



Tuesday 17th November 2020
2pm – 4pm
Teams meeting

MINUTES

MEMBERS PRESENT

David Bailey (DB)
Craig Mathie (CM)
Mike Francis MBE (MF)

Chair
Vice Chair
President

Sector & BID Representatives

Carol Scott (CSc)
David Squire (DS)
Guido Schillig (GS)
Steve Turner (ST)
Tim Lloyd (TL)
Andy Lennox (AL)
Zannah Chisolm (ZC)
Steve Riley (SR)
Paul Clarke (PC)
Martin Davies (MD)

Leisure & Attractions Sector
Transport Sector
IEA Sector
Conference & Convention Sector
Accommodation Sector
Eating Out Sector
Cultural Sector
Poole BID
Bournemouth Coastal BID
Bournemouth Town Centre BID

Professional Officers

Cllr Drew Mellor (DM)
Cllr Philip Broadhead (PB)
Cllr Mohan Iyengar (MI)
Bill Cotton (BC)
Chris Saunders (CSa)
Jon Weaver (JW)
Stevie Sainsbury (SS)

Leader – BCP Council
Deputy Leader – BCP Council
Portfolio Holder – Tourism
Executive Director – BCP Council
Director- Destination & Culture BCP Council
Head of Resort Marketing & Events BCP Council
Board Administration - BCP Council

Co-opted members

Sara Uzzell (SU)
Samantha Richardson (SR)

LEP representative
National Coastal Tourism Academy

Guests

Martin Spooner (MS)
Matt Radford (MR)

The Lagoon
The Lagoon

Apologies

Graham Farrant (GF)

CEO – BCP Council

1. Welcome & apologies

Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and asked if anyone had any objections to the meeting being recorded. In the absence of any objections the meeting was recorded.

Apologies had been received from Graham Farrant

Chair confirmed that there were no declarations of interest.

Chair welcomed Martin Spooner and Matt Radford to the meeting who would be presenting under item 4 of the Agenda.

2. Actions from the Minutes of the last meeting

- **ACTION 1: Compile a list of relevant ministers/ministries.** This is in the process of being done.
 - **ACTION 2: Priorities** – to be covered under Agenda Item 3
 - **ACTION 3: Set up Destination Strategy Working Group.** Meetings are now in the diary with the first one scheduled for Wednesday 18th November
 - **ACTION 4: MI to feedback to the Board on the position regarding planning permission for DMOs.** MI reported that he had spoken with the Planning Officer and the cases are still in progress. Officer has concerns over both planning applications. MI was advised of the grounds where HMOs could be granted to support the homeless, which the Council would support, but not where it could impair the tourism offer. There is a risk that some owners are seeing a move to HMO as a way to generate more income and this is a concern moving forward. MI will keep the Board updated
- **Are the Minutes from the last meeting correct?** The Minutes were agreed as correct.

3. Priorities

Chair reported that some work has been done on updating the Priorities for 2021 and a draft had been circulated in advance of the meeting. Chair went through the priorities one by one, inviting comments.

- 1) *Council Engagement – Further build on the strong support of the BCP political leadership for the tourism and hospitality industry and ensure the position and status of the Director of Destination & Culture is retained within BCP Council.*

Chair pointed out that it is was really important not only that the post continues but that it is respected within the authority of the Council. DM supported this and assured the Board that “we absolutely hear what the Board is saying and what we will be looking to do in terms of bringing forward our Administrations vision is absolutely aligned to destination and destination economy being a really front and central part, if not *the* front, of that vision”.

- 2) *Status - Ensure full engagement with targeted and influential members of the UK Government, Visit Britain and Dorset LEP to maximise the impact and reputation of BCP. Work with these partners to achieve Tourism Zone status and to address the skills shortage within local business.*

It was agreed that “and other key organisations” should be inserted after “LEP” and that Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole should be written out in full and only abbreviated to BCP when followed by the word ‘Council’.

- 3) *Events – to work closely with public, private and community organisations to develop a portfolio of economically viable events across the conurbation. Maintain a collaborative approach to events in areas including business, culture, arts, music, entertainment and sport.* It was agreed that the word ‘economically’ be deleted and that the wording be revised to include a ‘reputation’ and ‘sustainable’ element.

- 4) *International Education – Expand Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole’s profile internationally as educational tourism destinations and fully engage in government consultation.*

GS confirmed that the IE sector are happy with this wording.

