

**BOURNEMOUTH, CHRISTCHURCH AND POOLE COUNCIL**  
**CABINET**

Minutes of the Meeting held on 06 September 2023 at 10.15 am

Present:-

Cllr V Slade – Chairman

Cllr M Earl – Vice-Chairman

Present: Cllr D Brown, Cllr R Burton, Cllr M Cox, Cllr J Hanna, Cllr A Martin  
and Cllr K Wilson

Also in attendance  
virtually: Cllr P Broadhead and Cllr S Bartlett

Apologies: Cllr A Hadley

16. Declarations of Interests

Councillor Millie Earl declared an interest as a member of the SLM Everyone Active Poole Leisure Centres in relation to Minute No. 24 (Management of Leisure Centres).

Councillor Andy Martin declared an interest as a Director/ Trustee of BH Live in relation to Minute No. 24 (Management of Leisure Centres) and refrained from voting thereon.

17. Confirmation of Minutes

The Minutes of the meeting held on 26 July 2023 were confirmed and signed as a correct record.

18. Public Issues

**Statement from Rev Paul Hockley, Churches Together in Poole on Agenda Item 8**

Bournemouth is the second busiest crematorium in the UK.

Current profit is £1,178,000 which after deducting £365000 yearly cost still leaves a profit of £813400 into the Council's general funds.

Bereavement Services should not be used as a cash cow for other Council services. Any profit on Bereavement Services should be used first to enhance that Service.

If electric cremators were installed, BCP could claim to have one of the only few carbon neutral crematoriums in the UK.

BCP will be without any working cremators for a time when the gas cremators in Bournemouth are due for replacement in 27/28.

**Statement from Nick Douch on Agenda Item 8 – read out by Democratic Services**

We stand here as concerned residents, deeply troubled by recent decisions surrounding Poole Crematorium.

The claim of "lack of funds" for maintaining this essential service raises eyebrows when we recall that services worth an estimated £500k - £1M went un-invoiced for nearly a year. This irony cannot be ignored.

We believe in accountability and transparency. We question why private investment options were overlooked, and why sentiments of families who value Poole Crematorium weren't given more weight.

We must restore the dignity of choices and trust in local governance.

It's crucial to prioritise transparency and community engagement to make well-informed decisions.

**Statement from Rev Helen Bailey, Churches Together in Broadstone on Agenda Item 8 - read out by Democratic Services**

On behalf of Churches Together in Broadstone, leaders and laity: we strongly oppose pausing installation of new cremators at Poole Crematorium. Those needing local ceremonies/services are distressed, forced to choose between accompanying their loved one on final journey to Bournemouth or attending the wake with family/friends. Distance/journey time prevents both, causing serious risk of Poole Crematorium and local funeral directors other than Tappers going out of business. It impacts the bereaved's ability to hold church funerals for the same reason, denying their spiritual role and comfort received. We urge you to proceed with installing cremators.

**Statement from Rt Revd Karen Gorham, Bishop of Sherborne on Agenda Item 8 - read out by Democratic Services**

'The decision to restore the full crematorium facility was met with much relief. Many look to Poole as their nearest crematorium including Blandford, Purbeck and Wimborne.

The removal of the body for disposal elsewhere isn't always acceptable and families have been forced into paying for a private cremation or going elsewhere.

In 2021 78% of the population chose cremation, in 1970 it was 55%, alongside an increasing and aging population, demand will only increase.

Investment in the cremators at Poole will meet pastoral and financial need so I urge the Council to continue to invest in them'.

19. Recommendations from the Overview and Scrutiny Board

The Chairman of the Corporate and Community Overview and Scrutiny Committee addressed the Cabinet advising that whilst there were no additional recommendations from the Overview and Scrutiny Committees on items not otherwise indicated on the Cabinet agenda on this occasion

but stressed the need to reform the Overview and Scrutiny process in order to allow the opportunity for pre-Cabinet agenda scrutiny.

20. Budget Monitoring 2023/24 at Quarter One

The Portfolio Holder for Finance 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.

