

Notice of Overview and Scrutiny Board

Date: Wednesday, 18 December 2019 at 2.00 pm

Venue: Committee Suite, Civic Centre, Poole BH15 2RU



Membership:

Chairman:

Cllr P Broadhead

Vice Chairman:

Cllr M Haines

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

Cllr P Miles

Cllr C Rigby

All Members of the Overview and Scrutiny Board are summoned to attend this meeting to consider the items of business set out on the agenda below.

The press and public are welcome to attend.

If you would like any further information on the items to be considered at the meeting please contact: Claire Johnston - 01202 454627 or email claire.johnston@bcpcouncil.gov.uk

Press enquiries should be directed to the Press Office: Tel: 01202 454668 or email press.office@bcpcouncil.gov.uk

This notice and all the papers mentioned within it are available at democracy.bcpCouncil.gov.uk

GRAHAM FARRANT
CHIEF EXECUTIVE

10 December 2019



Available online and
on the Mod.gov app



AGENDA

Items to be considered while the meeting is open to the public

1. **Apologies**

To receive any apologies for absence from Members.

2. **Substitute Members**

To receive information on any changes in the membership of the Committee.

Note – When a member of a Committee is unable to attend a meeting of a Committee or Sub-Committee, the relevant Political Group Leader (or their nominated representative) may, by notice to the Monitoring Officer (or their nominated representative) prior to the meeting, appoint a substitute member from within the same Political Group. The contact details on the front of this agenda should be used for notifications.

3. **Declarations of Interests**

Councillors are required to comply with the requirements of the Localism Act 2011 and the Council's Code of Conduct regarding Disclosable Pecuniary Interests.

Councillors are also required to disclose any other interests where a Councillor is a member of an external body or organisation where that membership involves a position of control or significant influence, including bodies to which the Council has made the appointment in line with the Council's Code of Conduct.

Declarations received will be reported at the meeting.

4. **Confirmation of Minutes**

To confirm and sign as a correct record the minutes of the Meeting held on 7 October and the two Meetings on 11 November 2019.

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5. **Public Speaking**

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.bcpccouncil.gov.uk/documents/s2305/Public%20Items%20-%20Meeting%20Procedure%20Rules.pdf>

The deadline for the submission of public questions is Wednesday 11 December 2019.

The deadline for the submission of a statement is 12.00 noon, Tuesday 17 December 2019.

The deadline for the submission of a petition is 12.00 noon, Tuesday 17 December 2019.

Budget Scrutiny Matters

The Overview and Scrutiny Board are asked to consider the following items and attached guidance note in relation to the scrutiny of future budgets.

6. Scrutiny of the Medium Term Financial Plan Cabinet Report

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To consider the Medium Term Financial Plan Cabinet report scheduled for Cabinet on 20 December 2019 and budgetary issues as follows:

- Budget Scrutiny – Children’s Services
- Budget Scrutiny – Adults Social Care
- Budget Scrutiny – Medium Term Financial Plan
- Bournemouth International Centre (BIC) – Short Term Investment Plan

The O&S Board is asked to scrutinise the reports and make recommendations to Cabinet as appropriate.

Cabinet members invited to attend for this item:

Councillor David Brown, Portfolio Holder for Finance

Councillor Sandra Moore, Portfolio Holder for Children and Families

Councillor Lesley Deadman, Portfolio Holder for Adults and Health

The Cabinet report will be published on 12 December 2019 and available to view at the following link:

<https://democracy.bcpccouncil.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=285&MId=4171&Ver=4>

7. Scrutiny of Regeneration Cabinet Reports - Budget related

To consider the following Regeneration related Cabinet report scheduled for Cabinet on 20 December 2019:

- Bournemouth International Centre Short Term Investment Plan
- Winter Gardens – Including Exempt Information

The O&S Board is asked to scrutinise the reports and make recommendations to Cabinet as appropriate.

Cabinet members invited to attend for this item:

Councillor Mark Howell – Portfolio Holder for Regeneration and Culture

The Cabinet report will be published on 12 December 2019 and available to view at the following link:

<https://democracy.bcpccouncil.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=285&MId=4171&Ver=4>

8. Exclusion of Press and Public

In relation to the items of business appearing below, the Committee is asked to consider the following resolution: -

'That under Section 100(A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraph 3 in Part I of Schedule 12A of the Act and that the public interest in withholding the information outweighs such interest in disclosing the information.'

9. Scrutiny of Regeneration related Cabinet Report - Exempt Information

To consider the following Regeneration related Cabinet report scheduled for Cabinet on 20 December 2019:

- Winter Gardens – Including Exempt Information

The O&S Board is asked to scrutinise the report and make recommendations to Cabinet as appropriate.

Cabinet members invited to attend for this item:

Councillor Mark Howell – Portfolio Holder for Regeneration and Culture

The Cabinet report will be published on 12 December 2019. Overview and Scrutiny Board Members will receive a copy of the exempt report.

No other items of business can be considered unless the Chairman decides the matter is urgent for reasons that must be specified and recorded in the Minutes.

BOURNEMOUTH, CHRISTCHURCH AND POOLE COUNCIL
OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD

Minutes of the Meeting held on 07 October 2019 at 10.00 am

Present:-

Cllr P Broadhead – Chairman

Cllr M Haines – Vice-Chairman

Present: Cllr M Anderson, Cllr M F Brooke, Cllr M Earl, Cllr G Farquhar,
Cllr L Fear, Cllr M Iyengar, Cllr R Lawton, Cllr C Rigby, Cllr R Burton
and Cllr J J Butt

49. Apologies

Apologies were received from Cllrs S Bartlett, M Greene, N Greene, R Maidment and P Miles.

