



## People and Health Overview Committee

**Date:** Monday, 2 February 2026  
**Time:** 6.30 pm  
**Venue:** Meeting Room 1, County Hall, Dorchester, DT1 1XJ

**Members (Quorum: 3)**

Louise Bown (Chair), Jindy Atwal (Vice-Chair), Beryl Ezzard, Alex Fuhrmann, Ryan Holloway, Stella Jones, Steve Murcer, Jon Orrell, Mike Parkes and Byron Quayle

**Chief Executive:** Catherine Howe, County Hall, Dorchester, Dorset DT1 1XJ

For more information about this agenda please contact Democratic & Governance Services  
Meeting Contact 01305 224185 - [george.dare@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk](mailto:george.dare@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk)

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### Agenda

| Item |                                                 | Pages  |
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| 8.   | <b>TOWARDS A NEW MODEL OF DAY OPPORTUNITIES</b> | 3 - 18 |

To consider a report of the Commissioning Manager.

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## Cabinet

**3 March 2026**

## **Towards a New Model of Day Opportunities For Decision**

**Cabinet Member:**

Cllr S Robinson, Adult Social Care

**Local Councillor(s):**

All

**Senior Leadership Team:**

J Price, Executive Director of People - Adults

**Report author and job title:** Sarah Perrett - Commissioning Manager

**Email:** sarah.perrett@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk

**Statutory Authority:** Care Act 2014

**Report status:** Public (the exemption paragraph is N/A)

**Executive summary**

- 1.1 Day opportunities remain a key element of Dorset's adult social care provision, offering structured and purposeful activities to approximately 600 residents requiring support. These services underpin wellbeing, independence, and social inclusion. Recent engagement and research indicate a growing demand for flexibility, diversity, and opportunities for social interaction, particularly among younger cohorts.
- 1.2 Public engagement exercises conducted in 2021 and 2023 identified key priorities for service improvement. The formal consultation undertaken in Spring 2025 reinforced the need for a broader, more personalised offer. Evidence demonstrates that while some individuals do not seek or require building-based provision, there remains a significant need for people who use services to develop skills, confidence, and pathways to independence. Concurrently, a smaller group of individuals with complex needs will continue to require building-based support.
- 1.3 Proposed changes reflect the evolving system-wide approach that the council is taking to better align and integrate locality-based working within our communities. This includes our evolving social policy priorities, including Integrated Neighbourhood Teams, the Council's commitment to whole-population services, and a focus on preventative, community-led support. The Council must ensure that day service transformation optimises resources,

aligns with strategic objectives set out in the Council's Strategic Asset Management Plan and leverages existing community assets, such as Children and Family Hubs and libraries ensuring better use of Council property and assets. This integrated thinking will allow for joined-up thinking and approaches to the delivery of shared-outcomes across our local system, placing communities at the heart of how we design service provision and policies moving forwards.

- 1.4 This paper asks Cabinet to endorse a series of recommendations as set out below.

## **2. Recommendation(s)**

- 2.1 This report asks Cabinet to:

- i) Endorse the review of our commissioning model with Care Dorset and the private sector
- ii) Endorse the introduction of the revised delivery model, as described within the report and appendix 1, supporting development of a range of activities across multiple locations for implementation subject to Cabinet approval

## **3. Reason for the recommendations**

- 3.1 The recommendations aim to create a modern, sustainable model of day opportunities that reflects the changing needs and aspirations of Dorset's residents. They support the Council's ambition to deliver flexible, community-based services that promote independence, wellbeing, and social inclusion, while continuing to provide specialist support for those with complex needs. By endorsing these changes, the Council can make better use of existing community assets, integrate services within local neighbourhoods, and align with wider priorities such as prevention and early help as part of a wider outcomes-based approach that will help drive joined up models of delivery and partnership.
- 3.2 This approach also ensures that resources are used efficiently and commissioning arrangements with Care Dorset and the independent sector are optimised. It will enable the delivery of the Commissioning for a Better Life Strategy 2023–2028, offering a broader, more personalised range of opportunities that reduce reliance on traditional building-based provision. In doing so, the Council will strengthen pathways to independence, help reduce future care needs, and create a service model that is responsive, inclusive, and financially sustainable.

