

BOURNEMOUTH, CHRISTCHURCH AND POOLE COUNCIL
COUNCIL

Minutes of the Annual Meeting held on 10 May 2022 at 11.00 pm

Present:-

Cllr N Hedges – Chairman

Cllr T O'Neill – Vice-Chairman

Present: Cllr H Allen, Cllr L Allison, Cllr M Anderson, Cllr S C Anderson, Cllr M Andrews, Cllr J Bagwell, Cllr S Baron, Cllr S Bartlett, Cllr J Beesley, Cllr D Borthwick, Cllr P Broadhead, Cllr M F Brooke, Cllr N Brooks, Cllr D Brown, Cllr S Bull, Cllr R Burton, Cllr D Butler, Cllr D Butt, Cllr J J Butt, Cllr E Coope, Cllr M Cox, Cllr M Davies, Cllr L Dedman, Cllr B Dion, Cllr B Dove, Cllr B Dunlop, Cllr M Earl, Cllr G Farquhar, Cllr D Farr, Cllr L Fear, Cllr A Filer, Cllr S Gabriel, Cllr M Greene, Cllr N Greene, Cllr A Hadley, Cllr M Haines, Cllr P R A Hall, Cllr P Hilliard, Cllr M Howell, Cllr M Iyengar, Cllr T Johnson, Cllr A Jones, Cllr J Kelly, Cllr D Kelsey, Cllr R Lawton, Cllr L Lewis, Cllr R Maidment, Cllr C Matthews, Cllr S McCormack, Cllr D Mellor, Cllr P Miles, Cllr S Moore, Cllr L Northover, Cllr S Phillips, Cllr M Phipps, Cllr K Rampton, Cllr Dr F Rice, Cllr V Ricketts, Cllr C Rigby, Cllr R Rocca, Cllr M Robson, Cllr V Slade, Cllr T Trent, Cllr M White and Cllr L Williams

1. Apologies

Apologies were received from Councillors N Decent, J Edwards, L-J Evans, D Flagg, N Geary, C Johnson, M Le Poidevin and K Wilson.

2. Declarations of Interests

The Chief Executive reported that no declarations had been received for this meeting but reminded Members of the guidance set out on the agenda.

3. Election of Chair of the Council

Councillor O'Neill took the Chair for this item,

Nominations were received as follows:

- Councillor Nigel Hedges – proposed by Councillor Susan Phillips and seconded by Councillor Toby Johnson
- Councillor Vanessa Ricketts – proposed by Councillor Vikki Slade and seconded by Councillor Margaret Phipps.

The proposers and seconders commented on the reason for above nominations and the nominees' ability to fulfil the role. The nominees commented on the skills that they can bring to the role. A secret ballot was

undertaken in accordance with the Constitution. The outcome of the ballot was reported as follows:

Councillor Nigel Hedges 39

Councillor Vanessa Ricketts 27

RESOLVED that Councillor Nigel Hedges be elected Chair of the Council until the next Annual Council meeting in 2023.

Councillor Hedges thanked Councillors for electing him as Chair and for showing their confidence in him.

Councillor Hedges made and signed the declaration of acceptance of office.

"I Councillor Nigel Hedges having been elected to the office of Chair of BCP Council declare that I take the office upon myself and will duly and faithfully fulfil the duties of it according to the best of my judgement and ability.

4. Election of Vice-Chair of the Council

Councillor Hedges took the Chair for the remainder of the meeting.

The following nomination was received:

- Councillor Tony O'Neill – proposed by Councillor Mark Anderson and seconded by Councillor Bryan Dion.

The proposer and seconder outlined the reasons for the nomination and the nominee's ability to fulfil the role. There were no other nominations.

RESOLVED that Councillor O'Neill was elected Vice-Chair of the Council until the next Annual Council meeting in 2023.

Councillor O'Neill thanked Councillors for electing him and for showing their confidence in him.

Councillor O'Neill made and signed the declaration of acceptance of office.

"I Councillor Tony O'Neill having been elected to the office of Vice-chair of BCP Council declare that I take the office upon myself and will duly and faithfully fulfil the duties of it according to the best of my judgement and ability.

Councillors Filer, Kelly and Williams left at 11.25 pm

5. Review of the political balance of the Council, the allocation of seats on Committees to each Political Group, appointment of Councillors to Committees and appointments to Outside Bodies

The Head of Democratic Services reported that the report, on the review of the political balance of the Council, the allocation of seats on Committees to each political group, the appointment of Councillors on Committees and appointment of outside bodies as part of the annual review had been published following discussions with the Group Leaders a copy of which appears as Appendix 'A' to these Minutes in the Minute Book.

