

BOURNEMOUTH, CHRISTCHURCH AND POOLE COUNCIL
OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD

Minutes of the Meeting held on 02 April 2024 at 6.00 pm

Present:-

Cllr S Bartlett – Chairman

Present: Cllr L Dedman, Cllr B Dove, Cllr C Goodall, Cllr S Moore,
Cllr L Northover, Cllr K Salmon, Cllr M Tarling, Cllr T Trent,
Cllr O Walters, Cllr J Beesley and Cllr P Canavan

Present
virtually: Cllr F Rice

Also in
attendance: Cllr M Cox and Cllr V Slade

Also in
attendance
virtually: Cllr S Carr-Brown and Cllr A Hadley

55. Apologies

Apologies were received from the Vice-Chair Cllr S Aitkenhead.

56. Substitute Members

Cllr J Beesley substituted for Cllr P Broadhead.
Cllr P Canavan substituted for Cllr S Aitkenhead.

57. Declarations of Interests

There were no declarations of interest made on this occasion.

58. Confirmation of Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 26 February were approved as a correct record.

59. Public Issues

There were no public petitions or questions received on this occasion.
There were three public statements received as follows:

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.

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/A21heSdLqgE>

Thank you

From Cecila Bufton, Chair, Dorset Local Enterprise Partnership (Read by Richard Renault)

"Homes for people delivering health and care services to the people of Dorset are needed now. Human health and social work is the largest employer in the county, with 16% of jobs, with many vacancies, because workers can't afford to live in BCP, running into thousands. This leaves our services stretched and our citizens waiting on long lists for their health and care needs.

The economy of BCP is stagnating, in part because innovative, entrepreneurial private sector businesses are priced out of the area, unable to find affordable office/manufacturing locations and unable to find highly skilled people they need due to the high cost of living in the area. The LEP, our universities and colleges have invested in health and care innovation and related skills development. To maximise the potential of converting ideas into businesses, we need "start-up" and "grow on" facilities adjacent to our hospitals and university sites".

60. Disposal of Land at Wessex Fields, Riverside Avenue

The Portfolio Holder for Finance presented a report, a copy of which had been circulated to each Member and a copy of which appears as Appendix 'A' to these minutes in the Minute Book.

The Board was informed that the report presented a proposal to dispose of council owned land at Wessex Fields, Riverside Avenue, Bournemouth BH7 7EE, on the open market, or through direct sale, at an agreed RICS Red Book Valuation, to the University Hospital Dorset NHS Foundation Trust.

In relation to this the Board was advised that the disposal of land at the Wessex Fields site would generate a capital receipt to support the funding of the Council's Transformation Investment Programme, and that the Council could achieve specific socio-economic benefits as the purchase by the hospital could unlock substantial health benefits for the wider area and that disposal of the site to University Hospitals Dorset NHS Foundation Trust could evidence best value in financial terms, as the capital receipt would be determined in accordance with a RICS Red Book Valuation.

A number of points were raised by the Board including:

- An acknowledgement that the concerns raised by the Asset Disposal Working Group had been alleviated.
- Questions were raised around support from stakeholders where it was confirmed that letters of support had been received from other stakeholders, and that these would be circulated to Members prior to Council once received.
- Assurances being sought that there would be sufficient opportunity to ask questions.

A request was made that the University Hospitals Dorset be permitted to display their presentation, the Chairman in consultation with the members agreed to receive the presentation and the meeting adjourned briefly to set this up.

Meeting adjourned at 6.45pm and reconvened at 6.52pm

The Chairman of the University Hospitals Dorset, NHS FT, Rob Whiteman provided the Board with a short presentation following which a number of points were raised including:

- Assurances were requested with regards to there being a solid transport plan in place, and in relation to this the University Hospitals Dorset advised that there was a really significant programme to reduce car use look at road access, encourage the use of public transport and cycling to ensure a balanced mix. In relation to this UHD advised that they were happy to work with local councillors on this.
- A member questioned the probity which had been used to determine the plans were achievable and assurances that the plans were deliverable. In relation to this UHD advised that the Heads of Terms had been set out and agreed between the two parties and assurances had been obtained that this could be delivered.

- A member stressed the importance of transparency and emphasised that the open market was the only way to guarantee best value, supporting the original recommendation of the Asset Working Group.

Councillor Canavan proposed the following recommendation as per the recommendation from the Asset Working Group that:

If Cabinet is so minded to dispose of the site, that it does so by way of an open process, marketing the site on the open market for a 2-3 month period of time, with the expectation that the highest offer being the preferred preference of disposal. In addition, the Group felt strongly that the aspiration of the site as per the local plan be demonstrated by the accepted bidder.

This proposal was seconded by Councillor Dove.

Comprehensive discussion then took place on the proposition with the following points being raised:

- The value attached to the site is not only monetary but also the social value and the investment.
- It was confirmed that there was no suggestion that the land was being transferred at below market value.
- A member advised that the reason the Asset Working Group initially made that recommendation was that they had different information at that time and had taken a cautious approach, in relation to this they advised that things had moved on, further information was now available which would have alleviated the working groups concerns.
- Concern was expressed by a member questioning the proposal, and the obtaining of an additional red book valuation.
- The criteria around the valuation were also questioned by a member who felt that in order to determine whether this is best value much would depend on the planning use.
- The Leader highlighted that the site was in the Local Plan for a very specific use which this fulfils.
- Further questions were raised around the separated junction.

The proposed recommendation fell with voting 3 for and 9 against.

Councillor Dove requested her vote in favour of the proposal be recorded.

Councillor Salmon proposed recommendation 1. as set out within the report, this was seconded by Councillor Dedman.

RECOMMENDED that Cabinet recommend that Council: -

- 1. Approve the disposal of the council owned land at Wessex Fields to the University Hospitals Dorset NHS Foundation Trust on such items 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 9: Against 2 (1 abstention)

(Councillor Dove requested her vote against the proposal be recorded)

61. Work Plan

The Scrutiny Specialist introduced this item and presented a report, a copy of which had been circulated to each Member and a copy of which appears as Appendix 'B' to these minutes in the Minute Book.

The Overview and Scrutiny Board were requested to use table three within the circulated draft to be used as the work plan.

In relation to this the Board were advised that the items marked in the red text required further scoping.

Further to this the Board was requested to consider whether to programme dates in the diary for briefings or whether members would prefer these to be added on a more flexible arrangement as and when required.

In relation to this members of the Board requested that where briefings are required could these be facilitated on Teams.

RESOLVED that: -

- (a) Table three be noted as the Boards forward plan; and**
- (b) Briefings be arranged on an ad hoc basis as and when required.**

Voting: Nem.Con

The meeting ended at 8.49 pm

CHAIRMAN