



# Community Governance Consultation

August 2025

Redhill & Northbourne

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 setting up a new parish council in Redhill and Northbourne.

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 Redhill and Northbourne.

147 respondents provided feedback to this question. 23 of these respondents live in Redhill and Northbourne, while 124 live outside of the proposal area.

Feedback from residents of Redhill and Northbourne was mixed but generally more negative than positive. A small number welcomed the proposal, citing the opportunity for residents to have a greater say in shaping their community. However, most opposed the creation of a parish council, arguing it was unnecessary and provide little benefit.

Respondents raised a number of administrative concerns. Respondents argued that BCP Council had only recently been formed to reduce bureaucracy, and that introducing further layers of governance so soon was a backward step. Parish councils were likely to create inequalities between communities, while the number of proposed councillors was also seen as excessive, with existing representatives already considered sufficient.

Residents expressed opposition to paying higher council tax or precepts, while some respondents also criticised the consultation process, describing it as lacking detail and clarity. They felt insufficient explanation was given for the proposals, particularly when central government is encouraging councils to consolidate rather than fragment.

Feedback from non-residents was broadly more critical. While a small number supported the proposals on the grounds of community identity and stronger local

representation, the majority opposed them. Non-residents felt the proposals were unnecessary and costly.

Concerns from non-residents also centred on boundaries, with many arguing that Redhill and Northbourne were too small to warrant their own parish and should instead fall within Bournemouth Town Council or be merged with surrounding areas such as Throop, Holdenhurst, or Kinson. Others questioned why some areas had been selected for parish status while others were not.

As with residents, administrative issues dominated. Respondents felt the proposals would confuse accountability, duplicate services, and undermine the purpose of creating BCP Council. Many suggested that if the current structure was failing, the solution should be to revert to the three former councils rather than creating numerous small parish councils. Cost concerns were again raised, particularly around increased precepts without clear ceilings on future rises.

The consultation process was also criticised by non-residents for lacking detail, with some doubting whether feedback would meaningfully influence decisions.

### Any other comments about the draft recommendations

Respondents were asked to provide any other comments about the draft recommendations for Redhill and Northbourne.

77 respondents provided further comments, including 13 from within Redhill and Northbourne and 64 from outside the area.

A very small number of residents living in the proposed area expressed support, describing the proposals as a good idea. The majority, however, opposed the draft recommendations, viewing them as unnecessary, costly, and unlikely to bring benefit.

Administrative concerns included unfair cost burdens on local residents (such as maintaining shared facilities like the Redhill paddling pool). Boundary changes were also suggested, including extending the parish to cover areas more closely identified with Northbourne.

Cost was again a recurring issue. Residents argued that they already pay council tax and should not be asked to pay twice for the same services.

A small number of respondents living outside the proposal area expressed support, citing Redhill and Northbourne's active community identity. Most, however, were opposed to the draft recommendation. Respondents criticised the proposals as wasteful and unnecessary.

Respondents argued that parish councils create bureaucracy, confusion, and inequality between areas, while BCP Council should remain fully responsible for services. Many felt existing councillor representation was already adequate.

Cost concerns were again common, with respondents highlighting that many local residents could not afford additional council tax increases.

Boundary concerns were also raised, with suggestions that Redhill and Northbourne should form part of Bournemouth Town Council, or alternatively be merged with nearby areas such as Winton, Wallisdown, or Kinson. Some questioned why Redhill and Northbourne had been recommended for parish status while similar areas had not.

The consultation process attracted criticism. Respondents described it as unrepresentative, lacking evidence, and politically driven. Respondents also called for the matter to be decided by public vote at the next local elections.

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# 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 Redhill and Northbourne.

147 respondents provided feedback to this question. 23 of these respondents live in Redhill and Northbourne, while 124 of these respondents live outside of Redhill and Northbourne.

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	1	5	6
General opposition	6	54	60
Boundaries and parish/town allocation	1	26	27
Administration/management of decisions	18	68	86
Cost of delivery	6	31	37
Consultation/decision process	4	11	15
Other	0	0	0

#### 2.1.1 Respondents living in proposal area

1 respondent expressed general support for the proposal, highlighting that a local council could give people **more say in the future of their community**. However, 6 respondents voiced opposition to the proposals, commenting that there was **no need for a parish council** here or elsewhere in the conurbation. 1 respondent commented that they did not think Ensbury Park should be included in the proposal.



