

Supplementary Papers for Overview and Scrutiny Board

Date: Monday, 18 May 2026 - 6.00pm



9. Local Plan process	3 - 6
An additional appendix will be published with this report for the Cabinet meeting which was not previously available when the O&S papers were published – Terms of reference for the Local Plan working group.	
11. Work Plan	7 - 10
An Overview and Scrutiny Request form has been received. O&S Board are asked to consider whether this should be added to its work plan.	

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WORKING GROUP: BCP Local Plan

TERMS OF REFERENCE

[Insert Date]

Background: In [Insert Month and Year], Cabinet/Leader of the Council and Chair of Cabinet approved the establishment of a Working Group to provide cross party involvement and scrutiny in the preparation of the BCP Local Plan.

Scope of the Working Group: Included in the scope will be to interrogate and discuss the evidence emerging in relation to the Local Plan and how this informs the spatial and policy implications and options of the BCP Local Plan.

This group will not be a decision-making group and will provide a consultative role to support and inform decision-making by Cabinet. Cabinet are not obliged to adopt recommendations arising from this group.

Members:

The membership of the Local Plan Working Group will be politically balanced, based on the political balance calculations as at 14 October 2025 as follows.

Political Group	Representation on Council	Calculated Entitlement based on 15 seats	Number of allocated seats
Liberal Democrat	38.16% 29 Councillors	5.8	6
Conservative	11.84% 9 Councillors	1.8	2
Christchurch Independents	10.53% 8 Councillors	1.6	2
Labour	10.53% 8 Councillors	1.6	2
Green	7.89% 6 Councillors	1.2	1
BCP Independents	6.58% 5 Councillors	1	1
Poole People	6.58% 5 Councillors	1	1
BCP Reform UK	2.63% 2 Councillors	0.4	0
Independents	2.63% 2 Councillors	0.4	0
Poole Engage	2.63% 2 Councillors	0.4	0
			15

There will be an additional seat to be shared among the 3 smallest groups to enable a full spread of political representation. The total number of Councillors on the Working Group therefore will be 16.

Each Political Group Leader can appoint representative(s) to fill the seats allocated. Group Leaders will be expected to aim to have a representative from each of the Overview & Scrutiny Committees' and Board.

Substitute members are not permitted.

The **Working Group/ Leader of the Council and Chair of Cabinet** will elect a Chair, who will chair the meetings and agree the agenda and meeting dates with officers. Members of the group can make requests for agenda items through the Chair or officers. These must be received at least 7 calendar days before the meeting.

A Vice Chair will be elected by the group to chair meetings that the Chair is unable to attend.

Representatives of the Overview and Scrutiny Committees and Board will provide a dual function of being both a contributor to the discussions about the evidence and a rapporteur role for their relevant Committees and Board, updating them and feeding back to the Working Group.

Officers will facilitate the meetings and produce minutes. The Chair or Vice Chair will agree the minutes with officers.

The Local Plan Working Group will at times be required to delve into issues in a detailed manner. For the group to be effective, members must be afforded the time and space to engage in free and frank discussions without any external interference. This environment is essential for the group to explore all aspects of the issues they are examining, consider diverse viewpoints, and arrive at well-rounded conclusions. As a consequence, the work of the Local Plan Working Group must remain confidential at the formative stages. Information will be released and made public at appropriate times.

Objectives and Methodology:

- To read, review, and understand the evidence, options and emerging policies of the BCP Local Plan.
- To propose any relevant and appropriate recommendations to Cabinet, including about the dissemination of information, which should be outcome focussed.
- To maintain confidentiality of the information supplied to the working group members unless advised otherwise.

- To attend meetings in person or online as needed – there will not be the option of substitutes.

Governance, Reporting Arrangements and Timescales:

The Working Group will report to Cabinet for key stages and decision making.

For non-key stages, informal reporting and steer will take place via the Planning Portfolio Holder and Corporate Management Board (CMB) and Cabinet. This will be managed through the Director for Planning and Transport and Monitoring officer.

Cabinet will review the effectiveness of the Group's work to ensure it is conducted in a timely and constructive way that achieves the objectives set out.

The Working Group will convene as needed to assist with the preparation of the Local Plan in accordance with the timetable agreed by Cabinet.

