

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

Minutes of the Meeting held on 24 August 2020 at 2.00 pm

Present:-

Cllr P Broadhead – Chairman

Cllr M Haines – Vice-Chairman

Present: Cllr M Anderson, Cllr S Bartlett, Cllr M F Brooke, Cllr M Earl,  
Cllr G Farquhar, Cllr L Fear, Cllr M Greene, Cllr N Greene,  
Cllr D Mellor, Cllr P Miles, Cllr T Trent, Cllr L Northover (In place of  
Cllr C Rigby) and Cllr K Rampton (In place of Cllr M Iyengar)

25. Apologies

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Iyengar and Rigby.

26. Substitute Members

Councillor Rampton attended the meeting as substitute for Councillor Iyengar. Councillor Northover attended the meeting as substitute for Councillor Rigby.

27. Declarations of Interests

Councillor Brooke declared an interest in Agenda Item 7 (Emergency Active Travel Plan Programme) as a family member resided in Tatnum Road. Councillor Northover declared an interest in Agenda Item 7 as she resided close to the Cleveland Road bridge proposal. Councillor Miles declared an interest in Agenda Item 7 as a family member resided in Oakdale. Councillor Hadley (Portfolio Holder) declared an interest in Agenda Item 7 as he resided in the area of the Tatnum Road proposal.

28. Confirmation of Minutes

For clarification of the declarations made and recorded in the minutes of the meeting held at 6pm on 10 July 2020 it was noted that Councillor M Greene declared a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest in agenda item 8, Scrutiny of Transport and Infrastructure Related Cabinet Reports, Traffic Regulation Orders – Advertisement of Traffic Regulation Orders for the Lansdowne Programme, as he and his spouse have an interest in a property in the area.

It was also noted that at the same meeting, Councillor N Greene declared a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest in agenda item 8, Scrutiny of Transport and Infrastructure Related Cabinet Reports, Traffic Regulation Orders –

Advertisement of Traffic Regulation Orders for the Lansdowne Programme, as she and her spouse have an interest in a property in the area.

Subject to the above the minutes of the meeting held on 20 July 2020 were approved as a correct record.

29. Action Sheet

The Board noted the Action Sheet circulated with the agenda.

30. Public Speaking

The Board noted that 35 Public Statements and one Petition had been received in respect of Agenda Item 7 (Emergency Active Travel Plan Programme) and that details had been circulated to the Board in a supplement to the agenda and were available on the Council's public website.

31. Chairman's Update

The Chairman welcomed the Board's continuing approach to examining a range of forward looking issues relating to recovery in the post Covid19 period which in the current meeting focussed on review of Transport and Infrastructure.

The Chairman informed the Board that Item 8 on the agenda would be taken ahead of Item 7.

32. Scrutiny of Transport and Infrastructure related Cabinet Reports

The Board noted the significant number of public statements submitted in respect of this item. The Chairman informed the Board that he had agreed to a number of requests to read the statements at the meeting although only one speaker was now able to join the meeting. The Board accordingly heard the statement from Mr. J Challinor presented in his capacity as Chair of the Parkstone Bay Association. All the submitted statements had been made available to the Board ahead of the meeting.

The Portfolio Holder, Councillor Hadley, presented the report for scrutiny by the Board prior to its consideration by Cabinet on 9 September 2020. He described the context in which progress had been made under tranche 1 of the Emergency Active Travel Fund Programme and referred to a schedule of schemes in tranche 2. He explained that the aim of the programme was to introduce, at pace, and in response to the pandemic, temporary and experimental active travel measures which also had the potential to become permanent subject to successful trials.

The Board recognised the beneficial work already undertaken as the BCP Council responded to changing travel patterns and the Board recorded its appreciation of the work already undertaken by Council Officers within the Growth and Infrastructure teams particularly in respect of the success that had been achieved in taking full advantage, within very short timescales, of funding available from Central Government.

Comments from the Overview and Scrutiny Board focussed upon the nature of the Central Government Programme and the view of the Board was that communications about the programme, and particularly about the initial temporary nature of specific schemes, could have been improved.

Members were of the view that local ward councillors should have been consulted earlier on in the process of identifying specific local elements of the programme. This would have created the capacity for ward members to consult openly with local residents; to take a balanced approach within the community and to gather information from residents and from interested groups.

Board members highlighted examples where there had been lack of consultation with local services, such as schools and with local organisations that would have been affected, which had led to insufficient assessment of individual schemes in terms of their impact on particular localities. Failure to communicate in a manner that was accessible to local people was also considered to have contributed to the receipt of considerable negative feedback.

Members were also concerned that information they had received had been provided to them on a privileged basis which they were unable to release publicly. This was considered to be despite the fact that there was time available within the overall programme timetable for a much wider and comprehensive consultation. Members therefore described how they looked forward to increased levels of information going forward supported by improved communications with the public and more open dialogue with ward members. It was considered that this could facilitate achievement of higher quality schemes within the spirit of the overall programme.

The Portfolio Holder responded to the views and concerns of the Overview and Scrutiny Board explaining that the intention of the Department of Transport had been that consultation with the public should have been at a later date but he did underline his commitment to much wider consultation going forward into the second tranche of the programme.