*"I strongly agree with all the points put forward. It would give local area people more say in the future of their particular community."*

*"There is absolutely no need for a Redhill and Northbourne Community Council."*

18 respondents raised concerns about administration and decision-making. These respondents felt that creating another council would simply add an **extra layer of**

**governance** and bureaucracy without tangible benefits, complicating responsibilities, add delays, and create inefficiency. Several argued that **BCP Council was only recently formed** and should be allowed to prove its effectiveness before further governance layers were introduced. Parish councils would also lead to **different levels of service** being provided throughout the conurbation. Respondents also commented that extra councillors would provide **no additional benefit** and that existing councillors already serve the local area.



*"I thought the whole idea of forming Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole into one council was to reduce bureaucracy and this proposal is a backwards step."*

*"These plans will add confusion as to who is responsible. You should keep local governance simple, not make it more complicated."*

*"1. Highly divisive action across BCP, promoting different levels of service throughout the conurbation. 2. Unnecessary additional level of bureaucracy. 3. Resident confusion as to which councillor to contact, i.e. one of the two BCP councillors, or one of the 9 proposed parish councillors."*

6 respondents commented on cost implications and that they did not want to have to pay **additional council tax** or precepts as a result of an additional layer of governance.



*"I strongly disagree that we need further bureaucracy within BCP area which would inevitably increase costs for the residents."*

*"Council tax is already not value for money so I don't want to pay any more."*

4 respondents criticised the consultation process, arguing that it **lacked detail** regarding the reasons behind the proposals and what the differences were between community, parish and town councils. Respondents also commented that the proposals were **ill-thought-out** considering central government is trying to streamline councils into larger entities.



*"BCP Cllrs need to be more honest about those reasons behind this ill-thought out move."*

*"There should be greater detail explaining the difference between 'community style' council and other options."*

*"At a time when central government is seeking to amalgamate town and parish councils into larger entities I strongly disagree with BCP going in the opposite direction."*



## 2.1.2 Respondents living outside proposal area

5 respondents expressed support, noting that the area has a **distinct sense of community** and local councils give residents a stronger say in local issues.



*“The Redhill and Northbourne area has a coherent sense of place, supported by distinct neighbourhood character and shared community assets. The establishment of a parish council would empower residents to shape local priorities and act as a representative body on issues such as parks, youth provision, planning, and community safety.”*

However, 54 respondents voiced opposition. They argued that the area **did not need a parish council**. Respondents were also opposed to parish councils in general and feel they are a waste of money.



*“If there was not a Parish Council before, why do we need one now? Surely the area comes under BCP Council.”*

*“Parish councils and, especially, parish councillors are NOT needed.”*

26 respondents raised boundaries concerns. Respondents felt that the **area was too small** to warrant its own parish, while respondents felt that it should **remain within the Bournemouth Town Council area**. It was also suggested that it could be **merged with other areas**, including Throop and Holdenhurst, Kinson and Bearwood. Other respondents questioned why it was deemed appropriate for a parish council when **other areas** such as Kinson and Charminster were not. Respondents also made suggestions for alternative names for the parish.



*“I don't see the reason for a council separate from Bournemouth Town Council, as the area is too small for its own council.”*

*“I don't understand why this area has been nominated for a parish/town council but Kinson which is a much more established and defined town area hasn't.”*

*“The council should be named Redhill & Northbourne Parish Council in keeping with other parish councils and because that's what its function will be.”*

*“I can't understand why Ensbury Park is being excluded from the proposed name for this parish, given that it's the most built-up and well-known/frequented of the three areas.”*

68 respondents raised concerns about administration and decision-making. The most common view was that adding a **further layer of governance** and bureaucracy would confuse responsibilities between BCP and new councils, slow down delivery, and risk greater **inequality** across the conurbation. Others suggested that governance had **only recently been reorganised** with the creation of BCP

Council, and introducing further structures so soon would add unnecessary complexity. In contrast, other respondents argued that the solution was to **return to the former Bournemouth, Poole and Christchurch councils**, rather than introducing multiple small-scale councils. Respondents felt that resources would be better used to improve existing services rather than funding additional councillor allowances and administration. Respondents also commented that the **number of proposed councillors** was too many, while the area is already well served by proactive councillors. Respondents were also concerned about the profile of parish councillors and that seats may be uncontested.