50. Substitute Members

Notification had been received from the appropriate group leaders of the following changes in membership for this meeting of the Board:
Councillor J Butt to act as substitute for M Greene.
Councillor R Burton to act as substitute for R Maidment.

51. Declarations of Interests

There were no declarations of disclosable pecuniary interest.
For transparency Councillor F Brooke declared for item 6, the Housing Delivery Action Plan, that he was a Board member of the Bournemouth Development Company.
For Transparency Councillor R Burton declared that he was a landlord, with a property for rent in the BCP area outside of the Discretionary Licensing Scheme area.

52. Confirmation of Minutes

The Board agreed as an accurate record the minutes of the meeting held on 9 September 2019.
The Board agreed an amendment, to include Councillor A Hadley as present, in the minutes of the meeting held on 8th July.

53. Action Sheet

The Board confirmed the Action Sheet without amendment.

54. Public Speaking

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

55. Scrutiny of Housing Related Cabinet Reports

Housing Delivery Test Action Plan

The Portfolio Holders for Strategic Planning and Housing presented a report, a copy of which has been circulated and appears as Appendix 'A' of these minutes in the Minute Book.

It was explained that in February 2017 a white paper 'fixing our broken housing market' was published setting out the government's plan to increase housing supply. The White Paper set a national target of approximately 300,000 new homes annually.

A measure to assess whether councils were building enough homes locally was introduced and included a housing delivery target. Councils that fell below 95% of their housing delivery target were required to produce a Housing Delivery Test (HDT) Action Plan.

Cabinet were being asked to agree the publication of the BCP HDT Action Plan. The Plan identified 5 key strategic factors to help drive forward the delivery of housing.

The Plan would be implemented in 2019-2022 and would be monitored by a steering group jointly led by officers across Growth and Infrastructure and Housing. Progress on the Action Plan would be reported annually to Council and staffing resources would be increased to drive forward delivery. The Board were informed that between 2016 - 2019 Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole Councils granted planning permission for 10,425 homes, 3,705 of these were delivered. It was therefore considered important to understand the barriers to development and to work with landowners and developers to help to progress developments.

It was also recognized that the national targets had some anomalies and further work was required to understand them, with some councils struggling to meet their targets whilst others were reaching circa 200%.

Two technical errors were highlighted. On page 165, under 2.4, the figure should read 730 not 722. Additionally, on page 181, 4.12 Christchurch Town Council should be replaced with Highcliffe and Watford Parish Council.

A number of questions were raised and discussed by members of the Board at the meeting, including;

- The figures for the number of units that needed to be delivered. This was available on page 167 of the report;
- Whether the target had been appealed, what was being done to appeal it and the cost of the work. Initially the Council would gather evidence to inform its Local Plan. The Local Plan would identify a housing delivery target for the BCP area. This target would form the basis of any challenge to the national target. The work would be carried out using legacy budgets;
- That environmental constraints would be taken into consideration when identifying a housing delivery target in the Local Plan and that the Council would work with neighbours under the Duty to Cooperate to deliver housing;

- That lobbying government was important and developing housing was on the LGA's agenda. It was highlighted that this area needed further discussion;
- That taking direct action and being proactive in engaging developers was important, particularly in relation to the communications plan and in developing an understanding of barriers and reasons why sites may have stalled;
- Why the Winter Gardens wasn't on the Cabinet Forward Plan. The application would not be moved forward until a suitable alternative natural greenspace (SANG) was in place;
- That there could be a benefit in bringing forward the Strategic Planning Forum;
- Whether planning could be more flexible, particularly in relation to car parking requirements;
- The impact increased resource would have on budgeting. Existing resource would be redirected to priority areas. There could be a need for additional staff, but this was not yet determined because the new councils restructure process was underway;
- The importance of ensuring delivery of housing because national government can intervene if targets aren't being met;
- The importance of the communications plan and the engagement of key stakeholders beyond the BCP geography;
- Whether the Board could receive yearly updates on this item.

BCP Housing Strategy – approval to consult

The Portfolio Holder for Housing presented a report, a copy of which has been circulated and appears as Appendix 'B' of these minutes in the Minute Book.

The BCP Housing Strategy would be a key Policy for the Council. It would outline the local and national housing context and would assist in the funding and delivery of the Councils strategic priorities going forward.

The strategy would also anticipate future housing issues and would provide an action plan to address current local issues such as homelessness, new housing supply and private sector housing standards.

The Board were considering a report that set out the proposed consultation process to Cabinet. The proposal was for a consultation period of 12 weeks with high level communications across different channels, including a targeted interactive stakeholder consultation, engagement workshops and discussions at formal meetings.

A multi-disciplinary steering group would be established to manage the consultation process and the development of the strategy. The final strategy would be drafted in 2020 and then put to cabinet for endorsement and adoption.

A number of questions were raised and discussed by members of the Board at the meeting, including

- That the Overview and Scrutiny Board were keen to be engaged in the development of the strategy;

- That the document would benefit from incorporating passion, actions and outcomes, particularly in regard to the communications plan;
- That affordability of housing for young people should be included within the plan;
- That including ideas within the consultation process could help facilitate it.

