

A MEETING OF THE POLICY AND ORGANISATION BOARD

WAS HELD ON 17 SEPTEMBER 2008

The Mayor (Councillor Kimber) (ex-officio); Councillors Burgess (P), Chegwyn (P), Gill (P), Hicks (P), Hook (P), Langdon (P), Philpott (P), Mrs Searle (P), Smith (Chairman) (P) and Wright (P).

24. APOLOGIES

An apology for inability to attend the meeting was received on behalf of the Mayor.

25. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillors Chegwyn and Hicks declared personal and prejudicial interests in agenda item 10 (Stokes Bay Festival).

Councillor Mrs Searle declared a personal and prejudicial interest in agenda item 11 (Hot Dog Stand) which was raised as a Chairman's urgent item.

26. MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE BOARD HELD ON 25 JUNE 2008

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the Board meeting held on 25 June 2008 be approved and signed by the Chairman as a true and correct record.

27. DEPUTATIONS

There were no deputations.

28. PUBLIC QUESTIONS

There were no public questions.

PART I

29. TREASURY MANAGEMENT ANNUAL REVIEW 2007/08, PROGRESS REPORT 2008/09, & PRUDENTIAL INDICATORS

Consideration was given to a report of the Deputy Chief Executive and Borough Treasurer (a copy of which is affixed in the Minute Book as Appendix A). Members were advised that the annual treasury report was a requirement of the Council's reporting procedures and covered the treasury activity for 2007/08 together with a review of 2008/09 to date. The report also covered the actual Prudential Indicators for 2007/08 in accordance with the requirements of the Prudential Code.

The Borough Treasurer advised Members of the current volatile money market and that the Council's investment strategy would need to be critically reviewed before the next financial year.

With regard to paragraph 2.1.4 of the report, the Borough Treasurer clarified that the organisation the Council dealt with was the Royal Bank of Scotland and not the Bank of Scotland.

Members were advised that the maximum amount the Council would be borrowing was £12m based on the current capital programme. It was hoped that, at the next window of opportunity, the Council would be able to carry out more forward funding. However, there was no intention to borrow unless the market conditions improved.

It was anticipated that the Council would be able to borrow at about 4.5%. The money markets were monitored on a daily basis. The current long term borrowing of £8m was at an average rate of 3.89% and, in the absence of long term borrowing, short term borrowing could take place to ensure proper cash flow management.

The capital programme was improving slightly but there were still concerns about slippage.

With regard to the maturity of investments, Members were advised that money was normally placed for up to 364 days. Capital receipts had been saved for some projects and the Council had taken advantage of favourable interest rates and placed deposits for longer. Investments maturing this year would be generally lent out for short periods but some may be placed for one or two years. A certain amount of liquidity was needed for the Housing Decent Homes Standard Capital Expenditure and to finance other large projects.

Members were advised of the need for maturing invested money to meet commitments and for the investments to match up with the Council's largest payment dates, for example, when precepts were due to be paid. Income such as Council Tax, was also set aside for precept dates and, at the end of the Financial Year, the Council would be left with about £2m in working balances

RECOMMENDED: That:

- a) the report of the Deputy Chief Executive and Borough Treasurer be noted and the 2007/08 prudential indicators approved; and
- b) Approval be given to the revised 2008/09 limits at 3.3 of the report – i.e. to increase the current year limits for fixed interest rate investments from £10.5 to £15.0 million and for fixed interest rate borrowing from £8.0 to £12.0 million.

30. STOKES BAY FESTIVAL

Note: Councillors Chegwyn and Hicks declared personal and prejudicial interests in this item, left the meeting room and took no part in the discussion or voting thereon.

Consideration was given to the following motion which had been referred to the Board by Council at its meeting on 14 July 2008:

"That the Council reaffirm the decision taken by the Emergency Sub-Board on 18 February 2008 to allow Mr Peter Chegwyn to hold a festival at Stokes Bay and reconsider the terms of the decision."

Members debated this matter and the following views were expressed:

- The general public had been denied the opportunity to express their concerns
- The event had now taken place and lessons should be learned from it
- A full written report to the Policy and Organisation Board should be made
- The report could include comments from the police and fire services
- Many of the anticipated complaints from the public did not materialise
- The Council should consider a partnership approach on future festivals of this type
- The charging system for the hire of the land should be reviewed
- The Council should seek best value from events of this type
- Conditions laid down by the Licensing Sub-Board were superseded by the Temporary Event Notice
- Some shopkeepers reported an upturn in trade during the festival

Members agreed that a report relating to the Council's involvement with the festival should be presented to the next meeting of the Board.

