

BOURNEMOUTH, CHRISTCHURCH AND POOLE COUNCIL
OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD

Minutes of the Meeting held on 05 January 2022 at 2.00 pm

Present:-

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

Present: Cllr B Dion, Cllr M Earl, Cllr J Edwards, Cllr D Farr, Cllr S Gabriel,
Cllr M Howell, Cllr T O'Neill, Cllr A M Stribley and Cllr D Borthwick (In
place of Cllr D Kelsey)

Also in attendance: Councillor Mark Anderson
Councillor Philip Broadhead
Councillor Mike Greene
Councillor Andy Hadley
Councillor Drew Mellor

139. Apologies

Apologies were received from Councillors Lewis Allison, Lesley Dedman, David Kelsey and Chris Rigby.

140. Substitute Members

Cllr D Borthwick substituted for Cllr D Kelsey.

141. Declarations of Interests

Cllr V Slade declared, for the purpose of transparency, in relation to agenda items 6, Climate Action Annual Report and 7, Climate Change Enquiry Session that her work role was as a director of climate communications but this had no relevance to the BCP area.

142. Confirmation of Minutes

The minutes of the meetings held on 6 December 2021 were confirmed as a correct record.

142.1 **Action Sheet**

With reference to minute 136, Scrutiny of Finance Related Cabinet Reports – Quarter 2 Budget Monitoring Report, the Chairman advised that he had written to the Chairs of both Children's Services and Health and Adult Social Care Overview and Scrutiny Committees and had received responses from both. The Chairman read out the response from Children's Services and the Chair of Health and Adult Social Care explained that she had sent questions to relevant officers regarding this. Officers had advised that they were facing some recruitment challenges, but they were not using

locums and could fill some posts. Discussions had taken place on the winter position and it was noted that Covid was having some impact on pressures.

143. Public Speaking

There were no public statements or petitions.

A question had been submitted by a member of the public, Mrs Zoe Tees as follows:

The global overheating tragedy accelerates. Crop failure, starvation, floods, fires, ocean acidification, landslides, tornados; effects are multiplying exponentially. We are all vulnerable.

But Councillor Stribley (Echo report 18.12.21) fails to explain to local motorists the deep urgency of the climate crisis let alone show concern for the schoolchildren of the area on an extremely dangerous road (Tatnam). Despite financial government support, the approval of officers, the transport portfolio holder, headteachers, councillors and residents the decision is - inconsistently - being reversed, the road kept open to polluting vehicles. Moreover, BCP still support deadly policies harmful to nature. How can BCP reassure us we'll be speedily protected?

The Chairman responded that a significant part of the question was a statement but the question at the end was related to the agenda items and he did therefore accept it as a relevant question. However, the O&S Board whilst looking into related issues today, was not able to answer the question as the Board was not involved directly in formulating policy. The Chairman suggested that the question be referred to the relevant portfolio holder and that he be asked to respond to it as part of Cabinet's consideration of the Climate Action Annual report.

144. Climate Action Annual Report 2020/21

The Chairman explained to the Board the process for consideration of the items for this meeting. The Climate Change Enquiry would be addressed in three sections. The Climate Action Annual Report which was due to be considered by Cabinet on 12 January 2022 would be dealt with in the normal scrutiny form. The meeting would then move into the informal information gathering session. The Chairman thanked senior officers for being in attendance for this session. The final part of the session was primarily for board members to reflect on the discussions which had taken place.

Climate Action Annual Report – The Portfolio Holder for Sustainability and Transport presented a report, a copy of which had been circulated to each member of the Board and a copy of which appears as Appendix 'A' to these minutes in the Minute Book. The Portfolio Holder and officers addressed a number of points raised by the Board including:

- Measuring carbon usage – The IT changes which had been made increased carbon efficiency from a buildings point of view but there was no recording of potential increased carbon emissions of those working

from home. The Portfolio Holder was asked whether staff would be encouraged back into work from working from home so that the Council was not heating empty offices. The Portfolio Holder advised that it was difficult to measure some of these issues but the way that Council had developed would allow for more efficient use of buildings whilst officers continued some work from home.

