligation on local authorities to promote good race relations. The Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000 amends the original Act and strengthens its application to public authorities by covering areas that were previously excluded.

Under the General Duty, local authorities must have due regard to the need to:

- eliminate unlawful racial discrimination
- promote equality of opportunity
- promote good relations between persons of different racial groups

Under the Specific Duties, local authorities must include the following within their Race Equality Scheme:

- identify and list all policies, strategies and functions (including proposed items) that are relevant to the general duty
- set out arrangements for assessing and consulting on the likely impact of these on race equality
- set out arrangements for monitoring their policies for any adverse impact
- set out their arrangements for publishing the results of any assessments, consultations and monitoring they carry out to see whether there is any adverse impact on race equality
- set out arrangements for training staff in connection with the general duty or specific duties
- review the Race Equality Scheme every three years.

The Council's Race Equality Scheme was originally published in 2003, but has been revised in 2007 to include a new action plan for 2007-2010.

6.2 The Duty to Promote Disability Equality – Summary

The Disability Discrimination Act 1995 made it unlawful to discriminate against a person because they have a physical, sensory or mental impairment. Organisations were required to make 'reasonable adjustments' to ensure that disabled people were able to access services and employment. The Disability Discrimination Act 2005 placed greater responsibilities on public authorities citing general and specific duties.

Under the General Duty, local authorities must have due regard to the need to:

- eliminate discrimination that is unlawful under the Act
- eliminate harassment that is unlawful under the Act
- promote equality of opportunity between disabled persons and other persons
- take steps to take into account a person's disabilities, even where that involves treating disabled persons more favourable than other persons.

Under the Specific Duties, local authorities must include the following in their Disability Equality Scheme:

- prepare, publicise and implement a Disability Equality Scheme which aims to ensure the appropriate standards are achieved
- monitor progress
- review the scheme every three years
- conduct and publish disability impact assessments on policies and functions.

The Council's Disability Equality Scheme 2007-2010 was published in February 2007 along with an Action Plan for 2006-2009.

6.3 The Duty to Promote Gender Equality – Summary

The Equality Act 2006 amends the Sex Discrimination Acts of 1975 and 1986 by placing new duties on local authorities to mainstream gender equality in all areas of their work.

Under the General Duty, local authorities must have due regard to the need to:

- eliminate unlawful discrimination and harassment
- promote equality of opportunity between men and women.

Under the Specific Duties, local authorities must include the following in their Gender Equality Scheme:

- prepare and publish a Gender Equality Scheme, showing how the authority will meet its general and specific duties and setting out its gender equality objectives
- consider including objectives to address the cause of any gender pay gap
- gather and use information on how the authority's policies and practices affect gender equality in the workforce and in the delivery of services.
- consult stakeholders – employees. Service users and other, including trade unions – and take account of relevant information in order to determine gender equality objectives
- assess the impact of current and proposed policies and practices on gender equality
- implement the actions set out in its scheme within three years, unless it is unreasonable or impracticable to do so
- report against the scheme every year and review the scheme at least every three years.

The Council's Gender Equality Scheme and Action Plan were developed in 2007 and are to be adopted in 2008 after a period of public consultation.

7.0 DESIGNATION OF KEY RESPONSIBILITIES UNDER THIS POLICY

Chief Executive

The Chief Executive is responsible for developing a leadership role in the Borough, promoting improved understanding of equality and diversity and ensuring this policy and its supporting schemes are implemented throughout Gosport Borough Council and are regularly reviewed. The Chief Executive chairs the corporate Equality and Diversity Steering Group.

Council Management Team

Members of Council Management Team provide senior level support for equality and diversity and are responsible for ensuring this Corporate Equalities Policy and associated schemes are implemented within their service areas and issues of particular importance to their service area are addressed. They are also responsible for assessing the impact of the policies, strategies, functions and projects within their service areas for good equality practice and for developing and reviewing equality targets for their service areas that contribute to the Corporate Equalities Policy.

Section Heads

Section Heads have direct responsibility for the compliance of their service areas to this policy and its schemes. They must ensure their staff understand and meet their responsibilities towards the policy and schemes. This includes assessing the relevance of their policies, strategies and functions to those schemes, ensuring Equality Impact Assessments are undertaken and equality actions delivered.

Employees

All employees of the Council have a responsibility to understand this Corporate Equalities Policy and the individual equality schemes and consider them in the course of their work. Employees should also seek information and advice from their managers or the Equality and Diversity Steering Group on any aspect with which they are unfamiliar or about which they are uncertain.

Volunteers/Work Experience/Contractors

Council volunteers, work experience staff or those contracted by the Council for specific services have a responsibility to act in a fair and proper manner, in accordance with Council policies and procedures, and to seek information or advice on any aspect of which they are unfamiliar or uncertain.

Elected Members

Members engage with the wider Gosport community to better understand local needs and issues and to provide leadership and support for this policy and its schemes. They also participate in corporate training on equality schemes and issues. As representatives of the Council, they have a responsibility to support equal opportunities and practices in all aspects of their civic responsibilities.

Personnel Section

The Personnel Section is responsible for ensuring all employment procedures and processes including recruitment, retention and training comply with current equal opportunity in employment legislation as well as this policy and the equality schemes.

It administers and monitors a range of policies, strategies and functions linked to this policy as listed in Appendix B, and carries out monitoring of all employment areas. Personnel play a key role in ensuring training needs are identified and delivery mechanisms put in place with respect to equality and diversity issues in employment.

The production, review and updating of relevant equality and diversity in employment policies is the responsibility of the Personnel Section.

Trade Unions

Trade unions have an important role in the implementation and monitoring of this policy and its respective schemes through consultation with its membership and identification of equality issues and good practice throughout their networks.

Overview and Scrutiny Committee

This committee receives an annual progress report on the implementation of the equality schemes and their action plans. It can request further reports or additional information of any aspect of this policy, the equality schemes and action plans to audit and assess corporate compliance and good practice.

Performance Sub Group

The Council's Performance Officer collects performance data submitted from each service area in the Service Improvement Plan and Service Performance Indicator documentation and reports these quarterly to the Sub Group. Performance monitoring of equality activity is integrated into the Council's Performance Management Framework.

Learning and Development Group

This corporate group is responsible for identifying corporate training needs and developing appropriate responses. The group is involved in the design and delivery of training for staff and elected Members on its equality schemes and other equality issues.

Equality and Diversity Steering Group

This is a corporate group chaired by the Chief Executive and has representation from every Service Unit and Unison. The group has overall responsibility for co-ordinating the Council's equality and diversity work. It also provides a pool of expertise, a link and consultation mechanism with staff and facilitates best practice across units.

Its role includes an audit and scrutiny element and areas of work include:

- ensuring the Council is meeting its duties and obligations under all relevant legislation
- developing and monitoring of the Corporate Equalities Policy, the individual schemes and action plans
- contributing to the achievement of the Equality Standard for Local Government
- developing procedures and guidance for Equality Impact Assessments and equality action plan monitoring
- developing and supporting consultation activities both internally and with community groups
- consulting with the Corporate Learning and Development Group to identify training needs and delivery mechanisms on equality and diversity issues.

8.0 CONSULTATION WITH STAKEHOLDERS

Council Consultation Activity

The Council believes effective consultation with the local community improves the quality of its decision making and the responsiveness of the services and projects which it delivers. It is committed to consultation activity which is appropriate, inclusive, listened to and reported back to participants.

It co-ordinates its consultation activity under a Consultation Policy to ensure:

- consultation is effectively planned to make best use of resources and avoid consultation fatigue
- consultation outcomes are used to inform decision making processes
- consistent standards and approach are applied toward consultation across the Council.

One of the key consultation principles in the policy is 'inclusiveness' to ensure all sections of the community have an opportunity to express their views.

The Consultation Policy provides a toolkit on inclusiveness that incorporates a Faith and Culture Guide and a Diversity Calendar to assist staff in understanding cultural and religious practices and observances when planning and implementing consultation events and exercises.

A Customer Care Handbook provides information and tools for communicating successfully with people who have a range of accessibility requirements. Such requirements include interpreting and translation services, alternate formats for printed material, and physical requirements to access Council offices and services.

The Consultation Policy also establishes standards for the collection of demographic data and requires all surveys to contain specific questions regarding accessibility of services. Data analysis requirements are also stated to ensure that data is used to monitor trends in service delivery and customer satisfaction for the equality target groups.

The Council has adopted a co-ordinated approach to consultations throughout its service areas by requiring all planned consultations to be registered with

and approved by Council Management Team. A Consultation Finder has been developed to log all planned and completed consultations on the Council's web site to avoid duplication of effort, encourage joint working and share results to inform service planning and delivery.

Consultation with Partners and Networks

The Council believes local authorities, by the nature and range of their power and responsibility, have an influential role in the promotion of equality and good practice standards across their work with other groups and organisations. It is an active partner in the Gosport Partnership, the Borough's Local Strategic Partnership, and its member organisations deliver services to the local community. Partners share information and best practices on a range of issues.

The Council, through representation by its officers or elected members, plays an active role in several other partnerships and networks through which the Council can consult with local people and organisations.

The One Compact for Hampshire provides an effective framework for strengthening relationships with local voluntary and community organisations serving the needs of a diverse local community. Through the Compact, the Council is able to consult more effectively with grassroots organisations and develop joint approaches to consult more effectively with the more marginalised members of the community served by local groups.

The Council seeks to further its understanding of equality issues through consultation and networking with specialist forums. One of these is the Gosport Hate Crime Forum which tracks incidents of all types of hate crime in Gosport and works to provide better co-ordinate support for victims and detect and deter offenders.

Other networks include the:

- Hampshire Race and Equality Network, a forum for public authorities across Hampshire to develop local understanding of equality issues and share best practice
- Portsmouth Race and Equality Network Organisation, which provides information and links with many Black and Minority Ethnic and faith groups operating in Portsmouth and South Hampshire
- EU Welcome which provides information and support to migrant workers from Eastern Europe.

9.0 EQUALITY IMPLEMENTATION

Mainstreaming this policy and comprehensive equality practices is achieved through a variety of means:

Individual Schemes

This Corporate Equalities Policy provides the corporate framework and standards for mainstreaming equality principles and practices detailed in the individual Race, Disability and Gender Equality Schemes. Each service area

contributes to each scheme by identifying equality targets, committing actions and reporting achievements.

Guides and Toolkits

Current good equality practice is mainstreamed throughout the Council by the development of guidance notes and toolkits provided on the Council's Infonet and through induction packs to new members of staff. These include the Customer Care Handbook and consultation toolkits. Written updates on legislative changes are also provided.

Training

The Council delivers equalities training to staff through its New Employee Induction Programme. Training and awareness raising events are also developed through the Learning and Development Group and delivered to staff and elected Members in a variety of ways. Stakeholder groups are also consulted on the development of staff training and have assisted in the design and delivery of corporate training for elected Members and staff.

Equality Impact Assessments

Local Authorities are required to conduct and publish equality impact assessments for race, disability and gender under specific duties required in each scheme.

Gosport Borough Council has adopted a corporate process for assessing relevance of Council policies, strategies and functions to the General Duty for each scheme. Each service area completes a Relevance Checklist for all of its existing policies, strategies and functions and those in development. The results determine the priority in which each policy or function is assessed during the three-year action plan for each scheme.

A determination of high relevance under the general duty for any scheme means the policy, strategy or function must undergo an assessment during Year 1 of the Action Plan. Those of medium relevance undergo screening in Year 2 and all others are assessed in Year 3. Every three years, relevance of all Council policies, strategies and functions are reassessed.

Guidance notes on completing equality impact assessments are available to all staff on the Council's web site and staff Infonet. Equality and Diversity Steering Group members offer additional support to managers and staff completing assessments. A screening assessment is completed for all relevant policies, strategies and functions and reviewed by a sub-group of the Equality and Diversity Steering Group. The review sub-group determines if a full equality impact assessment is required. All completed assessments are then published on the Council's web site and offered in alternative formats and languages on request.

Progress reports are made regularly to Council Management Team.

Service Efficiency Reviews

All Council services are subject to Service Efficiency Reviews. The self-assessment toolkit and peer audit process includes areas of equality, customer satisfaction, compliments, complaints and consultation.

10.0 SERVICE AND POLICY MONITORING AND REVIEW

Mainstreaming and monitoring of equality principles and practices throughout Council activities is achieved through a variety of ways:

Service Statistics

Service usage statistics, collected through a standardised demographic question, allow sub-analysis of data and assist with service monitoring.

In addition to this the Councils adds a standardised question to its surveys regarding accessibility of its services. This is used to measure satisfaction with access to Council Services and asks those who are dissatisfied to comment further. Qualitative analysis of any further comments and of all 'other comments' (which is generally the final question on the Council's surveys) is carried out. If there are any comments related to equalities or diversity these are specifically reviewed (even if they are not a key theme) and reported to the Corporate Policy and Performance Section in addition to being considered within the Service Unit.

Survey analysis is generally carried out either by consultants or the Corporate Policy and Performance Section. If it is carried out in the Service Units it is done in accordance with the Corporate Consultation Policy and can be subject to scrutiny by the Corporate Policy and Performance Section.

Partnerships and Networks

Through active representation in many partnerships and networks, the Council seeks to improve its understanding of local issues and local needs. Opportunities to draw upon the expertise and local knowledge held by Gosport residents and organisations and share experiences help to raise awareness of community issues and address local concerns.

The Council understands its role as part of the fabric of the local community and not an entity outside of it. Regular consultation with and feedback from these partnerships, formal and informal networks, assists Council staff in assessing and monitoring services in relation to local equality issues and their impact on local people.

Personnel Management and Information Systems

Personnel collects and monitors extensive information to ensure equality standards are maintained throughout its staff management processes. Profile information on the Council's workforce, including gender and ethnicity information, is routinely collected and monitored. The monitoring of its grading

structure through the its Job Evaluation Steering Group and commitment to an Equal Pay Audit every two years, helps to ensure pay structure and grading of jobs are applied fairly.

Personal review processes and training assessment processes provide mechanisms for monitoring equality of opportunity in the development of the council's workforce.

Corporate guidance notes ensure consistent application of policies and procedures.

External Accreditation and Assessment

The Council has attained external accreditation and awards which indicate high standards in performance or service delivery, for example, Investors in People. The documentation required to prove the standard has been achieved can often include collecting evidence that a particular service area or Council as a whole has demonstrated good equality practices. Collection of this evidence in order to maintain an accreditation or award can serve as an ongoing monitoring and assessment tool for equalities good practice.

Personal Reviews

Personal reviews provide an opportunity for managers to discuss with staff areas for performance improvement with respect to customer care, service delivery and any aspect of this Corporate Equalities Policy. Each member of staff has his/her own personal training plan that is reviewed annually to help identify training needs and allocate training resources. Refresher training on the personal review process is offered regularly to managers; all managers new to the Council are provided with training before undertaking the process. A range of training is available to staff from internal and external sources.

Team Meetings

Equal Opportunities – 'Employment and Service Delivery Issues' is a corporate standard item on all team meeting agendas and acts as a vehicle for raising and discussing equalities issues identified within teams. Managers can seek further information or guidance from the Personnel Section, Equality and Diversity Steering Group or Council Management Team and the Corporate Policy and Performance Section to address issues raised.

Service Improvement Plans

Actions in reference to either of Race, Disability and Gender Equality Schemes are identified as such in the Service Improvement Plan for each service area. The Council's Performance Officer monitors each plan's performance. The Council uses a wide range of tools for monitoring its policies, functions and services for compliance with the general and specific duties of its equality schemes.

The Equality and Diversity Steering Group provides regular reports to the Council Management Team detailing corporate equalities progress and an annual report to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee. Each scheme is reviewed every three years and updated to ensure compliance with current

legislation and best practice. Their action plans are reviewed annually by the Equality and Diversity Steering Group. The Corporate Equalities Policy is reviewed annually to ensure compliance with legislation.

Compliments and Complaints

Compliments and complaints received about services also help to identify the impact of good practices and any adverse impact of existing practices.

Gosport Borough Council is committed to providing excellent service to all of its customers and wants to know if any aspect of its service, procedures or performance is unsatisfactory. It responds to complaints from customers as quickly and as efficiently as possible and considers their suggestions for improvements.

The formal three-stage complaint procedure is detailed on the Council web site and available in print formats from the Town Hall.

In addition to the service areas responding to complaints, the Council Management Team regularly reviews summary reports on complaints received by the Council with a focus on any related to equality and diversity issues. These are then reported to the Equality and Diversity Steering Group for further review and recommendations for corporate actions to address them.

The Standards and Governance Committee also receives and scrutinises reports on complaints received to assess for further actions required to address them.

The comprehensive Equality and Diversity in Employment Policy ensures that staff are aware of and can use a formal procedure for any complaints which may arise.

These corporate protocols for monitoring and review should ensure Gosport Borough Council is meeting both its statutory duties and organisational commitment to promoting equality and diversity throughout its services and practices.

Procurement and Funding Relationships

The general and specific duties under equality legislation applies to public authorities but places 'indirect requirements' on contractors and organisations that a public authority work in partnership with or funds.

The duty to promote equality applies to procurement. Where an external supplier carries out a function on the Council's behalf, the Council recognises it remains responsible for meeting the duty. All contracted services and functions are assessed for relevance to the general duty and undergo the Equality Impact Assessment process.

Contractors which currently or intend to supply goods or services on behalf of the Council must provide evidence that they have systems in place to ensure equal access and treatment in their own employment practices and in the

services they provide. The Council provides information to potential contractors on its equality commitments contained within its Corporate Equalities Policy and equality schemes as part of its Invitation to Tender documentation and ensures these commitments are part of its Contractual Agreements.

Post-contract monitoring is undertaken to assess equality performance indicators, collate reports of any complaints from service users- including any related to harassment- and service audits to check on any problems in relation to the equalities in the specification.

A Funding Code of Good Practice has been developed between the Council and local voluntary and community sector groups in Gosport which have signed up to the One Compact for Hampshire. It establishes specific undertakings for voluntary and community sector groups with regard to any Council funding. These include:

- adopt policies and practices to ensure equality in all activities and ensure the appropriate involvement of services users
- recognise that Gosport Borough Council applies equality standards to all of its activities and that it requires organisations with which it has contractual arrangements to do likewise

11.0 REVIEW OF THIS POLICY

This Corporate Equalities Policy will be review annually by the Equality and Diversity Steering Group to ensure it complies with current legislation and good practice.