RECOMMENDED: That a report relating to the Council's involvement with the Stokes Bay Festival be presented to the next meeting of the Board.

31. EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC

Members agreed that Mr Richard Perry, independent Member and Chairman of the Standards and Governance Committee, should be invited to remain in the meeting room for this item.

RESOLVED: That:

- a) in relation to the following item the public be excluded from the meeting, as it is likely, in view of the nature of the business to be transacted or the nature of the proceedings, that if members of the public were present during this item there would be disclosure to them of exempt information within Paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972, and further that in all circumstances of the case, the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information; and
- b) Mr Richard Perry, independent Member and Chairman of the Standards and Governance Committee, be invited to remain in the meeting room for this item.

32. LAND AT FORT ROAD, GOSPORT

This report was exempt from publication as it contained financial information which could be used by prospective purchasers and thereby adversely affect the offers which may be received.

Policy and Organisation Board
17 September 2008

Consideration was given to an exempt report of the Chief Executive which recommended the marketing of land at Fort Road which was currently in the ownership of the Council.

Under Standing Order 6.10 (Minority Order), two Members requested that the matter be referred to full Council.

RECOMMENDED: That the Board approve:

- a) the marketing of the site for sale for residential development;
- b) access by the Public to the seafront across the site to be retained (paragraph 2.4 of the report); and
- c) any sale of the land to be the subject of a further report to the Policy & Organisation Board.

PART II

33. ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH ENFORCEMENT POLICY

Consideration was given to a cross reference from the Community and Environment Board at its meeting on 8 September 2008 which advised of the results of stakeholder consultation on the Environmental Health Enforcement Policy approved at the meeting of the Community and Environment Board on 3 March 2008 and confirmed by Policy and Organisation Board and Full Council on 12 March and 2 April respectively. Approval was subject to a further report if the results of the consultation made this necessary.

RESOLVED: That the amended Environmental Health Enforcement Policy be approved.

34. PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT – LEE ROAD, GOSPORT

Consideration was given to a cross reference from the Housing Board at its meeting on 10 September 2008 which recommended that Gosport Borough Council lease an area of land at Lee Road to Portsmouth Housing Association who would carry out the redevelopment of that area of land to provide social rented housing.

RESOLVED: That a long lease of the land be granted to Portsmouth Housing Association at nil cost in lieu of grant and nomination rights.

35. APPOINTMENT PANEL

Consideration was given to a report of the Chief Executive which advised Members that the Personnel Sub-Board, at its meeting on 3rd September 2008, approved the creation of a new post of Director of Economic Development, Tourism and the Arts.

Members were advised that, for appointments at Director and Chief Officer level, the Board may appoint an Officer or an Appointment Sub-Board with power to act on its behalf. The Board were asked to nominate an Appointment Sub-Board to make the appointment to the newly created Director post.

Policy and Organisation Board
17 September 2008

Concerns were raised regarding the introduction of a post at Director level when, it was felt, additional staff resources could instead be provided within Economic Prosperity.

Members were advised that there were difficulties in attracting businesses to Gosport and that there should be more emphasis on tourism. An officer was required who would be able to negotiate at a high level.

It was agreed that any appointment panel created should be on a 2:2:2 basis. The nominations were:

Conservative Group: declined to nominate
Labour Group: Councillors Cully and Wright
Liberal Democrat Group: Councillors Chegwyn and Smith

The recommendation contained in the Chief Executive's report was put to the vote and was carried.

RESOLVED: That:

- a) the Policy and Organisation Board appoint an Appointment Sub-Board to act on its behalf in making the appointment of Director of Economic Development, Tourism and the Arts; and
- b) nominations to the Appointment Sub-Board be on a 2:2:2 basis

36. HOT DOG STAND AT BUS STATION

Note: Councillor Mrs Searle declared a personal and prejudicial interest in this item, left the meeting room and took no part in the discussion or voting thereon.

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

The special circumstances were created due the vendor having been given 21 days notice to leave the site of the hot dog stand and for efforts to be made to identify a solution as quickly as possible.

Members were advised that the hot dog vendor currently occupied a site at the Bus Station but had been given 21 days notice to leave.

Members agreed that the Chief Executive investigate the situation and endeavour to find a solution to enable the vendor to carry on his business, following which consultation with the Leader of the Council and Group Leaders would take place.

RESOLVED: That:

- a) the Chief Executive investigate the situation with a view to finding a solution to enable the vendor to carry on his business; and

Policy and Organisation Board
17 September 2008

- b) the Leader of the Council and Group Leaders be consulted once a potential solution is found.

The meeting ended at 8.25 p.m.