

BOURNEMOUTH, CHRISTCHURCH AND POOLE COUNCIL
OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD

Minutes of the Meeting held on 18 November 2024 at 6.00 pm

Present:-

Cllr S Bartlett – Chairman

Cllr S Aitkenhead – Vice-Chairman

Present: Cllr P Broadhead, Cllr J Beesley, Cllr L Dedman, Cllr C Goodall,
Cllr S Mackrow, Cllr L Northover, Cllr Dr F Rice, Cllr K Salmon,
Cllr T Trent, Cllr O Walters and Cllr C Weight

Also in attendance: Cllr D Brown, Cllr P Canavan, Cllr R Herrett, Cllr A Martin,
Cllr J Martin and Cllr C Rigby

Also in attendance
virtually: Cllr S Carr-Brown

62. Apologies

Apologies were received from Cllr P Broadhead for late arrival.

63. Substitute Members

None for this meeting.

64. Declarations of Interests

There were no declarations of interest made on this occasion.

65. Confirmation of Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 21 October were approved as a correct record.

66. Action Sheet

It was noted that the following actions could be removed from the action sheet as having been completed or were in the process of being completed before the next meeting:

Leader of the Council to Follow up on the issues raised regarding Homelessness performance from the Dashboard.

A copy of the Member/Officer relations report to be circulated to Board members.

Other items would be updated and reported back to the next meeting.

67. Public Issues

There were none on this occasion.

68. Overview of BCP Council Consultation approaches

The Portfolio Holder for 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 received a presentation from the research and Consultation Manager, a copy of which appears as Appendix 'B' to these minutes in the minute book. The report provided an overview of the consultation methods and approach used by BCP Council to consult on various decisions and issues. The Board was advised that the consultation framework was due to be refreshed, and this was an opportunity to receive feedback from the Board ahead of that work. A number of issues were raised by the Board including:

- Return address for hard copies – Normally people were asked to return paper copies to libraries, or the civic centre address would be provided. It was noted that there wasn't one provided for the Community Governance Review Consultation, and this would be looked into.
- Biases in consultations – It was noted that responses for consultations were always on a scale. However, it was suggested that the wording of questions sometimes prompted a particular response in a certain direction. The Board was advised that proposals and options were provided from services that the consultation team was working with but it was something which could be considered in greater depth.
- Analysis of Data - The raw data was not normally directly handed to the service areas, instead a fully analysed outcome would be provided. For example, the feedback from the Poole Park consultation was strongly supported by a robust analysis from the consultation team.
- Annual Survey – Unfortunately the trajectory of the survey was negative. People did not feel that they can influence, and people do not feel that people can influence decisions in the local area.
- Consultation login - There was a concern from members of the public of all persuasions, that surveys could be manipulated. There was also concern that people did not receive feedback following a consultation. It was suggested that a login system would be able to partially address these issues.
- Response to Consultations – It was noted that the results of the Poole Park and Unauthorised Camping consultations appeared to have been ignored which eroded public confidence. It was stated that consultations were not referenda; but a way to try to understand what the community wants. It may be helpful to provide more information on how consultation responses would be used, the objective and vision and priorities related to the consultation.
- Rewards / incentives for completing consultations – Incentives were used when carrying out research but not consultations. It was thought there may be some difficulty with this, but it could be looked into to see if any other authorities used this approach.

- Reaching under represented demographics/viewpoints – It was hoped that a residents panel might help with the issue of not getting the middle ground responses or responses from those not directly invested in a particular issue.
- Cost of open consultations – The Board was advised that this was approximately a few hundred pounds as this would involve fairly minimal costs based around printing and possibly advertising/postcards and some media promotion.

RESOVLED that a working group be established to contribute to the development of the consultation framework within the appropriate timescales.

