

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 **SIXTEENTH DAY** of **DECEMBER 2015** at **THE CONCLUSION OF THE EXTRAORDINARY COUNCIL MEETING, BUT NOT BEFORE 6.10PM, 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 Meeting of the Council held on 14<sup>th</sup> October 2015 (copy 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, 14 DECEMBER 2015** 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, 14 DECEMBER 2015**).

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, 15 DECEMBER 2015**).

#### PART I

6. Consideration of recommendations by Boards of the Council:

#### BOARD

#### DATE

Community Board

16 November 2015

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

<b>BOARD</b>	<b>DATE</b>	<b>Minute No.</b>
Community Board	16 November 2015	30-32
Economic Development Board	25 November 2015	31-36

8. Review of Scheme of Allowances for Members – Report of Independent Remuneration Panel

To consider the report of the Borough Solicitor and Deputy Chief Executive (copy herewith)

9. Local Council Tax Support Scheme for Gosport

To consider the report of the Borough Treasurer (copy herewith, Appendix A to follow)

**IAN LYCETT**  
**CHIEF EXECUTIVE**

**TOWN HALL**  
**GOSPORT**

8 December 2015

### **FIRE PRECAUTIONS**

(To be read by the Mayor if members of the public are present)

**In the event of the fire alarm being activated, please leave the Council Chamber and Public Gallery immediately. Proceed downstairs by way of the main stairs or as directed by GBC staff, follow any of the emergency exit signs. People with disability or mobility issues please identify yourself to GBC staff who will assist in your evacuation of the building.**

**This meeting may be filmed or otherwise recorded. By attending this meeting, you are consenting to any broadcast of your image and being recorded.**

**MEMBERS ARE REQUESTED TO NOTE THAT:**

**(1) IF THE COUNCIL WISHES TO CONTINUE ITS BUSINESS BEYOND 9.30PM  
THEN THE MAYOR MUST MOVE SUCH A PROPOSITION IN ACCORDANCE  
WITH STANDING ORDER 4.11.18**

**(2) MOBILE PHONES SHOULD BE SWITCHED OFF OR SWITCHED TO SILENT  
FOR THE DURATION OF THE MEETING**

## **AGENDA ITEM NO. 06**

### **REPORT TO: COUNCIL**

At its meeting on 16 November 2015 the Community Board considered a report of the Interim Housing Services Manager on the following item. Immediately following a vote on the decision taken by the Board and before the next item was called two members of the Board required that the decision be submitted to Council as a recommendation. The recommendations are as follows and a copy of the report is attached as Appendix 1.

### **GOSPORT SCHEME OF ALLOCATIONS - AN INTERIM REVIEW**

#### **RESOLVED THAT:**

1. The following amendments to the Gosport Scheme of Allocations for immediate implementation:
  - a) For access to Sheltered and Extra Care accommodation only, the capital/equity threshold is raised from £16,000 to £70,000 and for income thresholds to remain unchanged;  
-
  - b) Any changes to the above threshold to reflect changes in the market is dealt with by officers as part of their discretion on capital/equity thresholds;  
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  - c) That access criteria for Council mature lets be reduced from 38 years or more to those aged 35 years or more.  
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  - d) That Extra Care nominations requests are not advertised under the Choice Based Lettings approach.
2. Consultation with housing association partners in respect of recommendation 1(a) above, and, if significant issues arise from that consultation, authority is delegated to the Chief Executive in consultation with the Chairman of the Community Board to determine the Council's response.

<b>Board/Committee:</b>	COMMUNITY BOARD
<b>Date of Meeting:</b>	16 NOVEMBER 2015
<b>Title:</b>	GOSPORT SCHEME OF ALLOCATIONS - AN INTERIM REVIEW
<b>Author:</b>	INTERIM HOUSING SERVICES MANAGER
<b>Status:</b>	FOR DECISION

**Purpose**

To inform Members of the impact and outcomes of the changes made in 2013 & 2015 to the Scheme of Allocations following interim reviews. To seek approval for some immediate and minor policy adjustments to ensure the most effective use of social housing stock.

**Recommendations**

The Community Board approves:-

2. The following amendments to the Gosport Scheme of Allocations for immediate implementation:
  - e) For access to Sheltered and Extra Care accommodation only, the capital/equity threshold is raised from £16,000 to £70,000 and for income thresholds to remain unchanged;
  - f) Any changes to the above threshold to reflect changes in the market is dealt with by officers as part of their discretion on capital/equity thresholds;
  - g) That access criteria for Council mature lets be reduced from 38 years or more to those aged 35 years or more.
  - h) That Extra Care nominations requests are not advertised under the Choice Based Lettings approach.
2. Consultation with housing association partners in respect of recommendation 1(a) above, and, if significant issues arise from that consultation, authority is delegated to the Chief Executive in consultation with the Chairman of the Community Board to determine the Council's response.

**1 Background**

- 1.1 The Council made significant changes to the Gosport Scheme of Allocations (the Policy that determines the prioritisation and selection of prospective tenants for social housing) in 2013 through revised qualification criteria for customers to join the Housing Register. This was following the flexibility given to Councils in the Localism Act 2011. A Report in March 2015 introduced further minor changes.

- 1.2 As with any significant policy change it is prudent to monitor and review the impact to determine any unintended consequences. An initial review has been completed, with further detailed work underway in some specific areas.
- 1.3 The effect of changes to the Scheme of Allocations has impacted significantly on the number of qualified applicants, which in turn has reduced the pool of “active” bidders for various properties. The changes have been effective in achieving the intended outcomes of focusing bids to properties from local people in most housing need and sending strong messages on unacceptable behaviour. It has also effectively removed many applicants in no housing need who may have unnecessarily been given false hope of achieving a council home.
- 1.4 While it is clear that local people in significant housing need have more opportunities to bid for properties there are some areas of Policy that may have impacted on people in lower levels of housing need and our business objective of maximising letting of housing stock at all times.
- 1.5 Some immediate minor changes are recommended for adoption in this report. Further analysis is underway to ensure the scheme achieves the policy objectives that the Council set out in its changes, while meeting the business needs of maintaining fully let properties and nominations to our partner housing associations.

## **2 Report**

- 2.1 The Policy changes made in 2013-15 are summarised below.

- 1. The shift in treatment for those customers assessed as evidencing unacceptable behaviour.**

Prior to the 2013 changes affected customers had a penalty placed on their application, but they were still able to register. Now such customers do not meet the qualification criteria, and this is a much stronger message from this Council.

- 2. The higher threshold for assessing local connection.**

Prior to the 2013 changes a customer's own residence of six months was sufficient to establish a local connection. Now customers must have two or more years own residence and this better supports the theme of local housing for local people.

- 3. Introduction of direct lets for homeless customers**

This was only introduced in 2015. This provision enables homeless customers to be directed to specified void properties that are in low demand. It serves a dual purpose of addressing issues of low demand and overcoming identified problems of discharging duties to homeless customers. This measure is having some success for both purposes, but a further period of analysis is needed to determine the full impact.

#### **4. Re-introduction of disqualification for refusal of 2<sup>nd</sup> offer**

This was introduced in 2015 and we are still assessing the impact. However, there are encouraging signs that it is having a positive impact on customer behaviour by reducing frivolous bids for properties that the customer would not want if offered. There is a noticeable drop in bidding across certain types of housing, and further analysis will determine the full impact.

#### **5. Financial assessment revision**

Prior to 2013 the test was whether the customer could afford to access the owner-occupier sector, and there were suitable available properties on the market. The 2013 changes shifted this test to that of whether the customer could access the private sector. One emerging question is whether it is better to have a more calibrated Policy reflecting the wide variation of needs of our customer base, particularly for older people in need of sheltered housing. This is considered further below at 2.3.

#### **6. The introduction of the requirement to have an assessed housing need to qualify to register.**

Prior to 2013 customers were not required to have an assessed housing need. This resulted in nearly 4,000 households being registered, but for many applicants with no housing need this gave them false hopes of rehousing as we only have around 400 lets per year. Also in reducing administration this helped us to move staff resources to the Housing Advice function in the section restructure. However, it is unclear whether some applicants with lower levels of housing need are excluded by using the strict statutory 'reasonable preference' test. Further analysis is required to ensure the Scheme of Allocations is compliant with new case law, and also helps us to ensure we use our housing in the most effective and efficient way. This is considered below.