APPENDIX A

RELEVANT ANTI-DISCRIMINATORY LEGISLATION

Civil Partnerships Act 2004

Provides legal recognition and parity of treatment for same-sex couples and married couples, including employment benefits and pension rights.

Disability Discrimination Act 1995

Outlaws the discrimination of disabled people in employment, the provision of goods, facilities and services or the administration or management of premises.

Disability Discrimination Amendment Act 2005

Introduces a positive duty on public bodies to promote equality for disabled people.

Employment Equality (Age) Regulations 2006

The directive protects against discrimination on grounds of age in employment and vocational training. It prohibits direct and indirect discrimination, victimisation, harassment and instructions to discriminate.

Employment Equality (Religion and Belief) Regulations 2003

The directive protects against discrimination on the grounds of religion and belief in employment, vocational training, promotion and working conditions.

The Employment Equality (Sex Discrimination) Regulations 2005

These regulations introduce new definitions of indirect discrimination and harassment, explicitly prohibit discrimination on the grounds of pregnancy or maternity leave, and set out the extent to which it is discriminatory to pay a woman less than she would otherwise have been paid due to pregnancy or maternity issues.

Employment Equality (Sexual Orientation) Regulations 2003

The directive protects against discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation in employment, vocational training, promotion, and working conditions.

Equal Pay Act 1970 (Amended)

The Act gives an individual a right to the same contractual pay and benefits as a person of the opposite sex in the same employment where the man and the woman are doing: like work; work rated as equivalent under an analytical job evaluation study; or work that is proved to be of equal value.

Equality Act 2006

This Act establishes a single Commission for Equality and Human Rights by 2007 that replaces the three existing commissions. Introduces a positive duty on public sector bodies to promote equality of opportunity between women and men and eliminate sex discrimination. The Act protects against discrimination on the grounds of religion or belief in terms of access to goods, facilities and services.

Equality Act (Sexual Orientation) Regulations 2007

The Act protects individuals from discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation, in the provision of goods, facilities, services, education, disposal and management of premises and the exercise of public functions.

Gender Recognition Act 2004

The purpose of the Act is to provide transsexual people with legal recognition in their acquired gender. Legal recognition follows from the issue of a full gender recognition certificate by a gender recognition panel.

Race Relations Act 1976

The Act prohibits discrimination on racial grounds in the areas of employment, education, and the provision of goods, facilities, services and premises.

Race Relations Amendment Act 2000

Places a statutory duty on all public bodies to promote equal opportunity, eliminate racial discrimination and promote good relations between different racial groups.

Race Relations Act 1976 (Amendment) Regulation 2003

Introduced new definitions of indirect discrimination and harassment, new burden of proof requirements, continuing protection after employment ceases, new exemption for a determinate job requirement and the removal of certain other exemptions.

Racial and Religious Hatred Act 2006

The Act seeks to stop people from intentionally using threatening words or behaviour to stir up hatred against somebody because of their beliefs.

Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974

The Act enables some criminal convictions to become 'spent', or ignored, after a 'rehabilitation period'. After this period, an ex-offender is not normally required to mention a conviction when applying for a job, insurance or when involved in criminal or civil proceedings.

Sex Discrimination Acts 1975 and 1986

The Act makes it unlawful to discriminate on the grounds of sex. Sex discrimination is unlawful in employment, education, advertising or when providing housing, goods, services or facilities. It is unlawful to discriminate because someone is married, in employment or advertisements for jobs.

Sex Discrimination (Gender Reassignment) Regulations 1999

Prohibits discrimination where gender has been reassigned.

CURRENT CODES OF PRACTICE**Disability Rights Commission**

- Code of practice for the elimination of discrimination in the field of employment against disabled persons who have a disability (1999)
- Code of Practice on the duties of trade organisations to their members and applicants (1999)

- Code of Practice on the rights of access, goods, facilities, services and premises (1999)
- Access to goods, facilities and services: regulatory impact assessment (1999)
- Duty of reasonable adjustment on trade organisations to make reasonable adjustments: regulatory impact assessment (1999)

Equal Opportunity Commission

- Code of Practice on sex discrimination (1985)
- Code of practice on equal pay (1997)

Commission for Racial Equality

- Code of practice for the elimination of racial discrimination and the promotion of equality of opportunity in Employment (1984)
- Code of practice for the elimination of racial discrimination in education in England & Wales (1989)
- Code of practice in rented housing (1991)
- Code of practice in non-rented (owner-occupied) housing (1992)
- Code of practice in primary health care services (1992)
- Code of practice in maternity services (1994)

APPENDIX B

LINKED PLANS, POLICIES AND STRATEGIES TO THE CEP

Corporate - General

The Corporate Plan 2005-2008
Consultation Policy
Procurement Policy
Disability Equality Scheme 2007-2010
Race Equality Scheme 2007-2010
Gender Equality Scheme 2008-2011

Corporate - Employment

Equality and Diversity in Employment
Bullying and Harassment Policy
Redundancy and Redeployment Policy
People Management Strategy
Job Evaluation Scheme and processes
Workforce Development Plan and Action Plan
Recruitment and Selection Code of Practice
Code of Conduct for Members and Officers
Equal Pay Audit- biannually
Job description and person specification for every post
Standard Application with personal information removed for short-listing purposes
Personal Review processes
Training Review processes

Gosport Borough Council is committed to equal opportunities for all.

If you need this document in large print, on tape, in Braille or in other languages, please ask.

AGENDA ITEM NO. 8

Board/Committee:	Full Council
Date of Meeting:	6 th February 2008
Title:	Corporate Equalities Policy
Author:	The Chief Executive
Status:	FOR DECISION

Purpose

To seek adoption of the Corporate Equalities Policy as the Council's framework equalities document replacing the previous Equality Plan 2003.

This policy ensures the Council meets its legal obligations under relevant anti-discrimination legislation and Codes of Practice by setting out a more comprehensive approach to equality and diversity through explicit recognition of the Council's current statutory duties and commitments.

Recommendation

That the Council adopts the Corporate Equalities Policy.

1 Background

- 1.1 Councils have a statutory duty to produce race equality, disability equality and gender equality schemes. Whilst these are stand-alone documents, this policy links them and other Council equality plans and policies under the same equality and diversity framework.
- 1.2 Although schemes are not required for the equality areas of age, religion or belief and sexual orientation, the Equality Standard for Local Government, revised in 2007, now requires Local Authorities to incorporate these additional equality groups within a comprehensive equalities policy.
- 1.3 This policy meets the requirements of the Equality Standard for Local Government by demonstrating the Council's commitment to mainstreaming equalities and by informing the development of future plans, policies, strategies and systems.
- 1.4 This policy also underpins the core values of the Council's Corporate Plan.

2 Report

- 2.1 As both a service provider and employer, the Council aims to mainstream fairness and equality into all aspects of its services and employment practices and to remove barriers to equal opportunity.

- 2.2 This policy applies to all employees, volunteers, and placements and will be reflected in arrangements with contractors. Members of the Council have to comply with the Code of Conduct which covers equalities issues and by following this policy Members will be able to demonstrate compliance with the Code of Conduct.
- 2.3 This policy sets out clear designation of key responsibilities, an inclusive approach to consulting with its stakeholders and identification of its comprehensive tools for implementing equality practices and monitoring and reviewing its activities.
- 2.4 A draft Corporate Equalities Policy was prepared by members of the Equality and Diversity Steering Group. This corporate group is composed of representatives from each service area and Unison. The draft was approved by the Council's Management Team and circulated to elected members for comment in August 2007 through the Members Information Bulletin.
- 2.5 The draft was posted for public consultation in August 2007 on the Council's web site and on its staff Infonet. Feedback was invited from the partners on the Gosport Partnership Board, the Borough's Local Strategic Partnership, member organisations of the Compact through Gosport Voluntary Action and other relevant stakeholder groups and forums.
- 2.6 Awareness sessions for Council staff and elected members to launch the Corporate Equalities Policy along with the Race Equality Scheme 2007 2010 are planned for Spring 2008.

3 Risk Assessment

- 3.1 Compliance with all anti-discrimination legislation is monitored by the Commission for Equality and Human Rights formed in October 2007. Failure to comply would invite an array of possible enforcement actions against the Council.
- 3.2 Assessment of a Council's performance is now explicitly linked to equality, diversity and community cohesion. The Equality Standard for Local Government goes beyond the requirement for compliance to anti-discrimination legislation and also requires Local Authorities to actively promote good equality practice throughout all of its activities.

4 Conclusion

- 4.1 Adoption of a Corporate Equalities Policy not only provides a clear demonstration of the Council's commitment to comply with current anti-discrimination legislation, but also meets the requirements of the Equality Standard for Local Government by providing a corporate framework for promoting and mainstreaming good equality practice

throughout its activities.

Financial Services comments:	No financial implications arising directly from this report.
Legal Services comments:	Contained in the report.
Service Improvement Plan implications:	Production of this policy is a SIP Action for the Corporate Policy and Performance Section.
Corporate Plan:	This policy underpins the core values of the Corporate Plan.
Risk Assessment:	High -Failure to comply with anti-discrimination legislation could result in legal action against the Council and would also create a risk to the Council's reputation.
Background papers:	
Appendices/Enclosures:	
Appendix 'A'	Corporate Equalities Policy
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RACE EQUALITY SCHEME

Gosport Borough Council is committed to equal opportunities for all.

If you need this document in large print, on tape, in Braille or in other languages, please ask.

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CONTENTS

1.0 Introduction	4
2.0 Purpose	4
3.0 Scope	4
4.0 Development of this Scheme	4
5.0 Links to Other Plans, Policies and Schemes	6
6.0 The Legal Framework	6
7.0 Identification of Relevance	7
8.0 Equality Impact Assessments (EIAs)	8
9.0 Consultation	8
10.0 Access to Information and Services	9
11.0 Training and Awareness Raising	10
12.0 Policy and Service Monitoring Arrangements	11
13.0 Publishing Results	14
14.0 Partnership and Procurement Arrangements	14
15.0 Review of this Scheme	15
Appendix A EIA Timetable	16
Appendix B Race Equality Scheme Action Plan 2007-2010	19
Appendix C Guidance Notes for Equality Impact Assessments	24
Appendix D Directory of Council Services	46

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

Gosport Borough Council believes local authorities, by the nature and range of their powers and responsibilities can and should play an influential role in the promotion of racial equality and good race relations in their local area.

The Council recognises its leadership role as the democratically elected authority for the Borough and provider of many services central to the everyday lives of its citizens. The Council is committed to equal opportunities for all and recognises the value of diversity.

As an employer, service provider and community leader, the Council is committed to meeting its duties and responsibilities under the Race Relations Amendment Act 2000.

2.0 PURPOSE

The purpose of this Race Equality Scheme is to ensure Gosport Borough Council is addressing its legal duties and responsibilities under the Race Relations Amendment Act 2000 which prohibits racial discrimination in the delivery of services and employment.

This Race Equality Scheme 2007-2010 updates the Council's previous scheme.

3.0 SCOPE

This scheme applies to all employees, volunteers and placements and will be reflected in arrangements with contractors. Members of the Council have to comply with the Code of Conduct which covers equalities issues and by following this scheme Members will be able to demonstrate compliance with the Code of Conduct.

The designation of key responsibilities under this scheme is detailed within the Council's Corporate Equalities Policy.

4.0 DEVELOPMENT OF THIS SCHEME

In order to explain the development of this scheme, it is important to consider the population profile of Gosport.

Gosport is greatly influenced by its geography as a peninsula dividing the Solent and Portsmouth Harbour. It lies between the large urban areas of Southampton and Portsmouth.

According to the 2001 Census, nearly 77,000 people live within the Borough. Gosport is the fourth smallest local authority and the fifth most densely populated local authority in the South East of England.

The proportion of all non-white ethnic groups living within the Borough was 1.7% in 2001 accounting for 1,265 people. This is below the Hampshire average of 3.3% and significantly below the English average of 9%.

All ethnic minority groups within the Borough are below county and national averages despite a slight increase in numbers and the overall population of these groups between 1991 and 2001 Censuses.

Hampshire County Council has provided District Level information on the ethnicity and languages spoken within school populations. January 2007 figures showed 89 children, or less than 1%, of all Gosport school children spoke a language other than English as their first language. They are just 2.8% of all Hampshire school children whose first language is not English.

This information has helped to provide a more recent indicator of changes in the local Black and Minority Ethnic population in Gosport. Contact has been made with the Ethnic Minority Achievement Service to maintain current information on school populations and exchange ideas on how best to support the needs of these children and their families. The top five languages other than English spoken in Gosport schools are Polish, Spanish, Fijian, Turkish and Shona.

The small Black and Minority Ethnic population in the Borough means that it is difficult to identify specific groups in Gosport who can represent a collective view from their respective communities. Therefore the Council consults with several nearby Portsmouth and Southampton based organisations that provide religious and social support and activities to people from different cultural backgrounds. Through these networks, the Council hopes to improve opportunities for direct consultation with Black and Minority Ethnic people who live or work in Gosport.

The Portsmouth Racial Equality Network Organisation assists the Council in its understanding of the views and needs of culturally diverse communities and has contributed to the development of this scheme and to the Council's Corporate Equalities Policy. The EU Welcome Project based in Southampton supports new migrant populations from Eastern Europe and has contact with Polish people living in Gosport. The Project has helped inform this scheme and improve communication links between Council services and local Eastern European people.

The Council commissioned independent research into the views of Black and Minority Ethnic people living and working in Gosport through in-depth interviews held in December 2006 and January 2007. This research has contributed to the development of the scheme. Findings regarding ethnicity issues related to the Council in general and related to service delivery have been used to inform service development and improvement and are included in the corporate Race Equality Scheme Action Plan. The research has also provided evidence and information to support the Equality Impact Assessment processes.

The Council also used a survey to determine how accessible the community thinks its services are. A question about accessibility was piloted in the Council's General Survey in 2006. Standard wording for an accessibility question is now included in all Council surveys.

Sharing local and regional knowledge about race equality issues through partnerships and networks has also informed the development of this scheme. The Council is a member of the Hampshire Race & Equality Network whose aim is to share information and best practice on a range of equality issues between statutory and non-statutory organisations across Hampshire.

The Gosport Hate Crime Forum, which includes statutory and voluntary organisations, allows incidents of hate crime, including those based on race or ethnicity, to be tracked and recorded in order to better co-ordinate support for victims and detect and deter offenders.

Aided by the One Compact for Hampshire, the Council has developed good working relationships with many organisations providing frontline services to people who are particularly vulnerable or feel isolated in the community. The contributions of local knowledge and expertise from those voluntary and community sector organisations have aided the development of this scheme.

The Equality and Diversity Steering Group prepared the draft Race Equality Scheme. This group is composed of representatives from each service area and Unison. The Council's Management Team approved the draft and circulated to Elected Members for comment in August 2007.

The draft was then posted for consultation on the Council's web site and on its staff Infonet. Feedback was invited from the partners in the Gosport Partnership, the Borough's local strategic partnership, partners in the Compact through Gosport Voluntary Action and other relevant stakeholder groups and forums. Consultation results informed the final scheme which was formally adopted by the Council in January 2008.

5.0 LINKS TO OTHER PLANS, POLICIES AND SCHEMES

This Race Equality Scheme forms part of the Council's statutory commitment to equal opportunities for all under its Corporate Equalities Policy. Other schemes linked to the Corporate Equalities Policy are the Disability Equality Scheme 2007-2010 and the Gender Equality Scheme.

The Corporate Equalities Policy is the Council's framework equalities document which sets out how it intends to meet its duties under all relevant anti-discrimination legislation and Codes of Practice, and mainstream equality practices within human resource processes, service planning and delivery and democratic activity.

The list of relevant anti-discrimination legislation and Codes of Practice is contained in the Corporate Equalities Policy as well as the list of Council plans and policies regarding employment and other corporate processes which are directly linked to this Race Equality Scheme.

6.0 THE LEGAL FRAMEWORK

The Race Relations Act 1976 places a general obligation on local authorities to promote good race relations.

The Race Relations Amendment Act 2000 amends the original act and strengthens its application to public authorities by covering areas that were previously excluded.

Under the General Duty, local authorities must have due regard to the need to:

- eliminate unlawful racial discrimination
- promote equality of opportunity
- promote good relations between persons of different racial groups.

Under the Specific Duties, local authorities must include the following within their race equality scheme:

- identify and list all functions and policies (including proposed items) that are relevant to the general duty
- set out arrangements for assessing and consulting on the likely impact of these on race equality
- set out arrangements for monitoring their policies for any adverse impact
- set out their arrangements for publishing the results of any assessments, consultations and monitoring they carry out to see whether there is any adverse impact on race equality
- set out arrangements for training staff in connection with the general duty or specific duties
- review the Race Equality Scheme every three years.

7.0 IDENTIFICATION OF RELEVANCE

Public authorities must list in their race equality scheme the policies, strategies and functions (including proposed policies) which are relevant to the general duty to promote race equality.

Under its Corporate Equalities Policy, the Council is committed to mainstreaming consistent equality practices within human resource processes, service planning and delivery and democratic activity. Therefore, the Council considers most policies, strategies and functions are relevant, either directly or indirectly to the Race Relations Amendment Act.

Given the number of existing policies, strategies and functions involved, the Council sought to provide a means to determine the degree of relevance to racial equality in order to prioritise them for Equality Impact Assessments. Each service area completes a self-assessment Relevance Checklist to help them identify a low, medium or high degree of relevance of their main policies, strategies and functions against the three elements of the general duty.

Existing policies, strategies and functions, those under development and those contracted out and held within partnership arrangements are all assessed for relevance to the general duty. They will be re-assessed at least every three years.

The resulting corporate list of policies, strategies and functions assessed as High Medium or Low relevance to the General Duty for Racial Equality is found in Appendix A.

8.0 EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENTS

The results of the self-assessment Relevance Checklist are used to determine the priority of policies, strategies and functions to undergo Equality Impact Assessments as part of a three-year Race Equality Scheme Action Plan (shown in Appendix B).

The Equality and Diversity Steering Group developed the Equality Impact Assessment processes and guidance for staff. It is a corporate group chaired by the Chief Executive and has representation from every Service Unit, and Unison. This group has overall responsibility for co-ordinating the Council's equality and diversity work. It also provides a pool of expertise, a link and consultation mechanism with staff and facilitates best practice across units.

All policies, strategies and functions are prioritised for an Equality Impact Assessment based on their degree of relevance to the general duty for racial equality. High relevance policies, strategies and functions undergo screening during Year 1 of the Scheme; those of medium relevance undergo screening in Year 2 and all others are assessed in Year 3.