## **4. The Report Consultation**

- 4.1 Extensive engagement in 2021 and 2023 gathered feedback from individuals using day opportunities to identify areas for improvement. This informed the proposal for an expanded offer combining community-based activities with building-based support for those with complex needs. The approach was further validated through formal consultation launched in Spring 2025, ensuring broad participation and representation.
- 4.2 The consultation provided valuable insights into what people want from day opportunities, confirming a strong sense of community attachment and a clear desire for flexible, vibrant, and locally accessible services, particularly among younger people. The following key themes were identified:
- **Flexibility and Variety:** Younger cohorts expressed a preference for non-building-based day opportunities, favouring local activities that promote independence and skill development.
  - **Choice and Change:** Respondents highlighted the importance of greater choice and flexibility, with interest in alternative models of day provision.
  - **Local Provision and Community Support:** There was strong support for community-based services, with many people indicating a willingness to access opportunities closer to home.
  - **Specialist and Respite Services:** Retention of specialist and respite services was considered essential by service users and carers.
  - **Availability:** Weekday mornings were the preferred times for service users, while carers expressed strong support for weekend and evening options.
  - **Understanding of the Hub and Spoke Model:** Over half of respondents recognised the potential benefits of this model, demonstrating openness to a broader range of activities and innovative approaches.
  - **Transport:** Both service users and carers emphasised the need for more flexible transport arrangements.
  - **Communication:** Feedback indicated a requirement for clearer information and improved promotion of available services, as some respondents were unaware of local provision.
- 4.3 Some concerns were raised regarding the proposed changes. These will require careful management and appropriate support during implementation. It is important to emphasise that all individuals with assessed Care Act eligible needs will continue to receive an appropriate form of day service.
- 4.4 The [full published Consultation report can be found here](#).

### Service Changes and Developments

- 4.5 The proposal includes implementing a community Hub model across Dorset Council's five localities (North Dorset, Weymouth & Portland, East Dorset, West Dorset and Purbeck) with a range of building and community-based services. The hub model will act as the foundation to support future delivery of more joined up services in Neighbourhoods, working closely with communities. This ambition requires partners to work in a more proactive way, particularly paying attention to early help and prevention and enabling communities to thrive; an ambition that aligns with our Communities for All council plan priority and the required system-wide approach to the delivery of shared outcomes.
- 4.6 A Hub could provide and host a range of activities, and services that may include:
- Specialist community activities/day opportunities for individuals with complex needs
  - Introduction of a community brokerage service supporting individuals access a wider range of bespoke services closer to their homes. Supporting development of the private sector and VCSE options.
  - Act as a neighbourhood base for outreach services delivered by health, the VCSE and other partners.
- 4.7 In addition to the five hubs officers propose to retain and develop two specialist services for people with complex needs in Verwood (East Dorset) and Ridgeway (Weymouth & Portland). The remaining centres will continue to deliver a diverse range of options for community activities/day opportunities for adults across Dorset.
- 4.8 The Council will offer Direct Payments and Individual Service Funds as a first option to encourage and promote flexibility and choice in accessing day opportunities. People will still be able to access a day service via the block contract mechanism if that is their choice.

### Building Changes

- 4.9 As part of the transformation of day opportunities, the Council has reviewed the use of all 13 Care Dorset-managed building-based services to ensure they are fit for purpose, aligned with community needs, and maximised as local assets. This review considered consultation feedback, demand trends, and opportunities to integrate services within the wider neighbourhood model. While the initial proposals for each building are set out in the *appendix 1*, the overarching approach seeks to retain and repurpose key sites as community hubs, develop specialist provision where required, and ensure that any changes support flexibility, independence, and better use of Council

resources. Under the agreed Strategic Asset Management Plan, the council will work through the asset review process to refine and ensure all factors influencing future asset usage are fully considered.

