

WEYMOUTH & PORTLAND BOROUGH COUNCIL MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY 16 AUGUST 2016

Present: Cllrs K Brookes (Vice-Chair), A Blackwood, J Cant (Chairman), F Drake, C James, R Nowak, J Osborne, C Huckle and G Taylor

Apologies: Cllrs J Farquharson

Also present: Cllr P Kimber, Cllr K Wheller, Cllr I Bruce, Cllr O Kanji, Cllr M Leicester and Cllr S Maslin

Officers present (for all or part of the meeting):

David Brown (Head of Assets & Infrastructure), Stuart Caundle (Assistant Chief Executive), Jack Creeber (Parking & Transport Manager), Martin Hamilton (Strategic Director) and Julie Strange (Head of Financial Services)

27. Code of Conduct

J Cant declared an interest as he owned the property adjacent to the Bond Street public conveniences.

J Cant declared an interest in respect of minute xxx as he held a resident off-street parking permit; Cllr Cant did not vote on decision (x).

R Nowak declared an interest in minute xxxx as a trustee of the Portland Sculpture & Quarry Trust.

28. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 12 July 2016 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

29. Public Participation

Honorary Alderman Hutchings expressed concern that the public had not been consulted regarding the proposed charges set out within the car parking report and relating to off street parking.

He also expressed concern regarding the sell of the public conveniences at Bond Street. He stated that he understood that this was a valuable site, but the need for a public convenience in this area was essential.

Mr Farn addressed the committee on matters relating to Rodwell Trail public notice signage and enforcement; the Dorset Waste Partnership and litter issues on the Rodwell Trail.

The following members of the public addressed the committee regarding item 10 on the agenda “Review of Car Park Charges”. Mr Flannery, Mr Rodstone, Mr Adams, Mr Cridland, Ms Penny and Mr Farn. All the above speakers spoke against the proposals and a summary of their comments is set out below:-

- Concerns regarding the impact on the local community if there was an increase in charges was introduced.
- Concerns regarding traffic obstructions in residential streets and the highway as the public would park on the roadside inside of the car park
- Concern that there would be an increase in accidents due to poor and volume of roadside parking
- In respect of Radipole area, concern that the community centre would be forced to close if the public were unable to pay for the additional cost of car parking. This would destroy local community groups
- In respect of Southill area, concern that local shops and other facilities would close due to the public being unprepared to pay for parking choosing to shop elsewhere. The council would be responsible for closing down these stores
- Car parking in Weymouth town was already the 2nd most expensive in Dorset
- Southill was not a tourist site and only local residents would suffer the impact of the proposed charge increase
- The council had a responsibility to promote healthy living, by charging for parking at Radipole this would prohibit the public from visiting Radipole gardens due to the cost
- Parking Charges would have a detrimental impact on community exercise groups and the local tennis club

Mr Farn also asked for a written response to “what income did the council receive from car parking charges?”

The Chair of the Committee took the opportunity to thank the members of the public for attending the meeting and expressing their concerns; he also welcomed their commitment to local community organisations.

30. Questions By Councillors

K Wheller addressed the committee regarding concerns about the future of tourism in the town, she welcomed the Arts Strategy and the proposals set out in agenda item 11.

She also expressed concern regarding the delay in sorting out a refreshment hut for Greenhill gardens. This issue had been unresolved for years and a temporary solution was unsatisfactory. In response, The Head of Asset and Infrastructure advised that the council had been in discussions with the Environment Agency and had achieved an, in principal, agreement for a permanent structure to the site. A flood mitigation report would be submitted shortly.

In respect of the car parking report K Wheller expressed concern regarding the number of temporary solutions . The council needed to make decisions now. K Wheller also referred to the sell of Bond Street conveniences and insisted that a permanent solution be brought forward.

I Bruce welcomed the delivery programme set out in the Management Committee's action plan. He also asked members to support his application to the Dorset and East Devon Fisheries Local Action Group.

The following members addressed the committee regarding item 10 "Review of Car Parking Charges".

