

Supplementary Papers for Cabinet

Date: Wednesday, 14 April 2021



4. Public Issues

3 - 4

To receive any public questions, statements or petitions submitted in accordance with the Constitution. Further information on the requirements for submitting these is available to view at the following link:-

<https://democracy.bcpCouncil.gov.uk/ieListMeetings.aspx?CommitteeID=151&Info=1&bcr=1>

The deadline for the submission of public questions is 4 clear working days before the meeting.

The deadline for the submission of a statement is midday the working day before the meeting.

The deadline for the submission of a petition is 10 working days before the meeting.

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Cabinet – 14 April 2021

Agenda Item 15 (Stour Valley Park Partnership and Strategy)

PUBLIC QUESTION FROM SARAH FISHER

Over £700,000 already awarded by HLF to FPA via BPF. BPF 2020 acknowledge this sum in 'project delivery', but no audit trail in annual financial statement. Where is this money?

In interests of good governance/ financial excellence/future transparency is there a robust legal MoU between BPF/ BCP in place?

Minimum standards must include:

- Highest standards of charitable governance and oversight by (B)PF trustees, including regular published public minutes.
- Robust financial arrangements between all parties
- Transparent, regular public scrutiny by local government/parish councils/all interested parties
- Resolution of conflicts of interest.

Please confirm.

No Cabinet recommendation until MoU legally finalised.

RESPONSE BY THE PORTFOLIO HOLDER FOR ENVIRONMENT, CLEANSING AND WASTE

The Parks Foundation (TPF – formally Bournemouth Parks Foundation) were awarded a £700,300 grant from the National Lottery Heritage Fund (NLHF) in 2019 for the Future Parks Accelerator (FPA) project 'A sustainable parks service for the 21st century: Bournemouth, Christchurch & Poole'. A partnership agreement for the project is in place between TPF and BCP Council.

A steering group chaired by BCP Council's Director of Environment and consisting of senior council officers, Parks Foundation staff, representation from Public Health Dorset and our funders (NLHF) meet regularly (every six weeks) to ensure the project is progressing to it's agreed milestones and is delivered within the project budget. The project reports as is accountable to its funder's, NLHF, every quarter.

TPF report to the Charities Commission each year and are compliant with the required financial reporting for the charity.

There is an existing MoU in place between what was BPF and Bournemouth Borough Council, this was novated to BCP Council when BCP Council was formed in April 2019. This MoU will be reviewed as part of the FPA project during 2021.

PUBLIC QUESTION FROM NICK DOBBS

Given that the proposed Hicks Farm SANG would be part of the Stour Valley Park and that BCP Council are aiming to join the partnership, why has BCP Council not

demonstrated in this planning application their commitment to achieving net gains in biodiversity by commissioning an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA)?

I ask this question because it is incumbent upon Councils to be able to evidence in the public domain the processes that led to the decision as to why an EIA was not considered necessary and for the public to have been included in that process.

RESPONSE BY THE PORTFOLIO HOLDER FOR ENVIRONMENT, CLEANSING AND WASTE

The Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations details when an EIA is required to support a planning application by setting out thresholds and types of development where EIA is needed. The proposed Hicks Farm planning application does not comprise a form of development where an EIA is required having regard to the types of development and thresholds set out by the legislation and therefore a formal EIA was not required. EIA is also not the only way in which biodiversity is to be considered in the development process.

Accordingly, the NPPF requires planning decisions to contribute to and enhance the natural environment and this includes a requirement to minimise impacts on and provide net gains for biodiversity. The application is supported by a various reports including a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal, a Water Vole and Otter report and a Wildlife Hazard Management Plan all of which will be assessed by the Councils Biodiversity Officer.

STATEMENT FROM LESLEY BYERS

I asked - via the 'freedom of information' facility, the amount of fee paid to 'Landstory' (the Stour Valley park project) I received the reply:

Landstory have been commissioned through the Bournemouth Parks Foundation, not BCP council.

The work has been funded through the National Lottery Heritage Fund.

BCP council does not hold this data.

Charities are able to refuse FOI requests. Given the significant funds (£750+k) at Parks' disposal, the council must surely have access to its accounts otherwise it could operate without council regulation or scrutiny.