

BOURNEMOUTH, CHRISTCHURCH AND POOLE COUNCIL
PLACE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Minutes of the Meeting held on 19 July 2023 at 6.00 pm

Present:-

Cllr C Rigby – Chairman

Cllr R Herrett – Vice-Chairman

Present: Cllr C Adams, Cllr D d'Orton-Gibson, Cllr J Martin, Cllr S Moore,
Cllr L Northover, Cllr Dr F Rice, Cllr A Chapmanlaw (In place of Cllr J
Clements) and Cllr L Dedman (In place of Cllr S McCormack)

Also in
attendance:

10. Apologies

Apologies were received from Cllr J Clements and S McCormack

11. Substitute Members

Cllr A Chapmanlaw substituted for Cllr J Clements and Cllr L Dedman
substituted for Cllr S McCormack

12. Declarations of Interests

There were no declarations of interest made on this occasion.

13. Confirmation of Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 31 May were approved as a correct
record subject to the inclusion of the public statement received.

14. Public Issues

There were no public issues on this occasion.

15. Families in Bed and Breakfast/Hotels

The Portfolio Holder for Homes and Regulation introduced 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 Director of
Housing and Communities also provided key information to the Committee
on the key issues within the report. The Head of Strategic Housing &
Partnerships also responded to issues raised by the Committee.

The Committee was advised that the report was intended to raise
awareness of the challenges relating to family homelessness and the
direction of travel that the council and its partners are taking to tackle this. A

detailed action plan was due to follow and would be approved and overseen by the Homelessness Reduction Board. Further developments could be reported to future Committee meetings. The report outlined the current position on family homelessness demand, focusing on those placed in to Bed and Breakfast/Hotel accommodation. The Committee was advised of the programmes currently underway to respond to the demand and examine future demand to establish additional requirements. The significant challenge of homelessness demand was the top priority for the Housing service and the BCP Homelessness Partnership.

The Committee discussed a number of points including:

- Initiatives to address the impact of reforms in the private rented sector. There was a Private Rented Sector Homelessness action group looking at increasing access to the private rented sector and supporting landlords. This was led by a private sector local landlord and includes landlords and letting agents.
- People moving from temporary accommodation. How people moved on from temporary accommodation: The number of social housing lets offered to homeless families had been increased. This had an impact on the number of lets available for others in housing need and would mean people remaining on the waiting list for longer.
- People in temporary accommodation who the Council had lost contact with. These were more likely to be couples and singles and would often be people moving from the area or making different housing choices.
- Projected homelessness and how this looked going forward. Projections were based on the past 12 months experiences but it was difficult to project.
- The Landlord Forum would be looking at potential changes in the private rental sector but it was thought that rental reforms may give rise to further landlords leaving the market.
- Concern about the increased demand on the service and the effect on staff. The service was no longer dependent on agency staff and an apprenticeship programme had been developed. Staff were receiving additional training. Staff were dealing with more complex issues and are providing support around trauma and care and ensuring they have the time to be supported. The Chief Operations Officer noted their thanks to the staff within housing services.
- That the single people listed as homeless a number were likely to be pensioners who would struggle to find housing. A number of the single people would have additional needs, and some may be provided in supported housing settings. Remains challenging for both families and single people.
- Concern was raised regarding the ability of families in B&B/Hotel accommodation to have access to cooking facilities. This was a recognised issue and the Access to Food Partnership was taking action to specifically support these families.
- What is assessed as the standard and facilities for temporary accommodation. There was only a limited number of proprietors willing to offer temporary accommodation. Hotels needed to sign up to a set of

service standards and these were checked by the service on an 8-weekly basis.

- Concerns were raised regarding safeguarding of families in temporary accommodation. Single people and families were placed in separate accommodation. Accommodation was not block booked for temporary housing and there were a number of providers who catered better for families.
- In response to a question, it was confirmed that the majority of accommodation provided en-suite facilities for families.
- Needs of children varied in accordance with the age of a child. There were no national standards. The Council tried to ensure that younger children had access to a bath within the accommodation. A service manager was responsible for checking accommodation to ensure it was suitable.
- It was noted that sometimes the facilities would not be suitable and there was a challenge to ensure all families were housed appropriately but the team would do all it could to ensure families' needs were met.
- It was noted that at present there had not been any landlords forthcoming to offer winter lets but it was something which the service would explore further.
- The demand for 120 units every year and how this would be met.
- Plans for social housing, as opposed to affordable housing in private developments. Council house building was a huge priority for the administration. However, it was going to be challenging – there was a need to take a holistic approach to housing, there was a need to get every aspect correct. The CNAS programme was really driving this. The demand was for social housing but also key worker housing and owner occupier housing.
- The Economic Development Team- It was noted that they did not focus on housing need and were not involved in house building.
- Local Plan and a focus on reducing homelessness. The Housing Needs Assessment looking at needs across the
- Issues were raised regarding the mix of housing types and whether there was an evidence based to show that building of any types of housing reduced the rising levels of homelessness. Able to get more housing if focussed on affordable rents capped at the local housing allowance rate preferable to social housing.

