

Date of committee: 11 November 2025

Date published: 12 November 2025

Date of implementation: 20 November 2025

## **DECISIONS OF THE CABINET 11 NOVEMBER 2025**

The following decisions were made by the Cabinet on 11 November 2025 and will come into force and may be implemented on 20 November 2025 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 **19 November 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 SEPTEMBER 2025 (PERIOD 6) FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT REPORT 2025/26**

- (a) That the Senior Leadership Team's forecast of the full year's outturn for the Council, made at the end of September 2025 including progress of the transformational and efficiency savings incorporated into the budget, be noted.
- (b) That the capital programme for 2025/26 be noted.
- (c) That the number and extent of contract exemptions be noted.
- (d) That authority be delegated to the Executive Director for People (Children) in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Children's Services, Education and Skills to award phase 2 of the valuing care programme with IMPOWER which increases total spend to £0.94m. (as set out in Appendix D of the report to Cabinet of 11 November 2025)

Reason for the decision

The Council was legally required to set a balanced budget every year and so must deliver services within the resources made available through the revenue and capital budgets for 2025/26. The report summarised the Council's forecast financial performance for the year at the end of September 2025.

## **7 MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL PLAN (MTFP) AND BUDGET STRATEGY**

- (a) That the updated cost pressures set out in the Cabinet report of 11 November 2025 and the validation work that had been carried out on them, be noted.
- (b) That the assumptions being used in the Medium-Term Financial Plan (MTFP) be agreed.
- (c) That the financial gap arising from (b) and (c) above be noted.
- (d) That Cabinet agrees the 2026/27 principles for budget setting outlined in section 13 of the report of 11 November 2025.
- (e) That the approach to closing the budget gap set out in the report of 11 November 2025 be noted, recognising that the work was in progress.
- (f) That Cabinet continues to lobby local MPs and work with peers to press the case for additional, multi-year funding.
- (g) That Cabinet Members work with officers to continue to identify and develop further efficiencies and savings.

- (h) That Cabinet endorse the next steps and timetable leading up to the 2026/27 budget which will be presented to full Council on 10 February 2026.

#### Reason for the decision

Local councils were legally obligated to set a balanced annual budget, meaning that planned expenditure must be matched by sustainable income sources. This excludes reliance on one-off or short-term funding that cannot be maintained over time.

The report of 11 November 2025 was presented to Cabinet to provide an update on the projected budget gap for 2026/27 and the subsequent years covered by the MTFP. It also outlined progress made to date on identified actions and savings, including the forecasted financial performance for 2025/26 against the approved budget.

### **8 HIGHWAYS CAPITAL PROGRAMME STRATEGY**

- (a) That £1.5M of funding from the Department for Transport's new Structures Fund, be sought for essential concrete repairs and structural maintenance for the A30 Shaftesbury Bridge.
- (b) That Cabinet delegate authority to the Executive Director for Place in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Place Services, to approve funding allocation to the A30 Shaftesbury Bridge scheme from the Department for Transport Highways Maintenance Block allocation if the project is not eligible for the Structures Fund or maintenance is needed before the Structures Fund is allocated.
- (c) That Cabinet approves the spend within the forward plan (as set out in Appendix A of the Cabinet report of 11 November 2025) for Department for Transport and other externally funded highway improvement and structural maintenance work over £500k, and delegates the making of any contract award for schemes within Appendix A to the Cabinet Member for Place Services in consultation with the Executive Director for Place.
- (d) That Cabinet endorse the overall highway structural maintenance programme as agreed and in accordance with the Officer Scheme of Delegation, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Place Services, and confirm that approval of expenditure for individual schemes below £500k within that programme be made under the existing Officer Scheme of Delegation for Dorset Council.

#### Reason for the decision

To align the Department for Transport's multi-year funding with the local objectives of the Dorset Council Plan 2024 to 2029.

To support more effective long term asset management and gain additional Department for Transport investment for Dorset's highway network. Improving resilience, connectivity

and road safety would strongly contribute to the Council's priorities of growing our economy, communities for all and responding to the climate and nature crisis.

## **9 WEYMOUTH 2040: - RENEWABLE ENERGY PARTNERSHIP**

That authority be delegated to the Executive Director for Place, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Assets, Property and Economic Development and Corporate Director Finance & Commercial (s151 Officer) interim to:

- (i) Progress the Solar PV opportunity at Higher South Buckland Farm.
- (ii) Work with SSEN to secure a grid connection to enable future deployment with the next 24 months.
- (iii) Enter a strategic partnership with Source Galileo to advance the project.

*The project supported Dorset Council's net zero goals and offered early delivery potential, directly contributing to the intersecting clean energy and Weymouth regeneration ambitions of the Council Plan and our climate and economy strategies.*

Reason for the decision

To advance the Higher South Buckland Farm, Solar PV by securing a grid connection and enter into an agreement through the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with Source Galileo to advance this renewable energy project. The County Farm presented a strategic opportunity for renewable energy deployment. Securing grid access and exclusivity would enable Dorset Council to move forward with a 50MW solar PV project. This supported the Council's net zero goals and offered a quicker win in the regeneration programme.

## **10 WEYMOUTH 2040: A REGENERATION VISION ROOTED IN PLACE AND PEOPLE - LEVELLING UP FUND**

### **Weymouth Peninsula Development Proposal**

- (a) That authority be delegated to the Executive Director of Place, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Assets, Property and Economic Development and Corporate Director Finance & Commercial (s151 Officer) interim to:
  - (i) Formally invite Hall & Woodhouse to submit a proposal for a long leasehold development on the Weymouth Peninsula.
  - (ii) Ensure the proposal aligns with the Weymouth Town Centre Masterplan, including:
    - Provision of hospitality and leisure facilities.
    - Delivery of public realm enhancements that support placemaking and community benefit.
  - (iii) Report any recommended proposal to the Harbour Advisory Committee, Weymouth Harbour Consultative Group and Cabinet for approval.

