



Cabinet

Date: Tuesday, 11 June 2024
Time: 6.30 pm
Venue: Council Chamber, County Hall, Dorchester, DT1 1XJ

Membership: (Quorum 3)

Nick Ireland (Chair), Richard Biggs (Vice-Chair), Jon Andrews, Shane Bartlett, Simon Clifford, Ryan Holloway, Ryan Hope, Steve Robinson, Clare Sutton and Gill Taylor

Chief Executive: Matt Prosser

For more information about this agenda please contact Democratic Services Meeting Contact 01305 252234 - kate.critchell@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk

Members of the public are welcome to attend this meeting, apart from any items listed in the exempt part of this agenda.

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Agenda

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1. APOLOGIES

To receive any apologies for absence.

2. MINUTES

5 - 28

To note the minutes of the meeting held on 12 March 2024.

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

To disclose any pecuniary, other registrable or non-registrable interest as set out in the adopted Code of Conduct. In making their disclosure councillors are asked to state the agenda item, the nature of the interest and any action they propose to take as part of their declaration.

If required, further advice should be sought from the Monitoring Officer in advance of the meeting.

4. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

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.Critchell@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk by 8.30am on Thursday 6 June 2024.

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.

5. QUESTIONS FROM COUNCILLORS

To receive questions submitted by councillors.

Councillors can submit up to two valid questions at each meeting and sub divided questions count towards this total. Questions and statements received will be published as a supplement to the agenda and all questions, statements and responses will be published in full within the minutes of the meeting.

The submissions must be emailed in full to kate.critchell@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk 8.30am on Thursday 6 June 2024.

[Dorset Council Constitution](#) – Procedure Rule 13

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|------------|--|-----------|
| 6. | FORWARD PLAN | 29 - 38 |
| | To receive the Cabinet Forward Plan. | |
| 7. | COST OF LIVING SUPPORT | 39 - 48 |
| | To consider a report of the Cabinet Member for Customer, Culture and Community Engagement. | |
| 8. | SEND (SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS AND DISABILITIES) INSPECTION OUTCOME AND PLAN | 49 - 158 |
| | To consider a report Cabinet Member for Children’s Services, Education & Skills. | |
| 9. | CHILDREN'S SAFEGUARDING PARTNERSHIP REVIEW | 159 - 170 |
| | To consider a report Cabinet Member for Children’s Services, Education & Skills. | |
| 10. | QUARTER 4 OUTTURN REPORT 2023/24 | 171 - 204 |
| | To consider a report of the Cabinet Member for Finance & Capital Strategy. | |
| 11. | BOURNEMOUTH, CHRISTCHURCH POOLE COUNCIL LOCAL PLAN CONSULTATION RESPONSE | 205 - 224 |
| | To consider a report of the Cabinet Member for Planning and Emergency Planning. | |
| 12. | URGENT ITEMS | |
| | To consider any items of business which the Chairman has had prior notification and considers to be urgent pursuant to section 100B (4) b) of the Local Government Act 1972. The reason for the urgency shall be recorded in the minutes. | |
| 13. | EXEMPT BUSINESS | |
| | To move the exclusion of the press and the public for the following item in view of the likely disclosure of exempt information within the meaning of paragraph x of schedule 12 A to the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended). The public and the press will be asked to leave the meeting whilst the item of business is considered. | |

There are no exempt items scheduled for this meeting.



CABINET

MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY 12 MARCH 2024

Present: Cllrs Spencer Flower (Chairman), Gary Suttle (Vice-Chairman), Laura Beddow, Ray Bryan, Simon Gibson, Jill Haynes, Andrew Parry, Byron Quayle, Jane Somper and David Walsh

Apologies: none

Also present: Cllr Nocturin Lacey-Clarke, Cllr Mary Penfold, Cllr Jon Andrews, Cllr Shane Bartlett, Cllr Simon Christopher, Cllr Beryl Ezzard, Cllr Les Fry, Cllr Barry Goringe, Cllr Brian Heatley, Cllr Ryan Holloway, Cllr Nick Ireland, Cllr Sherry Jespersen, Cllr Carole Jones, Cllr Stella Jones and Cllr Paul Kimber

Also present remotely: Cllr Cherry Brooks, Cllr Mark Roberts and Cllr David Tooke

Officers present (for all or part of the meeting):

Dawn Adams (Service Manager for Commercial and Procurement), Jan Britton (Executive Lead for the Place Directorate), Trevor Badley (Lead Project Officer (Minerals & Waste)), Vivienne Broadhurst (Executive Director - People Adults), Lisa Cotton (Corporate Director for Customer and Cultural Services), Kate Critchel (Senior Democratic Services Officer), Aidan Dunn (Executive Director - Corporate Development S151), Mike Garrity (Head of Planning), Theresa Leavy (Executive Director of People - Children), Jonathan Mair (Director of Legal and Democratic and Monitoring Officer), Jonathan Price (Executive Director of People - Adults and Housing), Matt Prosser (Chief Executive), Elizabeth Saunders (Interim Corporate Director of Commissioning), Terry Sneller (Strategic Planning Manager) and Rebecca Watson (Project Lead - Family Hubs)

Officers present remotely (for all or part of the meeting):

Carl Warom (Climate and Ecology Policy Officer)

61. **Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held on 30 January 2024 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

ITEM 12 ALLOCATION OF S106 DEVELOPER CONTRIBUTION FUNDING FOR COMMUNITY FACILITIES AT MAMPITTS GREEN, SHAFTESBURY

The Chairman reported that Item 12, concerning the allocation of Section 106 developer contribution funding for community facilities at Mampitts Green, Shaftesbury, has been withdrawn from the agenda. The decision to withdraw this item was taken in the light of the Northern Area Planning Committee's independent consideration of the two Mampitts Lane planning applications based

on their planning merits alone. Section 106 funding arrangements was subject to a separate assessment process to the planning applications.

Cabinet would be tasked with considering the Section 106 funding allocation as the funding would exceed £500,000 and was therefore a key decision. Assessing any bids for such funds would involve a comprehensive and objective assessment based on a number of criteria, with the grant of planning permission being an important component. As the Shaftesbury Town Council planning application was refused by the Northern Area Planning Committee, the report on the section 106 funding allocation would be deferred to a future meeting of Cabinet to enable further consideration by Dorset Council.

62. Declarations of Interest

Cllr M Penfold, Cabinet Lead Member for Education declared an interest in respect of item 8 “Local Nutrient Mitigation Fund Arrangements” as a member of Dorset Council’s Harbours Advisory Committee. She advised that she would leave the room whilst the item was considered.

63. Public Participation

There was one question/statement from the public. A copy of the full question and the detailed response is set out in Appendix 1 to these minutes.

64. Questions from Councillors

There were two questions from Councillors G Taylor and Cllr P Kimber; these along with the responses are set out in Appendix 2 to these minutes.

65. Forward Plan

The draft Cabinet Forward Plan for April – July was received and noted.

66. Procurement Forward Plan Report - Over £500k (2023-2025)

The Portfolio Holder for Finance, Commercial and Capital Strategy set out the report and proposed the recommendation. This was seconded by Cllr A Parry

In response to a question seeking clarification, Cabinet supported the following change to 3.5 of the report.” Call-in does apply to an urgency decision but the relevant **Portfolio Holder and** Chief Officer can be called to account for their decision at a meeting of the relevant scrutiny committee.”

Decision

It was agreed:

- (a) To begin each of the procurement procedures, as listed at Appendix 1 to the Cabinet report of 12 March 2024.

- (b) That in each instance the further step of making any contract award be delegated to the relevant Portfolio Holder, in consultation with the relevant Executive Director.

Reason for the decision

Cabinet was required to approve all key decisions with financial consequences of £500k or more. It was good governance therefore to provide Cabinet with a summary of all proposed procurements, that individually were estimated to be total value of £500k or more, prior to procurement procedures formally commencing.

At this juncture Cllr M Penfold, Cabinet Lead member for Education left the room whilst the following item was discussed and decided upon.

67. **Poole Harbour Local Nutrient Mitigation Fund Award**

The Portfolio Holder for Planning presented a report on the Local Nutrient Mitigation Fund and the arrangements of the oversight and spend of the funds awarded to Dorset.

Dorset Council had made a bid to receive funds from the Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities Local Nutrient Mitigation Fund to deliver nutrient mitigation within the Poole Harbour catchment. This mitigation would enable development to take place by offsetting the increase in nutrient loading on the Poole Harbour protected site. This would help to meet the Council's priorities of protecting its natural environment, climate, and ecology, driving economic prosperity, and creating sustainable development and housing. The Portfolio Holder further reported that it would also help in creating stronger healthier communities through the provision of housing need.

In response to questions, the Portfolio Holder advised that there were several ways to mitigate nutrients, including meadows and tree planting, however phosphates from waste treatment plants caused issues and he was looking to central government to support water authorities carrying out 100% water cleansing rather than the current average of 75%. The Head of Planning confirmed that the Environment Agency worked closely with the agriculture sector to deal with agriculture issues and the council worked in partnership with the Environment Agency.

In response to a further question, the Portfolio Holder confirmed that any scrutiny provision would probably require a Joint Scrutiny process with BCP Council in the future.

In presenting the report the Portfolio Holder proposed the recommendation and this was seconded by Cllr R Bryan.

Cabinet members supported the proposals.

Decision

- (a) That spending from the Local Nutrient Mitigation Fund be delegated to the:
 - (i) Environment/Policy/Partnership Manager – individual expenditure decisions not exceeding £50,000.

- (ii) Head of Planning – individual expenditure decisions over £50,000 but not exceeding £100,000
 - (iii) Portfolio Holder for Planning in consultation with the Corporate Director for Economic Growth and Infrastructure individual expenditure over £100,000 but not exceeding £1.5m.
- (b) That regular (at least 6 monthly) reports be prepared for the Portfolio Holder to outline the spend to date and the number of homes enabled through the delivery of nutrient mitigation.
 - (c) Cabinet agreed to commit to the spend the Local Mitigation Fund on the delivery of nutrient mitigation with the indicative programme of spend as detailed in Appendix 2 to the Cabinet report of 12 March 2024.
 - (d) That the emerging outline strategy for the management of nutrient mitigation credits be acknowledged including transitional arrangements as set out in Appendix 3 to the Cabinet report of 12 March 2024.

Reason for the decision

Grant funding had been provided through the Local Nutrient Mitigation Fund by the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities for the delivery of nutrient mitigation within the Poole Harbour catchment. Mitigation would need to be provided for qualifying development (primarily residential) in the parts of the catchment that fall within both the Dorset Council area and the BCP Council area, but Dorset Council was accountable for any financial transactions.

68. **Dorset Council response to Hampshire County Council Minerals and Waste Plan: Partial Update - Proposed Submission Plan**

The Portfolio Holder for Planning set out a report with information about the consultation on the “Hampshire Minerals and Waste Plan: Partial Update – Proposed Submission Plan”. The report set out the detail of the plan’s proposals that was most relevant to Dorset Council by highlighting the potential impact on Dorset’s environment. It also set out a recommended response to be returned to the Hampshire Authorities.

The Portfolio Holder expressed concerns around four new allocations for sand and gravel extraction, two of which were on the Dorset border. These were Midgham Farm near Alderholt and Purple Haze, near Verwood. It was recommended that Dorset Council objected to these two sites because of the negative impact that the proposals would have in the natural environment, impact to the Moors Valley Country Park and significant concerns around air quality impact. The details of the objections and concerns were set out within the report.

The Local Ward member for Alderholt was invited to address the committee and he expressed concerns around the quality of the road surface in the area and the cumulative traffic impact of sand and gravel extraction to the A31 and access to the B381.

Cllr S Gibson and Cllr S Flower spoke in support of the proposed response to the Hampshire Authorities and welcomed the clarify that this brought to Dorset Council's position on this matter.

It was proposed by Cllr D Walsh and seconded by Cllr S Gibson

Decision

That the response agreed and endorsed by Cabinet be sent to the Hampshire Authorities regarding the Hampshire Minerals and Waste Plan: Partial Update – Proposed Submission Plan, objecting to the proposed re-allocation of the Purple Haze site, and including other comments as set out in the report to Cabinet of 12 March 2024.

Reason for the decision

As a neighbouring minerals and waste planning authority Dorset Council had been consulted by the Hampshire Authorities on the proposed update to their Minerals and Waste Plan 2013. Dorset Council needed to ensure that the proposals in the Proposed Submission Plan do not prejudice its interests. Submitting a response provided an opportunity to express to the Hampshire Authorities the council's objection to one proposal along with its support or concerns regarding others. Cabinet's endorsement of the response would give it additional weight when returned to the Hampshire Authorities. It was recommended that the response to the Hampshire Authorities included various previous response documents as appendices to ensure that when the Draft Plan undergoes Examination the Inspector would be able to take them into consideration.

69. **Local Development Scheme Update**

Cabinet considered a report of the Portfolio Holder for Planning regarding an update on the Local Development Scheme to establish the timetable to produce the Dorset Council Plan, the Dorset Council Minerals and Waste Local Plan.

Members were advised that the update was required in response to the written statement made by the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities on 19 December 2023.

In response to questions, the Portfolio Holder advised that the changes to the plan-making system included a streamlined 30-month local plan production timetable and the introduction of new Gateway Assessments into the process. The proposed changes would remove the need for certain policies through the introduction of a national set of development management policies. The statutory "Duty to Cooperate" had also been removed in preference to an 'alignment policy' which required councils to engage with key stakeholders in the production of their local plans. Given the stage that the Dorset Council Local Plan had reached, and the work required to resolve the identified issues, it was unlikely that the Council would be in the position to submit a complete local plan by 30 June 2025. Members were advised that it would be necessary to move across to the new planning-making system and to start preparing a new-style local plan in November 2024.

In response to questions around the statement of community involvement and the Weymouth Master Plan and how engagement would take place, the Chairman confirmed that this information would be shared with members outside of the meeting.

In response to concerns and comments regarding unplanned development, the Portfolio Holder advised that there were 33 neighbourhood plans in place, carrying the appropriate weight, to support planning development decisions. In total there were 60 communities working on neighbourhood plans in order for them to decide about what they wanted in their communities. The Head of Planning also confirmed that as work moved forward with the preparation of the plan, the emerging plan would gain evidence-based weight in future planning decision making.

It was proposed by Cllr D Walsh and seconded by Cllr L Beddow

Decision

- (a) That the timetables outlined in the revised Local Development Scheme be acknowledged and it was agreed to bring it into effect as of 12 March 2024.
- (b) That the Local Development Scheme be published on the Dorset Council Website.
- (c) That to comply with the request in the Written Ministerial Statement of 19 December 2023, a copy of the Local Development Scheme be sent to the Secretary of State.

Reason for the decision

To meet the requirement set out in the Written Ministerial Statement of 19 December 2023 all Local Planning Authorities need to update their Local Development Scheme within 12 weeks of the publication of the revised National Planning Policy Framework. The revised Local Development Scheme needed to be agreed and sent to the Secretary of State by 13 March 2024.

70. **Community Infrastructure Levy - Exception Circumstances Policy for the Purbeck area**

The Portfolio Holder for Planning advised members that Purbeck's community infrastructure Levy (CIL) schedule had been in operation since 2014. Each year the charging schedule rates were adjusted in line with inflation and changes in building costs. A revised charging schedule for Purbeck has been under examination since 2019, along with the examination of the draft Purbeck Local Plan (2018-2034).

The Portfolio Holder advised that with the rising infrastructure demands, it was estimated that the draft schedule would not provide sufficient CIL income to meet strategic infrastructure needs across Dorset. He recommended that Dorset

Council continued to operate the existing charging schedule until a Dorset-wide charging schedule was adopted and that the draft revised CIL charging schedule be withdrawn from public examination. An Exceptional Circumstances Relief Policy should be operated for the area until the Dorset-wide policy was in place.

In setting out the recommendation, the Portfolio Holder proposed a minor amendment in recommendation (c) that the wording “the Executive Lead for Place” replaces the “Head of Planning”. The motion was seconded by Cllr J Somper.

Decision

- (a) That Dorset Council withdraws the draft revised Community Infrastructure Levy charging schedule from public examination.
- (b) That an Exceptional Circumstances Relief Policy for the Purbeck charging area, as set out in Appendix A to the report of 12 March 2024, be agreed, and authority be given to publish the policy to operate exceptional circumstances relief for that area.
- (c) That authority be delegated to the Executive Lead for Place to determine applications for exceptional circumstances relief.

Reason for the decision

Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) operates as a planning tool to support the delivery of infrastructure which was required because of development. Across Dorset Council, four charging areas currently operate, each with its own adopted charging schedule. These charging schedules were adopted by the relevant predecessor councils prior to Local Government Reorganisation in April 2019. The revised draft charging schedule had been based on viability evidence developed prior to examination submission and proposed the introduction of a bespoke charging arrangement to help facilitate the delivery of sites allocated in the draft Purbeck Local Plan.

71. **Grid Capacity Task & Finish Group**

The Portfolio Holder for Highways, Travel and Environment set out the recommendations of the Grid Capacity Task & Finish Group of the Place & Resources Scrutiny Committee, on the council’s future approach to the strategic risks and opportunities regarding the electricity network. The Portfolio Holder took the opportunity to thank the task group for their work on this matter.

The Portfolio Holder continued to report that the scrutiny committee had clarified how Dorset Council could play a more strategic role in unlocking grid capacity in Dorset. He further advised that an Energy Officer had recently been appointed to the council and part of their role would be to support this work.

The recommendations were proposed by Cllr R Bryan seconded by Cllr B Quayle.

The Chairman of the Place & Resources Scrutiny Committee reported on the work of the task and finish group and thanked them for their efforts on this subject. He highlighted the recommendations set out within the report and the need to strengthen relationships with network operators across a strategic and operational level. Other comments included ensuring that rural communities were not left behind.

Cabinet members supported the recommendations.

Decision

That the recommendations of the Grid Capacity Task & Finish Group, set out within section 4 of the cover report to the Place and Resources Scrutiny Committee of 26 February 2024, on the council's future approach to the strategic risks and opportunities regarding the electricity network, be approved, subject to the following:

- (a) That, in respect of recommendation 6, MPs be invited to a meeting to enable councillors and officers to directly brief them on the issues and difficulties faced with the grid infrastructure and the issues raised during the review.
- (b) That an additional recommendation (7) be included – That the Place and Resources Scrutiny Committee monitor grid provision in Dorset and associated issues including emerging policy and regulatory reform, on an annual basis.
- (c) That a councillor webinar be provided post May 2024 regarding grid capacity, including technologies and the future impact on planning and energy provision.
- (d) That a councillor site visit be arranged post May 2024 to Canford Renewable Energy.

Reason for the decision

To ensure that the council was best placed to mitigate the risks and exploit the opportunities associated with the future of the electricity grid.

72. **Family Hub network development**

The Portfolio Holder for Children, Education, Skills, and Early Help presented the recommendation of the People and Health Overview Committee of 6 February 2024. He advised that when you focus on families and develop a network of support, outcomes were greatly improved. The Family Hub Programme Lead reported that family hubs were for all families living in the Dorset Council area. They provided information and services for families with children from conception to age 18, and this was up to age 25 for young people with SEND.

Non-executive members welcomed the programme and supported this multi-agency and collaborative way forward. In response to a question, the Executive Director for People – Children confirmed that no services would cease until any other appropriate alternative service with increased provision was put into place.

Cllr B Quayle proposed the recommendation, and this was seconded by Cllr J Haynes.

Decision

That the proposed development of Dorset's Family Hub Network be approved.

Reason for the decision

Family Hubs aim to improve access to, and take up of services for babies, children, young people, and their families, through coordinated multi agency delivery of information and support located in accessible spaces within communities. The report set out the proposed development of the Family Hub Network across Dorset.

73. **Children Sufficient Places**

The Portfolio Holder for Children, Education, Skills and Early Help set out the report and the recommendations from the People & Health Overview Committee of 6 February 2024. The Sufficiency Strategy 2024-2027 outlined how the council would continue to implement and deliver arrangements that wrap around children and families, to ensure that they receive the right support at the right time.

Approval of the Sufficiency Strategy for 2024-2027 was proposed by Cllr B Quayle and was unanimously agreed.

Decision

That the Sufficiency Strategy, and related action planning that is required for its effective delivery, be approved.

Reason for the decision

There were a range of legal duties associated with an overall "sufficiency duty" on all local authorities, as part of the Children Act 1989, to secure accommodation for children in their care, within the local authority area.

74. **Portfolio Holder /Lead Member(s) Update including any Policy referrals to report**

There were no referrals to report other than those already set out in the Forward Plan. The Portfolio Holder reports were attached at appendix 3 to these minutes.

75. **Urgent items**

The following item of business (min76) was considered by the Chairman as urgent pursuant to section 100B (4) b) of the Local Government Act 1972.

The item was urgent because a decision could not wait until the next available Cabinet meeting.

76. Hazelbury Bryan Neighbourhood Plan Review

The Portfolio Holder presented the report and recommendation in respect of making the Hazelbury Bryan Neighbourhood Plan. The recommendations were unanimously agreed by members.

Decision

- (a) That the Council makes the Modified Hazelbury Bryan Neighbourhood Plan 2018 - 2031 (as set out in Appendix A) part of the statutory development plan for the Hazelbury Bryan Neighbourhood Area.
- (b) That the Council offers its congratulations to Hazelbury Bryan Parish Council and members of the Neighbourhood Plan Group in producing a successful neighbourhood plan review.

Reason for the decision

To formally make the modified neighbourhood plan part of the statutory development plan for the Hazelbury Bryan Neighbourhood Area. In addition, to recognise the significant amount of work.

77. Exempt Business

There were no exempt reports scheduled for the meeting.

- Appendix 1 - Public Participation**
- Appendix 2 Councillor Questions**
- Appendix 3 Portfolio Holder reports**

Duration of meeting: 10.00 - 11.48 am

Chairman

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Cabinet – 12 March

Public Questions

Question from David Redgewell Southwest transport Network

With the Dorset bus services improvement plan

What progress is being made? On protect the west Dorset and south Somerset bus network by protect the bus and coach maintenance facilities in Yeovil, under threat of closure with very urgent need for a replacement Bus and coach maintenance cleaning driver and supervisor office facilities to be replaced and facilities at Weymouth and Bridport bus Depots which are a considerable distance from Yeovil

Which urgent requires a new bus and coach Depot facility for South Somerset and West Dorset,

And the on going provision bus service from that Depot 58 58 A Yeovil bus and coach station, Yeovil pen mill station Sherborne Town Sherborne Railway station Templecombe, Wincanton bus and coach station by First Group plc South buses jointy with Somerset council,

and the diversion of the x51 Weymouth King statue bus station Dorchester South station, Dorchester Town, Poundsbury ,Bridport bus and coach station, Lyme Regis and Axminster station services via martinstown and Winterbourne steepleton,

Response from the Portfolio Holder for Highways, Travel and Environment

These questions relate to operational decisions made by a commercial bus operator. Dorset Council doesn't have the ability to intervene in any bus company's commercial management, including their operational facilities or the running of commercial services. We will continue to engage with First to seek clarity over there future plans.

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Cabinet – 1 March 2024

Question from Councillor P Kimber

Community Asset Transfer Policy Review –

Dorset Council Dorset Council cabinet have approved a revised Community Asset Transfer Policy and the processes for assessing and determining Community Asset Transfer applications. Dorset Council's Community Asset Transfer Policy seeks to recognise and maximise the benefit of devolution of assets to local communities, particularly to Town and Parish Councils. The policy supports the delivery of this devolution by providing clear guidance and support for applicants.

Dorset Council aims to increase local control over assets, enabling assets to further meet the **needs of local communities** and enhance local Neighbourhood plans.

This review of the Community Asset Transfer policy and processes was required to incorporate it into existing reporting and decision-making processes within the Dorset Council Assets and Regeneration. The revised Policy makes the process simpler for applicants and ensures the process is transparent. A copy of the Full Cabinet report is available on the Dorset Council website.

Question to Cabinet

Portland Town Council welcomes the decision of the Cabinet to adopt the new policy and would welcome further discussions on the transfer of Portland assets.

In the meantime, would Dorset Council be able to provide a detailed list of all Dorset Council Portland Assets to the Town Council?

Response from the Portfolio Holder for Assets and Property

- In relation to the question on community asset transfers in Portland, A copy of the list of those completed and those pending transfer has been emailed to you.
- The list does not include every parcel of land that DC is responsible for in Portland and users of Dorset Explorer will see additional areas such as grass verges, small paths and highway verges which still rest with the Council.
- There are some parcels of land which may not be shown as they may be unregistered, and we are in the process of re-registering these.
- For safeguarding reasons we have removed specific reference to and house numbers of children's homes and simply referred to children's services.
- Dorset Explorer and the list of assets do not show some land the Council leases from the crown via old agreements e.g. Easton Gardens/Victoria Gardens – however these are in the process of being transferred to PTC anyway.

- Council officers are continuing to meet with the Portland Town Clerk to focus on the transfer of assets agreed at LGR.
- Please contact Carly Galloway or Jon Morgan should you have any specific queries.

Question from Cllr G Taylor

With reference to agenda item 10: Local Development Scheme Update

Speaking as a resident and Town Councillor for Weymouth I would like to thank Dorset Council for the update on the revised schedule and approach to producing a new Local Plan. In Weymouth we are eagerly awaiting the new plan as our existing Local Plan (from the Borough Council) is losing weight in planning terms due to its age. In Weymouth, a dedicated group including local residents are pressing forward with the Weymouth Neighbourhood Plan with the goal that this should be 'made' via a referendum in 2024 – this plan proposes allocating sites to address the chronic shortage of affordable homes but can only go so far as it cannot address Strategic Sites. We look forward to active engagement with Dorset Council Planning Team to ensure alignment of the Weymouth Neighbourhood Plan and Dorset Local Plan.

I have 2 Questions:

1. How will the revised LP address the chronic shortage of affordable homes for rent in Weymouth, identified in the Weymouth Housing Needs Analysis?
2. Is it Dorset Councils intention, as part of this process, to **update** the Weymouth Master Plan which is an extant Supplementary Planning Document?

Response from the Portfolio Holder for Planning

Thank you for your questions on this important topic. In answer to your questions:

1. How will the revised LP address the chronic shortage of affordable homes for rent in Weymouth, identified in the Weymouth Housing Needs Analysis?

The proposed update to the Local Development Scheme is intended to align Dorset Council Local Plan with the new local plan system. This will strengthen the Council's commitment to a plan-led approach that is right for Dorset, based upon up-to-date evidence, including housing need. Having a new plan that is prepared under the provisions of the new system should also support faster delivery. In preparing the plan, it will be important to take account of the best and most up-to-date evidence available to us, which will help the Council in seeking affordable housing delivery where it is needed most.

2. Is it Dorset Councils intention, as part of this process, to **update** the Weymouth Master Plan which is an extant Supplementary Planning Document?

We will be reviewing the Weymouth Masterplan to ensure it is fully up to date and best placed to support the regeneration of Weymouth's waterfront following the Council's successful bid for £19.5 million of levelling up funding. In doing this it will be important to have regard to previous consultation findings for other relevant

strategies, including the emerging Dorset Council Local Plan, Weymouth's neighbourhood plan, and the Weymouth Seafront Strategy. In terms of its future planning status, the new planning system is proposing to replace Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs) with Supplementary Plans, which will have the same weight as development plans. We will need to consider how best to progress a formal review of the SPD once more information is known, but in the meantime, work will continue on the masterplan itself.

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PORTFOLIO HOLDER/LEAD MEMBER UPDATE SUMMARY

PORTFOLIO:¹

Cllr Ray Bryan
Portfolio Holder for Highways, Travel, Environment,
Harbours and Climate Change

CABINET DATE:²

12th March 2024

KEY ACTIVITIES SINCE
THE LAST REPORT:³

Attended Meetings with Local Nature Partnership
Attended Meetings with Harbour Masters.
Attended Meetings to discuss Levelling up.
Attended Hedge to Hedge workshop
Attended HARP (Highways Asset Risk and Planning
Board.
Visited Damers School to discuss their Cycle Campaign.
Attended EAP on Local Plan
Attended Connected Dorset meeting.
Attended and Chaired Climate and Ecological EAP
Attended Place and Resources Scrutiny meeting.
Attended various meeting with Members.
Attended various meeting with residents.
Attended Dorset Strategic Road Safety Partnership
meeting.
Attended Harbour Advisory Committee.

DELEGATED DECISIONS
MADE:⁴

Numerous Traffic regulation orders over three meetings

¹ Enter the portfolio area

² Insert the date of the Cabinet meeting to which this summary update is to be reported

³ Provide brief details of the meetings attended, key activities or project milestones completed since the last report

⁴ Enter details of any delegated decisions made since the last meeting

ANTICIPATED
ACTIVITIES/MILESTONES
FOR NEXT PERIOD:⁵

Dealing with matters appertaining to my Portfolio under
business as usual.

⁵ Provide details of key activities, project milestones or significant meetings anticipated in the next period



PORTFOLIO HOLDER/LEAD MEMBER UPDATE SUMMARY

PORTFOLIO: ¹	Corporate Development and Transformation
CABINET DATE: ²	12th March 2024
KEY ACTIVITIES SINCE THE LAST REPORT: ³	Regular meetings with Executive director for Corporate service Performance Board Our Future Council phase 2 meetings Digital input to one Customer Account Meeting and preparation for the double council tax on second homes and empty properties. Economic development and digitisation meeting Joint Venture Board for contingency workforce. Webinar on AI and its future in the council Full Council Digital innovation and commercialisation business case review
DELEGATED DECISIONS MADE: ⁴	

¹ Enter the portfolio area

² Insert the date of the Cabinet meeting to which this summary update is to be reported

³ Provide brief details of the meetings attended, key activities or project milestones completed since the last report

⁴ Enter details of any delegated decisions made since the last meeting

ANTICIPATED
ACTIVITIES/MILESTONES
FOR NEXT PERIOD:⁵

The following pieces of work are ongoing:
Further meetings with infrastructure providers in particular cell phone providers
Review of strategic performance indicators and further work on dashboard in particular scrutiny dashboard.
Greater understanding of the work needed on a whole council approach to the digital side of the DULC work on Future Council
Develop other partners to provide equipment for Digital doorway
Review of internal governance to ensure it matches OFC activity
Presentation to LGA masterclass on connectivity

⁵ Provide details of key activities, project milestones or significant meetings anticipated in the next period

PORTFOLIO HOLDER/LEAD MEMBER UPDATE SUMMARY

PORTFOLIO:¹

Byron Quayle - Children, Education, Skills & Early Help

CABINET DATE:²

12.03.24

KEY ACTIVITIES SINCE
THE LAST REPORT:³

As part of my Cabinet Member responsibilities, I have attended the following meetings/evens since the last Cabinet meeting.

People and Health Overview Committee 06.02.24 – Sat in on the committee meeting as CS had a number if reports.

Performance Board meeting 07.02.24 – I attending this meeting as part of the rolling programme of looking into all services including CS.

Chestnut House - open event 07.02.24 – Attended the opening of Chestnut House our new children’s home in Weymouth.

North Dorset Family Hub Partnership group meeting – 13.02.24 A meeting focused on the Family Hub offer in the North Dorset area.

Birth2SettledAdulthood - Cllrs and Chairman catch up 14.02.24 – Part of the B2SA programme I meet with the chair and Cllr Somper to conduct a high-level review of the current plans.

Quality Assurance & Performance Management Quarterly Meeting 15.02.24 – I attended this meeting as part of the general work carried out by officers within CS.

Children's Services Team meeting 16.02.24 - Fortnightly meeting with Cllrs Penfold and Roberts.

Extraordinary Dorset Education Board 19.02.24 – Following a previous meeting this extraordinary meeting was called to carry out some focused work.

¹ Enter the portfolio area

² Insert the date of the Cabinet meeting to which this summary update is to be reported

³ Provide brief details of the meetings attended, key activities or project milestones completed since the last report

Spetisbury primary school visit 20.02.24 – Following a number of concerns raised by the local Parsh council I attended a site meeting to look into some road safety issues.

Early Years setting – North 20.02.24 – Held a meeting with officers to discuss the EY officer in the North Dorset Area.

Ofsted inspection of SEND Partnership – on the 26th Feb I was informed that Ofsted has contacted the council to inform us of their intention to carry out an inspection of our SEND Partnership and this would be a three week long inspection.

Shareholder Committee for Care Dorset 27.02.24 – Attended this meeting as part of my portfolio responsibilities.

Children's Lead Members Network Meeting 01.03.24 – attending this meeting which is focused on lead members for CS from across the region.

Milldown school 05.03.24 – attended the Milldown School to speak with year 6 about based issues.

People and Health Scrutiny Committee 06.03.24 - Sat in on the committee meeting as CS had a number of reports to present.

Area SEND Inspection: Local Area Context Meeting 06.03.24 – attended this meeting with Ofsted due the the current SEND Inspection taking place.

Strategic Alliance For Children and Young People 06.03.24 – Chaired this board meeting which brings together all our partners.

Shareholder Committee for the Dorset Centre of Excellence 11.03.24 – attended this meeting as part of my portfolio responsibilities.

DELEGATED DECISIONS
MADE:⁴

N/A

ANTICIPATED
ACTIVITIES/MILESTONES
FOR NEXT PERIOD:⁵

N/A

⁴ Enter details of any delegated decisions made since the last meeting

⁵ Provide details of key activities, project milestones or significant meetings anticipated in the next period



PORTFOLIO HOLDER/LEAD MEMBER UPDATE SUMMARY

PORTFOLIO:¹

Adult Social Care, Health and Housing

CABINET DATE:²

12 March 2024

KEY ACTIVITIES SINCE THE LAST REPORT:³

Earlier this year, Dorset Councils 4th Adults & Housing Quality Assurance Board took place. Lead Officers from Dorset Council, along with representatives from system groups including South West Audit Partnership, Healthwatch and the NHS Dorset quality lead were in attendance.

Board members were led through a comprehensive Quality Assurance report looking at activity across Operations, Commissioning and Housing Services, including how we are linking with system partners in quality spaces and the Safeguarding Adults Board.

In Commissioning, the Dorset Care, Support, Housing and Community Safety Framework (Dorset Care Framework 2) represents the main route to the provider market for Adults Services. We are working with providers to procure to our residential care offer, which will help meet the increasingly complex needs of the local older population in the future.

A new supported living scheme for adults with a learning disability and or autism has opened in Dorchester, which is designed to play a key role in enabling people to live with greater independence. The specialist accommodation, in Dorchester's Prince of Wales Road, includes 16 units - 12 flats

¹ Enter the portfolio area

² Insert the date of the Cabinet meeting to which this summary update is to be reported

³ Provide brief details of the meetings attended, key activities or project milestones completed since the last report

over three stories and four bungalows - and has been developed by Specialist Supported Housing Ltd. Elizabeth Court meets the NHS England Autism standards for accommodation.

In Housing, the team has successfully secured government funding from the Single Homelessness Accommodation Programme (SHAP) to tackle homelessness and rough sleeping in the area, for the third time in a row. The contribution of £1.3 million, will go towards buying and/or renovating accommodation for 10 residents, who are aged between 18 and 25 and have high levels of support needs.

Savings – 23/24

We continue to drive forward our challenging savings programme of £9.073m. Our transformation plan has supported us to deliver £8.521m (94%) as of the end of February 2024. As with all demand led budgets, we need to continuously monitor all activity and spend to help inform the year end forecast.

DELEGATED DECISIONS
MADE:⁴

N/A

ANTICIPATED
ACTIVITIES/MILESTONES
FOR NEXT PERIOD:⁵

⁴ Enter details of any delegated decisions made since the last meeting

⁵ Provide details of key activities, project milestones or significant meetings anticipated in the next period



**The Cabinet Forward Plan - July to October 2024
For the period 1 JUNE 2024 to 30 SEPTEMBER 2024
(Publication date – 10 JUNE 2024)**

Explanatory Note:

This Forward Plan contains future items to be considered by the Cabinet and Council. It is published 28 days before the next meeting of the Committee. The plan includes items for the meeting including key decisions. Each item shows if it is 'open' to the public or to be considered in a private part of the meeting.

Definition of Key Decisions

Key decisions are defined in Dorset Council's Constitution as decisions of the Cabinet which are likely to -

- (a) to result in the relevant local authority incurring expenditure which is, or the making of savings which are, significant having regard to the relevant local authority's budget for the service or function to which the decision relates (**Thresholds - £500k**); or
- (b) to be significant in terms of its effects on communities living or working in an area comprising two or more wards or electoral divisions in the area of the relevant local authority."

In determining the meaning of "*significant*" for these purposes the Council will have regard to any guidance issued by the Secretary of State in accordance with section 9Q of the Local Government Act 2000 Act. Officers will consult with lead members to determine significance and sensitivity.

