

# Towards a new model of day opportunities consultation - supplementary report

V3 19/11/25

## 1. Background

Day services are a vitally important part of the Dorset support offer for several hundred residents, providing meaningful activities during the day for those who need support, as well as crucial respite for carers.

In 2021 and 2023 extensive engagement activity was carried out to determine the views of people attending day opportunities on whether services could be improved and if so, what would enhance the services available.

Feedback from the engagement led to the proposal for an extended day opportunities offer that includes development of community activities as well as a building-based offer for people with complex needs. A model that works with individuals to build skills, strengths and independence was put forward and welcomed.

Based on the feedback gathered, we are proposing a new model and seeking further input. Key insights from the consultation are highlighted in this report. The new model of day opportunities will expand the range and availability of day opportunities across Dorset whilst ensuring that nobody is left without a service.

## 2. Consultation

- Public meeting at every Care Dorset centre (13) circa 500 people attended.
- Online sessions (6).
- Focus groups of people who use other services (3).
- Birth 2 Settled Adulthood Service Managers, inviting circulation to young people.
- Visits to professional settings (Schools)
- Written communication to every individual who uses a day service.
- Surveys in public buildings and online (335 responses)

## 3. Analysis Method

The “Towards a new model of Day Opportunities” team carried out Face to Face meetings at each day centre, group and online sessions, attended focus groups and social work team meetings. Surveys were circulated to all day opportunity attendees as well as young people likely to require day opportunities in the future.

Each centre was assessed individually, with overall trends reviewed and notable responses highlighted where relevant. It is important to acknowledge the limited number of responses received for certain locations, particularly given that respondents were asked to comment on centres specific to them.

### **3.1 Online and Easy Read Survey Analysis**

Throughout this report, the data source is indicated in the base notes. “Online” refers to responses submitted via the standard online survey or manually entered from paper submissions. Due to the accessibility format of the Easy Read version, it was not feasible to integrate all responses across questions; therefore, some questions have been analysed separately.

### **3.2 Open Text Comments**

Open-ended comments were coded and thematically analysed where response volumes allowed for meaningful pattern identification. These coded themes are presented based on the frequency of issues raised. For centres with fewer responses, comments are presented verbatim to preserve individual perspectives. Note: Figures may not always total precisely due to rounding.

## **4. Executive Summary**

The new model of day opportunities will expand the range and availability of day opportunities across Dorset whilst ensuring that nobody is left without a service. The intention is that our day opportunities deliver a much more ambitious, connected community offer for people. There are so many related ambitions that our day opportunities could support, on top of the important core offer of safe, rewarding places for people with complex needs.

The opportunity to link with wider programmes such as, Communities for All, Age Friendly Communities, Thriving Communities and Integrated Neighbourhoods can be fully harnessed to deliver improved outcomes for the residents of Dorset. Consultation was carried out between March and June 2025 and the Towards a new model of delivering day opportunities team received: -.

- 354 survey responses
- 853 Comments
- 2 petitions (Blandford 2511 signatures) (Ferndown 485 signatures)

## **5. Summary of Consultation Findings**

The consultation provided valuable insights into what people want from day opportunities, confirming a strong sense of community attachment and a clear desire for flexible, vibrant, and locally accessible services, particularly among younger people.

### **Key Themes Identified:**

#### **Flexibility and Variety**

Younger people expressed a preference for non-building-based day opportunities, valuing local activities that promote independence and skill development.

## **Choice and Change**

Many people indicated interest in exploring alternative models of day opportunities, emphasizing the need for greater choice and flexibility in delivery.

## **Local Provision and Community Support**

There was strong support for community-based services, with many people open to attending day opportunities closer to home.

## **Specialist and Respite Services**

People were keen on keeping both specialist and respite services. These were seen as essential.

## **Availability**

Weekday mornings were preferred by people using services.

Weekends and evenings received strong support from carers.

## **Understanding of the Hub and Spoke Model**

Over half of the people that responded felt this model could offer a wider range of activities, suggesting a good level of understanding and openness to innovation.

## **Transport**

People who use services and carers wanted a more flexible transport option.

## **Communication**

A need for clearer information and better promotion of services was reported, with some people stating they did not know what was available in their local communities.

## **6. Reassurance and Ongoing Engagement**

Some anxiety was expressed about proposed changes. The project team will ensure that no one will be left without a day opportunity and committed to continuous engagement with people who attend day opportunities, families, and carers to support ongoing development.

