

BOURNEMOUTH, CHRISTCHURCH AND POOLE COUNCIL
OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD

Minutes of the Meeting held on 23 August 2021 at 6.00 pm

Present:-

Cllr S Bartlett – Chairman
Cllr V Slade – Vice-Chairman

Present: Cllr L Allison, Cllr B Dion, Cllr M Earl, Cllr J Edwards, Cllr D Farr,
Cllr L Fear, Cllr S Gabriel, Cllr D Kelsey, Cllr T O'Neill, Cllr C Rigby,
Cllr M Andrews, Cllr A Hadley and Cllr S McCormack

Also in attendance: Cllr D Mellor

64. Apologies

Apologies were received from Cllrs M Cox, L Dedman and M Howell

65. Substitute Members

Cllr M Andrews substituted for Cllr M Cox
Cllr S McCormack substituted for Cllr L Dedman
Cllr A Hadley substituted for Cllr M Howell

66. Declarations of Interests

There were no declarations of disclosable pecuniary interest, although for the sake of transparency, Cllr M Andrews highlighted that he was a joint tenant of a property situated within the first phase of carter's quay, but he was not a resident.

67. Public Speaking

No public questions, statements or petitions had been received

68. Scrutiny of Transport and Sustainability Related Cabinet Reports

The Sustainable Transport Policy Manager 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.

Officers responded to comments and requests for clarification, details included:

- Under this proposal, buses would continue to be operated as commercial enterprises, with the odd exception where some routes were subsidised by the Council.

- The conurbation was lucky enough to be served by two good bus operators who had both invested in the quality of their vehicles, many of which provided services such as wi-fi, phone charging points and contactless payments.
- Go South Coast was considering the introduction of arrangements that would be similar to that of TfL's Oyster system.
- Routes were introduced by operators and were regularly reviewed. It should be noted that the council maintained a dialogue with operators to ensure that areas were being served and that the council did have the option to subsidise less profitable routes where appropriate and budget allowed for this to happen – it would be possible to bid for additional funding from the government going forwards.
- Baseline mapping was being undertaken at present to establish gaps in the bus network and inform future bidding opportunities. The data from this exercise would be used to assess the need in the area.
- Bearing in mind the tight timescale that had been set by the Government, the option of franchising was not feasible to pursue at this stage, hence the proposal to pursue the option of an Enhanced Partnership (EP).
- The move to franchising of services would present considerable risk financially and in terms of passenger expectations, and reputational risk to the council. Additionally, the Council did not currently have the capacity to introduce franchising at this time.
- In selecting the proposed approach, officers had been pragmatic and franchising does still remain an option for the future.
- There were some issues between the main operators in the area and taking the EP option was expected to remedy this.
- The EP would include all bus operators in the area, not just the main two, with the exception of the open-top tour buses.
- Officers had utilised information that had been gathered from both users and non-users of public transport to establish the priorities of both.
- The importance of integrating transportation systems was recognised and officers were focussed on the 'first and last mile' of commuters' journeys, particularly in regard to cycle access, and were working with Beryl Bikes to explore options.
- There was no BSIP document to share at present as it was still being drafted and would be considered as a 'high-level' plan. Following the publication of this, detailed solutions would follow with proposals due to be considered by Cabinet in February 2022.
- There would be an opportunity for the Council to bid for funding for a young person's travel scheme.
- It was recognised that there were gaps within the existing network, particularly within the Christchurch area and it was hoped that the introduction of the EP with the BSIP would help to address this in due course.
- The ultimate aim of this proposal was to ensure that bus services appeared more attractive and to encourage better usage amongst both users and non-users.

- Two tranches of funding were due to be announced by the Government and the Council were awaiting more detail to be made available. One tranche would be based on a formula basis based on the BSIP and the other tranche of funding would be for higher valued proposals.
- It was expected that the Government would also provided funding to kick start some of these changes to allow for a more commercially viable network that would cover its own costs.

It was moved and seconded that recommendation (b) to Cabinet be amended to read as follows:

Cabinet delegates authority to the Service Director for Transport and Engineering in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Transport and Sustainability to negotiate, seek stakeholder views and then publish a Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP) *to include a balanced review of the benefits of moving to a Franchising model within the next 5 years, with especial regard to the Dorset Metro concept, multimodal integration, and the development of Mobility as a service (MAAS) on behalf of the Council by the end of October 2021 in line with the requirements of the National Bus Strategy for England.*

Plus, the addition of a third recommendation, to read as follows:

- (c) “that the evolving Bus Service Improvement Plan, including longer term ambitions, comes back to Cabinet for approval, especially with a view to bidding via the Western Gateway for funding of wider public transport ambitions.”**

Voting:

For – 11

Against – 2

Abstained – 2

69. Officer Decision - Accessing requirements for minor transport schemes - Review

The Transport Network Manager 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.

Officers responded to comments and requests for clarification, details included:

- There had been national efforts made to understand casualty reduction by way of the introduction of 20mph speed limits on an isolated basis i.e. erecting a sign.
- It was important to note that 20mph zones were different to 20mph limits in the fact that zones often included a variety of measures to

slow down traffic and tended to be self-enforcing, whereas an isolated 20mph limit did not always have an effect and it had been identified that there was no real measurable reduction of casualties.

