BOURNEMOUTH, CHRISTCHURCH AND POOLE COUNCIL

CABINET

Minutes of the Meeting held on 02 September 2026 at 10.15 am

Present:-

Cllr M Earl – Chairman

Cllr M Cox – Vice-Chairman

Present:	Cllr D Brown, Cllr R Burton, Cllr A Hadley, Cllr J Hanna, Cllr R Herrett, Cllr A Martin, Cllr S Moore and Cllr K Wilson
Also in attendance:	Cllr P Canavan (Chair of the Health and Adult Social Care Overview and Scrutiny Committee) and Cllr G Farquhar
Also in attendance virtually:	Cllr S Aitkenhead (Vice-Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Board) and Cllr S Carr-Brown (Chair of the Childrens Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee).

40. Declarations of Interests

Councillor Sandra Moore declared an interest in Minute No. 44 (2026/27 Council Budget monitoring at quarter 1) as a Trustee of the Canford Heath Infant and Junior Schools and remained present for the discussion and voting thereon.

41. Confirmation of Minutes

The Minutes of the meeting held on 22 July 2026 were confirmed and signed as a correct record.

42. Public Issues

Cabinet was advised that there had been no petitions, questions or statements submitted by members of the public on this occasion.

43. Recommendations from the Overview and Scrutiny Committees

Cabinet was advised that recommendations had been received from the Overview and Scrutiny Board on items not otherwise indicated on the Cabinet agenda.

The Vice-Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Board, Councillor Sue Aitkenhead provided Cabinet with the background relating to the item and presented the recommendations from the Committee as set out below, copies of which had been circulated to Members of the Cabinet and published on the Council's website prior to the meeting.

In presenting the recommendation, Councillor Aitkenhead advised that the intention was to ensure that the Council had a clear understanding of the structural condition of its assets, to support the identification of future liabilities and maintenance requirements and to inform decisions relating to asset disposal.

Recommendation from the Overview and Scrutiny Board held on 24 August 2026

Overview and Scrutiny Board agenda item 9 – Estates Management and Asset Disposal

That Cabinet be advised that the Overview and Scrutiny Board considers that the condition of our estate needs to be known in order to ensure we have the data to inform asset disposals and maintenance needs and to plan maintenance in the most cost-effective way. This Board recommends that Cabinet support officers to find a way to complete this work as a matter of urgency.

Voting: For – 8, Against – 0, Abstain – 1

The Leader thanked the Overview and Scrutiny Board for its recommendation and advised that Cabinet would give the matter further consideration, with a formal response to be provided in due course.

Further to this recommendation the Leader and Portfolio Holders provided updates on recommendations which had previously been presented to the Cabinet, as follows: -

- The Portfolio Holder for Destination, Leisure and Commercial Operations, Councillor Richard Herrett, provided an update on previous recommendations relating to parking, road safety, highways and planning, with specific reference to parking issues around schools and parking pressures during the high season. In this regard, Councillor Herrett advised that he and the Leader had written to the Government to make the case for higher Penalty Charge Notice fines. He further advised that the Council had recently concluded a month-long trial and had requested that the Government either allow the Council to undertake a longer-term BCP-wide trial or address the matter nationally.
- The Leader of the Council, Councillor Millie Earl, provided an update on the recommendations relating to the Local Plan, specifically in relation to consultation and the terms of reference for the working group. Councillor Earl advised that work was already underway to consider how stakeholders, beyond statutory consultees, could best be engaged, and that Members would be written to in order to ensure they had the opportunity to provide input. With regard to the working group’s terms of reference, Councillor Earl advised that the recommendation from the Board had been adopted, enabling substitute members to attend the working group, provided that 72 hours’ notice was given to allow officers sufficient time to brief those Members. Councillor Earl further advised that the recommendation relating to risk, including the addition to the risk register of broader issues arising from devolution, local government reorganisation and any potential restructuring of governance arrangements, had also been accepted.

- The Portfolio Holder for Communities and Partnerships, Councillor Sandra Moore, advised that feedback had been provided to the Board and emphasised that the Social Value Statement related only to procurement and contract management. She further advised that ambiguity within the report had contributed to a misunderstanding of its intended purpose.

The Leader further confirmed that Portfolio Holders would attend the next meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Board to provide a full update to the Board in person.

44. 2026/27 Council Budget monitoring at Quarter 1

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

Cabinet was advised that, at Quarter 1, the Council was forecasting significant pressures arising from Children's Services (£11.8m) and Adult Social Care (£8.3m), due to rising demand for care services and increasing placement costs. Pressures were also forecast in Operations (£6.8m). The total General Fund forecast overspend was £27m, which represented an unprecedented level for the Council and a significant threat to its financial sustainability. Actions to address the position were set out in the report.

