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DORSET COUNCIL

MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON THURSDAY 23 OCTOBER 2025

Present: Cllrs Stella Jones (Chair), Les Fry (Vice-Chair), Jon Andrews, Jindy Atwal, Mike Baker, Shane Bartlett, Belinda Bawden, Derek Beer, Matt Bell, Richard Biggs, Bridget Bolwell, Dave Bolwell, Louise Bown, Alex Brenton, Piers Brown, Ray Bryan, Will Chakawhata, Simon Christopher, Simon Clifford, Toni Coombs, Barrie Cooper, Richard Crabb, Peter Dickenson, Neil Eysenck, Beryl Ezzard, Scott Florek, Spencer Flower, Alex Fuhrmann, Simon Gibson, Barry Goringe, Jill Haynes, Hannah Hobbs-Chell, Sally Holland, Ryan Holloway, Ryan Hope, Rob Hughes, Nick Ireland, Jack Jeanes, Sherry Jespersen, Carole Jones, Paul Kimber, Chris Kippax, Nocturin Lacey-Clarke, Cathy Lugg, Rory Major, Craig Monks, Steve Murcer, David Northam, Louie O'Leary, Mike Parkes, Andrew Parry, Val Potheary, Byron Quayle, Belinda Ridout, Steve Robinson, Pete Roper, David Shortell, Andy Skeats, Jane Somper, Duncan Sowry-House, Andrew Starr, Gary Suttle, Clare Sutton, Roland Tarr, David Taylor, Gill Taylor, Andy Todd, David Tooke, Claudia Webb, Kate Wheller, Sarah Williams, Ben Wilson and Carl Woode

Apologies: Cllrs Laura Beddow, Andy Canning, Robin Legg, David Morgan, Jon Orrell, Emma Parker, Julie Robinson and James Vitali

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

Jacqui Andrews (Service Manager for Democratic and Electoral Services), Sam Crowe (Director of Public Health), Kate Critchel (Senior Democratic & Governance Services Officer), Susan Dallison (Democratic & Governance Services Team Leader), Paul Dempsey (Executive Director of People - Children), Lindsey Watson (Senior Democratic and Governance Officer) and Catherine Howe (Chief Executive)

30. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 10 July 2025 were confirmed and signed by the Chair.

WELCOME

The Chair took this opportunity to welcome Cllr C Tomes and Catherine Howe, the new Chief Executive to their first meeting of Full Council.

31. Declarations of Interest

No declarations of disclosable pecuniary interests were made at the meeting.

32. Chair's Announcements

A short presentation was received from a young person representing care experienced voices and the “In My Shoes” exhibition running from 25 October to 7 November 2025 at Dorset Museum in Dorchester. The project explored the personal stories, creativity and resilience of young people who had experienced the care system.

33. Public Participation - questions

There were three questions from the public, these along with the responses are set out in Appendix 1 to these minutes.

34. Public participation - petitions and deputations

There were no petitions or deputations to report.

35. Announcements and Reports from the Leader of Council and Cabinet Members

The Leader of the Council congratulated Councillors Northam, O’Leary and Dickinson for successfully securing “Pride in Place” funding from a government initiative focused on revitalising communities via local decision-making and investment. Around £20 million would be invested over a 10-year period in parts of Broadway and Littlemoor.

Dorset Council would administer the funding through a Neighbourhood Board, although full details were still awaited from central government.

Growing the economy remains one of the council's key priorities and the 3rd prosperity event was recently held at the Sailing Academy in Portland, which had been well attended with positive feedback. The focus of the event was on Clean Energy Superclusters, and it was notable that representatives from the Crown Estate were also in attendance.

Continuing the theme of economic growth, on the 24 October the Dorset Innovation Park would be officially launched. This initiative included the establishment of an arm's length teckle company, which had been set up by Dorset Council to support innovation enterprise and employment in the region.

In response to questions about age-friendly status, the Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care confirmed that he would review the Blue Badge system, in respect of the individual case raised, and emphasised the importance of embedding age-friendly principles across all council services.

In respect of a question concerning defence, further education and potential training opportunities in cyber security, the Leader of the Council emphasised that young people lived across the whole of Dorset and must be equipped with the skills and education needed to thrive in these areas. He stressed that employment should be prioritised, and that promoting apprenticeships was also key to supporting young people's development.

36. Youth Justice Plan

The Cabinet Member for Children's Services, Education and Skills presented the report and proposed the recommendation that the Youth Justice Plan be adopted.

The recommendation was seconded by Cllr L Fry

Decision

That the Youth Justice Plan 2025/26 be approved.

Reason for the decision

Youth Justice Services were required to publish an annual Youth Justice Plan which should be approved by the local authority for that Youth Justice Service. Dorset Combined Youth Justice Service worked across both Bournemouth Christchurch and Poole Council (BCP) and Dorset Council. Approval was therefore sought from both Dorset Council and BCP.

37. Community Governance Review - Shipton Gorge and Loders Parish Council

The Leader of the Council reported that following the receipt of a petition seeking a review of part of the boundary between the parishes of Shipton Gorge and Loaders, the Council had a duty to undertake a community governance review.

Residents had raised concerns that the parish boundaries did not reflect community identity and had asked that the boundary be returned to its previous line prior to changes that took place in 2024.

The Leader of the Council proposed the recommendation as set out in the report and this was seconded by Cllr N Eysenck.

