

BOURNEMOUTH, CHRISTCHURCH AND POOLE COUNCIL
CHILDREN'S SERVICES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Minutes of the Meeting held on 16 June 2026 at 6.00 pm

Present:-

Cllr S Carr-Brown – Chair

Cllr S Bull – Vice-Chair

Present: Cllr O Brown, Cllr P Canavan (In place of Cllr P Cooper), Cllr D Farr, Cllr E Pankhurst, Cllr B Hitchcock, Cllr S Mackrow, Cllr D Martin, Cllr O Walters, Jeremy Payne, Tuddenham, Homan and Maatoug

Co-Opted Members: Jeremy Payne, Matt Tuddenham and Mark Saxby

Also in attendance: Polly Homan and Yakub Maatoug

1. Apologies

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr Peter Cooper.

2. Substitute Members

Cllr Patrick Canavan attended as substitute for Cllr Peter Cooper.

3. Election of Chair

RESOLVED that Cllr Sharon Carr-Brown be elected Chair of the Committee for the 2026/27 Municipal Year.

4. Election of Vice Chair

RESOLVED that Cllr Simon Bull be elected Vice-Chair of the Committee for the 2026/27 Municipal Year.

5. Declarations of Interests

No declarations of interest were received.

6. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 10 March 2026 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

7. Public Issues

No public issues were received.

8. Members of Youth Parliament Update

The Committee received an introductory presentation from the Members of Youth Parliament, including a Deputy Member, providing an update on their priorities and campaign focus following their recent election.

The Members of Youth Parliament outlined key areas of focus, including improving awareness and education around sexual crime, supporting positive mental health and encouraging young people to seek help, increasing access to work experience and employment opportunities, and addressing the affordability and accessibility of transport for young people.

The Committee discussed the update, including:

- In response to a query regarding the impact of social media restrictions, the Committee was advised that views among young people were mixed, with some recognising the potential benefits to safety and wellbeing, while others considered enforcement could be challenging.
- In response to a query regarding mental health, the Committee was advised that social media could have a negative impact, particularly in relation to comparison and feeling excluded, but that education and better regulation may be more effective than restriction alone.
- The Committee highlighted the importance of reducing stigma associated with mental health and ensuring young people feel confident accessing support at an early stage.
- The Committee discussed the financial burden of transport costs and the impact this can have on young people's ability to access education, employment and wider opportunities.
- Members offered support to the Members of Youth Parliament and highlighted opportunities for collaboration to progress their campaign priorities.

The Committee was advised that work was ongoing to support previous Youth Parliament initiatives, including a mental health training resource, and that further information would be provided on how this could be shared with Members.

Members thanked the Members of Youth Parliament for their presentation and commended them for their confidence, insight and commitment to representing the views of young people across the BCP area.

9. Recommendation Tracker

The Committee noted the Recommendation Tracker.

The Committee agreed that a number of actions could be closed, including those relating to SEND improvement updates and the Portage service, where information previously requested by the Committee had now been provided.

The Committee also acknowledged that responses from Cabinet remained outstanding in relation to recommendations 55 and 56 and would be expected at a future meeting.

10. Work Plan

The Committee considered the Work Plan update.

The Committee was advised that the Work Plan had been revised, including amendments to the timing of the SEND Reform Plan, which would now be brought to the September meeting.

The Committee discussed the importance of ensuring the Work Plan remained flexible and responsive to emerging priorities.

RESOLVED that the Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee:

- 1. Consider and confirm the refreshed Work Plan priorities set out within the revised Work Plan at Appendix A.**
- 2. Confirm the scrutiny lens of *"Nurturing Children, Young People and Families"*.**

Voting: Unanimous

11. Children's Services O&S Data Toolkit

The Committee noted the Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Data Toolkit.

The Committee was advised that the toolkit would be incorporated within the Work Plan documentation going forward to support Members in accessing relevant data and performance information.

12. Risk Management – Corporate Risk Register Update

The Committee received a verbal update regarding the Corporate Risk Register.

The Committee was advised that relevant Children's Services risks would continue to be included within the Committee's papers to support ongoing scrutiny, with a particular focus on those risks most applicable to Children's Services.

The Committee was further advised that these risks were also being considered by the Audit and Governance Committee.

The Committee noted that Children's Services risks would continue to be considered alongside other items of business where appropriate.

13. Recruitment of a Co-opted Academy Parent Governor Representative

The Democratic and Overview and Scrutiny Officer 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.

The Committee discussed the report, including:

- In response to a query regarding the rationale for recruiting from a secondary phase setting, the Committee was advised that this was to ensure balanced representation across the different education phases represented on the Committee.
- The Committee noted that further clarification could be provided following the meeting if required.

RESOLVED that the Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee:

- 1. Agree to the recruitment of a Co-opted Academy Parent Governor Representative from a secondary phase setting.**
- 2. Delegate authority to the Chair and Vice-Chair to appoint the representative in accordance with the process set out in the report.**

Voting: Unanimous

14. BCP Council's alignment with the National Youth Strategy

The Head of Communities, Partnerships and Community Safety 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.

This report provided an overview of BCP Council's alignment with the National Youth Strategy and highlighted the strong alignment with the Children and Young People's Partnership Plan.