### **2.2 Financial resources assessment**

Identifying nominations for sheltered accommodation has not been easy for many years. There are simply not enough applicants to guarantee a successful bidder for a void property. This situation has deteriorated since the 2013 -15 Policy changes. So far in 2015/16 a total of 24 sheltered lets have been advertised, with an average of 3.2 adverts per void (ranging from 1 – 9 adverts). The average time between first advert and final offer is 45 days. Appendix A compares the number of bids for all one bedroom properties prior to the 2013 changes and in 2015. Financial restrictions on capital are perceived to limit the number of suitable prospective elderly sheltered housing scheme residents

- 2.3 This Council's policy on financial tests has varied over time. An analysis of other Hampshire authorities shows no uniform treatment of capital and income. The key issue is whether an elderly resident

will have the financial capacity to secure suitable alternative accommodation with their available resources. The current median sale price for retirement homes in the Gosport district is £85,000, and the lowest sale price is £65,000 (2 of 17 properties). Five properties are on sale for less than £70,000. All retirement homes for sale have high lease fees. Market prices are increasing.

- 2.4 It is recommended that the capital limit for access to sheltered /extra care housing only be adjusted to £70,000. The flexibility needed to adjust this limit in line with market shifts is best undertaken through the existing officer discretion on capital limits.
- 2.5 The risk of not amending the capital limit would be increased numbers of long term void properties, or allocation of sheltered housing to younger people with support needs, which would not sit well with management practice and may destabilise sheltered housing schemes.
- 2.6 Consultation with housing association partners is recommended on this change. In the event that significant issues arise it is recommended that authority be delegated to the Chief Executive in consultation with the Chairman of the Community Board to determine the Council's response.

#### 2.7 **Areas requiring further analysis**

Appendix B sets out data on the total number of bids made in each advertising cycle for void properties. This shows that prior to the 2013 changes, the total bids received in a cycle were around 600. The total number of bids in each cycle has dropped to just over 100 in mid-2015/16. It is difficult for the allocations process to provide sufficient nominees for some property types at this level of bidding activity with refusal rates. This is particularly the case for this Council's one bedroom designated mature and elderly designated flats, but this problem is also now affecting all upper floor properties.

- 2.8 It is recognised that lettings issues do impact on void times, although they are just one of a number of factors involved. A detailed assessment of how these disparate processes work, is underway, and a future report will be put to this Board in 2016.

- 2.9 However there are areas where changes to Policy now could assist:-

##### 2.9.1 Council mature lets (currently for those over 38 years old)

It is recommended that access criteria be reduced to those aged 35 or more in line with central government classification of claimants by age cohorts. This will marginally increase the pool of suitable customers able to bid for these properties. This measure only affects this Council so no further consultation with partners is required.

##### 2.9.2 Extra Care Scheme Lettings



The Council has received a request that nominations for the Juniper Court Extra Care Scheme (and any other future extra Care Housing in the Borough) are not subject to the advertising and choice based lettings approach. This request is in line with existing special arrangements whereby a panel of agencies work collectively on the highest priority customers. As the panel exerts significant influence and professional judgement to ensure that people with appropriate level of needs and ability access extra care housing, it is unnecessary to advertise vacancies as this raises customer expectations unnecessarily. It is recommended that Extra Care nomination requests are not advertised under the Choice Based Lettings approach. No consultation with the relevant housing association is required as this measure has been requested by that partner.

### **3 Risk Assessment**

- 3.1 There is currently a medium risk that previous changes have re-calibrated demand for some properties, reducing the number of potential bidders to a level below that which is prudent for ensuring our stock is fully let.
- 3.2 There is prima facie evidence that local people in low housing need may not receive consideration or access to inclusion on the register through the strict definitions of 'reasonable preference criteria'. It is important to address these concerns to lessen the risk of vacant property times extending, and ensure that the scheme of allocations is compliant in its full policy impact. A more detailed analysis of impact and modelling is needed to fully mitigate this, and this is underway.

<b>Financial comments:</b>	<b>Services</b>	Contained in the report
<b>Legal Services comments:</b>		Contained in the report
<b>Crime and Disorder:</b>		The exclusion of households who demonstrate anti-social behaviour has confirmed the council's non tolerance of this behaviour
<b>Equality and Diversity:</b>		No equality impacts arising from these changes have been identified
<b>Service Improvement Plan implications:</b>		The review of the Scheme of Allocations was a Service Improvement Plan objective
<b>Corporate Plan:</b>		This is a service improvement plan item
<b>Risk Assessment:</b>		Medium - see 3.1
<b>Background papers:</b>		November 2013 Community Board: Allocations Policy Review (item 7) March 2015 Community Board: Gosport Scheme of Allocations (item 8)

<b>Appendices/Enclosures:</b>	
Appendix 'A'	Comparison of bids for all one bedroom properties: 2013 and 2015 compared
Appendix 'B'	Gosport Choice Bidding Analysis
<b>Report author/ Lead Officer:</b>	Stuart Palmer / Steve Newton

## APPENDIX A

A comparison of total bids received by property type  
for the period 2013 and 2015

Key:

Red cells (below 10 bids per advert) mean bidding levels at high risk of allocation being unsuccessful

Amber cells (between 10 and 15 bids per advert) mean bidding levels at medium risk of allocation being unsuccessful

Black cells mean no lets in period

One bedroom lets 2013/14	All	Bedsit	Bungalow	flat	house	maison ette	sheltered bedsit	sheltered bungalow	sheltered flat
total lets	196	1	30	119	1	4	6	3	32
total bids	13098	55	3509	8792	145	188	22	61	326
Average bids	66.83	55.00	116.97	73.88	145.00	47.00	3.67	20.33	10.19

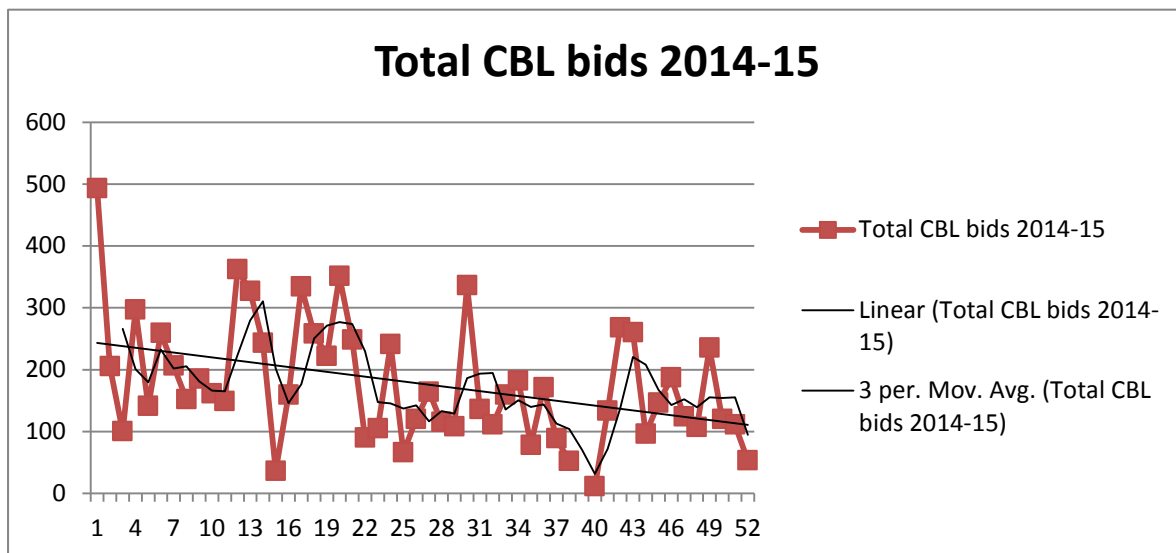
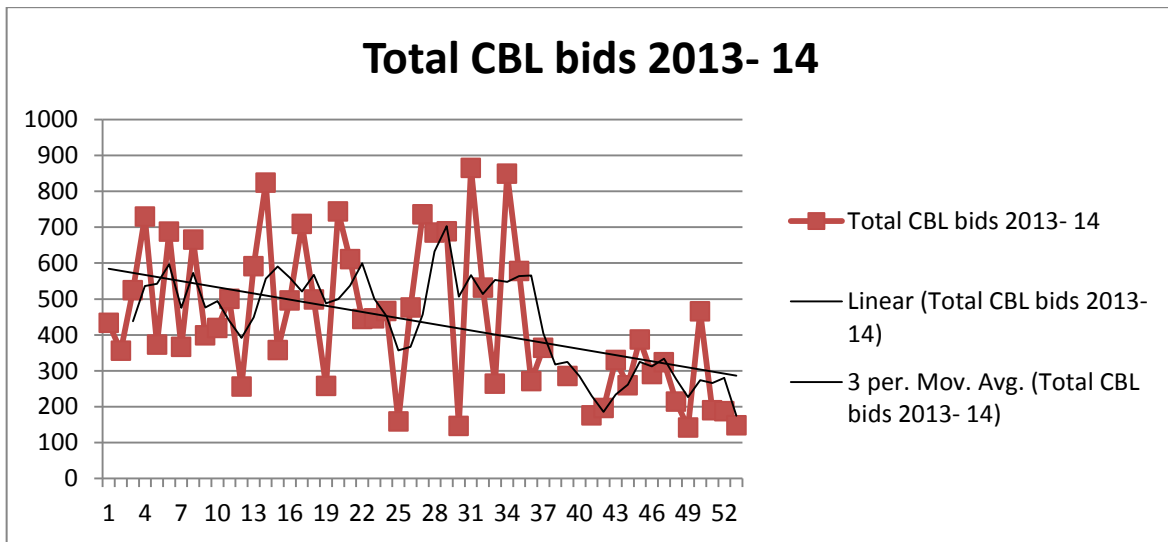
One bedroom lets 2015/16	All	Bedsit	Bungalow	flat	house	maison ette	sheltered bedsit	sheltered bungalow	sheltered flat
total lets	90		10	58			1	1	19
total bids	1033		316	613			1	7	96
Average bids	11.48		31.6	10.57			1	7	5.05