Decision

- (a) That the terms of reference for the community governance review (CGR) of the parishes of Shipton gorge and loaders be adopted.
- (b) That the cross-party task group established on the 10th of July 2025 be requested to make recommendations to Full Council on a submission to the Local Government Boundary Commission for England on the electoral review of Dorset Council and also be asked to pair recommendations in respect of this CGR.

Reason for the decision

To ensure that community governance arrangements within the area under review were reflective of the identities and interests of the community in that area.

38. An update to the Scheme of Delegation

The Leader of the Council set out a report that recommended changes to the *Officer Scheme of Delegation, specifically Part 2, Appendix 2, "Financial Powers"* following findings from the SWAP audit. The proposed provisions included a new table format for financial thresholds, clarification on officer roles and updated authorisation levels to better reflect operational needs and governance standards.

The recommendation was proposed by the Leader of the Council and seconded by Cllr S Clifford.

Decision

That the changes to the Scheme of Delegation set out in Appendix 1 to the report be approved.

Reason for the decision

To ensure the scheme of delegation remained fit for purpose aligned with the council's finance systems and provided clear requirements for financial decision-making.

39. Questions from Councillors

There were 11 questions from councillors and a copy of these are set out in Appendix 2 to these minutes.

In response to a supplementary question from Cllr S Flower regarding the Dorset Local Plan – Reg1 land allocation public consultation, the Cabinet Member for Planning and Emergency Planning, confirmed that an initial list of sites that were no longer available for development work, would be placed on the council website at the earliest opportunity after the close of the consultation and before 7 November.

As the consultation responses were reviewed, the initial list would be updated to ensure that remained as comprehensive as possible.

In response to a supplementary question from Cllr M Parkes regarding the potential development of a cycle lane along the A348 Ringwood Road in Ferndown, the Cabinet Member for Place Services advised that the option of undertaking a full public consultation ahead of any works would be considered.

In reply to an additional question from Cllr T Coombs regarding the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, the Cabinet Member for Children's Services, Education and Skills advised that there were concerns about the robustness of the proposed survey and the appropriate use of officers' time. She also highlighted that arranging in person meetings between members and the young people referenced could raise safeguarding issues and may not represent best practice.

The Chair of Council suggested that Cllr Coombs, the Executive Director of People (Children) and the Cabinet Member continue to discuss the matter outside of the meeting of Council.

In response to a supplementary question from Cllr C Monks regarding the recent loss of broadband in Beaminster, the Cabinet Member for Property & Assets and Economic Growth confirmed that this matter was the responsibility of Openreach, however if there were lessons for Dorset Council to learn, these would be taken on board.

40. **Urgent items**

There were no urgent items to report.

41. **Exempt Business**

There was no exempt business to report to this meeting.

Appendix 1 Public questions and responses

Appendix 2 Councillor Questions and Responses

Duration of meeting: 6.30 - 8.12 pm

Chair

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Full Council – 23 October 2025

Questions submitted by the public

Question 1 - submitted by Beaminster Town Council

Please could the relevant Cabinet member respond to the following points: -
How Dorset Council are assessing the long-term sustainability of its community resilience capabilities; what steps are being taken to improve public awareness, involvement and ownership of resilience planning; whether risk impact assessments are being conducted with meaningful community representations; how are Dorset's local resilience efforts being fed into the ongoing development and review of the National Resilience Framework and in particular, can the Council give a commitment to ensuring the improvement of local resilience capability and ensure that understanding is formally raised in national discussions?

Response by Cllr S Bartlett

Thank you for your question. Dorset Council understands that building strong community resilience is vital for protecting residents and helping communities recover from emergencies.

We work closely with partners through the Local Resilience Forum to strengthen resilience. There is an active community resilience group co-chaired by both Dorset local authorities. Earlier this year, the government published the *National Resilience Framework* and *National Security Strategy*, both of which highlight the importance of improving community resilience. Dorset Council also responded to a recent government consultation on this topic.

Local Resilience Forums have received Home Office funding for this financial year, and some of this has been allocated to local authorities to support community resilience work. We are currently deciding how to make the best use of this funding, working with the Dorset Association of Parish and Town Councils and other partners. Public engagement is key to our approach. We plan to work directly with communities to understand where they feel most vulnerable and how resilient they believe they are. This will help us identify priority areas for support.

The Council's transformation programme includes a focus on community partnerships. This includes working with town and parish councils and the voluntary sector to develop new service delivery models that meet local needs, with community resilience as a core theme.

There are resource challenges. The Emergency Management and Resilience team leads on community resilience support, helping parish and town councils and community groups where possible. However, this is in addition to their statutory duties for emergency response and planning.

We await the outcome of government discussions following the consultation and any updates on the national resilience framework, including whether additional funding

will be provided. In the meantime, we remain committed to supporting communities and encourage the use of resources available on the Local Resilience Forum's Dorset Prepared website, which helps councils and voluntary groups develop and test their own resilience plans.

Question 2 – submitted by Sam Hanbury

I am Sam Hanbury, co-founder of Baboo Gelato Ltd. We are a Dorset ice cream maker. We rent sites from Dorset Council in West Bay, Lyme Regis, and Weymouth.

We would like to ask Dorset Council to reduce the rental increases currently being imposed on tenants at your commercial kiosk sites in West Bay and Lyme Regis.

These rental increases are happening at a time of rising National Insurance, rising Minimum Wage, rising ingredient inflation, rising rates, and the Council's exceptionally aggressive and anti-tourist car park pricing measures which have depressed visitor numbers over the past two years.

Our rent in Lyme has jumped 54% since 2016. Likewise in West Bay our rent has jumped 68%. No business in West Bay or Lyme has seen anything like this increase in sales during the same period.