While some centres showed openness to change, others, particularly in North and East Dorset, were unenthusiastic. A number of responses were also identified from individuals residing in other Local Authority areas who had experienced the removal of their day services and subsequently engaged in the consultation by returning surveys and participating in social media campaigns, indicating wider regional interest and concern.

## **Understanding of the Proposed Model**

- 80.1% understood the proposal about more community-based activities – the hub, spoke and specialist model.
- 56.2% did not believe it would offer a wider range of activities.
- 17.1% felt confident it would improve options.

## **Current Engagement**

- 46.9% currently attend Care Dorset services.
- 43.4% do not currently attend but may in future.

## **Preferred Days and Times**

- Weekday mornings (Mon–Fri) were most preferred.
- Afternoons were also popular.
- Evenings and weekends had lower interest, though some groups showed flexibility.

## **Local Opportunities**

- 66.1% would consider attending a service near home.
- 15.9% would consider working with an Individual Service Fund provider.
- 20.6% would consider using Direct Payments.

## **Feedback Key Themes**

- Strong emphasis on local/community support.
- Concerns about transport accessibility.
- Desire for continuity of care, specialist support, and respite services.
- Calls for clearer information and better promotion of services.

## **Centre-Specific Insights**

Response numbers in brackets below indicate the total base size for relevant statements.

### **North Dorset Locality**

- Blandford Connect (126 responses)
- Stour Connect (71 responses)
- Shaftesbury Plus (55 responses)
- Sherborne Connect (53 responses)

### **East Dorset Locality**

- Ferndown Plus (20 responses)
- Verwood Connect (8 responses)

### **Purbeck Locality**

- Wareham Plus (46 responses)
- Purbeck Connect (18 responses)
- Swanage Connect (8 responses)

### **West Dorset Locality**

- Dorchester Connect (12 responses)
- Bridport Connect (3 responses)

### **Weymouth and Portland Locality**

- Weymouth Connect (7 responses)
- Ridgeway Plus had no proposed changes

In two localities there was a strong representation from the local community, whilst officers have reassured all stakeholders that anyone eligible for a day service will continue to receive one, for a small number of people any potential change is perceived as difficult.

Dorset are a listening local authority, and during the Autumn of 2025 the Towards a new model of day opportunities team reviewed and considered the initial proposals in light of the consultation feedback, in particular where potential solutions have been provided by consultees.

This report is supplementary to the 'Towards a new model of day opportunities Consultation report' produced by the Councils Consultation and Engagement Team. This report focuses on the outcome of the rich feedback received during face-to-face conversations and sets out the intentions to revise proposals for a number of the day centres that we have consulted on.

Officers will continue work with communities and individuals to ensure they are fully engaged and have the opportunity to co-design services.

The remainder of this report sets out the consultation feedback and our response to the proposal for each centre.

## 7. West Dorset

### 7.1 Dorchester Connect

The proposal was for Dorchester Plus to become the West Dorset Community Hub.

Dorchester Plus has already started to operate as a mini local hub, and the proposal received a good response with just under half of the respondents agreeing with Dorchester Plus becoming the West Dorset Hub.

#### 7.1.1 What people are telling us is working well

- Already working a hub model (since Covid)
- Staff are consistent, provides routine and staff are brilliant.

#### 7.1.3 What people are telling us is not working well

- Challenges with recruitment
- How other people might use the building.
- Difficult to access other community activities / services.

#### 7.1.4 Opportunities people are telling us we could develop

- Provide ongoing and progressive activities.
- Somewhere to provide information, advice & guidance

#### 7.1.5 Potential Solutions

There were no potential solutions present in the feedback.

#### 7.1.6 Listening and responding to proposed solutions

The face-to-face feedback has offered a valuable insight to the development of the proposed West Dorset Hub which will enhance the work which is already shaping the Dorchester Connect to become the West Dorset Community Hub in partnership with local partners.

#### 7.1.7 Supporting Data

### Q. Is there anything else you would like to tell us about the proposed changes to Dorchester Connect?

Open text comments include both online and easy read responses.

Due to the low number of responses, the feedback has been presented verbatim.

