

# Notice of Overview and Scrutiny Board

Date: Monday, 15 November 2021 at 6.00 pm

Venue: Committee Suite, Civic Centre, Poole BH15 2RU



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## Membership:

### Chairman:

Cllr S Bartlett

### Vice Chairman:

Cllr V Slade

Cllr L Allison  
Cllr M Cox  
Cllr L Dedman  
Cllr B Dion  
Cllr M Earl

Cllr J Edwards  
Cllr D Farr  
Cllr L Fear  
Cllr S Gabriel  
Cllr M Howell

Cllr D Kelsey  
Cllr T O'Neill  
Cllr C Rigby

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All Members of the Overview and Scrutiny Board are summoned to attend this meeting to consider the items of business set out on the agenda below. Please note that the above membership is subject to change following the Council meeting on 9 November.

The press and public are welcome to view the live stream of this meeting at the following link:

<https://democracy.bcpCouncil.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?MIId=4878>

If you would like any further information on the items to be considered at the meeting please contact: Claire Johnston on 01202 118686 or email [claire.johnston@bcpCouncil.gov.uk](mailto:claire.johnston@bcpCouncil.gov.uk)

Press enquiries should be directed to the Press Office: Tel: 01202 118686 or email [press.office@bcpCouncil.gov.uk](mailto:press.office@bcpCouncil.gov.uk)

This notice and all the papers mentioned within it are available at [democracy.bcpCouncil.gov.uk](https://democracy.bcpCouncil.gov.uk)

GRAHAM FARRANT  
CHIEF EXECUTIVE

5 November 2021



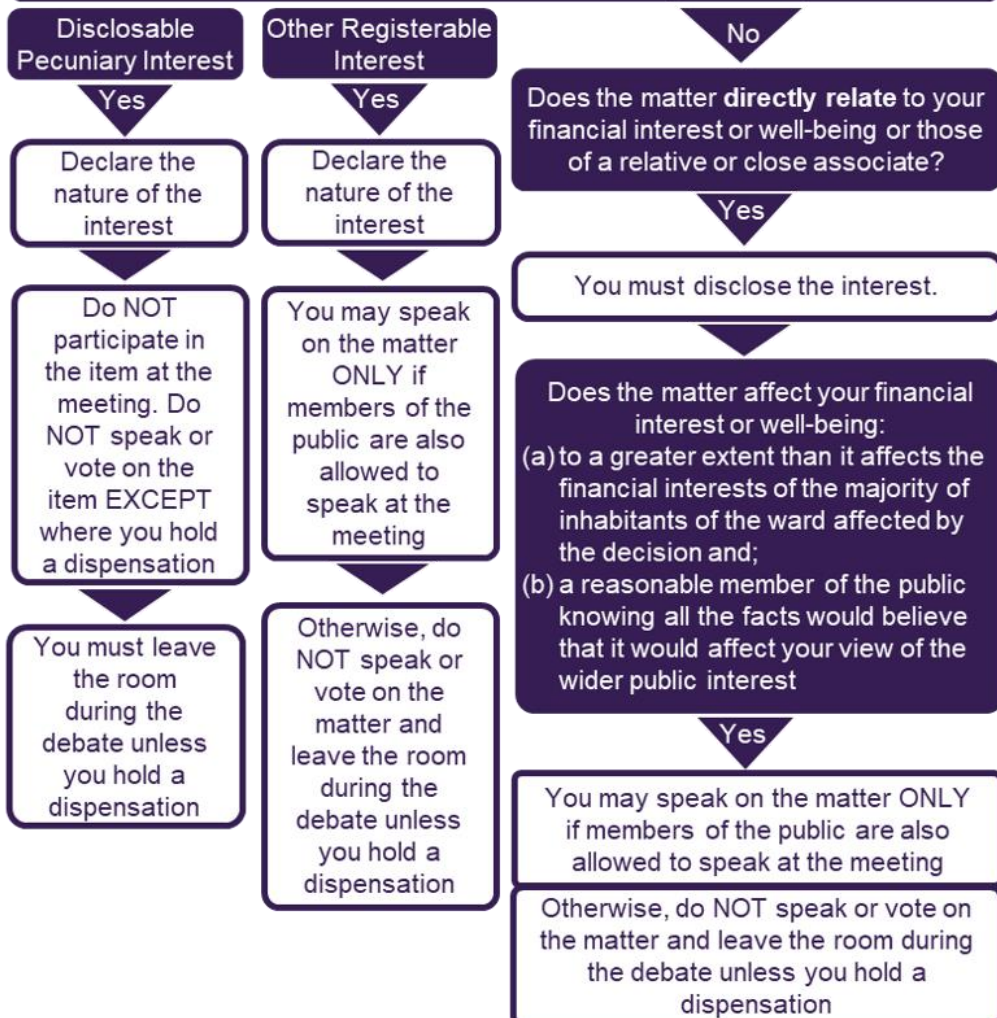
## Maintaining and promoting high standards of conduct

### Declaring interests at meetings

Familiarise yourself with the Councillor Code of Conduct which can be found in Part 6 of the Council's Constitution.

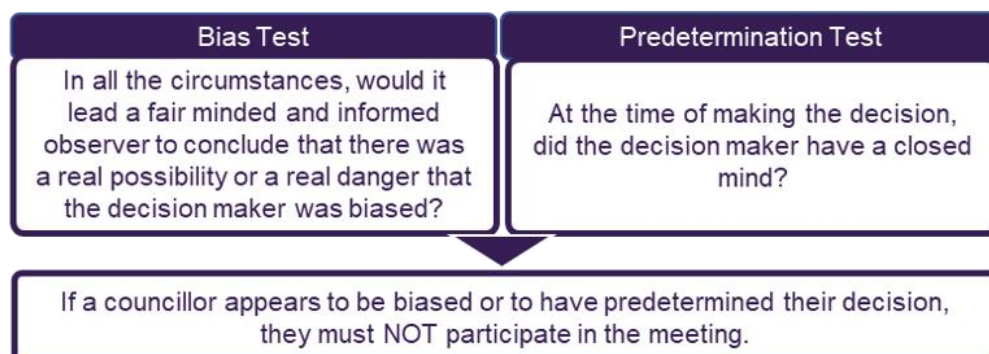
Before the meeting, read the agenda and reports to see if the matters to be discussed at the meeting concern your interests

Do any matters being discussed at the meeting directly relate to your registered interests?



What are the principles of bias and pre-determination and how do they affect my participation in the meeting?

Bias and predetermination are common law concepts. If they affect you, your participation in the meeting may call into question the decision arrived at on the item.



For more information or advice please contact the Monitoring Officer  
([susan.zeiss@bcpcouncil.gov.uk](mailto:susan.zeiss@bcpcouncil.gov.uk))

### Selflessness

Councillors should act solely in terms of the public interest

### Integrity

Councillors must avoid placing themselves under any obligation to people or organisations that might try inappropriately to influence them in their work. They should not act or take decisions in order to gain financial or other material benefits for themselves, their family, or their friends. They must declare and resolve any interests and relationships

### Objectivity

Councillors must act and take decisions impartially, fairly and on merit, using the best evidence and without discrimination or bias

### Accountability

Councillors are accountable to the public for their decisions and actions and must submit themselves to the scrutiny necessary to ensure this

### Openness

Councillors should act and take decisions in an open and transparent manner. Information should not be withheld from the public unless there are clear and lawful reasons for so doing

### Honesty & Integrity

Councillors should act with honesty and integrity and should not place themselves in situations where their honesty and integrity may be questioned

### Leadership

Councillors should exhibit these principles in their own behaviour. They should actively promote and robustly support the principles and be willing to challenge poor behaviour wherever it occurs

# AGENDA

Items to be considered while the meeting is open to the public

## 1. Apologies

To receive any apologies for absence from Members.

## 2. Substitute Members

To receive information on any changes in the membership of the Committee.

Note – When a member of a Committee is unable to attend a meeting of a Committee or Sub-Committee, the relevant Political Group Leader (or their nominated representative) may, by notice to the Monitoring Officer (or their nominated representative) prior to the meeting, appoint a substitute member from within the same Political Group. The contact details on the front of this agenda should be used for notifications.

## 3. Declarations of Interests

Councillors are requested to declare any interests on items included in this agenda. Please refer to the workflow on the preceding page for guidance.

Declarations received will be reported at the meeting.

## 4. Public Speaking

To receive any public questions, statements or petitions submitted in accordance with the Constitution, which is available to view at the following link:

<https://democracy.bcpccouncil.gov.uk/ieListMeetings.aspx?CommitteeID=151&Info=1&bcr=1>

The deadline for the submission of a public question is 4 clear working days before the meeting.

The deadline for the submission of a statement is midday the working day before the meeting.

The deadline for the submission of a petition is 10 working days before the meeting.

## 5. Planning Service Improvement Update

To consider the new Cabinet report on Planning Improvement. This report is scheduled for Cabinet consideration on 24 November 2021. This Cabinet report also provides the update on the Planning function which the Board requested when the issue was last considered by the Board.

The O&S Board is asked to scrutinise and comment on the report and if required make recommendations or observations as appropriate.

Cabinet member invited to attend for this item: Councillor Philip Broadhead, Portfolio Holder for Development, Growth and Regeneration and Councillor

Bobbie Dove, Portfolio Holder for Community Safety and Regulatory Services.

The Cabinet report for this item is included with the agenda for consideration by the Overview and Scrutiny Board.

## **6. Planning Committee Structure**

19 - 34

The Overview and Scrutiny Board, at its last meeting, considered a request from a member of the Public regarding BCP Council's Planning Committee Structure. The Board agreed to consider this matter further and is placed on this agenda for consideration at this meeting.

The request was accompanied by a consultant's report commissioned by local Parish Councils which is attached to this agenda for further consideration.

The relevant Cabinet Members Councillor Philip Broadhead, Portfolio Holder for Development, Growth and Regeneration and Councillor Bobbie Dove, Portfolio Holder for Community Safety and Regulatory Services have been invited to attend the meeting for consideration of this item.

## **7. Forward Plan**

35 - 70

To consider and amend the Board's Forward Plan as appropriate and to consider the published Cabinet Forward Plan.

## **8. Future Meeting Dates 2021/22 and 2022/23**

To note the following meeting dates for the 2021/22 municipal year:

- 6 December 2021
- 5 January 2022
- 31 January 2022
- 28 February 2022
- 4 April 2022

And 2022/23 municipal year:

- 16 May 2022
- 13 June 2022
- 18 July 2022
- 22 August 2022
- 19 September 2022
- 17 October 2022
- 14 November 2022
- 5 December 2022

- 9 January 2023
- 6 February 2023
- 6 March 2023
- 3 April 2023

All meetings will be held via video conferencing until further notice.

No other items of business can be considered unless the Chairman decides the matter is urgent for reasons that must be specified and recorded in the Minutes.

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## CABINET



Report subject	<b>Planning Service Improvement Update</b>
Meeting date	23 November 2022
Status	Public Report
Executive summary	<p>This provides an update on measures being implemented to deliver a step change in the reputation and performance of the BCP Planning Service in order to support the delivery of the Big Plan and other corporate priorities. It follows a previous report on the Planning Service considered by Cabinet in April 2021 and provides a 6-month update on progress since and actions for the next 6 months. The key improvement activities underway since the last report are as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ongoing governance by Planning Improvement Board</li> <li>• Appointment of interim Planning Service Director and Development Management Manager</li> <li>• Improved use of data to run service</li> <li>• Task force approach to dealing with out of time applications and reducing on hand demand</li> <li>• Use of outsourcing companies to deal with volumes of work needing to be determined</li> <li>• Validation process review</li> <li>• Single system and process project moving forward</li> <li>• Improved engagement with staff and customers</li> <li>• Major recruitment campaign due to start</li> <li>• Increased focus on Local Plan progression</li> <li>• Structural review to begin</li> </ul>
Recommendations	<p><b>It is RECOMMENDED that Cabinet:</b></p> <p><b>(a) Note and endorse the measures underway to improve and transform the planning service</b></p> <p><b>(b) Approve the actions required for the next 6 months as set out in the report</b></p>

	<p><b>(c) Endorse the additional in-year expenditure required to deliver ongoing service improvements for this financial year as shown in the financial implication section.</b></p> <p><b>(d) Agree the proposed funding for the additional expenditure as shown in the financial implication section, with delegated authority to the Section 151 Officer to alter the final funding arrangements once the actual figures at the end of the financial year are known.</b></p> <p><b>(e) Delegate authority to the Director of Planning in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Planning to review and deliver improvements to the process around planning application publicity.</b></p>
Reason for recommendations	To support the transformation of the Planning Service to support the local economy and the area's communities and delivery of the Big Plan
Portfolio Holder(s):	<p>Councillor Drew Mellor, Leader and Portfolio Holder for Finance &amp; Transformation</p> <p>Councillor Philip Broadhead, Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Development, Growth &amp; Regeneration</p> <p>Councillor Bobbie Dove, Portfolio Holder for Community Safety &amp; Regulatory Services</p>
Corporate Director	Kate Ryan – Chief Operations Officer
Report Authors	Colin Walker – Interim Director for Planning
Wards	Council-wide
Classification	For Information and Decision

## Background

1. This paper follows an earlier report on the BCP Council planning service received by Cabinet in April 2021. The April 2021 report set out the background for the need to deliver a significant improvement in the BCP Planning Service to create an exemplar planning department fit to deliver the Council's ambitions and representative of BCP's status as the 10<sup>th</sup> largest urban authority in the country.
2. The April 2021 report provided context for the various challenges the service has been dealing with in recent times that have impacted on performance and reputation; in summary these comprise high and increasing volumes of work to process, complexities with working within a pandemic environment, holding vacancies and operating largely legacy systems and processes. These issues are well understood and form the context for the various actions that have been or need



to be put in place to re-position the planning service where all stakeholders want it to be.

