

Report subject	Vitality Stadium land - draft heads of terms
Meeting date	26 November 2025
Status	Public Report
Executive summary	AFC Bournemouth approached BCP Council in relation to their plans to expand Vitality Stadium at Kings Park. On 1 October 2025 and on 14 October 2025, Cabinet and Council respectively approved the recommendations that officers negotiate Heads of Terms in relation to Option C (two leases) and then return to Cabinet and Council for a decision relating to those Heads of Terms. This report presents the negotiated Heads of Terms and associated values (agreed in principle, without prejudice and subject to contract and Council approval) agreed with AFC Bournemouth and recommends that they are accepted. This report requests authority for officers to instruct BCP's property legal team accordingly and progress the leases to completion. The information in the appendices is commercially sensitive. It is requested that the appendices are treated confidentially.
Recommendations	It is RECOMMENDED that Cabinet recommends that Council: a. Notes the decision of the Cabinet meeting held 1 October 2025 and Council Meeting held 14 October 2025 b. Approves the Heads of Terms (HOTs) recommended by officers for the Leasehold disposal of two parcels of land at Kings Park to AFC Bournemouth (Option C) c. Instructs BCP officers to agree the recommended HOTs with AFC Bournemouth, instruct BCP's legal team accordingly and progress the two leases to completion.
Reason for recommendations	This report sets out the heads of terms for the re gearing of existing agreements between BCP Council and AFC Bournemouth at Kings Park to enable expansion of the Vitality Stadium. The regear will result in two leases, the terms of which reflect Best Consideration, in line with BCP Councils constitution and financial regulations.

	By approving these recommendations, it will also: - Enable existing leases to be regeared onto more appropriate terms - allow this significant investment to be made into the area, improving the area for fans and park visitors - and help AFC Bournemouth achieve compliance with Premier League regulations
Portfolio Holder(s):	Councillor Mike Cox, Deputy Leader BCP Council and Portfolio Holder for Finance
Corporate Director	Aidan Dunn, Chief Executive
Report Authors	Gwilym Jones MRICS, Estates Manager Edward Alexander, Planning and Contract Manager, Environment – Greenspace Chris Shephard, Head of Policy, Strategy & Partnerships
Wards	Boscombe East & Pokesdown; Boscombe West; East Cliff & Springbourne; Littledown & Iford; Queen's Park
Classification	For Decision

Background

1. AFC Bournemouth (the Club) are a professional football club who compete in the top echelons of English Football, the Premier League, after gaining promotion at the end of the 2021/22 season.
2. The club stadium, the Vitality Stadium, is located at Dean Court in Kings Park, Boscombe, a suburb of the town of Bournemouth.
3. Vitality Stadium is one of the smallest stadiums in the Premier League with a capacity of 11,286 and parking for circa 200 domestic vehicles. There is an area of hardstanding used for fan coaches and media vehicles.
4. Kings Park was transferred to Local Authority ownership, for use as public open space, from two large landowners in the early 20th century. It is one of the largest green spaces within Bournemouth and in addition to the football stadium contains:
 - Community football pitches
 - A cricket square
 - Outdoor bowling green and pavilion

- Play parks
 - Athletics stadium
 - Leisure and Learning Centre
 - Sports pavilion with café
 - Plant nursery (currently closed)
5. The Club's core objective is to bring stadium and parking land under Club control to:
- Cost effectively increase capacity
 - Improve facilities: spectators, players, concessions, club facilities, media, back of house, flexible use/space
 - Review general admission and hospitality provision
 - UEFA and Premier League compliance
 - Minimise disruption to operations and income
 - Manage car parking and travel plans
6. After a lengthy search where several alternative sites were considered, expanding Vitality Stadium was deemed by the Club the most practical and viable to achieve these objectives.
7. The Club will seek to achieve these objectives by:
- Demolishing the existing South Stand and building a new, larger stand
 - Infilling all four corners to create additional capacity
 - Renovating the East and West stands to provide improved player facilities and hospitality
 - Vertically and horizontally expanding the North and East Stands to increase capacity
8. It is planned to occur over three principal phases: Enabling Works, Phase 1 and Phase 2. Additional capacity is desired for the start of the 2026/27 Premier League season (August 2026). However, the project will be phased over a broadly 2- to-3-year period to minimise disruption to football matches during the football seasons. The project programme has been specifically constructed to avoid playing any home games at an alternative venue while construction is underway.
9. The project area comprises the Vitality Stadium, adjacent surface level car parking and the former training pitches.
10. The training pitches are outside of the discussions and are held under a separate management agreement.
11. The Club commissioned Savills as their planning consultants, and in May of this year, entered into a pre-planning performance agreement with the Local Planning Authority. Their aspiration is to submit a full planning application before the end of 2025. If granted, this would give permission to expand the current stadium as outlined in 8.
12. As the landowner, officers have advised the Club of some proposals that would have negatively impacted Park users and therefore would give rise to an objection in a planning application. The Club have acknowledged the feedback and amended their plans.