A screening assessment is completed for all relevant policies, strategies and functions and reviewed by a sub-group of the Equality and Diversity Steering Group. The review sub-group determines if a full Equality Impact Assessment is required. Guidance notes on completing Equality Impact Assessments are available to all staff on the Infonet, and Equality and Diversity Steering Group members offer additional support to service managers and teams on completing them. The Guidance Notes are found in Appendix C. Completed Equality Impact Assessments are published on the Council's web site and offered in alternative formats and languages on request.

The Equality and Diversity Steering Group reports progress on Equality Impact Assessments quarterly to the Council's Management Team.

9.0 CONSULTATION

Council Consultation Activity

A comprehensive Consultation Policy has also been produced in 2007 to provide information and toolkits to ensure effective and meaningful consultation with stakeholders on proposed policies, services and quality of life issues.

One of the key consultation principles in the policy is 'inclusiveness' to ensure all sections of the community have an opportunity to express their views.

The Consultation Policy provides a toolkit on inclusiveness that incorporates a Faith and Culture Guide and a Diversity Calendar to assist staff in understanding cultural and religious customs and observances when planning and implementing consultation exercises.

A new Customer Care Handbook also provides information and tools for communicating successfully with people with a range of accessibility requirements.

Such requirements include interpreting and translation services, alternative formats for printed material, and physical requirements to access Council offices and services.

The Consultation Policy also establishes standards for the collection of demographic data and requires all surveys to contain specific questions regarding accessibility of services. Data analysis requirements are stated as well to ensure that data is used to monitor trends in service delivery and customer satisfaction for equality target groups.

The Council has adopted a co-ordinated approach to consultations throughout its service areas by requiring all planned consultations to be registered with and approved by Council Management Team. A Consultation Finder is used to log planned and completed consultations on the Council's web site in order to avoid duplication of effort, encourage joint working and share results to inform service planning and delivery.

Consultation with Partners and Networks

The Council recognises its leadership role in promoting racial equality and good race relations within any of the partnerships in which it participates, ensuring that the general duty of the Race Relations Amendment Act is applied to all aspects of the partnerships' work.

The Council, through representation by its officers or elected members, plays an active role in numerous partnerships, networks and specialist forums. Several have already been mentioned as consultees and contributors to the development of the scheme. These provide opportunities to share local knowledge and best practice with a diverse range of community groups and statutory and voluntary organisations that provide local services and support.

Partnerships and networks also provide valuable vehicles through which the Council can consult with local people and organisations.

10.0 ACCESS TO INFORMATION AND SERVICES

The Council is committed to equal opportunities for all and to providing information and services to meet accessibility needs. The Customer Care Handbook is a corporate reference document providing guidance on communicating with customers through face-to-face contact, by telephone, email and letter and meeting their needs for interpreting and translation services, alternate formats for print and electronic information, and sensory and physical aids to access services and events.

The Council has a close working partnership with the Gosport Access Group and Disability Forum to seek guidance on a range of physical and sensory impairments and improve the accessibility of Council offices and services.

This partnership has delivered physical improvements to the Town Hall resulting in improved access to its facilities and services. Joint working with this group and others has also resulted in the production of the Council's Easy Read version of its Disability Equality Scheme.

The Council also jointly employs an Access Officer through partnership with another Council to advise on building requirements and access needs of customers.

Information about the Council's organisational structure, descriptions of the services it provides and contact details and are included in Appendix D.

The Council's web site and community magazine, Coastline, which reaches nearly all households in the Borough, are other vehicles through which the Council provides information and invites feedback on its services and performance. New information about services and events is also circulated through local libraries, community centres, and promoted through partner organisations.

11.0 TRAINING AND AWARENESS RAISING

The Learning and Development Group identifies corporate training needs and delivery mechanisms for Council staff and is involved in the delivery of training sessions and events for staff on a wide range of issues. The Equality and Diversity Steering Group co-ordinates with this group to design and deliver training on equality legislation and corporate equality processes.

Specific guidance for service managers on applying the Relevance Checklist for Race Equality and undertaking Equality Impact Assessments for developing and existing policies and functions was piloted by the Equality and Diversity Steering Group prior to the formal adoption of this scheme. Further support to managers is offered through section and team meetings by members of the Equality and Diversity Steering Group and the Corporate Policy and Performance Section.

Awareness sessions for Council staff and elected members to launch the new Race Equality Scheme and the Corporate Equalities Policy have been incorporated into the corporate training calendar. Training includes specific guidance on the Race Equality Scheme General and Specific Duties.

Training reinforces the Council's statutory duties and provides the opportunity for staff and elected members to apply the general and specific duties of the Race Equality Scheme to their areas of work and responsibility. This helps to mainstream good equality standards and practices throughout all of the Council's activity. The Equality and Diversity Steering Group reviews the completed training evaluation forms and determines whether additional training is needed.

All new staff receives induction training that includes information about the Council's Corporate Equalities Policy, equal opportunities policy, and the Equality Schemes.

The staff Infonet provides a vehicle for disseminating guidance and toolkits to promote racial equality and inclusive approaches to all Council activity.

Bi-annual personal reviews provide an opportunity for managers to discuss with staff individual training needs or areas of performance improvement with respect to racial equality or any area of equality.

Each member of staff has his/her own personal training plan that is updated annually. Individual training needs are met through a variety of internal and external providers.

12.0 POLICY AND SERVICE MONITORING ARRANGEMENTS

The Council uses a wide range of tools for monitoring its policies, functions and services for compliance with the general and specific duties relating to racial equality. These include the following:

Service Statistics

Service usage statistics, collected through a standardised demographic question, allow sub-analysis of data and assist with service monitoring.

In addition to this the Council adds a standardised question to its surveys regarding accessibility of its services. This is used to measure satisfaction with access to Council services and asks those who are dissatisfied to comment further. Qualitative analysis of any further comments and of all 'other comments' (which is generally the final question in the Council's surveys) is carried out. If there are any comments related to equalities or diversity these are specifically reviewed (even if they are not a key theme) and reported to the Corporate Policy and Performance Section in addition to being considered within the Service Unit.

For example, a few survey comments revealed that Council staff could speak more slowly and use simpler language when explaining procedures and services. This advice has been incorporated in the new Customer Care Handbook that contains further details and good practice examples of meeting customer needs. The handbook is distributed to new and existing Council staff.

Survey analysis is generally carried out either by consultants or the Corporate Policy and Performance Section. If it is carried out in the Service Units it is done in accordance with the Corporate Consultation Policy and can be subject to scrutiny by the Corporate Policy and Performance Section.

Partnerships and Networks

Through its active representation in many partnerships and networks, the Council seeks to improve its understanding of local issues and local needs. Opportunities to draw upon the expertise and local knowledge held by Gosport residents and organisations, and shared experiences, help to raise awareness of community issues and address local concerns.

An example of this was the 'Make Your Mark' consultation campaign launched in December 2006 by the Gosport Partnership and co-ordinated by the Council to inform Sustainable Community Strategy for Gosport. The Council understands its role as a part of the fabric of the local community and not an entity outside of it.

Regular consultation with, and feedback from, these formal and informal networks assists the Council in assessing and monitoring services in relation to local equality issues and their impact on local people.

Discussions with Portsmouth Race Equality Network Organisation have helped the Council to identify access to Housing and Benefits as a key issue for local Black and Minority Ethnic Communities which is now being improved through several initiatives in the Action Plan.

Personnel Management and Information Systems

Personnel collects and monitors extensive information to ensure equality standards are maintained throughout its staff management processes. Profile information on the Council's workforce, including gender and ethnicity information, is routinely collected and monitored. Monitoring the staff grading structure through its Job Evaluation Steering Group and completing an Equal Pay Audit every two years help to ensure pay structure and grading of jobs are applied fairly.

Personal review processes and training assessment processes provide mechanisms for monitoring equality of opportunity in the development of the Council's workforce. Recruitment and selection data is also monitored, as are disciplinary and grievance issues. Information from exit interviews is also analysed to identify any employment issues.

External Accreditation and Assessment

The Council has attained external accreditation and awards that indicate high standards in performance or service delivery i.e. Investors in People. The documentation required to prove the standard has been achieved can often include collecting evidence that a particular service area or the Council, as a whole, has demonstrated good equality practices. Collection of this evidence in order to maintain an accreditation or award can serve as an ongoing monitoring and assessment tool for equalities good practice.

Personal Reviews

Personal reviews provide an opportunity for managers to discuss with staff areas for performance improvement with respect to customer care, service delivery and any aspect of the Council's Corporate Equalities Policy. Each member of staff has his/her own personal training plan that is reviewed annually to help identify training needs and allocate training resources. Refresher training on the personal review process is offered regularly to managers. A range of training is available to staff from internal and external sources.

Team Meetings

Equal Opportunities – 'Employment and Service Delivery Issues' is a corporate standard item on team meeting agendas and acts as a vehicle for raising and discussing equalities issues identified within teams. Managers can seek further information or guidance from the Personnel Section, Equality and Diversity Steering Group, Council Management Team and the Corporate Policy and Performance Section, to address issues raised in team meetings.

Service Improvement Plans

The Race, Disability and Gender Equality Schemes have action plans. Actions in reference to either of the statutory schemes are identified as such in the Service Improvement Plan for each service area. The Council's Performance Officer monitors the Service Improvement Plan performance regularly. Quarterly performance reports are presented to the Performance Sub Group and reports are prepared for EDSG to review the implementation of the Corporate Equalities Policy and its associated schemes.

The Equality and Diversity Steering Group provides updates to the Council Management Team detailing corporate progress of these action plans and an annual report to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

Each Equality Scheme is reviewed every three years and updated to ensure compliance with current legislation and best practice. Their action plans are reviewed annually by the Equality and Diversity Steering Group as part of the overall Corporate Equalities Action Plan. The Corporate Equalities Policy itself will be reviewed annually to ensure compliance with current legislation.

Compliments and Complaints

Compliments and complaints received about services also help to identify the impact of good practices and any adverse impact of existing practices.

For example, very positive feedback has been received with regard to an Environmental Health Officer taking an interpreter to inspect a food business and this good practice example has been disseminated to all of the Council's Service Units.

Gosport Borough Council is committed to providing excellent service to all of its customers and wants to know if any aspect of its service, procedures or performance is unsatisfactory. It responds to complaints as quickly and as efficiently as possible from customers and considers their suggestions for improvements.

The formal three-stage complaints procedure is detailed on the Council web site and available in print formats from the Town Hall.

In addition to the service areas responding to complaints, the Council Management Team regularly reviews summary reports on complaints received by the Council with a focus on any related to equality and diversity issues. These are then reported to Equality and Diversity Steering Group for further review and recommendations for corporate actions to address.

The Standards and Governance Committee also receives and scrutinises reports on complaints received to assess for further actions required to address them.

These corporate protocols for monitoring and review should ensure Gosport Borough Council is meeting both its statutory duties and organisational commitment to promoting equality and diversity throughout its services and practices.

13.0 PUBLISHING RESULTS

Assessments, Consultations and Monitoring Reports

The Council's Equality Schemes, including the Race Equality Scheme, and the Disability Equality Scheme along with their Action Plans, are published on the Council's web site on its Equality and Diversity pages. Completed Equality Impact Assessments are also published.

The Council has developed an online Consultation Finder that allows members of the public to view summaries of recent consultations as well as a list of consultation events or exercises being planned. Summary analysis of customer survey data is also available on the Consultation Finder.

In an attempt to remove barriers created by language differences or impairments, the Council endeavours to ensure its documents are fully accessible. Copies of documents can be requested in alternative formats and languages.

The Council's web site offers read aloud text, text only options and text size variations.

14.0 PARTNERSHIP AND PROCUREMENT ARRANGEMENTS

Working with Partners

The Council works closely with other public authorities and voluntary and community sector organisations in a variety of partnership arrangements.

It recognises its statutory obligations to comply with the duties of the Race Relations Amendment Act also apply to all aspects of partnership working. It also recognises its leadership role in promoting equal opportunities and good race relations in all its partnership arrangements.

The Race Relations Amendment Act applies to public authorities but places 'indirect requirements' on contractors and organisations with which a public authority may work in partnership or fund.

Procurement

The duty to promote race equality applies to procurement. Where an external supplier carries out a function on the Council's behalf, the Council recognises it remains responsible for meeting the duty. All contracted services and functions are assessed for relevance to the general duty and undergo the Equality Impact Assessment process.

Contractors who intend to supply goods or services on behalf of the Council must provide evidence that they have systems in place to ensure equal access and treatment in their own employment practices and in the services they provide. The Council provides information on its commitment to equality practices as contained within its Corporate Equalities Policy and Equality Schemes as part of its Invitation to Tender documentation and ensures these commitments are part of its Contractual Agreements.

Post-contract monitoring is undertaken to assess equality performance including reports of any complaints from service users (including any related to harassment) and service audits to check on any problems in relation to the equalities in the specification.

Funding to Local Groups and Organisations

A Funding Code of Good Practice has been developed between the Council and local voluntary and community sector groups in Gosport which have signed up to the One Compact for Hampshire. It establishes specific undertakings for voluntary and community sector groups with regard to any Council funding which include:

- adopt policies and practices to ensure equality in all activities and ensure the appropriate involvement of services users, and
- recognise that Gosport Borough Council applies equality standards to all of its activities and that it requires organisations with which it has contractual arrangements to do likewise.

15.0 REVIEW OF THIS SCHEME

The Council considers its Race Equality Scheme as well as its other Schemes to be 'live' documents. They will be adapted over the next three years to take account of the increasingly diverse composition of the local community, the needs and views of local people, and the development of new initiatives and best practices to eliminate racial discrimination, promote equal opportunities and good relations between racial groups.

This Race Equality Scheme will be reviewed, consulted on with the local community and updated every three years to ensure compliance with current legislation and responsiveness to local needs.

The Action Plan is monitored by the Equality and Diversity Steering Group as part of its own action plan and is developed and updated accordingly. The group provides quarterly monitoring reports to Council Management Team and an annual equalities report both to Council Management Team and the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT TIMETABLE

Existing policies/ strategies/functions

Year	Service/Policy	Service Unit
Y E A R O N E H I G H P R I O R I T Y	Community Safety (including the Crime and Disorder Strategy)*to become the Community Safety Plan in 2008	Chief Executive's Unit
	Community Strategy	Chief Executive's Unit
	Children and Young People's Policy	Chief Executive's Unit
	Corporate Equality Policy	Chief Executive's Unit
	Audit and Assurance	Chief Executive's Unit
	Consultation Policy	Chief Executive's Unit
	Economic Strategy	Chief Executive's Unit
	Equality and Diversity (Employment) Policy	Chief Executive's Unit
	Recruitment and Selection Code of Practice and Procedures (including the Policy on Ex- Offenders)	Chief Executive's Unit
	Bullying and Harassment Policy	Chief Executive's Unit
	Risk Management Strategy	Chief Executive's Unit
	Reception/Customer Contact Centre	Corporate Services
	Enforcement Policy	Environmental Services
	Environmental Health Commercial	Environmental Services
	Environmental Health Pollution	Environmental Services
	Gypsy and Traveller Liaison	Environmental Services
	Housing and Council Tax Benefit	Financial Services
	Recovery of Benefit Overpayments	Financial Services
	Counter Fraud Investigations	Financial Services
	Benefits Take Up Policy	Financial Services
	Housing Allocations Policy	Housing Services
	Homelessness Strategy	Housing Services
	Housing Anti-Social Behaviour Policy	Housing Services
	Housing Options	Housing Services
	Housing Operational Services	Housing Services
	Play Strategy	Leisure and Cultural Services
	Child and Young Persons Protection Policy	Leisure and Cultural Services
	Cultural Regeneration	Leisure and Cultural Services
Year	Service/Policy	Service Unit
Y E A	Business support/communications	Chief Executive's Unit
	Dispute Resolution Procedures	Chief Executive's Unit
	Training Policy and Procedures	Chief Executive's Unit
	Flexible Work Procedure	Chief Executive's Unit
	Community and Voluntary Sector	Chief Executive's Unit

R T W O M E D I U M P R I O R I T Y	Liaison	
	Home Working Policy	Chief Executive's Unit
	Redundancy and Redeployment Policy	Chief Executive's Unit
	People Management Strategy	Chief Executive's Unit
	Smoke-free Policy	Chief Executive's Unit
	Alcohol and Drug Abuse Policy	Chief Executive's Unit
	Press and Public Relations	Chief Executive's Unit
	Procurement Strategy	Chief Executive's Unit
	Complaints Policy	Corporate Services
	ICT Strategy	Corporate Services
	Planning Proposals	Development Services
	Planning Enforcement	Development Services
	Licensing (including Licensing Policy, Street Trading Policy and Driver Conviction Policy)	Environmental Services
	Safety Policy	Environmental Services
	Gambling Policy	Environmental Services
	Corporate Debt Policy	Financial Services
	Local Taxation	Financial Services
	Housing Strategy and Enabling (including Private Sector Housing Renewal Policy)	Housing Services
	Explosion! Museum	Leisure and Cultural Services
	Provision of Sports Facilities (including Holbrook Recreation Centre)	Leisure and Cultural Services
	Waterfront Music Festival	Leisure and Cultural Services
	Legal Services	Legal and Democratic Support
	Electoral Services	Legal and Democratic Support
	Cemetery Service	Leisure and Cultural Services
	Tourism	Leisure and Cultural Services
Year	Service/Policy	Service Unit
Y E A R T H R E E	Management and delivery of the Impact Project	Chief Executive's Unit
	Job Evaluation Scheme	Chief Executive's Unit
	Personal Review Scheme	Chief Executive's Unit
	Succession Planning Process	Chief Executive's Unit
	Corporate Policy and Performance Support	Chief Executive's Unit
	Information Technology Services	Corporate Services
	Cashiers	Corporate Services
	Printing and Graphics	Corporate Services
	Property Services	Development Services
	Traffic Management	Development Services
	Conservation and Design	Development Services

L O W P R I O R I T Y	Policy Planning	Development Services
	Waste Management	Environmental Services
	Grounds Maintenance/Street Cleansing	Environmental Services
	Concessionary Travel	Financial Services
	Corporate Accounting	Financial Service
	Creditors and Debtors	Financial Service
	Democratic Services	Legal and Democratic Support
	Land Charges	Legal and Democratic Support
	Parks and Service facilities	Leisure and Cultural Services
	Countryside	Leisure and Cultural Services

Proposed policies/strategies/functions

These will be impact assessed during their development and prior to implementation.

