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Tuesday, 05 June 2007

S U M M O N S

MEETING: Housing Board
DATE: 13 June 2007
TIME: 6.00pm
PLACE: Committee Room 1, Town Hall, Gosport
Democratic Services contact: Lindsey Holloway



BOROUGH SOLICITOR

MEMBERS OF THE BOARD

Councillor Mrs Wright (Chairman)
Councillor Mrs Cully (Vice Chairman)

Councillor Allen	Councillor Foster
Councillor Ms Ballard	Councillor Foster-Reed
Councillor Burgess	Councillor Mrs Mudie
Councillor Champion	Councillor Rigg

The Mayor (Councillor Gill) (ex officio)
Chairman of Policy and Organisation Board (Councillor Cully) (ex-officio)

FIRE PRECAUTIONS

(To be read from the Chair if members of the public are present)

In the event of the fire alarm (continuous ringing) or bomb alert (intermittent ringing) sounding, please leave the room immediately.

Proceed downstairs by way of the main stairs or as directed by GBC staff, follow any of the emergency exit signs. People with disability or mobility issues please identify yourself to GBC staff who will assist in your evacuation of the building.

IMPORTANT NOTICE:

- If you are in a wheelchair or have difficulty in walking and require access to the Committee Room on the First Floor of the Town Hall for this meeting, assistance can be provided by Town Hall staff on request

If you require any of the services detailed above please ring the Direct Line for the Democratic Services Officer listed on the Summons (first page).

NOTE:

- i. Members are requested to note that if any member wishes to speak at the Board meeting then the Borough Solicitor is required to receive not less than 24 hours prior notice in writing or electronically and such notice shall indicate the agenda item or items on which the member wishes to speak.
- ii. Please note that mobile phones should be switched off for the duration of the meeting.

AGENDA

RECOMMENDED
MINUTE
FORMAT

PART A ITEMS

1 APOLOGIES FOR NON-ATTENDANCE

2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

All Members present are required to declare, at this point in the meeting or as soon as possible thereafter, any personal or personal and prejudicial interest in any item(s) being considered at this meeting.

3 MINUTES OF THE MEETINGS OF THE BOARD HELD ON
7 MARCH and 17 MAY 2007 [Copies herewith].

4 DEPUTATIONS – STANDING ORDER 3.5

(NOTE: The Board is required to receive a deputation(s) on a matter which is before the meeting of the Board provided that notice of the intended deputation and its object shall have been received by the Borough Solicitor by 12 noon on Monday 11 June 2007. The total time for deputations in favour and against a proposal shall not exceed 10 minutes).

5 PUBLIC QUESTIONS – STANDING ORDER 3.6

(NOTE: The Board is required to allow a total of 15 minutes for questions from Members of the public on matters within the terms of reference of the Board provided that notice of such Question(s) shall have been submitted to the Borough Solicitor by 12 noon on Monday 11 June 2007).

6 NEW DELEGATIONS UNDER THE HOUSING ACT 2004

To formally delegate powers contained within the Housing Act 2004 to the Housing Services Manager (Report attached)

PART II
Contact Officer
Trevor Charlesworth
Extension 5510

7 BEST VALUE SHELTERED HOUSING REVIEW

To bring before Members the conclusions of the Working Group on the Best Value Sheltered Housing Review and the results of consultation with residents (Report attached)

PART II
Contact Officer:
Charles Harman
Extension 5287

8 HOMELESSNESS GRANTS TO EXTERNAL BODIES 2007/08

To approve the grants set out in this report for 2007/08 (Report attached)

PART II
Contact Officer:
Steve Newton
Extension 5296

Continued next page...

Housing Board
13 June 2007

9 HOUSING EDITORIAL PANEL REVIEW

The report proposes a new name for the At Your Service Panel and sets out terms of reference for the Housing Editorial Panel (Report attached)

PART II
Contact Officer:
Andy Elder
Extension 5351

10 ANY OTHER ITEMS

- which, in the opinion of the Chairman should be considered as a matter of urgency by reason of special circumstances.

**A MEETING OF THE HOUSING BOARD
WAS HELD ON 7 MARCH 2007**

The Mayor (Councillor Mrs Cully)(ex-officio), Councillors Allen (P), Burgess (P), Cully (P), Foster (P), Foster-Reed (P), Gill (P), Mrs Mudie, Philpott, Rigg (P) and Mrs Wright (P).

Also in attendance: Tenant Representative – Mrs Janne Carter

It was reported that, in accordance with Standing Orders, notice had been received that Councillors Carter and Ms Ballard would replace Councillors Philpott and Mrs Mudie for this meeting.

43 APOLOGIES

Apologies for inability to attend the meeting were received on behalf of Councillors Mrs Mudie and Philpott.

44 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

45 MINUTES

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the meetings held on 10 and 24 January 2007 be approved and signed by the Chairman as a true and correct record.

46 DEPUTATIONS

There were no deputations.

47 PUBLIC QUESTIONS

There were no public questions.

PART II

48 HOUSING REPAIRS PROGRAMME 2007/08

The Board considered the report of the Housing Services Manager (a copy of which is attached in the Minute Book as Appendix 'A') setting out the proposed 2007/08 Housing Repairs Programme and seeking the Board's approval for the programme.

Members' attention was drawn to the proposed changes following on from last year's Housing Repairs Programme and the key priority for investment to meet the Decent Homes Standard by 2010. Members were pleased with the plans to raise the standard of tenants' homes.

RESOLVED: That the proposed 2007/08 Housing Repairs Programme be approved and that officers follow the principles approved at the Housing Board meeting of March 2005 as detailed below:

- (i) Officers be required to seek Board approval to vary the Housing Repairs Programme where work within an identified element of the approved Housing Repairs Programme cannot take place;
- (ii) Where urgent works are identified after approval of the Housing Repairs Programme for which there is no identified provision, officers in consultation with the Chair of the Housing Board be permitted to vary the programme for works up to £60,000;
- (iii) Where urgent works are identified after approval of the Housing Repairs Programme for which there is no identified provision, officers in consultation with the Chair and Group Spokespersons be permitted to vary the programme for works between £60,000 and £100,000;
- (iv) Officers be required to seek Board approval to vary the approved Housing Repairs Programme where urgent works are identified after approval of the programme, for which there is no identified provision and the value of these works exceeds £100,000;
- (v) Officers be required to seek Board approval where work within an identified element of the approved Housing Repairs Programme is going to under or over spend by more than £100,000; and
- (vi) Members be informed of significant variations to the Programme, as outlined in (i) to (v) above, which are relevant to their Ward.

49 HOUSING RENEWAL POLICY 2007/08

The Board considered the report of the Housing Services Manager (a copy of which is attached in the Minute Book as Appendix 'B') advising Members that a formally adopted Housing Renewal Policy was required in order to implement changes to the home improvement grant system. The Regulatory Reform (Housing Assistance) (England and Wales) Order 2002 required that the Authority review the Housing Renewal Policy at intervals of not more than twelve months. The Housing Renewal Policy was last approved by the Housing Board on 8 March 2006 and subsequently endorsed by the March 2006 Policy and Organisation Board.

In response to a Member's question the criteria for and relationship between Disabled Facilities grants (DFG) and Warm Front scheme grants were explained.

RESOLVED: That

- (i) the new draft Housing Renewal Policy for 2007/08 be approved; and
- (ii) the Policy and Organisation Board at its meeting on 14 March 2007 be recommended to formally adopt the Housing Renewal Policy for 2007/08.

50 REVIEW OF THE ALLOCATIONS POLICY

The Board considered the report of the Housing Services Manager (a copy of which is attached in the Minute Book as Appendix 'C') advising Members of (i) the detail of the change back to a points based system as agreed at the previous meeting of the Housing Board, (ii) to inform Members of a revised points system as discussed at the last meeting of the Housing Board and (iii) the financial and resource implications thereof.

Following Members' questions, officers explained the circumstances surrounding the need for more resources to support the implementation of the new points system in that there had been an increase in applications to register on the waiting list which required detailed responses. The additional financial resources required to effect the changeover from the existing banding system to a points based system, had been minimised by transferring staff from other areas of the Council so that only one post was likely to be needed for the system lead-in time. In conclusion, the Housing Services Manager, reported that following the recent publication of draft guidance the Government had confirmed that it was for the local housing authority to decide whether to operate a banding or points system.

Members were in favour of implementing a new points based system.

RESOLVED: That

- (i) the recommended scheme for a points based system as detailed in Appendix A of the Housing Services Manager's report and its September 2007 introduction date be approved to allow the revised system to settle in and not to make any further changes for a twelve month period from its inception;
- (ii) the resources (in relation to cost and additional staffing) within Housing Services budgets be approved; and
- (iii) the Council's Housing Association Partners and relevant statutory and voluntary agencies be advised of the changes outlined in (i) above in accordance with Section 167(7) of the Housing Act 1996.