- Staff Commuting – It was noted that not all staff could be home-based and the Portfolio Holder was asked what consideration had been given to how staff commuted, particularly care workers, for example whether they had the ability to use co-wheels electric cars to reduce their carbon footprint. The Portfolio Holder advised that issues around car clubs needed further consideration as there were issues with this when the local authorities were merged. Co-Wheels was very Bournemouth based, but the car club strategy needed to be developed.
- Investments – Concerns were raised regarding how the Council's investments were justified under the declared environmental emergency as BCP was using services from one of the most environmentally unfriendly business in the market. A Board member asked whether there were problems with the procurement and tendering process in this regard or the market in general. The Portfolio Holder advised that he felt this issue had already been addressed. There was a sustainable procurement section and policy within the Council's procurement regulations. The Chief Financial Officer advised that there had already been an extensive dialogue with relevant members and officers. The company was a significant local employer and followed its own standards and those set out legally. The Board member commented that concerns remained regarding the company's funding of coal infrastructure, fossil fuels, arctic digging, etc. The Portfolio Holder responded that it was important to address things in a pragmatic way and weight issues appropriately rather than letting one issue dominate everything.
- Future Car Use – A Board member asked about the direction of urban development, whether it was realistic to expect people to maintain a car-free lifestyle in this area and whether the current public transport was a realistic alternative. It was noted that there was a dependency on access to private cars and improving bus services presented a vicious circle which the Council would need to address. Car-free or car-capped developments would need to be accompanied with parking restrictions and those choosing to occupy the developments would need to be encouraged to use public or micro transport as it would be difficult to own a car. If car use continued as currently there would be increased problems with an already congested network.
- Parking SPD – The report affirms that this would create a model shift to sustainable transport and the Board asked what evidence there was for this. There was a lot of evidence from other areas that this would have an effect. In order to make it work well the Council would need to look at parking restrictions and parking zones. However, a Board member noted that national transport statistics were skewed by the well-developed transport infrastructure in major cities, which Bournemouth did not have. The greater density being created should make the area more cyclable than areas which may sprawl outwards. The Portfolio

Holder commented that the area lacked a central business district where a majority of journeys started and ended which made public transport infrastructure more difficult.

- Procurement Mechanism – A Board member asked what percentage of the scoring matrix was allocated to environmental scoping criteria and whether there was a legal maximum for this. The Portfolio Holder commented that whilst the Council had obligations to oppose fossil fuels it also had other responsibilities, particularly to the Council Taxpayer, The Chief Financial Officer advised that the Council's financial regulations had provision for a 10 percent proportion within the scoring criteria which was in line with the sustainable governance provided by government. However, at this time the information was not available on what the tolerances were, under which the Council could operate on this issue.
- Home Working – A concern was raised that although carbon emissions had reduced, home working had not been taken into account. It was noted that it would be possible to work this out as the amount of gas and electricity usage by homes in the BCP area was known. The Board questioned why something so important had not been included within the report.
- Carbon Emissions by Sector – It was noted that it was difficult to ascertain the proportion of emissions outlined in the pie chart within the report. Officers undertook to include a full inventory table which would be supplied to members and included within the report to Council. A Board member advised that they would be interested to know how the aviation and water-based elements were calculated, in particular why the Port element was so low, they were advised that full details of this could be provided.
- Impact of Pets – A Board member asked whether any consideration had been given to the carbon footprint of pets as the target could not be met without addressing the issue at some point prior to 2050. The Board was advised that the Council would be looking to ensure that the trajectory was correct to come down to net zero. If there happened to be some areas which had been omitted the scope of emissions could be widened as further information came forward.
- Impact of Electric Vehicles - Issues were raised around their carbon neutrality and also their lifespan and disposal. There were serious considerations concerning this, both with the parking policy but also on the formula used to measure carbon savings.
- Scope 3 Emission Types – Further questions were asked about why this included the grey fleet, commuting and travel of staff but didn't include carbon emissions from working from home. It was noted that the Council paid for the grey fleet for travel but did not pay contributions for working from home.
- Reporting Issues – It was noted that cafes had not responded with end-of-life costs which presented a problem with accuracy of the information. It was questioned whether there could be a system where data was collected, in a more automated way rather than relying on people completing a return. It was reported that this may be possible, but the impact was very small.