## Dorchester Connect - user and non-user comments

- Our son is very happy at the Dorchester Connect
- Dorchester Connect is close to where our son lives and transport is available.
- In Dorchester opportunities are so limited and underdeveloped.
- The idea of developing spokes from the hub seems a good ideal providing our son is still allowed to attend the Centre during the day as a base. providing the much-needed consistency and daily routine.
- Our son has very limited concentration so providing various new activities in the community seems very unlikely. He needs to attend Dorchester Hub where he can safely mobilise.
- Transport to and from the activity would make it much more attractive to go to.
- As long as you keep what is currently working well and improve on top of that I'm sure it will be very welcome.
- A focus on some activities for youths and re-employment for younger adults.
- The local nature of each day centre is vital. You see the same people. whether they be carers, the cared for or the brilliant staff.
- Attendees and carers have a feeling of safety.
- Having just Dorchester and one or two others will make access harder and if you live a distance away, will mean access is much harder and getting someone ready to go much earlier because of increased travel, little short of impossible. It effectively removes the huge value the day centres offer because it would be too difficult to make it work for either the person being cared for or us as carers.
- Each day centre provides enormous value just as they are now and changing to what has been termed the hub and spoke model will just make accessing help too difficult as there already aren't enough hours in the day without placing the burden or sorting something spoke based out.
- It might be much cheaper for the council however, as I suspect many feel as I do and so wouldn't use it.
- I guess the question is whether this is about saving money or providing Adult Social care that the cared for adults need.
- I accept the council is struggling financially but the loss of the current day centres around the country would be catastrophic for both the cared for and the carer, it really is that simple.
- The assumption is always that the carer has the headspace for 'other stuff', such as sorting out activities.
- I would suggest those at the council coming up with these ideas live a week in the home of a carer to understand what being a carer is really like and what our loved ones need, before proposing changes that don't benefit either the cared for or their carer, just the council budget.

- The proposals are awful, and I cannot understand how the council thought these proposals were a good idea. Clearly thought up by someone with no actual care experience.
- If I understand the plans correctly, Acland Road to where my cared for person currently goes will remain a main hub but other "spoke" activities might be added

### **7.1.8 Data Summary**

Although respondent numbers for Dorchester Connect are small (12), the findings show encouraging interest in the proposed West Dorset Hub. 41.7% said "yes" to attending, indicating a good level of support, and a further 25% said "maybe," showing conditional openness depending on activities offered. Only 25% said "no," and 8.3% selected "other," suggesting that most respondents are either supportive or open to considering the hub model.

Among those who said they would not attend (7), 42.9% would consider local community activities (spokes) and 14.3% said "maybe," highlighting an opportunity to engage this group through appealing local options. While 28.6% were unsure and 14.3% said "no," these responses suggest that clear communication and tailored activities could increase participation.

Views on the proposed offer were generally positive or neutral. 33.4% agreed with the proposal, and 41.7% neither agreed nor disagreed, indicating that many respondents may simply need more detail. Opposition was low, with only 16.6% disagreeing or strongly disagreeing, and 8.3% unsure. Overall, this suggests a strong foundation for engagement, with opportunities to build support through clearer information and activity planning.

## **7.2 Bridport Connect**

The proposal was for the Bridport Connect service to become a Community Activity.

The proposal received strong support.

### **7.2.1 What people are telling us is working well**

- Staff - Kind & helpful. Not feeling alone
- Bus works well
- Walk to day centre

### **7.2.2 What people are telling us is not working well**

Participants expressed a desire for more activities, raised concerns about travel demands, and questioned the capacity of the voluntary sector to deliver future services.

### **Activities & Social Opportunities**

- Would like to go out more
- Would like to do more evenings & weekends

- Want to do more

### **Travel & Accessibility**

- Will impose significant travel requirements on some service users, with round trips of 30 or 40 miles in many cases

### **Delivery Model & Capacity**

- Concerns that these proposals rely so heavily on the voluntary and community sector (VCS) to deliver day opportunities in future, needs to be tempered with realism about its capacity

### **7.2.3 Opportunities people are telling us we could develop**

- Provision of more activities in the local community

### **7.2.4 Potential solutions**

- To achieve its ambition Dorset Council will need to back it up with significant infrastructure support for the VCS sector, both to help it recruit, train and retain more volunteers, and to help VCS organisations reach longer term financial sustainability.

### **7.2.5 Supporting Data**

#### **Q. Is there anything else you would like to tell us about the proposed changes to Bridport Connect?**

Open text comments include both online and easy read responses. Due to the low number of responses, the feedback has been presented verbatim.

#### **Bridport Connect – user and non-user comments**

- I come on the bus, I have shopping support from the day centre
- I would like to be part of the hub and community on supporting recovering addicts and mental health due to my own needs and experiences
- love Bridport Connect, all the staff here are lovely
- I would enjoy going out into Bridport more, we usually stay in the centre
- I rely on the centre for my personal care, medicine also my meal.
- I need an hour rest after my meal and medicine given which could affect what activities are happening in the afternoon.
- I can't rely on public transport as there might not have wheelchair space and the timings of the buses.
- I do at times get left out when others can go in staff cars and I can't as there no direct transport for me or visiting other places that I might like to go.
- I rely on the day centre as I can mix with people or my 1-1 take me out for a walk, depending on the weather.