According to a Google AI search of Cushman & Wakefield, Carter Jonas and Savills: *'Retail rents have been complex since 2016, with prime rents showing more stability or slight increases in certain prime locations, while secondary rents have often declined'*.

In addition the normal 7 or 10 year term of lease in Lyme Regis is no longer being offered due to the ongoing Harbour Orders. This is a huge disincentive to invest when we have such insecurity of tenancy.

We hope you will agree that the kiosks in West Bay and Lyme Regis are a vibrant, very popular and historic feature of the towns, and that Dorset Council's hostile pricing is detrimental to the traders, which will affect the community and tourism as quality and variety fall away. There has already been a consolidation of the kiosks in West Bay that has reduced the variety of food on offer considerably.

You will also understand that we have a very short season in which to make money. We lose money throughout the winter months, yet we stay open to our detriment in order to keep the area lively. The current rental increase means that during the winter the daily rent is often similar to our total daily takings.

We only seek a fair rent that recognises the economic reality for all traders. We are not cash cows to be milked but small businesses that add a lot to Dorset's tourist offering. The current strategy is genuinely negative for Dorset and our tourist sector, and suggests anti-business attitude from the Council that only ends up hurting our wonderful County.

Response by Cllr R Biggs

As part of ongoing asset management reviews, the Council is exploring alternative rental models, including income-based approaches such as turnover rents. Additionally, consideration is being given to the potential transfer of these assets to Town and Parish Councils, who may be better positioned to respond to local economic dynamics and community needs. These approaches reflect a more responsive and sustainable way of managing property assets, particularly in areas with seasonal trading patterns and diverse business pressures.

The Council has a statutory responsibility to secure best consideration in relation to its property assets. For commercial holdings, this includes the setting of appropriate rental levels. The income derived from these assets contributes to the Council's wider revenue budget, supporting the delivery of essential public services.

In the case of the commercial kiosk sites at West Bay and Lyme Regis, these fall under the harbour undertaking, and as such, rental income from these sites is directed to the Harbours' revenue budget. It is therefore incumbent upon the Council to ensure we continue to achieve best consideration in support of harbour operations.

Lease renewals and rent reviews are standard mechanisms through which rental values may be adjusted in line with contractual terms. Open market rent assessments are informed by comparable evidence and reflect the level a prospective tenant would reasonably expect to pay. The Council acknowledges the challenges that seasonal fluctuations in trade present for tenants. While market rent assessments inherently reflect such variations, we remain acutely aware of the diverse operational pressures faced by individual businesses and the implications for their long-term viability.

It is important to note that benchmarking rental values is inherently complex. Rental levels are highly specific to each individual property and lease, influenced by a wide range of factors including location, demand, lease terms, and trading potential. This means that direct comparisons across counties or authorities can be misleading and risk being taken out of context, especially when not grounded in like-for-like property data.

While the Consumer Price Index (CPI) is often referenced in financial contexts and does include private residential rental payments, it does not include commercial

rents. As such, CPI is not a property market index, and the movement of commercial rental values does not necessarily align with general inflation. That said, there can be a degree of correlation in some sectors, where commercial rents may move broadly in step with inflationary trends. However, the property market is influenced by a distinct set of factors, which can result in rental trends that diverge from CPI. For example, in some sectors, rental values have decreased even as CPI has risen.

Question 3 – submitted by David Frankl

I agree with the draft local transport plan objectives, in particular, prioritising walking, wheeling and cycling, delivering a connected, inclusive network of active-travel routes and minimising transport's negative health impacts.

Lowering of speed limits is all about safety on our roads, yet the present 20mph policy does not mention safety, it is written from a driver's point of view. Traffic surveys measure speed, not the other attributes that need to be considered when assessing appropriate speed limits. Keep average speeds up and you will likely not get the speed limit reduced.

The present 20mph policy appears to have been written to make it difficult to get 20mph limits in place. It was last reviewed in 2022 and was due to be reviewed in 2024.

When will it be reviewed to reflect current best practice and align it with the draft local transport plan, encouraging walking and cycling and putting the safety of vulnerable road users before car drivers?

Response by Cllr J Andrews

Dorset Council's 20mph policy places road safety at its core, clearly outlining our commitment to considering the implementation of 20mph speed limits where they can enhance safety for pedestrians and cyclists, and contribute to a reduction in road traffic collisions. Beyond safety, the policy supports broader objectives including improved quality of life, the promotion of healthier lifestyles, environmental sustainability, and strengthened social and economic wellbeing within communities. These objectives are closely aligned with the priorities identified in our recent consultation on the next Local Transport Plan.

Since the introduction of the 20mph policy, there has been strong public interest, with many communities submitting formal applications for implementation. So far, new limits have been setup in Bridport Town Centre, Wimborne Town Centre, Langton Matravers, Winfrith Newburgh, Pimperne, Child Okeford and Winterborne

Kingston. Cheselbourne and Okeford Fitzpaine are scheduled for delivery this month and another scheme in Wimborne is planned for November. We continue to support communities applying for new speed limits.

The strong level of community engagement and uptake clearly demonstrates that the policy is delivering meaningful benefits and remains well-aligned with local priorities. Consequently, there are no current plans for a formal review. However, we continue to maintain close liaison with the Department for Transport and other local authorities to ensure our approach remains evidence-based, responsive, and reflective of emerging insights from studies being undertaken in other areas.

Residents interested in a 20mph speed limit for their area are encouraged to contact their local town or parish council, or their Dorset Councillor, to initiate the process.

