

CABINET

MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY 21 APRIL 2026

Present: Cllrs Nick Ireland (Chair), Richard Biggs (Vice-Chair), Shane Bartlett, Simon Clifford, Ryan Hope, Steve Robinson, Clare Sutton, Gill Taylor and Ben Wilson

Apologies: Cllrs Jon Andrews

Also present: Cllr Matt Bell, Cllr Piers Brown, Cllr Les Fry, Cllr Craig Monks, Cllr Jon Orrell and Cllr Andrew Parry

Also present remotely: Cllr Carole Jones, Cllr Andy Todd, Cllr Belinda Bawden, Cllr Sherry Jespersen and Cllr Jane Somper

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

Jan Britton (Executive Director - Regeneration, Infrastructure & Growth), Bridget Betts (Environmental Advice Manager), Nina Coakley (Head of Transformation and Design), Sean Cremer (Director - Resources (Section 151 Officer)), Kate Critchel (Senior Democratic & Governance Services Officer), Paul Derrien (Housing Enabling and Delivery Manager), Andrew Galpin (Infrastructure & Delivery Planning Manager), Mike Garrity (Corporate Director for Planning), Steven March (Service Manager for Housing Standards), Paul Rutter (Service Manager for Leisure, Arts and Cultural Services), Lisa Cotton (Interim Executive Director - Whole Council Modernisation and Customer Delivery), Sam Crowe (Executive Director - Housing, Prevention and Communities), Paul Dempsey (Executive Director - Children's Services), Steven Ford (Assistant Chief Executive), Iain Sim (Interim Corporate Director for Housing), Jonathan Mair (Director - Assurance (Monitoring Officer)) and Catherine Howe (Chief Executive)

62. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 3 March 2026 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

63. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest to report.

64. Public Participation

There were no questions/statements from the public for this meeting.

65. Questions from Councillors

There were no questions from Councillors for this meeting.

66. **Forward Plan**

The draft Cabinet Forward Plan for May 2026 was received and noted.

67. **Strategic Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) - prioritisation of CIL funded infrastructure projects**

The Cabinet Member for Planning and Emergency Planning set out the report and its recommendations for the allocation of uncommitted strategic Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) funding to deliver essential infrastructure needed to support new development.

In response to a question, the Cabinet Member confirmed that he would be happy to meet with West Parley Parish Council in respect of the West Parley Link Road Project, at a suitable date in the future.

It was proposed by Cllr S Bartlett and seconded by Cllr S Clifford

Decision

That Cabinet:

- (a) Agree to allocate strategic Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) based on the projects and values shown in appendix A of the report of 21 April 2026 noting each allocated project was subject to inclusion in the Capital Programme and the development of an appropriate business case, and
- (b) Commit up to £600,000 of future CIL income in the West Dorset charging area per year to the Lyme Regis Cobb project, for a period of two years (to 2028), and
- (c) Delegate authority to the Executive Director for Regeneration, Infrastructure and Growth in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Planning and Emergency Planning, to agree a contribution of strategic CIL for the West Parley Link Road project, to be secured from the balance of uncommitted strategic CIL in the East Dorset charging schedule.

The contribution was subject to evidence being submitted to the council of the cost of the project and development viability. It was further recommended that future CIL income from the East Dorset charging schedule be considered should it be required.

Reason for the decision

To ensure the delivery of important infrastructure to support growth and development.

68. **Culture Strategy 2026 - 2031**

The Cabinet Member for Customer, Culture and Community Engagement presented the Cultural Strategy 2026 – 2031, which had also been considered by the Place and Resources Overview Committee on 26 March 2026.

Culture played a vital role in enriching people's lives and strengthening the places in which they lived. The new Cultural Strategy provided a framework to support and sustain the cultural infrastructure to deliver lasting social and economic benefits while helping to attract internal and external investment.

In response to questions about sports and leisure facilities, the Cabinet Member said that while these were important, he was satisfied they were already covered by existing strategies and there would further consideration through the Leisure Strategy review.

It was proposed by Cllr R Hope and seconded by Cllr S Clifford

Decision

That the Dorset Cultural Strategy 2026 – 2031 be adopted.

Reason for the decision

The Cultural Strategy would help to increase the opportunities of securing new investment into Dorset and maximise the leverage value of the council's own investment in arts, heritage and culture. This Cultural Strategy would be the foundation on which Dorset Council would set its own funding criteria, ensuring that all grant recipients were contributing to its priorities and ambition.

