

BOURNEMOUTH, CHRISTCHURCH AND POOLE COUNCIL
COUNCIL

Minutes of the Meeting held on 10 February 2026 at 7.00 pm

Present:-

Cllr L Dedman – Chairman

Cllr S Bull – Vice-Chairman

Present: Cllr C Adams, Cllr S Aitkenhead, 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 J Clements, Cllr P Cooper, Cllr M Cox, Cllr B Dove, 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 S Moore, Cllr A-M Moriarty, Cllr B Nanovo, Cllr L Northover, Cllr R Pattinson-West, Cllr K Rampton, Cllr Dr F Rice, Cllr J Richardson, Cllr V Ricketts, Cllr C Rigby, 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 and Cllr G Wright

70. Apologies

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Hazel Allen, Adrian Chapmanlaw, Eleanor Connolly, Michelle Dower, Pete Miles, Margaret Phipps and Kate Salmon.

71. Declarations of Interests

Declaration of Interests were received as follows:

Councillors Sara Armstong and Bobbie Dove declared non-pecuniary interests in respect of agenda item 6: Cabinet 17 December 2025 - Minute No. 96 - Dedicated Schools Grant. (DSG) High Needs Expenditure Forecast 2025/26. Councillor Armstrong and Dove advised that they would recuse themselves from the meeting for the duration of the item.

Councillors Richard Burton and Millie Earl declared non-pecuniary interests in respect of agenda item 7: Cabinet 17 December 2025 - Minute No. 98 - Waste Strategy for Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole Council 2026-2036.

72. Confirmation of Minutes

Consideration was given to the minutes of the meeting held on 9 December 2025.

In respect of minute no. 68 Councillor Farr advised Council that he had submitted a question that had been deemed inadmissible for the meeting.

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting held on 9 December 2025 be approved as a correct record.

Nem. Con.

73. Announcements and Introductions from the Chairman

The Chairman advised Council of the death of former Borough of Bournemouth Councillor Dennis Gritt.

Councillors Canavan & Edwards spoke in memory of Mr Gritt before Council stood to mark his passing.

The Chairman then advised Council of her event attendances since the last meeting, including:

14 December - lighting of the Giant Menorah;
20 December - charity concert, with Cadence;
9 January - Hall and Woodhouse Community Chest Awards;
21 January Adult Social Care Awards;
25 January Holocaust Memorial event.

74. Public Issues

Public question from Phillip Stanley Watts

As someone who has worked for the NHS for over 30 years including through covid and mindful that many of my colleagues gave their lives i am asking the cabinet member whether BCP Council can build a memorial garden dedicated to those victims and NHS workers who suffered and worked through covid?

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

Thank you for your question and for your dedication to our National Health Service, not only through the pandemic but through your 30 years of service.

There are Covid 19 memorials located within each of the three main NHS Hospital sites in Bournemouth, Poole and Christchurch, marked by memorial stones and buried time capsules.

As a Council, we did support the Annual National Day of Reflection last year, and this year we are asking the CEO of University Hospitals Dorset if we can join them on this year's National Day of Reflection which will be held on Sunday 8th March.

I can also confirm that we are exploring a potential Covid-19 memorial in the Pocket Park in Boscombe which could be included as part of the landscaping in Phase 2 of the Towns Fund Development. My fellow Cabinet members and I thank you, and all of the staff and volunteers across BCP, who worked tirelessly to help support those in our community during the pandemic.

Public question from Soo Chapman

Whilst decarbonising prizes are being offered by Elon Musk and Prince William and the King releases his "Finding Harmony" film there's a shocking communication gap from our negligent government who've refused to publish their censored report on national security, global diversity loss and ecosystem collapse. Let alone televise it.

In a democracy where the world has acknowledged the need to prevent the incineration of the Earth, motivated and informed citizens should all be helping to make good choices to change our dire trajectory. Currently we're all at the mercy of disinformation by the well-funded fossil fuel lobby, the horrors of poisoned waters, unbreathable air, crop failures and Siberian temperatures.

Please will BCP write a Freedom of information request to Defra about their censored report requesting the overdue need for a Decarbonising Plan to protect us all before the collapse of ecosystems predicted to the council in 2022?

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

Soo, thank you for your question.

The Government did publish their "Nature security assessment on global biodiversity loss, ecosystem collapse and national security" on 20th January 2026

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/nature-security-assessment-on-global-biodiversity-loss-ecosystem-collapse-and-national-security>

This strategic assessment explores how global biodiversity loss and the collapse of critical ecosystems could affect the UK's resilience, security and prosperity.

It makes really sobering reading, and you are right that it has not attracted the publicity it needs.

Back in November, there was also an independent conference briefing on the National Emergency, organised by a group of scientists, which I know

you highlighted.

[National Emergency Briefing on climate & nature
https://www.nebriefing.org/](https://www.nebriefing.org/)

This includes a range of videos now available online, of experts talking about changing weather systems, tipping points, food scarcity, forced migration, health issues, national security and energy transition.

I have watched them all, and I have written to all BCP Councillors highlighting the value of these accessible films to give the science and some achievable solutions to the threats you consistently remind us of.

