PLACE AND RESOURCES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON THURSDAY 30 APRIL 2026

Present: Cllrs Nocturin Lacey-Clarke (Chair), Ray Bryan (Vice-Chair), Barrie Cooper, Jack Jeanes, Craig Monks and Louie O'Leary

Apologies: Cllrs Alex Brenton, Alex Fuhrmann, David Tooke and Sarah Williams

Also present: Cllr Shane Bartlett, Cllr Nick Ireland, Cllr Peter Dickenson and Cllr Steve Robinson

Also present remotely: Cllr Jane Somper and Cllr Carole Jones

Officers present (for all or part of the meeting):
Jan Britton (Executive Director - Economy and Environment), Jonathan Mair (Director - Assurance (Monitoring Officer)), Lisa Cotton (Interim Executive Director - Modernisation and Customer Delivery), Steven Ford (Assistant Chief Executive), Chris Matthews (Head of Human Resources), Antony Nash (Senior Democratic & Governance Services Officer), Jack Wiltshire (Corporate Director for Highways and Engineering), James Ailward (Head of ICT Operations), Antony Bygrave (Senior Assurance Officer - Complaints), Liz Crocker (Head of Strategy), Marc Eyre (Service Manager for Assurance), Jenni Boddy (Senior Technical Systems Analyst) and Chris Heighway (Performance and Analytics Team Manager)

Officers present remotely (for all or part of the meeting):
Gemma Clinton (Corporate Director for Waste, Recycling and Resource Recovery)

62. **Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting on the 22 January 2026 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

63. **Declarations of interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

64. **Public Participation**

There was no public participation.

65. **Questions from Councillors**

There were no questions from Councillors.

66. **2025/26 Quarter 3 Performance Report**

Strategic Performance Intelligence &Risk manager introduced the Quarter 3 Performance Report (October–December 2025), alongside the associated performance dashboard and strategic risks.

The discussion focused on understanding the context and interpretation of the data presented, alongside identifying areas of concern and opportunities for further scrutiny.

Highways Maintenance and Department for Transport Ratings
The Corporate Director Highways &Engineering introduced the context around the ratings in the report and discussion explored the Department for Transport (DfT) road maintenance ratings and the methodology behind them. It was clarified that the ratings were largely based on submitted data through transparency reports rather than direct assessment of road conditions. This led to concern that the ratings did not fully reflect the lived experience of road quality and may present an unfair comparison between authorities. It was also noted that some scoring elements related to how funding was reported and allocated, rather than actual network condition.

The discussion concluded that the current ratings were more reflective of reporting approaches and financial strategy than a true comparative measure of infrastructure quality.

Cyber Security Training Compliance
The Head of ICT Operations (CTO) introduced the performance measures and discussion highlighted that previously reported compliance levels had been affected by data inaccuracies. Following data cleansing and revised reporting methods, compliance figures had improved significantly.
It was acknowledged, however, that the improvement was largely attributable to better data rather than increased completion rates. The discussion explored the challenges of engaging all staff groups, particularly those without regular access to IT systems.
The approach to compliance enforcement was discussed, including the potential removal of system access for persistent non-compliance. There was also recognition that councillor engagement with training required clearer communication.

Workforce Performance – Sickness, Turnover and Agency Use
the Head of People and Workforce introduced the performance data in the report in relation to workforce indicators in the report.

For sickness absence, it was noted that increases were primarily driven by long-term absence affecting a relatively small proportion of staff. The difference between long-term and short-term absence was clarified, along with how averages can mask the concentration of absence within specific cohorts.
There was discussion about the causes of absence, including physical roles and work-related stress, and the extent to which these could be influenced by the organisation. The importance of prevention, wellbeing support, and understanding underlying causes was emphasised.
Further discussion explored the impacts of workplace conditions, including exposure to abuse in frontline roles, and the need to improve reporting and

protection measures. Consideration was also given to the use of body-worn cameras and vehicle recording equipment as part of safeguarding staff.

On turnover, it was noted that rates were above the target range, with increases linked to retirement and organisational change. The discussion highlighted the importance of improving exit interview processes to better understand reasons for leaving, while recognising the potential bias in voluntary feedback.
Succession planning was discussed in the context of an ageing workforce, including the need to retain knowledge and plan for future skills requirements.
Regarding agency expenditure, it was acknowledged that spending had reduced significantly from previous levels but had now stabilised. The discussion explored the balance between agency and permanent staff, noting that agency workers can provide flexibility but may reduce continuity.
There was also consideration of whether reliance on agency staff reflected underlying recruitment challenges, particularly in specialist areas, and whether there should be a clearer organisational position on the appropriate level of agency use.

DBS Compliance
The discussion confirmed that while the target for DBS compliance remained at 100%, shortfalls were typically due to delays in processing. Assurance was provided that risk mitigation measures were in place, including supervision of staff awaiting clearance, and no safeguarding issues had arisen as a result.

Performance Indicators and Dashboard
The Committee discussed the structure of the performance dashboard and the selection of key indicators. It was noted that while the dashboard provided a high-level overview, it did not always reflect the full scope of activity within larger service areas.
There was agreement on the value of refining indicators where necessary and including additional measures where they would provide meaningful insight, particularly in high-priority areas.

Strategic Risks
The discussion examined several key strategic risks and their implications for performance.
Focus was given to transformation programmes, where there was concern about the potential impact of insufficient resourcing. While it was confirmed that current delivery remained on track, the presence of a high-risk rating prompted discussion about the alignment between risk assessment and operational performance.
The Local Plan risk was discussed in the context of external dependencies, including delays in receiving national guidance and required evidence. It was acknowledged that some aspects of this risk were outside of the Council's direct control.
The risk relating to business continuity planning generated discussion around whether the description accurately reflected current arrangements. It was noted that while plans and testing regimes were in place, the wording suggested a level of insufficiency that may not fully represent the current position.
The discussion emphasised the importance of clearly distinguishing between inherent risk and the effectiveness of mitigation measures.

The Committee used the discussion to identify areas for further detailed review reports which were workforce absence and wellbeing and waste management.

67. **Place and Resources Scrutiny Committee Work Programme**

The Place and Resources Scrutiny Committee reviewed the work programme and suggested items for future meetings.

Suggested items for future meetings

Workforce Deep Dive (July)
Waste Collections (July)
Accessibility of Dorset Council Estate. (September)

68. **Executive Arrangements Forward Plans**

The Committee noted the Forward Plans.

69. **Urgent items**

There were no urgent items.

70. **Exempt Business**

There was no exempt business.

Duration of meeting: 6.30 - 8.16 pm

Chairman

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