

Full Council – 14 May 2026

Questions submitted by Councillors

Question 1 – submitted by Cllr A Brenton on behalf of the Local Access Forum

Under the provisions of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000, local highway authorities are required to prepare and publish rights of way improvement plans (RoWIPs). These are the prime means for an authority to identify and prioritise actions to bring outdoor access up-to-date, addressing a range of issues such as recreation, sport, transport, health, economy, land-management, tourism and planning.

A new assessment of the matters set out in these plans must be undertaken every ten years, and the plans reviewed and amended as necessary. The most recent plan for Dorset covered the period 2011 - 2021, meaning that it was prepared long before local government reorganisation. Dorset Council officers carried out the initial consultation on the production of the new plan in 2021 but, five years later, the draft of the new plan has yet to appear for formal consultation. Comments made in 2021 will now be out of date. The timetable has slipped on numerous occasions and the deadlines shown on the website have, yet again, been missed.

The Local Access Forum, was established under the same legislation to advise Dorset Council on the improvement of public access to land and related matters, has been monitoring the situation, has offered its services in assisting with the preparation of the plan, and has regularly asked officers for updates. Given that a well-maintained rights of way network has been recognised as part of Dorset Council's Natural Environment, Climate and Ecology Strategy and that the renewal of the RoWIP is specifically mentioned in the Dorset Council Plan as a key action in responding to the climate and nature crisis,

my question is this: Please can the Cabinet Member for Roads and ROW

1. explain the lengthy delays with the production of the ROWIP; and
2. provide a new timetable for its expedient production; and
3. assure members of the Council and members of the Local Access Forum that there will be no further slippages; and keep the Local Access Forum fully appraised of the process.

Question 2 – submitted by Cllr R Legg

Following the devastating fire at Newell House, Sherborne on the 26th April can you explain why Dorset Council paid no heed to the warning given by the police and the fire service in September 2025 that the building was at high risk of arson attack? Will you now make a commitment to the people of Sherborne that you will do everything necessary to ensure this uninsured building does not remain as a burned-out wreck for years to come?

Question 3 – submitted by Cllr R Legg

The Local Plan Executive Advisory Panel last met in December for a briefing on the early messages from the public consultation. Prior to that the last meeting was in May 2025. With the next public stage of the plan process only 3 months away when will members have an opportunity to contribute to the development of plan policies and the CIL charging regime?

Question 4 – submitted by Cllr B Bawden

I'd like to thank the Cabinet on behalf of residents, businesses, visitors and online admirers to Lyme Regis for the decision to allocate £6.2 million from Community Infrastructure Levy contributions towards the funding of the Cobb stabilisation project, to protect our beautiful town for future generations.

I'd also like to thank the Parking Services team for working constructively with Lyme's business representatives to assess whether reducing parking fees in winter might increase revenue by encouraging more use during less busy months.

Could I ask the Portfolio Holder for Place Services whether he would visit Charmouth and Lyme to see whether we could develop a properly holistic approach to parking enforcement, including:

- preventing the loophole used by holiday lets and Air B&B owners to enable multiple cars to use one residential parking permit
- considering how best to deter people parking all day in 1- or 2-hour short term on-street bays
- prioritising the repainting and installation of double yellow lines to deter thoughtless and dangerous parking on residential streets, posing serious risks to drivers and pedestrians, and
- mitigating the impact of delivery vehicles which ignore the seasonal loading restrictions?

The flip side to trying to resolve parking problems is, of course, to support well-connected public transport services.

The new community weekend night-bus LB1 between Bridport and Lyme Regis, conceived and developed by West Dorset Commons, funded by the

Western Gateway Transport Body and operated by First Bus in collaboration with Lyme Regis and Bridport town councils, launched on 1st May to great excitement.

Would it be possible to work with Devon County Council and Axminster Town Council to extend this service to Axminster town centre and railway station, to enable evening bus connections for rail passengers and ultimately reduce the volumes of car traffic descending on Charmouth and Lyme?

Question 5 – submitted by Cllr J Haynes

In February 2024 I presented to Full Council a paper proposing to charge a double premium on council tax for second homes. The proposal was agreed with some specific changes in an amendment proposed by Cllr Ireland. The details are below:

1. 40% of the additional income from the council tax on second homes in Dorset is allocated to the Housing budget annually.
2. Any unused or unallocated funds from this budget are transferred to Housing reserves at the end of the financial year and ring-fenced for new supply.
3. Any income clearly generated from this budget to be transferred to Housing reserves.

The budget to be used for the following purposes:

- In support of new build, on site, affordable housing from s106 agreements. These properties should be viable however there are occasions when they are not and s106 off site contributions are required to deliver them. In the absence of sufficient off site s106 funding, this budget may be used.
- To spot purchase properties as required for temporary accommodation for homeless residents.
- To be available for matched funding for government grants, as and when they become available, to increase the amount of affordable housing in Dorset.
- To be used in support of increasing the amount of affordable homes owned by Dorset Council with due regard to the need for a Housing Revenue Account.

Following a written response from the Leader to one of my residents it has come to my attention that the sum collected from the second home premium in 2025/26 was £12M. This is great news as only £8M was predicted in the budget

and it means some £4.8M of additional funding (being the 40% of the total) should have gone into securing affordable housing for Dorset residents.

As we are now a year into getting this windfall can the portfolio holder inform us how much of this money has been spent yet on actual affordable homes and how many homes have been built/purchased using this money?

How much money has been raised in interest on the £12M and transferred to the housing budget and if the money has not been spent as yet, could we be reminded of the reserves from this windfall in the housing budget?

Question 6 – submitted by Cllr S Gibson

Verwood has experienced a number of missed bin collections this year with several areas suffering multiple missed collections within a few weeks. One of the reasons that has been repeatedly given is the unreliability of vehicles.

If we want people to use the full range of recycling and refuse services, it is vital that they can trust and depend upon the collection service. The local team do an incredible job but appear to be undermined by multiple break downs of vehicles.

Given that this is a key service for all residents and a service that Dorset Council has typically run incredibly well, what more can be done to support the local team at the Ferndown Depot to improve reliability of the bin fleet?