



Community Governance Consultation

August 2025

Burton & Winkton

Research and Consultation Team

Qualitative Analysis and Report by Darmax Research

Executive Summary

BCP Council are consulting on draft proposals to create new parish, town and community councils across Bournemouth and Poole and to make some small changes to the existing town/parish arrangements in Christchurch.

Before any decisions are made, the council sought the views of local residents on the existing parish and town council arrangements in Burton and Winkton.

This report summarises the free-text responses to the consultation.

Methodology

Qualitative analysis and reporting was undertaken by Darmax Research Ltd.

Results

Reasons for agreement/disagreement

Respondents were asked to provide their reasons for why they agree or disagree with the draft recommendations for Burton and Winkton. 93 respondents provided feedback to this question. 10 of these respondents live in Burton and Winkton, while 83 of these respondents live outside of Burton and Winkton.

Burton and Winkton residents expressed strong support for maintaining the existing parish arrangements, citing the long history of the parish, the importance of preserving its identity, and the value of local representation. Respondents also expressed satisfaction with the current councillors, while another highlighted potential difficulties in recruiting suitable candidates to fill all 10 proposed councillor roles.

The remaining 83 respondents lived outside the proposal area. While these respondents also expressed support for maintaining the parish of Burton and Winkton, a number of comments expressed opposition to the proposal. These non-residents objected to the concept of parish councils in general, considering them unnecessary, ineffective, and a poor use of public resources. These respondents also raised affordability concerns about increased council tax as a result of the proposal.

A number of respondents who do not live in Burton and Winkton expressed concerns that creating or retaining parish councils would add unnecessary bureaucracy, reduce efficiency, and fragment service delivery across the conurbation. Many felt decision-making should remain with BCP Council, and some saw the proposals as passing costs and responsibilities away from the unitary authority. Some respondents questioned the motives of the process, with some calling for a referendum before any changes are implemented.

Any other comments about the draft recommendations

Respondents were next asked to provide any other comments about the draft recommendations for Burton and Winkton. 38 respondents provided feedback to this question. 6 of these respondents live in Burton and Winkton, while 32 of these respondents live outside of Burton and Winkton.

Feedback received from Burton and Winkton residents was entirely supportive of retaining the current parish structure, referring to the village's character and sense of community. Residents also suggested enhancing the parish council's role to act as a stronger voice in regional planning, support local economic development, and improve community resilience. Residents also suggested regular reviews to ensure councillor diversity and engagement, as well as the need to encourage broader participation.

Feedback from those who do not live in Burton and Winkton showed a mix of limited support and significant opposition. A number of these respondents opposed retaining any parish councils, seeing them as unnecessary and a waste of resources. These respondents again raised concerns about the financial impact, including potential increases in council tax during a cost-of-living crisis, with opposition to any new precepts. Comments also highlighted concerns about duplication of roles, increased bureaucracy, and reduced clarity for residents over responsibilities. Respondents felt that BCP Council should retain service delivery responsibilities, while some expressed concern over fragmentation of services and inequity in provision across the conurbation. Respondents also called for a referendum in 2027 to align with local elections before any changes are made.

Contents

Executive Summary	ii
Methodology	ii
Results.....	ii
Reasons for agreement/disagreement	ii
Any other comments about the draft recommendations.....	iii
1 Methodology	5
2 Analysis and results	6
2.1 Reasons for agreement/disagreement.....	6
2.1.1 Respondents living in proposal area.....	6
2.1.2 Respondents living outside proposal area	7
2.2 Any other comments about the draft recommendations.....	10
2.2.1 Respondents living in proposal area.....	10
2.2.2 Respondents living outside proposal area	11

1 Methodology

Qualitative analysis and reporting was undertaken by Darmax Research Ltd.

Qualitative responses (write in text) to questions were exported into Excel and were thematically analysed. The most common themes are reported on in this report. Anonymised quotes from participants have been used to illustrate the themes identified.

Please note that while the purpose of qualitative data is to provide deeper insights into reasoning and impact rather than to quantify data, the numbers of respondents who mentioned the most prevalent themes are provided in this report to give an indication of the magnitude of response. However, given the nature of qualitative data, it should be noted that this does not provide an indication of significance in relation to the question asked.

In addition, where respondents have provided comments that relate to more than one theme, their feedback has been categorised into multiple categories. Where a response makes several different points, only the relevant part to the discussed theme is shown in the report.

2 Analysis and results

2.1 Reasons for agreement/disagreement

Respondents were asked to provide their reasons for why they agree or disagree with the draft recommendations for Burton and Winkton.

93 respondents provided feedback to this question. 10 of these respondents live in Burton and Winkton, while 83 of these respondents live outside of Burton and Winkton.

Responses have been coded into key themes to make them easier to interpret. Please note that where respondents have provided comments that relate to more than one theme, their feedback has been categorised into multiple categories.

