

**BOURNEMOUTH, CHRISTCHURCH AND POOLE COUNCIL**  
**CABINET**

Minutes of the Meeting held on 05 February 2025 at 10.15 am

Present:-

Cllr M Earl – Chairman

Cllr M Cox – Vice-Chairman (Present virtually)

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 G Farquhar

Also in attendance virtually: Cllr C Rigby (Chair of the Environment and Place Overview and Scrutiny Committee)

Apologies: Cllr S Bartlett (Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Board), Cllr P Canavan (Chair of the Health and Adult Social Care Overview and Scrutiny Committee) and Cllr S Carr-Brown (Chair of the Childrens Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee)

107. Declarations of Interests

There were no declarations of interest made on this occasion.

108. Confirmation of Minutes

The Minutes of the meeting held on 15 January 2025 were confirmed and signed as a correct record.

109. Public Issues

Cabinet was advised that there had been no petitions or questions submitted by members of the public on this occasion, but that one statement had been received in relation to Agenda Item 6 (Budget 2025/26 and Medium-Term Financial Plan).

**Public Statement received from Susan Stockwell on Agenda Item 6 – Budget 2025/26**

Please do not approve this budget unless you are absolutely certain that it will allow all of BCP's statutory duties in your area of responsibility to be met in full. From the evidence of my own eyes I do not believe this to be the case in many areas at present. I am not asking for gold plated taps, but for water to come out in more than a drip when turned on.

110. Recommendations from the Overview and Scrutiny Committees

Cabinet was advised that there were no additional recommendations from the Overview and Scrutiny Committees on items not otherwise indicated on the Cabinet agenda on this occasion.

111. Budget 2025/26 and Medium-Term Financial Plan

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 the report set out for Cabinet's consideration and recommendation to Council the proposed 2025/26 budget and council tax based on.

- Increasing council tax by 4.99% in 2025/26 in line with the government's annual referendum threshold which can be broken down into a 2.99% basic increase and a 2% uplift by way of the Adult Social Care (ASC) precept.
- Implementation of the approved financial strategy.
- Implementation of £7.8m of further savings, efficiencies, and additional income generation required to set a legally balanced budget and support the basis of a more financially sustainable council moving forward.
- Borrowing to fund the Special Educational Needs and Disability services revenue expenditure above the level of the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) High Needs grant. It will also be considered with government if it would be prudent to obtain a capitalisation direction associated with the 2024/25 and 2025/26 interest costs on the accumulated DSG deficit.
- Recognise that the government must come up with a permanent solution to return the SEND system both locally and nationally to financial sustainability.
- Recognition that the council is technically insolvent from the 1 April 2025 onwards as the accumulated deficit on the DSG will be greater than the total reserves held by the council, with a negative overall general fund position and is only protected by the statutory override.

Further to this Cabinet was informed that this report also provides the latest Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) covering the 3-year period to 31 March 2028.

Thanks were expressed to officers for all the work which had gone into the proposed budget 2025/26.

In presenting the report the Portfolio Holder for Finance detailed the pressures of SEND and highlighted some of the Councils achievements over the last year whilst also acknowledging the continued investment in areas.

Councillor Farquhar addressed the Cabinet commending the administration on the budget and raising a question in relation to the cessation of the

camera car with a proposed saving of £11,000 and the £25,000 set aside for another car.

In relation to this the Portfolio Holder for Destination, Leisure and Commercial Operations advised that the car was at its end of life, and that civil enforcement officers were more effective than the car itself. In relation to this the Portfolio Holder advised that the long-term solution should be fixed cameras, particularly around schools. Further to this the Portfolio Holder advised that the additional £25,000 set aside was for the vehicles in which the civil enforcement officers travel in.

Cabinet members spoke in support of the budget and acknowledged the significant work which taken place across the council.

The Leader thanked the Overview and Scrutiny Committees for their budget scrutiny on chosen areas and emphasised the importance of a collaborative approach for budget setting.