- 5) *Transport - To develop and improve sustainable transport options for residents and visitors including support and input into the Transforming Cities Fund (TCF) process.*

DS confirmed that the transport Sector are happy with this wording.

- 6) *Funding – identify, lobby and secure new and existing funding opportunities and streams; particularly through the Tourism Sector Deal and utilising public sector investment for the benefit of the area.*

Agreed

- 7) *Marketing – Support a collaborative approach to marketing activity and strategy between BCP Destination Marketing Team and industry to enhance the reputation of BCP and sustain tourism’s recovery post-Covid.*

DB pointed out that this priority it to ensure that the Destination Marketing team is fully anchored to the work that the Board does moving forward. MI stressed that it is really important that there was no risk of the work done by Destination Marketing Team being diluted in any way and that it is able to retain its focus on what the Board requires. JW confirmed that it is even more important in these COVID related times that the focus is retained as more and more businesses are being forced to cut back on marketing activity, and subsequently marketing staff, so need the support of a Destination Marketing Team to carry this forward.

ACTION – Changes outlined above to be made and Priorities to be ratified at the next Board meeting.

It was agreed that the Vision Statement and Principles as drafted remain unchanged.

4. The Lagoon – presentation. Martin Spooner (MS) & Matt Radford (MR)

Chair introduced MS & MR and invited them to present to the Board. Presentation slides to be circulated with the Minutes.

Following a video and slide presentation MS invited questions from the Board.

CM expressed his support for the concept and asked for clarification on what stage the company is at in relation to submission of plans etc. RM confirmed that they are hopefully within weeks of ‘pushing the planning button’. Everything is in place apart from the small amount of additional funding required to bridge the funding gap but they are to all intents and purposes fully funded and as soon as the ‘planning hurdle’ is removed they can begin to develop very rapidly. The development area is ‘locked’ so no one can encroach on their opportunity to develop.

MD asked to what extent it is a Centre Parks operation and what type of split is envisaged between visitors staying at the onsite hotel/glamping and day visitors coming to the attraction but staying elsewhere in the conurbation. MS pointed out that currently Bournemouth Airport does not have a hotel nearby so the provision of an onsite hotel should be seen as a very positive move which will encourage additional footfall into the area unlocking many opportunities including the suggestion of a transport hub where there would be hydrogen buses on a monorail down the A338.

DS felt it was an interesting presentation. He asked for clarification on whether there is a phased approach or whether things coming onboard at different times. He also asked when it was envisaged that the project will be completed. MS/MR confirmed they are looking at late 2023 at the earliest for completion as this has been delayed as a result of COVID. Business plan is based around everything happening at once as far as the

Lagoon/adventure project is concerned. The rest of the 100-acre site, including the hotel, will be developed in parallel. Some things may take longer than others – it will be down to individual developers who are being invited to come on site to develop these parts of the project.

DS further asked for clarification around the Section 106 agreement for road access, particularly bearing in mind the congestion already experienced at the junction from the Airport to the A338. MS pointed out that visitor numbers to the Bournemouth, Christchurch & Poole area are currently around 4.7million. The increase in numbers from the project is estimated at 230,000 which is only a 0.05% increase so should not have a significant impact on congestion.

SU congratulated MS/MR on their persistence in hopefully bringing the project to fruition soon. She felt the time is right and the need is there but asked for clarification on whether they had secured the land. MS confirmed that the 100-acre site, owned by Malmsbury Estates, has been secured on a 125-year lease. 35 acres is the Lagoon and the indoor/outdoor activities with the remaining 65 acres being open for development on a commercial / promotional basis. In terms of funding MS confirmed that they have received great support. The issue has always been the funding to get over the planning hurdle. There has been a lack of support from local organisations for the initial seed funding. Once that is secured the main funding is not an issue. SU confirmed that LEP is at the end of an 8-year growth deal period where focus has been solely on capital and infrastructure projects and it has been hard to fund anything entrepreneurial. They are now moving to a new phase which will be theme led and more transformational. MS confirmed that they are putting in a bid to the LEP.

DB felt that the hotel is a very important part of the overall project, particularly in view of the proximity to the airport. It is green belt land and he asked if they have started conversations over planning permission as this could be a large hurdle given the previous history of objections to building on green belt. MS confirmed that they are aware of the issues and have been speaking with Terry Williams from Terrence O'Rourke and with Bill Cotton to get some clarification in terms of the development moving forward. MR confirmed that the development is now on the local plan and they hope to have a PPA raised very soon but the seed funding for planning remains the main hurdle at the moment. It is a small hurdle but must be sorted before they can move forward.