Cabinet Members and Portfolios 2024/25

Nick Ireland	Leader / Governance, Performance and Communications, Environment, Climate Change and Safeguarding
Richard Biggs	Deputy Leader, Property & Assets, Economic Growth & Levelling Up
Simon Clifford	Finance & Capital Strategy
Ryan Holloway	Corporate Development, Transformation, Digital & Change
Jon Andrews	Place Commissioned Services
Clare Sutton	Children's Services, Education & Skills
Steve Robinson	Adult Social Care
Gill Taylor	Public health, Environmental Health, Housing, Community Safety and Regulatory Service.
Shane Bartlett	Planning and Emergency Planning
Ryan Hope	Customer, Culture and Community Engagement

Subject / Decision	Decision Maker	Date the Decision is Due	Other Committee(s) consulted and Date of meeting(s)	Portfolio Holder	Officer Contact
July					
<p>Youth Justice Plan 2024/25</p> <p>Key Decision - Yes Public Access - Open</p> <p>Annual approval of the Youth Justice Plan.</p>	<p>Decision Maker Cabinet</p>	<p>Decision Date 9 Jul 2024</p>	<p>People and Health Overview Committee 13 Jun 2024</p>	<p>Cabinet Member for Children's Services, Education and Skills</p>	<p><i>David Webb, Manager - Dorset Combined Youth Justice Service david.webb@bcpcouncil.gov.uk Executive Director, People - Children (Theresa Leavy)</i></p>
<p>Ofsted ILACS Annual Conversation Including Self-Assessment</p> <p>Key Decision - Yes Public Access - Open</p> <p>To receive the ILACS Annual Conversation, Self-Assessment and Annual Test of Assurance)</p>	<p>Decision Maker Cabinet</p>	<p>Decision Date 9 Jul 2024</p>		<p>Cabinet Member for Children's Services, Education and Skills</p>	<p><i>Richard Belcher, Service Manager - Strategic Partnerships richard.belcher@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk, Alice Deacon, Corporate Director for Commissioning and Partnerships alice.deacon@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk, Lisa Reid, Corporate Director for Quality Assurance & Safeguarding Families lisa.reid@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk Executive Director, People - Children (Theresa Leavy)</i></p>

Subject / Decision	Decision Maker	Date the Decision is Due	Other Committee(s) consulted and Date of meeting(s)	Portfolio Holder	Officer Contact
<p>Extra Care Housing Strategy & Accommodation with support programme</p> <p>Key Decision - Yes Public Access - Open</p> <p>To present the Extra Care Housing Strategy, seek endorsement from Cabinet, and to brief members on the Accommodation with Support programme.</p>	<p>Decision Maker Cabinet</p>	<p>Decision Date 9 Jul 2024</p>	<p>People and Health Overview Committee 13 Jun 2024</p>	<p>Cabinet Member for Public Health, Environmental Health, Housing, Community Safety and Regulatory Service, Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care</p>	<p><i>Adam Fitzgerald, Programme Manager for the accommodation with Support programme</i> <i>adam.fitzgerald@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk</i> <i>Executive Director, People - Adults</i></p>
<p>Productivity Plan</p> <p>Key Decision - No Public Access - Open</p> <p>Response to the government's request, as outlined in the Local Government Finance Settlement, to produce and submit a productivity plan.</p>	<p>Decision Maker Cabinet</p>	<p>Decision Date 9 Jul 2024</p>		<p>Leader, Cabinet Member for Governance, Performance, Communications, Environment, Climate Change and Safeguarding</p>	<p><i>Steven Ford, Corporate Director for Transformation, Innovation, Digital, and Environment</i> <i>steven.ford@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk</i> <i>Chief Executive (Matt Prosser)</i></p>
<p>Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion Strategy</p> <p>Key Decision - Yes Public Access - Open</p> <p>To approve the EDI Strategy and Action Plan.</p>	<p>Decision Maker Cabinet</p>	<p>Decision Date 9 Jul 2024</p>		<p>Cabinet Member for Corporate Development, Transformation, Digital & Change</p>	<p><i>Jennifer Lowis, Head of Strategic Communications and Engagement</i> <i>jennifer.lowis@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk</i>, <i>James Palfreman-Kay, Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Officer</i> <i>james.palfreman-kay@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk</i> <i>Executive Director, Corporate Development - Section 151 Officer (Aidan Dunn)</i></p>

Subject / Decision	Decision Maker	Date the Decision is Due	Other Committee(s) consulted and Date of meeting(s)	Portfolio Holder	Officer Contact
<p>Electric Vehicle Public Charging Infrastructure Procurement</p> <p>Key Decision - Yes Public Access - Open</p> <p>Request to go out to tender to procure an electric vehicle infrastructure installer and ChargePoint operator.</p>	<p>Decision Maker Cabinet</p>	<p>Decision Date 9 Jul 2024</p>		<p>Cabinet Member for Place Commissioned Services</p>	<p><i>Christopher Whitehouse, Projects Team Manager christopher.whitehouse@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk, Jack Wiltshire, Head of Highways jack.wiltshire@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk</i> <i>Executive Lead for Place Directorate (Jan Britton)</i></p>
<p>Middle Farm, Higher Kingcombe potential land purchase</p> <p>Key Decision - Yes Public Access - Fully exempt</p> <p>To consider a report on the potential land purchase using local nutrient mitigation funds to deliver nutrient mitigation for development in Poole Harbour Catchment.</p>	<p>Decision Maker Cabinet</p>	<p>Decision Date 9 Jul 2024</p>		<p>Deputy Leader, Cabinet Member for Property & Assets, Economic Growth & Levelling Up</p>	<p><i>Ken Buchan, Head of Environment and Wellbeing ken.buchan@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk</i> <i>Executive Lead for Place Directorate (Jan Britton)</i></p>
<p>September</p>					

<p>Quarter 1 Financial Monitoring 2024/25</p> <p>Key Decision - No Public Access - Open</p> <p>To consider the Quarter 1 Financial Monitoring Report 2024/25</p>	<p>Decision Maker Cabinet</p>	<p>Decision Date 10 Sep 2024</p>		<p>Cabinet Member for Finance & Capital Strategy</p>	<p><i>Sean Cremer, Corporate Director for Finance and Commercial sean.cremer@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk</i> <i>Executive Director, Corporate Development - Section 151 Officer (Aidan Dunn)</i></p>
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Subject / Decision	Decision Maker	Date the Decision is Due	Other Committee(s) consulted and Date of meeting(s)	Portfolio Holder	Officer Contact
<p>Strategic Asset Management Plan 2024 - 2030</p> <p>Key Decision - Yes Public Access - Open</p> <p>To present the Strategic Asset Management Plan 2024-2030 and seek endorsement.</p>	<p>Decision Maker Cabinet</p>	<p>Decision Date 10 Sep 2024</p>		<p>Deputy Leader, Cabinet Member for Property & Assets, Economic Growth & Levelling Up</p>	<p><i>Tim Hulme, Corporate Director of Assets and Reneration tim.hulme@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk, Julian Wain, Strategic Property Advisor Julian.wain@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk Executive Lead for Place Directorate (Jan Britton)</i></p>
<p>Additional Procurement Forward Plan Report - £500k (2024 - 2025) and Modern Slavery Transparency Statement 2023- 2024</p> <p>Key Decision - Yes Public Access - Open</p> <p>The Council define key decision as those with a financial consequence of £500k or more. A procurement forward plan report was approved by Cabinet 12th March 2024. This report is additional activity that has since been identified. The Modern Slavery Statement is an annual update in respect of financial year 2023/24.</p>	<p>Decision Maker Cabinet</p>	<p>Decision Date 10 Sep 2024</p>		<p>Cabinet Member for Corporate Development, Transformation, Digital & Change, Cabinet Member for Finance & Capital Strategy</p>	<p><i>Dawn Adams, Service Manager for Commercial and Procurement dawn.adams@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk, Sean Cremer, Corporate Director for Finance and Commercial sean.cremer@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk Executive Director, Corporate Development - Section 151 Officer (Aidan Dunn)</i></p>

Subject / Decision	Decision Maker	Date the Decision is Due	Other Committee(s) consulted and Date of meeting(s)	Portfolio Holder	Officer Contact
<p>Commissioning for better life, Day Opportunities in Dorset</p> <p>Key Decision - Yes Public Access - Open</p> <p>Report on the current Day Opportunities including research to date, supporting data and recommendations develop a model that delivers a bespoke and range of options for future reinvestment.</p>	<p>Decision Maker Cabinet</p>	<p>Decision Date 10 Sep 2024</p>		<p>Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care</p>	<p><i>Mark Tyson, Corporate Director for Adult Commissioning & Improvement mark.tyson@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk Corporate Director of Commissioning, People - Adults</i></p>
<p>Page 34 October</p>					
<p>Waste Strategy for Dorset 2024</p> <p>Key Decision - Yes Public Access - Open</p> <p>To consider and approve the Waste Strategy for Dorset.</p>	<p>Decision Maker Cabinet</p>	<p>Decision Date 15 Oct 2024</p>	<p>Place and Resources Overview Committee 12 Sep 2024</p>	<p>Cabinet Member for Place Commissioned Services</p>	<p><i>Gemma Clinton, Head of Commercial Waste and Strategy gemma.clinton@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk, Lisa Mounty, Service Development Manager lisa.mounty@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk Executive Lead for Place Directorate (Jan Britton)</i></p>

Subject / Decision	Decision Maker	Date the Decision is Due	Other Committee(s) consulted and Date of meeting(s)	Portfolio Holder	Officer Contact
<p>Growth & Economic Regeneration Strategy</p> <p>Key Decision - Yes Public Access - Open</p> <p>To consider and agree a refresh of the Council's strategy for economic growth. This will encompass the functions to be taken over by the Council from Dorset Local Enterprise Partnership in accordance with devolution and promote the needs and actions required to drive forward the economy in the Dorset Council area.</p>	<p>Decision Maker Cabinet</p>	<p>Decision Date 15 Oct 2024</p>	<p>Place and Resources Overview Committee 12 Sep 2024</p>	<p>Deputy Leader, Cabinet Member for Property & Assets, Economic Growth & Levelling Up</p>	<p><i>Jon Bird, Service Manager for Growth and Economic Regeneration jon.bird@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk, Nick Webster, Head of Growth and Economic Regeneration nicholas.webster@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk Executive Lead for Place Directorate (Jan Britton)</i></p>
<p>November</p>					

<p>Quarter 2 Financial Monitoring Report 2024/25</p> <p>Key Decision - Yes Public Access - Open</p> <p>To consider the Quarter 2 Financial Monitoring Report 2024/25</p>	<p>Decision Maker Cabinet</p>	<p>Decision Date 19 Nov 2024</p>		<p>Cabinet Member for Finance & Capital Strategy</p>	<p><i>Sean Cremer, Corporate Director for Finance and Commercial sean.cremer@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk Executive Director, Corporate Development - Section 151 Officer (Aidan Dunn)</i></p>
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Subject / Decision	Decision Maker	Date the Decision is Due	Other Committee(s) consulted and Date of meeting(s)	Portfolio Holder	Officer Contact
<p>Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) and budget strategy - update</p> <p>Key Decision - Yes Public Access - Open</p> <p>To receive a budget update for 2025/26.</p>	<p>Decision Maker Cabinet</p>	<p>Decision Date 19 Nov 2024</p>		<p>Cabinet Member for Finance & Capital Strategy</p>	<p><i>Sean Cremer, Corporate Director for Finance and Commercial</i> <i>sean.cremer@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk</i> <i>Executive Director, Corporate Development - Section 151 Officer (Aidan Dunn)</i></p>
<p>Draft Contaminated Land Strategy</p> <p>Key Decision - Yes Public Access - Open</p> <p>Draft Contaminated Land Strategy and report of consultation findings on the draft strategy.</p>	<p>Decision Maker Cabinet</p>	<p>Decision Date 19 Nov 2024</p>	<p>Place and Resources Overview Committee 12 Sep 2024</p>	<p>Cabinet Member for Customer, Culture and Community Engagement</p>	<p><i>Steven Horsler, Environmental Health Officer</i> <i>steven.horsler@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk, Janet Moore, Service Manager for Environmental Protection</i> <i>Janet.Moore@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk</i> <i>Executive Lead for Place Directorate (Jan Britton)</i></p>
<p>January 2025</p>					

<p>Quarter 3 Financial Monitoring 2024/25</p> <p>Key Decision - No Public Access - Open</p> <p>To consider the Quarter 3 financial Monitoring Report 2024/25</p>	<p>Decision Maker Cabinet</p>	<p>Decision Date 28 Jan 2025</p>		<p>Cabinet Member for Finance & Capital Strategy</p>	<p><i>Sean Cremer, Corporate Director for Finance and Commercial</i> <i>sean.cremer@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk</i> <i>Executive Director, Corporate Development - Section 151 Officer (Aidan Dunn)</i></p>
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Subject / Decision	Decision Maker	Date the Decision is Due	Other Committee(s) consulted and Date of meeting(s)	Portfolio Holder	Officer Contact
<p>Budget strategy and medium-term financial plan (MTFP)</p> <p>Key Decision - Yes Public Access - Open</p> <p>To consider a report and recommendation of the Portfolio Holder for Finance, Commercial and Capital Assets.</p>	<p>Decision Maker Full Council</p>	<p>Decision Date 11 Feb 2025</p>	<p>Cabinet 28 Jan 2025 People and Health Scrutiny Committee 17 Jan 2025</p> <p>Place and Resources Scrutiny Committee 16 Jan 2025</p>	<p>Cabinet Member for Finance & Capital Strategy</p>	<p><i>Sean Cremer, Corporate Director for Finance and Commercial</i> <i>sean.cremer@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk</i> <i>Executive Director, Corporate Development - Section 151 Officer (Aidan Dunn)</i></p>

Private/Exempt Items for Decision

Each item in the plan above marked as 'private' will refer to one of the following paragraphs.

1. Information relating to any individual.
2. Information which is likely to reveal the identity of an individual.
3. Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information).
4. Information relating to any consultations or negotiations, or contemplated consultations or negotiations, in connection with any labour relations matter arising between the authority or a Minister of the Crown and employees of, or office holders under, the authority.
5. Information in respect of which a claim to legal professional privilege could be maintained in legal proceedings.
6. Information which reveals that the shadow council proposes:-
 - (a) to give under any enactment a notice under or by virtue of which requirements are imposed on a person; or
 - (b) to make an order or direction under any enactment.
7. Information relating to any action taken or to be taken in connection with the prevention, investigation or prosecution of crime.

Cabinet

11 June 2024

Cost Of Living Report

For Decision

Cabinet Member and Portfolio:

Cllr R Hope, Customer, Culture and Community Engagement

Executive Director:

A Dunn, Executive Director, Corporate Development

Report Author: Laura Cornette

Job Title: Business Partner – Communities and Partnerships

Tel: 01305 224306

Email: laura.cornette@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk

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

Brief Summary:

In February 2023, following a request from the former Leader of the council, the former Cabinet authorised a one-off amount of £2 million to be drawn from the General Fund reserves to deliver a programme of short and medium-term activities and schemes to support Dorset residents hardest hit by the cost-of-living challenge for the financial year 2023-24. The programme of activities was developed to complement and enhance the support provided by central government and Dorset Council.

On 7th March 2024, members of the former People and Health Scrutiny Committee reviewed and endorsed the programme and recommended that the impact of this funding was brought to the first Cabinet meeting of the new administration.

Recommendation:

1. Cabinet members note the funded activity for 2023-24 and the outcomes achieved.
2. Cabinet agrees to earmark a further £2m from Council reserves to support the continuation of a targeted programme of work to support our most vulnerable

residents and to complement and address any gaps in other national and local support programmes.

3. Cabinet delegates authority to the Portfolio Holder for Customer, Culture and Community Engagement, to agree the targeted programme of work in consultation with the Executive Director Corporate Development(S151) and having regard to any views and recommendations of the Place and Resources Overview Committee.

4. Cabinet agrees that financial support for the cost-of-living agenda will be considered as part of the Council's annual budget setting process.

Reason for Recommendation:

Extensive support has been provided to Dorset Council residents over the last 12-18 months as outlined in the earlier Cabinet report of 28 February 2023 and section 2 of this report. A proactive, targeted, and flexible approach to supporting Dorset's communities with the cost-of-living challenge in both the short and medium term, based on evidence and data sets will enable Dorset Council to continue to identify gaps in local and national support initiatives and target support to our most vulnerable residents.

1. Background

1.1 Many Dorset Council residents have been directly affected by the cost-of-living challenge. In many ways, Dorset residents are facing the same issues as people across the country. However, our 2022 research data showed one factor affects Dorset Council residents more than elsewhere in the country: the high cost of housing relative to earnings. This has been felt in higher rental and mortgage payments, which lead to lower or, in some cases, no disposable income with which to absorb any price increases to fuel, energy bills and food.

1.2 Since mid-2022, Dorset Council has worked closely with our statutory and voluntary & community sector partners through the 'Dorset Together – Cost of Living' network to support residents with the challenges they are facing. This programme developed into four initial priority workstreams:

1. Keeping warm and well
2. Food security
3. Support to increase volunteering
4. Keeping homes warm and energy efficient.

1.3 Proposals for various activities and schemes which could provide immediate and medium-term support to Dorset residents hardest hit by the cost-of-living crisis, funded by £2 million (taken from the General Fund reserves) for the financial year 2023-24 were developed and approved by Cabinet in February

2023. The results of the first three quarters of 2024 were presented to People and Health Scrutiny Committee in March 2024 who recommended to Cabinet that funding for the cost-of-living support should be extended and reviewed annually as part of the budget setting process. Both papers are available in the **background papers**.

2. Impact of the Cost-of-living funding

2.1 The below table shows a short summary of the impacts for each project.

No. & Project name	Impact Headlines
1. Targeted supermarket vouchers	An additional 2333 £150 supermarket vouchers supplemented the Household Support Fund (HSF) creating an overall total of 12,000 available over the year. The top 5 wards were: 1 – Portland; 2 – Westham; 3 – Rodwell & Wyke; 4 – Bridport; 5 – Littlemoor & Preston
2. Debt and CoL Advice	Since September 2024 the specialist debt advisors have delivered the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 298 clients helped. • 1,376 issues supported. • £259,358 in financial gains for clients
3. Healthy Homes Dorset	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A total of 109 households benefitted. • 58 households were low income. • 49 households had a long-term illness or disability. • 74 properties were classed as Park Homes • Top 5 wards 1 – Chickerell; 2 – Ferndown North; 3 – St. Leonards & St. Ives; 4 - Verwood; 5 - Portland
4. Discretionary Housing Payment (DHP) allowance	Due to having to spend the annual Government grant first, this project only commenced in December 2023 and has offered an additional £131,000 to support the DHP officers to award longer term stability to those at risk of homelessness due to being able to stretch into this additional budget.
5. Disabled Facilities Grant – Energy Efficiency support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 64 disabled facilities energy efficiency grants in total • Average grant amount was £4,958. • Top 4 wards recipients were: Chickerell (5), Wareham (4), Bridport (4) Westham (4)
6. Food security	Food projects funded support to over 4020 households per month. 32% were to families with children; 38% disability (physical, mental health, learning disability, sensory); 12% pensioners; 32% other (inc. couples with none or no dependant age children, single people inc. temporary housing and HMOs).

	The largest numbers supported were in Weymouth, Portland, Sturminster Newton, Sherborne and Wareham
7. Small energy efficiency adaptations	<p>Volunteer Centre Dorset (VCD) have received 208 referrals which come from a range of professional sources. Items distributed include heated throws, oversized hoodies, hot water bottles, heated blankets, blankets, radiator foil, microwaves, and air fryers.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 75% of referrals are for people aged 40 and under • 47% of referrals are for adults living alone. • 35% of referral are for households with children. • 91% are struggling with utility bills and 35% are on a prepaid meter
8. Off grid energy discretionary vouchers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A total of 330 off-grid £200 grants issued by CA. - 74 households with children; 145 households with a disability; 63 with a state pension age person; 220 Off-grid; 41 Gypsy Roma Traveller; 58 park home residents; 35 HMO. • Locations: Bridport 32; Dorchester 84; East Dorset & Purbeck 77; North Dorset 44; Sherborne 35; Weymouth & Portland 58
9. Additional pre-school hours for 3–4-year-olds going to school	<p>This additional funding has enabled 134 children in the 2023 summer term, 152 children in the autumn term 2023 and 161 children in the winter term, to access additional early education hours in their setting of choice. Impact for families included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • support with the household with the cost-of-living situation. • ability to access additional paid work. • direct benefit to children’s development from the additional hours in a settled education environment
10. Targeted ‘ready to thrive’ locality programme	<p>Working with a target audience of parents and children who started school in September 2023 in partnership with HomeStart.</p> <p>75 children engaged with the HomeStart 2023 School Readiness programme. The programme of support included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • funding school uniform and other opportunities to increase children’s preparation for the transition into school. • Maths programme for early years settings being rolled out from January 2024 • supporting and celebrating the development and strengthening of parent-child relationships in preparing children for school. • offering children with play activities aligned with key school readiness areas.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Weekly focus groups for families discussing the significance of each area and discovering alternative ways to explore these topics at home
11. Homelessness Prevention	<p>The funds supported 179 households from being made / or at threat of being made homeless. The funding broke down as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rent arrears £13,716 Rent Deposits £28,391 Rents in Advance £72,893 Awareness Campaign £10,000 <p>Threat of homelessness continues to increase.</p>

3. Current situation

3.1 At the end of March 2024, national government announced an extension of the Household Support Fund (HSF) for a further 6-month period (April – September 2024). Dorset Council HSF received £2,294,941 and will continue to support free school meals for Dorset children during the school holidays and a host of other identified targeted support initiatives. Previously the projects supported by the Cost-of-Living fund boosted or complemented the HSF. A breakdown of the HSF projects signed off by Dorset Council Senior Leadership Team (SLT) in April 2024 are in **Appendix 1**

3.2 At the end of March 2024, national government cost-of-living energy payment support for residents in receipt of pension or universal credit ended and although the energy cap has fallen slightly to £1,690/annum, it remains at levels significantly higher levels than in 2020. Local Citizens Advice (CA) have already reported a general increase in contact from these residents enquiring about further energy support.

3.3 Food and shopping costs are now a 30% higher than April 2022 (approximate: Joseph Rowntree Trust).

3.4 In May 2024 CA reported that a total of 13,621 Dorset residents contacted them from support for 67,696 issues; 61% identified as long-term ill health / disabled. They also reported:

- The number of local residents asking for help every month has risen 10% since April 2023 and continues to rise.
- Dorset residents are facing mounting personal debt, and more Dorset residents start each month in 'negative budgets' mostly due to the rising costs of rents, energy and food.
- Dorset residents are struggling to pay their rent or mortgages and increasing 'no fault evictions' and losing or are at threat of losing their homes.
- In January 2024, CA supported a record number of residents who were struggling with increased fuel due to cold weather.

- People are continuing to struggle to feed their families.

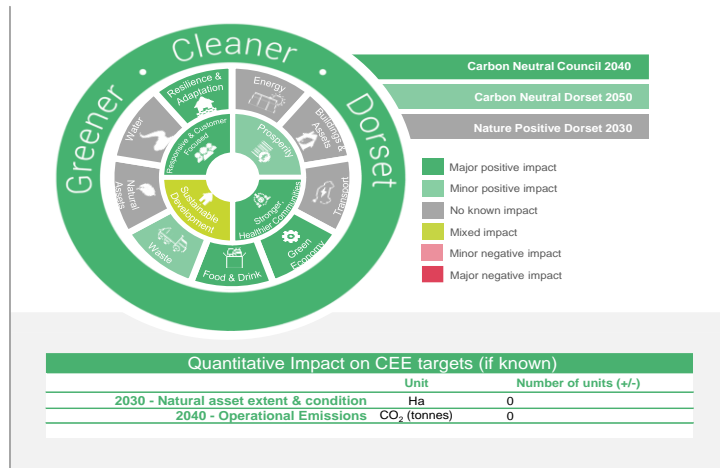
3.5 Local foodbanks and social supermarkets are reporting a continued increase in demand for their services, some, to levels exceeding their financial and volunteer capacity.

3.6 The Dorset Together: Cost-of-Living partnership working group have recently evaluated the 4 priorities and with the new trends being raised have added a further priority of Community Transport following feedback from our strategic community partners.

4. Financial Implications

A request that funding of up to a further £2m is earmarked from Council reserves be made available to support a targeted programme of work to support our most vulnerable residents and to complement and address any gaps in other national and local support programmes. Also, that financial support for the cost-of-living agenda will be considered as part of the Council’s annual budget setting process.

5. Natural Environment, Climate & Ecology Implications



ACCESSIBLE TABLE SHOWING IMPACTS

Natural Environment, Climate & Ecology Strategy Commitments	Impact
Energy	No known impact
Buildings & Assets	No known impact
Transport	No known impact
Green Economy	major positive impact
Food & Drink	major positive impact
Waste	minor positive impact
Natural Assets & Ecology	No known impact

Water	No known impact
Resilience and Adaptation	major positive impact

Corporate Plan Aims	Impact
Prosperity	minor positive impact
Stronger healthier communities	strongly supports it
Sustainable Development & Housing	neutral
Responsive & Customer Focused	strongly supports it

6. Well-being and Health Implications

The impacts of the well-being and health implications of the allocated funds are evidenced in this report.

7. Risk Assessment

7.1 **HAVING CONSIDERED:** the risks associated with this decision; the level of risk has been identified as:

Current Risk: Low

Residual Risk: Medium

Although the £2 million has achieved its purpose and has significantly supported our vulnerable residents to weather the cost-of-living challenge, the challenge has not ended. Emerging trends throughout this financial year have shown that housing issues have become more prevalent. There is a risk that our residents who may have been relying on some of the funded programmes, may not be able to bridge the financial gap now the funding support ended. Additionally, currently there is only 6-month financial provision from the current Government regarding the future of the HSF which supports many vulnerable people including paying for free school meal vouchers in the school holidays, supermarket vouchers (to support with increased energy prices), grants to foodbanks and social supermarkets and many others.

8. Equalities Impact Assessment

Proposals for the Cost-of-Living Challenge Cabinet paper 28 February 2023 were targeted at our most vulnerable residents. Means testing was used where possible to ensure the additional funding reaches those in greatest need.

Our research team undertook extensive data modelling to identify those households in greatest need. Using this data, we were able to identify gaps in national government and local support to date. We continue to work closely in partnership with our VCS partners such as CA and our food security organisations.

8. Appendices

- Appendix 1 - Breakdown of the HSF projects signed off by Dorset Council SLT in April 2024.

9. Background Papers

[Cost of Living Challenge Cabinet paper 23rd February 2023](#)

[Cost of Living Challenge People and Health Scrutiny paper 7th March 2024](#)

10. Report Sign Off

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)

Appendix 1

4. Household Support Fund distribution of funding School holiday voucher scheme and discretionary funds April - September 2024

Funding Element	Amount	Partnership	Notes
FSM+ holiday vouchers (school & EY) – via Wonde Ltd T/A evouchers.com	£1,045,000	Existing - continued	11,000 vouchers to be issued for the May half term and summer school holidays. £15 per child for May, £80 over the summer.
Housing team	£100,000	Existing - expanded	To build on the team's existing distribution of HSF and the impact made by their use of the Cost-of-Living funds released from reserves, which has now been exhausted.
Older people support organisations	£80,000	Existing - expanded	Support existing clients in financial hardship and take ad-hoc referrals from colleagues (not advertised). Targeted towards digitally excluded, older residents. Includes 10.8% management fee.
Citizens Advice (CA) case worker discretionary funds	£80,000	Existing - continued	Flexible fund accessible via CA case worker after initial triage. Flexible support for the most vulnerable being supported by CA. Includes 11% management fee.
Food security grants in partnership with Communities team - Corporate	£80,000	Existing - continued	Supporting Dorset's network of foodbanks, community fridges, social supermarkets, and pop-up larders.
Other Cost of Living / Community grants in partnership with Communities team - Corporate	£80,000	New	To provide responsive funding to emerging needs and initiatives (e.g. as identified in the Cost of Living Working group) and build on the projects delivered last year using the CoL reserves funding.

Locality funds – Children’s	£80,000	Existing - continued	Need identified by practitioners and resources (voucher/tangible items) distributed directly.
ELA scheme contribution / expansion - External, commissioned by Adults	£50,000	New	To increase the resource available within the Emergency Local Assistance scheme to support more residents who are in crisis.
Care Leaver team – Children’s	£20,000	Existing - continued	Need identified by practitioners and resources (voucher/tangible items) distributed directly.
Community transport – Place	£20,000	New	Increasing capacity to benefit lower income residents.
Education, Employment & Training team – Children’s	£15,000	Existing - expanded	Need identified by practitioners and resources (voucher/tangible items) distributed directly. Expanded to include advice resourcing.
Digital inclusion team - Place	£5,000	Existing - continued	Distribution of devices and mobile data sims.
Carer Support service - Adults	£5,000	Existing - continued	Need identified by practitioners and resources (voucher/tangible items) distributed directly.
Targeted support vouchers	£570,000	Existing – continued - Amended	To replace the self-referral scheme, this enables nominated referrers to ensure the funds reach those most vulnerable

Cabinet

11 June 2024

SEND (Special Educational Needs and Disabilities) Inspection Outcome and Plan

For Decision

Cabinet Member and Portfolio:

Cllr. C Sutton, Children's Services, Education & Skills

Local Councillor(s): All

Executive Director:

T Leavy, Executive Director of People - Children

Report Author: Amanda Davis

Job Title: Corporate Director for Education and Learning

Tel: 01305 224393

Email: amanda.davis@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk

Report Status: Public

Brief Summary: This report provides an overview of the Local Area SEND Inspection findings and our action plan to ensure the partnership responds to the recommendations made.

Recommendation: That Cabinet notes and welcomes the findings of Ofsted and the Care Quality Commission (CQC) and approve the action plan for publication.

Reason for Recommendation: We wholeheartedly welcome sharing the findings from the inspection, not least with our children, young people and families who are at the front and centre of our continuous improvement. We are required to publish an action plan following inspection to ensure appropriate accountability.

1. **Report**

- 1.1 The local Area SEND inspection was carried out over a three-week period at the end of February and beginning of March. The lead inspector, with a professional heritage in education, was joined by a further inspector for education, a lead for social care, and two leads for health, with 3 additional observers.
- 1.2 The framework for this inspection (see Background Papers) is extensive and rightly focuses on the lived experiences of children and families within our local area. This means that every area of our work in children's services and many health and education services, as well as the way in which we work together to achieve outcomes for children, was subject to scrutiny during the inspection.
- 1.3 Over the course of the three-week inspection, inspectors explored 16 children in detail, selected by them from a much larger cohort of children, to understand their lived experiences and that of their families. Surveys were issued to children and young people, practitioners across agencies, parents, and carers. We had an impressive response to these. 325 documents were shared with inspectors. The information from the surveys and the documents, as well as our Self Evaluation enabled the inspection team to develop key lines of enquiry and to test these through on-site activity.
- 1.4 Inspectors conducted a range of activities involving families, council & multi-agency partners. This included 79 interviews with: families, the Dorset Parent Carer Council (DPCC), The SEN (Special Education Needs) and Disability Information Advice and Support Service (SENDIASS), a broad range of leaders and practitioners from across services and disciplines and the voluntary sector, as well as onsite visits to a range of education settings, including alternative provision. Visits were also undertaken to health settings, the Harbour team at College House in Weymouth, and some of our residential provision.
- 1.5 There are three outcomes that could have been achieved through the inspection. In Dorset, we achieved the best of these three outcomes (see 1 below). We are the first unitary authority to achieve this and the first in our region.
- 1.6 The 3 possible outcomes are:

- 1) that children and families have typically positive experiences and outcomes;
 - 2) that children and families have inconsistent experiences and outcomes;
 - 3) that there are widespread and/or systemic failings
- 1.7 Inspectors commended the partnership for placing children, young people, and their families at the centre of decision-making, leading to “typically positive experiences and outcomes.”
- 1.8 The Inspection highlighted the collaborative efforts of strategic partners, including Dorset Council, NHS Dorset Integrated Care Board, and the Dorset Parent Carer Council, to support children and young people with special educational needs or disabilities (SEND).
- 1.9 The report noted the effective co-production across the partnership and the development of creative ways to listen to young people, such as through 'Dorset Youth Voice'.
- 1.10 The local area partnership was advised to continue its improvement efforts and update its strategic plan based on the two recommendations provided. These are:
- Leaders across education, health and social care should strengthen their use of the robust qualitative and quantitative information they hold. This will enable them to continually analyse and evaluate the impact of their, often innovative, work to improve the outcomes for children and young people with SEND.
 - Leaders across the partnership should ensure that their quality assurance and annual review processes, particularly in relation to preparation for adulthood, are as robust, precise and of the same high-quality as seen in the more recent education, health and care plans.
- Our SEND Inspection Delivery Plan details how we will approach these recommendations and also includes the other areas highlighted within the inspection report, for continuous improvement.
- As a partnership we are in agreement with the recommendations and had highlighted these areas in our self-evaluation.
- 1.11 The next full area SEND inspection is scheduled for approximately five years' time.

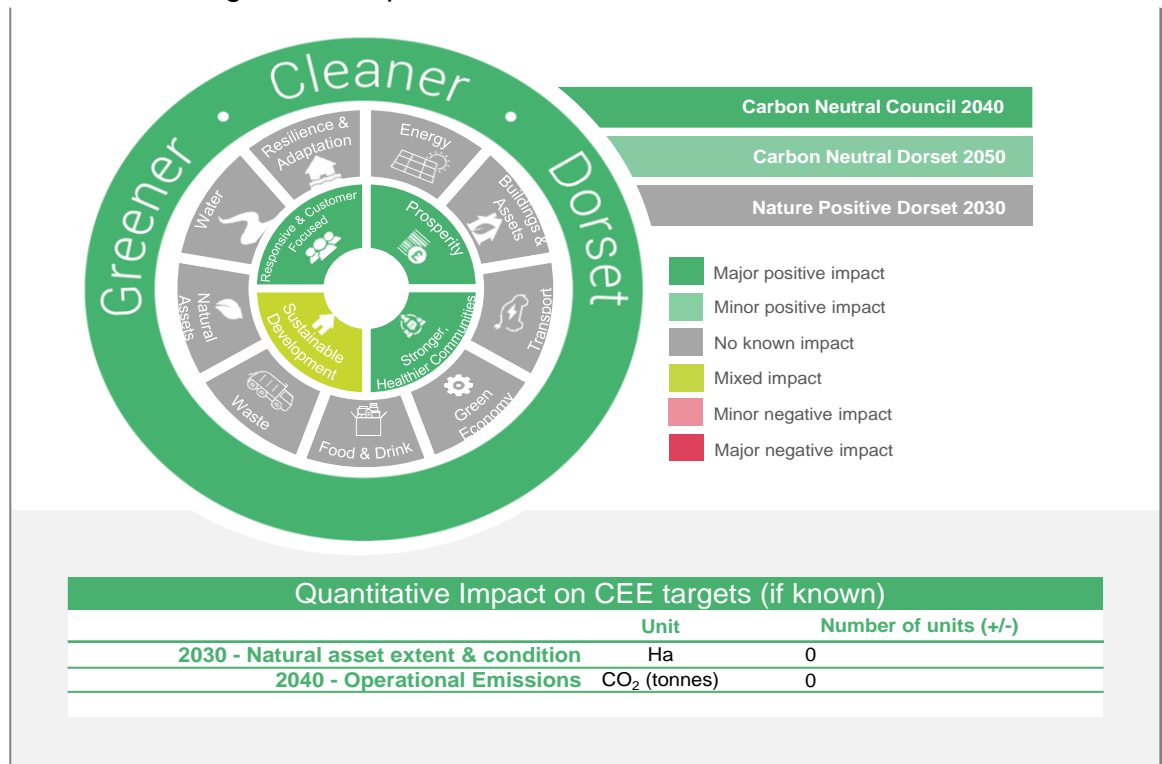
1.12 We welcome these findings and the recommendations and remain extremely ambitious for all our children. We are naturally delighted that typically; children and families have positive experiences and continue in our endeavour to ensure this is the case for all children and young people with SEND and their families.

2. Financial Implications

There are no significant financial implications as the actions we have proposed can be met through existing budgets.

3. Natural Environment, Climate & Ecology Implications

There are no significant implications.



4. Well-being and Health Implications

The outcome of the inspection and the plan we have agreed to meet the recommendations are explicitly designed to have a positive impact on wellbeing and health, particularly for children, young people, and families with SEND.

None Risk Assessment

- 5.1 **HAVING CONSIDERED:** the risks associated with this decision; the level of risk has been identified as:

Current Risk: Low

Residual Risk: Low

6. Equalities Impact Assessment

The recommendations and actions seek to support and enhance equality and equity for children and young people with SEND and their families.

Appendices

Appendix 1 – Dorset Local Area SEND Inspection Report

Appendix 2 – SEND Inspection Delivery Plan May 2024

Appendix 3 – SEND SEF

Background Papers

[Local Area SEND Inspection Framework](#)

9. Report Sign Off

- 11.1 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)

Area SEND inspection of Dorset Local Area Partnership

Inspection dates: 11 to 15 March 2024

Dates of previous inspection: 23 to 27 January 2017

Inspection outcome

The local area partnership's special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) arrangements typically lead to positive experiences and outcomes for children and young people with SEND. The local area partnership is taking action where improvements are needed.

The next full area SEND inspection will be within approximately five years.

Ofsted and the Quality Care Commission (CQC) ask that the local area partnership updates and publishes its strategic plan based on the recommendations set out in this report.

Information about the local area partnership

Dorset Council and the NHS Dorset Integrated Care Board (ICB) are jointly responsible for the planning and commissioning of services for children and young people with SEND in Dorset.

The commissioning of health services changed across England in 2022. On 1 July 2022, NHS Dorset ICB became responsible for the commissioning of health services in Dorset.

On the 1 April 2019, Dorset local authority's boundaries changed. Dorset's boundaries changed to form Dorset, and Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole local authorities. The executive director for children's services has been in post for a sustained period of time. There have been more recent changes to some senior leadership posts in the local authority services for children and families and within the ICB.

Dorset Council commissions a range of alternative provision (AP). These providers offer education for children or young people who have, for example, been unable to attend a school due to their social, emotional or medical needs, and for those who have been, or may be at risk of, being permanently excluded. The local area partnership publishes a directory of AP that it has checked for suitability. This includes providers such as four local authority learning centres and a number of independent providers.

What is it like to be a child or young person with SEND in this area?

Children and young people with SEND and their families are placed at the heart of all that leaders do. Effective co-production across the partnership ensures that the needs of children and young people lead decision-making. This culture of working together results in continual improvement to secure the best possible outcomes for children, young people and their families. These outcomes are clearly focused on education, employment, more independent living, participating in society and being as healthy as possible across education, health and care.

The voice of children and young people with SEND is highly valued. Leaders are developing creative ways to listen to young people. Examples within 'Dorset Youth Voice' include the development of the Young Ambassadors role, Dorset Youth Council and the Vision Support Service Student Council. Engagement with the DPCC (Dorset Parent and Carers Council, which is Dorset's parent carer forum) ensures highly effective two-way communication between families and the partnership. Consequently, many parents and carers feel they are true partners when planning their own provision and improvements generally. Parents, carers, children and young people typically speak positively about how they are supported to have better experiences.

The children and young people with SEND who are most vulnerable have their views represented well in shaping the support they receive. This is exemplified by the commissioning of AP and education other than at school provision, as well as for those in care. Particular groups, such as those who do not communicate with words or live out of the local area, are given particular attention. Long-term permanence is considered for children and young people in care. Careful planning about the right type of home for the child, both short and long term, and whether this is with family, foster care or residential care, is well-considered.

Leaders' knowledge of the children and young people in Dorset is evident. Even so, the partnership continues to explore innovative approaches to ensure that children, young people and their families can get the right help at the right time. The co-design of strategies such as the Belonging Framework and the Birth to Settled Adulthood plan have evolved from the partnership's knowledge of their children and young people. This knowledge is shared by the full range of partners, including practitioners and the DPCC. However, this could be strengthened further by more adept use of the data and information available to leaders. In turn, this will further improve the work already started to meet the needs and aspirations of young people as they transition into post-16 destinations and beyond.

Children and young people, as well as their families, are growing in confidence in local services. This is a result of local area leaders developing a knowledgeable workforce across the multi-agency partnership. Creative strategies and approaches are implemented successfully because people have the right expertise. Leaders have focused on making sure that any new plans are sustainable.

The shared aim of the local area is to improve the experience of children and young people who are placed in AP. This ambitious vision is strongly rooted in the Belonging Framework. Leaders ensure that AP is subject to a robust quality assurance process. This provides the necessary assurances about managing risk and safeguarding, including monitoring attendance. The four learning centres, as the local area's maintained alternative providers, are developing a best practice model. They are identifying the most effective approaches to meet the needs of children and young people, prioritising increased attendance and re-engagement with education.

What is the area partnership doing that is effective?

- Leaders in Dorset are ambitious for children and young people with SEND. Jointly commissioned services are well established. Local area partners work effectively with families to co-produce the diagnostic assessment pathway. This ensures that families are more aware that children's care and support needs can often be met without the need for a diagnosis. Leaders across education, health and care know their area well. They are committed to use what they know to ensure that every child or young person has their needs identified accurately and met consistently.
- The established culture of collaborative working across the partnership is a real strength. The locality team, including family hubs model, allows the partnership to work with the uniqueness of each of the six localities within Dorset. Staff share an understanding of high expectations, statutory responsibilities and the importance of integrated conversations about individual children and young people. SEND family workers support schools and families in the community so that help and advice is easily accessible.
- The timeliness and quality of education, health and care (EHC) plans is improving. This is informed through a robust quality assurance process. Local area leaders have mitigated some of the delays in reviewing and keeping these up to date. More recent plans show a clearer picture of the child or young person's experiences and aspirations.
- Children's transition into school is a strength of the partnership. Practitioners in early years feel valued, heard and well-supported by the teams around them. This includes portage and the early years advisory teams within locality teams, including family hubs. Additionally, family workers support schools and families in the community, so that help and advice are easily accessible. This enables a greater understanding of the community, consistency and close multi-agency working. As a result, planning and design of services are improving.
- The dynamic support register (DSR) is in development. However, at risk children and young people are being identified by multi-agency partners. Individual children and young people are risk-rated through regular meetings, and support packages are put in place to reduce the risk of escalation.
- The Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Information and Advice Support Service (SENDIASS) has redesigned its approach to responding to the increasing requests for independent information and guidance. This has strengthened its ability to manage available resources and continue to provide timely and effective

support. This includes, for example, a triage process for referrals into the service so that support can be prioritised more successfully.

- There is support in place for children and young people and their families when they are waiting on the neurodevelopmental pathway or sometimes for other assessments. Families can access further advice as well as being signposted to other support services. Practitioners receive specialist training to maximise the impact they can have when working face to face with families. For example, family workers assess the need for window locks and door sensors to provide additional safety measures while children and young people await occupational therapy assessments.
- Typically, children and young people who receive direct payments and short breaks have their needs assessed appropriately with the right level of involvement. The views of families and other agencies are sought to provide a joined-up approach and gain a clear understanding of identified needs. Effective systems are in place to oversee and monitor children and young people who are in receipt of direct payments, but, equally, families can access commissioned services if this is more suitable to them. The attendance of early help practitioners at annual reviews results in the ability to re-explore family needs, should these needs escalate or change.
- Many children and young people receive an effective service from speech and language therapists. The 'Balanced System' is being embedded through pre-school provisions, and there are currently no children waiting for an assessment. The 'Ready, S.T.E.A.D.I, Chat' sessions are available across the local area, both virtually and face to face. Children are benefiting from an initial triage appointment, with a communication plan provided. The necessary onward pathway can then be determined more appropriately so that the right support is provided at the right time.
- Children and families benefit from comprehensive delivery of the healthy child programme, including the ante-natal check, with all mandated visits being commissioned. This helps to identify children's needs in a timely way.
- Children and young people can access early support for emotional health and well-being through a range of commissioned services provided by the local authority, local schools and the voluntary sector. Mental health support teams work with many of the primary and secondary schools across the local area. This is making it easier to access these services. The partnership has well-developed plans to introduce teams in the remaining schools in the near future.
- Positive investment in housing, designed with young people's personal and social needs in mind, enabling young people living in accommodation that meets their needs and aspirations. Local area leaders' clear understanding ensures that young people do not become socially isolated and instead are able to maintain positive relationships with peers and be active participants in the communities where they live.
- There is strong oversight of children and young people in care living in homes away from Dorset. They are not considered 'out of sight, out of mind'. There is

increased oversight of children's progress and experience by social workers and quality assurance reviewing officers, particularly when there are issues of concern, such as allegations made against staff or a less than good Ofsted judgement.

