

THE CHARTER TRUSTEES FOR POOLE



Report subject	Report of the Poole Civic Working Group
Meeting date	29 January 2025.
Status	Public Report.
Executive summary	This report summarises the issues discussed at the Civic Working Group meetings held since the last Charter Trustee meeting in July 2024 and seeks support for any recommendations arising.
Recommendations	It is RECOMMENDED that: Following acceptance of legal advice regarding the remit of the Charter Trustees, and subsequent review of the Standing Orders, that the proposed amendments to the Standing orders be approved.
Reason for recommendations	To seek support of the Charter Trustees for the recommendations arising from the Civic Working Group.
Report Authors	Neil Fraser, Deputy Head of Democratic Services.
Classification	For Decision.

Background

1. At the meeting held on 22 June 2022, the Charter Trustees established a Civic Working Group (CWG) to make recommendations to the Charter Trustees at meetings.
2. Membership and Terms of Reference for this Working Group were most recently amended and adopted at the meeting held on 18 July 2024.

Purpose of the Civic Working Group

3. The establishment of the CWG provided an opportunity for earlier discussion of relevant matters and to allow members of the Charter Trustees to shape proposals for submission and consideration at the full Charter Trustee body.
4. The remainder of this paper draws upon those matters discussed and includes, where appropriate, a recommendation for determination.
5. The Civic Working Group agreed that they would meet six to eight weeks before each Charter Trustee meeting.

6. However, to facilitate discussion regarding revisions to the Charter Trustee Standing Orders, the CWG has met on 24 July, 13 August, 23 August, 6 September, 3 October, 31 October, 14 November, 29 November, 20 December 2024 and 10 January 2025.
7. Additional meetings and events relating to CT accommodation at the Guildhall, Poole were held on 30 August, 31 August and 15 October 2024.

Recommendations of the CWG:

CT Remit, Twinning, and amended Standing Orders and Handbook

8. The agenda for the Bournemouth Charter Trustees' meeting on 17 July 2024 included a motion to end the twinning arrangement between Bournemouth and Netanya, Israel. The motion was included on the agenda following King's Counsel (KC) Legal advice procured by the Honorary Clerk that advised that pre-existing twinning arrangements were matters that fell under the remit of the Charter Trustees, while any new twinning arrangements were to be determined by the prevailing authority (i.e. BCP Council).
9. On the day of the meeting conflicting advice was received from the KC, advising that twinning was not a matter for the Charter Trustees and that, upon review of the current CT Standing Orders, the Charter Trustees were likely operating outside of their remit. The motion was therefore removed from the agenda, and further advice was sought from the KC regarding twinning and Charter Trustee remit.
10. The advice regarding remit had similar implications for the Charter Trustees of Poole, and a similar review process was therefore undertaken for this body.
11. Throughout this review process, the Poole CWG met regularly and was kept informed of progress, and at the meeting on 31 October 2024, the Honorary Clerk confirmed the final position in respect of the advice received from the King's Counsel.
12. The CWG was informed that, in the opinion of the King's Counsel, the Charter Trustees' basic legislative remit is "very limited, and related to ceremonial and historical matters only."
13. CT functions are therefore limited to:
 - Appointing a Mayor, Deputy Mayor and Sheriff;
 - Ensuring the safe custody of the Charter of Incorporation; and
 - Acquiring, holding, administering, maintaining and improving historic property of a ceremonial nature.
14. Any functions currently being undertaken by the Charter Trustees that are outside of this very limited remit, such as the undertaking of Remembrance Sunday events or Mayor's Awards, are therefore not permissible and are to be stopped with immediate effect. (For the avoidance of doubt, the Remembrance events in Bournemouth and Poole for 2024 were underwritten by BCP Council).
15. This also includes matters relating to twinning which, as per the above, fall outside of the remit of the Charter Trustees. Determination of twinning matters is a matter for BCP Council by way of a resolution.

