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3 June 2009

S U M M O N S

MEETING: Overview and Scrutiny Committee
DATE: 11 June 2009
TIME: 6.00 p.m.
PLACE: Committee Room 1, Town Hall, Gosport
Democratic Services contact: Chris Wrein

LINDA EDWARDS
BOROUGH SOLICITOR

MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE

Councillor Forder (Chairman)
Councillor Carr (Vice-Chairman)

Councillor Beavis	Councillor Foster-Reed
Councillor Bradley	Councillor Geddes
Councillor Champion	Councillor Mrs Searle
Councillor Dickson	Councillor Smith
Councillor Mrs Forder	Councillor Miss West

FIRE PRECAUTIONS

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

In the event of the fire alarm (single continuous sound) being activated, 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:

Please note that mobile phones should be switched off for the duration of the meeting.

AGENDA

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

To receive apologies, if any, for inability to attend the meeting.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

3. MINUTES

To confirm the Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 18 March and 14 May 2009 (attached).

4. DEVELOPMENT OF A WORK PROGRAMME

A) REQUESTS FOR SCRUTINY

To consider any requests for scrutiny received by the Borough Solicitor. A copy of the Scrutiny Work Plan Prioritisation Aid is attached.

B) WORK PROGRAMME

To consider the work programme (attached) for the Committee and any suggestions from Members for issues to be scrutinise.

