Notice of Council

Date: Tuesday, 9 December 2025 at 7.00 pm

Venue: Council Chamber, BCP Civic Centre, Bournemouth BH2 6DY

Chairman:
Cllr L Dedman

Vice Chairman:
Cllr S Bull

Cllr C Adams
Cllr S Aitkenhead
Cllr H Allen
Cllr M Andrews
Cllr S Armstrong
Cllr J Bagwell
Cllr S Bartlett
Cllr J Beesley
Cllr D Brown
Cllr O Brown
Cllr R Burton
Cllr J J Butt
Cllr P Canavan
Cllr S Carr-Brown
Cllr J Challinor
Cllr A Chapmanlaw
Cllr B Chick
Cllr J Clements
Cllr E Connolly
Cllr P Cooper
Cllr M Cox
Cllr D d'Orton-Gibson
Cllr B Dove
Cllr M Dower
Cllr M Earl
Cllr J Edwards
Cllr G Farquhar
Cllr D Farr
Cllr A Filer
Cllr D A Flagg
Cllr M Gillett
Cllr C Goodall
Cllr A Hadley
Cllr J Hanna
Cllr E Harman
Cllr R Herrett
Cllr P Hilliard
Cllr B Hitchcock
Cllr M Howell
Cllr A Keddie
Cllr M Le Poidevin
Cllr D Logan
Cllr S Mackrow
Cllr A Martin
Cllr D Martin
Cllr G Martin
Cllr J Martin
Cllr C Matthews
Cllr S McCormack
Cllr P Miles
Cllr S Moore
Cllr A-M Moriarty
Cllr B Nanovo
Cllr L Northover
Cllr R Pattinson-West
Cllr M Phipps
Cllr K Rampton
Cllr Dr F Rice
Cllr J Richardson
Cllr V Ricketts
Cllr C Rigby
Cllr K Salmon
Cllr J Salmon
Cllr P Sidaway
Cllr P Slade
Cllr T Slade
Cllr V Slade
Cllr M Tarling
Cllr T Trent
Cllr O Walters
Cllr C Weight
Cllr L Williams
Cllr K Wilson
Cllr G Wright

All Members of the Council 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 attend or view the live stream of this meeting at the following link: https://democracy.bcpcouncil.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?MId=6080

If you would like any further information on the items to be considered at the meeting please contact: Democratic Services on 01202 096660 or 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

AIDAN DUNN
CHIEF EXECUTIVE

1 December 2025

DEBATE NOT HATE

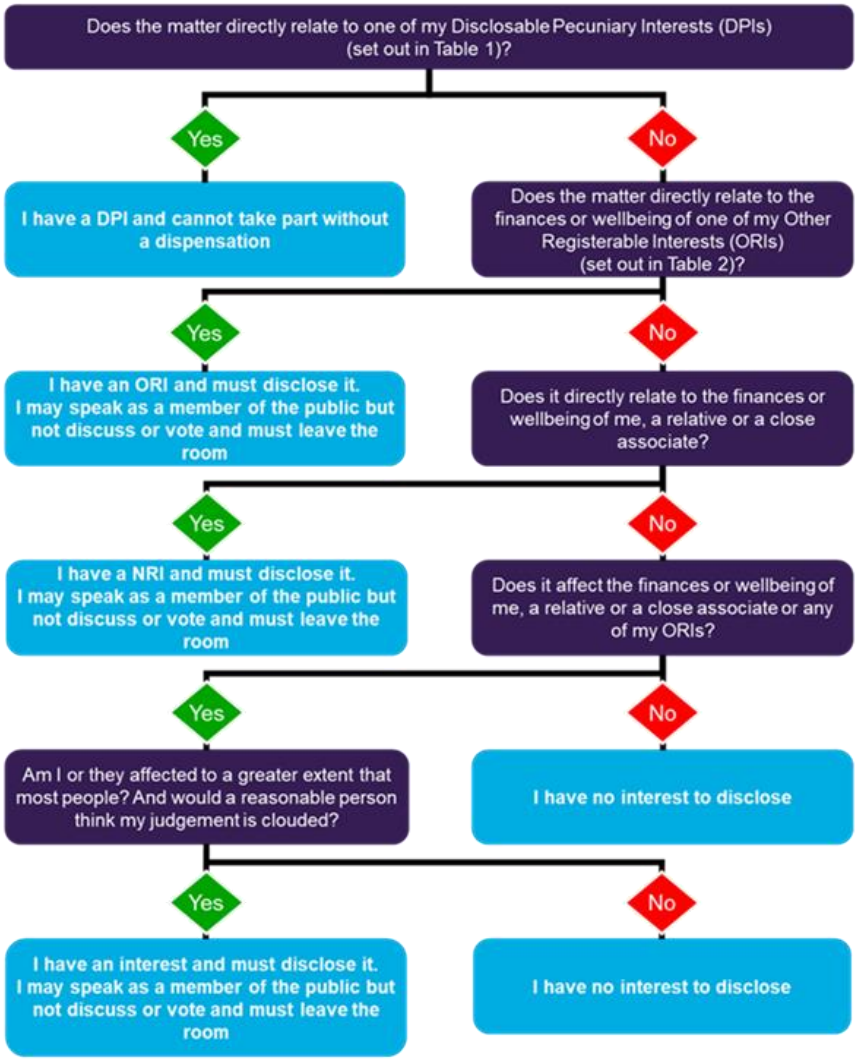
Available online and on the Mod.gov app

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	Predetermination 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?	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

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 7 - 42

To confirm and sign as a correct record the minutes of the Meeting held on 14 October 2025 and reconvened on the 3 November 2025.

4. Announcements and Introductions from the Chairman

To receive any announcements from the Chairman.

5. 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 Wednesday 3 December 2025 (mid-day, 3 clear working days before the meeting).

The deadline for the submission of a statement is mid-day Monday 8 December 2025 (mid-day the working day before the meeting).

The deadline for the submission of a petition is Tuesday 25 November 2025 (10 working days before the meeting).

ITEMS OF BUSINESS

Recommendations from Cabinet and Committees

6. Licensing Committee 22 October 2025 - Minute No. 23 - Review of the Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Driver, Vehicle and Operator Policies 43 - 212

RESOLVED that the Licensing Committee recommends a final version of the Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Driver, Vehicle and Operator Policies for adoption by Full Council on 9 December 2025.

7.	**Cabinet 29 October 2025 - Minute No. 64 - Upton Park Farm - Surrender of Lease** **RECOMMENDED that Council: -** **(a) note the recommendations of the Cross-Party Strategic Asset Disposal Working Group on 19 September 2025; and** **(b) approve to purchase the Farm Business Tenancy at Upton Park Farm, on such terms to be approved by the Director of Finance acting in his capacity as Corporate Property Officer, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Finance.** [PLEASE NOTE: Should the Council wish to discuss the detail of the confidential appendix at Appendix A the meeting will be required to move into Confidential (Exempt) Session].	213 - 228
8.	**Cabinet 26 November 2025 - Minute No. 81 - BCP Homes Asset Management Plan and Housing Revenue Account 30 Year Business Plan** **RECOMMENDED that Council: -** **(a) approve the HRA Asset Management Plan at appendix 1;** **(b) approve the Baseline+ scenario for the HRA 30 Year Business Plan; and** **(c) note that adjustments to the HRA 30 Year Business plans will be made on an annual basis alongside annual HRA budget setting and reported to Cabinet and Council accordingly.**	229 - 258
9.	**Cabinet 26 November 2025 - Minute No. 83 - Sea Cliff and Chine Management** **RECOMMENDED that Council: -** **(a) note the challenges being faced in managing BCP's sea cliffs and chines, including the impacts of climate change and limited resources allocated to this in the recent past;** **(b) support the immediate allocation of £1.446m from reserves to support responses to current cliff management issues and mitigate the lost income from commercial services on the seafront; and** **(c) delegate to the Director of Commercial Operations in consultation with the Chief Operations Officer and Portfolio Holder the allocations of the funding.**	259 - 268
10.	**Cabinet 26 November 2025 - Minute No. 84 - Home to School Transport** **RECOMMENDED that Council Agree to tender an external provider to deliver a transformation project over three years with a total cost of £1.5 million funded by the flexible use of capital receipts to deliver service improvements and by the end of the project on-going savings in SEND school transport projected at £3 million (net of additional resource requirement).**	269 - 338

[PLEASE NOTE: Should the Council wish to discuss the detail of the confidential appendix at Appendix 1, the meeting will be required to move into Confidential (Exempt) Session].

11. Cabinet 26 November 2025 - Minute No. 85 - Youth Justice Service Plan 2025 - 2026 339 - 408

RECOMMENDED that Council approve the Youth Justice Plan 2025-2026.

12. Cabinet 26 November 2025 - Minute No. 86 - Vitality Stadium land - draft heads of terms 409 - 482

RECOMMENDED that Council: -

(a) notes the decision of the Cabinet meeting held 1 October 2025 and Council Meeting held 14 October 2025;

(b) approves the Heads of Terms (HOTs) recommended by officers for the Leasehold disposal of two parcels of land at Kings Park to AFC Bournemouth (Option C); and

(c) instructs BCP officers to agree the recommended HOTs with AFC Bournemouth, instruct BCP's legal team accordingly and progress the two leases to completion.

[PLEASE NOTE: Should the Council wish to discuss the detail of the confidential appendices at Appendix A-G the meeting will be required to move into Confidential (Exempt) Session].

13. Community Governance Review - Consequential and Supplementary Provisions 483 - 496

This report presents the consequential and supplementary provisions required to implement the establishment of new town councils for Broadstone, Poole, and Bournemouth, following the Council's decision of 14 October 2025.

It outlines the arrangements necessary to ensure the new councils are legally compliant and operationally effective from 1 April 2026. Key recommendations include the formation of Shadow Councils from 1 January 2026 to oversee the recruitment of qualified clerks and address pre-implementation matters, and the agreement of anticipated precept amounts for each council, enabling sound financial planning.

The report details the limited transfer of assets, statutory requirements for allotments, and the continuation of certain services under Service Level Agreements to ensure continuity and mitigate risk. These measures are designed to provide a robust framework for the successful transition to new local governance arrangements and to support effective service delivery from inception.

14. Appointment of Parent Governor Representatives (maintained schools) Co-opted to Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee 497 - 500

The four-year term of Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee Co-opted Parent Governor Representatives (PGRs) came to an end resulting in Democratic Services commencing the process of recruiting two new PGRs (maintained schools) to sit as a Co-opted Members.

Following an election and in line with good practice, Council is asked to approve the appointment of the two successful nominees.

15. Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report 501 - 550

This is the annual report of the Statutory Scrutiny Officer on Overview and Scrutiny (O&S) activity within BCP Council for which there is an annual requirement to report to Council. This promotes visibility of the O&S function and Council ownership of activity and any improvements required.

The annual report contains a summary and analysis of O&S activity during 2024-25, reflections on working practices and identified improvements to strengthen the O&S function.

This report was preceded by consultation on proposals with the O&S Board and Committees and comments raised by O&S members are summarised within this report.

16. Questions from Councillors

The deadline for questions to be submitted to the Monitoring Officer is Monday 1 December 2025.

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

To consider any urgent decisions taken by the Chief Executive in accordance with the Constitution.

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.

BOURNEMOUTH, CHRISTCHURCH AND POOLE COUNCIL

COUNCIL

Minutes of the Meeting held on 14 October 2025 at 7.00 pm and resumed on 3 November 2025 at 7.00 pm

Present:-

Cllr L Dedman – Chairman

Cllr S Bull – Vice-Chairman

Present: Cllr C Adams (14 Oct), Cllr H Allen (14 Oct), Cllr M Andrews, Cllr S Armstrong (14 Oct), Cllr S Bartlett, Cllr J Beesley (3 Nov), Cllr D Brown, Cllr O Brown (14 Oct), Cllr R Burton, Cllr J J Butt (14 Oct), Cllr P Canavan, Cllr S Carr-Brown, Cllr J Challinor (14 Oct), Cllr A Chapmanlaw (3 Nov), Cllr B Chick (14 Oct), Cllr E Connolly (14 Oct), Cllr P Cooper (3 Nov), Cllr M Cox, Cllr D d'Orton-Gibson, Cllr B Dove, Cllr M Dower, Cllr M Earl, Cllr J Edwards, Cllr G Farquhar, Cllr D Farr (14 Oct), Cllr D A Flagg (14 Oct), Cllr M Gillett, Cllr C Goodall, Cllr A Hadley, Cllr J Hanna, Cllr E Harman, Cllr R Herrett, Cllr P Hilliard (14 Oct), Cllr B Hitchcock (14 Oct), Cllr M Howell (14 Oct), Cllr A Keddie, Cllr M Le Poidevin, Cllr D Logan, Cllr S Mackrow, Cllr A Martin, Cllr D Martin, Cllr G Martin, Cllr J Martin, Cllr C Matthews (14 Oct), Cllr S McCormack, Cllr P Miles (14 Oct), Cllr S Moore, Cllr A-M Moriarty, Cllr B Nanovo, Cllr L Northover (14 Oct), Cllr M Phipps, Cllr K Rampton, Cllr Dr F Rice, Cllr J Richardson, Cllr V Ricketts, Cllr C Rigby (14 Oct), Cllr K Salmon, Cllr P Sidaway (14 Oct), Cllr P Slade, Cllr T Slade, Cllr V Slade (14 Oct), Cllr M Tarling (14 Oct), Cllr T Trent, Cllr O Walters, Cllr C Weight (14 Oct), Cllr L Williams (14 Oct), Cllr K Wilson and Cllr G Wright

38. Apologies

14 October 2025

Apologies for absence were received from: -

Councillor Sue Aitkenhead
Councillor Julie Bagwell
Councillor John Beesley
Councillor Adrian Chapmanlaw
Councillor Peter Cooper
Councillor Anne Filer
Councillor Joe Salmon

3 November 2025

Apologies for absence were received from: -

Councillor Sue Aitkenhead
Councillor Hazel Allen
Councillor Marcus Andrews

Councillor Sara Armstrong
Councillor Julie Bagwell
Councillor Olivia Brown
Councillor Judy Butt
Councillor John Challinor
Councillor Brian Chick
Councillor Eleanor Connolly
Councillor Duane Farr
Councillor David Flagg
Councillor Paul Hilliard
Councillor Mark Howell
Councillor Chris Matthews
Councillor Pete Miles
Councillor Lisa Northover
Councillor Chris Rigby
Councillor Joe Salmon
Councillor Vikki Slade
Councillor Michael Tarling
Councillor Clare Weight
Councillor Lawrence Williams

39. Declarations of Interests

Councillors Stephen Bartlett and Crispin Goodall declared interests in Minute No. 48 (AFC Bournemouth stadium expansion. Land requirements and Disposal) and remained present for the discussion and voting thereon.

The Chief Executive reminded members that a dispensation had been granted to all BCP Councillors in respect of the Community Governance Review item to ensure all Councillors were freely able to participate in the debate and vote.

40. Confirmation of Minutes

The Minutes of the Council meeting held on 22 July 2025 and reconvened on 16 September 2025 were confirmed as a correct record.

41. Announcements and Introductions from the Chairman

The Chairman advised Council with sadness of the recent death of former Borough of Poole Councillor and Member of Parliament for Mid Dorset and North Poole Dame Annette Brooke. Councillor Vikki Slade relayed personal experiences of working with Dame Annette Brooke following which Councillors stood in silent tribute.

The Chairman updated Council on her activity since the last meeting and made particular reference to an event attended for Maddie's Miracle, a breast-feeding support group in Boscombe and the Royal Visit for the opening of the Police Headquarters.

42. Public Issues

The Chairman advised Council that given the significant number of questions and statements received the time limit for public questions and statements would be extended to 30 minutes.

Public Questions

Public Question from Barry Smith

Would BCP surrender the lease on Scott's hill lane play park and land on adjacent side of the road to allow Christchurch town council to take up a new lease with the freeholder and BCP council renew the lease owned by the freeholder on Purewell crossroad only? My question from the previous meeting had false information so could I have true facts please.

This is all to allow us to rejuvenate the play park which has been dilapidating for the past 4 years.

Response by the Portfolio Holder for Communities and Partnerships, Councillor Sandra Moore

Yes, BCP Council is exploring the available options with the landowner regarding the lease of Scott's Hill Lane play area, plus the other relevant land, to try to provide a solution which could then lead to the play area being improved in the future.

I would also like to confirm that BCP council is open to these discussions, and this work is continuing, but it is all very complicated given the nature of the land holdings and the lease agreements.

However, the Deputy Leader of the Council who is also the ward councillor for the area where the play park is sited, has spoken personally with the landowner and has been assured that a solution is in sight.

Public Question from Joanne Keeling

Predetermination & Legal Consultation

In the recent "Leader Live" broadcast, Cllr Millie Earl stated that it is the democratic right of elected members to deliver their mandate, including the creation of Town and Parish Councils, as reflected in official campaign literature. The first Gunning principle requires that consultations occur at a formative stage and that outcomes are not predetermined. If the Council proceeds despite consultation responses demonstrating overwhelming public opposition, does this indicate a predetermined decision, potentially rendering the consultation unlawful? Will the Leader confirm that the Council fully accepts its legal duty to comply with the Gunning principles, and explain how the current process ensures proposals remain genuinely open to influence before any final decision is taken?

Response by the Leader of the Council, Councillor Millie Earl

May I thank Ms Keeling for her question and confirm that the council recognises the Gunning principles and seeks to adhere to them at all times. The process by which the consultation on the Community Governance Review has taken place and been considered as part of the decision

making process has followed the advice of our professional officers, and the recommendations before us come from a cross-party Task and Finish Group, commissioned by the council to undertake the detailed work, which has taken time to evaluate the consultation responses, as set out in the substantial report we are considering this evening. Their recommendations have been subject to public scrutiny by the Overview and Scrutiny Board, which is both cross-party and exempt from party political influence, which had a full and open debate and which voted to support the recommendations. They have been publicly considered by the Council's Cabinet, which agreed to recommend the recommendations to this public meeting of the Council. It remains open, this evening, for issues to be raised that may support the recommendations or argue against them, and it is for individual councillors to vote as they see fit in the light of the consultation responses, the recommendations of those committees and the debate that will shortly take place.

With regard to the proposals being open to influence, should Ms Keeling care to compare the recommendations of the Task and Finish Group that were put to residents within the consultation exercise, with those that Council is considering this evening, she will note that these have already changed substantially in the light of the consultation responses, which have already influenced which town councils are being recommended, and which are not, have influenced the numbers of councillors proposed for each town councils, and have influenced the boundaries, sizes and names of the wards in the proposed town councils. It remains open to the Council to make further amendments to the proposals this evening, if that is the Council's wish.

Public Question from Daniel Parkin

1. The Christchurch Town Council repurchase of a car park highlights the complexity of assets transfer and if the town councils went ahead will BCP transfer any assets free of charge to these councils as they have for Christchurch, and how will the purchase costs of high-value assets be allocated to residents? And can you produce a list of said assets for the public today? As for the assets that will not be transferred, will the Town Councils be liable for maintaining, repairing, or developing assets they do not own? Clear definitions of ownership, liability, and cost allocation are essential at these early stages.
2. Can the Council confirm the exact legal and financial arrangements to prevent new councils from being exposed to unforeseen obligations.

Response by the Portfolio Holder for Finance, Councillor Mike Cox

1. Daniel. Thank you for allowing me the opportunity to highlight the fantastic achievement of Christchurch Town Council in purchasing a car park in the centre of Christchurch which the previous Conservative Council wanted to sell to a private equity company. The car park has been financed by Public Sector borrowing and will cost the Council circa £50k a year in interest or about £4 per

household per year. A fantastic value for money to keep such an important anchor tenant in the centre of Christchurch.

Apart from the Allotments BCP has no plans to transfer any other properties at the moment to any Town Councils but I am sure if you have been paying attention you would have heard about the great working being done by our Community Asset Transfer team which looks to transfer community assets BCP can no longer afford to maintain.

It goes without saying that any Town Council will not be liable to maintain an asset it does not own – I can't understand where you could have go that from or maybe I can.

2. All Town and Parish Councils are governed by their own constitutions and strict financial regulations and framework models of which are available from National Association of Local Councils.

Public Question from Judith Parkin read by the Daniel Parkin

The cost of electing Town/Parish Councillors and establishing each separate Town/Parish Council remains unclear.

Will it fall on new councils, potentially placing them in debt before operation or will it be borne by BCP?

Additionally, BCP Council will need to set the first-year precept. How will these costs be calculated to ensure fairness, transparency, and affordability?

How strong must public opposition be for the Council to respect consultation results rather than proceeding with predetermined policies?

Residents need assurance that financial and democratic safeguards are fully in place.

Response by the Portfolio Holder for Transformation, Resources and Governance, Councillor Jeff Hanna

Thank you to Ms Parkin for her question. As portfolio holder for governance and elections, may I confirm that, if the council agrees to create all three proposed new town councils, the total cost of the elections for all three in 2026 is estimated to be £933,500. The cost would be borne by the town councils themselves. Based on the numbers of properties in all three areas, this would make the precept, the extra Council tax, for a Band D property, just over £7 a year. In future years, with no elections needed, that small amount, some sixty pence a month, would generate the best part of one million pounds to be spent on local improvements and community activities across those new town councils. One million pounds that would benefit our residents, in Broadstone, Poole and Bournemouth. If agreed this evening, the first year's actual recommended precept will be calculated by the Task and Finish Group which will need to follow the wording in the recommendation, to do this on the basis of minimal transfer and precept, with their report to come to a meeting of the Full Council, to be debated publicly before finally being set.

Question from Jason Keeling read by Joanne Keeling

Competence of Allowance-Paid Councillors

Unitary authorities operate with professional officers, consultants and strong budgetary oversight to ensure accountability and compliance. Town and Parish Councils, while smaller, would still be run by councillors who receive allowances but may have little or no relevant experience. How can the public be confident these councillors will manage funds responsibly, deliver statutory services effectively, and avoid errors or overspending? In an authority already under financial strain, inexperienced councillors risk being set up to fail, passing financial and operational risks onto residents. What training, oversight, and safeguards will be in place to ensure councillors can meet their statutory, financial, and operational responsibilities and maintain public trust?

Response by the Portfolio Holder for Transformation, Resources and Governance, Councillor Jeff Hanna

Thank you to Mr Keeling for his question. As portfolio holder for governance, may I assure Mr Keeling that town councils will be supported by competent town clerks, potentially part-time, and such other officers as they see fit.

Training will be made available to all elected councillors either directly by the clerk to the council, or via the local association of parish and town councils or through the national association of local councils.

In our democratic system, there is no guarantee of competency for any future town councillors, or current or future BCP councillors, or any district and county councillors, elected Mayors, Members of Parliament or Prime Minister. That absence of a guarantee of competence was so clearly demonstrated recently by the former Conservative Prime Minister, Liz Truss. Nevertheless, we remain a democratic country. The assumption is that many of those elected will bring their experience in other walks of life to the role, and, collectively, with the professional advice available, and such training as is provided, some good decisions will be made that will benefit the communities they serve.

Public Question from Jane Newell

Would the Leader of the Council explain the anticipated cost to be borne by BCP Council taxpayers in 2026/27, being the proposed first year of Town Councils for Poole and Bournemouth, given that the costs for year one set-up, the holding of elections in May 2026, and other costs or aspirations will effectively be recharged in advance through a precept on Council Tax bills for 2026/27.

Response by the Leader of the Council, Councillor Millie Earl

Thank you to Ms Newell for her question. May I refer her to Cllr Hanna's answer to the very similar question from Ms Parkin a few minutes ago, when he explained the costs involved.

Public Question from Gabi Sanger-Stevens

In May 2024, Overview & Scrutiny unanimously recommended reviewing the consultation process after repeated petitions and responses were

ignored. No report has been presented, and similar engagement patterns persist. Lawful consultation requires conscientious consideration of all responses. This consultation returned overwhelming opposition to Town and Parish Councils, alongside serious concerns regarding uncapped costs, unclear service responsibilities, and transparency.

How does this consultation avoid previous failings and ensure residents' views are genuinely considered? Will the Council commit that the concerns and preferences of residents will be genuinely reflected in the final decision? If ignored, will the Council use public funds to defend against legal challenges arising from failure to respect consultation principles? Finally, how will the Council restore public confidence, rebuild engagement, and demonstrate that participation influences final decisions, reassuring resident that their engagement is meaningful and that the consultation is not just a token gesture to justify a predetermined outcome?

Response by the Portfolio Holder for Transformation, Resources and Governance, Councillor Jeff Hanna

Thank you to Ms Sanger-Stevens for her question. With regard to the consideration of the consultation responses, may I refer her to the Leader's answer to the very similar question from Ms Keeling. It would be inappropriate to comment on how the council would respond to any legal challenge. In terms of public confidence in consultations, the Overview and Scrutiny Board is reviewing the consultation process, and we await their advice.

Public Question from Mrs S Sandwell

Will the new Town and Parish Councils be given a meaningful role in promoting active travel and sustainable transport, including walking, cycling and innovative options such as electric trams or monorails? What authority and resources will they have to influence local transport planning and ensure communities can help shape greener, low-carbon solutions?

Response by the Portfolio Holder for Climate Response, Environment and Energy, Councillor Andy Hadley

Mrs Sandswell, thank you for your question.

If creation of Parish and Town Councils gets the go-ahead, It will be for those bodies to define their interests, and how they allocate their precept, raise funds from grants or elsewhere, or to aim to influence others.

I do have a relevant example from our neighbours. Last week, I was invited to a joint meeting of the Wimborne, Corfe Mullen and associated Town and Parish Councils, because they collectively want to see a solution to enable people to walk or cycle safely across Julians Bridge and the A31 junction between Corfe Mullen and Wimborne.

Dorset Council continues as the Transport authority to be responsible for highways, and a Dorset Council officer was present to answer their queries and take back recommendations to be considered. The A31 is managed by Highways England, who would also be a decision maker in respect of their junction.

I was invited as the parishes recognise the flows between Merley/Bearwood

towards Wimborne Shops and Schools, and for children from Wimborne and Corfe Mullen to attend Corfe hills school, and shop or work in Broadstone and Poole. Such measures need to be done in partnership.

I hope this illustrates the role of Parish and Town councils on Transport matters. Similarly, Christchurch Town Council were consulted recently on bus priority measures in Purewell, including a ride on a bus to experience the problem first hand.

When it comes to innovations like Electric Trams or Monorails, it is likely that a Town or parish council would be a consultee. The current Government aim is to devolve some powers for strategic investment to regional mayoral authorities, and that may give us more chance to promote such large schemes, if the funding follows.

The local voice is important in ensuring that communities can help shape and benefit from greener, low-carbon solutions, as you suggest, and indeed any enhancements to their area. The resources that they put into it will be for them to decide.

Public Question from Rick Ashcroft

A majority of respondents oppose Town Councils and the associated precept. If substantial numbers refuse to pay in protest, how will the Council respond? Will payment enforcement, penalties or service adjustments be applied? How will essential services be maintained without penalising compliant residents? Residents require clarity on legal and financial consequences of refusal and a framework outlining enforcement, liability, and service continuity before precepts are imposed.

Response by the Portfolio Holder for Transformation, Resources and Governance, Councillor Jeff Hanna

Thank you to Mr Ashcroft for his question. Whilst a taxpayer may disagree with specific decisions by the council, there is no ability to withhold all or part of their Council Tax on that basis. A Council Tax bill is compiled from different charges, but it is not an itemised bill. Therefore, the withholding of any Council Tax will not result in a reduction of payments to a Town Council. The Council has a legal requirement to charge and recover unpaid Council Tax and whilst it may be disagreeable, recovery action would have to be taken if Council Tax is not paid. It would be inappropriate to comment on exactly what process is followed in this situation, other than to reassure Mr Ashcroft that the council does have appropriate processes in place.

Public Question from Susan Lennon read by the Chief Executive

BCP Council if we are to have Parish councils does that mean our services already outsourced by Council will get worse or better?

Will Parish councils have to raise money to pay for services badly dwindling?

Why are Parish councillors not paid, but Council ones are?

Who will make Parish Council decisions them or you on Policy?

Response by the Portfolio Holder for Transformation, Resources and Governance, Councillor Jeff Hanna

Thank you to Ms Lennon for her question. Services provided by parish and town councils are in addition to those provided by unitary councils such as BCP, so their creation will unquestionably improve the overall services provided to residents, in contrast to the situation where no parish or town council exists. Parish and town councils make their own decisions as to what services they provide and do so independently of unitary councils. They do need to raise funds, through a precept, an increase in the Council Tax, to meet the costs of services they provide. I have already exemplified that a precept of some 60 pence a month could generate some one million pounds of benefits to residents across Broadstone, Poole and Bournemouth. Allowances received by councillors on unitary councils reflect the level of responsibilities they hold. Few parish and town councils provide services at a level that warrants allowances being given to their councillors.

Public Question from Trevor Muddimer read by the Chief Executive

I have a leaflet from 1998 which talks of Light Rail (trams) as a solution to increasing congestion across our area (the DARTS Scheme).

Many councils have taken this route, so when will this or something similar be implemented?

Response by the Portfolio Holder for Climate Response, Environment and Energy, Councillor Andy Hadley

Trevor, thank you for your question, this was a blast from the past, that leaflet was actually produced by me, with a small group of volunteers meeting at my house nearly 30 years ago, aiming to try and seek solutions to our traffic congestion problems. In addition to briefing councillors and MPs, it made a 2 page article in the Evening Echo, and the Meridian news.

The DARTS scheme consisted of 3 parts.

1) An integrated Transport Authority to ensure co-ordination rather than competition between different modes of public transport
2) Integrated ticketing, to enable frictionless travel on any form of public transport
3) Higher frequency of trains across the conurbation, and light rail/Trams to link up to Wimborne and the Airport, down to Bournemouth, Poole and Christchurch town centres, and potentially to connect to the Ferry Port and to Swanage Railway.

It was then included in the current Local Transport Plan 3 documents as a “long-term ambition”.

In response to being asked about your question, the Director of Investment and Development for BCP Council highlighted to me last week, that “Buses need to be replaced every 7 years. Routes are always dependant on commerciality and funding, whereas a tram lasts 30 years, and anchors new developments. Over its life cycle, trams can be a lot better value for money.”

We have a great local bus company, and we buck the national trends on bus-usage, but Trams increase capacity significantly and do attract different users.

I am very aware of the short-term disruption that installation of such a system brings, but we are one of the largest conurbations in the UK without mass transit. In France, Germany and even the USA, many towns have Light rail/trams on their highly used routes. Regional Devolution may provide the means to finally make progress.

I cannot give you a timescale. 30 years ago, we estimated £55M and 15 years. Costs will of course have multiplied hugely, and little has changed beyond congestion getting ever worse. There has though been some progress:

Network Rail recently undertook a study of adding one or two trains per hour through the area (the Dorset Metro concept). We have also been working with the bus company on integrated ticketing ideas, and I am keen that Officers look again at the feasibility of light rail in the mix, both in terms of land assignment in the Local Plan and taking steps to make a viable start on a Mass Transit scheme for the BCP area.

Public Question from Susan Chapman

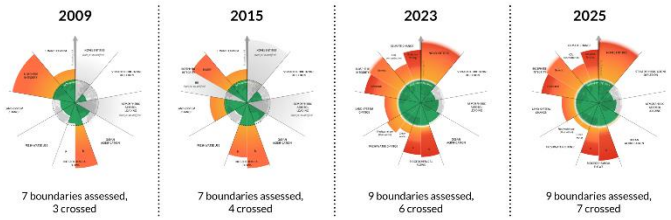
The Stockholm Resilience Centre warns that humanity has breached seven of nine planetary boundaries. The planetary boundaries framework highlights the rising risk from human pressure on nine critical global processes that regulate the stability and resilience of the Earth. Crossing boundaries risks generating "large-scale, abrupt or irreversible environmental changes" for which, dangerously, none of us are as yet prepared.

Please will BCP ensure they include this illustrated information in their newsletter and publications as well as telling us how we can all help maintain a safe operating space for humanity in our decision-making?

Response by the Portfolio Holder for Climate Response, Environment and Energy, Councillor Andy Hadley

Soo, thanks for your question and the clarity of your warning. The severe consequences of the shocks to planetary systems are increasingly stark, creating a very uncertain future for life on Planet Earth, whatever the populist politicians may do or say.

Planetary boundaries



The evolution of the planetary boundaries framework. Licenced under CC BY-NC-ND 3.0 (Credit: Azote for Stockholm Resilience Centre, Stockholm University. Based on Sakschewski and Caesar et al. 2025, Richardson et al. 2023, Steffen et al. 2015, and Rockström et al. 2009).

Planetary boundaries - Stockholm Resilience Centre

Globally, only one of the 9 planetary boundaries identified in their research has been controlled. International action on Ozone depletion has seen a

reversal and a mending of the Ozone Layer since the 1980s. This provides a faint hope for humanity when we all work together.

In the social media age, I'm afraid so many people are ignoring the science and choosing their own version of reality, to suit continued inaction, based on echo-chamber discussions.

We have known of the dangers of Climate Change since at least the 1991 Earth Summit. Councils across the UK, and much of the civilised world are doing their bit, and yet changing habits and our reliance on fossil fuels it seems, is too hard, particularly against the powerful vested interests. Changes to our weather systems are evident locally with drier summers and sudden heavy rainfall causing localised flooding.

We have seen with microplastics and pesticides, examples of the dangers of Novel entities in the environment. More unintended consequences of synthetic substances will emerge.

Ocean acidification, through CO2 absorption threatens marine life, with corals, molluscs and crustaceans evidently struggling, and so the marine food-web that depends on them is also threatened.

These factors are all inter-related and global. As a Council and a community, we cannot resolve them in isolation. We can highlight the challenges, and step up individually and together, on Climate and environmental responsibility, which helps to reduce the pressure on the stability and resilience of life on Earth.

This isn't a middle class or woke obsession, it is about adaptation and survival of the species. Our Biodiversity Net gain work, planting trees as identified in the BCP Urban Forest strategy, the work on our heathlands and natural spaces are all forces for good.

Individually, we all need to consider changing

- how we heat our homes,
- how we generate and use power,
- how we collect and use water,
- how and where we travel for work and leisure,
- what we buy,
- what we plant, and its impact on nature
- what we eat and
- what we reuse, repair, recycle and throw away

This all helps. The Council will do what we can to help people to make responsible choices for themselves and the common good, at this practical level.

Public Question from Mark White

This administration doesn't listen to its residents pure and simple with 80% of respondents saying no to town councils.

With our MPs bar one all raising concerns over the total lack of democratic process, there is now a very large growing concern raised by all over what appears to be a breach of the Gunning Principles in this consultation. Specifically, the principle requiring that proposals be at a formative stage

seems to have been disregarded, with outcomes appearing predetermined prior to public engagement. This undermines the integrity of the consultation and public trust in the process. with the large volumes of evidence of the leader stating elections will take place in May 2026 prior to the opening of the consultation

Could the leader please clarify how she ensured compliance with all four Gunning Principles, particularly regarding the openness to influence before decisions were made?

Response by the Leader of the Council, Councillor Millie Earl

Thank you to Mr White for your question. May I refer you to my answer to Ms Keeling's very similar question given a little earlier with regard to the Gunning principles.

The public statements listed below were duly submitted in advance of the meeting, however as the allotted time for public presentations was exceeded it was not possible for them to be read aloud during the meeting. All statements and questions were circulated to members prior to the and are provided here for the record and for informational purposes.

Public Statements

Public Statement from Mark White

Dorchester has a population of 23,000 a town council budget of £2.2 million, a staff of 22 with offices costing a total £965,000 & £24,400 of councillor's allowances. Dorchester increased precepts twice in 2024 hitting pockets of residents by £210 providing the bare minimum of events, allotment and facilities.

Poole and my ward Hamworthy a population of 151,000 with high areas of deprivation compare that to Highcliffe with a population of 14,000 with low or nil deprivation.

We all know these councils will not just take on the allotments it will end up taking more BCP services. Residents are not silly, we know you cannot compare the £50 precept of Highcliff to that of Poole, we know it will cost more then Dorchester.

Public Statement from Nick Greenwood

Encouraged by local Councils, Climate change has become the perfect trojan horse for global elites to push centralised, authoritarian control. The UN flag frequently flies outside; Proved.

Framed as an existential crisis, it demands urgent action that bypasses local democracy and justifies intrusive regulation, surveillance, and top-down mandates. Carbon markets, energy tracking, and global "green" policies expand State and Corporate intrusions into everyday life, all in the name of saving the planet. Public fear and moral pressure silence dissent, making centralised control appear not just necessary, but virtuous. Under the banner of climate, national sovereignty erodes, and decision-making shifts to technocrats and multinational bodies, creating a globalised governance model that few truly debate.

What begins as environmental concern morphs into an excuse to concentrate power, limit freedoms, and reshape societies according to the dictates of a distant elite—an urgent crisis manufactured to normalise authoritarianism under the guise of morality.

Public Statement from Susan Chapman

An important, detailed report by the defence chiefs concerning the climate crisis threatening the UK's national security was unexpectedly not launched in London last Thursday.

Governance at all levels should be preparing us for the destabilising impacts of the climate and nature crises. The looming collapse of vital natural ecosystems, food shortages and economic disaster are just years away. We're over-dependent on imports.

A robust system of protections must be implemented before dangerous changes accelerate, governments fall and there's social disorder.

Developers mustn't be allowed to commodify nature in new planning laws. Ancient woodlands, wetlands, and species-rich grasslands aren't interchangeable. Once they're destroyed, they cannot simply be recreated elsewhere.

Habitats carry centuries of ecological complexity that cannot be replicated by planting trees or designating land somewhere else. One in seven UK species faces extinction. 41% are declining. Nature must be respected if we're to survive.

Public Statement from Bob Cooper

The Reports you have had are misleading.

Requests received for activities which BCP cannot provide do not justify these Councils. I could ask for a Christmas tree in Talbot Village However if it meant a Town Council with a cost approaching £300 per year with no cap, I would say no thanks

To argue that Bournemouth and Poole already have a two-tier local government with Charter Trustees is both misleading and wrong. We don’t. Legally they are not a local authority.

Not mentioned in reports, the ward boundaries for Town Council’s and BCP Wards differ. One side of Wallisdown Road would be in Poole the other in Bournemouth. A recipe for confusion and inequality.

The consultation showed less than 1% of the population want Town Councils

Don’t be taken in by a misleading report. Recognize that there is minimal support for these Councils and don’t proceed with them.

Public Statement from Pat King

Digital payments offer convenience, but a fully cashless approach excludes and disadvantages many residents.

Older and younger people, those with disabilities, and individuals on low incomes often depend on cash for budgeting and daily spending. For many, it remains essential, not optional.

Councils have a duty to keep services accessible to all, not only the digitally connected. Cashless systems are fragile — network failures halt payments, and digital transactions risk privacy and data security. Visitors and tourists may also be unable to pay.

Under the Equality Act 2010, councils must ensure access and avoid indirect discrimination. Going cashless breaks that principle.

True inclusivity demands both cash and digital options — protecting fairness, accessibility, and public trust in council services, not eroding them.

Public Statement from Bill Hoodless

Since local government reorganisations are invariably costly, good justification is needed. The reported 78% level of objections is significant here.

Extra costs would arise from further buildings for further staff leading to reduced productivity of existing staff who would do less.

The new employees would have to learn on the job, involving liaison with the previously responsible officers and do various new administrative tasks.

There would be debates between BCP and town councils regarding responsibilities - a costly misuse of time.

More bureaucracy, higher taxes.

Typical households' tax increase estimate is £400, yet without proof of better services.

I support the petition (signed by more than 2,000) calling for any decision on this whole matter to be postponed until after the May 2027 local elections in order to allow effective democratic consideration before voting. The petition's understandable concerns include higher taxes, bureaucracy and division within communities.

Public Statement from Roy Pointer

The proposal to set up new town councils as an extra tier of local government within BCP area should be rejected for many obvious reasons including the following:

1. More widespread publicity should have been given prior to consultation.
2. Consultation responses were overwhelmingly against proposals.
3. This radical change should be subject to a local referendum.
4. 'Back to the future' - 60s style administration; this was swept away in 1974.
5. Extra layer of government confuses communication and responsibilities.
6. Set up costs, new members, staff transfer, new staff needed, premises, transport, IT configuration and utility costs.
7. Increased ongoing uncapped costs to taxpayers.
8. Better to liaise with LGA and Government to justify extra resources for these responsibilities within current arrangements.
9. BCP already has poor record on capturing benefits from its own reorganisation.

10. Review the proposals after next local elections to test stakeholder appetite then.

Public Statement from Peter Schroader on behalf of Branksome Park and Canford Cliffs Residents Association

- This proposal should be rejected for many reasons, including;
- The proposed extra tier of local government within BCP will do nothing to solve the problems we face of

  # Lack of a clear vision for BCP especially concerning Tourism, the key to future prosperity

  # The ongoing neglect of our environment; the Chines, footpaths, the esplanade etc

  # Inconsistences in planning decisions and inadequate monitoring of their implementation

- The consultation was badly handled including the exclusion of any discussion of cost
- BCP should concentrate on making its own creation work
- Before implementing such a radical and backward development a proper referendum is needed

Public Statement from Elizabeth Glass

As I have been unable to find the council's reasons for wanting to introduce town councils,

I surmise that –

a. Council feels unable to manage all local services required. Certainly, the area desperately needs revitalising. Introducing town councils would essentially be reverting to pre 2019 when BCP was formed, an option which should be considered.
b. Council needs more finance to deliver these services. Further finance could be available for local services if less money was spent on pursuing net zero globalist policies.

Public Statement from Mark White

The administration has made statements over the last few months. you believe in localism, just so long as its on your own terms.

You believe in restoring trust in local government but then undermine it with constant flawed consultations going against the 80% that say no.

You believe in listening to local voices, just as long as they say what you want to hear.

You believe in democracy but won't allow a referendum as No offends you.

This is not localism, its another word.

Council, there are those in the administration who have told me privately they have deep doubts about this, scared to voice concerns and are whipped to toe the line. But vote with your heart and not by the party whip. Listen to your MPs, examine the consultation results, but most importantly its time to listen and vote how your residents have indicated, vote down town councils.

43. Petition: 'Stop Parish & Town Councils Until 2027 - Let Residents Decide'

Consideration was given to a petition calling on BCP Council to postpone any decision to introduce parish and town councils until after the May 2027 local elections.

The petition organiser, Mrs Joanne Keeling provided Council with background relating to the submitted petition following which Mrs Keeling responded to a number of questions from Councillors.

The Chairman thanked the petition organiser for the submitted petition and advised Council that as the petition related directly to Agenda Item 10, Cabinet 1 October 2025 – Minute No. 47 – Community Governance Review – Final Recommendations the agenda order was being altered to now deal with Agenda Item 10.

Council debated whether the petition should be considered as a stand alone item or whether debate on such should be included within Agenda Item 10. The Chair called on members to vote on whether the item should be considered as part of Agenda Item 10 and upon being put to the vote this was carried and the meeting therefore moved onto Agenda Item 10.

44. Cabinet 1 October 2025 - Minute No. 47 - Community Governance Review - Final Recommendations

The Leader of the Council presented the report on the Community Governance Review – Final Recommendations and outlined the recommendations as set out on the agenda.

In introducing the report, the Leader advised of an alteration to deal with the issues as set out in paragraph 86 of the report and as discussed by the Working Group that an additional recommendation be included at (d) to read: -

(d) ***the Chief Executive be delegated authority to make amendments to the boundary between Bournemouth and Poole to avoid the co-existence of the Charter Trustees and a Town Council for the respective area.***

The Leader advised that this addition was to avoid duplication as the boundaries of the historic borough and the Charter Trustees were not coterminous.

Council consented to the amendment which therefore became part of the substantive motion.

Council comprehensively debated the item with members speaking both for and against the introduction of Town Councils with members making reference to the petition submitted to the meeting.

Councillor John Challinor proposed an amendment to recommendation (j) seeking to delay the introduction of town and parish councils and the election of councillors onto those until 2027 as follows: -

(j) ***a Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole Council (Reorganisation of Community Governance) Order be prepared in accordance with the***

above recommendations and that the Order be effective from 1st April ~~2026~~ 2027 save for those recommendations relating to parish electoral arrangements which shall come into force on the ordinary day of election of councillors in ~~2026~~ 2027.

This amendment was seconded by Councillor Lawrence Williams.
The monitoring officer advised council that the proposed amendment was not in accordance with the constitutional provisions set out in Part 4, Paragraph 14.9 for the submission of an amendment, and that the amendment as submitted had the effect of seeking a vote against the motion and therefore negated the motion itself and was subsequently deemed to be inadmissible as an amendment.

Council continued to debate the substantive motion.

Councillor Simon McCormack proposed that the question now be put in accordance with Procedural Rule 14.16 of the Councils Constitution, this proposal fell and following a short adjournment for a comfort break the debate on the item continued.

Meeting adjourned at 9.24pm
Meeting reconvened at 9.44pm

Following a lengthy further debate Councillor Margaret Phipps proposed that the question now be put in accordance with Procedural Rule 14.16. 2 of the Council's Constitution, this proposal was seconded and upon being put to the vote was carried with voting: For: 40, Against:26, Abstentions:1

Councillor Oliver Walters, Chair of the Community Governance Task and Finish Group addressed the Council as the seconder of the proposer and provided background to the work of the Task and Finish Group and of the benefits the proposed Town and Parish Councils could provide.

Following summing up by the Leader of the Council, the recommendations contained within the report were put to the vote.

Councillor Cameron Adams requested a recorded vote in respect of this item and upon receiving the required support for a recorded vote the substantive motion was put to the vote and carried as set out below.

Councillor Patrick Canavan proposed an amendment seeking to amend paragraph J in section 117, paragraph J in section 116 and paragraph J in section 118 removing the year 2026 and replacing with 2027, this was seconded by Councillor Sharon Carr-Brown and following debate the amendment was put to the vote and fell with voting:

For:32, Against: 28 Abstentions:

Following which the original motion was put to the vote:

RESOLVED that the: -

(a) Task and Finish Group community governance review final recommendations, as set out in paragraphs 49, 62, 74, 92, 104, 117, 128, 140, 152, 166 and 181 of this report be approved as follows;

(i) existing parishes of Burton and Winkton (paragraph 49), Hurn (paragraph 62), Highcliff and Walkford (paragraph 74), Christchurch Town (paragraph 92), Throop and Holdenhurst (paragraph 104) should not be abolished;

Voting:

For: 56

Cllr Hazel Allen	Cllr Andy Hadley	Cllr Marion Le Poidevin
Cllr Marcus Andrews	Cllr Jeff Hanna	Cllr Karen Rampton
Cllr Sara Armstrong	Cllr Emily Harman	Cllr Felicity Rice
Cllr Stephen Bartlett	Cllr Richard Herrett	Cllr Judy Richardson
Cllr David Brown	Cllr Paul Hilliard	Cllr Chris Rigby
Cllr Olivia Brown	Cllr Brian Hitchcock	Cllr Kate Salmon
Cllr Simon McCormack	Cllr Alasdair Keddie	Cllr Peter Sidaway
Cllr Richard Burton	Cllr Dawn Logan	Cllr Paul Slade
Cllr Judes Butt	Cllr Sandra Mackrow	Cllr Toby Slade
Cllr John Challinor	Cllr Andy Martin	Cllr Vikki Slade
Cllr Brian Chick	Cllr David Martin	Cllr Michael Tarling
Cllr Mike Cox	Cllr Gillian Martin	Cllr Tony Trent
Cllr Lesley Dedman	Cllr Chris Matthews	Cllr Oliver Walters
Cllr David d'Orton-Gibson	Cllr Simon McCormack	Cllr Clare Weight
Cllr Bobbie Dove	Cllr Pete Miles	Cllr Lawrence Williams
Cllr Millie Earl	Cllr Sandra Moore	Cllr Kieron Wilson
Cllr David Flagg	Cllr Bernadette Nanovo	Cllr Gavin Wright
Cllr Matthew Gillet	Cllr Lisa Northover	
Cllr Crispin Goodall	Cllr Margaret Phipps	

Against: 1

Cllr Patrick Canavan

Abstentions: 9

Cllr Cameron Adams	Cllr George Farquhar	Cllr Jamie Martin
Cllr Sharon Carr-Brown	Cllr Duane Farr	Cllr Anne-Marie Moriarty
Cllr Jackie Edwards	Cllr Mark Howell	Cllr Vanessa Ricketts

Voting: For:56, Against:1, Abstentions:9

(ii) that the proposed new parishes not to be established for Redhill and Northbourne (paragraph 128), Boscombe and Pokesdown (paragraph 140) and Southbourne (paragraph 152);

Voting:

For: 55

Cllr Cameron Adams	Cllr Matthew Gillett	Cllr Margaret Phipps
Cllr Hazel Allen	Cllr Crispin Goodall	Cllr Marion Le Poidevin
Cllr Marcus Andrews	Cllr Andy Hadley	Cllr Karen Rampton
Cllr Sara Armstrong	Cllr Jeff Hanna	Cllr Felicity Rice
Cllr Stephen Bartlett	Cllr Emily Harman	Cllr Vanessa Ricketts
Cllr David Brown	Cllr Richard Herrett	Cllr Chris Rigby
Cllr Olivia Brown	Cllr Paul Hilliard	Cllr Kate Salmon
Cllr Simon McCormack	Cllr Brian Hitchcock	Cllr Peter Sidaway
Cllr Richard Burton	Cllr Dawn Logan	Cllr Paul Slade

Cllr Judes Butt	Cllr Sandra Mackrow	Cllr Toby Slade
Cllr John Challinor	Cllr Andy Martin	Cllr Vikki Slade
Cllr Mike Cox	Cllr David Martin	Cllr Michael Tarling
Cllr David d'Orton-Gibson	Cllr Gillian Martin	Cllr Oliver Walters
Cllr Bobbie Dove	Cllr Chris Matthews	Cllr Clare Weight
Cllr Michelle Dower	Cllr Simon McCormack	Cllr Lawrence Williams
Cllr Millie Earl	Cllr Pete Miles	Cllr Kieron Wilson
Cllr Jackie Edwards	Cllr Sandra Moore	Cllr Gavin Wright
Cllr Duane Farr	Cllr Bernadette Nanovo	
Cllr David Flagg	Cllr Lisa Northover	

Against: 2

Cllr Brian Chick	Cllr Judy Richardson

Abstentions: 8

Cllr Patrick Canavan	Cllr George Farquhar	Cllr Anne-Marie Moriarty
Cllr Sharon Carr-Brown	Cllr Mark Howell	Cllr Tony Trent
Cllr Eleanor Connolly	Cllr Jamie Martin	

Voting: For:55, Against:2, Abstentions:8

(iii) that a proposed new parish be established for Broadstone (paragraph 117);

Voting:

For: 36

Cllr Marcus Andrews	Cllr Jeff Hanna	Cllr Bernadette Nanovo
Cllr David Brown	Cllr Emily Harman	Cllr Margaret Phipps
Cllr Olivia Brown	Cllr Richard Herrett	Cllr Marion Le Poidevin
Cllr Richard Burton	Cllr Paul Hilliard	Cllr Felicity Rice
Cllr Brian Chick	Cllr Mark Howell	Cllr Judy Richardson
Cllr Mike Cox	Cllr Dawn Logan	Cllr Vanessa Ricketts
Cllr Lesley Dedman	Cllr Sandra Mackrow	Cllr Paul Slade
Cllr Millie Earl	Cllr Andy Martin	Cllr Vikki Slade
Cllr David Flagg	Cllr David Martin	Cllr Michael Tarling
Cllr Matthew Gillett	Cllr Chris Matthews	Cllr Tony Trent
Cllr Crispin Goodall	Cllr Simon McCormack	Cllr Oliver Walters
Cllr Andy Hadley	Cllr Sandra Moore	Cllr Claire Weight

Against: 24

Cllr Cameron Adams	Cllr Bobbie Dove	Cllr Karen Rampton
Cllr Hazel Allen	Cllr Michelle Dower	Cllr Chris Rigby
Cllr Sara Armstrong	Cllr Jackie Edwards	Cllr Kate Salmon
Cllr Stephen Bartlett	Cllr Duane Farr	Cllr Peter Sidaway
Cllr Simon Bull	Cllr Brian Hitchcock	Cllr Toby Slade
Cllr Judes Butt	Cllr Alasdair Keddie	Cllr Lawrence Williams
Cllr John Challinor	Cllr Gillian Martin	Cllr Kieron Wilson
Cllr David d'Orton-Gibson	Cllr Pete Miles	Cllr Gavin Wright

Abstentions: 7

Cllr Patrick Canavan	Cllr George Farquhar	Cllr Lisa Northover
Cllr Sharon Carr-Brown	Cllr Jamie Martin	

Cllr Eleanor Connolly	Cllr Anne-Marie Moriarty	

Voting: For:36, Against:24, Abstentions:7

(iv) that a proposed new parish be established for Poole (paragraph 166);

Voting:

For: 36

Cllr Marcus Andrews	Cllr Jeff Hanna	Cllr Bernadette Nanovo
Cllr David Brown	Cllr Emily Harman	Cllr Margaret Phipps
Cllr Olivia Brown	Cllr Richard Herrett	Cllr Marion Le Poidevin
Cllr Richard Burton	Cllr Paul Hilliard	Cllr Felicity Rice
Cllr Brian Chick	Cllr Mark Howell	Cllr Judy Richardson
Cllr Mike Cox	Cllr Dawn Logan	Cllr Vanessa Ricketts
Cllr Lesley Dedman	Cllr Sandra Mackrow	Cllr Paul Slade
Cllr Millie Earl	Cllr Andy Martin	Cllr Vikki Slade
Cllr David Flagg	Cllr David Martin	Cllr Michael Tarling
Cllr Matthew Gillett	Cllr Chris Matthews	Cllr Tony Trent
Cllr Crispin Goodall	Cllr Simon McCormack	Cllr Oliver Walters
Cllr Andy Hadley	Cllr Sandra Moore	Cllr Claire Weight

Against: 24

Cllr Cameron Adams	Cllr Bobbie Dove	Cllr Lisa Northover
Cllr Hazel Allen	Cllr Michelle Dower	Cllr Karen Rampton
Cllr Sara Armstrong	Cllr Jackie Edwards	Cllr Chris Rigby
Cllr Stephen Bartlett	Cllr Duane Farr	Cllr Kate Salmon
Cllr Simon Bull	Cllr Brian Hitchcock	Cllr Toby Slade
Cllr Judes Butt	Cllr Alasdair Keddie	Cllr Lawrence Williams
Cllr John Challinor	Cllr Gillian Martin	Cllr Kieron Wilson
Cllr David d'Orton-Gibson	Cllr Pete Miles	Cllr Gavin Wright

Abstentions: 7

Cllr Patrick Canavan	Cllr George Farquhar	Cllr Peter Sidaway
Cllr Sharon Carr-Brown	Cllr Jamie Martin	
Cllr Eleanor Connolly	Cllr Anne-Marie Moriarty	

Voting: For:36, Against:24, Abstentions:7

(v) that a proposed new parish be established for Bournemouth (paragraph 181)

Voting:

For: 34

Cllr Marcus Andrews	Cllr Jeff Hanna	Cllr Marion Le Poidevin
Cllr David Brown	Cllr Emily Harman	Cllr Felicity Rice
Cllr Olivia Brown	Cllr Richard Herrett	Cllr Judy Richardson
Cllr Richard Burton	Cllr Paul Hilliard	Cllr Vanessa Ricketts
Cllr Brian Chick	Cllr Dawn Logan	Cllr Paul Slade
Cllr Mike Cox	Cllr Sandra Mackrow	Cllr Vikki Slade
Cllr Lesley Dedman	Cllr Andy Martin	Cllr Michael Tarling
Cllr Millie Earl	Cllr David Martin	Cllr Tony Trent
Cllr David Flagg	Cllr Chris Matthews	Cllr Oliver Walters

Cllr Matthew Gillett	Cllr Sandra Moore	Cllr Clare Weight
Cllr Crispin Goodall	Cllr Bernadette Nanovo	
Cllr Andy Hadley	Cllr Margaret Phipps	

Against: 31

Cllr Cameron Adams	Cllr Bobbie Dove	Cllr Anne-Marie Moriarty
Cllr Hazel Allen	Cllr Michelle Dower	Cllr Lisa Northover
Cllr Sara Armstrong	Cllr Jackie Edwards	Cllr Karen Rampton
Cllr Stephen Bartlett	Cllr George Farquhar	Cllr Chris Rigby
Cllr Simon Bull	Cllr Duane Farr	Cllr Kate Salmon
Cllr Judes Butt	Cllr Brian Hitchcock	Cllr Toby Slade
Cllr Patrick Canavan	Cllr Alasdair Keddie	Cllr Lawrence Williams
Cllr Sharon Carr-Brown	Cllr Gillian Martin	Cllr Kieron Wilson
Cllr John Challinor	Cllr Jamie Martin	Cllr Gavin Wright
Cllr Eleanor Connolly	Cllr Simon McCormack	
Cllr David d'Orton-Gibson	Cllr Pete Miles	

Abstentions: 2

Cllr Mark Howell	Cllr Peter Sidaway

Voting: For:34, Against:31, Abstentions:31

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

Voting:

For: 40

Cllr Marcus Andrews	Cllr Emily Harman	Cllr Marion Le Poidevin
Cllr David Brown	Cllr Richard Herrett	Cllr Felicity Rice
Cllr Olivia Brown	Cllr Paul Hilliard	Cllr Judy Richardson
Cllr Simon Bull	Cllr Mark Howell	Cllr Vanessa Ricketts
Cllr Richard Burton	Cllr Dawn Logan	Cllr Peter Sidaway
Cllr Brian Chick	Cllr Sandra Mackrow	Cllr Paul Slade
Cllr Mike Cox	Cllr Andy Martin	Cllr Vikki Slade
Cllr Lesley Dedman	Cllr David Martin	Cllr Michael Tarling
Cllr Millie Earl	Cllr Chris Matthews	Cllr Tony Trent
Cllr David Flagg	Cllr Simon McCormack	Cllr Oliver Walters
Cllr Matthew Gillett	Cllr Sandra Moore	Cllr Clare Weight
Cllr Crispin Goodall	Cllr Bernadette Nanovo	Cllr Kieron Wilson
Cllr Andy Hadley	Cllr Lisa Northover	
Cllr Jeff Hanna	Cllr Margaret Phipps	

Against: 22

Cllr Cameron Adams	Cllr David d'Orton-Gibson	Cllr Pete Miles
Cllr Hazel Allen	Cllr Bobbie Dove	Cllr Anne-Marie Moriarty
Cllr Sara Armstrong	Cllr Michelle Dower	Cllr Karen Rampton
Cllr Judes Butt	Cllr George Farquhar	Cllr Toby Slade
Cllr Patrick Canavan	Cllr Duane Farr	Cllr Lawrence Williams
Cllr Sharon Carr-Brown	Cllr Brian Hitchcock	Cllr Gavin Wright
Cllr John Challinor	Cllr Gillian Martin	
Cllr Eleanor Connolly	Cllr Jamie Martin	

Abstentions: 5

Cllr Stephen Bartlett	Cllr Alasdair Keddie	Cllr Kate Salmon
Cllr Jackie Edwards	Cllr Chris Rigby	

Voting: For:40, Against:22, Abstentions:5

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

Voting:

For: 37

Cllr Marcus Andrews	Cllr Emily Harman	Cllr Margaret Phipps
Cllr David Brown	Cllr Richard Herrett	Cllr Marion Le Poidevin
Cllr Olivia Brown	Cllr Paul Hilliard	Cllr Felicity Rice
Cllr Richard Burton	Cllr Mark Howell	Cllr Judy Richardson
Cllr Brian Chick	Cllr Dawn Logan	Cllr Vanessa Ricketts
Cllr Mike Cox	Cllr Sandra Mackrow	Cllr Peter Sidaway
Cllr Lesley Dedman	Cllr Andy Martin	Cllr Paul Slade
Cllr Millie Earl	Cllr David Martin	Cllr Vikki Slade
Cllr David Flagg	Cllr Chris Matthews	Cllr Tony Trent
Cllr Matthew Gillett	Cllr Simon McCormack	Cllr Oliver Walters
Cllr Crispin Goodall	Cllr Sandra Moore	Cllr Clare Weight
Cllr Andy Hadley	Cllr Bernadette Nanovo	
Cllr Jeff Hanna	Cllr Lisa Northover	

Against: 25

Cllr Cameron Adams	Cllr David d'Orton-Gibson	Cllr Pete Miles
Cllr Hazel Allen	Cllr Bobbie Dove	Cllr Anne-Marie Moriarty
Cllr Sara Armstrong	Cllr Michelle Dower	Cllr Karen Rampton
Cllr Stephen Bartlett	Cllr Jackie Edwards	Cllr Toby Slade
Cllr Judes Butt	Cllr George Farquhar	Cllr Lawrence Williams
Cllr Patrick Canavan	Cllr Duane Farr	Cllr Kieron Wilson
Cllr Sharon Carr-Brown	Cllr Brian Hitchcock	Cllr Gavin Wright
Cllr John Challinor	Cllr Gillian Martin	
Cllr Eleanor Connolly	Cllr Jamie Martin	

Abstentions: 5

Cllr Simon Bull	Cllr Chris Rigby	Cllr Michael Tarling
Cllr Alasdair Keddie	Cllr Kate Salmon	

Voting: For:37, Against:25, Abstentions:5

The Leader advised that as all proposed areas had been carried that the alteration and proposed addition of recommendation (d) was therefore withdrawn as no areas remained un-parished.

Councillor Mark Howell proposed the adjournment of the Council meeting, however in relation to this Council was advised that there were items on the agenda which needed to be dealt prior to any adjournment, with this in mind

council adjourned for a short comfort break before proceeding with the agenda.

Meeting adjourned at 11.07 pm
Meeting reconvened at 11.24pm

Councillors Cameron Adams, Stephen Bartlett, Judy Butt, John Challinor, Micheal Dower, Jacqui Edwards, Duanne Farr and Kieron Wilson left the meeting at 11.07pm

45. Audit and Governance Committee 24 July 2025 - Minute No. 23 - Increased Borrowing - Poole Museum

The Chair of the Audit and Governance Committee presented the report on the Increased Borrowing – Poole Museum and outlined the recommendations as set out on the agenda.

RESOLVED that Council approved the revised funding strategy for the Poole Museums capital schemes which will mean an increase in the approved prudential borrowing of £1.3m.

Voting: Unanimous

46. Audit and Governance Committee 24 July 2025 - Minute No. 31 - Audit and Governance Committee Annual Report 2024/25

The Chair of the Audit and Governance Committee presented the report on the Audit and Governance Committee Annual Report 2024/25 and outlined the recommendations as set out on the agenda.

RESOLVED that Council approved the Annual Report 2024/25.

Voting: Unanimous

47. Licensing Committee 18 September 2025 - Minute No. 14 - Review of Statement of Licensing Policy

The Chair of the Licensing Committee presented the report on the Review of Statement of Licensing Policy and outlined the recommendations as set out on the agenda.

RESOLVED that Council approved and adopted the Statement of Licensing Policy.

Voting: Unanimous

48. Cabinet 1 October 2025 - Minute No. 51 - AFC Bournemouth stadium expansion. Land Requirements and Disposal

The Portfolio Holder for Finance presented the report on the AFC Bournemouth stadium expansion, land requirements and disposal and outlined the recommendations as set out on the agenda.

RESOLVED that Council: -

(a) Noted the confidential minutes and the recommendations of the Cross-Party Asset Disposal Working Group meeting held on the 13 July 2025;

(b) Approved the negotiation and agreement in principle of Heads of Terms for the leasehold disposal of the two parcels of land at Kings Park to AFC Bournemouth shown in Option C; and

(c) Required officers to return to Cabinet and Council with the proposed Heads of Terms for decision as soon as possible.

Voting: For:44, Against:2, Abstentions:2

49. Review of the political balance of the Council, the allocation of seats on Committees to each political group and the appointment of Councillors to Committees and Outside Bodies

The Leader of the Council, Councillor Millie Earl 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.

Council was asked to consider and approve the review of the political balance of the Council, the allocation of seats on Committees to each political group, the appointment of Councillors on Committees and appointments to outside bodies following the result of the by-election in the Talbot and Branksome Woods Ward on 11 September 2025 and other political group changes.

RESOLVED that: -

(a) the revised political balance of the Council, as set out in Table 1 to this report be noted;

(b) the allocation of seats to each political group, as set out in Table 2 to this report, be approved;

(c) the appointment of Councillors to Committees and Boards, taking into account the wishes of each political group, as detailed in Table 3 to this report, be approved;

(d) the allocation of seats to each political group to the outside bodies, as detailed in Table 4 to this report, be approved; and

(e) the appointment of Councillors to the outside bodies, taking into account the wishes of each political group, as detailed in Table 5 to this report, be approved.

Voting: For:44, Against:3, Abstentions:1

Meeting adjourned at 11.44 pm

Meeting resumed on 3 November 2025

50. Notices of Motions in accordance with Procedure Rule 10

Council was advised that two motions had been received on this occasion.

Standing United Against Racism and Division

The following motion was submitted in accordance with Procedure Rule 10 of the Meeting Procedure Rules and was moved by Councillor Peter Cooper and seconded by Councillor Patrick Canavan.

Council notes:

- Recent far-right marches in Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole that seek to spread hatred, fear, and division.
- An increase in racist vandalism and graffiti which desecrate our communities and cost taxpayers thousands of pounds to remove.
- The rising tide of racist activity nationally, which is being exploited for political purposes to divide communities.

Council recognises:

- The invaluable work of anti-racist organisations, community groups, and residents who stand in solidarity against racism and bigotry.
- The efforts of Dorset Police in managing demonstrations and addressing hate crimes in a challenging climate.
- That racism, in any form, undermines cohesion, community safety, and the reputation of BCP as a welcoming, inclusive place.

Council believes:

- That racist rhetoric, graffiti, and intimidation have no place in our communities.
- That public resources should be directed towards supporting communities and improving services, not wasted on cleaning up hate-fuelled vandalism.
- That BCP Council must show leadership in building unity, trust, and mutual respect across all communities.

Council therefore resolves to:

1. **Publicly denounce far-right marches and racist graffiti in BCP, affirming that hate has no home here.**
2. **Develop and bring forward anti-racist policies, in partnership with schools, community groups, and faith organisations, to promote inclusion and challenge prejudice.**
3. **Strengthen joint working with Dorset Police, community safety teams, and voluntary organisations to tackle racist activity and support victims.**
4. **Recognise and thank the work of anti-racist groups and campaigners who stand against division and for equality.**

5. Request that the Leader of the Council writes to the Home Secretary and the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, calling for stronger national support and resources to tackle the rise in far-right activity and hate crime.

Councillor Stephen Bartlett proposed an amendment to the motion which was seconded by Councillor Karen Rampton to replace the word 'far-right' with the word 'extremist' so that the resolutions would read as follows: -

Council therefore resolves to:

1. Publicly denounce ~~far-right~~ extremist marches and racist graffiti in BCP, affirming that hate has no home here.

2. Develop and bring forward anti-racist policies, in partnership with schools, community groups, and faith organisations, to promote inclusion and challenge prejudice.

3. Strengthen joint working with Dorset Police, community safety teams, and voluntary organisations to tackle racist activity and support victims.

4. Recognise and thank the work of anti-racist groups and campaigners who stand against division and for equality.

5. Request that the Leader of the Council writes to the Home Secretary and the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, calling for stronger national support and resources to tackle the rise in ~~far-right~~ extremist activity and hate crime.

The proposer and seconder of the original motion advised that they would not accept the amendment which was therefore then debated.

Comprehensive discussion took place on the amendment during which Councillor Gavin Wright advised that he was going to propose the same amendment.

Upon being put to the vote the proposed amendment fell with voting:

For:13, Against:33, Abstentions:2

Councillor Kate Salmon proposed an amendment to the motion which was seconded by Councillor Simon Bull with the deletions and insertions as set out below: -

Council notes:

- *Recent far-right marches in Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole that seek to spread hatred, fear, and division.*
- *An increase in racist vandalism and graffiti which desecrate our communities and cost taxpayers thousands of pounds to remove.*
- *The rising tide of racist activity nationally, which is being exploited for political purposes to divide communities.*

Council recognises:

- *The invaluable work of anti-racist organisations, community groups, and residents who stand in solidarity against racism and bigotry.*

- *The efforts of Dorset Police in managing demonstrations and addressing hate crimes in a challenging climate.*
- *That racism, in any form, undermines cohesion, community safety, and the reputation of BCP as a welcoming, inclusive place.*

Council believes:

- *That racist rhetoric, graffiti, and intimidation have no place in our communities.*
- ~~*That public resources should be directed towards supporting communities and improving services, not wasted on cleaning up hate-fuelled vandalism.*~~ *That residents of BCP are losing out as a consequence of these incidents of hate-fuelled vandalism, which must be cleaned up at their expense using scarce public resources which would otherwise be spent on supporting communities and improving services*
- *That BCP Council must show leadership in building unity, trust, and mutual respect across all communities.*

Council therefore resolves to:

1. *Publicly denounce far-right marches and racist graffiti in BCP, affirming that hate has no home here.*
2. *Recognise and thank the work of anti-racist groups and campaigners who stand against division and for equality. (Moved from point 4 to point 2)*
3. *Establish a BCP Anti-Racism Partnership Task Group, comprising representatives from schools, community groups, faith organisations, Dorset Police, and anti-racism campaigners, to oversee the development and implementation of anti-racist policies and initiatives and seek external funding to deliver a Hate Crime Action Plan.*
4. *Support the creation of a publicly accessible Hate Crime Action Plan which outlines specific steps the Council and its partners will take to prevent and respond to racist incidents and support victims, with annual progress reports to Full Council.*

~~2. *Develop and bring forward anti-racist policies, in partnership with schools, community groups, and faith organisations, to promote inclusion and challenge prejudice.*~~

~~3. *Strengthen joint working with Dorset Police, community safety teams, and voluntary organisations to tackle racist activity and support victims.*~~

5. *Request that the Leader of the Council writes to the Home Secretary and the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, seeking a meeting with relevant ministers to discuss* ~~*calling for stronger*~~ *increased national support and resources to* ~~*tackle*~~ *address hate crime and far-right activity* ~~*the rise in far-right activity and hate crime*~~*.*

The proposer and seconder of the original motion advised that they were content with the amendments, however upon Council consent being sought

to confirm the amendments as the substantive a member indicated that they would not consent, the main body of the Council consented to the amendment which therefore became the substantive motion.

Meeting adjourned at 8.02pm due to a disturbance in the gallery

Meeting reconvened at 8.18pm

The substantive motion was debated as amended and it was resolved as follows: -

Council therefore resolves to:

1. **Publicly denounce far-right marches and racist graffiti in BCP, affirming that hate has no home here.**
2. **Recognise and thank the work of anti-racist groups and campaigners who stand against division and for equality.**
3. **Establish a BCP Anti-Racism Partnership Task Group, comprising representatives from schools, community groups, faith organisations, Dorset Police, and anti-racism campaigners, to oversee the development and implementation of anti-racist policies and initiatives and seek external funding to deliver a Hate Crime Action Plan.**
4. **Support the creation of a publicly accessible Hate Crime Action Plan which outlines specific steps the Council and its partners will take to prevent and respond to racist incidents and support victims, with annual progress reports to Full Council.**
5. **Request that the Leader of the Council writes to the Home Secretary and the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, seeking a meeting with relevant ministers to discuss increased national support and resources to address hate crime and far-right activity.**

Voting: For:34, Against:10, Abstentions:4

Councillor Margaret Phipps left the meeting at 8.25pm

Opposing Labour's Digital ID Scheme

The following motion was submitted in accordance with Procedure Rule 10 of the Meeting Procedure Rules and was moved by Councillor Millie Earl and seconded by Councillor Richard Herrett.

Council notes the recent announcement by Keir Starmer's Labour Government of plans to introduce a mandatory Digital ID scheme for all UK residents.

Council further notes that the Government's plan:

- Could require every resident to obtain a Digital ID to access public services and entitlements;
- Could risk criminalising millions of people, particularly older people, those on lower incomes, or those without access to digital technology;

- Raises significant privacy and civil liberties concerns;
- Could result in an estimated £4.6 billion of pounds of taxpayers' money being wasted on a massive IT project, with no clear benefit or safeguards.

Council believes that Labour's scheme:

- Represents an expensive measure that will undermine public trust;
- Will do nothing to address the real priorities facing communities such as the lack of economic growth that our country is facing, the cost-of-living crisis that residents in Bournemouth, Christchurch & Poole are experiencing, or the problems within public services that have been refused the investment that they need to deliver;
- Fails to protect our core British values of liberty, privacy and fairness.

Council welcomes the Liberal Democrats' consistent national opposition to Labour's ID cards, having previously defeated Labour's original plans for ID cards in 2010, and opposes Labour's renewed attempt to impose them in digital form.

Council resolves:

- To formally oppose the Labour Government's Digital ID plans;
- To request the Leader of the Council writes to:
    - The Secretary of State for the Home Department and the Minister for Digital Infrastructure expressing this council's firm opposition to Labour's mandatory Digital ID system and calling for the plans to be scrapped.
    - Members of Parliament across Bournemouth, Christchurch & Poole asking for their firm commitment to oppose Labour's mandatory Digital ID system and ask them to confirm that they will instead advocate for the estimated £4.6b cost to be rediverted in to settling SEND deficits nationally.
- To work with local voluntary, digital inclusion and civil liberties groups to ensure that no resident in Bournemouth, Christchurch or Poole is penalised or excluded as a result of any national identification scheme.

A number of members spoke on the motion and expressed concern that the motion had been submitted too early as the detail of the scheme hadn't been announced. In relation to this a member requested that the motion be withdrawn and brought back once the consultation had started.

Councillor Felicity Rice proposed an amendment to the motion to remove the reference to the Liberal Democrats in the final paragraph under *'Council believes that Labour's scheme:'*

In reference to this Councillor Rice was advised that the paragraph would not be included in the resolutions from Council, and that only the resolutions under 'Council resolves' would form the decisions arising from Council.

Council resolves: -

- **To formally oppose the Labour Government's Digital ID plans;**
- **To request the Leader of the Council writes to:**
    - **The Secretary of State for the Home Department and the Minister for Digital Infrastructure expressing this council's firm opposition to Labour's mandatory Digital ID system and calling for the plans to be scrapped.**
    - **Members of Parliament across Bournemouth, Christchurch & Poole asking for their firm commitment to oppose Labour's mandatory Digital ID system and ask them to confirm that they will instead advocate for the estimated £4.6b cost to be rediverted in to settling SEND deficits nationally.**
- **To work with local voluntary, digital inclusion and civil liberties groups to ensure that no resident in Bournemouth, Christchurch or Poole is penalised or excluded as a result of any national identification scheme**.

Voting: For:23, Against:15, Abstentions:8

Councillor Bobbie Dove left the meeting at 8.58pm prior to the vote on this item.

Councillors Emily Harman and David Martin left the meeting at 9.04pm

51. Questions from Councillors

Question from Councillor Anne-Marie Moriarty

Could councillors be granted access to the provisional schedule of works for regular cleansing and maintenance carried out by the environmental services team?

Having access to this information would significantly enhance our ability to fulfil our roles effectively. It would reduce the volume of correspondence between councillors and officers, streamline communication, and improve transparency for residents. When residents are informed about when and where work is scheduled, it helps manage expectations and addresses concerns about perceived inconsistencies in service delivery.

While I understand that such schedules are subject to change, having a working version available would still be invaluable. This request aligns with the principles of the Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985, which supports councillors' rights to access information necessary for their duties, and with guidance from the Local Government Association on the importance of timely and relevant information for elected members.

Response from the Portfolio Holder for Climate Response, Environment and Energy, Councillor Andy Hadley

Thank you for your question Councillor Moriarty,

We have asked several times for this information to be made available. I have been advised that;

BCP Council's approach to not publishing schedules is aligned to neighbouring authorities across the region. In theory it provides residents with an in advance schedule from which to remove cars on a known date to aid cleansing, in practice from those that do so it often either a) results in very few residents moving their vehicles or b) residents move them and then are frustrated when a crew don't appear – this can be for many reasons including

- vehicle breakdowns - sadly frequent due to complexities of the kit
- staffing shortages - LGV drivers are regularly pulled off to support shortages on waste collection crews,
- heavy leaf-fall etc which means they are unable to complete as many roads as may have been advertised,
- wider emergency or emerging issues
    - e.g. for our area seasonal pressures with tourists which routinely pulls resources from residential areas due to resourcing limitations

The situation has unfortunately been changing for the worse because with more people working from home, residential streets have more cars parked on them blocking access to sweepers and gulley cleaners, but also, with our changing climate, the period of leaf-fall is now from September to March, whereas it used to be from November to January.

Within BCP all our roads and pavement are being rescheduled for mechanical street cleansing to ensure parity of service across BCP, with historical resource greater in Poole than Bournemouth and Christchurch. I am told that Pre-LGR, Bournemouth went from 6 large sweepers down to only two covering the whole town.

Resources are targeted at areas of greatest need and alignment with Environment Protection Act Code of Practice for Litter & Refuse whereby zoning is applied. This is part of the roll out of in-cab technology within Waste & Cleansing and Environment more generally.

Once the new schedules have been worked a number of times to be able to provide reliable trends, this data will be used to adapt the schedules to reflect which roads and footpaths on the network are able to manage longer periods between sweeps and to identify those locations requiring more frequent cleansing, in order to be able to maintain consistent standards.

It should be possible to make details on historic and intended cleansing frequencies accessible to Councillors and the public via online mapping once these revisions to schedules have been complete.

In the meantime, cleansing requests can be made online via the Report It function for a review by the correct service team.

Report fallen leaves, pine needles and fir cones | BCP

Supplementary question from Councillor Anne-Marie Moriarty

May I just check what the timeline for this new kind of roll out is going to be in terms of when we will be able to support our residents to have a better understanding of when the schedule will be, do we have a timeline at all?

Response from the Portfolio Holder for Climate Response, Environment and Energy, Councillor Andy Hadley

Thank you for your supplementary question, I am afraid we don't, we have started rolling out the in cab technology that started in October. The working up of an online and active map is I am aware of is underway for other areas. But I can go away and find out and get the information available to you.

Councillor Toby Slade left the meeting at 9.05pm

Question from Councillor Patrick Canavan

Given the rising cost of food, the waiting lists for allotments across BCP, and the clear benefits allotments bring for healthy eating, mental health, and community wellbeing would the administration commit to conducting a review of current allotment provision, and bring forward proposals to expand access by identifying under-utilised council land, prioritising areas of high demand, and supporting schools and community groups in accessing growing spaces?

Response from the Portfolio Holder for Climate Response, Environment and Energy, Councillor Andy Hadley

Councillor Canavan, thank you for your question, and thank you for taking the trouble to give me advance notice, which was helpful to consider my response.

Providing Allotments and community food growing opportunities is a topic that I have had a long interest in.

With formal allotments, the waiting lists are variable around the area, and that partly depends on whether applicants are seeking space at a specific allotment, some of our smaller sites have a long waiting list, you could be waiting between 1 year and up to 10 years. Many plots have been reduced in size to encourage and support participation, but managing an allotment plot requires a lot of ongoing physical work to maintain, its outdoor gymnastics. About 1/3 of applicants decline the offer when they get to the top of the list.

For some time the team have been working to support the larger allotment associations who self-manage their sites. This has the advantage of greater autonomy, of being able to provide advice and nurturing support to new plot holders, maintaining the shared spaces, cheaper rents, more frequent inspections, and to quickly resolve any issues arising between plot holders, or reallocate plots. There are already 3 self-managed sites in Bournemouth area, and we are working with a Poole site in the process of changing to being self-managed.

Allotments are the one service that must transfer to the lowest level of local government. Longbarrow, which is a self-managed site, transferred to

Throop and Holdenhurst Parish Council, and all the Christchurch sites transferred to the new Town or Parish Councils in 2019. Given the Community Governance Review, this would be the wrong time for BCP to be undertaking a review of allotment provision. Any new formal allotment sites need a lot of surveying and preparation, which can be a significant outlay and take time.

However, we are actively supporting informal growing opportunities through community and school gardens, ranging from sites like Tatnam Organic Patch, a community garden I helped found in 1999, Turners Nursery community Orchard, BH15 grow together and others.

Many schools now have growing spaces and/or orchards in their grounds. It does of course depend on having an enthusiastic teacher and/or volunteers to sustain, and often summer holidays reduce access, interest, and thus the crop.

The Parks Foundation are supporting food growing in some of our public parks, including for example raised beds in Alexandra Park and Redhill Park. Sustaining a group to use the grow-zone Raised Beds in Churchill Gardens has been a challenge.

Projects like the Secret Garden in Boscombe, which has shared skills with many growers, and the Cornerstone Patch in Hamworthy are in particular set up to support the benefits you highlight, and we are working with Grounded Community and the Parks Foundation on food growing proposals for the Kings Park nursery site.

And we are supporting the BCP Access to Food project, which aims to map and co-ordinate the efforts to help those in need of support to access Food from across the area, including growing opportunities.

Supplementary question from Councillor Patrick Canavan

Thank you Councillor Hadley for that very comprehensive reply, I was just wondering though in the context of the possibility of new town councils would it not be an opportune time to actually just take stock of what our provision is and whether or not the other opportunities that you've outlined could be in come way itemised so that we know what it is that we might be transferring?

Response from the Portfolio Holder for Climate Response, Environment and Energy, Councillor Andy Hadley

Thank you for your supplementary question, I think that as I highlighted the BCP Access to Food Project which is a project that we support does map all of those opportunities out across the range, creating a new formal allotment requires the ground to be of good agricultural quality and so there is a long process and effort involved to make it a formal allotment. But certainly mapping out and sharing what is out there is a project which is underway already.

Question from Councillor Chris Rigby

BCP Council have stated that attaching anything to public infrastructure, such as bridges and lamp posts, without permission is likely to be unlawful

and where it causes a safety risk it will be removed as a priority. This includes flags.

Could you explain why flags attached to lampposts on Alma Road in Winton (which recorded 12 accidents between 2020–2023, according to Crash Map data) are considered less of a safety risk than those on East Way (which recorded 2 accidents in the same period), given that flags on East Way were removed after 8 days (11/09–19/09) while those on Alma Road have remained since 08/09?

Response from the Portfolio Holder for Destination, Leisure and Commercial Operations

Thankyou to Cllr Rigby for the question, and Cllr Salmon for reading it.

The removal of flags is not based on historic KSI's, but on a multitude of factors; risk to street furniture, the impact it could have on that street furniture due to age and type of furniture, as well as welfare, wellbeing and volume of vulnerable people in proximity, as reports are received of flags officers will go and check situations, and perform a dynamic risk assessment as to whether removal is necessary, based on factors that include but are not limited to, shadows cast, impact on sightlines, where on street furniture flags are attached, what they appear to be attached with as well as location, Officers are operating within financial constraints too so have to prioritise on these factors and others that may be apparent on site.

I would encourage councillors concerned about flags to report, and if anything changes with those flags to re-report. If they slip, shift, or appear that they may be causing an issue they were not before officers will be pleased to assist within the constraints outlined.

Question from Councillor Jamie Martin

I was recently advised that there was at least £44,489.76 of CIL money that had been allocated to projects in my ward that had not been spent, and that the council was attempting to ascertain whether this money could be reallocated to the ward pot. As this money concerned projects where the council could no longer contact a project co-ordinator, it follows that unspent money is also available where a contact is known. This will no doubt be replicated across the conurbation. As such, can the portfolio holder confirm the following:

The total amount of unspent CIL money awarded during previous neighbourhood portion bidding rounds.

The mechanism whereby councillors can request these identified amounts be returned to ward pots.

The steps the council can take in monitoring the spend arising from allocations made in current and future bidding rounds, so that where appropriate the money can be returned to ward pots and benefit other projects in a timelier fashion.

Response from the Leader of the Council, Councillor Millie Earl

The work towards confirming the total amount of unspent CIL money awarded during previous neighbourhood portion bidding rounds is always ongoing and we will have clarity on this for this year as part of the annual

update of the Infrastructure Funding Statement due to be published in December that demonstrates what CIL we have secured from developers and if and how it has been spent.

We have been through a process of review and reallocation across the Poole and Bournemouth wards for this round of Neighbourhood CIL, it should be spent in a timely manor. As part of Round 6, the NCIL Panel placed an emphasis on DELIVERY of projects which is leading to more positive outcomes. Project leads for Council delivered projects were also identified. This means that it is more efficient to be able to follow up on delivery. We can also advise successful bidders in Round 7 that project delivery needs to be timely, or they risk losing the funding.

Supplementary question from Councillor Jamie Martin

So given the fact that obviously for the majority of the time I have been an elected councillor I have not known about this money which has sort of been held off the books I know essentially with town councils it will be handled differently and so there is no mechanism for councillors to say, whats going on here? And get their money back into the pot? We just need a way to obviously make sure the money isn't just out there for years.

Response from the Leader of the Council, Councillor Millie Earl

I have an example of this in my own ward where it was a huge amount, £50,000 that had just been sitting there for nearly 8 years, completely unspent and I think that is why this work is really important, and why it is working quite well as it is identifying all those pots which have been applied for in the past but haven't actually been spent in the community which allows us then to calculate them all up and they can be available for round 7. And like I said that process has been completed and I think that the town centre pot now is something like £80,000, its huge and so I would consider getting that spent.

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

Council was advised that no urgent decisions had been taken by the Chief Executive in accordance with the Constitution since the last meeting of the Council.

The meeting ended at 11.44 pm

CHAIRMAN

This page is intentionally left blank

LICENSING COMMITTEE

Report subject	**Review of the Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Driver, Vehicle and Operator Policies**
Meeting date	22 October 2025
Status	Public Report
Executive summary	This report presents the updated policy proposals concerning the Council's taxi and private hire licences and the findings of the public consultation that was carried out between 3 March 2025 and the 28 April 2025. The current policies were adopted in June 2021, following the establishment of BCP Council. These policies are divided into three distinct areas: driver, vehicle, and operator licensing. Since their implementation, there have been updates issued by the Department for Transport to statutory standards and best practice guidance as well as legislative changes.
Recommendations	**It is RECOMMENDED that:** **Members consider the revised draft policy proposals having regard to the consultation responses and feedback.** **Where necessary and appropriate amend the draft policies and recommend a final version for adoption by Full Council.**
Reason for recommendations	The current BCP Taxi and Private Hire Licensing Policies were adopted in June 2021. In accordance with the Department of Transport - Statutory taxi and private hire vehicle standards 3.1 states that Licensing Authorities should review their Licensing Policies every 5 years.

Portfolio Holder(s):	Councillor Kieron Wilson – Portfolio Holder for Housing and Regulatory Services
Corporate Director	Glynn Barton – Chief Operations Officer
Report Authors	Trudi Barlow – Licensing Officer Nananka Randle – Licensing and Trading Standards Officer
Wards	Council-wide
Classification	For Decision

Background

1. The proposed Taxi Licensing Policies outlines this Licensing Authority's approach to fulfilling its statutory responsibilities concerning the licensing of drivers, vehicles, and operators.
2. The policy has been reviewed and updated to reflect legislative changes, evolving best practices, and updated statutory guidance. Its primary objectives are to enhance public safety, safeguard vulnerable individuals, ensure accessibility of the vehicles, support environmental improvements, and contribute to the growth of the local economy.
3. These documents establish a clear framework of standards that will guide the Licensing Authority in the execution of its regulatory functions.
4. As a key component of the Local Authority's decision-making process, these policies serve to inform and support officers and elected members in making decisions that are fair, transparent, and consistent.

Draft Policy development

5. At the Licensing Committee meeting on 7th December 2023 the forward plan and membership of workshops to review the existing policy were agreed.
6. These workshops took place on the 23 January and 20 February 2024 and were attended by Councillors Farquar and Chapmanlaw, taxi trade representatives Mr Lane and Mrs Smith together with the Council Licensing Officers and a Legal Officer.
7. The existing policies were discussed particularly in relation to the Department of Transport Statutory taxi and private hire vehicle standards (updated November 2022) and taxi and private hire vehicle licensing best practice guidance for licensing authorities in England (updated November 2023) as well as legislative amendments.
8. The suggested amendments were incorporated, and the revised draft policies were subsequently circulated to all workshop representatives. A follow-up workshop was held on 2 July 2024, during which the final draft policy was proposed.

9. The draft policy report was presented to the Licensing Committee on 12 December 2024 for review and approval prior to the commencement of the public consultation. The Committee endorsed the report as presented. Additionally, it was agreed that the public consultation should include a question regarding the potential need for new hackney carriage vehicles to be wheelchair-accessible vehicles. The Committee also requested that the consultation document be circulated via email to Members for feedback before it is published.

10. Draft copies of the BPC Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Driver, Vehicle and Private Hire Operator Policies are attached at Appendix 1,2 and 3.

Public Consultation

11. The public consultation was open from 3 March to 28 April 2025. It was accessible online via the BCP website, and paper copies of the survey were available at local BCP libraries. Completed surveys could be submitted using the 'Have Your Say' boxes located in the libraries or returned by post to the Civic Centre Offices.

12. Links to the online consultation were also emailed to all BCP Taxi and Private Hire driver, vehicle and operator licence holders and key stakeholders.

13. There were two questionnaire surveys.

    - General Public Survey at Appendix 4
    - BCP Licence Holders Survey at Appendix 5

    Both questionnaires were split into the three policy areas.

    - Driver policy
    - Vehicle policy
    - Operator policy

Consultation and summary of survey feedback

14. The results from the Public Consultation are contained within the Research and Consultation Team Report date June 25 and attached at Appendix 6.

15. There were 33 responses received in total, 22 related to the General Public Survey and 11 from the BCP Licence Holders survey.

    Common concerns that arose from comments in regard to all three policies.

    Out of town vehicles

16. The consultation raised concerns about the number of non BCP Council licenced vehicles operating in the conurbation.

17. The Deregulation Act 2015 allows private hire operators to subcontract bookings to licensed operators in different licensing authorities whereas previously they could only subcontract bookings to licensed operators within the same licensing authority area.

18. This has expanded the scope of subcontracting beyond local boundaries and has led to the concerns expressed about the number of non-local licenced vehicles in the areas and reports from passengers that drivers do not have knowledge of local roads. These issues are not unique to the BCP Council area and are being reported in many towns and cities throughout the UK.

19. We now have private hire operators applying for licences in different areas and they can then pass work from one to the other and providing that all three licences (that is the private hire operator, vehicle and driver) are issued by the same authority then it is legitimate. It has also meant that some drivers and vehicle proprietors tend to migrate to a local authority that has more relaxed requirements and/or has lower fees.

20. Furthermore, Hackney Carriages can work for any operator anywhere in the country regardless of where they are originally licensed.

21. We have no powers to regulate or take enforcement action regarding the out-of-town vehicles and drivers when reported apart from liaising with the licensing authority to ensure their own policy standards are upheld.

22. Allegations about vehicles illegally plying for hire within the conurbation are fully investigated and will be pursued formally as necessary.

Ride Hailing Apps – Uber

23. Uber operates as a licensed private hire operator in a number of local authority areas. All affiliated vehicles and drivers are licensed by the local authority in which they are based and are subject to the same regulatory standards and compliance requirements as any other licensed operator, driver, or vehicle within that jurisdiction.

24. Uber, have until now, chosen not to apply for an operator's licence in our area and contrary to comments received it has nothing to do with them not being permitted.

25. As of August 2025, Uber has now submitted a private hire operator licence application, and this is being processed as per our policy requirements. It should be noted that as long as they meet the requirements of our policy there is no basis for refusal.

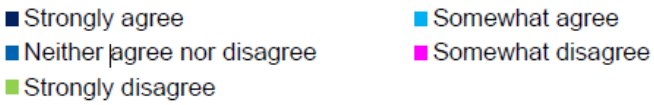
Driver Policy feedback

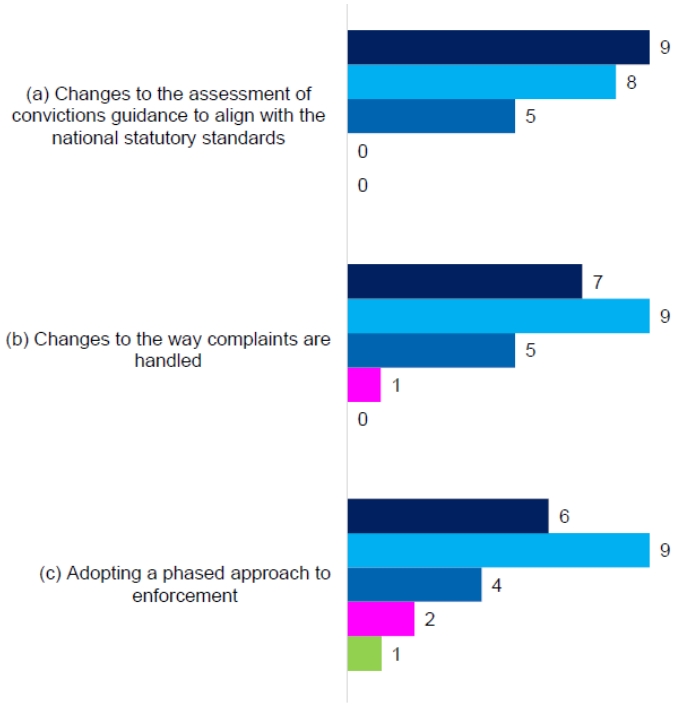
26. There was overall support for the Driver Policy.

27. Responses to specific questions asked are set out below:-

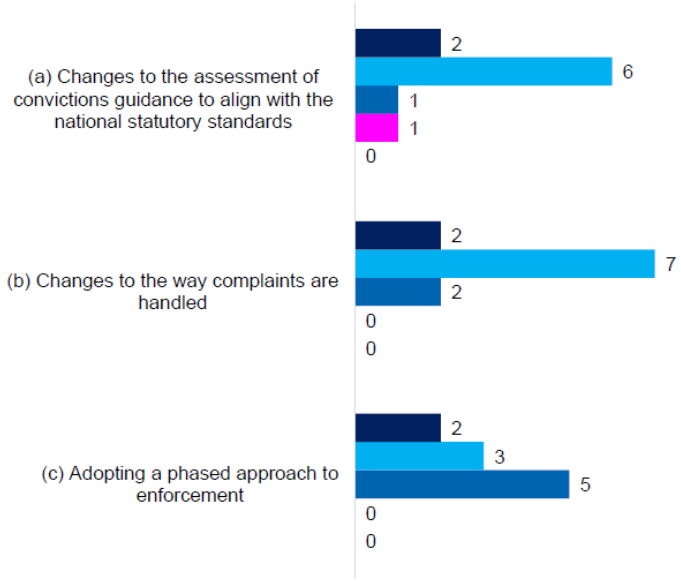
To what extent do you agree or disagree with the proposed changes to the draft Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Driver Policy for 2025-2030?

General Public responses





BCP Council Licence Holders Responses



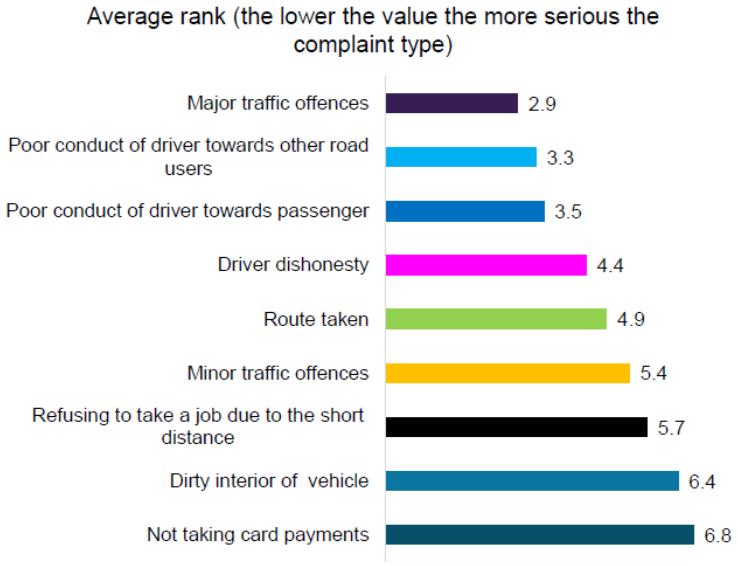
28. The responses from both the public and licence holders largely agree with the changes proposed.

29. By ensuring that applicants and existing driver" convictions are assessed against national statutory standards helps to provide consistent decision making with other local authorities and is supported by statutory guidance.

30. Having a more defined phased approach to enforcement will provide anyone making a complaint with assurance that officers take appropriate actions in accordance with our processes and ensures drivers are aware of the implications of infractions when contacted by officers.

31. The phased approach will support officers' actions and decisions in each complaint and provides transparency in the decision-making processes used.

Please rank these types of complaint in order of seriousness with the most serious placed at number 1, and the least serious placed at number 9.



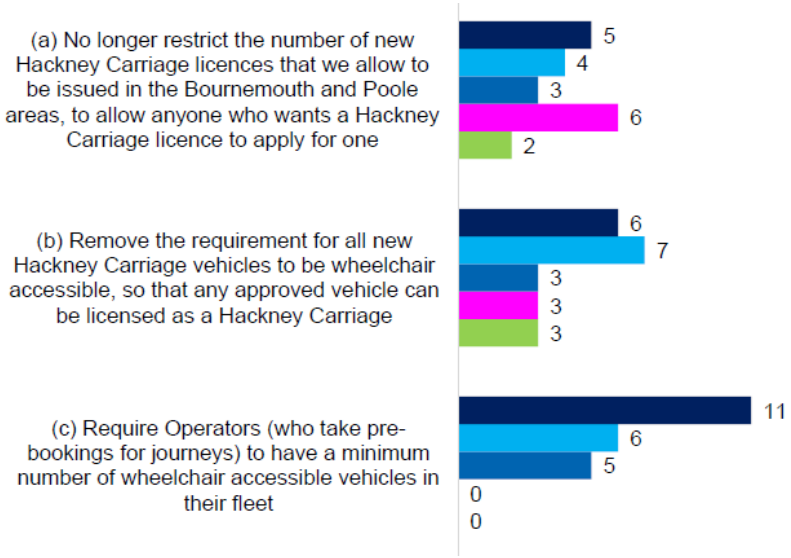
32. The consultation results support the current approach taken by officers whereby priority is given to complaints about major traffic offences and poor conduct of drivers towards other road users and passengers.

Vehicle Policy

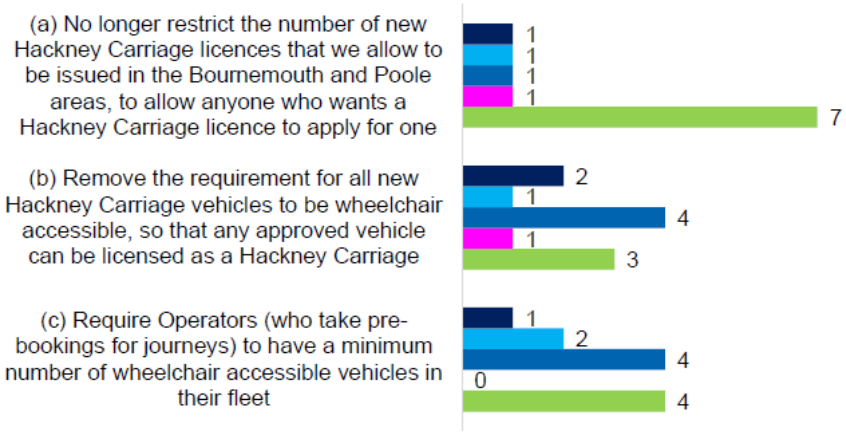
33. There was a mixed support to the vehicle policy specifically in regard to the areas concerning Hackney Carriages.

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the proposed changes to the draft Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Vehicle Policy for 2025-2030?

General Public responses



BCP Council Licence Holders Responses



34. There is a mixed response to the suggestion to remove the current limit on Hackney Carriage Licences issued, this suggestion is more supported by the general public than by the licence holders.

35. The associated comments by members of the public to this question were mixed with one person stating that anyone should have access to this type of vehicle at any time of the day or night and another stating there are already too many. There was a comment which raised a concern that by removing the limit it will increase the issue of drivers not knowing the area.

36. BCP licence holders comments suggested that the market is already flooded, there are too many vehicle already, and not enough work with long waits between jobs and by issuing more licences will reduce business for current licensed vehicles. Another comment remarks that there are plenty of standard vehicles with only wheelchair accessible vehicles being required.

37. Under the 2021 policy, 15 new Hackney Carriage wheelchair-accessible vehicles licences (WAV's) are released annually for both Bournemouth and Poole Zones. A total of 150 licences have been made available to date, however only 23 have been issued to date, all in Bournemouth. This means that currently there are 52 licences available in Bournemouth and 75 licences available in Poole. Christchurch has no restriction on vehicle licence numbers.

38. To maintain a restriction on the number of Hackney Carriage Vehicle Licences, the Licensing Authority must conduct an Unmet Demand Survey at least every five years. This requirement is in accordance with Section 16 of the Transport Act 1985.

39. The cost of conducting these surveys is typically in the range of £20,000 and is recovered through the annual vehicle licence fees paid by Hackney Carriage Vehicle Licence holders.

40. The Department of Transport Taxi and Private Hire best practice guidance for licensing authorities document updated in November 2023 at section 9.2 states that

    Most licensing authorities do not impose quantity restrictions. The department regards that as best practice. Where restrictions are imposed, the department

would urge that the matter should be regularly reviewed. The matter should be approached in terms of the interests of the travelling public

The proposal to remove the new hackney carriage vehicle licence quantity restriction will bring the BCP Council Policy in line with best practice.

It can be shown that lifting the restriction on numbers is unlikely to have a negative impact, as there are currently available licences that remain unallocated. The associated cost savings by not having to undertake an unmet needs survey will be incorporated into the annual Hackney Carriage vehicle licence fees.

41. The suggestion relating to the removal of the requirement to ensure all new hackney carriage licences must be wheelchair accessible had more support from the general public than by licence holders, with disagreement all from both surveys.

42. Comments relating to this suggestion generally reflected the previous public comments about availability of vehicles, and the need to ensure equality in access to such vehicles. Similarly, a licence holder expressed concerns that they are expensive to maintain and are not affordable.

43. Currently the policy requires all new Hackney Carriage licences to be for Wheelchair Accessible Vehicles (WAVs) to ensure equitable access for passengers with mobility needs.

44. To address affordability concerns for vehicle proprietors, the policy has been amended so all eligible WAVs must be Euro 6 compliant with no more than 100,000 miles on the clock, compared to the standard vehicle replacement criteria of being under five years old with no more than 60,000 miles on the clock.

45. This currently supports both inclusivity and financial feasibility. Nationally, wheelchair users represent approximately 2% of the population**,** and studies show they make twice as many licensed vehicle trips as non-wheelchair users.

46. By maintaining WAV availability, the policy directly improves transport accessibility for disabled passengers, enhancing independence and quality of life while making compliance more achievable for licence holders.

47. The suggestion to require private hire operators to have a minimum number of wheelchair accessible vehicles available is supported by the general public however, licence holders are less supportive and more disagree with the suggestion. Feedback comments include concerns that smaller operators may struggle as they only have 1 vehicle which would then need to be wheelchair accessible.

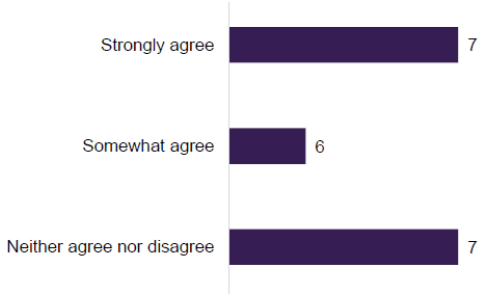
48. How this could be implemented in practice and enforced also needs to be carefully considered should this suggestion be included in the policy as a requirement.

Private Hire Operators

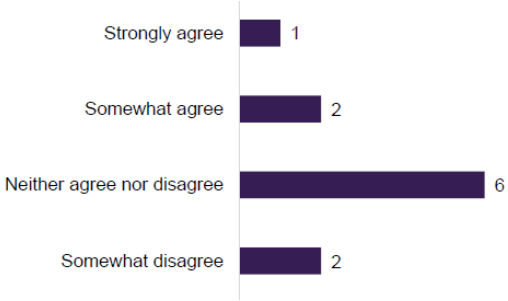
49. There was overall support for the Private Hire Operators policy.