The meeting commenced at 6pm and concluded at 6.16pm

CHAIRMAN

**A MEETING OF THE HOUSING BOARD
WAS HELD ON 17 MAY 2007**

The Mayor (Councillor Gill) (ex-officio), Chairman of Policy and Organisation Board (Councillor Cully) (ex-officio) (P), Councillors Allen (P), Ms Ballard (P), Burgess (P), Champion, Mrs Cully (P), Foster (P), Foster-Reed (P), Mrs Mudie (P), Rigg (P) and Mrs Wright (P).

1 APOLOGIES

An apology for inability to attend the meeting was received from Councillor Champion.

2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

3 ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN

RESOLVED: That Councillor Mrs Wright be appointed as Chairman of the Board for the Municipal Year 2007-08.

4 ELECTION OF VICE CHAIRMAN

RESOLVED: That Councillor Mrs Cully be appointed as Vice Chairman of the Board for the Municipal Year 2007-08.

The meeting commenced at 7.01pm and concluded at 7.02pm.

CHAIRMAN

Agenda item no. 6

Board/Committee:	Housing Board
Date of meeting:	13 June 2007
Title:	NEW DELEGATIONS UNDER THE HOUSING ACT 2004
Author:	Housing Services Manager/TC
Status:	For recommendation to the Policy and Organisation Board and Council

Purpose

To formally delegate powers contained within the Housing Act 2004 to the Housing Services Manager.

Recommendation

- 1) That the Board approves the powers set out in paragraph 3.3 of the report contained within the Housing Act 2004 to the relevant stated officers.
- 2) That the Board recommends to the Policy & Organisation Board (Meeting on 27th June 2007) and Council (Meeting on 11th July 2007) the delegation of powers contained within the Housing Act 2004 to the relevant stated officers.

1.0 Background

- 1.1 The Housing Act 2004 (the Act) which came into force on the 6 April 2006 makes provisions for dealing with the condition of private sector housing.
- 1.2 The Act replaces many of the powers contained within the Housing Act 1985. As a result a number of new delegations are required for officers to carry out their statutory functions.

2.0 Changes In Legislation

- 2.1 The Housing Act 2004 repeals many of the powers contained within the Housing Act 1985 and gives local housing authorities new statutory powers for enforcement of housing standards in the private sector. Four parts to the Act relevant to dealing with poor housing conditions are covered in this report.
- 2.2 Part 1 introduces the new Housing Health and Safety Rating System. This is a new risk assessment system for assessing the suitability of dwellings for occupation and it replaces the old standard of fitness for human habitation.
- 2.3 Part 1 also introduces a new range of enforcement powers that are available to the local authority to deal with poor housing conditions. These powers range from simple hazard awareness notices to emergency powers to resolve matters that pose a serious and imminent risk to the occupiers. If a dwelling is found to have hazards that pose sufficient risk to the health and safety of the occupants then the authority is obliged to take the most appropriate enforcement action.

- 2.4 Part 2 introduces new licensing powers relating to Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMO). This only covers certain HMOs that are three storey or more with more than five occupants. Each local authority has the power to extend licensing to other categories of HMO but the good condition and limited number of local HMOs in this Borough means that this is unlikely to be required.
- 2.5 Part 3 gives the local authority powers to designate areas for selective licensing. One of the conditions for designation is that the area is one of very low housing demand with extremely poor social and economic conditions. It is not anticipated at this stage that designation will be considered within the Borough of Gosport.
- 2.6 Part 4 gives local authorities the power to take control of certain dwellings. This includes the Empty Dwelling Management Order (EDMO) which will enable the Borough Council to take over the running of an empty property, carry out works, set up a tenancy and receive the rent. It is anticipated that these powers could be considered as part of the Borough Council's Empty Property Strategy.

3.0 Request For Delegation Of Powers

- 3.1 A local authority, referred to in the act as an enforcement authority, may authorise persons to act in matters arising under the Act.
- 3.2 The Private Sector Housing Team of Gosport Borough Council is part of the Housing Services Unit. It is therefore proposed to delegate the powers listed below to the stated officers.
- 3.3 The following powers are recommended to be delegated to the posts shown.

HOUSING ACT 2004

POWER DELEGATED

DELEGATION TO

Part 1 - Housing Conditions

Section 4 - To carry out inspections to see whether any Category 1 or 2 hazards exist.	Housing Services Manager.
Section 4 –To be the Proper Officer to whom any official complaint about the condition of residential premises must be made.	Housing Services Manager.
Section 11- To serve an Improvement Notice for Category 1 hazard	Housing Services Manager.
Section 12 - To serve an Improvement Notice for a Category 2 hazard	Housing Services Manager.
Section 14 - To suspend an Improvement Notice	Housing Services Manager.
Section 16 - To revoke or vary an Improvement Notice	Housing Services Manager.

Section 17 - To review a suspended Improvement Notice and give notice of the decision on a review.	Housing Services Manager.
Section 20 - To make and serve a Prohibition Order in respect of Category 1 hazards	Housing Services Manager.
Section 21 – To make and serve a prohibition order in respect of Category 2 hazards	Housing Services Manager.
Section 23 - To suspend a Prohibition Order	Housing Services Manager.
Section 25 - To revoke or vary a Prohibition Order	Housing Services Manager.
Section 26 - To review a suspended Prohibition Order and to serve notice of the decision of any review	Housing Services Manager.
Section 28 - To serve a Hazard Awareness Notice relating to a Category 1 hazard	Housing Services Manager.
Section 29 - to serve a Hazard Awareness Notice for a Category 2 hazard	Housing Services Manager.
Section 31 and Schedule 3 - To take action in respect of an Improvement Notice.	Housing Services Manager.
Sections 40 and 41 - To take emergency remedial action where there is a Category 1 hazard and to serve the requisite notices.	Housing Services Manager, subject to consultation with Hampshire Fire and Rescue Authority in respect of a fire hazard, in accordance with Section 10. Also: For the sole purpose of taking emergency remedial action in relation to blocked private sewers:- The Environmental Services Manager.
Section 43 - To serve an emergency prohibition order for Category 1 hazard	Housing Services Manager.
Section 46 (Housing Act 1985 S 265) – To serve a Demolition Order for Category 1 or 2 hazards	Housing Services Manager.
Section 47 (Housing Act 1985, S 289) – To declare a Clearance Area	Housing Services Manager.

Sections 49 - To make a charge for enforcement action Housing Services Manager.

Part 2 - Licensing of Houses in Multiple Occupation

Section 62 - To serve a temporary exemption from the licensing requirement for HMOs Housing Services Manager.

Sections 64, 69 and 70 - To grant or refuse a licence for an HMO, to vary or revoke the licence. Housing Services Manager.

Section 73 - To apply for a rent repayment order, and to serve the requisite notices Housing Services Manager.

Part 3 – Selective Licensing of Other Residential Accommodation

Section 96 - To apply for a rent repayment order and to serve the requisite notices Housing Services Manager.

Part 4 – Additional Control Provisions in Relation to Residential Accommodation

Sections 102, 111 and 112 - To make, vary and revoke interim management orders Housing Services Manager.

Sections 113, 121 and 122 – To make, vary and revoke final management orders Housing Services Manager.

Section 131 – Power of entry to carry out works where management order is in force, and to appoint, in writing, persons to enter the premises to carry out the work. Housing Services Manager.

Section 133 – To make an interim empty dwelling management order Housing Services Manager.

Section 136 – To make a final empty dwelling management order Housing Services Manager.

Section 139 – To serve an overcrowding notice Housing Services Manager.

Section 144 – To revoke and vary overcrowding notices Housing Services Manager.

Section 235 – To serve notice requiring documents to be produced	Housing Services Manager.
Section 239 – To enter premises for purposes of carrying out a survey or examination	Housing Services Manager.
Section 239 - To be the Proper Officer for determining if a survey or examination is necessary	Housing Services Manager.
Section 255 and 256 – To serve, and to revoke, an HMO declaration notice	Housing Services Manager.

3.4 There are no specific Crime and Disorder Implications to this report.

4.0 Conclusion

4.1 The Housing Act 2004 (The Act), which came into force on the 6 April 2006 makes provision for dealing with conditions within private sector housing. The Act replaces many of the powers contained within the Housing Act 1985. As a result new delegations to the Housing Services Manager need to be agreed.

