

## BOROUGH OF POOLE

### MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL MEETING OF THE COUNCIL

24<sup>TH</sup> JULY 2003

The meeting commenced at 7.00pm and concluded at 9.17pm

Present: Councillor Smith (Mayor)  
Councillor Mason (Deputy Mayor)  
Councillor Burden (Sheriff)  
Councillors Adams, Allen, Ms Atkinson, Belcham, Clements, Collier, Collyer, Curtis, Mrs Dion, Eades, Gillard, Gregory, Mrs Hillman, Mrs James, Knight, Mrs Lavender, Leverett, Matthews, Mrs Moore, Newell, Parker, Plummer, Rampton, Trent, White, Wilson and Woodcock

Also in attendance:

Mr Bailey, Mr McLees, Mr Sturdy, Mr Bearcroft, Mr Kennedy, Ms Curtis, Ms Peddie, Mrs Maguire, Mr Waring, Mr Dawson, Mr Noyes, Ms Greer, Ms Bombardiere, Mr Dimes, Mr Kermode, Mr Matlow, Ms Draper, Mr Williams, Mr Gardner, Mr N Williams, Ms Riddle, Ms Ellaway, Ms Sayers, Ms Dolan, Ms Cowley, Mr Adams, Mr Hart, Ms Staples, Mr Swann, Ms Wade, Mr A Morris, Mr Browning, Mr Cartwright, Mr Heighway, Mr Tarrant, Mr Baites, Ms Jennings, Mr Pettigrew, Mr Watts, Mr Cambrook, Mr Pottle, Mr Wheelhouse, Canon Webb.

Officers of the Council

Chief Executive, John McBride  
Jan Thurgood, Policy Director  
Bernie Topham, Policy Director  
Fred Davies, Policy Director  
Alan Barlow, Policy Director  
John Nash, Policy Director (Education)  
Bob Harris, Head of Democratic Services  
Steve Cattle, Principal Democratic Support Officer  
Lisa Gardner, Democratic Support Officer  
Pauline Gill, Democratic Services Manager

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Brooke, Mrs Butt, Dugdale and Pethen.

2. STATE OF THE AREA DEBATE

The Mayor welcomed members of the Council and invited representatives to this first "State of the Area" debate.

### 3. LEADER OF THE COUNCIL, COUNCILLOR BRIAN LEVERETT

The Leader of the Council outlined the purpose of the Council's first ever State of the Area debate. This was an important opportunity for the Council to stand back from the pressures of its day to day business and to think about the "bigger picture" to reflect what sort of a town Poole was, what sort of town do the people of Poole want it to be in the future.

The Leader was especially pleased that, as part of this process of considering the way forward, the Council would be working with members of Poole's Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) now known as Poole Partnership representing so many of the varied interests and service providers in the town. He indicated how greatly the Council valued the work of the LSP and stated that the Council wanted to incorporate the community's views and aspirations which, together with other consultations the Council was conducting both formally and informally, would enable the Council to produce a long-term strategy and budget.

He outlined the process for the evening explaining that representatives would be asked to work in groups with each group looking at a set of major issues facing the Council. He explained that one difficulty which had to be recognised from the outset was that improved services came at a price. He indicated that already signs were not good for this year's financial settlement from the Government, which meant there were likely to be some very tough choices ahead for the Council. He explained that this meant that what people wished for in Poole had to be balanced against the cost as never before. He explained the importance of carefully prioritising improvements as well as explaining what the Council was already doing to see if it was being done in the most efficient and cost effective way or even if the Council should be undertaking it at all.

### 4. MR KEN POTTLE, CHAIRMAN OF THE LOCAL STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP

Mr Pottle explained that he was proud to be Chairman of the Strategic Partnership informing the meeting that he had chaired the Poole Partnership for four months, but the work had been in progress since 2000. Much work had been undertaken to ensure that the views of people from all walks of life, including those in groups "traditionally hard to reach" were represented in the shaping of Poole's future.

Much consultation had taken place and the community's pride in Poole was acknowledged, together with the desire keep it beautiful to reflect the changing nature of the town, to retain the history of the town blending the old with the new so that Poole was a "host" town, not a "ghost" town. Mr Pottle outlined the findings exercise which had contributed to the vision for Poole.

