

BOURNEMOUTH, CHRISTCHURCH AND POOLE COUNCIL
OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD

Minutes of the Meeting held on 04 March 2025 at 6.00 pm

Present:-

Cllr S Bartlett – Chairman

Cllr S Aitkenhead – Vice-Chairman

Present: Cllr P Broadhead, Cllr J Beesley, Cllr L Dedman, Cllr C Goodall,
Cllr S Mackrow, Cllr L Northover, Cllr K Salmon, Cllr T Trent,
Cllr O Walters, Cllr C Weight and Cllr M Howell (In place of Cllr Dr F
Rice)

Also in Cllr M Earl, Cllr P Canavan, Cllr E Harman, Cllr K Rampton, Cllr C
attendance: Adams, Cllr T Slade, Cllr M Cox, Cllr J Hanna, Cllr D d’Orton-Gibson,
Cllr S Carr-Brown, Cllr J Martin and Cllr A Hadley

109. Apologies

Apologies were received from Cllr F Rice

110. Substitute Members

Cllr M Howell substituted for Cllr F Rice

111. Declarations of Interests

In relation to agenda item 7 – Bournemouth Development Company LLP Business Plan, Cllr M Howell advised that he wished to continue as a Board member of BDC but there had been some confusion around this issue, and he was unsure of his current status. The Chair advised that as far as the Council was now concerned he had resigned and therefore this was not an issue for this meeting. However, it was confirmed prior to consideration of this item that the resignation did not stand and he would remain as a Board member and he therefore declared this for the purpose of transparency.

Cllr d’Orton-Gibson also advised that he was a Board member of the Bournemouth Development Company

112. Confirmation of Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 3 February were approved as a correct record.

113. Action Sheet

The following actions were addressed.

114. Public Issues

There were no Public Statements or petitions. There were three public questions received from Mr McKinstry. These were responded to by the Lead Member of the Task and Finish Group as outlined below:

Question 1

For the historical record more than anything, can we be told which ten councillors were on the cross-party task and finish group which considered the community governance submissions; and what were the dates of their six meetings?

The Task and Finish Group was politically proportionate with each political group appointing their representatives. The membership of the Task and Finish Group was initially Councillor Walters (Chair), Councillor Aitkenhead (Vice-Chair) plus Councillors Broadhead, Bull, Dedman, Dove, Hanna, Le Poidevin, Rice and Trent. On 12 February 2025, Councillor Broadhead resigned from the Task and Finish Group and was replaced with Councillor Beesley.

The Task and Finish Group met on the following dates:

Friday, 31 January, Tuesday 4 February, Friday 7 February, Wednesday 12 February, Friday 14 February and Friday 21 February 2025.

Question 2

Why were councillors given such a short time frame to respond to the email of 7 February 2025 which sought their views on this matter? (The responses cite a deadline of 11 February, and this meeting wasn't until 4 March, so I can't see why they weren't given an extra week at least - given the complexity of the subject, plus their unique stance as ward representatives and charter trustees.) It would also be good to know why councillors' views were solicited so late in the day, whereas the response from Tom Hayes MP - dated 2 December 2024 - suggests MPs were communicated with back in November / early December.

BCP Councillors were emailed on 7 November 2024. This email outlined the project timetable for the stage 1 exercise, the dates of the initial submissions period and that the initial stage was open to any interested party to respond. The email included dates of the planned public briefings and details of an all-Councillor Briefing session which was held on 14 November. This communication was sent on the same date as the communication to local Members of Parliament. A number of councillors made representations during the initial submission period.

The agreed timetable for the Task and Finish Group to finalise the draft recommendations was as follows:

- Friday 14 February – Deadline to agree all draft recommendations to allow drafting of the report
- Friday 21 February – Sign-off content of final report
- Monday 24 February – Release report for inclusion on agenda

Question 3

Finally, why were councillors not allowed to make face-to-face representations to the task and finish group - as indicated in a reply to the 7 February email, reprinted on page 536 of tonight's supplementary papers?