3. It is recognised that the planning service and supporting staff are highly professional and dedicated and continue to work incredibly hard to maintain the planning service whilst the various structural issues and challenges are being resolved. It is also recognised that expectations from Members and external customers remain high and, in particular, that performance on planning applications should be improved at pace.
4. The focus of this paper is, therefore, to update on progress on the measures being put in place since April 2021 to improve the planning service and to identify the programme of further actions for the next six-month period.

### **Update on Planning Application Performance**

5. The BCP performance data on planning applications decisions in time for the first two quarters of the 2021/22 monitoring period, and compared with the 2020/21 performance, is as follows:

	<b>Q1</b>	<b>Q2</b>	<b>BCP year to date</b>	<b>BCP 2020/21 performance</b>	<b>Govt Targets</b>
Major	67%	79%	77%	77%	60%
Minor	80%	77%	78%	74%	70%
Others	82%	80%	81%	71%	70%

6. This table shows that overall performance on planning applications remains above the Government intervention levels and is currently exceeding the 2020/21 performance position on minor and other applications. Major application performance has been maintained to match the 2020/2021 position thus far. This is a positive overall position in so far there is no imminent threat of any Government intervention and continues the trend of improvement in performance over the last 12 months.
7. However, it is important to recognise that these headline statistics continue to include a high proportion of extensions of time that is a by-product of the various challenges within the service. It is worth noting that it is not unusual for Local Planning Authorities to use extensions of time when dealing with planning applications and the Government accept their use when Councils submit their returns. This is, however, not an acceptable corporate position, primarily because timely planning decisions (i.e. within statutory time periods) are key to facilitating economic growth and investment, as well as the delivery of regeneration and housing numbers at pace. The measures discussed in this report are aimed at addressing this and moving the service to only use extensions of time on an exceptional basis and determine the majority of planning applications within the 8- or 13-week statutory timeframes.
8. As part of the wider context around the demands on the planning service it is also useful to draw attention to the increase in demand that has been experienced since

2019 by way of submission of planning applications. The figures below set out how many applications have been received in 2019, 2020 and 2021 (to end of August) with a % increase from the previous year shown:

- 2019 – 4,330 applications at an average of 360 per month
- 2020 – 4,359 applications at an average of 363 per month (0.83% increase from 2019)
- 2021 (to end of August) – 3,507 applications at an average of 438 per month (21% increase from 2020)

9. The increase when looked at by month between 2019 and 2021 (September to December figures do not include 2021) is shown on Figure 1 below:

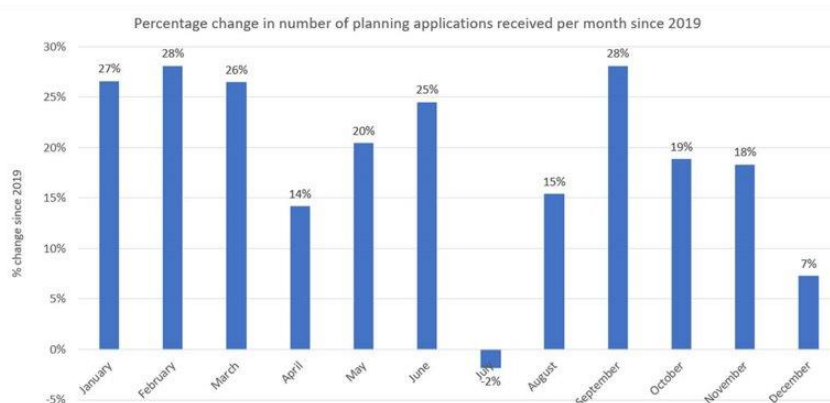


Figure 1 - % increase in planning applications in each month between 2019 and 2021

### **Update on Planning Service Improvement Actions between April 2021 and October 2021**

10. The April 2021 paper set out a series of initial actions required to deliver the required step change in the planning service. A series of additional actions have come out of the ongoing work since April 2021, all of which are updated upon as follows:

#### **Planning Improvement Board**

11. The Planning Improvement Board continues to meet monthly, chaired by the Chief Executive and attended by the Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Regeneration, Economy and Strategic Planning, Chief Operations Officer, Monitoring Officer, Interim Service Director for Planning and the Head of Planning. The Planning Improvement Board provides a clear and robust governance framework to oversee and drive the delivery of planning service improvement.

#### **Appointment of Planning Transformation Lead / Interim Planning Director**

12. A key part of the April 2021 report was to confirm plans to appoint a Planning Transformation Lead, which was subsequently enacted in June 2021. This post was then converted to the Interim Planning Director post in September 2021. This follows the placing of Planning Services within its own directorate reporting to the Chief Operations Officer in May 2021. The rationale for these changes is in recognition of the importance of the planning service to delivery of the Council's corporate ambitions as well as the area's resident and business communities.

13. The appointment of the Interim Planning Director will enable there to be a strong voice and additional strategic management capacity at the top tiers of the organisation to drive the required improvement to the planning service and champion the wider importance of planning to the area's future. The Interim Planning Director is also leading the planning service transformation programme.

#### **Use of data to run the service**

14. A key focus of the Interim Planning Director's initial actions has been to ensure the service is run using a more data driven and outcome focused approach. It is recognised that obtaining data at the present time can be challenging in view of the reliance of legacy planning systems that need consolidating. Notwithstanding this, measures have been put in place to obtain the core data required to monitor performance of planning applications. This includes:
- Weekly monitoring of the time taken to register planning applications to understand the impact the front end of the system is having on time to decision making;
  - Weekly monitoring of decisions in time to keep track of overall performance against the Government targets;
  - Weekly monitoring of officer workloads. There have been issues with many staff having unsustainable workloads that is impacting on ability to make timely decisions. A more focused approach to managing workloads is being implemented to ensure work is spread proportionately and avoid staff being overloaded wherever possible;
  - Monthly reporting of overall planning applications in the system. This provides the data to identify how many applications are in the system that are either out of time or close to coming out of time. The applications that are out of time have been identified as needing urgent resolution. The out of time applications are now being addressed as a project in order to re-set the service to determine applications within the 8 or 13 week timeframe wherever possible and remove the previous over reliance on extensions of time.
15. The service now has better data on numbers and types applications that remain within statutory timescales, and those that do not. This is a key improvement since April 2021, but the size of the out of time applications is larger than identified at that time, and will take time to deal with. This data is reported to the Planning Improvement Board each month.

#### **Addressing the Demand in Planning Applications**

16. The increased focus on using data to run the service has identified that there is a significant issue with a build up of out of time applications in the system that needs to be released as it is affecting the ability to operate a smooth workflow to process those applications that remain in time. Ensuring planning applications are processed in 8 or 13 weeks is a crucial service objective to ensure that the service is responsive to customers and can fulfil its function as a service that enables development in a timely way, whilst balancing the wider public interest. It is also critical that the current level of service complaints are reduced and customers are satisfied with the service provided.
17. A series of measures have been put in place to address the out of time applications as follows:

- Use of external providers to take and process batches of applications. This approach was identified in the April 2021 report and subsequently implemented with circa 300 applications having been or currently being processed using an external provider.
  - Appointment of an additional Development Management Manager on an interim basis for the next 6 months. This appointment is specifically focused on addressing the out of time applications over the next 6 months to enable the permanent Development Management Manager to focus on delivery of the in time and new applications.
  - Creation of a task force approach headed up by the Interim Development Management Manager that will use available resources take a targeted approach to reducing the out of time applications significantly over the next 6 months.
  - Focus on reducing the number of major planning applications in the system. It has been identified that the service was carrying too many major applications. The reasons for that are complex and are linked to the volumes of other work required on smaller scale applications. By implementing a focused approach to the out of time applications inroads have been made to reduce the amount of out of time majors since the last report. At the time of writing there are 110 major applications in the system. Continued focus on Major applications is required over the next six months to reduce this number further to a more steady state of around 50 to 60 on hand at any given time.
  - Introducing a more focused, target driven approach to the management of the service. A key issue identified has been the capacity of managers to manage the teams due the amount of other work that is ongoing. Measures are being put in place to ensure managers are given the time and space to focus solely on management tasks, which include greater emphasis on accountability and oversight of staff to meet deadlines for planning applications and related tasks. This extends from Service Manager down to Team Leader level.
18. In order to facilitate the successful delivery of the task force approach there is a need to invest in additional resources to reduce the amount of on hand applications in the system. This has resulted in the need to appoint the Interim Development Management Manager as well as increase the use of outsource providers to increase decision output.
19. Given the size and depth of the out of time applications, it is anticipated that it will take until April 2022 to clear, and progress will continue to be monitored and reported monthly to the Planning Improvement Board.

### **Planning Application Validation Review and Neighbour Notification**

20. A review of the validation process is underway as the current operation is currently validating planning applications between 2 days and 2 weeks. This fluctuation cannot continue as it is impacting on the ability to determine planning applications within the statutory timeframes by losing time at the front end of the process. A service standard of validating all planning applications within 2 working days has been established and work underway to ensure it can be delivered on a consistent basis.
21. The review of the validation process is identifying there is a need for additional resources and streamlined processes in order to address the delays and overall

inconsistency in service delivery. It is proposed that around £100,000 is required to be spent on validation process either through adding staff into existing vacancies or use of an outsourcing service for a temporary period to create increased capacity within the team.

22. As part of the validation process review, the BCP Council Statement of Community Involvement requires planning applications to be notified by both neighbour letters and erection of a site notice. The Development Management Procedure Order places a legal obligation on the Council to do only one of those notification options whereas the Council currently does both. It is fully recognised by doing both it provides the greatest opportunity for interested parties to engage in the planning system. However, it is equally highly resource intensive to operate both neighbour letters and site notices that has the impact of slowing down the validation process and thereby contributing to the out of time application issue within the service. As part of the process of review the Council needs to move to a more efficient process of planning application publicity. It is proposed that Cabinet delegate authority to the Director of Planning in consultation with the Portfolio holder to undertake and implement this review.

### **Single Planning System and Process**

23. It has previously been identified that the operation of three separate teams each with its own ICT system and related process is highly inefficient and a key constraint to delivering a step change in service improvement. Since April 2021 the Council has moved the single system project forward and work is underway to accelerate and implement the project, with the objective of identifying a single operating process by 2 January 2022.
24. The key outputs of this for our external customers and stakeholders will be a more consistent approach to service delivery, improved consistency of pre-application advice and decision making. It will also, in time, result in more rapid application processing.

### **Engagement**

25. A key action from the April 2021 report was the recognition of the need for better communication with the various stakeholders that engage in the planning service. In response, the Interim Planning Director has undertaken a series of focused engagement exercises with senior officers, councillor workshops, staff and customers to further identify issues that are affecting the service as well as how stakeholders want the service to operate in the future. Some of the additional issues that have been identified through this process that need to be focussed on are as follows:
- Improved communications at all levels
  - Better online information on planning application status/progress
  - Clear Planning Protocol clarifying how the service will approach service delivery on planning applications, how it will approach negotiations/amendments and what is expected from applicants/agents
  - Improved pre-application service
  - Consistency of decision making and outcomes across the service
26. The Agents and Developers Forum has continued and is welcomed by the participants as it provides a forum to provide services updates and receive

feedback on current customer experiences of the service. This will continue for the foreseeable future.

27. A planning E-bulletin will be going out bi-monthly to provide updates on the various transformation actions, general planning information as well as celebrate the successes and positive outcomes for the area the planning service continues to deliver. A key aim for the coming months will be to increase the circulation of the E-bulletin so it reaches as many parts of the area's communities as possible.
28. Monthly staff briefings have been introduced to keep the teams informed of the transformation project, generate further ideas and listen to feedback with the aim of ensuring all staff feel part of the transformation programme.
29. Weekly service manager meetings have been implemented in order to improve communications and management capacity. In addition, there are now monthly individual focus group meetings (led by the Interim Director plus Head of Planning) with the five service areas of:
  - a. Development Management
  - b. Conservation and Trees
  - c. Local Plans
  - d. Enforcement
  - e. Planning research and GIS
30. These changes are improving communications as well as implementing a more effective performance management culture.

