

**BOURNEMOUTH, CHRISTCHURCH AND POOLE COUNCIL**  
**CORPORATE AND COMMUNITY OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

Minutes of the Meeting held on 06 February 2023 at 6.00 pm

Present:-

Cllr L Williams – Chairman

Present: Cllr L Allison, Cllr M Andrews, Cllr S Bartlett, Cllr M Davies,  
Cllr L Dedman, Cllr N Hedges, Cllr M Iyengar, Cllr V Slade and  
Cllr A Filer (In place of Cllr R Rocca)

Also in attendance: Cllr D Mellor, Cllr G Farquhar and Cllr A Martin

62. Apologies

Apologies were received from Cllr R Rocca.

63. Substitute Members

Cllr A Filer Substituted for Cllr R Rocca.

64. Declarations of Interests

In response to a query about unknown potential interests in relation to the list of savings in connection with the budget report, the Monitoring Officer advised that for transparency if Committee members felt that they may have an interest they should declare this. It was acknowledged that members would not have had time to consider the further information regarding this and it should be treated as exempt information and not as part of the papers for the meeting. The following declarations were made for the purpose of transparency on this basis:

Cllr M Andrews advised that they were Chairman of St Peter's Surveying Limited.

Cllr V Slade advised that they were Chair of the Broadstone Youth Centres Trust.

Cllr S Bartlett advised that they were a member of BH Live and BH Live Enterprises. They also advised that they were a member of Tricuro Executive Board.

The Chairman advised that they were a member of the Arts Council.

Cllr M Iyengar and the Chairman declared their membership of the Russell-Cotes Art Gallery and Museum Management Committee.

Cllr V Slade, Cllr S Bartlett and the Chairman advised that they were all members of the Lower Central Gardens Trust Board.

In response to a question it was confirmed by the monitoring officer that as the Committee was not a decision making body a general dispensation to address the setting of Council tax was not required but this would be provided for all members for the full Council meeting when this would be discussed

65. Public Issues

There were no public petitions or statements. Two public questions were received from Mr McKinstry, a local resident. Mr McKinstry attended the meeting to put their questions. The questions and responses are outlined below:

1. If the Leader does produce a new budget proposal - perhaps as an amendment to the current budget on 21 February - will he publish, well in advance, all advice he has received on the soundness and legality of that proposal? (The Minister has suggested CIPFA be approached, for instance.) I well remember the KPMG reports being withheld during last year's budget; including the warning, on page 48 of the first report, that the Council borrowing to purchase its own assets "would be deemed for an improper purpose" - a warning omitted from 2022's budget paperwork.

Thank you for the question. Yeah, I've been clear in our, public statements on this and also in the budget café., The second budget cafe we had with Members was looking forward to bringing forward the budget proposal this evening. But we were also stating that we were going to take the extra time between now and the full Council in February to see it worked through tirelessly to see if we can improve the budget situation and in particular, Council tax requirement. Just one thing I will correct, if I may, the Council, can't use borrowing to fund revenue expenditures. So the expectation then or what was alluded to in your questions, was technically incorrect. But we look forward to continuing to work harder to make sure of the other means to fund local government services and public accounts for the taxpayer. Thank you.

2. If the Leader does produce a new budget proposal - perhaps as an amendment to the current budget on 21 February - will he publish, well in advance, all advice he has received on the soundness and legality of that proposal? (The Minister has suggested CIPFA be approached, for instance.) I well remember the KPMG reports being withheld during last year's budget; including the warning, on page 48 of the first report, that the Council borrowing to purchase its own assets "would be deemed for an improper purpose" - a warning omitted from 2022's budget paperwork.

Thank you very much. Yes, absolutely. We made it clear again in the budget cafe session that any, anything, any advice we've got would be made available. Again, they've put forward any budget amendment and also we had a confirmation from conversations with Minister Lee Rowley in terms of, the conversation we'd had in his expectation, obviously that any budget amendments or more budgets are legal, so they comply with our section 151 officers advice and any other statutory officers and also the current guidance. So, the simple answer to your question, Mr Kinstry would be, absolutely yes. Thank you.

66. Confirmation of Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 3 December 2022 were approved as a correct record.

