

Please ask for:

Chris Wrein

Direct dial:

(023) 9254 5288

Fax:

(023) 9254 5587

E-mail:

chris.wrein@gosport.gov.uk

23 February 2010

S U M M O N S

MEETING: Housing Board
DATE: 3 March 2010
TIME: 6.00pm
PLACE: Committee Room 1, Town Hall, Gosport
Democratic Services contact: Chris Wrein

BOROUGH SOLICITOR

MEMBERS OF THE BOARD

Councillor Philpott (Chairman)
Councillor Beavis (Vice Chairman)

Councillor Allen	Councillor Gill
Councillor Mrs Cully	Councillor Hylands
Councillor Edwards	Councillor Mrs Mitchell-Smith
Councillor Geddes	Councillor Mrs Mudie

The Mayor (Councillor Mrs Searle) (ex officio)
Chairman of Policy and Organisation Board (Councillor Hook) (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 MEETINGS OF THE BOARD HELD ON 20 JANUARY AND 3 FEBRUARY 2010 [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, 1 March 2010. 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, 1 March 2010).

6. HOUSING RENEWAL POLICY 2010/11

A formally adopted Housing Renewal Policy is required in order to deliver home repairs and adaptations in the Borough.

NOTE: *A copy of the Policy document is available in the Members' Room and can be viewed on the Council's website with this agenda.*

PART II
Contact Officers:
David Palmer
Ext 5509
Trevor
Charlesworth
Ext 5510

7. HOUSING REPAIRS PROGRAMME 2010/11 AND ASSET MANAGEMENT STRATEGY

The report sets out the proposed 2010 -11 Housing Repairs Programme and seeks the Board's approval for that programme and associated Asset Management Strategy.

PART II
Contact Officer;
Charles Harman
Ext 5287

8. AMENDMENTS TO THE HOUSING FORUM CONSTITUTION

The purpose of this report is to seek Housing Board approval for the changes to the Housing Forum constitution.

PART II
Contact Officer:
Kim Carron
Ext 5372

9. GRANTS TO EXTERNAL BODIES AND SPECIFIC SCHEMES

This report seeks approval of recommended grants in 2010/11 to external bodies and specific schemes in connection with homelessness prevention and advice.

PART II
Contact Officer:
Steve Newton
Ext 5296

Every year this Council has awarded grants in line with the Council's Homelessness Strategy with the aim of sustaining a matrix of advice and assistance services in the district.

10. ANY OTHER ITEMS

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

AGENDA ITEM NO. 6

Board/Committee:	Housing Board
Date of Meeting:	3 rd March 2010
Title:	Housing Renewal Policy 2010-2011
Author:	Environmental Services Manager
Status:	For Recommendation to Policy & Organisation Board

Purpose

A formally adopted Housing Renewal Policy is required in order to deliver home repairs and adaptations in the Borough.

Recommendation

- That the Board approves the new draft Housing Renewal Policy for 2010-2011,
- That authority be delegated to the Environmental Services Manager, subject to the Council's financial regulations, in consultation with the Chairman and Group housing spokespersons, to approve virements between capital programme budget headings in order to deal with demand, and
- That the Board recommends to the Policy and Organisation Board Meeting on 17 March 2010 that the Housing Renewal Policy be formally adopted.

1 Background

- 1.1 The Regulatory Reform (Housing Assistance) (England and Wales) Order 2002 requires that all Local Housing Authorities must provide Mandatory Disabled Facilities and have arrangements in place, including a formal Housing Renewal Policy, for all other forms of housing assistance for the improvement of housing conditions in their area.
- 1.2 The Order also requires that the Authority keep under review their Housing Renewal Policy and amend it if necessary. The Housing Renewal Policy was last approved by Members at the Housing Board Meeting on 4 March 2009, and subsequently endorsed by the Policy and Organisation Board Meeting on 11 March 2009.
- 1.3 The Government has made it clear that it acknowledges the importance of private sector housing and its effect on the health of the nation, and who should bear responsibility for repairs in that sector :

“Poor quality housing can have an impact on the health of the occupants and on the quality of life in an area. The Government’s view is that it is primarily the responsibility of homeowners to maintain their own property.”
[Introduction, paragraph 2; *Housing Renewal Guidance (Consultative Document)*, June 2002]

- 1.4 The Government has also stressed that local authorities have a key role in steering homeowners on the road to self-reliance and away from a grant dependency culture. However, the Government has also stressed that it would consider that an authority was failing in its duty as a housing enabler, and in its responsibility to consider the condition of the local private sector stock, if it did not make some provision for assistance :

“A blanket ‘no assistance policy’, whether for grants, loans or both, would therefore be unacceptable.” *[paragraph 4.3, Housing Renewal Guidance (Consultative Document), June 2002]*

- 1.5 A draft Housing Renewal Policy 2010-11 is attached (see Appendix A) and upon approval of this Board will be referred to the Policy and Organisation Board Meeting on 17 March 2010. A copy of the draft Policy is available in the Members Room and further copies are available on request.
- 1.6 The draft Policy proposes a broad package of grant-based assistance in the forthcoming financial year assistance. Also that affordable loans may be obtained (for specific low income groups) through the independent, not-for-profit South Coast Money Line. The Policy will target residents who are older and/or disabled and specified low income groups. Discretionary assistance in a variety of different forms will be provided towards vital, small scale repairs, energy efficiency improvements and assisting in the conversion of empty shops, offices and commercial properties and/or under-occupied properties into units for rent in the private sector. This will be backed up by appropriate advice and, where necessary, enforcement action.
- 1.7 With effect from 16 November 2009 the private sector housing responsibilities, with the exception of energy efficiency (which has remained within Housing Services), were transferred to the Environmental Health Section. This report and relevant parts of the draft Policy have therefore been prepared jointly between the two Units.

2 Key Themes and Considerations within the Housing Renewal Policy 2010 -11

- 2.1 **The Range and Type of Assistance to be Made Available** – the Housing Capital Programme, approved on 3 February 2010, will fully fund the grant proposals set out in the draft Policy. Regional Housing Board (RHB) funding in 2010/11 for affordable loans (see Section 4 below) and Homecheck materials is already agreed. Funding for other assistance packages cannot be confirmed until approved by the PUSH – Southern Home Loans Partnership (SHLP) Core Group and must therefore be considered provisional. No commitments will be incurred until RHB funding is secured, and will be limited to the sum allocated to Gosport for those purposes.
- 2.2 **Applicant Eligibility** – the proposal will limit eligibility to owner-occupiers, landlords and tenants.
- 2.3 **Grant limits** – proposed limits are set out in Section 6 of the draft Policy.

2.4 **Time limits** – grant approvals generally remain valid for a period of not more than twelve months and may be significantly shorter for small items of work.

2.5 **Repayment conditions** – the draft Policy sets out a number of conditions that would require repayment of any grant, summarised below.

Issue	Proposal	Reference in Draft Policy
Disposal of owner-occupied property benefiting from Mandatory Disabled Facilities within 10 years of grant payment	Full repayment, up to a maximum of £10,000, any part of the grant that exceeds £5,000.	6.5, Appendix A2.51
Disposal of property benefiting from discretionary Home Repairs Assistance or Conversion Grants within 5 years of grant payment	Full repayment plus compound interest	6.11, 6.15, Appendix A2.47 & A2.48
Breach of Nominations Agreement and/or Letting conditions in rented property benefiting from a discretionary Conversion Grant	Full repayment plus compound interest	6.15
Failure to provide information on grant condition compliance within 21 days	Full repayment plus compound interest	Appendix A2.53
Successful insurance claim	Full repayment in respect of such works, or the value of the insurance payment if lower; no interest	Appendix A2.55

2.6 **Non-Repayment Conditions** – the draft Policy also sets out a number of conditions in which repayment is not required, namely :

- all Handyperson Scheme works, due to low cost,
- mandatory Disabled Facilities Grants below £5,000,
- mandatory Disabled Facilities Grants above £5,000 to a tenant, and
- any other case subject to the discretion of the Head of Environmental Health.

2.7 **Dealing With Disputes** – The law does not make any provision for appeals against individual decisions on the level of assistance offered. However, under Section 14 of the draft Policy, any customer who is dissatisfied with the service provided will initially be asked to contact the officer who has been dealing with their case to give them the opportunity to alter the service or to explain the decision/outcome. If, after contact with the officer dealing with the

case, a customer is still dissatisfied and wishes to explore the matter further they are invited to contact the Head of Environmental Health who will provide a full written response within ten working days of becoming aware of the matter. If the customer is still dissatisfied, the Borough Council has a three-stage complaints procedure.

2.8 **Key service standards** – The service standards approved for the home improvement grant service are set out in Appendix 3 of the draft Policy.

2.9 **Enforcement policy** – When enforcement is required it will be undertaken in accordance with Gosport Borough Council's Generic Enforcement Policy.

3 Crime and Disorder Act 1998

3.1 Under the provisions of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998, Section 17, it is the duty of all local authorities to consider the crime and disorder implications of their actions in the exercise of their various functions. With regards to this Report, there are two items that could reasonably be deemed as aiding in the prevention of crime and disorder in the Borough, namely :

- *Discretionary Conversion Grants* : These small grants often provide the impetus to private landlords to convert empty commercial properties (shops, offices, etc.) into self-contained units of accommodation for renting in the private sector. Frequently an empty shop or public house can attract unwarranted damage by vandals. The conversion of these properties into self-contained units removes this criminal temptation, as well as providing much needed accommodation (see paragraph 6.12 in the draft Policy).
- *Handyperson Scheme* : This provides registered disabled and people aged 60 and over who are not in employment the opportunity of using a reliable workman employed by a non-profit making charity to undertake minor works of repair or maintenance at a reduced cost to themselves. This service is subsidised by the local authority. The Handyperson may carry out works such as providing improved security locks, door chains, etc. These works should lessen the risk of that home being targeted by intruders as well as reducing this fear for the occupant (see Section 7 of the draft Policy).

4 Progress Update on the Southern Home Loans Partnership Scheme

4.1 In March 2004 the Housing Board approved the Council's participation in a Consortium of local authorities to set up a pilot regional resource to provide low cost home repair/maintenance loans to applicants seeking to repair or improve their homes up to the Decent Homes Standard. These loans are made to homeowners whose financial circumstances would not allow them access to affordable finance from the mainstream 'High Street' financial institutions. The Scheme, named 'Southern Home Loans Partnership' made its first loans in 2006.

- 4.2 In 2007-08 Gosport Borough Council, together with other members of the Southern Home Loans Partnership Scheme Consortium (Portsmouth CC, Eastleigh BC and Chichester DC) made a bid for funding from the Regional Housing Board for from the period 2008 to 2011. The bid was based on the further operation and promotion of the good work already undertaken by all the Consortium Members on the Southern Home Loans Partnership Scheme project together with the promotion of the Homecheck Scheme and the Decent Homes Standard. The bid was successful and resulted in funds being made available to Gosport Borough Council (hence resulting in real savings to the Borough Council) to assist in the promotion and running costs of the Southern Home Loans Partnership Scheme and the promotion of the Decent Homes Standard/energy efficiency in the private sector. There will be no impact on the 2010-2011 Grant Budget from loans made under these arrangements. It is hoped that the Regional Housing Board will permit further bids to be made for funding beyond March 2011.

5 Spending Proposals 2010-11

- 5.1 The elements of this Policy are as follows :

<u>Capital Expenditure</u>	<u>2010/11</u>
Mandatory Disabled Facilities Grants	£340,000
<i>Less Government contribution</i>	<i>-£240,000</i>
Home Repair Assistance Grants (emergency priority disabled aids/adaptations)	£15,000
Conversion Grants (conversion of empty or under-occupied property into self-contained units)	£45,000
Private Sector House Condition Survey (originally approved in 2009/10 but deferred)	£40,000
Net Total Capital Expenditure	£200,000
 <u>Revenue Expenditure</u>	
Handyperson Service	£10,000
Homecheck Scheme (via C&E Board)	£18,000
Total Revenue Expenditure	£28,000
 <u>Funded by Regional Housing Board (provisional)</u>	
Conversion Grants (additional funding)	£60,000
Warm Front top-up grants	£7,000
Total RHB Funded Expenditure	£67,000

- 5.2 Where demand in one area exceeds that in another and funding is under the Council's direct control it is prudent to redirect funds providing that total expenditure remains unchanged. It is therefore proposed that in such circumstances, the Environmental Services Manager in consultation with the Chairman and Group housing spokespersons, is able to decide how to redirect funds as appropriate, in accordance with the Council's financial regulations.

- 5.3 Disabled Facilities Grants (DFGs) are mandatory and all local housing

authorities must provide this type of grant aid upon receipt of a full and proper application from a person who is registered (or registerable) disabled. The Government provides all local authorities with a Specified Capital Grant towards DFG expenditure. In the current financial year this amount is £240,000 and it is assumed that this will be repeated in 2010/11 although the Council has yet to receive formal confirmation from Government Office of the South East (GOSE). The Borough Council is expected to meet all commitments on Disabled Facilities Grants above that figure and will therefore supplement the amount by £100,000 taking the total proposed spend to £340,000.

- 5.4 The approval of a Mandatory DFG is time consuming and cannot accommodate emergency situations. Therefore it is proposed to allocate a small sum of £15,000 for “fast track” Discretionary Home Repair Assistance Grants (HRAs) for use in priority situations for emergency disabled aids and adaptations, e.g. to quickly provide a stair lift so that a patient may leave hospital and so prevent bed-blocking.
- 5.5 The cost of materials used in conjunction with the Homecheck service is funded via the Regional Housing Board until March 2011. Other Homecheck costs and the full cost of the Handyperson service are funded from the Environmental Health revenue budget; revenue funding for Homecheck is approved by the Community and Environment Board as part of its overarching interest in home safety.
- 5.6 Private Sector House Condition Survey : Government advice recommends that surveys be repeated at intervals of not more than five years and GOSE has indicated that failure to obtain reliable data will adversely affect the assessment of the Council’s overall housing performance. Independent surveyors last undertook this work on behalf of the Borough Council in 2004-2005 and the results have assisted in formulating the 2010/11 draft Housing Renewal Policy. Gosport joined a consortium of nine Hampshire local authorities to commission the next Private Sector House Condition Survey in 2010. This was originally scheduled for early 2010 and was approved by the Housing Board meeting on 4th March 2009. Unfortunately it had to be deferred and the budget has therefore been carried forward. A consortium approach that was later adopted to gain better value for money meant that the consultants that were employed by the consortium would survey each local authority area. Gosport’s planned survey was moved to a later stage in that process and this has led to slippage in the planned delivery time. The survey fieldwork will commence in early April.