### **Recruitment**

31. Approvals have been secured to undertake a significant recruitment campaign to fill the various vacant posts and deliver the Smarter Structures planning structure. The campaign is seeking to fill 29 posts across the planning teams, which once filled will enable workloads to be more manageable, drive improvements in planning application performance and support delivery of key corporate projects such as the Local Plan. The recruitment campaign is due to commence in November 2021 and is expected to be completed by the end of 2021.

### **Strategic Planning and Placeshaping**

32. The Local Plan is one of the most important strategic documents as it balances how BCP as a place will grow and thrive, whilst maintaining the things that make it special as a place. It is important that it fully reflects the ambitions within the Big Plan, as well as being facilitate investment via a variety of methods, including the Council's Urban Regeneration Company (URC). It is recognised that the Local Plan team needs to be strengthened to deliver a Plan of the scale and depth required, and the current recruitment drive will assist that. But there is an urgent need to bring additional skills and experience into the Team now, and this will be implemented via a combination of agency staff, and external support.
33. Additional support to the Local Plan team in relation to timetabling and robustness of the evidence base has been sought from the Planning Advisory Service (linked to and funded by MHCLG). At the time of writing the details of this support, and any likely costs involved have yet to be established, but Cabinet will be updated accordingly.

34. A series of workstreams are underway on strategic planning and placeshaping. Of particular significance, the Local Plan further Issues and Options consultation will start soon. This is a positive move forward after a hiatus in progress during 2020. Notwithstanding this, a review of the Local Plan timetable is underway to set out a clear and realistic route to adoption including consideration of the resources required.
35. The Design Brief project set in the April 2021 report has been progressed on two of the key areas identified. The work on these two areas should be moved forward significantly by the end of the year to enable further discussions to happen in respect of facilitating their delivery.
36. It has also been identified that there is a need for a more in depth piece of work to be undertaken in respect of overall place vision and delivery to form a crucial part of the Local Place evidence base to understand the potential for meeting development challenges in an ambitious but area-sensitive way. A request has been made for additional funding for this work through the planning budget growth bid that is being considered separately through the MTPF process.

### **Structural Review**

37. The Planning service has been through a restructure process as a result of the Smarter Structures initiative, and the vacancies resulting are in the process of being recruited, as stated earlier in this report. The structural review was relatively “light touch”.
38. Given the scale of the Council’s ambitions and the potential for the URC to unlock further growth, it is important that the Planning service is able to contribute and facilitate the delivery of that vision. This means that the service needs to be stronger in terms of Local Plan and place making, with a much stronger emphasis on economic viability issues, investment potential, and how this fits into policy development. The Development Management team needs to be better placed to facilitate timely decisions, with greater emphasis on operating within set targets and management of performance.
39. To that end, it is recognised that strong and experienced management is needed to deliver this step change, and this needs to be reflected in the ways that the service is organised. Also, the service needs to operate in a more business-like manner, with a clear eye on costs and income, as well as a much stronger approach toward delivering measurable efficiencies.
40. It is proposed that whilst the agreed Smarter Structures structure continues to be implemented, a further review takes place to reflect the above requirements. This review will have scope to look at the whole Planning service structure, with initial proposals being shared with the Planning Improvement Board by end of 2021.

### **Actions and Targets for the next six months November 2021 to April 2022**

41. The planning improvement programme will continue to require time and resources to drive the required changes. In order to maintain momentum with the planning service improvement programme, the key actions and delivery targets being set for the next six months are as follows:

<b>Action</b>	<b>Target Completion Date</b>
Address the out of time applications	By April 2022, with month-on-month reduction achieved from October 2021



Ensure new applications are processed mainly within the statutory timeframes	From November 2021
Review of Planning service structure to Planning Improvement Board	End of December 21
Complete review of validation process to set out interventions required to achieve consistent 48-hour planning application validation	By December 2021
Complete recruitment drive	By January 2022
Complete Local Plan programme review and re-establish timeframe	By January 2022
Produce new Service Plan for Planning focused on delivering and maintaining the step change in the planning service	By January 2022
Further focused engagement with members and other key stakeholders to be able to measure the success of the improvement programme	By January 2022
Review of pre-application services to encourage greater use to drive more applications being 'right first time'	By January 2022
Implement single planning system and reorganise teams in line with Smarter Structures	By April 2022

### Options Appraisal

42. The alternative option is to not continue with the planning service transformation. There are no obvious advantages to this but many disadvantages.

### Summary of financial implications

43. In the Council budget set and approved in February 2021 an additional £250k was allocated to Planning to address service development during 2021/22. These funds have been used to outsource some planning work, and employ interim and agency staff to facilitate transformation of the service.
44. The Local Plan work identified within the report will be covered by drawing down £140k from the Local Development Plan reserve which is specifically set aside for this statutory purpose.
45. The further initiatives identified in this report require investment of £334k as outlined in the table below. The additional investment will be used to fund agency staff, interim management support and further invest in outsourcing providers to deal with the volume of work. The figures represent a worst case scenario, if the

current recruitment drive is successful the pressure in on the staffing budget will be less as dependency on agency support reduces.

<b>Activity</b>	<b>Budget</b>	<b>In-year requirement</b>	<b>Difference</b>
	£'000	£'000	£'000
Staff – In-year requirement includes use of agency staff	£906	£1,140	£234
Business Support (Planning)	£0	£100	£100
<b>Total</b>			<b>£334</b>

46. It is suggested to fund the additional investment need from the following sources.

<b>Funding source</b>	<b>£'000</b>
Additional fee income	50
Other Earmarked Planning Reserves	260
In year non-income, non-staff savings	24
<b>Total funding</b>	<b>334</b>

47. By funding the required investment as shown in the table above there is no in-year pressure on the council's budget. All figures are best estimates at this time and the actual year end outturn may vary from this so it is recommended that the final funding of the investment activity is delegated to the Section 151 Officer who will consider the most appropriate sources based on the actual position.
48. A growth bid has been submitted through the MTPF to secure further resources for the 2022/23 period onwards to continue to address the challenges in the service but also to ensure the Planning Department is set up to facilitate the work of the Urban Regeneration Company and other key strategic developments.

### **Summary of legal implications**

49. None identified

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

50. None identified at this stage.

### **Summary of sustainability impact**

51. None identified.

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

52. None identified

### **Summary of equality implications**

53. No specific impacts identified. Maintaining an open, accessible and efficient planning system will enable all members of the community to engage and be offered the same levels of service. It is recognised that changing the approach to notification have equalities implications. At this stage an in-principle decision is sought on the basis of the efficiencies that would be derived by making the proposed change. More detailed work on the equalities implications will be undertaken if the in principle decision is agreed.

### **Summary of risk assessment**

54. There are risks associated with a planning service not meeting Government thresholds for decision making. If performance falls below these thresholds, then the Council can be designated by Government and have local decision making powers directed to the Planning Inspectorate. BCP Council are not close to this position but highlights the importance of maintaining a high standard of performance.

### **Background papers**

None

### **Appendices**

None

# Review of the BCP Planning Committee Structure

Report commissioned by:

Burton and Winkton Parish Council, Christchurch Town Council, Highcliffe and Walkford Parish Council and Hurn Parish Council

July 2021

## 1. INTRODUCTION

### Purpose of the report

1.1 The purpose of this report, commissioned and funded by Christchurch Town Council, Highcliffe and Walkford Parish Council, Hurn Parish Council and Burton Parish Council, is to investigate the functioning of the current BCP Planning Committee and the potential advantages of an area based arrangement, one planning board for each town.

1.2 The decision to seek the review was based on a growing concern in each of the four parish councils (together covering the whole of Christchurch Borough) that a democratic deficit exists in the current planning system which in turn means a lack of confidence among residents about the quality of decision making.

1.3 This report followed the decision made by BCP at Full Council on 5 January 2021, to retain the single planning committee structure. It was based upon the associated working group's recommendations (set up to advise the Audit and Governance Committee in November 2020)<sup>1</sup>. It is noted that the working group were presented with some comparative information about the organisation of the planning function in other Councils based on a sample of 12 Councils of similar population size (ranging from 331,000 – 463,000 population). For comparison purposes, this data is given in Appendix A.

### About the author

1.4 The report has been researched and written by Jo Witherden BSc(Hons) DipTP DipUD MRTPI. Jo Witherden is a chartered town planner and a full member of the Royal Town Planning Institute, with an upper second-class honours degree in City & Regional Planning from Cardiff University, a distinction in the Diploma in Town Planning from Cardiff University, and a distinction in the Diploma in Urban Design from Oxford Brookes. Jo has worked in planning policy roles in local authorities across Dorset for nearly 20 years, last employed as Head of Spatial Policy and Implementation for Weymouth & Portland Borough Council and West Dorset District Councils, leading a multi-disciplinary team of more than 10 officers dealing with planning policy, environmental assessment, planning obligations, urban and landscape design for the two council areas. Since November 2014 Jo has been working as an independent planning consultant, advising a wide range of clients on planning applications, appeals and policy matters, including working with Town and Parish Councils on Neighbourhood Plans.

### How the review was undertaken

1.5 The review has been undertaken in three parts:

- a) Identification of similar Councils (in terms of unitary function and population size / geographic area / volume of applications) for comparison purposes;

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<sup>1</sup> <https://democracy.bcpccouncil.gov.uk/documents/521378/Changes%20to%20the%20Councils%20Constitution.pdf>

- b) Review of sample of these local planning authorities, identifying variation in committee set-up and how they function – including any peer review and community engagement / representation information available;
- c) Identify key learning points of best practice.

## Principal Conclusions

**The main conclusions arising from this research can be summarised below:**

- The research shows that Planning Committee structures are varied and there is no one favoured method. If anything there is a slight partiality towards using area-based committees in comparable Councils, and geography is not a determining factor.
- There appear to be more factors in favour of an area-based committee structure than a single committee structure. An area-based structure would enable meetings to be held closer to the main population affected and would enable committee members to have greater familiarity with that area, and this is reinforced by the introduction of Neighbourhood Plans as a local layer of planning policy.
- It is clear that area based committees can and do work effectively in other local authority areas, can benefit from more local knowledge and expertise and are more likely to be accessible to the local community, therefore increasing public faith and confidence in the process.
- There is no evidence that they result in 'parochial' decision making. Nor is there any evidence to suggest that an area-based committee structure would increase the costs of the planning service.

## 2. IDENTIFICATION OF COMPARISON COUNCILS

### Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole (BCP) Council

2.1 BCP Council was established on 1 April 2019, following local government reorganisation in the former county of Dorset. This saw the county's nine councils replaced by two new councils: Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole Council (comprising Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole Borough Councils and the constituent element of Dorset County Council that covered the Christchurch area); and Dorset Council (comprising the remaining Dorset authorities).

– Population size:	– 395,331 (2019 mid year estimate)
– Council type:	– Unitary
– Geographic area:	– 17,393 hectares (total extent, not accounting for topography)
– Annual planning applications:	– 2,378 (all application types)

### Comparison Councils by Population and Type

2.2 Table 4 in Appendix B identifies Local Planning Authorities (i.e. excluding County Councils) within England by type and population size similar to the BCP population (of approximately 395,000). Those with a similar populations ( $\pm 75,000$  people) were highlighted for further consideration, but as this only identified 3 Councils with larger populations, the upper limited was extended to +150,000.

### Comparison Councils by Geographic area

2.3 Table 5 in Appendix B identifies Local Planning Authorities (i.e. excluding County Councils) within England by geographic area similar to the BCP area (of approximately 17,000 hectares). The spread of Councils was broadly similar looking  $\pm 3,000$  hectares either side of the BCP figure (13 more, and 9 less than BCP in area size).

### Comparison Councils by number of planning applications

2.4 And finally, Table 6 in Appendix B identifies Local Planning Authorities (i.e. excluding County Councils) within England by the number of planning applications (all types) received in the last 12 months (approximately 2,400 applications). Those with a similar volume ( $\pm 500$  applications) were highlighted for further consideration (9 Councils with more, and 23 with fewer, applications).

## Suggested comparison Councils

2.5 Based on an appraisal of all three factors, the following 15 Councils were then identified as reasonably close comparators to BCP for further evaluation, based on at least 2 of the 3 comparison factors (population size, area size and number of applications processed) with a ranking-based weighting applied to identify those most comparable to BCP<sup>2</sup>.

**Table 1. Suggested Councils for further research as comparators to BCP Council**

Barnet *	Cheshire West and Chester	East Riding of Yorkshire *	St Albans
Bristol City *	County Durham	Hillingdon	Shropshire
Bromley *	Croydon *	Kirklees *	Wandsworth
Cheshire East *	Dorset *	Manchester	Wigan

\* these nine Councils plus Newham, Enfield and Nottingham were also considered in the comparison report undertaken by the BCP working party.

