

Notice of Cabinet

Date: Tuesday, 13 May 2025 at 10.15 am

Venue: HMS Phoebe, BCP Civic Centre, Bournemouth BH2 6DY



Membership:

Chairman:

Cllr M Earl

Vice Chairman:

Cllr M Cox

Cllr D Brown
Cllr R Burton
Cllr A Hadley

Cllr J Hanna
Cllr R Herrett
Cllr A Martin

Cllr S Moore
Cllr K Wilson

All Members of the Cabinet are summoned to attend this meeting to consider the items of business set out on the agenda below.

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=6062>

If you would like any further information on the items to be considered at the meeting please contact: Sarah Culwick (01202 817615) on 01202 096660 or email democratic.services@bcpCouncil.gov.uk

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

This notice and all the papers mentioned within it are available at democracy.bcpCouncil.gov.uk

GRAHAM FARRANT
CHIEF EXECUTIVE

2 May 2025

**DEBATE
NOT HATE**



Available online and
on the Mod.gov app



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



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.

Bias Test

In all the circumstances, would it lead a fair minded and informed observer to conclude that there was a real possibility or a real danger that the decision maker was biased?

Predetermination Test

At the time of making the decision, did the decision maker have a closed mind?

If a councillor appears to be biased or to have predetermined their decision, they must NOT participate in the meeting.

For more information or advice please contact the Monitoring Officer
(janie.berry@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 Councillors.

2. 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.

3. Confirmation of Minutes

To confirm and sign as a correct record the minutes of the Meeting held on 2 April 2025.

7 - 18

4. Public Issues

To receive any public questions, statements or petitions submitted in accordance with the Constitution. Further information on the requirements for submitting these is available to view at the following link:-

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

The deadline for the submission of public questions is mid-day on Wednesday 7 May 2025 [mid-day 3 clear working days before the meeting].

The deadline for the submission of a statement is mid-day on Monday 12 May 2025 [mid-day the working day before the meeting].

The deadline for the submission of a petition is Friday 25 April 2025 [10 working days before the meeting].

5. Recommendations from the Overview and Scrutiny Committees

To consider recommendations from the Overview and Scrutiny committees on items not otherwise included on the Cabinet Agenda.

ITEMS OF BUSINESS

6. Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) Update

19 - 46

This report:

- Presents an update on Local Government Funding Reforms and the government Spring Statement.
- Aims to ensure the council presents a legally balanced 2026/27 budget.
- Proposes a budget planning process and timeline for key financial reports.
- Proposes a financial strategy to support the delivery of a robust and financially sustainable budget for 2026/27.

7.	BCP Local Plan next steps, updated Local Development Scheme (LDS) and Statement of Community Involvement (SCI)	47 - 94
	<p>Following Stage 1 examination hearings on the draft BCP Local Plan in January 2025, the Inspectors provided a post hearing letter in early March 2025. The letter stated that the Council had failed to adequately discharge the Duty to Cooperate. This is not something that can be rectified during the examination.</p> <p>Cabinet is therefore recommended to withdraw the draft BCP Local Plan from examination.</p> <p>The associated Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Charging Schedule that was submitted for its own examination at the same time is also recommended to be withdrawn due its strong ties with the draft Local Plan.</p> <p>If Cabinet and Council agree the withdrawal of the Local Plan and CIL Charging Schedule, a new Local Plan will need to be prepared. A timetable (Local Development Scheme - LDS) for this new Plan is recommended in Appendix 1.</p> <p>To facilitate community involvement and good plan making and development management processes, an updated Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) is also recommended for Cabinet to agree at Appendix 2.</p>	
8.	Our Place and Environment: Consolidated Active Travel Fund 2025/26	95 - 104
	<p>The Council has been allocated and accepted £1.459m Consolidated Active Travel Fund (CATF) grant from Active Travel England (ATE) for walking, wheeling and cycling improvements to deliver schemes aligned with the Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) approved by Council in May 2022.</p> <p>The award comprises £1.128m of capital and £331k of revenue funding.</p> <p>This report recommends how the grant award should be invested and seeks delegation to facilitate delivery.</p>	
9.	Russell-Cotes Art Gallery and Museum Arts Council England (ACE) Museum Estate and Development (MEND) Grant	105 - 108
	<p>In August 2024 the Russell-Cotes Art Gallery and Museum applied for a grant from Arts Council England (ACE)'s Museum Estate and Development Fund Round 4, to fund urgent repair work on the fabric of the building.</p> <p>In February 2025, ACE wrote to confirm success and an allocation of £1,500,817, match funded by £250,000 from CIL and £109,317 from legacies to the Museum charity, making a total project grant of £1,860,134.</p> <p>This paper informs Cabinet of this success and seeks delegation to formally accept the grant and invest awarded money and match funds in line with the application to ACE.</p>	

10. BCP Complaints Policy

109 - 150

An effective complaints process demonstrates commitment to accountability, fosters trust amongst customers and stakeholders, and provides a structured way to address concerns appropriately and promptly.

Recent revisions to the Local Government Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code have introduced changes designed to enhance the efficiency, transparency and responsiveness of local authorities in handling complaints. These modifications affect the operations and policies of all UK local authorities.

The BCP Council Complaints Policy has been updated and additionally, a separate new policy has also been prepared regarding Unreasonable Actions, as also recommended by the Local Government Ombudsman.

11. Urgent Decisions taken by the Chief Executive in accordance with the Constitution

The Chief Executive to report on any decisions taken under urgency provisions in accordance with the Constitution.

12. Cabinet Forward Plan

151 - 162

To consider the latest version of the Cabinet Forward Plan for approval.

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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BOURNEMOUTH, CHRISTCHURCH AND POOLE COUNCIL

CABINET

Minutes of the Meeting held on 02 April 2025 at 10.15 am

Present:-

Cllr M Earl – Chairman

Present: Cllr D Brown, Cllr R Burton, Cllr A Hadley, Cllr J Hanna,
Cllr R Herrett, Cllr A Martin, Cllr S Moore and Cllr K Wilson

Also in attendance: Cllr P Canavan (Chair of the Health and Adult Social Care Overview
and Scrutiny Committee), Cllr G Farquhar, Cllr C Rigby (Chair of the
Environment and Place Overview and Scrutiny Committee), and Cllr
T Slade

Also in attendance virtually: Cllr S Carr-Brown (Chair of the Childrens Services Overview and
Scrutiny Committee)

137. Declarations of Interests

There were no declarations of interest made on this occasion.

138. Confirmation of Minutes

The Minutes of the meeting held on 5 March 2025 were confirmed and signed as a correct record.

139. Public Issues

Cabinet was advised that there had been no petitions or questions submitted by members of the public on this occasion, but that 7 statements had been received in relation to Agenda Item 9 (Childcare Sufficiency Assessment 2024-25).

Public Statements all relating to Agenda Item 9 (Childcare Sufficiency Assessment 2024-25)

Public Statement from a concerned parent (read by Charlottee Moore)

Mudeford Wood Preschool has been instrumental in helping myself and my son, survive and integrate back into community life. We moved back to the UK last year with nothing, having been forced to leave an abusive marriage.

It wouldn't have been possible for me as a single mum to work, in order to support myself and my son. The preschool has gone above and beyond to emotionally support us and help us both feel safe, through one of the most life changing journeys we have ever had to face. I trust them with the most precious person in my life and they are part of the reason why he is now thriving!

The support cannot be measured or compared, and it frightens me to think about how we would have coped financially and emotionally without them. The thought of their closure is an extremely worrying time for parents like me.

Public Statement from Casey Burke

Two years ago, our world was turned upside down when we almost lost our beautiful daughter, to meningitis and sepsis. She made a full recovery, but the journey that followed was anything but easy. Her illness had a huge impact on her development, and it left us deeply shaken. For six months, we could hardly leave her side. When the time came to let her go to preschool, it was one of the hardest things we had to do.

But we found Mudeford Wood Preschool.

I don't have the words to express how incredible they have been. Staff go above and beyond with extra support —helping Maggie catch up with speech, language, and social skills.

Now, Maggie walks into preschool with confidence, excitement, and huge smiles - she loves it. We will never be able to thank them enough for the life-changing impact they have had on our little girl.

Public Statement from Emma Hayes

Mudeford Wood Preschool is at the heart of our community, shaping children's futures and supporting families. When looking at preschools, we chose it for our daughter Hayley, now 5, because of its dedicated staff, affordability, and strong reputation. She thrived, and her infant school praised how well-prepared its children are. Her sister Lily, 7 months, is on the waiting list for 2026, but the pre-school's future is uncertain.

This pre-school is more than a place of learning—it brings families together. Its welcoming community, inclusive events, and unwavering support have helped countless families, including our own. If it closes or moves, working parents will face higher costs, limited options, and children will lose an exceptional early education.

With more young families moving to Mudeford, this pre-school is needed now more than ever. Losing it would be a loss to the entire community, both now and for future generations.

Public Statement from Oli Poxon

Mudeford Wood Preschool is a community staple, providing outstanding early education and care. As a parent, I can vouch for the quality of care and nurturing environment offered to both my daughters. The preschool has given them a fantastic start to their learning journey, fostering confidence and curiosity.

The setting next to a playground and woods enriches the children's experience, and we have so many memories of our girls playing with newly made friends in this setting or at one of the group's countless parties. Our eldest now in year one is still best friends with those met at pre-school.

The preschool is an essential for local families, allowing parents to return to work or to focus on caring for others. It has enabled my wife to resume work as an events fundraiser for a local hospice.

Losing the preschool would harm our community and countless families.

Public Statement from Alex Kyrillou read by Felicity Porter

Mudeford Wood Playgroup has been a lifeline for so many families in our community, providing a safe and nurturing space where children can learn, grow, and build friendships.

It's a place where parents feel supported and connected, it strengthens our community. The decision by the Mudeford Wood Community Trust to remove it is not only heartbreaking but also goes against their very community ethos and motto "something for everyone".

It has left many feeling lost and anxious.

If the playgroup closes it means parents lose a trusted network, and it disrupts the stability and routine our children need. Closing the playgroup isn't just losing a service — it's losing a vital part of our community.

Public Statement from Richard McClaverty read by Emily Hernon

Mudeford wood Preschool goes above and beyond parents expectations, the level of care is more superior than just a preschool and provides both emotional support to the young families of the community but also an educational standard of care. The potential loss of the preschool is already causing distress for us and many other families having to consider alternative care, when there is already a more than adequate existing preschool which has been supporting the community for over 30 years.

MWCCT need a balanced committee representing all parts of the community and I for one would be more than happy to support the community for families. There needs to be a swift resolution for the community as this has dragged on for too long.

Public Statement from Adam Sofianos read by Democratic Services

For six months, an axe has hovered over Mudeford Wood Playgroup. That axe could be about to fall. The Community Trust, the landlords to the Playgroup, gave notice to remove it, without offering supporting evidence, and without any community engagement, leaving families in panic.

As the Chair of Highcliffe & Walkford Parish Council, I've engaged closely with this crisis. I've been inundated with emails from distraught parents. I've met with Playgroup staff. Alongside Cllr Andy Martin, I've tried to engage with the Trust directly. Officers have worked tirelessly to support a solution. Yet still our local families face turmoil.

If the Trust continues on this path, only the Council leadership can avert it. You have the legal power, if needed, to save this Playgroup, to protect this community, and to discharge your statutory duties. I ask you to find the courage needed, and do the right thing.

140. Recommendations from the Overview and Scrutiny Committees

The Chair of the Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee, Councillor Carr-Brown addressed the Cabinet advising that the following recommendations in relation to the SEND Improvement Update report had been agreed by the Committee for submission to Cabinet for consideration:-

Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee Agenda Item 10 – SEND Improvement Update

The Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee agreed the following recommendation to Cabinet on this item:

To better assess the impact on children, young people and families of any potential budget overspend in the SEND service budget, the Committee recommends that Cabinet requests a report be provided to Cabinet by June 2025 which outlines:

- the likely overspend in the budget*
- which areas have been identified to overspend*
- the options to ensure the budget limit is met*
- an appraisal of the impact on children and families of these factors.*

The Portfolio Holder for Children, Young People, Education and Skills thanked the Chair and the committee for their recommendations and in relation to this advised that he was content with the recommendations but requested that the report come to the July Cabinet meeting rather than the June meeting as set out within the recommendations.

In relation to this the Chair advised that she was happy for the date the report comes to Cabinet to be amended to July.

RESOLVED that a report be brought to the July Cabinet meeting as requested.

141. BCP Council Cemetery Rules and Regulations Amendment

The Portfolio Holder for Communities and Partnerships presented a report, a copy of which had been circulated to each Member and a copy of which appears as Appendix 'A' to these Minutes in the Minute Book.

Cabinet approval was sought for a modification to the BCP Council's Cemetery Rules and Regulations approved by Cabinet in June 2022 with wider updates approved in April 2024.

Cabinet was advised that following notification by a religious faith group of a typing omission relating specifically to Regulation 3, Section 3.12 an amendment is proposed to ensure BCP Council adopts legally compliant and fair rules and regulations.

Councillor Farquhar addressed Cabinet querying whether the Jesuit community had been approached when drafting the report.

In relation to this Officers advised that they hadn't spoken to the Jesuit community as part of this but that they would pick this up as a consequence of the question.

RESOLVED that: -

Cabinet approved the amendment to Regulation 3, Section 3.12 – Proposed Modification Single or bulk purchase of graves by funeral director s/arrangers or religious or non-religious faith group representatives to their group members or families they represent will not be permitted.

Voting: Unanimous

Portfolio Holder: Communities and Partnerships

Reason

To provide correct and updated guidance to users of our cemeteries that align with legislative requirements and general industry practice.

Cemetery Rules and Regulations are a statutory requirement governed by the Local Authority Cemetery Order (LACO) 1977, in which guidance on their content is issued on a regular basis. The adopted Cemetery Rules and Regulations with the proposed modification aim to remove some customs and practices that have developed over time that would not comply with current LACO guidance.

142. Poole Bridge to Hunger Hill Flood Defence Scheme – CIL Funding Proposal

The Portfolio Holder for Climate Response, Environment and Energy 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.

Cabinet was advised that Poole town centre is at considerable flood risk which will increase over time with the effects of climate change, and that this Scheme is the preferred option from the approved Poole Bay, Poole Harbour and Wareham, Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management Strategy (2014).

Cabinet was informed that the strategy identified that within Central Poole Cell there were 573 properties at flood risk in the present day 1% AEP event, rising to over 2,000 properties at flood risk by 2110.

Cabinet was advised that flood defence schemes have been completed from Baiter to Poole Bridge, delivered by the Environment Agency (EA) and Poole Harbour Commissioners (PHC), but that the area remains at risk due to the ageing infrastructure between Poole Bridge and Hunger Hill, and that BCP Council is responsible for and leading on a proposal for tidal flood defences on the remaining frontage.

Cabinet was informed that the current policy of flood defence delivery through regeneration and private development has not provided the required level of investment and protection, and that our proposal is to deliver via a single BCP Council led scheme, working in liaison with the various landowners.

Cabinet was advised that the costs to build the defences are estimated at circa £29m for delivery of all primary works in a single phase, and that the

scheme has secured £15.95m of Flood defence Grant in Aid and has submitted a bid for a further £6.5m to the Environment Agency.

Further to this Cabinet was advised that Cabinet had considered the Strategic Prioritisation of CIL on 05 March 2025, of which this scheme is a principal project and £7.3m is being proposed from Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL).

RECOMMENDED that Cabinet recommend to Council: -

Approval of the allocation of £7.3m to the Poole Bridge to Hunger Hill Flood Defence Scheme from Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) for the Financial Year 2025/26.

Voting: Unanimous

Portfolio Holder: Climate Response, Environment and Energy

Reasons

1. Delivers on our commitment through the approved business case to meet Defra targets to protect households from flooding.
2. Reduces the flood risk for West Quay Road, Old Town and parts of the Town Centre in Poole
3. Essential for progressing future development in the Twin Sails Regeneration Area, contributing to delivery of the Local Plan.
4. Positive public realm, sustainable transport, and place shaping consistency across the central area of the Poole.
5. Ease viability issues, unlocking land for much needed housing, contributing to council targets.
6. Present day value of damages in a 'do-nothing' scenario is £161m and with a proposed scheme cost of around £29m, the cost-benefit ratio is over 5.5 to 1.

143. Mid Point Review of the Housing Strategy Delivery Plan

The Portfolio Holder for Housing and Regulatory Services presented a 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.

Cabinet was advised that the BCP Housing Strategy was produced in 2021 and set priorities to be delivered over the following five years, and that given the challenges in the economy and the housing market both locally and nationally, a mid-point review has been completed to consider delivery to date, key challenges, and what has changed since 2021.

Cabinet was informed that the review then considers how the Delivery Plan needs to adapt to ensure delivery against the strategy objectives is maximised.

Cabinet was advised that the proposed new Delivery Plan for 2025-2027 was appended to the report and that Cabinet were being asked to approve this.

Further to this Cabinet were informed that the report also proposes a new governance structure to improve oversight and programme management of the Plan in its final stages.

The Chair of the Environment and Place Overview & Scrutiny Committee, Councillor Rigby addressed the Cabinet advising that the Committee at their meeting had debated the item in detail and agreed the following recommendation: -

RESOLVED that the Environment and Place Overview & Scrutiny Committee recommend to Cabinet that the steering group being formed is made up of 1 member of each Political group and 1 unaligned member.

The Portfolio Holder thanked the Environment and Place Overview & Scrutiny Committee for their through debate at the Committee and expressed support for their recommendation.

RESOLVED that Cabinet: -

- (a) Approved the Revised Housing Strategy Delivery Plan at appendix B;**
- (b) Approved the extension of the current Housing Strategy Period to 2027;**
- (c) Approved the governance structure as set out in paragraphs 7-11 of the report; and**
- (d) Approved that the steering group being formed be made up of 1 member of each Political group and 1 unaligned member.**

Voting: Unanimous

Portfolio Holder: Housing and Regulatory Services

Reason

To enable the Council to maximise delivery against the Housing Strategy Vision; to provide a safe, secure and sustainable home where it is needed and thereby enabling people the opportunity to live well.

144. Childcare Sufficiency Assessment 2024-25

The Portfolio Holder for Children, Young People, Education and Skills presented a report, a copy of which had been circulated to each Member and a copy of which appears as Appendix 'D' to these Minutes in the Minute Book.

Cabinet was advised that the Council has a statutory duty to provide working families of children aged 0-14 (18 with SEND) enough childcare places in its area, where reasonably practicable, and that each year Research and Children's Services colleagues assess the position of the market, providing parents, councillors, schools and private business ward level information as a planning tool to support access or expansion of places, while highlighting areas of focus for the year ahead.

Cabinet was informed that with significant government expansion of early years childcare and wraparound care currently taking place, this information

and data is vital for private businesses seeking to enter the market and help the Council fulfil its statutory duties.

Cabinet was advised that the content of the assessment concludes that the Council is meeting its statutory duties, and that at the time of writing, the quality of our providers stands at 99.2% good or outstanding (compared to 97.8% in England).

Further to this Cabinet was advised that in addition to a briefing report (appendix 1) the data that helped form the assessment was accessible on the councils website [here](#).

The Chair of the Children's Services Overview & Scrutiny Committee, Councillor Carr-Brown addressed the Cabinet advising that the Committee at their meeting had had a good debate on this item and had supported the recommendation as set out.

Cabinet members discussed the item, and particularly the issues surrounding the Mudeford Wood Preschool.

Cabinet was advised that whilst BCP owns the building that the building is subject to a 25-year lease with a trust who currently run the building. Further to this Cabinet was advised that the lease agreement had been scrutinised, and that the council could not find a legal reason to get involved in the private dispute between the trust and the Mudeford Wood Preschool.

In relation to this Cabinet was advised that officers and members had been looking at ways in which to resolve the matter and were actively trying to mediate between the Preschool and the trustees.

Thanks were expressed to officers and to Councillor Martin in particular for all their hard work in supporting the group and the families and for their tireless work in trying to resolve the issue.

RESOLVED that: -

Cabinet approves the content of the review and the priorities (areas of focus) as set out in the Childcare Sufficiency Assessment 2024-25 Briefing Report.

Voting: Unanimous

Portfolio Holder: Children, Young People, Education and Skills

Reason

To fulfil the Council's statutory duty to annually assess its childcare market.

145. Children and Young People's Partnership Plan 2025-2030

The Portfolio Holder for Children, Young People, Education and Skills presented a report, a copy of which had been circulated to each Member and a copy of which appears as Appendix 'E' to these Minutes in the Minute Book.

Cabinet was advised that having a Children and Young People's Partnership (CYPP) Plan is a statutory requirement of Children's Services, and that it is a high-level strategic plan that outlines how to support children

and young people living in Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole with the aim to improve outcomes for all children and young people.

Cabinet was informed that the current plan has come to an end, and this is the new plan covering 2025-2030.

Cabinet was advised that it is an important statement of the partnership's commitment to BCP's children and young people, and not only does it set out the priorities for services that support children and young people, but it also defines how partners will work with each other to deliver those priorities effectively.

The Chair of the Children's Services Overview & Scrutiny Committee, Councillor Carr-Brown addressed the Cabinet advising that the Committee had considered this at their recent meeting and had praised the document. Further to this the Chair advised that the latest version of the plan had been circulated to all the Children's Services Overview & Scrutiny Committee members for comment.

Cabinet members spoke in support of the document and endorsed the plan.

RECOMMENDED that: -

Members approve the final content and design of the plan.

Voting: Unanimous

Portfolio Holder: Children, Young People, Education and Skills

Reason

To be reviewed in advance of the final launch at the end of April.

146. Adult Social Care Strategy 2025-28

The Portfolio Holder for Health and Wellbeing presented a report, a copy of which had been circulated to each Member and a copy of which appears as Appendix 'F' to these Minutes in the Minute Book.

Cabinet was advised that the report provided background information on the development and consultation of the new Adult Social Care Strategy 2025-28.

The Chair of the Health and Adult Social Care Overview & Scrutiny Committee addressed the Cabinet advising that at their recent meeting the Committee debated the item in detail and agreed the following recommendation: -

RESOLVED that the Health and Adult Social Care O&S Committee recommend to Cabinet:

- *the inclusion of some clear targets ideally linked to the Adult Social Care Outcomes Framework (ASCOF) within the Adult Social Care Strategy; and*
- *the inclusion of an overview of how to better integrate performance and activity data with finance data in the Adult Social Care Strategy.*

The Portfolio Holder thanked the Health and Adult Social Care Overview & Scrutiny Committee for their thorough debate and recommendations which he welcomed.

RESOLVED that the new ASC Strategy 2025-28 is linked to the Corporate Vision and supports corporate priorities under ‘Our People and Communities.’

Voting: Unanimous

Portfolio Holder: Health and Wellbeing

Reason

Adult Social Care require a clear public facing strategy that encompasses our vision and ambitions for the next 4 years. Having consulted within the Directorate and completed a public consultation, we are assured that this is the right strategic approach for ASC.

147. Scrap metal licensing fee increase

The Portfolio Holder for Housing and Regulatory Services presented a report, a copy of which had been circulated to each Member and a copy of which appears as Appendix 'G' to these Minutes in the Minute Book.

Cabinet was advised that on 13 March 2025, BCP Licensing Committee considered and approved changes to licensing fees that are not statutorily set, including those applicable to Scrap Metal Licences.

In relation to this Cabinet was advised that relevant fees were considered on a full cost recovery basis, increasing to reflect rises to national insurance, annual local government pay award and consumer price index.

Cabinet was informed that the Scrap Metal Dealers Act 2013 allows the local authority to set fees to administer and issue site licences and collectors licences provided for under the legislation, and that fees should be set on a cost recovery basis, in line with the statutory guidance and giving due regard to relevant case law.

Cabinet was advised that the setting of fees in relation to the Scrap Metal Dealers Act 2013 is held as an executive function and therefore must be approved by BCP Cabinet.

Further to this Cabinet was advised that the Licensing Committee had considered the fees pertaining to licences issued under the Scrap Metal Dealers Act 2013 and had recommended that Cabinet approve these fees.

RESOLVED that Cabinet approved the fees for scrap metal licensing as recommended by the Licensing Committee.

Voting: Unanimous

Portfolio Holder: Housing and Regulatory Services

Reason

Fees are set in line with a cost recovery basis, ensuring the fees are reflective of the actual cost of administration and compliance. Fees are increasing in line with national insurance and annual local government pay award.

148. Urgent Decisions taken by the Chief Executive in accordance with the Constitution

Cabinet was advised that no urgent decisions had been taken in accordance with the Constitution since the last meeting of the Cabinet.

149. Cabinet Forward Plan

The Leader advised that the latest Cabinet Forward Plan had been published on the Council's website.

150. Date of the next meeting

The Leader advised Cabinet of the change of date of the next meeting which will now be held on Tuesday 13 May 2025 at 10.15am and not Wednesday 21 May 2025 as originally scheduled.

The meeting ended at 11.38 am

CHAIRMAN

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CABINET



Report subject	Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) Update
Meeting date	13 May 2025
Status	Public Report
Executive summary	<p>This report:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presents an update on Local Government Funding Reforms and the government Spring Statement. • Aims to ensure the council presents a legally balanced 2026/27 budget. • Proposes a budget planning process and timeline for key financial reports. • Proposes a financial strategy to support the delivery of a robust and financially sustainable budget for 2026/27.
Recommendations	<p>It is RECOMMENDED that Cabinet:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Approve the budget timetable and process as set out in Appendix B. Endorse the scenario planning exercise that guides the potential level of activity that may now be needed to present a legally balance budget for 2026/27. Approve the financial strategy designed to support the ongoing delivery of a balanced 2026/27 Budget and MTFP as set out in Appendix C.
Reason for recommendations	<p>To comply with accounting codes of practice and best practice which requires councils to have a rolling multi-year medium term financial plan.</p> <p>To comply with the Councils Constitution and the requirement to have as a minimum a 3-year Medium Term Financial Plan</p> <p>To provide Cabinet with the latest high-level overview of the medium-term financial plan.</p>

	To present a proposed financial strategy to support the ongoing delivery of a balanced budget for 2026/27.
Portfolio Holder(s):	Cllr. Mike Cox, Portfolio Holder for Finance
Corporate Director	Graham Farrant, Chief Executive
Report Authors	Adam Richens, Director of Finance and Chief Finance Officer adam.richens@bcpcouncil.gov.uk
Wards	Council-wide
Classification	For Decision

Background

1. Council in February 2025 approved a budget for 2025/26 and Medium-Term Financial Plan (MTFP) with the following key features.
 - a) A balanced MTFP over the 3-year period to 31 March 2028 based on conventional local government financial management processes and revenue sources.
 - b) A 4.99% council tax increase for 2025/26 with a financial planning assumption of the same increase in each of the following years consistent with the projections from the Office Budget Responsibility.
 - c) Assumed delivery of £9.6m in annual savings, efficiencies, and additional resources to balance the 2025/26 budget as itemised and supported with individual delivery plans. This was a significant reduction from the £38m assumed in support of the 2024/25 Budget.
 - d) A target of £19m in capital receipts from the disposal of assets to fund the council's transformation programmes over the 2-year period 2024/25 and 2025/26.
 - e) An ongoing request to government to honour their pledge to provide full compensation in respect of their Employers National Insurance increases on staff directly employed by the Council. Since the budget was published analysis by the Local Government Association suggests that over 60% of council tax increases nationally will be consumed by the rise in employers' National Insurance through direct or indirect effects.
2. The approved budget for 2025/26 also managed numerous financial risks. Principle amongst these is the existential threat to the financial viability and sustainability of the Council caused by the accumulated deficit on the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG). The 2025/26 budget assumed additional temporary borrowing through the Council's Treasury Management powers to fund the excess Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) High Needs revenue expenditure above the grant made available by government via the DSG. This shortfall was budgeted to be £57.5m in 2025/26 with the consequential impact that the cumulative DSG deficit is increased from £108m on 31 March 2025 to a predicted £165.5m on 31 March 2026.

This Treasury Management mechanism is only being made available as a temporary solution on the pretext that the government have committed to returning the SEND system to financial sustainability during 2025.