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Full Council – 23 October 2025

Questions submitted by councillors

Question 1 - submitted by Cllr K Wheller

Over my time as a councillor the subject of the increasing number of second homes in Dorset has been a perennial problem. Highlighted increasingly by our housing shortage and the burden being placed on us to find more and more sites on which to build houses. Not all, but some second homeowners and their families do become welcome additions to the communities in which they buy homes. Attending events, local churches and shopping locally. And these are distinct from buy-to-let owners who one hopes will be providing private long-term rental homes to local families. However, in recent years there has been a much more pernicious problem. That of Airbnb and short let holiday homes. We are frequently told by planners that we can do nothing to prevent this. I don't believe this is true. There are clauses in a Section 106 agreement that can be imposed, use class 3 I think but may now be use class 5. Town and Country Planning (use classes) Order 1987 defines a dwelling house as occupation by a single person, family or up to six individuals living together as one household.

Short-term lettings to a succession of paying guests **do not** constitute occupation by a single household. Each change of guest represents a new occupancy, which takes the use outside of class 3 and amounts to a material change of use to commercial (sui generis) letting.

The inclusion of the 'single household' clause strengthens the often-stated wish in planning committee that members do not wish to see new build properties become short-term holiday homes. Often sitting empty for six or more months of the year. Why is not imposed more frequently, or even routinely?

I will give examples which are specific to my own Ward but since this problem is County wide, I am sure members will know of properties in their Wards, too. The Groves Brewery redevelopment in Hope Square, Weymouth completed some twenty plus years ago is subject to a Class 3 clause, and indeed estate agents point this out to prospective buyers. A newer development part of the Devenish new build Malthouse etc. also in Hope Square, and I believe the regeneration of the Devonish scheme known as Brewers Quay are also subject to Class 3 conditions. In the case of the Malthouse Town Houses buyers were required to sign a covenant between themselves and the developer agreeing to Class 3. However, the developer has reneged on this covenant.

Request for action to the planning authority has been unsuccessful since owners are told this is a civil matter and does not fall within the planning enforcement remit. Whilst the Covenant is a civil agreement between builder and buyer the breach of a

planning condition is surely a Council matter? The phrase 'residential occupation by a single household' provides clear evidence that when this clause is breached the developer and Dorset Council are disregarding a binding obligation agreed to at the planning stage, it's not merely a private covenant between residents. Dorset Council should take the necessary enforcement action against the developer, and any owner in breach of the condition Class 3 not only in these dwellings in Brewers Quay / Hope Square but any others across the County.

Legal Precedents: -

The following case law supports the argument that short-term lettings breach both residential use clauses and planning control. :-

- Nemcova v Fairfield Rents Ltd. (2016) UKUT 303 (LC) – occupation by temporary guests was not occupation as a private residence.
- Bermondsey Exchange Freeholders Ltd. V Koumetto (2018) EWHC 816 (ch) - Short- term occupation incompatible with residential use.

Response from Cllr S Bartlett

Firstly, I can confirm that the planning enforcement team looks into all enforcement enquiries submitted, to check whether there is a breach of planning control. In the case of short-term holiday lets, it is a matter of fact and degree as to whether this constitutes a material change of use, and each case has to be considered on its own merits.

The Use Classes Order sets quite a wide definition for a C3 dwellinghouse, and in some cases, short-term holiday lets can fall within this definition, but this will depend on the circumstances of the case. There have been cases where the Planning Enforcement Team have identified potential material changes of use of single C3 dwellings due to short-term holiday letting use and have negotiated the submission of planning applications or cessation of such use. There is no simple one size fits all approach to this issue.

In terms of applying conditions or legal agreements to prevent short-term holiday lets, national planning policy sets out that planning conditions should be kept to a minimum and only imposed where they are necessary, relevant to planning and to the development to be permitted, enforceable, precise and reasonable in all other respects. Whilst every application is treated on its merits, the routine application of a condition to prevent short-term holiday lets is unlikely to meet the tests for conditions, unless there is a policy basis for this requirement and/or if an application is submitted specifically for new build holiday let properties.

The previous Government recognised that the C3 use class has had difficulties balancing the long-term interests of local communities with economic benefits of tourism and proposed to introduce a new C5 use class for short-term lets to address this. The new C5 use class has not yet been adopted, and it is not known whether this will be taken forward by the current Government. In the meantime, local authorities are obliged to rely on current use class definitions and case law, and the planning enforcement team continues to consider each case on a fact and degree basis.

Question 2 – submitted by Cllr V Pothecary

Recently a resident in my ward received a Fixed Penalty Notice in the post from Waste Investigations Support & Enforcement (WISE) on behalf of Pembrokeshire County Council, for dropping litter in Pembrokeshire. He was wrongly accused as he had never been to this location and could prove that he was in Dorset at the time.

He understands that WISE is being contracted by many County Councils in outsourcing certain enforcement functions. This includes Pembrokeshire, and he now understands Dorset Council.

Clearing his name and getting an adequate explanation as to how this mistake occurred from WISE was exceptionally difficult, and they cited the Data Protection Act as one of the reasons why.

It was only as a result of requesting Pembrokeshire County Council to assist him in the matter that he discovered what had occurred.

He hoped that I may be able to help alleviate this stressful situation by raising a question at our Council Meeting in order to answer his concern regarding this explanation.

The explanation given was:

"In this case WISE wrote to the address given by the individual, at the time of the offence. The correspondence was then returned back to WISE. A trace was then made, and High match was found to your details – name and date of birth".
(Marc Owen, Public Realm Manager, Pembrokeshire County Council).