- Training and development across the partnership are highly effective. Leaders have well-considered transformation plans. There is significant investment to ensure that practitioners at all levels have the necessary expertise to deliver the partnership's ambitious strategies. For example, ICB leaders proactively engage with Dorset SENDIASS so that its support staff are better equipped to address questions about EHC plans. This helps to mitigate demand on services and so target the right support at the right time.
- To further improve the offer for children and young people with SEND, leaders, at all levels, reflect on their practice and decisions, seek challenge and, where necessary, make the changes required. The local area makes connections between key strategic partners, for example by engaging school leaders and the ICB in the independently chaired Education Board in order to drive forward necessary changes.

What does the area partnership need to do better?

- There remains work to do to ensure timely and effective reviews of EHC plans, particularly in older plans and to support the early identification of aspirations and provision post-16 and beyond. This is necessary to ensure that sufficiency of provision beyond post-16 can be carefully considered and planned.
- Academic outcomes for children and young people, including those with SEND, at key stage 2 and key stage 4, are lower than national outcomes. Leaders have correctly identified specific aspects to focus on, particularly within key stage 2, such as girls' understanding of mathematics and boys' writing skills. The impact of this work is not yet evident.
- The local area partnership has a wealth of data and information available which is not being used as well as it could be to plan future provision. Leaders acknowledge that there is more to be done to strengthen their quality assurance of the impact of their actions and decisions.
- There is a recognised need to increase the availability of overnight short breaks for young adults with the most complex needs. Local leaders recognise that the current arrangements to identify, assess and support children's emotional, social and mental ill health need improvement. Even so, positive co-production across the partnership, including with the DPCC, has led to an ambitious, needs-led vision. This is driving the strategy to reconfigure and develop services.
- Waiting times for neurodevelopmental assessment for children remain too long. This causes some frustration for practitioners and families alike. Although cases are assessed according to need, elements of the multi-agency assessment pathway for school-age children may take place at different times. This adds to potential delays in the assessment process, which continue to cause families distress. Young people aged 16 years and above, who are referred to the

neurodevelopmental pathway, are at risk of not being assessed before they are 18 years old. At that point, they would require a referral to adult pathways. As a result, this raises some concerns about this service being able to cater for their specific needs.

- There remain some weaknesses in the partnership’s monitoring of waiting times for children and young people accessing services, such as Gateway assessments or core child and adolescent mental health services. Local area leaders’ methods of recording and maintaining oversight of children at risk of attending accident and emergency rooms or mental health wards are not fully effective. Leaders recognise this is a gap and they have well-considered plans in place to increase the monitoring and evaluation of these processes to keep vulnerable children and young people safe.
- There are some challenges about the efficiency in referral processes. These can add unnecessary delays and barriers, such as the expectations for referrals to community paediatrics.
- The partnership is working towards establishing a more formal DSR and the necessary key-worker roles that support this to fully comply with statutory guidance. This will ensure that there is more effective oversight of those vulnerable children and young people in line with to NHS England guidelines.

Areas for improvement

Areas for improvement
Leaders across education, health and social care should strengthen their use of the robust qualitative and quantitative information they hold. This will enable them to continually analyse and evaluate the impact of their, often innovative, work to improve the outcomes for children and young people with SEND.
Leaders across the partnership should ensure that their quality assurance and annual review processes, particularly in relation to preparation for adulthood, are as robust, precise and of the same high-quality as seen in the more recent education, health and care plans.

Local area partnership details

Local authority	Integrated care board
Dorset Council	Dorset ICB
Theresa Leavy, Executive Director of Children's Services	Patricia Miller (OBE)
www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk	www.nhsdorset.nhs.uk
Dorset County Hall Colliton Park Dorchester Dorset DT1 1XJ	Vespasian House Barrack Road Dorchester Dorset DT1 1TS

Information about this inspection

This inspection was carried out at the request of the Secretary of State for Education under section 20(1)(a) of the Children Act 2004.

The inspection was led by one of His Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) from Ofsted, with a team of inspectors, including: two HMIs from education and social care and an Ofsted Inspector from education; a lead Children's Services Inspector from the Care Quality Commission (CQC); and another Children's Services Inspector from the CQC.

Inspection team

Ofsted

Leanne Thirlby, Ofsted HMI Lead inspector
Sarah Canto, Ofsted HMI
Karina Kulawik, Ofsted Inspector

Care Quality Commission

Daniel Carrick, CQC Lead inspector
Lea Pickerill, CQC inspector

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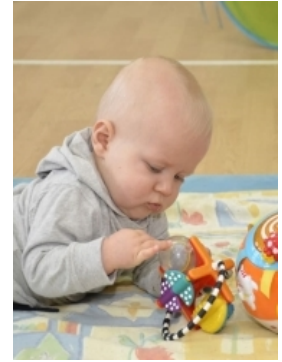
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Dorset Local Area SEND Partnership Plan

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17th May 2024

The Dorset Local Area Partnership Context

We have co-produced and agreed a framework across the Dorset Council area for all key strategic partners to collaboratively work to achieve the best outcomes for Children and Young People.

Our partnership ensures that children, young people and their families have ongoing opportunity to meaningfully participate in the decisions that affect them.

Our partnership works together to understand the needs of local children, young people and their families, so that we can commission and provide services that are inclusive and supportive, always keeping children and young people at the heart of all we do.

Our strategic partners are Dorset Council, NHS Dorset Integrated Care Board and the Dorset Parent Carer Council. Collectively, we are ambitious for our children and young people with SEND and increased vulnerabilities and are committed to providing a great education and supporting strong life outcomes.



Our aspirations for our children, young people and families

Our vision for Dorset:

"We want Dorset to be the best place to be a child, where communities thrive, and families are supported to be the best they can be.

Our Strategic Alliance has been working together since 2020. We have made real progress in many areas, despite facing a truly challenging few years. We are all too aware that the pandemic has disproportionately affected our children and young people who missed out on a lot to protect the health of the nation.

As a partnership, we are committed to building on what we have already achieved to create a bright and ambitious future for our children and young people. We have committed to working together and with our children, families and communities to ensure that Dorset is a place where all children thrive.

We passionately believe that strengthening families and communities - 'working with' not 'doing to' - is the key to unlocking potential and aspiration and this plan sets out how we will do that together.

Children and young people have generously given their feedback, shared their ideas and told us what it important to them. Their voices have shaped this plan, and we will work hard over the next 10 years to deliver their vision for Dorset."

Our Children, Young People and Families Plan can be accessed here:

[Children, Young People and Families' Plan 2023 to 2033](#)



Local Area SEND Inspection

In February to March 2024, Inspectors from Ofsted and the Care Quality Commission, visited Dorset to undertake the 'Local Area SEND Inspection. The inspection was a 3-week programme reviewing the impact of SEND services across the partnership to support children, young people and families with special educational needs or disabilities.

The Inspection made the following judgment:

'The local area partnership's special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) arrangements typically lead to positive experiences and outcomes for children and young people with SEND. The local area partnership is taking action where improvements are needed.'

We are delighted with these findings and remain dedicated to enhancing and further strengthening our partnerships to guarantee that every child, young person and their family receives exceptional experiences and outcomes they deserve. We will review and update our Partnerships' **SEND Strategy** by September 2024.

This document identifies our plans to progress these improvements.

SEND Inspection Plan

Dorset's SEND Inspection Plan sets out the partnership actions we are progressing to further strengthen and improve the effectiveness of services supporting children, young people and families with SEND.

A fully detailed Delivery Plan, with all operational activity and delivery, is held by the Strategic SEND Partnership. This Inspection Plan identifies the progress against the areas for improvement, noted in the recommendations in the published report, in Dorset's Local Area SEND Services 2024.

The SEND Partnership Board is responsible to oversee the implementation of the Delivery Plan, reporting into the Education Board and the Strategic Alliance, our executive level Partnership Board.

For each action, the plan identifies:

- The recommendations for improvement
- The actions we are taking to improve
- The outcome of the actions, which will be evidence based, reported to the SEND Partnership Board
- The timescales for completing actions

SEND Inspection Plan – Recommendation 1

Recommendation 1.0: Leaders across education, health and social care should strengthen their use of the robust qualitative and quantitative information they hold. This will enable them to continually analyse and evaluate the impact of their, often innovative, work to improve the outcomes for children and young people with SEND.

Ref	Action	Outcome	Owner	Timescale
R1.1	We will review our partnership response to early years notifications (known as Section 23 notifications) enabling sharing of relevant information to ensure and support planning for these children.	Improved quality of plans from sharing information, working together enabling better multi-agency planning and support for children and families in Early Years.	Designated Clinical Officer for SEND, NHS Dorset	July 2024
R1.2	We will establish a Task and Finish Group, led by NHS Dorset, to strengthen data to ensure effective planning and pathways. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Task and Finish Group will analyse data to inform how we use resource and enable oversight of practice 	Health needs are identified and suitable support is put in place to support learning and development.	Designated Clinical Officer for SEND, NHS Dorset	August 2024
R1.3	We will ensure data, including voices of children, families and practitioners is appropriately shared across the partnership to improve clarity of planning to deliver services earlier to meet the needs of children, young people and families with SEND <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Task and Finish Group will provide evidence to the SEND Partnership Board of how the use of data is leading to effective interventions and improved outcomes 	Voices of children and families will continue to influence and shape the services as the partnership will be fully cited on their views. Utilising data will further provide assurance to the partnership about the satisfaction of effective and timely services to our families Inspection reports identify strong information and data sharing across the partnership.	Head of Children Thriving in Education, Dorset Council	December 2024

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IMPACT: Children, young people and families with SEND have access to the right service at the right time because the partnership understands need and can respond in a timely way.

SEND Inspection Plan – Recommendation 2

Recommendation 2.0: Leaders across the partnership should ensure that their quality assurance and annual review processes, particularly in relation to preparation for adulthood, are as robust, precise and of the same high-quality as seen in the more recent education, health and care plans.

Ref	Action	Outcome	Owner	Timescale
R2.1	<p>We will ensure Dorset Council provide reminders and, where appropriate, support to educational settings to ensure reviews are held at an appropriate time.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The SEND Partnership Board will have oversight of performance of Annual Reviews held on time. 	Statutory timescales are met for phased transfers.	Strategic Lead SEND, Dorset Council	September 24
R2.2	<p>Dorset Council will ensure partners, setting and families receive a schedule of all EHCP Annual Reviews to ensure multi-agency partnership engagement. As part of this we will help the partnership understand which are a priority.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The partnership will have responsibility to prioritise attendance at the priority Annual Reviews. We will record and measure attendance, reporting to the SEND Partnership Board. 	<p>Annual Reviews are high quality, evidenced through multi-agency quality assurance audits and dip samples.</p> <p>There is evidence of high levels of attendance of partners at Annual Reviews in audit and dip sampling.</p>	Strategic Lead SEND, Dorset Council	December 2024
R2.3	<p>We will strengthen quality assurance for children preparing for adulthood as part of our Quality Assurance service.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> We will ensure there are regular and recurring multi-agency audits of EHCPs for children from Year 9. We will co-produce, implement and report on a specific multi-agency audit tool for our partnerships' Birth to Settled Adulthood Programme. We will provide assurance through the SEND Partnership Board that EHCP reviews are of consistent, high quality. 	Children, young people and families with SEND have Annual Reviews that continue to improve outcomes, reflecting the services required to meet their needs.	Head of Quality Assurance, Dorset Council	September 2024
R2.4	We will ensure appropriate reports are shared with the SEND Partnership Board, enabling performance oversight of both quality and preparation for adulthood is achieved, including annual review timeliness.	<p>Feedback from families identifies improved satisfaction of effective and timely services.</p> <p>Families report that EHCPs make a difference to understanding their child's needs and long-term outcomes</p> <p>Inspection reports identify strong information and data sharing across the partnership.</p>	Head of Children Thriving in Education, Dorset Council	December 2024

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IMPACT: EHCPs are identified as high quality through our quality assurance processes. Young people are ready for adulthood and experience good outcomes in their adult life.

There are 8 areas the partnership will strengthen:

Area 1.0: There remains work to do to ensure timely and effective reviews of EHC plans, particularly in older plans and to support the early identification of aspirations and provision post-16 and beyond. This is necessary to ensure that sufficiency of provision beyond post-16 can be carefully considered and planned.

Ref	Action	Outcome	Owner	Timescale
A1.1	<p>We will work with settings, partners and children, young people and families to provide consistent, high quality EHCPs in a timely manner.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> We will share learning from multi-agency audits across the partnership, with recommendations for further improvements We will share best practice and impact at our partnership workforce development events. 	Children, young people and families report satisfaction on the EHCP process and timescales. Quality Assurance have a robust evidence base of the provision and production of high quality EHCPs. Children and young people receive services that meet their needs.	Strategic Lead SEND, Dorset Council	December 2024
A1.2	<p>We will purposefully gather information regarding children and young people's aspirations through EHCPs and strengthen provision beyond post 16. We will also:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hold a focused Let's Talk session on post 16 to better understand the lived experiences and concerns of parents and carers Hold locality / setting-based sessions with parents and carers of children in Year 9 + with SEND Have a focused Education Board on post 16 provision and outcomes to inform a detailed plan Ensure the partnership informs the development of provision for further education and the merger of Kingston Maurward College and Weymouth College Increase supported internships Review and enhance the post 16 curriculum across the education community ensuring there is sufficient vocational opportunities 	More young people with SEND have planned next steps to move into education, employment or training beyond 16-years of age.	Service Manager Young and Thriving, Dorset Council	August 2025
A1.3	<p>We will update existing EHCs at the Annual Review to ensure they include aspirations and provision for post-16 and beyond.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> We will analyse the early identification of the needs of children post-16 to be able to provide suitable provision and sufficiency 	More young people with SEND progress into suitable post-16 provision.	Strategic Lead SEND, Dorset Council	December 2024

IMPACT: EHCPs are identified as high quality with a focus on achieving good outcomes. Young people are supported early in preparation for adulthood and do so in a planned and supported way. There are a breadth of opportunities in education and employment for our children and young people with SEND and sufficient provision.

Area 2.0: Academic outcomes for children and young people, including those with SEND, at key stage 2 and key stage 4, are lower than national outcomes. Leaders have correctly identified specific aspects to focus on, particularly within key stage 2, such as girls’ understanding of mathematics and boys’ writing skills.

Ref	Action	Outcome	Owner	Timescale
A2.1	<p>We will deliver our Key Stage 2 (KS2) plans, being progressed through our Education Strategy 2024-27 to improve KS2 attainment.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Impact review of Girls' Maths project to identify areas to strengthen and redelivery to targeted schools. • Raise awareness of anxiety around maths and support schools to address this through training. • Support all schools to access the English Hub for phonics and English Hub reading culture training. • Through our Chesil literacy project and book week. • Through the Chesil phase transfer project. • Ensure high quality CPD is available for EYFS, KS1 and KS2 teachers in literacy, to include a strong focus on writing outcomes at KS2. • Implement a Phase transfer project across all localities focused on KS2 writing. • Deliver a programme of support for all schools to address writing outcomes, facilitated by Hampshire Advisory Service. • Delivery of the Primary Elklan course, Specialist Reading Practitioner Course and supporting literacy needs and dyslexia in the classroom for schools, through specialist teachers. • Strengthen current task and finish groups and priorities in the education strategy, through the DFE, CEO of Trusts, Local Authority and Diocese Group, enhancing collaboration through strategic leadership across the school community. 	<p>Academic outcomes and attainment improve.</p> <p>Improved outcomes that meet, if not exceed national standard at KS2 maths.</p> <p>Improved outcomes that meet, if not exceed national standard at KS2 for reading.</p> <p>Improved outcomes that meet, if not exceed national standard at KS2 for writing.</p> <p>Improved outcomes in English specifically for children with SEND.</p> <p>Improved outcomes for children with SEND.</p>	Lead Best Education for All, Dorset Council	September 2025
A2.2	<p>We will deliver our Key Stage 4 (KS4) plans, being progressed through our Education Strategy 2024-27 to improve KS4 attainment.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A full curriculum review of KS3 and 4 curriculum will be carried out to quality assure the intent, implementation and impact of each subject. • We will focus on specific curriculum areas where attainment is below national average and using both local, regional (hubs) and national support, work with schools to address and influence academic data over time. • We will draw upon regional and national best practice around the teaching of young people with SEND to ensure the best adaptive strategies are in place to meet need. 	<p>Academic outcomes and attainment for young people with SEND show a continual upward trajectory towards meeting and exceeding national outcomes.</p> <p>Individual curriculum areas are robust with a clearly mapped out intent, effective implementation and clear impact end progression points that outline the core disciplinary knowledge that all students must have secured by the end of each year group.</p> <p>KS4 curriculum attainment outcomes are in line with national averages or above, year on year.</p> <p>Teaching staff feel confident to be able to adapt their teaching plans to suit the needs of all learners.</p>	Lead Best Education for All, Dorset Council Education Challenge Leads Specialist Teachers Special School outreach team.	December 2025

IMPACT: Academic outcomes and attainment improves to meet and ideally exceed national standards, with the gaps between children and young people with SEND and their peers closing.

Area 3.0: The local area partnership has a wealth of data and information available which is not being used as well as it could be to plan future provision. Leaders acknowledge that there is more to be done to strengthen their quality assurance of the impact of their actions and decisions.

Ref	Action	Outcome	Owner	Timescale
A3.1	<p>The partnership will work together to develop shared data systems to ensure we have sufficient provision and services to meet needs when they are identified.</p> <p>We will develop a system for ongoing monitoring and quality assurance of providers across the system to inform commissioning plans</p> <p>We will quality assure providers and commissioned services through a co-produced key performance framework</p> <p>We will provide assurance that provision is meeting children's needs through the SEND Partnership Board</p>	<p>All partners know what provision is suitable to meet the range of children's needs.</p> <p>Children and young people will receive appropriate provision at the right time.</p> <p>Family and setting feedback tells us that the provision supports the child to progress in their learning.</p> <p>Provision for children and young people with SEND is commissioned from providers who can evidence positive outcomes and are of good quality .</p>	Head of Children Thriving in Education, Dorset Council	July 2025
A3.2	<p>The partnership will work together to review services and measures to ensure we know where and how we are making a difference.</p> <p>We will strengthen quality assurance of our decision making to ensure they are timely and are being used to plan for future provision.</p> <p>We will provide assurance that our services are impactful by reporting to the SEND Partnership Board.</p>	<p>Commissioning and delivery of interventions and services will be informed by impact evidence.</p> <p>The partnership will know when and how decisions lead to positive outcomes.</p> <p>The partnership will know what provision is needed and have a plan to implement it.</p>	Head of Children Thriving in Education, Dorset Council	December 2024

IMPACT: Children and Young People's needs will be identified as early as possible and met through high quality services and provision in a timely way.

Area 4.0: There is a recognised need to increase the availability of overnight short breaks for young adults with the most complex needs. Local leaders recognise that the current arrangements to identify, assess and support children’s emotional, social and mental ill health need improvement.

Ref	Action	Outcome	Owner	Timescale
A4.1	<p>We will work with partners, providers and families to improve the awareness and access to the options and provision for short breaks.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> We will update our SEND Strategy to reflect the increased options to provide short break provision. We will strengthen our Joint Commissioning of SEND provision arrangements, reporting on the impact of commissioned provision through existing, established governance Boards. 	<p>Family feedback provides evidence of increased satisfaction of access to short break provision.</p> <p>Families will have access to short break provision that will best support them and particularly for families whose children have more complex needs.</p> <p>There is suitability of short break provision across the 14-25 age group.</p>	Head of Service, Birth to Settled Adulthood Service, Dorset Council	December 2024
A4.2	We will continue to transform Children and Young peoples’ mental health services so that any young person in Dorset is able to access the right type of support for their needs.	Children, young people and families are supported earlier and especially where children at risk of admission to a mental health bed.	Head of Children’s Services, Dorset Healthcare	August 2024

IMPACT: Families will have access to short break provision that will best support them and particularly for families whose children have more complex needs. Children and young people will also have access to appropriate support

Area 5.0: Waiting times for neurodevelopmental assessment for children remain too long. This causes some frustration for practitioners and families alike. Although cases are assessed according to need, elements of the multi-agency assessment pathway for school-age children may take place at different times. This adds to potential delays in the assessment process, which continue to cause families distress. Young people aged 16 years and above, who are referred to the neurodevelopmental pathway, are at risk of not being assessed before they are 18 years old. At that point, they would require a referral to adult pathways. As a result, this raises some concerns about this service being able to cater for their specific needs.

Ref	Action	Outcome	Owner	Timescale
A5.1	<p>We will deliver our partnerships' Children and Young People's Mental Health Transformation Plan already in progress:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Health and Social Care led review to progress new model aligned to place based delivery 	Children, young people, and their families report a positive experience mental health support, receiving timely assessment and support to meet their need.	Designated Clinical Officer for SEND, NHS Dorset	December 2024
A5.2	<p>We will implement the recommendations from our partnerships' 'All-Age Neurodevelopmental' Review.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The new model will be framed around four elements - access, assessment, support, and training. NHS Dorset will report on progress to our partnership and will inform the updated SEND strategy. 	Fewer Children and Young People will be waiting for assessment and will be able to access support whilst waiting.	Designated Clinical Officer for SEND, NHS Dorset	December 2024
A5.3	<p>We will include regular waiting times to the data reporting channels, accessible to the partnership and report on the waiting times into the SEND Partnership Board.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dorset intelligence information System (DiiS) will include neurodevelopmental assessment waiting times – Alerting decision makers to intervene and ensure families are supported while waiting. 	Fewer Children and Young People will be waiting for assessment and will be able to access support whilst waiting.	Designated Clinical Officer for SEND, NHS Dorset	December 2024

IMPACT: Waiting times will reduce improving outcomes for children, young people and families as they receive support at the earliest opportunity.

Area 6.0: There remain some weaknesses in the partnership’s monitoring of waiting times for children and young people accessing services, such as Gateway assessments or core child and adolescent mental health services. Local area leaders’ methods of recording and maintaining oversight of children at risk of attending accident and emergency rooms or mental health wards are not fully effective. Leaders recognise this is a gap and they have well-considered plans in place to increase the monitoring and evaluation of these processes to keep vulnerable children and young people safe.

Ref	Action	Outcome	Owner	Timescale
A6.1 Page 75	<p>We will continue to monitor and report on waiting times for core assessments and improve the varied interventions offered by Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To strengthen this work, we will create a Task and Finish Group to support system oversight and track performance data. • The Task and Finish Group will develop an action plan to improve recording practice, system configuration where possible, and routine reporting and visibility of mental health data amongst system partners. • The Children, Young People’s Mental Health Transformation Programme will consider the ways risk information is shared as part of the ‘Integrated Front Door’ work. 	<p>Improved visibility and understanding amongst system partners of key data regarding waits for assessment and intervention for the CAMHS pathway.</p> <p>Children, young people and families are supported earlier where children are at risk of attending accident and emergency or being admitted to a mental health beds.</p>	Head of Children’s Services, Dorset Healthcare	August 2024

IMPACT: Children, young people and families are supported earlier where children are at risk of attending accident and emergency or being admitted to a mental health bed.

Area 7.0: There are some challenges about the efficiency in referral processes. These can add unnecessary delays and barriers, such as the expectations for referrals to community paediatrics.

Ref	Action	Outcome	Owner	Timescale
A7.1	<p>We will review our referral process recommending improvements to the partnership.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> We will refresh our delivery options in the update of the SEND Strategy in 2024 	<p>Children, young people and families will receive timely support at the right time and have access to support across the partnership</p>	<p>Designated Clinical Officer for SEND, NHS Dorset</p>	<p>December 2024</p>
A7.2	<p>We will review the impact of our Dorset Development and Behaviour Pathway, updated in March 2024, publishing a revised pathway in the SEND Strategy in 2024.</p>	<p>Children, young people and families will receive timely support at the right time and have access to support across the partnership</p> <p>Areas to improve process are shared across the partnership with recommendations to improve the pathways.</p>	<p>Designated Clinical Officer for SEND, NHS Dorset</p>	<p>December 2024</p>
A7.3	<p>We will continue to work closely with our strategic oversight group to identify and respond to areas of improvement.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Feedback to be captured through family's experiences including the SEND annual survey. Updates to the pathway will be reflected in the updated SEND Strategy in 2024. 	<p>Family feedback will be used to monitor the impact and effectiveness of the pathways. Families will report an increase in satisfaction over time.</p>	<p>Designated Clinical Officer for SEND, NHS Dorset</p>	<p>December 2024</p>

IMPACT: Children, young people and families will receive timely support and have access to support across the partnership.

Area 8.0: The partnership is working towards establishing a more formal Dynamic Support Register (DSR) and the necessary key-worker roles that support this to fully comply with statutory guidance. This will ensure that there is more effective oversight of those vulnerable children and young people in line with NHS England guidelines.

Ref	Action	Outcome	Owner	Timescale
A8.1	We will further strengthen partnership working to explore producing a digital Dynamic Support Register (DSR). We will align this with the implementation of the Key Worker Service. Key workers will be allocated to families to support them through times of increased need.	Children, young people and families will receive the right type of support at the right time to meet their need.	Principal Programme Lead, NHS Dorset	December 2024
A8.2	We will communicate and share the revised digital DSR in the update of the SEND Strategy in 2024	Partners and families understand the DSR and how to access and use it.	Principal Programme Lead, NHS Dorset	December 2024

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IMPACT: Our most vulnerable children, young people and families will receive timely support. Partners will have shared information to support families across the system.

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Dorset Local Area Partnership

Self-Evaluation

May 2024

This is a live document, a version of which was provided to inspectors as part of the Local Area SEND Inspection 2024.

Confidential case studies have been removed from this public version to comply with data protection requirements.



Dorset



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Section Two – The Impact of Our Arrangements for Children and Young People with SEND

Children and young people’s needs are identified accurately and assessed in a timely and effective way

Children, young people and their families participate in decision making about their individual plans and support

Children and young people receive the right help at the right time

Children and young people are well prepared for their next steps and achieve strong outcomes

Children and young people are valued, visible and included in their communities

Leaders are ambitious for children and young people with SEND

Leaders actively engage and work with children, young people and their families

Leaders have an accurate, shared understanding of the needs of children and young people in their local area

Leaders commission services and provision to meet the needs and aspirations of children and young people, including alternative provision

Leaders evaluate services and make improvements

Leaders create an environment in which effective practice and multi-agency working can flourish

How we help and protect children and young people so that they are kept safe

Dorset Local Area Partnership Self-Evaluation

Section One – Introduction and Context

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What did our last Inspection find?

Our local area SEND & AP Inspection took place between 26th February and 15th March 2024.

Over the course of the three-week inspection, inspectors explored 16 children in detail, selected by them from a much larger cohort of children, to understand their lived experiences and that of their families. Surveys were issued to children and young people, practitioners across agencies, parents, and carers. We had an impressive response to these. 325 documents were shared with inspectors. The information from the surveys and the documents, as well as our Self Evaluation enabled the inspection team to develop key lines of enquiry and to test these through on-site activity.

Inspectors commended the partnership for placing children, young people, and their families at the centre of decision-making, leading to **“typically positive experiences and outcomes.”**

The Inspection highlighted the collaborative efforts of strategic partners, including Dorset Council, NHS Dorset Integrated Care Board, and the Dorset Parent Carer Council, to support children and young people with special educational needs or disabilities (SEND).

Our most recent Inspection report can be accessed [here](#).



What action are we taking?

Actions and Recommendations:

The local area partnership was advised to continue its improvement efforts and update its strategic plan based on the two recommendations provided. These are:

- Leaders across education, health and social care should strengthen their use of the robust qualitative and quantitative information they hold. This will enable them to continually analyse and evaluate the impact of their, often innovative, work to improve the outcomes for children and young people with SEND.
- Leaders across the partnership should ensure that their quality assurance and annual review processes, particularly in relation to preparation for adulthood, are as robust, precise and of the same high-quality as seen in the more recent education, health and care plans.

Our [SEND Inspection Delivery Plan](#) details how we will approach these recommendations and also includes the other areas highlighted within the inspection report, for continuous improvement.



The development of our SEF

Leaders are strongly committed to visible, strategic leadership, mutual accountability and to continuous improvement, working closely in partnership with young people and parent carers to achieve positive outcomes.

This document provides a Self-Evaluation (SEF) of our Local Area Partnership's work on this agenda, identifying impact and strengths and areas that require further development.

Our SEF is co-produced by our Local Area Partnership (LAP) with oversight of our LAP Governance. To develop our SEF, we have undertaken a range of activities including, but not limited to:

- Questionnaires, including the 2023 Parent/Carer survey, completed by 399 respondents
- Workshops and 'drop in' sessions, including 6 in-person events across Dorset and one virtual session in May 2023
- Further Let's Talk Events in 2024
- Focus Groups, including 7 sessions focussing on key areas for development (such as neurodiversity)
- Presentations, including workshop sessions and networks involving Headteacher and SENCO colleagues
- Our Local Area SEND Inspection March 2024

Our SEF is a live document, representative of the Local Area Partnership and owned by all.

Our aspirations for our children with SEND and their families

Our vision for Dorset:

"We want Dorset to be the best place to be a child, where communities thrive, and families are supported to be the best they can be."

Our Strategic Alliance has been working together since 2020. We have made real progress in many areas, despite facing a truly challenging few years. We are all too aware that the pandemic has disproportionately affected our children and young people who missed out on a lot to protect the health of the nation.

As a partnership, we are committed to building on what we have already achieved to create a bright and ambitious future for our children and young people. We have committed to working together and with our children, families and communities to ensure that Dorset is a place where all children thrive.

We passionately believe that strengthening families and communities - 'working with' not 'doing to' - is the key to unlocking potential and aspiration and this plan sets out how we will do that together.

Children and young people have generously given their feedback, shared their ideas and told us what it important to them. Their voices have shaped this plan, and we will work hard over the next 10 years to deliver their vision for Dorset."

Our Children, Young People and Families Plan can be accessed here:

[Children, Young People and Families' Plan 2023 to 2033 - Dorset Council](#)



Our aspirations for the services we deliver for children and young people with SEND

Our aim for our services is that they will enable all children and young people (CYP) with SEND and those using Alternative Provision (AP) in Dorset to be:

- Healthy, happy, safe and able to achieve their potential to lead a fulfilling life;
- As independent as possible;
- Supported to learn, thrive and achieve by their families, services and local communities;
- Able to access the same opportunities in life as other children and young people.

We are committed to achieve this vision working with children and young people, their families, and partners across the county. We want families to receive intervention at the earliest opportunity, at the right time and in the right place so our CYP with SEND can become independent adults. Our SEND strategy can be accessed here: [SEND Strategy - Dorset Council](#)

Our SEND Strategy Strands					
We identify need early and put in plans to support	Our children and young people feel like they belong at home, at school and in their community	Everyone understands what services are available and how to access them	We have access to enough resources to meet need	Young people move into adulthood successfully with the right support	We spend our money sensibly to meet need
Early Identification	Inclusion	SEND Pathway	Sufficiency and Provision	Transitions and preparation for adulthood	Managing Money and Resources

Our Priorities

We believe it has never been more important to focus on ensuring equity of outcomes for all children and young people. The pandemic disproportionately affected children and young people, widening the gap in outcomes. Our collective hope and determination can be found in our ambitious plans.

We want all our children and young people to:

- have the best start in life
- be safe from harm and have the help they need when they need it
- have healthy and active lives
- be prepared for adult life
- feel they can have their say, are listened to and are able to make a difference
- enjoy growing up in Dorset
- have a settled and happy education that enables them to achieve their full potential



- Best Start in Life
- Young and Thriving
- Good Care Provision
- Best Education for All
- Best Place to Live
- Local Family Help
- Safe at Home and in the Community

The Dorset Local Area Partnership Context

We have co-produced and agreed a [framework](#) across the Dorset Council area for all key strategic partners to collaboratively work to achieve the best outcomes for Children and Young People.

Our partnership ensures that children, young people and their families have ongoing opportunity to meaningfully participate in the decisions that affect them.

Our partnership works together to understand the needs of local children, young people and their families, so that we can commission and provide services that are inclusive and supportive, always keeping children and young people at the heart of all we do.

Our strategic partners are Dorset Council, NHS Dorset Integrated Care Board and the Dorset Parent Carer Council. Collectively, we are ambitious for our children and young people with SEND and increased vulnerabilities and are committed to providing a great education and supporting strong life outcomes.



Stable Homes Built on Love: Families First for Children Pathfinder (FFCP) through the lens of children with SEND

Here in Dorset, we believe that every child should experience inclusive services and practice and feel that they belong

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- We know that the support to children with Special Educational Needs and/or a Disability are currently supported well through our Locality model, but we can go further. Support to them and their families is a fundamental part of our Family Help offer.
- Our involvement in the FFCP allows to invest in and enhance our work with children with SEND, supported by central government grant funding. The enhancements we are making to our delivery model through the FFCP will not only allow us to continue to respond to the many children with SEND who access Social Care and Early Help, between the ages of 0-25 years, but allow us to go further in the offer of support across home, school and community.

Stable Homes Built on Love: Families First for Children Pathfinder (FFCP) through the lens of children with SEND

Our services will support children with SEND and their families in the following ways:

- An integrated front door that will include SEND expertise and operate DEAL (Dorset Education Advice Line) and be formed of: Children's Advice and Duty Teams, Educational Psychologists, Youth workers, Education colleagues, Children Who are Disabled Teams, Child and Adolescent Mental Health (CAMHS) Teams. Ultimately, whoever contacts the Front Door should be able to speak with a member of staff who will have the relevant skills and knowledge to support the conversation.
- Additional investment in Provision Leads and Caseworkers in the SEND teams to enable us to respond to need.
- Additional investment in Youth Work to enable more connection between home, school and community.

Stable Homes Built on Love: Families First for Children Pathfinder (FFCP) through the lens of children with SEND (2)

Our services will support children with SEND and their families in the following ways:

- Investment in leadership in Learning and Belonging - Our matrix management structure and approach provides specialist practice leadership in SEND in each locality area but also allows us to:
 - Flatten the structure
 - Share specialist knowledge, expertise, knowledge
 - Improve horizontal communication
 - Cross functional integration, coordination, standardisation
 - Cross functional learning
 - Flexibility – responsiveness to change
 - Allows us to be good at different things
 - Focuses us on all our children and all their needs rather than working in silos

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Stable Homes Built on Love: Families First for Children Pathfinder (FFCP) through the lens of children with SEND (3)

- Our locality structure is comprised of 4 locality teams that work across Permanence, Child Protection, Family Help (which brings together Child in Need and Targeted Early Help), Learning and Belonging and Education Psychology.
- Our learning and belonging structures include dedicated SEND teams in each locality with specific responsibilities including assessment and planning for EHCP's and delivery of SEND support and EHC plans.
- Our children tell us clearly what it is to belong from 'feeling safe', 'being part of a jigsaw', 'finding your people', 'being included' and 'being understood' as well as the physical places they belong like in their room, at the stables, at their dance class, at school and at home.
- Investing in our Learning and Belonging aspect of locality delivery through the additional investment the Pathfinder programme has brought will allow us alongside and with families and our partners create spaces and places where we all feel we belong and for us to deliver on our Belonging Strategy.
- Recruitment is underway for the additional resource to support the enhanced locality model. Reshaping of existing teams is underway and will be aiming for all new ways of working to be in place in July 2024.

Our Population

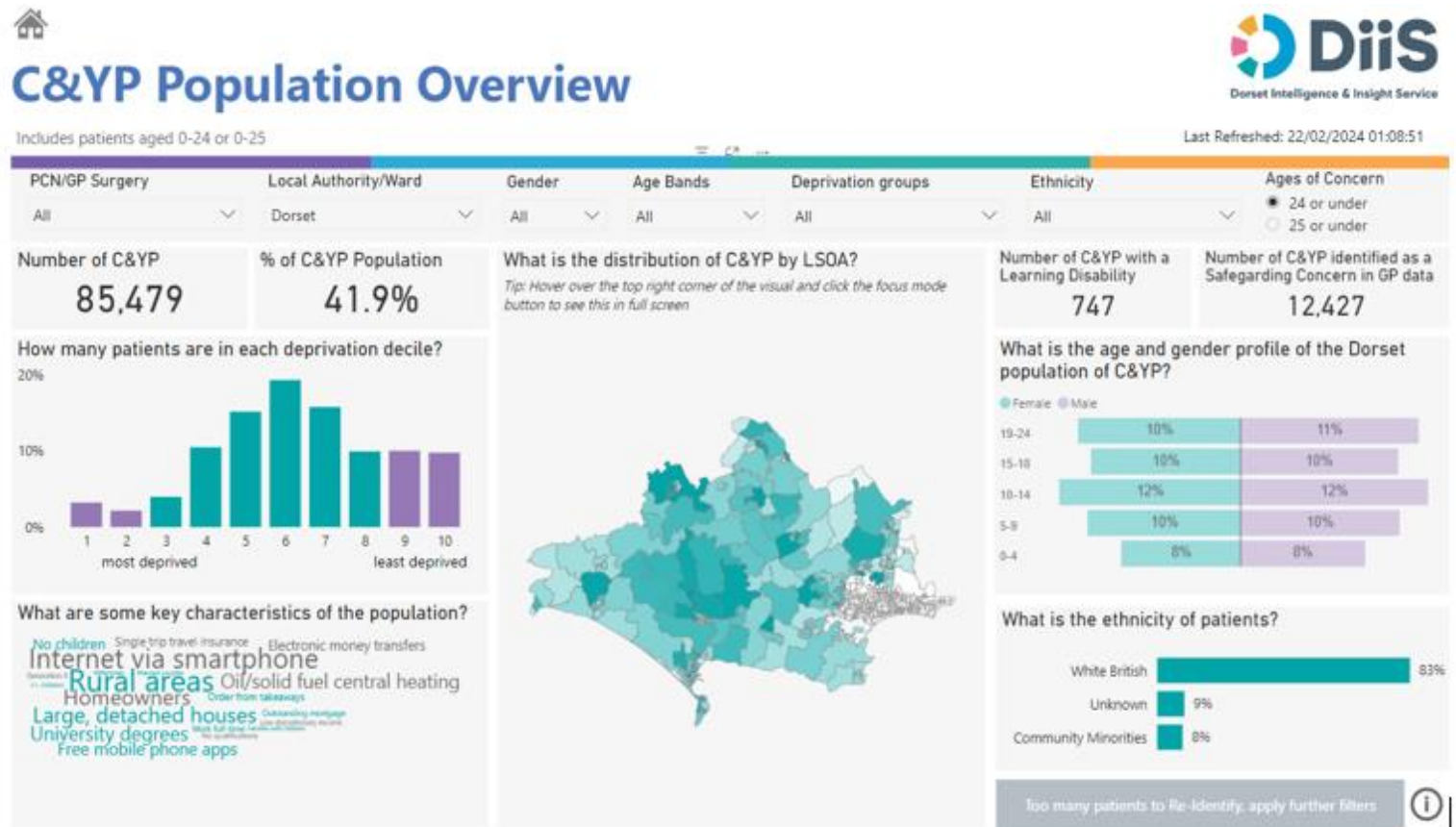
Dorset Council area has a population of 380,000 residents. Of those residents, around 88,000 are aged 0-25 ([2021 Census](#)). There are significant areas of deprivation, mostly in urban areas (mainly Weymouth and Portland) and in Bridport and the east of Dorset in Ferndown, Wimborne and Verwood. For more information on our local context: [Understanding Dorset - Dorset Council](#)

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The Dorset Intelligence Insight Service (DIIS) helps us understand clinical and non-clinical factors to support improved care and services for our children and young people.

We know that in December 2023, 1,531 CYP aged 0-25 had a Learning Disability. The Autism dashboard enables reporting of CYP with a diagnosis of Autism, those who are on the LD register and those who have a diagnosis of ADHD. However, we recognise that the true prevalence is likely higher, so we have designed and commissioned our provision to address this.

For further information on potential prevalence please see the [Pan Dorset ADHD and Autism Needs Assessment: All-Age-ADHD-and-Autism-Needs-Assessment-July-2022-3.pdf](#) (nhsdorset.nhs.uk)



Growing need for our services

We firmly believe every teacher is a teacher of special needs. Therefore, we have put improving the capabilities of our mainstream schools to support more children and young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities at the centre of our efforts to manage the emerging needs of children and young people.

