

# Supplementary Papers for Council

Date: Tuesday, 10 February 2026



## 8. Recommendations from Cabinet - 4 February 2026

a)	<b>Cabinet 4 February 2026 - Minute No. 120 - Our people and communities: Subsidised Bus Services Review</b>	3 - 72
	<b>It is RECOMMENDED that:</b>	
	(a) Council approves the phased withdrawal of the council bus subsidy budget commencing May 2026 resulting in the service changes set out in Appendix 4.	
	(b) Council approves the use of Local Authority Bus Grant to fund the revised subsidised bus network as set out in Appendix 4.	
b)	<b>Cabinet 4 February 2026 - Minute No. 122 - Early Years Mainstream Schools Funding 2026/27</b>	73 - 86
	<b>It is RECOMMENDED that:</b>	
	(a) The decision for the early years single funding formula (EYSFF) is delegated to the corporate director for children's services in consultation with the portfolio holder for children, young people, education and skills.	
	(b) Council approves the mainstream schools funding formula detailed in Appendix 2.	
c)	<b>Cabinet 4 February 2026 - Minute No. 123 - Hawkwood Road Phase 2 Update</b>	87 - 102
	<b>It is RECOMMENDED that Council authorise:</b>	
	1. Approval to proceed with Option 1 to enter the build contract for 68 homes and commercial floorspace, prior to executing an Agreement to Lease for the ground floor of Block A, to secure the total combined grant of £17.3m and redevelopment of the Hawkwood Road site within the external funder's timescales.	
	2. Authority to market the non-residential property as general commercial, if the NHS is unable to commit funding for the ground floor of Block A and noting the full residential scheme is no longer deliverable.	
	3. Authority to proceed to sale or long leasehold of the ground floor commercial asset to ensure a funding strategy is secured to offset the cost of building.	

**[PLEASE NOTE: Should the Council wish to discuss the detail of the exempt Appendices at Appendix 1 and 2, it will be necessary to exclude the press and public and move into Confidential (Exempt) session.]**

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## CABINET



Report subject	<b>Our people and communities: Subsidised Bus Services Review</b>
Meeting date	4 February 2026
Status	Public Report
Executive summary	<p>During 2025/26 financial year the council will spend over £1.59m supporting subsidised bus services from a combination of council derived revenue budget and external grants. By 2027/28 the cost is forecast to exceed £2.0m. Continuing to fund the subsidised network in its current form is not sustainable.</p> <p>This report presents recommended changes to the network informed by a performance review including public consultation. The recommendation has been developed in partnership with morebus (main enhanced bus partnership operator).</p> <p>Whilst undertaking the review the council has engaged with the Department for Transport (DfT) Bus Reform Team throughout to ensure that the recommended revised subsidised network is eligible to be funded from the recently announced £2,621,127 Local Authority Bus Grant (LABG) 2026/27 revenue allocation.</p> <p>A report setting out the full planned investment of both the revenue and capital LABG allocations shall be presented to Cabinet in March 2026.</p>
Recommendations	<p><b>It is RECOMMENDED that:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(a) <b>Cabinet recommends to Council the phased withdrawal of the council bus subsidy budget commencing May 2026 resulting in the service changes set out in Appendix 4.</b></li> <li>(b) <b>Cabinet recommends to Council the use of Local Authority Bus Grant to fund the revised subsidised bus network as set out in Appendix 4.</b></li> </ul>
Reason for recommendations	<p>The subsidy of local bus services is non-statutory, although Local Transport Authorities (LTAs) have a duty to assess the transport needs of their area and the impact of bus services being withdrawn, on the elderly, disabled, and people with mobility problems. There is a statutory duty for the council to provide transport services to schools to meet the requirements of the Education Act 1996.</p>

	<p>The council has undertaken a comprehensive review of subsidised bus services, including a public consultation, and worked in partnership with the local bus operator to develop the proposed revised subsidised bus network that minimises the impact on passengers/residents as follows:</p> <p>Evening and Weekend routes: with minimal adjustments these services to be operated commercially.</p> <p>Weekday routes: the majority either retained without adjustment, enhanced, or retained with minimal adjustment to make them commercial.</p> <p>Subsidised School Service Route 40 recommended to be discontinued at end of the 2025/26 academic year due to high cost per passenger journey, few and reducing numbers of passengers and there is an alternative commercial service covering most of the route indicating that the service is not essential.</p> <p>Subsidised School Service Route 425 recommended to be discontinued at end of 2026/27 academic year due to high cost per passenger journey and there are suitable alternative commercial services that cover most of the route. Reason for retaining this for a year longer than Route 40 is that the alternative journey is less direct with a need to change bus. Extending the service allows parents time to plan for change.</p> <p>Subsidised School Service Routes 81 is recommended to be combined with the 46 service to reduce the level of subsidy required.</p> <p>Routes 744 and 448 subsidies to be retained in their existing form due to them being considered good value for money.</p>
Portfolio Holder(s):	<p>Councillor Andy Hadley, Cabinet Member for Climate Mitigation, Energy and Environment</p> <p>Councillor Mike Cox, Cabinet Member for Finance</p> <p>Councillor Richard Burton, Cabinet Member for Children, Young People, Education and Skills</p>
Corporate Director	<p>Glynn Barton, Chief Operations Officer</p> <p>Cathi Hadley, Children's Services</p>
Report Authors	<p>Richard Pincroft, Head of Transport and Sustainable Travel</p> <p>John McVey, Sustainable Transport Manager</p>
Wards	Council-wide
Classification	For Recommendation

## Background

1. Bus subsidy is funding provided by the council to support bus services (or part thereof) that would not otherwise operate, due to there being too few passengers to generate sufficient revenue to cover the cost of operating the service and generate a profit.
2. Most bus routes across BCP operate without extra financial help from the council. However, some routes with fewer passengers, such as evening and Sunday services, and some school services, or those that serve areas away from the busy roads, have needed financial support (subsidy) to keep running.
3. When subsidising a bus route, the council specifies the service that it needs to be provided and procures the service, usually via an open tender, to any interested operators.
4. The council has a statutory duty under the Education Act 1996 to provide home to school transport for eligible children of compulsory school age. To help councils to comply with this duty the Department for Education published guidance in 2024 titled *Travel to school for children of compulsory school age*.
5. Section 509AD of the Education Act 1996 requires local authorities to have regard to any wish of a parent to have their child educated at a school based on their religion or belief when exercising their school travel duties. This does not mean local authorities must arrange travel to a school with a designated religious character for a child whose parents have chosen it on the grounds of their religion or belief (unless the child would be eligible for free travel to that school due to extended rights to support low-income families to exercise school choice), and they should not have a blanket policy that they never provide travel assistance to schools with a designated religious character and may need to make decisions on a case-by-case basis if asked to exercise their discretionary power in relation to such a school.
6. A child under the age of 8 is eligible for free travel to their nearest suitable school if it is more than 2 miles from their home. A child aged 8 years or over is eligible for free travel to their nearest suitable school if it is more than 3 miles from their home. Extended rights also apply to support low-income families. For children aged 8 or over but under 11, assistance is provided to their nearest suitable school if it is more than 2 miles from their home. For children aged 11 to 16, assistance is provided to attend their nearest suitable school provided it is more than 2 miles but not more than 6 miles from their home, or to attend a school chosen on the ground of their religion or belief provided it is their nearest faith school and it is more than 2 miles but not more than 15 miles from their home.
7. A 'suitable school' for school travel purposes is a qualifying school that is suitable for the child's age, ability, aptitude and any special educational needs they may have. It should also be suitable for the child's sex, for example a girls' school could not be considered the nearest suitable school for a boy. 'Suitable school' does not mean the most suitable school for a child. Schools are able to meet a wide range of needs. The nearest secondary school to the home of a child of secondary school age, for example, will almost always be their nearest suitable school (provided it would be able to admit them).
8. When a local authority assesses whether the distance between a child's home and their school is further than the statutory walking distance, the route they measure must be the shortest route along which a child, accompanied as necessary, may walk in reasonable safety. This is not necessarily the shortest distance by road. The

route may also include footpaths, bridleways, other pathways and alternative entrances to the school.

9. The relevant guidance states journey times need to be taken into account. Young people should be able to reach their education or training without incurring such stress, strain, or difficulty that they would be prevented from benefiting from the education provided. For example, a young person should not have to make several changes of public service bus to get to their education or training, if that would result in an unreasonably long journey time. In this context, local authorities should consider which mode of transport will best meet the need to ensure a reasonable journey time.

Guidance suggests that a child of primary school age may reasonably be expected to travel up to 45 minutes, and a child of secondary school age may reasonably be expected to travel up to 75 minutes each way to access learning.

10. Based on the Education Act 1996 local authority guidance none of the subsidised school services are required to mitigate the nearest suitable school requirement.
11. Some school children and young people are eligible for free home to school transport due to special educational needs (SEN), disability or mobility problems. Typically, very few children with SEN, disability or mobility problems utilise the subsidised school services and are instead transported by more specialist travel solutions; parents who receive a mileage rate or taxis with Passenger Assistants which generally pick up multiple passengers on route to a school.
12. In 2023/24 the council funded bus subsidy budget was £868k. As part of 2024/25 budget setting in the MTFP, the budget was reduced by £155k to £713k. This was achievable at the time due to a Department for Transport (DfT) provided Bus Service Improvement Plan Plus grant (BSIP+). In addition, approximately £80k was provided by Children's Services.
13. In 2024/25, the council spent £1.59million to keep subsidised bus services running. Note that due to the need to renew a number of contracts this is expected to increase to more than £2million by 2027/28 if the network/services are not adjusted. £860k of the £1.59m came from council revenue and the remainder from the devolved Bus Service Operators Grant (BSOG) and BSIP+. In addition, approximately £84k was provided by Children's Services.
14. Decision making to balance the 2024/25 council budget in the MTFP included a proposed future year review of the services and potential phased removal of the Bus Subsidy budget across the 2026/27 and 2027/28 financial years, subject to full consideration of the public consultation outputs and a performance review. The current year (2025/26) budget is £713k plus £84k from Children's Services.
15. The subsidy of bus services is non-statutory. However, Local Transport Authorities (LTAs) have a duty to assess the transport needs of their area and the impact of bus services being withdrawn on the elderly, disabled, and people with mobility problems.
16. In addition to council derived bus subsidy funding, ringfenced support is currently provided from the devolved government's Bus Service Operators' Grant (BSOG), which now forms part of a Local Authority Bus Grant (LABG) settlement – see paragraph below. Support for the network is also currently provided across BCP by a temporary Bus Service Improvement Plan Plus (BSIP+) grant which was awarded to local authorities in previous financial years to help them support services in the aftermath of the Covid-19 pandemic.

17. The council has been allocated £5.64m of Local Area Bus Grant (LABG) funding for 2026/27 of which £2.62m is revenue and £3.02m is capital. LABG is being allocated to local authorities nationally to work with local enhanced bus partnerships with the principal aim of delivering Bus Service Improvement Plans (BSIPs) objectives. The revenue allocation is repeated in 2027/28 and 2028/29. The capital funding allocation is also repeated (and slightly inflated) for 2027/28 and 2028/29. A Cabinet paper shall be presented in March 2026 setting out the recommended investment of this grant. The LABG conditions preclude the direct 'like for like' replacement of council bus subsidy. The more LABG that is allocated to subsidising services the less grant is available to enhance and promote bus services, it is therefore very important that services that are considered essential are funded utilising LABG.
18. As the council was aware that the LABG would include the 'like for like' condition, it engaged with the DfT at the beginning of 2025, and it agreed that, subject to a full review of all subsidised local bus services and the council maintaining its 'overall base bus funding' (funding for buses in BCP from all sources), the LABG revenue element could be used to support contracted routes.
19. In mid-December 2025 and through further dialogue in January 2026, DfT confirmed that it would permit the council to utilise the BCP Local Authority Bus Grant (LABG) revenue allocation to fund bus subsidy at a higher level than the legacy BSOG payment. This is on the basis that the local network has been reviewed following consultation (see section below) and a performance review undertaken to demonstrate best value for money. It was also due to the council being able to demonstrate that the overall base bus funding across BCP from all sources is set to increase in 2026/27 owing to substantial amounts of Section 106 funding from the development industry being utilised to prime new services.

### **Existing Subsidised Services**

20. The council currently subsidises 24 local bus service contracts – see **Appendix 1** for indicative route maps. These include six school services (two of these school routes are funded by Children's Services and were originally introduced to transport children with a statutory entitlement to home to school transport).
21. The two dedicated school buses funded through the Children's Services Home to School Transport budget historically carried high numbers of children with a statutory entitlement to free school transport. However, these numbers are now low, and it is likely to be more cost effective to meet this duty in other ways (smaller vehicle, network bus pass, or potentially parental payment).
22. The remainder of the routes are either Monday to Saturday day-time services, or Sunday and Evening Services for otherwise commercial services.
23. Many of the contracts are due for renewal by April 2027 which will very likely result in price increases which would need a substantial increase in BCP council derived subsidy to offset. One of the contracts, Service 20 (Poole to Castlepoint), is due for renewal by April 2026.

### **Public Consultation**

24. On 25 March 2025, Council agreed to a full review of the subsidised local bus service contracts.

25. The review comprised of on-bus passenger surveys; analysis of passenger boarding information supplied by the bus operator, morebus; discussions with morebus; and a ['Have your say' public consultation](#) which ran from 9 July to 18 August 2025.
26. Residents were asked to give their opinions on the council's subsidised bus services with the option of completing paper questionnaires that were made available on the bus routes affected or by submitting responses online. The council's Consultation Team engaged an external research company to undertake the data entry and analysis. A summary of the outcome is attached as **Appendix 2**.
27. There were 2,989 responses to the consultation, 765 (25.6%) of these were received online and 2,224 (74.4%) were on paper questionnaires. Most respondents (2,589) indicated that they use at least one of the Monday to Saturday routes. 919 respondents used at least one of the Sunday services and 881 used the evening routes. 140 respondents identified as users of at least one of the school routes. The key themes from the public consultation were:

### **Evening Routes**

28. 881 respondents identified as users of at least one of the affected Monday to Saturday evening routes.  
**Route 4: Poole - Broadstone - Merley – Wimborne (301 respondents)**  
**Route 8 & 9: Poole - Hamworthy - Turlin Moor - Upton - Creekmoor – Poole (297 respondents)**  
**Route 14: Poole - Bourne Estate – Wallisdown – Kinson (153 respondents)**  
**Route 16: Poole - Bourne Estate – Bournemouth (205 respondents)**  
**Route 25 & Route 26: Poole - Canford Heath - Tower Park (299 respondents)**
29. While evening bus users are disproportionately older, female, and living with disabilities, a significant proportion are younger adults and working age.
30. Core trip purposes include socialising, leisure, visiting family, shopping, attending medical appointments, and commuting to or from employment. Many users also rely on buses for caring responsibilities and volunteering.
31. Respondents fear increased isolation, loneliness, and poorer mental health if evening services are reduced or withdrawn. Many noted they would become housebound and unable to maintain community and family connections.
32. Without buses, many would be unable to access leisure, cultural venues, or evening appointments. Safety concerns were raised about walking long distances after dark, particularly for older people, women, and young people. Many described unmanageable journey times and disrupted routines.
33. Respondents highlighted that withdrawal would prevent them from accessing evening or night-shift employment in hospitality, healthcare, and retail. Alternative options, such as driving or taxis, were described as unaffordable.
34. Families with children, carers, and volunteers reported that withdrawal would make managing responsibilities extremely difficult.
35. Loss of services would push more people into car use, increasing congestion and emissions. Respondents also noted impacts on volunteering, community participation, and local cultural venues, which depend on accessible evening transport.

36. One third of respondents (34%) did not offer an opinion on the proposal to remove evening route subsidies. Among those who did, the majority disagreed with subsidy withdrawal, with strongest opposition from users, female respondents, and younger and middle-aged adults.

### **Sunday routes**

37. 919 respondents identified as users of at least one of the affected Sunday routes.

**Route 4: Poole – Broadstone – Merley – Wimborne (324 respondents)**

**Route 8 & 9: Poole - Hamworthy - Turlin Moor- Upton - Creekmoor – Poole (283 respondents)**

**Route 16: Poole - Bourne Estate – Bournemouth (191 respondents)**

**Route 25 & 26: Poole - Canford Heath - Tower Park (283 respondents)**

**Route X6: Poole - Bearwood (- Ringwood) (172 respondents)**

38. Most Sunday route users are over 65, female, and/or living with disabilities. While many users have older persons' bus passes, a significant number of users travel without concessionary passes, reflecting a mix of pensioners, working-aged people, and families.

39. The most common reasons for travel are socialising, leisure, shopping, visiting family, attending church, and commuting to weekend employment.

40. Respondents consistently highlighted risks of increased isolation, loneliness, and poor mental health if Sunday buses were reduced or withdrawn. Many feared becoming housebound or losing contact with friends, family, and faith communities.

41. Withdrawal would restrict access to shops, leisure facilities, church, volunteering, and medical appointments. For many with mobility challenges, walking to distant alternative stops or using multiple connections was described as unfeasible.

42. Loss of Sunday services would jeopardise access to work, particularly weekend and evening shifts in retail, hospitality, and care. Alternatives such as taxis were considered unaffordable.

43. Reduced availability would force longer or more complex journeys, increase waiting times, and disrupt daily routines. Families also noted difficulties in meeting caring responsibilities.

44. Respondents warned that withdrawal would increase car dependency, congestion, and emissions. Community and cultural activities reliant on accessible transport would also be negatively affected.

One third of respondents (32%) did not offer an opinion on the proposal to remove Sunday route subsidies. Of those who did, most disagreed with subsidy withdrawal, with opposition particularly strong among users, female respondents, and those aged younger than 65.

### **Monday to Saturday (daytime) routes**

45. 2,589 respondents indicated that they use at least one of the Monday - Saturday routes.

**Route One: Poole Bus Station - Hospital - Rail Station - Quay - Baiter Park (742 respondents)**

**Route 7A/B/C: Alderney East / Bloxworth Estate / Tower Park - Upper Parkstone (250 respondents)**

**Route 10: Poole - Sterte - Wessex Gate - Lytchett Matravers (319 respondents)**

**Route 18: Broadstone (West Way) - Canford Heath – Bournemouth (574 respondents)**  
**Route 20: Poole – Penn Hill - Bournemouth – Castlepoint (489 respondents)**  
**Route 32: Poole – Broadstone - Merley – Slades Farm – Bournemouth (238 respondents)**  
**Route 33: Bournemouth – East Cliff - Bournemouth Hospital – Christchurch (447 respondents)**  
**Route 36: Talbot View – Bournemouth – Kinson (527 respondents)**

46. Most weekday route users are over 65, female, and/or living with disabilities. A high proportion hold older persons or disabled bus passes, underlining the accessibility and equity role of these services.
47. Core purposes include shopping for essentials, attending medical appointments, meeting friends, leisure, caring responsibilities, and connecting to other bus services. Many passengers rely on these buses multiple times per week, with significant proportions travelling daily.
48. Respondents expressed concern that reductions or withdrawal would lead to isolation, reduced independence, and poorer mental health, particularly for elderly and disabled residents. Many described the bus as a lifeline.
49. Most users have no alternative means of transport. Withdrawal would prevent many from attending hospital appointments, shopping for essentials, or maintaining family and community connections.
50. Many users would face significant additional costs from taxis or car use, which they described as unaffordable. Some anticipated impacts on their ability to reach work, leading to potential loss of employment.
51. Reduced services would increase travel times, create overcrowding on other routes, and force difficult journey planning, particularly for those with mobility issues.
52. Withdrawal is expected to increase car dependency, traffic congestion, and emissions, undermining environmental efforts. Respondents also noted negative impacts on volunteering and caring responsibilities.
53. Most respondents (93%) expressed an opinion on the proposal to remove Monday–Saturday daytime route subsidies, with most strongly disagreeing with subsidy removal. Opposition was consistent across demographics, with route users particularly opposed.

### **School routes**

54. 140 respondents identified as users of at least one of the affected school routes.

School routes funded from Children's Services Budget:

**Route 40: Hamworthy - Turlin Moor - Upton - St Edward's & St Mary's Schools (57 respondents)**  
**Route 425: Wallisdown - Bearwood - Merley - Corfe Hills & Broadstone Middle Schools (43 respondents)**

School routes funded from Bus Subsidy budget:

**Route 46: Throop - Avonbourne Academies (5 respondents)**  
**Route 81: Charminster - Avonbourne Academies (8 respondents)**  
**Route 448: Old Town - Hamworthy - Parkstone & Poole Grammar Schools (37 respondents)**  
**Route 744: Baiter - Old Town - Oakdale Junior School (18 respondents)**

55. Most respondents rely on these services daily, highlighting their importance for routine and reliable school attendance.
56. If bus subsidies were withdrawn, respondents reported they would be forced to rely on driving, lifts from friends and family, taxis, or complex multi-bus journeys. Some indicated their children would be unable to reach school at all. Many children would face longer, more complicated, or unsafe journeys. For some, particularly those with additional needs, the bus is their only viable means of travel.
57. Families anticipate increased costs from fuel, taxis, and lost working hours, with several suggesting the change could jeopardise their employment. Parents with children in different schools described unmanageable schedules if bus routes are withdrawn. Respondents noted environmental impacts from increased car use and higher congestion. Respondents were also concerned over their children's independence and safety.
58. More than a third of respondents (37%) did not offer an opinion on the proposal to remove school route subsidies. Of those who did, the majority disagreed with the withdrawal of subsidies, with strongest opposition from current users, residents, female respondents, and those aged 16–64.

#### **General Consultees Comments**

59. Respondents were asked to provide their reasons for their agreement/disagreement. Respondents feared increased isolation, loss of independence, reduced ability to socialise, and negative mental health impacts. Buses were repeatedly described as a lifeline, particularly for older and disabled residents.
60. Respondents emphasised that buses are often their only viable transport option. Cuts would limit access to shops, healthcare, education, work, and social activities. Concerns about safety, distance to alternative stops, and already limited provision were common.
61. Respondents anticipated longer, more complex journeys, reliance on multiple buses, and increased strain on already crowded services.
62. Respondents stressed that buses are the most affordable option. Alternatives such as taxis were unaffordable, and many feared losing employment, particularly shift and weekend work. Some also highlighted that they had chosen homes based on bus access.
63. Respondents noted that subsidy removal would undermine environmental aims, increase congestion, and hinder volunteering and caring responsibilities. Some felt it would erode trust in the council.
64. Respondents feared children would lose access to education, particularly those in rural areas or from low-income families. Some argued pupils should attend local schools, but the dominant view was that removing subsidies would disadvantage children unfairly.
65. A smaller number of respondents supported subsidy withdrawal, arguing that public funds should not support services not used by everyone, or that bus users should bear the cost. Some felt alternative travel options were available.
66. Many respondents proposed alternatives to complete withdrawal, including reducing frequency, introducing smaller buses, diverting existing high-frequency routes, or restructuring services into circular/linked loops. These suggestions were framed as ways to reduce costs while avoiding leaving communities without any service.

## Existing Network Performance Analysis

67. **Appendix 3** contains a schedule of the existing services, including the route description, frequency, cost, number of passengers (annual and daily average), cost per passenger trip and consultation outputs.

68. The performance review identified that the evening routes (5 services) and the Sunday routes (5 services) have, on average, the lowest subsidy with the average being £1.22 (range £0.23 to £2.79) per passenger trip.

69. That the Monday to Saturday (daytime) services have a support per passenger trip cost average of £1.35 (range £0.46 to £2.66). This level of support is considered relatively low for a subsidised bus service, suggesting good value for money. There are high numbers of older people using these routes, mainly travelling with concessionary bus passes. It should be noted that concessionary bus travel is a statutory provision and is a subsidy to the passenger and not the bus operator.

70. The school routes (6 services) were found to be the most expensive to operate with an average cost per passenger trip of £4.69 (range £1.37 to £8.28).

Note: that one of the routes, Route 40, is currently being operated on a temporary basis until the end of the Summer Term 2026 due to the contract being terminated by the previous operator and a new provider procured. This change has resulted in a price increase equating to more than £9k per annum to maintain the service resulting in the cost of subsidy per passenger trip of £8.28.

71. The price that parents pay for their children to utilise the services also varies from route to route. The table 1 below schedules the price of a return trip using each of the respective school routes:

Table 1 – Passenger fares for using subsidised school routes

Bus Route	Price per term [£]	Daily price for a return trip [£]	Notes
46	£247.50	£4.58	-
81	£247.50	£4.58	-
448	£257.40	£4.77	-
744	n/a	£3.40	Zone A bus network period tickets accepted on this service
40	n/a	£2.40	-
425	£212.90	£3.94	-

Note: the price of unlimited travel on the BCP bus network using commercial services when purchased via the morebus app on a weekly basis is £16.70 so if used across 5 days the average price of a return journey is £3.34. If purchased monthly (30-day pass) at a cost of £64.00 this reduces the average cost of a return journey to £3.20 (assuming 20 days travel to/from school). This cost is reduced even further if a 90-day pass is purchased at a price of £165.00 with the average cost of a return journey being £2.75 (assuming 60 days travel to/from school).

For some students using service 425, which travels into Dorset, students using the commercial alternative would require a Zone AB bus network ticket. When purchased via the morebus app on a weekly basis the price is £20.50, so if used across 5 days the average price of a return journey would be £4.10. A 30-day pass costs £73.00 reducing the average cost of a return journey to £3.65 (assuming 20 days travel to/from school). A 90-day pass costs £188.00 making the average cost of a return journey £3.13 (assuming 60 days travel to/from school).

### **Revised Subsidised Bus Service Network Proposal**

72. Using the performance analysis alongside the consultation feedback and informed by dialogue with the DfT, a revised subsidised bus service network proposal has been developed through partnership working with the local bus operator, it is set out in **Appendix 4** and comprises the following:
  73. The 10 evening and weekend supported services to become commercial (operated without subsidy) following increases in patronage. There would be changes to some of the routes and/or timetables though these would be expected to maintain a similar level of service to the current provision.
  74. This would secure the evening and Sunday services to the key suburbs across the conurbation and is testament to the positive benefit of partnership working, the council's delivery of high-quality waiting facilities, Real Time Passenger Information, CCTV, the priming of routes with Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP) funded fares initiatives, and bus priority measures, being matched by morebus' significant investment in new vehicles, driver training and smart ticketing.
  75. 3 of the 8 Monday to Saturday daytime services would be adjusted and combined with other services to create new routes. The results of the consultation, together with analysis of Electronic Ticket Machine (ETM) boarding data, has been used to form these proposals. New peak hour services would be introduced, and cross-conurbation links (including to Bournemouth Hospital) would be provided. Some of the services could be enhanced, further utilising additional LABG to prime them and are designed with longer term commerciality in mind.
  76. 5 of the 8 Monday to Saturday daytime services would remain in their current form. These routes are considered the most socially necessary and have a low subsidy per passenger journey but are not currently fully commercial. The existing timetables are seen to be efficient and optimised.
  77. 4 of the 6 school services are not considered sustainable in their current form because of a combination of the following: they require high or very high subsidy per passenger journey; there is a suitable alternative service and/or there are very low passenger numbers. Therefore, the following is recommended:
    - a. Subsidised School Service Route 40 is recommended to be discontinued at the end of the 2025/26 academic year because the cost per passenger journey is high, there are very few passengers, and a suitable alternative commercial service exists.
    - b. Subsidised School Service Route 425 is recommended to be discontinued at the end of 2026/27 academic year because the cost per passenger journey is high and there are suitable alternative commercial services. The rationale for retaining this for a year longer than Route 40 is that the alternative journey is more complex with a change of bus, hence, delaying the withdrawal affords parents more time to plan for the change.