67. Transformation Programme Update

The Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Finance and Transformation 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 Committee were advised that the implementation of the Council's new Organisational Design and Operating model was a fundamental part of the wider "Our New Normal" transformation programme and that significant progress was being made in the implementation of the three programmes; Organisational Design; Where and how we work; and Supporting our Colleagues. In the subsequent discussion a number of issues were raised by the Committee and responded to by the Portfolio Holder and Officers including:

- That the area in which someone lived still had an impact on the services provided and how these were accessed. The aspiration was for a single service for the area and this was being worked towards. Yes that is the aspiration working towards - currently implementing customer resource management system – reengineering the customer front door including website elements – improve the way things are working at the moment. Looking towards Autumn of this year. Mosaic for social care for whole area now all on one system, so in this instance no need to
- When this was considered by the O&S Board in August 2021, one of the outcomes was the proposed establishment of cross-party councillor transformation group. However, this had still not been established and it was asked why this was the case.
- It was noted that current customer interactions were not efficient, and it was noted that the system changes which would drive efficiency would also lead to an improved outcome for customer services. This has been the ethos of the Transformation Programme for the last few years.
- It was noted that Enterprise, Resource, Planning systems were being implemented at great costs and could be impressive but may also fail to deliver benefits and a close eye would need to be kept on the big ticket items coming through to ensure that the benefits were realised. It was

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agreed that evaluating the benefits was important, for example in Children's Services cases were now on one system rather than passed over between systems as it was before.

- Concern was raised that staff were not comfortable bringing issues forward or people were not being properly informed. There appeared to be a disconnect here. The Committee was advised that it did need to be ensured that this work went through the whole organisation but that middle management were in a difficult place in terms of what they are able to communicate to their teams. It was felt that this was moving in the right direction, but Councillors were asked to make officers aware if they felt there was a specific problem.
- Previously prior to LGR Councillors were advised that this process would be straightforward, and it was good to see Mosaic working but the process was clearly a lot more difficult than it was understood to be initially and it would be useful to see an overview or top-level programme plan for this. The Committee was advised that BCP was the only Council which had to bring three different Council Services together. It was generally expected to take 10 years to bring all services together in a single council.
- That the report seemed to be about the financial savings and didn't reflect a people focus but it was good to hear how the system improvements would impact on customer services.
- There were queries raised around the finances of the transformation programme, the report indicated £43.9 million in benefits and efficiencies. Member queried if the figure was £43.9million or £50million as had been previously provided. A revised target for transformation savings was provided. At the back end of the MTFP it was hoped to move to 20 percent of savings. The Committee was advised that in total, over the first four years the Council budgeted for total savings of £47.9 million and included in that was £8.7 million, specifically in relation to transformation. In the Medium Term Financial Plan the savings that were directly related to the transformation investment programme were £43.9 million. These were in the upper band of figures provided by KPMG. There were risks with assuming the higher figures and therefore careful monitoring were required.
- Clarification was sought on when work on the Council Chamber and meeting rooms would be completed. It was not thought that listed building consent for the work had been achieved as yet. Those working on estates and accommodation are working through details of those changes. It was noted that the Council Chamber accessibility was an issue. It was noted that the current Council Chamber was a compromise with resources available, but the accessibility issues were being considered. Councillors sought greater visibility with this programme of work. Issues were also raised regarding the work at Poole Civic Centre. The Chief Executive undertook to provide further information on this issue, via the programme lead.

RECOMMENDED/RESOLVED that

(a) Corporate and Community Overview & Scrutiny Board note the progress made on the implementation of the Council's new Organisational Design & Operating Model

68. Scrutiny of Finance Related Cabinet Reports

The Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Finance and Transformation 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. In the ensuing discussion the Committee raised a number of issues which were responded to by the Portfolio Holder and Officers including:

