

**A MEETING OF THE POLICY AND ORGANISATION BOARD WAS HELD
ON 13 MARCH 2013**

The Mayor (Councillor Dickson) (ex-officio) (P); Councillors Beavis, Burgess, Carter, C R (P), Chegwyn (P), Hook (Chairman) (P), Lane (P), Langdon (P), Philpott (P), Ronayne (P) and Wright (P).

It was reported that, in accordance with Standing Orders, Councillors Mrs Hook and Kimber had been nominated to replace Councillors Beavis and Burgess for this meeting.

41. APOLOGIES

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

42. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Philpott declared a non-pecuniary interest in item 7 on the agenda (Discretionary Housing Payments).

43. MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE BOARD HELD ON 5 FEBRUARY 2013

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the Board meeting held on 5 February 2013 be approved and signed by the Chairman as a true and correct record.

44. DEPUTATIONS

No deputations were received.

45. PUBLIC QUESTIONS

There were no public questions.

PART I

46. HONORARY ALDERMAN HEWITT – HONORARY FREEDOM OF THE BOROUGH

Consideration was given to a report of the Chief Executive which set out proposals for Honorary Alderman Hewitt to be conferred the title of Honorary Freeman of the Borough.

RESOLVED: That, in accordance with Section 249(5) of the Local Government Act 1972, and in recognition of his eminent services to the people and Borough of Gosport over many years, the Board request that an Extraordinary Council Meeting be called, to confer the Title of Honorary Freeman of the Borough to Honorary Alderman Hewitt.

PART II

47. CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE VOLUNTARY & COMMUNITY SECTORS

Consideration was given to a report of the Chief Executive which recommended to Members a more robust consideration of funding to the voluntary and community sectors.

The Chief Executive confirmed that Gosport Voluntary Action and the Citizens Advice Bureau would be making presentations to the Board in June and September 2013 respectively.

Members agreed to amend the recommendation contained in the report to reflect that those voluntary and community sector organisations receiving over £10,000 per annum from this Council may be asked to make an annual presentation in respect of the funding to a Board/Committee of this Council and those receiving over £20,000 will be asked to make a presentation to a Board/Committee of this Council.

RESOLVED: That:

- a) those voluntary and community sector organisations that receive over £10,000 per annum from this Council, may be asked to make an annual presentation in respect of the funding to a Board/Committee of this Council; and
- b) those voluntary and community sector organisations that receive over £20,000 per annum from this Council, be asked to make an annual presentation in respect of the funding to a Board/Committee of this Council

48. DISCRETIONARY HOUSING PAYMENTS

Councillor Philpott declared a non-pecuniary interest in this item and remained in the meeting room throughout the discussion and voting thereon.

Consideration was given to a report of the Borough Treasurer which informed Members of recent changes to the Discretionary Housing Payment Grant awarded to this Council to fund changes to the Discretionary Housing Payment scheme required due to welfare reform changes commencing April 2013/14 and to recommend changes to the Council's policy.

Members were advised that the introduction of the benefit cap, the introduction of the dwelling size criteria for social tenants and the reductions in Local Housing Allowance would have a significant impact on the benefit customers within Gosport affected by these changes.

Concerns were expressed regarding tenants in social housing considered too large for their needs and that they could potentially be penalised if alternative accommodation could not be found. Members were assured that all possible assistance would be given to tenants in this position.

RESOLVED: That the Discretionary Housing Payments Policy set out in Appendix 1 to the Borough Treasurer's report be approved and take effect from 1 April 2013.

49. GOSPORT LEISURE PARK (ICE RINK)

Consideration was given to a report of the Chief Executive which requested Board approval for changes to the current lease on the Gosport ice rink and the investment of £100,000 towards the refurbishment and improvement of the facility.

Members were advised that the new Leisure Centre was complete and the hotel and pub were currently under construction. There had been concerns for many years regarding the ice rink building. The Council are the freeholder of the building with the lease currently assigned to Arena (Gosport) Limited.

The report was welcomed by Members who felt that if no investment were made by the Council, the ice rink would close and there was no other such facility in the neighbouring area.

RESOLVED: That:

- a) the Borough Solicitor and Deputy Chief Executive be authorised to negotiate and agree amendments to the current lease between this Council and Arena (Gosport) Limited as outlined in the Chief Executive's report; and
- b) a Supplementary Capital Estimate of £100,000 for a contribution towards the recladding of the walls/roof of the ice rink be approved.

50. NEW USES FOR HISTORIC BUILDINGS: A COLLABORATIVE APPROACH

Consideration was given to a report of the Chief Executive which informed Members of a proposal from English Heritage, supported by PUSH, for investment in bringing historic buildings in the area surrounding Portsmouth Harbour into productive use.

Members were advised that the English Heritage Panel had visited Gosport two years ago and had been impressed by the heritage of the town as well as recognising the burden placed on the Council by the many land releases by Defence Estates in Gosport, which contained nationally significant built heritage. English Heritage now proposed £500,000 investment and the joint funding of a post, to be hosted by Gosport Borough Council, to support the Portsmouth Harbour area and historic buildings. It was felt that this would be of great benefit to Gosport, particularly in relation to the Daedalus and Haslar sites. The contribution from Gosport Borough Council towards funding the post would be £9,000 over three years.

RESOLVED: That:

- a) the proposal, including the proposed matched funding from English Heritage, be noted;

- b) the provision of financial support for the proposed Project Officer post in the sum of £3000 per annum for 3 years be agreed; and
- c) the employment of the Project Officer be agreed.

51. EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC

RESOLVED: That 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 Paragraphs 1 and 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, for the reasons set out in the report.

52. STAFF CHANGES

The report was exempt from publication as it identified a specific individual and information regarding their personal financial affairs rather than the Council's overall financial affairs. The public interest in the Council's overall affairs can be met in other ways without releasing such personal information and therefore the public interest in maintaining the privacy of personal information outweighs the public interest in the Council's financial affairs.

Consideration was given to an exempt report of the Chief Executive

RESOLVED: That the recommendation contained in the report be approved.

The meeting ended at 6.47 pm.

CHAIRMAN