6 Conclusions

- 6.1 The 2010-11 Housing Renewal Policy will enable the Council to undertake its key functions and roles. Approving the discretionary elements of the Policy will also help the Council to meet Government and Regional objectives.

Financial Services comments:	As contained in Section 5.
Legal Services comments:	None.
Service Improvement Plan implications:	The implementation and monitoring of the Housing Renewal Policy will be part of the Environmental Services Service Improvement Plan for 2010-11
Corporate Plan:	<p>The proposals set out in the draft Policy have positive impacts in terms of :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • promoting health and well-being, and • reducing crime
Risk Assessment:	Southern Home Loans Partnership – Medium likelihood/Medium Severity. Risk Status: Medium
Background papers:	<p>The Regulatory Reform (Housing Assistance) (England and Wales) Order 2002 (S.I. 1860).</p> <p>Housing Renewal Guidance (Consultative Document) June 2002 (ODPM)</p> <p>Gosport Private Sector House Condition Survey 2004/05</p> <p>Housing Renewal Policy 2009-10</p>
Appendices/Enclosures:	
Appendix 'A'	Comparison of Key Differences Between 2010/11 Private Sector Housing Renewal Policy and the 2009/10 Version
Report author/ Lead Officer:	Trevor Charlesworth, Principal EHO, and David Palmer, Head of Environmental Health

APPENDIX A

Comparison of Key Differences Between 2010/11 Private Sector Housing Renewal Policy and the 2009/10 Version

2010/11 Version	2009/10 Version
1. 43 pages long.	1. 70 pages long.
2. Conditions and eligibility information distributed through the Policy.	2. Layout rearranged and more 'logical'. Conditions brought together in an appendix.
3. Detailed background information, e.g. on national policy, etc.	3. Reduced background information.
4. Full details included.	4. Omits background information on climate change and sustainability.
5. Main grant aid elements are Mandatory Disabled Facilities Grants, vital, small-scale Home Repair Assistance (also for adaptations) and Conversion grants.	5. Grant aid extended to cover Warm Front top-up. Also, grants for conversion of empty/under-occupied properties into self-contained units now comes with a nomination rights condition.
6. Prioritisation section deleted – since budgets are essentially self-contained and self-limiting, prioritisation less important.	6. Prioritisation set out in Section 9 of the Policy.
7. Enforcement now clearly linked to GBC generic policy.	7. Enforcement policy very detailed and isolated.
8. No details of the Housing Health and Safety Rating System (national methodology for assessing housing conditions).	8. Full explanation of HHSRS in Appendix 3.
9. Limited information on the Decent Homes Standard.	9. Full explanation in Appendix 4.

D. J. Palmer
Head of Environmental Health
15/2/10

Private Sector Housing Renewal Policy 2010/11

Draft for Housing Board 3 March 2010

CONTENTS

	Page No.
1. Introduction	3
2. Policy Implementation Plan	4
3. Meeting Key Aims and Objectives	4
4. Types of Assistance Available	6
5. Grants – General Matters	8
6. Details of Assistance	10
7. Energy Efficiency	14
8. Handyperson Scheme	16
9. Homecheck Scheme	16
10. Loans, Equity Release, etc.	17
11. General Terms and Conditions	17
12. Transitional Provisions	17
13. Applications Outside Policy	18
14. Complaints Policy	18
15. Definitions within this Policy	19
 <u>Appendices</u>	
1. National, Regional And Local Considerations	23
2. General Grant conditions	30
3. Key Service Standards	41
4. Definition of a Vulnerable Household	42
5. Contact Details of the Private Sector Housing Team	43

1.0 **INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 In order to provide assistance, authorities must adopt and publish a Policy stating what assistance is to be given and how it is to be provided.
- 1.2 This Gosport Borough Council Private Sector Housing Renewal Policy is effective from 1 April 2010. It is being adopted for the purposes of Article 3 of the Regulatory Reform (Housing Assistance) (England and Wales) Order 2002.
- 1.3 This Policy will be posted on the Gosport Borough Council website and customers will be able to make comments on the Policy on line. A printed summary will be available free of charge.
- 1.4 The Policy is subject to regular review, usually at annual intervals but also when significant changes occur, such as to the type of assistance available, and will be revised accordingly as necessary.
- 1.5 This Policy takes into account all relevant national legislation and guidance currently in place or introduced during the life of this document. The guidance issued for Housing Renewal will be of particular relevance especially where it deals with Enforcement, the Decent Home Standard, Neighbourhood Renewal Assessment and, in relation to Mandatory Disabled Facilities Grants, matters for which grant aid must be given. An outline of the relevant national, regional and local considerations that went into the formulation of this Policy is in Appendix 1.
- 1.6 This Policy document limits itself to consideration of works of repair, improvement or adaptation, etc.

2.0 POLICY IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

- 2.1 Performance within this Policy will be reported in line with corporate reporting of national and local Performance Indicators to Council Management Team and the Housing Board. The local indicators which will be used are set out in Appendix 3.
- 2.2 This Policy should remain in force for a minimum of one year. Intermediate amendment should only be necessary in case of significant change to policy items. Minor changes will be made by the Head of Environmental Health in consultation with the Housing Board Chairman where such changes make no significant difference to service provision, for example when there is no change to grant assistance offered but there is a benefit name change, etc. Where amendments produce significant changes to service provision those amendments will require the approval of the Housing Board and Policy and Organisation Board before the revised policy can take effect.
- 2.3 The Private Sector Housing Renewal Policy will be amended as necessary to reflect the changing needs of the local community and/or homes. Such information will be conveyed to the Council by various means including stock condition and housing needs surveys.
- 2.4 There may be other 'external' factors which prompt major review earlier than anticipated, such as :
- Changes to capital spending plans,
 - Acute changes to local circumstances,
 - National policy/legislative changes, or
 - Local strategic partnership influences.

3.0 MEETING KEY AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

- 3.1 The Council has a strategic role and responsibility to promote the economic, social and environmental well-being of the borough.

3.2 Through this Policy, it is the intention of Gosport Borough Council to achieve the following objectives :

- Meet the Government's target of increasing the number of vulnerable people living in Decent Homes (vulnerable households are defined in Appendix 4);
- Deal with unsatisfactory housing by the application of Housing and Public Health legislation;
- Help adults and children with disabilities (and their families) to live in homes that are adapted to meet their needs;
- Help people move out of fuel poverty and improve energy efficiency in private sector homes;
- Help provide a healthy home environment;
- Reduce the risks and effects of accidents, fire and other hazards in the home;
- Make homes more secure and safe from the risk of burglary and other crimes;
- Bring empty properties back into use as homes which meet the Decent Homes standard;
- Help people to carry out essential repairs to their homes;
- Work with partners to support the aims of relevant local strategies and to help deliver the key corporate objectives;
- Help older residents stay in their homes, improve their quality of life and reduce periods in hospital.

3.3 This Private Sector Housing Renewal Policy will be jointly delivered by the Environmental Services and Housing Services Units.

4.0 **TYPES OF ASSISTANCE AVAILABLE**

4.1 Under Article 3 of The Regulatory Reform (Housing Assistance) (England and Wales) Order 2002 the Borough Council has the power to render assistance, directly or indirectly, to any resident in a number of ways :

- “(a) to acquire living accommodation (whether within or outside their area);
- (b) to adapt or improve living accommodation (whether by alteration, conversion or enlargement, by the installation of any thing or injection of any substance, or otherwise);
- (c) to repair living accommodation;
- (d) to demolish buildings comprising or including living accommodation;
- (e) where buildings comprising or including living accommodation have been demolished, to construct buildings that comprise or include replacement living accommodation.”

It is the intention of this Policy to discharge these powers by providing assistance through a combination of education and encouragement, direct and indirect financial assistance and enforcement.

Promotion, Education and Encouragement

4.2 The Council’s officers will, except where statute requires otherwise or there is an imminent risk to health or safety, attempt to resolve all problems through education, mediation, negotiation and awareness raising. The objective will be to enable property owners to fulfil their responsibilities in an environment of understanding that meets their needs and promotes the benefits of such action. For example :

- Preventative measures via the Council’s Handyperson(see Section 8) and Homecheck (see Section 9) Services;
- Education of owner occupiers into the benefits of home repair and maintenance and self-reliance;

- Encouragement of vulnerable residents to use the local Home Improvement Agency (currently 'In Touch') for works of repair or improvement. This is an external non-profit making charity supported financially by the Borough Council and the Supporting People arm of Hampshire County Council. Case workers from In Touch can advise residents to use reliable, trusted contractors and can sometimes raise charitable funding to assist their clients;
- Encouragement of eligible residents to take up Warmfront Grants and the available CERT (Carbon Emissions Reduction Commitment, a scheme which obliges domestic energy suppliers to help customers reduce CO₂ emissions) for cavity wall insulation, loft insulation, etc.
- Private Rented Property Accreditation Schemes such as RAPS (Residential Accommodation in the Private Sector) run by the borough Council's Housing Services Unit;
- Encouragement of good landlord practice, such as the deposit scheme which forms part of the RAPS scheme;
- Assistance of landlords by the provision of Anti-Social Behaviour services through the Community Safety Section;
- Private rented tenancy support and advice through the Council's Housing Options Section, including the provision of key deposits, subject to certain criteria;
- Supports for third party organisations approved by the Council, such as an energy management company, to promote and co-ordinate home insulation in the Borough for the benefit of local residents.

Enforcement

- 4.3 Enforcement action will not normally be the first response to minor contraventions of legislation. Enforcement action usually only follows when the "softer skills" of mediation, negotiation and even listening have failed to achieve the desired result. This follows Central Government's determination

to attack the housing shortage in the private rented sector by persuading landlords of the benefits of entering this business. When enforcement proves necessary it will be undertaken in accordance with Gosport Borough Council's Generic Enforcement Policy¹. The need for immediate formal enforcement may be brought about by various factors such as the severity of a problem, imminent risk, previous history, confidence in a landlord, public interest, etc.

Direct Financial Assistance

- 4.4 The Regulatory Reform Order enables local authorities to provide financial assistance in the form of a grant, or a loan, either directly or through a third party.

5.0 GRANTS – GENERAL MATTERS

- 5.1 The Council's Private Sector Housing Renewal Policy takes into account the responsibilities of owners to maintain their own properties but also considers their ability so to do and the vulnerability of different groups as well as other criteria in determining eligibility, terms and conditions. It also takes into account the local need for private rented accommodation. Those people who are able to qualify for assistance will be given every opportunity to access the process through the full dissemination of information at Council points of contact, and those of partner organisations.
- 5.2 A printed summary of the Council's Policy will be made available on request, free of charge, from the Town Hall. A full copy of this Policy, and the summary, will also be posted on the Council's website. Customers will be able to make comments on the Policy on line. A soft copy of this Policy will be offered to any potentially interested organisations, e.g. In Touch, Citizens Advice Bureau, etc.

¹ See GBC web site: <http://www.gosport.gov.uk/sections/your-council/council-services/legal--democratic-support/generic-enforcement-policy/>.

- 5.3 Potential applicants make initial contact with the Council to discuss possible assistance for repair, improvement, adaptation, conversion or insulation. In order to retain the independence and integrity of Council employees in these instances, no assistance may be given with form filling or in finding suitable contractors. Potential clients are informed of the advantages of using the local Home Improvement Agency, In Touch, who can assist with administration, selection of contractors, supervision of works, etc. In the event of a person not wishing to use the services of In Touch, verbal assistance and all relevant forms can be provided by the Private Sector Housing Team. Where no financial assistance can be provided, the enquirer may be advised to obtain independent financial assistance for loans, equity release or other funding that may be available from commercial lenders.
- 5.4 If the officer believes grant funding may be available, the next stage will be the completion of the application formalities including appropriate certificates and agreement with terms and conditions, etc., as well as the required number of estimates/quotes.
- 5.5 No financial assistance will be paid towards the cost of repairing tenanted dwellings, nor for works to provide means of escape in case of fire or basic amenities or in HMOs (houses in multiple occupation); these needs will be remedied by recourse to enforcement action if appropriate.
- 5.6 The amount of information required of applicants will be commensurate with the Council being satisfied that all necessary audit checks have been complied with. Some applicants may be required to provide more information than others for the same type and level of grant.
- 5.7 **Level of Assistance** : Some applicants for Disabled Facilities Grants will, following a test of financial resources, be expected to make appropriate contributions towards the costs of the work. These applicants may have to arrange loans, etc., to cover their share of the cost. Other applicants, such as landlords applying for Conversion Grants, will be offered an incentive.

- 5.8 Where direct grant funding is not available or is insufficient to cover project costs, or where the applicant intends to carry out further works which are not the subject of a qualifying application, applicants will be directed to seek assistance from an Independent Financial Advisor or South Coast Money Line.
- 5.9 The Council will monitor the availability of appropriate private sector funding products and will actively seek to ensure that such products are made available locally. However, the Council will not offer financial advice to individual applicants.
- 5.10 The Council operates to a fixed budget. When this budget runs out no further grants will be paid in the financial year.
- 5.11 **Change of Name of a Welfare Benefit** : Certain benefits which have a direct bearing on grant eligibility, such as Income Support, may change or be amended by statute. The Head of Environmental Health has the discretion to continue to award grant aid in cases where the nature of the recipient's benefit remains substantially unchanged.

