



Borough of Gosport

A MEETING of the **COUNCIL OF THE BOROUGH OF GOSPORT** was held in the Council Chamber at the **TOWN HALL, GOSPORT** on **WEDNESDAY**, the **SEVENTH** day of **FEBRUARY 2007** at **6.00PM**.

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

The Deputy Mayor (Councillor Gill) (P);

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

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

APOLOGIES

Apologies for inability to attend the meeting were submitted on behalf of Councillor Hicks and Honorary Aldermen Flory and Rushton.

MINUTES

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the Ordinary and Extraordinary meetings of the Council held on 29 November and 8 December 2006 and 11 January 2007 be confirmed and signed.

A MEETING OF THE HOUSING BOARD

WAS HELD ON 24 JANUARY 2007

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

Also in attendance: Tenant Representative – Mrs Janne Carter

It was reported that, in accordance with Standing Orders, notice had been received that Councillors Hook and Langdon would replace Councillors Burgess and Allen for this meeting.

PART I

41 COUNCIL DWELLING RENTS 2007/08

The Board considered the Part II report of the Financial Services Manager and Housing Services Manager (a copy of which is attached in the Minute Book as Appendix 'HO1') considering the Board's revised 2006/2007 budget and the 2007/2008 budget for the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) and made recommendations on rent levels for the following year.

The Financial Services Manager confirmed that references in the report to page numbers in the draft budget book should be amended, in that Item 1.1 should read 'page 19' and item 3.1 should read 'page 46'.

The Chairman moved and it was agreed that this report should be considered as a Part I item.

RECOMMENDED: That the Board recommends to Council that with effect from 2nd April 2007 the Housing Revenue Account revised 2006/2007 budget and the 2007/2008 budget be approved including:

- (a) Average weekly Council Dwelling rents increase of 4.9%.
- (b) Garage, carports and parking lot rents increase of 3.0%.

RESOLVED: That the recommendation contained in Minute No 41 be approved and adopted.

A MEETING OF THE POLICY AND ORGANISATION BOARD

WAS HELD ON 30 JANUARY 2007

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

It was reported that, in accordance with Standing Orders, Councillor Ms Ballard had been nominated to attend this meeting in place of Councillor Smith.

PART I

43. TREASURY MANAGEMENT AND PRUDENTIAL INDICATORS 2007/08

Consideration was given to a report of the Financial Services Manager (a copy of which is affixed in the Minute Book as Appendix 'PO1'), which covered the operation of the Council's prudential indicators and its treasury function activities for the forthcoming year.

The Board was requested to approve the report and refer it to Council for formal approval, including the prudential indicators and limits within the report, and specific provisions with immediate effect.

RECOMMENDED: That the Financial Services Manager's report be approved, including the prudential indicators and limits within the report, and the following specific provisions with immediate effect:

- a) the new Investment Strategy;
- b) the use of R P Martins as an Authorised Money Broker;
- c) investment counterparties to include UK and Irish Clearing Banks & their wholly-owned subsidiaries and UK Building Societies, subject to Moody's credit ratings of at least P1 (short-term) and A3 (long-term); and
- d) investment exposure of no more than £4M with any one institution other than the Council's bank (consolidated total including wholly-owned subsidiaries).

RESOLVED: That the recommendation contained in Minute No 43 be approved and adopted.

44. COUNCIL BUDGET 2007/08

Consideration was given to a report of the Deputy Chief Executive and Borough Treasurer (a copy of which is affixed in the Minute Book as Appendix 'PO2'), which outlined the financial situation of the Council's General Fund in the current year and, after consideration of the main factors affecting the outlook for 2007/08 including Exchequer support and Reserve levels, recommended a budget level for that year.

The proposed budget consolidated the requirements of the Policy and Organisation Board plus the Community and Environment and Housing (General Fund) Boards as cross referenced.

The revised 2006/07 budget totalled £11,739,310, the same as the original. This had been achieved by making use of a substantial supplementary estimate from reserves.

Members were advised that the final Exchequer Grant figure for 2007/08 of £7,110,143 was £244,088 higher than that for the current year.

The 2007/08 budget totalled £12,302,210 and this represented an increase of £562,900(4.8%) over the 2006/07 budget.