M Leicester addressed the committee and considered that:

- no thought had been given to local knowledge in respect of the proposal for Portland car parks
- many were waste land that had been converted to parking in order to address parking issues with local schools and issues with on-street parking.
- She was also strongly opposed to reintroducing charging for night-time parking.

S Maslin made the following observations regarding the proposal to charge for parking at the swimming pool:

- Residents in Knightsdale Road were angry that their concerns were being ignored by the council
- Some pool users already used the local streets to park causing road congestion. This situation would worsen with this proposal.
- Concern that cars were parking on the pavement and blocking driveways
- Potential risk for dangerous driving and or fear that emergency vehicles would be unable to access the street.

O Kanji addressed the meeting and handed members a petition regarding "Southill Car Park Charges". He also expressed concern regarding the impact on local residents and the community if the charges go ahead.

P Kimber made the following points in respect of Portland:-

- Free parking on Portland helped to stimulate the local economy
- Concerned for established and establishing business in the area

31. Review of Car Parking Charges

R Nowak arrived at this juncture (10.00am)

C Huckle presented a report on the condition of the Council's car parks and set out the level of investment and parking charges required to upgrade these car parking areas. The Strategic Director (M Hamilton) confirmed that the proposals set out increases to some sites, reducing charges in areas that

were loss-making and set out the need for essential maintenance to be carried out.

C Huckle advised that he supported the majority of the recommendations set out within the report, however he proposed that recommendation 2.6 in the be replaced with the following proposal:- “ the committee revisit car parks that are loss-making or free for a further report in December 2016, following consultation with the Policy Development or Scrutiny Performance Committee” the motion was seconded by A Blackwood.

As the previous Briefholder responsible for car parks, C James referred to the Parking Policy of 2013 and questioned why these recommendations had not been enforced. C James requested that this parking policy be shared with members of the committee.

At this stage, the committee felt unable to support the proposal to introduce charges for the current free and non-profit car parks to the to lack of consultation and misinformation. Most members supported the proposal to receive a further report on this matter.

A Blackwood welcomed the comments from the public but expressed surprise regarding the proposal for the swimming pool car park; as the briefholder he understood that the swimming pool lease was being re-negotiated which would include the operation of the car park.

It was accepted that car parks were council assets, but the majority of members expressed concern that the public, local business community and residents had not been consulted prior to the report being presented to committee.

Members also strongly felt that it was not the appropriate time to re-introduce night-time charges.

In respect of the proposed recommendations regarding essential maintenance and improvements, it was important to carry out essential works and invest in the proposed new ticket machines. Long-term investment was vital for the commercial viability of the town as a major tourist destination.

Decision

That the committee:-

- (a) Approve a once off maintenance budget from the General Reserves of £100,000 to enable immediate repairs and upgrades that are essential to be carried out within the car parks during this current financial year.
- (b) Approve a once off £200,000 from the General reserves for implementing during this financial year planned specified works that were necessary to improve the condition and safety of the car parks.

- (c) Revisit car parks that are loss-making or free for a further report in December 2016, following consultation with the Policy Development or Scrutiny & Performance Committee.
- (d) Approve, until further discussions have taken place with Dorset County Council, the free use for residents of on street parking permits of Pavilion Swannery and the Nothe car parks during events that necessitate the closure of residential roads within the Town council and harbour areas.

32. Management Committee Action Plan

It was noted that the action plan in the process of being populated following separate meetings between the Leader of Council and individual Briefholders.

Once complete an electronic version of the action plan would be circulated to committee members and Briefholder workshop was due to be held in early September.

33. Business Review - Quarter 1 2016/17

The committee considered a strategic overview of the Council's performance, risk, revenue and capital expenditure and income as at the end of June 2016.

In response to a question regarding the backlog to processing of housing benefit claims, members were advised that this should be completed shortly.

Responding to questions regarding the high risk category for the management and implementation of the change programme, the Financial Services Manager advised that this matter was being actively managed by Business Improvement, but was scored as a risk due to the speed and amount of change currently taking place within the partnership.

In respect of recruitment issues, the Strategic Director advised that the necessary action was being taken to address the issues.