13. The Greenspace Team in particular has been engaging with the Planning Officer in the pre app stage and will review future planning applications on (or could possibly impact) land under its management including any ecological impacts, and if relevant, will make submissions. Other services will be doing the same.
14. To facilitate the expansion of the stadium, the Club approached Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole Council (BCP) to discuss the existing agreements and opportunity of regearing these to obtain additional land and allow their expansion plans to come forward.
15. Cabinet (1 October 2025) and Council (14 October 2025) agreed with the recommendations that officers negotiate Heads of Terms and once agreed in principle, return to Cabinet and Council for approval. Several issues were referenced at the Council meeting, and these are considered below:
 - The consultation relating to the disposal of open space was not sufficiently visible and that Ward Councillors were not informed in advance.
 - Land that is currently designated as Public Open Space will have its status changed.
16. Responses:
 - It is a legal requirement under the LGA 1972 that BCP advertise a Disposal of Public Open Space for two consecutive weeks in a newspaper that has a local circulation.
 - As well as being in the Echo's public notices section the Notice was on BCP's website ([Public notices of our proposals | BCP](#)) however once a notice 'expires' it is taken down.
 - All views submitted by the public were analysed and an outcome was reached which was detailed in the previous Cabinet report.
 - Officers consulted with Ward Councillors on site in July to discuss the proposals. Ward Councillors were then emailed on 29 July, informing them that the notice was going in the Echo and on their website the following day. A copy of the notice and plan was included in the email.
 - Due to the historic way land in Kings Park had been classified some of the south car park sits within the Council's Public Open Space. There is no plan to change this designation, but because it is Public Open Space, the Council had to legally include it in the disposal notice. This is because new leases, which will include the Public Open Space, are being proposed.
 - Officers consulted again with Ward Councillors on 6 August 2025. This was to explain that there was to be no significant change to the areas involved as they were already under an agreement to the Club. It was also explained that there will be no loss of Public Open Space being proposed but instead a consideration of realignment and updating of current leases.
 - Officers have consulted with Ward Councillors since the work started and continue to do so regularly.

Options Appraisal

17. Option A. Accept the recommendation of this report, that the Heads of Terms noted in confidential appendix A and C are agreed and allow officers to instruct Legal to progress the leases to completion.
18. Option B. Do not accept the recommendations of this report.

Summary of financial implications

19. The Heads of Terms reflect a Market Rent for the Stadium land, and a separate Market Rent for the Car Park land. See summary table in confidential appendix E.
20. The Market Rents reflect independent special valuation advice and should be taken as best consideration. Draft valuation report confidential appendix F. Awaiting final version. Commentary on Best Consideration in confidential appendix G. A formal s.123 commentary will be included in the final valuation report.
21. The Heads of Terms include a rent review mechanism.
22. The payment of a capital premium by AFC Bournemouth with a peppercorn rent has been discounted by the club. The leasing model provides the Club with greater financial agility, enabling investment where it matters most for Premier League Profitability and Sustainability Rules (PSR) compliance, competitive performance, and long-term footballing infrastructure. It aligns financial planning with operational priorities, ensuring the Club can sustain and grow on and off the pitch.

Summary of Legal Implications

23. The Council is empowered to sell land that it holds, and it may do so in any manner that it wishes. The Council is aware that the Secretary of State's consent is needed for any disposal which is considered not to be best value or is to be at an undervalue. It is not considered that the transactions are at an undervalue requiring Secretary of State approval.
24. The council is offering two long leaseholds, the Heads of Terms for which are recommended in this report.
25. Offering the land required via leasehold interest enables BCP to retain an element of control over the land and its use by AFC Bournemouth.
26. The Heads of Terms reflect the terms that exist in the current lease and licence agreement between AFC Bournemouth and BCP Council.
27. The new leases will see new documents drafted with the current ones becoming void upon completion. Upon completion there will be two documents relating to AFC Bournemouth's use of the site and not the five that currently exist.

28. The Heads of Terms have been agreed "without prejudice subject to contract". This means no formal; legally binding agreement exists until the leases are signed by all relevant parties.

Summary of human resources implications

29. There are no direct human resources implications of this decision beyond officer time working on the case.

Summary of sustainability impact

30. There are no sustainability impacts relating to the HOTs. However, there will be impacts relating to the overall project. These are being handled through the independent planning process.

Summary of public health implications

31. Any issues relating to previous landfill of Kings Park will be dealt with through the planning process.

Summary of equality implications

32. An EIA conversation/screening document has been completed. This decision will not have any direct equality implications. The proposed new leases show a change of control rather than loss of space and therefore does not change the current situation. However, mitigation of any future implications is controlled through the Heads of Terms.

Summary of risk assessment

33. By approving the recommendations in this report, which ensure appropriate steps and therefore mitigations are taken, the risk is assessed as being low.

Background papers

34. Council 14 October 2025: AFC Bournemouth stadium expansion. Land requirements and disposal.

<https://democracy.bcpCouncil.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=284&MId=6079&Ver=4>

Appendices

- Confidential Appendix A: Agreed Heads of Terms (without prejudice, subject to contract and council sign off) Stadium Land
- Confidential Appendix B: Stadium Land Plan
- Confidential Appendix C: Agreed Heads of Terms (without prejudice, subject to contract and council sign off) Car Park
- Confidential Appendix D: Car Park Land Plan
- Confidential Appendix E: Rent Summary
- Confidential Appendix F: Draft Valuation Report

CABINET



- Confidential Appendix G: Best Consideration