Provision had been made in the 2007/08 budget to continue restoring reserves. General Fund Working Balance would be increased by £20,000 to £860,000 during 2007/8 and Revenue Financing Reserve would increase by £42,000 to £331,650.

The Council's capital programme for the 6 years to 2011/12 amounted to over £37M and would require the use of capital receipts and borrowing totalling in excess of £12M.

The report advised Members that the proposed 2007/08 budget of £12,302,210 was considered both balanced and robust, producing an increase of 4% in Gosport's share of the Council Tax. The outlook for 2008/9 and beyond was further upward pressure on budgets, in excess of general inflation.

RECOMMENDED: That Council approve a revised 2006/2007 budget totalling £11,739,310 and a budget for 2007/2008 totalling £12,302,210 (including a net contribution to reserves of £46,760).

RESOLVED: That the recommendation contained in Minute No 44 be approved and adopted.

A MEETING OF THE POLICY AND ORGANISATION BOARD

WAS HELD ON 23 JANUARY 2007

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

It was reported that, in accordance with Standing Orders, Councillors Philpott and Ms Ballard had been nominated to replace Councillors Burgess and Chegwyn respectively for this meeting.

31. APOLOGIES

Apologies for inability to attend the meeting were submitted on behalf of Councillors Burgess and Chegwyn.

32. ELECTION OF VICE-CHAIRMAN

RESOLVED: That Councillor Wright be appointed as Vice-Chairman of the Policy and Organisation Board for the remainder of the Municipal Year 2006/07.

33. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

34. MINUTES

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the Board meeting held on 8 November 2006 be approved and signed by the Chairman as a true and correct record.

PART II

35. THE GOSPORT BOROUGH COUNCIL DISABILITY EQUALITY SCHEME

Consideration was given to a report of the Chief Executive, which sought Members' support for the Gosport Borough Council Disability Equality Scheme produced in response to the duties placed on the Council by the Disability Discrimination Act 2005.

Members were advised that Disability Equality Awareness training had been identified as a key action and would be compulsory for all staff. Members would be invited to attend training sessions.

Members proposed that amendments should be made to Section 11 of the Scheme headed “Monitoring the Action Plan and the Scheme as a Whole” to reflect that progress reports would be submitted annually to the Council’s Overview and Scrutiny Committee rather than the Policy and Organisation Board. Members were supportive of the Action Plan being reviewed annually and of the Scheme being revised in 2010.

RESOLVED: That the Gosport Borough Council Disability Equality Scheme be approved subject to the following amendments to Section 11 of the Scheme headed “Monitoring the Action Plan and the Scheme as a Whole”:

- a) Bullet point 2 to read: Progress reports will be taken quarterly to the DES Reference Group, the Corporate Equality and Diversity Group and the Council’s Management Team and annually to the Council’s Overview and Scrutiny Committee; and
- b) Bullet point 3 to be split and read:
 - The Action Plan will be reviewed annually; and
 - The Scheme will be revised in 2010.

36. CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE AND VULNERABLE PEOPLE POLICIES

Consideration was given to a report of the Leisure and Cultural Services Manager, which sought the Board’s approval for proposed policies in respect of Children and Young People, and the Protection of Children and Vulnerable Persons.

RESOLVED: That approval be given to:

- a) the Children and Young People’s Policy; and
- b) the Children and Vulnerable Persons’ Protection Policy

37. RAMPARTS INVESTIGATION AND ASSESSMENT – PRIDDY’S HARD HERITAGE AREA

Consideration was given to a report of the Chief Executive, which informed the Board of the results of the invitation to specialist Environmental and Engineering Consultants to tender for work to undertake a detailed ground investigation and report on the contaminants in the Rampart areas and moat on the Priddy’s Hard Heritage Area and recommend remedial measures.

The report also sought approval of the appointment of the consultancy providing the most economically advantageous tender to undertake the investigation and report.

RESOLVED: That:

- a) the Chief Executive be instructed to agree the programme of works with the lowest tender and agree the payment profile for the works as they proceed; and

- b) Bureau Veritas Land and Water Quality, 91-95 Winchester Road, Chandlers Ford, SO53 2GG be appointed to undertake the Rampart Investigation and Assessment in the sum of £51,102 plus VAT.