The Task and Finish Group had initially intended to invite all councillors to attend a meeting to explain the submissions for their respective ward areas and seek feedback. However, the Task and Finish Group were advised that a number of councillors were unable to attend and had indicated that they would prefer to receive details of the submissions received and to have the opportunity to potentially make a short written representation to the Task and Finish Group. The Task and Finish Group agreed to this request.

115. Community Governance Review - Draft Recommendations

The Lead Member of the Task and Finish Group 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 Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 (Part 4) devolved power from the Secretary of State to principal councils to carry out community governance reviews and put in place or make changes to local community governance arrangements. The Council commenced a review following the Council decision in October 2024 at which the terms of reference and timetable were approved. Cabinet would be asked to consider the draft recommendations of the Task and Finish Group and to make a recommendation to Council. The Lead Member explained the rationale behind some of the recommendations outlined in the report which may be viewed as by some as contentious. The Board considered the recommendations for each of the Parishes outlined in the report by areas across the conurbation.

Christchurch Area - There was support from both Ward Councillors and Board Members for all of the recommendations outlined in the report in relation to the Christchurch Area Town and Parish Councils which were broadly in line with the current Councils.

1. RESOLVED that the O&S Board Recommend to Cabinet that the draft recommendations of the Task and Finish Group relating to proposals for Burton and Winkton (A), Hurn (B), Highcliffe & Walkford (C) and Christchurch Town (D) be recommended to Council, for approval for publication and consultation, without amendment.

Voting: Unanimous

Poole Area – Ward Councillor spoke in opposition to the consultation, due to the additional layer of bureaucracy and additional Council Tax precept and the confusion that arises from this consultation. It was noted that the Charter Trustee system could work better if improved. Conversely others noted that in reality there were lots of things which the Council was unable to provide, and there may be services and buildings which would not be

able to be supported in the future. These issues would be able to be addressed by a Town Council and it was welcomed that it was a larger size Town Council which would be democratically accountable.

The Board reflected that the heritage of the three distinct towns was important. It was felt that it was important that Poole was its own distinct entity and areas where there is a Town Council have a better sense of identity and therefore it should go out for further consultation.

Concerns were raised regarding submissions which covered areas such as Hamworthy and Canford Cliffs which were dismissed by the working group in favour of a greater Poole Town Council area. Poole proposals received were for the whole of Poole including those areas which were now removed such as Broadstone. There were concerns raised in the way in which the working group operated in suggesting new areas. However, it was confirmed that the working group could put forward these as recommendations. It was noted that this was a starting point and there was a need to proceed with this process. It was suggested that those in areas around the edge of Poole may not feel the same loss of identity that some more central areas did but there did appear to be a strong drive within central Poole for a Town Council.

The issues around the demand expectations from the public, and the current Council Tax burden were highlighted.

2. RESOLVED that the O&S Board recommend to Cabinet that the draft recommendations of the Task and Finish Group relating to Broadstone (F) and Poole Town (J) be recommended to Council, for approval for publication and consultation, without amendment.

Voting: 11 in favour, 2 against

Bournemouth Area - The Chair advised that Bournemouth area proposals would be taken for discussion collectively across Bournemouth but that there may need to be a vote on each area separately.

A ward member advised that parishing did not appear to be necessary for the Bournemouth area and suggested that all recommendations for Bournemouth be rejected. It was felt that there was no appetite in Bournemouth for parishes and that there would unintended consequences to having a consultation on them. It was suggested that the starting point should be to 'do nothing' but that the working group process seemed to have moved beyond this. It was suggested that parishes introduce false boundaries and unnecessary conflict, reducing community cohesion.

Members commented that there was not enough support for this within the Bournemouth area and the current process felt directed from BCP Council rather than community supported. It was suggested that the creation of Parish Councils would fulfil services which were currently being provided by BCP but which were under threat due to the current financial situation.

It was suggested that the proposals indicated a failure in the Local Government Reorganisation process with services being cut down to minimal levels. It was noted that the overriding concern was to ensure that the public had a say in the proposals and it was confirmed that even if the proposals for Bournemouth were changed it would not save any money as this would still need to be consulted on.

