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| Report subject    | <b>Community Governance Review - Consequential and Supplementary Provisions</b>  |
| Meeting date      | 9 December 2025  |
| Status            | Public Report  |
| Executive summary | <p>This report presents the consequential and supplementary provisions required to implement the establishment of new town councils for Broadstone, Poole, and Bournemouth, following the Council's decision of 14 October 2025.</p> <p>It outlines the arrangements necessary to ensure the new councils are legally compliant and operationally effective from 1 April 2026. Key recommendations include the formation of Shadow Councils from 1 January 2026 to oversee the recruitment of qualified clerks and address pre-implementation matters, and the agreement of anticipated precept amounts for each council, enabling sound financial planning.</p> <p>The report details the limited transfer of assets, statutory requirements for allotments, and the continuation of certain services under Service Level Agreements to ensure continuity and mitigate risk. These measures are designed to provide a robust framework for the successful transition to new local governance arrangements and to support effective service delivery from inception.</p> |
| Recommendations   | <p><b>It is RECOMMENDED that:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><b>(a) a Shadow Council for each new Council be established from 1 January 2026 for the purposes of recruiting respective Clerks and to deal with any other matters requiring resolution prior to implementation with the membership being as set out in paragraph 26 to this report;</b></li><li><b>(b) the Head of Democratic Services be authorised to commence the recruitment process and to advertise the positions of town clerks for Broadstone, Poole and Bournemouth;</b></li><li><b>(c) the anticipated precept amounts for Broadstone Town Council, Poole Town Council and Bournemouth Town</b></li></ul>  |

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|-----------------------------|---|
|                             | <b>Council, as detailed in the table at paragraph 35 to this report, be included in the Reorganisation Order.</b>   |
| Reason for recommendations  | <p>It is important to ensure that the new town councils are safe and legal and capable of operating effectively from 1 April 2026. The recommendations are seeking to put in place arrangements to allow any matters to be resolved in a timely manner as they arise and to recruit qualified clerks for the new councils.</p> <p>The agreement of the anticipated precept requirements is a required decision of the principal council which will allow the new town councils to function effectively.</p> |
| Task and Finish Group Chair | Councillor Oliver Walters (Chair of the Task and Finish Group)  |
| Corporate Director          | Aidan Dunn (Chief Executive)  |
| Report Authors              | Richard Jones (Head of Democratic Services and Deputy Monitoring Officer)   |
| Wards                       | Council-wide  |
| Classification              | For Decision  |

## Background

1. The Council at its meeting on 14 October 2025 approved the establishment of three new local councils for Broadstone, Poole and Bournemouth.
2. The Task and Finish Group were requested to consider the assets and services to be transferred, to evaluate and calculate the projected costs of operating the new councils, and to recommend an anticipated precept requirement for the first year. In preparing the calculation of the anticipated precept it was necessary for the Task and Finish Group to identify potential budget lines for operating the new councils, although it is important to note that it is not for BCP Council to set the actual detailed budget. The new local councils will each be required to set and approve their own budget for 2026/27 by 1 October 2026 which may not exceed the calculated anticipated precept.
3. This report sets out those recommendations which Council is asked to support. The Overview and Scrutiny Board has requested to view the report before consideration by Council. The report will be considered at the meeting on the evening before Council on Monday 8 December. The Chair of the Board accepted that the report would not be available for inclusion with the agenda but would be published on 1 December 2025. Any views of the Board will be reported to full council.

## **Assets and Services**

4. The Task and Finish Group was mindful of the initial limited capacity of the new Councils to manage significant services and considered the direction of Council to limit the transfer of physical assets to those of a civic and ceremonial nature or where transfer is legally required. The only legally required assets are the allotment sites which fall within the boundary of the respective councils.
5. The anticipated budget calculations are based on supporting these limited activities, however, to avoid hamstringing the new councils, additional capacity, contingency and recommended reserves have been included for each of the councils to provide flexibility to support local activities in the first year if desirable by the elected councillors.

