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10 June 2008

S U M M O N S

MEETING: Housing Board
DATE: 18 June 2008
TIME: 6.00pm
PLACE: Committee Room 1, Town Hall, Gosport
Democratic Services contact: Lindsey Holloway

BOROUGH SOLICITOR

MEMBERS OF THE BOARD

Councillor Gill (Chairman)
Councillor Bradley (Vice Chairman)

Councillor Allen	Councillor Edwards
Councillor Ms Ballard	Councillor Geddes
Councillor Beavis	Councillor Mrs Mudie
Councillor Mrs Cully	Councillor Philpott

The Mayor (Councillor Kimber) (ex officio)
Chairman of Policy and Organisation Board (Councillor Smith) (ex-officio)

FIRE PRECAUTIONS

(To be read from the Chair if members of the public are present)

In the event of the fire alarm (single continuous sound) being activated, please leave the room 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.

IMPORTANT NOTICE:

- If you are in a wheelchair or have difficulty in walking and require access to the Committee Room on the First Floor of the Town Hall for this meeting, assistance can be provided by Town Hall staff on request

If you require any of the services detailed above please ring the Direct Line for the Democratic Services Officer listed on the Summons (first page).

NOTE:

- i. Members are requested to note that if any member wishes to speak at the Board meeting then the Borough Solicitor is required to receive not less than 24 hours prior notice in writing or electronically and such notice shall indicate the agenda item or items on which the member wishes to speak.
- ii. Please note that mobile phones should be switched off for the duration of the meeting.

AGENDA

RECOMMENDED
MINUTE
FORMAT

PART A ITEMS

1 APOLOGIES FOR NON-ATTENDANCE

2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

All Members present are required to declare, at this point in the meeting or as soon as possible thereafter, any personal or personal and prejudicial interest in any item(s) being considered at this meeting.

3 MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE BOARD HELD ON 5 MARCH AND 15 MAY 2008 [copies herewith].

4 DEPUTATIONS – STANDING ORDER 3.5

(NOTE: The Board is required to receive a deputation(s) on a matter which is before the meeting of the Board provided that notice of the intended deputation and its object shall have been received by the Borough Solicitor by 12 noon on Monday 16 June 2008. The total time for deputations in favour and against a proposal shall not exceed 10 minutes).

5 PUBLIC QUESTIONS – STANDING ORDER 3.6

(NOTE: The Board is required to allow a total of 15 minutes for questions from Members of the public on matters within the terms of reference of the Board provided that notice of such Question(s) shall have been submitted to the Borough Solicitor by 12 noon on Monday 16 June 2008).

6 HOMELESSNESS GRANTS TO EXTERNAL BODIES 2008/09

To approve the grants set out in the report for 2008/09. (report attached)

PART II
Contact Officer:
Steve Newton
Extension 5296

7 ANY OTHER ITEMS

- which, in the opinion of the Chairman should be considered as a matter of urgency by reason of special circumstances.

**A MEETING OF THE HOUSING BOARD
WAS HELD ON 5 MARCH 2008**

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

Also in attendance: Tenant Representative – Mrs Janne Carter

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

42 APOLOGIES

Apologies for inability to attend the meeting were submitted on behalf of The Mayor (Councillor Gill), Councillors Burgess, Champion, Foster and Rigg.

43 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

44 MINUTES

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the meeting held on 23 January 2008 be approved and signed by the Chairman as a true and correct record.

45 DEPUTATIONS

There were no deputations.

46 PUBLIC QUESTIONS

There were no public questions.

PART II

47 HOUSING REPAIRS PROGRAMME 2008-09

The Board considered the report of the Housing Services Manager (a copy of which is attached in the Minute Book as Appendix 'A') setting out the proposed 2008-09 Housing Repairs Programme and seeking the Board's approval for this programme.

Members were advised of two minor changes to Appendix B in the report resulting from 'Right to Buy' arrangements.

RESOLVED: That

- (i) the proposed 2008-09 Housing Repairs Programme be approved; and
- (ii) officers follow the principles (approved at the Housing Board meeting of March 2005) as detailed below:
 - (a) Officers be required to seek Board approval to vary the Housing Repairs Programme where work within an identified element of the approved Housing Repairs Programme cannot take place;
 - (b) Where urgent works are identified after approval of the Housing Repairs Programme for which there is no identified provision, officers in consultation with the Chairman of the Housing Board, be permitted to vary the programme for works up to £60,000;
 - (c) Where urgent works are identified after approval of the Housing Repairs Programme for which there is no identified provision, officers in consultation with the Chair and Group Spokespersons be permitted to vary the programme for works between £60,000 and £100,000;
 - (d) Officers be required to seek Board approval to vary the approved Housing Repairs Programme where urgent works are identified after approval of the programme, for which there is no identified provision and the value of these works exceeds £100,000;
 - (e) Officers be required to seek Board approval where work within an identified element of the approved Housing Repairs Programme is going to under- or over-spend by more than £100,000;
 - (f) Members be informed of significant variations to the Programme, as outlined in (a) to (e) above, which are relevant to their Ward.

