

**BOURNEMOUTH, CHRISTCHURCH AND POOLE COUNCIL**  
**OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD**

Minutes of the Meeting held on 11 November 2019 at 5.00 pm

Present:-

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

Present: Cllr M Anderson, Cllr S Bartlett, Cllr G Farquhar, Cllr L Fear,  
Cllr M Greene, Cllr N Greene, Cllr M Iyengar, Cllr R Lawton,  
Cllr R Maidment, Cllr P Miles, Cllr R Burton (Reserve) (In place of Cllr  
M F Brooke), Cllr T Trent (Reserve) (In place of Cllr M Earl) and  
Cllr L Northover (Reserve) (In place of Cllr C Rigby)

Also in Cllr D Brown, Cllr P Hilliard, Cllr M Howell, Cllr Dr F Rice,  
attendance: Cllr K Wilson, Cllr V Slade and Cllr S Moore

66. Apologies

Apologies were received from Cllrs M F Brooke, M Earl, R Maidment and C Rigby.

67. Substitute Members

Notification had been received from the appropriate group leaders of the following changes in membership for this meeting of the Board:

Cllr R Burton substituted for Cllr M Brooke  
Cllr T Trent substituted for Cllr M Earl  
Cllr L Northover substituted for Cllr C Rigby

68. Declarations of Interests

The following Councillors declared an interest for the purpose of transparency in agenda item 6, Scrutiny of Housing related Cabinet reports due to rental property interest within the BCP area:

Cllr N Greene  
Cllr M Greene  
Cllr S Bartlett  
Cllr R Burton

69. Minutes

The minutes of the meetings held on 23 September and 4 October were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.  
A Councillor commented, in relation to clause 45, the fourth bullet point on Transforming Cities Fund Strategic Outline Business Case, that they were experiencing difficulties in communicating with MPs. The Chairman

requested that this be initially directed through the appropriate Portfolio Holder.

70. Action Sheet

The Board's current action sheet was noted.

71. Public Items

There were no public questions, statements or petitions were received for this meeting.

72. Scrutiny of Housing Related Cabinet Reports

**Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Action Plan** - The Chairman invited the Portfolio Holder for Housing to introduce the report to the Board, a copy of which had been circulated and which appears as Appendix 'A' to the cabinet minutes of 13 November in the Minute Book. The Portfolio Holder outlined the aims of the report and recommendations.

The Chairman commented that this was an important issue and welcomed the report. The Board asked questions of the Portfolio Holder including:

- Whether children and young people were placed into unsuitable accommodation including bed and breakfast placements and what safeguards the Council had in place to ensure that properties owned privately were of a suitable standard. The Portfolio Holder advised that there was a list of authorised agencies to provide temporary accommodation. It was noted that whilst these 'met' the required standards there was an aspiration to improve standards for this type of accommodation over time. A Councillor referred to when residents were directed to private landlords by the Council and properties not being suitable. The Portfolio Holder undertook to take any details of particular cases and follow up on these.
- A Councillor commented that some of the action points and dates didn't line up correctly and asked about the Christchurch strategy being up to date. It was noted that the actions would be amended and that the current model for Christchurch was up to date and the new strategy was already being worked up and the Council was keen to progress this with input and support from different areas.
- A councillor asked about the Council's policy on tenants being threatened with eviction in particular those who had already received an eviction notice and the support they received before bailiffs arrived at the property. The Director of Housing advised that this was an issue for every local authority and on occasion people would be given advise that they had a legal right to remain in the property whilst the eviction process took place. The Action Plan set out everything the Council was trying to do, depending upon the circumstances of the case the Council may try to negotiate with landlords, offer rehousing, help to explore support from family. The Council would try to be creative in providing re-housing solutions.
- In response to a question about the BCP Homelessness Partnership and whether it was a public forum the Portfolio Holder confirmed it

would include members of statutory partners on the Board and would be in public.