## 3. OVERVIEW OF COMMITTEE ARRANGEMENT BY COMPARATORS

**Table 2. Overview of Committee Arrangement by Comparators<sup>3</sup>**

Authority	Type	Area	App's	Pop'n	Committee Structure
Barnet	London	8,677	2,705	395,869	M Three planning committees <sup>4</sup>
<b>BCP Council</b>	<b>Unitary</b>	<b>17,393</b>	<b>2,378</b>	<b>395,331</b>	<b>S Single planning committee</b>
Bristol City	Unitary	23,544	2,463	463,377	M Two committees
Bromley	London	15,013	2,517	332,336	M Four sub + planning committee
Cheshire E	Unitary	116,636	2,896	384,152	A Two area + strategic board
Cheshire W	Unitary	94,121	2,542	343,071	S Single planning committee
Co. Durham	Unitary	223,261	2,267	530,094	A Three area + county board
Croydon	London	8,649	2,156	386,710	M Single + sub-committee
Dorset	Unitary	252,108	3,412	378,508	A Three area + strategic board
East Riding	Unitary	249,179	2,529	341,173	A Two area + planning board
Hillingdon	London	11,570	2,361	306,870	A Two area + majors board
Kirklees	Metropolitan	40,855	2,059	439,787	A Two area + strategic board
Manchester	Metropolitan	11,565	2,022	552,858	S Single planning committee
Shropshire	Unitary	319,728	2,682	323,136	A Three area committees
St Albans	District	16,121	1,872	148,452	A Three area + referral committee
Wandsworth	London	3,522	2,305	329,677	S Single planning committee
Wigan	Metropolitan	18,817	1,038	328,662	S Single planning committee

3.1 It is clear from an initial overview that there is no single method by which these comparable Councils operate. There are three main types of set-up: a single planning committee (S), multiple planning committees (M), and area-based planning committees (A) some of which also have an area-wide strategic committee for the most significant applications. The sample suggests that there is a slight partiality towards using area-based committees as the preferred approach (8 of the 17 sampled), with only 5 of the 17 sampled (including BCP) operating a single planning committee structure<sup>5</sup>.

<sup>2</sup> 7 other authorities were identified as part of this sieving process but were considered less comparable than those in Table 1. These were: Bradford; Brent; Ealing; Lambeth; Liverpool; and Northumberland.

<sup>3</sup> See Appendix A for data sources

<sup>4</sup> The committee system changed from an area-based one system to the current arrangement in January 2021.

<sup>5</sup> It is noted that the additional 6 authorities discounted in the previous stage (see footnote 2) were fairly evenly split between single planning committee (4) and area-based committee (2) type structures and therefore their omission would not have altered the above conclusions.

3.2 In general, the data suggests that area-based committees tend to be more prevalent in the larger geographic areas (but not exclusively so - Cheshire West and Chester, Hillingdon and St Albans operating in much smaller areas), with no obvious correlation based on either the number of applications or population size. But clearly geography / rurality is not a determining factor, as there are examples of several London Boroughs that operate such a system (including Hillingdon, as well as others such as Kingston upon Thames and Greenwich)<sup>6</sup>.

3.3 Given the purpose of this report, the multiple committee structure can be discounted, particularly given that it was the least favoured form of planning committee structure and it would not appear to have any obvious advantages with regards to addressing the perceived problem that a democratic deficit exists in the current planning system.

## 4. PERFORMANCE COMPARISONS

4.1 The next step was to check comparable performance between Councils in relation to their Planning and Development Services functions. To do this, the relative performance as reported through the Local Government Association benchmarking tools was used<sup>7</sup>.

**Table 3. Overview of Planning Performance Indicators by Comparators (2019/20)**

Authority		Revenue / person	Majors % 13wks	Minors % 8wks	% Appeals granted	Appeals (1/4ly)	% appeals dismissed	Complaints / app'n
Barnet <sup>8</sup>	A	£23.84	86%	93%	71%	22	45%	0.5%
<b>BCP Council</b>	<b>S</b>	<b>£21.59</b>	<b>70%</b>	<b>63%</b>	<b>75%</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>85%</b>	<b>0.7%</b>
Cheshire E	A	£47.42	96%	88%	85%	24	67%	0.9%
Cheshire W	S	£58.17	100%	96%	89%	18	67%	0.4%
Co. Durham	A	£60.54	87%	96%	94%	14	71%	0.6%
Dorset	A	£40.25	71%	71%	82%	32	72%	0.0%
East Riding	A	£50.38	95%	95%	89%	21	76%	0.5%
Hillingdon	A	£23.64	88%	92%	63%	12	75%	0.6%
Kirklees	A	£45.82	100%	94%	87%	14	93%	0.5%
Manchester	S	£54.11	68%	82%	89%	8	63%	0.4%
Shropshire	A	£57.53	76%	88%	87%	19	74%	0.7%
St Albans		£33.20	100%	75%	79%	10	90%	0.3%
Wandsworth	S	£39.62	100%	90%	88%	3	100%	0.2%
Wigan	S	£38.10	100%	93%	89%	4	100%	0.8%
Single	S	£42.32	88%	85%	86%	12	83%	0.5%
Area-based	A	£42.51	89%	88%	82%	19	74%	0.5%

4.2 The analysis of these figures highlights that there is no clear correlation between any of these factors and the type of committee structure used. There is no significant difference between the committee types in terms of the performance indicators with the exception of appeals, with fewer appeals and higher dismissal rates for authorities using the single committee structure. However it is not possible to readily tell whether these were committee 'overturned' decisions that were going against officer recommendations.

## Peer Reviews / Challenges

4.3 The various comparator Councils were checked in terms of whether any had undergone recent Peer Review challenges of either their Planning department or Committee arrangements. The search

<sup>6</sup> It is noted that the London Borough of Barnet recently took the decision to change from an area-based to multiple planning committees (with the new structure in plan from January 2021).

<sup>7</sup> <https://lginform.local.gov.uk/> and based on latest available quarter data at that time (July to September 2020)

<sup>8</sup> These results reflect the previous area-based system in Barnet



identified Dorset as the only relevant case study<sup>9</sup>. Given the limited review data, a further search was undertaken to consider any additional evidence on scrutiny of Planning Committee's structures. This highlighted reports with regard to Cornwall, Enfield, Isle of Wight, South Cambridgeshire, South Lakeland, Test Valley, Waverley and Wirral Councils. The report findings are summarised in Appendix C, and common themes / messages are summarised below.

4.4 Planning can be a contentious matter, with concerns typically focused on:

- the transparency of decision-making and trust in the process
- the degree of political influence
- the perception that residents' concerns are not taken into account
- the efficiency of the decision-making process (the number of applications going in front of Committee can vary considerably, and ultimately is a matter for local determination based on delegation arrangements).

4.5 It is important that both the committee process and the legal requirements (i.e. that decisions must be taken in accord with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise) are clearly explained to the public, and the decision-making process is seen to be fair and transparent. There should be adequate opportunity for resident's views to be aired at committee, and a flexible approach may be needed in applying limits on public speaking where (for example) allowing more time would help members to better understand public views.

4.6 Problems are more likely to arise when Member involvement in planning decisions is left to the end of the process, missing opportunities to engage during the 'life' of the application, to potentially ensure any improvements or concerns they have are fully considered (and that these points are covered in the committee report).

4.7 It is important for the Council to learn from their decisions and seek improvements, particularly:

- reviewing decisions in terms of 'successes' and 'failures' where scheme are built, to help inform future considerations. This need not necessarily be limited to just those schemes approved by committee, but could include schemes approved under delegated powers;
- involving planning committee members in the review work on the Local Plan.

4.8 Where recommendations were made by the Planning Advisory Service in terms of restructuring planning committees, this was mainly based on the suggestion that Members involvement should focus more on strategic rather than minor planning applications (as being more important due to their scale). The pro's and con's of the different committee structures were not clearly explained or evidenced in those reports. Where this would result in a single committee structure, there was also clearly a reluctance from members to lose the benefits of area-based committees (as they saw them).

## 5. CONSIDERATION OF THE REVIEWED MATERIAL

5.1 Looking at comparable Councils of similar size and form, it is clear that the planning committee structure is varied and there is no one favoured method. Whilst area-based committees tend to be more prevalent in the larger geographic areas, there are exceptions to this 'rule of thumb'.

5.2 From a review of high level data, there is no clear correlation between the type of committee structure used and performance. Furthermore there are no clear indicators of customer satisfaction, either in terms of the process or whether decisions have (on hindsight) been good for the area (in terms of what is or isn't built). There is also no readily available data on direct and indirect costs of the planning services which can be broken down in order to be able to compare the cost efficiencies of the different planning committee processes, as well as the wide range of other factors that impact on performance.

5.3 The analysis of Peer Review challenges suggests that, whilst the Planning Advisory Service has made some recommendations in terms of restructuring planning committees, the pro's and con's of the different planning committee models are not clearly explained or evidenced in those reports. Where a

<sup>9</sup> Kirklees underwent a Corporate Peer Challenge in July 2019 but this did not make any notable comment on the planning committees.

recommendation to move to a single planning committee structure have been made, there is also clearly a reluctance from members to lose the benefits of area-based committees (as they see them) where these are in place, as they were in the individual legacy Councils of Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole.

5.4 Where local representation issues were raised, the main response from the Peer Review challenges was in line with the 1997 report by the Nolan Committee<sup>10</sup>, which considered standards of conduct in Local Government, and which stated:

*"It is essential for the proper operation of the planning system that local concerns are adequately ventilated. The most effective and suitable way that this can be done is through the local elected representatives, the councillors themselves."*

However not all councillors will be able to (or necessarily want to) attend committee regarding decisions for their area (a review of BCP planning committee minutes over the period November 2020 – April 2021 suggests that about a third of applications have no ward member input). As such, some areas may be disadvantaged by relying solely on this remedy. At the current time, BCP Planning Committee is held in Bournemouth, which is not local to Christchurch or Poole, and is therefore likely to deter attendance (on cost / convenience grounds) by not only Councillors from the outlying areas but also local residents and businesses who may find it more difficult / costly to attend (than attending a more local alternative).

5.5 Where cost issues were raised, the main response from the Peer Review challenges was to reduce the amount of planning applications as far as practical to allow just the major strategic decisions to be considered by a single committee. Whilst there is no readily available cost comparison data, it is self-evident that the more applications considered by committee (and their complexity) increases the time spent, and therefore costs (a review of BCP planning committee minutes over the period November 2020 – April 2021 suggests that committees are typically 5 hours long with about 6 applications considered per committee). There is no obvious reason to conclude that the same amount of applications considered under either a single committee or through a number of area-based committees would necessarily be significantly different in cost terms, the main factor potentially being travel time and abortive time 'waiting' for the relevant item on the agenda (which may be reduced for officers but greater for members of the public). The fact that there are area-based planning teams and the potential for greater local representation on the committees (subject to proportionate political representation) further reduces any apparent time-saving benefits of a single planning committee.

5.6 With reference to BCP Council, there are clearly challenges with regard to the how the operation of the planning committee may operate due to:

- The complexity of the current adopted development plan and associated supplementary guidance, as comprised from the constituent parts inherited from the former Councils. This means that there are different policies applied to the different areas, some of which include two sets of policies (such as for Christchurch Council where in addition to the Core Strategy there are also saved policies from the previous Local Plan),

⇒ *Given the extent of knowledge and materials required for each area, this would suggest an area-based committee structure reflecting the former areas may be the more appropriate format at this time. Clear planning officer advice (together with appropriate member training) is also key. The consolidation of the library of planning policy documents and associated maps onto a single webpage relevant to the committee coverage is also important, for all participants.*

<sup>10</sup> [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/336864/3rdInquiryReport.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/336864/3rdInquiryReport.pdf)

- Emerging Neighbourhood Plans which add an additional layer of local policy to the development plan (when BCP Council formed there were just two made Neighbourhood Plans, both in Poole (Poole Quays and Broadstone) – since that time the Boscombe and Pokesdown Neighbourhood Plan has been made, and 6 more areas are currently designated for Neighbourhood Planning purposes),  
 ⇒ *The increasing complexity of Neighbourhood Plans (which have the same development plan status but cover smaller areas) would suggest an area-based committee structure may be more appropriate for this reason. It would also be advisable for the Neighbourhood Plan Groups to be canvassed to see if they would wish to play an advisory role at committees in the interpretation of policies.*
- Previous public concerns raised about the Council reorganisation that local areas would receive less attention and representation, and  
 ⇒ *Whilst committee decisions need to be made based upon the development plan, an area-based committee structure would enable meetings to be held closer to the main population affected, and would enable committee members to have greater familiarity with that area (and also limit planning officer involvement to the respective area team).*
- Officer and Councillor's familiarity and knowledge of the area and previous decisions is also likely to be below average due to the re-organisation, and  
 ⇒ *Whilst reducing the number of applications considered by committee may be most effective at reducing direct costs, there are many indirect consequences that also need to be considered, such as the benefits of having greater member involvement that can feed into the review of the Local Plan.*
- Budgetary constraints, recognising the duty to secure continuous improvement in the way in which its functions are exercised (best value), having regard to a combination of economy, efficiency and effectiveness.  
 ⇒

## 6. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 Based on the above considerations, there appear to be more factors in favour of an area-based committee structure than a single committee structure. It is clear that area based committees can and do work effectively in other local authority areas, can benefit more from local knowledge and expertise (including that being developed through the preparation of Neighbourhood Plans), and are more likely to be accessible to the local community, therefore increasing public faith and confidence in the process. There is no evidence to suggest that they result in 'parochial' decision making. There is no evidence to suggest that this arrangement would increase the costs, particularly if the delegation arrangements (which influence the number of applications called in to committee) remains unchanged.