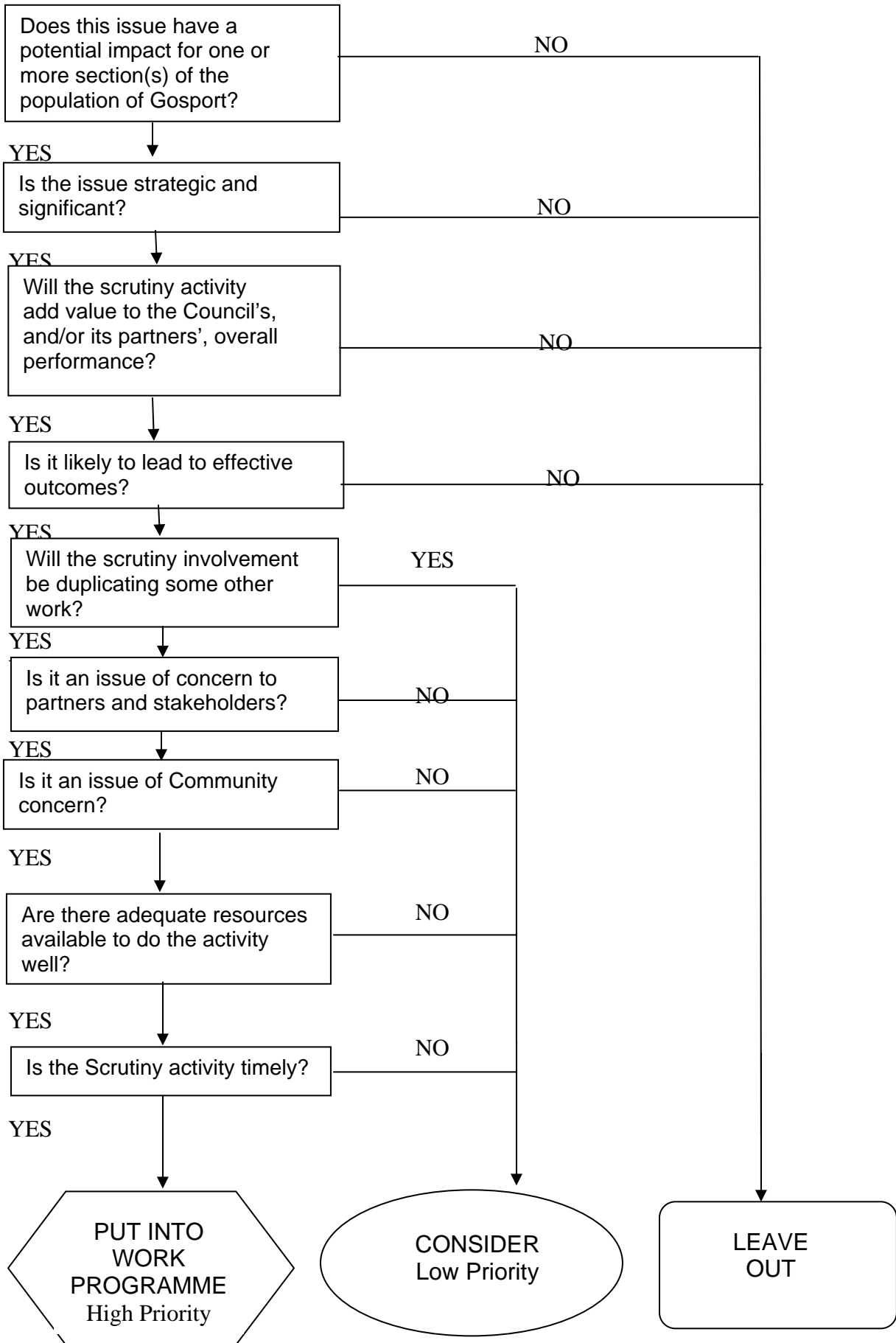
C) OTHER SUGGESTIONS FOR SCRUTINY

5. REPORTS TO BE RECEIVED

(i) DISABILITY EQUALITY SCHEME

To present the annual report on the second year of the Disability Equality Scheme (DES) and the revised Action Plan.

6. ANY OTHER BUSINESS



OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE: WORK PROGRAMME

Work Area	Lead Member/Officer	Date to be reported to Committee
Annual Report on the Work of the Committee	Chairman	25 March 2010
Performance Information: <i>Consideration of performance information relating to actions agreed by CMT</i>	Mike Jeffery	At 6-monthly intervals. Next report: 23 July 2009
Community Strategy Action Plan: <i>Policy Framework Document</i>	Julie Petty	At 6-monthly intervals: Next report 24 September 2009
Disability Equality Scheme: <i>Receive progress report on an annual basis</i>	Julie Petty	Annually: Next report 11 June 2009
Race Equality Scheme	Julie Petty	Annually: Next report 28 January 2010
Review of Outturn Budget (Whole Committee Scrutiny)	Peter Wilson	23 July 2009
Sustainable Communities Act 2007	Linda Edwards	Progress report 24 Sept 2009
Calls for Action and Local Petitions	Linda Edwards	Progress report 24 Sept 2009
Outcome of conference on Services for Older people	Linda Edwards	26 Nov 2009
Work areas: <i>Review at each meeting</i>		

GOSPORT BOROUGH COUNCIL

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

11th June 2009

ITEM FOR DISCUSSION

TITLE: DISABILITY EQUALITY SCHEME ANNUAL REPORT

AUTHOR: CHIEF EXECUTIVE

1.0 PURPOSE:

- 1.1 This is the annual report to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on the second year of its Disability Equality Scheme (DES) and its revised Action Plan – see action plan in Appendix A.

2.0 BACKGROUND:

- 2.1 The Disability Equality Scheme 2007-2010 and Action Plan was launched in February 2007, to ensure the Council is addressing its legal duties and responsibilities under the Disability Discrimination Act 2005.
- 2.2 The DES is one of three statutory equality schemes linked under the Corporate Equalities Policy which was adopted in February 2008. The other two schemes are the Race Equality Scheme, adopted in February 2007, and the Gender Equality Scheme adopted in July 2008.

3.0 REPORT:

- 3.1 All of the Council's statutory equality schemes include an annual review of the scheme and action plan through the Equality and Diversity Steering Group (EDSG) with an annual report being made to Council Management Team and the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.
- 3.2 The Council maintains effective partnership working with the Gosport Access Group and Disability Forum (GAG) to progress actions in the Action Plan and to identify and address other disability access issues to Council services and facilities.

