

Date of committee: 9 October 2025

Date published: 10 October 2025

Date of implementation: 17 October 2025

## **DECISIONS OF THE CABINET 9 OCTOBER 2025**

The following decisions were made by the Cabinet on 9 October 2025 and will come into force and may be implemented on xxx unless the decision is called in for scrutiny.

In accordance with the council's constitution, any six members of the same relevant Scrutiny Committee may request the Monitoring Officer to 'call-in' a decision for scrutiny. The Monitoring Officer will be provided with written notice that will identify the decision to be called-in and the ground for the call-in when the request is made. If satisfied that there are reasonable grounds for the proposed call-in, the Monitoring Officer will notify the decision-maker of the call-in within 5 clear working days. The deadline for this request is **16 October 2025.**

The full call-in procedure is set out in the Constitution or for further information and advice please telephone Kate Critchel on 01305 252234

## 6 DORSET COUNCIL TRANSFORMATION INVESTMENT UPDATE: OUR FUTURE COUNCIL

- (a) That the update for Our Future Council including commitment to the financial and strategic context for transformation following initial consultation, be noted.
- (b) That the high-level delivery plan, enabling Dorset Council to continue delivering critical improvements, modernising services, and preparing the organisation for future challenges and opportunities, be noted.
- (c) That the use of reserves to fund the investment of £12.4m in 2025/26, be approved:
  - £7.93m in H2 2025/26 plus additional procurement costs which must be committed to up-front totalling £4.47m.
  - Allocation of budget required as detailed in section 6 of the report to Cabinet 9 October 2025, released incrementally every 6 months. This includes investment required for internal and external capacity and skills, delivery of technology including Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP), contact centre, automation and AI and corporate bookings.

The incremental release required for October 2025 to March 2026 is:

- ERP: £1.65m plus commitment to 3 years procurement costs for SI and licensing of product to the value of £2.98m (out of a total of £14.23m over 3 years).
  - Contact Centre: £1.55m plus commitment to software licencing to the value of £0.99m and contracting of product team to the value of £0.5m (out of a total of £5.64m over 3 years).
  - Extension of existing automation technology, Ui path: £0.057m (out of a total of £0.25m over 3 years).
  - Whole council booking solution: £0.075m (£0.385m over 3 years).
  - Internal resource: £2.1m for Transformation Management Office.
  - Redundancy costs: £2.5m for voluntary and compulsory redundancies
- (d) That authority be delegated to the Chief Executive in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Transformation and Corporate Development and Section 151 Officer to procure and award contracts for the following (within the budget defined in paragraph 1.3 and section 6 of the Cabinet report to 9 October 2025):
    - Strategic implementation partner for Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) at a total contract value of £2.1m, licensing costs of the new product to a total value of £0.98m
    - Digital product team for contact centre of £0.5m for H2 2025/26 and commitment up front to £0.99m in licensing costs over 3 years.
  - (e) That the strengthened governance and leadership arrangements, with regular engagement, leadership, and oversight provided by the Chief Executive, Cabinet, and the wider Members Steering Group, supported by the Design Authority, be noted.

- (f) That investment requests, be made to Cabinet every six months as needed and as set out at section 4.3 of the Cabinet report of 9 October 2025, be agreed, with monthly monitoring by the cross-party Members Transformation Steering Group including:
- Delivery progress
  - Evidence of benefits realisation and substantiated savings
  - An updated request for the next investment increment, aligned to programme milestones

Reason for the decision

To confirm Dorset Council's transformation strategy, reaffirming our commitment to delivering Our Future Council as a whole-council, cross-cutting programme. This approach reflects the revised financial and strategic context and builds on the significant progress made over the past year.

## **7 CHILDREN'S SERVICES, INSPECTION OF LOCAL AUTHORITY CHILDREN'S SERVICES - POST INSPECTION UPDATE**

That the Post Inspection Action Plan be received and noted.

Reason for the decision

Dorset Council had a statutory duty to deliver effective safeguarding services and improve outcomes for children in care and care experienced young people. The impact of an effective Children's Services contributed to the 'communities for all' priority in the Council Plan.

The report provided assurance that Children's Services were continuing to learn from inspections and improve services to the communities of Dorset.

## **8 ASPIRE ADOPTION ANNUAL REPORT**

That the Aspire Adoption annual report 2024/25 be received and noted.

Reason for the decision

Dorset Council had a duty under the Adoption and Children Act 2002 to establish and maintain an adoption service for its area. Dorset Council along with BCP Council discharges this duty through a delegation of functions to Aspire Adoption, a Regional Adoption Agency.

## **9 GET DORSET AND BCP WORKING PLAN**

- (a) That the draft 'Get Dorset and BCP Working Plan', be approved for publication.
- (b) That authority be delegated to the Executive Director for Place, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Property, Assets and Economic Growth and Cabinet

Member for Children's Services, Education, and Skills, to undertake any minor changes to the Working Plan needed during its lifetime.

