

**A MEETING OF THE POLICY AND ORGANISATION BOARD
WAS HELD ON 29 SEPTEMBER 2020**

The Mayor Councillors Mrs Huggins, Ms Ballard, Bateman, Burgess, Chegwyn, Mrs Cully, Foster-Reed, Hook, Mrs Hook, Hylands, Jessop, Murphy, Philpott, Mrs Prickett, Raffaelli and Westerby (Substituting for Herridge)

17. APOLOGIES FOR NON-ATTENDANCE

An apology for non attendance was received from Councillor Herridge.

18. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Mrs Ballard declared a personal interest in agenda item 9 Covid Update.

19. MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE BOARD HELD ON 28/07/2020

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting held on 28 July 2020 be signed as a true and correct record.

20. DEPUTATIONS - STANDING ORDER 3.4

There were none.

21. PUBLIC QUESTIONS - STANDING ORDER 3.5

There were none.

**22. ELECTORAL REVIEW BY THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOUNDARY
COMMISSION FOR ENGLAND**

Consideration was given to a report of the Electoral Registration Officer advising the Board of the next steps required by the Borough Council regarding the statutory review currently being undertaken by the Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE), and to make recommendations to Full Council.

Members were given clarity by the Electoral Registration Officer regarding 28 members being the minimum necessary to enable Gosport Borough Council to deliver its strategic priorities, legislative requirements and governance arrangements. With the current number of boards/committees this would enable each Member to sit on 3.

Members wished to recognise the excellent report and thanked Officers for the hard work that had gone into it.

Members were reminded that the responsibility of the Board was to make recommendations to Council and if approved the Boundary Commission may not choose to accept the recommendations and would also consider submissions from other persons/groups.

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It was proposed and seconded that an amendment be made to the recommendation set out in the report; that recommendation e) reads “in consultation with the three group leaders”

A Member voiced their concern for the amount of money being spent by the LGBCE at a time when the future of Councils in 2022 were uncertain.

A Member proposed an amendment to recommendation b) to establish a Task and Finish Group to increase the amount of consultation by Members on this decision.

Members were pleased to accept that various other options could be explored by the Task and Finish group, without which the LGBCE may not accept the submission.

Members asked for clarification of what, if any information had been shared with LGBCE and were advised that only evidence of the political forecast of the electoral size for 2026 had been submitted. The rest of the report needed be submitted before the 12th October 2020.

Members were also advised that at Stage 1 of the process the LGBCE were only looking at the number of Councillors, and not the frequency or make up of elections.

The Board considered whether it was appropriate for the Task and Finish Group to meet prior the Council meeting as the Board was making a recommendation to the Council and the Task and Finish Group could potentially amend this or the supporting documents, but it was felt acceptable, given the short timescale for the return. It was accepted that the Group Leaders would make any amendments to recommendation or the document they considered appropriate.

The amendments to the recommendation were made under Standing Order 6.5.2.

RESOLVED The Policy and Organisation Board recommend that Full Council approve

- a) Local Government Boundary Commission for England: Polling District Forecasting Tool for the Borough of Gosport – attached as Appendix 1;
- b) Council Size submission for the Borough of Gosport to the LGBCE – attached as Appendix 4; subject to an all party Task & Finish group consisting of the three group leaders or their deputies being set up to consider and agree the Council’s proposals prior to their submission to LGBCE
- c) Gosport remains with the current electoral cycle and elects by halves;
- d) Gosport remains with the current ‘alternative arrangements’;
- e) authority be delegated to the Electoral Registration Officer, in consultation with the group leaders, to make further editing changes, correction and updates to the Council Size document prior to submission to the LGBCE.

23. UPDATED WHISTLEBLOWING POLICY

Consideration was given to a report of the Chief Internal Auditor seeking approval from Members in regards to the draft updated Whistleblowing Policy 2020.

Members were advised that this report contained a fairly substantial update and outlined the assurances the Council will give to employees making referrals and outlining how the process will be managed to ensure consistency. The methods of communication have been extended.

Members welcomed the report and fully supported the additional anonymity and confidentiality the process afforded employees.

RESOLVED: That the Policy and Organisation Board approve the draft updated whistleblowing Policy

24. FEES AND CHARGES

Consideration was given to a report by the Head of Finance setting out the Fees and Charges for 2021/22.

Members welcomed this report and supported the decision to freeze many of the fees particularly for the market traders taxi licenses and sports facilities. It was felt that the Council should do anything it could to support those worst hit by the current situation, and it justified the relatively small loss of income. It was felt that the new pavement licence had been of great benefit to small traders and had created a much welcomed “Café culture” in the High Street.

Members asked that the bulk waste situation, whereby there was a long waiting list for collections, should be looked into as it could result in not just a loss of revenue but potentially fly-tipping.

RESOLVED

That the Board recommend that Full Council approve the Fees and Charges referred to in the report and appendix for implementation from 1 January 2021 unless stated otherwise.

25. COVID UPDATE

Consideration was given to a report of the Head of Finance providing the Board with an update of the financial impact to the Council as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic.

Members welcomed the report and felt it put into perspective the cost to the Council of Covid 19, and recognised that there was an ongoing commitment for the foreseeable future. They were reassured that there would be no cuts to frontline services as a result of this additional expenditure.

Members also wanted to recognise the additional workload and responsibilities the Covid situation had put upon all officers, in particular those dealing with the homeless and vulnerable. There was also praise for the way in which voluntary organisations, churches and the community as a whole had come together to support those most in need.

Members expressed a wish to be kept updated on these figures and this would be done through the Members Information Bulletins.

The Board noted the report.

26. ANY OTHER ITEMS

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There were none.

CHAIRMAN

Concluded at 7.20 pm