

**A MEETING OF THE POLICY AND ORGANISATION BOARD
WAS HELD ON 3 JULY 2024**

Councillors Burgess, Chegwyn, Hutchison, Hylands, Raffaelli, Mrs Cully and Cox

7. APOLOGIES FOR NON-ATTENDANCE

There were none.

8. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Hutchison declared a personal interest in agenda item 7 Elson Hub and advised that he would leave the room and take no part in the discussion or voting thereon.

Councillors Burgess and Chegwyn advised that they had supported both the Lee and the Elson hubs respectively in their County Council roles.

9. MINUTES OF THE MEETINGS OF THE BOARD HELD ON 13 MARCH 2024 AND 15 MAY 2024

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meetings held on 13 March 2024 and 15 May 2024 be signed as a true and correct record.

10. DEPUTATIONS - STANDING ORDER 3.4

There were no deputations

11. PUBLIC QUESTIONS - STANDING ORDER 3.5

There were no public questions

12. NEW BUS STATION, MUMBY ROAD, GOSPORT - AGREEMENT FOR PAYMENT OF BUS DEPARTURE CHARGES BY FIRST BUS TO THE COUNCIL (GBC)

Consideration was given to a report of the Head of Commercial Property pertaining to the cessation of the lease of the existing bus station 'apron' to First Bus and the operational income to be received by the Council in lieu of the current lease rent.

The Board was advised that this was required as a result of the relocation of the bus station on to public highway and that this was a workaround solution agreed between First bus, Hampshire County Council and Gosport Borough Council.

Members were advised that this sum was fixed for 10 years and that if the number of departures reduced in this time the figure would remain the same.

The Board was advised that these were normal arrangements for bus companies and they were familiar with creating such frameworks.

That the Board approves:

- i) The surrender of the current Lease to First Bus.
- ii) The completion of the new Bus Departure Charges Payment Agreement.
- iii) Grants delegated authority to the Borough Solicitor & Monitoring Officer in conjunction with the Head of Commercial Property to conclude details and complete the new Bus Departure Charges Payment Agreement between the Council, First Bus and Hampshire County Council.

13. ELSON COMMUNITY LIBRARY & HUB (ELSON HUB), 136 CHANTRY ROAD, ELSON - SURRENDER OF EXISTING LEASE AND GRANT OF NEW 26 YEAR LEASE.

Councillor Hutchison left the room and took no further part in the discussion or the voting thereon.

Consideration was given to a report of the Head of Commercial Property, setting out the background leading to the approach by the Trustees of Elson Hub to Gosport Borough Council (the Council) to surrender the current 10 yr lease and request to grant a new 26 yr lease on near identical terms, to permit the Hub to obtain greater levels of external funding.

The Board was advised that the current lease length had led to missed opportunities for funding, and that the report was very straightforward in the surrendering of one lease for another. The Hubs had been a huge success and the Members welcome the additional support an extended lease would provide.

RESOLVED:

That the Board approves:

- i) The surrender of the current Lease (with 7 years remaining)
- ii) The simultaneous grant of a new 26 year Lease by the Council to the Hub on similar terms to the current lease.
- iii) Grants delegated authority to the Borough Solicitor & Monitoring Officer and in conjunction with the Head of Commercial Property to conclude negotiations and complete the new Lease between the Council and the Hub and associated necessary documentation with Hampshire County Council.

14. LEE HUB - INDEPENDENT COMMUNITY LIBRARY (LEE HUB), 14 HIGH STREET, LEE ON SOLENT - SURRENDER OF EXISTING LEASE AND GRANT OF NEW 26 YEAR LEASE.

Consideration was given to a report of the Head of Commercial Property detailing out the background leading to the approach by the Trustees of Lee Hub to Gosport Borough Council (the Council) to surrender the current 10 yr lease and request to grant a new 26 yr lease on near identical terms, to permit the Hub to obtain greater levels of external funding.

The Board was advised that the current lease length had led to missed opportunities for funding, and that the report was very straightforward in the surrendering of one lease for another. The Hubs had been a huge success and the Members welcome the additional support an extended lease would provide.

RESOLVED:

That the Board approves:

- i) The surrender of the current Lease (with 7 years remaining)
- ii) The simultaneous grant of a new 26 year Lease by the Council to the Hub on similar terms to the current lease.
- iii) Grants delegated authority to the Borough Solicitor & Monitoring Officer and in conjunction with the Head of Commercial Property to conclude negotiations and complete the new Lease between the Council and the Hub and associated necessary documentation with Hampshire County Council.

15. GBC GRANTS PROGRAMME ANNUAL OVERVIEW

Consideration was given to a report of the Head of Corporate Policy and Community Safety detailing an update on the Council's Grants Programme.

The Board was advised that the grants had been a great success and were hugely over subscribed. The scheme was continually under review and eligibility criteria considered.

Members welcomed that the forms were straightforward and that there were process notes and that the processes were evolving.

RESOLVED:

That the Board note the report.

16. HOUSING SERVICE COMPLAINTS POLICY

Consideration was given to a report of the Head of Housing setting out the requirements for the Housing Service to comply with the Housing Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code, seeking Board approval of the draft Housing Service Complaints Policy and making the Board aware of the outcome of the Housing Service self-assessment against the Housing Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code.

Members welcomed the report and commended housing for their handling of complaints. It was acknowledged that there was no choice but to adopt the policy and that it was hoped the additional work created would be staffed sufficiently. Members also welcomed that it would be clear for customers to follow.

RESOLVED: That the Board

- 1) Approve the draft Housing Complaints Policy (Appendix 1)
- 2) Gives delegated authority to the Head of Housing to implement the policy, and
- 3) Notes the outcome of the Housing Service self-assessment against the Housing Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code

17. PRODUCTIVITY PLAN FOR 2024/25

Consideration was given to a report of the Head of Finance advising the Board that a letter has been received from DLUHC asking for information around 'Productivity in Local Government'. The paper seeks to approve the recommended way forward in terms of collation of information, approval and submission of the GBC return to DLUHC.

Members acknowledged that the request had to be completed and published and recognised that the documents that informed them were high level and complex and may not be understood by the public. It was hoped some acknowledgement of this could be on the website.

RESOLVED: That

- i) The content of the draft plan be noted
- ii) Authority be delegated to the Chief Executive in consultation with the Leader to finalise the contents of the plan for submission, incorporating any changes/additions agreed by the Board.

18. CROSS REFERENCE FROM THE STANDARDS AND AUDIT SUB BOARD

Consideration was given to a report referred from the Standards and Audit Sub Board recommending the approval of the Audit planning report of the External Auditors.

The Board was advised that the first draft included the 22/23 fees and then the second report did not include the fees. It had been agreed with EY that if both reports were taken forward again that the fee presentation would be consistent. The fees had not changed or were now at nil cost it was a presentation change.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

19. ANY OTHER ITEMS

There were none.

CHAIRMAN

Concluded at 6.24 pm