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In March 2024, 3,975 children and young people had an EHC Plan in Dorset. This compares to 2,534 in 2019 and represents an overall increase of 56.9% over that time period, with the national increase during that period being 32.5%.

During the most recent Academic Year (2022/23), we received 869 requests for EHCPs (designated EHC Needs Assessments – EHCNAs – in Dorset). Of these EHCNAs, 646 were progressed (74.3%). In line with national trends, we have seen a year-on-year increase in EHCNAs and EHCPs.

In 2022/23 Academic Year, of the EHC Needs Assessment requests, 90% were made within the 6-week statutory timeline and 64.7% of EHCPs were issued within 20 weeks compared with 49.2% nationally.



Belonging Conferences 2023

[Two days of conferences, both with the theme of 'Belonging', were held in June 2023 for those working in education, health, the emergency services and the community and voluntary sector to look at improving the lives of young people in Dorset through the work they do.](#)

"The Board has been listening to young people in Dorset as we develop our work, and the importance of "belonging" has been a clear and consistent theme throughout. We are determined to ensure both high education standards and inclusion for all, including children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities."

Stephen Twigg, Independent Chair of the Dorset Education Board

Meeting the needs of our children

We are working to provide more specialist education to meet the needs of our children with and EHCP

[The Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Capital Strategy 2020-24](#) aims to create approximately 500 places across Dorset, including 280 places at the Coombe House School. The number of places has grown rapidly since inception. 281 places have been delivered to date. Of the 779 places in train, 200 are being delivered by the DfE and 579 are being delivered by Dorset Council.

Two Free School (Special School) projects underway with the Department for Education (DfE) will expand specialist provision for Dorset.

1. The Harbour School is growing to 130 places for children and young people aged 9 – 19 years old. This is for children and young people with Autism and additional needs in relation to their neurodiversity and children and young people with complex Social, Emotional and Mental Health needs. As of January 2024, 84 of these places have been delivered.
2. A planned 75 place free school which was granted a capital allocation in 2019. The DfE are creating this Special Free School in Osprey Quay which will support children and young people with SEND in the 14-19 age range. This is expected in Autumn 2025.

Additional places in resourced provision (Inclusion Hubs) are also being created, with 56 places delivered to date. Discussions are also underway about the potential for special school and learning centre “satellites” and outreach provision.

Meeting the needs of our children

	EHCP Requests (EHCNAs)	Requests Agreed
2018	625	87%
2019	688	94%
2020	598	87%
2021	688	77%
2022	769	82%
2023	869	74%

In 2023, 646 new EHC Plans were issued to children and young people residing in the local area, a total of 3,896 plans. By December 2023, 3703 children and young people were supported by CAMHS as open referrals.

Our neurodevelopmental waiting times are between 18 months and 2 years. However, we know that our families perceive significantly longer wait times from the point of seeking specialist professional support. To meet growing need, the Dorset All Age Neurodevelopmental Review has focused on our assessment offer and pathways to include support pre- and post-assessment support, alongside a waiting list recovery workstream. Our SEND Partnership Board has supported the implementation of a “Waiting Well” approach.

Children with special educational needs and disabilities in Dorset schools and settings

The percentage of children and young people receiving SEN Support without an EHC Plan has been consistently higher in Dorset when compared to national levels for many years. This gap has remained steady, evidencing the impact of continued investment in services that can be accessed without an EHC Plan (Graduated Approach).

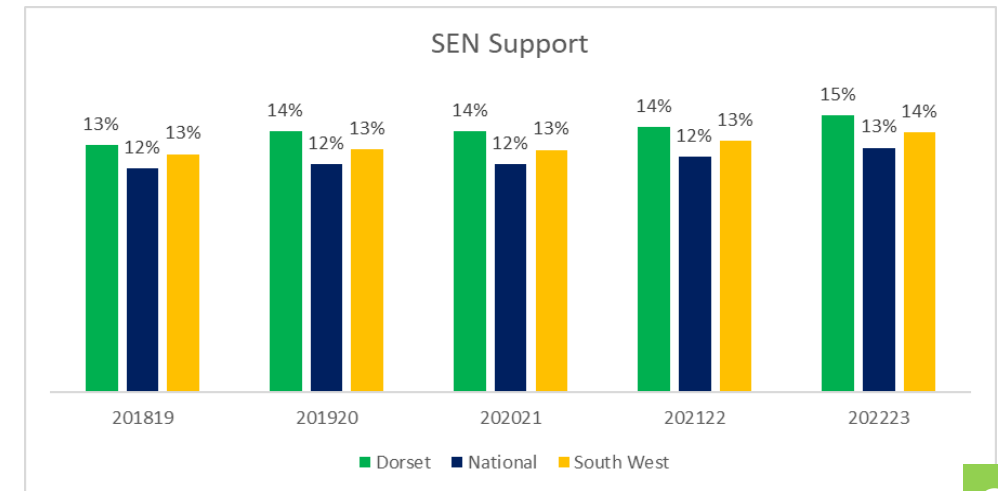
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EHC Plans (%)							
	16/17	17/18	18/19	19/20	20/21	21/22	22/23
Dorset	2.6	2.8	3.4	3.7	4.1	4.4	4.8
England	2.8	2.9	3.1	3.3	3.7	4.0	4.3
<i>Difference</i>	-0.2	-0.1	0.3	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.5

SEN support/SEN without an EHC plan (%)							
	16/17	17/18	18/19	19/20	20/21	21/22	22/23
Dorset	13.7	13.9	13.2	14.6	14.6	15.1	15.5
England	11.6	11.7	11.9	12.1	12.2	12.6	13.0
<i>Difference</i>	2.1	2.2	1.3	2.5	2.4	2.5	2.5

Since 2018, the percentage of children and young people receiving SEN support through an EHC Plan has been higher in Dorset than nationally. Over the period, the percentage of CYP identified as needing SEND Support has been above national levels.

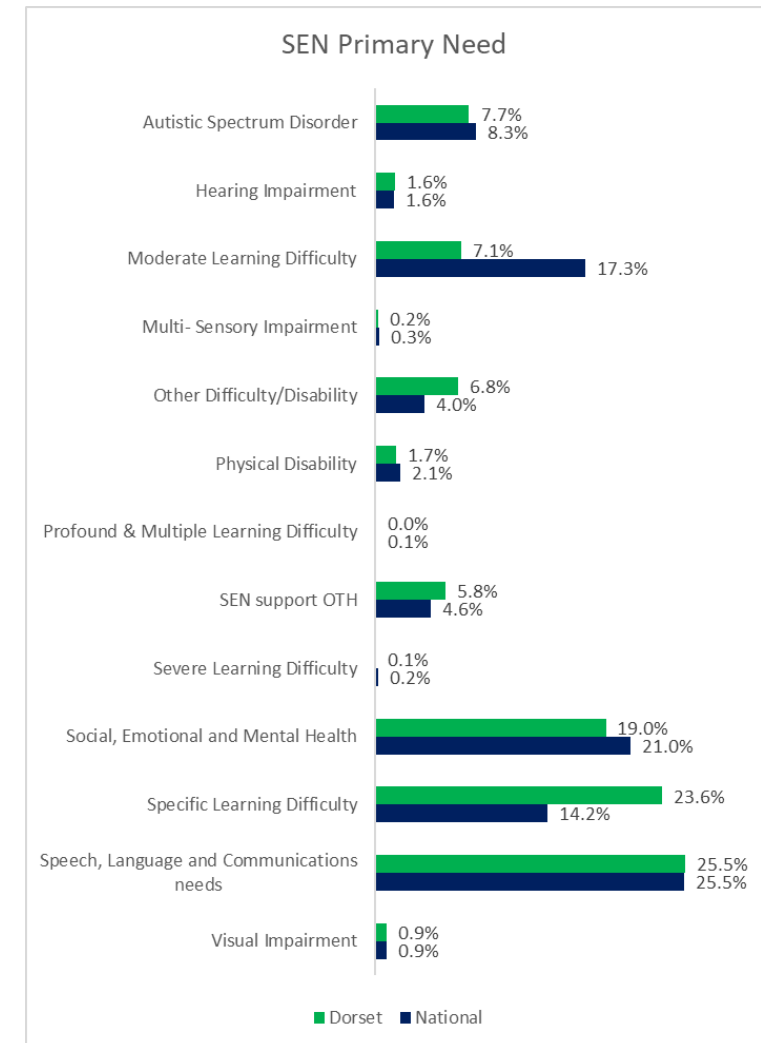
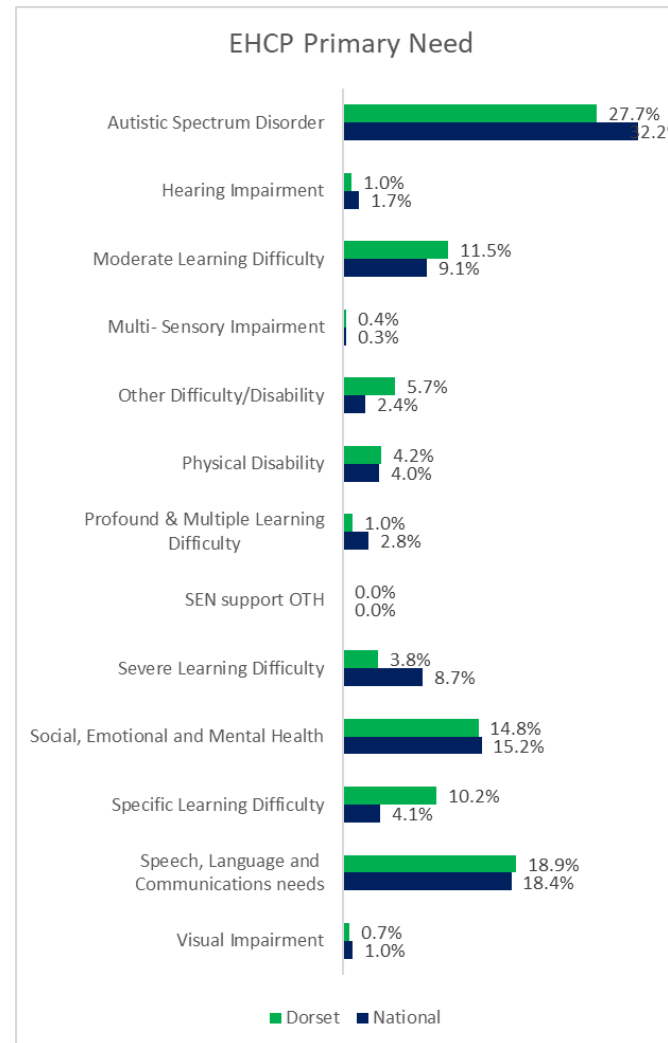
	National	Dorset
2018	319,819	2,392
2019	353,995	2,534
2020	390,109	2,957
2021	430,697	3,233
2022	473,255	3,653
2023	517,049	3,896
Increase between 2018 and 2023	61.7%	62.9%



Children with special educational needs and disabilities in Dorset schools and settings

The percentage of children and young people in Dorset with Autistic Spectrum Disorder is lower than the national average whilst those with Speech, Language and Communication Needs is slightly higher than national.

We have higher levels of CYP with an EHCP experiencing Specific Learning Difficulties and Moderate Learning Difficulties than national but significantly fewer CYP experiencing MLD without an EHCP when compared to national figures.



Academic outcomes for our children

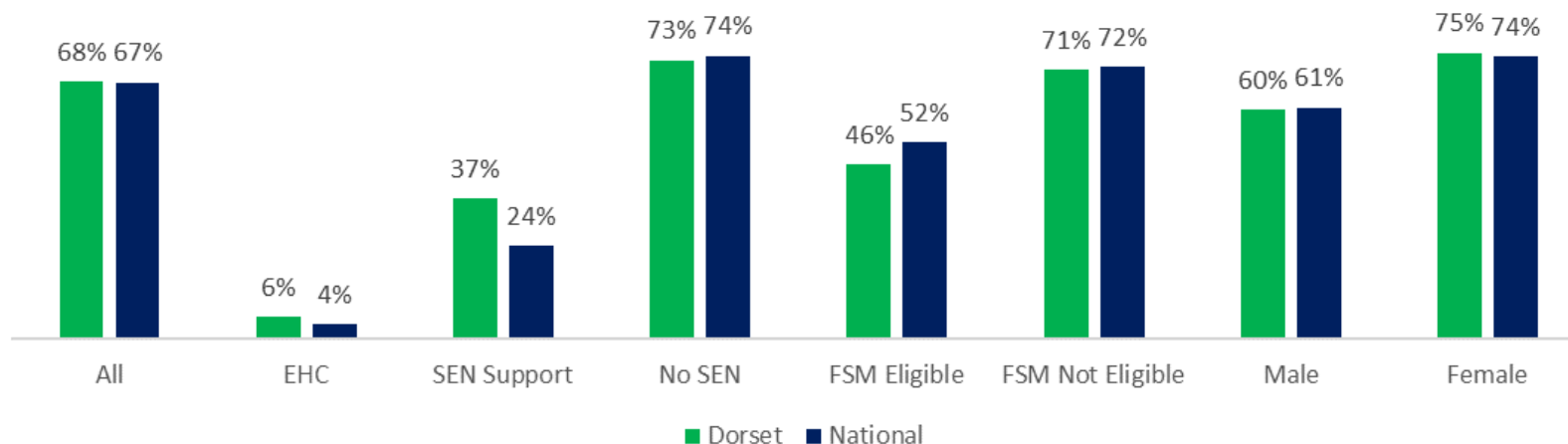
We are committed to enabling our children and young people to achieve the best outcomes through application of our Graduated Approach. 0-25s represent 20% of the total population (around 90,000 individuals). We support 159 schools and academies in Dorset, including one all-through school, 36 First Schools, 2 Infant Schools, 2 Junior Schools, 10 Middle Schools, 80 Primary Schools, 4 Pupil Referral Units (Learning Centres), 15 Secondary Schools, 6 Special and 3 Upper Schools.

Phase	Pupils	Schools
Primary	21,808	119
PRU	133	4
Secondary	25,657	29
Special	848	6
Total:	48,446	158

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Early Years Foundation Stage Outcomes

Dorset remains 1% above national for the percentage of children achieving a good level, of development. This rose 2% for both Dorset and National from 2021/22. Outcomes for children with an EHC Plan have improved and are now 2% above National, whilst outcomes for SEN Support children also remain above national levels.



EYFS Good Level of Development outcomes for groups, 2022/23

Academic outcomes for our children

We have identified themes in our data to support our development work and have co-produced through the Dorset Education Board a new [Dorset Education Strategy Education Strategy 2024 to 2027 - Dorset Council](#). This will be launched Officially at our Summer Education Conference

Specialist Teachers, Educational Psychologists and Education Challenge Leads (School Improvement Partners) work closely with our schools to identify and support good performance, including where related to children and young people with SEND.

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Overview - In the EYFS and KS1, performance is strong (3% above national in EYFS and in-line at Key Stage 1). We know that Dorset is in the lowest 20% of local authorities for Maths attainment at Key Stage 2. By Key Stage 2, achievement is 5% below for boys and girls combined (7% below for girls only). At Key Stage 4, Dorset is 4% below national for those achieving grade 5 or higher. 44% of Dorset girls achieve Maths at grade 5 or higher (6% below national). Similarly, Dorset is in the lowest 20% of local authorities for Writing attainment at Key Stage 2. Writing at the expected standard was 4% below national, 5% below for boys, 3% for girls.

Academic outcomes for our children

We have initiated a range of projects to address these issues - These include specific measures to support children and young people with SEND. For example, the Chesil Literacy Project – grew out of a reading project that gained national recognition for its impact on school and locality outcomes. It has now been expanded across Dorset. Following the success of the Chesil Reading Challenge, The Chesil Challenge has launched an exciting new project with a specific focus on practitioners making a difference. In this way, we are supporting our schools to develop their staff to have the most impact in the classroom. Transition projects focused on KS2 writing are being piloted in Dorchester with a view to rolling out county wide. A targeted programme of support for schools to address writing outcomes will be delivered from September 2024. The delivery of the Primary Elklan training to schools and the Specialist Reading Practitioner Course , will support in improving outcomes in English for children with SEND. In addition, the Dorset Girls Maths Project has focused on a range of activities to support our children.

In summary, we know that academic outcomes for children and young people with SEND, whether or not they are supported by an EHCP, are generally positive in the EYFS, KS1 and KS4, with work to be done to improve standards at KS2.

Academic outcomes for our children

Achievement Rankings – EHCPs

Academic outcomes for children and young people with SEND supported by an EHCP are generally positive.

Page 103 In the EYFS, Dorset is 28th out of all LAs for Good Level of Development, evidencing high quality support for our Early Years Foundation Stage and our commitment to giving children the Best Start in Life.

In KS1 and KS2, outcomes for CYP with SEND are continuing to improve and sit generally above average levels when compared to national data.

We know that we need to improve outcomes in Writing and Maths at KS2 for CYP with SEND and peers without SEND.

Dorset Ranking against other LAs (EHCP)		Q5 ←-- Lowest	Q4	Q3	Q2	Q1 Highest -->	Dorset 2023	Trend	Nat 2023	Nat Trend
EYFS (2023)	Good level of development					28	6%	↑	4%	↓
Key Stage 1 (2023)	Phonics			60			21%	↓	20%	↑
	Reading				36		15%	↓	12%	↔
	Writing			89			6%	↓	8%	↑
	Mathematics					27	19%	↔	15%	↑
Key Stage 2 Expected Standard (2023)	Reading				33		22%	↑	18%	↑
	Writing		97				10%	↑	12%	↑
	Mathematics				56		18%	↑	16%	↑
	GPS			66			17%	↑	16%	↑
	RWM		91				7%	↑	8%	↑
Key Stage 2 Progress (2023)	Reading		102				-4.7	↑	-4.40	↑
	Writing	147					-6.5	↓	-4.40	↑
	Mathematics	124					-5.0	↑	-4.10	↑
Key Stage 4 (2023)	Basics 9-5		116				4%	↓	7%	↑
	Basics 9-4			86			12%	↓	13%	↓
	Attainment 8		105				12.3	↓	14	↓
KS4 Progress (2023)	Progress 8		118				-1.28	↓	-1.12	↑
Key Stage 4	Destinations (2021/22)					25	94%	↑	90%	↓
Key Stage 5 (2023)	% achieving AAB+			89			0%	↓	18%	↓
	APS per entry			86			30.8	↓	32.3	↓
	At least 2 substantial level 3				55		86%	↑	80%	↓

Academic outcomes for our children

Achievement Rankings – SEN Support

Academic outcomes for children and young people working at SEND Support are generally positive, though we recognise that not enough of our CYP reach the expected standard across Reading, Writing and Maths at KS2 because they have not made enough progress during this key stage. We have designed and delivered projects to address these issues, including an innovative Maths Project for Girls.

The Dorset Education Board has commissioned specific work to address these inequalities.

Dorset Ranking against other LAs (SEN Support)		Q5 ←-- Lowest	Q4	Q3	Q2	Q1 Highest -->	Dorset 2023	Trend	Nat 2023	Nat Trend
EYFS (2023)	Good level of development					4	37%	↑	24%	↑
Key Stage 1 (2023)	Phonics			75			48%	↓	48%	↑
	Reading				59		33%	↔	32%	↑
	Writing				47		23%	↓	22%	↑
	Mathematics				39		39%	↑	37%	↑
Key Stage 2 Expected Standard (2023)	Reading			72			45%	↑	45%	↑
	Writing			78			33%	↑	34%	↑
	Mathematics						38%	↑	42%	↑
	GPS		99				35%	↑	38%	↑
	RWM	125					19%	↑	24%	↑
Key Stage 2 Progress (2023)	Reading		105				-0.9	↑	-0.60	↑
	Writing	135					-2.5	↑	-1.50	↓
	Mathematics	134					-1.7	↓	-0.80	↑
Key Stage 4 (2023)	Basics 9-5		113				16%	↓	21%	↓
	Basics 9-4			77			35%	↓	37%	↓
	Attainment 8		91				31.9	↓	33.2	↓
KS4 Progress (2023)	Progress 8		97				-0.53	↑	-0.45	↑
Key Stage 4	Destinations (2021/22)			81			89%	↓	89%	↓
Key Stage 5 (2023)	% achieving AAB+				56		19%	↑	18%	↓
	APS per entry		91				30.4	↓	32.0	↓
	At least 2 substantial level 3				45		90%	↓	86%	↓

Attendance Rates

We place great emphasis on the importance of school attendance and work with partners to support our children and young people to attend. To assist families facing challenges getting their children to school, we have recently launched a new school attendance campaign, focused on our needs in Dorset and complementary to the DfE national campaign, providing support and guidance to those needing help. Our partnership understands these challenges and has launched the campaign to tackle the issue head-on, offering advice and support to families and encouraging settings to listen and support.

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The overall absence rate in Dorset remains in line with our statistical neighbours and the South-West, sitting above the national average. Our overall absence rate remains higher than pre-pandemic levels, though absence in Dorset primary schools reduced from 2021/22 to 2022/23 and is now in line with averages nationally, against our statistical neighbours and within the South-West.

Through our new support model in the early years, we will be monitoring the attendance of children in their early years provision and supporting settings to encourage families to access their non-statutory, but beneficial, early education places.

In 2022/23, overall absence in Dorset special schools was 11.7% which was below national (13.0%) and Southwest (13.6%). Persistent absentee rates in Dorset special schools were 33.5% which was below national (38.3%) and Southwest (39.2%). Severe absence in Dorset special schools was 5.1% which was below national (6.2%) and Southwest (7.4%).



"We know some families have experienced all sorts of challenges and that each child has a unique set of circumstances that might get in the way of regular attendance in education. It's important to know you're not alone. We have support systems in place, and there are charities and community groups ready to help too."

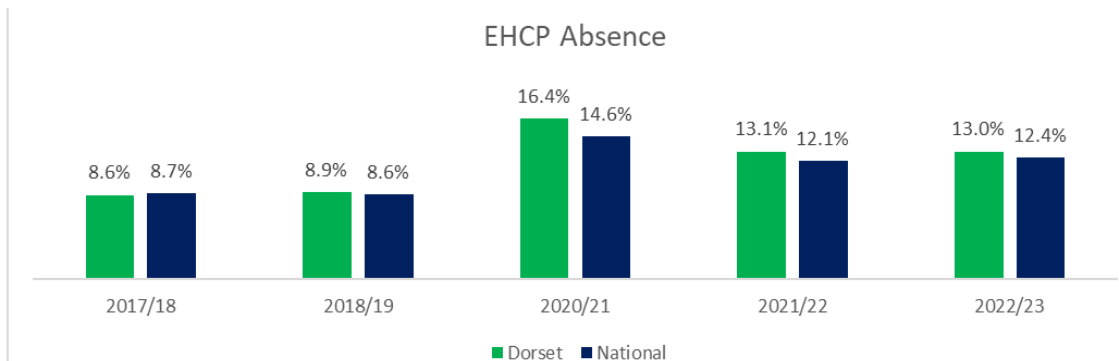
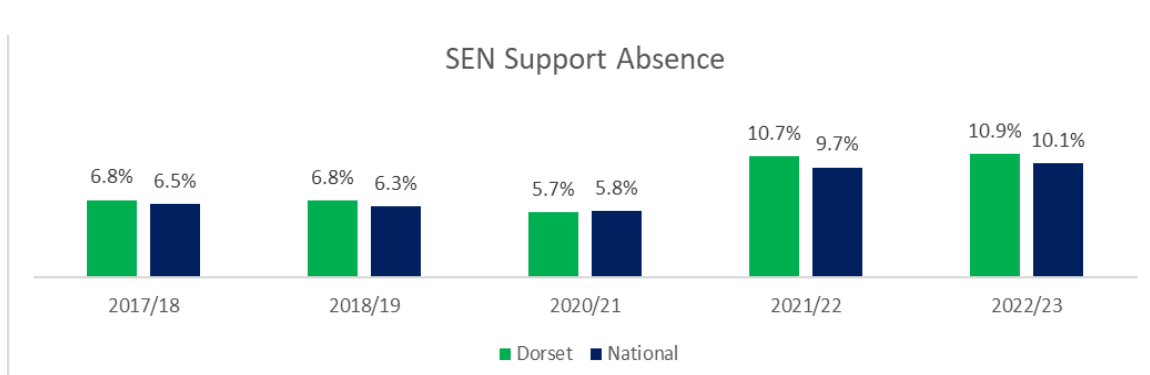
Amanda Davis, Director of Education and Learning

Attendance Rates

Primary attendance for both children with SEN support and those with an EHCP is in line with the national average. Primary attendance for children with an EHCP is better than the South-West and statistical neighbour averages.

Secondary absence rates have also reduced from 2012/22 to 2022/23, are in line with our statistical neighbours but below the national average. Secondary attendance for children with SEND support is in line with the South-West and statistical neighbour averages but below national. Secondary attendance for children with an EHCP is better than the South-West average and in line with statistical neighbours, however it is below the national average. Secondary unauthorised absence for children with EHCP is higher in Dorset than national but in line with the South-West. Authorised is just above national and just below the South-West.

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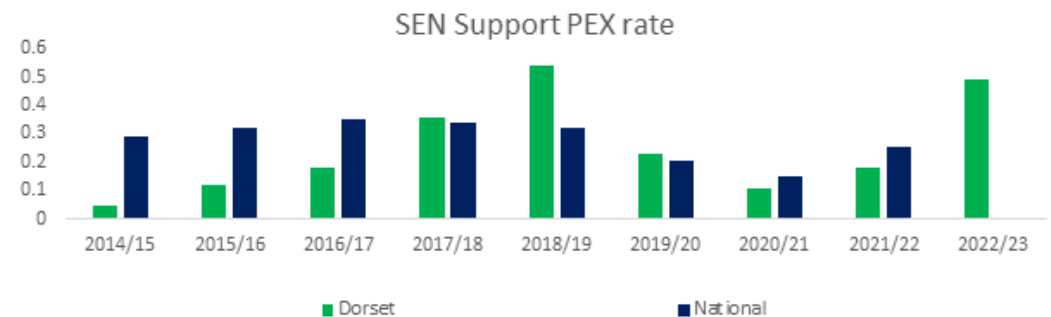
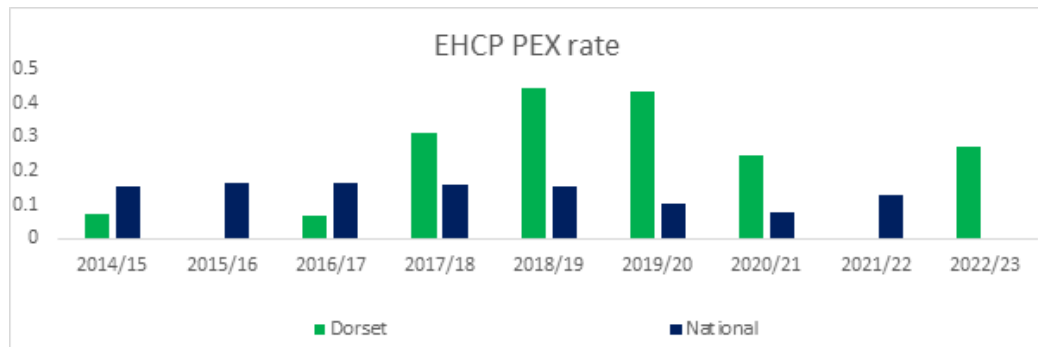
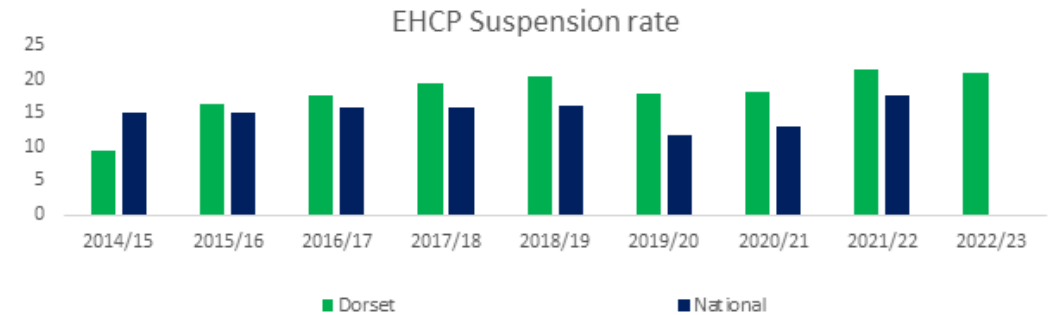
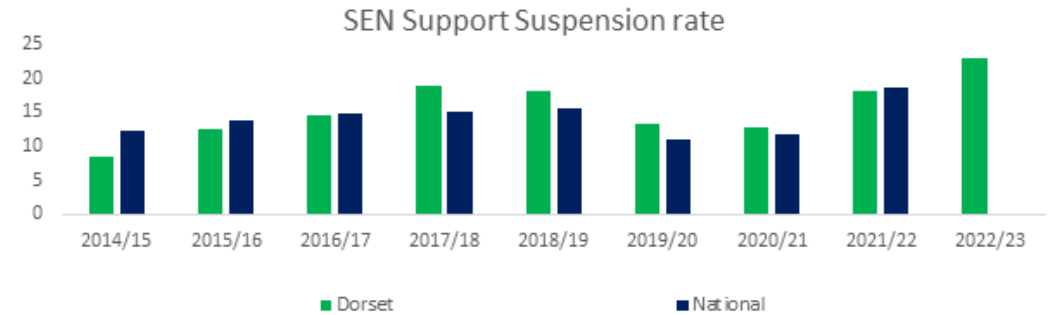


Suspension and Exclusion Rates

In 2021/22, SEN support suspension rates were just below national. Provisional data for 2022/23 suggests a rise of around 25% on the previous year. The rise for non-SEN was 36%. Suspension rates for pupils with an EHCP have been above national. However, there has been a small decrease in the EHCP suspension rate in 2022/23.

Permanent exclusion rates reduced between 2020/21 and 2021/22. However, provisional 2022/23 data suggests that permanent exclusions more than doubled. The SEN support permanent exclusion rate was below national in 2020/21 and 2021/22. The trend of permanent exclusion rates for children with an EHCP reduced from 2019/20 to 2021/22 but rose – in line with other groups – in 2022/23.

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Our strengths

Relationships are at the heart of our work in Dorset – this a key strength. We have strong working relationships at all levels with our stakeholder partners, families and communities who work together to ensure that Dorset is a place where all children can thrive. These relationships are grounded in an ethos of ‘working with’ not ‘doing to’ and can be seen in everything we do. Our strategic partnerships – Strategic Alliance for Children and Young People, Strengthening Services Board, Dorset Education Board and underpinning SEND Partnership Board, provide the system leadership for our work.

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As well as ensuring the ICB meets its statutory duties for CYP with SEND, the **Designated Clinical Officer (DCO) and Associate DCO** support and strengthen partnership working with Dorset and BCP Council as well as co production between NHS, providers, families and CYP with SEND.

Joint commissioning processes ensure that families and children support us to decide what and how we commission. We have services that are truly inclusive and designed around users rather than service needs, providing support "at the right time, in the right place and in the right way". Joint commissioning projects reduce health inequalities, barriers and advance equity of opportunity for all CYP with SEND to achieve their full potential.

We champion the voices of our young people through various means. Recent **co-production of a Student Pledge** devised with students from Dorchester Learning Centre, Budmouth Academy and Mountjoy Special School is a good example of our ongoing work to give agency to our children and young people.

We have strong relationships across the Local Area Partnership with **models of integrated posts**, bought in services and joint CPD, including SEND Tier 2 training and SEND training for Practitioners on contributing to the EHCNA process. Our partnership working is strengthened by current transformation programmes, including the **Speech, Language and Communication Needs service, the CYP Mental Health Transformation project and the All-Age Neurodevelopmental Review.**

Our strengths (continued)

We have a **well-resourced and well-used [Family Information Service](#)** that provides guidance and support for families of children with SEND, signposting them to funding and practical advice.



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Children's views are central to everything we do. We work closely with the community and voluntary sector, and Dorset Youth Association, (who have over 80 members to enable representatives to be conduits to young people, e.g. [Dorset Youth](#)) and work together to ensure that CYP are kept at the heart of decision making and get involved in opportunities to shape the services they use. School networks are also strong with a vibrant locality SENCO network to enable timely information sharing and good practice as well as each locality having a Local Alliance Group made up of strategic partners in the locality.

In addition to the FIS, we have established **[Family Hubs](#)** as ‘one-stop shops’ that can connect families – including those with children experiencing SEND – to the information and help they need as early and easily as possible. **[Family Hubs](#)** bring together staff and volunteers working across a range of different services to provide a joined-up service delivery network which ensures that families feel welcomed and are connected to the information and help they need.

We **work collaboratively to sustain and improve timeliness** of EHCNAs, Annual Reviews and quality of multi-agency advice that informs the assessments and reviews.

Our plan to improve experiences and outcomes for children and young people with SEND

Central to our plan to improve the experiences and outcomes of CYP with SEND is our [Best Start in Life initiative](#). Best Start in Life champions evidence-based approaches to improving outcomes from pre-birth to five years, recognising specifically the first 1001 days. For more information on our plan, click here: [Children, Young People and Families' Plan 2023 to 2033 - Dorset Council](#)

We have re-shaped our approach to supporting our youngest children, their families and early years settings. The ambitions for these children are high and we are continuing to work with families and partners to strengthen the offer in children's homes, communities and early years settings supporting each child to achieve their full potential. We are defining the impact measurements for this area of work alongside our families and partners.

In addition, we will continue to develop and embed the SEND Partnership Board with appropriate Local Area Partnership representation as well as agreed routes for interface with co-dependent and developing boards as our Place Based ways of working continue to develop as part of the Integrated Care Partnership and System. We have committed to a complete redesign of our local pathway for CYP mental health services that includes core NHS CYP Mental health service, developing the local crisis offer and embedding a No Wrong Door approach, in line with the THRIVE model.

We have co-produced a new proposed model of care for neurodevelopmental disorders (all age) to meet jointly agreed critical success factors as per All Age Neurodevelopmental Review recommendations. We will continue to improve access to sustainable universal, targeted and specialist support for CYP with a SLC need, jointly commissioning, designing and adopting the Balanced System® for a SCLN pathway that meets the needs of CYP.

Running alongside these and other plans is a robust SEND Quality Assurance and Practice Improvement Framework, this forms an important part of our plan to improve experiences and outcomes for children and young people.

Our plan to improve experiences and outcomes for children and young people with SEND

We want our children and young people with SEND to be healthy, happy and safe, and able to achieve their potential to lead a fulfilling life. We want them to have, and to expect the same opportunities in life as other children and young people. This is our 12-month 'plan on a page' summary.

Our SEND Strategy Strands					
We identify need early and put in plans to support	Our children and young people feel like they belong at home, at school and in their community	Everyone understands what services are available and how to access them	We have access to enough resources to meet need	Young people move into adulthood successfully with the right support	We spend our money sensibly to meet need
Early Identification	Inclusion	SEND Pathway	Sufficiency and Provision	Transitions and preparation for adulthood	Managing Money and Resources
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To increase the effectiveness of the Graduated Approach within Dorset settings To ensure CYP with SEND receive help earlier To ensure that SEND is everybody's business to enable Dorset's children and young people with SEND to thrive Completion of the All-Age Neurodevelopmental Review to achieve sustainable improvements around information, support, assessment and training for autism and neurodevelopmental conditions. System wide mental health transformation plan to improve and strengthen pathway for emotional health and wellbeing. The System Level Speech and Language Implementation Plan 23-25 for the new SLCN Graduated Response will be delivered as a whole system approach to supporting children and young people's speech, language and communication. New SEND Case Management system from Sept 23 with implementation roadmap Review and Develop S23 notification process Partners work together to proactively plan EHCPs and Annual Reviews throughout the year, and advice is received in a timely way Increase the offer of consultation from EPs and direct work with CYP The Key worker project will develop a key working model to enable any CYP 0-25 who has LD and/or Autism to have a key worker. The referral route is via the Dynamic Support Register. NHS Dorset Dynamic support register project will implement a new DSR system in 2024 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintain focus on high priority CYP (e.g. CiC, CP, EHE, NEET, phase transfers) To ensure that our most vulnerable cohorts receive an education that is suitable to their age, ability and aptitude and feel they belong at home, in education and in their community Develop and launch Dorset's Belonging Strategy and implementation plan by Oct 2023 JSNA will be updated Ensure robust processes are in place for section 23 notifications to be made by health to the SEND team Health data to inform our strategic planning as agreed and identified. CYP with an EHCP achieve in line with mainstream peers Further development of the Local Offer – completed by Summer 2024 Inclusion meetings with schools are high-quality, impactful and consistent Strengthen partnership working by having a signed and agreed SLA and Learning Centre Agreement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To ensure families do not experience drift and delay To ensure staff feel valued and are enabled to deliver great services Children and young people can access the right services at the right time in the right place Annual Reviews will include health and social care with proactive planning between agencies The Dorset neurodiversity website will be launched enabling a trusted source of information and advice that will align with our SEND Local Offer A working group led by NHS Dorset will identify key gaps in data which inhibit effective planning for young people with an EHCP and will develop an action plan to improve recording practice All Dorset schools have a trained Senior Mental Health Lead Dorset Key Worker Initiative is live from Sept 2023 Family Action will seek funding opportunities to develop their young person's offer Review and refine decision making processes by Dec 2023 System-wide mental health transformation plan will improve and strengthen pathway for emotional health and wellbeing The new SEND Strategy is co-produced with parents, young people and practitioners across the partnership area to define key priorities for 2024 and beyond 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To ensure that our children and young people can achieve their full potential A multi-agency QA partnership led by Dorset Council will collate insights from Ofsted, CQC and other regulators Children's Social Care Sufficiency Strategy to be completed by January 2024 Family Hubs rollout complete by April 2024 Develop and support a stable, well-trained workforce Develop Inclusion Hubs and other initiatives with mainstream schools – assets and property plan based on CYP needs analysis Health data to inform partner strategic planning is identified and agreed Joint commissioning Discovery report completed by Dorset Council and NHS Dorset by Apr 2024 AP review will be completed by Dec 2023 Sufficiency and Commissioning Review will set out a three-year strategy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Our children and young people with SEND achieve positive educational outcomes. A higher proportion of our young people remain in education, training and employment and a higher proportion to go on to achieve paid employment A higher proportion of young people with a Learning Disability are accessing their annual health checks from 14 years of age We will routinely seek feedback from CYP and families at different stages of our work with them An integrated delivery timeline is in place by Sept 23 to show the 3-year roadmap for service improvement that will be delivered by B2SA, AANR, CAMHS Service redesign and the AMH Review Post-16 Strategy drafted by Apr 2024 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To ensure that we can continue to meet need in the future Dorset SEND Capital Strategy will be delivered by 2026 New brokerage process and e-system will go online from Nov 2023 The DiIS development plan will deliver a suite of SEND dashboards by April 2023, depending on the integration of date from Synergy to the new CMS

Dorset Local Area Partnership Self-Evaluation

Section Two – The Impact of Our Arrangements

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Children and young people's needs are identified accurately and assessed in a timely and effective way

What do we know about the impact of our arrangements?

- We have seen a decrease in the number of complaints over the year about timeliness of EHC needs assessments.
- Our partnership has produced and published the Dorset SEND Strategy Impact Report 2022-23 highlighting progress and challenges that we continue to address. Our 2023-24 impact report will be published in Autumn 2024.



Children and young people's needs are identified accurately and assessed in a timely and effective way

Headlines and Highlights

- **We continue to perform better than our statistical neighbours and nationally when it comes to issuing EHC plans**
- The Dorset Development and Behaviour Pathway identifies the right support at the right time when someone is worried about a child or young person. The pathway was co-produced between parent carers, health, social care and education and is regularly updated so we know it is what is needed and wanted
- Children and young people with SEND who enter the care system and the youth justice system routinely have their needs checked. Agencies such as the multi-agency safeguarding hub, the police and health services are all involved in identifying children and young people's needs. Speech and Language Therapists within the service are placed within the Dorset Youth Justice Service and The Harbour Project, working collaboratively with a wide range of professionals. The CYP Speech and Language Therapy Service provides a skilled workforce able to support and meet the speech, language and communication needs of children and young people accessing their service
- The Children in Care Health Team review and ensure health assessments are adjusted according to specific needs as part of their holistic assessment
- The link Educational Psychologist (EP) and Specialist Teacher (ST) participate in joint planning consultation meetings termly with schools and FE providers implementing Dorset's Graduated Approach. Schools appreciate this universal offer

How do we know about the impact of our arrangements?