#### Review of Commissioning Mechanisms

- 4.10 The current Care Dorset contract for Day Services is funded via a block contract, comprising of a mix of direct service costs and building costs. Initial work has been undertaken to benchmark the private market, reviewing current volume of market placements, flat session rates, day rates and 1:1 rate. In addition, officers have reviewed Care Dorset financial and operational data as well as analysis of placements, frequency, expenditure, staffing levels and the self-funder market.
- 4.11 Completion of financial and operational analysis will act as a catalyst for future commissioning mechanisms. This will include removing a proportion of day centre costs out of the block contract and supporting Care Dorset to become commercially independent through the development of the self-funder market.

#### Next steps

- 4.12 Officers are committed to continuing the engagement with stakeholders and will ensure there are robust engagement and feedback structures in place. This will include further face to face sessions with people who use services, carers and families. Officers will support engagement with wider council departments where changes may impact, for example transport and utilisation of other resources including libraries. Further discussions will also be had to ensure that future approaches to locality working are symbiotic with this new model, enhancing the delivery of the outcomes that have been recognised through the extensive consultation that has been undertaken. Members will be kept apprised of progress in implementing recommended changes.
- 4.13 Subject to Cabinet decision, next steps to be prioritised are:
- April – Oct 2026**
- Review contracting mechanism and cost base for Care Dorset and the private market.
  - In line with the Strategic Asset Management Plan asset review process, continue to work with Asset & Property to review lease arrangements, associated costs, building condition, compliance, value, sustainability, and service change implications for each centre.
  - Issue new service specifications and contracts
  - Further embed 'pathways to independence' approach with front line social work staff, users and families and providers, as well as integration with wider approaches to prevention and new approaches to locality working to enhance the delivery of the outcomes identified in this paper.
  - Review Community Brokerage model

- Further market engagement with micro providers and VCSE.

## 5. Legal considerations

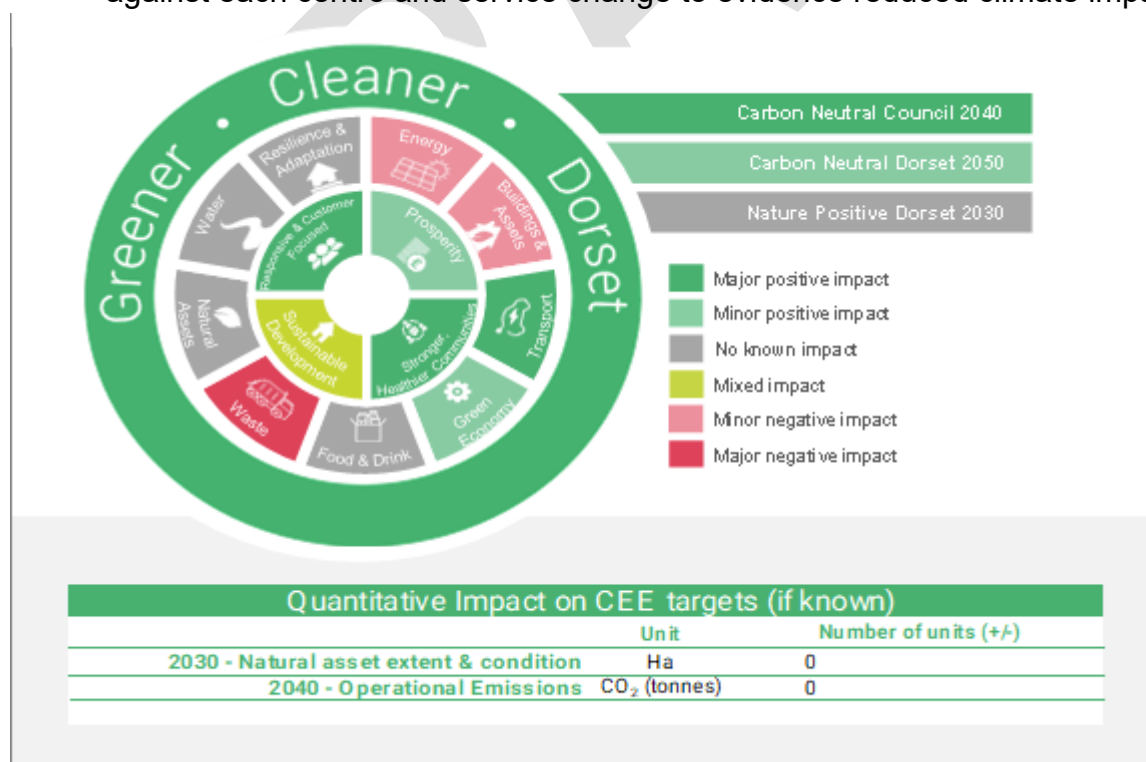
- 5.1 The Council has a duty under the Care Act to meet assessed needs and adopt a strength- based approach to delivering outcomes for eligible individuals. Moreover, the Care Act supports increased choice and control for people through individual budgets. The proposed changes to our day service operating model will enhance available options for individuals and strengthen the mechanism in which services can be purchased.