Proposals	Service Unit
Neighbourhood Panels	Chief Executive's Unit
Social Inclusion Statement	Chief Executive's Unit
Investment and Marketing Plan	Chief Executive's Unit
Skills Strategy	Chief Executive's Unit
Internet Acceptable Use Policy	Corporate Services
Waste Management Strategy	Environmental Services
Benefits Prosecutions	Financial Services
Housing Strategy 2008-2011	Housing Services
Adult Protection Policy 2008	Housing Services
Facilities Strategy	Leisure and Cultural Services

Race Equality Scheme Action Plan 2007-2010

Listed below are headline outcomes and actions to be achieved by Gosport Borough Council over three years. Details of service specific actions will be recorded and monitored through its Service Improvement Plans. A live Action Plan will be posted on the Council's website and be updated regularly.

Key to Abbreviations:

BME – Black and Minority Ethnic	EIA – Equality Impact Assessment
CMT – Council Management Team	LDF – Local Development Framework
CPPS – Corporate Policy and Performance Section	PRENO – Portsmouth Race Equality Network Organisation
EDSG – Equality and Diversity Steering Group	RES – Race Equality Scheme

Key to Specific Duties

1. Identify and list all functions and policies (including proposed items) that are relevant to the general duty.	4. Set out arrangements for publishing the results of any assessments, consultations and monitoring to see whether there is any adverse impact on race equality.
2. Set out arrangements for assessing and consulting on the likely impact of these on race equality.	5. Set out arrangements for training staff in connection with the general duty or specific duties.
3. Set out arrangements for monitoring policies for any adverse impact.	6. Review the Race Equality Scheme every three years.

Outcome	Actions to Achieve	Specific Duty Link	By Whom	By When	✓ when completed
1. Service areas are able to assess all of their policies, strategies and functions for relevance to the General Duty for Racial Equality.	1a. Develop a self-assessment Relevance Checklist for managers to assist them in assessing all policies and functions, including those planned or contracted out, for degree of relevance to the general duty of the RES.	1,2	EDSG	7-07	✓
	1b. Produce a list of policies, strategies and functions with the relevance to RES assessed by each service area.	1,2	Section Heads	8-07	✓
2. EIAs are completed for all policies, strategies and functions relevant to the general Duty in accordance with the priority level established by corporately agreed criteria.	2a. Draw up a Corporate list of main policies, strategies and functions to establish the priority for completing EIAs over the three- year action plans for Race, Disability and Gender.	1	EDSG	8-07	✓
	2b. Finalise guidance notes and workshop programme for managers on completing EIAs.	5	EDSG	9-07	✓
	2c. Submit completed EIA screening forms to EDSG for review and determination if full assessment is required. High priority policies and functions are assessed in Year 1 of the action plan, Medium in Year 2 and Low in Year 3.	2,3	Service Areas High Low Medium	01-08 01-09 01-10	
	2d. Publish completed EIAs on the Council's website after review by EDSG.	4	CPPS	09-08 09-09 09-10	

Outcome	Actions to Achieve	Specific Duty Link	By Whom	By When	✓ when completed
3. Improved communication and consultation between Council staff and customers whose understanding of English is limited.	3a. Feedback on MRUK research findings into needs of BME people through section meetings.	2,4	CMT, Section Heads	6-07	✓
	3b. Promote the availability of interpreting and translation services offered by the Council in Reception areas at the Town Hall through signs in alternative languages.	2	EDSG	9-07	✓
	3c. Keep roster of staff with verbal translation skills up to date.	2	Personnel Section	On-going	✓
	3d. Produce revised design guidance for all Council Information and publications- Customer Care Handbook.	5	EDSG	8-07	✓
	3e. Promote the availability of interpreting and translation services for all Council documents.	2	EDSG	9-07	✓
	3f. Develop welcome guide to Council Services for new EU immigrants, particularly from Poland.	2	EDSG	3-08	
	3g. Improve accessibility of housing and benefits information to BME people through improved links with local BME network organisations and communities.	2	Housing and Benefits	3-08	

Outcome	Actions to Achieve	Specific Duty Link	By Whom	By When	✓ when completed
4. Improved multi-cultural awareness among Council staff and better understanding of the different customs and beliefs held by BME customers.	4a. Work with BME networks and service organisations to develop and deliver multi-cultural awareness training in conjunction with the launch of the RES	5	EDSG, Corporate Learning and Development Group	12-07	
	4b. Incorporate information and feedback from awareness sessions into Corporate Equal Opportunities induction training for new staff.	5	Personnel	3-08	
	4c. Review and update content of Equal Opportunities training annually to ensure it remains current.	5	Personnel	3-09 3-10	
5. Local Council events and services are inclusive to a multi-cultural population.	5a. Involve local BME network and community organisations in developing and promoting information about Council events and services (i.e. PRENO newsletter) to their members.	2,3,4	All service areas	On-going	
	5b. Update information available on the Faith and Culture Guide and the Diversity Calendar annually for staff to consider when planning events.	5	CPPS	1-08, 1-09, 1-10	
6. Service Areas review and develop consistent BME monitoring processes for their key areas of service provision to better identify any specific needs to gaps in service provision.	6a. Review and Develop processes in each service area for consistent monitoring service take up and participation by BME populations.	3	All service areas	12-08	
	6b. Establish a corporate overview process for reporting results of monitoring information annually to the Council Management Team and publishing results.	3,4	EDSG	12-08	

Outcome	Actions to Achieve	Specific Duty Link	By Whom	By When	✓ when completed
7. Key BME liaison organisations help to review the action plan, assess new developments in local BME populations and set new goals.	7a. Hold annual 'checkpoint' meetings with PRENO, the EU Welcome Project, Ethnic Minority Achievement Service and others to assess action plan progress, discuss new trends or needs among local BME populations and set new goals in response to them.	2,3,6	CPPS	10-07 10-08 10-09	✓
8. Information on local BME populations is included in LDF baseline information used by Gosport Borough Council and the Local Strategic Partnership.	8a. Update LDF baseline information every six months and make available to all organisations within the Gosport Partnership to help inform the planning and delivery of local services.	4	Planning	12-07	
9. The Council's Procurement Strategy is reviewed to ensure it promotes Racial Equality in all of its procurement functions.	9a. Review current procurement functions to ensure potential and existing external contractors understand and comply with the Council's commitment to Racial Equality.	1,2,3	Internal Audit	12-08	
	9b. Collect post-contract monitoring data from contractors and review annually to assess compliance with the Council's equalities standards as stated in the RES.	3	Internal Audit	12-09 12-10	



EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT



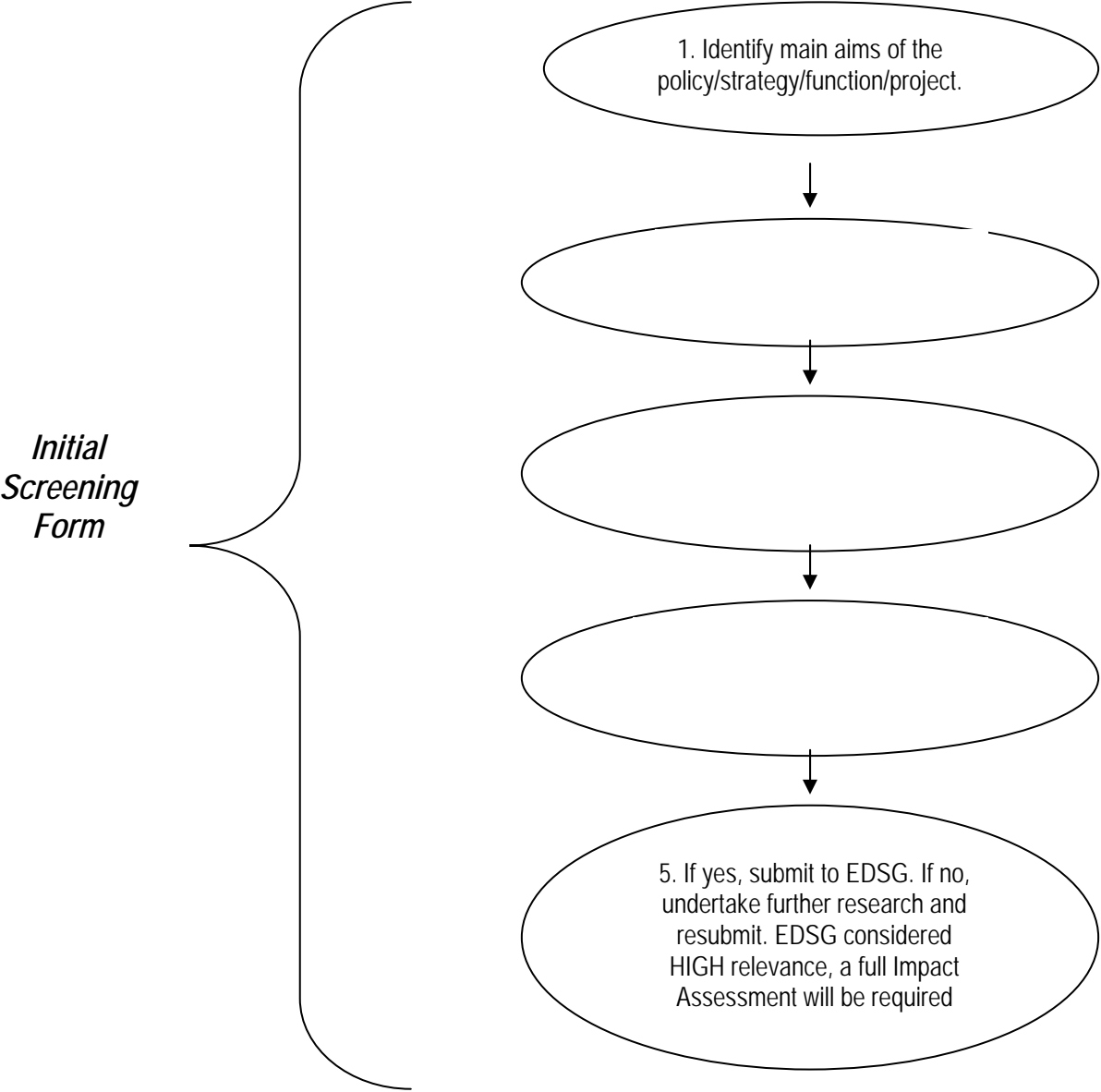
GUIDANCE NOTES

October 2007

Produced by the Equality and Diversity Steering Group

Flowchart: The Impact Assessment Process

***Relevance Checklist has been applied and
priority for assessment determined.***



What is the likely impact of this item on any of the six equality strands?

*Full
Assessment
Form*

```
graph TD; A([ ]) --> B([ ]); B --> C([ ]); C --> D([4. Detail monitoring arrangements.]); D --> E([ ]); E --> F([ ]); F --> G([ ]); G --> H([ ]);
```

A vertical flowchart consisting of nine empty oval boxes connected by downward-pointing arrows. The fourth box from the top contains the text "4. Detail monitoring arrangements.".

CONTENTS

Section 1: Establishing Relevance	
Section 2: What is an Equality Impact Assessment?	
Section 3: What Does 'Impact' Actually Mean?	
Section 4: What Needs to be Assessed?	
Section 5: Initial and Full Assessment Process	
Section 6: Completing the Full Assessment Form	
Appendix 1: Test of Relevance Checklist	
Appendix 2: EIA Screening Form	
Appendix 3: Full Assessment Form	



Section 1: Establishing Relevance

Gosport Borough Council must meet its duties under current Race, Disability and Gender Equality Schemes and requirements for the Equality Standard for Local Government by developing processes for assessing and monitoring its policies and functions for potential unequal impact and publishing the results of those Equality Impact Assessments (EIAs).

The first stage of this process is to list the main policies, strategies and services within each service area and make an initial assessment about the potential for each to have an unequal impact with regard to Race, Disability or Gender. This has been defined as the “test of relevance.”

The Relevance Checklist is a self-assessment tool for managers and provides the first stage of the EIA process. The Checklist is found in Appendix 1.

Service areas must assess their policies, strategies and functions every three years. These include any planned new policies and functions and those that are contracted out. Lists from service areas are combined into a corporate list- a statutory requirement of the Race Equality Scheme.

This list enables the Equality and Diversity Steering Group to co-ordinate the priority for submitting policies and functions through the EIA process over the three-year period of the Action Plans for the Race, Disability and Gender Equality Schemes.

The following criteria have been agreed to determine Priority Levels for completing Equality Impact Assessments:

High Priority (Year 1 EIAs):

- those which are relevant to **all or most** parts of the General Duty
- those which received complaints OR
- those which inspections/audits have indicated concerns about OR
- those which are under review OR
- those which have clear evidence of high or lower participation by some groups OR
- those which are new (within past 6-12 months) or currently under development

Medium (Year 2 EIAs):

- those which are relevant to **some** parts of the General Duty AND where there is some evidence to suggest different participation or take up levels by some groups which are (or could be) differently affected.
- those which are planned within the next 12 months.

Low (Year 3 EIAs):

- those not already assessed as High or Medium, but which are relevant to **at least one part** of the General Duty AND
- where there is no evidence to suggest different participation or take up levels by some groups, or that some could be differently affected.

Section 2: What is an Equality Impact Assessment?

The purpose of an Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) is to improve the work of

the Council by making sure it does not discriminate and that, where possible, it promotes equality. It is a way to ensure individuals and teams think carefully about the likely impact of their work on people in the Borough and take action to improve strategies, policies and projects, where appropriate.

Whilst there is a legal duty on local authorities to carry out EIAs in the areas of Race, Disability and Gender, Gosport Borough Council believes this principle should be extended to all equality strands. These equality strands are:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender
- Religion or Belief
- Race
- Sexual Orientation

EIAs involve anticipating the consequences of policies and projects and whether or not there is a potential for affecting different groups in different ways. As part of its equality duties, the Council must:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination
- Promote equal opportunities and
- Promote good relations between people from different groups.

Gosport Borough Council's Equal Opportunities Policy commits us all to removing barriers to equal opportunity and eliminating discrimination. Discrimination may be direct or indirect or occur in the forms of harassment or victimisation. Definitions of each are included within the Equal Opportunities Policy.

All are unacceptable and unlawful and need to be eradicated. By using the Equalities Impact Assessment process officers will be able to develop policies to ensure equality of opportunity for all, in both service delivery and employment and training.

Section 3: What Does 'Impact' Actually Mean?

There are two possible types of impact:

1. Negative or adverse impact:

This is where the impact could disadvantage one equality target group, or some equality target groups. This disadvantage may be differential, where the negative impact on one particular group of individuals or one equality target group is likely to be greater than on another.

The EIA provides an opportunity to assess this. For example an event that was held in a building with no induction loop facilities would have a negative or adverse impact on some attendees with a hearing impairment.

2. Positive impact:

An impact that will have a positive effect on an equality target group, or some equality target groups, or improve equal opportunities and /or relationships between groups.

This positive impact may be differential, where the positive impact on one particular group of individuals or one equality target group is likely to be greater than on another.

For example a targeted training programme for black and minority ethnic women would have a positive differential impact on black and minority ethnic women, compared with its impact on white women and all men. It would not, however, necessarily have an adverse impact on white women or men.

Section 4: What Needs to be Assessed?

Most of the work of the Council involves people, whether they are members of the public who live, work in or visit Gosport, or Council staff. Therefore, there is almost always a potential for affecting different groups in different ways which could discriminate against or disadvantage them.

Policies, strategies, functions or projects, must be assessed, please refer to the following definitions:

Policy – Usually a written document outlining an approved Council decision, principle, plan or set of procedures that influences and determines the way the Council itself carries out its business externally and/or internally. Any longstanding custom or practice, even though not “formal” policy, should be considered for assessment.

Strategy - The specific process or “road map” for achieving objectives, often underpinned by a policy and usually containing an associated action plan.

Function - A specific activity undertaken to carry out a duty or power held by a service area or organisation as a whole.

Project – Something which is temporary, created to achieve a specified business benefit or objective, including functions or events carried out by the Council annually or regularly.

Section 5: Initial and Full Assessment Process

The screening form is the first stage of the EIA process. The priority for completing the forms is determined by the results of the Relevance Checklist completed by service managers. The screening form assesses what is already known and done. It looks at available information and current practices.

At the screening stage, the Council is trying to assess obvious positive or negative impact or, importantly, gaps in our knowledge about the likely impact.

The lack of data **should not** be a reason to halt the process or not complete the form. If the likely impact on the different equality target groups is not known, then the officer or project leader needs to take action to acquire that information. The EDSG may be able to direct you to sources of information.

There are many sources of information and support to help you complete this initial assessment. You should make full use of the following:

- project leads, Council colleagues or those from partner organisations with professional knowledge of the issue and/or personal experience
- members of the Equality & Diversity Steering Group
- previous consultation results
- analysis of previous complaints, comments, evaluations and monitoring
- research and reports
- library searches
- internet searches
- advice from internal and external specialists staff with previous involvement of direct implementation of a similar project/policy.

The screening process is not an exact science and officers should take a common sense approach. It should not be a last-minute check. The aim should be to try to take the perspective of someone outside of the Council, such as a potential beneficiary or user, when carrying out an EIA. If there is a stakeholder group who can help you, please involve them!

It is particularly important that officers completing the form realise they have a legal duty on behalf of the Council to assess the impact of the policy, strategy or function on all equality target groups. They also need to be prepared for changes that the EIA identifies as necessary.

A full equality impact assessment may be required for a highly relevant or high likely impact policy, strategy or function even where the screening assessment has revealed little or no data or evidence of adverse impact.

If the potential for a negative impact has been identified during the screening stage, but steps to successfully minimise or negate this adverse impact can be clearly demonstrated, then a full assessment may not be required.

A full EIA builds on the information and evidence you provided during the screening assessment. It directs you to fill gaps in knowledge identified in the screening assessment through collection of additional evidence through research and direct consultation. It asks you how you will apply key findings from your research and consultation to minimise or negate adverse impact and promote equality. It also asks if you can identify any other group which could be adversely affected, any unavoidable barriers encountered and how these will be dealt with.

Finally, the full assessment asks you to consider how you will monitor the intended outcomes of your activity and how you will communicate with your stakeholder groups.

The Full Equality Impact Assessment uses the following five processes of assessment, monitoring, consultation, communication and training.

The five processes interact with each other at all times, e.g. when you have consulted with community groups you will need to communicate back to them the key results of the consultation in an appropriate manner. At each stage you will need to take account of and be sensitive to the 6 Equality Strands.

In order to ensure proper integration it is essential that all aspects of Equalities

be considered at the very earliest stages of policy writing or amendment, service or project development.