Members discussed the size of the business review document, as part of the report to committee and agreed that as this report was shared with all three councils within the partnership, Joint Overview & Scrutiny Committee be asked to carry out a review of the information provided within the report that was presented to members. The committee concluded that the Business Review document was useful in terms of monitoring the briefs budgets, but the large amount of information was difficult to digest at committee.

Decision

- (a) That the latest position and the projected outturn for the year in respect of 2016/17 revenue and capital budgets be noted.

- (b) That the Joint Scrutiny Committee be asked to carry out a review of the Business Review documents presented in terms of its quality and the information provided to committee members.

34. Proposals for a Combined Authority for Dorset

The Leader of the Council presented a report updating the committee on the progress of establishing a Dorset Combined Authority (DCA); outlined the next steps and asked the committee to agree the approach for the final approval process.

Although he supported the proposal in principal, R Nowak expressed concern regarding financial commitment of the Council in the future; and as this was currently unclear he was unable to support the recommendation.

The Leader of the Council confirmed that at this stage the DCA would provide a legal identity for the Dorset Growth Board and would strengthen the collective position by creating a single legal entity and voice presenting a shared strategic economic, transport plan for Dorset.

It was proposed by J Cant seconded by K Brookes

Recommendation to Full Council (not subject to call in)

- (a) That the council formally joints a Combined Authority (CA) for Dorset once it is established.
- (b) That authority be delegated to the Chief executive in consultation with the Leader to take a decision on final consent before the final draft Order is laid before parliament.
- (c) That no decisions were currently required on the formation of a Growth Unit or any operational support structure for the CA.

35. New National Policy on Affordable Housing

R Nowak presented a report informing members of changes to national policy on affordable housing and asked the committee to consider the implications from those changes in relation to planning decisions.

Decision

That the approach set out in the report of 16 August 2016 in relation to the changes to national policy on affordable housing, be endorsed, including, in appropriate circumstances:

- for applications to which local plan policy HOUS1 and new national policy and guidance on affordable housing relate, officers normally attaching very considerable weight to the provisions in new national policy and guidance.

- Officers normally applying or recommending the application of the thresholds in national policy and guidance below which affordable housing should not be sought, including officers applying, or recommending the application of, a different threshold in 'rural areas' described under Section 157(1) of the Housing Act 1985; and
- Officers normally applying or recommending the application of vacant building credit in accordance with national policy and guidance.

36. **Council support for arts development in Weymouth & Portland**

The Leisure Commissioning Manager set out a report on the options for the future role of the council in the development of arts activities as part of a cultural tourism offer for the borough. The report set out how the borough could benefit from investment in the arts and proposed that either the council acted as an enabler, with other organisations taking the lead or decided to develop a costed but ambitious approach, which would require the commitment of substantial finances from the council's reserves.

Members welcomed the proposals, but acknowledged that any future maintenance of art installation would need to be costed within the budget of the programme.

Decision

- (a) That the principles and themes set out in paragraphs 19, 21 and 22 of the report to Management Committee of 16 August 2016, be endorsed and instruct officers to allocate available resources accordingly and in consultation with the briefholder;
- (b) That the allocation of more significant resources to the development of an ambitious programme of arts activities in the borough be agreed and officers be instructed to come forward with costed proposals before the end of 2016;
- (c) That the use by officers of part of the council's current arts budget to assist with the drafting of a costed programme of arts activities as set out (b) above be approved.

37. **Outside Bodies**

The committee considered a report on a request to approve the inclusion of the Dorset and east Devon Fisheries Local Action Group to the approved outside bodies list and make the appointment of one representative and one substitute to the group.

Decision

- (a) That Dorset and East Devon Fisheries Local Action Group be added to the approved Outside Bodies List;

(b) That Councillor C Huckle be appointed to the Dorset and East Devon Fisheries Local Action Group;

(c) That Councillor G Taylor be appointed as the named substitute of the Dorset and East Devon Fisheries Local Action Group.

38. **4 Monthly Forward Plan**

Decision

That the forward Plan be received and noted.

39. **Urgent Business**

There were no urgent items to report.

Duration of meeting: Times Not Specified

Chairman

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