### **North Quay, Development**

- (b) That authority be delegated to the Executive Director of Place, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Assets, Property and Economic Development and Corporate Director Finance & Commercial (s151 Officer) interim to:

- (i) Approve the proposed disposal strategy for the North Quay site, based on a closed or selective tender process.
- (ii) Finalise the tender framework, including developer selection criteria and disposal conditions.
- (iii) Request a further report to Cabinet outlining the outcome of the process and recommending either a preferred developer or confirmation that the site will be included in the strategic partnership proposal.

### **Heart of Weymouth, Cultural and Visitor Centre, the Rectory, St Thomas Street**

- (c) To approve the investment of £1.1 million from the Levelling Up Fund towards the acquisition of The Rectory freehold and that authority be delegated to the Executive Director of Place, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Assets, Property and Economic Development and Corporate Director Finance & Commercial (s151 Officer) interim to approve and progress with the most appropriate to investment option, subject to:
  - (i) a council review of investment options.
  - (ii) the Weymouth Area Development Trust CIC confirming that it has secured capital funding; and
  - (iii) submission and satisfactory review of:
    - Architectural plans.
    - Cost plan and development cashflow.
    - Full project programme.
    - Evidence of positive pre-planning consultation.
    - A viable business case to be produced by Weymouth Area Development Trust CIC (WADT) for long term community use, including operational plans, financial forecasts, market need, and a fundraising strategy.

*The proposal must demonstrate financial viability, strategic alignment with Dorset Council's regeneration objectives, and WADT secured capital funding before Dorset Council commits its funding from its contribution as part of the Weymouth Levelling Up Fund (LUF) Regeneration Programme.*

Reason for the decision

To progress key regeneration opportunities in Weymouth by inviting Hall & Woodhouse to formalise their interest in a long leasehold development at the Peninsula, and by enabling due diligence on proposals for North Quay and the Heart of Weymouth Cultural and Visitor Centre. These steps would ensure alignment with the Council's masterplan, tourism strategy, and Levelling Up Fund objectives, while safeguarding harbour interests and securing financial viability before any disposal or investment was confirmed.

## **11 WEYMOUTH 2040: STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP**

**Strategic Partnership - Willmott Dixon, in partnership with Milligan**

That authority be delegated to the Executive Director of Place, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Assets, Property and Economic Development and Corporate Director Finance & Commercial (Interim s151 Officer) to:

- (i) Assess the potential added value of a long-term Strategic Regeneration Partnership with Willmott Dixon, in partnership with Milligan.
- (ii) Finalise the assessment of the use of the Pagabo Developer Led Framework and decide on whether to appoint Willmott Dixon directly or run a further competition in accordance with the Framework terms.
- (iii) Award a contract to undertake the commercial masterplan, high level feasibility studies and strategic business plan for 6 key initial Council-owned development sites up to a value of £250k (plus VAT) with Willmott Dixon or other supplier, with an option to extend the contract for further development works if desired.
- (iv) Negotiate the fee structure for the Partnership and next stages; and
- (v) Implement the necessary governance arrangements to support the Partnership.

Reason for the decision

The decision allows the Council to clarify the partnership structure, fee model, and deliverables to determine whether this collaboration offers added value beyond existing plans and whether it aligns with the Council's governance and procurement frameworks. It also provided the Council with a commercial masterplan, high level feasibility studies and strategic business plan to start the process of unlocking public and private sector investment.

## **12 ASSET DISPOSALS AND TRANSFERS**

- (a) That the proposed pipeline for asset disposals as a key mechanism to deliver the Strategic Asset Management Plan, generate capital receipts and support the delivery of the Council Plan, be approved.
- (b) That authority be delegated to approve disposals of individual assets identified on the disposals pipeline (as set out in Appendix A of the Cabinet report 11 November 2025) each with an estimated value exceeding £500,000 and method of disposal to the Executive Director for Place in consultation with the Cabinet Members for Property, Assets & Economic Growth and for Finance & Capital Strategy and the Section 151 Officer.

Reason for the decision

To reduce the Council's property portfolio to a sustainable level, generate capital receipts, and lower maintenance costs, while enabling reinvestment in core assets. Disposals and asset transfers would empower communities, support regeneration and housing delivery, and ensure more efficient use of resources in line with Dorset Council's priorities.

## **13 CHILDREN'S SERVICES CAPITAL PROGRAMME**

- (a) That the budget and funding allocations to projects within Appendix A of the report of 11 November 2025 (current Capital Programme), be approved.
- (b) That authority be delegated to the Executive Director of People – Children's, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Children's Services, Education & Skills and the Corporate Director Finance & Commercial/Chief Financial Officer & S151 Officer to agree funding allocation of up to £500,000 for any new project, provided those allocations were within the overall Capital Programme budget.
- (c) That authority be delegated to the Executive Director of Place, in consultation with the Executive Director of People – Children's and Cabinet Members for Children's Services, Education and Skills and Property & Assets and Economic Growth and the Corporate Director Finance & Commercial/Chief Financial Officer & S151 Officer to procure and award contracts, or release agreed funding to third parties delivering projects, for any project within Cabinet approved Appendix A, of the report, provided the project cost was contained within the overall programme budget.

Reason for the decision

To draw together several previous delegations against individual Capital programme budgets to ensure consistency across programmes. To ensure appropriate oversight and authority was in place to allow projects to progress through from inception to delivery.

## **18 DORSET CARE RECORD**

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

Reason for the decision

To enable Dorset Council to continue its strategic role in the Dorset Records Programme ensuring continuity of service and provision.