**RECOMMENDED that Council: -**

- (a) Undertakes a recorded vote in relation to the following items as required by the Local Authorities (Standing Orders) (England) (Amendments) Regulations 2014;**
  - (i) Agrees that a net budget of £356m, resulting in a total council tax requirement of £281.2m, is set for 2025/26 based on the draft local government financial settlement figures published by government in December 2024.**
  - (ii) Agrees an increase in council tax of 2.99% for 2025/26 in respect of the basic annual threshold and the collection of the additional social care precept of 2%.**
  - (iii) Confirms the key assumptions and provisions made in the budget as proposed and as set out in Appendix 3.**
  - (iv) Agrees the allocations to service areas in the budget as set out in Appendix 5.**
  - (v) Agrees the implementation of £7.8m of savings as set out in Appendix 5a.**
  - (vi) Approves the flexible use of capital receipts efficiency strategy as the mechanism for funding the council's transformation related expenditure as set out in Appendix 6.**
  - (vii) Approves the capital investment programme (CIP) as set out in paragraphs 84 to 97 and Appendix 7.**
  - (viii) Approves the asset management plan as set out in Appendix 8.**
  - (ix) Agrees the treasury management strategy (TMS) and prudential indicators as set out in paragraphs 100 to 103 and Appendix 9.**
  - (x) Accepts and supports the formal advice of the chief finance officer on the robustness of the budget and the**

adequacy of the reserves as set out in paragraphs 118 to 124 and Appendix 10.

- (b) **Accepts the government revenue and capital grant announcements linked to the 2025/26 local government finance settlement. This includes a £1.373m UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) grant for 2025/26 split between revenue and capital as set out in paragraphs 37 to 40;**
- (c) **Agree to borrow to fund the 2025/26 excess Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) High Needs DSG revenue expenditure above the government grant being made available. This is subject to clarification and negotiation with government, including whether or not a capitalisation direction will be required. A capitalisation direction may also be considered in respect of the associated interest costs;**
- (d) **Approves an increase in the permanent pay bill of the authority due to the implementation of the pay and reward project from the £1.641m pa agreed in December 2024 to £2.793m pa (1.5%) after the end of the pay protection period;**
- (e) **Delegate to the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Director of Finance, Leader, and Portfolio Holder for Finance, the allocation of any additional resources that become available through the final 2025/26 local government finance settlement or any other means; and**
- (f) **Approves the chief officers' pay policy statement 2025/2026 for consideration and approval by the council in accordance with the provisions of the Localism Act 2011 as set out in paragraphs 126 to 128 and Appendix 12.**

Voting: Unanimous

Portfolio Holder: Finance

Reason

The council is required to set an annual balanced budget presenting how its financial resources, both income and expenditure, are to be allocated and utilised.

112. Council Budget Monitoring 2024/25 at Quarter Three

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 'B' to these Minutes in the Minute Book.

Cabinet was advised that the report provided the quarter three projected financial outturn information for the general fund, housing revenue account (HRA) and capital programme.

In relation to this Cabinet was informed that the quarter three overall revenue projected outturn is for a balanced position to be achieved based on the latest assumptions, including that the expenditure control mechanisms remain in place for the remainder of the year, and that a small

contingency remains unused for any unexpected costs over the final quarter.

**RESOLVED that Cabinet: -**

- (a) **Noted the budget monitoring position for quarter three 2024/25; and**
- (b) **Agree the acceptance of capital grants for the general fund detailed in Appendix C1 paragraph 2.**

**RECOMMENDED that Cabinet recommends that Council: -**

- (c) **Agrees the acceptance of capital grant for the HRA detailed in Appendix D paragraph 20.**

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 finances. Also, to comply with the council's financial regulations regarding acceptance of grants.

113. Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Budget Setting 2025/26

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

Cabinet was advised that the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) is a separate account within the council's budgets that ring-fences the income and expenditure associated with council housing.

Cabinet was informed that the report sets out the proposals regarding increases to rents, service charges and other charges to tenants and leaseholders, and that the arrangements for these increases are separate to arrangements for increasing fees elsewhere in the council and are set out in law and regulation.

Cabinet was advised that the report also sets out plans for expenditure on services to residents, repairs and improvements to homes and the provision of new homes taking into account new legal and regulatory requirements.

Further to this Cabinet was informed that the report also demonstrates how council housing and spending within the HRA supports the council's corporate strategy and objectives.

Thanks were expressed to officers for all their work on the budget setting.

**RECOMMENDED that Cabinet recommends that Council agrees: -**

- (a) **The revenue budget for 2025/26 is set using the following principles:**
  - (i) **That dwelling rents are increased by 2.7 per cent (CPI for September 2024 + 1 per cent) from 7 April 2025 in line with**

the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government Policy statement on rents for social housing published in February 2019 (Rent Policy Statement).

- (ii) That garage, garage bases and parking plot rental charges are increased by 5 percent from 7 April 2025 and an additional £1.00 per week increase is made to garages in parts of Poole so that charges begin to align.
  - (iii) That leasehold services are charged to leaseholders in line with actual costs incurred.
  - (iv) That shared ownership dwelling rents are increased in line with lease terms.
  - (v) That the changes to services charges are agreed as set out in appendix 2.
  - (vi) That HRA reserves are set at £8.6 million.
- (b) That the Income and Expenditure budget as set out in Appendix 3 is agreed;
- (c) That capital budgets for 2025/26 are set using the following principles;
- (i) That the major project capital programme as set out in Appendix 4 is noted.
  - (ii) That the planned maintenance programme as set out in Appendix 5 is agreed.
  - (iii) That £0.5 million for the acquisition of individual properties (Acquire and Repair) is agreed.

It is RESOLVED that Cabinet agrees:

- (d) That further details of the medium- and long-term budget implications are presented to Cabinet during 2025/26 following the re-modelling of the 30-year HRA Business Plan.

Voting: Unanimous

Portfolio Holder: Housing and Regulatory Services

Reason

HRA rents and other changes along with the HRA Capital Programme are subject to review and require Cabinet and Council approval for rents and charges to be levied.

114. Review of the approach to Waste Enforcement and Waste Offences Enforcement Policy

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 waste offences such as littering and flytipping occur within the BCP Council area, with the Council and its contractor's

undertaking education, engagement and enforcement through the use of fixed penalty notices and/or prosecution.

Cabinet was informed that following updated government guidance and changes to legislation prescribing fixed penalty amounts in 2023, the Council increased fixed penalty notice fines in May 2024, and that a 6-month review of the impact of this change including consideration of the number of reports of waste offences, public opinion on the new fine levels and compliance with the legislation, has been undertaken.

In relation to this Cabinet was advised that this review has highlighted the need for a more detailed published policy as well as consideration around a proportionate approach to smaller residential fly tipping

Cabinet was informed that the current Waste Enforcement Policy is due for renewal and is proposed as appended, to include changes following the review and to align to the updated guidance.

Councillor Farquhar addressed the Cabinet welcoming the case by case basis approach but seeking confirmation that the third party contractor investigating the fly tipping reports are meeting their service level agreement in terms of timescales as the rubbish cannot be cleared until they have carried out their investigation.

The Head of Public Protection addressed the Cabinet in response to this advising that there had been a significant number of fly tipping reports during the year which had impacted the speed of investigations. In addition the Head of Public Protection advised that a key part of the policy was promoting how things can be disposed of.

The Portfolio Holder advised that the robust communications campaign will give clarity to residents.

Cabinet members spoke in support of the policy and highlighted ways in which residents can advertise items for free.