I don't think that it would be our role as a Council to write an FoI request to DEFRA.

I have included links to the two online resources mentioned for the written record of this meeting, for anyone interested to review.

Public question from Roger Mann

What plans does the council have to improve secure bicycle parking in Bournemouth town centre for both private bikes and Beryl bikes? Specifically:

- Installing secure/monitored cycle hubs?
- Working with Beryl to ensure better upkeep and monitoring?
- Ensuring bike security grows alongside new cycling infrastructure?

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

Roger, thank you for your question.

We have worked with the Dolphin Centre in Poole, and with a private operator, Spokesafe to provide a secure and monitored parking area in Poole Town centre.

Active Travel England, which is part of DfT awarded BCP Council the top level 3 assessment this year. As a result, their allocation of funds to BCP for Active Travel doubled to £2.95M for next year.

As part of planning for spending this allocation, we recognise the need and we intend to invest to increase the secure cycle parking in the Town and District Centres across BCP.

We hold regular quarterly meetings with the shared bike operator, Beryl to monitor their service.

As the devices are permanently on-street, they do suffer from weather and vandalism. Beryl do reduce the number of bikes and scooters on street over winter months, undertake preventative maintenance, and respond to faults as advised to them.

There is an easy method to report faults through their app. If you feel there are specific issues that are not getting resolved, I'd be happy to take this up

with them.

I agree that bike security needs to grow alongside other improvements to infrastructure.

Public Statement from Susan Stockwell

Taking down the strip club advertising that made Bournemouth look so seedy is starting to tempt businesses back into the town centre as it looks less like an 80s lad mag. Imagine what booting the sex tourists out completely by refusing to license them could do to regenerate the town.

It's worked in Newquay, Cornwall and Altrincham in Cheshire. We still have the beaches and the weather. Reclaim the streets for a safe thriving nightlife instead of the leering leches ruining it for everyone at the moment and the sky's the limit.

Calderdale, home of Riot Women and the original Happy Valley is battling to close one down at the moment, and residents should be getting together to do the same in Bournemouth. Eyes on the prize for a safe enjoyable buzzing night life where men and women can meet on an equal footing to party the night away.

Public Statement from Daniel Glennon

I'm returning to the previously raised issue of glyphosate use in public spaces. I appreciate the responses I've received around public expectations, cost and the challenges of alternative approaches. I recognise this is not a straightforward issue.

I'd like to refocus today on public health. Research by Pesticide Action Network UK[1] found residues of glyphosate and other cancer-linked pesticides in eight out of thirteen playgrounds tested across the UK. These are places designed for children, where families should feel safe.

I'm also concerned by recent developments in the scientific evidence base. A paper frequently cited to support the claim that a leading brand name weedkiller whose active ingredient is glyphosate poses no risk to human health has now been retracted following serious concerns about its independence[2].

Given this context, I'm asking the council to work collaboratively towards reducing and eliminating glyphosate use and prioritising the health of residents.

[1]<https://www.pan-uk.org/playgrounds/>

[2]<https://retractionwatch.com/2025/12/04/glyphosate-safety-article-retracted-elsevier-monsanto-ghostwriting/>

Public Statement from Phillip Gatrell (Read by BCP Chief Executive)

The Public Office (Accountability) Act will supersede "Misconduct in Public Office".

Duties of “candour, frankness and transparency” in the public interest shall apply at all times to Members’ and Officers’ functions. Breaches and misleading the public can invoke criminal penalties including imprisonment.

The Council’s Code of Governance pledges “Integrity, Openness, Transparent Reporting to Deliver Effective Accountability” - so why the new law?

My 24 July 2025 Question to Audit and Governance elucidates concerning Council’s disallowed and unconscionable request for anonymity in reporting its failed Judicial Review. Which incurred 292 hours Council lawyers’ time and £214,722 costs excluding the complainant’s reimbursement determined by the Ombudsman.

On 26 August 2025 the Leader was asked as to the decision maker and date of Members’ first awareness regarding the anonymity request but, despite reminders, remains unresponsive.

A response to my subsequent Freedom of Information request is overdue.

Other Councillors alerted on 24 July are apparently acquiescent.

Altogether this is troubling.

Public Statement from Alex McKinstry

The Item 10 report omits to mention that five Code of Conduct complaints were simply closed in August 2025, when the subject councillor failed to comply with sanctions. Complainants were invited to leave the matter there, or to submit further complaints under 8.4 of the Code (non-compliance).

That decision was made by officers without prior reference to the Standards Committee, who deplored that action at their subsequent meeting of 7 October. The Standards Committee can prevent this recurring by fortifying Part 8 of the Code, which requires co-operation with the Standards Committee and a response within 14 days; any non-cooperation / non-compliance should be reported to the next Council by default, then entered into the minutes as a permanent record.

I would incidentally like to thank the overwhelming majority of councillors who do take the Code of Conduct seriously, and who undertake their duties with diligence and integrity.

