

PLACE AND RESOURCES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON THURSDAY 30 JULY 2026

Present: Cllrs Nocturin Lacey-Clarke (Chair), Craig Monks (Vice-Chair), Alex Brenton, Barrie Cooper, Louie O'Leary, David Shortell, Carl Woode and David Tooke

Apologies: Cllrs Alex Fuhrmann and Jack Jeanes

Also present: Cllr Jon Andrews, Cllr Jane Somper and Cllr Shane Bartlett

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

Jan Britton (Executive Director - Economy and Environment), Jonathan Mair (Director - Assurance (Monitoring Officer)), Antony Nash (Senior Democratic & Governance Services Officer), George Dare (Senior Democratic and Governance Officer), Gemma Clinton (Corporate Director for Waste, Recycling and Resource Recovery), Jack Wiltshire (Corporate Director for Highways and Engineering), Matthew Boulter (Head of Fleet and Waste Operations), Marc Eyre (Service Manager for Assurance) and Christopher Peck (Principal Transport Planner)

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

21. Declarations of interest

There were no Declarations of interest.

22. Public Participation

There was no public participation.

23. Questions from Councillors

There were no questions from Councillors.

24. Emergency Response to Flooding Incidents in Dorset (Storm Chandra), 09/07/2026 Place and Resources Scrutiny Committee

The Service Manager for Assurance introduced the report, setting the context and the key details from the report

The Committee considered the Council's response to the severe flooding events experienced during the winter period and acknowledged the scale and complexity of the incident, which involved multiple concurrent emergencies across Dorset. The significant efforts of Council staff, emergency responders, partner organisations and local communities in responding to the incidents were recognised.

A key area of discussion related to communication during emergencies. The Committee considered examples where information about flooding incidents, road closures and community impacts had not always reached all relevant parties in a timely manner. Discussion focused on improving communication between operational services, ward members, town and parish councils and affected communities. Emphasis was placed on ensuring that information could be shared more effectively before and during emergency events.

The Committee discussed the increasing frequency and severity of flooding incidents and considered whether existing arrangements possessed sufficient resilience to respond to prolonged and complex emergencies. Consideration was given to how additional support could be drawn from across the wider organisation when emergency planning resources came under pressure.

The role of communities, flood wardens and local emergency planning featured prominently in the discussion. The Committee recognised the value of local knowledge, volunteer networks and parish level emergency arrangements. It was considered that greater clarity around the role of flood wardens, together with improved guidance and support, would strengthen local preparedness and resilience.

Discussion also focused on the impact of road closures and the effect flooding could have on communities becoming isolated. The Committee considered whether suitable arrangements existed for assessing the impact of road closures, communicating with affected residents and ensuring that appropriate support was available when access to services became restricted.

Highway drainage and flood prevention measures were also discussed. The Committee considered gully maintenance arrangements, drainage responsibilities and how historical flood data could be used to help identify locations requiring additional preventative measures.

Recommendations

The Place and Resources Scrutiny Committee recommended that:

1. A skills-sharing arrangement like that used during the COVID pandemic be developed to enable suitably trained staff from across the Council to support emergency responses when required.
2. A named responsibility be established during emergency incidents to ensure information is communicated effectively to ward members and onward to town and parish councils.
3. Pre-emptive communications be improved ahead of severe weather events, including targeted communications to areas with a history of flooding.
4. The current approach to gully maintenance be reviewed to ensure known flood-prone locations are appropriately considered within planned maintenance programmes.
5. Greater clarity be provided regarding the role, responsibilities and expectations of flood wardens, working alongside relevant partner organisations.
6. Public guidance on actions to be taken during flooding incidents be reviewed and strengthened.

7. Communication failures that prevented information reaching the emergency planning response structure be investigated and addressed.
8. A framework be developed for assessing, notifying and supporting communities that become isolated because of emergency road closures.

25. **Active Travel**

The cabinet member for Place Services introduced the item and the Committee considered evidence relating to the use, benefits, value and maintenance of Dorset's active travel network. Discussion recognised the contribution of walking, wheeling and cycling infrastructure towards improving health, accessibility and sustainable travel.