- c. Subsidised School Service Routes 81 is recommended to be discontinued owing to the high cost per passenger albeit this shall be mitigated by being combined with the 46 service which shall reduce the level of subsidy required to cover the area representing better value for money.

78. Routes 744 and 448 are recommended to be retained in their existing form as the existing timetables are considered efficient and optimised.

79. The council has introduced child period tickets for the first time this year using Bus Grant funding which would help students potentially transferring from dedicated school buses to network services. It has also invested millions in walking and cycling infrastructure making active travel (walking/wheeling) journeys much safer and convenient compared to when the services were originally conceived.

### **Options Appraisal**

80. The following options have been considered when reviewing the subsidised bus network.

#### **81. Option 1 - no changes to existing subsidised bus service network.**

This would result in no reductions in service provision in the short term and therefore no immediate impact on passengers. However, in the medium term (from April 2027 onwards) unless the council bus subsidy budget is significantly increased (not currently viable due to ongoing financial pressure) then there would be a need to review all services again and make cuts because many of the services shall need to be retendered which will result in increased costs (more than £500k) – the council cannot afford to increase bus subsidy budgets.

Furthermore, the review has demonstrated that several of the services are commercially viable and that other services do not represent good value for money, hence, if the services are not adjusted then the council would be unable to justify the use of Local Area Bus Grant (LABG) to operate the services. This option is therefore not considered sustainable in the medium/long term and is not recommended.

#### **82. Option 2 – Changes to the Evening/Sunday services to enable them to be operated commercially and some daytime Monday to Saturday services and all School Services retained in their current form.**

The service provision would be as per **Appendix 4**, but with all the school services retained in their existing form. In consideration of the performance review, whilst the proposals for adjusting the Evening/Sunday Services and the Monday to Saturday daytime services demonstrate best value and use of the LABG to support them is justifiable, some of the school services by comparison are very expensive to operate (Routes 40 and 425 specifically) resulting in poor value for money and there are suitable alternative options via the commercial network (**refer to Appendix 5**).

The LABG has been awarded to the council to improve and grow bus services and not to support services that are not good value for money or not essential. The costs of operating Routes 40 and 425 are set to substantially increase in future years because both services need to be retendered soon (the 40 now and 425 in August 2027) which will result in increased costs (expected to be nearly double) making them even less sustainable.

Using LABG to operate services that largely duplicate the commercial network and that have limited patronage making them very expensive to operate, is not

considered to be the best use of public money, hence, this option is not recommended.

**83. Option 3 – withdrawal council derived subsidy for bus services and utilise Local Authority Bus Grant to fund a revised subsidised bus network**

The service provision would be as set out in **Appendix 4**, which has been developed in full consideration of the consultation and performance review outputs and is considered to represent the best value for money and as such is suitable to be LABG funded with the exception of the 40 and 425 routes which are not good value for money and therefore recommended to cease in a phased manner (they shall continue to be funded by Children's Services until they finish operating).

The council has reviewed the impact on parents and children that use the existing school services to consider the impacts they ceased to operate. Potential suitable options either via the commercially operated bus network or active travel for some or part of the journeys are set out in **Appendix 5**.

The proposed revised network is affordable (utilising the LABG), and some elements could potentially become commercial in the future. This option is considered sustainable in the medium/long term, it is therefore recommended.

84. Bus timetables across BCP are adjusted for the summer and winter seasons. To minimise disruption to passengers, it is proposed that if any changes to Monday to Saturday daytime, evening and Sunday are approved that they would dovetail with the morebus summer 2026 timetable effective from 24 May 2026. i.e., no services would change until 24 May 2026 and bus subsidy would need to be utilised during 2026/27 financial year to cover the period 1 April to 24 May 2026.
85. The variation, or termination of local bus service contracts requires 16 weeks' notice. Morebus has agreed to reduce the notice period to 12 weeks meaning that all the options set out below are deliverable ahead of the 24 May 2026 timetable change date.
86. School services would not be withdrawn part-way through the academic year. If the decision is made to withdraw the subsidy to Route 40 it would continue to be operated until the end of the 2025/26 academic year (20 July 2026).
87. If the decision is made to withdraw the subsidy to Route 425 it would continue to be operated until the end of the 2026/27 academic year.
88. If the decision is made to combine the 46 and 81 they would continue to be operated in current form until the end of the 2025/26 academic year (20 July 2026) funded using bus subsidy and in advance of September 2026 a new timetable would be published for a revised 46 covering both the 46 and required parts of the 81 service that would be funded into the future utilising LABG.

**Summary of financial implications**

89. Refer to options 1 to 3 set out above.
90. There would be a substantial increase in financial pressure on the council to maintain the existing services in their current form in 2026/27 and beyond. These services have been in-effect maintained (funded) whilst the bus subsidy review has been undertaken by utilising one off BSIP+ grant to top up, council derived bus subsidy grant and BSOG.

There is no more BSIP+ funding available and BSOG is now incorporated into the LAGB settlement. By 2027/28 the cost of providing the subsidised network is estimated to increase from £1.59m to over £2m due to the retendering of existing long-term contracts for services that expire in April 2027 and that are currently being operated on a temporary contract. This is not considered sustainable.

91. Option 3 is sustainable. It can be funded into the future utilising BCP LAGB revenue allocation. It is estimated that in 2026/27 financial year £138k of council bus subsidy revenue budget would be used to subsidise the existing services until the respective May timetable changes and end of the school year.

£53k of the £138k would be funded from Children's Services to subsidise Route 40 to the end of the 2026 summer term and to provide the 425 during the 2026/27 financial year. £13k would also be required in 2027/28 financial year from the Children's Services budget to operate the service until the end of the 2027 summer term.

92. On 5 December 2025 DfT published LAGB revenue allocations and the council has been allocated £2,621,127 for 2026/27 and the same amount annually through to 2028/29 financial year. This indicates that the recommended proposal would be sustainable until at least end of March 2029. There is no indication that beyond 2028/29 that this annual commitment would cease.

### **Summary of legal implications**

93. Local Transport Authorities (LTAs) have a duty to assess the transport needs of its area and the impact of bus services being withdrawn, on the elderly, disabled, and people with mobility problems. The council, as the LTA, must not decide on the budget cut, and then simply find several bus services that if cut would save them that amount. This review has included a full assessment of how changes to subsidised routes would impact on passengers. The consultation undertaken as part of the review did not predetermine the outcome and sufficient time was allocated to ensure full consideration of the outcome.

94. A reduced timescale has been agreed with morebus for any contract variations or terminations resulting from this review.

95. Local authorities must provide free home-to-school transport for eligible children, but they are not required to run a full public bus network; instead, they arrange suitable transport (like contracted school buses, taxis, or public bus passes) to meet specific needs, for those living beyond walking distance or with special needs/disabilities, focusing on safe, stress-free access to education. The duty under the Education Act 1996 is to ensure access, not necessarily a general public service, using commissioned services or public transport where appropriate.

### **Summary of human resources implications**

96. No significant human resources implications have been identified. There is potential that some BCP Council employees could be affected by any reductions in bus services, either directly or indirectly.

### **Summary of sustainability impact**

97. A Decision Impact Assessment DIA Proposal ID 741 has been created for this decision, and the impact summary is set out below. Major negative impacts were identified for the Transport and Accessibility category; however, these would be

largely mitigated should Option 3 be adopted. No positive or negative impacts were identified for Water and Resource use or Sustainable Procurement.

98. Concern was raised from the Natural Environment perspective that reductions in bus services do not affect the opportunity for people to travel to green spaces, highlighting that green spaces offer huge benefits for health and wellbeing, community cohesion, volunteering and environmental engagement.
99. The remaining categories identified minor negative impacts, or the impacts were unknown. The overall impact is considered **Moderate**.

### Impact Summary

Category	Description	Impact Score
Climate Change & Energy	Amber - Minor negative impacts identified / unknown impacts	
Communities & Culture	Amber - Minor negative impacts identified / unknown impacts	
Waste & Resource Use	No positive or negative impacts identified	
Economy	Amber - Minor negative impacts identified / unknown impacts	
Health & Wellbeing	Amber - Minor negative impacts identified / unknown impacts	
Learning & Skills	Amber - Minor negative impacts identified / unknown impacts	
Natural Environment	Amber - Minor negative impacts identified / unknown impacts	
Sustainable Procurement	No positive or negative impacts identified	
Transport & Accessibility	Red - Major negative impacts identified	

Answers provided indicate that the score for the carbon footprint of the proposal is: 7.5

Answers provided indicate that the carbon footprint of the proposal is:	Moderate	
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## **Summary of public health implications**

100. A decision by Council to reduce or withdraw subsidised local bus services is likely to have varying public health implications.
101. A change that encourages those that can do so to walk to a bus stop further away from their usual stop is likely to have positive health benefits. Also, bus passengers switching to cycling for some or all their bus journeys are also likely to have a positive benefit.
102. However, bus journeys that are replaced by car journeys (non-EV) will have a negative effect. Diesel cars are the single biggest contributor to NOx levels, responsible for 41% of all NOx emissions from road transport, impacting on air quality and public health.
103. Bus passengers that do not have alternative modes of travel are likely to make fewer journeys or not travel at all. This is likely to have a negative effect on both physical and mental health.
104. The Revised Subsidised Bus Service Network Proposal and offer of help to plan alternative ways to travel aims to minimise public health implications.

## **Summary of equality implications**

105. An EIA conversation/screening document has been completed for this decision and is attached at **Appendix 6**.

The profile of people that use buses, from both national and local evidence, are groups the Equality Act is intended to benefit by advancing equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not. Much older, much younger age groups, people with a disability, women, other ethnic groups, other religions, other sexual orientations and residents from more deprived areas are all more likely to use buses, compared to others in their protected groups.

Any deterioration in service following a decision to reduce or withdraw subsidised bus routes will disproportionately impact on these groups unless adequate mitigation actions can be put in place.

Negotiations with Morebus have resulted in their agreement to operate the evening and Sunday routes on a commercial basis and minimum impact on passengers is expected. In addition, the authorisation from the DfT to use Bus Grant revenue allocation (subject to conditions) will significantly reduce the impact on most passengers.

Alternative journeys for school children currently using the two dedicated school buses proposed for withdrawal and transferring to the general bus network have been investigated. This has concluded that there are options available, albeit involving a change of bus and/or a longer walk to/from the bus stop.

## **Summary of risk assessment**

106. The main risks identified were ensuring that public consultation is undertaken and that the outputs used to understand the impacts to passengers (including children and young people) accessing essential services, employment and education if changes were made to subsidised services. Ensuring that statutory duties regarding public transport and access to education are met. And that sufficient information was/is provided to ensure that decision makers are fully informed of the impacts of recommended changes.

## **Background papers**

None

## **Appendices**

Appendix 1: Indicative route map of the existing subsidised bus network

Appendix 2: BCP Council Bus Subsidies Consultation 2025 Report (Summary)

Appendix 3: Performance Review of the existing subsidised bus network

Appendix 4: Subsidised Bus Service Network Proposal (Option 3)

Appendix 5: Alternative journey choices examples

Appendix 6: Equalities Impact Assessment Conversation/Screening

Appendix 1: Indicative route map of the existing subsidised bus network

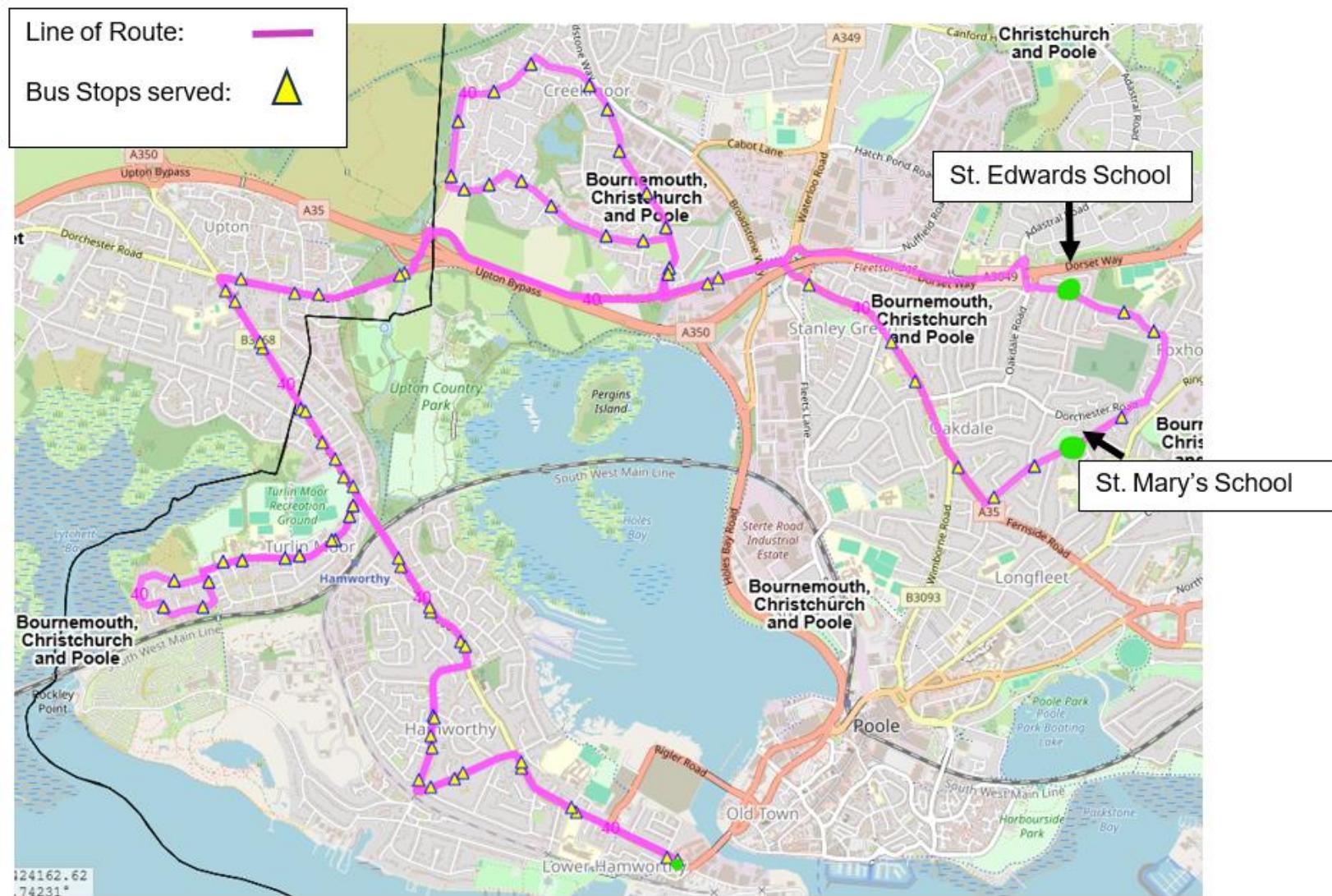
Infographic showing subsidised daytime Monday to Saturday routes (excluding school routes)



Infographic showing subsidised school bus service routes provided by morebus



Indicative route map showing subsidised school service 40 operated by Linkrider





# BCP Council Bus Subsidies Consultation 2025

Data Collection, Analysis and Reporting by Darmax Research

[bcpcouncil.gov.uk](http://bcpcouncil.gov.uk)

## Introduction

- BCP Council are undertaking a review of subsidised bus services to confirm whether council subsidies are still needed to provide services and to see if viable alternatives exist. The council supports 24 local bus service contracts, consisting of school services (n=6), Monday - Saturday routes (n=8), evening routes (n=5) and Sunday routes (n=5)
- This consultation will inform decision making on which routes the council continue to subsidise
- A survey was designed to collect evidence on the use of subsidised bus services, views and suggestions on the proposals and what users would do if the routes were reduced in frequency or withdrawn
- Paper versions of the survey were made available on buses and in all of BCP Council's libraries. Respondents could also provide their views by completing the survey online
- A total of 2,989 survey responses were received
- Fieldwork took place between 7th July and 18th August 2025
- The council commissioned Darmax Research to undertake the data collection, analysis and reporting of survey results

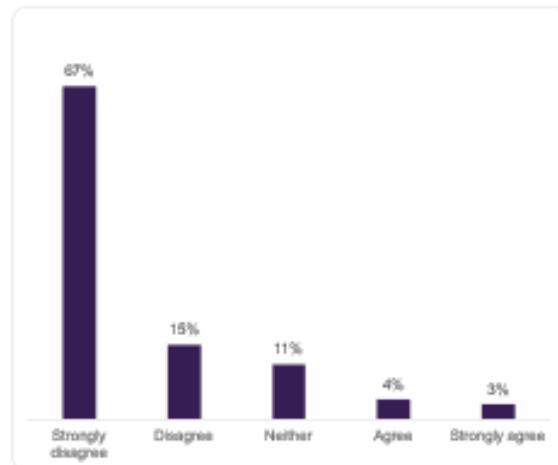
## School routes



The majority of respondents disagreed with the proposal to withdraw subsidies on school routes.

Respondents who were significantly most likely to strongly disagree with the proposal to remove the subsidy for school routes were:

- Respondents who use one of the school routes
- Bournemouth, Poole and Dorset residents
- Female respondents
- Those aged 16-64 years



### Route 40: Hamworthy - Turlin Moor - Upton - St Edward's & St Mary's Schools



57 respondents indicated that they or their child(ren) use the school route 40.

More than half of the respondents who use the school route 40 do so on a daily basis (57%), while the majority of the other users do so either 2-4 times a week (17%) or weekly (11%).

33% of those who use the school route 40 would have to rely on friends / family to get them or their child to school if the route was withdrawn, while 33% would have to drive. Respondents also indicated that they / their child would walk (17%), use a bus on a different route (15%) or use a taxi (13%).

Some respondents indicated their child(ren) would be unable to reach school at all.

Respondents commented that withdrawing this school route would put additional stress on parents and mean that they would be late to work, impacting the hours that they could work and risk losing their job. These respondents also commented that it would cost them more money to get their child(ren) to school by other means.

Parents with children in different schools described unmanageable schedules if bus routes are withdrawn.

#### Route 46: Throop - Avonbourne Academies

5 respondents indicated that they or their child(ren) use the school route 46.

4 of these respondents use route 46 on a daily basis.

Respondents would have to drive, rely on friends / family to get them or their child to school, use a taxi or use a bus on a different route if route 46 was withdrawn.

Respondents commented that they have to get to work at the same time that school starts and withdrawing this school route would mean that they would be late to work, impacting the hours that they could work and risk losing their job.

Respondents also commented that it would cost them more money to get their child(ren) to school by other means and that their child would be more tired by travelling to school by alternative means.

#### Route 81: Charminster - Avonbourne Academies

8 respondents indicated that they or their child(ren) use the school route 81.

4 of these respondents use route 81 on a daily basis, while the other 4 use it either weekly or 2-4 times a week.

Respondents would have to drive, rely on friends / family to get them or their child to school, use a taxi or use a bus on a different route if route 46 was withdrawn.

Respondents commented that they have to get to work at the same time that school starts and withdrawing this school route would mean that they would be late to work, impacting the hours that they could work and risk losing their job.

Respondents also commented that it would cost them more money to get their child(ren) to school by other means or they would be forced to drive, increasing congestion and their environmental impact.

Some respondents commented that it would cause their child to be late to school, or would be unable to get to school at all.

### Route 425: Wallisdown - Corfe Hills & Broadstone Middle Schools

43 respondents indicated that they or their child(ren) use the school route 425.

67% of respondents who use the school route 425 do so on a daily basis, while the other users do so either 2-4 times a week (14%) or weekly (19%).

37% of those who use the school route 425 would have to rely on friends / family to get them or their child to school if the route was withdrawn, while 33% would have to drive.

Respondents indicated their child(ren) would be late or unable to reach school at all if this route was withdrawn. Respondents also commented that they are unable to drive and this route is the only way their child can get to school.

Other respondents commented that it would mean that they would be late to work, impact the hours that they could work and risk losing their job. These respondents also commented that it would cost them more money to get their child(ren) to school by other means.

Parents with children in different schools described unmanageable schedules if bus routes are withdrawn, while the route is vitally important for children with a disability.

### Route 448: Old Town - Hamworthy - Parkstone & Poole Grammar Schools

37 respondents indicated that they or their child(ren) use the school route 448.

67% of respondents who use the school route 448 do so on a daily basis, while the majority of other users do so either 2-4 times a week (11%) or weekly (14%).

52% of those who use the school route 448 would have to rely on friends / family to get them or their child to school if the route was withdrawn, while 30% would have to drive. Respondents also indicated that they / their child would walk (18%), cycle (15%) or use a taxi (15%).

Respondents indicated their child(ren) would be late or unable to reach school at all if this route was withdrawn. Respondents also commented that they are unable to drive and this route is the only way their child can get to school. It is too far to walk to school and parents are concerned for their child's safety if they had to cycle.

Other respondents commented that it would mean that they would be late to work, impact the hours that they could work and risk losing their job. These respondents also commented that it would cost them more money to get their child(ren) to school by other means.

Parents with children in different schools would struggle if bus routes are withdrawn.

### Route 744: Baiter - Old Town - Oakdale Junior School

18 respondents indicated that they or their child(ren) use the school route 744.

78% of respondents who use the school route 744 do so on a daily basis.

47% of those who use the school route 744 would have to rely on friends / family to get them or their child to school if the route was withdrawn, while 41% would walk. Other respondents would use a taxi (18%) or a bus on a different route (12%).

Respondents indicated their child(ren) would be late or unable to reach school at all if this route was withdrawn. Respondents also commented that it is too far to walk to school and parents would be concerned for their child's safety.

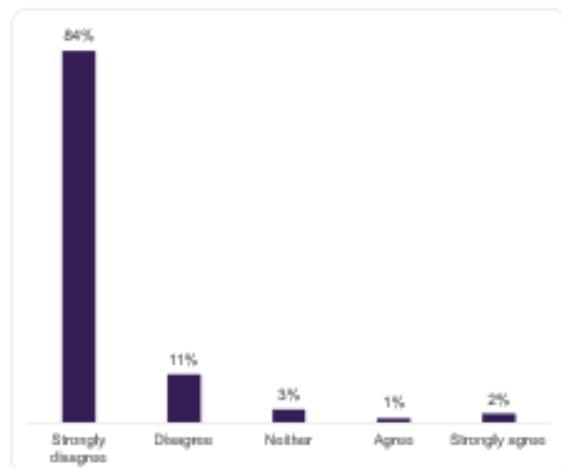
Other respondents commented that it would mean that they would be late to work, impact the hours that they could work and risk losing their job. These respondents also commented that it would cost them more money to get their child(ren) to school by other means.

Parents with children in different schools would struggle if bus routes are withdrawn.

### Monday - Saturday routes

The vast majority of respondents disagreed with the proposal to withdraw subsidies on Monday - Saturday routes.

Respondents who were significantly most likely to strongly disagree with the proposal to remove the subsidy for Monday - Saturday routes were those who use one of the routes



## Route One: Poole Bus Station - Hospital - Rail Station - Quay - Baiter Park



742 respondents indicated that they use Route One on Monday - Saturday.

The vast majority of Route One users live in Poole (87%) and are older than 65 years of age (80%). 87% of respondents who use Route One are female, while 70% have a disability. The majority of users have an older persons bus pass (76%).

89% of users travel on this route at least once a week.

The most common reasons for travelling on Route One are shopping for food, shopping for other items, social/meeting friends, medical reasons and for leisure purposes.

Respondents travel on Route One because it is too far/difficult to walk and they don't have the option of travelling by other means. In addition, users of this route do so because they have a disability and it is both better for the environment and more convenient than the car.

Respondents would not go anymore (35%), don't know what they would do (29%) or would travel at a different time (28%) if the route was reduced in frequency.

Respondents would not go anymore (44%) or don't know what they would do (32%) if the route was withdrawn.

Respondents expressed concern that they have no alternative means of transport. Withdrawal would prevent many from attending medical appointments, shopping for essentials, or maintaining family and community connections. Reductions or withdrawal would lead to isolation and poorer mental health, particularly for elderly and disabled residents.

Many users would face significant additional and unaffordable costs from taxis or car use. Some anticipated impacts on their ability to reach work, leading to potential loss of employment. Withdrawal is expected to increase traffic congestion and emissions, undermining environmental efforts. Respondents also noted negative impacts on volunteering and caring responsibilities.

## Route 7A/B/C: Alderney East / Bloxworth Estate / Tower Park - Upper Parkstone



250 respondents indicated that they use Route 7A/B/C on Monday - Saturday.

The vast majority of Route 7A/B/C users live in Poole (96%) and are older than 65 years of age (76%). 89% of respondents who use Route 7A/B/C are female, while 67% have a disability. The majority of users have an older persons bus pass (68%).

92% of users travel on this route at least once a week.

The most common reasons for travelling on Route 7A/B/C are shopping for food, shopping for other items, social/meeting friends, medical reasons and for leisure purposes.

Respondents travel on Route 7A/B/C because it is too far/difficult to walk and they don't have the option of travelling by other means.

Respondents would not go anymore (45%) or don't know what they would do (33%) if the route was reduced in frequency.

Respondents would not go anymore (55%) or don't know what they would do (33%) if the route was withdrawn.

Respondents expressed concern that they have no alternative means of transport. Withdrawal would prevent many from attending medical appointments, shopping for essentials, or maintaining family and community connections. Reductions or withdrawal would lead to isolation, loneliness and poorer physical and mental health, particularly for elderly and disabled residents.

Many users would face significant additional and unaffordable costs from taxis or car use. Some anticipated impacts on their ability to reach work, leading to potential loss of employment.

## Route 10: Poole - Sterte - Wessex Gate - Lymington - Lytchett Matravers



319 respondents indicated that they use Route 10 on Monday - Saturday.

64% of Route 10 users live in Dorset, while 32% live in Poole. 65% of users are older than 65 years of age. 72% of respondents who use Route 10 are female, while 49% have a disability. 33% of users do not have an older persons bus pass or a disabled persons bus pass.

80% of users travel on this route at least once a week.

The most common reasons for travelling on Route 10 are shopping for other items, social/meeting friends, shopping for food, leisure purposes and for medical reasons.

Respondents travel on Route 10 because it is too far/difficult to walk, they don't have the option of travelling by other means and it is more convenient, cheaper and better for the environment than the car.

Respondents would not go anymore (37%) or don't know what they would do (32%) if the route was reduced in frequency. 21% would drive, rely on friends / family or travel at a different time.

Respondents would not go anymore (46%) or don't know what they would do (34%) if the route was withdrawn. 19% would drive and 20% would rely on friends / family.

Respondents expressed concern that they have no alternative means of transport and it is too far/difficult to walk to alternative bus stops. Withdrawal would prevent many from attending medical appointments, shopping for essentials, or maintaining family and community connections. Reductions or withdrawal would lead to isolation, loneliness and poorer physical and mental health.

Many users would face significant additional and unaffordable costs from taxis or car use. Others anticipated impacts on their ability to reach work, leading to potential loss of employment.

## Route 18: Broadstone (West Way) - Canford Heath - Bournemouth



574 respondents indicated that they use Route 18 on Monday - Saturday.

The majority of Route 18 users live in Poole (84%), while just less than three quarters of users are older than 65 years of age (72%). Two thirds of respondents who use Route 18 are female (67%), while more than half have a disability (56%). Two thirds of users (65%) have an older persons bus pass.

83% of users travel on this route at least once a week.