Private Sector Housing Enforcement Policy

The Portfolio Holder for Housing presented a report, a copy of which has been circulated and appears as Appendix 'C' of these minutes in the Minute Book.

The Overview and Scrutiny Board were asked to review the BCP Private Sector Housing Enforcement Policy ahead of its consideration by Cabinet.

The BCP Private Sector Housing Enforcement Policy detailed how standards would be regulated in the Private Rented Sector and how empty homes would be tackled in Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole.

The Policy included details of the legislation and its application across BCP. It also included information on the processes for formal and informal enforcement, risk assessments and financial penalties.

It was highlighted that the policy would also explain the service and approach that residents and landlords could expect from the private rented sector, including details of liability and expected standards. The Policy would also help to ensure a consistent approach from council officers.

The aim of the Policy was to raise standards in the Private Rented Sector by working alongside owners, landlords, letting agencies and tenants, whilst recognising that enforcement can be necessary to protect the public and the environment.

It was highlighted that there was a significant amount of legislation to support the regulation of housing conditions and the policy had aligned preceding policies with minimal change to the legislative functions and processes. It was proposed that the policy be reviewed in 24 months.

A number of questions were raised and discussed by members of the Board at the meeting, including;

- Changes to the Policy included the introduction of civil penalties and the tenant fee's act amendments;
- The aim of the policy was to work with landlords to improve housing standards informally without having to take formal action, outcomes of the previous policies included 100'000 civil penalties for offences committed;
- That owners of empty homes would be engaged as soon as possible. This could be through long-term support, advice and guidance. If the property was having a negative impact on the community there would be targeted action;
- Whether the policy was having the desired impact on landlord's behavior. It was highlighted that engagement included a landlord conference, direct emails and other methods that could promote awareness and provide skills and knowledge to landlords;

- The impact of changes to amenity standards. It was explained that partnership working was key to ensuring affordable and carbon neutral options;
- Gaps in data in The Equality Impact Assessment were due to the council not collecting personal details that weren't required for the job. It was highlighted that the policy was likely to have a positive impact on equality and where there could be a negative impact mitigation had been included within the policy;
- Details of risk assessments for Houses of Multiple Occupancy (HMO's);
- The Policy would be made available on the BCP website. There would also be signposting and work with partners to promote it;
- That a record was kept of landlords and agents who were repeatedly not managing properties effectively;
- Tenants having problems with their landlord could call the Councils helpline or contact their local Councillor;
- Whether enforcement policy had been an effective way of working with Private Sector Landlords;
- That prosecutions took up a disproportionate amount of time which meant resources for proactive work was limited;
- The Housing Health and Safety Rating System was being discussed nationally;

Discretionary Licensing

The Portfolio Holder for Housing presented a report, a copy of which has been circulated and appears as Appendix 'D' of these minutes in the Minute Book.

The report sought approval to launch a public consultation on the potential introduction of two Discretionary Licensing Schemes within the BCP area. These were Additional Licensing which is the licensing of Houses of Multiple Occupancy (HMO's) that fall outside of the mandatory licensing definition and Selective Licensing which is the licensing of units of private sector accommodation within a certain area.

It was highlighted that the private rented sector accounted for 22% of homes in Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole compared to a national average of 19% of homes. In some areas up to 62% of homes were in the Private Rented Sector.

It was explained that high density, high population areas with high levels of private rented sector accommodation often suffered from a lack of community cohesion, tenants with challenging and chaotic lifestyles and high levels of anti-social behavior and crime.

It was recommended that Cabinet approve a 12-week consultation on the introduction of Discretionary Licensing due to the significance of this issue and the need to facilitate a greater impact than could be achieved through small-scale interventions and strategies.

The consultation process would include the development of a business case and options appraisals, that would outline the rationale for Discretionary Licensing. Residents, tenants, landlords, managing agents and members of

the community who live or operate businesses or services in the area would be consulted.

The consultation would cost £69,500. This cost would be recovered in Licensing fees if the scheme was agreed. If the scheme was not agreed the consultation response would be used to develop service responses and strategies to tackle issues that arose from the consultations evidence base. The scheme would require approval from the Secretary of State.

It was highlighted that if implemented effectively Discretionary Licensing could ensure landlords were a fit and proper person; there was good and fair management of tenancy relations; landlords had support to participate in regeneration and to tackle antisocial behavior effectively; there were protections for vulnerable tenants; strategic knowledge for targeted inspections and actions was developed; support for landlords to improve the worst properties was available; the number of occupants would be limited to the properties size and the properties would be properly maintained.

