

BOURNEMOUTH, CHRISTCHURCH AND POOLE COUNCIL
OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD

Minutes of the Meeting held on 23 February 2026 at 6.00 pm

Present:-

Cllr K Salmon – Chairman

Cllr S Aitkenhead – Vice-Chairman

Present: Cllr J Beesley (online), Cllr P Canavan, Cllr L Dedman,
Cllr C Goodall, Cllr S Mackrow, Cllr L Northover, Cllr T Trent,
Cllr O Walters, Cllr C Weight and Cllr F Rice (online).

Also in attendance: Cllr R Herrett and Cllr K Wilson

97. Apologies

There were no apologies received for this meeting.

98. Substitute Members

There were no substitute members

99. Declarations of Interests

There were no declarations of interest made on this occasion.

100. Confirmation of Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 9 February were approved as a correct record.

101. Recommendation Tracker

The recommendation tracker was circulated with the agenda for information.

102. Public Issues

There were no public petitions or questions. One public statement was received from Mr Stephen Tallamy and read out by the Democratic Services Officer as follows:

As a resident of Creekmoor in Poole it frustrates me that the majority of councillors, particularly Portfolio Holders are remiss when it comes to posting positive news regarding council business especially consultations on their social media accounts. Many may be reluctant to do so because of negative comments from well-known anti-everything residents but if used responsibly there is no need to engage with them. At almost every council

meeting the thorny subject of "how do we get the trust of residents and better get them to engage in consultations," is raised. Well you won't get it by non-engagement, all councillors have as community representatives a duty to keep their residents updated and informed in a timely, responsible and polite fashion, so everyone of you should be proud of being resident representatives and shouldn't be afraid of some negative feedback because that is never going to go away.

103. Consultation Framework Working Group Report

The Lead Member of the Working Group presented a report, a copy of which had been circulated to each Member and a copy of which appears as Appendix 'A' to these minutes in the Minute Book. It was explained that at its meeting on 18 November 2024 the Overview and Scrutiny Board agreed to establish a working group to consider the BCP Council developing Consultation Framework in response to the report brought to the Board on Consultation methods and responses. Subsequently, the Board requested the working group broaden its original remit to include an examination of recent consultations and examples of previous consultations, with a view to identifying any lessons that could be applied to future practice. The findings of the working group and detail explaining the rationale behind the recommendations which the Working Group had formulated were presented to the Board. The officers who supported the working group and the relevant portfolio holder also addressed the Board. There were a number of points raised in discussion of this issue including:

- **Managing expectations:** It was emphasised that expectation-setting was crucial, particularly where views will be divided; caution was advised regarding councillor commentary on social media during live consultations.
- **Notification for ward members:** Several members stated that 24-hour notice had sometimes been experienced and that longer lead-in was necessary for effective local engagement. Members asked for sufficient detail prior to launch and not merely awareness that a consultation would occur.
- **Councillor conduct:** Concerns were expressed about online conduct and misinformation. It was noted that Councillor behaviour is governed by the Code of Conduct and Standards processes, with limited sanctions; the working group had focused on improving methodology rather than policing conduct.
- **Confidentiality:** A suggestion to withdraw early-notification privileges from any councillor who breached confidentiality was raised; officers cautioned this would be impractical to operate and outside the consultation team's remit, suggesting any such measures belong with conduct/standards governance
- **Clear framing on survey purpose:** Members supported prominent explanation that consultations inform, but do not decide, and suggested link-through to the published framework; a "tick acknowledgement" was discussed as a possible nudge to improve comprehension. Officers agreed to incorporate clearer front-end statements upon framework approval.

- **Representative Sampling / Citizens' Panel:** Clarification was provided that a Citizens' Panel (distinct from a Citizens' Assembly) would be a representative sample recruited via professional methods (e.g., telephone/online sampling and face-to-face intercepts), used alongside open consultations for surveys/focus groups to reach broader, less polarised views. Cost and methodology (including mobile recruitment and geographic/demographic spread) were noted.
- **Method and engagement:** Members advocated creative, hands-on approaches (e.g., participatory budgeting exercises) to help residents understand trade-offs, noting past local examples and recent panel work on town centre priorities that used budget-reallocation scenarios.
- **Question Design:** It was proposed that the framework state explicitly that questions would be meaningful and capable of informing decisions (not merely objective/non-leading). Officers undertook to review the draft to ensure this intent is explicit.
- **Professional standards:** Officers reiterated adherence to established consultation principles (including avoiding leading questions) and explained the value of sample surveys for more representative insight, acknowledging margins of error.

