

BOURNEMOUTH, CHRISTCHURCH AND POOLE COUNCIL
COUNCIL

Minutes of the Meeting held on 23 April 2024 at 7.00 pm

Present:-

Cllr L Dedman – Chairman

Cllr S Bull – Vice-Chairman

Present: Cllr C Adams, Cllr S Aitkenhead, Cllr H Allen, Cllr M Andrews, Cllr S Armstrong, Cllr S Bartlett, Cllr J Beesley, Cllr P Broadhead, Cllr D Brown, Cllr O Brown, Cllr R Burton, Cllr P Canavan, Cllr S Carr-Brown, Cllr B Castle, Cllr J Challinor, Cllr A Chapmanlaw, Cllr B Chick, Cllr J Clements, Cllr E Connolly, Cllr P Cooper, Cllr M Cox, Cllr B Dove, Cllr M Dower, Cllr M Earl, Cllr J Edwards, Cllr G Farquhar, Cllr D Farr, Cllr D A Flagg, Cllr M Gillett, Cllr C Goodall, Cllr A Hadley, Cllr J Hanna, Cllr E Harman, Cllr R Herrett, Cllr P Hilliard, Cllr B Hitchcock, Cllr M Howell, Cllr A Keddie, Cllr M Le Poidevin, Cllr S Mackrow, Cllr A Martin, Cllr D Martin, Cllr G Martin, Cllr J Martin, Cllr C Matthews, Cllr S McCormack, Cllr P Miles, Cllr S Moore, Cllr A-M Moriarty, Cllr B Nanovo, Cllr L Northover, Cllr M Phipps, Cllr Dr F Rice, Cllr V Ricketts, Cllr C Rigby, Cllr K Salmon, Cllr J Salmon, Cllr P Sidaway, Cllr P Slade, Cllr V Slade, Cllr M Tarling, Cllr T Trent, Cllr O Walters, Cllr C Weight and Cllr K Wilson

88. Apologies

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors A Filer, D d’Orton-Gibson, J Bagwell, J Butt, R Maidment, K Rampton, J Richardson and L Williams.

89. Declarations of Interests

Councillors H Allen and P Hilliard declared an interest in Minute No. 96 (Disposal of Land at Wessex Fields, Riverside Avenue) and left the room for the discussion and voting thereon.

Councillor S Moore declared an interest in Minute No. 97 (SEND Programme of Expansion – Canford Heath Infant and Junior Schools) and remained present for the discussion and voting thereon.

90. Confirmation of Minutes

The Minutes of the meeting held on 20 February 2024, reconvened on 27 February 2024 were confirmed as a correct record.

91. Announcements and Introductions from the Chairman

The Chairman updated Council on her activities since the last meeting. These included attendance at: -

- Ukrainian community sisterhood stories
- Welcoming of delegates to a conference on computing
- Youth parliament awards
- High Sheriff awards
- BCP International Womens Day event
- Opened of the Annual Surgical Conference
- Re-opening of Christchurch Town Hall
- Opened Growth Hub Expo
- Soroptomist STEM challenge awards
- Poole Hospital Covid time capsule service
- Welcoming Oddfellows to Bournemouth for conference (3rd year they have chosen Bournemouth)
- Funeral of Paul Rowsell

92. Public Issues

The public questions and statements set out in the minutes below are printed as per the wording used within the submissions made in accordance with the constitution.

Public Question from Philip Gattrell (Read out by the Chief Executive)

REGARDING THE ADMINISTRATION'S COMMITMENT TO SCRUTINY AND ACCOUNTABILITY: Two public statements at the Council's meeting on 20 February 2024 profile increasing complaint decisions by the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman against the Council and - contrary to Sections 5 and 5A of the cited "1989 Act" - internal failure to report those decisions to Members.

A public statement at the Audit and Governance meeting on 11 April 2024 underscores this concern by explanatory précis of the correct statutory obligations for incorporation in the Constitution.

Ombudsman decisions regarding maladministration and service failures include children's and adults' care, planning, the environment and Members' conduct. They reflect Council performance and are relevant to not only directly affected Members and committees but also every Councillor's awareness.

Ombudsman decisions currently average six monthly. Following the Monitoring Officer's obligatory notification of decisions to all Members, will the Leader ensure the Council's or Cabinet's actions including under Subsections S5(5) or S5A(9)?

Response by the Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Dymnic Places, Councillor Vikki Slade

I would like to thank Mr Gattrell for his question.

The Council's responses to LGSCO decisions are appropriately addressed in a number of ways and according to the Local Government and Housing Act 1989. This includes through the Audit and Governance committee, and I would refer Mr Gattrell in particular to the January meeting of this committee where the updated Assurance Review Framework was debated and approved by the Council.

