

**ENVIRONMENT AND TRANSPORT OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL
26 January 2016**

PRESENT: Councillor Mark Anderson - Chairman, Councillor Christopher Rochester - Vice-Chairman, Councillors Philip Broadhead, Eddie Coope, Nigel Hedges, Andy Jones (left the meeting for minute no. 9), Gill Seymour and John Trickett.

ALSO PRESENT FOR ALL OR PART OF THE MEETING:

Councillor Michael Filer - Cabinet Member for Cleansing and Waste
Councillor Mike Greene - Cabinet Member for Transport, Sustainability and Carbon Management
Councillor David Smith - Cabinet Member for Planning and the Environment
Councillor Lawrence Williams - Cabinet Member for Tourism, Leisure and the Arts
Paul Ambrose - Flooding and Drainage Manager
Bill Cotton - Executive Director, Environment and Economy
Mike Holmes - Service Director, Planning, Transport and Regulation
Michael Rowland - Parks Development Manager
Anthony Kirby - Highways Design Manager

The meeting commenced at 6.52 p.m.

Note: To see a copy of the public reports that were considered by the Panel at this meeting please visit:

<http://www.bournemouth.gov.uk/CouncilDemocratic/CouncilMeetings/CommitteesPanels/EnvironmentTransportOverviewScrutinyPanel.aspx>

SECTION I - BUSINESS RECOMMENDED TO THE COUNCIL

1. FLOOD ADVISORY GROUP - 9.2

The Chairman introduced to the Panel the report circulated at '9.2'. It was explained to the Panel that the report outlined the proposed membership and terms of reference of the Flood Advisory Group and that, if happy, the Panel were asked to recommend to Full Council the adoption of the terms of reference into the Constitution of the Council.

DECISION MADE:

1. That the Panel recommend to Full Council that the proposed membership and terms of reference, as outlined in report 9.2, be approved for adoption into the Constitution of the Council.

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SECTION II - BUSINESS DECIDED UNDER DELEGATED POWERS

2. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Councillor Sue Anderson.

3. SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS

There were no substitute Members.

4. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Andy Jones declared a disclosable pecuniary interest in Item 7. On the agenda due to employment at Borough of Poole Council. Councillor Jones undertook to leave the room for the duration of that item.

5. MINUTES AND MATTERS ARISING

The Panel confirmed the minutes of the meeting that took place on 7 October 2015 and raised the following on matters arising:

Minute no. 33 - The Chairman asked for an update on the actions related to the minute. The Democratic and Overview and Scrutiny Officer undertook to find out the latest and report back to the Panel.

Minute no. 36 - The Chairman asked for an update on the actions related to the minute. The Executive Director, Environment and Economy, undertook to raise the matter with the Chair of the Economy and Tourism Overview and Scrutiny Panel.

DECISION MADE:

That the minutes of the meetings held on 7 October 2016 be confirmed as a true and accurate record.

6. PUBLIC ITEMS

The Democratic and Overview and Scrutiny Officer reported that there were no public items.

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7. QUESTIONS TO PORTFOLIO HOLDERS

The Cabinet Portfolio Holders for Cleansing and Waste; Planning and Environment ; Tourism, Leisure and the Arts; and Transport, Sustainability and Carbon Management each provided a written or verbal update on the latest works that they were involved in as part of their portfolio responsibilities for consideration by the Panel. A number of questions were submitted to the Cabinet Members for Cleansing & Waste and Transport, Sustainability and Carbon Management. A copy of the questions and answers can be found at the link below:

- <http://www.bournemouth.gov.uk/CouncilDemocratic/CouncilMeetings/CommitteeMeetings/EnvironmentTransportOverviewScrutinyPanel/2016/01/26/Environment&TransportOverview&ScrutinyPanel26-Jan-2016.aspx>

8. DEVELOPMENT OF BOURNEMOUTH PARKS AND GREEN SPACE STRATEGY

The Chairman informed the Panel that Item 8. On the agenda (Development of Bournemouth Parks and Green Space Strategy) would be taken ahead of item 7. (Repair of Roads and the Asset Management Strategy).