Whilst we understand that outsourcing can offer operational efficiencies. It has to be a requirement that the third-party provider upholds the Council's standards of accuracy, transparency and ethical conduct. But more importantly respect the data held by the respective County Councils and not utilise it for their own benefits.

So, my question is: Has this third-party company, WISE, been given access or utilised any data held by Dorset Council to find personal details: name, date of birth and address in order to carry out this trace on my resident - on behalf of another County Council?

Response by Cllr G Taylor

Thank you for your question and I am sorry to hear about the difficulties that your constituent has been experiencing.

I have checked with the Council's Environmental Enforcement Team and can confirm that we do not have any contractual arrangement with Waste Investigations Support and Enforcement Ltd. No access to any personal data held by this Council has been given to them.

Only our employees are authorised to issue Fixed Penalty Notices for relevant offences, and they undergo thorough training beforehand. There is also provision for appeal if the recipient feels that a notice was issued in error.

Question 3 – submitted by Cllr S Flower

Dorset Local Plan – Reg18 Land Allocations Public Consultation

Given the magnitude and impact of the Government imposed 80% increase in the Dorset Council housing target during the lifetime of the plan, the recent public consultation on land allocations has caused a significant amount of public unrest.

Sites have been offered for consideration by landowners and developers. However, a number were identified in the local maps without the owner's consent or were clearly contrary to National Policy Guidance and/or the NPPF or had been screened out when the legacy local plans were adopted.

It does seem rather odd that sites which have been through the rigour of a legacy District Council's Local Plan adoption process should be included in the Land Allocations Consultation.

I am aware that following the end of the consultation period officers will be using an established hierarchy to sift out sites which cannot be delivered or are contrary to the NPPF or other National Policy Guidance.

The scheduled date for publishing the next draft Dorset Council Local Plan is August 2026, to be followed by a further period of public consultation, with the intention of submitting a draft Dorset Council Local Plan to the SoS during December 2026.

An appointed Planning Inspector would then carry out an Examination in Public [an EIP] with expectations that the plan would be adopted during late 2027.

So, my question is; waiting until August 2026 to reveal such information would be unfair and hugely concerning for those in our communities who are anxious about the significant loss of green belt, sensitive sites and undeveloped land caused by new housing being 'pepper potted' across the Dorset Council area. What action will be taken ahead of August 2026, to make

members, and the public aware, of which of these sites will not be taken forward?

In the interest of transparency will a list of these sites be created with supporting evidence and submitted, along with the draft Local Plan, to the Secretary of State in December 2026?

Thank you, madam chairman

Response from Cllr S Bartlett

The Local plan options consultation includes a large number of sites, many of which have been nominated to us, although it is recognised that some may have come forward from earlier plan stages or even previously discounted. However, there have been recent changes to National Planning Policy which necessitate a different approach, including re-examining some of these previously discounted sites. The higher housing targets may mean that great weight needs to be given to the delivery of housing which the local plan process will need to test. There have also been significant changes to national Green Belt policy requiring us to undertake a review of the Green Belt boundary and consider amendments to enable development.

National Guidance strongly suggests that we should not restrict our site proposals to those nominated to us but consider other sites too. Where we have been made aware that a landowner does not want their land to be considered for development, we will reflect this as the Local Plan progresses. We have written to landowners to apologise and confirm their sites will not be taken forward. After the close of the consultation at the end of the month, we will prepare a list of sites that are no longer available and place this on our website.

We will also need to consider the responses received through the consultation, alongside the ongoing evidence gathering, to assess whether the identified sites are deliverable, before any decisions can be made on which ones are suitable for inclusion in the draft plan. During this process, we will contact the promoters of the site to confirm their availability. The final draft of the plan will need to be agreed by Cabinet and Full Council before it is published in advance of submission to the Secretary of State. I can confirm that the submission of the Plan to the Secretary of State will also include details of those sites that are not proposed to be taken forward.

Question 4 – submitted by Cllr M Parkes

Councillor Lugg and I understand from officers that there are plans to build a cycle lane on the section of the A348 Ringwood Road in Ferndown from Penny's Hill to Tricketts Cross.

After around five years of severe disruption caused by the construction of the TCF project, residents have lost patience and are not prepared to put up with further unnecessary roadworks.

Bearing in mind we now have active travel routes from Tricketts Cross through to Wimborne encompassing access to the town centre, schools and the industrial estates we are bemused as to why this route which was removed from the TCF scheme is now back on the agenda.

Mindful of the current financial situation, can the cabinet member responsible for this project explain the rationale as to why it's now felt necessary to build it, the evidence for its need, the timescales for delivery and the costs of the project.

Response from Cllr J Andrews

The full package of Transforming Cities Fund schemes could not be delivered as originally planned due to inflationary pressures arising from the Covid pandemic, the war in Ukraine, and other global factors. Despite these challenges, the ambition remains to complete the full network of safe and connected active travel routes across Southeast Dorset over time using other funding when available.

The proposed scheme between Penny's Hill junction and Trickett's Cross represents a significant capital investment in local infrastructure. It is aimed at improving safe access for all road users, including those who do not have access to a car. The scheme would deliver upgraded facilities for walking, cycling, wheeling, public transport and provide road crossings, helping to connect communities to local services more safely and sustainably.

As part of the scheme, the ageing traffic signal infrastructure at Penny's Hill junction would be replaced, with the introduction of much-needed pedestrian crossings and improvements to the operation of the junction for vehicles. Drainage improvements would also be investigated to support the long-term resilience of the road.