## **Allotments**

6. The only statutory land responsibility of local councils is the provision of allotments where there is demand for them. The Local Government (Parishes and Parish Councils) (England) Regulations 2008 requires the transfer of any land to the parish council which immediately before the order date is held by a principal council for any purpose of the Allotments Acts 1908 to 1950 or is vested in a principal council and used for those purposes.
7. The table below includes the allotment sites which must be transferred to the respective new council.

| <b>Site</b>                                  | <b>Managed or Self-Managed</b> | <b>Receiving Council</b> |
|--|--------------------------------|--------------------------|
| Broadstone                                   | Managed                        | Broadstone               |
| Alder Farm, Alderney & Bourne Valley         | Managed                        | Poole                    |
| Blake Dene, Penn Hill                        | Managed                        | Poole                    |
| Bushell Mill , Oakdale                       | Managed                        | Poole                    |
| Hamworthy                                    | Managed                        | Poole                    |
| Tatnam Farm, Oakdale                         | Managed                        | Poole                    |
| Tatnam Organic Patch, Oakdale                | Self-managed                   | Poole                    |
| Whitecliff, Parkstone                        | Self-managed                   | Poole                    |
| Widdicombe, Parkstone                        | Managed                        | Poole                    |
| Merrivale Avenue, East Southbourne & Tuckton | Managed                        | Bournemouth              |
| Elizabeth Gardens, East Cliff & Springbourne | Managed                        | Bournemouth              |
| Southill Gardens, Moordown                   | Managed                        | Bournemouth              |
| Bournemouth East, West Southbourne           | Self-managed                   | Bournemouth              |
| North Bournemouth, Wallisdown & Winton       | Self-managed                   | Bournemouth              |
| Brook Road, Kinson                           | Self-managed                   | Bournemouth              |

8. Self-managed sites are managed by local allotment societies who maintain the relationship with plot users, including the collection of rents and inspections, with the responsibility of the local authority limited to structural repairs of buildings, trees and to support the societies. Managed sites are operated and managed by the local authority including inspections, billing, grounds maintenance, utilities, etc.
9. The income and expenditure varies between the two operating models and this has been taken into account by the Task and Finish Group for each area.

### **Property and Mayoralty**

10. There are no recommendations to transfer the ownership or responsibility for any other land or buildings to the new councils. The councils will of course need to operate from premises and to meet in local venues. Provision has therefore been made for the initial rental of space although the precise locations will be a matter for the new councils to determine in the longer term.
11. For continuity purposes, the budget provision for both Bournemouth and Poole includes the continued use of shared space for the storage of historic and ceremonial assets (including a strongroom) and for Bournemouth to continue to use the Mayor's parlour at the Civic Centre. Space is also being commissioned in the Guildhall in Poole for the use of the current Mayor and this could be used by the Town Council post-implementation.
12. Other public facilities and community halls could be used for formal meetings for each council as required.

### **Operating Arrangements of Allotments and Civic Support for Year 1**

13. Although, the proposed schedule proposes the transfer of the allotment sites, it is critical that there is continuity of service from 1 April 2026 without any obvious detriment to delivery.
14. There are a number of options for service delivery including the potential transfer of existing operational staff and equipment, the engagement of an external contractor or the establishment of a Service Level Agreement with Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole Council to deliver the services for the first year.
15. It has not been possible in the time available to undertake a full analysis of the manpower requirements and resilience needed to deliver these services directly from 1 April and as a consequence it is considered high risk and undesirable to transfer staff and equipment or engage an external contractor at this stage. Further detailed work will be required by the new local councils in the first year of operation to fully develop a delivery plan.
16. It is therefore recommended that Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole Council continue to deliver the operational services for the management of the allotment sites and to support the mace bearing and chauffeuring duties of the Bournemouth and Poole Mayoralty for the period from 1 April 2026 to 31 March 2027 and a Service Level Agreement be entered into accordingly.
17. This approach will not only provide for a continuation of service for the customer but will also provide more certainty for existing staff delivering the services and allow appropriate time to plan for the delivery of the services from April 2027.