We closely monitor our performance through our **embedded Performance Management Framework** which includes operational **Service Dashboards** which are utilised on daily basis by practitioners to manage our work, and strategic oversight support and challenge through our **Performance Board**. Our **SEND Partnership Board** maintains 6 weekly oversight of performance at their meetings.

We assure ourselves of quality of practice through our **Multi-agency Quality Assurance Framework**. EHCPs are monitored on a monthly basis, in addition managers undertake dip samples and the partnership undertakes Learning Circles to reflect upon and learn from practice.

Children and young people's needs are identified accurately and assessed in a timely and effective way

Our Local Offer provides high quality information, guidance and support for families and practitioners to access. Our local service referral pathways are comprehensive and easy to access and follow. We have clear referral routes including – for example –for hearing and visual impairment, whilst our Pan-Dorset Development and Behaviour Pathway can be followed when someone is worried about a child or young person.

Parents and carers understand and can access [the graduated approach](#) to support them to identify the right support at the right time. Like our other pathways, this was co-produced with parent carers, health, social care and education partners. Each pathway is overseen by a strategic group that meets regularly to review the pathway and make recommendations/escalate issues as they arise. Parents understand the system better and how to access support as evidenced by responses to the Parent Carer survey.

Inclusion and Belonging are the golden threads that run through our work, our training offer and our communications, leading to an increased awareness of the importance of accurate and timely assessment by school partners and internal colleagues (including Early Help, Intervention and Inclusion teams across Dorset).

Children, young people and their families can access immediate advice and support including via [DEAL](#). The Dorset Education Advice Line (DEAL) was introduced with the aim to help meet the needs of children and young people with SEND, as early as possible. The phone line is available for parents, carers and professionals who support children who may have special educational needs and disabilities (SEND). This advice line is part of our Local Offer and will continue to be offered and improved as part of our [Pathfinder](#) work.

We offer a consistent range of services and interventions for emotional health and wellbeing, applying the [iThrive Framework](#). We have co-produced a [Dorset Belonging Strategy](#) and Plan with our schools and other partners. It is an overarching strategy that sets priorities for all partners across Dorset in addressing key issues, such as attendance, suspensions and exclusions, through an increased sense of Belonging. For many children and young people in Dorset, Belonging is their everyday, positive reality. Our aim with this Belonging Strategy and Plan is to make sure that this is the lived experience for all our children and young people.

Children and young people's needs are identified accurately and assessed in a timely and effective way

Our plans for the next 12 months to improve the experiences and outcomes of children and young people with SEND

We will seek ways to better include the CIC and Personal Health Commissioning teams in SEND assessments and annual reviews to ensure we are commissioning the right provision. We are aiming to reduce waiting times for our neurodevelopmental pathways and to improve support. The All-age neurodevelopmental review has looked at access to support and diagnostic services across the whole of Dorset and recommendations are being shaped into a business case.

We are listening to families and practitioners who tell us that immediate change is needed. The Pan-Dorset ADHD and Autism Needs Assessment of June 2022 told us that diagnosis has been on the increase in Dorset. We have a new Autism and ADHD dashboard that is updated weekly and reports on the number of people with a diagnosis. Waiting times for assessment are averaging at 18 months and therefore, this continues to be a primary areas of focus. We have been able to draw on some external funding to outsource some assessments to reduce waiting times.

We know that the multi agency assessment pathways can be long and drawn out leading to challenges with clinical decision making, stress for families and dissatisfaction for the professionals participating in the assessment so we are addressing this through a transformation process that is also informing the Dorset Development and Behaviour Pathway. As part of this, a system wide co-produced CYP Mental Health Transformation Plan is in progress that aims to improve and strengthen the pathway for emotional health and wellbeing, ensuring a consistent offer and range of services and interventions using the Thrive Framework. Likewise, the speech and language service is working with Dorset Council, NHS Dorset, and Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole Council to co-produce a new Dorset pathway for speech, language and communication needs (SLCN).

We are currently reviewing the Section 23 health notification process to enable services to plan for the needs of children.

Children, young people and their families participate in decision making about their individual plans and support

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Children, young people and their families participate in decision making about their individual plans and support

How do we know about the impact of our arrangements for children and young people with SEND?

We work in partnership with DPCC, SENDIASS, Chatterbox, Healthwatch and others to support children, young people and their carers to participate actively in their individual plans and support. Our SEND [Local Offer](#) has been redesigned to better support children and young people and their families. It provides engaging content for children and young people to support them to make informed decisions and be well prepared for their next steps and [was well-received by partners and the community](#).

Our families report that access and criteria to services in social care and strengthening families is better understood, largely because all new and existing social workers receive specific SEND training to improve their understanding of SEND issues and better identify, assess and meet children and young people's needs.

Our plans for the next 12 months to improve the experiences and outcomes of children and young people with SEND

We are working with DPCC and SENDIASS to ensure families participate fully in decision making and do not feel the need to appeal through the SEND tribunal process. We are working to ensure Health notifications inform more intelligent commissioning and sufficiency planning. We are embedding co-production of re-integration plans for children and young people with our Learning Centres (registered AP) and externally commissioned AP.

- **Impact rather than input** – 58 responses via the Prove It Tool questionnaires to date. The first 6 weeks follow up responses are now being received and, although numbers so far are low, the positive impact of attending RSC is clearly indicated:

What changed following the drop-in session?

What positive changes have you seen in your child's communication skills?

Table data

Option	Responses	Proportion
My child has made progress with their talking or understanding	3	100%
My child is able to communicate more with me and/or other people	2	66.7%
My child's attention and listening have improved	1	33.3%

What changed following the drop-in session?

What has changed for you?

Table data

Option	Responses	Proportion
I use strategies that help my child's communication	4	100%
I know what to do and where to go for more help	3	75%
I now have information to help me with my child's communication	2	50%
Other family members are also using strategies that help my child's communication	2	50%

What changed following the drop-in session?

Tell us anything that has changed about your child's communication

He is now using lot of sentences and words are more clear now.

-

He now has a few more words which are getting clearer

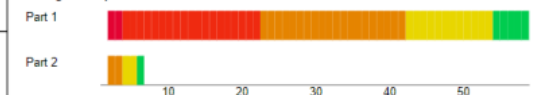
-

Some of his words are sounding clearer and easier for others to understand

How do you feel now, following the drop-in session?



Change in responses



Our Local Area Emergency Protocol Meetings (LEAPs) and Care (Education) and Treatment Reviews (CETRs) have reduced local hospital admissions and out of area placements. Additionally, the new SLCN pathway empowers parents and carers through access to information, tools and support.

Children and young people receive the right help at the right time

What do we know about the impact of our arrangements for children and young people with SEND?

We know that decisions about EHC needs assessments are made in a timely manner, 90% are made within 6 weeks enabling us to progress to the assessment process. 64.7% EHCPs are completed within 20 weeks leading to children and young people receiving provision to meet their special educational needs.

We know that 50% of the requests for Outreach from one of Dorset's special schools are met within 6 weeks and feedback shows that this has helped to meet the child's needs

"The child is in class full time"

"The Outreach is an integral part of our inclusive approach, and we would not be able to provide the level of support we do without it. X (and colleagues!) is an enormous asset to our school."

Children and young people receive the right help at the right time

Headlines and Highlights

- Every early years setting has a SENCO who accesses regular training and support. From 1 June 2024, we implemented service changes introducing a new role 'Best Start in Life Advisor' (BSILA) replacing the roles of Portage Consultant and Early Years Support and Advice Officer. Our design approach was based on what is valued and makes a difference for children, families and settings. We are increasing the number of people who are confident in the 'Portage principles' to provide more support to more families. We feel this will really help our children have the best start in life that will help them in the long term and upskill 'front line' staff with skills that can help families without delay.
- Specialist Teachers deliver training on SEND, to ensure that SEND needs are identified early. Working with Ophthalmology and Audiology, the Hearing and Vision Support Services (HVSS) work to enable learning environments so children and young people have equitable access to the curriculum. Specific outcomes are achieved by teaching independence skills such as using assistive technology, mobility, developing language and communication skills, sign language and braille. By supporting inclusion and social and emotional health through training we build capacity in schools so children and young people can stay in their local mainstream school
- Best Start in Life meetings between locality practitioners and health colleagues are held at least fortnightly where the most vulnerable children are discussed, and plans agreed for support. The Children and Young People's Public Health team complete a trigger tool when developmental milestones have not been met to identify any children who may have SEND and/or will need ongoing monitoring /assessments
- Children and young people with SEND are identified at the point of pre-assessment by Children and Young People's Continuing Care (CYPCC) based on information provided by the referrer whilst Core-CAMHS support families to initiate the EHC needs assessment process if identified as a potential need
- The Physical & Medical Needs Service work with Health colleagues (such as specialist and community nurses and Children's Therapy practitioners) and the Assets & Property Team to ensure that individual children and young people have the appropriate plans to support them in school, and that any specialist equipment or environmental adaptations are provided either before they start school, or within a reasonable timeframe following diagnosis.

Children and young people receive the right help at the right time

How do we know about the impact of our arrangements for children and young people with SEND?

Using Balanced System® Framework, families and professionals can find information, advice and contact details for local and UK resources which are suitable for all ages, to create a pathway of support. The online resource assists users in building a programme of support to help children and young people develop their speech, language and communication.

We take a whole system approach, which includes a strong focus on the universal offer across settings and services, and empowering families, to strengthen timely and accurate identification and assessment of SLC needs.

For our youngest children, the introduction of the easy access pathway for SLCN has supported the reduction in waiting times for support. We have listened to our families who tell us access to speech and language support make a difference to their child's development. We are therefore introducing Stay, Play and Chat sessions in Autumn 2024 facilitated by a Portage trained Best Start in Life Advisor and a SALT in local communities. We will be monitoring the impact of attendance at these sessions on children and families.

We are enabling better relationships between young people with learning disabilities aged 14 – 25 and their primary care provider (GP). We are working with secondary care, schools, parents/carers, primary care, and young people to co-produce resources and information to enable all partners to deliver consistent credible messaging. Our intent is to enable every service working with young people to understand the importance of a learning disability health check and to support young people as they take ownership of their own health.

We are using a key worker project to focus on young people with learning disabilities, autistic young people, and their families. Where crises happen and help is not available locally, children and young people with a learning disability, autism or both may end up in tier 4 mental health settings that are not always well placed to meet their needs. Our approach makes sure the young person and their family get the right support at the right time and makes sure that local systems are responsive to meeting their needs in a holistic and joined up way.

We have decreased waiting times for access to specialist services such as CAMHS, pediatricians and therapy (SALT, OT and Physiotherapy), reducing anxiety and supporting faster access to services.

Children and young people receive the right help at the right time

Headlines and Highlights

- We have agreed pathways in place to enable multi-agency advice to be requested to inform EHCNAs
- We hold regular multi-disciplinary locality and multi-agency resource panels to ensure effective, timely and responsive decision-making
- We have recently refreshed our standard templates between services and parent carers (including ECHNA, EHCP and Request for Advice)
- Our schools can access outreach from the Teaching Alliance of Dorset Special Schools (TADSS) and most can access Mental Health Support Teams
- A campaign to promote the benefits of annual health checks for young people with a learning disability led to increased uptake of these checks and conversations about needs
- Pathways to access support are largely clear, well-publicised and understood by partners and stakeholders
- Our Graduated Approach is regularly promoted through our SENCO networks
- SENDIASS has commissioned and employs a young person to help other young people to engage and share views relating to their education, health and care provisions
- Leaders take effective action to improve the quality of the EHC plan process. This includes continuously refining a fair and robust decision-making system to decide on a child or young person's education, health and care needs or plan, issuing plans in a timely way and checking the quality of EHC plans
- We are digitalising the process to receive Section 23 Notification from health partners enabling us to act more quickly to meet the needs of children and families.

Children and young people are well prepared for their next steps and achieve strong outcomes

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Children and young people are well prepared for their next steps and achieve strong outcomes

Headlines and Highlights

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- The Children in Care Team (NHS Dorset) aims to help children and young people with their physical and emotional health needs and promote healthy lifestyle choices. Care experienced young people up to the age of 21 and 25 with an EHCP have access to support from a Care Leaver transition nurse. The Health Passport for Care Leavers is a recent collaborative piece of work with young people that was designed to meet all needs and be inclusive of care leavers
DCH aim to support young people and their families as they transition from Paediatric to adult services through holistic annual transition reviews, by providing information, managing expectations and supporting them initially in adult services – electronic flags on notes to alert us to admissions. This involves working closely with Primary care, tertiary care, social care, education, and the voluntary sector to provide a more seamless service. DCH have a specialist transitions nurse in post. The Ready Steady Go toolkit is being used to support transitions from 13/14 years of age
- Our hospitals have specialty-specific transition pathways for children with SEND and ongoing medical needs, with dedicated clinics attended by a paediatrician and adult colleagues. For children with multisystem conditions, there is a regular transition meeting led by Will Dunford, and supported by a paediatrician and adult consultant with expertise in neurodisability. Where suitable, some patients have their ongoing care delivered by GP. There is an opportunity to discontinue medications, such as melatonin during the transition process. Families are supported by the Ready Steady Go programme, and information given over multiple appointments as appropriate.

Children and young people are well prepared for their next steps and achieve strong outcomes

How do we know about the impact of our arrangements?

We have completed the review of the internal transition pathway in Personal Health Commissioning, which has improved patient/carer experience of transitions. Our ID CAMHS teams work closely with the adult learning disability teams to ensure that transitions are smooth, particularly when discharging to community mental health teams or back to the GP, when no ongoing work is indicated, and medication is prescribed.

Case Study – The Role of our SEND Provision Leads in supporting Next Steps and Securing Strong Outcomes

CASE STUDY REDACTED FOR DATA PROTECTION PURPOSES

Children and young people are valued, visible and included in their communities

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Children and young people are valued, visible and included in their communities

Headlines and Highlights

- The role of a social prescriber is to facilitate ‘What Matters to You’ conversations, to listen and support that person to make changes in their lives and connections in the area, such as new activities, that might boost their wellbeing. One example is at the Jurassic coast primary care network. The SELF Service (Support, Empowerment, Links and Future), is helping young people by providing them with advice, guidance and links with other local youth groups and opportunities. They are working with young people’s support charities, such as Stormbreak, as well as voluntary organisations and statutory services to make it as far reaching and successful as possible within the area. Since September 2022 the team have also had drop-in sessions at local schools. So far, over 70 young people have been able to seek support from the SELF team: Social prescribing saves lives – NHS Dorset
- There is a strong focus in our education and post 16 provision on children and young people being part of their local community, whether that is through community-based activities or through local employment pathways

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Strengthening Services for Disabled Children and Young People

Our [Strengthening Services for children who are disabled programme](#), approved by Cabinet on 5 April 2022, has and is continuing to reshape provision for children who are disabled within Dorset. The programme encompasses a range of different homes and settings, providing flexible, wraparound services delivering intensive support to meet children and family needs. This approach is strengthening our wider offer to enable children to continue living at home, alongside a short break offer which reduces the need for children to have to live away from home permanently. The Harbour, our service for children on the edge of care, in care and leaving care, has had a positive impact, and this evidence suggests that a similar approach, incorporating a single multi-agency team, residential and fostering provision, community-based support and in reach provision, will improve outcomes for children who are disabled. See also pages 59-60 (Birth to Settled Adulthood).

Children and young people are valued, visible and included in their communities

Case Study – Beaucroft Special School, The College

The College at Beaucroft Special School opened in June 2023. It is located one mile from the school site in Wimborne. The college provides a rich learning experience for their Post 16 young adults.

A huge part of their learning experience is taking part in the management of enterprises. This gives them experience of work-related learning environments and develops their life skills, independence, interpersonal skills, communication skills and team-work skills and helps prepare them for adulthood. It also supports them to play a meaningful part in their local community.

The young adults support in the 1HQ Café on a half termly basis. They serve customers, prepare food and take payments. To support this the menus are visual, and they have a specially adapted visual till. The café is self-supporting and able to employ staff to work alongside the students and volunteers. Arts and crafts produced by the students are available to purchase at the café. Future plans are to expand and relocate in the very near future and to incorporate bicycle repairs.

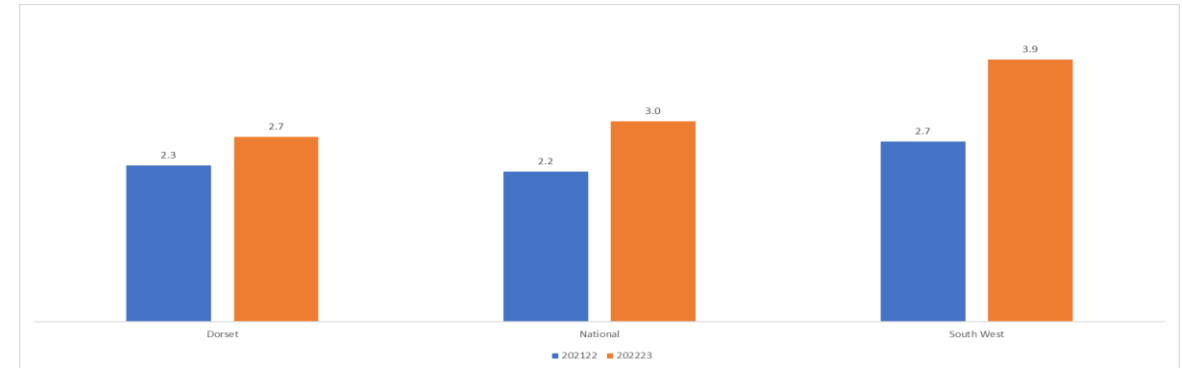
[Post-16 Enterprises – Beaucroft Foundation School](#)



Children and young people are valued, visible and included in their communities

How do we know about the impact of our arrangements for children and young people?

The latest nationally released suspensions data shows the level of suspensions in Dorset is below level at both national level and in the Southwest for 2022/23. Nationally there was a significant rise from 2021/22 to 2022/23 of 34%. In the equivalent period, the rise in Dorset was 18% and in the Southwest 46%.



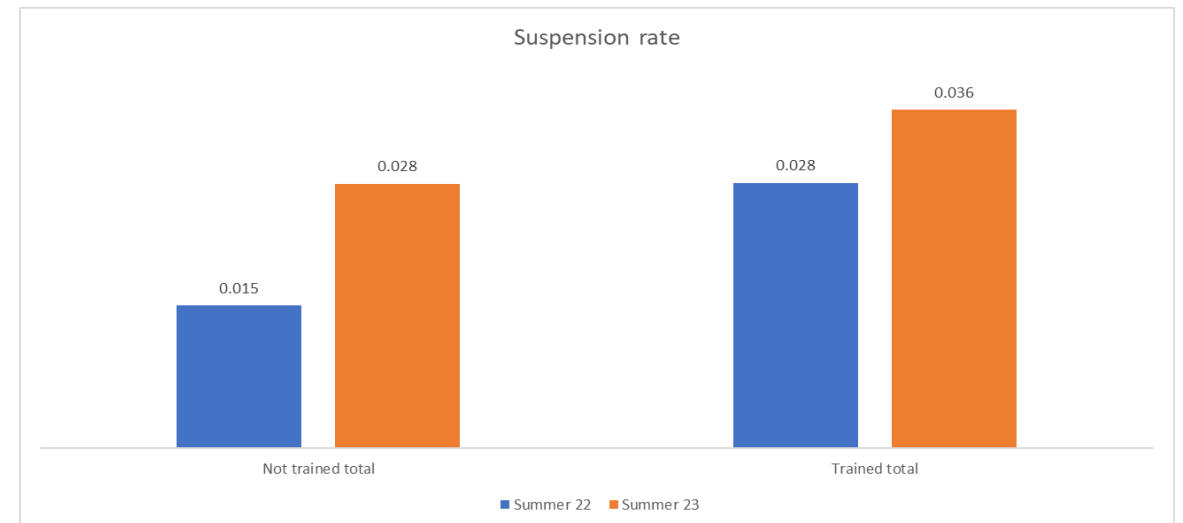
Suspension rate increase from 2021/22 to 2022/23, showing slower increase in Dorset

Headlines and Highlights

We want our schools and settings to be inclusive for all our children and young people through thinking therapeutically. Therapeutic thinking alongside relational trauma informed practice is the preferred approach to managing relationships when emotional well-being is preventing a child/ young person from accessing education. It involves using a variety of person-centred tools to explore, consider and understand emotionally distressed behaviour.

We are in the process of introducing therapeutic thinking training to early years settings.

94 Dorset schools have already accessed the training. We compared suspensions rates from summer 2022 and summer 2023. Analysis shows that in a national context of rising suspensions, the increase in those trained schools was much lower than the increase in those not trained (see table opposite).



Suspension rate comparison showing impact of Therapeutic Thinking training. Where schools have engaged with the training and approach, suspensions are now lower.

Leaders are ambitious for children and young people with SEND

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Leaders are ambitious for children and young people with SEND

Headlines and Highlights

- The SEND agenda aligns with our Integrated Care Partnership Strategy 22/23 that focuses on prevention and early help, thriving communities and working better together. Our vision and principles have been agreed by system leaders, 100 Voices (providing community insights) and case studies including CYP mental health that highlights the opportunity to work differently improve population health and use of resources. Partnership working at place can enable partners to have a **shared understanding** of local need and to coordinate **multi-agency action** to support residents. It can support **integration** of services in the areas where most people's interactions with them happen - the place in which they live or work.
- At Dorset Healthcare NHS Foundation trust, Senior Leaders are committed to continually reviewing the Dorset Healthcare offer and attend the SEND Improvement Board to have strategic oversight of the SEND system to enable Provider services to support the Local Offer.
- SEND is an integral part of all children's services provided and there is a dedicated SEND Champion within the Universal 0-19 service. Their role is to ensure that targeted services are accessed in a timely manner and to maintain a focus on SEND needs across the 0-19 services. Targeted services provided would include Speech & Language Therapy and CAMHS who offer either assessment or referral into other specialist services such as Paediatrics.
- Dorset Healthcare sit within the wider SEND system which incorporates both Local Authorities, the Acute Trusts, Primary Care, Education and Third Sector providers. There is a network of professionals who support the SEND Offer and work collaboratively to ensure services can be accessed as required.
- Dorset Healthcare are ambitious to continue to provide SEND services through Universal and Targeted services and strive to continually improve the offer.

Leaders are ambitious for children and young people with SEND

How do we know about the impact of our arrangements for children and young people?

Through a Locality Structure, leaders are well-placed to improve children and young people's outcomes. This is nowhere more visible than through the Partnership Agreement. Leaders' action plans are firmly focused on the needs and ambitions of children and young people. Locality leaders have the expertise and commitment to improve health, education and care outcomes for all children and young people with SEND. The Education Strategy 2024-27 outlines our vision, commitments and intended impact on outcomes for all Dorset children. [Education Strategy 2024 to 2027 - Dorset Council](#).

A detailed SEND Delivery Plan captures the actions that are being undertaken to improve outcomes for our SEND children and young people and those attending AP. Each Priority Action area is broken down into separate actions each with a named professional responsible for their oversight and delivery. Those Accountable, Consulted and Informed are also detailed in the Action Plan as are SMART targets and KPIs to help monitor realisation.

Our plans for the next 12 months to improve the experiences and outcomes of children and young people with SEND

Dorset Healthcare will create a senior role to support the Trust SEND agenda. This role will provide a dedicated focus on SEND across all services with an active role in improving the Provider Offer through quality assurance and practice improvement activity, review and raising awareness across the system.

The Trust will focus on adult services as well as children's services as the SEND Offer incorporates young people up to the age of 25. This will be a new way of working for adult services and will require an in-depth analysis of what services currently offer to then plan how to improve the SEND Offer across all Trust services provided.

Leaders are ambitious for children and young people with SEND

Case Study – Improving Inclusion at Wey Valley: Taking a Unique Approach

We have partnered with Wey Valley Academy, an 11-16 high school in Weymouth, to develop a programme to support young people with some of the lowest attendance in Dorset (less than 15%). We identified that most of these young people had an ASC diagnosis and high anxiety. Collectively, we felt that we could support this group to access their education with individual timetables, specialist teacher support, one tutor and one space in school. The project is at an early stage, but we have worked with the school to remove barriers and create individual solutions, rather than a 'one size fits all' approach. Centrally employed specialist teachers have captured the voices of these young people and the school is listening and putting in place as many of the adjustments as possible with the building and staffing that they have. Each young person is taking their own path to returning to school, some in smaller steps than others, but all are wanting to return to education, a big step for these learners.

The school have reported that Year 7 attendance is 1.4% higher than Year 7 attendance in 2023, demonstrating the positive impact of the enhanced transition and peer mentoring projects. The number of students in Year 11 not sitting exams is 3% lower than in 2023, and 5% lower than in 2022. They have also noted a declining trend in suspensions between terms 1 and 2 this academic year.

Wey Valley Principal Tom Neill said:

"This project has had a significant positive impact on some of our most vulnerable young people and supported them back into school. Work completed as part of the programme has given these young people the tools to better understand and regulate their emotions and to navigate the challenges they face. Our year 11 students in particular have benefited from this work and we have seen a drop in persistent absence in the cohort alongside a significant increase in Level 2 and Level 3 college and 6th form applications. We are committed to ensuring that every young person gets the best possible start in life and this programme has helped us to deliver on that commitment."



Leaders are ambitious for children and young people with SEND

How do we know about the impact of our arrangements for children and young people with SEND?

Through our ten-year plan for **Children, Young People and Families**, Education Strategy Education Strategy 2024 to 2027 - Dorset Council and a tightly-focused SEND Strategy and SEND delivery plan, we have clearly defined the shared outcomes we are working towards to support all children and young people with SEND. Through regular contact with partners (including SENCO Networks, Headteacher touchdowns and dozens of other touchpoints), we are embedding an aspirational culture of high expectations and quality across services and provision.

Through the SEND Board, Dorset Education Board, Quality of Practice and Action Group (QPAG) and a range of other structured meetings, leaders understand their responsibilities and accountabilities, including their statutory duties and their individual responsibilities in the wider area strategy. Responsibilities are delegated in line with leaders' legal duties, as captured in our Scheme of Delegation, which is reviewed at least annually. There is strong oversight for SEND decision-making (for example at panel-level) whilst dividing responsibility for thematic areas to designated leads – including our Principal Educational Psychologist who holds the role of Head of Children Thriving in Education – maintains our ambitious and clear focus on children and young people with SEND.

Our SEND (Special Educational Needs and Disabilities) Practice Standards and Scheme of Delegation (and its regular review) ensures processes for making decisions are structured so that the leaders responsible can swiftly agree to the changes that are required to improve services. Through our boards, we ensure that leaders challenge themselves and each other to improve experiences and outcomes for children and young people with SEND.

Leaders are ambitious for children and young people with SEND

Case Study - Our ambition for young people to experience the workplace, inform decisions and have their voices heard: The Takeover Challenge July 2023

To improve experiences and outcomes for children and young people with SEND, we hold a range of professional meetings. Health colleagues engage with clinical governance and CHUMS meetings each month to audit patient experience and clinical audits. Education colleagues meet to evaluate whether services and provision are improving outcomes for children and young people with SEND through our SEND Board and Dorset Education Board, chaired by former MP Stephen Twigg.

We have embraced the annual Takeover Challenge – [held most recently in July 2023](#) – putting our children and young people into real-life decision-making positions, giving them a valuable insight and experience of our organisation. We, in turn, have benefitted from a fresh perspective.

Cllr Byron Quayle - Dorset's Portfolio Holder for Children, Education, Skills and Early Help – summed up the value brought by involving our young people. *“We’ve been inspired and humbled at their bravery. They were brilliant at challenging us and sharing their thoughts on how we can do things differently. By sharing their voices and experiences with us, they will directly help to inform and shape our services to better meet the needs of young people and families.”*

Feedback from Schools: *“Just wanted to thank you for making our Mountjoy class visit feel so welcome and heard. Thank you for the hard work to make us and other young people in Dorset feel like we have a voice. The students thoroughly enjoyed being a part of what you are doing and I will encourage them to become involved in Youth Voice.”*

Our plans to improve experiences and outcomes

We are changing what we commission to support more children and young people to remain in their local school and community. This is grounded in our [Attendance Strategy](#) and also our Belonging Strategy that – amongst other things – is advocating and supporting a broad and aspirational curriculum offer, including vocational pathways, that foster a sense of achievement, independence and lead to meaningful qualifications.

Leaders are ambitious for children and young people with SEND:

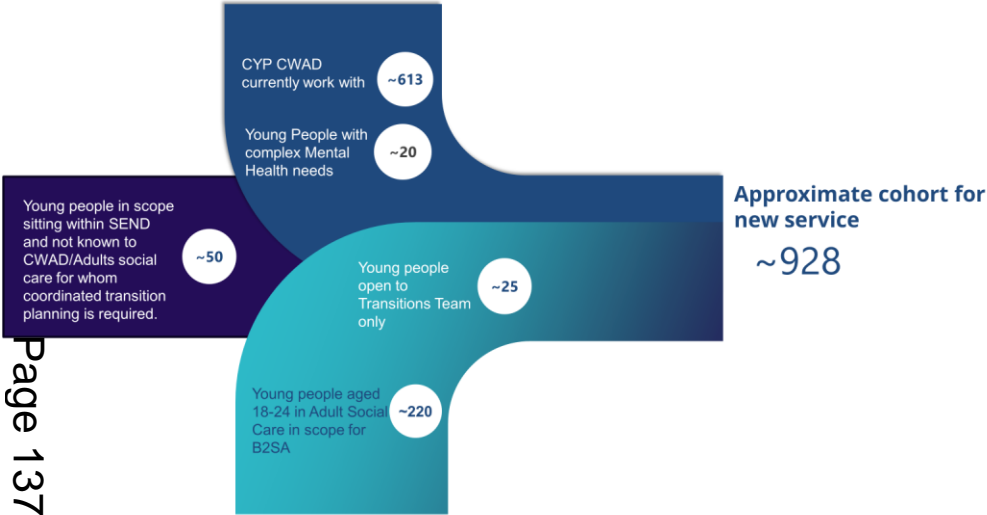
Developing our services to meet the needs of our children

Leaders continue to be ambitious for our children in Dorset, we are currently:

- Developing the Birth to Settled Adulthood partnership service extended to age 25
- Enhancing our multi-disciplinary family help and learning and belonging service as part of Pathfinder
- Opening new children's homes and a short break home for children with disabilities to enhance our offer to children and families

Leaders are ambitious for children and young people with SEND: Birth to Settled Adulthood

Needs analysis



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As at 10 October 2023

Background context

- Feedback highlighted a need to improve the experience for young people who are disabled or who have mental health issues and their families as they transition from childhood to adulthood
- The Birth to Settled Adulthood Programme was officially launched in Summer 2022,
- It has signed commitment form Dorset Parent Carer Council, NHS Dorset and Dorset Council to work together to make the necessary improvements.
- The programme includes how we commission care and support, provide information, advice and guidance, measuring success and service design.

Our ambition

- To offer children and young people the best start in life and support them and their families to build skills and strengths as they move towards adulthood.
- To achieve integration across the Integrated Care System
- We recognise that this needs to be a phased approach, creating opportunities to develop closer integration.
- Phase 1 focusses on integration across Dorset Council Adult and Children’s services.
- This approach was discussed and supported at the Health and Wellbeing Board on 20/09/2023.

What people have told us ...



Leaders are ambitious for children and young people with SEND: Birth to Settled Adulthood

Phase 1 launched on 30 April 2024

- Creation of a flexible 0-25 service model for Dorset Council
- Right workers supporting the child, young person and family at the right time
- Early planning to support transitions
- Improved support for parent carers to build resilience, knowledge and confidence in caring for their child or young person
- Practical support to build skills for independence
- Support to navigate the Local Offer, information advice and guidance
- Education Health and Care Plans play a key role in joint working and have a stronger focus on preparation for Adulthood outcomes
- Maintains and enhances statutory Safeguarding and Short Breaks functions.

Internal changes

- Management of the service hosted in Children's Services
- Shared responsibility for Key Performance Indicators
- Embedded specialisms within the service including early years Best Start in Life Advisors
- Ability to draw in expertise from other teams
- Appointment of a dedicated Head of Service for Birth to Settled Adulthood who will also hold the DSCO role.
- Align funding decisions



Outcomes Framework

We have co-produced 'I Statements' with children, young people and parents and are developing 'We Statements' as the basis of our outcomes framework.

Links

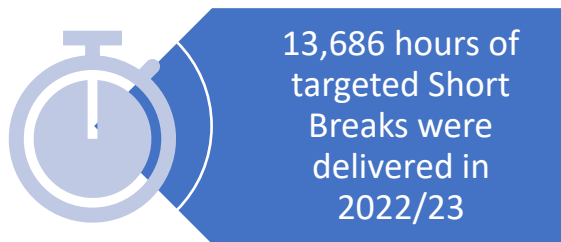
Joint Declaration video [Birth to Settled Adulthood declaration \(youtube.com\)](#)
Birth to Settled Adulthood webpage [Birth to Settled Adulthood - Dorset Council](#)
Committee Report [Birth to Settled Adulthood report September 2021 V2 Final.pdf \(dorsetcouncil.gov.uk\)](#)

Leaders are ambitious for children and young people with SEND: Short Breaks

Providers collect feedback from young people and their families to tell us about the impact of Short Breaks, here is some of what they tell us:

We commission targeted group based Short Breaks, as well as specialist and overnight Short Breaks.

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'I made friends with new people'

'This group has allowed our son to take part in a group setting with children that allows him to feel like he fits in. A safe and welcoming environment with good activities. Thank you!'

Leaders are ambitious for children and young people with SEND: Supporting our most vulnerable young people

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We are developing our in-house residential and outreach services – a multi-agency approach to support our most vulnerable young people...

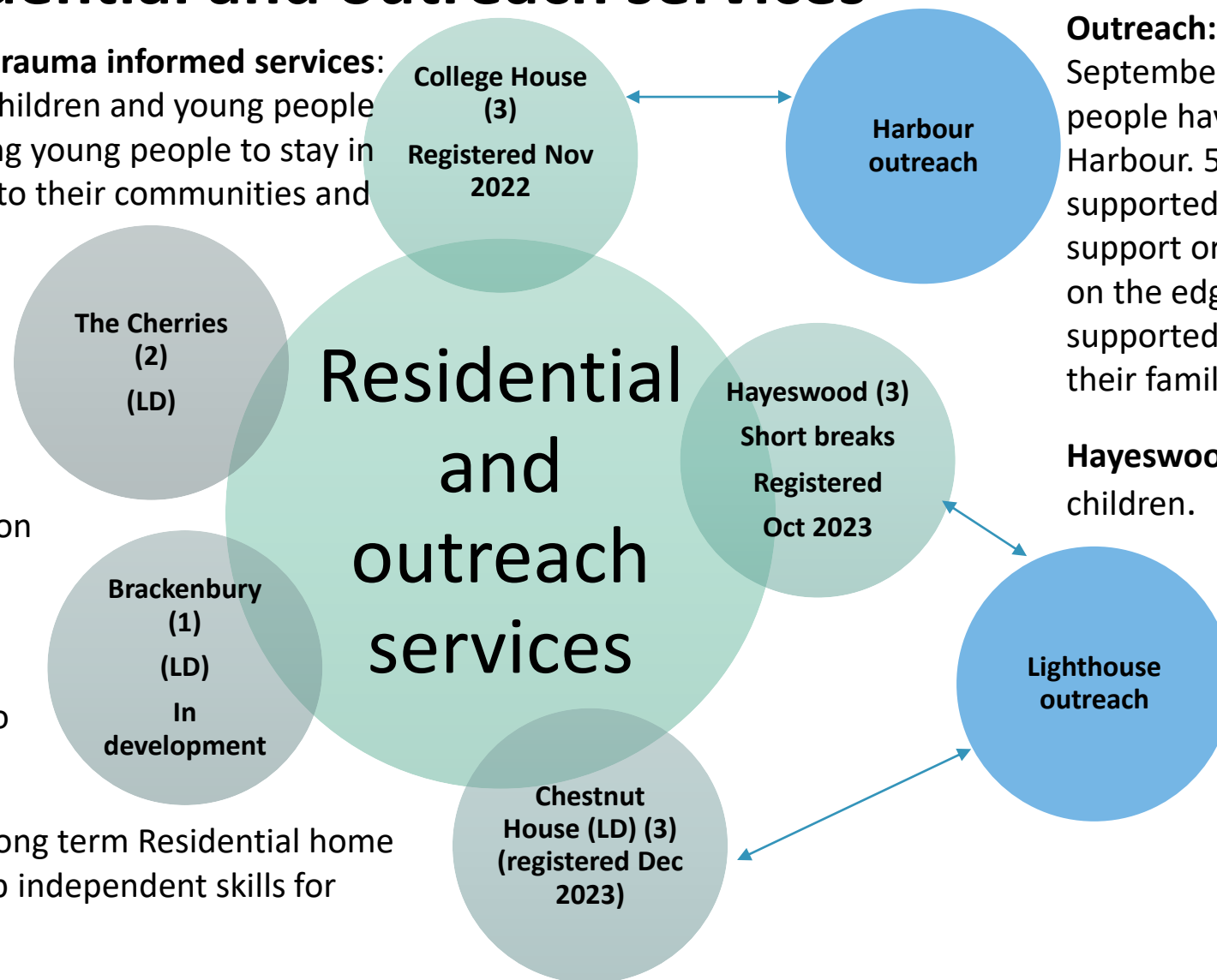
Leaders are ambitious for children and young people with SEND: In-house residential and outreach services

College house: multi-agency trauma informed services: Residential and outreach for children and young people on the edge of care. Supporting young people to stay in their family settings and local to their communities and people that matter to them.

Cherries: Close down plan underway. Children being supported with their move on plans

Solo homes: planning for the future and developing forever a forever home for children, to reduce the need to move on.

Chestnut House: Medium to long term Residential home supporting children to develop independent skills for adulthood



Outreach: As at the end of September 2023 a total of 166 young people have been supported by the Harbour. 50% of children were supported either through SEN support or EHCP. 108 children were on the edge of care and 94% were supported to remain cared for by their family.

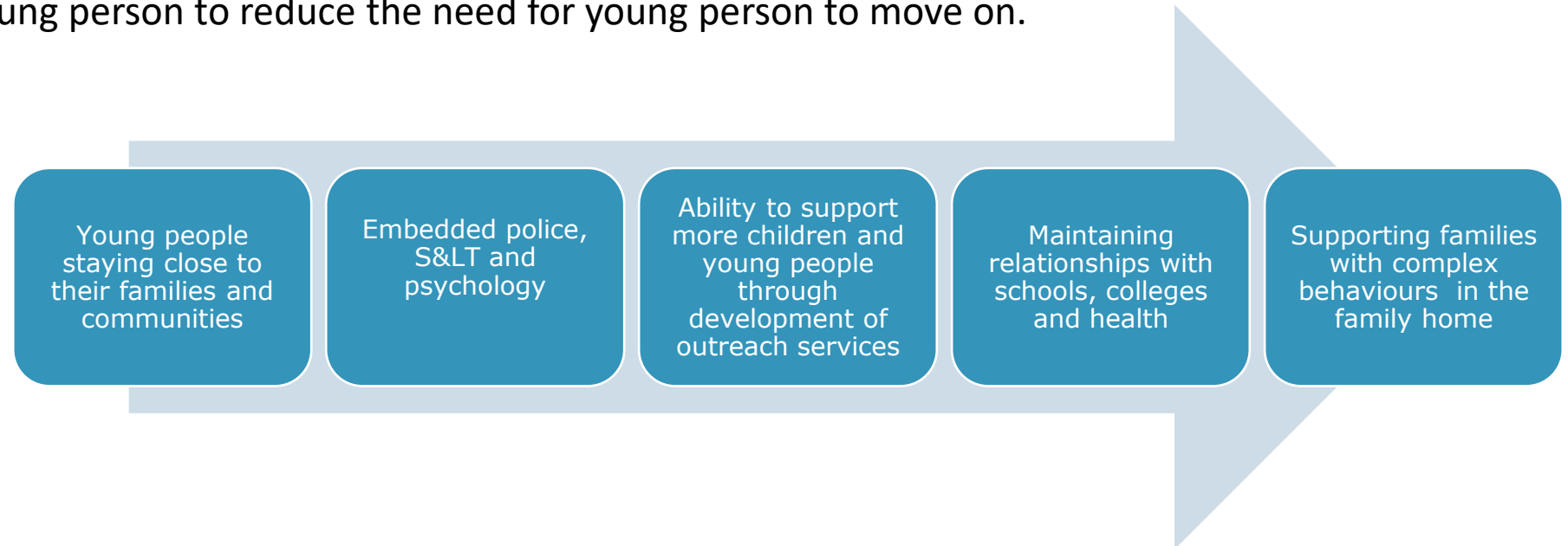
Hayeswood: Short break home for children.

