

BOURNEMOUTH, CHRISTCHURCH AND POOLE COUNCIL
OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD

Minutes of the Meeting held on 18 May 2026 at 6.00 pm

Present:-

Cllr K Salmon – Chairman

Cllr S Aitkenhead – Vice-Chairman

Present: Cllr J Beesley, 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 G Wright

Present virtually: Cllr F Rice

Also in attendance: Cllr A Keddie, Cllr A Martin and Cllr S Moore

1. Apologies

None received.

2. Substitute Members

None received

3. Election of Chair

The Vice-Chair presided over the meeting for this item. Nominations were sought for the position of Chair for the Overview and Scrutiny Board. A nomination was proposed and seconded for Cllr K Salmon. There being no further nominations it was:

RESOLVED that Cllr K Salmon be elected Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Board for the 2026/27 Municipal Year.

4. Election of Vice-Chair

Nominations were sought for the position of Vice-Chair for the Overview and Scrutiny Board. A nomination was proposed and seconded for Cllr S Aitkenhead. There being no further nominations it was:

RESOLVED that Cllr S Aitkenhead be elected Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Board for the 2026/27 Municipal Year.

5. Declarations of Interests

There were no declarations of interest made on this occasion.

6. Confirmation of Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 23 March were approved as a correct record

7. Recommendation Tracker

Updates to the recommendation tracker since the last meeting and outstanding actions were noted.

8. Feedback from Cabinet Portfolio Holder on recommendations to Cabinet

The Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Customer Communications and Culture provided feedback to the Board on the consultation framework recommendations. It was reported that the majority of recommendations had been accepted and welcomed, with particular recognition of the importance of improving transparency and consistency in consultation processes.

It was acknowledged that consultation processes are increasingly challenging due to declining public trust, the influence of social media, and the risk of consultation outcomes being perceived as predetermined. Concerns were raised regarding the integrity of consultations, particularly the potential for processes to be politicised or undermined through early disclosure.

Cabinet indicated general agreement with the proposal for earlier awareness of upcoming consultations, including sharing forward plans with Group Leaders. However, caution was expressed regarding the recommendation to provide one week's advance notice prior to consultations going live, due to the risk of leaks or misuse of information.

Officers confirmed that improvements would be implemented, including:

- Increased clarity regarding the selection of consultation methods.
- Continued emphasis on ensuring robust and meaningful consultation approaches.
- Greater transparency through structured documentation.

Members welcomed the overall acceptance of the recommendations and emphasised the importance of ensuring councillors are not informed of consultations after media release.

- Forward plans for consultations to be shared with Group Leaders.
- Efforts to provide advance notice of consultations to members to be undertaken where practicable, while maintaining confidentiality and process integrity.

9. Public Issues

There were no public items for this meeting.

10. Local Plan process

The Portfolio Holder for Communities and Partnerships presented a report on behalf of the Leader, 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. The Board was informed that in June 2025, Cabinet

agreed to prepare a new Local Plan under the Government's reformed plan-making system. The Government has now published the Regulations and guidance setting out the new process, which is intended to enable plans to be prepared and adopted within 30 months from Gateway 1. The report summarised the process and proposed timetable for preparing the new BCP Local Plan and sought authorisation to undertake the Stage 1 ("Getting ready") activities, together with delegated authority to progress the Plan through the prescribed Gateway stages. Cabinet would make decisions at each formal consultation stage.

The Board was informed that the previous Local Plan had been withdrawn, primarily due to issues relating to the duty to cooperate and housing need assessments. It was explained that the absence of an up-to-date Local Plan limits the Council's ability to control development and increases exposure to speculative applications, particularly in the context of changes to national policy (e.g. "grey belt"). It was emphasised that the timeline is extremely challenging, with most work required within the first 18 months. A number of issues were raised during discussion of this item including:

- Scoping Consultation - It was confirmed that the scoping consultation is a statutory requirement. Concerns were expressed that it may offer limited value due to constraints imposed by national policy and predefined frameworks.
- Member Engagement - It was noted that opportunities for member involvement are limited within formal stages, placing significant importance on early engagement. The proposed working group was identified as a key mechanism for detailed member input. Concerns were raised that insufficient early engagement may lead to frustration and reduced influence at later stages.
- Risks and Governance - Significant risks were identified, including potential changes in political leadership affecting direction mid-process; possibility of government intervention if the timetable is not met; delivery risks linked to viability constraints in housing development. It was recognised that new "gateway" review stages involving the Planning Inspectorate should reduce the likelihood of late-stage failure.
- Viability and Delivery - Concerns were raised that policy aspirations may not translate into delivery due to viability issues, particularly in town centres. It was acknowledged that development economics favour greenfield sites, which may conflict with spatial and sustainability objectives.
- Regional Planning (Devolution) - Concerns were expressed regarding potential future conflict with emerging regional spatial strategies under devolution arrangements. Officers advised that roles are expected to remain distinct, though it was acknowledged that uncertainty remains.
- Stakeholder Engagement - Members highlighted the need for a broader stakeholder engagement strategy. It was considered insufficient to rely on responses from existing contacts. A strong emphasis was placed on ensuring inclusion of vulnerable groups and those in housing need, community organisations and smaller stakeholder groups and specific groups such as van-life communities and Gypsy and Traveller

communities. It was suggested that the existing stakeholder database to be circulated to Members for review and expansion.