Board members noted that there was no submission which suggested a 'rest of Bournemouth' Town Council and that there appeared to be strong feelings that there wasn't a desire for town/parish councils in other areas of Bournemouth. Further concerns were raised regarding the additional precepts which would be incurred by parishing different areas. It was hoped that any communications circulated to residents would have greater engagement across political parties/groups. Concerns were raised regarding the mayoralty and the way in which this may be eroded by the proposals.

It was suggested that there may also be impacts if some areas of Bournemouth became parish councils but not all and may lead to some areas wanting a Town or Parish Council later on. It was clarified that different Parish Councils may be put forward following the consultation process and there would still be an opportunity after formation of the Parish Councils for certain areas to put forward proposals for a different parish area.

The Lead member of the Task and Finish Group advised that they could only put forward positive recommendations and the residents of BCP should be consulted on the recommendations. However there could be no recommendations made at all. It was felt that the Council did not have a strong record on responding to consultations and it was therefore more appropriate to not put a proposal forward that wasn't based on a suggestion received.

3. RESOLVED that the Board recommend to Cabinet that that the recommendation for Bournemouth (K) not be forwarded to Council.

Voting: 6 in favour 5 against, 2 abstentions

- The meeting adjourned between 7:54pm and 8:04pm -

The Board discussed the proposals for the separate parish Councils within the Bournemouth area, the current proposals to draw a boundary between Southbourne, Boscombe and Pokesdown. A Ward Councillor suggested that there were no positive benefits for drawing up division between areas. These were dense residential areas where the communities blended into each other. The Guidance suggests that the boundaries between the areas should be easily identifiable, and this was not the case within the Southbourne/Boscombe/Pokesdown areas.

It was noted that the boarder between Southbourne and Boscombe was potentially an issue as there was not a clearly defined division and many residents would not be able to identify a specific boarder. It was felt that it was important to keep a commercial area within the suggested Parish. Others commented that the proposed Southbourne Community Council was a well thought up proposal.

It was moved and seconded to recommend to Cabinet to not put the Southbourne area forward for consultation. The vote on this was put and lost.

Voting: 4 in favour, 7 against, 2 abstentions

4. It was then RESOLVED that the O&S Board recommend to Cabinet that the draft recommendations of the Task and Finish Group relating to Southbourne (I) be recommended to Council, for approval for publication and consultation, without amendment.

Voting: 7 in favour, 4 against, 2 abstentions

The Board went on to discuss the proposals for Boscombe. A ward Councillor advised that none of the four Ward Councillor for the Boscombe area were in support of a parish council for this area.

A Ward Councillor supported the removal of a part of polling district EC1 from the proposal. It was suggested that there was no evidence that people within the area wanted this parish and it was suggested that momentum could take this forward without this really being desired by the residents of the area. Board members commented that there were proposals put forward for these areas and therefore these submissions should be reflected in the consultation process which was taken forward.

RESOLVED that the O&S Board recommend to Cabinet that the draft recommendations of the Task and Finish Group relating to Boscombe and Pokesdown (H) be recommended to Council, for approval for publication and consultation, without amendment.

Voting: 9 in favour 4 against

Note: An amendment to this recommendation was put and lost to remove that the section of EC1 polling district from the proposed boundary of the parish. It was noted that this was part of the original community submission.

Voting: 4 in favour, 9 against

The Board was advised that there were no proposed changes to the existing Throop and Holdenhurst Parish Council.

RESOVLED that the O&S Board recommend to Cabinet that the draft recommendations of the Task and Finish Group relating to Throop

and Holdenhurst (E) be recommended to Council, for approval for publication and consultation, without amendment.

Voting: Unanimous

The Board considered the proposal for the Redhill and Northbourne area. The Chair suggested an amendment to incorporate an area which self-identified as Northbourne. It was confirmed by the Deputy Monitoring Officer that the proposals could be amended slightly to accommodate the changes in elector numbers. There was debate as to whether the Kinson area Councillors supported this proposal. This amendment was moved and seconded but lost.

Voting: 4 in favour 6 against 3 abstentions.