Importantly, substantial maintenance works are already required on this stretch of road. By aligning these essential repairs with the delivery of active travel improvements, we can minimise disruption to residents, reduce costs, and deliver greater overall value. While the 30mph speed limit introduced during the TCF

programme has helped to reduce vehicle speeds, further measures were identified at the time to support lower speeds and discourage high volumes of heavy goods vehicle traffic. This scheme would help reinforce those objectives.

The estimated capital cost of the scheme is approximately £2.5 million. Early assessments indicate that it offers strong value for money, with clear benefits for safety, accessibility, and long-term asset management. I know that the delays caused by roadworks in the area over recent years have caused frustration. As we decide what we want to do in this area, I will lead the engagement with local members to ensure we meet local needs and aspirations.

Question 5 submitted by Cllr T Coombs

To the Cabinet Member for Children & Young People, Cllr Claire Sutton.

Back in May, this Council reaffirmed its commitment to the United Nations Rights of the Child.

The UNCRC, adopted in 1989, outlines the civil, political, economic, social, health, and cultural rights of children. It emphasises the importance of children's voices in matters that affect them and acknowledges their right to a safe environment, education, and health care.

Reference from the minutes:

That this Council: -

1. Affirms its commitment to the principals and provisions of the UNCRC and integrates these into local policies and practices, complimenting the delivery of Dorset Council's 10 yr plan for children, young people and families, aiming to be a Rights Respecting Authority.
2. Establishes a Children's Rights Committee to oversee the implementation of the UNCRC within our authority, ensuring that children's voices are heard and considered in decision-making processes. This will include developing some of our young people as 'Rights Respecting Ambassadors as well as a Children's rights impact assessment.
3. Signposts training and awareness programs for council members and staff on the importance of children's rights and the UNCRC.
4. Engages with local communities, schools, and organisations to promote understanding of children's rights and encourage active participation from children in matters that affect them.
5. Declares that Corporate Parents as duty bearers, capturing all our children and young people, we uphold the United Nations Convention of The Rights of The Child and identify as a Rights Respecting Authority.
6. Requires that all policies, procedures and interactions involving our children and young people are mindful of relevant articles from the UNCRC.

Can the Cabinet Member update the Council on how this is making a difference to the lives and lived experiences of our children and young people in Dorset?

Response from Cllr C Sutton

Following the motion passed by Full Council in May, we established a Children's Rights Steering Group led by Cllr Sowry-House with a core group of Children's Services representatives.

Progress so far has included:

1. Training events delivered by Realising Rights, prioritising Local Alliance Groups (LAGs), and attended by key decision-makers (Heads of Service and Locality, Principal Social worker, colleagues leading Equality, Diversity and Inclusion work and communications)
2. A training session delivered to care-experienced young people by a UNICEF Gold School Assessor
3. We have developed two new pages on children's rights which have been added to the "Important Information for Children in Care" guide
4. We are in the process of integrating rights-based thinking into planning, procurement and evaluation
5. We have also identified 14 Rights Respecting Schools in Dorset: currently, 3 Gold, 5 silver, 6 bronze

Our imminent next steps include:

- Developing the infrastructure required for a long-term implementation plan
- Garnering support across the Corporate Leadership Team and Portfolio Holders
- Implementing grant eligibility for schools to apply for Rights Respecting status via Local Alliance Group funding (2025/2026 and beyond).

Our Implementation Plan priorities are to:

- Establish Terms of Reference and a formal committee to replace the steering group
- Roll out leadership and workforce communications and training
- Recruit and train young ambassadors for committee roles
- Align Children, Young Peoples and Families Plan delivery with the committee's role and influence.

Question 6 submitted by Cllr B Bawden

Residential disabled parking bays

For Cllr Jon Andrews, Portfolio Holder for Place Services

Dorset Council offers Blue Badge holders with additional mobility challenges [Restricted Mobility Permits](#) enabling free parking for up to three hours, once a day.

BCP Council offers the opportunity to apply for a [Residential disabled parking bay](#) which can only be used by the permit holder.

I've asked before whether Dorset Council could consider this option for those residents with additional mobility challenges so that they could park close enough to their home to get there safely. Please could this be investigated again?

Response from Cllr Jon Andrews

Thank you for your question and we will continue to keep a close eye on the effectiveness of BCP's policy. Creating parking bays for individual people can often have unintended consequences. In busy areas, if we restrict parking to individual people, it may mean that other blue badge holders won't be able to park. Our current approach of providing disabled bays for all blue badge holders ensures spaces aren't left empty when blue badge holders need to park.

Question 7 submitted by Cllr B Bawden

Cross-departmental working group on surface water management

For Cllr Nick Ireland, Portfolio Holder for Climate and Nature, Cllr Shane Bartlett, Portfolio Holder for Planning and Emergency Planning and/or Cllr Jon Andrews, Portfolio Holder for Place Services.

Understanding the need to adapt to known climate impacts, including more extreme heat, drought and surface water flooding, could a cross-departmental, cross-party member working group be set up to help co-ordinate Dorset Council's responses on surface water management.

We passed a motion in July 2023 promoting the use of sustainable drainage systems ensuring the separation of surface water and sewage; the use of permeable surfaces where possible through the planning system and the Local Plan; and engagement with the water companies to focus their investment plans on the drastic reduction in sewage discharges needed to restore the health of our rivers and sea.

I'm happy to report that South West Water has announced major investment plans for the storage and separation of the sewage and surface water network in Lyme

Regis. This is in no small part due to the proactive engagement between the River Lim Action team of river monitors, the Environment Agency, Dorset Council and the town council over the past three years.