## 6. Financial implications

- 6.1 There are no immediate negative financial pressures through adopting a new service model. As change is implemented opportunities will emerge to review contracting mechanisms which will drive efficiencies, alongside any changes to building usage may have financial implications related to changes in building usage. The focus on building skills and independence for people who use services will have a positive financial impact over a medium term as care and support needs will reduce.

## 7. Natural environment, climate & ecology implications

- 7.1 Reduction in travel and transportation of individuals will result in reduced carbon emissions and carbon footprint. The climate wheel will be utilised against each centre and service change to evidence reduced climate impact.



## **8. Well-being and health implications**

- 8.1 The Adults Directorate Transformation programme continues to drive change that improves how the Council supports individuals, ensuring services are tailored to meet diverse needs. The move towards a new model of day opportunities strengthens this ambition by redesigning provision to deliver personalised, meaningful activities in local settings. This approach will be delivered in partnership with community organisations, voluntary groups, and local businesses, creating a richer and more inclusive offer.
- 8.2 By embedding day opportunities within neighbourhoods, the proposed model enhances the ability of the wider health and care system to improve population health and wellbeing. It supports early intervention and prevention, reduces isolation, and promotes independence, all of which contribute to better long-term outcomes. Through proactive collaboration with partners and local networks, the model will enable communities to thrive and ensure that individuals receive support that is holistic, accessible, and aligned with their aspirations. This forms part of a systems-wide approach to redefine the way that we are working with communities with shared-outcomes at the heart of all we do.

## **9. Other implications**

- 9.1 Changes in building use and enhanced community activities will require a review of transport options including the use of the VCSE, Council Transport and increased use of Direct Payments that will support people have more flexibility on how they access a day opportunity.
- 9.2 Aligning to the approved Strategic Asset Management Plan, which was approved by Cabinet in October 2024, officers will work to ensure there is a comprehensive understanding of existing community provision and opportunities to design services that address existing gaps and reduce service provision.
- 9.3 This paper and the provisions within it align with the broader redefinition of the approach to locality working as articulated in the Communities for All council plan priority, where shared outcomes will be at the heart of how we approach future service delivery.

## **10. Risk implications**

Having considered the risks associated with this decision; the level of risk has been identified as:

Current Risk: LOW

Residual Risk: LOW

The decision is assessed as low risk because it maintains statutory compliance under the Care Act, ensures continuity of support for all

individuals with eligible needs, and introduces changes through a phased, consultative approach.