Section 6: Completing the Full Assessment Form

Part 1 – Main Details

Please be consistent in how you refer to the item being assessed. Use its full title or current working title if a proposed item. Contact details of the officer responsible for completing this form are required.

Part 2 – Assessment

Think carefully about who will be affected by this item. Review the answers provided to Question 3 of the screening form completed for this item.

Impact is assessed on both a breadth and depth basis. A policy or procedure may affect all households in the Borough, but the impact on individual lives or well being would not necessarily be significant. These may be “universal” whereas something else may affect a small number of people or “targeted” groups but have the potential to impact significantly on their lives and well being.

Consider all information and evidence sources, any new information you have gained since the initial screening. This could include the results of very recent consultation, new findings from national research, seminars, networking events, etc. What have been the key findings? Please document them. You must show how you have applied any new evidence or knowledge to minimise or negate possible adverse impact on any of the six equality target groups.

If you have identified any adverse impacts which cannot be avoided, how will these be addressed? This must be stated. As part of the monitoring process, unavoidable barriers and how these are dealt with should be reviewed. Improved knowledge, expertise, etc. may mean in future these barriers can be removed or dealt with more effectively.

Part 3 – Monitoring

In order to monitor effectively, the aims and intended outcomes of your item must be clear. If they are not, how can you be confident you have assessed them against the needs of the six equality target groups?

Details of monitoring arrangements are required in order to demonstrate that all data relevant to the Equalities aspect of your item are being included. Consider whether any group is over or under represented in your service, project etc. against the Borough’s population as a whole.

The equalities monitoring data which the Council collects provides information about the number of people from certain target groups who are using our services and are part of our workforce. It helps the Council to understand how different policies, strategies and projects affect different groups and which groups may be under-represented. Collection and analysis of this data helps to highlight possible inequalities and investigate their underlying causes.

It is essential your assessment is underpinned by the most reliable and current data available to you to inform your decision making process as well

as to measure and monitor progress in meeting your intended outcomes.

Part 4 – Consultation

Consultation is an ongoing requirement aimed at ensuring engagement with the community and staff. Equalities issues should be part of the overall consultation process as set down in the Consultation Policy. Use the information and toolkits with the policy to ensure you are consulting meaningfully with your stakeholder groups.

You need to demonstrate at all stages that efforts have been made to consult and engage with stakeholders likely to be affected by your item. If an existing service, look at your data. Who isn't using the service? There may be a barrier that exists preventing certain groups of people from accessing your service. In Part 2 you demonstrated how the results of consultation have informed decisions about the item you are assessing under the 6 Equalities Strands.

In Part 4 you need to show what consultations are in place and what is planned with any targeted group.

Part 5 – Communication

For each stage of the EIA you will need to communicate progress appropriately to all relevant groups. This helps ensure you are receiving any updated information that will assist the process and ensure stakeholders are as involved as possible at each step of the way. Once the EIA is completed, the results will need to be communicated to all relevant and affected groups.

Part 6 – Training

As the result of the Assessment process, you may identify training needs against each of the 6 Equalities Strands for yourself, your team, all staff or staff from partner organisations.

Seek advice from the Learning and Development Group.

There may already be corporate training courses which could be adapted to meet your needs or could be developed. It is also worth checking with other local authorities or partner organisations to see if they have successfully designed and delivered similar training. Often joint training initiatives between organisations can be not only cost effective but also valuable in sharing perspectives and experience.

Existing stakeholder support groups are often valuable sources of information about training expertise and materials. Group members themselves, such as Gosport Access Group and Disability Forum, can describe their first hand experiences which can be very compelling training tools for staff charged with implementing your policy, project, etc.

Test of Relevance Checklist For Race, Disability and Gender Equality

To be carried out by Unit Managers with the help of Section Heads:

Gosport Borough Council must meet its duties under current Race, Disability and Gender Equality Schemes by developing processes for assessing and monitoring policies, strategies and functions for potential unequal impact, and publishing the results of those equality impact assessments (EIAs).

The first stage of this process is to list the main policies, strategies and services within each service area and then make an initial assessment on whether these items could potentially have an unequal impact with regard to Race, Disability or Gender. This has been defined as the “test of relevance.”

Lists collected from each service area will be combined into a corporate inventory in accordance with a statutory requirement of the Race Equality Scheme for 2007-2010.

This list will also help the Equality and Diversity Steering Group coordinate the priority for evaluating policies and functions through the EIA process over a three-year period.

Set out below is the “test of relevance” toolkit and table. Please list the existing main policies, strategies and services in your particular area of work and assess them in light of the following questions.

Directions:

Please include any planned new policies and services for this current year and indicate (P) after the name of it. Also list any contracted out services and indicate (C) in the same way. You may not be able to answer all questions for planned developments, but it is important to list them as they will need to be assessed eventually.

Using the information below, consider the relevant Parts of the General Duty for each scheme (columns 1, 3, 5 on the worksheet) as well as other types of evidence or information that should also be considered (columns 2, 4 ,6) when assessing relevance to each scheme.

Use the guidance on High, Medium and Low relevance to complete column 7 for each scheme.

COLUMN 1

THE GENERAL DUTY FOR RACE EQUALITY

Which parts (if any) apply?

- A. Eliminate unlawful racial discrimination
- B. Promote equality of opportunity
- C. Promote good relations between persons of different racial groups.

Please enter A, B, C or All in Column 1*

*In exceptional circumstances, the answer may be none. Please mark NONE in Column 1.

COLUMN 2

EVIDENCE AND INFORMATION

A. Complaints

Have any complaints been received which indicate adverse or potential adverse impact with regard to race?

Record the approximate number of complaints received within the past 12 months. A0 = 0 complaints/ A3 = 3 complaints.

Please enter (for example) A3 in Column 2

B. Inspections/Audits

Have any internal/external inspections/audits highlighted adverse or potential adverse impact with regard to race?

Please enter BY (yes), BN (no) or BR (under review) in Column 2

C. Participation

Is there any indication (from statistics, consultations, research) that there is a higher or lower participation or take up with regard to race?

Please enter CN (no), or to indicate higher or lower participation enter C+ (higher) or C- (lower) in Column 2

COLUMN 3

THE GENERAL DUTY FOR DISABILITY EQUALITY

Which parts (if any) apply?

- A. Eliminate unlawful discrimination based on a physical, sensory or mental impairment.
- B. Eliminate unlawful harassment.
- C. Promote equality of opportunity between disabled and other persons.
- D. Take steps to account for disabilities even where that involves treating disabled persons more favourably.

Please list A, B, C, D or All in Column 3*

*In exceptional circumstances, the answer may be none. Please mark NONE in Column 3.

COLUMN 4

EVIDENCE AND INFORMATION

A. Complaints

Have any complaints been received which indicate adverse or potential adverse impact with regard to disability?

Record the approximate number of complaints received within the past 12 months. A0 = 0 complaints/ A3 = 3 complaints.

Please enter (for example) A3 in Column 2

D. Inspections/Audits

Have any internal/external inspections/audits highlighted adverse or potential adverse impact with regard to disability?

Please enter BY (yes), BN (no) or BR (under review) in Column 2

E. Participation

Is there any indication (from statistics, consultations, research) that there is a higher or lower participation or take up with regard to disability?

Please enter CN (no), or to indicate higher or lower participation enter C+ (higher) or C- (lower) in Column 2

COLUMN 5

THE GENERAL DUTY FOR GENDER EQUALITY

- A. Eliminate unlawful discrimination and harassment.
- B. Promote equality of opportunity between men and women.

Please list A, B, or All in Column 5*

* In exceptional circumstances, the answer may be none. Please mark NONE in Column 5.

COLUMN 6

EVIDENCE AND INFORMATION

A. Complaints

Have any complaints been received which indicate adverse or potential adverse impact with regard to gender?

Record the approximate number of complaints received within the past 12 months. A0 = 0 complaints/ A3 = 3 complaints.

Please enter (for example) A3 in Column 2

F. Inspections/Audits

Have any internal/external inspections/audits highlighted adverse or potential adverse impact with regard to gender?

Please enter BY (yes), BN (no) or BR (under review) in Column 2

G. Participation

Is there any indication (from statistics, consultations, research) that there is a higher or lower participation or take up with regard to gender?

Please enter CN (no), or to indicate higher or lower participation enter C+ (higher) or C- (lower) in Column 2

COLUMN 7

ASSIGNING DEGREE OF RELEVANCE

Use the following guide to help assess the priority that should be assigned to the item under each of the Race, Disability and Gender equality strands

High Priority (Year 1 EIAs):

- Those which are relevant to **all or most** parts of the General Duty
- Those which received complaints OR
- Those which inspections/audits have indicated concerns about OR
- Those which are under review OR
- Those which have clear evidence of high or lower participation by some groups OR
- Those which are new (within past 6-12 months) or currently under development

Please enter H in Column 7 if priority is High in relation to each of the Race, Disability and Gender strands

Medium (Year 2 EIAs):

- Those which are relevant to **some** parts of the General Duty AND which there is some evidence to suggest different participation or take up levels by some groups, or that some groups could be differently affected.
- Those which are planned within the next 12 months.

Please enter M in Column 7 if priority is Medium in relation to each of the Race, Disability and Gender strands

Low (Year 3 EIAs):

- Those not already assessed as High or Medium, but which are relevant to at least one part of the General Duty AND
- Which there is no evidence to suggest different participation or take up levels by some groups, or that some could be differently affected.

Please enter L in Column 7 if priority is Low in relation to each of the Race, Disability and Gender strands

FINAL NOTES ON ESTABLISHING DEGREE OF RELEVANCE:

The Equality and Diversity Steering Group (EDSG) will establish and oversee a corporate priority schedule for completing EIA screening forms once checklists have been received. Assessing priority is not an exact science, but EDSG will evaluate the priority chosen by managers also in light of the following considerations:

1. Does the policy/strategy/ function affect or have the potential to affect large numbers of people?
2. Does the policy/strategy/function affect or have the potential to affect some people significantly?
3. Does the policy/strategy/function require decisions to be made based on an individual's personal circumstances?

These additional considerations may lead EDSG to increase the priority in some instances to ensure any potential adverse impact of a policy/strategy or function is identified as early as possible through the Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) process.

The Council's corporate EIA process means impact is assessed at the same time for Race, Disability and Gender as well as Religion or Belief, Age and Sexual Orientation.

EDSG has also determined that the final priority assigned for each policy/strategy or function will be based on the highest priority assessed under either Race, Disability or Gender. For example, if a function were assessed as Low for Race, Medium for Disability and Low for Gender, the priority assigned will be Medium for a Year 2 EIA to be completed.

EIA screening forms with guidance notes and examples of completed forms will be provided to assist you once completed checklists have been received.

EDSG members will provide ongoing support to managers and officers completing assessments.

If you have any questions about completing this form, please contact Julie Petty or Mandy Baggaley in CPPS.

Self Assessment Questions to Determine Relevance

Department		Assessed by:				Date:			
Name of Function or Policy Indicate (P) after the title if a planned policy or function	Race Equality		Disability Equality		Gender Equality		Priority H,M,L		
	1 General Duty A, B, C, or ALL	2 Evidence 1. Complaints 2. Inspections 3. Participation	3 General Duty A,B,C, D All	4 Evidence 1. Complaints 2. Inspections 3. Participation	5 General Duty A, B, All	6 Evidence 1. Complaints 2. Inspections 3. Participation	7 Race	7 Dis.	7 Gen.

Please insert any additional comments here. If there are special circumstances or considerations which could affect the priority of any function or policy listed, please indicate a ★ next to its name and describe here.
--

EQUALITIES IMPACT ASSESSMENT Screening Form

Introduction

This initial screening form needs to be completed for all proposed policies, strategies, functions and projects. This form should be completed and returned to the Corporate Policy and Performance Section (CPPS). It will then be passed to the Equality & Diversity Steering Group (EDSG) for review and recommendations.

You can contact Mandy Baggailey in CPPS for advice in completing this screening form. If the EDSG determines a full impact assessment is required, further guidance will be provided.

Name of policy/strategy/function/activity/project being screened.	
1. State reasons for developing or reviewing this item. E.g.: What is the trigger for this – legislation, complaints, results of consultation.	
2a. What is the main aim or purpose of this item?	
2b. How does this contribute to the Council's values and strategic priorities? Refer to the Corporate Plan (weblink will be added)	
2c. Who is likely to be affected? Please ✓ Universal ____ Targeted Group(s) ____ E.g. Please specify populations affected – Universal means all households or customers. If affecting targeted groups, please list groups and why.	
Group	Reason
3a. Could this item have an adverse impact ¹ or discriminate unlawfully or have a positive impact for different groups? Please complete using the following questions to assist your assessment: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Is there any evidence it could discriminate unlawfully, directly or indirectly, against different groups? Could it damage relations with any group? 	

¹ Adverse impact or unlawful discrimination is more likely to occur in services that are customer facing particularly when judgements need to be made about access, entitlement etc.

- Could its consequences differ depending on the group?
- Will it affect relations between certain groups because it is seen as favouring one group or denying opportunities for another?

Category	Adverse Impact?	Positive Impact?	Information Source(s) ²	How has adverse impact been negated?
Age				
Disability				
Gender				
Religion or Belief				
Race				
Sexual Orientation				

3b. Are there any other groups, outside of the six equality target groups, which could be adversely affected?(eg Socially excluded)

Please ✓ Yes_____ No_____

If yes, please list and describe the likely impact.

4. In your view, is the information/evidence you have collected adequate to make a decision on whether this item discriminates against any group? Please ✓ Yes_____ No_____

If yes, then proceed to 5. If no, undertake further research or contact EDSG for advice.

5. Does this item promote equality? Please ✓ Yes_____ No_____ If yes, please state how.

6. Do you have any additional comments? If so, please add.

² Possible information sources for assessing impact or understanding issues related to target group :

- demographic data, studies of deprivation, statistics on health etc
- results of consultations, usage data results of equality monitoring data, complaints, customer feedback,
- information collected from partner agencies and groups, support groups, professional expertise, 'peer review', project leads/teams, inspection reports etc.
-

7. Date of screening:	Officer(s) responsible for this screening:	Contact Number(s):
8. Name of Section Head:		Date Approved by Section Head:
Date submitted to CPPS:		Review completed by EDSG:
<p>EDSG Recommendation(s):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> The screening assessment of this policy, strategy or function is incomplete and requires further information as listed in order to assess it by EDSG. _____ <input type="checkbox"/> This proposed policy, strategy or function has successfully completed a screening assessment and does not require a full assessment. <input type="checkbox"/> This proposed policy, strategy or function has successfully completed a screening assessment and will require a full assessment prior to full adoption. <input type="checkbox"/> This existing policy, strategy or function has successfully completed a screening assessment and does not require a full assessment. <input type="checkbox"/> This existing policy, strategy or function has successfully completed a screening assessment but will require a full assessment because _____. 		

EQUALITIES IMPACT ASSESSMENT Full Assessment Form

Introduction

This form needs to be completed for all **proposed and existing** policies, strategies, functions and projects that have been initially screened and referred by the Equality & Diversity Steering Group (EDSG) for a full assessment. Please complete and return to the Corporate Policy and Performance Section (CPPS). It will then be passed to the EDSG for review and recommendations.

Please refer to the Equality Impact Assessment Guidance Notes that accompany this form. If you require further assistance or advice, please contact CPPS.

Part 1 – Main Details			
Full Title of item being screened		Date Submitted:	
Section Responsible			
Part 2 - Assessment			
Consider the evidence and information sources provided in Question 3 of the Screening form on the possible adverse impact on any of the six targeted equality strands and answer the following questions.			
2a. <u>New Research/ Evidence:</u> Have you carried out any new research or collected any new evidence relevant to this assessment? Please ✓ Yes____ No____ If yes please list:			
New Research/ Evidence	Key Findings		
2b. <u>Direct Consultation:</u> Have you consulted directly with any community, in-house or other group in the assessment of this item? If yes, please complete the information below. If no, please explain why no direct consultation has taken place.			
Target Group	Consulted Group	Consultation Method	Key Findings
Age			
Disability			
Gender			
Religion or Belief			
Race			

Sexual Orientation			
If there has been no direct consultation with any target group, please explain why:			
2c. <u>Applying Findings:</u> Please show how key findings from research or consultation have been applied to minimise or negate any possible impact or to promote equality?			
Target Group	Information source	How key findings minimise/negate adverse impact or promote equality	
Age			
Disability			
Gender			
Religion or Belief			
Race			
Sexual Orientation			
2d. Have you identified any other possible “barrier” or adverse impact affecting any group which cannot be avoided? Please ✓ Yes____ No____ If yes, please provide details of how your item will deal with any impact which cannot be avoided.			
Unavoidable Barrier		How it will be dealt with	
Part 3 - Monitoring			
Consider the intended outcomes of this item in relation to the six targeted groups and any other group that could be adversely affected.			
3a. What monitoring arrangements will you put in place to ensure intended outcomes are achieved?			
Target Group	Intended Outcome	Monitoring Method	By Whom
Part 4 - Consultation			
4a. Please describe any arrangements currently in place for consulting with any targeted group or plans for future consultation with any targeted group.			

Target Group	Current /Ongoing Arrangements	Planned Arrangements

Part 5 - Communication

5a. What plans do you have for communicating the progress of implementing this item to community groups, staff or other stakeholder groups? Please provide details.

Name of Group	Communication Method	When

Part 6 - Training

6a. Have you identified any training needs in relation to any Equality Strand for staff in order to successfully implement this item?
Please ✓ Yes____ No____

6b. If yes, please list any training required, how and when you plan to achieve this. If training has already occurred, please list.

Staff Group	Training Needed	By When

Part 7 – Additional Comments

7a. Do you have any additional comments to make in support of the full Equality Impact Assessment process? If yes, please explain.

7b. Do you have any comments on the process or forms used for Equality Impact Assessments which may help to improve them? If yes, please explain.

8. Date	Lead Officer(s) responsible for this assessment	Contact Number(s):

9. Name of Section Head:	Date Approved by Section Head:

Date submitted to CPPS:	Review completed by EDSG:
EDSG Recommendation(s): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> The item has been successfully assessed and can proceed toward formal adoption, if required, or to implementation. <input type="checkbox"/> The assessment form is incomplete and requires further information as listed in order to assess this proposed item. <hr/> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> The item has been adequately assessed as an amendment to an existing policy, strategy, function, project, etc. under EIA Guidelines and can proceed toward formal adoption, if required, or implementation. <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____ 	

GOSPORT BOROUGH COUNCIL - DIRECTORY OF COUNCIL SERVICES

Contacting us

Our address is Town Hall, High Street, Gosport, Hampshire PO12 1EB and our main switchboard number is (023) 9258 4242.