The most common reasons for travelling on Route 18 are shopping for food, social/meeting friends, shopping for other items, leisure purposes and for medical reasons.

Respondents travel on Route 18 because it is too far/difficult to walk, they don't have the option of travelling by other means, they have a disability and it is more convenient, cheaper and better for the environment than the car.

Respondents would not go anymore (33%) or don't know what they would do (26%) if the route was reduced in frequency. 27% would use a bus on a different route, 24% would travel at a different time, 17% would rely on friends / family and 15% would drive.

Respondents would not go anymore (40%) or don't know what they would do (27%) if the route was withdrawn. 28% would use a bus on a different route.

Respondents expressed concern that they have no alternative means of transport and it is too far/difficult to walk to alternative bus stops. Withdrawal would prevent many from attending medical appointments, shopping for essentials, or maintaining family and community connections. Reductions or withdrawal would lead to isolation, loneliness and poorer physical and mental health.

Many users would face significant additional and unaffordable costs from taxis or car use. Others anticipated impacts on their ability to reach work, leading to potential loss of employment. Some warned that it would increase congestion and emissions, while others commented that it would impact on their ability to undertake volunteering and/or help with caring responsibilities.

## Route 20: Poole - Penn Hill - Bournemouth - Castlepoint



489 respondents indicated that they use Route 20 on Monday - Saturday.

Two thirds of Route 20 users live in Poole (66%), while one third live in Bournemouth (32%). The majority of users are older than 65 years of age (82%). Two thirds of respondents who use Route 20 are female (66%), while more than half have a disability (60%). More than three quarters of users (78%) have an older persons bus pass.

86% of users travel on this route at least once a week.

The most common reasons for travelling on Route 20 are shopping for other items, shopping for food, social/meeting friends, leisure purposes and for medical reasons.

Respondents travel on Route 20 because it is too far/difficult to walk, they don't have the option of travelling by other means, they have a disability and it is more convenient, cheaper and better for the environment than the car and other means of transport.

Respondents would not go anymore (36%) or don't know what they would do (27%) if the route was reduced in frequency. 28% would travel at a different time and 25% would use a bus on a different route.

Respondents would not go anymore (40%) or don't know what they would do (29%) if the route was withdrawn. 26% would use a bus on a different route.

Respondents expressed concern that they have no alternative means of transport and it is too far/difficult to walk to alternative bus stops. Withdrawal would prevent many from attending medical appointments, shopping for essentials, or maintaining family and community connections. Reductions or withdrawal would lead to isolation, loneliness and poorer physical and mental health.

Many users would face significant additional and unaffordable costs from taxis or car use. Others anticipated impacts on their ability to reach work, leading to potential loss of employment. Some warned that it would increase congestion and emissions, while others commented that it would impact on their ability to undertake volunteering and/or help with caring responsibilities.

## Route 32: Poole - Broadstone - Merley - Slades Farm - Bournemouth



238 respondents indicated that they use Route 32 on Monday - Saturday.

Two thirds of Route 32 users live in Poole (68%), while just less than one third live in Bournemouth (29%). Three quarters of users are older than 65 years of age (77%). Two thirds of respondents who use Route 32 are female (65%), while two thirds have a disability (64%). Three quarters of users (73%) have an older persons bus pass.

84% of users travel on this route at least once a week.

The most common reasons for travelling on Route 32 are shopping for food, shopping for other items, social/meeting friends, medical reasons and for leisure purposes.

Respondents travel on Route 32 because they don't have the option of travelling by other means and it is too far/difficult to walk. Others do so because they have a disability and it is more convenient and better for the environment than the car.

Respondents would not go anymore (41%) or don't know what they would do (31%) if the route was reduced in frequency. 20% would rely on friends / family.

Respondents would not go anymore (42%) or don't know what they would do (32%) if the route was withdrawn. 20% would use a bus on a different route.

Respondents expressed concern that they have no alternative means of transport and it is too far/difficult to walk to alternative bus stops. Withdrawal would prevent many from attending medical appointments, shopping for essentials, or maintaining family and community connections. Reductions or withdrawal would lead to isolation, loneliness and poorer physical and mental health.

Many users would face significant additional and unaffordable costs from taxis or car use. Others anticipated impacts on their ability to reach work, leading to potential loss of employment.

## Route 33: Bournemouth - East Cliff - Bournemouth Hospital - Christchurch



447 respondents indicated that they use Route 33 on Monday - Saturday.

Just less than three quarters of Route 33 users live in Bournemouth (71%), while the remaining users are split between Poole (13%) and Christchurch (15%) residents. The majority of users are older than 65 years of age (83%). Just less than two thirds of respondents who use Route 33 are female (62%), while 59% have a disability. Three quarters of users (76%) have an older persons bus pass.

83% of users travel on this route at least once a week.

The most common reasons for travelling on Route 33 are medical reasons, shopping for food, shopping for other items, social/meeting friends and for leisure purposes.

Respondents travel on Route 33 because they don't have the option of travelling by other means and it is too far/difficult to walk. Others do so because they have a disability and it is more convenient and better for the environment than the car.

Respondents would not go anymore (28%) or don't know what they would do (28%) if the route was reduced in frequency. 27% would use a bus on a different route, 20% would rely on friends / family, 18% would travel at a different time or use a taxi. 16% would drive.

Respondents would not go anymore (32%) or don't know what they would do (39%) if the route was withdrawn. 31% would use a bus on a different route, 21% would rely on friends / family, 20% would travel at a different time and 17% would drive.

Respondents expressed concern that they have no alternative means of transport and it is too far/difficult to walk to alternative bus stops. Withdrawal would prevent many from attending medical appointments, shopping for essentials, or maintaining family and community connections. Reductions or withdrawal would lead to isolation, loneliness and poorer physical and mental health.

Many users would face significant additional and unaffordable costs from taxis or car use. Others anticipated impacts on their ability to reach work, leading to potential loss of employment.

## Route 36: Talbot View - Bournemouth - Kinson



527 respondents indicated that they use Route 36 on Monday - Saturday.

The majority of Route 36 users live in Bournemouth (81%), while the remaining users live in Poole (19%). Two thirds of users are older than 65 years of age (88%). More than half of respondents who use Route 36 are female (58%), while half have a disability. Two thirds of users (65%) have an older persons bus pass.

90% of users travel on this route at least once a week.

The most common reasons for travelling on Route 36 are shopping for other items, social/meeting friends, shopping for food, leisure purposes and for medical reasons.

Respondents travel on Route 36 because they don't have the option of travelling by other means and it is too far/difficult to walk. Others do so because it is more convenient, better for the environment and cheaper than the car and other means of transport.

Respondents would not go anymore (36%) or don't know what they would do (32%) if the route was reduced in frequency. 21% would use a bus on a different route.

Respondents would not go anymore (48%) or don't know what they would do (26%) if the route was withdrawn. 23% would use a bus on a different route.

Respondents expressed concern that they have no alternative means of transport and it is too far/difficult to walk to alternative bus stops. Withdrawal would prevent many from attending medical appointments, shopping for essentials, or maintaining family and community connections. Reductions or withdrawal would lead to isolation, loneliness and poorer physical and mental health.

Many users would face significant additional and unaffordable costs from taxis or car use. Others anticipated impacts on their ability to reach work, leading to potential loss of employment.

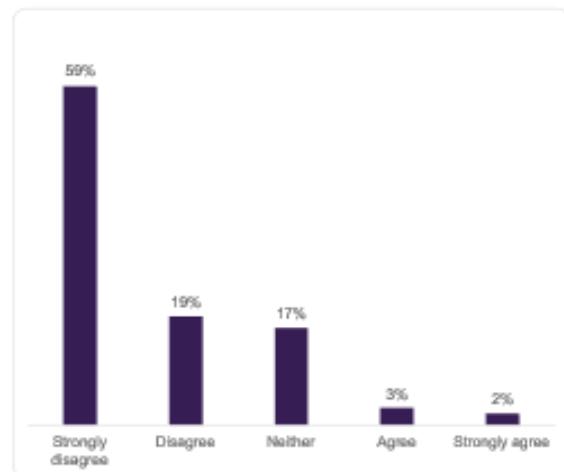
## Evening routes



The majority of respondents disagreed with the proposal to withdraw subsidies on evening routes.

Respondents who were significantly most likely to strongly disagree with the proposal to remove the subsidy for evening routes were:

- Respondents who use one of the evening routes
- Bournemouth, Poole and Dorset residents
- Female respondents
- Those aged 16-24 years, as well as those aged 25-64



### Route 4: Poole - Broadstone - Merley - Wimborne



301 respondents indicated that they use Route 4 in the evening.

The majority of Route 4 users live in Poole (87%), while two thirds of users are older than 65 years of age (65%). Just less than two thirds of respondents who use Route 4 are female (63%), while more than half have a disability (53%). 60% of users have an older persons bus pass.

55% of respondents who use Route 4 in the evening (after 6pm) use it at least once a week.

The most common reasons for travelling on Route 4 are social/meeting friends and for leisure purposes. In addition, respondents also use this route for shopping for other items, shopping for food and medical reasons.

Respondents travel on Route 4 because they don't have the option of travelling by other means and it is too far/difficult to walk. Others do so because it is more convenient, better for the environment and cheaper than the car.

Respondents would not go anymore (39%) or don't know what they would do (26%) if the route was reduced in frequency. 38% would use a bus on a different route, 21% would travel at a different time and 20% would drive.

Respondents would not go anymore (53%) or don't know what they would do (20%) if the route was withdrawn. 20% would drive.

Respondents expressed concern that they have no alternative means of transport and it would make travelling in the evening much more difficult. Withdrawal would prevent many from attending evening social or leisure activities, reducing opportunities to connect with friends, family, and their community. Reductions or withdrawal would lead to isolation, loneliness and poorer physical and mental health.

Many users would face significant additional and unaffordable costs from taxis or car use. Others anticipated impacts on their ability to reach work, leading to potential loss of employment.

## Route 8 & 9: Poole - Hamworthy - Turlin Moor - Upton - Creekmoor - Poole



297 respondents indicated that they use Route 8 & 9 in the evening.

The majority of Route 8 & 9 users live in Poole (84%), while more than half of users are older than 65 years of age (57%). More than two thirds of respondents who use Route 8 & 9 are female (71%), while more than half have a disability (55%). While more than half of users have an older persons bus pass (53%), two fifths have no concessionary bus pass (39%).

68% of respondents who use Route 8 & 9 in the evening (after 8pm) use it at least once a week.

The most common reasons for travelling on Route 8 & 9 are social/meeting friends and for leisure purposes. In addition, respondents also use this route for shopping for food, shopping for other items, medical reasons and for commuting to/from work.

Respondents travel on Route 8 & 9 because they don't have the option of travelling by other means and it is too far/difficult to walk. Others do so because they have a disability and it is more convenient, better for the environment and cheaper than the car.

Respondents would not go anymore (48%) or don't know what they would do (27%) if the route was reduced in frequency. 39% would use a bus on a different route, 21% would rely on friends / family and 18% would travel at a different time.

Respondents would not go anymore (56%) or don't know what they would do (27%) if the route was withdrawn. 20% would rely on friends / family.

Respondents expressed concern that they have no alternative means of transport and it would make travelling in the evening much more difficult. Withdrawal would prevent many from attending evening social or leisure activities, reducing opportunities to connect with friends, family, and their community. Reductions or withdrawal would lead to isolation, loneliness and poorer physical and mental health.

Many users would face significant additional and unaffordable costs from taxis or car use. Others anticipated impacts on their ability to reach work, leading to potential loss of employment.

## Route 14: Poole - Bourne Estate – Wallisdown - Kinson



153 respondents indicated that they use Route 14 in the evening.

60% of Route 14 users live in Poole while 38% live in Bournemouth. Just less than half of users are older than 65 years of age (45%), while 44% are aged 25-64. 62% of respondents who use Route 14 are female, while more than half have a disability (61%). While 39% of users have an older persons bus pass, half have no concessionary bus pass (49%).

64% of respondents who use Route 14 in the evening (after 8pm) use it at least once a week.

The most common reasons for travelling on Route 14 are social/meeting friends and for leisure purposes. In addition, respondents also use this route for shopping for other items, medical reasons, shopping for food and for commuting to/from work.

Respondents travel on Route 14 because they don't have the option of travelling by other means and it is too far/difficult to walk. Others do so because they have a disability and it is more convenient, better for the environment and cheaper than the car.

Respondents would not go anymore (35%) or don't know what they would do (33%) if the route was reduced in frequency. 53% would use a bus on a different route, 20% would rely on friends / family and 20% would travel at a different time.

Respondents would not go anymore (41%) or don't know what they would do (30%) if the route was withdrawn. 25% would use a bus on a different route, 20% would use a taxi and 18% would rely on friends / family.

Respondents expressed concern that they have no alternative means of transport and it would make travelling in the evening much more difficult. Withdrawal would prevent many from attending evening social or leisure activities, reducing opportunities to connect with friends, family, and their community. Reductions or withdrawal would lead to isolation, loneliness and poorer physical and mental health. Respondents would also not be able to get to medical appointments or to shops.

Many users anticipated impacts on their ability to reach work, leading to potential loss of employment.

## Route 16: Poole - Bourne Estate - Bournemouth



205 respondents indicated that they use Route 16 in the evening.

78% of Route 16 users live in Poole while 20% live in Bournemouth. Half of users are older than 65 years of age (51%), while 63% of respondents who use Route 16 are female. Half of Route 16 users have a disability (51%). While 45% of users have an older persons bus pass, 48% have no concessionary bus pass.

69% of respondents who use Route 16 in the evening (after 6pm) use it at least once a week.

The most common reasons for travelling on Route 16 are social/meeting friends and for leisure purposes. In addition, respondents also use this route for shopping for other items, shopping for food, commuting to/from work and for medical reasons.

Respondents travel on Route 16 because they don't have the option of travelling by other means and it is too far/difficult to walk. Others do so because it is more convenient, better for the environment and cheaper than the car and other means of transport.

Respondents would not go anymore (40%) or don't know what they would do (32%) if the route was reduced in frequency. 50% would use a bus on a different route and 19% would travel at a different time.

Respondents would not go anymore (48%) or don't know what they would do (26%) if the route was withdrawn. 28% would use a bus on a different route, 19% would rely on friends / family and 18% would use a taxi.

Respondents expressed concern that they have no alternative means of transport and it would make travelling in the evening much more difficult. Withdrawal would prevent many from attending evening social or leisure activities, reducing opportunities to connect with friends, family, and their community. Reductions or withdrawal would lead to isolation, loneliness and poorer physical and mental health. Respondents would also not be able to get to medical appointments or to shops.

Many users would face significant additional and unaffordable costs from taxis or car use. Others anticipated impacts on their ability to reach work, leading to potential loss of employment.

## Route 25 & Route 26: Poole - Canford Heath - Tower Park



299 respondents indicated that they use Route 25 & Route 26 in the evening.

The vast majority of Route 25 & 26 users live in Poole (92%). More than half of users are older than 65 years of age (61%), while 67% of respondents who use Route 25 & 26 are female. Half of Route 25 & 26 users have a disability (53%). While 58% of users have an older persons bus pass, 36% have no concessionary bus pass.

64% of respondents who use Route 25 & 26 in the evening (after 6pm) use it at least once a week.

The most common reasons for travelling on Route 25 & 26 are social/meeting friends and for leisure purposes. In addition, respondents also use this route for shopping for food, shopping for other items, medical reasons and for commuting to/from work.

Respondents travel on Route 25 & 26 because they don't have the option of travelling by other means and it is too far/difficult to walk. Others do so because they have a disability and it is more convenient, better for the environment and cheaper than the car.

Respondents would not go anymore (41%) or don't know what they would do (31%) if the route was reduced in frequency. 28% would use a bus on a different route and 19% would travel at a different time. 21% would rely on friends / family and 18% would drive.

Respondents would not go anymore (50%) or don't know what they would do (28%) if the route was withdrawn. 21% would rely on friends / family and 20% would drive.

Respondents expressed concern that they have no alternative means of transport and it would make travelling in the evening much more difficult. Withdrawal would prevent many from attending evening social or leisure activities, reducing opportunities to connect with friends, family, and their community. Reductions or withdrawal would lead to isolation, loneliness and poorer physical and mental health. Respondents would also not be able to get to shops.

Many users would face significant additional and unaffordable costs from taxis or car use. Others anticipated impacts on their ability to reach work, leading to potential loss of employment.

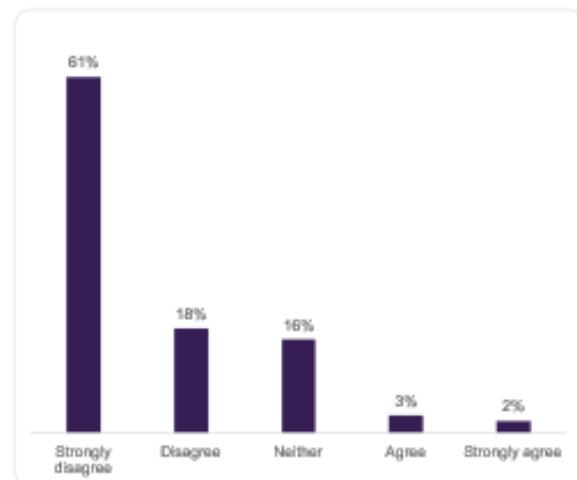
## Sunday routes



The majority of respondents disagreed with the proposal to withdraw subsidies on Sunday routes.

Respondents who were significantly most likely to strongly disagree with the proposal to remove the subsidy for Sunday routes were:

- Respondents who use one of the Sunday routes
- Bournemouth, Poole and Dorset residents
- Female respondents
- Those aged 16-24 years, as well as those aged 25-64



### Route 4: Poole - Broadstone - Merley-Wimborne



324 respondents indicated that they use Route 4 on Sundays.

The vast majority of Route 4 users live in Poole (86%). More than two thirds of users are older than 65 years of age (69%), while 68% of respondents who use Route 4 are female. More than half of Route 4 users have a disability (55%). While 63% of users have an older persons bus pass, 30% have no concessionary bus pass.

40% of respondents who use Route 4 on Sundays use it weekly.

The most common reasons for travelling on Route 4 are social/meeting friends and for leisure purposes. In addition, respondents also use this route for shopping for other items and food.

Respondents travel on Route 4 because they don't have the option of travelling by other means and it is too far/difficult to walk. Others do so because it is more convenient, better for the environment and cheaper than the car.

Respondents would not go anymore (47%) or don't know what they would do (24%) if the route was reduced in frequency. 19% would drive, 18% would travel at a different time and 15% would rely on friends / family.

Respondents would not go anymore (58%) or don't know what they would do (20%) if the route was withdrawn. 21% would drive and 16% would rely on friends / family.

Respondents expressed concern that they have no alternative means of transport and it would make travelling on Sundays much more difficult. Withdrawal would prevent many from attending social or leisure activities, reducing opportunities to connect with friends, family, and their community. Reductions or withdrawal would lead to isolation, loneliness and poorer physical and mental health. A withdrawal of service would also mean that they would not be able to get to church.

Many users would face significant additional and unaffordable costs from taxis or car use. Others anticipated impacts on their ability to reach work, leading to potential loss of employment.

## Route 8 & 9: Poole - Hamworthy - Turlin Moor- Upton - Creekmoor - Poole



283 respondents indicated that they use Route 8 & 9 on Sundays.

The vast majority of Route 8 & 9 users live in Poole (84%). Two thirds of users are older than 65 years of age (63%), while 72% of respondents who use Route 8 & 9 are female. More than half of Route 8 & 9 users have a disability (56%). While 58% of users have an older persons bus pass, 35% have no concessionary bus pass.

50% of respondents who use Route 8 & 9 on Sundays use it weekly.

The most common reasons for travelling on Route 8 & 9 are social/meeting friends and for leisure purposes. In addition, respondents also use this route for shopping for other items and food.

Respondents travel on Route 8 & 9 because they don't have the option of travelling by other means and it is too far/difficult to walk. Others do so because they have a disability and it is more convenient, better for the environment and cheaper than the car.

Respondents would not go anymore (47%) or don't know what they would do (30%) if the route was reduced in frequency. 19% would travel at a different time, 19% would rely on friends / family and 15% would drive.

Respondents would not go anymore (60%) or don't know what they would do (26%) if the route was withdrawn. 20% would rely on friends / family and 14% would drive.

Respondents expressed concern that they have no alternative means of transport and it would make travelling on Sundays much more difficult. Withdrawal would prevent many from attending social or leisure activities, reducing opportunities to connect with friends, family, and their community. Reductions or withdrawal would lead to isolation, loneliness and poorer physical and mental health. A withdrawal of service would also mean that they would not be able to get to church.

Many users would face significant additional and unaffordable costs from taxis or car use. Others anticipated impacts on their ability to reach work, leading to potential loss of employment.

## Route 16: Poole - Bourne Estate - Bournemouth



191 respondents indicated that they use Route 16 on Sundays.

The vast majority of Route 16 users live in Poole (86%). 61% of users are older than 65 years of age, while 67% of respondents who use Route 16 are female. More than half of Route 16 users have a disability (58%). While 55% of users have an older persons bus pass, 37% have no concessionary bus pass.

57% of respondents who use Route 16 on Sundays use it weekly.

The most common reasons for travelling on Route 16 are social/meeting friends and for leisure purposes. In addition, respondents also use this route for shopping for other items and food, commuting to/from work and for medical reasons.

Respondents travel on Route 16 because they don't have the option of travelling by other means and it is too far/difficult to walk. Others do so because they have a disability and it is more convenient, better for the environment and cheaper than the car and other means of transport.

Respondents would not go anymore (43%) or don't know what they would do (30%) if the route was reduced in frequency. 29% would use a bus on a different route, 22% would travel at a different time and 19% would rely on friends / family.

Respondents would not go anymore (53%) or don't know what they would do (24%) if the route was withdrawn. 28% would use a bus on a different route.

Respondents expressed concern that they have no alternative means of transport and it would make travelling on Sundays much more difficult. Withdrawal would prevent many from attending social or leisure activities, reducing opportunities to connect with friends, family, and their community. Reductions or withdrawal would lead to isolation, loneliness and poorer physical and mental health. A withdrawal of service would also mean that they would not be able to get to church.

Many users would face significant additional and unaffordable costs from taxis or car use. Others anticipated impacts on their ability to reach work, leading to potential loss of employment.

## Route 25 & 26: Poole - Canford Heath - Tower Park



283 respondents indicated that they use Route 25 & 26 on Sundays.

The vast majority of Route 25 & 26 users live in Poole (94%). 65% of users are older than 65 years of age, while 69% of respondents who use Route 25 & 26 are female. More than half of Route 25 & 26 users have a disability (53%). While 59% of users have an older persons bus pass, 33% have no concessionary bus pass.

47% of respondents who use Route 25 & 26 on Sundays use it weekly.

The most common reasons for travelling on Route 25 & 26 are social/meeting friends and for leisure purposes. In addition, respondents also use this route for shopping for other items and food.

Respondents travel on Route 25 & 26 because they don't have the option of travelling by other means and it is too far/difficult to walk. Others do so because it is more convenient, better for the environment and cheaper than the car.

Respondents would not go anymore (35%) or don't know what they would do (33%) if the route was reduced in frequency. 19% would travel at a different time, 18% would drive and 16% would rely on friends / family.

Respondents would not go anymore (47%) or don't know what they would do (27%) if the route was withdrawn. 19% would drive and 18% would rely on friends / family.

Respondents expressed concern that they have no alternative means of transport and it would make travelling on Sundays much more difficult. Withdrawal would prevent many from attending social or leisure activities, reducing opportunities to connect with friends, family, and their community. Reductions or withdrawal would lead to isolation, loneliness and poorer physical and mental health.

Many users would face significant additional and unaffordable costs from taxis or car use. Others anticipated impacts on their ability to reach work, leading to potential loss of employment.

## Route X6: Poole - Bearwood - Ringwood



172 respondents indicated that they use Route X6 on Sundays.

70% of Route X6 users live in Poole, 20% live in Bournemouth and 11% live in Dorset. 58% of users are older than 65 years of age, while 70% of respondents who use Route X6 are female. More than half of Route X6 users have a disability (59%). While 52% of users have an older persons bus pass, 39% have no concessionary bus pass.

43% of respondents who use Route X6 on Sundays use it weekly.

The most common reasons for travelling on Route X6 are social/meeting friends and for leisure purposes. In addition, respondents also use this route for shopping for other items and food.

Respondents travel on Route X6 because they don't have the option of travelling by other means and it is too far/difficult to walk. Others do so because they have a disability and it is more convenient, better for the environment and cheaper than the car and other means of transport.

Respondents would not go anymore (57%) or don't know what they would do (30%) if the route was reduced in frequency.

Respondents would not go anymore (63%) or don't know what they would do (22%) if the route was withdrawn.

Respondents expressed concern that they have no alternative means of transport and it would make travelling on Sundays much more difficult. Withdrawal would prevent many from attending social or leisure activities, reducing opportunities to connect with friends, family, and their community. Reductions or withdrawal would lead to isolation, loneliness and poorer physical and mental health. A withdrawal of service would also mean that they would not be able to get to church.

Many users would face significant additional and unaffordable costs from taxis or car use. Others anticipated impacts on their ability to reach work, leading to potential loss of employment.