6.0 **DETAILS OF ASSISTANCE**

- 6.1 **Mandatory Disabled Facilities Grants** : The Council must provide Mandatory Disabled Facilities Grants (DFGs), under the provisions of Section 23 of the Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996, when it has been assessed (usually by an Occupational Therapist) that the works entailed will meet the needs of a registered, or registerable, disabled person towards :

- Facilitating access by the disabled occupant to, from and within the property;
- Making the property safe for the disabled occupant;

- Providing suitable and accessible living, sleeping, bathing and cooking facilities;
 - Providing suitable heating;
 - Altering as required the heating, lighting and electrical systems/fittings.
- 6.2 The Council will award Mandatory Disabled Facilities Grants according to the prevailing legislation and Government guidance that determines, amongst other things, the type of work that can be funded, the maximum contribution that may be made (currently £30,000), and the test of financial resources that must be applied.
- 6.3 Applicants usually make their initial approach to Hampshire County Council Occupational Therapy Unit. The Occupational Therapist will make an assessment of the relevant person's needs, not wants, and advise the person that they may apply for a DFG to assist them with the cost of the works.
- 6.4 Applicants will be actively encouraged to use the services of the local Home Improvement Agency which in Gosport is supplied by the registered charity and non-profit making organisation, In Touch.
- 6.5 *Conditions* : If the grant received was to an owner-occupier and was greater than £5,000 then, under the terms of The Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996: Disabled Facilities Grant (Conditions relating to approval or payment of Grant) General Consent 2008, it shall be a condition that if a person disposes of the property benefiting from the DFG before a period of 10 years from the 'certified date' (or 'completion date') they must repay to the Council on demand, up to a maximum of £10,000, any part of the grant that exceeds £5,000. This condition does not apply to applicants who are tenants.
- 6.6 **Discretionary Disabled Facilities Grants** : The Council will not normally consider applications for Discretionary Disabled Facilities Grants. Where

applicants have a contribution to make according to the outcome of the test of financial resources they may provide written evidence to the Council from an independent third party financial advisor of their inability to raise sufficient funds to cover their own contribution. In such circumstances the applicant will be recommended to approach South Coast Money Line (SCML²) to raise funds. If the applicant refuses to do this and so requests, a confidential report on the application will be presented to the Housing Board and Members will decide what level, if any, of additional funding will be awarded.

6.7 *Conditions* : It shall be a condition of this grant that if the relevant property is disposed of within 5 years of the certified date the grant plus interest at compound rate must be repaid to the Borough Council.

6.8 **Discretionary Home Repair Assistance Grants** : Discretionary Home Repair Assistance Grants (HRAs) up to a maximum of £5,000 will be considered for vital emergency minor aids or adaptations. Applicants must be owner-occupiers or private sector tenants, be registered or registerable disabled and in receipt of –

- Income Support,
- Income-based Employment and Support Allowance (not contribution-based ESA),
- Income-based Jobseeker's Allowance (not contribution-based JSA),
- Guarantee Pension Credit (not Savings Pension Credit alone),
- Housing Benefit,
- Council Tax Benefit, or
- Working Tax Credit and/or Child Tax Credit provided that the annual income for the purposes of assessing entitlement to the tax credit is less than £15,050.

² <http://www.part.org.uk/>

- 6.9 These grants are appropriate in priority situations for urgently needed disabled aids and adaptations (for instance, a straight stair lift or level access shower) that, if not carried out, could directly affect the occupant's health, safety and welfare, or the health, safety and welfare of the disabled person's carer or to prevent "bed-blocking".
- 6.10 The method of means testing for this type of assistance shall be a simple transference method whereby applicants will qualify if they already receive a means tested benefit listed above.
- 6.11 *Conditions* : It shall be a condition of this grant that if the relevant property is disposed of within 5 years of the certified date the grant plus interest at compound rate must be repaid to the Borough Council.
- 6.12 **Discretionary Conversion Grants** : The Council will consider applications for Discretionary Conversion Grants from private sector landlords/owners for the conversion of suitable empty shops, offices or commercial buildings, or under-occupied properties, into smaller self-contained units for subsequent renting, subject to specified terms and conditions. Under-occupied properties in this instance refers to large domestic properties, occupied by no one or a single household, which readily lend themselves to be converted into two or more self-contained units.
- 6.13 To qualify, the resultant units must be rented, or available to rent, for a period of not less than five years from the certified date. During this period the owner must let the properties to the Council's nominee either direct (himself or via his agent) or through a registered social landlord approved by the Council for this purpose. Throughout the letting period the landlord must manage and maintain the dwelling in accordance with relevant legislation and such reasonable policies and practices as may be notified by the Council. These and further requirements are set out in a Nominations Agreement which must be signed prior to approval of the Conversion Grant.

- 6.14 The level of assistance will not be greater than 50% of the total cost of the works per unit created up to a maximum of £5,000 per unit created. The Head of Environmental Health will have the discretion to increase this amount should the cost of the proposed conversion be unduly large. Any assistance over the normal maximum of £5,000 will be matched by a requirement to increase the minimum length of time that the units are rented in the private sector. The Council will consider the cost of all proposed work in the light of the eligibility of work and reasonableness of costed items on estimates/quotations.
- 6.15 *Conditions* : It shall be a condition of this grant that if the relevant property is disposed of within 5 years (or such longer period as may be agreed following approval of a grant greater than the normal maximum) of the certified date the grant plus interest at compound rate must be repaid to the Borough Council. Repayment will also be demanded, with compound interest, for a breach of the Nominations Agreement.

7.0 **ENERGY EFFICIENCY**

- 7.1 **Warm Front Grant Top-Up** : The national Warm Front scheme provides a package of insulation and heating improvements up to the value of £3,500 (or £6,000 where oil, low carbon or renewable technologies are recommended). It is a Government-funded initiative and the scheme is managed by eaga. People who own their own home or rent it from a private landlord may be eligible for a grant.
- 7.2 Applicants must be –
- (a) Householders aged 60 or over in receipt of one or more of the following benefits :
- Income Support
 - Council Tax Benefit
 - Housing Benefit
 - Job Seekers Allowance (income-based)

- Pension Credit
- Income-related Employment and Support Allowance

(b) Householders with a child under 16, or pregnant women with maternity certificate MAT-B1, in receipt of one or more of the following benefits :

- Income Support
- Council Tax Benefit
- Housing Benefit
- Job Seekers Allowance (income-based)
- Pension Credit
- Income-related Employment and Support Allowance

(c) Householders in receipt of one or more of the following benefits :

- Working Tax Credit (with an income of less than £16,040, which must include a disability element)
- Disability Living Allowance
- Child Tax Credit (with an income of less than £16,040)
- Housing Benefit (which must include a disability premium)
- Income Support (which must include a disability premium)
- Council Tax Benefit (which must include a disability premium)
- War Disablement Pension (which must include a mobility supplement or Constant Attendance Allowance)
- Industrial Injuries Disablement Benefit (which must include Constant Attendance Allowance)
- Attendance Allowance

7.3 The scheme covers loft insulation, draught-proofing, cavity wall insulation, hot water tank insulation, gas, electric or oil central heating or a glass-fronted solid fuel fire.

7.4 The top-up from Gosport Borough Council will be up to a maximum of £2,000 for householders who have their Warm Front Grant approved but are unable to meet their contribution where the cost of the works exceeds the

prevailing Warm Front limits. Funding is subject to an allocation of funds from the Regional Housing Board.

8.0 **HANDYPERSON SCHEME**

8.1 This Scheme promotes the concept of personal responsibility for the maintenance of one's own property, for older people, the registered disabled and the less well off. It is provided via the local Home Improvement Agency, In Touch. The Handyperson Scheme provides elderly and disabled residents with a reliable workman to undertake minor works of repair or maintenance at a reduced cost which is subsidised by the Council and the Supporting People arm of Hampshire County Council. It covers work such as replacing a tap washer, installing security measures, clearing eaves gutters, etc., that would be difficult for older people to undertake themselves and that, if not attended, can quickly lead to larger problems and the gradual deterioration of the property.

8.2 The last Gosport Private Sector House Condition Survey revealed that 51% of local households contain retired people, one of the highest concentrations in the United Kingdom. Surveys have also shown that older homeowners have a real fear of employing 'unknown' workmen, and have difficulty in finding trustworthy contractors to undertake small-scale works in the first place.

8.3 The Scheme is available to all residents who are over the age of 60 (not in employment) or who are registered disabled. The maximum value of support per request is £250.

8.4 *Conditions* : None.

9.0 **HOMECHECK SCHEME**

9.1 The Scheme provides a free home health and safety check for vulnerable households in the Borough who are aged over 60, the registered disabled

and those with a child under 5 years of age. The valuable work the Homecheck Scheme undertakes, such as removing trip hazards, providing free smoke detectors and improved door and window security, helps to reduce the number of home accidents and help people feel safer in their own homes. The Regional Housing Board currently provides partial support of the Homecheck Scheme. The maximum value of support per request is £250.

9.2 *Conditions* : None.

10.0 **LOANS, EQUITY RELEASE ETC.**

10.1 The Council will not directly provide any loan or arrange any equity release or other funding. A range of potential secured and unsecured loans may be available through South Coast Money Line (SCML). These loans will be made available to owner-occupiers, who own the freehold of their property, to bring their homes up to the Decent Homes Standard.

10.2 Loans will not be offered to leaseholders of properties whose freeholder is a Registered Social Landlord (RSL) since RSLs provide many ways in which payments can be made for key repairs. Neither will loans be offered to home owners who would qualify for a loan from a main High Street lender.

11.0 **GENERAL TERMS AND CONDITIONS**

11.1 These are detailed in Appendix 2.

12.0 **TRANSITIONAL PROVISIONS**

12.1 The following transitional provisions apply when this policy first has effect :

- Any application for assistance made and formally approved before the date from which this policy has effect under any previous policy will continue to be administered under that previous policy and will be subject to any conditions imposed thereby.

- Any application for assistance fully made but not formally approved before the date from which this policy has effect will be considered under and subject to any conditions imposed by this policy. If, however, any application would be liable to refusal solely because of changes to eligibility criteria, then the eligibility criteria of the previous policy will apply to the application to permit it to proceed subject to any other conditions imposed by this policy.

13.0 **APPLICATIONS OUTSIDE POLICY**

- 13.1 Article 4 of the 2002 Order makes it plain that the Borough Council cannot provide assistance unless the power is exercised in accordance with the Policy.

14.0 **COMPLAINTS POLICY**

- 14.1 Any customer who is dissatisfied with the service provided will initially be asked to contact the officer dealing with their case and give them the opportunity to alter the services or to explain the decision/outcome.
- 14.2 If after contact with the officer dealing with the case a customer is still dissatisfied and wishes to explore the matter further they must contact the Head of Environmental Health who will provide a full written response within ten working days. In the event of all enquiries not being complete to enable a full response within ten working days, an interim response will be made indicating when a full response may be expected.
- 14.3 In the event that a customer is still dissatisfied, the matter will be dealt with in accordance with the Council's formal complaints procedure and a leaflet is available upon request or can be viewed on line³. This is a three-stage process as follows :

³ <http://www.gosport.gov.uk/sections/your-council/customer-comments/complaints/>

- *Stage 1:* If the customer is still unhappy they should contact the Council's Complaints Manager who will refer the matter to the relevant Manager for investigation within ten working days.
- *Stage 2:* If the customer still feels that their complaint has not been dealt with satisfactorily, or they would like to discuss it further, they can contact the Council's Complaints Manager who will arrange an independent review by an impartial Manager within 20 working days.
- *Stage 3:* If the customer still remains dissatisfied, their complaint can go before a panel of elected Councillors which will meet within thirty days and which the customer may attend.

15.0 **DEFINITION OF TERMS USED IN THIS POLICY AND APPENDICES**

Agreed Works	Those works appearing on a schedule produced or authorised by the Council.
Common Parts	In relation to a building, includes the structure and exterior of the building and common facilities provided, whether in the building or elsewhere, for persons who include the occupiers of one or more flats in the building.
Consent of Mortgagee	This is given by the building society, bank, etc., with whom the applicant has their mortgage in the case of freeholders and leaseholders.
Conversion Application	An application in respect of works to provide one or more dwellings by the conversion of a house or other building.
Date of final payment of grant	The date of the final cheque from the Council that completes payment of the grant assistance.

Decent Home Standard	<p>A Decent Home is defined as :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • meeting the current statutory minimum standard for housing, • is in a reasonable state of repair, • has reasonably modern facilities and services and • provides a reasonable degree of thermal comfort.
Equity Release	<p>A means by which elderly persons can raise money against the value of their home where the difference between any outstanding mortgage/loan and the current market value is significant, also applicable where there is no outstanding mortgage/loan. The method of repayment can vary but generally the value of the loan, with or without interest, is repaid upon sale of the property.</p>
House in Multiple Occupation	<p>Defined in Parts 2 and 7 of the Housing Act 2004 or any successor statutory definition. References to the owner of or person managing such a house shall have the same meaning.</p>
Mandatory Disabled Facilities Grant	<p>Defined in the Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996, as amended, or in any successor statutory definition.</p>
Means Tested Benefits	<p>Any income-based benefit received by an applicant.</p>
Member of the Family	<p>Includes spouses, persons who live together as husband and wife, parents, grandparents, children, grandchildren, brothers, sisters, uncles, aunts, nephews and nieces. It also includes same sex couples.</p>
Person with a disability or	<p>She/he is registered as a person with a disability or, in</p>

people with disabilities	the opinion of the Social Services Authority, is registerable as a person with a disability. This definition recognises the fact that the majority of people will not be on a register.
Persons not related or connected with the owner of a dwelling	Means not being a member of the owner's family in accordance with the definition of 'Member of the Family' described above.
Preliminary or Ancillary Services, Fees and Charges which may be included in a grant application	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Technical and structural surveys; • Designing and preparing plans and drawings and preparing schedules of works; • Obtaining estimates and valuations; • Applications for building regulations approval and planning permission; • Supervision of works; • Disconnection and reconnection of electricity, gas, water and drainage utilities made necessary by the works (but no charges arising out of non-payment of bills); • Advice on contracts and on financing the cost of works; <p>including such services given by or through home improvement agencies.</p>
Proof of Title	Completed by a Solicitor or Building Society on an applicant's behalf in the case of freeholders or leaseholders to confirm property ownership.
Reasonable Repair	Means the Council shall have due regard to the age and character of a dwelling and the locality in which it is situated, but not its state of internal decoration, when

considering its condition.