## 7.2.6 Data Summary

Although respondent numbers for Bridport Connect are small (7), the feedback is highly encouraging. All respondents expressed interest in the proposed alternative options, with two choosing the Bridport community activity, one selecting other local spokes, and one saying “maybe,” showing conditional interest depending on activities offered. Notably, no respondents selected ‘No’, suggesting that all participants are open to engaging with the new model.

Views on the proposed offer were strongly positive. Of the three respondents, two strongly agreed, showing clear support for the proposal, while one selected “don’t know,” indicating a need for more information. No respondents expressed disagreement or neutrality, suggesting that with clearer communication, full support is achievable.

## 8. North Dorset

### 8.1 Blandford

The proposal was for the relocation of the day opportunity currently known as Blandford Connect to a smaller building more suited to the number of attendees.

During the consultation we received rich and fruitful feedback from the face-to-face session, a 2511 signature UK wide petition which included feedback from a wide range of people that included people who use the Blandford connect service and other interested parties across the UK, and a number of emails and other correspondence. People are passionate about the building that Blandford Connect operates from.

#### 8.1.1 What people told us is working well

Feedback highlighted three key strengths: good facilities, strong community value, and a range of supportive services and activities.

##### 1. Facilities & Infrastructure

- Current building is purpose built and serviceable.
- Café on-site
- Allotment and garden available
- Convenient bus stops directly outside.
- Proximity to town (10 minutes away)

##### 2. Community Engagement & Longevity

- Strong community use of the building
- Recognised as a community asset
- Long-term attendance by some individuals (over 20 years)

### **3. Services & Activities**

- Provision of Meals on Wheels
- CMHT-led cooking and gardening sessions at centre.
- Hosting student placements

#### **8.1.2 What people told us is not working well**

Feedback highlighted three key issues: underused facilities, limited access and awareness especially in Blandford and ongoing system-level challenges.

##### **1. Underutilisation of Resources**

- Building is underused, especially out of hours.
- Shortage of community activities
- Lack of care staff to support engagement

##### **2. Access & Awareness**

- No services available in Blandford
- Limited awareness of existing services (e.g. Blandford Connect)
- Individual isn't aware what is on offer locally for daughter to access.

##### **3. Systemic & Structural Challenges**

- Earlier initiatives have not been successful (POPs, Wayfinders, care navigators, community connectors, social prescribers, link workers)
- Concerns about the cost of the proposed hub & spoke model.
- Direct Payments

#### **8.1.3 Opportunities people told us we could develop**

Feedback highlighted opportunities to involve carers and users more, make better use of the space, and raise awareness of what's available and how to access it.

##### **1. Inclusive Engagement**

- Involve carers and users at every stage.
- Improve support for carers.
- Special schools and other groups could feed into service.

##### **2. Better Use of Space & Time**

- Expand use of the garden and café.
- Host evening and weekend activities.
- Improve building accessibility.

##### **3. Improved Awareness & Integration**

- Strengthen links with Children's Services
- Better promotion of service
- Improved information, advice, and guidance (IAG)
- Build on services like Meals on Wheels

### 8.1.4 Potential solutions

People suggested opening the centre to other groups to generate income, offering more varied activities, and encouraging support from carers, volunteers, and smaller community groups.

#### 1. Generating Income & Expanding Activities

- Open centre up to other groups and organisations to generate rental income (e.g. nail service, NHS Dorset Diabetic Eye Screening, party/event hire)
- Host sessions like cooking clubs or cinema events.
- Introduce varied activities such as animal visits, fitness classes, and drama clubs.

#### 2. Supporting Carers, Volunteers and other groups

- Carers support group meetings.
- Encourage volunteers to support with tasks like garden upkeep.
- Support for smaller activities / groups.

### 8.1.5 Listening and responding to proposed solutions

The response to the consultation provided us with a valuable insight into how the building is being used and could be better used.

We are a listening Local authority and therefore there are further considerations to make in light of the consultation response. We are exploring a number of potential opportunities including linking with Children's Directorate, the Friends of Blandford Connect or a partnership to include a Community Hub, Family Hub and a community café.

