

BOURNEMOUTH, CHRISTCHURCH AND POOLE COUNCIL
COUNCIL

Minutes of the Meeting held on 15 January 2025 at 7.00 pm

Present:-

Cllr L Dedman – Chairman

Cllr S Bull – Vice-Chairman

Present: Cllr C Adams, Cllr S Aitkenhead, Cllr H Allen, Cllr M Andrews, Cllr S Bartlett, Cllr J Beesley, Cllr P Broadhead, Cllr D Brown, Cllr R Burton, Cllr P Canavan, Cllr A Chapmanlaw, Cllr E Connolly, Cllr P Cooper, Cllr M Cox, Cllr D d'Orton-Gibson, Cllr B Dove, Cllr M Dower, Cllr M Earl, Cllr J Edwards, Cllr G Farquhar, Cllr D Farr, Cllr A Filer, Cllr M Gillett, Cllr C Goodall, Cllr A Hadley, Cllr J Hanna, Cllr E Harman, Cllr R Herrett, Cllr P Hilliard, Cllr B Hitchcock, Cllr A Keddle, Cllr M Le Poidevin, Cllr S Mackrow, Cllr R Pattinson-West, Cllr A Martin, Cllr D Martin, Cllr G Martin, Cllr J Martin, Cllr S McCormack, Cllr P Miles, Cllr S Moore, Cllr A-M Moriarty, Cllr B Nanovo, Cllr L Northover, Cllr M Phipps, Cllr K Rampton, Cllr Dr F Rice, Cllr J Richardson, Cllr V Ricketts, Cllr C Rigby, Cllr K Salmon, Cllr P Sidaway, Cllr P Slade, Cllr T Slade, Cllr O Walters, Cllr C Weight, Cllr L Williams, Cllr K Wilson and Cllr G Wright

56. Apologies

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors S Armstrong, J Bagwell, O Brown, J Butt, S Carr-Brown, J Challinor, B Chick, J Clements, D Flagg, M Howell, C Matthews, J Salmon, V Slade, M Tarling, and T Trent.

57. Declarations of Interests

There were no declarations of interest submitted on this occasion.

58. Devolution

A report and paper containing supplementary information was presented to Council, copies of which had been circulated to each Member and copies of which appears as Appendix 'A' to these Minutes in the Minute Book.

Council was advised that the recommendations within the report would be taken separately with recommendation 1 (whether BCP Council should apply to participate in the Priority Programme) being discussed, debated and voted on prior to moving to recommendation 2 (what the preferred geography should be).

Council was informed that on 16 December 2024 Government had released its [Devolution White Paper](#) which clearly sets out its ambition for universal coverage of Strategic Authorities in England, with or without mayors, "to ensure citizens benefit from devolution and to ensure the effective running of public services."

Council was advised that this will have implications for BCP Council and its residents now and into the future.

Council was informed that Government was seeking urgent responses from Councils as to whether they want to join its Priority Programme, which is a pathway to the creation of Strategic Authorities, with mayoral elections in May 2026, and that Government is giving councils the opportunity to put forward their preferred devolution option either as part of this priority programme or at a later stage.

Further to this Council was advised that it has made it clear that those councils unable to reach a clear decision on devolution that satisfies the terms of the government's white paper within an undefined reasonable time frame will be subject to a ministerial directive.

In relation to this Council was informed that the Council has several options to consider, and that following the recommendation from Overview and Scrutiny Board on 6 January 2024, this report builds on previous reports and presentations to members to provide evidence and data on each option to enable Council to have an informed debate and indicate the preferred way forward on devolution.

In opening the debate the Leader of the Council, Councillor Mille Earl addressed Council highlighting the urgent nature of responding to the government in respect of the priority programme, further to this the Leader advised that the preferred approach would have been for BCP Council to submit a single-authority proposal but that advice from MHCLG was that the government would not support this approach and that the population criteria of 1.5m was clear.

In relation to this, the Leader stressed the importance of being part of the discussions around the strategic authorities at inception and proposed that BCP Council apply to participate in the Priority Programme, this proposal was seconded by Councillor Andy Martin.

Comprehensive discussion and debate then took place both in support and against the proposal with the following areas of discussion being raised: -

- Agreement by some members that the preferred model would have been as a single authority but that clear guidance had been received from government that this wasn't an option.
- Support from some members that staying out of the priority programme was not an option as the government had advised that if a decision isn't made then government may make the decision for the council.
- Importance of deciding today
- Good example of members working together
- Some members spoke against the proposal disagreeing with the whole process
- Concern with regards to the benefit of being first
- Concern with regards to not knowing what residents want
- Importance of having a voice at a regional level

The Leader of the Council summed up the debate acknowledging the comprehensive discussion which had taken place.