AL had three questions - how much money has actually been raised to date/ has consideration been given to the use of local operators for the cafes/bars etc./ has the technology being used for the Lagoon been fully tested – bearing in mind local history over the Surf Reef. MR confirmed that over £200,000 has been raised through SES and EIS funds most of which has been spent, primarily on licencing elements. They are forecasting an additional £600,000. The technology has been extensively tested and a decision has been taken to use Wave Garden, which has the largest market share with over 150 projects completed or in progress. In respect of the surfing/adventure element this will be run in-house as that is the only commercially viable option. In respect of other operations onsite it will be down to individual developers to decide what they want to do.

BC confirmed that he has every confidence in the project and is keen to see it develop over the next few months. He acknowledged that there will be challenges over planning, bearing in mind green belt and potential transport issues. However, he felt that there is a story emerging around the wider benefits of the project and these will need to be emphasised moving forward.

MS thanked the Board for their time and support.

ACTION: DB asked for the presentation to be shared with the Minutes.

5. Portfolio Holder & Director Update

MI had unfortunately had to leave the meeting, so CS picked up this agenda item.

- **Event Development**
 - Beverly Dunlop has been appointed to look at events and festivals. Conversations ongoing over the best way forward
- **Tourism Strategy**
 - Following discussions at the last meeting on developing the Destination Strategy a meeting has been set up tomorrow for a focussed group to take this forward and develop an action plan to bring to the January DMB meeting.
 - The timeline is to get an 18-month action plan agreed quite quickly as the general principles have not changed.
 - SR confirmed that Jo Edom has been reviewing all the research to check that the five-year principles presented to DMB back at the beginning of the year are still valid and that the sentiments coming out post/mid-covid are still valid. This evidence will be presented at the meeting of the group tomorrow.
- **Christmas**
 - Plans been curtailed by COVID.
 - Some lighting going up but there will be no Christmas Market or Ice Rink.
 - Gone out for some quotes for options on what could go in the Square, but this is dependent on the COVID situation moving forward.
 - Upton Country Park plans have been cancelled.
 - CS felt it will be interesting to see what the public appetite is if we come out of lockdown on 2nd December. There could be a lot of demand and it could be quite busy as people are keen to get out and about again. Not easy to plan at the moment.
- **Discretionary Grants.**
 - Email came out this morning on the Tourism networks but still awaiting confirmation of what is in and out of scope for the grants.
 - DB asked if BCP Council are going to be the grant giving body for this as he was aware of some discussions over using external bodies to deliver the grants. He felt that BCP Council would be the preferred option.
 - CS reported that discussions last week implied that BCP Council would be the main grant body but that some smaller grants may be distributed via the Dorset Growth Hub. He did not have an update on the position this week for the meeting.
 - AL reported that Night Time Economy businesses should be able to back date their claims to August, as per the Government's website, but that the online site does not currently allow for this, it will only allow them to apply for a grant from the beginning of November. He asked that this be fed back as it would make a considerable difference to the businesses concerned.
 - AL further pointed out that it has been incredibly hard to get any money out of the Dorset Growth Hub – something which he has personal experience of - so he asked that consideration be given to keeping it within BCP Council rather than extending to the Growth Hub to distribute monies. Both DB and MD were aware of these problems with businesses across the area and endorsed what AL had said.
 - CS agreed to feed this back.
- **Great South West Tourism Partnership**
 - Ongoing conversations with the Government.
 - Guidance still not been forthcoming on the Tourism Action Zones.
 - Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole seem to have currently fallen in with the South West Tourism Partnership and there was a meeting last week with the Tourism minister. A lot of discussion took place around what they wanted and as

expected they asked for a number of things eg. 5-year recovery plans/ rate relief etc