### 8.1.6 Supporting Data

#### Q. Is there anything else you would like to tell us about the proposed changes to Blandford Connect?

Open text comments include both online and easy read responses.

#### Blandford Connect – Users comments

- It is a community hub.
- Social interaction so important
- Local services (in Blandford) are essential.
- Blandford is accessible by public transport.
- Centre provides important stability
- Transport to Sturminster/other centres is an issue or not possible.
- Better promotion of the centre with more agencies involved would increase usage.
- viability of new building.
- There are other ways centre could increase funds.
- Centre is needed to provide respite.
- Should remain open.

- Growing town with new housing developments.
- Money being priority.
- New building established before moving.
- Centre provides supported employment.
- Blandford a more suitable hub.
- DC own current building.
- Gardens are calming for those that may not have access.
- Centre is ideal for clients for community events.
- Centre already does what spokes model is proposing.
- What will happen to meals on wheels?

### **Blandford Connect – non-users comments**

- Day centre needed in Blandford.
- Day centres needed to tackle social isolation.
- Utilise the space.
- Sturminster is too far.
- Unreliable public transport.
- Blandford lacks services/needs more due to surplus housing.
- Public transport is reliable.
- The disabled don't deal well with change/slow changes need to be made.
- Blandford needs more advertisement.
- Day centres need to be accessible.
- Create a map of current day centres.
- Shrink and maintain the space.
- There is a lack of parking on the site.
- Closing will add more pressure on NHS.

### **8.1.7 Data Summary**

The Blandford Connect consultation has provided a clear picture of what people value and how we can build on these strengths to shape the future. The feedback confirms that Blandford Connect is seen as a vital community hub, offering social interaction, stability, and respite—services that are essential for wellbeing and inclusion. This strong attachment is reflected in the data: 57.1% of current users and 55.6% of carers prefer to stay with the existing service, underlining its importance to those who rely on it most.

While willingness to move is limited, there is emerging openness to new opportunities. Up to 28.6% of users and 26.7% of potential users indicated they might consider attending an alternative hub or spoke if activities meet their needs. Interest in a Blandford Community Activity spoke was also noted among 22.2% of carers and 14.3% of users, suggesting scope for a blended model that retains local access while introducing new options.

Respondents shared constructive ideas for development, including opening the centre to other groups to generate income, hosting community events, and offering more varied activities such as cooking clubs, fitness classes, and animal visits.

There was strong support for involving carers, volunteers, and local organisations to create a more inclusive and sustainable service. These suggestions align with the community's aspiration for more services, particularly given Blandford's growth and the need to tackle social isolation.

## **8.2 Stour Connect, Sturminster Newton**

The proposal was for the development of Stour Connect to become the North Dorset Hub.

People were uncertain about the proposal and there was some reluctance from respondents to attending the proposed hub.

Face-to-face feedback was fruitful, initially centring on a lack of activities currently being delivered at Stour Connect. Attendees shared great insight into ways the day opportunity could be enhanced. These included working with local schools and inviting other partners into the building to explore the best use of the space in partnership with the local community.

### **8.2.1 What are people telling us is working well?**

- Life skills training can be delivered.
- Day centre is a place for people to meet their friends.

### **8.2.2 What people are telling us is not working well**

Participants highlighted a lack of services, staffing, and transport, along with concerns about increased pressure on carers and unclear support in the proposed model.

#### **1. Limited Access & Opportunities**

- Lack of transport options and travel training
- Few work experience and respite options.
- No staff available in the evenings
- Charities closing
- Overall lack of services

#### **2. Challenges with the Proposed Model**

- High setup costs for VCSE groups and 1:1 support in proposed model
- Proposed model places more responsibility on carers to arrange / source / access services.
- Uncertainty around Social Worker approval for activities

#### **3. Gaps in Support & Information**

- No named Social Workers
- Direct Payments are challenging.
- Lack of information

### **8.2.3 Opportunities people told us we could develop**

Participants identified opportunities to better support young people and promote independence.

### **1. Skill Development**

- Focus on developing independence skills.
- Provide age-appropriate activities.

### **2. Expanded Holiday Provision**

- Develop connections with Yew stock School
- Develop range of activities during school / college holidays.

### **3. Better Information Access**

- Create a central point for information, advice, and guidance (IAG)

#### **8.2.4 Potential solutions**

- Better use of rooms
- Use flat / apartment linked to the building for developing independent life skills.

#### **8.2.5 Listening and responding to proposed solutions**

Peoples reflected that the current service could be enhanced to make full use of the Stour Connect building. Development of the proposed Community Hub would support the development of the service to include better partnership working, better use of rooms and as well as an enhanced Information and Advice offer.