The Monitoring Officer has reviewed this and is of the professional opinion that these do not trigger the statutory reporting requirements under the Local Government and Housing Act 1989.

Public Question from Philip Stanley Watts

In the light of the threat of flooding and implications of climate change.

Could the cabinet member tell me BCP councils response and need for proper flood defences.

Response by the Portfolio Holder for Climate Response, Environment and Energy, Councillor Andy Hadley

Thank you for your question.

The Councils response to climate mitigation was summarised in the annual climate report that came to Cabinet in March, this continues to be developed but it also needs individuals, companies and other organisations across the BCP area as elsewhere to recognise the issue and to take action.

Our Flooding and Coastal Erosion Risk Management Team has been developed over recent years and is held in high regard across the region, they are dedicated to bidding for funds and implementing measures to protect our communities and the current work on Hengistbury Head long groyne and the replacement of a number of wooden groynes on the seafront and the maintenance of drains in the cliff face are all part of that work.

Sea defences around the West Quay of Poole are also currently being designed along with a Hundred Year Plan for the entire Christchurch Bay.

We have just experienced the wettest and warmest March on record and with saturated ground a number of locations have flooded repeatedly. Several areas of cliff along the rural Dorset coast have fallen and we are fortunate that there is sustained investment and long-term thinking in creating plans for the entire sea and harbour frontage of BCP, and as you highlight proper flood defences where homes are at risk.

Sea level continues to rise and it seems that the modelling is being out paced by reality, we are also actively looking at the inland flood risks, both from river catchments and from extreme rainfall events and an Inland Surface Water Management Plan is also under development. We will need to work with the Environment Agency, with water companies, neighbouring local authorities and landowners to better hold water in the landscape and to mitigate the risks, we also need to maintain a focus on other aspects of climate change and mitigation

Public Question from Adam Osman

This council has declared an environmental emergency as of 5 years ago.

We will hit 1.5 degrees of warming. Millions of people will become refugees. There will be floods and food shortages in the UK. Our children will live through the greatest economic and social collapse ever.

20mph limits, an instant, affordable measure would be a start.

Councillor Dove, you are concern that speed isn't the cause of accidents, correct. But you know lower speed gives drivers time to react and reduces the severity of accidents when they occur, preventing an accident. Do you not support 20mph limits when you know this is?

A slow rollout of limits is proposed. How can we act slowly in an emergency? Is it money or resources? It is too late to be slow, there isn't enough time. Will BCP raise the barriers to implementing 20mph to the UK government and the public?

Response by the Portfolio Holder for Climate Response, Environment and Energy, Councillor Andy Hadley

Thank you for your question.

With apathy and inaction we will undoubtedly exceed the targets as set in the Paris Agreement of 1.5 degrees centigrade above preindustrial levels, and the economic and social collapse that you highlight will displace many people worldwide.

We need to pursue a range of measures to reduce the pressure and to mitigate the impact across all energy use, heating and cooling spaces, growing our food and how we travel. There are also impacts regarding biodiversity loss, freshwater scarcity and sea level rise.

I cannot answer for the knowledge or views of an opposition councillor but I agree that driver reaction times with lower speeds reduces the severity and likelihood of crashes, a huge body of evidence supports this.

The Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents states 'in built up resident areas RSPA believes that 20mph represents the best compromise between mobility and risk'. They also highlight that 20mph limits are not just a road safety measure, it is important also to consider as you highlighted they increase the opportunities for walking and cycling, they provide improvements in quality of life indicators such as health improvements, community cohesion and better air quality as well as the reductions in road crashes and casualties from lower vehicle speeds.

We declared a climate and ecological emergency in 2019 and we do need to act with urgency across a wide range of measures. Setting 20mph limits should help in supporting safer journeys including encouraging people to consider how they travel for some trips in the urban area. To ensure these measures are appropriate we have committed to working with communities and consulting on implementing these measures and we will take further funding opportunities as they arise.

This needs to sit alongside individuals choosing to better insulate their homes, turning down the thermostat, considering a low meat diet, reducing air travel and living lighter on the planet in order to mitigate the climate changes that are increasingly manifest.

Public Statement from Diana Butler

With the loss of half our BCP day centres - libraries could fill a vital gap in day service provision. Groups with specific needs could use facilities on 'library closed' days.

With the rise in social isolation, loneliness, anxiety and depression - libraries provide a safe meeting place for inclusion, friendship, support, education, skills.

Our libraries have experienced, caring staff who provide for all ages - including work experience for young people and sessions for parents and babies. "What's On" library activities include talks, crafts, games, events and children's sessions.