Update: Dedicated Schools Grant – High Needs Expenditure

3. The government have confirmed that they will address the £6bn national special educational needs and disability deficit later this year, with details of the announcement being made as part of the Spending Review in June and the local government finance settlement which they aim to publish in late November. Appearing before the Public Accounts Committee (PAC) on the 3 April 2025, MHCLG's director of local government finance Nico Heslop said 'all options are on the table' but the aim is to increase mainstream delivery for children with SEND and that 'as part of that transition we are working on plans around the DSG deficits.

Local Government Funding Reforms

4. The local government finance policy statement 2025 to 2026 published in November 2024 outlined the intention of the government to progress with funding reforms across local government with a phased implementation beginning with the first year of the multi-year settlement in 2026/27. In advance of this the government published an initial consultation on the objectives and principles of their proposed approach alongside the provisional Local Government Finance Settlement for 2025/26. The council's response to this consultation is included as **Appendix A**.
5. In essence the government are looking to use what they refer to use the best available evidence to assess differences for local government services, including deprivation and resources available to local authorities. It is the last part of this statement that is of most concern as it appears that BCP Council being highly council tax and business rates geared (generates the majority of its net budget funding from these sources) could be a disadvantaged under these reforms. As an example, the government used a very similar approach in distributing the £600m Recovery Grant for 2025/26 and BCP Council received a zero allocation.
6. The reforms were also reflected upon by The Rt Hon Angela Rayner MP in a keynote speech on the 28 February 2025 when in reflecting on the 2025/26 Local Government Finance Settlement she said *"This government is only giving the North what it's owed, and what it deserves. For too long, our outdated system of council funding has been stacked against the north. The days of Ministers expecting the North to go cap in hand ends now. That's why with Jim McMahon, our Minister for English Devolution and Local Government, we are making simpler and clearer structures and will fix the foundations of local government. He is already beginning to replace the funding formula to give the North nearly £840 million more this year. That brings the North's total increase to just over 8 per cent - the biggest rise of all regions in England, by a good distance". "All councils are facing pressures, but it's particularly hard for those that bore the brunt of austerity. And this year's settlement marks a clear direction of travel for the rest of the Parliament"*. This is considered to give a clear statement of intent in respect of the outcome of the LG funding reforms.
7. Early work by a national modelling organisation suggests that BCP Council could see up to a £7.4m per annum reduction in funding from this process. At this stage the MTFP makes no financial planning assumptions relating to the assumed outcome from this process. This is on the grounds that the work remains at an early stage and the council will be lobbying to encourage government not to implement a funding formula that takes local resources, predominately those raised from council tax and

business rates, and redistributes them nationally to authorities with lower council tax levels.

Spring Statement (March 2025)

8. On 25 March 2025 the Chancellor of the Exchequer delivered her Spring Statement which responded to the latest set of forecasts for the economy and public finances from the Office for Budget Responsibility (OBR). The intent of the government is to have only one major fiscal event each year, in the Autumn, followed by a Spring update from the OBR. However, worsening fiscal projections meant the Chancellor had to widen the scope of the spring statement ahead of the June Spending Review. Generally, this was due to increased interest rates, lower growth than anticipated and increased uncertainty. The focus of the statement was on macroeconomic issues, defence, spending reductions in welfare and benefit payments, alongside cuts in Whitehall back-office services.
9. For the council it was disappointing that the Spring Statement did not include anything in respect of the governments previous commitment to return the SEND system to financial sustainability in 2025. It should also be highlighted that although none of the proposed cuts directly affected local government, there is concern about their knock-on impact, particularly where we work in partnership with other public sector agencies, such as NHS trusts. There is also a concern that the reduction in medium-term spending allocations to be detailed in the forthcoming spending review will impact on the sector, either directly, or indirectly.
10. The government is due to present its Spending Review on 11 June 2025.

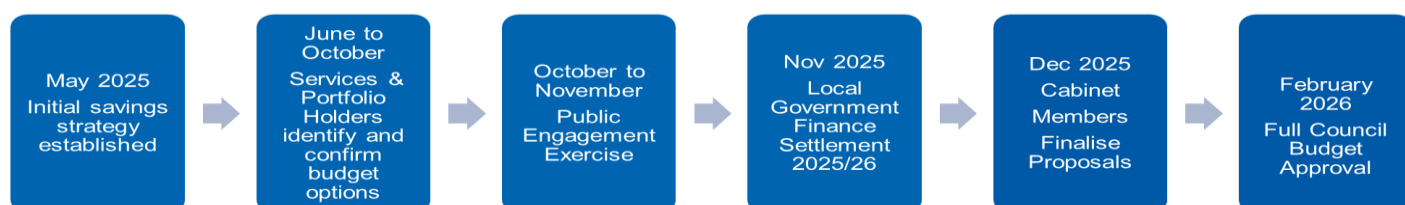
2026/27 Budget Planning Process

11. The budget for 2026/27 and the MTFP should be seen in the context of a rolling, evolving process structured to enable the ongoing proactive management and prioritisation of the council's resources. As a sector local authorities have been grappling with sustained financial pressures since 2010. Recently councils have had to become more efficient in navigating the uncertainty and volatility caused by global macro-economic factors, the legacy and long-term consequences of the Covid-19 pandemic, alongside those caused by the recent cost-of-living crisis, and changes in public policy. Stability in financial planning is impacted by a current financial framework characterised by one-year local government funding settlements. To improve its financial resilience the council does continue to encourage the government to move to multi-year financial settlements. It also looks to continually reflect on the robustness of its strategic and financial risk management to embed and improve arrangements moving forward.
12. Full details of the budget planning process and timetable to support the 2026/27 budget are set out in **Appendix B** attached. Key features include.
 - Consideration of the vision, ambitions and aspirations of the council to ensure the organisation commits its limited resources in accordance with its stated priorities and Corporate Strategy.
 - A scenario planning and financial forecasting led approach.
 - Constant refinement of assumptions based on government announcements, economic forecasts, trend analysis, and professional judgement.

- Public participation in the budget via an engagement process in October/November 2025.
- Two budget workshops, one in November 2025 and then one in January 2026 setting out the final budget proposals.
- Cabinet members working with Corporate Management Board colleagues to shape the proposals via bi-weekly Strategy Planning sessions throughout 2025/26.
- Further to last years enhanced process, it should be highlighted that the process for scrutiny committees' input into the budget remains under consideration.

13. A high-level summary can be shown as set out in Figure 1 below.

Figure 1: High level summary of the 2026/27 budget planning process



Currently approved and rolled Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP)

14. Figure 2 below sets out the current approved and balanced MTFP to 2028. As a reminder to Cabinet, the table sets out changes in the revenue budgets on an annual basis, either positive numbers which represent additional costs to be met, or negative numbers which represent forecast cost reductions or additional income. The variances are shown in the year in which they are expected to be first seen and are then assumed to recur on an ongoing basis in each of the following years. One-off changes will be seen as an entry in one year and will then be reversed out in a following year. For example, there is currently a £3.7m pressure in 2025/26 in respect of one-off savings that were approved for 2024/25.

15. **Figure 2:** February 2025 Council approved MTFP position

	Revised Budget 2024/25 £m	Jan 2025 MTFP Position (updated from February 2024)			
Service Pressures (net of any specific grant changes)		25/26 £m	26/27 £m	27/28 £m	Total £m
Wellbeing Directorate	125.5	14.4	6.0	6.2	26.6
Children's Directorate	92.3	6.5	5.3	5.3	17.0
Operations Directorate	31.7	7.1	(0.1)	2.3	9.3
- Operations Directorate: Waste & Extended Producer Responsibility	29.5	(8.7)	1.9	0.8	(6.0)
Resources Directorate	41.4	2.4	0.2	0.0	2.6
Service Pressures (net of any specific grant changes)	320.4	21.7	13.3	14.5	49.5
Savings, Efficiencies, Fees & Charges		£m	£m	£m	£m
Wellbeing Directorate		(2.8)	(0.9)	(0.8)	(4.5)
Children's Directorate		0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Operations Directorate		(2.7)	(3.3)	(2.0)	(8.0)
Resources Directorate		(0.7)	(0.1)	(0.1)	(0.9)
Transformation		(1.7)	(3.5)	(5.2)	(10.4)
Reversal of one off savings in 2024/25		3.7	0.0	0.0	3.7
		(4.1)	(7.9)	(8.1)	(20.1)
Corporate Items - Cost Pressures	21.7	4.8	7.1	6.2	18.2
Funding - Changes	(338.7)	(23.0)	(10.4)	(17.6)	(50.9)
Annual – Net Funding Gap	3.4	(0.6)	2.1	(4.9)	(3.4)
Application of one-off business rates resources to MTFP	(3.4)	0.6	2.8	0.0	3.4
Annual – Net Funding Gap	0.0	0.0	4.9	(4.9)	0.0
Cumulative MTFP – Net Funding Gap		0.0	4.9	0.0	

Please note: The MTFP as presented does not provide for two specific known unknowns namely any potential impact of the governments funding reforms and future waste strategy.

16. The position as set out above has now been updated for several potential adjustments to previously identified cost pressures as well as the inclusion of a starting position 2028/29. These matters, as underpinned, by several key assumptions as set out below in Figure 3, are being kept under continual review and constantly refined based on the latest trend analysis, economic forecasts, government announcements, and professional judgements.

17. Figure 3: Medium Term Financial Plan - Key assumptions

	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29
Council Tax (Includes 2% Social Care Precept)	4.99%	4.99%	4.99%
Pay Award	2.0%	2.0%	2.0%
Minimum Increase in Fees & Charges	2%	2%	2%
National Living Wage (NLW) % Increase in the National Living Wage	2%	2%	2%
Bank of England - Base Rate	Dec-25 4.00%	Dec-26 3.50%	Dec-27 3.50%
Current BoE Base Rate: March 2025 4.5%			

Please note:

a) The increase in fees and charges should be regarded as a minimum increase to those not set by statute. The principle of full cost recovery may mean increases above these levels for example based on the specific cost profile of the service.

18. Figure 4: Updated and rolled MTFP

	Original Budget 2025/26 £m	April 2025 MTFP Position			
Service Pressures (net of any specific grant changes)		26/27 £m	27/28 £m	28/29 £m	Total £m
Wellbeing Directorate	137.9	6.0	6.2	6.5	18.7
Children's Directorate	99.4	5.3	5.3	5.3	15.8
Operations Directorate	36.1	(0.1)	2.3	2.5	4.7
- Operations Directorate: Waste & Extended Producer Responsibility	22.0	1.9	0.8	6.0	8.6
Resources Directorate	42.5	0.2	0.0	1.6	1.8
Service Pressures (net of any specific grant changes)	337.9	13.3	14.5	21.8	49.6
Savings, Efficiencies, Fees & Charges					
Wellbeing Directorate		(0.9)	(0.8)	(0.8)	(2.6)
Children's Directorate		0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Operations Directorate		(3.3)	(2.0)	(1.3)	(6.6)
Resources Directorate		(0.1)	(0.1)	(0.1)	(0.3)
Transformation		(3.5)	(5.2)	0.0	(8.8)
		(7.9)	(8.1)	(2.3)	(18.2)
Corporate Items - Cost Pressures	26.5	10.0	6.1	6.8	22.9
Funding - Changes	(361.6)	(10.4)	(17.6)	(20.1)	(48.1)
Annual – Net Funding Gap	2.8	5.0	(5.1)	6.3	6.2
Application of one-off business rates resources to MTFP	(2.8)	2.8	0.0	0.0	2.8
Annual – Net Funding Gap	0.0	7.7	(5.1)	6.3	8.9
Cumulative MTFP – Net Funding Gap		7.7	2.7	8.9	

Please note: The MTFP as presented does not provide for two specific known unknowns namely any potential impact of the governments funding reforms and future waste strategy.

19. The key changes since February relate to a slightly higher interest rate assumption and an assumption that further resources will need to be invested in the authority's pay base due to the ongoing negotiations associated with pay and reward and pay inflation in 2025/26.

Scenario Planning: Potential Variations

20. In support of the financial planning approach to enable delivery of a balanced budget for 2026/27 the council has considered the level of uncertainty and therefore risk that will apply to the current assumptions. In line with good practice these assumptions have been tested via a process of sensitivity analysis and several different models developed that highlight their impact. At the extremes they indicate there could be an improvement in the position or alternatively a deterioration which would lead to significant widening of the funding gap for 2026/27. These models consider the impact of various changes such as.

- Lower threshold increases in council tax levels.
- Lower or higher levels of change to the council's tax base.
- Lower or higher levels of base government grant funding including the impact of the government funding reforms.
- Lower or higher annual pay awards.
- Lower or higher borrowing costs.
- Alternative approaches that could be taken by government to address the accumulated DSG deficit.
- Changes to service demands including those impacted by the national living wage.

21. It should be highlighted that no tolerance has been made as part of this modelling in respect of the 2025/26 budgeted savings or those included in the MTFP for 2026/27 and 2027/28 on the basis that services are expected to ensure their delivery.

22. Figure 5: Sensitivity Analysis 2026/27 Budget Models

	Original Budget 2025/26 £m	Base Case 26/27 £m	Better Case 2026/27 £m	Middle Case 2026/27 £m	Worse Case 2026/27 £m
Service Pressures (net of any specific grant changes)	337.9	13.3	13.1	17.5	21.2
Savings, Efficiencies, Fees & Charges		(7.9)	(7.9)	(7.9)	(7.9)
Corporate Items - Cost Pressures	26.5	10.0	2.2	14.0	24.9
Funding - Changes	(361.6)	(10.4)	(18.3)	(7.4)	3.2
Annual – Net Funding Gap	2.8	5.0	(11.0)	16.2	41.4
Application of one-off business rates resources to MTFP	(2.8)	2.8	2.8	2.8	2.8
Annual – Net Funding Gap	0.0	7.7	(8.2)	19.0	44.2
Cumulative MTFP – Net Funding Gap		7.7	(8.2)	19.0	44.2

23. To ensure the council has considered and planned for all eventualities the intent is for services to produce savings plans based on cash limited budgets for 2026/27. These limits can be broken down into the net £337.9m cost of service total in the current 2025/26 financial year less the £7.9m in savings services have already committed to deliver in 2026/27 as approved by the savings schedule supporting the approved 2025/26 Budget and MTFP.
24. Therefore, services have been asked to develop savings proposals of circa £13.3m in support of the financial planning process.
25. Working with their Portfolio Holders, Corporate Directors, Service Directors, and Budget Holders will have until initially September 2025 to prepare these potential additional proposals for balancing the 2026/27 budget should they be required. As such these proposals will be considered at Bi-weekly Cabinet/Corporate Management Board meetings for further consideration as to whether they should be taken forward.

Financial Strategy to support maintaining a balance budget for 2025/26.

26. A financial strategy designed to support the delivery of a legally balanced budget for 2026/27 is attached in **Appendix C**. This focuses on a prudent approach to the council's financial management by considering the actions that now need to be developed and implemented. The approach continues to be one focused on conventional local government financial management processes and revenue sources. Developed by Cabinet working with Senior Officers, the strategy is focused on the following summarised workstreams which are detailed in the relevant appendix.

a) Delivering the February 2025 approved MTFP

Emphasis on the £7.9m of transformation and service specific savings proposals already approved for 2026/27.

b) Special Educational Needs & Disability (SEND) & Dedicated Schools Grant

Encourage government to honour commitment to return SEND to financial sustainability and set out how any such expenditure is to be funded moving forward.

c) Financial Outturn 2024/25.

Has the Council been able to deliver within the parameters of the February 2024 Council approved budget for 2024/25. Is there headroom to consider a voluntary repayment of debt contribution.

d) Savings plans based on cash limited budget targets for 2026/27

Working with Portfolio Holders services have been requested to develop saving plans based on a cash limited budget for 2026/27 which also recognises savings already committed to. The following activities will be considered in support of this approach.

- i) Invest to save proposals*
- ii) Use of AI technology*
- iii) Level of fees and charges*
- iv) Service harmonisation*

- v) *Service rationalisations*
- vi) *Market analysis*
- vii) *Voluntary redundancy programme*

e) Deliver a pipeline of capital receipts from asset disposals

Continue with the development of an ongoing programme of sales from assets no longer needed for service or strategic reasons.

f) Generation of additional resources

Develop and consider any proposals which would be able to increase the permanent or temporary resource base of the council.

g) Minimise capital programme requirements

Limit new capital requirements/bids by only considering fully externally funded schemes or those where there is a legal requirement. Additionally, consideration will be given to robust self-financing business cases that use the council's ability to borrow to invest in capital infrastructure which in turn drives down operational costs or avoids demand pressures.

h) Government policy reforms

Continue to monitor the impact of various government proposals which will have a direct impact on either the cost base or income sources available to the council.

i) Review of the council's balance sheet

To include a fundamental review of Earmarked Reserves and to benchmark items such as bad debts provisions to compare with the levels and policies of other local authorities.

j) Comparisons with other local authorities

Reflecting on best practice and the responses of other local authorities to the overall financial challenge and specifically any learning that BCP Council might want to consider implementing.

27. In summary, the financial strategy continues to be designed to improve the overall financial resilience of the council, to enhance financial stability, and to ensure that the Council can set a legally balanced budget for 2026/27.

Options Appraisal

28. Ultimately the budget process results in a consideration of alternative savings, efficiency, income generation and service rationalisation proposals. This may include consideration of alternative council tax strategies.

Summary of financial implications

29. Any financial implications of the report's recommendations are considered, alongside alternative options, elsewhere within this report.

Summary of legal implications

30. The council has a fiduciary duty to its taxpayers to be prudent in the administration of the funds on their behalf and an equal duty to consider the interests of the community which benefit from the services it provides.

31. It is the responsibility of councillors to ensure the council sets a balanced budget for the forthcoming year. In setting, such a budget councillors and officers of the council have a legal requirement to ensure it is balanced in a manner which reflects the needs of both current and future taxpayers in discharging these responsibilities. In essence, this is a direct reference to ensure that Council sets a financially sustainable budget which is mindful of the long-term consequences of any short-term decisions.
32. As a billing authority, failure to set a legal budget by 11 March each year may lead to intervention from the Secretary of State under section 15 of the Local Government Act 1999. It should however be noted that the deadline is, in reality, the 1 March each year to allow sufficient time for the council tax direct debit process to be adhered to.

Summary of human resources implications

33. There are no direct human resources implications associated with this report. However, the 2026/27 budget is likely to have a direct impact on the level of services delivered by the council, the mechanism by which those services are delivered and the associated staffing establishment.

Summary of sustainability impact

34. The 2025/26 approved budget protected the staffing resources associated with climate change and ecological emergency activity. In addition, as at the 31 March 2024 £1.239m was available in an earmarked reserve to support project activity.

Summary of public health implications

35. The Department of Health and Social Care have announced the council's public health grant allocations for 2025/26 is £23.261m which was an increase of 5.33% from the 2024/25 allocation. It has been agreed that £10.988m will be contributed towards shared contracted services with Dorset Council as part of the phased transition away from shared public health service.
36. In addition to the basic allocation, we have also received the following additional allocations.
- £3.023m drug & alcohol treatment and recovery improvement grant (DATRIG)
 - £429.9k for the local stop smoking and support grant (LSSSASG)

Summary of equality implications

37. Officers are expected to deliver the services they are responsible for with due regard to the equality's implications. A full equalities impact assessment will be undertaken as part of the final February 2026 report to members as part of the annual budget process.

Summary of risk assessment

38. The risks inherent in the financial position of the council include the following issues set out in detail as part of the 11 February 2025 report to full council in relating to the 2025/26 budget and medium-term financial plan.
- Accumulating DSG Deficit.
 - Cashflow Crisis

- New Pay and Grading Structure.
- Council Tax – Taxbase
- Financial Outturn 2024/25
- Legal Claims.
- Uncertainty.
- Pay Award
- Local Government Funding Reforms.
- Extended Producer Responsibility
- Loss or disruption to IT systems and Networks from a cyber-attack.
- Council Owned Companies and Joint Ventures.
- Intervention.
- Children's Services.
- Wellbeing Services.
- Housing: Temporary Accommodation including Bed and Breakfast
- Delivering savings, efficiencies, and additional income generation.
- Realisation of capital receipts to fund the council's transformation programme.
- Carters Quay.

39. These risks will continue to be monitored and where possible and appropriate mitigation strategies considered. At the time of writing this report a particular risk which will continue to be considered is in regard to the uncertainty caused by global macroeconomic factors.

Background papers

40. February 2025: Budget 2025/26 and Medium-Term Financial Plan report

<https://democracy.bcpccouncil.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=284&MId=6294&Ver=4>

Appendices

Appendix A Local Government Funding Reform: Consultation Response

Appendix B Budget Planning process and timetable.

Appendix C Financial strategy supporting the delivery of the 2026/27 budget.

Local Government Finance
Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government
Fry Building
2 Marsham Street
London
SW1P 4DF

Response to the consultation on Local Government Funding Reform

Name: Adam Richens

Type of Organisation: Local Authority

Name of Organisation: Bournemouth, Christchurch, and Poole

Position: Director of Finance

Address: Civic Centre, Bourne Avenue, Bournemouth, BH2 6DY

Email address: adam.richens@bcpcouncil.gov.uk

Telephone number: 01202 123027

Question 1: Do you agree with the government's objective to allocate grant and retained business rates income in a way which accounts for differences between local authorities in demand for services, the cost of delivering them and ability to raise Council Tax locally?

Response

Disagree.

This should not be based on the ability to raise Council tax locally which is an entirely false and misleading measure based on historical decisions taken over the last 30+ years. Each local authority has the ability to raise the same council tax locally. It has been the historic vagaries of the local government funding formulae and local decision making that has created the current disparities.

Question 2: In addition to the areas included in this consultation, are there elements of the local government finance system that are not fit for purpose and require improvement and reform? If so, please provide information on what reforms are required and why.

Response

Business Rates as a funding source is an incredibly complex system which needs to be simplified in its operation with any reset.

We are not convinced any Area Cost Adjustments are still appropriate in which staff work from home and then work for the local authority with the best remuneration package which tends to be the London Authorities.

Question 3: Do you agree that the suggested principles should inform our approach to updating local authority funding allocations?

Response

Agree

The transitional arrangements are particularly important to allow authorities time to make thoughtful and considered responses to any changes.

In regard to transparency to the public it is important they understand what councils actually deliver, particularly the significant cost of social care. How councils are funded is fairly well understood.

Question 4: Do you agree with our proposal to use the best available evidence and most up-to-date data in the assessment of need, including using the most recent census data?

Response

Agree particularly focus on adult and children social care being of the utmost importance.

Question 5: Do you agree with our proposal to simplify the assessment by reducing the number of Relative Needs Formulae? If you disagree, please explain why and which service areas you are concerned about.

Response

Agree particularly focus on adult and children social care being of the utmost importance.

Question 6: For the children, young people and family services formula, do you agree that the variables set out are the right ones to consider in an assessment of relative need? If you recommend the addition or removal of variables, please provide supporting evidence and recommend a suitable dataset.

Response

These indicators intuitively would be the right ones but is there a clear link with the data for numbers of looked after children and children in need with the associated costs? Local childcare markets can significantly impact on placements costs unrelated to general local labour markets or levels of local deprivation. Unrelated to council funding, government action is needed to tackle excess profits being made in children's social care markets.

Question 7: Do you agree that the government should consider updating the data in the fire and rescue services Relative Needs Formula?

Response

No view

This is a matter for Fire and Rescue authorities.

Question 8: Do you agree we should assess differences in cost using an Area Cost Adjustment based on the structure of 2024 ACA? If not, please provide evidence for alternative approaches.

Response

Disagree

The relevance of the Area Cost Adjustment has significantly diminished with staff working from home. BCP Council has certainly lost a significant number of staff who now work for higher paying local London authorities but at home from Bournemouth, Christchurch, Poole area. All the Area Cost Adjustment does it perpetuates the ability of London authorities to attract staff.

Question 9: Do you agree that (other than locally retained business rates) we should only adjust for Council Tax when assessing local resources? If you do not agree, please include details of what other sources of income you think should be included (if any), and how the government should adjust for them.

Response

Disagree

Do not believe you should be adjusting for Council Tax as government has the ability to reset the system and allow all local authorities to apply a consistent rate. Account should not be taken of other forms of income such as Sales, Fees and Charges as these generally should be set to cover costs, costs which are not recognised in the various assessments of need.

Question 10: Do you agree that we should measure Council Tax income by making uniform assumptions on the Level of Council Tax charged by local authorities and factors which determine their ability to raise Council Tax?

Response

Agree

Question 11: To what extent should we adjust for Council Tax when determining local authority allocations (i.e. what assumption should we make on Council Tax Level)?

Response

No view

Question 12: Do you agree Transitional Arrangements should account for a Business Rates Reset? If not, please explain why.

Response

Agree. The system was always designed for a reset. Transitional arrangements must avoid cliff edges for councils. We have concerns around a percentage of business rates income going toward strategic authorities without a clear understanding of what costs will also be removed at the same time.

The council would have concerns around any system which leads to local resources, be that Council Tax or Business Rates, which are redistributed nationally.

Question 13: Do you agree or disagree we should enable and encourage local authorities to support housebuilding in their areas through the Local Government Finance Settlement? Please provide any explanation or supporting evidence for your view.

Response

Agree

However, this needs to be supported by significantly higher capital grant rates than are currently available and investment in other infrastructure key to developments such as the electrical power network, water and sewage works, and NHS Service.

Question 14: What measures should we use to support local authorities to move to their updated funding allocations?

Response

Blend in updated allocations over several years

Question 15: Do you agree we should keep funding allocations up-to-date dynamically by using the most up-to-date data possible? If so, how?

Response

Agree

Question 16: What are the most excessively burdensome activities or requirements for councils, which if changed, could significantly free up local government capacity?

Response

No strong view.

Question 17: Do you agree with our proposals to reduce the number of grants and New Burdens payments issued to local government?

Response

Agree too many grants but a clear link must still be maintained where new demands are placed on local authorities to ensure they are adequately funded. An example would be the requirements of the Children's and Families Act 2014 which created the need to establish Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs) and the ballooning annual shortfalls in the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) high needs block government funding and the corresponding DSG deficits.

Question 18: Do you agree or disagree that the government should provide local authorities with greater control over Sales, Fees and Charges? Please provide supporting evidence, considering specific fees where greater control would be of most benefit, and expected impacts on charge-payers.

Response

Agree

All fees should be set to at least cover the cost of providing those services, including the full on-costs, not just headline costs. Most fees set by government do not cover the full cost of providing those services. Councils should also be given the power to set penalties such as parking fines at rates which will act as a deterrent based on local parking fees.

Question 19: Do you have any views on the potential impacts of the proposals in this consultation on persons who share a protected characteristic?

No

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2026/27 Budget Timetable and Budget Process

1. The budget for 2026/27 and the MTFP should be seen in the context of a rolling, evolving process structured to enable the ongoing proactive management and prioritisation of the council's resources.
2. As a sector local authorities have been grappling with sustained financial pressures since 2010. Recently councils have had to become more efficient in navigating the uncertainty and volatility caused by global macro-economic factors, the legacy and long-term consequences of the Covid-19 pandemic, alongside those caused by the recent cost-of-living crisis, and changes in public policy.
3. The key dates in the 2026/27 budget setting process can be set out as follows.