38. LOCAL GOVERNMENT WHITE PAPER – STRONG & PROSPEROUS COMMUNITIES

Consideration was given to a report of the Chief Executive, which advised Members of the Government White Paper setting out the future challenges for Local Government and the main messages contained therein.

Members were advised that the Government Office for the South East had confirmed that only one local authority in the South East had applied for unitary status and that no further applications were expected.

RESOLVED: That the report of the Chief Executive be noted.

39. RELATE PORTSMOUTH & DISTRICT

The Policy and Organisation Board, at its meeting on 18 January 2006, had agreed a further year's funding of Relate, Portsmouth and District up to a maximum of £7,000 with a review of funding requirements being reported back to the Board.

Consideration was given to a report of the Financial Services Manager detailing the funding requirements already identified by Relate and subsequently paid by the Council in respect of the current year and the request by Relate for funding in 2007/08.

A request had been received from Relate for the Council to consider the continuation of their existing funding for a further year to enable the organisation to continue providing the current level of service to Gosport residents.

Members were advised that the third quarter return from Relate indicated a shortfall of £4,342 but that only £2,035 of the Council grant of £7,000 for this year remained, £4,965 having already been paid to Relate.

Members acknowledged the fact that the number of sessions with clients had steadily increased and that the current year's grant of £7,000 did not cover the shortfall but were concerned that the funding provided to Relate by Gosport Borough Council was relatively high compared to that of some other local authorities in the area.

Members agreed that a grant of £5,000 be made available to Relate on an annual basis.

RESOLVED: That a grant of £5,000 be made available to Relate for the financial year 2007/08 and thereafter on an annual basis.

40. VICTIM SUPPORT HAMPSHIRE & ISLE OF WIGHT

Consideration was given to a report of the Financial Services Manager, which advised Members that the Policy and Resources Committee had agreed ongoing funding for Gosport Victim Support with effect from 1 April 1999 to support the employment of an administrative assistant in the Gosport Office. This office had been closed due to the difficulty of providing cover during periods of leave and sickness. This post was now covered within the Portsmouth District Office although the organisation had stated this had not affected the service offered to Gosport residents.

A request had been received from Victim Support Hampshire and Isle of Wight for the Council to consider continuing funding the service for the current year and for 2007/08, to enable the continuation of the current level of service to Gosport residents.

Members were advised that, during the financial year ending 31 March 2006, Victim Support Hampshire and Isle of Wight had received the following grants from local authorities:

	£
Hampshire Police Authority	28,000
Hampshire County Council	14,281
East Hampshire District Council	6,653
Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council	20,808
Eastleigh Borough Council	288
Havant Borough Council	1,000
Test Valley Borough Council	9,000
Winchester City Council	2,000
Portsmouth City Council	none
New Forest District Council	none

Grants received included a number from town and parish councils.

Members expressed concern that, although the Gosport office had been closed, grant aid was still being sought from the Borough Council. It was also felt that the financial position of some of the local authorities in Hampshire was stronger than in Gosport and therefore Gosport Borough Council should not contribute to the extent that it had in the past.

The Board proposed that grant aid of £3,000 be made available to Victim Support Hampshire and Isle of Wight for each of the financial years 2006/07 and 2007/08.

RESOLVED: That grant aid of £3,000 be made available to Victim Support Hampshire and Isle of Wight for each of the financial year 2006/07 and 2007/08.

The meeting commenced at 6.00 p.m. and concluded at 7.00 p.m.

RESOLVED: That Minute Nos 31 – 40 (inclusive) of the meeting of the Policy and Organisation Board held on 23 January 2007 be received.

A MEETING OF THE POLICY AND ORGANISATION BOARD

WAS HELD ON 30 JANUARY 2007

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

It was reported that, in accordance with Standing Orders, Councillor Ms Ballard had been nominated to attend this meeting in place of Councillor Smith.

41. APOLOGIES

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

42. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

PART II

45. BOARD BUDGET 2007/08

The Board received a report of the Financial Services Manager, which considered the Board's revised 2006/07 and 2007/08 budgets, including the Board's fees and charges for 2007/08 and capital programme, and recommended their inclusion in the Council's overall budget proposals.