Statutory Notice	A legal notice requiring owners/responsible persons to carry out work or some other action with regard to their property. The notice is served using the power of a national law and failure to comply may result in prosecution through the courts or works being carried out at the responsible person's expense.
Substantial Disrepair	Repairs to a single property required to put it in reasonable repair and that will cost over £1,000. This figure is not legally defined but is accepted when undertaking house condition surveys.
Tenant	A person occupying property on an assured, or assured short term letting basis.
Vulnerable Household	A household where at least one member is in receipt of at least one of the principal means tested or disability related benefits. See Appendix 4 for a more detailed definition.
Works in Default	Works that the Council organise and possibly carry out as a result of the recipient of a statutory notice failing to comply with its requirements within a reasonable period of time.
Working Days	Days excluding Saturday and Sundays and Bank Holidays.

APPENDIX 1

NATIONAL, REGIONAL AND LOCAL CONSIDERATIONS RELEVANT TO THE FORMULATION OF THIS POLICY

- A1.1 The Regulatory Reform (Housing Assistance) (England and Wales) Order 2002 came into force on 18 July 2002. This repealed most of the prescriptive legislation governing the previous housing assistance regime and replaced it with new wide-ranging powers whereby local housing authorities could provide assistance for housing renewal significantly based on local needs and achievement of local and regional strategic objectives.
- A1.2 The increased flexibility permits the possibility of new and innovative approaches to housing renewal based upon locally perceived needs, though this also means it will require regular review together with the overall Housing Strategy.
- A1.3 The first Private Sector Housing Renewal Policy was approved by Members and became effective from 1 April 2003. The latest Private Sector Housing Renewal Policy is effective from 1 April and replaces its predecessor. It is adopted for the purposes of Article 3 of the 2002 Order. The Policy is posted on the Council website and customers will be invited to make comments. A printed summary is available free of charge upon request. The Policy is subject to regular review and when significant changes occur, such as to the type of assistance available.
- A1.4 **THE LOCAL CONTEXT**
- The Borough of Gosport is part of the internationally famous maritime recreational area of the Solent with its prime location on the South Coast of England.
- A1.5 The population of the Borough is projected to increase from 76,400 in 2001 to 77,050 in 2026 (0.9% or a total of 650 people). Set on a peninsula of only

2,750 hectares (27.5 square kilometres), it is one of the most densely populated urban areas in the South of England.

- A1.6 Despite its crowded nature, the Borough boasts over 27 kilometres of beaches, inlets and marinas around Portsmouth Harbour and the Solent. The Alver Valley, which extends to 243 hectares, provides a green gap between Gosport town and Lee-on-the-Solent, providing the community with an invaluable rural recreational resource. The inlets and coastal waters are of national and international nature conservation significance and reach far into the urban fabric, whilst the Alver Valley has elements of ancient woodlands and rare reed beds along the River Alver.
- A1.7 The built heritage of the Borough is both rich and unique, primarily a product of the Borough's long association with the Royal Navy and the defence of Portsmouth Harbour. Many of the waterfront naval and military establishments are of national historic importance.
- A1.8 The Borough is proud of its recent achievements including the construction of the 5 kilometres long Millennium Promenade which opened up coastal areas closed to public access for hundreds of years. Along with this have come spectacular waterfront housing developments, the restoration of prominent historic buildings and the opportunity to create further improvements and to provide community facilities.
- A1.9 Land use and employment have been dominated by the MOD (Ministry of Defence), but as its influence declines, it brings both concerns and new opportunities. The review of the MOD in Gosport is continuing to release new land for regeneration and development, but the legacy of the defence industry leaves problems in its wake.
- A1.10 It has been estimated that at one stage over two thirds of the local economy was dependent on the MOD, but as demands have declined, many local

people have been forced to seek work outside the Borough. With only one single carriageway access road (A32), no train line, and only a pedestrian ferry access to Portsmouth, daily commuting from Gosport brings major congestion problems though plans for a Bus Rapid Transport System are currently being implemented.

- A1.11 There are isolated pockets of social deprivation and low educational achievement, as there are with any local authority. One of the most significant statistics relating to the Borough is the number of 'retired' households. Research by the Government Office of the South East (GOSE), estimates that Gosport will witness the second greatest growth in the number of 'retired' households in the South-East England/Thames Valley area. It is estimated that the number of retired people will increase by 49.3% by 2026. In some areas of the Borough there are a significant number of single parent families, and state benefits support many people, 22% of households are classed as 'vulnerable'; that is, in receipt of at least one of the principal means tested or disability related benefits. There is an inextricable link between ageing and disability and 38.7% of those with a disability are over the age of 60.
- A1.12 A survey of the condition of private sector housing using a sample of randomly selected stratified properties was last undertaken in 2004 and the Report produced in early 2005. Some of the key findings, extended for the total private sector stock are summarised below. A new Private Sector House Condition Survey will be undertaken in Spring/Summer 2010 in conjunction with eight other Hampshire local authorities. The results will help to focus and prioritise private sector housing activity.
- A1.13 More recent regional research has been undertaken by CURS (Centre for Urban and Regional Studies) based at the University of Birmingham. CURS was commissioned by the Regional Housing Board of the South-East Region in December 2005 to undertake a study into the location, nature and extent of poor housing conditions in the private sector in order to inform decisions

on resource allocations in the future. The report was published in May 2006. One of the key elements of the Report revealed that in the south east region as a whole, 75% of properties that failed the Decent Homes Standard were on thermal comfort considerations. 89% of dwellings failing on the grounds of thermal comfort did so for reasons of poor insulation. 61% of dwellings failed the Decent Homes Standard on thermal comfort alone.

Table: Key facts from Private Sector Stock Condition Survey 2004-05

Population of the Borough/District (2001 Census)	76,415
Total number of houses private sector dwellings, including registered social landlord stock but excluding Ministry of Defence	30,828
Total number of owner occupied dwellings (2004 Housing Improvement Programme return)	28,489
Rate of unfitness	1.5% (473 dwellings)
Total Cost of repairing unfit houses	£1.75 m
Number of homes not achieving the Decent Homes Standard	2,838 (9%)
Number of vulnerable households	6,936 (22%)
Number of vulnerable households in Decent Homes	2,299 (67%)
Percentage of households occupied by : 50 – 65 yr olds Retired persons	28% 51%
Percentage of unfitness in the private rented sector (includes Registered Social Landlord dwellings but not GBC or MOD)	2.55%
Average SAP (Standard Assessment Procedure) rating	56%
Percentage of dwellings with inadequate loft insulation	50%
Percentage of private sector vacant dwellings	1%

A1.14 Meeting Key Strategic And Service-Related Aims And Objectives :

Gosport Borough Council's Mission Statement is :

To work with our community to improve everyone's quality of life and deliver a sustainable future for the Borough.

- A1.15 The Council has identified a number of challenges that face the Borough in the next few years. The Council's Corporate Plan and latest position statement are available on our web site⁴.
- A1.16 In addition, the South East Regional Housing Strategy 2008 – 2011 includes a number of key priorities of relevance to the Council's Private Sector Housing Renewal Policy :
- increasing the proportion of private sector Decent Homes,
 - energy efficiency improvement, provision of adequate heating systems and reduction of fuel poverty,
 - bringing empty homes back into use.
- A1.17 The Regional Housing Board have adopted a competitive approach to funding through local authority partnerships that will improve non-decent housing in urban and rural locations and will include developing equity release and loan products, tackling thermal comfort and fuel poverty issues and bringing empty homes back into use. Their approach is designed to encourage innovation and ensure that good practice is promulgated across the region. The Board were encouraged by the enthusiastic response of local authorities to this approach and approved bids taking up the full allocation of £20m for 2008-09 and £30m for each of the following two years.
- A1.18 The provision of an adequate supply of Decent Homes is a key element of the Government's Sustainable Communities Plan, "Sustainable Communities: Building for the Future" published in 2003.
- A1.19 The Council must contribute to a key national priority of increasing the proportion of vulnerable households in the private sector living in decent homes. Compliance requires the proportion of 'vulnerable' households, defined as those in receipt of at least one of the principal means tested or

⁴ <http://www.gosport.gov.uk/sections/your-council/corporate-plan/>

disability related benefits living in Decent Homes (from a National 2001 baseline of 57%) to reach the following levels :

63% by 2005

70% by 2010

75% by 2020

The proportion of private sector vulnerable households in Gosport living in decent housing in 2001 was 59.4%. The most recent local private sector house condition survey in 2004-05 indicated that the proportion of non-decent homes in the Borough stood at 9%, and the proportion of vulnerable households who occupied a decent home was 67%. It should be noted that The Department for Communities and Local Government have stated that when local authorities are assessing levels of non-Decency, as a rule of thumb, properties constructed after 1980 should be adjudged to be decent.

- A1.20 **Resourcing The Private Sector Housing Renewal Policy** : The capital funding of assistance for approved works or other measures comes largely from the Council's own resources although the Government does provide a substantial contribution towards Mandatory Disabled Facilities Grants depending on local need. The local authority is expected to meet all the Disabled Facilities Grants needs of its residents up to and above this figure. The allocation of capital funds for private sector housing renewal depends on the prevailing priorities within the wider capital programme. Further funding for specific schemes is also available from the Regional Housing Board.
- A1.21 Support is provided by the Borough Council, together with a substantial contribution from Hampshire County Council's Supporting People, to the local Home Improvement Agency provided through In Touch, part of the Hyde Housing Group. The Council recognises the needs and benefits of supporting the private housing sector in a targeted and effective manner and will continue to do so.

A1.22 **Loans, Equity Release etc.** The Council will not directly provide any loan or arrange any equity release or other funding. Due to a dire shortage of suitable products from mainstream High Street lenders the Borough Council, in conjunction with a consortium of other neighbouring local authorities (five in all, including Brighton, Chichester, Eastleigh and Portsmouth) commissioned a feasibility study on a range of potential secured and unsecured loans through South Coast Money Line (SCML, formerly Portsmouth Area Regeneration Trust (PART)⁵). The Report recommended that a pilot scheme be introduced and to that end Members agreed in the Housing Renewal Policy 2004/5 to fund initial set-up costs and loan funding each year. The Scheme, named 'Southern Home Loans Partnership' made its first loans in 2006. The Scheme follows Government Guidance that the primary responsibility to repair one's home rests with the owner but, unlike the Handyperson Scheme, this loan scheme will be for larger scale repair works by owner-occupiers who find it very difficult to access funding from mainstream financial institutions. A key task for the SCML will be to identify sources of loan funds, other than direct from the commissioning local authorities. In time, with the repayment of loans, and hence re-cycling of the original funds provided, it is hoped that the Scheme will become more and more self-financing.

⁵ <http://www.part.org.uk/>

APPENDIX 2

GENERAL GRANT CONDITIONS

- A2.1 These terms and conditions form part of the Council's Private Sector Housing Renewal Policy and will be applicable to all elements of it, except where otherwise stated. In so much as the terms and conditions applicable to Mandatory DFG are set by statute determined by the Government, these terms and conditions are not applicable to these grants although some may be the same as those which are applicable to such grants, details of which are separately available.
- A2.2 The terms and conditions criteria for discretionary grants detailed within this policy will be listed on the relevant approval document. In making an application for assistance, applicants are agreeing to all the terms and conditions as detailed by the Council.
- A2.3 The **discretionary grants** the Council awards are all subject to levels of available funding in each financial year and as such the Council reserves the right to defer consideration or approval of applications for periods of time of its own choosing in order to properly manage its finances.
- A2.4 No application will be accepted for works required to **reinstate any dwelling** designated by the Secretary of State as defective under Part XVI of the Housing Act 1985, although applications for other types of work to defective dwellings will be considered, such as a DFG. These 'designated dwelling types' were typically properties constructed using pre-cast reinforced concrete components in the years following the end of the Second World War. A full list of these property types may be obtained by contacting the Private Sector Housing Team.
- A2.5 The Council **may refer enquiries** for assistance to the externally managed Warm Front Scheme or to the Home Improvement Agency if appropriate.

- A2.6 In considering applications for the benefit of people with disabilities, the Council may choose not to grant aid adaptations for which Hampshire County Council are responsible under the **Chronically Sick and Disabled Persons Act 1970**. This would include simple items such as grab rails fixed either side of entrance doors and near slipper baths.
- A2.7 The Council may from time to time utilise **special funding** from Central Government or other sources aimed at specific works to target issues of local and national concern in accordance with any special conditions, such as the conversion of under-occupied homes into several flats for renting in the private sector. Any special terms and conditions applicable to such initiatives will be appended to the Private Sector Housing Renewal Policy, as they will not significantly alter the Council's primary approach.
- A2.8 The Council does not require applicants who are able to raise their own funding through equity release or similar schemes to raise **funds in excess of the cost of agreed works** where they do not wish to do so, as a result of any minimum funding values imposed by potential lenders.
- A2.9 The Council may determine not to consider applications from persons, organisations, etc., where there is a possible **alternative source of funding** for maintaining properties, such as the NHS.
- A2.10 Applicants must be **18 years of age or older** at the date of application and in the case of joint applications, one must be over 18 at the date of application.
- A2.11 Grant assistance will only be approved for the benefit of applicants who are able to provide evidence of a **valid National Insurance Number**. Foreign nationals who have not worked in the UK must supply some other form of evidence that is to the satisfaction of the Head of Audit.
- A2.12 Applications will only be accepted on the **prescribed forms** of the Council. Applicants for assistance will be **required to sign a declaration** as to the

accuracy of information provided and that of supporting paperwork, such as wage slips and accounts, etc.