69. **Nitrogen Credit Pricing methodology**

The Leader of the Council presented a report on the Dorset Local Nutrient Mitigation Fund aimed to deliver nitrogen mitigation projects across Poole Harbour catchment. Cabinet considered the information and recommendations set out in the report and it was proposed by Cllr N Ireland and seconded by Cllr S Bartlett

Decision

That the methodology for setting the price for Poole Harbour nitrogen permanent credits (as set out in appendix 1) be agreed and allow for a discretionary adjustment of up to 10% to be applied, with authority delegated to the Executive Director of Place to respond appropriately to market conditions.

Reason for the decision

The selling of nutrient credits to developers was essential because it provided a mechanism for development to proceed legally, ensuring that nutrient impacts were mitigated. It also ensured legal defensibility, financial sustainability, a credible and trusted credit market, and strong governance through transparent, accountable pricing.

70. **Housing Standards and Tenants Rights Enforcement Policy**

The Cabinet Member for Health and Housing presented the report on the Housing Standards and Tenants' Rights Enforcement Policy. She proposed that recommendations 1 and 2 be agreed, as previously supported by the People and Health Overview Committee on 16 March 2026.

The Cabinet Member proposed an amendment to recommendation 3, asking that monthly financial updates be shared with the Chair and Vice-Chair of the People and Health Overview Committee, and that the policy be reviewed by an Overview Committee within its first year.

The recommendations and amendment were seconded by Councillor R Biggs. It was also noted that the policy had been considered by the Place and Resources Overview Committee on 26 March 2026.

Decision

That:

- (a) the Housing Standards and Tenants Rights Enforcement Policy 2026 be approved and adopted.
- (b) delegated authority be given to the Cabinet Member for Health and Housing, in consultation with the Interim/Corporate Director for Housing and Community Safety, to make minor changes to the Housing Standards and Tenants Rights Enforcement Policy 2026 including
 - i. the need to amend the policy to account for known future enactments which form part of the Phase 1 and Phase 2 implementation of the Renters Rights Act 2025; and,
 - ii. approval of operational procedure notes including but not limited to a methodology for determining the amount of Civil Financial Penalties under this policy for breaches of up to £7,000 and offences of up to £40,000.
- (c) updates on the financial arrangements be made available on a monthly basis to the Chair and Vice-Chair of the People and Health Overview Committee.
- (d) an update on the policy be provided to an Overview Committee at an appropriate time within the first year of its operation.

Reason for the decision

To ensure that the Council had a robust and legally compliant enforcement policy which enabled the effective enforcement of the Housing Act 2004, Renters Rights Act 2025, the 'Landlord Legislation' and other relevant statutory provisions affecting enforcement in the Private Rented Sector, which would be maintained 'up to date' as new known legal provisions were enacted.

71. **Local Authority Housing Fund (LAHF) 4**

The Cabinet Member for Health and Housing presented the report and its recommendations, which Cabinet supported unanimously.

It was proposed by Cllr G Taylor and seconded by Cllr N Ireland

Decision

- (a) That £662,000 capital and £4,796 revenue to be granted to Bournemouth Churches Housing (BCHA), who will act as the delivery vehicle and purchase the 4 properties using these funds and their own funds.

Completion of the purchase of the properties to be finalised by 31st March 2027;

- (b) That a lettings plan be in place with BCHA so Dorset Council can ensure the properties were allocated in accordance with the funding requirements.

Reason for the decision

The Council previously purchased and now owns 30 properties using funding provided through LAHF1 by Government and Dorset Council. While these homes will be used as temporary accommodation when vacant, the project required significant input from the Housing and Assets teams. In addition, as the Council was not a stock-holding authority, it could only offer non-secure tenancies.

LAHF4 funding required Afghan refugees to be offered secure tenancies. It was therefore recommended that the properties are provided, owned, and managed by a Registered Provider, specifically BCHA, to ensure secure tenancies could be offered to Afghan families.

72. **Transformation Update**

The Cabinet Member for Corporate Development and Transformation presented the report on the transitional transformation update, which set out progress since the last Cabinet report in October 2025. The report also sought approval to move to the next phase of work with details of required investment for 2026/27.

Cabinet noted and supported the proposal to July Full Council, as set out in appendix B, of the report regarding the approval of the updated use of flexible use of capital receipts and strategy policy.

