BOURNEMOUTH, CHRISTCHURCH AND POOLE COUNCIL

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD

Minutes of the Meeting held on 15 June 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 and Cllr O Walters
Present virtually:	Cllr F Rice
Also in attendance:	Cllr M Cox, Cllr R Herrett and Cllr R Burton

13. Apologies

Apologies were received from Cllrs T Trent and G Wright.

14. Substitute Members

There were no substitute members.

15. Declarations of Interests

There were no declarations of interest made on this occasion.

16. Confirmation of Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 18 May were approved as a correct record.

17. Recommendation Tracker

The recommendation tracker was noted.

18. Public Issues

There were 3 public questions received from Mr Alex McKinstry and 1 public statement from Mr Ian Redmanas follows:

Public Questions in relation to agenda item 7 – BCP Growth Plan

1. A Cabinet supplement from February this year listed three sets of "consultees" on the BCP Growth Plan: namely, Council officers; "businesses across BCP"; and an entity called "the BCP Business Growth Board", which seems to have been constituted around October 2025. Can you provide any further information on this "business growth board", such as: who its members are, including its chair and vice-chair; whether it is

independent of the Council; if not independent of the Council, how its members were appointed; how frequently it meets; and what its remit comprises? Can you also confirm whether this board is likely to be a long-term entity or whether it has been formed chiefly to assist with the Growth Plan's compilation?

Response: Historically, Dorset Local Enterprise Partnership (DLEP) led on pan Dorset business-led growth, led by a Dorset LEP board, consisting of representatives from the private sector, local government leaders, and higher education institutions. Since the LEP reforms in 2024 when LEP's were phased out their responsibilities have moved into councils and to ensure business engagement continues councils have set up Business Growth Boards.
In March 2025 Dorset LEP was wound down and BCP Council invited sector representatives from Universities, Destination Management Board, Port of Poole, Advanced Engineering and Manufacturing, Start-ups (Chair), Business Improvement District , Voluntary Sector, Cultural Sector, Dorset Chamber of Commerce, Finance and Fintech, Retail, Healthcare, Key development sites , Federation of Small Business, Skills Sector (Vice Chair), Hospitality and Accommodation, Low Carbon, Creative and Digital, Bournemouth Airport and Night-time Economy & Events. The Chair and Vice Chair roles were selected from within the Board whereby representatives put forward nominations and the Board voted to appoint the Chair and Vice Chair. The Chair is Dan Ware and the Vice Chair is Phil Sayles.
The BCP Business Growth Board meet a minimum of 4 times per (every quarter) but with the Growth Plan development there have been additional meetings.
The remit of the BCP Business Growth Board is to serve as the strategic "Voice of Business" in Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole, shaping and championing economic growth by advising on strategy, influencing investment and policy, and representing business interests across local, regional, and national partnerships. This includes co-ordinating, endorsing and ensuring effective delivery and accountability of the BCP Growth Plan, a 10-year plan.

2. Will the BCP Growth Plan be going out to public consultation?

   Response: The growth plan will not be going for formal public consultation, as this is done by the business growth board and pulls together existing strategies. These strategies, though, have been subject to public consultation

Public Question in relation to agenda item 8 – Financial Outturn 2025/26

The table on page 63 (Appendix A1) provides a breakdown of the overspend in the Wellbeing directorate. This includes a £10.8 million overspend on adult care packages, which is offset to some extent by underspends elsewhere; by client contributions and other income; and by £1,955,000 which is described as "Bad debts provision for deferred

payment". Can you explain in layman's terms what a "bad debts provision for deferred payment" is, exactly; and as this sum relates to bad debts, is there any possibility of the Council not actually receiving this money?
Response: Bad debt provision is a sum of money an organisation may put aside in the eventuality that clients do not repay their debt to the organisation. In terms of Adult Social Care, the accounts need to reflect that service users may not pay assessed contributions or reimburse the Council for the cost of their care if the Council paid up front under specific arrangements.
To date Adult Social Care has had a provisional £1.955m provision for debts linked to deferred payment agreements. Historic analysis however has shown that no deferred payment agreement debt has ever not been recovered because it is secured by a first charge (typically on a clients' property in line with national policy) and, so the decision was made that such provision was not necessary. Such a decision to change this provision can only be applied once, hence it is a one-off adjustment,

Public Statement in relation to agenda item 8 - Financial Outturn 2025/26
Recent Freedom of Information responses raise questions about the performance management arrangements for the Council's seafront trading operations. The Council has confirmed that kiosk opening times are not set centrally, staffing deployment by site is not recorded, and no performance reports or comparisons with previous years are held. While revenue data exists, no site-level performance reports or comparative analysis were identified in the FOI response.
Given that these venues occupy prominent seafront locations and are intended to generate income for the Council, the absence of such management information may limit the Council's ability to assess performance, benchmark operations, identify underperforming assets, and demonstrate that best value is being achieved.
I therefore request that the Committee examines whether current performance management arrangements for Seafront Services provide sufficient assurance that commercial objectives are being met and whether opportunities exist to improve returns from these public assets.

