

Report subject	Disposal of Land at Cabot Lane, Poole
Meeting date	22 July 2026
Status	Public Report with Confidential Appendix
Executive summary	This report seeks approval for the disposal of Council-owned land at Cabot Lane, Poole to Wessex Water. The proposed transactions support the delivery of the Poole Strategic Resource Option (SRO), a significant water resilience scheme designed to improve long-term water supply and reduce abstraction from environmentally sensitive river systems. Wessex Water has the ability to seek to acquire the land through compulsory purchase powers under Section 155 of the Water Industry Act 1991. A negotiated disposal provides the Council with greater control over the terms, timing and outcome of the transaction when compared to a compulsory purchase process, which can be uncertain, time-consuming and resource intensive. The disposals also enable the relocation of the 'New to You' service and wider asset rationalisation, which in turn supports the delivery of the Council's Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) accommodation programme. The proposals have been reviewed by the Cross-Party Strategic Asset Disposal Working Group and relevant ward councillors, who have endorsed the approach.
Recommendations	It is RECOMMENDED that Cabinet Recommends to Council that it: a. Approves the disposal of land at Cabot Lane, Poole, as shown on the attached plan in Appendix 2, to Wessex Water on the principal terms set out in this report and for the consideration detailed in Confidential Appendix 3; b. Delegates authority to the Corporate Property Officer (Section 151 Officer), in consultation with the Portfolio holder, Monitoring Officer, to finalise the detailed terms of the disposals and enter into all necessary

	agreements;
Reason for recommendations	1. Supports delivery of a strategically important water infrastructure scheme contributing to long-term resilience and environmental objectives; 2. Provides a negotiated alternative to compulsory purchase, enabling the Council to retain greater influence over the outcome; 3. Ensures that best consideration reasonably obtainable is achieved in accordance with Section 123 of the Local Government Act 1972; 4. Enables asset rationalisation and supports improved service delivery and accommodation provision, including the SEND programme.
Portfolio Holder:	Councillor Mike Cox
Corporate Director	Glynn Barton, Chief Operations Officer
Report Authors	Sarah Knott, Senior Estates Surveyor Gwilym Jones, Estates Manager Miles Phillips, Head of Estates
Wards	Creekmoor Ward Councillor Paul Slade and Councillor Judes Butt
Classification	For Decision and Recommendation

Background

1. Wessex Water is bringing forward the Poole Strategic Resource Option (SRO), a regionally significant infrastructure scheme designed to improve long-term water resilience in the BCP area and wider region.
2. BCP land at Cabot Lane has been identified by Wessex Water as required to deliver the scheme (see plans at Appendix 2).
3. The land comprises:
 - Part of Cabot Lane Depot
 - Part of the Dolphin Indoor Bowls Club site
 - A parcel of Woodland
4. If a negotiated disposal is not agreed, Wessex Water has the ability to seek to acquire the land through compulsory purchase powers under Section 155 of the Water Industry Act 1991, subject to the relevant statutory processes.

5. Location plans and site information is provided at Appendix 1. A more detailed background for each site will now follow.

Cabot Lane Depot, Poole, BH17 7BX

6. Cabot Lane Depot accommodates the Council's reuse shop 'New to You' and is also used for storage.
7. Following an assessment of alternative sites, the vacant Wallisdown Heights former day centre has been identified as a suitable relocation site for the New to You facility.
8. The relocation will facilitate the release of the Cabot Lane depot and supports wider asset rationalisation, including the release of additional operational buildings, which in turn contributes to the delivery of the Council's SEND accommodation programme.
9. Further detail on this accommodation and SEND project is provided within the 'Wallisdown Service Hub' report coming before Cabinet in this meeting.
10. The proposed sale of Cabot Lane has resulted in the majority of vehicles, equipment and stored materials previously based at the site being relocated to alternative Council depots. However, this has placed additional pressure on the remaining operational sites, primarily Hatchpond Depot and Southcote Road Depot, both of which are already operating close to capacity. As a result, further consideration will need to be given to identifying alternative locations or rationalising existing storage arrangements to ensure sufficient capacity across the Council's depot estate.