Our website address is www.gosport.gov.uk which contains a directory and information about our services, new initiatives and events.

You are also welcome to visit us in person. Our opening hours are 9 am to 5 pm Monday through Friday except on public holidays.

Council structure and services

The Council provides a wide range of services, which are delivered by Service Units. Some Service Units directly provide services to the community, whilst others provide support to the organisation and make sure that the Council has the means and ability to do its job.

The framework of the Service Units is organised to allow maximum management efficiency. The composition of the Council's Management Team reflects the Service Units and sections within them.

The Service Units are:

- Chief Executive's Unit
- Corporate Services
- Development Services
- Environmental Services
- Financial Services
- Housing Services
- Legal and Democratic Support
- Leisure and Cultural Services.

Chief Executive's Unit

The Chief Executive's Unit contains six sections:

- Community Safety
- Corporate Policy and Performance
- Economic Prosperity
- Internal Audit
- Personnel
- Press and Public Relations.

The unit provides front-line services dealing with Community Safety and the implementation of regeneration and inward investment. The unit also provides corporate support to the Council in respect of Human Resource legislation and practices, corporate policies, strategies, consultation, equalities and diversity and performance management processes. The Press and Public Relations section is the Council's interface with the media and also produces

the Council's magazine, 'Coastline'.

Internal Audit is an assurance function that primarily provides an independent and objective opinion to the Council on the control environment, comprising risk management, control and governance.

Corporate Services

The Corporate Services Unit provides front-line services in respect of the main reception, contact centre and cashiers as well as on-line services via the Council website. Support services, including Information Technology, Telecommunications, Central Purchasing, Printing and Graphics and the management of Town Hall accommodation are provided for all other Service Units. This arrangement ensures the cost effective delivery of support services and enables front-line units to concentrate on the direct delivery of services to the public. The unit also provides secretarial support to the Mayor and other Members, as well as managing the Council's Emergency Planning arrangements. The unit also deals with Data Protection matters and manages requests received under the Freedom of Information Act.

Development Services

The Development Services Unit contains six service sections:

- Planning Policy
- Development Control
- Building Control
- Conservation and Design
- Property Services
- Traffic Management.

The Planning Policy Section is responsible for the preparation and implementation of spatial planning policy through the Local Plan and Local Development Framework (LDF).

Development Control is a process that regulates the development and use of land. Like the Planning Policy service, it is statutory and is governed by law. It operates within a complex framework of government guidance, policies and advice set out in the South East Regional Plan, the Gosport Borough Local Plan and the emerging LDF.

National building standards throughout the United Kingdom are legislated through "The Building Regulations". The Fareham and Gosport Building Control Partnership provides an independent specialist surveying service, examining drawings and calculations and supervising building works during construction. Fees are charged for this service, which is provided to the public, designers, architects, other development professionals and to the building industry.

A range of other related services are also provided to the same clients. All are statutory and provided essentially in the interest of health and safety.

The Conservation and Design Section provides policy and implementation support relating to heritage and conservation matters, and regeneration schemes. The Council's land and property interests are managed by the

Property Services Section.

The Traffic Management Section carries out local functions as well as functions under agency agreements with the Local Highway Authority, Hampshire County Council. These functions include joint responsibility with the County Council for the preparation and implementation of the Local Transport Plan, commenting on the highway elements of planning application proposals, the preparation of local pedestrian and cycle safety schemes and the making of Traffic Regulation Orders.

Environmental Services

The Environmental Services Unit contains two Service Sections, Streetscene and Environmental Health (Commercial, and Pollution and Environment).

Streetscene provides front-line services dealing with Grounds Maintenance, Waste Management, Recycling, Car Parking, Litter and Cleansing.

The Environmental Health (Commercial) Section provides the following services: Food Safety and Hygiene, Health and Safety at Work, Infectious Disease Control, Licensing and Registration, Public Health and Health Promotion.

The Environmental Health (Pollution and Environment) Section provides the following services: Air and Noise Pollution Control, Water Quality Monitoring, Contaminated Land Monitoring, Pest and Dog Control.

Financial Services

The Financial Services Unit provides front-line services in respect of Housing Benefits, Council Tax, National Non-Domestic Rates, Concessionary Travel and Council Mortgages. Support services including Accountancy, Salaries and Wages, Insurance, Debtors and Creditors, are provided for all the other Service Units and the elected Councillors. The Financial Services Unit aims to ensure that the Council operates in an accountable and financially efficient manner, both by the direct provision of front-line services and by providing information and support to other service providers.

Housing Services

The Housing Services Unit contains 4 main service areas: Operational Services, Strategic Services (comprising Strategy, Customer Services and Private Sector housing), Housing Options and Financial Services. These together discharge the statutory and contractual housing duties of the Council.

The collection of rent remains one of the unit's primary activities, but in addition, it provides the key services to council tenants and leaseholders outlined below:

- Dealing with rent enquiries, rent arrears and court action
- Ordering day-to-day repairs
- Dealing with neighbour disputes between council tenants
- Environmental improvements on housing land
- General management of communal housing areas and estates

- Caretaking services in blocks of flats, and the White Lion Walk estate
- Mobile caretaking services to various communal areas on housing estates (includes rubbish removal and general cleanliness)
- Community Warden service for the Seafeld Estate
- Cleaning of communal areas in flats and sheltered schemes
- Management of sheltered schemes, including 8 sheltered scheme managers
- Management of the Council's planned maintenance and improvements programme
- Agreeing disabled adaptations to Council owned dwellings
- Turnaround of empty Council-owned dwellings
- Right to Buy administration
- Management of services to leaseholders.

More detail on these services is provided within the Tenant and Repairs Handbook, which is available from Housing Operational Services.

One of the main activities of Strategic Services is the preparation and implementation of the Council's Housing Strategy and its various elements. The Customer Services team is responsible for the comprehensive consultation processes the unit undertakes with residents.

The Technical Services team is focused on delivering our partnering services for repairs and maintenance and the cyclical programmes to achieve the Decent Homes Standard.

The Housing Options team provides the following services:

- Management of the joint housing register (transfer/waiting list including homeless/exchanges/garages)
- Processing of transfer/waiting list (including homeless) applications for permanent re-housing
- Dealing with homeless applications
- Allocation of Council dwellings
- Nominations to housing associations and liaison with housing association partners
- Allocation of garages
- Housing advice to "all comers" aimed at helping people to find accommodation and/or to retain their existing accommodation
- Management of homeless persons hostel
- Management of the RAPS Scheme (Rented Accommodation in the Private Sector)
- Management of Bed and Breakfast/Hostel/Lodgings/Contractual Tenancies (Council general needs stock allocated on a temporary basis) and associated rent accounts
- Damage deposit/rent in advance scheme
- Monitoring external services
- Citizens Advice Bureau Fast Track Debt Service
- 'Supporting People' Services. The Homeless Support Officers provide support and resettlement services to our homeless customers.

The Housing Strategy, along with a range of other housing strategy documentation, is available in either hard copy or CD ROM format from the

Head of Housing Strategic Services on telephone number (023) 9254 5292.

Legal and Democratic Support

The services provided by the Legal and Democratic Support Unit are a mixture of front-line and support services. Land Charges and Electoral Services are front-line services whereas Legal Services and Democratic Services provide corporate support for the Council.

Leisure and Cultural Services

The Leisure and Cultural Services Unit is structured with an overall management function and four service sections: Leisure Corporate and Tourism; Leisure, Recreation and Development; Service Facilities; and the Engineering Group.

Leisure Corporate and Tourism provides overall management of, and support to, the whole unit as well as monitoring the delivery of Tourism Services via the agreement with Tourism South East.

The Leisure, Recreation and Development Section provides the following services: Arts and Events, Community Recreation, Countryside Management, Explosion (Museum of Naval Firepower) and Holbrook Recreation Centre.

The Service Facilities Section provides the following services: Ann's Hill Cemetery; Play Areas; Parks and Open Spaces; Sports and Facilities Management, Allotments, Beach Huts and Slipways.

The Engineering Group provides the following services: coastal protection services and engineering support to the unit.

AGENDA ITEM NO. 9

Board/Committee:	Full Council
Date of Meeting:	6 th February 2008
Title:	Race Equality Scheme 2007-2010
Author:	The Chief Executive
Status:	FOR DECISION

Purpose

The purpose of this report is to ensure Gosport Borough Council is addressing its legal duties and responsibilities under the Race Relations Amendment Act 2000 by adopting a Race Equality Scheme which prohibits racial discrimination in the delivery of services and employment. Local Councils are required to produce a Race Equality Scheme and update that scheme every three years.

This Race Equality Scheme 2007-2010 updates the Council's previous scheme.

Recommendation

That the Council adopts the Race Equality Scheme 2007-2010.

1 Background

- 1.1 The Race Relations Act 1976 places a general obligation on local authorities to promote good race relations. The Race Relations Amendment Act 2000 amends the original act and strengthens its application to public authorities by covering areas that were previously excluded.

Under the General Duty, local authorities must have due regard to the need to:

- A. Eliminate unlawful racial discrimination
- B. Promote equality of opportunity
- C. Promote good relations between persons of different racial groups.

Under the Specific Duties, local authorities must include the following within their race equality scheme:

- 1. Identify and list all functions and policies (including proposed items) that are relevant to the general duty.
- 2. Set out arrangements for assessing and consulting on the likely impact of these on race equality.

3. Set out arrangements for monitoring their policies for any adverse impact.
4. Set out their arrangements for publishing the results of any assessments, consultations and monitoring they carry out to see whether there is any adverse impact on race equality.
5. Set out arrangements for training staff in connection with the general duty or specific duties.
6. Review the Race Equality Scheme every three years.

2 Report

- 2.1 This Race Equality Scheme forms part of the Council's statutory commitment to equal opportunities for all under its Corporate Equalities Policy. Other schemes linked to the Corporate Equalities Policy are the Disability Equality Scheme 2007-2010 and the Gender Equality Scheme which is being developed.
- 2.2 This policy applies to all employees, volunteers, and placements and will be reflected in arrangements with contractors. Members of the Council have to comply with the Code of Conduct which covers equalities issues and by following this policy Members will be able to demonstrate compliance with the Code of Conduct.
- 2.3 The statutory obligations to comply with the duties of the Race Relations Amendment Act also apply to all aspects of partnership working. The Race Equality Scheme recognizes the Council's leadership role in promoting equal opportunities and good race relations in all of its partnership arrangements.
- 2.4 A draft Race Equality Scheme was prepared by members of the Equality and Diversity Steering Group. This corporate group is composed of representatives from each service area and Unison. The draft was approved by the Council's Management Team and circulated to elected members for comment through the Members Information Bulletin in August 2007.
- 2.5 The draft was posted for public consultation in August 2007 on the Council's website and on its staff Infonet. Feedback was invited from the partners in the Gosport Partnership, the Borough's local strategic partnership, partners in the Compact through Gosport Voluntary Action and other relevant stakeholder groups and forums.
- 2.6 Awareness sessions for Council staff and elected members to launch the new Race Equality Scheme are planned for Spring 2008. Training includes specific guidance on the Race Equality Scheme General and Specific Duties.
- 2.7 This Race Equality Scheme will be reviewed, consulted on with the local community and updated every three years to ensure compliance with current legislation and responsiveness to local

needs.

- 2.8 An Action Plan is included within the Race Equality Scheme. It is monitored by the Equality and Diversity Steering Group as part of its own action plan and is developed and updated accordingly. The group provides quarterly monitoring reports to Council Management Team and an annual equalities report both to Council Management Team and the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

3 Risk Assessment

- 3.1 Compliance of Public Bodies to all anti-discrimination legislation is monitored by the Commission for Equality and Human Rights formed in October 2007. Failure to adopt a Race Equality Scheme which satisfies the general and specific duties required under the Race Relations Amendment Act 2000 would invite an array of possible enforcement actions against the Council.

4 Conclusion

- 4.1 Local authorities, by the nature and range of their powers and responsibilities can and should play an influential role in the promotion of racial equality and good race relations in their local area.
- 4.2 The Council recognizes its leadership role as the democratically elected authority for the Borough and provider of many services central to the everyday lives of its citizens. The Council is committed to equal opportunities for all and recognizes the value of diversity.
- 4.3 As an employer, service provider and community leader, the Council is committed to meeting its duties and responsibilities under the Race Relations Amendment Act 2000 by adopting the Race Equality Scheme 2007 - 2010.

Financial Services comments:	No financial implications arising directly from this report.
Legal Services comments:	Contained in the report.
Service Improvement Plan implications:	Production of this scheme is a SIP Action for the Corporate Policy and Performance Section
Corporate Plan:	This scheme contributes to the Council's Corporate Plan through the promotion of social inclusion and good relations between racial groups.
Risk Assessment:	High - Failure to comply with anti-discrimination legislation could result in legal action against the Council and would also create a risk to the Council's

	reputation.
Background papers:	Corporate Equalities Policy
Appendices/Enclosures:	
Appendix 'A'	Race Equality Scheme 2007 - 2010
Report author/ Lead Officer:	Mandy Baggaley Principal Corporate Policy Officer Telephone: 02392 545695 Email: mandy.baggaley@gosport.gov.uk

AGENDA ITEM NO. 10

Board/Committee:	COUNCIL
Date of Meeting:	06 FEBRUARY 2008
Title:	AUTHORISATION OF OFFICERS, PART 15 GAMBLING ACT 2005
Author:	ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES MANAGER
Status:	FOR DECISION

Purpose

The Gambling Act 2005 introduces control over premise used for gambling including a system of premises licences and permits issued by the Licensing Authority. The legislation provides for officers authorised under the Act to carry out a range of inspections to ensure compliance with the Act.

Recommendations

That the Council be recommended to:

- a) approve an amendment to the delegations to the Environmental Services Manager to include the power to authorise officers as required by Section 304 (3) (b) Gambling Act 2005.
- b) approve an amendment to the Council's constitution to identify the Head of Environmental Health as the appropriate person to initiate any enforcement action to be taken under the Gambling Act 2005.
- c) authorise the Borough Solicitor to make all necessary amendments to the Council's Constitution to give effect to Recommendations a) and b) above.

1 Background

- 1.1 The Gambling Act came into force on 1st September 2007. The Act is designed to control gambling activities through a new organisation, the Gambling Commission and by the use of Premises Licences issued by district councils who under the Act are Licensing Authorities.
- 1.2 The Act provides for compliance inspection of premise licensed for gambling activities by persons authorised by the Licensing Authority.

2 Report

- 2.1 The Gambling Act 2005 creates a new system of licensing and regulation for commercial gambling in the UK. Amongst other changes it gives to licensing authorities new and extended responsibilities for licensing premises for gambling.

- 2.2 The Act provides provision for the inspection of premises holding a premises licence or permit in order to monitor compliance with the requirements of the Act.
- 2.3 The inspection of premises and investigation of possible offences under the Act can only be undertaken by a constable, enforcement officer or authorised person. It is for licensing authorities to authorise those persons it deems fit to carry out these functions. Authorised officers must be formally authorised in writing by the Council to act in matters relating to the Gambling Act. Staff from the Environmental Health Commercial Team (Licensing) will be specifically authorised to enforce the Act as they are more likely to have contact with the commercial premises which will be mainly affected.
- 2.4 Officers authorised under the Act will be required to exercise the powers conferred by the Act in accordance with any relevant regulations issued under the Act.
- 2.5 It is recommended that the Environmental Services Manager be granted delegated authority in accordance with the Scheme of Delegation to Officers in Part 3 Schedule 10 of the Council's Constitution to appoint authorised officers for the purposes of Part 15, the Gambling Act 2006 as may be amended or replaced at any time.

3 Risk Assessment

- 3.1 There is a high risk to the Council of failing to undertake its statutory duty under Part 15 of the Act "Inspections" if it does not appoint authorised officers to enforce the Act. Once officers have been authorised this risk will be reduced.
- 3.2 There is a risk of inconsistencies in the enforcement of the Act throughout the borough if officers are not authorised to investigate matters relevant to the Act.
- 3.3 To further reduce the risk to a Low level, only those staff experienced in enforcement work will be authorised under the Gambling Act 2005 and they will also be made aware of any enforcement guidance issued by LACORS or any other agency or statutory body. Enforcement will be in accordance with the Council's General Enforcement Policy.

4 Conclusion

- 4.1 District councils are in part responsible for enforcing the new gambling regime in England from 1st September 2007. It will affect all premises used for gambling.
- 4.2 An essential part of this new regime is the inspection of premises as part of a risk-based inspection programme and the enforcement of the

new legislation. This can only be done by officer authorised by the licensing authorities, including district councils.

- 4.3 Whilst advice and assistance will be given to businesses to help them to comply with the legislation, in accordance with the Council's General Enforcement Policy. It is necessary to authorise officers to undertake routine inspection of premises, to carry out investigations of complaints and to undertake enforcement procedures should the need arise.
- 4.4 The recommendation to delegate the power to appoint authorised officers under the Gambling Act 2005 to the Environmental Services Manager is in accordance with other similar powers delegated to that Manager under the Council's Constitution.

Financial Services comments:	No additional resources are proposed
Legal Services comments:	Contained in the Report
Service Improvement Plan implications:	This is not included in the current Service Improvement Plan
Corporate Plan:	People – less crime against people and property
Risk Assessment:	See Paragraph 3.1 above
Background papers:	The GBC Gambling Act 2005 Statement of Principles Part A - Para. 7 – "Enforcement".
Appendices/Enclosures:	None
Report author/ Lead Officer:	<i>T Dagens, Principal Environmental Health Officer, Tel: 023 9354 5516 Email: dageth01@gosport.gov.uk</i>

AGENDA ITEM NO. 6 (ii)

REPORT TO: COUNCIL

DATE OF MEETING: 06 FEBRUARY 2008

**REPORT BY: COUNCILLOR CULLY (CHAIRMAN OF THE POLICY AND
ORGANISATION BOARD)**

At its meeting on 29 January 2008, the Policy and Organisation Board considered a report on the following item and made the following recommendation to Full Council.

i) TREASURY MANAGEMENT & PRUDENTIAL INDICATORS 2008-2009 (APPENDIX PO1)

RECOMMENDATION: That the report be referred to Council for formal approval including the prudential indicators and limits within the report.