*“I was under the impression that creating the BCP council was to reduce the overheads in local government. Introducing a new town council would seem to be an increase in costs and involve additional council tax for residents.”*

*“Responsibilities and accountability between council will become blurred.”*

*“I think 9 councillors is too many you will never get anything done.”*

*“Parish councils are damaging for BCP council, enabling greater fragmentation, inequality between areas, corruption and prevention the integrated transformation that the area needs.”*

*“Redhill and Northbourne is already well served by proactive councillors no need to waste money on another tier of administration.”*

31 respondents raised cost concerns, pointing to the **financial burden** of additional precepts without clear safeguards against future rises.



*“An unnecessary extra expense for residents during a trying time.”*

*“I do not agree there should be a second council tax just for the sake of the new parish and town councils. There have been no costings whatsoever as to how much this will cost so how can anyone agree when no information given on exactly 1) what the new town and parish councils will do and 2) how much tax with NO ceiling increase will cost.”*

11 respondents criticised the **consultation process**. They described it as poorly explained and questioned whether resident views would genuinely influence the outcome.



*“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.”*

*“I am of the opinion if to 'do nothing at all' was an option in the consultation then the majority of the consultation responses would be in favour of a 'change is unnecessary' response.”*

## 2.2 Any other comments about the draft recommendations

Respondents were asked to provide any other comments about the draft recommendations for Redhill and Northbourne.

77 respondents provided feedback to this question. 13 of these respondents live in Redhill and Northbourne, while 64 of these respondents live outside of Redhill and Northbourne.

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	1	2	3
General opposition	7	32	39
Boundaries and parish/town allocation	1	13	14
Administration/management of decisions	4	25	29
Cost of delivery	3	10	13
Consultation/decision process	0	12	12
Other	0	0	0

### 2.2.1 Respondents living in proposal area

1 respondent expressed general support for the proposal, believing that it is a **good idea**. In contrast, 7 respondents voiced general opposition. These respondents felt that a parish council would add **little benefit** to local residents.



*“These plans will bring no benefit to the residents, so should be scrapped.”*

4 respondents raised concerns about administration and decision-making. While 1 respondent commented that the **recent merger** to form BCP Council has been successful so the proposed was not required, a separate respondent felt that the council should revert back to its previous three town councils. 1 respondent felt that it was unfair that Redhill residents have the **sole burden of paying for the maintenance of the paddling pool** when it is used by people from across the entire conurbation. Respondents also commented that the area is **already served by councillors**.



*“BCP has recently and very effectively, in my opinion, combined three areas into one. I’m at a loss as to why the council are now looking to break it down into even smaller entities than it originally had. Redhill and Northbourne have sufficient councillors for the resident’s needs.”*

*“Just revert back to Bournemouth Council. The merging of the 3 councils has obviously not worked.”*

*“The residents of Redhill should not have the whole burden of the cost of maintaining the paddling pool. It is used by children from a minimum of 4 other wards who must share the cost.”*

1 respondent suggested that the **boundary** should be extended to incorporate areas that are also considered part of Northbourne.



*“The Ward Northern boundary should be extended westward along Wimborne Road to the East Howe Lane junction, then southward along East Howe Lane to join the existing boundary at the junction of East Howe Lane and Leybourne Avenue. This action would encompass a small area of Northbourne currently part of Kinson Ward, but where residents identify as being part of the Northbourne Ward... Geographically the area is not in the Kinson area as reflected by the name of The Northbourne Shopping Parade, Northbourne Church, Northbourne Day Centre (now demolished), Northbourne Carvery, Northbourne Surgery, etc.”*

3 respondents raised concerns about **costs**, commenting that they already pay council tax and these changes would result in them paying twice for the same service.