48 HOUSING RENEWAL POLICY 2008-09

The Board considered the report of the Housing Services Manager (a copy of which is attached in the Minute Book as Appendix 'B'). A formally adopted Housing Renewal Policy was required in order to implement changes to the home repair and adaptation system.

Clarification was given following a Member's question regarding a small area of wording in the report.

RESOLVED: That

- (a) the new draft Housing Renewal Policy for 2008-09 be approved; and
- (b) the Board recommends to the Policy and Organisation Board (meeting 12 March 2008) that the Housing Renewal Policy be formally adopted.

The meeting commenced at 6pm and concluded at 6.05pm.

CHAIRMAN

**A MEETING OF THE HOUSING BOARD
WAS HELD ON 15 MAY 2008**

The Mayor (Councillor Kimber) (ex-officio) (P), Chairman of Policy and Organisation Board (Councillor Smith) (P), Councillors Allen (P), Ms Ballard (P), Beavis (P), Bradley (P), Mrs Cully (P), Edwards (P), Geddes (P), Gill (P), Mrs Mudie (P), and Philpott (P).

1 APOLOGIES

There were no apologies for absence.

3 ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN

RESOLVED: That Councillor Gill be appointed as Chairman of the Board for the Municipal Year 2008-09.

4 ELECTION OF VICE CHAIRMAN

RESOLVED: That Councillor Bradley be appointed as Vice Chairman of the Board for the Municipal Year 2008-09.

CHAIRMAN

AGENDA ITEM NO. 6

Board/Committee:	HOUSING BOARD
Date of Meeting:	18 th JUNE 2008
Title:	HOMELESSNESS GRANTS TO EXTERNAL BODIES 2008-09
Author:	HOUSING SERVICES MANAGER/ SN
Status:	FOR DECISION

Purpose

To approve the grants set out in this report for 2008/09.

Recommendation

1). That the following grants/budgets be approved and funded by homelessness grant (unless otherwise stated):

- Gosport Citizens Advice Bureau, debt service: £12,298.37 of which £3,000 to be paid from Housing Revenue Account
- Accommodation Resource Centre (Mediation and homeless education service): £8,540.00
- Domestic Violence Call Centre monitoring budget: £461.00
- Domestic Violence (agent installation/removal budget): £1700.00.

1.0 Background

1.1 Table One below sets out the spend on grants to external bodies in 2007/08 and the proposals for 2008/09 (contained in this report for the purposes of comparison).

Agency	2007/08 Grant	2008-09 Proposed Grant
Citizen Advice Bureau – Debt service	£11,911.74 (£2,900 HRA funded)	£12,298.37 (£3,000 HRA based upon a 26.5% customer base of this Councils tenants) = £9,298.37 funded by Homelessness Grant
Accommodation Resource Centre –Youth mediation/education	£7,092.00	£8,540.00
Domestic Violence alarms response centre	£420.00	£461.00
Domestic Violence Alarms- installation agent (F&G Family Aid)	£1558.00	£1700.00
Housing Aid Centre	£2,353.05	£0.00
Expanding supported lodgings	£20,000*	
Total	£42,785.74	£20,000

* This money has been carried over to 2008/09 due to delays in Hampshire County Council's tendering process. Incidentally, Members will be interested to know that Supporting People have added an additional £65,000 annual funding until 2011 into this scheme. This additional grant will increase the number of households able to be accommodated and supported in Gosport from 5 to 9, and in Fareham from 0 to 5.

1.2 The Housing Aid Centre was invited to make a bid for 2008/09 but has not made one so has not been considered.

1.3 The source of funding for the grants applications is as follows:

- The Department for Communities and Local Government has confirmed, again, that this Council will receive £46,000 extra Homelessness Grant for 2008/09.
- For the Citizens Advice Bureau debt service, an element of the funding commensurate with the number of Council tenants referred to the service applies. In 2007/08 the debt service breakdown shows that 26.5% of Council Housing Services referrals were existing Council tenants. So 26.5% of the total funding has been allotted to the Housing Revenue Account.