## APPENDIX B

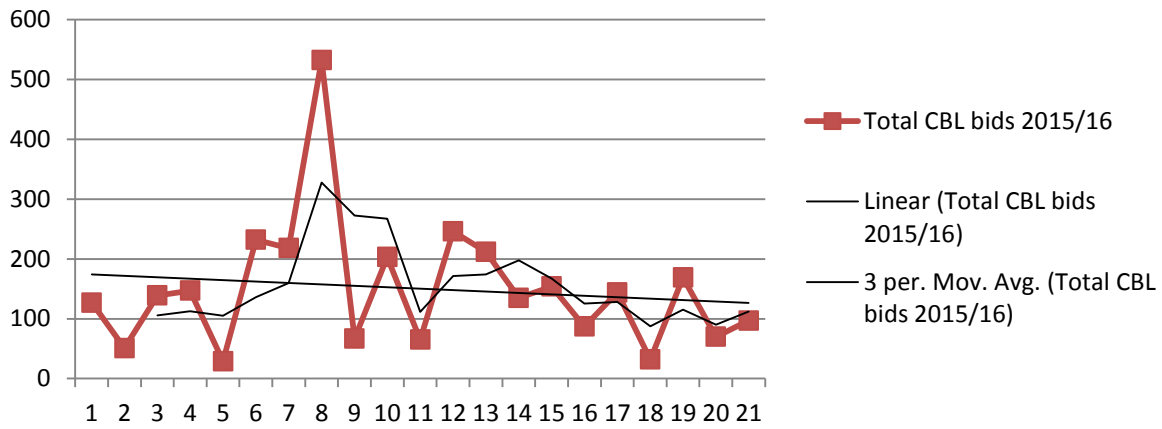
### GOSPORT CHOICE BIDDING ANALYSIS 2013- 15

The following three graphs show total number of bids in each advertising cycle (Y axis on the left hand side) and the corresponding week in the year (x axis on the bottom of each graph).

The 2013 policy changes were implemented in a staged manner but the majority were implemented in weeks 35 – 40 in year 2013/14 (see first graph)



## Total CBL bids 2015/16



**A MEETING OF THE COMMUNITY BOARD  
WAS HELD ON 16 NOVEMBER 2015 AT 6PM**

The Mayor (Councillor Farr) (ex-officio), Councillor Hook (P) (ex-officio), Bateman (P), Burgess (P), Dickson(P), Edgar (P), Foster-Reed, Hazel(P), Mrs Hook (P), Hylands (P), Mrs Morgan (P), Murphy (P), Searle (P), Wright (P)

**30. REPORT FROM THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – INTERPRETATION BOARDS**

Consideration was given to a report by the Chief Executive for Members to consider the report of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee relating to the work of the Interpretation Board Working Group and to indicate what action they propose to take.

Members were advised that there was an amendment to the Interpretation board rolling programme of works as detailed in Appendix B of the report of the Chief Executive. Interpretation board number 48 was to be replaced. The location of the board was to remain the same.

The Chairman thanked the Overview & Scrutiny Committee for the work carried out in compiling the work programme for the Interpretation boards in the Borough.

**RESOLVED:** That:

- a) the Community Board agree to the implementation of the interpretation Board programme of work as recommended by the Overview & Scrutiny Committee and detailed in Appendix B of the report of the Chief Executive
- b) the Boards be updated and upgraded from the funds in the Capital Programme.
- c) that the recommendation for Board number 48 be amended and that that the Board be replaced but remain in the same location.

**31. GOSPORT SCHEME OF ALLOCATIONS – AN INTERIM REVIEW**

Consideration was given to a report by the Interim Housing Services Manager which informed Members of the impact and outcomes of the changes made in 2013 and 2015 to the Scheme of Allocations following interim reviews. The report also sought Member's approval for some immediate and minor policy adjustments to ensure the most effective use of social housing stock.

**RESOLVED:** That the Community Board approves:

- 1. The following amendments to the Gosport Scheme of Allocations for immediate implementation:
  - a) For access to Sheltered and Extra Care accommodation only, the capital/equity threshold is raised from £16,000 to £70,000 and for income thresholds to remain unchanged;
  - b) Any changes to the above threshold to reflect changes in the market is dealt with by officers as part of their discretion on capital/equity thresholds;
  - c) That access criteria for Council mature lets be reduced from 38 years or more to those aged 35 years or more.

- d) That Extra Care nominations requests are not advertised under the Choice Based Lettings approach.
- 2. Consultation with housing association partners in respect of recommendation 1(a) above, and, if significant issues arise from that consultation, authority is delegated to the Chief Executive in consultation with the Chairman of the Community Board to determine the Council's response

Following the vote on the recommendation and before the next agenda item was considered two Members of the Community Board required under Standing Order 6.10.1, that this decision be submitted to Council as a recommendation.

### **32. ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

There was no other business.

The meeting concluded at 18:20

CHAIRMAN

**A MEETING OF THE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT BOARD  
WAS HELD ON 25 NOVEMBER 2015**

The Mayor (Councillor Farr) (ex-officio), Chairman of the Policy and Organisation Board (Councillor Hook) (P); Councillors Ms Ballard (P), Mrs Batty (P), Beavis (P), Mrs Cully (P), Geddes, Hylands (P), Langdon (P), Philpott (P), Ronayne (P).

It was reported that in accordance with Standing Order 2.3.5 Councillor Hook had been nominated to replace Councillor Edgar permanently on the Economic Development Board.

It was reported that in accordance with Standing Order 2.3.6 Councillor Mrs Hook had been nominated to replace Councillor Geddes for this meeting.

**PART II**

**31. LAND ADJACENT TO HUHTAMAKI**

Consideration was given to a report of the Borough Solicitor and Deputy Chief Executive informing Members of the proposal to lease additional land, adjacent to the Huhtamaki site on Rowner Road, to Huhtamaki and to acquire land from them on Grange Road to provide a pedestrian and cycle route and open space.

Members sought clarification as to whether the deal presented best value for the Council in relation to the rent that would be received. The Board were advised that proceeding with outstanding rent review clause would allow for the rent to be decreased as well as increases, and the rent had been decreased at the previous review at arbitration and the Council's adviser believed it would decrease again under the outstanding rent review.

The Board was advised that by agreeing to the recommendations of the Report, the rent would remain at its current rate of £105,000 per annum and could then only be increased.

Members welcomed both the extension to Huhtamaki, with the potential for new jobs and the improvements to the path.

**RESOLVED:** That the Board agrees:-

1. To accept a surrender of the land edged red on Plan 1;
2. To advertise the intention to dispose of the land edged red on Plan 1 and edged brown on Plan 2 in accordance with Section 123 2(A) of the Local Government Act 1972;
3. Subject to the responses received in relation to the advertisement set out in 2 above to lease the land edged red on Plan 1 and edged brown on Plan 2 to Huhtamaki as set out in paragraph 2.9 of the report;
4. To acquire the land edged blue on Plan 3 from Huhtamaki as set out in paragraph 2.10 of the report;
5. To provide a pedestrian and cycle route as indicated in yellow on Plan 3 and open space on the remainder of the land edged blue on Plan 3 as set out in paragraphs 2.6 and 2.7 of the report;
6. To use Developer Contributions to fund the provision of the pedestrian and cycle route;
7. To procure the provision of the pedestrian and cycle route as set out in paragraph 2.13 of the report including waiving Contract Procedure Rules 8.1, 9, 10, 11, 12 and appointments being made by the Borough Solicitor and Deputy Chief Executive.
8. To delegate to the Borough Solicitor and Deputy Chief Executive authority to give approval to the finalised surveyed plans, which will replace those plans annexed to the Report, when received.



### **32. LEASE LAND IN SHOOT LANE**

Consideration was given to a report of the Chief Executive requesting that the Board approve the proposal to take a lease of land in Shoot Lane, Lee-on-the-Solent.

In answer to a Member's question, the Board were advised that there had been no specific use identified for the land as it would form part of the overall the Alver Valley Country Park for the general public to access for recreational use.

**RESOLVED:** That the Board approve the Council taking a lease of land in Shoot Lane as set out in the Report and that the Borough Solicitor and Deputy Chief Executive be authorised to complete the negotiations and lease.