- A Councillor commented on the programme of buying up housing to provide temporary accommodation which was bucking the national trend and asked if there was scope to expand this across the BCP Council area. The Portfolio Holder confirmed that this had been helpful in improving figures and it may be possible to expand but any actions would have to take into account the three different ways of doing things across the three preceding authorities. A councillor commented that they hope Seascope's position in identifying homelessness solutions could continue.
- The positive action outlined in the report was identified by a Board Member. The Portfolio Holder was asked about homeless people without a connection to the local area. The Board was advised that just over 25% of rough sleepers had no local connection and there was a discussion needed at a national level but the Council would work hard to help people without local connections in various ways.
- In response to a query about the winding down of the Enforcement, Prevention, Intelligence and Communication group the Director advised that it had worked so well that co-operation between partners was now mainstream and the group was no longer needed. There would, however, be a sub-group to the main Board which would be responsible for similar activity. The Board was assured that the multi-agency response to rough sleeping would continue.
- A Councillor commented that the homelessness paperwork from BCP Council was out of line with the requirements of the armed forces covenant. It was confirmed that this would be picked up and that ex-forces were placed in the 'silver' band for housing.
- A Board Member questioned what residents could do when coming across someone sleeping rough with regards to the Severe Weather Emergency Protocols (SWEP). It was noted that the SWEP policies and work would begin to kick in as the weather became colder.

Cllr P Miles arrived during this item.

73. Scrutiny of Corporate Cabinet Reports

**Organisational Development** - The Leader of the Council was invited to introduce the report, a copy of which had been circulated and which appears as Appendix 'D' to the Cabinet Minutes of 13 November in the Minute Book. The Leader outlined the key areas within the report and the proposed recommendations for Cabinet. A number of issues were raised in the ensuing discussion including:

- Cost – It was noted that whilst this was significant there were considerable savings which would be made, and it was important to ensure that the process was carried out effectively.
- Contract – A Councillor asked why KPMG was awarded the contract to carry out this work. The Leader explained that they had provided a fixed cost contract and would facilitate our view for the future of BCP Council rather than a generic proposal from elsewhere.

- Accommodation and location – The Board asked about pressures arising from teams and ensuring that professionals were in the right place logically. The accommodation strategy would look at a corporate hub, how current provision was utilised and the available options. It was noted that accommodation and ways of working shouldn't be separate considerations and there was an expectation that there would need to be moved to meet needs and ensure the right people were where they needed to be. There would be a Cabinet Working Group to include the Leader of the Opposition to look at accommodation options as part of a 2-3 month programme which would then come back through Cabinet. A Board member commented that this would be the main focus of resident's mind and was concerned about the lack of engagement with Councillors to date. It was noted that the exclusion of politicians from the accommodation group was deliberate in order not to influence and that this was a particularly challenging issue.
- Systems – It was noted that the high number of different software systems in place seemed horrendous but conversely it was important to ensure that the requirements of the service were met. This was agreed but there were excesses within the system for example social care was working across three different platforms. The processes for this were likely to come back through Cabinet and Overview and Scrutiny.
- Savings – In response to a question the Leader confirmed that the figures outlined were somewhat pessimistic and other Councils in similar positions had made significant savings. The capital costs outlined were related to changes in working practices and not buildings which would be the subject of a separate report.
- Operating Model – Following questions from the Board it was confirmed that the model was decided following an intensive two-day process modelling different ideas. There was a clear driver that only a digitally enable front door model would transform. The model would be designed with communities in mind with services that people were able to access themselves without having to negotiate clunky systems whilst ensuring staff were available to address more complex problems.

**Corporate Performance Management Update** - The Leader of the Council was invited to introduce the report, a copy of which had been circulated and which appears as Appendix 'F' to the Cabinet Minutes of 13 November in the Minute Book. The Leader outlined the key areas within the report and the proposed recommendations for Cabinet. A number of issues were raised in the ensuing discussion including:

- The Leader asked the Board for any feedback on the areas that the report should include in the future. The Chairman asked the Board to exclude Children's and Adults in its consideration as there were separate Scrutiny Committees to address these areas.
- A Member asked about the information on planning applications and the ability to turnaround householder applications. It was noted that it was important to know how much out of time those applications were, as the statistics only included the percentage of applications which did not meet the target. It was noted that the expectation was that the benchmark would be met. The Corporate Director would be asked

specifically why this had reduced but it was also noted that there were staffing pressures within the planning department.

