

Towards a new model of day opportunities

Appendix – Building Proposals

03 March 2026

1. Introduction

- 1.1 This appendix provides the detailed proposals for each of the 13 Care Dorset-managed day centres, reflecting the feedback received through public consultation and the Council's ambition to modernise day opportunities across Dorset. While the main report outlines the strategic rationale for change, this appendix sets out how those principles translate into local recommendations for each building. The proposals balance the need to maximise use of Council assets with a commitment to maintaining local presence wherever possible, supporting the wider ambition for Communities for All. The next step would be to work with Asset & Property to complete full asset reviews (as per Strategic Asset Management Plan) to ensure all factors influencing future asset use are fully considered. Unlike some local authorities that have closed a significant proportion of their day centres, Dorset is taking a more measured and community-focused approach, retaining most buildings while redesigning how they operate to better meet current and future needs.

2. Building Proposals

- 2.1 The below describes the context of each centre, the initial proposal and a revised recommendation post consultation.

North Dorset Locality

Blandford
Context: The Blandford Centre is an important community resource for local people. It is currently attended by 15 LD and 6 OP, 4 self-funders. The building is in a good location but is not fully maximised. There is opportunity to harness the centre as a community resource and link the operational activity in the centre to wider community work, such as Integrated Neighbourhoods and Thriving Communities.
Initial Proposal: To close the centre and relocate services to a smaller site in Blandford
Revised Recommendation following Consultation: Keep Blandford open but invest in developing an all-age service by integrating: • Children and Family Services. • Extend community activity for those not assessed as needing building-based care. • Providing expert local knowledge, advice, guidance and support

- Harness new opportunities to work with Health and develop a vibrant community asset

Sherborne

Context:

The day service is operated from an old house that is no longer fit for purpose. Only one floor of the property is used and it is not centrally located to other community resources. 3 people with LD attend, 7 OP and 8 Self funders. Sherbourne Town has significant potential to offer improved services for local people, closer to the centre, harnessing local assets whilst maintaining a more appropriate building base for those that need it.

Initial Proposal:

Maintain the services offered to the current clients but transition from the current building to a community-based model which will include: -

- Commissioning a smaller building closer to the town centre.
- Supporting more people to access community resources and local activities.
- Extend and develop community activity for those not assessed as needing building-based care.

Revised Recommendation following Consultation:

Continue with original proposal.

Shaftesbury

Context:

The day service is currently provided from a large, rented property. It has a small number of attendees. A number of the rooms in the rental agreement are unused and demand from the local population is declining. 0 people with LD attend, 8 OP and 7 Self funders. However, officers do recognise the need for a local service and propose to maintain the service in the current building, utilising different space, whilst developing opportunities to develop outreach for those who want it. Officers will also be reviewing the potential to extend out of all our centres in the North to ensure more rural areas have access to services.

Initial Proposal:

To transition the current service to a community-based model.

Revised Recommendation following Consultation:

To keep the Shaftesbury services offer to current clients.

- Renegotiate the lease to reflect actual building space required
- Support more people to access community resources and local activities.
- Targeted work to develop a community-based offer for younger adults
- Extend community activity for those not assessed as needing building-based care.

Sturminster Newton (Stour Connect)

Context:

This day service is operated from a large building with community café and other onsite community provisions (charity shop & sixth form college). Important community resource for local people. It is currently attended by 32 people with LD, 6 OP and 4 Self funders.

The building is not fully utilised by the wider community and has significant scope to be developed further. This will include a range of options with health, the VCSE and other partners to create a local vibrant resource.

Initial Proposal:

Stour Connect to become a Community Hub for North Dorset

Revised Recommendation following Consultation:

- Continue current services, providing specialist community activities/day opportunities for individuals with complex needs
- Provide specialised equipment and support to local services in towns and villages for outreach services delivered by health, the VCSE and other partners.
- Introduction of a community brokerage service supporting individuals access a wider range of bespoke services closer to their homes.
- Supporting development of the private sector and VCSE options.
- Support more people to access community resources and local activities.
- Extend community activity for those not assessed as needing building-based care.

Weymouth and Portland Locality

Weymouth**Context:**

The day service is operated from a large centrally located building in Weymouth. A well, attended provision for adults with learning Disability and older people with cognitive impairment. 30 people with LD attend, 21 OP and 11 Self funders. The service has the potential to develop further, and more will enable the Council to develop services with health and other stakeholders

Initial Proposal: Weymouth Connect to become the Community Hub for Weymouth and Portland.

- Review the long- term viability of the current building and if appropriate commission a more appropriate space.
- Support more people to access community resources and local activities.
- Extend community activity for those not assessed as needing building-based care.

Revised Recommendation following Consultation:

- Review the long- term viability of the current building and if appropriate commission a more appropriate, local, space.