Cabinet was informed that delivery of the Council's £14.1m savings programme remained challenging, with only £9.6m currently forecast to be achieved, resulting in a projected £4.5m shortfall.

In addition, Cabinet was advised that the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) deficit remained the Council's most significant financial risk, with the accumulated deficit forecast to increase to approximately £275.5m by March 2027.

Cabinet was informed that the Council was awaiting approval of its SEND Reform Plan, which would unlock Government support through a High Needs Stability Grant covering 90% of the historic deficit as of March 2026.

Further to this, Cabinet was advised that the Capital Investment Programme had increased to £149m, with £11m, equivalent to 8%, spent by the end of Quarter 1, and that major investment continued in flood defences, transport, fleet replacement and SEND provision.

Cabinet was further advised that the Housing Revenue Account remained financially stable and was forecasting a £3.5m surplus.

In closing, Cabinet was informed that the Council was facing significant financial pressures and savings delivery risks, requiring ongoing management and recovery actions during the remainder of 2026/27.

Councillor Patrick Canavan addressed Cabinet in relation to Pride in Place and advised that, in respect of Boscombe West, the independent Chair and Neighbourhood Board had been appointed. Cabinet was further advised that the new Board had already determined the revised boundaries for the area and that the required letter of support from the MP had been sent to the Government. In addition, Councillor Canavan advised that, in his view, the virement of funding from the Bournemouth Pier allocation to the East Cliff stabilisation project should be discussed at a meeting of Full Council.

Councillor Canavan further addressed Cabinet as Chair of the Health and Adult Social Care Overview and Scrutiny Committee and advised that the Committee would be considering the adult social care budget in detail at its September meeting, to ensure that all possible actions were being taken in respect of budget management.

Councillor George Farquhar addressed Cabinet and asked how the Council should communicate its budget constraints. In particular, Councillor Farquhar highlighted a ward issue relating to a dog waste bin which had been damaged six or seven months previously, and questioned whether such issues would continue to be addressed and whether residents should continue to report matters in the usual way if budget constraints meant that replacements or repairs could not be undertaken. Councillor Farquhar further asked whether, before any decisions were made to cut or reduce services, discussions would take place with town councils and other local authorities to explore whether there was any scope for them to assist.

Cabinet members spoke in respect of the report and highlighted the significant pressures in Adult Social Care and Children’s Services, where funding did not meet demand.

Further to this, Cabinet highlighted areas in which town and parish councils could make valuable contributions to the delivery of some services, with examples from Highcliffe and Walkford Parish Council.

Cabinet was informed that, in respect of Councillor Farquhar’s question relating to dog waste bins, litter bins were a discretionary spend. Cabinet was advised that the relevant team had sought to recycle bins where possible, and it was agreed that the Council should be open and honest in order to help manage expectations.

RESOLVED that Cabinet: -

(a) noted the Quarter 1 position for 2026/27, actions taken by the Section 151 Officer to date as well as the action plan being delivered by all directors;

(b) approved the General Fund capital virement set out in paragraph 3 of appendix C1 (Capital Investment programme)

RECOMMENDED that Council: -

(c) Note and approve the General Fund capital virements set out in paragraphs 4, 5 and 6 of Appendix C1 (Capital Investment Programme);

(d) Approve the general fund budget virement of £2.16m from the Housing budget to central contingency as set out in paragraph 37 a) of this report, to support the council budget pressures;

(e) Approve a temporary budget virement of £2.2m representing revenue budget for borrowing repayment not used in 2026/27 to central contingency as set out in paragraph 37 c) of this report, to support the council budget pressures;

(f) Approve the Pride in Place Programme – role of the council as accountable body recommendations set out in Appendix A5; and

(g) Note the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) annual update in Appendix C4.

Voting: Unanimous

Portfolio Holder: Finance

Reason

To comply with accounting codes of practice and best practice which requires councils to regularly monitor the annual budget position and take any action to support the sustainability of the council's financial position. To comply with the council's financial regulations regarding capital virements, acceptance of grants and new borrowing.

45. Learning Disability Big Plan 2026–2031

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

Cabinet was advised that the report sought approval for the publication and delivery of the Learning Disability Big Plan 2026–2031, which set out the shared priorities for supporting people with a learning disability in Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole to live fulfilled lives.