Q11. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the proposed changes to the draft Private Hire Operator Policy for 2025-2030?

General Public responses



BCP Council Licence Holders Responses



50. The proposed changes to the Operators Policy were more supported by the general public than by licence holders. There was a greater number of those who neither disagreed nor agreed from both sets of respondents.

51. Comments received did not reflect the question and seemed to relate more to the general concerns already discussed.

Policy specific feedback

52. Where responses related directly to the policy we have collated the responses into the following table with suggested amendments for consideration.

Section /Para	Comment/Feedback	Suggested amendment and or officer feedback
11.2	"Regarding section 11.2, you use the term 'approved medical centre' in the new policy wording. Unless you are planning to keep a list of 'approved medical centres' then I think this term is unclear. I think the current wording is actually also ambiguous……	Our correspondence to drivers and published on our website does state that we only accept medicals completed by the driver's normal GP OR if they are unable to make an appointment with their GP, we accept certificates from Nuffield Hospital. To avoid any ambiguity, we suggest adding highlighted wording 11.2 Group 2 medical certificates must be completed

		by the drivers own GP or **BCP Council approved** medical centre, with access to the driver's medical records no more than 3 months before the medical is due. For drivers who also have a lorry or bus licence we will accept a copy of the same medical subject to the requirements above.
13	From Guide dogs- See Section 8, on page 40 of consultation report for letter in full. • Disability Equality Training (DET) mandatory for all drivers • Zero tolerance: The policy should state that BCP Council will use its best endeavours to investigate all reported violations of the Equality Act 2010 in a timely manner with a view to pursuing a conviction. • Mystery shopping: The policy should state that	• All drivers are required to complete training **New drivers** – have to complete the NVQ course which includes a disability awareness module which all drivers have to have successfully completed before making an application. **Existing Drivers** – any complaints received of this nature can be asked to complete a further DET course to better understand situations. • Suggested amendment to add additional paragraph after 13.3 **All reported complaints/ violations of the Equality Act 2010 will be investigated in a timely manner and according to our complaints policy (section 20). This may involve pursuing a conviction under the Equality Act.** • Add additional paragraph after 13.4 **Where possible the Licensing Authority shall work in conjunction**

	BCP will work together in conjunction with assistance dog owners to ensure that licensing requirements are being complied with by various means such as, but not limited to, test purchases.	**with assistance dog owners to ensure that licensing requirements are being complied with by various means such as, but not limited to, test purchases.**
23	No mention of livery/sticker requirements for private hire vehicles that fall into exemption category.	It is suggested that paragraph 23.2 can be reworded as follows **All Private hire vehicles shall ensure that they are in compliance with the Private Hire Plate and livery requirements as stated in Appendix B.** Amend Appendix B to read '**Private Hire Plate and livery requirements'.** In Appendix B also insert a new section at 1 **All Private Hire Vehicles shall have permanently affixed in the prescribed positions the following signage - unless they are classified under section 2 and 3 below:** • **Door livery – including No booking, No ride and PH licence number** • **Large 'No booking No ride' stickers on both rear passenger doors as near to the door handle as is possible either to the side or directly underneath. (they**

		are clearly visible to the customer when entering the vehicle). • **Small 'No booking, No ride' sticker on front passenger door as above.** **If the vehicle wishes to use the bus lanes in the BCP Council area a 'Chequered flag' sticker should be affixed to the offside, front of the bonnet**.

Officer observations for policy delivery

53. Whilst delivering the policy and since the draft was agreed changes in how we administer our licences have been and continue to be made. As such officers suggest the following amendments which clarify some of the processing and questions received.

54. All policies under chapter entitled Renewals as follows:

Section /Para	Current wording	Suggested amendment and or officer feedback
Renewals **9.1 and 9.4(Driver)** **10.1 and 10.3 (Operator)** **11.1 and 11.4 (Vehicle)**	Holders of existing driver's licences must apply to renew their licence no earlier than 2 months prior and no later than ten working day prior to the expiry date. Renewal applications and all associated paperwork including online payment receipt must be submitted electronically via e-mail to taxi.privatehire@bcpcouncil.gov.uk,	The way licence holders submit applications will be changing shortly due to IT improvements as such the policy needs to reflect this. **Holders of existing drivers licences shall ensure that they submit the renewal application and all associated paperwork electronically, no earlier than 2 months and no later than 10 working days prior to the expiry date of the**

	before the licence has expired.	**licence.**

Driver Policy

55. Amendments to reflect current practice and provide clarity for driver medical requirements.

Section /Para	Current wording	Suggested amendment and or officer feedback
11.2 and 11.3	11.2 Group 2 medical certificates must be completed by the drivers own GP or approved medical centre, with access to the driver's medical records no more than 3 months before the medical is due. For drivers who also have a lorry or bus licence we will accept a copy of the same medical subject to the requirements above. 11.3 New applicants should not undertake the medical examination until notified to do so during the application process. We will not accept any certificate that is dated prior to the date of application.	Regarding medicals new drivers are expected to submit a Group 2 medical submitted by their own GP however for existing drivers we do accept medicals from our approved provider. As such we seek to amend paragraphs 11.2 and 11.3 as follows 11.2 **For existing drivers** Group 2 medical certificates must be completed by the drivers own GP or approved medical centre, with access to the driver's medical records no more than 3 months before the medical is due. For drivers who also have a lorry or bus licence we will accept a copy of the same medical subject to the requirements above. 11.3 New applicants **are required to have the Group 2 medical certificate completed by their own GP or a GP at the practice where they are registered.** They should not undertake the medical examination until notified to do so during the application process.

		We will not accept any medical certificate that is dated prior to the date of their application.
13.2	Drivers of wheelchair accessible vehicles must undergo additional passenger transportation training, and the evidence of this training must be supplied at renewal of both the drivers' licence and the vehicle licence. If expired this must be updated in the three months before the driver renews their licence, the new certificate will be submitted as part of the renewal process.	Paragraph 13.2 we suggest deleting the final sentence regarding the expiry of the certificate as this is deal with by the vehicle policy requirements. 13.2 Drivers of wheelchair accessible vehicles must undergo additional passenger transportation training, and the evidence of this training must be supplied at renewal of both the drivers' licence and the vehicle licence.
16.4	When new drivers collect their licence for the first time, they will be required to sign a declaration that they have read and understood the conditions. A copy of this policy and all accompanying appendices will be issued to them.	It is suggested to amend this to delete wording that no longer applies. Copies of the policy are not provided in hard cop, a weblink to the documents is provided instead. 16.4 When new drivers collect their licence for the first time, they will be required to sign a declaration that they have read and understood the licence conditions and policy.

Vehicle Policy

56. Amendments to clarify requirements to submit vehicle mechanical check documentation in good time and links to the previous convictions policy amendments.

Section /Para	Current wording	Suggested amendment and or officer feedback
8.3	Failure to complete the MEC within two months of the due date will result in the vehicle licence being revoked.	Failure to complete the MEC **or MoT** within two months of the due date will result in the vehicle licence being revoked.
12.1	The applicant/licence holder must declare any previous criminal convictions, cautions and fixed penalty notices received, including those awaiting appeal, and any charges pending. The council will make a decision as to the relevance of convictions, cautions, charges and fixed penalty notices in accordance with criminal convictions guidelines.	The applicant/licence holder must declare any previous criminal convictions, cautions and fixed penalty notices received, including those awaiting appeal, and any charges pending in line with the assessment of **previous convictions annexe of the Statutory taxi and private hire vehicle standards - GOV.UK)**

Operators Policy

57. Paragraph 7.11 with the increase in online and APP based operators we need to reflect that an actual premises office is not always required as long as an address is provided so that officers can inspect records if needed.

Section /Para	Current wording	Suggested amendment and or officer feedback
7.11	Applicants must specify the address from which they will operate, and records can be inspected. These premises must	Officers will accept applications that include a 'virtual office' address as long as evidence of a contract/lease is

	be in the BCP Council conurbation and where necessary should have planning consent for use as a Private Hire office. PO box, solicitors, accountants, or care of addresses will not be accepted.	provided. This means officers can still meet operators and inspect records as necessary.

Options Appraisal

58. Members are asked to consider the consultation report and feedback received and decide whether:

    - to amend the draft policy after consideration of the consultation feedback and agree a final version or
    - after consideration retain the current version of draft policy.

59. Reasons should be given for any amendments made.

60. Once all feedback has been discussed members are asked to agree a final version of the Policy to be recommended to Full Council.

Summary of financial implications

61. Any fees incurred will be absorbed within current budgets. Any costs associated with the review process will be covered by the income from the fees.

Summary of legal implications

62. Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing Policies are not statutory. This means that there is no requirement for the Council to adopt one, however it is good practice to do so as it sets out the Council's approach to issuing licences and enforcement. Decisions made in accordance with the policy are more likely to be upheld in the event of an appeal. A good policy ensures consistency of approach by the council thus ensuring fairness and transparency for both the licence holders and public alike.

Summary of human resources implications

63. There are no implications on human resources the current licensing team will continue to implement the policy within current resource levels

Summary of sustainability impact

64. From 1 January 2025 all licenced vehicles met the specified minimum emission standards of the policy.

65. The current policy requires that any vehicle that does not meet Euro 6 emission standard would not be renewed after 31 December 2023. As licences are issued

for a year the last vehicles which did not meet this emission criteria had to be replaced by the end of December 2024.

Summary of public health implications

66. The policies currently and as proposed focus on protecting and safeguarding children and vulnerable adults

Summary of equality implications

67. A full Equality Impact Assessment has been completed and was rated as green by the EIA review panel on 24 September 2025. Appendix 7.

Summary of risk assessment

68. There is a risk of judicial review should any new policy be challenged. The Committee must ensure that any decisions are made with reference to the public sector equality duty.

Background papers

Statutory taxi and private hire vehicle standards - GOV.UK

Taxi and private hire vehicle licensing best practice guidance for licensing authorities in England - GOV.UK

Appendices

Appendix 1- Draft BCP Council Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Driver Policy

Appendix 2 - Draft BCP Council Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Vehicle Policy

Appendix 3 - Draft BCP Council Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Operator Policy

Appendix 4 - General public survey questions

Appendix 5 - BCP Licence holders survey questions

Appendix 6 - Consultation report

Appendix 7 – Equalities Impact Assessment Report and Action Plan

This page is intentionally left blank

Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Driver Policy

2025 - 2030

Bournemouth Christchurch and Poole (BCP) Licensing

Author: Nananka Randle
Version: 2
Review Date: 2025

Index

CHAPTER		PAGE NO
	Introduction	
1	Purpose statement	2
2	Who does the policy apply to	2
3	This policy replaces	3
4	Approval process	3
5	Links to BCP Council strategies	3
6	The Policy	3
7	New driver applications	4
8	'Fit and Proper Person' test	5
9	Renewals	7
10	Safeguarding	8
11	Medicals	9
12	Data handling and National Register of Hackney Carriage and Private Hire vehicle driver licence refusals and revocations database	9
13	Equality Act 2010 and medical exemptions	11
14	Driver conduct requirements	11
15	Driver dress code	13
16	Driver licence conditions	14
17	How to use this policy	14
18	Roles and responsibilities	14
19	Enforcement and sanctions	14
20	Complaints, disciplinary and delegation to officers	15
	Appendix	
A	Drivers Licence conditions	16
B	Equality Act 2010 responsibilities and notice of exemption process	22

DRAFT

Introduction

The Licensing Committee and officers are committed to ensuring the highest standards in order to protect public safety when administering this policy.

All requirements contained within this policy together with conditions on the licence are mandatory requirement for holding a Private Hire or Hackney Carriage Driver Licence issued by Bournemouth Christchurch and Poole Council (BCP).

From the first day of adoption of this policy ALL licence holders are required to meet these high standards, and it is expected that they will ensure they are fully aware of this policy and comply with all the requirements set out within it.

The Licensing Committee will not accept the excuse that a licence holder was not aware of these requirements when considering any matters bought before them.

1. Purpose statement

1.1 BCP Council has a responsibility to issue Hackney Carriage and Private Hire driver licences under the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976 and the Town Police Clauses Act 1847.

1.2 In the interest of public safety and to safeguard vulnerable persons BCP Council seek to ensure that anyone issued with such a licence is considered to be 'fit and proper.'

1.3 This policy is concerned with the regulation of Hackney Carriage and Private Hire licensed drivers and the Council adopts the overall approach to encourage the responsible activity of all drivers. In the interests of its residents and visitors, it will not tolerate any driver who poses a threat to the safety of any passenger or other road user.

1.4 Notwithstanding the existence of this policy, each application or enforcement measure will be considered on its own merits.

1.5 Where is it appropriate for the Council to depart from its policy clear reasons will be given for doing so. Nothing in this policy will prevent an applicant or licence holder requesting that the Council considers the individual merits of their case and gives reasonable consideration to departing from its policy. Such requests must either be in writing**,** via email or orally before the Licensing Committee or Sub Committee.

2. Who does the policy apply to

2.1 This policy will assist applicants, licence holders, officers of the Licensing Authority, Members of the Licensing Committee and persons using public carriages to be aware of the standards of conduct and behaviour required of all prospective or existing licensed drivers.

2.2 This policy also affords members of the Licensing Committee and officers alike, to consider the concerns of the public and other recognised bodies and to take appropriate measures where the behaviour of drivers is called into question at application or after licences have been issued.

3. This policy replaces

3.1 This policy replaces the previous BCP Council Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Driver Policy implemented in June 2021.

4. Approval process

4.1 BCP Council as the Licensing Authority has delegated the Licensing Committee to oversee the development and review of its 'Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Driver Policy.'

4.2 Once drafted the policy is subject to a period of public consultation. Consultation responses are reported to the full licensing committee for consideration.

4.3 Once finalised the policy is presented to the Full Council for ratification.

5. Links to BCP Council strategies

5.1 This policy supports the BCP Council Core Strategy.

5.2 During the preparation of this policy document due consideration has been given to the following Key Council Strategies:

- Corporate Plan
- Sustainable Transport Plan
- Workforce Strategy
- Health & Wellbeing Strategy
- Safeguarding Strategy
- Climate Change Strategy
- Children in Care Strategy
- Crime & Disorder Reduction Strategy
- Equality & Diversity

6. The Policy

6.1 This policy is a working document and the Licensing Authority reserves the right to alter and amend the Policy as appropriate to correct errors, inconsistencies, clarify guidance, legislative changes and issue a revised version of the Policy at any time. However, any **significant changes** to the Policy will only be implemented after a formal consultation process with the trade and public.

6.2 Any **significant amendment** is defined as one that:

1. is likely to have a significant financial effect on licence holders or
2. is likely to have a significant procedural effect on licence holders or
3. is likely to have a significant adverse effect on the community.

6.3 Any changes to this policy will be communicated to licence holders via email as soon as practicable to do so.

DRAFT

7. New driver applications

7.1 Anyone wishing to make an application must prove to BCP Council that they are fit and proper to be issued with such a driver's licence. Anyone making an application must be at least 21 years old at the time of application. Applications are made online, and applicants must meet the Council's entry level criteria and provide the necessary documentation.

7.2 All applications must be completed within one year of commencing the application process. If an applicant fails to meet all the necessary application criteria within one year the application will be closed. The applicant is not permitted to apply again for a year from the date the application is closed.

7.3 All applicants must meet the qualification requirement by having studied and passed Level 2 Introduction to the role of Taxi and Private Hire Driver**.**

7.4 In order to ensure applicants, meet the required standard of English language competency and gain the necessary hands-on practice required to be a licensed driver**,** the Licensing Authority will only accept certificates from an approved provider. Other providers via online courses are not deemed to meet the high standards required and do not provide the practical aspects of training to assist passengers with mobility.

7.5 Applicant identity verification checks with the course provider may be undertaken**.** This will involve confirming that the person who is submitting the certificate is the same person who attended the course. Information such as passport data and photo may be shared as deemed necessary.

7.6 All drivers must pass the Driver Knowledge Test' prior to being issued with a licence. This will require applicants to demonstrate a working knowledge of the licensed area of BCP for Private Hire vehicles and more detailed working knowledge of the zones for Hackney Carriage licences which are not pre booked.

7.7 All applicants are permitted to sit the Driver Knowledge Test' on four occasions during the one-year application period. If the applicant fails to pass the test four times, then their application will be closed, and they are not permitted to reapply for a year from the date of closure of their application.

7.8 Applicants are required to submit an enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service Certificate (DBS) on application. All drivers are required to sign up to the DBS update service. This is an annual subscription service that allows drivers to provide the Council's licensing officers with access to DBS records at any time**.**

7.9 Applicants will be assessed with reference to the 'Fit and Proper' criteria as set out in Section 8. If you are deemed not to meet the criteria your application will be rejected.

7.10 Any applicant who makes a false or inaccurate statement on their application form will not be deemed to be a proper person to hold a licence and their application will be terminated. This includes not disclosing convictions, cautions, penalty, or previous licence revocation.

DRAFT

7.11 Anyone whose application is terminated for making a false or inaccurate statement on their application form will not be permitted to reapply for a licence for 12 months from the termination of their application. It is an offence to make a false statement knowingly or recklessly or to omit information required by the Council by virtue of s.57 Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976.

7.12 When a licence is issued to a new driver, on collection of their licence they will be required to sign a declaration that they have read and understood this policy document and all annexes which include the driver licence conditions/byelaws which they are required to adhere to all times (Appendix A)

7.13 Licences will be issued for a period of three years.

Reapplication

7.14 Where an applicant has previously had a licence revoked by the Council the Authority will not, save in exceptional circumstances, consider any further application from the applicant for a period of three years from the date of the Authority's decision or, if that decision was appealed against and the appeal was dismissed, abandoned, or otherwise failed, from the date of the dismissal, abandonment or other failure of the appeal, whichever is the later

8. Fit and Proper Person test

8.1 The sections below, apply equally to Hackney Carriage and Private Hire drivers. The Licensing Authority may impose such additional conditions on a Private Hire driver's licence as it sees fit.

8.2 Passengers are potentially vulnerable when being transported due to their age, unaccompanied children, people with a disability, those who may have consumed excessive quantities of alcohol, lone people and overseas' visitors or tourists to the area.

8.3 The Licensing Authority has a duty to take a robust stance in ensuring that applicants and licence holders are and remain 'fit and proper' to hold a licence at all times.

8.4 The term 'fit and proper person' is not defined in law and this Authority considers the definition be considered in line with modern thinking as 'safe and suitable' to be a licensed driver.

8.5 In considering what might be assessed to ensure that a driver is 'fit and proper 'or safe and suitable 'the Licensing Authority considers the following to be amongst appropriate matters that it will take into account:

1. Criminality (see assessment of previous convictions annexe of the Statutory taxi and private hire vehicle standards Statutory taxi and private hire vehicle standards - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)
2. Period of holding a drivers licence.
3. Conduct of the driver during the licence period, including relationship and co-operation with officers of the Licensing Authority.
4. Number of points on a licence or driving convictions.
5. Right to work in the UK and any time restrictions.
6. Medical fitness – physical and mental condition.

7. Enhanced driver competence by means of an appropriate higher standard Driving Assessment Test**.**
8. Behaviour displayed by a driver towards customers and others**,** i.e. staff in the Licensing Team or other Council officers and their overall integrity**.**

8.6 DBS status checks on licenced drivers will take place throughout the licence period. Any unreported change in status will result in the drivers licence being suspended pending a new enhanced DBS certificate being produced for examination and determination.

8.7 Should any driver disclose any conviction, caution or penalty or the DBS check shows a change in the DBS status the drivers will be required to provide a new enhanced DBS certificate.

8.8 If a driver has not maintained their DBS update service subscription they will be required to apply for a new enhanced DBS certificate immediately on notification. Failure to reapply for a new certificate and/or repeated failure to sign up/maintain DBS update service subscription will result in suspension of their licence until the new certificate has been received and assessed by the Licensing Officer.

8.9 As well as the assessment of previous criminal convictions as stated within the Statutory taxi and private hire vehicle standards, BCP Council will also have regard to the latest Institute of Licensing guidance on determining the suitability of applicants and licensees in the taxi and private hire trade as a minimum standard Institute of Licensing (IOL) Suitability Guidance (November 2024).

8.10 In addition, consideration on suitability may include other factors including the conduct of the applicant during the application process or during the term of their existing or previous licence as well as their conduct, co-operation and working relationship with the Authority and its officers.

8.11 In cases of convictions or cautions received whilst licensed that only come to light following the DBS status check the matter will referred to the Licensing Committee to consider if the driver remains a fit and proper person to hold such a licence.

8.12 In essence a 'fit and proper' person.

1. must not be violent, abusive, or threatening in their behaviour even if subjected to unpleasant, confrontational, or dishonest passenger behaviour or when subject to enforcement action from officers.

2. must be honest, trustworthy **and** have integrity**,** as they have access to a large amount of personal information that could be misused with significant opportunity to defraud passengers in drink or under the influence of drugs, the vulnerable or– overseas passengers, or to steal property left in their vehicles.

3. must display safe and competent driving standards**,** as they are professional drivers and should be fully aware of all road traffic legislation, the safety of their passengers and the safety of their vehicles at all times.

4. must be in good physical and mental health to ensure they do not put passengers at any risk whilst transporting them, through for example having uncorrected or impaired eyesight, suffering from medical conditions including cardiac events, recovering from a stroke, or have impaired driving ability through the use of prescribed medication.

They must also be physically fit and agile to load passengers in wheelchairs into their vehicles.

5. must work co-operatively with and be civil and respectful towards officers of the Licensing Authority who are carrying out their duties.

8.13 This list is not exclusive, and other factors may also be relevant to the 'fit and proper person' definition.

8.14 The Licensing Authority will consider all information provided to it from sources such as the Police, Children and Adults Safeguarding Boards, Passenger Services, and other statutory agencies. Existing licence holders will also have previous history/outcomes during their time as a licensed driver /operator or previous applicant taken into account and their ability to work constructively and positively with the Licensing Authority.

8.15 The Licensing Authority will consider all criminal history, unacceptable behaviour, and conduct**,** irrespective of whether the specific history, behaviour or conduct occurred whilst drivers were directly engaged in Hackney Carriage or Private Hire work at the time or whether they occurred during the driver's own personal time.

8.16 Where a non-UK national has made an application and they have lived in the UK for at least 12 months, but information on their previous criminal history/convictions is limited or not available at all then the matter will be brought before the Licensing Committee for final determination as to whether a licence should be granted in these circumstances.

8.17 Periods of residency outside the UK. Applicants who have spent a period of six months or more at any one time living overseas, whilst holding a driver's licence with the Authority will be required to present a criminal record check from the country/countries they have lived in/visited covering the period that the applicant was living overseas.

8.18 This can be done through the 'Certificate of Good Conduct' from the Embassy of the relevant country. This will include renewal applicants where the driver has returned overseas to spend several months with their family. Private Hire Operators will be required to share information with the Licensing Authority where they are aware that a driver, they use for private hire services has returned overseas from a long-term absence of six months or more.

9. Renewals

9.1 Holders of existing driver's licences must apply to renew their licence no earlier than 2 months prior and no later than ten working day prior to the expiry date.

9.2 Hackney Carriage and Private Hire drivers Licence shall be issued for a standard length of three years (maximum duration). Any shorter duration must be requested by an applicant and shall only be issued when the Licensing Authority considers it is appropriate due to the specific circumstances of the case.

9.3 The Council has no duty to notify drivers that their licence is due for renewal as it is the licence holder's responsibility to renew their licence. As a courtesy an e-mail reminder will be sent to the driver in advance of their renewal date. It is the responsibility of the licence holder to ensure they report any change in their email address.

9.4 Renewal applications and all associated paperwork including online payment receipt must be submitted electronically via e-mail to taxi.privatehire@bcpcouncil.gov.uk, before the licence has expired.

9.5 All drivers are required to sign up to the DBS update service. This is an annual subscription service that allows drivers to provide the Council's licensing officers with access to DBS records at any time, applicants must sign up to the update service within 28 days of the DBS certificate being issued and must maintain the subscription for the duration of their licence.

9.6 Failure to disclose or declare **any** previous convictions, cautions, fixed penalty notices or pending charges may be construed as an attempt to deceive and appropriate and proportionate action will be taken. It is an offence to make a false statement knowingly or recklessly or to omit information required by the Council by virtue of s.57 Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976.

9.7 In cases of convictions or cautions received whilst licensed and only declared at the time of renewal**,** the decision to renew a driver's licence will be referred to the Licensing Committee.

9.8 Renewal applications with newly disclosed convictions will be assessed with reference to the assessment of previous criminal convictions as stated within the Statutory Taxi and Private Hire Vehicle Standards.

9.9 Drivers who do not renew their licence by the expiry date are no longer authorised as a licensed driver from the date of expiry of the licence. The Licensing Authority will notify the driver's Operator or vehicle proprietor that the licence has expired/lapsed if appropriate.

9.10 Anyone who does not renew their licence by the renewal date is required to return their badge within five working days and their licence will be deemed expired/lapsed.

10. Safeguarding

10.1 Awareness about human trafficking and child sexual exploitation can assist Hackney Carriage and Private Hire drivers to protect those who are vulnerable and/or being exploited. Licensed drivers can help identify those who commit these crimes and can help assist those in need of help.

10.2 Anyone applying to become a licensed driver and those renewing their licence will be required to undertake Safeguarding training.

10.3 Safeguarding training will be delivered by an approved provider such as the Blue Lamp Trust, in a classroom setting. All applicants must attend this training and present the certificate.

10.4 New applicants should not undertake the safeguarding training until notified to do so during the application process. We will not accept any certificate that is dated prior to the date of application.

10.5 Drivers renewing their licence must, renew their safeguarding training certificate by attending the training as detailed above. A certificate that is dated within 12 months must be presented at renewal.

10.6 All drivers are expected to adhere to good safeguarding practices.

10.7 All drivers completing school passenger transportation bookings must ensure that they follow all instructions provided for the child being transported.

11. Medicals

11.1 The council has determined that all licensed drivers must comply with the DVLA **'Group 2 Standard for Drivers'**. This is a higher medical standard that recognises the length of time an occupational driver spends behind the wheel. Guidance of what medical conditions affect a drivers licence can be found at https://www.gov.uk/guidance/general-information-assessing-fitness-to-drive

11.2 Group 2 medical certificates must be completed by the drivers own GP or approved medical centre, with access to the driver's medical records no more than 3 months before the medical is due. For drivers who also have a lorry or bus licence we will accept a copy of the same medical subject to the requirements above.

11.3 New applicants should not undertake the medical examination until notified to do so during the application process. We will not accept any certificate that is dated prior to the date of application.

11.4 Medical certificates are required at the time of any new application and then every 5 years from the age of 45 to the age of 65. After the age of 65 the medical is required on an annual basis.

11.5 Drivers will be required to submit their completed medical certificate to the licensing office on or before their birthday when they reach the ages of 45,50,55,60 and 65. Then from the age of 65 every year on or before their birthday.

11.6 If a driver fails to submit a completed medical certificate by the due date their licence will be suspended until such time as the certificate is received and accepted by the licensing team**.** In all such cases the licensing officer will also notify the driver's operator or the proprietor of the vehicle they drive, to advise them of the suspension. Once the medical is received all parties will be notified that the suspension has been lifted.

11.7 This requirement is not contingent on any other need to provide a medical**,** such as date of first application or reported health concerns that may reflect the need for additional medical assessments.

12. Data handling and National Register of Hackney Carriage and Private Hire vehicle driver licence refusals and revocations database

12.1 This Council has subscribed to the National Register of Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Vehicle Licence Revocations, Refusals or Suspensions, or NR3S Register

12.2 At the point of application, checks will be made on the National Anti-Fraud Network Database (NAFN), to ensure any history held regarding an applicant's previous refusals/revocations from other licensing authorities is available for consideration.

12.3 The Licensing Authority will upload data on refused/revoked licences into the NAFN database,

12.4 Any applicant who has held a licence issued by another Council and has had their licence revoked within three years of their application will be referred to the Licensing Committee who will consider the application on its own merits.

12.5 Information held by the Licensing Authority complies with requirements of the Data Protection Act 2018; however, there is a requirement for a 'Public Register' to be kept available for the free public inspection of all dual drivers' licences granted. To promote public safety this register will also detail information of any dual driver licences suspended or revoked.

12.6 Any information given may be shared with other internal/external organisations/partners to prevent crime and/or detect fraud, to promote public safety and safeguarding, or when a driver is suspected of having committed an offence, civil or criminal.

12.7 Under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 the Licensing Authority is required to provide certain information to the public by request. There are, however, exemptions to this duty, which includes certain personal or sensitive data, confidential information, and business/commercial information.

12.8 The Licensing Authority may lawfully disclose information to other public sector agencies and external partners to: -

1. Protect the safety of the public**.**
2. Prevent or detect fraud and any other crime**.**
3. Support national fraud initiatives**.**
4. Protect public funds**.**
5. Progress a request for service**.**

12.9 Safeguarding children and those adults at risk of harm in particular sharing information with the Children or Adults Safeguarding Board or officers of the Safeguarding Unit, other Licensing Authorities to protect the travelling public or with the Council's Legal Services Team or Transport Services Team, which may impact, on the delivery of its schools and adult services contracts.

12.10 The safeguarding and protection of the public will be the primary aim when deciding whether to share information with other services, organisations, or partners.

12.11 Relevant information is held on record relating to the history of a licensed driver, vehicle owner or operator, is retained until the lapse, surrender, refusal, or revocation of a licence and then usually held for an additional period of 6 years before being destroyed. Each case will be considered on its own merits prior to its destruction in line with the 'Licensing Retention of Documents' policy.

12.12 In some cases, due to the serious nature of offences/allegations the information may be held indefinitely by the Authority. Historic data can remain relevant to the Licensing Authority to demonstrate a pattern of behaviour and characteristics by a licensed driver or applicant over several years or if the licence has been revoked by the Licensing Authority for a serious safeguarding or public safety matter.

12.13 In addition, information from the enhanced Disclosure and Barring Certificate checks are retained in accordance with the DBS Code of Practice. However, as drivers are now registered on the online DBS Update service there will be little need to retain this information in the future**,** other than noting any recordable offences for future reference.

13. Equality Act 2010 and medical exemptions

Wheelchair Accessible Vehicle drivers duties

13.1 Under section 165 licensed drivers of designated wheelchair accessible vehicles must provide assistance to passengers into and out of the vehicle. Full guidance on driver responsibilities is included in Appendix B.

13.2 Drivers of wheelchair accessible vehicles must undergo additional passenger transportation training, and the evidence of this training must be supplied at renewal of both the drivers' licence and the vehicle licence. If expired this must be updated in the three months before the driver renews their licence, the new certificate will be submitted as part of the renewal process.

Duties for all drivers

13.3 Under sections 168 and 170 all licensed drivers are under a legal duty to carry passengers with a guide hearing and other assistance dogs without additional charge for the animal. Unless they hold a medical exemption, is displayed within the vehicle, the driver cannot refuse to transport an assistance dog.

13.4 When carrying such passengers drivers must: -

1. Convey the disabled passenger's dog and allow it to remain under the physical control of the owner**.**
2. Not make any additional charge for doing so.

13.5 Any driver of a wheelchair accessible vehicle or any licensed vehicle who has a medical reason they are unable to comply with the requirements of the Equality Act 2010 must apply for a medical exemption as set out in the Equality Act Policy (Appendix B).

13.6 The 'Medical Exemption Certificate' is only valid for drivers when it is displayed in the vehicle. If the exemption certificate is not displayed the driver MUST comply with the legislation.

13.7 The exemption certificate is granted to the driver only and cannot be transferred to any other driver of the vehicle. Once the driver leaves the vehicle at the end of their shift the exemption certificate must be removed from the front screen.

14. Driver conduct requirements.

14.1 It is expected that all licensed drivers will take reasonable steps to comply with the following standards failure to do so will lead to questions about their continued fitness and propriety**:**

1. To carry out a daily check to ensure that the vehicle is a roadworthy condition prior to carrying passengers. Where faults of any description are identified which undermine the roadworthy condition of the vehicle the driver should not drive the vehicle and should report them to the proprietor as soon as possible**. Where warning lights activate during a shift (tps of failed bulb etc.) the cause should be rectified as soon as possible and always before the start of the next shift.**
2. To be professional and understanding to other road users**.**
3. To be polite and courteous to passengers**.**

4. To behave in a manner that is in keeping of that expected of a professional licensed driver.
5. Not to engage in any activity that would undermine professional standards and public confidence in the service.
6. Not to engage in any unwanted conversation or enter into any conversation of a personal or sexual nature.
7. Not to ask for or share any personal contact details with any passengers including via any social media apps.
8. To assist passengers, where necessary into and out of the vehicle.
9. To offer assistance to passengers with their luggage.
10. To wear the driver's identification badge at all times when working.
11. Be punctual.
12. Not to allow passengers to smoke or vape in your vehicle.
13. Not to use a handheld mobile phone or similar device whilst driving.
14. Transport passengers by the shortest available route (subject to any unforeseen circumstances such as any road works or congestion where it may be appropriate to take an alternative route by agreement with the passenger).
15. Hackney Carriage drivers are expected to comply with sections 20.3 and 20.4 of the Taxi and Private Hire Vehicle Policy relating to the correct use of taximeter or GPS fare calculator.
16. Charge the correct monetary fare.
17. Comply with the requirements of the current Highway Code.

14.2 A licensed driver has successfully passed a driver knowledge test which demonstrates a good knowledge of all main routes throughout the BCP area. A licensed driver is then expected to develop and improve their knowledge whilst working. Sole reliance on Satellite Navigation equipment is not an image that the Council wishes to promote.

14.3 A licensed driver is expected to know the shortest route and where unsure to ask the passenger when nearing the desired destination.

14.4 A licensed driver should also have regard to their surrounding environment and not cause nuisance when picking up or dropping off passengers so they must take reasonable steps to comply with the following requirements:

1. Not sound the vehicle horn as a means of notifying a passenger of your arrival.
2. Switch off the engine if required to wait.
3. Do not play amplified music without passenger consent.
4. Take whatever action is necessary to avoid disturbance to local residents.
5. Pick up and drop off safely and without risk to pedestrians and other road users.

14.5 Hackney Carriages Drivers **<u>can</u>** 'stand or ply for hire' so when using appointed ranks drivers they must comply with the following requirements:

1. Rank in an orderly manner.
2. Move up promptly to allow others to access the end of the rank.
3. If a space is not available, proceed to the next available rank.
4. Remain with the vehicle whilst ranked.
5. When hailed on the street, to stop in a safe manner without hazard to other road users.

DRAFT

14.6 Private Hire drivers **cannot** 'stand or ply for hire' or pick up from the street when hailed. A Private Hire driver can only accept a fare that has been pre-booked through an operator.

14.7 The Council views the following activities as examples of unlawful plying for hire:

1. Accepting a booking direct from a member of the public without the fare having been pre-booked.
2. Touting or standing at the roadside directing persons to vehicles.
3. A driver contacting their office by radio in order to make a booking on behalf of the customer.
4. A driver contacting their office using their own mobile phone to make a booking on behalf of the customer.
5. A driver offering their mobile to assist the customer to make a booking.

14.8 The Council consider all licensed drivers to be 'ambassadors' who will take personal responsibility for presenting BCP Council in a positive light. The Council is committed to improving the overall standards and as such expects all licensed drivers to present themselves in the manner that promotes a good professional image.

15 Driver dress code

15.1 The purpose of a driver's dress code is to seek a standard of dress that portrays a positive image of the BCP licensed trade, to enhance a professional image of drivers licensed by this Authority and to ensure public and driver safety is not compromised.

15.2 The Licensing Authority expects that drivers will always comply with the following requirements when they are working:

1. Drivers are expected to be well groomed and tidy.
2. Drivers must always ensure a smart standard of dress and cleanliness is maintained at all times, such as smart shirt, blouse/top, collared polo shirt together with trousers, tailored shorts, a skirt, or dress.
3. Drivers must wear a top at all times.
4. Clothing must be free from holes, rips, and snags.
5. Denim jeans and track suit bottoms are not permitted.
6. Religious or cultural attire is permitted, where appropriate.
7. Drivers must not wear or display any clothing, logos, badges, or any other image that implies a political, sporting, national or similar allegiance which could cause offence, discriminate, or enflame sections of the community.
8. Sports replica shirts e.g., football, rugby or cricket tops, track suits or gym type wear are not acceptable.
9. Footwear for all drivers shall fit around the heel of the foot. Mules or flip flops and/or bare feet are not acceptable.
10. Headwear is not permitted unless for religious or medical reasons.
11. Drivers shall not wear any item of clothing or apparel which exhibits any of the following:
    A. Offensive language.
    B. References to drunkenness or the use of recreational drugs.
    C. Anything racist, sexist, discriminatory or otherwise offensive.
    D. Any tattoos they may be considered sexist, racist, or otherwise offensive must be covered at all times.

16 Driver licence conditions

16.1 The Licensing Authority may attach such conditions to a Private Hire and/or Hackney Carriage, and/or dual drivers licence as are considered necessary.

16.2 The standard conditions are available in Appendix A.

16.3 All drivers must read and understand the licence conditions which will be available on the Council website.

16.4 When new drivers collect their licence for the first time, they will be required to sign a declaration that they have read and understood the conditions. A copy of this policy and all accompanying appendices will be issued to them.

16.5 Failure to comply with the conditions set out in this document may result in enforcement action (Section 19).

17 How to use this policy

17.1 All BCP licensed drivers should ensure that they are fully compliant with the policy and appendices.

17.2 At first application and renewal licenced drivers will be provided with an up-to-date link to this policy and its appendices.

17.3 It is a requirement that all drivers adhere to this policy and the conditions set out in it. In the event of enforcement action being necessary, it is not deemed acceptable that a licenced driver uses the excuse they were not aware of the requirements of this policy.

18 Roles and responsibilities

18.1 The Licensing Manager is responsible for overseeing the functions and work of the licensing team who deliver the policy.

18.2 The Licensing Committee or Sub- Committee will be presented with reports in cases where drivers do not meet the conditions of their licence, or where a complaint has resulted in the need for the licence to be reviewed.

19 Enforcement and sanctions

19.1 Any driver who does not comply with this policy, or any conditions contained in it, which leads to a breach of a condition, or any complaint received will be subject to investigation, the result of which may be brought before the Licensing Committee.

19.2 The Licensing Committee can choose to revoke a licence or suspend a licence pending any necessary action by the drivers such as attending training or counselling as required.

19.3 Decisions by the Licensing Committee are subject to appeal to the Magistrates Court within a statutory appeal period of 21 days from the notification of any committee hearing decision.

DRAFT

20 Complaints, disciplinary and delegation to officers

20.1 In cases of complaints, allegations, or reports of unacceptable behaviour by a licensed driver, the licensing officer will investigate the matter fully and determine the seriousness of the allegation.

20.2 Once the full details of the complaint with both sides of the story have been considered, the officer will assess the severity of the complaint together with any previous history/issues and other previous actions taken to determine what action, if any is needed.

20.3 The actions which will be taken by officers following a complaint are as follows:-

- Non serious complaint no history – **issue advisory guidance**
- Non serious complaint, history of similar issues **- issue written warning.**
- Non serious complaint, history of similar issues and already received warning **– issue Written Formal Caution** if already cautioned or officer is concerned refer to Committee.
- Serious event of concern no immediate risk to public safety, no history – **issue written warning.**
- Serious event of concern no immediate risk to public safety, history of similar issues – **Issue Formal Caution**
- Serious event of concern no immediate risk to public safety history of similar issues and already received warning – **Refer to Committee.**

20.4 Where there are serious allegations that are deemed to pose an **imminent risk to public safety regardless of whether there is any history of complaints against the driver or not,** will be investigated and actioned immediately. The Licensing Manager or Licensing Officer will try to contact the driver in question to discuss the allegations. If the officer deems that the complaint is founded and the evidence is sufficient to support the allegation of an imminent risk to public safety, then the matter will be referred to three members of the Licensing Committee to include the Chair and/or Vice Chair for them to make a decision if any immediate action needs to be taken in respect of a licence.

20.5 If members determine that the evidence presented demonstrates there is an imminent risk to public safety, the driver's licence could be immediately revoked and the driver concerned will be notified and required to surrender their badge and paper licence the same day. Members will confirm in writing the decision made and the reasons why the decision was reached.

20.6 If members agree there is a risk to public safety, but it is not an imminent risk the matter will be referred to the Licensing Sub-Committee.

20.7 In all cases of complaint, officers will make reference to the driver licence conditions attached to all licences as detailed in Appendix A, as well as the guidance contained within the following documents:-

- Institute of Licensing (IOL) Suitability Guidance (November 2024)
- The Statutory taxi and private hire vehicle standards
  Statutory taxi and private hire vehicle standards - GOV.UK

DRAFT

APPENDIX A

Private Hire / Hackney Carriage Driver Conditions of Licence

These conditions of licence are made pursuant to Section 51 of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976 and Section 46 of the Town and Police Clauses Act 1847

1. DRIVER BADGE

a. The driver must at all times, when driving a licensed vehicle for hire or reward, the driver's badge issued by the Council must be displayed in a prominent visible place in the vehicle.

b. The driver's badge remains the property of the Council. Upon expiry of the licence and badge (whether application to renew has been made or not) the badge must be returned to the Council within 7 days of expiry or other such time as the Council may specify.

c. The badge must be returned to the Council immediately should the licence be suspended, revoked or becomes invalid for any reason (e.g. expiry).

2 CONDUCT OF DRIVER

a. The driver must dress in accordance with the BCP Council Licensed Driver Dress Code at stated in chapter 15 of this Policy.

b. The driver must comply with the BCP Code of Conduct in relation to working with vulnerable passengers' chapter 14 of this Policy.

c. The driver must behave in a civil and orderly manner and comply with all reasonable requirements of any person hiring or being conveyed in the vehicle.

d. The driver must afford all reasonable assistance with passenger luggage as may be required. At the conclusion of the journey the driver must similarly offer all reasonable assistance to passengers leaving the vehicle and assist them with luggage or any disability aids or wheelchair.

e. Particular care must be taken with unaccompanied children and vulnerable adults. Drivers must remain alert to safeguarding matters related to children and vulnerable adults. Drivers should ensure that children and vulnerable adults leave the vehicle directly onto the kerb and immediately outside their destination (if it is safe and legal to do so).

f. The driver must take all reasonable steps to ensure the safety of passengers entering or conveyed in or alighting from the vehicle, especially those passengers with a disability – see 4 below.

g. The driver must not smoke tobacco or like substance (including vape) in the vehicle at any time as detailed by the Health Act 2006.

h. The driver must not, without the express consent of the hirer, drink or eat in the vehicle (water may be drunk) or play any radio or sound reproducing instrument or equipment in the vehicle other than for the sending or receiving messages in connection with the operation of the vehicle.

i. The driver must at all times when driving a licensed vehicle ensure that such vehicle is maintained in a roadworthy and clean condition.

j. The driver of a licensed vehicle must ensure that none of the markings / signs / notices that are required to be displayed on the vehicle become concealed from public view or be so damaged or defaced that any figure or material particular is rendered illegible.

k. The driver of a private hire vehicle must if they are aware that the vehicle has been hired to be in attendance at an appointed time and place or they have otherwise been instructed by the operator or proprietor of the vehicle to be in attendance at an appointed time and place punctually attend at the appointed time and place unless delayed or prevented by sufficient cause.

l. The use of scanner equipment is prohibited.

m. The driver of a wheelchair accessible vehicle is required to hold a Driving Standards Agency (DSA) Wheelchair Assessment Certificate.

n. Drivers must undertake an inspection of any vehicle that they are driving whilst working as a private hire / Hackney Carriage driver. This inspection must be undertaken at least daily and before the first carriage of fare paying passengers in the vehicle whilst it is being driven by the licence holder. The checks to be carried out by the driver must include all vehicle maintenance items listed in the annex to the Highway Code entitled 'vehicle maintenance, safety and security.' In addition, a check must be made to ensure that all signage and notices that are required by BCP Council licensing conditions are appropriately fixed / attached to the vehicle. A record must be made by the driver to confirm that the checks have been undertaken, this record must be available for inspection by an authorised officer of the council.

o. The driver must ensure that in cases where the vehicle has been fitted with a CCTV system, it is operational at all times that the vehicle is being used as a licensed vehicle (i.e. for the carriage of fare paying passengers). The system does not need to be operational during other times (for example when being used for domestic purposes).

Video recording must be active at all times.

The driver must not tamper or otherwise interfere with the system or the footage that is contained within it (nor must the driver allow the system to be tampered or interfered with my any person that does not have the council's express authority to do so), except as would be expected in order to operate the system in accordance with the manufacturer's directions.

3 FARES AND FARECARDS

a. The driver of a **private hire vehicle** must ensure that a notice is visibly displayed for the benefit of passengers to the effect that in the absence of a published fare scale, the fare should be agreed between passenger(s) and driver before commencement of the journey.

When a fare scale is used that fare scale must be displayed and must be a similar size to the fare cards carried by Hackney Carriages and must give an accurate reflection of the charge, including any specific additions (i.e. Bank Holiday and after midnight loading) the customer may be expected to pay.

b. The driver must not, if driving a licensed vehicle fitted with a taximeter, other approved device, cause the fare recorded thereon to be cancelled or concealed until the hirer has had the opportunity of examining it and has paid the fare.

c. The driver must not demand from any hirer of a **private hire vehicle** a fare in excess of any previously agreed for that hiring between the hirer and the operator or if the vehicle is fitted with a taximeter and there has been no previous agreement as to the fare, the fare shown on the face of the taximeter.

d. The driver must, if requested by the hirer, provide a receipt for the fare paid, such receipt to bear the name and address of the proprietor of the vehicle together with the badge number of the driver.

4 PASSENGERS

a. The licence holder must not cause, suffer, or permit to be conveyed in a licensed vehicle a greater number of persons exclusive of the driver than the number of persons specified in the licence issued in respect of that licensed vehicle. In addition, the driver must ensure that seat belt legislation is compiled with in respect of all children conveyed in the vehicle.

b. The driver must not allow to be conveyed in the front of a licensed vehicle: -

i. more than one person unless the vehicle is manufactured to carry two front seat passengers and seat belts are fitted for both passengers, or

ii. subject to paragraph iv below, any child under the age of 10 years old,

iii. subject to paragraph iv below, any person between the ages of 10 and 18 years old, unless the passenger is part of a group that includes at least one person over the age of 18, or all other passenger seats in the vehicle are occupied by persons under the age of 18.

iv. Paragraphs ii and iii above do not apply in cases where it is not reasonably practicable for the child to sit in the rear of the vehicle due to them having impaired mobility or some other impairment that would mean that it is safer for them to sit in the front seat. The impairment must be confirmed by an appropriate adult (who is independent of the driver). The adult must be familiar with the child's specific needs and confirm that it is not reasonably practicable for the child to sit in the rear seat as a result of that impairment. In these cases, a record must be made of the adult's name and contact details and this record must be retained by the driver for at least 28 days.

c. The driver must not, without the consent of the hirer of the vehicle, convey or permit to be conveyed any other person in that vehicle.

d. The driver must provide all reasonable assistance to passengers and especially those with a disability.

All drivers must comply with the requirements of The Equality Act 2010.

DRAFT

Duty to assist passengers in Wheelchairs.

The Equality Act 2010 section 165A places a duty on the driver of a designated* wheelchair accessible Hackney Carriages and Private Hire vehicles to:

- Carry the passenger while in the wheelchair.
- Not to make any additional charge for doing so.
- If the passenger chooses to sit in a passenger seat to carry the wheelchair.
- To take such steps as are necessary to ensure that the passenger is carried in safety and reasonable comfort; and
- To give the passenger such mobility assistance as is reasonably required.

* Designated vehicles are those listed by the Licensing Authority under section 167of the Equality Act 2010 as being a 'wheelchair accessible vehicle'.

Duty to carry guide dogs and assistance dogs.

The driver must not fail or refuse to carry out a booking by or on behalf of a person with disabilities who is accompanied by an 'assistance dog' unless the driver has a Medical Exemption granted by the Licensing Authority and is displaying the Exemption Certificate in the approved manner or in the vehicle.

Any animal belonging to or in the custody of any passenger should remain with that passenger and be conveyed in the front or rear of the vehicle.

Drivers are advised to have a blanket / towel which is kept in the boot of the licensed vehicle to be used where they may have concerns about excess dog hair being left in the vehicle.

5 FOUND PROPERTY

Any property accidentally left in the vehicle which is found by or handed to the driver if not claimed by or on behalf of its owner, shall be taken to the nearest Police Station and left it in the custody of the officer in charge. Any property not accepted by the police is to be kept for a period of 28 days to allow for the loser to claim it. A record is to be kept of all such property including the date it was found, date claimed or disposed of and how.

6 MEDICAL CONDITION(S)

a. The licence holder must notify the Council ***in writing/via email without undue delay*** of any change in medical condition.

b. The licence holder must at any time, or at such intervals as the Council may reasonably require, produce a certificate in the form prescribed by the Council signed by a registered medical practitioner to the effect that they are or continues to be physically fit to be a driver of a Private Hire/Hackney Carriage vehicle.

7 CONVICTIONS, CAUTIONS, ARREST ETC.

The licence holder must notify the Council **in writing within 5 working days (or 3 working days in the case of arrest)** providing full details of any conviction, binding over, caution, warning, reprimand, or arrest for any matter (whether or not charged) imposed on him / her during the period of the licence.

The 5 days excludes a Saturday or a Sunday, Christmas Eve, Christmas Day, Good Friday, Bank Holidays, or any other day on which the Licensing Office is closed.

What should be reported:-

- **Any conviction (criminal or driving matter).**
- **Any caution (issued by the Police or any other agency).**
- **Issue of any Magistrate's Court summonses against you.**
- **Issue of any fixed penalty notice for any matter.**
- **Any harassment or other form of warning or order within the criminal law including anti-social behaviour orders or similar.**
- **Arrest for any offence (whether or not charged).**
- **Any acquittal following a criminal case heard by a court.**

Fixed Penalty Notices

The driver must notify the Council in writing of the acceptance of any fixed penalty endorsement within ***5 working days***.

Arrest for any Offence

Whether charged or not the driver must notify the Council within 3 working days of their arrest for an alleged offence(s).

8 DISCLOSURE AND BARRING SERVICE ONLINE UPDATE SERVICE

All licence holders must subscribe to the Disclosure and Barring Service Online Update Service. Gov.Uk - DBS-Update-Service

Any costs associated with maintaining this subscription must be met by the licence holder.

The licence holder must give permission for the council to undertake checks of their DBS status should the council consider it necessary to do so. The council will use the update service to monitor the criminal record of licence holders.

9 CHANGE OF OPERATOR

The licence holder must notify the Council ***in writing within 5 working days **** of any change of operator through whom they work.

**** The 5 working days excludes a Saturday or a Sunday, Christmas Eve, Christmas Day, Good Friday, Bank Holidays, or any other day on which the Licensing Office is closed.***

10 CHANGE OF ADDRESS AND EMAIL ADDRESS

a. The licence holder must notify the Council ***in writing/email within 5 working days **** of any change of their address taking place during the period of the licence, whether permanent or temporary.

b. The licence holder must notify the Council ***in writing/email within 5 working days **** of any change of their contact email address taking place during the period of the licence, whether permanent or temporary

**** The 5 working days excludes a Saturday or a Sunday, Christmas Eve, Christmas Day, Good Friday, Bank Holidays, or any other day on which the Licensing Office is closed.***

11 WORKING HOURS

Licensed drivers will not drive when their ability to do so is impaired by having worked excessive hours.

12 CUSTOMER AND OTHER PERSONAL INFORMATION

Drivers must ensure that any personal information obtained during the course of their business is stored securely, and only retained for as long as is absolutely necessary. Access to this information must be restricted to those that will use it for the purpose for which it has been collected.

Personal information must not be used for any other purpose other than that for which it was collected without the express permission of the individual to which the information relates.

For example, telephone numbers provided by customers so that they can be alerted/updated by SMS text message with regard to a booking they have made must only be used for this purpose. The information must not be retained by the driver after the text message has been sent, and / or used for any other purpose (such as unsolicited calls or messages).

13 DUTY TO COOPERATE ON REGULATORY MATTERS

Licensed drivers must co-operate with authorised officers of the council in all matters relating to the regulation of the licensed vehicle trade. However, nothing in this condition affects the licence holders statutory protection afforded by other legislation.

14 APPEARANCE OF DRIVER

If a licensed driver alters their appearance significantly (for example by growing/removing a beard or moustache, changing hair colour etc), they must request a replacement ID badge from the council at the earliest opportunity and supply them with a up to date photograph that is an accurate portrayal of their current appearance.

15 ACCIDENTS

If at any time the vehicle is involved in an accident, however minor, the driver must inform the Council of this fact as soon as possible and in any event within 3 working day (by email).

DRAFT

APPENDIX B

Equality Act 2010

Duty for drivers of Wheelchair Accessible Vehicles to assist passengers in wheelchairs.

1. Under section 165 licensed drivers of designated wheelchair accessible vehicles **MUST** undertake the following duties
   - Carry the passenger while in the wheelchair.
   - Not make any additional charge for doing so – this includes making sure the meter is NOT running while you are rending assistance into and out of the vehicle.
   - If the passenger chooses to sit in a passenger seat to carry the wheelchair
   - To take such steps as are necessary to ensure that the passenger is carried in safety and comfort.
   - To provide such assistance as it necessary to :-
     - enable the passenger to get into and out of the vehicle, this should include installing the boarding ramp.
     - if the passenger wishes to remain in the wheelchair, to enable them to get into and out of the vehicle while in the wheelchair. This should include pushing a manual wheelchair or light electric wheelchair up a ramp.
     - to load the passenger's luggage into out of the vehicle
     - if the passenger does not want to remain in the wheelchair to load the wheelchair into and out of the vehicle. This should include folding a manual wheelchair and placing it in the luggage compartment or stowing a light electric wheelchair in the luggage compartment.

   .
2. The Council expects it that the owner and/or driver of a designated wheelchair accessible vehicle is fully aware of the safe method for loading, securing, and unloading of wheelchair users. The owner and/or driver should also be aware of any limitations that the vehicle may have in relation to different types of wheelchairs.

3. It is a criminal offense to refuse to undertake any of the duties listed above any driver who breaches the duties outlines above will be liable to prosecution and their taxi license could be a risk.

4. It is recognised that some types of wheelchair, particularly some powered wheelchairs, may be unable to access some of the vehicles included in the Local Authorities list. The Act recognises this possibility, and section 165(9) provides a defence for the driver if it would not have been possible for the wheelchair to be carried safely in the vehicle.

5. Drivers who have a certified medical condition or physical condition, which makes it impossible or unreasonably difficult for them to assist wheelchair users may apply to the council for an exemption from one or more of the duties listed above. Any such application will need to be supported by a completed medical form which is available to download from the council website. The medical form must be completed by the drivers' doctor or specialist, detailing the following:

   - What duties cannot be undertaken.
   - Why they cannot be undertaken.

- Date the conditions was first noted.
- Whether any modification to the vehicle or the way the driver provides the service can be made that would negate the need for an exemption.
- How long the medical exemption will be required for.
- Provide medical reports in support of the request being made.

6. The Council reserves the right to refer the driver to the Council's own medical or occupational health practitioner if an assessment by a third-party medical practitioner is felt necessary. The driver will bear any additional costs.

7. On a case-by-case basis a temporary exemption certificate or a permanent exemption certificate will be issued which must be displayed clearly in the front windscreen of the vehicle at all times that the driver is using the vehicle. **The exemption only applies if the notice is displayed correctly**.

8. In cases where the licensing officer has any concerns regarding granting an exemption then the matter will be referred to the Licensing Committee.

9. There is a right of appeal to any decision made and the driver can appeal to the Magistrates court within 28 days of the decision being made.

Duty of all drivers to carry of assistance dogs

10. Under sections 168 and 170 licensed drivers of taxis and private hire vehicles are under a duty to carry passengers with guide, hearing, and other assistance dogs without additional charge. When carrying such passengers drivers must: -

    - Convey the disabled passengers dog and allow it to remain under the physical control of the owner and
    - Not make or propose to make any additional charge for doing so.

11. It is a criminal offence to refuse to carry an assistance dog and any driver who breaches the duties outlined above will be liable to prosecution and their taxi licence could be a risk.

12. Drivers who have a certified medical conditions which is aggravated by exposure to dogs may apply to the Council for an exemption from the duties listed above. Any such application will need to be supported by a completed medical form which is available to download from the council website. The medical form must be completed by the driver's doctor or specialist, detailing the following:

    - What duties cannot be undertaken.
    - Why they cannot be undertaken.
    - Date the conditions was first noted.
    - Whether any modification to the vehicle or the way the driver provides the service can be made that would negate the need for an exemption.
    - How long the medical exemption will be required for.
    - Provide medical reports in support of the request being made.

13. The Council reserves the right to refer the driver to the Council's own medical or occupational health practitioner if an assessment by a third-party medical practitioner is felt necessary. The driver will bear any additional costs.

14. On a case-by-case basis a temporary exemption certificate or a permanent exemption certificate will be issued which **must be displayed clearly in the front of the vehicle at all times that the driver is using the vehicle**. The exemption only applies if the notice is displayed correctly.

15. In cases where licensing officer have any concerns regarding granting an exemption then the matter will be referred to the Licensing Committee or Sub Committee. .

16. There is a right of appeal to any decision made and the driver can appeal to the Magistrates court within 21 days of the decision being made.

DRAFT

This page is intentionally left blank

Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Vehicle Policy

2025-2030

DRAFT

Bournemouth Christchurch and Poole (BCP)Licensing

Author: Nananka Randle
Version: 1
Review Date: 2025

Index

CHAPTER		PAGE NO
	Introduction	
1	Purpose Statement	3
2	Who the Policy Applies to	3
3	This Policy Replaces	4
4	Approval Process	4
5	Links to Council Strategies	4
6	The policy	4
7	Requirements for new or replacement vehicles	5
8	Vehicle inspections	7
9	Vehicle emissions requirements	7
10	Applications for new or replacement vehicles	7
11	Renewal of licence	8
12	Criminal records	9
13	CCTV or other electronic equipment	10
14	Wheelchair accessibility	10
15	Hackney carriages	12
16	Quantity restrictions on Hackney Carriage numbers	12
17	Hackney Carriage livery	12
18	Hackney Carriage roof signs	13
19	Hackney Carriage licence plates	13
20	Hackney Carriage fare meters and printers	14
21	Private Hire vehicle	15
22	Private Hire meter and printer	15
23	Private Hire vehicle colour and signage	16
24	Private Hire vehicle licence plates	16
25	Vehicle advertising	16
26	Changes to vehicle licence holder	16
27	Accidents/damage to vehicles and temporary substitution	17
28	How to use this policy	17
29	Roles and responsibilities	17

30	Enforcement and sanctions	18
31	Complaints, disciplinary and delegation to officers	18
	Appendix	
A	Speciality Private Hire vehicles	19
B	Private Hire Vehicle plate exemptions	21
C	Private Hire and Hackney Carriage licence conditions	23
D	CCTV	26
E	Advertising and sign guidelines	31
F	Bylaws	32

Introduction

The Licensing Committee and officers are committed to ensuring the highest standards in order to protect public safety when administering this policy.

All requirements contained within this policy together with conditions on the licence are a mandatory requirement for holding a Hackney Carriage or Private Hire Vehicle Licence issued by Bournemouth Christchurch and Poole Council (BCP).

From the first day of adoption of this policy ALL licence holders are required to meet these high standards, and it is expected that they will ensure they are fully aware of this policy and comply with all the requirements set out within it.

The Licensing Committee will not accept the excuse that a licence holder was not aware of these requirements when considering any matters bought before them.

1. Purpose statement

1.1 BCP Council has a responsibility to issue Hackney Carriage and Private Hire vehicles, operators and driver licences under the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976 and the Town Police Clauses Act 1847.

1.2 The policy also reflects government guidance as set out in the Department for Transport Statutory Taxi and Private Hire Vehicle Standards issued in July 2020 and updated in 2022. Statutory taxi and private hire vehicle standards - GOV.UK

1.3 In the interest of public safety BCP Council seek to ensure that anyone issued with such a licence is considered to be 'fit and proper' and that the vehicle meets the safety standards prior to issuing or reissuing any licence.

1.4 This Policy is concerned with the regulation of Hackney Carriage and Private Hire licenced vehicles and the council adopts the overall approach to encouraging the responsible activity of all licence holders. In the interests of its residents and visitors, it will not tolerate any vehicle which poses a threat to the safety of any passenger or other road user.

1.5 Notwithstanding the existence of this Policy, each application or enforcement measure will be considered on its own merits. Where is it appropriate for the Council to depart from its Policy clear reasons will be given for doing so. Nothing in this Policy will prevent an applicant or licence holder requesting that the Council considers the individual merits of their case and give reasonable consideration to departing from its Policy. Such requests my either be in writing via email or orally before the Licensing Committee or Sub Committee.

2. Who the policy applies to

2.1 This Policy will assist applicants, licence holders, officers of the Licensing Authority, Members of the Licensing Committee, and persons using Hackney Carriage or Private Hire vehicles to be aware of the standards of conduct and behaviour required of all prospective or existing licenced vehicle proprietors, drivers and operators.

2.2 This Policy also affords members of the Licensing Committee and Officers of the Licensing Authority alike, to consider the concerns of the public and other recognised bodies, and to take appropriate measures where the behaviour of licensed vehicle proprietors, drivers and operators are called into question at application or after licences have been issued.

3. This policy replaces

3.1 This Policy replaces the previous BCP Council Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Vehicle Policy implemented in June 2021.

4. Approval process

4.1 BCP Council as the Licensing Authority has delegated the Licensing Committee to oversee the development and review of its Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Vehicle Policy.

4.2 Once drafted the policy is subject to a period of public consultation. Consultation responses are reported to the full Licensing Committee for consideration.

4.3 Once finalised the policy is presented to the Full Council for ratification.

5. Links to Council Strategies

5.1 This policy supports the BCP Council Core Strategy.

5.2 During the preparation of this policy document due consideration has been given to the following Key Council Strategies:

- Corporate Plan
- Sustainable Transport Plan
- Workforce Strategy
- Health & Wellbeing Strategy
- Safeguarding Strategy
- Climate Change Strategy
- Children in Care Strategy
- Crime & Disorder Reduction Strategy
- Equality & Diversity

6. The policy

6.1 This policy is a working document, and the Licensing Authority reserves the right to alter and amend the policy as appropriate to correct errors, inconsistencies, clarify guidance, legislative changes and issue a revised version of the policy at any time. However, any **significant changes** to the Policy will only be implemented after a formal consultation process with the trade and public.

6.2 Any **significant amendment** is defined as one that:

- Is likely to have a significant financial effect on licence holders or
- Is likely to have a significant procedural effect on licence holders or
- Is likely to have a significant adverse effect on the community

6.3 Any changes to this policy will be communicated to licence holders via email as soon as practicable to do so

7. Vehicle requirements for new or replacement vehicles

7.1 All vehicles must comply with British and European vehicle regulations, be approved to the standard of type M1 European Whole Vehicle Type Approval (EWVTA), and materially unaltered from the type approval specification. A certificate of conformity bearing the vehicle's unique identification number which relates to an M1 whole vehicle type approval may be required. This requirement is subject to the following provisions:

- The Council may, at its discretion, accept vehicles converted and certified as conforming to a national Small Series or Low Volume Type Approval in place of the above requirement, providing no further modifications have been made to the vehicle since conversion. A certificate of conformity, bearing the vehicle's unique identification number, will be required as evidence of the satisfactory conversion.

- Proprietors of vehicles which have been modified from an original type approval specification must additionally provide proof of type conformity by way of successful completion of a voluntary Individual Vehicle Approval (IVA) test to M1 standards at a Vehicle and Operator Services Agency (VOSA) testing station, following completion of the modification and with any additional equipment (e.g. wheelchair access /restraints) in place. In such cases, the original vehicle, prior to modification, must be of M1 EWVTA Approval.

- Vehicles converted from other base vehicle types (e.g. M2 or N1) will not be accepted for licensing, unless converted and certified in accordance with the above.

7.2 No material alteration or change in the specification, design, condition or appearance of the vehicle shall be made subsequent to the inspection of the vehicle by the Council at any time while the licence is in force and at all times the vehicle shall comply with the specifications of the Council for a licensed vehicle. (Vehicles which have been modified in any way from the manufacturer's standard of construction may not be considered suitable for licensing purposes depending upon the nature of the modification).

7.3 The vehicle should have a minimum of four opening doors, two on each side of the vehicle with the exception of London style taxis

7.4 To assist applicants the council will publish a list of approved vehicles on the website for reference purposes only.

Vehicle age and emissions

7.5 All vehicles at first licence must be no more than 5 years old from the date of first registration and have no more than 60,000 miles on the clock. The vehicle engine emissions must meet euro 6 emission standard or higher (or other equivalent standard.) See section 9.

7.6 For wheelchair accessible vehicles these shall have no more than 100,000 miles on the clock and must meet euro 6 emission standard or higher (or other equivalent standard) and all other additional requirements as set out in paragraph 10.2 and Section 14.

Tinted windows

7.7 After-market tinted or blacked out windows are not acceptable. Tint film must not be applied to any windows.

Passenger seat

7.8 The vehicle must have sufficient seating capacity to carry not less than four and not more than eight passengers in addition to the driver. (The seating capacity is determined on the assumption that allowance is made for a rear seating width of approximately 400 mm (16") per passenger measured laterally along the widest part of the seat and where arm rests are positioned over such seats the measurement shall be taken between arm rests.)

7.9 Access to every passenger seat must be unobstructed and be easily accessible to passengers and without the need for more than one passenger to move.

7.10 Head rests and seatbelts must be fitted to all forward or rear facing seats.

Luggage

7.11 A suitable space separated from the passenger compartment for the safe carriage of luggage.

7.12 The boot capacity shall be no less than 370 litres, please ensure with estate and hatchback or similar type cars this is not calculated to include above the parcel shelf unless there is a permanently fixed divider behind the rear seats.

7.13 The vehicle shall not carry luggage on the roof, without ensuring that it is adequately fixed on a secure luggage rack which complies with necessary safety standards and weight restrictions.

Insurance write-offs

7.14 No vehicle which has been previously written off will be licenced regardless of the category.

Card payments

7.15 All vehicles must have a payment facility to accept debit/credit cards and contactless payment

7.16 The payment facility must be kept in the vehicle, be fully operational and available for immediate use at all times the vehicle is operational.

7.17 No additional costs as a result of card payments may be passed to the customer.

Speciality vehicles

7.18 Speciality vehicles such as limousines or novelty vehicles must comply with the requirements as set out in Appendix A.

8. Vehicle Inspections

8.1 All licenced vehicles regardless of age or mileage will be required to have two mechanical inspections per calendar year.

- Prior to the issue of a licence and annually thereafter a licensed vehicle must undergo a mechanical examination at one of the Council approved designated testing centres. The testing station will issue a Mechanical Examination Certificate (MEC) for twelve months.

- The vehicle must then be tested no more than 6 months but no less than five months after the MEC issue date . This inspection will take the form of a standard Mot and can take place at any DVSA authorised garage. (If there is an existing Mot this can mean the vehicle is tested three times the first year to bring the testing into synchronisation with the policy requirements.

8.2 Failure to complete the MEC or Mot by the due date will result in the vehicle licence being immediately suspended and the vehicle cannot be used as a licensed vehicle until confirmation that the test has been successfully completed is received and reviewed by the taxi licensing team.

8.3 Failure to complete the MEC within two months of the due date will result in the vehicle licence being revoked.

8.4 The annual MEC test the vehicle must be completed no more than four weeks before the anniversary of the first MEC test inspection date.

8.5 If the vehicle fails the MEC and its condition represents a risk to passengers a Stop Notice will be issued, this suspends the vehicle licence until the necessary repairs are carried out and the vehicle has been rechecked at the testing station.

8.6 The Council does not have a duty to notify the licence holder's that their vehicle requires a test certificate to remain licenced. It is the licence holder's responsibility to ensure that the vehicle is tested in accordance with the requirements of the licence.

9. Vehicle emission requirements

9.1 BCP council has declared an Environment Emergency, vehicles exhaust emissions are a principal source of air pollution.

9.2 All vehicles must meet the minimum emission standard Euro 6 or equivalent standard with the exception of speciality vehicles.

9.3 The aim of Euro 6 is to reduce levels of harmful car and van exhaust emissions, both in petrol and diesel cars.

10. Applications for new or replacement vehicles

10.1 Vehicle licences for new or replacement vehicles will only be issued on receipt of all the necessary paperwork. Applicants are reminded that the licence is for the vehicle and the plate together so the person who applies for the licence MUST own the vehicle as well as be a licence holder. Licences can be issued to multiple applicants to ensure everyone who has a financial interest in the vehicle and its licence are named.

10.2 Applications must be accompanied by the following documents

- V5 – this is the registered keeper details
- VOSA – if vehicle is more than 12 months old
- Certificate of mechanical inspection from appointed testing centre
- Proof of purchase – receipt/bill of sale/HP agreement
- Valid insurance which includes hire and reward
- Basic DBS certificate dated within 12 months, if the applicant already holds a Hackney Carriage or Private Hire drivers licence issued by BCP council the DBS update service details must be provided with the application. The basic DBS certificate or DBS update details are required for each named person applying for the vehicle licence
- Certificate of conformance (for wheelchair accessible vehicles only on first application)
- Lifting Operations and Lifting Equipment Regulation (LOLER) certificate where a vehicle has an electric winch or other electric equipment to help move wheelchairs.
- Driver wheelchair accessible training certificates (for wheelchair accessible vehicle only)
- Correct fee

10.3 Once all the relevant paperwork has been submitted a vehicle licence and plate will be issued to the main designated licence holder.

10.4 Once issued the licence holder is responsible for complying with the licence conditions as set out in Appendix C Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Conditions of Licence.

11. Renewal of licence

11.1 Holders of existing vehicle licences must apply to renew their licence no earlier than two months prior and no later than ten working day prior to the expiry date.

11.2 Where the vehicle is a wheelchair accessible vehicle the licence holder must also supply evidence of each drivers additional training in the safe transportation of passengers in a wheelchair. Refresher training certificate should not be more than three years old.

11.3 The council has no duty to notify the holder that their licence is due for renewal as it is the licence holder's responsibility to renew their licence. As a courtesy an email reminder will be sent to the licence holder in advance of their renewal date. It is the licence holder's responsibility to ensure their email address is kept up to date.

11.4 Renewal applications must be submitted electronically via email to: taxi.privatehire@bcpcouncil.gov.uk.

11.5 The renewal criteria is the same as for an application, as set out section 10.

11.6 If a Licence holder does not renew their licence by the renewal date, the licence will automatically expire. Where this occurs, the applicant will be required to submit a new application, and the vehicle will be deemed to be a new vehicle. Therefore, the vehicle will need to meet all the necessary requirements for a new vehicle. (As in Chapter 7) The expired vehicle licence plates must be returned to the Licensing Authority within five working days of expiry.

12. Criminal Records

12.1 The applicant/licence holder must declare any previous criminal convictions, cautions and fixed penalty notices received, including those awaiting appeal, and any charges pending. The council will make a decision as to the relevance of convictions, cautions, charges and fixed penalty notices in accordance with criminal convictions guidelines.

12.2 The council may require further information from the Police or Crown Prosecution Service. Applicants/licence holders who have previous criminal convictions, cautions, fixed penalty notices or charges pending will be interviewed and details of that interview may be included in any report which is referred to the Licensing Committee.

12.3 Failure to disclose or declare any previous convictions, cautions, fixed penalty notices or pending charges, maybe construed as an attempt to deceive and appropriate and proportionate action will be taken.

12.4 BCP Council will have regard to the IOL guidance on determining the suitability of applicants and licensees in the taxi and Private Hire trade as a minimum standard.

12.5 In addition, consideration on suitability may include other factors including the conduct of the applicant during the application process or during the term of their existing or previous licence as well as their conduct, co-operation and working relationship with the Authority and its officers.

12.6 In essence a 'fit and proper' vehicle proprietor .

- Any previous criminality will be assessed (see assessment of previous convictions annexe of Statutory taxi and private hire vehicle standards - GOV.UK)
- should not be violent, abusive or threatening in their behaviour even if subjected to unpleasant, confrontational or dishonest passenger behaviour or when subject to enforcement action from officers.
- should be honest and trustworthy with integrity as they have access to a large amount of personal information that could be misused and significant opportunity to defraud people.
- should work co-operatively with and be civil and respectful towards officers of the Licensing Authority who are carrying out their duties.

12.7 This list is not exclusive, and other factors may also be relevant to the fit and proper person definition.

12.8 The Licensing Authority will consider all information provided to it from sources such as the Police, Children and Adults Safeguarding Committees, Passenger Services and other statutory agencies. Existing licence holders will also have previous history/outcomes during their time as a licensed driver /operator or previous applicant taken into account and their ability to work constructively and positively with the Licensing Authority.

12.9 The Licensing Authority will consider all criminal history, unacceptable behaviour and conduct irrespective of whether the specific history, behaviour or conduct occurred whilst licence holders drivers were directly engaged in their professional capacity at work or whether they occurred during the licence holders own personal time.

13. CCTV and other electronic equipment

13.1 The Licensing Authority has determined that CCTV systems can be installed and operated in Hackney Carriage and Private Hire vehicles for the following legitimate purposes:

- preventing and detecting crime
- reducing the fear of crime
- enhancing the safety of Hackney Carriage and Private Hire vehicle drivers, and their passengers

13.2 The policy seeks to ensure that the installation and operation of CCTV systems does not

(a) unreasonably interfere with the rights and freedoms of members of the public; and
(b) compromise the safety of drivers and passengers.

13.3 A CCTV system will include any electronic recording device attached to the inside of a Hackney Carriage or Private Hire vehicle having the technical capability to capture and retain visual images from inside or external to the vehicle. Appendix D.

13.4 Any CCTV system to be fitted in a Hackney Carriage or Private Hire vehicle must, as a minimum, meet the requirements of this policy.

13.5 Where a licensed vehicle proprietor/driver wishes to install and use a CCTV system, it will be a condition of the Hackney Carriage or Private Hire vehicle licence that the requirements of this policy are fully complied with.

13.6 This policy does not place a mandatory requirement to install a CCTV system in all Hackney Carriage or Private Hire vehicles.

13.7 Other electronic equipment which is not supplied with the vehicle as standard should be for the receiving and fulfilling of bookings and be of an approved type.

13.8 Unauthorised equipment for the recording and replay of video and audio is not permitted.

13.9 Dashcams can be installed They must not record sound and must be recording the outside of the vehicle only. As the vehicle is for public hire the licence holder will also need to ensure that it is registered with the Information Commissioner in the same way as the CCTV. Appendix D

14. Wheelchair accessibility

Wheelchair Accessible Vehicle (WAV) requirements and published list

14.1 It is expected any vehicle presented to the council to be licenced as a wheelchair accessible vehicle must meet the following space standards which are 1350mm high, 700mm wide, 1200mm long as stated within the Statutory Guidance Access to taxis and private hire vehicles for disabled users - GOV.UK

14.2 It is the licence holder's responsibility to ensure any vehicle meets this standard prior to purchase and presentation for a licence.

14.3 Prior to any licence being issued the applicant will have to provide a copy of the vehicle conformance certificate for the adaptation or the vehicle should have a Multistage (stage 2 verification plate) build plate that must be complete, legible, and match the vehicle it was originally issued to.

14.4 These regulations also set out the requirements for the testing of wheelchair restraints and hoists. It will be a requirement at first licence and each subsequent renewal that testing LOLER certificates showing annual maintenance of any hoist, restraint system and ramps is submitted.

14.5 The council has a duty to publish a list of wheelchair accessible vehicles so that anyone that requires such a vehicle is able to book one directly. All wheelchair accessible vehicle licence holders will be required to provide a contact name and number together with vehicle availability details on an annual basis on first application and at renewal. If the details change it is the responsibility of the licence holder to notify the Licensing team.

14.6 WAV Training to be completed in accordance with paragraph 11.2.

Duty to assist passengers in wheelchairs

14.7 Under section 165 of the Equality Act 2010 licensed drivers of designated wheelchair accessible vehicles MUST undertake the following duties.

- Carry the passenger while in the wheelchair.
- Not make any additional charge for doing so – this includes making sure the meter is NOT running while you are rending assistance into and out of the vehicle
- If the passenger chooses to sit in a passenger seat to carry the wheelchair
- To take such steps as are necessary to ensure that the passenger is carried in safety and comfort.
- To provide such assistance as it necessary to enable the passenger to get into and out of the vehicle, this should include.
    - installing the boarding ramp, if the passenger wishes to remain in the wheelchair, to enable them to get into and out of the vehicle while in the wheelchair. This should include pushing a manual wheelchair or light electric wheelchair up a ramp.
    - to load the passenger's luggage into out of the vehicle
    - if the passenger does not want to remain in the wheelchair to load the wheelchair into and out of the vehicle. This should include folding a manual wheelchair and placing it in the luggage compartment or stowing a light electric wheelchair in the luggage compartment.

14.8 It is expected by the Council that the proprietor and/or driver of a designated wheelchair accessible vehicle is fully aware of the safe method for loading, securing and unloading of wheelchair users for their particular vehicle.

14.9 The licence holder will be responsible for ensuring drivers of their vehicle can safely transport and assist passengers in a wheelchair and as such they must submit a certificate of training for each named driver as part of the vehicle renewal process.

15. Hackney Carriages

15.1 Hackney Carriage vehicles are available for immediate hire by being hailed (flagged down) in a public street or hired from a taxi rank.

15.2 As these vehicles are not pre-booked it is important that members of the public can easily identify a licenced vehicle in order to flag it down or accept a ride from a rank.

15.3 Hackney Carriages can also be used as a Private Hire vehicle and can work for any operator regardless of the area the operator is licenced in.

15.4 Hackney Carriage appearance and livery reflects the conurbation and in order to ensure visitors and residents alike they should be easily identifiable as a BCP Hackney Carriage. See Section 17.

15.5 All Hackney Carriages must have an illuminated roof sign. See Section18.

15.6 The Hackney Carriage licence plates issued by BCP Council must be displayed in the approved positions. See Section 19.

15.7 All Hackney Carriages must be fitted with a meter and receipt printer. See Section 20.

15.8 BCP Council does not allow dual plating. Any vehicle that is licensed by BCP Council may not be licensed by any other Council at the same time.

16. Quantity restrictions on Hackney Carriage numbers

16.1 An 'Unmet Needs' survey was undertaken on behalf of the Licensing Authority in January 2023, the survey concluded that there is no unmet need in any of the three licensed zones within the BCP area.

16.2 The three Hackney Carriage vehicle zones for B (Bournemouth), C (Christchurch) and P (Poole) will be retained. Applicants will be required to state which zone the vehicle is to work in when applying for a new licence.

16.3 Any application for a new Hackney Carriage vehicle licence will only be approved for Wheelchair Accessible Vehicles.

16.4 Existing Hackney Carriage licences which are not restricted to wheelchair accessible vehicles can be replaced with a suitable which vehicle meets policy requirements.

16.5 Hackney Carriage licences issued after 2021 in any of the three zones must remain wheelchair accessible at all times and any replacement vehicles must meet the wheelchair accessible requirements of this policy.

17 Hackney Carriage Livery

17.1 All new and replacement Hackney Carriage vehicles must be white in colour.

17.2 The vehicle shall have permanently affixed, in the prescribed position the following livery:

- A reflective blue stripe which should be between 75-85 mm wide and run continually along each side of the vehicle as close to the window line as possible.

- The reflective blue stripe shall have the words either BOURNEMOUTH CHRISTCHURCH or POOLE (in upper case) depending on the licenced zone of the vehicle on the near and offside quarter panels. Lettering shall be 25mm 'Eurostile' font Medium in white.

- The vehicle door insignia (as approved by BCP Council) must be fixed in place on both front doors of the vehicle and the bonnet.

- Any vehicle that is a designated Wheelchair Accessible vehicle must also display a sticker indicating that it is accessible.

18 Hackney Carriage Roof Signs

18.1 All Hackney Carriage vehicle must be fitted with an illuminated roof sign of a size and design approved by BCP Council Licensing Office.

18.2 The illuminated roof sign should be positioned so that it is visible from the front and rear by customers

18.3 The front of the sign should have a white background and in black letters a minimum of height of 62.5mm and a maximum of 75mm display the word 'TAXI'.

18.4 The rear of the sign must be the same size letters and wording as 18.3 but it should be on a red background.

18.5 There is an exception for purpose-built Hackney Carriages that have a built-in roof sign/pod.

19 Hackney Carriage Licence Plates

19.1 All Hackney Carriages will be issued with licence plates one to be displayed externally and one internally, with the drivers badge displayed internally visible by the passenger at all times.

19.2 The external vehicle plates are to be displayed on outer rear of the vehicle by the number plate or bumper and be clearly visible.

19.3 The internal licence plate is to be displayed in the front windscreen preferably in the top passenger side of the vehicle or on the internal partition if present in the vehicle. The internal plate must be clearly visible with the illuminated side showing into the vehicle so all travelling passengers can easily identify the licence number and how to make a compliant.

19.4 Any damaged or lost plates must be notified to the Licensing Authority immediately. The cost of a replacement plate will incur an additional charge to the licence holder.

19.5 The licence plate is the property of BCP Council and must be returned to the Licensing Office when the licence expires and/or it is not to be renewed.

20 Hackney Carriage Fare Meters and Printers

20.1 All Hackney Carriages must be fitted with either of the following types of device:

a) A meter of the clock/calendar type which has been approved by the Council and which will calculate distance and time of the hiring, and a receipt printer attached to the meter ("a taximeter"); (As set in Appendix F)

Or

b) A GPS equipped fare calculator which has been approved by the Council and which will calculate distance and time of the hiring, and a receipt printer attached to it ("a GPS fare calculator")

20.2 In both cases the device must be calibrated and set to a rate which does not exceed the Councils table of fares as may be made and be in force from time to time.

20.3 All Hackney Carriages fitted with a GPS fare calculator (as defined in (b) above) must ensure that:

i. When standing or plying for hire the GPS fare calculator is inactive insofar as it is not recording time or distance or calculating a fare.
ii. Before beginning a journey for which a fare is charged for distance and time, activate the GPS fare calculator to record and display the fare until the hiring terminates.

20.4 All Hackney Carriage vehicles should be fitted with a printer connected to the taximeter or GPS fare calculator this must be either hard wired or connected via Bluetooth and must be able to provide either a printed receipt or a virtual receipt to any passenger on request. (A handwritten receipt is not permitted except if the vehicle has a meter temporary permit.)

20.5 A receipt including virtual receipts must include the following information: -

a. Vehicle registration and licence number
b. The date and time of the journey.
c. fare displayed and calculated by the meter together with other approved charges in accordance with the fare chart

20.6 The meter and any associated receipt printer must be maintained in proper working order at all times.

20.7 The licensed holder must ensure that any driver using the licensed vehicle is trained to use the meter and printer in order to facilitate the above requirements.

20.8 In cases where a meter or approved system /and or printer is out of action the licensed vehicle holder must notify the Licensing Office immediately. A meter temporary permit to ply for hire without a meter and or printer may then be issued for a period not exceeding fourteen days and subject to immediate steps being taken to effect repair.

21 Private Hire Vehicles

21.1 Private Hire vehicles cannot be hired without a prior booking via a licenced Private Hire Operator. The requirements of the legislation require that licenced Private Hire vehicles, drivers and operators must all be licenced within the same licensing area.

21.2 BCP council has one Private Hire area which covers the entire council area allowing licenced Private Hire vehicles to be used any BCP licenced Private Hire Operator.

21.3 Private Hire vehicle shall meet the requirements as set out in section 7, with the exception of speciality vehicles. See Appendix A.

- The proprietor of a Private Hire vehicle shall at all times ensure the vehicle is not of such design and appearance as to lead any person to believe that the vehicle is a Hackney Carriage.

21.4 BCP Council does not allow dual plating. Any vehicle that is licensed by BCP Council may not be licensed by any other Council at the same time.

22 Private Hire fare meter and printer

22.1 A Private Hire vehicle is permitted to be fitted with either a:

a) A meter of the clock/calendar type which has been approved by the Council and which will calculate distance and time of the hiring and a receipt printer attached to the meter ("a taximeter"); (As set in Appendix F)

or

b) A GPS equipped fare calculator which has been approved by the Council and which will calculate distance and time of the hiring and a receipt printer attached to it ("a GPS fare calculator")

22.2 Any such system shall be approved by the Licensing Authority prior to installation.

22.3 The meter/fare calculator and any associated receipt printer must be maintained in proper working order at all times.

22.4 A Private Hire vehicle must be able to produce or provide a receipt for the journey. (A handwritten receipt is not permitted). This can be:

- A printed receipt directly from the meter (where one is fitted)
- An email/ text message
- A hard copy produced by the operator

22.5 All receipts including virtual receipts must include the following information: -

1. The operators name, vehicle registration and licence number
2. The date and time of the journey.
3. fare displayed and calculated by the meter together with other approved charges in accordance with the fare chart.

22.6 The licensed holder must ensure that any driver using the licensed vehicle is trained to use the meter and printer in order to facilitate the above requirements.

23 Private Hire Vehicle Colour and signage

23.1 No vehicle licensed as a Private Hire shall be coloured white. (This is to avoid confusion with Hackney Carriages.)

23.2 All Private Hire vehicles shall have permanently affixed in the prescribed positions the following signage:

- Door livery – including No booking, No ride and PH licence number
- Large 'No booking No ride' stickers on both rear passenger doors as near to the door handle as is possible either to the side or directly underneath. (they are clearly visible to the customer when entering the vehicle).
- Small 'No booking, No ride' sticker on front passenger door as above.
- If the vehicle wishes to use the bus lanes in the BCP Council area a 'Chequered flag' sticker should be on the offside, front of the bonnet.

24 Private Hire Licence Plates

24.1 All Private Hire vehicles will be issued with two licence plates one to be displayed externally and one internally with the drivers badge displayed internally visible by the passenger at all times.

24.2 The external vehicle plate must be displayed on outer rear of the vehicle by the number plate or bumper and be clearly visible. Unless exempt see Appendix B

24.3 The internal licence plate is to be displayed in the front windscreen preferably in the top passenger side of the vehicle. The internal plate must be clearly visible with the illuminated side showing into the vehicle so all traveling passengers can easily identify the licence number and how to make a complaint.

24.4 Any damaged or lost plates must be notified to the Licensing Authority immediately. The cost of a replacement plate will incur an additional charge to the licence holder.

24.5 The licence plate is the property of BCP Council and must be returned to the Licensing Office when the licence expires and/or it is not to be renewed.

25 Vehicle advertising

25.1 All vehicle advertising must be approved by the Licensing Office before being used.

25.2 A proof of the proposal must be provided to the Licensing Office and where necessary the appropriate fee paid prior to approval.

25.3 All advertising and signs should meet the requirements as stated in Appendix E.

26 Changes to Vehicle Licence holder (Transfers)

26.1 Vehicle licences can be amended to add or remove licence holders.

26.2 A vehicle licence includes the licence(plate) and the vehicle to which it relates, as such a vehicle cannot be transferred without the licence being updated to reflect this change in ownership. In addition, a licence(plate) cannot change hands if the vehicle is not owned by anyone on the licence.

26.3 As a vehicle licence is technically a business, the licensing team must ensure that everyone involved in the business is aware of any change in ownership of the licence.

Identity documentation will be checked, and copies will be required prior to the change in licence being administered.

27 Accidents/damage to vehicles and temporary substitution

Temporary Vehicles

27.1 In the event that a licenced vehicle requires repair due to accident or mechanical breakdown the licence holder can apply for a temporary licence to allow an alternative vehicle to be used for a period of no more than 28 days on application to the Licensing Authority.

27.2 In the case of repair due to an accident, the licence holder must have reported the accident as per the conditions of the licence.

27.3 The replacement vehicle should be of a similar type or better than the damaged vehicle and must meet our current vehicle policy requirements in regard to age and mileage. Temporary vehicles must meet the councils colour requirements. See Section 7

27.4 The vehicle will need an MOT dated within 7 days of the application

27.5 The application form must be completed by the vehicle licence holder (not vehicle hire company) and must include all the necessary documentation.

27.6 Temporary substitute plates will be provided by appointment only at the civic offices and at the time of appointment the licence holder must provide the plate from the vehicle being repaired in exchange for a temporary plate. On the expiry of 28 days, by appointment, the licence holder must return the temporary plate to the civic offices in exchange for the plate for the licenced vehicle.

27.7 In exceptional circumstances an extension for the temporary substitute will be granted on receipt of written request detailing the reasons that an extension is necessary. A further fee will be payable.

Vehicles Written Off

27.8 In cases where the licenced vehicle is subsequently classed as a Category A, B or S write off, the vehicle will need to be immediately replaced or the licence surrendered.

27.9 In cases where the licenced vehicle is subsequently classed as a Category N write off, following repair it must pass the councils advanced mechanical inspection prior to being permitted to continue to be used as a licenced vehicle.

28 How to use this policy

28.1 All BCP vehicle licence holders should ensure that they are fully compliant with this policy and appendices.

29 Roles and responsibilities

29.1 The Licensing Manager is responsible for overseeing the functions and work of the licensing team who deliver the policy.

29.2 The Licensing Committee or Sub-Committee will be presented with reports in cases where drivers do not meet the conditions of their licence or where complaints have been received and a decision is required if the driver remains a fit and proper person.

29.3 Decisions by the Licensing Committee are subject to appeal to the Magistrates court within a statutory appeal period of 21 days from the notification of any committee hearing decision.

30 Enforcement and sanctions

30.1 Any vehicle licence holder who does not comply with the policy, or any conditions contained in it, which leads to a breach of a condition or any complaint received, will be subject to an investigation the results of which may be referred to the Licensing Committee for consideration.

.

30.2 The Licensing Committee can choose to revoke a licence or suspend a licence pending any necessary action by the vehicle licence holder such as attending training or counselling as required.

30.3 Decisions by the Licensing Committee are subject to appeal to the Magistrates Court within a statutory appeal period of 21 days from the notification of any committee hearing decision.

31 Complaints, disciplinary and delegation to officers

31.1 In cases of complaints or allegations about a licenced vehicle, the Licensing Officer will investigate the matter fully and determine the seriousness of the allegation.

31.2 Where there are serious allegations that are deemed to pose an **imminent risk to public safety**, the Licensing Manager or other senior officer, will contact the vehicle proprietor/operator in question and obtain their version of the event. If the officer deems that the complaint is founded the matter will be referred to three members of the Licensing Committee to include the chair and vice chair.

31.3 If members determine that the evidence presented demonstrates there is an imminent risk to public safety, the drivers licence will be immediately revoked and the person concerned will be notified and required to surrender their badge and paper licence the same day. Members will confirm in writing the decision made and the reasons why the decision was reached.

31.4 If members agree there is a risk to public safety, but it is not an imminent risk the matter will be referred to the Licensing or Licensing Sub-Committee.

31.5 For complaints of a less serious matter with no requirement for consideration by the Licensing Committee, the Licensing Manager is permitted to issue/authorise caution letters and can suspend a licence for a period of no more than 2 weeks.

31.6 In all cases of complaint, officers will make reference to this policy and any conditions as specified as well as the Institute of Licensing guidance on the suitability of applicants and licensees in the Hackney Carriage and Private Hire trades.

APPENDIX A

SPECIALITY PRIVATE HIRE VEHICLES REQUIREMENTS

1.1 On being presented for licensing for the first time, the vehicle shall have proof of one of the following:
- Individual Vehicle approval certificate
- a European whole vehicle certificate
- a UK low vehicle type approval certificate

1.2 No Stretched Limousine or Party Vehicle shall be licensed by the Council where the maximum unladen weight of the vehicle exceeds 3,220.50kg (7,100 lbs).

1.3 A Stretched Limousine or Party Vehicle shall only be considered for licensing where the applicant produces evidence that the "stretch" was performed by the manufacturer or by a coachbuilder approved by the vehicle manufacturer. American limousines/party vehicles shall have been built by an approved coachbuilder under the QVM programme for Ford vehicles or the CMC programme for Cadillac vehicles. The onus shall be upon the applicant to prove that the vehicle meets the prescribed standards.

1.4 Any replacement parts fitted to a Stretched Limousine/Party Vehicle shall meet the approved standards of the stretched specifications i.e. tyres shall meet both the size and weight specifications.

1.5 Vehicles shall be capable of carrying no fewer than three and not more than eight passengers in addition to the driver. Side facing seats shall only be permitted on a Stretched Limousine/Party Vehicle if they meet the minimum requirements of lap belts fitted to each passenger seat of the side facing seats. A seat shall be a minimum width of 400mm. Stretched limousines shall only be licensed to carry a maximum of eight passengers regardless of how many seats are fitted to the vehicle.

1.6 Vehicles shall be equipped at all times with seat belts of an acceptable type in respect of every seat which can be used for the carriage of passengers. Seat belts shall comply with current legislation and be in proper working order at all times.

1.7 passenger shall have direct access to a door without the need to fold flat, tilt up or remove other seating.

1.8 Vehicles shall be fitted with at least four doors and four wheels.

1.9 The vehicle may be left or right-hand drive.

1.10 All paintwork shall be free of rust and corrosion and be of a very high standard.

1.11 Vehicles shall have adequate space for luggage.

1.12 All brakes and mechanical parts shall be kept in good order and condition.

1.13 The vehicle shall have a serviceable spare wheel, together with the proper tools and equipment to change the wheel in the event of a tyre or wheel becoming defective.

1.14 All tyres (including the spare) shall be suitable for the vehicle

1.15 The vehicle shall not be designed or adapted for off road purposes.

1.16 The vehicle shall not be designed or adapted as a people carrier, minibus, people mover or other like vehicle.

Note: **PRIOR TO** purchasing any vehicle to be used as speciality type vehicle you are strongly advised to contact the Licensing Team for advice concerning the different makes and models of vehicles considered appropriate for licensing for this type of work.

APPENDIX B

PRIVATE HIRE PLATE AND LIVERY EXEMPTIONS

1. Full exemption – Exclusive Executive Chauffeur Service

Any vehicle proprietor wishing to apply for a full exemption should be solely engaged in the provision of an executive chauffeur service.

1.1 Applications for a full exemption from the requirement to display an external identification plate on the rear of a Private Hire vehicle for the duration of the licence will generally only be considered where the requirements listed below are met:

- Work undertaken is exclusively "chauffeured" in nature. The chauffeur and vehicle are specifically hired to provide transport to a company or person, and/or where the display of a licence plate may affect the dignity or security of the persons carried.

- Vehicles must be of a standard and size and comfort and equipped to a level equal or above luxury model Relevant considerations as to whether a vehicle meets this standard include but are not limited to cost, reputation, specification, appearance, perception, superior comfort levels and

- seating specification i.e. whether the vehicle offers additional space per passenger opposed to standard vehicles.

- Vehicles must be in pristine condition with no visible defects, dents or blemishes to the external bodywork, wheels or internal trim and seating. Interior seating will usually be leather and the cabin air conditioned to maintain passenger comfort.

- The safety of the travelling public will not be compromised by exempting the vehicle from displaying an identity plate

1.2 An application for a vehicle to be exempted from displaying an external identification plate must be made by the vehicle proprietor using the appropriate application form. Additional documentation may be requested as reasonably necessary.

1.3 When issued with an exemption notice, the vehicle will not be required to display any other signs (except the internal licence plate) which the Council may at any time require Private Hire vehicles to display.

1.4 The vehicle shall not be permitted to display any advertisement including that of the operator either on or inside the vehicle.

1.5 the driver shall not be required to wear a Private Hire Driver's identification badge but will have it available for immediate inspection on request by an authorised officer of the Council or any Police Officer.

1.6 The exemption notice together with the external plate must be kept in the vehicle at all times and available for immediate inspection on request by an authorised officer of the Council or any Police Officer.

1.7 The exemption will cease to have effect on selling or transferring the vehicle to another party.

2. Part Exemption – Long distance Airports and Ports

Any vehicle proprietor wishing to apply for this exemption should be engaged in the provision of predominantly long-distance travel, namely airports, ports and 'special' journeys.

2.1 Applications for a part exemption will not have to display 'No booking No ride' 'stickers on all passenger doors or any other livery requirements the Council may determine necessary.

2.2 They will be required to display an external identification plate on the rear of a Private Hire vehicle for the duration of the licence as well as an internal plate.

2.3 An application for a vehicle to be exempt from displaying external identification 'No booking No ride' stickers or other livery requirements the Council may determine necessary must be made by the vehicle proprietor using the appropriate form.

2.4 The vehicle shall not be permitted to display any advertisement including that of the operator on the vehicle.

2.5 The part-exemption will cease to have effect on selling or transferring the vehicle to another party.

APPENDIX C

PRIVATE HIRE AND HACKNEY CARRIAGE CONDITIONS OF LICENCE

These conditions of licence are made pursuant to of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976 the Town and Police Clauses Act 1847

The licence holder must observe and carry out the requirements of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976, Part II, and any orders or regulations made thereunder.

1. Change to licence holders address

The licence holder must notify the Council ***in writing/email within 5 working days **** of any change of address taking place during the period of the licence, whether permanent or temporary.

2. Change to licence holders contact information including email address

The licence holder must notify the Council ***in writing/email within 5 working days **** of any change of their contact numbers and/or email address taking place during the period of the licence, whether permanent or temporary

**** The 5 working days excludes a Saturday or a Sunday, Christmas Eve, Christmas Day, Good Friday, Bank Holidays or any other day on which the Licensing Office is closed.***

3. Insurance

At all times during the licence period the licence holder shall hold valid insurance in relation to the use of the vehicle as a licenced vehicle for hire and reward. The licence holder is required to produce the most up to date copy of this on request by the Licensing Authority.

4. Cooperation in regulatory matters

Licensed holders must co-operate with authorised officers of the council in all matters relating to the regulation of the licensed vehicle. However, nothing in this condition affects the licence holders statutory protection afforded by other legislation.

5. Reporting of accidents

The licence holder must report any accident or damage to the vehicle within one working day of the incident and provide full details

6. Maintenance of vehicle

The vehicle, all of its fittings and any attached equipment shall at all times when the vehicle is in use or available for hire, be kept in a clean, safe, tidy and efficient state, and must also comply with all relevant statutory provisions including in particular those contained in the Road Vehicles (Construction and Use) Regulations 1986.

For the sake of clarity, the driver should visually check the condition of the vehicle each day to ensure there is no damage to bodywork or external surfaces, all lamps are functioning and the inside and outside of the vehicle is clean with no damage to internal seats and doors. Where damage or the condition is not clean, safe or tidy the vehicle shall not be used until the damage or cleanliness has been resolved.

No material alteration or change to the vehicle, its fittings or any attached equipment shall be made without the prior approval of the Council.

7. Tyres

A spare wheel tyre appropriate for the vehicle must be carried when the vehicle is being used for public hire.

All tyres fitted to the vehicle or carried as a spare must comply with the Motor Vehicles (Construction and Use) Regulations 1986 and Motor Vehicle (Tests) Regulations 1981.

Re-cut and Remoulded Tyres.
Re-cut tyres are not acceptable for M1 passenger vehicles and remould tyres shall only be acceptable if they carry a recognised approval marking (currently BSAU144e) and display the following information clearly displayed on each tyre:
a) Nominal size.
b) Construction type (e.g. radial ply).
c) Load capacity; and d) Speed capability Space Saver Tyres

The carrying and use of Space saver tyres and tyre sealant kits will only be approved with the support of a method statement. The method statement will detail the drivers and vehicle owners responsibility with regard to the maximum permitted speed and restrictions of use and highlight that they are ONLY a temporary measure to complete the journey in which the puncture occurred.

An approved repair to BS AU159 or a replacement tyre must be undertaken before any further fares are carried. Run flat tyres fitted to any vehicle by the manufacturer will not be replaced by any other type or make either individually or all of them. The use of these tyres must be supported by a method statement (such as the manufacturers handbook for the vehicle) specifying the capability and restrictions of use following a puncture. In all cases the Tyre Pressure Monitoring System (TPMS) must be working correctly and if required, be reset when a tyre(s) are renewed ore replaced. Worn or damaged run flat tyres must be replaced by the same make and size.

8. Roof racks

A roof rack may only be used when excess luggage is to be carried and any luggage so carried shall be safely secured and shall not exceed such weight or size that as can safely be carried on the vehicle.

9. Advertising

The proprietor of any licenced vehicle shall not place or allow any window or on any part of the exterior of such carriage any advertisement or printed matter other than such as may be required to comply with this policy or approved by the Council.

10. No smoking

The Health Act 2006 prohibits smoking in enclosed places, all licensed vehicles are designated as an enclosed public space and therefore it is unlawful for any person to smoke in a licensed vehicle at any time, including any time when it is not being used for hire.

11. Driver records

If the proprietor permits or employs any other person to drive the vehicle as a Hackney Carriage or Private Hire, the proprietor shall retain the person's Hackney Carriage or Private Hire drivers licence until such time as the driver ceases to be permitted or employed to drive the vehicle.

12. Licenced drivers

The proprietor of a Hackney Carriage or Private Hire vehicle shall not allow the vehicle to be driven and used for hire by any person who does not hold a current Hackney Carriage or Private Hire driver's licence, as appropriate, issued by the Council.

APPENDIX D

CCTV AND DASHCAMS IN VEHICLES

The Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) is the regulatory body responsible for enforcing compliance with privacy and data protection legislation. Licence holders should have regard to the Information Commissioner's Office Code of Practice, 'In the picture: A data protection code of practice for surveillance cameras and personal information'.

Data recorded by any CCTV system and dashcams must be handled in accordance with The Data Protection Act and GDPR. The Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) is the UK regulator for all matters relating to the use of personal data.

Summary of CCTV and Dashcam Requirements

- **The vehicle proprietor must be registered with the Information Commissioner's Office and be able to evidence continuous registration throughout the lifetime of the licence.**
- **The system should not record audio except in exceptional circumstance**
- **Clearly visible and readable signage, as prescribed, advising of the system and the Data Controller's contact details, including ICO registration number, must be displayed in the vehicle.**
- **Data must be stored securely and only shared when lawful.**

1. A CCTV system must not be used to record conversations between members of the public as this is highly intrusive and unlikely to be justified except in very exceptional circumstances.

2. Wherever possible, the CCTV system should not have any sound recording facility. However, if the system comes equipped with a sound recording facility, then this functionality should be disabled and only capable of being utilised in the following limited circumstances:- where the recording is triggered due to a specific threat to driver or passenger safety, e.g. a 'panic button' is utilised and must be subject to the following safeguards:-

   a) Where this audio recording facility is utilised a reset function must be installed which automatically disables audio recording and returns the system to normal default operation after a specified time period has elapsed.
   b) The time period that audio recording may be active should be the minimum possible and should be declared at the time of submission for approval of the equipment.

   In the limited circumstance where audio recording is justified, signs must make it very clear that audio recording is being or may be carried out.

3. All equipment must comply with any legislative requirements in respect of Motor Vehicle Construction and Use Regulations.

4. All equipment must meet any and all requirements as regards safety, technical acceptability and operational/data integrity.

5. All equipment must be designed, constructed and installed in such a way and in such materials as to present no danger to passengers or to the driver, including impact

with the equipment in the event of a collision or danger from the electrical integrity being breached through vandalism, misuse, or wear and tear. In particular, the camera(s) must be fitted safely and securely in such a way that it does not adversely encroach into the passenger area and must not impact on the safety of the driver, passenger or other road users.

6. All equipment must be installed as prescribed by the equipment and/or vehicle manufacturer installation instructions by a qualified auto-electrician.

7. The CCTV system must not weaken the structure or any component part of the vehicle or interfere with the integrity of the manufacturer's original equipment.

8. All equipment must be installed in such a manner so as not to increase the risk of injury and/or discomfort to the driver and/or passengers. For example, temporary fixing methods such as suction cups will not be permitted, or lighting, such as infra-red, which emits at such a level that may cause distraction or nuisance to the driver and/or passengers.

9. All equipment must be protected from the elements, secure from tampering and located such as to have the minimum intrusion into any passenger or driver area or impact on the luggage carrying capacity of the vehicle.

10. It is contrary to the Motor Vehicle (Construction and Use) Regulations 1986 for equipment to obscure the view of the road through the windscreen.

11. Equipment must not obscure or interfere with the operation of any of the vehicle's standard and/or mandatory equipment, i.e. not mounted on or adjacent to air bags/air curtains or within proximity of other supplementary safety systems which may cause degradation in performance or functionality of such safety systems.