Libraries could generate income through room hire - as Hamworthy does.

The Day Opportunities Strategy and Library Strategy should be considered together - resources could be shared.

Libraries fill a social, educational & health void in our communities.

Vastly reducing staff & hours - will increase need & expense elsewhere.

Redundancies will affect lives. Staff & residents must be heard.

Public Statement from Joanne Keeling

The decision-making process regarding Wessex Fields is deeply troubling. Initially, the Asset Disposal Working Group advocated for an open sale, expressing concerns about securing best value for this vital employment site for BCP. However, a sudden shift occurred during the Overview and Scrutiny meeting, where Councillors voted to sell to UHD. Many of these Councillors were also members of the ADW Group, raising questions about the change in position. One cannot help but wonder what other influences swayed the councillors' decisions. It would seem logical for BCP to solicit bids, considering both development plans and financial considerations, to maximise benefits for the community. Particularly alarming are reports suggesting that the proposed purchaser may receive a substantial discount on the red book valuation, courtesy of the council's unusual contribution to further infrastructure. Despite assertions of openness and transparency from this administration, incidents like these cast doubt on their sincerity.

Public Statement from Daniel Parkin

During a Council meeting last year Cllr Mike Cox stated that the council will be moving to a cashless system amongst the kiosks and car parks to save the Council money. When questioned further by Cllr Joe Salmon, Cllr Cox responded that any wider equalities impact would always be considered. Cllr Salmon asked for the hard data on this and as far as I know, has not been made available.

Following my own FOI request, and a complaint to the ICO, the officer who responded could find no information of any meeting regarding this. I raised an appeal for a senior officer to review - again there was no trace

Please can the Council, or Mike Cox, publish this data and any minutes taken, to confirm any risks that would be a concern and the Ragg rating, along with the potential cost savings.

Public Statement from Elizabeth Glass (Read by Daniel Parkin)

The consultation on 20mph has been very poor. Many businesses on the A35 and local residents had not received letters or knew of the proposed scheme.

I understand that in the last 5 years there were 162 collisions on this stretch of the A35. Of these 25 were speed related, 3 classed severe. The speed had not been recorded. How can this be used as evidence to support the 20mph case?

In Bath a report one year after the introduction of the zones indicated that the rate of people killed or injured had gone up in 7 of the 13 zones, possibly due to the reduced speed zones giving a false sense of security. In Wales they are now U turning on 20mph.

Before committing substantial sums of taxpayer money, I urge the council to re-assess its position on this scheme and have a thorough consultation across the entire conurbation.

Public Statement from Nick Greenwood

The United Nations Flag flies over this Town Hall symbolising the direction of travel within.

Through Freedom of Information requests we discover the UN 2030 Agenda, has been followed by BCP since 2019, producing the 'BCP COUNCIL CORPORATE STRATEGY' (note the word Corporate).

This Strategy is full of specious, untested, impractical utopian ideas having no regard for cost/benefit analysis.

Ideologically driven and goals dependant on renewable energy currently without any empirical data.

The Strategy claims a 'Climate Emergency' being a trojan horse aligning itself to an authoritarian New World Order seemingly desired by too many BCP Councillors. 15 minute Cities, open prisons initially requiring us to seek Council permission to leave by car after 100 times per year. Blanket 20 mph polluting speed restrictions. Net Zero is a term best suited to our Bank Accounts once the Politicians have spent their way into this dystopian nightmare.

Public Statement from Patrick King

17 March 24

Secretary for transport :

Councils received strengthened guidance on 20 limits, reminding them to reserve for sensible and appropriate areas only such as outside schools with safety and local support at the heart of the decision.

Authorities expected to consider this guidance, could have implications for future funding.

2 Oct 23

We will remove annoyances that irritate drivers and get in their way, like making parking less problematic.

This Council report shows preference for all areas implementation of 20 limits.

and concerns of insufficient parking availability.

Why is Creekmoor Park and Ride not functioning?

Why propose closing Beach road carpark?

These contravene the latest guidance, rendering the report redundant, necessitating adjournment and procedural review.

20 April 24 Saturday

Welsh minister

"Poorly, inconsistently implemented with many roads unreasonably changed to 20 limits."

"Communities to own speed limit decisions rather than imposed upon them"

Public Statement from Siobhan Harrington, CEO, University Hospitals Dorset, NHS FT

This is a win-win decision. The land has unique value to NHS & partners.

Health-led campus leads to high-quality jobs, like research & education.

We need more homes, especially for the NHS key workers, who will walk to work.

UHD is an environmental custodian who can make this a net zero site.

This proposal is popular, common-sense use of the land. It's supported by neighbouring landowners.

We're local, with a long-term view. We have every interest in making this work.