## **11. Equalities**

- 11.1 An EQIA has been completed for each centre and approved by the Equalities Team. Consideration was given to any potential impact for people who use services now and those who may in the future. The Impact Assessment evidenced the proposed model of day services increased people's choice, would support more bespoke options particularly in rural areas and support people ambitions to develop more independence and skills.

## **12. Appendices**

- 12.1 Appendix 1: Towards a new Model of Day Opportunities – Building proposals

## **13. Background Papers**

- 13.1 [Commissioning for A Better Life for Adults in Dorset 2023 to 2028](#)

## **14. Report sign-off**

- 14.1 This report has been through the internal report clearance process and has been signed off by the Director for Legal and Democratic (Monitoring Officer), the Executive Director for Corporate Development (Section 151 Officer) and the appropriate Portfolio Holder(s)

# Towards a new model of day opportunities

## Appendix – Building Proposals

### 03 March 2026

#### 1. Introduction

- 1.1 This appendix provides the detailed proposals for each of the 13 Care Dorset-managed day centres, reflecting the feedback received through public consultation and the Council's ambition to modernise day opportunities across Dorset. While the main report outlines the strategic rationale for change, this appendix sets out how those principles translate into local recommendations for each building. The proposals balance the need to maximise use of Council assets with a commitment to maintaining local presence wherever possible, supporting the wider ambition for Communities for All. The next step would be to work with Asset & Property to complete full asset reviews (as per Strategic Asset Management Plan) to ensure all factors influencing future asset use are fully considered. Unlike some local authorities that have closed a significant proportion of their day centres, Dorset is taking a more measured and community-focused approach, retaining most buildings while redesigning how they operate to better meet current and future needs.

#### 2. Building Proposals

- 2.1 The below describes the context of each centre, the initial proposal and a revised recommendation post consultation.

##### North Dorset Locality

|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
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| <b>Blandford</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| <b>Context:</b><br><p>The Blandford Centre is an important community resource for local people. It is currently attended by 15 LD and 6 OP, 4 self-funders. The building is in a good location but is not fully maximised. There is opportunity to harness the centre as a community resource and link the operational activity in the centre to wider community work, such as Integrated Neighbourhoods and Thriving Communities.</p> |
| <b>Initial Proposal:</b><br><p>To close the centre and relocate services to a smaller site in Blandford</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| <b>Revised Recommendation following Consultation:</b><br><p>Keep Blandford open but invest in developing an all-age service by integrating:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Children and Family Services.</li> <li>• Extend community activity for those not assessed as needing building-based care.</li> <li>• Providing expert local knowledge, advice, guidance and support</li> </ul>                                |

- Harness new opportunities to work with Health and develop a vibrant community asset

### **Sherborne**

#### **Context:**

The day service is operated from an old house that is no longer fit for purpose. Only one floor of the property is used and it is not centrally located to other community resources. 3 people with LD attend, 7 OP and 8 Self funders. Sherbourne Town has significant potential to offer improved services for local people, closer to the centre, harnessing local assets whilst maintaining a more appropriate building base for those that need it.

#### **Initial Proposal:**

Maintain the services offered to the current clients but transition from the current building to a community-based model which will include: -

- Commissioning a smaller building closer to the town centre.
- Supporting more people to access community resources and local activities.
- Extend and develop community activity for those not assessed as needing building-based care.

#### **Revised Recommendation following Consultation:**

Continue with original proposal.

### **Shaftesbury**

#### **Context:**

The day service is currently provided from a large, rented property. It has a small number of attendees. A number of the rooms in the rental agreement are unused and demand from the local population is declining. 0 people with LD attend, 8 OP and 7 Self funders. However, officers do recognise the need for a local service and propose to maintain the service in the current building, utilising different space, whilst developing opportunities to develop outreach for those who want it. Officers will also be reviewing the potential to extend out of all our centres in the North to ensure more rural areas have access to services.