There are Citizen Science River monitoring groups providing similar water quality and ecological monitoring services throughout West Dorset, including in Charmouth, which are working together with Wessex Water through CROWD, Clean Rivers of West Dorset.

A cross-party working group could help co-ordinate responses from planning, highways and the climate and nature adaptation teams,

Notice of Motion for July 13th Council 2025

The heavy rain parts of Dorset experienced last month once again resulted in sewage being discharged into the sea – this time at West Bay, Lyme Regis, and seven locations across Weymouth and Portland. As a result, people were advised not to bathe on certain polluted beaches.

The main reason this occurs is our antiquated sewage system – a single system that has to deliver both foul water and surface water to the treatment plants, a system that is unable to cope with sudden large amounts of surface water.

Whilst the investment and determination to upgrade this system is largely outside the remit of this Council, there are three things it can do. This Council, therefore, resolves to:

1. Engage positively with central government in implementing Schedule 3 of the Flood and Water Act 2010 (and any subsequent changes in national planning guidance) to ensure sustainable drainage systems are designed, constructed and adopted to national standards for the lifetime of the development, securing the separation of foul water from surface water.
2. Through both its new local development plan and any associated guidance, promotes the use of permeable surface treatments where this is achievable.
3. Engages with Wessex Water and South West Water to focus their investment plans on reducing sewage discharges by the substantial amount needed.

Response from Cllr S Bartlett

Dorset Council is the Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA) and plays a central co-ordinating role in managing surface water risk, ordinary watercourses and groundwater. In performing this role, the LLFA is tasked with developing Dorset's flood risk management strategy. It is also a statutory consultee for planning on applications where there is a risk of surface water flooding, taking account of future floodwater forecasts which are modelled on climate change predictions. The LLFA is also required to cooperate and share information with other risk management authorities, including the Environment Agency and Highway Authority. Such roles are

performed in accordance with statutory national policy frameworks around how flood risk needs to be avoided or mitigated, including any necessary adaptation measures.

Under Dorset Council's duty as the LLFA, we also support the use of Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) in all major development proposals. The LLFA and the Local Planning Authority take a co-ordinated approach to the management of surface water flood risk, seeking to reduce additional surface water input into foul sewers. This is backed up by building regulations which require the separation of foul and surface water in new housing development.

In addition to the LLFA's statutory remit, the emerging local plan and accompanying design code will provide an opportunity to include planning policies and guidance on achieving high environmental standards in new development which deliver biodiversity net gain, climate resilience and mitigation of both ground and surface water flooding. The preparation of these policy documents is supported by cross-party member executive advisory panels and will be subject to adoption by Full Council. Furthermore, when the LLFA reviews the Council's local flood risk management strategy, this will be subject to member scrutiny. Therefore, whilst I recognise the importance of effective coordination for flood risk, I consider that there is no need at the present time to create a new cross-party working group.

Question 8 – submitted by Cllr L O’Leary

After reversing the plan to abolish the cabinet system, the administration has fully used the executive powers of the cabinet, which they are entitled to do. However, other actions raise concerns. These include setting up an unelected citizens’ panel on climate change to advise the cabinet on what, that isn't clear and I believe the panel to have been selected without any clear transparency. What happened to the Climate EAP made up of elected member? The Seeking to hand power to the first tier of local government, towns and parishes under the banner of “devolution,” bypassing elected ward members for insight and finally pushing the questions of democratically elected councillors to the end of the agenda. These actions suggest a worrying trend of sidelining elected, accountable councillors in favour of unelected bodies and executive members.

Will the council leader confirm that he is committed to keeping all members, especially opposition and backbench councillors, fully informed about matters in their wards and ensuring that elected councillors have priority in decision-making and policy over unelected bodies?

Response from Cllr N Ireland

Tackling the climate and nature emergencies and mitigating the impacts of climate change are key priorities for this organisation. While the council has a key

role to play, delivering on this ambition will be a shared endeavour and one that I would hope would be supported by ward members from all political parties in this chamber.

The Dorset citizens' climate panel is not a decision-making body, and it does not hold any formal powers. It has been established to support and strengthen our democratic process, not to replace or bypass it. Its purpose is to bring forward insights, lived experiences, and recommendations from our residents to help shape a Climate Adaptation Strategy for Dorset. Ensuring the voices of local people, especially those most likely to be affected by climate change, are heard right from the start is vital to shaping our approach.

The panel was formed through a transparent process, led by the Sortition Foundation, a non-profit organisation. A letter was sent to 6,600 randomly selected households across Dorset, and from those who responded, 22 individuals were selected to reflect the county's diversity in terms of demographics, geography, and attitudes toward climate change. This process ensures that the panel is broadly representative of our communities, including those whose voices are often underrepresented in traditional consultations.

Involving residents in this way helps build trust in our processes and decisions. When people see that decisions are shaped by people like them—not just politicians or experts—it makes the process feel more open, fair, and transparent.

