

BOURNEMOUTH, CHRISTCHURCH AND POOLE COUNCIL
OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD

Minutes of the Meeting held on 30 September 2025 at 6.00 pm

Present:-

Cllr K Salmon – Chairman

Present: Cllr J Beesley, Cllr P Canavan, Cllr L Dedman, Cllr C Goodall,
Cllr S Mackrow, Cllr L Northover, Cllr Dr F Rice, Cllr T Trent,
Cllr O Walters, Cllr C Weight and Cllr G Wright

Also in attendance: Cllr A Chapmanlaw, Cllr K Rampton, Cllr B Nanovo, Cllr A Moriarty,
Cllr D d'Orton-Gibson, Cllr L Williams, Cllr T Slade, Cllr A Keddie, Cllr
D Martin and Cllr M Earl

Also in attendance virtually: Cllr J Challinor, Cllr S Armstrong, Cllr S Carr-Brown, Cllr M Dower,
Cllr O Brown, Cllr C Adams, Cllr J Butt, Cllr B Dove and Cllr D Farr

42. Apologies

Apologies were received from the Vice-Chair Cllr S Aitkenhead.

43. Substitute Members

Cllr J Martin substituted for Cllr S Aitkenhead.

44. Declarations of Interests

There were no declarations of interest made on this occasion. The Chair reminded all Councillors that the Interim monitoring officer had issued a dispensation for Councillors in relation to the Community Governance Review.

45. Public Issues

One Public Question and 2 public statements were received as follows in relation to agenda Item 6 – Community Governance Review – Final Recommendations:

Question from Mr B Lister

We already have 76 Councillors Representing 33 wards.

If All Those Represented Their Ward Constituents Properly With Funded Laptops, Constituency Meetings, CIL Funding & Generous Return For Part Time Work.

Town Councillors Would Get Exactly What??

Why DO We Need Them, How Many Would They Be?

WHAT would the Taxpayers Precept Charge Be In Years 2026 & 2027?

Response from Cllr O Walters as Chair of the Task and Finish Group:

To clarify, there are 76 councillors representing BCP Council, however, there are also a further 53 councillors representing the existing town and parish councils of Burton and Winkton, Hurn, Highcliffe & Walkford, Christchurch and Throop & Holdenhurst.

If the recommendations are approved there would be an additional 50 councillors created.

The vast majority of town and parish councils do not provide IT equipment and do not normally receive allowances.

Parish and town councils can play a vital role in supporting and representing local communities, individuals and events, act as statutory consultee on a number of regulatory matters and act as the first point of contact locally.

BCP Council will be required to agree a first year anticipated budget for the new councils which will be worked on over the coming months if the recommendations are approved. It will be for the new councils, once elected, to agree their actual budget for 2026 and for all future years.

Statement from Mr H Seccombe, Chair of the Boscombe and Pokesdown Community Forum:

Boscombe has spent 15 years building genuine community-led governance — a Forum, a Towns Fund Board managing £20million in grant funding, a Neighbourhood Plan with community-distributed CIL, and transparent local decision-making.

Imposing a Bournemouth Town Council will dismantle all of this. Residents rejected the proposal not out of apathy, but because Boscombe already has trusted, functioning systems. To override that rejection — while denying Boscombe its own parish — suggests a pre-determined agenda, not genuine localism. This is not parity. Throop is permitted a parish; Boscombe is denied one.

The consultation process was flawed: many residents were unaware that rejecting a Boscombe parish could lead to forced inclusion in a larger one. This directly contradicts the aim of “strengthening local voices.” It risks silencing one of the strongest and undoing years of hard-won community progress. We urge councillors to reject the recommendation and support a separate Boscombe parish or leave Boscombe out altogether.

Statement from Mr H Seccombe in a personal capacity:

Southbourne is a proud, distinct, and community-minded area with its own forum, coastline, independent shops, and a long record of civic participation. It has the identity and infrastructure to support a parish council — just as much as the already approved Throop.

To deny Southbourne a parish while imposing a larger Bournemouth Town Council is a serious democratic failure. It overrides local identity in favour of administrative convenience, and risks silencing the very voices parish councils are meant to strengthen. Residents were not clearly informed that rejecting a Southbourne parish could lead to forced inclusion in a wider Bournemouth council. This flaw undermines the legitimacy of the process and contradicts the principle of consent.

If this new model must go ahead, it must include space for genuinely local parishes like Southbourne — not just subsume them. At the very least, Southbourne should be permitted its own parish council or left out altogether.

46. Work Plan

The Chair advised that the report had been presented to the meeting the previous week and there were no further updates, as such it was proposed that the report be noted. A copy of the report had been circulated to each Member and a copy appears as Appendix 'A' to these minutes in the Minute Book.

RESOLVED that the work plan be noted.

Voting: Nem. Con.