#### **Initial Proposal:**

To transition the current service to a community-based model.

#### **Revised Recommendation following Consultation:**

To keep the Shaftesbury services offer to current clients.

- Renegotiate the lease to reflect actual building space required
- Support more people to access community resources and local activities.
- Targeted work to develop a community-based offer for younger adults
- Extend community activity for those not assessed as needing building-based care.

### **Sturminster Newton (Stour Connect)**

**Context:**

This day service is operated from a large building with community café and other onsite community provisions (charity shop & sixth form college). Important community resource for local people. It is currently attended by 32 people with LD, 6 OP and 4 Self funders.

The building is not fully utilised by the wider community and has significant scope to be developed further. This will include a range of options with health, the VCSE and other partners to create a local vibrant resource.

**Initial Proposal:**

Stour Connect to become a Community Hub for North Dorset

**Revised Recommendation following Consultation:**

- Continue current services, providing specialist community activities/day opportunities for individuals with complex needs
- Provide specialised equipment and support to local services in towns and villages for outreach services delivered by health, the VCSE and other partners.
- Introduction of a community brokerage service supporting individuals access a wider range of bespoke services closer to their homes.
- Supporting development of the private sector and VCSE options.
- Support more people to access community resources and local activities.
- Extend community activity for those not assessed as needing building-based care.

## Weymouth and Portland Locality

**Weymouth****Context:**

The day service is operated from a large centrally located building in Weymouth. A well, attended provision for adults with learning Disability and older people with cognitive impairment. 30 people with LD attend, 21 OP and 11 Self funders. The service has the potential to develop further, and more will enable the Council to develop services with health and other stakeholders

**Initial Proposal:** Weymouth Connect to become the Community Hub for Weymouth and Portland.

- Review the long- term viability of the current building and if appropriate commission a more appropriate space.
- Support more people to access community resources and local activities.
- Extend community activity for those not assessed as needing building-based care.

**Revised Recommendation following Consultation:**

- Review the long- term viability of the current building and if appropriate commission a more appropriate, local, space.

- Continue current services, providing specialist community activities/day opportunities for individuals with complex needs
- Provide specialised equipment and support to local services in towns and villages for outreach services delivered by health, the VCSE and other partners.
- Introduction of a community brokerage service supporting individuals access a wider range of bespoke services closer to their homes.
- Supporting development of the private sector and VCSE options within towns and villages.
- Support more people to access community resources and local activities.

### **Ridgeway**

#### **Context:**

Large day service on the outskirts of Weymouth with ample outdoor space, on a shared site with Children's service provision. 29 people with LD attend, 1 OP and 11 Self funders. Ridgeway is a key local resource, the model of service delivery could be enhanced to support people plan for greater independence

#### **Initial Proposal:**

To build on the services provided at the Ridgeway creating a specialist service for the west of the County for adults with Learning Disabilities. Change the service model to focus on building skills and independence.

#### **Revised Recommendation following Consultation:**

Continue with original proposal.

### **East Dorset Locality**

### **Verwood**

#### **Context:**

The Verwood day service is located in a purpose built two storey building with good access. 27 people with LD attend, 3 OP and 12 Self funders. Verwood is a key service for local people, the service model can be developed to support people build independence and extend out into the community

#### **Initial Proposal:**

Develop the service as a Community Hub for East Dorset.

#### **Revised Recommendation following Consultation:**

To build on the services provided at the Verwood centre creating a specialist Service for the east of the County for adults with Learning Disabilities. Change the Service model to focus on building skills and independence.

### **Ferndown**

#### **Context:**

Ferndown is well located and has the potential to develop as a strong community asset. There are not high numbers of Council funded people attending (10) and 15

Self-funders. Developing Ferndown as a community resource, linking with children's services. VCSE and Health offers potential to create a local resource that build and extends existing services.

**Initial Proposal:**

To close the service with people attending local community activities or the proposed Verwood Hub.