It was then RESOLVED that the O&S Board recommend to Cabinet that the draft recommendations of the Task and Finish Group relating to Redhill and Northbourne (G) be recommended to Council, for approval for publication and consultation, without amendment

Voting: 9 in favour 3 against 1 abstention

The meeting adjourned at 9.07pm and resumed at 9.19pm.

116. Bournemouth Development Company LLP Business Plan

The Leader of the Council 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. Bournemouth Development Company LLP ("BDC") is a joint venture between the Council and Community Solutions for regeneration Bournemouth, a subsidiary of MUSE Developments Limited (itself a subsidiary of Morgan Sindall Group plc). It was established in 2011 and is currently due to expire in 2031.

In March 2023, Cabinet approved a request to extend the Site Option Execution Date for Winter Gardens to September 2024. This date has passed and a further extension is required in order for BDC to continue working on a new scheme.

A Strategy Day was held on 6 December to review and consider options for moving forward with the Winter Gardens site. Following that meeting, Muse have committed funds to take forward new high-level design and capacity work for the site. Early indications show potential for a housing-led scheme with circa 500 homes, including a good proportion of affordable homes, along with some street level retail and commercial space. The purpose of the report was to update Cabinet on progress since the recent BDC Strategy Day, to agree the proposed timetable for the new Partnership Business Plan and to update on the priority project, Winter Gardens, including the proposed strategy for bringing forward residential development on the site, which requires approval to extend the Site Option Execution date.

The Winter Gardens site should remain a landmark mixed-use site with car parking and active frontage. The suggestion for the site was for an extensively housing led scheme, and it was suggested by a Board member that this would not be considered as regeneration. The Leader advised that the essential need at present was for housing and that this should be a greater priority than parking provision. Much needed homes could be delivered, and this site would also deliver commercial offerings such as restaurants. In terms of podium parking the issue was viability and this decision would come to full Council for a decision.

The report advised that the development would include a good proportion of affordable homes and clarification on this was sought. The next stage of the process would refine this issue as a pre-planning application was developed. The Leader advised that as much affordable and social housing should be provided as would make the scheme viable.

Concern was raised that the option execution date was proposed to be extended, and it was suggested that the plans should be developed first if the Council was unsure as to whether it wanted this to proceed. The Leader advised that the Council did want this to proceed. In terms of social housing and the funding of the scheme was dependent upon the relationship with homes England. The proposal placed forward would be very important for regeneration in the Town Centre in terms of footfall.

There were a number of risks associated with moving forward. FuturePlaces was of the opinion previously that this was not a viable site to take forward. It was important to have a culture within a Council to drive forward regeneration. Cross-party support to take projects forward was needed. It was suggested that at present there was not enough resource put into regeneration. If the Council wanted to deliver regeneration on the scale that was needed this area, then a number of cultural issues needed to be addressed.

Concerns were raised that there was a lack of ambition to deliver viable regeneration schemes and in order to progress it needed to be acknowledged that the site was only suitable for certain types of development. The Leader advised that the report was coming forward because there was ambition to deliver on this site. The Leader supported the Improvement and Development Directorate and the work which it was progressing.

It was noted that the scheme did not currently exist and was not within the Council's capital programme. There were a number of loans to BDC and outstanding loans for the purchase of the land for the Winter Garden's site. The Chair commented that it was important to see what the full business plan of the BDC was.

It was suggested that the O&S Board recommend to Cabinet that a decision to extend the option execution date be deferred until the new BDC business plan had been approved by Cabinet. It was noted that the way BDC was working was different to the way in which was originally

envisioned and this needed to be fully reconsidered in terms of bringing forward a Business Plan. The viability of the site would need to feed into a BDC business plan, and this would require the amendment to the 'Option Execution Date'.

A BDC Board Member advised that the change in the structure of the Board was not as effective without senior officer representation. It was further noted that the current partner was not interested in the development of some of the smaller sites. Any site can be developed through BDC and using BDC there was a level of control that BCP could have which would not be available with sites which were in total commercial control. It was noted that all of the schemes previously delivered had been funded slightly differently depending upon the situation and financial conditions at the time.