1.4 Of the £46,000 annual Homelessness Grant, £26,000 is applied to direct Council employee costs in the Housing Options Team. This Council has always sought to use the remainder of grant to build and sustain capacity in the voluntary sector to prevent homelessness. This means £20,000 is available in 2008/09 for grants to external bodies.

1.5 Approval of all the grants and budgets in Table One may be approved under delegated powers by Housing Services Manager (March 2003 Housing Board delegation), in consultation with Housing Board Chairman and Group Spokespersons. This is provided that the grant application was not to be substantially changed. Grant levels recommended are at previous years funding plus 2.5% inflation apart from the Accommodation Resource Centre grant. The Accommodation Resource Centre grant has been increased by an additional £1,270.70 in recognition of the £4580 earmarked funding (see 2.7 below) that the Accommodation Resource Centre will take on. This amendment to grant may be viewed as grant not being substantially changed, however, the Housing Services Manager has decided to refer all grant decisions for 2008/09 to Housing Board because Members had previously wished to consider all grant applications collectively.

2.0 Report

2.1 Citizens Advice Bureau

This Council funds the core activities of the Citizens Advice Bureau with a grant of £81,890 approved for 2008/09. In addition to this core grant the Housing Board have supported the specific provision of a Debt Service. In the year 2007/08, this long established service is projected to have seen 80 direct Housing Services referrals and 143 indirect referrals. These projections are based on three quarters results.

- 2.2 The funding request for 2008/09 is for the same staffing resources as for 2007/08 with a 2.5% inflationary and incremental uplift. A speculative bid for increased staff resources for the debt service has been received and is attached at Appendix A. It is recommended that the increased staffing grant application be rejected on the basis there are insufficient funds available to meet this bid (£18,234 compared to the recommended £12,298.37) within approved budgets.

2.3 Accommodation Resource Centre, Mediation and Homelessness Education Services

This Council's homelessness grants have made a contribution to funding of this service for several years in recognition of the work this agency does for young people. The grant requested for 2008/09 is £8,450. This includes £4580 earmarked grant discussed below. It is recommended that this grant be approved.

- 2.4 Service outcomes (projection based on first three quarters results) for the Accommodation Resource Centre (ARC), 2007/08 are set out below.

	Total referrals	Homelessness prevented
Council referrals to ARC	119	9 (7.6%)
ARC general cases	259	29 (11.2%)

As in previous years, it is interesting to note that customers referred by this Council are (in statistical terms) harder to prevent from becoming homeless. This is consistent with anecdotal evidence that the Council tends to become involved directly with young customers when they have more chaotic lifestyles and have already failed with prior interventions by other agencies.

- 2.5 The recommended grant for 2008/09 represents more than a 2.5% inflationary increase in recognition that this year a total of £4,580 of the grant is to be used by the Accommodation Resource Centre to

progress this Council's strategic priority to reduce youth homelessness in ways specified by this Council (Local Strategic Partnership priority reference HA).

Government research (DCLG Homelessness Research Summary 7, 2008) endorses the previously developing view that youth homelessness (particularly 16/17 year olds) has to be addressed through skills based facilitation, preferably at school age. Council officers have been carefully identifying the necessary and deliverable options needed to address this area. In addition, officers have gone beyond their area of direct concern to recommend options at a district wide strategic inter-agency level to achieve appropriate interventions. Appendix B sets out the matrix of needs and service options currently thought to be needed. The outcome of this analysis is as follows:

- 2008/09 recommended Housing Services funding to ARC includes:
 - £2330 (notional value) webcam counselling for 80 young people. This is 50% of the total referrals, the other 50% being taken by Fareham Council referrals who are providing matched funding. This facility will assist ARC in the targeting of cases for more detailed face to face counselling
 - £2250 (notional value) family face to face counselling for 13 families. This is 50% of the total referrals, the other 50% being taken by Fareham Council referrals who are providing matched funding
 - Continued educational input by ARC through presentations to schools and colleges
 - Continued rights for the Council to refer customers to ARC.
- Other items in Appendix B have been referred to the Local Strategic Partnership for progression.

2.6 Domestic Violence Alarms

This is another example of cross district work with Fareham. Both districts are providing the same service as outlined in the September 2007 Housing Board report. The costs for this scheme are relatively small in comparison to the number of preventions of homelessness that the scheme achieves. It is recommended that the current arrangements continue.

3.0 Risk Assessment

- 3.1 The grants set out in this report achieve good value for money in terms of the prevention of homelessness agenda. In terms of service delivery, it is important that the Council is not the only source of homeless prevention in the district.