12. Viewing screens within the vehicle for the purposes of viewing captured images will not be permitted.

13. The location of the camera(s) installed within the vehicle must be for the purpose of providing a safer environment for the benefit of the Hackney Carriage and Private Hire vehicle driver and passengers, and not for any other purpose.

14. All equipment must be checked regularly and maintained to operational standards, including any repairs after damage.

15. All system components requiring calibration in situ should be easily accessible.

Automotive Electromagnetic Compatibility Requirements (Emc)

16. CCTV equipment must not interfere with any other safety, control, electrical, computer, navigation, satellite, or radio system in the vehicle.

17. Any electrical equipment such as an in-vehicle CCTV system fitted after the vehicle has been manufactured and registered, is deemed to be an Electronic Sub Assembly (ESA) under the European Community Automotive Electromagnetic Compatibility Directive and therefore must meet with requirements specified in that Directive.

18. CCTV equipment should be e-marked or CE-marked. If CE marked confirmation by the equipment manufacturer as being non-immunity related and suitable for use in motor vehicles is required.

19. Activation of the equipment may be via a number and combination of options, such as - door switches, time delay, drivers' panic button or in the case of incident/event recorder, predetermined G-Force parameters set on one or more axis (i.e. braking, acceleration, lateral forces) and configured to record for a short period of time before the event, during the event and a short period following the event.

Security of Images

20. All images captured by the CCTV system must remain secure at all times.

21. The captured images must be protected using encryption software which is designed to guard against the compromise of the stored data, for example, in the event of the vehicle or equipment being stolen.

22. It is recommended by the Information Commissioner that the data controller ensures that any encryption software used meets or exceeds the current FIPS 140-2 standard or equivalent.

23. System protection access codes will also be required to ensure permanent security.

Retention of Images

24. The installed CCTV equipment must have the capability of retaining images either:

    - within its own hard drive.
    - using a fully secured and appropriately encrypted detachable mass storage device, for example, a compact flash solid state card.
    - or where a service provider is providing storage facilities, transferred in real time using fully secured and appropriately encrypted GPRS GSM telephone) signalling to a secure server within the service provider's monitoring centre.

25. Images must not be downloaded onto any kind of portable media device (e.g. CDs or memory sticks) for the purpose of general storage outside the vehicle.

26. The CCTV system must include an automatic overwriting function, so that images are only retained within the installed storage device for a maximum period of 31 days from the date of capture.

27. Where a service provider is used to store images on a secure server, the specified retention period must also only be for a maximum period of 31 days from the date of capture.

28. Where applicable, these provisions shall also apply to audio recordings.

Use of the Information Recorded by the CCTV system

29. Any images and any audio recording should only be used for the purposes described in this policy.

30. The licence holder must comply with valid information requests, in accordance with The Data Protection Act (2018) and General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR). Data must be shared securely, and requests must be fulfilled without charge. Data must only be shared where there is a valid lawful reason, for example:

    a. where a crime report has been made involving the specific vehicle and the Police have formally requested that data.

b. where a Data request is received from an applicant e.g. authorised officer of the Licensing Authority, police or other statutory law enforcement agencies, that has a legal basis to have access to the data requested to assist them in an investigation that involves a licensed vehicle or driver.
c. a Subject Access Request (SAR) compliant with the GDPR. The DPA gives individuals the right to see information held about them, including CCTV images of them.

It is the responsibility of the Data Controller to consider the lawfulness of request to share data in line with the UK Data Protection Law.

31. The uploading of footage to social media does not have a lawful basis and it is expressly prohibited. This includes, by way of examples, but is not limited to: YouTube, WhatsApp, Instagram, TikTok, Facebook and Twitter. Where licence holders' have shared footage unlawfully, they will be liable to criminal prosecution. Unlawful sharing is a breach of UK Data Protection law and is considered a breach of policy.

The Data Controller

32. The Information Commissioners Office (ICO) defines a 'data controller' as the individual or organisation which has ultimate responsibility for how personal data is collected and processed.

33. For the purpose of the installation and operation of in-vehicle CCTV and dashcam, the data controller is the vehicle licence holder. The licence holder must be registered with the Information Commissioner's Office and be able to evidence continuous registration throughout the lifetime of the licence.

34. Registration with the Information Commissioner's Office requires renewal on an annual basis, and payment of the appropriate fee.

35. If a passenger wants to request CCTV footage relating to them, they should make a Subject Access Request (SAR) to the Data Controller detailed on the signage in the vehicle. Information on how to make a valid SAR is available at https://ico.org.uk/your-data-matters/your-right-to-get-copies-of-your- data/

Data Processor

36. A data processor, in relation to personal data, means any person (other than an employee of the data controller) who processes data on behalf of the data controller, in response to specific instructions. Where a service provider is authorised for the remote storage and/or management of CCTV data, they will act as a 'data processor'.

37. The data controller retains full responsibility for the actions of the data processor.

38. There must be a formal written contract between the data controller and the data processor. The contract must contain provisions covering security arrangements, retention/deletion instructions, access requests and termination arrangements.

39. A copy of the contract must be provided to an authorised officer of the Licensing Authority, or to the Police, on reasonable request.

Signage requirements for CCTV and dashcams

40. Any vehicle must display clearly visible and readable signage informing passengers that such a system is fitted. This signage must be displayed so as to minimise obstruction but must be visible before and after entering the vehicle.

41. The signage must contain:

    a) The purpose for using the surveillance system, "in the interests of public safety, crime detection and crime prevention".

    b) The name and contact number of the Data Controller, which should be the vehicle licence holder.
    BCP COUNCIL IS NOT THE DATA CONTROLLER.

    c) The Data Controller's ICO Registration Number.

42. All necessary signage must be installed prior to any licensable activities being undertaken

APPENDIX E

ADVERTISING AND SIGNS GUIDELINES

All advertising must be fixed and maintained in good condition – this means that it is, not peeling, blistering or fading

EXTERNAL

Private Hire Operator Signage on any vehicle

- Advertising shall only be located on the rear passenger doors or the equivalent portions
- It must be below window level and the licensed vehicle stripe (on Hackney Carriages) It should be positioned centrally and level.
- The advertising panel shall not larger than 420mm wide x 300mm high
- The Advertisement must be limited to operator name logo, email/website and contact number. It may include a QR code and reference to social media outlets. Private Hire vehicles also meet the following requirements Advertising must include the words "Pre-Bookable Vehicle Only" in letters not less than18mm high in a contrasting colour which is clearly visible.
- No advertising shall contain the words "Taxi", "Tax", "Cab" or any other words that might imply that the vehicle is a Hackney Carriage, whether in the singular or plural or as part of another word.

Third Party Advertising

This includes those vehicles that use other app-based services not licensed as a Private Hire operator with BCP.

- One advert per vehicle to be placed on the rear quarter/ sides.
- The advertising panel shall not larger than 420mm wide x 300mm high
- Adverts will be permitted to display website addresses/emails address but not telephone numbers.
- Background colour of advert to be transparent or match with the vehicle colour as appropriate

INTERNAL

- Advertising shall only be displayed below window level.
- Advertising on headrests including use of display screens will be permitted subject to the normal approval process for third party advertising.

1. The Licensing Committee may waive this fee where the display of signage is considered to be in the public interest.

2. No other signs shall be displayed on or in vehicles including windows other than those approved/required by policy i.e. No smoking signs No booking No ride Signs etc.

APPENDIX F

BYLAWS

BYLAWS WITH RESPECT TO HACKNEY CARRIAGES MADE IN 1968.
This is an abridged version, a full version is available for inspection at the Civic Offices

INTERPRETATION

1. The "Council" means the Council of the Borough of Bournemouth and the "District" means the said Borough area or in the case of a hiring within the Borough a distance of seven miles from the entrance of Bournemouth Pier, and the "Inspector of Hackney Carriages" means the Public Carriage Inspector for the said Borough.

LICENCE PLATES

2. Supplemented by Hackney Carriage Policy Chapter 19.

FURNISHINGS

3. The proprietor of a hackney carriage shall:-

   a) provide sufficient means by which any person in the carriage may communicate with the driver,
   b) cause the roof or covering to be kept water-tight
   c) provide any necessary windows and a means of opening and closing not less than one window on each side,
   d) cause the seats to be properly cushioned or covered,
   e) cause the floor to be provided with a proper carpet, mat or other suitable covering,
   f) cause both the exterior and the interior of the carriage including all the fittings and furniture to be kept in a clean condition, well maintained and in every way fit for public service,
   g) provide means for securing luggage if the carriage is so constructed as to carry luggage,
   h) provide an efficient fire extinguisher which shall be carried in such a position as to be readily available for use,
   i) provide at least two doors for the use of persons conveyed in such carriage and a separate means of ingress and egress for the driver.

TAXIMETER

4. The proprietor of a Hackney Carriage shall cause the same to be provided with a taximeter so constructed, attached and maintained as to comply with the following requirements, that is to say:-

   a) When the machinery of the taximeter is in action there shall be recorded on the face of the taximeter in figures clearly legible and free from ambiguity, a fare not exceeding the rate or fare which the proprietor or driver is entitled to demand and take in pursuance of the bylaw in that behalf for the hire of the carriage by distance.

   b) The word "FARE" shall be printed on the face of the taximeter in plain letters so as clearly to apply to the fare recorded thereon.

   c) The taximeter shall be so placed that all letters and figures on the face thereof may be at all times plainly visible to any person being conveyed in the carriage and for

that purpose the letters and figures shall be capable of being suitably illuminated during any period of hiring.

d) The taximeter and all the fittings thereof shall be so affixed to the carriage with seals or other appliances that it shall not be practicable for any person to tamper with them except by breaking, damaging or permanently displacing the seals or other appliances.

5. The proprietor of a Hackney Carriage provided with a taximeter not fitted with a flag or other device bearing the words "FOR HIRE" shall cause the carriage to be provided with a sign so constructed as to comply with the following requirements, that is to say:-

a) The sign shall bear the words "FOR HIRE" in plain letters at least one and a half inches in height.
b) The sign shall be capable of being so operated that it indicates clearly and conveniently to persons outside the carriage whether or not the carriage is for hire.

6. In a case where it appears to the Council to be impracticable for a proprietor for the time being to comply with any requirement contained in bylaws 3,4 and 5, they may issue a certificate to that effect to the proprietor and thereupon the proprietor shall not be guilty of an offence in respect of a failure to comply with that requirement if he causes or permits the carriage to stand or ply for hire until the expiry of such period of time as may be specified in the certificate for compliance with the requirement aforesaid.

EXAMINATION AND INSPECTION

7. The proprietor of a Hackney Carriage vehicle shall cause the same to be presented at the Bournemouth Fleet Transport Southcote Road, Bournemouth for examination and inspection at least once in every year. See also Statutory Provisions, Requirements of Licence and vehicle condition 7.

CONDUCT OF PROPRIETORS

8. The driver of a Hackney Carriage shall:-
   a) If the taximeter is fitted with a flag or other device bearing the words "FOR HIRE":-
      i. when standing or plying for hire keep such flag or other device locked in the position in which the words are horizontal and legible.
      ii. as soon as the carriage is hired by distance, and before commencing the journey, bring the machinery of the taximeter into action by moving the flag or other device so that the words are not conveniently legible and keep the machinery of the taximeter in action until the termination of the hiring.

   b) If the taximeter is not fitted with a flag or other device bearing the words "FOR HIRE":-

      i. when standing or plying for hire keep the taximeter locked in the position in which no fare is recorded on the face of the taximeter and operate the sign provided in pursuance of bylaw 5 or so that the words "FOR HIRE" are clearly and conveniently legible by persons outside the carriage.
      ii. as soon as the carriage is hired whether by distance or by time, operate the said sign so that the words "FOR HIRE" are not conveniently legible by persons outside the carriage.

iii. as soon as the carriage is hired by distance, and before commencing the journey, bring the machinery of the taximeter into action by moving the key or other device fitted for the purpose so that the word "HIRED" is legible on the face of the taximeter and keep the machinery of the taximeter in action until the termination of the hiring.

c) Cause the dial of the taximeter to be kept properly illuminated throughout any part of a hiring which is during the period from half an hour after sunset to half an hour before sun rise and also at any other time at the request of the hirer.

9. A proprietor or driver of a Hackney Carriage shall not tamper with or permit any person to tamper with any taximeter with which the carriage is provided, with the fittings thereof, or with the seals affixed thereto, without the written authority of the Inspector of Hackney Carriages.

RANKS (HACKNEY STANDS)

10. The driver of a Hackney Carriage shall, when plying for hire in any street and not actually hired:-

a) proceed with reasonable speed to one of the stands fixed by the bylaw in that behalf:
b) if a stand, at the time of arrival, is occupied by the full number of carriages authorised to occupy it, proceed to another stand:
c) on arriving at a stand not already occupied by the full number of carriages authorised to occupy it, station the carriage on the stand and so as to face the same direction as any other carriages on the stand:
d) from time to time when any other carriage immediately in front is driven off or moved forward at once cause the carriage to be moved forward so as to fill the place previously occupied by the carriage driven off or moved forward:
e) during the whole time the carriage is on the stand be within call thereof and ready to be hired.

11. A proprietor or driver of a Hackney Carriage shall not wash such carriage or permit such carriage to be washed while it is on any stand.

IMPORTUNING

12. Importuning (touting for business) is an offence under section 167 of Criminal Justice and Public Order Act 1994.

HIRER SELECTION

13. A proprietor or driver of a Hackney Carriage shall not by any means interfere with the free selection by any person of the particular carriage on any stand which such person may desire to hire.

CONDUCT OF DRIVER

14. The driver of a Hackney Carriage shall behave in a civil and orderly manner and shall take all reasonable precautions to ensure the safety of persons conveyed in or entering or alighting from the carriage.

SMOKING

15. Smoking in Public Carriage Vehicles is an offence under the provisions of the Public Health Act 2006.

ATTENDANCE

16. The proprietor or driver of a Hackney Carriage who has agreed or has been hired to be in attendance with the carriage at an appointed time and place shall, unless delayed or prevented by some sufficient cause, punctually attend with such carriage at such appointed time and place.

ROUTE

17. The driver of a Hackney Carriage when hired to drive any particular destination shall, subject to any directions given by the hirer, proceed to that destination by the shortest available route.

PERSONS CARRIED

18. A proprietor or driver of a Hackney Carriage shall not convey or permit to be conveyed in such carriage any greater number of persons than the number of persons specified on the plate affixed to the outside of the carriage.

SERVICE

19. The driver of a Hackney Carriage so constructed as to carry luggage shall, when requested by any person hiring or seeking to hire the carriage:-

    a) convey a reasonable quantity of luggage:
    b) afford reasonable assistance in loading and unloading:
    c) afford reasonable assistance in removing it to or from the entrance of any house, block of flats, station, or place at which he may take up or set down such person.
    d) See legal requirements regarding assistance dogs.

    Provided always the driver of a Hackney Carriage shall not be obliged to convey:-

    a) any article or animal which is of such bulk or amount or character that the carrying of such article or animal would be likely to cause damage to the cab or its fittings:
    b) any petroleum spirit or explosive or dangerous substance:
    c) any noxious, odorous, foul or offensive substance.

ADVERTISING

20. The proprietor or driver of a Hackney Carriage shall not place or suffer to be placed on any window or on any part of the exterior of such carriage any advertisement or printed matter other than such as may be required to comply with these bylaws or approved by the Council. See Appendix E.

STATEMENT OF FARES

21. The proprietor of a Hackney Carriage shall:-

    i. cause a statement or the fares fixed by the Council in that behalf to be affixed to the inside of the carriage in clearly distinguishable letters and figures:
    ii. renew such letters and figures as often as is necessary to keep them clearly visible.

22. The proprietor or driver of a Hackney Carriage bearing a statement of fares shall not wilfully or negligently cause or suffer the letters or figures in the statement to be concealed or rendered illegible at any time while the carriage is plying or being used for hire.

This page is intentionally left blank

Private Hire Operator Policy

2025 - 2030

Bournemouth Christchurch and Poole (BCP) Licensing

Author: Nananka Randle
Version: 2
Review Date: 2030

Index

CHAPTER		PAGE NO
	Introduction	
1	Purpose Statement	2
2	Who the Policy Applies to	2
3	This Policy Replaces	2
4	Approval Process	2
5	Links to Council Strategies	3
6	The policy	3
7	Requirement of applicants	3
8	Application procedure	4
9	Criminal records	5
10	Renewals	6
11	Operator licence conditions	7
12	How to use this policy	7
13	Roles and responsibilities	7
14	Enforcement and sanctions	7
15	Complaints, disciplinary and delegation to officers	8
	Appendix	
A	Operator licence conditions	9

Introduction

The Licensing Committee and officers are committed to ensuring the highest standards in order to protect public safety when administering this policy.

All requirements contained within this policy together with conditions on the licence are mandatory requirements for holding a Private Hire Operator Licence issued by Bournemouth Christchurch and Poole Council (BCP).

From the first day of adoption of this policy ALL licence holders are required to meet these high standards, and it is expected that they will ensure that they are fully aware of this policy and comply with all the requirements set out within it.

The Licensing Committee will not accept the excuse that a licence holder was not aware of these requirements when considering any matters bought before them.

1. Purpose Statement

1.1 BCP Council has a responsibility to issue Private Hire Operator licences under Part II of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976.

1.2 A Private Hire Operator licence is required by anyone who, in the course of business, makes provision for the invitation or acceptance of bookings for private hire vehicle.

1.3 In the interest of public safety and to safeguard vulnerable persons BCP Council seek to ensure that anyone issued with such a licence is considered to be 'fit and proper.'

1.4 This Policy is concerned with the regulation of Private Hire Operators and the Council adopts the overall approach to encouraging the responsible activity of all operators.

1.5 Notwithstanding the existence of this Policy, each application or enforcement measure will be considered on its own merits.

1.6 Where it is appropriate for the Council to depart from its Policy clear reasons will be given for doing so. Nothing in this Policy will prevent an applicant or licence holder requesting that the Council considers the individual merits of their case and give reasonable consideration to departing from its Policy. Such requests may either be in writing, via email, or verbally before the Licensing Committee or Sub Committee.

2. Who the policy applies to

2.1 This Policy will assist applicants, licence holders, officers of the Licensing Authority, Members of the Licensing Committee, and persons using public carriages to be aware of the standards of conduct and behaviour required of all prospective or existing licenced operators.

2.2 This Policy also affords members of the Licensing Committee and Officers alike, to consider the concerns of the public and other recognised bodies, and to take appropriate measures where the behaviour of operators is called into question at application or after licences have been issued.

3. This policy replaces.

3.1 This Policy replaces the previous BCP Taxi and Private Hire Operator Policy implemented in June 2021.

4. Approval process

4.1 BCP Council as the Licensing Authority has delegated the Licensing Committee to oversee the development and review of its Private Hire Operator Policy.

4.2 Once drafted the policy is subject to a period of public consultation. Consultation responses are reported to the full licensing committee for consideration.

4.3 Once finalised the policy is presented to the Full Council for ratification.

5. Links to Council strategies

5.1 This policy supports the BCP Council Core Strategy.

5.2 During the preparation of this policy document due consideration has been given to the following Key Council Strategies:

- Corporate Plan
- Sustainable Transport Plan
- Workforce Strategy
- Health & Wellbeing Strategy
- Safeguarding Strategy
- Climate Change Strategy
- Children in Care Strategy
- Crime & Disorder Reduction Strategy
- Equality & Diversity

6. The policy

6.1 This policy is a working document, and the Licensing Authority reserves the right to alter and amend the policy as appropriate to correct errors, inconsistencies, clarify guidance, legislative changes and issue a revised version of the policy at any time. However, any **significant changes** to the Policy will only be implemented after a formal consultation process with the trade and public.

6.2 Any **significant amendment** is defined as one that:-

- Is likely to have a significant financial effect on licence holders or
- Is likely to have a significant procedural effect on licence holders or
- Is likely to have a significant adverse effect on the community.

6.3 Any changes will be communicated to licence holders via email as soon as practicable to do so.

7. Requirements for applicants

7.1 The objective when licensing Private Hire Operators is ensuring the protection of the public who will be using the operator's premises and the vehicles and drivers arranged through them.

7.2 A Private Hire vehicle may only be dispatched to a customer by a Private Hire Operator who holds an operator's licence. Such a licence permits the operator to make provision for the invitation or acceptance of bookings for a Private Hire vehicle.

7.3 A Private Hire Operator must ensure that every Private Hire vehicle dispatched by them is licensed and driven by a person who holds a Private Hire driver's licence.

7.4 All three licences (operator, vehicle, and driver) must be issued by the same Licensing Authority.

7.5 It is a criminal offence to operate a Private Hire vehicle without an operator's licence.

7.6 Basic DBS check is required for an initial Private Hire Operator application.

7.7 DBS checks will be required on an annual basis for licence holders unless they are already licenced as a driver by BCP Council.

Licence Duration

7.8 Operators' licences will be issued for a standard five-year period.

7.9 However, the Council has the power to grant a licence for a shorter period should this be appropriate in the circumstances.

7.10 If an operator changes their name or address, they must notify the Council immediately.

Address from which an Operator may operate.

7.11 Applicants must specify the address from which they will operate, and records can be inspected. These premises must be in the BCP Council conurbation and where necessary should have planning consent for use as a Private Hire office. PO box, solicitors, accountants, or care of addresses will not be accepted.

7.12 If an operator wishes to change the base from which they operate they will be required to submit a new application.

7.13 Operator's licences are non-transferrable to another person or company. In the event of control of a licensed business passing to a different person, it will be necessary for the new owner of the business to apply for a new licence.

8. Application procedure

8.1 Applications must be submitted electronically by email taxi.privatehire@bcpcouncil.gov.uk

8.2 To complete an application an applicant must

a) Complete an application form.
b) For each listed director or individual, complete a basic criminal disclosure (DBS) form and produce at least 3 forms of valid identification as required by the DBS A DBS check may not be necessary if the applicant has registered for the DBS Update Service and provides evidence to that effect, or where the applicant is already a licenced driver with BCP Council.
c) All applicants must produce evidence of their right to work and live in the UK in accordance with the requirements of the Immigration Act 2016.
Prove your right to work to an employer: Overview - GOV.UK
d) Provide evidence of appropriate public liability insurance if the premises are open to the public.
e) Pay the appropriate fee.

8.3 If there are restrictions on the length of time the applicant can work in the UK, the licence will not be issued for any longer than this period.

8.4 The application will not be determined until all of the above have been provided and the DBS criminal record disclosure certificate has been produced by the applicant.

8.5 Applicants are advised to check and where necessary obtain planning consent for the premises. If the planning consent is time restricted it is the operator's responsibility to ensure that a new permission is applied for prior to the current planning permission expiring.

8.6 Officers may require a site visit prior to the determination of the licence. The Council has the power to impose such conditions on an operator's licence as it considers reasonably necessary.

8.7 Appendix A sets out the conditions to be attached to an operator's licence which cover the standards of service expected.

8.8 Any applicant who makes a false or inaccurate statement on their application form will not be deemed to be a fit and proper person to hold a licence and their application will be terminated. This includes not disclosing convictions, cautions, penalty, or previous licence revocation.

8.9 Anyone whose application is refused for making a false or inaccurate statement on their application form will not be permitted to reapply for a licence for 12 months from the termination of their application. It is an offence to make a false statement knowingly or recklessly or to omit information required by the Council by virtue of s.57 Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976.

Reapplication

8.10 Where an applicant has previously had a licence revoked by the Council the Authority will not, save in exceptional circumstances, consider any further application from the applicant for a period of three years from the date of the Authority's decision or, if that decision was appealed against and the appeal was dismissed, abandoned, or otherwise failed, from the date of the dismissal, abandonment or other failure of the appeal, whichever is the later

9. Criminal records

9.1 The applicant must declare any previous criminal convictions, cautions and fixed penalty notices received, including those awaiting appeal, and any charges pending. The Council will make a decision as to the relevance of convictions, cautions, charges, and fixed penalty notices in accordance with criminal convictions guidelines.
Institute of Licensing (IOL) Suitability Guidance (November 2024)

9.2 The Council may require further information from the Police or Crown Prosecution Service. Applicants who have previous criminal convictions, cautions, fixed penalty notices or charges pending will be interviewed and details of that interview may be included in any report which is referred to the Licensing Committee or Sub Committee.

9.3 Failure to disclose or declare any previous convictions, cautions, fixed penalty notices or pending charges will be construed as an attempt to deceive and appropriate and proportionate action will be taken.

9.4 In considering what might be assessed to ensure that an operator is fit and proper or safe and suitable the Licensing Authority considers the following to be amongst appropriate matters that it will take into account:

- Criminality- see assessment of previous convictions annexe of the Statutory taxi and private hire vehicle standards.
  Statutory taxi and private hire vehicle standards - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)
- Period of holding an operator's licence
- Conduct of the operator during the licence period, including relationship and co-operation with officers of the Licensing Authority.
- Right to work in the UK and any time restrictions
- Characteristics displayed by a licence holder towards customers and others i.e. staff in the Licensing Team or other Council officers and their overall integrity.

9.5 BCP Council will have regard to the Institute of Licensing (IOL) Suitability Guidance (November 2024) as a minimum standard however the assessment of previous convictions as set out within the of the Statutory taxi and private hire vehicle standards as published by the Department for Transport will be taken as the base line relating to convictions.

9.6 In addition, consideration on suitability may include other factors including the conduct of the applicant during the application process or during the term of their existing or previous licence as well as their conduct, co-operation and working relationship with the Authority and its officers.

9.7 In essence a 'fit and proper' operator.

- must not be violent, abusive, or threatening in their behaviour even if subjected to unpleasant, confrontational, or dishonest passenger behaviour or when subject to enforcement action from officers.

- must be honest and trustworthy with integrity as they have access to a large amount of personal information that could be misused and significant opportunity to defraud people.

- must work co-operatively with and be civil and respectful towards officers of the Licensing Authority who are carrying out their duties.

9.8 This list is not exclusive, and other factors may also be relevant to the fit and proper person definition.

9.9 The Licensing Authority will consider all information provided to it from sources such as the Police, Children and Adults Safeguarding Boards, Passenger Services, and other statutory agencies. Existing licence holders will also have previous history/outcomes during their time as a licensed driver /operator or previous applicant taken into account and their ability to work constructively and positively with the Licensing Authority.

9.10 The Licensing Authority will consider all criminal history, unacceptable behaviour and conduct irrespective of whether the specific history, behaviour or conduct occurred whilst licence holders drivers were directly engaged in their professional capacity at work or whether they occurred during the licence holders own personal time.

10. Renewals

10.1 Holders of existing operators licences should apply to renew their licence no more than two months prior to the expiry of the previous licence.

10.2 The Council has no duty to notify operators that their licence is due for renewal as it is the licence holder's responsibility to renew their licence. As a courtesy, a reminder via email will be sent to the operator in advance of their renewal date.

10.3 Renewal applications and associated paperwork must be submitted electronically via email to taxi.privatehire@bcpcouncil.gov.uk, before the licence has expired.

11. Operator licence conditions

11.1 The Licensing Authority may attach such conditions to a licence as are considered necessary.

11.2 The standard conditions are available in Appendix A.

11.3 All operators must read and understand the licence conditions which will be available on the Council website.

11.4 Failure to comply with the conditions set out in this document may result in enforcement action (Section 14).

12. How to use this policy

12.1 All BCP licensed operators should ensure that they are fully compliant with the policy and appendices

12.2 At first application and renewal licence holders will be provided with an up-to-date link to this policy and its appendices.

12.3 It is a requirement that all licence holders adhere to this policy and the conditions set out in it. In the event of enforcement action being necessary, it is not deemed acceptable that a licenced operator uses the excuse they were not aware of the requirements of this policy.

13. Roles and responsibilities

13.1 The Licensing Manager is responsible for overseeing the functions and work of the licensing team who deliver the policy.

13.2 The Licensing Committee or Sub-Committee will be presented with reports in cases where operators do not meet the conditions of their licence, or where complaint investigation has resulted in the need for the licence to be reviewed.

14. Enforcement and sanctions

14.1 Any operator who does not comply with this policy, or any conditions contained in it, which leads to a breach of a condition, or any complaint received will be subject to investigation, the result of which may be brought before the Licensing Committee or Sub Committee.

14.2 The Licensing Committee or Sub Committee. can choose to revoke a licence or suspend a licence pending any necessary action by the operators such as attending training or improving systems and record keeping as required.

14.3 Decisions by the Licensing Committee or Sub Committee. are subject to appeal to the Magistrates court within a statutory appeal period of 21 days from the notification of any committee hearing decision.

15. Complaints, disciplinary and delegation to officers

15.1 In cases of complaints, allegations, or reports of unacceptable behaviour by a licenced operator, the licensing officer will investigate the matter fully and determine the seriousness of the allegation.

15.2 Where there are serious allegations that are deemed to pose an **imminent risk to public safety,** they will need to be investigated and actioned immediately. The Licensing Manager or other Licensing officer will try to contact the Operators in question to discuss the allegations. If the officer deems that the complaint is founded, and the evidence is sufficient to support the allegation of an imminent risk to public safety, then the matter will be referred to three members of the Licensing Committee to include the Chair and/or Vice Chair for the to make a decision if any immediate action needs to be taken in respect of a licence.

15.3 If members determine that the evidence presented demonstrates there is an imminent risk to public safety, the Operator's licence could be immediately revoked . Members will confirm in writing the decision made and the reasons why the decision was reached.

15.4 If members agree there is a risk to public safety, but it is not an imminent risk the matter will be referred to the Licensing Committee or Sub-Committee.

15.5 Complaints of a less serious matter will be dealt with by the Licensing Manager or another licensing officer, who may either issue guidance, a formal warning or caution or suspend the licence for a period of no more than two weeks.

15.6 In all cases of complaint, officers will make reference to the Operator licence conditions attached to all licences as detailed in Appendix A.

15.7 In cases where convictions or cautions have been reported via complaint or direct from the operator, reference will be made to the assessment of previous convictions as set out within the of the Statutory taxi and private hire vehicle standards as published by the Department for Transport.

APPENDIX A

Private Hire Operator Conditions of Licence

These conditions of licence are made pursuant to of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976 the Town and Police Clauses Act 1847.

All operators must comply with the requirements of The Equality Act 2010.

1. Record Keeping

1.1 The records required to be kept by the operator under s.56 (2) of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976 must be kept in a suitable book, the pages of which are numbered consecutively, a computer record or other durable recording format. The operator shall enter or cause to be entered therein before the commencement of each journey, the following particulars of every booking of a private hire vehicle invited or accepted by him:-

a) The time and date of the booking
b) The name of the hirer
c) The time of the pick-up
d) The point of pick-up
e) The destination
f) The licence number of the vehicle allocated for the booking
g) The name of any individual who responded to the bookings (where applicable)
h) The name of any individual that dispatched the vehicle (where applicable)
i) Remarks (including details of any sub-contract).

1.2 When the Operator passes the hiring to another company the record shall include the name, address, and Council with which that Operator is licensed.

1.3 The operator shall keep copies of all vehicle and driver licences. All records kept by the operator shall be preserved for a period of not less than TWO years following the date of the last entry.

1.4 The Operator shall document the following particulars of any vehicle operated:

a) The registration number of the vehicle
b) The number of the identification plate provided by the Council pursuant to s.48(5) of the 1976 Act
c) The make and model of the vehicle
d) The name and address of the proprietor(s) of the vehicle
e) The number of passengers permitted to be carried in the vehicle, as shown on the licence.
f) The start and expiry dates of the vehicle's licence issued by the Council.
g) The date on which the vehicle was added to the operator's fleet.
h) The date on which the vehicle was withdrawn from the operator's fleet.

1.5 The Operator shall keep a record of the following particulars of all licensed drivers:

a) The full names of the driver
b) The permanent address of the driver
c) The drivers date of birth
d) The drivers licence (badge) number
e) The start and expiry dates of the driver's licence issued by the Council.
f) The dates the driver's engagement/employment was commenced and terminated.

g) To keep a record of long term oversees absences of drivers and notify the Licensing Authority if over 6 months.

1.6 The operator is required to keep a record of criminal record checks for all employees who take bookings and dispatch vehicles.

1.7 The operator is required to provide to the Licensing Office on annual basis on the anniversary of the issue of the licence the following information.

a) List of all BCP Licenced vehicles registered with them.
b) List of all BCP Licenced drivers registered with them.
c) Confirmation that the details provided by the operator on their application have not changed.

2. Standard of Service

2.1 The operator shall provide a prompt, efficient and reliable service to members of the public at all reasonable times and for this purpose shall in particular:-

a) Ensure that when a private hire vehicle has been hired to be in attendance at an appointed time and place, the vehicle shall, unless delayed or prevented by sufficient cause, punctually attend at that appointed time and place.
b) Keep clean, adequately heated, ventilated, and lit any premises which the operator provides and to which the public have access, whether for the purpose of booking or waiting.
c) Ensure that any waiting area provided by the operator has adequate seating facilities.
d) Ensure that any telephone facilities and radio equipment provided are maintained in a sound condition and that any defects are repaired promptly.
e) Ensure that all vehicles dispatched by them are maintained at all times in a safe and roadworthy condition.

3 Safeguarding

3.1 The licence holder shall also keep a register of all employees who have access to customer personal data including booking and dispatching vehicles, this shall include the dates and times of work and their role.

3.2 The licence holder shall have in place a policy on employing ex-offenders which recognises that those with a conviction for offences provided in the Councils policy on previous convictions other than those relating to driving matters may not be suitable to have access to such customer records and personal information.

3.3 The operator shall require at least a basic DBS certificate for individuals named in the register at 3.1 at the time of employment to be no more than 3 months old and any contracts of employment shall include a clause requiring the individual to disclose any arrest or conviction to the employer.

3.4 Operators may outsource booking and dispatch functions, but they cannot pass on the obligation to protect children and vulnerable adults. Operators are required to evidence that comparable protections are applied by the company to which they outsource these functions.

3.5 The operator shall ensure all staff who take bookings and dispatch vehicles have been provided with suitable training in the awareness of and reporting of safeguarding concerns which includes human trafficking, county lines and child sexual exploitation.

3.6 The operator shall keep records for all staff who have received safeguarding training which shall be provided to the Licensing Authority on request.

4 Complaints

4.1 The Operator shall publish a complaints handling procedure, detailing how members of the public may make complaints to the Operator, in respect of any aspect of the service provided, and investigate any complaints received in a timely manner, making details of such complaints and investigations available to authorised Council.

4.2 The operator shall notify the Licensing Authority of serious incidents or serious complaints that may bring into question the fitness and propriety of a driver or the operator, regarding any driver or other operator used by the operator within one working day of receipt. This includes incidents or complaints received from third parties and relates to any journey whether a hiring by the public or from contract work. Any response to a complaint that has already been made should be forwarded to the Council Licensing Team at the same time. Any further responses should be forwarded to the Council Licensing Team on request. The report shall include details of driver(s) vehicle(s) or other operator(s) involved and the hirers name and contact details.

4.3 A list of complaint types the must be reported to the Licensing Authority includes but is not limited to:

- sexual misconduct, sexual harassment, or inappropriate sexual attention
- breaching terms and conditions laid down by the operator regarding fares and charges including the cancellation of a journey without good reason.
- unnecessarily obtaining passengers personal information which includes but not limited to social media contact details and telephone numbers.
- racist behaviour
- violence
- dishonesty, including but not limited to theft, touting, incorrect routing to inflate a fare
- breaches of equality (specifically wheelchair and service animal denial)
- road traffic offences including condition of any vehicle and including instances of poor driving standards.
- any other act that may bring into question the fitness and propriety of the driver or operator.
- any driver that has been removed from the working through the Operator on a permanent basis.

5 Change of Operator's Home Address

5.1 The operator shall notify the Council in writing of any change of their home address during the period of the licence within seven days of such change taking place.

6 Change of Operator's Business Premises

6.1 If an operator wishes to change the base from which they operate they shall be required to submit a new application. (Note: all operators' business premises must be within the BCP Council Boundary).

7 Convictions and Cautions

7.1 The operator shall within seven days disclose to the Council in writing details of any conviction or caution imposed on them (or, if the operator is a Company, of any its Directors) during the period of the licence.

8 Operator's Licence

8.1 Operators shall operate wholly from those premises specified in the licence and situated within the boundaries of BCP Council

8.2 The Operator shall display the Operator's Licence issued by the Council in a conspicuous position at the licensed premises.

9 Signage

9.1 Each Private Hire Operator is responsible for ensuring that their advertising is only is placed on a vehicle linked to their circuit. Only advertising approved by the Licensing Officers may be displayed.

9.2 When an operator ceases to dispatch a vehicle, the operator shall ensure that the driver returns all such signage and livery to them.

10 Public Liability Insurance

10.1 Operators shall have at all times a current valid policy of public liability insurance for the premises they are licensed to operate from if those premises are open to the public.

11 Duty to cooperate on regulatory matters.

11.1 Operators must co-operate with authorised officers of the Council in all matters relating to the regulation of the licensed vehicle trade. However, nothing in this condition affects the licence holders statutory protection afforded by other legislation.

12 Reapplication

12.1 Where an applicant has previously had a licence revoked by the Council the Authority shall not, save in exceptional circumstances, consider any further application from the applicant for a period of three years from the date of the Authority's decision or, if that decision was appealed against and the appeal was dismissed, abandoned, or otherwise failed, from the date of the dismissal, abandonment or other failure of the and appeal, whichever is the later.

This page is intentionally left blank

Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Policies Consultation - General Public Survey

We are consulting on proposed changes to the following Hackney Carriage and Private Hire policies for Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole (BCP):

- Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Driver Policy
- Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Vehicle Policy
- Private Hire Operator Policy.

These policies set out the principles that BCP Council propose to apply in exercising its Hackney Carriage and Private Hire functions from 2025 to 2030.

Before any decisions are made, we would like to hear your views on the proposed changes to all three policies and on other relevant questions relating to complaints and wheelchair accessibility.

All the documents and Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) can be found on the main consultation page: **haveyoursay.bcpcouncil.gov.uk/taxi-policy-consultation** and on request in any BCP library. If you have any questions or need support completing the survey, please email taxi.privatehire@bcpcouncil.gov.uk.

The consultation will close at **11:59pm on 28 April 2025**.

Privacy statement

The survey data is hosted by Snap Surveys on behalf of BCP Council. The data is stored securely as specified in the Snap Surveys privacy policy: www.snapsurveys.com/survey-software/privacy-policy-uk. All information you provide is treated in confidence and in accordance with the Data Protection Act 2018. The information will be used for statistical and monitoring purposes. It will not be used to identify individuals apart from those instances where you give us consent to contact you using the personal details you have provided us with. You can find out more about how BCP Council use and store your data in our privacy policy: www.bcpcouncil.gov.uk/research-privacy.

Q1 **Are you responding as a:**
(select all that apply)

- ☐ BCP Resident
- ☐ BCP Hackney Carriage/Private Hire car user
- ☐ BCP Hackney Carriage/Private Hire licence holder (please end this survey and complete the BCP Licence Holders Survey)
- ☐ A business or organisation (please tell us the name of your business/organisation below)
- ☐ BCP Councillor
- ☐ Other, please specify below

Please tell us which organisation you are responding on behalf of?

Q2 **How did you find out about this consultation?**
(select all that apply)

- ☐ BCP Council's social media
- ☐ Other social media
- ☐ BCP Council website
- ☐ BCP Council email
- ☐ BCP Council press release
- ☐ BCP Library
- ☐ Bournemouth Echo
- ☐ Word of mouth
- ☐ Councillor
- ☐ None of the above
- ☐ Other, please specify below

Q3 **Which of these Hackney Carriage and Private Hire journeys have you taken in the last 12 months?**
(select all that apply)

- ☐ Prebooked journey through a BCP Council licensed operator such as PRC Streamline, United Taxis, Mobile Radio Cars or Ariel Taxis
- ☐ Prebooked journey via a nationwide operator such as Uber or Bolt
- ☐ Flagged down a taxi on the street
- ☐ Got into a taxi at a rank
- ☐ None of the above

Proposed changes to the draft Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Driver Policy

In this section, we will ask for your views on the proposed changes to the Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Driver Policy for the BCP area. We will also ask you questions about how serious you feel different types of complaints are.

Please read the Table of Proposed Changes for this policy before responding to the questions.

Q4 **To what extent do you agree or disagree with the proposed changes to the draft Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Driver Policy for 2025-2030?**
(select one option per row only)

	Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know/not sure
(a) Changes to the assessment of convictions guidance to align with the national statutory standards	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
(b) Changes to the way complaints are handled	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
(c) Adopting a phased approach to enforcement	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Q5 **If you selected 'somewhat disagree' or 'strongly disagree' for any of the proposals, please tell us why below.** Please make it clear which proposal you are disagreeing with by writing '(a)', '(b)' etc before your comment.

Q6 **Please rank these types of complaint in order of seriousness with the <u>most</u> serious placed at number 1, and the <u>least</u> serious placed at number 9.**
(write a rank in the boxes for each complaint)

	Rank
Minor traffic offences – passing cyclist too close/parking on pavements	☐
Major traffic offences – using phone, driving without insurance, drink/drug driving	☐
Poor conduct of driver towards passenger, e.g. violent or abusive language	☐
Poor conduct of driver towards other road users e.g. speeding, road rage, endangering pedestrians	☐
Driver dishonesty, e.g. about fares or routes	☐
Dirty interior of vehicle	☐
Route taken, e.g. purposefully taking a longer route to increase the fare	☐
Not taking card payments	☐
Refusing to take a job due to the short distance	☐

Q7 **Is there anything else you would like to say about the proposed changes to the draft Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Driver Policy?**

Proposed changes to the draft Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Vehicle Policy

In this section, we will ask for your views on the proposed changes to the Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Vehicle Policy for the BCP area. We will also ask you questions about wheelchair accessibility in vehicles.

Please read the Table of Proposed Changes for this policy before responding to the questions.

Q8 **To what extent do you agree or disagree with the proposed changes to the draft Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Vehicle Policy for 2025-2030?**
(select one option per row only)

	Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know/not sure
(a) No longer restrict the number of new Hackney Carriage licences that we allow to be issued in the Bournemouth and Poole areas, to allow anyone who wants a Hackney Carriage licence to apply for one	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
(b) Remove the requirement for all new Hackney Carriage vehicles to be wheelchair accessible, so that any approved vehicle can be licensed as a Hackney Carriage	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
(c) Require Operators (who take pre-bookings for journeys) to have a minimum number of wheelchair accessible vehicles in their fleet	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Q9 **If you selected 'somewhat disagree' or 'strongly disagree' for any of the proposals, please tell us why below.** Please make it clear which proposal you are disagreeing with by writing '(a)', '(b)' etc before your comment.

Q10 **How often do you use a wheelchair accessible taxi?**
(select one option only)

- ☐ Daily
- ☐ Weekly
- ☐ Monthly
- ☐ A few times a year
- ☐ Never (go to Q13)

Q11 **Have you ever experienced difficulties when trying to book a wheelchair accessible taxi?**
(select one option only)

- ☐ Yes - a lot
- ☐ Yes - a little
- ☐ No
- ☐ Not sure
- ☐ Not applicable

Q12 **If you said you have experienced difficulties when trying to book a wheelchair accessible taxi, please tell us why.**

Q13 **Is there anything else you would like to say about the proposed changes to the draft Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Vehicle Policy?**

Proposed changes to the draft Private Hire Operator Policy

In this section, we will ask for your views on the proposed changes to the Private Hire Operator Policy for the BCP area.

Please read the Table of Proposed Changes for this policy before responding to the questions.

Q14 **To what extent do you agree or disagree with the proposed changes to the draft Private Hire Operator Policy for 2025-2030?**
(select one option only)

- ☐ Strongly agree
- ☐ Somewhat agree
- ☐ Neither agree nor disagree
- ☐ Somewhat disagree
- ☐ Strongly disagree
- ☐ Don't know/not sure

Q15 **If you selected 'somewhat disagree' or 'strongly disagree' for any of the proposals, please tell us why below.** Please make it clear which sections of the draft Private Hire Operator Policy your comment relates to.

Q16 **Is there anything else you would like to say about the proposed changes to the draft Private Hire Operator Policy?**

Further comments

Q17 **Is there anything else you would like to say about the proposed changes to the draft Hackney Carriage and Private Hire policies?**

This page is intentionally left blank

Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Policies Consultation - BCP Licence Holders Survey

We are consulting on proposed changes to the following Hackney Carriage and Private Hire policies for Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole (BCP):

- Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Driver Policy
- Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Vehicle Policy
- Private Hire Operator Policy.

These policies set out the principles that BCP Council propose to apply in exercising its Hackney Carriage and Private Hire functions from 2025 to 2030.

Before any decisions are made, we would like to hear your views on the proposed changes to all three policies and on other relevant questions relating to wheelchair accessibility.

All the documents and Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) can be found on the main consultation page: **haveyoursay.bcpcouncil.gov.uk/taxi-policy-consultation** and on request in any BCP library. If you have any questions or need support completing the survey, please email taxi.privatehire@bcpcouncil.gov.uk.

The consultation will close at **11:59pm on 28 April 2025**.

Privacy statement

The survey data is hosted by Snap Surveys on behalf of BCP Council. The data is stored securely as specified in the Snap Surveys privacy policy: www.snapsurveys.com/survey-software/privacy-policy-uk. All information you provide is treated in confidence and in accordance with the Data Protection Act 2018. The information will be used for statistical and monitoring purposes. It will not be used to identify individuals apart from those instances where you give us consent to contact you using the personal details you have provided us with. You can find out more about how BCP Council use and store your data in our privacy policy: www.bcpcouncil.gov.uk/research-privacy.

Q1 **Are you responding as a:**
(select all that apply)

- ☐ BCP Hackney Carriage/Private Hire driver
- ☐ BCP Hackney Carriage/Private Hire vehicle proprietor (please tell us the name of your business/organisation below)
- ☐ BCP Private Hire Operator (please tell us the name of your business/organisation below)

Please tell us which organisation you are responding on behalf of?

Q2 **How did you find out about this consultation?**
(select all that apply)

- ☐ BCP Council's social media
- ☐ Other social media
- ☐ BCP Council website
- ☐ BCP Council email
- ☐ BCP Council press release
- ☐ BCP Library
- ☐ Bournemouth Echo
- ☐ Word of mouth
- ☐ Councillor
- ☐ None of the above
- ☐ Other, please specify below

Q3 **Which of these taxi and private hire journeys have you worked on in the last 12 months?**
(select all that apply)

- ☐ Prebooked journey through a BCP Council licensed operator such as PRC Streamline, United Taxis, Mobile Radio Cars or Ariel Taxis
- ☐ Prebooked journey via a nationwide operator such as Uber or Bolt
- ☐ The customer flagged me down on the street
- ☐ The customer got into my taxi at a rank
- ☐ None of the above
- ☐ Other, please specify below

Proposed changes to the draft Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Driver Policy

In this section, we will ask for your views on the proposed changes to the Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Driver Policy for the BCP area. Please read the Table of Proposed Changes for this policy before responding to the questions.

Q4 **To what extent do you agree or disagree with the proposed changes to the draft Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Driver Policy for 2025-2030?**
(select one option per row only)

	Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know/not sure
(a) Changes to the assessment of convictions guidance to align with the national statutory standards	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
(b) Changes to the way complaints are handled	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
(c) Adopting a phased approach to enforcement	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Q5 **If you selected 'somewhat disagree' or 'strongly disagree' for any of the proposals, please tell us why below.** Please make it clear which proposal you are disagreeing with by writing '(a)', '(b)' etc before your comment.

Q6 **Is there anything else you would like to say about the proposed changes to the draft Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Driver Policy?**

Proposed changes to the draft Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Vehicle Policy

In this section, we will ask for your views on the proposed changes to the Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Vehicle Policy for the BCP area. We will also ask you about wheelchair accessibility.

Please read the Table of Proposed Changes for this policy before responding to the questions.

Q7 **To what extent do you agree or disagree with the proposed changes to the draft Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Vehicle Policy for 2025-2030?** (select one option per row only)

	Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know/not sure
(a) No longer restrict the number of new Hackney Carriage licences that we allow to be issued in the Bournemouth and Poole areas, to allow anyone who wants a Hackney Carriage licence to apply for one	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
(b) Remove the requirement for all new Hackney Carriage vehicles to be wheelchair accessible, so that any approved vehicle can be licensed as a Hackney Carriage	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
(c) Require Operators (who take pre-bookings for journeys) to have a minimum number of wheelchair accessible vehicles in their fleet	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Q8 **If you selected 'somewhat disagree' or 'strongly disagree' for any of the proposals, please tell us why below.** Please make it clear which proposal you are disagreeing with by writing '(a)', '(b)' etc before your comment.

Q9 **How often do you drive a wheelchair accessible taxi for work?**
(select one option only)

- ☐ Daily
- ☐ Weekly
- ☐ Monthly
- ☐ A few times a year
- ☐ Never

Q10 **Is there anything else you would like to say about the proposed changes to the draft Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Vehicle Policy?**

Proposed changes to the draft Private Hire Operator Policy

In this section, we will ask for your views on the proposed changes to the Private Hire Operator Policy for the BCP area.

Please read the Table of Proposed Changes for this policy before responding to the questions.

Q11 **To what extent do you agree or disagree with the proposed changes to the draft Private Hire Operator Policy for 2025-2030?**
(select one option only)

- ☐ Strongly agree
- ☐ Somewhat agree
- ☐ Neither agree nor disagree
- ☐ Somewhat disagree
- ☐ Strongly disagree
- ☐ Don't know/not sure

Q12 **If you selected 'somewhat disagree' or 'strongly disagree' for any of the proposals, please tell us why below.** Please make it clear which sections of the draft Private Hire Operator Policy your comments relate to.

Q13 **Is there anything else you would like to say about the proposed changes to the draft Private Hire Operator Policy?**

Further comments

Q14 **Is there anything else you would like to say about the proposed changes to the draft Hackney Carriage and Private Hire policies?**

HACKNEY CARRIAGE AND PRIVATE HIRE POLICIES CONSULTATION

3 March to 28 April 2025

Report June 2025

Research and Consultation Team

Executive Summary

- 33 responses in total:
  - 22 responses to the General Public Survey
  - 11 responses to the BCP Licence Holders Survey
- 4 additional responses were received by email
- **General Public Survey**

  Most respondents said they:

  - Were responding as BCP residents
  - Found out about the consultation through BCP Council emails
  - Have taken a 'prebooked Hackney Carriage and Private Hire journey through a BCP Council operator' in the last 12 months
  - Agree with the proposed changes to the draft Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Driver Policy for 2025-2030
  - Agree with the proposed changes to the draft Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Vehicle Policy for 2025-2030
  - Agree with the proposed changes to the draft Private Hire Operator Policy for 2025-2030
  - Think 'major traffic offences' are the most serious type of complaint about Hackney Carriage and Private Hire drivers
  - Never use a wheelchair accessible taxi.
- Respondents expressed concerns over:
  - The number of taxis operating within the BCP area who are licensed by other councils
  - Too many Hackney Carriage and private hire licences being issued in the BCP area.
- **BCP License Holders Survey**

  Most respondents said they:

  - Were responding as a 'BCP Hackney Carriage/Private Hire driver'
  - Found out about the consultation through BCP Council emails
  - Have worked on a 'prebooked journey through a BCP Council licensed operator' in the last 12 months
  - Agree with the proposed changes to the draft Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Driver Policy for 2025-2030

- Disagree with the proposal in the draft Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Vehicle Policy for 2025-2030 to **no longer restrict the number of new Hackney Carriage licences that we allow to be issued in the Bournemouth and Poole areas, to allow anyone who wants a Hackney Carriage licence to apply for one**, as they feel there are too many Hackney Carriage and private hire drivers already
- Neither agree nor disagree with the proposed changes to the draft Private Hire Operator Policy for 2025-2030
- Never drive a wheelchair accessible taxi for work.

- Respondents expressed concerns over:
  - The number of taxis operating within the BCP area who are licensed by other councils and the lack of regulation around this
  - How taxis licensed in other councils operate to lower standards than those expected of Operators in the BCP area.

- **Email responses**

  Respondents expressed concerns over:

  - The number of taxis operating within the BCP area who are licensed by other councils including Southampton Council, Portsmouth Council, New Forest District Council and Fareham Council
  - How BCP Council will tackle licensed Hackney Carriage drivers who also work for Uber illegally
  - How BCP Council will tackle Taxi/Private Hire Vehicle Operators who offer their services inside the BCP Council conurbation without having an Operator license
  - Exemptions for speciality vehicles
  - Assistance dog owners being refused access to taxis.

- Respondents suggested adding the following to the policies:
  - Some level of “grandfather” rights, similar to what has been previously provided in the legacy Borough of Poole policy
  - All drivers to undertake disability equality training
  - BCP Council to investigate all violations of the Equality Act by drivers and Operators
  - BCP Council to work together with assistance dog owners to ensure license requirements are being complied with.

Contents

Executive Summary ii
1 Introduction and background 6
2 Methodology 6
2.1 Support 7
3 Engagement Figures 8
3.1 Engagement HQ Analytics 8
4 Communications Report 10
5 Analysis and results 12
6 General Public Survey 12
6.1 Respondent Type 12
6.2 Consultation Awareness 13
6.3 Journeys in the last 12 months 13
6.4 Proposed changes to the draft Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Driver Policy 14
6.5 Seriousness of Complaints 16
6.6 Further comments – Driver Policy 17
6.7 Proposed changes to the draft Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Vehicle Policy 19
6.8 Further comments – Vehicle Policy 24
6.9 Proposed changes to the draft Private Hire Operator Policy 25
6.10 Further comments – Private Hire Operator Policy 26
6.11 Further comments – All Policies 27
7 BCP License Holders Survey 28
7.1 Respondent Type 28
7.2 Consultation Awareness 28
7.3 Journeys in the last 12 months 29
7.4 Proposed changes to the draft Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Driver Policy 29
7.5 Further comments – Driver Policy 31
7.6 Proposed changes to the draft Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Vehicle Policy 32
7.7 Further comments – Vehicle Policy 35
7.8 Proposed changes to the draft Private Hire Operator Policy 37
7.9 Further comments – Private Hire Operator Policy 38

7.10 Further comments – All Policies..... 38
8 Email responses..... 39
9 Appendix 1 - Respondent profile – General Public Survey 44
10 Appendix 2 - Respondent profile – BCP License Holders Survey 46
11 Appendix 3 - Respondent postcodes by area (Both surveys)..... 47

1 Introduction and background

BCP Council ran a consultation on proposed changes to three Hackney Carriage and Private Hire policies for Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole (BCP):

- Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Driver Policy
- Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Vehicle Policy
- Private Hire Operator Policy.

These draft policies set out the principles that BCP Council propose to apply in exercising its Hackney Carriage and Private hire licensing functions from 2025 to 2030.

We asked the public and key stakeholders for their views on the proposed changes to these policies and on questions relating to complaints and wheelchair accessibility.

The consultation ran from **3 March to 28 April 2025**.

2 Methodology

The consultation used online and paper surveys to ensure broad participation from residents, businesses, and local organisations.

Respondents were asked to read a Table of Proposed Changes for each of the draft policies that clearly highlighted all the proposals. The Tables of Proposed Changes for each policy are shown below, along with the full draft policies:

1. **Draft Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Driver Policy**
    - Table of Proposed Changes
    - Full draft Policy

2. **Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Vehicle Policy**
    - Table of Proposed Changes
    - Full draft Policy

3. **Private Hire Operator Policy**
    - Table of Proposed Changes
    - Full draft Policy

The consultation was hosted on the BCP Engagement HQ platform and was promoted through various channels including:

- Press release
- Social media posts (Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, and Instagram)
- A full breakdown of the communications activity for this consultation can be found in the Communications Report
- Details of engagement rates can be found in the Engagement HQ Analytics section

The main project page was hosted from the council's Engagement HQ Platform along with a brief description of the project: haveyoursay.bcpcouncil.gov.uk/taxi-policy-consultation.

The consultation was designed in Engagement HQ (engagement platform software). The online responses were downloaded from the sofware for analysis. The data was checked and verified in preparation for analysis and held in the Research and Consultation Team's secure area.

The online survey was designed and hosted in Engagement HQ. The online responses were downloaded into Excel for analysis. The data was checked and verified in preparation for analysis and held in the BCP Council Research and Consultation Team's secure area. Quantitative analysis was carried out using Excel to identify the frequencies for each question.

The write in (qualitative) responses were exported into Excel and coded into categories. Qualitative research does not seek to quantify data, instead, its purpose is to provide deeper insights into reasoning and impact and many researchers therefore believe that numbers should not be included in reporting. The numbers of people mentioning the most prevalent codes are provided in this report to give an indication of the magnitude of response. Importantly, however, given the nature of the data, this does not provide an indication of significance or salience in relation to the question asked.

2.1 Support

During the consultation period, paper copies of the policies and surveys were available on request at any of any of BCP's libraries.

Respondents could give us their views by:

- Completing an online survey for the each of the policies being consulted on
- Completing a paper survey for the each of the policies being consulted on, which they could download on the main consultation page or collect from one of BCP's libraries
- Paper surveys could also be dropped in the 'Have Your Say' boxes in any BCP library or posted to:

Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Policies Consultation, Research and Consultation Team, BCP Council, Civic Centre, Bourne Avenue, Bournemouth, BH2 6DY.

If respondents had any questions, needed support or needed the documents in a different format, they could email taxi.privatehire@bcpcouncil.gov.uk.

They could also refer to the Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs).

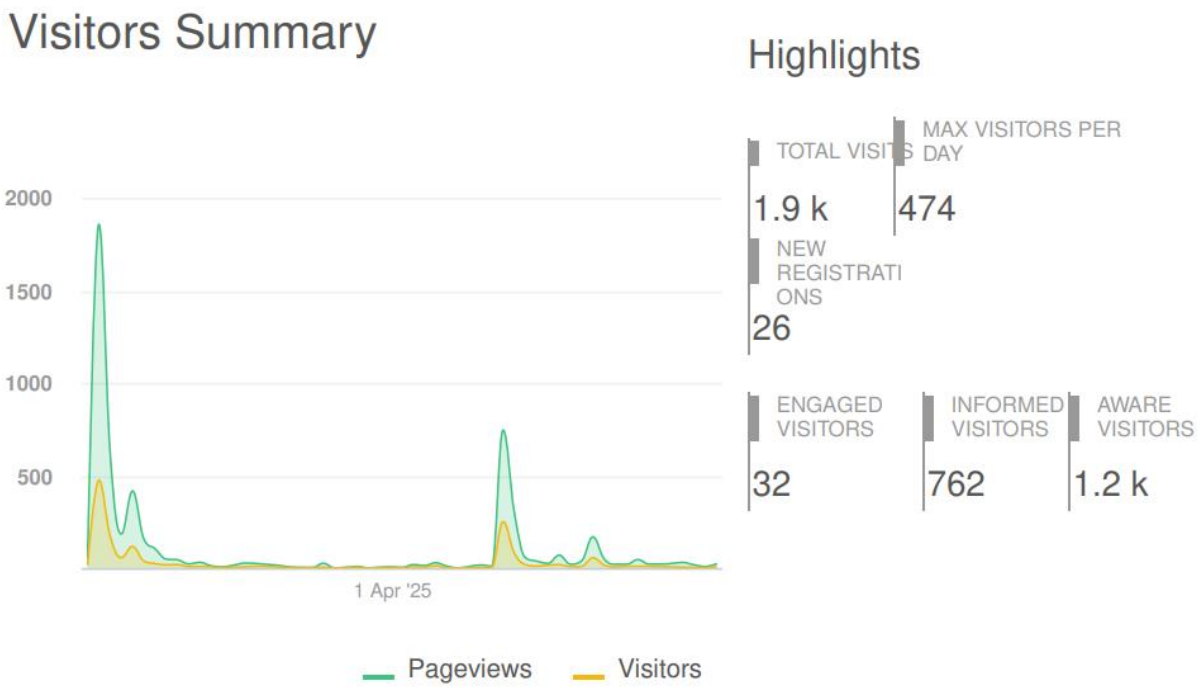
3 Engagement Figures

This section shows the engagement figures for each method used during the consultation.

3.1 Engagement HQ Analytics

The consultation was hosted on the council's engagement platform 'Engagement HQ'. There were 1,854 visits to the consultation page with 1,218 **aware visitors** (i.e. a visitor who has made at least one single visit to the webpage) and 762 **informed visitors** (i.e. a visitor who has taken the 'next step' from being aware and clicked on something).

Engagement HQ Measurement Figures



Visitors engaged with the content on the main consultation page as follows:

- 633 visitors downloaded documents 1,160 times, including:

- 532 downloads of the Table of Proposed Changes - Draft Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Driver Policy
- 221 downloads of the Table of Proposed Changes - Draft Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Vehicle Policy
- 174 downloads of the Draft Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Driver Policy 2025-2030
- 128 downloads of the Draft Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Vehicle Policy 2025-2030
- 92 downloads of the Table of Proposed Changes - Draft Private Hire Operator Policy
- 42 downloads of the Draft Private Hire Operator Policy 2025-2030
- 7 downloads of the General Public paper survey
- 3 downloads of the BCP Licence Holders Paper Survey
- 3 downloads of the consultation poster

The majority of visitors to the consultation page on Engagement HQ came via an Android app (109 visits), Google (95 visits), and the BCP Council website (10 visits). A full breakdown of the site referrals can be seen below:

TRAFFIC SOURCES OVERVIEW

REFERRER URL	Visits
android-app	109
www.google.com	85
www.bcpcouncil.gov.uk	10
www.google.co.uk	7
www.bing.com	6
email.bt.com	3
lm.facebook.com	3
mail.google.com	3
content.yudu.com	2
duckduckgo.com	2
e.mail.ru	2
m.facebook.com	2
nextdoor.co.uk	1
t.co	1
staging.yudu.com	1

4 Communications Report

Below is a breakdown of the communications activity carried out by BCP Council to promote the Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Policies Consultation as widely as possible.

The council used a variety of methods to promote the consultations including a press release and social media posts on Facebook, X (formerly Twitter), LinkedIn, and Instagram along with posters in libraries.

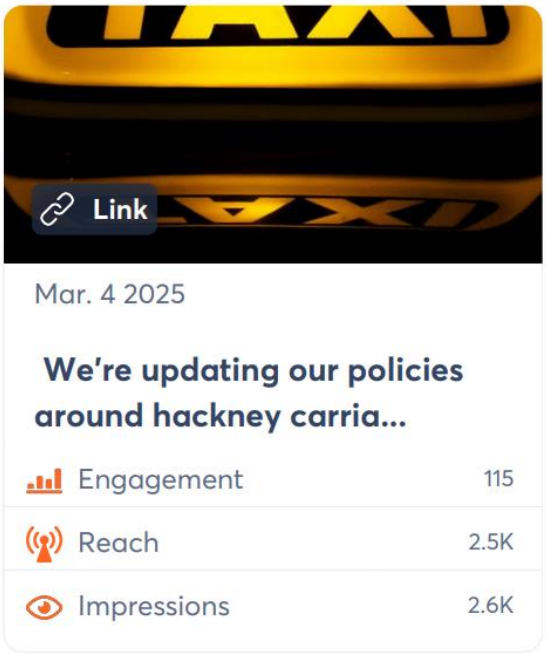
Four social media posts had a total reach[1] of 4,040 people, a total engagement[2] of 162 people and a total 4,852 impressions[3]. Below are details of how people interacted with our social media posts during the consultation period:

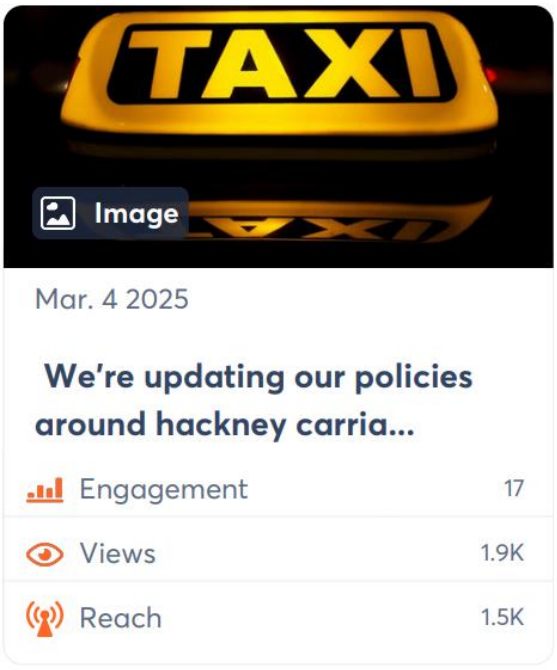
Facebook	Total
Reactions	2
Clicks	32
Other clicks	78
Comments	1
Shares	2

Instagram	Total
Likes	15
Saved	0
Comments	2

Linkedin	Total
Likes	0
Clicks	11
Comments	1
Shares	0

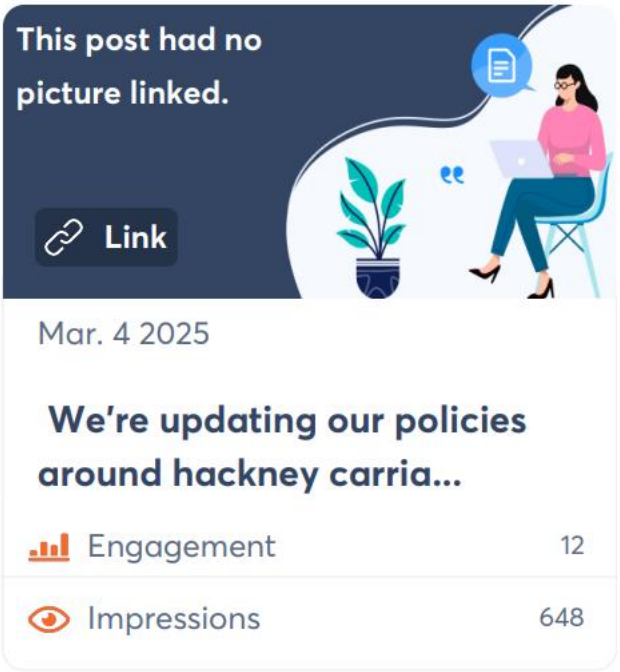
Below is the best performing social media posts based on reach and engagement:





[1] The total number of people who see the post.
[2] The number of unique people who engaged with the post, i.e., commented or liked.
[3] The number of times people saw the post.

Below is the best performing social media post based on impressions and engagement:



5 Analysis and results

A total of 33 people responded to the consultation surveys. This was made up of 22 responses to the General Public Survey and 11 responses to the BCP Licence Holders Survey. Please see the Engagement HQ Analytics section for additional information on the levels of engagement with the consultation aside from those who responded.

Figures in this report are presented as the number of people who answered a question i.e. excluding 'don't know', 'not applicable' and 'no reply', unless otherwise stated. This is a more accurate way of reporting results when a low number of responses have been received.

Please note that where numbers have been provided for the most prevalent codes to open-ended questions in this report, this is to give an indication of the magnitude of response rather than an indication of significance or salience in relation to the question asked.

6 General Public Survey

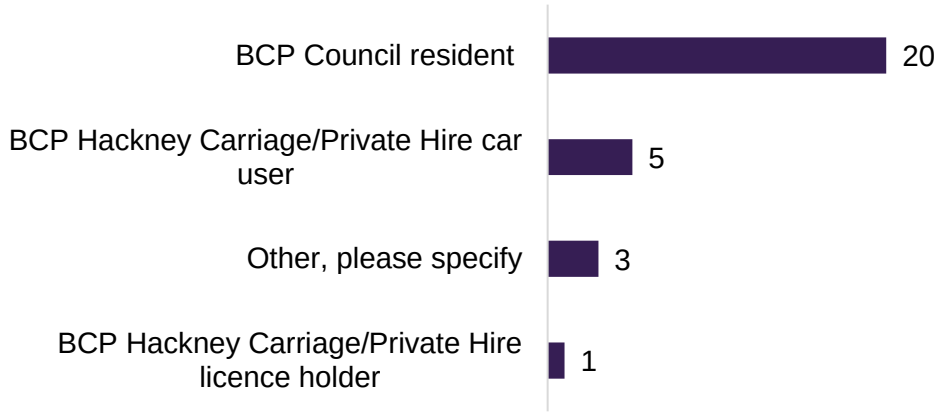
There was a total of 22 responses to this survey.

6.1 Respondent Type

Q1. Are you responding as a:

Please note respondents could select more than one option for this question.

20 respondents said they were responding as a 'BCP Council resident', while five respondents said they were responding as a 'BCP Hackney Carriage/Private Hire car user'. Three respondents said they were responding in a different capacity which are outlined below. One respondent said they were responding as BCP Hackney Carriage/Private Hire licence holder.



Base: All respondents

The other ways that the respondents said they were responding to the survey as were:

- Guide Dogs [for the Blind Association]
- Medical doctor
- A retired Hackney driver

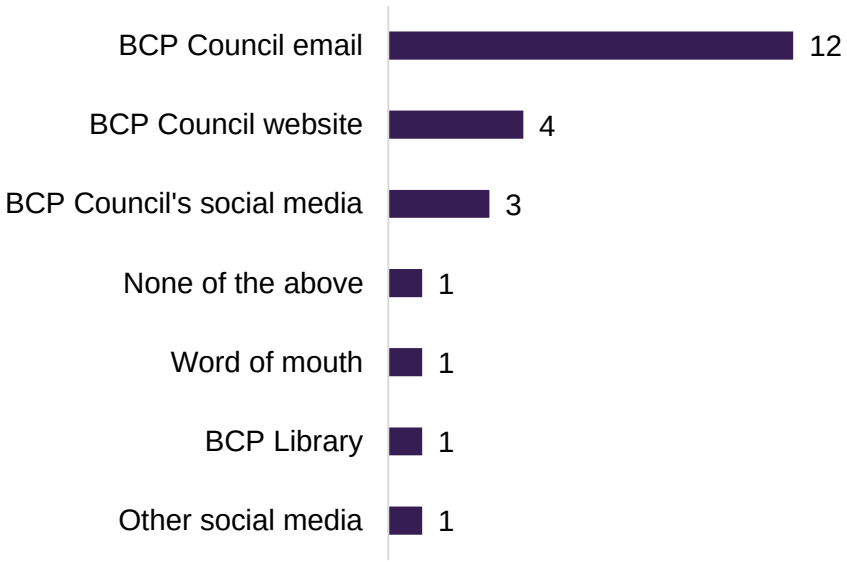
6.2 Consultation Awareness

Q2. How did you find out about this consultation?

Please note respondents could select more than one option for this question.

12 respondents said they found out about the consultation through 'BCP Council email', while four respondents said they find out through the 'BCP Council website' and three respondents said they found out through 'BCP Council's social media' posts.

Other ways respondents said they found out about the consultation were through 'word of mouth', a 'BCP Library' and 'Other social media' posts (one response each). One respondent said 'none of the above'.



Base: All respondents

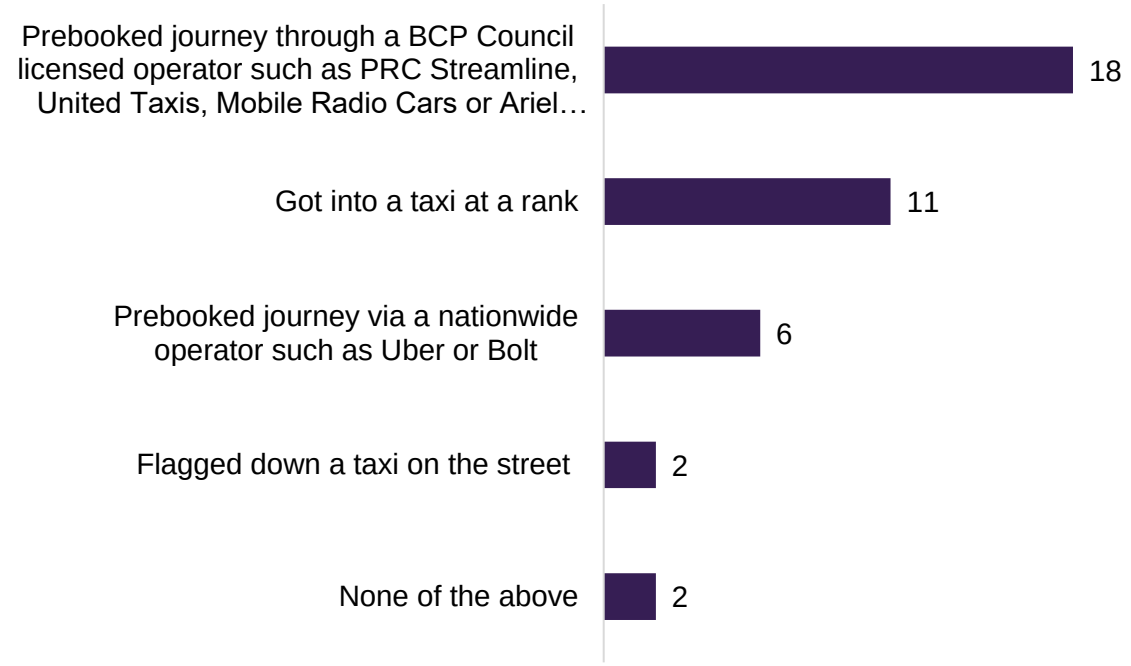
6.3 Journeys in the last 12 months

Q3. Which of these Hackney Carriage and Private Hire journeys have you taken in the last 12 months??

Please note respondents could select more than one option for this question.

18 respondents said they have taken a 'prebooked hackney carriage and private hire journey through a BCP Council operator' in the last 12 months, while 11 respondents

said they have gotten into a taxi at a taxi rank' in the last 12 months. Six respondents said they have taken a 'prebooked hackney carriage and private hire journey through a nationwide operator' in the last 12 months, while two respondents said they 'flagged down a taxi on the street' in the past 12 months. Two respondents said 'none of the above'.



Base: All respondents

6.4 Proposed changes to the draft Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Driver Policy

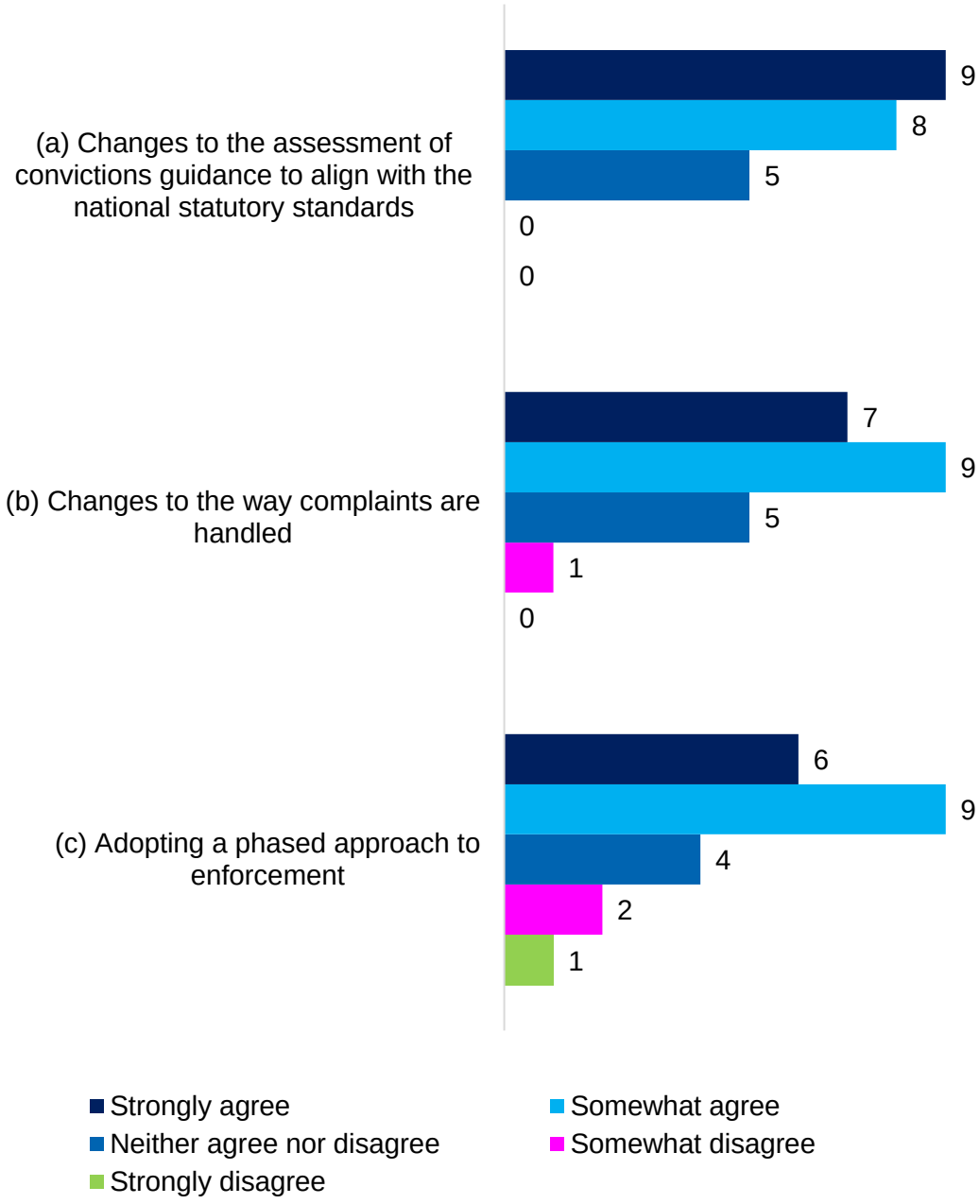
We asked respondents to read the Table of Proposed Changes for this policy before responding to the questions. They could also refer to the full draft policy.

Q4. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the proposed changes to the draft Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Driver Policy for 2025-2030?

17 respondents said they 'agree' with the proposal in the draft Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Driver Policy for 2025-2030 to **make changes to the assessment of convictions guidance to align with the national statutory standards**, while five respondents said they 'neither agree nor disagree' with the proposal.

16 respondents said they 'agree' with the proposal in the draft Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Driver Policy for 2025-2030 to **make changes to the way complaints are handled**, while five respondents said they 'neither agree nor disagree', and one respondent said they 'disagree' with the proposal.

15 respondents said they ‘agree’ with the proposal in the draft Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Driver Policy for 2025-2030 to **adopt a phased approach to enforcement**, while five respondents said they ‘neither agree nor disagree’, and one respondent said they ‘disagree’ with the proposal.



Base: All respondents

Q5. If you selected 'somewhat disagree' or 'strongly disagree' for any of the proposals, please tell us why below.

3 comments

Three respondents gave an explanation for why they disagreed with the proposals to (b) change the way complaints are handled and (c) to adopt a phased approach to enforcement. These comments are shown below along with the proposal they relate to:

(b) Make changes to the way complaints are handled

"Please refer to the written response from Guide Dogs emailed to taxi.privatehire@bcpcouncil.gov.uk."

(c) Adopting a phased approach to enforcement

"Sorry, will have to read it all again are you giving them 3 strikes and out? Only doing this survey to keep Uber out of town."

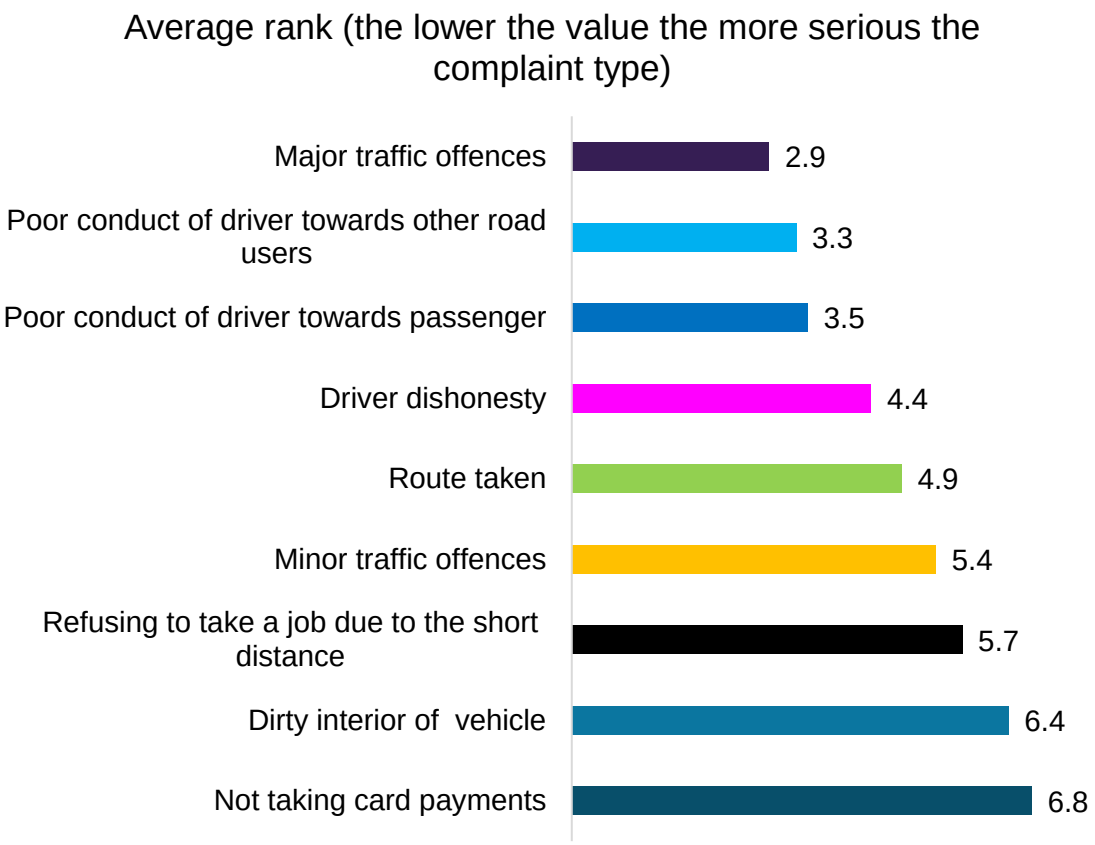
"Enforcement should be stricter and implemented with only legal notice."

6.5 Seriousness of Complaints

Q6. Please rank these types of complaint in order of seriousness with the most serious placed at number 1, and the least serious placed at number 9.

The chart below shows how respondents ranked each of type of complaint about Hackney Carriage and Private Hire drivers. Please note that the more serious the type of complaint is, the lower the value allocated to that type of complaint.

On average, respondents ranked 'major traffic offences' (2.9) as the most serious type of complaint about Hackney Carriage and Private Hire drivers, followed by 'poor conduct of drivers towards other road users' (3.3), and 'poor conduct of drivers towards passengers' (3.5). Respondents said 'not taking card payments' (6.8) is the least serious type of complaint about Hackney Carriage and Private Hire drivers.



Base: 21 respondents

6.6 Further comments – Driver Policy

Q7. Is there anything else you would like to say about the proposed changes to the draft Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Driver Policy?

11 comments

Half of respondents provided further comments on the proposed changes to the draft Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Driver Policy.

These comments have been coded into themes to make them easier to interpret. These are shown in the table below:

Table 1: Further Comments Themes – Driver Policy

Theme	No of comments
Criticisms	5
Suggestions	4
Other	1
None	1

Criticisms

These respondents made comments criticising the consultation survey, the lack of knowledge that some drivers have of the local area, the council for not allowing ride sharing apps like Uber and the number of hackney carriages and private hire licences:

“So many drivers I meet with no area knowledge.”

“Question 6 of this consultation is flawed and unacceptable because participants should be able to give a 1 rating for all the behaviours as none of them are acceptable to any degree.”

“Survey is difficult to complete on iPhone.”

“It is disappointing that the number of hackney carriages and private hire licences isn't being reduced. There are clearly too many available especially given how they park everywhere at their ranks such as at Bournemouth Station.”

“Absolutely needs to be an inclusion for Uber and other outside international operators. The council should hang their heads in shame at the fact other councils operating Uber are significantly cheaper and more efficient than BCP.”

Suggestions

These respondents made suggestions including amending Section 11.2 of the draft Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Driver Policy, ride sharing apps, and additional requirements for all vehicles Hackney Carriage and Private Hire vehicles:

“All drivers with high step vehicles to have step ups and all drivers and cabs to be disabled friendly.”

“Every driver should have a vehicle number in plain sight.”

“What you really need to do is license Uber and other ride sharing apps to operate in the BCP area. Not sure why this has not already been done. It reflects poorly on the council, as it seems a license has not been granted because owners of local taxi companies have made some sort of underhanded agreement with the council to ban ride sharing apps from the area, so that they can continue to inflate prices for customers. If you really had residents' interests at heart, you would license drivers who operate through ride sharing apps so that passengers are not paying exorbitant amounts to the few taxi companies who have a monopoly in BCP.”

“Regarding section 11.2, you use the term 'approved medical centre' in the new policy wording. Unless you are planning to keep a list of 'approved medical centres' then I think this term is unclear. I think the current wording is actually also ambiguous. In practice, where the driver's own GP is unable to carry out the medical, many taxi medicals currently, and certainly most of the lorry/bus Group 2 examination reports (which you are now proposing to accept in the new policy), are actually conducted by medical practitioners working from private consulting rooms. I would propose that the wording is changed from 'approved medical centre' to 'registered medical practitioner'. So, it would read as follows: 'Group 2 medical certificates must be completed by the driver's own General Practitioner (GP) or a registered medical practitioner with access to the driver's medical records, no more than four months before the medical is due. For drivers who also have a lorry or bus licence, we will accept a copy of the same medical, subject to the requirements above'. My proposed amended wording would be clearer, but it also shows that the council expects the medical to be done by a registered medical practitioner (ie. not lesser qualified staff who work in an 'approved medical centre'). My proposed wording would be in line with the current DVLA requirement that D4 (lorry/bus) medical examinations must be conducted by a registered medical practitioner (ie. a doctor).”

Other

“Please refer to the written response from Guide Dogs emailed to taxi.privatehire@bcpcouncil.gov.uk.”

6.7 Proposed changes to the draft Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Vehicle Policy

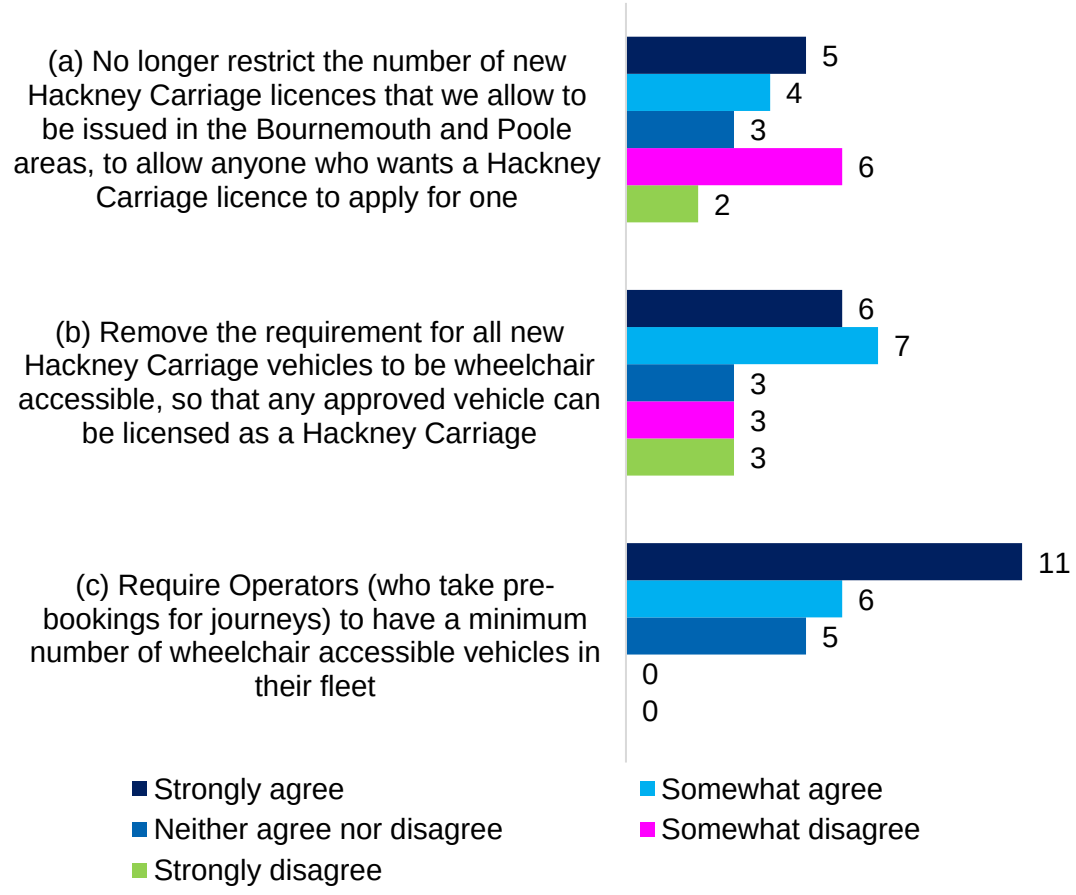
We asked respondents to read the Table of Proposed Changes for this policy before responding to the questions. They could also refer to the full draft policy.

Q8. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the proposed changes to the draft Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Vehicle Policy for 2025-2030?

9 respondents said they 'agree' with the proposal in the draft Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Vehicle Policy for 2025-2030 to **no longer restrict the number of new Hackney Carriage licences that we allow to be issued in the Bournemouth and Poole areas, to allow anyone who wants a Hackney Carriage licence to apply for one**, while eight respondents said they 'disagree' and three respondents said they 'neither agree nor disagree' with the proposal.

13 respondents said they 'agree' with the proposal in the draft Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Vehicle Policy for 2025-2030 to **remove the requirement for all new Hackney Carriage vehicles to be wheelchair accessible, so that any approved vehicle can be licensed as a Hackney Carriage**, while six respondents said they 'disagree' and three respondents said they 'neither agree nor disagree' with the proposal.

17 respondents said they 'agree' with the proposal in the draft Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Vehicle Policy for 2025-2030 to **require Operators (who take pre-bookings for journeys) to have a minimum number of wheelchair accessible vehicles in their fleet**, while five respondents said they 'neither agree nor disagree' with the proposal.



Base: All respondents

Q9. If you selected 'somewhat disagree' or 'strongly disagree' for any of the proposals, please tell us why below.

8 comments

Six respondents gave an explanation for why they disagreed with the proposals to (a) no longer restrict the number of new Hackney Carriage licences that we allow to be issued in the Bournemouth and Poole areas, to allow anyone who wants a Hackney Carriage licence to apply for one and (b) remove the requirement for all new Hackney Carriage vehicles to be wheelchair accessible, so that any approved vehicle can be licensed as a Hackney Carriage.

Please note some of the comments below have been repeated because some respondents disagreed with more than proposal.

Two respondents answered the question despite saying they neither agree nor disagree with the proposal. These comments have not been included in this report as they do not relate to the question.

The comments are shown below along with the proposal they relate to:

(a) No longer restrict the number of new Hackney Carriage licences that we allow to be issued in the Bournemouth and Poole areas, to allow anyone who wants a Hackney Carriage licence to apply for one

"Anyone should be able to access this type of vehicle any time of day or night!"

"I think allowing an unlimited number of licenses will increase the issue of drivers not knowing the area and just doing the odd job it will also lead to drivers having to compete [for] work (while this would be good if it drove fair prices down I can't see this would happen)."

"There are too many taxis already for the available trade. They must take anyone requiring assistance not refusing to do so."

"Drive around the area, look at how many taxis are sitting idle on driveways, there are more than enough now."

(b) Remove the requirement for all new Hackney Carriage vehicles to be wheelchair accessible, so that any approved vehicle can be licensed as a Hackney Carriage

"Anyone should be able to access this type of vehicle any time of day or night!"

"There are too many taxis already for the available trade. They must take anyone requiring assistance not refusing to do so."

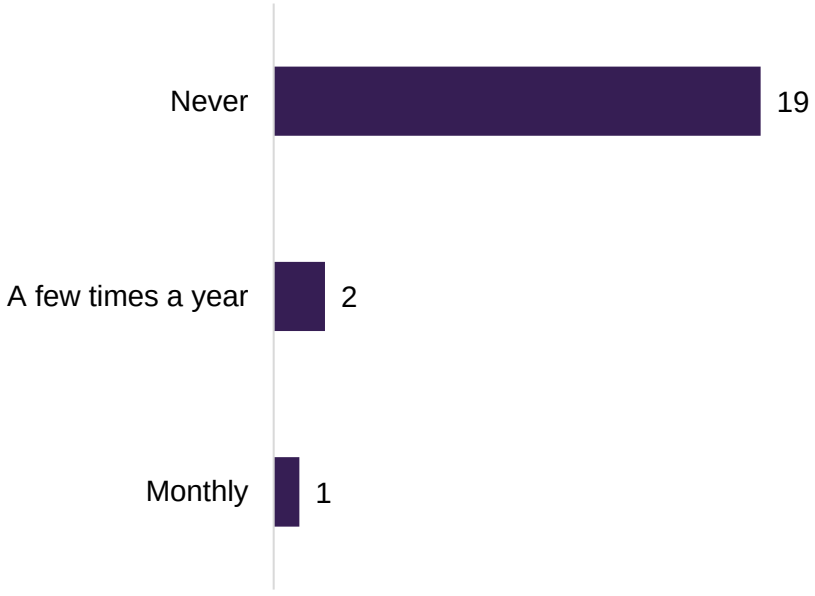
"Drive around the area, look at how many Taxis are sitting idle on driveways, there are more than enough now."

"There must be equality in access."

"Provision should be available but not at the expense of other operators."

Q10. How often do you use a wheelchair accessible taxi?

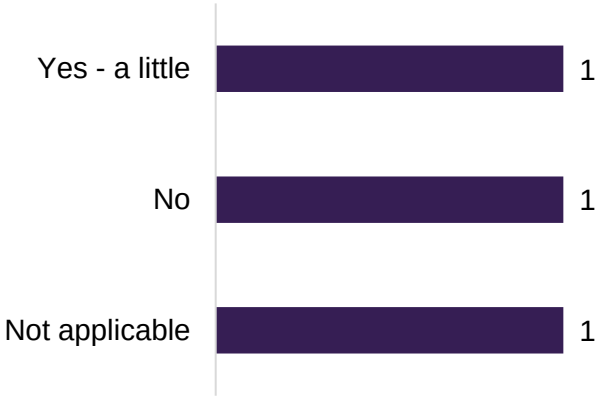
19 respondents said they 'never' use a wheelchair accessible taxi, while two respondents said they use them 'a few times year' and one respondent said they use them 'monthly'.



Base: All respondents

Q11. Have you ever experienced difficulties when trying to book a wheelchair accessible taxi?

One respondent said they have experienced difficulties when trying to book a wheelchair accessible taxi, while another said they did not. One respondent said they question was not applicable to them.



Base: 3 respondents

Q12. If you said you have experienced difficulties when trying to book a wheelchair accessible taxi, please tell us why.

2 comments

Two respondents gave an explanation for why they had experienced difficulties when trying to book a wheelchair accessible taxi. One comment relates to the respondent who said “Yes – a little” and the other comment relates to the respondent who said “Not applicable” in the previous question:

Yes – a little

“Long wait.”

Not applicable

“I haven't booked one but others travelling with did and struggled to get someone to take them.”

6.8 Further comments – Vehicle Policy

Q13. Is there anything else you would like to say about the proposed changes to the draft Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Vehicle Policy?

6 comments

These respondents provided further comments on the proposed changes to the draft Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Vehicle Policy.

These comments have been coded into themes to make them easier to interpret. These are shown in the table below:

Table 2: Further Comments Themes – Vehicle Policy

Theme	No of comments
Suggestions	2
None	2
Criticisms	1
Other	1

Suggestions

These respondents made suggestions about promoting equality amongst Hackney Carriage and Private Hire vehicle drivers, about their ability to speak English, reporting conduct breaches, and the need for Uber in BCP:

"It's important to promote female taxi drivers so that female customers have that as an option. All taxi drivers should speak very good English. It should be made easier to report poor standards experienced when using a taxi. There should be a code of conduct for taxi drivers with respect at the top and it's not acceptable for taxi drivers to have an attitude of not valuing women as equals."

"We need Uber in BCP."

Criticisms

One respondent criticised the consultation survey:

"Survey [was] difficult to complete."

Other

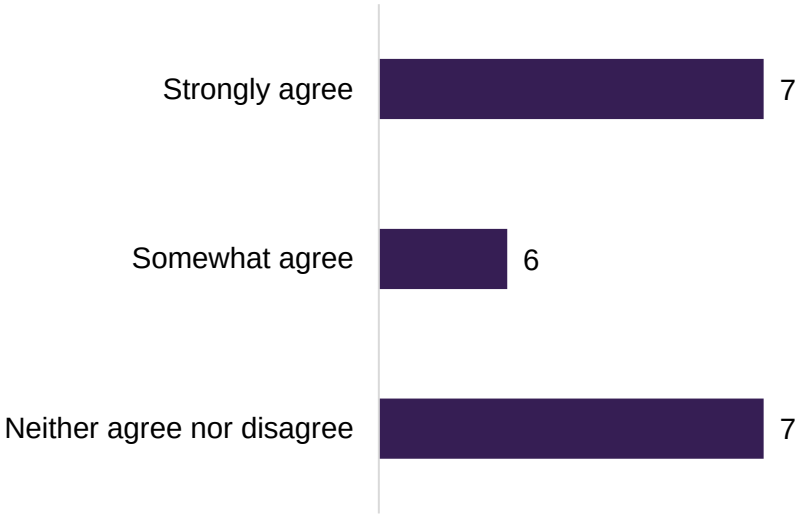
"Please refer to the written response from Guide Dogs emailed to taxi.privatehire@bcpcouncil.gov.uk."

6.9 Proposed changes to the draft Private Hire Operator Policy

We asked respondents to read the Table of Proposed Changes for this policy before responding to the questions. They could also refer to the full draft policy.

Q14. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the proposed changes to the draft Private Hire Operator Policy for 2025-2030?

13 respondents said they 'agree' with the proposed changes to the draft Private Hire Operator Policy for 2025-2030, while seven respondents said they 'neither agree nor disagree' with the proposal.



Base: 20 respondents

Q15. If you selected 'somewhat disagree' or 'strongly disagree' for any of the proposals, please tell us why below.

1 comment

One respondent answered the question despite saying they neither agree nor disagree with the proposal. This comment has not been included in this report as it does not relate to the question.

6.10 Further comments – Private Hire Operator Policy

Q16. Is there anything else you would like to say about the proposed changes to the draft Private Hire Operator Policy?

7 comments

These respondents provided further comments on the proposed changes to the draft Private Hire Operator Policy.

These comments have not been coded into themes for this section as they repeat themes already outlined in the Driver and Vehicle policy sections above. However, these comments are listed below:

"License Uber and other ride sharing apps to operate in the BCP area. There is no reason why you should not be doing this---other nearby councils (e.g. Southampton) do. You have created a situation where taxi prices are inflated. If you care about BCP residents who rely on cabs/taxis for transportation, you need to make this change asap."

"Please refer to the written response from Guide Dogs emailed to taxi.privatehire@bcpcouncil.gov.uk."

"Please have drivers who can communicate and follow basic instructions. Too many drivers irrelevant of nationality that are not up to standard."

"Make sure you get a good representation of responses to this consultant from females, the elderly and people with disabilities."

"As previously mentioned Uber should be granted access to BCP and free market should dictate numbers."

"No."

"None."

6.11 Further comments – All Policies

Q17. Is there anything else you would like to say about the proposed changes to the draft Hackney Carriage and Private Hire policies?

7 comments

These respondents provided further comments on the proposed changes to the draft Hackney Carriage and Private Hire policies. These comments relate to regulating driver behaviour, having dogs in taxis, Uber and some queries about the implementation of the policies.

These comments are listed below:

"Say no to Uber."

"There needs to be robust policy in place to ban drivers who have concerns raised about them. Well behaved dogs should be allowed to travel in taxis."

"Drivers must be able to speak English and have a basic knowledge of the area."

"Will this mean Uber will operate in BCP?"

"I'm concerned about the cost of these massively over bureaucratic rules and regulations. I doubt many drivers will read and understand all 25 pages. How many people and how much time is spent on ensuring procedures are followed and what are the positive outcomes, or is that irrelevant?"

"None."

"Please refer to the written response from Guide Dogs emailed to taxi.privatehire@bcpcouncil.gov.uk."

7 BCP License Holders Survey

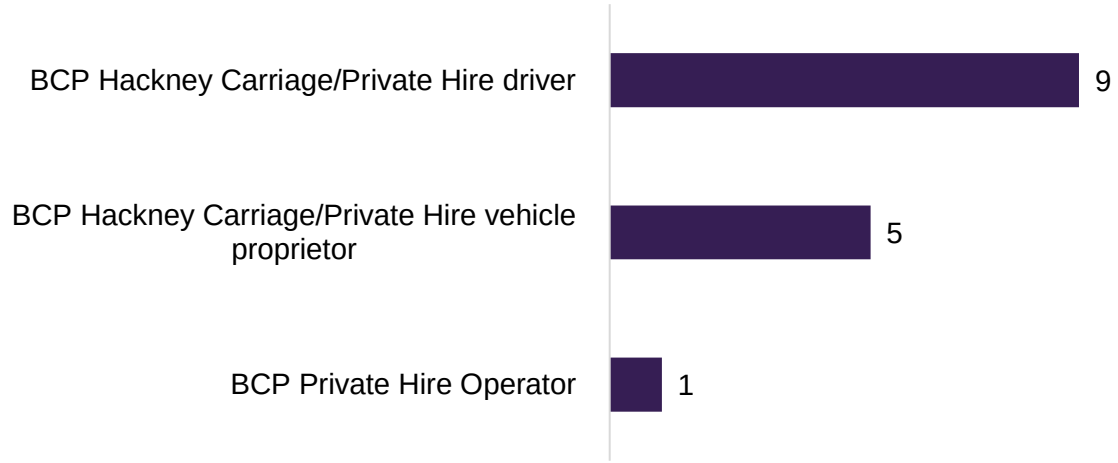
There was a total of 11 responses to this survey

7.1 Respondent Type

Q1. Are you responding as a:

Please note respondents could select more than one option for this question.

20 respondents said they were responding as a ‘BCP Hackney Carriage/Private Hire driver’, while five respondents said they were responding as a ‘BCP Hackney Carriage/Private Hire vehicle proprietor’. One respondent said they were responding as a ‘BCP Private Hire Operator’.



Base: All respondents

Respondents were asked to tell us which organisation they were responding on behalf of. One respondent provided these details:

- Enigmus Limited T/A Dorset Day Trips

7.2 Consultation Awareness

Q2. How did you find out about this consultation?

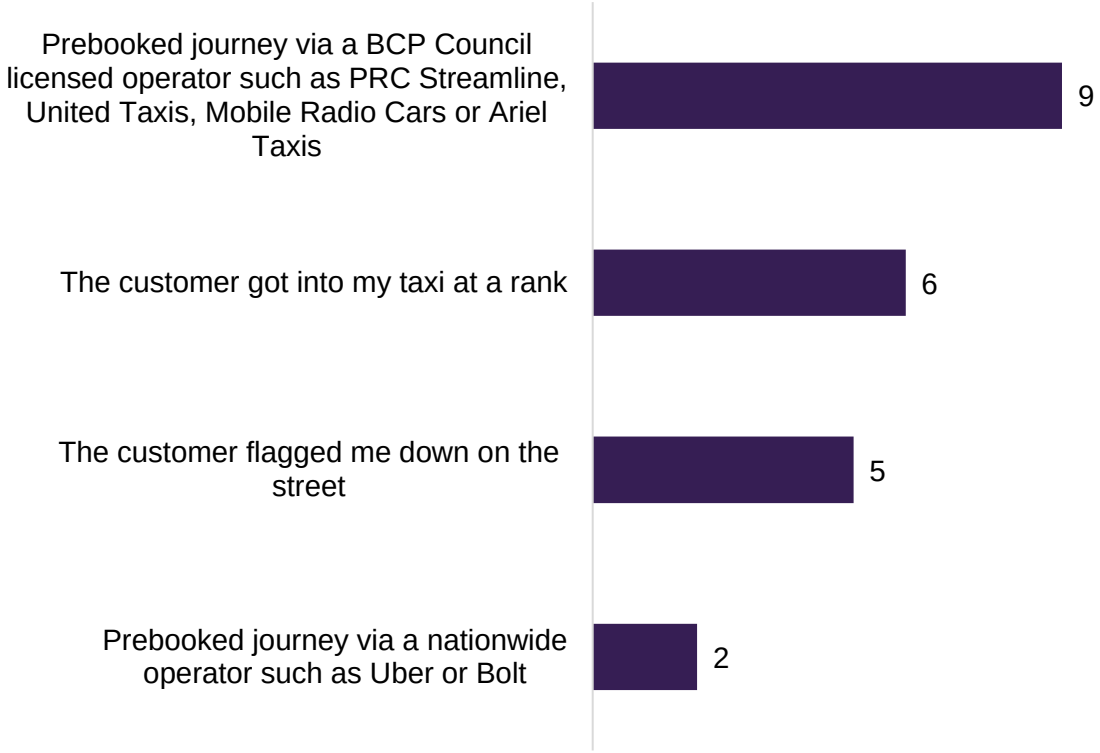
11 respondents answered this question and they all said they found out about the consultation through ‘BCP Council email’.