Expert opinion has set the price, following the due process, so a fair deal for taxpayers.

We've developed a joint vision for the site, over many years. BCP are no longer leading on developing the site, UHD is best placed to progress this.

UHD's track record includes £24m Pathology Hub, £13m for electrical upgrade, Net-zero buildings. We are keen to further deliver, with partners, the vision for this site.

Public Statement from Rob Whiteman, Chairman, University Hospitals Dorset, NHS FT

We are keen to work in partnership for the benefit of all our residents. That means taking One Estate approach for best public value.

We've prepared a briefing for our stakeholders, on our intentions for Wessex Fields. As a public body we are putting this in the public domain.
https://www.uhd.nhs.uk/uploads/comms/uhd_-_wessex_fields_brief_to_bcp_apr_2nd_v1.pdf

We are very keen to meet and discuss this with any councillors and partners. This has been our first opportunity to address councillors. To help

explain why we are so keen to progress we also have this short video
<https://youtu.be/A21heSdLqqE>

Thank you

Public Statement from Diana Butler

Local road safety is the shared responsibility of Council, Police, contractors and the public.

We need more education & safety awareness for road & pavement users :-

Where & how to cross the road safely, vehicle stopping distances, driver blind spots, being visible to drivers. Cyclists using cycle lanes or cycle paths where provided and using a bell on shared pathways. Drivers watching for hazards and adhering to speed restrictions.

Mass 20mph roads will affect duration of journeys, 999 response times, reduced attention to the road ahead whilst checking the speedometer and reduce fuel efficiency by using lower gears.

The majority of drivers are law abiding. It is the reckless who create the most danger and they have no respect for speed restrictions.

"Dorset Police will not be able to supply additional resource to monitor and enforce" proposed 20mph limits but could surely catch reckless drivers and illegal scooting.

93. Cabinet 6 March 2024 - Minute No. 120 - Our People and Communities: 20mph Options Appraisal

The Portfolio Holder for Connected Communities presented the report on the Our People and Communities 20mph Options Appraisal and outlined the recommendations as set out on the agenda.

Due to a disturbance from members of the public the meeting was adjourned at 19:39 and reconvened at 19:50 to enable to public gallery to be cleared.

Following the recommencement of the meeting comprehensive discussion took place with the following aspects being raised: -

- Concern was expressed with regards to the lack of public consultation
- Council was advised that there was considerable public opinion against this
- The importance of a cohesive and collaborative approach was highlighted.

Councillor Philip Broadhead proposed an amendment to the recommendation which was seconded by Councillor Cameron Adams and sought to remove wording so the recommendation read as follows: -

- (a) that a dedicated budget is included in the Local Transport Plan (LTP) Capital programme for 2024/25 financial year to recommence delivery of 20mph speed limits on a neighbourhood basis with a focus on residential roads and this is continued into future years subject to the availability of capital funding.**

Council debated the amendment following which the proposed amendment fell with voting: 13:49 (4 abstentions).

Councillors Bobbie Dove and Duane Farr requested that their votes for the amendment be recorded.

Members then proceeded to debate the original recommendation as set out on the agenda where discussion focused around the need for consultation and of the limits being placed in specific residential areas particularly around schools and where residents are supportive of them.

A recorded vote was requested but was not supported by the required number of councillors, the request therefore fell.

RESOLVED that: -

- (a) a dedicated budget is included in the Local Transport Plan (LTP) Capital programme for 2024/25 financial year to recommence delivery of 20mph speed limits on a neighbourhood basis with a focus on residential roads and this is continued into future years subject to the availability of capital funding.**

Note – resolutions (b) and (c) were resolved matters by the Cabinet.

Voting: For:41, Against:12, Abstentions:14

Councillors Cameron Adams, John Beesley, Bobbie Dove and Duane Farr requested that their votes against the item be recorded.

94. Cabinet 6 March 2024 - Minute No. 121 - Our Place and Environment: LTP Capital Programme 2024/25

The Portfolio Holder for Climate Response, Environment and Energy, Councillor Andy Hadley presented the report on the LTP Capital Programme 2024/25 and outlined the recommendations as set out on the agenda.

RESOLVED that: -

- (a) Council approves the 2024/25 LTP Capital Programme as set out in Appendix A and delegates the delivery to the Director of Infrastructure in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Dynamic Places; and**
- (b) Council approves the indicative 2025/26 and 2026/27 Highways Maintenance Programmes as set out in Appendix B**

Voting: For:54, Against:4, Abstentions:8

95. Audit and Governance Committee 7 March 2024 - Minute No. 68 - Financial Regulations - Annual Evolution of the Financial Year 2024/25

The Chairman of the Audit and Governance Committee, Councillor Marcus Andrews, presented the report on the financial regulations and outlined the recommendations as set out on the agenda.