- Concerns were raised regarding proposed cuts in grants to non-profit cultural organisations. The Leader advised that the Council was working to ensure that these saving cuts would not be required.
- Whether the recommendation at "o", "agrees capital investment of £5m in seafront infrastructure assets funded by borrowing supported by revisions to beach hut fees", was needed. This was to follow on from the paper taken to Cabinet in December and identifies the major capital investment outlined at section 123 of the report.
- Whether the recommendation outlined at 'q', "That Cabinet confirms the previously approved budget of £12.5 million for Roeshot Hill and Crescent Road to be repurposed and used under the CNHAS Programme", was working.
- The plans for taking forward the budget report through Cabinet and Council and whether there was an additional proposal which may be worked up and presented to Cabinet and/or Council. The Leader advised that there was no proposal to bring forward anything differently to the Cabinet meeting to be voted on. However, there was also an aim to try to improve the position regarding the Council Tax increase. The Leader advised that with the current political balance situation this would need to be opened up to discussion with the other political groups.
- In response to queries regarding an outline of the legitimate timeframe in terms of the Council deadlines it was confirmed that any member could bring a proposed amendment to the S151 officer by the deadline of three clear working days prior to the Council meeting. It was confirmed that this applied to all.
- That it was unfair for school funding issues with the dedicated schools grant to be picked up by local authorities. It was noted that this was within the legislation and the Council did not have any choice on this. The Committee was advised that at some point this would need to be addressed and paid for by someone, be it schools local councils or government.
- Risks associated with FuturePlaces. Concerns were raised around the situation of full business cases being approved and what the market conditions may be like in terms of being able to secure financing to take these forward. The possibility of the Council having to take a loss on a development as not being able to secure funding on it. Whether there was an option to reign in some of the work of future places

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- The proposed non-traditional commercialisation, and work with partners and the timeframe set out to be able to do this only providing 3 months.
- The 130 lines of cuts outlined and how much of this would be achieved through efficiencies and transformation.
- The proposed cuts in grants to community organisations such as the Citizens Advice Bureau and Community Action Partnership. There were also issues raised concerning communications to the organisations potentially impacted. It was suggested that other proposed budget cuts would lead to more pressure on these voluntary organisations.
- Further queries were raised regarding whether this was the budget which would be presented to Council. The Committee was advised that it was unless it could be material improved.
- Queries were raised concerning the proposed Council Tax increase and the impact on the budget and the impact on households. It was noted that the number of households used to calculate this was outlined in the Council Tax base report taken to Cabinet in January, this was set at 144,839 for 2023/24.
- In response to a query the Section 151 officer advised that he was providing assurance that the report as presented provided a balanced budget. However, it was indicated that there were a number of issues which were highlighted in the report. The Committee sought further assurance that the savings as outlined in the report were deliverable. It was confirmed that there was ongoing work with Cabinet and CMB to ensure that the savings could be achieved.
- In response to a question it was confirmed that the local council tax support scheme would be continuing.
- There was concern raised that some of the current savings was due to difficulty in recruitment which in effect meant that the level of service provision was reduced and in the longer term there would be an impact arising due to a need to engage temporary staff. In response it was noted that there would be significantly more money going into adult social care over the years.
- Concerns were expressed that the budget presented was high risk and that it appeared that the administration were making every effort to put forward changes to the proposed budget. The Leader advised that this was a detailed methodological approach.
- The Committee questioned whether there were any alternative draft papers available which would be released. It was confirmed that this was not the case. The Section 151 officer advised that the only advice which could be offered was on proposals presented and requested that any alternative proposals be put forward in an appropriate timeframe to allow reasonable consideration.

The Committee recorded its thanks to the Chief Financial Officer and the finance team for the preparation of the budget.

There was a concern raised that the Leader of the Council left the meeting at this point. The Chairman was asked if he could write to the leader to raise concerns with how scrutiny was being treated.

69. Work Plan

The Chairman 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.

Committee members noted their disappointment that there had not been opportunity for further meetings of this important Committee. It was noted that there were a number of items on the work programme which were outstanding. A number of the items on the Work plan were now due to come to the Cabinet meeting in March. It was noted that the number of Overview and Scrutiny meetings were being considered by the Constitution Review working Group. The Chairman advised that he would look into the possibility of an additional meeting and discuss this with Democratic Services. It was noted that special meetings outside of the normal schedule would need to be agreed with the monitoring officer by the Chairman. It was suggested that a meeting could be conducted virtually if this would make the practicalities of scheduling this more straight forward.

The meeting ended at 9.03 pm

CHAIRMAN