### Appendix 3: Performance Review of the existing subsidised bus network

#### Performance review: Evening services Monday to Saturday

Route	Route Description	Frequency	Cost of subsidy in 2025/26	Annual passenger numbers	Average number of passengers per evening (approx.)	Cost per passenger trip	Number of consultation responses linked to the route	Additional information (where applicable)
Route 4	Poole-Wimborne via Oakdale, Waterloo, Broadstone & Merley	4x return journeys after 19:00 until end of service	£50,580.97	42,612	137	£1.19	301	87% live in BCP area. 55% of respondents use the service at least once a week.
Route 8/9	Poole-Creekmoor-Upton	7x service 8 journeys. 6x service 9 operating from 18:20 until end of service	£78,966.79	91,668	294	£0.86	297	68% of respondents use the service at least once a week.
Route 14	Poole-Bourne Estate-Wallisdown-Kinson	5x return journeys hourly from 1910 operating to Kinson only.	£66,007.42	48,012	154	£1.37	153	Currently enhanced to extend journeys from Kinson to Royal Bournemouth Hospital
Route 16	Poole-Bourne Estate-Bournemouth	4x return journeys hourly from 20:30	£56,923.86	41,040	132	£1.39	205	
Route 25/26	Poole-Canford Heath/Tower Park	8x return journeys half-hourly from 18:30 then hourly from 21:15	£52,926.98	35,592	114	£1.49	299	

Performance review: Sunday Services

Route	Route Description	Frequency	Cost of subsidy in 2025/26	Annual passenger numbers	Average number of passengers per day (approx.)	Cost per passenger trip	Number of consultation responses linked to the route	Additional information (where applicable)
Route 4	Poole-Wimborne via Oakdale, Waterloo, Broadstone & Merley	Half-Hourly until 17:10 then 2x return journeys until 20:32	£20,603.50	30,444	585	£0.68	324	
Route 8	Poole-Turlin Moor via Creekmoor (Circular)	Hourly from 08:22 until 19:35. An additional 23:10 service 8 from Turlin Moor	£10,900.26	33,468	644	£0.33	283	
Route 16	Poole-Bournemouth via Newtown, Alderney, Rossmore and Westbourne	Hourly from 08:20 until 18:20. 3x return journeys from 18:30 until end of service	£8,478.08	36,564	703	£0.23	191	
30	Route 25	Poole-Canford Heath	1x return journey at 0830. Then 6x return journeys from 18:30 until end of service.	£11,384.70	4,080	78	£2.79	283
	Route X6	Poole-Bearwood	5x return journeys between Poole and Bearwood only	£12,959.27	6,804	131	£1.90	172

Performance review: Monday to Saturday daytime services

Route	Route Description	Frequency	Cost of subsidy in 2025/26	Annual passenger numbers	Average number of passengers per day (approx.)	Cost per passenger trip	Number of consultation responses linked to the route	Additional information (where applicable)
Route ONE	Poole Town Circular via Hospital, Railway Station, Poole Quay and Baiter	Half-Hourly	£78,811.44	135,624	435	£0.58	742	80% of passengers aged 65+. 70% have a disability. 89% use this service at least once a week. 76% have a concessionary bus pass. Contract price will reduce in 2026 when vehicles are supplied by BCP Council.
Route 7 A/B/C	Upper Parkstone- Alderney East/Bloxworth/Tower Park (Circulars)	4x round trips for each service variation.	£20,623.40	44,388	142	£0.46	250	76% of passengers aged 65+. 67% have a disability. 92% use this service at least once a week. 68% have a concessionary bus pass.
Route 10	Poole-Lytchett Matravers via Sterte, Wessex Gate and Upton	7x round trips	£14,745.29	6,960	22	£2.12	319	64% of passengers live in Dorset. 65% of passengers aged 65+.
Route 18	Bournemouth- Broadstone via Westbourne, Upper Parkstone, Canford Heath	Hourly	£274,511.81	306,984	984	£0.89	574	72% of passengers aged 65+. 83% use this service at least once a week.
Route 20	Poole-Castlepoint via Lilliput, Penn Hill, Westbourne & Bournemouth	Hourly	£103,230.36	136,332	437	£0.76	489	82% of passengers aged 65+. 60% have a disability. 86% of passengers use this service at least once a week.
Route 32	Poole-Bournemouth via Oakdale, Broadstone, Merley, Kinson and Winton	2x return journeys	£72,305.44	27,132	87	£2.66	238	77% of passengers aged 65+. 64% have a disability. 84% travel on this route at least once a week.
Route 33	Bournemouth- Christchurch via East Cliff, Boscombe, RBH & Southbourne	Hourly. Reduced route on Saturday PM (Bournemouth to Royal Bournemouth Hospital only)	£227,159.85	160,212	514	£1.42	447	83% of passengers aged 65+. 59% have a disability. 83% use this service at least once a week.
Route 36	Talbot View-Kinson via Bournemouth, Branksome Woods & West Howe	Hourly	£231,428.36	119,280	382	£1.94	527	68% of passengers aged 65+. 50% have a disability. 90% use this service at least once a week.

## Performance review: School Services

Route	Route Description	Frequency	Cost of subsidy in 2025/26	Annual passenger numbers (2024/25 academic year)	Average number of passengers per trip (approx.)	Cost per passenger trip	Number of consultation responses linked to the route	Additional information (where applicable)
Route 46	Throop-Avonbourne Academies via Winton, Charminster and Lansdowne	1 return journey on schooldays	£32,336.85	9,789	26	£3.30	5	13 passengers with statutory entitlement to school transport using the 46 and 81 routes. 4 of the respondents use the 46 route on a daily basis and 4 use the 81 route on a daily basis.
Route 81	Fiveways-Avonbourne Academies via Castle La. West & Chesildene Dr.	1 return journey on schooldays	£36,001.61	5,741	15	£6.27	8	
Route 448	Poole-Parkstone & Poole Grammar Schools via Hamworthy and Creekmoor	1 return journey on schooldays	£33,307.71	10,054	26	£3.31	37	67% of respondents use the 448 route on a daily basis.
Route 744	Baiter & Poole Old Town - Oakdale Junior School	1 return journey on schooldays	£15,726.36	11,445	30	£1.37	18	Approx 1.3 miles at furthest point. 78% of respondents use the 744 on a daily basis.
Route 40	Lower Hamworthy/T.Moor-St Edward's & St Mary's Schools via Creekmoor	1 return journey on schooldays	£45,600.00	5,510	15	£8.28	57	Price is for annual equivalent of current temporary contract set up until end of Summer Term 2026 following termination by previous operator. Previous price was £36,556 = £6.63 per passenger trip. 1 passenger with statutory entitlement to school transport. 57% use the 40 daily. Passengers redirected to alternative network bus routes.
Route 425	Wallisdown-Corfe Hills & Broadstone (Mid) Schools via Bearwood & Merley	1 return journey on schooldays	£38,339.00	6,864	18	£5.59	43	3 passengers with statutory entitlement to school transport. 67% of the respondents using the 425 travel daily.

#### Appendix 4: Subsidised Bus Service Network Proposal (Option 3)

##### Recommended changes (Option 3): Evening services Monday to Saturday

Route	Route Description	Current frequency	Cost of subsidy in 2025/26	Average number of passengers per evening (approx.)	Cost per passenger trip	Additional information (where applicable)	Recommended change	Estimated council derived bus subsidy spend in 2026/27 (up to end of May 2026)	
42	Route 4	Poole-Wimborne via Oakdale, Waterloo, Broadstone & Merley	4x return journeys after 19:00 until end of service	£50,580.97	137	£1.19	87% live in BCP area. 55% of respondents use the service at least once a week.	Morebus to operate commercially. Timetable to be confirmed but is expected that some of the journeys will operate via Corfe Mullen rather than Merley. May be slight overall reduction in service.	£8,430.16
	Route 8/9	Poole-Creekmoor-Upton	7x service 8 journeys. 6x service 9 operating from 18:20 until end of service	£78,966.79	294	£0.86	68% of respondents use the service at least once a week.	Morebus to operate commercially. Timetable to be confirmed. Poole-Hamworthy-Upton remains hourly. Other journeys expected to see some reduction.	£13,161.13
	Route 14	Poole-Bourne Estate-Wallisdown-Kinson	5x return journeys hourly from 1910 operating to Kinson only.	£66,007.42	154	£1.37	Currently enhanced to extend journeys from Kinson to Royal Bournemouth Hospital	Morebus to operate commercially. Timetable to be confirmed but likely to see minor changes only.	£11,001.24
	Route 16	Poole-Bourne Estate-Bournemouth	4x return journeys hourly from 20:30	£56,923.86	132	£1.39	-	Morebus to operate commercially. Timetable to be confirmed but likely to see minor changes only.	£9,487.31
	Route 25/26	Poole-Canford Heath/Tower Park	8x return journeys half-hourly from 18:30 then hourly from 21:15	£52,926.98	114	£1.49	-	Morebus to operate commercially. Timetable to be confirmed but a minimum hourly service will be retained. Daytime commercial service will also be reviewed with expected reductions.	£8,821.16

**Recommended changes (Option 3): Sunday Services**

Route	Route Description	Frequency	Cost of subsidy in 2025/26	Average number of passengers per day (approx.)	Cost per passenger trip	Additional information (where applicable)	Recommended change	Estimated council derived bus subsidy spend in 2026/27 (up to end of May 2026)
Route 4	Poole-Wimborne via Oakdale, Waterloo, Broadstone & Merley	Half-Hourly until 17:10 then 2x return journeys until 20:32	£20,603.50	585	£0.68	-	Morebus to operate commercially. Timetable to be confirmed but no significant changes expected.	£3,433.92
Route 8	Poole-Turlin Moor via Creekmoor (Circular)	Hourly from 08:22 until 19:35. An additional 23:10 service 8 from Turlin Moor	£10,900.26	644	£0.33	-	Morebus to operate commercially. Timetable to be confirmed but no significant changes expected.	£1,816.71
Route 16	Poole-Bournemouth via Newtown, Alderney, Rossmore and Westbourne	Hourly from 08:20 until 18:20. 3x return journeys from 18:30 until end of service	£8,478.08	703	£0.23	-	Morebus to operate commercially. Timetable to be confirmed but no significant changes expected.	£1,413.01
Route 25	Poole-Canford Heath	1x return journey at 0830. Then 6x return journeys from 18:30 until end of service.	£11,384.70	78	£2.79	-	Morebus to operate commercially. Timetable to be confirmed but no significant changes expected.	£1,897.45
Route X6	Poole-Bearwood	5x return journeys between Poole and Bearwood only	£12,959.27	131	£1.90	-	Morebus to operate commercially. Timetable to be confirmed but no significant changes expected.	£2,159.88

**Recommended changes (Option 3): Monday to Saturday daytime services**

Route	Route Description	Frequency	Cost of subsidy in 2025/26	Average number of passengers per day (approx.)	Cost per passenger trip	Additional information (where applicable)	Recommended change	Estimated council derived bus subsidy spend in 2026/27 (up to end of May 2026)
Route ONE	Poole Town Circular via Hospital, Railway Station, Poole Quay and Baiter	Half-Hourly	£78,811.44	435	£0.58	80% of passengers aged 65+. 70% have a disability. 89% use this service at least once a week. 76% have a concessionary bus pass. Contract price will reduce in 2026 when vehicles are supplied by BCP Council.	No change to the route or timetable.	n/a in lieu of LABG
Route 7 A/B/C	Upper Parkstone- Alderney East/Bloxworth/Tower Park (Circulars)	4x round trips for each service variation.	£20,623.40	142	£0.46	76% of passengers aged 65+. 67% have a disability. 92% use this service at least once a week. 68% have a concessionary bus pass.	No change to the route or timetable.	n/a in lieu of LABG
Route 10	Poole-Lytchett Matravers via Sterte, Wessex Gate and Upton	7x round trips	£14,745.29	22	£2.12	64% of passengers live in Dorset. 65% of passengers aged 65+.	No change to the route or timetable.	n/a in lieu of LABG
Route 18	Bournemouth- Broadstone via Westbourne, Upper Parkstone, Canford Heath	Hourly	£274,511.81	984	£0.89	72% of passengers aged 65+. 83% use this service at least once a week.	No change to the route or timetable.	n/a in lieu of LABG
Route 20	Poole-Castlepoint via Lilliput, Penn Hill, Westbourne & Bournemouth	Hourly	£103,230.36	437	£0.76	82% of passengers aged 65+. 60% have a disability. 86% of passengers use this service at least once a week.	Revised hourly service to operate from Poole – Bournemouth - Castlepoint – Royal Bournemouth Hospital – Southbourne – Christchurch, replacing route 33 between Royal Bournemouth Hospital and Christchurch via Southbourne Additional peak hour journeys provided with new direct links to Bournemouth Hospital. Morebus to confirm revised timetable.	n/a in lieu of LABG
Route 32	Poole-Bournemouth via Oakdale, Broadstone, Merley, Kinson and Winton	2x return journeys	£72,305.44	87	£2.66	77% of passengers aged 65+. 64% have a disability. 84% travel on this route at least once a week.	No change to the route or timetable.	n/a in lieu of S106 developer funding
Route 33	Bournemouth- Christchurch via East Cliff, Boscombe, RBH & Southbourne	Hourly. Reduced route on Saturday PM (Bournemouth to Royal Bournemouth Hospital only)	£227,159.85	514	£1.42	83% of passengers aged 65+. 59% have a disability. 83% use this service at least once a week.	No change to the route or timetable.	n/a in lieu of LABG
Route 36	Talbot View-Kinson via Bournemouth, Branksome Woods & West Howe	Hourly	£231,428.36	382	£1.94	68% of passengers aged 65+. 50% have a disability. 90% use this service at least once a week.	No change to the route or timetable.	n/a in lieu of LABG

**Recommended changes (Option 3): School Services**

Route	Route Description	Frequency	Cost of subsidy in 2025/26	Average number of return journeys per day approx. 2024/25 academic year	Cost per passenger trip	Additional information (where applicable)	Recommended change	Estimated council derived bus subsidy spend in 2026/27
Route 46	Throop-Avonbourne Academies via Winton, Charminster and Lansdowne	1 return journey on schooldays	£32,336.85	26	£3.30	13 passengers with statutory entitlement to school transport using the 46 and 81 routes. 4 of the respondents use the 46 route daily and 4 use the 81 route daily.	Services 46 and 81 to be withdrawn at the end of the Summer Term 2026 and replaced with a new combined route from the start of the Autumn Term 2026.	£22,780.00
Route 81	Fiveways-Avonbourne Academies via Castle La. West & Chesildene Dr.	1 return journey on schooldays	£36,001.61	15	£6.27			
Route 448	Poole-Parkstone & Poole Grammar Schools via Hamworthy and Creekmoor	1 return journey on schooldays	£33,307.71	26	£3.31	67% of respondents use the 448 route daily.	No change to the route or timetable.	n/a in lieu of LABG
Route 744	Baiter & Poole Old Town - Oakdale Junior School	1 return journey on schooldays	£15,726.36	30	£1.37	Approx 1.3 miles at furthest point. 78% of respondents use the 744 daily.	No change to the route or timetable.	n/a in lieu of LABG
Route 40	Lower Hamworthy/T.Moor-St Edward's & St Mary's Schools via Creekmoor	1 return journey on schooldays	£45,600.00	15	£8.28	Price is for annual equivalent of current temporary contract set up until end of Summer Term 2026 following termination by previous operator. Previous price was £36,556 = £6.63 cost per passenger trip. 1 passenger with statutory entitlement to school transport. 57% use the 40 daily. Passengers redirected to alternative network bus routes. Sept to Dec 2025 data indicates the average number of return journeys has reduced to 9 per day. If this continued across the 2025/26 academic year, then the cost per passenger trip would be £13.33	Service to not operate beyond end of 2026 summer term. Passengers redirected to alternative network bus routes and/or other sustainable transport alternatives.	£15,200.00 (Children's Services)
Route 425	Wallisdown-Corfe Hills & Broadstone (Mid) Schools via Bearwood & Merley	1 return journey on schooldays	£38,339.00	18	£5.59	3 passengers with statutory entitlement to school transport. 67% of the respondents using the 425 travel daily. Sept to Dec 2025 data indicates the average number of return journeys has marginally increased. Sept to Dec 2024 the average number of return journeys was 22 per day. Sept to Dec 2025 the average number of return journeys was 23 per day.	Service to not operate beyond end of 2027 summer term. Passengers redirected to alternative network bus routes and/or other sustainable transport alternatives.	£40,256.00 (Children's Services)  Note: approx. £13,000 required in 2027/28 financial year to operate service until end of Summer 2027 term.

## Appendix 5: Alternative journey options examples for school services and Children's Services Comments

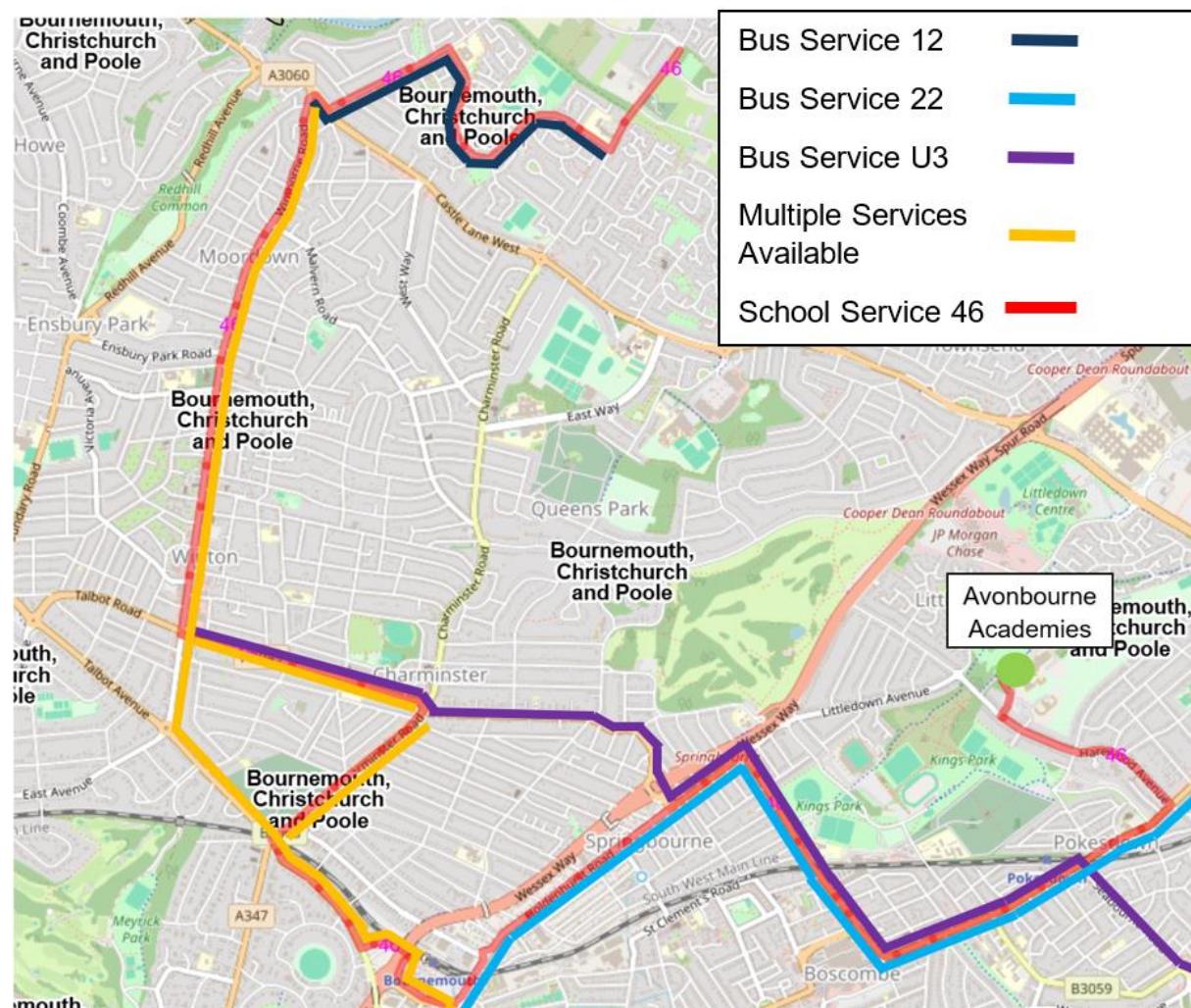
Where local authority school bus services are recommended for withdrawal, there are instances where the existing local bus network can offer alternative travel options.

Please note the following alternative journey suggestions are based on current timetabled services that make up the local bus network. These services could be subject to change by the operator. Services may also be subject to unforeseen disruption, such as breakdown or abnormal traffic congestion, which could lead to advertised journeys being delayed or cancelled.

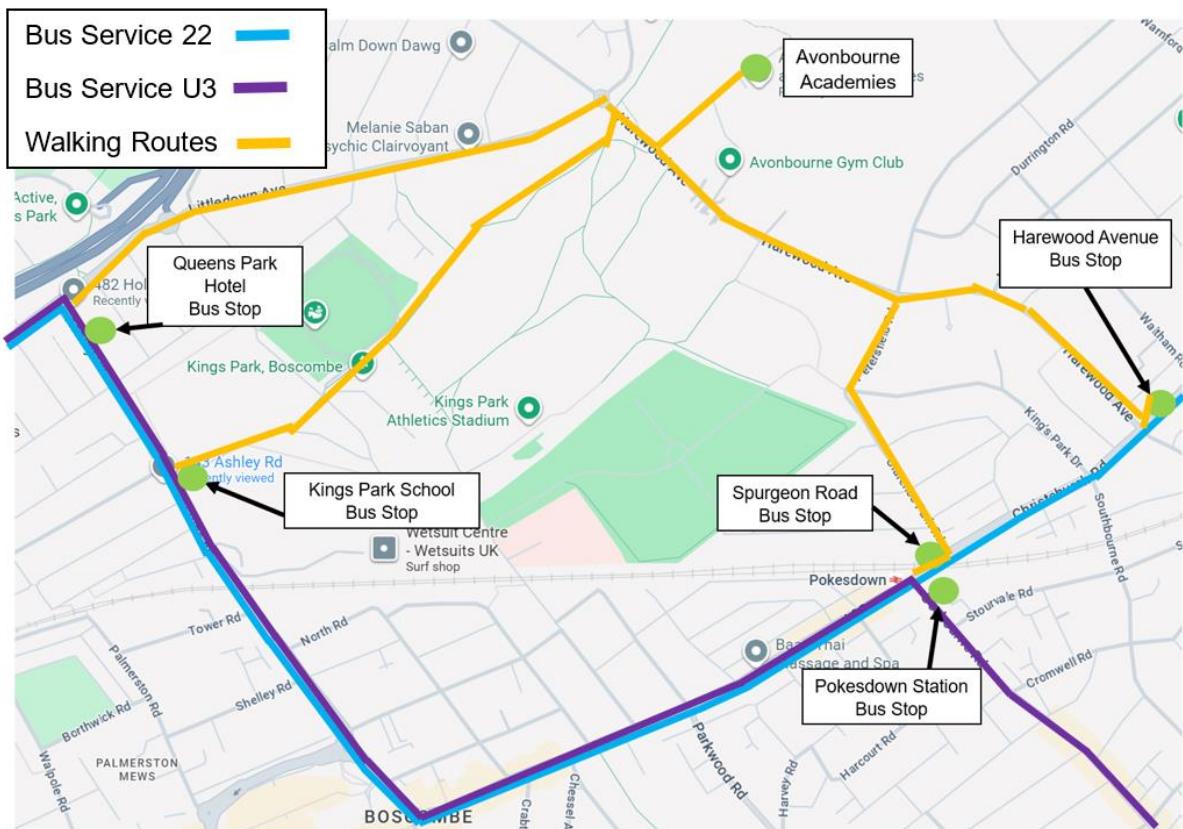
### Service 46

Service 46 operates from Throop and serves Avonbourne Academies. The service departs at 07:20 and operates via Muscliff, Moordown, Winton, Charminster, Bournemouth Station, Springbourne, Boscombe and Pokesdown before arriving at Avonbourne Academies at 08:05. Students are required to be on site for registration at 08:30

Most of the route is covered by the local bus network, although for many, there would need to be a bus change as part of their journey. For students in Throop, they would need to undertake a 10-minute walk to the nearest bus stop on Shillingstone Drive for the nearest local bus service. There will also be a short walk between the bus stops and school site. The map below shows services available in comparison to the existing service.



Due to the location of the school relative to the nearest network provision, students have several choices where they can disembark bus services in Boscombe and Pokesdown, all of which are an approximate 20-minute walk to the school site. The map below shows the multiple walking routes available following disembarking from services 22 or U3.



For students in Moordown, Winton and Charminster, there are multiple services available to get students to Bournemouth Station. From there, they can connect with the Service 22 which departs Bournemouth Square at 07:25, connecting with the service at Bournemouth Station at 07:33. The service then reaches Boscombe at around 07:48. With walking considered, students would be on site at around 08:08. This is three minutes later than the scheduled arrival time for the current school service.

22	
Bournemouth Square [Q]	07:25
<b>Bournemouth Railway Station [6]</b>	<b>07:33</b>
Springbourne Library	07:38
<b>Boscombe Bus Station [D]</b>	<b>07:48</b>
Royal Bournemouth Hospital [C]	08:08
Mount Pleasant Drive	-
Townsend, Jewell Academy	08:16
Castlepoint, Hamlin Way [E]	08:22

Board service at Bournemouth Station at 07:33 to disembark at Boscombe at 07:48

Those in Winton and Charminster can also consider using Service U3 (during university term time only) which travels direct between Winton and Charminster to Boscombe. Students can board the service which departs Bournemouth University at 07:35 and arrives at Boscombe around 08:02. With walking considered, students would be on site at around 08:22.

U3	
<u>Bournemouth University, Talbot Campus [D]</u>	07:35
<u>Winton Banks, Alma Road [E]</u>	07:42
<u>Charminster, Richmond Park Road</u>	07:48
<u>Richmond Park Road, Gilbert Road</u>	07:55
<b><u>Boscombe, Christchurch Road</u></b>	<b>08:02</b>
<u>Pokesdown Railway Station</u>	08:06
<u>Douglas Mews</u>	08:08
<u>Southbourne, Fishermans Walk</u>	08:10

Disembark at  
Boscombe at 08:02

As mentioned, students living in Muscliff and Throop are impacted due to being at the furthest end of the route. One option available to students is to board Service 12 which departs Castlepoint at 07:04 and to disembark at Bournemouth Station at 07:31, to connect with the above-mentioned Service 22 from Bournemouth Square. However, this only gives students 2 minutes to make the switch between services; any delay to Service 12 could result in missing this connection.

Alternatively, students in Muscliff can board Service 12 which departs Bournemouth Square at 06:32 and travel to Castlepoint, arriving at 07:02. The service then Service 22 departing Castlepoint at 07:05, arriving at Boscombe around 07:32. With walking from time from the bus stop considered, students would be arriving to school before 08:00; this is five minutes earlier than the current school service.

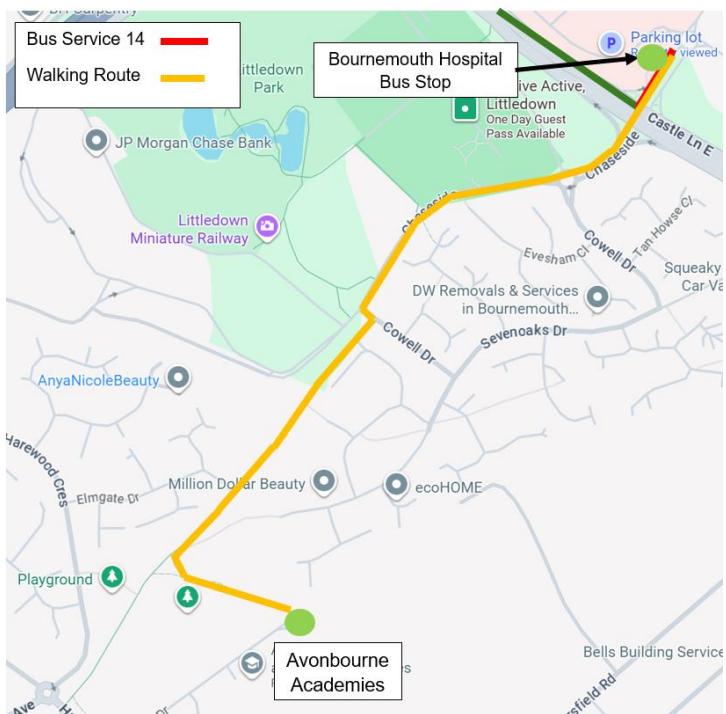
12	
<u>Bournemouth Square [Z]</u>	06:32
<u>Bournemouth Railway Station [2]</u>	06:39
<u>Winton Banks, Waitrose [B]</u>	06:45
<u>Westover Retail Park</u>	06:52
<u>Muscliff Primary School</u>	06:56
<b><u>Castlepoint, Hamblin Way [E]</u></b>	<b>07:02</b>

22	
<u>Castlepoint, Hamblin Way [E]</u>	07:05
<u>Mount Pleasant Drive</u>	-
<u>Townsend, Jewell Academy</u>	07:09
<u>Royal Bournemouth Hospital [A]</u>	07:18
<b><u>Boscombe Bus Station [C]</u></b>	<b>07:32</b>
<u>Springbourne Library</u>	07:39
<u>Dorchester House, Holdenhurst Road [7]</u>	07:42
<u>Bournemouth Square [G]</u>	07:50

The final option would be for students in Muscliff to walk to Castle Lane West to connect with Service 14 which departs Poole Bus Station at 06:30. The service runs along Castle Lane West at around 07:24 and arrives at Bournemouth Hospital at 07:40. The walking time from Bournemouth Hospital to Avonbourne Academies is approximately 20 minutes, similar to the walking times for other services. Students would arrive on site at approximately 08:00, which is five minutes before the scheduled time of the current school service.