- A2.13 **Information provided to the Council by applicants** as part of the application process will be checked thoroughly and may be shared with other departments of the Council and other organisations involved in any aspect of handling public funds, upon the discretion of the Head of Audit, to prevent and detect fraud or in investigation of other possible criminal activities.
- A2.14 In certain circumstances where the Council believe that applicants may have attempted to **deliberately defraud** the Council, details will be passed to the Head of Audit who may recommend that the file be passed to the Police for investigation.
- A2.15 **The Council will determine the level of assistance**, if any, of Mandatory DFG as set out in the prevailing Housing Renewal Grants Regulations. The Council will routinely carry out cross-checks on information provided.
- A2.16 All applications for assistance must be accompanied by an **Owner Occupation Certificate or a Tenant's Certificate or a Certificate Of Intended Letting**, which states that the applicant has, or proposes to acquire, a qualifying interest in the property which is the subject to the application; or, that he will rent out the property for a minimum of five years. In addition :
- *Owner Occupation Certificate* : in the case of an application for a DFG, the applicant must confirm that he/she intends that the property will be the only or main residence of the disabled occupant throughout the condition period or such shorter period as his/her health and other relevant circumstances may permit.
 - *Intended Letting Certificate* : that throughout a period of five years, or longer if applicable, from the completion date the property will be let or available for letting as a residence, not a holiday home, to a

person(s) not related or connected with the owner of the dwelling for which assistance is being received.

- *Tenant's Certificate* : in the case of a tenant's application for a DFG, the applicant must confirm that he/she occupies (alone or jointly with others) the property as a tenant or, in the case of a common part, is a tenant of a flat in the building; and in either case does not have or propose to acquire an owner's interest.

A2.17 In addition, the Borough Council will require any information that it believes to be necessary to process the application form.

A2.18 **Proof of title** shall be required to enable property ownership to be confirmed, and **consent of any mortgagee** will be needed.

A2.19 Grant applications from **private sector tenants, Council tenants and housing association tenants** will only be accepted for a Mandatory Disabled Facilities Grant.

A2.20 A **Gosport Borough Council tenant** proposing to apply for a Mandatory Disabled Facilities Grant will be directed to the Housing Services Unit which will consider the scheme and fund any approved adaptations.

A2.21 Assistance for private sector, Council and housing association tenants will be accepted for the **Handyperson Scheme and Homecheck Scheme**.

A2.22 A tenant's Disabled Facilities Grant application must also be supported by **written permission from the landlord** agreeing to the proposed adaptation.

A2.23 In the case of assistance for **works to common parts** (as some part or the whole works of a Disabled Facilities Grant) an individual applicant must obtain permission from the Freeholder for the works to be undertaken unless there is evidence to the contrary, such as deeds or tenancy agreements, which prove otherwise.

- A2.24 In all circumstances, other than the Handyperson Scheme, work to a property will require the **owner's written authority** and the knowledge of any mortgagee.
- A2.25 The responsibility to gain all **necessary approvals for works** to be undertaken with assistance rests with the applicant or their agent; such approvals may be Planning Permission or Building Regulation Approval or any of the matters raised within the terms and conditions of grant assistance.
- A2.26 An application for a Disabled Facilities Grant will only be considered complete and then duly processed when it is accompanied by an **Occupational Therapist's Report** recommending the necessary works. It is expected that such a report will normally be provided at the commencement of the enquiry/application process.
- A2.27 Applications for assistance towards **works that have already been completed** will not be accepted.
- A2.28 The Head of Environmental Health has the discretion to permit grant aided works to **commence prior to approval**. However, the applicant must first obtain this permission in writing and is subject to the proviso that such consent is not tantamount to grant approval. In the case of Disabled Facilities Grants, where it is adjudged that the needs of the applicant are critical but for some reason (such as lack of funds) a Grant cannot be approved immediately, applicants will normally be permitted to commence the relevant works following the issue of written authorisation from the Council.
- A2.29 The details of **means testing** referred to in individual grant descriptions shall apply to all applications made for Disabled Facilities Grant except in cases where the grant is for a child.

- A2.30 In any case where **financial circumstances** at the time of application are later confirmed differently to those submitted by the applicant(s) such as would lead to reduced assistance or denial of assistance, the original approval will be amended/cancelled and the Council is entitled to demand repayment together with compound interest from the date on which any payment was made until the date of full repayment, at such reasonable rate as the Council may determine to recover any over payment. In such circumstances, the local authority may choose to cancel the whole approval or demand repayment of all monies paid, plus compound interest, despite the fact that a reduced level of assistance would have been approved, where it is felt the degree of error in the applicant completing the original means test forms is such to suggest a deliberate attempt to deceive. In cases where **financial circumstances** at the time of application are later confirmed differently to those submitted by the applicant(s) such as would lead to an increased assistance, the original approval will be amended/cancelled.
- A2.31 The Council or their agents will hold final authority to determine what works are included on **grant schedules** although it may be acceptable for owners, tenants or their agents, etc, to draw up initial schedules of work which may be reduced or added to by the Council in terms of work qualifying for possible assistance.
- A2.32 The Council will include the cost of **Preliminary or Ancillary Services Fees and Charges** within the calculation of assistance and each submission of fees will be individually considered for reasonableness. Payment towards any such fees is conditional on a grant being approved and the specified works being completed in full.
- A2.33 **The number of estimates/quotes** accompanying an application for assistance for a DFG/Conversion Grant shall be at least two. The exception shall be in cases where the adaptation or aid required is so specialised that only one manufacturer can supply it. In the case of a Home Repair Assistance Grant the minimum requirement will be one estimate/quote. No

separate estimate/quote will be required in the case of Handyperson Scheme; costs shall be determined according to a standard schedule of rates agreed with the contractor, In Touch. The Council reserves the right to ask for more estimates/quotes if it is not satisfied with that/those already submitted.

- A2.34 If an applicant submits an **estimate/quote from a member of their family** who then carries out the agreed works the grant will be paid on the basis of the cost of materials only and no allowance will be paid towards labour.
- A2.35 The grant **works must be carried out** by one of the contractors whose estimates/quotes were submitted as part of the application process, the grant having normally been calculated using the lowest priced estimate/quote. Exceptions to this rule will only be made in special circumstances, such as the original contractor being unavailable to carry out the work.
- A2.36 Upon the conclusion of a Discretionary Conversion Grant, it will be expected that the property will meet the **Decent Homes Standard**. Any exception to this will require the authority of the Head of Environmental Health.
- A2.37 The amount of **grant payable**, for each application, shall be the actual cost of undertaking the eligible works (including any associated fees) less any contribution required from the applicant, up to the prevailing limits as listed below. For Mandatory Disabled Facilities Grant the limit is absolute, based on Government legislation; for other grants the limit is determined locally.

Mandatory Disabled Facilities Grant	£30,000
Home Repairs Assistance Grant (HRA) for an essential minor aid or adaptation	£5,000
Discretionary Disabled Facilities Grant	Determined by Housing Board
Handyperson and Homecheck Schemes	£250

A2.38 **Funding will only be increased** beyond the sum originally approved, up to the maximum set out above, in the event of :

- unforeseen work being required to allow completion of eligible works, or
- associated works needed to protect the health and safety of occupiers, or
- evidenced increases in costs to the contractor from their suppliers, etc.

A formal **Revised Approval** will be required before any additional payment is made.

A2.39 Where an **applicant's other circumstances change**, or are confirmed as different from originally stated, after the application has been approved, such that approval would no longer be given, the grant approval will be cancelled and no payments made, or no further payments made where interim payments have already been paid, except in exceptional circumstances when the Head of Environmental Health may give authority to provide further funding so as to conclude work at a suitable and appropriate stage. Where payments have been made, the local authority may demand repayment together with compound interest from the date on which payment was made until the date of full repayment, at such reasonable rate as the Council may determine.

A2.40 The Council will determine in each approval document the **time period allowed for works** to be completed, which will not normally exceed 12 months and may be significantly shorter for small items of work.

A2.41 The Council may specify in grant approvals involving the installation of specialised equipment for the benefit of people with disabilities that the **equipment is to be returned to the Council** if it is no longer needed or the property is sold. The grant recipient, or a representative, shall notify the Council as soon as the equipment is no longer needed and the Council or their agent may choose to remove it for re-use elsewhere, making good any

damage caused by its removal. This principle shall apply even where the original grant was approved with a contribution from the applicant.

- A2.42 **The applicant employs the builder or contractor** to undertake agreed works and the Council have no contractual liabilities in that relationship as their role is only to administer the grant process.
- A2.43 The applicant is ultimately responsible for ensuring the **quality of the completed works**. This responsibility can be transferred to an agent of the applicant, such as an architect or a Home Improvement Agency, such as In Touch.
- A2.44 The **payment** of a grant will only be considered after any applicant's contribution has been accounted for in the value of invoices submitted.
- A2.45 All payments shall be conditional upon **receipt of an acceptable invoice** and made direct to the appropriate contractor following agreement with the applicant that works to the appropriate stage have been satisfactorily completed. In any dispute between the applicant and contractor, which is not resolved in a reasonable time period, the grant, or part thereof, may be paid to the applicant at the discretion of the Council.
- A2.46 The Council will consider requests for **Interim Payments** such that no interim payment will be more than 90% of the cost of completed work and in aggregate no more than 90% of the total approved amount before final completion.
- A2.47 In the case of a **Conversion Grant** (made to a landlord) for which part or complete payment has been made, and where the applicant **disposes of the property**, or ceases to make it available for letting as the case may be, before the conclusion of a five-year period (or longer period at the discretion of the Head of Environmental Health) following the date of final payment then he/she shall repay to the Council on demand the full amount of assistance paid plus compound interest at a reasonable rate determined by

the Council. The compound interest part of this equation may be waived in exceptional circumstances, and at the discretion of the Head of Environmental Health, such as the ill-health of the original applicant being unable to continue his business.

A2.48 In the case of a **Discretionary Home Repairs Assistance Grant** (made to an owner-occupier) for which part or complete payment has been made, and where the applicant **disposes of the property**, or does not use the property as their sole or main dwelling as the case may be, before the conclusion of a five-year period following the date of final payment then he/she shall repay to the Council on demand the full amount of assistance paid plus compound interest at a reasonable rate determined by the Council. The compound interest part of this equation may be waived in exceptional circumstances, and at the discretion of the Head of Environmental Health, such as the ill-health of the original applicant forcing them to move properties.

A2.49 The condition requiring repayment of assistance in the event of sale, etc, within the five full years after final payment is made **shall not apply to the following :**

- Handyperson Scheme,
- Mandatory Disabled Facilities Grants below £5,000, or
- Exceptional circumstances at the discretion of the Head of Environmental Health, e.g. the applicant having to move into a nursing or residential home.

A2.50 **Repayment shall not be required** in the instance of discretionary grant aid for the Handyperson Scheme because their low cost value, i.e. less than £250, would make recovery uneconomic and in any event the measures undertaken have improved the housing stock as a whole.

A2.51 Under the terms of The Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996 : Disabled Facilities Grant (Conditions relating to approval or payment

of Grant) General Consent 2008, if a person (who is an owner-occupier) **disposes of the property** benefiting from the DFG before a period of 10 years from the 'certified date' (or, 'completion date'), then that person must repay to the Council on demand, up to a maximum of £10,000, any part of the grant that exceeds £5,000. This condition does not apply to tenants.

A2.52 **If a property is disposed of within five years** and the grant recipient feels they have a case for repayment to be foregone, representations will be considered by the Head of Environmental Health, who will determine whether to waive repayment or not, or to recover the grant in total or in part. The Head of Environmental Health shall have regard to the individual circumstances and the ability of the person concerned to make that repayment in full or part.

A2.53 In the five-year period following final payment of grant, the applicant shall, upon written request from the Council, reply in writing within 21 days of the date of the request stating how he/she is **complying with any of the terms and conditions** of the grant. Failure to comply with this requirement will be deemed a failure of grant conditions requiring total repayment of grant plus compound interest at a reasonable rate determined by the Council.

A2.54 The conditions relating to **repayment of grant** apply equally to whichever certificate was signed for a five-year period from the date of final payment of grant.

A2.55 In the event of a grant recipient pursuing a **successful insurance claim**, action for legal damages, etc, which covers the cost of works for which grant was previously paid, the applicant will on demand repay the total value of grant paid relating to such works or the value of the insurance payment/legal damages if lower.

A2.56 The Council will **not undertake works on behalf of applicants**, except where works may be due in default of an owner's, tenant's, etc, failure to comply with a statutory notice. This involves no grant aid.

APPENDIX 3

KEY SERVICE STANDARDS 2010/11

ACTIVITY	TARGET
Respond to urgent service requests, such as : <ul style="list-style-type: none">• no hot water in private tenanted home of vulnerable person, or• severe water penetration in private tenanted home, or• electrical failure in private tenanted home, or• Disconnection of gas/electric/water in a House in Multiple Occupation.	95% within 1 working days
Resolve all requests for private sector housing service.	95% within 6 months
Determine all valid and fully made grant applications.	95% within 30 working days
Authorise payment of grant monies following the satisfactory completion and inspection of the work and submission of all documentation.	95% within 20 working days

APPENDIX 4

DEFINITION OF A VULNERABLE HOUSEHOLD

Vulnerable households have been defined for the purposes of the Decent Homes Standard as a whole as those in which at least one household member is in receipt of at least one of the principal means tested or disability related benefits. These being :

- Income Support.
- Housing Benefit.
- Council Tax Benefit.
- Disabled Persons Tax Credit.
- Income Based Job Seekers Allowance.
- Working Families Tax Credit.
- Attendance Allowance.
- Disability Living Allowance.
- Industrial Injuries Disablement Benefit.
- War Disablement Pension.
- Child Tax Credit.
- Working Tax Credit.
- Pension Credit.

The definition of qualifying benefits used to define 'vulnerable' will be subject to change; for instance, the last three qualifying benefits above have been introduced since 2001 and they have different qualifying thresholds.

APPENDIX 5

CONTACT DETAILS

Private Sector Housing Team
Environmental Health Section
Environmental Services Unit
Gosport Borough Council
Town Hall
High Street
GOSPORT
PO12 1EB

Tel 023 9254 5510
Fax 023 9254 5360
Email ehs@gosport.gov.uk

AGENDA ITEM NO. 7

Board/Committee:	Housing Board
Date of Meeting:	Wednesday 3 rd March 2010
Title:	Housing Repairs Programme 2010-11 and Asset Management Strategy
Author:	Housing Services Manager/CH
Status:	For Decision

Purpose

The report sets out the proposed 2010 -11 Housing Repairs Programme and seeks the Board's approval for that programme and associated Asset Management Strategy.