6.2 An area-based structure should reflect the existing local plans, and the planning team arrangements continue to align to the same areas. Any new Neighbourhood Area designations should be encouraged to fall within the area rather than straddling an area. A strategic overview on consistency in the application of strategic policies can and should be provided by the Head of Planning (or delegated to a single officer).

6.3 The committee membership should avoid political influence / bias. This can be achieved through committee member selection (both in terms of proportionate representation and exclusion of Cabinet / Executive members), seating mix during committee and clarity over the role of the ward councillor at committee. In introducing the committee, the Chairperson should clarify the role of the committee with reference to making decisions based on the development plan and other material considerations.

6.4 To improve performance at, and perceptions of, committee meetings, there should be:

- Good communication between officers and committee members prior to Committee, including informal (non-decision making) briefings / questions where relevant to reduce the length of less relevant discussion;

- Clear and reasonably succinct officer presentations. The presentation should identify the most relevant development plan policies, any other material considerations and any clear technical evidence to take into account. A slide / summary highlighting what weight should be given to the key issues when taking a balanced decision is considered to be good practice in focusing the discussion.
- Some flexibility in how the public can speak in the meetings prior to the committee debate – on rare occasions it may be beneficial to hold a public meeting.
- Consideration of the role of Neighbourhood Plan Groups / Forums to play an advisory role at committees in the interpretation of their policies.

6.5 It would be prudent to monitor customer satisfaction on planning including the views of those attending committee, and also those that choose not to attend (to understand the reasons why).

6.6 Planning committee members should be closely involved in the formation and review of planning policy (and this can be at both BCP Local Plan and Neighbourhood Plan levels). They should also look to learn from past decisions by having an annual tour / review of developments that were decided through committee and those decided under delegated powers.

## APPENDICES

### Appendix A – Comparison data presented to the BCP working group

Authority	Population (ranking in England)	Committee structure
Bristol	463,000 10th	2
Kirklees	438,000 11th	3 (2 sub committees 1 strategic)
<b>BCP Council</b>	<b>398,000</b> <b>12th</b>	<b>1</b>
LB Barnet	392,000 13 <sup>th</sup>	3
LB Croydon	385,000 14th	2
Cheshire East	380,000 15th	3 (2 sub committees 1 strategic)
Dorset	376,000 16th	4 (3 sub committees 1 strategic)
LB Newham	352,000 19th	2
East Riding Yorkshire	339,000 23rd	2
LB Enfield	333,000 24th	1 + Planning Panel
LB Bromley	331,000 25th	2
Nottingham	331,000 26th	2 (1 is strategic)

## Appendix B – Comparison Councils Data

Table 4. Population and Council Type comparisons<sup>11</sup>:

Authority	Council Type	Population Size
<b>Manchester</b>	<b>Metropolitan District</b>	<b>552,858</b>
Buckinghamshire <sup>12</sup>	Unitary Authority	543,973
Bradford	Metropolitan District	539,776
<b>County Durham</b>	<b>Unitary Authority</b>	<b>530,094</b>
Wiltshire	Unitary Authority	500,024
Liverpool	Metropolitan District	498,042
<b>Bristol City</b>	<b>Unitary Authority</b>	<b>463,377</b>
<b>Kirklees</b>	<b>Metropolitan District</b>	<b>439,787</b>
<b>Barnet</b>	<b>London Borough</b>	<b>395,869</b>
<b>BCP Council</b>	<b>Unitary Authority</b>	<b>395,331</b>
<b>Croydon</b>	<b>London Borough</b>	<b>386,710</b>
<b>Cheshire East</b>	<b>Unitary Authority</b>	<b>384,152</b>
<b>Dorset</b>	<b>Unitary Authority</b>	<b>378,508</b>
Coventry	Metropolitan District	371,521
Leicester	Unitary Authority	354,224
Newham	London Borough	353,134
Wakefield	Metropolitan District	348,312
<b>Cheshire West and Chester</b>	<b>Unitary Authority</b>	<b>343,071</b>
Ealing	London Borough	341,806
<b>East Riding of Yorkshire</b>	<b>Unitary Authority</b>	<b>341,173</b>
Enfield	London Borough	333,794
Nottingham	Unitary Authority	332,900
<b>Bromley</b>	<b>London Borough</b>	<b>332,336</b>
Brent	London Borough	329,771
<b>Wandsworth</b>	<b>London Borough</b>	<b>329,677</b>
<b>Wigan</b>	<b>Metropolitan District</b>	<b>328,662</b>
Sandwell	Metropolitan District	328,450
Lambeth	London Borough	326,034
Tower Hamlets	London Borough	324,745
Wirral	Metropolitan District	324,011
<b>Shropshire</b>	<b>Unitary Authority</b>	<b>323,136</b>
Northumberland	Unitary Authority	322,434
<b>Hillingdon</b>	<b>London Borough</b>	<b>306,870</b>

<sup>11</sup> Based on Mid-2019: April 2020 local authority district codes

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/populationandmigration/populationestimates/datasets/populationestimatesforukenglandandwalesscotlandandnorthernireland>

<sup>12</sup> Former as a new Unitary authority in April 2020

Table 5. Area and Council comparisons<sup>13</sup>:

Authority	Area (ha)	Council Type	Population Size
Chorley	20,291	Shire District	118,216
Sefton	20,276	Metropolitan District	276,410
North East Lincolnshire	20,266	Unitary Authority	159,563
Windsor and Maidenhead	19,843	Unitary Authority	151,422
Darlington	19,748	Unitary Authority	106,803
Wyre Forest	19,540	Shire District	101,291
<b>Wigan</b>	<b>18,817</b>	<b>Metropolitan District</b>	<b>328,662</b>
Thurrock	18,441	Unitary Authority	174,341
Fylde	18,263	Shire District	80,780
Great Yarmouth	18,256	Shire District	99,336
Warrington	18,238	Unitary Authority	210,014
Wokingham	17,897	Unitary Authority	171,119
Solihull	17,828	Metropolitan District	216,374
<b>BCP Council</b>	<b>17,393</b>	<b>Unitary Authority</b>	<b>395,331</b>
Pendle	16,938	Shire District	92,112
Wellingborough	16,304	Shire District	79,707
<b>St Albans</b>	<b>16,121</b>	<b>Shire District</b>	<b>148,452</b>
Bolsover	16,033	Shire District	80,562
Rochdale	15,813	Metropolitan District	222,412
Brentwood	15,312	Shire District	77,021
Bromley	15,013	London Borough	332,336
Gateshead	14,408	Metropolitan District	202,055
Preston	14,294	Shire District	143,135
Liverpool	13,353	Metropolitan District	498,042
Stockport	12,604	Metropolitan District	293,423
<b>Hillingdon</b>	<b>11,570</b>	<b>London Borough</b>	<b>306,870</b>
<b>Manchester</b>	<b>11,565</b>	<b>Metropolitan District</b>	<b>552,858</b>

<sup>13</sup> Based on Standard Area Measurements (SAM) for the administrative areas in the United Kingdom as at 31 December 2020 <https://geoportal.statistics.gov.uk/datasets/standard-area-measurements-latest-for-administrative-areas-in-the-united-kingdom>



Table 6. Application volume and Council comparisons<sup>14</sup>

Authority	Applications	Council Type	Population Size
Dorset	3,412	Unitary Authority	378,508
Cheshire East	2,896	Unitary Authority	384,152
Bradford	2,870	Metropolitan District	539,776
Barnet	2,705	London Borough	395,869
Shropshire	2,682	Unitary Authority	323,136
Cheshire West and Chester	2,542	Unitary Authority	343,071
East Riding of Yorkshire	2,529	Unitary Authority	341,173
Bromley	2,517	London Borough	332,336
Bristol City	2,463	Unitary Authority	463,377
Richmond upon Thames	2,421	London boroughs	198,019
<b>BCP Council</b>	<b>2,378</b>	<b>Unitary Authority</b>	<b>395,331</b>
Hillingdon	2,361	London boroughs	306,870
Wandsworth	2,305	London Borough	329,677
Sheffield	2,282	Metropolitan District	584,853
County Durham	2,267	Unitary Authority	530,094
East Suffolk	2,202	Shire District	249,461
Central Bedfordshire	2,164	Unitary authorities	288,648
Croydon	2,156	London boroughs	386,710
Brighton and Hove	2,153	Unitary authorities	290,885
Ealing	2,130	London Borough	341,806
Kensington and Chelsea	2,097	London boroughs	156,129
Kirklees	2,059	Metropolitan District	439,787
Northumberland	2,059	Unitary Authority	322,434
Manchester	2,022	Metropolitan District	552,858
South Downs National Park	1,991	National parks	117,000
Brent	1,925	London Borough	329,771
Bath and North East Somerset	1,922	Unitary authorities	193,282
Camden	1,922	London boroughs	270,029
St Albans	1,872	Shire District	148,452
Redbridge	1,871	London boroughs	305,222
Lambeth	1,858	London Borough	326,034
Herefordshire, County of	1,848	Unitary authorities	192,801
South Oxfordshire	1,826	Shire District	142,057
South Gloucestershire	1,767	Unitary authorities	285,093

<sup>14</sup> Based on Table P124A: district planning authorities – ALL planning decisions by local planning authority, year ending September 2020 <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/live-tables-on-planning-application-statistics#district-matter-tables>

## Appendix C: Peer Reviews / Challenges – Advice / Issues Summary

### Dorset<sup>15</sup>

6.7 A Planning Advisory Service Peer Challenge of the Planning Service was undertaken for Dorset Council in 2020. Whilst this did not specifically focus on the committee arrangements, it highlighted that in considering the role of the committee it was important to think about how this could best be focused on decisions where it was possible to add significant value. :

### Cornwall<sup>16</sup>

6.8 The Peer Review for Cornwall considered the committee approach in the Council in some depth. It recognised that strongly held views about local choice and the importance of protecting the communities and landscape had underpinned the initial decision to create an area-based structure. The poor policy framework (at that time Cornwall did not yet have its own Local Plan; and had a shortfall of housing land supply) and finely balanced coalition politics had all contributed to poor decisions being made and overturned at appeal (at that time this had been around 62% of appeals being allowed).

6.9 The report commended a number of actions:

- The single 'key issue' slide that was used to help Committees to stay focussed on the main planning issues raised by the proposed development and what weight should be given to these when taking a balanced decision
- Good communication between officers and councillors prior to Committee (this was notably better in one of the committees)

6.10 It also suggested disbanding the strategic committee, with these decisions delegated to the relevant area-based committee (this recommendation does not appear to have been taken up by the Council) and eliminating the 'cross-examination' of the public / applicants by the Divisional councillor (which was considered to have gone 'too far').

### Enfield<sup>17</sup>

6.11 The 2014 Peer Review for Enfield looked specifically at the planning committee, following on from its planning service review. This operated as a single committee (and still does) sitting at least once a month (and sometimes two or even three times). The recommendations and suggestions made were relatively minor in scope, with perhaps the most significant (and relevant) being:

- Measures to reduce the politicising of the agenda, such as in terms of seating and arrangement (avoiding political groupings) and involvement of the lead member of the opposition in the pre-meeting
- Greater engagement of members in pre-application discussions of major applications
- Consider involving committee members in review work on the Local Plan
- Have an annual tour of completed sites in order to provide the Committee with valuable information on the impact of its decisions and inform future considerations.

### Isle of Wight<sup>18</sup>

6.12 The 2016 Peer Review of the Planning Committee Isle of Wight Council looked at the constitutional and procedural arrangements which were in place for determining planning applications at the single Planning Committee. At that time it was notably underperforming in relation to determining major applications within the statutory period, and a slightly higher than average proportion of overturned

<sup>15</sup> <https://moderngov.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/documents/s21977/APPENDIX%20A%20-%20Dorset%20Peer%20Challenge%20Final%20Report%202020%20Publication%20Version.pdf>

<sup>16</sup> <https://www.cornwall.gov.uk/media/20505029/planning-peer-report-final-070116.pdf>

<sup>17</sup> <https://governance.enfield.gov.uk/documents/s45789/APPENDIX%201%20-%20PAS%20Report%20Recommendations.pdf>

<sup>18</sup> <https://www.iow.gov.uk/Meetings/committees/Planning%20Committee%20from%202013/13-6-16/Paper%20A%20-%20Appendix%20A.pdf>

appeals. The committee meets about once every six weeks (a very high proportion of applications being decided under delegated powers). The recommendations and suggestions made were relatively minor in scope. In addition to further member training, the most notable recommendations included:

- Continue the commendable practice of holding occasional public meetings prior to the formal planning committee meeting for members of the committee to hear public views (but not debate the merits of a scheme), for relevant major and controversial applications.
- Continue the practice of extending the period for public speaking for reasons of natural justice, fairness, or for other reasons to enable the proper determination of an application
- Continue with the annual review of developments granted permission by the committee.