Public Statement from Elaine Findlay (Read by BCP Chief Executive)

Dear Councillors

In the Bournemouth Town Council ward map, EC3, in EC&S, has been detached from its neighbours and placed within S&QP without consultation.

A poll of EC3 residents was undertaken and 92% are very unhappy because:

- The strong sense of community with the rest of EC&S ward will be fractured.
- EC3 was divorced from S&QP by the A338 nearly sixty years ago so

no sense of community remains,

- No sense of common identity between EC3 and rest of S&QP.
- Issues in EC&S completely different from those in SQ&P.

Fear is EC3 will be considered a tiny backwater and completely ignored.

Please reconsider the positioning of EC3 as a matter of urgency to ensure the community remains with those with the same issues, ideas and sense of place. The obvious area to move is QP1. This is already in the Queens Park area and identifies more with that community.

End of Public Questions and Statements

Councillor Joe Salmon sought to move a motion to refer Mr McKinstry's statement to the relevant Governance Working Group or Committee for further review. The Monitoring Officer, Mr Robin Watson, advised that there was no provision to refer a public statement. Mr Watson advised that it would be most appropriate for Councillor Salmon to discuss the matter with the relevant Portfolio Holder.

75. Cabinet 17 December 2025 - Minute No. 96 - Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) High Needs Expenditure Forecast 2025/26

Councillor Richard Burton introduced the report and moved the recommendations as set out in the report.

This was seconded and, following debate, it was:

RESOLVED: that Council: -

- (a) Approve a £14.3m increase in the 2025/26 high needs budget. This brings the forecast expenditure to £71.8m more than the grant made available by government as part of the DSG;**
- (b) Request the Corporate Director of Children's Services implement the deficit management measures outlined in this report.**

Voting: F54, A0 (9 Abstentions)

Councillors Dove and Ricketts left 19:39.

76. Cabinet 17 December 2025 - Minute No. 98 - Waste Strategy for Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole Council 2026-2036

Councillor Andy Hadley introduced the report and moved the recommendations as set out in the report.

This was seconded and, following debate, it was:

RESOLVED: that Council: -

(a) note the consultation report, summarising feedback from residents and stakeholders;

Voting: Nem. Con.

(b) adopt the Waste Strategy for BCP Council 2026-2036 including the additional wording for paragraphs 5.1 and 5.2 as recommended by the Environment and Place Overview and Scrutiny Committee; and

Voting: F46, A18, (2 Abstentions)

Councillors John Beesley and Bobbie Dove requested that their votes against be recorded in the minutes.

(c) approve the following service change to progress supporting actions set out in the Waste Strategy: (i) removal of current separate kerbside battery collections where household batteries are collected in a clear bag placed on top of the kerbside recycling bin.

Voting: F47, A16, (4 Abstentions)

Councillors Dove and Cllr Ricketts returned 19:49.

Councillor Trent arrived 19:55.

Council adjourned 20:24.

Council resumed 20:44.

77. Recommendations from Cabinet - 4 February 2026

Recommendations from the Cabinet meeting held on 4 February 2026 were determined under agenda items 8(a) to (c). Reports were set out in the supplementary agenda.

78. Cabinet 4 February 2026 - Minute No. 120 - Our people and communities: Subsidised Bus Services Review

Councillor Andy Hadley introduced the report and moved the recommendations as set out in the report.

This was seconded and, following debate, it was:

RESOLVED: that:

(a) Council approves the phased withdrawal of the council bus subsidy budget commencing May 2026 resulting in the service changes set out in Appendix 4;

(b) Council approves the use of Local Authority Bus Grant to fund the revised subsidised bus network as set out in Appendix 4.

Voting: Nem. Con.

79. Cabinet 4 February 2026 - Minute No. 122 - Early Years Mainstream Schools Funding 2026/27

Councillor Richard Burton introduced the report and moved the recommendations as set out in the report.

This was seconded and it was:

RESOLVED: that:

(a) The decision for the early years single funding formula (EYSFF) is delegated to the corporate director for children's services in consultation with the portfolio holder for children, young people, education and skills;

(b) Council approves the mainstream schools funding formula detailed in Appendix 2.

Voting: Nem. Con.

80. Cabinet 4 February 2026 - Minute No. 123 - Hawkwood Road Phase 2 Update

Councillor Kieron Wilson introduced the report and moved the recommendations as amended via circulated email.

Council agreed the proposed amendments.

Voting: Nem. Con.

Council then moved to debate on the amended recommendation. During the debate, Council sought clarity from the Monitoring Officer on whether members of the Eastern Planning Committee were able to take part in the debate and vote on the item, as the Committee was due to determine an application on the use of the proposed commercial unit.

The Monitoring Officer advised that members of the Eastern Planning Committee were able to take part in the debate and vote on the item. Expressing a view or voting at Council would likely not be deemed predetermination, though ultimately this was a matter for those Members to consider.