16. The CT Standing Orders and Handbook therefore require amendment to better reflect this advice. At the same time, it was felt this was an opportunity to tidy up the Standing Orders and Handbook to clarify certain matters, e.g. to add clarity on the order of precedence or the mechanism by which a Trustee may be removed.
17. The CWG also recommends changes to the Standing Orders to grant the CT the freedom to procure officer support from the 'principal authority' (in this case BCP Council) or other providers should they wish, together with the facility to agree Service Level Agreements (SLAs) with those providers.
18. Additionally, the CWG recommends the ability to appoint a 'Ceremonial Advisor' to advise on matters of ceremonial protocol such as the wearing of robes, order of precedence at civic functions etc.
19. A Service Level Agreement is currently being drafted for proposed adoption at a future CT meeting. A revised Handbook will also be submitted for approval at a future meeting, pending approval of the proposed changes to the Standing Orders.
20. These amended Standing Orders, as approved by the CWG, can be found appended to this report under appendices A and B.

The CWG RECOMMENDS that:

Following acceptance of legal advice regarding the remit of the Charter Trustees, and subsequent review of the Standing Orders, that the proposed amendments to the Standing Orders be approved.

Update on a Mayor's Parlour at Poole Guildhall

21. Due to longstanding concerns regarding the closure of Poole Civic Centre and dissatisfaction with the current provision of Mayoral meeting space at the Poole Guildhall, the CWG has explored options for a new Mayor's Parlour.
22. On 30 and 31 August 2024 Trustees were invited to tour two potential locations for this new Parlour, these being the ground floor of the Poole Guildhall and the Old Bridge House on Poole Quay. During the tours, and at the subsequent CWG meeting held on 13 August, Trustees expressed a clear preference for the use of the Guildhall. The CWG therefore instructed officers to provide further options for amendments to the building's internal layout to accommodate the Parlour, together with an estimate of resultant costs.
23. Following review of that detail at subsequent CWG meetings, all Trustees were invited to express a preference for one of four layout options at a meeting held prior to the Full Council meeting on 15 October 2024. At this meeting, the majority of Trustees in attendance advised that they did not want to progress any further work to accommodate a Mayor's Parlour in the Guildhall and instead expressed a strong

preference for use of the 'Vertical Slice' at the Poole Civic Centre. This was reiterated at the subsequent Full Council meeting, with the resolution that the Council:

(b) proceeds to market testing on the basis of disposal of the whole site and disposal of the site minus the vertically sliced civic function, and that the viability of retaining the vertical slice in public use incorporating the Poole Mayoralty function and potential community and coroner use be properly considered by the Council with any decision as to disposal being reserved to Council.

24. Officers are currently working to fulfil the Council resolution, with further detail to be brought to a future meeting of the CWG.

Summary of financial implications

25. There are no financial implications arising from this report and the recommendations before the Charter Trustees. The reduced CT remit will be reflected in the proposed budget for 2025/26.

Summary of legal implications

26. The roles and responsibilities of the Charter Trustees is defined in legislation, standing orders and the handbook. The issues raised in this report are in accordance with these provisions.

Summary of human resources implications

27. There are no human resource implications arising from this report.

Summary of sustainability impact

28. There are no sustainability implications arising from this report.

Summary of public health implications

29. There are no public health implications arising from this report.

Summary of equality implications

30. There are no equality implications arising from this report.

Summary of risk assessment

31. The Charter Trustees maintain a separate risk register which is reviewed annually by the Charter Trustees as a body. Any implications arising from decisions of the Charter Trustees which may have an impact on the register will be updated accordingly.

Background papers

32. [Current CT Standing Orders](#)
33. [Current CT Handbook](#)
34. [241015 Report to Council on Poole Civic Centre](#)

Appendices

Appendix A: CT Standing Orders (proposed w/ tracked changes)

Appendix B: CT Standing Orders (proposed/clean)