**Revised Recommendation following Consultation:**

- Retain the current services offered to the Ferndown community
- Retain the Ferndown building and develop towards becoming a financially viable community asset for local people, complementing (not competing with) existing provision within the town.
- Review the contracting mechanism with Care Dorset
- Establish best use of the space and how the building can be managed locally, with revised contracting arrangements developed.

**West Dorset**

**Dorchester**

**Context:**

Dorchester plus is a centrally located and easily accessible day service. 14 people with LD attend, 19 OP and 17 Self funders. It has potential to integrate with other local services with improved utilisation of the building.

**Initial Proposal:**

Dorchester Plus to become the West Dorset Community Hub.

**Revised Recommendation following Consultation:**

- Continue current services, providing specialist community activities/day opportunities for individuals with complex needs
- Provide specialised equipment and support to local towns and villages for outreach services delivered by health, the VCSE and other partners.
- Introduction of a community brokerage service supporting individuals access a wider range of bespoke services closer to their homes.
- Supporting development of the private sector and VCSE options within towns and villages.
- Support more people to access community resources and local activities
- Extend community activity for those not assessed as needing building-based care.

**Bridport**

**Context:**

The day service operates from an old Victorian school building which is in poor condition. 22 people with LD attend, 22 OP and 5 Self funders. A service in Bridport is key to ensuring people in the west have good access to services. However,

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| building based support is not always right for younger people who feedback they seek broader opportunities.                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| <b>Initial Proposal:</b><br>To move the current service to a more suitable building and location in Bridport.                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
| <b>Revised Recommendation following Consultation:</b><br>No immediate change but explore the development of a new centre, located within the Reablement development in Bridport, or seek an alternative local site. Additionally, develop a community outreach model for people who want to build skills and independence |

### **Purbeck Locality**

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| <b>Swanage</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| <b>Context:</b><br>The day centre was transferred to the Swanage and Purbeck Development (SPDT) Trust as part of a community asset transfer in 2024. 2 people with LD attend, 1 OP and 0 Self funders. Some people who previously attended have moved to a new provider in the Swanage area. There remains a need for a local service in Swanage and working with the SPDT and other local providers to develop further is key to our proposals |
| <b>Initial Proposal:</b><br>Remove from Care Dorset Block contract and work with the SPDT and local community activities providers to deliver a local service.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| <b>Revised Recommendation following Consultation:</b><br>Maintain services to current clients through the development of spot funding and commissioning of VCSE and other agencies. Develop new, flexible services as need arises.                                                                                                                                                                                                              |

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| <b>Wareham</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
| <b>Context:</b> Specialist Day service for older people with cognitive impairment. The service is joined to Anglebury Court residential home in Wareham. 1 person with LD attend, 24 OP and 31 Self funders. Wareham is well located and links well to the attached residential home, proposals to retain Wareham but build community outreach form part of our proposals. |
| <b>Initial Proposal:</b><br>To close the current service, redirect people to Purbeck Connect as a Community Hub and develop community activities.                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| <b>Revised Recommendation following Consultation:</b><br>To retain Wareham Plus as a specialist service for Older People. Review the contracting mechanism with Care Dorset.                                                                                                                                                                                               |

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| <b>Purbeck</b>                                                                                         |
| <b>Context:</b><br>The centre is located on an industrial estate a mile from the Wareham centre. Older |

people who use Purbeck fed back that they wanted a different type of service and more opportunities.

**Initial Proposal:**

To keep Purbeck as a local Hub and develop increased community services.

**Revised Recommendation following Consultation:**

- Offer the older people attending Purbeck places in the Wareham Centre, in accordance with their feedback.
- Review the use of Purbeck with a medium-term plan to close the centre and transfer services to a community-based service in Wareham. While this is being worked through people will continue to attend the Purbeck Centre. Any changes will need to be considered and aligned to the proposed St Mary's development.

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