

Environment & Place Overview and Scrutiny Van Life Discussion – Kushti Bok Meeting Notes

Date - 8 July 2026

Purpose

Evidence-gathering discussion with representatives from Kushti Bok to inform scrutiny work considering how BCP Council might better support people living in vehicles through the development of a community pact.

It was explained that the focus is on practical support rather than site allocation. Committee is gathering evidence and not making decisions.

Different Groups Have Different Needs

- Distinction between van lifers by choice, those forced into vehicle living, people sleeping in cars, and travelling communities.
- Support should be tailored to each group.

Housing Affordability and Financial Pressures

- High housing costs and lack of affordable accommodation are driving some people into vehicle living.
- Many vehicle dwellers are in work but still struggle to afford housing.

Ideas for what support is needed

- Fresh water points identified as a priority.
- Need for waste disposal and toilet emptying facilities.
- French and European stopping areas were referenced as successful examples offering water, waste and power facilities.
- Need for suitable parking spaces for large vans and converted vehicles.

Safety and Security

- Concerns about isolation, hostility and personal safety, particularly for people living alone in vehicles.

Communication and Information Sharing

- Potential development of information packs and better signposting to services and support.

Tailored Support for Vulnerable Vehicle Dwellers

- Housing, debt and welfare advice suggested for those living in vehicles through necessity.

Relationship with Travelling Communities

- Recognition that traveller communities and van lifers have different needs and should not be treated as a single group.

Key Messages

- Different groups require different support.
- Water, waste facilities and suitable parking remain priority needs.
- Communication and support pathways could be improved.
- Any future approach should recognise the diversity of vehicle-dwelling communities.