In relation to this, Cabinet was informed that the Plan had been developed through the Learning Disability Partnership Board, in partnership with people with lived experience, families, carers, providers, voluntary sector organisations, BCP Council and NHS Dorset, and that it reflected the Council's commitment to co-production, person-centred support and the duties set out in the Care Act 2014.

Cabinet was further advised that the Big Plan had been shaped through extensive engagement and consultation, with engagement events in 2024 involving over 150 people which were followed by formal consultation between February and March 2026, which received 97 responses across online and paper formats. Feedback had been broadly supportive of the Plan and its vision, while highlighting the need for clearer communication, more joined-up services, earlier support, greater consistency and a stronger focus on delivery and real-life impact.

Cabinet was informed that the final Plan was structured around seven Big Aims: Where I Live; Staying Healthy; Having a Good Life; Right Care and Support; Keeping Safe; Becoming an Adult; and Support for My Family. These aims focused on improving housing choice, health outcomes, community inclusion, personalised care and support, safety, transition into adulthood and support for families and carers.

In addition, Cabinet was advised that delivery would be overseen by the Learning Disability Partnership Board, with action groups responsible for progressing the agreed priorities and reporting progress quarterly, and that further work was required to confirm the delivery arrangements for Right Care and Support and Having a Good Life, including whether dedicated groups were required or whether actions could be embedded within existing governance structures.

Cabinet was asked to approve the Learning Disability Big Plan for publication and delivery, enabling continued co-production with local people, families and partners and supporting a clearer framework for improving outcomes for people with a learning disability across BCP.

Following the introduction by the Portfolio Holder, representatives of the Learning Disability Partnership Board, Amanda Frost, Assistant Manager at People First Forum and Co-Chair of the BCP Learning Disability Partnership Board, and Bridget Campbell, Family Carer Representative on the Learning Disability Partnership Board, addressed Cabinet in support of the Plan and explained the process through which it had been developed.

RESOLVED that Cabinet approved the Learning Disability Big Plan for future publication and delivery against the priorities set within.

Voting: Unanimous

Portfolio Holder: Health and Wellbeing

Reason

To co-produce services with people with lived experience and carers, ensuring people with a learning disability in Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole are supported to live fulfilled lives.

46. IT & Programmes Infrastructure Capital Investment Plan 2026–2032

The Portfolio Holder for Transformation, Resources and Governance presented a report, a copy of which had been circulated to each Member and a copy of which appears as Appendix ‘C’ to these Minutes in the Minute Book.

Cabinet was advised that the report sought approval for a multi-year IT Infrastructure Capital Investment Plan to maintain, modernise and secure the Council’s core digital infrastructure over the period 2026 to 2032.

In relation to this, Cabinet was informed that the Council’s IT infrastructure and end-user devices underpinned the delivery of all frontline, statutory and corporate services and supported approximately 6,500 users across multiple sites, and that a significant proportion of the current estate was reaching, or had exceeded, its effective lifecycle.

Cabinet was advised that, without planned investment, the Council faced increasing cyber security risk, rising maintenance costs, reduced system performance and a higher likelihood of service disruption, impacting the delivery of critical services to residents.

Further to this, Cabinet was informed that three options had been considered: extending asset lifecycles further; increasing the use of revenue-funded models; or continuing a structured, lifecycle-based capital investment approach, and that the first two options were deemed either to increase risk or not to be viable, given the remaining IT infrastructure requirements.

Cabinet was advised that the recommended option was to continue a lifecycle-based investment programme supported by capital funding, totalling £11.2 million over six years. This approach would ensure that technology remained secure, supportable and aligned to service needs.

In closing, Cabinet was informed that approval of the Plan would provide a stable, resilient and cost-effective foundation to support BCP Council's strategic objectives and the ongoing delivery of reliable, resident-focused services.

It is RESOLVED that Cabinet: -

(a) approved delegated procurement authority to Director of IT & Programmes;

(b) recommend to Audit and Governance Committee to recommend to council to approve prudential borrowing of £11.2m to support delivery of the programme over 6 years.

It is RECOMMENDED that Cabinet recommend to Council: -

(c) to approve the business case for the delivery of a multi-year IT Infrastructure Capital Investment Plan to maintain, modernise and continue to secure the Council's core digital infrastructure.

(d) to approve recommendation for capital budget allocation of £11.2m over the period 2026–2032 to fund core IT infrastructure and a rolling program of end-user laptop replacement.

(e) to prioritise MTFP growth of £2.8 million over 6 years to fund the prudential borrowing cost of £11.2 million IT investment.