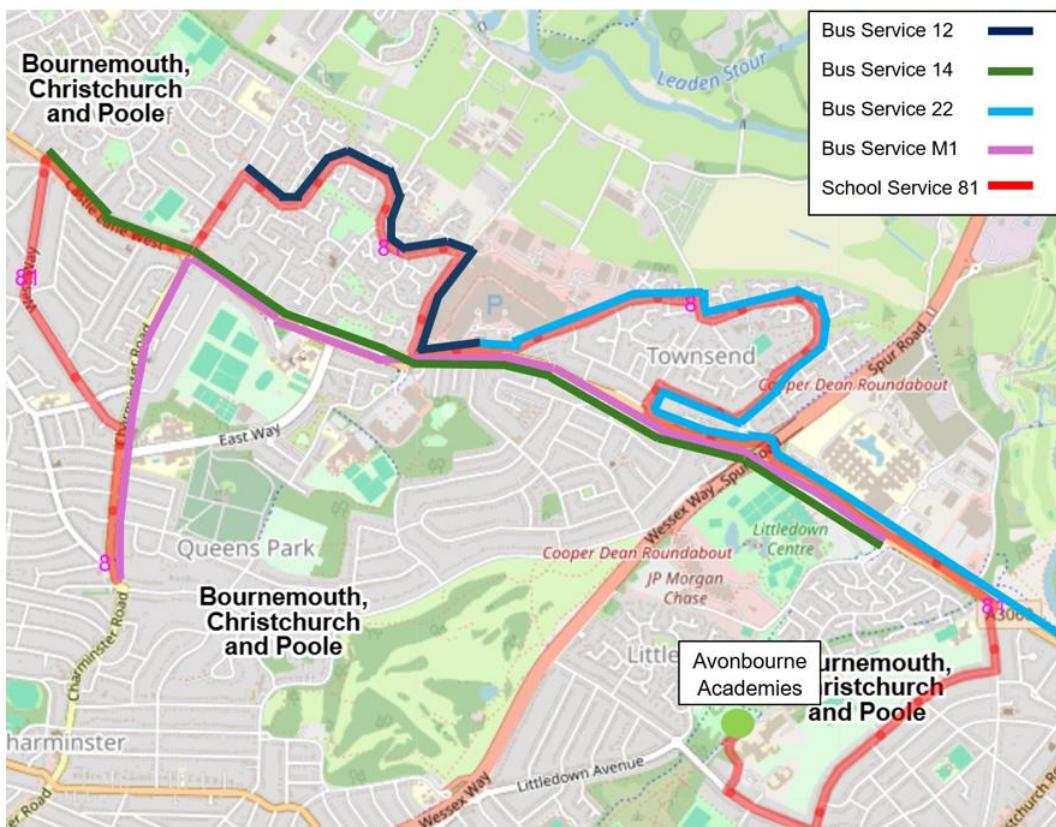
14	
<u>Poole Bus Station [N]</u>	06:30
<u>Sea View, Constitution Hill [A]</u>	06:38
<u>Newtown Tesco</u>	06:42
<u>Alderney, Stone Park Corner</u>	06:45
<u>Mountbatten Roundabout, Walli...</u>	06:49
<u>Wallisdown Roundabout, Tesco</u>	06:53
<u>West Howe, Fernheath Road</u>	06:56
<u>West Howe, Cunningham Cresc...</u>	07:02
<u>Kinson Library, Wimborne Road</u>	07:09
<u>East Howe, Palfrey Road</u>	07:12
<u>Ensbury Park, Cherries Drive</u>	07:17
<u>Westover Retail Park</u>	07:24
<u>Castlepoint, Castle Lane [B]</u>	07:31
<u>Royal Bournemouth Hospital [C]</u>	07:40



## Service 81

Service 81 operates from The Fiveways, Charminster and serves Avonbourne Academies. The service departs at 07:23 and operates via Muscliff, Castlepoint and Townsend, arriving at Avonbourne Academies at 08:05.

The majority of the route is covered by the local bus network. A small section of the route that is uncovered is West Way. Students can either walk to Charminster Road to connect with service M1 or walk to Castle Lane West to connect with service 14. In both cases this walk is approximately 10 minutes from the existing route. Where sections are not covered, there may be a small walk for students to connect with these services. The map below shows services available in comparison to the existing service.



The majority of services terminate at Bournemouth Hospital, though service 22 continues along Castle Lane East, giving opportunity for students to alight at 'Castle Lane Tesco' bus stop. The map below shows the multiple walking routes available from these stops. The walking time for these routes is approximately 20 minutes, and these are currently utilised by existing students that use the local bus network.



For most students there are multiple journeys provided by services 14, 22 and M1 along Castle Lane West which give multiple options to travel to Bournemouth Hospital then walk to school. Whilst students in Muscliff can use options outlined in relation to Service 46 above.

12	
<u>Bournemouth Square</u> [Z]	06:32
<u>Bournemouth Railway Station</u> [2]	06:39
<u>Winton Banks, Waitrose</u> [B]	06:45
Westover Retail Park	06:52
<u>Muscliff Primary School</u>	06:56
<u>Castlepoint, Hamblin Way</u> [E]	07:02

22	
<u>Castlepoint, Hamblin Way [E]</u>	07:05
<u>Mount Pleasant Drive</u>	-
<u>Townsend, Jewell Academy</u>	07:09
<u>Royal Bournemouth Hospital [A]</u>	07:18
<u>Boscombe Bus Station [C]</u>	07:32
<u>Springbourne Library</u>	07:39
<u>Dorchester House, Holdenhurst Road [7]</u>	07:42
<u>Bournemouth Square [Q]</u>	07:50

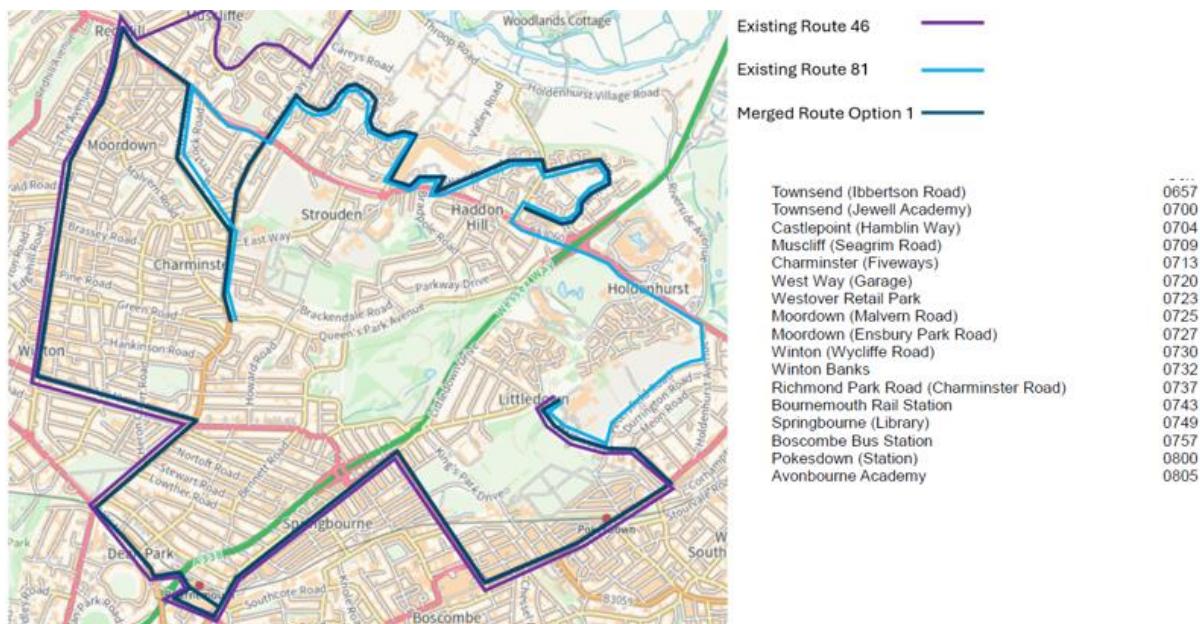
	<b>m1</b>	<b>m1</b>	<b>m1</b>
<u>Poole Bus Station [A]</u>	06:44	06:50	06:56
<u>Lower Parkstone, Ashley Cross</u>	06:51	06:57	07:03
<u>Upper Parkstone, Jubilee Road</u>	06:57	07:03	07:10
<u>Westbourne, County Gates</u>	07:04	07:11	07:18
<u>Bournemouth Square [B]</u>	07:13	07:21	07:29
<u>Bournemouth Railway Station [4]</u>	07:21	07:29	07:37
<u>Charminster, Richmond Arms</u>	07:27	07:35	07:43
<u>Castlepoint, Castle Lane [B]</u>	07:37	07:46	07:55
<u>Royal Bournemouth Hospital [B]</u>	07:43	07:53	08:02

	14
<u>Poole Bus Station [N]</u>	06:30
<u>Sea View, Constitution Hill [A]</u>	06:38
<u>Newtown Tesco</u>	06:42
<u>Alderney, Stone Park Corner</u>	06:45
<u>Mountbatten Roundabout, Wallisdown</u>	06:49
<u>Wallisdown Roundabout, Tesco</u>	06:53
<u>West Howe, Fernheath Road</u>	06:56
<u>West Howe, Cunningham Crescent</u>	07:02
<u>Kinson Library, Wimborne Road</u>	07:09
<u>East Howe, Palfrey Road</u>	07:12
<u>Ensbury Park, Cherries Drive</u>	07:17
<u>Westover Retail Park</u>	07:24
<u>Castlepoint, Castle Lane [B]</u>	07:31
<u>Royal Bournemouth Hospital [C]</u>	07:40

## Combining the 46 and 81:

Prior to the bus subsidy review, work had been underway to investigate the potential to combine services 46 and 81 into one single service, due to both services having higher operational costs due to low patronage.

The proposed amended service starts at Townsend operating a reverse of the current service 81 to Fiveways then travelling to Westover Retail Park before continuing the existing route of Service 46 to Avonbourne Academies. This route would result in earlier timing for students in Townsend. It is likely students in this area may use Services 14, 22 and M1 to travel to Bournemouth Hospital as previously mentioned instead.



This option covers the majority of both existing school services, using one vehicle instead of two. The cost of operating either option would be around £32,000.00. This would be a saving of around £36,000.00 based on current operating costs outlined in Appendix 3.

## Children's Services Comments regarding the proposed withdrawal of Routes 81 and 46 in their current form and replacement with a new combined route

These routes are recommended to be withdrawn in their current form and will combine to form Route 46. This reflects high costs per person, low use and route overlaps with operational inefficiency. Route 46 was established as a dedicated school bus service for Avonbourne Academies, providing a direct journey at school times for pupils travelling from Throop, Muscliff, Moordown, Winton, Charminster and surrounding areas—offering a consistent, reliable single-bus journey aligned to school start times. Route 81 was set up to provide a direct, timetabled school-day link to Avonbourne Academies from the Fiveways and Castle Lane West area, ensuring pupils could travel to school on a single bus without the need for connections across sections of the network not then well served by the commercial bus system. Further detailed work will be required to understand the implications of withdrawing the current Routes 81 and 46 and introducing the proposed combined Route 46. The next steps outlined below set out the analysis needed to assess any potential impact on eligible children, ensure appropriate mitigations, and avoid unintended consequence.

## **Routes 81 and 46 Next Steps and Mitigations**

- Understand the proposed combined route and investigate whether any eligible children would be adversely affected
- Work with schools to identify children with vulnerable identifiers and any other concerns
- Work with GIS colleagues to identify postcodes surrounding the route within a reasonable distance and investigate whether they would qualify for transport assistance under extended rights

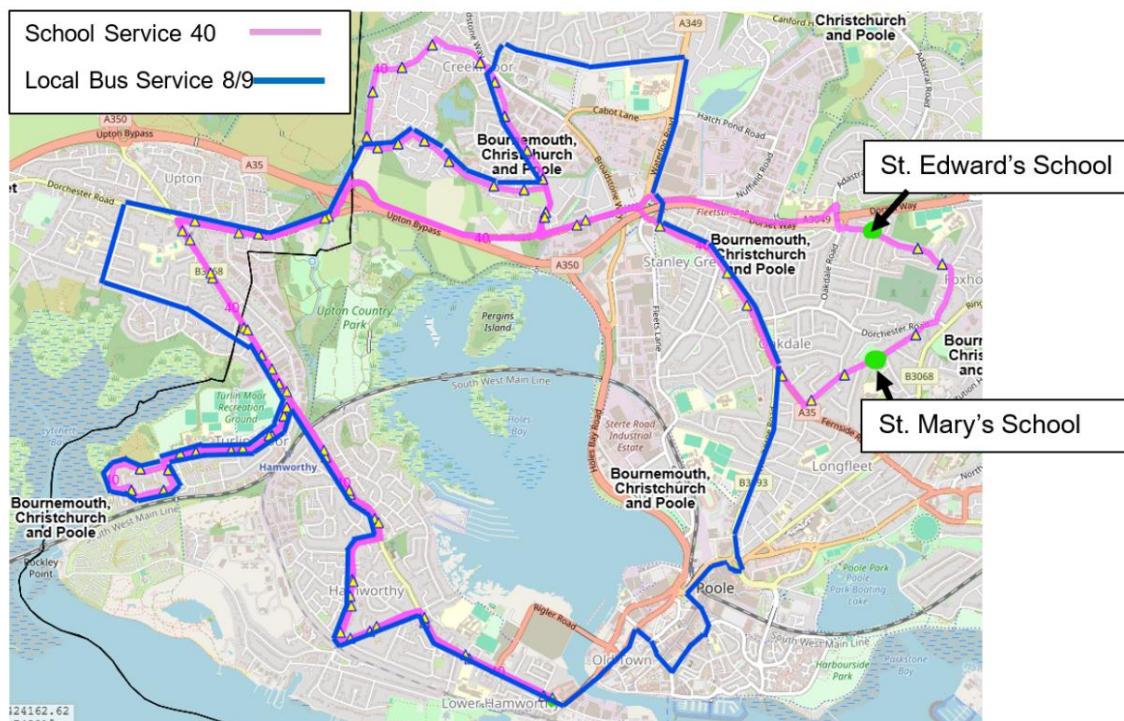
## Service 40

Service 40 operates from Lower Hamworthy and serves St. Edward's and St. Mary's Schools. The route operates via Hamworthy, Turlin Moor, Upton, Creekmoor then to Oakdale to serve both schools. The service departs from Lower Hamworthy at 07:46, arriving at St Edwards School at 08:29 and St. Mary's School (Pound Lane) at 08:35. For both schools, students are required to be on site for registration at 08:45.

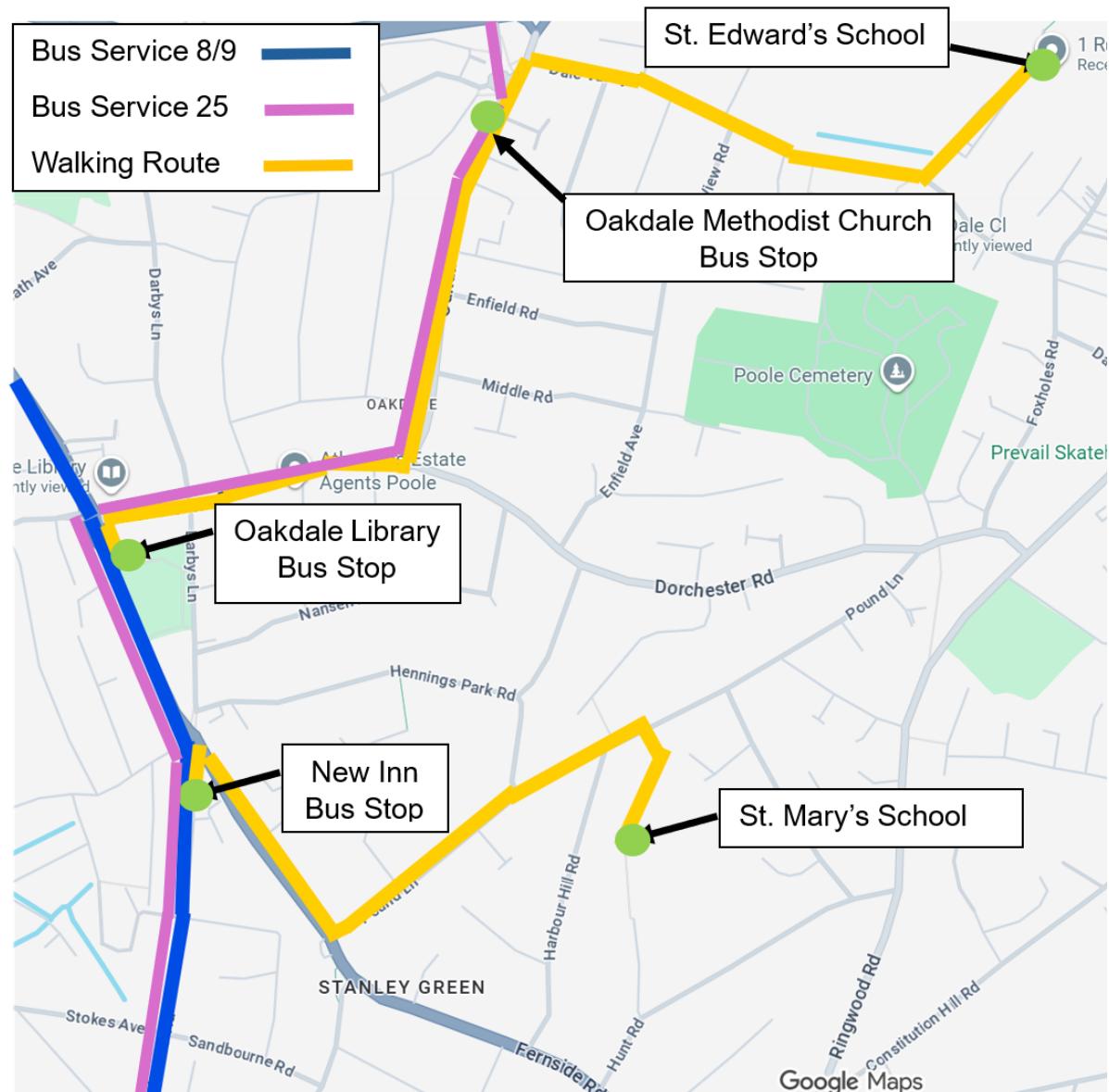
Service 40 timetable:

Morning	Time	Afternoon	Time
Blandford Road (Potter's Arms)	0746	Dale Valley Road (for St Edward's School)	1528
Blandford Road (Ashmore Avenue)	0747	Pound Lane (Bus bay near footpath to St Mary's School)	1535
Blandford Road (Coles Avenue/Co-op)	0748	Creekmoor Lane (Northmead Ave)	1543
Coles Avenue (Lakeside)	0750	Beechbank Avenue	1546
Lake Road (Hamilton Road)	0751	Longmeadow Lane	1548
Blandford Road (Dawkins Road)	0752	Woodpecker Drive	1550
Turlin Road (Fitzworth Avenue)	0754	Northmead Drive	1552
Turlin Road (Shops)	0756	Blandford Road (Upton Cross Roads)	1557
Egmont Road (Peverell/Patchins Rd)	0758	Blandford Road (Sandy Lane)	1558
Blandford Road (Sandy Lane)	0804	Turlin Road (Fitzworth Avenue)	1601
Blandford Road (Upton Crossroads)	0806	Turlin Road (Shops)	1603
Creekmoor Lane (Northmead Ave)	0812	Turlin Road (Egmont/Patchins Rd)	1605
Beechbank Avenue	0815	Blandford Road (Dawkins Road)	1607
Longmeadow Lane	0817	Lake Road (Hamilton Road)	1609
Woodpecker Drive	0819	Coles Avenue (Lakeside)	1610
Northmead Drive	0821	Blandford Road (Coles Avenue/Co-op)	1612
Dale Valley Road (for St Edward's School)	0829	Blandford Road (Ashmore Avenue)	1613
Pound Lane (Bus bay near footpath to St. Mary's School)	0835	Blandford Road (Potter's Arms)	1614

Most of the school service route is replicated by Service 8 which operates a circular route between Poole, Hamworthy, Upton, Creekmoor, Fleetsbridge and back to Poole in a clockwise direction. Service 9 operates along the same line of route but in an anticlockwise direction. The map below shows the routes for both services for comparison.



As shown on the route map comparison, Services 8 and 9 do not directly pass either school; students therefore must undertake a walk from the nearest bus stop. The recommended walking routes for students is shown on the map below.



For St. Edward's School, pupils can disembark Service 8 or 9 from 'Oakdale Library' bus stop. It is then an approximate 23-minute walk to the school site from here. Students may also consider disembarking here to connect with Service 25 to travel as far as Oakdale Methodist Church; although this journey is only a couple of minutes, it does reduce overall walking time to 13 minutes. Pupils at St. Mary's School can disembark at 'New Inn' bus stop. It is then an approximate 15-minute walk to the school site.

As service 8 replicates much of the route and direction of travel, this could be the preferred option for many. Students can board the service which departs from Poole Bus Station at 07:03 and travel until reaching Oakdale at around 07:55 where they can disembark to then walk to school as described above. This option may be preferred for students living in the Upton and Creekmoor areas.

8	
<u>Poole Bus Station [E]</u>	07:03
<u>Poole, Old Orchard</u>	07:07
<u>Hamworthy, Ashmore Avenue</u>	07:13
<u>Hamworthy, Red Lion</u>	07:18
<u>Turlin Moor, Foreland Road</u>	07:24
<u>Upton, Sandy Close</u>	07:33
<u>Upton, Moorland Way</u>	07:36
<u>Upton Crossroads, Poole Road</u>	07:39
<u>Upton Country Park, entrance</u>	07:41
<u>Creekmoor, Northmead Dr/Millfield</u>	07:47
<u>Fleetsbridge, The Fleetsbridge</u>	07:52
<b><u>Oakdale Library</u></b>	<b>07:55</b>
<u>Poole Bus Station [E]</u>	08:02

Disembark service at this point

Alternatively, students may consider using Service 9 travelling in an anticlockwise direction. The service departs Poole Bus Station at 08:05, reaching Oakdale at around 08:11; Students could also disembark the service and board Service 25. This is 16 minutes later than the most suitable Service 8 mentioned above, but would still ensure students are punctual for school, allowing for the walking time from bus stop to school site. This option may be preferable for students living in Hamworthy and Lower Hamworthy.

>> 9 9 9 9 9	
<u>Poole Bus Station</u>	06:58
<u>Oakdale, Esso Garage</u>	07:03
<u>Fleetsbridge, The Fleetsbridge</u>	07:05
<u>Creekmoor, Northmead Dr/Millfield</u>	07:08
<u>Upton Crossroads, Dorchester ...</u>	07:16
<u>Upton, Moorland Way</u>	07:18
<u>Upton, Sandy Close</u>	07:21
<u>Turlin Moor, Foreland Road</u>	07:26
<u>Hamworthy, Red Lion</u>	07:36
<u>Hamworthy, Ashmore Avenue</u>	07:45
<u>Poole, Old Orchard</u>	07:51
<u>Poole Bus Station</u>	07:59
	08:05
	08:11
	08:13
	08:16
	08:26
	08:28
	08:31
	08:38
	08:48
	08:55
	09:01

25	
<u>Poole Bus Station [D]</u>	08:05
<u>Oakdale Library</u>	08:12
<u>Canford Heath, The Pilot</u>	08:17
<u>Canford Heath Asda</u>	08:26
<u>Tollerford Road, Steeple Close</u>	08:30
<u>Tower Park</u>	-

Disembark services from Poole Bus Station at this point for either service

### Children's Services Comments regarding the proposed withdrawal of Route 40

Route 40 transports pupils from Turlin Moor and Hamworthy to St Mary's Catholic Primary School and St Edward's Catholic School. The service is recommended for withdrawal in July 2026 due to very high subsidy, low usage, and suitable network alternatives. Route 40 was introduced by Children's Services as a dedicated school bus to transport pupils who had a statutory entitlement to free home-to-school transport, and historically the route carried high numbers of eligible children. Details of our initial assessment are as follows:

#### Children Attending St Mary's Catholic Primary

- There are no children travelling on Route 40 to St Mary's Catholic Primary School who have been assessed as entitled to receive free assistance with home to school transport.
- The distance from Turlin Moor to St Mary's Catholic Primary School is approximately 4 miles safe walking distance. Children travelling to St Mary's indicates a distinct preference from families to attend a distant school likely on the basis of faith. Eligibility for transport assistance for primary-aged children depends on the nearest suitable school, not the preferred school and there is no entitlement on the grounds of faith alone.
- There are surplus places at other local schools in the Turlin Moor and Hamworthy area within 0.3–1.8 miles. This is well within the statutory walking distances of 2-3 miles depending on the age of the child.
- Details of any children who may be travelling on this route who are not eligible for home to school transport are not available.

### **Children Attending St Edward's RC CE Secondary**

- One eligible pupil currently receives a bus pass under extended rights (FSM + nearest faith school). This entitlement will continue and there is an alternative public network service available for the continuation of travel.
- Three other FSM pupils live along the route and could apply for transport under extended rights but do not currently do so. If they applied and qualified, they would receive a bus pass.
- 31 additional non-FSM pupils from the same postcodes attend St Edward's RC CE Secondary School. Eligibility is unlikely unless other criteria apply.
- For families who no longer wish to travel to St Edward's RC CE Secondary School, local secondary places are available within 1.8 miles – this is within the 3-mile statutory walking distance.
- Alternative public transport is available. For children travelling from the area, the anticipated route would be:
  - 07:25 No. 9 to Poole Bus Station (30 min)
  - 08:05 No. 25 Canford Heath (10 min)
  - 08:15 Walk 0.5 miles to school (approx. 15 mins) (total journey time 55 minutes)
- The suggested alternative is within the recommended maximum journey time of 75 minutes for secondary-aged children.

### **Route 40 Summary Position Across both Schools**

- Eligibility: Only 1 pupil is formally eligible; 3 others could become eligible if they apply; the remainder are non-eligible travellers.
- Access to education: All pupils have reasonable alternatives, either via the commercial network or via local schools within statutory walking distances.
- Risk: Potential unknown impacts for pupils with protected characteristics.