7.3 Journeys in the last 12 months

Q3. Which of these taxi and private hire journeys have you worked on in the last 12 months?

Please note respondents could select more than one option for this question.

9 respondents said they have worked on a ‘prebooked journey through a BCP Council licensed operator’ in the last 12 months, while six respondents said a ‘customer got into my taxi at a rank’ in the last 12 months. Five respondents said a ‘customer flagged them down on the street’ in the last 12 months, while two respondents said they have worked on a ‘prebooked journey via a nationwide operator’ in the last 12 months.



Base: All respondents

7.4 Proposed changes to the draft Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Driver Policy

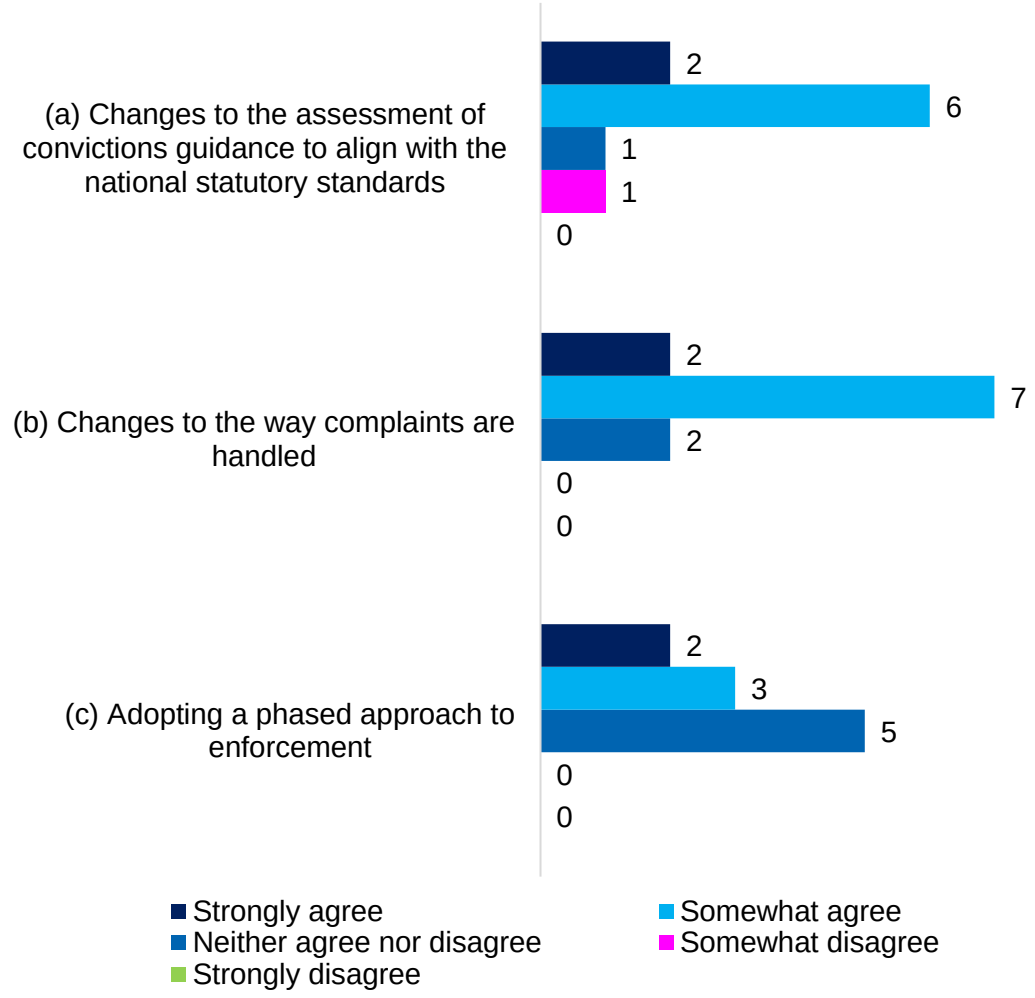
We asked respondents to read the Table of Proposed Changes for this policy before responding to the questions. They could also refer to the full draft policy.

Q4. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the proposed changes to the draft Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Driver Policy for 2025-2030?

Eight respondents said they 'agree' with the proposal in the draft Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Driver Policy for 2025-2030 to **make changes to the assessment of convictions guidance to align with the national statutory standards**, while one respondent said they 'disagree' and another respondent said they 'neither agree nor disagree' with the proposal.

Nine respondents said they 'agree' with the proposal in the draft Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Driver Policy for 2025-2030 to **make changes to the way complaints are handled**, while two respondents said they 'neither agree nor disagree' with the proposal.

Five respondents said they 'agree' with the proposal in the draft Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Driver Policy for 2025-2030 to **adopt a phased approach to enforcement**. Five respondents also said they 'neither agree nor disagree' with the proposal.



Base: All respondents

Q5. If you selected 'somewhat disagree' or 'strongly disagree' for any of the proposals, please tell us why below.

No responses were received for this question.

7.5 Further comments – Driver Policy

Q6. Is there anything else you would like to say about the proposed changes to the draft Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Driver Policy?

6 comments

Six respondents provided further comments on the proposed changes to the draft Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Driver Policy.

Three of these comments were respondents saying they had no comment to make, the other three comments relate to private hire vehicles and the impact taxis from other council areas are having on the BCP area. These comments are shown below:

"[Private hire cabs] have old, dirty cars, and they don't respect the driving rules of the BCP or the traffic laws. They are very aggressive. Save us from the invasion of private hire cabs from other counties, e.g. Uber, and their prices are too low. Thanks."

"We need a national change. Sadly, your good ideas are ruined by substandard drivers getting licenses with other councils and driving in BCP."

"As all three council were merged in [2019], I think it's the time to make all three zones into one. I found many times customers get confused which taxi they should use [because] all three zone taxi colours and logos are [the] same. We are facing income loss as all the Dorset Council taxis are now [operating] in [the] BCP area. Also from other councils like Southampton, Portsmouth & New Forest [and] Uber taxis [are] also operating in [the] BCP area. Private Hire Operator United and Streamline taxis from Dorset Council should not be operate in [the] BCP area. Many drivers are now affected and [have lost] income because of too many Dorset taxis [operating] here."

7.6 Proposed changes to the draft Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Vehicle Policy

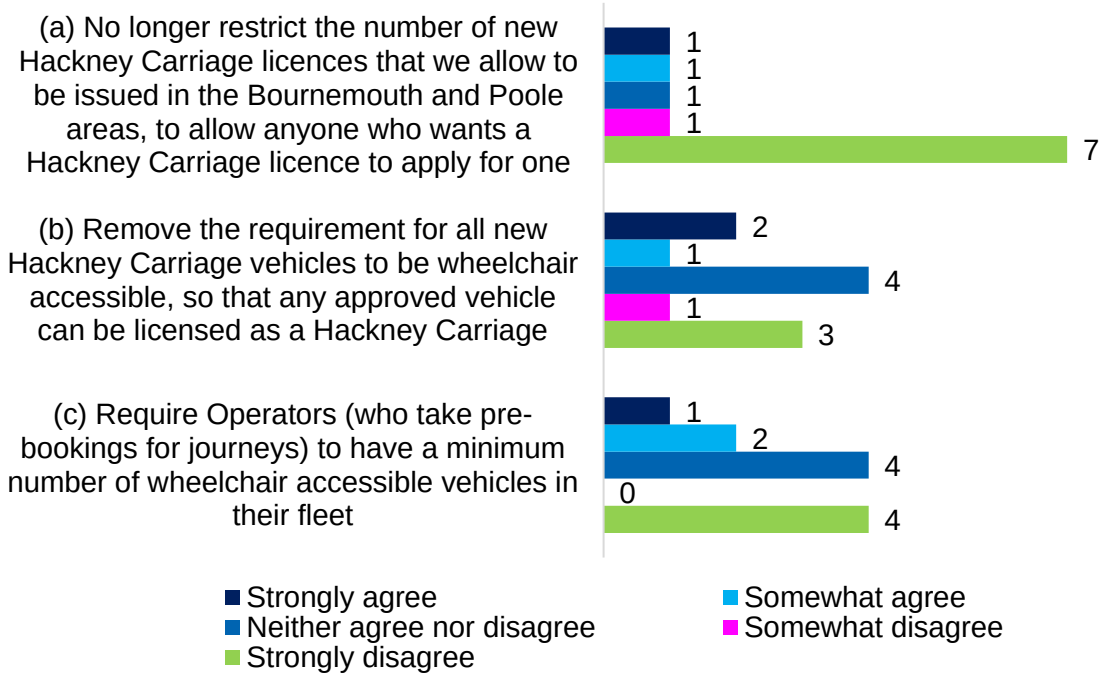
We asked respondents to read the Table of Proposed Changes for this policy before responding to the questions. They could also refer to the full draft policy.

Q7. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the proposed changes to the draft Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Vehicle Policy for 2025-2030?

Eight respondents said they 'disagree' with the proposal in the draft Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Vehicle Policy for 2025-2030 to **no longer restrict the number of new Hackney Carriage licences that we allow to be issued in the Bournemouth and Poole areas, to allow anyone who wants a Hackney Carriage licence to apply for one**, while two respondents said they 'agree' and one respondent said they 'neither agree nor disagree' with the proposal.

Four respondents said they 'disagree' with the proposal in the draft Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Vehicle Policy for 2025-2030 to **remove the requirement for all new Hackney Carriage vehicles to be wheelchair accessible, so that any approved vehicle can be licensed as a Hackney Carriage**, while three respondents said they 'agree' and four respondents said they 'neither agree nor disagree' with the proposal.

Four respondents said they 'disagree' with the proposal in the draft Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Vehicle Policy for 2025-2030 to **require Operators (who take pre-bookings for journeys) to have a minimum number of wheelchair accessible vehicles in their fleet**, while three respondents said they 'disagree' and another four respondents said they 'neither agree nor disagree' with the proposal.



Base: All respondents

Q8. If you selected 'somewhat disagree' or 'strongly disagree' for any of the proposals, please tell us why below.

7 comments

Six respondents gave an explanation for why they disagreed with all the proposals, while one respondent answered this question despite saying they agree with proposals (a) and (b), and that they neither agree nor disagree with proposal (c).

Please note some of the comments below have been repeated because some respondents disagreed with more than proposal.

The comments explaining why respondents disagree are shown below along with the proposal they relate to:

(a) No longer restrict the number of new Hackney Carriage licences that we allow to be issued in the Bournemouth and Poole areas, to allow anyone who wants a Hackney Carriage licence to apply for one

"The market is already flooded due to loopholes in the countrywide taxi network without drastically increasing the numbers in BCP. It's not sustainable!"

"(a) This should be restricted. As there are enough drives already, sometimes they need to wait about 1 to 3 hours for a job. the private hires are coming from other councils, covering lots of jobs. The Hackney drivers should be able to make ends meet. If there are more Hackney Drivers, the competition would be too much, and no one would be proud of the profession, as they have to rely on other sources of income for survival."

"Issuing more hackney vehicle licenses will reduce the business of current hackney vehicles. The taxi ranks won't be enough if more hackney vehicle licences [are] issued."

"There are plenty of standard vehicles and no unmet demand for regular taxis. Only required vehicles are wheelchair accessible."

"(a) There is already too many Hackney Carriages in [the] BCP zone now. Also, there [are] not enough taxi ranks or [car] parks in the current rank. Therefore, [a] cap should be in place for Hackney Carriages and [the council should] no longer issue any new plates."

(b) Remove the requirement for all new Hackney Carriage vehicles to be wheelchair accessible, so that any approved vehicle can be licensed as a Hackney Carriage

"There are plenty of standard vehicles and no unmet demand for regular taxis. Only required vehicles are wheelchair accessible."

"(b) Wheelchair vehicles are expensive and [to maintain]. [They are] not affordable."

(c) Require Operators (who take pre-bookings for journeys) to have a minimum number of wheelchair accessible vehicles in their fleet

"A one-vehicle operator such as myself cannot have a minimum number of wheelchair accessible vehicles unless that one vehicle is so-adapted already."

One respondent answered this question despite saying they 'agree' with proposals (a) and (b), and that they 'neither agree nor disagree' with proposal (c):

"That's very hard to implement since it's based on number on vehicles that exist. I'm a Christchurch Hackney [carriage driver]... and [I'm] disappointed I can't buy my own car and [the] council force me into slavery for another owner. I'll wait to see the outcome of [these] new BCP policies. If I'm forced to rent a car in the future, I'll probably quit... the stress [is] too high and I'm not sure it's [worth it] anymore to be a slave. I don't see the point to own a hackney driver licence if I can't work [using] my own car."

Q9. How often do you drive a wheelchair accessible taxi for work?

10 respondents said they 'never' drive a wheelchair accessible taxi for work, while one respondent said they do 'a few times a year'.

7.7 Further comments – Vehicle Policy

Q10. Is there anything else you would like to say about the proposed changes to the draft Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Vehicle Policy?

6 comments

These respondents provided further comments on the proposed changes to the draft Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Vehicle Policy. These comments have been coded into themes to make them easier to interpret. These are shown in the table below:

Table 3: Further Comments Themes – Vehicle Policy

Theme	No of comments
Suggestions	3
Criticisms	1
Concerns	1

Suggestions

These respondents made suggestions about operating rules, restricting the number of Hackney Carriage licences available, and changes to the draft Vehicle Policy:

"[Make sure] that Hackney carriages (no matter the zone) [removed] can rank and [can] be hired by being held (flagged down) from the street in all BCP areas."

"I would like BCP to keep the number of Hackney licenses limited."

1) As a single speciality vehicle operator that has provided a unique contribution to the tourism offering of the BCP area for the last 12 years, I presume that there will be some level of "grandfather" rights applicable with this update, as there were when BCP policies were last revised, replacing [the] previous Poole [Borough Council] policy.

2) You mention the speciality vehicle exemption in para 9.2 & 21.3, but it is not mentioned anymore in 23.2 (livery & sticker requirements – previously covered by category A/B differentiation). As the exemption is very much still relevant & applicable, please add to the text.

3) Similarly, the livery/sticker exemption for speciality PH vehicles is not mentioned at all in new Appendix B, where it should be added to back up my previous point.

Please confirm these corrections in (2) & (3) will be added – do contact me if further clarification needed."

Criticisms

One respondent criticised the experience of being a Hackney Carriage driver because of health impacts and cost implications:

“[Wheelchair Accessible Vehicles] (WAV) IS NOT FOR ME... I have a back problem which I try to keep it under control ... if I'm forced to buy a wav car to work... probably my back condition will get worse. So no thank you. I also don't want to buy a overpriced hackney car just for a plate. If the policies restriction for Christchurch Hackney plates will stand, I probably just have no option but to quit. I had enough slavery in 7 years. Since I have my Hackney driver licence, it's clear that I have to say "stop"... my mental health [is] more important. Thank you.”

Concerns

One respondent expressed several concerns about the number of private hire vehicles operating in the BCP area under other councils’ licenses:

“"I would like to raise concerns regarding the growing number of private hire vehicles operating in the BCP area that are licensed by other councils.

- A large number of private hire vehicles licensed by other councils are operating in the BCP area, increasing competition and making it difficult for BCP-licensed private hire and Hackney Carriage drivers to earn a fair living.

- Drivers from other councils are not always required to complete the same professional training or courses that BCP Council mandates, which is unfair to local drivers who invest time and money to meet these standards.

- Some vehicles licensed by other councils do not meet the same safety, cleanliness, or quality standards expected by BCP Council, potentially compromising passenger experience and safety.

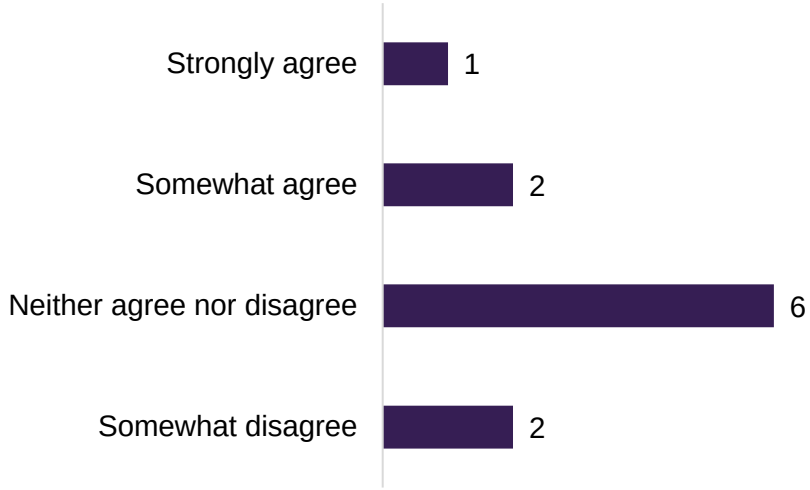
- BCP-licensed drivers must follow strict procedures, undergo regular checks, and maintain high standards, whereas out-of-area drivers are not held to the same level of regulation, creating an uneven playing field.”

7.8 Proposed changes to the draft Private Hire Operator Policy

We asked respondents to read the Table of Proposed Changes for this policy before responding to the questions. They could also refer to the full draft policy.

Q11. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the proposed changes to the draft Private Hire Operator Policy for 2025-2030?

Six respondents said they 'neither agree nor disagree' with the proposed changes to the draft Private Hire Operator Policy for 2025-2030, while three respondents said they 'agree', and two respondents said they 'disagree' with the proposal.



Base: All respondents

Q12. If you selected 'somewhat disagree' or 'strongly disagree' for any of the proposals, please tell us why below.

1 comment

One respondent explained why they disagree with the proposed changes to the draft Private Hire Operator Policy for 2025-2030:

"All vehicles should only rank in [the] area [where their] licence [is] held."

7.9 Further comments – Private Hire Operator Policy

Q13. Is there anything else you would like to say about the proposed changes to the draft Private Hire Operator Policy?

No comments were received for this question.

7.10 Further comments – All Policies

Q14. Is there anything else you would like to say about the proposed changes to the draft Hackney Carriage and Private Hire policies?

4 comments

These respondents provided further comments on the proposed changes to the draft Hackney Carriage and Private Hire policies. These comments relate to not restricting the number of Hackney Carriage plates in the area, the impact drivers from other council areas are having in the BCP area, and special rights for long-serving drivers.

These comments are listed below:

"Hope in best interest of drivers that the limitation of hackney carriage plates are removed. Thank you."

"Many, many things need looking at which would require much more space and time to go through. However hard BCP try with your policies, sadly they're being ruined by outside drivers getting licenses in other boroughs and driving here. Sadly, ALL operators in BCP are [actively] encouraging ALL of us to get licenses that aren't with BCP. It's so unfair and destroying our reputation and credibility."

"As all three council were merged in [2019], I think it's the time to make all three zones into one. I found many times customers get confused which taxi they should use [because] all three zone taxi colours and logos are [the] same. We are facing income loss as all the Dorset Council taxis are now [operating] in [the] BCP area. Also from other councils like Southampton, Portsmouth & New Forest [and] Uber taxis [are] also operating in [the] BCP area. Private Hire Operators United and Streamline taxis from Dorset Council should not be operate in [the] BCP area."

"As mentioned above, I presume that there will be some level of "grandfather" rights applicable with this update, as there were when BCP policies were last revised, replacing previous Poole [Borough Council] policy."

8 Email responses

In addition to the survey responses, four emails were received during the consultation period.

The comments in the emails relate to the impact drivers from other council areas are having in the BCP area, regulation of driver and Operator conduct, speciality private hire vehicles, and

“I really don’t understand why people [from areas outside the BCP area are] working under [the] BCP area. More than half [from] Portsmouth, Southampton, [and the] New Forest all work as Uber drivers. Please check [this] out. I can easily make videos and photos.” - Anonymous

“Good morning,

Thank you for opportunity to read the draft of changes proposal.

In general, [removed] I am fine with all changes [the] proposed, these should improve our service offered to [the] public in all aspects.

Only what I do [find is] missing in the draft is any mention [of] how the Taxi Licensing department will tackle Hackney drivers, licensed by BCP Council, who [also work] for Uber illegally because Uber doesn't hold Operator licenses issued by BCP Council.

Also, in the new draft there is [no] mention [of] how [removed] BCP Council tackle Taxi/PHV (Private Hire Vehicle) Operators who offer their services inside BCP Council conurbation without [an] Operator license [being] issued (Uber mentioned again).

And finally, in the new draft [policies there] is not any new policy or paragraph [on] how BCP Council want to deal with PHV drivers, licensed by Southampton Council, Portsmouth Council, New Forest District Council and Fareham Council, who [accept] PHV rides inside BCP Council conurbation illegally, with no link to the Operator, licensed by BCP Council.” - BH1 Airport Cars

“Dear Licensing

Please note that I have made the following comments on the proposed policies in the Have Your Say survey, specifically the [Private Hire] Vehicle section and including some omissions therein relating to speciality vehicles. As they are important points to any local business such as my own and potentially its future, I thought I would advise you directly too.

1) As a single speciality vehicle operator that has provided a unique contribution to the tourism offering of the BCP area for the last 12 years, I presume that there will be some level of “grandfather” rights applicable with this update, as there were when BCP policies were last revised, replacing previous Poole [Borough Council] policy.

2) You mention the speciality vehicle exemption in para 9.2 & 21.3, but it is not mentioned anymore in 23.2 (livery & sticker requirements – previously covered by category A/B differentiation). As the exemption is very much still relevant & applicable, please add to the text.

3) Similarly, the livery/sticker exemption for speciality PH vehicles is not mentioned at all in new Appendix B, where it should be added to back up my previous point.

4) In addition, regarding the proposed change to a minimum number of wheelchair accessible vehicles: a one-vehicle operator such as myself cannot have a minimum number of wheelchair accessible vehicles unless that one vehicle is so-adapted already. So if this policy addition is adopted, a version of the exemption mentioned above may be needed, as there are plenty of other operators in a similar position as well as myself.

Please confirm these corrections in (2) & (3) [and potentially (4)] will be added – do contact me if further clarification needed.” - Enigmus Limited T/A Dorset Day Trips

BCP Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Policies Consultation

Guide Dogs provides mobility services to increase the independence of people with sight loss in the UK. Alongside our mobility work we campaign to break down physical and legal barriers to enable people with sight loss to live their life on their own terms.

Across Dorset and the BCP conurbation, it is estimated that there are 34,700 people living with sight loss with 4,050 people registered as blind or partially sighted. Due to a variety of reasons, including an ageing population, the number of people with sight loss is predicted to increase to 42,200 by 2032[1].

Taxis and private hire vehicles (PHVs) and the door-to-door service they provide are essential for disabled people. They are particularly important for the independence of blind and partially sighted people, who are unable to drive, and often face barriers when using public transport.

However, accessing taxis and PHVs can be a major challenge for assistance dog owners. A 2022 Guide Dogs survey[2] found that 63% of respondents said they have been refused access to a taxi or PHV in the previous 12 months. 7% said it had happened to them between six and 10 times. None of the respondents indicated that they were presented with an exemption certificate

[1] RNIB, Statistics on Sight Loss, available at https://www.rnib.org.uk/professionals/knowledge-and-research-hub/key-information-and-statistics/sight-loss-data-tool
[2] https://gd-prod.azureedge.net/-/media/project/guidedogs/guidedogsdotorg/files/how-you-can-help/campaigning/guide-dogs-access-report-2022.pdf

when they were refused, despite this being a criminal offence under the Equality Act 2010. Such access refusals can have a significant impact on assistance dog owners' lives, leading to feelings of anger and embarrassment and a loss of confidence and independence, which can often lead to isolation and poor mental health.

Key recommendations:

- Disability equality training: All drivers should be required to undertake mandatory disability equality training.
- Zero tolerance: The policy should state that BCP Council will use its best endeavours to investigate all reported violations of the Equality Act 2010 in a timely manner with a view to pursuing a conviction.
- Mystery shopping: The policy should state that BCP will work together in conjunction with assistance dog owners to ensure that licensing requirements are being complied with by various means such as, but not limited to, test purchases.

Disability equality training

Guide Dogs welcomes the inclusion within the draft policy of sections 13.3 - 13.7, along with Appendix B; Duty of all drivers to carry of assistance dogs.

The consequences of delayed travel combined with the emotional impact of facing discrimination and confrontation when trying to carry out everyday activities take a significant toll on assistance dog owners. Apart from feelings of anger and embarrassment, refusals can undermine the independence that assistance dogs bring to their owners. Assistance dog owners also reported that the stress of refusals has had a detrimental impact on their mental health and on whether they feel able to leave the house.

This also has a negative impact on their ability to access work and other opportunities. As guide dog owners report:

- "Each refusal is crushing, confidence shattering, rejecting, and traumatic. I always feel that I don't want to go out after - but work dictates I must." Guide dog owner, Stevenage.
- "I was left on my own at the side of the road in the dark. I am deaf and unable to phone for help and it made me feel very vulnerable. It makes me feel afraid to go out." Assistance dog owner.
- "I was very upset, it was dark, raining and 10pm at night. I was scared. I avoid evening invites, as I worry about getting home. I lose out on the chance of socialising with friends, which is bad, as I have no family." Guide dog owner, Rochester.
- "I used to have a very tough two-hour commute to work. The taxi part of the journey was the shortest bit travel wise, but it always ended up being the bit that held me up the most because I was having to spend time facing drivers who wouldn't take me with my dog. … It's good that my contract was flexi hours otherwise I'm sure I would have been sacked for being late all the time - it happened so often." Guide dog owner, Daventry.

Further, guide dog owners have expressed concern of access refusals which take the form of drivers not stopping the car when they see the dog.

Drivers who refuse to carry an assistance dog are committing a criminal offence under the Equality Act 2010. A Guide Dogs survey found that many taxi drivers are unaware of their legal obligations and the impact refusals have on assistance dog owners. The best way to address this is through disability equality (as opposed to disability awareness) training for all taxi and PHV drivers.

The Taxis and Private Hire Vehicles (Disabled Persons) Act 2022[3] amends the Equality Act 2010 to place duties on taxi drivers and PHV drivers and operators, so any disabled person has specific rights and protections to be transported and receive assistance when using a taxi or PHV without being charged extra. As part of the amendments, taxi and PHV drivers could face fines of up to £1,000 if they fail to provide reasonable mobility assistance to disabled passengers taking a pre-booked vehicle.

Therefore, to help reduce the number of access refusals, it is important that drivers know their legal obligations and how to best offer assistance to their customers with vision impairments, including those travelling with a guide dog.

We recommend that disability equality training, as well as highlighting a driver's legal obligations and disabled people's rights, should focus on the concept of people being disabled by society's barriers and attitudes. It should highlight the role an organisation and individuals play in the removal of those barriers, while also including awareness elements such as customer care, etiquette, and appropriate communication.

Many of the positive experiences disabled people report when using taxis and PHVs come about following disability equality training. Councils that have introduced disability equality training report very positive results with fewer refusals and drivers feeling more confident in assisting passengers with disabilities.

Enforcement

While our most recent survey shows that a substantial percentage of assistance dog owners have been refused access over a one-year period, many of these incidents are not reported. Indeed, research in 2019 found that only 8% of owners who had been refused access had taken legal action which resulted in prosecution. In part, the underreporting is due to challenges of reporting, especially for people with sight loss. However, it is also due to disappointment at the lack of action taken following an access refusal and the low fines issued.

Considering the significant impact an access refusal can have on assistance dog owners and their communities, it is important that assistance dog owners know that all cases of access refusals are viewed very seriously and are investigated.

It is a criminal offence for any operator or driver to refuse to carry assistance dogs. On conviction for such an offence, drivers can be fined up to £1,000. As failure to carry an assistance dog is a criminal offence, we recommend a zero-tolerance approach to enforcement of the Equality Act 2010. We therefore

recommend that it is clearly stated that failure to carry an assistance dog without the requisite medical exemption certificate will result in immediate suspension or revocation of a driver's license.

We recommend a zero-tolerance approach to enforcement of the Equality Act 2010 in seeking prosecutions and therefore recommend that BCP Council states it will use its best endeavours to investigate all reported violations of the Equality Act 2010 in a timely manner, with a view to pursuing a conviction.

We also recommend that BCP Council works together in conjunction with assistance dog owners to ensure that licensing requirements are being complied with by various means such as, but not limited to, test purchases.

Guide Dogs has a history of working in partnership with local authorities, be it in service provision or in consultation, and I look forward to this continuing with BCP Council.

Kindest regards

Guide Dogs

9 Appendix 1 - Respondent profile – General Public Survey

The equalities profile is shown below.

Equalities	Group	Number
Age	16 - 24 years	1
	25 - 34 years	6
	35 - 44 years	1
	45 - 54 years	6
	55 - 64 years	2
	65 - 74 years	3
	75 - 84 years	2
	Prefer not to say	1
Gender	Female	4
	Male	14
	Prefer not to say	3
Sexual orientation	Straight / Heterosexual	17
	All other sexual orientations	1
	Prefer not to say	3
Disability	Yes - limited a little/a lot	5
	No	15
	Prefer not to say	1
Disability Type	Reduced physical capacity	3
	Mobility	2
	Severe disfigurement	1
	Long Term progressive condition	1
	Other disability	1
Ethnic Group	White English / Welsh / Scottish / Northern Irish / British	16
	Other White	1
	BME	1
	Prefer not to say	3
Religion	No religion	8
	Christian	9
	Any other religion	2
	Prefer not to say	12
Respondent Type	BCP resident	20
	BCP Hackney Carriage/Private Hire car user	5

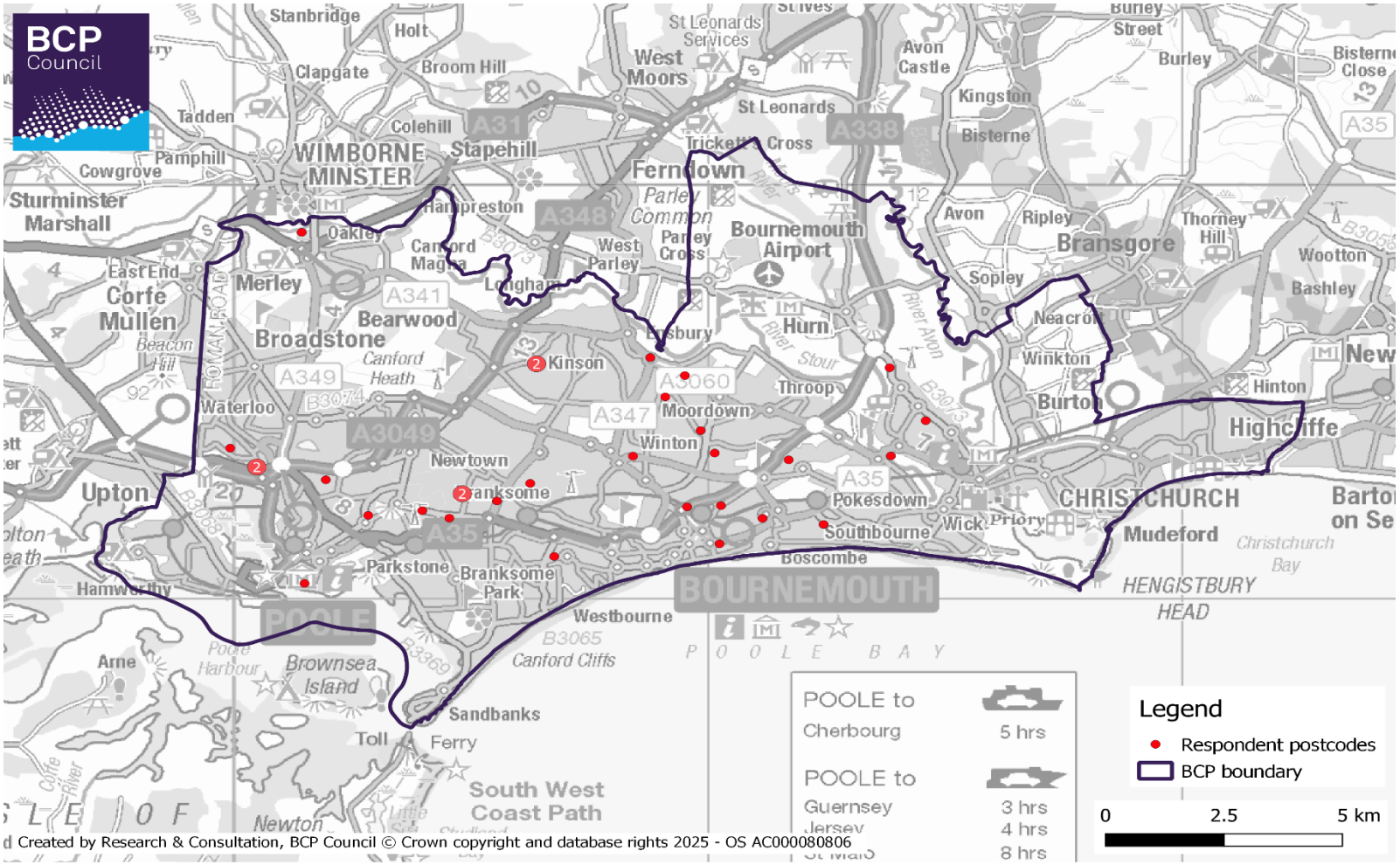
	Other	3
	BCP Hackney Carriage/Private Hire licence holder	1

10 Appendix 2 - Respondent profile – BCP License Holders Survey

The equalities profile is shown below.

Equalities	Group	Number
Age	35 - 44 years	7
	45 - 54 years	1
	55 - 64 years	1
	Prefer not to say	1
Gender	Male	9
	Prefer not to say	1
Sexual orientation	Straight / Heterosexual	9
	Prefer not to say	1
Disability	Yes - limited a little/a lot	1
	No	8
	Prefer not to say	1
Disability Type	Other disability	1
Ethnic Group	White English / Welsh / Scottish / Northern Irish / British	2
	Other White	2
	BME	4
	Prefer not to say	2
Religion	No religion	2
	Christian	4
	Any other religion	2
	Prefer not to say	2
Respondent Type	BCP Hackney Carriage/Private Hire driver	9
	BCP Hackney Carriage/Private Hire vehicle proprietor	5
	BCP Private Hire Operator	1

11 Appendix 3 - Respondent postcodes by area (Both surveys)



Postcode	Number of respondents
BH12	4
BH1	3
BH8	3
BH9	3
BH14	3
BH15	2
BH17	2
BH23	2
BH4	1
BH5	1
BH6	1
BH7	1
BH10	1
BH11	1
BH21	1
BH25	1
Total	**30**

This page is intentionally left blank

Equality Impact Assessment: Report and EIA Action Plan

Purpose

What is being reviewed?	Taxi and Private Hire Driver, Vehicle and Operator Policies
Service Lead and Service Unit:	Housing and Public Protection
People involved in EIA process:	Nananka Randle. Trudi Barlow, Sophie Sajic
Date/s EIA started and reviewed:	January 2024, May/June 2025

Background

Taxi Licensing Regime overview

The existing Hackney Carriage (Taxi) and Private Hire Driver, Vehicle and Private Hire Operator policies were introduced in 2021 following the formation of BCP Council. They merged the three legacy licensing regimes into one clear accountable set out standards and requirements for anyone wishing to apply for or maintain existing licences issued under the taxi/private hire regime.

These policies are now being reviewed and updated.

Following the publication of the Department for Transport updated documents Taxi and private hire vehicle (PHV) licensing best practice guidance for licensing authorities in England in November 2023 and Statutory taxi and private hire vehicle standards.
Taxi and private hire vehicle licensing best practice guidance for licensing authorities in England - GOV.UK
Statutory taxi and private hire vehicle standards - GOV.UK

Licensing authorities have to ensure that their licensing policy and requirements are proportionate, so that passengers can choose from a wide range of safe services. the **primary function of the licensing regime is public safety**; however, an unduly stringent regime on other issues may restrict the supply of taxi and private hire vehicle services by putting up the cost of operation or otherwise restricting entry to the trade.

BCP Council recognises that too restrictive an approach can be counter-productive, restricting the licensed trade to such an extent that the public resort to the use of unlicensed, unvetted and uninsured drivers and vehicles.

There are also economic benefits in enabling visitors to move quickly and safely through the conurbation. Taxis and PHVs have a particularly important role in the night-time economy, ensuring the public return home safely, and can be helpful in ensuring that people disperse quickly and peacefully after events.

Differences between Taxi (taxis) and PHVs
One of the key differences between the vehicles is that a PHV, unlike a taxi, cannot ply for hire, which means that all journeys must be pre-booked in advance through a licensed operator.
It is an offence for PHVs to pick up passengers from any location unless pre-booked.

	Taxi	Private Hire
Ply for hire	✔	x
Pre booked	✔	✔
Operating from a rank	✔	x
Fare meter required	✔	x
Fare tariff set by council	✔	x
Number of vehicles may be restricted by councils	✔	x
Taxis require two types of licence:		Hackney carriage proprietors (vehicle) licence Hackney carriage drivers licence
The provision of a private hire service requires three types of licence:		Private hire operators licence Private vehicle licence Private hire drivers licence

Licensing Regime overview

The BCP licensing team administer the taxi and private hire licensing regime for :-

- Drivers –1277 – licenced every three years
- Vehicles –924 – annual licence
- Operators –93 – licenced every five years

Proposed changes

In drafting the revised policies workshops took place which included members of the licensing committee, representatives of the taxi trade, licensing officers and legal representatives. Each policy was considered in relation to the following documents
Statutory taxi and private hire vehicle standards - GOV.UK
Taxi and private hire vehicle licensing best practice guidance for licensing authorities in England - GOV.UK

Once agreed the revised policies were presented to Licensing Committee for agreement to proceed to consultation.

Driver Policy

Having regard to the Department for Transport Statutory guidance: Statutory taxi and private hire vehicle standards updated in November 2022 it is suggested that the current convictions policy as set out in Appendix C of the current Policy is deleted and replaced with the statutory guidance annexe - assessment of previous convictions.

This will support consistency and transparency in committee decisions on the fitness of licence holders and will keep abreast of changes as they occur without having to amend the policy.

Taxis and private hire vehicles (PHV), drivers and Private Hire Operators are all vital to our communities. As the licensing authority, we are responsible for ensuring the public travel safely and receive a good level of service, and that our systems attract safe and suitable drivers.

Our critical responsibilities in licensing both drivers and vehicles have been highlighted by dreadful examples of licensed vehicle drivers and/or operators being involved in the sexual exploitation of children. *Alexis Jay report - Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Exploitation in Rotherham 1997 2013.pdf*

Taxis are regularly used to transport children during the school run. Elderly and disabled users also rely heavily on the door-to-door services that taxis and PHVs provide, as it is often the only way for many residents to access local services. Clearly, drivers must therefore command the highest level of confidence before they can be entrusted with this responsibility. It is essential that we take seriously our responsibility to determine whether someone is a 'fit and proper' person to hold a licence.

The current policy Chapter 8 sets out stringent driver suitability or fitness criteria for all new and existing drivers to adhere to, which includes enhanced Disclosure and Baring Service (DBS) checks and a requirement to sign up to the DBS update service. This allows us to check the DBS status of all drivers at any time and immediately be made aware if there has been a change that needs to be addressed by officers.

All new and existing drivers have to undertake safeguarding training which covers not only Child Sexual Exploitation but also Criminal exploitation, county lines, cuckooing, how to identify and report general concerns about vulnerable passengers. This training is refreshed every three years prior to licences being reissued.

The revised policy is retaining these driver suitability checks.

The current policy Appendix C sets out criminal conviction guidelines for consideration of the suitability of new and existing drivers. The revised policy has removed this appendix and instead officers will refer to the assessment of previous convictions guidance contained within the *Statutory taxi and private hire vehicle standards - GOV.UK* this brings us in line with national standards and supports harmonisation with other local authority decisions based on the statutory standard.

Vehicle Policy

Section 16 of the Transport Act 1985 gives local authorities the power to limit taxi licenses, but they must be satisfied that there's no significant unmet demand in their area.

Previous to the current policy there were limits or quantity restriction on the number of taxi licences issued in the Bournemouth and Poole Zones. These restrictions prevented anyone from applying for a new taxi licence within the zones.

The Policy in 2021 released 15 new licences per year in each zone for wheelchair accessible vehicles only – at that time there was a significant waiting list for new licences in both Bournemouth and Poole.

Since 2021 of the 120 new licences made available, 21 new taxis have been licenced. There is currently no waiting list. All those who had expressed interest in a new licence have been offered the opportunity but there has been a very low take up of this.

The revised policy proposes to remove this quantity restriction on taxis from all zones meaning that anyone who wishes to apply for a new taxi vehicle licence that meets the policy criteria will be able to apply and receive a licence. The vehicle policy criteria require all new licenced taxi vehicles to be wheelchair accessible.

There is no provision within legislation to limit the type of vehicle licenced for private hire journeys in this way. As such it is the only mechanism the council has to encourage the licensing of vehicles able to transport people in wheelchairs.

The *Taxis and Private Hire Vehicles (Disabled Persons) Act 2022* places specific duties on drivers of designated wheelchair-accessible taxis to carry passengers while in wheelchairs, not to charge extra for doing so, and to ensure the passenger's safety and comfort

The proposed policy retains guidance on these duties and requires proprietors of wheelchair accessible vehicles to provide evidence of suitable driver training at each renewal. (drivers can change regularly so this is asked for as part of the vehicle renewal process)

Appendix D sets out the requirements and use of CCTV and dashcams has been significantly updated to reflect current guidance by the Information Commissioners office. This applies to all and has no equality implications.

Private Hire Operator Policy

There are new requirements contained within Appendix A in relation to safeguarding and reporting of complaints to improve the ability of the Licensing Authority to address concerns about driver behaviours and raising awareness and reporting of safeguarding concerns.

This includes new requirements for safeguarding training and DBS checks of employees of the private hire operator who book and dispatch vehicles. This will raise awareness and reporting of safeguarding concerns which include human trafficking, county lines and child sexual exploitation

Although private hire vehicle operators may not have direct contact with passengers, they are still entrusted to ensure that the vehicles and drivers used to carry passengers are appropriately licensed and so maintain the safety benefits of the driver licensing regime.

Enhanced complaint reporting requirements have been added with the operator required to notify the local authority of serious incidents or complaints including but not limited to:-

- sexual misconduct, sexual harassment, or inappropriate sexual attention
- breaching terms and conditions laid down by the Operator regarding fares and charges including the cancellation of a journey without good reason
- unnecessarily obtaining passengers personal information which includes but not limited to social media contact details and telephone numbers
- racist behaviour
- violence
- dishonesty, including but not limited to theft, touting, incorrect routing to inflate a fare
- breaches of equality (specifically wheelchair and service animal denial)
- road traffic offences including condition of any vehicle and including instances of poor driving standards
- any other act that may bring into question the fitness and propriety of the driver or Operator
- the Operator shall notify the Council in writing (email), within 7 days of any complaints that are of a serious nature, in line with their policy
- any driver that has been removed from the working through the Operator on a permanent basis

This provision will support timely investigations and enforcement action to be taken where breaches have occurred particularly in relation to vulnerable children and adults as well as those people with disabilities who need to travel with passenger assistance animals.

Consultation

The consultation ran between 3 March and 28 April 2025 and was online via the BCP Engagement HG platform and paper surveys were available on request.

A table of changes and the draft policies were provided for ease of reference.

A link to the consultation webpages were emailed to all 2294 licence holders and key stakeholders at the start of the consultation and a further reminders was sent.

Key stakeholders included local BIDS, parish and town councils, trader associations, Police and Crime Commissioner, DOTs disability and Soroptimists (women's group Bournemouth).

The consultation generated 33 responses of which 11 were from current licence holders.

The profile of respondents is as follows:-

General Public Survey

The equalities profile is shown below.

Equalities	Group	Number
Age	16 - 24 years	1
	25 - 34 years	6
	35 - 44 years	1
	45 - 54 years	6
	55 - 64 years	2
	65 - 74 years	3
	75 - 84 years	2
	Prefer not to say	1
Gender	Female	4
	Male	14
	Prefer not to say	3
Sexual orientation	Straight / Heterosexual	17
	All other sexual orientations	1
	Prefer not to say	3
Disability	Yes - limited a little/a lot	5
	No	15
	Prefer not to say	1
Disability Type	Reduced physical capacity	3
	Mobility	2
	Severe disfigurement	1
	Long Term progressive condition	1
	Other disability	1
Ethnic Group	White English / Welsh / Scottish / Northern Irish / British	16
	Other White	1
	BME	1
	Prefer not to say	3
Religion	No religion	8
	Christian	9
	Any other religion	2
	Prefer not to say	12
Respondent Type	BCP resident	20
	BCP Hackney Carriage/Private Hire car user	5
	Other	3
	BCP Hackney Carriage/Private Hire licence holder	1

BCP License Holders Survey

The equalities profile is shown below.

Equalities	Group	Number
Age	35 - 44 years	7
	45 - 54 years	1
	55 - 64 years	1
	Prefer not to say	1
Gender	Male	9
	Prefer not to say	1
Sexual orientation	Straight / Heterosexual	9
	Prefer not to say	1
Disability	Yes - limited a little/a lot	1
	No	8
	Prefer not to say	1
Disability Type	Other disability	1
Ethnic Group	White English / Welsh / Scottish / Northern Irish / British	2
	Other White	2
	BME	4
	Prefer not to say	2
Religion	No religion	2
	Christian	4
	Any other religion	2
	Prefer not to say	2
Respondent Type	BCP Hackney Carriage/Private Hire driver	9
	BCP Hackney Carriage/Private Hire vehicle proprietor	5
	BCP Private Hire Operator	1

Key results from the surveys and Equalities issues raised and considered

General Public Survey

- Most respondents identified as BCP residents.
- Majority found out about the consultation through BCP Council emails.
- Most had taken prebooked journeys via BCP Council operators within the last 12 months.
- Respondents generally agreed with proposed changes to Taxi and Private Hire policies, including those for drivers, vehicles, and operators.
- Concerns raised included:
- The number of taxis operating within the BCP area but licensed by other councils.
- Too many Taxi and Private Hire licences being issued locally.

BCP Licence Holders Survey

- Most respondents were Taxi/Private Hire drivers.
- Majority had worked on prebooked journeys via BCP Council operators within the last 12 months.
- Respondents expressed concerns about:
- The impact of taxis licensed by other councils operating in the BCP area.
- The need for clearer policies around enforcement and licensing standards.

Email Responses

- Four email responses raised specific concerns, including:
    - Regulating out-of-area drivers and operators who do not comply with local standards.
    - Issues with Uber drivers operating without BCP Council-approved licences.
    - Suggestions for enhancing equality training and tackling violations of the Equality Act.

Key Themes from Feedback – responses to these in bold

Suggestions

- Amendments to vehicle requirements, including adding step-ups for high-step vehicles and ensuring all vehicles are disability-friendly. **We have included that all new taxis are wheelchair accessible, the legislation does not allow us to the make the same provision for private hire vehicles**.
- Recommendations for clearer enforcement procedures and additional training for drivers.

Criticisms

- Concerns about the rising number of taxis in the area and the lack of regulation for out-of-area operators. **Whilst it is recognised this is frustrating for the local trade this is outside the scope of the policy and not within the remit of the local authority to address. The reverse issue is also true, we are aware of BCP vehicles and drivers working on remote operator systems such as Uber n Southampton and Portsmouth.**
- Dissatisfaction with the exclusion of ride-sharing apps like Uber from the BCP area. **This is an incorrect assumption, BCP Council has never excluded any app-based PHO such as Uber. Should an application be submitted, it will be processed and assessed in line with all other such applications.**

Concerns about Specific Groups

- Issues with taxi services for assistance dog owners. **These are addressed with the policies under complaint reporting and the phased approach to enforcement. Also supported by driver training requirements**
- Suggestions for promoting equality and improving service delivery for vulnerable passengers. **Ongoing safeguarding requirements are embedded within the policies for safeguarding training does address most of the concerns raised.**

The consultation revealed support for the proposed changes to Taxi and Private Hire policies, alongside valuable feedback regarding enforcement and equality.

Consideration of the Public Sector Equality Duty

The Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) requires public bodies, including those involved in taxi and private hire licensing, to consider the impact of their decisions on people with protected characteristics. This means taking steps to eliminate discrimination, advance equality, and foster good relations between people who share and don't share a protected characteristic. Specifically, in the context of taxi policies, the PSED ensures that disabled individuals can access transport services without discrimination and can make use of vehicles and services without additional charges or undue hardship.

Public bodies must ensure that their policies and practices don't discriminate against individuals with protected characteristics, including those with disabilities, when it comes to taxi services.

Public bodies should actively promote equal opportunities and reduce inequalities related to accessing taxi services, particularly for disabled individuals.

Public bodies are expected to make reasonable adjustments to their taxi policies to accommodate the needs of disabled individuals and ensure their access to transportation.

Due regard

To 'have due regard' means that in making decisions and in its other day-to-day activities the council must consciously consider the need to do the things set out in the general equality duty: eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations.

How much regard is 'due' will depend on the circumstances and in particular on the relevance of the aims in the general equality duty to the decision or function in question. The greater the relevance and potential impact, the higher the regard required by the duty. The three aims of the duty may be more relevant to some functions than others; or they may be more relevant to some protected characteristics than others.
Collecting and using equality information

The Equalities and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) states that 'Having due regard to the aims of the general equality duty requires public authorities to have an adequate evidence base for their decision making'.

We need to make sure that we understand the potential impact of decisions on people with different protected characteristics. This will help us to reduce or remove unhelpful impacts. We need to consider this information before and as decisions are being made.

Case law principles

A number of principles have been established by the courts in relation to the equality duty and due regard:

- Decision-makers in public authorities must be aware of their duty to have 'due regard' to the equality duty
- Due regard is fulfilled before and at the time a particular policy is under consideration as well as at the time a decision is taken. Due regard involves a conscious approach and state of mind.
- A public authority cannot satisfy the duty by justifying a decision after it has been taken.
- The duty must be exercised in substance, with rigour and with an open mind in such a way that it influences the final decision.
- The duty is a non-delegable one. The duty will always remain the responsibility of the public authority.
- The duty is a continuing one.
- It is good practice for those exercising public functions to keep an accurate record showing that they have actually considered the general duty and pondered relevant questions. Proper record keeping encourages transparency and will discipline those carrying out the relevant function to undertake the duty conscientiously.
- The general equality duty is not a duty to achieve a result; it is a duty to have due regard to the need achieve the aims of the duty.
- A public authority will need to consider whether it has sufficient information to assess the effects of the policy, or the way a function is being carried out, on the aims set out in the general equality duty.
- A public authority cannot avoid complying with the duty by claiming that it does not have enough resources to do so.

Findings

- ***Different Ages***
  Positive impacts on safeguarding of both young and older passengers.

  The policy retains the requirement for all drivers to undertake enhanced DBS checks including checks for working with young people. Our licence holders fulfil a vital role in transporting children to and from school.

  Licence holders are also responsible for transporting vulnerable elderly people to and from hospital appointments. All drivers undertake safeguarding training which includes.

  - Understand the need to protect vulnerable adults, young people, and children
  - Identify sources of advice and pathways for reporting concerns
  - Identify possible victims of abuse or exploitation by understanding indicators of risk
  - Understand their roles and responsibilities in relation to personal safety and security

- ***Current/Previous members of the Armed Forces***
  No positive or negative impacts

- ***Those with caring responsibilities***
  Positive all drivers undertake safeguarding training and often fulfil school contract work for children with special educational needs supporting carers in the knowledge the drivers are fit and proper to transport their children.

- ***Those with physical disabilities***
  Positive impact the policy aims to support anyone being able to access a licenced vehicle as needed. The policy continues with the existing requirement for any new taxi to be wheelchair accessible and removing the current restriction on the number of taxi licences issued in Poole and Bournemouth zones, there is no such requirement in Christchurch. The take up of these licences is further supported by removing any age restriction and having a higher milage limit for new wheelchair accessible vehicles. *Apply for a new or replacement vehicle licence | BCP*

  Drivers of wheelchair accessible vehicles are required to be trained in safe loading and unloading techniques which is specific for the vehicle and if they change vehicles, they must undergo further training.

  The council publishes a register which lists the licenced wheelchair accessible vehicles with contact details to support bookings *Taxi and private hire registers | BCP*

  It is a legislative requirement that drivers cannot refuse a fare with an assistance dog and any reported breaches of this legislation are investigated and the appropriate enforcement measures are taken in line with the phased approach of enforcement as set out within the policy.

- ***Those with mental disabilities***
  Positive impacts with safeguarding training of drivers to recognise vulnerabilities and how to report concerns

- ***Different genders***
  The policy has a positive impact in raising awareness of safeguarding concerns around women and girls as part of ongoing training of all drivers every three years. In addition, those dispatching vehicles and drivers to fulfil journeys are obliged by way of revised licence conditions to report issues around safeguarding complaints to the licensing authority who have set out robust enforcement measures.

  Taxi drivers are predominantly male (93.6% in 2024 nationally according to the Department of Transport *Taxi and private hire vehicle statistics, England, 2024 (revised) - GOV.UK* the policy clearly sets out the requirements for all licence holders and allows anyone to apply as long as they meet the criteria. While applications are open to all genders, the nature of the work—such as unsociable hours and safety considerations—may influence the demographic profile of applicants, resulting in a predominance of male drivers. These factors are external to the policy itself.

  Feedback, from complaints received by the licensing team and conversations with trade representatives during forum meetings have identified that issues can arise (similar to unconscious bias) relating the cultural views of women by some drivers that can adversely impact on potential passengers. This is addressed by way of proposed changes to driver conditions and robust application of the fit and proper person criteria within the policy which allows licences to be suspended or revoked if behaviours fall short of that expected of licence holders.

- ***Those who identify as trans***
  No positive or negative impacts

- ***Those who are pregnant/on maternity***
  No positive or negative impacts

- ***Those who are married/in a civil partnership***
  No positive or negative impacts

- ***People from different ethnic groups***
  In 2024 nationally, the two main ethnic groups of drivers were Asian or Asian British, and White. These comprised 50% and 35% of drivers respectively. This compares to 29% and 63% respectively in 2010. *Taxi and private hire vehicle statistics, England, 2024 (revised) - GOV.UK*

  All applicants are dealt with on an induvial basis and anyone struggling with applications or understanding requirements is provided with support and guidance if their preferred language on request. However, in recognition of the role of the taxi driver all applicants must hold a NVQ in Introduction to the role of professional private hire and taxi driver which does have a level entry assessment of understanding of English language both verbal and written.

  All applications are undertaken online however we do offer an in-house support service for anyone wishing to meet face to face and receive help completing forms and submitting applications – there is a small fee for this to cover additional costs to the service.

- ***People with different religions or beliefs***
  No positive or negative impacts

- ***People with different sexual orientations***
  No positive or negative impacts

- ***People in different socio-economic groups***
  Positive impacts – it is recognised that those in lower socio-economic groups have lowers car ownership and rely on alternative transport including taxis our policies ensure that we have vehicles drivers and operators which are safe and reliable meeting high standards for all.
  Future of mobility: inequalities in mobility and access in the UK Transport System

- ***People's human rights***
  No positive or negative impacts

Conclusion

Summary of Equality Implications

The revised policies will meet the statutory taxi and private hire vehicle standard published by the DfT which states that licensing authorities must use their licensing powers to protect children and vulnerable adults.

Taxis and private hire vehicles are a high-risk environment. In terms of risks to passengers, this can be seen in abuse and exploitation of children and vulnerable adults and the number of sexual crimes reported which involve taxi and private hire vehicle drivers. Changes to the policy and conditions therefore reflect the importance of safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and adults and ensure that all passengers are protected.

The importance of providing adequate access to accessible vehicles is recognised and supported by the policies with staff training requirements embedded to reflect the importance of safe transport and assistance into and out of the vehicles as well as support for booking via the public register.

Equality Impact Assessment: Report and EIA Action Plan

[This action plan provides a summary of any negative impacts and relevant mitigating actions]

Equality Impact Assessment Action Plan *Please complete this Action Plan for any negative or unknown impacts identified above. Use the table from the Capturing Evidence form to assist.*			
Issue identified	**Action required to reduce impact**	**Timescale**	**Responsible officer**
e.g. the effect on disabled people is unknown	*Undertake research and consultation*		

Form Version 1.2 Prepared by: Date:

CABINET

Report subject	**Upton Park Farm - Surrender of lease**
Meeting date	29 October 2025
Status	Public Report
Executive summary	This report presents a proposal to agree to the surrender the whole of the lease of Upton Park Farm, Poole Road, Poole BH16 5LW dated 5 June 2014 and made between (1) The Council of the Borough & County of the Town of Poole and (2) William Robert Pennington and Others ("Lease") and simultaneous payment of compensation or premium to the tenant of the Lease (subject to specialist agricultural legal advice).
Recommendations	**It is RECOMMENDED that Cabinet recommend that Council:** **a. Note the recommendations of the Cross-Party Strategic Asset Disposal Working Group on 19 September 2025.** **b. Approve to purchase the Farm Business Tenancy at Upton Park Farm, on such terms to be approved by the Director of Finance acting in his capacity as Corporate Property Officer, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Finance.**
Reason for recommendations	To obtain approval to surrender the Lease at Upton Park Farm.
Portfolio Holder(s):	Councillor Mike Cox, Deputy Leader BCP Council and Portfolio Holder for Finance
Corporate Director	Aidan Dunn, Chief Executive
Report Authors	Adam Richens, Director of Finance adam.richen@bcpcouncil.gov.uk Miles Phillips, Head of Estates miles.phillips@bcpcouncil.gov.uk Gwilym Jones, Estates Manager gwilym.jones@bcpcouncil.gov.uk
Wards	Creekmoor Ward and Dorset County Council
Classification	For Recommendation

Background

1. In 2024, the tenant of the business tenancy at Upton Park Farm approached the Estates department at BCP Council and expressed an interest in surrendering the Lease.

2. A financial offer was made to BCP Council in August 2025 on a without prejudice and subject to contract basis by the tenant's agent to surrender the Lease and return vacant possession. See confidential Appendix A.

3. BCP Estates negotiated with the tenant and their appointed agent and have agreed a price and terms that can be considered as "best consideration".

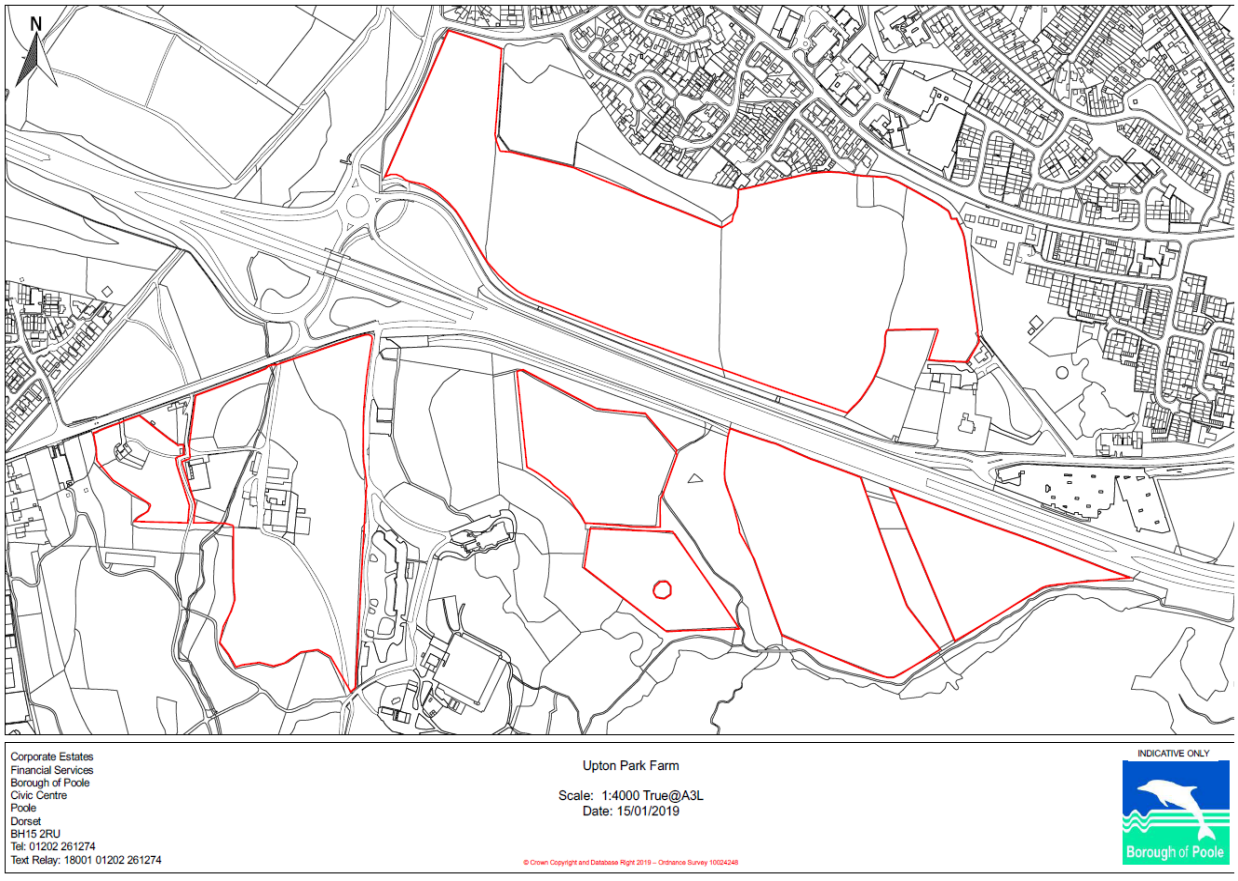
Current Arrangement

4. Upton Park Fam is let on a Farm Business Tenancy date 5 June 2014 with circa 40 years unexpired.

5. Upton Park Farm comprises:

   - A detached farmhouse
   - A terrace of three cottages known as 1, 2 and 3 Pentre Cottages
   - A range of traditional and modern farm buildings
   - Agricultural land extending to a total of 36.30 hectares (89.7 acres).

   The Lease demise is outlined in red on-site plan 1.



Site plan 1. Not to scale. Illustration only.

Options

6. Maintain the status quo. BCP could reject the offer and keep the tenancy in place.

7. BCP estates agree the surrender of the Lease. This is the recommended option.

BCP Considerations

8. Under BCP's constitution, authority to acquire an asset is linked to its Capital Value. Capital Value and linked to the Local Government Act 1972 s.123 requirement to obtain "best consideration".

9. In this instance Capital Value is driven by the Market Value. To determine Market Value an independent opinion of value was sought in the form of an RICS compliant Red Book valuation report by a specialist agricultural valuer. See confidential Appendix A.

10. Under the terms of the Lease, BCP has the liability for the upkeep and maintenance of the farm buildings and dwellings. Since 2023, circa £35,000 has been spent to remedy damp issues within Pentre Cottages.

11. It has been identified that a further cira £415,000 of additional work will need to be carried out by BCP over the term of the Lease.

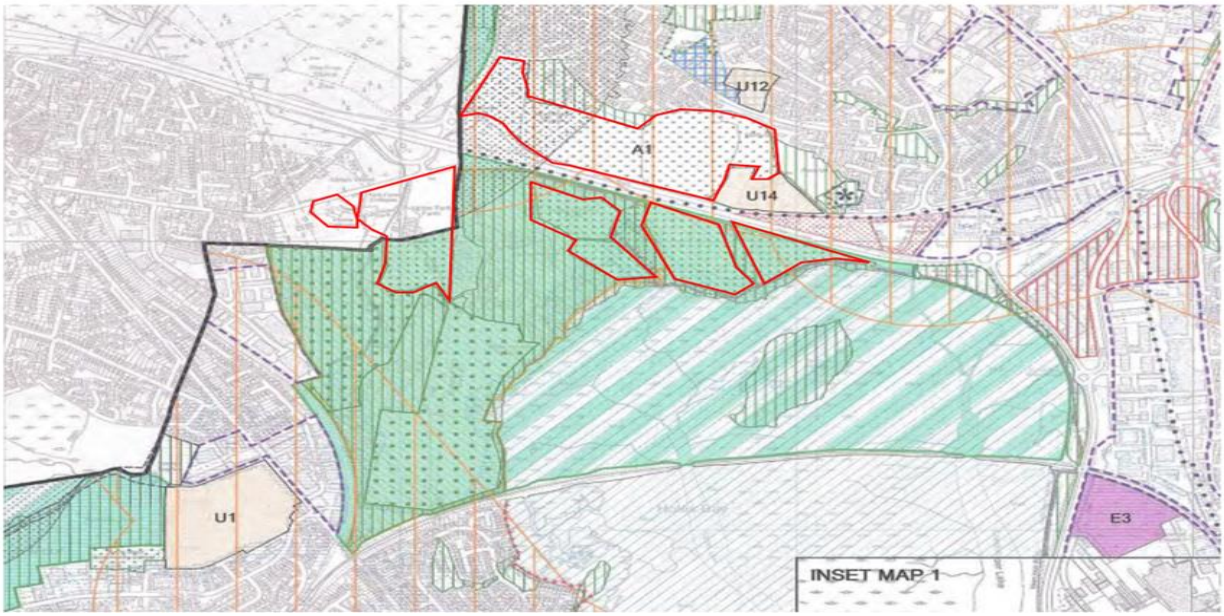
12. The passing rent of £20,470 per annum is low, and the rent review mechanism within the Lease restricts the ability to significantly increase the rent. The rent is split 80/20 between residential and agricultural accordingly. The larger residential element is RPI linked, whilst the smaller agricultural part is based upon the Market Rent for the land only i.e. it excludes the value for the farm buildings.

13. The local plan is reproduced with the farm area overlayed in red. One section of land (Pentre Cottages and farm buildings) lies outside BCP's boundary, within the administrative area of Dorset County Council. Most of the land situated between the demise edged in red is owned by BCP.

14. Most of the land is designated as "Proposed Heathland Mitigation" with exception of the land lying North of A35, policy A1.

15. The land within Dorset County Council falls within the 400m Heathland Buffer Zone.

Local plan overlay. Not to scale. Illustration Only



16. Policy A1 puts forward this land for educational purposes, namely school and associated playing fields. There is keen interest in this site for community use. As examples only elements of it could be used for Housing, or a new waste depot. It is noted that the land lying to the West of this parcel falls within the 400m Heathland Buffer Zone. This land is identified in the current local plan for development.

17. The rest of the land falls within greenbelt, heathland and open space designations. This limits the potential use, however a SANG is a possibility.

18. In 2014 circa 30 hectares of land to the south of the farmhouse was taken back (authority exercised a take back lease term) to create a SANG which opened in 2020.

19. BCP is reaching the limit of its current SANG capacity and has already expanded this through land at Throop (former Hicks Farmland).

20. SWOT Analysis

Strengths	• There are strategic advantages in taking back control of the farm • Land lies in an area with residential development potential. • The land to the north of the A35 would be of interest for a number of community uses • Potential for SANG expansion
Weaknesses	• Capital outlay to surrender the Lease • Land is constrained by planning designations (greenbelt, heathland, open space etc).

Opportunities	• Eliminate repair liability for 40 years • Unlock a capital receipt from the sale of land/ redundant buildings • Explore alternative use of the land • Explore SANG
Threats	• Market changes • Stakeholder engagement. Willingness to sell may change if left too long • Stamp Duty Land Tax

Summary of financial Implications

21. The price to be agreed for the proposed acquisition will reflect independent valuation advice.

22. An RICS Red Book valuation report was commissioned to provide an opinion of Market Value. See confidential Appendix A.

23. It is proposed that the acquisition is funded from the application of Strategic Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) resources approved by Cabinet on the 5 March 2025 for habitats site mitigation. This included resources for an expansion of the SANG at Upton Country Park. The proposal is to offset the acquisition costs by the capital receipts received from the disposal of those buildings deemed surplus to requirements.

24. The authority currently pays the tenant each year to use land for additional car parking during events at Upton Country House. These monies would be saved if the Lease were surrendered.

25. It is assumed that Stamp Duty Land Tax (SDLT) will be payable by BCP Council on the purchase price as this is a land transaction. Details are set out within confidential Appendix A.

Summary of legal implications

26. The Lease grants the tenant the exclusive possession of the premises in accordance with the terms of the Lease.

27. The law relating to Farm Business Tenancies and agricultural landlord and tenant matters is complex and specialist. Advice from specialist legal advisor will need to be sought.

28. The Tenant under this Farm Business Tenancy may be entitled to additional statutory compensation from BCP Council. BCP Council Legal Services cannot confirm whether additional compensation is due to the tenant. Additional compensation may be payable to the tenant after the Lease has been surrendered. Advice from a specialist legal advisor will need to be sought to clarify.

29. Compensation (whether monetary or equivalent value) has already been paid to the tenant of the Lease, and this should be considered to prevent duplicate payments to the tenant of the Lease.

30. The BCP Council will be liable to pay Stamp Duty Land Tax to HM Revenue and Customs as this is a property transaction. Advice from specialist tax advisor may need to be sought.

Summary of human resources implications

31. There are no direct human resources implications of this decision beyond officer time working on the case.

32. Where specific professional services are required (valuation, legal etc) these will be outsourced.

Summary of sustainability impact

33. The Asset Management Plan recognises the estate should be sustainable and carbon neutral and will play a key role in the council achieving these targets.

Summary of public health implications

34. There are no direct public health implications associated with this decision.

Summary of equality implications

35. This decision will not have any direct equality implications.

Summary of risk assessment

36. Economic conditions dampen

37. The tenant withdraws their offer to surrender the Lease.

Background papers

Appendices

Appendix A **Confidential Appendix**. Plans and Red Book Valuation figures.

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

Document is Restricted

This page is intentionally left blank

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

Document is Restricted

This page is intentionally left blank

Agenda Item 7

CABINET - 29 October 2025

Upton Park Farm – Surrender of lease

Addendum

Additional Cabinet recommendation that Council

c) Approve the funding for the purchase of the land south of the A35 which equates to approximately 18.4% of the market value from Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) habitats site mitigation.

d) Approve the funding for the purchase of the land north of the A35 and building deemed surplus to requirements, which equates to approximately 81.6% of the market value, from capital receipts with these to be replenished by the receipts from the disposal of those acquired buildings deemed surplus to requirements.

e) Approve the disposal of those acquired buildings deemed surplus to requirements.

Update to the Financial Implications

The primary purpose of this report is to acquire the land south of the A35 for habitat mitigation.

For the purposes of clarity and to provide an update in regard to the financial strategy being used to fund the premium it is proposed is paid for the surrender of the Upton Park Farm lease, it is now proposed to amend the financial strategy.

The Strategic Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) for habitat mitigation will only be used to fund the land acquired to the south of the A35. The Council's capital receipt resources will be used to fund the land to the north of the A35 and those building deemed surplus to requirements with these resources then replenished from the disposal of those acquired buildings deemed surplus to requirements.

For absolute reassurance no decision is being made via this report as to how the acquired land north of the A35 will be used. Any such use will need to considered as part of a future report to Cabinet/Council as appropriate.

This page is intentionally left blank

CABINET

Report subject	**BCP Homes Asset Management Plan and Housing Revenue Account 30 Year Business Plan**
Meeting date	26 November 2025
Status	Public Report
Executive summary	This report presents the BCP Homes Asset Management Plan and the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) 30 Year Business Plan principles for approval. The HRA Business Plan is a strategic financial framework that ensures the long-term sustainability of council housing by aligning investment in existing homes, compliance, decarbonisation, and new housing supply with prudent financial management. The plan is underpinned by robust stock condition data, prudent financial assumptions, and a sustainable borrowing strategy. It supports the delivery of 937 new homes by 2034/35, significant investment in existing stock, and ongoing compliance with regulatory standards. The plan prioritises financial resilience, risk management, and alignment with corporate priorities such as decarbonisation and tenant engagement. Adoption of these recommendations will ensure BCP Homes continues to provide safe, decent, and energy-efficient homes, while maintaining the financial viability of the HRA and supporting the Council's wider social and environmental objectives.
Recommendations	**It is RECOMMENDED that Cabinet recommends to Council to:** i) Approve the HRA Asset Management Plan at appendix 1; ii) Approve the Baseline**+** scenario for the HRA 30 Year Business Plan; iii) Note that adjustments to the HRA 30 Year Business plans will be made on an annual basis alongside annual HRA budget setting and reported to Cabinet and Council accordingly.
Reason for recommendations	The recommendations are made to secure the long-term financial sustainability and legal compliance of the Council's housing services. By adopting this plan, the Council ensures it can continue to provide safe, decent, and energy-efficient homes, supported by robust stock condition data and prudent financial assumptions. The plan enables the delivery of 937 new homes by 2034/35 and significant investment in existing properties, all while aligning with corporate priorities such as decarbonisation and tenant

	engagement. Regular review and scenario testing provide resilience against risks like inflation, interest rate changes, and evolving government policy. This approach maintains transparency, accountability, and good governance, ensuring that the Council's housing ambitions remain both affordable and achievable.
Portfolio Holder(s):	Cllr Kieron Wilson – Housing and Regulation
Corporate Director	Glynn Barton, Chief Operations Officer
Report Authors	Kelly Deane, Director of Housing and Public Protection Richard Sumner, HRA Accountant
Wards	Council-wide
Classification	For Decision

Background

1. The Housing Revenue Account (HRA) is a ring-fenced account that records all income and expenditure relating to the Council's housing stock. To ensure the long-term sustainability of council housing, local authorities are strongly encouraged to maintain a 30-year HRA Business Plan. This plan sets out the financial strategy for managing and maintaining the housing stock over a 30-year period, including both revenue and capital investment requirements.
2. The importance of the HRA Business Plan has grown since the introduction of self-financing arrangements under the Localism Act 2011, which gave councils full responsibility for managing their housing stock from rental income rather than relying on government subsidy. Councils can now borrow against HRA income to fund improvements and new housing, making robust long-term planning essential.

Why is the HRA Business Plan Important?

3. **Financial Viability:** It demonstrates that the HRA can remain solvent while meeting obligations for maintenance, compliance, and investment. This is critical for councils to manage debt responsibly and avoid deficits, as the HRA cannot legally go into the red.
4. **Strategic Asset Management:** The plan supports decisions on major works, regeneration, and new housing supply, aligning with corporate priorities such as affordable housing and energy efficiency targets.
5. **Risk Management:** Long-term modelling allows councils to test scenarios for inflation, interest rates, and policy changes, ensuring resilience against economic shocks and legislative reforms.
6. **Transparency and Accountability:** Best practice guidance from CIPFA and the Local Government Association highlights that a clear, regularly updated business plan underpins good governance, tenant engagement, and compliance with regulatory standards.

Benefits for Councils

7. Enables planned investment in stock condition, decarbonisation, and new build programmes.
8. Provides a framework for borrowing decisions and treasury management.

9. Supports delivery of wider social outcomes, including improved health, employment opportunities, and community regeneration.

10. Although not a statutory requirement, maintaining and reviewing a 30-year HRA Business Plan is widely regarded as best practice and is strongly encouraged by central government. It ensures councils can make informed short, medium and long-term decisions while safeguarding the financial sustainability of their housing services.

Asset Management Plan

11. A robust 30-year asset management plan is fundamental to the long-term sustainability and strategic direction of the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) business plan. It provides the essential framework for ensuring that BCP Homes can maintain, invest in, and improve its housing stock in a way that is financially viable, legally compliant, and aligned with tenant needs and expectations.

12. In order to inform the development of a refreshed asset management plan, BCP Homes has undertaken significant work to deepen its understanding of the condition of its housing stock. This includes completing stock condition surveys in the last 5 years on over 70% of all properties, providing a strong evidence base for future investment planning. This enhanced insight allows for more accurate forecasting of capital and revenue requirements, enabling the HRA business plan to be built on realistic assumptions and priorities.

13. Appendix 1 outlines the proposed 30-year asset investment plan, which has been used as a key baseline for reviewing and shaping the HRA business plan. This alignment ensures that investment decisions are both strategic and responsive, supporting the delivery of safe, decent, and energy-efficient homes while maintaining financial resilience across the HRA.

14. The key aspects of the plan are summarised in the following table;

	30-year spend £m	Per property £
Major Works (kitchens, bathrooms etc)	480.3	50,000
Decarbonisation	72.0	7,500
Disabled Adaptations	42.0	4,372
Environmental Improvements	4.9	510
Compliance	19.2	1,994
Other Capex	19.8	2,063
TOTAL	**638.2**	**66,439**

Review of HRA 30 Year Business Plan

15. The review of the HRA business plan for BCP Homes has followed a structured and evidence-based approach, ensuring that the plan is robust, credible, and aligned with both operational realities and strategic objectives. The key steps in this process are as follows:

Stock Condition Data

- Up-to-date surveys and assessments of the housing stock to understand current condition and future capital investment needs.

Financial Data and Forecasts

- Detailed analysis of budgets, reserves, income (e.g., rents, service charges), and expenditure (e.g., repairs, capital works, management costs).
- Long-term projections for income and expenditure, including scenario and sensitivity analysis to test resilience under different assumptions (e.g., inflation, interest rates, rent policy changes).

National Policy and Regulatory Context

- Impact of national rent setting policy, building safety and fire safety regulations, decarbonisation requirements, the Decent Homes Standard, and other statutory or regulatory changes.

Strategic Asset Management

- Alignment with the asset management strategy, including investment in existing homes, regeneration, and new housing supply.

Capital Programme and Investment Needs

- Planning for major works, decarbonisation, and new build programmes, ensuring these are affordable and deliverable within the HRA's financial capacity.

Debt and Financing Strategy

- Borrowing plans, interest rates, repayment schedules, and affordability assessments.

Reserves Strategy

- Use and management of HRA reserves to support financial resilience.

Governance and Compliance

- Ensuring the plan demonstrates strong governance, regulatory compliance, and prudent management.

Stakeholder and Resident Engagement

- Involving residents, portfolio holders, Section 151 Officer, Corporate Management Board, and other stakeholders in setting objectives and reviewing options.

Risk Management

- Identification and mitigation of risks such as non-compliance, operational disruptions, and resident dissatisfaction.

Equality and Diversity

- Considering equality impacts and ensuring fair treatment for all residents.

16. In order to support this complex review, external support was commissioned from Housing Finance Associates. Their report is at appendix 2.

17. In summary, the HRA remains in a strong financial position, providing a solid foundation for continued investment in existing housing stock and the delivery of new homes. Current projections indicate that the Council can achieve its ambition of delivering 937 new homes by 2034/35, including 680 additional homes from 2027/28 onwards. This is underpinned by a series of prudent assumptions, including a permanent 2% reduction in operating costs from 2026/27, increased recovery of service costs through service charges, and rent increases aligned to CPI plus 1% until 2035/36, followed by CPI thereafter. Rent convergence is expected to progress at £1 per week from 2026/27.

18. While the outlook is positive, the projections are sensitive to external factors such as inflation, interest rates, and government policy on rents. Future requirements for decent homes standards and decarbonisation, as well as the availability of external funding, present additional risks. Stress testing demonstrates that the HRA's

resilience could weaken if costs rise without corresponding increases in income or funding.

19. The capital programme prioritises major works, compliance, adaptations, and decarbonisation, with an estimated £50,000 per unit for major works and £7,500 per unit for decarbonisation over 30 years. Financing will draw on the Major Repairs Reserve, retained Right to Buy receipts, grants, and Section 106 contributions, with borrowing used only when other resources are exhausted. Debt is projected to rise from £150 million in 2025/26 to £330 million by 2034/35, peaking at £361 million by 2054/55.

20. Despite the challenges, the HRA demonstrates strong affordability metrics, with operating surplus improving from 16.3% in 2025/26 to 29.8% in 2035/36 and interest cover remaining above minimum thresholds. This provides confidence that the proposed investment programme is sustainable, provided cost control and income generation remain priorities.

21. To maintain this position, the Council must continue to apply downward pressure on operating costs, maximise income through service charges and rent policy, and monitor external risks closely. Should assumptions change, corrective actions such as reducing borrowing, seeking additional funding, or exploring rent flexibility and asset disposals may be required.

Core Baseline Plus Assumptions

22. This report is seeking approval of the baseline plus position recommended as a result of the HRA Business Plan review. The Core Assumptions act as the foundation for the Plan and are as follows;

Inflation (Bank of England projections)

- CPI:
  - 3.75% (2026/27)
  - 2.5% (2027/28)
  - 2.0% thereafter
- Building costs: CPI + 1% annually.

Interest Rates

- Existing loans: 3.92%
- New borrowing: 5.3% long-term average.

Rent Policy

- Rent increases: **CPI + 1% until 2035/36**, then CPI only.
- Rent convergence: Up to £1 per week from 2026/27.
- No rent flexibility assumed.

Stock & Growth

- Opening stock: 9,606 units (2025/26).
- New homes: 937 by 2034/35 (257 by 2026/27, then 85 per year).
- RTB sales:
  - 30 per year (2025/26–2026/27), then 5 per year from 2027/28.
  - Discounts reduced to £30,000 max.

Operating Cost Adjustments

- Permanent **2% reduction** in general management and repairs budgets from 2026/27.

- Additional £100k service charge income from 2026/27.

Capital Programme Assumptions

- Major works: £50k per unit over 30 years.
- Decarbonisation: £7.5k per unit over 30 years.
- Compliance: Ongoing fire safety, asbestos, damp/mould works.

Minimum HRA Balance

- 5% of operating expenditure (excl. capital financing).

Debt & Financing

- Debt rises from £150m (2025/26) to £330m (2034/35), peaking at £361m by 2054/55.
- Financing mix: Major Repairs Reserve, RCCO, RTB receipts, grants, S106, borrowing.

Outputs

23. The Asset Management Plan and 30 Year Business Plan Baseline Plus position provides a robust framework for BCP Homes, ensuring the delivery of 937 new homes by 2034/35—including 257 homes by 2026/27 and a further 680 by 2034/35—across a mix of social rent, affordable rent, and shared ownership. Over the next 30 years, the plan commits to significant investment in existing homes, with £50,000 per unit allocated for major works and £7,500 per unit for decarbonisation, alongside ongoing funding for compliance, adaptations, and other capital works. These outputs are underpinned by prudent financial assumptions, a sustainable borrowing strategy, and a focus on maintaining strong operating surpluses. This plan is not only a delivery schedule but also the strategic foundation for BCP Homes' future, providing the evidence base and financial resilience needed to support safe, decent, and energy-efficient homes for residents, and guiding decision-making for investment, risk management, and compliance in the years ahead.

24. The Baseline Plus position, in summary, will deliver;

New Homes

- Total: 937 new homes by 2034/35
  - 257 homes delivered by 2026/27 (current development/acquisition programme).
  - 680 additional homes delivered between 2027/28 and 2034/35 (85 homes per year).
- Tenure mix: Social rent, affordable rent, and shared ownership

Investment in Existing Homes

- Major Works:
  - £50,000 per unit over 30 years (based on stock condition data).
- Decarbonisation:
  - £7,500 per unit over 30 years (no external funding assumed).
- Compliance & Safety:
  - Ongoing fire safety, asbestos removal, damp/mould remediation.
- Adaptations:
  - Continuing at 2025/26 levels for disabled adaptations.
- Other Capital Works:

- Includes communal areas, walkways, balconies, garages.

Next Steps

25. The next phase of this work will concentrate on formulating detailed plans aimed at further enhancing the energy efficiency of BCP Homes' housing stock. This work builds upon the decarbonisation commitments already established within the Asset Management and 30 Year Business Plan, ensuring continued progress towards more sustainable, energy-efficient homes.

26. In parallel, BCP Homes will develop a comprehensive strategy to assess and prepare for achieving net zero carbon emissions by 2050. This strategy will ensure that the organisation remains aligned with both national and local climate objectives, setting a clear pathway for future compliance and environmental stewardship.

27. As part of these next steps, efforts will be made to identify and pursue opportunities for external grant funding. The intention is to supplement existing financial resources and maximise the potential for investment in improvement works, thereby extending the impact of the Council's sustainability initiatives.

28. Additionally, the Council's Newbuild Housing and Acquisition Strategy will undergo a review to pinpoint appropriate sites for potential inclusion in the future new build programme. This approach supports the delivery of high-quality, sustainable homes, in line with the Council's commitment to meeting housing needs and environmental targets.

29. All decisions and proposals arising from these workstreams will be presented to Cabinet for consideration and approval. This process ensures that progress remains subject to ongoing oversight and continues to reflect the Council's strategic priorities.

Summary of financial implications

30. The proposed recommendations are based on the latest Housing Revenue Account (HRA) financial projections, which indicate that the account remains sustainable over the long term. The plan supports continued investment in existing stock and the delivery of 937 new homes by 2034/35, funded through a combination of rental income, service charges, retained Right to Buy receipts, grants, and borrowing. Debt is forecast to rise from £150 million in 2025/26 to £330 million by 2034/35, peaking at £361 million by 2054/55. Operating surplus is projected to improve from 16.3% to 29.8% over the same period, and interest cover remains above minimum thresholds, confirming affordability. However, the projections are sensitive to inflation, interest rates, and government policy changes. Any deviation from assumptions may require corrective action, such as reducing borrowing, seeking additional funding, or adjusting the capital programme.

Summary of legal implications

31. The Council has a statutory duty under the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 to maintain a balanced Housing Revenue Account. Adoption of the proposed recommendations ensures compliance with this requirement and supports delivery of obligations under the Housing Act 1985, including maintaining homes to the Decent Homes Standard. The recommendations also align with the Council's legal responsibilities regarding health and safety, building compliance, and decarbonisation targets under current environmental legislation. Any borrowing undertaken will be in accordance with the Prudential Code and the Council's Treasury Management Strategy. Failure to adopt the recommendations could compromise the Council's ability to meet these statutory duties and contractual obligations.

Summary of human resources implications

32. None.

Summary of sustainability impact

33. The Asset Management and 30 Year Business Plan for BCP Homes is designed to support the long-term sustainability of the Council's housing stock, ensuring that homes remain safe, decent, and energy-efficient for current and future residents. The plan's sustainability impact is reflected in several key areas:

    - Strategic Investment in Decarbonisation: The plan prioritizes investment in decarbonisation measures, with an estimated £7,500 per unit allocated over 30 years. This commitment supports the Council's environmental objectives and helps to future-proof homes against rising energy costs and evolving regulatory standards.
    - Evidence-Based Asset Management: By completing stock condition surveys on over 70% of properties within the last five years, BCP Homes has established a robust evidence base for investment decisions. This enables targeted interventions that maximize the lifespan of assets and minimize waste, supporting both financial and environmental sustainability.
    - Financial Resilience: The business plan is underpinned by prudent financial assumptions and stress testing, ensuring that investment in sustainability measures is affordable and deliverable within the HRA's capacity. The plan's approach to borrowing, reserves, and income generation is designed to maintain long-term viability without compromising service delivery.
    - Alignment with Regulatory and Policy Requirements: The plan supports compliance with current and emerging standards, including the Decent Homes Standard and environmental legislation. This proactive approach reduces the risk of future non-compliance and associated costs, while supporting the Council's broader sustainability commitments.
    - Continuous Improvement: The plan is periodically reviewed and updated as new information becomes available, ensuring that sustainability objectives remain central to decision-making and that the Council can respond to emerging risks and opportunities.

34. In summary, the Asset Management and 30 Year Business Plan provides a framework for sustainable investment in BCP Homes' housing stock, balancing financial viability with the need to deliver high-quality, energy-efficient, and future-ready homes for residents.

Summary of public health implications

35. Enhancing housing standards and providing new homes are key to supporting health. The quality, safety, and suitability of housing directly affect physical and mental wellbeing. Upgrading existing and building high-quality homes creates safer, warmer, and more energy-efficient environments, reducing health risks like damp, cold, overcrowding, and poor air quality. Investing in social housing tackles health inequalities by offering secure, affordable homes to those most vulnerable, such as older adults, families with young children, and people with disabilities. Stable, good-quality housing improves mental health and allows residents greater participation in work, education, and community life.

36. Accessible homes and adaptations support independent living for older people and those with disabilities, reducing reliance on health and social care. Regeneration and increased housing supply promote safer communities and local economic growth. Integrating high standards into the Asset Management and 30 Year Business Plan enables BCP Homes to advance public health aims and improve residents' lives.

Summary of equality implications

37. Improving housing through the Asset Management and 30 Year Business Plan offers significant opportunities to reduce health inequalities and tackle poverty within the community. By investing in safer, warmer, and more energy-efficient homes, the plan directly addresses factors that contribute to poor health, such as damp, cold, and overcrowding. Enhanced housing standards and the delivery of new, affordable homes support vulnerable groups—including older adults, families with young children, and people with disabilities—helping to reduce social and economic disparities. Stable, high-quality housing also enables greater participation in work, education, and community life, further supporting efforts to alleviate poverty and promote equality across Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole.

Summary of risk assessment

38. The main risks arising from this report include financial uncertainties (such as inflation, interest rates, and changes in government policy), regulatory and policy changes, operational challenges (like non-compliance or resident dissatisfaction), and delivery risks related to new home development and funding. There are also sustainability risks tied to achieving decarbonisation and net zero targets, and governance risks if oversight or prudent management lapses. The plan addresses these risks through regular review, scenario testing, prioritisation of key investments, and ongoing Cabinet and Council oversight. Flexibility to take corrective action—such as adjusting borrowing, seeking additional funding, or modifying the capital programme—ensures the plan remains resilient and sustainable over the long term.

Background papers

None

Appendices

Appendix 1 – BCP Homes Asset Investment Management Plan

Appendix 2 – BCP Homes HRA Business Plan Report – Housing Finance Associates

This page is intentionally left blank

CAPITAL COSTS ONLY HRA properties only		2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29	2029/30	1-5 2025/29 5 year cost (£)	6-10 2030/34	11-15 2035/39	16-20 2040/44	21-25 2045/49	26-30 2050/54	Totals
Internal works- main	Kitchen replacements	£3,245,000	£3,657,500	£3,833,500	£2,937,000	£2,717,000	**£16,390,000**	£15,372,500	£10,147,500	£6,968,500	£20,625,000	£15,383,500	**£84,887,000**
	Kitchen Extractor Fan	£29,820	£21,420	£19,320	£22,260	£24,080	**£116,900**	£391,300	£111,020	£54,320	£1,540	£420	**£675,500**
	Bathroom replacements	£337,500	£387,000	£342,000	£441,000	£252,000	**£1,759,500**	£2,691,000	£16,483,500	£8,568,000	£8,041,500	£3,393,000	**£40,936,500**
	Replacement gas Boiler	£809,250	£1,225,250	£1,241,500	£997,750	£962,000	**£5,235,750**	£1,800,500	£1,807,000	£7,101,250	£3,159,000	£1,807,000	**£20,910,500**
	Main Heating Distribution	£373,500	£175,500	£69,000	£1,443,000	£1,942,500	**£4,003,500**	£999,000	£873,000	£1,375,500	£1,482,000	£1,500	**£8,734,500**
	Electric heating replacements	£120,000	£300,000	£360,000	£450,000	£432,000	**£1,662,000**	£6,012,000	£6,090,000	£108,000	£120,000	£120,000	**£14,112,000**
	Rewiring and upgrades	£1,015,000	£2,125,000	£2,125,000	£2,125,000	£2,125,000	**£9,515,000**	£3,120,000	£5,665,000	£6,775,000	£3,150,000	£585,000	**£28,810,000**
	Electric consumer units	£60,000	£79,200	£88,200	£99,600	£58,800	**£385,800**	£846,600	£1,938,000	£1,521,000	£996,600	£566,400	**£6,254,400**
External works - structural/main	Windows	£720,000	£711,000	£1,503,000	£1,404,000	£1,071,000	**£5,409,000**	£1,858,500	£976,500	£3,973,500	£7,132,500	£21,006,000	**£40,356,000**
	External Dwelling Door	£489,600	£900,000	£232,800	£654,000	£142,800	**£2,419,200**	£2,694,000	£940,800	£218,400	£278,400	£3,428,400	**£9,979,200**
	Flatted dwelling Front Door	£272,000	£45,900	£102,000	£657,900	£95,200	**£1,173,000**	£516,800	£44,200	£49,300	£372,300	£3,542,800	**£5,698,400**
	Re-roofing (pitched)	£1,887,500	£1,087,500	£1,187,500	£575,000	£1,375,000	**£6,112,500**	£13,262,500	£13,262,500	£2,712,500	£625,000	£4,462,500	**£40,437,500**
	Flat Roof Covering	£690,000	£585,000	£405,000	£870,000	£1,035,000	**£3,585,000**	£1,905,000	£1,215,000	£555,000	£165,000	£60,000	**£7,485,000**
	Fascias & Soffits	£89,250	£51,850	£50,150	£137,700	£79,900	**£408,850**	£826,200	£169,150	£258,400	£351,050	£277,950	**£2,291,600**
	Gutters & Downpipes	£100,300	£64,600	£70,550	£160,650	£88,400	**£484,500**	£965,600	£348,500	£335,750	£270,300	£35,700	**£2,440,350**
	Chimneys (as part of reroof)	£313,750	£293,750	£122,500	£198,750	£535,000	**£1,463,750**	£2,023,750	£305,000	£222,500	£168,750	£566,250	**£4,750,000**
	Wall fabric and finishes	£1,375,000	£1,525,000	£1,847,500	£2,315,000	£3,722,500	**£10,785,000**	£3,997,500	£1,212,500	£522,500	£507,500	£1,460,000	**£18,485,000**
Insulation & decarbonisation	EPC band C works	£2,302,500	£2,302,500	£2,302,500	£2,302,500	£2,302,500	**£11,512,500**	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	**£11,512,500**
	Other insulation (lofts/EWI??)	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	**£0**	£125,000	£125,000	£125,000	£125,000	£125,000	**£625,000**
	Decarbonisation 2031 - 2054	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£14,400,000	£14,400,000	£14,400,000	£14,400,000	£14,400,000	**£72,000,000**
	New DHS	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	**£0**	£0	£4,950,000	£4,950,000	£4,950,000	£4,950,000	**£19,800,000**
Catch up works up to 2028		£150,000	£500,000	£750,000	£750,000	£650,000	**£2,800,000**	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	**£2,800,000**
Safety	Smoke, Fire and CO detectors	£300,000	£300,000	£300,000	£300,000	£300,000	**£1,500,000**	£1,500,000	£1,500,000	£1,500,000	£1,500,000	£1,500,000	**£9,000,000**
	FRA works/Fire alarms	£150,000	£250,000	£250,000	£250,000	£220,000	**£1,120,000**	£870,000	£11,250	£250	£250	£0	**£2,001,750**
	Lifts	£0	£1,260,000	£1,260,000	£1,350,000	£1,260,000	**£5,130,000**	£1,260,000	£180,000	£90,000	£90,000	£0	**£6,750,000**
Garages and Stores	Store Doors	£57,500	£58,000	£58,000	£58,000	£58,000	**£289,500**	£110,000	£458,500	£82,000	£213,000	£14,000	**£1,167,000**
	Store Roof	£12,000	£24,000	£16,000	£14,000	£0	**£66,000**	£132,000	£44,000	£6,000	£14,000	£12,000	**£274,000**
	Store Wall	£12,000	£2,000	£4,000	£0	£0	**£18,000**	£208,000	£40,000	£4,000	£2,000	£2,000	**£274,000**
Balconies and Walkways	Balconies	£12,000	£24,000	£25,000	£23,000	£5,000	**£89,000**	£2,000	£0	£0	£0	£1,000	**£92,000**
External general	Paths and paving	£128,800	£19,600	£35,000	£66,500	£6,300	**£256,200**	£231,700	£105,000	£42,000	£14,000	£11,200	**£660,100**
	Boundary Walls	£181,000	£186,000	£77,000	£326,000	£501,000	**£1,271,000**	£431,000	£147,000	£109,000	£9,000	£584,000	**£2,551,000**
	Porches and Canopies	£63,000	£69,300	£123,900	£317,800	£480,200	**£1,054,200**	£378,700	£119,000	£81,900	£39,200	£104,300	**£1,777,300**
Works to Communal Areas	Staircases, landings etc)	£180,000	£520,000	£570,000	£680,000	£650,000	**£2,600,000**	£2,600,000	£2,600,000	£2,600,000	£2,600,000	£2,600,000	**£15,600,000**
	Communal Entrance Door	£4,000	£144,000		£148,000	£148,000	**£444,000**	£456,000	£192,000	£288,000	£92,000	£92,000	**£1,564,000**
Other Works	Triple Glazing additional costs	£72,000	£71,100	£150,300	£140,400	£107,100	**£540,900**	£185,850	£97,650	£397,350	£713,250	£2,100,600	**£4,035,600**
	Adaptations	£1,400,000	£1,400,000	£1,400,000	£1,400,000	£1,400,000	**£7,000,000**	£7,000,000	£7,000,000	£7,000,000	£7,000,000	£7,000,000	**£42,000,000**
	Asbestos Removal Works	£100,000	£100,000	£100,000	£100,000	£100,000	**£500,000**	£500,000	£500,000	£500,000	£500,000	£500,000	**£3,000,000**
	Enviromental Improvements		£169,000	£169,000	£169,000	£169,000	**£676,000**	£845,000	£845,000	£845,000	£845,000	£845,000	**£4,901,000**
	Other Major Works		£1,530,000	£1,530,000	£1,530,000	£1,530,000	**£6,120,000**	£7,675,000	£7,675,000	£7,675,000	£7,675,000	£7,675,000	**£44,495,000**
	Other Compliance		£662,000	£662,000	£662,000	£662,000	**£2,648,000**	£3,300,000	£3,300,000	£3,300,000	£3,300,000	£3,300,000	**£19,148,000**
	Other Capex		£682,000	£682,000	£682,000	£682,000	**£2,728,000**	£3,400,000	£3,400,000	£3,400,000	£3,400,000	£3,400,000	**£19,728,000**
	Damp and Mould Remedials	£500,000	£500,000	£500,000	£500,000	£500,000	**£2,500,000**	£2,500,000	£2,500,000	£2,500,000	£2,500,000	£2,500,000	**£15,000,000**
	Total annual Investment costs	**£17,552,270**	**£24,008,970**	**£24,564,220**	**£27,257,810**	**£28,389,280**							
	Total 5 Year Investment Programme(s)						**£121,772,550**	**£107,393,000**	**£111,778,570**	**£91,214,920**	**£97,428,140**	**£108,412,520**	**£637,999,700**
													Total 30 Year investment plan

This page is intentionally left blank

housing finance associates

HRA Financial Projections

Report for BCP Council

Executive Summary

The BCP Council HRA is in a strong financial position. The Baseline financial projections indicate that there is sufficient capacity for the authority to continue investing in its stock and to deliver 680 new homes by 2034/35.

To deliver this level of investment and new homes delivery the authority needs to ensure that it maintains downward pressure on its operating costs. This will require a permanent reduction in its operating budgets for general management and repairs and maintenance in 2026/27. This represents a 2% reduction across its base budget (at 2025/26 levels) for both services. In addition, the authority must increase the level of service costs it recovers via service charges.

The projections include assumptions that are subject to change, but outside of the authority's direct control. These include:

- Underlying rates of inflation
- Interest rates
- Future requirements for investment in decent homes and decarbonisation
- External funding available for future stock investment and new homes
- Government policy on rent convergence

While stress testing of the projections suggests that the authority's HRA is in a strong position, the situation is very sensitive to changes in future costs and income. The financial strength of the HRA weakens if costs rise without a corresponding increase in income or funding. For this reason, the authority needs to ensure that it delivers the revenue cost reductions and additional service charge income that help its ability to finance the delivery of additional new homes.

The council needs to remain alert to the potential effects of the decisions it takes and their impact on the financial capacity of the HRA. It will be important to reassess any changes in key assumptions as they become apparent and adjust the authority's future plans accordingly.

Introduction

Background

It is good practice for a local housing authority to maintain and update long term financial projections for its housing revenue account (HRA) and capital programme. These projections enable the authority to test the financial capacity of its HRA over the short, medium and long terms, while stress testing the results help to illustrate current and potential risks. Armed with this knowledge, the authority is better informed when setting and updating its budget and capital programme

Housing Finance Associates supports BCP Council in preparing and analysing the long term financial projections for its HRA. We provide the authority with our comprehensive financial model, which enables dynamic modelling and testing of long term income, expenditure, investment, resources and debt. We work with council officers to ensure that the modelling assumptions are evidence-based and represent the authority's current position. We also ensure that changes made to the underlying assumptions when stress testing the projections or exploring alternative scenarios are reasonable.

Methodology

The projections outlined in this report have been prepared in consultation with council officers, who met regularly during the process. This iteration of the process started in July 2025 and has involved a wide range of council officers. It has operated through a core group of officers, which has co-ordinated the necessary data collection and provided the main steer when refining the modelling assumptions.

The core officer group was led by the Director of Housing and Public Protection and included heads of service from property services, BCP Homes and Finance.

Our consultancy team initiated data collection in July 2025 and worked with officers to check the information provided and prepare an initial financial model. This was discussed and refined at meetings during August and a first draft was presented to officers on 22 August. Further revisions were then made to prepare a briefing that was presented to an informal Cabinet meeting on 29 September. Discussion at that meeting led to final adjustments to the modelling assumptions that have been reflected in this report.

Housing Finance Associates

Housing Finance Associates is a specialised consultancy, providing financial modelling and associated support to housing authorities in England. We work with a wide range of local housing authorities, of all types and sizes. Our services are provided by a team of highly experienced HRA finance consultants.

Key assumptions

Best available evidence

The HRA financial projections are based on the best available evidence base available to the authority. This includes verifiable data, provided by the council, such as stock numbers, rents and opening balances as at April 2025. The projections also reflect the authority's current spending plans, as described by its current budgets and capital programme.

Supporting Assumptions

We supplement this evidence with a range of assumptions, which draw on other information sources and are developed in consultation with council officers. These assumptions include:

- Future policy on rent increases (based on recent government consultations)
- Inflation (based on Monetary Policy Reports from the Bank of England)
- Future rent loss from voids and bad debts (reflecting local experience and expectations)
- Future right to buy sales (reflecting local experience and expectations)
- Changes in the levels of revenue income and expenditure for future years

The Appendix to this report provides a summary of all the key assumptions made over the first five years of the financial projections. Further information for specific areas of the financial modelling is described in the graphics that follow.

Inflation

The projections include allowances for inflation on both expenditure and income. The underlying rates of inflation used are based on the August 2025 monetary policy report from the Bank of England, which projected CPI at:

- 3.75% in the final quarter of 2025 (applied to projections for 2026/27)
- 2.5% in the final quarter of 2026 (applied to projections for 2027/28)
- 2.0% in the final quarters of 2027 (applied to projections for 2028/29)
- 2.0% thereafter (reflecting long standing government inflation targets)

Most costs allow for inflation to be applied at CPI. For building costs, which have a tendency to increase at higher rates over the long term, inflation has been assumed at CPI +1% each year.

Interest Rates

Assumed interest rates reflect the authority's expectations when the projections were prepared during August 2025. They allow for current rates to be applied to the authority's existing portfolio of HRA-related loans. For new borrowing that is required to finance the capital programme, the projections assume a long term average interest rate of 5.3%.

Capital Financing

The projections allow for the authority to maintain a minimum balance on its HRA, which has been set at 5% of its operating expenditure. This includes depreciation but excludes capital financing charges. Any surplus the HRA generates that takes the balance above this minimum level is made available for use in repaying debt or to finance the capital programme as a revenue contribution to capital outlay (RCCO).