Cabinet was advised that the report provided the quarter one 2023/24 projected financial outturn information for the general fund and housing revenue account (HRA).

Cabinet was informed that the February 2023 approved general fund budget for 2023/24 was balanced on the assumption of a £30m drawdown in reserves and the delivery of £34m in savings, efficiencies, and additional resources including £9m in respect of transformation which were un-itemised.

In relation to this Cabinet was advised that the projected outturn continues to assume the drawdown of the £30m in reserves, and in respect of the £34m of savings it assumes either their delivery or that equivalent alternative savings are delivered. Where these alternatives are of a one-off nature then this will add a pressure to the £44m funding gap for 2024/25 identified as part of the July MTFP Update report.

Cabinet was informed that services are expected to implement mitigation strategies to address emerging operational pressures identified within the first quarter, and that this is critical as the council does not have any earmarked reserves identified as available to support any drawdown over the £30m assumed in the original budget.

**RESOLVED that Cabinet: -**

- (a) Noted the budget monitoring position for quarter one 2023/24; and**
- (b) Request the Chief Operations Officer and the Corporate Director for Resources present in the quarter two Cabinet monitoring report their mitigation proposals to balance service pressures if these remain; and**
- (c) Approved the implementation of an expenditure freeze and vacancy management process for the remainder of 2023/24 with delegation to the Chief Executive to develop an appropriate policy. This is to be supported by consideration of the redeployment of any staff in posts that it is proposed to remove.**

Voting: Unanimous

Portfolio Holder: Finance

Reasons

To comply with accounting codes of practice and best practice which requires councils to regularly monitor the annual budget position and take any action to support the sustainability of the council's financial position.

21. Responding to the Best Value Notice

The Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Dynamic Places 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.

Cabinet was advised that the Council has been issued with a Best Value Notice by the Department for Levelling Up, Housing & Communities (DLUHC), following an assurance review that was commissioned in response to the Council's request for a capitalisation direction made in July 2022 under the Exceptional Financial Support programme, and that the Chief Executive has also carried out an internal assurance review.

An action plan is proposed which sets out how the Council has responded to each item in the two assurance reviews and the Best Value Notice.

The Chairman of the Corporate and Community Overview and Scrutiny Committee addressed the Cabinet in support of the formation of the Transformation Working Group and for the opportunity for pre Cabinet scrutiny.

A number of members of the Cabinet spoke raising areas of work which had begun to address the best value notice.

**RESOLVED that: -**

- (a) Cabinet accepted the findings of the two assurance reviews;**
- (b) Cabinet noted the receipt of and accept the Best Value Notice; and**
- (c) Cabinet agreed the action plan, to ensure progress is made against each of the recommendations.**

Voting: Unanimous

Portfolio Holder: Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Dynamic Places

Reason

To appropriately respond to the Best Value Notice and the issues raised in the assurance reviews, in order to ensure appropriate governance and assurance is in place.

22. Poole Crematorium - Cremator(s) Reinvestment Business Case

The Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Connected Communities 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.

Cabinet was advised that in March 2023, Cabinet requested a further report detailing a business case for *Option 3: Investing in two electric cremator(s) at Poole Crematorium* be brought back to Cabinet, and that this report provided the data and evidence for this business case.

Cabinet was informed that the crematoria market in Poole is highly competitive since the opening of a private facility at Lytchett Minster, Poole, now further compounded by competition to the wider BCP Bereavement Care Services offer at Bournemouth Crematorium following the opening of New Milton Crematorium and the wider Direct Cremation market offer, and that the market analysis set out in this business case and previous background reports indicates that BCP Council would not be able to reinvest and run a crematoria facility at Poole at no cost to the Council.

In relation to this Cabinet was advised that due to the current BCP Council financial context within which Cabinet are considering this business case this Officer report recommends Cabinet pause investment in new electric cremators at Poole and reviews the operating model for BCP Bereavement Care Services, and that in doing so it is suggested Cabinet asks Officers to present options for future investment and operational delivery at a future Cabinet meeting. Cabinet is asked to consider the Officer recommendation.