## South Cambridgeshire<sup>19</sup>

6.13 South Cambridgeshire similarly has a single planning committee, which was reviewed relatively recently in the summer of 2020. The report notes that the numbers of applications going in front of Committee are low compared against other councils (but that this is a matter for local determination). The main issue identified by officers and members was in terms of a breakdown in trust and confidence, partly due to the lack of a 5 year housing land supply and growing community frustrations that developments were being approved against the general thrust of the local plan. Probably one of the more notable recommendations (in line with those flagged in other reviews) was:

- Re-establish the Chair's briefing with planning managers to support improved communication between members and officers and explore ways to establish opportunities for informal (non-decision making) pre planning briefings for members of the planning committee, district councillors and parish councillors.

South Lakeland<sup>20</sup>

6.14 South Lakeland District Council's review of its single planning committee in 2015 generally focused on procedural issues such as committee timings, report formats, use of IT in presentations etc.

Test Valley<sup>21</sup>

6.15 The Peer Review of the operation of the Planning Committees for Test Valley Borough Council was undertaken in 2018. At that time the Council was operating two area committees and a Planning Control Committee (dealing with referrals from the area committees where the Head of Planning has identified a possible conflict with policy, public interest or claim for costs against the Council). All Councillors (including cabinet members) sat on one of the area committees. The main issues requiring a review were the poor public and customer experience from those committees (the planning service was otherwise operating effectively in terms of Government targets).

6.16 The report recommended creating one, smaller, Borough wide, committee (no larger than the Planning Control Committee) to make decisions for the whole Borough, or alternatively two smaller area committees (and abolishing the Planning Control Committee). The reasons given were: "to create a more effective and efficient decision making body where the proceedings can be more clearly understood, where all the members are trained to effectively execute the planning decision making function of the Borough and make decisions in the public interest of the whole Borough". The reviewers however did note that the single committee option may be considered 'too radical'. The second (less radical) recommendation appears to have been carried through.

<sup>19</sup> <https://scams.moderngov.co.uk/documents/s120312/Appendix%20A%20->

<sup>20</sup> <https://democracy.southlakeland.gov.uk/documents/s13470/Planning%20Committee%20Peer%20Review%20-%20Appx%201.pdf>

<sup>21</sup> <https://democracy.testvalley.gov.uk/documents/s2384/Item%2011%20Review%20of%20Area%20Planning%20Committees%20-%20Annex%202.pdf>

Waverley<sup>22</sup>

6.17 The Planning Improvement Peer Challenge for Waverley Borough Council took place in 2018. At that time there were four area committees together with a joint planning committee (dealing with the larger, more strategic, and more controversial applications), with the majority of councillors sitting on planning decision making committees. Concerns had been raised that this was an overly complicated and inefficient decision-making processes. The Review Panel also felt that this set-up wrongly gave the impression that Councillors' roles were to represent local community views rather than for decisions to be taken in accord with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise (and with particular focus on the consequences of failing to have a five year housing land supply). They recommended the restructuring of the committee to one strategic planning committee. This recommendation was rejected by members.

Wirral<sup>23</sup>

6.18 The Planning Improvement Peer Challenge for Wirral Metropolitan Borough Council in 2019 examined a wider range of issues arising from the planning service, including proposals to create two Planning Committees to separate out major applications. Instead, the Peer Challenge Panel recommended the existing committee refocus on strategic rather than minor planning applications, together with more informal pre-planning briefings for members to better understand the issues (and for officers to consider what further information that could usefully provide). It does not appear that this option has yet been formally considered by the Council.

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<sup>22</sup> <https://modgov.waverley.gov.uk/documents/s28577/Item%209%20-%20Peer%20Review%20Final%20Report%20to%20Waverley%20BC%20Sept%203%202018%20Appendix%201.pdf>

<sup>23</sup> <https://www.wirral.gov.uk/sites/default/files/all/planning%20and%20building/Wirral%20Council%20Planning%20Peer%20Review%20Final%20Report%20to%20Council%20July%2029%202019.pdf>

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## OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD

Report subject	<b>Forward Plan</b>
Meeting date	15 November 2021
Status	Public Report
Executive summary	The Chairman and Vice Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny (O&S) Board have worked with Officers to identify the priority areas of work for the Board with contributions from the Board members. The work priorities of the Board have been developed on the basis of risk. The proposed Forward Plan is attached at Appendix A. The Board is asked to consider the proposals contained in the Forward Plan and approve or amend the contents. The current published Cabinet Forward Plan is attached at Appendix B to aid the Board in deciding on its priorities for scrutiny.
Recommendations	<b>It is RECOMMENDED that the Overview and Scrutiny Board amend as appropriate and then approve the Forward Plan attached at Appendix A to this report.</b>
Reason for recommendations	The Council's Constitution requires all Overview and Scrutiny bodies to set out proposed work in a Forward Plan which will be published with each agenda.

Portfolio Holder(s):	Not applicable
Corporate Director	Graham Farrant, Chief Executive
Contributors	Lindsay Marshall, Overview and Scrutiny Specialist
Wards	N/A
Classification	For Decision

## Background

1. All Overview and Scrutiny (O&S) bodies are required by the Constitution to consider work priorities and set these out in a Forward Plan. When approved, this should be published with each agenda.
2. The Constitution requires that the Forward Plan of O&S bodies shall consist of work aligned to the principles of the function. The BCP Council O&S function is based upon six principles:
  1. Contributes to sound decision making in a timely way by holding decision makers to account as a 'critical friend'.
  2. A member led and owned function – seeks to continuously improve through self-reflection and development. Enables the voice and concerns of the public to be heard and reflected in the Council's decision-making process.
  3. Engages in decision making and policy development at an appropriate time to be able to have influence.
  4. Contributes to and reflects the vision and priorities of the council.
  5. Agile – able to respond to changing and emerging priorities at the right time with flexible working methods.
3. The O&S Board may take suggestions from a variety of sources to form its Forward Plan. This may include suggestions from members of the public, Officers of the Council, Portfolio Holders, the Cabinet and Council, members of the Board, and other Councillors who are not on the Board.
4. The Constitution requires that all suggestions for O&S work will be accompanied by detail outlining the background to the issue suggested, the proposed method of undertaking the work and likely timescale associated, and the anticipated outcome and value to be added by the work proposed. No item of work shall join the Forward Plan of the O&S Board without an assessment of this information.



### **Summary of financial implications**

5. When establishing a Forward Plan, the Constitution requires the Overview and Scrutiny Board to take into account the resources, including Councillor availability, Officer and financial resources, available to support their proposals.
6. To ensure sufficient resource availability across all O&S bodies, Officer advice is that, in addition to agenda items, one additional item of scrutiny inquiry work may be commissioned by an Overview and Scrutiny body at any one time. This may take the form of a working group or task and finish group, for example. Bodies commissioned by the Overview and Scrutiny Board may have conferred upon them the power to act on behalf of the parent body in considering issues within the remit of the parent body and making recommendations directly to Portfolio Holders, Cabinet, Council or other bodies or people within the Council or externally as appropriate.

### **Summary of legal implications**

7. The Council's Constitution requires all Overview and Scrutiny bodies to set out proposed work in a Forward Plan which will be published with each agenda.

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

8. N/A to this decision

### **Summary of environmental impact**

9. N/A to this decision

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

10. N/A to this decision

### **Summary of equality implications**

11. Any member of the public may make suggestions for Overview and Scrutiny work. Further detail on this process is included with Part 4 of the Council's Constitution.

### **Summary of risk assessment**

12. N/A to this decision.

### **Background papers**

None

### **Appendices**

Appendix A – Overview and Scrutiny Board proposed Forward Plan  
Appendix B – Published Cabinet Forward Plan

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## Forward Plan – BCP Overview and Scrutiny Board

Updated 03.11.21

	Subject and background	Anticipated benefits and value to be added by O&S engagement	How will the scrutiny be done?	Lead Officer / Cabinet Portfolio Holder	Report Information
	<b>Meeting Date – 15 November 2021</b>				
1.	<b>Scrutiny of Cabinet Items</b> To consider items scheduled for Cabinet decision on 24 November. The Chairman should be notified of any items Board Member's wish to scrutinise. Items identified: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>BCP Economic Development Strategy</li> <li>Planning Service Improvement Update</li> <li>Pokesdown Railway Station Improvements</li> </ul>	To enable the Board to consider proposed Cabinet decisions and to make recommendations to Cabinet as appropriate.	Scrutiny of Cabinet reports and invitations to Cabinet Portfolio Holders to respond to questions.	TBC	Any queries to be emailed to the Chair and Democratic Services.
2.	<b>Review of the Multi-Partner Summer Response Plan.</b> To review the plan performance following the summer season.	The O&S Board considered the plan prior to the summer and requested feedback on this.	Committee Report	Sophie Sajic, Head of Seasonal Response	Added to the FP following the Board meeting in June at request of Cllr Rigby – moved from October
3.	<b>Planning Committee Structure</b> The O&S Board considered a request for scrutiny of this issue at its meeting held on 18 October 2021. The Board agreed to add this issue to its Forward Plan.	To enable the Board to consider the current arrangements and issues brought forward by the request for Scrutiny.	Invitation to Portfolio Holders and Officers to respond to questions		Added to the FP following the Boards decision at its meeting in October 2021
	<b>Meeting Date – 6 December 2021</b>				
1.	<b>Scrutiny of Cabinet Items</b> To consider items scheduled for Cabinet decision on 15 December. The Chairman should be notified of	To enable the Board to consider proposed Cabinet decisions and	Scrutiny of Cabinet reports and invitations to	TBC	Any queries to be emailed to the Chair

	<b>Subject and background</b>	<b>Anticipated benefits and value to be added by O&amp;S engagement</b>	<b>How will the scrutiny be done?</b>	<b>Lead Officer / Cabinet Portfolio Holder</b>	<b>Report Information</b>
	any items Board Member's wish to scrutinise. Items identified: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Quarter 2 Budget Monitoring and MTFP report</li> <li>• Levelling Up Report</li> <li>• Biodiversity Net Gain Report</li> <li>• Concessionary bus fares policy</li> </ul>	to make recommendations to Cabinet as appropriate.	Cabinet Portfolio Holders to respond to questions.		and Democratic Services.
<b>2</b>	<b>Crime and Disorder Scrutiny</b> To include an update on the Community Safety Partnership.	To fulfil the Board's statutory responsibility for Crime and Disorder Scrutiny.	Annual report	Cllr May Haines, Community Safety; Andy Williams – Head of Safer Communities	Any queries to be emailed to the Chair and Democratic Services – Moved from August
<b>Meeting Date – 5 January 2022</b>					
<b>1.</b>	<b>Scrutiny of Cabinet Items</b> To consider items scheduled for Cabinet decision on 12 January. The Chairman should be notified of any items Board Member's wish to scrutinise. Items identified: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Acquisition of Queens Park Leisure Centre</li> <li>• Future of Stour Valley Revenues and Benefits Partnership</li> </ul>	To enable the Board to consider proposed Cabinet decisions and to make recommendations to Cabinet as appropriate.	Scrutiny of Cabinet reports and invitations to Cabinet Portfolio Holders to respond to questions.	TBC	Any queries to be emailed to the Chair and Democratic Services.
<b>2.</b>	<b>Enquiry Session - Climate Change</b> At its meeting on Monday 19 July the O&S agreed to add this item to its Forward Plan. Full scope of the issue and participants in the enquiry session are to be determined. To include the annual report on Green Credentials	To enable the Board to retain oversight of the Council's performance against climate change targets and make regular recommendations as required.	Enquiry Session	Mike Greene, Portfolio Holder for Transport and Sustainability	Any queries to be emailed to the Chair and Democratic Services.