Outreach: Support is provided for children and young people with disabilities. The aim is to support families and young people within their family home.

Leaders are ambitious for children and young people with SEND: Impact for young people

- Young person E was able to tell us important things happening in his life by trusted adults working with speech and language to devise a comic strip discussion.
- Young person D was able to stay close locally to mum by a robust transition to her new home. This meant relationships were not disrupted by D living away from the local area. This also meant she was able to continue attending the same school.
- Young person P has been provided with 1:1 outreach support at his family home so that mum can have some time to herself, therefore decreasing the likelihood of P coming into care.
- Young person S had very complex behaviour needs, with the intensive support from CAMHS ID we were able to support the young person to self-regulate, resulting in him staying close to his family and community.
- Forever home for young person to reduce the need for young person to move on.

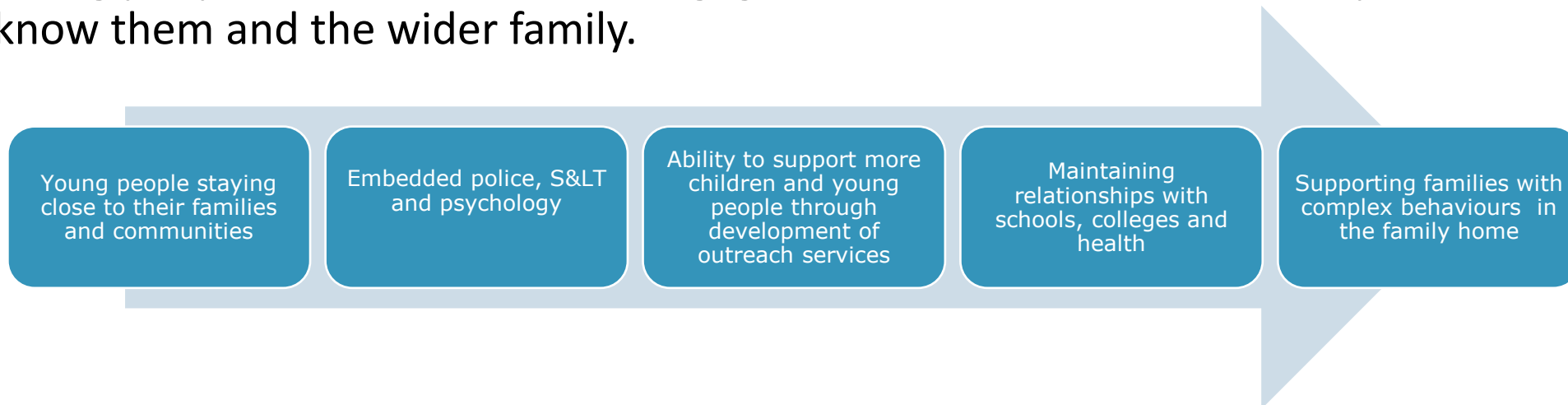
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Leaders are ambitious for children and young people with SEND: Wider Impact

- The development of the short breaks service (Hayeswood) has also supported families with outreach, so parents can have a break, helping families stay together. The first overnight commences 08/03/24.
- Using our specialist S< and embedded police we have been able to develop information that helps our young people understand what happens when they go missing and how this is reported. This has resulted in a decrease of missing episodes.
- Supporting our police colleagues to obtain more knowledge of working with SEND children and embedded police forming better relationship with our young people.
- Young people have better health engagement from local services and professionals who know them and the wider family.

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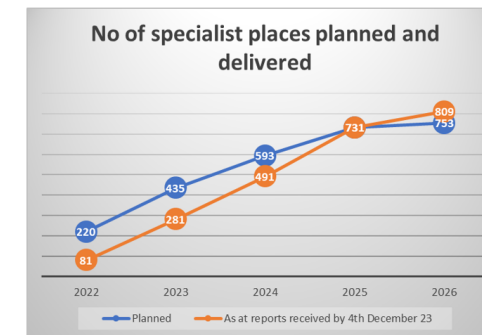
Leaders actively engage and work with children, young people and their families

Our plans for the next 12 months to improve experiences and outcomes

We are holding [100 Conversations](#) with our stakeholders to hear about their experiences and improve their outcomes. So far, we have learned that CYP and/or parent carer representation as part of recruitment panels for staff working with SEND is important so we have routinely put that in place. We have completed an annual health check of resources co-produced and developed with lived experience and each of our current system wide transformation programmes are coproduced and rooted in lived experience.

The [Family Information Service](#) has improved the ways that families, carers, and young people can access information about the services and support available through Dorset Council. We have already reviewed over 800 of our webpages to simplify the language and make things easier to understand, for example, by using plain English. We are going to continue to ensure that information is up-to-date, complete, and that links to other webpages and sites are current and that related information is grouped logically. We will do more of the things that we have been told work well, such as greater personalisation, using more pictures and videos, joining up with other organisations so everything is in one place and, where possible, supporting the booking of appointments, meetings, and other activities.

281 new SEND places delivered



We made a bid to the DfE for additional funding of £13.6M for a further 116 places on 5th Jan 24. If successful, this would mean a total 925 new places in train for Dorset children with SEND

Projects have been completed at:

- Beaucroft
- Yewstock
- Westfield
- Harbour School
- Coombe House
- St Mary's, Bridport
- Bincombe Valley
- Gillingham

Of the 809 places in train, 230 places are being delivered by the DfE & 579 places are being delivered by Dorset

Projects are in train at:

- Ferndown
- Coombe House
- Osprey Quay
- Forum centre
- Sir John Colfox
- Wey Valley
- Westfield – South Annex



Jo Twine
Interim Capital
Programme Manager

We are delivering on an ambitious plan to increase the number of special school and specialist places available to Dorset children and young people. This plan involves the creation of over 800 new places in settings across Dorset. We have delivered almost 300 of these new places to date and expect to have around 500 in place for the start of the 2024/25 academic year.

Leaders actively engage and work with children, young people and their families

Case Study – Impact of Local Alliance Groups

Our Local Alliance Groups (LAG) are strategic groups for each locality that include key partners from the local area. Each LAG sets priorities for focus for their children, young people and families and is allocated £100K annually to support projects driven by the local community and partner organisations. The aim is to find creative solutions to inclusion challenges within settings, communities and families, to do with and not to.

Some of the funding is accessed by schools directly. Approved projects range from creating dedicated sensory spaces to running additional Forest School sessions and allowing for the introduction of bespoke summer school provision targeting children with Social, Emotional and Mental Health needs (SEMH) who might struggle with transition. One recent project in a Dorset first school focused on children from disadvantaged backgrounds who were invited to attend a healthy cooking club. The funding provided by LAG enabled the project to expand so that their siblings, parents and carers could also attend, cooking healthy family recipes and then taking the meals home to eat. In December, children attending the club cooked a three-course Christmas meal, designed and created by them, and served this to their invited family members. This is just one example of how this funding has been used to support projects bringing communities together. Elsewhere, a group of 25 children at St Mary's Middle School in Dorchester received a much-needed confidence boost, thanks to funding allocated by the Local Alliance Group

[Summer school programme builds self-confidence and engagement with school – St. Mary's Middle School.](#)



A Youth Voice Officer was employed in Nov'23 to lead on hearing the voices of children and young people with SEND and those with more complex needs. They joined us from working in one of our children's homes for those with complex needs.

Given the nature of this work, there has been a significant effort made in getting to know and build relationships with these children and young people, their parents/carers and practitioners.

The team are trained in using Easy Read with Photo Symbols licenses and also use Widgets to produce resources.

We have been engaging with children and young people regarding the development of the Birth to Settled Adulthood Service, here's a summary the activity so far...

- We have delivered a workshop at Mountjoy School to 12 students in addition, 5 young people have been seen at Purbeck SEN Youth Club and 3 young people have been seen at the Horse Course

'often worry if we have enough money for things we buy and need'

- 3 young people have been seen at A Stars autism youth club and 3 visits were undertaken to EMA (Employ My Ability) and the YV Officer took part in their PSHE lesson and is attending their School Council Mtg with week.
- Visit to Wyvern School – joining their school council every half term
- Westfield School – working on B2SA with their students and teachers will gather the feedback.

Teacher feedback: *'More personalised language needed and different versions of the booklet'*

Student Feedback: *'I don't understand what you mean community, equipment etc'*

Young people told us that we need to think carefully about the language we are using, for example 'I Statements', which were triggering for some SEMH students e.g. regarding bullying and being treated unfairly.

Autism in Schools Project: Home visit to an autistic young person who is no longer in school. They have given feedback on the documents for the project and how to make them more young person friendly. Next step is to see if they would like to design some of the documents.

Education Board: Those with less complex needs who are members of the Dorset Youth Council have given feedback about the language in the Pledge for Students and have asked to include a section on individuality – ‘see me’

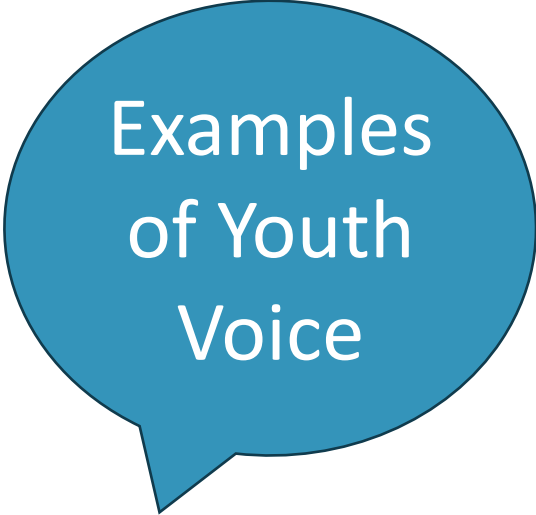
Youth Council: The Youth Council is a group for all young people including our young people with SEN.

Youth Elections: Some of our Special Schools are taking part with adapted ballot papers and Mountjoy took part in an activity about the Play Strategy, to practice voting but also telling us what play means to them.

Takeover Challenge 2023: 32 young people took part in total, 16 of those who took part were from 2 of our special schools, Mountjoy and Westfield . They took part as small groups and were supported to join us in the workplace at county hall, by their teachers and TA’s. They contributed to our **Belonging Strategy**.

Feedback from young people: “I learned how much thought went into making sure that children in care with a disability would feel safe and welcome”

Young Commissioners: Our young commissioner group includes children with additional needs



Examples
of Youth
Voice

Leaders have an accurate, shared understanding of the needs of children and young people in their local area

Headlines and Highlights

- Our Dorset Intelligence Insight Service (DiiS) links data from across health and social care throughout Dorset to give an accurate and shared understanding of needs. Various dashboards give us the information we need to understand the wider determinants of education, health and social factors to support improved care and services for CYP and predict future needs.
- NHS Dorset holds a monthly virtual panel where health funding requests and exceptional commissioning arrangements are considered. Alongside this, multi-agency SEND panels meet throughout each week to consider requests for support, providing professionals with a clear and immediate picture of needs on the ground.
- Complaints and compliments are closely monitored, with Service Manager and Director oversight, a log of learning and follow-up on agreed actions a matter of established practice
- Strong governance arrangements are in place including multi agency panels and forums including the SEND health Forum.
- We know that we need to improve monitoring of concerns around mental health and wellbeing – particularly amongst Health colleagues – to enable a better understanding of needs and to address the increase in need as the population changes.

Leaders have an accurate, shared understanding of the needs of children and young people in their local area

How do we know about the impact of our arrangements for children and young people?

We gather accurate, timely information about our children and young people with SEND through our EHC Needs Assessment process. We are consistently providing decisions within timescale (87% over the past two years, to date) and we use this information, reports from our quarterly Quality of Practice and Action Group (QPAG) sessions, Annual Review dip samples (conducted monthly) and Specialist Teacher/Education Psychologist-led SEND planning meetings in EVERY school to monitor the changing needs of the population, including using the perspectives of children, young people and families. Through our SEND Survey, Local Offer Community Events and engagement with our young people via community events, we understand the experiences and outcomes of children and young people with SEND in our area. Our robust approach to monitoring, exemplified through our multi-agency “QPAG” sessions, but built into the DNA of our Locality model enables leaders to share information across education, care and health services so we can learn from different perspectives and approaches.



Case Study – Gaining an Understanding: Chesil Youth Pride

Teams from Dorset Council’s Children’s Services – including our SEND team – and youth workers from partner organisations, attended an inaugural [Youth Pride event in Weymouth](#) to listen to the needs of a vulnerable group in our community and offer advice and support to the LGBTQI+ young people and to signpost them to available services. As well as being a wonderful and joyous event, it gave leaders an opportunity to add to their understanding of the needs of children and young people in the local area.

Leaders commission services and provision to meet the needs and aspirations of children and young people, including Alternative Provision

How do we know about the impact of our arrangements for children and young people with SEND?

Many children and young people are supported back into mainstream education or onto a positive next step because of commissioned services such as outreach or Alternative Provision. Our aim is that more children benefit from support early enough. We demand high standards of provision and work with providers to deliver better for our children.

Our plans for the next 12 months to improve the experiences and outcomes of CYP with SEND

Key to improving the experiences and outcomes of children and young people with SEND is supporting them to attend their local school or setting, whenever appropriate. We have worked with partners to develop a county-wide school attendance campaign, which is all about providing practical and supportive advice to families, through understanding lived experiences and responding as an education community.

As a local education system, we are changing what we commissioning to support more children and young people in their local school and community. This is ambitious work, some elements are emerging, and we plan to have further provision starting to come online for September 2024 onwards. For example, our two FE colleges, local schools and Dorset Council are co-creating an enhanced and aspirational vocational offer.

Leaders commission services and provision to meet the needs and aspirations of children and young people, including Alternative Provision

Case Study – Working with [Weymouth College](#) to Commission Provision

CASE STUDY REDACTED FOR DATA PROTECTION PURPOSES

Leaders evaluate services and make improvements

How do we know about the impact of our arrangements for children and young people with SEND?

We have a robust Quality Assurance and Practice Improvement process that enables education, health and social care colleagues to work alongside our children, young people and their families to ensure we deliver high quality and timely services that have a positive impact.

Through our Quality Assurance and Practice Improvement Framework, we ensure the quality, effectiveness and timeliness of:

- Educational settings' graduated approach to supporting children and young people who have SEND
- Capturing and considering the child/young person's views, wishes and aspirations, and those of their family
- Education Health and Care needs assessments, plans and reviews

We undertake a robust cycle of Multi-Agency quality assurance and data analysis which includes:

- Data analysis to identify themes and trends
- Auditing, practice improvement and learning activity
- Feedback from children, young people and their families
- Regular reviews of practice and performance to ensure continuous improvement

Our plans for the next 12 months to improve the experiences and outcomes of children and young people with SEND

- We have strengthened quality assurance and practice improvement activities, arrangements around external progress and inclusion (AP) providers. As the Belonging Strategy is embedded, we will reduce reliance on the use of AP and provide further improvements through our own local specialist provision, with more enhanced facilities in mainstream schools to ensure that young people with SEND have the best environment and resources to meet their needs, close to home within their local community. We will clearly communicate to providers and parents/carers the provision that is available in the local area, including within mainstream, specialist and through Alternative Provision. We will strengthen our business intelligence around Alternative Provision specifically to ensure we are tracking outcomes.
- Our new case management system will improve the efficiency of delivery and bring on board professional and schools to genuinely co-produce EHCPs. We are continuing to develop our digital Local Offer to provide clear, easy to use information, advice and assistance as part of a Digital Family Offer (ODFO) across education, health and care.



Leaders create an environment in which effective practice and multi-agency working can flourish

How do we know about the impact of our arrangements for children and young people?

We have clear processes and systems to support practitioners to work together and share appropriate information in a timely manner, including extensive use of One Page Profiles to form views, fully-inclusive Annual Review processes held in conjunction with PEPs for Children in Care (where appropriate) to promote multi-agency working. Leaders encourage practitioners working together in these situations to focus on the child or young person, identifying alternative solutions when existing options do not meet needs and aspirations effectively.

Through [TADSS](#) and SENCO networks, leaders ensure that expertise is shared and practice upskilled and through the promotion and use of Learning Circles, we learn from mistakes and strengthen practice. We have put in place strong systems for identifying and responding to risks to children and young people with SEND, such as transitions stakeholders group sessions, prioritizing audits for children and young people in specialist placements (including ISPs) and Alternative Provision, and joint workforce planning and development for our [B2SA vision](#).

Leaders ensure that practitioners are clear on their individual roles and how they can best work together to improve outcomes for children and young people *and* that practitioners have the appropriate skills to understand children and young people's needs and aspirations through robust supervision and performance management. In addition, we use the Dorset Education Board, SEND Board, Schools Forum, DSL termly meetings and a range of other touchpoints to ensure that practitioners working with children and young people with SEND have the right knowledge and skills to reduce the risk of harm.

"After a further meeting with representatives from Dorset today, I just wanted to email to formally thank you all for your understanding, flexibility and support with the complex case we've been collaborating on. It's been so refreshing to work with such an open and solution-focused team and for our suggestions to not only be listened to but given real consideration in the best interests of the child."

Director of SEND (Local MAT)

Leaders create an environment in which effective practice and multi-agency working can flourish

Our plans for the next 12 months to improve experiences and outcomes of children and young people with SEND

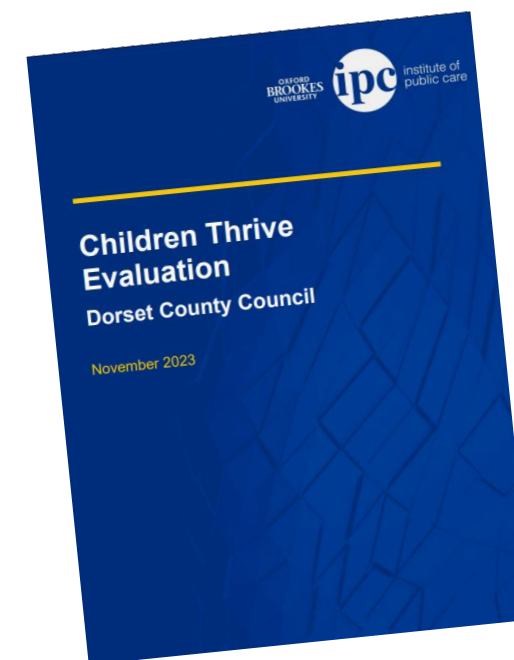
- We are strengthening our contract management arrangements to ensure oversight of externally commissioned school and college places. At the same time, we will use our Business Intelligence resources to ensure we are tracking outcomes more effectively. We will undertake further joint commissioning work to target earlier intervention, including the use of pooled budgets and a new approach and pathway for SLCN partners.
 - Every SENCO will be offered the opportunity for restorative and relational practice training during the academic year 2023-24. Schools that have already completed the 3-day 'Therapeutic Thinking' training but who have disproportionately high numbers of children and young people with EHCPs and suspensions will receive additional support to embed, implement and tailor the approach.
- We will continue to roll out our Inclusion Hub model to schools, keeping children within their school and local communities. We will review with multi-agency partners how we support children in the Early Years.

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Case Study – Dorset Children Thrive – Independent Report

Dorset Council Children's Services received a judgment of 'Good' when last inspected in October 2021. We introduced a new locality practice model, Children Thrive, in September 2020, integrating Education and Early Help services and linking them much more closely with social care practice in localities. We commissioned the Institute of Public Care at Oxford Brookes University to help us understand the effectiveness of our approach and the Children Thrive model and where there might be opportunities to develop practice as we pilot a new Families First for Children model as one of three pathfinders. The Children Thrive model, whilst being introduced in a time of unprecedented challenge, has not been static and has developed over the last three years, to pilot initiatives such as Safeguarding Families Together.

A key principle of the Children Thrive model is getting the right help at the right time. From data and cases analysed, triangulated with staff feedback, this external audit of our approach found was frequently found to be the case.



Leaders create an environment in which effective practice and multi-agency working can flourish

Examples of impact and next steps:

- our SEND Partnership Board understands performance across the partnership and supports ongoing improvement in multi-agency work, such as seeking an alternative approach to supporting families awaiting diagnosis
- SENCOs are involved in a trial of an audit tool to understand setting readiness and needs of children and families in West and East localities and this has led to feedback on feeling more confident in their leadership and practice
- Practitioners draw on expertise within their multi-disciplinary teams, to ensure the best outcomes for children as evidenced in the Oxford Brookes evaluation of our locality model
- Our workforce development offer has strong uptake from across the partnership (for example, 94 settings have completed the 3-day Therapeutic Thinking Tutor Training)
- schools adopting the Therapeutic Thinking approaches have a lower rate of suspensions – particularly in secondary
- the quality of our EHCPs has improved with more being graded Good or better through audit
- practitioners benefit from group supervision as part of Safeguarding Families Together and we are expanding this offer to education partners to further strengthen practice
- The Dorset Education Board has commissioned a workforce pledge task group, including representatives from across the partnership to continuously strengthen and support our workforce

How we help and protect children and young people so that they are kept safe

We are committed to delivering services which ensure that children and young people in Dorset will be happy and safe and have opportunities to reach their goals as responsible members of their community. To make Dorset the best place for all children and young people, we ensure they are at the heart of all we do.

Underpinning features

- child protection practice (including information-sharing) and workforce development
- recruitment and selection practice
- induction, training and supervision
- code of conduct
- whistle blowing
- complaints and representations
- equal opportunities/diversity
- disciplinary and capability issues
- the management of allegations against people who work with children

To safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people in Dorset we:

- listen to children, young people and their families and involve them in decisions that affect them, make sure our staff and anyone who works on our behalf, are aware of and committed to the Safeguarding Policy and Procedures
- develop practice across Directorates which aims to achieve compliance with the Standards set by Dorset Safeguarding Children Board Safeguarding Standards
- work constantly with individuals or organisations working with children on a paid or voluntary basis to ensure that there are robust measures in place to keep children safe and to respond to any concerns or allegations that are raised

Our Dorset Council Policy
Statement on Safeguarding
Children and Young People

How we help and protect children and young people so that they are kept safe

We have strengthened our Safeguarding practice by employing a dedicated Service Manager for Safeguarding in Education. This postholder manages the Local Area Designated Officer and sits within our Quality Assurance team. The postholder oversees support and challenge within our education community to ensure safeguarding standards are maintained. This will be strengthened even further through Education being the fourth statutory partner within the pathfinder programme.

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As a result of the work:

- Our settings utilise a robust safeguarding audit tool to enable excellent understanding of their practice and where to take action to improve
- School inspections % of good or better outcomes are improving
- We are assured of the safety of our children through oversights and visits by managers and senior officers
- We follow up swiftly on Ofsted complaints and support best practice in settings
- There is purposeful, multi-disciplinary activity with educational settings with higher rates of suspension and exclusion
- We spoke at a national conference on Online Safety in March 2024 as we are recognised as leading practice in this area, alongside our Community Safety colleagues in the police.

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Report to Cabinet

11 June 2024

Children's Safeguarding Partnership Review

Cabinet Member and Portfolio

Cllr C Sutton, Children's Services, Education & Skills

Local Councillor(s): All

Executive Director:

T Leavy, Executive Director of People - Children

Report Author:

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Report Status: Public

Brief Summary:

A review of the Pan-Dorset arrangements for the delivery of the Safeguarding Children's Partnership has been considered by the statutory partners: Dorset Police, NHS Dorset and both local authorities (LAs) involved in the Pan-Dorset arrangements, BCP Children's Services and Dorset Children's Services. The review recommends that the partnership arrangements be delivered separately for each LA. This report will therefore set out the recommendation made by the partners who have been given the delegated authority to conduct the statutory duties for their organisation.

Recommendation:

To agree separation of the Pan-Dorset Safeguarding Children arrangements and create a Dorset Safeguarding Children's Partnership and a BCP Safeguarding Children's Partnership in order to meet the needs of two separate Local Authorities and enable the effectiveness of the partnership arrangements moving forward.

Reason for Recommendation:

One of the fundamental reasons behind this proposal is the significant disparity between the two local authorities within the existing partnership. The authorities operate differently, and their approaches to safeguarding and working practices often diverge. The recent changes outlined in the Working Together Guidance 2023 pose an additional challenge for our current Pan-Dorset arrangement. With the removal of the Independent Chair role, implementing the necessary changes becomes considerably more complex under a Pan-Dorset arrangement. By transitioning to a Dorset Safeguarding Partnership and a separate BCP Safeguarding Partnership, both authorities can adapt their structures and procedures seamlessly to align with the revised guidelines. This will enable them to fulfil their safeguarding responsibilities independently and effectively across the region, with each Director of Children's Services maintaining individual responsibility and being supported by scrutineers.

1. Report

- 1.1 Considering the distinct operational approaches of the two local authorities within the Pan-Dorset structure, a review of the Pan-Dorset Safeguarding Children's Partnership's delivery arrangements was undertaken, and agreement reached that the two local authorities in the partnership operate very differently. Attempts have been made over the years to maintain the current arrangements at a strategic and governance level. However, it is acknowledged this is becoming increasingly challenging.
- 1.2 Attempts have been made to try and maintain the current arrangements and avoid duplication for the partners; for example, the partnership has introduced certain flexibilities over the past two years, adjusting partnership priorities and facilitating place-based subgroups. However, the significant disparity between the two local authorities within the existing partnership is preventing the progress of some key areas of work. The reason for this is each authority operates differently, resulting in divergent approaches to safeguarding and working practices; this creates a need for strategies to be more individual to the two local authorities and for the partnership to respond accordingly.
- 1.3 Additionally, Dorset Children's Services designation as a Pathfinder for the government under the "Stable Homes Built on Love" initiative has further emphasized the need for partners to deliver services in a distinct manner within each authority. For BCP they have a strong focus on improvement

and have regulated priorities they must achieve. Therefore, after careful consideration, it appears that the most favourable way forward is to now agree on a separation.

- 1.4 By establishing individual safeguarding partnerships, we can customize our strategies and operations to suit the unique needs and circumstances of each authority. Consequently, this will lead to improved safeguarding outcomes within our respective areas. It is crucial to note that the proposed separation does not indicate complete isolation. Collaboration among the safeguarding partners can continue, albeit in a modified format.
- 1.5 Under the proposal, the current Safeguarding Partners can convene two or three times a year as a Pan-Dorset group to review shared learning, to address any shared priorities and meet the statutory duties placed upon them as the Designated Safeguarding Leads. This approach ensures that our efforts remain unified and consistent where necessary while minimizing any potential strategic impact resulting from the separation. Furthermore, both local authorities have an existing governance structure where the partnership is already embedded; this minimises the impact on the partners with no additional meetings being suggested. With a review of the membership for the Subgroups already underway in Dorset council it is further aimed to reduce duplication all round. BCP have also committed to undertaking this work too.
- 1.6 Furthermore, a requirement of the Children's Safeguarding Partnership as part of the new Working Together 2023 legislation changes, is that Education will now be included as the 4th statutory partner. Dorset Council have already been planning for these changes to be implemented and again a separation allows both councils to focus on their respective areas and determine how best to ensure the right representation of schools and early years provision in their own governance arrangements for the partnership.
- 1.7 Finally, it is helpful to note that the Dorset Integrated Care Board (ICB) has already developed place based arrangements and will therefore allow the two new safeguarding arrangements to feed into the proposed changes seamlessly.
- 1.8 **Proposed Business Team Functions**

There will be some arrangements that will continue to be Pan-Dorset whilst others will be allocated to the new Partnerships as follows:

- **Pan Dorset website**, this will remain in place, but the landing page will have two distinct areas to direct professionals and families to the relevant authority for work that is place based. This will be supported by the creation of a Dorset Council partnership logo and a separate BCP partnership logo.
- **Pan- Dorset Tri X**. This is where policy and procedures are recorded and will remain Pan-Dorset as these reflect legislation, statutory guidance and best practice. The site allows for individual practices to be recorded when required and again the new partnership logos will help differentiate when required.
- **Pan-Dorset Training**. This is hosted by Dorset and is working well across the partnership, training hundreds of partners each month; therefore, this will continue as is and any bespoke training for each LA can be factored accordingly. The team is completely self-funded through income generation.
- **Child Death Overview Panel**, this is a tri authority arrangement that includes Somerset and will remain in place.
- **Partnership Data**, this will need to be separated to allow clear distinction between the two areas. This will further support the Partnership to respond to individual area needs.
- **Partnership Annual Report**, this will no longer be a Pan-Dorset report and the two partnerships will have their own annual reports enabling clear focus on the arrangements for Dorset children and families as will BCP.

2. **Financial Implications**

The Safeguarding Partners have agreed that they are committed to maintaining the current financial contributions and neither LA is requesting any additional funding to deliver two separate partnerships. As a result, it is agreed that the contributions will be split 50-50 to allow the Children's Safeguarding Partnership to be delivered separately. There will be some minor rebalancing of funds between the two authorities where Pan-Dorset functions are delivered within Dorset Council, and this has been agreed by the executive partners. As a result, both LAs are in agreement that they can deliver the Children's Safeguarding Partnership business within the allocated funds.

3. **Natural Environment, Climate & Ecology Implication**

None noted.

4. **Well-being and Health Implications**

A consultation will be undertaken with the business team staff as it will likely mean some changes to the line management and the role of the manager.

5. **Other Implications**

A review of the business manager role will be required as this was a strategic role to enable a Pan-Dorset approach which will no longer be required. HR processes will be followed accordingly should the recommendation for the creation of separate Dorset and BCP partnerships be approved.

6. **Risk Assessment**

HAVING CONSIDERED: the risks associated with this decision; the level of risk has been identified as:

Current Risk: 10

Residual Risk: 2

7. **Equalities Impact Assessment**

Attached as Appendix 1

8. **Appendices**

Appendix 1: EqlA Childrens Safeguarding Partnership Review

9. **Background Papers**

Report Sign Off

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).

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Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) Template

Before completing the EQIA please have a look at the [Dorset Council style guide](#) and also use the [accessibility checker](#) to make sure your document is easy for people of all abilities to read.

Some key tips

- avoid tables and charts, if possible please provide raw data
- avoid pictures and maps if possible.
- avoid using bold, italics or colour to highlight or stress a point
- when using numbering or bullet points avoid using capitals at the beginning unless the name of something
- date format is dd month yyyy (1 June 2021)
- use clear and simple language
- where you need to use technical terms, abbreviations or acronyms, explain what they mean the first time you use them
- if using hyperlinks, make sure the link text describes where the link goes rather than 'click here' Please note equality impact assessments are published on the Dorset Council [website](#)

Before completing this form, please refer to the [supporting guidance](#). The aim of an Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) is to consider the equality implications of your policy, strategy, project or service on different groups of people including employees of Dorset Council, residents and users of our services and to consider if there are ways to proactively advance equality.

Where further guidance is needed, please contact the Inclusion Champion or the [Diversity & Inclusion Officer](#).

1. Initial information

Name of the policy, project, strategy, project or service being assessed:

Separation of the Childrens Safeguarding Partnership

2. Is this a (please delete those not required):

Service review

3. Is this (please delete those not required):

Both internal and external

4. Please provide a brief overview of its aims and objectives:

A review of the Pan-Dorset arrangements for the delivery of the Safeguarding Children's Partnership has been considered by the statutory partners: Dorset Police, NHS Dorset and both local authorities (LAs) involved in the Pan-Dorset arrangements, BCP Children's Services and Dorset Children's Services. The review recommends that the partnership arrangements be delivered separately for each LA and this is being put before the Cabinet for agreement.

It is being recommended that a separation of the Pan-Dorset Safeguarding Children arrangements is implemented and create two separate arrangements; A Dorset Safeguarding Children's Partnership and a BCP Safeguarding Children's Partnership in order to meet the needs of two separate Local Authorities and enable the effectiveness of the partnership arrangements moving forward. Allowing Dorset to focus on the local needs of our families and children so we develop our own partnership responses in line with our practice model and safeguarding arrangements locally.

5. Please provide the background to this proposal?

One of the fundamental reasons behind this proposal is the significant disparity between the two local authorities within the existing partnership, for example Dorset council is a Pathfinder for the social care reforms which requires us to operate differently to BCP. The authorities therefore operate differently, and their approaches to safeguarding and working practices often diverge. The recent changes outlined in the Working Together Guidance 2023 pose an additional challenge for our current Pan-Dorset arrangement. With the removal of the Independent Chair role, implementing the necessary changes becomes considerably more complex under a Pan-Dorset arrangement. By transitioning to a Dorset Safeguarding Partnership and a separate BCP Safeguarding Partnership, both authorities can adapt their structures and procedures seamlessly to align with the revised guidelines. This will enable them to fulfil their safeguarding responsibilities independently and effectively across the region, with each Director of Children's Services maintaining individual responsibility and being supported by scrutineers.

Evidence gathering and engagement

6. What sources of data, evidence or research has been used for this assessment? (e.g national statistics, employee data):

Evidence has come from the oversight of the place-based arrangements that we can see delays in significant pieces of work that are a priority for Dorset which may not

be the same for BCP. At times work is progressed at a Pan-Dorset meeting but input from both local authorities hasn't always been equal and when work is then ready for approval this can often be delayed as the work doesn't represent how BCP operate, and changes are requested and creates further delay. BCP are also wishing to deliver some key strategies differently and in order to do this it would need to be under the BCP partnership rather than a Pan arrangement.

7. What did this tell you?

There are no equality needs that will be impacted by the separation from BCP council. The work we wish to deliver for Dorset families and how we wish to work as a partnership is being delayed under the current arrangements. The extra familial harm strategy for example was significantly delayed and we had ensured the feedback from the youth justice inspection is incorporated but while work remains unapproved this becomes a challenge.

8. Who have you engaged and consulted with as part of this assessment?

All statutory safeguarding partners have been consulted, the Independent Chair of the Board, The lead member for Children's services, the Chief Executive and the Children's DCS. Separate discussions have taken place with the current PDSCP business team and confirmed there will be no direct impact. The current business manager who may have been impacted has since found another role and resigned from the post. Both Dorset Council and BCP will now determine what individual capacity is required pending cabinet approval.

9. Is further information needed to help inform decision making?

No

Is an EQIA required?

Not every proposal will need an EqIA. The data and research should inform your decision whether to continue with this EqIA. If you decide that your proposal does not need an EqIA, please answer the following question:

This policy, strategy, project or service does not require and EqIA because (provide details):

This proposal supports better equality by allowing sole focus on our Dorset families and providing the right oversight and effectiveness of the partnership.

Assessing the impact on different groups of people

For each of the protected characteristics groups below, please explain whether your proposal could have a positive, negative, unclear or no impact. Where an impact has been identified, please explain what it is and if unclear or negative please explain what mitigating actions will be taken.

- use the evidence you have gathered to inform your decision making.
- consider impacts on residents, service users and employees separately.
- if your strategy, policy, project or service contains options you may wish to consider providing an assessment for each option.
- see guidance for more information about the different [protected characteristics](#).

Key to impacts

Positive Impact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the proposal eliminates discrimination, advances equality of opportunity and/or fosters good relations with protected groups.
Negative Impact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • protected characteristic group(s) could be disadvantaged or discriminated against
Neutral Impact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • no change/ no assessed significant impact of protected characteristic groups
Unclear	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • not enough data/evidence has been collected to make an informed decision.

Impacts on who or what?	Choose impact	How
Age		
Disability		
Gender reassignment and Gender Identity		
Marriage or civil partnership		
Pregnancy and maternity		
Race and Ethnicity		
Religion and belief		

Impacts on who or what?	Choose impact	How
Sex (consider men and women)		
Sexual orientation		
People with caring responsibilities		
Rural isolation		
Socio-economic deprivation		
Single parents		
Armed forces communities		

Please provide a summary of the impacts:

Action Plan

Summarise any actions required as a result of this EqIA.

Issue	Action to be taken	Person(s) responsible	Date to be completed by

Sign Off

Officer completing this EqIA:

Officers involved in completing the EqIA:

Date of completion:

Version Number:

EqIA review date: Equality Lead Sign Off:

Next Steps:

- the EqIA will be reviewed by Communications and Engagement and if in agreement, your EqIA will be signed off.
- if not, we will get in touch to chat further about the EqIA, to get a better understanding.
- EqIA authors are responsible to ensuring any actions in the action plan are implemented.

Please send to [Diversity and Inclusion Officer](#)

Cabinet

11 June 2024

Draft outturn report 2023/24

For Decision

Cabinet Member and Portfolio:

Cllr S Clifford, Finance & Capital Strategy

Local Councillor(s):

All

Executive Director:

A Dunn, Executive Director, Corporate Development

Report Author: Sean Cremer

Job Title: Corporate Director, Finance and Commercial

Tel: 01305 228685

Email: sean.cremer@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk

Report Status: Public

This report comes to Cabinet with information about the Council's draft, unaudited financial performance for the year ended 31 March 2024 and the financial position at that date.

Recommendation:

Cabinet is asked to;

1. Note the draft revenue and capital outturn and the financial performance for the year ended 31 March 2024; and
2. To approve use of un-ringfenced reserves to support the 2023/24 final outturn in addition to increasing the general fund balance in line with the financial strategy document.
3. To approve a transfer of £4.4m reserves to a ring-fenced reserve to support the Dedicated Schools Grant Safety Valve program and realignment of existing earmarked reserves as reported in section 11.6.

Reason for Recommendation:

Although this report does not seek formal approval from Cabinet for the reported outturn, the financial performance for the year and the financial position at 31 March 2024 are important aspects of financial management as they mark the start of the next medium-term financial plan update (MTFP) and budget strategy development for 2025/26.

In addition to reporting outturn, with the financial performance for the year materially complete, it is important for Cabinet to review the risks the organisation now faces and to consider areas where it wishes to make strategic investments and/or to repurpose and prioritise its reserves to facilitate these aims.

1. Financial Implications

The financial performance for the year and the position at year-end are set out in this document. The report also summarises the impact on the 2024/25 budget and the MTFP.

The actions to reduce the balance and age of debt and arrears following the increases in these numbers during the pandemic and more recently the cost of living rises, are critical to reducing debt as well as supporting residents and businesses to pay what is due. The charges levied by the Council – and all local taxes – are vital to funding service delivery so they must be supported by appropriate and proportionate recovery action by all local authorities.

2. Natural Environment, Climate & Ecology Implications

The outturn for the year and the position at 31 March 2024 includes revenue and capital spend which support the delivery of the Council's climate and ecology strategies.

3. Well-being and Health Implications

The Council's has total service budgets of £371.8m of which £232m (62%) is spent within the Adults & Housing and Children's directorates which aims to improve aspects of well-being and health across Dorset. Further resources are available through the Public Health Ring Fenced Grant allocation of £15m.

4. Other Implications

None specific.

5. Risk Assessment

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

Current Risk: Medium

Residual Risk: High

5.2 Despite the mitigations and the governance framework around strategic and financial performance that the Council has in place, the S151 Officer deems the current risk to be medium due to Dorset's financial position relative to other Local Authorities.

5.3 The residual risk being high principally reflects the national picture and economic conditions affecting all local authorities. Pressures continue to build in the Medium-Term Financial Plan (MTFP) and around the High Needs Block (HNB) of the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG).

5.4 There is further uncertainty as to future Local Government funding given the General Election and how this will impact the Autumn Statement, Spending Review and Local Government Finance Settlement all of which to take place before the 2025/26 financial year.

6. Equalities Impact Assessment

No specific equalities issues have emerged in drafting the Council's various reports on financial performance and position.

7. Appendices

a) Financial Savings graph

b) Climate wheel

8. Background Papers

[2023/24 budget strategy report](#)

[Financial management report Q1 2023/24](#)

[Financial management report Q2 2023/24](#)

[Financial management report Q3 2023/24](#)

[2024/25 budget strategy report](#)

9. Budget setting 2023/24 and context

9.1 2023/24 involved setting a strategic budget and MTFP against a further one-year settlement from Government. This financial year has proved challenging which has required the Council to continue its good work to drive proactive and positive action to deliver high quality services within limited resources. The UK has also been experiencing a period of sustained inflation. These rising costs directly affect the Council in terms of cost of providing services as well as leading to increased demand for support from residents and businesses. The Council's budget requirement is £347.6m and was funded from:

- 1) Council tax (£292.1m)
- 2) Business rates (£50.2m)
- 3) Rural services delivery grant (£2.8m)
- 4) New homes bonus (£1.8m)
- 5) Revenue support grant (£0.7m)

More detail is set out in the budget strategy report at the link above.