RESOLVED:

1. That the Overview and Scrutiny Board recommend to Cabinet that it adopts the Code of Good Practice.
2. That the Overview and Scrutiny Board recommend to Cabinet that all members should be notified of consultations at least 1 week in advance of going live, providing summary detail of the topic for consultation.
3. That the Overview and Scrutiny Board endorse the ongoing work to produce an internal consultation toolkit, which should provide clear guidance on confidentiality.
4. That the Overview and Scrutiny Board recommend to Cabinet that it endorses an approach to every consultation which clearly outlines that it is not a referendum.
5. That the Overview and Scrutiny Board recommend to Cabinet that funding for the establishment of a citizens panel is built into future budgets for Consultations.
6. That the Overview and Scrutiny Board recommend that the Chief Executive bring the Consultation Forward Plan to Group Leaders Meetings on a quarterly basis in order to raise awareness with members. As well as informing of forthcoming consultations the update should provide guidance on confidentiality and expectations for member engagement.
7. That the Overview and Scrutiny Board recommend to officers that greater clarity be provided around why particular consultation methods were chosen and also clarity on the reason why a consultation is taking place and how the results of the consultation will be used.

8. That the Overview and Scrutiny Board recommend that officers give consideration to the most robust consultation process available, recognising that sample surveys tend to be more robust and consider the additional costs involved with this

The Board also asked officers to review whether the framework (Code of Good Practice) should more explicitly reference the need for meaningful, decision-relevant consultation questions. Officers agreed to thoroughly check through the Code and make adjustments if required.

Voting: Nem. Con.

104. BCP Community Safety Partnership Annual Report

The presented a report, a copy of which had been circulated to each Member and a copy of which appears as Appendix '?' to these Minutes in the Minute Book. The Board considered the paper which sets out elements of development and delivery by 'Safer BCP', the BCP Community Safety Partnership (CSP), and its constituent agencies. It provided Members with an update since the last report to Overview and Scrutiny Panel in January 2025. The Board was reminded that the Local Government Act 2000 includes crime and disorder scrutiny as one of the functions the council must ensure its scrutiny arrangements cover and the Board had been designated as the appropriate body for this function. The CSP's statutory partners and duties were outlined, including strategic assessment, plan/monitoring, information sharing, reducing re-offending/substance misuse, and commissioning of Domestic Homicide Reviews. The priorities for 2025/26 were outlined, as reducing serious violence; reducing violence against women and girls; and reducing ASB and crime hot spots. There had been a general downward trend in sexual assaults, domestic abuse incidents, personal robbery, and knife crime. Reported ASB had decreased year-on-year. The Board was informed of the future work for the CSP which included continued funding for domestic abuse services and serious violence interventions; a national review of CSPs and impacts of forthcoming legislation were anticipated. Executive. A number of issues were discussed by the Board including:

- **ASB reporting and data confidence:** Assurance was sought that reduced figures did not simply reflect barriers to reporting. Dorset Police described actions to improve reporting confidence, while maintaining hotspot-led patrols, noted likely increases as confidence improves, and highlighted targeted operations.
- **E-scooters/E-bikes:** Members queried legality and retail practices. It was explained that rental e-scooters operated under authorised schemes with speed caps and licence checks, whereas privately owned e-scooters remained unlawful on public roads. Calls for national legislative clarity were noted.
- **Noisy motorcycles / late-night nuisance:** Concerns about specific corridors were raised. Police encouraged continued reporting to inform planned operations, outlined limitations of certain tactics for motorcycles, and described new tagging/spray tactics to support

later identification. Use of ANPR where plates are visible was referenced.

- **Community Patrol Groups:** Questions were raised about an unregulated community group operating locally. Police stated that such entities were not endorsed due to concerns with operating models. The Council reported ongoing dialogue aimed at signposting to proper governance, safeguarding and insurance standards, whilst reiterating that commissioned/specialist services should not be replaced by unregulated activity.
- **Future Changes and Scrutiny:** It was observed that CSP arrangements may change significantly over the next 12 months as national policy develops. The Board indicated an intention to schedule future scrutiny of any proposed changes once guidance is clearer.
- **Community cohesion:** In response to questions, officers outlined a new externally funded community cohesion role to work with diverse communities, counter misinformation, progress the hate crime action plan, expand third-party reporting, and develop education resources with schools.
- **Domestic abuse:** An increase in high-risk cases referred to Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference, MARAC was discussed. Officers cited factors including recent police training and transition to a new risk assessment tool, potentially affecting risk categorisation. Safeguarding processes remained in place for victims and children, with perpetrator risk also addressed.
- **Safe Places Scheme:** Members sought information and avenues to champion the scheme locally. Officers confirmed expansion across BCP, inclusion of day/night-time venues, and signposting via the national Safe Places website, with communications being prepared to raise awareness.
- **Retail Crime:** Activity with Business Improvement Districts (BIDs) and retailers was described, including evidence upload tools for CCTV, proactive arrests of repeat offenders, use of Criminal Behaviour Orders, CPS engagement, and tailored crime-prevention advice. Members asked that similar support be considered for non-BID areas with high shoplifting rates.

