

Public Document Pack

Policy and Organisation Board
30 May 2022

A MEETING OF THE POLICY AND ORGANISATION BOARD WAS HELD ON 30 MAY 2022

Councillors Burgess, Chegwyn, Hylands, Marshall, Pepper, Philpott and Raffaelli

1. APOLOGIES FOR NON-ATTENDANCE

An apology for non attendance was received from the Mayor.

2. ELECTION OF VICE CHAIRMAN

RESOLVED: That Councillor Hylands be elected as Vice Chairman of the Policy and Organisation Board for the Municipal Year 2022-23.

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Declarations of Interest were received on the following items.

Councillor Hylands declared a pecuniary interest in the Assets of Community Value report – specifically the Junction Tavern and the Queen’s Hotel.

Councillors Pepper, Marshall, and Chegwyn declared personal interests in the Junction Tavern and the Queen’s Hotel Assets of Community Values because they had used the facilities at some pointed.

Councillor Hylands declared a personal interest in the Criterion.

4. MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE BOARD HELD ON 17 MARCH 2022

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting held on 17 March 2022 be signed as a true and correct record.

5. DEPUTATIONS - STANDING ORDER 3.4

There were no deputations.

6. PUBLIC QUESTIONS - STANDING ORDER 3.5

There were none.

7. COMMUNITY SKIPS

Consideration was given to a report of the Head of Streetscene seeking the approval of a free community skip service for Gosport.

A Member advised that they had a number of questions regarding the proposal as follows:

In answer a Members question the Board was advised that it had not yet been finalised as to the timings that the skips would be on site, but they would be there on Saturdays and wouldn't be left overnight. They would be staffed to reduce the risk of dumping unsuitable waste. It was accepted that the waste that could be accepted had changed significantly since so some items previously disposed of in skips would be unsuitable. There would be three closely monitored skips, but without knowing how popular it would be it would be hard to set out a complete plan. No hazardous waste would be accepted and existing staff would be utilised.

A Member expressed concern that if skips filled quickly, there would be disappointment from residents who had loaded their vehicles who could then not a Recycling Centre space as they were prebookable. As a result it was feared that there could actually be an increase in fly tipping.

A Members questioned the method for advertising the location and date of the skips, how far in advanced they'd be advertised and was advised that the details for this were yet to be finalised.

A Member questioned whether consultation had been undertaken with Hampshire County Council as they did not believe that it had. They did not believe that the proposal was compatible with the Joint Municipal Waste Management Strategy to which the Borough Council were named signatories. The priorities of the Strategy were to reduce carbon footprints, increase recycling rates, and take action against climate change. It was felt that the proposal did none of this.

In addition it was questioned as to whether competition law had been considered and which companies would actually provide the facility to dispose of waste.

The Board was advised that the details of the provider could not be finalised until the procurement process had been undertaken, at which point the disposal and transfer methods would be confirmed. It was also confirmed that social media would be one of the tools used to advertise the skips.

The Board was advised that consultation would be undertaken with Hampshire County Council following approval of the Policy and that the proposal would help increase recycling rates as less rubbish would be dumped.

The Board was advised that Gosport had the 9th worth recycling rate in the Country and this would help to improve it.

The Board was advised that the costs of the scheme could not be confirmed until the procurement exercise was undertaken but that there would not be a cost to the Council Tax Payer and advised that the costs would be presented to the Board.

In answer to a Members question, the Board was advised that costings would be presented to a future board but that the decision to implement the scheme was being considered at the meeting.

Notice was given that following the vote, if approved, Under Part 4 Schedule 9 Standing Order 5.11 that should the proposal be approved, it would be requested that the decision be referred to Full Council for consideration as a Minority Order.

A Member advised that this would delay a decision that many people in the Borough wanted.

A Member advised that Hampshire County Council had previously advised that the provision of amenity skips was against the principals of the JWMS and that Council Officers had previously advised that the scheme was inappropriate and unacceptable.

As a result Members advised they wish to know what had changed to make the proposal now acceptable. This was not able to be answered by the officer's present.

It was reiterated to the Board that the funding for the introduction would be found from existing budgets and that there would be a review in six month's time.

A Members advised that all Councils in Hampshire had signed the JWMS, including the two unitary authorities. One of the agreements of the Strategy was the partnership across authorities on seven points including the reduction of bulky waste, the reduction in waste to landfill and the reduction of contaminated waste.

This proposal fell short on all seven objectives.

Work was ongoing to improve the rates of recycling for mixed recyclables, and this would allow the Council to go further in meeting its Climate Change commitment and would increase the recycling rate. A Member advised the Board that the proposal was prohibitive for those with disabilities or mobility issues.