Financial implications:	None
Legal implications:	The proposed delegations contained in this Report will amend the current scheme of delegation to Officers contained in The Constitution, and so will need to be approved by full Council.
Service Improvement Plan implications:	The implementation and monitoring of work undertaken under the provisions of the Housing Act 2004 will be part of the Housing Service Improvement Plan for 2007-08
Corporate Plan:	None
Risk Assessment:	Risk assessments have been carried out for separate elements of the Housing Act 2004:
Background papers :	None
Report author/Lead Officer:	Trevor Charlesworth Principal EHO

Board/Committee:	Housing Board
Date of meeting:	13th June 2007
Title:	Best Value Sheltered Housing Review
Author:	HOUSING SERVICES MANAGER/CH
Status:	FOR DECISION

Purpose

To bring before Members the conclusions of the Working Group on the Best Value Sheltered Housing Review and the results of consultation with residents.

Recommendation

That the Board

- (i) instructs officers to work with an appointed Housing Association Partner or Partners to deliver detailed re-development plans, for subsequent consideration by the Housing Board, for The Leisure, Rogers House and Agnew House, including management options by the Housing Association Partner and/or the Council. And that any re-development plans be subject to full consultation with the Ward Members for the particular schemes, with the views of Ward Councillors included in the subsequent re-development report;
- (ii) instructs officers to identify alternative solutions for the future of Behrendt House, and that any future solution be considered in consultation with the Trade Union and approved by the Housing Board;
- (iii) approves the retention of, and investment in, Alec Rose & Slocum House, Fortune House, Gloucester House and Woodlands House. That investment in these schemes is programmed within the annual investment programmes approved by Members.
- (iv) approves amending charges for guest rooms to £5.00 and £7.50 per night, depending on the facilities on offer at the specific schemes, and that any increase in guest room charges be linked to annual average rent increases;
- (v) instructs officers to examine the cleaning costs for each scheme as part of a Best Value process;
- (vi) approves a policy of providing scooter spaces/recharging facilities where feasible. That it further approves the re-charging of electricity to users of Mobility Scooters and the charging for storage spaces in line with charges for parking bays. It is further recommended that Buggy stores be planned in to any new scheme development;
- (vii) approves that when Sheltered Scheme Managers accommodation becomes vacant, that officers explore ways to utilise the released accommodation and that any existing staff moving from tied accommodation be re-housed on a like for like basis.

1.0 BACKGROUND

- 1.0.1 At its meeting in June 2006 Members agreed to the setting up of a Working Group “comprising of four Members of the Board (2:1:1) to work with a resident representative and Officers to examine the options available for the future of the sheltered housing stock”.
- 1.0.2 Members further requested that “the Working Group report back to Housing Board in January 2007 with recommendations for the future of each sheltered housing scheme”. A report was duly submitted to the January Housing Board for consideration.
- 1.0.3 The recommendation of that Board was that consultation take place with scheme residents and the report be re-submitted to Housing Board outlining resident feedback.

1.1 The Working Group

1.1.1 The full Working Group comprised of:

- Resident Representative Maureen Brown
- Councillor S Philpott
- Councillor I Foster
- Councillor Mrs Wright
- Councillor K Gill
- Maureen McClure – Staff/Unison Representative

1.1.2 The Working Group met formally on 5 separate occasions:

- 3rd August 2006
- 6th September 2006
- 12th October 2006
- 15th November 2006
- 11th December 2006

1.1.3 The meetings were chaired by the Housing Services Manager, and officers serviced the group. PCA Consultants offered the Working Group independent advice and Unison was also in attendance at each meeting.

1.2 Site Visits

1.2.1 In addition to the formal meetings 2 visits were arranged for the Working Group:

- A tour of all GBC Sheltered Schemes took place on Monday 24th July 2006.
- A visit by Members of the Working Group took place on 27 October 2006 to Downing Court, Fareham (built circa 1992) a Fareham Borough Council Sheltered Scheme and Extra Care Centre. A visit also took place to the Technology House in Bosham. This unit demonstrated the latest innovative range of technology intended to assist the disabled and older persons to stay in their own homes.

2.0 PART ONE: GENERAL PRINCIPLES AND ASPIRATIONS OF THE WORKING GROUP

2.1 At the first meeting of this “task and finish” Working Group it agreed the following remit:

“Consider the conclusions of the Best Value Review of Sheltered Housing and make recommendations to Housing Board for a delivery plan for public sector sheltered housing provision in the light of the wider strategic and enabling role of Gosport Borough Council; maximising the opportunity to meet both the anticipated demand and the aspirations of Gosport residents within a financially sustainable framework;

Report its recommendations to the Housing Board in January 2007.”

2.2 There was also agreement on a number of general principles and aspirations that were established by the Working Group through discussions.

2.2.1 There was a desire within Working Group to increase public sector sheltered housing unit numbers within Gosport (in line with predicted demand):

- Preferably these would be managed by GBC
- RSL ownership and/or management would not be ruled out
- The Group saw no role for Private Sector involvement in achieving this aim

2.2.2. Increase the range of Service/Support levels available to residents including:

- Extra Care provision
- Outreach support

2.2.3 Committed to the aspiration to have stock which is:

- 1 & 2 bedroom (removing bedsits)
- self contained
- flexible design, making it suitable for change in the future
- contains a proportion of accommodation to meet differing physical needs

2.2.4. The Service running costs needed to be cost effective and competitive

- Rules out compulsory staff redundancy to achieve this aim
- Acknowledges the need to look at more flexible working arrangements

2.2.5. The commitment of the Working Group is to provide the highest possible Service Standards for residents within given resources.

2.2.6. The Working Group is prepared to recommend the reasonable use of Housing land and other assets to facilitate the meeting of the above aspirations.

2.3 Areas of Activity

The Working Group considered the following areas of activity and the Groups recommendations are set out in Part Two of this report:

2.3.1 Delivery of the Strategy

- Consider financial implications of Meeting Decent Homes & Upgrading Stock

- Consider options for meeting the aspirations of the Working Group (in particular 1, 2 and 3 above)

2.3.2 Physical Upgrading of the Current Schemes and Decent Homes Work

- Consider the technical building issues
- The level of investment required to meet objectives
- The impact on the Housing Services business plan

2.2.3 Getting Value for Money (Revenue Income & Expenditure)

- Consider Benchmarking information
- Review sheltered scheme operational costs
- Review guest room charges
- Address high cleaning costs
- Understanding Heating Costs

2.3.4 Improving Service Standards for Residents & Good Management Practice

- Review role of scheme managers
- Consider role of new technologies
- Review Existing Service Standards & compare with other providers
- Address the needs of those who own mobility scooters

3.0 PART TWO: RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE WORKING GROUP

3.1 Delivery of the Strategy

3.1.1 The Working Group recommends the way forward for the Sheltered Housing schemes be as detailed in table 3.1 as follows;

Scheme	Recommendation
Agnew House	Redevelopment
Alec Rose & Slocum	Investment
Behrendt House	Explore alternative use
Fortune House	Investment
Gloucester House	Investment
Rogers House	Redevelopment
The Leisure	Redevelopment
Woodlands House	Investment

Table 3.1

3.1.2 The Working Group recognises that insufficient available funding prevents Housing Services from undertaking its own re-development of the four schemes outlined above in table 3.1 (The Leisure, Rogers House, Agnew House and Behrendt House).

3.1.3 The Working Group therefore recommends that Housing Board instructs officers to work with an appointed RSL Partner or Partners to deliver detailed re-development plans, for subsequent approval of the Housing Board, for the following schemes:

- The Leisure
- Rogers House
- Agnew House

- 3.1.4 As the schemes at Rogers House and The Leisure are believed to generate the highest gains in terms of new units, the Working Group proposes that these two schemes be a priority.
- 3.1.5 The Working Group further recommend to Housing Board that officers be instructed to identify alternative solutions for the future of Behrendt House, and that any future solution be considered and approved by the Housing Board, following consultation with the Trade Union.

3.2 Upgrading of the Retained Schemes (including Decent Homes Work)

- 3.2.1 For the schemes recommended for investment (Alec Rose & Slocum, Fortune House, Gloucester House, Woodlands House):

Scheme*	Option** (where applicable)	Total Cost '000	No of units remaining	Unit Price/unit
Alec Rose & Slocum		£220	33 (16+17)	£6,670
Fortune House	Totals [option 1]	£242	31	£7,806
	Totals [option 2]	£428	31	£13,806
Gloucester House	Total [excl options]	£145	34	£4,260
	Incl. option 1	£349	34	£10,260
	Incl. option 2	£295	34	£8,680
	Incl. option 1&2	£499	34	£14,680
Woodlands House		£322	29	£11,103

*costs for schemes proposed for re-development in Appendix A (1) ** options detailed in Appendix A (2) All calculations exclude any adjacent bungalows. Table 3.2

- 3.2.2 The Working Group recommended that work to Alec Rose & Slocum House be programmed for future investment and brought to Housing Board, at a date to be determined, for approval within the annual investment programme.
- 3.2.3 The Working Group recommended that work to Fortune House as detailed in Option 1 or 2 (for future decision) be programmed for future investment and brought to Housing Board, at a date to be determined, for approval within the annual investment programme.
- 3.2.4 The Working Group recommended that work to Gloucester House as detailed in table 3.2 (for future decision on options) be programmed for future investment and brought to Housing Board, at a date to be determined, for approval within the annual investment programme.
- 3.2.5 The Working Group recommended that work to Woodlands House be programmed for future investment and brought to Housing Board, at a date to be determined, for approval within the annual investment programme.