	Subject and background	Anticipated benefits and value to be added by O&S engagement	How will the scrutiny be done?	Lead Officer / Cabinet Portfolio Holder	Report Information
	<b>Meeting Date – 31 January 2022</b>				
1.	<b>Scrutiny of Cabinet Items</b> To consider items scheduled for Cabinet decision in February. The Chairman should be notified of any items Board Member's would wish to scrutinise. Items identified: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Seafront Strategy</li> <li>• Cultural Development in BCP</li> <li>• Budget &amp; MTFP 22/23</li> </ul>	To enable the Board to consider proposed Cabinet decisions and to make recommendations to Cabinet as appropriate.	Scrutiny of Cabinet reports and invitations to Cabinet Portfolio Holders to respond to questions.	Various	Any queries to be emailed to the Chair and Democratic Services.
	<b>Meeting Date – 28 February 2022</b>				
1.	<b>Enquiry Session - The Council's use of Digital</b> This session will gather information from officers across the Council. To include Lansdowne trial, plans for a Council Owned WAN, system integration, location of the data centre, commercial partners, system specification, project timescales	To enable the board to gain an oversight and understanding of progress and developments in this area	Enquiry Session		Any queries to be emailed to the Chair and Democratic Services. Added to the FP following the 14 June Meeting at the request of Cllr Slade
<b>Commissioned Work</b> Work commissioned by the Board (for example task and finish groups and working groups) is listed below: Note – to provide sufficient resource for effective scrutiny, one item of commissioned work will run at a time. Further commissioned work can commence upon completion of previous work.					
1.	<b>Working Group – Development of the BCP Local Plan</b> At its meeting on 7 December 2020 the Board	To fulfil the 'overview' element of the Board's role in assisting with the development of policy	A Working Group. The Chairman was agreed as lead member with authority to	Councillor Philip Broadhead, Portfolio Holder for Regeneration,	Any queries to be emailed to the Chair and Democratic Services.

	<b>Subject and background</b>	<b>Anticipated benefits and value to be added by O&amp;S engagement</b>	<b>How will the scrutiny be done?</b>	<b>Lead Officer / Cabinet Portfolio Holder</b>	<b>Report Information</b>
	<p>agreed to establish a working group to assist in the development of the BCP Local Plan.</p> <p>The Group held its initial meeting on 20 January. Regular reports on recommendations and actions of the working group will be reported to the O&amp;S Board.</p>		determine final membership.	Economy and Strategic Planning	
<b>2.</b>	<p><b>Working Group – Enforcement</b></p> <p>At its meeting on 17 May the O&amp;S Board agreed that a working group was needed on this issue to resolve a number of issues discussed. The full scope of the working group is to be determined.</p>	TBD – dependent on scope	Working Group	Cllr M Haines, Portfolio Holder for Community Safety	Any queries to be emailed to the Chair and Democratic Services.
<b>3.</b>	<p><b>Working Group – Tree Strategy</b></p> <p>At its meeting on 14 June the O&amp;S Board agreed that a working group to input into the development of the BCP Council Tree Strategy was required. The full scope of the working group is to be determined.</p>	To ensure that the views of O&S are taken into account when developing the strategy and to ensure wider member engagement	Working Group	Cllr M Anderson, Portfolio Holder for Environment, Cleansing and Waste	Any queries to be emailed to the Chair and Democratic Services.
<p><b>Items to be programmed</b></p> <p>The following items have been identified by the Overview and Scrutiny Board as requiring further scrutiny. Dates are TBC.</p>					
<p><b>Other items previously agreed by the Board</b></p>					
<b>1.</b>	<p><b>Acquisition and Compulsory Purchase Order (CPO) Strategy - TBC</b></p> <p>At its meeting in December 2019 the Board requested to undertake further scrutiny of this strategy, which was referred to as part of the Poole Regeneration report.</p>	To enable the Board to test, challenge and contribute to the development of this strategy prior to its final adoption.	Potentially to be included within an acquisition strategy regeneration paper for September 2021	TBC	Any queries to be emailed to the Chair and Democratic Services – appropriate date to be agreed

	<b>Subject and background</b>	<b>Anticipated benefits and value to be added by O&amp;S engagement</b>	<b>How will the scrutiny be done?</b>	<b>Lead Officer / Cabinet Portfolio Holder</b>	<b>Report Information</b>
<b>2.</b>	<b>Review of Leisure Centre Management</b> At its meeting in December 2019 the Board agreed to receive information from the consultants appointed to undertake the Leisure Services Review prior to its report back to Cabinet.	To enable the Board to have an early opportunity to contribute to the development of the Leisure Centre Review.	TBC	Cllr Mohan Iyengar, Portfolio Holder for Tourism, Leisure and Culture	Any queries to be emailed to the Chair and Democratic Services – appropriate date to be agreed
<b>3.</b>	<b>Maintenance of Key Destination Locations Across BCP / Poole Quay</b> Added following a request made by a Board member at the meeting on 1 April. It was noted that there was no specific provision for this issue. Scoping request has been submitted by Cllr Howell. Further scope for this item is to be discussed.	To enable the Board to have overview of this issue.	TBC		Any queries to be emailed to the Chair and Democratic Services – appropriate date to be agreed
<b>4.</b>	<b>Review of the Domestic Abuse Strategy and Delivery Plan</b> Item requested by Board members during initial consideration of this item to review progress.	To enable the O&S Board to maintain an overview of this issue and to review progress on the delivery plan a year on.	Committee Report	Cllr Bobbie Dove – Community Safety	Any queries to be emailed to the Chair and Democratic Services – appropriate date to be agreed 12 months from May 2021
<b>5.</b>	<b>Poole Bay Surface Water Runoff and Sewage Overflows</b> To consider information from Wessex Water on the use of overflows across BCP, level of water quality and plans for the future use.	To enable the Board to understand the issues and what steps are being taken to resolve these	TBC	Cllr Mark Anderson, Environment, Cleansing and Waste	Item requested by Cllr Rigby at the August 2021 meeting – to be heard within 6 months

	<b>Subject and background</b>	<b>Anticipated benefits and value to be added by O&amp;S engagement</b>	<b>How will the scrutiny be done?</b>	<b>Lead Officer / Cabinet Portfolio Holder</b>	<b>Report Information</b>
<b>6.</b>	<b>The Big Plan</b> The O&S Board agreed to add this item to the Forward Plan at its meeting in October 2021. The Big Plan had been referenced in several areas but had not as yet been considered by O&S.	To enable the O&S Board to gain oversight and potentially review this key policy document.	TBC	Cllr Drew Mellor, Leader of the Council	
<b>Recurring Items</b>					
<b>7.</b>	<b>Crime and Disorder Scrutiny</b> To include scrutiny of the Community Safety Partnership annual report	To fulfil the Board's statutory responsibility for Crime and Disorder Scrutiny	Annual report – August	Cllr Bobbie Dove	
<b>8.</b>	<b>Green Credentials</b> An annual report on the Council's progress to assess our performance against targets in respect of climate change.	To enable the Board to retain oversight of the Council's performance against climate change targets and make regular recommendations as required.	Annual Report to O&S in December	Mike Greene, Portfolio Holder for Transport and Sustainability	



# CABINET FORWARD PLAN

## 1 NOVEMBER 2021 TO 28 FEBRUARY 2022

(PUBLICATION DATE – 26 October 2021)



45

What is the subject?	What is the purpose of the issue?	Is this a Key Decision?	Decision Maker and Due Date	Wards	Who are the key stakeholders to be consulted before the decision is made?	What is the consultation process and period	Officer writing the report	Is the report likely to be considered in private (i.e., it contains confidential or exempt information)?
MTFP Update Report	To provide the latest progress on balancing the 2022/23 budget and the 5 year MTFP position	No	Cabinet 27 Oct 2021  Council 9 Nov 2021	All Wards	Senior Council Leadership	Through CMB	Nicola Webb	Open
Organisational Design - Implementation Progress	To provide an update on progress of implementation of the organisational design and BCP Council operating model	No	Cabinet 27 Oct 2021	All Wards	None	None	Julian Osgathorpe	Open

What is the subject?	What is the purpose of the issue?	Is this a Key Decision?	Decision Maker and Due Date	Wards	Who are the key stakeholders to be consulted before the decision is made?	What is the consultation process and period	Officer writing the report	Is the report likely to be considered in private (i.e., it contains confidential or exempt information)?
Estates and Accommodation - Poole civic space	To propose the design and layout for the Poole civic (vertical slice) and obtain approval for funds to commence remodelling works.	No	Cabinet 27 Oct 2021	All Wards	Coroner, Poole Charter Trustees		Matti Raudsepp	Open
Smart Place Programme – ‘Futures Fund’ funding of Gigabit Fibre and Smart Place Resources	This report sets out the case for ‘Future Fund’ investment in a core gigabit-fibre network across the BCP area in order to deliver operational savings for the Council.	Yes	Cabinet 27 Oct 2021	All Wards			Adrian Hale, Ruth Spencer	
BCP Commissioning Plan for Regeneration and Development and Urban Regeneration Company Business Plan	To seek approval for the URC Business Plan	Yes	Cabinet 27 Oct 2021  Council 9 Nov 2021	All Wards			Dave Anderson	Open

What is the subject?	What is the purpose of the issue?	Is this a Key Decision?	Decision Maker and Due Date	Wards	Who are the key stakeholders to be consulted before the decision is made?	What is the consultation process and period	Officer writing the report	Is the report likely to be considered in private (i.e., it contains confidential or exempt information)?
Skills Commission	to seek Cabinet's approval for the formation of a Skills Commission for Dorset	No	Cabinet 27 Oct 2021	All Wards			Chris Shephard	Open
Children's Services Capital Programme	To advise both CS O and S and then Cabinet	No	Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee 21 Sep 2021  Cabinet 27 Oct 2021	All Wards			Simon Mckenzie, Anthony Douglas, Shirley Haider, Andrew Hind, Sarah Rempel	Open
The BCP Appreciative Inquiry into inclusion practices in BCP schools	To report to Cabinet on the content and recommendations of the Appreciative Inquiry into inclusion practices in BCP schools undertaken during spring/Summer 2021	No	Cabinet 27 Oct 2021	All Wards			Elaine Redding	Open

What is the subject?	What is the purpose of the issue?	Is this a Key Decision?	Decision Maker and Due Date	Wards	Who are the key stakeholders to be consulted before the decision is made?	What is the consultation process and period	Officer writing the report	Is the report likely to be considered in private (i.e., it contains confidential or exempt information)?
Adult Social Care Commissioning Strategies	To seek approval for updated versions of the Care Homes for Older People Strategy and Extra Care Housing Strategy	Yes	Cabinet 27 Oct 2021	All Wards			Phil Hornsby	Open
Estates and Accommodation - BCP civic space	To propose the layout and design for the civic space in BCP civic centre and obtain approval for funds to commence remodeling works.	No	Cabinet 24 Nov 2021	All Wards	Bournemouth Charter Trustees		Joelle Price	Open
BCP Economic Development Strategy (EDS)	To seek Cabinet approval for the Economic Development Strategy for BCP Council	No	Cabinet 24 Nov 2021	All Wards	None	None	Matthew Robson	Open

What is the subject?	What is the purpose of the issue?	Is this a Key Decision?	Decision Maker and Due Date	Wards	Who are the key stakeholders to be consulted before the decision is made?	What is the consultation process and period	Officer writing the report	Is the report likely to be considered in private (i.e., it contains confidential or exempt information)?
An overview of the government's forthcoming Waste Strategy; impacts and opportunities for BCP Council	<p>To provide Members with an update of the forthcoming national waste strategy following the three recent Defra consultations on waste services currently targeted for introduction in 2023. These proposals will necessitate significant transformation to the universal services delivered to households and businesses. As with any complex change programme this will require advanced research, regulatory compliance, modelling, procurement and resources to implement the potential changes to waste services across BCP Council.</p> <p>To provide Members with an overview of the current waste infrastructure across BCP Council. There could be significant opportunities to maximise the efficiency, re-development and re-purposing of sites, as well as the feasibility of potential new sites and partnerships. This will ensure the future of long term operational waste services as new technologies and best practice is introduced to meet government strategies and the Council's Climate and Ecological Emergency ambitions. This work will ensure that BCP Council is in the strongest position in readiness for the retendering of all of the main waste disposal contracts in 2027.</p>	No	Cabinet 24 Nov 2021	All Wards	<p>Kate Ryan - Chief Operations Officer</p> <p>Adam Richens - Chief Finance Officer and Director of Finance</p> <p>Kate Langdown - Director of Environment</p>		Laura Neil	Open

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Pokesdown Railway Station Improvement	To seek confirmation of BCP Future Funds towards improving Pokesdown Station and to enter into a partnership approach Network Rail and South Western Railway	Yes	Cabinet 24 Nov 2021	Boscombe East & Pokesdown	None. As the project progresses the outcomes will be shared with the public for consideration. This decision is to commit the funding towards an initial business case - itself then subject to partnership approvals.	tbc		Open
Ashley Road Petition Report	To update Members on activities to tackle crime and anti-social behaviour in the Ashley Road area, following the petition considered by full Council on 14th September 2021	No	Cabinet 24 Nov 2021	Alderney & Bourne Valley; Newtown & Heatherlands; Parkstone; Penn Hill			Andrew Williams	Open