A number of questions were raised and discussed by members of the Board at the meeting, including

- That Bournemouth Council had previously looked at Selective Licensing and it was concluded through seeing it in action that positive results hadn't been seen in other councils;
- That there was no exact figure for the cost of the scheme to landlords because Cabinet approval was necessary before further work on costs could be undertaken, however the Chartered Institute of Housing said the average cost is £500 over 5 years. This is the equivalent of £1.92 a week but there was also the potential for savings, for example draft proofing could reduce energy bills;
- The costs and benefits of the scheme would be considered in the consultation;
- That the National Landlords Association and other bodies were against Discretionary Licensing;
- Whether there was a risk that the problem of bad landlords would not be resolved;
- The financial implications of the scheme, particularly considering enforcement would not be funded through the license fee. It was explained that enforcement officers were in place through existing budgets and it was expected that the need for enforcement action would reduce due to the continuous regulation of licenses;
- That persistent issues had been identified around private sector renting across BCP and a high-level analysis around whether Discretionary Licensing could support dealing with some of those issues had been carried out. The next step would be for Cabinet to agree the public consultation. Following the consultation, a detailed options appraisal would take place;
- There was concern that there was no evidence or proof that the scheme had worked elsewhere, and the Private Sector Housing Enforcement Policy covered this without the additional expense of the licensing;

- That there was evidence from different councils that Discretionary Licensing worked due to continuous regulation and the ability to target specific areas. It was also explained that having a regulatory body can engage landlords and help residents;
- Whether the increase in standards could lead to an increase in rents;
- That landlords may leave the area if licensing is introduced;
- The risk of landlord fees being higher than anticipated and of costs being passed on to tenants;
- Whether Discretionary Licensing would still require an enforcement route;
- The importance of signposting to the scheme;
- Whether or not residents were likely to benefit from the scheme;
- That an independent review by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government found Discretionary Licensing did not cause displacement of residents or landlords to move out of the area;
- That the Chartered Institute for Housing considered 50 cases of Selective Licensing across the country and said the scheme was not a quick win but many of the schemes delivered significant benefits;
- That targeted enforcement was a considerable cost to the Council and the consultation was not perusing the case for Selective Licensing but was intended to consider options;
- Whether more evidence for Discretionary Licensing should be considered before the outlay for the consultation.

RESOLVED that:-

That prior to the consultation period associated with Discretionary Licensing further information on the success of targeted enforcement be considered by Cabinet to determine whether Discretionary Licensing is necessary.

Vote: 6/5

56. Scrutiny of Transport Related Cabinet Reports

BCP Council Strategic Car Parking Review

The Portfolio Holder for Strategic Planning presented a report, a copy of which has been circulated and appears as Appendix 'E' of these minutes in the Minute Book.

The report informed the Board that parking in the BCP area had previously been managed by four councils. The report proposed a BCP Council Strategic Review in order to form a new single strategy for the provision, operation, pricing and enforcement of parking across the highway network and car parks in the area.

The plan would be linked to the BCP Council Parking Policy and the Local Plan. There would be three stages to the review. These would include the gathering of information and consultation, the assessment of data and preparation of recommendations and finally the formation of the recommendations. It was anticipated that the recommendations would go through Council in October 2020.

A number of questions were raised and discussed by members of the Board at the meeting, including

- The possible benefit of introducing variable charging rates within a carpark;
- The importance of considering competitor carpark rates and the impact charges have on commercial activity;
- The benefit of considering charging principles outside of the BCP area;
- That stakeholders including businesses, trading associations, major employers and members of the public would be engaged;
- That the report would benefit from incorporating clear benefits to focus the discussion and facilitate clear feedback.
- The role of the proposed steering group in setting the direction of the consultation;
- That a member of the Overview and Scrutiny Board should be on the Steering Group;
- That Neighborhood Forums could be engaged by Councillors and through the communications programme;
- The importance of protecting income from carparks;
- The importance of considering the aim of the policy, for example whether the intention is to make money or support sustainable travel;
- Details regarding what the Council is permitted to charge;
- The importance of rationalizing car park spaces to ensure maximum benefit;
- That disabled people should be considered key stakeholders. That some councils do not charge for off-road disabled spaces;
- That differential rates depending on the type of vehicle should be considered, some authorities include a surcharge for cars with heavy emissions.

RESOLVED that:-

That the Steering Group that considers the BCP Council Strategic Car Parking Strategy include a member of the Overview and Scrutiny Board.

Vote: Unanimous

57. Scrutiny of Environment and Climate Change Related Cabinet Reports

Revised Policy and Practice for Unauthorized Encampments

The Portfolio Holder for Environment and Climate Change presented a report, a copy of which has been circulated and appears as Appendix 'F' of these minutes in the Minute Book.

The report informed the Board that there were variation between the existing policies and practices for unauthorized encampments across Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole.

The report recommended that a cross party working group was established to align the policies and procedures across the BCP Council area. The unified policy for unauthorized encampments would then return to Cabinet for further consideration.

A number of questions were raised and discussed by members of the Board at the meeting, including

- Potential reasons for the differing number of incursions between Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole, particularly why there were less incursions in Christchurch;

- The environmental impact and the cost of decontaminating and cleaning following incursions;
- The impact of height barriers and target hardening;
- The differing approaches to incursions by predecessor councils, particularly the provision of toilets and skips in Poole;
- Whether the approach would be to make incursions difficult or to provide facilities, this would be determined following an evidence gathering process;
- That the policy was urgent and important and whether some decisions could be made more quickly to meet the needs of gypsies and residents earlier;
- The large amount of work involved;
- The importance of providing training to ensure members of the Working Group had a broad knowledge and understanding of the issue;
- That the cost of the methods used by legacy councils should be considered when making a decision;
- The importance of considering whether an option is good value for money, manages public expectations and can be delivered effectively within budget;
- Whether or not a transit camp could make a difference and whether parliament should be lobbied to allow the police powers to direct to the Dorset site;
- Whether quarterly meetings with MP's would be beneficial in order to discuss items on the agenda;
- Whether pre-emptive injunctions should be considered first by the Working Group and the implications this had on other policies;
- Whether the number of Councillors on the Working Group should be reduced to allow a swifter response;

RESOLVED that:-

To suggest to Cabinet an amendment to the recommendation included within the report, as follows:

It is recommended that Cabinet establish a cross-party member working group, as outlined in para 27, to

- 1. expedite actions as a matter of urgency in anticipation of incursions for summer 2020,**
- 2. consider the alignment of policies and procedures across the council area and report back to Cabinet.**

Vote: 11/0 Abstention 1

The Chairman left the meeting. The Vice-Chairman stepped into the Chair.