3.3 Getting Value for Money (Revenue Income & Expenditure)

- 3.3.1 *Recommendations on Amendments to Sheltered Scheme Managers working hours*
- i) The Working Group endorsed a review of current working hours for Sheltered Scheme Managers.
 - ii) The Working Group acknowledged that any proposed changes would be in line with existing GBC procedures for making any changes and would therefore be subject to negotiation with Unison and staff, and ratification (if applicable) by the Personnel Sub-Board.

3.3.2 *Recommendations on Residential v Non-residential staff*

- i) The Working Group endorsed the continuing practise of not providing tied accommodation for newly recruited Sheltered Scheme Managers. Any future changes for existing staff in tied accommodation would be implemented by negotiation with staff and Unison.
- ii) The Working Group acknowledged that any proposed changes for existing staff in tied accommodation would be in line with existing GBC procedures and would therefore be subject to negotiation with Unison and staff, and ratification (if applicable) by the Personnel Sub-Board.

3.3.3 *Recommendations on guest room charges*

- i) The Working Group recommended amending charges for guest rooms to £5.00 & £7.50 per night (up from £3.50) depending on facilities on offer at the specific schemes. It was further recommended that any increase in guestroom charges be linked year-on-year to annual average rent increases.

3.3.4 *Recommendations to address high cleaning costs*

- i) The Working Group noted the high cost of cleaning (48% above benchmarked average) and recommended that the cleaning service should be reviewed on a scheme-by-scheme basis.
- ii) The Working Group acknowledged that any proposed changes would be in line with existing GBC procedures for making any changes and would therefore be subject to negotiation with Unison and staff, and ratification (if applicable) by the Personnel Sub-Board.

3.3.5 *Recommendations on charges for Buggy Stores*

- i) The Working Group recommended the re-charging of electricity to users of the scooters and the charging for storage spaces in line with charges for parking bays (also see 3.4.1 below).

3.3.6 *Other Recommendations*

- i) The Working Group recommended that when Sheltered Scheme Managers accommodation becomes vacant, that officers explore ways to utilise the released accommodation to increase current (sheltered) stock and as a consequence rental income.

3.4 Improving Service Standards for Residents & Good Management Practice

3.4.1 *Recommendations on Provision of Storage Areas for Mobility Scooters*

- i) The Working Group recommended a move away from the current policy of not providing scooter spaces/recharging facilities. It is further recommended that buggy stores be planned in to any new scheme development

3.4.2 *Recommendations on Guest Room Facilities*

- i) The Working Group recommended improving facilities (where possible) to existing guestrooms in line with the proposed investment in schemes. When considering developing/refurbishing of schemes account should be made to provide self-contained guestroom suites. It further recommended offering guests tea making facilities as standard.

3.4.3 *New Technologies*

- i) The Working Group considered there could be major advantages for residents in expanding the use of new technologies and this was believed to be the way forward for the future. It was noted that although these technologies could dramatically reduce costs there were reservations around the impersonal nature of some of the innovations.

3.4.4 *Quality Assessment Framework Action Plan*

- i) Members should note that a range of service standards and good management practice improvements have been introduced recently (or scheduled to be introduced) under the Quality Assessment Framework (QAF) action plan, and were not therefore discussed by the Working Group.

3.5 Resident Consultation

3.5.1 A programme of consultation meetings took place between the 13th March 2007 and 26th April 2007 at the schemes (see appendix 3).

3.5.2 An invite was extended to all scheme residents, who were encouraged to bring with them a friend or relative should they wish, and residents were provided with an information pack. Invitations were also extended to local Ward Councillors, who were also provided with an information pack giving details of the scheme and a background to the Review.

3.5.3 The consultations took the form of presentations by officers and, where attending, the Chair of Housing. These were followed by a question and answer session at which residents asked a range of questions concerning the Review and its implications. It was felt useful that the resident representative on the original Working Party was also able to attend the majority of consultation meetings.

3.5.4 A written record was made of each meeting of the principal issues and questions raised by residents and these have been included in Appendix 4 for information. A summary of the presentations and the question and answer sessions were then given to residents who were unable to attend on the day.

3.6 Section 17 Crime and Disorder Act

3.6.1 There no direct implications in this report although a number of improvements proposed for sheltered schemes as part of the investment programme are linked to improving security and the safety of residents within those schemes.

4.0 RISK ASSESSMENT

4.1 The investment plans for the sheltered housing service will be factored into the revised HRA (Housing Revenue Account) Business Plan. Any level of investment must be affordable within the Business Plan assumptions. Long-term financial planning, whilst necessary, is a subject to annual amendment because the housing subsidy received is only known on an annual basis.

4.2 The substantive part of this report is a report back to Members of the conclusions of the Best Value Working Group on Sheltered Housing. As such it contains low operational risk for the organisation.

- 4.3 Individual risk assessments will be undertaken on the elements of the recommendations approved by Members, and where appropriate reported back to Board.

5.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 The report taken to Housing Board 1 November 2006 titled 'Delivering Decent Homes 2010 and beyond' outlined the issues relating to the funding of the Improvement Programme which would enable the Council to achieve the decent homes standard in addition to a number of other improvements to the housing stock. This indicated that prudential borrowing would be required between 2007-11 largely due to the loss of supported borrowing (£822,000 in 2005/6) and reduction in capital receipts previously available to support the funding of the Housing Capital programme. Current estimates as detailed in the Budget Book 2007/08 suggest between 2007-2009 borrowing of £3.3M would be required although it is anticipated there would be an opportunity to repay around £600,000 of this sum between 2009-2011. The loss of supported borrowing also affects 2006/7, where a further prudential borrowing requirement of approximately £800,000 is likely to be required.
- 5.2 The Schemes proposed for investment will potentially add a further £929,000 to £1,469,000 (dependent on the options agreed upon) to the estimated prudential borrowing already required of £3.5M between 2006-2011. This will place a burden on the HRA for several years to come. It is therefore seen as essential that the Schemes recommended for redevelopment are progressed at little or no cost to the Council.

6.0 CONCLUSIONS

- 6.1 The members of the Working Group have discussed and considered the range of solutions for the future of the sheltered housing service in great detail over the last 6 months. There was a general appreciation that the Council does not have the resources itself to make all the investment we would wish into the schemes. A mix of solutions for the different schemes is being proposed by the Working Group. This includes retention and investment, re-development of schemes in partnership with an RSL (Registered Social Landlord) and identifying an alternative use for Behrendt House.
- 6.2 The Working Group also reviewed the service standards currently being provided and made visits to schemes managed by alternative providers to see what different services may wish to provide in the future. The revenue contributions towards the costs of the service from the Supporting People system will be reducing in April 2007, so it is necessary to plan for that impact by implementing changes to the service whilst minimising the impact to residents.
- 6.3 The Working Group identified that in future more people in the community should be able to benefit from their local sheltered housing service, using it both as a hub and as a location for immediate service provision.
- 6.4 Our strategic aim is to provide a service for older people which meets their aspirations both now and in the future.

Financial Services comments:	As set out in Section 5 of the report
Legal Services comments:	Tenants affected by the proposals contained in this report must be consulted on them. In addition, it must be remembered that, depending on the eventual plans for the properties in question, the consent of The Secretary of State may be required
Service Improvement Plan implications:	The Best Value Sheltered Housing Review is a major feature of the current Service Improvement Plan (SIP) for the Housing Service
Corporate Plan	The Best Value Review of Sheltered Housing impacts on the Strategic Priorities of Prosperity and Pursuit of Excellence
Risk Assessment	See 4.0
Background papers:	‘Best Value Review: Sheltered Housing BVR Sheltered Housing’ Report to Board June 2006 ‘Delivering Decent Homes 2010 and beyond’ Report to Board November 2006
Appendices/Enclosures:	<i>APPENDIX (1):</i> Cost of Upgrades to schemes not being retained <i>APPENDIX (2):</i> Further details of upgrade options for retained schemes <i>APPENDIX (3):</i> Schedule of consultations <i>APPENDIX (4):</i> Feedback from consultations sessions
Report author/Lead Officer:	Charles Harman/Andy Elder

Appendix (1)

The anticipated costs for upgrading schemes, where they to have been done, that have been designated by the Working Group for redevelopment

Scheme Calculations exclude adjacent bungalows	Option (where applicable)	Total Cost '000	No. of units remaining	Unit Price/unit
Agnew House*	Total Option 1	£1,058	38	£27,840
	Total Option 2	£1,308	28	£46,710
Behrendt House		£373	9	£41,440
Rogers House**	Total	£673	9	£74,777
	Incl optional work	£770	9	£85,560
The Leisure		£943	14	£67,360

*Option one assumes 30 1 bed flats with shared facilities would enable showers to be fitted into each unit unchanged. Option Two assumes 30 1 bed flats with shared facilities will convert to 20 self contained units. Total reduction from existing provision 10 units

**based on 9 properties in main block, but could be calculated to incl. adjacent [linked] block making 19 units in total and unit costs £35,420 and £40,530 (incl optional work) respectively.