### 5. CHIEF EXECUTIVE, MR JOHN McBRIDE

Mr McBride explained that representatives and Councillors were to be invited to break into discussion groups relating to the following themes:

- Community Support (Housing, Health and Social Services)
- Learning and Young People (Education, Culture and Youth)
- Local Economy (Economy, Transport and Infrastructure)
- Environment and Community (Community Safety Environment, Sustainability, Waste and Leisure)

Each group has to be led by the Council's Portfolio Holder for that area. Environment and Community area was to be led by the Chairman of the Environment Overview Group, Councillor Collier, as Councillor Pethen was unable to attend the meeting.

Each Group was supported by a lead Member of the Local Strategic Partnership with a Policy Director(s) to facilitate. Issues papers were circulated to facilitate discussion in these Groups.

## 6. FEEDBACK FROM THE THEME GROUPS

Local Economy: Councillor Parker, Portfolio Holder

Councillor Parker reported back on the following issues raised in his Group:

### Skills

- Lack of apprenticeships
- The problems of retaining graduates
- The need to raise the profile of business as a career to attract young people
- High housing costs
- Need to engender a change of culture so that careers in business was seen as of equal value as those academically based
- Huge gap in wages with regard to the cost of housing
- The need to expand the area of study with regard to travel to work
- There was a need to improve communications as it was important that industry could compete
- The A31, the problems with the north/south links
- Manufacturing concentrated on strength, but there was a need to innovate
- Need to encourage investment in the area
- Need for stronger support from the Regional Development Agency
- Concern over the state of local shopping centres and there was a need to maintain them
- There was a need to reduce travel within the conurbation
- The need for a mixed economy verses existing industries

## 7. ENVIRONMENT

Councillor Collier, Chairman of the Environment Overview Group

Councillor Collier reported back on the findings of his Group noting that there was an overlap with those of the previous speaker on Local Economy:

- There was a conflict in growth verses the quality of life and open space loss
- There was a need to investigate how to involve the community
- There was a need to explore how to get people to be proud of their street with regard to cleaning, graffiti, litter etc. Pride in the community was very important
- There was a need to widen the area's industrial base
- There needed to be a wider range of housing type and infrastructure
- Citizenship in schools needed to ensure that community involvement was recognised and the benefits for all was explained
- There should be a reward for people contributing to the community to encourage everyone to participate
- Churches, Youth Groups should be more visible
- Targets and improved performance – there should be a greater feeling of community

#### 8. COMMUNITY SUPPORT: COUNCILLOR MS ATKINSON, PORTFOLIO HOLDER

Councillor Ms Atkinson detailed the main issues arising from the Group discussion on Community Support. She emphasised that the discussion had majored on the need for more appropriate, affordable housing as a basis for a stronger community. The following other issues were also raised:

- The need for partnership working across the conurbation
- The need to look at housing across the conurbation
- The need to source funding
- The need to lobby Government for targeted bids for funds
- EU funding
- With regard to the community, the community had to decide what it wanted to be. There were large numbers of elderly and young people in the population and there was a perceived emphasis on tourism. Did the town wish to be a tourist town or self-sufficient?
- The marketing of the town needed to be examined to see what the town wanted to be, a home or a destination?
- There was a need to look at examples of good practice internally, locally, nationally. The community schemes operating in America were mentioned and the possibility of piloting such a scheme on a work/locality basis was discussed.
- There was a need to investigate how affordable care could be accessed
- There was a need to maximise income. Both the Council and the Government should be working in concert to ensure there was a higher percentage of take-up of benefit entitlement
- The community should be proactive rather than reactive
- Citizenship, now part of the school curriculum, should be taught to how one can help others in the community.

## 9. LEARNING AND YOUNG PEOPLE

### Councillor Woodcock, Portfolio Holder

Councillor Woodcock detailed the following points arising from the discussion within his Group, noting that there were a number of points which had overlapped in all the Groups:

- There was a need to target groups of pupils not in education, employment or training the 16-18 year olds.
- There was a need to target groups more effectively
- There were opportunities to find the Council's own strengths
- There was a need to support parents in bringing up children
- A need for social cohesion with a collaboration across providers and agencies
- A need to build up the respect of work/apprenticeships versus academia so that there was parity of esteem.
- There was a need to identify community leaders/role models
- The opportunities for lifelong learning needed to be marketed.

## 10. CONCLUSION

The Leader thanked everyone for their attendance and participation and explained that these views would be fed into the process to help shape the Council's priorities.

The Mayor joined with the Leader in thanking everyone for their participation and close the meeting.

**Mayor**