9.2 Members will recall that the Council has been forecasting an overspend against its budget for much of the year due to pressures within service budgets as a result of the direct impact of inflation and rising demand and complexity of need.

9.3 Areas of risk remain and are carefully monitored and reported on during the year. During 2023/24, inflation in the UK reached 9.6%. Whilst the Council made some provision for inflation in its 2023/24 budgets, and has a contingency budget to support price fluctuations, it is also important to remember that pressure on costs cannot and should not be managed by the Council alone. To reduce the impact of inflation the Council must, and does, work with partners and suppliers to minimise the impact on service delivery as well as continuing to lobby central government for increased funding for Dorset recognising the challenge of our demography and rurality when providing services to our residents, communities and businesses.

9.4 The Council's budget is essentially fixed in cash terms and its ability to raise income is limited. There are national controls in place around council tax and business rates and ability to generate income from trading is relatively limited in the short-term as well as potentially at odds with wider economic development ambitions.

- 9.5 There are major policy changes within our planning horizon – such as the social care funding reforms which have been delayed to October 2025 and work on education funding formulae. These changes may be affected by the upcoming General Election.

10. Financial performance for the year

Overall performance

- 10.1 The financial year 2023/24 concluded with an overspend of £0.998m which represents 0.29% of the Councils budget requirement (£347.6m). This overspend falls to be financed from the general fund reserve. This is a significantly improved position than had been predicted earlier in the year.
- 10.2 Whilst this improvement to the Councils net position is welcome we must recognise that this is driven by one-off changes within the heading Central Finance driving a £14.9m underspend/over recovery as well as work within services to drive down costs impacted by inflation and rising demand and complexity.
- 10.3 It is therefore essential to remain committed to the ongoing requirement for mitigation to address the overspend of £15.9m across Service budgets as shown in the table below. Much of the underlying pressures associated with need and complexity will feature operationally in 2024/25 and the pre-existing and emerging transformation activity will be key to delivering on the balanced budget as set at Full Council in February 2024.
- 10.4 Headline performance against budget is summarised in the table below.

Directorate	Net Budget £'000	Outturn £'000	(Overspend)/ Underspend £'000		Change since Q3 £'000
People - Adults	151,184	154,292	(3,108)	(2.1%)	296
People - Children's	80,803	83,129	(2,326)	(2.9%)	718
Place	86,684	99,300	(12,616)	(14.6%)	1,605
Corporate Development	44,210	42,475	1,735	3.9%	900
Legal & Democratic Services	7,010	6,582	428	6.1%	22
Public Health	1,890	1,890	0	0.0%	0
Total Service Budgets	371,781	387,668	(15,886)	(4.3%)	3,542
Central Finance	(359,871)	(374,760)	14,889	(4.1%)	(1,017)
Whole Authority	11,910	12,908	(998)		2,524
Dedicated Schools Grant budgets	941	24,597	(23,655)		1,002

10.5 More detail on the specific Directorates is set out in the following paragraphs.

Children's Services

10.6 The Children's Services outturn was £83.129m compared with a net budget of £80.803m, an overspend of £2.326m (2.9%). A variance at this level can be seen as a positive outcome for a demand-led directorate operating in an ever-changing environment.

People Services - Children	Net Budget £'000	Outturn £'000	(Overspend)/ Underspend £'000		Change since Q3 £'000
Quality Assurance	2,734	2,886	(152)	(5.6%)	(7)
Care & Protection	60,621	63,278	(2,657)	(4.4%)	(101)
Commissioning and Partnerships	7,571	8,011	(440)	(5.8%)	43
Director's Services	(2,017)	(2,461)	444	(22.0%)	307
Education and Learning	12,322	11,844	479	3.9%	476
DSG Recharges	(429)	(429)	0	0.0%	(0)
Total Directorate Budget	80,803	83,129	(2,326)	(2.9%)	718
Dedicated Schools Grant budgets	941	24,597	(23,655)		1,002

10.7 The Quarter 3 forecast indicated a £3.04m overspend, so there was an improvement of £0.718m between the last predictions reported to Cabinet and the draft outturn. The narrative below considers major variances from budgets during the year as well as any risks or other factors that need to be considered in the next iteration of the MTFP.

10.8 The national overspending position for external placements is also true at Dorset Council. This area overspent by £3.4m, excluding £0.4m for Asylum Seeking children, despite numbers of children in care falling, excluding our unaccompanied asylum-seeking children:

	April 2023	March 2024	Change
Children in Care (excluding UASC)	404	396	-8
Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children (UASC)	34	54	+20

Source: Monthly Financial Tracker

10.9 The external placement overspend has been offset by in-house fostering and in-house residential underspends by £1.9m. There are pressures within the Children with a Disability (CWAD) area for all services (£1.0m).

- 10.10 Some of the overspends have been offset by carefully managing vacancies and agency budgets, increases in grants, other funding, and underspending non-pay budgets.
- 10.11 The directorate also delivered £3.4m (90%) of targeted transformation and tactical savings during the year.
- 10.12 There are risks within the 2024/25 budget that will require careful monitoring and management. Risks include capital project delays and the subsequent impact on revenue budgets, inflation (particularly for placements and externally provided services), the Social Care reforms via Pathfinder and long-term funding, and the delivery of transformation savings.

Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG)

- 10.13 The DSG was overspent by £23.655m. The grant is split into four blocks, with the High Needs Block (HNB) overspending by £23.62m, and the Early Years Block (£0.092m) with an underspend in the Central Services to Schools Block (£0.06m). The Schools Block had no variance.
- 10.14 The cumulative deficit is now £59.57m The DSG is a ring-fenced grant handed out by the Department for Education (DfE) for local authorities' school budgets.
- 10.15 Any deficit associated with the DSG is kept off councils' balance sheets as a result of the statutory override set out in The Local Authorities Capital Finance and Accounting (England) Regulations. It was announced in December 2022 that this would apply for a one-off period of three years up to 31 March 2026.
- 10.16 Whilst the deficit is therefore held separately from the general fund, there is a cashflow pressure resulting from carrying a £59.75m deficit meaning that the Council has access to £59.75m less cash than it would otherwise. As a result, interest foregone on the deficit equates to £3m of pressure met by the General Fund. This is £3m which could otherwise be spent on local service delivery.
- 10.17 As a result of the financial position in April 2023 the Dorset Council has been working with Department for Education (DfE) as part of the Enhanced Monitoring and Support programme. The Council is continuing negotiations with DfE SEN practice and financial advisors and developing a revised plan that has been both supported and scrutinised by external parties.
- 10.18 This work seeks to identify a future in-year HNB break-even point and therefore cumulative deficit position.

- 10.19 The DfE announced in March 2024 that Safety Valve payments towards funding the historic deficit would be temporarily paused until Ministerial agreement of a revised plan. Dorset Council has submitted revised draft plans for scrutiny during the course of the 2023/24 financial year and awaits recommendations from advisors. In the absence of feedback officers continue to deliver the improvement work outlined in the plan & have commissioned external expertise to support the continued improvement.
- 10.20 Whilst the financial contributions are paused Dorset Council has earmarked its own contributions agreed within the original Safety Valve agreement which will now be held in reserve pending the outcome of the revised agreement.
- 10.21 In January 2024, Dorset applied for additional £13.684m of SEND capital funding from the DfE which would deliver new assets to improve provision and in turn support the required outputs of the Safety Valve. Dorset have been awarded £10.6m, announced in April 2024.
- 10.22 The historical DSG deficit is a long and well-documented risk stemming from a change in government legislation in 2014. The number of children who require an Education Health and Care Place (EHCP) continues to rise and coupled with Dorset Special Schools reaching capacity, has seen an increase in the use of generally more expensive special school places.
- 10.23 This is a national issue. 'SEND provision and funding' was debated in parliament on the 11 January 2024. The below is an extract from the Local Government Association, published on the 9 January 2024 ahead of the debate:
- Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) and high needs funding pressures are one of the biggest challenges that councils with education responsibilities are currently facing. This is the result of an ever-increasing demand for SEND support and the growing number of children and young people who have an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP). Department for Education (DfE) statistics show that at January 2023 there were over 517,000 children with an EHCP, an increase of 9 per cent on 2022. The number of EHCPs has increased every year since they were introduced. We do not believe that the proposals set out in the Government's SEND and Alternative Provision improvement plan will result in this increase either slowing down or stopping.*
- 10.24 Although the reforms will take time to implement, Dorset Council and partners continue to be ahead of the curve, especially regarding the Safety Valve and for our children and young people.

- 10.25 Members will be reassured that the financial position has not affected the quality of service delivery. In March 2024 Dorset had a joint area inspection for local area arrangements for children and young people with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). This was joint with NHS Dorset and included inspectors from Ofsted and the Care Quality Commission (CQC). The report from that inspection was published in May 2024.
- 10.26 The inspection report stated that
'the local area partnership's special educational needs and/or disability (SEND) arrangements typically lead to positive experiences and outcomes for children and young people with SEND...Children and young people with SEND and their families are placed at the heart of all that leaders do.'
- 10.27 This is the best possible outcome from an inspection and Dorset Council is the first unitary authority to receive this outcome under the new SEND inspection framework. Testament to the hard work and dedication of the teams supporting children and young people with SEND and their families and the whole Council approach to supporting their work.

Adults Services & Housing

- 10.28 The Adults Services & Housing outturn was £154.292m compared with a net budget of £151.184m, an overspend of £3.108m (2.1%). Given the national picture and demand for service provision this is a positive outcome for the directorate.

People Services Adults & Housing	Net Budget	Outturn	(Overspend)/ Underspend		Change since Q3 £'000
	£'000	£'000	£'000		
Adult Care Packages	117,882	119,684	(1,802)	(1.5%)	(185)
Adult Care	15,515	14,899	616	4.0%	540
Commissioning & Improvements	8,606	8,445	161	1.9%	144
Directorate Wide	2,691	2,653	38	1.4%	38
Housing & Community Safety	6,490	8,611	(2,121)	(32.7%)	(241)
Total Directorate Budget	151,184	154,292	(3,108)	(2.1%)	296

- 10.29 The quarter three forecast indicated a £3.404m overspend, however, there was an improvement of £0.296m between the last prediction reported to Cabinet and the draft outturn. The final quarter's improved position was achieved through improvements across the Directorate.
- 10.30 The Adult Social Care budget supports approximately 4,123 people an increase of 198 people since 2022/23.

Adult Care Packages

- 10.31 The Adult Care Packages budget ended the year with an overspend of £1.802m. The main driver for the overspend was Learning Disabilities; this is a complex area of service provision within the Directorate.
- 10.32 Positive work has continued in year with the 'Home First Accelerator' programme which supports Hospital Discharge. Through the ICS (Integrated Care System), partners have collaborated on Home First plans. The programme has supported the rebalancing of demand across the out of hospital pathway, improved system resilience and provided better outcomes for people.
- 10.33 We have seen the full year effect of thirty therapy led, reablement beds, supported by multi-disciplinary teams and commissioned through Care Dorset. Occupancy levels across these beds is 78% with an average length of stay of 38 days.
- 10.34 There has been a positive in-year shift with more people being supported at home. 154 more people were supported to live at home in March 2024 than in April 2023 and the average weekly cost of £433 per week is the same as in April 2023.
- 10.35 There has been a focus on Working Age Accelerator programme within 2023/24 which has focused on ensuring that the right joint funding arrangements are in place or packages of care are at the right levels to maximise individual independence as well as best value for the authority. The HomeFirst Accelerator programme has included a focus on market-wide developments to ensure that the right care and support is available for people, by optimising the delivery of homecare and supporting provider innovation. This work will continue into 2024/25.

Adult Care

- 10.36 The Adult Care Budget ended the year with an underspend of £0.616m. There were several vacancies across the Directorate in the year, particularly within Locality and Specialist Teams which were the primary cause of this. Recruitment remains a national challenge and we are working to make Dorset a place of choice to practice.

Housing & Community Safety

- 10.37 Housing overspent by £2.121m. This overspend is attributable to the Council needing to pick up the widened Housing Benefit Subsidy shortfall on B&B accommodation used for homelessness. This is adverse because of the impact of increased demand and increased charges and rents for such accommodation. Additional budget was allocated in the 2024/25 budget setting process to address this.

- 10.38 Performance in homelessness prevention is strong despite demand being sustained over the year resulting in a 2.5% increase when compared to last year. The increased demand means that Bed and Breakfast and other expensive nightly rate accommodation is still being required at charges which are punitively high. Charges are rising from the private landlord and B&B sector, whilst Local Housing Allowance remains frozen at 2011 rates (meaning that the cost of the shortfall is picked up by the Council).
- 10.39 To meet the high increases in demand and costs, work continues to scale up and transform the work on prevention of homelessness and also to increase the supply of better priced non B&B accommodation (including proposals to make better use of Council assets and land, but to operate from several approaches, such as Government grants, leases with private providers and Housing Associations). Prevention of homelessness is the key result, but the financial mitigations are primarily linked to finding alternatives to the high net cost accommodation, such as B&Bs, which are delivered with a smaller subsidy gap.
- 10.40 Demand for temporary accommodation remains high but there are early indications that intensive placement management and early homeless prevention and triage are easing placement demand.
- 10.41 The homes for Ukraine and Afghan and households has progressed in year securing 30 new homes for households who are homeless or at risk of homelessness. The council is currently in the process of identifying households and allocate homes. An expression of interest was submitted for phase 3 of this scheme.
- 10.42 There are 3 projects underway related to Single Homeless Accommodation Programme (SHAP) including the extension of the Bus Shelter site, a new unit to cater for homeless women with complex needs and proposals for a new hub and spoke model for young homeless people (18-25) with support.
- 10.43 Adults and Housing have delivered £9.073m of savings during the year with a total of £19.373m over the last three years.

Public Health

10.44 The public health grant for 2023/24 for BCP council was £21.288m and for Dorset council was £15.090m. Agreed local authority contributions for the year gave a shared service budget of £26.298m.

10.45 Final outturn resulted in a £0.040m underspend which has been added to reserves. The figures in the table, above are net, so they do not reflect the numbers shown in this analysis, which are gross grant income and expenditure and transfers to and from reserves.

Place Directorate

10.46 The final Place Directorate net budget for 2023/24, after in-year adjustments, was £86.7m, and the final net spend was £99.3m, an overspend of £12.6m (14.6%). Comparative spend (i.e. taking into account organisational changes) for the prior year was £80.6m, meaning that actual net expenditure for the Place Directorate increased by £18.7m from one year to the next.

Place	Net Budget £'000	Outturn £'000	(Overspend)/ Underspend £'000		Change since Q3 £'000
Assets and Regeneration	10,085	12,218	(2,133)	(21.2%)	(132)
Economic Growth and Infrastructure					
Highways	(1,675)	888	(2,563)	(153.0%)	160
Planning	5,336	6,543	(1,207)	(22.6%)	(177)
Travel	27,931	34,679	(6,748)	(24.2%)	311
Business Support	1,913	1,796	117	6.1%	72
Subtotal: EG&I	33,506	43,906	(10,400)	(31.0%)	
Place Services					
Environment and Wellbeing	8,324	8,351	(27)	(0.3%)	412
Community and Public Protection	3,301	3,408	(107)	(3.2%)	231
Waste - Commercial & Strategy	14,696	14,537	159	1.1%	508
Waste - Operations	16,282	16,321	(39)	(0.2%)	181
Subtotal: Place Services	42,602	42,617	(14)	(0.0%)	
Directors Office	492	559	(67)	(13.7%)	39
Total Directorate Budget	86,684	99,300	(12,616)	(14.6%)	1,605

10.47 A number of headline adverse factors have been flagged throughout the year and remain unmitigated; volatile income, escalating costs, car parking income falling short of the budget set, and notably the issues facing school transport and SEND transport. The final Quarter 4 outturn was circa £1.6m better than the quarter 3 (December) forecast, however, this is largely made up of relatively small improvements over a wide range of areas.

Assets and Regeneration

10.48 The Assets and Regeneration budget ended the year with an overspend of £2.1m. Approximately £1.1m relates to savings targets that could not be achieved. In addition, income achieved fell short of budget, particularly around the 5% uplift (£355k), contributions to capital (£252k), car parking income at County Hall (£169k), Coombe House occupation (£87k) and County Farms.

Economic Growth and Infrastructure

10.49 Economic Growth and Infrastructure (EGI) consists of three services: Highways, Planning, and Dorset Travel.

10.50 The cumulative overspend for EGI is £10.4m representing a 31% overspend against the net budget.

Highways

10.51 The Highways service ended the year at £2.563m overspent. The majority of this (£2.430m) relates to car parking income underachieving against the approved budget. The budget has been rebased in 2024/25 to reduce the budgeted car parking income by £3.5m. Outside of car parking, other Highways budgets saw various underspends and overspends with a net effect of £133k overspent.

Planning

10.52 The Planning Service ended the year at £1.2m overspent, broadly in line with the forecast and largely due to income levels underperforming against the budget.

10.53 The table reveals the highly volatile nature of the fees and charges income budget for Planning over the last five years:

	Outturn 2019/20	Outturn 2020/21	Outturn 2021/22	Outturn 2022/23	Outturn 2023/24
	£	£	£	£	£
Fees and Charges	-4,521,157	-4,003,881	-5,164,921	-4,038,113	-4,139,772

10.54 These Fees and Charges are broken down by service as follows:

	Outturn 2019/20	Outturn 2020/21	Outturn 2021/22	Outturn 2022/23	Outturn 2023/24
	£	£	£	£	£
Development Management	-3,459,915	-2,801,899	-3,719,195	-3,058,816	-2,914,673
Spatial Planning	-188,567	-327,826	-292,538	-22,863	-275,332
Building Control	-872,675	-874,156	-1,153,188	-956,434	-949,767

Travel

10.55 Dorset Travel ended the year at £6.748m (circa 24%) overspent. The issues affecting all aspects of Dorset Travel (mainstream school transport, SEND transport, and public transport) reflect the same issues seen on a national level. The budget has been rebased for 2024/25, adding £12m to the base budget to address current and future demand. The 2023/24 final position by service is as follows:

Public Transport

- 10.56 Public Transport ended the year better than anticipated. This is due to unbudgeted grant money from central government, known as BSIP (Bus Service Improvement Plans) grant of £884k, and without which this contribution to service costs would have been significantly higher. The cost of public transport contracts, like many areas, has seen, and continues to see, significant price increases (with suppliers quoting driver shortages and general inflation/cost of living crisis as the main reasons).

Mainstream school transport

- 10.57 Mainstream school transport contracts did not benefit from BSIP funding but faced the same contractual price hikes, and as a result overspent by £672k.

SEND Home to school transport

- 10.58 There has been a significant overspend in the SEND home to school transport budget. As well as the cost increases highlighted above, there is an increased demand on the service and more children with EHCPs (Education Health Care Plans) who require home to school transport. There is also limited supply in the local market and therefore a reduction in competition.

Place Services

- 10.59 Place Services consists of four services, which are Environment and Wellbeing, Community and Public Protection, Waste Operations and Waste – Strategy and Commercial. Place services has a £14k overspend (0.03%)
- 10.60 **Environment and Wellbeing** budgets ended the year at £27k overspent. As forecast all year, Leisure Centre budgets were under pressure with increased utility costs and volatile income, and ended at £215k overspent, although this was better than some earlier estimates. Largely offsetting this was an underspend in the Flood and Coastal Erosion budgets of £209k. A significant portion of this relates to delayed spend on the Flood Management information system.
- 10.61 Weymouth Harbour and Bridport Harbour have ringfenced accounts and fully self-financing. Weymouth Harbour added £1.068m to their reserve following improved parking and berthing income, whilst Bridport Harbour added £34k to their reserve.

- 10.62 **Community and Public Protection (CPP)** budgets ended the year at £107k overspent, slightly better than expected. This is partly due a late (unbudgeted and not forecast) third party contribution to a high-profile case in the Coroners service. Adverse services were Dorchester Market (£69k), Bereavement (£187k) and Licencing (£101k) offset by favourable positions in Trading Standards (£79k), Environmental Protection (£110k) and Registrars (£87k).
- 10.63 **Waste – Commercial Waste and Strategy** ended the year with an underspend of £159k. The forecast in the early part of the year was very gloomy, with the costs of recyclate being the highest on record and exceeding the budget well in excess of £1m. However, income earned for glass was favourable and played a major part in offsetting the cost of the general recyclate. In addition, income from trade waste and garden waste services made contributions in excess of the budget, and overall volumes of waste were lower than budgeted.
- 10.64 **Waste Operations** including Dorset Council fleet services ended the year at a £39k overspend on a £16.3m budget. There was an underspend of circa £400k on vehicle fuel. That budget line was increased following the spiralling fuel costs seen after the Ukraine war began. Prices have since stabilised, and £250k has been removed from the 2024/25 budget accordingly. Offsetting this, there were a number of adverse variances including: not meeting MOT income target (£160k)(adjusted in 2024/25 budget), contractual overtime £95k (adjusted in 2024/25 budget) and seasonal resorts cleaning £84k (adjusted in 2024/25 budget).
- 10.65 **Directors Office** There were no material variances within the Directors Office.

Corporate Development

10.66 Overall, the Corporate Development outturn is £42.475m compared with a net budget of £44.21m, an underspend of £1,735k (3.9%). Corporate Development remained committed to supporting the Council's budget position and maintained a number of spend control measures throughout the year.

Corporate Development	Net Budget	Outturn	(Overspend)/ Underspend		Change since Q3 £'000
	£'000	£'000	£'000		
Financial & Commercial	11,624	10,929	695	6.0%	487
Human Resources	1,411	1,263	148	10.5%	(185)
ICT Operations	8,658	8,107	551	6.4%	242
Chief Executive's Office	1,098	1,027	70	6.4%	38
Directors Office	1,408	1,403	5	0.3%	(8)
Strategy, Performance and Sustainability	7,972	7,469	503	6.3%	296
Transformation, Customer and Cultural Services	12,039	12,276	(237)	(2.0%)	31
Total Directorate Budget	44,210	42,475	1,735	3.9%	900

10.67 **Finance & Commercial** has an outturn underspend of £695k. The improvement from the previous quarter includes: Pensions – the final spend on ICT costs was less than expected which in turn reduced the final recharge to the Pension Fund leaving a surplus of £117k that hadn't been forecast; Financial Services – there was an unbudgeted internal recharge income of £66k and within Revenues & Benefits the final adjustments to the bad debt provision improved the outturn position by £169k.

10.68 **HR** has an outturn underspend of £148k, which is in the main related to savings in pay related costs. The movement from the previous period is due to the forecast underspend being used to fund the Employer of Choice and new recruitment team rather than using additional business rates income.

10.69 **ICT Operations** has an underspend of £551k. The underspend is due to pay savings of £167k, predominantly driven by vacancies. There is also additional income of £173k as a result of a review of the costing model, an increase in customer user bases and £67k benefit from change of income received from leased assets. There is also a software underspend of £76k and infrastructure underspend of £248k.

10.70 The **Chief Executive's Office** has an underspend of £70k, which is mainly related to savings in pay costs.

Strategy, Performance and Sustainability

10.71 **Business Intelligence** has an underspend of £144k, which is mainly related to savings in pay costs.

10.72 **Communications** has an underspend of £166k, which comprises of pay savings of £80k from vacant posts, together with supplies and services savings of £30k and additional income of £56k.

10.73 **Community Grants** has an underspend of £127k, which has arisen from the recharge of time spent on Asylum Barge and Ukrainian support projects.

Transformation, Customer and Cultural Services

10.74 **Digital & Change** has an underspend of £147k, this comprises of pay savings of £45k and at year end, spend of £95k relating to the Children's transformation programme was picked up by Children's service rather than it being funded from within Digital & Change.

10.75 **Transformation** has an underspend of £37k that has resulted from a prior year adjustment. During 2023/24 £1.8m reserves were drawn down to support the Transformation activity within the Corporate directorate.

10.76 **Customer Service, Libraries and Archives** is showing an overspend of £422k. The budgeted customer transformation saving of £500k remains unmet in 2023/24.

10.77 Service budgets under Customer Service, Libraries and Archives have an underspend of £78k which partially offsets the saving. The libraries service has an overspend of £89k, which is the result of the restructure and redundancy costs of £176k being incurred. These have been offset by savings of £163k from within the Corporate Director and Customer Services budgets.

Legal & Democratic Services

10.78 The Legal & Democratic outturn was £6.582m compared with a net budget of £7.010m, an underspend of £0.428m (6.1%).

Legal & Democratic	Net Budget	Outturn	(Overspend)/ Underspend		Change since Q3 £'000
	£'000		£'000	£'000	
Assurance	1,476	1,531	(55)	(3.7%)	(31)
Democratic & Elections Services	3,014	2,864	151	5.0%	44
Land Charges	(360)	(266)	(94)	(26.0%)	(0)
Legal Services	2,879	2,453	426	14.8%	10
Total Directorate Budget	7,010	6,582	428	6.1%	22

10.79 Within **Assurance** there is an adverse variance of £55k, which has arisen due to additional pay costs of £11k, increased cost of the Civil Contingencies contribution of £12k, unplanned expenditure of £16k on hazardous waste collection and a slight shortfall in income £9k.

10.80 The **Democratic & Elections Service** outturn is an underspend of £151k, which consists of pay related savings £69k; additional income of £153k offset by additional in supplies and services of £75k.

10.81 The **Land Charges** service outturn is an overspend of £94k. This comprises an income shortfall of £166k, which is largely due to reduced demand for searches as the housing market slows. The number of searches processed, and income trend is being closely monitored each month. This is offset by savings from vacant posts of £71k.

10.82 Within **Legal Services** the outturn underspend of £426k relates mainly to the vacant posts, which has resulted in a pay saving of £637k. This is offset by an income shortfall of £76k and agency costs of £154k.

Central budgets

10.83 The outturn for central budgets is £374.760m compared with a net income budget of £359.871m, which is a net surplus of £14.889m (4.1%). The majority of savings / over recoveries are welcome and have been essential to reduce the impact of service overspends. As noted earlier in the report, these variances are mostly one-off items, where they are expected to be recurrent, they have been used to fund service pressures as part of setting the 2024/25 budget. As a result, are not expected to be available to offset new or emerging future pressures.

Central Finance	Net Budget £'000	Outturn £'000	(Overspend)/ Underspend £'000		Change since Q3 £'000
General Funding	(30,074)	(29,997)	(77)	0.3%	0
Capital Financing	11,379	9,550	1,828	16.1%	(996)
Contingency	10,725	6,049	4,676	43.6%	(55)
Schools Balance	0	0	0	0.0%	0
Precepts/Levy	18,440	18,495	(55)	(0.3%)	(18)
Central Finance	(372,290)	(380,787)	8,497	(2.3%)	(0)
Retirement costs	1,950	1,929	20	1.0%	52
Total Central Budgets	(359,871)	(374,760)	14,889	(4.1%)	(1,017)

10.84 **General Funding** is showing an underspend of £77k.

10.85 **Capital Financing** is showing a £1.8m underspend, which comprises of a saving in interest paid of £0.2m and an increase in investment interest of £2.1m. This has been offset by an overspend of £529k against the MRP budget.

10.86 As mentioned earlier in the report, the cumulative DSG overspend results in cashflow pressures resulting in interest foregone on cash balances. The in year DSG deficit was £23.65m, which equates to £1.19m of pressure.

10.87 The table above shows the net impact of the changing cash balances with a £1m worsening since Q3.

10.88 **Contingency** the budget has been released in line with its purpose, to offset the now confirmed additional cost of the pay award and inflationary pressures across the Council.

10.89 **Central Finance** is showing a £8.497m underspend as there is a council tax surplus forecast of £1.8m and business rates forecast of £6.6m. The business rates surplus has offset the business rates pressure in the services that have been impacted by the increased rateable values. As part of setting the 2024/25 budget the over recovery seen in 2023/24 has been rebased. An additional £6.2m of Business Rates income was

allocated to support the additional cost of the Assets and Property Health and Safety Compliance work which required urgent attention during the year across the whole asset estate. The health and safety compliance project is a pan council building survey programme covering 750 assets which are aimed at ensuring all assets can be classified as safe, legal and compliant. It includes a series of annual specialist surveys including asbestos, gas, fire safety, water safety (legionella) electrical, RAAC and RADON. The surveys usually identify a series of building improvements which are implemented immediately to ensure continued use of the asset.

11 General fund position and other earmarked reserves at year-end

- 11.1 The overspend of £0.998m (0.29%) for the year falls to the general fund to finance. The quarter three finance report indicated a £3.5m overspend, so there was an improvement of £2.5m (0.7%) between the last forecast reported to Cabinet and the draft outturn.
- 11.2 As well as covering the overspend, Council agreed that the general fund should be increased to £37.6m which maintains the General Fund at 10% of the net budget for 2024/25. This was approved as part of the budget strategy in February 2024. The fund started the year with a balance of £34.75m so taken together, the £2.9m required to do this must be funded from the reorganisation of other reserves.
- 11.3 The impact of the outturn position on the Council's general fund and its earmarked reserves is set out below. The same analysis is used as in last year's outturn report, albeit the numbers vary marginally between the draft outturn reported to Cabinet and the audited figures.

	31/03/2023	31/03/2024	31/03/2025	31/03/2026	31/03/2027	31/03/2028
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
General Fund	(34,753)	(37,686)	(38,385)	(39,590)	(40,840)	(42,138)
Reserve purpose/use						
Risk mitigation/alignment	(26,711)	(39,042)	(24,996)	(18,542)	(11,190)	(6,045)
Deferred grants	(27,448)	(24,684)	(13,631)	(9,892)	(6,469)	(5,367)
For investing/service provision	(16,357)	(12,088)	(6,036)	(5,841)	(5,809)	(5,775)
Accounting requirements	(30,682)	(5,854)	(3,782)	(2,719)	(1,761)	(844)
Funding (restricted eg S278)	(30,457)	(31,777)	(16,968)	(15,873)	(15,530)	(15,428)
PFI reserves	(6,977)	(5,976)	(5,698)	(5,073)	(4,450)	(3,827)
Partnerships/joint reserves	(1,836)	(1,994)	(871)	(721)	(721)	(721)
Traded services	(437)	(457)	(116)	(116)	(116)	(116)
Total earmarked reserves	(140,905)	(121,872)	(72,098)	(58,777)	(46,047)	(38,124)

- 11.4 Deferred grants are held in reserve until they are spent in line with their purpose, in 23/24 there has been a reduction of £2.8m for deferred grants. Additional costs to fund revenue repairs and maintenance has totalled £2m. The earmarked reserves position above takes into consideration that the £0.998m overspend has been funded from earmarked reserves.
- 11.5 Other main adjustments to the earmarked reserves are: A council wide drawdown of £2.8m from the Transformation Investment Fund, £3.6m for the Hospital Discharge programme, Reduction in the general insurance reserve of £2.3m and a reduction of £1.8m from the cost of living support fund.
- 11.6 Shown under the heading 'Risk mitigation / alignment' Existing reserves have been re-purposed to align the Councils earmarked reserves to mitigate against known risks. This includes:
- a spending review reserve (£10m)
 - Contribution to the 2024/25 DSG Safety Valve programme (£4.4m),
 - Local Authority Housing Fund (£247.8k)
 - Rent reserves for the leased estate (£500k)
 - A transfer to the MTFP support reserve to be equal to the 2024/25 OFC target (£2.9m) meaning the MTFP reserve matches the value of the savings requirement of £8.6m.

12 Capital outturn and financing

- 12.1 The capital strategy and capital programme for the MTFP period, which totalled almost £350m, was agreed by Cabinet in March 2023.
- 12.2 The 2022/23 capital outturn was reported to Cabinet in June 2023 and the result of that was that there was programme slippage into 2023/24. This, along with the approved budget and updates since that date, mean a programme of £391.9m for the next five years, as summarised in the table below.

Capital Programme	Budget					Total
	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	
Full external funding	4,196	15,849	5,141	95	0	25,281
Partial external funding	61,010	21,274	0	0	0	82,284
Partial external funding	0	54,832	30,801	15,644	0	101,277
Council funded	3,880	40,966	25,194	13,672	(9,413)	74,299
Funded from other Reserves	0	0	0	0	0	0
Capital Receipts Applied	2,000	5,000	1,000	1,000	1,000	10,000
Minimum Revenue Provision	10,588	11,566	12,966	14,116	16,013	65,249
Self Funded	1,693	17,538	11,565	2,178	600	33,574
Total funding	83,367	167,025	86,667	46,705	8,200	391,964

12.3 The movements in the project budgets since the quarter three report are shown in the table below:

Directorate	Q3 Budget £,000	Adjustments £,000	Re-profiling £,000	New funding £,000	Q4 Budget £,000
Adults & Housing	11,280	0	-1,106	115	10,289
Childrens	11,492	0	-6,150	4,716	10,058
Place	71,907	6,584	-25,180	3,983	57,294
Corporate	4,100	3,613	-1,987	0	5,726
Total	98,779	10,197	-34,423	8,814	83,367

Note: reprofiling shown as a negative (-) value refers to reprofiling spend to later years. This is based on the latest estimates and project progress, provided by project managers.

12.4 Capital outturn as at 31 March 2024 is shown in the table below:

Directorate	No. of projects	Project Budget £,000	Spend £,000	Variance £,000	% Spent
Adults & Housing	10	10,289	8,928	1,361	87%
Childrens	12	10,058	10,057	1	100%
Place	93	57,294	57,172	121	100%
Corporate	8	5,726	5,725	1	100%
Total	123	83,367	81,883	1,483	98%

- 12.5 The top 10 capital projects, which represent 79% of the total capital spend in 2023/24, are outlined below:

Project Name	Spend £,000
Local Transport Plan programme of works	33,931
LAHF - Ukraine & Afghan Refugee Housing	7,075
SEND capital strategy	6,316
Dorchester Library Historic Adjustment	3,738
Property Improvements Programme (R&M)	3,663
Dorset Council Fleet Replacement Programme	2,572
Tilly Whim	1,918
Decarbonisation Main Fund	1,856
SOCA Board programme	1,688
Weymouth Quay Regeneration Project WPBC	1,641
Total	£64,398

- 12.6 Changes to the Capital scheme since the quarter three report include the following items.
- 12.7 There have been adjustments of £10.2m, which in the main relate to:
- Local Transport Plan programme of works. At the end of 2022/23 the level of capital reserve funding was understated by £7.0m and this adjustment reflects the correction in 2023/24.
 - Dorchester Library adjustment of £3.7m, to correct a legacy misclassification and accurately reflect the asset within the Councils accounts.
- 12.8 There has been re-profiling of £34.4m into future years to more accurately reflect the timing of spend. This includes SEND capital strategy £4.2m; Dorset Innovation Park £3.6m; Property Improvements Programme £2.5m and a number of smaller projects.
- 12.9 There has also been new external funding of £8.8m confirmed, which includes Flexible Use of Capital Receipts £1.9m; Local Transport Plan programme of works £2.0m and SEND capital strategy £4.2m.
- 12.10 An additional £1.057 million is required to complete the council's current phase of building retrofit programme, which would be funded from the climate budgets through reprofiling the existing capital programme. The climate budgets have been realigned to draw forward approved budget from 2025/26 and 26/27 as follows:

Project Name	Total 23/24 budget	External Funding	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	Total project budget (up to 27/28)
Building retrofit programm	-	- 1,250	1,567	708	-	-	2,275
Electric Vehicle charging int	200	- 35	125	125	125	-	575
Climate Schemes	300		542	806	1,091	-	2,739
streetlighting schemes	499		600	575	575	-	2,249
Installation of new PV	100		231	250	250	-	831
low Carbon Dorset	378	- 507	479	-	-	-	857
	1,477	- 1,792	3,544	2,464	2,041	-	9,526

12.11 The position on the capital programme is reviewed by the Capital Strategy and Asset Management Group (CSAM) throughout the year.

13 Sundry debt management

13.1 The total value of debts (invoices) raised in 2023/24 is £299m, a breakdown by directorate is shown below.

Total debt raised	2023/24 £'000
Adults & Housing	77,799
Children's Services	18,782
Place	111,402
Corporate	91,020
Total	299,003

13.2 As at 31 March 2024 the balance outstanding was £56.3m, this is an increase of £12.0m when compared to the quarter three position. The table below shows a breakdown of the aged debt. Overall £25.8m of the £56.3m is less than 30 days old, therefore considered current.

13.3 The most significant increase is within the Corporate directorate relating to the Council's customers who subscribe to the payroll service.

13.4 In March 2024, payroll deductions totalling £10m were paid by the Council on behalf of customers to various organisations, including HMRC, Teachers' Pensions, LGPS Dorset Pension Fund, and Unison. Invoices were raised by the Council for the value of these deductions to recover these costs in the following month. Given the nature of these invoices and debtors, £10m of the £12m increase in sundry debt is relatively low risk and contained within the 'less than 30 days' category. The increase represents a snapshot in time and in this instance does not a concerning trend of increasing current debt.

13.5 The breakdown of the total sundry debt is as follows:

Directorate	2023/24 £'000	Less than 30 days £'000	30-90 days £'000	90-365 days £'000	Over 365 days £'000
Adults & Housing	27,279	5,478	3,624	7,488	10,688
Children's Services	2,164	1,822	144	15	182
Place	13,171	6,112	2,239	3,443	1,377
Corporate	13,643	12,394	364	565	320
Grand Total	56,256	25,807	6,371	11,511	12,568

13.6 £27.3m of the £56.3m of outstanding debt is within Adults & Housing. Of which, some relates to deferred payment arrangements, or care provided through gross without prejudice.

13.7 After adjusting for these the debt which is currently collectable is as follows:

Collectable Debt					
Directorate	2023/24 £'000	Less than 30 days £'000	30-90 days £'000	90-365 days £'000	Over 365 days £'000
Adults & Housing	17,028	4,618	2,615	3,275	6,520
Children's Services	2,164	1,822	144	15	182
Place	13,171	6,112	2,239	3,443	1,377
Corporate	13,643	12,394	364	565	320
Total	46,005	24,947	5,362	7,298	8,399

13.8 The Council has increased the number of staff working within the teams responsible for collecting overdue invoices and early signs such as the improvement between reports indicates this work is proving effective.

13.9 To ensure debts are pursued more promptly the automated reminder process is being reviewed, with the intention of starting earlier and increasing the frequency of follow up. There is also work being undertaken to identify income streams where payment can be obtained up front without the need to create a debt in the first place.

13.10 At the end of 2022/23 the Collectable Debt arrears were £36.9m and during 2023/24 £28.5m (77%) of this debt was collected. This demonstrates the effectiveness of the Councils debt recovery processes to secure income that funds service delivery.

Prior year arrears	Amount owed 31/03/2023 £,000	Collected in year £,000	Amount outstanding 31/03/2024 £,000	% collected
Pre 1 April 2019	1,455	137	1,317	9%
2019/20	1,275	347	928	27%
2020/21	1,874	531	1,342	28%
2021/22	6,375	4,688	1,688	74%
2022/23	25,955	22,831	3,124	88%
Total	36,933	28,534	8,400	77%

13.11 Deferred payments are debts that relate to adult care provided by Dorset Council, which have been secured against the property of the customer. The Council will eventually receive full payment of the debt when the property can be sold.

Deferred Payments					
Directorate	2023/24 £'000	Less than 30 days £'000	30-90 days £'000	90-365 days £'000	Over 365 days £'000
Adults & Housing	3,075	14	259	1,364	1,466

13.12 Gross without prejudice debts also relate to adult care, the debt is raised but not actively pursued whilst a care act assessment and subsequent financial assessment is undertaken to determine whether the recipient of the care is financially assessed as able to contribute towards the cost of their care.

Gross Without Prejudice					
Directorate	2023/24 £'000	Less than 30 days £'000	30-90 days £'000	90-365 days £'000	Over 365 days £'000
Adults & Housing	7,175	874	750	2,849	2,702

13.13 Gross without prejudice numbers and accrued debt has increased year on year as per below:-

	31 st March 2022	31 st March 2023	31 st March 2024
Number of cases	95	106	156
Accrued debt £'000	3,816	4,476	6,984

13.14 Managing family finances is complex and can take time to understand an individual's circumstances. The Court of Protection process is timely and has impacted on the time cases sit with Dorset Council.

13.15 The write-offs processed during the year are shown in the table below. There is adequate provision to cover these debts, which are a relatively small proportion of the total outstanding debt (1.0%).