I understand the concern about the role and importance of ward members in local decision-making. The council's approach to devolution is about empowering communities, not bypassing elected members. We remain committed to ensuring ward councillors are fully informed and involved in matters affecting both their individual areas and the wider council. I don't think a week goes by without at least one webinar being held for members and this will continue. As an example, and to address the initial statement about abandoning the committee model of governance, the next webinar in the diary on Wednesday 29th is an update on the current state of devolution, which as Cllr O'Leary will know requires what is referred to a strong leadership model aka an Executive or Cabinet. On working more closely with our towns and parishes, I've now completed about 30 visits to our town councils and have many more dates in the diary for the next six months and beyond. I was at Stalbridge last week, Shaftesbury earlier this week and I'll be at Verwood next Tuesday. A constant theme is that our town councils want to work more closely with Dorset Council and take on more responsibilities. The next step in that process is the Chief Executive and I, together with other officers and Cabinet members, attending

the DAPTC “A Fresh Start: Devolving Dorset” event next Thursday at which we will be discussing how better we can work together for the benefit of all our residents.

Question 9 – submitted by Cllr L O’Leary

Many of the bus routes and timetables in area south of the Ridgeway around Weymouth are now out of date. They don’t take into account new communities in Curtis fields, Chickerell, and Bincombe. They neglect many villages such as Broadmayne, Nottingham, and Sutton Poyntz. There is great potential for more imaginative, update to date and profitable routes that would serve more people and areas and bring the routes up to date with the needs of communities. Will the council work with providers, communities and elected members to carry out a review of these routes?

Response from Cllr J Andrews

Thank you for raising this important issue regarding bus routes and timetables in the area around Weymouth.

We recognise the importance of ensuring public transport reflects the needs of growing communities such as Weymouth and better serves surrounding villages. We agree there is potential to grow bus patronage in this area and better respond to community needs.

The Council is actively working with First Bus through our Enhanced Partnership, which provides a framework for collaboration and improvement. Additionally, our Bus User Group offers a valuable forum to review services and gather feedback from communities and elected members. Ideas and suggestions from these groups are regularly shared with operators.

While these are commercial services and decisions rest with the bus companies, we can influence and support changes where there’s clear need. A recent example of this partnership working has seen a rerouting of the X53 service to serve Curtis Fields and Lanehouse Rocks Road. This connects around 11,000 residents and allows us to use developer contributions to help sustain the service in the long term.

We’ll continue working with local communities, elected members and transport action groups to identify gaps and opportunities, and feed these into the operators for consideration.

Question 10 submitted by Cllr C Monks

Following the recent loss of broadband in Beaminster due to a vehicle fire, I would like to thank the portfolio holder and officers for their prompt response in ensuring the vehicle was safely removed. Could the portfolio holder please outline what steps Dorset Council can take to review the resilience and security of our current broadband infrastructure, and what lessons or actions might be considered to help prevent similar service disruptions in Beaminster and across the wider county?

Response by Cllr R Biggs

Access to broadband and broadband infrastructure is the responsibility of the network owner, predominately, and in the case of this outage in Beaminster, Openreach.

Service users, where they have critical functions, can opt for additional resilience. This usually involves separate physical infrastructure referred to as 'diverse routing' and this can be very expensive to install. These will typically be installed commercially and at a customer or site level rather than across an exchange area.

Officers have undertaken to review the incident with Openreach to see if any wider lessons can be drawn, but fundamentally this lies within the commercial operations of Openreach in this instance.

Openreach has been contacted and provided this further information:

Our Openreach Network Operations Centre (NOC) detected a hardware failure affecting just over 1000 customers just before midnight on Sunday 12th, going into the morning of 13th October. A major incident group was immediately mobilised and it was identified that a car had crashed into our pole and combusted. Once the fire was put out, our engineers reviewed the site and ascertained that the car would need removing in order for our engineers to access the area and work safely to replace the pole and the local network. The removal of the car was organised by Dorset Council.

The car was removed at lunchtime on Tuesday 14th October and survey work was undertaken the same day. Applications were made to Dorset Council to close off the road to allow for the removal of the damaged pole and tree cutting to take place so that our engineers could work safely to rebuild the network. The tree cutting took place on Wednesday 15th October and the pole was replaced on the morning of Thursday 15th, which then allowed our engineers to re-cable and restore the network, which was completed just after 3am on Friday 16th October.

Resilience and security

The Openreach Network Operations Centre (NOC) are on duty around the clock, 24 x 7 x 365 days every year, monitoring our network. They work with operational teams across Openreach that are based in local communities to fix faults and get customers back in service as quickly as possible.

The cause of this particular incident is not something that could have been prevented, but we mitigate the length of time required to make these complex repairs by having local engineering teams on standby to respond, with supplies held locally to expedite the speed of repair. Our thanks to Dorset Council for their support with making the area safe for our engineers to make the necessary repairs.

We understand that the mobile network was unaffected and remained available for use. For any customers that do not have good mobile coverage or require extra help and support with their services, the advice is always that we ask that they please contact their phone/broadband provider to discuss what additional support could be offered in the event of their service being impacted

Question 11 submitted by Cllr C Monks

How can we better engage with local residents to ensure they understand what a Community Resilience Plan is, and how can we work together to identify the specific needs and strengths of our communities to make future planning truly effective and inclusive to those at the coal face as and when local events take place?

Response by Cllr S Bartlett

As mentioned in the response to the question from Beaminster Town Council, we remain committed to supporting communities and encourage the use of resources available on the Local Resilience Forum's Dorset Prepared website, which helps communities develop and test their own resilience plans. In addition to this, we are working with the Dorset Association of Parish and Town Councils to explore ways of strengthening our community resilience messaging to local communities. We are also in the process of finalising our input into a national community resilience booklet, which is being tailored to meet Dorset's needs. The aim is to make this available in a range of community settings, and we are exploring the viability of distribution to all households. We will also shortly be undertaking a survey across communities to get a clearer understanding of priority areas of focus. So in summary, we are confident that engagement will increase in coming months.

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