The Stour Connect consultation provided a mixed picture of the current service and peoples aspirations for the future. Considering all the feedback received the proposal for the development of Stour Connect as the North Dorset Hub we propose to continue with the development of Stour Connect to become a Hub for North Dorset working with the Friends of Stour Connect and the local community.

#### **8.2.6 Supporting data**

### **Q. Is there anything else you would like to tell us about the proposed changes to Stour Connect?**

Open text comments include both online and easy read responses.

#### **Stour Connect – user comments**

- Access to transport, financially.
- Importance of staff, not volunteers.
- Not sure what the changes will be.
- Has facilities, but little else.
- Would not be able to use another centre.
- Concern for this being the hub.
- Building is great for current users.
- Importance of own space for users with dementia.
- Change can cause a lot of stress.

## Stour Connect – non-user comments

- Travel an issue/not feasible for all.
- Blandford more appropriate hub.
- Not suited to be the hub.
- Other.
- Provide transport.
- One building cannot provide for all.
- Increase in numbers would disturb calm environment.
- Current system works.

### 8.2.7 Data Summary

Feedback and data from the consultation on the proposal for Stour Connect to become the North Dorset Hub highlights several encouraging signs and opportunities for engagement. While many respondents indicated they would not attend the hub of which, 61.1% were users, 62.5% were care givers, and 60.7% of others, the responses also show a need for flexibility.

A notable proportion expressed conditional interest in attendance, with 16.7% of users, 8.3% of care givers, and 10.7% of others saying attendance would depend on the activities offered. Among current service users, 29.2% of care givers and 16.7% of users stated they would attend, showing a foundation of support. Positive feedback about staff reinforces this strength: *“Please keep the current staff because they are brilliant at providing good quality care.”*

For those who said “No” to attending the hub, interest in alternative local activities through community spokes is clear.

Almost half of users (44.4%) and one-third of care givers (33.3%) expressed willingness to attend community spokes, with others (25%) and those considering using (20%) also showing interest. Additionally, 20–33% across all groups selected “Maybe – it will depend on the activities offered,” suggesting that well-designed, engaging activities could significantly increase participation.

Views on the proposed offer are mixed but include positive signals. Among current users, 30.8% agreed or strongly agreed with the proposal, and 15.4% were neutral, indicating openness to further discussion. Care givers showed similar patterns, with 21.7% agreeing and 21.7% neutral. Among those considering using the service, 33.3% were neutral, highlighting potential for engagement. While some respondents expressed a preference for alternative locations, such as Blandford, these comments provide useful insight for planning.

### 8.2.8 Summary

Overall, the findings reveal strong appreciation for existing staff, conditional interest in both the hub and community spokes, and a significant proportion of neutral responses that suggest room for dialogue and clarity. Community spokes present a promising alternative for those hesitant about the hub, and the emphasis on activities offers a clear opportunity to shape services that meet local needs.

## 8.3 Sherborne Connect

The proposal was for Sherborne Connect to close with alternative day opportunities being developed in Sherborne.

During the consultation we received meaningful feedback from the surveys and during the face-to-face sessions, people were unsure about moving to an alternative day opportunity in the local area. People are passionate about the Sherborne Connect service although not so wedded to the current building,

### 8.3.1 What people are telling us is working well

Participants shared examples of how the centre supports carers and creates a safe, helpful environment.

#### 1. Carer Support & Respite

- Coffee mornings and short stays allow carers time for themselves.
- Staff provide helpful advice and support to carers.

#### 2. Safe & Understanding Environment

- The centre is a prime example of using a 'safe space' that's local and where the staff understood user needs and the needs of the carer.

#### 3. Openness to Change

- Open to change if support is in place.

### 8.3.2 What people are telling us is not working well

- Knowing what is available in the local area (e.g. local groups)
- Transport issues
- Public spaces for people with incontinence
- Less groups since Covid

### 8.3.3 Opportunities people are telling us we could develop

Themes highlight opportunities to better use Children's & Families Hubs by making use of local assets, rethinking spaces and relationships, expanding learning and activities, and improving promotion.

#### 1. Using Local Services & Assets

- Using Children's & Families Hubs
- Use local services & assets.
- Letting rooms for other local organisations / charities (e.g. youth groups, peer groups)
- Support to find buildings that meet needs.

#### 2. Rethinking Options, Spaces & Trusted People

- Think different about options, spaces and trusted people.