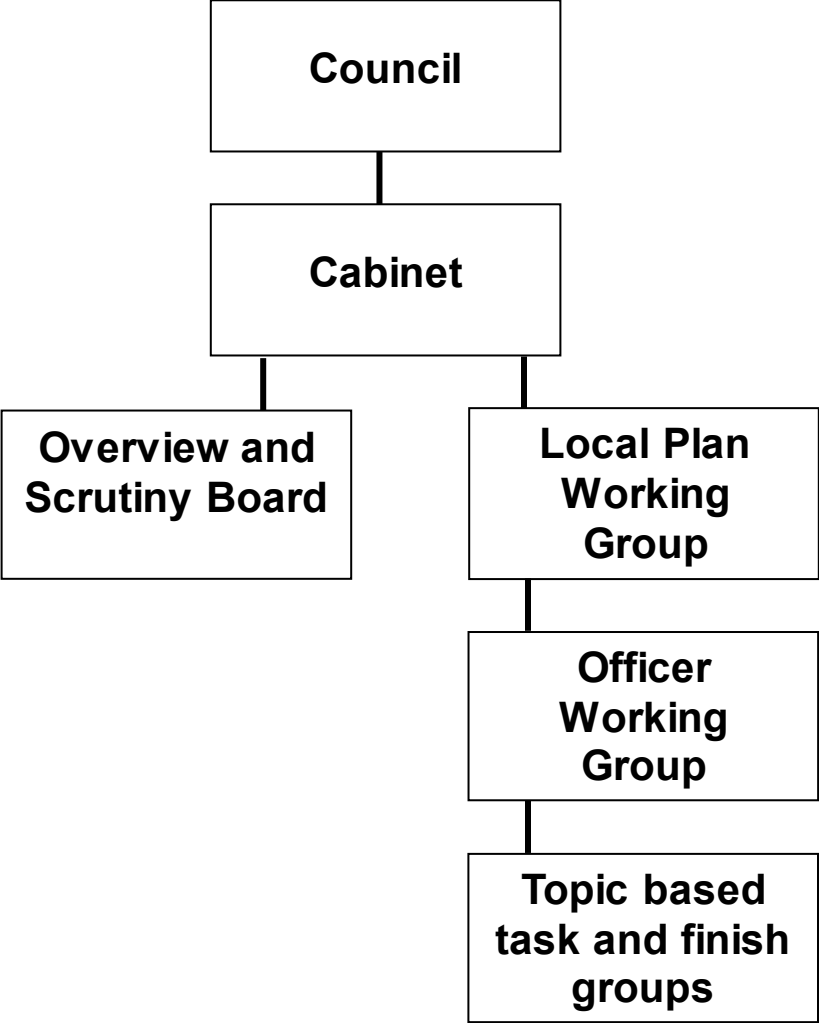
It is expected to report its findings and recommendations to Cabinet on a regular basis. This will be via a Cabinet report prepared by officers at key stages and verbal update by the Lead as chair or vice chair at other stages.

The chair or vice chair will agree the minutes with officers.

Depending on the policy direction and stage, recommendations to other committees, or Council will be required.

The formal scrutiny of the Local Plan will be through the Overview and Scrutiny Board.

Review: The terms of reference will be reviewed annually by the Director of Planning and Transport in consultation with the Planning Portfolio Holder. Any material changes to the terms shall be agreed by Cabinet.



Request for consideration of an issue by Overview and Scrutiny

Guidance on the use of this form:

This form is for use by councillors and members of the public who want to request that an item joins an Overview and Scrutiny agenda. Any issue may be suggested, provided it affects the BCP area or the inhabitants of the area in some way. Scrutiny of the issue can only be requested once in a 12 month period.

The form may also be used for the reporting of a referral item to Overview and Scrutiny by another body of the council, such as Cabinet or Council.

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee receiving the request will make an assessment of the issue using the detail provided in this form and determine whether to add it to its forward plan of work.

They may take a variety of steps to progress the issue, including requesting more information on it from officers of the council, asking for a member of the overview and scrutiny committee to 'champion' the issue and report back, or establishing a small working group of councillors to look at the issue in more detail.

If the Committee does not agree to progress the issue it will set out reasons for this and they will be provided to the person submitting this form.

More information can be found at Part 4.C of the BCP Council Constitution
<https://democracy.bpcouncil.gov.uk/ieListMeetings.aspx?CommitteeID=151&Info=1&bcr=1>

Please complete all sections as fully as possible

1. Issue requested for scrutiny

Scrutiny of works and issues leading to the structural damage and closure of Charminster Library and the implications for the rest of the BCP library estate.

2. Desired outcome resulting from Overview and Scrutiny engagement, including the value to be added to the Council, the BCP area or its inhabitants.

To understand what led to this situation, learn lessons and avoid it happening again. If necessary, make further recommendations to cabinet.

Given the sudden, unplanned closure of the library there is an urgent need to address the issues that have led us to this point, to ensure that the library can be reopened and a vital community service can resume.

In terms of value, a rapporteur led approach would provide additional, member led resource to explore options to learn lessons and secure the future of Charminster Library and the further BCP library estate.

3. Background to the issue.

In December 2025, part of the ceiling of Charminster Library collapsed, leading to temporary closure of the building for safety reasons.

Further investigations, including structural assessments have led to Charminster Library being closed “for the foreseeable future”.

As more information has become available, it has raised questions around:

- Delays in repairing known faults leading to significant further deterioration of the building.
- The presence of unassessed risks, including asbestos and 36 heavy iron radiator units located in the ceiling void, with dire safety implications for library staff and users.
- How essential repairs to the library estate can be funded, to prevent further degradation of the buildings, increased cost of repair and ensure continuity of service.
- The implications on integrity of the wider library estate.

I note that the O&S Board has previously taken a keen interest in the library service, and particularly in the risks to the library estate due to the lack of funding available to maintain and repair library buildings.

In October 2025 the Board made a specific recommendation to Cabinet that consideration should be given to obtaining funding, through asset disposal, to address the known maintenance and repair needs of public-facing buildings.

This recommendation was made following the Board’s examination of the Library Strategy, and in particular the schedule of maintenance and repair works that

had been identified across the library estate, totalling £1.8M.

In this schedule it was noted that Charminster Library in particular was in urgent need of significant investment

4. Proposed method of scrutiny - (for example, a committee report or a working group investigation)

I would welcome a rapporteur approach, reporting into the Board following a period of investigation and research. Given restrictions on both committee time and scrutiny support from officers, I would like to volunteer to help conduct the investigation.

5. Key dates and anticipated timescale for the scrutiny work

This is an urgent topic, as the long term closure of the library was announced suddenly in March 2026 and residents are left without a library service. It is therefore proposed that the rapporteur work should begin immediately.

In order to balance the need for sufficient time for the investigation, but also to ensure that progress is made in a timely manner, it is proposed that the rapporteur's report to the Board is timetabled for September 2026.

Document last reviewed – January 2022

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