

**A MEETING OF THE POLICY AND ORGANISATION BOARD
WAS HELD ON 29 NOVEMBER 2023**

Councillors Burgess, Chegwyn, Hutchison, Pepper, Raffaelli, Mrs Cully and Ms Ballard (substitute for Councillor Hylands)

23. APOLOGIES FOR NON-ATTENDANCE

An apology for non attendance was received from Councillor Hylands

24. MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE BOARD HELD ON 4 OCTOBER 2023

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting held on 4 October 2023 be signed as a true and correct record.

25. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Hutchison advised that he was a trustee of the Elson Hub and Councillor Burgess advised he was a trustee of the Lee Hub, in relation to the Digital Strategy.

26. DEPUTATIONS - STANDING ORDER 3.4

There were none.

27. PUBLIC QUESTIONS - STANDING ORDER 3.5

There was one public question –

Question in the name of Mr Mair to Councillor Chegwyn –

The Council continues to work on its future business plan for the Criterion but nothing has been delivered so far. Can you please make all relevant documents open to public inspection without any delay including the first business case costing £20,000?

Answer – No

28. PRESENTATION - CITIZENS ADVICE GOSPORT

A presentation was given by Citizen's Advice Gosport detailing their work over the year to date. They explained that there was a greater demand for their services and that cases were becoming increasingly complex.

29. MAY 2024 LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND POLICE & CRIME COMMISSIONER ELECTIONS

Consideration was given to a report detailing the proposed changes to the Polling Places for electors in the Lee East 2 and Lee West 3 Polling Districts.

It was requested that recommendation ii) be amended to ensure that consultation was undertaken with the group leaders.

RESOVLED: That the Board:

- i) approves the recommendations of the Returning Officer and Electoral Registration Officer with regard to the Polling Places for electors in Polling Districts Lee East 2 and Lee West 3;
- ii) provides delegated authority to the Returning Officer in consultation with the group leaders to make changes to the Polling Places required for use at these Polls.

30. DIGITAL STRATEGY - PROJECT DELIVERY PLAN

Consideration was given to a report of the Economic and Regeneration Manager seeking approval for the proposed project plan & delivery timetable and asks the Board to note overall progress against the project programme.

The Board was advised that the roles in place were different to previous tourist information roles and that the aim was to increase digital presence. The continuation of the role was unknown but would be assessed as time developed.

RESOLVED:

1. That the Board notes the progress of Year One delivery as set out in Section 2 of this report.
2. That the Board approves the Year Two project plans set out in Section 3, to be delivered by March 2024 in accordance with the UKSPF funding criteria.
3. That the Board approves the Year Three project plans set out in Section 4, in accordance with the UKSPF funding criteria.
4. That the Board approves the Year Three plan for one full time resource to be funded through UKSPF funding criteria set out in Section 5.

31. FEES AND CHARGES

Consideration was given to a report of the Borough Treasurer detailing the proposed amended fees and charges.

In answer to a Member's question, the Board was advised that no particular index was used as an anchor to set rates as these were not sole indicators. Last year, October's CPI had been used, and was one of a number of indicators that had been evaluated to determine the fees and charges for the year.

It was advised that household inflation could not be followed as there were other factors to consider such as cost of services, price and volume of delivery and service enhancement.

Members questioned the large increase in charges for sports facilities, particularly as Gosport had an above average obesity problem and accessible sports facilities could help.

The Board was advised that although a complete review had not been undertaken to review the fees and charges, scoping work had taken place but that it would not be as easy as comparable datasets and was not granular. 12 months ago there had been an expectation of an elevation in inflation, between then and now, and a reduction had been unexpected and not a true reflection of current costs for the Council.

Members welcomed the inclusion of drugs tests for taxi licenses.

Members reiterated their concerns about the correlation of the increase, as car parking charges had increased 3 times since May 2022 but the increase across them varied from between 40 and 70 %. This variation in increase also applied to sports pitches.

Some Members felt that the sports pitches and pavilion had been in decline for a significant period of time.

RESOLVED: That the proposed fees and charges be referred to the Full Council

32. CRITERION THEATRE

Consideration was given to a report of the Economic and Redevelopment Manager providing an update the Board and to request approval from the Policy & Organisation Board for the release of capital expenditure to complete the work required to develop a Business Case.

The Board was advised of a typographical amendment that was updated as a consultant had yet to be appointed.

Members questioned that they were being asked to fund additional spend on business cases without seeing the work undertaken to date.

The Board was advised that commercial examples had been studied and this had progressed to CIC and Charity based models, and that visits to similar venues had been undertaken.

Members reiterated concern that they had not seen work of the progress to date and questioned when they would receive the outcome of the additional work that funds were being sought for. Members also questioned initial claims that work would be grant funded, but that there was no evidence of this to date

It was acknowledged that this would be a minimum of four months as a consultant was yet to be appointed.

The Board was advised that the completed business case would allow for grants to be applied for.

Members reiterated the desire to see the business case once the further work had been undertaken.

RESOLVED:

That the Board:

1. Note the progress of the project.
2. Approve the release of the capital expenditure required to continue the development of the Business Case.
3. Delegate's approval to the Chief Executive Officer, in consultation with the Deputy Chief Executive Officer and the Leader of the Council, to appoint a selected Business Development Consultant to undertake this work.

33. ANY OTHER ITEMS

It was acknowledged that press officers Kerri Pope and John Millard were leaving the Council and was requested that thanks be placed on record for their work.

CHAIRMAN

Concluded at 7.17 pm