RESOLVED that that the Financial Regulations as shown in Appendix A (with the updated amendment to Paragraph 16 in Part G) be approved for adoption, with the operational 'go live' date being 24 April 2024.

Voting: Unanimous

96. Cabinet 10 April 2024 - Minute No. 132 - Disposal of Land at Wessex Fields, Riverside Avenue

The Portfolio Holder for Finance, Councillor Mike Cox, presented the report on the disposal of land at Wessex Fields and outlined the recommendations as set out on the agenda.

In addition to the report the Portfolio Holder drew members attention to the supplementary papers which had been published in relation to this item providing members with an additional confidential briefing note.

Comprehensive discussion took place on the item before Council moved to the vote.

RESOLVED that Council approved the disposal of the council owned land at Wessex Fields to the University Hospitals Dorset NHS Foundation Trust on such terms to be approved by the Director of Finance acting in his capacity as Corporate Property Officer, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Finance.

Voting: For:58, Against:6

Councillor Bobbie Dove requested her vote against the recommendation be recorded.

(Councillors Hazel Allen and Paul Hilliard declared an interest in this item and left the room for the discussion and voting thereon).

97. Cabinet 10 April 2024 - Minute No. 136 - SEND Programme of Expansion - Canford Heath Infant and Junior Schools

The Portfolio Holder for Children and Young People, Councillor Richard Burton, presented the report on the SEND programme of expansion and outlined the recommendations as set out on the agenda.

Council spoke in support of the recommendations set out on the agenda.

RESOLVED that the total project budget as contained in Appendix 1 (Exempt) be approved. This will enable the scheme to progress in line with the project programme set out in paragraph 18. The project is fully funded from the Council's high needs specialist provision capital grant allocation.

Voting: Unanimous

(Councillor Sandra Moore declared an interest in this item and remained present for the discussion and voting thereon).

98. Audit and Governance Committee 11 April 2024 - Minute No. 78 - Review of the Council's Constitution - Recommendations of the Constitution Review Working Group

The Chairman of the Audit and Governance Committee, Councillor Marcus Andrews, presented the report on the review of the councils constitution and outlined the recommendations as set out on the agenda.

RESOLVED that: -

- (a) in relation to Issue 1 (Budget and Policy Framework Approval Procedure Rules) the proposed amendment to insert the new Procedure Rules into Part 4E of the Constitution, as set out in Appendix 1 to this report, be approved;**
- (b) any necessary and consequential technical and formatting related updates and revisions to the Constitution be delegated to the Monitoring Officer.**

Voting: Unanimous

99. Consultation on the draft BCP Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Charging Schedule

The Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Dynamic Places, Councillor Vikki Slade presented the report on the consultation on the draft BCP Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Charging Schedule and outlined the recommendations as set out on the agenda.

RESOLVED that the proposed amendments to the Draft CIL Charging Schedule are approved for public consultation for a period of six weeks from April 2024.

Voting: Nem.Con (4 abstentions)

(Councillor Eleanor Connolly left the meeting at 22:15, before the vote was taken on this item)

100. Acceptance of the Household Support Fund 5

The Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Connected Communities, Councillor Millie Earl presented the report on the Acceptance of the Household Support Fund 5 and outlined the recommendations as set out on the agenda.

RESOLVED that Council accept the Household Support Fund 5 allocated to BCP Council by the Department for Work and Pension in line with the Council's Financial Regulations.

Voting: Unanimous

Councillors Joe and Kate Salmon declared pecuniary interests in this item and left the room for the discussion and voting thereon.

(Councillors Paul Hilliard, Andy Martin, David Martin and Michael Tarling left the meeting at 22:33)

101. Notices of Motion in accordance with Procedure Rule 10

The following motion was submitted in accordance with Procedure Rule 10 of the Meeting Procedure Rules and was moved by Councillor J Salmon and seconded by Councillor K Salmon: -

1. Council resolves to:

- a. acknowledge the importance of inclusivity and recognises the diverse financial circumstances of residents, including those who may be unbanked or underbanked.
- b. commit to ensuring that all policies and provisions are designed to be inclusive and considerate of the needs of all residents, regardless of their banking status.
- c. be aware of the significance of maintaining accessibility for all residents to council facilities, regardless of their financial situation, and express a commitment to finding solutions that do not disproportionately burden those without regular access to banking services.

