



# Community Governance Consultation

August 2025

Hurn

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 Hurn.

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

A total of 78 respondents provided feedback to this question. No responses were received from residents living within the Hurn proposal area; all respondents lived outside the area.

Some respondents expressed general support, citing Hurn's distinct identity and the benefits of retaining its current council to represent local interests. However, respondents expressed general opposition, considering such councils unnecessary, ineffective, and a waste of resources.

Some respondents suggested the parish is too small to justify its own council and should be merged with a neighbouring area. Conversely, others felt retaining the current council arrangement was logical despite the small population.

Respondents commented on increased bureaucracy, potential duplication and confusion over service responsibility. Several respondents felt the number of councillors was disproportionate to the population and that there are existing councillors to represent the local population.

Cost concerns were also raised by respondents, focused on the affordability of increased council tax. Some respondents criticised the consultation process, citing limited information and questioning the motivations behind the proposals.

## Any other comments about the draft recommendations

A total of 35 respondents provided feedback to this question. No responses were received from residents living within the Hurn proposal area; all respondents lived outside the area.

Respondents reiterated that parish councils are unnecessary and a waste of resources. Boundary issues were raised by respondents, with suggestions to merge Hurn into Christchurch Town Council or neighbouring parishes, and that parts of Hurn might identify more closely with other communities.

Increased bureaucracy, duplication, fragmentation, and reduced accountability for BCP Council was also mentioned.

Respondents also opposed any additional precept and suggested reductions in BCP council tax if responsibilities were devolved.

Respondents criticised the consultation process, citing a lack of transparency and recommending that changes be subject to a public referendum.

## 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.....	9
2.2.1 Respondents living in proposal area.....	9
2.2.2 Respondents living outside proposal area .....	10

# 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 Hurn.

A total of 78 respondents provided feedback to this question. No responses were received from residents living within the Hurn proposal area. All 78 respondents live outside of the Hurn proposal area.

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	-	11	11
General opposition	-	32	32
Boundaries and parish/town allocation	-	12	12
Administration/management of decisions	-	43	43
Cost of delivery	-	14	14
Consultation/decision process	-	4	4
Other	-	3	3

#### 2.1.1 Respondents living in proposal area

No responses were received from residents living within the Hurn proposal area for this question.

## 2.1.2 Respondents living outside proposal area

11 respondents who live outside of the proposed area for Hurn expressed support for the draft recommendations. They commented that Hurn has its **own historical identity** and should be allowed to continue with its own parish council. Respondents noted that a dedicated council represents the area's interests more effectively.



*"This is an area where historically the residents have been served well by the council and there's no need for change."*

*"Hurn is clearly a separate semi-rural community within BCP and should be allowed to continue with their own parish council."*

32 respondents expressed opposition to the parish and town councils in general. Respondents described parish and town councils as **unnecessary**, ineffective, and a **waste of resources**.



*"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."*

*"I do not agree that any area requires a parish council."*

12 respondents commented on the proposed boundaries and allocation. Some respondents commented that the **area was too small**, both geographically and in terms of population, and should be merged with a neighbouring parish or incorporated into Christchurch Town Council. However, others felt that it did not matter there was a small population and that the **boundaries made sense**.



*"Should be part of an Independent Christchurch Council."*

*"It is patently ridiculous that a district of less than 600 people has a parish council."*

*"This is a Parish council already in place - it seems overkill for just 594 residents, but I don't think it should be abolished just because of that. The boundary changes make some logical sense, especially as it does not affect any residents of either parish."*

43 respondents opposed the creation of another layer of governance, warning it would increase **bureaucracy** and cause **duplication of services**. Respondents commented that the **formation of BCP Council** was to reduce bureaucracy and duplication and that responsibilities should remain with BCP Council to ensure consistency and efficiency. The added layer of governance would create **confusion** amongst residents in terms of responsibilities and who to contact, while it would also result in fragmentation and **service inconsistency** across the conurbation. Respondents also commented that the proposed **number of councillors** was too many for the population size and there is **already councillor representation** for the

area. Respondents were also concerned if candidates would have the **required expertise** as well as concern if the seats were **uncontested**.