- (c) That authority be delegated to the Executive Director for Place, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Property, Assets and Economic Growth and Cabinet Member for Children's Services, Education, and Skills, to assign any remaining funding from the Government allocation to deliver outcomes identified in the Get Dorset and BCP Working Plan.
- (d) That the Connect to Work Plan, be approved.
- (e) That authority be delegated to the Executive Director for Place, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Property, Assets and Economic Growth and Cabinet Member for Children's Services, Education, and Skills, to undertake any minor changes to the Connect to Work Plan needed during its lifetime.

Reason for the decision

The Get Dorset and BCP Working Plan, and supporting Connect to Work programme, would enable Dorset Council to help address challenges related to labour market participation and progression.

In addition to being a government requirement, development and implementation of the Plan would help realise key ambitions of the Council's Plan and supporting Economic Growth Strategy and Digital Infrastructure and Inclusion Strategy, particularly around productivity, investment and skills needed for both today's economy and the proposed future expansion of key sectors including clean energy.

## **10 DORSET COUNCIL - FARMS ESTATE STRATEGY**

That the Farms Estate Strategy be adopted for a ten-year period, enabling the Council to deliver a structured, sustainable, and future-focused approach to the management of its agricultural holdings.

Reason for the decision

The previous strategy expired in 2021, and the need for a new framework had been crystallised by changes in national agricultural policy and the Council's adoption of the Strategic Asset Management Plan. The new strategy provided clarity of purpose, aligned with statutory obligations under the Agriculture Act 1970, and supported the Council's wider ambitions for economic growth, environmental stewardship, and community development.

## **11 DEVELOPER CONTRIBUTION FUNDING FOR COMMUNITY FACILITIES AT MAMPITTS GREEN, SHAFTESBURY**

Part 1 – That the previously set timescale milestone for the award of s106 funding to Shaftesbury Town Council, be extended as follows:

- (a) That the timescale condition requiring the completion of all necessary information required by condition, extended to 9 June 2026.
- (b) That the commencement of work on-site, extended to: 9 July 2026

That the appraisal of further information required by the conditions be agreed by the Head of Planning in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Planning and Emergency Planning, and any subsequent transfer of funds (and land) be made under the relevant officer delegation in accordance with the s106 protocol process. Failure to comply with either milestone extension would result in referral to Cabinet for further consideration.

Part 2 – That provision for up to 10% of the current total award value of £919,563 be available for early drawdown prior to the new milestone deadlines, to support the recovery of costs to-date and future expenditure relating to the refinement of the design.

Any further expenditure which required payment via the early draw down must be agreed in advance with Dorset Council. To ensure that the amount spent against the 10% early drawdown was monitored and not exceeded.

Reason for the decision

To increase the level of flexibility in the award of s106 funding to Shaftesbury Town Council to support delivery of important community infrastructure at Mampitts Green, Shaftesbury.

## **12 EMPTY HOMES STRATEGY**

- (a) That the Empty Homes Strategy be adopted.
- (b) That the recommendation from People and Health Overview Committee of 15 September 2025, be noted and considered as part of the Council's planned work to prepare the budget for the coming financial year and ongoing capital programme.

Reason for the decision

To enable officers to work towards implementing the content of the Empty Homes Strategy, bringing long term empty homes back into beneficial use to meet the corporate aims of the Council and the aims of its [Housing Strategy January 2024 to January 2029 - Dorset Council](#).

## **13 DORSET DOMESTIC ABUSE STRATEGY 2025-2028**

That the Domestic Abuse Strategy 2025-28 be approved.

Reason for the decision

To ensure the Council met its statutory duty under the Domestic Abuse Act 2021 relating to preparing and publishing a domestic abuse strategy.

## **14 AGE FRIENDLY COMMUNITIES**

- (a) That Dorset's application for Age Friendly accreditation by the World Health Organisation (WHO), be endorsed.
- (b) That the integration of Age-Friendly principles into whole council strategy and planning considerations including Adult Social Care locality practice, commissioning and strategic planning, be endorsed.
- (c) That, through the Council's OFC programme (Commissioning & Procurement & Community Partnerships Programmes), age friendly principles, be integrated into design of infrastructure, transport, housing, and public spaces.
- (d) That Dorset promotes Age Friendly Communities through local charities, businesses, faith groups, and local councils.

### **Reason for the decision**

According to recent research, nearly one-third of Dorset's population is aged 65 or over, significantly higher than the national average of 19%, with a median age of 52 compared to 40.5 nationally. Dorset also had the highest proportion of residents aged 85+ in the UK, and an old age dependency ratio of 537 (vs. 297 nationally), meaning there were 537 people aged 65+ for every 1,000 working-age adults.

As a result, Dorset Council faced growing financial pressures, with adult social care accounting for £159.6 million, over 38% of the 2025/26 net budget. Rising demand, particularly for complex care, combined with limited national funding, highlights the urgent need for preventative approaches. Delivering community programmes, such as Age Friendly Communities offered a strategic solution to reduce future demand, delay formal care, and improve outcomes, whilst delivering long-term sustainability and value.

## **17 MODIFICATION OF PUBLIC HEALTH CONTRACTS OVER £500K: 0-19 PUBLIC HEALTH NURSING AND SEXUAL HEALTH SERVICES**

That the recommendations set out in the exempt report be approved.

### **Reason for the decision**

To allow a more managed approach to the phasing of capacity and necessary procurement activity.