

**A MEETING OF THE POLICY AND ORGANISATION BOARD
WAS HELD ON 15 MARCH 2023**

The Mayor Councillor Hutchison

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

78. NEW COUNCIL BRANDING

Consideration was given to a report of the Head of Communications seeking Board approval for the updated Gosport Borough Council branding.

The Board was advised that the proposal was for an update to the visual identity of Gosport Borough Council and that the Borough Crest remained intact. An addendum was proposed to the recommendation to reflect and clarify the continued retention of the crest. It would still be appropriate to use the crest for civic occasions and Council meetings.

The Board was advised that there was widespread use of the crest within the Borough, some of this was appropriate, voluntary sector, sports teams but it was also used more widely.

In creating an identity for the Council, that could be trademarked, any unauthorised use could be challenged, which could not happen with the existing crest as it had been in use for a significant period of time.

It was reiterated to the Board that there was no way of challenging existing use of the crest and that the proposed logo for the Council would add clarity to the identification of Council services.

A Member read out a letter from The Chairman of the Portsmouth and Gosport History Team expressing their concern at the removal of the crest and the Board was advised that the crest would not be being removed from important Civic occasions and requirements.

The Board was advised that the costs were paid to the professional design team at Portsmouth City Council and that this had already been spent.

Members expressed disappointment that effort could not be made to stop unlawful use of the crest.

Members debated the proposal and it was reiterated that the logo was intended to create an identity for the Council separate from its association with the crest.

Members sought additional clarification that the crest would be retained on items such as employee's uniform and it was advised that this could be possible.

Concern was expressed that a lot of misinformation had been circulated regarding the proposals, it was acknowledged that a petition had been submitted but that the subject of

the petition had never been considered as an option and that only a small amount of the population had signed it.

The recommendation was amended with an addendum to read; that the Board approve the new logo and the Borough Crest remain unaltered with the words 'God's Port, Our Haven' remaining intact.

RESOLVED: That the Board approved the new logo and the Borough Crest remain unaltered with the words 'God's Port, Our Haven' remaining intact.

79. COUNCIL PLAN

Consideration was given to a report of the Chief Executive detail the proposed Council Plan.

The Board was advised that the details provided were examples and not exhaustive as they would evolve and business as usual services would continue.

A Member sought clarification on proposals for the waterfront with regard to funding for the proposal as funding would be lost for developing on brown field sites.

The Board was advised that this was included in the budget and would open up the park with an attractive concession and had the potential to include other facilities such as Tourist Information.

A Member advised that they had believed it previously advertised that restaurants would be located on this site but that this was now not the case.

It was accepted that some of the issues concerning the bus station were in relation to there needing to be a provision for electric buses on site, which were larger than diesel.

Some Members also expressed concern that the Borough's housing need would not be met, the Board was advised that investigation into use of redundant car parking spaces was being considered.

The Board was also advised that there was still provision for allotments, and that were a number of projects throughout the Borough that were exciting.

The Board was advised that estimates for the waterfront improvements were £800,000.

RESOLVED: That the Board approve the Council Plan

80. ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT 2021/22

Consideration was given to a report of the Annual Auditor detailing the draft Annual Governance Statement 2021/22.

RESOLVED: That the Policy and Organisation Board approve the Annual Governance Statement 2021/22

81. EY - AUDIT RESULTS REPORT 2021/22

Consideration was given to a report of the External Auditor summerising the findings to date form the 2021/22 external audit.

The Board was advised that it was recognised that there were delays.

The Key Findings of the report were the statement of accounts, which were being progressed and it was hoped would be completed within the next few weeks.

Any further amendments to the accounts arising until the conclusion of the audit would be agreed with the Borough Treasurer and chairman.

The Board was advised of an extrapolated error, but that this did not need to be corrected.

The work undertaken was crucial in ensuring that tax payers received value for money.

The Board was advised that there was concern raised about procurement within the report, however significant progress had been made, and it was hoped that the next reporting would show continued improvement and progress.

RESOLVED: That the Board note the report.

82. FINAL ACCOUNTS 2021/22

Consideration was given to a report of the borough Treasurer detailing the outturn position for the 2021/22 Financial Year and recommending approval of the statement of accounts.

The Board was advised that the report was presented to give Elected Members confidence that the council was operating in an environment free of errors.