Board / Committee	POLICY AND ORGANISATION BOARD
Date of meeting:	29 TH JANUARY 2008
Title:	TREASURY MANAGEMENT & PRUDENTIAL INDICATORS 2008-2009
Author:	FINANCIAL SERVICES MANAGER
Status	FOR RECOMMENDATION TO COUNCIL

Purpose

The attached reports cover the operation of the Council's prudential indicators, its treasury function and its likely activities for the forthcoming year. The report incorporates the following Council reporting requirements:

- The reporting of the main prudential indicators in accordance with the requirements of the CIPFA Prudential Code for Capital Finance in Local Authorities.
- The treasury strategy for 2008/09 in accordance with the CIPFA Code of Practice on Treasury Management, incorporating the summary to the investment strategy (in accordance with the DCLG investment guidance).
- The treasury management prudential indicators.

Recommendation

The Board is recommended to consider this report and refer it to Council for formal approval including the prudential indicators and limits within the report.

1.0 BACKGROUND

- 1.1 The Local Government Act 2003 in conjunction with the Prudential Code require the Council to consider the affordability of its capital expenditure plans during the annual budget setting process. The Prudential Code operates by the provision of prudential indicators, which highlight particular aspects of capital expenditure planning.
- 1.2 The purpose of the indicators is to provide a framework for capital expenditure decision making. The report highlights through the prudential indicators the level of capital expenditure, the impact on borrowing and investment levels and the overall controls in place to ensure the activity remains affordable, prudent and sustainable.
- 1.3 Within this overall capital expenditure framework there is a clear impact on the Council's treasury management activity, either through increased borrowing levels or the application of investment balances. As a consequence the treasury management strategy for 2008/09 is included to set appropriate parameters for the expected treasury

management activity. This report also includes the treasury prudential indicators. The production of the treasury management strategy is a requirement of the CIPFA Code of Practice on Treasury Management.

- 1.4 In addition, part of the treasury strategy requirement is the formulation of an investment strategy. Investment guidance issued by the DCLG during March 2004 overlaps into the Code of Practice requirements and the reporting requirements of the DCLG guidance have therefore been incorporated into the treasury management strategy.

2.0 CAPITAL EXPENDITURE AND THE CAPITAL FINANCING REQUIREMENT

- 2.1 The capital expenditure plans will be partially financed by resources such as capital receipts, capital grants, external contributions and deposits. The remaining element which is not able to be immediately financed from other sources will impact on the Council's underlying need to borrow (the Capital Financing Requirement, or CFR). The summary capital expenditure, financing and the impact on the CFR are shown in the table below. This forms one of the required prudential indicators.
- 2.2 A certain level of capital expenditure may be supported by the Government; anything above this level will be unsupported and will need to be financed from the Council's own resources.
- 2.3 The main limiting factor on the Council's ability to undertake unsupported capital expenditure is the availability of revenue resources to support the full implications of capital expenditure, both borrowing costs and running costs. Financing costs are currently approximately 9% of expenditure, comprising a minimum revenue provision (principal repayment) of 4% and interest of 5%.
- 2.4 A key risk of the plan is that sources of funding, such as capital receipts and government support, have been estimated and are therefore subject to change. Additionally, some schemes within the Council's capital programme require ongoing negotiation with partners and contributors and this may result in changing costs and funding patterns over time.
- 2.5 The Council is asked to approve the capital expenditure projections below which are taken from the draft Capital Programme to be considered as part of the 2008/09 Budget.

	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11
Capital Programme	Actual	Revised	Estimate	Estimate	Estimate
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Capital Expenditure	6,707.4	7,674.6	12,953.0	9,602.0	4,932.0
Financed by:					
Capital receipts	1,413.2	716.0	1,280.0	2,040.0	0.0
Capital grants	2,398.0	2,357.0	2,346.0	2,346.0	2,346.0
Other contributions	839.3	1,235.3	1,724.0	1,845.0	1,100.0
Revenue	400.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Total financing	5,050.5	4,308.3	5,350.0	6,231.0	3,446.0
Net financing need	1,656.9	3,366.3	7,603.0	3,371.0	1,486.0

- 2.6 The net financing need above will impact directly on the Council's Capital Financing Requirement (CFR). The CFR is the total outstanding capital expenditure, which has not yet been paid for from either revenue or capital resources. It is essentially a measure of the Council's underlying borrowing need for capital purposes. The Council is asked to approve the CFR projections below:

	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11
Capital Financing Requirement (CFR) at 31st March	Actual	Revised	Estimate	Estimate	Estimate
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Housing	(115.0)	1,936.0	3,452.0	3,552.0	3,566.0
Non - Housing	3,986.4	5,300.7	11,250.6	14,078.3	14,974.8
Total	3,871.4	7,236.7	14,702.6	17,630.3	18,540.8

3.0 LIMITS TO BORROWING ACTIVITY

- 3.1 The Council needs to ensure that net external borrowing does not, except in the short term, exceed the total of the CFR in the preceding year plus the estimates of any additional CFR for 2008/09 and next two financial years. This allows some flexibility for limited early borrowing for future years.

	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11
Treasury Position at 31st March	Actual	Revised	Estimate	Estimate	Estimate
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Borrowing	8,000.0	8,000.0	8,000.0	8,000.0	8,000.0
Total debt	8,000.0	8,000.0	8,000.0	8,000.0	8,000.0
Investments	(11,309.0)	(10,000.0)	(5,000.0)	(4,000.0)	(3,000.0)
Net borrowing (investments)	(3,309.0)	(2,000.0)	3,000.0	4,000.0	5,000.0
CFR	3,871.4	7,236.7	14,702.6	17,630.3	18,540.8

- 3.2 The Council complied with this prudential indicator in the current year and does not envisage difficulties for the future. This view takes into account current commitments, existing plans, and the proposals in this budget report.
- 3.3 A further two prudential indicators control the overall level of borrowing. These are:
- **The authorised limit** – This represents the limit beyond which borrowing is prohibited, and needs to be set and revised by members. It reflects the level of borrowing which, while not desired, could be afforded in the short term, but is not sustainable. It is the expected maximum borrowing need with some headroom for unexpected movements. This is the statutory limit determined under section 3 (1) of the Local Government Act 2003.
 - **The operational boundary** – This indicator is based on the probable external debt during the course of the year; it is not a limit and actual borrowing could vary around this boundary for short times during the year. It should act as an indicator to ensure the authorised limit is not breached.
- 3.4 The Council is asked to approve the following authorised and operational limits:

Authorised Limit for External Debt (against maximum position)	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11
	Actual	Revised	Estimate	Estimate	Estimate
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
	10,000.0	10,026.1	13,125.5	14,806.2	13,971.2

Operational Boundary for External Debt	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11
	Actual	Revised	Estimate	Estimate	Estimate
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
	10,000.0	9,236.7	11,702.6	13,630.3	13,540.8

4.0 AFFORDABILITY PRUDENTIAL INDICATORS

- 4.1 The previous sections cover the overall capital and control of borrowing prudential indicators but, within this framework, prudential indicators are required to assess the affordability of the capital investment plans. These provide an indication of the impact of the capital investment plans on the overall Council finances. The Council is asked to approve the following indicators:

- 4.2 **Actual and Estimates of the ratio of financing costs to net revenue stream** – This indicator identifies the trend in the cost of capital (borrowing costs net of investment income) against the net revenue stream.

4.3 **Ratio of financing costs to net revenue stream**

Ratio of financing costs to net revenue stream	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11
	Actual	Revised	Estimate	Estimate	Estimate
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Non - Housing	-2.1%	-2.7%	0.4%	4.0%	4.6%
Housing	-1.3%	0.5%	1.6%	1.6%	1.5%

- 4.4 The estimates of financing costs include current commitments and the proposals in this budget report.

- 4.5 **Estimates of the incremental impact of capital investment decisions on the Council Tax** – This indicator identifies the trend in the cost of proposed changes in the three year capital programme recommended in this budget report compared to the Council's existing commitments and current plans.

4.6 **Incremental impact of capital investment decisions on the Band D Council Tax**

Incremental impact of Capital investments decisions on	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11
	Proposed	Projected	Projected
	£'000	£'000	£'000
Council Tax - Band D	£10.92	£18.84	£2.26

- 4.7 **Estimates of the incremental impact of capital investment decisions on Housing Rent levels** – Similar to the Council tax calculation this indicator identifies the trend in the cost of proposed changes in the housing capital programme recommended in this budget report compared to the Council's existing commitments and current plans, expressed as a change in weekly rent levels.

4.8 **Incremental impact of capital investment decisions Housing Rent levels**

Incremental impact of Capital investments decisions on	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11
	Proposed	Projected	Projected
	£'000	£'000	£'000
Housing rent levels	£0.49	£0.25	£0.03

5.0 TREASURY MANAGEMENT STRATEGY 2008/09 – 2010/11

- 5.1 The treasury management service is an important part of the overall financial management of the Council's affairs. Its importance has increased as a result of the freedoms provided by the Prudential Code. Whilst the prudential indicators above consider the affordability and impact of capital expenditure decisions, the treasury service covers the effective funding of these decisions. There are also specific treasury prudential indicators.
- 5.2 The Council's activities are strictly regulated by statutory requirements and a professional code of practice (the CIPFA Code of Practice on Treasury Management).
- 5.3 An annual strategy is required to be recommended to Council outlining the expected treasury activity for the forthcoming 3 years and a further report is produced after the year-end to report on actual activity for the year. This report includes the Treasury Management Strategy for 2008/2009.
- 5.4 A key requirement of this report is to explain both the risks, and the management of the risks, associated with the treasury service.

This strategy covers:

- The current treasury position
- The expected movement in interest rates
- The Council's borrowing and debt strategy
- The Council's investment strategy (in compliance with the DCLG guidance)
- Treasury performance indicators

▪ Treasury Position

As reflected in the Statement of Accounts for 2006/07, the Council had had a net investment of £11.309 million at 31st March 2007, (comprising investments of £9 million and Global Treasury Funds and Corporate Deposit Account balances of £2.309 million).

The authority to respond to different interest rates throughout the financial year is delegated to the Borough Treasurer. In his absence the Council's response to short term fluctuations is jointly agreed between any two of the Financial Services Manager, the Head of Accountancy, and the Senior Accountant

Approved methods of raising finance are:-

- All long-term loans (in excess of 365 days) to be raised through the PWLB, Bond Issue or Loan Receipt (1989 Housing Act).

- All short term loans (less than 365 days) to be raised through dealings on the London Money Markets using
 - o Garban Harlow Ueda Limited,
 - o Tradition UK Limited
 - o ICAP
 - o R P Martins
 - o Other brokers at the discretion of the Borough Treasurer.
 - o Directly via the Council's bank

During 2007/08 the Council been in a net investment position and this expected to continue for the remainder of 2007/08 and during 2008/09.

▪ **Expected Movement in Interest Rates**

The slowdown in economic activity will provide scope for further cuts in official interest rates in 2008. The stubborn strength of consumer activity had been one factor restraining the MPC from taking action earlier. But the threat posed by the credit crunch of late 2007 has raised the urgency of the need to counter the more profound dangers this holds for the health of the wider economy. The first move was seen in early December with a quarter-point cut in Bank Rate to 5.5%. Further action to cut Bank Rate is anticipated. Nevertheless, the scope to ease policy beyond this will depend critically upon the performance of inflation.

While CPI is widely expected to return to the 2% region after a rise in early 2008, the persistence of underlying inflation pressures may limit the downside. In these circumstances, the MPC will be reluctant to cut Bank Rate aggressively. A 5% rate is forecast for end-2008 with a modest reduction into 2009 before rates start rising as economic activity and inflation pick up.

Long-term interest rates are set to remain volatile. Concerns over the health of the financial markets, the threat of counterparty failure or the potential collapse of structured investment products have been instrumental in driving government bond yields to levels significantly below those available on equivalent money market instruments.

▪ **Borrowing and Debt Strategy 2007/08 – 2009/10**

The growing uncertainty over future interest rates increases the risks associated with treasury activity. As a result the Council will take a cautious approach to its treasury strategy.

The Borough Treasurer, under delegated powers, will take the most appropriate form of borrowing depending on the prevailing interest rates at the time, taking into account the risks shown in the forecast above.

Capital programme funding estimates indicate that the Council may need to borrow additionally for capital purposes in 2008/09 and beyond.

▪ **Investment Strategy 2007/08 – 2009/10**

- o Continue to take advantage of the high 364 day deposit rates that will be available in the first quarter of the 2008/09 financial year before market anticipation of interest rate cuts erodes value on this part of the curve
- o Maintain some flexibility in the portfolio to take advantage of any unforeseen increases in rates or swings in market sentiment to a more pessimistic footing.

The main principles governing the Council's investment criteria are the security and liquidity of its investments, although the yield or return on the investment will be a consideration, subject to adequate security and liquidity.

The Council will ensure:

- o It has sufficient liquidity in its investments. For this purpose it will set out procedures for determining the maximum periods for which funds may prudently be committed. These procedures also apply to the Council's prudential indicators covering the maximum principal sums invested.
- o It maintains a policy covering both the categories of investment types it will invest in, criteria for choosing investment counterparties with adequate security, and monitoring their security. This is set out in the Specified and Non-Specified investment sections below.

In the normal course of the Council's cash flow operations it is expected that both specified and non specified investments will be utilised for the control of liquidity as both categories allow for short term investments. The Council will maintain the majority of its investments in specified investments.

The use of longer term instruments (greater than one year from inception to repayment) will fall in the non-specified investment category. These instruments will only be used where the council's liquidity requirements are safeguarded. This will also be limited by the investment prudential indicator below. It is unlikely that any new investments in this category will be placed in 2008/09.

The approved organisations for investment should be agreed as follows:-

- The major British Banking Groups*
- The top ten Building Societies *
- Other Local Authorities *

- The Bank of England
- Money Market funds and deposit accounts as operated by the Council's bank

(* subject to a minimum credit rating of P1 Short Term, A3 Long Term and a maximum of £4 million with any single borrower))

In order to limit interest rate exposure all investments are to be fixed rate transactions; the Borough Treasurer is provided with a networked report enabling him to assess performance. The Borough Treasurer, under delegated powers, will undertake the most appropriate form of investments depending on the prevailing interest rates at the time, taking into account the relevant risks

▪ **Treasury Management Prudential Indicators and Limits on Activity**

There are four treasury prudential indicators. The purpose of these prudential indicators is to contain the activity of the treasury function within certain limits, thereby reducing the risk or likelihood of an adverse movement in interest rates or borrowing decisions impacting negatively on the Council's overall financial position. However if these are set to be too restrictive they will impair the opportunities to reduce costs. The indicators are:

- Upper limits on variable rate exposure – This indicator identifies a maximum limit for variable interest rates based upon the debt position net of investments.
- Upper limits on fixed rate exposure – Similar to the previous indicator this covers a maximum limit on fixed interest rates.
- Maturity structures of borrowing – These gross limits are set to reduce the Council's exposure to large fixed rate sums falling due for refinancing, and are required for upper and lower limits.
- Total principal funds invested for greater than 364 days – These limits are set to reduce the need for early sale of an investment, and are based on the availability of investments after each year-end.

The Council is asked to approve the following prudential indicators:

	2007/08		2008/09		2009/10	
Limits on Activity	Upper		Upper		Upper	
	Investments	Borrowing	Investments	Borrowing	Investments	Borrowing
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Limits on fixed interest rates	(13,000.0)	8,000.0	(10,500.0)	8,000.0	(5,500.0)	8,000.0
Limits on variable interest rates	(8,000.0)	2,500.0	(8,000.0)	2,500.0	(8,000.0)	2,500.0

Maturity Structure (limits & actual) of fixed borrowing	Lower	Upper	Lower	Upper	Lower	Upper
	%	%	%	%	%	%
Under 12 months	0%	30%	20%	40%	20%	40%
12 months to 2 years	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
2 years to 5 years	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
5 years to 10 years	0%	30%	20%	40%	20%	40%
10 years and above	0%	100%	50%	100%	50%	100%

Maximum percentage of principal sums invested for over 364 days at year end	50%	80%	60%
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▪ **Performance Indicators**

The Code of Practice on Treasury Management requires the Council to set performance indicators to assess the adequacy of the treasury function over the year. For the year ahead, it is suggested that the following areas are monitored against these benchmarks

- Number of transactions for borrowing and lending.
- Average rate of interest achieved on investments and paid on borrowing, to be compared with that budgeted and the average 7 day rate as the year progresses.

6.0 CONCLUSION

- 6.1 This report considers the financing of the Council's capital expenditure plans and their impact on the capital financing requirement and borrowing limits. An appropriate Treasury Management Strategy is recommended and Prudential Code indicators are included throughout.

Financial Implications:	As contained in the report
Legal Implications:	The formulation of a plan or strategy for the control of the authority's borrowing, investments or capital expenditure is a function reserved for the Council.
Service Improvement Plan implications:	This report is required in order that to fulfil statutory requirements associated with the achievement of both service improvement plan and corporate plan targets.
Corporate Plan:	
Risk Assessment:	As contained in the report
Background papers:	Budget working papers
Appendices / Enclosures:	None
Author / Lead Officer:	John Norman

REPORT TO: COUNCIL

DATE OF MEETING: 06 FEBRUARY 2008

**REPORT BY: COUNCILLOR CULLY (CHAIRMAN OF THE POLICY AND
ORGANISATION BOARD)**

At its meeting on 29 January 2008, the Policy and Organisation Board considered a report on the following item and made the following recommendation to Full Council.

ii) COUNCIL BUDGET 2008/09 (APPENDIX PO2)

RECOMMENDATION: That Council approve a revised 2007/8 budget totalling £12,302,210 and a budget for 2008/9 totalling £12,707,000.

BOARD/COMMITTEE:	POLICY & ORGANISATION BOARD
DATE OF MEETING:	29 JANUARY 2008
TITLE:	COUNCIL BUDGET 2008/9
AUTHOR:	DEPUTY CHIEF EXECUTIVE & BOROUGH TREASURER
STATUS:	FOR RECOMMENDATION TO COUNCIL

SUMMARY OF REPORT AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The report outlines the financial situation of the Council's General Fund in the current year and, after consideration of the main factors affecting the outlook for 2008/9 including Exchequer support and reserve levels, recommends a budget level for that year. The proposed budget is expected to result in an increase in the Borough's share of the Council Tax of 3.8% after taking account of reserve and tax collection fund balances. This increase equates to an extra 10.8p per week Council Tax for an average Gosport property (Band B).

RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the Board consider the budget requirements of all of the Council's Boards (including Fees & Charges and Capital Programme) and recommend to Council a revised 2007/8 budget totalling £12,302,210 and a budget for 2008/9 totalling £12,707,000 (including, subject to final Exchequer grant levels, a net contribution to reserves of £221,780).