In presenting the report the Deputy Leader proposed amendments to the recommendations set out within the report, these became the substantive recommendations as set out below.

Councillor Broadhead addressed the Cabinet stressing the importance of work being carried out.

The Leader of the Council advised that it was important to include the faith sector in discussions and alternative ways of funding.

**RESOLVED that: -**

- (a) Cabinet agrees Option 1; to pause a reinvestment decision in new electric cremators at Poole Crematorium and review the future operating model for BCP Bereavement Care Services;**
- (b) Cabinet members commit to meet with representatives of the bereavement industry and faith sector to discuss the feasibility of working in partnership to deliver cremator provision at Poole Crematorium; and**
- (c) Cabinet asks Officers to prepare a detailed financial review of the service and present options for investment and operational delivery models to a future Cabinet.**

Voting: Unanimous

Portfolio Holder: Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Connected Communities

Reasons

The recommendations of this report, based on the data and evidence set out in this business case and background reports for electric cremators at Poole Crematoria seeks to provide a financially sustainable approach to the provision of cremators and ceremonial space to meet the needs of the whole BCP Community.

23. Levelling Up Fund: Coastal Communities Seafront Infrastructure Project

The Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Connected Communities 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.

Cabinet was advised that following a competitive bidding process, BCP Council has been awarded £19,993,858 Levelling Up Fund by Government to invest in specific seafront infrastructure projects to safeguard and create jobs; enable delivery of community projects; stimulate commercial investment, increase physical activity and improve place identity, and that all delivery costs including staffing resource, have been capitalised within the budget.

Cabinet was informed that the programme is aligned to the draft Corporate Strategy:

- Create sustainable and contemporary infrastructure that connects our communities, offers choice, and encourages people to be active
- Strive to be as self-sustaining as we can be in water, energy and economy
- Restore, recover and regenerate our natural environment and enhance community access
- Work with partners to ensure everyone feels safe
- Promote quality of life for all, where people live active, independent lives
- Celebrate our cultural identity and diverse heritage to inspire a sense of pride.

Members praised the work of officers and welcomed the report and the opportunities it presented.

**RESOLVED that Cabinet: -**

- (a) Approved delivery of the Coastal Communities Seafront Infrastructure Project as set out in the DHULC Levelling Up Funding award to BCP Council;**
- (b) Delegated authority to the Service Director for Commercial Operations in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Finance and Operations to spend and deliver the £19.9m project; and**
- (c) Agree an update on delivery progress to Cabinet in September 2024**

Voting: Unanimous

Portfolio Holder: Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Connected Communities

Reasons

BCP Council has formally accepted the grant offer from DHULC. 100% externally funded, the programme delivers monetised benefits of £105,866,082 and a projected benefit to cost ratio of 4.65. Investments will reduce seafront maintenance (revenue pressure) and unlock commercial growth (revenue growth). In order to maintain progress on the project interventions, which have a funding requirement to complete by March 2025, approval is required by 6th September. Risk to approval delay will result in the programme timeline being unachievable and risk funding having to be returned to Government.

Meeting adjourned at 12:07pm  
Meeting reconvened at 12:16pm

24. Management of Leisure Centres

The Portfolio Holder for Finance presented a report, a copy of which had been circulated to each Member and a copy of which appears as Appendix 'E' to these Minutes in the Minute Book.

Cabinet was advised that the paper makes recommendations for the future management of three leisure centres (the Dolphin Leisure Centre, Rossmore Leisure Centre, and Ashdown Leisure Centre) in Poole on the ending of the current operating contract with Sports and Leisure Management (SLM).

In relation to this Cabinet was informed that the recommendations set out in this report are based on evidence from work commissioned from Max Associates leisure consultants, and that the paper outlines the options for future management of the in scope leisure centres including the financial implications and timeframes of the options.

In proposing the report the Portfolio Holder for Finance proposed amendments to recommendations (a) and (b) as set out on the agenda these became the substantive recommendations as set out below.

Councillor Bartlett addressed the Cabinet stressing the importance of holding discussions with BH Live.