RESOLVED: That the Financial Services Manager's report be accepted and forwarded without debate for consideration under Minute No. 44 above.

The meeting commenced at 6.00 p.m. and concluded at 6.02 p.m.

RESOLVED: That Minute Nos 41 – 42 and 45 of the meeting of the Policy and Organisation Board held on 30 January 2007 be received.

A MEETING OF THE COMMUNITY AND ENVIRONMENT BOARD

WAS HELD ON 8 JANUARY 2007

The Mayor (Councillor Mrs Cully)(ex-officio)(P); Councillors Ms Ballard (P), Carr (P), Champion, Clinton, Dickson (P), Edgar (P), Kimber (P), Smith (P), Wright (P) and Mrs Wright (P)

In accordance with Standing Orders, it was reported that notice had been received that Councillors Allen and Carter would replace Councillors Champion and Clinton for this meeting.

27. APOLOGIES

Apologies for inability to attend the meeting were received on behalf of Councillors Champion and Clinton.

28. ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN

RESOLVED: That Councillor Wright be appointed Chairman of the Board.

29. ELECTION OF VICE-CHAIRMAN

RESOLVED: That Councillor Mrs Wright be appointed Vice-Chairman of the Board.

30. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillors Edgar and Wright each declared a non-prejudicial interest in that any decision they made in respect of Agenda No. 8 – 'High Street Improvements' would not affect any decision made as a Hampshire County Councillor.

31. MINUTES

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the Board meeting held on 30 October 2006 be approved and signed by the Chairman as a true and correct record.

32. DEPUTATIONS

It was reported that no deputations had been received.

33. PUBLIC QUESTIONS

No questions had been received from the public.

PART II

34. HIGH STREET IMPROVEMENTS

The Board received a report of the Head of Conservation and Design, which provided Members with an update of the Town Centre improvements that had been completed during the first phase of works in Gosport High Street, in addition to further subsequent works that had been implemented.

It was reported that £79,841 remained from the original budget and the Town Centre Study Members Panel had recommended that refurbishment of the alleyways be undertaken from the remaining budget. The estimated cost of improvements to the alleyways, i.e. Hobbs Passage, Vigars Yard, Carters Yard and India Arms Yard, was in the region of £71,708.

Hobbs Passage required the most work and a sketch plan and photomontage were included with the report.

In answer to a question, Members were informed that should the Board approve the remaining budget to be used for work on the alleyways, the owners and landlords of the various properties abutting the alleyways would be invited to the Town Hall, in due course, to receive a presentation on the proposals for the refurbishment programme. This event would be hosted by the Mayor.

The Town Centre Study Members Panel also requested the Board to consider a phased delivery of the 'Islands of Enrichment' over the next three years, subject to budget approval. The cost of implementation for development of the three 'Islands of Enrichment' – Heritage, Maritime and Discovery – including fees, preliminaries and provisional costs, had been estimated at £248,040.

The Board's approval was sought to use the remaining budget to implement improvements to the alleyways in the Town Centre and, in addition, agreement was requested to the phasing of work on the 'Islands of Enrichment'.

RESOLVED: That

- (a) the progress made with the improvements to the Gosport Town Centre be noted;
- (b) the completion of the alleyway improvements, within the remaining budget, be approved; and
- (c) the phasing of the 'Islands of Enrichment' over the next three years and the inclusion within the draft capital programme of the required funding, totalling £248,000, be approved.

The meeting commenced at 6.00pm and concluded at 6.10pm

RESOLVED: That Minute Nos 27 – 34 (inclusive) of the meeting of the Community and Environment Board held on 8 January 2007 be received.

A MEETING OF THE COMMUNITY AND ENVIRONMENT BOARD

WAS HELD ON 22 JANUARY 2007

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

35. APOLOGIES

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

36. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

37. DEPUTATIONS

It was reported that no deputations had been received.

38. PUBLIC QUESTIONS

No questions had been received from the public.