Appendix (2)

Details of investment Options for schemes to be retained

Fortune House	Totals [option 1]	£242	31	£7,806
	Totals [option 2]	£428	31	£13,806
Gloucester House	Total [excl options]	£145	34	£4,260
	Incl. option 1	£349	34	£10,260
	Incl. option 2	£295	34	£8,680
	Incl. option 1&2	£499	34	£14,680

Fortune House

Option One involves leaving baths in situ, but replacing with showers on an ad hoc basis through the voids programme (and if desired by the incoming resident). The cost of this work would then be met from a voids budget over a number of years, and therefore the cost has been left out for the purposes of the costings in option One.

Option Two involves removing existing baths and replacing with showers on a capital programme basis, the cost of this programme has therefore been included in Option Two.

Gloucester House

There are two further options over and above base level work. These are;

Option One, as with Fortune House, involves removing existing baths and replacing with showers on a capital programme.

Option Two is the replacement of existing French doors to all ground floor flats and upgrading to double glazed uPVC. There are security and thermal insulation benefits, but it is not essential work at this stage.

Consultation meetings

Date	Time	Reason
Tues 27 Feb	5.30pm	Meeting with Ward Cllrs to discuss consultation meeting at schemes
Thurs 1 Mar	5.00pm	Meeting with Ward Cllrs to discuss consultation meeting at schemes
Monday 5 Mar	5.00pm	Meeting with Ward Cllrs to discuss consultation meeting at schemes
Tuesday 13 Mar	11.00am	Consultation meeting with residents at Alec Rose/Slocum House
Tuesday 13 Mar	2.00pm	Consultation meeting with residents at Fortune House
Tuesday 20 Mar	10.30am	Consultation meeting with residents at Woodlands House
Tuesday 20 Mar	2.00pm	Consultation meeting with residents at Gloucester House
Friday 23 Mar	10.00am	Consultation meeting with residents at The Leisure
Tuesday 27 Mar	2.30pm	Consultation meeting with residents at Behrendt House
Thurs 12 April	2.30pm	Consultation meeting with residents at Agnew House
Thur 26 April	2.30pm	Consultation meeting with residents at Rogers House

QUESTION AND ANSWER SESSIONS
IN RESPONSE TO PRESENTATIONS TO SCHELTERED SCHEMES
UNDER BEST VALUE REVIEW CONSULTATION

Questions/Statements by Residents (answered by Head of Operational Services unless named)

Alec Rose House and Slocum House Consultation (13 March 2007)
[Proposal is that this scheme is modernised under the Review]

Resident Statement: Replacement Baths– when Alec Rose was done up showers were not given as an option, baths were put in. Housing Services will want to move towards having showers in properties rather than baths, but it will take a little time to arrange.

Resident Statement: Combi Boiler is excellent for the shower – am delighted with flat – nice position/nice design/good value for money

Resident Statement: New sign boarding required - Slocum House needs re-painting and a light is required at the entrance to Slocum House under the archway. Railings end of Alec Rose House – Fire exit – chipped need re-painting

Resident Question: *Would it be possible to put in a water meter for both Alec Rose House and Slocum House?* Sue Kendall will contact Portsmouth Water to discuss the possibility of installing a meter.

Fortune House Consultation (13 March 2007)
[Proposal is that this scheme is modernised under the Review]

Resident Question: *Would it be possible to put in a water meter?* Sue Kendall will contact Portsmouth Water to discuss the possibility of installing a meter.

Woodlands House Consultation (20 March 2007)
[Proposal is that this scheme is modernised under the Review]

Resident Question: *When will the work be done?* The work will be done as money becomes available, there will be programmes worked through for each scheme. Most work will be undertaken in the next 3 years, but additional work will be required after that date.

Resident Question: *Will grab rails and seats be put in showers?* Yes, the need to do that was picked up after the conversion work at Alec Rose House.

Gloucester House Consultation (20 March 2007)
[Proposal is that this scheme is modernised under the Review]

Resident Question: *Why couldn't I get a shower in my flat?* Where communal showers exist in the House we have not changed individual flats so far. We know that showers are more popular than baths within Schemes, and we will be looking at ways that we can install showers into flats where they are requested, but showers are not cheap to install, and it will have to be phased in over a number of years. This does not stop residents installing their own shower if they wish, but they do need permission before they go ahead.

Resident Question: Can the French windows which are to be put in the downstairs flats be brown on the outside instead of white? Residents will be consulted prior to any decision being taken

Resident Question: Will residents have choice? It is Housing Service policy to offer as much choice to residents as practicable.

Resident Question: If showers are fitted will they have grab rails and seats? Yes

Questions/Statements by Residents (answered by Housing Services Manager)

The Leisure Consultation (23 March 2007)

[Proposal is this scheme is re-developed under the Review]

Resident Statement: Only one shower is ever used and that is in the bathroom. Officer

Response: Residents now desire to have their own shower and redevelopment of the site will make this happen

Councillor Mrs Wright: The Leisure redevelopment will be the Housing Boards first priority and will be a two year process

Resident Question: How much will this cost the residents? Rebecca Wealthall: There will not be a cost to residents; they will receive a Home Loss payment, which is currently £4,000.

- Up to £1500 for disturbance – to cover the costs of moving, disconnections and reconnections.
- Up to £1500 per property for carpets and curtains in the new home.

Housing Services have used a carpet firm in other moves they have had to carry out and can organise the firm to see residents individually to enable them to choose and order their carpets for their new home and the bill submitted straight to the Housing Services.

Resident Question: What is being planned? Councillor Mrs Wright – No decisions have been made at the moment, but you will be kept informed of any relevant developments. Other Sheltered Schemes have got to be visited and depending on the result of these consultations a recommendation will be taken to the Housing Board in June 2007 for a decision to be made.

Resident Question: Residents should know what the re-development will look like? Work would be done with Housing Associations. All residents would be part of the consultation process.

Councillor Dennis Wright: It would be hoped the new development would have District Nurse, Chiropodist, Doctors facilities.

Resident Question: What size would the development be? Oona Hickson: It is anticipated that a Housing Association would build on three floors with lifts and may take up more space on the land – this would all be subject to Planning Permission.

Resident Question: Why are there empty properties in the Sheltered Schemes? No one wants to live in bed-sits now.

Resident Question: How would the process work? If the Housing Board makes the decision to re-develop the scheme all Residents will be kept fully informed and would be individually consulted as to their needs. When all residents have been found new homes, the developers would move onto the site to commence the re-development.

Resident Question: Will residents go into other Sheltered Schemes? Andy Elder: If that is their wish. To clarify the position no resident could stay on, every resident will make their own choice as to where they want to move to and would go on to the top of the list for accommodation. In past schemes where we have had to carry out the same kind of moves each resident is seen individually, they are fully consulted and their health requirements would be part of the consideration.

Councillor Mrs Wright: The Leisure is at the forefront of our thoughts. You deserve better and we will work with you to provide a better future by investing in the housing stock, for both today's residents and those of the future. There is a requirement for more sheltered accommodation.

Resident Question: Will the re-developments be sheltered accommodation? Whatever is built it will be for sheltered housing; this is true for all our schemes in order to produce more sheltered units.

Resident Question: Could current residents return when the new scheme is built? Residents would have the choice to stay where they have moved to, or return to the scheme when it is built.

Behrendt House Consultation (27 March 2007)

[The future of this scheme is uncertain under the review]

Resident Question: We are quite happy where we are, why should we move? We are encouraged by your satisfaction but there is a distinction between those who are self contained properties and those in bedsits and sharing facilities

Resident Question: Why the need for change? We are looking to invest £400,000, new customers want more modern facilities, and we are preparing for the future.

Sue Kendall: 2 years ago Behrendt House was popular with people wanting to come into sheltered housing but now people do not choose to come to this sheltered scheme'

Resident Statement: Downstairs has no ventilation – very warm in the House.

Resident Statement: Does it all boil down to money? Answer: We need to refurbish all our sheltered schemes and bring them up to a modern standard with all the new technology available and it does cost a lot of money.