- Feedback was that basically the Minister wants some ammunition to take back to the Treasury and did not appear to be getting that from that group.
- Following discussions after the meeting with MI and DB, CS felt that Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole should be leading rather than being led.
- There may be some benefits with going with the South West but could equally be some benefits going with the South East.
- CS also reported that following a recent meeting with Southampton City Council, around the City of Culture Bid, it had come out that Southampton see themselves as representing the South West.
- A decision needs to be made ready for when the announcement comes out about the Zones.
- CS suggested inviting the Tourism Minister to attend a Board meeting, providing the opportunity to present him with some information & evidence to help him to put forward the Bournemouth, Christchurch & Poole case – rather than just making demands.
- DB expressed concern over Bournemouth, Christchurch & Poole aligning with the South West as it is such a large area and its priorities do not sit alongside those of Bournemouth, Christchurch & Poole
- SR agreed that it is a difficult decision but pointed out that at the meeting the Minister implied quite clearly that there was not currently any funding for tourism zones, so it is not an immediate priority to make a decision. However, moving forward she felt it was important to engage more with the South West group to ensure that it *does* represent the needs of the Bournemouth, Christchurch & Poole area if a decision to go with them is made.
- Feedback from the Government is that when the funding *is* available for zones there will be a change to the criteria to favour areas that have been most heavily hit by COVID-19 which will disadvantage the whole of the South.
- SR further pointed out that the DCMS are actively pushing through the DMO review and restructure process which they are trying to get done before the end of this fiscal year so that they can bid for funding in the following fiscal year. That may start to affect where those tourism zone partnerships form as the Government will have outlined its priorities over which DMOs it engages with. It is therefore important that Bournemouth, Christchurch & Poole is engaging in that process moving forward.
- CS queried whether as a tactic we are better to be speaking to DCMS or better talking to the Minister. SR agreed that this is difficult to know what is best and it is a question NCTA have been trying to address recently. The budget does not sit with the Minister but with his arm's length bodies – ie. Visit England/Visit Dorset. It is therefore essential to keep in the loop with everyone and to identify what is Bournemouth, Christchurch & Poole's unique point of difference and make the Minister aware of this. JW agreed that it is important that we are pro-active and positive and engage the Minister in what we have been doing and what we are planning to do.

ACTION: Contact Minister for Tourism and invite to a meeting

6. South Coast Events Forum

- First meeting was last Thursday
- Next meeting scheduled for 10th December
- Started on back of the national campaign 'We make Events' to create awareness and profile around the events industry across the local area
- 54 signed up members. WhatsApp group just under 100.

- Presented last week to the LGA, including local businesses, community and sectors, around what the Forum is looking to achieve. Now have a standing invite to meetings
- Working across three areas –
 - Increasing awareness and recognition of the events sector across the business community and the public at large
 - Develop representation and collaboration. Ways to bring new people, who are excellent at what they do, to the table in driving strategy
 - Drive professional standards across all types of event – community, arts & culture, sports
- Are now looking to have a voice on boards etc, including DMB and to develop an events-based strategy. Membership is made up of a host of different people from a multitude of different areas of the business from event suppliers to fencing suppliers, marketing agencies, arts organisers etc.
- Next stage is to develop a Board which will be structured and have outreach into the various parts of the sector and to hone the strategy going forward.
- Events industry is feeling very optimistic about 2021 with some good conversations already taking place. One positive example is that The World Conference on Women in Sport is about to start bidding for 2026 and they are talking about Bournemouth potentially becoming a host city for that event. 2022 event is scheduled to take place in Auckland.

7. Sector updates - Any key information or issues from Sectors that are useful for the Board to know or require Board consideration/action

- **Leisure & Attractions – CSc**

- Not much has changed since last meeting
- Attractions had quite a good period when open
- All in same boat now and looking at closing for the winter
- Furlough scheme – if this continues in January then many businesses may look to furlough staff through to March and look to reopen then. Need to protect revenue made.
- Looking forward to a good year in 2021. Bookings, particularly for groups, are looking very good

- **Transport – DS**

- Sector meeting last week
- Few concerns raised on Transforming Cities Fund. Dorset Council unfortunately went off on a tangent and put out public facing information without briefing anyone in advance. They also held a meeting with Network Rail and did not include South West Railways.
- Have now had a subsequent meeting with representatives from Dorset and BCP Councils and now have some governance in place, together with assurances that everyone will be in the loop from now on.

- **International Education Forum - GS**

- Meeting last week which provided an update from all the subsectors (Universities, Colleges, Language Schools and Boarding Schools)
- Universities & Colleges – domestic students have taken up slack where International students has dissipated. However, Int'l students pay more so that has meant a drop in revenue
- On a positive note - the A level fiasco resulted in the taking on of more domestic students and also many students deferred to 2021.
- Brexit is on the horizon – which is going to affect European Int'l student numbers
- Graduate Immigration Rule, whereby Int'l students can stay on for two years after graduating has had a positive effect.