Recommendation

- a. That Board approve the proposed 2010 -11 Housing Repairs Programme and note the impact on the Asset Management Strategy.
- b. That Officers follow the principles [approved at the Housing Board meeting of March 2005] as detailed below:
 - i. That 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;
 - ii. That 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;
 - iii. That 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 and Group Spokespersons be permitted to vary the programme for works between £60,000 and £100,000;
 - iv. That 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;
 - v. That 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;
 - vi. That Members be informed of significant variations to the Programme as outlined in (i) to (v) above, which are relevant to their Ward.

1.0 Background

- 1.1 This is an annual report to Housing Board on the proposed budget allocations for 2010 -11 on day-to-day and planned repairs and maintenance works.
- 1.2 The key priority for the investment programme remains the meeting of the Decent Homes Standard by the end of 2010.
- 1.3 The delivery of the 2007–08 programmes effectively completed the major programmes for the installation of new kitchens, central heating systems and double glazing elements under the Decent Homes programme. An element remains in the budget, primarily for the completion of insulation to solid walled properties, but also includes for properties subsequently being picked up in sweep up programmes or the voids process.

2.0 Report

- 2.1 As has previously been notified to the Board (*Council Dwelling Rents 2010/2011* Feb 2010) the Housing Subsidy Settlement for this Council presents some challenges. The impact on the allocation of repair and maintenance funding for 2010-11 is as follows:

	2007- 08	2008- 09	2009 -10	2010-11
Capital Expenditure:	£4,366,000	£3,676,000	£2,300,000	£2,024,000
Revenue Expenditure:	£2,100,000	£1,900,000	£1,900,000	£1,938,000
Total	£6,466,000	£5,576,000	£4,200,000	£3,962,000

- 2.2 This is a reduction of £276,000 in capital expenditure and a minor increase (£38,000) in revenue expenditure between 2009-10 and 2010-11. This represents a 12% reduction in capital expenditure (down from the £2,300,000 in 2009-10) and almost 54% reduction from the allocation received in 2007 - 08. This does not take account of building inflation so in real terms the decrease in investment in the stock is even greater.
- 2.3 This settlement has clearly impacted on the proposed Housing Repairs Programme (see Appendix A & B). There have been a number of variations on 2009-10 and these are highlighted below (2.4-7). The advanced funding of £300,000 received in 2009-10 from the Department for Communities and Local Government will be repaid in 2010-11 as part of the subsidy settlement.

Variations From The Budget Allocation For 2010-11

- 2.4 The advanced funding of £300,000 in 2009-10 was used primarily in an attempt to reduce heating and hot water repair complaints by replacing older systems a year earlier than scheduled. This was a success, reducing the number of servicing and callouts during the cold weather in 2009-10. This has enabled a small reduction in Gas Servicing budget for 2010-11.

2.5 High Cost (Capital) And Standard Voids

- 2.5.1 There was a decrease in the total number of voids in 2007 - 08 (a fall of 60 over the previous year – down to 200) and that continued in 2008 – 09. The number of voids rose slightly in 2009 -10 and it is anticipated there will be increase in voids for 2010-11. The capital voids budget (for expensive voids) has been increased by £20,000, and the standard voids budget by £50,000 to take account of this projected increase.
- 2.6 It is not anticipated that the re-profiling of expenditure will affect the ability to meet the Decent Homes standard in 2010-11.

2.7 Day-to-Day Repairs Service

- 2.7.1 The allocation of funding, at £1,070,000, is a reduction of £75,000 on the previous year. The Connaught partnership is anticipated to bring additional budget savings in 2010-11 to enable this saving to be realised.

3.0 Implications for Asset Management

- 3.1 The Asset Management Strategy details the priorities and investment required to maintain the stock to an acceptable standard and to comply with statutory and contractual obligations. It was a realistic assessment of the investment required in the housing stock based on the latest stock condition information. The Strategy also sets out priorities for that investment and the potential impact of failures to invest.
- 3.2 The Asset Management Strategy was approved by Housing Board in January 2009. An overview of changes are detailed below (3.2.1-10) and the updated Strategy, when finalised, will be circulated to Members via the Members Information Bulletin.
- 3.2.1 The first priority remains to achieve the Decent Homes standard for all of the Councils housing stock. Any remaining kitchen renewals will be completed in 2010-11 and the external wall insulation programme will also be completed.
- 3.2.2 The Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS) audit has been completed within target and although the highest priority repairs resulting from the audit will be carried out using Health and Safety budgets, further HHSRS obligations are not budgeted for in planned maintenance programmes for communal areas. The emphasis for 2010-11 will be to monitor communal areas and to repair on a worst first basis.
- 3.2.3 Priority Two set out in the Asset Management Strategy is to carry out legislative and regulatory obligations. This will include electrical re-wiring work commencing in 2010-11, which has arisen from the electrical testing undertaken in 2007-08 and 2008-09. An extra £50,000 was added to the 2009-10 allocation (making £300,000 in total for 2009-10) through the successful Department for Communities and Local Government advanced funding scheme (*also see central heating installations 3.2.7 below and 2.4*). This extra funding meant that an extra 20 homes were re-wired. The Asset Management Strategy estimates a required investment of £250,000 for 2010-

11, but currently only £200,000 can be budgeted for in 2010-11.

- 3.2.4 Although there is currently no legal requirement to remove asbestos from residential property the Asset Management Strategy has pledged that all licensed asbestos will be removed from housing communal areas by 2015, and all licensed asbestos removed from the housing stock by 2020. At present the allocation of £50,000 for 2010/11 will fund any asbestos removal from void properties, and ad hoc removal in let properties, but is insufficient to fund programmes of asbestos removal to meet the longer term objectives.
- 3.2.5 Previously approved planned maintenance programmes will continue in 2010-11, and these include the sheltered scheme improvements. The budget allocation for 2010-11 has been reduced by £76,000, and is now likely to be scheduled over a further year. It was programmed to be completed by 2011-12, but unless the capital shortfall can be made good in the next three years, it will need to be extended to 2013- 14 and possibly beyond.
- 3.2.6 The garage action plan was initially planned to take place over 5 years, but the budget allocation means that the strategy will extend beyond 7 years. The garage demolitions planned for 2009-10 have taken place, and preparations are already in place for Year 2 of the action plan.
- 3.2.7 Advanced funding was made available in 2009-10 for central heating system renewals, which reduced reported heating failures during this winter. Further investment of £250,000 is allocated in 2010-11 to further pre-empt heating system failures.
- 3.2.8 There is funding of £80,000 available in 2010-11 for a limited investment in flat roof improvements. A programme of works has been established, prioritised on a worst first basis.
- 3.2.9 The Energy Efficiency Initiative commenced in 2009-10 with a pilot programme of roof insulation in bungalows in Harris Road, which attracted grant funding from the Government's Carbon Emissions Reduction Target (CERT). The initiative will continue in 2010-11 and CERT funding remains available to help finance programmes of insulation and changes of heating type.
- 3.2.10 In part, this reflects the Housing Board's commitment outlined in "*Delivering Decent Homes 2010 And Beyond*" (Housing Board November 2006). Outlined in that report was investment requirements over and above the limiting goals of the Decent Home standard. The Asset Management Strategy has included a 10-year bathroom modernisation programme at an estimated cost of £600,000 per year over ten years. This has not been possible due to budget restrictions, but a trial will be conducted on four properties in 2010-11 in order to work with residents to establish a product range and working methodology, with a view to a more substantial programme in 2011-12.
- 3.4 The investment gap in 2009-10 (that is the difference between what the Asset Management Strategy states should be invested in the stock and what is actually invested) was £1.33m. It is anticipated that there will be an investment gap of

£1.06m for 2010-11 after the completion of the proposed programmes outlined in Appendix A and B. This effectively means that the assessed shortfall between the investment required in the stock and the investment that will have taken place by the end of 2010-11 will be £2.39m.

	Recommended under the Asset Management Strategy (AMS) for 2010-11	Funding allocated in 2010-11	Work type arising from
Undertaking of post Decent Homes work 2010+ incl. bathroom installation	£1,000,000	£270,000	AMS against budget
Replace worn / tired roofs and structural repairs	£80,000	£160,000	AMS against priority
Electrical re-wiring work	£250,000	£200,000	
Central Heating installations	£500,000	£250,000	Decent Homes
Garage action plan	£80,000	£138,650	AMS against Garage Action Plan
Energy Efficiency Initiatives	£10,000	£20,000	
External and Communal Painting	£270,000	£250,000	AMS against budget
Capitalising Voids	£250,000	£200,000	AMS against budget
Sheltered improvements	£276,000	£200,000	BV Review
Environmental Improvements	£30,000	£0	
Asbestos removal	£50,000	£50,000	Communal/ HHSRS Survey
	£2,796,000	£1,738,650	

4.0 Section 17 Crime & Disorder Act 1998

4.1 Included in the day-to-day repairs programme are specific works for security and target hardening. This expenditure will contribute towards the Councils' responsibility under Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 to do all that can reasonably be done to prevent crime and disorder in the area.

5.0 Risk Assessment

5.1 There is a long term increasing risk associated with reduced investment in the stock. This includes, but is not limited to:

- Ever increasing decline in stock condition leading to risk of increased response repairs through delayed programmed repairs;
- Risk to budgets if the unexpected i.e. storm damage should occur;
- No contingency for any additional requirements brought in by Government for requirements to work on the stock i.e. Decent Homes Plus.

5.2 The overall risk which has previously been assessed as low, is now assessed as medium because of the reduced investment in the stock and reduced budgets that

do not provide for contingencies.

6.0 Conclusion

- 6.1 The repairs programme continues towards meeting this Housing Boards objective of reaching the Decent Homes Standard by 2010 - 11, but investment in wider aspects of the stock remains restricted.
- 6.2 Nevertheless Year One of the garage improvement strategy was successfully completed in 2009-10 and a trial bathroom replacement programme has been initiated for 2010-11.

Financial Services comments:	Housing repairs expenditure covered by this report is included in the Council's budget for 2010-11.
Legal Services comments:	The Council must ensure that it complies with both its statutory duties relating to the condition of properties and facilities, such as gas installations and their obligations under the Tenancy Agreement.
Service Improvement Plan implications:	The meeting of the Decent Homes Standard by the end of 2010-11 is a Service Improvement Plan objective.
Corporate Plan:	The maintaining of the Council housing stock is a strategic priority for 'Prosperity' (PR2/01).
Risk Assessment:	The potential risk over individual budget over/under spends is medium, due to unforeseen circumstances: weather conditions, higher estimates, higher demand for services etc Rigorous controls in place reduce the risk and impact of those over/underspends. The overall risk rating for budget over/under spends is therefore assessed as medium
Background papers:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Housing Board Report (Nov 2002) "<i>Capital Programme Works Priorities 2003-06</i>" • Housing Board Report (March 2006) "<i>Housing Repairs Programme 2006/07</i>" • Housing Board Report (Nov 2006) "<i>Delivering Decent Homes 2010 And Beyond</i>" • Housing Board Report (Feb 2009) "<i>Council Dwelling Rents 2009/2010</i>" • Housing Board Report (Jan 2009) "<i>Asset Management Strategy</i>"
Appendices/Enclosures:	Appendix A: Budget allocations 2010-11 Appendix B: Programmes of work
Report author/ Lead Officer:	Charles Harman, Head of Operational Services

APPENDIX A

BUDGET HEADING	2010-11
Day-to-day repairs Including; Infrastructure £45,000 Minor Fencing Works £10,000 O.A.P. Decorations £10,000 Security and Communal Safety £5,000 HO Communal area budget nil	£1,070,000
Repairs to void properties (also see capital void investment below under Decent Homes work) incl. Decoration Allowances £30,000	£430,000
Decent Homes & Associated works; External Painting/associated repairs/Communal decoration £250,000 Central Heating £250,000 External Wall Insulation £250,000 Kitchen Installs £100,000 Capital Voids £200,000 Bathroom Renewal £10,000 UPVC Windows £10,000	£1,070,000
Barclay and Burney House health and safety	£3,000
Barclay/ Burney House Day to Day and Voids	£30,000
Barclay Upgrading Works	£0
Environmental Improvements Panel	£0
Gas servicing	£300,000
Lift service and repairs	£10,000
Door entry systems	£30,000
Health and safety management	£40,000
Estate Warden team	£3,000
Disabled aids	£130,000
Electrical rewiring and testing	£200,000
Asbestos removal	£50,000
Energy efficiency	£20,000
Tenant-led improvements (kitchen and fencing scheme)	£30,000
Transfer Incentive Scheme	£10,000
Professional fees	£5,000
Sheltered scheme improvements	£200,000
Sheltered schemes general health and safety	£15,000
Structural repairs	£80,000
Roof Renewals (incl. flat to pitch conversions)	£80,000
Bulk waste Management	£20,000
Garages	£136,000
TOTAL	£3,962,000

APPENDIX B

Decent Homes Programmes

Over-cladding - External Wall Insulation (to include associated works)

Continue with Skipper Way, Elmore Avenue, Elmore Road and Elmore Close,
Bridge House, Montgomery Road and Bridgemark Road

Kitchens

Reactive provision to meet Decent Homes Standard. Specific properties are yet to be identified through void process or previous refusals or that are becoming "non decent" £100,000

Bathrooms (£10,000)

Carry out up to **four** trials in advance of bathroom programme anticipated for 2011-12

Windows

Trial of Replacement of timber windows with coloured UPVC. Overall programme Includes:

Renewed timber double glazing at 14 Old Road and 4 properties at Anns Hill Road

Programme for subsequent years (and subject to funding)

Old Road (excl No. 4)
Hilton Road
Hornet Close
Mariners Way

87 Properties in Total

Central Heating programme

£250,000 for properties which are identified in conjunction with Decent Homes Surveys and aged failures identified from Gas Servicing;