### **33. ACQUISITION OF LAND AT RAMPART ROW, GOSPORT**

Consideration was given to a report of the Head of Property Services requesting authorisation for the acquisition of a number of small open space land parcels forming part of the housing development at Rampart Row, Gosport.

Councillor Mrs Cully as Ward Councillor advised the Board that the proposal was very welcome and that it would provide greater clarity on responsibility for the land.

Members welcomed the proposal.

**RESOLVED:** That the acquisition of a number of small open space land parcels from The Treasury Solicitor as shown in Appendix A and B under a Dedication Agreement for the Rampart Row housing development be approved.

### **34. SURRENDER OF LEASES OF CREWSAVER BUILDING, MUMBY ROAD AND GRANT OF A NEW LEASE**

Consideration was given to the report of the Chief Executive seeking Board approval for the surrender of the two existing leases for the Crewsaver building at Mumby Road and the grant of a new lease to the current Lessee, Prinset Limited, but on revised terms.

A Member sought clarification as to whether the proposal met the requirements of the Waterfront plan. The Board were advised that it met the objective of the Local Plan by contributing to the number of residential properties, the application has also been granted planning permission.

The Board was advised that the restrictions referred to in the report were common place with such proposals.

**RESOLVED:** That the terms contained in this Report be approved and the Borough Solicitor and Deputy Chief Executive be authorised to accept surrenders of the current Leases for the building and to enter into a new Lease with the current tenant, on the basic revised terms as set out in the Report, with the remainder of the terms to be agreed by the Borough Solicitor and Deputy Chief Executive.

### **35. SALE OF FREEHOLD LAND ADJACENT TO 3 KEAST WALK, GOSPORT**

Consideration was given to a report of the Head of Property Services seeking Board approval for the freehold disposal of land adjacent to No 3 Keast Walk to the owners of No 3 Keast Walk Gosport.

Members acknowledged that there was to be no permanent structure erected on the land to be sold.

RESOLVED: That the Board declares the land as surplus to the Council's requirements, the proposed disposal be approved, and the Borough Solicitor and Deputy Chief Executive be authorised to carry out the required legal work to dispose of the land.

### **36. ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

The Board wished to place on record their thanks to Lynda Dine, Head of Economic Prosperity, Tourism and Culture following her departure from the Council. The Board wished her well in her new employment.

The meeting concluded at 6:29pm

**CHAIRMAN**

## AGENDA ITEM NO. 8

<b>Board/Committee:</b>	COUNCIL
<b>Date of Meeting:</b>	16 DECEMBER 2015
<b>Title:</b>	REVIEW OF SCHEME OF ALLOWANCES FOR MEMBERS – REPORT OF INDEPENDENT REMUNERATION PANEL
<b>Author:</b>	BOROUGH SOLICITOR AND DEPUTY CHIEF EXECUTIVE
<b>Status:</b>	FOR DECISION

### **Purpose**

To consider the report and recommendations of the Independent Remuneration Panel and agree any changes to the current Scheme of Allowances for Members.

### **Recommendations**

A. That the Council agrees each of the following recommendations from the Independent Remuneration Panel as set out in their report dated December 2015:

1. In line with the current Scheme, no more than 50% of Members of Gosport Borough Council are to receive Special Responsibility allowances at any one time;
2. The Basic Allowance be paid at £5,862.00 per annum which has been calculated by reference to the work involved and no provision has been included for other out of pocket expenses;
3. No Member should be entitled to receive more than one Special Responsibility Allowance;
4. Special Responsibility Allowances should be paid for the following roles and in the following amounts:

Leader of the Council: £13,620.00

Chairman of Service Boards, Regulatory Board and Licensing Board: £4,362

Chairman of Overview and Scrutiny Committee: £3,270

Chairman of the Standards and Governance Committee: £3,270

Opposition Political Group Leaders Special Responsibility Allowance

be calculated in accordance with the formula set out in paragraph 36 of the Independent Remuneration Panel's Report and paid in the following amounts:

Liberal Democrat Group Leader: £2,383.50

Labour Group Leader: £2,383.50

5. Vice Chairmen of Boards do not receive a Special Responsibility Allowance;
  6. Deputy Leader does not receive a Special Responsibility Allowance;
  7. Travel Allowance should only be paid for travel outside of the Borough on approved duties at 40.9 pence per mile;
  8. The Basic Allowance and Special Responsibility Allowance should be subject to an annual adjustment equal to percentage increase in the pay of Gosport Borough Council Staff and implemented in April each year;
  9. Child Care and Dependent Carers' Allowances should be retained and paid at the hourly rate for the National Living Wage for attendance at formally approved meetings only (not constituency work). The number of hours to be paid per week is the lower of the total time spent at no more than 2 meetings in that week or 8 hours subject to a maximum allowance, per Councillor, of £2,000 per year;
  10. A Co-optees Allowance is not paid;
  11. Where a Councillor is suspended or partially suspended, the Basic Allowance; Special Responsibility Allowance; and Travel Allowance payable in respect of the period of suspension or partial suspension should be withheld;
  12. In accordance with the 2003 Regulations where the term of office of a Member begins or ends otherwise than at the beginning of the year, or the Member does not have any responsibilities to entitle them to a special responsibility allowance, their entitlement, or special responsibility allowance shall be to payment of such part of the basic allowance or special responsibility allowance as bears to the whole same proportion as the number of days during which their term of office as Member or the number of days during which they hold a special responsibility allowance subsists bears to the number of days in that year; and
  13. Any amendment which affects an allowance payable for the year in which the amendment is made shall apply with effect from 1 April of the year in which the amendment is made.
- B. That the Council agrees that the current provisions relating to

payments set out in paragraph 2.3 and 2.4 continue.

## **1.0 REVIEW OF SCHEME OF ALLOWANCES FOR MEMBERS**

- 1.1** At its meeting on 15 July 2015 the Council agreed the composition of the Independent Remuneration Panel (the Panel) to carry out a review of the current Scheme of Allowances for Members.
- 1.2** The Panel has now submitted their report which is attached as Appendix A. Notice of receipt of this report has been advertised and a copy has been made available for public inspection at the Town Hall and placed on the Council's website.

## **2.0 Report**

- 2.1** The Council must now decide what changes if any should be made to the current Scheme of Allowances for Members and must have regard to the recommendations of the Panel.
- 2.2** The Council's scheme must provide for payment of a basic allowance to each member which must be the same amount irrespective of the number of Boards and Committees a member serves on or their attendance at training or other meetings.
- 2.3** The Council's scheme should also specify the time limit for claims for Childcare and Dependent Carers' Allowance and Travel Allowance to be made. The current scheme requires these claims to be made within 3 months of expenditure being incurred.
- 2.4** The current scheme also provides that payment of the Basic Allowance and any Special Responsibility Allowance is by way of 12 equal monthly instalments.
- 2.5** It is suggested that these 2 provisions are not changed.

## **3.0 Conclusion**

- 3.1** Once the Council has considered the Panel's report and agreed any changes to the Scheme of Allowances a further notice will be published in the newspaper and on the website.

## **SUPPORTING INFORMATION**

<b>Financial Services Comments:</b>	If the recommendations of the Independent Remuneration panel are accepted in full this would require an additional budgetary provision in this year of £4087
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<b>Legal Services Comments:</b>	As indicated in Section 2
<b>Crime and Disorder:</b>	Nil
<b>Equality and Diversity:</b>	Nil
<b>Service Improvement Plan implications:</b>	Nil
<b>Corporate Plan:</b>	Nil
<b>Risk Assessment:</b>	Nil
<b>Background Papers:</b>	Report to Council 15 July 2015
<b>Appendix A:</b>	Report of the Independent Remuneration Panel December 2015 (including Appendices)
<b>Report Author/Lead Officer:</b>	Linda Edwards, Borough Solicitor and Deputy Chief Executive

**A REVIEW OF MEMBERS' ALLOWANCES  
FOR  
GOSPORT BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**A REPORT BY THE  
INDEPENDENT MEMBERS REMUNERATION PANEL  
DECEMBER 2015**

## **The Panel**

1. The Independent Members Remuneration Panel consisted of:
  - Richard Kelly: Head Teacher of Brune Park Community School
  - Suzanne Pepper: Public Representative
  - John Jeffs: Community Representative, Gosport Voluntary Action.