- Language Schools – locally been 3 or 4 closed in the area. 30+ closed nationwide. These figures could be higher as these are only the ones that are known about. Could be as high as 50-60 nationwide. They are really struggling compared to Universities, Colleges and Boarding Schools
- BCP Councils rate relief was very much welcomed.
- Worldwide - recoveries in Far East are doing quite well. Biggest obstacle is air bridges – there is none with China. Quarantine regulations are also a block with regard to China. This has affected students returning to China for Christmas – which is not a problem with Universities and Colleges but is problematic for Boarding Schools.
- **Conference and Convention – ST**
 - Still suffering from a lack of guidance over when will be able to open
 - Bookings in 2021/2 are showing a high increase in entertainment bookings but slight decline in Conference bookings as there is a bigger delay in the decision-making process for rebooking conferences.
 - There is a definite desire to continue with events
 - Entertainment – normally around 90 bookings/year for Windsor Hall – looking at 30% growth for 2021 (116 confirmed) Similar for Pavilion
 - Strong for next year but very dependent on when can open and what restrictions are.
 - Looking to start doing things in April but will have to wait and see.
- **Accommodation – TL**
 - TL had to leave the meeting but has provided an update which will be circulated with these Minutes
- **Eating Out – AL**
 - Trying to clarify if going to be able to open after 2nd December and what the opening will look like with regard to curfew/tiers etc. At the moment no one has any idea.
 - Pushing for 11pm curfew
 - Discretionary grants – pushing NTE and Events forward to be at the top of the pile
- **Culture – ZC**
 - ABTS – part of group who won Destination Award for Events & Culture for Dorset Moon 2019 project
 - UK Dance Showcase, hosted by PDSW, is one of three UK awards nominated for the UK Dance Awards at the end of November
 - In second lock down PDSW and Lighthouse are partially open at the moment, but Regent Centre and Russell-Cotes are both closed
 - Earliest anyone is going to open will be Lighthouse with a very limited programme from 4th December. PDSW planning on January opening. Russell-Cotes and Regent Centre will have no live programme until Spring 2021.
 - Seen 70 -95% drop in sales
 - Lost between 12 – 25% in staff redundancies
 - Working on Autumn 2021 for 'return to normal'
 - Interest in outdoor and digital work – both challenging, particularly financially
 - No engagement with any of the destination campaigns or Coast with the Most so would welcome any ideas on how can work collaboratively with others moving forward
 - There is a strong London Theatres campaign which may look to work with.
 - Looking to Bournemouth, Christchurch & Poole as holistic destination
- **Poole BID - SR**
 - Christmas lights are up now – Dolphin Centre and BID - and there has been very good response and feedback from the public

- Events – artisan markets and busking scheme, similar to Southampton. Bringing some professional busking to the area
- **Coastal BID – PC**
 - Collected in over 55% of levy monies
 - Christmas is looking positive with trees/lights/decorations all going up and receiving good feedback
 - Benefitted from an error by Gala Lights who put up lighting on East and West Cliff by mistake but have kindly agreed to leave them there at no cost. Value £50000
 - There has been a lot of positive PR and Social media. Lot of support from independant businesses.
 - BEB – still supporting staffing costs
 - Hotels – interesting to see what December looks like as it is possible that a lot may not re-open after lockdown, and possibly may not re-open in New Year.
 - Brexit – going to be a shortage of people wanting to come to UK to work in Hospitality. This is likely to be a really big issue.
 - Need to focus on Colleges etc to find a way to get people into the industry
 - Universities are putting back placements for students to June next year – and this will have an effect on staffing shortages.
- **Town Centre BID - MD**
 - Quiet at the moment.
 - Collected in 60% of the levy - mainly the independents & smaller businesses have paid and not the nationals.
 - Been pushing campaign for buy local, spend local and hoping that post 2nd December businesses will be able to make up some of their losses. If that does not happen then there will be some more businesses that go under.
 - A positive is that independents are doing better than nationals in these difficult times.
- **National Coastal Tourism Academy – SR**
 - Mike Francis has recently stepped ;down as Chair and a new Chair – Keith Wilkes – has been appointed.
 - SR expressed thanks to Mike Francis MBE for his years of dedicated service and support in the role
 - MF responded to wish the NCTA all the best for the future and went on to report that he had recently been made aware that Saudi Arabia has recently announced that they will be funding a number of scholarships for students to study in Britain and have chosen Bournemouth as one of only two Universities in the UK. Bournemouth has been selected because it offers courses on Tourism.

Planning Updates

Nothing significant to report

Chair thanked everyone for attending the meeting and for their continued support and wished everyone an early Happy Christmas.

Next meeting

19th January 2021. 2pm – 4pm.