

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

Minutes of the Meeting held on 01 February 2021 at 6.00 pm

Present:-

Cllr S Bartlett – Chairman

Cllr T O'Neill – Vice-Chairman

Present: Cllr L Allison, Cllr D Borthwick, Cllr M Cox, Cllr L Dedman,  
Cllr B Dion, Cllr M Earl, Cllr J Edwards, Cllr D Farr, Cllr L Fear,  
Cllr D Kelsey, Cllr C Rigby, Cllr V Slade and Cllr Dr F Rice (In place  
of Cllr M Howell)

Also in attendance: Councillor Mark Anderson  
Councillor Philip Broadhead  
Councillor Nigel Brooks

143. Apologies

Apologies were received from Cllr M Howell

144. Substitute Members

Cllr F Rice Substituted for Cllr M Howell

145. Declarations of Interests

There were no declarations of interest received.

146. Public Speaking

There were no public questions, statements or petitions.

147. Cabinet Member Report - Environment, Cleansing and Waste

The Chairman advised the Board that this was the second Cabinet Member report which was being considered by the Overview and Scrutiny Board. A copy of the report had been circulated to the Board members and a copy of which appears as Appendix 'A' to these minutes in the Minute Book. The Chairman advised the Board that the purpose of the item was to help generate ideas for the future and consider those issues which the Overview and Scrutiny Board would want to get involved in or consider further.

The Portfolio Holder for Environment, Cleansing and Waste outlined the key points from the Portfolio, the future projects which were coming forward and areas where the Overview and Scrutiny Board may become involved and add value. The Portfolio Holder also provided a response to the questions which had been submitted by other Councillors in advance of the meeting a copy of the questions and responses had been circulated to the

Board members and a copy of which appears as Appendix 'B' to these minutes in the Minute Book. A number of issues were raised in the subsequent discussion including:

- The provision of bins and whether there was an intention to increase or reduce the number of bins and what information did the Council have on the numbers, types and locations of bins. It was noted that a full review of the provision of bins was needed. Whilst the Council was broadly aware of the location of bins because there was a cleansing schedule there were over 3200 bins across the conurbation. In some areas there may be a need to remove bins and declutter the area but in others there may be a need to increase the number of bins but that this would need to be part of a significant piece of work.
- Whether street cleansing was taking place at weekends and whether there was a specific schedule in place which covered the minor roads. It was noted that the street cleansing schedule was monitored closely and took into factors such as storms and whether impacts. The teams worked at different times throughout the day to attempt to mitigate various impacting factors such as parked cars. Where possible the team would try to get parked cars removed. Teams also coordinated to try to undertake other works during the same time, such as line painting. There were schedules in place for Bournemouth and Poole but Christchurch didn't previously have a schedule and these were being reviewed. A Councillor asked about tying the street cleansing programme in with rubbish collection but it was explained that both areas operated very differently, the rubbish collection by necessity had to cover a large number of bins and was done on a repetitive basis but street cleansing had to react to a number of different factors at different times of year and different areas would have different requirements depending on the environment. In response to a suggestion regarding having bin crews monitoring areas for street cleansing the Board was advised that this was a possibility but would be difficult due to the speed of bin collections and difficult for the person in the cab as they were responsible for health and safety.
- In response to an enquiry the Portfolio Holder advised that he would check and confirm the dates for the all member briefing sessions he was scheduling for a number of areas within his portfolio.
- In response to one of the questions previously submitted the Portfolio Holder was able to confirm that temporary toilets would be put in place at the beach around the East Cliff for the summer season.
- **In response to a question regarding the large areas of the seafront set aside for storage and what was being done with these as they seemed to increase in size. The Portfolio Holder advised that he was meeting with the Director of Destination and Culture Chair and would raise this issue and provide a response. On the same issue a Councillor asked if work could be undertaken to make the storage compounds look more attractive. The Portfolio Holder agreed to also feedback on this**
- In response to a question regarding the increase in demand for cardboard products the Board was advised that anything would have to go through the existing contracts.

