

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

Minutes of the Meeting held on 15 May 2024 at 6.00 pm

Present:-

Cllr C Rigby – Chairman

Cllr D d'Orton-Gibson – Vice-Chairman

Present: Cllr J Clements, Cllr J Martin, Cllr S Moore, Cllr Dr F Rice,  
Cllr V Ricketts, Cllr B Chick and Cllr G Wright

Also in attendance: Cllr C Adams, Cllr S Aitkenhead, Cllr R Burton, Cllr A Chapmanlaw,  
Cllr M Earl, Cllr G Farquhar, Cllr C Goodall, Cllr A Hadley,  
Cllr E Harman, Cllr M Howell and Cllr A Keddie

1. Apologies

Apologies received from Councillor Lisa Northover

2. Substitute Members

The were no substitute members

3. Election of Chair

It was agreed that Councillor Chris Rigby be Elected Chair for the municipal year 2024/25.

4. Election of Vice-Chair

It was agreed that Councillor David D'Orton-Gibson be elected Vice-Chair for the Municipal year 2024/25.

5. Declarations of Interests

There were no declarations of interest made on this occasion.

6. Confirmation of Minutes

The minutes of the Environment and Place Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 24 February 2024 were approved as a correct record.

7. Public Issues

Please see Appendix A to these minutes in the Minute Book

8. Improvement of the environment in Poole Park through a trial closure of a park entrance to motor traffic

The Portfolio Holder for Climate 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 'B' to these Minutes in the Minute Book. The Committee was informed that from 17 January 2024, BCP Council began a trial 24-hour daily closure to motor vehicles of one entrance / exit point in Poole Park.

On the same day the trial began, BCP Council launched a four-week consultation with the public, to understand the impact of reducing vehicles movements in Poole Park. The consultation results are considered in this report alongside other evidence, the strategic management of the park and the wider impact of a closure.

An Equalities Impact Assessment (EIA) on the closure confirmed that on balance there are no significant impacts on protected characteristic groups, including older people and those with disabilities. The public consultation did show that older people and those with a disability were more likely to disagree with the proposal. The purpose of the Cabinet report was to assess the strategic management of the environment within Poole Park and to seek a decision as to whether the trial arrangement and road closure shall be adjusted or made permanent.

A Ward Councillor stated that residents feel passionate about the closure and along with a fellow Ward Councillor in Parkstone had engaged with residents and delivered over 700 letters to those closest to the gate. It was mentioned that residents said there was increased safety for children and mobility scooters.

It was stated in Poole Town Ward it was a difficult issue as there was a lot of disagreement and campaigning in the area. Walking and talking to people in the park it was stated that more were in favour of keeping the gate closed than they were keeping it open. Not a lot of residents of Poole Town had gardens and felt the park was like their garden.

The report from DOTs had been read which listed how the closure of the gate effects the elderly and disabled, there were various issues raised. It was confirmed that DOTs was independent.

It was stated there was no perfect solution and a park should not be used for through traffic. It was also stated that it would be a positive step if adopted by the Council. Most people who visited the park and spoke to councillors said it was marvellous that it was closed.

Members of the Committee said they had received lots of letters from residents, although some were emotive, rude and unhelpful. Residents had stated that they drove through the park as they were unable to walk. It was also stated that the scenic drive was therapeutic and fulfilled psychological needs and the ability to drive through the park needed to remain.

It was stated that the park encompassed a lovely scenic view that should be protected. You cannot get the view anywhere else and it can be seen from the hospital.

It was stated that traffic levels dropped over the last 20 years as the number of offices on Parkstone Road decreased.

A compromise was suggested of only closing the gate at peak times but it was stated that it would be difficult to do and could cause conflict if intermittent closure was introduced.

RECOMMENDED that

1. Cabinet refer the matter to Full Council for decision.

Voting: 6 for, 1 against and 2 abstentions

9. 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. The Environment and Place Overview and Scrutiny (O&S) Committee was asked to consider and identify work priorities for publication in a Work Plan.

The Chair invited the Overview and Scrutiny specialist to update the Committee. There was a request from a member of the public regarding the use of phosphates in Chemicals used for weed killing, it was explained that any scrutiny request received has to go to the next available meeting for the Committee to decide if it wishes to conduct further scrutiny.

The Joint Service Unit Head for Environmental services gave a presentation on weed killing, attached to these minutes.

It was highlighted that BCP had a statutory responsibility to ensure the highway was safe. BCP encouraged residents to support removing weeds along boundary lines. Only approved chemicals were used. Chemicals were not used in play areas and were applied directly to the weeds and not as blanket coverage.

The Committee decided that they wanted to keep an eye on this and have it added to the forward plan and the Chair would consult with officer about this.

The Forward Plan was divided into pre-cabinet and pro-active scrutiny. Reactive scrutiny may appear if required as issues arise.

It was noted that the Urban Forest Strategy will go to July Cabinet and to the Committee the week before.

The Forward Plan has been themed for meetings that are similar for example Climate and housing which was in the remit for the committee.

RESOLVED that

1. **the O&S Committee consider, update and confirm its Work Plan and agree to delegate to the Chair and Vice-Chair arrangements for the items.**

Voting: Unanimous

The meeting ended at Time Not Specified

CHAIRMAN