- When ranking traffic schemes, there were many considerations when assessing demand and safety was just one of them. The process had been published and so was accessible.
- It would be possible to submit an FOI in relation to what schemes had been suggested, but as this was a moving process, many requests received had not yet been assessed.
- There were a backlog of applications and the reason that this officer decision had been taken was to form a position and approach to enable the council to assess and facilitate requests sooner where appropriate. The desired outcome was for the process to be more efficient than it had been to date.
- There had been a shift in priorities for the small traffic team that dealt with minor requests and as such, this project, was subsequently delayed until now.
- The first list of community TRO's had now been sent to the relevant Portfolio Holder to review and consider.
- Erecting a singular 20mph sign was unlikely to have any real effect on casualty rates.
- The cost of erecting a Speed Indicator Device (SID) was approximately £3k per site and funding could be sourced from CIL contributions, but it was important to note that this would not always be the ideal option as it was likely that the impact of such devices would be lost if placed on every road on the network and it was therefore better used in speeding and/or accident hotspots.
- A process had been established to ensure these SIDs were installed in the most appropriate of locations, as the primary aim was to reduce casualties by making drivers aware of their speed.
- The Highway Code contained advice that drivers shouldn't park within 10m of a junction, however without double yellow lines or another TRO, this was not enforceable.
- Speed enforcement lied within the remit of Dorset Police, not the Council.
- The Council published details of TRO's that were being consulted on and the Portfolio Holder undertook his own level of consultation with Ward Members when ideas were presented to him.

The Chairman thanked Board Members and Officers for their contributions.

70. Scrutiny of Environment Cleansing and Waste Cabinet Reports

The Head of Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management 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.

Officers responded to comments and requests for clarification, details included:

- Despite the situation, the Council did have the capacity to continue delivering the service it already provided and discrepancies between job titles between BCP based officers and Dorset Council (DC) officer were superficial – in effect they performed the same roles.
- The team was highly specialised and was made up of technicians that were ‘on the ground’ undertaking the required work.
- BCP have had a framework in place to utilise various consultants where appropriate, however the reliance on this mechanism was expected to reduce once the council had its own staff in place.
- BCP Council was an attractive authority to work for and therefore were well placed when recruiting.
- The FCERM service was viable even when just tasked with BCP projects, but with the addition of more staff, would generate more income to work with communities.
- The separation of this service from DC would come at no cost to BCP and would allow more priority on delivering BCP objectives.
- The FCERM team were often requested to undertake work on behalf of neighbouring local authorities and also the Environment Agency, which put it in a strong position.
- The separation from DC was down to a change in style on their part as opposed to a lack of collaboration and BCP Council would still maintain a strong relationship with DC.
- There was no risk to decision-making in relation to works required in Poole Harbour.
- Due to Local Government Reorganisation, the service was more attractive when seeking funding.

The Chairman thanked Board Members and Officers for their contributions.

71. Scrutiny of Regeneration, Economy and Strategic Planning Related Cabinet Reports

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 'D' to these Minutes in the Minute Book.

The Leader of the Council, supported by Officers, responded to comments and requests for clarification, details included:

- The existing planning permission on the site was due to lapse which was currently being addressed by the current landowner.
- This was an opportunity for the Council to progress this site and lead by example and that by purchasing the site it would allow the council to take control of promoting regeneration in the immediate area.
- The price for building on site also included the land transaction costs and the landscaping of the site and was not solely on a cost to build per unit basis.
- The Council would be discussing the issue of gas boilers with the current landowner/developer.

- Market report data was taken before, during and after covid restrictions were in place and is therefore up to date and accurate.
- There was the possibility that four of the commercial units on site could assist with the homeworking agenda.
- The development provided a large central courtyard which would provide a quality amenity space.
- It was not unusual for developers to gain planning permission and then not fully develop a site and this allowed the council to step in and assist with its regeneration ambitions.
- There was a need to take a long-term view and once critical mass took effect, additional projects would follow.
- In developing these proposals, the council had obtained professional and expert advice from both an external body and from its own officers, who had both been prudent in the financial modelling.
- The reward to the council for taking a risk would be the profitability of the scheme, which in turn would be used on the Council's frontline services.
- In relation to the planning permission that was due to lapse, there was only a requirement to satisfy the commencement conditions on site, not to actually start the work itself.
- Over a period of time, the level of investment would break even, before going onto make a profit.
- This scheme was geared at the private rented sector and there was a degree of flexibility in the numbers if they did not work out as planned.
- Seascope would be managing the development on behalf of the Council.
- The Council was having constructive discussions with Inland Homes to ensure that the risks were mitigated, which would continue.
- The Council had been prudent in its assessment of occupancy rates and had its own data in relation to market requirements.

It was moved and seconded that the recommendations to Cabinet and Council be amended as follows:

In the recommendations to Cabinet:

- Delete “*and buildings*” after ‘land’ in first line**
- Insert “*for the land*” after ‘price’ in the first line**
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- Insert a new d) saying “*Authorises the Corporate Property Officer to pursue for the land a redesigned scheme having regard to a fresh investigation of demand, the 2021 Parking Standards, this Council’s declaration on Climate Control and all other relevant matters*”**
- Re-letter para d) as e)**

In the recommendation to Council:

- Delete after all text after ‘part of this report’ in the 4th line**

Voting:

For – 7

Against – 8

Abstentions – 0

The amendment was therefore LOST

A Member requested that even though the amendment had been lost that in presenting to Cabinet, the Chairman highlighted the difference of opinions had by Board Members.

The Chairman thanked Board Members and Officers for their contributions.

72. Future Meeting Dates 2021/22

The future meeting dates were noted.

The meeting ended at 9.32 pm

CHAIRMAN