

CABINET

MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY 24 JUNE 2025

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

Also present: Cllr Laura Beddow, Cllr Piers Brown, Cllr Les Fry, Mike Garrity, Cllr Simon Gibson, Cllr Hannah Hobbs-Chell, Cllr Sherry Jespersen, Cllr Craig Monks, Cllr Louie O'Leary, Cllr Andrew Parry and Cllr Jane Somper

Also present remotely: Cllr David Tooke, Cllr Mike Baker, Cllr Barry Goringe, Cllr Jack Jeanes, Cllr Carole Jones, Cllr Chris Kippax, Cllr David Morgan, Cllr David Northam, Cllr Mike Parkes, Cllr Val Potheary and Cllr Andy Skeats

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

Jan Britton (Executive Director for Places Services), Kate Critchel (Senior Democratic Services Officer), Lindsey Watson (Senior Democratic Services Officer), Alice Deacon (Corporate Director for Commissioning and Partnerships), Sam Crowe (Interim Chief Executive), Paul Dempsey (Executive Director of People - Children), Matthew Piles (Corporate Director - Strategic Director - Weymouth 2040), Beth Whittaker (Interim Corporate Director for Education and Learning), Aidan Dunn (Executive Director - Corporate Development S151), Jonathan Mair (Director of Legal and Democratic and Monitoring Officer), Nick Webster (Head of Growth and Regeneration), Laura Cornette (Business Partner - Communities and Partnerships) and Terry Sneller (Strategic Planning Manager)

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

Richard Freed (Service Manager for Commercial and Procurement)

10. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 20 May 2025 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

11. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest to report.

12. Public Participation

There were no questions or statements from the public.

13. Questions from Councillors

There were no questions from Councillors.

14. Forward Plan

The draft Cabinet Forward Plan for July 2025 was received and noted.

15. Inspection of Local Authority Children's Services 2025

The Cabinet member for Children's Services, Education & Skills reported the findings of a recent Ofsted inspection of the Council's Children's Services. Ofsted awarded an outcome judgement of overall effectiveness as outstanding. She indicated that the judgement was set out in full within the report along with the post inspection action plan.

Cabinet took this opportunity to congratulate all those involved in the inspection process and the recommendations were unanimously supported.

Decision

- (a) That the report be noted and that the positive judgements awarded to the Service by Ofsted, be celebrated.
- (b) That the post inspection action plan be supported and
- (c) That the test of assurance document, as set out in appendix 3 of the report, be received.

Reason for the decision

Dorset Council had a legal 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 delivering improving communities for all, a priority in the Council Plan.

16. Commissioned Grants for Direct Community Benefit Policy

The Cabinet member for Finance & Capital Strategy set out the report with the draft commissioned grants for direct community benefit policy and guidance which offered an auditable and transparent commissioning process.

It was proposed by Cllr S Clifford seconded by Cllr N Ireland

Decision

That the Commissioned Grants Policy be approved.

Reason for the decision

The Commissioned Grants Policy was an alternative model for direct community benefit that would streamline the process of commissioning for our Voluntary

Community Sector whilst still ensuring Dorset Council maintained essential checks and balances, and that Dorset Council got value for money.

17. **Dorset Council Local Plan Consultation**

The Cabinet member for Planning and Emergency Planning advised Cabinet that it was a statutory requirement to have an up-to-date Local Plan, to meet the growth needs of the community. Consultation for a draft local plan took place in January 2021. However, since this consultation there had been significant changes to national policy and an amended standard approach to calculating housing needs. As a result of these changes there was a need to conduct a further consultation. A new Minerals and Waste Plan was also necessary, and a separate consultation process on this would run alongside the local plan consultation.

The Cabinet member took the opportunity to highlight the four strategic priorities that were relevant to the local plan and the uplift in housing numbers from central government meant that a further consultation on new development sites was necessary.

The Cabinet member confirmed that it was important to demonstrate throughout the creation of the local plan that the Council has consulted and considered all development site options. He proposed the recommendations as set out in the report.

