

BOURNEMOUTH, CHRISTCHURCH AND POOLE COUNCIL
OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD

Minutes of the Meeting held on 16 March 2020 at 6.00 pm

Present:-

– Chairman

– Vice-Chairman

Present: Cllr M Haines (Vice-Chair, in the Chair), Cllr M Anderson, Cllr S Bartlett, Cllr M F Brooke, Cllr M Earl, Cllr G Farquhar, Cllr L Fear, Cllr M Iyengar, Cllr R Lawton, Cllr R Maidment, Cllr P Miles, Cllr C Rigby, Cllr S C Anderson (In place of Cllr M Greene), Cllr D Mellor (In place of Cllr P Broadhead) and Cllr J Edwards (In place of Cllr N Greene)

Also in attendance: Cllr L Allison, Cllr D Brown, Cllr L Dedman, Cllr A Hadley and Cllr V Slade

139. Apologies

Apologies were received from the Chairman – Cllr P Broadhead, Cllr N Greene, Cllr M Greene; Cllr M Iyengar and Cllr P Miles.

140. Substitute Members

Notification of the following substitute members for this meeting was received from the relevant political group leaders or their nominated representatives:

- Cllr D Mellor for Cllr P Broadhead, Cllr J Edwards for Cllr N Greene and Cllr S Anderson for M Greene.

141. Declarations of Interests

Cllr M Brooke declared a local interest in agenda Item 7, Scrutiny of Finance Related Cabinet Reports, Capital Investment Strategy (Non-Treasury) as he was a Board Member of the Bournemouth Development Company which was referenced within the report.

Cllr S Bartlett and Cllr J Edwards declared local interests in agenda item 6, Scrutiny of Regeneration Related Cabinet reports, Arts and Cultural Development in Bournemouth, as they were directors of BH Live Enterprises, which was referenced within the report.

142. Public Speaking

None received

143. Chairman's Update

The Chairman welcomed all members and substitute members to the board and reminded everyone that scrutiny was most effective with full participation.

The Vice-Chairman advised that she had agreed to add an urgent item of business to the agenda on the Coronavirus outbreak due to its imminent importance. The latest government advice permitted the meeting to go ahead. The Chief Executive confirmed that government advice related to stopping social contact and as this was a work meeting it would count as essential travel in terms of conducting ongoing business of the Council.

The Board was advised that if the appropriate Officer or Cabinet member was not in attendance and there were issues raised by the Board for which an immediate response could not be provided this would be addressed prior to the Cabinet meeting on 18 March.

144. Scrutiny of Regeneration Related Cabinet Reports

Wessex Fields Site Development Strategy – The Portfolio Holder for Regeneration and Culture was not available for questions. The Portfolio Holder for Transport and Infrastructure introduced the report, a copy of which had been circulated and which appears as Appendix B to the Cabinet minutes of 18 March 2020 in the Minute Book. The Portfolio Holder advised that there were both positive and negative themes outlined. The Council were now looking at viable options to take those key themes forward. A number of points were raised by the Board including:

- A Councillor commented that he was present at one of the events, which was well attended, and he thought it was a great way to reach out to the public. The officers at the public event provided information on the transfer from one plan to another. The focus of the events was not on transportation but on other areas such as environment, affordable housing and the hospital provided plans for a 'living lab'.
- Key worker housing and access to the roads. A Councillor commented that 300 key worker homes would require significant infrastructure to access the site. The Portfolio Holder advised that the consultation process was very much around land use. Discussions with the hospital were ongoing about access to the site for staff and ambulances. Access requirements would be part of the future development.
- A Councillor asked about the Administration's view of the development following the positive feedback from the survey. The Board was advised that the outcome of the public events showed differing opinions around the access road, there was a need to look at sustainable transport for the whole area, for example a foot and cycle bridge to Christchurch to improve access. The Cabinet's view had not changed since previously presented.
- Further issues were raised within the ward concerning traffic and routes around that area and the impact that any development would have. A Councillor commented that more people were in favour of the road transport scheme than against it, 30% vs 25%.

- A Board member asked how the outcome of the recent consultation compared to the previous consultation. The original issues were from people responding to the planning consent for the previous scheme. The Portfolio Holder advised that an acceptable scheme needed to be drawn up from the outcome of the most recent consultation. With regards to transport the specific measures outlined in the report, Deansleigh access road, was supported by 6 percent and not supported by 12 percent.
- Further queries were raised regarding a pass around the underpass to access but there was now a need to work up how the desired land use would be supported by a transport scheme, which reflected the views of residents.
- In response to a question the Board was advised that a 'living lab' was a concept from Bournemouth University biological engineering and biological science related to health and social care.
- In response to a question regarding what was meant by key workers the Portfolio Holder explained that these would be places for rent, which would be affordable to those keeping the care economy going and also to young teachers and other public sector staff.
- A Councillor commented that more transport items were linked to the negative outcomes from the consultation than the positive outcomes. Feedback from the charts was not in relation to what transport system should be followed through. Transport development was crucial and needed to be looked at along with the various themes. It was important to listen and evaluate all comments in order to come to the best possible solution.
- The original purpose for the land was employment based. The Board questioned whether anything needed to be changed in terms of adding housing to the development. There would need to be employment use on the land but the funding would not be jeopardized by the proposals.