2. Council:

- a. instructs the relevant officers to bring a report to the Portfolio Holder for Finance that reviews the decision and impact of the implementation of cashless-only provision at council facilities that covers:
 - The implications of the cashless-only policy on residents who are currently unbanked or underbanked
 - The reduction of income due to council service users and customers taking the business elsewhere
 - The consequences of encouraging cashless spending which can be more risky for those in financial difficulty
 - The future financial savings anticipated and those already realised from the move to cashless
- b. considers reinstating the acceptance of cash at council facilities if the review indicates that the cashless-only provision disproportionately impacts residents negatively relative to the envisioned savings.

Comprehensive discussion took place on the motion with Members supporting the principles of the motion, during which the following amendments were proposed to the motion: -

Councillor Patrick Canavan proposed an amendment in regard to 2a. proposing the deletion of the words 'the Portfolio Holder for Finance', replacing this with the words '*to the Cabinet*', and additionally to add to the end of the first bullet point in paragraph 2a '*and those who may require additional support*', so that the amended motion would read:-

1. Council resolves to:

- a) *acknowledge the importance of inclusivity and recognises the diverse financial circumstances of residents, including those who may be unbanked or underbanked.*
- b) *commit to ensuring that all policies and provisions are designed to be inclusive and considerate of the needs of all residents, regardless of their banking status.*
- c) *be aware of the significance of maintaining accessibility for all residents to council facilities, regardless of their financial situation, and express a commitment to finding solutions that do not disproportionately burden those without regular access to banking services.*

2. Council:

- a) *instructs the relevant officers to bring a report to ~~the Portfolio Holder for Finance~~ **the Cabinet** that reviews the decision and impact of the implementation of cashless-only provision at council facilities that covers:*
 - *The implications of the cashless-only policy on residents who are currently unbanked or underbanked **and those who may require additional support***
 - *The reduction of income due to council service users and customers taking the business elsewhere*
 - *The consequences of encouraging cashless spending which can be more risky for those in financial difficulty*
 - *The future financial savings anticipated and those already realised from the move to cashless*
- b) *considers reinstating the acceptance of cash at council facilities if the review indicates that the cashless-only provision disproportionately impacts residents negatively relative to the envisioned savings.*

The amendment was seconded by Councillor Peter Cooper.

The proposer and seconder of the Motion accepted the proposed amendments as set out which were subsequently accepted by the Council.

Councillor Millie Earl proposed a further amendment in relation to 1(b) adding additional wording as set out below so that 1(b) would read: -

1. (b) *commit to ensuring that all policies and provisions are designed to be inclusive and considerate of the needs of all residents, regardless of their banking status **by adopting unbanked and underbanked as local characteristics that must also be considered when developing equality impact assessments.***

The amendment was seconded by Councillor Mike Cox.

The proposer and seconder of the Motion accepted the proposed amendments as set out which were subsequently accepted by the Council.

Comprehensive discussion took place in support of the motion with members highlighting the importance of having different ways in which people are able to access and pay for services.

RESOLVED: -

1. Council resolves to:

- a) **acknowledge the importance of inclusivity and recognises the diverse financial circumstances of residents, including those who may be unbanked or underbanked.**
- b) **commit to ensuring that all policies and provisions are designed to be inclusive and considerate of the needs of all residents, regardless of their banking status by adopting unbanked and underbanked as local characteristics that must also be considered when developing equality impact assessments.**
- c) **be aware of the significance of maintaining accessibility for all residents to council facilities, regardless of their financial situation, and express a commitment to finding solutions that do not disproportionately burden those without regular access to banking services.**

2. Council:

- a) **instructs the relevant officers to bring a report to the Portfolio Holder for Finance the Cabinet that reviews the decision and impact of the implementation of cashless-only provision at council facilities that covers:**
 - **The implications of the cashless-only policy on residents who are currently unbanked or underbanked and those who may require additional support**
 - **The reduction of income due to council service users and customers taking the business elsewhere**
 - **The consequences of encouraging cashless spending which can be more risky for those in financial difficulty**
 - **The future financial savings anticipated and those already realised from the move to cashless**
- b) **considers reinstating the acceptance of cash at council facilities if the review indicates that the cashless-only provision disproportionately impacts residents negatively relative to the envisioned savings.**

Voting: Unanimous

102. Questions from Councillors

Question by Councillor Patrick Canavan

In relation to the voluntary redundancy exercise please outline:

- a) the total number of staff who applied

- b) the number of those staff whose applications have been accepted
- c) the number of applications refused or are still under consideration

Also, can it be confirmed that following this exercise no staff will be made compulsorily redundant?

Response by the Portfolio Holder for Transformation, Councillor Jeff Hanna

May I firstly thank all of our staff for the work they do on behalf of our residents. It is a matter of regret that the need to achieve some fifty million of savings means that we need to reduce our number of staff, with all of the uncertainties and concerns involved.