Woodland, Waterloo Road, Poole

11. The Woodland parcel provides screening between Waterloo Road and adjacent land and is not accessible to the public.
12. The Woodland is designated as public open space within the Local Plan. Any development proposals will therefore need to demonstrate compliance with Policy DM9 (Public Open Space) and Policy PP25 (Green Infrastructure), which together seek to resist the loss of open space unless appropriately justified and require mitigation and replacement provision where necessary. In addition, the Site has recently been made subject to Tree Preservation Order TPO/26/0005 (Land to the south of Cabot Lane), which affords statutory protection to the trees identified within the Order and requires Council consent for works affecting those trees. The loss of woodland, both as an ecological resource and in terms of tree canopy cover, will therefore need to be carefully considered and appropriately mitigated, having regard to the Tree Preservation Order, the Dorset Local Nature Recovery Strategy and the Council's Urban Forest Strategy. These matters will be assessed through the planning process.
13. In accordance with section 123(2A) of the Local Government Act 1972, the Council will advertise its intention to dispose of the open space land and consider any representations received prior to completing the disposal. (see Legal Implications section below).

Dolphin Indoor Bowls, Waterloo Road, Poole

14. Dolphin Indoor Bowls Club occupies the site under a long lease with approximately 57 years unexpired. The Club constructed the building and operates a well-established facility with approximately 1,000 members. It is recognised as one of the largest indoor bowls clubs in England and provides a significant recreational and community resource for the area.
15. A portion of the southern part of the site is required by Wessex Water and will be surrendered from the bowls club lease to form part of the disposal. To ensure that the bowls club operation is not adversely affected, this land will be replaced with an equivalent area from the northern part of the Cabot Lane Depot site (see Existing and Proposed Plans at Appendix 2). As part of the reinstatement works agreed with Wessex Water, new hardstanding/ parking and boundary treatments will be provided on the replacement land.
16. Prior to the approach from Wessex Water, the Council had been in discussions with Dolphin Indoor Bowls Club regarding the potential disposal of the freehold interest in the site. As part of the overall arrangement, it is proposed that the freehold interest in the retained Bowls Club site is disposed to the Club. This reflects its long-standing occupation and will enable the Club to secure external funding and invest in the long-term sustainability of the facility. With only 57 years remaining on the lease, the Club has experienced difficulties in securing funding for future investment.
17. The terms of the proposed freehold disposal are currently being finalised and, having regard to the level of capital receipt, will be approved under delegated authority. The disposal will be subject to appropriate legal safeguards, including restrictive covenants and overage provisions, to secure continued community use and enable the Council to capture a proportion of any future uplift in value.

Options Appraisal

18. **Option 1: Do nothing.** Retain the land and risk the use of compulsory purchase powers. This option is not recommended due to the potential loss of control, programme delay, and associated financial and reputational risks.
19. **Option 2: Agree a Negotiated Disposal with Wessex Water (Recommended).** Secures compensation, avoids compulsory purchase, supports delivery of strategic infrastructure, and enables wider service and accommodation benefits.

Cross Party Strategic Asset Disposal Working Group

20. The Cross-Party Strategic Asset Disposal Working Group (CPSADWG) and its guiding principles were established at Cabinet on 26 July 2023.
21. The CPSADWG considered the proposed disposals at its meeting on 19 June 2026 and endorsed the recommendation to dispose of the land, subject to clarification on the following matters:
 - Whether the Transportation Service requires any of the land to facilitate future improvements to Waterloo Road in support of sustainable transport initiatives.

- Why the area of land shaded red on the plans is proposed to be retained by the Council rather than transferred to the Bowls Club.

In response to these queries, the following can be confirmed:

- The Transportation Service has advised that a strip of land adjoining Waterloo Road should be retained to facilitate the future provision of a combined footway and cycleway. The relevant area is outlined in green and identified by hatching on the plans contained in Appendix 2. This provision would support the delivery of a proposed cycle route identified within the BCP Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan.

Accordingly, the required strips of land will be retained in Council ownership and excluded from the disposal. In addition, Officers will seek agreement with Wessex Water for the transfer to the Council of a small adjoining parcel of Wessex Water land that is also required to facilitate the proposed cycleway, as part of the wider transaction.

- The area shaded red on the plans is to be retained by the Council as it does not form part of the land currently demised under the existing Bowls Club lease.

Summary of financial implications

22. The financial implications are detailed in confidential Appendix 3.
23. The Council will receive compensation comprising the market value of the land, together with disturbance, relocation and statutory loss payments, as appropriate.
24. These compensation arrangements reflect the principles of compulsory purchase compensation and are intended to place the Council in an equivalent financial position as if the land had been acquired compulsorily.