- The Board requested information on waste diverted from landfill and TROs completed on time. The Leader advised that she had already requested further information on transport, roadworks and other traffic issues to be included.
- It needed to be decided, where there was no national benchmark, what was a reasonable target. Benchmarks would need to be integrated into the new model of working. The more embedded these were into the system the better they could be utilised. It was also hoped to develop an electronic performance scorecard to monitor performance as it is changing.
- It was noted that this work sat alongside the base budget review programme which would enable a more joined up review of statistics and more informed conversations to take place. Performance would be an ongoing piece of work for the O&S Board and an issue for future consideration.

74. Scrutiny of Finance Related Cabinet Reports

**Quarter Two Budget Monitoring Report 2019/20** - The Portfolio Holder for Housing was invited to introduce the report, a copy of which had been circulated and which appears as Appendix 'E' to the Cabinet Minutes of 13 November in the Minute Book. The Portfolio Holder outlined the key areas within the report including those areas with budget pressures and the details of these. A number of issues were raised in the ensuing discussion including:

- Whether the cost of the build for the projects outlined in paragraphs 69 and 70 of the report included the land cost or not. It was confirmed that it did not include the cost of land and it was commented that this then seemed too high. The Board was advised that there was contingency built into the cost outlined and the project would.
- A Councillor noted that the pressure from Children's services hadn't moved and whether there was an expectation of an explanation for this from the Corporate Director. It was explained that this was a projection for quarter 3 and this was an issue that further feedback would be sought on. A Councillor requested that a further exception report on this be included as a recommendation of Cabinet. It was agreed that there needed to be communication between the Board and the Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee on how to address the budget pressures arising in Children's Services and deficit arising from the High Needs Block of the Dedicated Schools Grant.
- A Board Member asked whether there were any unused government grants which needed to be returned to central government. It was confirmed that there were none returned or expected to be returned.
- A Member questioned when the capital projects added since February were agreed. It was noted that this had taken place across a number of meetings since February and were previously approved by Cabinet or Council.

- In response to a question on the return on investments the Portfolio Holder advised that the return, which was better than expected was not as a result of using reserves and the Audit and Governance Committee had received a full paper on the £95k variance.
- In response to a query it was confirmed that the listing for the Bournemouth Council Group should be recorded as Seascope group.
- The Board questioned the variance in administrative receipts from the Community Infrastructure Levy. These had been worked over to ensure greater consistency in moving forward. It was noted that the administrative processes had been undertaken but not accounted for in the correct way and the different accounting practices in preceding authorities would be drawn together.

75. Forward Plan

The Overview and Scrutiny Specialist advised that it was important that the Forward Plan was owned by the whole of the Board and requested feedback from the Board members on which items from the Cabinet Forward Plan they wished to be considered by the Board. The Board noted a number of items it wished to consider at the next meeting and asked that the Chairman and Vice-Chairman agree the remaining items and that the agreed items be circulated to the Board for further consideration.

Regarding the Pokesdown Station lifts a Councillor mentioned that following feedback from residents he was following up on the issue as the advice being provided on the accessibility transfer services was not always in-line with that advertised.

A Councillor asked for her concern with the timing of meetings to be placed on record – in particular that the change of time to daytime meetings amounted to indirect discrimination under the Equalities Act 2010. Another Councillor commented that most meetings should have a 7.00pm start time. The Chairman noted that the Board needed to be reactive to what was being agreed by Cabinet but accepted the principle that a better solution was required

76. Future Meeting Dates

The dates of future meetings were noted. It was noted that the Centre for Public Scrutiny would be providing a training session on 4 December along with the S151 officer and all Councillors would be invited. The Board was advised that the Cabinet meeting date for December was likely to change and therefore the date for the Overview and Scrutiny Board was also likely to be moved from that currently planned.

The meeting ended at 8.03 pm

CHAIRMAN