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To recommend budget levels for General Fund services for 2008/9 and help determine, in due course, the level of Council Tax to be levied in the Borough. (Council will take the final decision on the Council Tax level for 2008/9 at a special meeting scheduled for 25 February 2008 when precepting authorities' requirements are known).

2.0 INTRODUCTION

- 2.1 The Council's finances have been steadily recovering following a prolonged period when overspending on statutory demand-led services such as Housing Benefits and Homelessness was a regular feature and reserves reached critically low levels. In addition, many areas of the Council's finances are coming under pressure from increased demand, new statutory responsibilities and above-RPI cost increases.
- 2.2 It is important that the Council tries to consolidate its financial position. Accordingly, a programme of service reviews is in place to enhance value for money and reduce pressure on future council tax levels, whilst addressing strategic priorities. It is inevitable that service levels will have to be reduced during the next two years in order to work within Council Tax levels that will avoid Government capping.

- 2.3 The Local Government Act 2003 requires the Council to consider whether its budget is balanced and robust with appropriate levels of reserves. It is considered that the currently proposed budget is balanced and robust and any proposed amendments must be considered in this context.
- 2.4 Conclusions about the adequacy of the proposed budget are based on both an examination of various aspects that are summarised in a risk assessment and the knowledge that all services are being reviewed in order to achieve efficiencies in the longer term.
- 2.5 Reserve powers for capping of the Council's budget still exist and the Government have made it clear that these powers will be used if necessary. It is probable that a Council Tax increase of over 5% would result in capping. Council policy is for annual increases of no more than 4%.
- 2.6 The provisional Exchequer Grant figure for 2008/9 of £7,224,031 is £113,888 higher than the current year, a 1.6% cash increase (but only 1% on an adjusted base). Cash increases of only 0.5% per annum have been provisionally announced for the following two years. A major concern regarding these figures is the population data which has been used and is the most significant determinant of grant entitlement. The reduced population figure has been queried but is unlikely to be amended. The final grant settlement figures should be available by early February and it is intended that any variation should be dealt with by adjusting the contribution to reserves.

3.0 REVISED 2007/8 EXPENDITURE & INCOME

- 3.1 The revised budget totals £12,302,210, the same as the original.
- 3.2 The draft budget book contains a list of variations that have arisen between the Council's original spending plans for the current year and the latest estimate of expenditure and income. There are a number of substantial variations, many of which have previously been anticipated in budget monitor reports, plus a large number of smaller variations.
- 3.3 The Working Balance is being maintained at its 7% target level of £860,000 by 31 March 2008 but the Revenue Financing Reserve is proving difficult to boost to an adequate level in order to fulfil its intended purpose, having been drawn on heavily to fund spend-to-save initiatives during 2007/8 as well as meeting the cost of slippage from 2006/7.
- 3.4 Efforts will be made to improve the 2007/8 finances further during what remains of the financial year, although there is still a risk of increased costs associated with the national Bus Pass scheme.

4.0 BUDGET PROPOSALS FOR 2008/9

- 4.1 The total proposed net budget for 2008/9 is £12,707,000 and this represents an increase of £404,790 (3.3%) on the original budget for the current year. Of this change almost £270,000 relates to

Concessionary Travel, £33,000 Market income, £47,000 Holbrook Recreation Centre premises costs, £75,000 reduced investment income plus inflation of the order of £500,000. These increases have been offset by increased income from Land Charges £100,000, Planning Fees £60,000, over £100,000 from new arrangements for the operation of Explosion museum plus efficiencies and savings resulting from service reviews. A detailed analysis of all variations is contained in the draft budget book.

- 4.2 Every effort has been made to ensure that the proposed budget is balanced and robust. Only the minimum necessary levels of maintenance and administration expenditure have been provided.
- 4.3 Appendix 1 summarises a risk assessment of the budget areas considered most vulnerable. Generally, these risks are higher than in previous years and must be borne in mind when considering reserve levels.

5.0 RESERVES

- 5.1 General Fund provisions available for general use comprise a Working Balance and the Revenue Financing Reserve. The Board agreed ground rules for the operation of the Revenue Financing Reserve when Budget Strategy for 2006/7 was considered. Revenue Financing Reserve is to be used to ensure that fluctuations in annual maintenance requirements can be met, to underwrite uninsurable risks and for funding spend-to-save initiatives. Substantial additional maintenance requirements are expected to arise in the future from Asset Management Planning and more self-insurance will help to moderate future premium increases. Maintaining a viable Revenue Financing Reserve is essential for improved management of the Council's finances.
- 5.2 The Council's Working Balance minimum prudent target level of 7% of net expenditure equates to £890,000 for 2008/9. This is very low compared to most local authorities and requires continuing budget contributions and use of council tax collection fund surpluses. The percentage link will be kept under review as the Working Balance nears £1M, with the probability that further increases might not be necessary beyond that point if the Council has acted appropriately to manage the higher risk areas of its income and expenditure and has reduced future budget commitments down to a sustainable level.
- 5.3 Provision is made in the 2008/9 budget to continue restoring reserves. General Fund Working Balance will be increased by £30,000 to £890,000 during 2008/9 and Revenue Financing Reserve will increase by £191,780 to £414,370, subject to final Exchequer grant levels.

6.0 THE LONGER TERM OUTLOOK

6.1 A 3-year projection of revenue commitments (Appendix 2) indicates further pressures on budgets. A significant proportion of the projected increases relates to the expected costs of major contracts that are due to be retendered and the revenue impact of the Capital Programme.

6.2 Projected budget totals including inflation are as follows:

	Budget £'000	Budget Increase %	Potential Council Tax Increase %
2009/10	13,813	8.7	19.8
2010/11	14,646	6.0	11.2
20011/12	14,887	1.6	0.6

Action must be taken to cut the cost of services to an affordable level and/or increase income in order to reduce the projected Council Tax rises if the Council is to avoid capping in coming years. (It may be possible, for example, to moderate or defer the impact expected from major contracts that are due for renewal in 2009/10). The reductions necessary to the Council's projected General Fund budget to achieve a 4% Council Tax amount to £863,000 in 2009/10 and an additional £516,000 in 2010/11.

6.3 A proposed Medium Term Financial Strategy 2008/9-2012/13 will be brought before the Board in March 2007, reflecting the implications of the approved budget. Efficiency Review and Best Value processes required by Government will assist in identifying economies that will improve the above forecasts, as will close monitoring of services using the Council's Performance Management Framework.

7.0 THE COUNCIL'S CAPITAL PROGRAMME

7.1 A separate report dealing with Treasury Management Strategy and Prudential Code of Borrowing for the coming year is on the agenda for recommendation to Council.

7.2 The Council's capital programme for the 6 years to 2012/13 amounts to over £33M and will require substantial use of capital receipts and borrowing.

7.3 There is a direct impact on revenue budgets arising from the capital programme and, where expenditure is not supported by Government grant, a resulting council tax requirement. (See para. 6.1 & Appendix 2). The ability of the Council to properly maintain and improve its assets is a concern, principally because of the revenue impact. The amount of discretionary capital expenditure in the capital programme must be strictly controlled in the future and **it should be noted that some essential schemes (e.g. replacement landing stage) cannot**

be afforded unless the revenue implications can be met within future budgets. The Council is unable to fund such expenditure within the Prudential Code of Borrowing without such assurances.

8.0 COUNCIL TAX LEVELS FOR 2007/8

- 8.1 The budget of £12,707,000 for 2008/9 will result in an increase of 3.8% in Gosport's share of the Council Tax when that is set on 25 February 2008. The Band D tax is likely to be £197.87 for 2008/9.
- 8.2 Based on provisional data, the Council Tax increases resulting from alternative 2008/9 budget levels are as follows:

BUDGET £M	C T RISE %
12.51	0
12.61	2
12.66	3
12.77	5

(for 2008/9 1% Council Tax is equivalent to approximately £52,400 net expenditure).

9.0 CONCLUSION

- 9.1 The proposed 2008/9 budget of £12,707,000 is considered both balanced and robust, producing an increase of 3.8% in Gosport's Council Tax. **The outlook for 2008/9 and beyond is substantial upward pressure on budgets and the Council's Budget Strategy for 2009/10 will address this when it is considered during Summer 2008 in order to achieve acceptable budget levels for 2009/10 and 2010/11.**
- 9.2 A budget book containing the budget and Medium Term Financial Strategy as finally approved will be circulated by April.

Financial Implications:	Council's General Fund Budget for 2008/9
Legal Implications:	The Council has to set a balanced and robust budget and is also under an obligation to carry out its functions effectively, efficiently and economically.
Service Improvement Plan Implications:	The budget submissions reflect both service improvement plans and the corporate plan.
Corporate Plan	Ditto.
Risk Assessment	As contained in section 6 of the report and para's. 2.4, 3.4 & 4.3
Background papers:	Draft Budget Book Draft Fees and Charges Book Budget working papers

Appendices/Enclosures:	1. Risk Assessment 2. 4 year projection
Report Author/Lead Officer	Peter Wilson

APPENDIX 1

BUDGET RISK ASSESSMENT (GENERAL FUND)

Budget Area	Risk	Budget £'000	Likelihood	Impact	Comment
Concessionary Fares	Increased costs.	>1,000	H	H	Impact of new national pass scheme is a concern.
Political Balance	Problems delivering difficult decisions (planning decisions, service level changes).	N/A	H	H	
Homelessness	Additional demand.	2,075	H	M	Current trend is that Homelessness is reducing.
Housing Benefits	Error/overpayment rates increase + grant formula changes.	19,739	H	M	
Gosport Market Income	Reduction in stall numbers.	158	H	L	
Land Charges Income	Recession/policy change.	252	M	M	
General Income	Shortfall due to unpredicted demand changes.	2,500	M	M	Budget reflects prudent income forecasts.
Insurance	Claims experience forces more self-insurance.	360	M	M	Storm damage is an increasing concern.
Maintenance & Administration	Inadequate provision.	3,000	M	L	Essential expenditure has been provided for.
Interest Income (net)	Reduces from forecast or capital receipts & deposits get spent earlier than anticipated.	239	L	M	The Council is currently over-dependent on investment income.
Inflation	Exceeds allowance.	500	L	M	
Vacancy Savings target	Target cannot be achieved.	130	L	L	Budgeted provision is realistic based on recent experience.

NOTES

- 1 Assessment is of 2008/9 budget taking account of past trends and budget monitoring.
- 2 Likelihood: High = most years, Medium = Occasional, Low = rare.
3. Impact: High = over £100,000; Medium = £50 – 100,000; Low = less than £50,000

APPENDIX 2

PROJECTED GENERAL FUND FOR THE YEARS TO 2012/13 (AT CURRENT PRICES)

	(£'000)			
	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13
A 2008/9 Base Budget	12,707	12,707	12,707	12,707
B Revenue Increases				
Private Housing Condition Survey		60		
Local Elections	-70		-70	
Insurance Contract re-tendering	100	100	100	100
Major Contract re-tendering	350	350	350	350
Leisure Centre			-200	-200
Pension Contributions	70	140	140	140
Other	14	3	10	10
	464	653	330	400
C Additional Financing Charges *	315	533	622	639
D (A+B+C)	13,486	13,893	13,659	13,746
E Less Revenue Decreases				
Business Growth Grant		-52	-52	-52
New Revenue Streams	73	99	24	24
	73	47	-28	-28
F PROJECTED BUDGET TOTALS (D-E)	13,413	13,846	13,687	13,774

*Arising from the Capital Programme and accounting requirements

**PART II MINUTES OF THE POLICY AND ORGANISATION BOARD
HELD ON 29 JANUARY 2008**

59. CITIZEN OF THE YEAR CRITERIA

Consideration was given to a report of the Borough Solicitor, which requested the Board to consider an amendment to the criteria for the Council's Citizen of the Year Award, to take account of the Honorary Aldermen Selection Advisory Panel's recommendation that the residency qualification should no longer feature in the criteria.

Members were advised that a Panel of Honorary Aldermen recommended who should receive the Awards for Gosport Citizen of the Year and Young Citizen of the Year.

When the Panel met on 3 October 2007 to consider more information being added to the respective application forms it had also expressed the view that the Citizen of the Year nominee should not actually be required to live in Gosport. If a person could satisfy the Panel that they had undertaken a high standard of work of a continuous nature over a significant period of time in Gosport then the residency criteria was immaterial. In the circumstances the Panel recommended the deletion of the residency qualification in the criteria.

Members took the view that the standing of the award was special and it would be more appropriate for the existing residency qualification to remain than to be extended to areas outside Gosport.

The Chairman also requested that Gosport Youth Council be more involved in selecting the Young Citizen of the Year and the Council's Youth Champion (Councillor Hook) undertook to look into this with officers.

RESOLVED: That the existing residency qualification for the Citizen of the Year award remain unchanged.

**60. CROSS REFERENCE FROM THE CIVIC AND COMMEMORATIVE
EVENTS SUB-BOARD**

Consideration was given to a cross reference from the meeting of the Civic and Commemorative Events Sub-Board held on 19 December 2007. The cross reference recommended that, in accordance with Section 249(5) of the Local Government Act 1972 and in recognition of her eminent services to the people and Borough of Gosport over many years, the Policy and Organisation Board be requested to refer to an Extraordinary Council meeting, to be held on a date to be agreed, the award of the Freedom of the Borough to Mrs Dorothy Simpson.

RESOLVED: That, in accordance with Section 249(5) of the Local Government Act 1972 and in recognition of her eminent services to the people and Borough of Gosport over many years, the award of the Freedom of the Borough to Mrs Dorothy Simpson be referred to an Extraordinary Council meeting, to be held on 13 February 2008.

61. BRIDGEMARY – DISPERSAL OF GROUPS

Consideration was given to a report of the Borough Solicitor, which noted the Police action in using their powers to issue an authorisation under Section 31 of the Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003 and sought ratification of the consent given by the Chief Executive.

Members were advised that the authorisation had come into effect on 2 January 2008 and had already had a considerable impact with a reduction of anti-social behaviour in the area. Local residents were known to be pleased with the outcome.

Concerns were raised as to whether anti-social behaviour problems had transferred to other areas as a result of the authorisation and what the position would be after six months, when the authorisation was due to expire. It was suggested that a further report be made to the Board in six months time.

RESOLVED: That the decision to consent to the police issuing an authorisation under Section 31 of the 2003 Act for the Dispersal of Groups in the Bridgemary area, given by the Chief Executive in a letter dated 28 November 2007, be ratified.

62. APPOINTMENT OF CHIEF OFFICER

Consideration was given to a report of the Chief Executive which requested the Board to consider arrangements for the appointment of a Housing Services Manager.

RESOLVED: That:

- a) the arrangements proposed by the Chief Executive to fill the vacant post of Housing Services Manager be endorsed; and
- b) a Members Appointment Panel be set up on a 1:1:1 basis.

63. GOSPORT MUSEUM/DISCOVERY CENTRE

Consideration was given to a report of the Chief Executive, which reviewed the Gosport Museum agreement between Gosport Borough Council and Hampshire County Council.

The Chairman advised the Board that decisions were required regarding, firstly, budgetary provision to contribute towards the management costs of Gosport Museum and, secondly, the continuation of the agreement with Hampshire County Council.

Members took the view that the current museum service contribution did not represent value for the financial contribution made by the Borough Council and that notice to terminate the agreement with Hampshire County Council should be given. It was felt that the Discovery Centre had been a success but the Borough Council had no statutory responsibility for its funding and the Borough Council was rarely consulted on its operation.

It was felt that a lesser sum should be paid to Hampshire County Council towards Gosport Museum which would give the Borough Council a greater opportunity to negotiate with the County Council regarding the eventual withdrawal of support.

Members were advised that the artefacts in Gosport Museum had been owned by the Borough Council when the agreement first came into being but, since then, the County Council had added additional artefacts. With regard to the ownership of the Gosport Museum building, it was reported that the Borough Council had registered ownership and this could form part of any negotiations with the County Council. The use of the building was restricted to education and arts.

Members raised concerns regarding the possible loss of the Search Museum and the geological collection.

Members agreed that a contribution of £80,000 should be made towards Gosport Museum in the financial year 2008/09 and that the required 30 months notice should be given to Hampshire County Council to terminate the agreement in respect of the Gosport Museum.

RESOLVED: That:

- a) a contribution of £80,000 be made towards the management costs of the Gosport Museum for the Financial Year 2008/09; and
- b) 30 months notice to terminate the agreement with Hampshire County Council in respect of the Gosport Museum be served.

64. POLICY AND ORGANISATION BOARD BUDGET 2008/09

Members were presented with a report of the Financial Services Manager, which considered the Board's revised 2007/08 and 2008/09 budgets, including the Board's fees and charges for 2008/09 and capital programme, and recommended thereon to the Policy and Organisation Board for inclusion in the Council's overall budget proposals.

RESOLVED: That approval be given to:

- a) the revenue budget (revised 2007/08 and estimate 2008/09);
- b) the fees and charges for 2008/09; and
- c) the capital programme 2007/08 to 2012/13.

65. EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC

RESOLVED: That in relation to the following item the public be excluded from the meeting, as it is likely, in view of the nature of the business to be transacted or the nature of the proceedings, that if members of the public were present during this item there would be disclosure to them of exempt information within Paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972, and further that in all circumstances of the case, the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.

66. PRIDDY'S HARD PHASE II: AGREEMENT OF PROPOSED HEADS OF TERMS FOR DISPOSAL.

The report was exempt from publication as the item under discussion included financial and business information of third parties. Disclosure of such information could prejudice current and future negotiations for the disposal of land that would not be in the interest of the Council Tax Payers of Gosport and therefore the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighed the public interest in disclosing the information.

Consideration was given to an exempt report of the Chief Executive, which advised the Board of the progress to date on agreeing the Heads of Terms for the freehold disposal of Priddy's Hard Phase II and the proposed grant of a long lease for the Explosion! Museum.

Members also received some updated information and, following a proposal from a Councillor, agreed the Heads of Terms.

RESOLVED: That:

- a) approval in principle be given to the Heads of Terms agreed by the Board and the Chief Executive be requested to conclude negotiations with Verve Properties Limited on this basis; and
- b) the Borough Solicitor be authorised to progress the legal work with a view to the grant of a 999 year lease to Verve Properties Ltd for Explosion! together with the grant of a Building Agreement followed by the freehold sale of Priddy's Hard Phase II.

The meeting ended at 7.45 p.m.