Response to the Climate Change Emergency

The Portfolio Holder for Environment and Climate Change presented a report, a copy of which has been circulated and appears as Appendix 'G' of these minutes in the Minute Book.

The Portfolio Holder highlighted that the world was on course for a temperature rise of 3-4 degrees and that climate change should be at the heart of everything the council did. This was applicable to carbon reduction but also food security, transport equality, health and clean air.

The report outlined arrangements to help facilitate the development of a Climate Change Emergency Action Plan. The Plan would be considered by Council in December 2019. The report particularly highlighted the proposed governance structure and the launch of a behavioral change campaign. It included the introduction of a Zero-Carbon Emissions Support Officer.

A number of questions were raised and discussed by members of the Board at the meeting, including

- The cost of the additional staff member and where they would be located;
- The cost of additional resources;
- The potential for savings, for example through encouraging digital access instead of using paper;
- The importance of not over promising and under delivering, and the impact this could have on the Councils reputation;
- That having climate change and sustainability at the heart of everything the council did would lead to huge changes. It was therefore important to be clear and well-informed before agreeing to take it forward;
- Whether an additional member of staff was sufficient to deliver the change needed;
- That the Council should lead by example and focus on educating the workforce to be leading the way;
- That introducing a Citizens Assembly was well received by the public gallery and the timescales for its implementation. The draft Action Plan would be put to Council in December and could include the timescale;
- Whether a Green Credentials Report which examined the council's environmental impact should be produced;
- Whether the ecological emergency should also be considered and how to reduce the environmental impact of BCP as a whole;
- How the councils work on this would be communicated to residents, this could be included within the plan;
- Whether the key mission and objectives should underpin all the Councils policies and operations;
- That the cost implications in regard to the carbon footprint would be included in all impact assessments;

RESOLVED that:-

An additional recommendation is set out in the report under (a) iv that the Council produce an annual Green Credentials Report, which may be considered by Cabinet and Overview and Scrutiny to monitor the Council's performance against targets in this respect.

Vote: unanimous

58. Scrutiny of Finance Related Cabinet Reports

The Medium-Term Financial Plan Update Report

The Portfolio Holder for Finance presented a report, a copy of which has been circulated and appears as Appendix 'H' of these minutes in the Minute Book.

The report outlined the refresh of the Medium-Term Financial Plan (MTFP) and informed the Board of the progress made towards delivering a balanced budget for 2020/21.

The report included information on the financial risks faced by the Council, progress with the disaggregation of the 31 March Dorset County Council balance sheet and details of grants available from the government to support the potential cost to the Council following the decision for the UK to leave the European Union.

It was highlighted that the forecast funding gap for 2020/21 had reduced from 15,000,000 to 7,700,000. The main changes included an additional 3,000,000 in savings and efficiencies identified by service areas, the inclusion of the Councils share of extra funding from the Adult and Children's Social Care Grant, the deferred implementation of the Negative Revenue Support Grant and the recognition of additional spending pressures.

It was highlighted that no decision had been made on whether to increase Council Tax by 4% in 2020/21, as per the government strategy to fund social care. The increase in the MTFP remained at 2.99%.

The Board were informed that delivering the resources needed for the Capital Programme and the transformation agenda were key risks. Additionally, the Schools Forum and Council were required to deliver a balanced budget for the high needs block of the Dedicated Schools Grant. More information on this would be available following further consideration on 5 November.

A number of questions were raised and discussed by members of the Board at the meeting, including

- The importance of recognising that 3,000,000 of the reduced funding gap was from savings and efficiencies and the rest was from grants and a government decision;
- That government needed to be lobbied and work needed to continue to ensure support for the high needs block within the Dedicated Schools Grant;
- That the savings and efficiencies in service areas was mostly from efficiencies and the restructuring of the Council. There would also be an increase due to inflation but tax payers would not see an increase that is much higher than inflation;
- When the council would consider its assets and buildings surplus to requirement;
- Whether the Council would pay for Dorset County Council's debts. Disaggregation was covered in paragraph 18-21 of the report;
- That the settlement announcement was usually in December but due to turbulence in national government it could be later;
- The importance of having a sustainable budget and not relying on grants;

59. Forward Plan

Members agreed the Forward Plan at their meeting on 4 October 2019. Any additions from this meeting would be agreed by the Chairman and Vice-Chairman in advance of the November meeting.

60. Future Meeting Dates

It was highlighted to the Board that a meeting to consider 5G would take place on Monday 11th November 2019.

A date had not been confirmed for the next meeting that would consider Cabinet reports. It was explained that members would be consulted if there were various options for a future date.

