

Cabinet 19 May 2026

Public Questions

Question from Megan Sutton

As a local resident, parent, and registered NHS and Primary Care Practitioner, I am writing to raise urgent concerns ahead of the upcoming management transition.

From my personal and individual professional perspective in preventative healthcare, a permanent ending of curriculum swimming at The Purbeck School would fail the council's public health goals to reduce health inequalities in coastal areas. In a coastal community like Purbeck, school swimming lessons are not a luxury; they are a vital vehicle for **essential water safety and drowning prevention training**.

Furthermore, I am deeply concerned by recent cost-cutting measures at the Purbeck Sports Centre. Young, under 16-year-old 'Swim Helpers' have had their hours reduced while their supervision responsibilities have increased. Reducing safety ratios while maintaining class sizes places an unacceptable burden on staff who are minors. This directly risks non-compliance with **HSE Guidelines (HSG179)** for safe pool supervision of children working toward their **STA Awards**. Additionally, these regular young staff are being repeatedly asked to consider moving from casual to Zero-Hours contracts.

1. **Safety:** Can the Council provide the revised risk assessment justifying the reduction of helper hours for children's lessons under **HSG179** standards?
2. **Employment:** Given the **Employment Rights Act 2025**, why is the Council suggesting regular youth staff to move to insecure zero-hours contracts ahead of the April 2026 management transition?
3. **Contract:** Will the new private management contract include legally binding 'Social Value' clauses to protect the long-standing school swimming programme, protect long-term club training slots, and **guarantee a price freeze on lane hire fees** so the Wareham and District Swimming Club is not priced out by a commercial operator?