

BOURNEMOUTH, CHRISTCHURCH AND POOLE COUNCIL
OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD

Minutes of the Meeting held on 26 February 2024 at 6.00 pm

Present:-

Cllr S Bartlett – Chairman

Cllr S Aitkenhead – Vice-Chairman

Present: Cllr P Broadhead, Cllr S Moore, Cllr L Northover, Cllr Dr F Rice,
Cllr K Salmon, Cllr M Tarling, Cllr T Trent, Cllr O Walters,
Cllr A Chapmanlaw and Cllr M Phipps
Present Cllr B Dove
Virtually:

Also in Cllr M Earl, Cllr A Hadley and Cllr V Slade
attendance:

47. Apologies

Apologies were received from Cllr L Dedman and Cllr C Goodall.

48. Substitute Members

Cllr M Phipps substituted for Cllr L Dedman and Cllr A Chapmanlaw substituted for Cllr Goodall.

49. Declarations of Interests

There were no declarations of interest made on this occasion.

50. Confirmation of Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 29 January were approved as a correct record subject to the following amendments:

- Clause 41 - To include the relevant agenda item number in the declarations of interest made.
- Clause 43 - To include the full response from the Portfolio Holder to the second public question.
- Clause 45 – To amend the adjournment start time from 7.54pm to 8.54pm.

51. Public Issues

There were no public petitions or questions on this occasion. There were 2 public statements received, as follows:

1. From Mr Adam Osman – Local Resident, read out by Democratic Services:

The proposal to maintain the default speed limit on residential streets falls short. The average walk to school is 2km in the UK; a 2km radius of every school in BCP would cover the entire conurbation. Children need protection via 20mph speed limits. A piecemeal approach would merely confuse drivers, half solve the issue and would cost more, with on and off signage.

I question the figure of £300m to retrofit speed limits. I believe this figure is disproportionately large and must be reviewed.

I query the need for enforcement of 20mph limits being a barrier to implementation. This is far from the case as we know 30mph limits aren't enforced. There is no reason we cannot work towards enforcement while implementing 20mph now. Do authorities not allow 20mph without enforcement? If not so, this is a major barrier to progress, and should be tackled.

2. From Mr Nick Greenwood – Local Resident:

'Dorset Police and GSC Morebus have expressed concerns about the 20-mph limit according to notes for the Cabinet Meeting on 6 March 2024.

Data produced in support of 20 mph limit cannot be trusted because of Political eco-warrior bias to the 2030 Agenda. If the data could be trusted then there should be a case for 12 or 15 mph limits which should be debated. The likely pragmatic difficulties of not using these lower speed limits could be argued for the reduction from 30 mph.

The 20 mph limit are part of a bigger scheme and are tied in with 15-minute Neighbourhoods from the 2030 Agenda designed and implemented by the UN and World Economic Forum in the pursuit of World Governance.

Hence the subjectivity of those making biased decisions on an unwilling or uninformed Public. This should be exposed so the Public can make objective decisions.

The Chair agreed to vary the order of business to take agenda item 7 Wessex Fields Update next.

52. Wessex Fields Update

The Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Dynamic Places provided an update to the Board. It was explained that at the time of the request being made for an update to the Board on this issue there were no plans to change anything which had previously been agreed. The Wessex Fields site had been handed over as a project to FuturePlaces and all

FuturePLaces work was being wrapped up into bundles and would be presented to Cabinet at a future date. It was confirmed that as of the end of 2023 Wessex Fields was not being considered a priority site.

Since then, BCP Council had been approached with an offer to purchase the land. The Cross-Party Strategic Asset Disposal \working Group was due to consider the offer at a meeting on 8 March. If the group endorsed the proposal, it would be considered by Cabinet on 10 April and then by Council depending on the valuation level. The meeting was advised that until anything was agreed by the working group there was nothing further to report. The Cross-Party Working Group had a set of agreed criteria against which it would assess the offer. A number of issues were raised by the Board in the subsequent discussion including:

- Whether the arrangements for phase 2 of the A338 works for the northbound slip road and roundabout within this area would be affected. It was noted that it could not be confirmed until heads of terms were agreed.
- Whether the purpose of the site would be ancillary or compatible with the hospital. The Board was advised that without disclosing who the offer had been received from it would be difficult to give any further information.
- Prior to the offer being made any report on this issue would have explained that this was a FuturePLaces site and that any work they had done would come within a future update to Cabinet about what the next steps would have been.
- There were concerns raised that it had been heard that the Council had dropped its plans for the development of Wessex Fields, namely the aspiration for the area being a science/biotech type industry-based employment area. It was noted that the requirement for the area was to generate a certain number of jobs and it did not dictate a specific purpose for the site. The Local Plan identified it as a primary employment site.
- The Working Group would consider issues around best value for the site and decide whether to recommend on to Cabinet and Council in accordance with the key principles as agreed by the working group in accordance with section 123 of the Local Government Act 1972. The offer must also meet the independent red book valuation. The current offer was deemed to be credible and would be followed up.
- It was noted that in general there was not a policy to always sell to highest bidder buy default. A site that would be of huge social and community value may be sold at a lower price to someone which would develop it in this way.
- The Chief Finance Officer explained in response to a query regarding whether it was imperative to sell the site to balance the budget that the budget had been set but there was a £3.8 million shortfall, which could be addressed by a schedule of assets that were under consideration which potentially could realise that value and any conversation about Wessex Fields, if that was turned into receipt, would've been able to be a contribution towards the £3.8 million.