## **Terms of Reference for the Panel**

2. To review the current Members' Allowances scheme, which was introduced in July 2002 and last reviewed in May 2011.

## **Legal Requirements**

3. 1 The Panel has produced its report in accordance with the Local Authorities (Members Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003 and sets out its recommendations in relation to:-
  - 3.1.1 the amount of basic allowance which should be payable to elected members and whether it should be withheld if a member is suspended or partially suspended;
  - 3.1.2 the roles and responsibilities for which a special responsibility allowance should be payable and the amount of such allowance;\*
  - 3.1.3 travelling and subsistence allowance; Co-Optees allowance and the amount of such allowances;
  - 3.1.4 whether the authority's allowances scheme should include an allowance in respect of the expenses of arranging for the care of children and dependents and the amount of this allowance;
  - 3.1.5 whether allowances may be backdated where an amendment to the scheme is made after 1 April and before 31 March of the next calendar year; and
  - 3.1.6 whether adjustments to the level of allowances may be determined according to an index and which index should be used (this is subject to a maximum of 4 years before its application is reviewed).

## **Methodology**

- 4.1 The Panel met on five occasions (see appendix one). Sessions were private and were held at Gosport Borough Council's offices.
- 4.2 The Panel was provided with a copy of the current scheme of Member Allowances and documents detailing the composition of the Council as well as the Member Allowance Schemes and the budgets of three other Local Authorities and the Members Allowance Scheme of two neighbouring Local Authorities (see appendix two).

\*The Panel were advised that although changes had been made to the Standards regime the 2003 regulations still require this to be addressed in the scheme of allowances



- 4.3 The Panel was grateful to Lisa Young, Senior Democratic Services Officer, who provided a record of the meetings and general assistance throughout the review.
- 4.4 The Head of Legal Services, Head of Payroll and the Borough Treasurer were requested to attend an early meeting to outline the current scheme and answer Panel Members' questions.
- 4.5 All Members of the Council were invited to complete a questionnaire (see appendix three).
- 4.6 The Panel invited Group Leaders, Chairmen of all the Council's Service Boards and the Chairmen of Overview and Scrutiny Committee and Standards and Governance Committee for interview.

**Table: Summary of Recommendations**

Post	Number	Basic Allowance	Special Responsibility	Total Allowance per Member
Basic Allowance to all Councillors	34*	£5,862.00	£0.00	£5,862.00
Leader of the Council^	1	£5,862.00	£13,620.00	£19,482.00
Deputy Leader of the Council	1	£5,862.00	£0.00	£5,862.00
Chairman of Service Boards Regulatory Board and Licensing Board	4	£5,862.00	£4,362.00	£10224.00
Chairman of Overview and Scrutiny Committee	1	£5,862.00	£3270.00	£9,132.00
Chairman of the Standards and Governance Committee	1	£5,862.00	£3270.00	£9,132.00
Vice – Chairman	6	£5,862.00	£0.00	£5,862.00
Opposition Group Leader based on 6 Members	1	£5,862.00	£2,383.50	£8245.50
Opposition Group Leader based on 6 Members	1	£5,862.00	£2,383.50	£8245.50
<b>Budget Required</b>		<b>£199,308.00</b>	<b>£42,375.00</b>	<b>£241,683.00</b>
Childcare and Dependent				£2,000
Travel Allowance paid at 40.9 pence per mile				

**Notes**

\*Total number of Councillors

^ The Leader of the Council chairs the Policy and Organisation Board for which the post receives the Leaders allowance only

## **Recommendations**

5. The Independent Members Remuneration Panel recommends that:
  - 5.1 in line with the current Scheme, no more than 50% of Members of Gosport Borough Council are to receive Special Responsibility Allowances at any one time;
  - 5.2 the Basic Allowance be paid at £5,862 per annum which has been calculated by reference to the work involved and no provision has been included for other out of pocket expenses;
  - 5.3 no Member should be entitled to receive more than one Special Responsibility Allowance;
  - 5.4 Special Responsibility Allowances should be paid for the following roles and in the following amounts:
    - 5.4.1 Leader of the Council: £13,620
    - 5.4.2 Chairman of Service Boards, Regulatory Board and Licensing Board: £4362
    - 5.4.3 Chairman of Overview and Scrutiny Committee and Standards and Governance Committee: £3270 (75%, rounded down) of the remuneration of the Chairmen of the Service Boards, Regulatory Board and Licensing Board)
    - 5.4.4 Opposition Political Group Leaders Special Responsibility Allowance be calculated in accordance with the formula set out in paragraphs 36 and 38 and paid in the following amounts:
      - Liberal Democrat Group Leader: £2,383.50
      - Labour Group Leader: £2,383.50
  - 5.5 Vice Chairmen of Boards do not receive a Special Responsibility Allowance;
  - 5.6 Deputy Leader does not receive a Special Responsibility Allowance;
  - 5.7 Travel Allowance should only be paid for travel outside of the Borough on approved duties at 40.9 pence per mile;
  - 5.8 The Basic Allowance and Special Responsibility Allowance should be subject to an annual adjustment equal to the percentage in pay increase received by Gosport Borough Council staff and implemented in April each year;

- 5.9 Child Care and Dependent Carers' Allowances should be retained and paid at the hourly rate for the National Living Wage for attendance at formally approved meetings only (not constituency work). The number of hours to be paid per week is the lower of the total time spent at no more than 2 meetings in that week or 8 hours subject to a maximum Allowance, per Councillor, of £2000 per year.
- 5.10 A Co-optees Allowance is not paid;
- 5.11 Where a Councillor is suspended or partially suspended, the Basic Allowance: Special Responsibility Allowance ;and Travel Allowance payable in respect of the period of suspension or partial suspension should be withheld;
- 5.12 In accordance with the 2003 Regulations where the term of office of a Member begins or ends otherwise than at the beginning of the year, or the Member does not have any responsibilities to entitle them to a special responsibility allowance, their entitlement, or special responsibility allowance shall be to payment of such part of the basic allowance or special responsibility allowance as bears to the whole same proportion as the number of days during which their term of office as Member or the number of days during which they hold a special responsibility allowance subsists bears to the number of days in that year; and
- 5.13 Any amendment which affects an allowance payable for the year in which the amendment is made shall apply with effect from 1 April of the year in which the amendment is made.

## **Benchmarks**

6. *Benchmark Remunerated Days*  
The last Independent Members Remuneration Panel indicated that Councillors worked 87.25 days a year on Council related work. The Panel recommended that this should remain the same.

**The Panel recommends that the benchmark remunerated days should remain at 87.25 days.**

7. *The Voluntary Principle – or Public Service Ethos*  
The Panel agreed that the Voluntary Principle, the notion that an important part of being a Councillor is the desire to serve the public and therefore not all of what a Councillor does should be remunerated, should be retained in the Members Allowance Scheme. The Panel felt that this was an important principle in deciding the remuneration packet for Councillors, and decided that the current level of 40% was adequate. This was reflected in the questionnaires received back from Councillors,

as 67% of responses believed that the voluntary discount was sufficient.

**The Panel recommends that the Voluntary Principle be retained at the current rate of 40%.**

### **Setting the Basic Allowance**

8. The Panel noted that the previous panel had undertaken an extensive review of the Scheme of Allowances and accepted that the calculations previously undertaken with regard to daily remuneration rate, number of days, and increases applied to the allowance were still acceptable and were happy to set the allowance at the existing rate.
9. The Panel therefore calculated that the Basic Allowance should remain at the existing rate of £5862. Based on the calculations of the previous panel.
10. **The Panel recommends a Basic Allowance of £5862 for 2015/16.**

### **Setting the Basic Allowance – Attendance at Meetings**

11. Throughout the Panel's investigations into the current Members Allowance Scheme, many Councillors had suggested that some Councillors worked more hours than others. It was expressed that this should be reflected in the Members Allowance Scheme. The Panel felt strongly that those who worked more should be rewarded for their efforts.
12. However the Panel are advised that legally, the Council's scheme of allowances must provide for payment of a basic allowance which is the same for each member. It was agreed that the additional application of extra allowances other than the Special Responsibility allowance based upon hours worked would be complex and costly to implement and therefore not practicable.

### **Setting the Special Responsibility Allowance**

13. The Panel recommends that Councillors who perform extra duties, such as being Chairman of a Service Board, Regulatory Board and Licensing Board should be remunerated for their extra work. Councillors should only be entitled to receive one special allowance. It was agreed that there would not be a voluntary discount added to the Special Responsibility Allowance.
14. The questionnaire specifically asked for Councillors views on the current level of Special Responsibility Allowances. 53% of responses indicated that this allowance should stay at its current level.
15. The Panel agreed that the current level of Special Responsibility

Allowance was adequate for the Chairmen of the Boards referred to above, but gave extensive consideration to the allowance paid to the Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and Standards and Governance Committee following the change in its Chairmanship. The Panel also gave extensive consideration to the allowance paid to Opposition Political Group Leaders.