PART II

39. BOARD BUDGET 2007-2008

Consideration was given to a report of the Financial Services Manager, which summarised the Board's revised 2006/07 and 2007/08 budgets, including the Board's fees and charges for 2007/2008 and capital programme. The Board's budget recommendations would be forwarded to the Policy and Organisation Board for inclusion in the Council's overall budget proposals.

Members attention was drawn to a review of the operation of Gosport Market, which was mid-way through a 10 year agreement, and it was recommended that the existing arrangement for larger pitch sizes for the Tuesday market be extended for a further year and that no increase be made in the consent fee charged to stallholders in 2007/08 (now unchanged since 2002/03). Officers would re-examine the legislation under which the market was operated prior to the re-letting of the concession with a view to improving returns to the Council.

Members were advised that recommended fees and charges were set out within the draft Fees and Charges Book.

The draft Capital Programme 2006/7 to 2011/12 for the Board was included in the Budget Book that had been previously distributed.

RESOLVED: That

- (a) the Board recommend to the Policy and Organisation Board its requirements for:
 - the revenue budget (revised 2006/07 and estimate 2007/08);
 - the fees and charges for 2007/08;
 - the capital programme for 2006/07 to 2011/12; and
- (b) approval be given to regularise and extend for a further year the existing trial arrangements for larger Gosport Market pitch sizes on Tuesdays.

The meeting commenced at 6.00pm and concluded at 6.04pm

RESOLVED: That Minute Nos 35 – 39 (inclusive) of the meeting of the Community and Environment Board held on 22 January 2007 be received.

A MEETING OF THE HOUSING BOARD

WAS HELD ON 10 JANUARY 2007

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

Also in attendance: Tenant Representative – Mrs Janne Carter

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

23 APOLOGIES

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

24 ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN

RESOLVED: That Councillor Mrs Wright be appointed as Chairman of the Board.

25 ELECTION OF VICE CHAIRMAN

RESOLVED: That Councillor Cully be appointed as Vice Chairman of the Board.

26 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

27 MINUTES

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the meeting held on 1 November 2006 be approved and signed by the Chairman as a true and correct record.

28 DEPUTATIONS

There were no deputations.

29 PUBLIC QUESTIONS

There were no public questions.

PART II

30 BEST VALUE SHELTERED HOUSING WORKING GROUP

The Board considered the report of the Housing Services Manager, bringing

before Members the conclusions of the Working Group on the Best Value Sheltered Housing Review.

The Chairman of the Sheltered Housing Working Group thanked all the group members for their commitment for the duration of the Best Value Sheltered Housing Review.

It was proposed and seconded that this matter be deferred to allow time for consultation with residents of all the Sheltered Housing Schemes. It was suggested that consultation should consist of an afternoon at some schemes with residents, Group Spokespersons, Ward Councillors and officers.

Members suggested that those residents unable to attend the consultation afternoons could be supplied with a report and given an opportunity to submit their views.

RESOLVED: That the Board defers the decision on the recommendations to the Housing Board meeting in June 2007 to give time for consultation afternoons to take place at the Sheltered Housing Schemes.

31 ALLOCATIONS POLICY REVIEW

The Board considered the report of the Housing Services Manager seeking Members' approval of recommendations to amend the existing Allocations Policy, prior to consultation with customers and housing association partners.

It was suggested that encouragement to use the bidding process could be enhanced by requesting for a declaration to be signed by the customer confirming that they understood the bidding process thereby encouraging bidding. Members were informed that, at present the law was not clear and therefore officers requested sight of the amendments when available to establish any impact this might have, before any changes were made. The Borough Solicitor stated that case law did not identify what was 'a reasonable length of time' to bid. It was explained that the law changed in 2002 and was not yet fully explored therefore officers could only note concern and explore the Code of Guidance once published otherwise a penalty could be incurred.

Members were also concerned about bidding penalties as they related to vulnerable people. The process was explained including the right of appeal, that reasons for refusal were likely to give an indication of vulnerability as would the updating of medical information and that authorised persons could bid on the vulnerable person's behalf. Members welcomed the work on homelessness waiting lists and the Tower Blocks.

The Borough Solicitor explained that under the law, factors were given to reasonable preference groups, the legality of the scheme would have given weight to 'local connection' rather than 'residency' enabling a balance to be struck and if this was not adhered to it could appear to be potentially unlawful.