The meeting ended at 2.47 pm

CHAIRMAN

BOURNEMOUTH, CHRISTCHURCH AND POOLE COUNCIL
OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD

Minutes of the Meeting held on 11 November 2019 at 2.00 pm

Present:-

Cllr P Broadhead – Chairman

Cllr M Haines – Vice-Chairman

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

Also in attendance: Cllr D Butler, Cllr J Edwards, Cllr P Hilliard, Cllr A Hadley, Cllr M Howell, Cllr Dr F Rice, Cllr V Slade and Cllr K Wilson

61. Apologies

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

62. 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 F Brooke
Cllr T Trent substituted for Cllr M Earl
Cllr M Andrews substituted for Cllr R Maidment
Cllr L Northover substituted for Cllr C Rigby

63. Declarations of Interests

There were no declarations of disclosable pecuniary interest or other interests.

64. Public Speaking

The Board was advised that two public statements had been submitted in relation to the agenda item on the Call for Evidence – 5G Connectivity. These were presented to the Board as follows:

Emma Johnson, local resident:

“I am a solicitor turned energy healer. I am deeply concerned about the potential impact of microwave radiation from untested 5G technology on all living things. Did you know 252 reputable EMF scientists from 43 nations presented a petition to the World Health Organisation? Did you know 5G is

uninsurable, classified as a pollutant and a high risk by Swiss Re insurance group? Did you know 5G will have a massive carbon footprint? There has been no public consultation and no consent obtained to this worldwide experiment. I trust BCP Council will join Glastonbury, Frome, Totnes, Kingsbridge, Shepton Mallet and Wellington in applying the Precautionary Principle now.”

Mike Forte, local resident:

"If you cannot answer these two questions positively I suggest that the only option is to apply the precautionary principle and call a moratorium on the BCP 5G rollout. Do I sufficiently understand the components that fall under the umbrella marketing term '5G' and what each of those elements offers over and above currently available technology? And secondly, in the absence, globally and locally, of an independent Environmental Impact Assessment: Am I satisfied that this new technology is safe to roll out in BCP where I am tasked with the guardianship of the best interests of citizens and their surroundings?"

65. Call for Evidence - 5G Connectivity

The O&S Board considered a report, a copy of which had been circulated and which appears as Appendix 'A' to these Minutes in the Minute Book.

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting. He gave a summary of the methodology and timetable adopted by the O&S Board in its call for evidence in relation to 5G connectivity during September and October 2019.

He outlined the key lines of inquiry which had encouraged respondents to focus on the perceived benefits and concerns around implementing 5G. As well as inviting written evidence, the Board had listened to verbal submissions from interested parties at its meeting on 23 September. He reported that 220 written submissions had been received by the closing date of 7 October, and he thanked all those who had taken part. All councillors had been able to view the responses received. The purpose of today's meeting was to consider these responses and the officer report relating to 5G and determine the next steps required, as set out in the options at paragraph 8 of the covering report.

The Board viewed a television report on 5G which had featured in a recent episode of Click, the BBC News Channel's technology programme. The report had been brought to the Chairman's attention by officers and provided a useful summary of some of the issues the Board was considering. Although opinions were expressed in the programme, the Chairman made it clear that the Board would be considering the agenda item on the basis of the information received in the call for evidence and the officer report.

(Note: The Board took a vote on whether to show the television report, which was supported by 12 votes in favour, 2 votes against. Cllr G Farquhar asked to be recorded as voting against.)

The Overview and Scrutiny Specialist explained how the summary of verbal and written responses had been presented in Appendix 1 of the report. A list of the main issues and comments raised by all speakers at the meeting on 23 September was provided. Views submitted in the written responses had been grouped into themes, based on three or more similar views expressed, with the numbers of respondents per theme indicated. Overall, a wide variety of views had been expressed with no clear conclusion. Appendix 2 provided some background and information in relation to 5G which had been prepared by officers to assist the Board in its considerations.

The Board considered and commented on themes which were set out in Appendix 1. At each stage officers were asked for their professional input and provided additional information in response to questions.

General comments and advisory views:

The Sector Growth Manager and the Smart Place/Urban Mobility/Major Bids Manager outlined the main benefits of 5G technology and its potential to transform services, including transport systems, health and social care and manufacturing. It was noted that commercial operators were already planning to roll out 5G in the local area. 5G also formed part of the Council's digital pilot in the Lansdowne area, funded through Dorset Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP).

Officers confirmed that the Council was working closely with mobile operators to address existing coverage blackspots. It was explained that 5G provided new outcomes using the same technology as 3G/ 4G. The installation of additional antenna meant less energy was required for users. An example was given where 5G technology enabled the emergency services to be better prepared to respond to incidents, with potentially life-saving consequences. The latest Government communication to local authorities on 5G dated November 2019 was noted, including the role of local planning authorities as set out in Chapter 10 of the National Planning Policy Framework (to be discussed further below).

Summary of comments from Board members:

- There were obvious benefits to the economy and the wider community in having more connectivity - with or without 5G.
- The main concerns about 5G were around its safety and provenance, and whether this could be better evidenced and understood.
- There were opportunities to learn from other areas testing 5G prior to its implementation (it was noted that further details of the DCMS test bed programme was included in Appendix 2)

- As much of the 5G deployment was outside the Council's remit, the O&S Board should focus on those aspects which the Council could control or influence.