May 2025	Cabinet - MTFP update report (including financial strategy).
July 2025	Cabinet - Quarter 4 / Financial Outturn 2024/25.
September 2025	Cabinet - Quarter 1 - 2025/26 budget monitoring.
October 2025	Cabinet - MTFP update report
October 2025	Budget Consultation Exercise Opens
November 2025	Budget Consultation Exercise Closes
November 2025	All Members – Draft developing 2026/27 Budget Presentation
December 2025	Cabinet - Quarter 2 – 2025/26 budget monitoring
December 2025	Cabinet - MTFP update report
January 2026	Cabinet – Council Tax 2026/27 taxbase report
January 2026	Audit & Governance Committee (Treasury Management Strategy)
January 2026	All Member – Final proposed 2026/27 Budget Presentation
January 2026	Presentation to representatives from Commerce and Industry
February 2026	Cabinet – Quarter 3 – 2025/26 budget monitoring
February 2026	Cabinet – 2026/27 proposed budget and MTFP
February 2026	Council – 2026/27 proposed budget and MTFP

BCP Council - Budget Process 2026/27

Month		Decisions	Cabinet	Public Engagement	Budget Holders	Finance	Strategic Planning Cycle
38	Feb	Council Budget Meeting					Budget 25/26 approved + MTFP to 31 March 2028
	March						
	April						
	May		Based on a proposed scenario Portfolio Holders engagement with budget holders to develop proposals for balancing the 2026/27 budget. Conversations part of the Bi-weekly informal Corporate Management Board/Cabinet strategic planning session meetings		Services prepare savings, efficiency, additional income and service rationalisation proposals to enable the 2026/27 budget to be balanced	Calculate initial savings targets	
	June						
	June					Draft progress update report	
	July	Cabinet MTFP Update Report					
	Aug					Fundamental refresh of the MTFP baseline	
	Sept					Refine savings targets	
	Oct	Cabinet MTFP Update Report		Budget Public Engagement Exercise - 6 weeks	Services present proposals to Bi-weekly CMB/Cabinet strategic planning meetings	Draft Cabinet report on savings proposals	
	Nov					Draft progress update report	
	Dec	Cabinet MTFP Update Report	Cabinet members finalise 2026/27 budget proposals		Service refine budget proposals in light of outcomes of public engagement exercise	Update MTFP and draft Cabinet report on final budget proposals	Finalisation of budget proposal for 2026/27 and MTFP for Cabinet and Council consideration
	Jan						
	Feb	Council Budget Meeting		Statutory Consultation Commerce & Industry			Budget 26/27 approved + MTFP to 31 March 2029

Key Financial Reports & Events - 25/26 Budget Monitoring & 26/27 Budget Timeline

Date	Event	Report Title / Action	Detail
May 2025	Budget Proposals	Corporate Directors, Service Directors and Budget Holders working with Portfolio Holders	Start of period for preparation of proposals for delivering a balanced 2026/27 budget.
May 2025	Cabinet	Medium Term Financial Plan (Update)	To include. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Update on MTFP. • Proposed financial strategy. • Budget process.
July 2025	Cabinet	Financial Outturn Report	Summary report covering the financial outturn for 2024/25.
August 2025	Budget Refresh	Corporate Directors & Service Directors	Deadline to produce a refresh of the MTFP baseline financial resource requirements for each service for the three-year period to the 31 March 2029
September 2025	Cabinet	Quarter One Budget Monitoring Report	First quarter (April to June) budget monitoring for 2025/26.
September 2025	Budget Proposals	Corporate Directors, Service Directors and Budget Holders working with Portfolio Holders	Close of initial period for preparation of proposals for delivering a balanced 2026/27 budget.
October 2025	Audit & Governance	2024/25 Statement of Accounts	Report presents the 2024/25 statement of accounts for BCP Council including the Annual Governance Statement.

Date	Event	Report Title / Action	Detail
October 2025	Cabinet	Medium Term Financial Plan (Update)	To include. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> fundamental refresh of the MTFP. progress towards delivering a balanced budget for 2026/27
October 2025	Budget Proposals	Budget Engagement Exercise	4 or 6-week consultation opens
November 2025	Budget Proposals	Budget Engagement Exercise	Consultation closes (assuming 4 week) 18 October if 6 weeks exercise.
November 2025	Budget Proposals	Budget Presentation	All Councillor Seminar
December 2025	Cabinet	Quarter Two Budget Monitoring Report	Second quarter (July to September) in-year budget monitoring for 2025/26
December 2024	Cabinet	Medium Term Financial Plan (Update)	Progress towards delivering a balanced budget for 2026/27
January 2026	Cabinet	Council Tax - Taxbase Report	2026/27 Council Tax Taxbase

Date	Event	Report Title / Action	Detail
January 2026	Audit & Governance	Treasury Management Strategy 2026/27	Seek approval for 2026/27 treasury management strategy
January 2026	Budget Proposals	Budget Presentation	All Councillor Seminar
January 2026	Budget Proposals	Presentation to representatives from Commerce & Industry	Statutory consultation on 2026/27 Budget & MTFP
February 2026	Cabinet	Quarter Three Budget Monitoring	Third quarter (October to December) budget monitoring for 2025/26.
February 2026	Cabinet	2026/27 Budget & MTFP Update	To include. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2026/27 Provisional Local Government Finance Settlement. • 2026/27 Budget Proposal. • 2026/27 Council Tax Resolution.
February 2026	Cabinet	Housing Revenue Account (HRA) 2026/27 Budget Setting	Seeks approval for the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) which is the separate account that ring-fences the income and expenditure associated with BCP Council's housing stock. Includes rents, service charges and other charges to tenants.

Date	Event	Report Title / Action	Detail
February 2026	Cabinet	Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) and Early Years Funding Formula 2026/27	Setting the 2026/27 funding formulae for early education and childcare for eligible 2-year-olds and all 3- and 4-years olds, mainstream schools for pupils in reception to year 11.
February 2026	Council	2026/27 Budget & MTFP Update Report	Formal approval of the following. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • General fund 2026/27 budget and council tax. • Education and childcare funding formula. • Housing Revenue Account 2026/27 budget and tenant charges.
March 2026	n/a	n/a	Publish 2026/27 Budget Book
July 2026	Cabinet	Financial Outturn Report	Summary report covering the financial outturn for the financial year 2025/26.

Subject to determination

- Scrutiny arrangements associated with the 2026/27 budget process.
- Dates of the precept meetings for the Town, Parish and Neighbourhood Councils in Christchurch and the Chartered Trustees in both Bournemouth & Poole

2026/27 Budget - Financial Strategy

Supporting the 2026/27 Budget & Medium-Term Financial Plan (MTFP)

With a continuing focus on traditional local government financial management processes and revenue sources the Cabinet working with Senior Officers has developed the following financial strategy to support the delivery of a legally balanced 2026/27 Budget and Medium-Term Financial Plan.

a) Delivery of the February 2025 approved Medium Term Financial Plan

Action by Portfolio Holders, Corporate Directors, and all Budget Holders to deliver the assumptions as set out in the February 2025 report to Council. The emphasis will be on the delivery of the £7.9m of assumed, savings, efficiencies, additional fees and charges, or service adjustments programmed for 2026/27.

b) Special Educational Needs & Disability & Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG)

Continue to encourage the Department for Education (DfE) and the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) to honour their commitment to return the SEND system to financial sustainability during 2025. The council has budgeted to borrow to fund the £57.5m of excess of special educational needs and disability (SEND) expenditure over the government DSG grant in 2025/26. It can only do this on a temporary basis linked to the promise of government to establish a sustainable solution. Failure of government to provide a solution will present an existential threat to the financial viability of the council.

c) Financial Outturn 2024/25

Review of the 2024/25 Financial Outturn to consider the extent to which the council was able to deliver within the parameters of the February 2024 Council approved resources for the year. In addition, and as a matter of principle, it was also previously identified that should resources become available at financial year-end then consideration will be given, as recognised in the councils Treasury Management Strategy, to the voluntary repayment of debt bearing in mind the budget for the year adopted a different strategy to debt repayment from that previously applied.

The opportunity will also be taken to consider if there is any evidence to suggest that the base revenue budget needs to be rebased to reflect income and expenditure patterns in the period since the 2025/26 budget was set. Care will need to be taken to consider the impact of the spend control that operated during the whole of the last financial year.

d) Savings plans based on cash limited budget targets for 2026/27

Services have been asked to develop saving plan proposals for 2026/27 based on cash limited budgets. These can be broken down into the current 2025/26 budget less the £7.9m savings services have already committed to deliver in 2026/27. The following activities will be considered in support of this approach.

i. Invest to save proposals

Based on value for money principles and on robust business cases, proposals which demonstrate that a specified upfront invest of either revenue or capital or both, will deliver an ongoing revenue saving to the authority.

ii. Use of AI technology

It is recognised that AI technology could have an impact on a range of council services from business support and customer services to adult social care

and children's services. The cost of the technology including ongoing licensing costs needs to be reflected upon in any business case alongside staff productivity and the ability to actually realise savings.

iii. Level of fees and charges

Ensure all fees and charges are increased in line with the impact of inflation on the service including the impact of the pay award and the pay & reward workstream. In doing so services should continue to ensure application of the full cost recovery principle which requires that all fees and charges are set at a level to guarantee that all costs both revenue and capital, direct and indirect are fully recovered.

iv. Service harmonisation

The intent is to harmonise all services across the conurbation following the 2019 Local Government Reorganisation. Good progress has been made however all outstanding areas of harmonisation will be reviewed to eliminate any areas of difference. This action is underpinned by the assumption of the harmonisation of systems used to underpin the delivery of services

v. Service rationalisations

Consideration of services that the local authority is not required to provide and any expenditure on services that it currently provides above the statutory minimum.

vi. Market analysis

Consider the extent to which services, from a value for money perspective, might be better delivered by the private sector. Besides efficiency, considerations might include the cost differentials between local authorities and private companies. The council may also find it more effective to procure services as and when needed via a contract arrangement rather than retaining capacity in-house.

vii. Voluntary redundancy programmes

Ongoing consideration will be given to the extent to which voluntary redundancy processes can be used to unlock the delivery of savings for 2026/27 onwards. Previously endorsed value for money criteria will be used to assess any such proposals.

e) Deliver a pipeline of capital receipts from asset disposals

Continue with the development of an ongoing programme of sales from assets no longer needed for service or strategic reasons. The use of these receipts to be considered in support of.

- Service specific transformation programmes funded via the Flexible Use of Capital Receipts.
- Debt repayment.
- Improvements to Civic Hubs.
- Capital investment in assets.

f) Minimise capital programme requirements

Limit new capital requirements/bids by only considering fully externally funded schemes or those where there is a legal requirement (such a critical condition schemes to manage health and safety or manage operations). In addition, consideration will be given to robust self-financing business cases that use the

council's ability to borrow to invest in capital infrastructure which in turn drives down operational costs or avoid demand pressures.

g) Generation of additional resources

Develop and consider any proposals which would be able to increase the permanent or temporary resource base of the council. This includes consideration of resurrecting a previous conversation with government around having the flexibility to increase council tax by the additional 2.43% that it could now be charging if it had increased its amounts in line with government policy across the two-year time horizon 2021/22 and 2022/23.

h) Government policy reforms

Continue to monitor the impact of various government proposals which will have a direct impact on either the cost base or income sources available to the council. An example being the Family First Partnership resources which overtime the government are expecting to significantly reduce the number of looked after children.

i) Review of the council's balance sheet

Ongoing review of the authority's balance sheet to include a fundamental review of Earmarked Reserves and to benchmark items such as bad debts provisions to compare with the levels and policies of other local authorities.

j) Comparisons with other local authorities

Reflecting on best practice and the responses of other local authorities to the overall financial challenge and specifically any learning that BCP Council might want to consider implementing.

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CABINET



Report subject	BCP Local Plan next steps, updated Local Development Scheme (LDS) and Statement of Community Involvement (SCI)
Meeting date	13 May 2025
Status	Public Report
Executive summary	<p>Following Stage 1 examination hearings on the draft BCP Local Plan in January 2025, the Inspectors provided a post hearing letter in early March 2025. The letter stated that the Council had failed to adequately discharge the Duty to Cooperate. This is not something that can be rectified during the examination.</p> <p>Cabinet is therefore recommended to withdraw the draft BCP Local Plan from examination.</p> <p>The associated Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Charging Schedule that was submitted for its own examination at the same time is also recommended to be withdrawn due its strong ties with the draft Local Plan.</p> <p>If Cabinet and Council agree the withdrawal of the Local Plan and CIL Charging Schedule, a new Local Plan will need to be prepared. A timetable (Local Development Scheme - LDS) for this new Plan is recommended in Appendix 1.</p> <p>To facilitate community involvement and good plan making and development management processes, an updated Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) is also recommended for Cabinet to agree at Appendix 2.</p>
Recommendations	<p>It is RECOMMENDED that Cabinet:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Recommends to Council that the draft BCP Local Plan be withdrawn from examination. b. Recommends to Council that the draft BCP CIL Charging Schedule be withdrawn from examination. c. Agree to the publication of a new Local Development Scheme at Appendix 1 and submission to Government, subject to Council agreement to withdraw the draft BCP Local Plan under recommendation a. d. Agree the updated Statement of Community Involvement at Appendix 2.

Reason for recommendations	<p>The draft BCP Local Plan has not been supported by the Inspectors' at examination Stage 1.</p> <p>Local Authorities are required to produce, and keep up to date, a Local Development Scheme (LDS) which sets out the future planning documents the Council will be producing within a three-year period and the timescales and key milestones for their preparation. A new LDS is needed if the Council chooses to withdraw the draft BCP Local Plan and start work on a new BCP Local Plan.</p> <p>To update the SCI for the purpose of good planning.</p>
Portfolio Holder(s):	Councillor Millie Earl, Leader of the Council and Chair of Cabinet
Corporate Director	Glynn Barton, Chief Operations Officer
Report Authors	Caroline Peach, Head of Strategic Planning
Wards	Council-wide
Classification	For Decision and Recommendation to Council

Draft BCP Local Plan – Background

1. The draft BCP Local Plan was considered and agreed for public consultation and submission to the Secretary of State at Cabinet on 13 December 2023 and by Council on 9 January 2024.
2. Following public consultation between 20 March and 3 May 2024 (Regulation 19), the draft Plan was submitted to the Secretary of State on 27 June 2024.
3. Examination Stage 1 hearings took place between 21 and 23 of January 2025. The hearings were to examine compliance with statutory procedures and legal compliance, including the Duty to Cooperate (DtC), housing needs and the housing requirement. Subject to the Plan being found sound at Stage 1 the Plan would proceed to Stage 2 where the rest of the Plan would be considered.
4. In the week commencing the 3 March 2025, the Council received a post hearing letter from the Inspectors which confirmed that they did not support the Plan. A copy of the letter has been published on the examination web site: [Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole Local Plan & CIL Examination](#)
5. Paragraph 29 of the letter states, "On the basis of all the evidence before us, and for the reasons set out above, we therefore conclude that the Council has failed to engage constructively, actively and on an ongoing basis during the preparation of the Plan so far as it relates to the strategic matter of housing."

BCP Council and Duty to Cooperate

6. The background to the DtC can be summarised as follows:
 - The Government determined that the standard method for calculating housing need would use 2014-based household projections, even though more recent projections were available.
 - In 2016, the Office of National Statistics (ONS) advised that Bournemouth was one of six towns that had a significant over-estimation of student emigration figures. This was adjusted by the ONS for its projections from 2016 onwards, but this meant that the 2014-based household projections were inaccurate.
 - Therefore, an alternative method was used by BCP Council as the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF 2023) allowed an alternative approach where there were exceptional circumstances, which placed housing need at 1,600 homes per year. BCP Council could identify land for this amount of need and therefore there was no shortfall to be met by neighbours. DtC meetings therefore focused on other issues such as nutrient neutrality.
 - BCP Council held an advisory meeting with the Planning Inspectorate to discuss this issue and they advised that they felt that the Council would be better identifying a shortfall and discussing with neighbours, then relying on exceptional circumstances for an alternative approach.
 - This change in approach was the reason for the late identification of a shortfall
 - The Local Plan Inspectors were “not persuaded that there are ‘exceptional circumstances’ in BCP which justify an alternative approach to assessing housing need” (para.33 of the Inspectors letter). This matter could only be tested at the examination.
7. Paragraph 37 of the letter sets out the options now open to the Council: “In the light of the failure to adequately discharge the DtC [Duty to Cooperate], there are two options open to the Council, either to withdraw the Plan from examination or to ask that we write a report setting out our conclusions. The latter option would incur further expense, and the contents of our report would likely be very similar to this letter.”
8. Paragraph 31 of the Planning Policy Guidance (PPG) states that,

“As the duty to cooperate relates to the preparation of the plan it cannot be rectified post-submission, so if the Inspector finds that the duty has not been complied with they will recommend that the local plan is not adopted and the examination will not proceed any further. The most appropriate course of action is likely to be for the local planning authority to withdraw the plan and engage in the necessary discussions and actions with other relevant local planning authorities and bodies. In these circumstances the local planning authority will need to re-publish the revised plan for consultation before it is re-submitted for examination.”

Options for the draft BCP Local Plan

9. There are limited options open to the Council. These have been set out by the Inspectors in their letter and paragraphs 7 and 8 above.
10. **Withdraw the Plan** (recommended to Cabinet and Council) - If the Council chooses to withdraw the Plan, the way becomes clear to focus resources on the

preparation of a new Local Plan. Note that if the draft BCP Local Plan had been supported at Stage 1 of the examination then it would have been challenging in terms of resources to undertake Stage 2 of the examination, consult on modifications and adopt the Plan at the same time as starting a partial review as required by Government.

11. If the Council support withdrawal of the BCP Local Plan, then a new LDS setting out the timetable for the preparation of a new Local Plan is needed. The updated LDS attached as Appendix 1 provides this. The LDS continues to be subject to the need for further clarification from Government and the publication of regulations and guidance for plan-making reforms, expected in Summer/ Autumn 2025.
12. The draft BCP Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Charging Schedule was submitted to the Secretary of State for examination on 27 June 2024. This was proposed to be a follow-on examination after the draft BCP Local Plan examination had been completed. However, if the Council supports withdrawal of the BCP Local Plan, it is recommended that the draft BCP Community CIL Charging Schedule is also withdrawn. This is because the draft CIL Charging Schedule is inextricably linked to the draft BCP Local Plan, its policies and evidence base. A new CIL Charging Schedule would need to be prepared.
13. **Ask that the Inspectors write a report setting out their conclusions** – The Inspectors have already indicated that this would incur further expense for the Council and the contents of their report would likely be very similar to the letter that has already received. Based on the reasons given by the Inspectors for not supporting the Plan, this option is not recommended.
14. **Do nothing** – The Council could choose to make no decision. However, there is a statutory requirement placed on all Local Authorities to have an up-to-date Local Plan in place and for the Local Planning Authorities to review their plans every five years. The Bournemouth Core Strategy (2012), Christchurch Core Strategy (2014) and Poole Local Plan (2018) are all older than 5 years and, as such, we have a statutory duty to produce a plan. This means that a 'do nothing approach' is not a viable option. It also does not provide key stakeholders such as the community, businesses and infrastructure providers with certainty about where development and investments should and will occur.

Next steps for a BCP Local Plan

15. If Council decides to withdraw the draft BCP Local Plan from examination, a new LDS is needed to provide clarity on the timetable for the preparation of a new Local Plan.
16. The indicative timetable for the new Local Plan (Appendix 1) is based on the requirements in the Levelling Up and Regeneration Act (LURA) to produce a Local Plan within 30 months. Much of the detail on the plan-making reforms is still to be published and confirmed. In the absence of these details, the Planning Advisory Service has recommended using the details published under the 2023 consultation regarding the new system and this consultation has shaped the indicative timetable in Appendix 1.
17. The indicative timetable includes 3 assessment points, called Gateways to check on progress and to help address issues early in the process. Planning Inspectors

will likely be involved with at least 2 of these Gateway stages. The 30-month timeframe for plan preparation is triggered at Gateway 1.

18. Two formal stages of public consultation will be needed: visioning and strategy development (8 weeks) and response to a draft plan (6 weeks). However, in advance of these stages and Gateway 1, BCP Council intends to carry out early engagement to front load the process.
19. Significant changes and requirements will be needed for the new Local Plan, which will be considered under the NPPF December 2024. This includes mandatory Government housing figures (new standard method), assessment of Green Belt and new definition of 'Grey Belt'. The draft BCP Local Plan included 1,600 homes per year for 15 years (24,000). The new housing requirement will be almost 3,000 homes per year (45,000).
20. It is intended that robust early engagement will assist local communities in understanding what national policy requires of this new plan and enable them to influence where growth is to be planned.
21. The new Local Plan making process is expected to increase the use of digital tools and use of templates to support efficiencies and produce simpler, visual and accessible plans.
22. Until a BCP Local Plan is in place, current Local Plans where relevant and the Government's reforms are informing decisions as the revised National Planning Policy Framework is a material consideration in the Council's decisions on planning applications.

Local Development Scheme

23. A draft LDS was considered by Cabinet on 5 March and subsequently submitted to Government as required on 6 March. This was submitted as a draft because this LDS had been prepared in advance of the Council receiving the letter from the Inspectors' examining the draft BCP Local Plan. The draft LDS considered in March was prepared on the basis that the Plan would be supported at Stage 1 and that the Council would carry out a partial review of the Plan to address the Government's new Plan making requirements e.g mandatory housing figures prepared using a new standard method of calculation and Green Belt review.
24. As the BCP Plan has not been supported at examination, subject to the Council's consideration and decision about whether to withdraw the Plan, the draft LDS needs to be updated to reflect the change in situation. It would no longer be a partial review of the Plan, but a completely new Local Plan reflecting the Government's new planning system.
25. The available options for Cabinet (not Council) to consider are:
 - i. To approve the draft LDS in appendix 1; or
 - ii. To approve the draft LDS in appendix 1 with changes; or
 - iii. To not agree the draft LDS in appendix 1.Options i) and ii) include submission of an updated LDS to Government.

Statement of Community Involvement

26. Local planning authorities are required through the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (as amended) to produce a Statement of Community Involvement (SCI), which sets out how they will engage with communities on planning matters including preparation of local plans and planning applications.
27. BCP Council's SCI was adopted in September 2020: [Statement of Community Involvement | BCP](#). Local Planning Authorities are required to review their SCIs every five years from the adoption date.
28. It is important that SCIs are kept up to date to ensure effective community involvement at all stages of the planning process and to reflect any changes to engagement. A local planning authority may review and update their SCI at the same time as reviewing and updating a plan to reflect what action is taken to involve the community in any change to the plan.
29. Since it is close to five years since the adoption of the SCI and subject to the Council's decision to withdraw the draft BCP Local Plan, work will begin on a new Local Plan, it is therefore an appropriate time to update the SCI.
30. The updated SCI is a refresh of the 2020 document and includes primarily factual updates and deletions. These include:
 - a) Removal of reference to Covid-19
 - b) Removal of references to neighbour notification letters.
(In February 2023, BCP Council agreed a budget for 2023/24. This included the implementation of £32.9m of savings from 1 April 2023. This included changes to our approach to consultation on planning applications).
 - c) Removal of reference and details relating to the Council's Corporate Strategy November 2019 and inclusion of details relating to the December 2024 Strategy.
 - d) Removal of reference to the Council's constitution July 2019 and inclusion of reference to January 2025.
 - e) Removal of reference to the Dorset Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP)
 - f) Removal of reference to Growth and Infrastructure unit.
 - g) Update of the General engagement and consultation principles in relation to inclusive engagement and consultation - with more specific ways that this will be done such as use of plain English.
 - h) Inclusion of reference to the Government's Planning Reforms.
 - i) Inclusion of reference to a revised Local Development Scheme in 2025.
 - j) Update to the reference to made/adopted Neighbourhood Plans.
 - k) Updated text relating to Specific and General consultation bodies.
 - l) Inclusion of reference to Environmental Outcome reports (under Sustainability Appraisal).
 - m) Other minor text updates.

31. The available options for Cabinet (not Council) to consider are:
- i. To approve the draft SCI in appendix 2; or
 - ii. To approve the draft SCI in appendix 2 with changes; or
 - iii. To not agree the draft SCI in appendix 2.

Summary of financial implications

32. The budgetary implications of this report relate to the options above. Withdrawal of the BCP Local Plan would mean incurring no further costs on this Plan. Instead, costs would be focussed on a new Local Plan, making use of evidence wherever possible from the BCP Local Plan. The costs of asking the Inspectors to provide a report is unknown but this is likely to be significantly less than if their conclusions are subsequently challenged.
33. Initial assumptions have been built into the MTFP in respect to growth pressures and re-charging the Local Plan reserve.

Summary of legal implications

34. The preparation of a Local Development Scheme and Local Plan are statutory requirements of the Planning & Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (as amended by the Localism Act 2011) and Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012. The Local Plan must be prepared in line with relevant legislation as well as having regard to national planning policy and guidance.
35. Planning & Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (as amended) requires the local planning authority to produce a Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) every five years.

Summary of human resources implications

36. N/A

Summary of sustainability impact

37. The LDS sets out a timetable for the production of the Local Plan and in itself does not give rise to any impact upon environmental matters or climate change. The Local Plan has a comprehensive suite of assessments including Sustainability Appraisal and Habitats Regulations Assessment. The SCI is a refresh and update of the previous document and does not give rise to any impact upon environmental matters or climate change.

Summary of public health implications

38. Implications will be considered as part of plan-making and decision-taking

Summary of equality implications

39. Implications will be considered as part of plan-making and decision-taking.

Summary of risk assessment

40. There is reputational risk associated with asking for an Inspectors' report and the doing nothing options, as these would cause delay and increase uncertainty for decision makers and developers.
41. The LDS, for which the timetables are being considered, will identify the risks to meeting the Local Plan milestones and sets out some mitigation to each risk. These risks will need to reflect some uncertainty about the yet to be published regulations and guidance for the new planning system moving forwards.
42. There is a reputational risk associated with not updating the SCI in a timely manner in accordance with planning legislation.

Background papers

Planning Reforms and new Local Development Scheme (item 13 Cabinet 5 March 2025: [Welcome to BCP Council | BCP](#)).

National Planning Policy Framework 2024: [National Planning Policy Framework - GOV.UK](#)

Appendices

Appendix 1 – Local Development Scheme

Appendix 2 – Statement of Community Involvement



Local Development Scheme

May 2025

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Introduction

1. Local planning authorities are required by the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (as amended) to publish and maintain a Local Development Scheme (LDS). The primary role of the LDS is to set out what documents will make up the development plan for the area and provide a timetable for their preparation.
2. Legislation states that a Local Development Scheme must specify:
 - The Local Development Documents which are to be Development Plan Documents (Section 2);
 - The subject matter and geographical area to which each development plan document relates (Section 3);
 - The timetable for the preparation and revision of the Development Plan Documents (Section 4);
 - Which Development Plan Documents, if any, are to be prepared jointly with one or more other local planning authorities (Section 2);
 - Any matter or area in respect of which the authority has agreed (or proposes to agree) to the constitution of a joint committee (with other Local Planning Authorities) (not applicable); and
 - The timetable for the preparation of the Authorities' monitoring reports (section 5).
3. The Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) requires the LDS to be kept up-to-date and be made publicly available, so that local communities and interested parties can keep track of the progress of development plan documents.
4. This LDS supersedes the Council's previous draft LDS published in March 2025.

Development Plan Documents

5. The Development Plan Documents for the BCP area currently consists of:
 - Bournemouth Local Plan (saved policies) 2002
 - Bournemouth Affordable Housing Development Plan Document 2009
 - Bournemouth Core Strategy 2012
 - Bournemouth Town Centre Area Action Plan 2013
 - Christchurch Local Plan (saved policies) 2001
 - East Dorset and Christchurch Local Plan Part 1: Core Strategy 2014
 - Poole Local Plan 2018
 - 'Made' Neighbourhood Plans (Broadstone, Poole Quay Forum, Highcliffe and Walkford, Hurn, Sandbanks Peninsular and Boscombe and Pokesdown)
 - The Bournemouth, Christchurch, Poole and Dorset Waste Plan (2019)
 - The Bournemouth, Dorset and Poole Minerals Strategy and Minerals Sites Plan (2014)
6. In the future the Development Plan Documents for the BCP area will consist of:
 - The BCP Local Plan
 - 'Made' Neighbourhood Plans
 - The Bournemouth, Christchurch, Poole and Dorset Waste Plan (2019)
 - The Bournemouth, Dorset and Poole Minerals Strategy and Minerals Sites Plan (2014)
7. In addition to the development plan documents, there are also other important documents that relate to the development plan, including;
 - Community Infrastructure Levy Charging Schedule
 - Statement of Community Involvement
 - Supplementary Planning Documents
 - Conservation Area Appraisals and Management Plans
8. These are not development plan documents and details about these various documents can be found separately on our website.

