

BCP Council

Council Meeting 11 February 2025

Item: Agenda Item 8

Recommendation from the Cabinet 5 February 2025

Budget 2025/26 and Medium-Term Financial Plan

Conservative Group: Budget Amendment

Proposal

1. A **one-year** Town Centre Improvement Project for 2025/26 only, to reduce the car parking charges off season in Bournemouth and Poole Town Centres. This reduction is 11% compared to the current charges and 15% based on the budgeted fee levels for 2025/26. A full list of car parks set out in paragraph 13 below.
2. The intent in making this change is a one-year trial to encourage footfall activity back into Bournemouth and Poole Town Centres.
3. It is the view of the Conservative Group that this 15% car parking reduction based on the budgeted fee levels would encourage significant footfall back into Poole and Bournemouth town centres, provide an injection of positivity into those areas, and could lead to increased consumer and business confidence. If car park custom increased, this could further mitigate the financial impact of this decision. Furthermore, increased confidence and footfall into our town centres could also stimulate economic growth and attract new businesses into the towns, which could see increased income through business rates and other council income streams.

Financial Implications: Impact on revenue generated.

4. This proposal would lead to a **£612,100** reduction in Car Parking revenue income compared to the 2025/26 substantive budget as proposed. This income reduction would then need to be matched by equivalent savings or cost reductions.

Financial Implications: Funding to cover lost revenue generated

5. The proposal is to provide the resources to offset the **£612,100** reduction in car parking income through permanently deleting the Climate Action Team (**£50,564**) and through a (**£561,536**) reduction in the resources available to fund Climate Change projects via the Climate Change Earmarked Reserve.

6. The permanently removal of the Climate Action Team in the Marketing, Communications and Policy Directorate would deliver the following £50,564 saving in 2025/26.

Directorate	Annual Budget £	Achievable Savings £	Notes
Employee Budget	287,200	215,400	5.43 FTE posts. Due to consultation and notice periods assume saving 9/12ths total
Mileage costs	200	200	
Subscriptions	6,000	6,000	
Revenue projects budget	8,600	8,600	
Total Net Service Budget	302,000	230,200	
		179,636	3.43 FTE redundancy costs X £52,372 average redundancy cost since April 2019
		50,564	Net saving deliverable in 2025/26

7. The **£561,536** reduction in the climate change Earmarked Reserve relates to not progressing with the majority (87%) of the £647,000 of 2025/26 projects where the commitment has not yet been made (£350k+£297k). This reserve is currently profiled to be used as follows.

£	Detail
1,239,000	Earmarked Reserve Balance 31 March 2024
	2024/25 Project Spend
(70,000)	LAEP study
(158,000)	2 Riversmeet decarbonisation project
(68,000)	Kings Park Bowling Centre
943,000	Earmarked Reserve Balance 31 March 2025
	2025/26 Project Spend - Already committed
(130,000)	Dolphin Centre BEMS controls
(120,000)	Heat network DPD, to apply for DESNZ infrastructure funding
(20,000)	EPC's Compliance
(16,000)	Ashdown Lighting
(10,000)	Rossmore Lighting
	2025/26 Project Spend - Commitment not yet made
(350,000)	LAEP action plan
(297,000)	Roof top solar, corporate buildings
0	Earmarked Reserve Balance 31 March 2026

8. Consequently, most of the commitments not yet made in 2025/26 will not be able to be taken forward through the current funding mechanism which is using revenue reserves.
9. BCP council committed to a Local Area Action Plan (LAEP) in 2023, this work progressed during 2023/24, a key end-goal of the LAEP is to develop a set of actions which can be taken forward to drive decarbonisation and facilitate post-LAEP delivery projects. The LAEP work has now concluded with 15 key actions to take forward, this work covers retrofit to social housing stock, transport initiatives, decarbonising the council's corporate

estate, district heat networks, SSEN essential infrastructure upgrades (to support moving away from gas, delivering roof top solar and the roll-out of EV infrastructure), and ensuring we have a local skilled workforce, which helps to protect the local economy.

10. The consequences of not taking forward these recommendations will have a significant impact on our ability to move away from gas, deliver energy security and protect the council against future energy price increases. This lack of investment would mean a step back, a council reliant on fossil fuels, increased risk to the impacts of climate change and limited access to essential infrastructure upgrades.