Members were advised that there were some gaps in the identification of Councillors in view of the timescale and political group Leaders were given until 12 noon on Friday 13 May 2022 to notify Democratic Services of how any vacancies would be filled. The Head of Democratic Services reported that there was no imbalance in the proportionality.

Councillor Slade expressed her concerns on the allocation of seats on the Overview and Scrutiny Committees.

Councillor Mellor moved the recommendations in the report as presented which were seconded by Councillor Broadhead.

RESOLVED that:

- (a) the revised political balance of the Council, as set out in Appendix 1, Table 1, be approved;**
- (b) the allocation of seats to each political group, as set out in Appendix 1, Table 2, be approved;**
- (c) the appointment of Councillors to Committees and Boards, taking account of the membership as set out in Appendix 1, Table 3, be approved;**
- (d) the allocation of seats to each political group on the outside bodies, as detailed in Appendix 1, Table 4, be approved;**
- (e) the appointment of Councillors to the outside bodies, as detailed in Appendix 1, Table 5, be approved;**
- (f) subject to (b) to (e) above the Council approved the appointment of unaligned Members to Committees, Boards and Outside bodies as detailed in Appendix 1.**

Voting – Nem con

6. Calendar of Meetings for 2022/23 and 2023/24

The Head of Democratic Services presented a report on the Calendar of Meetings for 2022/23 and 2023/24, 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 Head of Democratic Services reported that due to the decision taken regarding the Overview and Scrutiny function there was a change to recommendation b as set out in the report. He also outlined changes to the calendar and the approach to the pre-election period in 2023.

Councillor Mellor moved the recommendations as amended which were seconded by Councillor Broadhead.

RESOLVED that:

- (a) the approach to the scheduling of meetings during the period prior to the Local Elections on 4 May 2023 as set out in Appendix 1 to the report be agreed.**
- (b) subject to the decision of the Council at the reconvened meeting on 10 May 2022 on the development of the Overview and Scrutiny**

Function, authority be delegated to the Overview and Scrutiny bodies, to set their schedule of meetings with the first meetings to be agreed by Council. (Note the first meetings of these bodies would be Corporate and Community Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 19 May at 6 pm, Place Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 24 May at 6 pm, Health and Adult Social Care Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 23 May at 6 pm and Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committees on 7 June at 6 pm).

- (c) subject to (a) and (b) above the schedule of meetings for the 2022/23 and 2023/24 municipal years as attached at Appendix 1 to the report be approved.**

Voting – Nem. Con.

7. Members' Allowances Scheme 2022-2023

The Monitoring Officer reported that all Councillors had been granted a dispensation to vote on this item.

The Head of Democratic Services presented a report on the Members' Allowances Scheme 2022-23, 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. He reported that whilst there were no proposed changes to the allowances at this point in terms of an increase. A previous decision taken by the Council was that allowances would be increased in line with the national pay award for employees which has yet to be determined for 2022-23 but would be backdated to 10 May 2022. The Head of Democratic Services reported on the changes needed as a result of the decision taken on the Overview and Scrutiny function and asked that row J in Appendix 1 be removed. The net increase of the Chairs SRAs would be £5,143.

Councillor Mellor moved the amended recommendations as set out by the Head of Democratic Services which were seconded by Councillor Broadhead.

RESOLVED that

- (a) subject to the deletion of row J referring to the Overview and Scrutiny Board the schedule of Members' Allowances, as set out in Appendix 1 to this report, be approved with effect from 10 May 2022;**
- (b) the allowances as set out in the schedule be increased in accordance with the Employees' National Pay Award when determined and back-dated to 10 May 2022.**

Voting - Nem. Con

Councillor Bagwell, Coope and Bagwell left at 11.40 pm

8. Questions from Councillors

The following questions were submitted.

Question from Councillor Vikki Slade

Poole Civic Centre is due to be decommissioned later this month for staff and for works to commence on a 'vertical slice' around the historic section of the building to create a new coroners court, space for the mayoralty and for the Charter Trustees of Poole. The section was being isolated from the rest of the building so that the rest of the site could be remodelled or redeveloped, with suggestions including housing, hotel or community use.