Chair summarised that whilst the consultation did not talk about the transport scheme this did need to be taken into consideration as part of the scheme. Therefore, it was difficult for the Board to make any further comment other than the Board was broadly in support of the recommendation but with the caveat that it hasn't seen the transportation aspect of the scheme in order to provide an entire picture.

Arts and Culture Development in BCP Council - In the absence of the Portfolio Holder the Corporate Director for Regeneration and Economy presented the report, a copy of which had been circulated and which appears as Appendix 'C' to the Cabinet minutes of 18 March 2020 in the Minute Book. The Board was advised that the conference outlined in the report would be postponed due to Corona Virus measures. Small increase in budget agreed for additional officers to support the arts agenda. Arts Council acknowledged that budgets are being protected. In the ensuing discussion the points raised by the Board included:

- Whether this was the right project to be taking forward at the current time, in light of the conference being postponed and what may take

place over the next six months. It was noted that the Council would be looking overall at recruitment and related issues in the coming months.

- A question was asked about whether the position of Chairman of the Cultural Collective would be a remunerated position. It was noted that this was due be discussed at the conference will it be remunerated. The Leader commented that this had been discussed and if it was someone who was paid this would come out of the Cultural Collective£150k budget. The overall value in having a paid Chairman needed to be considered. There would be a paid member of staff to facilitate and support the Board. Discussions had looked at whether to advertise nationally for someone with a high public profile – who would be unlikely to provide time for free. The decision on how it would be taken forward would be taken in conjunction with arts council and other groups. There were some concerns raised as to how much of the funding would be used for officers.
- A Councillor commented that they were impressed with the take up for the conference and it was disappointing that it had to be postponed. Pausing FDEs, long established events group. Working through temporary events notices – link on Council for community groups to contact regarding liability, arrangements – reach out to groups to help liaise on community events. The members of staff that part of the £150k would pay for would support development of community arts and culture. However, it was noted with Covid-19 issues places like the Light House may require further support. It was acknowledged that arts and culture in the community was vital. In terms of support for community events the Safety Advisory Group within the tourism and events team were able to assist in the running of events and concerns with safety issues.
- Anti-Social Behaviour – A Councillor asked how the invested money has affected ASB and how things have improved. Delivery plans included clear measures of success and a paper in April would include a framework of how performance measures will be set. The Leader agreed that it would be reasonable to report back in a years' time, to provide evidence that the proposed funding represented good value for money.
- It was acknowledged that there was often a struggle to engage disadvantaged communities in arts and culture, which needed to be inclusive to reap rewards. There was an aim to ensure that everyone is engaged not just those who would be normally. There was a concern that the cultural enquiry didn't have all the people you may expect and there were a lot of people for whom this wouldn't feel inclusive. It needed to include a broad range of culture.
- The Board discussed the role libraries played in cultural services. A Councillor commented that literature is culture, huge literary legacy in the area. Literature and libraries should be part of the cultural collective.
- It was noted that a three-year standstill settlement for organisations such as the Light House had been agreed which would help in future planning for organisations. They were tied to service level agreements which would tie up the services delivered into the funding provided.

The Vice-Chairman highlighted the impact of current situation for the Light House, which was an important cultural asset for the area. It was discussed that funds were to be given on the understanding that they would be able to

continue events through other means as they were reliant on grant funding through Council.

RESOLVED: That an update report be provided to the Board in 12 months' time, to provide an overview of how effective the strategy has been in meeting its aims; and for this report to include as measures of effectiveness an assessment of how the strategy has assisted in tackling anti-social behaviour and in engaging with harder to reach groups in our communities.

145. Scrutiny of Finance Related Cabinet Reports

Capital Investment Strategy (non-treasury) – The Portfolio Holder for Finance introduced the report, a copy of which had been circulated and which appears as Appendix 'F' to the Cabinet minutes of 18 March 2020 in the Minute Book. The Board was advised that the strategy updated the legacy assets, including a financial appraisal at appendix B to the report. A key issue in asking Cabinet to approve the strategy was aligning with current corporate strategy. In the ensuing discussion several points were raised, including:

A Councillor suggested that paragraph 2.3.3 of the appendix should be removed. The Portfolio Holder responded that there was a need to make sure the portfolio was diversified. There would need to be a business case and due diligence for any change with a view to risk.