*“We already pay our council tax. So as far as I am concerned why should I pay TWICE for services that should be supplied by YOU THE COUNCIL.”*

### 2.2.2 Respondents living outside proposal area

2 respondents expressed support, seeing the proposals as an opportunity to **continue the community involvement** that already exists in the area.



*“Redhill and Northbourne residents have consistently demonstrated strong levels of community involvement, from Friends groups to schools, churches, and local campaigns. A community council would provide democratic legitimacy and coordination to that energy.”*

In contrast, 32 respondents voiced opposition. They described the proposals as **wasteful and unnecessary**. Respondents also felt that parish councils in general were not required and should be abolished.



*"This is something we just don't have a big need for."*

*"I disagree with the continuation of current parish and town councils within BCP Council and I disagree with the establishment of any new parish or town councils in BCP."*

25 respondents raised concerns about administration and decision-making. The most common view was that adding a **further layer of governance** and bureaucracy would confuse responsibilities between BCP and new councils, slow down delivery, and risk greater **inequality** across the conurbation. Others suggested that an alternative solution was to **return to the former Bournemouth, Poole and Christchurch councils**, rather than introducing multiple small-scale councils. BCP Council should be solely responsible for service delivery in the conurbation and resources would be better used on service delivery rather than creating unnecessary levels of governance. Respondents also commented that the **number of proposed councillors** was too many, while the area is already well served by proactive councillors.



*"Less bureaucracy and transparency is required from BCP with more action from those already elected, not more."*

*"Disband BCP Council and go back to just having Bournemouth Council who looked after Bournemouth a lot better than BCP have ever done."*

*"Start with the basics and not deflect by creating a new element which will increase existing issues. Go back to basics."*

*"All services should be provided by existing BCP Council. Existing councillor representation is adequate."*

13 respondents raised **boundary concerns**. Respondents commented that Redhill and Northbourne should be part of the Bournemouth Town Council area and made other suggestions for the designation of wards and parishes. These included creating a larger parish area, incorporating areas such as Wallisdown, Winton West and Kinson. However, respondents also questioned the inclusion of Moordown in this parish, as well as why Redhill and Northbourne were recommended parish council status when areas such as Charminster, Winton, Moordown and Kinson were not. Respondents also suggested adjustments to the parish boundary.



*"This area should not be separated from the rest of Bournemouth. The division with Kinson is entirely artificial."*

*"If this area is to be 'parished' it would make more sense if it was part of a larger parish, perhaps including Wallisdown and Winton West as well as Moordown, although I can see that it will be difficult to establish boundaries."*



*“There is absolutely no reason for Redhill & Northbourne to be a parish that could not be applied to Winton, Moordown, Kinson or any other area of BCP. Indeed it could be equally argued that this could be two parishes.”*

*“The proposal to include part of Moordown Ward in this parish to encompass the whole of Redhill Park raises concerns. Whilst there are currently no properties in the area, if there were in future, electors would be voting for different BCP Council and parliamentary areas.”*

*“Include Keeble Road and New Road up to Ensbury Bridge to boundary for Northbourne.”*

*“Perhaps the area should include a slice of Northbourne off East Howe Lane to form a better parish boundary. They consider themselves Northbourne.”*

10 respondents commented on **costs**, pointing to increases in council tax being unaffordable for many local residents and that precepts should not be put in place.



*“Local people cannot afford any more council tax and will not be value for money.”*

12 respondents criticised the consultation process. They described it as **lacking detail** with no sound justification for the grouping of wards, driven by a small number of the electorate and politically motivated. The decision should go to **public vote** at the next local elections rather than decided following the consultation.



*“The draft recommendation fail to explain any benefit whatsoever to the residents, workers or visitors to the area.”*

*“The recommendations are driven by a small response of the 7625 electorate. i.e. if a proposal / delegation / submission to CGR was less than 76 individuals it would be less than 1% of the electorate. In no way is this representative of the communities and would be dismissed if it were a referendum on such a change for either of in this CGR.”*

*“People are trying to circumvent the elected authority to suit their own politics.”*

*“It's unacceptable that you would do something like this without a referendum (which you clearly won't as you already know what the outcome would be and you don't like listening to people who disagree with you).”*