General concerns:

Officers confirmed that there was no cost to the Council in the commercial deployment of 5G. The Council's digital pilot at the Lansdowne pilot was LEP funded. It aimed to add social and economic value to the BCP Council area and beyond. There had not yet been detailed analysis of the impact on Council partners / suppliers. It was confirmed that a full economic analysis of 5G would be undertaken over the next six to nine months. Security issues were a focus of one of the workstreams. There was also an opportunity to raise issues through the Dorset Cyber Alliance if required.

Summary of comments from Board members:

- There were potential costs in not implementing 5G and these should also be taken into account.
- The desire to bring the local economy up to speed should not outweigh the need to give due consideration to public concerns.
- Connectivity would not resolve every issue in the local economy.
- National policy appeared to override local concerns and made a potential moratorium subject to challenge and the award of costs.
- Had the public been consulted about being included in a test bed area? It was noted that there were opportunities for the public to engage in the democratic process through O&S and Cabinet, including the report on the Lansdowne digital pilot.
- It had not yet been established whether 5G technology alone might cause an increased security risk, or whether the risk might be caused by the increase in data resulting from 5G's capabilities.

Environmental and ecological concerns:

The Development Management Team Leader outlined the role of the Council as the local planning authority (LPA) in dealing with planning related issues around 5G, as set out in Chapter 10 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) on 'Supporting High Quality Communications'.

The tone of the NPPF was clear that LPAs should support the expansion of electronic communications networks, with certain provisos – keeping the ratio to a minimum while taking into account operator requirements, using existing masts or buildings, and not imposing blanket bans or restrictions. Issuing a moratorium would therefore be contrary to the NPPF.

Paragraph 115 set out the requirements for applicants to provide 'necessary evidence' to justify proposals, including the outcome of consultation and a statement which self-certified compliance with international exposure guidelines. Paragraph 116 stated that LPAs must determine applications on planning grounds only. These grounds related to the siting and appearance of equipment. They did not include need, commercial competition, or health grounds. Proposals could be in the form

of full planning applications, permitted development requiring prior approval, or permitted development requiring notification only. The Government was currently consulting on expanding permitted development rights which if implemented would result in fewer proposals requiring prior approval or planning permission.

Any local planning policies in relation to 5G should align with the NPPF. It was noted that a new BCP Local Plan was being developed.

Summary of comments from Board members:

- The NPPF appeared to limit the ability of local residents with genuine concerns to influence the planning process. It was explained that full or prior approval applications were still subject to the usual public notification period and due democratic procedures. However, there would be less scope for this if the Government decided to relax permitted development.
- Whether there was evidence that the high frequencies for 5G posed any greater health risk than previous technologies. Public Health England's advice on 5G, as set out in Appendix 2 of the report, indicated that while there may be a small increase in overall exposure to radio waves through 5G, the overall exposure would remain low in accordance with the International Commission on Non-Ionising Radiation Protection's (ICNIRP) exposure guidelines. There should therefore be no cause for concern.
- A member commented on a previous planning application in another authority where the fear of risk to public health was used successfully as a reason for refusal. Officers agreed to find out more about this case.
- Although minimum distances could not be imposed a member asked whether consideration could be given to the proximity of antenna to schools and nurseries. It was explained that the indications were that being closer to an antenna actually took less energy. It was an area which required further research.
- A member was concerned at the environmental impact of potential tree removal to facilitate 5G deployment, particularly in light of the Council's declaration of a climate emergency.

As an outcome of this discussion the Board agreed that there was an opportunity to explore further the public's involvement in the planning process.

RESOLVED that Cabinet be asked to consider equitable ways to involve the public more in the consultation around the planning implications of the implementation of 5G technology, particularly with regard to the siting of masts.

Voting: For – 13, Against – 0, Abstentions – 1

Health concerns:

The Director of Public Health, Dorset and BCP Councils, explained how Public Health England (PHE) was dealing with health matters relating to 5G on a national level. PHE continued to monitor the evidence and update its advice as further information became available. Updated guidelines from ICNIRP were due to be published in Autumn 2019. The Director outlined his role and area of expertise in public health matters. He explained that the work undertaken in this particular field was complex and extensive, and that PHE was reliant on the World Health Organisation and ICNIRP for its advice on health matters.

The Director reported that PHE's Centre for Radiation, Chemical and Environmental Hazards (CRCE) had agreed to consider any significant scientific information submitted in the 5G call for evidence that may not have been previously considered by earlier reviews. This was currently being sifted and it was noted that some of the submissions were opinion based.

Summary of comments from Board members:

- A member queried whether the increased demand for 5G technology would result in a stronger signal being required. The Board was referred to ICNIRP guidelines which had taken into account the cumulative effect of the density of devices. The advice of PHE was reiterated.
- It was noted that PHE stated that it was the industry's responsibility to ensure overall exposure remains within ICNIRP guidelines. More information was required on how this was regulated and monitored.
- Some of the wording in the PHE advice was questioned as being too inconclusive to allay concerns. It was explained that PHE advice was usually precautionary in nature. PHE was reluctant to give definitive statements as it was continually monitoring and updating advice as more findings emerged. The ICNIRP guidelines were based on years of detailed research and exposure levels applied up to 300GHz. This was well in excess of the maximum levels (20 – 30 GHz) expected from 5G technology.
- The Director confirmed that subject to exposure levels remaining well within the ICNIRP guidelines he had not seen anything that would deem 5G to be a threat to public health. He would continue to work with the Council and PHE to monitor deployments and would keep the Council informed of any updates as and when they became available.
- Members talked about the complexities around establishing safe exposure levels, knowing exactly who and what was contributing, and understanding the difference between ionising and non-ionising radiation. The Director explained how safe exposure levels were assessed. He reiterated the point that 5G emitted non ionising radiation, meaning that it was unlikely to lead to carcinogenic cell damage.