It was noted that BCP Council had inherited a number of investments through the preceding authorities and bringing them together within one strategy helped to provide a more balanced picture of the overall portfolio of the Council. At present there were certain investments in the portfolio which skewed the overall picture.

A Councillor commented that the net yield and profits percentages, as set out in Appendix 2, were far too low and therefore not worth taking the risk on the investments. The Board was advised that all investments would be scrutinised by the Section 151 officer who was content with this low risk strategy. The strategy aimed to find the right balance which could be reviewed periodically if not performing appropriately.

It was confirmed that Mallard Road retail park was not making a loss. The business plan was for a £1.8m surplus but it returned a £1.6m surplus. It was partly a long term investment in terms of property value. Original cost included fees.

The Board discussed the principle of investing within the BCP Council area. The Portfolio Holder noted that there was additional socioeconomic value if investing within area but by exception would look outside of the area if it would provide a particularly identified environmental benefit. However, there were plenty of investment opportunities within the local area.

Some of the Board members commented that the triple bottom line and proposal to invest within the area was limiting and showed a lack of ambition. The Portfolio Holder suggested that the strategy would ensure the best outcome for people of the area.

A Councillor asked about the Council's Declaration of a climate change emergency and how an environmental impact would work for each case.

The Board was informed that it would challenge the Council to look at the sustainable angle of investments and work with organisations to ensure that they become more environmentally sustainable but would be considered on a case by case basis to consider.

RECOMMENDED: That Cabinet amend paragraph 2.3.3 of Appendix A –‘Capital Investment Strategy (Non-Treasury) 2020-2025’ to remove all text following the end of the first sentence ‘In making an investment decision, the Council will take a balanced portfolio approach’.

Voting: For: 9, Against: 1, 3 abstentions Cllr G Farquhar asked for his abstention to be recorded.

146. Scrutiny of Leisure and Communities related Cabinet Reports

Developing a Harmonised Approach to Tackling Street Based Anti-Social Behaviour – The Portfolio Holder for Leisure and Communities introduced the report, a copy of which had been circulated and which appears as Appendix ‘F’ to the Cabinet minutes of 18 March 2020 in the Minute Book. The Portfolio Holder informed the Board that a review had been recently undertaken and the report presented the findings. It was noted that given the present situation the proposed consultation as outlined in the report will begin in the way as set out in the paper.

- In response to a question the Portfolio Holder advised that the suggested consultation was to allow for the whole area to be dealt with in the same way. The PSPO would be consulted on prior to coming back to Cabinet for a decision. It was confirmed that the administration was not abandoning PSPOs and these would continue to be in use by the Council.
- A Councillor commented that they supported the CSAS officers in Boscombe and welcomed the increases of officers in Poole and Bournemouth. It was suggested that at least another one for Poole and one for Bournemouth were required. It was noted that there were many other areas of the conurbation which would benefit from the presence of CSAS officers. The Portfolio Holder confirmed that he would like to have as many officers in the area as possible and would review the impact that these extra officers had and would continue to monitor the situation in future.
- In response to a question it was confirmed that the CSAS officers wore body cameras and would continue to do so.
- The Board questioned the reasoning behind the suggested removal of a number of the points within the PSPO. The Portfolio Holder did not believe these were providing anything additional to the other points listed in helping to improve the situation.
- The Board asked about the deployment of CSAS officers and their ability to be more agile in terms of where they could be deployed based upon evidence that they are required there for a period of time.
- The area in which CSAS officers operated needed to be designated by the Chief Constable based on evidence of antisocial behaviour. If there

was evidence of other areas needing them the Council would need to work with Dorset Police to get those areas designated.

- Impact on more vulnerable members of society – A Councillor commented that they were pleased to see co-ordinated approach with other agencies taking into account mental health; working on interconnected problems and resolving these issues.
- In response to a question it was confirmed that Bournemouth and Poole had different approaches to anti-social behaviour and there was a need to harmonise across the area. Officers in Poole have a different way of working. A Councillor expressed concern that the Poole PSPO was being watered down and there was evidence base to say the PSPO in Poole had worked. The PSPO issue would be going out to public consultation.

The Chairman summarised that the Board was supportive of this overall and wanted things to start moving on this. However there was concern regarding the removal of b,c,d,e as these were shown to work. A Councillor commented that there was an evidence base that this enabled interaction which helped the most vulnerable in society.