The Board was advised that any errors identified had been extrapolated and and as a result no action needed to be taken

The Board was advised that the statement of accounts would be signed within the next few weeks and any amendments that needed to be made would be done so with the agreement of the section 151 officer and in consultation with the Chairman.

The statement of accounts would then be placed on the website for inspection.

RESOLVED that:

- i) The Board note the outturn position summarised in the report and the Narrative Report contained in the Statement of Accounts (Appendix A)
- ii) The Board approves the Statement of Accounts for 2021/22 at Appendix A
- iii) The Board approve the Letter of Representation at Appendix B.
- iv) The Board delegate to the Borough Treasurer in consultation with the Chairman of the Policy & Organisation Board the decision to agree any final changes to the financial statement arising from the completion of the audit.

83. TREASURY MANAGEMENT STRATEGY AND MRP POLICY 2023/24

Consideration was given to a report of the Borough Treasurer detailing the Council's policy for charging unfinanced capital expenditure to revenue (MRP) together with the expected treasury operations for this period. It fulfils a key legislative requirement.

The Board was advised that the Council was currently operating in a high interest environment, with relatively low interest rates predicted for the average bank of England base rate for 2022/23 of 0.98% and now the forecast for 2023/23 is an average of 3.63%, this had an impact on the cost of debt, however there was a positive increase in interest received on working capital and cash flow.

RESOLVED: That the Council approves

The minimum revenue provision policy identified in 2.1 and the treasury management strategy identified in 2.2

84. GBC WATERFRONT - BUS STATION REDEVELOPMENT DEDICATION OF COUNCIL FREEHOLD LAND AS PUBLIC HIGHWAY TO FACILITATE CONSTRUCTION AND OPERATION OF NEW BUS STATION

Consideration was given to a report of the Head of Housing setting out the details of the Council's proposed dedication of land to become public highway at Mumby Road and South Street, to facilitate the construction and operation of the new bus station, taxi rank, drop-off & short-term parking.

The Board was advised that the dedication was for a small area of land that would allow adoption as public highway but remain under Gosport Borough Council's ownership.

The Board recognised that the proposal had been delayed, it had been due to be finished but as yet was not yet started. The latest update was that it was due to be a 12 month project starting in May 2023.

Members expressed concern that this would impact on the funding, however it was hoped the project could be progressed.

That the Council:

- i) Approve the dedication of the four areas of land indicated on the two drawings at Appendix 2 as public highway.
- ii) Grant delegated authority to the Chief Executive Officer and Borough Solicitor & Monitoring Officer to conclude negotiations and agree details associated with i) above and complete the transaction

85. CONSULTATION DRAFT STATEMENT OF COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

Consideration was given to a report of the Manager of Planning Policy detailing the draft statement of community involvement.

RESOLVED: That the Board approves the draft Statement of Community Involvement (as set out in Appendix 1 to this Report) for public consultation purposes.

86. LOCAL DEVELOPMENT SCHEME

Consideration was given to a report of the Manager of Planning Policy seeking approval to publish the latest version of the Local Development Scheme.

The Board was advised that the timetable for the production of the Local Plan including the Regulation 19 consultation dates had been adjusted to take into account various factors outlined in the report.

A Members question acknowledged that since the Regulation 18 consultation a number of sites such as the Police Station and the Waterfront were no longer available and that this would increase the Borough's unmet housing need. Concern was expressed that as a result, neighbouring authorities would potentially need to pick up the additional housing, leading to building on the strategic gap and arterial routes.

The Board was advised that there was always a risk with putting forward a plan but the Government has made it clear that local authorities should continue with progressing their Local Plan notwithstanding that it is proposing changes to the planning system. This includes amending the Standard Method for calculating housing need which currently uses the 2014 household projections rather than more recent figures which identifies a smaller increase in household growth. In addition to this the census figures for Gosport for 2021 had shown a decline in the population by 0.9% so it was likely that requirements would be less.

The Board was advised that Worthing had recently been granted approval for their Local Plan with an unmet need, and with a protection of the Goring Gap as the inspector had used a pragmatic approach to the issues presented in coastal towns.

Concern was expressed at the level of housing required and acknowledged that work was ongoing with preparing the statement of common ground with PfSH members and that a statement of common ground was already in place with Fareham Borough Council.

That this Board:

Approves the Local Development Scheme (March 2023) (as set out in Appendix A).

87. ANY OTHER ITEMS

There were none.

CHAIRMAN

Concluded at 7.35 pm