Summary of legal implications

25. The Council has the necessary statutory powers to dispose of this land pursuant to section 123 of the Local Government Act 1972, which provides a general power of disposal subject to the duty to obtain the best consideration reasonably obtainable.
26. Independent valuation advice has been obtained and confirms that the proposed disposals represent best consideration reasonably obtainable in accordance with the requirements of the Act.
27. Legal advice will be obtained to ensure that the transaction documentation secures appropriate protections, conditions and safeguards, including obligations relating to works, reinstatement and access.
28. In accordance with Section 123(2A) of the Local Government Act 1972, the Council is required to advertise its intention to dispose of the Woodland, which constitutes public open space. Notice will be published in a local newspaper for two consecutive weeks, and any representations received will be considered prior to determining whether to proceed.

Summary of human resources implications

29. As part of the relocation of services from Cabot Lane, employees currently based at the depot will transfer to the Wallisdown Hub site.

Summary of sustainability impact

30. The proposed disposals have been considered in the context of environmental, social and economic sustainability.
31. The transfer of land to Wessex Water will facilitate the delivery of strategic water infrastructure, supporting long-term water resilience and environmental management for the BCP and wider area.
32. Whilst the Woodland will be affected, this will be addressed through the planning process, including appropriate mitigation, reinstatement and landscaping works as required by planning policy.
33. Overall, the proposals represent a balanced outcome enabling essential infrastructure while mitigating environmental impacts and safeguarding community use.

Summary of public health implications

34. The proposed disposal to Wessex Water and associated land reconfiguration are not anticipated to give rise to any significant adverse public health impacts. The works will support the delivery of essential water infrastructure, which contributes to the protection of public health through the effective management of water supply and wastewater services.
35. The arrangements have been structured to ensure that the operation of Dolphin Indoor Bowls Club is not adversely affected. The retention and enhancement of the Club's facilities, including improved parking provision and long-term security of tenure through the proposed freehold disposal, will support continued participation in physical activity and community wellbeing. As such, the proposals are considered to have a neutral to positive impact on public health.

Summary of equality implications

36. The proposed relocation of depot services from Cabot Lane to the Wallisdown Hub has the potential to deliver positive equality impacts. The consolidation of services within a single, more centrally located facility across the BCP area is expected to improve overall accessibility. The Wallisdown Hub benefits from enhanced public transport connectivity and the availability of nearby parking, which may better support access for disabled people, older people, parents and carers, and others who may encounter barriers to travel.
37. However, there are also potential negative equality impacts associated with the relocation. Changes to journey length, travel cost and complexity may adversely affect some service users and staff. These impacts could disproportionately affect individuals with protected characteristics, including disabled people, those with limited mobility, people on lower incomes, carers, and individuals with caring responsibilities.

38. In addition, staff may experience anxiety and uncertainty associated with changes to their workplace and working arrangements.
39. Mitigation measures will be implemented to address these risks. These include a comprehensive staff engagement process, regular and clear communications, and opportunities for staff to raise questions and concerns. Site visits and familiarisation opportunities will be provided to support adjustment to the new location and to identify and respond to any reasonable adjustment requirements.
40. For service users and delivery partners, clear and timely information will be provided regarding the new location, access arrangements, and available transport and parking options
41. A full EIA document has been completed and approved by BCP Equalities.

Summary of risk assessment

42. The disposals have been subject to a proportionate risk assessment. Key risks include financial, delivery, planning and governance risks.
43. Financial risk is mitigated through independent valuation advice confirming best consideration.
44. The increased pressure on remaining depot sites may impact the efficient deployment, storage and maintenance of operational assets, which could in turn affect service delivery if not actively managed. In addition, the consolidation of assets into fewer locations may limit the Council's ability to respond to future service changes or growth, potentially requiring further investment in depot infrastructure or alternative sites.
45. Delivery risk associated with the implementation of Wessex Water works and reinstatement is mitigated through the inclusion of enforceable obligations and appropriate safeguards within the legal agreements.
46. Planning risks, including impacts on designated open space, will be managed through the statutory planning process and the requirement to provide appropriate mitigation and compliance with planning policy.
47. Legal and governance risks are addressed through compliance with statutory processes, including Section 123 requirements, and through legal oversight of the transaction documentation.
48. Overall, residual risks are considered to be manageable and proportionate to the strategic benefits of the proposals.

Appendices

Appendix 1	Public	Site Information
Appendix 2	Public	Existing and Proposed Land Ownership Plans
Appendix 3	Confidential	Financial Information