It was highlighted that if people were faced with homelessness the best way to get in touch was through bcphousingadvice@bcpcouncil.gov.uk and that there was a duty team available for emergency situations. However, people were asked to come forward as soon as they were aware of a potential issue.

The Portfolio Holder was asked to provide an update to the Committee on the work with central government on this issue in 9-12 months-time.

Councillors were advised that they were welcome to visit with the outreach team.

The Chairman thanked the Officers and Portfolio Holder and advised that they looked forward to hearing more in future.

16. Planning Reforms

The Interim Planning Policy 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. The Committee was advised that the Government's planning reforms are set out in Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill that is currently proceeding through the House of Lords, with publication expected in late 2023. The Council responded positively to the government consultation on the proposals in early 2023. Whilst the Bill continued to be amended the implications for the Local Plan were unclear. Promised quick changes to the NPPF had yet to materialise and this uncertainty over national policy on housing targets and Green Belt may cause delays to progress with the Local Plan.

One area that the emerging Local Plan could address was ensuring new development contributed to meeting the climate change target of net zero carbon by 2050. The government's Future Homes Standard is due to be implemented in 2025 and will require homes to be built to reduce carbon emissions by 75-80%. The emerging local plan was expected to be adopted by 2025 and its timing would align with this new approach. There was also the opportunity to aspire to higher targets, a key objective of the emerging local plan was to achieve carbon neutrality ahead of 2050.

This report focused on the main aspects of emerging policy to ensure that new building address climate change. This report includes discussion on energy efficiency, carbon reduction, water efficiency, sustainable construction and green infrastructure/urban greening.

A number of issues were raised in the ensuing discussion, including:

- Whether there were further small requirements which could be built into the local plan which could have a significant impact on future development and help to ensure carbon neutrality.
- The problem of putting rainwater into a foul water sewer, requiring all developments to put additional drainage which could lead to a surface water drainage system which could alleviate pressure on the sewage system. There was a concern raised regarding ensuring viability for smaller developers.
- The focus on sustainable communities, which could potentially lead to overwhelming the population in certain areas and ensuring that all areas were sustainable. Initially workshops focused on the most sustainable areas, but this was now being developed to see how all areas can become more sustainable.
- Data mapping allowed the service to visualise the impact of the policy on different areas and it would be useful if other service areas were able to use it to provide data to project. It was noted that additional population helped to maintain shops, schools and community facilities.

- Focus needed to be on town centres for developments as most of the facilities were already there. However other areas were identified for local opportunities.
- Greener building methods should be encouraged. The 10 percent renewal energy proposals seemed on the low side particularly if being incorporated into new builds. Everything possible was being done to encourage housing which did not leak energy.
- Transport decarbonisation – There was conflict with employment sites which did not fit in with the sustainable community areas with limited bus provision. It was noted that government guidance was decarbonising. Good sites within urban area but need to have large employment sites and need to look at how these areas can become more sustainable.
- Climate Earth previously wrote to all Councils stating local plans needed to be in keeping with achieving net zero by 2050. The ambition was to try to achieve carbon neutral status by 2050 but there was a limited amount that could be done solely with the Local Plan. It was suggested that it would be helpful to see this communication from Climate Earth.
- Community facilities - Due to demographic changes there was some viability concerns for schools. GP surgeries were funded in line with the number of patients, but these were within the private sector and not much could be done from the Local Plan
- Car charging points – lots of houses and new developments didn't have space for a car.
- Duty to co-operate – If local authorities were defining their own housing need this would not be possible. However the government was considering alignment policies and would need to consider this with the new NPPF.
- Water efficiency – A surface water mapper previously looked at tidal and fluvial but was now also looking at the impact of surface water flooding. Areas for flood water storage were being considered.
- Biodiversity net gain policy. The threshold which has been set was now very low. It was explained that all developments would be asked to include something. The Guidance note on this had recently been completed but would need to be signed off through the Chief Operations Officer and Portfolio Holder. The Committee requested that a final draft be shared with the Committee prior to finalisation.

Chair asked the Committee members to consider whether they could identify a couple of areas which the Committee could focus on and where the committee may be able to add value to the development of the Local Plan as it moved forward. Members were asked to consider this and contact the chairman with any suggestions.

17. Work Plan

The Chair introduced 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. The Chair mentioned the changes which were likely to

take place to the Overview and Scrutiny Structure and the progress being made on this. It was noted that due to this and engaging with support offered by the Local Government Association it had not yet been possible to arrange a work planning workshop. Due to this the Committee was asked to delegate work planning for the next meeting to the Chair and Vice-Chair in consultation with Officers.

The Chairman noted that there were two items on the Committee's work plan on the FCERM and the Play strategy which would be good to bring to the next meeting of the Committee.

RESOLVED that the Chair and Vice-Chair agree priorities for the next meeting of the Committee prior to a work planning workshop to set future priorities.

18. Future Meeting Dates

The dates for future meetings were noted as follows:

Wednesday 11 October 2023
Wednesday 6 December 2023
Wednesday 28 February 2024

The meeting ended at 7.59 pm

CHAIRMAN