### 3. Learning & Activities

- Adult learning opportunities
- More day trips
- Evening & weekend activities

### 4. Promotion & Awareness

- Better promotion (using more inviting language)

#### 8.3.4 Potential solutions

- Use day centre and as youth centre or club in the evenings.

#### 8.3.5 Listening and responding to proposed solutions

The proposal for Sherborne Connect generated valuable feedback that is shaping our approach to future services for Sherborne. We are committed to listening to the community and responding to what matters most. We will continue to work with the local community to find a more suitable locally based building that can meet the requirements of the Sherborne Community Activity.

#### 8.3.6 Supporting data

#### Q. Is there anything else you would like to tell us about the proposed changes to Sherborne Connect?

Open text comments include both online and easy read responses.

#### Sherborne Connect - user comments

- Positive comments on current experience.
- Do not want centre to close.
- Going to other centres not possible.
- Day centres tackle social isolation.
- Sherborne Connect a suitable hub/capable of more.
- Need appropriate transport to attend elsewhere.
- Other.
- Have replacement in place before closing.
- Lack of provision elsewhere.
- Depends on what is offered elsewhere.
- Keep the same staff.
- General worries about closing.
- Essential to take pressure off family/carers.

### Sherborne Connect – non-user comments

- Sherborne is needed.
- Ageing population.
- Essential to take pressure off family/carer.
- Sherborne provides excellent care.
- Going elsewhere is not possible/too far.
- Travel is difficult.
- Sherborne is inaccessible.
- Sherborne is not fit for purpose.
- Sherborne is fit for purpose.
- Day centre tackles social isolation.

#### 8.3.7 Data summary

When asked if they would consider attending a different hub or spoke should Sherborne Connect close, responses varied depending on current attendance or activities. Among those actively using the service, there is openness to alternatives: 31.6% of users and 20% of care givers expressed interest in local community activities, while 21.1% of users and 20% of care givers said “Maybe,” indicating a need for flexibility in the service provision.

Interest in the North Dorset Hub was also present, with 10.5% of users and 16% of care givers selecting this option. While the combined Hub and Spoke, model had limited appeal among these groups, it was chosen by 5.3% of users and 8% of care givers, showing some potential for future engagement.

Respondents not currently engaged with Sherborne Connect were more hesitant, with 80% of those considering using the service and 76.9% of others telling us they would not attend a different hub or spoke. However, 20% of those considering using the service expressed interest in the combined Hub and Spoke model, suggesting an opportunity to build awareness and confidence in new approaches.

Feedback on the proposed offer for Sherborne Connect reflects strong opinions but also areas for dialogue. Among users, 40% strongly disagreed, while 20% were neutral and 20% were unsure, showing that clarity and communication will be key.

A small proportion expressed agreement (13.4% of users and 4.8% of care givers strongly agreed), and neutrality among some groups indicates scope for engagement. While dissatisfaction was higher among care givers (66.7% strongly disagreed) and those considering using the service (80% strongly disagreed), these insights provide a clear direction for improvement.

Overall, this feedback reinforces the importance of co-designing services with the community. We are listening and responding by exploring more varied activities, considering partnerships, and ensuring that future hubs and spokes reflect local priorities. The interest in community activities and conditional openness to

alternatives demonstrates that, with the right offer, there is potential to create inclusive, flexible services that work more efficiently and sustainably.

## 8.4 Shaftesbury

The proposal was for the Shaftesbury Plus day opportunity to close and for an increase in community activities in Shaftesbury. The development of additional places, groups and individuals offer offering activities to meet local people's needs.

During the consultation we received fruitful feedback from the face-to-face sessions as well as 63 written responses and a number of emails. The 10 people funded by the Council indicating their preference would be to continue attending a day opportunity in its current location although people did recognise the need to reduce the size of the rooms occupied due to the number of attendees.

### 8.4.1 What people are telling us is working well

Participants highlighted the value of practical support, accessible facilities, and strong emotional and social benefits.

#### 1. Practical Support

- Hot meal provision
- Outreach for people in their own homes
- Enables carers to work and have respite.

#### 2. Accessibility & Location

- Wheelchair accessible
- Location
- Good stepping stone to residential care
- Positive response to idea of a centralised hub

#### 3. Social & Emotional Value

- Spending time with others
- Acts as a lifeline
- Crisis prevention

### 8.4.2 What people are telling us is not working well

Feedback raised concerns about access, clarity, and sustainability of services.