It was

**RESOLVED**

**That the recommendation to Cabinet be that Cabinet**

**1. note the progress to date regarding the delivery of the Tranche 1 Emergency Active Travel Fund Programme and**

**2. subject to a successful application for Emergency Active Travel Fund Tranche 2 approves the delegation of decision making regarding the progression of the indicative Tranche 2 Emergency Active Travel Fund Programme to the Director of Growth & Infrastructure in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Transport and Infrastructure and following consultation between the Portfolio Holder and ward councillors and adjacent ward councillors at the earliest possible opportunity**

*Voting: For – 12; Against – 1; Abstain – 2.*

*Councillor Farquhar requested that his vote for the resolution be recorded in the Minutes.*

It was also

**RESOLVED that**

**The Overview and Scrutiny Board expresses its disappointment at the lack of engagement with ward councillors who were prevented from**

**onward consultation with their communities. It believes that this democratic deficit significantly increased the concern and confusion which inevitably followed among the public.**

*Voting: For – 9; Against – 4; Abstain – 2.*

*Councillor Farquhar requested that his vote against the resolution be recorded in the Minutes.*

33. Covid-19 Recovery - Transport and Infrastructure

Regional Development Manager of South Western Trains, Andrew Ardley, described the measures and processes being adopted across the rail network in response to the Coronavirus pandemic. He set out the enhanced regime of train and station cleaning being undertaken and outlined measures being taken to educate customers and to promote good practice. It was explained that the rail service was currently operating under the terms of an Emergency Measures Agreement prescribed by Central Government although the Agreement was expected to be reviewed in September 2020.

In practice this was all reported to be happening within the context of significant changes in travel patterns with considerable reduction in passenger numbers.

Initiatives being pursued going forward included exploration of new opportunities for flexible ticketing and improved facilities for customers in trains and at stations. Examples included improvements in toilets and other facilities on stations and better provision for cycles and storage and carriage of luggage.

There was a recognition of the benefits of working in partnership with BCP Council to identify and assess likely changes in future travel patterns and to develop an appropriate response. This could potentially encompass provision of facilities available in stations and a better understanding of the way in which passengers travel to the station for onward rail travel. There was agreement that the Council was very well placed to have a role in gathering customer and user information from the local public.

The following responses were provided in response to questions raised by members of the Overview and Scrutiny Board:

Assurances were provided that a wide range of flexible ticketing options were being examined and prepared for submission through to Central Government regulators.

The concerns of local people around visitors travelling on trains and arriving in the area without wearing face coverings had already been highlighted and the Board was assured that everything possible within the powers of the rail operators was being done to enforce compliance with regulations including the involvement of the Police and the Transport Police who were the only bodies authorised to take punitive enforcement action.

In relation to Pokesdown station, complex options for station development and improvement continued to be developed and discussions were ongoing.

The Chair of BH Active Travel, Jason Falconer, described his organisation's ongoing dialogue with BCP Council at Councillor and at Officer level and there was enthusiasm expressed for working with the Council on the provision of clear communication for the public on available alternative

travel options. A number of positive initiatives were in place across the BCP Council area including, for example, the 'Beryl Bikes' scheme and reducing vehicle use in areas such as town centres and in beach areas was expressed as a continuing priority.

The Board once again recognised the beneficial work already undertaken as the BCP Council responded to changing travel patterns and the Board recorded its appreciation of the work already undertaken by Council Officers within the Growth and Infrastructure teams particularly in respect of the success that had been achieved in taking full advantage, within very short timescales, of funding available from Central Government.

The Operations Director of GoSW Busses, David Lee-Kong, reported a similar slump in numbers of bus passengers and described the continuing impact and effect of Central Government's comments early in the pandemic which encouraged avoidance of public transport. Although this message was no longer being promoted, targeted messages were still required to counter-balance these early messages and to bring passengers back into the network.

Support provided by the Council and its Officers was welcomed and grants from Central Government had enabled the maintenance of, an albeit much reduced, service for local key workers. From September, however, it was hoped to be able to return to 100% of network mileage although with each vehicle running at 50% of capacity in order to maintain social distancing. Provision of the school bus service routes would also be fully introduced with extra capacity should it prove to be required.

The Managing Director of Yellow Busses, David Squire, described the impact upon Yellow Busses services and provided the Board with further detail about the risk assessment approach across the bus service sector and the improvements that had resulted from it. Once again, services were being increased from September with considerable effort being focussed on communicating with the public.

Against this background, the Board noted with concern the reported level of abuse directed against bus staff particularly on the subject of wearing of face coverings and the efforts being made to address this were noted.

The following responses were provided in response to questions raised by members of the Overview and Scrutiny Board:

It was confirmed that bus companies were continuing to look at alternative types of bus (electric busses for example) and that some trials were taking place, although not presently within the BCP Council area. Further development was likely to be dependent on return to a sound financial situation post pandemic and when there was, once again, financial capacity for development.

Assurances were provided about the measures being taken to provide a safe working environment for staff with current risk being identified and addressed. Individual employees were integral to the process as well as the close involvement of Trade Unions.

In response to questions about routes and fares it was explained that fares could not be increased during the pandemic period as the companies continued to operate under the Emergency Agreement. This was also regulated under national policy although some initiatives were being pursued. Examples included working with the Councils to obtain funding to help integrate bus routes into large new housing developments. Bus

companies also anticipated the need to respond to the changing patterns of passenger travel resulting from the changes generally to the economic and wider employment situation within the BCP area.

The Chairman of the Board thanked the representatives of the travel infrastructure companies for their helpful insights and informative presentations. The Board welcomed the positive approaches towards planning for recovery during the post Covis19 period.

The meeting ended at Time Not Specified

CHAIRMAN