**RESOLVED that Cabinet: -**

- (a) Approved the updated Enforcement of Waste Offences policy at Appendix B; and**
- (b) Approved the revision of the fixed penalty notices as detailed in Section 36.**

Voting: Unanimous

Portfolio Holder: Housing and Regulatory Services

Reason

The previous 2019 policy is due for review and should be aligned to the new statutory guidance issued by the Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) in October 2023. A clear policy supports the education of stakeholders on the Council's approach and supports a proportionate but robust enforcement approach. 349

A six-month review following the increase in relevant fixed penalty notice fines has been conducted and recommends that a revised approach to flytipping is deemed proportionate to support enhanced compliance with the

legislation. This approach will be supported by enhanced communication to ensure stakeholders are aware of the offences, penalties and approach by the local authority and its contractors.

115. Phase 2 - Council Sustainable Fleet Management Strategy and Fleet Replacement Programme

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 'E' to these Minutes in the Minute Book.

Cabinet was advised that the report provided an update on progress against Phase One of BCP Council's adopted Fleet Replacement Programme. Furthermore, the report seeks endorsement of Phase Two to continue to support the council wide Fleet Management De Carbonising and Replacement Programme for the next 3 years, 2025 – 2028.

Cabinet was informed that investment in vehicle replacements will ensure a pathway approach that will help to ensure that BCP Council has fit for purpose, safe, reliable, cost effective and carbon reduced vehicles, plant and associated equipment assets, in the right place at the right time and at the right cost to support the strategic, corporate and service objectives of the Council.

In relation to this Cabinet was advised that if approved this will continue to form the basis of an ambitious council wide Fleet Management De Carbonising Strategy that proposes to balance value for money investment in the necessary alternative fuel technology and infrastructure to support a continued increase in the number of Ultra Low Emissions Vehicles (ULEV) purchased and operated by the council and reduction in CO2 emissions of non ULEV's to support the council's 2030 carbon neutral declaration.

**RESOLVED that Cabinet: -**

- (a) Noted the good progress made in transitioning the Council's corporate fleet assets against challenging international marketplace conditions and balancing risk exposure on unproven new vehicle technology market entrants;**
- (b) Endorsed Phase Two of BCP Council's Sustainable Fleet Replacement Plan, through an in-house management and maintenance delivery model to achieve a safe, compliant, ultra-low emission fleet and future key infrastructure decisions required that will determine its direction and success; and**
- (c) Acknowledged that without significant investment in suitable premisses and area wide utilities that will deliver the required infrastructure to support the continued modernisation and electric decarbonisation of the BCP fleet in future Phase 3 2028 – 2030, future green fleet transition will be limited unless progress in alternative fuel technologies are forthcoming especially heavy goods vehicles.**



**RECOMMENDED that Council: -**

- (d) Approve the phase two fleet replacement programme of £19.857m over 3 years;**
- (e) Approve the use of £18.692m new prudential borrowing for the Fleet Replacement Plan and the capital investment necessary in increasing associated EV charging infrastructure recognising the impact of this on the annual revenue budget requirement; and**
- (f) Approve use of capital receipts from the sales of vehicles of £1.165m to fund part of the phase 2 fleet replacement plan.**

Voting: Unanimous

Portfolio Holder: Climate Response, Environment and Energy

Reason

The proposed replacement and management plan is a continuation of the adopted Sustainable Fleet Strategy that provided Capital fleet funding and governance for years 2021 – 2024 building on the existing framework towards achieving a sustainable fleet for BCP Council and a commitment towards its ambition of becoming carbon neutral by 2030.

Failure to approve the fleet replacement plan places the authority at risk as vehicles reach end of life and require increased maintenance, which impacts on services risking repeated statutory service failure, associated reputational damage, increased revenue budget pressure and potential for breach(es) of Operator Licence compliance.