## **Office Staffing Requirements and Recruitment of Clerks**

18. It will be necessary to establish an initial staffing structure for the new local councils. Local councils require as a minimum a designated clerk to the council and a responsible finance officer (RFO). The role of RFO is often performed by the Clerk.
19. It is anticipated at this stage that the Town Council for Broadstone will operate in a manner similar to other parish councils with a qualified clerk employed on a part-time basis (0.5 FTE), assuming the responsibilities of the RFO and operating from home or an office in a local facility or meeting place for limited hours per week.
20. Conversely, the Town Councils for Poole and Bournemouth are likely to desire a greater presence in the Town Centres, serving as a pivotal point of contact to signpost and represent residents, businesses and visitors. The role and profile of Mayor is anticipated to be maintained to both uphold the historic and ceremonial events but to also promote the towns as community, cultural, historic and business destinations.
21. As a consequence, it is anticipated that the town councils will require a qualified full-time clerk, part-time mayoral support officer and a part-time finance officer.
22. It is not envisaged that any existing employees of BCP Council will transfer to the new councils to support these specific roles under the TUPE Regulations. If this situation changes, it will be necessary to undertake consultation with any member of staff who is considered to fall within this category before commencing further recruitment.
23. The Task and Finish Group are proposing that the recruitment of qualified clerks for each council is commenced as soon as practicably possible to secure an appointment by 1 April 2026. The appointed clerks for Bournemouth and Poole will then lead on the recruitment of additional staff.
24. Subject to the approval of this report, shadow councils will be asked to approve the recruitment process for their respective clerk, including the establishment of an appointments panel.
25. It will be necessary to establish Shadow Councils from 1 January 2026 for the purposes of recruiting respective Clerks and determining other matters that may require a decision prior to implementation.
26. The Shadow Councils shall comprise the BCP Councillors whose wards fall wholly or partially within the boundary of the new town councils. For Broadstone, there are only 2 qualifying ward councillors and therefore it is proposed that the Shadow Council for Broadstone should also include 4 representatives of the Broadstone Neighbourhood Forum.
27. No business shall be dealt with at the Shadow Council meetings if there are fewer than one quarter of Councillors who are members of that body present at the meeting.

## **Historical Property and Armorial Bearings**

28. Since 1 April 2019, the Charter Trustees for Bournemouth and Poole have been custodians of the historic property and armorial bearings. "Historic property" is

defined as including “any charter, insignia, plate, or other property which is of an historic and ceremonial nature”.

29. Upon the establishment of the new town councils, the Charter Trustees will cease to exist and it is therefore critical that the historic property is secured through a formal transfer to the new councils in a Supplementary Order which will be completed before 31 March 2026. This will include a full inventory of the historic property.
30. To secure the Armorial Bearing (typically referred to as Coat of Arms), it will be necessary to submit a petition for a Royal Licence to transfer the Arms. The Kings of Arms at the College of Arms will issue a Certificate confirming the transfer. This is included as an action in a work programme being overseen by officers. Updates will be provided to the respective Shadow Councils.

### **Assumptions**

31. The following section of the report sets out the anticipated precept amount for each council and the estimated Band D Council Tax charge. In developing the precept amounts, there were a number of assumptions used by the Task and Finish Group in their deliberations as set out below.

| <b>Category</b>  | <b>Assumption</b>  |
|--|--|
| Members Allowances                                     | That no provision is made for the payment of members allowances  |
| Pay Award  | 3% pay award provision included  |
| LGPS (Pension Contributions)                           | 22%  |
| National Insurance Contribution                        | 15%  |
| Contingency provision                                  | 30% of expenditure   |
| General Reserves                                       | 6 months of net revenue expenditure  |
| Distribution of Existing Charter Trustee (CT) Reserves | Distribution based on the net proportion of the Tax Base movement from existing boundaries to new.<br>Broadstone - 7.9% of Poole CT area<br>Poole – 92.1% of Poole CT area, plus 1.7% of Bournemouth CT area<br>Bournemouth – 98.3% of Bournemouth CT area |