Development Plan Document Details

9. This section sets out the subject matter and geographical area to which each development plan document relates.

BCP Local Plan

10. Work on the preparation of a BCP Local Plan commenced in 2019 when the Council began consulting on issues and gathering evidence. A draft Local Plan was then submitted to the Secretary of State for examination in June 2024. The examining Inspectors undertook an initial examination stage considering the Duty to Cooperate, Legal Compliance and Housing Requirement in January 2025. The examining Inspectors identified substantive issues with regard to the Council's approach to the Duty to Cooperate and that Local Plan is recommended to be withdrawn.
11. It is a legal requirement to have an up to date Local Plan for our area and work must now commence on a new BCP Local Plan. The new BCP Local Plan will provide an overarching and cohesive development strategy for the whole of BCP area. It will set out how much, where and what type of development will take place across our area, giving us control over development decisions. The Local Plan has an important role in meeting the Council's corporate objectives and will help us to raise the quality of development so we can achieve the placemaking objectives we aspire to within the BCP area.
12. The BCP Local Plan will cover a 15 year period post adoption and, once adopted, will provide one up to date planning document that is based on up to date social, economic and environmental evidence. As well as setting out our development strategy the Local Plan will provide policies by which to determine planning applications, and will allocate sites to guide new development.
13. The BCP Local Plan will cover the whole of the Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole administrative area and will be produced by BCP Council.
14. Once adopted the BCP Local Plan will supersede:
 - Bournemouth Local Plan (saved policies) 2002
 - Bournemouth Affordable Housing Development Plan Document 2009
 - Bournemouth Core Strategy 2012

- Bournemouth Town Centre Area Action Plan 2013
 - Christchurch Local Plan (saved policies) 2001
 - East Dorset and Christchurch Local Plan Part 1: Core Strategy 2014
 - Poole Local Plan 2018
15. The new Local Plan will be prepared under the revised plan-making system provided for under the Levelling Up and Regeneration Act 2023 (as soon as the relevant provisions are brought into force in 2025).
16. The indicative timetable for the new Local Plan is set out in Section 4 and is based on the requirements in the Levelling Up and Regeneration Act (LURA) to produce a Local Plan within 30 months. Much of the detail on the plan-making reforms is still to be published and confirmed. In the absence of these details the Planning Advisory Service has recommended using the details published under the 2023 consultation regarding the new system and this consultation has shaped the indicative timetable.
17. The indicative timetable for the new Local Plan includes 3 assessment points, called Gateways to check on progress and to help address issues early in the process. Planning Inspectors will likely be involved with at least 2 of these Gateway stages. The 30-month timeframe for plan preparation is triggered at Gateway 1.
18. Two formal stages of public consultation will be needed: visioning and strategy development (8 weeks) and response to a draft plan (6 weeks). However, in advance of these stages and Gateway 1, BCP Council intends to carry out early engagement to front load the process. This will assist local communities in having early understanding of and influence on the Plan.
19. The new Plan making process is expected to increase the use of digital tools and use of templates to support efficiencies and produce simpler, visual and accessible plans.
20. Currently all development plan documents are required to be subject to on-going Sustainability Appraisal which informs the content of the Local Plan. The Sustainability Appraisal must meet the requirements of United Kingdom regulations. As such, the Sustainability Appraisal and Strategic Environmental Assessment (SA/SEA) are an integral part of the Local Plan preparation process. As part of the planning reforms it is proposed that the Sustainability Appraisal process will be replaced by an Environmental Outcomes Report. Further details on the new process are yet to be released. The Sustainability Appraisal process

or Environmental Outcomes process will take place alongside the Local Plan and the relevant reports will be made available at the various stages of plan preparation.

Neighbourhood Plans

21. Neighbourhood Plan cover specific designated 'neighbourhood areas'. A parish council, town council or a designated neighbourhood forum can apply to have an area designated as a 'neighbourhood area' for the purpose of preparing a neighbourhood plan. Neighbourhood plans provide a specific strategy and/or set of policies for future development in the neighbourhood area. The content and scope of the plans can vary from place to place.
22. Neighbourhood plans must meet certain specified 'basic conditions'. These ensure plans contribute to the achievement of sustainable development, have regard to national policy and guidance and are in general conformity with adopted strategic local planning policies.
23. There are currently six made neighbourhood plans in the BCP area.
 - Broadstone (2018)
 - Poole Quays Forum (2017)
 - Boscombe and Pokesdown (2019)
 - Highcliffe and Walkford (2023)
 - Sandbanks Peninsula (2024)
 - Hurn (2024)
24. In addition, preparation on neighbourhood plans have been progressing in the following areas:
 - Christchurch Town
 - Burton and Winkton
 - Queen's Park and Charminster
25. East Cliff and Springbourne and Lilliput are also in the process of establishing a neighbourhood area.
26. The geographical scope and where known the subject matter of the neighbourhood plan areas can be viewed on our website [Neighbourhood Planning | BCP](#).

Minerals and waste plans

24. The Bournemouth, Christchurch, Poole and Dorset Waste Plan (2019) identifies sites for new waste management facilities to meet the county's needs. It provides the policy framework for determining planning applications for waste management facilities up to 2033. This plan is now five years old and is in need of review.
25. The Bournemouth, Dorset and Poole Minerals Strategy was adopted in 2014. A five year review was carried out in 2020, as required by the National Planning Policy Framework. The review concludes that while an update of the Strategy is not currently required further work is needed to ensure the strategy remains suitable.
26. Both the Waste Plan and Minerals Strategy were prepared jointly between Dorset Council and BCP Council to cover the administrative areas of both Councils. BCP and Dorset Councils are continuing to work together on minerals and waste issues.
27. Dorset Council have set out that they aim to integrate the currently separate minerals and waste plans into a single document, to establish a strategic approach and set out the appropriate policy structure and site allocations to maintain a steady and appropriate supply of minerals to meet identified need. It will also establish the strategic approach and appropriate policy basis and site allocations to manage waste. The Plan will be taken forward as a new-style local plan. Once adopted, it is anticipated that the Minerals and Waste Plan will supersede the Minerals Strategy (2014), the Bournemouth, Christchurch, Poole and Dorset Mineral Sites Plan (2019) and the Bournemouth, Christchurch, Poole and Dorset Waste Plan (2019).

Timelines

27. The timetable for the new BCP Local Plan is set out below and noted above. Adoption is anticipated by the end of 2028.
28. The preparation of **Neighbourhood Plans** must follow the process set out in Neighbourhood Planning (General) regulations 2012. The main stages of the Neighbourhood Plan process are:
- Publication of the draft Neighbourhood Plan (Regulation 14): The draft plan is published for consultation by the neighbourhood planning body.
 - Submission of the Neighbourhood Plan (Regulation 16): The draft Neighbourhood plan is submitted to the local planning authority and is publicised for a minimum of 6 weeks.
 - Examination (Regulation 18): The local authority appoint an independent examiner to consider that the neighbourhood plan meets the basic conditions and other requirements set out by law. The examiner will issue a report to confirm if the plan can proceed to referendum or if modifications are required.
 - Referendum: People on the electoral register are entitled to vote on whether or not the neighbourhood plan should be used to help decide planning applications in the neighbourhood area.
Plan is 'made': If successful at referendum the neighbourhood plan is formally made and becomes part of the development plan.
29. Burton and Winkton have published a pre submission draft plan for consultation (Reg 14). The consultation closed in November 2024. It is anticipated that the plan will be submitted and examined in 2025, with a view to the referendum and plan being made in late 2025 or early 2026.
30. Christchurch Town and Queen's Park and Charminster are yet to publish draft plans. It is anticipated that Christchurch Town will publish a draft plan for consultation (Reg 14) in 2025 with a view to a referendum and plan being made in 2026. Queen's Park and Charminster are at an earlier stage of plan preparation and are likely to publish a draft plan in 2026.
31. Up to date information about the process of neighbourhood plans can be found on our website.

New BCP Local Plan													2026												2027												2028											
Task	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec																
Key dates summary																																																
Evidence gathering																																																
Notice of start of plan making																																																
Prepare Project Initiation Document																																																
Early engagement																																																
Gateway 1																																																
Visioning and strategy development																																																
Consultation on options 8 weeks																																																
Visioning and strategy development																																																
Gateway 2																																																
Writing the plan																																																
Consultation on draft plan 6 weeks																																																
Make changes																																																
Gateway 3																																																
Examination																																																
Adoption																																																
30 Months													1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30						

Other documents

Community Infrastructure Levy

32. The Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) will sets out a charging schedule of tariffs to be applied to qualifying development in the BCP area. This will allow funding to be secured for infrastructure that is needed because of development in the area. The tariff is typically applied per m2 of net additional residential floorspace. The rate of the tariff has been determined by examining the ability of development to bear the charge without unduly affecting a development's viability.
33. The CIL charging schedule will be prepared by BCP Council to cover the administrative area of the Council.
34. The stages and the proposed timetable for the production of the CIL Charging is set out below and will follow that of the proposed BCP Local Plan timetable.
 - Stage 1: Publication/Consultation on Preliminary Draft Charging Schedule
 - Stage 2: Publication/Consultation on Draft Charging Schedule
 - Stage 3: Submission for Examination.
 - Stage 4: Examination of the Draft Charging Schedule

Statement of Community Involvement

35. The Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) was adopted in 2025. It sets out how the council will consult on planning matters including the preparation of planning policy and the determination of planning applications. The Neighbourhood Planning Act 2017 introduced new requirements for the SCI and as such it is now a requirement to review the SCI every 5 years. The next review of the SCI is therefore due to take place in 2030.

Supplementary Planning Documents

36. Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs) are typically produced to provide more detailed guidance on how a particular policy (or policies) should be implemented. There are currently a number of Supplementary Planning Documents that relate to the legacy areas' Local Plans. A full list of the existing SPDs is available on our website at: www.bcpCouncil.gov.uk/planningpolicy.
37. The SPDs required to support the BCP Local Plan will be reviewed as the Local Plan is developed.

Authority Monitoring Report (AMR)

38. The Council is required to produce an Authority Monitoring Report (AMR), setting out how it has monitored progress against key milestones in the programme of plan making, including how effective the programme has been. The AMR will also show how the Council has monitored the implementation of plan policies and will help to establish whether there is a need to revise the LDS. The AMR will be produced annually.



Statement of Community Involvement

May 2025

**Planning and Transport
Strategic Planning**

Introduction

1.1 The role of planning is important in shaping the places where people live and work.

1.2 The planning system provides opportunities for local people to take part in making key decisions about how their local areas will develop over time. A planning system that provides many opportunities for local people to participate is essential in creating and delivering inclusive, accessible and safe sustainable communities.

1.3 BCP Council, as a local planning authority, is responsible for preparing a range of planning policy documents which collectively is known as the Local Development Plan (LDP). It is also responsible for the determination of planning applications for a range of development proposals across the area. Community involvement in both these functions is a fundamental component of the planning process.

1.4 As part of the suite of planning documents, the council is statutorily required by the Planning & Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (as amended) to produce a Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) every five years. The purpose of the SCI is to set out how we will engage with local communities and organisations on a range of planning matters including:

- the preparation of relevant LDP documents and other local planning documents
- the consideration and determination of planning applications for development

Background

1.5 BCP Council had inherited three legacy SCIs from the preceding Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole councils, all adopted 2015 and 2016. The new Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole council produced a new SCI in 2020, this updated SCI will replace the 2020 version.

1.6 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) revised in December 2024 values meaningful, effective engagement and making participation in public consultation genuinely easy for all. The NPPF (2024: para 16) states that the planning system should be genuinely plan led. Para 16(c) clarifies that plans should be shaped by early, proportionate and effective engagement between plan-makers and communities, local organisations, businesses, infrastructure providers and operators and statutory consultees. The council is committed to maintaining the fundamental elements of effective and meaningful engagement whilst recognising the social and technological behaviour changes taking place in the community.

1.7 The Localism Act (2011) introduced a duty to cooperate when plan making with adjoining authorities and other bodies on strategic cross boundary strategic infrastructure, including transport, flooding, housing and open space requirements. The three preceding local authority areas of Bournemouth, Christchurch & Poole and Dorset Council, New Forest District Council and New Forest National Park Authority have been cooperating on a range

of strategic matters for several years. BCP Council intends to continue effective discussion on such matters to enable the duty to be met in full.

1.8 The Neighbourhood Planning Act 2017 has introduced requirements for local planning authorities to set out policies in the SCI for involving interested parties in the preliminary stages of plan making including supporting communities who wish to undertake neighbourhood planning.

1.9 The council has produced this SCI to ensure local communities, individuals and other interested local organisations can be involved and engaged in local planning matters.

The SCI therefore sets out:

- the key stages in the preparation of development plan and supplementary planning documents and identifies the opportunities for consultation and involvement by communities, individuals and other local organisations
- the opportunities for local people to comment on planning applications for development which affects them
- additional guidance and assistance offered to potential and existing neighbourhood plan making bodies including the statutory stages for any modification to a 'made' neighbourhood plan

1.10 The Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) Regulations 2017 require the local planning authority to complete a review of its SCI every five years. However, it may also be reviewed within this period to accord with new regulations and guidance, or when fundamental changes take place that warrants a fresh SCI, for example to temporarily introduce changes to the methods of engaging the community and stakeholders.

1.11 We reserve the right to revise the SCI for minor changes or where temporary situations may cause temporary arrangements to methods of engagement. Where necessary revisions are made, we will continue to take steps to engage by means which are reasonably practicable. This will ensure that plan-making and decision making can progress in accordance with the regulations and the provisions of the SCI.

The benefits of involving the community

1.12 Local communities are those that are most likely to be affected by development proposals in their areas. They are also those who know the most about their neighbourhood. Involving the community in the consideration of planning matters for their area can have a number of benefits, which include:

- benefitting from detailed local knowledge, expertise and perspective of local people, organisations and community groups
- greater community support for, and ownership of policies, strategies and decisions
- community commitment to the future development of their area
- improving the quality of life and of the built and natural environment

1.13 When undertaking engagement with local communities on planning matters, the Local Planning Authority will promote fairness in the consultation process through application of the Gunning Principles. These principles state that:

- a. Consultation must take place when the proposal is still at a formative stage.
- b. Sufficient information is put forward with the proposal to allow for intelligent consideration and response.
- c. Adequate time must be given for consideration of the proposal and response to it.
- d. The consultation responses must be conscientiously considered by the decision maker.

Links with other corporate plans and strategies

1.14 The SCI has been prepared in the context of the adopted BCP Council Corporate Strategy (December 2024) which sets out what the council intends to achieve over the next 4 years. The strategy makes clear that the council is modern, accessible and accountable, committed to providing effective community leadership. It sets out two high level priorities

1. Vibrant Place, where people and nature flourish, with a thriving economy in a healthy, natural environment
2. Our People and communities. Everyone leads a fulfilled life, maximising opportunity for all. are to improve the quality of life for our residents to

1.15 The methods set out in the adopted (2021) BCP Council Community Engagement and Consultation Strategy will commit us to improve the way decisions are made by reviewing our public engagement methodology, transparency and communication and providing more satisfactory methods of communicating with the council as digital technology evolves over time.

The Council's Constitution (January 2025)

1.16 The Constitution sets out rules and procedures which explain how council business is done and how decisions are made. The Constitution gives residents and others certain rights and opportunities to participate in decision-making and contribute to public meetings. Procedures for asking questions, submitting petitions and taking part in certain meetings are contained within the Constitution and set out on the council's website.

Our engagement and consultation principles

1.17 The following general engagement and consultation principles will be applied when preparing planning documents as part of the LDP and in assessing and determining planning applications for development.

General engagement and consultation principles

We will:

Ensure public engagement and consultation is as inclusive as possible. This will be done by:

- Ensure that traditionally hard to reach groups have the opportunity to be involved in the planning process
- Ensure fair and equal treatment of all members of the community
- Use Plain English and avoid the use of planning jargon where possible
- Where required, make information available in a range of easily accessible formats (e.g. in languages, large print, electronic, paper copies).
- Utilise a range of different communication formats and methods, proportionate to the type
- Holding events or meetings in accessible locations at times appropriate for different members of the community

We will do this so that the widest range of residents and local organisations can be involved in, and influence the preparation of, local development plan documents and in the planning application decision making process.

Use consultation methods that are appropriate to each stage of the planning process.

The Council will use a range of techniques to engage with the community including making use of existing community and local interest groups. Seeking the views of the community and other local organisations at the earliest possible stages and throughout the planning process.

Promote methods of engagement and consultation that make communication and involvement more meaningful, easier, faster and cost effective, such as the use of the

council's website, email, e-bulletin subscriber service and other digital and innovative technology.

Provide more opportunities for contact with the community through the use of workshops, meetings and other events and where practicable, be flexible in the timing of such events so that as wide an audience as possible can be reached.

How to use this document

1.18 This document sets out the council's commitments to consultation for both plan-making and planning application decision-taking.

Section 2 deals with plan making. All Specific and General Consultees for BCP Council are set out. Organisations and individuals can request to be included within the consultee list at any time. Details will be maintained on the council's consultation database and all those on the database will be notified of future planning policy consultations.

Section 3 explains how planning applications are dealt with and shows how individuals and the community can be involved in the planning application process, including any right of appeal.

2 The Local Development Plan for BCP Council: plan-making

2.1 The council is responsible for preparing a range of planning documents that collectively make up the Local Development Plan (LDP). Such documents provide the planning strategy, policies, site allocations and guidance aimed at managing growth and development across the Bournemouth, Christchurch & Poole areas.

2.2 There are currently two main types of local planning policy documents prepared by the council, as follows:

- (i) **Development Plan Documents (DPDs)** are statutory documents, including the Local Plan that set the planning strategy, policies and site allocations for a local authority area.
- (ii) **Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs)** are non-statutory documents that provide further detail and guidance on the implementation of policies and proposals contained in adopted DPDs. Whilst SPDs do not have the same 'weight' as DPDs, they can be an important 'material consideration' in the process of assessing and determining planning applications for development.

2.3 The government is currently in the process of introducing planning reforms. Development Plan Documents will remain and consist of Local Plans and Supplementary Plans. The Supplementary Plans will be able to cover any subject matter which may be in a Local Plan or Minerals and Waste Plan, but must be site specific or relate to two or more sites which an authority consider to be 'nearby' to each other; except for design related supplementary plans which may be authority area wide. As a result SPDs are likely to remain in place until new style Local Plans and Supplementary Plans are introduced.

2.4 Alongside Local Plan production there is a current requirement to prepare Sustainability Appraisal (SA), integrated with a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) to assess the environmental social and economic effects of the Plan. As part of the planning reforms changes are proposed to introduce Environment Reports and further details are anticipated in 2025. Documents prepared as part of the SA or Environmental Reporting process will be published on the council's website.

2.5 The council will also consult on changes to Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL). A locally set charge which can be applied to development to help fund infrastructure required to accommodate growth e.g. heathland mitigation; strategic borough-wide transport improvements and flood defences; additional educational, health, social care, leisure and community facilities; green infrastructure/open space and public realm improvements.

2.6 Whilst not prepared by the council, it is obliged at various key stages of the neighbourhood planning process to consult with residents and interested parties when applications for forum and/or area designations are submitted. The draft Neighbourhood Plan (at Reg 16) will also require the council to undertake public consultation in accordance with the SCI. Consultation at the referendum stage is undertaken under separate legislative

regulations. However, all consultation feedback is reported to council committees to enable informed decision making to take place, in accordance with the council's Constitution.

2.7 The Local Development Scheme 2025 sets out a programme for the preparation of new development plan documents including the BCP Local Plan. The LDS will also be published on the council's website.

The current context

2.8 A new BCP Local Plan will be produced and will replace the legacy authorities' existing planning policies set out in The Bournemouth Core Strategy, Bournemouth AAP, Bournemouth Saved policies (2022), Bournemouth AH DPD (2009), Christchurch and East Dorset LP (2014), Christchurch saved policies (2001), Poole Local Plan 2018.

2.9 The list below sets out the current Local Development Plans:

- **Bournemouth Core Strategy (2012)**
- **Bournemouth Town Centre Area Action Plan (2013)**
- **Saved policies from the Bournemouth District Wide Local Plan 2002**
- **Affordable Housing DPD (2009)**
- **Boscombe & Pokesdown Neighbourhood Plan (2019)**
- **Christchurch and East Dorset Local Plan Part 1 – Core Strategy (2014)**
- **Hurn Neighbourhood Plan (2024)**
- **Highcliffe and Walkford Neighbourhood Plan (2023)**
- **Remaining saved policies from the Borough of Christchurch Local Plan (2001)**
- **Poole Local Plan 2018**
- **Broadstone Neighbourhood Plan 2018**
- **Poole Quays Forum Neighbourhood Plan 2017**
- **Sandbanks Peninsula Neighbourhood Plan (2024)**
- **Bournemouth, Dorset & Poole Minerals Strategy (2014)**
- **Bournemouth, Christchurch, Poole and Dorset Waste Plan (2019)**
- **Bournemouth, Christchurch, Poole and Dorset Mineral Sites Plan (2019)**

Other planning documents

Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Charging Schedule - an evidence based adopted local planning charge based on net additional floorspace created by new residential development. The Charging Schedule and Local Plan form the mechanisms for collecting developer contributions to enable infrastructure that supports housing growth.

Conservation Area Appraisals and Management Plans - documents that define the special character of each of Bournemouth's conservation areas and the approach to their preservation and enhancement.

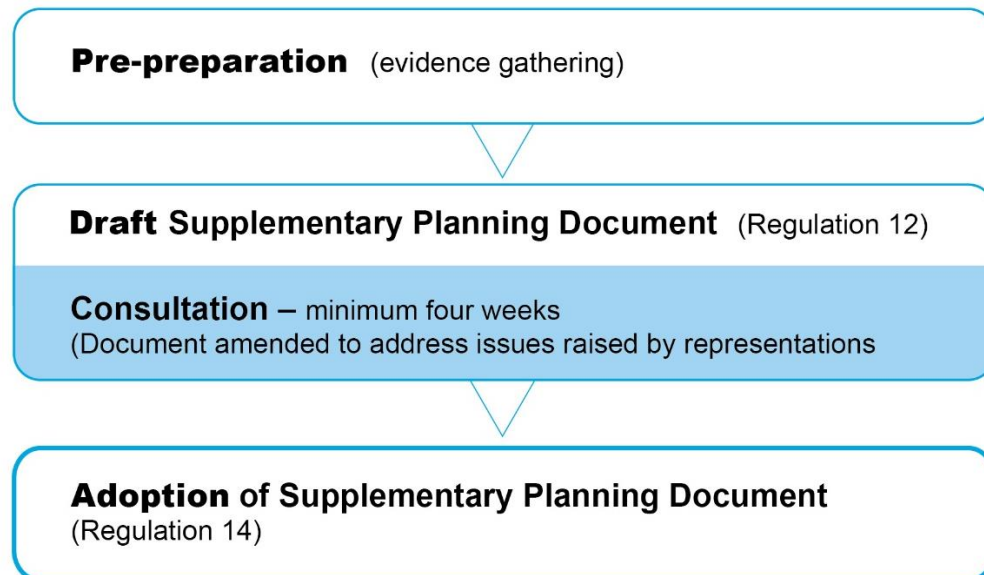
Stages in Local Plan preparation

2.10 Diagram 1 below sets out the statutory process in the preparation of local plan documents.



Stages in the preparation of Supplementary Planning Documents

2.11 Diagram 2 below sets out the stages in the preparation of supplementary planning documents, which as they are not statutory documents are subject to a more streamlined preparation process.



Ways to get involved in the development of new planning policies

2.12 The table below sets out the range of methods that can be used in engaging with the community and other stakeholders. The method(s) used will be those that are appropriate to the stage of the planning process, the issues that are being considered and the community involved.

Website	All planning policy documents, engagement, consultations and supporting information will be available on our dedicated 'haveyoursay' webpage. We may also use the website for online comment forms, questionnaires and feedback
Email	Emails may include information on consultations, responses, the stage of preparation reached, adoption and general updates.
Social media	Where appropriate, social media such as the council's Facebook or X (Formally known as Twitter) may be used to communicate planning matters with groups who are hard to reach or do not traditionally respond to other methods of communication.
Telephone	Where appropriate, to be used where alternative methods are not practical for individuals or groups who do not have internet access.
Meetings (including virtual/digital meetings)	Meetings with individuals, businesses, groups and organisations will be used where appropriate and relevant to the document being prepared. We may offer to attend meetings which are held by existing groups to clarify or explain issues or documents we are consulting on.
Digital communication and consultations	We will seek to use emerging or new digital technology to engage with residents and interested parties, capturing feedback through the use of new technology.
Workshops (including virtual/digital workshops)	Facilitated workshops may be used where appropriate and relevant to allow discussion on issues in detail and to ensure that a range of interested parties have the opportunity to express their views and opinions.
Exhibitions (including virtual/digital exhibitions)	Exhibitions may be used to explain specific proposals and, when staffed, will be used as a method for clarifying our approach and generating feedback.
Video conferencing targeted meetings	In appropriate situations, video conference type meetings may be arranged with representative groups who are not normally engaged in planning consultations to make sure their views are heard.
Local publicity	Where appropriate, additional publicity measures may be taken at a local level.
Walkabout tours	In certain instances, 'walkabout tours' may be used as a way of engaging with a range of stakeholders with interests in a specific geographical area.



Who will be consulted in the preparation of planning documents

2.13 The Town & Country Planning (Local Planning) England Regulations 2012 identify 'specific consultation bodies' and 'general consultation bodies' that local planning authorities must consult. The Government has indicated that it may update these consultation bodies.

Specific consultation bodies:

- BCP Town and Parish Councils
- Relevant Adjoining Local Planning Authorities:
 - Dorset Council
 - New Forest District Council
- Electronic communications companies/owners or operators of telecommunications
- Apparatus: BT, Three, Openreach, Telefónica UK Ltd (O2), Vodafone Ltd
- British Gas
- Dorset Healthcare NHS Trust
- Historic England
- Environment Agency
- Highways England
- Homes England
- Marine Management Organisation
- National Grid
- Natural England
- Network Rail
- Scottish and Southern Energy PLC
- Bournemouth Water Ltd
- Wessex Water

General consultation bodies:

- Neighbourhood Forums
- Resident and community groups
- Places of worship and religious groups
- Gypsy and Traveller groups
- Heritage groups
- Leisure and recreation groups
- Healthcare and community safety groups
- Citizen, political and societal groups

- Business and economy groups
- Developers and planning agents
- Wider stakeholders and individuals

2.14 The strategic planning team maintain a database of organisations and individuals who we are statutorily obliged to consult with and those who have expressed an interest in being involved in the development plan process. As the database is capable of continuous update, any organisation or individual can sign up for notifications by adding their contact details to the mailing list, similarly they can remove their contact details as appropriate.

How your views will be taken into account

2.15 When a consultation event has ended, all the representations we have received will be fully considered and our response will be set out in a summary document. Where appropriate, the planning document consulted on will be revised to reflect the representations received. The summary consultation document will set out:

- who was consulted
- how they were consulted
- a summary of the main issues raised in the comments
- how the comments have been taken into account in the final document

2.16 The summary will be published on our website alongside the consultation documents.

Adoption of LDP and supplementary planning documents

2.17 Once the formal stages of plan preparation have been completed, as set out in Diagrams 1 and 2 (under paragraphs 2.12 and 2.13) documents are required to be formally adopted by the council. All Development Plan and Supplementary Planning Documents must be adopted by full council.

Development Plans - consultation principles

2.18 In the preparation of development plan and supplementary planning documents we will apply the following principles:

Preparing development plan and supplementary planning documents

We will:

Provide clear information on both the purpose of the engagement and consultation being undertaken and the issues under consideration.

Design engagement and consultation events to provide at least the minimum statutory consultation period and wherever practicable or appropriate, exceed these, and coordinate and combine engagement and consultation events to reduce duplication and waste.

Keep records of all representations received through consultation and wherever practicable, provide an appropriate acknowledgement.

Publish responses to representations and use the results to inform policy and service development.