19. BCP Growth Plan Presentation

The Portfolio Holder for Destination, Leisure and Commercial Operations Introduced the item, and the Board considered a presentation, 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 Chair of the Growth Board also attended the meeting to provide their perspective to the Board.
An early draft Growth Plan was presented. It was noted that the Plan sets out a 10-year vision to 2036, with the aim of supporting a connected, sustainable, and inclusive economy. Four core themes underpin this vision: Thriving People, a Strong Economy, Vibrant Places, and Connected Places. Key performance measures identified within the Plan include job creation, Gross Value Added (GVA), and levels of inward investment.
It was reported that the Plan was developed through a series of sector workshops and wider engagement activity, with strategic leadership and

sector representation provided by a Business Growth Board. The document is intended to be iterative in nature, with ongoing refinement expected as it evolves. Key interventions were highlighted, including the development of strategic regeneration frameworks for major sites, the strengthening of talent pipelines and skills development programmes, and the establishment of a proposed inward investment agency. Additional priorities include infrastructure improvements, particularly in transport and energy capacity, alongside a focused agenda on green skills and sustainability. A number of issues were raised in discussion of this item including:

- Delivery and Leadership - It was emphasised that effective delivery of the Growth Plan would rely on strong and coordinated leadership. The need for partnership working between the Council, private sector organisations, and key stakeholders was highlighted. It was further noted that clear accountability for delivery would be required to ensure that progress is maintained and that responsibilities are clearly defined.
- Integration with Other Strategies - The need to ensure that the Growth Plan is aligned with other key strategic documents was highlighted. In particular, it was noted that integration with the Local Plan and the Local Transport Plan would be essential to ensure a coordinated approach. It was observed that alignment between these strategies would support more effective delivery and avoid conflicting priorities.
- Evidence Base - It was suggested that the assumptions underpinning the proposals within the Plan should be supported by a strengthened evidence base. Members indicated that further data and analysis may be required to test the feasibility of proposed interventions. The importance of clear performance measures and evidence to support decision-making was emphasised.
- Skills and Workforce - A need to strengthen the focus on skills and workforce development was identified. It was suggested that greater emphasis should be placed on apprenticeships, vocational training, and trade-based skills. The importance of developing a local workforce capable of meeting future economic demands was highlighted, alongside the need to ensure opportunities are accessible to local residents.
- Community and Social Enterprise - Greater recognition of the role of community-led initiatives and social enterprises was suggested. It was noted that such organisations can contribute to inclusive growth and support local economic resilience. It was considered that the Growth Plan could be strengthened by more explicitly acknowledging these sectors and their contribution.
- Public Accountability - Concerns were raised regarding the absence of a formal public consultation process. It was suggested that this could limit opportunities for residents and stakeholders to engage with the Plan. The importance of transparency and public involvement in shaping strategic priorities was highlighted.
- Governance and Accountability - It was confirmed that the Growth Plan would be subject to Cabinet approval. It was also noted that the Overview and Scrutiny Board could play an ongoing role in monitoring progress. However, it was acknowledged that governance arrangements

required further development, and greater clarity would be needed to ensure effective oversight and accountability.

- Resourcing and Delivery Risks - It was highlighted that delivery would require significant resourcing and external funding. The Plan would need to move beyond high-level aspirations to clearly prioritised, deliverable actions.
- Future Scrutiny - It was confirmed that the O&S Board would identify areas within the Growth Plan for future in-depth scrutiny. The Growth Plan would be treated as a live document, with ongoing Member input encouraged. Members were asked to provide feedback on the clusters and comments on the plan.

The Overview and Scrutiny Board RECOMMENDED to the Growth Board:

a) That it engage with the National Emergency Briefing, and consider showing the briefing to Board members and the wider business community to help inform the future development of the growth plan.

Voting: 7 in favour 0 against 2 abstentions

b) That it undertake more extensive process of public consultation to enable a greater degree of public oversight and transparency.

Voting: Unanimous

The meeting was adjourned at 7.30pm and resumed at 7.40pm.