Voting: Unanimous

Portfolio Holder: Transformation, Resources and Governance

Reason

Approval of the recommendations is required to enable IT & Programmes to deliver a structured, multi-year investment programme that maintains and modernises its core IT infrastructure in a controlled and financially sustainable way.

The proposed capital allocation of £11.2m and associated prudential borrowing provides the funding certainty needed to plan and deliver lifecycle-based replacements, avoiding a fragmented or reactive approach to investment.

Prioritisation within the Medium-Term Financial Plan (MTFP) ensures that the revenue implications of borrowing are recognised and managed over the life of the programme, maintaining affordability and alignment with BCP Council's wider financial strategy.

Delegated procurement authority is required to enable timely and efficient delivery of the programme within approved budgets, ensuring BCP Council can respond to market opportunities and maintain continuity of IT services.

Recommendation to Audit and Governance Committee supports appropriate oversight and approval of prudential borrowing, ensuring the programme is delivered within BCP Council's financial governance.

47. BCP Homes Performance and Regulatory Compliance Update

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

Cabinet was advised that the report set out performance information on how services provided through the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) were delivered to Council tenants, to support councillors’ oversight in ensuring that the Council:

- provided good quality homes and services to all tenants;
- made best use of its resources to deliver what it was required to do as a landlord; and
- resolved issues promptly and effectively when things went wrong.

In relation to this, Cabinet was informed that the report provided an update against key performance indicators for Quarter 1, 2026-27 and the Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSMs) for 2025-26.

Further to this, Cabinet was advised that the report also set out how BCP Homes ensured that the Council, in its role as a Registered Provider of Social Housing, was meeting its regulatory responsibilities under the Social Housing (Regulation) Act 2023 and engaging with the Regulator of Social Housing.

RESOLVED that Cabinet noted the content of the report and raised any issues for consideration by officers.

Voting: Unanimous

Portfolio Holder: Housing and Regulatory Services

Reason

To support councillors in ensuring that council services provided to tenants are managed effectively and that regulatory requirements are met.

48. BCP Civic Annexe service relocations

The Portfolio Holder for Transformation, Resources and Governance presented a report, a copy of which had been circulated to each Member and a copy of which appears as Appendix ‘E’ to these Minutes in the Minute Book.

Cabinet was advised that the report proposed the relocation of services currently accommodated within the BCP Civic Centre Annexe, to allow for its disposal.

In relation to this, Cabinet was informed that options were set out within the proposal detailing various approaches to re-provision services, supporting the Council’s strategic direction for more efficient and effective use of its estate.

Further to this, Cabinet was advised that the proposal formed part of the wider Estates and Accommodation Programme and sought to ensure that operational services were accommodated in locations that better supported long-term estate planning.

Cabinet was informed that a range of relocation options had been considered across several Council assets, including the Civic Centre and West Wing, Civic Extension, Civic Basement, Parkway House and other potential operational accommodation, and that these options had been reviewed against service requirements, statutory obligations, operational deliverability, financial implications, impact on other building users and alignment with the Council's wider estate strategy.

In presenting the report, the Portfolio Holder expressed disappointment that the Council was unable to provide better interim accommodation for the Coroner's Jury Court, highlighting the recent briefings provided on the needs of the service and the sensitivities involved. The Portfolio Holder advised that he recognised the compromises and adaptations which had been agreed and, in relation to this, proposed that an additional recommendation be inserted as follows: -

(e) Request officers to review the situation regarding the Coroners Service in 2028 and to report to Cabinet on the scope for capital provision to enable the Service to be located in accommodation appropriately configured to meet the needs of the service for the foreseeable future.

Cabinet assented to the inclusion of the additional recommendation, which therefore formed part of the substantive recommendations as set out below.

Councillor Patrick Canavan addressed Cabinet and highlighted that the item had not yet been considered by the cross-party asset disposal working group and was being submitted to Cabinet without any prior scrutiny.

In relation to this, the Leader advised that the decision was still required to be considered by the Audit and Governance Committee and Full Council for adoption, and that there would therefore be further opportunities for scrutiny.

Cabinet Members spoke in support of the report and thanked the Coroner for the recent briefing, which had assisted Members in understanding the operational needs and sensitivities of the service. Members acknowledged that the proposed interim arrangements were not ideal and that compromises had been necessary but considered that the additional recommendation provided an opportunity to review the position in 2028 and consider whether a more suitable long-term solution could be identified, reference was also made to potential future legislative requirements and the need to ensure that any implications for the service were kept under review.