Sustainability Appraisal and Strategic Environmental Assessment

2.19 As part of the preparation of Development Plan Documents the council is currently required to undertake Sustainability Appraisal (SA) and Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA). SA examines the implications of the LDP on the community, the environment and natural resources, whereas SEAs are undertaken to measure the effects of the plan, policy or programme on the environment generally. The process aims to combine social, environmental and economic considerations into the preparation of plans in order to promote sustainable development. In addition, as part of the SA process, our development plan documents are also subject to separate appraisal in respect of health and equalities issues in the form of Health Impact Assessment (HIA) and Equalities Impact Assessment (EqIA). As part of the planning reforms the process is likely to change involving new Environmental Outcome reports but the details have not yet been released.

2.20 If the current process remains in place SA scoping will be undertaken at the commencement of the Local Plan process and the resulting SA framework and methodology applied to subsequent DPDs. An SA report will then be produced for consultation alongside a development plan document, at each stage in its preparation. A final SA report will be published prior to a development plan document being adopted by the council. However, this process may be updated through the introduction of Environmental Outcome Reports.

Fulfilling the requirements of Sustainability Appraisal/ Strategic Environmental Assessment

If the current SA system remains, we will:

Undertake and consult on a revised scoping document and develop an updated SA framework and methodology which will be applied to the review of the Local Plan and subsequent development plan documents, as appropriate.

Publish SA reports for consultation, alongside development plan documents, at each stage in their preparation.

Amend SA reports, where appropriate, in response to any comments received.

Produce a final SA report prior to a development plan document being adopted.

The Duty to Cooperate

2.21 The Localism Act 2011 introduced a new 'Duty to Cooperate', requiring local Authorities and a number of other public bodies to:

- Cooperate in relation to issues of sustainable development or the use of land that would result in a significant impact on at least two local planning authority areas.
- Set out planning policies to address these issues.
- 'Engage constructively, actively and on an ongoing basis' in developing strategic policies.
- Consider joint approaches to plan making.

2.22 The NPPF sets out the strategic issues where cooperation might be appropriate and further guidance is provided on 'planning strategically across local boundaries', highlighting the importance of joint working to meet development requirements that cannot be wholly met within a single local planning area, through either joint planning policies or informal strategies such as infrastructure and investment plans.

2.23 BCP Council will be required to demonstrate that it has complied with, and fulfilled the requirements of the Duty to Cooperate in preparing its Local Development Plan and associated documents. In this regard the commitments below will be implemented.

Fulfilling the Duty to Cooperate

We will:

Identify those issues that will require to be considered jointly with neighbouring local authorities and other public and private bodies and actively engage with them in fulfilling the requirements of the duty to cooperate.

Produce appropriate documentation that sets out duty to cooperate arrangements for identified issues and includes details of the decisions reached and why.

Neighbourhood Planning

2.24 Neighbourhood planning was introduced by the Localism Act 2011 and the Neighbourhood Planning Regulations (2012). The Localism Act sets out the areas of neighbourhood planning for which local planning authorities are responsible. In meeting these responsibilities, Strategic Planning will support community groups through their applications to become designated neighbourhood forums, as well as town or parish councils with general powers of competence to progress through key statutory stages of neighbourhood plan production.

2.25 The Neighbourhood Planning Act 2017 and Neighbourhood Planning Regulations 2012 introduced a duty on local authorities to extend advice and assistance on proposals

for modification of 'made' neighbourhood plans. This is reflected in our commitments in the table below.

Neighbourhood Planning

We will:

- Comply with all Neighbourhood Planning legislation and regulatory requirements.
- Provide guidance and support to prospective neighbourhood groups in wishing to establish themselves as a neighbourhood forum and designate a neighbourhood area.
- Provide advice and assistance to a designated neighbourhood forum or town or parish council in the preparation of a neighbourhood plan, subject to the availability of resources.
- Make the appropriate checks to ensure that a submitted neighbourhood plan meets basic conditions and legal requirements.
- Publish the submission version of the Neighbourhood Plan for public consultation on the council's website for a period of 6 weeks and gather representations received to be forwarded to the examiner for consideration.
- Make arrangements to appoint independent examiner for the examination of a neighbourhood plan - generally examination will be by written representations.
- Make the examiner's report available on the council's webpages.
- Progress to referendum and write to eligible residents and businesses on the council's electoral register informing them that a referendum will be held at least 28 days prior to the voting date.
- Notify residents of Neighbourhood Planning referendums in their area, on the council's website.
- Following a positive referendum and subject to the Plan meeting EU obligations, progress the Plan to adoption.
- Publicise the Neighbourhood Plan on the council's website and in libraries and put up site notices in the Neighbourhood Area publicising the adoption of the Plan.
- Provide advice and assistance to modify 'made' plans and provision for changing neighbourhood area boundaries.

Community Infrastructure Levy

2.26 The three preceding authority areas have separate adopted Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Charging Schedules. CIL provides the main mechanism for development in Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole to contribute towards providing the infrastructure required to accommodate growth in the town. The CIL Charging Schedule sets out the rates (set at £ per square metre of new floorspace) that are applied to development depending on location in the council areas. The adopted rates will be subject to monitoring and periodic review to ensure that they remain up to date and effective. Where, in the future, the adopted Charging Schedule needs to be amended the council will ensure that it will consult widely to ensure that any proposed changes are subject to the appropriate engagement with local communities, infrastructure providers, developers and other stakeholders.

Community Infrastructure Levy

We will:

- Continue to allocate funding through the Neighbourhood Portion of CIL.
- Regularly review the operation and effectiveness of the adopted Charging Schedules.
- Report on the collection and expenditure of CIL monies
- Maintain regular engagement with communities, interested parties and infrastructure providers to ensure the town's infrastructure needs evidence base is kept up to date.
- Publish an Infrastructure Funding Statement identifying infrastructure needs, costs, sources of funding and spending.
- Undertake consultation with communities and organisations in accordance with the CIL Regulations requirements for engagement prior to any formal review of the adopted CIL Charging Schedule.

How locally elected councillors will be involved

2.27 Councillors are the locally elected representatives for the area. Councillors attend Council meetings and a number of them may be appointed to sit on various committees such as the Planning Committee. The Overview and Scrutiny Board plays a vital role in maintaining an overview of the Council's work and looking in depth at areas of particular significance or concern.

What resources does Strategic Planning have?

2.28 Undertaking engagement and consultation is an integral part of the work of the Planning Service, but it is also resource intensive. There are direct costs in terms of resources and staff time. What we have set out in this Statement of Community Involvement is capable of being resourced from within existing budgets, based on the current resources available to the service.

2.29 We will aim to use the most cost-effective methods of engagement and consultation, provide a high-quality service to all customers and where possible, will work with others to coordinate consultations where we can and use innovative technology to assist us where possible.

3 Development management - planning applications

3.1 The requirements for advertising and consulting on planning applications are set out in The Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015. Table 1 sets out how BCP Council will meet the statutory publication requirements for various categories of planning application. Please also see paragraph 3.3 below.

Development type	How BCP Council will meet statutory requirements
Applications for non-major development including; household, minor, change of use, variation of condition and others.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Site notice(s) • Publish on website
Major applications (as set out in Article 2) of the Development Management Procedure Order 2015	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advertisement in local newspaper • Site notice(s) • Publish on website
Major applications accompanied by an environmental statement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advertisement in local newspaper • Site notice(s) • Publish on website
Applications for Development affecting the setting of a Listed Building or a Conservation Area.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advertisement in local newspaper • Site Notice(s) • Publish on website
Applications which do not accord with (departures from) the statutory development plan.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advertisement in local newspaper • Site Notice(s)
Applications which affect a Public Right of Way (PRoW) to which Part 3 of the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 applies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advertisement in local newspaper • Site Notice(s) • Publish on website
Notice of hedgerow removals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Notify town/parish council (where existing)
Development by Electronic Communications Code Operators GPDO 2015 Sch 2, Part 16	<p>If development is not in accordance with the development plan or would affect a PRO to which Part 3 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 applies: Site notice and advertisement in local newspaper</p> <p>On sites of 1 hectare or more: Site notice(s) Advertisement in local newspaper</p> <p>All other development not covered above: Site notice(s) Advertisement in local newspaper</p>

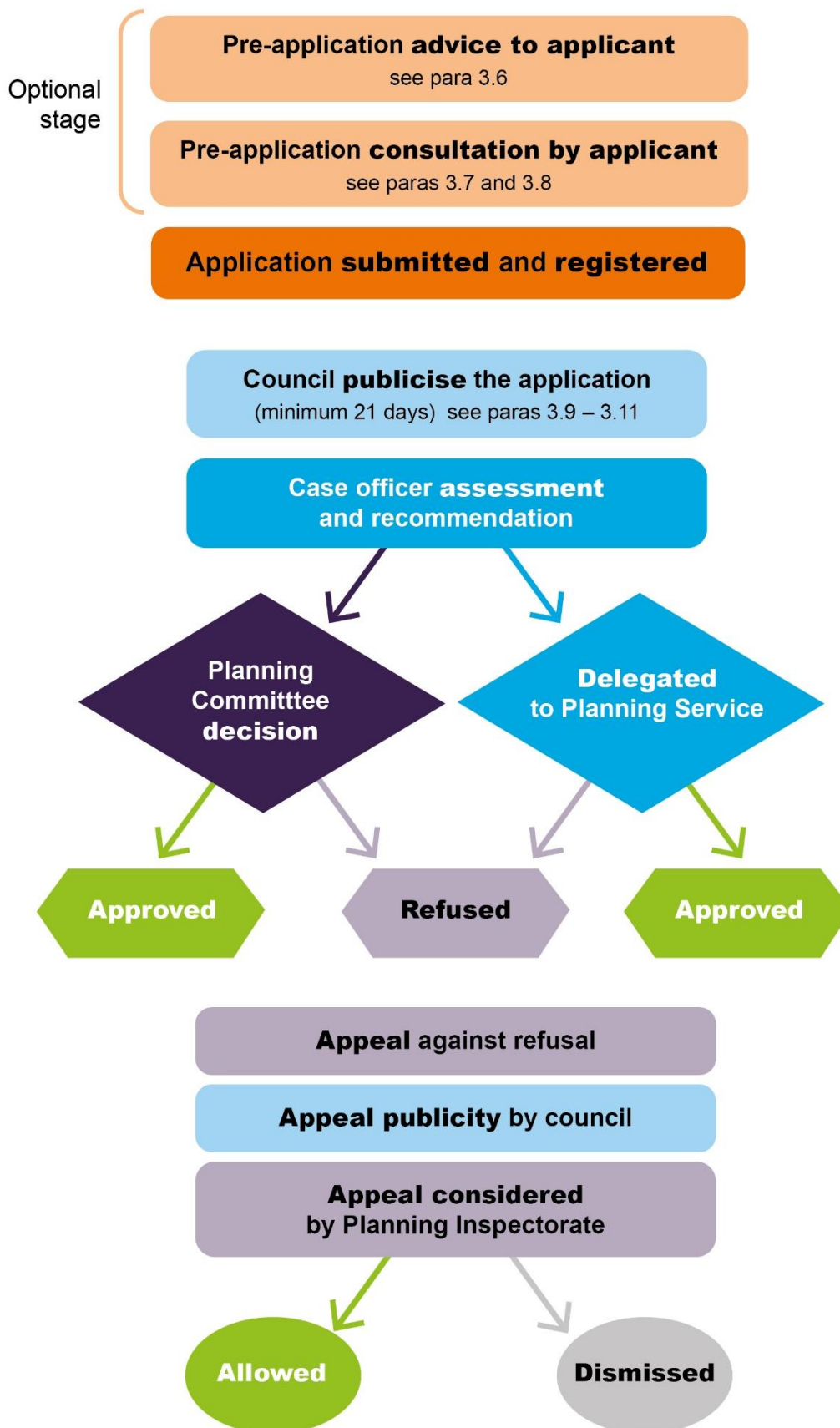
Application for non-material amendment.	No statutory requirement however, applications for non-materials amendments will be published on the BCP planning website application portals.
Certain applications for Permitted Development requiring Prior Approval as defined by the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 2015 as amended.	Notify each adjoining owner or occupier about a proposed development by serving on them a notice where required by the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 2015 as amended.

3.2 The council is committed to engagement and consultation on planning applications in line with legal requirements. Site notices are posted on or near the land to which the application relates for not less than 21 days in accordance with the relevant legislation. The council advertise applications in the local press where required. People can request a copy of the weekly list and they are encouraged to make themselves known to the local planning authority. The notice will briefly describe the proposal and specify a date by which representations should be made (not less than 21 days from the date of posting). Representations must be made in writing, preferably using the Council's online comment facility via the BCP Council website.

3.3 The council encourages pre-application engagement and consultation in line with the NPPF (2024).

3.4 The following flowchart sets out the planning application process (opportunities for public/ward councillors' involvement highlighted in pale blue).

Planning application process



Pre-application discussions with applicant

3.5 Most applications can benefit from obtaining advice at the pre-application stage, before an application is submitted. Pre-application discussions and written advice from the LPA provides greater certainty and clarity to applicants by identifying relevant planning issues and requirements that can influence the final scheme at an early stage, before it is submitted.

Pre-application consultation

3.6 Applicants are strongly encouraged to engage in pre-application consultation for major or potentially controversial development schemes where appropriate. Pre-application consultation provides an opportunity for applicants/agents/developers to explain their proposals to the local community and allow them the opportunity to express their views and raise concerns directly with applicant with the possibility of influencing the proposal prior to the submission of a planning application.

3.7 The council recognises the importance of actively and creatively engaging the community in the shaping and development of the places where people live and work and the role this can have in fostering a sense of pride and ownership in a local area. To achieve this, the council will consider the use of engagement forums and events to allow elected councillors to liaise with invited local community leaders, schools, community groups, business representatives and other relevant key stakeholders. In this way, forums can participate in discussion to consider a site's future use, design and layout, before a proposed development scheme is submitted to the council. This process aligns with the spirit of the Government's 'Localism' agenda.

How local communities are involved when a planning application is received

3.8 When a planning application is received, properties will be notified by site notice. The public normally have 21 days (extended where the period includes a bank holiday) to make comments on any application proposal and the deadline for comments will be displayed at the bottom of the site notice(s). A decision will not be made until the latest publicity period has expired. Copies of application forms, plans and supporting documents are available for the public to view on the council's website.

3.9 In addition to the weekly lists, the council has a statutory obligation to advertise specific types of applications within a local newspaper – in our case, the Daily Echo.

The council publishes public notices to advertise the following types of applications:

- Applications for Major Development as set out in article 2 of the Development Management Procedure Order 2015.
- Major Applications accompanied by an Environmental Statement.
- Applications for Development within a Conservation Area

- Applications for Listed Building Consent where works to the exterior of the building are proposed.
- Applications affecting the setting of Listed Buildings.
- Applications which do not accord with (departures from) from the statutory Development Plan.
- Applications affecting a public right of way to which Part 3 of the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 applies.
- Certain development by Electronic Communications Code Operators

Who makes decisions on planning applications?

3.10 A wide variety of planning applications are received each year, ranging from small householder and minor applications, change of use, variation of conditions to large commercial, retail, housing or mixed-use developments. The council makes decisions on these planning applications in one of two ways:

- i. The Director of Planning and Transport can determine applications under delegated powers. This accounts for more than 90% of all applications received.
- ii. Planning Committee deals with those other applications considered to be more contentious as set out in the BCP Constitution.

3.11 Planning application decisions are made taking into account the recommendation of planning officers, the adopted development plan and other relevant material considerations, including consultation comments and third-party representation. Consultation arrangements and the application of planning policy is the same whichever route is chosen.

3.12 Once a planning application has been determined, the decision will be available to view on the council's website.

3.13 The following commitments set out our approach to how the planning application process will be undertaken and what information will be made available.

Undertaking the planning application process

We will:

Encourage applicants to undertake pre-submission consultations with local communities on large or significant development proposals.

Encourage applicants to engage in pre-application discussions with the council for major or significant/controversial applications.

Encourage householders to undertake informal discussions with neighbours over householder proposals.

Allow access to all planning application files (except where confidentiality exclusions apply) and develop document management systems so that, progressively, all files are available electronically through the BCP Council website.

Negotiate minor changes with applicants where necessary and address issues identified through the publicity and consultation exercises on an application where they are considered to hold merit.

Where an application has been amended, officers will exercise their professional judgement to decide whether further publicity and consultation is necessary in the interests of fairness. The time period for any further publicity may be shorter than 21 days depending on the extent of change to the scheme.

In the interests of economy, it is not possible to respond to specific points raised in representations or to provide individual notification of the outcome of the application.

Appendix 1

Glossary of planning terms and acronyms

Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) - the financial contribution raised from new development that is used to fund the provision of infrastructure (eg transport schemes, flood defences, parks and green spaces etc), that is needed as a result of development.

Local Plan - key document that sets out the long-term spatial vision for an area, together with the spatial objectives, strategic policies and development management policies required to deliver that vision. The Local Plan has the status of a Development Plan Document.

Development Plan - as set out in Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act, an authority's development plan consists of relevant documents contained within its Local Plan.

Duty to Cooperate - provision of the Localism Act 2011, that has created a duty on local authorities to cooperate with each other when making plans.

Overview and Scrutiny Board - advisory committee dealing with the development of planning policy.

Equalities Impact Assessment (EqIA) - an assessment tool used to ensure that policies, plans, programmes and strategies do not discriminate against any group or individual on the grounds of age, disability, sex, gender reassignment, pregnancy/maternity, marriage/civil partnership, race, religious belief or faith, sexual orientation, armed forces communities, social inequality or human rights.

General Consultation Bodies - defined in Part 1 of The Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012.

Gunning Principles - following a landmark case in 1985 (R v LB Brent ex parte Gunning), Stephen Sedley QC proposed four consultation principles applicable to all public consultations by public bodies in the UK. These include ensuring consultation is undertaken when proposals are still at a formative stage, that there is sufficient information provided for the public to make an informed choice, that adequate time is given for consideration and response and, that consultation responses are conscientiously taken into account by decision makers.

Health Impact Assessment (HIA) - an assessment tool used in determining how policies, plans, programmes and strategies can contribute to improving the health and wellbeing of communities.

Annual Monitoring Report – Authorities monitoring the indicators of achievement and targets set out in the Local Plan. The monitoring report assists with identifying how well the Local Plan's key outcomes related to the strategic objectives are being implemented.

Local Development Plan (LDP) - the name for the portfolio of Local Development Documents.

Local Development Scheme (LDS) - a work programme showing when planning policy documents will be produced.

Localism Act 2011 - legislation that brought about a number of reforms to the planning system which included the abolition of regional strategies; the duty to cooperate and introduction of neighbourhood planning.

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (revised 2024) - document that sets out the Government's planning policies and how these are to be applied. It also provides the framework within which local people and their accountable councils can produce their own distinctive local and neighbourhood plans, which reflect the needs and priorities of their communities.

Neighbourhood Planning – Introduced by the Localism Act 2011, this is a means by which local communities are provided with the rights and powers to decide the future of the places where they live and work by developing a Neighbourhood Plan. When made, the plan has the same status as the Local Plan.

Local Planning Authority (LPA) - term for the body as part of the council that has responsibility for setting local planning policies and making decisions on planning applications.

Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) - sets out the standards which authorities will achieve with regard to involving local communities in the preparation of local development documents and development management decisions.

Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) - a generic term used to describe environmental assessment as applied to policies, plans and programmes. The European 'SEA Directive' (2001/42/EC) requires a formal 'environmental assessment of certain plans and programmes, including those in the field of planning and land use'.

Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) - document that provides supplementary information in respect of the policies in Development Plan Documents. They do not form part of the Development Plan and are not subject to independent examination.

Specific Consultation Bodies - defined in Part 1 of The Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012, examples given in Appendix 2.

Sustainability Appraisal (SA) - tool for appraising policies to ensure they reflect sustainable development objectives (i.e. social, environmental and economic factors) and required in the Act to be undertaken for all local development documents.

Stakeholders - any individual or organisation who has an interest in the way an area develops. This may include residents, developers, community groups, employers etc...

The Regulations - Town & Country (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 No. 767

Appendix 2

List of Specific Consultation Bodies as interpreted from the Town & Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012

BCP Town and Parish Councils

Relevant Adjoining Local Planning Authorities:

Dorset Council

New Forest District Council

Relevant Adjoining town and parish councils: (not exhaustive for BCP)

Arne

Colehill

Corfe Castle

Corfe Mullen

Ferndown

Lytchett Matravers

Lytchett Minster and Upton

Morden

Pamphill and Shapwick

Studland

Sturminster Marshall

Wareham St Martin

West Parley

Wimborne Minster

Electronic communications companies/owners or operators of telecommunications apparatus

BT

EE

Three

Openreach

SSE Telecoms

Telefónica UK Ltd (O2)

Vodafone Ltd

Licence granted under section 7(2) of the Gas act 1986(9): British Gas

Dorset Health and Wellbeing Board

Historic England

Environment Agency

Highways England

Homes and Communities Agency

Marine Management Organisation

National Grid

Natural England

Network Rail

Licence granted under section 6(1)(b) or (c) of the Electricity Act 1989

Scottish and Southern Energy PLC

Bournemouth Water Ltd

Wessex Water

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CABINET



Report subject	Our Place and Environment: Consolidated Active Travel Fund 2025/26
Meeting date	13 May 2025
Status	Public Report
Executive summary	<p>The Council has been allocated and accepted £1.459m Consolidated Active Travel Fund (CATF) grant from Active Travel England (ATE) for walking, wheeling and cycling improvements to deliver schemes aligned with the Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) approved by Council in May 2022.</p> <p>The award comprises £1.128m of capital and £331k of revenue funding.</p> <p>This report recommends how the grant award should be invested and seeks delegation to facilitate delivery.</p>
Recommendations	<p>It is RECOMMENDED that Cabinet:</p> <p>(a) Recommends to Council delegation of the investment of the £1.459m of Consolidated Active Travel Fund 2025/26 to the Service Director for Planning & Transport in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Climate Response, Environment and Energy</p>
Reason for recommendations	<p>To set out recommended investment of the CATF 2025/26 award and seek Council approval to deliver in line with the constitution and financial regulations delegations.</p> <p>The investment of the ATF funding is aligned with the LCWIP; Council's Corporate Strategy; and the Climate and Ecological Emergency Action Plan.</p>
Portfolio Holder(s):	Councillor Andy Hadley - Portfolio Holder for Climate Response, Environment and Energy
Corporate Director	Glynn Barton – Chief Operations Officer
Report Authors	<p>Richard Pincroft – Head of Transport and Sustainable Travel</p> <p>Susan Fox – LTP and Capital Programme Manager</p> <p>Beth Barker-Stock – Sustainable Travel Team Leader</p>

Wards	Alderney & Bourne Valley, Christchurch Town, Mudeford, Stanpit & West Highcliffe, Poole Town
Classification	For Recommendation

Background

1. On 28 February 2025 a confirmation letter was received from Active Travel England advising that the council had been allocated £1,459,542 Consolidated Active Travel Fund (CATF) grant (= £331k revenue and £1.128m capital).
2. The letter advised that CATF allocations were calculated based on population size and Active Travel capability ratings. BCP Council is rated as Level 2: Visible local leadership and support, with emerging network.
3. The purpose of the CATF is to enable councils to focus on delivering active travel programmes including the delivery of high-quality walking, wheeling and cycling infrastructure, behaviour change activities and capability building measures which are all aligned with the BCP Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) approved at Council in May 2022 and the following motion approved at Council in November 2022:

'In order to meet our climate emergency declaration, we will work to decarbonise the transport network in the BCP area. In order to do this we will aim to get to 50% of journeys within the BCP area to be done by walking, scooting, cycling or public transport by 2030, in the spirit of the government's 'Decarbonising Transport. A Better, Greener Britain 2021 report'.
4. The award letter required the council to complete a Section 31 grant acceptance declaration to ATE by the 19 March 2025 ahead of first payment. Acceptance of the grant was undertaken by the Chief Executive on behalf of the Council using delegated powers for reasons of urgency and the return completed and sent back to ATE ahead of deadline. Note: Chief Executive delegation was used because the award was greater than £1m (threshold for Council approval) and there were no council meetings scheduled between receipt of the grant letter and the deadline for return of the declaration to ATE accepting the grant.
5. An assessment of the existing council active travel related programmes including the delivery of high-quality walking, wheeling and cycling infrastructure, behaviour change activities and capability building measures has been undertaken by the council Sustainable Travel Team in consultation with the Active Travel England Regional Lead, Portfolio Holder for Climate Response, Environment and Energy, Portfolio Holder for Destination, Leisure & Commercial Operations and a Transport Advisory Group member.
6. The output of the assessment, which is in line with the funding guidance is a recommendation that the following items are funded using the CATF grant:

CATF Revenue:

Description	Estimated Cost [£]
Continuation of Bike It Plus and School Street support from Sustrans – dedicated officers (2.5FTE) working with multiple schools, supporting the Sustainable Travel Team to engage with families to encourage and enable modal shift, to consult with users on proposals, monitor and evaluate projects and deliver new School Streets – aligned with Local Transport Plan (LTP) Capital Programme.	160,000
Design and Programme Management fees for development of CATF capital schemes – required to fund CATF Revenue and Capital items.	121,000
Feasibility, development of design and implementation of minor measures linked to Barrack Road Bike Bus – aligned with LCWIP.	50,000
Total	331,000

CATF Capital:

Description	Estimated Cost [£]
Pedestrian and cycle route improvements between Recreation Road and Coy Pond via Sheringham, Wroxham and Yarmouth Road extending Transforming Cities Funded and Active Travel Fund 4 funded route from Bournemouth Town Centre via the Gardens – high priority in LCWIP.	478,000
Highcliffe Road Toucan Crossing between Somerford and Hoburne Roundabouts – highest ranked pedestrian crossing and aligned with LTP capital programme.	350,000
Parkstone Road Toucan Crossing connecting Poole Park to Birds Hill Road – high priority in LCWIP.	300,000
Total	1,128,000

Note: maps showing the location of the recommended capital schemes and how they fit into the walking and cycling network can be viewed in Appendix A.

Options appraisal

7. Options:

- a) Do nothing – not recommended. Reason: this would require the council to return the £1,459,542 grant to Active Travel England and forfeit the opportunity to provide infrastructure and activities to encourage active travel.
- b) Support recommendation to invest the grant as scheduled above under item 6 – recommended. Reason: acceptance of the grant and investment would be

directly aligned with high priorities in the council Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) and Local Transport Plan (LTP). Delivery of the priority items scheduled would help to maximise the impact of infrastructure built to date by providing key links to connect them.

c) Adjust recommendation – not recommended. Reason: the proposed schedule has been developed in consideration of LCWIP and Local Transport Plan priorities, therefore, adjusting the recommendation would likely result in lower priority items being delivered.

Summary of financial implications

8. All resources and costs to deliver the schemes in accordance with the grant criteria are included within the funding or already allocated through the Local Transport Plan (LTP) capital programme for 2025/26.
9. Failing to accept the grant funding will mean that these prioritised and strategically important schemes would not be funded.

Summary of legal implications

10. The proposed schemes are all at varying levels of development and appropriate public engagement and consultation would be undertaken to ensure that residents and stakeholders are able to inform proposals.
11. Delivery of some schemes funded by the grant scheme would require alterations to Traffic Regulation Orders and these would be progressed in accordance with the detailed procedures set out in legislation, including public consultation as required.
12. As detailed in paragraph 4 above the constitution allows for the Chief Executive delegation to be exercised where there is insufficient time to convene a formal decision-making meeting. As this grant was more than £1m a meeting of Council would have been required which in this occasion was not possible due to the very short window for acceptance of the grant.

Summary of human resources implications

13. The costs included within the application allowed for programme management (including financial support) and associated communications and consultation costs to be recharged to the programme.

Summary of sustainability impact

14. A DIA has been completed (ID 711) and the impact summary is appended to this report. The overall impact is positive, with few minor impacts, and the carbon footprint score is moderate.

Summary of public health implications

15. The delivery of schemes to support walking, wheeling and cycling would enable and encourage more people to travel by active modes, thus incorporating physical movement into their daily lives. This in turn would result in improved health and well-being for residents and visitors, with evidence showing that more daily activity leads to fewer sickness days and positive long-term health outcomes. Active travel undertaken in the place of motorised journeys has a positive impact on air quality with consequential health benefits.