Following debate, it was:

RESOLVED: that Council:

- 1. grants approval to proceed with Option 1 to enter the build contract for 68 homes and commercial floorspace, prior to executing an Agreement to Lease for the ground floor of Block A, to secure the total combined grant of £17.3m and redevelopment of the Hawkwood Road site within the external funder's timescales.**
- 2. gives authority to the Estates team to market the non-residential property as general commercial, if the NHS is unable to commit funding for the ground floor of Block A and noting the full residential scheme is no longer deliverable.**
- 3. gives authority to the Corporate Property Officer to proceed to sale or long leasehold of the ground floor commercial asset to ensure a funding strategy is secured to offset the cost of building.**

Voting: F64, A1 (2 Abstentions)

81. 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

Councillor Millie Earl introduced the report and moved the recommendations as set out in the report. Council was advised that the appointments to the remaining vacancies on the Licensing Committee and Eastern Planning Committee would be taken separately.

This was seconded and, following debate, it was:

RESOLVED: That

- a) the revised political balance of the Council, as set out in Table 1 to this report be noted;**
- b) the number of seats on the Health and Adult Social Care Overview and Scrutiny Committee be reduced to 11 to 10 seats;**
- c) the allocation of seats to each political group, as set out in Table 2 to this report, be approved;**

- d) 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;
- e) Councillor Mark Howell plus one other member of the Council be appointed to fill the vacancy on the Licensing Committee referred to in paragraphs 12 and 13 to this report;
- f) a member of the Council be appointed to fill the vacancy on the Eastern BCP Planning Committee referred to in paragraphs 12 and 13 of this report;
- g) the allocation of seats to each political group to the outside bodies, as detailed in Table 4 to this report, be approved;
- h) 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;
- i) Councillor Lawrence Williams be appointed to fill the vacancy on the Dorset Police and Crime Panel as shown in Table 5 to this report.

Voting: Nem. Con.

The Chair then sought nominations to the two Committee vacancies.

Licensing Committee:

Councillors Patrick Canavan and Duane Farr were nominated and seconded. Following a secret ballot, Councillor Farr was appointed to the Committee.

RESOLVED: That Councillor Duane Farr be appointed to the Licensing Committee.

Voting: Councillor Farr: 36, Councillor Canavan: 8 (1 abstention.)

Eastern Planning Committee:

Councillors Judes Butt, Gillian Martin and Julie Bagwell were nominated and seconded. Councillor Bagwell did not accept the nomination.

Following debate, Councillor Butt withdrew and Councillor Martin was appointed unopposed.

RESOLVED: That Councillor Gillian Martin be appointed to the Eastern BCP Planning Committee.

Voting: Nem. Con.

Cllr Weight left 21:35

Cllr Weight returned 21:45

82. Non-compliance with Standards Complaints Process - Determination

Councillor Vanessa Ricketts introduced the report which was for information only.

The report was noted.

Councillor Salmon moved a motion to refer the item to the Constitution Working Group to review strengthening the powers of the Standards Committee when dealing with such matters.

The Chair advised that the motion would not be accepted.

Councillors Butt, Bagwell and Filer left 22:23

Councillor Williams left 22:24

83. Notices of Motions in accordance with Procedure Rule 10

APR1 Numberplate

As the mover of the original motion, Cllr Howell requested that the motion be deferred to a future meeting of Council to allow for officers to prepare a report.

Council accepted the request.

Voting: Nem. Con.

Live Traffic, Flooding and Infrastructure Resilience for BCP

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.

This Council notes that during the recent aftermath of Storm Chandra, Dorset Council provided residents with a dedicated live traffic update service, offering real-time information on road closures, incidents and disruption. This proved vital for public safety, emergency response and travel planning during severe weather.

In contrast, BCP Council does not currently provide a comparable live or real-time traffic and road status page. Information available to residents is largely limited to planned roadworks or issue reporting, leaving no central, publicly accessible source of live information during emergencies.

Council further notes that recent flooding events across the BCP conurbation have caused significant disruption to residents, businesses and essential services. These events are not new or exceptional, and climate related severe weather is increasingly frequent and predictable. This Council is also concerned that sewer backflow and inadequate sewer network capacity during torrential rainfall continues to exacerbate flooding, property damage and public health risks. These issues are often insufficiently acknowledged or addressed within planning, infrastructure capacity assessments and development decisions.

This Council believes the absence of a live, coordinated traffic and road status system, alongside unresolved drainage and sewer capacity challenges, represents a serious gap in resilience and emergency preparedness.

This Council therefore resolves to:

1. Ask Cabinet to set out the reasons why BCP Council does not currently provide a live, real-time traffic and road status service comparable to Dorset Council's, including an assessment of costs, funding priorities and whether financial considerations alone justify the absence of such a service.
2. Request that officers urgently explore the development of a publicly accessible, real-time system covering traffic disruption, flooding, road closures and emergency conditions across BCP.
3. Call for a long-term, resilient approach that brings together all relevant agencies, stakeholders and partners including highways, emergency services, water and sewerage providers, planning authorities and neighbouring councils to address information sharing, sewer backflow, drainage capacity and infrastructure resilience during extreme weather.
4. Require that sewer network capacity, flood risk and surface water management are explicitly and robustly addressed within planning policy and development decisions.
5. Request a report back to Full Council setting out options, costs, responsibilities and timescales for delivery.