Voting: 12 in favour; 0 against; 1 abstention

69. O&S Budget Working Groups – findings and recommendations

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 Scrutiny Specialist advised that each of the four Overview and Scrutiny Committees established working groups at their meetings in September to undertake scrutiny work into the 2025/26 budget. Each Committee selected a particular area of budget development in which they wanted to take a deep dive within the working group. All of the groups were now reporting back into the O&S Board. Any recommendations from the working groups for Cabinet would be considered by the Board, in some instances the groups had also made recommendations to the individual O&S Committees, and these would therefore need to be recommended to the different Committees as appropriate. The Chair invited the Lead member for each of the working groups to outline the work that they had undertaken and outline the recommendations which would be made to Cabinet or to the relevant Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

Each lead member outlined the work undertaken by their respective groups. The Committee had an opportunity to discuss all of the motions put forward from the working group recommendations and suggested minor amendments to some of the recommendations. The Chair thanked working group lead members for presenting their findings and the working groups and officers supporting them for the work undertaken.

RESOLVED that

O&S Board – Car parking

The O&S Board recommend to Cabinet:

- 1. That the principle of an inflationary increase across all parking charges be endorsed for the 2025/26 budget.**
- 2. That it requests Officers to take into account the suggestion that an assessment be made on using a proportion of surplus income to**

accelerate the parking charging machine replacement programme prioritising the best value machines in order to reduce future costs (subject to the necessary procurement processes).

- 3. That it requests that Officers evaluate the retention and recruitment of Civil Enforcement Officers to ensure a robust and resilient workforce to provide an appropriate level of resource and promote safe and appropriate parking.**
- 4. That Officers be requested to explore options to reduce costs for the Council and make the process easier for the public to pay for car parking, in particular an option to be able to pay in advance/on Council website.**
- 5. That Officers be requested to ensure adequate resourcing of parking enforcement to reduce inappropriate parking around schools.**

Voting: 10 in favour; 2 against; 0 abstentions

OS Board - Residents Card

The O&S Board recommend to Cabinet:

- 1. That any Resident Card offering is made fully accessible to all those who are not digitally enabled.**
- 2. That there should be an application process for the card with a small financial contribution for the cost of processing and that the card should be a valuable offer that residents are willing to pay a small cost for, so that it can be sustainable in terms of administrative costs.**
- 3. That any charge levied for the card should be the same regardless of the format and that consideration should be given to concessions for disadvantaged groups.**

Environment and Place Working Group - Climate

The Board recommend to Cabinet:

- 1. That it puts in place as a matter of urgency a corporate approach to financial decision making that would enable it to meet its net zero targets by 2030, to include a gap analysis of the estimated total amount of spend required to reach net zero targets against the work already underway within departments to reach these targets.**
- 2. That following receipt of the Local Area Energy Plan (LAEP) report and the work suggested at recommendation 1 above, Cabinet considers a mechanism for including the full costs associated with reaching net zero by 2030 alongside the Medium Term Financial Plan, by consulting best practice used in other authorities to date for the same purpose.**

The Board recommends to the Environment and Place O&S Committee:

1. That the committee add to its work programme an officer report relating to the Local Area Energy Plan (LAEP), when available, in order that the committee can understand and comment on the direction provided to the council and the steps that the council should take upon receipt of the LAEP.
2. That the committee continue to explore ways in which it can contribute to and support the council in reaching its net zero targets by 2030, to be informed by the LAEP report. This may include deep dive scrutiny into a range of areas that will have the most impact on reaching the council's net zero targets, such as the council's fleet of vehicles, housing, energy supply and the council's procurement strategy.
3. That the O&S committee add to its work programme a deep dive exploring options to progress community owned renewable energy working in partnership with the council.

Environment and Place Working Group – Housing

The Board recommend to Cabinet:

1. That Cabinet notes that the O&S working group members are assured that, within the difficult financial position that the council is in, officers have explored options to maximise budget and to change the direction of travel in relation to temporary accommodation.
2. That the O&S working group members record their concern at the level of Homelessness Prevention Grant and the government subsidy for temporary accommodation placements and request that the Portfolio Holder for Housing & Regulatory Services explore all possible mechanisms to lobby government for increases in this respect.
3. That, to support work around the Temporary Accommodation Efficiency Review Themes, Officers be asked to explore the benefits of using co-production tools to answer difficult policy questions, such as the approach to be taken to releasing empty homes. The working group suggested that one such tool may be a Citizens Assembly or Citizens Survey.