It was proposed by Cllr B Wilson and seconded by Cllr S Robinson that the recommendations, which were unanimously supported.

Decision

- (a) That the progress to date in delivery of the 2025/26 plans including realised benefit outcomes, be noted.
- (b) That the 2026/27 delivery plan, including benefits, key milestones, and intended outcomes for the year be approved.
- (c) That the adjusted business change model for the HR, Procurement & Finance programme including the approach to resourcing, engagement, training, readiness, and adoption across all services, be agreed.
- (d) That Cabinet recommend to Full Council the use of up to £5.3m of flexible use of capital receipts and approve the remaining balance of £1.97m of the investment request of £7.27m be funded from reserves, for the transformation portfolio, enabling continued delivery of priority workstreams and associated benefits, including ERP – HR, Finance and Procurement system investment. To recommend approval of the updated use of flexible use of capital receipts strategy policy, summary of as set out in Appendix B of the report of 21 April 2026.
- (e) That the spend decision of £2.34m for digital initiatives pending final business case sign off across the next 6 months be delegated to the Chief Executive in consultation with the Section 151 officer.
- (f) That the updated governance and reporting cadence outlined in the report, including frequency, format, and escalation routes for programme oversight and decision making, be agreed.

Reason for the decision

The decision gave the council the direction, resources and oversight needed to deliver the 2026/27 transformation plan. They also make sure the ERP - HR, procurement and finance programme had the right support for business change. This allowed the next stage of investment to go ahead, keeps track of progress and risks, and ensure the planned benefits were achieved.

73. **Microsoft Licensing May 2026 to April 2027 - Spend over £500k**

The Cabinet Member for Transformation, Customer & Cultural Services presented the report to extend the Microsoft Enterprise Subscription Agreement and associated licensing spends. The recommendations were unanimously supported.

It was proposed by Cllr B Wilson and seconded by Cllr N Ireland

Decision

That a maximum spend of £2.332m be authorised on the final year of our current, extended Microsoft Enterprise Subscription Agreement and associated licensing spends through our compliantly contracted LSP, Boxxe.

Reason for the decision

To continue to be able to access critical operational licensing, after the 1 May 2026 renewal date, authority was required to spend on the additional year of the current Microsoft Enterprise Agreement, ahead of a formal re-procurement for 1 May 2027.

74. New Forest District Council Local Plan consultation

The Cabinet Member for Planning and Emergency Planning introduced the report and referred to the agreed response to the New Forest District Council's Local Plan consultation, subject to formal Cabinet endorsement.

It was proposed by Cllr S Bartlett and seconded by Cllr N Ireland

Decision

That the response agreed with the Cabinet Member for Planning and Emergency Planning be endorsed.

Reason for the decision

It was important that Dorset Council engaged with New Forest District Council in the production of their Local Plan and sought to address any cross-boundary issues constructively. The response to the consultation on the emerging Local Plan was part of that on-going cooperation.

The draft response in Appendix A to the report of 21 April 2026 had been submitted to the New Forest District Council. This draft response had been agreed with the Cabinet member for Planning and Emergency Planning.

After consideration by Cabinet, contact would be made with the District Council to either confirm that the submitted response was final or to adjust the response and submit a revised version to supersede the original draft response.

75. Marnhull Neighbourhood Development Plan 2024 - 2038

The Cabinet Member for Planning and Emergency Planning presented a report on the adoption of the Marnhull Neighbourhood Development Plan, 2024 – 2038 following an independent examination and referendum.

It was proposed by Cllr S Bartlett and seconded by Cllr N Ireland

Decision

- (a) That the Council 'makes' the Marnhull Neighbourhood Development Plan, 2024 - 2038 (as set out in Appendix A of the report of 21 April 2026) part of the statutory development plan for the Marnhull Neighbourhood Area.

- (b) That the Council offers its congratulations to Marnhull Parish Council and members of the Neighbourhood Plan Group for producing a successful neighbourhood plan.

Reason for the decision

To formally 'make' the Marnhull Neighbourhood Development Plan, 2024 -2038 part of the statutory development plan for the Marnhull Neighbourhood Area. In addition, to recognise the significant amount of work undertaken by the Parish Council and members of the Neighbourhood Plan Group in preparing the plan and to congratulate the Council and the Group on their success.

76. Urgent items

There were no urgent items considered at the meeting.

77. Exempt Business

There was no exempt business to report.

Duration of meeting: 6.30 - 7.25 pm

Chairman

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