A Member advised that given the position of HCC had not been confirmed there was a reluctance to accept the proposal, as it would not eliminate or address contaminated waste.

Members sought clarification as to whether the County Council had agreed to accept the waste at the transfer station, as this would impact on cost or whether the transfer of waste would be private through a third party. Both of these methods would have costs associated to them for the disposal of rubbish and concern was expressed that the cost for delivering each skip could run into thousands of pounds per skip.

Concern was reiterated about the contamination of waste and the cost associated with this and questioned whether the skips would be monitored as part of normal staff working hours, or as overtime. Concern was also expressed that the proposal duplicated the Household Waste Recycling Scheme.

It was reiterated that the proposal was not compliant with HCC policies and that it risked more fly tipping, rather than reducing it. Concern was reiterated that if the skips were full and people had loaded their cars to attend they would simply dump the waste. It was also advised that the JWMS promoted reducing, reusing and recycling waste and did not advocate the easy disposal of bulky waste.

A Member questioned whether the proposal would scratch the surface of the fly tipping of bulky waste as there was a mechanism in place already to address it through the recycling

centres, which ensured correct disposal and concluded that the scheme was poorly thought out and costed. As a result it was felt unreasonable that a decision could be taken on the proposal, without further information.

The Board was also advised that Hampshire county Council were constantly looking to improve recycling rates, but that additional measures took time.

The Board was advised that legislation had changed since free amenity skips were last available in Gosport and that the residents had asked for their return. Gosport had the 9th worst recycling rate in the country and residents constantly asked why plastics marked as recyclable, weren't in Gosport. Business waste was able to be recycled this way, but not domestic.

The Board were advised that the proposal would make it easier for residents to dispose of their waste correctly and improve Gosport's rates.

Members expressed disappointment that the key Council Officers were unavailable for the meeting as it was hoped that additional clarification could be reviewed on the process and the hierarchical position of waste management.

Members felt that it was important to upcycle goods where possible.

Members felt that the proposal breached the Environment Act 2021 and expressed concern that the proposals were unsound. Members felt it should be accepted that the proposal was unsound and that there should be an acceptance that the change in legislation meant amenity skips were no longer viable.

Members also expressed concern should anyone present hazardous waste, and the risk this presented.

Members advised that other Local Authorities that fell under the scheme and were not so poor at recycling, therefore it was important to try new initiatives to improve it.

There was currently a significant level of fly tipping and the aim of the proposal was to address this at source. People had advised that they wanted a cleaner and greener Gosport and this would support this happening. If it didn't work, something else would be tried. Additional kerb side recycling would be pursued and that in addition there shouldn't be any delays to the proposal.

The Board was advised that clause 2c of the recommendation would need to be included in part 1 of the recommendation which would split to become 2 parts, 1a and 1b.

1. That the Board approves the additional funding to enable the provision of community skips in the Borough at an estimated cost of £45,570 (subject to tender) as set out in Section 3, but subject to a further report to the Board to identify equivalent on-going savings once final tender costs have been determined.
2. A procurement exercise in order to obtain suitable bids to operate the community skips service.

2. That the Head of Streetscene is instructed to report to a subsequent Board regarding
 - a. the final costs of the Community Skips scheme
 - b. the funding for the scheme; and

Under Part 4, Schedule 9, Standing order 5.11 it was requested that the decision be referred to the Full Council as a minority order.

8. CAR PARKING

Consideration was given to a report of the Head of Finance requesting a decision on the provision of free parking in town centre short-stay car parks in order to stimulate additional economic activity in the town centre and to amend the scheme of fees and charges accordingly.

A Member advised that the proposal would rationalise the parking costs across the Borough and that if had been achievable car parking charges would have been scrapped all together.

A Member advised that they felt the proposal was contradictory as the provision for free parking for one hour for the Town Centre actually resulted in an increase in parking charges for most other car parking provision.

The Board was advised that the increase in prices was actually damaging to those that worked in the Town Centre and would have to pay more to park and that the chargers were a smokescreen.

There was already 378 parking spaces in the Town Centre that provided free parking for an hour, so the move was unnecessary.

The proposals were no real use to traders as they would increase the cost for a second hour parking from 40p to £1, a 150 % increase in cost.

Members advised that there would be a considerable detrimental effect on health and wellbeing of residents, particularly those that used the seafront and Alver Valley early morning and it was felt that the increase in the cost of parking for the second hour would be detrimental to traders.

Members were advised that the seafront areas were often used in quieter periods by people walking their dogs, or excising and that there were significant health benefits to wellbeing.