I am grateful to the Human Resources team for their ongoing work in managing the process and I was pleased that the invitation was made to staff to offer themselves for Voluntary Redundancy, as a slightly less painful way of managing the staffing reductions.

It was explained that applications would be evaluated taking into consideration the posts and skills that needed to be retained and this has included considering:

- the impact of the loss of the post on our ability to meet our statutory duties and targets,
- our current and future service needs
- the ability for work to be re-allocated if the post were lost, or for the service delivery to be re-designed, and lastly,
- the affordability of the individual redundancy arrangements.

Given this, we anticipated rather more staff wanting to explore the possibility of voluntary redundancy, than would meet these considerations, and this has proven to be the case.

Indeed, in some cases, where several staff in similar posts applied, a scoring process needed to be used to decide which might proceed.

In other cases, future levels of staffing remain uncertain, as is the case in libraries, as the library review is still under way, and applications there have been paused, and will be considered under a different process.

Further some members of staff have withdrawn their application during the process.

Accordingly, the answers to Councillor Canavan's question are slightly more detailed than he may have expected. As of today's date;

330 staff have applied for Voluntary Redundancy, of whom 13 have subsequently withdrawn their application.

The Corporate Management Board have approved 79 applications, 64 having then been agreed by the employee and are proceeding, 4 are awaiting employee agreement, and 11 have subsequently been withdrawn by the employee.

A total of 206 applications have been declined, with 2 not yet having been submitted to the Board, none are under current consideration, and 30 have been paused and will be considered under a separate process.

It was never expected that there would be a perfect fit between those applying and the areas where we would need to reduce our staffing, so I am afraid that it will still be necessary for a compulsory redundancy process to be used to complete the overall reductions, but I am pleased this has been minimised through the use of the Voluntary Redundancy scheme.

Supplementary Question from Councillor Patrick Canavan

Could it be clarified that if there are 206 applications that have either been refused or are still under consideration, given that there are 206 why can't you rule out voluntary redundancy given that you have already accepted that you have got more people who want to go than you have agreed?

Response by the Portfolio Holder for Transformation and Resources, Councillor Jeff Hanna

The various considerations that came into play I have already set out in the answer to the question.

Question by Councillor Duane Farr

Recently I was contacted by several Kinson residents, some of whom are disabled and depend on their cars, raising concerns over the positioning of a new Zebra crossing on Poole Lane was going to impact on their day-to-day living, removing their ability to park outside their own home which they have always been able to do.

The reason they felt compelled to contact me directly was due to having NOT heard back from council officers. Only upon involving myself as their ward councillor was a response given. However, the response was sent to the concerned residents on the very last day possible of the consultation period – a Friday, with the works to commence the Monday after. Allowing no time to consider the residents' concerns and how the location of the crossing would affect them.

What steps can be taken to improve response time by officers to ensure our residents' concerns are taken seriously?

Response by the Portfolio Holder for Climate Response, Environment and Energy

I asked the Head of Transport and Sustainable Travel to investigate this matter for you, he has found that whilst legally compliant the noticing in advance of the build of the zebra crossing on Poole Lane adjacent to Duck Lane was very tight.

Ordinarily this noticing is undertaken weeks and/or months in advance of a build, however in this instance due to an oversight by the engineering delivery team it did not happen until the last permissible moment. They are extremely sorry for any inconvenience caused to the residents.

There was a pressure to undertake this disruptive work on a busy road during the easter school holidays.

The new zebra crossing is located on the pedestrian desire line, and this required parking on the approaches to be removed to provide clear sight lines for pedestrian safety. It would not have been safe to modify the design to accommodate parked vehicles, this was considered by the team. There is still unrestricted on street parking in the vicinity of the houses beyond the zig zag markings, many properties in this area additionally have rear accesses with private parking areas and/or garage spaces or space to create off street parking.

To ensure that noticing's are undertaken in a more timely manner going forwards a robust gateway's approval process is in development, this is a safe routes to school measure but I do hope it also helps the residents, especially those with disabilities in safely crossing this busy road when they are on foot.

Question by Councillor George Farquhar

What value in WISE

When using the Reporting Portal why does it now take nearly 2weeks for reported flytipping to be cleared?

What SLAs and KPIs are in place for WISE to complete their investigations and instruct Clearance?

Response by the Portfolio Holder for Housing and Regulatory Services, Councillor Kieron Wilson

On public land investigations need to be undertaken by WISE prior to fly tipping being cleared. These investigations are done as soon as reasonably and practicably possible but may include complexities. Contract meetings are held with the provider on a regular basis and there have been recent issues with resourcing which have now been resolved.