- Climate Action Plan - As 153 items were prioritised originally, the Portfolio Holder was asked whether it was possible to see a list including which items were being progressed and which had not been. The Portfolio Holder advised that it was easy to look at previous climate action plans against the current action plan. It was expected that this would continue year on year, and they responded that this was fully transparent.
- Climate Action Steering Group – It was noted that this was different from the Climate Action Board. The Steering Group was made up of senior leaders within the Council and met every two months to take things forward. A Board member commented that it would be helpful to know who was on this group and asked if a paragraph could be included within the report on this issue
- UK 100 – A Board Member questioned why this had only recently been considered and why there wasn't a commitment to join. The Board member asked that if the Council did join, that records were kept up to date as this had not been the case with the compact of mayors. A Non-Board member suggested that recommendation 'c' of the report should be changed to make a commitment to join UK 100. The Portfolio Holder advised that he wanted to look further into what needed to be done to join and how it was hoped to be achieved before making a commitment. It was also suggested that the Council should be joining the UN's Race to Zero Pledge.
- Council Homes – It appeared from the paper that nothing had been done to improve any Council homes in terms of carbon emissions over the past year, a Board member asked if this was correct. The Board was advised that there had been changes made but it had not been possible to measure these. It was noted that the amount would have gone down but as it was not possible to record this accurately so the figures remained unchanged. It was suggested that it would be sensible to add a line on this basis to explain the situation.
- Carbon Offset – In response to a query regarding the 6,600 tonnes which were from hard to reduce sources the Portfolio Holder advised that carbon offset had to be the last of all possibilities to achieve net zero.
- Minimum Energy Efficiency Standards – The Chairman questioned how these standards would be enforced in the private sector and how the Council would ensure that buildings exceeded the building regulation requirements. In terms of building regulations this would be down to guidance which would sit underneath the local plan. By 2025 there would be a requirement that all private rented properties had to achieve an EPC rating of C or greater. The Council had a duty to ensure the private sector complied with this.

The meeting adjourned at 3:54pm and resumed at 4:04pm.

145. Climate Change Enquiry Session

The Chairman introduced the item and outlined how the enquiry process would work. A number of members of the Board had undertaken to lead questioning on specific areas. The areas of discussion were outlined in the

scoping report which had been circulated to Board members and which was attached at Appendix B to these minutes in the Minute Book. During the enquiry session the issues raised included:

How the Council's leadership championed and directed action on climate change? The Board asked how the Portfolio Holder and the senior leadership team led the process of tackling climate change, how this was done on a daily basis and how that was targeted for each of the different departments. The Portfolio Holder advised that from his perspective the political leadership on this issue was very solid, as was the political support for the climate change agenda that had been put through. This was evidenced particularly financially, but also in the support for putting together the team that was now in place. There had been an increase in activity across the board. The Steering Group was making sure that everyone was pulling in the same direction and ensuring that the action plan had been a collaborative approach. The Leadership on this was extremely strong. The Board asked about the liaison with different teams on a daily basis and how the ongoing work was being disseminated through managers to their teams and delivered.

The Head of Climate Action explained that currently the systems and processes in place were not necessarily the ones that needed to go forward. There was good engagement with directors, but this needed formalising and for it to be made clear how plans tied together to support an overall reduction. All actions would be tracked going forward and there would be a management control process to ensure things moved in the right direction.

More regular meetings would be useful to ensure that the emissions reductions were passed to the appropriate officers in different Directorates and that they were aware of the support that could be provided to them. The Strategic Lead for Climate explained that they had worked with different teams on a case-by-case basis, some teams required more support, and some needed specific support on practical solutions to reduce carbon emissions. It was suggested that it would be useful to have officer responsibility included in the internal version of the Climate Action Plan.

The Board asked how many Council buildings were now on a green energy tariff and how the Council was engaging with the commercial sector and public to encourage similar change – All Council buildings were now on a green tariff. The only non-green contract in place was Christchurch streetlighting, which was in place until 2031/32 but the Portfolio Holder advised that he was happy to take away Cllr A Hadley's suggestion to push them to move towards a green tariff.