Summary of equality implications

16. The CATF-funded programme of projects will have an overall **positive** impact on people from protected characteristic groups, particularly those living in the relevant areas and travelling on foot, by cycle, wheeling, or using a mobility aid.

Crossing busy main roads can be a real barrier and safety concern for anyone who is permanently or temporarily visually, mentally or physically disabled or impaired. Provision of formal crossing points can help people make safer, more comfortable active journeys.

Similarly, implementing measures in and around schools to help children travel safely and independently to school on foot, or by scooting, wheeling or cycling, improves safety and perceptions of safety. It can also help reduce the number of children being driven to school, which helps increase activity rates, improves air quality and reduces road danger, and is in line with national and local policy.

17. Where applicable further EIA screenings and potentially full assessments shall be undertaken as proposals are progressed.

Summary of risk assessment

18. Not accepting the CATF funding would result in the delay or non-delivery of Active Travel schemes in the BCP council area. This would impact on the propensity to shift to sustainable travel modes and make it more difficult to achieve reductions in traffic congestion, which in turn impact on air quality, the local economy, health and wellbeing and climate change targets.

Background papers

[BCP Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan](#)

Appendices

Appendix A – Maps showing location of proposed walking and cycling measures.

Appendix B – DIA Impact Summary table

Appendix A – Maps showing location of proposed walking and cycling measures

Key:

Key walking, wheeling or cycling routes

Extent of proposed route improvements

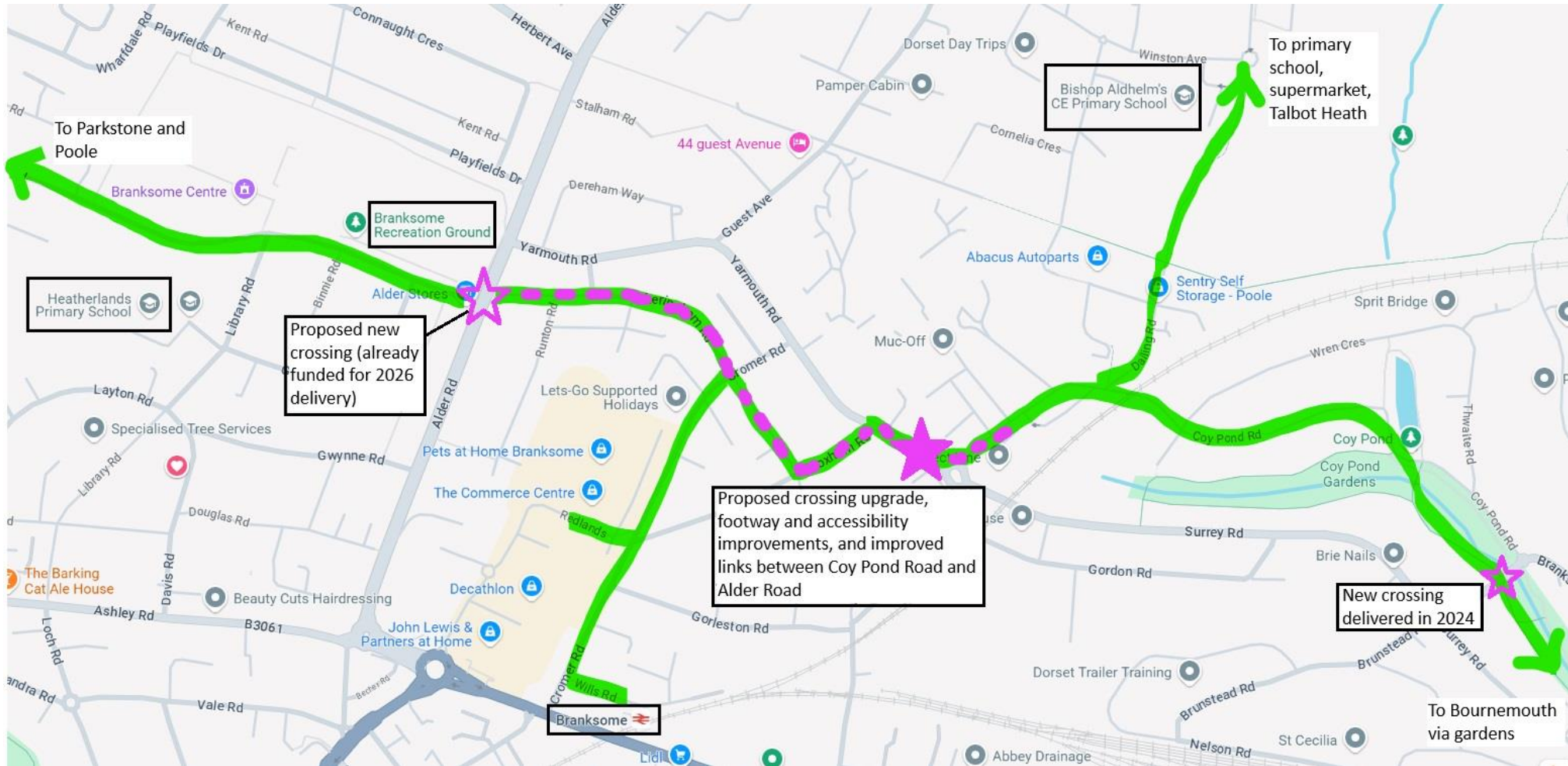


Location of proposed new crossing to be funded with CATF

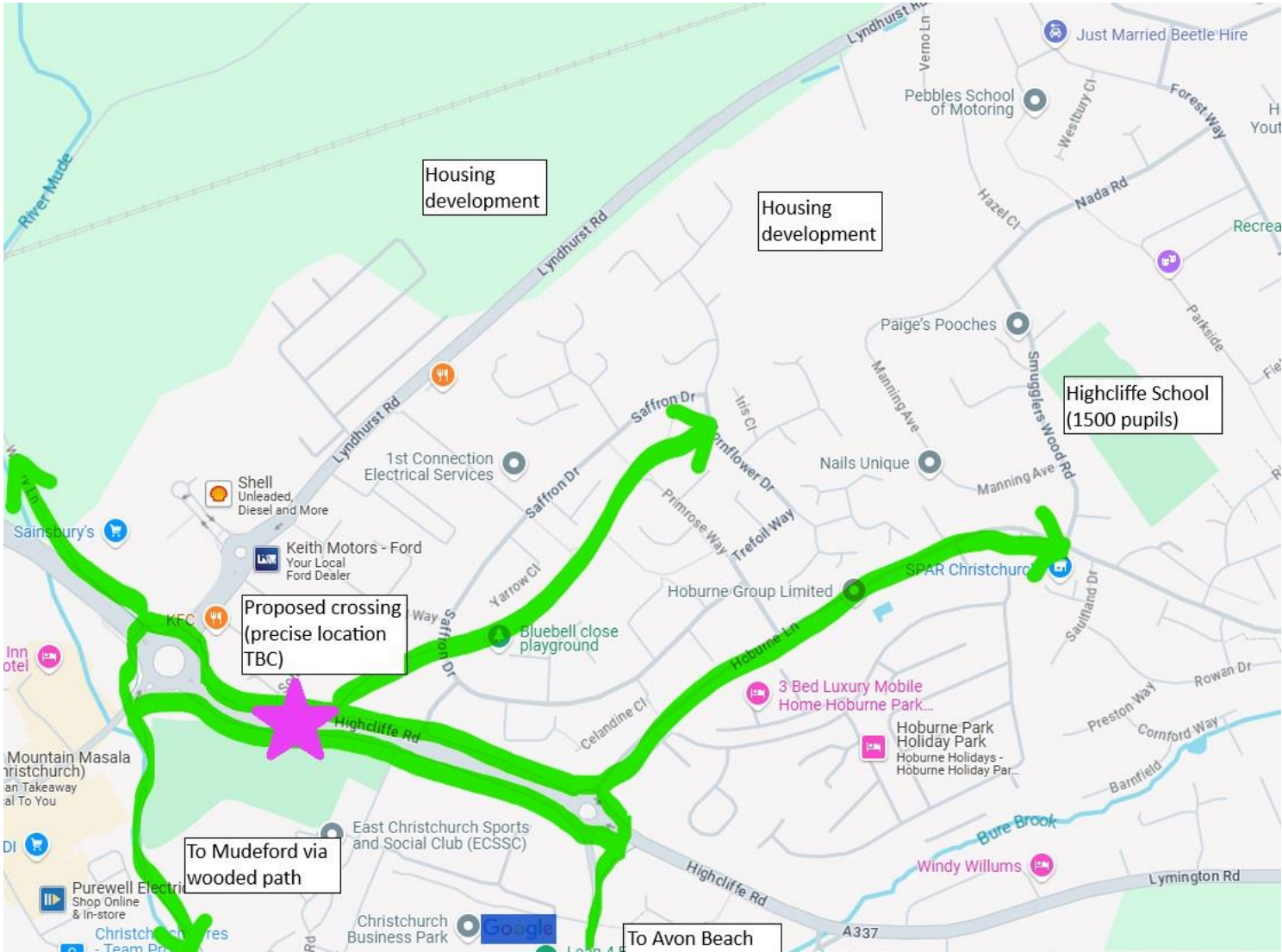


Location of nearby/related crossing already funded

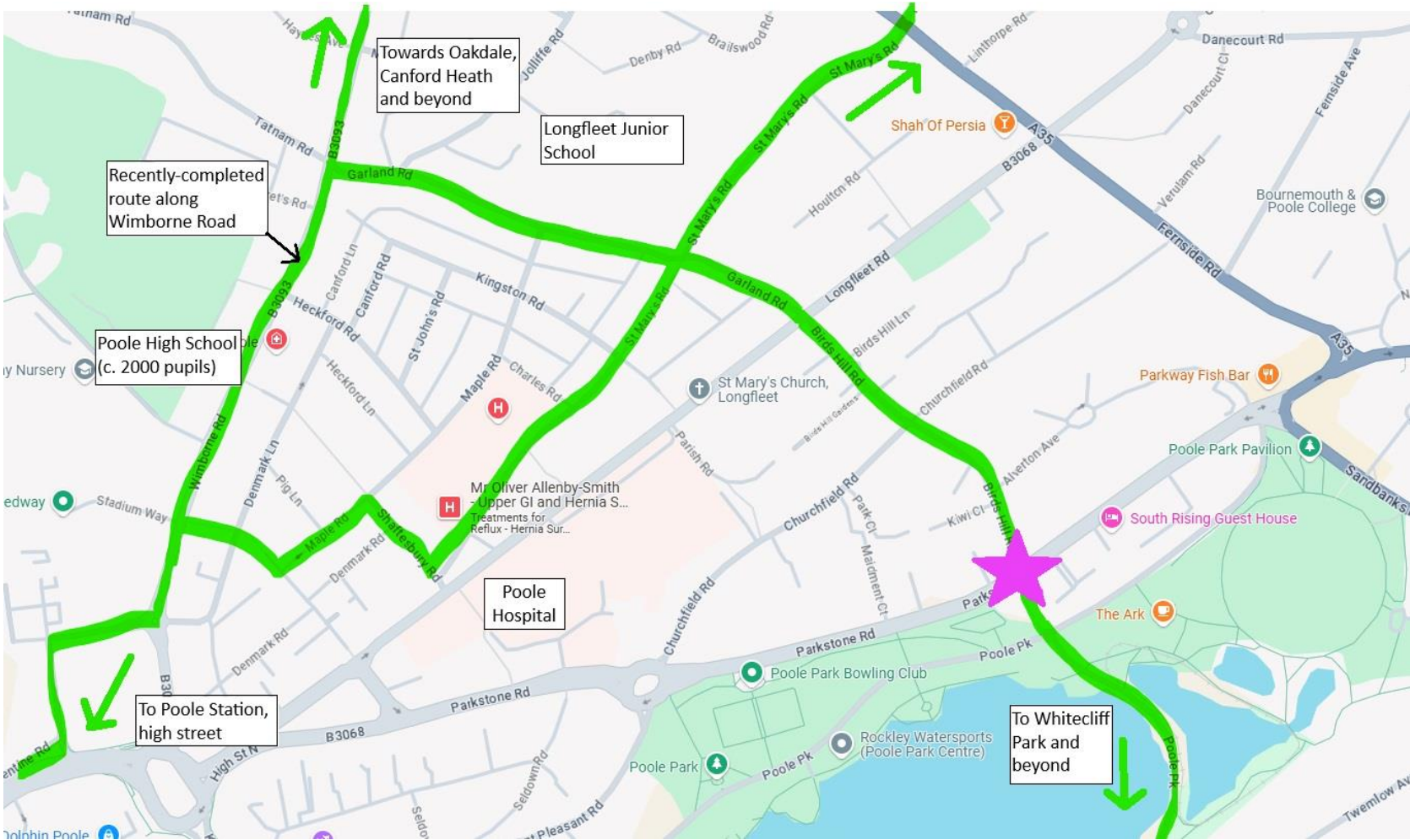
Scheme 1 – Recreation Road to Coy Pond route improvements












Scheme 2 – Highcliffe Road crossing




Scheme 3 – Parkstone Road crossing



Impact Summary

Climate Change & Energy	Green - Only positive impacts identified	
Communities & Culture	Green - Only positive impacts identified	
Waste & Resource Use	Amber - Minor negative impacts identified / unknown impacts	
Economy	Green - Only positive impacts identified	
Health & Wellbeing	Green - Only positive impacts identified	
Learning & Skills	Green - Only positive impacts identified	
Natural Environment	Green - Only positive impacts identified	
Sustainable Procurement	Green - Only positive impacts identified	
Transport & Accessibility	Green - Only positive impacts identified	

Answers provided indicate that the score for the carbon footprint of the proposal is: **5**

Answers provided indicate that the carbon footprint of the proposal is:	Moderate	
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CABINET



Report subject	Russell-Cotes Art Gallery and Museum Arts Council England (ACE) Museum Estate and Development (MEND) Grant
Meeting date	13 May 2025
Status	Public Report
Executive summary	<p>In August 2024 the Russell-Cotes Art Gallery and Museum applied for a grant from Arts Council England (ACE)'s Museum Estate and Development Fund Round 4, to fund urgent repair work on the fabric of the building.</p> <p>In February 2025, ACE wrote to confirm success and an allocation of £1,500,817, match funded by £250,000 from CIL and £109,317 from legacies to the Museum charity, making a total project grant of £1,860,134.</p> <p>This paper informs Cabinet of this success and seeks delegation to formally accept the grant and invest awarded money and match funds in line with the application to ACE.</p>
Recommendations	<p>It is RECOMMENDED that Cabinet:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Recommends Council to accept the £1,500,817 from Arts Council England MEND Round 4 and delegates authority to the Director of Customer & Property to complete the formal acceptance process on behalf of the Council b) Notes the match funding of £250,000 from CIL and £109,317 from restricted legacies c) Approves their investment in the project outcomes of urgent repairs and renewals outlined in the application to ACE
Reason for recommendations	<p>Financial Regulations require the acceptance of external funding and approval of any project over £1million by full Council.</p> <p>ACE require Cabinet approval before payment can be made.</p> <p>The grant will be spent on urgent remedial maintenance of the Russell-Cotes Art Gallery and Museum (of which BCP Council is sole trustee) to ensure it can remain open and survive.</p>

Portfolio Holder(s):	Cllr Andy Martin, Portfolio Holder for Customer, Communications and Culture
Corporate Director	Glynn Barton, Chief Operations Officer
Report Authors	Sarah Newman, Manager, Russell-Cotes Art Gallery and Museum Matti Raudsepp, Service Director, Customer and Property
Wards	Council-wide
Classification	For Decision

Background

1. The Russell-Cotes Art Gallery and Museum is a Grade 2* listed historic house with an internationally important art and world culture collection. It has been operated by BCP Council (and its forerunners) since 1923 as its sole trustee. It is Bournemouth's most significant heritage and cultural asset.
2. For the last 20 years, Bournemouth Council and later BCP Council have not been able to maintain the Museum adequately and its fragile, highly decorated interiors and exteriors in the exposed location of the Bournemouth clifftop exposed to increasingly ferocious storms are now at the point of catastrophic failure, putting its valuable collections at risk, as well as income generation and operations. Water ingress through failing decorations in multiple places has resulted in partial and total closure for visitors. Pest infestations in offices have put rooms out of use and threaten the collection. End of life services and poor security are resulting in regular episodes of anti-social behaviour and lead theft.
3. The governance arrangements of the Museum have been under review for a number of years in order to improve its financial and organisational sustainability and increase investment. The Charity Commission has recently completed its drafting of the charitable scheme to enable a new dedicated Sole Trustee to assume the responsibilities of the Council for the Charity. The process has now moved into the parliamentary phase for Department of Culture Media and Sport to draft the associated Order to be laid before Parliament with a target completion date of 1 October 2025. At completion the responsibility for managing the museum and its assets will transfer to the new trustee and will no longer be the responsibility of the council.
4. In Spring 2024, the Arts Council England (ACE) announced Round 4 of MEND (Museum Estate and Development Fund) to support essential maintenance in the Museum sector. The Russell-Cotes had received funding in Round 1 of £518,000 to replace all plant and repair the conservatory.
5. The Russell-Cotes submitted an Expression of Interest to ACE for funding from MEND Round 4 of further vital maintenance work and was invited to make a full application for work to start in April 2025.

6. Work was identified to deal with the most urgent needs of the building (ie required in the next 18 months) as outlined by a conservation led and Quantity Surveyor costed condition survey. It would:
 - Provide additional security measures
 - Construct new drainage
 - Redecorate and overhaul sea facing facades, roofs, joinery and guttering
 - Install new services – CCTV, intruder alarms, emergency lighting
 - Enable disabled access
 - Install fire safety and protection measures
 - Restore water damaged murals
7. Funding of £1,500,817 has been awarded from Arts Council MEND 4. Match funding is necessary to lever MEND funding and will be contributed from:
 - £250,000 CIL (committed and reported to Cabinet 5 March 2025)
 - £25,000 Mrs Hart Legacy
 - £84,317 Miss Stallard Legacy

£1,860,134 Total Project

Options Appraisal

8. Option 1 Accept the grant and maintain the Russell-Cotes Art Gallery and Museum.
RECOMMENDED
9. Option 2 Decline the grant and allow the Museum to deteriorate further.

Summary of financial implications

10. Accepting the grant will allow urgent maintenance work required in the next 18 months.
11. Declining the grant would leave the total liability for all urgent building work with BCP Council as sole trustee. It risks closing the museum to the public and causing irreparable damage to the building and puts the collections at risk.
12. Risks of cost inflation have been mitigated. The work has been developed to RIBA Stage 3, by specialist conservation accredited surveyors and architects, costed by a QS and includes an element for inflation and contingency in line with sector expectations. The work should be completed in 2026.
13. Further repairs in the next 3 to 5 years are required (c £2million) which are subject to discussions with National Lottery Heritage Fund (NLHF) about a phased approach to long-term capital investment, once the Russell-Cotes is independent of BCP Council.
14. Formal acceptance of the grant by Council is required in order to begin drawing down the funding.

Summary of legal implications

15. ACE require a Deed of Covenant with BCP Council with a restriction on title over the freehold of the Project Asset for a period of 20 years and a Certificate of Title and letter of undertaking as to registration at the Land Registry.
16. RCAGM previously met these legal requirements for the previous round of MEND.
17. The Russell-Cotes is moving towards full independence from BCP Council, with a target date of 1 October 2025, however, the timetable is dependent on parliamentary time and is therefore outside the control of the Council. ACE is aware of the likely governance changes and the grant would novate to the new Trustee for administration when the changes take place.

Summary of human resources implications

18. None

Summary of sustainability impact

19. None

Summary of public health implications

20. None

Summary of equality implications

21. None

Summary of risk assessment

22. Not accepting the grant would result in the further deterioration of the fabric of the building putting the staff and visitors at risk and potentially leading to the closure of the building for periods of time, if not indefinitely. Water ingress and pest infestations are putting the collections at risk.
23. Allowing the museum to deteriorate to the point of closure or failure is not acting in the best interests of the charity and the Council, as sole trustee, risks reputational damage if it were to refuse the grant.
24. Failure to accept the grant would put the current governance change programme at risk as the new sole trustee is not likely to take on the liability for the Museum, if significant further deterioration has been allowed to occur and opportunities to rectify it not taken.
25. Failure to take the grant would leave the entire liability for building work valued at nearly £2million with BCP Council.

Background papers

None.

Appendices

There are no appendices to this report.

CABINET



Report subject	BCP Council Complaints Policy
Meeting date	13 May 2025
Status	Public
Executive summary	<p>An effective complaints process demonstrates commitment to accountability, fosters trust amongst customers and stakeholders, and provides a structured way to address concerns appropriately and promptly.</p> <p>Recent revisions to the Local Government Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code have introduced changes designed to enhance the efficiency, transparency and responsiveness of local authorities in handling complaints. These modifications affect the operations and policies of all UK local authorities.</p> <p>The BCP Council Complaints Policy has been updated and additionally, a separate new policy has also been prepared regarding Unreasonable Actions, as also recommended by the Local Government Ombudsman.</p>
Recommendations	<p>It is RECOMMENDED that Cabinet:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Approves the updated BCP Complaints policy 2. Approves the Unreasonable Actions policy.
Reason for recommendations	These policies now reflect the changes at a national level that are being introduced by the Local Government Ombudsman.

Portfolio Holder(s):	Cllr Andy Martin, Portfolio Holder for Customer, Culture & Communications
Corporate Director	Glynn Barton, Chief Operations Officer
Report Authors	Jane Potter, Head of Business Management, Complaints and Children's Services Information Governance Ellen Miles, BCP Complaints Manager Katie Whitney, BCP Complaints Manager
Wards	Council-wide
Classification	For approval

Background

- The council provides a wide range of services to local residents, customers and stakeholders, and it is inevitable that from time to time some customers may not feel satisfied with the outcome of their interaction, or the way in which their concerns were handled. An effective complaints process contributes to developing and maintaining public confidence in the council, as well as supporting learning through which services can continuously improve.
- Recent revisions to the Local Government Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code aim to enhance efficiency, transparency and responsiveness in handling corporate complaints. These changes necessitate an update to BCP Council's complaints policy. The changes required do not affect the statutory complaints processes for Adult and Children's Social Care which are stand-alone procedures. The following is a list of key changes that are now reflected in the revised Complaint's Policy (see Appendix 1):

4. Simplified Complaint Process

The new code mandates a streamlined complaint process, reducing the steps required for a complaint to be filed and resolved. This aims to make the process more accessible to the public and reduce administrative burdens on local authorities. The simplified process means that individuals can file complaints more easily without navigating complex procedures, thereby promoting quicker resolutions.

5. Time Frames for Resolution

The code introduces stricter time frames for the resolution of complaints. Local authorities must acknowledge receipt of a complaint within five working days (currently 3 working days) and provide a substantive response within 10 working days (currently 20 working days) for stage 1 complaints, and 20 working days for a Stage 2 complaint (currently 15 days). Extensions are allowed only under exceptional circumstances and complainants must be informed of any delays promptly.

6. Training and Development

BCP Council will implement regular training programs for staff involved in complaint handling. These programs are designed to ensure that staff are well-equipped to manage complaints effectively and sensitively. A targeted training programme is already under development within the Council.

7. Standardised Response Formats

To ensure consistency and clarity in communications with complainants, BCP Council will adopt standardised response formats. This includes templates for acknowledgement letters, substantive responses and follow-up communications. Standardising response formats helps to maintain a professional and uniform approach in all communications, making it easier for complainants to understand the outcomes and processes involved in their complaints.

8. Support for Vulnerable Complainants

BCP Council will provide additional support for vulnerable individuals. This involves ensuring clear guidance and access to support services for those who require assistance navigating the complaint process. The Council's commitment to supporting vulnerable complainants ensures that everyone, regardless of their circumstances, has access to the necessary resources to submit and resolve complaints effectively.

9. Enhanced Transparency

BCP Council will now be required to publish more detailed information about its complaint handling procedures and outcomes. This includes annual reports on the number of complaints received, the nature of these complaints and the resolutions achieved. This level of transparency is expected to build public trust and ensure accountability.

10. Regular Audits and Monitoring

BCP Council will be subject to regular audits and monitoring by the Ombudsman to ensure compliance with the new code. The first audit on KPI's would be in April 2027. These audits will assess the effectiveness and efficiency of complaint handling procedures and identify areas for improvement. This new monitoring arrangement will be facilitated by a reporting tool within the new complaints database. These changes are potentially time intensive for officers, but it is intended that the new case management system will automate the procedures by April 2027.

11. Feedback and Continuous Improvement

Local authorities are encouraged to actively seek feedback from complainants to improve their services. This includes conducting satisfaction surveys and implementing changes based on the feedback received. Within BCP this is a standard element within the correspondence with complainants, however we will be working on ensuring all feedback is comprehensively captured across the whole local authority with the launch of the new central complaints database. These changes are potentially time intensive for officers, but it is intended that the new case management system will automate the procedures by April 2027.

12. Collaboration and Best Practices

Local authorities are encouraged to collaborate and share best practices in complaint handling. The code promotes the establishment of networks and forums where local authorities can exchange experiences and strategies for improving their complaint handling processes.

13. Use of Technology

The new code advocates for the use of technology to enhance complaint handling. This includes online complaint submission forms, automated tracking systems and digital communication channels to facilitate quicker and more efficient resolutions. All of these initiatives are being built into the new complaints management database.

14. Accountability for Unresolved Complaints

Local authorities are required to provide clear explanations for any complaints that remain unresolved and outline the steps taken to address the issues. This ensures that complainants understand the reasons for any delays or failures in resolution.

15. Impact Assessment

The code requires local authorities to conduct regular impact assessments of their complaint handling processes. These assessments measure effectiveness and identify resolution barriers. BCP Central Complaints ensures that insights from these assessments are used for service improvements or procedural changes.

16. Unreasonable actions (formerly UPC)

The new policy on unreasonable actions, formerly known as Unreasonably Persistent Complainants (UPC), aims to provide clarity and fairness in handling complaints from individuals whose actions may be deemed unreasonable. This includes setting clear guidelines on what constitutes unreasonable behaviour, such as excessive demands or harassment and establishing procedures to manage and respond to such complaints effectively. The policy ensures that complainants are treated respectfully while safeguarding the wellbeing of staff and maintaining the integrity of the complaint handling process. The revised policy is attached at Appendix 2.

17. Clarity around Service Requests

The Ombudsman guidance provides clear distinctions between complaints and service requests to ensure appropriate handling and resolution. This distinction is now reflected in our reviewed policy.

A complaint typically involves dissatisfaction with the service provided, the behaviour of staff, or an administrative process, where the complainant feels that the authority has failed in its duties. Examples of complaints include instances where a service was not delivered as promised, improper conduct by a staff member, or perceived injustices in the application of procedures or policies.

Conversely, a service request is an appeal for assistance or service provision that has not yet been performed. Examples of service requests include requesting a repair for a public facility, reporting issues like potholes or broken streetlights, or seeking specific information about services offered by the local authority.

The distinction allows the Council to direct complaints to the appropriate resolution channels while ensuring that service requests are addressed through the relevant departments.

18. The single complaints policy links with the statutory complaints policies for Children's Services, Adult Social Care and Housing. These policies remain independent, with the single corporate policy serving as an overarching reference for adherence to Ombudsman guidance and the primary source of guidance for all corporate non-statutory complaints.
19. Since adopting a centralised model of complaints, most of the recommendations within the Ombudsman code have been implemented as best practice or are a work in progress, such as the single case management system, which will go live by 1 April 2026. By adopting a revised complaints policy which fully adheres to the new code, we can ensure we are complying with the Ombudsman's objectives of fostering greater public trust and accountability in our complaints management and operations.
20. The new code requires a lead member to act as champion for the organisation's complaints process, and this role will be performed by the Portfolio Holder for Customer, Communications & Culture.