### **Route 40 Next Steps and Mitigations**

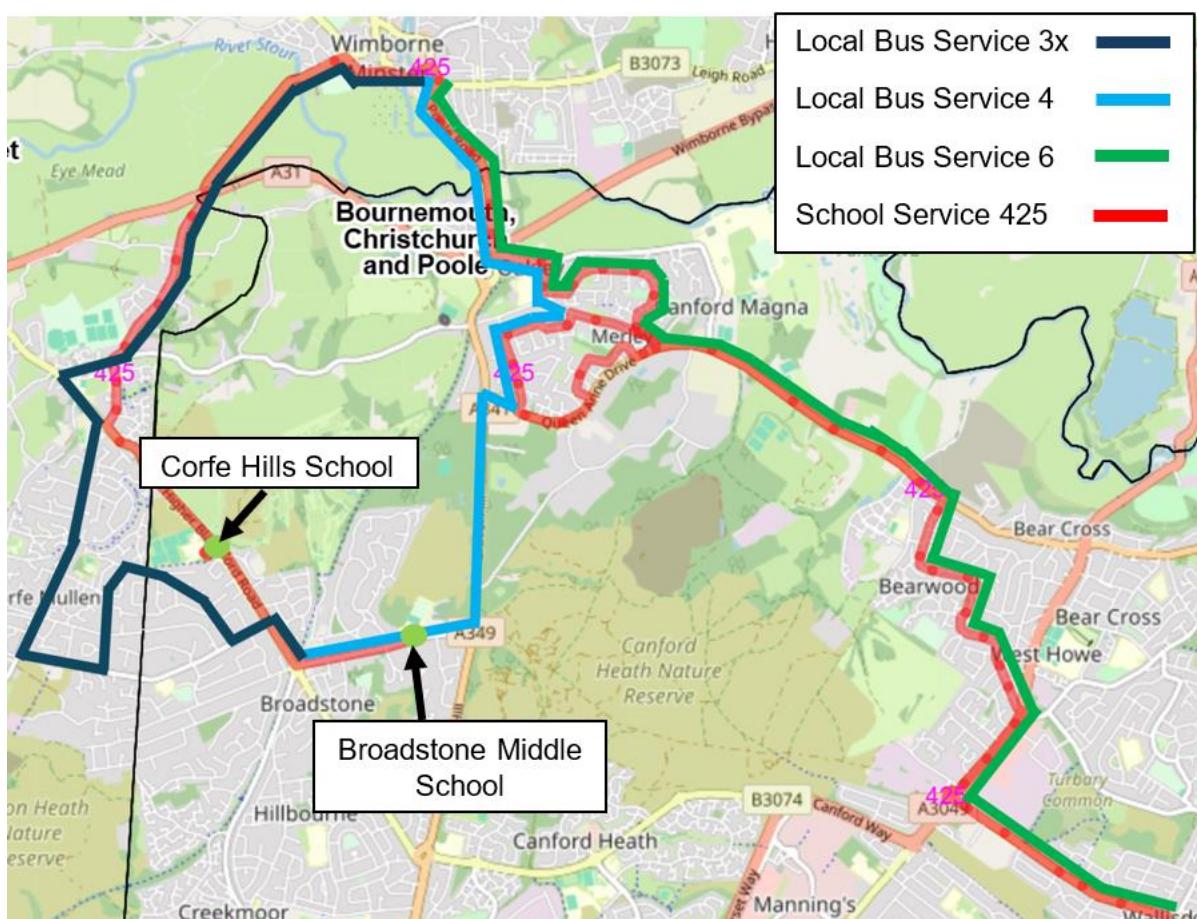
- Provide individual journey planning support
- Work with schools to identify children with vulnerable identifiers and any other concerns
- Consider appropriate mitigations for children in key year group i.e. Year 11

- Ensure that the council continues to support a diverse choice of schools for parents on the basis of faith. Faith schools are an important part of our rich offer of quality local schools and liaise with Diocesan Directors as appropriate.
- Communicate eligibility criteria as contained in the Council's policy on assistance with the costs of Home to School Transport and how to apply
- An Equalities Impact Assessment may be needed to confirm if there are any children impacted with protected characteristics.

## Service 425

Service 425 operates from Wallisdown and serves Corfe Hills School and Broadstone Middle School. The service departs at 07:26 and operates via Bearwood, Merley, Wimborne, Corfe Mullen and Broadstone, arriving at Corfe Hills School at 08:23 and Broadstone Middle School at 08:35. Students at Corfe Hills School are required to be on site by 08:30 whilst those at Broadstone Middle School are required to be in school by 08:40.

The majority of the route is covered by the local bus network, although for most, there would need to be a bus change as part of their journey. For students in Wallisdown and Bearwood, there is no direct service to Corfe Mullen and Broadstone, therefore these students would need to travel to Merley/Wimborne to connect with other services. Students in the Merley and Wimborne area are better served, though there will most likely be a short walk between the bus stops and school site depending on which school and where students reside. The map below shows services available in comparison to the existing service



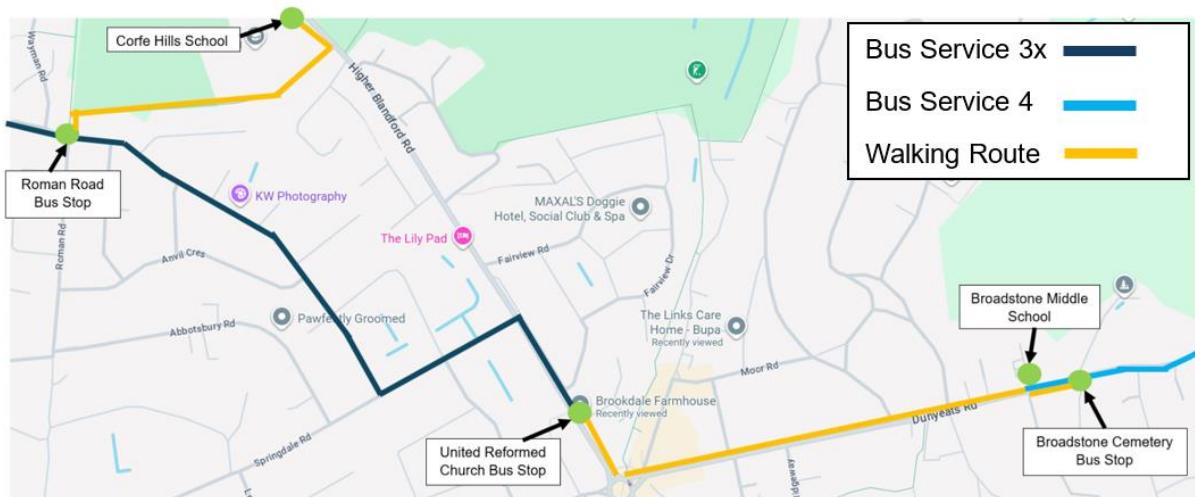
Service 425 timetable:

	»	<b>425</b>		<b>425</b>
<u>Wallisdown Roundabout, Tesco</u>		07:26	<u>Corfe Hills School</u>	15:20
<u>Mountbatten Roundabout, Fran...</u>		07:34	<u>Broadstone Middle School</u>	15:27
<u>High Howe Close</u>		07:36	<u>Merley, Willett Arms</u>	15:32
<u>Bearwood Co-op</u>		07:40	<u>Merley, Oakley Straight</u>	15:34
<u>Selkirk Close</u>		07:49	<u>The Lantern Church</u>	15:35
<u>De Montfort Road</u>		07:51	<u>Merley, Sopwith Crescent/Cock...</u>	15:37
<u>Queen Anne Drive</u>		07:53	<u>Selkirk Close</u>	15:38
<u>Egdon Drive</u>		07:55	<u>De Montfort Road</u>	15:41
<u>Merley, Sopwith Crescent/Cock...</u>		07:57	<u>Queen Anne Drive</u>	15:43
<u>The Lantern Church</u>		08:00	<u>Egdon Drive</u>	15:45
<u>Merley, Oakley Straight</u>		08:02	<u>Lynwood Drive</u>	15:47
<u>Julian's Bridge</u>		08:14	<u>Bearwood Co-op</u>	15:53
<u>Corfe Hills School</u>		08:23	<u>Wallisdown Roundabout, Tesco</u>	16:02
<u>Broadstone Middle School</u>		08:35		

Service 3x which operates from Wimborne via Corfe Mullen and Service 4 from Wimborne which operates via Merley are the most suitable alternative services. Walking distances for students will vary depending on which area they live and which school they attend.

Students in Corfe Mullen going to Corfe Hills School can disembark Service 3x at Roman Road for a 10 minute walk to school, whilst those at Broadstone Middle School can continue on Service 3x until the United Reformed Church, where it is a 15 minute walk to school.

Students in Merley can travel to Broadstone Middle School on service 4 which stops outside of the school, meaning minimal walking time for these students.



Students at Broadstone Middle School are required to be in school for at least 08:40 for registration. Students from the Corfe Mullen area can use the Service 3x which departs Wimborne at 07:43 and arrives at United Reformed Church bus stop just before 08:17 followed by the 15 minute walk to school. Students in Merley can use the Service 4 which departs Wimborne at 08:00 and arrives at the Broadstone Cemetery bus stop just before 08:27.

For students at Corfe Hills School, the only suitable option available is to Service 3x which departs Wimborne at 07:43 and arrives at Roman Road at 08:05, followed by the 10 minute walk to school. This means for any students residing in Merley they will need to make their way to Wimborne to connect with this service. This can be achieved by boarding Service 6 which departs Bournemouth at 06:45 and calls at Merley at 07:27.

	«	3x	4
<u>Wimborne Square [A]</u>		07:43	08:00
<u>Allenbourn Middle School</u>		-	-
<u>Merley, Oakley Straight</u>		-	08:10
<u>Corfe Mullen, Lockyers School</u>	07:54		-

	»	6	3x	4
<u>Bournemouth Square [S]</u>		06:45	07:43	08:00
<u>Bournemouth Railway Station [2]</u>		06:53	Allenbourn Middle School	-
<u>Winton Banks, Talbot Road [D]</u>		07:00	Merley, Oakley Straight	-
<u>Bournemouth University, Talbot...</u>		07:05	<u>Corfe Mullen, Lockyers School</u>	08:10
<u>Wallisdown, Talbot Drive</u>		07:07	<u>Hill View Post Office</u>	07:54
<u>Mountbatten Roundabout, Fran...</u>		07:13	<u>Highfield Estate, Lancaster Drive</u>	-
<u>High Howe Close</u>		07:15	<u>Broadstone, Broadway</u>	08:05
<u>Bearwood Co-op</u>		07:19	<u>Waterloo Road Garage</u>	08:17
<u>Merley, Brabazon Road</u>		07:27	<u>Wessex Gate Retail Park, Willis ...</u>	08:27
<u>Merley, Willett Arms</u>		-	<u>Poole Bus Station [E]</u>	08:21
<u>Wimborne Square [B]</u>		07:37	<u>Waterloo Estate, Milne Road</u>	-
			<u>Creekmoor, Borley Road</u>	08:37
			<u>Fleetsbridge, The Fleetsbridge</u>	-
			<u>Oakdale Library</u>	08:40
			<u>Poole Bus Station [E]</u>	08:46
				08:49
				08:56

As mentioned, students residing in Wallisdown and Bearwood would have to make their way to Wimborne or Merley to connect with the most suitable service. The most suitable service available is the 06:45 Service 6 from Bournemouth, which passes through Wallisdown at 07:07 and arrives at Wimborne at 07:37 to allow students to connect with either 07:43 Service 3x or 08:00 Service 4.

### Children's Services Comments regarding the proposed withdrawal of Service 425

The 425 serves a large area and the route travels through areas within Dorset Council (Wimborne and Corfe Mullen). The route was established as a dedicated school service funded by Children's Services to meet statutory home-to-school transport duties for pupils

entitled to free transport, at a time when demand for these journeys was significantly higher. An initial analysis of the impact of the withdrawal of this route is set out below.

### **Children Attending Broadstone First School or Broadstone Middle School**

- There are no children attending Broadstone Middle School (or Broadstone First School) in receipt of home to school travel assistance who use the route.
- Eligibility for transport assistance for primary-aged children depends on the nearest suitable school, not the preferred school.
- There are surplus places at other local schools in the areas the route serves therefore we do not anticipate that primary-aged children attending Broadstone First or Broadstone Middle would be eligible for assistance on the grounds of distance to school.
- Details of any children who may be travelling on this route who are not eligible for home to school transport are not available.

### **Children Attending Corfe Hills School**

- There are 4 children living in the Bearwood area who receive transport assistance in the form of a bus pass specifically for use on the 425. Two children are in Year 11 and their transport entitlement is likely to cease in July 2026, one child is in Year 10 and their entitlement is likely to cease in July 2027 and one child is in Year 9 and their entitlement is likely cease in July 2028.
- In considering alternatives for the two children in Year 9 and Year 10, they both live in the same area and therefore they currently travel on route 425 at 07:39 in the morning, arriving at Corfe Hills School at 08:25 (journey time 46 minutes). The suggested alternative journey would be:
  - 07:15 Number 6 to Wimborne
  - 07:43 Number 3x from Wimborne to Roman Road
  - 08:05 9 minute walk to Corfe Hills School (total journey time 59 minutes)
- The suggested alternative is within the recommended maximum journey time of 75 minutes for secondary-aged children.
- Initial investigations into children living within the areas currently served by the 425 indicate that two Corfe Hills students who receive free school meals reside close to the route. Given the wide geographic area covered, it would be advisable to conduct further analysis to establish how many children are eligible for free school meals (who are currently not accessing transport assistance) and whether they may qualify for extended rights travel assistance, should the route be withdrawn at the end of July 2027.
- Note: We do not provide statutory travel assistance for Dorset resident children but there is likely to be some cross border movement of children accessing this route.

### **Route 425 Next Steps and Mitigations**

- Work with schools to identify children with vulnerable identifiers and any other concerns
- Work with GIS colleagues to identify postcodes surrounding the route within a reasonable distance and investigate whether they would qualify for transport assistance under extended rights
- Include in Parent/Carer Guide to Applying for a School Place changes to available routes and explore other media for promoting awareness prior to withdrawal in July 2027.

## **Children's Service's Comments regarding Communication and Engagement Activity and Financial Implications with regards to Routes 40 and 425**

**Communications and Engagement Activity:** Effective communication will be essential to help schools, families and children understand the changes and plan accordingly. Engagement with affected families and local schools is a critical part of this work and will need to be significantly stepped-up as the proposals progress. Proposed communications activity includes

- Direct engagement with affected schools and families. It will be important that services work collaboratively to agree how best this is achieved
- Journey planning support and promotion of child period tickets
- Support for walking and cycling alternatives

**Financial Implications:** Two of the dedicated school bus routes Route 40 and Route 425 are already funded by Children's Services because they were originally introduced to transport pupils who had a statutory entitlement to free home-to-school transport. These routes historically carried high numbers of eligible children, but usage has now fallen significantly, with only 1 eligible pupil on Route 40 and 3 on Route 425, making the services increasingly expensive to operate.

The phased withdrawal of school routes will have direct and time-limited financial implications for Children's Services. Children's Services must continue to meet the cost of these routes until they are fully withdrawn in line with the phased timetable to the end of the 2025/26 academic year for Route 40 and to the end of the 2026/27 academic year for Route 425, with £53k required in 2026/27 and a further £13k in 2027/28 to complete the transition.

Under Option 3, the main report confirms that £53,000 of the £138,000 council bus subsidy revenue required in 2026/27 relates specifically to Children's Services funding for these school routes, and that a further £13,000 will be required in 2027/28 to operate Route 425 until the end of the 2027 summer term.

Therefore, while the wider bus subsidy budget is proposed to reduce, Children's Services must continue to meet the transport costs associated with Routes 40 and 425 during the transition period until their respective end dates. This includes ensuring that eligible pupils continue to receive transport support in line with the Education Act 1996 while the phased changes take effect. These costs will therefore remain a Children's Services financial commitment across 2026/27 and into 2027/28, aligned to the timetable for the withdrawal of these school services and until the relevant academic-year commitments have concluded.

## Appendix 6: Equalities Impact Assessment Conversation/Screening

### Equality Impact Assessment: Conversation Screening Tool

[Use this form to prompt an EIA conversation and capture the discussion. This completed form or if needed, a full EIA report (form 3) will be published as part of the decision-making process \*Please delete prompts before publishing]

<b>What is being reviewed?</b>	<p>BCP Council agreed to a full review of all subsidised local bus service contracts ahead of a planned proposed commencement of the withdrawal of the Bus Subsidy budget starting in 2026/27 in accordance with the council's Medium Term Financial Plan. The Department for Transport (DfT) recommended a full review of the subsidised bus network would be required to potentially unlock Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP) revenue funding for bus subsidy. Most bus routes across BCP run without extra financial help from the council. However, some routes with fewer passengers, such as evening and Sunday services or those that serve areas away from the busy roads, need financial support (subsidy) to keep running.</p> <p>The council supports 24 local bus service contracts which can be categorised as follows:</p> <p>6 x School Routes 8 x Monday to Saturday Daytime Routes 5 x Monday to Saturday Evening Routes 5 x Sundays Routes</p> <p>The review comprised of on-bus passenger surveys; analysis of passenger boarding information supplied by the bus operator, morebus; discussions with morebus; and a 'Have your say' public consultation which ran from 9 July to 18 August 2025.</p> <p>Cabinet will be considering the results of this review at its meeting on 4 February 2026. Following this consideration, Cabinet may recommend to Council reductions in bus subsidy funding which could potentially result in the withdrawal or reduction of some services.</p> <p>Post-consultation negotiations with the principal bus operator, Morebus, and discussions with the Bus Reform Team at the Department for Transport, have resulted in recommendations that would reduce the impact of the withdrawal of BCP Council subsidy.</p>
<b>What changes are being made?</b>	The potential outcome of the review is that with effect from the summer 2026 timetable change (23 May), some

	services could be withdrawn; some may be reduced in frequency or route; and some services could be combined together.
<b>Service Unit:</b>	Transport and Sustainable Travel
<b>Participants in the conversation:</b>	John McVey – Sustainable Transport Manager Nick Phillips – Sustainable Travel Operations Team Leader Kevin Brolan – Senior Transport Officer Richard Barnes – Service Unit Equality Champion and part of Sustainable Transport Policy Team.
<b>Conversation date/s:</b>	9 September 2025; 1 October 2025; 8 January 2026; 15 January 2026
<b>Do you know your current or potential client base? Who are the key stakeholders?</b>	<p>The Enhanced Partnership (EP) Board which includes the principal local bus company operating in the BCP Council area, Morebus, as well BCP Council Members and Officers.</p> <p>People that currently travel by bus in the BCP Council area, both locals and visitors and future bus users.</p> <p>Bus Passenger representative groups/organisations.</p> <p>Schools, business and organisations in the locations where changes to bus routes may impact on access.</p> <p>Organisations and support groups who could be impacted by people no longer having access to bus services – due to isolation and linked detriment to mental health and wellbeing.</p>
<b>Do different groups have different needs or experiences?</b>	<p>Information is available regarding the equality profile of people that currently use buses.</p> <p>Bus use is particularly common for those aged 17-20, aged over 70, for women and girls, most ethnic minority groups and people on lower incomes (National Audit Office).</p> <p>Children and young people use school buses and therefore they may be disproportionately impacted on school days/at school times if their school bus route is changed or withdrawn.</p> <p>As bus use is highest for over 65s, older people may be disproportionately impacted by bus routes being changed, merged, or removed. This may be because they can no longer drive or own a car. Bus routes being removed could cause them to no longer be able to get out and about,</p>

preventing them from socialising or grocery shopping and making access to medical appointments more difficult.

People with a disability are more likely to use a bus, and so if their bus route is changed or withdrawn, they may find that they can no longer access the services they need, socialise with people, or get to appointments.

A **Bournemouth Council travel survey** undertaken October 2018 to January 2019 showed that 60% of respondents had used a bus within the last 12 months. Locally bus use was for **age** – highest for over 65s and under 24s; **disability** – disabled people were more likely to travel by bus than people without a disability; **ethnicity** – ‘White Other’ and BME people were more likely to use buses than white British people; **sexual orientation** – all other sexual orientations were more likely to travel by bus than heterosexual people; **religion** – all other religions were more likely to travel by bus compared to Christians and residents from more deprived areas were more likely to use buses.

A **BCP Council residents survey** from September 2021 suggested that younger age groups are more satisfied with local bus services, particularly the 16-24 age groups. Those aged 35-44 are less satisfied. This could be as car ownership is higher compared to younger people so with more of this group having a choice of transport, they are less satisfied.

Whether a household has a car available may result in a different need or experience. This could be linked to **socio-economic** conditions, with households from less prosperous areas having lower levels of car ownership and more likely to rely on bus services for transport needs.

A **BCP Council survey ‘Bus Back Better’** from 29 November 2021 to 7 January 2022 to inform priorities for the Enhanced Partnership (statutory partnership between the Local Transport Authority and the bus operators), identified safety and security concerns travelling on buses and waiting at stops and interchanges, particularly Poole Bus Station. These concerns are likely to be more prevalent amongst certain protected groups including women and some ethnic groups.

There are not any identifiable or known impacts specific to Marriage and Civil Partnership, Gender reassignment, human rights, the Armed Forces or those with caring responsibilities.

	<p>A <b>Transforming Travel Survey</b> (August 2022) identified:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Respondents aged 18-24 are significantly more likely to frequently travel by bus than respondents aged 25-64</li> <li>• Respondents aged 65+ are significantly more likely to frequently travel by bus than respondents aged 35-64</li> <li>• Respondents aged 18-24 are significantly less likely to use the bus 'infrequently' or 'hardly ever' than respondents aged 25-64</li> <li>• BAME respondents are significantly more likely to choose 'frequently' and 'occasionally' than White British respondents</li> <li>• Respondents with no disabilities are significantly more likely to travel by local bus infrequently than respondents with disabilities</li> <li>• Retired respondents are significantly more likely to frequently travel by bus than respondents in employment</li> <li>• Respondents in employment are significantly less likely to travel by bus occasionally than unemployed, retired and economically inactive respondents</li> <li>• Respondents in IMD quintile 2 are significantly more likely to frequently travel by bus than respondents in IMD quintiles 3-5</li> <li>• Mosaic groups with above average frequent bus use include group N – Urban Cohesion, O – Rental Hubs and I – Family Basics</li> <li>• Mosaic groups with the highest proportions of respondents who hardly ever use a bus are Group E – Senior Security, L – Vintage Value and D – Rural Reality</li> </ul> <p>The <b>2024 Transport Focus' "Your Bus Journey" survey</b> of bus users in Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole in 2024 identified that out of over 1,000 respondents:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 53% identified as Female, 43% identified as Male, 3% preferred not to say, 0% preferred to self-describe</li> <li>• 40% were aged 26 – 64, 29% were aged 16 – 25, 29% were aged over 65, 2% preferred not to say.</li> <li>• 32% stated they were affected by a physical or mental health condition lasting or expected to last over 12 months.</li> <li>• 77% described their ethnicity as White, 7% described as Asian, 6% described as Black, 6% preferred not to say, the remaining 4% described as Other.</li> <li>• 40% of respondents did not drive, 47% did say they had a car available to them, however 28% of these respondents said they preferred not to drive.</li> </ul>
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>47% of respondents have access to a car through others at least “some of the time”. 26% of respondents did not have anybody available with a car to assist</li> </ul>
<b>Will this change affect any service users?</b>	<p>Yes.</p> <p>The proposed changes could see services reduced in frequency, reduced in route and destinations served, or withdrawn. Some services may be combined together.</p> <p>The proposed changes will impact on choices and routines of some service users who may find they will no longer be able to catch their usual bus and so will need to find alternative arrangements. The arrangements could include (but not limited to):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- An alternative bus service from the same bus stop, but require changing to another service along the route to reach desired destination.</li> <li>- An alternative bus service from an alternative bus stop.</li> <li>- Use of cycle (private or micromobility hire) to reach destination or connect with alternative bus service.</li> <li>- Use of private car including reliance on friends/relatives.</li> <li>- Walking or wheeling depending on journey distance and ability.</li> <li>- Not travelling and relying on home visits/deliveries, unless an emergency.</li> </ul> <p>The recommended changes will result in the majority of routes remaining, though some of these will be with changes to routes and timetables, including some reductions. The main impact will be on passengers using two of the six dedicated school buses as these are recommended to be withdrawn at the end of the Summer Term 2026 (Route 40) and end of the Summer Term 2027 (Route 425). For each of the school services affected, an analysis has been undertaken to identify alternative journey and ticketing options on the local bus network, as well as the potential for walking and cycling.</p> <p>Changes may also impact into the wider community including to those not directly using these services. Potential positive and negative impacts are outlined in the sections below.</p>

**[If the answer to any of the questions above is ‘don’t know’ then you need to gather more evidence. The best way to do this is to use forms 2 and 3. \*Please delete prompts before publishing]**

<p><b>What are the benefits or positive impacts of the change on current or potential users?</b></p>	<p>Where services are combined together, this could provide new transport links for residents to previously unserved destination. This would be dependent on the services combined, and whether these changes are seen by residents as beneficial to them.</p> <p>The review and outcomes from the consultation has assisted in providing information about up-to-date use of the supported bus network, enabling recommendations for the routes receiving financially support to better fulfil current user requirements. There hasn't previously been a full review undertaken of the entire supported bus network.</p>
<p><b>What are the negative impacts of the change on current or potential users?</b></p>	<p>The alternative provisions may be less convenient for all service users including increased walking to the bus stop, less frequent buses, slower routes or requiring changing services along the journey. These will have varying impacts depending on personal needs and circumstances of service users. The agreement by morebus to operate the evening and Sunday routes on a commercial basis (though with some timetable revisions) and the authorisation from the DfT to use Bus Grant revenue allocation (subject to conditions) will significantly reduce the impact on most passengers.</p> <p>Passengers using the two dedicated school buses proposed for withdrawal and still choosing or needing to travel by bus, are likely to have journeys that take longer and involve a change of buses and/or longer walks to and from the bus stop. There will also be fare implications for these passengers as different types of tickets will be needed (e.g. day ticket or season ticket). Some will need to pay more though others may find their fares are cheaper.</p> <p>Regular commuters on bus services including active workers and students may have to plan their journeys in consideration of the potential increase in both 'first mile' and 'last mile' elements as they have to travel further to connect with an alternative service (this includes instances where interchanging between services is required). This requires increased commuting time which can lead to increased disruption in instances where services are unreliable, which can impact on a service users work and education prospects. This added disruption will also impact how service users connect with key services such as medical appointments and local doctors' surgeries or at key hospital facilities.</p> <p>Having to use alternative bus services including</p>

	<p>interchanging between services can have a socio-economic impact, with users having to purchase additional tickets, (such as periodic or cross network tickets) instead of being able to purchase a 'single' or 'return'. This can increase pressure on personal budgets and can either lead to users finding alternative work/education provision with less reliance on commuting or can lead to users changing how they spend money on other items such as food and clothing.</p> <p>The potential for increased 'first mile' or 'last mile' elements of a passenger's journey to connect with alternative services can be increasingly difficult for older people and those with a disability, particularly mobility difficulties, and even more so if changing between bus services is required as part of this new journey. This can prove especially difficult for those with limited mobility to the extent that it may not be possible for them to undertake these longer journeys independently. This loss of independent living could lead to a decline in both physical and mental health.</p> <p>The additional journey to alternative bus services may make some groups such as women, disabled people or elderly feel less safe depending on how well the route is lit at night and whether there are any anti-social concerns in the area. This again can severely limit employment opportunity as well as social integration within the community.</p>
<b>Will the change affect employees?</b>	<p>Many employees and others in their households will use buses, to get to/from work, for work business travel and general personal travel. The BCP employee travel survey 2022 stated that 7% sometimes used a bus to travel to/from work, with bus as the main mode for 4%.</p> <p>The majority of bus routes are operated on a commercial basis and are therefore unaffected by this review. However, it is possible that some employees would be impacted by any reductions or withdrawals.</p>
<b>Will the change affect the wider community?</b>	<p>Yes. Some passengers (most likely to be school children using the two dedicated school buses proposed for withdrawal) could find they can no longer catch their usual bus and will either need to find an alternative route, an alternative mode of travel, or not travel at all. Some passengers will find they still have a bus but it is less convenient (longer walk to bus stop; less frequent; slower route; need to change services along route). Where households have access to a car – should a bus service no longer be available, this could lead to additional replacement car journeys adding to congestion on our roads and increasing pollution with linked detrimental</p>

	health and environmental impacts. This is contrary to the BCP Council Corporate Strategy ambition to tackle climate change through sustainable policies and practice.
<b>What mitigating actions are planned or already in place for those negatively affected by this change?</b>	<p>Negotiations with Morebus have resulted in their agreement to operate the evening and Sunday routes on a commercial basis and minimum impact on passengers is expected. In addition, the authorisation from the DfT to use Bus Grant revenue allocation (subject to conditions) will significantly reduce the impact on most passengers.</p> <p>Alternative journeys for school children currently using the two dedicated school buses proposed for withdrawal and transferring to the general bus network have been investigated. This has concluded that there are options available, albeit involving a change of bus and/or a longer walk to/from the bus stop.</p>
<b>Summary of Equality Implications:</b>	<p>The profile of people that use buses, from both national and local evidence, are groups the Equality Act is intended to benefit by advancing equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not. Much older, much younger age groups, people with a disability, women, other ethnic groups, other religions, other sexual orientations and residents from more deprived areas are all more likely to use buses, compared to others in their protected groups.</p> <p>Any deterioration in service following a decision to reduce or withdraw subsidised bus routes will disproportionately impact on these groups unless adequate mitigation actions can be put in place.</p> <p>Negotiations with Morebus have resulted in their agreement to operate the evening and Sunday routes on a commercial basis and minimum impact on passengers is expected. In addition, the authorisation from the DfT to use Bus Grant revenue allocation (subject to conditions) will significantly reduce the impact on most passengers.</p> <p>Alternative journeys for school children currently using the two dedicated school buses proposed for withdrawal and transferring to the general bus network have been investigated. This has concluded that there are options available, albeit involving a change of bus and/or a longer walk to/from the bus stop.</p>

