

BOURNEMOUTH, CHRISTCHURCH AND POOLE COUNCIL
ENVIRONMENT AND PLACE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Minutes of the Meeting held on 11 October 2023 at 6.00 pm

Present:-

Cllr C Rigby – Chairman

Cllr R Herrett – Vice-Chairman

Present: Cllr C Adams, Cllr J Clements, Cllr D d'Orton-Gibson, Cllr J Martin,
Cllr S McCormack, Cllr S Moore and Cllr L Northover

Present virtually: Cllr R Rice

Also in attendance virtually: Cllr A Hadley

1. Apologies

Apologies were received from Cllr C Adams as he would be arriving late.

2. Substitute Members

There were no substitute members.

3. Declarations of Interests

There were no declarations of interest made on this occasion.

4. Confirmation of Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of the Place Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 19 July 2003 were approved as a correct record.

5. Public Issues

There were no public issue requests received for this meeting.

6. FCERM Service Progress

The Head of Flood Risk Management 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 was advised that In September 2021, Cabinet agreed for the re-structuring of the Flood & Coastal Erosion Risk Management (FCERM) service to allow growth in line with needs for the FCERM capital programme, aspirations for climate resilience and expertise sharing across the South-West region. Proposals were set out against the expectation that growth could be enabled at no additional cost to the Council due to the ability to secure

central government grant in aid. A number of issues were raised in the subsequent discussion including:

- A query was raised regarding the balance between a focus on the BCP area and the ability to be involved with the wider region. It was noted that there was increased capability but that over 90 percent of programme was BCP focused. Expanding out allowed the service to reduce costs and increase the income as well as building greater resilience. Which would hopefully make the service more attractive and see more people applying for jobs in the services.
- In response to a query regarding funding the Committee was advised that some of it was local lending as well as grant funding, which was bid for through the Regional Flood and Coastal Committee. It was confirmed that it was all funding brought in which staff time could be charged against. It was therefore at zero cost to the Council.
- The Committee enquired about the skills resource available and if this was now in a position to ensure preventable measures were put in place or if there were any concerns around a knowledge gap. The Committee was informed that there was now a role in the strategy and policy environment team of a principal engineering geologist and geotechnical engineer. They were now in the middle of developing a strategy which would provide a really good framework for decision making. Because there was significant risk in the cliff lift area it was suggested that a board made up of all decision makers within the cliff lift zone would help as a lot of the issue around there was from surface water and this would help ensure that there would not be problems with cliff slips.
- The committee also received an update on ongoing projects for the FCERM service including future strategies around beach/cliff management.
- In response to a question, it was explained that beach management would help prevent cliff erosion. It was noted that the service was looking to source supplies for the beach management campaign more locally. It was clarified that previous comments referred to looking at long term sea level rise and the impact on beach management.
- The Portfolio Holder explained that a lot of effort had been put into building this team and he had been really impressed with the quality of staff. He also commented on the role of drones, which had been really useful in the recent oil spill in Poole.
- A Committee member asked about public engagement, particularly around the risks of climate change and flash flooding. It was suggested that it should be more collaborative with some sort of resident lead approach to flooding issues. It was acknowledged that communication with the public did need to improve and there was a need to be candid about what the risks were and what the Council were not able to do. Flooding and coastal erosion risk needed to be more open with communication across the sector and not just within BCP.
- The Poole Bay risk management scheme was protecting 4000 properties from coastal erosion and the Council had recently bid for £500k for a suite of surface water management plans. This would also help identify where those communities most at risk were.

- The need for residents to understand what the risk was for their properties and to help people with property level resistance levels.
- It was confirmed that the Council worked in partnership with Wessex Water and shared data. They were also represented on the Regional Flood and Coastal Committee. The service also worked with organisations such as the RSPB, National trust, etc. It was acknowledged that how they managed flood risk was very different to BCP's hold the line approach. The partners also sat on the shoreline management committee.

The Chairman thanked officers for bringing the report and advised that the Committee would consider what issues it would like to see further information coming back to the Committee on in future.