Some Members reported that residents were unhappy with the new Banding

System as it appeared to be less transparent and less understandable and local people appeared to be disadvantaged and disillusioned by the system. It was proposed and seconded that the present Banding System should revert to a Points System arrangement as previously, starting from the 8 May 2007 bidding cycle.

There was concern as to the impact of returning to a points system might cause and the large amount of resources that might be needed to reverse the systems especially when taking into account the increase in numbers on the Housing Register and the significant number of changes to records. There was some support for preparing an assessment to compare the two systems prior to making a decision on any reversal and/or to let the new system settle down.

The Housing Services Manager advised that it had been a long and detailed process to set up the new banding system and offered to make an assessment of the issues and the implications of reverting to the points system. He felt it would be very difficult to achieve a switch of the systems by March 2007 because of the resources needed to change the IT system and other processes.

RESOLVED: That

- (a) With effect from bidding cycle 8 May 2007, the present banding system should revert to a points based system and ensure compliance with legislation;
- (b) In future amendments to the Allocations Policy and Choice Based Letting Scheme should be considered jointly;
- (c) The Choice Based Lettings Scheme should be reviewed and a report should be presented to a future Housing Board meeting;
- (d) Delegated powers be given to the Housing Services Manager to implement the recommendations approved by this Housing Board and that they be deferred for further consideration at a future Housing Board meeting;
- (e) The Planned Lettings targets be amended as follows:
 - 1 General Needs:
 - Homeless down from 45% to 35%
 - Transfer static at 25%
 - Waiting list up from 30% to 40%
 - 2 New Developments
 - Transfer down from 90% to 70%
 - Waiting list and homeless up from 10% to 30%
 - 3 Sheltered and Designated Elderly
 - Transfer 50%
 - Waiting list and homeless 50%
 - 4 Tower Blocks

- Homeless customers 10%
- Transfer customers 10%
- Waiting list customers 80%

5 Amend the definition of a new development from:

Cherque Farm, Clarence Yard, Royal Barracks to any new development involving 10 or more new properties in one location;

- (f) Customers subject to specified behaviour penalty provisions within the Allocations Policy be additionally subject to special rules relating to sensitive lettings, namely:
- a) Approval of any offer of re-housing, where a dwelling is a sensitive letting, be subject to Head of Section (Housing Options) discretion; and
 - b) The Head of Section (Housing Options) to have delegated powers to amend the applicant's priority, in the negative, to a maximum permissible under law in the specific circumstances of that application
 - c) The definition of a specified behaviour penalty in this recommendation excludes penalties applied for refusal of offer of re-housing, rent arrears and financial means
 - d) Sensitive lettings are defined as:
 - i) The actual property being re-let was void due to repossession action (formal written notice or beyond) against the previous tenant for nuisance/anti-social behaviour, criminal behaviour justifying possession action; or
 - ii) An immediate neighbouring property is currently subject to repossession action as in (1); or
 - iii) In the sub-locality area a minimum of 10% of tenancies are currently subject to repossession action as in (1);
 - iv) For the sub-locality area the Police or Principal Housing Officer, or equivalent, has made a strong recommendation to the Council that it be designated a sensitive letting area (recommendations to be reviewed every six months) and that recommendation has been accepted. Such recommendation to be made within a framework protocol (to be produced)
 - v) In the sub-locality a minimum of 10% of tenancies are currently occupied by sublet tenants; and
- (g) Customers refusing an offer of re-housing that they have personally bid for, and where that refusal is not reasonable, have a penalty applied to their application (minor penalty as defined in Allocations Policy).

32 REVIEW OF THE CHOICE BASED LETTINGS SCHEME

The Board considered the report of the Housing Services Manager giving information on the first 24 weeks of the Scheme to the end of November 2006. Members had previously received an interim report at Housing Board on 1 November 2006 encompassing the first 12 weeks of the new Choice Based Lettings Scheme (CBL).

Members were informed that there were amendments to Table 6 in the report

in that the 'comparison of numbers of applications received immediately before and after Choice Based Lettings was introduced' should be '22 weeks post CBL with 46.5 average weekly applications and total applications received 1024'.