The parking charges would discourage such activities, and be detrimental to people's health. This would in particular affect parkrun, at Lee-on-the-Solent on a Saturday morning which was one of the most successful on the south coast. As well as dog walkers out before and after work.

Members were advised that there was a system in place Wickham that allowed for 30 minutes free parking and that this could be replicated and that the charging for on street parking on the seafront did not start until 10am and could be utilised. It was advised that the introduction of the charges was important revenue for the Borough.

RESOLVED: It is recommended that the Board approves the following, subject to approval of Full Council:

- 1. One hour of free parking is provided in all town centre short-stay car parks;**
- 2. That the loss of car-parking income, estimated at £28,651 per annum, is offset by implementing an increase to long-stay town centre car parking charges by an average of 10.6% as set out in Section 2;**
- 3. Charging periods of all Seafront and Leisure Car Parks are brought in line with Town Centre Car Parks;**
- 4. Delegates authority to the Head of Finance to amend the scheme of fees and charges to accommodate the changes to car parking charges proposed within this report;**
- 5. Instructs the Head of Streetscene to implement any necessary notices and orders required to bring the parking charges into effect;**

Notice was given following the vote, Under Part 4 Schedule 9 Standing Order 5.11 that the decision be referred to Full Council for decision as a Minority Order.

9. LEVELLING UP PROCUREMENT

Consideration was given to a report of the Head of Procurement, and the Assistant Chief Executive requesting that consideration be given to an extension of the current contract that has been awarded to AECOM to include preparing additional work for the Council's Round 2 levelling up bid and the UK Shared Prosperity Fund Investment plan bid.

Members recognised the time pressures associated with the levelling up bid and advised that it was important that Gosport be considered for levelling up funding after missing out in previous rounds.

The Board was advised that there would not be time to bring the bid back to the Board but that a MIB would be provided.

Members welcomed the opportunities that would be given and reiterated the importance of Gosport receiving funding.

It was recognised and agreed that the leaders of the political Groups should be made aware of any bid or additional work.

RESOLVED:

That the Board approves the procurement approach as set out within this report to extend the current AECOM contract to include additional work on the Levelling Up Fund Round 2 bid and the UK Shared Prosperity Fund Investment plan bid and delegates authority to the Assistant Chief Executive and Head of Procurement in consultation with the Borough Solicitor and Chairman of the Policy & Organisation Board and Leaders of the opposition to approve any additional works and services in respect of these bids

10. BEACH ROAD CAR PARK COMMUNITY TRIGGER

Consideration was given to a report of the Head of Streetscene updating the Board on the progress of the Community Trigger Action Plan for Beach Road Car Park, in respect of actions that the Council is responsible for.

The Board was advised that an update had been requested as a result of the spending of money on speed bumps and of the shrubs planted dying off.

The Board requested information as to whether Anti-Social Behaviour at the site and questioned the previous decision. It was acknowledged that the option to close the car park had not been taken up but questioned the costings that had been provided to do so. The suggestion of exit only ramps was proposed as it would be less cost than the closures. Concern was expressed that there was less CCTV coverage now and questioned whether uniformed patrols were still being undertaken.

A Members advised the Board that there was that the speed bumps in the car park were not part of the Community Trigger but had been installed as part of safety measures to protect users of the splash park.

Members expressed concern that the residents concerns had not properly been addressed through the actioning of the community trigger. The Board was advised that noise monitoring recording had been offered and that it had been requested that any Anti Social Behaviour be reported to the Police.

Members expressed concern that it was important that the residents concerns were taken seriously. Members wanted to ensure that the Community Trigger was properly executed and that it was kept under review and the process amended if appropriate. Members hoped that the local residents would be met with to ensure concerns were considered.

Members advised that they wished to see a copy of the community trigger and of its process and to see the policy for Community Triggers.

RESOLVED: That the Board reviews the progress updates outlined in this report and approves the continuation of uniformed operations and discontinuation of improved lighting, CCTV and hedge planting (referred to in paragraphs 4.6, 4.7 and 4.8 of the report).

11. ANY OTHER ITEMS

The Board was advised that there were two additional items for consideration. These items had not been available at the publication of the agenda.

RESOLVED: That in order to progress swiftly, reports regarding assets of Community Value and the Commemorative Bench Seat Policy be considered by the Board.

12. COMMEMORATIVE BENCH SEAT POLICY

Consideration was given to a report by the Head of Streetscene seeking approval for the adoption of the amended Commemorative Bench Seat Policy.

The overall objective of the policy is to retain a consistent approach to the management of the commemorative bench seats in the Borough.