16. **The Panel recommends that no Member should be entitled to more than one Special Responsibility Allowance.**

#### **Setting the Leader of the Council's Allowance**

17. The Panel interviewed the current Leader of the Council. It was clear to the Panel that the current Leader of the Council worked a full week in their capacity as Leader.
18. The Panel felt that the allowance for the Leader of the Council should remain the same.
19. **The Panel recommends a special responsibility allowance of £13,620 for the Leader of the Council for 2015/16.**

#### **Setting the Deputy Leader's Allowance**

20. The Panel agreed with the conclusion of the previous Independent Remuneration Panels in 2002 and 2011, which recommended that the Deputy Leader should not receive a Special Allowance in that role.
21. **The Panel recommends that no special responsibility allowance be paid to the Deputy Leader of the Council in that role.**

#### **Setting the Chairmen of Service, Regulatory and Licensing Boards Allowance**

22. The Panel was satisfied with the current level of Special Responsibility Allowance for the Chairmen of Service Boards, Regulatory Board and Licensing Board. The Panel recognised the work and extra duties that these Chairmen had, but agreed that the current amount of £4,362 was adequate.
23. **The Panel recommends a special responsibility allowance of £4,362.00 to the Chairmen of the Service Boards; Regulatory Board; and Licensing Board for 2015/16.**

#### **Setting the Chairman of Overview and Scrutiny Committee Allowance**

24. The Panel was advised of the work of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

25. After consultation with Councillors and an interview with the current Chairman of Overview and Scrutiny Committee, the Panel felt that the current level of special allowance was sufficient. It was felt that the allowance for the Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee should remain at 75% of the allowance paid to Chairmen of Service Boards.
26. The Panel therefore calculated that the Special Responsibility Allowance for the Chairman of Overview and Scrutiny Committee should remain as £4,362 multiplied by 0.75 which rounded down equates to a sum of £3,270.00.
27. **The Panel recommends a special responsibility allowance of £3,270.00 to the Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee**

#### **Setting the Chairman of Standards and Governance Committee Allowance**

28. The Panel were advised of the changes in the Chairmanship of the Standards and Governance Committee since the 2011 Panel. The Panel discussed extensively the role of the within Council and sought Councillor's views.
29. The Panel felt that the Chairman of the Standards and Governance Committee should be remunerated at the same rate received by the Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.
30. **The Panel recommends a special responsibility allowance of £3270.00 to the Chairman of the Standards and Governance Committee.**

#### **Setting the Vice-Chair of Boards Allowance**

31. The Panel agreed with the conclusion of the previous Independent Members Remuneration Panels in 2002 and 2011, which recommended that Vice - Chairmen should not receive a Special Responsibility Allowance in that role.
32. **The Panel recommends that no special responsibility allowance be paid to the Vice Chairmen of the Service Boards, the Regulatory Board, Licensing Board and Overview and Scrutiny Committee.**

#### **Setting the Opposition Political Group Leaders Allowance**

33. The political make up of the Council is slightly different from that in 2011. The Conservative Party still hold a majority, but the Panel recognised the

important role in the Council that opposition political groups have and on this basis believed it important that they receive a Special Responsibility Allowance.

34. The Panel were advised that to be a Political Group requires two or more Councillors.
35. The Panel agreed with the previous report, whereby all opposition political group leaders receive a Special Responsibility Allowance.
36. The Panel believed that since the Conservative group have a majority, the Special Responsibility Allowance for opposition group Leaders should not be arrived at by assuming that the Leader of opposition political groups was equivalent to a half of the Leaders role. The Panel suggested that the allowance should be calculated by calculating the number of opposition Councillors in political groups on the Council as a percentage of the total number of Councillors (34). There are 12 opposition Councillors in political groups on the Council, rounded down, this is 35% of the Council. Therefore, the collective opposition group Leaders' allowance was calculated as  $\text{£}13,620 \times 35\% = \text{£}4,767$ .
37. The Panel then calculated the individual opposition political group Leaders' Special Responsibility Allowance by expressing it as a proportion of  $\text{£}4,767.00$  based on the number of Councillors each opposition political group had in relation to the total opposition political group Councillors. The Panel have used the numbers of Councillors elected on 7<sup>th</sup> May 2014 for the calculation.
38. **The Panel recommend that the Opposition Political Group Leaders be paid a Special Responsibility Allowance calculated as follows:**  
**Number of Councillors in opposition political group divided by the total number of opposition councillors in political groups on the Council multiplied by (the Leaders Allowance multiplied by the percentage of the Council made up by opposition Councillors in political groups)**
39. *Liberal Democrats Group*  
**Special Responsibility Allowance equals 6 Councillors divided by 12 total opposition Councillors in Political Groups x (Leaders allowance x percentage of opposition Councillors in Political Groups) =  $\text{£}2,383.50$ .**
40. *Labour Group*  
**Special Responsibility Allowance equals 6 Councillors divided by 12 total opposition Councillors in Political Groups x (Leaders allowance x percentage of opposition Councillors in Political Groups) =  $\text{£}2,383.50$ .**



## Expenses

41. The Panel agreed with the recommendation in the report from 2011 that the only business expense that should be reimbursed is travel on Council business outside of the Borough. This would be reimbursed at the same rate as Council Officers currently 40.9p per mile.
42. The Panel noted that Members were able to be able to claim up to £25 a month for Broadband on production of a valid bill.
43. **The Panel recommends that Travel Allowance should only be reimbursed for travel outside of the Borough for approved duties and should be reimbursed at the same rate as paid to Council Officers 40.9 pence per mile.**

## Index Linking

44. Currently the allowances are linked to rises in the national average daily salary as published in January of each year in the New Earnings Survey and implemented in April of each year. The Panel felt that this should be amended and that any increase paid to Councillors should be in line with any percentage increase in the pay of Gosport Borough Council staff.
45. **The Panel recommends that the Basic and Special Responsibilities allowances be linked to any percentage increase in the pay of Gosport Borough Council Staff.**

## Childcare and Dependent Carers' Allowance

46. The Panel agreed that it was important to include an allowance for childcare and dependent carer's so as not to prevent people standing as Councillors, or preventing elected Councillors from performing their duties. This was despite the fact that the allowance had not been used for some years.
47. The Panel agreed that the allowance should be paid at the hourly rate for the National Living Wage (currently £8.25) per hour, for attendance at formally approved meetings only (not constituency work). The number of hours to be paid per week is the lower of the total time spent at no more than 2 meetings in that week or 8 hours subject to a maximum allowance of £2000 per year.

The Panel also requested that details of the Child Care and Dependent Carers' Allowance be made known to Councillors when they are elected to the Council.

48. **The Panel recommends Child Care and Dependent Carers' Allowances be paid at the hourly rate for the National Living Wage**

**for attendance at formally approved meetings only (not constituency work). The number of hours to be paid per week is the lower of the total time spent at no more than 2 meetings in that week or 8 hours subject to a maximum Allowance of £2000 per year.**

### **Co Optees Allowance**

49. The current scheme does not include provision for payment of a Co Optees Allowance and the Panel did not consider that this should change.

### **Suspension\***

50. The Panel agreed that where a Councillor is suspended or partially suspended, any allowance payable in respect of the period of suspension or partial suspension should be withheld.
51. **The Panel recommends that where a Councillor is suspended or partially suspended, the Basic Allowance, Special Responsibility Allowance, and Travel Allowance payable in respect of the period of suspension or partial suspension should be withheld.**

### **Amendments to Scheme**

52. Allowances are paid in respect of the Scheme in operation on 1 April each year. Where amendments are made to the scheme after that date then the Scheme can make provision for that amendment to apply from the beginning of the year i.e. 1 April (changes are backdated).
53. **The Panel recommends that any amendment which affects an allowance payable for the year in which the amendment is made shall apply with effect from 1 April in the year in which the amendment is made.**

### **Pension**

54. The Panel recognised that the Local Government Pension Scheme for Councillors had been updated in 2014 and that the Councillors who were Members of the Local Government Pension Scheme on the 31 March 2014 were permitted to pay pension contributions and build up pension benefits until the term of office which they were in on the 31 March 2014 finished. At that point they cease to become a member.

The scheme would no longer be available to newly elected Members, or existing Members on conclusion of the term of office they were in on 31 March 2014.

\*See note at 3.1.2

The Panel therefore acknowledged that they would not need to determine which Members were to be entitled to pensions and whether basic, special or both allowances are to be treated as amounts in respect of which pensions are payable, as the LGPS Scheme for Councillors had been updated and superseded this requirement.

### **Responsibility of the Political Group Leaders**

55. The Panel recognised that Councillors felt strongly that there was disparity in the work level undertaken by individual Councillors. They accepted that legally a variation could not be made to the basic allowance. The Panel felt that Political Group Leaders, as part of their duties for which they receive a Special Responsibility Allowance should hold some responsibility for ensuring that their Members attend meeting and training opportunities and carry out their duties diligently.

### **Future Independent Members' Remuneration Allowances Panel**

56. The Current Panel were nominated to stand on the Independent Members Remuneration Panel on 15<sup>th</sup> July 2015. The term of office is currently 4 years.