RESOLVED: That the contents of the Housing Services Manager's report be noted.

33 REVISED REPAIRS PROGRAMME 2006/07

The Board considered the report of the Housing Services Manager setting out a revised Housing Repairs Programme for 2006/07 and sought Members' approval for the revised programme.

Due to a significant reduction in Supported Capital Expenditure (Borrowing) from the Regional Housing Board, officers had identified savings of £250,000 with no likely disruption to residents. It was explained that St Vincents storm damage specified in the appendix to the report, was that suffered towards the end of 2005 and that the door entry systems item referred to St Johns Square in March 2006.

The primary reasons for the increasing difficulty in identifying properties where the tenant would accept gas fired central heating were explained and a Member requested that when there was a change in tenancy this matter could be addressed. Members were positive about the low number of Right to Buy sales.

RESOLVED: That the Board approve the Housing Repairs Programme 2006/07 subject to Policy and Organisation Board's approval of the revised budget.

34 PARTNERING ARRANGEMENTS FOR PAINTING AND DECORATING; HEATING AND ELECTRICAL INSTALLATIONS

The Board considered the report of the Housing Services Manager seeking Members' approval for the proposed appointment of a painting and decorating partner for the next five years and the Board's approval to extend the current heating/electrical partnership with 1st Saxon-Clenmay for a further two years from April 2007.

Members questioned why Councillors had been excluded from the selection process for the appointment of a painting and decorating partner but acknowledged that this had been regrettable and would be addressed. Officers explained that this omission had not been intentional and that Tenants' Representatives and Internal Audit had been involved.

Members requested that representatives from all political parties should be present at similar future selection processes and partnering arrangements and welcomed the proposed protocol.

RESOLVED: That

- (a) Contract Standing Orders be waived in accordance with Standing Order 1.4.1 and that Richardson Decorating be appointed as the Housing Services painting and decorating partner for 5 years from January 2007 to January 2012;
- (b) The extension of the current partnering arrangement for heating and electrical installations until April 2009 with 1st Saxon – Glenmay be approved; and
- (c) A protocol that the Housing Board Chairman and Housing Group Spokespersons or nominated deputies be invited to participate in the selection processes for all Housing partnering arrangements be approved.

35 GARAGE REVIEW: PROPOSED AMENDMENT TO LICENCES

The Board considered the report of the Housing Services Manager proposing a change in policy to allow the storage of household goods in garages and that the garage licence agreement be amended accordingly.

Members were informed that a review into the condition of Council garage stock had been underway since July 2006 and was likely to be completed by March 2007. A copy of an interim progress report to the Chairman of Housing had been circulated to Members in November 2006. It had become apparent that there was a clear demand for storage space by residents, this practice was not included in the current Housing Service garage licence and the storing of household items was difficult to patrol and enforce.

There was a perception by some Members that Bridgemark had been singled out for garage inspections but it was confirmed that the review had simply started with Bridgemark. The second phase of inspections was likely to include Leesland and Lee-on-the-Solent Wards. There was Member support for inspecting all garages in the Borough both internally and externally or alternatively repairs could be made when reported or as part of Housing Officers' visits. Members would welcome information on the new licence agreement to be sent to the tenants of garages. It was confirmed that it had been planned to inspect all garages in the Borough but resources had been limited although other resources could be redirected to address the matter.

Members were assured that the storage of household items would not include dangerous materials and if this was found to be the case enforcement action could be taken and licences could be terminated. There was some support for gaining entry to the garages where no access had so far been possible to establish their usage.

Members were in favour of amending the recommendation to include details of the amended licence.

RESOLVED: That the licence agreement be amended, in consultation with Legal Services, to additionally allow the keeping of household goods in Council garages as detailed below:

- A licence is granted by the Council for the purpose of garaging/parking a vehicle owned by the licensee (or member of their family), **and additionally if required the storage of household items.**
- No trade or business shall be carried out and the licensee must not sub-let, assign, or allow any third party to use the garage/car port/locking post.
- The Council and persons authorised by them shall, at any time, be permitted to enter/inspect and/or carry out work.