The Leader advised that they were taking a lead in this area and were making significant changes in the way regeneration was progressing. The Leader advised that they did understand there were issues but that they were working hard to address these.

It was noted that MUSE had requested the extension and without this they would not continue with the work.

Cllr K Salmon and C Weight left during the consideration of this item.

RESOLVED that the O&S Board recommend to Cabinet that a decision to extend the Winter Gardens site 'Option Execution Date' is deferred by Cabinet until the new BDC Partnerships Business Plan has been approved by Cabinet.

Voting: 5 in favour, 5 against, 1 abstention (6:5 following the Chair's casting vote).

Cllrs P Broadhead and L Dedman left following the vote on this item.

117. Strategic Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)

The Leader of the Council presented a report, a copy of which had been circulated to each Member and a copy of which appears as Appendix 'C' to these Minutes in the Minute Book. The Board was advised that the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) is collected from development and used to fund infrastructure necessary to support planned growth set out by the Draft BCP Local Plan. CIL receipts are split into strategic, neighbourhood and administration components. We can only spend CIL once it is received.

Strategic CIL spending governance was agreed by Cabinet in 2021. The Capital Briefing Board (CBB) assesses project bids for strategic CIL and recommends which projects receive spending, subject to following the necessary sign off procedures in accordance with the financial regulations.

Service providers have identified £121.8m infrastructure projects for CIL funding over the next 5 years. This exceeds the projected uncommitted £29.3m Strategic CIL budget and so prioritisation is necessary. This paper asks Cabinet to recommend to Council the priorities for Strategic CIL spend enabling CBB to manage the process.

The preferred approach to prioritisation was set out in Option 2 in the report, to put approximately 80% of Strategic CIL towards large infrastructure projects essential to support local plan growth. The provision of Poole Town Centre flood defences and habitats sites mitigation are critical to enable the Council to grant planning permission. Approximately 20% of CIL remains for discretionary infrastructure projects.

The Board asked about how the different options were developed. It was noted that the two main infrastructure issues to be addressed was the Poole Town flood defences and habitat site mitigation. The technical work to draw this up came through with a package, the largest component of this was transport issues. An infrastructure delivery schedule was drawn up in consultation with infrastructure providers and the overall proposals were developed from this. Smaller projects could be agreed through delegated authority and others would need to go through Cabinet and/or Council approval process.

It was noted that there was a significant level of risk identified within the proposals. It was suggested that there should be political oversight in terms of the items outlined. It was noted the priorities changed over time and other, more significant risks were being assessed.

Comments were made that were Broadly supportive of option 2 as set out in the report. However, there were concerns raised around the governance arrangements to support this.

Support was also voiced for option 4 and the Board questioned why option 4 was not given further consideration. It was noted at this stage it was thought more useful to have the additional funding available through the 18 percent discretionary spend at option 2. It was also noted that it was not desirable to allocated funds to phase 2 of the play strategy at present as phase 1 had not been completed and there were potentially other options for funding for this.

RESOLVED That the Board recommended to Cabinet:

- 1. That the spending priorities for Strategic CIL as set out in Option 2 of the paper over the period 2024/25 to 2029/30 be agreed provided CIL income is as forecast; and**
- 2. That the report be updated annually for Cabinet and Council.**

Voting: Unanimous

The Chair presented a report, a copy of which had been circulated to each Member and a copy of which appears as Appendix 'D' to these Minutes in the Minute Book. The Chair advised that there were two new items added to the Plan. The Chair proposed that the Commercial Operations item be moved to the Board's meeting in June. The Board agreed these changes.

The Chair also advised the Board members that there were no scheduled items on the Work Plan for the Board's next scheduled meeting and therefore it was probable that this meeting would be cancelled.

A Board member suggested an additional item for the Board to review the culture of BCP Council in advance of the recruitment of a new Chief Executive. It was noted that timing may be difficult as the recruitment process has already begun. It was suggested that an item request form be submitted, and this could then be added to the Board's Work Plan.

RESOLVED That the Work Plan be agreed subject to the amendments outlined above.

The meeting ended at 11.19 pm

CHAIRMAN