47. Community Governance Review - Final Recommendations

The Chair of the Task and Finish Group presented a report, a copy of which had been circulated to each Member and a copy of which appears as Appendix 'B' to these minutes in the Minute Book. The Board was advised that the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 (Part 4) devolved power from the Secretary of State to principal councils to carry out community governance reviews and put in place or make changes to local community governance arrangements. The Council commenced a review following the Council decision in October 2024 at which the terms of reference and timetable were approved. The Task and Finish Group has considered the response to the consultation, taking into account all relevant factors, engaged with local ward councillors and existing parish councils before determining these recommendations.

Introduction and External Contributions

The Chair of the Task and Finish Group introduced the report and outlined the process undertaken. It was noted that the consultation had received 1,866 responses, representing approximately 0.5% of the BCP population. The proposals had been amended in response to feedback, including reductions in Councillor numbers and boundary adjustments.

The Board then received the following presentations and had the opportunity to ask questions:

- The Chief Executive of the Dorset Association of Parish and Town Councils, who outlined the role, powers, and funding mechanisms of local councils.
- The Vice President of the Association of Charter Trustee Towns, who submitted a written statement highlighting the importance of preserving civic traditions and the role of charter trustees.

The meeting adjourned at 6:45pm and resumed at 6:50pm

Contributions from Non-Board Councillors

The Chair invited non-Board Councillors address the meeting. Due to the number of non-Board Councillors who wished to speak each was given approximately two minutes to share their views. There were a number of issues raised, including:

- Concerns that the proposals were top-down and lacked grassroots support.
- Objections to the Bournemouth Town Council proposal, citing low consultation response rates and potential duplication of existing community structures.
- Support for the principle of localism and the potential for town councils to protect non-statutory services.
- Warnings about the political risks of proceeding without broader public support.

The following questions were raised and responded to:

- The confidentiality of the consultation results was questioned and it was clarified that the task and finish group was not subject to the same rules as Cabinet and therefore the specific procedure rule outlined did not apply, and that the draft results contained personal identifiers, justifying their restricted access.
- The estimated cost of elections for the proposed town councils and how long it would take to repay those. It was stated that the estimated costs were £36,700 for Broadstone, £412,900 for Poole, and £483,900 for Bournemouth, with an estimated £7.20 per property in the first year. BCP Council would fund the elections upfront and recover costs through council tax.
- In response to a question about where the idea for a Bournemouth Town Council originated. It was explained that it was part of the administration's 2023 election manifesto and followed statutory guidance for a Community Governance Review.

General Discussion and Clarifications

The following key issues were raised and discussed:

- The legal and procedural basis for the CGR process, including the role of the Task and Finish Group and the status of the consultation.
- The anticipated costs of elections for new councils and how these would be recovered.
- The limitations of charter trustees in delivering community services and civic functions.
- The potential for future community councils to be established through petition.
- It was proposed and seconded that the Board should not support the recommendation outlined in the report at 'C' which proposed the continuation

of the task and finish group to address amongst other things the transfer of ceremonial assets as these were the domain of the existing Charter Trustees. It was clarified that the only statutory service proposed for transfer to new town councils was allotments. The Task and Finish Group would be responsible for preparing budgets and identifying assets for transfer (including civic regalia), whilst BCP Council retained responsibility for setting the initial precept as the billing authority. The motion was not carried.

Discussion and Decisions by area:

Existing Parish and Town Councils (Sections A–E)

The continuation of the existing parish and town councils in Christchurch and Bournemouth was supported, with minor boundary amendments as proposed.

It was noted that some consultation responses appeared to misunderstand that these councils already existed. Some concerns were raised in terms of the number of Councillors, noting that some wards were uncontested and the proportion of Councillors to electors would be far higher in Christchurch than Bournemouth and Poole should Town Councils be established.

RESOLVED that the Board support that the recommendations of the Task and Finish Group relating to proposals for Burton and Winkton (A), Hurn (B), Highcliffe & Walkford (C) Christchurch Town (D) and Throop and Holdenhurst (E) be recommended to Council for approval without amendment.

Voting: 9 in favour, 0 against, 4 abstentions

Broadstone Town Council (Section F)

The proposal to create a new Town Council in Broadstone was outlined. It was acknowledged that the consultation response from Broadstone residents was mixed. However, the distinct identity of Broadstone and the clarity around the boundaries were provided as reasons for proceeding with a recommendation to create this Town Council. The Board asked questions and commented on a number of issues in discussion of this proposal. The Board members commented that Broadstone had always had somewhat of a unique identity within the Borough of Poole.

The rationale for establishing a separate Broadstone Town Council, rather than including it within a wider Poole Town Council, was based on the area's strong local identity and clearly defined boundaries. Despite a majority of consultation responses from Broadstone residents opposing the proposal, it was considered that the community would benefit from dedicated local representation. Concerns were raised about consistency in decision-making and the dismissal of similar community-led structures in other areas.

RESOLVED that the Board support that the recommendations of the Task and Finish Group relating to Broadstone (F) be recommended to Council for approval without amendment.

Voting: 7 in favour, 4 against, 2 abstentions

Community Councils in Bournemouth (Section G–I)

The proposals to establish community councils in Redhill and Northbourne, Boscombe and Pokesdown, and Southbourne were not supported by the Task and Finish Group. One of the reasons for this was the difficulty in defining clear boundaries for all of the proposed areas. The presence of existing community forums was also a factor.