S25 Report of the Chief Finance Officer

11. The below comments should be considered as additional to those summarised in the budget report in paragraphs 118 to 124 and Appendix 10 the s25 report of the Director of Finance.
12. The Council's Director of Finance has reviewed this addendum and can confirm that it complies with the Council's Financial Regulations in that it enables a balanced budget for 2025/26 still to be delivered and it has no material impact on the robustness of the budget or the adequacy of the council's reserves. That said, the following additional risks need to be highlighted:
 - This proposal involves the use of Earmarked Reserves therefore it is important that it is recognised as a one-off proposal that is not financially sustainable. Particularly salient as such proposals become difficult to reverse once enacted.
 - Two of the 3.43 FTEs that will need to be made redundant are in the process of joining BCP Council. There is therefore the possibility that they will issue legal proceedings against the council for breach of contract. The consequences of this maybe more than the redundancy cost allowed for as part of the financial implications.
 - This proposal will impact on the council's ability to meet its commitment to become carbon neutral by 2030 and increases the likelihood of a financial impact as a consequence of having to purchase carbon credits to meet this pledge. An Environment & Place Overview & Scrutiny Budget Working Group in the Autumn of 2024 set out that, based on the current understanding, £64m may be required to meet the council's net zero targets by 2030.
 - The proposal would also impact the ability to reach the area-wide target of net zero by 2045 as the Council is a key partner working with others towards this goal.
13. List of car parks the 15% off season one-off reduction in car parking charges will be applied to.

Sites In Scope Area	Site	Project
Bournemouth	Avenue Road	W626F
Bournemouth	Avenue Road	W023F
Bournemouth	Bath Road North Car Park	W049F
Bournemouth	Bath Roadsouth	W043F
Bournemouth	Berry Court	W024F
Bournemouth	BH Live – Pavilion	W053F
Bournemouth	Bourne Avenue On-Street Parking	W613F
Bournemouth	Braidley Road On-Street Parking	W612F
Bournemouth	Cambridge Road	W623F
Bournemouth	Central	W021F
Bournemouth	Eden Glen	W020F
Bournemouth	Exeter Park Road	W204F
Bournemouth	Gervis Road On-Street Parking	W614F
Bournemouth	Glen Fern	W015F
Bournemouth	Glen Fern Road On-Street Parking	W605F
Bournemouth	Hinton Road On-Street Parking	W600F
Bournemouth	Keystone	W013F
Bournemouth	Lansdowne Crescent On-Street Parking	W604F
Bournemouth	Lansdowne Road	W039F
Bournemouth	Lansdowne Road On-Street Parking	W608F
Bournemouth	Lorne Park Road On-Street Parking	W610F
Bournemouth	Madeira Road (Formerly West & East)	W031F
Bournemouth	Madeira Road On-Street Parking	W609F
Bournemouth	Old Christchurch Road On-Street Parking	W603F
Bournemouth	Priory Road	W040F
Bournemouth	Richmond Gardens	W022F
Bournemouth	Richmond Hill	W018F
Bournemouth	Richmond Hill On-Street Parking	W607F
Bournemouth	St Stephens Road	W207F
Bournemouth	Town Centre Outer	W005F
Bournemouth	Upper Hinton Road On-Street Parking	W606F
Bournemouth	West Hill	W014F
Bournemouth	Westover Gardens	W011F
Bournemouth	Westover Road On-Street Parking	W601F
Bournemouth	Wootton Gardens	W205F
Bournemouth	Wotton Gardens On-Street Parking	W611F
Poole	Chapel Lane	W087F
Poole	CPZ - Old Town	W216F
Poole	Dear Hay Lane On Street	W648F
Poole	Dolphin Shopping Centre	W075F
Poole	Green Road	W095F
Poole	High Street Shops	W076F
Poole	Kingland/Park Lake Road On Street	W645F
Poole	Labrador/Catalina/On Street	W649F
Poole	Merk/Seldown	W080F
Poole	New Orchard	W096F
Poole	Parkstone Road On Street	W646F
Poole	Prosperous Street	W097F
Poole	Quay Visitors	W077F
Poole	Sainsbury Car Park	W071F
Poole	Seldown Bridge	W101F
Poole	Serpentine Lane	W094F
Poole	Serpentine Road On Street	W647F
Poole	Shopping Centre 1	W078F
Poole	Shopping Centre 2	W079F
Poole	Swimming Pool	W086F
Poole	Town Centre	W004F
Poole	Town Centre Outer	W005F