- The Portfolio Holder explained to the Board about the different types of surveys which were undertaken to measure various aspects of highway conditions, the different maintenance process and inspection processes over various different types of roads. The Portfolio Holder also outlined the differing options for resurfacing roads. In response to an enquiry by a Board member it was explained that maintenance on dropped kerbs would be included with this Portfolio but the installation was a matter for the Transport Portfolio, although it was believed that there was currently a long waiting list.
- In response to an enquiry about sewage getting into the sea and to waterways the Board was advised that this was not a regulatory task for the council and it therefore could not enforce issues from sewage works. However under planning rules the Council could ensure that more permeable surfaces were introduced which should help reduce the amount of waste water. The Portfolio Holder had written to all local MPs on this issue to urge them to support the inland waterways bill which was being introduced. This was a problem for Poole Bay, Christchurch Harbour and also the River Stour. Wessex Water had storm drains which fed into the sea. The AI in Poole Harbour could be useful in the long term in providing a live feed which would show a spike in E.coli and indicate where it came from. This was however probably approximately 18 months away. The Portfolio Holder thanked Councillor Hadley and Councillor Miles for raising these issues and advised that this was something he was very much pushing on at present. A Councillor commented on the previous Flood Committee held in Bournemouth and that this was a useful forum for raising these particular types of issues as it also included external partners.
- In response to a question regarding vehicle traffic using Poole Park during rush hour the Portfolio Holder advised that he was happy to take on Board the opinion of the local ward Councillor who were happy with the situation and he supported their decision.
- A Board member enquired about increasing the number of grass meadow patches and the Portfolio Holder advised that this would form part of a biodiversity paper which will be coming forward in the next few months.
- The Portfolio Holder advised that the team was looking into issues concerning surface water flooding in low lying suburban areas, particular Creekmoor.
- In response to an enquiry about the use of unrecyclable plastic waste in resurfacing roads and concerns about the effect of this, particularly on devaluing plastic and discouraging the use of recyclable plastics but more importantly introducing a new source of microplastics. The Portfolio Holder advised that these were being used in the manufacture of a road surface and were products which were otherwise unrecyclable.
- A Councillor commented that fly tipping had increased since tips closed at the beginning of the pandemic and it didn't appear to have reduced. Over 100 bags of waste had been dumped in Queens Park. It was noted that planning was underway on this issue for the summer and a fly tipping policy was being set up. Officers were also working through some fairly detailed plans to deal with the expected influx of tourists from easter onwards.

- In relation to the provision of Suitable Alternative Natural Green Space and the requirement to provide 15,000 homes a Councillor asked if there was an option for part of Queens Park to be rewilded. The Portfolio Holder advised that the deputy Leader was meeting on this tomorrow but that he was not in favour of this option as income from golf helped to fund the park.
- A Councillor commented that they were extremely worried about the provision of neighbourhood play parks when they would only be funded through the Community Infrastructure Levy, particularly if this was limited. Older children were particularly poorly provided for in this regard. The Portfolio Holder advised that there was an aim to make parks revenue neutral and was trying to establish a parks foundation which could be used to fund the development of play parks. However, it was suggested that this was limited, and Councillors asked if there were other strategic means of dealing with informal play.

The Chairman asked the Portfolio Holder to give consideration to any areas that would be useful to put to O&S for any policy development, the Portfolio Holder initially suggested that O&S involvement would be welcome on a service plan on public toilets and he would take this away to consider any further issues. It was also suggested that an important current issue was ensuring the safety of refuse workers who were doing a fantastic job in sometimes challenging circumstances. The Chairman commented that it had been extremely interesting discussion and thanked the Portfolio Holder for his report and his responses to questions.

148. Scrutiny of High Streets Strategy Cabinet Report

The Chairman invited the Portfolio Holder for Regeneration, Economy and Strategic Planning to present the report, a copy of which had been circulated to each member and which appears as Appendix 'C' to these minutes in the Minute Book. The Portfolio Holder introduced the item and asked the Lead Member for BCP Retail Strategy to provide further updates to the Board on the content of the paper. The Lead Member advised the Board that there was a Workshop held on 19 January, which provided an opportunity to share ideas, observations and thoughts on how to revive a high street. The Board were informed of the number and percentage of empty units across the three main town centres within BCP. It was noted that it was a difficult situation being faced by traders, but it was hoped that when lockdown was over there would be opportunities for high streets to bounce back. The Lead Member suggested that a kick start was needed to get confidence back into town centres and a number of different ideas were shared with the Board to help ensure that void spaces were occupied, help high streets recover and give confidence to landlords. The Chairman commented that it was great that we were being proactive on this by taking innovative steps and ideas and opened the item up to further discussion from Board members which included the following issues:

- A Councillor commented that the link between transportation and high streets was important and that this needed to be included. In reference to the Workplace Parking Levy, introduced by Nottingham Council

which had generated £64m to invest into sustainable transport methods, the Councillor commented that it would be good to see BCP doing something similar with this piece of work. It was noted that the scheme had also attracted external funding. The Lead member noted that one of the issues with this was that the places most likely to survive the pandemic would be industrial estates and out of town retail parks. Furthermore, finance from car parking was baked into the forecast for BCP. However, there was a whole mix of things that the Council could be doing in this regard and this would come through in the retail strategy. The Portfolio Holder commented that making sure people could get around as part of an enjoyable experience. It was noted that of those living in Boscombe / Bournemouth town centres around half do not have access to a car and when seeking views of the area from young people a number said how easy it was to get around the local area using public transport.