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A New Planning Service for the BCP Council City Region	To update Cabinet on existing and future actions required to improve the BCP Planning Service	No	Cabinet 24 Nov 2021	All Wards	Senior officers and members	Via CMB process and Planning Improvement Board	Nick Perrins	Open
Written statement of action for special educational needs and disabilities	To set out the requirements for the Council and Dorset Clinical Commissioning Group to submit a written statement of action (WSOA) following the local area inspection of special educational needs and disabilities (SEND); provide assurance on how it is being co-produced; set out progress to date; and seek agreement for delegated authority to the Portfolio Holder for Covid Resilience, Public Health and Education to agree the WSOA on behalf of the Council.	Yes	Cabinet 24 Nov 2021	All Wards	The written statement of action must be co-produced by partners in the SEND system across BCP, this includes the Council, families, the Clinical Commissioning Group, health providers and schools.	Local partners are involved in a co-production process throughout October and November to co-produce the written statement (details as set out in the report) inline with the deadline for submitting the WSOA.	Claire Webb	Open

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Housing and Property Compliance Update (Housing Revenue Account)	To provide assurance that Council homes within the Bournemouth and Poole Neighbourhoods are being managed in accordance with health and safety legislation and best practice and that the Council is compliant with current regulations and standards.	No	Cabinet 15 Dec 2021	All Wards			Lorraine Mealings	Open
Quarter Two Budget Monitoring and MTFP Report	To provide budget monitoring information for the end for quarter 2 with explanations for significant variances. The report may also include budget virements for approval by Cabinet or Council.	No	Cabinet 15 Dec 2021  Council 4 Jan 2022	All Wards	CMB	CMB	Nicola Webb	Open



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Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) Update	To provide an update on progress in the development of the 5-year MTFP.	No	Cabinet 15 Dec 2021  Council 4 Jan 2022	All Wards	CMB and Lead Member	CMB	Adam Richens	Open
Levelling Up	to demonstrate how existing and future projects contribute to Government's Levelling Up agenda	Yes	Cabinet 15 Dec 2021	All Wards	no official consultation required	n/a	Chris Shephard	Open
Biodiversity Net Gain	To update Cabinet on emerging statutory provisions for Biodiversity Net Gain within the planning system and preparations underway and required for BCP Council to proactively respond	No	Cabinet 15 Dec 2021	All Wards	Senior officers and members and Environment Directorate	Via CMB process	Nick Perrins	Open

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Schools Admissions Arrangements 2023/2024 for community and maintained schools	This item is for information only prior to the report going to Cabinet on 24th November 2021	No	Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee 23 Nov 2021  Cabinet 15 Dec 2021	All Wards			Sarah Rempel	Open
Home to School Transport	To present the report for sign off (pre consultation report previously presented to Cabinet and O and S in June 2021)	No	Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee 23 Nov 2021  Cabinet 15 Dec 2021	All Wards			Rachel Gravett, Andrew Hind	Open

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Climate Action Annual Report 2020/21	<p>To update on progress towards achieving BCP Council's targets to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• make BCP Council and its operations carbon neutral by 2030</li> <li>• work with the wider community to make the BCP Council Area carbon neutral before the UK target of 2050</li> </ul> <p>Report will look back over activities and achievements in 2020, and set out planned action up to the target dates of 2030 and 2050.</p>	No	<p>Cabinet 15 Dec 2021</p> <p>Council 4 Jan 2022</p>	All Wards	Portfolio Holder, Executive Officers, Climate Action Steering Group	Input sought from services in the development of the report. Paper to Climate Action Steering Group/CMB/Scrutiny/Cabinet/Council.	Roxanne King, Kate Langdown, Ian Poultney	Open
Acquisition of Queen Parks Leisure Centre	To consider the proposal to acquire Queens Park Leisure Centre in Bournemouth.	Yes	Cabinet 12 Jan 2022	Queen's Park			Amanda Barrie	Fully exempt

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Future of the Stour Valley and Poole Revenues and Benefits Partnership	To consider the future of the Stour Valley and Poole Partnership (SVPP).	Yes	Cabinet 12 Jan 2022	All Wards	Stour Valley and Poole Partnership Joint Committee	Consideration further to discussion at the Stour Valley and Poole Partnership Joint Committee in October 2021 and Dorset Council in December 2021.	Adam Richens	Open
Coastal Business Improvement District (BID) Renewal Ballot	Coastal BID is preparing to take their renewal proposals to a postal ballot in Spring 2022. This report seeks Cabinet approval for the Council to support Coastal BID for its third five-year term.	No	Cabinet 12 Jan 2022	Boscombe East & Pokesdown; Boscombe West; Bournemouth Central; East Cliff & Springbourne ; East Southbourne & Tuckton; West Southbourne; Westbourne & West Cliff			Liz Orme	Open

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Bournemouth Town Centre Business Improvement District (BID) Renewal Ballot	Bournemouth Town Centre BID is preparing to take their renewal proposals to a postal ballot in Spring 2022. This report seeks Cabinet approval for the Council to support Bournemouth Town Centre BID for its third five-year term.	No	Cabinet 12 Jan 2022	Bournemouth Central; Westbourne & West Cliff			Liz Orme	Open
BCP Seafront Strategy	Updated strategy	No	Cabinet 9 Feb 2022		Seafront Strategy Board, Ward Councillors, land owners, NGOs, DMB, BIDs, Seafront User Groups, Resident Groups in coastal wards.	Two stage consultation around vision, aims, objectives and high level delivery plan. To take place across June, July & August.	Andrew Emery	Open

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Cultural Development in Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole	To ask for Cabinet's approval of a strategic review of arts festivals in BCP and recommendations for governance, programming, marketing and production aimed at ensuring the festivals ecology meets BCP's objectives and provides maximum reach, value and provision for BCP residents. To also advise Cabinet on Council applications for Arts Council National Portfolio Organisation support in 2022 and advise on the overall picture of applications from the locality.	No	Cabinet 9 Feb 2022	All Wards	Cultural organisations, Arts Council England, BCP Cultural Compact board and consultative group.	Informal engagement May-September 2021	Michael Spender	Open

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Home to School Transport	This comes back to CS O and S and Cabinet post consultation (pre consultation reports to CS O and S and Cabinet in Sept)	No	Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee 25 Jan 2022  Cabinet 9 Feb 2022	All Wards			Rachel Gravett	Open
Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Budget Setting 2022/23	To set the HRA budget for April 2022 to March 2023	Yes	Cabinet 9 Feb 2022  Council 22 Feb 2022	All Wards	CMB, Portfolio Holder for Homes, Director of Finance, Head of Legal Services, Poole Housing Partnership	Internal consultation prior to decision November - December	Lorraine Mealings	Open

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BCP Council Cemeteries Rules & Regulations adoption	To present to and be adopted by Cabinet a harmonised set of Cemeteries Rules & Regulations for BCP Council, in accordance with the local Government Act 1972 and the Local Authorities Cemeteries Order 1977	Yes	Cabinet 9 Feb 2022	All Wards			Andy McDonald	Open
Bus Operator Enhanced Partnership Plan	Cabinet is asked to recommend to Council to support the making of the Enhanced Partnership Plan and Scheme(s).	No	Cabinet 9 Feb 2022  Council 22 Feb 2022	All Wards			John McVey	Open
School Admissions Arrangements 2023/24 for community and maintained schools	Following the completion of public consultation, Cabinet to determine the 2023/24 admission arrangements for community and maintained schools	No	Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee 25 Jan 2022  Cabinet 9 Feb 2022	All Wards			Angie Hill, Andrew Hind, Debra Jones, Sarah Rempel	Open



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Budget and Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) 2022/23	To approve the budget for 2022/23 and provide an update on the 5-year MTFP	No	Cabinet 9 Feb 2021  Council 22 Feb 2022	All Wards	TBC	TBC	Adam Richens	Open
Corporate Asset Management Plan	To approve the Corporate Asset Management Plan	Yes	Cabinet 9 Mar 2022				Chris Shephard	

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Bereavement Services Business Plan Update	To update Cabinet on the progress made since the adoption of BCP Council Bereavement Plan 2021 -26 and the future options for investment into Poole Crematorium as a continued site for the bereaved.	Yes	Cabinet 25 May 2022	All Wards	Council, Councillors, Funeral Directors, General Public		Andy McDonald	Open

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Christchurch Bay and Harbour FCERM Strategy	Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole Council (BCP) and New Forest District Council (NFDC) are working together with the Environment Agency to produce a new strategy to protect coastal communities from tidal flooding and erosion risk. It will guide how the frontage from Hengistbury Head to Hurst Spit, encompassing Christchurch Harbour, will be sustainably managed for the next 100 years.	No	Cabinet 12 Apr 2023	Christchurch Town; East Southbourn e & Tuckton; Highcliffe & Walkford; Mudeford, Stanpit & West Highcliffe	Landowners, BCP residents, businesses, organisations, BCP services	Several levels of public enegagement and consultation throughout the development of the Strategy between 2021 and 2023.	Catherine Corbin, Alan Frampton, Matt Hosey	Open

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Corporate Strategy	To update Cabinet on the corporate strategy	No	Cabinet Date to be confirmed	All Wards	None	None	Bridget West	Open

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South Part of Beach Road Car Park Poole	Appropriation and disposal for housing (in accordance with its local plan allocation) subject to an approved and adopted Development Brief by the Local Planning Authority, being in place.	Yes	Cabinet Council  Dates to be confirmed	Canford Cliffs	Portfolio holders for 1.Regeneration, Economy & Strategic Planning, 2. Tourism,Leisure Culture, 3.Community Safety and 4. Transport & Sustainability.	The disposal approval is sought, subject to an adopted Development brief being in place, and if Cabinet give the Local Planning Authority (LPA) approval to consult the public on the Development brief, then all portfolio holders local residents association and other interested parties from the public will have an opportunity to make representations through the LPA's 6 week public consultation process.	Irene Ferns	Open

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Pay & Reward - New Terms and Conditions of Employment	To seek approval for the Council's new terms and conditions of employment, including new pay and grading arrangements.	No	Cabinet Date to be confirmed		Proposals have been developed through a process of collective bargaining with recognised Trade Unions. CMB, directorate leadership teams and employees have also been consulted at various stages during the project and informed the development of proposals		Lucy Eldred, Jon Burrows	Fully exempt
Library Strategy	To produce a library strategy across all BCP libraries and the development of libraries as neighbourhood hubs.	No	Cabinet Date to be confirmed					Open

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Russell Coates Arts Gallery Museum Governance Report	To consider the formation of a separate charitable entity for Russell Cotes Art Gallery & Museum.	No	Cabinet Date to be confirmed		RCAGM Mgt Committee Charity Commission Arts Council	All parties have been involved with initial feasibility and continue to be actively engaged.	Sarah Newman, Chris Saunders	Open
Beach Hut Policy	Harmonisation of policy, pricing, team location and booking system	No	Cabinet Date to be confirmed		Beach Hut Associations, I Beach Hut owners/ tenants, and for some of the work a more general consultation with BCP residents.	Consultation with the Beach Hut Associations will take place over the course of the project. More formal consultation will take place with Beach Hut Owners & Tenants and if required a suitable sample of BCP residents (between April a2020 and April 2021).	Andrew Brown	Open

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Adoption of Ducking Stool Walk, Christchurch	To consider a request from Priory Mews Management Company for BCP Council to adopt the land and structures forming the Public Right of Way known as Ducking Stool Walk	No	Cabinet Date to be confirmed	Christchurch Town	Leader of the Council (Cllr Drew Mellor); Portfolio Holder (Cllr Mark Anderston); Ward Councillors (Cllr Peter Hall and Cllr Mike Cox);	Informal consultation to inform the report	Alan Ottaway	Open
Western Gateway Sub-national Transport Body (STB)- Strategic Transport Plan	To advise Cabinet of the STB's intention to adopt its Strategic Transport Plan at its Board meeting in December 2020 subject to agreement of all its constituent members. This is also subject to the outcome of an active consultation period which will close on 31st July 2020.	No	Cabinet Date to be confirmed	All Wards	Portfolio Holders for Transport and Infrastructure and Environment and Climate Change.	A public consultation is active until 31 July 2020 <a href="https://westerngatewaystb.org.uk/">https://westerngatewaystb.org.uk/</a>	Julian McLaughlin, Ewan Wilson	Open



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Children's Safeguarding Arrangements	To present reviewed arrangements	No	Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee  Cabinet  Dates to be confirmed	All Wards			Rachel Gravett	Open
Bournemouth Learning Centre conversion to a Special School Campus - Capital budget approval		No	Cabinet Date to be confirmed	All Wards				Open
Poole Regeneration Update	To update Cabinet and the public on projects and activities in Poole Town Centre	No	Cabinet Date to be confirmed	Poole Town	relevant stakeholders to the Poole Regeneration Programme		Chris Shephard	Open

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Thistle Hotel, Poole Quay - Lease restructure	To seek authorisation to restructure a lease to enable a third party Hotel/Residential development to proceed	No	Cabinet Date to be confirmed	Poole Town			Rebecca Bray	Open
Crime & Disorder Reduction Strategy	To agree & adopt a BCP Crime & Disorder Reduction Strategy	No	Cabinet Date to be confirmed	All Wards	Community Safety Partnership		Andrew Williams	Open