Right to buy sales generate a variety of different types of capital receipt. Allowable Debt receipts that are generated from those sales are held in reserve, for use in repaying the authority's HRA-related loans. Retained right to buy receipts must be used for the supply of new homes and the

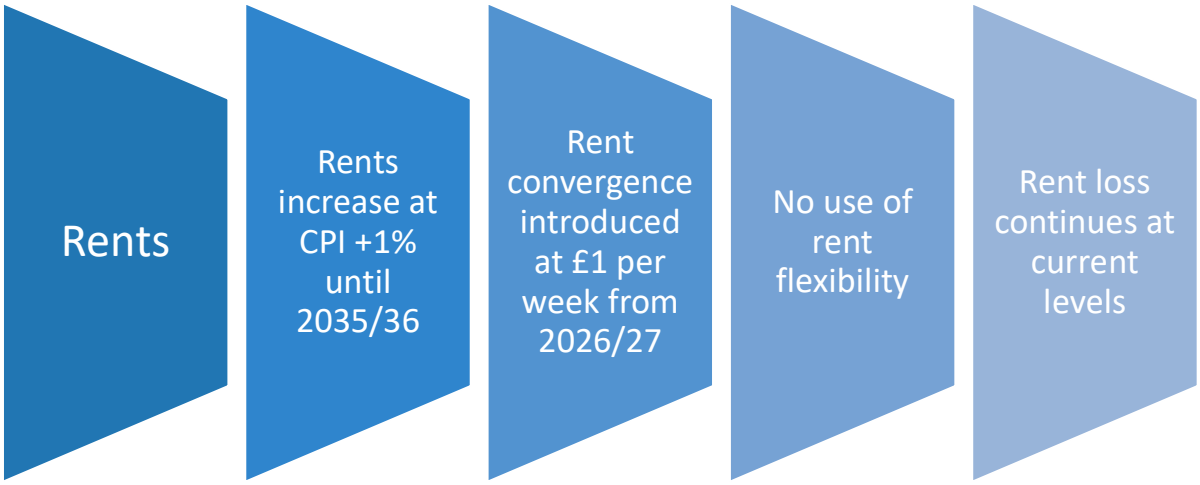
modelling assumes that the authority uses them to part pay for new homes that it delivers itself or (after the medium term development programme) that are provided by a housing association in exchange for nomination rights.

The projections allow for the planned use of Homes England grant, first tranche shared ownership receipts and S106 to help pay for the delivery of new homes.

Other projected capital resources include the major repairs reserve (MRR) and HRA balances that are above the minimum level. Both of these resources are self-generated by the HRA. MRR comes from HRA depreciation charges and HRA balances build up when HRA income is greater than HRA expenditure. The projections allow for the authority to prioritise its MRR for repaying its existing schedule of HRA-related loans. HRA balances above the minimum level are made available to finance the HRA capital programme as a revenue contribution to capital outlay (RCCO).

Rent Assumptions

The principal assumptions that have been used with the authority's existing stock and rents as at 1 April 2025 are described below:



The assumption on rent increases at CPI +1% reflects current government policy, which was first published as a five year settlement in October 2024 and updated to ten years in July 2025. We have assumed that rents would continue to increase at CPI only after that ten year period ends, from 2036/37 onwards.

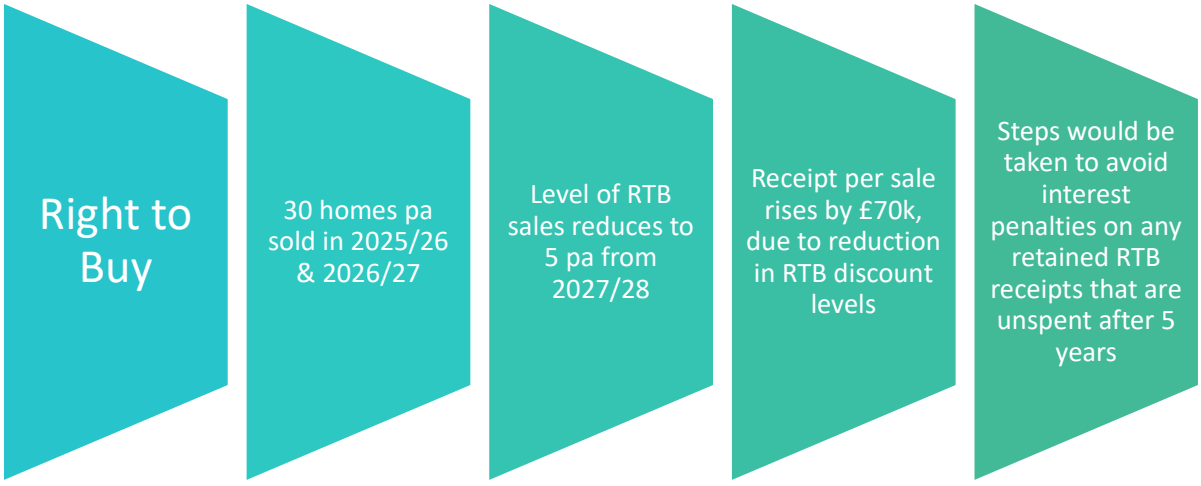
The approach to rent convergence reflects the lower of two specific options that the government consulted on in July 2025. We have allowed for the rents of existing tenants to converge with the formula rent for their homes at a rate of up to £1 per week. Using the authority's own data, this would lead to actual rents converging with formula rents from 2038/39 onwards and generates substantial additional rent income during the period covered by the projections.

Right to Buy Assumptions

The government announced a series of reforms to the right to buy in England in July 2025. These reforms came into effect from 21 November 2024 and included:

- Extending the period required for a tenant to qualify for the right to buy from three to ten years
- Discounts were reduced to pre-2012 levels. This sets the maximum discount for BCP and other authorities in the South West of England at £30,000
- New homes to be exempt from the right to buy for 35 years
- Adjustments to the cash floor, used when calculating a discount
- Discounts may be part-repayable for ten years after the sale
- The council has an indefinite first right of refusal when a property is re-sold

These measures have impacted on the future level of right to buy sales and the receipts they generate. The following graphic describes the main assumptions made:



In addition to the measures outlined above, in July 2025 the government also announced a range of changes to the treatment of future right to buy receipts, some of which extended flexibilities previously announced in July 2024. These changes included:

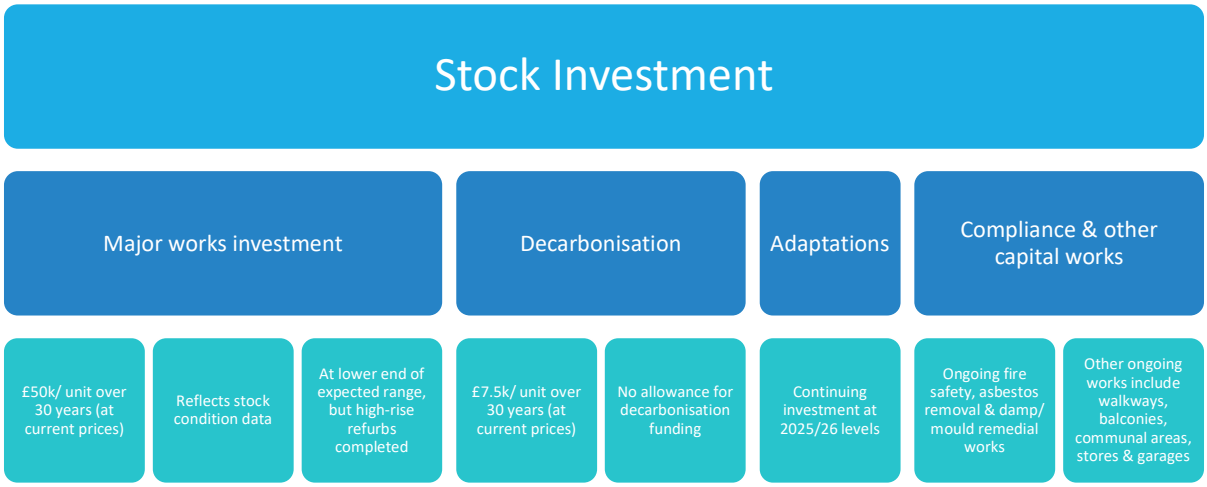
- The ability to use retained right to buy receipts to pay for up to 100% of the eligible cost of providing a new home
- Removal of previous caps on the number of acquisitions that may be made using retained right to buy receipts
- Allowing retained right to buy receipts to be combined with the use of S106 funding
- Allowing retained right to buy receipts to be combined with the use of government grant from 2026/27
- Extending the maximum time period for spending retained right to buy receipts from 5 to 10 years from 2027/28
- Allowing authorities to use retained right to buy receipts to deliver new homes via an ALMO
- Requiring local authority share and buyback receipts from the right to buy to be spent on new homes

These changes have been taken into account when considering how the authority uses its right to buy receipts in future.

Stock Investment Assumptions

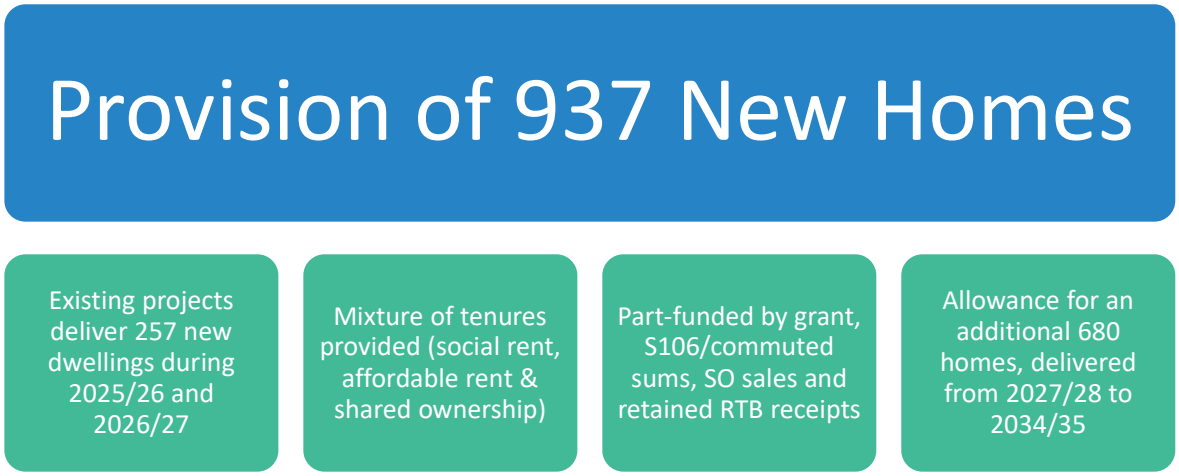
Projections on stock investment are largely based on a combination of the authority's existing capital programme for 2025/26 and, from 2026/27 onwards, the level of investment identified from its stock condition survey. In addition to the results provided from the authority's data we have added a contingency to ensure that stock investment over a 30 year period is at a representative level. This contingency was added in consultation with council officers.

The graphic below summarises these key assumptions:



Provision of New Homes

The Baseline projections allow for the provision of 937 new homes by 2034/35. Of these, 257 would be delivered by 2026/27 as part of the authority's ongoing programme for developing and acquiring new dwellings. The remaining 680 homes would form an extension of the existing programme, which (if approved by the Council) would deliver 85 further homes a year from 2027/28 to 2034/35.



The assumptions made for delivery of the additional 680 homes are as follows:

Baseline Projections

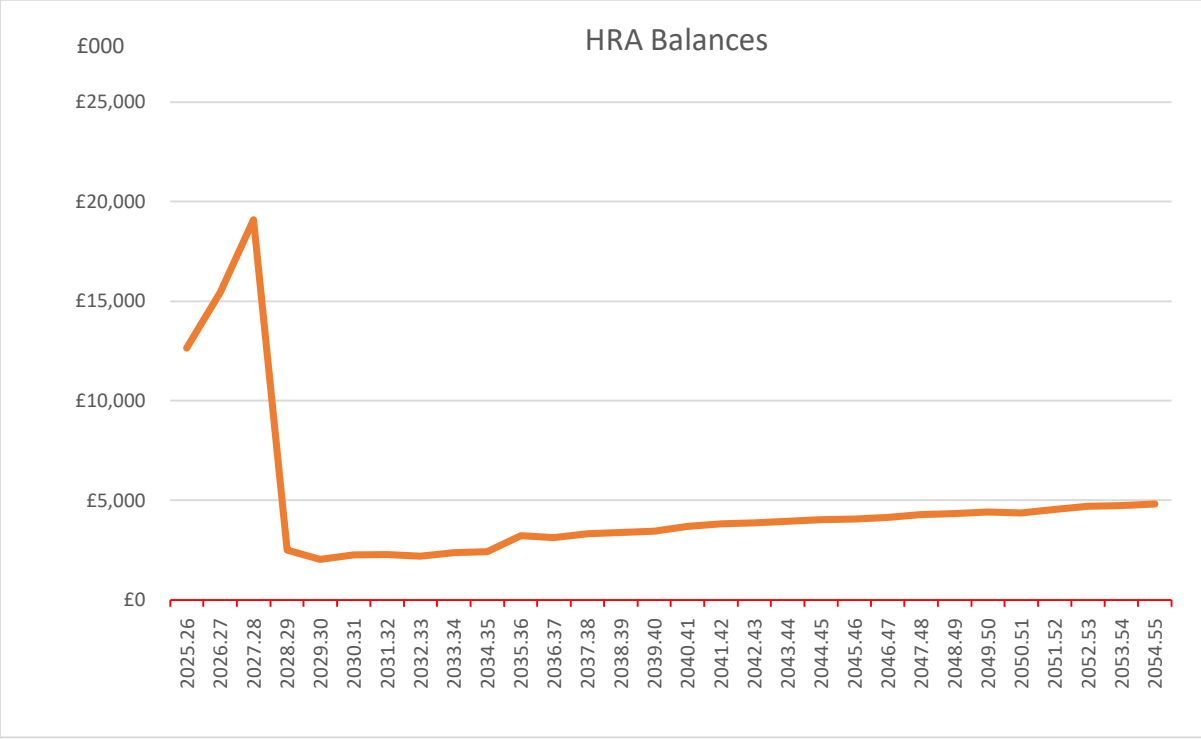
Introduction

The charts that follow summarise the Baseline HRA projections, which have been prepared in consultation with Council officers. Each chart shows a different aspect of the projections, describing the capital investment required, how it is financed and the financial performance of the HRA under the Baseline assumptions, as outlined above.

Revenue Balances

HRA Minimum Balance

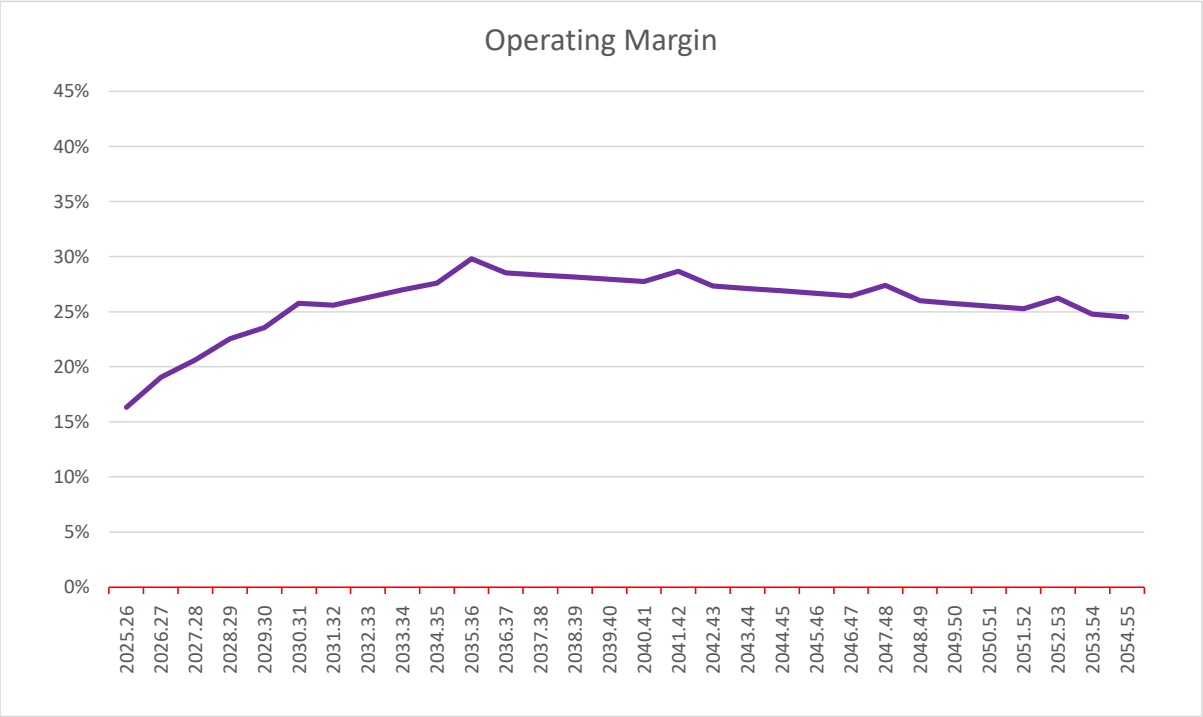
It would be unlawful for the Council to budget for its HRA to fall into deficit. To guard against this, the Baseline projections allow for the authority to maintain a minimum HRA balance that is equivalent to 5% of gross expenditure, excluding interest charges.



This chart shows that the authority can meet this minimum HRA balance requirement. From 2028/29 onwards, the modelling allows for any balances above the minimum level to be used to finance the HRA capital programme (as revenue contribution to capital outlay, or RCCO) or to repay debt.

Operating Surplus

The operating surplus of the HRA is a measure of financial performance. This shows the percentage of income (primarily from rents) that is retained after allowing for the operating costs of the service. These operating costs include general management, repairs and maintenance and charges for depreciation. The chart below shows how the operating surplus varies with changes in the assumptions:



The authority's operating surplus increases from a starting rate of 16.3% in 2025/26, which is representative of the performance we see in many other local authorities. The projected surplus then rises to a peak of 29.8% in 2035/36. This rise is also seen at other local authorities. At BCP, it is driven by the following measures, which have been reflected in the Baseline assumptions:

- A £100,000 increase in annual service charge income from 2026/27 onwards
- A permanent 2% reduction in general management costs in 2026/27
- A permanent 2% reduction in repairs and maintenance costs in 2026/27
- Rents increase at CPI +1% from 2026/27 to 2035/36
- Implementation of rent convergence at up to £1 per week for existing tenants from 2026/27

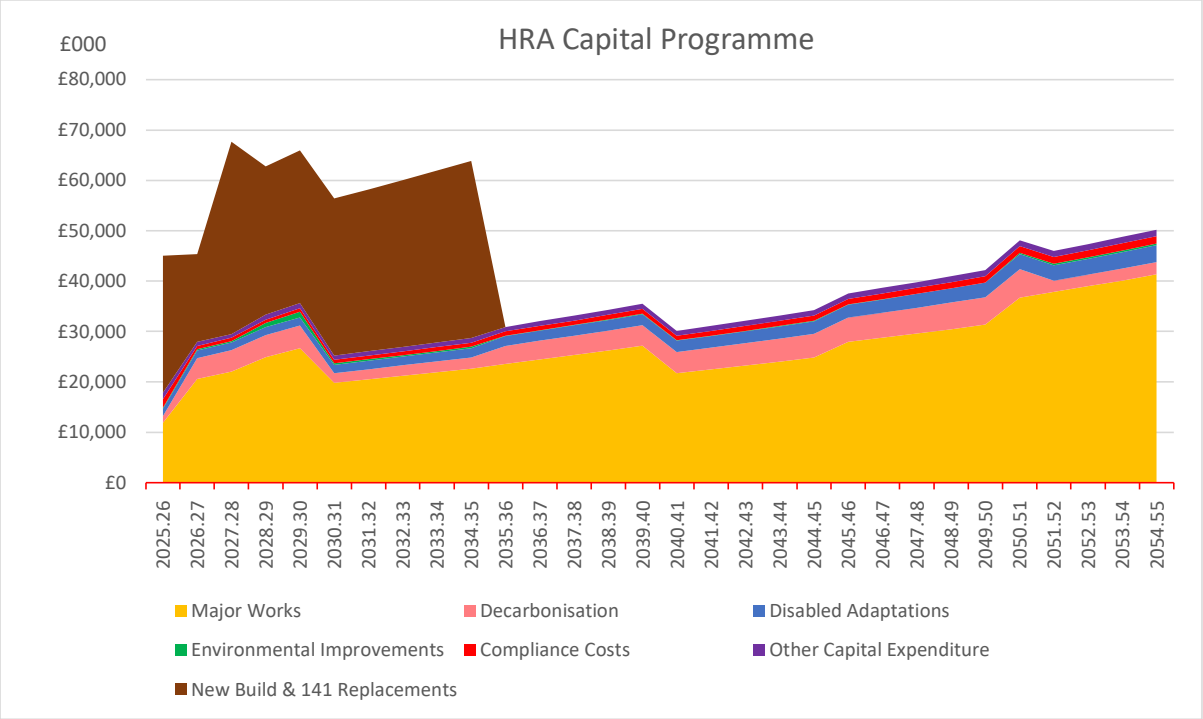
This improvement in the operating surplus helps to increase the financial capacity of the HRA. If the surplus goes up, the HRA is better able to service the borrowing it needs to deliver the capital programme.

It will be important for the authority to match or outperform these improvements in the HRA operating surplus, if it is to maximise future financial capacity.

Capital Programme

Expenditure

The projections allow for the following programme of investment in its HRA over the next 30 years:

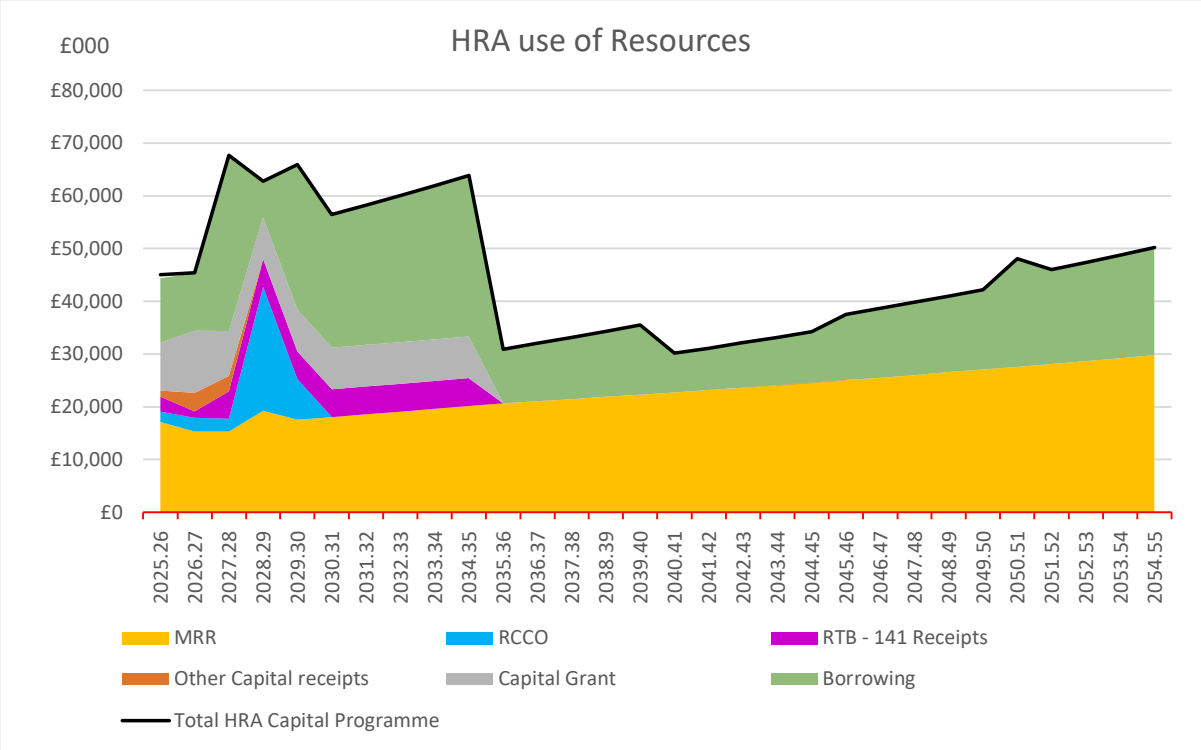


These projections allow for:

- Provision of 937 new homes by 2034/35 (brown area)
- An average of £50,000 (at current prices) to be invested each existing home over 30 years (amber area)
- An average investment in energy efficiency improvements of £7,500 per dwelling over 30 years (pink area)
- Current levels of investment in adaptations (blue area), compliance works (red area) and other capital projects (purple area)

Financing

The authority would access a range of capital resources when financing this capital programme. The projections to minimise the use of borrowing by maximising the use of other resources that are available to support HRA-related investment and are shown in the chart below:



Resources applied in the projections include:

- Major repairs Reserve (MRR – amber area). This is self-generated by the HRA from depreciation charges made against HRA-related assets
- Revenue contributions to capital outlay (RCCO – light blue area). This reflects budgeted contributions over the medium term, along with HRA surpluses that are greater than the minimum balance level from 2028/29 onwards
- Use of retained right to buy receipts (also known as "141 receipts" – pink area). These may only be used to build or acquire new homes and are subject to specific rules
- Other capital receipts (orange area). These reflect the planned use of S106 and shared ownership receipts that part-finance the authority's existing new homes programme
- Grant (grey area). These grants relate to the provision of new homes
- Borrowing (green area).

Note that borrowing to finance the capital programme incurs interest charges, which are chargeable to the HRA. These charges make borrowing it the most expensive of the capital resources available when financing the HRA capital programme. For this reason, borrowing is only assumed when no other resources are available.

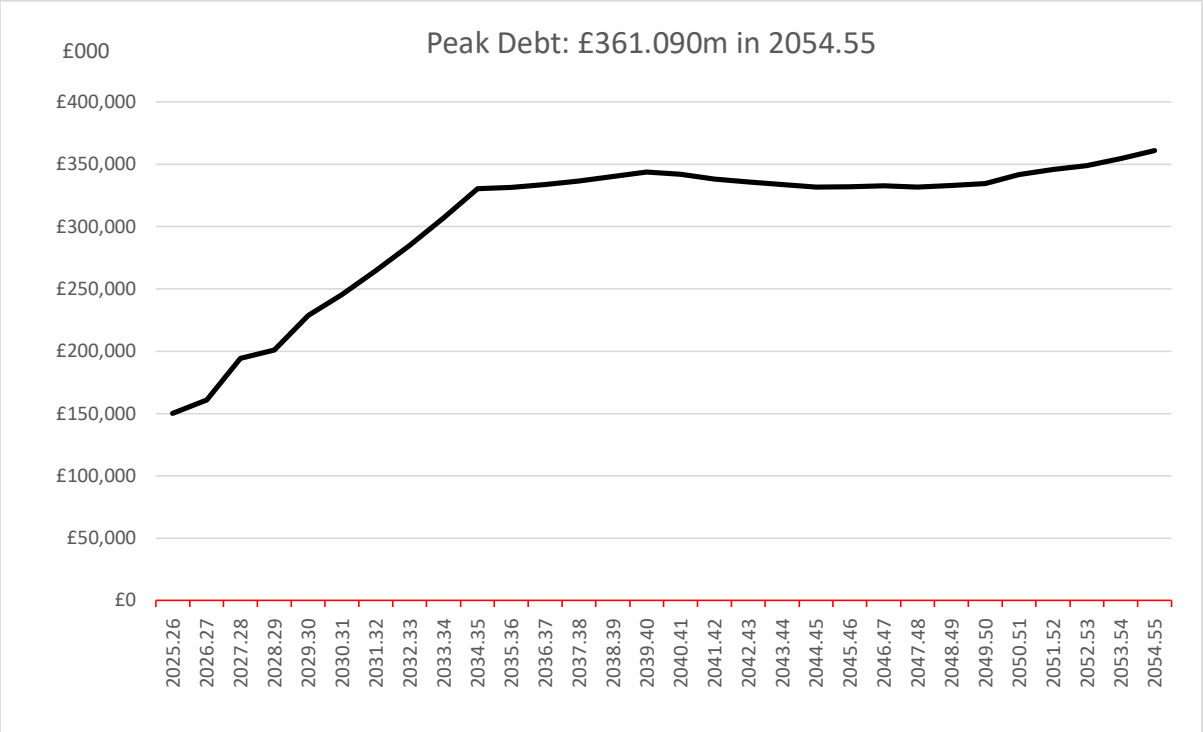
HRA-related Debt

HRA-related Debt levels

Alongside the need to borrow identified when financing the capital programme, above, the projections assume that the HRA would repay any existing debt or new borrowing when it can afford to do so. Two approaches have been taken to facilitate these future repayments:

- Application of revenue balances that are above the minimum level
- Using allowable debt receipts from future right to buy sales to repay debt. These are separate from the retained right to buy receipts (also known as "141 receipts") that may be used to part-pay for new homes.

The following chart projects the net movement in HRA-related debt:



Projected debt rises substantially while the authority provides new homes, from just under £150m at the end of 2025/26 to just over £330m by the end of 2034/35. Between 2035/36 and 2049/50, debt levels stabilise, indicating that the HRA is broadly able to repay an equivalent amount of the debt that it needs to borrow to finance ongoing stock investment during that period.

Importantly, debt levels start to rise again from 2050/51, reaching a peak of £361.090m in the final year. This indicates a long term exposure to interest rate changes, which represents a key potential risk for the authority.

The authority needs to ensure that the HRA can cover the costs of that debt over the long term.

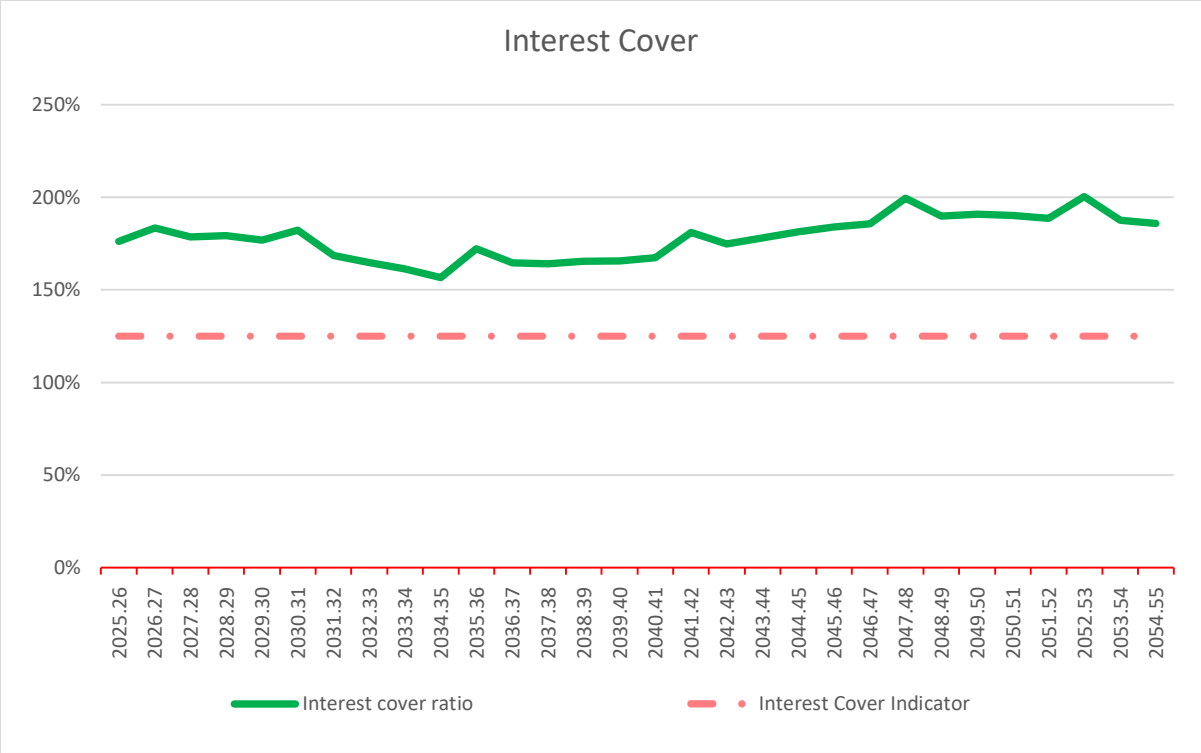
Affordability

Introduction

The projections use interest cover performance as the principal indicator of affordability to the HRA. Interest cover measures how well the HRA would be able to pay the interest charges on projected debt levels from its operating surplus.

Interest Cover Performance

The chart below shows projected levels of interest cover performance for the Baseline projections:



The green line on this chart represents interest cover performance. The dashed pink line shows a prudent minimum performance indicator.

Interest cover performance reduces whenever costs increase. This can happen as a result of:

- Rises in operating costs (such as general management and repairs)
- Loss of income (including higher rent loss or lower rent increases)
- Increases in stock investment costs or the provision of new homes
- Loss of capital funding (such as grant or capital receipts)
- Higher interest charges, caused by additional borrowing on increases in interest rates

The opposite happens if the authority is able to reduce costs or increase income, or if interest rates go down.

The Baseline interest cover projections for the BCP HRA are consistently above the minimum performance level. This indicates that the position is affordable and financially sustainable. Throughout the period the Baseline HRA retains some spare financial capacity for the authority to draw upon in response to any unexpected costs and emerging risks.

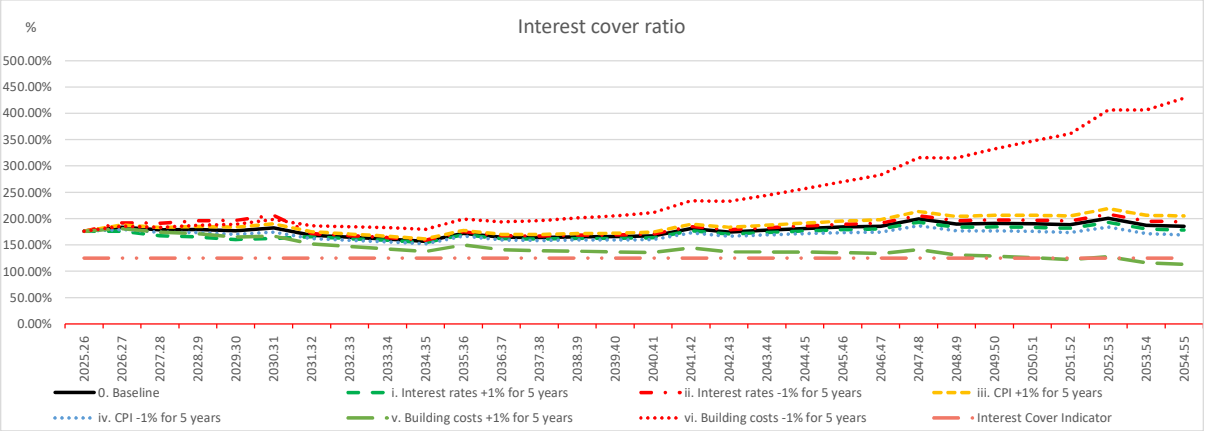
Stress testing and risks

Approach to Stress Testing

While preparing these projections we have explored a range of sensitivity tests and alternative scenarios with council officers. Sensitivity tests show the exposure of the HRA to changes in external factors that are largely outside the authority's control, such as inflation and interest rates. Alternative scenarios show the potential impact of actions that are largely within the authority's control, such as the approach taken when setting budgets or increasing rents.

Impact of Sensitivity Testing

The chart below shows the impact of a range of sensitivity tests on interest cover performance, compared with the Baseline:



The black line in this chart shows the Baseline position. The sensitivities included are:

i. Interest rates rise to 1% above Baseline for 5 years (dark green dashed line)
ii. Interest rates fall to 1% below Baseline for 5 years (red dashed line)
iii. CPI rises by 1% above Baseline for 5 years (yellow dashed line)
iv. CPI drops 1% below Baseline for 5 years (blue dotted line)
v. Building costs increase by 1% above Baseline for 5 years (light green dashed line)
vi. Building costs increase by 1% below Baseline for 5 years (red dotted line)

Sensitivities that cause costs to rise result in lower interest cover performance. This can be seen most clearly by sensitivity (v), which projects a five year period of increasing costs with no corresponding increase in income. Sensitivities that cause costs to drop result in higher interest cover performance. This is demonstrated by sensitivity (vi), which shows the effects of building costs rising by less than projected for five years.

Interestingly, fluctuations in CPI have slightly different effects, as they impact on both income (i.e. rents) and costs. If CPI goes up, rent rises by more than costs over the medium term, causing a marginal improvement in interest cover performance. A drop in general inflation over the same period has the opposite effect.

The sensitivities show that interest cover drops if the authority's costs rise, unless there is a corresponding increase in income. It is therefore important that the authority continues to focus on minimising costs while maximising income.

Alternative Scenarios

In developing the Baseline position the authority's project team considered a range of alternative scenarios, in addition to the sensitivity tests. The scenarios considered included:

- Increasing the level of decarbonisation spending to £15,000 per home
- Excluding rent convergence
- Allowing for rent convergence at £2 per week
- Introducing the use of rent flexibility when re-letting a home to a new tenant
- Setting a medium term plan to reduce operating costs further
- Combining the above scenarios

These scenarios underlined the conclusions from the sensitivity analysis, that the HRA becomes less financially sustainable if costs rise, unless actions are taken to reduce costs elsewhere or to generate additional income.

Our analysis also considered the level of new homes provision that might be achievable if the authority increased decarbonisation investment while reducing its operating costs and maximising income. The modelling suggested that a modest increase in provision of 40 new homes might be achievable under those circumstances, although doing so would prevent the authority from using the additional capacity for other types of investment or service improvement.

Potential Corrective Actions

While stress testing the HRA projections we explored a range of actions the authority could take to help improve the financial position of the HRA. These actions are also available for the authority to take if it needs to mitigate the impact of emerging risks or adverse changes in financial circumstances and include:

Potential Corrective Actions	
Reduce borrowing	• Allocate corporate resources to the HRA capital programme • Sell under-performing or high value assets for capital receipts • Seek additional funding from government or third parties
Improve revenue performance	• Reduce operating costs permanently over the medium term • Ensure service charges fully recover service costs • Explore use of rent flexibility for social rent re-lets
Set and deliver strict performance requirements for new development	• Payback within 30 to 40 years • Positive Net Present Value across the programme

It will be important to keep these and other options under review, so that the authority can adopt the measures it needs when to responding to emerging risks.

Conclusions

The Baseline financial position for the authority's HRA is strong. The projections allow for representative levels of investment in the existing stock, along with the delivery of a substantial new homes programme.

However, stress testing shows that the capacity of the HRA reduces if the authority is unable to contain costs within the indicated levels or if it cannot generate the income and funding required to deliver the Baseline plans. This is a key risk, which the authority can mitigate by maintaining its focus on minimising costs while maximising income and funding. This approach will help it to meet and, ideally, outperform the Baseline projections over the medium and long terms.

The future HRA will also be subject to changes that are outside of its direct control, such as:

- Underlying rates of inflation
- Interest rates
- Future requirements for investment in decent homes and decarbonisation
- External funding available for future stock investment and new homes
- Government policy on rent convergence

All these factors are subject to change and could cause the financial strength of the HRA to weaken if costs rise without a corresponding increase in income or funding. Similarly, the council will also make decisions that can impact on HRA costs and income.

The council needs to remain alert to the potential effects of changes in circumstances and the decisions it takes. It will be important to reassess the impact of such changes on the Baseline projections as they become apparent, so that the authority can adjust its future plans accordingly.

Appendix – Summary of key assumptions

No.	Description	2025.26	2026.27	2027.28	2028.29	2029.30	Notes
1.00	**Constraints**						
1.01	Minimum HRA balance	£2,449,750	£2,526,184	£2,635,203	£2,685,769	£2,763,481	Allowance set at 5% of operating expenditure plus depreciation (excludes capital financing charges)
1.02	Interest cover requirement	125%	125%	125%	125%	125%	Minimum interest cover performance requirement
2.00	**Inflation**						
2.01	Underlying CPI	0.00%	3.75%	2.50%	2.00%	2.00%	BoE MPR projection, August 2025. Continuing at 2% pa from 2028/29. Not applied to outturn budgets.
2.02	Underlying RPI	0.00%	4.75%	3.50%	3.00%	3.00%	CPI + 1%. Not applied to outturn budgets.
2.03	Underlying Building Costs	0.00%	4.75%	3.50%	3.00%	3.00%	CPI + 1%. Not applied to outturn budgets.
2.04	House prices	0.00%	5.00%	5.00%	5.00%	5.00%	Standard assumption
2.05	Rent increases	0.00%	4.75%	3.50%	3.00%	3.00%	Current Government Policy to 2035/36, then CPI.
2.06	Shared ownership rent increases	0.00%	5.25%	4.00%	3.50%	3.50%	RPI + 0.5% - should reflect SO agreements
2.07	Management cost inflation	0.00%	0.00%	2.50%	2.00%	2.00%	Not applied to outturn budgets.
2.08	Repairs & building cost inflation	0.00%	0.00%	3.50%	3.00%	3.00%	Not applied to outturn budgets.
2.09	Depreciation charge increases	0.00%	0.00%	2.50%	2.00%	2.00%	CPI. Not applied to outturn budgets.
2.10	SCS investment costs cost increases	0.00%	0.00%	3.50%	3.00%	3.00%	Building Costs. Not applied to outturn budgets.
3.00	**Management costs**						
3.01	Fixed management costs	100% of Budget	100% of Budget	70% of Budget	70% of Budget	70% of Budget	Plus inflation. Fixed costs not adjusted to reflect changes in stock numbers. 100% fixed until 2026/27
3.02	Variable management costs	None	None	30% of Budget	30% of Budget	30% of Budget	Plus inflation. Variable costs adjusted to reflect changes in stock numbers. 30% variable from 2027/28
4.00	**Repairs & asset management costs**						
4.01	Fixed repairs costs	100% of Budget	100% of Budget	10% of Budget	10% of Budget	10% of Budget	Plus inflation. Fixed costs not adjusted to reflect changes in stock numbers. 100% fixed until 2026/27
4.02	Variable repairs costs	None	None	90% of Budget	90% of Budget	90% of Budget	Plus inflation. Variable costs adjusted to reflect changes in stock numbers. 90% variable from 2027/28
5.00	**Growth, Efficiency & savings**						
5.01	R&M growth assumed	£0	£750,000	£0	-£500,000	-£500,000	Medium term increase in 2026/27. £500k removed in 2027/28, £250k balance removed in 2031/32
5.02	R&M cost reductions assumed	£0	-£274,240	-£274,240	-£274,240	-£274,240	Permanent 2% reduction in base budget assumed in 2026/27
5.03	GM cost reductions assumed	£0	-£375,180	-£375,180	-£375,180	-£375,180	Permanent 2% reduction in base budget assumed in 2026/27
6.00	**Depreciation charges**						
6.01	Depreciation	£15,300,000	£16,035,937	£16,612,360	£17,082,326	£17,564,446	Uses a per-unit allowance from 2025/26 to reflect the effects of stock movements.
7.00	**Capital Programme**	**£000**	**£000**	**£000**	**£000**	**£000**	
7.01	Major works	£11,870	£20,605	£22,052	£24,897	£26,683	
7.02	Decarbonisation	£1,380	£4,116	£4,254	£4,380	£4,510	
7.03	Development	£27,248	£17,453	£38,195	£29,425	£30,307	
7.04	Aids & Adaptations (Fixed)	£1,400	£1,467	£1,518	£1,563	£1,610	
7.05	Compliance	£1,750	£629	£650	£670	£690	
7.06	Other capital expenditure	£1,202	£784	£703	£1,005	£985	
8.00	**Stock**						
8.01	Opening Stock	9,606	9,675	9,803	9,883	9,963	
8.02	New Homes	99	158	85	85	85	
8.03	RTB Sales	-30	-30	-5	-5	-5	
8.04	Other Sales	0	0	0	0	0	
8.05	Units removed from management	0	0	0	0	0	
8.06	Closing Stock	9,675	9,803	9,883	9,963	10,043	

Appendix – Summary of key assumptions

No.	Description	2025.26	2026.27	2027.28	2028.29	2029.30	Notes
9.00	**Rents**						
9.01	No. Rent weeks	52	52	52	52	52	Allows for years with 53 rent debits
9.02	Average weekly rent paid by tenants	£109.78	£116.27	£122.28	£126.90	£131.49	Allows for rent convergence at £0.80 pw for social rent homes from 2026/27
9.03	Average weekly formula rent (general needs)	£116.75	£122.29	£126.58	£130.37	£134.28	
9.04	Average weekly formula rent (supported)	£100.58	£105.36	£109.05	£112.32	£115.69	
9.05	Units re-let at formula rent	572	535	500	468	439	Assumes 6% of GN stock pa re-let at formula rent (7% of SH stock), using a reducing balance method
9.06	Of these, units re-let with rent flexibility	0	0	0	0	0	No use of rent flexibility
9.07	Rent loss from voids	1.37%	1.37%	1.37%	1.37%	1.37%	
9.08	Rent loss from bad debts	0.73%	0.73%	0.73%	0.73%	0.73%	
10.00	**RTB sales**						
10.01	Average value per sale	£158,881	£158,881	£228,881	£228,881	£228,881	Plus inflation. Lower RTB discount levels applied from 2027/28 onwards
10.02	Attributable debt per sale	£41,821	£43,912	£46,108	£48,413	£50,834	
10.03	HRA use of capital receipts	£1,200,000	£3,564,000	£2,888,000	£0	£0	Use of shared ownership receipts to support provision of new homes
11.00	**Capital financing sequence**						
11.01	RCCO	Budget	Budget	Optimised	Optimised	Optimised	No use of RCCO assumed
11.02	MRR	Budget	Budget	Optimised	Optimised	Optimised	Optimised within financial constraints from 2025/26
11.03	Grant	Devpt Prog.	Devpt Prog.	Devpt Prog.	Devpt Prog.	Devpt Prog.	
11.04	S106/ commuted sums	Devpt Prog.	Devpt Prog.	Devpt Prog.	Devpt Prog.	Devpt Prog.	
11.05	Retained 141 RTB receipts	Devpt Prog.	Devpt Prog.	Devpt Prog.	Devpt Prog.	Devpt Prog.	
11.06	Other RTB receipts	None	None	None	None	None	Allowable debt receipts reserved for future repayments of debt
11.07	Other capital receipts	Budget	Budget	Budget	None	None	
11.08	Other HRA reserves	None	None	None	None	None	
11.09	Borrowing	Budget	Optimised	Optimised	Optimised	Optimised	Balancing item
12.00	**Capital financing sequence**						
12.01	1	Major repairs reserve					Used for major works. Balance also available to repay debt.
12.02	2	Retained 141 RTB receipts					Used to pay for 20% of the cost of new homes. Could be used for up to 100% of new build costs.
12.03	3	Capital grant					Can be included if made available
12.04	4	S106/ commuted sums					Can be included if made available
12.05	5	Other capital receipts					Available for any capital purpose
12.06	6	Revenue contributions					Can be made available for any capital purpose if balance above minimum level
12.07	7	Borrowing					Available for any capital purpose
13.00	**Debt**						
13.01	Pool rate for new external loans	5.60%	5.30%	5.30%	5.30%	5.30%	Indicative rate, assuming PWLB loans. Needs alignment to WBC Treasury expectations.
13.02	Pool rate for internal borrowing	5.60%	5.30%	5.30%	5.30%	5.30%	Indicative rate, assuming PWLB loans. Needs alignment to WBC Treasury expectations.
13.03	Debt repayment period for new external loans	ASAP					Demonstrates ability to repay debt within a reasonable period
13.04	Interest rate for existing loans	3.92%	3.92%	3.93%	3.92%	3.92%	Average rate, based on indicative loan schedule provided.
13.05	Repayment of existing loans	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	No repayment of existing loans scheduled until 2030/31.
14.00	**Resources available for debt repayment**						
14.01	1	Reserves set aside for debt repayment					
14.02	2	Unused balance on the major repairs reserve					
14.03	3	HRA balances above the target level					

This page is intentionally left blank

CABINET

Report subject	**Sea Cliff and Chine Management**
Meeting date	26 November 2025
Status	Public Report
Executive summary	Along the BCP coastline there is approximately 15.5 miles of sea cliffs and chines. The responsibility for much of the management of the sea cliffs and chines falls to BCP Council (either as landowner or leaseholder). In order to address cliff slips and falls, past engineering efforts during the 20th century have introduced various forms of cliff drainage and stabilisation works including pinning and netting, slope regrading and installation of over 700 sand drains along large sections of the BCP coast. Engineering that would cost many tens of £millions at today's prices Ongoing work to develop a new BCP cliff management strategy has identified that costs for cliff management along the BCP frontage over the next 20 years are currently estimated to be in excess of £41m. In order to address some of the issues being identified in the immediate term, one-off funding of £1.446m has been allocated by the finance team for cliff management over this financial year and next. It is planned to prioritise this funding on items identified through the Cliff Management Working Group.
Recommendations	**It is RECOMMENDED that Cabinet Recommends to Council to:** **(a) Note the challenges being faced in managing BCP's sea cliffs and chines, including the impacts of climate change and limited resources allocated to this in the recent past.** **(b) Support the immediate allocation of £1.446m from reserves to support responses to current cliff management issues and mitigate the lost income from commercial services on the seafront.** **(c) Delegate to the Director of Commercial Operations in consultation with the Chief Operations Officer and Portfolio Holder the allocations of the funding.**

Reason for recommendations	To support achievement of the BCP vision for where people, nature, coast and towns come together in sustainable, safe and healthy communities, by contributing the delivery of the following objectives: • People and places are connected by sustainable and modern infrastructure. • Our communities have pride in our streets, neighbourhoods and public spaces. • Climate change is tackled through sustainable policies and practice • Our green spaces flourish and support the wellbeing of both people and nature.

Portfolio Holder(s):	Councillor Andy Hadley, Cabinet Member for Climate Response, Environment and Energy
Corporate Director	Glynn Barton – Chief Operations Officer
Report Authors	Alan Frampton – Strategy, Policy & Environment Manager Matt Hosey – Head of FCERM Julian Case – Principal Geotechnical Engineer Anthony Rogers – Head of Seafront
Wards	Boscombe East & Pokesdown; Boscombe West; Bournemouth Central; Canford Cliffs; East Cliff & Springbourne; East Southbourne & Tuckton; Hamworthy; Highcliffe & Walkford; Mudeford, Stanpit & West Highcliffe; West Southbourne; Westbourne & West Cliff;
Classification	For Decision

Key terminology to understand in reading this paper:

- **Coastal erosion** is a natural process where material (sediment, rocks and manmade features) is taken away from shorelines by the action of waves, tides and currents (often to be deposited along other parts of the coast or moved to offshore areas). This is not replaced by new material, resulting in the coastline being 'eroded'.

  Waves, currents, tides, and wind can all contribute to coastal erosion.

  Importantly, coastal erosion is driven by forces at the base of cliffs (i.e. along the shoreline), though the impacts result in retreat of the cliff top that in turn can lead to loss of properties and infrastructure located on top of cliffs.
- **Cliff stability** is the ability of inclined soil or rock slopes to withstand destabilising forces. This is related to conditions within the cliffs / slopes including the mass characteristics of the geology and groundwater conditions which on occasion may cause excessive destabilising pressures due to the build-up of water levels within the cliffs due to rainfall and/or other sources.
- **Cliff instability** occurs when the stabilising forces within the cliff are exceeded, leading to rockfalls, mudflows, landslips and landslides. These may be confined to the face of cliffs and slopes or they can be deep seated and cause damage/risk to life to people, property and infrastructure on or at the base of the slopes, or they may also result in retreat of the cliff top position in which case they can then also lead to loss of properties and infrastructure located on

top of cliffs.

Background

1. This paper should be read in conjunction with the background paper on Cliff and Coastal Erosion Management Across the BCP Coast presented to the BCP Council Environment & Place Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 9 July 2025.

2. Along the BCP coastline there is approximately 15.5 miles of sea cliffs and chines fronted by sandy beaches, extending from the boundary with New Forest District Council at Chewton Bunny in the east to the boundary with Dorset Council in Lytchett Bay in the west (see Figure 1).

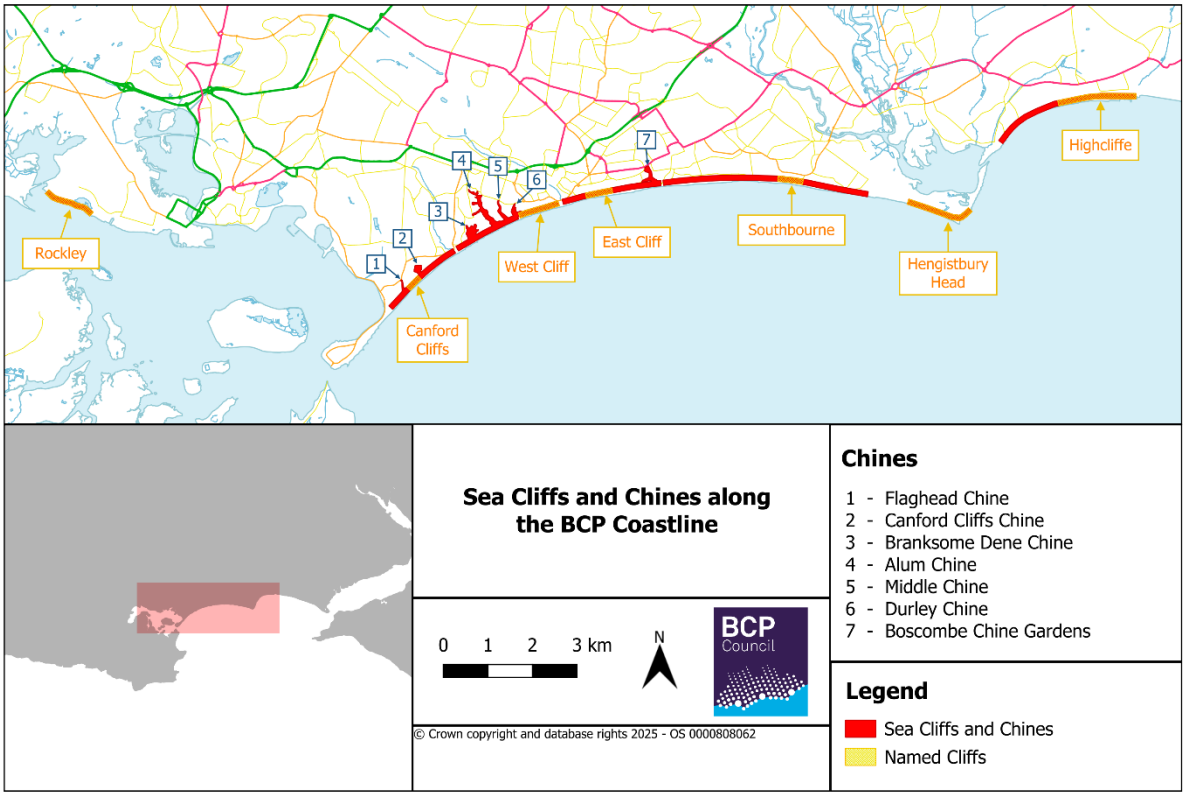


Figure 1 Extent of sea cliffs and chines along the BCP coast

3. The responsibility for much of the management of the sea cliffs and chines falls to BCP Council (either as landowner or leaseholder), however about 1.4 miles of sea cliffs and chines are in private ownership and so the responsibility for management lies with those private owners (see Figure 2). These private cliffs often have a relationship to adjacent sections of cliff, or assets at the top and bottom of the cliff, that are the responsibility of BCP Council, which poses challenges for integrated management.

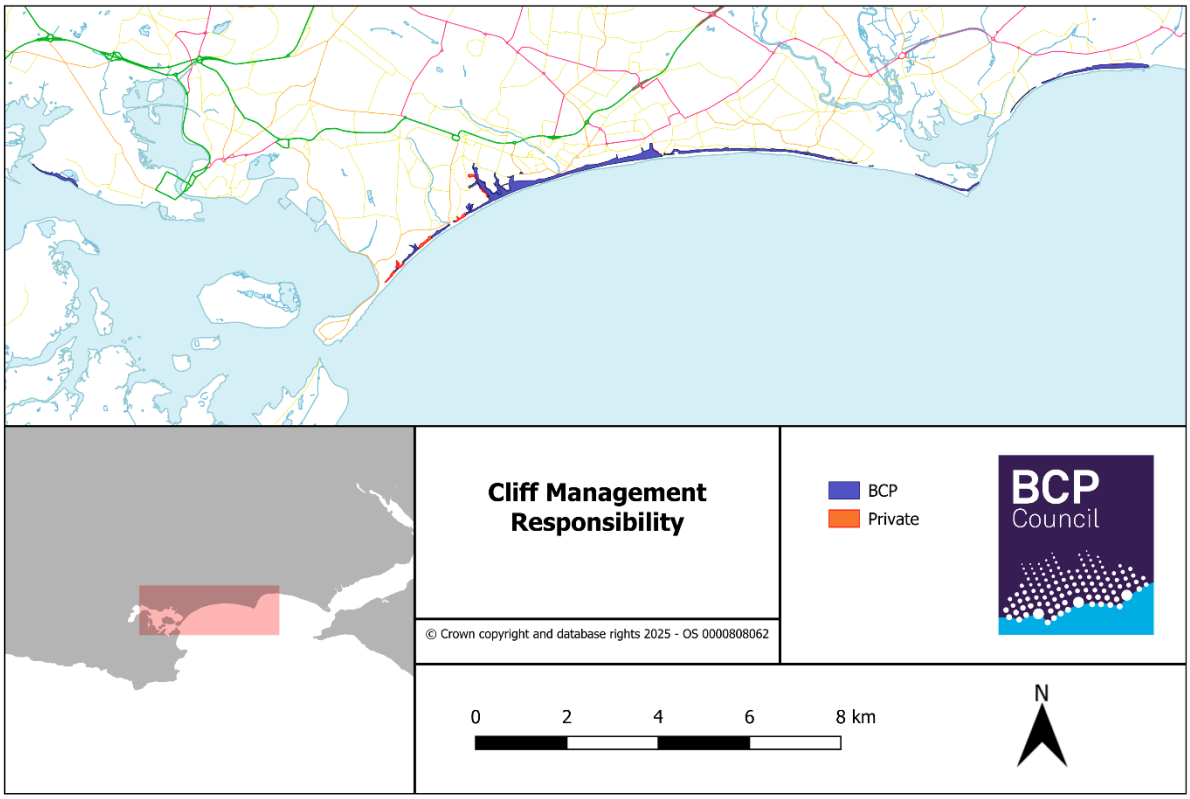


Figure 2 Sea cliffs and chines management responsibility along the BCP coast

4. Since the late 19th century, we have been building coastal defences along the shoreline at the base of the cliff to prevent coastal erosion. Whilst the introduction and evolution of coastal defences along the base of the cliffs have been very successful in stopping coastal erosion by marine action, they were not successful in stopping cliff instability landwards of the coastal defences. Cliff slips and falls were still occurring throughout the 20th century and into the 21st century, including most recently at West Cliff on 9th and 19th October 2024, and East Cliff on 28th November 2024 and 30th January 2025 adjacent to the slip at East Cliff lift that occurred in April 2016.

5. The distinction between coastal erosion and cliff stability/instability (which relates more to landslips) is significant for the management of the sea cliffs and chines along the BCP coast.

6. If we were to stop maintaining coastal erosion defences along the BCP coast, these defences would eventually fail and this would lead to the resumption of cliff retreat that, over a 100 year timescale, would put around 7,000 properties at risk of coastal erosion across the BCP coast. However, we are able to access central Government funding to provide coastal defences along the shoreline/base of cliffs via FCERM Grant in Aid (GiA) to stop this risk arising.

7. In reality therefore, although much of the BCP coast is protected against coastal erosion by seawalls, groynes and beach nourishment located along the base of the cliffs, these coastal erosion defences do not stop landslips that are the result of groundwater driven cliff instability. We therefore still regularly see landslips and falls along much of the BCP

coast albeit to a lesser scale than if the sea was still able to attack the base of the cliffs When these events occur they pose a risk to life, property and infrastructure.

8. However, unlike coastal erosion, dealing with landslips caused by cliff stability issues is not eligible for funding from central Government via FCERM GiA. In fact there is no national funding available at all for managing this. Rather the funding to deal with cliff stability / landslip issues is the responsibility solely of the landowner or responsible operating organisation, which as noted in paragraph 3, is largely BCP Council in this case.

9. As noted above, from the mid/late 19th century coastal defences have been constructed along the shoreline of much of the BCP coast to prevent coastal erosion. However, these coastal erosion defences did not stop the groundwater driven cliff instability issues along the coast. The clay layers within the cliffs are a significant factor in this regard which together with perched water tables were found to have provided the primary sliding mechanism to a number of cliff falls and landslips in the past. Given this, past engineering efforts have also introduced various forms of cliff drainage and stabilisation works including pinning and netting, slope regrading and installation of over 700 sand drains along large sections of the BCP coast.

10. Despite these efforts, we still have fairly regular cliff instability failures along the BCP coast, albeit smaller in scale and less often than if we have not coastal defences and full coastal erosion was able to occur.

11. As noted above, the management of this residual coastal instability risk is not eligible for FCERM GiA and so is reliant on BCP Council funding. A consequence of the funding required for sea cliff and chine management largely having to come from BCP Council is that, as this is not a statutory requirement and as budgetary pressures have grown, it has in the past not always been prioritised, meaning that it can take years to address and remedy cliff instability failures.

12. The Cliff Management Strategy is still in development and aims to be completed by March 2026. At its core is treating the cliffs as an asset system and applying an asset management system approach to their management. This involves establishing systematic and repeated inspections to assess whether cliff stability issues are present and whether existing cliff stability measures are functioning as they were designed to do. In addition, we undertake regular inspections across the seafront, to report any signs of cliff instability that may develop. Regular inspections of cliff drainage systems built into the cliffs also take place to identify any maintenance and/or monitoring requirements.

13. This information is then reported to a new Cliff Management Working Group (CMWG) that has been formed to better deal with the integrated issues of cliff management across BCP. The CMWG regularly brings together officers from all services in BCP that have a role in managing aspects of the sea cliffs and chines, and includes:

- the Seafront Service who are responsible for managing people and services including: general visitors and access (including land trains and cliff lifts), beach huts, catering concessions and sports clubs.

- Environment service who undertake things like cliff vegetation management under the Natural England approved Higher Level Stewardship scheme to systematically remove invasive species and reintroduce native species to enhance ground cover and cliff stability. NB: This Higher Level Stewardship funding is the only other sources of external funding BCP Council receives to manage the cliffs.

14. The focus of the CMWG is to review and discuss the latest cliff inspection findings and recommendations and to prioritise actions to address issues identified. Actions recommended may range from communicating with private landowners and establishing cliff monitoring works, to enlisting geotechnical consultants to undertake detailed stability assessments and if necessary, the detailed design of stabilisation measures. Actions taken following this process in the last 2 years have cost BCP Council in excess of £750k and include:

- GPS cliff monitoring by the South West Flood & Coastal team;

- Commissioning expert advice such as stability assessments, structural assessments and / or detailed design of stabilisation measures;

- Cliff maintenance work; and

- Portman Ravine Emergency Works involving physical intervention to remove partial slip and stabilise cliff face.

15. In order to address some of the issues being identified in the immediate term, one off funding of £1.446m has been allocated from reserves for cliff management over this financial year and next. It is planned to prioritise this funding on activities including:

- A rolling programme of inspection, maintenance, recommissioning and replacement (where necessary) of over 700 sand drains and other cliff drainage systems located in different sections of cliff, including along various cliff zig zag paths/access steps such as those at Tofts, Fisherman's Walk, Manor Steps, East Cliff and Highcliffe as doing so can greatly reduce risk at relatively low cost; and

- Detailed assessment of areas identified as being of concern by visual inspection, and design and implementation (subject to cost / availability of funding) of any recommended remediation measures, including at West Cliff / West Cliff Lift, Honeycombe Chine and Pinecliff Gardens, so that areas can be made safe for the public use of such areas and enable seafront operations to resume.

Options Appraisal

Do not invest in sea cliff and chine management along the BCP coast

16. This will lead to ongoing cliff falls and landslips, posing risk to life, property and infrastructure along the cliff top and along the base of the cliffs (i.e. promenade, beach huts and concessions), as well as access routes from top to bottom of the cliffs (i.e. steps, zig zag paths and cliff lifts).

17. As a result we will see more closures of roads, suspension of parking and partial / full closure of sections of promenade, etc.

18. As well as being disruptive to residents, businesses and visitors, it will also lead to loss of income to BCP Council (e.g. loss beach hut revenue) and increased spend on incident management and fencing/diversions to ensure public safety. The Seafront Service currently generates a surplus of more than £6m/yr from commercial facilities and services.

19. This can be further exacerbated by the perception that the seafront is closed to visitors due to the way such events are portrayed in the media with associated negative impacts on the local tourism sector as well and reputational damage to BCP Council.

Undertake investment in sea cliff and chine management along the BCP coast

20. Investing in the proactive, evidence-based management of the sea cliffs and chines along the BCP coast will mean we will be able to ensure effective maintenance of existing stabilisation systems is occurring, reducing the risk of future cliff falls and slips occurring.

21. This won't fully prevent cliff falls and slips occurring, but will ensure we are doing everything in our power to minimise the risk to people, property and infrastructure. It will also reduce the risk of loss of income to BCP Council from having to respond to such events and having to close beach huts etc.

Summary of financial implications

22. Currently there is no base budget for sea cliff and chine management. However, if annual funding was earmarked for this area it will enable steady progress to be made in tackling the issues identified to date and over time reduce the risk of future cliff falls and slips requiring sudden requirements for funding to be found in an emergency situation as well as reducing the risk of lost revenue to BCP Council. The need for future funding allocation to sea cliff and chine management should therefore be considered as part of ongoing medium-term financial planning.

23. At the present time, £1.446m of BCP Council funding has been allocated, and it is proposed to utilise this one-off funding amount in the near term to progress priority items identified through the CMWG.

Summary of legal implications

24. There is no legal duty on BCP Council to undertake cliff stabilisation and associated cliff management works. However, failure to do so will have implications for public safety and leasehold agreements, as well as insurance premiums etc.

Summary of human resources implications

25. The implementation of this approach requires geotechnical expertise to be retained within the BCP Council FCERM team (South West Flood & Coastal) in order to provide the technical advice on risks and priorities to the CMWG, and to also then aide the effective management of consultants and contractors.

26. The South West Flood & Coastal team currently employs a Principal Geotechnical Engineer and Graduate Geotechnical Engineer who lead on these aspects for BCP Council.

Summary of sustainability impact

27. The purpose of the BCP Cliff Management Strategy is to provide an integrated, sustainable approach to all aspects of cliff management across the BCP coast.

28. The ongoing implementation of the approach, processes and procedures that the cliff management strategy has developed will require ongoing investment by BCP Council to ensure this integrated, sustainable approach to managing the risks of cliff falls and slips occurs.

Summary of public health implications

29. Investment in sea cliff and chine management across the BCP coast will reduce the risk of cliff falls and slips which can and do cause mental health stress in those affected, for example be that through risk of loss of property or loss of access along the seafront due to path closures etc.

Summary of equality implications

30. There are no equality implications of this recommendation.

Summary of risk assessment

31. Without investment in sea cliff and chine management across the BCP coast, there will be an ongoing risk (that with climate change could increase) of further cliff falls and slips. These will impact people, property, businesses and infrastructure, and lead to loss of revenue and sudden need for emergency, unplanned funding for BCP Council. Staff resources would be in demand for reactive measures, delaying other pre-planned activity.

Background papers

a) Cliff and Coastal Erosion Management Across the BCP Coast. Paper presented to the BCP Council Environment & Place Overview and Scrutiny Committee (9 July 2025).

   - Full minutes of the 9 July 2025 Environment & Place Overview and Scrutiny Committee for this agenda item.

Appendices

There are no appendices to this report.

CABINET

Agenda Item 10

Report subject	**Home to School Transport**
Meeting date	26 November 2025
Status	Public Report
Executive summary	This report presents the findings of a strategic review undertaken by an external provider into the Local Authority's home to school transport arrangements focussing on our arrangements and provision for children and young people pupils with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND). The key objective of the review was to identify strategic and operational opportunities that support the development of independent travel options and make improvements to how home-to-school transport is delivered with a focus on potential efficiencies and service improvement. It identifies key opportunities to introduce travel options that meet individual needs and help prepare young people for adulthood and promote long-term independence. Key issues include the complexity of transport arrangements, market capacity challenges, and the need for improved commissioning models that deliver better outcomes and value for money. The report presents a range of options and opportunities for future delivery and contained details of the investment necessary to achieve cashable savings and cost avoidance. This report seeks approval to proceed with a formal tendering exercise to commission an external provider to implement a phased delivery of change proposals that encourage independent travel, build independence and reduce journey times for children and young people. The approach will be supportive of young people's development to help young people gain confidence and practical skills for travelling safely on their own will result in making school transport more efficient and sustainable.
Recommendations	**It is RECOMMENDED that COUNCIL:** **Agree to tender an external provider to deliver a transformation project over three years with a total cost of £1.5 million funded by the flexible use of capital receipts to deliver service improvements and by the end of the project on-going savings in SEND school transport projected at £3 million (net of additional resource requirement).**
Reason for recommendations	The recommended approach promotes independence by equipping children and young people with essential travel skills, while addressing rising complexity and cost pressures. A phased delivery plan ensures smooth transition, co-production with families, and ongoing evaluation. By building internal resilience and leveraging external expertise where needed, the Council retains strategic control and delivers a more sustainable, value-for-money service—reducing long-term costs and improving outcomes.
Portfolio Holder(s):	Richard Burton
Corporate Director	Cathi Hadley, Director of Children's Services
Report Authors	Tanya Smith, Head of Inclusion, Places and Capital
Wards	Council-wide

Classification	For Recommendation/Decision

Background

1. Local authorities have a statutory duty under the Education Act 1996 to provide free home to school transport for eligible children and young people. This includes those who live beyond the statutory walking distance, have special educational needs or disabilities (SEND), or face other qualifying circumstances. The duty ensures that children can access suitable education without barriers related to travel.

2. The council currently provides home to school transport for 1,639 SEND passengers on a day-to-day basis. In recent years, the Council has experienced significant growth in demand for home to school transport, particularly for children and young people with SEND. This increase reflects broader demographic changes, rising levels of need, and growing parental expectations around personalised transport solutions.

3. This trend is mirrored nationally, with many local authorities reporting escalating costs and operational pressures in delivering SEND transport. The council's SEND home to school transport expenditure in 2024/25 was £13.8m with the budget for 2025/26 being £16.4m million. This budget in the current MTFP is projected to grow to £21.8m by 2028/29.

4. The key driver for the increased demand in passenger numbers has been an increase to the number of children with an EHCP which has increased by 45% since 2021/22 to 4,837. The service has largely mirrored that of other local authority operations across England and Wales. Increasing pressure has been created by a rising number of children entitled to transport which has been largely driven by growing numbers. This has combined with more costly external taxi and bus supply for inflationary and other operational reasons.

5. **The 2024/25 outturn and 2025/26 budget and forecast**

Budget Category	**2024/25 Outturn £million**	**2025/26 Budget £million**	**2025/26 Forecast £million**
Staff Costs - Passenger Assistants (PAs)	2.3	2.3	2.3
Staff Costs Recharge - Transport Team	0.4	0.4	0.4
Client Travel	0.5	0.6	0.5
Private Contract Hire - Taxi	6.8	9.3	9.6
Private Contract Hire - Minibus	3.9	3.9	3.8
Total expenditure	**14.0**	**16.5**	**16.6**
Income	**(0.1)**	**(0.1)**	**(0.1)**
Next Expenditure	**13.8**	**16.4**	**16.5**

6. The 19% increase in 2025/26 compared with the previous year outturn reflects that the EHCP backlog that existed until the final quarter of last year had supressed the demand for transport with a £0.3m underspend against budget recorded for 2024/25. This expenditure has caught up in 2025/26. The current year budget allowed for a further significant increase in EHCP demand throughout the year plus inflationary pressures totalling £2.1 million. The pay award initially budgeted centrally was distributed to services in quarter two and is reflected in the staff costs in the above table.

7. The current MTFP presented to October Cabinet allows for a further £1.8 million of growth each year over the next three years (39% in total) to 2028/29 for pupil travel costs, the annual pay award for staff costs continuing to be budgeted centrally.

8. The latest service estimate for EHCP growth for the relevant SEND cohort potentially eligible for school transport is under review.

9. To address these challenges, the council commissioned a headline review of its home to school transport arrangements with a focus on operational opportunities that support the development of independent travel options for children and young people with SEND. The review, undertaken by Edge Public Solutions, identifies opportunities to promote independent travel and includes measures designed to improve the delivery and sustainability of the service with associated

opportunities for cost efficiencies. The review sets out a proposed three-year transformation strategy comprising a timeline, clear recommendations and investment implications in systems and permanent resources. A full report of the review is set out at Appendix 1.

Issues

10. The home to school transport function is delivered with input and cooperation from and between the Children's Services and Environment Directorates. Duties and responsibilities are the responsibility of various Education, Social Care and Passenger Transport services. Essentially, assessment of eligibility for assistance with travel costs from home to school is undertaken by the Admissions and Transport team working across the directorate and with the SEND service where assessments and placements decisions are taken for children with additional needs. The budget and policy are the responsibility of the Education service while the day-to-day travel arrangements and commissioning functions sit within the Passenger Transport unit (see page 10 of the report for details). The overall performance of the service is summarised on pages 10-15 and headline capability and gaps are included in Appendix B of the consultant's report in Appendix 1.

11. A summary of the report's key findings is set out in an executive summary on pages 6-7. This identifies:

- BCP performs similarly to other progressive authorities and has put into place many initiatives in recent years to improve control of demand and service delivery.
- There is a commendable eligibility assessment regime which clearly contributes to only 33% of children with an EHCP receiving transport which is lower than expected when comparing to other authorities.
- Respective teams with an involvement in delivering the home to school transport function have been hampered by poor systems and are at full capacity delivering a demanding service.
- The report identifies activity to achieve service transformation over the next 3 years and deliver an annual financial impact of £2.7 million from 2028/29.
- Each key initiative will require careful phasing to allow time to properly implement in a sustainable and low risk manner over 2-3 years.
- Savings should be considered separately from cost avoidance, which is the impact of applying the efficiencies to predicted new demand and cost growth.
- Successful delivery of the changes and efficiencies will be dependent on fully implementing initiatives involving supply management and commissioning activities, policy changes, investment in independent travel training and governance.
- Implementation will present a significant challenge and be dependent on five critical building blocks necessary for sustainable delivery namely, political and officer buy-in, parent/carer understanding of the rationale and the benefits of the programme and delivering a positive message to parents and schools communicated as a period of transition (pages 6-9 of the report).
- Investment in resources will be necessary to properly support and deliver the implementation; including to ensure schools, parents and passenger needs and expectations are managed. There will also be a requirement for additional investment in systems and permanent resources as contained in the financial implications paragraph 26 and the human resource implications set out in paragraphs 35-38.

12. Opportunities to secure efficiencies in supply management and procurement are outlined in pages 17- 25 and include opportunities in the following areas:

- Supply management and procurement
- Routing
- Group/safe pick-up
- Supply of passenger assistants

13. An overview of assessment and policy is provided on pages 26 – 33 including observations, challenges and operational complexities. It highlights a limited re-assessment regime and opportunities to strengthen this. It also details proposals for assessment of single person journeys, moving away from door-to-door transport, promotion of personal travel budgets and policy change in respect of Post 16 travel, specifically, a proposal to review charges for Post 16 passengers to cover some of the cost of their journey. Details of the role of independent travel training and a

proposed model are set out on pages 34 – 36. The robustness of the policy is contained on page 37 and include some more minor changes to enforce parental responsibility and promote independence and manage parental expectations.

14. **Resources Necessary for Implementation:** Details of the resources and expertise necessary to implement a phased delivery plan of proposed changes is provided on pages 38 – 46 in the Consultant's report. The total ongoing cost implications comprise staffing costs totalling £160k and these are summarised in the financial implications and resource implications sections in this report.

15. **Implementation Timeline:** A timeline of key activity over the next 2 years to implement proposals is provided on page 44 of the report. The timelines in the report are indicative at this stage and may need some level of refinement. In particular, it will be important to manage expectations about the typical timescales involved in implementing substantive changes to the home to school transport policy. This reflects that information and guidance which help inform decisions about onward school or college placements must also be available during the autumn in each academic year. It therefore follows that the process to implement changes to policy need to be co-produced, consulted upon and formally approved well advance and typically begin almost two years prior to the point of admission. The table below helps to illustrate this in more detail. Note: regardless of whether the admission is resolved through the School Admissions Code or the SEND Code of Practice, transition planning starts in the autumn for admission in the following academic year.

Timescales involved in making changes to policy

Activity	Duration	Timeline
Initial Report to Cabinet		25 November 2025
Commission an external partner	8-12 weeks	January – March 2026
Review data	4 weeks	April 2026
Co production of policy changes	6-8 weeks	April – May 2026
Consultation/Collate responses	6-8 weeks	June – July 2026
Cabinet Approval	6 weeks	September 2026
New policy published and applicable for new starters with existing users ageing through*	September 2026 ready for families making their decision for following September 2027	New policy effective from September 2027 if consultation and decision making align. If the autumn window for a decision is not met, the new policy will be implemented from September 2028.

16. **Delivery Model:** A summary of delivery models is provided on page 43 showing the rationale for commissioning external support working in partnership with the council and pros and cons of internal/external resources including an outline cost comparison.

17. **Initiatives for Change - Recommendations:** A summary of recommendations is provided on pages 47-48.

Options Appraisal

18. **Option 1:** Do Nothing -Maintain Current Arrangements

- Advantages: No disruption to current service; avoids short-term political or operational risk.
- Disadvantages: Fails to address rising costs, inefficiencies, and increasing demand; does not include options to support children to travel independently, does not meet the council's strategic objectives for transformation or value for money.
- Conclusion: Not recommended.

19. **Option 2:** Proceed to a formal tendering process to commission an external provider to deliver the recommended changes contained in the external report which form the basis of a 3-year programme of transformation as set out in a phased delivery plan.

- Advantages: Delivers comprehensive transformation over three years; addresses demand, cost, and quality; aligns with national best practice.

- Disadvantages: Requires upfront investment; some proposals may be politically sensitive; requires formal procurement process which may impact timescales/
- Formal tendering may result in a bid award to a new supplier which could impact costs/initial investment and opportunities for savings.
- Conclusion: Recommended option, subject to robust tendering/commissioning.

Consultation

20. **Engaging with Parents/Carers:** The council has been thinking carefully about how best to engage and communicate the range of possible proposals designed to promote independence. This recognises that early and effective consultation is vital to securing the support of parents, carers and all stakeholders. Undoubtedly, effective communication involves clearly outlining the rationale for change, listening to concerns, and collaboratively exploring solutions that place children at the centre of decision making. For this purpose and as an initial step, the council has met with representatives of Parents/Carers Together who agreed to gather the views of parents/carers on proposed policy changes designed to promote independent travel. As a result, feedback on the each of the project proposals will be feedback to the council and following this, further work will be undertaken with BCP Parents/Carers to support conversations with families and stakeholders in line with the timescales of the delivery plan.

21. **Communications Plan:** In advance of a decision on the recommended option and led by our Corporate Communications Team, the council has begun shaping a communication approach to ensure parents, carers, and other stakeholders are kept informed and involved as proposals develop. It is planned that the approach will comprise:

- A distinct focus on changes that promote independent skills for life
- Inclusive decision-making and targeted information sessions
- Regular communication to all stakeholders and formal periods of consultation
- Proactive and coordinated press releases and associated handling plan

22. **Consultation Requirements for Policy Changes:** Any substantive changes to home to school transport policy particularly those affecting eligibility, service models, or parental responsibilities must be subject to public consultation. This ensures:

- Parents and carers understand their rights and responsibilities.
- Stakeholders can provide feedback on proposed changes.
- The Council meets its duty to act transparently and fairly.

23. **Consultation Aligned to School Admissions and Transition:** Home to school transport policy is closely linked to school admissions. Regardless of whether the admission is resolved through the School Admissions Code or the SEND Code of Practice, transition planning starts in the autumn for admission in the following academic year. This means that information and guidance which help to determine an onward school or college placement must also be available during the autumn in each academic year. It therefore follows that any changes to policy need to be co-produced, consulted upon and agreed as part of the democratic decision-making process by the autumn in any year. The School Admissions Code 2021 requires local authorities to ensure that parents are provided with clear, accessible information about transport eligibility when expressing school preferences. This includes:

- Definitions of “nearest suitable school” for preference, travel and transport purposes.
- The impact of stating a preference for a school that does not meet transport eligibility criteria.
- How transport policies may affect access to school and an emphasis to encourage parents/cares to consider how they will get their children to school when expressing their school preferences.

24. This information must be included in composite prospectuses (School Admissions Guide) and published annually to support informed parental decision-making during the admissions process. Failure to provide this information may disadvantage families and undermine fair access to education. Consultation should be timed to align with the school admissions cycle to allow families to make informed choices. Local authorities must ensure that transport arrangements are suitable, safe, and enable access to education.

Summary of Financial Implications

25. The delivery plan includes invest-to-save proposals requiring upfront investment, with projected savings over a three-year period. It shows that an investment of £1.49m is required for project management, consultation, and delivery of system changes. Budget implications span financial years 2026/27 to 2028/29. As this is a transformation programme that will lead to savings, funding for the investment can be provided through the flexible use of capital receipts, a government policy that has been extended to March 2030.

26. Details of the headline annual savings and investments required in each year are based on a late 2025/26 starting point now (page 5 in the report). The following table is an extract, and further details are contained in the detailed financial plan contained on page 49-50 of the report, section 8 items 11 and 12 in the table.

Opportunity for Cash Savings

	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29	Total 26/27–28/29	2029/30 Ongoing position
	£000's	£000's	£000's	£000's	£000's
Savings and Efficiencies –Note 1	576	2,611	3,167	6,354	3,167
Total Investment Required	(558)	(497)	(439)	(1,494)	
Ongoing Resource Implications					(160)
Net Cash Saving After Investment	**18**	**2,114**	**2,728**	**4,860**	**3,007**

Note 1 - The savings figures in the above table are the reductions from the current level of budget and are the absolute values to include in the MTFP.

The cost avoidance figures in the consultant's report are indicative only based on one possible scenario for EHCP growth estimates and inflation applied to all costs, including staff costs that have not risen according to this EHCP growth trajectory and where pay awards are budgeted centrally. The final cost avoidance figures to be assumed does not impact on the savings and efficiencies in the above table or the level of investment required to achieve them. It will impact on the overall budget required each year with this budget growth requirement still under review.

Summary of Legal Implications

27. **Statutory Duty to Provide Home to School Transport:** Local authorities have a legal obligation under the Education Act 1996 to provide free home-to-school transport for eligible children. Any changes must ensure continued compliance with these duties, particularly for children with special educational needs (SEN), disabilities, or those living beyond statutory walking distances.

28. **Equality and Non-Discrimination**: Under the Equality Act 2010, the council must ensure that changes do not disproportionately disadvantage protected groups. This includes conducting a robust Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) at the appropriate stage to identify and mitigate potential adverse effects. While an initial Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) screening has been initiated, it is recognised that the process is at a very early stage. A full assessment will be more appropriately timed once proposals have been further developed and shaped through co-production and informed by the appointment of external consultancy support. Any detailed analysis will need to align with the specific proposals and be based on current data relating to children and young people travelling at that point in time.

29. **Duty to Consult**: There is a legal requirement to consult meaningfully with affected parties—especially parents, carers, and schools—before implementing significant changes. Failure to do so could expose the council to legal challenge on grounds of procedural unfairness.

30. **Human Rights Considerations**: Changes must respect the rights of children and families under the Human Rights Act 1998, particularly the right to education and the right to private and family life. Any perceived infringement must be proportionate and justified.

31. **Data Protection and Privacy**: If proposals involve collecting or using personal data (e.g., travel patterns, health information), compliance with UK GDPR and the Data Protection Act 2018 is essential, including transparency and appropriate safeguards.

32. **Contractual and Procurement Implications**: If changes affect existing transport contracts or require new services, procurement rules and contractual obligations must be carefully managed to avoid breach or legal disputes.

33. The proposed three-year delivery strategy constitutes a significant programme of work. In accordance with the public contracts' regulations, the Council must undertake a competitive tendering process to commission an external provider. Note: a direct award to the external consultant firm engaged for the purposes of producing the attached review report is not permissible unless specific exemptions apply, which is not the case here. The procurement process must ensure:
    - Transparency and equal treatment of bidders.
    - Value for money and legal compliance.
    - Alignment with commissioning timelines to avoid delays in implementation.

34. **The SEND White Paper:** The "SEND Review: Right Support, Right Place, Right Time" White Paper has been delayed until 2026. Local authorities anticipated that the White Paper would address several long-standing challenges in the SEND system, including unsustainable growth in SEND transport costs. Key expectations included:

    - **Clarification of Eligibility Criteria:** Councils sought clearer guidance on statutory duties, especially around post-16 transport and independent placements, which often drive high costs.
    - **Flexibility in Delivery Models:** Proposals were expected to support travel training, personal travel budgets, and phased independence models to reduce reliance on specialist transport.
    - **Improved Commissioning and Market Shaping:** Authorities wanted support to develop local provision and reduce long-distance travel, which contributes to rising costs and carbon emissions.
    - **Data and Benchmarking Tools:** Better national data collection and benchmarking to help councils compare costs and identify efficiencies.

35. The impact of the Delay to the White Paper until early 2026 means that there is no formal national mandate to reform transport policy or indeed help manage several long-standing challenges in the SEND system which impacts on growth and sustainability. In the meantime, local authorities continue to face rising demand and rely on sector-led guidance, such as the ADCS and ADEPT joint report (Nov 2023), which calls for legislative reform and better alignment between SEND and transport policy.

Summary of Human Resources Implications

36. The report emphasises there are a range of resource intensive activities (page 36) and sets out the requirements of successful implementation in terms of leadership, governance and additional permanent temporary/fixed term support (page 41-42). Namely successful implementation will require:

    - Strong leadership to drive progress,
    - Clear governance to ensure accountability,
    - Additional permanent team resources, and
    - Temporary fixed-term support to manage and execute key initiatives beyond daily operations.

37. Adequate resources and expertise are critical to ensuring the sustainable delivery of resource-intensive initiatives. These efforts aim to achieve annual efficiencies and cost reductions. Additional support will establish the foundational elements for successful service transformation, including:

    - Building a performance-driven culture,
    - Strengthening governance frameworks,
    - Refining strategic priorities,
    - Enhancing communication,
    - Managing customer expectations, and
    - Supporting team development.

38. While precise resource requirements are challenging to predict, experience suggests the following full-time equivalent (FTE) resource levels over the three-year transformation period at a cost of £160k. Newly appointed staff will deliver travel training and team resources focussing on the development of a training contract and re assessment and compliance including the arrangements for providing personal travel budgets.

Year	Resources (FTE)
1	3–5
2	3–5
3	1–3

39. Resource demands will fluctuate, with peaks during procurement events and quieter periods thereafter. Training and change management support will be required. An Equality Impact Assessment will be completed to assess the impact on affected groups.

Summary of Sustainability Impact

40. Improved transport planning may reduce unnecessary journeys and promote more sustainable travel options. The transformation plan includes consideration of environmental impact and carbon reduction.

Summary of Public Health Implications

41. Efficient and reliable transport supports attendance and wellbeing for children with SEND. The plan aims to reduce stress for families and improve access to education.

Summary of Risk Assessment

42. Risks include political sensitivity, stakeholder resistance, and procurement delays. Mitigation includes phased implementation, clear communication, and alignment with statutory timelines.

Background Papers

Edge Public Solutions Strategic Review Report July 2025

Appendices

Appendix 1: Edge Public Solutions Strategic Review Report July 2025

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

Document is Restricted

This page is intentionally left blank

CABINET

Report subject	**Youth Justice Service Plan 2025-2026**
Meeting date	26 November 2025
Status	Public Report
Executive summary	To present the Youth Justice Plan for 2025/26. There is a statutory requirement to publish an annual Youth Justice Plan which must provide specified information about the local provision of youth justice services. This report summarises the Youth Justice Plan for 2025/26, with a copy of the Plan appended. The Youth Justice Plan needs to be approved by the full Council.
Recommendations	**It is RECOMMENDED that:** **The Cabinet recommend approval of the Youth Justice Plan 2025-2026 to the Full Council.**
Reason for recommendations	Youth Justice Services are required to publish an annual Youth Justice Plan which should be approved by the Local Authority for that Youth Justice Service. Dorset Combined Youth Justice Service is a partnership between Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole Council and Dorset Council. Approval is therefore sought from both Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole Council and from Dorset Council.
Portfolio Holder(s):	Councillor Richard Burton, Portfolio Holder for Children &Young People, Education and Skills
Corporate Director	Cathi Hadley, Corporate Director, Children's Services
Report Authors	David Webb, Head of Service, Dorset Combined Youth Justice Service
Wards	Council-wide
Classification	For Recommendation

Background

1. The Crime and Disorder Act (1998) requires Youth Offending Teams (now known as Youth Justice Services) to publish an annual Youth Justice Plan. The Youth Justice Board sets out detailed and prescriptive guidance about what must be included in the Plan. The draft Youth Justice Plan for the Dorset Combined Youth Justice Service is attached at Appendix One. A brief summary of the Youth Justice Plan is provided in this report.

Summary of the Youth Justice Plan 2025/26

2. The Youth Justice Plan provides information on the resourcing, structure, governance, partnership arrangements and performance of the Dorset Combined Youth Justice Service. The Plan also describes the national and local youth justice context for 2025/26 and sets out our priorities for this year.

3. Dorset Combined Youth Justice Service was rated 'Good' in its most recent inspection report, which was published in January 2023. An action plan was produced, in response to the inspection recommendations. All actions have been completed. Dorset Combined Youth Justice Service has again been inspected, in February 2025, as part of a national thematic inspection of work with children on 'Out of Court Disposals'. The national report will be published in the summer. The Youth Justice Plan includes some references to the findings and learning from this inspection.

4. The Youth Justice Board continues to publish data for three 'key performance indicators' for youth justice. National performance data is published as a combined figure for the two local authorities within the Dorset Combined Youth Justice Service partnership.

5. The first indicator relates to the rate of young people entering the justice system for the first time. Overall local performance in this area, across both local authorities, has improved significantly in recent years. In the year before the pandemic, 2019/20, 104 BCP Council children entered the justice system. In the past year, 2024/25, 57 BCP Council children entered the justice system. Pages 11-16 of the Youth Justice Plan provide more data and analysis of our work to divert children from the justice system.

6. The other two national indicators relate to reducing reoffending and minimising the use of custodial sentences. The reoffending rate fluctuates, partly because of the current counting rules for this measure. Our local reoffending rate has for the most part remained close to the national rate. Local analysis, summarised on pages 17-19 of the Youth Justice Plan, shows some of the patterns underlying the reoffending data. The Youth Justice Plan sets out some of the actions that are being taken to address these issues.

7. Locally we have low rates of children being sentenced to custody, below the regional and national averages. Young people who are sentenced to custody have often experienced significant trauma in their earlier life, affecting their current behaviour. Analysis on pages 19-20 of the Youth Justice Plan shows some of the common characteristics of the children who have been sentenced to custody.

8. Although the numbers remanded or sentenced to custody are low, these outcomes usually reflect serious offences causing significant harm to victims. Reducing youth violence, and harm to victims, is a priority for the Youth Justice

Service and for other local strategic partnerships, such as the Community Safety Partnership and the Safeguarding Children's Partnership. In 2023 the government introduced the Serious Violence Duty, which requires specified local partners, including youth offending teams, to work together to share information and target interventions to prevent and reduce serious violence. Local implementation of the Serious Violence Duty is coordinated by the Community Safety Partnership.

9. The Youth Justice Board promotes a good practice approach to youth justice work, known as 'Child First'. The Youth Justice Plan includes examples of how the principles of Child First practice underpin the work of the Dorset Combined Youth Justice Service.

10. It is recognised nationally that some groups of children are over-represented in the youth justice system. Locally, we have identified a particular concern about the over-representation of Children in Care. A multi-agency task and finish group is now working on two main themes: earlier identification of Children in Care who may be at risk of entering the justice system and improvements to the joint multi-agency work with Children in Care who have already entered the justice system. This activity is one of the service's priorities for 2025/26.

11. During the past year we have launched a two-year programme, known as 'Re-Engage', aimed at identifying the speech, language and communication needs of children in Key Stage 3 who are at risk of permanent exclusion from mainstream schools. The objective is to reduce school exclusions and to prevent future offending. Part of the rationale for this project was the recognition that almost all children who enter the justice system have unidentified communication needs. The Youth Justice Plan also includes data analysing the outcomes of the assessments completed by the YJS Speech and Language Therapists (see pages 43-45). The findings are significant, notably the evidence that 94% of children in the justice system are below the expected level for understanding spoken language. The YJS plans for the coming year include adaptation of our interactions with children to focus more on activities and less on talking-based interventions.

12. The DCYJS Partnership's strategic priorities for 2025/26 are:

    - Continuing to divert children from the formal justice system.
    - Reducing the over-representation of minority groups.
    - Improving education outcomes for children in the justice system.
    - Earlier identification of speech, language and communication needs for children at risk of school exclusion.
    - Increasing public awareness and confidence in work which children are doing with the Youth Justice Service to repair the harm from their offence.

Options Appraisal

13. Councillors are asked to endorse the Youth Justice Plan for 2025/26 before it is considered by Cabinet. Cabinet will then decide whether to recommend approval of the Youth Justice Plan to the full Council.

Summary of financial implications

14. The Youth Justice Plan reports on the resourcing of the Youth Justice Service. Like all local authority services, the YJS is subject to significant resource pressures. Although there was an increase in the national Youth Justice Grant in 2024/25, taking it to £767,922, this did not restore it to the allocation of £790,000 in 2014/15. At the time of writing this report, in mid-May, the Youth Justice Grant allocation for 2025/26 has not yet been announced.

15. The Youth Justice Service faces budget pressures arising from the additional staffing costs of annual pay awards, with no increase in local authority contributions to the YJS budget since 2022/23. The Youth Justice Service achieved a balanced budget in 2024/25 through a combination of staffing reductions and additional fixed-term funding from the Ministry of Justice and the Home Office.

Summary of legal implications

16. Local authorities are legally required to form a youth offending team with the statutory partners named in the Crime and Disorder Act 1998. The Act also stipulates that youth offending partnerships must submit an annual youth justice plan setting out how youth justice services in their area will be provided and funded; and how the youth offending team will be composed and funded, how it will operate and what functions it will carry out. The Youth Justice Plan for 2024/25 meets these legal obligations.

17. The Youth Justice Board guidance states that Youth Justice Plans must be signed off by full council in accordance with 'Regulation 4 of the Local Authorities (Functions and Responsibilities) (England) Regulations 2000'.

Summary of human resources implications

18. No Human Resources implications have been identified. Local Authority YJS staff members are employees of Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole council, including those team members who work in the Dorset Council area. The YJS also includes employees of the partner agencies who have been seconded to work in the team and who remain employed by the partner agency. The Crime and Disorder Act 1998 contains statutory requirements for the staffing composition of youth offending services. The Youth Justice Plan shows how Dorset Combined Youth Justice Service meets these requirements.

Summary of sustainability impact

19. No adverse environmental impact has been identified. The Covid-19 pandemic led to changes in the working arrangements of the Youth Justice Service, with increased working from home and a consequent reduction in staff travel.

Summary of public health implications

20. Young people in contact with youth justice services are known to be more likely than other young people to have unmet or unidentified health needs. The Youth Justice Service includes seconded health workers who work directly with young people and who facilitate their engagement with community health services. The Youth Justice Plan includes an update on health provision for children in the justice system (see pages 42-45).

Summary of equality implications

21. The Youth Justice Plan does not relate to a new strategy, policy or function so an Equalities Impact Assessment has not been undertaken. Some information about equalities issues is included in the report. No adverse equalities impacts have been identified.

22. It is recognised nationally that young people with diverse heritage, and young people in the care of the local authority, are over-represented in the youth justice system and particularly in the youth custodial population. It is also recognised that young people known to the YJS may experience learning difficulties or disabilities, including in respect of speech, language and communication needs. Information from Dorset Combined Youth Justice Service records, summarised in the Youth Justice Plan, shows that some of these issues of over-representation also apply in our area. Actions have been identified in the Youth Justice Plan to address these issues.

Summary of risk assessment

23. The Youth Justice Plan sets out local priorities and actions to prevent and reduce offending by young people. These priorities and actions have been developed in response to identified risks and concerns. The recommendation for councillors to endorse the Youth Justice Plan is intended to support the Youth Justice Service to reduce the risks associated with youth offending. No specific risks have been identified as arising from this recommendation.

Background papers

None

Appendices

Appendix 1 – Dorset Combined Youth Justice Service Youth Justice Plan 2025/26.

This page is intentionally left blank

DORSET COMBINED Youth Justice Service

Service	Dorset Combined Youth Justice Service

YOUTH JUSTICE PLAN 2025/26

Head of Service	David Webb
Chair of YJS Board	Paul Dempsey

Contents

1. Executive Summary
2. Introduction, vision, strategy, and local context
3. Governance, leadership, and partnership arrangements.
4. Update on the previous year.
   - 4.1. Progress on priorities in last year's plan
   - 4.2. Performance
   - 4.3. Risks and Issues
5. Plans for the year ahead.
   - 5.1. Child First practice
   - 5.2. Resources and Services
   - 5.3. YJS Partnership Board Development
   - 5.4. Workforce development
   - 5.5. Evidence-based practice and innovation and evaluation
   - 5.6. Standards for work with children in the youth justice system
   - 5.7. Response to inspections, reviews and audits.
6. Local and National Priorities for 2025/26
   - 6.1. Over-representation
   - 6.2. Prevention
   - 6.3. Diversion
   - 6.4. Education, Training and Employment
   - 6.5. Health Needs of Children in the youth justice system
   - 6.6. Restorative justice and victims
   - 6.7. Serious violence and exploitation
   - 6.8. Policing and Detention of children in police custody
   - 6.9. Transitions to Probation
   - 6.10. Remands
   - 6.11. Custodial Sentences and Resettlement
   - 6.12. Working with Families
   - 6.13. DCYJS Priorities and Plans for 2025/26
7. Sign off, submission and approval.
8. Appendix 1 – Service Structure Chart
9. Appendix 2 – Budget Costs and Contributions

Youth Justice Plan 2025/26

1. Executive Summary

Dorset Combined Youth Justice Service (DCYJS) works across the Dorset Council and BCP Council areas in a multi-agency partnership between the local authorities, Dorset Police, NHS Dorset and the Probation Service.

DCYJS helps children to make positive changes, keeping them safe, keeping other people safe, and repairing the harm caused to victims. When possible, we do this work outside the formal justice system, to avoid criminalising the child.

During the past year, DCYJS has made progress on our partnership priorities, including:

Keeping children out of the formal justice system: the number of children across Dorset and BCP who received a first caution or court order dropped from 108 in 2023/24 to 106 in 2024/25. The 2023/24 figure was a significant reduction on previous years.

Reducing over-representation of minority groups in the youth justice system: local children from ethnic minorities are not over-represented among those entering the justice system but may progress further through the system. Children in Care and children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities are over-represented locally and nationally. Action is being taken to reduce over-representation of these groups.

Reducing youth violence and extra-familial harm: there was a reduction in the number of children entering the justice system for violent offences in 2024/25, compared to the previous year. The number of children being arrested locally has reduced in the past three years.

Improve education outcomes for children in the justice system: DCYJS worked with Upton Country Park to provide a project supporting young people to become ready for college or employment.

DCYJS applies the 'Child First' principles that are promoted by the Youth Justice Board. A parent said that '*having YJS involved was at first a worry due to the offence, but it has turned out to be a godsend with all the support'.*

The DCYJS Partnership Strategic Priorities for 2025/26 are:

- Continuing to divert children from the formal justice system.
- Reducing over-representation of minority groups.
- Improving education outcomes.
- Earlier identification of speech, language and communication needs for children at risk of school exclusion.
- Increasing public awareness and confidence in work undertaken by children to repair the harm from their offence.

These priorities sit alongside ongoing commitments to improve outcomes for children in the youth justice system and to repair the harm caused to victims.

2. Introduction, vision, strategy, and local context

Foreword

This document is the Youth Justice Strategic Plan for the Dorset Combined Youth Justice Service (DCYJS) for 2025/26. It sets out the key priorities and targets for the service for the next 12 months as required by the Crime & Disorder Act 1998. This Plan adheres to the Youth Justice Board's document 'Youth Justice Plans: Guidance for Youth Justice Services'.

This Plan has been developed under the direction and oversight of the DCYJS Partnership Board, alongside consultation with DCYJS staff and feedback from DCYJS users.

The Youth Justice Strategic Plan:

- summarises the DCYJS structure, governance and partnership arrangements.
- outlines the resources available to the DCYJS.
- reviews achievements and developments during 2024/25.
- identifies emerging issues and describes the partnership's priorities.
- sets out our priorities and actions for improving youth justice outcomes this year.

Paul Dempsey, Executive Director People – Children, Dorset Council
Chair, Dorset Combined Youth Justice Service Partnership Board.

Dorset Combined Youth Justice Service Statement of Purpose

Dorset Combined Youth Justice Service works with children in the local youth justice system. Our purpose is to help those children to make positive changes, to keep them safe, to keep other people safe, and to repair the harm caused to victims.

We support the national Youth Justice Board Vision for a 'child first' youth justice system:

A youth justice system that sees children as children, treats them fairly and helps them to build on their strengths so they can make a constructive contribution to society. This will prevent offending and create safer communities with fewer victims.

Who We Are and What We Do

Dorset Combined Youth Justice Service (DCYJS) is a statutory partnership between Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole Council, Dorset Council, Dorset Police, The Probation Service (Dorset) and NHS Dorset Integrated Care Board.

We are a multi-disciplinary team which includes youth justice officers, restorative justice specialists, parenting workers, education and employment workers, police officers, a probation officer, nurses, speech and language therapists and a psychologist.

More information about the Youth Justice Service (YJS) partnership and the members of the YJS team is provided later in this document.

The team works with children who have committed criminal offences to help them make positive changes and to reduce the risks to them and to other people. We also work with parents and carers to help them support their children to make changes.

We contact all victims of crimes committed by the children we work with. We offer those victims the chance to take part in restorative justice processes so we can help to repair the harm they have experienced.

The organisations in the YJS partnership also work together to prevent children entering the youth justice system, to improve the quality of our local youth justice system and to ensure that young people who work with the YJS can access the specialist support they need for their care, health and education.

The combination of direct work with children, parents and victims and work to improve our local youth justice and children's services systems enables us to meet our strategic objectives to:

- Reduce the number of children in the youth justice system.
- Reduce reoffending by children in the youth justice system.
- Improve the safety and well-being of children in the youth justice system.
- Reduce and repair the harm caused to victims and the community.
- Improve outcomes for children in the youth justice system.

Local Context

Dorset Combined Youth Justice Service (DCYJS) is a partnership working across two local authorities: Dorset Council and Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole Council.

Dorset Council covers a large geographical, predominantly rural area with market towns and a larger urban area in Weymouth and Portland. Dorset Council has a population of about 385,000 (Dorset Council 'State of Population' 2023.

Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole together form a conurbation with a population of 404,500 (ONS 2023 mid-year estimates).

Other members of the DCYJS Partnership, such as Dorset Police, the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner, NHS Dorset CCG, Dorset HealthCare Trust and the Probation Service (Dorset) also work across both local authorities.

The following table provides comparative demographic information about young people in both local authorities at the start of 2025. Fuller versions of this data, including data source information can be found in Appendix 3:

COMPARATIVE DATA FOR 10–17 YEAR-OLDS

(10-17 yrs.)	BCP	DORSET
Number of Children	35,208	33,694
Male (%) Female (%)[1]	51 49	51 49
Pupils eligible for FSM (%)	20.5	22
Pupils with SEN Support (%)	14.3	14.6
Pupils with an EHCP (%)[2]	5.2	6.7
Pupils from black and ethnic backgrounds (%)[3]	15.9	5.6
Children living in poverty after housing costs (%)[4]	25	25.7

SAFEGUARDING

(10-17 yrs.)	BCP	DORSET
Number of Children in Need	531	562
Male (%)	58	50.5
Female (%)	42	48.9
Indeterminate(%)	0	0.4
Number of children with a child protection plan	203	100
Number of children in care	376	315
Male (%)	58.7	59.7
Female (%)	41.0	40.3
Indeterminate(%)	0.3	0
Number of children at risk of exploitation		
Significant	18	12
Moderate	41	30
Emerging	35	20

Although the two local authorities differ in geographical size and demography, they have similar population sizes for 10-17 year-olds. Dorset Council has slightly higher rates of children eligible for free school meals and slightly higher rates of children identified as having special educational needs and disabilities. 1,110 children aged 10-17 in the BCP Council area (3,2%) have an allocated social worker, compared to 977 children in the Dorset Council area (2.9%).