RECOMMENDED: That Cabinet be recommended to amend paragraph 25 of the Cabinet report, in order that the final sentence reads:

‘It is proposed that specifically, consultation is undertaken with a view to removing clauses b) to c) but that clauses a),d), e), f) and g) would remain in force’;

and that consultation on the variation of the Public Spaces Protection Order, as outlined at recommendation 2 of the Cabinet report, is undertaken on the basis of this amendment.

Voting: For: 8, Against: 5

Cllr G Farqhaur asked for his vote against the recommendation to be recorded.

147. Update on the Impact of the Corona Virus

The Assistant Director of Public Health Dorset, the Leader of the Council and the Portfolio Holder for Health and Adult Social Care as well as the Chief Executive all provided updates to the Board. The Leader advised that she had taken part in a conference call with the MHCLG at lunchtime to provide an update. However following the Prime Minister’s announcement the staying at home procedures which had been discussed at the management team meeting had already changed from the government update at lunchtime. The Boar was advised that legal changes were expected tomorrow allowing for Council meetings to be varied to allow for remote engagement and the requirement to hold an annual Council would be suspended. The finance team were working on support for businesses, looking at rules around the hardship fund. There were also a number of sub-groups working on particular areas of concern. The Council would need to take a lead on community resilience and was setting up steering

group in next 24 hours to co-ordinate and take forward support. Non-essential travel had been stopped and events were being cancelled. There would be an assessment undertaken of what Council meetings were necessary and what could be done in a different.

The Cabinet meeting on Wednesday and the Health and Wellbeing Board next Thursday were still due to take place. If the Board had questions which could not be responded to this evening then answers would be supplied at either the Cabinet meeting or Health and Wellbeing Board.

The Assistant Director for Public Health provided an update on the official advise against going to large venues, events and travel. The recommendations on self-isolating were outlined. Up to this point public health was receiving updates on all cases within BCP although this was now expected to cease, and only particularly significant cases would now be reported. Locally published figures of 5 cases for the BCP area were all linked to overseas travel. London was ahead in terms of community transmission. The situation was no longer business as usual, there was a need to do things differently and respond differently.

The Chief Executive commented on the Council's emergency response and planning. There were tactical groups meeting within the BCP area – which included Public Health, HR and Communications representation.

This was the most serious public health threat experienced by all and there was therefore no external support available. It was important to identify the correct role which Councillors could play in this situation. The Council would look at which services could be maintained which could be reigned back on. There would be a major impact and therefore the budget would need to change significantly. There would be a paper taken to the Cabinet meeting on Wednesday, identifying immediate budget issues. Other actions which were being taken included: cancelling events, looking into the hardship fund business rates rebilling and working with social care providers. However, the Emergency Planning in place was strong but there would be an impact on services. There was a need to look at Council governance arrangements and put something in place for decision making and scrutiny. It was expected that staff absence would have an impact on services.

The Portfolio Holder for Health and Adult Social Care confirmed that Tricuro was putting resilience measures into place. Those staff who can work from home were working from home, but others needed to go out into the community. The Board was advised that there would be people not known to the Council and it was felt that Councillors often did know about those who need help within their community.

In response to a question about timescales the Assistant Director of Public Health advised that the Chief Medical Officer had suggested a 10 – 12 week peak. Dependent upon control measures and suppression of the peak. The US President suggested an outbreak in the US until July or August.

A Councillor asked about schools remaining open but being told to socially distance and how this could be done. There was specific guidance for the education sector and there will be a time when schools need to close, However, this would mean that the NHS and care sector lose a significant proportion of their workforce. There was also the role schools had in feeding children and additional support. Schools were making preparations to create space to help children learn from home.

Schools were being asked to be sensitive to the issue of vulnerable children and siblings or children of those who were vulnerable, especially with regards to absences and issuing fines. (Not BCP fines). The Board also asked about maintain contact arrangements for children in care.

In response to a question about the BCP website not having a banner headline it was confirmed that the Communications team were already looking into this.

A Councillor asked about how do we interact with work colleagues and loved ones. The Government statement was that we needed to be living our lives in a different way and avoiding unnecessary travel and social environments.

It was important that the public was directed to reliable sources of information. The Gov.uk website had all information and the NHS website has medical information.

Work was taking place in terms of the Council's role in community support and it was hoped to have something in place by the end of the week. The Leader advised that an update would be sent to Councillors Will send update to members. Issues would need to be shared with community groups and fed back in a controlled way. Want Council to work as one team on the issues which need action and look to all support in this. Work was also ongoing in terms of business continuity and staff absences.

In terms of community resilience, a councillor commented that it would be helpful to know where to signpost people so that the response was properly co-ordinated and efforts were not duplicated. Communications would be made to the public and to staff. Everyone was advised to try to steer people to official advice and help stop misinformation.

The meeting ended at 9.09 pm

CHAIRMAN