7. BCP Green Spaces Play and Wheeled Play Strategy development

The Strategic Lead for Green Spaces and Conservation 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 presentation provided information on progress to develop a BCP Greenspaces Play & Wheeled Play Strategy. It was noted that BCP Council does not currently have a strategy in place for play and as such does not have any tangible foundation from which to support the development and provision of play opportunities. The Council's fixed play assets were ageing and in decline. Given the financial context the Council was facing it was vital that data and evidence captured as part of the strategy development is used to support future decisions in terms of play location, investment, and maintenance. The Council remained committed to the development of the strategy, recognising the importance of play to the physical, social and psychological wellbeing of children and young people living and visiting the conurbation. It was explained that the strategy would set out:

- A vision for play
- A design standard
- An evidence base of current provision

In the following discussion a number of issues were raised by the Committee which included:

- There were lots of play assets across the BCP area. These were subject to annual independent inspections for safety checks but funding for maintenance and repairs was limited. There had been no additional government funding since the Play Builder programme.
- The paper was welcomed and there were concerns raised regarding the very limited budget available for maintenance and repair of a large number of sites. It was suggested that there could be some community involvement in trying to improve them. It was noted that the cost of play equipment was significant, and everything needed to meet specified standards and budgets for repair were not always sufficient which has meant equipment has needed to be approved.
- Residents frequently raised concerns about the condition of play sites but without additional funding it difficult to do much beside paint, remove

litter and clear shrubs. It was suggested that there should be a method by which residents could set up support groups for individual parks but Councillors advised that they had heard reports of residents being told they could not do certain things.

- Friends groups/support groups – There needed to be some sort of Council facilitation and limited by resources. Would need to get some sort of agreement in place to ensure that everyone is aware of roles and responsibilities.
- Request for ward councillor involvement in the development of the play strategy. It was noted that it would need to be considered how Ward Councillor involvement would be done as this would affect every ward across the borough in different ways.
- Emphasising the ability of children to independently and safely access these areas. It was suggested that there needed to be a method within the documentation highlighting this and increasing accessibility. It was noted that everyone should have access to a play area within a 15 minute walk time and that spatial mapping would take into account areas which are effectively landlocked by different roads.
- Play streets. The strategy was mostly looking at formal play areas, but it was noted that there were opportunities for other informal play areas. If residents lived on a quiet road they can apply to close it for 2 hours on Sunday afternoon for play opportunities. It was noted that incidental play would also become part of the strategy. There was a need for further involvement from highways colleagues to support this.
- It was noted that there were lots of opportunities for incidental play such as adapted bus shelters and community opportunities such as growing food alongside play spaces.
- Importance of considering spaces for girls – Multi Use Games Areas (MUGAs), wheeled and traditional play spaces were used more by boys than girls. Different kinds of spaces to meet and maybe perform were needed.
- Access to play spaces for people with mobility issues. Poole park currently provided a range of accessible equipment.
- Concerns were raised around street drinkers and anti-social behaviour making play spaces difficult for children to access. It was noted that the park team may be able to help but it was a difficult issue to resolve.
- In some areas there was provision for small play areas within residential developments but also with access to a more substantial play space not far away. In these circumstances consolidation of facilities would be a factor. The strategy would include destination play areas to travel to, ensuring that these were sustainable. It needed to be considered whether current destination play parks were in the right locations and whether they were doing the right job. Councillors questioned how this tied in with the Local Plan. It was noted that the range of play was really important. Local community play was essential to “green heart parks”. Which would also bring in volunteering opportunities, café and toilet facilities.
- Whether bigger areas were easier to maintain. Each different type of park had costs attached. Consideration would need to be given to developing new parks versus improving and expanding existing parks.

Destination parks were easier to fund on an ongoing basis commercially. Contactless donation units were being trialled by Bournemouth Parks foundation. There was some success with donation points in parks.

- Communications with other play park operators. A number of areas were operated by other agencies. These were not included on the map but did need to be considered.

The Chair commented that the Environment and Place O&S Committee would be happy to feed into the strategy more and if any workshops were going ahead it would be good to have ward councillor involvement.

RESOLVED that Place Overview and Scrutiny committee support the development of a BCP Green Spaces Play and Wheeled Play Strategy.

8. Forward 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. The Environment and Place Overview and Scrutiny Committee was asked to consider and identify work priorities for its next meeting pending a wider review of its forward plan at a future meeting.

A request was received for scrutiny into the training provided around the Council's declaration of a climate and ecological emergency. It was suggested that there should be a structured training programme to outline what this is and the impact of this. It would be useful to consider what training should be happening. Climate should be part of the communications portfolio and climate support delivered to different departments. The Chair advised that the Committee would be looking at the Council's annual climate report at a future meeting and it would be helpful to bring in the climate team as a whole. It was suggested that this request could form part of the Committees future consideration around progress on the climate action plan.

It was noted that these issues could be considered further through the planned workshops.

The Chair advised that an informal update to the committee from the Portfolio Holder on the lifts at Pokesdown Station had been requested.

The Committee considered the provision agreed at the last Council meeting for the Committee to appoint 2 independent co-opted members to the committee. It was agreed that a report should come to the next meeting of the committee for further consideration of this issue.

9. Future Meeting Dates

The date of the next meeting was noted as Wednesday 6 December 2023.

The meeting ended at 7:45pm

CHAIRMAN