Theme	Number of respondents		
	Respondent living in proposal area	Respondent living outside proposal area	Total
General support	10	17	27
General opposition	0	35	35
Boundaries and parish/town allocation	0	2	2
Administration/management of decisions	2	45	47
Cost of delivery	0	21	21
Consultation/decision process	0	7	7
Other	0	3	3

2.1.1 Respondents living in proposal area

All 10 respondents who live in Burton and Winkton were in general support of the proposals. Comments referred to the parish being **long established**, there being **no reason to change** and it is important to keep its identity and have local representation.



“Long running parish council with a successful record.”

“We need complete local representation. Our needs will be different from say Mudeford.”

2 respondents commented on the administration and management of the proposed parish. 1 respondent commented that they are **happy with the councillors** that are currently elected for the existing parish, while 1 respondent commented that it may be **difficult to find appropriate candidates** to fill all of the 10 councillor roles.



“Having lived in Burton for the last 2 years I am happy with the councillors which are elected for Burton and Winkton.”

“I value our local focus and the efforts of our Parish Council to respond to local issues. It could be more effective but finding reliable and forward thinking councillors is not easy.”

2.1.2 Respondents living outside proposal area

17 respondents who live outside of Burton and Winkton commented that they were in **general support** of the proposals. Comments again referred to the parish being long established and there being no reason to change, while it is important to keep its identity and have local representation.



“There is no reason to change this historic council that appears to work well for its residents.”

“Burton and Winkton is clearly a separate semi-rural community within BCP and should be allowed to continue with their own parish council.”

35 respondents who live outside of Burton and Winkton commented general opposition of the proposal. The majority of these respondents were **opposed to parish councils in general**, they are not needed and won't improve things, while some respondents commented that both the consultation and proposed changes are a **waste of money**.



“Have not read anything to suggest benefit of parish councils of any kind in current financial environment.”

“I do not think we should have parish councils. Waste of money.”

There were 21 respondents who live outside of Burton and Winkton whose comments related to potential **additional council tax costs** to residents as a result of the proposals, with concerns about the affordability, especially in the current economic climate.



“I do not think that the constituents can afford to pay more than they already are for council tax. In the current economy people are already struggling to pay their overheads let alone fork out more, for what seems to be the same service they already receive, with no monetary cap on what can be charged.”

45 respondents who live outside of Burton and Winkton commented about the administration and management of decisions. A number of these related to the added tier of government would result in **additional bureaucracy and red tape**, which would slow down decision-making. Respondents felt that parish councils have **limited authority**, while others felt that it would result in a **fragmented approach**

with inequity of service delivery across the conurbation. Respondents also commented that **BCP Council should be responsible** for decision-making and service delivery, particularly given the merger of Bournemouth Borough Council, Christchurch Borough Council and Borough of Poole Council. However, some respondents commented that BCP Council should **revert to three separate town councils**. Respondents also thought that the proposals **pass the buck** of service delivery and associated costs to parish and town councils. Respondents also commented that the area **already has councillors**, while the proposed 10 councillors was too many.



“The bureaucracy and cost of additional layers of local government should be avoided wherever possible.”

“The creation of parish councils is adding another layer of bureaucracy to the unitary authority of BCP which the bringing together of the 3 councils said it would avoid.”

“Ratio of electors to councillors too low and therefore undemocratic.”

“The parish councils don't have any function or use; they are primarily used by career politicians as a stepping stone to become councillors.”

“Divisions into parish/town councils across the conurbation is likely to increase differences in levels of provision.”

“BCP councillors will be less accountable for maintaining the separate local areas and will pass the buck to parish councils for issues it finds too expensive or too difficult to deal with.”

“What was the point of merging into BCP council if you are now looking to have parish councils with more cost, expense and non-accountability to the electorate.”

2 respondents commented on the boundary and allocations to different parishes and towns. Comments related to **inconsistencies in the draft recommendations** and variance in the elector ratios.



“I am puzzled by the variance in the elector ratios.”

“The problem with the Draft recommendations are their incredible inconsistency. Why should any comparably sized area be treated differently? Such a situation is inherently unfair and undemocratic.”

7 respondents commented on the consultation and decision process. Respondents questioned the **motive behind the proposed changes** as well as a concern that the views of **residents would not be listened to**. The proposed changes **lacked detail**, while any changes should be **voted on before being implemented**.



“BCP have a poor record when it comes to listening to local people.”

“Changes should involve a whole authority referendum, not rely on councillor decisions.”

“I fear the drivers for maintaining the status quo in this area are to keep money and power in the hands of a few.”

2 respondents commented that as they **do not live in the area** they were not in a position to offer an opinion on the proposal, while 1 respondent commented that the council are **more concerned about non-residents** than the local population.



“I am not a resident there so they should decide.”

“They are more concerned for [those] from out of town and the illegal immigrants who are turning Bournemouth town centre into a no-go zone. They class these antisocial people as “the most vulnerable in our society”.”