The Chairman advised that if a proposal was taken to Cabinet this would first come through O&S Board at its next meeting and thanked those present for providing information.

53. Our People and Communities: 20mph options appraisal

The Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Connected Communities and the Portfolio Holder for Response Environment and Energy 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 Board was advised that the purpose of the Cabinet report was to present the outputs of a review of local and national 20mph initiatives and to seek endorsement for a programme to enable the delivery of 20mph speed limits to create safer neighbourhoods across the three towns and make journeys by all modes safer. It was proposed that this would be achieved in areas through consultation with residents in priority communities, and through the reinstatement of a dedicated 20mph speed limit budget allocation within the Council's Local Transport Plan (LTP) Capital programme. The Board was advised that there were approximately 77 areas across the conurbation that already had 20mph speed limits and further proposed areas were outlined in the appendix to the report. There were a number of issues raised by the Board including:

- What would be addressed by the £149k budget and would this include any legislative changes required? It was noted that this budget would cover approximately three of the areas outlined on the map in the appendix to provide signage and roundels. There would also be a need for Traffic Regulation Orders for each 20-mph area introduced. Rolling out the process in area zones rather than by streets would be more cost effective.
- The Deputy Leader confirmed in response to a question that it was their long-term ambition to have 20 mph roads as default for residential neighbourhoods, with some exceptions. This would be dependent upon the funding which could be achieved from the Department of Transport and based upon the advice from the RoSPA regarding the use of 20mph in residential neighbourhoods.
- Some expressed the view that it was disappointing that all the areas could not be rolled out faster across the whole conurbation but appreciated that a dedicated budget was being introduced.
- It was confirmed that there would be TROs introduced and the process for these followed in terms of consultation, for any of the 20 mph areas.
- A member questioned why the money was being allocated for a number of schemes before consultation had taken place with the public on whether they wanted these to be introduced and commented that the public had lost confidence in Council consultations. In response it was noted that there were approximately sixty requests for 20mph schemes which had not yet been implemented. It was noted that a full consultation was expected to take up all of the money the report was requesting. A Councillor asked that if there was a consultation, everyone needed to be aware of it.

- A member advised that they received lots of correspondence from residents seeking the implementation of 20 mph zones.
- There was a need for a flexible and sensible approach with a system of consulting where it had been found there was a demand.
- It was questioned whether bus routes would be included in 20mph zones. It was noted that this would be considered for relevant roads. It was noted that bus companies suggested the bus average speed was 12-13 mph. It was therefore felt that the 20mph introduction would have a minimal impact.
- It was suggested that some areas would need more than just sign language to make a 20mph zone work.
- In response to a question, it was noted that the £300 million figure would be based on a zone approach to reduce speeds across the conurbation, including speed bumps, chicanes etc.
- It was suggested that consideration should also be given to the provision of 20mph around pre-school settings.
- The biggest issue in the area for speed was the congestion not the speed limit. It was quicker to drive through 20mph zones rather than using the peripheral roads.
- The paper was welcomed by a number of Councillors in relation to the safety aspect particularly round schools and nurseries. Councillors also questioned how areas would be prioritised. Conversely others suggested there was little evidence that reducing speed limits from 30mph to 20mph made roads safer and that congestion and pollution increased with lower speed limits.

Following discussion a move was made, seconded, and subsequently amended to support the recommendation outlined in the report with a comment that when zones or roads come up there should be robust public consultation.

During discussion of the move a further proposal was made that Cabinet be recommended to support option A and that 20 mph scheme limits should be introduced as part of the delivery of schemes around schools and where historically significant numbers of casualties had arisen. Following a vote on the initial motion it was:

RESOLVED That Option B as outlined in the report, be recommended to Cabinet for its approval subject to Cabinet committing to robust and meaningful consultation on each 20mph area and that residents' views be taken into account before any decisions on implementation are made.

Voting: For 8; Against 3

Note: Cllr Tarling left the meeting prior to the vote being taken.

The motion to recommend option A was not put to the vote as this would conflict with the previously agreed motion.

Following this, a further motion was put, seconded and it was:

RECOMMENDED that as part of the ongoing process, Cabinet considers focusing identifying areas around schools and pre-school settings for the introduction of 20mph road safety measures.

Voting: Unanimous

54. Forward Plan

The Scrutiny Specialist 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 Overview and Scrutiny (O&S) Board was asked to consider and identify work priorities for publication in a Forward Plan. The Board was advised that the O&S Board should be separate from the Cabinet and Administration but there would be arrangements made to meet with Cabinet quarterly. The Plan was intended to help drive independence of the Board rather than the reliance on Cabinet items for scrutiny. It was noted that it would be useful to establish a series of informal briefings which could provide an early outline for issues and input towards the direction of travel.

Decisions from workshops were potentially also linked to pre-decision scrutiny. Proactive scrutiny could also be done through smaller working groups etc. and not necessarily done through Board meetings.

The Chairman confirmed the items for the next meeting of the Board which would include the Seafront Strategy, Pay and Reward and Wessex Fields - depending on whether it moved forward for Cabinet decision.

The Board RESOLVED

- a) That the Forward Plan be noted.**
- b) That the agreements made in O&S workshops to develop a lens and a framework for scrutiny, as set out in Appendix E to the report be confirmed.**
- c) That the next steps in developing the Board's work programme, as set out in Appendix E to this report be noted.**

Voting: Nem. Con

The meeting ended at 8.58 pm

CHAIRMAN