In considering outcomes from this discussion the Board agreed that it would be helpful to formalise the arrangements for evidence collated in the 5G call for evidence to be passed to PHE and a mechanism for feedback to be agreed. The Board also felt that there was an opportunity for the Council to have direct involvement in the monitoring of exposure levels in respect of the digital pilot initiative at the Lansdowne.

RESOLVED:

- **That the Board agrees that all information submitted in its call for evidence in relation to 5G connectivity be passed to Public Health England to consider for inclusion in future reviews.**
- **That a framework be established for feedback to be provided to the Council in relation to the call for evidence information passed to Public Health England.**
- **That if Cabinet is minded to approve the deployment by the Council of 5G connectivity as part of the Lansdowne Digital Pilot continuous monitoring takes place to ensure that the levels of radio wave emissions fall within the internationally recognised limits, and the findings be reported back to the Overview and Scrutiny Board.**

Voting – Unanimous

The Chairman agreed on behalf of the Board to request through Cabinet that the Council contacts other relevant local authorities with regard to their work around 5G technology, including those local authorities who have agreed to be Government funded test bed areas and those who have declared a moratorium.

The Chairman provided a sum up of the proceedings before concluding the meeting. He hoped that the 5G call for evidence had been a useful exercise for all involved. It had provided an opportunity to explore some of the key issues at a deeper level and make recommendations to Cabinet as appropriate at this stage. The Cabinet would be requested to provide feedback on these recommendations to the O&S Board. The O&S Board may wish to continue its investigations into this work in the future.

The meeting ended at 4.35 pm

CHAIRMAN

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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



Centre for Public Scrutiny – Budget Scrutiny Briefing for BCP Council

Background

1. BCP Overview and Scrutiny Board is preparing to engage in the Council's budget and medium-term financial strategy to provide effective, objective and analytical challenge of Cabinet's proposals. The Council's budget setting and MTFP update is a crucial part of the Council's corporate planning and it is essential that it receives the additional benefit of scrutiny. Scrutiny itself needs to be structured and systematic in its approach to ensure that it concentrates on the key priorities, challenges, opportunities and risks. O&S Board will therefore need distil from the available evidence and financial information presented, potential areas of high impact, high value and risk which it can then choose to closely examine and test.
2. O&S Board members were invited to a development workshop on 4th December delivered by the Centre for Public Scrutiny on budget scrutiny and received a briefing on the MTFP and draft Budget from the Service Director (Finance) and Sec 151 Officer and Chief Executive.
3. This paper is provided as an aide-memoire for Members of the O&S Board and is based on the content of the development workshop.

Recommended approach from Centre for Public Scrutiny

4. This is the first year of the new council and its first budget setting process after its formation. Scrutiny will need to play an active role in the journey, providing objective challenge and examination of the MTFP and Annual Budget. The value of scrutiny will be to focus on strategic aims, intentions and priorities of the Council's plan and the use of financial resources which supports it.
5. Scrutiny will recognise that there is little time left in the current year to deliver the level of scrutiny it may consider appropriate and productive. National advice suggests that scrutiny needs to be engaged early in the planning and drafting stages and become closely aligned to the process. Guidance also suggests that

the Board is provided with early and essential information to provide structured and beneficial scrutiny of budget priorities, risks, challenges, opportunities, underlying assumptions, future planning and forecasting.

6. Accomplished successfully, scrutiny should be valued as a key part of the finance planning and delivery process. It should aim to be a positive, supportive experience for the Executive and a constructive, value-adding service to the Council and community. Transparent and rigorous scrutiny also provides an important level of assurance to local taxpayers and community.
7. It is important that scrutiny spends its time exploring the narrative that underlines to MTFP/Budget, and to explore the trends, challenges and options that are being considered in the budget.
8. Suggested areas of strategic focus for the Scrutiny Board are:
 - Test the suitability of the budget - Is it realistic and affordable? What are the headline implications and changes planned?
 - How well does it support the aims of the council plan?
 - Test the assumptions upon which it is based – economic such as inflation, interest rates, pay awards, income from its various sources and associated risks and changes in its operating environment.
 - Test its effect and impact – what are the effects on communities, economy, environment etc?
 - Test its acceptability – does it meet the values of the council and expectations of communities?
 - Test its deliverability – is it realistic? Is it over optimistic? Does it lack necessary ambition? What are the risks and challenges in its delivery?
 - Test savings and transformation plans – have gaps been identified? What are the plans to fill gaps? What are the intensions or outcomes expected from transformation? How achievable are they and are there realistic plans in place to implement any necessary change? Are savings targets realistic?
 - Test future planning – consider how the world is changing and how social, environmental, technological, legal and political issues may cause new or different demands on council resources – how well is the future understood and the Council prepared
 - Test the capital programme and its fit with the corporate aims of the council. Does investment in infrastructure, community assets, economic development, environment and community well-being match council and community priorities

9. There is a significant challenge for the O&S Board to make a useful contribution in the current cycle, given the remaining timescale. But there is also a useful learning and shaping opportunity which may inform the Board how it may wish to structure and focus its scrutiny capacity in future cycles.

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