Members expressed how they felt that the previous policy had not been appropriate and that the loss of benches for families was deeply distressing. It was felt that if a commemoration was on a bench, it should remain. Members felt that if a bench was irreparable then it would be time for it to be replaced, however it was felt that benches could last longer than 10 years and there was proof of this on benches already in situ.

Members advised that the handling of commemorative benches should be sensitive to those that are making requests for them as they requested in sad circumstances.

Members accepted that the placing of flowers and other such commemorations was difficult as they were often left to disintegrate and were unsightly.

It was suggested that investigations be made into the provision of a memory wall to allow all those that wished loved ones to be recognised to do so.

Members recognised that it was a sensitive subject and there was a balance between available memorial space and allowing all those that wished to remember loved ones there to do so.

The Board was advised that the previous policy had been presented as it there had been no policy for benches in place and that coupled with a large number of requests outstanding for benches.

Members debated the restriction of 10 years on benches and it was felt that it was difficult to set a time limit as to when benches would reach the end of their useful lives.

Concern was also expressed about how bench holders may not be contactable by the Council and the difficulties this may present.

Members felt that 10 years was not sufficient time for a bench to be in situ and maintained, the Board was advised that the previous policy did not state that the bench would be removed after 10 years, but that it not be maintained and replaced after this point should it be deemed faulty.

The Board was advised that the Friends of Stokes Bay had suggested there was the levels of benches at the beach was too many. Some Members felt that it was not for the Friends of Stokes Bay to determine how many benches were at the beach.

Members advised that all residents of the Borough benefited from and requested benches at the beaches, not just those in Anglesey and Alverstoke.

Members felt it was important that that local groups were consulted on such proposals as they were a vital part of the community.

RESOLVED: That the Board approves the amended Commemorative Bench Seat Policy and continue to provide delegated authority to the Head of Streetscene in conjunction with the Chairman of the Policy and Organisation Board to:-

- 1 Cease the provision of bench seats where sites are deemed exhausted or unsuitable.
- 2 Determine fees based on supply, installation and maintenance costs each financial year.
- 3 Manage the service provision in accordance with the policy.

13. ASSETS OF COMMUNITY VALUE

Consideration was given to a report of the Borough Solicitor requesting that consideration be given an application received to register the former Criterion, Forton Road, the Junction Tavern, Whitworth Road and The Queen's Hotel, as an Asset of Community Value.

A Member advised that they had viewed inside the Criterion and to their surprise many of the original features still remained.

It had been a large impressive theatre and cinema in the building previously. It was an important valuable building and a heritage asset.

The Board was advised that it was an early 20th Century Building and later been converted to a bingo hall, which had operated until 2020. The Board was advised that a recent inspection had indicated that the building was in surprisingly good condition and that the original balcony remained, along with the original staircase, floor, light fittings and port holes.

The building looked not to have any water damage and had been bought recently for £400,000. It was acknowledged that the site was a difficult one, and was in effect a traffic island which would make residential development difficult.

The Board was advised that an application to make the building an asset of Community value would provide some breathing space for it, to allow further options to be considered as the Borough was crying out for arts provision.

The Board was advised that it was important to recognise heritage sites and that it would be a lost opportunity should another valuable heritage asset be lost.

The Board was advised that status as an Asset of Community Value did not mean that the Council could purchase the building, but allowed for a 6 week period for community groups to declare an interest in the building and establish proposals for it.

The Council would not be eligible to be an interested party in the building as an asset of community value.

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Members welcomed the proposal and hoped there would be a collaborative approach to protecting the building would be taken.

Member were advised that Assets of Community Value were introduced as part of the Localism Act and that the recommendation was that the Board gave consideration as to whether or not to accept the proposal.

Members felt the venue could be utilised as an arts venue, and that there had been some interest from the St Vincent Cinema.

It was reiterated that making the building a ACV would not save it, merely allow interested parties to express interest in it and it was acknowledged that conversations would need to take place with the owner.

The Board was advised that the Queens Hotel had been managed by the same person since 1983 and it was now believed that the owners of the building wished to sell it. It was acknowledged that the building was dated but the value of the building as a community asset should not go unnoticed and members recognised that the application, if approved, would provide some breathing space.

Members were advised that the Junction Tavern had previously been designated as an asset of Community Value previously and that this was to reinstate it as one.

The Board was advised that any change of use of planning application for any of the proposals would be for the Regulatory Board to consider.

RESOLVED:

That the Board designate The Criterion, Forton Road, Junction Tavern in Leesland Road, and the Queens Hotel in Queen's Road as Assets of Community Value

CHAIRMAN

Concluded at 8.20 pm