## **Appendix one**

### **Meetings held by the Independent Remuneration Panel**

- 24<sup>th</sup> August 2015 – General meeting (minutes attached as 1a)
- 4<sup>th</sup> November 2015 – General meeting (minutes attached as 1b)
- 11<sup>th</sup> November 2015 – General meeting and interviews (minutes attached as 1c)
- 12<sup>th</sup> November 2015 – General meeting and interviews ( minutes attached as 1d)
- 20<sup>th</sup> November 2015 – General meeting and report writing (minutes attached as 1e)

**MEETING OF THE INDEPENDENT REMUNERATION PANEL****24<sup>th</sup> AUGUST 2015**

Panel Members Present: Mr Richard Kelly (P), Mrs Suzanne Pepper (P) and Mr John Jeffs (P).

Officers Present: Lisa Young (note taker) (P), Mark Simmonds (P).

**1. APPOINTMENT OF THE PANEL**

This was the first meeting of the Panel following the appointment of the Panel by the Council.

**2. ELECTION OF THE CHAIRMAN OF THE PANEL**

The Panel felt that there was not a need to appoint a Chairman at this stage, but that should it become necessary later, one be appointed.

**3. REVIEW OF MEMBERS ALLOWANCES**

The Panel was advised of the composition of the Council and details of the Boards that took place.

The Panel was also advised of the formula used to calculate the allowance by the previous Panel.

The Panel discussed whether the current level of allowance was prohibitive for some people standing as candidates for election.

The Panel had previously had circulated to them the report of the previous Independent Remuneration Panel and felt that their review of the allowance had been comprehensive and thorough.

The Panel agreed that they would like the review process to be undertaken using a similar method to the previous Panel and that they would like to send all Members a questionnaire and also interview Group Leaders and Chairman.

The Panel examined the questionnaire previously distributed to Members and made amendments in line with any changes that had occurred. The Panel requested that it be distributed to Councillors for return and analysis before the next meeting.

The Panel were advised of a number of other documents that could be provided to them to aid them with their review of Members Allowances.

The Panel agreed the timeline for the review, with the aim that the report be completed in time for it to be considered at the December meeting of the Council.

**4. ACTIONS FOR NEXT MEETING**

- That questionnaires, as amended at the meeting be sent to Councillors and the responses collated.

- That documents that would be of use to the Panel be provided in soft copy, these included details of the composition of the Council, lists of Committee Membership and Outside Bodies, Members Allowance Schemes from both neighbouring and other alternative arrangement authorities.
- That Councillor interviews be arranged for November

#### **4. FUTURE MEETINGS**

It was agreed that the next two meetings of the Panel should take place at the Town Hall on:

- Wednesday, 7<sup>th</sup> October 2015
- Wednesday, 4<sup>th</sup> November 2015 (interviews)

#### **5. ANY OTHER ITEMS**

There was no other items to discuss.

The meeting ended at 3.30p.m.

**MEETING OF THE INDEPENDENT REMUNERATION PANEL****04 NOVEMBER 2015**

Panel Members Present: Mr Richard Kelly (P), Mrs Suzanne Pepper (P) and Mr John Jeffs (P).

Officers Present: Lisa Young (note taker) (P), Julian Bowcher (P) and Phillip Reynolds (P).

**1. NOTES OF THE LAST MEETING**

The Panel accepted these as a true and correct record

**2. REVIEW OF THE MEMBERS ALLOWANCE SCHEME**

This was the second meeting of the Panel, the Panel reviewed the findings of the questionnaires sent to Council Members.

The Panel recognised there was a desire for Members to be remunerated for the work they undertook and their commitment to the role.

The Panel acknowledged that it would be difficult to measure a Councillor's performance and that Special Responsibility Allowances were in place to remunerate Chairmen of the Boards for their additional work.

The Panel sympathised with Members comments regarding the differing levels of commitment to the role.

The Panel discussed the changes to the Standards and Governance Committee since the last Panel had been appointed. It was recognised that the Committee was no longer chaired by an Independent Member.

The Panel invited the Borough Treasurer and the Head of Payroll to the meeting and the following points were discussed:

The Panel were advised that the allowance was paid automatically to Councillors and that they did not have to 'claim' for it. Councillors did have the option to refuse to accept the allowance and any annual increase.

The Panel was advised that Councillors were able to claim up to £25 per month for Broadband on production of a bill and that currently 14 out of 34 Councillors claimed it.

The Panel were also advised that the current uptake of mileage claims was low.

The Panel were advised that no Councillors have ever claimed Child Care or Carer's Allowance and that the figure had been set a number of years ago at 8 hours, measured against an average week containing two meetings.

The Panel were advised that in total £203,660 had been spent on Members Allowances in 2014/15 and that £39,130 had been spent on Special Responsibility Allowances.

The Panel sought further clarification as to the function of the Overview and Scrutiny

Committee and the Standards and Governance Committee and were advised that the Overview and Scrutiny worked differently in Gosport to other Councils as Gosport was a committee system authority.

The Panel was advised that the remit of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee was quite broad and that Working Groups often undertook a lot of the scrutiny tasks.

The Panel were advised that the revised Standards and Governance Committee was responsible for reviewing the external audit.

The Panel discussed the comparisons between the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and the Standards and Governance Committee and whether they were comparable in responsibility.

The Panel felt that they did not want to reduce the Special Responsibility Allowance paid to the Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, but were unsure as to whether any payment to the Chairman of Standards and Governance Committee should be comparable.

The Panel felt that any increase in the Members Allowance should reflect any annual increase in Gosport Borough Council staff pay, rather than use the existing ASH Scale. They felt that the Carer's and Childcare Allowance should remain in place and that the hourly rate should be increased to match the National Living Wage.

### **3. ACTIONS FOR NEXT MEETING**

The Panel requested that copies of the questionnaires that Councillors completed be made available at the next meeting, in addition to the data, to allow the Panel to refer to them at the next meeting when Councillors would be interviewed.

The Panel agreed to take the previous interview questionnaires away to develop them for the upcoming interviews.

### **4. FUTURE MEETINGS**

It was agreed that the next two meetings of the Panel should take place at the Town Hall on:

- Wednesday, 11<sup>th</sup> November 2015
- Thursday, 12<sup>th</sup> November 2015

The Panel agreed to interview Councillors during the second half the meetings.

### **5. ANY OTHER ITEMS**

There were no other items to discuss.

The meeting ended at 5 p.m.



**MEETING OF THE INDEPENDENT REMUNERATION PANEL  
11 NOVEMBER 2015**

Panel Members Present: Mr Richard Kelly (P), Mrs Suzanne Pepper (P) and Mr John Jeffs (P).

Officers Present: Lisa Young (note taker) (P).

**1. NOTES OF THE LAST MEETING**

The Panel accepted these as a true and correct record

**2. REVIEW OF THE MEMBERS ALLOWANCE SCHEME AND COUNCILLOR INTERVIEWS**

This was the third meeting of the Panel, the Panel considered the questions posed to Group Leaders and Chairman of the Council by the previous Panel and amended accordingly.

The Panel interviewed the Leader of the Council, Chairmen of the Community, and Regulatory Boards and the Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

The Leader of the Liberal Democrat Group sent apologies for inability to attend the interview.

**3. FUTURE MEETINGS**

It was agreed that the next meeting of the Panel should take place at the Town Hall on:

- Thursday, 12<sup>th</sup> November 2015

**4. ANY OTHER ITEMS**

There were no other items to discuss.

The meeting ended at 6.15p.m.

**MEETING OF THE INDEPENDENT REMUNERATION PANEL****11 NOVEMBER 2015**

Panel Members Present: Mr Richard Kelly (P), Mrs Suzanne Pepper (P) and Mr John Jeffs (P).

Officers Present: Lisa Young (note taker) (P).

**1. NOTES OF THE LAST MEETING**

The Panel accepted these as a true and correct record

**2. REVIEW OF THE MEMBERS ALLOWANCE SCHEME AND COUNCILLOR INTERVIEWS**

The Panel discussed the interview responses that they had received so far. The Panel also discussed their view in relation to the recommendations made by the last Panel.

The Panel interviewed the Chairman of the Economic Development Board and the Leader of the Labour Group.

Upon the conclusion of the interviews the Panel reviewed the report of the previous panel, producing initial recommendations based on their findings, it was agreed that an initial report be drafted and emailed out for consideration and that the findings and report of the Panel be concluded at the next meeting of the Panel.

**3. FUTURE MEETINGS**

It was agreed that the meeting of the Panel should take place at the Town Hall on:

- Friday, 20<sup>th</sup> November 2015

**4. ANY OTHER ITEMS**

There were no other items to discuss.

The meeting ended at 6.20p.m.

**MEETING OF THE INDEPENDENT REMUNERATION PANEL****WAS HELD ON 20 NOVEMBER 2015**

Panel Members Present: Mr Richard Kelly, Mrs Suzanne Pepper (P) and Mr John Jeffs (P).

