

BOURNEMOUTH, CHRISTCHURCH AND POOLE COUNCIL
OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD

Minutes of the Meeting held on 13 January 2020 at 6.00 pm

Present:-

Cllr P Broadhead – Chairman
Cllr M Haines – Vice-Chairman

Present: Cllr M Anderson, Cllr S Bartlett, Cllr M F Brooke, Cllr M Earl,
Cllr G Farquhar, Cllr L Fear, Cllr M Greene, Cllr N Greene,
Cllr M Iyengar, Cllr R Lawton, Cllr R Maidment and Cllr C Rigby

Also in attendance: Cllr L Allison, Cllr Dr F Rice and Cllr V Slade

99. Apologies

Apologies were received from Cllr P Miles.

100. Substitute Members

There were no substitute members.

101. Declarations of Interests

There were no declarations interest received.

102. Public Speaking

There were no public statements, questions or petitions submitted to the meeting.

103. Forward Plan

The Chairman informed the Board of the items on the current Cabinet Forward Plan and put forward those items he considered the Board should scrutinise at its next meeting.

The Board agreed that the following items as suggested by the Chairman be included on the O&S Board agenda for February:

- Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) strategic and neighbourhood governance
- Budget and MTFP
- Bereavement Services
- HRA
- Organisational Design Estates Strategy – previously agreed
- Seascope Group Ltd Strategic Plan

- Winter Gardens – previously agreed
- York Road – previously agreed

A concern was raised that the CIL item would need a significant amount of time and therefore maybe some of the other items should be reconsidered. The Chairman did not feel this would be necessary.

The Chairman also suggested that representatives from the three BIDs within the BCP area be invited to the next O&S Board Meeting to provide the Board with a foreshadow on emerging issues.

The Chairman advised the Board that when the O&S function was established it was agreed to have a review after the first year. This would take place in July; a timetable would be drawn up and further information would follow.

The Chairman raised a concern regarding a proposal to limit public questions to only items on the meetings agenda. The Chairman felt that this would constrict public engagement and felt that O&S in particular should be exempt from this. The Board debated this issue and there was general agreement with the Chairman. The Board therefore,

RECOMMENDED that:

‘the Audit & Governance Committee ensure that the key principle of engaging the public through Overview and Scrutiny, as outlined in the Constitution, can continue to be met; that public questions may be received by the O&S Board and O&S Committees on any issue within the remit of that O&S body and are not restricted to items already listed on the agenda for that meeting.’

The Chairman also advised the Board of his intention for the Board to commission a working group and this is something which would be progressed in the coming weeks.

104. Scrutiny of Corporate Related Cabinet Reports

Smart Place Programme - The Chairman asked the Leader to introduce the report a copy of which had been circulated and which appears as Appendix 'A' to the Cabinet minutes of 15 January in the Minute Book. The Portfolio Holder outlined the aims of the report and recommendations. A number of points were raised by the Board in the ensuing questioning including:

- The impact of the smart place programme throughout the conurbation. The Leader advised that BCP were in talks with the companies providing super-fast fibre and they were keen to expand to the whole of the conurbation. Issues concerning transport would only work when looking at the full corridor across the area.

- Opportunities for businesses. It was noted that these were critical to the operating model. If, in order to fulfil the digital operating model, it needed to be developed in house there may be opportunities which were missed. The Leader advised that this paper is about the need for an investment plan to explore the different opportunities. Some part of the plan would be best delivered in house whilst others would be best delivered by partners within the sector in order to achieve the best possible outcomes.
- A Councillor questioned the need for accuracy to £400k in the figures when the total investment over 15 years was over £1bn. It was noted that the commitment to the investment plan did not commit to output and there was a significant benefit which would outweigh the cost; whilst noting the point on the point on the necessity of accuracy. The commitment from the plan was just over £250k. The figures had already been submitted to the Local Enterprise Partnership and gone through the first stage and due to go before the full board on 28 January. The issues raised with the figures would be looked into and the leader would provide a response by email.
- A Councillor asked about income streams, it was noted that there would be a full exploration of this within the investment plan but there was commercial sensitivity around what could be included within the paper.
- Concerning whether the project was likely to be approved the Leader advised that the LEP were looking to fund 7 or 8 projects and were required to spend remaining funds by March 2021. Other projects were becoming undeliverable and therefore the chances of the project getting funding were considered to be fairly good. Alternative options would be considered if funding from the LEP was not secured.

A Councillor commented that the only investment required to progress the project at this stage was £20k and the O&S Board should absolutely be supporting it and whether there was anything more the Board could do to support it. It was agreed that the Chairman should write to the LEP on behalf of the Board supporting the project. It was suggested that BCP was both the physical and digital gateway to the area. This aspect of the Local Industrial Strategy should be included in the letter.

105. Scrutiny of Leisure and Communities Related Cabinet Reports

BH Coastal Lottery Small Grant Scheme Criteria and Proposal to Extend BH Coastal Lottery Across BCP - The Chairman asked the Portfolio Holder for Tourism Leisure and Communities to introduce the report a copy of which had been circulated and which appears as Appendix 'D' to the Cabinet minutes of 15 January in the Minute Book. The Portfolio Holder outlined the aims of the report and recommendations. A number of points were raised by the Board in the ensuing questioning including:

- That funding for smaller amounts for local charities was difficult to come by and welcomed the expansion. The scheme would be open to Charities from March this year;
- A Councillor had received a letter raising concerns that the Council was encouraging gambling and questioned how the risk of potential gambling addiction would be mitigated and what safeguarding measures were in

place. It was reported that underage gambling would be difficult as a bank account was required, and age had to be verified in order to buy tickets. People in general would buy 1-2 tickets per week and then had to wait for the results from the draw. Due to the fact there was no instant gratification the risks of gambling addiction were minimal. Although any user could self-refer for a refusal to sell further tickets. The scheme was also required to make a donation to gambling addiction charities.

