

WORKING GROUP: BCP Local Plan

TERMS OF REFERENCE

[Insert Date]

Background: In **[Insert Month and Year]**, **Cabinet/Leader of the Council and Chair of Cabinet** approved the establishment of a Working Group to provide cross party involvement and scrutiny in the preparation of the BCP Local Plan.

Scope of the Working Group: Included in the scope will be to interrogate and discuss the evidence emerging in relation to the Local Plan and how this informs the spatial and policy implications and options of the BCP Local Plan.

This group will not be a decision-making group and will provide a consultative role to support and inform decision-making by Cabinet. Cabinet are not obliged to adopt recommendations arising from this group.

Members:

The membership of the Local Plan Working Group will be politically balanced, based on the political balance calculations as at 14 October 2025 as follows.

Political Group	Representation on Council	Calculated Entitlement based on 15 seats	Number of allocated seats
Liberal Democrat	38.16% 29 Councillors	5.8	6
Conservative	11.84% 9 Councillors	1.8	2
Christchurch Independents	10.53% 8 Councillors	1.6	2
Labour	10.53% 8 Councillors	1.6	2
Green	7.89% 6 Councillors	1.2	1
BCP Independents	6.58% 5 Councillors	1	1
Poole People	6.58% 5 Councillors	1	1
BCP Reform UK	2.63% 2 Councillors	0.4	0
Independents	2.63% 2 Councillors	0.4	0
Poole Engage	2.63% 2 Councillors	0.4	0
			15

There will be an additional seat to be shared among the 3 smallest groups to enable a full spread of political representation. The total number of Councillors on the Working Group therefore will be 16.

Each Political Group Leader can appoint representative(s) to fill the seats allocated. Group Leaders will be expected to aim to have a representative from each of the Overview & Scrutiny Committees' and Board.

Substitute members are not permitted.

The **Working Group/ Leader of the Council and Chair of Cabinet** will elect a Chair, who will chair the meetings and agree the agenda and meeting dates with officers. Members of the group can make requests for agenda items through the Chair or officers. These must be received at least 7 calendar days before the meeting.

A Vice Chair will be elected by the group to chair meetings that the Chair is unable to attend.

Representatives of the Overview and Scrutiny Committees and Board will provide a dual function of being both a contributor to the discussions about the evidence and a rapporteur role for their relevant Committees and Board, updating them and feeding back to the Working Group.

Officers will facilitate the meetings and produce minutes. The Chair or Vice Chair will agree the minutes with officers.

The Local Plan Working Group will at times be required to delve into issues in a detailed manner. For the group to be effective, members must be afforded the time and space to engage in free and frank discussions without any external interference. This environment is essential for the group to explore all aspects of the issues they are examining, consider diverse viewpoints, and arrive at well-rounded conclusions. As a consequence, the work of the Local Plan Working Group must remain confidential at the formative stages. Information will be released and made public at appropriate times.

Objectives and Methodology:

- To read, review, and understand the evidence, options and emerging policies of the BCP Local Plan.
- To propose any relevant and appropriate recommendations to Cabinet, including about the dissemination of information, which should be outcome focussed.
- To maintain confidentiality of the information supplied to the working group members unless advised otherwise.

- To attend meetings in person or online as needed – there will not be the option of substitutes.

Governance, Reporting Arrangements and Timescales:

The Working Group will report to Cabinet for key stages and decision making.

For non-key stages, informal reporting and steer will take place via the Planning Portfolio Holder and Corporate Management Board (CMB) and Cabinet. This will be managed through the Director for Planning and Transport and Monitoring officer.

Cabinet will review the effectiveness of the Group's work to ensure it is conducted in a timely and constructive way that achieves the objectives set out.

The Working Group will convene as needed to assist with the preparation of the Local Plan in accordance with the timetable agreed by Cabinet.

It is expected to report its findings and recommendations to Cabinet on a regular basis. This will be via a Cabinet report prepared by officers at key stages and verbal update by the Lead as chair or vice chair at other stages.

The chair or vice chair will agree the minutes with officers.

Depending on the policy direction and stage, recommendations to other committees, or Council will be required.

The formal scrutiny of the Local Plan will be through the Overview and Scrutiny Board.

Review: The terms of reference will be reviewed annually by the Director of Planning and Transport in consultation with the Planning Portfolio Holder. Any material changes to the terms shall be agreed by Cabinet.