I recently became aware that the planned works on the Vertical Slice has been shelved as BCP Future Places is concerned that proceeding might compromise plans for the rest of the site and no work will be undertaken over the summer. Can the leader please explain why neither the Mayor of Poole, the Civic Working Party for BCP nor the Charter Trustees of Poole have been consulted about this change of plan, and what the impact will be on the creation of committee rooms and the remodelling of BCP Civic Centre at Bournemouth Town Hall, and on the likelihood of the coroners service remaining in the conurbation if the coroners court will not be vacating this space as planned?

Reply from Councillor Drew Mellor, Leader of the Council

Let me remind the member of an email on this topic that I have sent to members including her, last week. Nothing in this work from Future Places changes the absolute commitment that the charter trustees and mayoralty will ultimately be located as agreed at the Poole Civic (the vertical slice). So to be clear, no plans have been shelved.

This piece of work is to assure us all of who would be the best anchor tenant ie a service like the Coroner or a lease to an anchor tenant like a quality hotelier.

In addition, both the project team and Democratic services have been working with the Poole Charter Trustees to find alternative accommodation and facilities for their use – something that would have had to have happened even were we imminently proceeding with the project to develop and retain the "vertical slice".

Plans to improve committee meeting space in BCP Civic Centre, including improvements to the Council chamber remain a priority. We are relocating the Cabinet and other Committee meetings to a dedicated space within the BCP Civic Centre Annexe and in addition a dedicated space for the coroner also in the Civic Centre Annexe while ongoing works to the BCP Civic Centre progress.

Councillor Slade clarified that the question was submitted before the email was sent out and after several weeks of toing and froing and it was disappointing that the Leader chose not to engage with anyone until after a question had been submitted to Council.

Question from Councillor Mike Cox

Given the increase in the Transformation budgets for the current year includes over £7 million of staff costs can the Cabinet Member confirm what will happen to these staff members when the Transformation program is completed. Will they

- a) Be made redundant
- b) Be redeployed
- c) A mixture of the 2

If a) have the staff been informed and the redundancy costs factored into the budget and if b) are the redeployment costs factored into the MTFP.

Reply from Councillor Drew Mellor, Leader of the Council

As set out in the 2022/23 Budget Report the council engaged with both CIPFA Consultancy and the External Auditor to provide assurance that the recharge of staff working on the programme who, are therefore not available to support day to day or statutory improvement duties, accorded with the regulations on the Flexible Use of Capital Receipts regulations being used to funding transformation expenditure.

This £6.7m per annum recharge is only part of the time of numerous staff throughout the organisation and will vary as to who it relates to each year as the transformation programme moves through its various phases.

Therefore, the MTFP assumes that the recharge is for the three years to the 31 March 2025 with the costs of these staff in their entirety being again borne from the General Fund from 2025/26 onwards. At which point it is the intention to have delivered the full transformation savings programme, totalling c£50m.

Councillor Cox as a supplementary indicated that must mean b) that they are going to be redeployed. Councillor Mellor in response explained that the staff are not being redeployed they are in their current posts we have no plans to change those, but we do have a plan to make £50m savings to deliver the type of organisation that we created BCP Council for.

Question from Councillor Mike Cox

In the recent settlement by HMG of the Dedicated Schools Grant for the 9 local authorities facing the biggest challenge in respect of deficits these Councils have only received settlements of circa 65% of the deficit. The Councils must cover the remainder from their unallocated reserves.

Can the Cabinet Member confirm that BCP has the adequate budgeted unallocated reserves as at the end of this financial year to accept this offer if it were made?

Reply from Councillor Drew Mellor, Leader of the Council

The 9 local authorities referred to (and the previous 5) are part of what is referred to as the "Safety Valve" mechanism which are the authorities with the highest current levels of absolute deficits on their Dedicated Schools Grants were required to be part off.

BCP Council is not part of the safety valve mechanism as we are not at the threshold of the safety valve authorities but has instead been invited to be part of the “Delivering Better Value” (DBV) in SEND programme. This DBV is a 3-year voluntary transformation programme for authorities with smaller but growing deficits and is linked to Ofsted for those authorities with Written Statements of Action. Councils invited to be part of this programme will get access to resources to support the delivery of the reforms.

The risk associated with this position has been set out clearly as part of the 2022/23 Budget report.

At the end of the meeting the Chairman announced that Karen Tompkins, Deputy Head of Democratic Services would be retiring in June after 36 years service. Councillors gave her a standing ovation.

The meeting ended at 11.45 pm

CHAIRMAN