Council debated the motion and Councillor Earl moved an amendment to add the following: "That Council refers to the Environment and Place Overview and Scrutiny Committee to investigate the following requests:"

This was seconded by Councillor Mike Cox.

Cllr Cooper accepted the proposed amendment and Council debated the substantive motion, where it was:

RESOLVED: That Council refers to the Environment and Place Overview and Scrutiny Committee to investigate the following requests:

- 1. Ask Cabinet to set out the reasons why BCP Council does not currently provide a live, real-time traffic and road status service comparable to Dorset Council's, including an assessment of costs, funding priorities and whether financial considerations alone justify the absence of such a service.**
- 2. Request that officers urgently explore the development of a publicly accessible, real-time system covering traffic disruption, flooding, road closures and emergency conditions across BCP.**
- 3. Call for a long-term, resilient approach that brings together all relevant agencies, stakeholders and partners including highways, emergency services, water and sewerage providers, planning authorities and neighbouring councils to address information sharing, sewer backflow, drainage capacity and infrastructure resilience during extreme weather.**
- 4. Require that sewer network capacity, flood risk and surface water management are explicitly and robustly addressed within planning policy and development decisions.**
- 5. Request a report back to Full Council setting out options, costs, responsibilities and timescales for delivery.**

Voting: Nem. Con.

Cllr Tarling left 22:28

Cllr Tarling returned 22:32

84. Questions from Councillors

Upon request from the Chair, Council agreed that Members would receive written replies to their submitted questions.

Voting: Nem. Con.

Question from Councillor Duane Farr

Has Children's Services carried out any safeguarding triage, Section 47 assessment, or Continuum-of-Need classification in response to concerns about filming at school sites raised since October 2025?

Response from the Portfolio Holder for Children, Young People, Education and Skills, Councillor Richard Burton

CSC has not undertaken any safeguarding triage, Section 47 assessment, or Continuum-of-Need classification in response to concerns about filming at school sites since October 2025, as no specific child's details have been provided indicating harm or risk. Without such information, CSC is unable to initiate an investigation or assessment in accordance with established procedures.

Question from Councillor Mark Howell

When I was in the changing room of the Dolphin Pool recently, I heard a BCP employee who was showing a potential new member around apologise for the state of the facility. He said it was due a refurbishment soon.

The Leader has previously committed to the facility's renovation, having reneged on the previous Leader's public commitment to build a new facility.

What is the timescale for renovation and when will the extent of the renovation be made public?

Response from the Leader of the Council, Councillor Millie Earl

The delivery of a new council leisure centre is a multi-year, multi-million-pound project. Despite the financial challenges and rising costs, if a funded solution could be found this would achieve immense social value and health benefits which often outweigh purely financial considerations in the long run. A funding strategy was investigated to support this ambition through use of the nearby car parks. After substantial due diligence, three refurbishment options and two residential development options were considered and evaluated against the set financing parameters.

Currently the development options do not provide a sufficient return, to fund the refurbishment or replacement of the leisure centre. The size and shape of the available development site limits design options. Available grant funding options are insufficient to bridge the viability gap and other local authorities delivering leisure centres, have seen costs double at build from concept stage. In 2024, three leisure centres were insourced, this included the Poole Dolphin Leisure Centre.

By taking full control back the Council has been able to establish the condition of the building and current facilities to inform a longer-term investment strategy. The Leisure team are reviewing the whole BCP Leisure portfolio to establish an investment strategy which will include options for sustaining the facilities. This reflects our priority in balancing the Council's budget for 2026/27, whilst supporting the ongoing operations of this facility.

Question from Councillor Patrick Canavan

Given the government's new commitment to end the placement of families with children in B&Bs beyond six weeks and its wider child-poverty strategy, can the Council set out our current position in relation to these issues?

Specifically, how many children in BCP are currently living in temporary accommodation, including B&Bs beyond the legal six-week limit and what actions are being taken to reduce reliance on unsuitable accommodation?

Recognising recent initiatives, what further steps will be taken to ensure that BCP aligns local policy and resourcing with the government's stated aim of reducing child poverty and making childcare more accessible for families on Universal Credit?

Response from the Portfolio Holder for Housing and Regulatory Services, Councillor Kieron Wilson

In terms of the use of B&Bs for families with children, BCP Council are committed not to use such accommodation for children and families.

The Council currently has 317 families in temporary accommodation, representing 726 children – most of which are staying in self contained homes managed by the Council.

We've worked hard to significantly reduce families in B&B from well over one hundred families and today we have just one family and one child who have stayed in B&B one night. You may have seen we have recently celebrated the past year by having no families with children in B&B for longer than 6 weeks.

To support our approach, an updated Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Strategy will be coming to Cabinet in the Spring, this details our strategic approach which further strengthens our approach to homelessness prevention and reduces dependency upon unsuitable temporary housing.

We have some families with children where there is no duty under Housing legislation to house. For these families with children, they may be supported by Children's Services due to social care needs. We currently have one family accessing a B&B through Children's Social Care- has been for less than 6 weeks.