It is RECOMMENDED that Cabinet recommend to Council to:

(a) approve the delivery of building improvements as set out in Option 3;

(b) approve a budget of £2.3m to support the activity detailed within Option 3;

(c) approve the funding strategy proposed for Option 3 for the delivery of the Annexe service relocations as set out in restricted Appendix 2 - Financial Implications;

(d) approve the health and safety related essential improvements, bringing the basement in line with the improvements delivered throughout the rest of the building within the earlier Phase 1 works; and

(e) request officers to review the situation regarding the Coroners Service in 2028 and to report to Cabinet on the scope for capital provision to enable the Service to be located in accommodation appropriately configured to meet the needs of the service for the foreseeable future.

It is RECOMMENDED that Cabinet recommend to Audit and Governance Committee to:

(f) recommend to Council to approve short-term prudential borrowing of £1.8m part of the funding strategy to deliver the Annexe services relocations.

Voting: Unanimous

Portfolio Holder: Transformation, Resources and Governance

Reason

The recommended option reallocates services from the BCP Civic Annexe allowing for its disposal.

49. Disposal of farmhouse and farm buildings at Hicks Farm, Bournemouth.

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

Cabinet was advised that the report sought approval for the disposal of the majority of the Council-owned property and land forming the Hicks Farm buildings complex, Bournemouth.

In relation to this, Cabinet was informed that securing a future use for these assets had been under review, as the various outbuildings were in a significant state of disrepair and had been for many years.

Cabinet was further advised that there was a disrepair claim against the Council in respect of the tenanted farmhouse, and that the Council was currently unable to fund the necessary repairs required to bring the site back into use.

Cabinet was informed that the proposed transactions would secure best consideration in accordance with Section 123 of the Local Government Act 1972, with the disposals expected to secure a capital receipt of approximately £1m, which could support an improved facility on the western parcel and contribute to the Council's finances.

RECOMMENDED that Council: -

(a) approve the disposal of the land and buildings at Hicks Farm as per the attached plans; and

(b) agree that any proceeds be allocated to a separate fund for the repair and maintenance of council assets.

Voting: Unanimous

Portfolio Holder: Finance

Reason

The disposals resolve the long-standing issues with the farm buildings being in poor condition and with unknown future usage.

This releases the buildings and land for external investment that will benefit the overall quality of the local environment of Throop which is a noted concern of the local community.

The sale of the farmhouse mitigates the impact of high costs of repair and remedial works.

Independent valuation advice confirms that the proposed disposals represent best consideration.

A future business case to seek capital investment in the remaining parcel of land to enable continued use by the countryside team as an important location adjacent to countryside sites.

Red Book valuation of May 2026 estimates the market value of between £820,000 and £1.2m.

50. Future land use options at Upton Park Farm, Poole.

The Portfolio Holder for Climate Response, Environment and Energy presented a report, a copy of which had been circulated to each Member and a copy of which appears as Appendix ‘G’ to these Minutes in the Minute Book.

Cabinet was advised that the report summarised options for the future use of land at Upton Park Farm following the cessation of the farm tenancy on 2 April 2026, and set out a coordinated approach to align capital receipt, sustainable commercial revenue, community benefit and environmental impact across the retained land parcels, supporting both the tenancy purchase and longer-term strategic outcomes.

RECOMMENDED that Council: -

(a) agree to enable land disposal and capital receipt to fund the farm tenancy purchase;

(b) delegate authority to the Director of Finance, acting in his capacity as Corporate Property Officer, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Finance and Monitoring Officer, to finalise the detailed terms of the disposals and their sale price; and

(c) agree that future land management arrangements be developed accordingly and approve the allocation of £489,900 of Heathland Infrastructure Project funding for the delivery of additional Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace.

Voting: Unanimous

Portfolio Holder: Climate Response, Environment and Energy

Reason

The future use of the land drives long-term revenue growth for Upton Country Park, expanding the commercial offer to generate sustainable income in support of the MTFP, while maximising social value through improved access, wellbeing and community benefit in line with the Corporate Strategy.

The future use of the land protects and enhances its role as accessible public open space, supporting recreation, access to nature and biodiversity, and contributing to nature recovery in line with the Corporate Strategy.

The sale of the residential properties and adjoining land is required to fund the farm tenancy purchase. Independent valuation advice confirms that the proposed disposals represent best consideration that can reasonably be obtained (market value) under S123 of the Local Government Act 1972. Use of a reserve price if applicable to ensure sufficient capital receipt is received.

Enables investment in the remaining parcel of land and assets.

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

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

52. Cabinet Forward Plan

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

The meeting ended at 12.23 pm

CHAIRMAN