Summary of financial implications

21. There are no financial implications associated with this policy change.

Summary of legal implications

22. Legal Services have been consulted in the preparation of the new policy.

Summary of human resources implications

23. There are no HR implications associated with the adoption of this complaints policy.

Summary of sustainability impact

24. There are no sustainability impact issues associated with the adoption of this revised policy.

Summary of public health implications

25. The adoption of this revised policy does not entail any public health implications.

Summary of equality implications

26. There are no equality implications associated with the adoption of this policy.

Summary of risk assessment

27. The risk assessment highlights the dependency on the new single case management system to effectively monitor and comply with the Ombudsman recommendations and produce the required KPI's from 2027 onwards. Without this automated system, adherence to compliance would demand significant manual effort, making the process labour-intensive.

Background papers

None

Appendices

Appendix 1: Revised Complaints Policy

Appendix 2: Unreasonable actions (formerly UPC) Policy

Appendix 3: Ombudsman code



COMPLAINT HANDLING POLICY

If you require this information in an alternative format please call us on
01202 123321 or email BCPComplaints@bcpCouncil.gov.uk

BCP Complaints Service

Author: Ellen Miles
Version: V1.0
Date: 07 March 2025

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1. Introduction

- 1.1. BCP Council is committed to providing an excellent service for our customers. We do, however recognise our customers have a right to challenge the Council over its decisions and complain when they feel we have fallen short of the services we provide.
- 1.2. As well as giving the Council the chance to put things right when something has gone wrong, complaints give us valuable feedback, so that we learn from customer's experiences and help us to improve our services.
- 1.3. The Council is committed to developing a positive and transparent complaint handling culture. We recognise complaints as helping us to identify issues and supports us to introduce positive changes. The Council's objective in relation to complaints is to ensure complaints are handled in line with the complaints policy. We ensure that is collaborative and that we take collective responsibility for any learning identified as part of the process.
- 1.4. The Head of BCP Business Management oversees complaint handling and performance. The appropriate Complaints Manager is responsible for ensuring themes and trends are assessed to identify potential systemic issues, serious risks, or policies and procedures that require revision. This function is supported by complaint officers in each directorate.
- 1.5. The Council's Audit and Governance Committee is responsible for maintaining oversight of complaints.
- 1.6. The Council produces an annual complaints performance report for scrutiny and challenge by the Audit and Governance Committee and the Overview and Scrutiny Board in addition to regular complaints reports which are also made available to wider stakeholders on our website.

- 1.7. The Council's complaints reports include information about the volume, categories and outcomes of complaints, complaint handling performance, issues and trends arising from complaint handling, and wider learning and improvements made because of complaints.
- 1.8. The Council will carry out an annual self-assessment against the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman's (LGSCO) [Complaint Handling Code](#) to ensure this policy remains in line with the code and aims to carry out a formal review of the policy every two years.

2. Scope of the Complaint Policy

- 2.1. This Complaint Policy explains our process for managing general complaints made to the council. It does not apply to complaints about the following, which are outside the scope of the policy:
 - [Adult Social Care](#)
 - [Anti-social behaviour case review](#)
 - [BCP Homes complaints](#)
 - [Blue badge appeals](#)
 - [Children's Social Care](#)
 - [Complaints about Councillors](#)
 - [Fixed penalty notice \(FPN's\)](#)
 - [Food hygiene rating appeal](#)
 - [Housing Benefit](#) and [Council Tax Benefit](#) entitlement disputes
 - [Insurance claims against the council](#)
 - [Parking ticket appeals \(PCN's\)](#)
 - [Planning appeals about the refusal of planning permission](#)
 - [School admission appeals](#)
- 2.2. The policy does not apply to complaints by council staff that relate to their employment.
- 2.3. Complaints that fall within the scope of this policy are managed by the central complaints team within our Business Support directorate or nominated complaints officers within service directorates.

3. What is a complaint?

- 3.1. **A complaint** may be defined as: 'an expression of dissatisfaction, however made, about the standard of service, actions or lack of action by the organisation, its own staff, or those acting on its behalf, affecting an individual or group of individuals.'
There is a difference between a complaint and a request for a service or an enquiry about a service, which is usually referred to as a 'service request'.
- 3.2. **A service request** may be defined as: 'a request that the organisation provides or improves a service, fixes a problem or reconsiders a decision.'
- 3.3. A service request may escalate to become a complaint. Customers will also be given the option of making a complaint if they express dissatisfaction with the response to their service request. Service requests will be recorded, monitored, learning taken as applicable and included in complaint reporting.

- 3.4. A customer does not need to use the word complaint for it to be treated as such. The Council will seek to resolve the issues raised in the most appropriate manner and as quickly as possible. The Council will seek to ensure staff recognise the difference between a service request and a formal complaint and the Complaints Team will support colleagues to recognise the difference.
- 3.5. The Council will accept a complaint unless there is valid reason not to do so.
- 3.6. Valid reasons for not accepting a complaint include:
- the issue is, or has been subject to legal proceedings
 - where there is an appeals process available
 - the matters raised are subject to a safeguarding inquiry
 - there is a liability issue that is subject to an insurance claim
 - the complaint has not been raised in a reasonable timeframe (see 4.9)
 - the complaint has been raised by an unauthorised or inappropriate third party
 - the issue has already been considered as a complaint
- 3.7. If the Council decides not to accept a complaint, we will explain clearly why the matter is not suitable for the complaints process and what the next steps in the process are.

4. The way we manage complaints

- 4.1. The Council has a 2-stage complaint process. The process for managing complaints is set out in sections 7-11 below.
- 4.2. Complaints will be managed in adherence to this policy and in conjunction with the guidance set out by the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman in their complaint handling code.
- 4.3. All complaints are managed confidentially and impartially, regardless of who is making the complaint. Please see section 7 for further information.
- 4.4. All complaints will be responded to promptly, and in accordance with the timescales set out in this policy wherever possible.
- 4.5. Where we are unable to meet the timescales set out in the policy, we will let the customer know there has been a delay and arrange an appropriate extension.
- 4.6. Customers will be kept informed of the progress of their complaint and of any delays.
- 4.7. If a complaint is made to a Councillor(s) or MP, the customer will be referred to the complaint function and the complaint will be managed in line with this policy. The Councillor(s) or MP will only be provided with a copy of the response to the complaint on provision of suitable consent from our customer.
- 4.8. Where complaints involve multiple service areas, the service with the most significant involvement in the complaint will coordinate the response. The complaints team acknowledging the complaint will act as a single point of contact for the complainant whilst the investigation is being undertaken.
- 4.9. We will consider stage 1 and stage 2 complaints made within 12 months of the issue occurring or becoming apparent to the person making the complaint. We may still consider a complaint made outside of the timescales if there are exceptional circumstances, but this will be determined on a case by case basis.

5. Support for customers who make a complaint

- 5.1. We are committed to making sure the way we handle complaints does not place anyone at a disadvantage. We will attempt to make suitable and equitable reasonable adjustments if the way we handle complaints would otherwise place a person with disabilities or other characteristics at a substantial disadvantage.
- 5.2. Customers who would like the Council to make a reasonable adjustment to enable them to make a complaint should make a request to the complaints function. A request for a reasonable adjustment can be made through any channel, or via a representative.

6. Ways to make a complaint

- 6.1. The Council will accept complaints made verbally or in writing, and via any of its customer service channels, including:
 - In person
 - By telephone
 - By letter or email
 - Through our online complaint form
 - Through direct contact via social media channels
 - Through a Councillor or MP subject to appropriate consent being in place
 - Through a representative, subject to appropriate consent being in place
- 6.2. Verbal complaints will be confirmed with the person making the complaint. If we confirm the complaint verbally, we will follow up with a written confirmation where appropriate. Once agreed, complaints will be processed in line with this policy. A formal acknowledgement of the complaint will be provided to the complainant regardless of the method in which the complaint is received.
- 6.3. Anonymous complaints will not be processed in line with this policy. They will be forwarded to the relevant service as a service request, to ensure appropriate action and/or suitable learning is taken where applicable.
- 6.4. Complaints made via third party websites or other platforms that are designed to generate multiple complaints on the same or similar subjects will not be processed in line with this policy.
- 6.5. Everyone has the right to appoint a representative, that is someone else to act on their behalf. A representative can be, for example, a parent, a husband, wife, or civil partner, an adult child, a friend, an attorney, advocate, or solicitor, or a local Councillor or MP. You can search for details of your [local Councillor online](#).
- 6.6. If a complaint is made through a representative, we will need to ensure we have consent from the customer. This would usually be written consent from the customer giving the representative permission to act on their behalf, or other evidence, for example evidence of lasting power of attorney.

7. How we identify and accept a complaint

- 7.1. Complaints or matters that could be considered a complaint that fall within the scope of this policy are referred to the appropriate complaint function in the first instance.
- 7.2. The complaint officer(s) will review all complaints, considering:
- whether the complaint falls within the complaint definition at section 3.1 of this policy, or whether it is a service request in line with the definition at section 3.2
 - whether the complaint should be accepted, with reference to the reasons a complaint cannot be considered set out at section 3.6
 - whether the complaint should be considered under the corporate complaints policy, or whether it falls under a different policy in line with the policy exclusions set out at section 2.1.
- 7.3. If a complaint is valid, it will be logged by the complaints officer as a stage 1 complaint within **5 working days** of the complaint being received. If the issues will not be managed as a complaint, the Council will communicate with the individual raising the matter and explain what the next steps in the process are.
- 7.4. If the complaint is unclear, the complaints officer will seek clarification from the customer before the complaint is logged.
- 7.5. The Council is able to use personal information that it holds for the purposes of investigating concerns or complaints. That includes the Council sharing necessary data and information internally. Sometimes it is appropriate to appoint an independent third party who has no prior knowledge of the complaints or issues. Whether an investigator is appointed internally or externally, the Council will require all those involved to comply with the various legal obligations regarding personal information and data.

The Council's Privacy Notices makes the above clear:

<https://www.bcpccouncil.gov.uk/privacy>

<https://www.bcpccouncil.gov.uk/privacy-notices/childrens-services-privacy-notice>

<https://www.bcpccouncil.gov.uk/privacy-notices/adult-social-care-complaints-privacy-notice>

The Council will always seek consent from any party that is involved where it is appropriate to do so. If it were prevented from sharing information, any investigation would most likely be hampered. The Council will only process data in accordance with its legal obligations.

8. Stage 1 complaints

- 8.1. Once a complaint has been received, the complaints officer(s) will consider a range of factors including the complexity of the complaint and the specific needs of the individual customer and assess if the complaint may be responded to within **10 working days**. If this is not possible, and a more detailed response or investigation is needed whether an extension to the response time is needed. The acknowledgement will be prepared for the complainant to reflect these timescales.

- 8.2. The complaint will then be passed to the relevant manager to respond, in line with the assessment of the complaint and in line with the timescale appropriate to the complaint. Responses will be proportionate to the issues raised.
- 8.3. Where complaints involve more than one Council service, the manager responding to the complaint should act as a liaison point with the services involved. The complaints officer will act as a single point of contact for the customer.
- 8.4. The Council will aim to respond to complaints promptly and within 10 working days of the complaint being acknowledged.
- 8.5. If a complaint is complex and requires more detailed investigation, the length of time allowed for the complaint response will be extended at the earliest opportunity and communicated to the customer.
- 8.6. The timescales for more complex complaints will be determined on a case-by-case basis at the outset, but should not exceed 20 working days, without good reason.
- 8.7. Once an investigation has started, if a further extension is required, this will be exceptional, and the reason will be clearly communicated to the customer.
- 8.8. The quality assurance of any stage 1 complaint response is the responsibility of complaint officer(s) for that directorate.
- 8.9. We will send the customer an acknowledgement in writing by email, or by post if an email address is not provided, within five working days of logging the complaint. In acknowledging the complaint, we will briefly confirm:
- our understanding of the complaint and the outcomes being sought
 - the investigating officer or investigating area
 - when the customer can expect a response
- If the Council is not responsible for any aspect of the complaint, this will be clearly explained in the complaint acknowledgement.
- 8.10. In acknowledging the complaint, we will offer the customer the opportunity to review their acknowledgement and make amendments as necessary. This ensures we have the correct understanding of the complaint and the outcome being sought is clear.
- 8.11. Complaint responses will be provided when the answer to the complaint is known, not when the outstanding actions required to address the issue are completed. If there are outstanding actions, these should be explained in the complaint response, actioned promptly and tracked by the service responsible for the complaint response, and where appropriate the customer will be provided with updates.
- 8.12. The format of stage 1 complaint responses will depend on the nature of the complaint and the needs of the customer. Responses to stage 1 complaints can be written, verbal or in an audio format as necessary.
- 8.13. In all cases, a full response to the complaint should be made and an explanation, apology or other resolution will be provided to the customer.

- 8.14. In all cases, the complaint response should cover all the points made by the customer and provide clear reasons for any decisions, referencing the relevant policy, law or good practice where appropriate.
- 8.15. The stage 1 complaint response should include details of how to escalate the matter to stage 2 of the complaint process if the customer is not satisfied with the response.
- 8.16. The complaint response will be recorded by the complaints officer(s) for that directorate on the Council's complaint recording system.
- 8.17. If the customer making the complaint wants to raise additional issues related to the complaint, we will aim to incorporate the additional issues into the stage 1 response. Where the new matters are not related, the stage 1 response has already been provided, or addressing the additional issues would unreasonably delay the response to the original complaint, a new stage 1 complaint will be logged.

9. Stage 2 complaints

- 9.1. If the customer is unhappy with the response to their stage 1 complaint, then they should ask the Council to escalate their complaint to stage 2. An escalation or review should be made within 20 working days of receipt of the stage 1 response.
- 9.2. Requests for stage 2 will be acknowledged and logged at stage 2 of the complaint's procedure within **5 working days of the escalation request being received**.
- 9.3. If in making a request to escalate a complaint to stage 2, the customer does not explain their reasons for the request, we will make reasonable efforts to try and understand why the customer remains dissatisfied. A complaint may be declined an escalation if the reasons remain unknown.
- 9.4. In acknowledging the stage 2 complaint, we will briefly confirm:
- our understanding of the complaint and the outcomes being sought
 - clarification of what will happen next and the process being undertaken
 - the investigating officer(s) details
 - when the customer can expect a response
- 9.5. In acknowledging the complaint, we will offer the customer the opportunity to review their acknowledgement and make amendments as necessary. This ensures we have the correct understanding of the complaint and the outcome being sought is clear.
- 9.6. If a complaint is escalated to stage 2, we will carry out an investigation that is appropriate to the nature of the complaint. This may be a simple review of the stage 1 process, or alternatively a further investigation with an adjudication may be made. The complaints officer(s) will assess the stage 2 complaint, considering factors including complexity and the individual circumstances.
- 9.7. We aim to respond to stage 2 complaints within **20 working days** of the complaint being acknowledged.
- 9.8. If we think a response will take longer due to the complexity of the complaint, we will inform the customer of the length of time we expect the response to take at the outset.

- 9.9. Any extension will not be more than an additional 20 working days without good reason. If an extension of more than 20 working days is required, this will be exceptional, the reasons will be clearly communicated to the individual making the complaint and they will be provided with the details for the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (LGSCO).
- 9.10. Stage 2 complaints will be investigated by:
- the appropriate Director, or
 - an appropriate senior manager. This manager will be different to the person who responded at stage 1
- 9.11. As with stage 1, where complaints involve more than one Council service the manager responding to the complaint should act as a liaison point with the services involved. The complaints officer will act as a single point of contact for the customer.
- 9.12. When we respond to a stage 2 complaint, our response will be confirmed in writing, in clear, plain language. The response will include:
- the complaint stage
 - our understanding of the complaint, in line with the complaint acknowledgement
 - the decision on the complaint
 - the reasons for any decisions made
 - details of any remedies offered to put things right, in line with section 11 below
 - details of any outstanding actions, if applicable
 - details of how to escalate the matter to the LGSCO if the individual remains dissatisfied
- 9.13. Stage 2 is the final stage of the Council's complaints process.

10. Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman

- 10.1. If a customer remains unhappy having exhausted the council's complaints process, they can contact the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (LGSCO):
- Online complaint form at www.lgo.org.uk
 - Telephone 0300 061 0614

The LGSCO will not investigate most complaints until they have gone through the council's complaints process.

11. Remedies

- 11.1. Where something has gone wrong, we will acknowledge this and set out the action that has already been taken or that we will take to put things right.
- 11.2. We will aim to ensure remedies offered reflect the impact on the customer of any fault identified.

- 11.3. When making a remedy offer, we will clearly set out what will happen and by when, in agreement with the customer where appropriate, and we will ensure the remedy is delivered within a reasonable timescale.
- 11.4. If we are not able to deliver a remedy, we will inform the customer, explain why, provide details of an alternative remedy if possible and appropriate, and remind them of their right to complaint to the LGSCO.
- 11.5. Remedies include:
- apologising
 - acknowledging when things have gone wrong
 - providing an explanation, assistance or reasons
 - taking action if there has been a delay
 - reconsidering or changing a decision
 - amending a record, or adding an addendum or correction
 - changing policies, procedures or practices
 - providing a financial remedy
- 11.6. Any issues identified as a result of complaints will be put right as quickly as possible: we will not wait until the complaints process is concluded.
- 11.7. When responding to complaints we will consider whether the customer needs support to understand the outcome and will offer alternatives, including meetings to discuss, where appropriate.

12. Complaints about contractors or commissioned for services

- 12.1. The Council contracts organisations to provide services on its behalf. If a complaint is made about a service provided by a contractor directly to the contractor, it should be managed in line with this policy or processes detailed at point 2.1.
- 12.2. Our contractors are expected to comply with the policy, including providing information to council officers as requested and providing assistance with further investigations as appropriate.
- 12.3. A contractor who receives a complaint is expected to notify the Council of the complaint via the Council's complaints function. Notifications should be made in line with the timescales in the policy, and at all stages in the process so the complaint can be logged and monitored.
- 12.4. If the Council receives a complaint that relates to a service provided by one of the council's contractors, the Council will provide a response.
- 12.5. Complaints relating to contractors/third-party providers working on behalf of the council acting in its capacity as a landlord will be dealt with in accordance with the local authority housing landlord services complaints policy and process.

13. Unreasonable actions by customers

- 13.1. We recognise that someone with cause to complain may be upset, and this may be reflected in their behaviour towards us. In dealing with complaints, we will understand and empathise with customers who are upset.
- 13.2. We also recognise that someone making a complaint is justified in making reasonable attempts to follow up their complaint to make sure it is being dealt with.
- 13.3. However, we expect complaints to be made in a reasonable way so we can investigate. This means communicating with us in a way that is reasonable, both in terms of the nature and frequency of contact.
- 13.4. However, in a small minority of cases, there is a point at which a customer's behaviour becomes unreasonable and makes it more difficult for us to resolve complaints, either because it impedes the investigation or because it takes up a significant amount of time without due cause.
- 13.5. In these cases, the Council will follow its unreasonable actions by customers [policy](#).

14. Review

- 14.1. This policy is the responsibility of the Director of Customer and Property.
- 14.2. This policy will undergo regular review, once every two years, or as required in response to regulatory changes.

Contacts

BCP Council Complaints Team, Civic Centre, Bournemouth, BH2 6DY

Email bcpcomplaints@bcpcouncil.gov.uk

Website [Formal complaints | BCP](#)

Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman ("LGSCO")

Online complaint form at www.lgo.org.uk

Telephone 0300 061 0614

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UNREASONABLE ACTIONS BY CUSTOMERS POLICY

If you require this information in an alternative format please call us on
01202 123321 or email BCPComplaints@bcpcouncil.gov.uk

BCP Complaints Service

Author: Ellen Miles
Version: V1.0
Date: 07 March 2025

Introduction

This policy has been prepared for individuals who demonstrate unreasonable or unreasonably persistent actions or behaviour.

It sets out how we will decide if a customer is being unreasonably persistent or behaving unreasonably and what we will do in those circumstances.

It should be read in conjunction with the council's agreed complaints handling [policy](#).

In a small number of cases people interact with services in a way that is unreasonable. This may include being unreasonably persistent in relation to their contact and submission of information. This can prevent organisations from providing services to the individual and others and have a significant impact on staff wellbeing. These actions can occur during delivery of a service, while a complaint is being investigated, or once an organisation has finished the complaint investigation.

We are committed to dealing with all complaints and customers equitably, comprehensively and in a timely manner.

We do not expect staff to tolerate unacceptable behaviour by complainants or any customer and will take appropriate action to protect them from such behaviour. Our customer charter prescribing acceptable communication standards may be found [here](#).

Definition

BCP Council has adopted the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman's (LGSCO) definition of 'unreasonable actions'. Unreasonable actions are those which, because of the nature or frequency of contact with an organisation, hinder the organisation's delivery of services or consideration of complaints. A copy of the LGSCO's guidance may be found [here](#).

BCP Council recognise that not all disabilities are visible and therefore prior to restrictions being enforced, we will ensure that how we communicate to deliver our service, is in such a way that is accessible to all. This allows individuals an opportunity to tell us if they need any reasonable adjustments under the Equality Act 2010.

Examples of unreasonable actions:

- a. Being abusive, threatening or acting in a manner intended to intimidate staff. This includes any use of racist, sexist, homophobic or other discriminatory language.
- b. Putting, or threatening to put information on social media or websites which includes personal information of an organisation's employees without their consent and/or making defamatory statements about employees online.
- c. Making excessive demands on the time and resources of staff with lengthy phone calls, emails to numerous council staff, or detailed correspondence every few days or more often, and expecting immediate responses. Denying or changing statements they made at an earlier stage

- d. Submitting repeat contacts or complaints with minor additions/variations which the complainant insists make these 'new' complaints. Introducing trivial or irrelevant new information at a later stage.
- e. Refusing to specify the grounds of a complaint, despite offers of help.
- f. Refusing to cooperate with the complaints investigation process. For example, failing to provide information requested that is important for the investigation.
- g. Insisting on the complaint being dealt with in ways which are incompatible with the adopted complaints procedure or with good practice.
- h. Making unjustified complaints about staff who are trying to deal with the issues, and seeking to have them replaced.
- i. Frequently changing the basis of the complaint as the investigation proceeds.
- j. Raising many detailed but unimportant questions, and insisting they are all answered.
- k. Providing false information and/ or submitting falsified documents from themselves or others.
- l. Adopting a 'scatter gun' approach: pursuing parallel complaints or contact about the same issue with various organisations, officers or Councillors.
- m. Refusing to accept that certain issues are not within the scope of complaints procedure.
- n. Refusing to accept the decision, repeatedly arguing points with no new evidence.

Recording of interactions with organisations by members of the public

Modern technology now allows individuals to record interactions with organisations more easily than at any time in the past. This includes the ability to live broadcast interactions in public and private spaces. Sometimes this can be done without an organisation's knowledge and staff may be understandably concerned about what a person may do with a recording.

BCP Council will not automatically refuse to allow members of the public to record interactions. It is important to acknowledge that organisations can routinely record their interactions with the public for training and monitoring purposes. Customers should not be prevented from making their own recording in order to have a clear record of matters that were discussed. We do however expect customers to advise staff members if they intended to record any interactions and the purpose for doing so.

Having a recording of a meeting or telephone call can be helpful to people with certain disabilities who may struggle to recollect details of what was said or be unable to read or process written records about any interactions.

However, a small number of people will misuse technology and act in a way that is unreasonable. This may include:

- Recording interactions with the Council without good reason.
- Putting recordings online without the consent of those being recorded.
- Live broadcasting interactions with the Council without their consent.
- Manipulating or editing recordings.

Objectives

The objective in taking action is to manage unreasonable behaviour or communication which may hinder the Council's delivery of services or consideration of complaints.

Any actions taken should be proportionate to the nature and frequency of the customer's current contacts. Unreasonable actions can also be an indication of an unmet communication or support need. The following are examples of the types of restriction(s) which may be used:

- a. Placing limits on the number and duration of contacts with staff per week or month
- b. Offering a restricted timeslot for necessary calls
- c. Limiting the complainant to one medium of contact (telephone, letter, email etc.)
- d. Requiring the complainant to communicate only with one named member of staff
- e. Requiring any personal contacts to take place in the presence of a witness and in a suitable location
- f. Refusing to register and process further complaints about the same matter
- g. When a decision on the complaint has been made, tell the complainant that future correspondence will be read and placed on the file but not acknowledged unless it contains new material or information. A designated officer should be identified who will read future correspondence.
- h. Restricting access to discretionary services

BCP Council recognise that there is a duty to make reasonable adjustment under the Equalities Act 2010. However, where the behaviour is so extreme or it threatens the immediate safety and welfare of staff, we will consider other options which could include reporting the matter to the police or taking legal action. In such cases the Council may not give the complainant prior warning of that action.

Implementing a restriction

Staff members are empowered to warn individuals of the consequences of their actions in the first instance. Staff members are also able to take immediate action in response to unreasonable actions such as terminating phone calls, asking someone to leave the premises or pausing communications. Any immediate steps will be followed by either an informal warning about future conduct or consideration of further action under the Council's unreasonable actions policy. Once an informal warning has been issued, this may progress to a formal warning that a restriction or sanctions may be imposed should they not modify their behaviours. The formal warning will be prepared by the Service Manager concerned and will include:

- a. Actions the organisation considers unreasonable;
- b. Examples of actions considered unreasonable;
- c. A time period within which future actions will be monitored and when / how / by whom any restrictions on contact or other actions will be reviewed;
- d. Consequences of failing to address their actions;
- e. A check on whether the individual requires any reasonable adjustments under the Equality Act 2010; and
- f. Details of the organisation's complaints process if the person is unhappy with their warning.

If a decision is taken to apply restricted access or implement a sanction an appropriate Director will write to inform the complainant:

- a. Actions the organisation considers unreasonable;
- b. Examples of actions considered unreasonable;
- c. A time period within which future actions will be monitored; and when / how / by whom any restrictions on contact or other actions will be reviewed;
- d. Consequences of failing to address their actions;
- e. Confirmation the organisation has considered the individual's rights under human rights and equality act legislation; and
- f. Details of the organisation's appeals process **or** details of the Ombudsman if the appeals process has been exhausted.

A copy of this policy should be enclosed with the letter.

All officers and Members who have experienced unreasonable behaviours in respect of a specific customer shall be informed of the decision to impose contact restrictions.

A register of those subject to this policy is maintained by the complaints team. The register will include details of the decision, the restrictions and the time limits if appropriate.

Records

Adequate records must be kept of all contacts with customers behaving unreasonably in the business unit. The information will be treated as confidential and only shared with those who may be affected by the decision.

When complaints or service requests about new issues are made, these should be treated on their merits. We should consider whether any restrictions previously applied are still appropriate and necessary.

Appeals against decisions

Appeals or reviews of the decision to restrict a customer's contact, or the authority's responses to them should be made in writing to the Complaints Manager. They may be contacted at bcpcomplaints@bcpcouncil.gov.uk

When the review has been carried out the Council will write to advise the complainant of the outcome and, if restrictions are to continue to be applied, when these will next be reviewed.

Reviewing decisions to restrict access

When imposing a restriction on access, you will be provided with a specified review date.

Limits should be lifted and relationships returned to normal unless there are good grounds to extend them.

You will be told the outcome of your review. If limits are to continue, BCP Council will explain the reasons and state when the limits will be next reviewed.

Referring complainants to the Ombudsman

The Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman may be prepared to consider a complaint before the Council's complaints procedure has been exhausted. Referral to the Ombudsman should be made when the relationship between the complainant and the Council irretrievably breakdown whilst complaints are under investigation and there is little prospect of achieving a satisfactory outcome.

In addition, a complainant who has been treated as behaving unreasonably may make a complaint to the LGSCO about this. The Ombudsman may be contacted at the following details:

Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman ("LGSCO")

Online complaint form at www.lgo.org.uk

Telephone 0300 061 0614

For further details contact: the Complaints team:

bcpcomplaints@bcpcouncil.gov.uk

Local Government &
Social Care
OMBUDSMAN



Complaint Handling Code

Date published: February 2024

Date applicable: April 2024

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Introduction

Good complaint handling requires effective procedures and well-trained staff alongside a positive complaints culture that enables those procedures to achieve maximum impact. This code sets out what an organisation should do procedurally to handle complaints.