RESOLVED: That the annual report be noted.

Voting: Nem.Con.

The Board affirmed its intention in returning to the subject to scrutinise implications of national CSP reforms once proposals were published.

105. Increased Penalty Charge Notice and Associated Charges Trial

The Portfolio Holder for Cabinet Member for Destination, Leisure and Commercial Operations presented a report, a copy of which had been circulated to each Member and a copy of which appears as Appendix 'C' to these Minutes in the Minute Book. The Board was advised that the Council conducted a Department for Transport (DfT) authorised trial in August 2025

to test whether increasing Penalty Charge Notice (PCN) levels and associated charges to London-equivalent rates would improve compliance and reduce illegal parking in the coastal area from Sandbanks to Hengistbury Head. The trial showed a reversal of the expected rise in contraventions, with overall PCNs decreasing against forecast models, alongside reductions in serious on-street breaches and improvements in bus punctuality. No negative impact on visitor numbers was identified, and parking capacity remained consistently available, suggesting most illegal parking had been by choice rather than necessity. Some behavioural displacement occurred into lower-level car park contraventions, and peak-pressure days still presented challenges. Overall, the trial demonstrated that higher PCN levels can effectively improve compliance, with BCP Council recommending either a national review of PCN rates outside London or a wider, longer-term follow-up trial. A number of points were discussed by the Board including:

- **Potential Future Scope:** It was asked that any extension cover the whole BCP area and run longer (to capture school-term impacts). The Cabinet Member indicated that any further trial sought from the DfT should be BCP-wide and for an extended period.
- **DfT decision-making:** Members asked whether a national uplift or a further local trial would be pursued and when. The Board was informed that the evidence-led officer report with two feasible recommendations, a national rates uplift or a further extended local trial, had been submitted to the DfT. The Cabinet report was provided for the findings to be noted and to publicly support the approach; follow-up representations to the DfT were planned once the DfT had digested the report.
- **Strength of recommendation:** Members urged the strongest case be made that the tested uplift should form the baseline for either option presented. Officers acknowledged that London rates may change from April and that alignment to London is the likely ceiling outside London.
- **Measurement:** Questions were raised about whether “success” reflected tickets issued or contraventions occurring. Officers stated that the relevant metric was contraventions, with officer productivity per hour steady year-on-year; higher counts on bank-holiday days reflected increased demand pressures, whereas the overall period evidenced reduction.
- **CEO Capacity:** Approximately 55 FTE Civil Enforcement Officers were in post against a structure of roughly 60–65.
- **Resident/visitor information:** The approach to informing visitors included on-site posters, entry-point notices, radio and press was outlined. The absence of unusual challenge rates suggested effective communication.
- **Interaction with the Parking Strategy:** Members asked how the trial feeds into the emerging Parking Strategy. It was stated that evidence of improved compliance at higher penalty levels informs assumptions about effective enforcement and the role of restrictions. Further discussion on this was anticipated when the draft strategy is considered by the Board.

The Board noted the report and welcomed the submission to DfT seeking either national change or approval for an extended BCP-wide trial ahead of summer 2026.

106. Work Plan

The Chair of the Board presented a report, a copy of which had been circulated to each Member and a copy of which appears as Appendix 'D' to these Minutes in the Minute Book. The Overview and Scrutiny (O&S) Board was asked to consider and identify work priorities for publication in a Work Plan. The ongoing work-programming exercise was noted and the outcomes from this were expected to be reported to the next meeting. The next meeting was scheduled to focus on parking: both the early draft Parking Strategy and a rapporteur report on parking enforcement around schools. Engagement with schools and the local bus operator for that item was being arranged. A suggestion to hear directly from a headteacher was welcomed.

RESOLVED: That the O&S Board work plan be noted.

The meeting ended at 8.22 pm

CHAIRMAN