The Council would look into how it could green up both commercial and residential centres, but it should not be done by the Council alone. The Climate Leadership Board would include the major partners – including the biggest employers and influencers within the BCP area. It was essential to engage with energy providers, commerce and transportation providers.

The Board asked if the Council was taking action on a commercial retail green energy proposition to the advantage of Council Taxpayers, and if so, what were these initiatives and how did they link to climate objectives. The Board was advised that the Council was in the very early stages of this process. It was agreed that energy providers and partners would be part of the Leadership Board. There were opportunities in this area, but these were in the very initial stages of being explored. The Head of Climate Action agreed that there were potential opportunities. There were a number of leased buildings which were not on a green tariff and there were potential opportunities to utilise roof space for solar panels. The Chief Financial Officer advised that the Council would need to ensure it worked with the financial code. The Portfolio Holder assured the Board they would be looking into this and would involve the Cabinet member support group on buildings and energy. A Board member commented on the increasing pressure on councils to fund their own services and suggested that perhaps there could be a challenge back through the LGA to allow us to do more to fund future development of council services. The Chief Financial Officer advised that he held regular meetings to ensure that any proposals were looked at in an early stage and that the system would be tested if necessary for the benefit of trying to achieve the ambition set out. A Board member questioned whether schemes such as Solar Together, which was not for commercial gain but negotiated as a group buy, were being considered and if not, could it be added to a list of potential opportunities. The Portfolio Holder confirmed that this was amongst many opportunities which could be considered.

The Board asked how the Council was adopting a clear and detailed strategic plan, and how it was mainstreaming climate change mitigation and adaptation? The Chairman commented that from the earlier report it appeared that there were two main elements; activities that the council does and controls for itself and areas of activity within the general conurbation. It appeared that a task list had been formed without having a strategy from which a detailed plan should be formed. The Board asked whether there should be a clear strategy in place so it could be easily seen where we were and the progress which had been made. The Board was advised that there was already a process in place which helped, this was the decision impact assessment. Every decision taken was assessed for its impact on climate change. Rather than one overall plan there were number of plans. It was also suggested that ideally there would be a regional climate change risk assessment and regional decarbonisation plan. The Portfolio Holder also advised that he didn't feel it necessary to pause work just to get a structure in place when it was known what needed to be done.

The Board asked how this was monitored through an organisational perspective, how was everyone informed of where we want to go and how we were going to get there. Every decision had to go through the decision impact assessment, the Climate Action Steering Group ensured that the alignment was in place and the last element was the genuine will from everybody across the Council.

The Board asked how this was developing in the greater area in terms of engagement with local stakeholders and businesses to promote the climate change issues. The Portfolio Holder expressed his disappointment in that the Climate Change Leadership Board had yet to be set up. This was really the next step in order to hit the target but as this developed it did not necessarily mean the Council would be the leader or sole leader. The Head of Climate Action commented that having a strategic plan in place was the number one priority both for within the Council and externally. A strategy was currently being refreshed and it was hoped this would be available by the end of March. There hadn't been sufficient resources in place previously to progress both the strategic plan and the operational work which had been taking place. However, there was now an opportunity to address this and create a plan going forward. It was noted that the action plan was intended to be a live document but there was a need to address prioritising and scheduling of actions to make sure that whatever actions were to be taken had the greatest impact possible, both within the Council and regionally. There was then an opportunity to get a strategic plan going on a regional level up to 2050.

The Board questioned how well the Council understood the need to take action locally. A Board member asked why it was important for the Council, businesses and residents to promote local activity rather than activity more widely. It was clear that there was a need to respond locally because of what happens locally. There were many local issues and threats including flood risk. The Board member commented that it was hoped there was an understanding that the more trade and activities were local the shorter the supply chains were, which would reduce the carbon footprint. It would also have positive results in improving local communities.

The Board asked how much did the Council attribute to local supply in the procurement scoring matrix. The Chief Financial Officer advised that he would need to check and come back on this issue. The Board asked whether Bournemouth Airport and Poole Harbour had agreed to participate in the Board. It was confirmed that they were both expected to be on the Board but there had not been any further discussions surrounding this.