**RESOLVED that Cabinet: -**

- (a) Agrees Option 2 an in-house model for the interim future management of the in-scope leisure centres;**
- (b) Within the context of (a), asks Officers to undertake a further assessment of options to align the public leisure offer across the BCP Council area and to consider wider use of these sites as part of “enabling council” workstream;**
- (c) Approve £151k of in-house set up costs funded by the draw down from the specific earmarked reserve to support the SLM Contract;**
- (d) Approves £630k of capital investment via prudential borrowing to fund the in-house set up and investment costs;**

- (e) **Agrees the 12-month programme, detailed in appendix 4, to bring the facilities in house;**
- (f) **Agrees to further development and implementation of opportunities for residents' access to health and fitness services at Bournemouth Indoor Bowls Centre including rebranding the facility in line with BCP Council inhouse leisure offer; and**
- (g) **Delegates authority to the Director of Commercial Operations in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Finance, to implement the recommendations from this report.**

Voting: Nem: Con (1 abstention)

Portfolio Holders: Finance

Deputy Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for  
Connected Communities

Councillor Millie Earl declared an interest in this item and remained present for the discussion and voting thereon.

Councillor Andy Martin declared an interest in this item and refrained from participating in the vote.

25. Disabled Parking Bay Proposals – Sealing of Traffic Order Ref P37 2023

The Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Dynamic Places presented a report, a copy of which had been circulated to each Member and a copy of which appears as Appendix 'F' to these Minutes in the Minute Book.

Cabinet was advised that a decision is required on making and sealing the proposed Traffic Order which will amend the Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole (Parking Regulation, On-Street Parking Places and Off-Street Parking Places) Consolidation Order 2021, and that this will allow the council to implement new and amend existing on-street Residential Disabled Parking Bays (RDPBs).

Cabinet was informed that applications are primarily received online, assessed, and batched for sets of proposals periodically through the year, and that statutory consultation has been carried out for this batch of proposals reference P37 2023 and recommendations for each individual site are included in Appendix 1 of the report.

**RESOLVED that the Traffic Order is made and sealed as per option (8)(a) of the options appraisal contained in this report.**

Voting: Unanimous

Portfolio Holder: Climate Response, Environment and Energy

Reason

This will allow us to implement the restrictions outlined in Appendix 1 of this report, installing new and changing existing on-street RDPBs.

26. Harmonisation of car parking across Bournemouth Christchurch and Poole

The Portfolio Holder for Finance presented a report, a copy of which had been circulated to each Member and a copy of which appears as Appendix 'G' to these Minutes in the Minute Book.

Cabinet was advised that this report sets out the proposals consulted on to harmonise car parking and on street chargeable location high season dates, daytime tariff structures and flat rate evening and Sunday charging times, and that this harmonisation is in relation to tariff structures, including dates and times tariffs are applicable but is not a review of tariff amounts.

Cabinet was informed that a public consultation was conducted from Thursday 11 May until Thursday 8 June 2023 received 1,491 responses, and that all feedback has been reviewed and used to inform the recommendation detailed in this report.

**RESOLVED that Cabinet: -**

- (a) Agree to respond to the consultation feedback by implementing Option 2 as outlined in paragraph 36;**
- (b) Agree to the Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) advertisement and consultation process required to implement the car parking harmonisation proposals, in line with legislation; and**
- (c) Delegates authority to the Director of Commercial Operations, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Finance to implement the recommendations outlined in this report.**

Voting: Unanimous

Portfolio Holder: Finance

Reason

To support the delivery of the harmonisation of the car parking service for residents and visitors across Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole ensuring consistency and certainty for all areas of the borough.

To support the corporate strategy objective of sustainable environment including encouraging visitors to our town centres to walk, cycle, use the train or bus.

27. Urgent Decisions taken by the Chief Executive in accordance with the Constitution

Cabinet was advised that there had been no urgent decisions taken in accordance with the Constitution since the last meeting of the Cabinet.

28. Cabinet Forward Plan

The Leader advised that the latest Cabinet Forward Plan had been published on the Council's website.

The meeting ended at 12.44 pm

CHAIRMAN