- With reference to charity shops, a Councillor advised that the shop set up to contribute to the Mayor of Bournemouth's charities in Boscombe town centre was taking £1800 per week and was looking to increase trading further, and showed that some retail premises were still doing well, even in these difficult times. Charity shops formed a key part of economic recoveries and may have a key place in bringing about thriving high streets with a mix of provision.
- A Councillor queries the reason as to why the report from the Lead Member wasn't appended to the Cabinet report as this would provide greater detail for members of the public and for the Board to have that information available. The Portfolio Holder explained that they were currently working on a number of different areas related to the high street, a number of areas on future of high streets and that this represented a statement of intent for ongoing work. There would be more encompassing workstreams going forward. Member seminars would be a good way to tease out issues and form ideas.
- It was noted that there were very few mentions of important district centres within the BCP area. There was a recognition that districts were different to major town centres and that this needed to be acknowledged in terms of future high streets. The Portfolio Holder advised that there were 17 recognised different high streets across the BCP conurbation. The Board was advised that lots of these areas were doing well because they were different to the town centre high streets, there was lots of work going on with regards to these areas. The Portfolio Holder confirmed that they wanted to work with as many different partners as possible across the sector whether that was through BIDs or through other means, such as traders associations and other groups in some of the smaller high streets, e.g. Ashley Cross, Broadstone. The Portfolio Holder confirmed that they were working with them to develop.
- A Councillor commented on paragraph 6 of the report which outlined information from the Centre for Cities, who referred to the general urban area as Bournemouth' but which also included Poole and Christchurch and suggested it would be preferable if it could be referred to in terms of the three separate entities. The Portfolio Holder confirmed that this was the terminology used by the Centre for Cities,

which was why this was particular brought out in the report. However, he advised that he would raise this with them.

- The Portfolio Holder was asked whether all districts would be involved in the plan or if it would just be confined to Bournemouth, Poole and Christchurch High Streets. He confirmed that they would not be going into districts tell them what to do but they would want to provide support which could help and enable. Districts were particularly important with more people working from home they were choosing to stay more local. It was also noted that many retail units were being replaced by service units in district centres. Although a number of district centres were thriving, such as Southbourne, where a number of retailers had identified with the characteristics of its catchment area and the area was prepared to support a number of independent retailers. Other district centres had their own issues to address which were unique to them and it was felt that that there would need to be individual solutions for different districts.
- A Councillor advised that work had taken place on this previously for Christchurch High Street back in 2003 which had generated some good ideas and suggestions which were not implemented and she advised that she would pass this on to the Lead Member for information and consideration. The report mentioned the R3 group, who were working with Health and Wellbeing Board to support a Dementia Friendly Town in Christchurch. The Lead Member advised that he would certainly take this into consideration.
- A Councillor commented on the diversity of high streets, which also included other places such as nightclubs and other large empty units such as banks and asked what the potential plans were for these areas. The Portfolio Holder confirmed that he was keen to get some design briefs. It was noted that there were plans coming forward on larger empty premises which would only utilise a section of the property. Investment in bricks and mortar - town centres and retail – big institution suffering enormously. Bigger units represented some of the more challenging issues to deal with and developers would need to be creative when coming forward with plans. This was particularly the case with regards to rental values for these types of premises which had plummeted. A Councillor commented that they were looking forward to seeing this develop and pleased that there was interest in it.

Councillors commented that they were keen to ensure member engagement at ward level, in particular with regards to the local district centres. The Portfolio Holder advised that the Lead Member would be leading on a district advisory group and he gave the Board members a commitment to an ongoing piece of work, which would be a massive priority going forward with a number of different streams coming through. He confirmed that they would certainly be involving other Councillors on the journey.

Following further discussion particularly with regards to member engagement, it was:

**RECOMMENDED to Cabinet that the recommendation in the report be amended as follows:**

**Cabinet delegates authority to the Director of Development, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Economy and Strategic Planning, to work with partners and ward Councillors, to swiftly develop a strategy and action plan, enabling the delivery interventions that will support our high streets.**

Voting: Nem Con

The Chairman thanked the Portfolio Holder and Lead Member and looked forward to things coming forward on this issue.

149. Forward Plan

The Chairman asked Board members if they had any comments on the proposed Forward Plan for the Board. A Councillor commented on the Call-in submitted with regards to the Cabinet Member decision on the ETRO for Keyhole Bridge. The Chairman advised that he had not yet been formally notified of the decision as the call-in period had not yet expired but once this had taken place he confirmed that he would advise members when it would be considered by the Board.

It was confirmed that the requested items on Tree Management and Road maintenance would remain on the Board's Forward Plan.

**RESOLVED: That the Forward Plan for the Overview and Scrutiny Board be noted.**

150. Update from the Local Plan Working Group

The Chairman advised the Board that the Working Group had held an initial meeting and had agreed in principle that there was value in moving forward. The first formal meeting was set for 17 February. The Chairman outlined the key points from the scoping report, a copy of which had been circulated to the O&S Board members and a copy of which appears as Appendix D to these minutes in the Minute Book.

**RESOLVED: That the scope and purpose of the working group as outlined in the report be agreed.**

151. Future Meeting Dates 2020/21 and 21/22

The Board noted the dates for future meetings and agreed that the January meeting in 2022 should be held on Wednesday 5 January as the previously scheduled date, 3 January fell on a bank holiday.

The meeting ended at 8.54 pm

CHAIRMAN