The Parks Development Manager made reference to the briefing note circulated ahead of the meeting which contained early thoughts and ideas surrounding the development of Bournemouth Parks and Green Space Strategy. It was explained to the Panel that the Bournemouth Opinion Survey 2015 had found that 24% of people use parks and open space on a daily basis and over 60% use them weekly. It was also explained that 85% of people were satisfied with parks and open spaces, which was an increasing figure in contrast to the national picture. The survey also found that parks and open spaces were very important to residents of Bournemouth. The Panel was told that the cost of parks and open spaces per person worked out at £15 per year and that the cost of management per hectare was £3,000, below the national average.

The Panel were told that there were a number of challenges that the Parks team would have to face and manage in the years ahead. It was explained that the survey had found just over 20% of people disagreed that their park had good facilities and that 27% of Black and Minority Ethnic respondents disagreed that their park had good facilities. The Parks Development Manager explained that they wanted to do further investigation to find out the reason behind that. It was also explained to the Panel that the usage of parks and open spaces had changes as people used parks and open spaces less for formal sports fixtures and more for informal activities (such as running and cycling, picnics, barbeques and relaxing). It was explained that facilities and investment would need to react to these preferences.

The Panel was also told that the Council would need to look at the numbers of playgrounds it maintains and how to go forwards maintaining and renewing them. It was explained that there were 55 playground sites in Bournemouth,

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which was down on the numbers in 2007, the focus has been on reducing the number of small local parks and increasing the quality of larger playgrounds with better facilities, such as toilets and a cafe, which encouraged longer stays at parks which in turn allowed children to undertake more exercise. It was explained that there would be serious budgetary challenges ahead to manage maintenance and renewal of playgrounds at current levels. The Parks Development Manager also highlighted that there are areas that do not have good access to playgrounds, such as Townsend or large areas of Southbourne. It was further highlighted that the proposed mergers ahead could change priorities.

The Panel had a number of questions and made a number of comments including the following:

Income generation - Councillor Broadhead encouraged the use of income generation to help fund projects and maintenance and explained that other countries seemed to maximise their assets in this regard more efficiently. The Parks Development Manager told the Panel that income generation was crucial and that the Parks team now employed two people focussed on business and marketing.

Volunteers - Councillor Jones enquired as to the numbers of volunteers and the nature of the work they undertook. The Parks Development Manager told the Panel that there were hundreds, if not thousands, of volunteers that did a whole range of activities including running sports clubs and staffing the Hengistbury Head Visitor Centre.

Timelines - Councillor Trickett asked about whether there were timelines attached to aspirations such as a park in Townsend. The Parks Development Manager told the Panel that timelines would not be put into place until funding was secured.

9. REPAIR OF ROADS AND THE ASSET MANAGEMENT STRATEGY

The Highways Design Manager introduced the report circulated at '7' with the agenda. It was explained to the Panel that central government had made a drive to optimise the use of funds and incentivise efficiency. The Panel was told that the government would begin to top slice funding for the Council with the top sliced funding being released dependent on a self-assessment which would be certified by the Section 151 Officer. The assessment would look at Council performance on a number of measures which would assess whether the stated criteria required for funding to be released had been met. It was explained that the funding that was top sliced would be increased year on year and that in 2021 around £250,000 would be dependent on what band of scoring the Council achieved based on its self assessment. It was explained that band 3 was the highest band and to receive all available funding Councils would need to be in this band in future years. The Panel was told that the Council currently assessed itself as being in band 1 with progress being made towards band 2.

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The Panel had a number of questions and made a number of comments including the following:

Potholes - Members of the Panel enquired as to pothole repair and whether there were actions that could be taken to prevent continuous minor repairs. The Panel was told that resilience was key and that repairs were carried out in a targeted and efficient way.