- Continue current services, providing specialist community activities/day opportunities for individuals with complex needs
- Provide specialised equipment and support to local services in towns and villages for outreach services delivered by health, the VCSE and other partners.
- Introduction of a community brokerage service supporting individuals access a wider range of bespoke services closer to their homes.
- Supporting development of the private sector and VCSE options within towns and villages.
- Support more people to access community resources and local activities.

Ridgeway

Context:

Large day service on the outskirts of Weymouth with ample outdoor space, on a shared site with Children's service provision. 29 people with LD attend, 1 OP and 11 Self funders. Ridgeway is a key local resource, the model of service delivery could be enhanced to support people plan for greater independence

Initial Proposal:

To build on the services provided at the Ridgeway creating a specialist service for the west of the County for adults with Learning Disabilities. Change the service model to focus on building skills and independence.

Revised Recommendation following Consultation:

Continue with original proposal.

East Dorset Locality

Verwood

Context:

The Verwood day service is located in a purpose built two storey building with good access. 27 people with LD attend, 3 OP and 12 Self funders. Verwood is a key service for local people, the service model can be developed to support people build independence and extend out into the community

Initial Proposal:

Develop the service as a Community Hub for East Dorset.

Revised Recommendation following Consultation:

To build on the services provided at the Verwood centre creating a specialist Service for the east of the County for adults with Learning Disabilities. Change the Service model to focus on building skills and independence.

Ferndown

Context:

Ferndown is well located and has the potential to develop as a strong community asset. There are not high numbers of Council funded people attending (10) and 15

Self-funders. Developing Ferndown as a community resource, linking with children's services. VCSE and Health offers potential to create a local resource that build and extends existing services.

Initial Proposal:

To close the service with people attending local community activities or the proposed Verwood Hub.

Revised Recommendation following Consultation:

- Retain the current services offered to the Ferndown community
- Retain the Ferndown building and develop towards becoming a financially viable community asset for local people, complementing (not competing with) existing provision within the town.
- Review the contracting mechanism with Care Dorset
- Establish best use of the space and how the building can be managed locally, with revised contracting arrangements developed.

West Dorset

Dorchester

Context:

Dorchester plus is a centrally located and easily accessible day service. 14 people with LD attend, 19 OP and 17 Self funders. It has potential to integrate with other local services with improved utilisation of the building.

Initial Proposal:

Dorchester Plus to become the West Dorset Community Hub.

Revised Recommendation following Consultation:

- Continue current services, providing specialist community activities/day opportunities for individuals with complex needs
- Provide specialised equipment and support to local towns and villages for outreach services delivered by health, the VCSE and other partners.
- Introduction of a community brokerage service supporting individuals access a wider range of bespoke services closer to their homes.
- Supporting development of the private sector and VCSE options within towns and villages.
- Support more people to access community resources and local activities
- Extend community activity for those not assessed as needing building-based care.

Bridport

Context:

The day service operates from an old Victorian school building which is in poor condition. 22 people with LD attend, 22 OP and 5 Self funders. A service in Bridport is key to ensuring people in the west have good access to services. However,

building based support is not always right for younger people who feedback they seek broader opportunities.

Initial Proposal:

To move the current service to a more suitable building and location in Bridport.

Revised Recommendation following Consultation:

No immediate change but explore the development of a new centre, located within the Reablement development in Bridport, or seek an alternative local site. Additionally, develop a community outreach model for people who want to build skills and independence

Purbeck Locality

Swanage

Context:

The day centre was transferred to the Swanage and Purbeck Development (SPDT) Trust as part of a community asset transfer in 2024. 2 people with LD attend, 1 OP and 0 Self funders. Some people who previously attended have moved to a new provider in the Swanage area. There remains a need for a local service in Swanage and working with the SPDT and other local providers to develop further is key to our proposals

Initial Proposal:

Remove from Care Dorset Block contract and work with the SPDT and local community activities providers to deliver a local service.

Revised Recommendation following Consultation:

Maintain services to current clients through the development of spot funding and commissioning of VCSE and other agencies. Develop new, flexible services as need arises.

Wareham

Context: Specialist Day service for older people with cognitive impairment. The service is joined to Anglebury Court residential home in Wareham. 1 person with LD attend, 24 OP and 31 Self funders. Wareham is well located and links well to the attached residential home, proposals to retain Wareham but build community outreach form part of our proposals.

Initial Proposal:

To close the current service, redirect people to Purbeck Connect as a Community Hub and develop community activities.

Revised Recommendation following Consultation:

To retain Wareham Plus as a specialist service for Older People. Review the contracting mechanism with Care Dorset.

Purbeck

Context:

The centre is located on an industrial estate a mile from the Wareham centre. Older

people who use Purbeck fed back that they wanted a different type of service and more opportunities.

Initial Proposal:

To keep Purbeck as a local Hub and develop increased community services.

Revised Recommendation following Consultation & recommendation from the Health & Wellbeing Board (11 Feb):

- Purbeck Connect to continue operating as normal, with Care Dorset committed to sustaining and growing the service so current users can keep attending unless they choose an alternative.
- Continue to develop community-based service in Wareham.