Response to part 2:

We are continuing to expand the availability of childcare places across our area. Using national funding streams from the Department for Education—including the Childcare Expansion Capital Grant and the National Wraparound Childcare Programme—we are supporting schools, early years providers and childminders to grow their provision. This includes helping them develop sustainable business models and offering tools and resources through the Childcare Works programme. These measures increase capacity across the sector, ensuring more families can access the places they need.

We are strengthening wraparound childcare. Through the wraparound

programme, we are helping schools and providers to expand before- and after-school childcare, which is vital for working parents, particularly those claiming Universal Credit who must balance work requirements with caring responsibilities.

We continue to provide clear and accessible information to families through our Family Information Directory and SEND Local Offer. These platforms help parents find local childcare options, understand eligibility for funded entitlements, and navigate the support available to them, including how national Universal Credit childcare support can be used alongside local entitlements.

Through the delivery of national childcare entitlements—such as 15 hours for all 3- and 4-year-olds, and the growing offer of 30 hours for working parents from nine months to four years—we are helping to reduce the financial burden on families. These funded hours can be combined with Universal Credit childcare support, which reimburses up to 85% of eligible childcare costs. Together, these measures significantly reduce the cost of childcare for low-income working families.

This will continue to be developed as part of our Best Start in Life local plan, due to be published in March 2026.

Question from Councillor Sharon Carr-Brown

There are more than a million young people classed as NEET nationally. Could the Leader of the Council / Portfolio Holder for Children's Services / relevant Cabinet Member please provide an update on the situation in the BCP Council area? Specifically:

- What is the current number and trend of young people aged 16–24 who are NEET in the BCP conurbation (broken down by age group where available)?
- What do we know about the root causes driving NEET status locally — for example, education disengagement, mental health barriers, transport issues, lack of opportunity, socio-economic factors, or skills gaps?
- What partnership initiatives (with Jobcentre Plus, schools & colleges, training providers, voluntary sector organisations, local employers, or combined authorities) are currently in place or planned to support NEET young people into employment, education, apprenticeships, traineeships, or volunteer placements?
- What performance data or outcome metrics is the Council using to monitor progress on reducing NEET figures and improving transition outcomes?
- How is the Council ensuring that paid employment opportunities (including apprenticeships and supported internships) are available — and that equality of access is provided across all parts of the BCP area?

Response from the Portfolio Holder for Children, Young People, Education and Skills, Councillor Richard Burton

Currently, our NEET figure in Year 12 and 13 is 201 (16- to 18-year-olds), which is a reduction on previous years.

Our NEET figure for young people with an EHCP is 97 (16 to 25 years), which is a reduction on previous years.

Across BCP, there is a combination of pressures that often overlap. These include:

- Mental health challenges and high levels of anxiety, which have become much more common since the pandemic.
- Specific barriers for young people with SEND, who often face more barriers to access courses, work experience or post-16 provision.
- Family and socio-economic pressures, which can make it harder for young people to attend consistently or stay motivated.
- Some young people experience transport barriers, especially those living further out.

Our young people who are NEET face a complex mix of health, personal, educational and practical challenges. And our response has to reflect that complexity.

We are working with Dorset Chamber, local employers, and education providers to deliver the Local Skills Improvement Plan, ensuring training meets local workforce needs.

We have recently strengthened our Education, Employment and Training Forum, to enhance partnership working. It provides strategic leadership and oversight for improving participation in education, employment and training for young people aged 14–25 across Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole.

A small 16–18 education grant enables Skills & Learning to support around 30 young people each year who are not ready for college or apprenticeships, including creative arts and barbering programmes. The funding also provides flexible English and maths to help young people without GCSEs re-engage in learning or work.

The Dorset & Somerset Training Provider Network continues to publish *Your Future Sorted*, helping young people and families understand local education and training options.

This spring, we will launch *Connect to Work*, a new Supported Employment Service for adults with disabilities or complex barriers, offering tailored support and working with employers to create suitable job opportunities. A new Youth Hub is also being set up with Jobcentre Plus and Bournemouth & Poole College to provide dedicated employment coaching for young people.

The *Get Dorset and BCP Working* plan highlights wider partnership activity, including work to reduce turnover in the social care workforce and to

expand opportunities in local health and care.

Careers and Coffee sessions across town centres have been well attended, and in March we will host the major Careers and Apprenticeship Show with over 60 employers and a supported employment zone.

This means our young people now have more ways to re-engage, more ways to build confidence, and more supported routes into paid work than ever before.

We monitor our NEET performance monthly, comparing it with regional and national data. There is a focus on young people with vulnerabilities. This is tracked and reported at different levels, such as the Education Quality and Performance Board and SEND and AP Improvement Board.

Locally, via our work with the Careers and Enterprise company, we have developed a destination data platform which our schools can access, allowing them to track the destinations of their young people. This work has been highlighted by Ofsted in several inspections as strong practice and has also been recognised by the DFE.

Key Performance Indicators and progress of the collaborative Local Skills Improvement Plan (LSIP) are monitored by The Dorset Skills & Workforce Board, including BCP Council and impact reports and employer survey data helps shape the local training and skills offer.