Resident Question: When will it all happen? Answer: The key date is June 2007 the Housing Board will meet to agree a way forward from the recommendations made by officers. If the Housing Board decides to accept the recommendations in all probability no one would move until Autumn 2008, and that is unlikely to be Behrendt House residents first. Residents will be kept fully informed and would be individually consulted as to their needs.

We do not think we can re-develop the Behrendt House site as it is too small. Our Partner Housing Associations will own any sites which are re-developed. Even if funding is not there we will look after residents, Politicians have difficult decisions but wanted to know the residents views prior to making any decisions. We have money to do refurbishment of some of our sheltered schemes to ensure that we are providing sheltered housing which is modern for the future

Resident Question: What would happen if you modernised, could residents come back once renovation was done? Answer: Each scheme has individual issues, where schemes are being knocked down and a new scheme built there would be an opportunity to move back.

Resident Question: What about this scheme? Answer: We are not able to develop this scheme the land is not big enough, to enable a Housing Association to re-develop the site. Residents will be given the opportunity to move to existing sheltered schemes or to one of the newly re-developed schemes; this would be after consultation with individual residents.

The reason for these decisions is to enable us to provide significantly more sheltered units and this cannot be achieved at Behrendt House.

Agnew House Consultation (12th April 2007)

[Proposal is this scheme is re-developed under the Review]

Resident Question: How long will they be moved out of Agnew? Answer: Anything up to 2 years

Resident Question: Can occupants be involved in the design process? (Question by tenant in a bungalow).

Resident Question: How are you going to do this work if there is no money? Answer: Through HA partner.

Resident Question: Are you going to build one big scheme? Answer: People want to live in their area – so we are going to rebuild to modern standards in each area

Resident Question: Nobody is moving into sheltered schemes – it's a waste of money to redevelop? Answer: We will make sure that the standard of properties available meets the decent homes standard by 2010, this will help, but the research we have done strongly suggests there is demand, but not for certain types of accommodation that we have, with shared facilities and bedsits.

Resident Question: We have a new central heating system – it's never been right since it was installed? Answer: Solar heating systems will be installed in the redevelopment.

Resident Question: What happens to repairs while we are awaiting the redevelopment? Answer: Repairs will continue to happen as stated in the tenancy agreement. However we will have to consider VFM when considering any improvements on a scheme-by-scheme basis. (Concerns from residents of Agnew about the age & possible problems with their lift)

Rogers House Consultation (26 April 2007)

[Proposal is this scheme is re-developed under the Review]

Resident Question: Why is Lee on the Solent last for a meeting? They had to be prioritised somehow, we could not do all the schemes at the same time, and those schemes that are modernised were first. I wouldn't read anything into it.

Oona Hickson it may be possible for more than one scheme to be re-developed at the same time.

Resident Question: If the work takes 4 years I am worried because I am happy here and worried about what will happen to my cat, my buggy and my wheelchair? All of this will be taken into account; Rebecca Wealthall will talk to each resident and cater for their individual needs. Cllr Burgess said that there are properties being developed to cater for individual needs such as storing and charging of buggies.

Resident Question: Will there be buggy provision? Yes there will be provisions for buggies as well as outreach services.

Cllr Kimber said that residents may be concerned about the transport infrastructure and reassured residents that the team will be aware that residents rely on being near shops and public transport.

Resident Question: I want to stay in Lee on the Solent? Individual needs will be catered for and there is the possibility that properties in the two developments may be earmarked for residents.

Resident Question: Will there be pull cords in these developments? They have not been designed into the properties as yet but there is still time for this to be done and with technology there is the facility to plug in pull cords anywhere

Resident Question: Will there be your own front door as well as a communal door? Yes.

Andy Elder said that all new sheltered housing will have to be self contained to allow for the changing needs of the elderly.

Resident Question: Will there be gas installed as well as electric? Oona Hickson said that she was unsure as they usually install electricity for safety reasons just in cases of memory loss and the gas being left on by accident. There will be consultation.

Resident Question: Can we come back here? Yes, you can all come back if you wish.

Cllr Kimber said that when the residents from Cherry and Rowan Close had to move, where possible the team at GBC allocated friends close together to keep the community together.

Resident Question: Will the disturbance allowance need paying back if we move back? No.

Resident Question: Will their names need putting down soon for these re developments that are coming up in Lee on the Solent? No decisions have been made yet, the potential green light is not until June 13th, if the Housing Board agrees to the redevelopment housing staff will let residents know and they will each be seen individually to assess their needs.

Resident Question: What options will be available? You may be offered a move on a temporary or permanent basis – each individual can make their own decision.

Resident Question: If we want to move back can we reserve a property? Yes.

Officer statement: The whole purpose of this project is to increase the amount of sheltered accommodation in the Gosport area.

Resident Question: Will the property be bigger? Yes, they are trying to exceed original accommodation size to allow for wheelchair access.

Resident Question. Why did the residents have to hear about this from the newspaper? Cllr Mrs Wright apologised that residents had to hear about the plans this way. Cllr Kimber said that the public have access to Housing Board Agendas as they are public documents (this was on January's Agenda) and the media have picked up on this and ran the story.

Cllr Mrs Wright said that this is why we are here this afternoon.

Resident Question: Will the Cherry & Rowan Close development be sheltered accommodation? No, but the plug in pull cord systems can be used over there and all sheltered scheme services will still be in place.

Resident Question: Will we get our own washing machines as there is a communal one here? If you were to move into non sheltered accommodation some of the disturbance allowance can help you purchase one.

Resident Question: I think that most of us would like a two bed-roomed property to allow for visitors or carers to stay? This is why 1 and 2 bed-roomed properties are being developed to allow for the needs of individuals who may want carers/visitors to stay.

Question: If I wish to return to live here will I get a choice of property and position? We will write to all residents who lived here and they will be given the opportunity to have a property in the new development if they wish. Maureen Brown said that when Alec Rose House was re-developed all the residents there chose to move back.

Resident Question: If someone needed a ground floor place will they be allocated the same for medical reasons? Yes, medical grounds will be taken into consideration

Cllr Kimber spoke to say that he had had fears about the Cherry & Rowan Close development but they were allayed by the team at the Council; Rebecca Wealthall and her team can help. If you do worry about anything to do with this please talk to the officers or Ward Councillors.

Resident Question: If property is available after 13th June can they bid for a property now if they have seen something come available? No, don't do anything until a decision has been made.

Resident Question: Can I relocate completely away from area and still be eligible for disbursement fees? Yes, we can certainly talk to RSL partners.

Cllr Mrs Wright reiterated that we will work towards meeting individual needs.

AGENDA ITEM NO. 8

Board/Committee:	HOUSING BOARD
Date of Meeting:	13 JUNE 2007
Title:	HOMELESSNESS GRANTS TO EXTERNAL BODIES 2007-08
Author:	HOUSING SERVICES MANAGER/ SN
Status:	FOR DECISION

Purpose

To approve the grants set out in this report for 2007/08.

Recommendation

- 1) That the following grants be approved and funded by homelessness grant as part of existing budgets.
 - Gosport Citizens Advice Bureau, debt service: £11,911.74 of which £2,900 to be paid from Housing Revenue Account.
 - Housing Aid Centre, Rowner outreach service: £3,872.00.
 - Accommodation Resource Centre (Mediation and homeless education service): £7,092.
 - Expansion of supported Lodgings scheme): £20,000, subject to Service Level Agreement approved by the Housing Services Manager. Grant to be awarded to the agency awarded new Supporting People Grant.

- 2) That future funding of the domestic violence alarm service is administered through existing homelessness prevention budgets.

1.0 Background

- 1.1 The Table One below set out the spend on grants to external bodies in 2006/07 and the proposals for 2007/08 contained in this report for comparison.

Agency	2006/07 grant	2007/08 proposed grant
Citizen Advice Bureau – Debt service	£12,055.71 (£6,022.85 HRA funded)	£11,911.74 (£2,900 HRA funded)
Accommodation Resource Centre –Youth mediation/education	£6,919	£7,092
Fareport Fund-A-Home	£1,250	£0
Domestic Violence alarms	£3,000	£0
Meadows outreach	£2,500	£0
Housing Aid Centre	£0	£3,782
Expanding supported lodgings	£0	£20,000
Total	£25,724.71	£42,785.74

Table One

In respect of spend in 2006/07 it should be noted that:

- Grant contribution was approved (£2,500) in favour of the Meadows outreach housing worker, subject to conditions. That grant was not drawn down, and it is understood that alternative arrangements have now been made for that service which do not involve Council funding.
- Members may be aware that the Fareport Fund-A-Home service has been closed due to Supporting People funding withdrawal.