- Consultation Methods - It was recommended that consultation approaches extend beyond standard surveys to include more inclusive and representative engagement methods.
- Local Plan Working Group - Concerns were expressed regarding a lack of geographical balance across the conurbation, restrictions on substitutes, which were considered impractical and confidentiality requirements, particularly restrictions on sharing information within political groups. It was argued that excessive confidentiality may hinder transparency and effective communication. Additionally, concerns were raised that working groups should not be overly restrictive and should allow broader member participation where appropriate.

RESOLVED that the Overview and Scrutiny Board recommend to Cabinet:

- 1. That further clarification be provided on the stakeholders who will be engaged with beyond the statutory consultees and that Ward members be encouraged to provide the details to officers of any organisations that they feel should be engaged with as stakeholders.**
- 2. That the Working Group Terms of reference be amended to allow the possibility for substitute members provided that group leaders or their nominated representative notify of the change at least 72 hours in advance of a meeting and provided that the substitute attend a briefing with relevant officers prior to the meeting.**
- 3. That a risk concerning the wider potential implications of devolution and local government reorganisation, e.g. changing consultees, be added to the risk register included within the Project Initiation Document**

Voting: Nem. Con.

The meeting adjourned at 8.05pm and resumed at 8.15pm.

11. Social Value Statement for BCP Council

The Portfolio Holder for Communities and Partnerships presented a report, a copy of which had been circulated to each Member and a copy of which appears as Appendix 'B' to these Minutes in the Minute Book. The Board was informed that BCP Council does not have a Social Value Policy nor a Social Value Statement. In June 2025, a Social Value Working Group was convened to develop the Council's Social Value Statement, aligned to priorities within the Corporate Plan and BCP's Procurement and Contract Management Strategy. The scope of the Social Value Statement includes leveraging social value through; Procurement and contract management, External offers relating to Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR), Planning, Economic Development and Community-based projects. The Board

considered the proposed Social Value Statement and the recommendation that it be adopted in accordance with national government guidance. A number of issues were raised in discussion on this item including:

- It was acknowledged that the statement represents a strong and well-developed framework for embedding social value within procurement and contract management, and Members welcomed the progress made to date.
- Concern was expressed that the nationally prescribed approach places significant emphasis on monetised outcomes, which may not fully capture wider social, environmental, and community benefits, including preventative outcomes and longer-term impacts. Members noted that a more locally tailored framework could, in principle, better reflect these non-monetised elements.
- It was recognised that departing from the national model would require substantial additional work, specialist capacity, and financial resource, and could result in inconsistency with national standards and reduced comparability. It was further acknowledged that such change would be more appropriately led at a national level rather than by a single authority.
- Clarification was sought regarding the scope of the recommendation. It was confirmed that the proposal related solely to adoption of the Social Value Statement for procurement and contract management purposes and did not commit the Council to immediate budget growth or to wider application across all Council activities.
- The Board discussed a proposal for a separate recommendation to request that Cabinet consider the development of a future action plan and appropriate governance arrangements to explore the extension of social value principles beyond procurement on a phased basis.
- The Board considered that adoption of the Social Value Statement, as presented, represented a pragmatic and proportionate approach and provided a sound foundation for future development.

The Overview and Scrutiny Board Recommend to Cabinet:

- 1. That an action plan, including details of an appropriate governance structure, is produced in order to clearly outline how the social value statement will be taken forward to cover all Council activities beyond procurement.**

Voting: 10 in favour, 2 against (Note that this vote was revisited following further clarification of the motion – the original vote being 11 in favour 1 against.)

- 2. That the O&S Board support the recommendation outlined in the report to approve the Social Value Statement for adoption**

Voting: 10 in favour, 2 against

12. Work Plan

The Chair 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 asked to note the work plan and agree

Scrutiny Request - The Board considered its forward work programme and a new scrutiny request relating to the closure of Charminster Library following structural failure. The issue was presented as a significant safety concern, with implications for maintenance practices across the wider estate. The potential for broader lessons to be learned regarding asset management and risk mitigation was emphasised.

A proposal was made to undertake this scrutiny using a rapporteur approach to minimise resource demands.

Members supported inclusion of the item, while emphasising the need to:

- Clearly define scope.
- Focus on lessons learned and preventative measures.
- Avoid duplication with operational or ward-level activity.

RESOLVED:

1. That the Charminster Library item be added to the Board's work plan.

2. That a small group of members develop key lines of inquiry.

3. A rapporteur approach to be adopted, with findings to be reported back to the Board. Rapporteur members to be agreed by the Board following the development of the KLOE.

The Chair outlined the programme for in-depth scrutiny which had been agreed by the O&S Chairs/ Vice Chairs group as follows. This would be kept under review by the Chair's group to ensure items progressed in a timely manner.

1. Van Life (E&P topic)
2. Children's Wellbeing (Joint Children's and HASC topic)
3. Budget scrutiny (All O&S joint topic - tbc dependent on early draft budget release)
4. Resident's Parking (O&S Board topic)

The meeting ended at 9.38 pm

CHAIRMAN