- 3.3 EDSG receives regular updates from the GAG via the Council's Access Officer. Other Council officers often attend the GAG meetings to update them on policy developments and access and service improvements which could affect people with a range of disabilities.
- 3.4 All Council sections which had responsibility for 2008-09 actions in the action plan were canvassed for progress on those actions at the end of 2009. These and further updates have been co-ordinated by the Corporate Policy and Performance Section.
- 3.5 Progress has been significant across the three-year timetable of actions. An estimated 87% of all actions were completed during the second year with only one action incomplete.
- 3.6 GAG discussed the updated draft three-year DES Action Plan at its March meeting and recommended some additional actions for consideration by the Council.
- 3.7 The attached action plan for 2009-2010 has been updated to include new and ongoing actions agreed between the Gosport Access Group and Disability Forum and the Council.
- 3.8 The revised plan was re-circulated to the Gosport Access Group and Disability Forum.
- 3.9 As this is the final year of the current scheme, consultation on the development of a new scheme will begin later this year.

4.0 CONCLUSION:

- 4.1 The Council Management Team approved this annual progress report and revised Action Plan for 2009-2010 (in Appendix A) in April 2009.
- 4.2 It also acknowledged that all equality schemes and action plans are 'live' documents which are monitored and updated regularly to identify and address areas of inequality and to reflect the development of new initiatives and best practices to eliminate discrimination.
- 4.3 It is recommended that the Overview and Scrutiny note this annual report on the Disability Equality Scheme and the updated Action Plan for 2009-2010.

Supporting Information

Financial implications:	None for the purposes of this report
Legal implications:	None
Risk Assessment:	Compliance of Public Bodies to all anti-discrimination legislation is monitored by the Equality and Human Rights Commission. Failure to maintain a Disability Equality Scheme and Action Plan which satisfies the general and specific duties required under the Disability Discrimination Act 2005 would invite an array of possible enforcement actions against the Council.
Background papers including previous reports:	The Disability Equality Scheme 2007-2010
Enclosures/Appendices:	Disability Equality Scheme Action Plan 2009-2010
Contact name & tel. no.	Julie Petty, 023 9254 5381

Action Plan 2009 – 2010

Introduction

Gosport Borough Council published its Disability Equality Scheme in February 2007, which included a three year action plan.

Progress reports on the action plan have been presented to the Gosport Access Group and Disability Forum, Equality and Diversity Steering Group, the Council's Management Team and annually to the Council's Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

A formal annual review of the action plan has been carried out with the Gosport Access Group and Disability Forum to take into account progress and any new key issues arising.

1. OUTCOME: Improved access to Council buildings.

	What will we achieve	Whose job it is	When they will do it by
1a	Ensure continued compliance with the Disability Audit recommendations for the Town Hall in line with the Disability Discrimination Act 2005.	Central Services Section	Assess at checkpoint meeting March 2010

2. OUTCOME: Improved information on the physical access to services, facilities and events provided by the Council

	What will we achieve	Whose job it is	When they will do it by
2a	Develop corporate guidance on the consistent use of access symbols and information.	Reprographics	May 2009 – deferred from March 2009

3. OUTCOME: Higher levels of participation by disabled customers, in respect of Housing Services, to improve overall service design and quality.

All actions originally listed in this section were completed in October 2008.

4. OUTCOME: Improved job opportunities for disabled people through a more pro-active approach.

All actions originally listed in this section were completed in October 2008.

5. OUTCOME: Improve the safety and accessibility of disabled people in the urban environment.

	What will we achieve	Whose job it is	When they will do it by
5a	Improve awareness among local business and service providers about Disability Discrimination Act requirements and local access issues via business newsletter and website.	Access officer	March 2010 – Will review in light of new Equality Bill legislation expected in 2009
5b	Consult with disabled people when compiling programmes of leisure and cultural activities to ensure they are inclusive	Leisure and cultural services officers in co-operation with Access Officer	March 2010

6. OUTCOME: Improved understanding and use of access statements to accompany planning applications

All actions originally listed in this section were completed in March 2009.

7. OUTCOME: Increased awareness and understanding of disability issues through training, awareness raising events and targeted communications.

	What will we achieve	Whose job it is	When they will do it by
4a	Set up a fortnightly drop-in sessions for disabled residents/carers/local organisations to discuss issues of concern and also act as a consultation group to ensure inclusive decisions/policies are made.	Access Officer (approved but pending final arrangements)	March 2010