The proportion of 10-17 year-olds identifying as being from non-white ethnicities is higher in BCP Council (15.9%) than in Dorset Council (5.6%).

3. Governance, leadership, and partnership arrangements

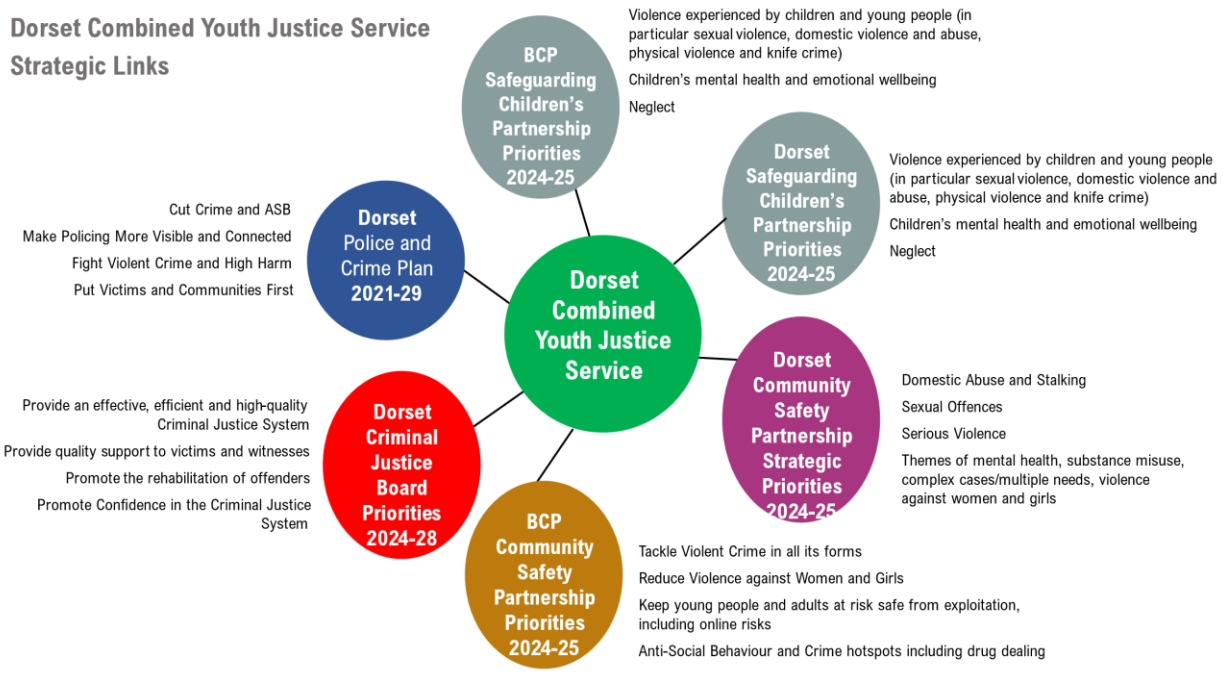
The work of the Dorset Combined Youth Justice Service is managed strategically by a Partnership Board. The Partnership Board consists of senior representatives of the statutory partner organisations, together with other relevant local partners.

Membership:

- Dorset Council (chair)
- Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole Council (vice-chair)
- Dorset Police

- The Probation Service (Dorset)
- NHS Dorset Integrated Care Board
- Public Health Dorset
- Dorset Healthcare University Foundation Trust
- Dorset Magistrates' Youth Panel
- Youth Justice Board for England and Wales
- Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner.

The Partnership Board oversees the development of the Youth Justice Plan. Board members and the DCYJS Head of Service sit on other strategic partnerships, helping to ensure that the Youth Justice Plan and other local strategic plans and priorities are integrated and consider the needs of children and victims in the local youth justice system. The links between DCYJS and local strategic groups, and their overlapping strategic priorities, are illustrated below:



Representation by senior leaders from the key partners enables the DCYJS Head of Service to resolve any difficulties in multi-agency working at a senior level and supports effective links at managerial and practitioner levels.

The DCYJS participates in local multi-agency agreements for information sharing, for safeguarding and for the escalation of concerns. The DCYJS Partnership Data Sharing Agreement underpins local multi-agency work to prevent offending and to reduce reoffending.

The DCYJS Partnership Board oversees activities by partner agencies which contribute to the key youth justice outcomes, particularly in respect of the prevention of offending.

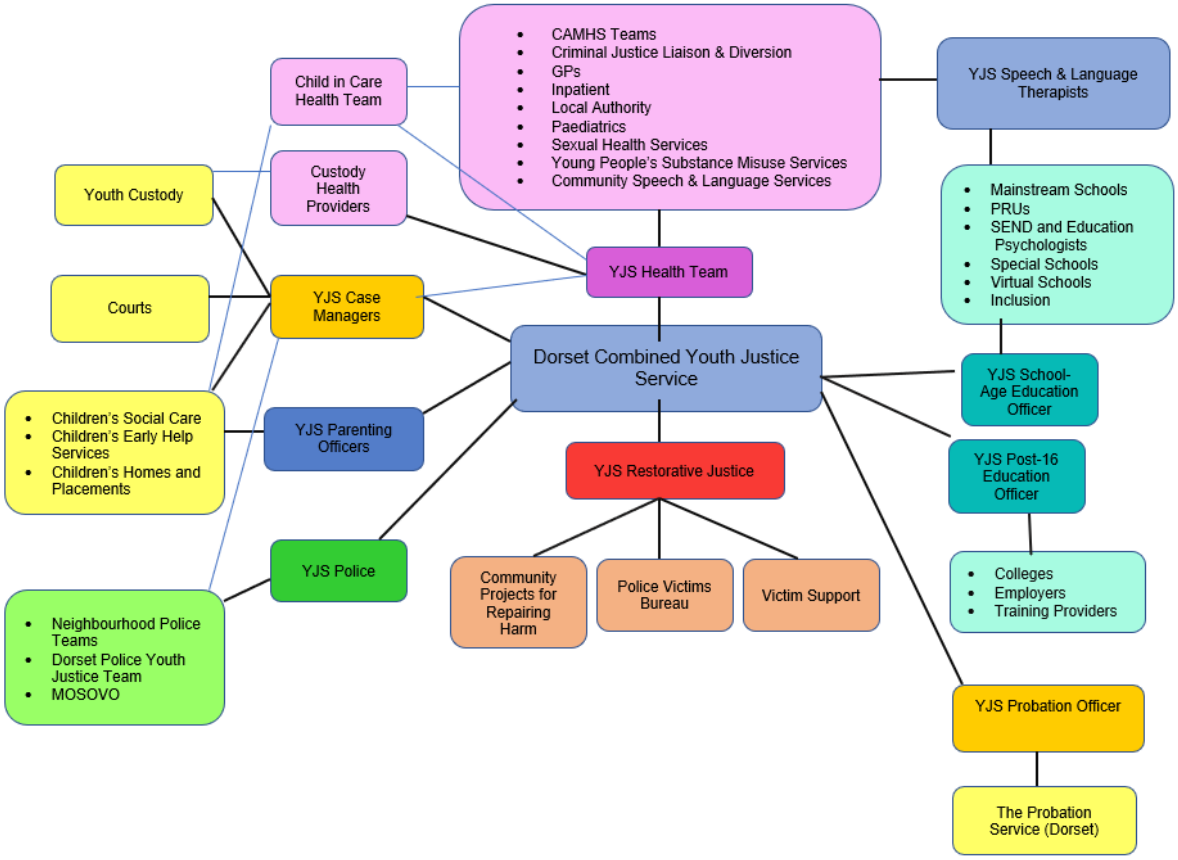
The Partnership Board also provides oversight and governance for local multi-agency protocols in respect of the criminalisation of children in care and the detention of children in police custody. The DCYJS Manager chairs multi-agency operational groups for each protocol and reports on progress to the DCYJS Partnership Board.

DCYJS is hosted by Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole Council. The Head of Service is a Tier 3 Manager, reporting to the Director of Children's Social Care. The Head of Service also reports to the Corporate Director for Care and Protection in Dorset Council.

Appendix One includes the structure chart for DCYJS and structure charts showing where the YJS sits in each local authority.

DCYJS meets the statutory staffing requirements for youth justice services, set out in the Crime and Disorder Act 1998. Specialist staff are seconded into the service by Dorset Police, the Probation Service and Dorset HealthCare University Foundation Trust. These workers have line managers in both the YJS and their employing organisation. They have direct access to their own organisation's case management systems, to enable the prompt and proportionate sharing of information. More details about the staffing and financial contributions from YJS partners are provided in Appendix Two.

The YJS multi-disciplinary team also includes education specialists, parenting workers and restorative justice practitioners. The team works closely with other local services, as illustrated below:



4. UPDATE ON THE PREVIOUS YEAR

4.1. Progress on priorities in last year's plan

Our strategic priorities for 2024-25 are listed below with a brief summary of progress made:

Continue to reduce the rate of children entering the justice system:

- There was a 1.9% reduction in the rate of first-time entrants in 2024/25 compared to the previous year. There has been a 42% reduction in the rate of first-time entrants since 2019/20.
- Use of local authority workers, YJS workers, a Restorative Justice Practitioner and a Speech and Language Therapist to divert children from the justice system, under the Ministry of Justice 'Turnaround' programme.
- Consolidating the use of the police crime disposal option 'Outcome 22' for children with low level offences, as an alternative to a formal justice outcome.
- Transition plan implemented into the new Turnaround arrangements for 2025/26.
- Creation and implementation of the 'Re-Engage' programme, a two-year scheme from summer 2024 to offer speech and language assessments and support for children at risk of school exclusion.

Continue to address over-representation of minority groups in the youth justice system:

- Local children from minority ethnicities are not over-represented in the youth justice system in terms of overall numbers, although there is evidence that children from these groups are more likely to reach the court order stage of the justice system.
- There has been a reduction in recent years in the proportion of black and mixed heritage boys among local children receiving custodial sentences.
- Dorset Police report annually to the YJS Partnership Board on the local use of stop and search and of strip search for children.
- The DCYJS Head of Service represents DCYJS and other local YJS Managers in the Local Criminal Justice Boards' 'Wessex Disproportionality Group'.
- YJS performance data reporting is broken down by disadvantaged groups to check for any over-representation.
- Data analysis has shown that children in care are over-represented amongst children in the local youth justice system. The YJS Partnership Board initiated work in 2024 to improve multi-agency support for children in care in the justice system, and to prevent other children in care from entering the justice system.
- Analysis of YJS Speech and Language assessments, explained later in this document, has improved understanding and responses to children's specific communication needs.
- The 2024 thematic case audit focused on YJS work with girls.

Reduce extra-familial harm and serious violence:

- There has been a reduction in both local authorities in the number of children entering the justice system for an offence of violence against the person.
- DCYJS has contributed to Serious Violence Duty activities in both local authorities, including needs assessment and action planning, to support the multi-agency response to youth violence.
- Actions have been implemented from the 2023 case audit of YJS work with children who committed weapon offences.
- A quarterly 'weapon-related offending' group has been established for YJS practitioners and managers, to share good practice and learning, with inputs from colleagues in Dorset Police. A similar group for Harmful Sexual Behaviour continues to operate.
- The YJS health team has provided support to YJS and other colleagues working with children identified as requiring 'risk support', including Enhanced Case Management trauma formulations led by the DCYJS Psychologist and SAVRY assessments (Structured Assessment of Violence Risk in Youth).
- DCYJS managers and practitioners have participated in partnership work in each local authority to develop and consolidate arrangements for addressing extra-familial harm,

including active contributions to Dorset Council's weekly Extra-Familial Harm panels and BCP Council's fortnightly Missing, Exploited and Trafficked panel.
- The YJS Head of Service has met regularly with senior colleagues from Dorset Police and the Crown Prosecution Service to try to speed up outstanding investigations into alleged violent and sexual offences by children. Progress in this important area remains slow.

Improve education outcomes for children in the youth justice system:

- Funding has been secured to continue the Discover You project at Upton Country Park. The project supports children and young people who are not in employment, education or training. Young people have accessed online learning, gained AQA awards, worked with the Ranger on conservation volunteering activities, engaged in career planning, designed and built animal habitats, bird feeders and play resources for younger children.
- The use of AQA awards to certificate learning by young people during YJS activities has been expanded.
- A weekly ETE Allocations meeting has been established, to prioritise work and to help ensure that support is provided to children without suitable education.

Continue to improve the quality of YJS practice:

- The YJB's new 'Prevention and Diversion' assessment tool has been implemented, with a series of team workshops to improve the quality of YJS assessments and plans with children.
- 'Child First' practice has been embedded through the workshops on assessment and planning, and by aligning individuals' appraisal objectives with the 4 tenets of Child First practice.
- Plans to develop the use of feedback from young people who transfer from the YJS to Probation have been delayed by the continuing vacancy for the seconded Probation Officer post in the YJS.
- The team has developed more options for children to repair the harm caused by weapon and drug offences.

4.2. Performance

DCYJS was inspected in late 2022 under the HMI Probation 'Full Joint Inspection' framework. The inspection report was published in January 2023, rating the service as 'Good'. The inspection report can be found at this link: A joint inspection of youth offending services in Dorset (justiceinspectorates.gov.uk).

DCYJS was also inspected in February 2025 as part of a national thematic inspection of work with children on 'Out of Court Disposals'. Informal feedback was provided after the inspection, identifying examples of good practice which may be included in the national report in the summer of 2025.

The three primary key performance indicators for youth justice partnerships are:

- The rate of first time entrants to the criminal justice system.
- The rate and frequency of reoffending by children in the criminal justice system.
- The use of custodial sentences.

The YJB publish quarterly performance data for youth justice services, compiled nationally, in relation to these three indicators. The information reported below is drawn from the data published in March 2025 for the period ending December 2024.

First Time Entrants

A 'First Time Entrant' is a child receiving a formal criminal justice outcome for the first time. A Youth Caution, a Youth Conditional Caution or a court outcome count as a formal criminal justice outcome. There are also options for diverting children from the justice system, by using informal justice outcomes, which do not make the child a First Time Entrant.

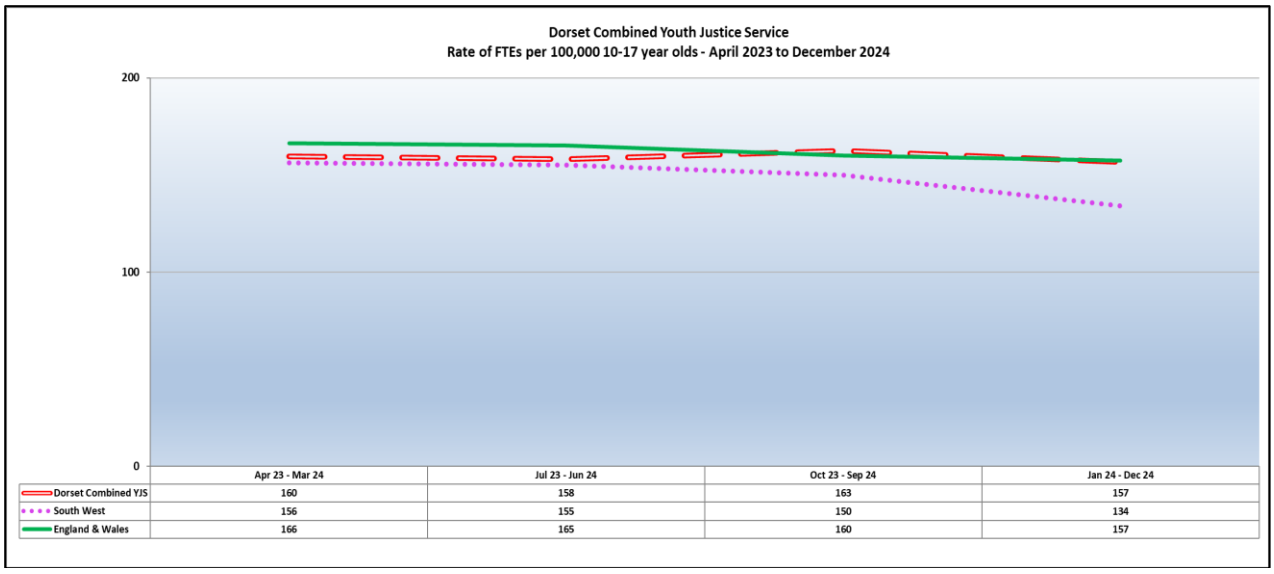
Dorset Police, DCYJS and other children's services work closely together to decide the appropriate outcome for a child who has committed a criminal offence. Whenever possible we seek to use an informal option which does not criminalise the child. It is recognised that receiving a formal justice outcome is in itself detrimental for children. Verbal feedback from HMI Probation, after their inspection of our work with children on Out of Court Disposals, noted that *"There is a clear focus and shared commitment across the partnership both strategically and operationally to divert children from the criminal justice system wherever this is possible".*

National Performance Data

National performance data for First Time Entrants is drawn from the YJB's uploads of information from YJS case management systems.

In the past, DCYJS consistently had a higher rate of First Time Entrants than the national and regional averages. It is pleasing to note that there has been a consistent and sustained reduction in local First Time Entrants, with DCYJS now having a lower rate than the national average.

The following chart shows the last four quarters of national First Time Entrants data, with a consistent rate of around 160 First Time Entrants per 100,000 10-17 year-olds. This compares to a rate of 234 First Time Entrants per 100,000 10-17 year-olds in the year to December 2022.



	Apr 23 - Mar 24	Jul 23 - Jun 24	Oct 23 - Sep 24	Jan 24 - Dec 24
Dorset Combined YJS	160	158	163	157
South West	156	155	150	134
England & Wales	166	165	160	157

Local Performance Data

DCYJS tracks data on its own case management system to monitor the number and characteristics of children entering the justice system. Local data shows a significant reduction in the number of children entering the justice system compared to the year before the pandemic:

Year	BCP First Time Entrants	Dorset First Time Entrants	Total DCYJS First Time Entrants	% Difference from previous year
2019-20	104	78	**182**	
2020-21	78	48	**126**	-30.8%
2021-22	77	47	**124**	-1.6%
2022-23	79	39	**118**	-4.8%
2023-24	52	56	**108**	-8.5%
2024-25	57	49	**106**	-1.9%

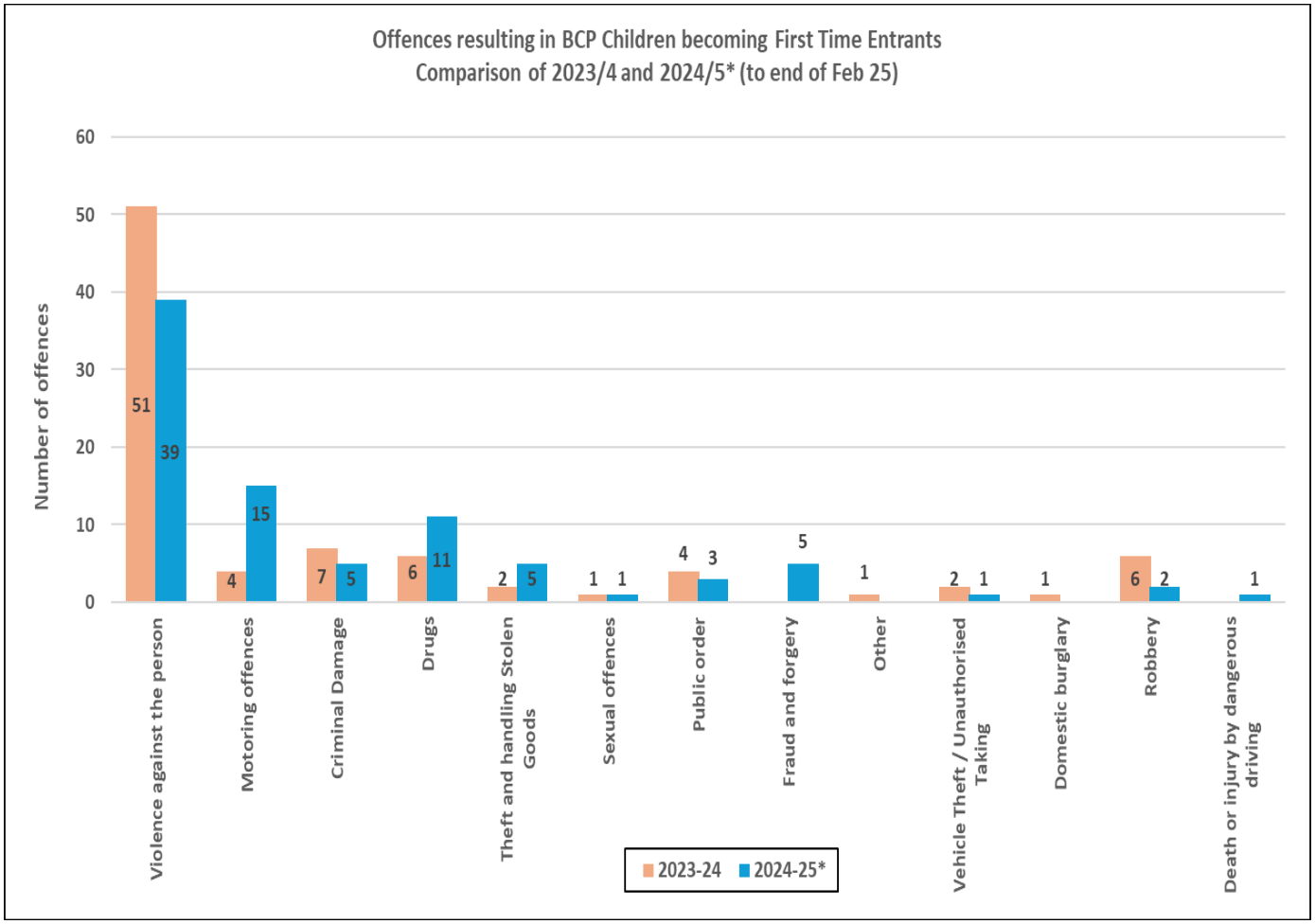
There was a notable reduction in First Time Entrants in BCP in 2023-24, which was sustained in 2024-25.

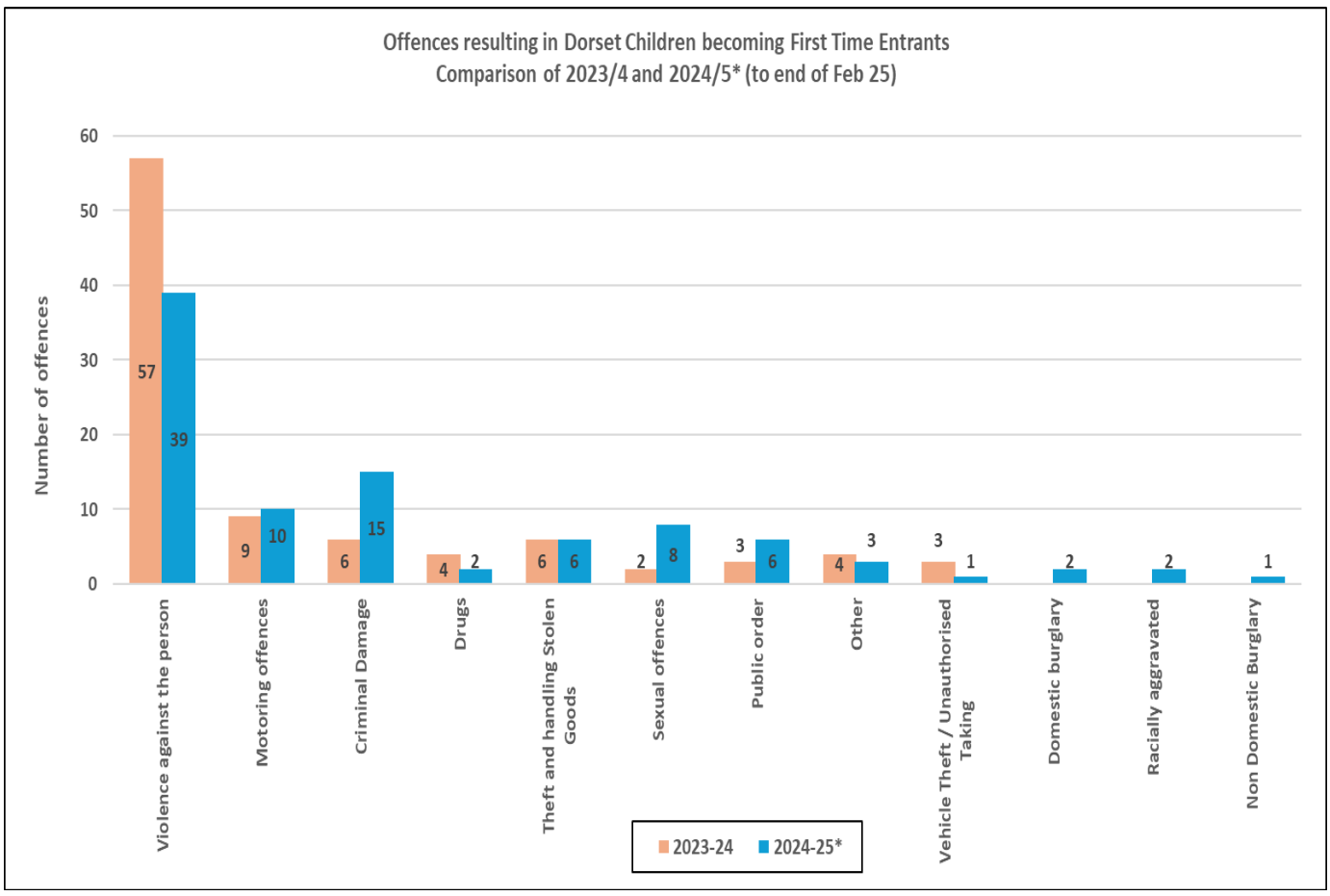
The increase in Dorset First-Time Entrants in 2023-24 reflected a marked increase in April and May 2023 relating to older offences which could have been dealt with during the previous year. It is pleasing to see the number of Dorset children entering the justice system dropping again in 2024-25.

Information about the ethnicity and gender of First Time Entrants is included later in this document, in section 5.1 on 'Over-Representation'.

Offences Leading to Children Entering the Justice System

Decisions about whether to offer a diversion option, instead of a caution or court appearance, depend to some extent on the nature of the offence committed by the child. The following charts shows the offences which led to children in each local authority becoming First Time Entrants during the past year:


Offences resulting in BCP Children becoming First Time Entrants
Comparison of 2023/4 and 2024/5* (to end of Feb 25)
Number of offences
60
50
40
30
20
10
0
51
39
4
15
7
5
6
11
2
5
1
1
4
3
5
1
2
1
1
6
2
1
Violence against the person
Motoring offences
Criminal Damage
Drugs
Theft and handling Stolen Goods
Sexual offences
Public order
Fraud and forgery
Other
Vehicle Theft / Unauthorised Taking
Domestic burglary
Robbery
Death or injury by dangerous driving
2023-24
2024-25*


Offences resulting in Dorset Children becoming First Time Entrants
Comparison of 2023/4 and 2024/5* (to end of Feb 25)
Number of offences
60
50
40
30
20
10
0
57
39
9
10
6
15
4
2
6
6
2
8
3
6
4
3
3
1
2
2
1
Violence against the person
Motoring offences
Criminal Damage
Drugs
Theft and handling Stolen Goods
Sexual offences
Public order
Other
Vehicle Theft / Unauthorised Taking
Domestic burglary
Racially aggravated
Non Domestic Burglary
2023-24
2024-25*

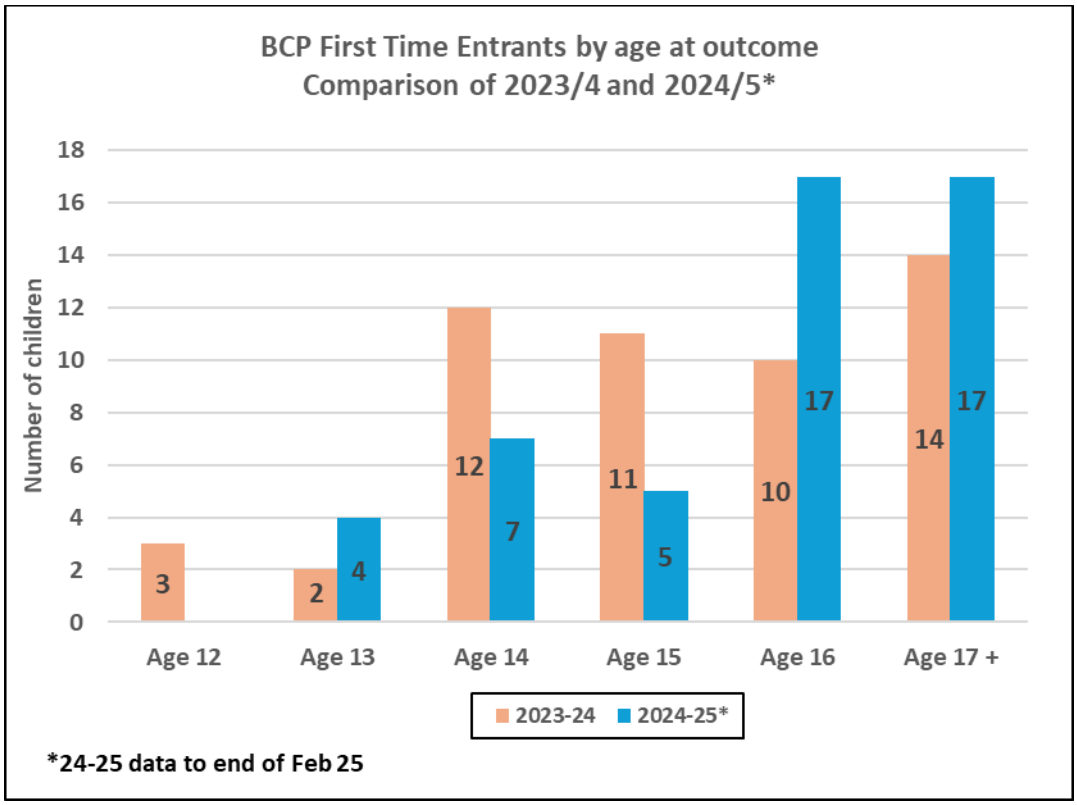
Offences involving possession or use of a weapon, or assaults on emergency workers, are included in the 'Violence against the Person' category and in almost all cases result in a caution or court disposal. Diversion options for these offence types are only considered in exceptional circumstances. There has been a reduction in both local authorities in the number of Violence against the Person resulting in a child entering the justice system.

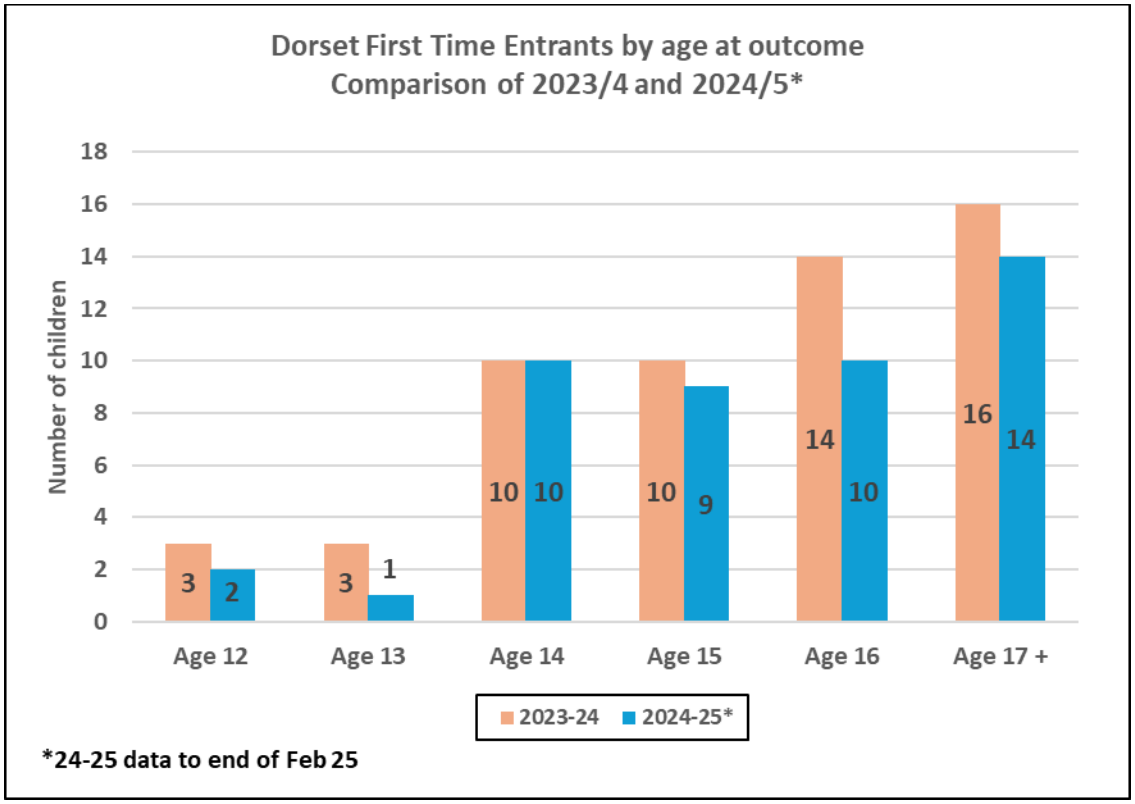
Some children are counted as entering the justice system for motoring offences which result in a court appearance for points to be added to the young person's driver's licence. Speed awareness courses are only available to people aged 18+, which means that a 17 year-old who commits a speeding offence is taken to court to be fined. In our view, such behaviour should not be viewed as criminal activity which counts as entering the justice system. DCYJS and Dorset Police are working locally and regionally, with support from the Youth Justice Board, to agree diversion options for young people with motoring offences.

Age of Children Entering the Justice System

Previous analysis has shown that children who enter the justice system before the age of 14 are likely to have complex needs and may go on to commit further, more serious offences. During 2023-24, a total of 11 children under the age of 14 entered the justice system across our two local authorities. This year, 2024-25, saw a total of 8 children under the age of 14 who entered the justice system, indicating a reassuring reduction in young First-Time Entrants.

The following charts show the ages of First-Time Entrants in each local authority in the past two years. The age of First-Time Entrants in the BCP Council area has risen in 2024-25:



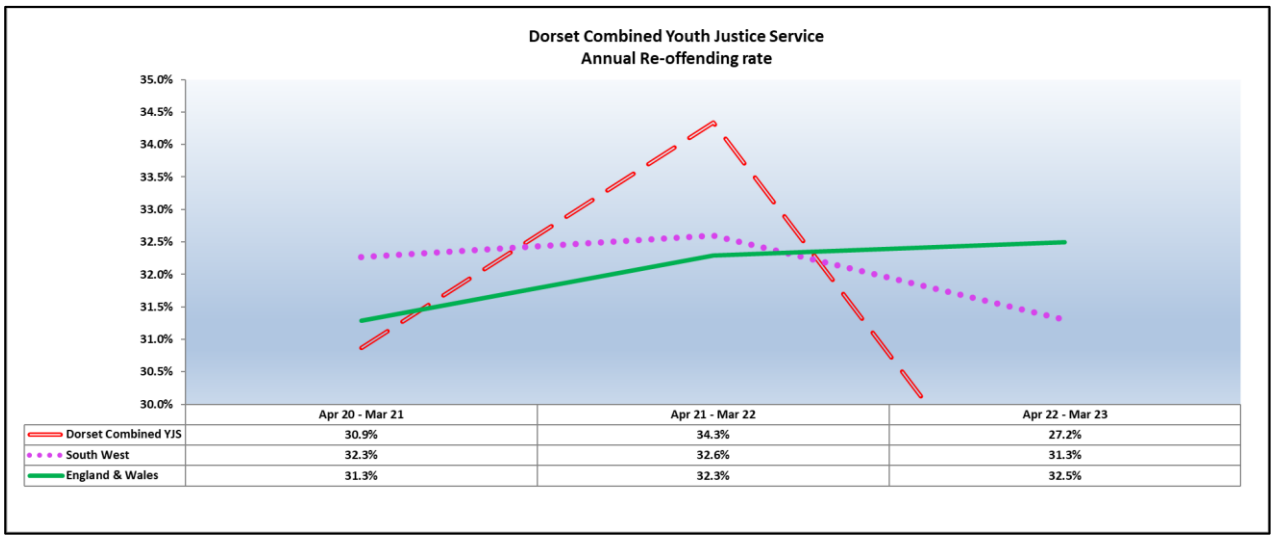


Rate of Proven Reoffending

National re-offending data is published in two formats: the 'binary' rate shows the proportion of children in the cohort who go on to be convicted for subsequent offences in the 12 months after their previous justice outcome; the 'frequency' rate shows the average number of offences per reoffender.

Reoffending data is necessarily delayed in order to allow time to see if the child is reconvicted and for that later outcome to be recorded. The following data therefore relates to children with whom the service worked up to March 2023.

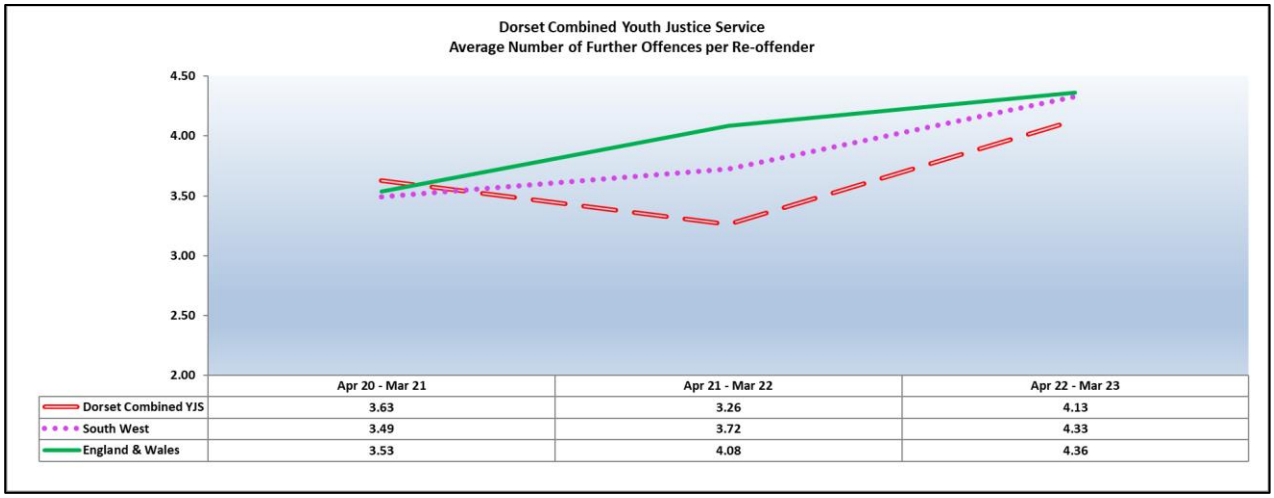
Reoffending rate (Reoffenders/Number in cohort)



	Apr 20 - Mar 21	Apr 21 - Mar 22	Apr 22 - Mar 23
Dorset Combined YJS	30.9%	34.3%	27.2%
South West	32.3%	32.6%	31.3%
England & Wales	31.3%	32.3%	32.5%

The binary reoffending rate for the most recent year, to March 2023, shows a significant reduction on previous years, with DCYJS performance exceeding the regional and national averages.

Reoffences/Reoffenders

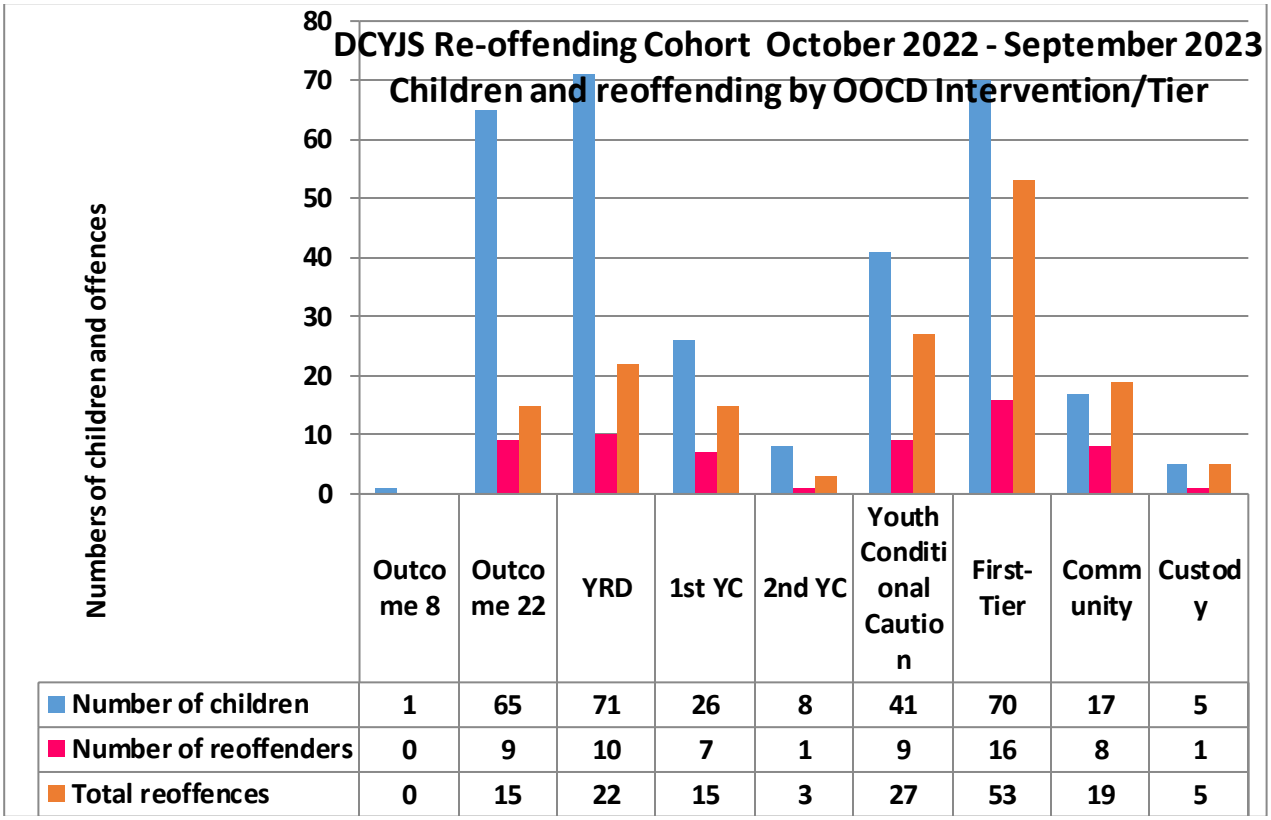


	Apr 20 - Mar 21	Apr 21 - Mar 22	Apr 22 - Mar 23
Dorset Combined YJS	3.63	3.26	4.13
South West	3.49	3.72	4.33
England & Wales	3.53	4.08	4.36

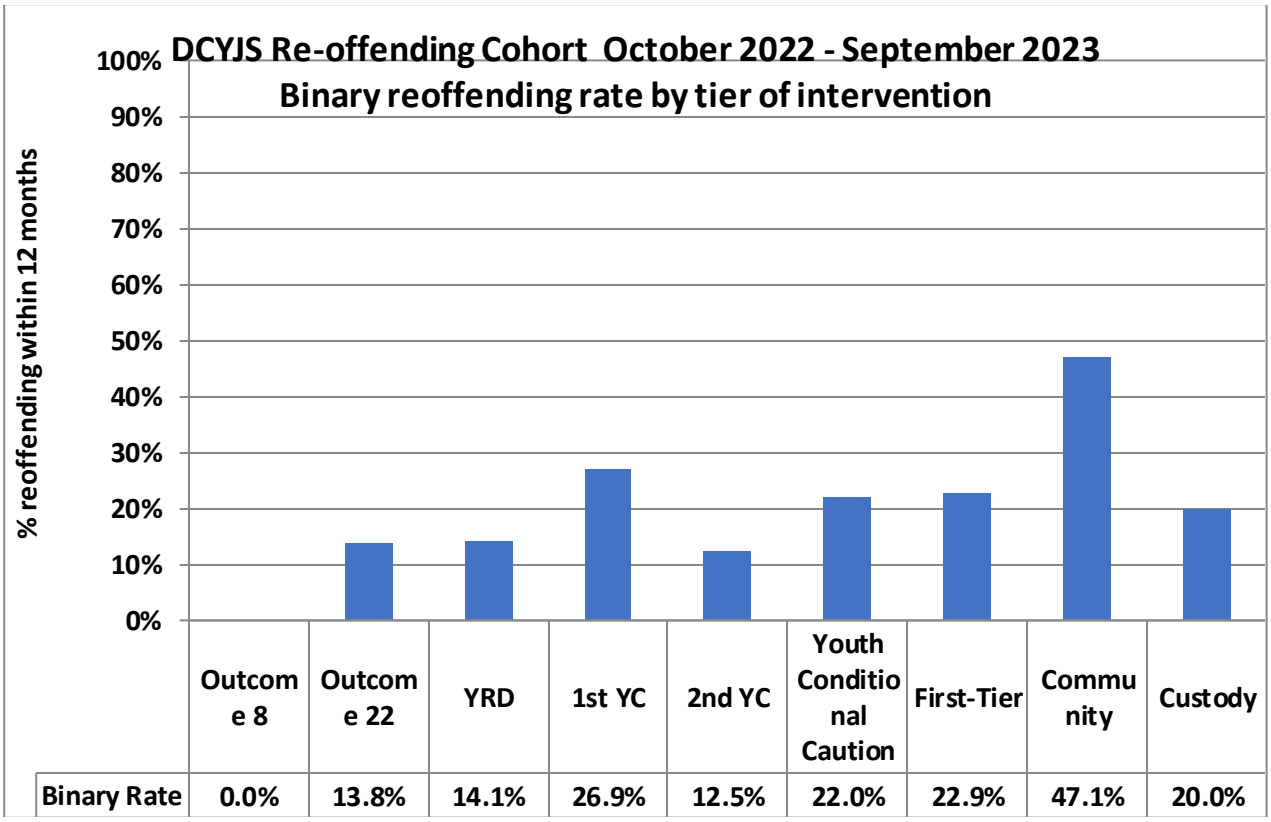
There has been an increase in the average number of offences per reoffender, but DCYJS has remained below the regional and national averages for this measure.

Local data, stored on the DCYJS case management system, can also be scrutinised to show information about reoffending. Our most recent analysis looked at children on the DCYJS caseload between October 2022 and September 2023, giving us a more detailed understanding of reoffending by local children

Analysis of reoffending by disposal type shows that informal, diversion options have the lowest rate of reoffending (nb 'Outcome 22' is a police recording code, showing that no further action was taken but the child received an intervention to prevent future offending; 'YRD' refers to a Youth Restorative Disposal, the local name for a Community Resolution, which is also known as Outcome 8). It should be noted, however, that diversion options may be more likely for children with a lower risk of reoffending.



	Outcome 8	Outcome 22	YRD	1st YC	2nd YC	Youth Conditional Caution	First-Tier	Community	Custody
Number of children	1	65	71	26	8	41	70	17	5
Number of reoffenders	0	9	10	7	1	9	16	8	1
Total reoffences	0	15	22	15	3	27	53	19	5



	Outcome 8	Outcome 22	YRD	1st YC	2nd YC	Youth Conditional Caution	First-Tier	Community	Custody
Binary Rate	0.0%	13.8%	14.1%	26.9%	12.5%	22.0%	22.9%	47.1%	20.0%

The local reoffending data also shows that:

- 15 and 16 year-olds are more likely to reoffend than other age groups.

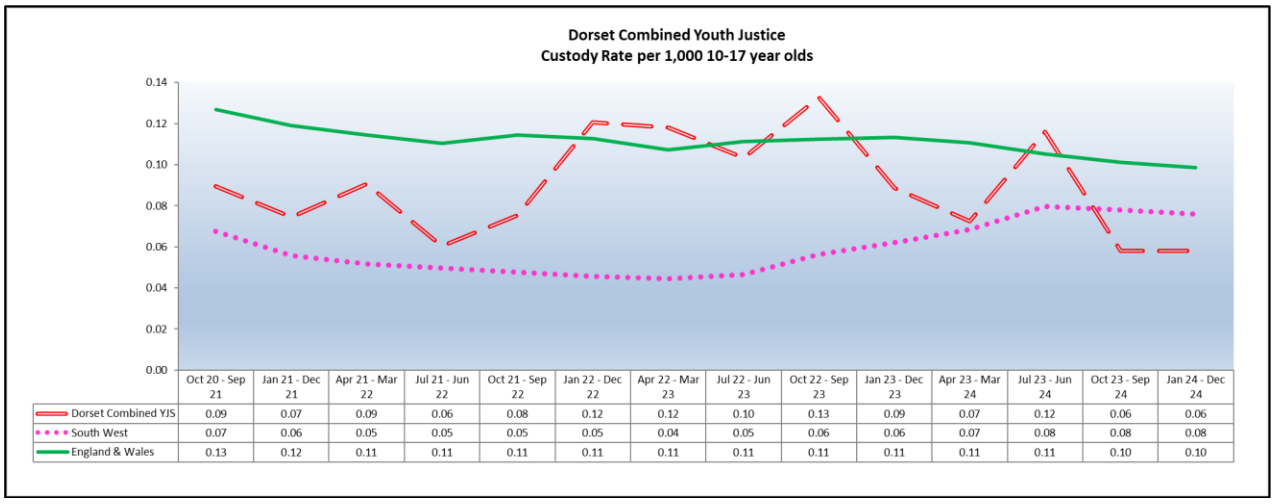
- Boys are more likely to reoffend than girls.
- Black and mixed heritage children show a higher reoffending rate than white children, but the numbers of black and mixed heritage children are low, meaning each child has a greater impact on the percentage rates.
- Children in the BCP Council area had a higher reoffending rate than children in the Dorset Council area.
- Children who were currently in care were more likely to reoffend than children who had never been in care.
- Children who committed burglary, robbery, thefts or vehicle thefts had higher rates of reoffending than children who committed other types of offence.
- 38% of reoffenders committed less serious further offences, 39% committed offences of the same seriousness and 23% committed more serious offences.

Analysis of local reoffending data helps the YJS to focus its work and to identify groups who may need additional attention.

Use of Custodial Sentences

DCYJS continues to see low numbers of children sentenced to custody.

The latest national data is copied below. The context of this data is a large reduction over recent years in the number of children in custody in England and Wales. This means that small changes in numbers can have a noticeable effect on the local and national rates.



	Oct 20 - Sep 21	Jan 21 - Dec 21	Apr 21 - Mar 22	Jul 21 - Jun 22	Oct 21 - Sep 22	Jan 22 - Dec 22	Apr 22 - Mar 23	Jul 22 - Jun 23	Oct 22 - Sep 23	Jan 23 - Dec 23	Apr 23 - Mar 24	Jul 23 - Jun 24	Oct 23 - Sep 24	Jan 24 - Dec 24
Dorset Combined YJS	0.09	0.07	0.09	0.06	0.08	0.12	0.12	0.10	0.13	0.09	0.07	0.12	0.06	0.06
South West	0.07	0.06	0.05	0.05	0.05	0.05	0.04	0.05	0.06	0.06	0.07	0.08	0.08	0.08
England & Wales	0.13	0.12	0.11	0.11	0.11	0.11	0.11	0.11	0.11	0.11	0.11	0.11	0.10	0.10

During the most recent period on the above chart, January 2024 – December 2024, a total of 6 children and young people received custodial sentences (4 from BCP Council, 2 from Dorset Council).

The trauma-informed approach to youth justice work encourages us to ask “what happened to you?” rather than “what’s wrong with you?”. In this context, it is interesting to look at some of the common experiences of these 6 children and young people.

One of these young people was not known to DCYJS. He entered a Not Guilty plea as a child but was tried, convicted and sentenced after he turned 18. We do not therefore hold information about his past experiences and needs.

Analysis of the other 5 children and young people who received custodial sentences in 2024 shows that:

- All 5 were male.
- 4 of the 5 defined their ethnicity as White British, one identifed as Mixed Heritage.
- At the time of sentence, 1 was aged 18, 2 were aged 17, and 2 were aged 16.
- All 5 were a Child in Care or a Care Experienced Young Person.
- All 5 had been identified as being at risk of harm from criminal exploitation. 4 of the 5 had been referred to the National Referral Mechanism (NRM), and the other was assessed as being at significant risk of extra-familial harm.
- All 5 were identifed as having Speech, Language and Communication Needs, following assessment by the DCYJS Speech and Language Therapist.
- All 5 had been permanently excluded from school.
- 4 out of 5 had an Education, Health and Care Plan.
- All 5 had had past contact with CAMHS, with a common experience of childhood trauma, and evidence of neurodiversity amongst some of these children.

The pattern of being a Child in Care, having experienced child exploitation, having been excluded from school, having speech, language and communication needs, and health needs related to past trauma and neurodiversity, shows the need for effective multi-agency working. DCYJS works closely with other children's services to provide community sentences which have the confidence of our local courts so that custodial sentences are only used as a last resort, for the most serious or persistent offending.

Section 6.1 of this document provides further analysis of the over-representation of Children in Care in the local youth justice system, and actions being taken.

New Youth Justice Key Performance Indicators

The Youth Justice Board introduced a new set of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) to be collected from April 2023. The following measures are reported:

- Accommodation – the percentage of children in suitable accommodation.
- Education, training and employment (ETE) – the percentage of children attending a suitable ETE arrangement.
- SEND – the percentage of children with SEND who are in suitable ETE with a current, formal learning plan in place.
- Mental healthcare and emotional wellbeing – the percentage of children identified as needing an intervention to improve their mental health or emotional wellbeing and the percentage being offered and attending interventions.
- Substance Use – the percentage of children identified as needing an intervention to address subtance misuse and the percentage being offered and attending interventions.
- Out of Court Disposals – the percentage of out of court disposals that are completed or not completed.
- Management Board attendance – the attendance of senior representatives from partner agencies and if partners contribute data from their services to identify ethnic and racial disproportionality.
- Wider services – the percentage of YJS children who are currently on an Early Help plan, on a Child Protection Plan, classified as a Child in Need or a Child in Care.
- Serious Violence – the rates of children convicted for a serious violence offence on the YJS caseload.
- Victims – the percentage of victims who consent to be contacted by the YJS; of those, the percentage who are engaged with about restorative justice opportunities, asked their views prior to out of court disposal decision-making and planning for statutory court orders, provided with information about the progress of the child's case (when requested) and provided with information on appropriate support services (when requested).

The new KPIs have required significant additional work to adapt recording systems and to adjust recording practices. The consistency, accuracy and usefulness of this data remains a work in progress. The YJB stated in March 2025 that the data collected nationally in 2023/24 and 2024/25 is 'low quality and cannot be used for analysis, reporting, and decision-making'. It is hoped that the extra activity associated with these additional measures will eventually prove to be useful.

4.3. Risks and issues

Like other youth justice services, DCYJS operates in a context of system challenges and resource pressures.

Current issues and future risks being faced by DCYJS include the following:

Issue/risk facing DCYJS	**Actions being taken in response**
Delays in the youth justice system, often arising from prolonged police investigations, make it harder to work effectively with children to prevent future offending and harder to provide timely support to victims and to engage them in Restorative Justice.	Monitoring instances of children released under investigation or on bail, to consider voluntary support options for the child during the investigation period. Work with Dorset Police and the CPS to prioritise, progress and resolve investigations for children on a case-by-case basis.
Funding and resources – real terms reductions since DCYJS was formed in 2015, no budget uplift to fund annual staff pay awards, uncertainty about future funding.	The combined service, working across two local authorities, provides resilience and savings of scale which has enabled the service to maintain high practice standards in the context of reducing resources. Some staffing reductions were required in 2024-25. Further reductions may be needed in 2025-26 if budgets remain frozen.
Permanent exclusions from school, and difficulties finding suitable alternative provision.	Re-Engage project to provide Speech and Language assessments and support to schools for children at risk of school exclusion before contact with the youth justice system.
Additional data recording and reporting requirements for the YJB KPIs and the Turnaround programme coinciding with a reduction in the YJS staffing resource for performance data.	Revisit staffing capacity for performance data, ensure efficient and accurate data recording procedures.
The YJS is likely to be required to vacate its current office premises in Bournemouth and its reparation/child contact premises in Dorchester during 2025. This could affect the work that can be done with children and the quality of joint work by team members.	YJS managers are seeking assurance from local authority facilities managers in BCP and Dorset that suitable alternative accommodation will be located.

5. PLANS FOR THE YEAR AHEAD

5.1. ‘Child First’ practice

DCYJS applies ‘Child First’ practice principles to underpin its work. The Child First approach is embedded in the YJB national guidance documents ‘Standards for Children in the Youth Justice System’ and ‘Case Management Guidance’. These documents direct the work of youth justice services.

The Child First approach is built on evidence demonstrating its effectiveness to prevent offending by children who are at risk of entering the justice system and to reduce offending by the small number of children who do enter the youth justice system. The research evidence is summarised in this document: https://www.lboro.ac.uk/subjects/social-policy-studies/research/child-first-justice/.

DCYJS supports these principles and promotes them in its own work and in its interactions with local partners in children’s services and the youth justice system.

The Child First approach has four tenets, listed below.

The ABCD of Child First practice	Examples of how DCYJS implements this in our work
As children: recognise how children are developmentally different from adults and require different support.	*DCYJS uses Speech and Language assessments and trauma formulations to help identify each child’s communication needs and developmental stage and the appropriate support for the child.*
Building pro-social identity: promote children’s individual strengths and capacities to develop a pro-social identity, focusing on positive child outcomes rather than just trying to manage offending.	*DCYJS work with Upton Country Park to provide the ‘Discover You’ project, aimed at building children’s skills, confidence and employability. Positive outcomes from the project include a child who has become a volunteer with Upton Country Park.* *A new Youth Justice Activities Coordinator joined us in February 2025 to develop our positive activities and build a stronger child voice into our service design and delivery.*
Collaborating with children: involve children meaningfully to encourage their investment, engagement and social inclusion.	*Children are actively involved in developing the plans for our work with them, as part of the DCYJS commitment to working restoratively. Case records are written ‘to the child’ to be more inclusive and to help shift the worker’s perspective. Training for the team is currently focusing on how to collaborate with children to agree their intervention plan.*
Diverting from stigma: promote supportive diversion from the criminal justice system where possible, or minimising stigma within it, as we know that stigma causes further offending	*The ‘Turnaround’ programme has helped us to embed the use of Outcome 22 to divert children from formal justice outcomes.* *YJS Speech and Language assessments are written on Dorset HealthCare documentation, without reference to the YJS, to avoid stigmatising the child.*

Appraisals objectives for YJS practitioners and managers for 2025/26 were structured around the four tenets of Child First practice, to help embed these principles in our day-to-day work.

The strategic priorities in the DCYJS Youth Justice Plan for 2025/26 are aligned with the Child First principles, reflecting work to strengthen the local implementation of the four tenets of Child First practice.

Voice of the child

DCYJS works collaboratively with children to hear their voice during their contact with our service. Case records are addressed to the child and quote their words, to ensure the child's voice is prominent.

The team's Speech and Language Therapists complete assessments so that we can adapt our work to each child's communication needs. The Speech and Language Therapists also provide advice to colleagues in the YJS about how to work with each child. The following example illustrates how this can work in practice:

A YJS case manager had been struggling to engage a child who has communication needs. The case manager asked the Speech and Language Therapist for suggestions about alternative ways of working with the child. They agreed to try a session with a video clip and a cartooning exercise, to shift from language-based interventions to something more visual. The new approach was successful, as shown in this extract from the child's case record:

You watched a TikTok video of an incident where two men were arguing and one man goes to grab a bottle, the video cuts off before the you see the bottle being used. Your mum was present and consented to you watching the video. You drew a comic strip of the video and spoke about the behaviour, why it happened, what was happening, body language and what you think the consequences were of the behaviour.

You engaged well in this session, you previously were not talking to me nor were you showing an interest in the work we were doing, however, this particular style of work seemed to help you engage you in the session, you asked questions and actively took part drawing the comic strip, rewatching the video to make sure you were remembering it correctly and when I said that we were finished, you were surprised. It is positive you took such an active role in your session, you appeared to enjoy this and wanted all your sessions to be like this.

Another child had struggled to express how they experience life as someone with autism. Their case manager asked them to write about it, encouraging them to have confidence in expressing themselves. The child produced a striking and insightful description of their perspective which they read out to their parents and the case manager. Their account was subsequently edited to create this poem:

I'm Paradoxical

Autism is like a lonely boat at sea, navigating on its own;
Autism faces challenges in social interactions,
Communication, and sensory processing.
Daily routines can be demanding,
and sensitivity to sensory stimuli may lead to overwhelming experiences.

ADHD is depressing,
it's a mix of everything.
You will fit in everywhere, but nowhere.
You are extremely arrogant, but very much aware of your own faults

Capable of everything, yet not motivated to do a thing
Witty and charismatic, but have a low tolerance for BS people.
Great with advice but follow none of it.
You're most likely a genius but have trouble handling your emotions.

You are an extrovert, who needs a lot of personal space.
You love being different but hate being misunderstood.
Have brilliant ideas, but lack the patience to follow through with them.
You have more interests than anyone you know, but will get bored of every one of them.
You easily understand the thoughts of others, but find it hard to translate your own.

Surprisingly compassionate, but seemingly very cold.
We make it look fun, but it's really not.
People judge me before knowing me
My disabilities are hidden
so people just think I'm acting that way
which makes me more angry.

I'm paradoxical,
I like to be happy
But I think about sad things all the time
I don't really like myself
But I love the person I have become
I say I don't care
But I care too much - Deep into my bones

I crave attention
Yet, I reject everything that comes my way
I healed people
But I broke my own heart trying to fix them
I love to listen
But never tell them what's inside me.

Autism is part of who I am,
not a barrier to who I can become.
I may be as mysterious as the ocean,
but within the depths of my mind,
waves of brilliance and success
continuously ebb and flow.

As well as hearing the child's voice in the team's day to day practice, there are also processes in place to gather the views of children and other service users about their experience of the service's work.

Spontaneous comments from service users about their experience of our service are recorded and analysed, using a data report from our case management system.

Examples of recent comments from service users include:

Working with C is really helpful and I feel like a weight has been lifted.

We have talked about quite a lot, I really like J. She just listens, sometimes when I have had workers before it feels like a job, with J I feel like she actually cares. She calls me to check in on me and she keeps my mum updated too.

It has been really eye-opening. My original thought was that social services was a bad thing but it has changed my view because it has been supportive. It has been good for her because her worker is an open-minded person and has not judged her. It has been relaxed and here to help her rather than to make her feel bad

I met with you at your panel meeting today, thank you for allowing me to attend, it was good to put a face to your name. You told me that the style of your panel suited you and you felt comfortable with panel members being in the room and you coming in with your parents. You also said that the panel members asked if you would like to write your contract, you said they could but you told them what to write. This is good to hear that your voice has been captured. You and your parents told me that L has been great with you. She has helped you to understand the process, helped you to think about the impact your behaviour had on the victim and your parents too. You said that you liked L and you trusted her.

Each year the YJS undertakes a case audit on a priority area of YJS work. In 2024 the audit focused on our work with girls. As part of the audit, we talked with some of the children and parents in the audit sample.

One of the themes to emerge from the audit was the impact of delays in the justice system. One girl commented that:

Work with YJS was good, but it would have been more helpful before when I actually needed it. I had already made loads of changes myself. The gap was too long, it was two years between the offence and the matter going to court.

5.2. Resources and Services

The funding contributions to the DCYJS partnership budget are listed in Appendix Two, showing the figures for 2024/25. Indicative budget contributions for 2025/26 from local partners have been agreed. Local authority contributions will remain frozen at the 2022/23 levels, with no uplift to meet the cost of annual pay awards. The Youth Justice Grant allocation for DCYJS in 2025/26 has not yet been announced, although the YJB shared information in late March 2025 to indicate that the national Youth Justice Grant will be increased by 1.46%.

All local authority staff in DCYJS are employed by Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole Council. Other DCYJS staff are employed by Dorset Police, the Probation Service (Dorset) and Dorset HealthCare University NHS Foundation Trust. A DCYJS Structure Chart is included in Appendix One, showing the posts provided through our partnership resources. DCYJS has a strong multi-agency and multi-disciplinary identity, meeting the staffing requirements of the Crime and Disorder Act (1998).

Like all public services, DCYJS operates in a context of reducing resources. Ensuring value for money and making best use of resources is a high priority for the service. The combined

partnership, working across Dorset's local authorities since 2015, has enabled the service to maintain high practice standards while managing real terms budget reductions over that period.

During 2024/25 short-term funding was also provided through the Ministry of Justice Turnaround programme, to enable additional work with children on the cusp of the youth justice system. Funding was also received from the Home Office Immediate Justice pilot scheme, to augment work with children who received Out of Court Disposals for offences which caused harm to local communities. The Ministry of Justice has announced that funding will be provided in 2025/26 to continue Turnaround work, albeit the funding has been reduced from £182,595 in 2024/25 to £123,184 in 2025/26.

The Youth Justice Board Grant is paid subject to terms and conditions relating to its use. The Grant supports the front-line delivery of essential youth justice services for children. The Grant may only be used towards the achievement of the following outcomes:

- Reduce the number of children in the youth justice system;
- Reduce reoffending by children in the youth justice system;
- Improve the safety and wellbeing of children in the youth justice system; and
- Improve outcomes for children in the youth justice system.

The conditions of the Grant also refer to the services that must be provided and the duty to comply with data reporting requirements.

The Youth Justice Grant contributes to the Partnership's resources for employing practitioners who work with children to prevent and reduce offending and to keep children and other members of the community safe from harm. Resources from the Youth Justice Grant are also used to provide restorative justice and reparative activities, to promote pro-social activities for children building on their strengths and to improve the education, training and employment opportunities of young people in the local youth justice system. The Youth Justice Grant contributes to the performance achievements described in section 4.2, reducing the number of children entering the justice system, reducing reoffending by those who do enter the justice system, and maintaining low numbers of children being sentenced to custody.

In addition to the service outcomes listed above, the Youth Justice Grant and other Partnership resources are used to achieve the strategic priorities set out later in this Plan. Progress against those priorities is reported to the DCYJS Partnership Board, with oversight also provided by the relevant scrutiny committees of the two local authorities.

5.3. YJS Partnership Board Development

HMI Probation's Joint Inspection of Dorset Combined Youth Justice Service was published in January 2023. The inspection included scrutiny of the Board's work. The inspection report rated the service's Governance and Leadership as 'Good'.

HMI Probation also met with members of the DCYJS Partnership Board in February 2025 as part of their thematic inspection of work with children on Out of Court Disposals. Inspectors identified a strategic commitment to diverting children from the justice system wherever possible.

The YJS Partnership Board has an established cycle of performance review, strategic oversight and forward planning. During the past year, the Board's activities have included scrutiny of the local use of stop-search and strip-search of children, decisions on the future delivery of diversion activities after the initial Turnaround programme, and action to address the over-representation of Children in Care in our youth justice system.

The YJS Partnership Board's plans for 2025-26 include increased oversight of our work with victims, to ensure we are compliant with the new youth justice inspection criteria.

5.4. Workforce Development

The YJS is committed to good practice, using staff supervision, peer support, team workshops and external training courses to develop the skills, knowledge and confidence of our workers. Informal feedback from HMI Probation, after their recent inspection of our work with children on Out of Court Disposals, noted that *"Staff are highly motivated and build strong relationships with children and families, as reflected in the feedback received from children, parents, and carers. YJS staff are skilled, knowledgeable, and feel well supported. There is a strong capacity for reflection at all levels of the service."*

The DCYJS Workforce Development Policy identifies core training for different roles in the team. As well as refresher training in child safeguarding, extra-familial harm and information governance, team members are also trained in Motivational Interviewing, AIM3 Harmful Sexual Behaviour assessments and Restorative Justice with complex and sensitive cases.

Team members will continue to attend training and development activities in these approaches in 2025/26. A Motivational Interviewing Development Group was established in 2024, facilitated by an expert external trainer. This will continue in 2025/26.

The team's work with children showing Harmful Sexual Behaviour is supported by a quarterly YJS HSB Practitioner's Group, which sometimes includes contributions from external speakers.

During 2024/25 a quarterly YJS Weapons Offences Practitioner's Group was established. This initiative derived partly from a YJS multi-agency case audit in 2023 of our work with children who have committed offences involving weapons.

The YJB mandated the use, from April 2024, of the 'Prevention and Diversion' assessment tool for children receiving Out of Court Disposals. The YJS has held workshops with line managers and case managers throughout 2024/25 to support the implementation of this new assessment tool. This gave us an opportunity to embed Child First principles in working collaboratively with children during the assessment and planning phase.

Volunteers play an important role in the work of the YJS, especially as Referral Order community panel members. We appreciate their engagement during 2024/25 in several training sessions aimed at aligning our Referral Order panel meetings with Child First practice.

In addition to the core training courses, the service's development plans for 2025/26 require staff training in the following areas:

- Prevention and Diversion Assessment tool – improve the plans that are devised with children, with a focus on collaborative planning and exit planning.
- Harmful Sexual Behaviour – train the team's HSB workers in 'Techology-Assisted Harmful Sexual Behaviour'; commission an external consultant to run a session with the team's HSB workers on working with denial.
- Revise the training for new volunteers to emphasise Child First practice.

DCYJS also supports individual career progression plans for team members. Plans for 2025/26 include:

- a Youth Justice Worker continuing with his social work qualification through the Social Work Apprenticeship with BCP Council and Solent University.
- a Youth Justice Worker studying for the Level 5 Youth Justice Practitioner Apprenticeship.
- a Youth Justice Officer working towards her Practice Educator qualification.

DCYJS also hosts student placements for students studying for social work qualifications and for trainee Speech and Language Therapists.

5.5. Evidence-based practice, innovation and evaluation

Evidence shows that the key determinant for positive change is a pro-social relationship with a trusted adult The primary focus for effective practice in DCYJS is therefore the quality of workers' relationships with children, alongside positive relationships within the team and with other professionals. The approach also builds on previous feedback from young people on the DCYJS caseload about what was most important to them in their experience of the service. The whole service training in 'Working Restoratively' in January 2024 was aimed at supporting this key aspect of our evidence-based work.

Employment and training support for 16-17 year-olds

The service has continued to focus on improving young people's employment and training prospects.

DCYJS partners with Upton Country Park to provide the 'Discover You' project. The project aims to improve young people's self-esteem, practical skills and employability, to increase their chances of accessing employment and training.

21 young people attended the project between September 2024 and March 2025. Some of the positive outcomes for these young people included:

- Access to online learning within different subject areas e.g. Food Hygiene, First Aid, Health & Safety in the workplace, Manual Handling, Customer Service, Fire Safety and Barista Training.
- AQA Certificated Learning –most young people complete around 5-10 awards, depending on how long they attend and what they engage in. Awards include Team Building, Employment and Training, Practical Tasks, Communication Skills.
- Work Experience options around Upton Country Park within the Welcome Centre and Café.
- Conservation Volunteering Activities – Working with the Ranger onsite to complete practical activities around the site like planting trees, taking out hedgerows, coppicing, painting, creating woodwork items, putting stag beetle loggery (different things available at different times of the year).
- Team Building – different opportunities like den building and orienteering.
- Life skills – budgeting/managing money, dealing with bills, communication skills.
- ETE and Careers – Careers Information Advice and Guidance – Career Action Planning, CV work, Applications for College and Jobs, Interview Skills.
- Other Support towards qualifications - CSCS Practice, Maths and English Assessments, and working towards exam readiness..
- Completing practical tasks for Upton Country Park, e.g. animal habitat, bird feeders, designing and building play resources for school/nursery groups, redesigning a bird screen and creating art work and bird facts to go on the completed bird screen.
- Raising money for charity by making items to sell at Upton Country Park, eg Halloween items, Christmas items, nature-themed items and outdoor objects such as planters, bird boxes, bug hotels, bird feeders.
- Development into mentoring opportunities for young people who continue to volunteer at Upton Country Park after attending the Discover You project.

The Discover You project received Lottery Heritage funding until March 2024. Other funding was used in 2024/25, including a contribution from the Immediate Justice pilot scheme. We are seeking funding to continue and develop the project in 2025/26.

Animal Habitat built by children on the Discover You project

The Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner also continued to provide funding for young people to work with training providers to gain their 'CSCS' card to increase their chances of work in the construction sector.

Early identification of speech and language needs for children at risk of school exclusion

Our local Youth Justice Partnership's strategic priorities include reducing school exclusions, to prevent offending, and meeting the speech, language and communication needs of children who may enter the youth justice system. The DCYJS Partnership Board allocated funding for a two-year project, known as 'Re-Engage', to identify and support the speech, language and communication needs of children at risk of school exclusion.

The Re-Engage project commenced in summer 2024, working with schools to focus on children in Key Stage 3 who are at risk of permanent exclusion and whose behaviour indicates a risk of future offending. The project is staffed by a Speech and Language Therapist and a Speech and

Language Associate Practitioner. Their roles are to assess the communication needs of children who are at risk of school exclusion and to support schools to respond to the child's specific needs. Training sessions are also offered to schools as part of their staff development.

At the end of February 2025, halfway through the school year, 50 children had been referred to the project, from 18 schools across the Dorset and BCP Council areas. Assessments had been completed for 30 children. The results showed that 76% of these children had communication needs which had not previously been identified. 33% of the assessments indicated that the child had significant communication needs, with a diagnosis of Developmental Language Disorder.

Evaluation of the project will include 'before and after' data on the child's attendance, behaviour incidents and exclusions, as well as feedback from schools, children and parents/carers.

5.6. Standards for work with children in the youth justice system

All Youth Justice Services are required to comply with the Youth Justice Board's 'Standards for work with children in the youth justice system' (2019). The Youth Justice Board oversees a programme of self-assessments to monitor compliance.

The last YJB self-assessment exercise took place in 2023, when all services were directed to audit their work under 'Standard 2: Work in Court'. The YJB provided an audit tool, comprising 22 questions. The DCYJS self-assessment rated our work in court as Good, with most of the audit questions being rated Good or Outstanding.

The positive outcome from our audit of court work reflects the strong partnership between DCYJS and our local youth courts. The chair of the Dorset Magistrates Youth Panel sits on the DCYJS Partnership Board, enabling other partners to hear the views of magistrates.

The YJB did not require Youth Justice Services to complete a National Standards audit in 2024/25 and has stated that there will also be no requirement for a National Standards audit in 2025/26.

5.7. Response to inspections, reviews and audits.

Inspection reports, learning reviews and case audits all contribute to our service planning.

The most recent full inspection of our service was published in January 2023, rating the service as 'Good'. The inspectors made 6 recommendations, which were followed up through an action plan, overseen by the YJS Partnership Board. Actions have been completed for all of the recommendations.

Dorset Police and DCYJS were jointly inspected in February 2025 as part of a national thematic inspection of work with children on Out of Court Disposals. This thematic inspection is being conducted by HMI Probation and HMI Constabulary, Fire and Rescue Services. The report will be published in summer 2025. Informal feedback from the inspectorates after our inspection visit recognised strong partnership working between Dorset Police and DCYJS. The inspectorates identified examples of good practice in our work and gave us some helpful advice on areas for development which will be included in our plans for 2025/26.

In September 2024, HMI Probation published a national thematic report, 'The quality of services delivered to young adults in the Probation Service'. Although this report focused on the work of the Probation Service, there was some consideration of transition arrangements from youth justice to Probation. One of the report recommendations was for HM Prison and Probation

Service to “ensure that any barriers to staff requesting or accessing information from partner agencies, including youth justice services, are addressed”. Locally, DCYJS and the Probation Service in Dorset put steps in place, in 2023, to support Probation Officers to request relevant information from DCYJS when working with a young adult who was previously known to the YJS.

DCYJS contributed to a Child Safeguarding Practice Review in Dorset, relating to the accidental death of a child on a railway line, which was published in May 2024. Learning from this review was identified and actioned in 2023.

There have been no new local Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews (CSPRs) involving the YJS in the past year. A local multi-agency learning review took place in BCP Council in 2024 relating to a 20 year-old care experienced young person who took her own life, in the context of domestic abuse. A Domestic Homicide Review is also being completed. This young person had been known to DCYJS before she turned 18. No changes to YJS practice have been identified in these reviews.

YJS learning from local CSPRs and multi-agency learning reviews is included in the team’s development plans, and is reported annually to the YJS Partnership Board.

DCYJS undertakes thematic case audits, linked to the service’s priorities. The focus in 2024 was on our work with girls. Areas for improvement in our practice arising from this audit included work with boys on healthy, safe behaviour in relationships, and work with girls and boys to help them explore their online identity and activity. The theme for our case audit in 2025 has not yet been confirmed but is likely to link to our work on the over-representation og Children in Care.

6. Local and National Priorities for 2025/26

This section of the Plan reviews issues of local and national priority for youth justice which contribute to our service priorities for 2025/26.

6.1. Over-representation

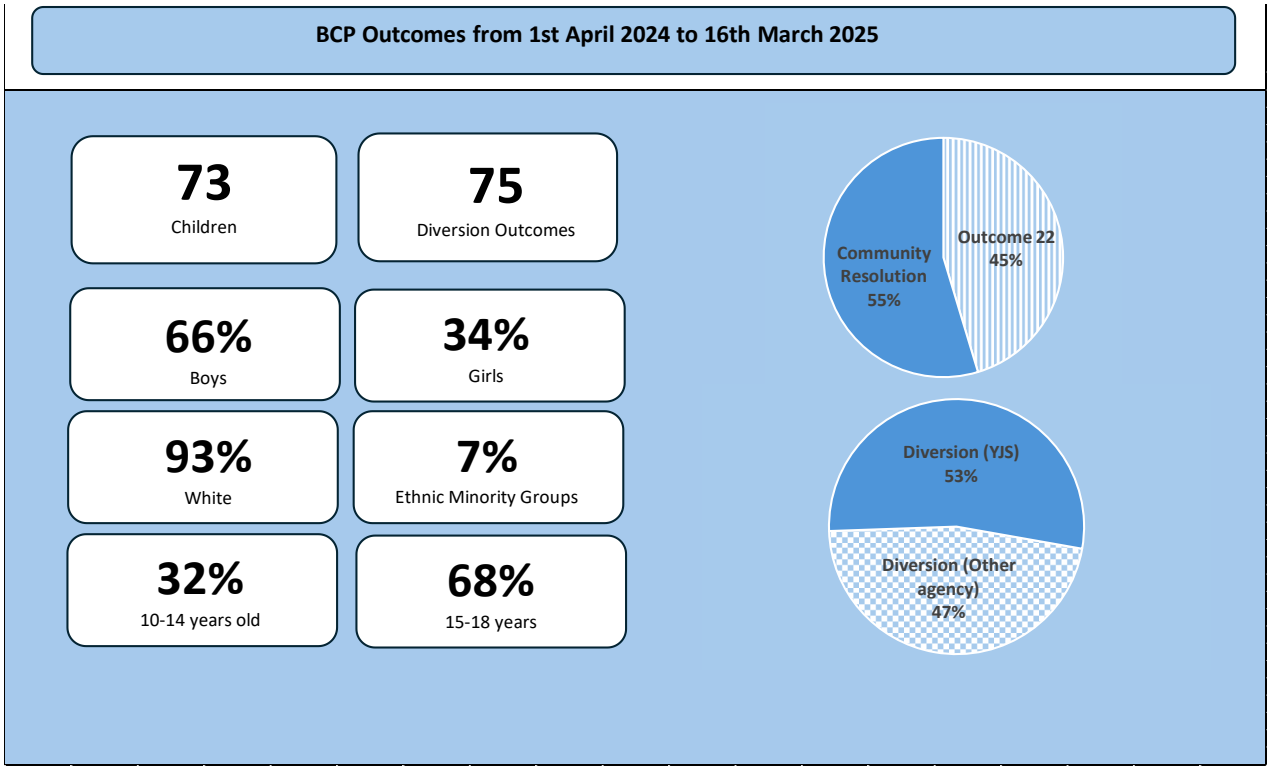
National data shows that some groups of children, such as those with diverse ethnic heritage, children in care and children with Special Educational Needs are over-represented in the youth justice system. DCYJS monitors caseload information for children from minority and disadvantaged groups.

Ethnic Disparity

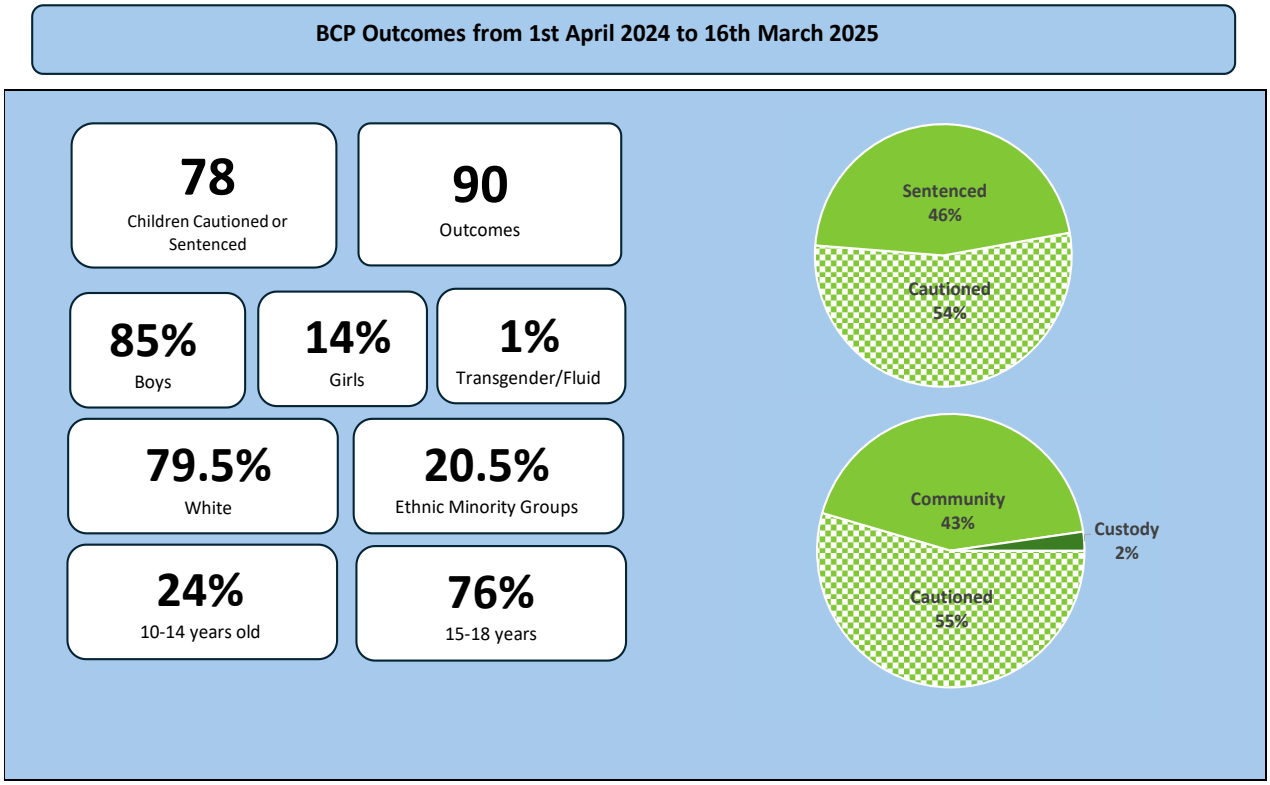
Data from the January 2024 School Census shows that 15.9% of 10-17 year-olds at schools in the BCP Council area identify as not having a white ethnicity. The equivalent figure for schools in the Dorset Council area is 5.6%. This data helps us compare the rate of children on our caseload from different ethnicities with proportions in the local population.

The following charts provide information about the children in the youth justice system in each local authority, separating them by children who were diverted and children who were cautioned or sentenced.

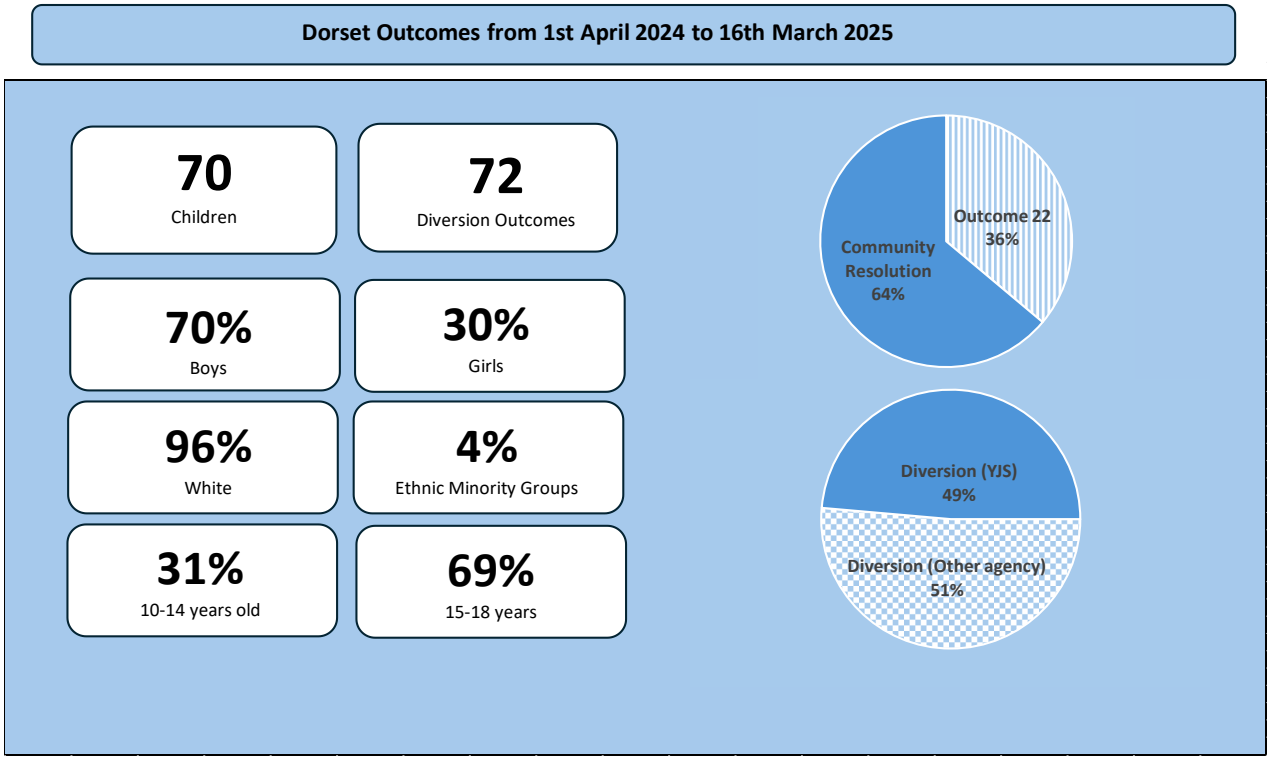
BCP Council children who were diverted from the justice system in 2024/25



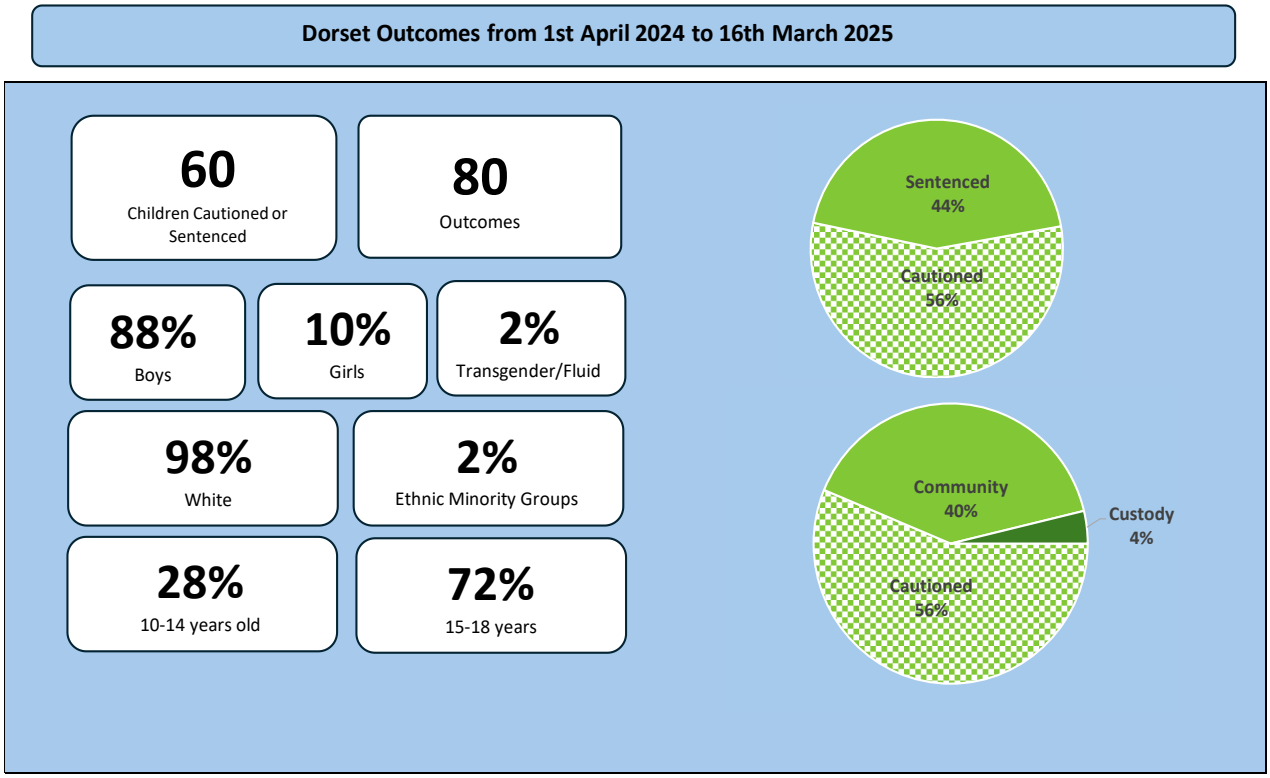
BCP Council children who were cautioned or sentenced in 2024/25



Dorset Council children who were diverted from the justice system in 2024/25



Dorset Council children who were cautioned or sentenced in 2024/25

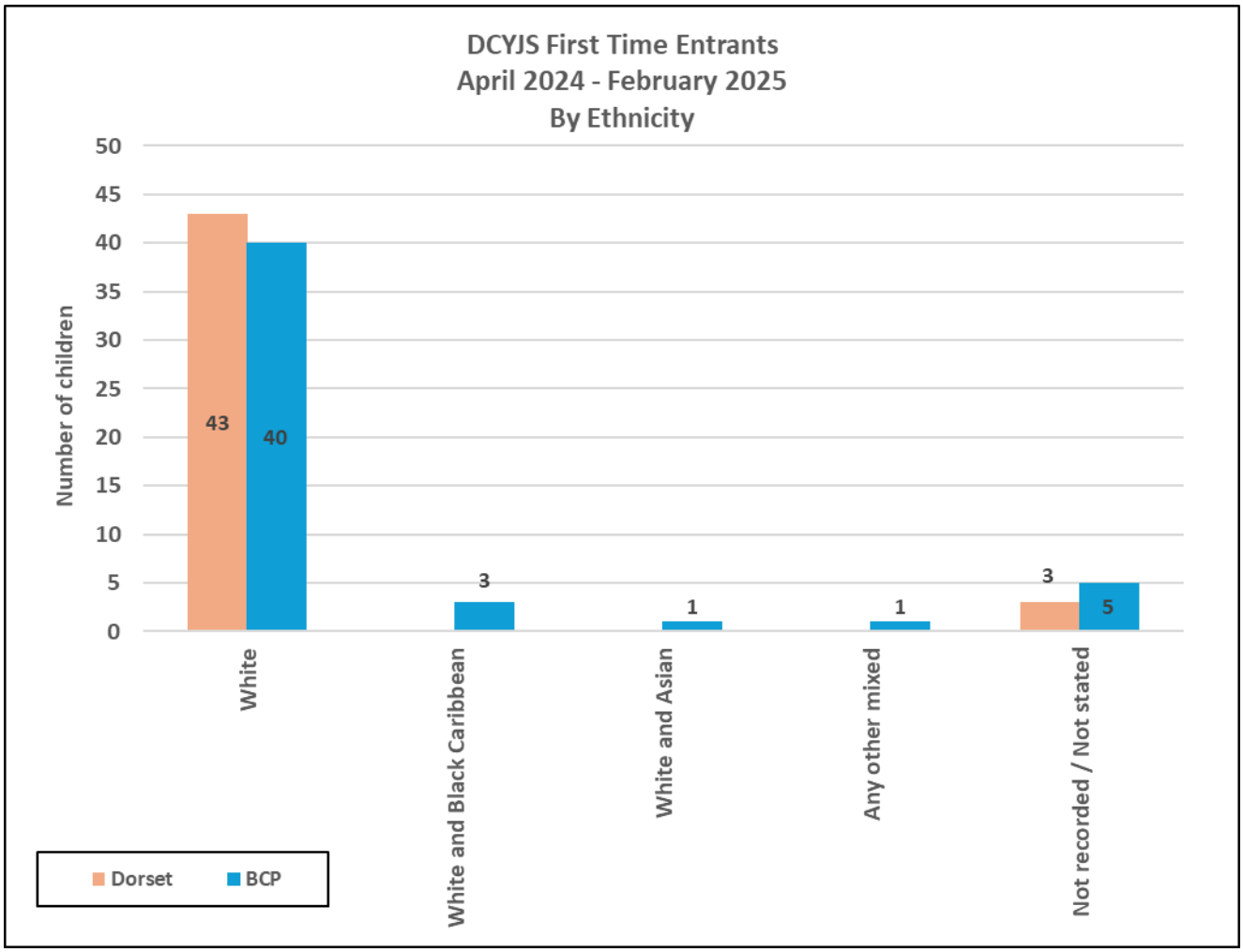


Comparison of these charts shows that:

- There is a notably higher proportion of girls among the children diverted from the justice system compared to the proportion of girls in the groups who were cautioned or sentenced.
- The proportion of children with non-white ethnicity is lower among the children who were diverted than among the children who were cautioned or sentenced.

- Children who do not identify as white are not over-represented in Dorset, or among children in BCP who are diverted, but they are over-represented among children sentenced or cautioned in BCP.
- In both local authorities, there is a higher proportion of younger children among those who were diverted.

Last year's Youth Justice Plan noted that we had not seen over-representation of minority ethnicities among children entering the justice system. This has remained the case in 2024-25 for the overall area, as shown in the following chart:



The explanation for no ethnicity being recorded for 8 of the total 96 first-time entrants is that some children are fined or discharged at court, for offences such as motoring, and have no contact with DCYJS.

43 of the 46 first-time entrants in Dorset defined themselves as having white ethnicity. The other 3 have no ethnicity recorded.

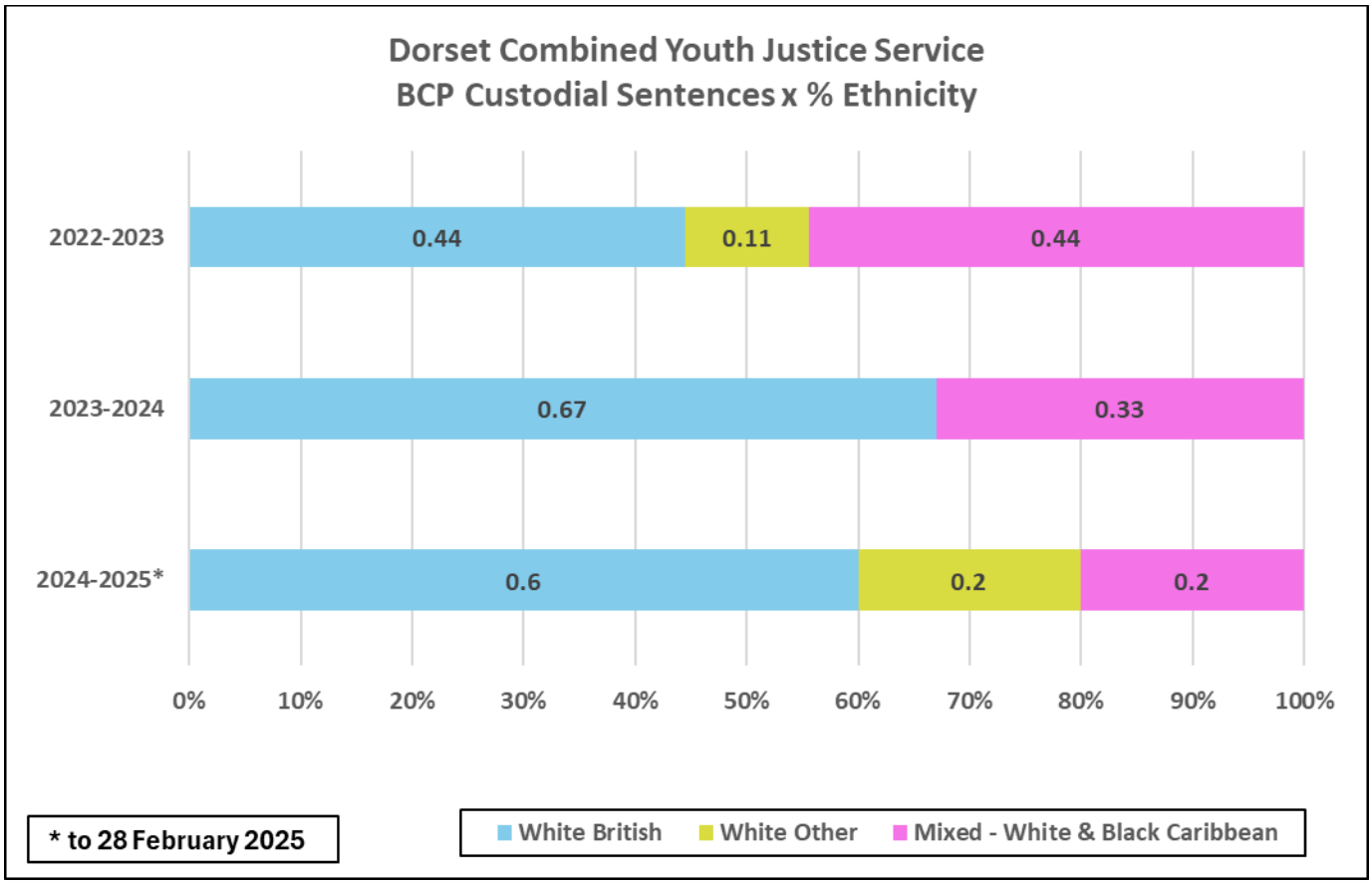
5 out of 50 first-time entrants in BCP did not define themselves as having white ethnicity. At 10%, this is below the School Census rate of 15.9%.

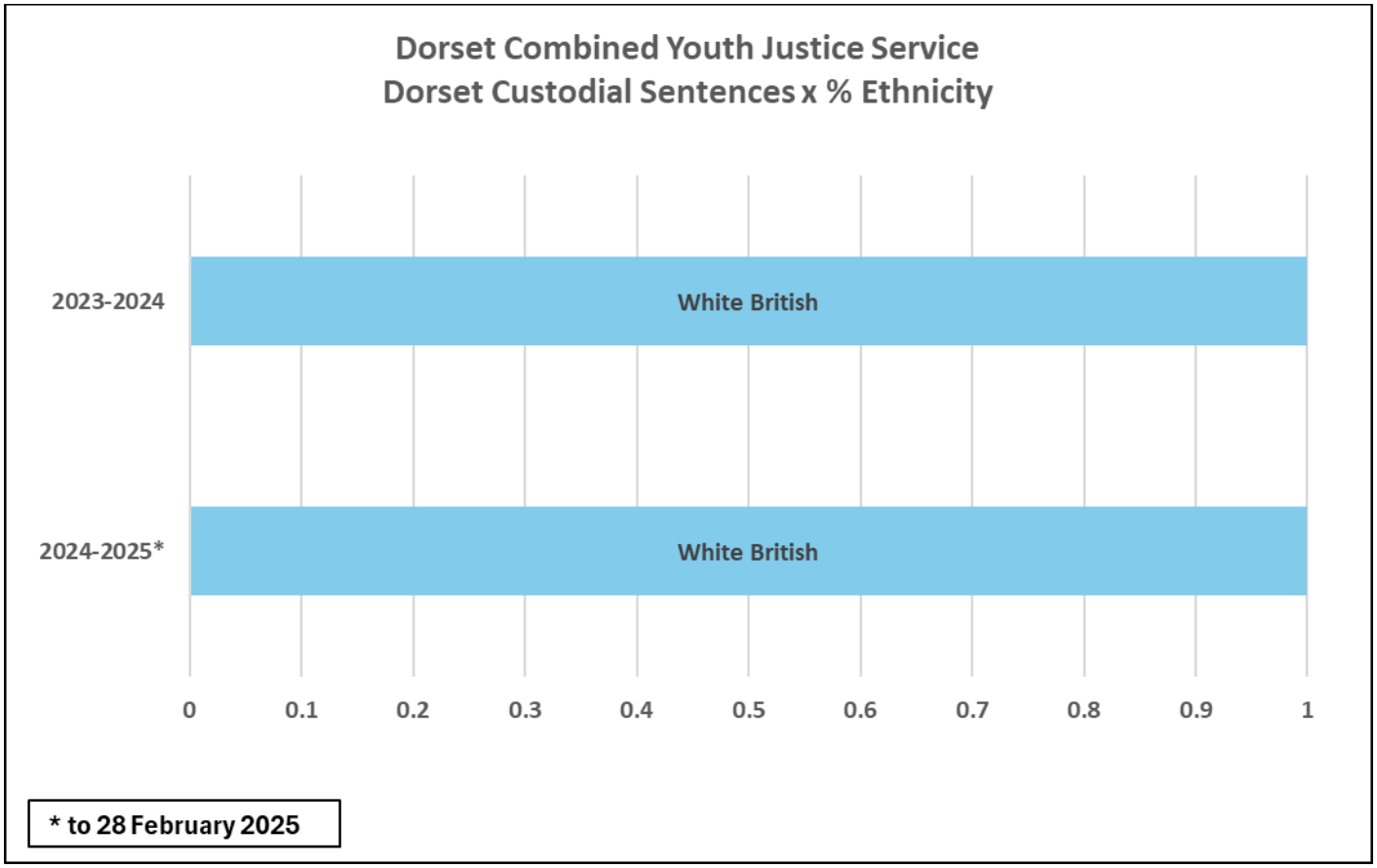
Although we do not see over-representation among first-time entrants, we also track how far children 'progress' into the youth justice system.

The charts showing the numbers of children cautioned or sentenced in 2024/25 indicate that children from ethnic minority groups in the BCP Council area are over-represented amongst

those receiving a caution or court order. More analysis is needed to understand the reasons for this over-representation, noting that DCYJS and Dorset Police also work with Dorset Council children, where children from ethnic minority groups are not over-represented.

At a national level there are enduring concerns about the over-representation of Black and mixed heritage boys amongst children in custody. Low numbers of local children being sentenced to custody make it hard to analyse data based on percentages. The following charts show custodial sentences by ethnicity in each local authority in recent years.





Amongst the BCP Council children who have been sentenced to custody, there has been previous evidence of over-representation of children who do not identify as white, although this has been reducing in recent years.

In summary, there is a nuanced and varied picture locally for over-representation by ethnicity. Overall, local children from global majority ethnicities are not more likely to be criminalised and are not over-represented. There are some subtleties to the data though, such as how children from different groups progress through the justice system, which require further attention.

Gender

We also monitor the gender breakdown of our caseload and the distribution by gender at different stages of the youth justice system. There tends to be a higher proportion of girls among children who are diverted from a formal outcome, with lower proportions of girls amongst those who receive a community or custodial sentence.

At a national and local level there is evidence that boys are significantly over-represented among children in custody. Locally, no girls have been remanded or sentenced to custody in the past 8 years.

The proportion of girls on the DCYJS caseload fluctuates but usually stays within a range of about 15%-20% of the total caseload, consistent with national rates. Girls accounted for 17% of our First Time Entrants in 2024/25, the same percentage as in 2023/24.