Apologies for inability to attend the meeting were received from Richard Kelly.

Officers Present: Lisa Young (note taker) (P).

**1. NOTES OF THE LAST MEETING**

The Panel accepted these as a true and correct record

**2. REVIEW OF THE MEMBERS ALLOWANCE SCHEME AND COUNCILLOR INTERVIEWS**

The Panel discussed the report of their findings in, it was agreed that the payment made to the Chairman of the Standards and Governance Committee should be equal, to the Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee at 75% of the payment made to the Chairman of the Policy and Organisation Board, Community Board, Economic Development Board, Licensing and Regulatory Boards.

The Panel agreed that provision should still be made for Members to claim for up to £25 month for Broadband.

**3. FUTURE MEETINGS**

It was agreed that the Committee would make any further changes remotely and that there was no need for them to meet again unless called.

**4. ANY OTHER ITEMS**

There were no other items to discuss.

The meeting ended at 4.30.pm.

## **Appendix two**

The Panel was provided with copies of the following Local Authorities Schemes of Members Allowance:

1. West Dorset District Council
2. Weymouth and Portland Borough Council (Committee System)
3. Melton Borough Council (Committee System)

The Panel was provided with the copies of the following neighbouring authorities schemes of Member Allowance:

4. Fareham Borough Council
5. Havant Borough Council

The Panel was also provided with a number of documents relating to Gosport Borough Council:

6. Structure of the Council
7. List of Composition of Council Boards, Committees and Outside bodies
8. Existing Scheme of Allowance
9. Report of the Previous Independent Remuneration Panel

# Independent Remuneration Panel

## Research supporting Gosport Borough Council

### Review of Members' Allowance Scheme 2015

#### Survey to Members on Members' Allowances

The Independent Remuneration Panel has been asked to provide Gosport Borough Council with a review of and recommendations for change to the Members' Allowance Scheme.

This survey aims to gather evidence and the view of members focussed on the three main functions of the Panel:

1. To make recommendations to the authority as to the amount of basic allowance which should be payable to elected members.
2. To make recommendations to the authority about the role and responsibilities for which paid responsibility allowances should be payable, and as to the amount of each such allowance.
3. To make recommendations as to whether the authority's allowance scheme should include an allowance in respect of the expenses of arranging for the care of children and dependents and if it does make such a recommendation the amount of this allowance and the means by which it is determined.

## A) Basic Allowance

Q1: Whatever your role, how many hours on average do you spend each week on Gosport Borough Council business?

Answer:

Q2: In a typical week, please record the average number of hours spent on each activity for Gosport Borough Council.

Answer:

Attending Meetings	Working in your ward	Community work	Research	Other

Q3: The basic allowance is currently £5,862 per year. Do you feel it should be higher or lower or is about right?

Answer:      Higher      Lower      About Right (Please circle answer)

Q4: In no more than 30 words please explain your answer to Q3.

Answer:

Q5: The 'basic allowance' considers the number of days worked minus a 'voluntary discount'. Local authorities can apply a discount of 33-50%. The current discount is 40%.

Do you feel this is broadly right?

Answer:              Yes              or              No              (Please circle answer)

Q6: In no more than 30 words please explain your answer to Q5.

Answer:

Q7: Allowances are linked to changes in the national average daily salary as published in January each year at the New Earnings Survey and implemented in April of each year.

Are you satisfied that this secures a sense of parity with others and responds to changes in the economic climate?

Answer:                      Yes                      or                      No                      (Please circle answer)

Q8: In no more than 30 words please explain your answer to Q7.

Answer:

Q9: Would you like to make any further comments on the basic allowance?



**B) Special Responsibility Allowances**

Q1: Would you like to see any changes made to these allowances?

Answer:                Yes                or                No                (Please circle answer)

Do you have any further comments?

Q2: Do you have a Special Responsibility Allowance?

Answer:                Yes                or                No                (Please circle answer)

Role Title:

Detail additional hours on average per week assigned to this role.

Answer:

Q3: Should the role of Chairman of Overview and Scrutiny and have a special responsibility allowance equal to the Chairman of Service Boards and Regulatory and Licensing Boards?

Answer:                Yes                or                No                (Please circle answer)

Q4: Do you have any further comments?

Q5: Should the Chairman of the Standards and Governance Committee receive a special responsibility allowance?

Answer:                Yes                or                No                (Please circle answer)

Q.6: Do you have any further comments to make about this?

**C) Carer's Allowance**

Q1: A Child Care and Dependent Carer's Allowance of the national minimum wage per hour for a maximum of 8 hours per week or two meetings is currently available.

Should this rate be increased, decreased or stay the same?

Answer:      Increase      Decrease      Stay the same      (Please circle answer)

Q2: Is there an alternatives to this allowance that would work better.

Q3: Should more be done to advertise the allowance?

Other comments about the allowance process.

Thank you for your views.

Please return a hard copy of your completed survey to Lisa Young (Democratic Services) by **Wednesday 23<sup>rd</sup> September**.

Name:

Date:

Signed:

## AGENDA ITEM NO. 9

<b>Board/Committee:</b>	Full Council
<b>Date of Meeting:</b>	16 December 2015
<b>Title:</b>	Local Council Tax Support scheme for Gosport
<b>Author:</b>	Borough Treasurer
<b>Status:</b>	FOR DECISION

### **Purpose**

The purpose of this report is to inform Members of the proposal not to change the Local Council Tax Support scheme (LCTS) for Gosport for the forthcoming 2016-2017 financial year other than minor changes to reflect the changes to the Regulations by the Department of Work and Pensions.

### **Recommendations**

That Council approve the Local Council Tax Support Scheme (LCTS) for Gosport at Appendix A of this report and notes the statutory scheme for Pension Age customers.

#### **1 Background**

- 1.1 On 23 January 2012 full Council approved the Local Council Tax Support Scheme for Gosport for the 2013/14 financial year. The scheme has remained largely unchanged apart from minor statutory amendments and was last approved for the 15/16 financial year by full Council on the 28 January 2015.
- 1.2 Legislation requires that the scheme is approved by full Council for each year. Proposed changes to this year's scheme are minor and are in response to statutory changes required by law as the Council's scheme must include prescribed requirements as set out in Regulations.

#### **2 Report**

- 2.1 Since January 2015 new Regulations have been issued which amend the prescribed requirements for the LCTS. The proposed changes are being made to reflect the new prescribed requirements within the Regulations. As the proposed changes are not substantive and are to reflect changes the Council have to make to accord with Regulations no consultation is required.
- 2.2 The scheme at Appendix A maintains the following protections for vulnerable Customers:
  - The continuation of income disregards for Disability benefits,

Child benefit and maintenance payments.

- The continuation of the full income disregard for War Widows and War disablement pension.
- The continuation of “extended payments” or benefit “run-ons” when a Customer starts work or increases their hours in work.
- “fast track” claims to expedite re-claims after a short period of temporary work reducing the requirement for extended verification.

## 2.3

The changes in the proposed scheme which are required to ensure the scheme accords with legislation will have a limited impact on Customers and maintains a prudent financial approach whilst continuing to protect and assist our most vulnerable Customers.

## 3

### **Financial implications**

## 3.1

It is not anticipated that the proposed changes to the scheme will in themselves lead to a significant cost increase.

## **4 Risk Assessment**

4.1 To mitigate any challenges to the Council over new LCTS scheme, an initial Equality Impact risk assessment was undertaken followed by a full Equalities Impact Assessment, which considered all factors of the scheme and the responses to the Consultation. This full Equality Impact Assessment has been considered by the Corporate Equalities and Diversity Steering Group and the proposed changes are merely to reflect changes in statute.

4.2 The Central Government Grant given to finance the scheme is not separately identified. In common with all Council grant funded expenditure there is a risk that Central Government Support will be further reduced resulting in greater difficulty in providing for the proposed scheme within the resources available.

<b>Financial Services comments:</b>	The total cost of the 14/15 scheme was £4,326,605.00 of this £601,398.00 was borne by this Council and it is believed the scheme for 2015/16 will not exceed these amounts.
<b>Legal Services</b>	Contained in the Report.

<b>comments:</b>	
<b>Crime and Disorder:</b>	
<b>Equality and Diversity:</b>	As detailed in the report.
<b>Service Improvement Plan implications:</b>	None
<b>Corporate Plan:</b>	None
<b>Risk Assessment:</b>	See Paragraph 4
<b>Background papers:</b>	Full Council report 23.1.2012 Full Council report 18.12.2013 Full Council report 28.1.2015
	Local Tax Support Scheme 2013/14 2014/15 and 2015/16
	( <a href="http://www.gosport.gov.uk/assets/lcts">http://www.gosport.gov.uk/assets/lcts</a> )
<b>Appendices/Enclosures:</b>	Appendix A: Proposed Local Council Tax Support Scheme 2016/17
<b>Report author/ Lead Officer:</b>	Stephanie Pride