### **Anticipated Precept Amount**

32. The Reorganisation Order must specify the anticipated precept requirement for the three new local councils. This sum will include both the cost of the services being transferred and the operational costs required to run the councils. These additional costs include staffing, buildings, subscriptions, telephone, IT and web site, banking, insurance, general office expenses, election expenses, equipment and equipment maintenance, cleaning, utilities, reserves, etc. Provision has also been included for each council to support local events, community groups or other activities, although it will be a matter for each council to determine if and how this is to be used.

33. The estimated requirements have been based on evaluation of other parish and town councils, shared knowledge of existing parish clerks and includes a contingency supplement and general reserve provision. It is advisable for town and parish councils to maintain a general budget reserve equivalent to between three- and twelve-months' net revenue expenditure depending upon the size of the council. The proposed anticipated precept requirement makes provision for general reserves of six months, although the new town councils may vary the level of general reserves it wishes to allocate.

34. Appended to this report is a copy of the working budget template used to calculate the anticipated requirement. As mentioned in paragraph 2, the new local councils will each be required to set and approve their own budget for 2026/27 by 1 October 2026 which may not exceed the calculated anticipated precept. The appendices are for illustrative purposes only and do not constrain the discretion of the new councils to set their own priorities and budget allocations within the anticipated precept total.

35. It is considered prudent financial planning to make contingency provisions in the anticipated amount to allow sufficient headroom for any unforeseen expenditure. The anticipated sum will be used to calculate the Council Tax for each new Council for the first year by dividing the precept requirement by the Council Tax Base. The official Council Tax Base cannot be calculated until after the end of November, however, officers have provided an indicative Council Tax Base for each of the three areas to provide a good indication of the likely Council Tax charge.

36. The table below provides details of the anticipated precept requirement, the indicative tax base and the estimated Band D Council Tax charge.

|   | <b>Broadstone TC</b> | <b>Poole TC</b> | <b>Bournemouth TC</b> |
|---|----------------------|-----------------|-----------------------|
| Anticipated Precept Total                       | £296,560             | £1,896,970      | £1,981,980            |
| Indicative Tax Base                             | 4,909.0              | 58,215.8        | 67,172.9              |
| Estimated Band D Council Tax Charge (per annum) | £60.41               | £32.59          | £29.51                |

37. The anticipated precept requirement excludes the transfer of Community Infrastructure Levy funds. On-going work is being undertaken in relation to the impact and distribution of CIL funds to the new councils, however, this does not impact on the anticipated precept requirement as CIL funds cannot be used to offset revenue expenditure. CIL money must be spent on the provision, improvement, or maintenance of infrastructure.

### **Implementation Workstreams**

38. The implementation of the three new councils is a complex project and work must focus on priority activities which to date has included the drafting of reorganisation orders, calculation of council tax bases, drawing of definitive GIS maps, electoral registration changes and the modelling of anticipated budget requirements. Listed below are a series of workstreams identifying associated actions. Many of the actions will require completion prior to 1 April 2026, others will be for the new councils to implement.

39. The list is not exhaustive and has been presented in this format for ease of reference for Council.

#### **Legal & Governance**

Draft Reorganisation Orders; Submit Orders to Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE); Notify Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC); Application to College of Arms; Draft Standing Orders; Draft Financial Regulations; Model Code of Conduct; Draft Scheme of Delegation; Draft committee structure and schedule

#### **Finance & Taxation**

Calculate Tax Base; Set anticipated budget and precept requirements; Establish bank accounts; Arrange external audit provision; Procure Insurance provision; Determine cost of operating allotments; Creation of ledgers