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## CABINET



Report subject	<b>Early Years and Mainstream Schools Funding 2026/27</b>
Meeting date	4 February 2026
Status	Public Report
Executive summary	<p>This paper outlines the proposed 2026/27 local mainstream schools funding formula based on recommendations from the Schools Forum.</p> <p>The formula is highly regulated by the Department for Education (DfE), with funding provided by the £293m schools block of the ring-fenced dedicated schools grant (DSG).</p> <p>The proposed local mainstream formula is to replicate the national funding formula (NFF) with minor amendments as recommended by Schools Forum on 19 January 2026 to reflect that it is not affordable in full.</p> <p>The early years single funding formula (EYSFF) is being considered by Schools Forum on 16 February 2026 to allow time for a full consultation process with providers.</p>
Recommendations	<p><b>It is RECOMMENDED that Cabinet recommends to Council:</b></p> <p><b>(a) The decision for the early years single funding formula (EYSFF) is delegated to the corporate director for children's services in consultation with the portfolio holder for children, young people, education and skills.</b></p> <p><b>(b) The mainstream schools funding formula detailed in Appendix 2.</b></p>
Reason for recommendations	The recommendations reflect the mainstream schools formula recommended by the Schools Forum in January 2026 and the timetable for the early years consultation requested by providers.
Portfolio Holder(s):	Councillor Richard Burton, Children, Young People, Education and Skills
Corporate Directors	Cathi Hadley, Director of Children's Services
Report Authors	Nicola Webb, Assistant Chief Finance Officer Tanya Smith, Head of School Place Planning, Admissions and Capital
Wards	Council-wide
Classification	For Decision

## Background

1. The DSG is allocated by the DfE through four separate funding blocks – early years, schools, high needs, and central school services with a total estimated for 2026/27 of £426m provided in the settlement announced on 17 December 2025.
2. A summary of the DSG settlement for 2026/27 is provided in table 1 below:

**Table 1: School Funding Settlement 2026/27**

DSG Funding Block	2025/26 Forecast	2026/27 Forecast	Annual Change		Reason for Change
	£000's	£000's	£000's	%	
Early Years	52,499	62,205	9,706	18.5%	Full year impact of free entitlements for working parents from Sept. 2025 and increased funding rates.
Schools *	291,773	292,823	1,050	0.4%	Increased NFF funding rates but falling rolls in both primary and secondary schools and with reduced growth funding
Central School Services Block (CSSB)**	2,174	2,187	13	0.6%	Increase in unit funding rate applied to falling pupil numbers.
High Needs *	68,369	68,369	0	0.0%	High Needs NFF suspended with no increase in funding.
<b>Total</b>	<b>414,815</b>	<b>425,584</b>	<b>10,769</b>	<b>3%</b>	

\* Comparative includes 2025/26 separate pay grants rolled into the DSG NFF baselines for 2026/27. \*\* Central services 2026/27 forecast assumes successful application to restore commitment funding to the prior year level (outcome expected in March 2026).

3. The main driver of DSG funding levels is pupil numbers. The birth rate decline is continuing its progress through schools with a 1.4% reduction in pupil numbers overall at the October 2025 school census. The impact has progressed into secondary school age pupils in BCP for the first time in the current academic year (2025/26).
4. The schools block allocations are now fixed but it is likely that additional grants will be paid to schools to reflect national pay awards when they are known as in previous years. Significant adjustments could be made to early years funding in-year based on the take up of the free entitlements at each termly census. A small element of high needs block funding will be adjusted in-year based on the January 2026 pupil-level data returns.
5. Each funding block has its own national funding formula (NFF) methodology to allocate funding to the local authority and expenditure is governed by the School and Early Years Finance and Childcare (Provision of Information About Young Children) (Amendment) (England) Regulations 2025.

## Schools Forum

6. The Schools Forum is a statutory consultation body of the council with its constitution and operation regulated by the DfE. It has oversight of all DSG budgets with a range of decision-making powers.
7. The Schools Forum includes representation from the early years sector, each phase of school (primary, secondary, special, and alternative provision), each status (maintained and academy) plus an age 14-19 provider and local dioceses. Lead officers and the Cabinet members for children's services and resources can contribute at meetings but are non-voting members of the forum.

8. The regulations set out the responsibilities for decision-making between the Council and the Schools Forum, including any consultation requirements.
9. The Schools Forum decides the level of central expenditure retained from each funding block, except for high needs, for which it has a consultation role only. It also decides if funding can be transferred away from the schools block up to a maximum of 0.5%, with any higher level requiring the approval of the DfE.
10. Funding through the central school services block is used to support a range of council services supporting schools (for example, the school admission service) with the decision regarding the use of funding made by the Schools Forum.
11. Schools Forum is to make recommendations, following consultations with each sector, regarding the early years and mainstream schools funding formulae with the decisions to be made by Council.

#### **Early Years Funding Block and EYSFF 2026/27**

12. Funding is for a sector comprised of private, voluntary, and independent settings with a small number of nursery classes in mainstream schools.
13. The DSG funding rates have increased for each entitlement for 2026/27, and the number of funded hours will increase compared with current levels as the entitlement expansions for working parents from September 2025 will apply for a full financial year.
14. The funding rates include allowances for pay awards and other pressures across the sector. The hourly funding rate increases are as follows for children:
  - a. aged under 2 (working parents) - 6.3%
  - b. aged 2 - 6.5% - both entitlements (working parents, children requiring extra support)
  - c. aged 3&4 - 9% with a further 3% added to reflect that the move to termly census funding is more costly for local authorities.
15. The pass-through rate of funding to providers must be at least 97% of funding for each of the four different entitlements separately. Included in the passthrough calculation is the local EYSFF funding and special education needs inclusion fund (SENIF) allocations to providers as well a contingency for provider allocations being more than expected as funding rates cannot be changed in-year.
16. Early years take up of the entitlements in 2026/27 has been estimated by the DfE based on their latest data and the funding total will remain estimated until summer 2027.
17. The council is responsible for distributing funding between childcare providers through the EYSFF. The methodology is determined locally within DfE parameters, with a requirement to consult providers on any changes.
18. Last year a principle-based consultation was undertaken with the sector during October – November 2024 and the outcome shared with Schools Forum in time for a recommendation to be provided to Council in February. However, this approach was not popular with providers, and they have been clear this year that any consultation undertaken with the sector should be based on known funding values and not estimates. Also, that consultation should not be undertaken over a period that includes the Christmas school holidays.
19. The late announcements this year on 15 December has meant that consultation has been undertaken in January 2026 and been unable to conclude in time for the 19 January Schools Forum meeting. A Schools Forum meeting has been arranged for 16 February to consider the outcome of the provider consultation and make a recommendation to the council.

20. A summary of the EYSFF being recommended to providers is included in Appendix 1. The formula must be approved and notified to providers by 28 February 2026. To meet this deadline and give providers as much notice as possible, it is recommended that the decision for the 2026/27 formula is delegated to the corporate director for children's services, in consultation with the portfolio holder for children, young people, education and skills. This will enable time for full stakeholder engagement and Schools Forum to consider the outcome of the consultation and make a recommendation.

### **Schools Funding Block**

21. Funding through the schools block is for mainstream schools and finalised each year in the December settlement through two separate funding streams – the mainstream school NFF and the growth fund NFF.

22. The school level NFF allocations calculated by the DfE for 2026/27 use school census data from October 2024. These allocations are totalled and divided by pupil numbers to derive the primary and secondary school phase unit funding levels for each council. These separate school phase unit values are then applied to the October 2025 census pupil numbers to determine the final schools NFF funding to the council.

23. The local formula must use school data from the October 2025 school census to calculate school budgets so these will differ from those provided through the NFF to the council.

24. The mainstream schools NFF in 2026/27 has increased unit values for all formula factors by an average of 2.1% with the minimum per pupil funding remaining at 2025/26 levels. This means that schools where the formula provides funding below the minimum in both years will not see an increase in per pupil funding in 2026/27.

25. The growth fund NFF has provided only £0.9m within the schools block and this is less than half of the allocation in 2025/26. This accounts for much of the low overall growth in the schools block alongside the reduction in pupil numbers.

### **Central School Services Block (CSSB)**

26. The CSSB is fully committed to the council's central education budgets supporting schools with allocations agreed by the Schools Forum on 19 February 2026 at the level of funding.

### **High Needs Funding Block**

27. The high needs block largely funds the costs of meeting the needs of individual pupils through top up funding for those in mainstream schools and funding for pupils in special schools and other specialist providers.

28. The high needs NFF has been suspended for 2026/27 with no increase in funding though the Settlement. Small adjustments will be made in-year to update for pay grants to be passed on to schools and to take account of the cross-border flow of pupils based on January 2026 data returns.

29. Any transfer of funding from the school block to support high needs is for one year only so that the amount is not locked into the budget. It is limited within the regulations to 0.5% of school block funding.

30. The Schools Forum has been clear annually that all schools expect to receive their NFF allocations in full if affordable, and only surplus funds are available for transfer. The DfE has also made clear that any further applications to the DfE that are outside the wishes of schools would be unsuccessful.

## **Mainstream School Funding Formula 2026/27**

31. The 2026/27 mainstream school NFF detail is set out in Appendix 2. It is not affordable in full when applied to the October 2025 BCP school data with a shortfall of £0.15m. No proposals have, therefore, been developed to transfer funding away from the schools block to support pupils with high needs.
32. The funding shortfall is due to the significant reduction in growth funding (which has subsidised the mainstream schools NFF in recent years) and the continuing trend for increasing numbers of pupils attracting characteristics funding in school data (for example, being from relatively deprived households).
33. The local formula to pass funding on to mainstream schools must be designed to a DfE template, the authority pro-forma tool (APT), which is based on the NFF and provides detailed calculations and narrative. The APT must be approved by the DfE prior to budgets being notified to schools. The DfE ensure the budget calculations adhere to the regulations, and any variations (dis-applications of the regulations) have the appropriate approvals from the Schools Forum and/or the DfE. No disapplication requests were made this year and no DfE decisions are pending other than approval of the APT calculations.
34. As last year, the previously expected July government announcements for the mainstream schools NFF were not made until late November 2025 with the DfE not providing the APT to enable modelling of options to commence until 17 December.
35. To be made affordable the NFF could be adjusted by:
  - a. Reducing any individual or all unit values within the 2.5% tolerance permitted.
  - b. Reducing the minimum funding guarantee (MFG) from the NFF 0% up to the permitted maximum reduction of minus 0.5% in per pupil funding
  - c. Introducing a cap on per pupil funding increases (either by scaling back all increases by an equal percentage or only those above a threshold)
  - d. Any combination of methods (a) to (c) above
36. Options were presented to the Schools Forum on 19 January 2026 with a recommendation made to the council as set out in Appendix 2.

### **Options Appraisals**

37. The January 2026 early years consultation with providers set out proposals for the 2026/27 EYSFF as set out in Appendix 1.
38. The mainstream schools funding formula options were considered in the consultation process with schools and Schools Forum and are summarised in Appendix 2 with further detail available in the papers for the January 2026 Schools Forum meeting (link within the background papers).

### **Summary of financial implications**

39. The EYSFF and mainstream schools formula are set within the funding envelope of the DSG and therefore have no impact on the general fund.
40. The impact of the growing accumulated DSG deficit is considered further in the Budget and Medium-Term Financial Plan (MTFP) 2026/27 report scheduled for later in February.

### **Summary of legal implications**

41. The consultation undertaken and formulae recommendations are compliant with the School and Early Years Finance and Childcare (Provision of Information About Young Children) (Amendment) (England) Regulations 2025.

42. Funding rates for early years must be provided to the sector by 28 February 2026 (in prior years was 31 March).
43. School budgets must be finalised and notified to maintained schools by 28 February 2026 with the DfE timetable the same for academy budgets.

#### **Summary of human resources implications**

44. Implications for staffing levels from mainstream funding changes rests within individual schools.

#### **Summary of sustainability impact**

45. None.

#### **Summary of public health implications**

46. Should appropriate funding not be allocated to meet the needs of pupils with SEND within BCP, there may be health and well-being implications for this group of the population leading to reduced health equalities locally.

#### **Summary of equality implications**

47. An equalities impact assessment has not been undertaken. The DfE has undertaken equality impact assessments in determining the structure of the funding formulae and how funding is to be allocated. The local formula is aligned with the national scheme.

#### **Summary of risk assessment**

48. There are no risks to the council from the implementation of the funding formulae within the Regulations and published guidance. However, the main risk relates to the high needs funding gap over the next two years until the government take over the SEND budget from councils in April 2028.

#### **Background papers**

1. DfE DSG Settlement announcements 17 December:  
[dedicated schools grant \(DSG\) funding allocations for the 2026 to 2027 financial year](#)
2. Schools Forum Meeting – 19 January 2026  
[Welcome to BCP Council | BCP](#)

#### **Appendices**

Appendix 1    Summary of the EYSFF and proposed funding values for 2026/27

included in the stakeholder consultation.

Appendix 2    Proposed mainstream schools formula 2026/27

**EYSFF****Background**

1. The DSG early years block funding includes hourly rates for children:
  - a. aged 3&4 (30 hours for working parents and 15 hours for others),
  - b. aged 2 (30 hours for working parents or 15 hours for those from disadvantaged backgrounds)
  - c. aged between 9 months and 2 years of working parents only
2. The early years block is distributed according to a national funding formula (NFF) with funding allocated by the local authority to providers in accordance with the School and Early Years Finance and Childcare (Provision of Information About Young Children) (Amendment) (England) Regulations. The regulations impose some restrictions on how the funding can be allocated to early years providers, as well as detailing the central expenditure that can be charged to the grant within the block.
3. Elements included within the DSG, but outside the early years funding formula are as follows:
  - a. Early years pupil premium (EYPP) for eligible children
  - b. Disability Access Fund for one off payments to settings for eligible children

**EYSFF Parameters**

4. The Council is required to operate an EYSFF for all providers. The formula is applicable for the free entitlements to childcare places delivered in pre-schools, day nurseries, independent schools, childminders, and in nursery classes within a small number of academies.
5. The formula for 3 and 4-year-olds is to include a universal base rate for all providers and a mandatory deprivation supplement to differentiate funding.
6. The formula for 2-year-olds includes a base rate for all providers and a discretionary deprivation supplement to differentiate funding between a disadvantaged 2-year-old, a working parent and a working parent eligible for EYPP.
7. The formula for under 2's includes a base rate for all providers and a discretionary deprivation supplement to differentiate funding between a working parent and a working parent eligible for EYPP.
8. The formula must include a SEND Inclusion Fund (SENIF). The SENIF provides additional funding to support children with additional needs in all free entitlement age groups. SENIF is not provided under the statutory framework for EHCPs. Any EHCPs for children in the early years age groups are funded by the high needs block following statutory processes in addition to the inclusion fund within the EYSFF.
9. Councils are permitted to retain up to 3% of the early years funding from each entitlement separately for central services such as administering the entitlement and providing support to providers and systems to operate the funding claims. Included within the retention can be any amounts transferred to other free entitlement age groups or other funding blocks.
10. A central contingency is held as DfE funding is adjusted in-year based on take up at termly census points and this may provide fewer hours than the take up to be funded for providers across each term. This contingency is included in the calculation of the 97% passthrough rate to providers, except for 3 and 4 year olds. This age group has separate arrangements due to the move to termly census in 2026/27. Previously funding was based only on two January census points. This is explained further under Table 3d in the next section.

## EYSFF 2026/27

11. It is proposed that only the base rate is increased in 2026/27 for each age group with the table below showing the comparison with 2025/26:

**Table 2: EYSFF – Hourly Funding Rates 2026/27**

	Provider base rate 2025/26	Proposed increase to provider base rate	Proposed provider base rate 2026/27	% increase
<b>Under 2s</b>	<b>£10.28</b>	<b>£0.72</b>	<b>£11.25</b>	<b>9.4%</b>
<b>2-year-olds</b>	<b>£7.72</b>	<b>£0.55</b>	<b>£8.27</b>	<b>7.1%</b>
<b>3- &amp; 4-year-olds</b>	<b>£5.34</b>	<b>£0.52</b>	<b>£5.86</b>	<b>9.7%</b>

12. The BCP EYSFF includes only a base rate and deprivation supplement. The budget makes an allowance for a central contingency and additional SEND allocations. Funding is also allocated to central expenditure. Table 4 below shows how the hourly funding rate to the council is allocated to the allowable early years expenditure.

**Table 3 – EYSFF funding values and allocation of hourly funding**

Table 3a	Under 2s			Notes
	Allocation from funded rate	%	EYSFF Provider Rate for Approval	
<b>Provider Base Rate</b>	£11.25	93.3%	£11.25	Every child
<b>Deprivation Supplement</b>	£0.01	0.1%	£0.33	Per eligible child
<b>SENIF - targeted</b>	£0.15	1.2%	£2.43/£4.86/ £7.49	Per eligible child
<b>Central Functions</b>	£0.36	3.0%		
<b>Contingency</b>	£0.28	2.3%		
<b>DSG Funding per hour</b>	<b>£12.06</b>			

Table 3b	2-year-olds Working Families			Notes
	Allocation from funded rate	%	EYSFF Provider Rate for Approval	
<b>Provider Base Rate</b>	£8.27	92.8%	£8.27	Every child
<b>Deprivation Supplement</b>	£0.03	0.3%	£0.65	Per eligible child
<b>SENIF - targeted</b>	£0.14	1.6%	£2.43/£4.86/ £7.49	Per eligible child
<b>Central Functions</b>	£0.27	3.0%		
<b>Contingency</b>	£0.20	2.2%		
<b>DSG Funding per hour</b>	<b>£8.91</b>			

		2-year-olds Families receiving additional support (disadvantaged families)			
Table 3c		Allocation from funded rate	%	EYSFF Provider Rate for Approval	Notes
<b>Provider Base Rate</b>		£8.27	92.8%	£8.27	Every child
<b>Deprivation Supplement</b>		£0.65	7.3%	£0.65	Per eligible child
<b>SENIF - targeted</b>		£0.32	3.6%	£2.43/£4.86/ £7.49	Per eligible child
<b>Central Functions</b>		£0.27	3.0%		
<b>Contingency</b>		£0.00	0.0%		
<b>DSG Funding per hour</b>		<b>£8.91</b>			

		3 & 4 year-olds			
Table 3d		Allocation from funded rate	%	EYSFF Provider Rate for Approval	Notes
<b>Provider Base Rate</b>		£5.86	92.1%	£5.86	Every child
<b>Deprivation Supplement</b>		£0.06	0.9%	£0.33	Per eligible child
<b>SENIF - targeted</b>		£0.25	3.9%	£2.43/£4.86/ £7.49	Per eligible child
<b>Central Functions</b>		£0.19	3%		
<b>Contingency*</b>		£0.00	0%		
<b>DSG Funding per hour</b>		<b>£6.36</b>			

\*Note that for 3&4 year old funding in table 3d there is no contingency provided within the total hourly rate. Additional funding of 3% (£0.18) per hour is provided within the DSG with funding is to be excluded from the pass-through rate and the central retention and is to cover the extra cost of moving to termly census for funding.

#### Additional Information for supplements and SENIF

##### Deprivation eligibility is determined as follows:

- **3- and 4-year-olds** the supplement is added for those children that had formerly accessed disadvantaged 2-year-old funding or those that are currently eligible for EYPP. The supplement is added only to the funding rate of the entitled child.
- **2-year-olds** the supplement is added for those children that qualify as a disadvantaged 2-year-old, or those that are currently eligible for EYPP. The supplement is added only to the funding rate of the entitled child.
- **Under 2-year-olds** the supplement is added for those children that are currently eligible for EYPP. The supplement is added only to the funding rate of the entitled child.

##### SEND inclusion is funded as follows:

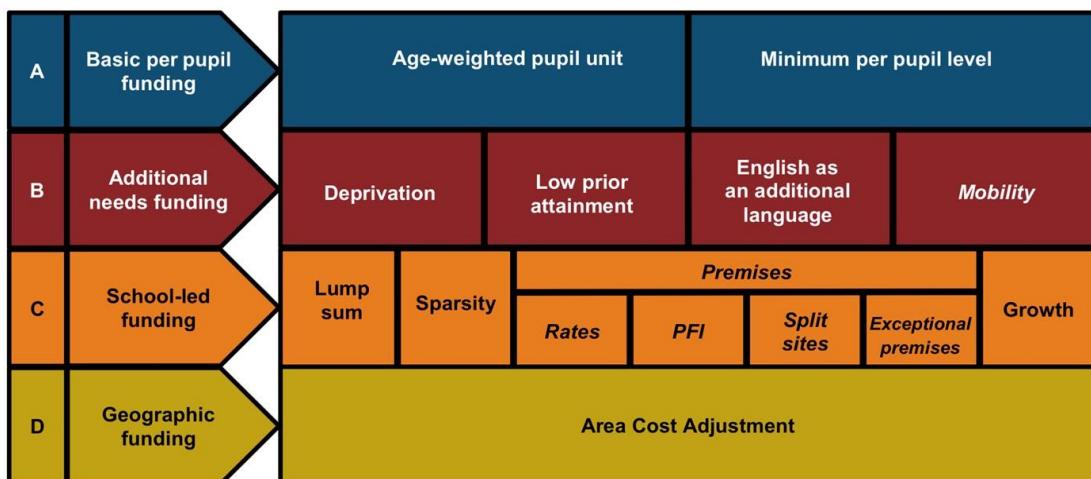
- **(All age groups)** Providers are funded per hour for all early entitlement hours accessed, based on three levels of need which is determined by a weekly panel of special education needs officers.
- Tier 1 at £2.43, Tier 2 at £4.86, tier 3 at £7.49.

## Local Mainstream School Funding Formula 2026/27

### Background

1. The NFF to provide funding for mainstream schools comprises factors as shown in Figure 1.

**Figure 1: Factors in the schools national funding formula**



2. The PFI factor and area cost adjustment are not applicable to BCP, with the relevant 2026/27 NFF factors and funding values included in Appendix 2(b).
3. The minimum funding guarantee (MFG) in the NFF is set at 0% for 2026/27 but the local formula can set it between minus 0.5% and 0%. The MFG protects per pupil funding reductions between years, not absolute funding.
4. The minimum per pupil funding level (MPPFL) provides an absolute minimum that cannot be varied without DfE approval.
5. The detail of the local formula has been becoming increasingly regulated each year but with no further changes for 2026/27. Only limited movement away from the NFF funding values is permitted (plus or minus 2.5%) in setting the local formula. The range of unit values set for each formula factor are included in the APT along with the school data to ensure compliance. The APT including the October 2025 school census data was supplied by the DfE on 17 December 2025.
6. As the proportion of schools funded by the NFF (rather than through the fixed MPPFL or MFG) has been increasing, data movements between years have a greater impact on the level of funding provided to schools through the local formula. The DSG schools block allocation will not reflect these data changes until 2027/28 as it uses data lagged by one year to calculate the primary and secondary units of DSG funding.
7. The impact of adopting the NFF as the local formula for 2026/27 if it had been fully affordable for the 90 BCP mainstream schools would have been:
  - a) **Minimum per pupil funding level (MPPFL)** impacts on 24 schools (27%) down from 28 schools last year. Budgets are topped up to the MPPFL where the NFF allocations otherwise would provide less funding than national mandatory minimum levels (typically for schools with more high performing pupils from relatively affluent backgrounds).

- b) **Minimum funding guarantee (MFG) per pupil funding protection of an increase of 0%** impacts on 5 schools (down from 14 schools last year), where the NFF provides less per pupil funding compared with the previous year allocation with funding topped up to this level.
- c) The remaining 61 schools, up from 45 last year, are fully **formula funded** with changes in NFF allocations driven by the uplift in NFF formula factor unit values and data changes from the October 2025 school census.

8. The NFF is not fully affordable in 2026/27 with a shortfall of £0.15m. In recent years surplus growth funding has been used to top up the NFF funding, enabling all schools to receive their NFF allocations in full. The low growth funding in 2026/27 has led to the overall shortfall in school block funding.

## Options

- 9. To be affordable the NFF could be adjusted by:
  - a. Reducing any individual or all unit values within the 2.5% tolerance permitted. This excludes the MPPFLs which are set out in the regulations and can be reduced only with the express agreement of the DfE and where the funding shortfall is so large that it remains the only option remaining to balance.
  - b. Reducing the MFG from 0% up to minus 0.5%
  - c. Introducing a cap on per pupil increases (either by scaling back all increases by an equal percentage or only those above a threshold)
  - d. A combination of the adjustments in paragraphs a to c.
- 10. Many different options and combinations of approaches could be devised with three viable and illustrative approaches shortlisted for consideration by schools and Schools Forum in January 2026. The options presented were as follows:
  - a. Option 1 – to reduce the basic entitlement only by an equal % for each age group (primary, key stage 3 and key stage 4). This would ensure that each phase of school is impacted equally and preserve the NFF funding rates for those pupils attracting pupil characteristic funding, such as for special educational needs. Note that schools protected by the NFF MFG of 0% (along with those funded at the MPPFL) would not contribute any of their funding as the NFF protects the per pupil level at the level of 2025/26.
  - b. Option 2 – to reduce the basic entitlement funding as in option1, and also to reduce the MFG below 0% so that more schools contribute to the shortfall.
  - c. Option 3 – to set a cap on per pupil increases so that only schools with the greater increase in per pupil funding contribute to the shortfall.
  - d. Any of the above options in combination.

## Recommendation from the Schools Forum on 19 January 2026

11. Consultation was emailed to all schools on 7 January 2026 with a closing date for responses set at by noon on 16 January to allow time for a summary to be prepared for Schools Forum. A draft of the Schools Forum paper which summarised the mainstream school funding for 2026/27, was used as the basis of the consultation as this detailed the reasons for the NFF funding shortfall, summary of options, and impact across schools.