9		Beryton Close
12		Beryton Close
16		Beryton Close
3	A	Beryton Close
11	A	Beryton Close

12	A	Beryton Close
15	A	Beryton Close
86		Beryton Road
28		Blackthorn Drive
31		Blackthorn Drive
33		Blackthorn Drive
46		Blackthorn Drive
58		Blackthorn Drive
59		Blackthorn Drive
36		Brading Avenue
45		Braemar Road
80		Braemar Road
76		Carisbrooke Road
4		Chale Close
21		Chale Close
22		Chatfield Road
59		Conifer Grove
3	A	Coulmere Road
77		Dukes Road
79	A	Dukes Road
5		Durley Road
8		Durley Road
23		Durley Road
30		Durley Road
8		Elmore Avenue
263	B	Forton Road
35		Green Crescent
43		Greenway Road
16		Horton Road
2		Mariners Way
8		Mariners Way
11		Mariners Way
12		Mariners Way
13		Mariners Way
14		Mariners Way
17		Mariners Way
20		Mariners Way
21		Mariners Way
23		Mariners Way
25		Mariners Way
28		Mariners Way
35		Mariners Way
37		Mariners Way
39		Mariners Way
41		Mariners Way
42		Mariners Way
43		Mariners Way
44		Mariners Way
48		Mariners Way
51		Mariners Way
52		Mariners Way
57		Mariners Way

58		Mariners Way
18		Old Road
22		Old Road
36		Old Road
38		Old Road
46		Old Road
48		Old Road
20		Osborn Crescent
17		Portal Road
22		Portal Road
22		Prideaux Brune Avenue
10		Queens Close
1		San Diego Road
5		San Diego Road
30		The Crossways
21		The Hoe
15		The Thicket
17		Totland Road
20		Totland Road
29		Totland Road
8		Wilmott Close
12		Wilmott Close
29		Wilmott Close
36		Wilmott Close
73		Wilmott Close
79		Wilmott Close
208		Wych Lane
216		Wych Lane

Electrical Programme £200,000 [Deferred from 2009 – 2010]

6 Agnew Road		4 Sycamore Close
2 Brewers Lane		8 Tukes Avenue
4 Brookers Lane		7Warnford Close
10 Elmore Close		8 Willis Road
9 Elmore Road		13 Wych Lane
5 Giles Close		
9 Gregson Close		
6 Keyes Close		
8 Long Drive		
7 Mill Lane		
5 Montgomery Road		
28 Nobes Avenue		
4 Park Terrace		

Testing and rewire where possible should the budget allow;

10 Dayshes Close	15 Austerberry Way
23 Keyes Road	4 Astra Walk

68 Old Road	15 Bridgemary Road
3 Alma Street	2 Endeavour Close
11 Avenue Road	15 Mabey Close
3 Laphorn Close	10 Harwood Road
16 Osborn Crescent	3 Rowner Lane
4 Queens Road	15 Totland Road
32 Tichborne Way	4 Bridgemary Grove
5 Conifer Grove	29 Dolman Road
22 Green Crescent	17 Hilton Road
11 Crossways, The	9 Stoners Close
10 Mead, The	15 Prideaux Brune Avenue
18 Brading Avenue	16 Tamworth Court
	6 Copse Lane

Roofing and Asphalt Works [Deferred from 2009/10]

Watergate; replacement

Condition survey of all roofs (to prioritise for a subsequent programme)

St Johns Square
Forton Road
Hove Court
Chester Court

Balcony Repairs [£80,000]

Prioritised in accordance with Condition Schedule and subject to budget. To carry out remedial works to cantilevered balconies including any railing and asphalt works.

Archer House
Chester Court
Elmore Avenue 70-84
Glebe Drive 42-53
Glebe Drive 54-65
Ivy House
Mill Lane 1-9
Mill Lane 18-27
Nyria Way
Slocum House
St Vincent Road
St Lukes Road
The Fairway
The Links
The Mews
Warders Court
Warnford Close
Watergate

External Painting and Associated Repairs

WINDSOR ROAD	1
WILMOTT CLOSE (37-104)	76
WARNFORD CLOSE	14
THE CROSSWAYS	11
ST VINCENT ROAD	63
ST ANNS CRESCENT	1
SKIPPER WAY	30
SALERNO DRIVE	1
RUSSELL STREET	1
PARKLANDS CLOSE	21
NORMANDY GARDENS	15
MILL POND ROAD	4
LEESLAND	5
KEALY ROAD	8
DURHAM STREET	1
DUNKELD ROAD	1
TICHBOURNE WAY	32
WHEELER CLOSE	16
LAPHORN CLOSE	4
NESBITT CLOSE	6
COULMERE ROAD	6
NOBES AVENUE	31
Property Total	348

Communal Works

Including screen replacement and/or remedial works

Northway 58-62 Evens
Northway 38-44 Evens
Northway 39-45 Odds
Northway 73-85 Odds
Northway 20-26 Evens
Northway 3-25 Odds
Almondside 9-17
The Firs 5-13
Orange Grove 8-16
Keilder Grove 7-15
Savernake Close 6-14
Bridge House 1-12
Bridgemary Road 1-15
St Johns Square 1-27
Southway 1-7 Odds
Southway 18-32 Evens
Southway 31-37 Odds
Southway 51-57 Odds
Southway 46-52 Evens

AGENDA ITEM NO. 8

Board/Committee:	Housing Board
Date of Meeting:	3 March 2010
Title:	Amendments to the Housing Forum Constitution
Author:	Housing Services Manager/KC
Status:	FOR DECISION

Purpose

The purpose of this report is to seek Housing Board approval for the changes to the Housing Forum constitution.

Recommendation

- A) That the Board approves the amendments to the Housing Forum Constitution
- B) The Board delegates powers to the Housing Services Manager to make any amendments to the Housing Forum Constitution and associated documents.

1 Background

- 1.1 Attendance by Housing Forum Members has been poor, with members missing meetings without an explanation.
- 1.2 Housing Forum member numbers have dropped during the past years. Therefore it has been difficult to obtain a quorum at meetings.

2 Report – Housing Forum Constitution

- 2.1 At an Extraordinary General Meeting of the Housing Forum on 18 January 2010, the Forum unanimously accepted the changes to the Constitution (Appendix A):

- Clause **3.3 Membership** should be added to the Constitution, it states:
 - *Any Residents Association, whose representatives miss two meetings without explanation or apology, should be invited to choose an alternative representative to attend in their place. Failure to do so may cause their membership to lapse.*
 - *Any Road/Area Representative who misses two meetings without explanation or apology will be invited to stand down, and a new representative would be elected.*
- Clause **5.0 Meetings** should be amended from
 - *“The quorum for all meetings will be six Full Members.” to “The quorum for all meetings will be four Full Members”.*

3 Conclusion

- 3.1 The amendment of the Constitution should ensure that a quorum will be at the meetings.
- 3.2 The amendments to the Constitution should encourage members to either attend meetings or send an alternative representative to attend in their place.

Financial Services comments:	None
Legal Services comments:	None
Service Improvement Plan implications:	Not applicable
Corporate Plan:	Not applicable
Risk Assessment:	There is no risk associated with the minor amendments to the Constitution
Background papers:	None
Appendices/Enclosures:	
Appendix 'A'	Draft Housing Forum Constitution
Report author/ Lead Officer:	Kim Carron

DRAFT HOUSING FORUM

CONSTITUTION

1.0 Name

- 1.1 The name of the organisation is the Housing Forum.

2.0 Aims

- 2.1 To provide a means for residents to be involved in the management of their homes and environment, by working in partnership with the Council.
- 2.2 To consider and advise Gosport Council through the Housing Board on relevant matters.
- 2.3 To promote equal opportunities and equal access to all services.
- 2.4 To promote non-discriminatory practices.
- 2.5 To promote good community relations.
- 2.6 To be non-political.

3.0 Membership

- 3.1 The Housing Forum should be made up of:

a) Full Members (with voting rights):

Full members will only be those who have been duly elected

- A representative from each Residents Association affiliated to the Housing Board in the Borough. Each Residents Association should also appoint a reserve representative. In the event that both the member and the reserve attend the Housing Forum meeting they will only have one vote.
- One tenant or leaseholder representing each locality (road/area/block representative).
- A representative from the Sheltered Housing Panel which will be an elected Panel (elected by residents living in Sheltered Schemes only). That Panel shall elect a representative and a reserve.

Housing Forum members may not belong to more than one of the categories above

b) Co-opted Tenant Members (as required):

- An Ethnic Minority representative.
- A Disability representative.

HB 10 Sep 2008 accepted

c) Members (with no voting rights):

- One Councillor from each political group to be invited to the meetings.
- A representative from each current working group.

3.2 Voting Members of the Housing Forum shall be tenants and leaseholders of Gosport Borough Council. If a tenant representative or a leaseholder becomes an owner-occupier or moves out of Council accommodation they will no longer be a voting Member and a new representative will be elected.

Where a tenant representative moves away from their area, but remains a tenant or leaseholder of the Council, they cease to be the representative for that area, but may become a co-opted member where they are a member of a current working group until that group's work is completed.

3.3

- Any Residents Association, whose representatives miss two meetings without explanation or apology, should be invited to choose an alternative representative to attend in their place. Failure to do so may cause their membership to lapse.
- Any Road/Area Representative who misses two meetings without explanation or apology will be invited to stand down, and a new representative would be elected.

Formatted: Indent: Hanging: 39.7 pt, Tabs: 14.3 pt, List tab + Not at 36 pt

Formatted: Bullets and Numbering

4.0

Officers

Formatted: Indent: Left: -3.7 pt, No bullets or numbering

4.1 At its Annual General Meeting (AGM), the Housing Forum shall elect positions of office to include:

- A Chairperson.
- A Vice-Chairperson.
- A Tenant Representative to the Housing Board and a Deputy Tenant Representative to the Housing Board.
- A representative to the Editorial Panel.
- A representative to other Panels as required.

4.2 If at any Annual General Meeting, any of the positions of office in paragraph 4.1 above are not filled, elections for the vacant positions will be held at the subsequent meeting.

4.3 If, at any time, the tenant representative or reserve representative is unable to attend the Housing Board meeting, the Chairperson or Vice-Chairperson shall be entitled to attend as the Housing Forum representative (provided that the person is a tenant of the Council).

4.4 All officers of the Housing Forum will only be permitted to serve a maximum of 3 consecutive years in a position of office. After a twelve month break, a member will be eligible to stand for further election to any such office.

4.5 No officers of the Housing Forum shall have any authority or powers, except those expressly given to them by a meeting of the Housing Forum.

4.6 Should an officer of the Housing Forum leave or stand down during their term, the Housing Forum shall elect a substitute at the next Housing Forum meeting.

HB 10 Sep 2008 accepted

5.0 Meetings

5.1 The quorum for all meetings will be four Full Members.

Deleted: six

6.0 Annual General Meeting

6.1 There shall be an Annual General Meeting (AGM) every year

6.2 All members of the Housing Forum will have 28 days written notice of the AGM.

6.3 The date of the AGM will be distributed to all tenants and leaseholders 28 days prior to the meeting and will be advertised widely.

6.4 At the AGM the Housing Forum will:

- Receive the Chairpersons report on the work of the previous year.
- Elect its officers and members of Panels.
- Draw up plans for the coming year.
- Consider amendments to the Constitution see paragraphs 9.0 to 9.6 as required. Voting will be by a show of hands and a vote will be carried by two thirds of the general membership (GBC tenants and Leaseholders)

7.0 General Meetings

7.1 The Housing Forum meetings will coincide with the Housing Board cycle and meet no less than four times a year.

7.2 General meetings may be called by giving ten working days written notice with the Agenda being sent five days prior to the meeting.

7.3 Items for the Agenda should be notified to the Resident Involvement Team seven days prior to the meeting.

7.4 Agendas will be drawn up by Officers of the Council in consultation with the Housing Forum Chairperson.

7.5 All Housing Forum both voting and co-opted members will be required to sign the Code of Conduct and Confidentiality Agreement before taking their place on the Housing Forum.

8.0 Conduct of Meetings

8.1 Members shall conduct themselves in a reasonable manner at meetings and may be excluded if they act in an abusive or offensive way (Code of Conduct).

8.2 Exclusion from the meeting will take place when the majority of those who are present vote to exclude the member. The member will be allowed to attend subsequent meetings provided that they apologise in writing to the Chairperson and agree to abide by the Code of Conduct, which they have signed.

8.3 All meetings will be open to attendance by any interested resident, who may be invited to express their opinion/ask a question at the discretion of the Chairperson. If a confidential item is to be discussed, all non Housing Forum

HB 10 Sep 2008 accepted

members will be required to leave the meeting.

- 8.4 If any interested resident behaves in a disruptive manner, they will be required to leave the meeting.
- 8.5 Where there is no consensus or agreement on any point, a vote will be taken, decided by a simple majority on a show of hands. Only representatives of the Housing Forum have a vote.
- 8.6 There will be no Chair's casting vote. In the event of a tied vote, the vote will be taken again. If it is still tied, the proposal will be deemed not carried.
- 8.7 Any member of the Housing Forum may make a proposal. In order for it to be voted on, it must have a seconder. An amendment to the tabled proposal made at the meeting will require a proposer and seconder.

9.0 Changes to Constitution

- 9.1 The Constitution of the Housing Forum may only be altered at an AGM, or other properly constituted meetings of the Housing Forum arranged in accordance with paragraphs 6.4 of this Constitution.
- 9.2 Any proposed changes to the Constitution should be forwarded to the Resident Involvement Team, 10 working days prior to the next AGM.
- 9.3 The proposed changes to the Constitution will be made in writing.
- 9.4 Agendas will be drawn up by Resident Involvement Team in consultation with the Housing Forum Chairperson, the Agenda shall include a written record of suggested changes and be sent out five days prior to the AGM.
- 9.5 Changes to the Constitution must be approved by two thirds of the Full Members at the meeting.
- 9.6 Proposed changes to the Constitution made by the Housing Forum must be submitted to the Housing Board for approval.
- 9.7 Where the Forum and the Board cannot agree changes, the matter will be referred to an independent body for advice.

10.0 Annual Report

- 10.1 The Housing Forum will produce an Annual Report, to report back to Council tenants and leaseholders on work accomplished on their behalf.

11.0 Complaints

- 11.1 The Council complaints procedure can be initiated by any individual, a Residents Association/group or a Road Representative.

12.0 Dissolution

- 12.1 The Housing Forum may only be dissolved, at a Special General Meeting called for that purpose.