In response to a question about a more frequent stopper service on local rail the Portfolio Holder commented that this would be an extremely desirable outcome. A turn up and go level of service was required and an integrated system would be extremely important. There was more opportunity to work with the local bus companies as a non-fixed element in developing a metro system. However, a local system would need to be accommodated along with fast trains to London.

The Strategic Lead for Climate, in response to a question about sustainable food cities, advised that there had been a number of sustainable food initiatives whether through the sustainable Food Cities project or individual campaigns such as fair-trade towns. It was also noted that a lot of pressure to make changes, such as sustainable palm oil was being driven by pressure from the market. The Board asked what the Council was doing to encourage businesses to localise their supply chains. It was widely

accepted that compared to other places in the country there was not a great relationship between local farming producers and businesses. Produce didn't seem to make its way into shops and restaurants in the same way it did in other places. BCP wanted to take supply chains into account and understand the impact of these. There was a sustainable business group which included environmental officers and financial officers, which had been able to explore things like food co-operatives. There was a need to make numbers work for suppliers and also for businesses within BCP. Economic and social benefits of shorter supply chains also needed to be taken into account.

The Board asked how the Council reviewed its investment strategy, supply chains and procurement models to give due consideration to climate change impacts. A Councillor informed the Board that officers had confirmed that the Council had not set out a sustainable procurement strategy beyond that set out in the BCP Financial Regulations and asked whether there was an intention to move forward with a sustainable procurement policy outlining green, local and ethical procurement practices. It was suggested that the Leader would need to respond to this question in full but the Board was advised that a balance in procurement processes was required and further discussion on this issue would be needed. The Chief Financial Officer advised that there wasn't a set percentage within the procurement strategy in terms of sourcing locally, but this was looked at on each individual procurement. Each would need to be assessed on its own merits as by setting a fixed amount it could lead to the exclusion of some small business. The Board member commented that there were different interpretations of what was meant by sustainability in terms of the investment strategy.

A Board Member observed that there had been little or no mention of the natural environment. This could be an excellent contributor for biodiversity in the area and have an impact on climate change. The Board asked how the Council was acting as a custodian of the natural environment which it owned and what were the plans for wildlife corridors. The Portfolio Holder for Environment and Place advised that there were many different green initiatives underway, and the green infrastructure strategy was in the later stages of drafting. There were lots of pieces of green space over a very wide-ranging area. The Council should also consider some of the plans and testing which had taken place elsewhere. The Portfolio Holder for Development, Growth and Regeneration advised that this was a major issue as part of the local plan process. There was a significant section in the local plan on climate change itself. There were decisions and consequences related to this which would need to be considered in the future. It was noted that urban densification could be positive in respect of less need to travel. The climate and ecological emergency work would also feed into the local plan.

The section on how the council was planning to understand and act on the need to adapt existing properties and estates to address the impacts of climate change was partially responded to but it was suggested that further responses may be provided outside of the meeting. The Board was

advised that Poole Housing Partnership had undertaken an assessment of all housing stock to identify the carbon emissions and then identify what measures were needed to improve energy efficiency. There was a programme of work in place which would be fulfilled with the budget setting process, and it was understood that colleagues in Bournemouth were undertaking similar measures.

The Board asked about whether there was a robust carbon literacy training programme in place. There were already good programmes in place through the LGA and others, but the Council was working on a programme with the University. The Board asked how the Council was supporting and working with relevant private and civic actors in the area towards climate change mitigation adaptation. Many councils had done really good work with citizens groups and direct engagement without having a citizens' assembly in place. The Portfolio Holder advised that they would be working with non-state actors through the Climate Leaders Group but that they were reluctant to include specific interest groups as sometimes their agenda was too specific as to where we want to be. There was also engagement with the public in terms of the action plan. It was agreed that all officers needed to be at a certain level of carbon literacy and how to train them was being considered. The Portfolio Holder advised that he would ask the Climate Strategic Lead to provide further information on this issue. A specific request was made that all Councillors should be included in carbon literacy training. It was noted that this was part of the induction programme for Councillors, but the Council would ensure everyone was fully informed.