2.2 Any other comments about the draft recommendations

Respondents were asked to provide any other comments about the draft recommendations for Burton and Winkton.

38 respondents provided feedback to this question. 6 of these respondents live in Burton and Winkton, while 32 of these respondents live outside of Burton and Winkton.

Responses have been coded into key themes to make them easier to interpret. Please note that where respondents have provided comments that relate to more than one theme, their feedback has been categorised into multiple categories.

Theme	Number of respondents		
	Respondent living in proposal area	Respondent living outside proposal area	Total
General support	6	3	9
General opposition	0	18	18
Boundaries and parish/town allocation	0	1	1
Administration/management of decisions	1	12	13
Cost of delivery	0	6	6
Consultation/decision process	0	5	5
Other	1	1	2

2.2.1 Respondents living in proposal area

All 6 residents who live in Burton and Winkton were in **general support** with the continuation of the current structure of the parish. 1 respondent commented that the parish council could take on an **enhanced role** and **stronger voice** on regional matters, while they also suggested that regular reviews should be undertaken in terms of the **representativeness of councillors** of the local area. 1 respondent was concerned about **potential housing developments** in rural areas in the future.



"I don't see any reason to change anything. The reason we live here is because it still has a great village feel even though we're close to town."

"The proposal to continue the parish council is essential, but it could go further by outlining an ambition for the council to take on more proactive responsibilities - such as acting as a stronger voice in regional planning matters, supporting local economic development, or improving community resilience."

“Keeping the number of councillors at 10 is sensible, but the effectiveness of representation could be enhanced by committing to regular reviews of councillor diversity and engagement, encouraging wider participation from all community groups, and considering youth advisory roles or co-opted positions to broaden perspectives.”

“The existing arrangements are fine - there is the feeling that more rural areas like ours will be seen as easy pickings for development and this must be resisted to keep Burton as a separate small village type community.”

2.2.2 Respondents living outside proposal area

3 respondents who live outside Burton and Winkton were in **general support** with the continuation of the current structure of the parish. However, 18 respondents were in general opposition of the proposal. These respondents commented that they are **not in favour of retaining any parish councils**, there is **not a need** for any parish councils and the proposals are a **waste of money**.



“It doesn't need altering, it works as it is.”

“I disagree with the continuation of current parish councils within BCP Council and I disagree with the establishment of any new parish councils in BCP.”

“A drain on public funding and no substance offered for improved services.”

6 respondents commented on and questioned the **cost implications** of the proposals to local residents.



“No council tax precepts should be put in place.”

“This is clearly going to end up costing residents money that simply cannot be afforded in a cost of living crisis.”

12 respondents who live outside Burton and Winkton made comments that related to the administration and management of the town and parish councils. These respondents commented that they create an **additional layer of bureaucracy** and red tape and **duplicate roles, responsibilities and service delivery**. In addition, they commented that due to the formation of BCP Council through the merger of Bournemouth Borough Council, Christchurch Borough Council and Borough of Poole Council, the **unitary authority should be responsible** for service provision and delivery. Respondents also commented that the two-tier approach would create **confusion** amongst residents with regards to who was responsible for different services, as well as expressing concern for BCP Council **passing responsibility** of service delivery and subsequent costs to parish councils. Respondents also commented that the proposed **10 councillors for the parish was too many** and

that the town/parish council approach would result in **fragmentation** of service provision across the conurbation.



“BCP unitary authority, amalgamating Poole, Christchurch and Bournemouth, was supposed to improve transparency, costs and bureaucracy. Creating parish/town councils will be adding another level of unnecessary bureaucracy and cost with no tangible benefit and worse accountability.”

“The creation of parish councils will be damaging for BCP Council, enabling greater fragmentation and corruption, preventing the change the area needs.”

“I think 10 parish councillors is way over the top. The cost in time and money would be too much.”

One respondent commented that they felt the proposed three town councils were **not fairly distributed** in terms of representation, while they also felt that the parish boundaries need to **ensure equal representation**.



“The boundaries of “Poole” council are clear - however the town will be disadvantaged and overwhelmed, if the whole of the town is 1x parish - when the town of Bournemouth is “represented” as 4 separate parishes. Resources for “Poole” (as well as “Christchurch”) will instead be routed (diverted/stolen) for projects elsewhere. The number of parishes need to be equivalent across the “Three Towns”, based on population, ratepayers, and geography - the cultural and historic value across the towns should be valued for this as well.”

“The parish boundaries need to be reviewed and corrected, for equal representation for everyone.”

5 respondents commented on the consultation process, including that no changes should be made without a **referendum**, which should take place at the same time as local elections in 2027. Respondents also commented that the proposals were being **made by people to suit their own agenda** and that these people should be removed from post.



“No decisions should be made before 2027 and then only following a referendum.”

“People are trying to ignore the elected system and insert yet another level in the hope it'll reflect their own politics.”