Utilities - Members of the Panel stated that often surfacing work carried out after utilities had dug trenches etc. seemed to often erode and degrade quickly. It was explained to the Panel that utilities were responsible for repairs up to 6 months after work had been completed so if issues were reported within that timeframe the utilities would foot the bill for repair.

DECISION MADE:

That the Panel:

1. Support the development of a Highway Infrastructure Asset Management (HIAM) Framework, strategy and policy to deliver future department for transport funding and to maximise the annual level of Incentive Scheme Funding Award.
2. Recommend that the approvals necessary for the associated HIAM policies and strategies are included as an item on the Cabinet Forward Plan.

10. FLOOD ADVISORY GROUP 9.1

The Vice-Chairman introduced the report circulated at '9.1' with the agenda and informed the Panel that the local levy, a charge the Council contributes to a regional fund to fund flood defence, had been set at a recent meeting of the Wessex Regional Flooding and Coastal Defence Committee with an increase 2%. The Vice-Chairman informed the Panel that the area of Bournemouth received multi-million pound improvements from the fund so would see a return on its contribution.

DECISION MADE:

1. That the minutes of the Flood Advisory Group meeting be noted.

11. TASK AND FINISH GROUPS - TRAFFIC POLICY

The Democratic and Overview and Scrutiny Officer introduced the report circulated at '10' with the agenda. The Panel was told the Cabinet Member for Transport, Sustainability and Carbon Management had responded formally to the

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recommendations of the Panel and decided against implementing the proposed policy. It was explained to the Panel that it was up to them to decide on what action to take next.

The Cabinet Member for Transport, Sustainability and Carbon Management explained that the proposed policy had a number of aspects which were good and that those would be taken forward but that the overall idea of a policy would not provide the flexibility needed in decision-making and that a scoring matrix, as proposed in the policy, would mean that the Council would be bound by the scores that arise which may conflict with priorities Councillors had. It was explained that it was felt this would provide expectations amongst residents. The Cabinet Member for Transport, Sustainability and Carbon Management further explained that they feared the petition proposal would lead to well-organised wealthy residents groups demanding bigger shares of funding and officer time at the expense of the disadvantaged and more disparate residents elsewhere.

Councillor Broadhead thanked the Cabinet Member for their comments and accepted much of what they had said but suggested that as the task and finish group was set up in response to a central government consultation it might be worth taking forward a less binding policy.

Councillor Trickett explained that the difficulty of proceeding without an objective scoring matrix was that ward Councillors were at the mercy of Officers and felt that in the past Councillors requests had been thwarted by Officers whereas a scoring matrix would stop this.

DECISION MADE:

1. That the Panel accept the Cabinet Member for Transport, Sustainability and Carbon Management's response but request that the issue of adopting a parking policy be looked at again in future.

12. TASK AND FINISH GROUPS - FOOTBALL TRAFFIC

The Chairman informed the Panel that the task and finish group would be meeting with AFC Bournemouth in the near future.

13. WORK PROGRAMME

The Chairman introduced the Work Programme, which was circulated at '11'. The Cabinet Member for Transport, Sustainability and Carbon Management suggested that the Panel should set up a task and finish group to look into nuisance. The Panel was told that an in-depth review on the topic would be of great benefit.

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DECISION MADE:

1. That the Panel establish a task and finish group to look into nuisance parking.
2. That, subject to the additions discussed, the work programme be approved.

14. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

a. Planning Enforcement - Councillor Broadhead raised the issue of the proposed reduction in numbers of planning enforcement officers and the impact this would have on the ability of the Council to ensure that people play by the rules. Councillor Broadhead further asked what income the team brought in as a result of enforcement activities. The Service Director, Planning, Transport and Regulation clarified that the proposal was to reduce the total number of enforcement officers from four to two, and told the Panel that they had to face up to difficult financial challenges and make difficult decisions on a service which was not statutory. It was explained to the Panel that there was no zeal to propose the reduction. In relation to income the Service Director, Planning and Transport informed the Panel that £40,000 was generated, though additional costs that occur, such as processing resulting applications, could outweigh this income.

The meeting closed at 9:10pm.

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