The Board asked what measures were being taken to ensure that health and social care systems would be resilient with the extra pressures they would come under due to climate change. The Covid pandemic had thrown a spotlight on the health system and the aging population put further pressures on the care system. The UK Climate Change risk assessment identified climate change as one of the greatest risks to public health in the UK and one which would impact vulnerable people disproportionately. The Board asked how resilient the system was and how was it reacting locally to pressures. The Board was advised that the majority of care locally was delivered by external care providers which had their own plans to deal with continuity of care issues. The overriding issue was how rare occurrences that created disruption for a period of time were planned for. The Local Resilience Forum would be stood up to consider how to plan for appropriate disruptions. There were more frequent issues around storms or disruptions. The Local Resilience Forum adopted an emergency planning approach. In these circumstances providers would prioritise care calls.

The Council needed to work with hospitals on reducing air pollution and we all needed to consider the impact on the environment for any health choices which were made. The Portfolio Holder confirmed that he would expect to see health partners as key members of the Climate Action Leadership Board.

Public Health Dorset was promoting a lot of the health inequalities work and Building control would be working closely with the hospital around their building projects.

A Board Member asked whether the Council had an opportunity to look at the providers resilience plans. At the start of the pandemic the Council asked all providers to review and update these and had looked at the plans for all 183 providers. These would be reviewed again in light of current changes.

The Board asked how the council identified those who were most at risk from the impacts of climate change, and what was being done to assist the most vulnerable. The Board questioned whether there was any broader work specifically around equalities and the wider climate plan; how the Council identified those who were most at risk from the impacts of climate change and what was being done to assist the most vulnerable. The Portfolio Holder trusted that the measures employed by the Equalities Board and reviews would identify those that would be most affected, both by the actions that were taken and also by the effects of climate change itself. As each decision came forward it would be accompanied by a DIA, which would take equality issues into account.

The Board Member advised that it was also wider than look that, looking at social, economic, financial and geographical impacts that effected different pockets of individuals or how communities might actually suffer with some of the effects. The Portfolio Holder was asked whether vulnerability plans had been or could be considered. The Portfolio Holder advised that he wasn't aware of this but would take it up with officers. The Portfolio Holder mentioned some of the policies which were being put into place which included LEAP scheme and an opportunity to provide insulation and other measures for those who were not on the highest incomes. The latest scheme had a limit of approximately £42k annual income. There was also a free assessment available if a home had an EPC rating of D or lower. It was thought that BCP was the first to be offering such a scheme. There was an opportunity for those who may not be financially struggling, a scheme open to more people to access an assessment. It was reported that at present 1400 households had accessed the LEAP scheme. It was suggested that this needed to be pushed out further. It was suggested that the scheme should also be open to people who were not financial struggling to pay for the service. It was noted that this measure was in place and there was a small incentive scheme for others as well.

The Board member asked about how the Council was engaging on this issue with those groups who did not normally have much of a voice, particularly young people and children, older voices and those from minority groups. The Portfolio Holder responded that the opportunity was open but perhaps there was more to be done to encourage engagement from these groups and this may need to be left to the experts to address.

The Chairman proposed that the final part of the meeting, the decision-making section, would be added to the agenda for the next meeting of the

Board. This would allow everyone time to reflect on the issues which had been raised. The Chairman thanked the Portfolio Holder and the Portfolio Holder thanked everyone on the Board who had participated and particularly the officers who had answered the questions which the Board had gone through.

146. Forward Plan

The Chairman advised that he had a number of changes to the Forward Plan for the Board's meetings on 31 January, but that this would be updated outside of the meeting and circulated to Board members.

The Vice-Chair requested that an item be added to the agenda on play, including; its role in health and wellbeing, whether there was a strategy in place and the role of play in poorer neighbourhoods.

The Lead Member for the Enforcement Working Group provided an update to the Board on what the group had considered in its initial meeting and the areas which it would like to move forward on. There were a number of issues considered but the areas that the group wanted to initially focus on were; street-based littering and dog fouling and Bylaws, including finding out what these were and how they were enforced.

147. Future Meeting Dates 2021/22

The dates for future meetings were noted.

The meeting ended at 6.18 pm

CHAIRMAN