We are ensuring that young people across BCP have equal access to high-quality, meaningful employment opportunities in several ways:

We have expanded Supported Internships and now have a well-coordinated network across the conurbation. 73 young people are currently accessing supported employment pathways.

Our Careers and Apprenticeship Show and Careers and Coffee events are providing direct routes into jobs and apprenticeships.

We are opening up work experience opportunities for young people with SEND through new pilot programmes, which are being supported by education and third sector partners.

In addition, Dorset Careers Hub Work Experience Directory is supporting schools to link with employers and new modern work experience for KS3 is being piloted.

Opportunities for Apprenticeships, Small Medium Enterprises and employer engagement is being expanded in schools through the work of Dorset Careers Hub, for example, via Employer Encounters and other grant-funded programmes such as Hospitality Connect. These opportunities give schools access to a variety of providers, including Sunseeker and JP Morgan, and are further supported by the flagship Dorset Chamber Apprenticeship Awards.

Bournemouth and Poole College are developing a new post-14 skills-based pathway, which will give younger learners earlier access to vocational, practical and applied learning. This upstream offer will help keep students engaged in school, build confidence before KS4, and ultimately reduce the risk of those young people becoming NEET at 16 by giving them a clearer sense of purpose and direction.

And finally, we are aware that transport is a barrier to equality of opportunity. We are working on solutions such as improved travel training and closer alignment of learning provision with local communities.

The Government's Post-16 Education and Skills White Paper sets out a new skills system that is more closely aligned with employers and guarantees every young person a place in education or training. For BCP, these reforms reinforce the approach we are already taking: earlier identification, stronger employer partnerships, and more accessible skills-based pathways, all of which help us re-engage vulnerable young people and reduce NEET locally.

Our commitment is that every young person, wherever they live, and whatever challenges they face, should have a meaningful, supported route into the world of work. And through the partnerships we have built, the data we are using, and the reforms we are leading, we are better placed than ever to make that a reality.

Question from Councillor Peter Cooper

Given the Government's introduction of a "use it or lose it" funding model for pothole repairs—under which councils may lose up to 25% of additional highways funding if sufficient progress is not demonstrated—and the implementation of a traffic-light performance rating system, can the Portfolio Holder advise:

- What progress has been made to date in repairing potholes and improving road conditions across the borough.
- How the Portfolio Holder intends to ensure the Council achieves a green rating under the new performance and transparency framework; and
- What long-term preventative maintenance strategies are being pursued to move away from short-term "patch-and-run" repairs and secure the Council's full allocation of future funding?

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

Councillor Cooper,

The council has already secured the 25% incentive element for the current financial year. The DfT wrote to the Council on 19 December 2025 stating :

I am writing to confirm that your authority will receive its full share of this year's £500 million funding uplift for local highways maintenance, following your compliance with the new reporting requirements introduced this year.

Your commitment to transparency and best practice is greatly appreciated. The funding withheld from non-compliant authorities has been redistributed equally among all compliant local authorities.

In January the DfT advised that for 2025/26 the council has been rated as

- green for network condition

- amber for spend
- amber for wider best practice

The council was therefore rated as amber overall.

Of the 154 local authorities with Transport responsibilities, the breakdown for 2025/26 is as follows:

- 16 green rated
- 125 amber rated
- 13 red rated

Progress on repairing potholes and improving Road condition:

We are doing all we can in accordance with Best Practice, within available resources, on both reactive pothole maintenance, and structural maintenance based on road condition surveys, and focus our pothole prevention treatment programmes where they will have the most positive effect.

Improvements to the condition of the Highway Network can only be achieved with a significant increase in funding.

A recent life cycle planning exercise by our road condition survey contractor, highlighted that the LTP Maintenance Block allocation equates to about 30% of the level of resource required to keep the Highway Network in a reasonable condition.

Whilst we are pleased the allocations from DfT are increasing over the next 4 years they still fall far short of the £14M a year required to maintain steady state.

This is a legacy of decades of under funding for structural Highways maintenance, more heavier vehicles, increased congestion and climate change.

Potholes can be reported via the BCP website.

How do we ensure that the Council gets a green rating?

I am assured by the responsible officers that they are taking targeted action to improve the rating ahead of the next annual update.

The items flagged as being amber were

- The level of investment, which is an interesting indicator, given the council can only invest what it can afford to, based on a funding formula set by DfT. Of note we have no major roads maintained by Highways England within the conurbation.
- Best practice. Given the network condition was rated as green and considered to be one of the best in the country, the team were surprised by the amber rating for best practice.

Long term preventative maintenance strategies:

Once a defect has been reported, the team act swiftly to assess and where necessary implement a temporary repair.

BCP Council take a pro-active approach to the prevention of potholes

following asset management principles. Programmes of micro surfacing and asphalt preservation are undertaken on an annual basis with a programme of surface dressing also due to be implemented in 26/27. This work is focused on some sites that are showing early signs of deterioration, treated to keep them in a good condition to slow the rate of deterioration.