12. The timescale for consultation was short due to the DfE release of information and the modelling tool, the local authority proforma tool (APT), on 17 December 2025 and the APT being required to be submitted to the DfE by 22 January.
13. The consultation gave schools the opportunity to express a preference for how the NFF should be scaled back to be affordable. It also enabled schools to raise questions directly in seeking clarification on their individual school information, the proposals generally, why there was a funding shortfall, as well as consideration of pupil growth, falling rolls and other potential formula options not included in the modelling.
14. Of the 90 mainstream schools, 64 were included in the feedback, representing 71%. Options 1 and 2 (adjusting formula values and reducing funding protection) were preferred by schools with less support for capping per pupil increases as in option 3.
15. Schools Forum sought clarification on the information provided, considered the options presented and recommended that using the adjustments in options 1 and 2 in combination would produce the fairest outcome. This would keep more schools closer to their NFF funding level and limit the scale of impact for schools with MFG protection. The suggested combination of an MFG of minus 0.25% with the balance from reducing the basic entitlements was modelled and considered with a small group of Schools Forum representatives as requested by the Schools Forum. It was agreed the Schools Forum principled recommendation has been achieved by this option.
16. The changed elements of the NFF for the local formula using the Schools Forum recommendation are shaded green in the table of NFF unit values in Appendix 2(b).

**Appendix 2 (b)**  
**Summary of DfE Mainstream School NFF 2026/27**

Factor Name	Unit Value 2025/26 £	Subsumed Grants £	Restated 2025/26 £	Unit Value 2026/27 £	% Change
Primary*	3,847	133	3,980	4,064	2.1%
KS3*	5,422	146	5,568	5,686	2.1%
KS4*	6,113	165	6,278	6,410	2.1%
Primary minimum per pupil	4,955	160	5,115	5,115	0.0%
Key Stage 3 minimum per pupil	6,221	167	6,388	6,388	0.0%
Key Stage 4 minimum per pupil	6,831	187	7,018	7,018	0.0%
FSM6 Primary	1,060	124	1,184	1,210	2.2%
FSM6 Secondary	1,555	132	1,687	1,725	2.3%
FMS Primary	495		495	505	2.0%
FMS Secondary	495		495	505	2.0%
IDACI Band A Primary	685		685	700	2.2%
IDACI Band A Secondary	950		950	970	2.1%
IDACI Band B Primary	520		520	530	1.9%
IDACI Band B Secondary	745		745	760	2.0%
IDACI Band C Primary	490		490	500	2.0%
IDACI Band C Secondary	695		695	710	2.2%
IDACI Band D Primary	445		445	455	2.2%
IDACI Band D Secondary	635		635	650	2.4%
IDACI Band E Primary	285		285	290	1.8%
IDACI Band E Secondary	450		450	460	2.2%
IDACI Band F Primary	235		235	240	2.1%
IDACI Band F Secondary	340		340	345	1.5%
Low Prior Attainment Primary	1,175		1,175	1,200	2.1%
Low Prior Attainment Secondary	1,785		1,785	1,825	2.2%
EAL Primary	595		595	610	2.5%
EAL Secondary	1,595		1,595	1,630	2.2%
Mobility Primary	965		965	985	2.1%
Mobility Secondary	1,385		1,385	1,415	2.2%
Lump Sum Primary	145,100	4,486	149,586	152,700	2.1%
Lump Sum Secondary	145,100	4,486	149,586	152,700	2.1%
Sparsity Primary – N/A in BCP	57,400		57,400	58,600	2.1%
Sparsity Secondary – N/A in BCP	83,400		83,400	85,200	2.2%
Split Sites	Variable			Variable	
Business Rates	Variable			Variable	
Minimum Funding Guarantee (MFG)**				0%	

**Proposed local formula adjustments to NFF in above table:**

\*Equal % reduction from the above NFF table values to balance the cost of the local formula to the funding level

\*\*Local formula to use minus 0.25%

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## CABINET



Report subject	<b>Hawkwood Road Phase 2 update</b>
Meeting date	4 February 2026
Status	Public Report (Exempt appendices)
Executive summary	<p>This report provides an update on Hawkwood Road, which is a priority project for the Boscombe Towns Fund. In February 2025 Council, resolved to approve the funding strategy for a mixed-use residential-led scheme with a clinical facility in collaboration with the NHS (Option 1).</p> <p>The Cabinet recommendation to Council included an obligation to have a contract in place with the NHS prior to award of the build works contract for the main construction. Despite a Memorandum of Understanding between the NHS and BCP Council being signed in December 2024 and best endeavours, a final contract has not been entered into with the NHS. To maintain delivery, this report seeks authority to proceed to award the build contract for the main construction to ensure that the grant milestones for the Towns Fund programme and Homes England are satisfied and thereby safeguard the total grant of £17.3m.</p> <p>This will allow for continued discussions with the NHS and ensure that the significant social and physical regeneration to the ward of Boscombe West and the local need is not lost.</p> <p>There is a continued commitment to have a health provision at Hawkwood Road, but in the event the NHS cannot proceed, this report seeks authority to market the property as general commercial use as the preferred alternative strategy now due to funding timelines being unachievable for a new residential scheme which would require planning. The 100% residential scheme (Option 2 in the previous Cabinet report) would require a new design and planning application and tender, which is likely to result in higher pricing and therefore is not deliverable within the immediate need to start on site in 2026/2027 and deliver by 2028/2029.</p>
Recommendations	<p><b>It is RECOMMENDED Cabinet recommends to Council that:</b></p>

	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Approval to proceed with Option 1 to enter the build contract for 68 homes and commercial floorspace, prior to executing an Agreement to Lease for the ground floor of Block A, to secure the total combined grant of £17.3m and redevelopment of the Hawkwood Road site within the external funder's timescales.</li> <li>2. Authority to market the non-residential property as general commercial, if the NHS is unable to commit funding for the ground floor of Block A and noting the full residential scheme is no longer deliverable.</li> <li>3. Authority to proceed to sale or long leasehold of the ground floor commercial asset to ensure a funding strategy is secured to offset the cost of building.</li> </ol>
Reason for recommendations	To enter the build contract in line with the current active tender and grant funding milestones prior to the lease of the ground floor being signed. This will enable the Council to achieve the funding deadlines set by MHCLG and Homes England and ensures the project remains deliverable.

Portfolio Holder(s):	Cllr Kieron Wilson, Portfolio Holder for Housing and Regulatory Services
Corporate Director	Glynn Barton, Chief Operating Officer
Report Authors	<p>Peter Friend, Development Project Manager</p> <p>Remi Oshibajo, Housing Development Manager</p> <p>Jonathan Thornton, Head of Housing Delivery</p>
Wards	Boscombe West;
Classification	For Recommendation

## Background

1. In February 2025, Full Council resolved to approve the Hawkwood Road project, Phase 2 (which had been recommended by Cabinet on 10 December 2024). This included the funding strategy and additional borrowing to support the scheme to proceed to development. This approval was for Option 1 – 68 homes (owned and managed by the Council at Social rent) and an NHS medical/clinical facility with the caveat that the scheme would not move into delivery without a lease signed by the NHS. Option 2 was approved in the same paper as the alternative strategy and proposed 76 socially rented homes. This option is no longer deliverable within the grant funding timeframes and therefore this report proposes that the Council proceed to award the build contract and

market the ground floor use as general commercial in the event the NHS is not able to proceed to a formal rental agreement or acquisition.

2. Since the previous Cabinet authority, good progress has been made to secure the delivery of much needed new affordable homes. Following negotiations with Homes England, £9.7m grant has been secured for the scheme – the largest allocation for any scheme led by BCP Council. Further review of the build costs were carried out to ensure the scheme is as efficient as it can be which resulted in a lower scheme cost to that approved by Cabinet and Council. A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was completed with an Agreement for lease to follow by Jan 2026 to enable contracts for the main works to be awarded. At the time of writing this report, negotiations with the NHS are still on-going.
3. In January 2025, the tender for the construction of Hawkwood Road phase 2 (option 1) was published, with a deadline for tender returns of 2 May 2025. Tenders were received with the tender prices being valid for 6 months taking this to 2 November 2025. Due to the ongoing NHS business case approval process, this was extended by agreement of tenderers to 2 March 2026, to satisfy the Cabinet authority which required a formal contract with the NHS prior to award of the main build contract.
4. Subject to Cabinet approval, the intention is to award the build contract to allow for further negotiations with the NHS and maintain delivery to satisfy the grant milestones. This is at risk on the income for the ground floor commercial but is considered necessary to mitigate the greater risk of losing c.£17m and the reputational risk of non-performance with external funders.
5. The Council remains committed to offering a NHS healthcare within the Hawkwood Road masterplan given the indices of deprivation and the need for better health outcomes. The Council continues to explore options with NHS Dorset and partners to develop a neighborhood health centre to complement the community centre and housing offer.
6. The Council has negotiated a grant allocation of £142,500 grant per home (£9.65m total) for 68 homes, which is a higher-than-average grant amount per unit allocation by Homes England and reflects the viability pressures of the scheme. The condition of the grant requires that the build must start on site in April 2026 and complete by March 2029. The Towns Fund grant (c.£7m) requires full spend by 2028. These timelines are under significant pressure due to the time taken to satisfy the previous Cabinet authority that required the NHS to have signed the agreement for lease, which meant the build contract is 4 months behind programme. Further delays would mean the Council is unable to drawdown the grant and that would make the scheme unviable.
7. Additionally, the approval for Option 2 (78 homes and removal of commercial use in Block A) is no longer achievable within the external funders' grant timeframes. Option 2 would require a new business case as the grant would be lost due to the revised scheme needing a new planning application (likely to prolong the programme by over 12 months) and a re-tender of the build contract which is likely to result in higher costs and prices compared to the current tenders being held.
8. Bringing forward option 2 would also require the Council to confer with the MHCLG to seek approval to transfer the Towns Fund grant allocation to the 100% residential scheme. This would be contrary to the wishes of the Towns Fund Board which adds risk to the project who will wish to retain a health offer for the community. Additionally, a new application for grant would need to be made as the current grant for 68 homes is under the old programme and therefore if the Council doesn't proceed to build, we would be required to bid in the new programme which is likely to be highly competitive and therefore puts the funding strategy at risk.

9. Option 2 has therefore been replaced with the alternative option of awarding the build contract with the 68 homes and commercial use, to be marketed in the event the NHS does not commit financially to the scheme. The main benefit of proceeding with this alternative is because it presents the lowest risk, is deliverable within the current funding programmes and satisfies the draw-down requirements of both external funders, Homes England and MHCLG. To de-risk the income for the ground floor commercial use, marketability will be improved by widening the current consented uses. A planning application has been submitted to vary the consented use from medical to include a range of commercial, which provides flexibility to the NHS partners and any other commercial opportunity.
10. Therefore Option 2 as approved by the previous Cabinet report, is no longer recommended as it is not achievable within the timescales and would mean £11m is at risk of being lost.
11. The HRA Business Plan has sufficient capacity for this development in the forms recommended in this paper, the Hawkwood Road financial modelling has been tested as a scheme in the HRA with a payback period over a 50-year period. Appendix 1 shows sensitivity analysis with different interest rates and different rent inflation increases over the life of the buildings.

### Options Appraisals

#### **12. Option 1. 68 apartments as originally approved, with NHS use of health provision or commercial use on ground floor of block A**

- 12.1. The scheme with planning consent consists of 68 residential apartments spread across three individual blocks, A, B and C, with the medical facility is on the ground floor of block A. These form two separate areas either side of the new park/gardens. The remaining public car park is to the west of block A.
- 12.2. While providing much-needed affordable homes, this option will deliver other public benefits by bringing health provision opportunities into the community.
- 12.3. The 68-home scheme remains unchanged and therefore deliverable within the existing planning consent. To allow for a broader commercial use for the ground floor a new full planning application will be required. As with Option 1 this will deliver many other public health benefits by bringing a new commercial unit to Boscombe, driving commerce in the area as well as overall economic development.

Block A Social Homes Rent	No. Homes	Block B Social Homes Rent	No. Homes	Block C Social Homes Rent	No. Homes	Block A No. Total
1b2p flat	8	1b2p flat	6	1b2p flat	8	Medical/ Commer cial/retail facility
2b3p flat	10	2b3p flat	3	2b3p flat	3	
3b4p flat	10	3b4p flat	9	3b4p flat	11	
total	28	total	18	total	22	total 1 22 16 30

#### **13. Option 2. 100% residential if no agreement was reached with the NHS approval**

This would require a new business case as the grant timeframes cannot be achieved and therefore is no longer recommended. A new planning application will

be required for this option to proceed. The preparation of the planning application would take several months and new consultants will need to be procured, additional revenue budget for surveys (which it currently does not have) and will need over 12 months including a new tender which means this falls outside of the grant funding milestones and £7m would need to be handed back to MHCLG. Given timing of when a new scheme would be tendered, the likelihood is this would also increase the cost of development with tender prices likely to reflect higher build costs. This would also require a new bid to Homes England and there is no guarantee that the negotiated grant rates will be secured and could mean a lower grant or worse, no grant award.

#### 14. Milestone comparison (Option 1 and 2)

Milestone	Option 1	Option 2	Deadlines
Start on Site (SOS)	June 2026	July 2027	MHCLG Spend 31/03/2028
Practical Completion (PC)	June 2028	July 2029	Homes England Start works June 2026 and Complete works March 2029

#### Benefits

15. The main outcome of this development is the regeneration of the area including provision of affordable housing, pocket park and resurfacing of hard landscaping in the area linking through to the previously approved Phase 1 (Community Centre) and Christchurch Road shopping area. This is the case whether Option 1 or 2 are taken forward. Discussions are continuing with the NHS and the Council endeavors to reach a place where in the discussions the NHS are able to sign an agreement for lease and tenancy. Investment by The NHS will help the local residents in an area of deprivation (Boscombe is ranked 978 out of 32,844 in England, where 1 is the most deprived and 32,844 the least, 2015), with current proposals as a Health Centre. Should this avenue not be available to the Council, it is understood engagement with the market to find an appropriate tenant for the commercial unit is the right way forward, whilst safeguarding the vision of the masterplan.
16. A local lettings plan will allow operations to ensure tenancies of the proposed homes complement the vision for the project and the community it serves. Local lettings plan- outline who the project is benefiting.
17. Savings to spend for the Parking team associated with Hawkwood Road Main Car Park can be achieved through delivery of this project.
18. This scheme is part of the Towns Fund project which is a transformational place-making project within Boscombe. Other parts of the Towns Fund Project include investment in skills, public WIFI, Woodland Walk, Shop fronts and many others. These projects will benefit local people and jobs – additional jobs secured through the construction phase of Hawkwood Road (Phase 2) and Community Centre (Phase 1) will be monitored.

#### Summary of financial implications and Value for Money

19. The following table shows the cost and funding changes that have taken place since February 2025 council approval (more detail shown in confidential appendix 1):

Scheme name: Hawkwood Road Option 1	HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT - 68 social rent homes			GENERAL FUND		
	Social rent (February 2026)	Social Rent (cabinet members Apr 2025)	Social Rent (Cabinet Dec. 2024)	Commercial unit & kiosks (February 2026)	Dental College & Kiosks (cabinet members April 2025)	Dental college & Kiosks (Cabinet Dec. 2024)
	£	£	£	£	£	£
<b>Total scheme cost</b>	<b>22,210,320</b>	<b>22,541,500</b>	<b>23,791,000</b>	<b>1,701,297</b>	<b>3,478,500</b>	<b>4,866,000</b>
Funding						
Grants - Homes England	(9,656,000)	(9,656,000)	(9,510,000)			
Grants - Towns Fund	(7,741,000)	(7,741,000)	(5,783,000)	(290,000)	(290,000)	(1,675,000)
Shared Ownership			(2,425,000)			
<b>Total non-debt funding</b>	<b>(17,397,000)</b>	<b>(17,397,000)</b>	<b>(17,698,000)</b>	<b>(290,000)</b>	<b>(290,000)</b>	<b>(1,675,000)</b>
<b>Borrowing requirement</b>	<b>(4,813,320)</b>	<b>(5,144,500)</b>	<b>(6,093,000)</b>	<b>(1,411,297)</b>	<b>(3,188,500)</b>	<b>(3,191,000)</b>
<b>Total Funding</b>	<b>(22,210,320)</b>	<b>(22,541,500)</b>	<b>(23,791,000)</b>	<b>(1,701,297)</b>	<b>(3,478,500)</b>	<b>(4,866,000)</b>

20. The overall Hawkwood Road phase 2 scheme cost has reduced from £28.7 million to £23.9 million.

21. The Housing Revenue Account (HRA) scheme costs have reduced from £23.8 million to £22.2 million following the receipt of tender prices.

22. The General Fund (GF) scheme costs have decreased from £4.8 million to £1.7 million due to a combination of tender prices and change of development configuration from fully fitted to shell and core.

23. The non-debt funding in the HRA has reduced from £17.7 million to £17.4 million due to removal of capital receipts from shared ownership, additional Homes England grant secured and realignment of the Towns Fund grant use including change between the HRA and general fund in this scheme. The changed funding strategy was approved by cabinet members in April 2025.

24. Due to the reduced scheme cost overall, the borrowing requirement in the HRA has reduced from £6.1 million to £4.8 million and in the general fund from £3.2 million to £1.4 million.

25. The post construction cash flow assumptions for the financial appraisal viability have been updated with the following current expectations:

Cash flow assumptions	
Service Charges (Cost) per unit per annum	£828
Service Charges (income) per unit per annum	(£496)
Revenue Maintenance per unit per annum	£886
Major Repairs per unit per annum	£1,630
Management cost per unit per annum	£400
Prevailing interest rate for HRA as of 29/12/2025	5.33%
Prevailing interest rate for GF as of 29/12/2025	5.73%
Rental income adjustments for voids and bad debt (HRA)	1%
Rental income adjustments for voids and bad debt (Kiosks)	6%

26. The cash flow summary in confidential appendix 2 shows the residential part of the scheme in the HRA, generating between £23,443 and £34,514 annual average contribution to the HRA over 30 years depending on interest rates applied and a cumulative contribution between £703,294 and £1.04 million at

year 30 again depending on interest rates applied. It is estimated that the HRA will need to subsidise the scheme with approximately £16,000 to £21,000 on average per annum in the first 10 years, before reaching breakeven point after construction.

27. The cash flow for the commercial space and kiosks in the general fund shows that an average between £21,000 and £175,000 per annum over 30 years could be realised depending on rental income achieved. The model shows that the council could be at risk to initially subsidise borrowing up to a cumulative £107,000 depending on rental income achieved. This would increase if there were longer void periods and rent-free incentives periods.
28. The council has received enquiries about letting all four kiosks and for the commercial space, whilst the NHS has withdrawn support for an oral health institute and is investigating other possible NHS use. The borrowing exposure of the commercial space is £920,320 with an annual repayment of £71,141 over 50 years at the PWLB prevailing interest rate of 5.73% as of 29 December 2025.
29. The borrowing exposure may be mitigated with potential underspend in other areas of the regeneration fund programme which could be redirected towards this scheme.
30. This report seeks approval to proceed at risk before securing rental income to repay the loan required to build the development as per the current tender specifications. A recent report and valuation of the site expressed significant concerns about if the Council to be proposing to proceed, as now is the case, without a pre-letting agreement for use. Whilst it is possible that some businesses may have a defined need for a specific Boscombe location, general market perception is a low need for space in this area. The configuration of the ground floor layout offers a degree of mitigation with effective subdivision.
31. With this information in hand, it is clear the council will struggle to demonstrate the affordability of the prudential borrowing for the commercial space and therefore value for money for this project under the legislative prudential code.
32. However, the council needs to balance the borrowing exposure of £920,000 (excl. land and kiosks) against the potential loss of £9.6 million Homes England grant and the loss or redirection of £7.7 million Towns Fund grant resulting in a lost opportunity to deliver 68 social rent homes in the Boscombe area.
33. In addition, there may be unfunded maintenance and security costs if the premises are not let.
34. The council will need to prioritise the estimated £71,141 debt repayment and any incidental maintenance and security costs, increasing the MTFP gap if the premises are not let.

## Risks

35. The largest risk entering the Build contract for Option 1 without the Ground Floor of Block A let, is the risk of income to support the loan required to build the property. Alternative uses have been estimated (as per valuation at Appendix 3 and advice from Estates Team) at c£74,656/pa for shell and core as per recent enquiry.
36. Concerns about primary market letting opportunities in the Boscombe area and ability to let or achieve market value.
37. The configuration of the ground floor layout militates against effective subdivision increasing the risk of additional costs as landlords to remodel the layout before it can be let. Unknown market expectations regarding shell and core specification may increase landlord costs further.
38. Extension of the build contract tender for Option 1 will require all tenderers to agree to a delayed end date, if any tenderer declines, the tender must be collapsed, which will necessitate a new build tender to be issued – this will cause further delay to the project and be an additional risk to external grant funding. Moving forward with Option 2 provides additional risk of losing Homes England (£9.656m) and the loss of grant or need to redirect the use of grant from MHCLG (£7.4m) due to project delay and inability to achieve required milestones.
39. Progression of Option 2 requires collapsing the current build tender, which causes project delay and greater risk to external grant funding to ensure scheme viability.
40. The major repairs assumption has been updated to £1,630 per annum per unit considering the total build cost includes a high proportion of infrastructure (car park resurfacing, highway works, pocket park etc.).

#### **Unchanged Risks Relating to The Housing provision**

41. Uncertainty over the inflationary increase for future rental income. The Government has committed to CPI +1% only for the next five years. 2% baseline inflation has been assumed in the models.
42. High interest rates make feasibility of the scheme more challenging. Affordability of the schemes relies on an estimated future lower interest rate of 4.5%, prevailing interest rates of 5.33% in the HRA and 5.73% in the general fund, making viability of the project more vulnerable.
43. Whilst the preferred contractor has come in comfortably under budget, viability of the model is reliant on the construction costs being held at the current bid level. Any increase from this amount introduces risk into the project overall financially. However, the requested extension of time increases the risk of construction costs rising over the extended tender period.
44. Cost contingency is assumed at 10% to allow for build cost fluctuations.

## **Prudential Borrowing**

45. The Council can borrow under the Prudential Code if it is affordable and can be repaid over the life of the asset. The proposed scheme is predicated on borrowing circa £4.8 million in the HRA and £1.2 million (excl. land value) in the General Fund (option 1) repaid over 50 years at an annual interest cost using an estimated rate 5.33% in the HRA and 5.73% in the general fund (PWLB prevailing rate 29 December 2025). Previous modelling with estimated lower future forecasted interest rates have not been progressed because lower interest rates expectations have not been realised to date.
46. Appendix Two demonstrates a positive contribution to the HRA over the 50-year period. This is after provision has been made for interest repayments as well as management, maintenance and major repair costs, and an adjustment to the rental income to cover void costs. Any potential capital growth has been ignored for the purposes of this modelling. Financial modelling assumes the use of fixed rates funding for the schemes repaid on a maturity basis.
47. Affordability for the commercial space in the general fund is high risk at the time of writing; the council will need to prioritise the estimated £71,141 per annum for 50 years debt repayment, increasing the MTFP gap if the premises are not let.

## **Taxation and Public Sector Subsidy**

48. In general, the construction of residential dwellings is not subject to VAT. However, VAT may be applicable on professional fees such as those charged by architects, surveyors etc, which have been accounting from in modelling. Any VAT incurred by the Council on social housing construction is fully reclaimable under section 33 of the VAT Act.
49. Further tax advice should be sought if the properties are sold or leased at market rent.
50. The construction of the community centre and the commercial facility does not qualify for any VAT exemptions and therefore VAT will be charged at standard rate. To ensure the VAT incurred is reclaimable and does not affect the Council's partial exemption threshold, the property must be opted to tax before the works commence.
51. Particular care should be taken when negotiating the terms of the lease for the medical facility, especially regarding fit out costs and any rent-free period. If the NHS undertakes work on the property, that under the general law is considered as the landlord's responsibility, the anti-avoidance measures will be triggered. As a result, the option to tax will be disallowed which will lead to a breach of the partial exemption de-minimis limit and financial implications for the Authority.
52. Subsidy Control is applicable as State resources are given to the Council, in terms of grant from MHCLG and Homes England.

### **Summary of legal implications**

53. The Council is empowered by Section 1 Local Government Act 2003 to borrow funds for any purpose related to its functions and/or for the purposes of the prudent management of its financial affairs. The project team will need to be confident that the proposal to enter contract now (before the commercial space is let) supports the provision of housing in accordance with the Council's housing duties.
54. Legal advice will continue to be sought regarding the agreement for lease including negotiation of legal documents required for the medical facility or alternative commercial space.
55. The Council will need to comply with all relevant procurement requirements in undertaking the proposals contained within this report and the Council will seek further procurement and legal advice in procuring the works contract and completing the appropriate documentation for the construction elements.
56. The Council will need to comply with all grant funding conditions that apply to this project.

### **Summary of human resources implications**

57. The existing Housing Delivery Team will oversee the delivery of this scheme alongside the other new build schemes in the pipeline. The construction works for the development will be procured through an open tender. No Implications.
58. Other professional services have also been procured e.g. architects to bring this scheme forward.

### **Summary of sustainability impact**

59. The development will provide energy efficient homes to help address the BCP Council declared Climate and Ecological Emergency 2019. The development will contribute to the Council's commitment to achieving a net zero carbon emission target.
60. A carbon reduction statement will be completed to measure the sustainability of the development through carbon savings.
61. All homes will be built to high sustainability standards delivered through the excellent fabric first and airtightness approach (designed in this case to accommodate the principles of Passivhaus). This standard offers the benefit of low carbon heating requirements, high levels of energy efficiency and an off-gas heating system.

### **Summary of public health implications**

62. Both options of the site deliver significant public health benefits to Boscombe West, a ward that suffers from various challenges. The provision of affordable housing delivers stability to an area that is currently struggling with transience and little feelings of rootedness. Further, the clinical facility will deliver much needed skill provision and health services to the wider area.

### **Summary of equality implications**

63. Equality Impact Assessment remains unchanged as the scheme that this paper asks for the same scheme that was initially approved in the September Cabinet.

### **Summary of risk assessment**

64. Property development activity involves inherent risks, but a cautious approach has been adopted here to minimise these risks as much as possible. Financial contingencies for build have been included at 10%, and significant consultation has been undertaken to date to help ensure a sustainable scheme.

<b>Overall Project Risk Rating</b>		
<b>Key Project Risks</b>	<b>Gross Risk Rating</b>	<b>Mitigating Actions</b>
A Vacant ground floor	Medium	Continuing discussions with the other parts of the NHS in order to partner as well as consulting with medical and commercial surveyors to position the space competitively on the open market if needed. A reasonable void period has also been factored into cash flow and borrowing requirement. Marketing within the build programme VW report
Rising construction costs render the project unaffordable	Medium	There is high risk if the build contract is not awarded Award the build contract subject to approvals (such as tenderers refusing to a later end date,
Alternative tenants for the property not able to be found	Medium	Active marketing of the property. Increase use class via planning permission.
Scheme not gaining satisfactory planning consent for Option 1 Commercial use	Medium	Current planning consent is for Use Class E(e) healthcare rather than general commercial use. A new planning consent is required.
Insufficient funding available, such as failure to secure funding from s106 Contributions, RTB receipts or Homes England grant, including loss of allocated funding	Low	Monitor and review spend of such funding on other schemes within the development programme. Should insufficient funding be available, schemes will be prioritised and potentially some schemes put on hold until sufficient funding is available. MHCLG and Homes England funding has been confirmed which helps scheme viability.

### **Background Papers**

Cabinet December 2024  
Council February 2025

## **Appendices**

Appendix 1 Outlay and finding  
Appendix 2 Financial Summary

By virtue of paragraph(s) 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A  
of the Local Government Act 1972.

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