The Committee discussed the report, including:

- In response to a query regarding the number of proposed youth hubs, the Committee was advised that further detail was not yet available, although BCP had been confirmed as part of phase two of the national programme.
- In response to a query regarding the role of the voluntary and community sector, the Committee was advised that whilst there was a strong reliance on the sector, this was not considered a governance risk, although additional support may be required where expectations increased.
- The Committee discussed opportunities to maximise funding, including external grant funding, and was advised that support was available through a funding advisor and associated resources.
- The Committee noted that the Strategy represented a complex, cross-cutting programme of work spanning multiple service areas and was described as a blueprint for further development.

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- The Committee emphasised the importance of ensuring that the next steps in delivery were shaped by the voices and lived experiences of young people.
- The Committee discussed the importance of identifying what could be delivered both now, without additional funding, and in readiness for future funding opportunities.
- The Committee highlighted the need for ongoing governance and regular updates to ensure the Strategy remained responsive to changing needs over time.

The Committee agreed that further work was required to develop the approach and that updates on implementation should be brought back to the Committee.

RESOLVED that the Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee:

- 1. Recommend to Cabinet the recommendations set out in the report.**
- 2. Request that the Strategy be brought back to the Committee for an update on implementation within eight months.**
- 3. Recommend to Cabinet that, within the summary section of all Council reports, a requirement be included to consider the impact on children and young people.**

Voting: Unanimous

15. Youth Justice Plan 2026-2027

The Head of Service, Dorset Combined Youth Justice Service 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 Crime and Disorder Act (1998) placed a statutory requirement on local authority youth offending teams to publish an annual Youth Justice Plan which must provide specified information about the local provision of youth justice services. The report summarised the Youth Justice Plan for 2026/27, with a copy of the Plan appended. The Youth Justice Plan required approval by Full Council.

The Plan demonstrated strong performance by the service, including diverting children from the justice system, avoiding the use of custody for children, and delivering high-quality work to reduce reoffending and repair harm caused to victims.

Priorities for the year ahead included responding to national and local reform programmes, enhancing 'Child First' practice, developing work with victims, reducing the over-representation of some groups of children in the justice system, and making best use of available resources.

The Committee discussed the report, including:

- In response to a query regarding speech and language needs, the Committee was advised of the importance of early identification, noting that many needs were not recognised until young people entered the Youth Justice system and that work had been undertaken to better understand the scale of need.
- The Committee discussed the ongoing funding for speech and language support and highlighted the importance of ensuring continued provision beyond current funding arrangements.
- The Committee highlighted the importance of raising awareness across schools and services to support earlier intervention and was advised that officers were supportive of this approach and would continue to work with partners, including through the Schools Forum, to promote this.
- The Committee discussed the alignment of the Youth Justice Plan with the wider development of the Youth Strategy and the importance of a joined-up approach to supporting young people.

The Committee acknowledged the strong performance of the service and the continued focus on prevention and early intervention.

RESOLVED that the Committee endorse the Youth Justice Plan 2026–2027 so that Cabinet can recommend its approval to Full Council.

Voting: Unanimous

16. Children's Services Self-Assessment 2026

The report was circulated for information only with no discussion in Committee.

17. Best Start in Life Local Plan

The report was circulated for information only with no discussion in Committee.

18. Children in Care and Care Experienced Young People Sufficiency Strategy Update (September 2024 – March 2026)

The report was circulated for information only with no discussion in Committee.

19. Portfolio Holder Update

The Portfolio Holder for Children, Young People, Education and Skills provided a verbal update on recent activity across Children's Services and congratulated the Chair on her re-election.

The Committee was advised that:

- Two recommendations from the Committee meeting held on 27 January 2026, relating to the Invest to Save Budgets in the High

Needs Block and the Family Hubs Working Group report, had been presented to Cabinet on 4 February 2026. The Portfolio Holder confirmed that a formal response to these recommendations would be provided at a future meeting of the Committee.

- In relation to Family Hubs and the Best Start in Life programme, two hubs had been established within existing provision, including one in Poole Old Town. The Committee was advised that the Department for Education had requested BCP Council host a ministerial visit to showcase this work.
- The SEND Reform Plan was due to be submitted to the Department for Education on 19 June 2026. The Committee was thanked for its engagement, including attendance at the recent briefing, and it was noted that further updates would be provided to Cabinet and the Chair.
- An update on the Corporate Parenting Board highlighted positive progress, with priorities identified by young people including access to work experience and employment, discounts and offers, and improved access to digital equipment.
- A range of school visits had been undertaken by the Portfolio Holder, including Magna Academy, Parkstone Grammar School, Manorside, TEACH Trust Canford Heath, Cornerstone Academy, The Grange, Glenmoor and Winton Academies, and Poole High School. It was noted that Poole High School would be implementing a full ban on smartphones within the school from September.
- The Portfolio Holder had attended a number of additional events and engagements, including the UK Youth Parliament results event, a neurodiversity debate event, BCP Youth Forum discussions, SEND reform workshops, Headteacher Forum at Bournemouth University, the opening of a new children's secure mental health unit, and the STAR Awards.

The Committee noted the update.

The meeting ended at 8.12 pm

CHAIRMAN