116. Early Years and Mainstream Schools Funding 2025/26

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

Cabinet was advised that the paper outlined the proposed 2025/26 early years single funding formula (EYSFF) and local mainstream schools funding formula based on recommendations from the Schools Forum, and that the mainstream schools formula included options dependent on final decisions from government.

Cabinet was informed that the formulae are highly regulated by the Department for Education (DfE), with funding provided by the £54m early years block and £285m schools block of the ring-fenced dedicated schools grant (DSG).

Cabinet was advised that the national increase in expenditure needed to support pupils with special education needs (SEND) and shortfall in DSG funding through the high needs block had been well-documented, and that it is generally agreed that for the system to improve outcomes for children and become more financially stable, mainstream schools must become more inclusive.

Further to this Cabinet was advised that the proposed local mainstream formula options included transferring up to £2.8m (1%) of school block funding for new high needs expenditure on services to help mainstream schools provide more support for pupils with SEND.

**RECOMMENDED that Council agrees: -**

- (a) The early years funding formula detailed in Appendix 1; and**
- (b) The mainstream schools funding formula options detailed in Appendix 2 (paragraph 18), with the final outcome dependent on DfE decisions.**

Voting: Unanimous

Portfolio Holder: Children, Young People, Education and Skills

Reason

The recommendations balance the funding needs of early years providers, schools and council central activity supporting the sectors and management of the high needs funding gap.

117. School Admission Arrangements 2026/27

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

Cabinet was advised that BCP Council administers admission arrangements for its community and voluntary controlled schools, and that there is a legal requirement to determine the arrangements annually as described in the School Admissions Code 2021 and associated legislation.

Cabinet was informed that there are no proposed changes to the admission arrangements for the 2026/27 academic year from those which were publicly consulted upon and determined by the Council for the 2023/24 academic year.

In relation to this Cabinet was advised that the local authority must also formulate and publish a scheme to coordinate the admission arrangements for all publicly funded schools within their area for the 2026/27 academic year.

The Portfolio Holder for Children, Young People, Education and Skills advised Cabinet that this report had been discussed at the recent Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee, and the Chair had confirmed that the Committee didn't have any further comments and supported the report.

**RESOLVED that: -**

- (a) Cabinet considered the comments from Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee, if any, concerning Schools Admissions Arrangements 2026/2027 for community and maintained schools; and**

- (b) Cabinet supported the determination of the arrangements as set out in Appendix 1 and 2 of this report.**

Voting: Unanimous

Portfolio Holder: Children, Young People, Education and Skills

Reason

BCP Council is legally required to determine admission arrangements for the 2026/27 academic year for all maintained schools for which it is an admission authority and to agree coordinated admission arrangements for all admission authorities in the area. Arrangements must be determined by BCP Council by 28 February 2025.

118. Public health disaggregation: progress and overview of decisions

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 'H' to these Minutes in the Minute Book.

Cabinet was advised that report provided an overview of the progress with disaggregating the shared public health service and establishment of two separate public health teams by 1 April 2025.

Thanks were expressed to the Corporate Director for Wellbeing for all her hard work.

**RESOLVED that Cabinet: -**

- (a) Recognised and supported the work done out in partnership with Dorset Council to disaggregate the shared service following BCP Council's decision to terminate the agreement in April 2024;**
- (b) Endorsed the decisions that the steering group is proposing to take, set out at para 12 below and Appendix A, recognising the pragmatic approach taken in order to maintain positive working relationships, financial stability and service provision to residents; and**
- (c) Noted that the programme is on track to have two separate public health teams in place from 1 April.**

Voting: Unanimous

Portfolio Holder: Health and Wellbeing

Reason

To ensure continued provision of equitable and effective public health services for both Councils, in line with the Health and Social Care Act 2012. This contributes to the delivery of BCP Council's vision and ambitions around health and wellbeing in the Corporate Strategy.

119. 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.

120. Cabinet Forward Plan

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

The meeting ended at 12.05 pm

CHAIRMAN