RESOLVED that BCP Council applies to participate in the priority programme.

Voting: 51:8 (2 abstentions)

Councillors Stephen Bartlett, Cameron Adams, Duane Farr, Simon McCormack and Pete Miles requested their vote against the recommendation be recorded.

Following the decision being carried for BCP Council to apply to participate in the priority programme being carried as set out above Council then moved onto the discussion and debate relating to the second recommendation contained within the papers in terms of the preferred geography.

In opening the debate the Leader of the Council proposed that the Heart of Wessex be submitted as BCP Councils preferred geography. In doing so the Leader stressed the consideration and time which had been taken to come to this proposed geography and of the benefits of being part of the Heart of Wessex.

This proposal was seconded by Councillor Andy Hadley.

Comprehensive discussion and debate then took place on the proposal with the following areas of discussion being raised: -

- The benefits of being part of the Heart of Wessex, including the scale and influence, current partnerships and shared ambitions.
- All authorities within the Heart of Wessex have been through Local Government Reorganisation whereas some Solent authorities are still to embark on this process.
- The mayor should be based here where the largest population area is.

An amendment was proposed by Councillor Patrick Canavan to remove the words 'Heart of Wessex' from the proposal and insert the words 'Hampshire and Solent' therefore amending the proposed preferred geography of the recommendation currently being debated.

This proposal was seconded by Councillor Sue Aitkenhead.

Comprehensive discussion then took place on the amended recommendation both in support and against the proposal with the following areas of discussion being raised: -

- Support for the Hampshire and Solent proposal stressing the importance of being ambitious.
- Good balance of urban and rural in the Solent proposal
- Advantages of there being two airports, and ports within the Solent proposal
- Concern around other Solent authorities being larger than BCP and therefore BCP priorities being lost in other agendas

The proposed amendment fell with voting 25:33 (2 abstentions)

For: 25

Cllr Cameron Adams	Cllr Bobbie Dove	Cllr Jamie Martin
Cllr Sue Aitkenhead	Cllr Jackie Edwards	Cllr Simon McCormack
Cllr Stephen Bartlett	Cllr George Farquhar	Cllr Anne-Marie Moriarty
Cllr John Beesley	Cllr Duane Farr	Cllr Vanessa Ricketts
Cllr Philip Broadhead	Cllr Anne Filer	Cllr Toby Slade
Cllr Patrick Canavan	Cllr Brian Hitchcock	Cllr Lawrence Williams
Cllr Eleanor Connolly	Cllr Andy Martin	Cllr Gavin Wright
Cllr Peter Cooper	Cllr David Martin	
Cllr Lesley Dedman	Cllr Gillian Martin	

Against: 33

Cllr Marcus Andrews	Cllr Jeff Hanna	Cllr Margaret Phipps
Cllr David Brown	Cllr Emily Harman	Cllr Karen Rampton
Cllr Simon Bull	Cllr Richard Herrett	Cllr Dr Felicity Rice
Cllr Richard Burton	Cllr Paul Hilliard	Cllr Judy Richardson
Cllr Adrian Chapmanlaw	Cllr Alasdair Keddie	Cllr Chris Rigby
Cllr Mike Cox	Cllr Marion Le Poidevin	Cllr Kate Salmon
Cllr David d'Orton-Gibson	Cllr Sandra Mackrow	Cllr Peter Sidaway
Cllr Millie Earl	Cllr Rachel Maidment	Cllr Paul Slade
Cllr Matthew Gillett	Cllr Sandra Moore	Cllr Oliver Walters
Cllr Crispin Goodall	Cllr Bernadette Nanovo	Cllr Clare Weight
Cllr Andy Hadley	Cllr Lisa Northover	Cllr Kieron Wilson

Abstentions: 2

Cllr Hazel Allen	Cllr Michelle Dower	
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Following the vote and the proposed amendment having fallen Councillor Earl summed up the original motion with the preferred geography being Heart of Wessex.

RESOLVED that the Heart of Wessex be submitted as BCP Councils preferred geography.

Voting: 43:12 (4 abstentions)

Councillor Pete Miles left the meeting at 8.22 pm prior to the vote on the amendment being taken.

59. Questions from Councillors

Council was advised that there had been no questions submitted from Councillors on this occasion.

The meeting ended at 9.05 pm

CHAIRMAN