An SLA (Service Level Agreement) is in place, however it does not have a specific time frame for investigations as this will vary based on the size, location and material of the fly tip. WISE will also look to remove smaller fly tips at the end of the investigation and dispose of the waste as part of the contract at added value. There is now a dedicated officer for fly tipping investigations.

Since the inception of the WISE contract over 6000 fly tipping cases have been investigated, which is obviously quite a considerable amount, and since the beginning of April alone 226 fly tips have been reported that require investigation.

If a fly tip is reported on private land the environmental protection team will investigate, at times this can be complex, especially where the land is unadopted and not registered with an owner.

Supplementary Question by Councillor George Farquhar

Thanks very much for the reply, it is good to be aware that there are service level agreements in place. The reason I am bringing this question is to highlight that from the pilot of WISE, and it is acceptance as part of our procedure then the resourcing issues which you've alluded to haven't necessarily been communicated to the ward councillors, so it is very difficult to actually lay out to the residents what expectations there are.

Would the Portfolio Holder be kind enough to avail the members of what those SLAs would be, because it is very difficult to explain to a resident that you have escalated their fly tipping report. The investigating team used to do their investigation within 24 hours attend the scene, give the thumbs up to the clearance team and it was cleared within two days, two weeks is quite a big expansion on that. So my supplementary question is would it be possible to have the key performance indicators and SLAs shared to the members so that we can actually inform the residents of why it is that some fly tipping may well be delayed in its clearance?

Response by the Portfolio Holder for Housing and Regulatory Services, Councillor Kieron Wilson

Yes, more than happy to go away with my team and get that sorted for you.

Question by Councillor George Farquhar

Tackling Racist Graffiti

Why did it take an extra 6days after escalation by an elected Member before racist graffiti was covered up.

This was after a delay following the initial report by a member of the Public via the Reporting Portal which went without action.

What steps have been put in place to reduce this time for action and avoid a recurrence?

Response by the Portfolio Holder for Housing and Regulatory Services, Councillor Kieron Wilson

As you have mentioned, this case relates to one that you have put forward. You were kept updated throughout the case and it was acted upon by the initial public report.

BCP Council do not have the legal powers or responsibility to remove graffiti on private land without formal enforcement action. There is a legal process to follow with reasonable timeframes in order to ensure the council is not liable for costs or legal damage on claims of damage to the premises.

This case was escalated and actioned as soon as possible, within the legal timeframe and the Environmental Protection Team prioritise these cases to ensure swift resolution within the boundaries of the law.

Supplementary Question by Councillor George Farquhar

I understand the legal restrictions, but if this is on public premises and in this particular case it was on commercial retail premises I am sure that any shop owner or retail premises owner would be dismayed that it takes a period of time because of legal wrangling to actually alert them to the fact that racist graffiti is on their premises. It reflects poorly on them, it reflects poorly on the public estate and it reflects poorly on the council that we are not more dynamic.

My question once again to the Portfolio Holder is how can we work within the restrictions of the law to alert premises holders that they have racist graffiti or offensive graffiti on their premises? And how can we together get it covered up and then argue the toss about who's responsible for paying for it?

Response by the Portfolio Holder for Housing and Regulatory Services, Councillor Kieron Wilson

As I said in the last council meeting, I am more than happy to work with you, my team is always willing to accommodate members and it would be really really helpful, but I would just emphasise we are working within the timeframes of the law and within the level of resource we have. It is on private premises it is up to the retailer, and it is the retailer's responsibility, obviously if they weren't alerted to it then that's a separate issue and I can go away and see at what time frame they were alerted to it but it is their responsibility.

103. Urgent Decisions taken by the Chief Executive in accordance with the Constitution

The Chief Executive advised that he had taken two urgent decisions since the last meeting of the Council, both of which had been published on the Councils website and were reported to the last meeting of the Cabinet, these being: -

- Acceptance of Active Travel Capability Funding - DECISION: 21 March 2024 - To accept £285,908 2024 Active Travel Capability Funding revenue (Tranche 4) from Active Travel England for walking and cycling projects.
- HR Support Pilots Project - DECISION: 2 April 2024 - BCP's acceptance of a grant of up to £180,000 (plus vat) for the supply of 'Labour Market Participation Trials' to the Secretary of State for the Department for Business and Trade. The trials will be a pilot project to provide BCP based businesses with HR support predominantly around recruitment and retention.

In closing the meeting the Chairman advised members of the public that the next meeting of the Council on the 7 May was the Annual Council meeting and that there would therefore be no opportunity for public representations or motions from members of the Council at this meeting, and that the next ordinary meeting of the Council was scheduled for the 4 June 2024.

The meeting ended at 11.18 pm

CHAIRMAN