Debts written off	2023/24
	£'000
Adults & Housing	203
Children's Services	15
Place	345
Corporate	0
Total	563

14 Local taxation

Council tax

14.1 The value of council tax debt raised in 2023/24 was £370.2m and £356.2m was collected in the year. The collection rate at 31 March 2024 was 96.23%, which is slightly less than the previous year's rate 96.62%.

14.2 At the end of 2022/23 the arrears were £36.7m and during 2023/24 £7.7m (21%) of this debt was collected.

Business rates (non-domestic rates – NDR)

14.3 The value of business rates debt raised in 2023/24 was £94.5m and £90.9m was collected in the year. The collection rate at 31 March 2024 was 96.17%, which is an improvement on the previous year's rate 92.07%. This improvement is reflected in the improved 'central finance' position earlier in the report.

14.4 At the end of 2022/23 the arrears were £14.2m and during 2023/24 £7.8m (55%) of this debt was collected.

- 14.5 The write-offs processed by the Revenues & Benefits Service during the year are shown in the table below.

Debts written off	2023/24 £'000
Council tax	252
Business rates	230
Housing Benefit Overpayments	151
Total	633

15 Financial planning, strategy and the MTFP

- 15.1 Over the coming months the Council will be refreshing the MTFP and developing the budget strategy for 2025/26. Recent budget rounds have seen significant turbulence and volatility, and the backdrop to setting the budget for next year to be very similar, with uncertainty around prices, markets, and labour conditions.
- 15.2 There are significant and sustained inflationary pressures building in the UK economy and globally, driven principally by sustained conflict and global uncertainty. This has principally manifested in increased fuel and energy prices but the knock-on effect of these is increasingly apparent across other commodities and supply chains. Supply of labour is also a significant concern, especially in the care sector although this is affecting other areas where the Council needs to engage significant human resources in coming months, such as in gearing-up to meet the challenges of adult social care reform.
- 15.3 The first update of the refreshed update of the MTFP financial model will come to Cabinet in November for endorsement of the planning assumptions for the year ahead as well as the longer-term financial planning horizon.

16 Summary, conclusions, and next steps

- 16.1 2023/24 was another challenging year financially with inflation continuing to impact on expenditure as demonstrated by the significant overspends associated with service delivery. Spend on Childrens and Adults at a national level remains under extreme pressure and Dorset is fortunate to have relatively minor variances within these directorates which is testament to the strong leadership and continued delivery of transformation plans.
- 16.2 Overall for the Council to deliver a 0.29% overspend demonstrates the relatively stable financial footing the Council is in, and offers some comfort as we approach the new financial year.
- 16.3 Looking ahead to the medium term, in February 2024 the Budget was set with a future gap of £50m across the life of the MTFP. This continues to be of concern despite the late improvements to 2023/24. This improvement provides with the luxury, and responsibility to use the time and space wisely to respond to the uncertainty as the outcome of the upcoming Spending Review, implications on future funding, national reform along with the sustained pressure locally from increased complexity, need and demand for statutory services.

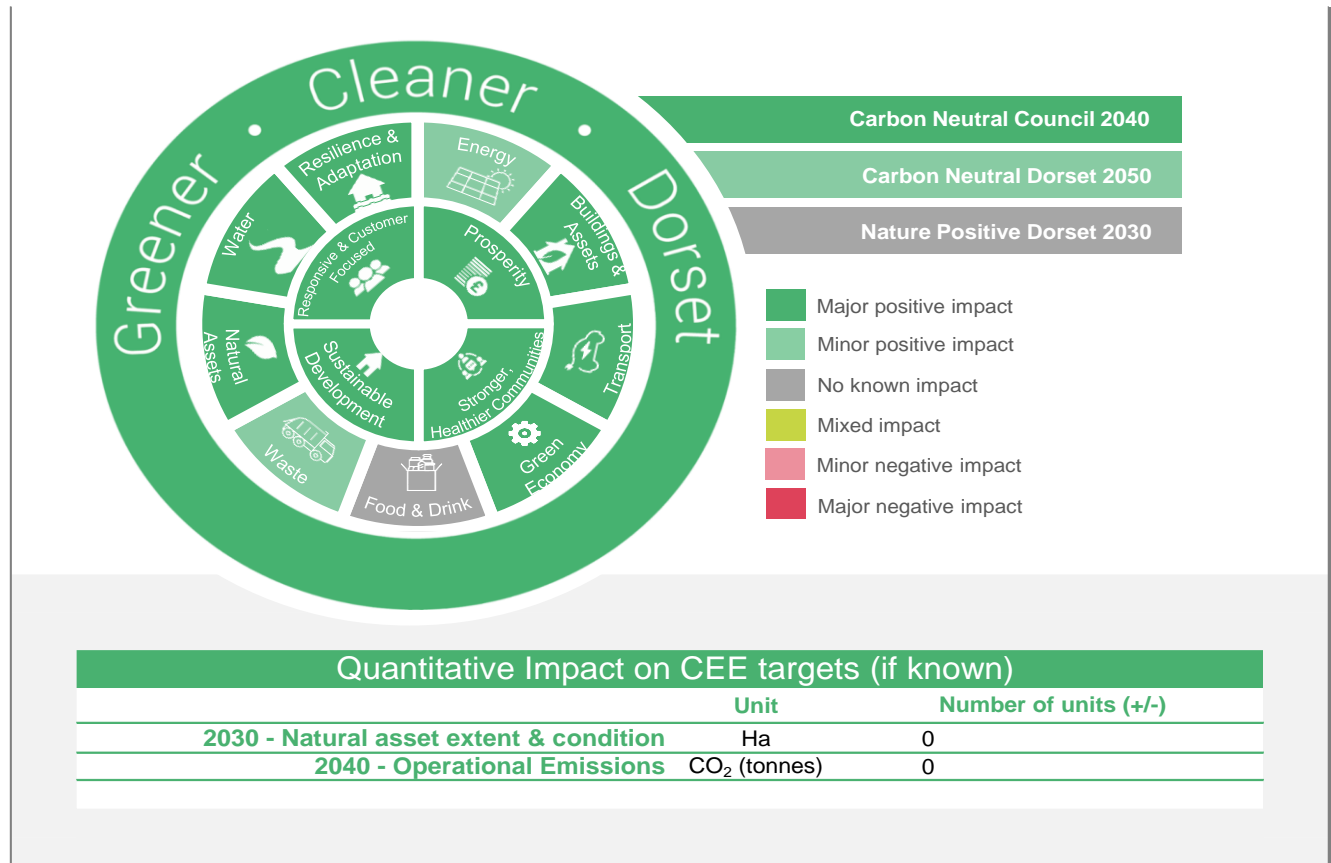
Appendix A

The table below shows the final position for the 2023/24 savings. The financial implications of this are reflected in the 2023/24 outturn figures contained in this report.

2023/24 Savings Plans		Green	Amber	Amber 2	Red
	£000's	£000's	£000's	£000's	£000's
Adults & Housing	9,073	9,073	0	0	0
Childrens	3,935	3,435	0	0	500
Place	4,529	1,250	0	0	3,279
Central	1,888	1,888	0	0	0
Corporate	708	123	0	0	585
Total Savings Plans	20,133	15,769	0	0	4,364

Category	Green (£000's)	Amber (£000's)	Amber 2 (£000's)	Red (£000's)
Adults & Housing	9,073	0	0	0
Childrens	3,435	0	0	500
Place	1,250	0	0	3,279
Central	1,888	0	0	0
Corporate	123	0	0	585

Appendix B – Climate Wheel



ACCESSIBLE TABLE SHOWING IMPACTS

Natural Environment, Climate & Ecology Strategy Commitments	Impact
Energy	minor positive impact
Buildings & Assets	major positive impact
Transport	major positive impact
Green Economy	major positive impact
Food & Drink	No known impact
Waste	minor positive impact
Natural Assets & Ecology	major positive impact
Water	major positive impact
Resilience and Adaptation	major positive impact
Corporate Plan Aims	Impact
Prosperity	strongly supports it
Stronger healthier communities	strongly supports it
Sustainable Development & Housing	strongly supports it
Responsive & Customer Focused	strongly supports it

TABLE OF RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendations	Responses -will this be incorporated into your proposal? How? And if not, why not?
Energy	
Find out energy use of buildings that are being brought into the Dorset Council carbon footprint, as this will affect our ability to hit our carbon reduction targets	
Find out energy use of any new build buildings that are being added to the Dorset Council carbon footprint, as this will affect our ability to hit our carbon reduction targets	
Support the acceleration of heating and energy and water efficiency through cavity and solid wall insulation, draught proofing, improved glazing and shading, and high energy and water efficient smart appliances	
Buildings & Assets	
No recommendations found for this category	
Transport	
No recommendations found for this category	
Green Economy	
No recommendations found for this category	
Food & Drink	
No recommendations found for this category	
Waste	
Look at ways to reduce the amount of waste produced	
Natural Assets & Ecology	

No recommendations found for this category	
Water	
No recommendations found for this category	
Resilience & Adaptation	
No recommendations found for this category	

Cabinet

11 June 2024

Bournemouth Christchurch Poole Council Local Plan consultation response

For Decision

Cabinet Member and Portfolio

Cllr S Bartlett, Planning and Emergency Planning

Local Councillor(s): All

Executive Director:

Jan Britton, Executive Lead for Place

Report Author: Terry Sneller
Job Title: Strategic Planning Manager
Tel: 01305 838224
Email: terry.sneller@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk

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

Brief Summary:

Bournemouth Christchurch and Poole Council (BCP Council) are at an advanced stage of producing their Local Plan. A publication consultation version (Regulation 19) has been produced ahead of the draft plan being submitted to the Secretary of State for examination in public. This plan is what BCP Council to be a legally compliant and sound local plan for their area. Consultation on this draft plan ran between 20 March and 3 May 2024.

The response in Appendix 1 of this report has been prepared in response to the regulation 19 consultation on the BCP Council Local Plan. The response has been submitted to BCP Council as an officer response with the opportunity now for Dorset Council Cabinet to endorse the response.

In addition, consultation on the BCP Council Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) charging schedule ran between 25 April and 6 June. An officer response has been submitted to this consultation and is include as Appendix 3 to this report.

Should amendments to the submitted consultation responses be considered necessary, these can be submitted to BCP Council however the official consultation periods have now closed.

Recommendation:

That Cabinet endorse the submitted officer responses made to the recent consultations as the official view of Dorset Council:

- a. the BCP Council Local Plan consultation in Appendix 1.
- b. the BCP Council Community Infrastructure Levy Charging Schedule consultation in Appendix 3.

Reason for Recommendation:

It is important that Dorset Council engages with BCP Council to help shape their Local Plan and to ensure that any cross-boundary effects are identified and managed through joint working. This engagement, alongside the continued engagement that has taken place during the production of the Local Plan, ensures that the Council's obligations under the Duty to Cooperate are fulfilled.

1. Report

- 1.1 Every Local Planning Authority in England is required to produce a Local Plan. The local plan is used as the basis for making decisions on planning applications within the authority area. During the preparation of a local plan, there is a legal requirement to engage with neighbouring local planning authorities on strategic cross-boundary issues as part of the duty to cooperate. It is therefore important that Dorset Council engage and work with neighbouring local authorities during the preparation of their local plans and in the preparation of Dorset Council Local Plan.
- 1.2 Officers from BCP Council and Dorset Council have met regularly during the production of the BCP Council Local Plan. In addition to this ongoing engagement, there are formal opportunities for Dorset Council to comment on the BCP Council Local Plan at the point that consultation takes place. A response was made to consultation in March 2022 (see Appendix 2) and this recent consultation was the final opportunity prior to the plan being submitted for examination in public.
- 1.3 An officer response was submitted to the consultation before it closed on 3 May (see Appendix 1). Should amendments be made to this officer response, BCP Council will have discretion as to whether they accept the amended response.
- 1.4 The BCP Council Local Plan will cover the period from 2024 to 2039 and proposes to meet a housing requirement of 1,600 homes over the plan period (1,200 per year to 2028/29 and then 1,800 for the remainder of the plan period), This delivery rate is below the Local Housing Need figure calculated

using the Standard Method but this is because of the specific characteristics of population growth in the BCP area¹.

- 1.5 Under the duty to cooperate, neighbouring councils are required to maintain effective cooperation on strategic issues that cross local authority boundaries. When establishing the number of new homes needed, the unmet need in a neighbouring local authority area should be considered. If BCP Council are found to not be effectively meeting their housing need, as derived through the Standard Method, then Dorset Council will need to consider whether it would be appropriate to meet some or all of this unmet need. The response submitted to the consultation supports the use of a lower housing requirement for the BCP Council Local Plan but also raises concerns about the deliverability of the strategy for delivering housing. The suggestion is that BCP Council need to demonstrate that they have thoroughly examined all opportunities for meeting their housing need before Dorset Council will consider whether there are opportunities for any unmet need to be met within Dorset.
- 1.6 The strategy for accommodating the housing that is needed in BCP focuses primarily on the intensification of the urban area. Approximately 90% of the housing growth is proposed to be delivered within the existing built-up area with the remaining 10% being delivered on existing urban extension sites. The plan does not propose any additional release of Green Belt land.
- 1.7 Although the submitted response supports the approach of intensification within the urban area, there is concern as to whether the strategy will meet the housing needs of the area and specifically whether it will meet the needs of families and those needing affordable homes. Intensification of an existing built-up urban area tends to deliver a higher proportion of flats than on greenfield sites and these urban sites are often more complicated and costly to deliver. The implication of this strategy could be a displacement of the need for family homes and for affordable homes to the Dorset Council area. This could result in increased commuting and increased pressure on existing infrastructure within the Dorset Council area.
- 1.8 The response supports the efforts in the plan to encourage low carbon and active/non-car travel but also raises a number of concerns about some of the specific transport infrastructure proposals that may impact directly upon the Dorset Council area. Establishing cross-boundary active travel infrastructure connections are supported.

¹ A jointly produced report examined the inputs of the Standard Method for calculating a local plan housing requirement for BCP Council and Dorset Council [907d0399-0cf7-36a2-4920-a268c4e93e0f](https://www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/907d0399-0cf7-36a2-4920-a268c4e93e0f) ([dorsetcouncil.gov.uk](https://www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk))

- 1.9 The consultation response includes support for the allocation of a site to help meet the need for gypsies and travellers and supports the delivery of the Stour Valley Park as a strategic piece of green infrastructure that will serve both the residents of BCP Council and Dorset Council areas.
- 1.10 Several supporting documents will sit alongside the BCP Council Local Plan, one of which is a new Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) charging schedule that will replace the three existing area-based schedules covering the BCP Council area. Charging schedules form an important tool in the delivery of infrastructure needed to support development. The proposed charging schedule has relevance to Dorset Council due to shared responsibilities with the delivery of habitat mitigation. Consultation on the BCP Council CIL charging schedule took place between 25 April and 6 June. A short officer response included as Appendix 3 to this report, supporting the principle of a revised charging schedule, was submitted within the consultation timeframe.

2. **Financial Implications**

- 2.1 There are no financial implications arising from the consideration of this response to the BCP Council Local Plan consultation as an officer report has already been submitted. However, officers may need to prepare for and attend the examination of the BCP Local Plan to state the Council's position. The costs associated with this will be met from within existing budgets.

3. **Natural Environment, Climate & Ecology Implications**

- 3.1 The purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. Sustainable development includes an environmental, social and economic objectives with the balancing of these being the role of the planning system. As such, the proposals within the BCP Local Plan will have considered the implications for the Natural Environment, Climate & Ecology and the Plan contains objectives focused on tackling these issues.

4. **Well-being and Health Implications**

- 4.1 Local Plans, such as the BCP Local Plan, are required by national planning policy to aim to deliver healthy, inclusive and safe places.

5. **Other Implications**

- 5.1 The content of a local plan is wide ranging however there are not considered any significant implications that warrant a detailed response other than those identified in this report.

6. **Risk Assessment**

- 6.1 HAVING CONSIDERED: the risks associated with this decision; the level of risk has been identified as:

Current Risk: Low

Residual Risk: Low

7. **Equalities Impact Assessment**

- 7.1 This report proposes a response to the BCP Council Local Plan. As part of the preparation of their Local Plan, BCP Council would have considered equalities issues and will have prepared an Equalities Impact Assessment.

8. **Appendices**

Appendix 1: Officer response to the BCP Council Local Plan Regulation 19 consultation submitted on 1 May 2024.

Appendix 2: Response submitted in March 2022 to the earlier Regulation 18 consultation on the BCP Council Local Plan.

9. **Background Papers**

- 9.1 The detail of the BCP Council Local Plan and Community Infrastructure Levy including the consultation material relevant to this report can be found at the link below.

[BCP Local Plan | BCP \(bcpcouncil.gov.uk\)](https://bcpcouncil.gov.uk)

[Community Infrastructure Levy | BCP \(bcpcouncil.gov.uk\)](https://bcpcouncil.gov.uk)

10. **Report Sign Off**

- 10.1 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).

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Appendix 1: Officer response to the BCP Council Local Plan Regulation 19 consultation submitted on 1 May 2024.

Dorset Council – response to the BCP Council Local Plan regulation 19 consultation

20 March to 1 May 2024

Dorset Council recognises the challenge of meeting the growth needs of the area whilst protecting the environment – an environment that is valued both locally and internationally for its wildlife interests. This challenge exists across both the BCP and Dorset areas and needs to be given significant weight when considering the approach to development. However, there are opportunities that exist within the BCP area that can offer significant benefits for both the urban and natural environment.

Dorset Council support efforts to intensify the urban areas as an approach to meeting housing needs but there is uncertainty exists as to whether this approach will enable the needs of the BCP area to be met and specifically the needs of families and those needing affordable homes. BCP Council will be aware that Green Belt is a national policy tool that can be reviewed through the plan-making process and through the release of Green Belt land for development, opportunities for more closely meeting the size and type of housing that are needed in the area can be realised.

Local Housing Need

Dorset Council agree that the Local Housing Need for BCP Council, calculated using the standard method, does not represent a realistic estimate of actual housing need in the BCP area. The work jointly produced by BCP Council and Dorset Council has explored the impact of the 2014 demographic baseline and found that the projected levels of in-migration into the BCP area adversely affected the result of the Local Housing Need calculation, overestimating the need for new housing. The same arguments do not however apply to the Dorset Council area as there are no significant attractors of people (e.g. universities) to the area beyond that typical of areas such as Dorset.

National policy states that the Local Housing Need calculated using the standard method, should be considered as “an advisory starting-point for establishing a housing requirement for the area.” It goes on to state that “There may be exceptional circumstances, including relating to the particular demographic characteristics of an area which justify an alternative approach to assessing housing need; in which case the alternative approach should also reflect current and future demographic trends and market signals.” The recalculated Local Housing Need, using locally derived demographic projections results in a more achievable housing requirement for the BCP area more closely aligned to past rates of housing delivery. If the housing target were to be higher, this would necessitate a significant change

in the development strategy including significant urban intensification and the release of Green Belt sites, which is likely to be detrimental to the character of the area.

It is accepted that by virtue of the facilities, services and employment opportunities within the BCP area, development within the urban area would offer a sustainable approach to the distribution of development. Therefore the opportunities within the inner boundary of the Green Belt, adjacent to the built-up area of BCP, should be given consideration for development before considering areas beyond the outer edge of the Green Belt. The displacement of development to the outer edge of the Green Belt would increase the distance people travel to access the facilities and services within the BCP area. Dorset Council will only consider accommodating some of the unmet need from BCP if there is robust evidence that all opportunities for development within the BCP area are being maximised through the policies being put in place.

Dorset Council has not indicated that there are no opportunities to meet any unmet need from BCP as stated in paragraph 4.12 of the BCP Local Plan. Dorset Council is of the view that the housing needs of an area should be met as close to where they arise before they are displaced out to other locations. The Council's position is therefore that a full and thorough examination of all opportunities for BCP to meet its own housing need needs to be undertaken. If this assessment concludes that all realistic opportunities had been explored and the housing delivery maximised, Dorset will consider what opportunities exist to address any shortfall in a sustainable way. To date, BCP Council have not made a request to Dorset Council to meet its unmet need.

Spatial Strategy and the delivery of housing

The strategy within the BCP Local Plan suggests that approximately 57.4% of the housing need will be met at the strategic opportunity areas of the town centres. Only 9.3% of the housing need will be met through the existing greenfield urban extensions with the remaining 33.3% being met elsewhere within the BCP area. To date, Dorset Council has not seen a detailed analysis of the capacity within these areas. There is also a suggestion that, due to the sensitivity of some of these areas, design codes will need to be produced. These design codes would offer an opportunity to examine capacity more closely and consider the constraints (heritage constraints, character etc.) and therefore capacity within each. Without this information, there is a lack of certainty that the housing estimates can be achieved.

The Local Plan proposes a stepped housing target with an estimated 1,200 homes being delivered to 2028/29 and 1,800 homes being delivered for the remainder of the plan period. This initial lower rate is approximately equivalent to the amount of time an average large development site takes to deliver from the point of a plan allocation. This therefore gives time for the proposed policies to be implemented and to deliver. After this period, it will

become apparent whether the policy framework being put in place will deliver housing at the higher rate for the latter years of the plan.

Housing mix

The Local Plan acknowledges that evidence points towards a significant need for affordable homes within the BCP area but that the amount that can be delivered is limited by development viability. This is particularly true for brownfield redevelopment sites and for urban intensification sites where abnormal development costs often exist. The converse of this is that most greenfield sites are relatively uncomplicated to develop and do not involve abnormal costs. It is therefore often possible to deliver a greater number of affordable housing units via greenfield development than through urban intensification.

Similarly, the Local Plan acknowledges that urban intensification sites often deliver a larger proportion of smaller flats than family housing. The Plan highlights the reliance on a relatively small number of larger site allocations to deliver housing to meet the housing needs of families.

Dorset Council supports the measures to deliver balanced communities within the town centres and local opportunity areas. However, with few greenfield sites being allocated in the plan, and the knock-on effect on family and affordable housing delivery, there is likely to be displacement of housing demand outwards towards more remote locations outside of the BCP area. This is likely to undermine the policies that seek to deliver balanced communities and will potentially increase commuting distances for those who work within the BCP area resulting in increased traffic on the already congested roads.

The jointly produced a Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment which evaluates the need for additional gypsy and traveller accommodation across the BCP and Dorset areas. Dorset Council welcome the allocation of a site to meet the need for gypsies, travellers and travelling show people and the commitment to identify transit pitches.

Environment

The provision of nutrient mitigation within the Poole Harbour catchment is undertaken jointly with Dorset Council with the delivery of this mitigation keeping pace with the rate of development. The majority of the mitigation opportunities are within the Dorset Council area. Recent changes to the nutrient neutrality advice from Natural England have necessitated a change in approach to the calculation of nutrient loading from development. In addition, Dorset Council have been awarded funds from the DLUHC Local Nutrient Mitigation Fund to deliver nutrient mitigation across the Poole Harbour catchment. The approach that Dorset Council is seeking to implement will shift onus onto developers to secure mitigation rather than to rely on the councils to deliver. This will enable more opportunities for mitigation to be realised and will enable the councils to prioritise the

mitigation they deliver on those hard to deliver sites or sites that deliver a significant proportion of affordable housing.

It is likely that BNG delivery on urban intensification sites will be difficult to deliver. Provision is made in the Environment Act for BNG to be provided off site and it is likely that this will be necessary in many of the urban intensification schemes and other housing sites proposed in the BCP Council Local Plan. Dorset Council is working to put in place a mechanism to deliver BNG in Dorset and could offer opportunities for BNG to be delivered to serve developments in BCP.

Although Dorset Council are supportive of the Stour Valley Park project as a significant piece of green infrastructure to serve both BCP and Dorset residents, the boundaries of the park in Dorset have not been defined and agreed. As such Figure 6.6 and the boundary shown on the policies map should not be seen as definitive and some wording to this effect should be included in the Local Plan or the project boundary in Dorset should be removed.

Employment needs

Dorset Council welcome the aspirations of BCP to meet their employment needs as identified in the jointly produced Economic Needs Assessment. The recognition that the BCP Council area and the Dorset Council area are linked from an economic perspective highlights the importance of a coordinated economic strategy for Dorset and BCP councils.

The proposed Local Labour Agreements policy is supported and further highlights the need for joint working across the area. Many employees from Dorset work in BCP and vice-versa with high levels of commuting between the two areas especially in the parts of Dorset which are closer to the major employment areas within the BCP area than some parts of BCP. The Local Labour Agreements policy should therefore consider the labour supply that arises from the Dorset Council area alongside that from the BCP Council area for the purposes of this policy. Supporting and enabling the economy of BCP is therefore important to the prosperity of the wider area and will offer benefits to both councils.

Dorset council notice that Policy E7, E10 and E12 require commercial properties that are suggested to be surplus to requirements, need to be the subject of "full and proper marketing of the site for its existing use at a reasonable value" for a period of only 6 months. The industry standard appears to be closer to 12 months of marketing.

Transport Strategy

It is evident that transport has been considered during the formation of the Local Plan's development strategy and Dorset Council is supportive of the identification and delivery of sustainable transport corridors throughout the BCP area. Any enhancement of these corridors should connect through to parts of Dorset from where many people travel on a

regular basis for work and to access facilities and services. These flows are two-way with BCP residents travelling to Dorset and Dorset residents travelling to BCP.

Encouraging local trips to be undertaken through active travel and sustainable forms of transport through the integration of land use planning and transport planning, can produce healthier lifestyles and have positive impacts on traffic congestion and air quality.

Within Policy E3, the Northern Aviation Business Park site should prioritise the establishment of sustainable transport connections to Ferndown and West Parley. Ferndown and West Parley are areas that have the potential to accommodate additional growth over the medium and longer term and therefore it is important to support the delivery of sustainable travel connections to the business park.

The inclusion of a requirement for a high-frequency bus route to and from the Wessex Fields site is supported however it is suggested that additional connections should be made between this site and the neighbouring areas of Wimborne, Ferndown, and Trickett's Cross.

Freight routing from the A31 to the port of Poole is a concern. There are currently already high levels of Freight traffic travelling through Ferndown to join onto the A31. Policy E6 should consider the measures needed to support freight movement on the highway network to ensure the existing situation is not made worse with betterment being sought where possible.

Policy T2 states that "proposals which are likely to generate significant transport impacts must be supported by a transport assessment / statement and a travel plan (at the Council's request)" and this is supported. However, there is no suggestion of what constitutes "a development that generates a significant amount of traffic". Clarity on this is needed to enable the potential impacts on the Dorset Council area as well as the impacts on the BCP area to be understood.

The walking, wheeling, and cycling section of Policy T4 states that transport infrastructure should be designed to "be safe, attractive and accessible for all users". This statement should be included as a guiding principle for all transport related infrastructure.

The park and ride site, located north of the A35 at Creekmoor, is currently unused. Dorset Council would like to see a commitment to this site being safeguarded within the Local Plan and for it to be reopened as a park and ride site during the lifespan of the Plan.

Policy P12 outlines a minimum of 210 dwellings and associated development which will have an impact on the Upton Gateway Roundabout and A35 Upton bypass. These pieces of transport infrastructure are managed by Dorset Council and highway mitigation measures along this route will need to be considered to alleviate any impact.

Development of the land north of Merley (BM.1) needs to consider impacts on the A31 and provide appropriate mitigation to the road network. The planned improvements to the A31

Merley roundabout should ensure any additional traffic generated from development allocated in the Local Plan can be accommodated.

Development of land north of Bearwood (BM.2) needs to consider traffic impacts along the A348 and Longham bridge. Active travel connections will be needed along Ringwood Road towards Ferndown. This should be an outcome of the development of site BM.2 secured through the financial contribution that forms part of the policy. Sustainable transport connections towards Wimborne town centre should also be provided.

Transport Infrastructure Improvements

A338 Highway Improvements, including widening to three lanes and a new link road from A338 to the airport, will need to be considered against the priorities of the forthcoming Local Transport Plan and agreed between both BCP Council and Dorset Council as the route falls within both council areas. Agreement will also need to be secured from National Highways as the impact on the Strategic Road network will be a significant factor.

There are existing safety issues at the Ashley Heath roundabout therefore any scheme will need to mitigate these issues. Similarly, the transport modelling work undertaken to support the Local Plan indicates that the Ashley Heath roundabout will experience capacity issues over time.

As with many of the transport improvements outlined in the Local Plan, the impact on the Dorset Council highway network will need to be given careful consideration. The proposals will need to be considered strategically across the area so that appropriate connections are made, and traffic impacts are mitigated. Specific schemes that cause concern include the proposed upgrades to the Castleman Trailway and improvements to the B3073 corridor Hurn Roundabout to A338 Blackwater Junction.

Appendix 2: Response submitted in March 2022 to the earlier Regulation 18 consultation on the BCP Council Local Plan.

Response to the Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole Council Local Plan Issues and Options Consultation

Dorset Council welcome this opportunity to respond to the Issues and Options Consultation on the emerging Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole (BCP) Council Local Plan. The comments included below build on the on-going discussions between BCP Council and Dorset Council under the Duty-to-Cooperate that are informing both council's local plans.

Dorset Council consider that the Bournemouth - Christchurch - Poole conurbation is a sustainable location within which to locate growth. It offers opportunities to meet the future need for housing close to where people work and where the necessary supporting infrastructure is and can be expanded therefore reducing the distance people travel to access these facilities. Focusing development close to these destinations enables active travel and less polluting alternatives to car travel. The strategy of intensifying within the urban area is therefore supported as being the best location for meeting the majority of the growth needs of the wider area.

Having worked closely with BCP Council in understanding the housing needs of the area, Dorset Council is of the opinion that the characteristics of population growth in the BCP area are likely to give rise to the exceptional circumstances required to enable a departure from the Standard Methodology. Ultimately, it will be a decision for BCP to make as to what housing target is included in the BCP Local Plan as it progresses towards submission however there is a need to make efforts to meet the needs of the range of households that may wish to live in BCP including the elderly, families and those who are unable to afford to compete in the housing market.

The overall level of housing growth should be objectively assessed giving consideration to the local demographics and market signals. Regard should then be had to any economic growth strategies and infrastructure investments that are planned in the area. Decisions on how this need can be met should be separated from the overall calculated need.

It is noted that BCP Council estimate that there is capacity within the urban area to deliver up to 39,000 homes including through taller buildings and increased density within conservation areas. This detailed work to estimate the capacity of the BCP area to deliver new homes is supported, however any estimates of capacity and any unmet need arising from a shortfall in supply, will need to be justified by robust evidence. Dorset Council is keen to work with BCP Council as this work progresses.

In addition to the estimates of capacity, intensification through the development of some identified areas is likely to have a detrimental impact on local character and have the potential to be misaligned with the stated objective of protecting existing open spaces.

There are a number of minerals and waste sites in close proximity to some intensification areas which would have the potential to restrict residential uses. There are also several sites affected by minerals safeguarding which could lead to delays whilst minerals deposits are assessed, and prior extraction considered. Dorset Council are willing to continue work closely with BCP in identifying and mitigating any impact on these strategically important minerals and waste sites and ensure appropriate safeguarding of the mineral resource.

Within the consultation document, there is a suggestion that *"It may be possible that Dorset could accommodate some of our unmet housing need"*. The recent consultation document produced by Dorset Council explored options for meeting the growth needs of the Dorset Council area and to give some flexibility in meeting the overall supply. It included a number of sites, the delivery of which will be tested through the development of the Dorset Council Local Plan with a final suite of sites being proposed in the publication version of the Plan. Before Dorset Council will consider whether there it could meet any unmet need from the BCP area, it will need to be convinced that BCP council have explored all possible options including the release of Green Belt sites, for meeting its own need. It is BCP Council's responsibility to robustly demonstrate that it cannot meet its own housing need before a request is made to Dorset Council to consider meeting any unmet need.

In order to meet the growth needs of the area, Dorset Council is exploring opportunities for releasing Green Belt for development with a strategic review of the Green Belt jointly produced with BCP Council. Due to their location, the sites identified for possible release within the Dorset Council area will primarily meet the needs of those who live and work close to the BCP Conurbation. In accordance with National Policy, all other options should be considered before releasing Green Belt with release only being considered in exceptional circumstances. When considering options, it is also important to have regard to the need to promote sustainable patterns of development. Without Green Belt release in the BCP area, it becomes very difficult to demonstrate the exceptional circumstances required to justify Green Belt release in the Dorset area which in turn restricts the ability of Dorset Council to meet any unmet need from BCP. Therefore, it is important that BCP consider Green Belt release as a failure to do so would limit Dorset Council's ability to meet its own needs and would therefore remove its ability to meet unmet need from elsewhere.

The need for Green Belt release goes beyond simply meeting housing targets. There is a need to meet the needs of the different groups that may wish to live in BCP and Dorset including meeting the needs of families and those who cannot afford to live in market homes. Larger sites, such as those being considered in the Green Belt, will offer more opportunities to deliver housing to meet the needs of these groups than intensification sites within the urban area. The urban intensification sites are, by their very nature, more likely to deliver flatted housing which are less likely to meet the needs of families. They also are likely to have higher site development costs and therefore are unlikely to deliver a significant number of affordable homes.

At the earliest opportunity, some certainty around the approach BCP are looking to take around Green Belt release and any unmet need arising from the BCP area, would be welcomed.

The need for pitches for gypsies, travellers and travelling show people will be evidenced by the emerging joint Needs Assessment being prepared for both Dorset and BCP councils. It is important that an appropriate supply of sites (including five years' worth of deliverable sites, 10 years for developable sites and broad locations for the longer term) are identified within the BCP Local Plan. Dorset Council support the use of a criteria-based policy to allow decisions to be made on site proposals.

The approach to managing town centre development needs to consider the implications for nearby town centres within the Dorset Council area. Town centres interact across an area and therefore sit within a hierarchy. Excessive change in one centre, or development outside of a centre, will have an impact on nearby centres and therefore it is important that the strategy for managing town centres is aligned across the two council areas. There will however be opportunities to increase the vibrancy of town centres through additional appropriately designed residential development.

Similarly, the approach taken to development to accommodate future jobs, will have implications for Dorset Council. Although there may be scope to release some employment areas for housing development, there is a need to maintain a sufficient and diverse mix of employment sites in the BCP area as these provide employment opportunities for the wider area. Employment sites should be in locations that allow for ease of access by non-car-based travel including active travel and public transport with connections being made to the wider south east Dorset area. This therefore needs to be planned at a strategic level across local authority boundaries.

Dorset Council strongly support the ambition to increase use of low carbon transport options and to promote active and non-car travel. Part of this will involve directing development to the most sustainable locations and this includes meeting as closely as possible the need for new homes in the location where the need arises. If development of new housing is not met, the result will be a displacement of this need to more remote and less sustainable locations.

Working with Dorset Council, additional connections between cycling and walking routes should be explored to enable greater permeability of the built area and connect outlying areas to the main economic and cultural centres. Park and Ride will be an important part of this overall strategy. The continued joint working on a revised Local Transport Plan will help to capitalise on opportunities that exist around improvements to the transport network.

Many issues associated with impacts on internationally protected wildlife sites are strategic and therefore require strategic solutions. Dorset Council is committed to working alongside

BCP Council to address these issues through the delivery of strategic mitigation where opportunities arise including the opportunities for a strategic approach at the Stour Valley Park.

Green Infrastructure is essential within urban areas and adds to the character of an area. The policy approach to existing open space and green infrastructure will need to be developed with careful consideration of the implications for the delivery of housing and intensification within the urban area. For example, it appears as though some of the areas identified on Figure 16 – 'BCP's network of open spaces' are also identified as areas for housing development.

Increasing density, by allowing tall buildings, will help with the delivery of housing targets. Design guidance and robust estimates of capacity will be necessary to demonstrate the deliverability of sites. We are supportive of the approach proposed by BCP to preserve and enhance the heritage of their area, and in particular the two options under consideration. We would be interested in discussing the results of the consultation regarding the options to introduce controls to prevent the demolition of locally important heritage assets, and the review of Conservation Area Appraisals.

Dorset Council welcomes the commitment to continued cooperation with Dorset Council and the recognition that it is essential that BCP explore all options for meeting its own housing need before asking Dorset Council to consider whether it is appropriate for it to meet some of BCP's unmet need. Dorset Council is committed to working closely with BCP Council during the production of both council's local plans to address these and other strategic cross-boundary issues.

Appendix 3: Response submitted to the BCP Council Community Infrastructure Levy Charging Schedule consultation.

Dorset Council response to BCP Community Infrastructure Levy Charging Schedule

General

Dorset Council welcomes the opportunity to comment on the BCP draft Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Charging Schedule.

Dorset Council supports the preparation of a single charging schedule, combining the existing charging schedules for Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole under one charging area. Dorset Council intends to follow a similar pathway by combining the existing charging schedules of West Dorset, Weymouth & Portland, Purbeck and East Dorset. A single charging schedule will also include North Dorset, ensuring complete coverage of CIL across the Dorset Council administrative area.

Dorset Council anticipates that a single charging schedule will be adopted alongside the Dorset Council Local Plan under timetabling agreed through its latest approved Local Development Scheme (March 2024).

Dorset Council manages CIL to support a wide variety of infrastructure. The use of developer contributions is guided (in-part) by Supplementary Planning Documents and strategies, particularly where the delivery of environmental mitigation is concerned. For the most part, environmental mitigation such as the protection of Dorset Heathlands and Poole Harbour catchment are met through financial contributions secured through CIL.

CIL led approach to developer contributions

Over the course of time where CIL has operated in the Dorset Council area, the responsibility for mitigating the effects of development on protected wildlife habitats has grown, placing increased financial burden on Dorset Council's CIL.

As a consequence, the scope to support other forms of infrastructure using CIL such as schools, transport and community facilities has reduced, particularly in charging areas where multiple strands of habitat mitigation are present. Having experience of covering the cost of habitat mitigation through CIL, Dorset Council would offer caution to BCP's approach, particularly given the role it sees CIL playing in supporting wider infrastructure costs as indicated through the accompanying Infrastructure Delivery Plan.

Development that is CIL liable but has the subsequent benefit of social housing or self-build relief further effects CIL income and can leave development paying CIL to cross-subsidise the income lost to CIL relief. This further reduces the availability of CIL funding to deliver

other forms of infrastructure. In 2022/23 self-build and social housing relief accounted for approximately 30% of all CIL liable housing completions.

Site specific infrastructure

The Community Infrastructure Levy regime is not intended to serve site-specific needs. As such, any genuine site-specific need that is regulation 122 compliant would trigger the need to secure s106 developer contributions in addition to the CIL charge. The assumptions included in the accompanying viability evidence of £1,500 for education and £1,500 for transport, would appear to under-represent their true cost in these situations. The range of site specific infrastructure requirements will often be guided by site-specific need and individual circumstances.

Charging rate comparisons

The BCP Council draft charging schedule presents rates which are a significant increase on existing adopted rates. There does not appear to be any allowance for large and complex site allocations where contributions would typically be secured through s106 and CIL charged at a £0 rate.

The accompanying table sets out how the proposed BCP Council CIL rates compare to those rates currently applied through Dorset Council's adopted CIL where it adjoins the BCP charging area boundary. In all cases, the proposed BCP rate is much higher, but the most significant change occurs between value area 1 and the Purbeck - Upton rate where the increase is over 2000%.

Sales values are a component in determining appropriate CIL rates. In 2022, Dorset Council prepared new viability evidence to inform the emerging Dorset Council Local Plan. That viability evidence considered up to date development costs including the increased environmental mitigation responsibilities outlined in this response. The supporting viability information accompanying the BCP draft charging schedule sets out the expected sales value rates by value area. Again, these represent an increase on equivalent rates for Dorset, with the most significant increase again occurring in areas where the council's charging areas adjoin one another.

The outcome of the 2022 viability study was the recommendation of a range of CIL rates, with an upper limit of up to £200 per sqm in higher value areas.

Implications and conclusions

National planning guidance suggests that CIL should be easily understandable and minimise the need for multiple charging zones and development types. Such a large step change in the BCP Council CIL rate, could lead to market shock and potentially have an effect on the delivery of future development and supporting infrastructure across both BCP Council and Dorset Council areas as a whole.

Development Type	CIL Charges on land adjoining Value Area 3				CIL Charges on land adjoining Value Area 2			CIL Charges on land adjoining Value Area 1	
	BCP CIL Draft	DC - East Dorset - Wimborne	DC Purbeck - Upton		BCP CIL Draft	DC East Dorset - West Parley		BCP CIL Draft	DC Purbeck - Upton
Brownfield 1-9 dwellings	£360	£200	£16		£310	£200		£280	£16
Brownfield 10+ dwellings	£300	£93	£16		£130	£93		£40	£16
Greenfield	£600	As above	£16		£485	As above		N/A	£16

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