20. Financial Outturn 2025/26 and Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) update

The Portfolio Holder for Finance presented two reports, The Financial Outturn and the Medium-Term financial plan, copies of which had been circulated to each Member and copies of which appear as Appendices ‘B’ and 'C' to these Minutes in the Minute Book. The Financial Outturn Report presented the revenue and capital budget outturn, reserves position, dedicated schools grant outturn, housing revenue account, and results of council company and partner organisations for the financial year 2025/26. The 2025/26 general fund revenue outturn of £4.6m was in line with the quarter three forecast and confirms that demand-led social care services remain the council’s most significant financial challenge. This is particularly within children’s services which overall has overspent by (£9.1m), being 9% of the service’s budget. Planned investment and mitigation for 2026/27 will be critical to improving resilience and bringing these pressures under control. Pressures across the main service areas were partly offset by underspends in Resources and corporate budgets. Included in the budget were itemised savings of £9.6m with 91% achieved through service

transformation, third party spend reduction, staff savings and raising additional income.
The transformation programmes over the last six years have been crucial in reducing annual ongoing expenditure with cumulative revenue savings of £56m over this period from one off investments of £45m to date.
The accumulated deficit of £180m for the dedicated schools grant at 31 March 2026 remains a significant threat to the council's financial stability. Expenditure will continue to outstrip funding by an estimated further £200m over the next two financial years. The required SEND reform plan has been developed and if approved, central government could provide an estimated 90% contribution toward this deficit. This would still leave the council with a residual debt to fund of £38m.
Delivery of the £100m general fund capital programme was 60% spent by the year end, largely funded by government grant, with the balance carried forward into future years. A number of issues were discussed in the discussion of these reports including:

- Children's Services - A substantial increase in children entering care was reported. Costs were driven primarily by numbers rather than increasing costs. It was reported that external review work had been commissioned to identify improvement opportunities.
  Adult Social Care - An overspend had occurred for the first time. This was due to demand increases including care home placements and domiciliary care provision. It was noted that cost control mechanisms were effective and that pressures were largely demand-driven and systemic
- Budget Management and Monitoring - It was explained that financial performance was monitored on a monthly basis. Overspends were managed through, departmental accountability, corporate oversight and exception reporting.
- Financial Oversight and Scrutiny - It was emphasised that strengthened financial discipline and robust scrutiny arrangements would be essential. Councillors highlighted the need for close monitoring of budget performance and early identification of variances. The importance of clear and transparent financial reporting to support effective oversight was also noted.
- Reliance on Asset Disposals Concerns were raised regarding the reliance on asset disposals to address financial pressures, particularly in relation to the Dedicated Schools Grant deficit. It was noted that uncertainty remained around the availability of suitable assets and the potential long-term impact on the Council's asset base. Further clarity on the strategy and associated risks was requested.
- Long-Term Financial Sustainability - The long-term financial sustainability of the Council was identified as a key concern. It was observed that increasing demand for statutory services, combined with inflationary pressures and funding uncertainty, presented a challenging outlook. It was suggested that more fundamental changes to the Council's operating model may be required.
- Delivery of Transformation and Savings - Attention was drawn to the delivery of transformation and savings programmes. While progress had been made, it was noted that delivery had been slower than

anticipated. Members stressed the importance of ensuring that savings were realistic, closely monitored, and delivered in full, given the limited financial resilience available.

- Demand-Led Service Pressures - Ongoing pressures within demand-led services, particularly Children's Services and Adult Social Care, were highlighted. It was acknowledged that these pressures were being experienced nationally. However, it was emphasised that local mitigation measures, including early intervention and service transformation, would need to be strengthened to manage demand effectively.
- National and Systemic Pressures - It was recognised that many of the financial challenges faced were systemic and national in nature. However, Councillors emphasised that the Council must continue to take proactive steps to manage its financial position, including strengthening governance, improving forecasting, and prioritising available resources effectively.

- Exclusion of the Press and Public -

In order to discuss a figure outlined in the Financial Outturn Report the Board agreed the following resolution:

That under Section 100(A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraphs 5 in Part I of Schedule 12A of the Act and that the public interest in withholding the information outweighs such interest in disclosing the information.

The Board discussed and sought clarification on the information. The Board was also advised that this information was still pertinent to a live legal case and therefore the Council were not able to discuss the matter in a public meeting.

Following the discussion in exempt session the Board moved back into public session for the remainder of the meeting

21. 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 '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.

It was noted that a formal scrutiny request had been received in relation to seafront trading operations. The issues raised included concerns regarding the absence of performance data, benchmarking, and clear commercial objectives.
It was agreed that the request would be considered at a future meeting of the Board.

Board Members were asked to contribute to outstanding KLOEs on Asset Management and Disposal and Planning Performance.

The meeting ended at 9.40 pm

CHAIRMAN