The Committee examined how active travel schemes had been assessed and how value for money had been measured. Consideration was given to the methodologies used to evaluate schemes, including national assessment frameworks and the measurement of future benefits. The discussion explored how health outcomes, safety improvements and wider community benefits were reflected within those assessments.

The challenges associated with delivering active travel infrastructure in rural areas were also discussed. The Committee considered the difficulties of demonstrating the same levels of usage and economic benefit often achieved in larger urban areas and discussed the importance of recognising broader social and community outcomes.

A recurring theme throughout the discussion was that the success of active travel schemes should not be judged solely by user numbers. The Committee highlighted the importance of understanding whether schemes improved confidence, perceptions of safety and opportunities for residents to walk, wheel or cycle, as well as the wider contribution they made to local communities and environments.

Recommendation

The Place and Resources Scrutiny recommended that future evaluations of active travel schemes should consider wider outcomes alongside usage statistics and financial measures, including:

- Whether residents felt safer using the routes.
- Whether schemes encouraged more walking, wheeling and cycling.
- Whether schemes improved local environments and communities.
- Whether residents viewed the schemes positively and considered them beneficial.

26. **Waste Deep Dive Review**

The Committee undertook a detailed review of waste collection performance, service reliability, staffing, fleet resilience, customer communication and enforcement activity. While recognising the generally strong performance of the

service across Dorset, the Committee also examined areas where improvements were required.

A significant part of the discussion focused on the performance of the Shaftesbury depot, which had been identified as performing less strongly than other depots. The Committee considered the factors contributing to this position, including recruitment challenges, staff absence, vehicle maintenance and workshop capacity. Concerns were raised regarding the need for clear improvement plans supported by measurable targets and transparent reporting.

Service resilience formed a further area of discussion. The Committee considered staffing levels, vacancy management, the use of agency workers, vehicle availability and maintenance arrangements. Discussion focused on whether sufficient resilience existed within the service to respond to operational pressures and future demand.

The Committee also discussed the quality and accessibility of performance information. While improvements in reporting were welcomed, it was considered that more localised information would provide a clearer understanding of service performance within individual depots, towns and wards.

Customer communication arrangements were reviewed, including discussion around the potential benefits of a customer portal that could provide residents with more timely information regarding collections, disruptions and service requests. The Committee considered whether technological improvements could be implemented more quickly to improve the customer experience.

Further discussion addressed blocked access to collections, enforcement activity, fly-tipping and opportunities to improve recycling performance. The impact of parked vehicles preventing collections was considered, along with the need to identify recurring issues and explore potential local solutions.

The Committee concluded that maintaining strong overall performance would require continued focus on transparency, accountability, operational resilience and improvement in areas where challenges remained.

Recommendation

The Place and Resources Scrutiny Committee recommended that:

1. Future performance reports include depot-level, town-level and ward-level performance information.
2. A measurable and targeted improvement plan be developed for the Shaftesbury depot.
3. Regular progress reports be presented to the Committee, initially on a quarterly basis, particularly in relation to the performance of the Shaftesbury depot.
4. Future reports include information on vacancies, sickness absence, duration of absence, agency staffing and staff turnover, with depot-level breakdowns where possible.

5. All improvement plans include measurable targets, responsible officers, timescales and clear success measures.
6. That instances where collections are missed because of parked vehicles are reported and that recurring issues are fed back to town and parish councils to support traffic management solutions where appropriate.
7. Councillors be provided with improved access to local waste performance information and dashboard data.
8. Development of a customer portal be accelerated to improve communication use of the service specific customer portal to improve communication and information available to residents unless the future corporate solution is under 12 months from full implementation.
9. Missed collections resulting from parking obstructions be recorded and recurring issues escalated to support longer-term solutions.

27. Place and Resources Scrutiny Committee Work Programme

Recruitment and workforce resilience issues were identified as a potential future item for the Committee's work programme following concerns raised during the Waste Deep Dive discussion.

28. Executive Arrangements Forward Plans

The Committee noted the forward plans.

29. Urgent items

There were no urgent items.

30. Exempt Business

There was no exempt business.

Duration of meeting: 6.30 - 9.48 pm

Chairman

.....