It is recognised that girls can have different needs and experiences from boys, requiring differentiated responses from YJS workers. Worker allocation decisions are taken carefully to be sensitive to each girl's needs. During 2024-25 a thematic case audit was undertaken to review our work with girls and to identify areas for improvement, as mentioned in section 5.7.

Children in Care

Local data shows that Children in Care are over-represented in our youth justice system. Analysis commissioned by the YJS Partnership Board for its meeting in October 2024 included the following observations and findings:

- In the previous 2.5 years, approximately 11% of children on the YJS caseload were or had been Children in Care.
- 13.75% of 'First-Time Entrants' over that period were Children in Care.
- The proportion of Children in Care on the YJS caseload between April 2024 and September 2024 was higher amongst children who had received court orders (29.6%), compared to children who had received a Youth Caution or Youth Conditional Caution (14%) and children who had received a diversion outcome (7%).
- 'Violence against the person' offences were more common for Children in Care than for children who had never been in care.
- There were 20 Children in Care on the DCYJS caseload in September 2024. All 20 were born male and identified as male.
- 15 of the 20 had been placed out of their home area at some point.
- 20 out of 20 had experienced school exclusions and multiple education placements.
- 15 out of 20 had an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP).
- 20 out of 20 had had contact with CAMHS and/or paediatric services, though these services struggled to sustain their engagement with the child.
- 5 out of 20 had significant physical health conditions or injuries.
- 19 out of 20 were reported as using drugs and/or alcohol. The average age of first use of cannabis was 11 in BCP and 12 in Dorset.
- 14 out of 20 had been assessed as being at risk of experiencing Extra-Familial Harm.

The YJS Partnership Board has requested actions in response to these findings, to look for opportunities for earlier intervention with Children in Care who are at risk of entering the justice system and to review the effectiveness of current multi-agency work with Children in Care who are known to the YJS. A multi-agency 'task and finish' group is working on these issues. This activity will be one of the YJS Partnership's priorities for 2025/26.

SEND

DCYJS caseload information shows that children in the local youth justice system are likely to have Special Educational Needs and Disabilities. In February 2025, 24.6% of school-age children on the caseload had an Education, Health and Care Plan and a further 10.8% had the status of 'SEN Support'. This means that 35% of school-age children were identified as having Special Educational Needs and Disabilities, compared to about 20% in the local populations for their age group. It should be noted that the YJS was still collecting SEND information for some of these children, and there are others who are likely to have unidentified needs, meaning that the figure of 35% is probably an under-estimate of the level of SEND. These concerns fit with evidence collected by the DCYJS Speech and Language Therapists, showing high levels of communication needs amongst children in our local youth justice system and indicating the need for YJS workers to adapt their work to the needs of each child.

6.2. Prevention

The rate of children entering the justice system is influenced by the effectiveness of local prevention and diversion activities. 'Prevention' refers to work with children who have been identified as being at risk of going on to commit offences in future if they do not receive additional help. 'Diversion' describes the response to children who have committed an offence but who can be diverted from the justice system.

DCYJS does not directly undertake prevention work, focusing its activities on children who have committed a criminal offence. As described in section 5.5, however, the YJS is currently providing a two-year prevention project to identify the speech, language and communication needs of children in Key Stage 3 who are at risk of permanent exclusion from mainstream school.

Each of our local authorities provides early help services, working with other local organisations like schools, the Dorset Police Safer Schools and Communities Team and the voluntary sector.

In the Dorset Council area oversight of prevention activities sits with the Strategic Alliance for Children and Young People, supported by more detailed work at locality level. The DCYJS Manager is a member of the Strategic Alliance and team members participate in locality meetings to identify and respond to children at risk. 'The Harbour' is a Dorset Council multi-disciplinary service which works with children who need additional support to prevent negative outcomes such as being taken into care or entering the justice system. DCYJS and The Harbour have close links, including joint work with children who have entered the justice system.

In the Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole Council area. preventative work occurs within the Community Safety Partnership (CSP) and Early Help. Both services use local data to determine the needs in the area and to then provide preventative services to meet those needs. Governance for the Community Safety work sits with the Community Safety Partnership Executive Board. The Board's role includes scrutiny of the work undertaken. It can also agree to commission further services. The YJS Head of Service sits on the CSP Executive board. Targeted early help services are overseen by the Early Help Partnership Board (a multi-agency partnership which also incorporates Family Hubs). The Board agrees what services may be needed and which to provide/ commission. Services are provided based on the *Continuum of need,* with clear pathways in relation to how to access the support and services. Performance monitoring for the Early Help Partnership Board includes data on the rate of first-time entrants to the youth justice system.

6.3. Diversion

As mentioned above, DCYJS and Dorset Police were inspected in February 2025 as part of a joint national thematic inspection of work with children on Out of Court Disposals. The inspectors noted, in their informal inspection feedback, that *"There is a clear focus and shared commitment across the partnership both strategically and operationally to divert children from the criminal justice system wherever this is possible."*

Diversion work is undertaken locally on a partnership basis. Dorset Police, DCYJS and local authority Early Help services meet weekly as an Out of Court Disposal Panel to decide the appropriate youth justice outcome for children who have committed criminal offences. The panel looks for opportunities to divert chldren from a formal justice outcome when possible. This fits with the local priority to reduce First Time Entrants, described above in section 4.2.

Diversion activities usually involve additional support for the child and, when appropriate, some form of restorative response in respect of the criminal offence. The Dorset Police Safer Schools and Communities Team, Early Help Services, Children's Social Care Services and DCYJS each provide support at the diversion stage. The appropriate service for each child is decided on the basis of the child's needs, risks and existing relationships with professionals.

During 2024/25 a total of 146 children received diversion options for a criminal offence, instead of a formal justice outcome. 74 of them received interventions from the Youth Justice Service. 72 received interventions from other services, principally the police Safer Schools and Communities Team or the local authority Turnaround workers.

During 2022/23 the Ministry of Justice announced a new programme, 'Turnaround', aimed at 'children on the cusp of the youth justice system'. Locally we used this programme to divert children from the justice system and to reduce our rate of First Time Entrants. Instead of potentially receiving a Youth Caution, children are considered for an informal response which is recorded by the Police as 'Outcome 22' (No Further Police Action but with support provided to the child).

Turnaround funding was used to employ targeted youth workers in each local authority and a part-time Speech and Language Therapist. Each child on the Turnaround programme was allocated to one of the local authority Turnaround workers who worked with the child and their family to agree a support plan to help them avoid further offending. Since Christmas 2024, this work has transferred to the YJS. The Turnaround Speech and Language Therapist assesses the child's communication needs and provides advice for the child, their family and professionals about the child's individual needs and how best to respond to them.

The local Turnaround programme is overseen by the Youth Justice Service Partnership Board. The Ministry of Justice require Youth Justice Services to submit quarterly data returns. Data up to the end of December 2024 showed that a total of 101 children had completed a Turnaround intervention, with another 21 currently receiving support through the Turnaround programme.

Funding for the Turnaround programme has been confirmed for 2025/26, albeit at a reduced level. The Turnaround eligibility criteria will be amended for 2025/26, to include Children in Care and children who are subject to a Child Protection Plan. Up till March 2025 children in these categories had been excluded from the Turnaround programme; these children were still given access to diversion outcomes, working with the YJS, but this activity could not be included in the Turnaround data returns.

6.4. Education, Training and Employment

Children in the youth justice system are less likely to stay in mainstream schools, to achieve good educational outcomes and to access education, employment or training after Year 11.

In February 2025, 24.6% of school-age children on the caseload had an Education, Health and Care Plan and a further 11% had the status of 'SEN Support'. There are also likely to be other children whose additional needs have not been identified or who would have been categorised as needing SEN Support if they were on roll at a mainstream school.

In recent years DCYJS has worked with local authority colleagues to improve the accuracy of the recording and reporting of school exclusions experienced by children on the caseload. In February 2025, 13 out of 65 school-age children on the caseload had been permanently excluded from school in the past 2.5 academic years, and another 26 children had experienced at least one fixed-term exclusion during that period. In total, 60% of school-age children had experienced a permanent or fixed-term exclusion during the past 2.5 academic years, with some of them experiencing multiple exclusions.

Improving education provision and outcomes for children in the youth justice system remains one of our strategic priorities.

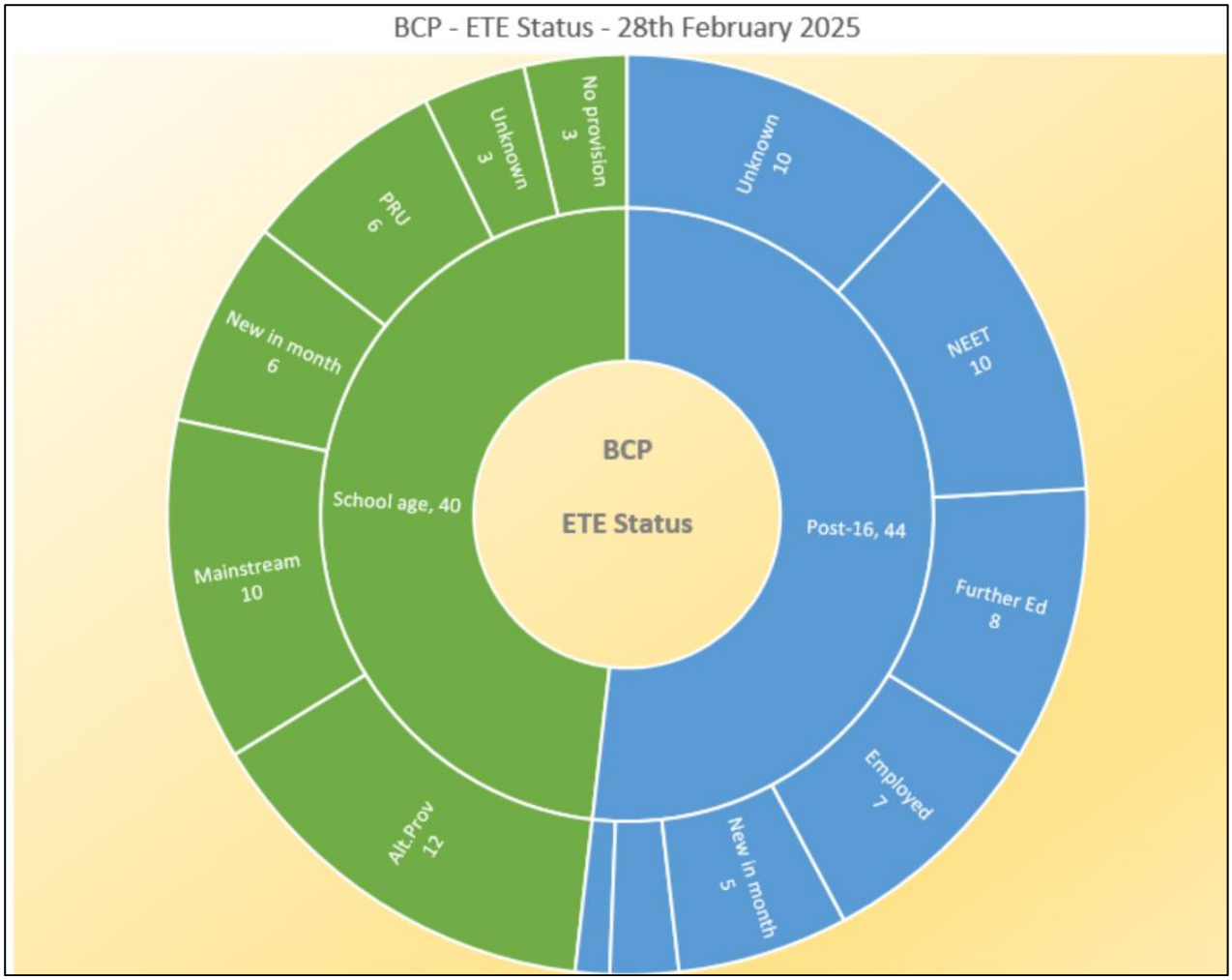
Each local authority's Director of Education is a member of the DCYJS Partnership Board. The headteacher of the BCP Council Virtual School and College is also a member of the DCYJS Partnership Board.

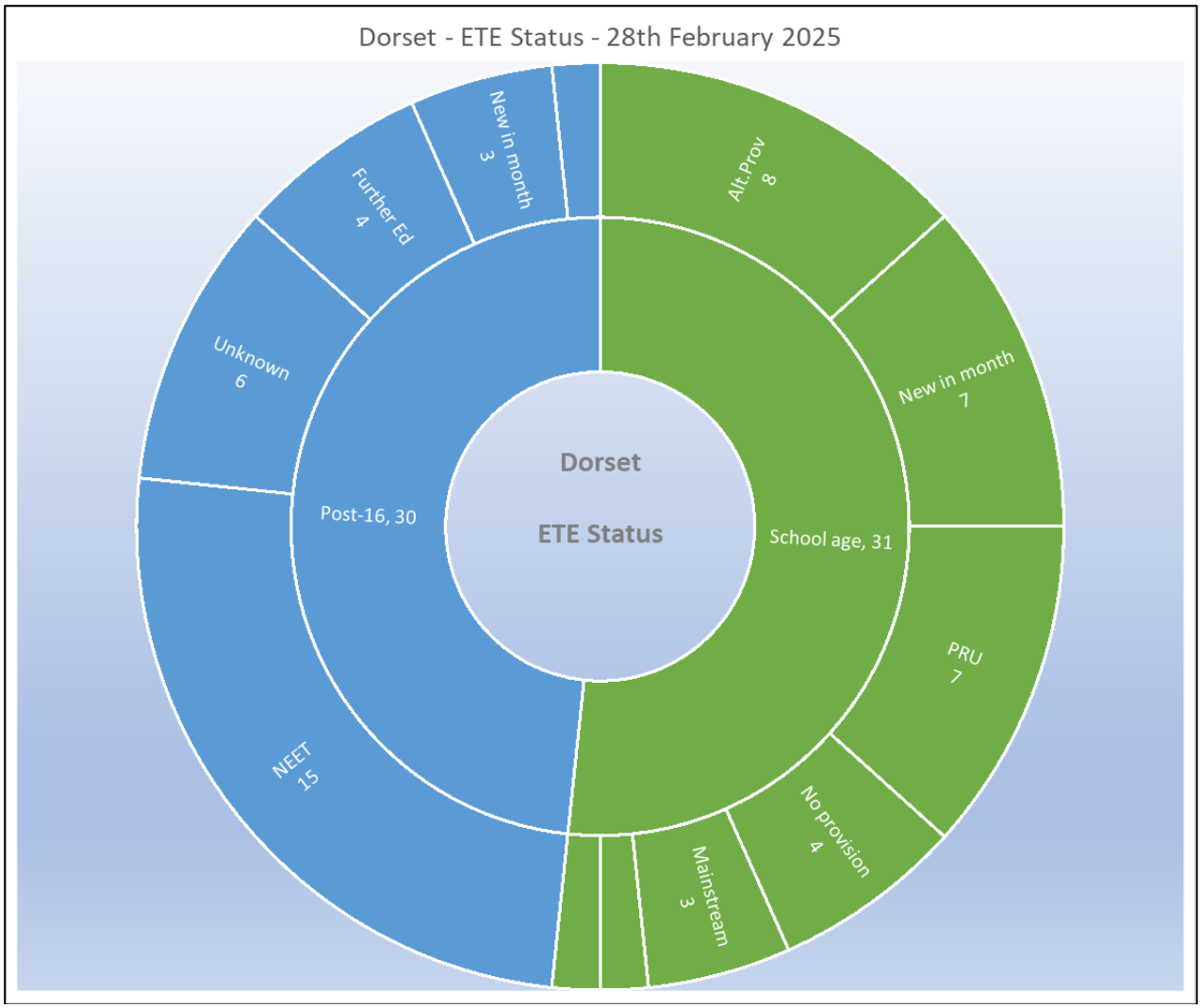
DCYJS employs two Education Officers, one focusing on school-age children and one supporting the post-16 age group. They provide advice to DCYJS case managers and work directly with young people to understand their needs and to support their attendance and engagement. They

also work with schools and local authorities to increase the suitability of provision, maintaining strong links with colleagues in the local authority Virtual Schools, the SEND teams and Inclusion services.

When a child is remanded or sentenced to custody, the appropriate YJS Education Officer is allocated to work on ensuring that the child's education needs are understood and met during and after the period in custody. It is a requirement of the SEND Code of Practice, for children in custody with an EHCP, that an up to date EHCP is shared with the custody education provider to enable the child's specific educational needs to be met. The YJS Education Officers liaise with custody education providers and local authority colleagues to ensure that all relevant information is shared.

The following charts show the education status of BCP and Dorset children on the YJS caseload at the end of February 2025:





These charts show the high numbers of school-age children who are not in mainstream school, and of those in the post-16 age group who are not in suitable employment or training. The service also monitors more detailed information, such as the number of hours offered and attended for each child, the social care and SEND status of these young people, to enable a focused response by our education specialists, working alongside relevant local authority colleagues.

Each local authority has a multi-agency group which monitors and acts on inclusion in education for the school-age children causing most concern in respect of their access to education. The DCYJS Education Officer attends these groups and represents the needs of children who are open to the YJS.

DCYJS occasionally works with children who are receiving Elective Home Education. The YJS Education Officer follows up each case where a child receives Elective Home Education to review the adequacy and safety of the arrangement and to offer more support if needed.

The numbers of young people who not in employment, education or training (NEET) or in employment without training reflects the limited opportunities for YJS young people, who can lack the necessary attainment levels to access the available provision. Actions taken in 2024/25 to address this gap include:

- The ‘Discover You’ project, run jointly with Upton Country Park, to increase young people’s readiness for post-16 training and employment options.

- Funding provided by the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner for young people to train for the Construction Skills Certification Scheme (CSCS card).
- Increased use of AQA awards to certificate learning from activities undertaken during young people's contact with DCYJS.

Securing the funding to continue the Discover You project will be a priority for 2025-26.

6.5. Health and Communication Needs of Children in the youth justice system

Evidence shows that children who have contact with the justice system are likely to have significant health needs, including difficulties with mental health, physical health and substance use. DCYJS has a strong health team, reflecting the commitment of NHS Dorset and Dorset HealthCare to meeting the health needs of children in the youth justice system. The DCYJS health team is comprised of 2.8 full-time equivalent CAMHS nurses, a 0.8 Clinical Psychologist and 1.4 Speech and Language Therapists.

The health professionals in the YJS work directly with children and provide consultation and advice to YJS colleagues and other professionals. The YJS nurses meet regularly with colleagues in the Child in Care health team and the Criminal Justice Liaison and Diversion Service to ensure the integration of healthcare support for children in the youth justice system.

The specialist skills and knowledge of the YJS nurses and psychologist underpin the DCYJS commitment to trauma-informed practice through the Trauma Recovery Model. Children who will be under YJS supervision for more than 6 months are considered for the Enhanced Case Management (ECM) multi-agency formulation model, led by the YJS Psychologist.

A YJS nurse is allocated to all children who are remanded or sentenced to custody. The aim is to ensure the continuity and effectiveness of health care for the child as they move into custody, during the custodial period and as part of their post-release planning. The YJS nurses liaise with the healthcare provider in the custodial establishment. There have been some instances over the past year of delays in accessing prescribed medication for children in custody. The YJS nurses are tenacious and proactive in ensuring that the custody healthcare provider has all the necessary information to prescribe the correct medication for the child. The YJS health team will continue to strengthen links with custody healthcare providers in 2025/26.

Access to ADHD assessments continue to vary according to the child's home area. If a child also has mental health needs requiring CAMHS support, an ADHD assessment can be accessed via CAMHS throughout the county. Paediatricians can provide ADHD assessments for children who are not open to CAMHS. In the west of the county paediatricians provide ADHD assessments for all children, but paediatricians in the east of the county only provide ADHD assessments for children under the age of 16. Children who are 16 or 17 in the east of the county, and not open to CAMHS, are therefore unable to access an ADHD assessment. YJS Nurses and managers have continued to flag this issue with NHS managers and commissioners. Although this service gap remains, the NHS Dorset representative on the YJS Partnership Board has given assurance that plans are being developed to resolve this issue.

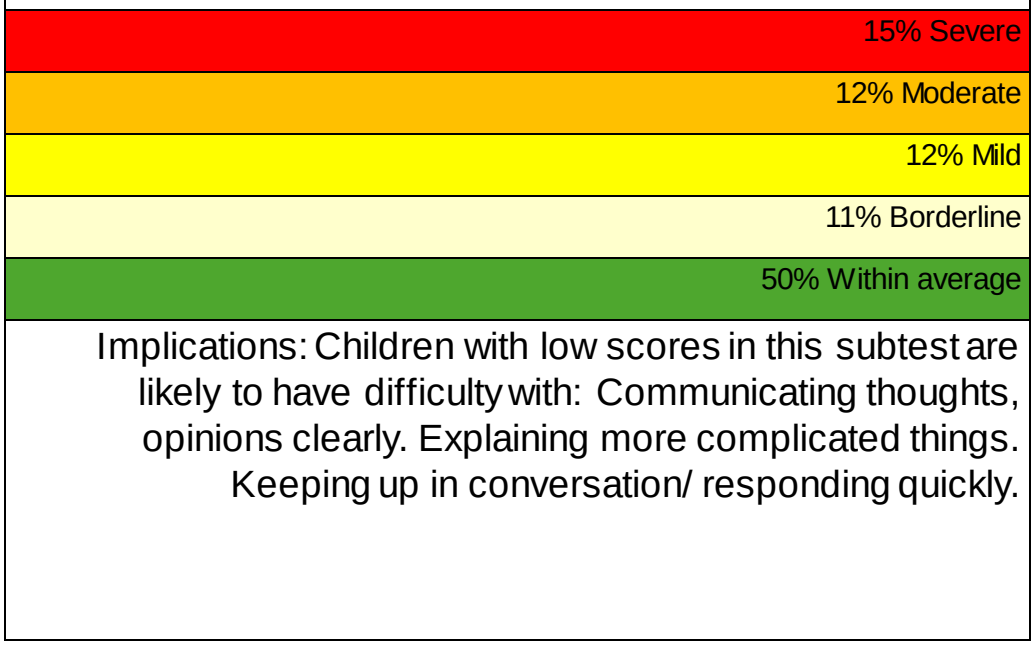
Speech and Language Therapists have been based in the YJS since 2018. Data has been reported in previous Youth Justice Plans to show that over 80% of children in contact with the justice system locally have speech, language and communication needs (SLCN).

The YJS Speech and Language Therapists use the formal language assessment 'Clinical Evaluation of Language Fundamentals – v5' (CELF) as part of their assessments, alongside assessment of Language for Behaviour and Emotions. Each assessment involves several sub-tests, to investigate different aspects of communication.

During 2024/25, the YJS Speech and Language team collated and analysed the results of all assessments of children known to the YJS in recent years.

A total of 202 assessments had been completed by February 2025, providing a robust sample size. The following charts show the aggregated results for each sub-test in the CELF assessment:

50% of children have some level of difficulty planning / using spoken sentences.



Implications: Children with low scores in this subtest are likely to have difficulty with: Communicating thoughts, opinions clearly. Explaining more complicated things. Keeping up in conversation/ responding quickly.

94 % of children have some level of difficulty answering questions about paragraphs & stories they have heard.

This subtest has no visual support.

Implications: Children with low scores are likely to have difficulty with understanding input in lessons or meetings with professionals. Understanding & remembering longer explanations/ instructions. Following stories in conversation. Understanding when there is a lot of information, e.g. court, panel.

65% of children have some level of difficulty understanding sentences that express a relationship,

i.e. where, when, what order things are in, comparisons (e.g. older/younger) and passive phrases. Choices of answers are written down providing some visual support.

22% Severe

11% Moderate

16% Mild

16% Borderline

35% Within average

Implications: Evidence for using visual supports. Children with low scores in this subtest are likely to have difficulty with: Understanding information about where, when and what order things are in. Passive sentences (e.g. 'the bag was found by the police'). 'Wordy' maths questions. Multi-step instructions.

63% of children have some level of difficulty repeating spoken sentences they have heard.

16% Severe

16% Moderate

16% Mild

15% Borderline

37% Within average

Implications: Children with low scores in this subtest are likely to have difficulty with: Sentence structure; Vocabulary; Recalling spoken information accurately.

The data shows that children who are open to the YJS have particular difficulties in understanding spoken language. 94% did not reach the expected level in the 'Understanding Spoken Paragraphs' sub-test (it is worth noting that this test is carried out in a safe environment by a skilled practitioner. A child's communication abilities will deteriorate in more stressful situations).

The receptive language skills of children in the justice system tend not to be as strong as their expressive language skills. Adults may not realise that the child does not understand or cannot retain what the adult is talking about. These children may have the ability to mask their language difficulties and to use behaviour to prevent adults from finding things hard partially explains why it is so rare for a child's communication needs to have been identified before they enter the youth justice system. Other systemic factors such as services finding it difficult to engage families, disrupted education and reduction in early identification strategies will also have contributed to the difficulties in children having their SLCN identified in a timely manner.

There are important implications from this data analysis for the YJS and for other professionals about how they communicate and interact with children in the justice system. Workers in the YJS are shifting their practice to make greater use of visuals and activities, reducing the use of language-based interventions. It will be a YJS priority in 2025/26 to extend and consolidate these changes, and to support other services in the justice system to consider adjusting their communication styles.

6.6. Restorative Justice and Victims

Alongside the 'Child First' approach, Restorative Justice is a core principle underpinning the work of DCYJS. In January 2024 all YJS team members participated in training in 'Working Restoratively'. The course included a focus on how restorative work fits with and supports a trauma-informed, child first approach.

Whenever DCYJS work with a child whose offence harmed a victim, the DCYJS Restorative Justice Practitioners contact the victim to find out about the impact of the offence and to explain the opportunities for Restorative Justice activities. These contacts help us to meet our obligations under the Victims Code.

Delays in the youth justice system, which are more common in cases that go to court, make it harder to engage victims in activity to repair the harm they have experienced. Contacting the victim many months after the offence requires tact and sensitivity, emphasising the victim's choice in whether or how much they engage with our service.

The DCYJS Restorative Justice Practitioners previously received occasional negative feedback from victims about the decision-making process and outcomes for children who receive Out of Court Disposals (OOCDs). Managers from DCYJS and Dorset Police met in March 2024 to review these concerns and to amend the processes for keeping victims informed and considering their views in the decision-making process.

HMI Probation and HMI Constabulary Fire and Rescue Services reviewed victim engagement in February 2025 as part of their inspection of local work with children who received OOCDs. The inspectors responded positively to our new arrangements, commenting in their informal feedback that *"The capturing of the victims' wishes by police officers is a strength and inspectors noted the quality of this practice. This also ensures that opportunities for restorative justice can be considered at the earliest stage supporting the overall approach of the YJS in terms of its commitment to restorative justice. The victim agreed to contact from the YJS in almost every case".*

During the past year the YJS Restorative Justice Practitioners have facilitated successful Restorative Justice Conferences, bringing together the child with the person harmed by the child's offence. The following example illustrates the positive impact that participants can experience from Restorative Justice.

A Restorative Justice Conference was held at a local library. Both parties wanted to explain their actions. The child felt the school had not understood the reason he had been carrying a knife (for self-harm). The headteacher wanted the child to understand the reasons why he had received a permanent exclusion. He also wanted to pass on good wishes from a number of staff members who remembered the child fondly and wanted to know that he was settled and had been able to 'move on'.

At the end of the Restorative Justice Conference, the team's RJ Practitioner spoke with the headteacher to check if the process was what he had expected and if it had achieved what he had wanted. The headteacher said that 'I will take back to the school and the Trust that if the opportunity arises to do an RJ conference it should be grabbed at with both hands. It was everything I hoped for. I feel we should not have to do this through the Youth Justice Service but should set up a way of doing this ourselves for all pupils who have been excluded'.

Another aspect of the team's Restorative Justice work is undertaking 'repairing the harm' activities with children, to help them make amends for their offence. Examples include making wooden planters or bird boxes to be sold for charities chosen by the victim. Other children work on community projects supported by the service or on conservation activities.

During 2024/25 the YJS reparation team successfully held stalls, to sell items made by children, at venues including County Hall in Dorchester, a BCP Council Children's Services event and Moordown Community Centre. The stalls help us both to raise money for charities chosen by victims and to raise the profile of the good work being completed by children working with the YJS.

Stall at County Hall in Dorchester

Over the past two years, the service has strengthened joint work between case managers, restorative justice workers and our reparation supervisor, to tailor each activity to the needs of the child and the wishes of the victim. The aim is to increase the child's sense of doing something constructive and meaningful to repair the harm caused.

Not all offences have a direct victim. During 2024/25 the YJS worked to develop restorative responses for offences like weapon possession and drugs possession.

Recent Youth Justice Plans have reported on progress in developing a restorative response for children who commit offences against police officers and other emergency workers. This approach was extended in 2024/25 to include a reparation project at Bournemouth Hospital, alongside ongoing work with the YJS Police Officers who can meet with young people to help them understand the human impact of offences against emergency workers.

Priorities for 2025/26 will include strengthening links with local communities for restorative and reparative activities, establishing reparative activities at Dorset County Hospital and preparing for the new Youth Justice inspection standards for work with victims.

6.7. Serious Violence and Extra-Familial Harm

Tackling extra-familial harm and reducing serious violence are priorities for strategic partnerships in both our local authority areas (as described in section 2 of this Plan).

During 2023 the YJS completed a case audit to review its work with children who commit offences with weapons. The focus on weapon offences reflected evidence of an increase in these offences in both local authority areas. The audit included the views of children, parents and YJS practitioners and led to changes in our risk planning and interventions for children who committed weapon offences. Work in response to the findings from that audit continued in 2024/25.

DCYJS uses the 'Trauma Recovery Model' in its work. One of the benefits of this approach is to understand and respond to the issues which may underlie a child's exploitaiton or their use of violent behaviour. As described in section 6.5, the YJS Psychologist leads multi-agency formulations under the 'Enhanced Case Management' approach for children showing the highest levels of trauma and concerns for the safety of them and others.

The Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Act 2021 introduced a Serious Violence Duty for specifed authorities, including youth justice services, to work together to share data and knowledge, allowing them to target their interventions to prevent serious violence. The specified authorities in Dorset and BCP agreed to use our two Community Safety Partnerships to lead this work. DCYJS contributed to the Serious Violence Needs Assessment in each local authority, and to the subsequent action planning. In 2024 the Dorset Police and Crime Commissioner appointed a 'Head of Violence Reduction and Prevention'. The post holder has joined the YJS Partnership Board and works actively with YJS managers and practitioners to ensure that the YJS is integrated into local initiatives to reduce and prevent violence.

One of the obstacles to effective work with children who have committed serious violence offences is the length of time that can elapse between the offence and the child appearing in court. This is a priority area for the DCYJS Partnership Board, with the aim of reducing delays and of mitigating their impact by offering voluntary YJS contact with young people while their alleged offences are under investigation. The YJS Head of Service has also raised this issue with the Dorset Criminal Justice Board, to add performance monitoring for the time between the offence and the charging decision to the Board's performance information.

The YJS Head of Service is also working with the local MAPPA Responsible Authorities to review MAPPA involvement and risk management while a MAPPA-eligible child or adult is under investigation or going through an extended court process.

Extra-familial harm occurs across the pan-Dorset area, with DCYJS seeing instances of exploitation and National Referral Mechanism (NRM) referrals for children in both local authorities. DCYJS plays an active role in the partnership arrangements in both local authority areas to address child exploitation, participating in strategic and tactical groups as well as other multi-agency initiatives such as the 'Missing, Exploited, Trafficked' (MET) Panel in BCP Council and the Dorset Council Extra-Familial Harm (EFH) panels and the EFH Champions group.

Although it is rare for children to become radicalised or involved in violent extremism, the harms from such behaviours are significant for individuals and for the community. The YJS Head of

Service is a standing member of the 'Channel Panel' in each local authority. The YJS also engages actively as a member of the local Prevent Partnership.

6.8. Policing and Detention of children in police custody

DCYJS and Dorset Police work together closely on issues affecting children in the justice system. As well as the seconded police officers in the YJS, there is active police representation on the DCYJS Partnership Board. At an operational level there is daily contact between YJS Team Managers and the Sergeant in the police Youth Justice team.

In 2023 Dorset Police published its 'Child Centred Policing Strategy 2023-25' which "sets out Dorset Police's commitment to provide children and young people with a first-class policing response that is child-centred and part of an integrated and effective partnership approach. This means we will put the voices and needs of children and young people at the heart of the services we deliver to make them safer".

A 'Voice of the Child Scrutiny Panel' oversees the operational implementation of the strategy. The YJS Head of Service is a member of this panel, along with police leads from across the force.

Dorset Police is committed to reducing the numbers of children who are detained in police custody, as part of its Child-Centred Policing Strategy. A multi-agency 'Child Custody Detentions' group, led by the DCYJS Head of Service, monitors and addresses the use of police custody for children. The aim of the group is to reduce the number of children being arrested and, when an arrest is appropriate, to reduce the time the child stays in custody.

Data on child arrests is also reported to the YJS Partnership Board. The following table shows the child arrests in Bournemouth, Weymouth and Poole during 2024/25.

2024/25	April	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar
Auth Detention	21	27	19	29	35	25	39	24	17	13	29	28
Det Not Auth	4	2	1	1	6	2	4	2	1	3	4	1
10-13 Y/O	0	0	0	1	2	3	1	2	0	0	2	1
Overnight	9	8	6	10	11	7	22	11	7	5	15	17
Strip searches / Clothing Changes	3/0	1 / 0	3 / 1	4 / 5	4 / 3	2/3	2 / 0	3 / 3	1 / 2	0 / 1	5 / 0	2 / 1
Remand/warrant	0/4	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	2 / 2	1/4	0 / 1	0 / 2	0 / 0	0 / 0	5 / 0	0 / 1
C114 requested	0	0	0	0	3	1	0	1	0	0	5	0

These figures show the success of Dorset Police's active work to reduce the numbers of children being arrested locally. Custody managers have strengthened the challenge on whether the detention is justified, evidenced by the monthly figures showing the number of 'Detentions not Authorised'. This means a child has been brought to the custody suite but the custody sergeant has refused to authorise the detention.

The number of child arrests in Dorset has declined in the past 4 years, from a total of 501 arrests in 2021/22 to a total of 306 arrests in the past 12 months.

Although there has been less progress in reducing the duration of child detentions, the overall reduction in arrest numbers means that arrests tend to reflect more complex cases, potentially requiring longer detention periods.

Dorset Police have changed their approach to custody arrivals during the evening to reduce the numbers that are detained overnight. The following table shows both the reduction in child

arrests and the significant reduction in the numbers being detained overnight (a 47% reduction over the past 4 years):

Year	Average number of child arrests per month	Total annual overnight detentions	
2021/22	42	242	
2022/23	36	182	
2023/24	32	150	
2024/25	26	128	

The Child Custody Detentions group previously identified a number of factors which can prolong a child's detention in police custody, including the availability of Appropriate Adults (AAs) and the time of day when the child arrives in the custody suite. The timeliness of Appropriate Adult attendance has improved since 2021, when the service was commissioned externally from 'The Appropriate Adult Service' (TAAS). The average response time for an AA from TAAS for a child in a Dorset custody suite was 57 minutes in the period July 2024-December 2024. This is a deterioration from past performance by TAAS, refelcting intermittent shortages of available Appropriate Adults. TAAS have committed to recruiting additional AAs to reduce the average arrival times.

When the police remand a child, ie charge them with an offence and refuse to grant the child bail, there is a legal requirement (under the Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984) to transfer the child to local authority accommodation until their appearance at the next available court. A child arrested on a warrant or for breaching bail must remain in police custody. In recent years, BCP Council and Dorset Council operated a joint arrangement whereby a foster carer was on standby each night to accommodate a child in this situation. Usage of this foster placement was very low, partly reflecting the very few remands of children in police custody. The standby foster carer arrangement was ended in April 2024, with each local authority making alternative arrangements.

The Child Custody Detentions group reviews every instance of a child being remanded, to check that the procedures and decision-making were correctly applied. The table on the previous page shows that there were only 8 instances of a child being remanded in 2024/25.

6.9. Transitions to Probation

The seconded Probation Officer post in DCYJS has been vacant since September 2024. The Probation Officer plays an important role in supporting transitions for young people who are moving from the YJS to Probation. In the period up to September 2024 we made progress to improve the transition arrangements, including the following changes:

- New process for Probation to request YJS information for young adults committing new offences who were previously known to YJS. 125 requests for information were made under this process during 2023.
- Extending the transition process for young people transferring from YJS to Probation, with additional joint meetings.
- Training session delivered by the YJS Speech and Language Therapist to Probation staff to help them respond to the communication needs of young adults.
- YJS attendance at MAPPA Level 2 or 3 meetings for new cases aged 18-21 when the YJS previously supervised the young person.

While the Probation Officer post has been vacant, there has been regular dialogue between the lead managers in the YJS and Probation for transition arrangements. Recruitment to the vacant post was delayed by staffing problems in the Probation Service, but the recruitment process commenced in March 2025.

The planned activity for 2024/25, to develop our methods for gathering feedback from young people about their experience of the transition process, has been delayed until the new Probation Officer has joined the YJS. We will also seek the views of practitioners in the YJS and Probation, to identify further opportunities for improvement.

6.10. Remands

There were 7 episodes of children being remanded in custody during 2024/25, the same number as the previous year.

Children who are remanded in custody gain 'child in care' status if they are not already a child in care. 3 of the 7 children were already a child in care before being remanded into custody.

One of the children was remanded in custody for one night, before being bailed the next day.

Another child was remanded into custody for 7 weeks, before making a successful bail application, supported by the YJS. This child was later convicted at trial and sentenced to custody.

Three children were remanded in custody for 5 weeks as co-defendants for the same offences before the CPS discontinued the charges against them due to insufficient evidence. The YJS is making enquiries about whether there is any review process in the CPS or police when a child is remanded into custody without sufficient evidence to go to trial.

The remaining two children are both care experienced young people who were remanded into custody shortly before their 18th birthday and remained on remand as young adults at the end of March 2025.

There were also 3 instances of children being remanded into the care of the local authority during 2024/25. Two of these children were already a child in care; the other child remained living at home with family during the remand period.

Each remand in custody is reviewed in team meetings to consider if alternative options could have been taken. In most cases the remand decision reflects the seriousness of the alleged offence, and may also reflect patterns of offending and previous non-compliance with bail conditions.

In November 2023, HMI Probation published a thematic inspection report on work with children subject to remand in youth detention. One of the recommendations from this report was for the YJS to help colleagues in Children's Social Care to understand the practice and procedure requirements for children who are remanded in custody. A YJS Practice Manager produced written guidance in 2024 about remand procedures to help social workers and social work managers when they work with children on remand.

6.11. Custodial Sentences and Resettlement

Six local children received custodial sentences during 2024/25 (the same number as the previous year). Information about custodial sentences and analysis of the young people is included in section 4.2 of this document. Information about the support for the health needs and education needs of children in custody is included in sections 6.4 and 6.5.

In recent years very few children have been released from custody before their 18th birthday. With low numbers going into custody, and some not being released before becoming adults, the approach to resettlement for each child is planned individually.

Finding suitable accommodation for children leaving custody can be challenging. DCYJS contributes to local authority care planning processes, promoting the early identification of the child's release address. The DCYJS Manager reports to the DCYJS Partnership Board on the timeliness of accommodation being confirmed for children being released from custodial sentences. This measure is also now included in the new youth justice Key Performance Indicators. The release address for children leaving custody is sometimes not confirmed until the last few days before release. As well as causing the child a lot of anxiety and distress, this makes it difficult to plan the child's resettlement, affecting access to education, health care and constructive activities.

'Release on Temporary Licence' (ROTL) is an option for children nearing the end of their time in custody. Day releases for specific purposes are agreed, for children with good behaviour records in custody, to help prepare them for release. DCYJS worked with a secure establishment in 2024 to confirm ROTL plans for a child who was approaching his release date. DCYJS managers attended briefings in March 2025 about new ROTL arrangements which are being piloted in 5 child custodial establishments.

6.12. Working with Families

DCYJS Parenting staff provide support to the parents and carers of children on the YJS caseload. Support can be provided under a Parenting Order but in practice it is always achievable on a voluntary basis. Most contact is provided on a one to one basis, focusing on communications, relationships, setting boundaries and applying consequences. The workers remain alert to risk and safeguarding issues, attending multi-agency meetings and supporting parents in their interactions with other services.

When appropriate, separate parenting workers can be allocated to a child's father and mother, in order to enable engagement with both parents.

Plans for 2025/26 include development of the YJS Parent Forums and building links with other services and provisions in the local authorities, such as the Family Hubs.

6.13. DCYJS Priorities and Plans for 2025/26

The following table shows the priorities and plans for DCYJS in 2025/26. This is a dynamic plan which will continue to be updated, recognising that other priorities will arise during the year.

DCYJS Partnership Priority	Area for Development	Partners and Staff Providing Support	Benefits
Earlier identification of speech, language and communication needs for children at risk of school exclusion	Continue to provide and develop the Re-Engage project to identify and support the communication needs of children at risk of school exclusion	Dorset HealthCare BCP Council and Dorset Council education services Schools and PRUs DCYJS SALTs and Head of Service	Reduction in school exclusions and future offending
Diverting children from the formal justice	Work with Dorset Police to develop	Dorset Police DCYJS HoS and Team	Avoid first-time entrants for motoring

system	alternative non-court options for motoring offences	Managers	offences such as speeding
Diverting children from the formal justice system	Take action in response to the 'areas for improvement' identified in the thematic inspection of work in Dorset with children on OOCDs	DCYJS practitioners and managers Dorset Police BCP Council Dorset Council Dorset HealthCare Trust	Improved practice to strengthen confidence in diversion options
Reducing Serious Violence and Extra-Familial Harm	Regular dialogue and scrutiny meetings between Police CPS and YJS to track and progress delayed investigations	Dorset Police CPS DCYJS managers	Improved timeliness for offences reaching court.
Reducing Serious Violence and Extra-Familial Harm	YJS Nurses to provide one-to-one First Aid sessions to children for responses to weapon injuries	YJS health team Dorset HealthCare Trust	Children are better able to respond in an emergency, and they have increased awareness of the potential harm from weapons.
Reducing over-representation	Investigate and agree actions in response to black or mixed heritage children being over-represented amongst children on court orders	DCYJS practitioners and managers	Reduce the proportions of black or mixed heritage children amongst children on court orders
Reducing over-representation	Multi-agency task and finish group to agree and implement actions to reduce the over-representation of children in care in the justice system and to report on progress to the YJS Board	DCYJS managers and practitioners BCP Council Child in Care services Dorset Council Child in Care services Dorset HealthCare and NHS Dorset Child in Care health leads Dorset Police	Earlier identification to prevent children in care entering the justice system. Improved multi-agency support for children in care who are in the justice system.
Improving education outcomes	Secure funding to continue the Discover You programme	DCYJS funding partners DCYJS HoS DCYJS Education Officers	Improving young people's readiness for post-16 ETE options
Improving health outcomes – mental health	Improve YJS data recording and analysis of children's mental health needs and access to suitable support	DCYJS Dorset HealthCare	Assurance that children with mental health needs are receiving suitable support
Improving health outcomes – substance use	Review and develop joint working between YJS and young people's substance use treatment services	DCYJS With You Reach Public Health commissioners	Assurance that children with substance use needs are receiving suitable support

DCYJS practice improvement	Develop the team's use of collaborative planning, including exit planning, with children and families	DCYJS managers and practitioners	Working in partnership with children and families will strengthen their capacity to sustain positive changes without professional support
DCYJS practice improvement	Increase feedback from young people and practitioners about the transition from YJS to Probation	Probation DCYJS managers and practitioners	Identify and apply improvements to the transition process
DCYJS practice improvement	Develop the use of activities and visual resources for work with children in response to the evidence about difficulty processing and retaining spoken language	DCYJS practitioners and managers, supported by the DCYJS SALTs	Workers are better able to engage children in YJS interventions
DCYJS practice improvement	Build team members' knowledge and confidence to work with children on the impact of their online experiences and identity	DCYJS practitioners and managers	Better understanding of and support for children's online safety and reduced harm arising from online activity.
Child voice	Establish new methods to hear from children and engage them in our service development	DCYJS managers and DCYJS Activity Coordinator	Improved experiences and outcomes for children working with the YJS
Restorative Justice	Review current RJ and victim work in context of the new inspection criteria, including increased Board oversight of this activity	DCYJS Head of Service and the RJ manager	Meeting the new inspection standards for victim work will help to ensure the quality of our work with victims
Increasing public awareness and confidence in work undertaken by children to repair the harm from their offence	Increase the number of community projects, stalls and donations to charities	DCYJS RJ manager and RJ team	Enhanced victim satisfaction and increased public confidence
Custody and remand	Strengthen joint working with custody health and education providers, and community health and education services	Dorset Council and BCP Council Children's Social Care and Virtual School Dorset HealthCare DCYJS managers and practitioners	Improved health and education support and outcomes for children in custody and on release

7. Sign off, submission and approval

This Youth Justice Plan has been approved by the YJS Partnership Board in April 2023.

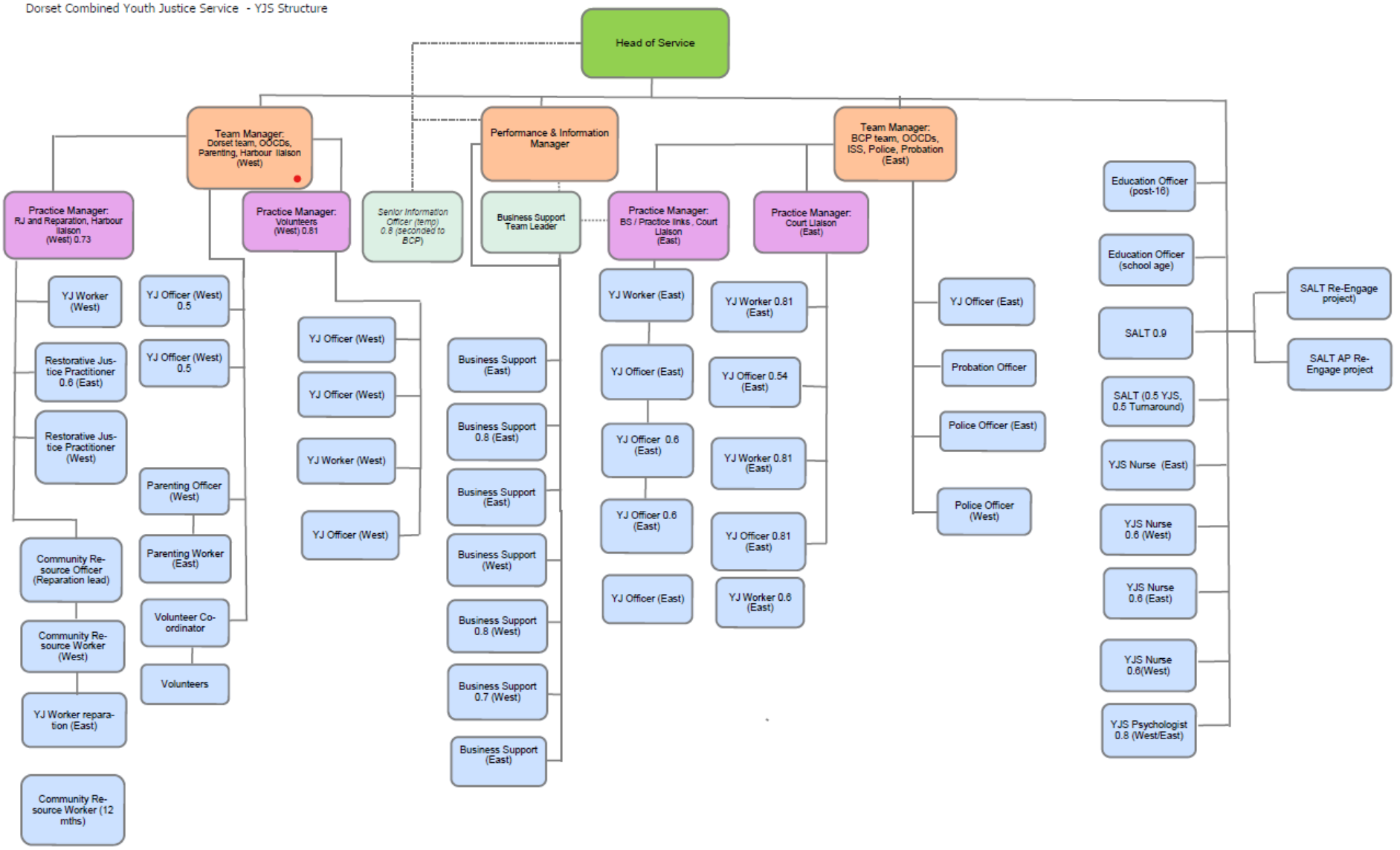
In accordance with 'Regulation 4 of the Local Authorities (Functions and Responsibilities) (England) Regulations 2000', Youth Justice Plans must be approved by the full council of the local authority. This Youth Justice Plan is subject to the scrutiny and approval processes of our two local authorities. It will be considered for approval by the full council of Dorset Council on 10/07/2025 and by the full council of Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole Council on 22/07/2025.

Chair of YJS Board - name	Paul Dempsey
Signature	
Date	

8. Appendix 1 – Service Structure Chart

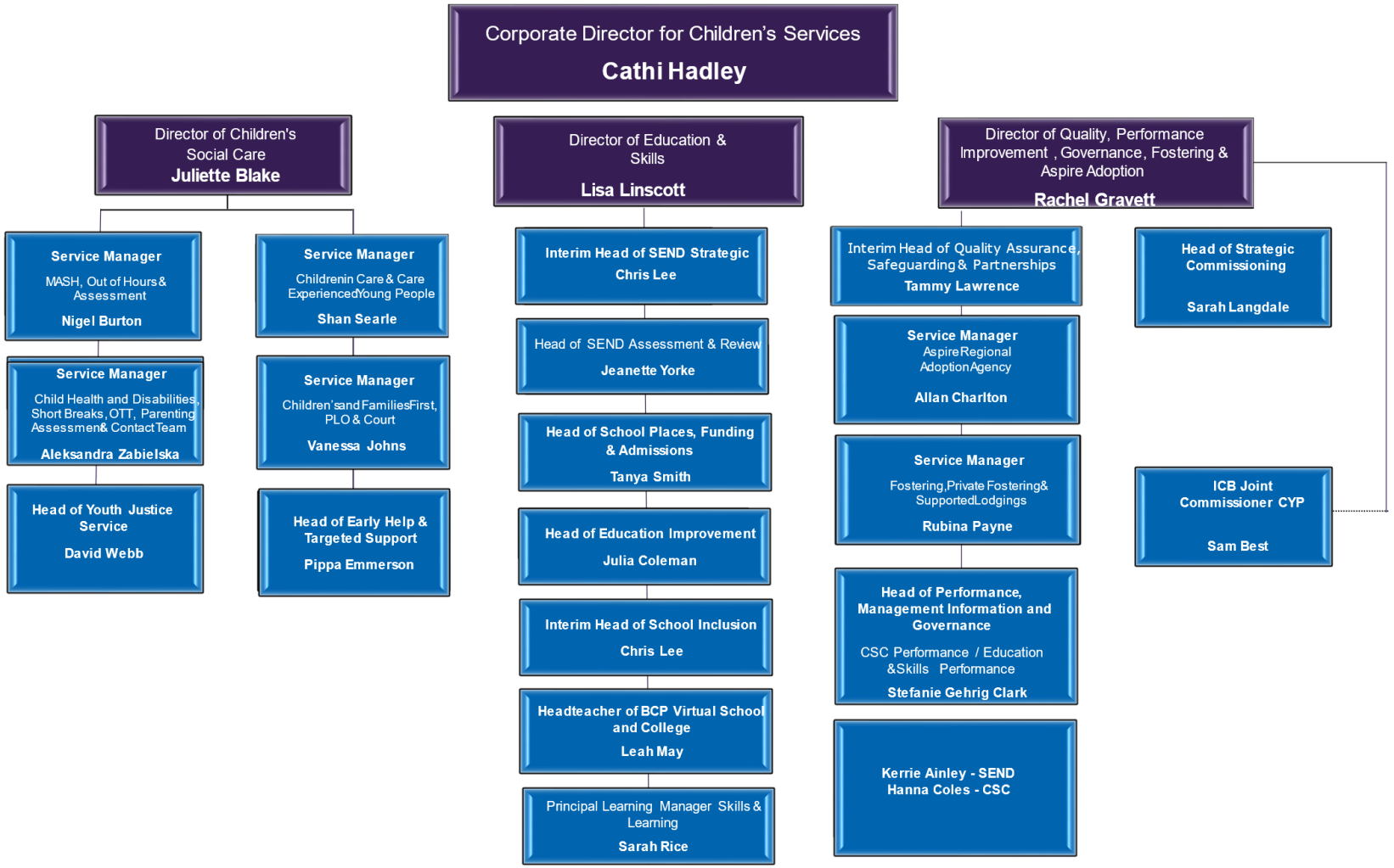
The following structure charts show the staffing structure of Dorset Combined Youth Justice Service and where the service sits in the two local authorities.

Dorset Combined Youth Justice Service - YJS Structure

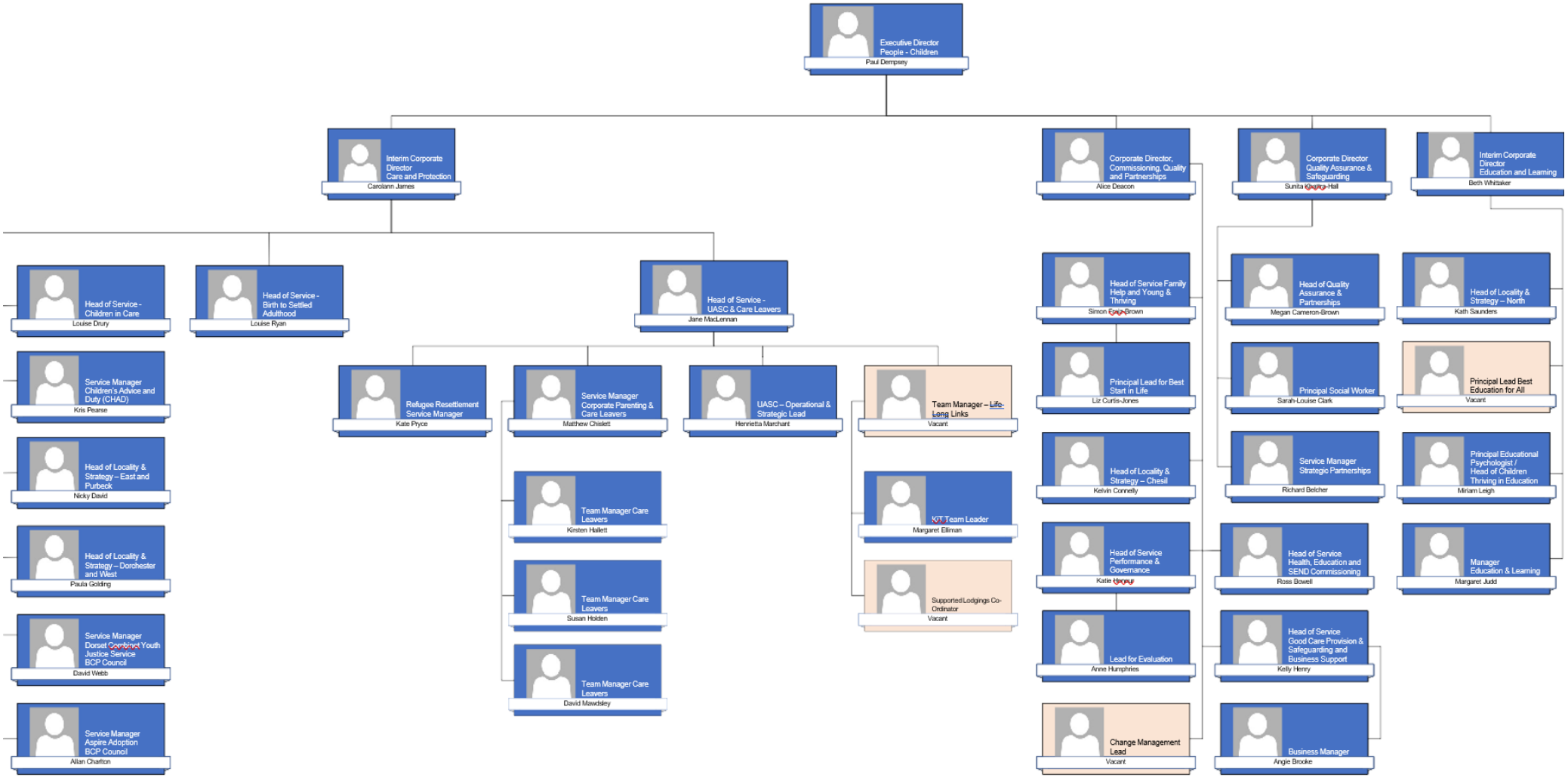


Dorset Combined Youth Justice Service January 2025

BCP Council Children's Services Extended Leadership Team



Dorset Council Children's Services Extended Leadership Team



DCYJS Staff and Volunteers:

The following table shows the gender, ethnicity and disability status of DCYJS staff members and volunteers:

YJS Staff at 3 March 2025

	Male	Female
White British	9	42
White Irish	1	0
White Other	0	1
Mixed	0	1
Prefer not to say	0	2
	10	46

YJS Volunteers at 3 March 2025

	Male	Female
White British	7	12
White Other	1	1
	8	13

Four staff members in DCYJS are recorded as having a disability.

9. Appendix 2 – Budget Costs and Contributions 2024/25

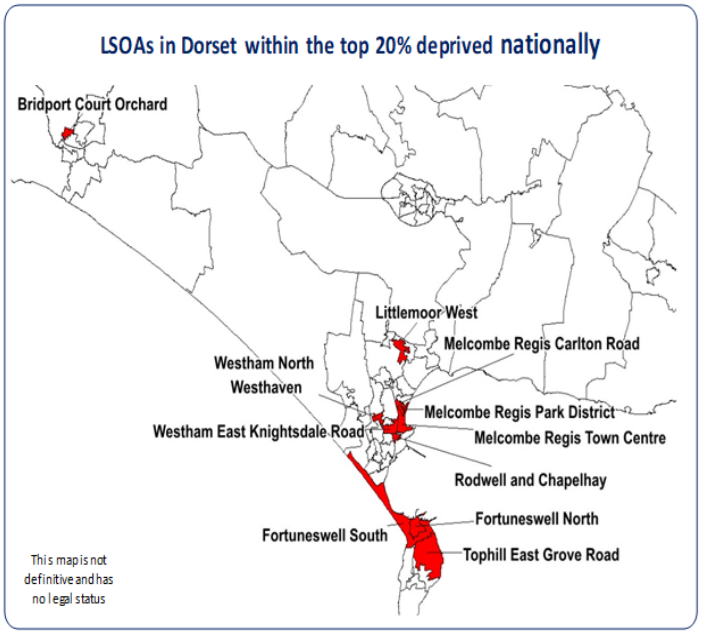
Partner Agency	**24/25 Revenue** (excluding recharges)	**Staff**
Dorset Council	£536,164	
Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole Council	£628,622	
Dorset Police and Crime Commissioner	£81,927	2.0 Police Officers
The Probation Service (Dorset)	£5,000	1.0 Probation Officer
NHS Dorset Clinical Commissioning Group	£22,487	2.8 FTE Nurses, 0.8 Psychologist, 1.4 Speech and Language Therapists
Youth Justice Grant	£767,922	
Total	**£2,042,122**	

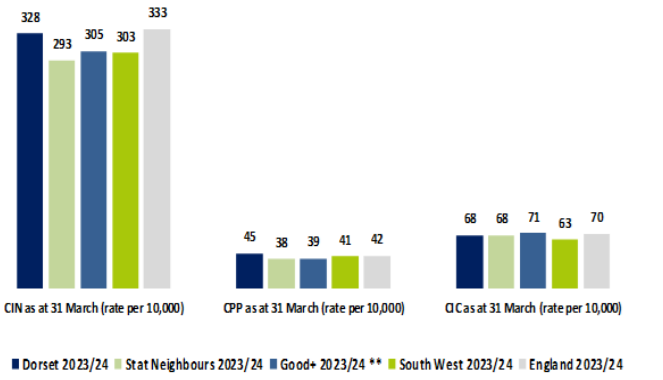
Appendix 3 – Local Authority Demographic Information

Population	Age 10-17
Number of Children[1]	33,694
Male[1]	51%
Female[1]	49%
Pupils eligible for Free School Meals[2]	22.0%
Pupils with SEN Support[2]	14.6%
Pupils with an EHC Plan[2]	6.7%
Pupils from Non-white Minority Ethnic groups[3]	5.6%
25.7% children living in Poverty after housing costs[4]	

Safeguarding	Age 10-17
Number of Children in Need[5]	562
Male[5]	50.5%
Female[5]	48.9%
Indeterminate[5]	0.4%
Number of Children with a Child Protection Plan[7]	100
Number of Children in Care[6]	315
Male[6]	59.7%
Female[6]	40.3%
Indeterminate[5]	0%
Number of children and young people at risk of exploitation[7]	
Significant	12
Moderate	30
Emerging	20

1. Dorset mid-year 2023 population estimates (published July 2024).
2. October 2024 School Census (includes all pupils at a Dorset School aged 10-17: ages as at 31 August 2024).
3. January 2024 School Census (all non-white pupils at a Dorset School, excluding 'Refused' and 'Information not yet obtained').
4. Based on the DWP/HMRC statistics "Children in low income families: local area statistics" (March 2024).
5. From MOSAIC, as at 31 December 2024. Excluding CP and CIC. Gender figures exclude Unknown and Unborn.
6. From MOSAIC, as at 31 December 2024. Gender figures exclude Unknown and Unborn.
7. From MOSAIC as at 31 December 2024.





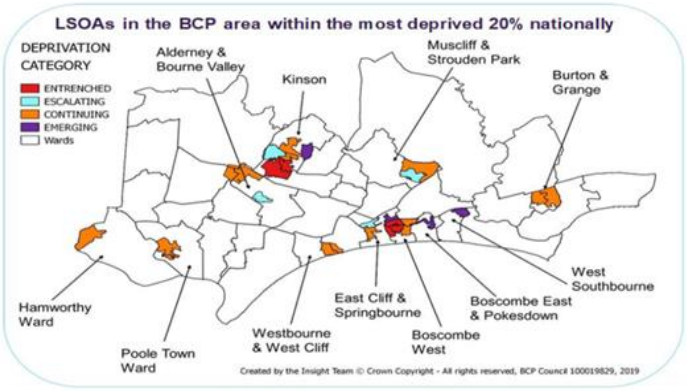
** Good+ Local Authorities are: Cornwall, East Sussex, Norfolk, Shropshire, Somerset, Wiltshire, Worcestershire

Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole

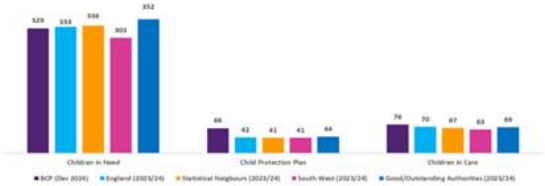
Population[1]:	Age 10-17
Number of Children[1]	35,208
Male[1]	51%
Female[1]	49%
Pupils Eligible for Free School Meals[2]	20.5%
Pupils with SEN Support[2]	14.3%
Pupils with an EHC Plan[2]	5.2%
Pupils from Non-white Minority Ethnic groups[3]	15.9%
25% children living in poverty after housing costs[4]	

Safeguarding	Age 10-17
Number of Children in Need [5]	531
Male [5]	58.0%
Female [5]	42.0%
Number of Children with a Child Protection Plan[7]	203
Number of Children in Care[6]	376
Male[6]	58.7%
Female[6]	41.0%
Indeterminate[6]	0.3%
Number of children and young people at risk of exploitation[8]	
Suffering[8]	18
Risk of harm[8]	41
Potential concerns[8]	35

1. Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole population estimates (published July 2024)
2. October 2024 School Census (includes all pupils at a BCP School aged 10-17: ages as at 31st August 2024)
3. January 2024 School Census (all non-white pupils at a BCP School, excluding 'Refused' and 'Information not yet obtained')
4. Local Child Poverty Statistics : https://endchildpoverty.org.uk/child-poverty-2024 (June 2024).
5. From MOSAIC, as at 3 February 2025. Excluding CP and CIC. Gender figures exclude Unknown and Unborn.
6. From MOSAIC, as at 3 February 2025. Gender figures exclude Unknown and Unborn.
7. From MOSAIC, as at 3 February 2025.
8. From MOSAIC, as at 31 December 2024.



Need comparison (rate per 10,000 0-17 year olds)



** Good+ Local Authorities are: Cornwall, East Sussex, Norfolk, Shropshire, Somerset, Suffolk, Wiltshire and Worcestershire

Common youth justice terms – national glossary

ACE	Adverse Childhood Experience. Events in the child's life that can have negative, long lasting impact on the child's health and life outcomes
AIM 2 and 3	Assessment, Intervention and Moving on; an assessment tool and framework for children who have instigated harmful sexual behaviour
ASB	Anti-social behaviour
AssetPlus	Assessment tool to be used for children who have been involved in offending behaviour
CAMHS	Child and adolescent mental health services
CCE	Child Criminal exploitation, where a child is forced, through threats of violence, or manipulated to take part in criminal activity
Children	We define a child as anyone who has not yet reached their 18th birthday. This is in line with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child and civil legislation in England and Wales. The fact that a child has reached 16 years of age, is living independently or is in further education, is a member of the armed forces, is in hospital or in custody in the secure estate, does not change their status or entitlements to services or protection.
Child First	A system wide approach to working with children in the youth justice system. There are four tenets to this approach which should be: developmentally informed, strength based, promote participation, and encourage diversion

Child looked-after, also Child in Care	Child Looked After/Child in Care; where a child is looked after by the local authority
CME	Child Missing Education
Constructive resettlement	The principle of encouraging and supporting a child's positive identity development from pro-offending to pro-social
Contextual safeguarding	An approach to safeguarding children which considers the wider community and peer influences on a child's safety
Community resolution	Community resolution; an informal disposal, administered by the police, for low level offending where there has been an admission of guilt
EHCP	Education and health care plan; a plan outlining the education, health and social care needs of a child with additional needs
ETE	Education, training or employment
EHE	Electively home educated; children who are formally recorded as being educated at home and do not attend school
EOTAS	Education other than at school; children who receive their education away from a mainstream school setting
FTE	First Time Entrant. A child who receives a statutory criminal justice outcome for the first time (youth caution, youth conditional caution, or court disposal)
HMIP	Her Majesty Inspectorate of Probation. An independent arms-length body who inspect Youth Justice services and probation services
HSB	Harmful sexual behaviour, developmentally inappropriate sexual behaviour by children, which is harmful to another child or adult, or themselves
JAC	Junior Attendance Centre
MAPPA	Multi agency public protection arrangements
MFH	Missing from Home
NRM	National Referral Mechanism. The national framework for identifying and referring potential victims of modern slavery in order to gain help to support and protect them
OOCD	Out-of-court disposal. All recorded disposals where a crime is recorded, an outcome delivered but the matter is not

	sent to court
Outcome 22/21	An informal disposal, available where the child does not admit the offence, but they undertake intervention to build strengths to minimise the possibility of further offending
Over-represented children	Appearing in higher numbers than the local or national average
RHI	Return home Interviews. These are interviews completed after a child has been reported missing
SLCN	Speech, Language and communication needs
STC	Secure training centre
SCH	Secure children's home
Young adult	We define a young adult as someone who is 18 or over. For example, when a young adult is transferring to the adult probation service.
YJS	Youth Justice Service. This is now the preferred title for services working with children in the youth justice system. This reflects the move to a child first approach
YOI	Young offender institution

This page is intentionally left blank

CABINET

Report subject	**Vitality Stadium land - draft heads of terms**
Meeting date	26 November 2025
Status	Public Report
Executive summary	AFC Bournemouth approached BCP Council in relation to their plans to expand Vitality Stadium at Kings Park. On 1 October 2025 and on 14 October 2025, Cabinet and Council respectively approved the recommendations that officers negotiate Heads of Terms in relation to Option C (two leases) and then return to Cabinet and Council for a decision relating to those Heads of Terms. This report presents the negotiated Heads of Terms and associated values (agreed in principle, without prejudice and subject to contract and Council approval) agreed with AFC Bournemouth and recommends that they are accepted. This report requests authority for officers to instruct BCP's property legal team accordingly and progress the leases to completion. The information in the appendices is commercially sensitive. It is requested that the appendices are treated confidentially.
Recommendations	**It is RECOMMENDED that Cabinet recommends that Council:** **a. Notes the decision of the Cabinet meeting held 1 October 2025 and Council Meeting held 14 October 2025** **b. Approves the Heads of Terms (HOTs) recommended by officers for the Leasehold disposal of two parcels of land at Kings Park to AFC Bournemouth (Option C)** **c. Instructs BCP officers to agree the recommended HOTs with AFC Bournemouth, instruct BCP's legal team accordingly and progress the two leases to completion.**
Reason for recommendations	This report sets out the heads of terms for the re gearing of existing agreements between BCP Council and AFC Bournemouth at Kings Park to enable expansion of the Vitality Stadium. The regear will result in two leases, the terms of which reflect Best Consideration, in line with BCP Councils constitution and financial regulations.

	By approving these recommendations, it will also: - Enable existing leases to be regeared onto more appropriate terms - allow this significant investment to be made into the area, improving the area for fans and park visitors - and help AFC Bournemouth achieve compliance with Premier League regulations
Portfolio Holder(s):	Councillor Mike Cox, Deputy Leader BCP Council and Portfolio Holder for Finance
Corporate Director	Aidan Dunn, Chief Executive
Report Authors	Gwilym Jones MRICS, Estates Manager Edward Alexander, Planning and Contract Manager, Environment – Greenspace Chris Shephard, Head of Policy, Strategy & Partnerships
Wards	Boscombe East & Pokesdown; Boscombe West; East Cliff & Springbourne; Littledown & Iford; Queen's Park
Classification	For Decision

Background

1. AFC Bournemouth (the Club) are a professional football club who compete in the top echelons of English Football, the Premier League, after gaining promotion at the end of the 2021/22 season.

2. The club stadium, the Vitality Stadium, is located at Dean Court in Kings Park, Boscombe, a suburb of the town of Bournemouth.

3. Vitality Stadium is one of the smallest stadiums in the Premier League with a capacity of 11,286 and parking for circa 200 domestic vehicles. There is an area of hardstanding used for fan coaches and media vehicles.

4. Kings Park was transferred to Local Authority ownership, for use as public open space, from two large landowners in the early 20th century. It is one of the largest green spaces within Bournemouth and in addition to the football stadium contains:
   - Community football pitches
   - A cricket square
   - Outdoor bowling green and pavilion

- Play parks
- Athletics stadium
- Leisure and Learning Centre
- Sports pavilion with café
- Plant nursery (currently closed)

5. The Club's core objective is to bring stadium and parking land under Club control to:

   - Cost effectively increase capacity
   - Improve facilities: spectators, players, concessions, club facilities, media, back of house, flexible use/space
   - Review general admission and hospitality provision
   - UEFA and Premier League compliance
   - Minimise disruption to operations and income
   - Manage car parking and travel plans

6. After a lengthy search where several alternative sites were considered, expanding Vitality Stadium was deemed by the Club the most practical and viable to achieve these objectives.

7. The Club will seek to achieve these objectives by:

   - Demolishing the existing South Stand and building a new, larger stand
   - Infilling all four corners to create additional capacity
   - Renovating the East and West stands to provide improved player facilities and hospitality
   - Vertically and horizontally expanding the North and East Stands to increase capacity

8. It is planned to occur over three principal phases: Enabling Works, Phase 1 and Phase 2. Additional capacity is desired for the start of the 2026/27 Premier League season (August 2026). However, the project will be phased over a broadly 2- to-3-year period to minimise disruption to football matches during the football seasons. The project programme has been specifically constructed to avoid playing any home games at an alternative venue while construction is underway.

9. The project area comprises the Vitality Stadium, adjacent surface level car parking and the former training pitches.

10. The training pitches are outside of the discussions and are held under a separate management agreement.

11. The Club commissioned Savills as their planning consultants, and in May of this year, entered into a pre-planning performance agreement with the Local Planning Authority. Their aspiration is to submit a full planning application before the end of 2025. If granted, this would give permission to expand the current stadium as outlined in 8.

12. As the landowner, officers have advised the Club of some proposals that would have negatively impacted Park users and therefore would give rise to an objection in a planning application. The Club have acknowledged the feedback and amended their plans.

13. The Greenspace Team in particular has been engaging with the Planning Officer in the pre app stage and will review future planning applications on (or could possibly impact) land under its management including any ecological impacts, and if relevant, will make submissions. Other services will be doing the same.

14. To facilitate the expansion of the stadium, the Club approached Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole Council (BCP) to discuss the existing agreements and opportunity of regearing these to obtain additional land and allow their expansion plans to come forward.

15. Cabinet (1 October 2025) and Council (14 October 2025) agreed with the recommendations that officers negotiate Heads of Terms and once agreed in principle, return to Cabinet and Council for approval. Several issues were referenced at the Council meeting, and these are considered below:

    - The consultation relating to the disposal of open space was not sufficiently visible and that Ward Councillors were not informed in advance.
    - Land that is currently designated as Public Open Space will have its status changed.

16. Responses:
    - It is a legal requirement under the LGA 1972 that BCP advertise a Disposal of Public Open Space for two consecutive weeks in a newspaper that has a local circulation.
    - As well as being in the Echo's public notices section the Notice was on BCP's website (Public notices of our proposals | BCP) however once a notice 'expires' it is taken down.
    - All views submitted by the public were analysed and an outcome was reached which was detailed in the previous Cabinet report.
    - Officers consulted with Ward Councillors on site in July to discuss the proposals. Ward Councillors were then emailed on 29 July, informing them that the notice was going in the Echo and on their website the following day. A copy of the notice and plan was included in the email.
    - Due to the historic way land in Kings Park had been classified some of the south car park sits within the Council's Public Open Space. There is no plan to change this designation, but because it is Public Open Space, the Council had to legally include it in the disposal notice. This is because new leases, which will include the Public Open Space, are being proposed.
    - Officers consulted again with Ward Councillors on 6 August 2025. This was to explain that there was to be no significant change to the areas involved as they were already under an agreement to the Club. It was also explained that there will be no loss of Public Open Space being proposed but instead a consideration of realignment and updating of current leases.
    - Officers have consulted with Ward Councillors since the work started and continue to do so regularly.

Options Appraisal

17. Option A. Accept the recommendation of this report, that the Heads of Terms noted in confidential appendix A and C are agreed and allow officers to instruct Legal to progress the leases to completion.

18. Option B. Do not accept the recommendations of this report.

Summary of financial implications

19. The Heads of Terms reflect a Market Rent for the Stadium land, and a separate Market Rent for the Car Park land. See summary table in confidential appendix E.

20. The Market Rents reflect independent special valuation advice and should be taken as best consideration. Draft valuation report confidential appendix F. Awaiting final version. Commentary on Best Consideration in confidential appendix G. A formal s.123 commentary will be included in the final valuation report.

21. The Heads of Terms include a rent review mechanism.

22. The payment of a capital premium by AFC Bournemouth with a peppercorn rent has been discounted by the club. The leasing model provides the Club with greater financial agility, enabling investment where it matters most for Premier League Profitability and Sustainability Rules (PSR) compliance, competitive performance, and long-term footballing infrastructure. It aligns financial planning with operational priorities, ensuring the Club can sustain and grow on and off the pitch.

Summary of Legal Implications

23. The Council is empowered to sell land that it holds, and it may do so in any manner that it wishes. The Council is aware that the Secretary of State's consent is needed for any disposal which is considered not to be best value or is to be at an undervalue. It is not considered that the transactions are at an undervalue requiring Secretary of State approval.

24. The council is offering two long leaseholds, the Heads of Terms for which are recommended in this report.

25. Offering the land required via leasehold interest enables BCP to retain an element of control over the land and its use by AFC Bournemouth.

26. The Heads of Terms reflect the terms that exist in the current lease and licence agreement between AFC Bournemouth and BCP Council.

27. The new leases will see new documents drafted with the current ones becoming void upon completion. Upon completion there will be two documents relating to AFC Bournemouth's use of the site and not the five that currently exist.

28. The Heads of Terms have been agreed "without prejudice subject to contract". This means no formal; legally binding agreement exists until the leases are signed by all relevant parties.

Summary of human resources implications

29. There are no direct human resources implications of this decision beyond officer time working on the case.

Summary of sustainability impact

30. There are no sustainability impacts relating to the HOTs. However, there will be impacts relating to the overall project. These are being handled through the independent planning process.

Summary of public health implications

31. Any issues relating to previous landfill of Kings Park will be dealt with through the planning process.

Summary of equality implications

32. An EIA conversation/screening document has been completed. This decision will not have any direct equality implications. The proposed new leases show a change of control rather than loss of space and therefore does not change the current situation. However, mitigation of any future implications is controlled through the Heads of Terms.

Summary of risk assessment

33. By approving the recommendations in this report, which ensure appropriate steps and therefore mitigations are taken, the risk is assessed as being low.

Background papers

34. Council 14 October 2025: AFC Bournemouth stadium expansion. Land requirements and disposal.

https://democracy.bcpcouncil.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=284&MId=6079&Ver=4

Appendices

- Confidential Appendix A: Agreed Heads of Terms (without prejudice, subject to contract and council sign off) Stadium Land
- Confidential Appendix B: Stadium Land Plan
- Confidential Appendix C: Agreed Heads of Terms (without prejudice, subject to contract and council sign off) Car Park
- Confidential Appendix D: Car Park Land Plan
- Confidential Appendix E: Rent Summary
- Confidential Appendix F: Draft Valuation Report

- Confidential Appendix G: Best Consideration

This page is intentionally left blank

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

Document is Restricted

This page is intentionally left blank

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

Document is Restricted

This page is intentionally left blank

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

Document is Restricted

This page is intentionally left blank

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

Document is Restricted

This page is intentionally left blank

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

Document is Restricted

This page is intentionally left blank

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

Document is Restricted

This page is intentionally left blank

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

Document is Restricted

This page is intentionally left blank

COUNCIL

Report subject	**Community Governance Review - Consequential and Supplementary Provisions**
Meeting date	9 December 2025
Status	Public Report
Executive summary	This report presents the consequential and supplementary provisions required to implement the establishment of new town councils for Broadstone, Poole, and Bournemouth, following the Council's decision of 14 October 2025. It outlines the arrangements necessary to ensure the new councils are legally compliant and operationally effective from 1 April 2026. Key recommendations include the formation of Shadow Councils from 1 January 2026 to oversee the recruitment of qualified clerks and address pre-implementation matters, and the agreement of anticipated precept amounts for each council, enabling sound financial planning. The report details the limited transfer of assets, statutory requirements for allotments, and the continuation of certain services under Service Level Agreements to ensure continuity and mitigate risk. These measures are designed to provide a robust framework for the successful transition to new local governance arrangements and to support effective service delivery from inception.
Recommendations	**It is RECOMMENDED that:** **(a) a Shadow Council for each new Council be established from 1 January 2026 for the purposes of recruiting respective Clerks and to deal with any other matters requiring resolution prior to implementation with the membership being as set out in paragraph 26 to this report;** **(b) the Head of Democratic Services be authorised to commence the recruitment process and to advertise the positions of town clerks for Broadstone, Poole and Bournemouth;** **(c) the anticipated precept amounts for Broadstone Town Council, Poole Town Council and Bournemouth Town**

	Council, as detailed in the table at paragraph 35 to this report, be included in the Reorganisation Order.
Reason for recommendations	It is important to ensure that the new town councils are safe and legal and capable of operating effectively from 1 April 2026. The recommendations are seeking to put in place arrangements to allow any matters to be resolved in a timely manner as they arise and to recruit qualified clerks for the new councils. The agreement of the anticipated precept requirements is a required decision of the principal council which will allow the new town councils to function effectively.
Task and Finish Group Chair	Councillor Oliver Walters (Chair of the Task and Finish Group)
Corporate Director	Aidan Dunn (Chief Executive)
Report Authors	Richard Jones (Head of Democratic Services and Deputy Monitoring Officer)
Wards	Council-wide
Classification	For Decision

Background

1. The Council at its meeting on 14 October 2025 approved the establishment of three new local councils for Broadstone, Poole and Bournemouth.
2. The Task and Finish Group were requested to consider the assets and services to be transferred, to evaluate and calculate the projected costs of operating the new councils, and to recommend an anticipated precept requirement for the first year. In preparing the calculation of the anticipated precept it was necessary for the Task and Finish Group to identify potential budget lines for operating the new councils, although it is important to note that it is not for BCP Council to set the actual detailed budget. The new local councils will each be required to set and approve their own budget for 2026/27 by 1 October 2026 which may not exceed the calculated anticipated precept.
3. This report sets out those recommendations which Council is asked to support. The Overview and Scrutiny Board has requested to view the report before consideration by Council. The report will be considered at the meeting on the evening before Council on Monday 8 December. The Chair of the Board accepted that the report would not be available for inclusion with the agenda but would be published on 1 December 2025. Any views of the Board will be reported to full council.

Assets and Services

4. The Task and Finish Group was mindful of the initial limited capacity of the new Councils to manage significant services and considered the direction of Council to limit the transfer of physical assets to those of a civic and ceremonial nature or where transfer is legally required. The only legally required assets are the allotment sites which fall within the boundary of the respective councils.

5. The anticipated budget calculations are based on supporting these limited activities, however, to avoid hamstringing the new councils, additional capacity, contingency and recommended reserves have been included for each of the councils to provide flexibility to support local activities in the first year if desirable by the elected councillors.

Allotments

6. The only statutory land responsibility of local councils is the provision of allotments where there is demand for them. The Local Government (Parishes and Parish Councils) (England) Regulations 2008 requires the transfer of any land to the parish council which immediately before the order date is held by a principal council for any purpose of the Allotments Acts 1908 to 1950 or is vested in a principal council and used for those purposes.

7. The table below includes the allotment sites which must be transferred to the respective new council.

Site	**Managed or Self-Managed**	**Receiving Council**
Broadstone	Managed	Broadstone
Alder Farm, Alderney & Bourne Valley	Managed	Poole
Blake Dene, Penn Hill	Managed	Poole
Bushell Mill , Oakdale	Managed	Poole
Hamworthy	Managed	Poole
Tatnam Farm, Oakdale	Managed	Poole
Tatnam Organic Patch, Oakdale	Self-managed	Poole
Whitecliff, Parkstone	Self-managed	Poole
Widdicombe, Parkstone	Managed	Poole
Merrivale Avenue, East Southbourne & Tuckton	Managed	Bournemouth
Elizabeth Gardens, East Cliff & Springbourne	Managed	Bournemouth
Southill Gardens, Moordown	Managed	Bournemouth
Bournemouth East, West Southbourne	Self-managed	Bournemouth
North Bournemouth, Wallisdown & Winton	Self-managed	Bournemouth
Brook Road, Kinson	Self-managed	Bournemouth

8. Self-managed sites are managed by local allotment societies who maintain the relationship with plot users, including the collection of rents and inspections, with the responsibility of the local authority limited to structural repairs of buildings, trees and to support the societies. Managed sites are operated and managed by the local authority including inspections, billing, grounds maintenance, utilities, etc.

9. The income and expenditure varies between the two operating models and this has been taken into account by the Task and Finish Group for each area.

Property and Mayoralty

10. There are no recommendations to transfer the ownership or responsibility for any other land or buildings to the new councils. The councils will of course need to operate from premises and to meet in local venues. Provision has therefore been made for the initial rental of space although the precise locations will be a matter for the new councils to determine in the longer term.

11. For continuity purposes, the budget provision for both Bournemouth and Poole includes the continued use of shared space for the storage of historic and ceremonial assets (including a strongroom) and for Bournemouth to continue to use the Mayor's parlour at the Civic Centre. Space is also being commissioned in the Guildhall in Poole for the use of the current Mayor and this could be used by the Town Council post-implementation.

12. Other public facilities and community halls could be used for formal meetings for each council as required.

Operating Arrangements of Allotments and Civic Support for Year 1

13. Although, the proposed schedule proposes the transfer of the allotment sites, it is critical that there is continuity of service from 1 April 2026 without any obvious detriment to delivery.

14. There are a number of options for service delivery including the potential transfer of existing operational staff and equipment, the engagement of an external contractor or the establishment of a Service Level Agreement with Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole Council to deliver the services for the first year.

15. It has not been possible in the time available to undertake a full analysis of the manpower requirements and resilience needed to deliver these services directly from 1 April and as a consequence it is considered high risk and undesirable to transfer staff and equipment or engage an external contractor at this stage. Further detailed work will be required by the new local councils in the first year of operation to fully develop a delivery plan.

16. It is therefore recommended that Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole Council continue to deliver the operational services for the management of the allotment sites and to support the mace bearing and chauffeuring duties of the Bournemouth and Poole Mayoralty for the period from 1 April 2026 to 31 March 2027 and a Service Level Agreement be entered into accordingly.

17. This approach will not only provide for a continuation of service for the customer but will also provide more certainty for existing staff delivering the services and allow appropriate time to plan for the delivery of the services from April 2027.

Office Staffing Requirements and Recruitment of Clerks

18. It will be necessary to establish an initial staffing structure for the new local councils. Local councils require as a minimum a designated clerk to the council and a responsible finance officer (RFO). The role of RFO is often performed by the Clerk.

19. It is anticipated at this stage that the Town Council for Broadstone will operate in a manner similar to other parish councils with a qualified clerk employed on a part-time basis (0.5 FTE), assuming the responsibilities of the RFO and operating from home or an office in a local facility or meeting place for limited hours per week.

20. Conversely, the Town Councils for Poole and Bournemouth are likely to desire a greater presence in the Town Centres, serving as a pivotal point of contact to signpost and represent residents, businesses and visitors. The role and profile of Mayor is anticipated to be maintained to both uphold the historic and ceremonial events but to also promote the towns as community, cultural, historic and business destinations.

21. As a consequence, it is anticipated that the town councils will require a qualified full-time clerk, part-time mayoral support officer and a part-time finance officer.

22. It is not envisaged that any existing employees with of BCP Council will transfer to the new councils to support these specific roles under the TUPE Regulations. If this situation changes, it will be necessary to undertake consultation with any member of staff who is considered to fall within this category before commencing further recruitment.

23. The Task and Finish Group are proposing that the recruitment of qualified clerks for each council is commenced as soon as practicably possible to secure an appointment by 1 April 2026. The appointed clerks for Bournemouth and Poole will then lead on the recruitment of additional staff.

24. Subject to the approval of this report, shadow councils will be asked to approve the recruitment process for their respective clerk, including the establishment of an appointments panel.

25. It will be necessary to establish Shadow Councils from 1 January 2026 for the purposes of recruiting respective Clerks and determining other matters that may require a decision prior to implementation.

26. The Shadow Councils shall comprise the BCP Councillors whose wards fall wholly or partially within the boundary of the new town councils. For Broadstone, there are only 2 qualifying ward councillors and therefore it is proposed that the Shadow Council for Broadstone should also include 4 representatives of the Broadstone Neighbourhood Forum.

27. No business shall be dealt with at the Shadow Council meetings if there are fewer than one quarter of Councillors who are members of that body present at the meeting.

Historical Property and Armorial Bearings

28. Since 1 April 2019, the Charter Trustees for Bournemouth and Poole have been custodians of the historic property and armorial bearings. “Historic property” is

defined as including “any charter, insignia, plate, or other property which is of an historic and ceremonial nature”.

29. Upon the establishment of the new town councils, the Charter Trustees will cease to exist and it is therefore critical that the historic property is secured through a formal transfer to the new councils in a Supplementary Order which will be completed before 31 March 2026. This will include a full inventory of the historic property.

30. To secure the Armorial Bearing (typically referred to as Coat of Arms), it will be necessary to submit a petition for a Royal Licence to transfer the Arms. The Kings of Arms at the College of Arms will issue a Certificate confirming the transfer. This is included as an action in a work programme being overseen by officers. Updates will be provided to the respective Shadow Councils.

Assumptions

31. The following section of the report sets out the anticipated precept amount for each council and the estimated Band D Council Tax charge. In developing the precept amounts, there were a number of assumptions used by the Task and Finish Group in their deliberations as set out below.

Category	**Assumption**
Members Allowances	That no provision is made for the payment of members allowances
Pay Award	3% pay award provision included
LGPS (Pension Contributions)	22%
National Insurance Contribution	15%
Contingency provision	30% of expenditure
General Reserves	6 months of net revenue expenditure
Distribution of Existing Charter Trustee (CT) Reserves	Distribution based on the net proportion of the Tax Base movement from existing boundaries to new. Broadstone - 7.9% of Poole CT area Poole – 92.1% of Poole CT area, plus 1.7% of Bournemouth CT area Bournemouth – 98.3% of Bournemouth CT area

Anticipated Precept Amount

32. The Reorganisation Order must specify the anticipated precept requirement for the three new local councils. This sum will include both the cost of the services being transferred and the operational costs required to run the councils. These additional costs include staffing, buildings, subscriptions, telephone, IT and web site, banking, insurance, general office expenses, election expenses, equipment and equipment maintenance, cleaning, utilities, reserves, etc. Provision has also been included for each council to support local events, community groups or other activities, although it will be a matter for each council to determine if and how this is to be used.

33. The estimated requirements have been based on evaluation of other parish and town councils, shared knowledge of existing parish clerks and includes a contingency supplement and general reserve provision. It is advisable for town and parish councils to maintain a general budget reserve equivalent to between three- and twelve-months' net revenue expenditure depending upon the size of the council. The proposed anticipated precept requirement makes provision for general reserves of six months, although the new town councils may vary the level of general reserves it wishes to allocate.

34. Appended to this report is a copy of the working budget template used to calculate the anticipated requirement. As mentioned in paragraph 2, the new local councils will each be required to set and approve their own budget for 2026/27 by 1 October 2026 which may not exceed the calculated anticipated precept. The appendices are for illustrative purposes only and do not constrain the discretion of the new councils to set their own priorities and budget allocations within the anticipated precept total.

35. It is considered prudent financial planning to make contingency provisions in the anticipated amount to allow sufficient headroom for any unforeseen expenditure. The anticipated sum will be used to calculate the Council Tax for each new Council for the first year by dividing the precept requirement by the Council Tax Base. The official Council Tax Base cannot be calculated until after the end of November, however, officers have provided an indicative Council Tax Base for each of the three areas to provide a good indication of the likely Council Tax charge.

36. The table below provides details of the anticipated precept requirement, the indicative tax base and the estimated Band D Council Tax charge.

	Broadstone TC	**Poole TC**	**Bournemouth TC**
Anticipated Precept Total	£296,560	£1,896,970	£1,981,980
Indicative Tax Base	4,909.0	58,215.8	67,172.9
Estimated Band D Council Tax Charge (per annum)	£60.41	£32.59	£29.51

37. The anticipated precept requirement excludes the transfer of Community Infrastructure Levy funds. On-going work is being undertaken in relation to the impact and distribution of CIL funds to the new councils, however, this does not impact on the anticipated precept requirement as CIL funds cannot be used to offset revenue expenditure. CIL money must be spent on the provision, improvement, or maintenance of infrastructure.

Implementation Workstreams

38. The implementation of the three new councils is a complex project and work must focus on priority activities which to date has included the drafting of reorganisation orders, calculation of council tax bases, drawing of definitive GIS maps, electoral registration changes and the modelling of anticipated budget requirements. Listed below are a series of workstreams identifying associated actions. Many of the actions will require completion prior to 1 April 2026, others will be for the new councils to implement.

39. The list is not exhaustive and has been presented in this format for ease of reference for Council.

Legal & Governance
Draft Reorganisation Orders; Submit Orders to Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE); Notify Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC); Application to College of Arms; Draft Standing Orders; Draft Financial Regulations; Model Code of Conduct; Draft Scheme of Delegation; Draft committee structure and schedule
Finance & Taxation
Calculate Tax Base; Set anticipated budget and precept requirements; Establish bank accounts; Arrange external audit provision; Procure Insurance provision; Determine cost of operating allotments; Creation of ledgers
Assets & Property
Identify & Transfer Assets; Determine extent of allotment sites to be transferred; Finalise asset registers; Valuation of assets update; Confirm insurance cover for transferred assets
Staffing & Operations
Appoint Interim or Permanent Staff; Interim payroll services; Secure interim office accommodation and meeting venues; Procure IT Equipment, telephony and software
Elections & Democratic Services
Election date; Define warding arrangements and polling stations; Update registers to reflect new boundaries and wards; Publish Notice of Election; Prepare induction packs and training for new councillors; Set date for first Annual Town Council meetings
Mapping & Data
Finalise definitive GIS boundary mapping; Update LLPG (Local Land and Property Gazetteer); Notify Ordnance Survey (provide Shape Files); Update Council Tax System for new parishes; Identify other systems requiring updates (planning, highways, licensing, etc)
Communications & Engagement
Development communication plan; Promote governance arrangements with residents; Organise community welcome events; Set up email and website domains; Launch websites and social media channels
Registrations and Notifications
Register with HMRC; Register with Information Commissioners Officer (ICO); Register VAT office (if applicable); Register with Pensions Regulator (if applicable); Notify / remind local MP's, Departments, Local Partners and other Stakeholders

Options Appraisal

40. The Task and Finish Group was tasked with recommending the anticipated precept requirements for each council and has spent considerable time debating the level to be set. Council is required to agree the anticipated precept requirement and this is recommended for approval.

41. If Council fails to agree an amount for each town council at this meeting it will be necessary to convene an extraordinary meeting before the end of January 2026.

Summary of financial implications

42. There are no direct financial implications arising from this report, however, as outlined in the previous report to Council in October, budget contingency has been set aside to undertake the community governance review process. It was highlighted that there may be a requirement to make system and service changes to recognise the new councils. The budget underspend on this project to date has been released, however, any external costs required to support the implementation will need to be drawn down from the councils unearmarked reserves.

43. There will be a requirement for officers from various service areas to support the proposed Shadow Councils and the activities identified within the various workstreams.

Summary of legal implications

44. The Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 (Part 4) devolved power from the Secretary of State to principal councils to carry out community governance reviews and put in place or make changes to local community governance arrangements. The Community Governance Review was undertaken in accordance with this Act.

45. To implement the new councils, the Council will be required to draw up Community Governance Re-organisation Orders.

46. The Local Government Finance (New Parishes) (England) Regulations 2008 permits councils to anticipate a precept and provides that the new parish council then sets the budget which must not exceed the amount specified in the establishment order for it. This report is seeking the Council's approval of the anticipated precept requirements.

Summary of human resources implications

47. There are no direct human resource implications arising from this report, however, we will need to consider any potential impacts upon existing staff who support the activities of the new councils, including extra work required during any hand over period. It is proposed to initially establish an SLA with the new councils to allow sufficient time to fully consider the implications.

Summary of sustainability impact

48. There are no direct sustainability impacts arising from this report.

Summary of public health implications

49. There are no direct public health impacts arising from this report.

Summary of equality implications

50. There are no direct equality implications arising from this report. There is a legal requirement to agree an anticipated precept requirement. The introduction of new councils will result in an additional council tax burden. For those in economic hardship and in receipt of council tax discounts, the same discounts will apply to these additional charges.

Summary of risk assessment

51. It is vital that the Governance Review is undertaken in accordance with the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 and the guidance produced by the Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government and the Local Government Boundary Commission for England. Failure to adhere to these could result in the Review being open to challenge and judicial review.

52. All operational costs will be borne by the relevant parish or town council through an appropriate precept.

Background papers

Published works

Appendices

Appendix 1 - Indicative draft budget for Broadstone Town Council
Appendix 2 - Indicative draft budget for Poole Town Council
Appendix 3 - Indicative draft budget for Bournemouth Town Council

Description	Allotments	Events	Community Development / Neighbourhood Planning	Members	Civic	Central Operating Costs	Contributions to Reserves	TOTAL
Salary Costs (Inc. salary overheads)	3,200					33,760		36,960
Staff Training						2,000		2,000
Total Employees	**3,200**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**35,760**	**0**	**38,960**
Electricity						2,000		2,000
Minor Maintenance and Repair	50							50
Rates						2,000		2,000
Rent						10,390		10,390
Water	480							480
Service Recharges	410							410
Total Premises	**940**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**14,390**	**0**	**15,330**
Mileage						500		500
Total Transport	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**500**	**0**	**500**
Audit Fees						600		600
Bank Charges						350		350
Civic Services						1,500		1,500
Website / Comms Support						5,000		5,000
Elections				36,740				36,740
Equipment						750		750
Grants Funding / Projects			15,000					15,000
HR Advice						600		600
Insurance						1,500		1,500
IT Support						3,500		3,500
IT Systems	80					750		830
Legal Advice						600		600
Waste & Recycling	20							20
Mayors Budget / Hospitality					500			500
Training & Conferences				200				200
Photography					100			100
Flowers					100			100
Members Training					500			500
Travel & Subsistence					100			100
Payroll						450		450
Printing						100		100
Postage						50		50
Small Tools						1,000		1,000
Stationery						1,000		1,000
Subscriptions & Memberships	10					2,000		2,010
Telephones						500		500
Tree and Hedge Maintenance	600							600
General grounds maintenance	6,040							6,040
Office Provisions						2,000		2,000
Publicity & Promotions					500			500
Supplies	60							60
Christmas Lights		3,000						3,000
Minor & Civic Events		8,000						8,000
Transfer to Reserves							85,570	85,570
Total Supplies & Services	**6,810**	**11,000**	**15,000**	**36,940**	**1,800**	**22,250**	**85,570**	**179,370**
Total Expenditure	**10,950**	**11,000**	**15,000**	**36,940**	**1,800**	**72,900**	**85,570**	**234,160**
General Contingency Fund								70,270
								304,430
Fees and Charges	(6,800)							(6,800)
Allotment keys	(70)							(70)
Interest						(1,000)		(1,000)
Total Income	**(6,870)**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**(1,000)**	**0**	**(7,870)**
NET TOTAL	**4,080**	**11,000**	**15,000**	**36,940**	**1,800**	**71,900**	**85,570**	**296,560**
Precept Requirement								**296,560**
Indicative Tax Base								**4,909.0**
Estimated Band D Charge								**£60.41**
Cost Per Month								**£5.03**
Cost Per Week								**£1.16**

Description	
Opening Balance	**0**
Transfer from Charter Trustees Reserves	7,090
Transfer from Budget (Reserves)	85,570
Closing Balance	**92,660**

Description	Allotments	Events	Community Development / Neighbourhood Planning	Members	Civic	Central Operating Costs	Contributions to Reserves	TOTAL
Salary Costs (Inc. salary overheads)	22,350					203,440		225,790
Staff Training						2,500		2,500
Total Employees	**22,350**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**205,940**	**0**	**228,290**
Minor Maintenance and Repair	310							310
Rent						62,970		62,970
Water	3,360							3,360
Service Recharges	2,820							2,820
Total Premises	**6,490**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**62,970**	**0**	**69,460**
Contract Fleet Hire					400			400
Use of Vehicles					3,000			3,000
Fuel					1,000			1,000
Total Transport	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**4,400**	**0**	**0**	**4,400**
Audit Fees						3,500		3,500
Bank Charges						500		500
Civic Services		2,000				2,000		4,000
Website / Comms Support						14,500		14,500
Elections				412,920				412,920
Equipment						2,000		2,000
Grants Funding / Projects			112,000					112,000
HR Advice						1,750		1,750
Insurance						3,500		3,500
IT Support						1,650		1,650
IT Systems	530					1,000		1,530
Legal Advice						2,000		2,000
Accountancy						4,000		4,000
Waste & Recycling	140							140
Mayors Budget / Hospitality					10,000	300		10,300
Out of Pocket Expenses					1,000			1,000
Civic Regalia					2,500			2,500
Civic Awards					2,000			2,000
Training & Conferences				1,000				1,000
Photography					150			150
Flowers					300			300
Members Training					1,000			1,000
Travel & Subsistence					200			200
Payroll						750		750
Printing						350		350
Postage						100		100
Protective Clothing & Uniforms						300		300
Remembrance Service		5,000						5,000
Stationery						1,500		1,500
Subscriptions & Memberships	50					4,000		4,050
Telephones						1,200		1,200
Tree and Hedge Maintenance	6,000							6,000
General Grounds Maintenance	42,270							42,270
Publicity & Promotions					400			400
Laundry					200			200
Supplies	360							360
Annual Mayor-Making		2,500						2,500
Mayor-Making Procession		1,500						1,500
Minor & Civic Events		2,000						2,000
Sheriff Convention					1,000			1,000
Anniversary War Commomorations		6,000						6,000
Freedom Parades / Events		13,000						13,000
Transfer to Reserves							523,850	523,850
Total Supplies & Services	**49,350**	**32,000**	**112,000**	**413,920**	**18,750**	**44,900**	**523,850**	**1,194,770**
Total Expenditure	**78,190**	**32,000**	**112,000**	**413,920**	**23,150**	**313,810**	**523,850**	**1,496,920**
General Contingency Fund								449,100
								1,946,020
Fees and Charges	(47,590)							(47,590)
Allotment keys	(460)							(460)
Interest						(1,000)		(1,000)
Total Income	**(48,050)**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**(1,000)**	**0**	**(49,050)**
NET TOTAL	**30,140**	**32,000**	**112,000**	**413,920**	**23,150**	**312,810**	**523,850**	**1,896,970**
Precept Requirement								**1,896,970**
Indicative Tax Base								**58,215.8**
Band D Charge								**£32.59**
Cost Per Month								**£2.72**
Cost Per Week								**£0.63**

Description	
Opening Balance	**0**
Transfer from Charter Trustees Reserves	84,134
Transfer from Budget (Reserves)	523,850
Closing Balance	**607,984**

Description	Allotments	Events	Community Development / Neighbourhood Planning	Members	Civic	Central Operating Costs	Contributions to Reserves	TOTAL
Salary Costs (Inc. salary overheads)	7,000					203,440		210,440
Staff Training						2,500		2,500
Total Employees	**7,000**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**205,940**	**0**	**212,940**
Minor Maintenance and Repair	20							20
Rent						48,720		48,720
Response Maintenance	6,000							6,000
Water	650							650
Service Recharges	3,240							3,240
Total Premises	**9,910**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**48,720**	**0**	**58,630**
Contract Fleet Hire					400			400
Use of Vehicles					3,000			3,000
Fuel					1,000			1,000
Total Transport	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**4,400**	**0**	**0**	**4,400**
Audit Fees						3,500		3,500
Bank Charges						500		500
Civic Services		2,000				2,000		4,000
Website / Comms Support						14,500		14,500
Elections				483,870				483,870
Equipment						2,000		2,000
Grants Funding / Projects			138,000					138,000
HR Advice						1,750		1,750
Insurance						3,500		3,500
IT Support	600					1,650		2,250
IT Systems						1,000		1,000
Legal Advice						1,000		1,000
Accountancy						4,000		4,000
Mayors Budget / Hospitality					10,000	300		10,300
Out of Pocket Expenses					1,000			1,000
Civic Regalia					6,000			6,000
Civic Awards					2,000			2,000
Training & Conferences				1,000				1,000
Photography					150			150
Flowers					300			300
Members Training					1,000			1,000
Travel & Subsistence					200			200
Payroll						750		750
Printing						350		350
Postage						100		100
Protective Clothing & Uniforms						200		200
Remembrance Service		10,000						10,000
Stationery						1,500		1,500
Subscriptions & Memberships	60					4,000		4,060
Telephones						1,200		1,200
Tree and Hedge Maintenance	2,000							2,000
Publicity & Promotions					400			400
Laundry					200			200
Supplies	170							170
Annual Mayor-Making		3,000						3,000
Minor & Civic Events		2,000						2,000
Anniversary War Commomorations		6,000						6,000
Transfer to Reserves							538,540	538,540
Total Supplies & Services	**2,830**	**23,000**	**138,000**	**484,870**	**21,250**	**43,800**	**538,540**	**1,252,290**
Total Expenditure	**19,740**	**23,000**	**138,000**	**484,870**	**25,650**	**298,460**	**538,540**	**1,528,260**
General Contingency Fund								458,510
								1,986,770
Fees and Charges	(3,790)							(3,790)
Transfer from Reserves						(1,000)		(1,000)
Total Income	**(3,790)**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**(1,000)**	**0**	**(4,790)**
NET TOTAL	**15,950**	**23,000**	**138,000**	**484,870**	**25,650**	**297,460**	**538,540**	**1,981,980**
Precept Requirement								**1,981,980**
Indicative Tax Base								**67,172.9**
Band D Charge								**£29.51**
Cost Per Month								**£2.46**
Cost Per Week								**£0.57**

Description	
Opening Balance	**0**
Transfer from Charter Trustees Reserves	102,397
Transfer from Budget (Reserves)	538,540
Closing Balance	**640,937**

This page is intentionally left blank

COUNCIL

Report subject	**Appointment of Parent Governor Representatives (maintained schools) Co-opted to Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee**
Meeting date	9 December 2025
Status	Public Report
Executive summary	The four-year term of Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee Co-opted Parent Governor Representatives (PGRs) came to an end resulting in Democratic Services commencing the process of recruiting two new PGRs (maintained schools) to sit as a Co-opted Members. Following an election and in line with good practice, Council is asked to approve the appointment of the two successful nominees.
Recommendations	**It is RECOMMENDED that:** **Council approves the following nominees to be co-opted to the Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee for a four-year term:** • **Jeremy Payne, Linwood Special School** • **Matt Tuddenham, Highcliffe St Mark Primary School**
Reason for recommendations	To appoint two new Parent Governor Representatives from maintained schools as Co-opted Members to the Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee.
Portfolio Holder(s):	N/A – Overview and Scrutiny is a non-executive function
Corporate Director	Robin Watson, Interim Monitoring Officer, Law and Governance
Report Authors	Louise Smith, Senior Democratic and Overview and Scrutiny Officer
Wards	All
Classification	For Decision

Background

1. Under the provisions of the Local Government Act 2000 and the Parent Governor Representatives (England) Regulations 2001, local authorities must appoint representatives of parent governors (PGRs) at maintained schools to Scrutiny Committees which deal with Education matters. This is to enable parents to have a direct input to policies on education provision for pupils of school age.
2. Upon appointment, the PGRs will sit on Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee for a four-year term.
3. Following the end of term for the outgoing Parent Governor Representatives, Democratic Services undertook the process of seeking nominations to appoint two new PGRs from BCP maintained schools.
4. Democratic Services received three nominations for the two available positions and so moved to an election in line with Regulations.
5. The election was carried out in accordance with the Regulations to enable all PGRs from maintained schools to vote. The election ran from Monday 3 November 2025 with a closing date of 21 November 2025 for receipt of votes. The closing date was extended by a week to Friday 28 November 2025, due to Democratic Services being made aware of some schools delaying distribution of the letters enclosing ballot papers to its PGRs. This extension was communicated to all relevant schools.
6. Following the successful appointment of two PGRs from maintained schools, Democratic Services will undertake a similar process to seek a PGR representative from an Academy setting. This is a local choice and not governed by legislation but is felt to be beneficial in representing the wider parent community within BCP.
7. If confirmed by Council, the effective start date for the four-year term will be 9 December 2025.