#### **Assets & Property**

Identify & Transfer Assets; Determine extent of allotment sites to be transferred; Finalise asset registers; Valuation of assets update; Confirm insurance cover for transferred assets

#### **Staffing & Operations**

Appoint Interim or Permanent Staff; Interim payroll services; Secure interim office accommodation and meeting venues; Procure IT Equipment, telephony and software

#### **Elections & Democratic Services**

Election date; Define warding arrangements and polling stations; Update registers to reflect new boundaries and wards; Publish Notice of Election; Prepare induction packs and training for new councillors; Set date for first Annual Town Council meetings

#### **Mapping & Data**

Finalise definitive GIS boundary mapping; Update LLPG (Local Land and Property Gazetteer); Notify Ordnance Survey (provide Shape Files); Update Council Tax System for new parishes; Identify other systems requiring updates (planning, highways, licensing, etc)

#### **Communications & Engagement**

Development communication plan; Promote governance arrangements with residents; Organise community welcome events; Set up email and website domains; Launch websites and social media channels

#### **Registrations and Notifications**

Register with HMRC; Register with Information Commissioners Officer (ICO); Register VAT office (if applicable); Register with Pensions Regulator (if applicable); Notify / remind local MP's, Departments, Local Partners and other Stakeholders

## **Options Appraisal**

40. The Task and Finish Group was tasked with recommending the anticipated precept requirements for each council and has spent considerable time debating the level to be set. Council is required to agree the anticipated precept requirement and this is recommended for approval.
41. If Council fails to agree an amount for each town council at this meeting it will be necessary to convene an extraordinary meeting before the end of January 2026.

## **Summary of financial implications**

42. There are no direct financial implications arising from this report, however, as outlined in the previous report to Council in October, budget contingency has been set aside to undertake the community governance review process. It was highlighted that there may be a requirement to make system and service changes to recognise the new councils. The budget underspend on this project to date has been released, however, any external costs required to support the implementation will need to be drawn down from the councils unearmarked reserves.
43. There will be a requirement for officers from various service areas to support the proposed Shadow Councils and the activities identified within the various workstreams.

## **Summary of legal implications**

44. The Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 (Part 4) devolved power from the Secretary of State to principal councils to carry out community governance reviews and put in place or make changes to local community governance arrangements. The Community Governance Review was undertaken in accordance with this Act.
45. To implement the new councils, the Council will be required to draw up Community Governance Re-organisation Orders.
46. The Local Government Finance (New Parishes) (England) Regulations 2008 permits councils to anticipate a precept and provides that the new parish council then sets the budget which must not exceed the amount specified in the establishment order for it. This report is seeking the Council's approval of the anticipated precept requirements.

## **Summary of human resources implications**

47. There are no direct human resource implications arising from this report, however, we will need to consider any potential impacts upon existing staff who support the activities of the new councils, including extra work required during any hand over period. It is proposed to initially establish an SLA with the new councils to allow sufficient time to fully consider the implications.

## **Summary of sustainability impact**

48. There are no direct sustainability impacts arising from this report.

## **Summary of public health implications**

49. There are no direct public health impacts arising from this report.

## **Summary of equality implications**

50. There are no direct equality implications arising from this report. There is a legal requirement to agree an anticipated precept requirement. The introduction of new councils will result in an additional council tax burden. For those in economic hardship and in receipt of council tax discounts, the same discounts will apply to these additional charges.

## **Summary of risk assessment**

51. It is vital that the Governance Review is undertaken in accordance with the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 and the guidance produced by the Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government and the Local Government Boundary Commission for England. Failure to adhere to these could result in the Review being open to challenge and judicial review.
52. All operational costs will be borne by the relevant parish or town council through an appropriate precept.

## **Background papers**

Published works

## **Appendices**

Appendix 1 - Indicative draft budget for Broadstone Town Council

Appendix 2 - Indicative draft budget for Poole Town Council

Appendix 3 - Indicative draft budget for Bournemouth Town Council