Organisations should embrace complaints through increased transparency, accessibility, and complaint handling governance. Demonstrating that individuals are at the heart of its service delivery and good complaint handling is central to that.

Some organisations see complaints as a form of negative feedback. However, there are many benefits to be gained from having an effective and efficient complaints process:

- > Good complaint handling promotes a positive relationship between an organisation and service users.
- > Complaints allow an issue to be resolved before it becomes worse. Those issues not resolved promptly can take significant resource and time to remedy.
- > Involvement in complaint resolution develops staff ownership, decision-making and engagement.
- > Complaints provide senior staff with essential insight into day-to-day operations, allowing them to assess effectiveness and drive a positive complaint handling culture.
- > Data collected about complaints can be analysed and used to inform key business decisions to drive improvement in service provision.

The Complaint Handling Code ('the Code'), sets out a process for organisations that will allow them to respond to complaints effectively and fairly. The purpose of the Code is to enable organisations to resolve complaints raised by individuals promptly, and to use the data and learning from complaints to drive service improvements. It will also help to create a

positive complaint handling culture amongst staff and individuals.

The Code will act as a guide for individuals setting out what they may expect from an organisation when they make a complaint. Organisations should seek feedback from individuals in relation to their complaint handling as part of the drive to encourage a positive complaint and learning culture.

Organisations should have a single policy for dealing with complaints covered by the Code.

The principles, process and timescales in this Code are aligned with the Complaint Handling Code issued by the Housing Ombudsman. This means that organisations who fall under the jurisdiction of both Ombudsmen should be able to provide a co-ordinated complaint handling process across services covered by both Codes.

The Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman's powers and approach

The Code is issued under the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman's powers to provide "guidance about good administrative practice" to organisations under section 23(12A) of the Local Government Act 1974. For the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman, this Code constitutes important advice and guidance to councils, rather than instructions.

We have issued the Code for local councils in England. Other organisations in the Ombudsman's jurisdiction may find the Code helpful in setting out good practice.

We can recommend an organisation takes action to improve services or provide a personal remedy where it finds fault causing injustice to an individual or group of individuals. Unlike the Housing Ombudsman, we have no specific responsibility for monitoring compliance with the Code in addition to our role investigating complaints of maladministration and service failure.

Using the Code

We expect local councils to carefully consider the Code when developing policies and procedures. Where an organisation decides that it will depart from the Code, it should ensure local decision-making processes have been properly followed.

We may make a finding of maladministration where local councils' policies and procedures depart from the Code without sufficient explanation. We may also make a finding of maladministration where a local council, without good reason, does not meet the standards in the Code when responding to an individual complaint.

Where an organisation is unable to comply with its policies and procedures when dealing with an individual complaint, the individual should be provided with a suitable explanation and signposted to the Ombudsman.

The Code should be considered along with other guidance issued by the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman.

The Code does not replace any existing statutory complaint processes such as The Children Act 1989 Representations Procedure (England) Regulations 2006 or Local Authority Social Services and National Health Service Complaints (England) Regulations 2009.

The Complaint Handling Code

1. Definition of a service request and complaint

- 1.1 Effective complaint handling enables individuals to be heard and understood. The starting point for this is a shared understanding of what constitutes a service request and what constitutes a complaint. In most cases organisations should be able to put things right through normal service delivery processes.
- 1.2 A service request may be defined as:
‘a request that the organisation provides or improves a service, fixes a problem or reconsiders a decision.’
- 1.3 This provides organisations with opportunities to resolve matters to an individual’s satisfaction before they become a complaint.
- 1.4 A complaint may be defined as:
‘an expression of dissatisfaction, however made, about the standard of service, actions or lack of action by the organisation, its own staff, or those acting on its behalf, affecting an individual or group of individuals.’
- 1.5 An individual should not have to use the word ‘complaint’ for it to be treated as such. A complaint that is submitted via a third party or representative should still be handled in line with the organisation’s complaints policy.
- 1.6 Organisations should recognise the difference between a service request and a complaint. This should be set out in their complaints policy.
- 1.7 Service requests are not complaints but may contain expressions of dissatisfaction. Organisations should have the opportunity to deal with a service request before a complaint is made. A complaint may be raised when the individual expresses dissatisfaction with the response to their service request, even if the handling of the service request remains ongoing. An organisation should not stop its efforts to address the service request if the individual complains.
- 1.8 Service requests should be recorded, monitored and reviewed regularly.

2. Exclusions

- 2.1 An organisation should accept a complaint unless there is a valid reason not to do so. If the organisation decides not to accept a complaint, it should be able to evidence its reasoning. Each complaint should be considered on its own merits.
- 2.2 Organisations should accept complaints referred to them within 12 months of the issue occurring, or the individual becoming aware of the issue. Organisations should consider whether to apply discretion to accept complaints made outside this time limit where there are good reasons to do so.
- 2.3 A complaints policy should set out the circumstances in which a matter might not be considered or escalated. Organisations should ensure that these are reasonable, and should not deny individuals access to redress.
- 2.4 If an organisation decides not to accept a complaint, an explanation should be provided to the individual setting out the reasons why the matter is not suitable for the complaints process and the right to take that decision to the Ombudsman.
- 2.5 Organisations should not take a blanket approach to excluding complaints; they should consider the individual circumstances of each complaint.

3. Accessibility and awareness

- 3.1 Organisations should make it easy for individuals to complain by providing different channels through which they can make a complaint. Organisations must consider their duties under the Equality Act 2010 and anticipate the needs and reasonable adjustments of individuals who may need to access the complaints process.
- 3.2 Individuals should be able to raise their complaints in any way and with any member of staff. All staff should be aware of the complaints process and be able to pass details of the complaint to the appropriate person within the organisation.
- 3.3 High volumes of complaints should not be seen as a negative, as they can be indicative of a well-publicised and accessible complaints process. Low complaint volumes are potentially a sign that individuals are unable to complain.
- 3.4 Organisations should make their complaint policy available in a clear and accessible format for all individuals. This should detail the process, what will happen at each stage, and the timeframes for responding. The policy should also be published on the organisation's website.
- 3.5 The policy should explain how the organisation will publicise details of the complaints policy, including information about the Ombudsman and this Code.
- 3.6 Organisations should give individuals the opportunity to have a suitable representative deal with their complaint on their behalf, and to be represented or accompanied at any meeting with the organisation.
- 3.7 Organisations should provide individuals with information on their right to access the Ombudsman service and how the individual can engage with the Ombudsman about their complaint.
- 3.8 Where an organisation asks for feedback about its services through a survey, it should provide details of how individuals can complain so they can pursue any dissatisfaction if they so wish.

4. Complaint handling resources

- 4.1 Organisations should have designated, sufficient resource assigned to take responsibility for complaint handling, including liaison with the relevant Ombudsman and ensuring complaints are reported to the governing body (or equivalent).
- 4.2 Anyone responding to a complaint should have access to staff at all levels to facilitate the prompt resolution of complaints. They should also have the authority and autonomy to act to resolve disputes promptly and fairly.
- 4.3 Organisations are expected to prioritise complaint handling and a culture of learning from complaints. All relevant staff should be suitably trained in the importance of complaint handling. It is important that complaints are seen as a core service and resourced accordingly

5. The complaint handling process

- 5.1 Organisations should have a single policy for dealing with complaints covered by the Code.
- 5.2 The early and local resolution of issues between organisations and individuals is key to effective complaint handling. Organisations should not have extra named stages (such as 'stage 0' or 'informal complaint') as this causes unnecessary confusion.
- 5.3 When an individual expresses dissatisfaction that could meet the criteria for a complaint as set out in section 1 of the Code, they should be given the opportunity to make a complaint. Organisations should recognise that individuals may be reluctant to raise complaints out of fear it may impact services they receive in future.
- 5.4 The person responding to the complaint should:
- clarify with the individual any aspects of the complaint they are unclear about;
 - deal with complaints on their merits, act independently, and have an open mind;
 - give the individual a fair chance to set out their position;
 - take measures to address any actual or perceived conflict of interest; and
 - consider all relevant information and evidence carefully.
- 5.5 Where a response to a complaint will fall outside the timescales set out in this Code the organisation should inform the individual of when the response will be provided and the reason(s) for the delay.
- 5.6 Organisations must make reasonable adjustments for individuals where appropriate under the Equality Act 2010.
- Organisations should keep a record of any reasonable adjustments agreed. Any agreed reasonable adjustments should be kept under active review.
- 5.7 Organisations should not refuse to escalate a complaint through all stages of the complaints procedure unless there are valid reasons to do so. Organisations should clearly set out these reasons, and they should align with the approach to exclusions set out in section 2 of the Code.
- 5.8 A full record should be kept of the complaint, and the outcomes at each stage. This should include the original complaint and the date received, all correspondence with the individual, correspondence with other parties, and any relevant supporting documentation such as reports. This should be retained in line with the organisation's data retention policies.
- 5.9 Organisations should have systems in place to ensure that a complaint can be remedied at any stage of its complaints process. Organisations should ensure that appropriate remedies can be provided at any stage of the complaints process without the need for escalation to stage 2 or the Ombudsman.
- 5.10 Organisations should have policies and procedures in place for managing unacceptable behaviour from individuals and/or their representatives. Organisations should be able to evidence reasons for putting any restrictions in place and should keep an individual's restrictions under regular review.
- 5.11 Any restrictions placed on an individual's contact due to unacceptable behaviour should be proportionate and demonstrate regard for the provisions of the Equality Act 2010.

6. Complaints stages

Stage 1

- 6.1 Organisations should have processes in place to consider which complaints can be responded to as early as possible, and which require further consideration. Organisations should consider factors such as the complexity of the complaint and whether the individual is vulnerable or at risk. Most stage 1 complaints can be resolved promptly, and an explanation, apology or resolution provided to the individual.
- 6.2 Complaints should be acknowledged, and logged at stage 1 of the complaints procedure **within five working days of the complaint being received**.
- 6.3 Organisations should provide a full response to stage 1 complaints **within 10 working days** of the complaint being acknowledged.
- 6.4 Organisations should decide whether an extension to this timescale is needed when considering the complexity of the complaint and then inform individuals of the expected timescale for response. Any extension should be no more than 10 working days without good reason, and the reason(s) should be clearly explained to the individual.
- 6.5 When an organisation informs an individual about an extension to these timescales, they should be provided with the details of the relevant Ombudsman.
- 6.6 A complaint response should be provided to the individual when the answer to the complaint is known, not when the outstanding actions required to address the issue are completed. Outstanding actions should still be tracked and actioned promptly, with appropriate updates provided to the individual.
- 6.7 Organisations should address all points raised in the complaint and provide clear reasons for any decisions, referencing the relevant policy, law and good practice where appropriate. Organisations should be clear which aspects of the complaint they are, and are not, responsible for and clarify any areas where this is not clear.
- 6.8 At the conclusion of stage 1 organisations should provide details of how to escalate the matter to stage 2 if the individual is not satisfied with the response.
- 6.9 Where individuals raise additional complaints during stage 1, these should be incorporated into the stage 1 response if they are related, and the stage 1 response has not been provided. Where the stage 1 response has been provided, the new issues are unrelated to the issues already being considered, or it would unreasonably delay the response, the new issues should be logged as a new complaint.
- 6.10 Organisations should have systems in place to ensure that a complaint can be remedied at any stage of its complaints process. Individuals should not have to escalate a complaint in order to get an appropriate remedy.

Stage 2

- 6.11 If all or part of the complaint is not resolved to the individual's satisfaction at stage 1, it should be progressed to stage 2 of the organisation's procedure. Stage 2 is the organisation's final response..
- 6.12 Requests for stage 2 should be acknowledged and logged at stage 2 of the complaints procedure within **five working days of the escalation request being received**. Within the acknowledgement, organisations should set out their understanding of any outstanding issues and the outcomes the individual is seeking. If any aspect of the complaint is unclear, the individual should be asked for clarification.
- 6.13 Individuals should not be required to explain their reasons for requesting a stage 2 consideration. Organisations should make reasonable efforts to understand why an individual remains unhappy as part of its stage 2 response.
- 6.14 The person considering the complaint at stage 2 should not be the same person that considered the complaint at stage 1.
- 6.15 Organisations should issue a final response to the stage 2 **within 20 working days** of the complaint being acknowledged.
- 6.16 Organisations should decide whether an extension to this timescale is needed when considering the complexity of the complaint and then inform individuals of the expected timescale for response. Any extension should be no more than 20 working days without good reason, and the reason(s) should be clearly explained to the individual.
- 6.17 When an organisation informs an individual about an extension to these timescales they should be provided with the details of the relevant Ombudsman.
- 6.18 Organisations should confirm the following in writing to the individual at the completion of stage 2 in clear, plain language:
- a. the complaint stage;
 - b. the organisation's understanding of the complaint;
 - c. the decision on the complaint;
 - d. the reasons for any decisions made;
 - e. the details of any remedy offered to put things right;
 - f. details of any outstanding actions; and
 - g. details of how to escalate the matter to the Ombudsman if the individual remains dissatisfied.
- 6.19 Stage 2 should be the organisation's final response and should involve all suitable staff members needed to issue such a response.
- 6.20 A process with more than two stages will make the complaint process unduly long and delay access to the relevant Ombudsman. A process with a single stage means the organisation may lack the ability to check its response before an individual comes to the Ombudsman.
- 6.21 Where an organisation's complaint response is handled by a third party (e.g. a contractor) or independent adjudicator at any stage, it should form part of the two stage complaints process set out in this Code. Individuals should not be expected to go through two complaints processes.
- 6.22 Organisations are responsible for ensuring that any third parties handle complaints in line with the Code.

7. Putting things right

- 7.1 Where something has gone wrong an organisation should acknowledge this and set out the actions it has already taken, or intends to take, to put things right. These can include:
- > Apologising;
 - > Acknowledging where things have gone wrong;
 - > Providing an explanation, assistance or reasons;
 - > Taking action if there has been delay;
 - > Reconsidering or changing a decision;
 - > Amending a record or adding a correction or addendum;
 - > Providing a financial remedy;
 - > Changing policies, procedures or practices.
- 7.2 Any remedy offered should reflect the impact on the individual as a result of any fault identified.
- 7.3 The remedy offer should clearly set out what will happen and by when, in agreement with the individual where appropriate. Any remedy proposed should be followed through to completion.
- 7.4 If a proposed remedy cannot be delivered, the individual should be informed of the reasons for this, provided with details of any alternative remedy and reminded of their right to complain to the Ombudsman,
- 7.5 Organisations should take account of the good practice guides issued by the Ombudsman when deciding on appropriate remedies.

8. Performance reporting and self-assessment

- 8.1 Organisations should produce an annual complaints performance and service improvement report for scrutiny and challenge, which should include:
- a. an annual self-assessment against this Code to ensure its complaint handling policy remains in line with its requirements.
 - b. a qualitative and quantitative analysis of the organisation's complaint handling performance. This should also include a summary of the types of complaints the organisation has refused to accept;
 - c. any findings of non-compliance with this Code;
 - d. the service improvements made as a result of the learning from complaints;
 - e. the annual letter about the organisation's performance from the Ombudsman; and
 - f. any other relevant reports or publications produced by the Ombudsman in relation to the work of the organisation.
- 8.2 The annual complaints performance and service improvement report should be reported through the organisation's governance arrangements and published on the section of its website relating to complaints. The response to the report from the relevant governance arrangement should be published alongside this.
- 8.3 Organisations should also carry out a self-assessment following a significant restructure, merger and/or change in procedures.

9. Scrutiny & oversight: continuous learning and improvement

- 9.1 Organisations should look beyond the circumstances of the individual complaint and consider whether service improvements can be made as a result of any learning from the complaint.
- 9.2 A positive complaint handling culture is important to the effectiveness with which organisations resolve disputes. Organisations should use complaints as a source of intelligence to identify issues and introduce positive changes in service delivery.
- 9.3 Accountability and transparency are also integral to a positive organisational culture. Organisations should report back on wider learning and improvements from complaints to stakeholders, such as citizens' panels, staff and relevant committees.
- 9.4 The organisation should appoint a suitably senior person to oversee its complaint handling performance. This person should assess any themes or trends to identify potential systemic issues, serious risks, or policies and procedures that require revision.
- 9.5 In addition to this, organisations should assign lead responsibility for complaints in governance arrangements to support a positive complaint handling culture. We refer to this as the 'Member Responsible for Complaints' (the Member). This role could be carried out by an individual or committee depending on the governance arrangements in place.
- 9.6 The Member should receive regular information on complaints that provides insight on the organisation's complaint handling performance. The Member should have access to suitable information and staff to perform this role and report on their findings.
- 9.7 As a minimum, the Member should receive:
 - a. regular updates on the volume, categories, and outcomes of complaints, alongside complaint handling performance
 - b. regular reviews of issues and trends arising from complaint handling; and
 - c. the annual complaints performance and service improvement report.
- 9.8 Organisations should have a standard objective in relation to complaint handling for all relevant employees or third parties that reflects the need to:
 - > have a collaborative and co-operative approach towards resolving complaints, working with colleagues across teams and departments;
 - > take collective responsibility for any shortfalls identified through complaints, rather than blaming others; and
 - > act within the professional standards for engaging with complaints as set by any relevant professional body.

Appendix A: Self-assessment

A self-assessment should be completed and shared with the organisation's governance arrangements as part of the complaints performance and service improvement report.

Evidence should show how the organisation follows the Code and its own policies. It should also set out how well it is performing and provide information about service improvements which have been implemented following complaints.

For example, this could include records of quality assurance checks on complaint responses, exclusions and feedback from relevant staff. If the failure to meet an expectation only relates to one service area or department this should be made clear.

When completing the self-assessment, organisations should not focus on the number of complaints received. Recording a high number of complaints may be an indication that the organisation welcomes complaints and that individuals are able to access the complaints process easily. Organisations should focus on timescales for responding to complaints and complaint outcomes.

A suggested self-assessment format is included here, but organisations may adopt their own version to meet local needs and reporting requirements.

Example: Self-assessment against the requirements of the Code

Code section	Action	Do we follow the code Yes/No	Explanations and Commentary
1: Definition of a service request and complaint	We recognise the difference between a service request and a complaint and these are defined in our policies and procedures.		
2: Exclusions	Our complaints policy sets out circumstances where we would not consider a complaint. These are reasonable and do not deny individuals access to redress.		
3: Accessibility and awareness	We provide different channels through which individuals can make complaints. These are accessible and we are able to make reasonable adjustments where necessary.		
4: Complaint handling resources	We have designated, sufficient resource assigned to take responsibility for complaint handling. Complaints are viewed as a core service and resourced accordingly.		

Code section	Action	Do we follow the code Yes/No	Explanations and Commentary
5: The complaint handling process	We have a single policy for dealing with complaints covered by the Code and individuals are given the option of raising a complaint where they express dissatisfaction that meets the definition of the complaint in our policy.		
6: Complaints stages (Stage 1)	We process stage 1 complaints in line with timescales and processes set out in the Code.		
6: Complaints stages (Stage 2)	We process stage 2 complaints in line with timescales and processes set out in the Code.		
7: Putting things right	When something has gone wrong we take action to put things right.		
8: Performance reporting and self-assessment	We produce an annual complaints performance and service improvement report for scrutiny and challenge which includes a self-assessment against the Code.		
9: Scrutiny & Oversight	We have appropriate senior leadership and governance oversight of the complaints process and performance.		

Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman

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CABINET FORWARD PLAN – 1 MAY 2025 TO 30 SEPTEMBER 2025

(PUBLICATION DATE – 02 May 2025)



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)?
Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) Update	To present the latest medium-term financial plan (MTFP) of the council	No	Cabinet 13 May 2025	All Wards			Adam Richens	Open
BCP Local Plan next steps, updated Local Development Scheme (LDS) and Statement of Community Involvement (SCI)	To consider the next steps for the draft BCP Local Plan following receipt of the post examination hearing Stage 1 Inspectors' letter. Also to consider a proposed revised timetable for the Local Plan (LDS).	Yes	Cabinet 13 May 2025	All Wards	No public consultation required. Internal only.	n/a	Caroline Peach	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)?
Our Place and Environment: Consolidated Active Travel Fund 2025/26	The Council has been allocated and accepted £1.459m Consolidated Active Travel Fund (CATF) grant. This report recommends how the grant award should be invested and seeks delegation to facilitate delivery.	Yes	Transportation Advisory Group 7 May 2025 Cabinet 13 May 2025	Alderney & Bourne Valley; Christchurch Town; Commons; Mudeford, Stanpit & West Highcliffe; Poole Town; Queen's Park			Wendy Lane, Richard Pincroft	Open
Russell-Cotes Art Gallery and Museum Arts Council England (ACE) Museum Estate and Development (MEND) Grant	To accept the grant of £1,500,817 from ACE MEND Fund for the urgent repair of the Russell-Cotes	No	Cabinet 13 May 2025	All Wards			Sarah Newman	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)?
BCP Complaints Policy	To agree the updated policy, that reflects the latest guidance from the Local Government Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code	No	Cabinet 13 May 2025		National Ombudsman policy, no stakeholder consultation required at this stage, will be published on BCP website following approval.	National policy.	Jane Potter	Open
Bournemouth Air Festival	This report provides an update on the progress of the agreed options from the report presented to Cabinet on 2 October 2024, to seek external support to deliver and fund an Air Festival from 2026 onwards and recommends a way forward in relation to the future delivery of the Air Festival.	Yes	Cabinet 18 Jun 2025	All Wards			Amanda Barrie, Helen Wildman	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)?
Corporate Performance Report - Q4	Progress update on performance against key measures in the Corporate Strategy.	No	Cabinet 18 Jun 2025	All Wards	n/a	n/a	Isla Reynolds	Open
Investment & Development Directorate - Regeneration Programme	To provide a bi-annual update on the progress of the Council's regeneration programme	No	Overview and Scrutiny Board 9 Jun 2025 Cabinet 18 Jun 2025	All Wards			Amena Matin, Jonathan Thornton	Open
Bournemouth Development Company - Winter Gardens project	To provide Cabinet with an assessment of the options for funding the pre-construction work on a new Winter Gardens development project through the Bournemouth Development Company joint venture.	Yes	Overview and Scrutiny Board 9 Jun 2025 Cabinet 18 Jun 2025 Council 22 Jul 2025	Bournemouth Central	s151 Officer Cabinet Member for Finance BCP members of BDC board		Rob Dunford, Amena Matin	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)?
BCP Homes Tenant Satisfaction Measures and Housing Regulatory Compliance Update	To ensure that Cabinet has assurance that the outcomes of the Regulatory Consumer Standards are being delivered.	No	Cabinet 18 Jun 2025	All Wards			Kelly Deane	Open
Our Place and Environment: Safer Roads Fund – 20mph Boscombe and Pokesdown	Present Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) consultation outputs for proposed 20mph speed limits in Boscombe and Pokesdown as part of Safer Roads Fund Programme. For decision.	No	Transportation Advisory Group 7 May 2025 Cabinet 18 Jun 2025	Boscombe East & Pokesdown; Boscombe West; Bournemouth Central; East Cliff & Springbourn; Littledown & Iford			Richard Pincroft	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)?
Our Place and Environment: Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP) – Pokesdown and Southbourne	To inform Councillors of the outputs of public consultation regarding proposed measures to improve journey times on public transport through Pokesdown and Southbourne. Cabinet decision required following advertisement of Traffic Regulation Orders.	No	Transportation Advisory Group 7 May 2025 Cabinet 18 Jun 2025	Boscombe East & Pokesdown; West Southbourne			John McVey, Richard Pincroft	Open
Change of Age Range Highcliffe St Mark Primary School	The school seeks approval to lower their admission age range so that they may introduce an onsite school nursery class from September 2025	No	Cabinet 18 Jun 2025	Highcliffe & Walkford			Tanya Smith	Open
Change of Age Range Corpus Christi Catholic Primary School	The school seeks approval to lower their admission age range so that they may introduce an onsite school nursery class from September 2025.	No	Cabinet 18 Jun 2025	Boscombe East & Pokesdown			Tanya Smith	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)?
Poole Civic Centre - Soft Market Testing	To consider Poole Civic Centre - Soft Market Testing	No	Cabinet 16 Jul 2025	Poole Town			Sarah Culwick	Open
Fulfilled Lives programme		No	Cabinet 16 Jul 2025				Jillian Kay	
Designation of Neighbourhood Forum and Area	Cabinet to assess options, considering feedback from the consultation, and take the decision on the most appropriate forum and area to be formally designated.	No	Cabinet 16 Jul 2025	Bournemouth Central; East Cliff & Springbourne	Planning and Transport, Legal		Rebecca Landman	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)?
SEND Budget Pressures	To better assess the impact on children, young people and families of any potential budget overspend in the SEND service budget	No	Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee 10 Jun 2025 Cabinet 16 Jul 2025	All Wards			Kerrie Ainley, Tanya England, Rachel Gravett, Cathi Hadley, Lisa Linscott, Shirley McGillick	Open
Corporate Performance Report - Q1	Progress update on performance against key measures in the Corporate Strategy.	No	Cabinet 3 Sep 2025	All Wards	n/a	n/a	Isla Reynolds	Open
BCP Council Libraries – Proposed Library Strategy	To present the key elements of the new draft Library Strategy ahead of a second stage consultation process.	Yes	Overview and Scrutiny Board 26 Aug 2025 Cabinet 3 Sep 2025	All Wards			Lynda Anderson, Matti Raudsepp	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)?
Community Governance Review - Final Recommendations	To consider the proposals of the Task and Finish Group and to recommend to Council the final recommendations for the review of community governance for Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole	Yes	Cabinet 1 Oct 2025 Council 14 Oct 2025	All Wards	Existing parish and town councils, local representatives, local community and residents' groups, residents within the areas proposed for any new local councils	This is defined as stage 3 of the process and will include a 12 week consultation period for any interested party to respond using both online and paper forms.	Janie Berry, Richard Jones	Open
BCP Homes Annual Complaints Performance and Service Improvement Report	To provide an overview of complaint handling performance, lessons learned and compliance against the Housing Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code.	No	Cabinet 1 Oct 2025	All Wards	BCP Homes residents will have been provided with regular information on complaint handling performance through published information and resident panels.		Seamus Doran	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)?
Local Transport Plan 4 (LTP4)	To present outputs from Local Transport Plan 4 (LTP4) consultation and to present proposed LTP4 Policy Document complete with Implementation Plan for approval/adoption.	Yes	Overview and Scrutiny Board 17 Nov 2025 Cabinet 26 Nov 2025 Council 9 Dec 2025	All Wards	Residents (BCP and neighbouring authorities), partners, organisations and businesses that operate/exist in BCP area and are impacted by transport.	Exact dates tbc, but 6 to 8 week public consultation required, note: LTP4 engagement was facilitated in Spring 2024.	Wendy Lane, Richard Pincroft	Open
Corporate Performance Report - Q2	Progress update on performance against key measures in the Corporate Strategy.	No	Cabinet 26 Nov 2025	All Wards	n/a	n/a	Isla Reynolds	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)?
Waste Strategy for Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole	To approve the ambitions, principles and a delivery framework to manage waste produced from homes and businesses across Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole for the next 10 years.	Yes	Environment and Place Overview and Scrutiny Committee 19 Nov 2025 Cabinet 26 Nov 2025 Council 9 Dec 2025	All Wards	Residents, businesses, special interest groups,		Georgina Fry	Open
Corporate Performance Report - Q3	Progress update on performance against key measures in the Corporate Strategy.	No	Cabinet 4 Mar 2026	All Wards	n/a	n/a	Isla Reynolds	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)?
Junction Road Development	To seek approval to develop a section of green space and garage area to provide 4 new affordable rent homes as part of BCP Homes housing stock	Yes	Cabinet Date to be confirmed Council Date to be confirmed	Hamworthy			Jonathan Thornton	Open
DfE SEND review next steps	To consider the DfE review next steps	No	Cabinet Date to be confirmed				Rachel Gravett, Shirley McGillick, Sharon Muldoon	Fully exempt
Children's Services Early Help Offer	Summary of findings and recommendations from an ongoing review of our current Early Help services	No	Cabinet Date to be confirmed	All Wards			Zafer Yilkan	Open