

Cabinet

Date: Tuesday, 19 May 2026
Time: 6.30 pm
Venue: Council Chamber, County Hall, Dorchester, DT1 1XJ

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

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4 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

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Representatives of town or parish councils and members of the public who live, work, or represent an organisation within the Dorset Council area are welcome to submit either 1 question or 1 statement for each meeting. You are welcome to attend the meeting in person or via MS Teams to read out your question and to receive the response. If you submit a statement for the committee this will be circulated to all members of the committee in advance of the meeting as a supplement to the agenda and appended to the minutes for the formal record but will not be read out at the meeting. The first 8 questions and the first 8 statements received from members of the public or organisations for each meeting will be accepted on a first come first served basis in accordance with the deadline set out below. Further information read [Public Participation - Dorset Council](#)

All submissions must be emailed in full to Kate.Critchel@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk by 8.30am on Thursday 14 May 2026.

When submitting your question or statement please note that:

- You can submit 1 question or 1 statement.
 - a question may include a short pre-amble to set the context.
 - It must be a single question and any sub-divided questions will not be permitted.
 - Each question will consist of no more than 450 words, and you will be given up to 3 minutes to present your question.
 - when submitting a question please indicate who the question is for (e.g., the name of the committee or Portfolio Holder)
 - Include your name, address, and contact details. Only your name will be published but we may need your other details to contact you about your question or statement in advance of the meeting.
 - questions and statements received in line with the council's rules for public participation will be published as a supplement to the agenda.
 - all questions, statements and responses will be published in full within the minutes of the meeting.
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Public Questions

Question from Megan Sutton

As a local resident, parent, and registered NHS and Primary Care Practitioner, I am writing to raise urgent concerns ahead of the upcoming management transition.

From my personal and individual professional perspective in preventative healthcare, a permanent ending of curriculum swimming at The Purbeck School would fail the council's public health goals to reduce health inequalities in coastal areas. In a coastal community like Purbeck, school swimming lessons are not a luxury; they are a vital vehicle for **essential water safety and drowning prevention training**.

Furthermore, I am deeply concerned by recent cost-cutting measures at the Purbeck Sports Centre. Young, under 16-year-old 'Swim Helpers' have had their hours reduced while their supervision responsibilities have increased. Reducing safety ratios while maintaining class sizes places an unacceptable burden on staff who are minors. This directly risks non-compliance with **HSE Guidelines (HSG179)** for safe pool supervision of children working toward their **STA Awards**. Additionally, these regular young staff are being repeatedly asked to consider moving from casual to Zero-Hours contracts.

1. **Safety:** Can the Council provide the revised risk assessment justifying the reduction of helper hours for children's lessons under **HSG179** standards?
2. **Employment:** Given the **Employment Rights Act 2025**, why is the Council suggesting regular youth staff to move to insecure zero-hours contracts ahead of the April 2026 management transition?
3. **Contract:** Will the new private management contract include legally binding 'Social Value' clauses to protect the long-standing school swimming programme, protect long-term club training slots, and **guarantee a price freeze on lane hire fees** so the Wareham and District Swimming Club is not priced out by a commercial operator?

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