In the coming year (26/27) we will be treating 28.5km of our carriageways with pothole prevention treatments with details to be shortly announced.

As a result of this good practice BCP Council has one of the best Highway networks in England, evidenced by its 'GREEN' RAG status relating to Condition in the recent transparency report.

In summary, we will seek to ensure that we receive the full allocation, it is not enough to keep the highways in good condition, we could do more with increased resources.

Question from Councillor Anne-Marie Moriarty

Will the Council review and reconsider the use or promotion of content hosted on the platform X in Council or affiliated communications, given growing concerns about the platform's role in amplifying far-right narratives, the circulation of pornographic and misogynistic material (including content generated via Grok), and the widespread use of inappropriate and exploitative images, all of which appear inconsistent with the Council's commitments to equality, safeguarding, and democratic values?

Response from the Portfolio Holder for Customer, Communications and Culture, Councillor Andy Martin

Thank you for your question which is in fact timely as we have been indeed been looking at options regarding this platform.

I am sure all members even those not on social media will be more than aware of the increasing concerns about X.

Just for some context in 2024 BCP had 38,650 followers with 18,274 engagements. In 2025 we had 37,587 followers with 4991 engagements (that is likes/comments/shares).

That is a significant downward trend compared with other platforms such as Facebook, TikTok, Instagram and LinkedIn which have seen growth.

We have looked at three options for BCP. Remove all accounts, take no action or retain one corporate account on X but for limited purposes only.

This third option is our current position.

All BCP Council X / Twitter accounts are to be closed the exception of one BCP Council corporate account which retained for the following use only:

- Monitoring purposes
- communicating during emergencies when we have a statutory duty to warn and inform, and

- responding to questions about council services.

This position

- Maintains access to 37,900 users for key updates
- Supports warning and informing communications – allows us to push emergency info to 37,900 users
- A presence allows us to continue monitoring and therefore act quickly to escalating issues

The council has already taken mitigations around use of X including

- No new X accounts approved across the organisation
- No advertising, content or campaign designed for X exclusively
- No content posted only on X, anything posted on X is shared on other channels too

We intend to keep this under review and continue to monitor government guidance, updates on policy, what other public sector organisations are doing and indeed how X is being run.

Question from Councillor Duane Farr

How many public questions or statements have not been accepted to be heard at Full Council meetings since May 2023?

Response from the Leader of the Council, Councillor Millie Earl

Councillor Farr, thank you for your question.

Unfortunately, it is not possible to answer your question with a definitive number. The Democratic Services team communicate with many members of the public wishing to ask questions or make statements, typically via email.

Questions and statements may be rejected upon receipt by Democratic Services for technical failures (e.g., exceeding word limit or received too late) or ruled out of order by the Chair of the relevant meeting.

Correspondence relating to public questions and statements is not structured and would require significant officer effort to trawl through historic emails. Even if this took place, it is not possible to guarantee all rejections would be identified.

However, in response to your question, the team have implemented a new process and will in future register all received questions and statements and capture if the submission is valid or rejected, and if rejected, capture the reason.

Question from Councillor Peter Cooper

A resident has reported being instructed at the Nuffield recycling site to

place a hard-plastic crate into the general waste stream because it is “no longer economically viable” for the council to recycle that material.

Can the Cabinet Member explain whether hard-plastic recycling has been withdrawn at Nuffield, on what financial and environmental evidence this decision was based, and how this aligns with the council’s stated climate and sustainability commitments?

Further, what assessment has been made of the long-term environmental and land-use costs of sending hard plastics to landfill, and what options are being explored to reinstate a responsible and sustainable recycling route for these materials?

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

Councillor Cooper, thanks for your question.

Hard Plastic items such as buckets, crates, garden furniture and pipes form a very small part of the overall waste streams at our three BCP recycling centres including the Nuffield site in Poole.

The council have to retender waste and recycling contracts on a regular basis to show transparency and to follow the market and economic trends.

At the end of last year we issued a tender for the treatment of hard plastic recycling from all of the Council recycling centres, but unfortunately this did not receive any suitable bids for this particular contract due to the very high price that was being asked for.

As a result, the Council temporarily removed the separate collection of hard plastic recycling whilst we monitored and assessed the market, with a view to retendering as soon as practically possible.

I must emphasise that this does not affect the kerbside recycling collection of plastic bottles, pots, tubs trays and lids.

During January 2026 our waste team have engaged in a pre market engagement exercise that has targeted local and national companies to develop industry interest, and with the feedback we have received we are now confident a new tender that will be released shortly will find a contractor with whom we can start this service again at all of our three recycling centres in the Spring.

Our recycling centres continue to collect PVCu frames, and any plastic item that contains electrical components (WEEE). Residents should let staff know if they have any hard plastic items still in good working order and condition, as these may be suitable for reuse via our ‘New to You’ store.

Only 11% of our waste now goes to landfill sites and this is reducing all of the time. The vast majority of residual waste is now sent to Energy from Waste Facilities located in the South West.

I do hope we can resume recycling of hard plastics soon.

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

None.

The meeting ended at 10.49 pm

CHAIRMAN