4.0 Conclusion

- 4.1 In addition to this Council's homeless prevention work (in the top quartile nationally) it is clear that significant numbers of people have their homelessness prevented by the voluntary sector. Continued funding of these external voluntary sector agencies is considered strategically important to ensure the best network across the district to prevent homelessness.

Financial Services comments:	The recommended grants can be financed in the current year from existing budgetary provision.
Legal Services comments:	The Council has the power under the Housing Acts to give assistance by way of grants to voluntary organisations concerned with homelessness or matters related to it.
Service Improvement Plan implications:	None
Corporate Plan:	None
Risk Assessment:	See paragraph 3.1
Background papers:	Grants to Voluntary Bodies and Prevention of Homelessness, 2006 (delegated powers report) Grants to External Bodies: Housing Board September 2007
Appendices/Enclosures:	
Appendix 'A'	CAB debt Service expansion bid
Appendix 'B'	Young Persons Housing Options matrix
Report author/ Lead Officer:	Steve Newton 023 9254 5296

APPENDIX A
CITIZENS ADVICE BUREAU BID FOR ADDITIONAL FUNDING
(NOT RECOMMENDED DUE TO COST)

2008/09 – QUOTE C *

Salaries		
Eddie Luigi	(.24)	£ 4120.30
Jane Beer	(.23)	£ 3989.92
New Caseworker		£ 3875.94
Paid Admin – 9 hrs		£ 3357.90
Management Charges a/b		£ 2890.82
		<u>£18234.88</u>

- Quote C is based on quote B.
- An additional Caseworker for 1 day per week is included at spinal point 22 and includes a 2.5% cost of living pay rise.
- Paid Admin is increased by 3 hours to provide the same level of admin support for the new caseworker.
- The Management Charge has been increased on a pro-rata basis.

* Please see attached information to support this additional one day per week Fast Track service.

GOSPORT CAB FAST TRACK DEBT SERVICE – EXTENSION TO SERVICE FROM TWO TO THREE DAYS PER WEEK.

We have seen a significant increase in demand for the debt advice over recent months and this is expected to grow further as the “Credit Crunch” impacts further on the residents of Gosport.

There are signs that, generally, people are calling for help earlier than they have been doing previously. Rises in costs (fuel and housing etc) coupled with endless media coverage of the ‘credit crunch’ has, we believe, resulted in more people deciding to address their debt problems earlier. However the concern is how a further significant increase in demand will affect an already under resourced sector.

The waiting time for generalist debt appointments continues to increase and currently stands at over 3 weeks, this increases to 4 weeks if the client needs to seek advice from a specialist debt caseworker. Last year we were usually able to offer appointments within a 1 - 2 week waiting period.

In the past 5 months (October 2007 – February 2008) we dealt with 1430 debt issues. This compares to 1075 debt issues for the same period the previous year, representing an increase of 33%. Debt now accounts for over 36% of all issues dealt with at Gosport CAB.

Following our move to new premises we now have the capacity to extend the Fast Track Service to 3 days if we receive the additional funding from GBC. It will also help to ensure that the link with the ‘Court Desk Service’ remains effective and referred clients are able to see a specialist worker within a reasonable time frame.

Thank you for agreeing to consider this request and please do not hesitate to contact me should you require clarification on the above or require any additional information.

APPENDIX B
YOUNG PERSONS HOUSING OPTIONS RESPONSES

Area of need	Housing Option	Inter-agency options	Current Position
Increased provision for 1 st stage assessment accommodation	DCLG recognises a 1 st stage assessment centre as a required component of accommodation matrix	Councils' (GBC & FBC) and Hampshire Supporting People, and provider	Increase from 6 – 9 beds revenue funded –seeking location .In the interim, the £65,000 has been put into the supported lodgings tender
Increased supported Lodgings	DCLG recognises as valuable, appropriate supported housing provision	Gosport Council and Hampshire Supporting People	Hampshire preparing tender bid process for 9 unit expansion
Youth homelessness education	DCLG recognises prevention work must start in schools	Gosport Council and Two Saints. Expansion of educational materials beyond videos referred to LSP for consideration April 2008.	Yes- Two Saints make presentations in schools. They have commissioned two educational videos by local college
Family mediation	DCLG recognises this to be an important option but careful filtering required	Accommodation Resource Centre provides this service	In place –to be strengthened in 2008/09 via access to specialist family counselling via Relate and youth counselling via Relate
Family skills based support	DCLG recognises that a variety of interventions prior to 16 years of age are needed	Housing Options have referred to Local Strategic Partnership and Community Safety for funding	To be considered for development in 2008/09
School age children access to counselling		Local Strategic Partnership now considering the Relate model for role out in Gosport – referred by Council Housing Options	