The recommendation was seconded by Cllr N Ireland, who advised that the Local Plan EAP members would have an opportunity to road test the consultation before launched.

In response to questions around the housing numbers set by central government, the Cabinet member for Planning and Emergency Planning advised that the Council needed to carry out the consultation, research and due diligence by presenting a plan to the examiner, that would show that the Council had tested all the development sites and set out the number of houses that the Council could actually deliver within the plan.

Responding to questions around the consultation timeline, the Cabinet member advised that the Council could be flexible with the first consultation period and responses received past 13 October 2025 will be included, however the second consultation end date, in August 2026 was a more rigorous period. There would also be an all-Councillor Briefing held on a date in August 2025.

Decision

- (a) That officers be authorised to prepare for the Dorset Council Local Plan options consultation; and approve the commencement of the consultation in mid-August 2025, to run for a period of eight weeks.
- (b) That officers be authorised to prepare for the Minerals and Waste Local Plan consultation and approve the commencement of the consultation in mid-August for a period of eight weeks.

- (c) That authority be delegated to the Service Manager for Spatial Planning, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Planning and Emergency Planning, to agree the consultation material prior to the start of the consultation.

Reason for the decision

It was important that the Local Plan was prepared in a positive manner that actively explored realistic opportunities for meeting growth needs within Dorset. Following the correct process would enable a robust Local Plan to be prepared.

The consultation material would include a strategy for meeting housing, employment and other needs. It would need to explore the reasonable deliverable development opportunities for meeting these needs.

Once the consultation was complete, the site opportunities would be reviewed and where no insurmountable deliverability issues including significant negative impacts had been identified, the sites were likely to be taken forward for allocation. The final set of site opportunities for the next stage of plan making would need to be deliverable.

18. **Economic Growth Strategy**

The Cabinet member for Property & Assets and Economic Growth presented the Economic Growth Strategy for approval following key member sessions, including a cross-party EAP and consideration at Place and Resources Committee on 22 May 2025.

The Cabinet member confirmed that all councillors had a role to hold the strategy to account and acknowledged that it was a living document. Dorset had significant economic challenges including low productivity, a lack of available skilled labour, social mobility challenges in some of its largest population centres, and housing affordability concerns. The strategy aimed to identify opportunities that would help mitigate these challenges.

In response to a question, the Cabinet member emphasised that tourism was a vital component of the County's Strategic priorities and discussions regarding hotel rental rates in Weymouth were ongoing. The Head of Growth and Economic Regeneration highlighted that the key ambitions for tourism in the county included increasing visitor spend, extending the visitor season and enhancing the productivity of tourism businesses. This would be achieved through innovation in business processes enabling these enterprises to become highly productive and contribute more significantly to the county's overall economic growth.

Non-executive members welcomed the ambitions for the market town framework but asked for more detail on the timeframe for that part of the strategy. Responding, the Executive Director for Place advised that there was an active work stream ongoing with town and parish councils around working more closely as partners and Dorset Council's support for market towns had been an important part of that discussion. The route forward would be to drive the market town framework into that existing workstream so that this process was a key part of that work programme.

The Interim Chief Executive indicated that the timescale for the work with town and parish councils would be presented to overview committee in approximately 6 months.

Cabinet members welcomed and fully supported the strategy and its key performance indicators.

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

Decision

- (a) That the Economic Growth Strategy be approved
- (b) That authority be delegated to the Executive Director for Place Services in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Property & Assets and Economic Growth, to approve final document design and minor textual changes.
- (c) That authority be delegated to the Cabinet Member for Property & Assets and Economic Growth, in consultation with the Executive Director for Place Services and the Director of Legal and Democratic, to finalise the terms of reference and any other required governance for the Dorset Growth Board.
- (d) That the roles that several Dorset Council services need to play in supporting improved economic growth, be noted.
- (e) Cabinet endorsed the allocation of the £0.62m Dorset Rural England Prosperity Fund (REPF) FY2026 extension funds, on a 50/50 basis, to two interventions previously funded by REPF, that complement the Shared Prosperity Fund extension interventions approved by Cabinet on 25 January 2025:
 - a. Advice and support to business (productivity grants) and
 - b. Zero Carbon Business Support (DC Zero Carbon Dorset grants)

Reason for the decision

The Economic Growth Strategy was a significant document which was being produced at a critical time. World economics were currently very fluid, and the council was aware of a wide range of economic challenges and opportunities as it sought to create a more prosperous and more sustainable Dorset for current and future generations.