- A Councillor commented that it was great that people could choose where the funding was going and was a form of charitable donation.
- In response to a question about how the funding for good causes would be split once the scheme was expanded geographically the Board was advised that the BCP wide scheme would start from zero as the previous funding pot would be fully distributed first.
- Councillors asked about studies of gambling addiction in relation to the Bournemouth Lottery. It was explained that there wasn't any known but previous research had taken place when establishing the lottery. This could be circulated by email if Councillors wanted it. If there was a significant increase in the quantity of tickets an individual was buying, they would be contacted by the company running the lottery.

Pilot scheme for the use of fixed penalty notices for relevant environmental enforcement issues and associated policy - The Chairman asked the Portfolio Holder for Tourism Leisure and Communities to introduce the report a copy of which had been circulated and which appears as Appendix 'E' to the Cabinet minutes of 15 January in the Minute Book. The Portfolio Holder outlined the aims of the report and recommendations. A number of points were raised by the Board in the ensuing questioning including:

- Whether the beachfront would be included within this scheme. It was noted that there was no motivation for specific targets or unnecessary fines. It was important that the beachfront would be included and it was one of the worst areas. The Portfolio Holder confirmed that he had confidence in Council Officers ability to be impartial and neutral in delivering the scheme.
- There was a perception that the previous scheme was extremely harsh but there was no profit involved for Bournemouth.
- A Councillor asked how the amount for the fines was arrived at and the Board was advised that there were benchmarked and were inline with other areas.
- In response to a question it was explained that the Community Safety Accreditation Scheme officers would provide statements as evidence as part of their general role.
- The Board asked about restrictions of the scheme on those who were homeless and about action taken being proportionate. It was noted that there would need to be discretion in the issuing of notices.
- A Councillor asked about how the success of the project would be measured. It was noted that it was difficult to gauge how much litter was actually dropped in the area and public perception would be a better indication of the scheme's effectiveness.

- The Board was informed that Dorset Police were aware of the pilot scheme and the communications strategy for ensuring that the public were aware of the project was being considered.

The Chairman thanked the Portfolio Holder for attending and responding to the issues raised on his reports.

106. Scrutiny of Environment Related Cabinet Reports

The Chairman asked the Portfolio Holder for Environment and Climate Change to introduce the report a copy of which had been circulated and which appears as Appendix 'B' to the Cabinet minutes of 15 January in the Minute Book. The Portfolio Holder outlined the report. A number of points were raised by the Board in the ensuing questioning including:

- The Board asked for information on what was included within the £4m of funding. It was explained that this excluded Christchurch's fleet for which separate funds had been identified. It included 140 vehicles in total including highways vehicles;
- The Board asked about the considerations given regarding more sustainable vehicles versus the cost of replacement vehicles. The Portfolio Holder commented that the first priority was reducing the amount of waste produced and therefore reducing the need for vehicle use. The current investment from government in electric vehicles was not sufficient and they were therefore still very expensive, 2 to 3 times the price of normal vehicles and BCP did not have the budget available.
- Unfortunately much of the fleet needed replacement in order to continue services over the next few years. Availability of electric vehicles was also an issue.
- A Councillor asked about how much BCP was prepared to spend in monetary terms and in carbon terms. The Portfolio Holder commented that she was looking at a way to value the environmental and economic issues.
- In response to a question the Service Director advised that the Dorset contracts would be coming back in-house to BCP in April and services would be continuing as they were. The fleet would be moving to a sustainable fleet over a period of time to meet the Council's carbon-neutral ambitions;
- The Board raised concerns regarding the lack of detail within the report regarding the vehicle replacement. It was noted that in a previous version of the report these were included but a corporate decision was taken to remove this information as it was a lot of data and would be meaningless to most. The Corporate Director undertook to provide the details of the schedule of vehicles to Cabinet and O&S Board. The Board were concerned that it did not have the level of detail needed to scrutinise properly and that Cabinet did not have all the information available.
- A Councillor raised further concerns about the lack of a long-term fleet strategy along with this report and was disappointed that the two issues had not been brought together. The current necessity for fleet

replacement would target environmental credentials as all cars coming in would improve the current baseline.

- The Board questioned whether different options had been modelled, including high tech vehicles and lease/hire options, as there was no detail contained within the report.
- Concerns were raised again on the lack of detail forthcoming from the report and Portfolio Holder and questioned whether Cabinet had the information it needed to take a decision. Others noted that funding for this had already been approved and the detail was not required, and officers needed to be able to proceed. The Portfolio Holder suggested that the O&S Board could have asked for more information prior to the meeting.

It was moved and seconded that a recommendation be made that the recommendations at 'a' and 'b' in the Cabinet paper should not be discussed but should come back to Cabinet in a separate paper.

Voting: For 2, Against 10, 2 abstentions

There was further discussion about the most appropriate course of action given the Board's dissatisfaction with the information contained within the Cabinet paper. It was agreed that the Board would not make a formal recommendation but that the Chairman should share the general views of the Board with the Cabinet.

107. Future Meeting Dates

The Chairman confirmed that there was likely to be O&S Board meetings at both 2.00pm and 6.00pm on 10 February. The dates for the meetings in March and April were under discussion.

The meeting ended at 8.29 pm

CHAIRMAN