- 12.2 A notice to dissolve must be circulated to all tenants and leaseholders 28 days prior to the special meeting. That notice shall contain the wording for dissolution which will be included in the proposal.
- 12.3 The proposal will only take effect if agreed by two thirds of the total membership at the meeting.
- 12.4 Should the Special General Meeting not have sufficient attendance, less than six Full Members for a vote to be taken or carried, then the matter of dissolution will be referred to the next Housing Board for their decision
- 12.5 Copies of the minutes will be made available to any interested resident (excluding any minutes relating to confidential items).
- 12.6 Full copies of the minutes, excluding confidential items, will be made available to the Group Leaders and Housing Spokesperson of Gosport Borough Council and placed on the Gosport Borough Council website.

Deleted: Party

**HOUSING FORUM
CODE OF CONDUCT AND CONFIDENTIALITY AGREEMENT**

This Code of Conduct seeks to set out the minimum standards for Housing Forum Members.

The code requires members to:

- Work together as a team
Comply with confidentiality guidelines
Uphold the Council's commitment to equal opportunities
- Give all members of the group the opportunity to speak
- Endorse and promote Gosport Borough Council's policy of partnership working
Keep members of their respective groups informed and where appropriate ask their views on current issues
- Abide by the Code of Conduct when representing the Housing Forum

Members of the Housing Forum will NOT:

- Personalise discussions
- Use foul, abusive or offensive language
- Smoke in the offices
- Be involved if under the influence of alcohol or drugs
- Engage in any form of racial, sexual or any other form of harassment.

In the event of a breach of this Code by members of the Housing Forum, the following procedure will be implemented:

- A vote will be taken to exclude the member from the meeting.
- Exclusion from the meeting will take place when the majority of members present vote to exclude the member.
- The member will be allowed to attend subsequent meetings provided that they apologise in writing to the Chairperson and agree to abide by the Code of Conduct, which they have signed.

Confidentiality

It is a requirement that this confidentiality clause is signed:

***I, (please insert your name).
Will not at any time during my role as a member of the Housing Forum, tell, or allow to be told, to any person, any confidential information relating to the work of the group and Gosport Borough Council.***

Signed: Name (Please print):

I hereby agree to all the above conditions and will endorse and promote Gosport Borough Council's policy of partnership working.

Name:

Address:
.....
.

Signed: Date:

HB 10 Sep 2008 accepted

AGENDA ITEM NO. 9

Board/Committee:	Housing Board
Date of Meeting:	3 rd March 2010
Title:	Grants to External Bodies and Specific Schemes
Author:	Housing Services Manager/SN
Status:	For Decision

Purpose

This report seeks approval of recommended grants in 2010/11 to external bodies and specific schemes in connection with homelessness prevention and advice.

Every year this Council has awarded grants in line with the Council's Homelessness Strategy with the aim of sustaining a matrix of advice and assistance services in the district.

Recommendation

- 1). That the following grants/budgets be approved and funded by homelessness grant (unless otherwise stated):
 - a. Gosport Citizens Advice Bureau, debt service: £31,531.85 of which £11,252.70 to be paid from DCLG grant, £3,200 to be paid from Housing Revenue Account and £17,079.15 from existing homelessness budgets;
 - b. Accommodation Resource Centre (Mediation and homeless education service) £8,625.49;
 - c. Domestic Violence Call Centre monitoring budget: £550;
 - d. Domestic Violence (agent installation/removal budget): £620;
- 2) That the following new grants/budgets be approved subject to release, or at least a satisfactory guarantee of imminent release, of anticipated Hampshire grant:
 - a. £19,629 to match fund Government grant for the Family Intervention Project;
 - b. £10,371 to be held on account pending further grant bid to the Gosport Community Cohesion Fund for the Family Support Service and that the Housing Services Manager, in consultation with the Housing Board Chairman, is given delegated power to agree a Service Level Agreement and release of grant in respect of this service.
 - c. The Housing Services Manager, in consultation with the Housing Board Chairman, is given delegated power to agree up to £6,942 budget spend in respect of the Fareham and Gosport Supported Housing Panel Scheme.

1 Background

- 1.1 The March 2009 Housing Board approved grants for the year 2009/10. In

addition, the June 2009 Housing Board approved recommendations for spend arising from an anticipated one off windfall grant to this Council from Hampshire County Council (see Locality Housing Officer Update and LPSA2 (Local Public Services Agreement) Reward Money). The approvals on this latter report included provision for further Housing Board consideration before any proposed draw down of monies. This report considers all these matters together.

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

- The Department for Communities and Local Government has confirmed that £47,050 is due in grant to this Council for 2010/11. Of this total grant, £21,050 per year has previously been applied to external grants and the remaining £26,000 to staffing budgets;
- The Housing Revenue Account contributes £3,200 to the Citizens Advice Bureau debt service (see March 2009 Housing Board Report for an explanation of how this figure was arrived at);
- As for 2009/10, £17, 079.15 is from existing homelessness budgets.
- LPSA2 reward grant is due from Hampshire County Council as a one off grant, probably payable in two equal tranches in late 2009/10 and early 2010/11. This report updates the June 2009 Housing Board Report, and seeks draw down of some of this money.

2 Report Established Services

2.1 An assessment of the homelessness prevention results for established grant funded schemes (Accommodation Resource Centre and Citizens Advice Bureau Debt Service) can be found at Appendix A, Table One.

2.2 In summary:

- The domestic abuse alarms scheme is highly efficient although low in numbers;
- The unit cost of prevention of homelessness is probably comparable between the Accommodation Resource Centre and the Council (except where this Council prevents homelessness through securing private rented accommodation through the Rent in advance/Damage bond scheme);
- The Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB) debt service has the highest unit costs per prevention, but in 54% of Council prevention cases the Councils average unit cost is £1026 compared the £1,234 cost via CAB.

2.3 The contribution outside bodies have made to homelessness prevention has primarily been in the retention of the existing home. External agencies contribute 42% of all preventions through remaining in the current home. Of all the interventions, achieving the outcome of remaining in the home is by far the best customer outcome, although it is accepted as the hardest outcome to achieve and specialist agencies are needed to achieve good results

2.4 Homelessness prevention is not the only contribution the external agencies provide for the district. The total number of customers accessing these services is a relevant consideration (see Appendix A, column two of Table One). Both the Accommodation Resource Centre (ARC) and the CAB Debt Service are also integral to other specific agendas:

- The CAB Debt Service is the conduit for the Governments Mortgage Rescue Scheme. This scheme took time to deliver results nationally but there is now a steady stream of cases being rescued. Gosport has done comparatively well having had three mortgage rescue completions to date and several in the pipeline.
- ARC is the accepted front-line agency for young people and particularly 16/17 year olds. ARC's role in assisting this Council and Children's Services (who are the primary funders of ARC's reception and assessment service) is crucial.

2.5 For the reasons set out in 2.3/4 above it is considered that the variation in agency costs per prevention are acceptable. It is considered that the specialist skills ARC and the CAB debt Service provide could not be easily or more economically achieved in house. It is also considered that the external agencies could not achieve the volume of preventions this Council can achieve, nor would they wish to take on this work. The long standing principle within the homelessness strategy of "best placed agency is given the job, and funds" continues to make sense in Gosport.

New Schemes

2.5 The June 2009 Housing Board (Locality Housing Officer Update and LPSA2 (Local Public Services Agreement) Reward Money) approved recommendations for anticipated grant receipt from Hampshire County Council to be held on account for specified purposes. The background to those recommendations is detailed in that report. The following schemes now require budget commitment which can be netted-off by draw down of a proportion of the anticipated LPSA2 (Housing) reward grant. Any budget spend will be subject to release, or at least a satisfactory guarantee of impending release, of LPSA2 (Housing) grant from Hampshire County Council.

2.7 Family Support Services

Members will be aware that it was proposed at the June 2009 Board meeting that this Council ring-fence £60,000 of anticipated grant for this purpose. By approving that decision the Housing Board enabled £30,000 funding to be secured from Hampshire Supporting People to provide one year of funding (ending 2010) of a Family Intervention Project (FIP) provided by the Roberts Centre.

2.8 FIP's are intensive support programmes for which an exceptionally high level of multiple needs factors must be evident before a service can be provided. The £30,000 provided for support intervention for 3 families at any time within a one year period.

2.9 The Government announced a match funding round in late 2009 and has subsequently announced a further round for unsuccessful and new bids. Following consultation with the Housing Board Chairman a successful bid has been made for £19,629. The service can expand to intervene in 6 families at any time in 2010/11. This Housing Board needs to approve the release of match funding of £19,629, subject to receipt of anticipated Hampshire grant. Alternatively this Council can decline the Government grant. A copy of the grant bid has been put in the Members Information Bulletin for information.

- 2.10 If the recommendation to approve £19,629 of Gosport grant is approved it does mean that Housing Board decisions will have attracted an additional sum of £49,629 external funding including £19,629 of anticipated grant receipt.
- 2.11 Strategically, the FIP is a key pilot scheme within the Gosport Children's and Young Peoples Partnership (Supporting Families & Community Strategy) and is also of high significance for the Gosport Think Family pilot for Hampshire Children's Services. National indicators of the success of FIP's are emphatically positive (The Roberts Centre feeds into these national indicators data).
- 2.12 The Roberts Centre recommended that a "sub-FIP" scheme be established in Gosport. From a Housing Services perspective this is considered to be of high importance. It is apparent among housing providers that many of the most difficult cases fall just below the threshold for FIP services. Accordingly, this Council's bid for FIP grant was reduced from £30,000 to the £19,629 to free up potential grant. The Roberts Centre has provided two bids for a family support scheme at £11,974 and £22,230 and these simply vary how many families can be supported at any time. A copy of the bids has been placed in the Members Information Bulletin.
- 2.13 Additional funding is being sought from the Community Cohesion fund held by the Gosport Strategic Partnership. It is recommended, subject to receipt of Hampshire LA21 (Housing) grant, that the residual £10,371 be held on account for this purpose and combined with any successful Community Cohesion grant to establish this family support service.
- 2.14 This Family Support Service is consistent with a further Gosport Children and Young Peoples Strategic Partnership objective (supporting families and community Action plan). That objective is to map existing sources of intervention and support. That objective stemmed from this Council's observation that there were not enough accessible services pitched at the right level of intensity.
- 2.15 **Fareham and Gosport Supported Housing Panel**
The June 2009 Housing Board approved £6,942 to be held from anticipated reward grant for this purpose.
- 2.16 The Supported Housing Panel has been operational for several years and is one of Hampshire's busiest panels. It has become the key forum for support agencies to gather and respond to new customers seeking access to supported housing. The difficulty that has been identified through the Panels work is that of inability to achieve customer access to supported accommodation, on far too many occasions, simply because of an apparent shortfall in supply.
- 2.17 This Council continues to exert the maximum leverage it can to attract new resources through Supporting People, and has had many successes that have previously been reported to this Board. However, the issue of efficiency by existing providers is also considered important by both Councils'. In response the strategy has been for the Councils' to take over:
- Maintain waiting lists for supported housing;
 - Maintain move-on records for existing residents of supported housing to ensure appropriate move-on occurs;

- The allocations function for supported housing;
- Nominations to providers for void units.

2.18 The new Supported Housing Panel scheme is expected to start in April 2010. This Council has commissioned a new database via in-house IT. This Council has existing officers who can and should be involved in the maintenance of the new scheme, as does Fareham Council. However, discussions with Fareham Council continue and new resource issues may arise. For this reason it is recommended that the Housing Services Manager, in consultation with the Housing Board Chairman be given delegated powers to spend up to the £6,942 set aside for this scheme to support the partnership approach. Both Council's have adopted the position of 50/50 share of costs/resources.

3 Risk Assessment

- 3.1 The external agencies recommended to receive these grants are considered to be sufficiently robust in their business to deliver services as outlined. The CAB debt service is exposed to a low risk of service suspension because the grant funds one specialist officer who could not be easily replaced. All agencies receiving grant will be subject to a Service Level Agreement to minimise risks.
- 3.2 The risks to this Council of not approving the established schemes are significantly higher homelessness numbers for whom the Council would lack the specialist skills needed to efficiently process applications.
- 3.3 The risks associated with the new schemes are largely based upon no receipt of anticipated grant from Hampshire. This risk is addressed by any grant being subject to receipt of, or guarantee of imminent, grant release.

4 Conclusion

- 4.1 This Report seeks to continue to maintain the matrix of specialist agencies giving advice and assistance in Gosport in respect of homelessness. In addition, new themes (Family Support) within the Gosport Strategic Partnership are recommended to be resourced as well as expansion of Council role in the use of supported housing (The Supported Housing Panel)

Financial Services comments:	As contained in the report
Legal Services comments:	None
Service Improvement Plan implications:	Not applicable
Corporate Plan:	This report contributes the Corporate Plan strategic priority of people.
Risk Assessment:	As outlined in 3.0 in the body of the report
Background papers:	March 2009 Housing Board: Homelessness Grants to External Bodies 2009/10 June 2009 Housing Board: Locality Housing Officer Update and LPSA2 (Local Public Services Agreement) Reward Money

Appendices/Enclosures:	
Appendix 'A'	Assessment of Homelessness Prevention Efficiency
Report author/ Lead Officer:	Steve Newton 9254 5296

APPENDIX A

An assessment of the efficiency of homeless prevention results 2009/10.

Table one below provides projected costs and outcomes for the whole year 2009/10 based on three quarters results.

*The unit cost per prevention to this Council is not the actual cost incurred by the accommodation Resource Centre (ARC). ARC receives grant from Children's Services of around £12,000 and possibly some, unquantified Supporting People grant. It is likely that actual cost per prevention is comparable to the Councils unit costs.

**Council costs assessed by staff costs (50% of Housing Options Team, including team Leader only, plus 25% on costs)

Agency	Projected number of customer households accessing service	Remain in current home	Re-housing avoids homelessness	Unit cost per prevention to this Council	Additional costs of prevention
ARC	234	49	22	£97.32*	N/A
CAB Debt Service	320	25	0	£1,234	N/A
Domestic Abuse Alarms	12	12	0	£97	N/A
Council Prevention Service	512	116	348	£338**	£688 (in 252 cases where rent in advance /damage bond applies)

Table One