*"I don't believe we need an extra layer of admin and bureaucracy."*

*"How are people supposed to know who does what? How can you ensure that the various parish councils act with any consistency?"*

*"6 parish councillors for 99 people each - really is ridiculous."*

*"Uncontested elections are deeply undemocratic. It might be more democratic for BCP Council to assume this parish council's functions and for the BCP Council councillors for the ward to represent their residents through BCP Council and its processes."*

14 respondents raised concerns about the associated cost, particularly the impact on council tax and the associated **affordability** for local residents.



*"I do not think that the constituents can afford to pay more than they already are for council tax."*

4 respondents criticised the consultation process, commenting on **limited information within the recommendations**. Respondents also questioned the motivations behind the proposals and that the changes should go to **referendum**.



*"There is insufficient information to be able to make an informed decision on any of these draft recommendations. There is no indication of what services will be provided via the new parish/town councils."*

*"Changes should involve a whole authority referendum and not rely on Councillor decisions."*

3 respondents made other comments, including that the **decision should not be made by people who do not live in the area**, as well as concern for **housing developments**.



*"The 5 anonymous residents don't live in this and I fail to see why the views of 5 should override those of the majority in these boroughs. The future of Hurn area is at risk - the dreadful housing development at Parley Cross is evidence of that."*



## 2.2 Any other comments about the draft recommendations

Respondents were asked to provide any other comments about the draft recommendations for Hurn.

A total of 35 respondents provided feedback to this question. No responses were received from residents living within the Hurn proposal area. All 35 respondents live outside of the Hurn proposal area.

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	-	3	3
General opposition	-	18	18
Boundaries and parish/town allocation	-	5	5
Administration/management of decisions	-	12	12
Cost of delivery	-	5	5
Consultation/decision process	-	4	4
Other	-	2	2

### 2.2.1 Respondents living in proposal area

No responses were received from residents living within the Hurn proposal area for this question.

## 2.2.2 Respondents living outside proposal area

3 respondents expressed **general support** for the proposals.



*“I fully endorse all of the recommendations.”*

18 respondents expressed opposition for parish councils generally and consider them to be **unnecessary**.



*“Parish councils totally unnecessary as we already have an amalgamated council with BCP.”*

5 respondents commented on boundaries. 1 of these respondents commented that Hurn should be **integrated into a neighbouring parish** or Christchurch Town Council, while another respondent commented that residents in the western part of Hurn may **relate more to being part of Parley**. Respondents also commented on **other draft recommendations**, including that Throop should be aligned with Bournemouth and that there is inconsistency in the number of parishes/town councils across Bournemouth, Poole and Christchurch.



*“The western part of Hurn is now becoming more developed and residents there may relate more to being part of the Parley area instead of Hurn.”*

*“Merge Hurn Parish with a Neighbouring Parish Council. Integrating Hurn into a neighbouring parish (e.g. Jumpers or Christchurch Town).”*

*“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.”*

*“I think Throop should go to Bournemouth instead but Christchurch is still a good option for it.”*

12 respondents expressed concern about additional **bureaucracy**, duplication of responsibilities, and **fragmentation of service delivery** across the conurbation. **BCP Council should be responsible** for service delivery and decisions across the conurbation and parish and town councils would result in **reduced accountability** for BCP Council.



*“There should be no separate organisation outside of BCP Council.”*

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

5 respondents raised concerns about **increased costs to residents** without clear benefit, as well as calling for reductions in BCP council tax.



*“All services and democratic processes should be done through BCP Council and no council tax precepts should be put in place.”*

*“Hurn should consider cutting back on council tax so as to benefit the residents.”*

4 respondents criticised the consultation process, highlighting a **lack of transparency and detail** in the proposals, and suggesting a **public vote** before implementation.



*“People are trying to circumvent the elected authorities to suit their own ends.”*

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

2 respondents mentioned **unrelated local issues**, including public transport access and opposition to housing developments.



*“We need a bus to Hurn Airport, NOT a Parish Council.”*

*“Hurn open spaces need full protection from development - the dreadful development at Parley Cross - ugly boxes that no one wants - should be warning enough of what can happen.”*