The Board recommends that the Environment and Place O&S Committee:

1. Notes that officers plan to develop a Temporary Accommodation Strategy and agrees that this is added to the work plan to provide O&S engagement in the strategy at the appropriate time.

Childrens Services Working Group - Care Growth Forecast

The Board recommends that Cabinet:

1. Be informed that the O&S working group notes that the Children's Social Care Service is working within the MTFP and is assured that

the budget for 25/26 is being built on well informed growth forecasts and that BCP's position was now stabilising in terms of numbers of children entering the care system.

2. Notes that, within a time of financial constraint, the O&S working group finds that protection of non-statutory services (such as Early Help) continues to be vitally important to avoid additional financial impact on statutory services. The working group supports and recommends a continued approach to protecting non-statutory services for this reason.
3. Be informed that the O&S working group was assured by the previous end of year outturn being within approximately £300k of the Quarter 3 projections for the year which was a minimal variance, demonstrating that the Service has a good handle on the anticipated costs for Children's Services

The Board recommends that the Children's Services O&S Committee:

1. Notes the challenges in the market around children's social care providers and the development of the Sufficiency Strategy to address this and that the Sufficiency Strategy be added to the Children's Services O&S work plan for engagement in at the appropriate time.
2. Notes that mental health provision needs strengthening to meet demand and that this be included within the Children's Services O&S work plan as a priority for scrutiny.

Children's Services Working Group - Home to school transport

1. The Board recommends that Cabinet supports and promotes inclusion as a key priority for Children's Services enabling more SEND pupils to be educated in mainstream, local schools, therefore reducing the need for school transport provision and associated costs
2. The Board recommends that Children's Services Officers: Increase awareness of school transport options through engagement and co-production with parents and carers.
3. The Board recommends that the Children's Services Overview Scrutinises the progress of the delivery of sustainability projects to continue to improve service provision and mitigate against cost growth in the area of school transport, particularly the first two planned projects as follows:
 - Implement a replacement operating system to manage Home To School Transport (HTST). (Noting that the existing system will cease to be supported from February 2025).
 - Develop an Independent Travel Training (ITT) programme including exploring future development of ITT to include opportunities for children and young people who are

successfully trained to participate in mentoring of future trainees.

Health and Adult Social Care Working Group

The Board recommends that Cabinet:

- 1. In light of the financial and other benefits of block booking beds, make funds available in the 2025/26 budget to allow the Adult Social Care service to increase the number of block booked beds used by the council for long-term care provision with the aim of reaching 300 block booked beds, followed by a review and a further aim of 500 block booked beds.**
- 2. Make funds available in the 2025/26 budget to support the Adult Social Care Service to work in partnership with health partners to develop a more enhanced offer of intermediate care and reablement care to be able to meet the objective of reducing or delaying long-term residential care need for residents.**

The Board recommends that the Health & Adult Social Care Committee:

- 1. Monitors the proposed increase of block booked beds for long-term care and requests an officer update on progress against this at an appropriate time.**

The Scrutiny Specialist advised that the recommendations to Cabinet would go to the next Cabinet meeting and it was expected that feedback on this for budget related recommendations would be reported back to the Overview and Scrutiny Board at its meeting on 3 February 2025.

70. 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 'D' 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 Work Plan.

The Chairman highlighted that the number of items planned for the next meeting of the Board in December was fairly large and it was suggested that the proposed budget items be grouped together for consideration.

The Board agreed to delegate to the Chair and Vice-Chair in consultation with officers to agree the items to be brought to the December Board meeting. An update would be sent to all Board members.

It was agreed that a KLOE document would be circulated to Board members for completion regarding the complaints working group and a separate reminder email for KLOE documents for other outstanding items on the work plan.

The meeting ended at 8.55 pm

CHAIRMAN