Election results

8. Following a count of all votes received by the closing date of Friday 28 November 2025, the successful candidates are:
    - Jeremy Payne, Linwood Special School
    - Matt Tuddenham, Highcliffe St Mark Primary School

Options Appraisal

9. Confirm PGRs for the reasons outlined within this Report.

10. Do nothing. This would be in contravention of the Local Government Act 2000 and the Parent Governor Representatives (England) Regulations 2001, which state that local authorities must appoint representatives of parent governors (PGRs) at maintained schools to Scrutiny Committees which deal with Education matters.

- **Summary of financial implications**

11. The two PGRs will receive renumeration in accordance with relevant section of the agreed Members Allowance Scheme. The current renumeration for Co-opted Members of BCP Committees is £1,239 per annum.

Summary of legal implications

12. Confirmation by Council of the co-optees elected will ensure that the Council fulfils its obligations under the Local Government Act 2000 and the Parent Governor Representatives (England) Regulations 2001.

Summary of human resources implications

13. There are no human resources implications arising from this report.

Summary of sustainability impact

14. There are no sustainability implications arising from this report.

Summary of public health implications

15. There are no public health implications arising from this report.

Summary of equality implications

16. This report continues arrangements in terms of co-opted membership on Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee and seeks to confirm new representatives for these roles in line with Regulations. As there is no service change an equality impact assessment has not been undertaken.

17. Inclusion of Co-opted Representatives on Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee provides opportunity for additional input into the decision making process from parents with children in the BCP education system.

Summary of risk assessment

18. There are no risks arising from this Report.

Background papers

None.

Appendices

There are no appendices to this report.

This page is intentionally left blank

COUNCIL

Report subject	**Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report**
Meeting date	9 December 2025
Status	Public Report
Executive summary	This is the annual report of the Statutory Scrutiny Officer on Overview and Scrutiny (O&S) activity within BCP Council for which there is an annual requirement to report to Council. This promotes visibility of the O&S function and Council ownership of activity and any improvements required. The annual report contains a summary and analysis of O&S activity during 2024-25, reflections on working practices and identified improvements to strengthen the O&S function. This report was preceded by consultation on proposals with the O&S Board and Committees and comments raised by O&S members are summarised within this report.
Recommendations	**It is RECOMMENDED that:** **1. Council consider and comment on the annual report.** **2. Council agree the minor amendment to O&S committee remits as outlined in figure one.** 3. **To maximise the resource available for O&S work, Council agree the following:** **i) for pieces of in-depth work, the constitution be updated to allow one scrutiny topic to be undertaken at a time across the whole O&S function, with one further topic being scoped during the same period.** **ii) the O&S Chairs and Vice Chairs group role be strengthened to include a responsibility to agree the priority of all work topics across the full O&S committee structure.** **iii) the O&S Chairs and Vice Chairs group strengthen scoping for all O&S topics by reviewing key lines of enquiry for topics on an ongoing basis to provide peer test and challenge.**

	iv) the Monitoring Officer be delegated to make the associated updates to the Constitution.
Reason for recommendations	The Constitution requires the Statutory Scrutiny Officer to report to Council on an annual basis on the work of Overview and Scrutiny, including recommendations for any changes that may be required to ensure the function remains fit for purpose. The report must be informed by consultation with the Chairs and Vice-Chairs of the O&S Committees and referred to the four O&S Committees for comment. Consideration and comment on the annual report by the O&S Committees and Council upholds principle b) of good scrutiny, as outlined in the Constitution, that O&S shall 'be a Councillor led and owned function that seeks to continuously improve through self-reflection and development'.
Portfolio Holder(s):	Not applicable – Overview and Scrutiny is a non-executive function.
Corporate Director	Aidan Dunn - Chief Executive
Report Authors	Lindsay Marshall – Overview and Scrutiny Specialist
Wards	Council-wide
Classification	For Decision

Background

The Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report

1. 'Overview and Scrutiny: statutory guidance for councils and combined authorities' by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) and the Department for Levelling Up, Housing & Communities (DLUHC), recommends that councils report annually on their Overview & Scrutiny (O&S) function and activity. The purpose of the report is to outline the activity and output of the O&S function over the previous year and to identify improvements for the function to ensure it remains fit for purpose. This report is based on the municipal year of May 2024 - April 2025.
2. The report will be received by all O&S Committees and at a meeting of Council but is aimed at all stakeholders of O&S – this includes those within the Council, external partners, and the public and communities served by the council.
3. This is the report of the council's Statutory Scrutiny Officer, who is responsible for supporting and promoting O&S activity. Contribution has been made by other officers who provide support to O&S, and Chairs and Vice Chairs of O&S committees. Comments made by Chairs and Vice Chairs through consultation are reflected within the body of this report.

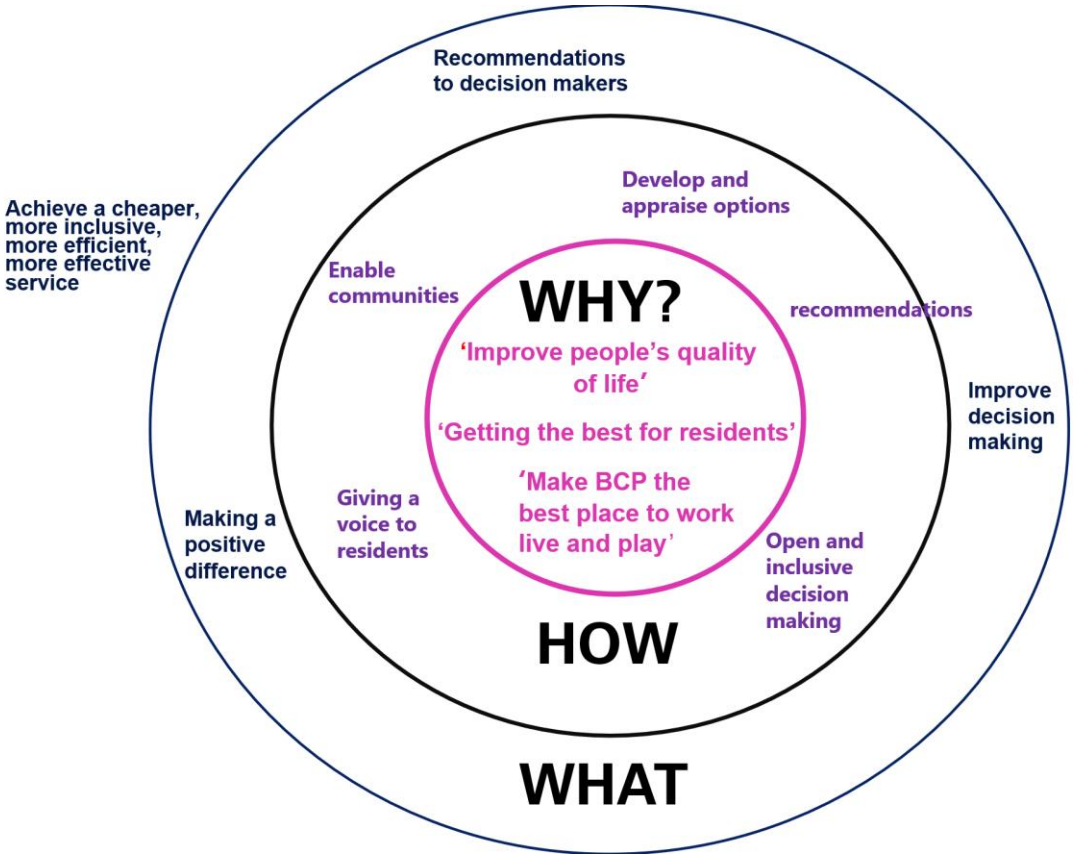
What is Overview and Scrutiny?

4. The purpose and principles of overview and scrutiny and its role in supporting the ambitions and values of the council is set out in Appendix 1.

What does good scrutiny look like?

5. There is not one definition of good scrutiny. In development workshops in 2025, stakeholders of O&S worked together to articulate their view on what good scrutiny looks like in BCP council. This is illustrated below as a 'What/ How/ Why' of good scrutiny, and an outline of good scrutiny ways of working:

Good scrutiny – what/ how / why – defined by BCP O&S members, Cabinet and senior officers:



Good scrutiny – ways of working – defined by BCP O&S members, Cabinet and senior officers:

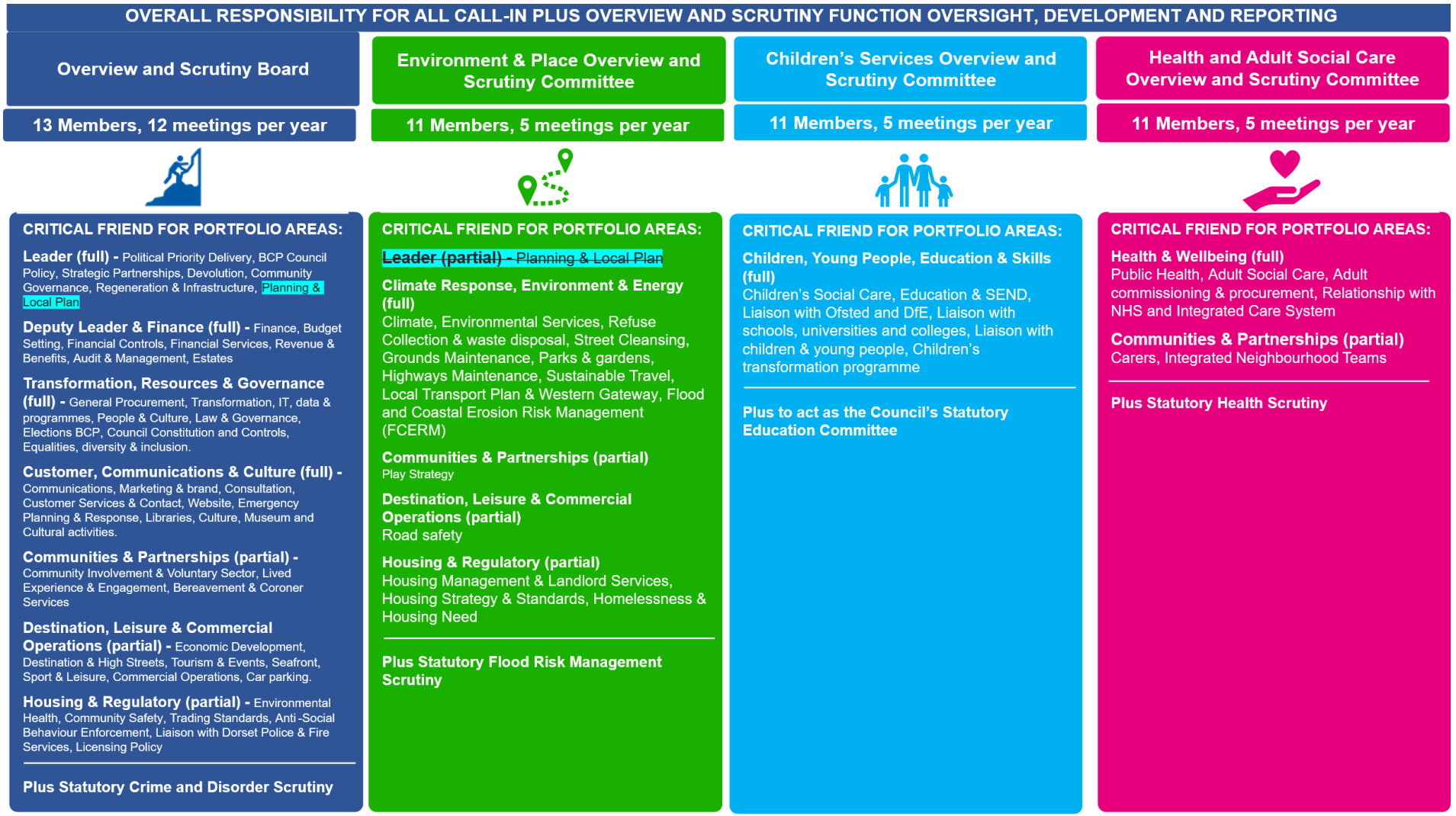
Approaches	Ask sensible questions
	Critical friend
	Sharing information
	Exploring information and data
	Wider input from members and community
Accountability	Accountability, defending decisions
	Holding systems, officers and outside bodies to account
	Asking questions of officials and portfolio holders
Policy development	A check on policy
	Adding value to the position, policy on output
	Opportunity to refine decisions and ensure views are considered
Overview and direction setting	More overview – forward looking
	Venue for fresh ideas

6. Understanding what good scrutiny looks like in BCP is important as this helps stakeholders of O&S work towards a common aim and to reflect on how well the organisation is meeting this aim. This annual report forms a key part of the reflection process and allows councillors the opportunity to refresh their understanding of the aims and purpose of scrutiny.

The Overview & Scrutiny Committee structure

7. The current Overview and Scrutiny Committee structure is illustrated in figure one below. The Council's Constitution makes provision for any changes required to the structure to be reported to Council as part of this annual report, to ensure committees remain fit for purpose. Councillors will note that 'Planning and the Local Plan' is highlighted and listed under the responsibilities of the O&S Board and removed from the responsibilities of the Environment & Place O&S Committee. This change was agreed by the Monitoring Officer in 2025 in consultation with O&S Chairs under constitution rules relating to joint working, to allow for more flexible interaction with the developing local plan through the higher frequency of O&S Board meetings. It is suggested that this now be agreed by Council as a permanent change to ensure clear lines of reporting.

Figure One – Overview and Scrutiny Committee structure



Overview & Scrutiny Activity 2024/25

8. A full outline of Overview and Scrutiny activity during this reporting year is attached at Appendix 2. This includes a summary of scrutiny topics and outcomes by committee, improvements and successes, and future aims.

Overview & Scrutiny Action Plan

9. An O&S Action Plan was agreed by Council in September 2023, to identify strategic actions to improve O&S activity in BCP Council and bring working practices in line with statutory guidance. Actions were originally planned for completion within one year but have slowed as a result of resource pressures with core service activity prioritised over action plan progression. The plan now is now at over 75% completion. More detail is set out in Appendix 2 and the full O&S Action Plan is available to view as a background paper to this report.

Recommendations from Council to Overview & Scrutiny

10. During 2024/25 there was a marked increase in recommendations from Council to Overview and Scrutiny committees to undertake work (detailed further in Appendix 2). This increase shows a greater council-wide understanding of the role that O&S can play in developing policy and providing critical friend test and challenge to issues of importance to councillors and residents.

11. When receiving a request for work, including requests from Council, O&S committees are required to weigh up the likely added value of any work suggestion and the resources available to it to proceed with the request. Many suggestions from Council to scrutiny have been agreed by O&S committees but not yet progressed owing to lack of work programme capacity. O&S Chairs and Vice Chairs have asked that, through this report, councillors be reminded that whilst Council can ask Overview and Scrutiny to undertake work, it is in the gift of the relevant O&S committee to determine whether to agree to this request and when to timetable work, taking account of other work programme priorities.

12. Many recommendations from Council to O&S result from motions raised by councillors. To make this process more effective, it is recommended that Councillors wishing to raise a Council motion for O&S work seek prior consultation with the relevant O&S Chair. This will enable them to gain an understanding of available O&S resources, the alignment of their motion with existing work programme priorities and so the likelihood of their work suggestion being agreed / progressing in a timely way through O&S.

Resourcing Overview & Scrutiny

Background and Challenges

13. Resources available to support Overview and Scrutiny are stretched and have been well documented in previous annual reports which are available to view as background papers. The most significant pressures relate to previous cumulative Council decisions to increase the number of O&S committees and meeting numbers over time, not matched by officer resource to support these. Accompanied by an increase in other committees also resourced by the same team (Democratic Services) the overall resource available to support Overview and Scrutiny work has reduced whilst the level of O&S and other committee activity has increased. This is illustrated in figure two below which shows the total meeting numbers resourced by the Democratic Services team.

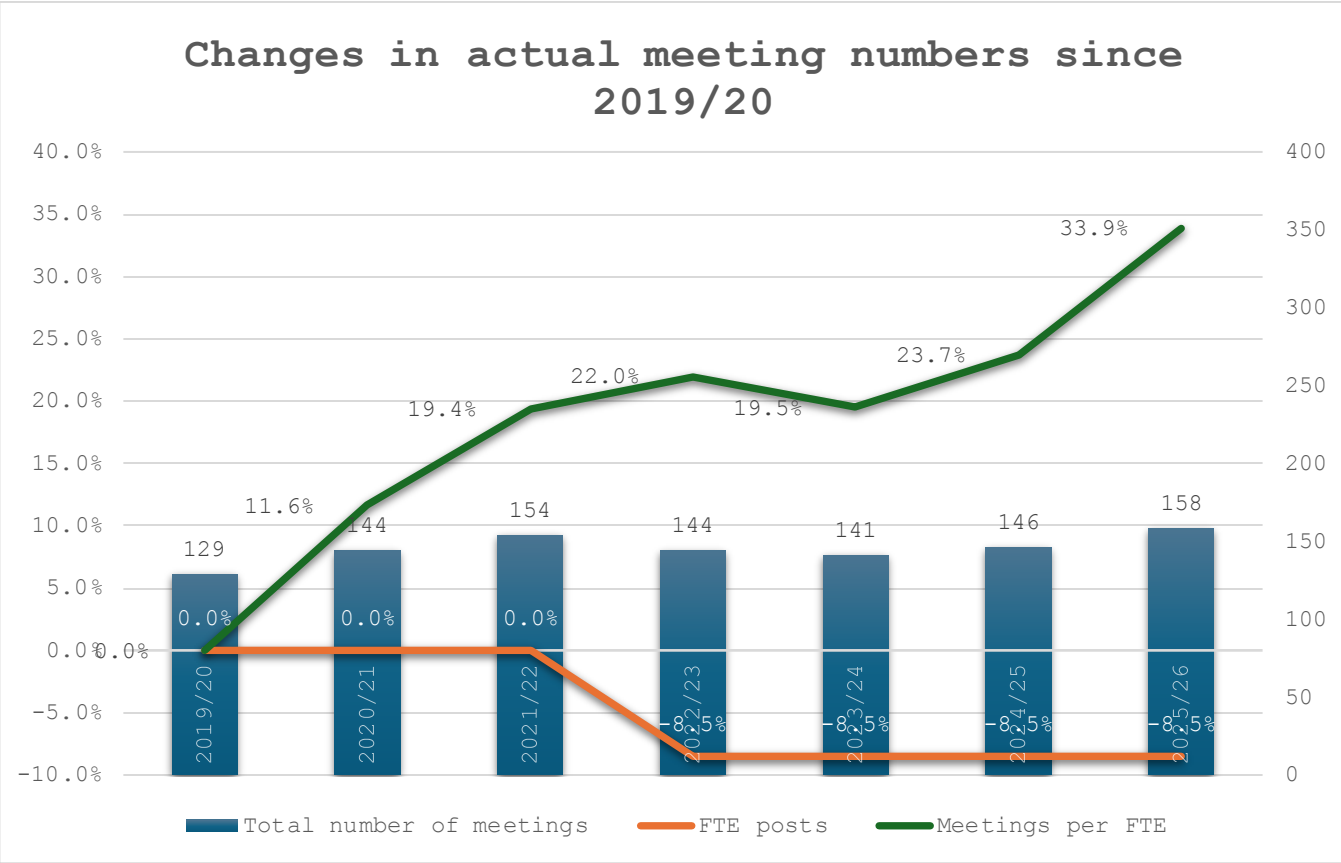


Figure Two – BCP meeting numbers in relation to Democratic Services Team resource.

14. More recently resource has been further strained by a high number of working groups and other in-depth scrutiny work (such as committee based proactive inquiries) scheduled to take place concurrently, as permitted under the constitution. An increase in work programme suggestions being received from councillors and other council bodies has also been seen, and day to day advice and guidance to councillors and officers on O&S has also increased in line with this. Whilst this reflects a healthy engagement with the O&S function and a wider understanding of the ability of O&S to undertake work which contributes to the priorities of the Council, this has added additional pressure to resources.

15. The impact of highly stretched resource has been a slow rate of progression for planned work, delays to strategic O&S work (such as annual work programme activity), limited resource available to respond to arising issues throughout the year and the likelihood that O&S outcomes have been limited in value as planned work has not benefitted from effective levels of officer support.

16. Scoping support: analysis of scrutiny outcomes in 2024/25 indicates that the current level of activity in O&S could benefit from strengthened scoping to plan for valuable outcomes. In 2024/25 an average of 25% agenda items across all O&S committee meetings led to recommendations. Whilst not all scrutiny work will lead to recommendations, this figure indicates that there is room for more targeted selection

of scrutiny topics and stronger scoping of the topics selected to ensure that O&S activity has impact.

Addressing resource challenges

Levels of concurrent work

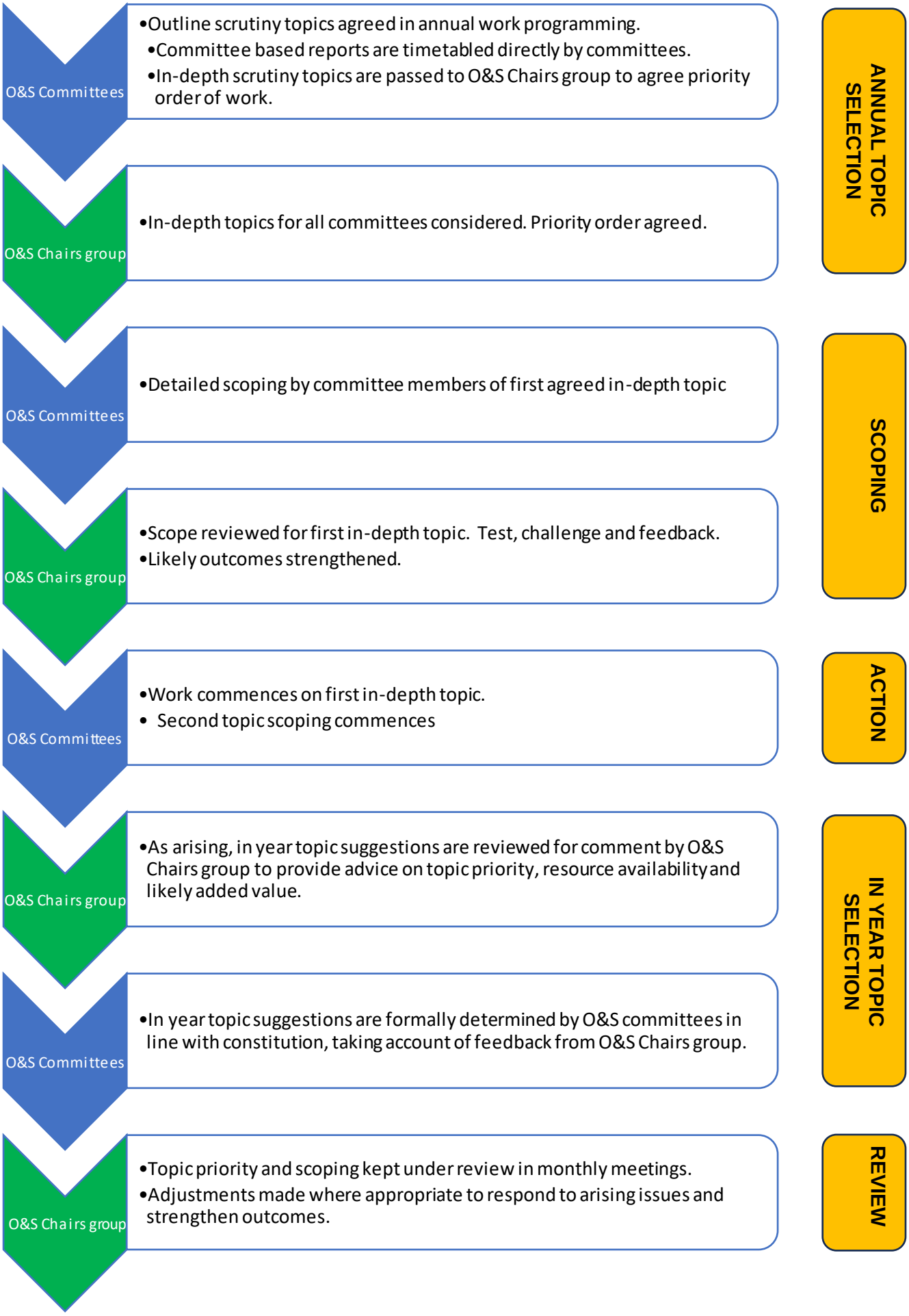
17. Under current Constitution rules, up to four committees are able to undertake one piece of in-depth work concurrently with no limit on scoping activity. This high level of concurrent activity across all O&S committees dilutes the level of officer support that is available for this purpose and risks a quantity over quality approach. To make better use of existing resources it is recommended that greater controls be placed around the use of resource for work that requires significant planning and resource to undertake (eg. working groups/ in-depth committee inquiries**). For pieces of in-depth work, it is recommended that the constitution be updated to allow one topic to be scrutinised at a time across the whole O&S function, with one further topic being scoped during the same period (Option A).** This will enable greater and more timely focus and support to selected topics in train.

Topic prioritisation

18. To agree the priority of in-depth topics, **it is recommended that the O&S Chairs and Vice Chairs group role be strengthened to include a responsibility to agree the priority of all work topics across the full O&S committee structure.** Currently, all O&S committees are able to decide their own work priorities. It is not proposed that this be changed but adding a level of O&S leadership sign off to the implementation of in-depth work will provide tighter grip to the use of resource and test and challenge to the selection of topics before work commences.

Topic scoping

19. To plan for valuable O&S outcomes, **it is recommended that the O&S Chairs and Vice Chairs group strengthen scoping for all O&S topics by reviewing key lines of enquiry for topics on an ongoing basis.** This group of O&S lead members have received a higher level of training in achieving effective O&S outcomes and are well placed to provide peer challenge.
20. Figure three below illustrates the proposed oversight to be provided by the O&S Chairs and Vice Chairs group. It is intended that this will provide opportunity for an ongoing dialogue with committees to give views on topic suggestions, resource availability and likely added value of the topics suggested. It is suggested that this be kept under continuous review to ensure that arrangements are fit for purpose.


O&S Committees
•Outline scrutiny topics agreed in annual work programming.
•Committee based reports are timetabled directly by committees.
•In-depth scrutiny topics are passed to O&S Chairs group to agree priority order of work.
ANNUAL TOPIC SELECTION
O&S Chairs group
•In-depth topics for all committees considered. Priority order agreed.
O&S Committees
•Detailed scoping by committee members of first agreed in-depth topic
SCOPING
O&S Chairs group
•Scope reviewed for first in-depth topic. Test, challenge and feedback.
•Likely outcomes strengthened.
O&S Committees
•Work commences on first in-depth topic.
• Second topic scoping commences
ACTION
O&S Chairs group
•As arising, in year topic suggestions are reviewed for comment by O&S Chairs group to provide advice on topic priority, resource availability and likely added value.
O&S Committees
•In year topic suggestions are formally determined by O&S committees in line with constitution, taking account of feedback from O&S Chairs group.
IN YEAR TOPIC SELECTION
O&S Chairs group
•Topic priority and scoping kept under review in monthly meetings.
•Adjustments made where appropriate to respond to arising issues and strengthen outcomes.
REVIEW

Maximising Resource – Rapporteurs

21. Along with effective topic prioritisation, O&S resource can be maximised by a member-led approach to scrutiny that capitalises on the strengths and interests of individual committee members. An effective way to do this is through the use of rapporteurs. O&S committees have appointed more rapporteurs in 2024/25, and O&S Chairs intend to embed the use of these further in future. Rapporteurs are councillor champions appointed by an O&S committee to work independently towards an agreed remit and report back to committee. The model is suited to the progression of light touch scrutiny topics and research, such as gathering background information on a topic through conversations with officers and portfolio holders. By establishing rapporteurs O&S committees can spread workload across members with relevant skills and interests and progress issues in a timely way.

22. As a working method, rapporteurs rely on officers and portfolio holders working with them in a flexible and transparent way to share information, as they would if a committee report were requested by an O&S committee. O&S Chairs and Vice Chairs have asked that awareness of rapporteurs be raised through this annual report. Further information on rapporteurs and other working methods that will maximise resource is contained within Appendix 2.

Consultation with Overview and Scrutiny Committees

23. On behalf of all O&S committees, the O&S Board hosted a discussion on the proposals set out in this report at its meeting on 17 November 2025, inviting all O&S Chairs to contribute.

24. Below is a summary of views raised by O&S members during discussions:

- Acknowledgement of the need to prioritise resource and support from the O&S Board for the recommendations outlined in this report to address this.
- A preference from councillors for greater dedicated O&S resource levels and a request to officers to continue to explore opportunities to achieve this within the context of the financial challenges faced by the council.
- Acknowledgement of the significant improvement in the organisational culture that supports O&S work in BCP since this was highlighted as a concern within the Best Value Review in 2023. O&S members noted the view of the O&S Specialist that working relationships with senior officers and the Cabinet were now effective with a clear understanding of the role and aims of scrutiny; O&S Chairs were highly trained and member conduct at meetings was productive. These improvements provided the necessary foundation for effective scrutiny and the rationale for now addressing the O&S resource constraints referred to in this report, with a view to increasing the overall impact of scrutiny work.
- Frustration from councillors that motions referred from Council to O&S committees with a request for action are not able to be progressed in a timely way due to limited O&S resources.
- Support for a greater member-led approach to O&S work, including wider use of rapporteurs to independently undertake specific elements of work and report back to committees. O&S Councillors requested the development of a rapporteur guide and awareness raising with officers across the organisation to ensure that O&S rapporteurs can be effective.

- The need for committees to maintain close oversight of the type of scrutiny work selected and that this should include a balance of pre-decision scrutiny (Cabinet reports) and proactive enquiries responding to ward and community concerns.
- Queries regarding how many in-depth work items are achievable within resources within a year, and the hope that the Chairs group can take a pragmatic and flexible approach to prioritisation of in-depth topics so that as much work as possible can be progressed. O&S members acknowledged that this will be variable depending on the depth and scope of each in-depth topic selected.

Options Appraisal

25. Option A (Recommended option) -

i) for pieces of in-depth work, the constitution be updated to allow one topic to be undertaken at a time across the whole O&S function, with one further topic being scoped during the same period.

ii) the O&S Chairs and Vice Chairs group role be strengthened to include a responsibility to agree the priority of all work topics across the full O&S committee structure.

iii) the O&S Chairs and Vice Chairs group strengthen scoping for all O&S topics by reviewing key lines of enquiry for topics on an ongoing basis to provide peer test and challenge.

iv) the Monitoring Officer be delegated to make the associated updates to the Constitution.

More detail on this option is outlined in paragraphs 17-20 above. This option is preferred because it will allow work to progress in a more focussed and timely way and will release capacity for greater scoping support for agreed priorities. The option does not require any significant change to the current O&S committee structure or committee numbers and has no financial implications. This option was supported by the O&S Board when it considered this report.

26. Option B – Arrangements for in-depth work levels remain the same but resource is released to support this work through a review of the O&S committee structure to reduce committee numbers and thereby reduce meeting numbers.

A review of the O&S committee structure will be required if this is the preferred option, including stakeholder consultation. This will divert officer resource from ongoing O&S work priorities and so has not been provided in detail with this report. If this option is preferred, the detail of this option will require further consideration and reporting.

27. Option C – Arrangements for in-depth work levels remain the same but resource is released to support this work through a reduction in the overall number of meetings across all O&S committees.

A review of O&S committee numbers will be required if this is the preferred option, including stakeholder consultation. This will divert officer resource from ongoing O&S work priorities and so has not been provided in detail with this report. If this option is preferred, the detail of this option will require further consideration and reporting.

28. **Option D –** Arrangements for in-depth work levels remain the same but resource to the Democratic Services team is increased to provide greater support to O&S work.

    To advance this option, a bid will need to be prepared to set out the required resource. This will divert officer resource from ongoing O&S work priorities and so has not been provided in detail with this report. If this option is preferred, the detail of this option will require further consideration and reporting.

29. **Option E –** Arrangements for in-depth work levels remain the same but in-depth work is outsourced to an external body such as the Centre for Governance and Scrutiny, to undertake work on behalf of the council.

    (Note – this option was considered unfavourable by the O&S Chairs' group in early consultation due to likely prohibitive costs and reduction in council ownership of work. If this option is preferred it will require further consideration and reporting to identify financial implications).

30. **Option F** – No change.

    If no change is made resources will be used to support statutory work as a priority (eg. scheduled meetings and associated activity). Non-statutory O&S activity may be delayed or not delivered. This includes a delay to the progression of working groups and in-depth O&S work and limitations on scoping support which will affect the outcomes of work. Additional O&S activity such as annual work programming may not be supported and committees will instead plan work on a rolling basis. Proactive budget scrutiny, over and above committee meeting-based scrutiny, may not be fulfilled.

Summary of financial implications

31. There are no direct financial implications related with the production of this annual report. The report explores the implications of resourcing O&S in paragraphs 13 to 22 above. Should options D-E above be supported it is recommended that a further report be brought forward to set out the detail of financial implications associated with pursuing these options.

Summary of legal implications

32. Overview and Scrutiny is a statutory function of all councils operating an executive model of decision making. Improvements to the function, outlined in the report, will ensure that the work of O&S Committees in BCP Council complies with relevant legislation and upholds statutory guidance.

Summary of human resources implications

33. There are no human resources implications arising from this report.

Summary of sustainability impact

34. There are no sustainability implications arising from this report.

Summary of public health implications

35. There are no public health implications arising from this report.

Summary of equality implications

36. Equality impact screening has been undertaken in relation to the preferred option in the report and the EIA is attached at Appendix 3. This has indicated that there are no equality implications relating to the proposals within this report and so no mitigations are required. Should other options within the report be preferred these will be the subject of a further report and associated EIA as appropriate.

Summary of risk assessment

37. The improvements identified for O&S, as set out in Appendix 2 and recommended above, will promote the upholding of statutory guidance and valuable O&S outcomes. There is a risk that the guidance will not be properly upheld by the Council if actions identified within this report, particularly those to address resources, are not taken; although this risk is low as it is for each local authority to implement their own scrutiny arrangements in response to the statutory guidance.

Background papers

Published works:

- 'Statutory Guidance on Overview and Scrutiny in Local and Combined Authorities' the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) and the Department for Levelling Up, Housing & Communities (DLUHC)
- Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report 2023/24
- Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report 2019-23
- Overview and Scrutiny Action Plan

Appendices

Appendix 1– Overview and Scrutiny statutory powers and BCP context

Appendix 2 – Overview & Scrutiny 2024/25 Activity

Appendix 3 – Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) Screening Tool

This page is intentionally left blank

BOURNEMOUTH, CHRISTCHURCH AND POOLE COUNCIL

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY STATUTORY POWERS AND BCP CONTEXT

WHAT IS OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY?

1. Overview and Scrutiny (O&S) is an integral part of the Council's governance structure and is a statutory requirement for BCP Council. All councils operating executive arrangements must have at least one O&S committee. In BCP Council, O&S activity is carried out by four O&S committees formed of councillors and co-opted members. These are:
    - The Overview and Scrutiny Board
    - Environment and Place Overview and Scrutiny Committee
    - Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee
    - Health and Adult Social Care Overview and Scrutiny Committee
2. The role of the Overview and Scrutiny Board and Committees is to help develop policy, to carry out reviews of Council and other local services, and to hold decision makers to account.
3. O&S committees are not decision-making bodies but can influence decisions through powers to obtain information, require attendance from council officers and members and to make recommendations. Under the Local Government Act 2000, O&S committees have the right to scrutinise *'any matter affecting the local authority area or the inhabitants of the area.'*
4. Additional powers to scrutinise NHS services and review the work of the local community safety partnership mean that O&S committees have an important role in acting as a 'check and balance' to decisions made both within the council and in external organisations.
5. The overall aim of O&S activity is to impact in a tangible way on the council and the residents it serves. The Ministerial foreword of 'Overview and Scrutiny: statutory guidance for councils and combined authorities' by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) and the Department for Levelling Up, Housing & Communities (DLUHC) states:

    "The role that overview and scrutiny can play in holding an authority's decision-makers to account makes it fundamentally important to the successful functioning of local democracy.

    Effective scrutiny helps secure the efficient delivery of public services and drives improvements within the authority itself. Conversely, poor scrutiny can be indicative of wider governance, leadership, and service failure."

PRINCIPLES OF GOOD SCRUTINY

6. The majority of councils base their O&S arrangements on commonly held principles of good scrutiny. These are set out in the BCP Constitution, which states that the O&S committees shall:

    a) contribute to sound decision making in a timely way by holding decision makers to account as a 'critical friend';

    b) be a Councillor led and owned function that seeks to continuously improve through self-reflection and development;

    c) enable the voice and concerns of the public to be heard and reflected in the Council's decision-making process;

    d) engage in decision making and policy development at an appropriate time to be able to have influence;

    e) contribute to and reflect the vision and priorities of the Council; and

    f) be agile and be able to respond to changing and emerging priorities at the right time with flexible working methods.

    Through their work, O&S councillors should seek to uphold these principles.

SUPPORTING THE AMBITIONS AND VALUES OF THE COUNCIL

7. O&S can support the high level aims of the council by aligning its work to the priorities identified within the council's corporate plan entitled 'A Shared Vision for Bournemouth Christchurch and Poole, 2024-28'. The plan was refreshed in May 2024. With the remit of O&S committees spanning all service areas of the council, O&S activity has the potential to support the following vision and priorities identified within the corporate plan:

    Our vision:

    - Where people, nature, coast and towns come together in sustainable, safe and healthy communities.

    Our priorities:

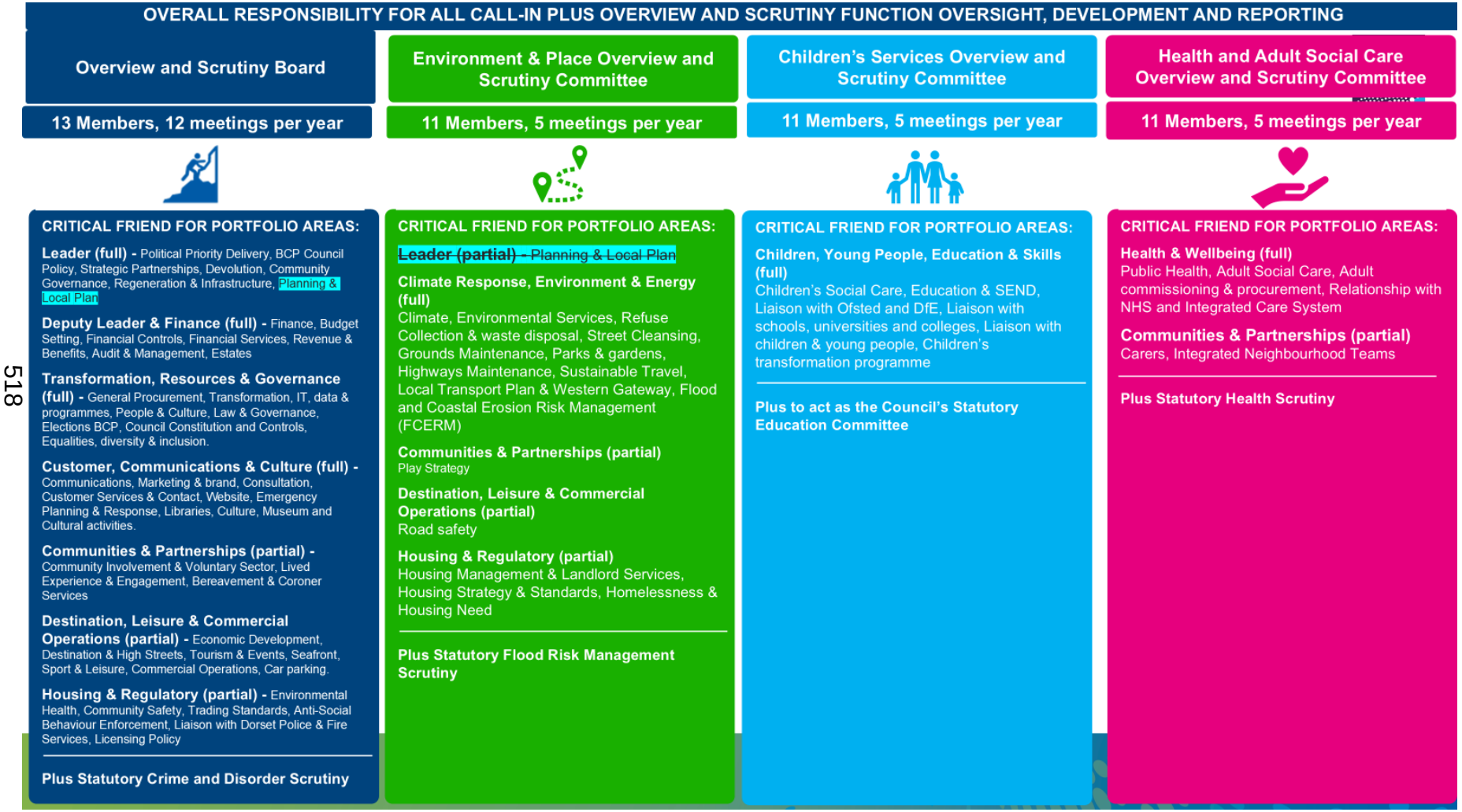
    - Our place and environment: Vibrant places, where people and nature flourish, with a thriving economy in a healthy, natural environment.
    - Our people and communities: Everyone leads a fulfilled life, maximising opportunity for all.

    This could be achieved through alignment of O&S work plans to policy areas earmarked for development within the corporate plan. O&S can also provide benefit by monitoring the progress of the council against the ambitions set out in the corporate plan, through engagement with the relevant aspects of performance dashboards.

Overview & Scrutiny

2024/25 Activity

BCP Overview & Scrutiny Committee structure



The structure consists of one Board and three committees, with remits aligned to Portfolio Holder responsibilities.

The Board has additional responsibilities, but each O&S body is distinctly separate and has powers to set its own programme of work.

Recent changes to the structure are identified in highlighted text.

Overview & Scrutiny Board

CHAIR – COUNCILLOR STEPHEN BARTLETT

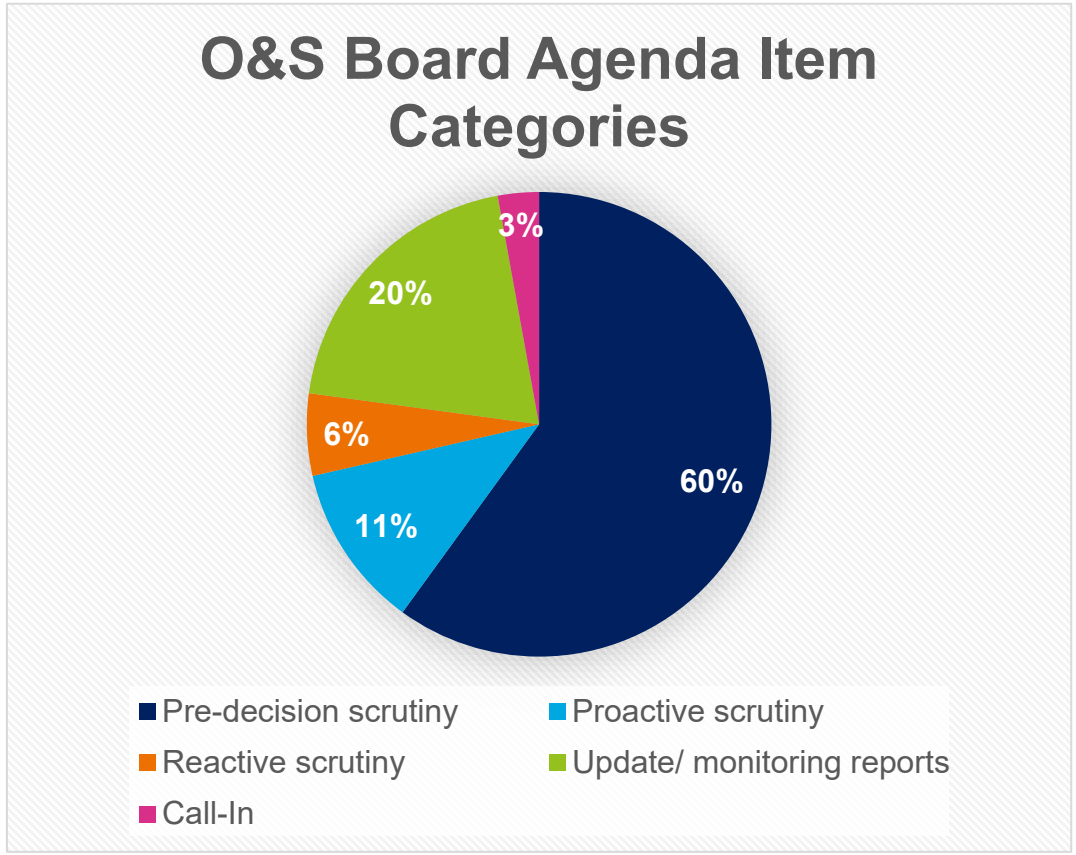
VICE CHAIR – COUNCILLOR SUE AITKENHEAD

MEETINGS: 10 ORDINARY, 2 SPECIAL MEETINGS

MEMBERSHIP: 13 COUNCILLORS

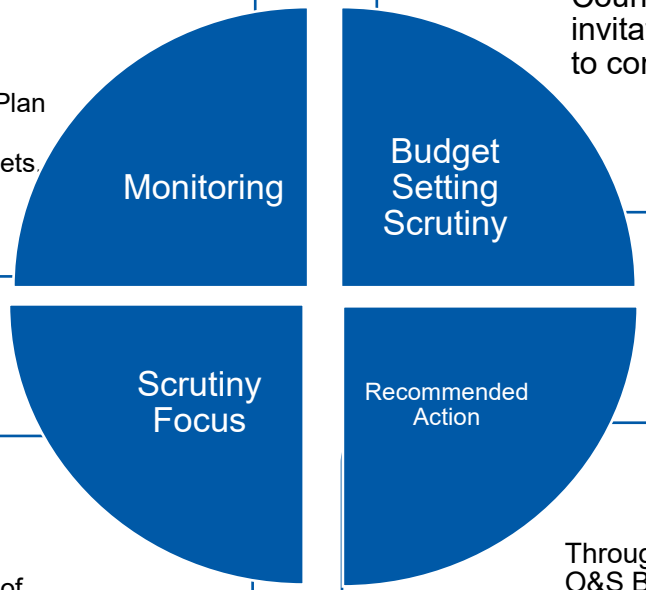
AVERAGE NUMBER OF AGENDA ITEMS – 2.9

WORKING GROUPS - 2



Overview & Scrutiny Board - Scrutinising the Council's Finances

Ongoing in year monitoring of finance related Cabinet reports:



An important area of the O&S Board remit, comprehensive financial monitoring took place throughout the year with scrutiny of reports on:

- Financial outturns
- Budget Monitoring
- Medium Term Financial Plan updates
- Directorate specific budgets, pressures and plans

Annual scrutiny event scrutinising the proposed 2025/6 council budget, prior to Cabinet and Council decision with invitation for all councillors to contribute.

The Board maintained particularly close overview of the increasing demand and cost outstripping the High Needs Dedicated Schools Grant government funding, and the impact of this on the council's overall financial position.

Through annual budget scrutiny, O&S Board recommended to the Audit & Governance Committee that an investigation be undertaken into the Carter's Quay development considering the delay to this development and the significant financial implication attached.

Scrutiny of the developing 2025/26 budget:

Budget Working Group

Deep dive scrutiny into budgets associated with **car parking** and the proposed **Resident's Card.**

Working group provided test, challenge and ideas to strengthen the areas selected. Working group recommendations to Cabinet included:

Car Parking

- Inflationary increases across all car parks endorsed;
- Proposal for use of surplus car parking income to accelerate the car park charging machine replacement programme;
- Exploration of options to reduce costs for the Council and make the process easier for the public to pay for car parking, in particular an option to be able to pay in advance on Council website.

Resident's Card

- Proposed small financial contribution for the Resident's Card, to make it a financially sustainable offer to residents; concessions to the charge to be considered for disadvantaged groups.

Overview & Scrutiny Board

Scrutinising Corporate Activity

The Board scrutinised key areas of council activity:

- The Council's **Transformation Programme**
- **Regeneration updates**, including scrutiny of activity of the **Bournemouth Development Company**
- **Seafront Strategy**
- Strategic use of the **Community Infrastructure Levy**
- **Pay & Reward** included multiple update reports and one call-in meeting.
  The Board determined that no scrutiny advice was required to be given to Cabinet following the call-in.
- Monitoring the impact and effectiveness of the whole O&S function through scrutiny of the **O&S Annual Report.**

Developing Policy

- Open discussion items to test, challenge & contribute views to emerging policies including:
- **The Library Strategy**
- **Centralised complaints policy**
- **Community Governance Review**
- **Devolution**

➢ Discussion items in committee to consider the council's position on joining with other local authorities to form a strategic authority across a wider area.

➢ O&S recommended, and Cabinet agreed, that an emergency Council meeting was required to include all councillors in this important decision.

Performance Monitoring

- Contribution to the refreshed **Corporate Plan**
- **Corporate Performance Dashboard** demo and scrutiny
- **Best Value Notice-** monitoring this improvement activity until conclusion with the lifting of the Best Value Notice.
- **Quarterly performance 'for information' reports** – regular monitoring of these reports allows scrutiny members to identify red flags and issues which may benefit from scrutiny.
- Reports circulated outside of meetings to reserve committee time for impactful scrutiny.

Overview & Scrutiny Board

Monitoring Impact

Blue Badge Service

- Monitoring reports of improvement actions following scrutiny of the service in 2023.
- Original scrutiny requested triggered by councillor and community concerns about lengthy waiting times for badge renewals and the negative impact on residents who may be left without a badge whilst waiting for a renewal.
- Update reports showed that changes in operational activities were being implemented with streamlined assessments, renewals being prioritised and good practice from other authorities being adopted in BCP.
- A final report in May 2025 highlighted that waiting times had significantly reduced.

Working Groups

Small groups of members meeting to deep dive into a specific topic:

BCP Consultation approaches

- Working group commissioned to provide test and challenge to a refreshed Consultation Framework, as it develops.

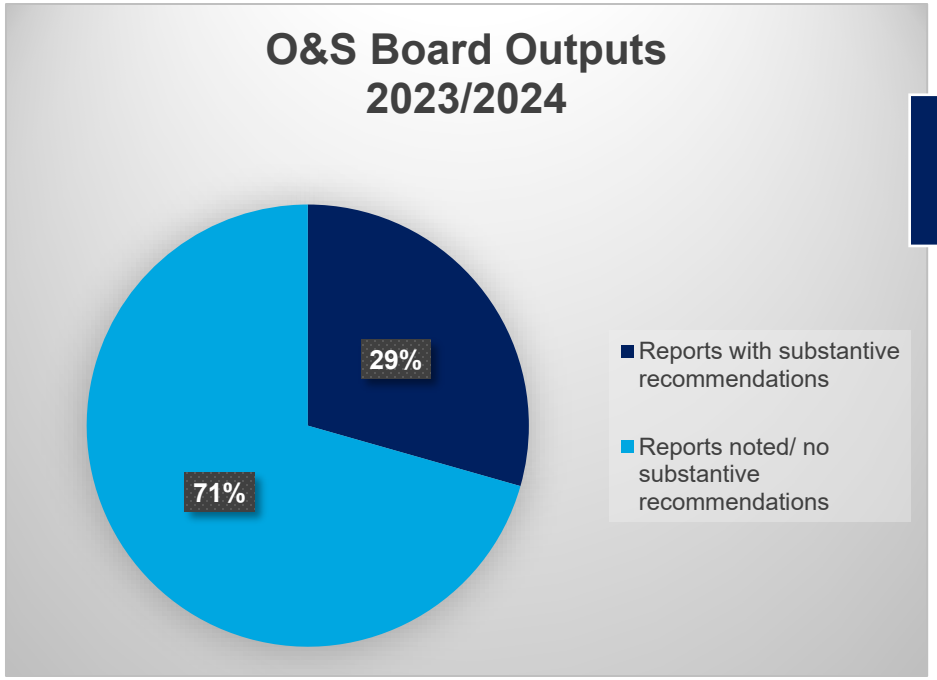
Budget working group

- Deep dive into the budgets associated with car parking and residents card, providing opportunity to test and challenge and influence the related 2025/26 budget as it develops.

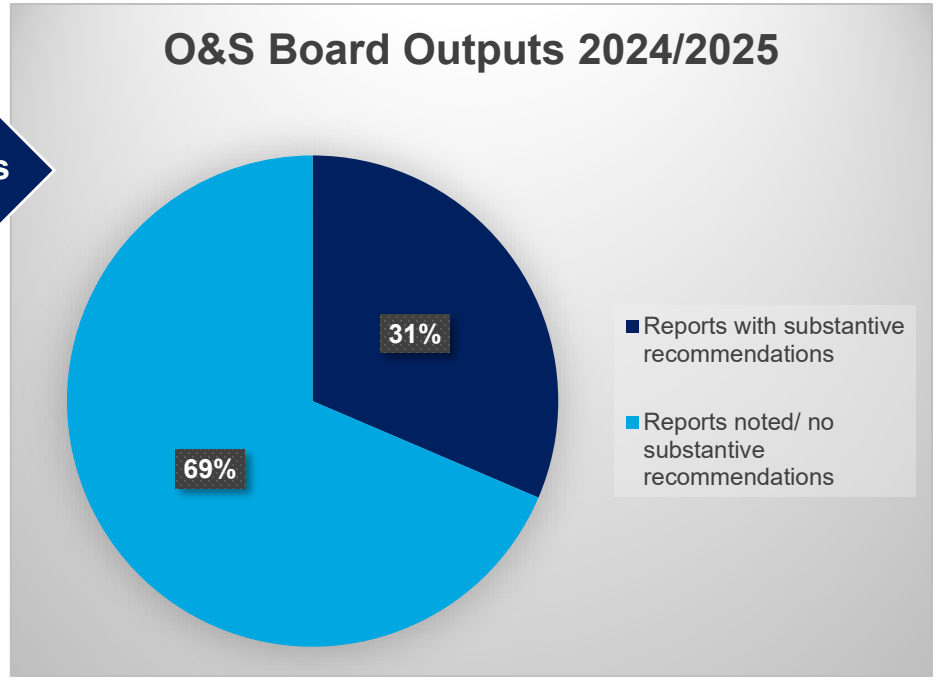
Statutory Scrutiny

Scrutiny of the **Community Safety Partnership** – fulfilling the requirement for councils to undertake crime and disorder scrutiny annually.

Overview & Scrutiny Board



2% increase in recommendations since last year



Environment & Place Overview & Scrutiny Committee

CHAIR – COUNCILLOR CHRIS RIGBY

VICE CHAIR – COUNCILLOR DAVID D'ORTON-GIBSON

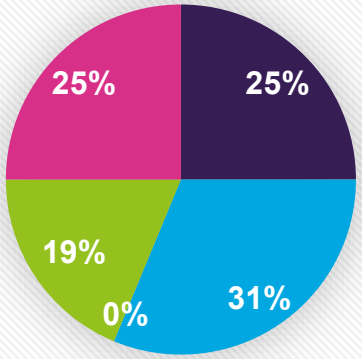
MEETINGS: 5 ORDINARY, 0 SPECIAL MEETINGS

MEMBERSHIP: 11 COUNCILLORS

AVERAGE NUMBER OF AGENDA ITEMS – 3.2

WORKING GROUPS - 2

Environment & Place O&S Agenda Item Categories



Environment & Place Overview & Scrutiny Committee

Listening to Residents

Prompted by high levels of public interest, the committee held a scrutiny session dedicated to hearing views on the **trial closure to vehicles of an entrance to Poole Park.** The committee assessed a range **of views and evidence, including:**

- Over 30 public questions and statements, for and against the closure.
- The outcome of a four- week public consultation
- The impact of the trial closure on the elderly and disabled through a report by DOTS disability.
- Portfolio Holder and ward councillor views.
- An officer report outlining the purpose of the trial closure and anticipated benefits to the environment of Poole Park.

The committee recommended to Cabinet that a full Council debate and decision should be held on the topic in light of the significant public interest. This was not upheld by Cabinet and the closure was confirmed as permanent.

Climate & Nature Scrutiny

A central part of the committee's remit, the committee scrutinised a range of areas relating to climate & nature:

- Monitoring work relating to **Nutrient Neutrality** in respect of Phosphates in the River Avon.
- **Heathland Mitigation -** monitoring work that mitigates the impact of housing on Dorset's lowland heaths.
- Scrutiny of progress across the council towards reaching climate action goals through the **Climate Action Annual Report.**
- Review of the Council's new **BCP Greenhouse Gas Emissions Dashboard**, with scrutiny recommendations to strengthen targets for carbon emission reduction.
- Through the budget working group, the committee recommended that Cabinet **strengthen the corporate approach to financing the council's climate action goals,** to enable the council to meet its net zero targets by 2030.

Environment & Place Overview & Scrutiny Committee

Monitoring Improvements

- Scrutinising the performance of the **Planning Service** to monitor improvements including the reduction of the planning application backlog and stabilisation of the workforce.

Adding value through rapporteurs

The committee increased its capacity to undertake work through member-led rapporteur scrutiny.

Rapporteurs work towards an agreed remit on behalf of the committee, liaising with officers to progress issues outside of meeting and reporting activity back to the full committee

This year, Councillor Felicity Rice worked with officers to progress a Play Streets policy, which sets out how residents can close streets to make them safe for children to play and socialise. The work led to the drafting of a policy in readiness for launch.

Further rapporteurs were established in 2025 and their work will be reported in the 2025/26 annual report.

Housing Scrutiny

- **Housing Strategy review** – scrutiny of the refreshed housing strategy with recommendations made regarding the governance and monitoring of the strategy.
- **Safe Accommodation Strategy –** the committee established a working **group to test, challenge** and contribute to the developing strategy which outlines how the council will support residents in need of housing due to domestic abuse.

Working Groups

- Small groups of members meeting to deep dive into a specific topic:
- **Budget Working Group –** topics covered: climate & ecological emergency budget; housing temporary accommodation budget.
- Recommendations included requesting a gap analysis of the estimated total amount of spend required to reach net zero targets and including the costs within the MTFP
- **Safe Accommodation Strategy Working Group**
- Recommendations included an awareness campaign to inform residents escaping domestic abuse about the financial and housing support available to them; suggestions to strengthen the strategy itself and councillor awareness of it; suggestions for KPIs to be introduced to monitor the effectiveness of the new safe accommodation model.

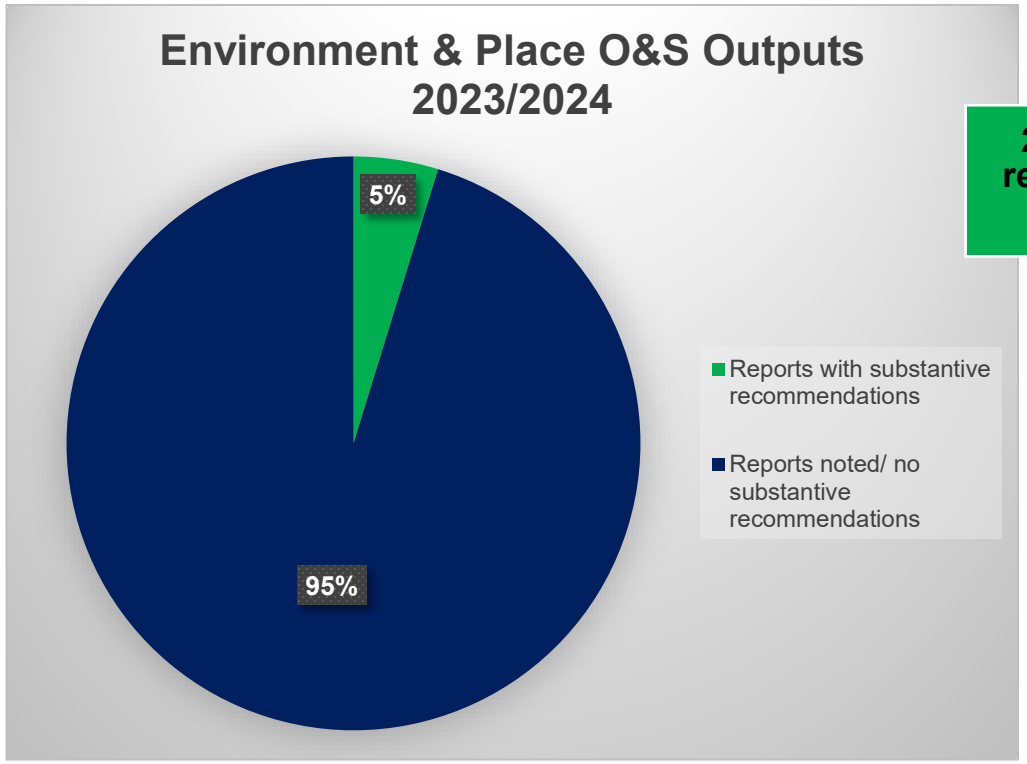
Council Driven Scrutiny

The Committee saw an uplift in suggested topics for scrutiny, generated by debate at full Council meetings or portfolio holder suggestions. Topics submitted included:

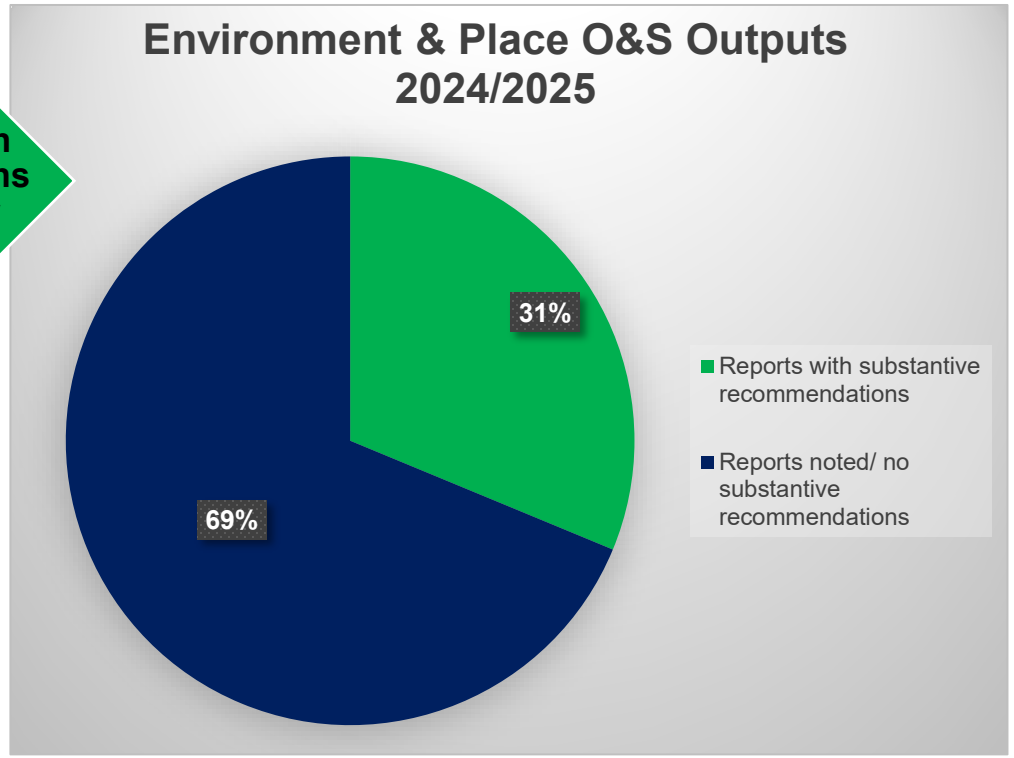
Safe Accommodation Strategy
Van Life
Climate & Nature scrutiny
Cliff and Coastal erosion
Redhill paddling pool
Strengthening building standards through local authority control.

A Safe Accommodation working group was established in response (see above), and other topics were added to the committee's work programme for later work.

Environment & Place Overview & Scrutiny Committee



26% increase in recommendations since last year



Children's Services Overview & Scrutiny Committee

CHAIR – COUNCILLOR SHARON CARR-BROWN

VICE CHAIR – COUNCILLOR SIMON BULL

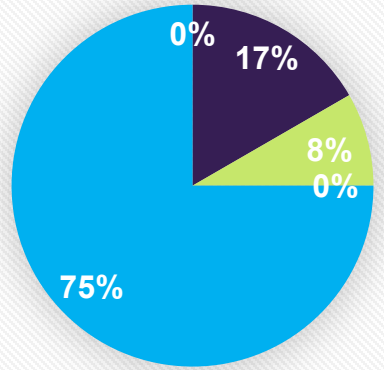
MEETINGS: 5 ORDINARY, 0 SPECIAL MEETINGS

MEMBERSHIP: 11 COUNCILLORS

AVERAGE NUMBER OF AGENDA ITEMS – 4.8

WORKING GROUPS - 2

Children's Services O&S Agenda Item Categories



Children's Services Overview & Scrutiny Committee

Scrutinising new activity

The committee scrutinised new decisions and strategies prior to adoption, applying test and challenge to strengthen outcomes:

- **Linwood Special School –** the committee scrutinised the Cabinet paper prior to decision and recommended that expansion of the school go ahead.
- **Children in care and care experienced young people sufficiency strategy –** setting out how BCP will provide sufficient, safe, secure and sustainable homes for children in care and care experienced young people between 2024-2028.
- **Children & Young People's Partnership Plan 2025-2030**- 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.
- **Childcare Sufficiency Assessment 2024-2025** – an evaluation of childcare places to ensure that there are enough to meet the needs of the BCP area.

Monitoring progress

In its role as a critical friend, the Committee monitored key areas of activity within children's services:

- **SEND progress updates** including discussions and continued public interest in the Safety Valve Programme.
- **Children's social care improvement journey-** in keeping with previous years' work, the committee supported this critical area of improvement in the council and closely monitored activity along the way. In 2025 the council moved from an 'inadequate' to a 'good' Ofsted rating.
- **Independent Reviewing Officer annual report.**
- **Speech and language therapy update**

Holding decision makers to account

- The committee received updates on activity from the Portfolio Holder for Children, Young People, Education & Skills at every meeting, providing opportunity for questions and idea sharing.

Children's Services Overview & Scrutiny Committee

Scrutinising the Council's Finances

The committee considered a range of financial reports to monitor budget and pressures within children's services, and the impact on children and families. This included:

- **An update on the full children's services budget**
- **Alternative Provision** – an update on the services provided to support mainstream inclusion and action being taken to positively impact the trajectory of high needs expenditure.
- **The High Needs Schools Grant Expenditure Forecast**
- **Children's Services Capital Strategy –** setting out the capital funding available to the service and improvement priorities aligned.
- The committee also recommended that Cabinet **assess the impact on children, young people and families of any potential budget overspend in the SEND service budget**, which Cabinet agreed to through a dedicated report.

Gaining insight

In addition to councillors bringing insight from their own work with residents and schools, the committee heard from:

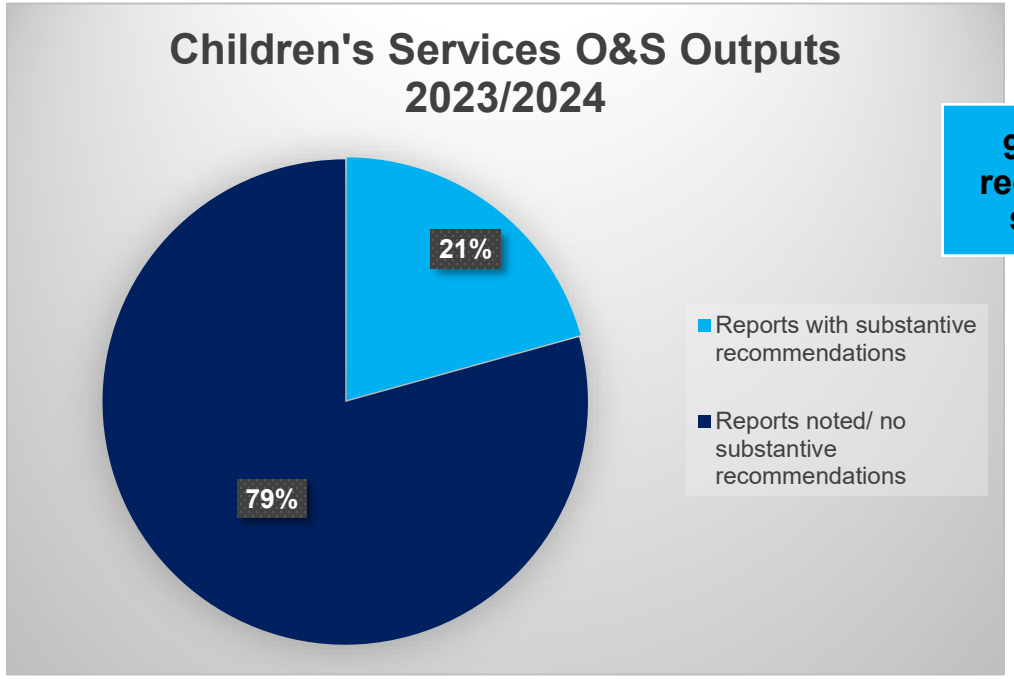
- **Youth Parliament representatives** – a regular meeting slot to provide updates on Youth Parliament priorities and gain the views of young people on scrutiny topics.
- **NHS Dorset representative –** the introduction of a standing invitation to the Chief Nursing Officer to provide a link between children's services and health related matters and gain the insight of health professionals on topics scrutinised.

Working Groups

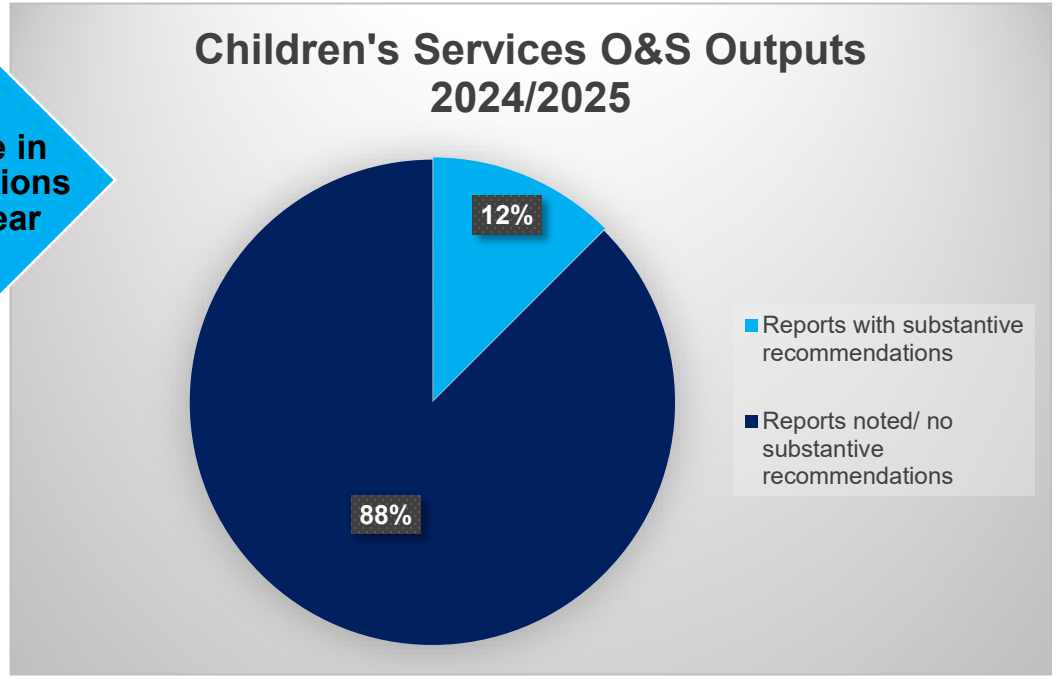
Small groups of members meeting to deep dive into a specific topic:

- Final report of the **Child Exploitation Working Group** (activity took place in previous municipal years). Recommendations included earlier age-appropriate education in schools regarding the risks associated with exploitation, drugs and the dangers of carrying weapons.
- **Family Hubs Working Group –** included a visit to see Family Hubs in action. Further work in progress.
- **Budget Working Group** - priority topics selected by councillors for deep dive scrutiny - **School Transport Costs** and **Care Growth Forecast.**
- Recommendations included advocacy for:
- the protection of non-statutory services (such as Early Help) – councillors highlighted that it is vitally important to support these services to avoid additional financial impact on statutory services.
- the inclusion of pupils with SEND in mainstream, local schools, to reduce the need for school transport provision and associated costs.

Children's Services Overview & Scrutiny Committee



9% decrease in recommendations since last year



Health & Adult Social Care Overview & Scrutiny Committee

CHAIR – COUNCILLOR PATRICK CANAVAN

VICE CHAIR – COUNCILLOR LESLEY DEDMAN

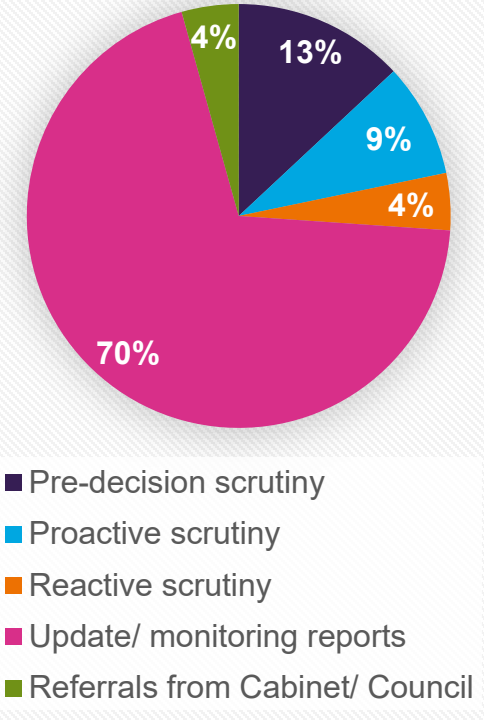
MEETINGS: 5 ORDINARY, 0 SPECIAL MEETINGS

MEMBERSHIP: 11 COUNCILLORS

AVERAGE NUMBER OF AGENDA ITEMS – 4.6

WORKING GROUPS - 2

Health & Adult Social Care O&S Agenda Item Categories



Health & Adult Social Care O&S Committee

Holding decision makers to account

The committee received updates on activity from the Portfolio Holder for Health & Wellbeing at every meeting, providing opportunity for questions and idea sharing.

Scrutinising new activity

The committee scrutinised new decisions and strategies prior to adoption, applying test and challenge to strengthen outcomes:

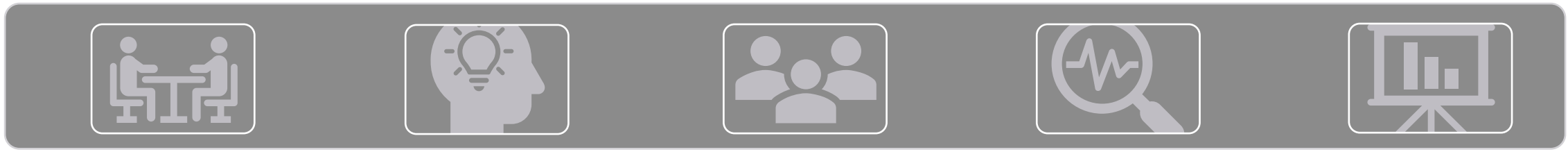
- **Adult Social Care Strategy 2025-28–** the committee made recommendations that the strategy be strengthened by the inclusion of clear targets.
- **Reconfiguration of the Public Health function for BCP**– the committee contributed views on new arrangements and received updates on progress throughout the year.
- **Transforming Urgent and Emergency Care Services** – the committee scrutinised plans for a system-wide programme to transform and improve urgent and emergency care services for Dorset residents.
- **'Fulfilled Lives'** – the committee scrutinised the establishment of a new transformation programme for adult social care services and supported activity throughout the year through a series of briefings and update reports on specific themes within the programme.

Monitoring Progress

In its role as a critical friend, the Committee monitored key areas of activity by health providers and within adult social care:

- **Home First Development across Dorset** update report.
- **Integrated Neighbourhood Teams** update report.
- **NHS Dentistry –** update report from Healthwatch.
- **Tricuro Business Plan**
- **Safeguarding Adults Board Annual Report**
- **Adult Social Care Compliments, Complaints & Learning Annual Report**
- **Adult Social Care Waiting Times** update report

Health & Adult Social Care O&S Committee



Working with Health Partners

- The committee maintained overview of key issues relating to health service provision, including:
- **Transformation of UHD hospitals**
- **UHD Maternity Services**
- **Gender Identity Disorder Services**

Gaining Insight

- In addition to councillors bringing insight from their own work with residents the committee heard from a representative of **Healthwatch Dorset** at every meeting. Healthwatch champions residents' voices in relation to their experience of health and social care services and brings this service user insight to scrutiny debates.

Working Groups

- Small groups of members meeting to deep dive into a specific topic:
- **Data Working Group** - this working group developed a Data Toolkit to enable members to more easily access data and information sources, with a view to achieving more evidence driven scrutiny. The group recommended roll-out of a similar toolkit to all O&S committees.
- **Budget Working Group**

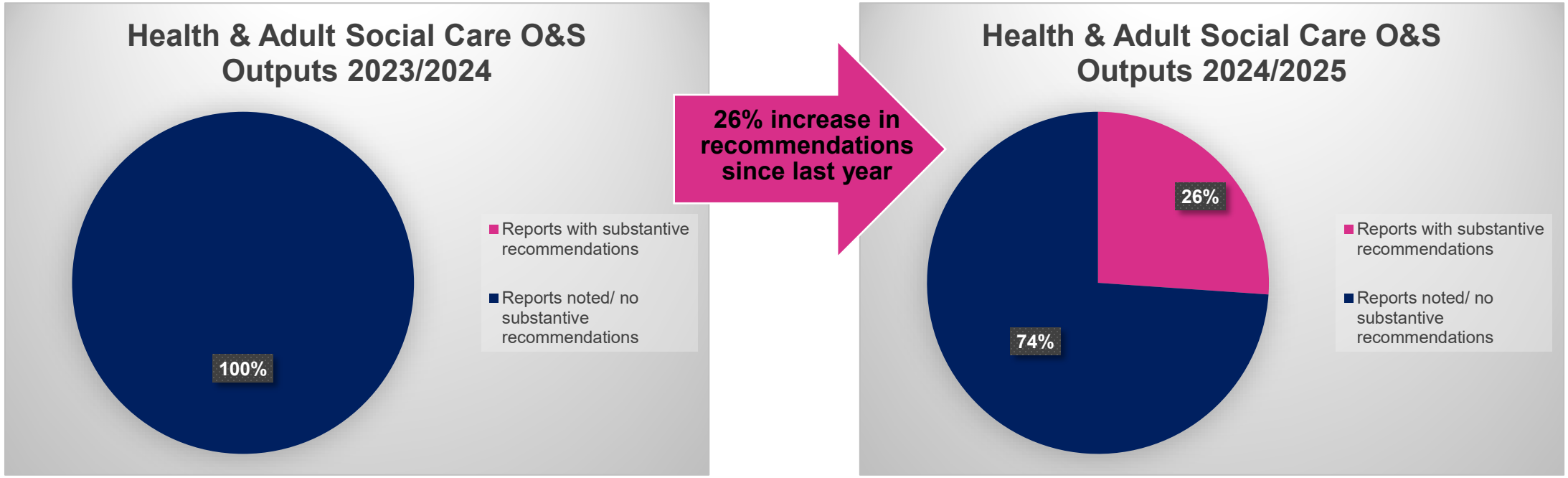
Proactive Scrutiny

- Prompted by a publication of Healthwatch Dorset, looking at **health inequality for people experiencing homelessness**, the committee asked NHS Dorset and council officers to outline how existing services address inequalities.
- Through recommendations, the committee highlighted the issues to Cabinet and asked them to discuss the matter further, in particular funding and partnership collaboration, to ensure a robust system is in place to support the most vulnerable.

Scrutinising the Council's Finances

- The committee received an update on adult social care and public health budgets and commissioned a **Budget Working Group** to take a deep dive into financial planning for **demand management.**
- The working group made a recommendation to Cabinet that block booked-beds for long-term care provision be increased, to achieve more value for money in this budget area.

Health & Adult Social Care O&S Committee



Improvements & Successes

Strategic improvements made across all O&S Committees in 2024/25

Improvements & Successes- Training & Development

O&S Culture Development workshops

- Facilitated by the Centre for Governance and Scrutiny, three workshops were held with officers, Cabinet and O&S councillors to focus on the roles of each in underpinning a culture that enables successful scrutiny. Output – an O&S / Cabinet protocol is in development to capture agreements and good practices.

Leadership training for O&S Chairs

- All O&S Chairs have been provided LGA scrutiny leadership training, refreshed with any changes in chairing positions to ensure continuity of scrutiny expertise.

Targeted training for Children's Services O&S

- Facilitated by the LGA, a comprehensive package of support and mentoring was provided throughout 2024/25 to strengthen councillors' approach to child-centred, successful scrutiny. Councillors' knowledge of the children's services landscape was improved and focussed sessions on work planning and scoping work will enable the committee to better support and scrutinise the important services provided to support young people in the BCP area.

Regular briefings

- All committees established a series of regular briefing slots to enable them to stay informed and explore issues related to their remit. These informal slots free up committee time for value- added scrutiny topics. With standard invitations to all councillors, these regular briefings also provide opportunity for other councillors to stay informed of important issues.

*"The prevailing **organisational culture, behaviours and attitudes** of an authority will largely determine whether its scrutiny function succeeds or fails. While everyone in an authority can play a role in creating an environment conducive to effective scrutiny, **it is important that this is led and owned by members,** given their role in setting and maintaining the culture of an authority." **

* Overview and Scrutiny: statutory guidance for councils, combined authorities and combined county authorities

Improvements & Successes - Topics and scoping

The key to effective O&S outputs lies in the selection and scoping of topics. Improvements in 2024/25 included:

Closer working with Council

- 2025 saw a marked increase in recommendations from Council to O&S committees, particularly within the remit of the Environment & Place O&S Committee. This increase shows a greater council-wide understanding of the role that O&S can play in developing policy and providing critical friend test and challenge to burning issues raised at Council. Many of these topics have been raised by residents attending Council meetings, or through councillors bringing forward insight on matters of concern from their wards.

Maintaining a balance of scrutiny work

- In the 2023 Best Value review, the Council was encouraged to reduce its focus on pre-decision scrutiny and increase the O&S policy development role. The imbalance of pre-decision scrutiny was successfully addressed in 2023/24 with pre decision scrutiny accounting for 21% of all scrutiny across all committees in the function. There was a small increase to 29% across the function in 2024/25. Pre-decision levels represent a higher proportion of O&S Board work as this committee aligns to the calendar of Cabinet meetings with the specific purpose of enabling pre-decision scrutiny where required.

Key lines of enquiry

- Key lines of enquiry documents have been embedded as standard across all committees for use when scoping work topics. These encourage focus on lines of enquiry that will lead to valuable outcomes and ensure that O&S councillors' enquiries are clearly captured and officers have clarity on the ask of scrutiny.

A lens for scrutiny

- Statutory guidance encourages the establishment of a clear and communicable role for scrutiny, over and above statutory rights and the role of holding decision makers to account. Three out of four O&S committees have now established lenses for their committees to more clearly identify their role and to help with topic choices and scrutiny enquiry lines.

*"Authorities should take steps to **ensure scrutiny has a clear role and focus within the organisation,** i.e. a niche within which it can clearly demonstrate it adds value. Therefore, prioritisation is necessary to ensure the scrutiny function concentrates on delivering work that is of genuine value and relevance to the work of the wider authority – **this is one of the most challenging parts of scrutiny, and a critical element to get right** if it is to be recognised as a strategic function of the authority" **

* Overview and Scrutiny: statutory guidance for councils, combined authorities and combined county authorities

Improvements & Successes - Governance & Leadership

Call-In levels remain stable

- O&S call-in should be used as a last resort where there is a concern that a decision has not been made in keeping with budget and policy framework of the council or the principles of decision making. There was one call-in item considered during 2024/25, in keeping with an average of one call in per year during the 2019-24 period. The level of call-in items in BCP indicates that call-in is not used as a party-political tool. Low call-in levels may be an indication that governance arrangements in the council offer appropriate alternative opportunities to test and challenge decision making, such as a suitable level of pre-decision scrutiny opportunities and flexibility for all non-Cabinet members to ask question in O&S meetings and Cabinet meetings.

Regular O&S Chairs meetings

- O&S Chairs and Vice Chairs meet regularly to oversee the function, discussing cross-cutting topics, resource, training and development needs, successes and challenges.

Strengthened links to Audit

- The Chair and Vice Chair of Audit & Governance Committee have now been made standing invitees to O&S Chairs meetings to strengthen the links between O&S & Audit providing opportunity for alignment of work programmes to ensure the council's governance arrangements in this respect are robust.

Greater member- led approach

- Scrutiny councillors have taken a more active role in leading O&S enquiries. Rapporteurs have been established on specific topics, to undertake detailed enquiries independently, and report back to committee, successfully encouraging action on topics selected. Coupled with strong committee leadership from Chairs and Vice Chairs this is in keeping with one of the founding principles of O&S that scrutiny should be councillor led. A proactive member-led approach is also a vital tool for O&S members to share the workload across committee members and progress issues of importance to them despite resource constraints.

*"Scrutiny committees do have the power to 'call in' decisions, i.e. ask the executive to reconsider them before they are implemented, but should not view it as a substitute for early involvement in the decision-making process or as a party-political tool." **

* Overview and Scrutiny: statutory guidance for councils, combined authorities and combined county authorities

Improvements & Successes –

Proactive Budget Scrutiny

- Budget scrutiny opportunities were increased in 24/25. Scrutiny councillors provided test, challenge and ideas on the developing budget for the following year.
- Proactive scrutiny was timed to give councillors the chance to input during development stages of the budget – not at the end when proposals are fully developed and impact is limited.
- The enhanced model was recognised by the Centre for Governance and Scrutiny as an example of excellence in proactive budget scrutiny.

Improvements & Successes - Proactive Budget Scrutiny ctd.

July

Budget Skills Training

- Delivered to all councillors
- Equipped councillors with knowledge and skills to understand the budget setting cycle and effectively scrutinise.

September

Directorate Budget presentations NEW

- Delivered to each O&S Committee.
- Breakdown of current and proposed budget arrangements across all council directorates.

O&S Budget Working Groups established NEW

- Four groups established, one for each O&S committee.
- Small groups of councillors worked with officers to deep dive into priority budget areas.
- All councillors given opportunity to suggest topics.

October

Budget Working Group activity month NEW

Budget topics scrutinised:

- Car Parking
- Resident's Card
- Climate & Ecological emergency budget
- Housing Temporary Accommodation budget
- School transport costs
- Care Growth forecast (children's services)
- Adult Social Care demand management

November - January

Budget Working Groups - feedback into O&S Board. NEW

- Public feedback of working group findings.
- Board debated findings and made recommendations to Cabinet.

Budget workshops

- Two workshops delivered to all councillors.
- Outlined proposed budget pre and post LG Finance settlement

February

Scrutiny of final proposed budget

- Dedicated O&S Board meeting.
- All member invitation.
- Included feedback to O&S from Cabinet on recommendations arising from budget working groups.

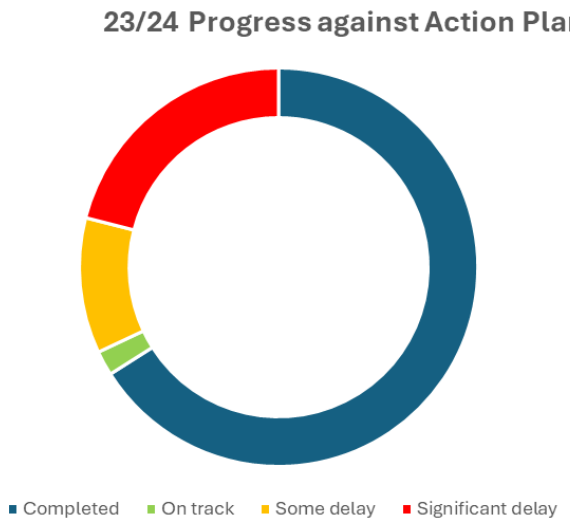
Final 2025/26 Council budget agreed

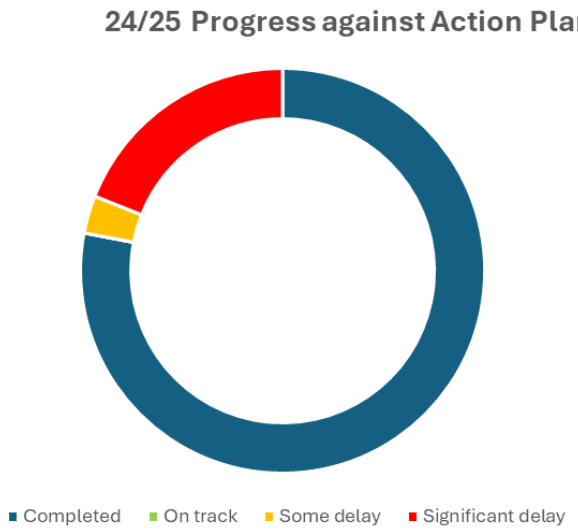
- Cabinet and Council meetings

O&S Board – ongoing in year financial monitoring of all finance related reports to Cabinet.

Improvements & Successes – O&S Action Plan

- The O&S Action Plan was agreed by Council in 2023 and contains strategic actions to improve O&S activity and bring it into line with statutory guidance.
- Progress made against the O&S Action Plan in 2024/25 took it to over 75% complete.
- Notable actions completed this year related to officer and member training to improve the culture needed to support effective scrutiny and targeted support to the Children's Services O&S Committee.
- The Action Plan has been progressed as resources allow, and after core O&S activity is resourced. It will continue to be progressed on this basis and reported annually to Council with this report. O&S lead members also monitor the Action Plan on a regular basis.





Future Aims

Planned improvements to strengthen the practices and value of scrutiny

These are focussed on two clear aims:

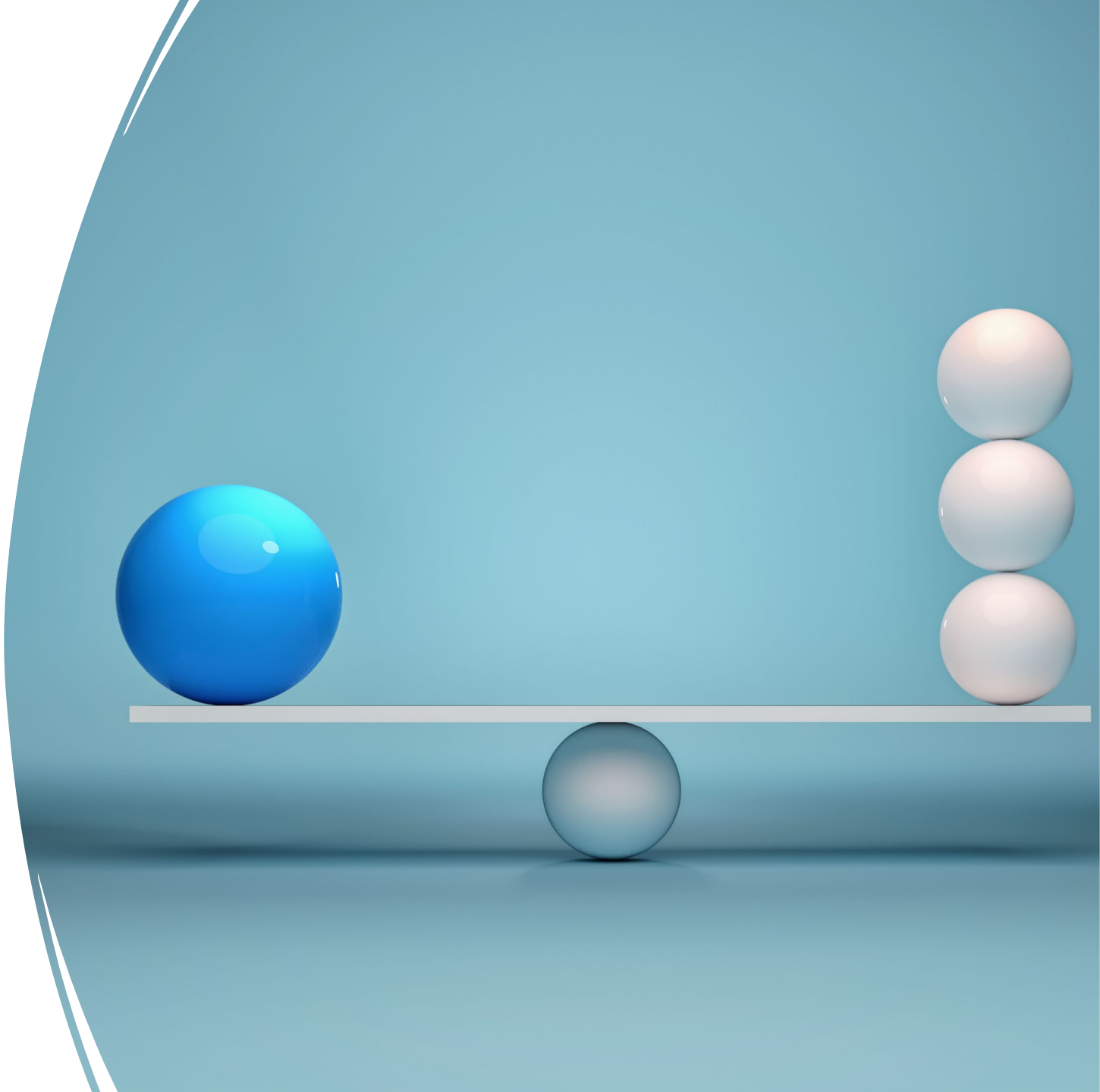
- **Maximising Resource**
- **Value added scrutiny**

Future Aims – Maximising Resource

"The resource an authority allocates to the scrutiny function plays a pivotal role in determining how successful that function is and therefore the value it can add to the work of the authority.

*Ultimately it is up to each authority to decide on the resource it provides, but every authority should recognise that creating and sustaining an effective scrutiny function requires them to allocate resources to it." **

* Overview and Scrutiny: statutory guidance for councils, combined authorities and combined county authorities



Future Aims – Maximising Resource

The biggest challenge to overview and scrutiny is how to use its resources for maximum impact. Resource to support Overview and Scrutiny work is limited and to have the most influence, must be used innovatively and targeted towards the topics that will have the most likelihood of tangible change and improvements for residents. **Measures suggested to maximise resource in 2025/26 include:**

Streamlining working groups	• It is recommended that the council move to a quality over quantity approach, with one O&S working group taking place at a time (previously up to 4 concurrently). This will encourage a focus on progressing the highest importance working groups and enable the work to progress in a timely way, before moving on to the next topic. O&S Chairs and Vice Chairs will play a role in determining the priority order of working groups.
More test and challenge of topic suggestions and scopes	• As O&S leads, the O&S Chairs and Vice Chairs group are well placed to provide peer test and challenge to the topics and scopes suggested for scrutiny across all committees with the aim of ensuring that those selected are likely to lead to meaningful outcomes. Chairs and Vice Chairs meet regularly throughout the year and will add this to their oversight role.
Scoping champions	• In addition to added challenge from Chairs and Vice Chairs, it is recommended that any topic agreed for scoping will be assigned a committee member to liaise with other councillors and officers to ensure scopes will add value. Member championing will ensure that the issues of highest interest to committees are driven forward at pace by passionate members keen to explore issues of interest.
Matrix for prioritising topics	• In consultation with O&S Chairs, a topic prioritisation matrix will be introduced to assist committees in their work programming choices. A scored matrix will provide a more evidence-based method for councillors to assess and prioritise topics with the greatest likelihood of impact.

"Scrutiny members should accept that shortlisting can be difficult; scrutiny committees have finite resources and deciding how these are best allocated is tough. They should understand that, if work programming is robust and effective, there might well be issues that they want to look at that nonetheless are not selected." * * Overview and Scrutiny: statutory guidance for councils, combined authorities and combined county authorities

Future Aims – Maximising Resource ctd.

Other measures that will maximise O&S resource:

Rapporteurs –

Embedding the use of rapporteurs across all committees will enable individual members to champion issues of interest, monitor, progress and report back on issues to the full committee, freeing up committee time. This model has already been used successfully in some committees.

Self-serve councillor access to data –

Following the implementation of a Data Toolkit to assist Health & Adult Social Care O&S Committee members navigate the complex health data landscape, a similar toolkit has been developed for Children's Services O&S members. Corporate performance data and will also be shared with all O&S committees on a regular basis. This will enable O&S members to horizon scan data on a self-serve basis, raising red flags into committee and using data to inform scrutiny topics choices.

Keeping agenda items low –

Attempting to scrutinise too many items in committee meetings can dilute the benefit of scrutiny and limit meaningful outcomes. Maintaining a focus on a maximum of 3 items per committee agenda and reducing from the levels seen in 2024/25 will ensure that each topic can be explored in sufficient depth to lead to valuable recommendations. Using other scrutiny mechanisms to receive information items and selecting only the topics where the committee can have the most influence will be essential to making the most of O&S resource.

Future Aims – Value added scrutiny

Scrutiny topics should impact positively on the work of the Council and, through this, BCP residents. Understanding and demonstrating this impact is an identified action within the O&S action plan. Planned measures to strengthen this include:

❑ **Introducing recommendation trackers**
- to enable O&S committees to track the recommendations made and ask for updates on implementation, ultimately assisting committees in understanding the impact that recommendations have had and how recommendations could be strengthened to maximise impact.

❑**Annual surveys to gather insight on added value and impact**
- gathering feedback from councillors and officers on their perception of impact to help inform future work planning choices.

❑ **Regular monitoring of impact**
- reflecting on the value and success of scrutiny topics and methods through Chairs and Vice Chairs meetings.

Listening to Residents

❑ **Topic suggestion form**
- an improved user-friendly form will be provided on the council website for residents to make scrutiny topic suggestions.

❑ **Increase resident driven scrutiny topics**
- scrutiny committees can become overwhelmed by internal focussed reports such as budget and performance reports. By making space on agendas for topics that either respond to burning issues for residents, are generated by resident suggestions or include listening opportunities to hear from the public, scrutiny will ensure that it is aligning to and serving the needs of residents. Listening sessions are already planned in 2025/26 for topics such as ‘Van Life’, to understand the needs of those who live in vehicles in BCP through choice or necessity.

Equality Impact Assessment: Conversation Screening Tool

The Council is legally required by the Equality Act 2010 to evidence how it has considered its equality duties in its decision-making process.
The Council must have due regard to the need to -

(a) eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act;
(b) advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;
(c) foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

Having due regard to the need to advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it involves having due regard, in particular, to the need to -

(a) remove or minimise disadvantages suffered by persons who share a relevant protected characteristic that are connected to that characteristic;
(b) take steps to meet the needs of persons who share a relevant protected characteristic that are different from the needs of persons who do not share it;
(c) encourage persons who share a relevant protected characteristic to participate in public life or in any other activity in which participation by such persons is disproportionately low.

A link to the full text of s149 of the Equality Act 2010 which must be considered when making decisions.

1	**What is being reviewed?**	The level of concurrent Overview and Scrutiny topic inquiries
2	**What changes are being made?**	Potential reduction of topics from one per Overview and Scrutiny (O&S) committee concurrently (across four committees) to one at a time across all committees. Topic priority order to be determined by O&S Chairs rather than O&S committees. Greater scoping controls to be applied by Overview and Scrutiny chairs.
3	**Service Unit:**	Democratic Services
4	**Participants in the conversation:**	Lindsay Marshall, Overview and Scrutiny Specialist Richard Jones, Head of Democratic Services
5	**Conversation date/s:**	September 2025
6	**Do you know your current or potential client base? Who are the key stakeholders?**	Anyone submitting a topic for overview and scrutiny work, primarily councillors but also including officers, other council bodies (eg. Cabinet/ Council), and residents.
7	**Do different groups have different needs or experiences?** age (young/old), disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation, members of the armed forces community, any other factors/groups e.g. socio-economic status, carers, human rights.	The impact on all protected groups is neutral and there is no difference in needs or experiences for any protected group. Under the BCP Constitution all councillors and residents have the right to submit a topic for scrutiny work and this will not change.
8	**Will this change affect any service users?**	No - There will be no impact on any protected group as a result of the proposed changes to O&S topic prioritisation.

9	**Not applicable**	
10	**What are the benefits or positive equality impacts of the change on current or potential users?**	The proposed changes to topic prioritisation may positively benefit the council and residents as prioritisation will by necessity become more robust and those topics of the highest importance and tangible impact to residents may be more likely to be selected for scrutiny. The impact on all protected groups will be equal.
11	**What are the negative impacts of the change on current or potential users?**	As a result of more robust topic prioritisation some topics may not be selected for scrutiny which may otherwise have been progressed. This may include topics suggested by residents. However it is likely that topics that are less impactful are not progressed and this is in line with existing arrangements in place to guide O&S councillors when making judgements on scrutiny topic selection. The impact of this on all protected groups will be equal.
12	**Will the change affect employees?**	No.
13	**Will the change affect the wider community?**	No further than is outlined in the paragraphs above.
14	**What mitigating actions are planned or already in place for those negativelyaffected by this change?**	There are no significant negative impacts of proposed changes to O&S topic prioritisation and so no mitigating actions are planned.
15	**Summary of Equality Implications:**	There are no direct equality implications arising from proposed changes to O&S topic prioritisation. Benefits to communities may be seen in the selection of topics that have a greater positive impact on communities but this will not affect any protected group more than others. Overall, the outcome of proposals will have a neutral impact on equality.