It was noted that the consultation responses did not demonstrate sufficient support for any of the proposals and there was also a lack of people willing to stand as community councillors in these areas. The area for Redhill appeared to be too small to be viable and it was also noted that the community assets were used by a wider population. Whilst some consideration was given to redefining boundaries it was not felt that there were other areas which would naturally fall within this area. In Southbourne, whilst there was a strong community identity, where the boundaries for the wards and community council area should be were more difficult to define. Members noted that there were strong opinions from some areas of Bournemouth to identify with their local area.

RESOLVED that the Board support that the recommendations of the Task and Finish Group relating to Redhill and Northbourne (G), Boscombe and Pokesdown (H) and Southbourne (I) be recommended to Council for approval without amendment.

Voting: 9 in favour; 0 against; 4 abstentions

The meeting adjourned at 8:36pm and resumed at 8:44pm

Poole Town Council (Section J)

The Board was advised that the proposal to establish a Poole Town Council was supported by the Task and Finish Group. The Board discussed the proposal extensively and the views of Board members were mixed. Issues raised included:

- The limitations of the charter trustees in delivering civic functions and the inability of the Charter Trustees to organise even small events.
- The historical identity of Poole and the desire for local representation were cited as key reasons to progress a Town Council.
- Concerns were raised about the consultation results and the potential for future precept increases.
- Concerns were raised that the proposal ignored public opinion from the consultation and that there was no clear direction on what the Council would do or what services it would take on.
- The financial implications of establishing a new Council were discussed including the ability to raise funds for surveys which it was no longer possible for BCP Council to provide.
- Concerns were raised regarding predetermination in putting forward this proposal and also the potential future political implications.

RESOLVED that the Board support That the recommendations of the Task and Finish Group relating to Poole Town (J) be recommended to Council for approval without amendment.

Voting: 7 in favour, 2 against 4 abstentions

Cllr J Beesley and Cllr G Wright asked for their votes against the proposal to be recorded.

Cllr T Trent asked that his vote in favour of the proposal be recorded.

Bournemouth Town Council (Section K)

The proposal to establish a Bournemouth Town Council was supported by the Task and Finish Group. However, this was on the narrowest of margins with the Chair of the Group using his casting vote. There were a number of issues around ward boundaries that the Chair of the Task and Finish Group advised had been difficult to work out and asked Board members for any comments they may have on this. A wide-ranging debate was held, with a number of views expressed both in favour and against the proposals. The Leader also responded to a number of issues raised in discussion. Issues raised included:

- That the consultation results—showing 76% opposition—were being disregarded, and that existing neighbourhood forums already provided effective local governance.
- That the whole process had been very much on a top down approach but none of the alternatives to the proposal appeared to be acceptable.
- There were lots of issues raised in the BCP area for what people wanted and a Bournemouth Town Council would be a vehicle to achieve this.
- The main budget issue for BCP Council was the SEND deficit and creating local councils would not have an impact on this
- It was noted that both Bournemouth MPs do not support a Town Council.
- It was noted that the average precept was around £89 across country but the new parish Council could choose not to take on any services and have a minimal precept.
- Supporters highlighted the need for local investment and democratic representation at a local level.
- Opponents raised concerns about the consultation results, the potential cost, and the impact on existing community structures.

RESOLVED that the Board support that the recommendations of the Task and Finish Group relating to Bournemouth Town (K) be recommended to Council for approval without amendment.

Voting: A recorded vote on this issue was requested and agreed:

Those voting in favour: Cllrs F Rice, L Dedman, C Weight, O Walters, T Trent, S Mackrow and C Goodall.

Those against: Cllr P Canavan, J Martin, L Northover, J Beesley and G Wright

Cllr K Salmon abstained

Implementation and Budget Setting

RESOLVED that the Board support that recommendations at 'B' and 'C' of the report be recommended to Council without amendment as follows:

(b) the Head of Democratic Services be authorised to make all necessary reorganisation of community governance orders to implement the changes agreed by Council;

(c) the Task and Finish Group continue to consider the transfer of civic and ceremonial assets, statutory services and precept requirements for year 1, for each new parish, on the basis of minimal transfer and precept, and a report be presented to full Council in due course.

Voting: 8 in favour; 1 against; 4 abstentions

Consultation Process

The Board discussed the consultation process and noted the following:

- The low response rate limited the ability to draw firm conclusions.
- The consultation was conducted in accordance with statutory guidance.
- Concerns were raised about the clarity and accessibility of the consultation materials.
- The Board agreed that the consultation process should be reviewed by the existing working group on public engagement.

48. Council Budget Monitoring 2025/26 at Quarter One

This report, a copy of which had been circulated to each Member and a copy of which appears as Appendix 'C' to these Minutes in the Minute Book was circulated to Board members for information. No comments or questions were received on this in advance of the meeting and the report was noted.

The meeting ended at 10.02 pm

CHAIRMAN