In respect of proposed spend in 2007/08:

- Although proposed spend has gone up by £17,061.03, this Council has been awarded an additional £20,000 to spend on prevention

1.2 For the year 2007-08 the Council has received funding bids as follows:

- Citizens Advice Bureau, Debt Service:
- Accommodation Resource Centre:
 - Mediation and homeless education services:
 - Lodgings expansion scheme (new);
- Housing Aid Centre, Rowner service:

The domestic violence alarm service is undergoing review, and will need to be considered separately from this report. The reasons for this are:

- Fareham Borough Council wishes to adopt the same service;
- Hermitage Care (the organisation leasing the alarms to the Council and providing the call centre response and Police activation) are reviewing the existing contract;
- Both Fareham and Gosport Community Safety Partnerships have reported money available to expand and improve the service;
- It is recommended that residual costs after Community Safety Partnership funding should fall within the Councils general homelessness prevention budgets.

1.3 The source of funding for the grants applications is as follows:

- The Department for Communities and Local Government has confirmed, again, that this Council will receive £46,000 extra homeless grant for 2007-08. In addition, a windfall grant of £20,000 has been made to this Council in

recognition of successes made in reductions in numbers in temporary accommodation and to continue this work.

- For the Citizens Advice Bureau debt service an element of the funding commensurate with the number of Council tenants referred to the service applies.

1.4 Of the £46,000 annual homelessness grant £26,000 is applied to direct Council employee costs in the Housing Options Team. This Council has always sought to use the remainder of grant to build and sustain capacity in the voluntary sector to prevent homelessness. This means £20,000 is available in 2007-08 for grants to external bodies.

1.5 The Councils Best Value Performance Indicator for prevention of homelessness was 5 households prevented per 1,000 in the district in 2005/06. This matches the average top quartile result nationally. In 2006/07 this Council has achieved an improvement to 7 (228 households) per 1,000 households in the district.

1.6 Approval of grant for the Citizens Advice Bureau debt service, and Accommodation Resource Centre, mediation service may be approved under previously delegated powers by Housing Services Manager in consultation with Housing Board Chairman and Group Spokespersons. The other funding requests, being new, must be considered by the Housing Board.

2.0 Report

2.1 Citizens Advice Bureau, Debt Service

In the year 2006-07, this long established service (part funded by Gosport Housing Services) had the following service outcomes.

	Total cases	Homelessness prevented
Direct Council Housing Options Service referrals	65	37
Estimated Council tenant referrals*	28%	0
Non-direct Council referrals	130	Not recorded

* Reported statistics in columns B & C are annual projections based upon actual results October 2006 to March 2007 inclusive

2.2 The funding request for 2007-08 is for £11,911.74. This includes an incremental pay increase for the two part-time debt advisers and an additional 2 hours administration support in recognition that debt works accounts for 32% of all Gosport Citizens Advice Bureau work currently. A lower grant of £11,183.74 applies if the pay rise and

extra administration support are not provided. It is recommended that the £11,911.74 is approved.

2.3 **Housing Aid Centre**

The Housing Aid Centre, operated by Southern Focus Trust, runs an outreach service in the Rowner Village area. Although this is funded primarily from the Legal Services Commission (non-solicitor advice services) the Commission has terminated travel payments from 1 April 2007. The loss to the Housing Aid Centre is reported as £4,840 for 2007-08. The Housing Aid Centre has requested a grant of £3,872 from this Council in 2007-08, in recognition of limited available finances. It is recommended that this be approved.

2.4 Appendix A is the funding request letter for Member information, given that this is a new funding request. It is reported that the Housing Aid service in Rowner (and in combination with the Portsmouth County Court help desk that the Housing Aid Centre manages) has achieved 118 homeless preventions out of 268 cases seen.

2.5 **Accommodation Resource Centre, Mediation and homelessness education services.**

This Council's homelessness grants have made a contribution to funding of this service for several years in recognition of the work this agency does for young people. The grant requested for 2007-08 is £7,092, which is a 2.5% increase on 2006-07 grant. It is recommended that this grant be approved.

2.6 Service outcomes for the Accommodation Resource Centre, in the first three quarters of 2006/07 are set out below.

	Total referrals	Homeless prevented
Council mediation referrals to ARC	20	4
ARC general cases	241	98

2.7 **Lodgings scheme expansion.**

This Council was one of three Council's in Hampshire that received additional homelessness grant for 2007/08. Gosport received £20,000. The purpose of that grant is to assist in the further reduction of numbers in temporary accommodation (Government instruction for a 50% reduction by 2010 applying). Council officer advice to the Government was that the intended use would be to expand supported lodgings provision in the district. The reasons for this are:

- The largest (since 2005) and most difficult category of customer for the Council to manage are young single vulnerable customers (particularly those under eighteen years of age).
- Our experience has shown, and the Government view is, that supported lodgings is a good accommodation option for these customers;
- Past experience has shown that by enabling supported lodgings to house the customer:
 - Suitable accommodation with specialist support is secured;
 - The customer is not counted as homeless, thus reducing this Council's homeless count;

2.8 Appendix B sets out a previously submitted scheme proposal to the then Office of Deputy Prime Minister (unsuccessful additional homeless grant bid in 2005). Appendix B is an illustrative example of the principles of the scheme. That original bid was in partnership with Fareham Borough Council and Two Saints. The difference between that original bid to the ODPM and the bid subject of this report is that Fareham Borough Council are not involved and the organisation to whom the grant should be paid is conditional (see below).

The intention is to expand existing lodgings provision, and to give incentives to those lodgings providers to take young people with complex needs (the Council is generally accommodating these customers at present). Two Saints, who operate the largest lodgings scheme in Gosport have expressed an interest in operating this revised and expanded scheme. However, it is also the case that Hampshire Supporting People have approved new grant of £30,000 to increase support capacity to provide the additional support needed to support these lodgings placements. The contract for that support has to be put to tender. Because this Council accepts the quality assessments made by Hampshire Supporting People (assessed as part of any tender) it is recommended that this Council enters into Service Level Agreement with the agency appointed by Hampshire Supporting People to receive Supporting People Grant. The Council Service Level Agreement will detail the arrangements in terms of payment to accommodation providers, administration, monitoring and reporting (including financial reporting)

3.0 Risk Assessment

3.1 The grants set out in this report achieve good value for money in terms of the prevention of homelessness agenda. In terms of service delivery it is important that the Council is not the only source of homeless prevention in the district.

4.0 Conclusion

4.1 In addition to this Council's homeless prevention work (in the top quartile nationally) it is clear that significant numbers of people have their homelessness prevented by the voluntary sector. Continued funding of these external voluntary sector agencies is considered strategically important to ensure the best network across the district to prevent homelessness.

Financial Services comments:	The recommended grants can be financed in the current year from existing budgetary provision and the additional £20,000 'windfall grant' grant received.
Legal Services comments:	The Council has the power under the Housing Acts to give assistance by way of grants to voluntary organisations concerned with homelessness or matters related to it.
Service Improvement Plan implications:	None
Corporate Plan:	None
Risk Assessment:	See paragraph 3.1
Background papers:	Grants to Voluntary Bodies and Prevention of Homelessness, 2006 (delegated powers report)
Appendices/Enclosures:	
Appendix 'A'	Housing Aid Centre bid 2007-08
Appendix 'B'	Gosport Council bid to the then Office of Deputy Prime Minister, 2005 – expanding the supported lodgings scheme. An illustration of the scheme
Report author/ Lead Officer:	Steve Newton 023 9254 5296

**APPENDIX A
HOUSING AID CENTRE
ROWNER OUTREACH SERVICE
FUNDING REQUEST 2007-08**

HOUSING ADVICE CENTRE

Focus Point, 116 Kingston Crescent, Portsmouth, Hants, PO2 8AL
Tel 023 9279 4350, Fax 023 9279 4300, E-mail kim.montague@sft.org uk

Mr S Newton
Housing Options Manager
Gosport Borough Council
Town Hall
High Street
Hants
PO12 1EB

22 February 2007

Dear Mr Newton

REQUEST FOR GRANT FUNDING 2007/08

Following our meeting on the 14 February 2007 I would be grateful if you could consider a request for funding to support our current outreach service to Gosport.

The Legal service commission (LSC) will no longer fund travel time for outreach services as of the 1st April 2007 due to a change of contract that will bring the not for profit sector inline with solicitors. This will have an impact on our current resources and we need to review our outreach service provision so that it does not affect our ability to reach new target standards which will ensure continued income.

We provide a session at the Rowner Access Point and Sure Start per week offering six appointments. This service is proving very successful and we have assisted 268 people in the last year and have prevented homelessness in 118 cases (casework and court desk service).