36 PRIVATE SECTOR HOUSING ENERGY EFFICIENCY PROPOSAL

The Board considered the report of the Housing Services Manager. The report gave an outline of the British Gas incentive scheme, its relevance to improving energy efficiency in Gosport, why it would be advantageous for the Council to participate, the benefits it would bring to local residents and the gains in relation to improved energy efficiency.

Members were informed that this proposed scheme for the private sector was one of a number of alternative schemes available. Following a request, a précis of the alternative schemes would be circulated to Members of the Board.

Members welcomed the British Gas scheme and it was confirmed that the government placed a climate change levy on all the major energy utilities. It was money from this fund that British Gas used to finance its Council Tax refund scheme to install insulation in private properties. It was confirmed that if residents took part in the proposed scheme they would not be obliged to switch energy suppliers.

It was confirmed that in some cases the construction of a property might not lend itself to any further insulation and those residents would be advised accordingly. Following a Member's question it was confirmed that it would be established whether 'blown fibre' insulation might be suitable in these cases.

RESOLVED: That the British Gas incentive scheme as outlined in the Housing Services Manager's report be endorsed and officers be instructed to enrol Gosport Borough Council in the British Gas sponsored scheme to promote energy efficiency.

The meeting commenced at 6pm and concluded at 7.57pm

RESOLVED: That Minute Nos 23 – 36 (inclusive) of the meeting of the Housing Board held on 10 January 2007 be received.

A MEETING OF THE HOUSING BOARD

WAS HELD ON 24 JANUARY 2007

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

Also in attendance: Tenant Representative – Mrs Janne Carter

It was reported that, in accordance with Standing Orders, notice had been received that Councillors Hook and Langdon would replace Councillors Burgess and Allen for this meeting.

37 APOLOGIES

Apologies for inability to attend the meeting were received on behalf of Councillors Allen and Burgess.

38 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

39 DEPUTATIONS

There were no deputations.

40 PUBLIC QUESTIONS

There were no public questions.

PART II

42 HOUSING GENERAL FUND BUDGET 2007/2008

The Board considered the report of the Borough Treasurer and Housing Services Manager regarding the Board's revised 2006/2007 budget and the 2007/2008 budget for the Housing General Fund and recommends thereon the Policy and Organisation Board for inclusion in the Council's overall budget proposals.

A Member questioned the reduction in the Housing General Fund budget for 2007/08 as against the original and revised budgets for 2006/07 and the concern that homelessness and bed and breakfast costs could increase leaving a shortfall. The Housing Services Manager explained that a business plan to provide a hostel was being produced which would reduce our reliance on expensive bed and breakfast accommodation. Members were also informed of homelessness percentages in the Borough, that the Housing Options Team was working on homelessness using the range of initiatives available to prevent homelessness. It was further explained that the service was under pressure in some areas such as people with mental health

difficulties and services for those between 16 and 25 years.

A Member questioned the provision for garage repairs in the Capital Programme in the light of the garage review due to be completed in Spring 2007. The Housing Services Manager advised that the Repairs Programme for 2007/08 would be presented to the Board on 7 March 2007.

The draft Capital Programme 2006/07 to 2011/12 for the Board was included in the budget book that had been circulated to Members previously.

RESOLVED: That the Board recommends to the Policy and Organisation Board its requirements for the Revenue Budget (revised 2006/07 and estimate 2007/08) and the Capital Programme 2006/07 to 2011/2012.

The meeting commenced at 6pm and concluded at 6.13pm

RESOLVED: That Minute Nos 37 – 40 and 42 of the meeting of the Housing Board held on 24 January 2007 be received.

ELECTION OF MAYOR AND DEPUTY MAYOR 2007-2008

The Council was informed that in accordance with Standing Order 2.4 the Borough Solicitor had written to Group Leaders and Members of the Council to invite Member nominations for the selection of Mayor-Elect and Deputy Mayor-Elect for the next Municipal Year.

It was reported that one nomination each had been received by the Borough Solicitor; Councillor K L Gill for Mayor-Elect and Councillor D R Kimber for Deputy Mayor-Elect for the 2007-2008 Municipal Year. The Council accordingly approved the nominations and Councillors Gill and Kimber briefly returned thanks for their nominations.

The Council rose at 7.45pm