19. **Draft outturn report 2024/25**

Cabinet received the draft outturn report for 2024/25. The Cabinet member for Finance & Capital Strategy advised that at the financial year 2024/25 concluded with an overspend of £6.714m. This was an improvement of £4.1 million since Q3. He further advised that the report would be considered by Audit and Governance Committee at their next meeting on 30 June 2025.

In respect of a question that Continuing Healthcare Funding (CHC) should be subject to a scrutiny request, the Leader of the Council advised that this matter would be taken outside of the meeting and discussed further with the Chair of the appropriate Scrutiny Committee.

It was proposed by Cllr S Clifford seconded by Cllr R Biggs

Decision

- (a) That the draft revenue and capital outturn and the financial performance for the year ended 31 March 2025, be noted
- (b) That the use of un-ringfenced reserves to support the 2024/25 final outturn as set out in section 12, of the report to Cabinet of 24 June 2025, be approved
- (c) That the reallocation of the additional funding sources and budgets to the Weymouth Harbour Walls Project as set out in section 14 of the report, be approved
- (d) That authority be delegated to the Executive Director for Place, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Place Services to approve spend decisions, including procurement, contract award, and payment of invoices, within the Total Scheme Budget for the Weymouth Harbour Walls Project as set out in section 14 of the report.

Reason for the decision

To report the financial performance for the year and the financial position at 31 March 2025. To give Cabinet the opportunity to review the risks the organisation faced and consider areas where it may wish to make strategic investments and/or to repurpose and prioritise its reserves to facilitate these aims.

20. Youth Justice Plan 2025 - 26 - Recommendation from People & Health Overview Committee

The Cabinet member for Children's Services, Education and Skills presented the recommendation from People and Health Overview Committee to recommend approval of the Plan to Full Council.

It was proposed by Cllr C Sutton and seconded by Cllr S Bartlett

Recommendation to Full Council

That the Youth Justice Plan 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 works across both Dorset Council and

Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole Council. Approval is therefore sought from both Dorset Council and from Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole Council.

21. Consultation Report for Anti-social Behaviour Related Public Spaces Protection Orders - recommendation from Place & Resources Committee

The Cabinet member for Health & Housing presented the recommendation from Place and Resources Overview Committee of 22 May 2025.

Members were advised that existing Anti-social Behaviour Related Public Spaces Protection Orders (PSPO's) were due to expire on 30 June 2025. As allowed for in the legislation and following consultation with key stakeholders, the recommendation sought support to continue these Orders for a further three years. There were also two new Orders proposed, and a public consultation process had been undertaken.

In response to questions, the Cabinet member agreed that she would investigate if sites could be extended to nearby and neighbouring areas where Public Space Protection Orders were already in place.

It was proposed by Cllr G Taylor seconded by Cllr S Robinson

Decision

- (a) That the Anti-social Behaviour Related Public Spaces Protection Orders due to expire on 30 June 2025 be extended for a period of three years.
- (b) That the two new proposed Anti-social Behaviour Related Public Spaces Protection Orders relating to fires on open land and unauthorised camping on Studland Beach be approved.

Reason for the decision

To comply with legislative requirements for the making of Public Spaces Protection Orders

To ensure openness and transparency in the Council's decision making by taking appropriate account of the results of the consultation.

To ensure that residents and businesses affected by anti-social behaviour be afforded the protection provided by such Orders.

22. Urgent items

There were no urgent items considered at the meeting.

23. Exempt Business

There was no exempt business to report.

Duration of meeting: 6.30 - 7.37 pm

Chairman

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