The LSC currently allows us 10% for travel time which is 110 hrs @ £44.00 = £4,840 but I am aware that the grant budget is very restricted. Therefore we would like to request a grant payment of £3,872 calculated as follows:

Sessions per week	Total travel time per week	Travel time for funding request	LSC Hourly rate £44.00
2 @ 3hrs = 6 appointments	3.5 hours a week	2 hours a week	2hrs @ £44.00 x 44 weeks = £3,872 (adjusted for BH, A/L, staff sickness)

I would be grateful if you could consider our request for funding and look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely
Kim Montague
Manager Housing Advice Centre

APPENDIX B

Gosport Borough Council (lead agency) historical bid to the Office of Deputy Prime Minister 2005 –

Expansion of lodgings scheme – An illustration of the scheme proposed in Housing Board Report to June 2007 Housing Board

Homelessness Innovation Fund - Bidding Form

1. Lead Partner: Gosport Borough Council
2. Other Partners: Fareham Borough Council Two Saints Housing Association
3. Amount bid for and name of project: Accommodation Resource Centre Supported Lodgings Scheme 2005/06 £5,250 2006/07 £29,750
4. What is the project? Lodgings scheme for homeless persons 25 years and under. Support provision is already funded. This scheme is to expand the existing lodgings scheme generally and to extend lodgings provision for young people with more complex needs that would otherwise have to be accommodated by the Council under homelessness.
Bids must meet at least one of the two aims of the HIF - reductions in use of temporary accommodation and developing more effective homeless prevention.
5. (a) How will temporary accommodation be reduced? Due to the lack of the housing option of securing lodgings both Councils are accommodating single homeless applicants in emergency accommodation. The majority of these applicants have support needs to the extent that a move into self-contained non-supported accommodation would be inadvisable without a period in supported lodgings (there being insufficient specialist residential hostel type accommodation locally). Two Saints currently operates a lodgings scheme across Gosport and Fareham and is the main agency for young persons. Due to shortage of lodgings providers approximately 50% of the existing support provided by this agency is conducted in B&B or homeless hostels where the delivery of support is, at least, problematic in the extreme. Very few existing lodgings providers will take on young homeless customers with additional needs (ie mental health, learning difficulties etc).

The identified need is for an expansion of up to 40 lodgings placements across Gosport and Fareham that will accommodate young people with more complex needs. Existing funding for support will enable support programmes to be effectively delivered. Incentives to lodgings providers will be paid to attract them to the more difficult end of the market.

There will be an equivalent drop in temporary accommodation usage for this client group, as the lodgings scheme will become a real housing option to avoid homelessness. The direct result would be a drop of around 40 households with the indirect effect of reducing length of time in emergency accommodation as effective move-on packages can be achieved.

5 (b) Please state outcomes to be achieved (e.g. percentage reduction in TA and target date)

Gosport = 25 single household reduction by March 2007 (quarter upon quarter)

Fareham = 15 single household reduction by March 2007 (quarter upon quarter)

6. (a) Explain how the scheme demonstrates more effective homelessness prevention

The provision of supported lodgings is accepted locally as better-suited accommodation for this client group. In addition, although short-term accommodation, the stability that lodgings provides enables effective support packages to be delivered and thus achieve greater move-on to less supported accommodation.

6(b) Please state the outcomes to be achieved

Reduction of single homeless "failure rates" in homeless temporary accommodation. For under 18 year olds in Gosport this is currently 13% and for care leavers it is 20%.

7. What added value will result from partnership working?

- Strengthening of existing relationship which is required to address the increase in single vulnerable homeless;
- Will provide stable accommodation where support provision can be more effectively delivered;
- Will reduce failure rates in homeless temporary accommodation and thus reduce repeat homelessness (currently there is a 13% failure rate for under 18 year olds). Accommodation provided by Two Saints as an alternative to homelessness placements is a far better solution;
- Will provide a significant increase in housing options (which are in very short supply at present) for the new Generic Supported Housing Panel which is intended to become the vehicle to avoid the Council in having to accommodate as many single homeless as is the case at present (Gosport split is 55% family/ 45% single). Without additional accommodation the Generic Housing Panel is likely to be significantly compromised.

<p>8. What are the partnership arrangements and how will the partnership be managed?</p> <p>A steering Group of all partners will oversee the delivery of the scheme</p>	
<p>9. How would the funding be spent if the bid is successful?</p> <p>£25 per week incentive to landlords providing lodgings to young persons with complex needs = £25 x 10 units (average) x 13 weeks (2005/06)=£3,250 £25 x 20 units (average) x 52 weeks (2006/07) = £26,000 Other units at nil cost Advertising strategy = £2,000 2005 – 2006 £3,750 2006 - 2007</p> <p>Total £35,000</p>	
<p>10. What is the exit strategy to mainstream the work if the bid is successful?</p> <p>Joint funding approaches would apply</p>	
<p>Main contact</p> <p>Name: Position: Organisation: Address:</p> <p>E-mail: Phone Number:</p>	<p>Alternative Contact</p> <p>Name: Position: Organisation: Address:</p> <p>E-mail: Phone Number:</p>

AGENDA ITEM NO. 9

Board/Committee:	HOUSING BOARD
Date of Meeting:	13 JUNE 2007
Title:	HOUSING EDITORIAL PANEL REVIEW
Author:	HOUSING SERVICES MANAGER
Status:	FOR DECISION

Purpose

The report proposes a new name for the At Your Service Panel and sets out terms of reference for the Housing Editorial Panel.

Recommendation

- 1) That the title of the At Your Service Panel be amended to the Housing Editorial Panel.
- 2) That the terms of reference for the Housing Editorial Panel set out at paragraph 2.3 of the report be approved.

1 Background

- 1.1 The At Your Service Panel has operated for a number of years to approve the editorial content of the quarterly Housing newsletter. The panel has also approved the Tenant and Leaseholder calendar which is produced for all residents on an annual basis.
- 1.2 Membership of the At Your Service Panel has comprised of Members and appointed at the Annual Council Meeting the Housing Services Manager and the Principal Resident Involvement Officer. Technical Advice is provided to the panel by officers from Design Services.

2 Report

- 2.1 Members of the At Your Service Panel have expressed an interest in widening the scope of the panels remit to include the approval of other publications produced by the Housing Service. This revision of the panel along with a proposed change of name, to reflect the wider brief, needs to be approved by the Housing Board. The proposed new name for the panel would be the Housing Editorial Panel.
- 2.2 The At Your Service Panel is not recognised in the Constitution of the Council, however in operational terms it is accountable to the Housing Board. The Housing Board is therefore the appropriate authority to approve the revisions to the At Your Service Panel.

2.3 ▪ The terms of reference for the Housing Editorial Panel are;

PUBLICATION	PRODUCED BY	WHEN	WHO NEEDS TO SEE DRAFT PRIOR TO PRINTING
At Your Service	Housing (Resident Involvement Team)	Quarterly	Editorial Panel
Annual Report with At Your Service	Operational Services & Resident Involvement Team	Annually Autumn edition of AYS	Editorial Panel
Homeless and Supporting People Newsletter	Supporting People Team – information	As required	Editorial Panel
Choice Based Lettings Newsletter	Lettings – information those on Housing Register	Twice a year at the most	Editorial Panel
Tenant Calendar	Tenant & Leaseholder Framework with help from Resident Involvement Team	Once a year as an annual report	Editorial Panel
Loud and Clear	Resident Involvement Team	Prior to Housing Forum Meetings – 2 days before Housing Board	Housing Spokesmen
RAPs Newsletter	Alison Simonds – for Landlords	Quarterly	Housing Spokesmen
Sheltered Scheme Newsletter	Resident Involvement Team – Denise Hudson	If required after a Sheltered Housing Forum Meeting	Housing Spokesmen
Seafield Community House Newsletter	Resident Involvement Team - Sam Mitchell	To advertise what is going on in the Community House	Housing Spokesmen
ALL Housing Leaflets -	Resident Involvement Team	100's Printed on a regular basis and facts checked prior to each print run – Displayed in Reception area	Housing Spokesmen
Resident Newsletters (Road Representatives & Housing Associations)	Resident Involvement Team - Information Sheet prior to meetings	As required - Work done to encourage Tenant Involvement in area	Ward Councillors

- To approve the editorial content and design of the At Your Service publication;
- To approve the editorial content and design of other key Housing publications as set out above;
- To recommend and promote good practice for all Housing publications;

2.4 There are no Crime and Disorder Action issues to be considered within the scope of this report.

3 Risk Assessment

3.1 The risk assessment is considered to be low in carrying out this work.

4 Conclusion

4.1 It is important that the Housing Service continues to communicate effectively with all its customers. The widening of the scope for the Housing Editorial Panel can contribute towards this objective.

Financial Services comments:	None
Legal Services comments:	Contained in the report
Service Improvement Plan implications:	None
Corporate Plan:	None
Risk Assessment:	See paragraph 3.1
Background papers:	None
Appendices/Enclosures:	None
Report author/ Lead Officer:	Andy Elder: Ext 5372