#### 1. Access Issues

- No bus transport
- Higher criteria for accessing services.
- Lack of referrals

#### 2. Information & Clarity

- Need better information and advice.
- Not enough examples of the proposed model

### **3. Sustainability & Support**

- Volunteers can't be relied on to run services.
- Carers not considered

#### **8.4.3 Opportunities people are telling us we could develop**

- Reduce space used by negotiating with Trinity Centre
- Offer activities in the evenings & weekends.

#### **8.4.4 Potential solutions**

- Link in with other organisations (e.g. In Jolly Good Company / Royal British Legion / Melody Remembers / Gillingham Dementia Friends / Read Easy)
- Use smaller spaces.

#### **8.4.5 Listening and responding to proposed solutions**

The response to the consultation offered a valuable insight into service being delivered and the space it is delivered within. We propose to explore the opportunity to better use space within the Trinity Centre to deliver the day service that better meets the needs of the current attendees as well seek suitable provision for young adults.

#### **8.4.6 Supporting data**

### **Q. Is there anything else you would like to tell us about the proposed changes to Shaftesbury Plus?**

Open text comments include both online and easy read responses.

#### **Shaftesbury Plus – user comments**

- Travel is difficult/time consuming.
- Change is difficult on people with disabilities.
- Day centre provides enjoyment.
- Shaftesbury is needed.
- Day centres take pressure off family/carers.
- Attendance figured are misquoted.
- Staff are skilled.
- Day centres tackle social isolation.
- Too many people would put pressure on the day centre.
- Accessibility is good.
- Parking at the centre can be difficult.
- Utilise vacant buildings.
- Public transport is unreliable.

### Shaftesbury Plus – non-user comments

- There is need in Shaftesbury.
- Day centres tackle social isolation.
- Public transport is unreliable/expensive.
- Travel is time consuming and difficult.
- Shaftesbury has an ageing population.
- There is need in Gillingham.
- Shrink the space.
- The day centre provides enjoyment.
- Day centre is in a perfect location.

#### 8.4.7 Data summary

Feedback on the future of Shaftesbury Plus and the potential for attending alternative hubs or spokes reveals both challenges and opportunities for service development. While many respondents expressed reluctance to change 50% of users, 52.4% of care givers, and 60% of both those considering using the service and the 'other' group indicated they would not attend a different hub or spoke, shows there are encouraging signs of flexibility in future development to meet varied community needs.

The option "*Maybe – it will depend on the activities offered*" attracted significant interest, particularly among those considering using the service (40%), followed by users (33.3%), the 'other' group (16%), and care givers (14.3%). This suggests that the type and quality of activities could play a key role in influencing future engagement.

Although interest in specific alternative services is limited, it is present and provides a foundation for development. For example, 8.3% of users and 9.5% of care givers expressed interest in attending the North Dorset Hub, with 4% of the 'other' group also showing interest.

Similarly, 9.5% of care givers indicated interest in local community activities (spokes), and a small proportion of respondents, 9.5% of care givers and 8% of the 'other' group expressed interest in both the hub and spokes. There is also some demand indicated for specialist services offering complex support, with 8.3% of users, 4.8% of care givers, and 8% of the 'other' group selecting this option.

When asked about the proposed offer for Shaftesbury Plus, responses indicate dissatisfaction but also highlight opportunities for clearer communication and engagement. While a majority of all groups disagreed or strongly disagreed—82.4% of care givers, 63.6% of users, and 59.1% of the 'other' group, the data shows areas of openness. Among those considering using the service, 20% selected "*neither agree nor disagree*," and 18.2% of both users and the 'other' group chose "*don't know*."

These neutral and uncertain responses suggest that clearer information and tailored engagement could positively influence perceptions. Notably, 9.1% of users strongly agreed with the proposal, providing a small but important base of support.

### **8.5.8 Overall summary**

While reluctance to change is evident, the findings highlight several positives: conditional interest in alternative hubs and spokes, openness to change based on activities offered, and opportunities to improve clarity around proposals through future co-design. These insights provide a solid foundation for shaping services that are responsive, engaging, and aligned with community needs.

## **9. Weymouth & Portland**

### **9.1 Weymouth Connect**

The proposal was for the day opportunity known as Weymouth Connect to become Weymouth and Portland Community Hub.

During the consultation we received a wealth of feedback from the face-to-face sessions with most respondents stating that they would be happy to attend the Weymouth and Portland Community Hub.

#### **9.1.1 What are people telling us is working well?**

Participants appreciate the wide range of engaging activities, strong community links, support for independent living, access to health services, and the dedication of staff.

#### **1. Activities & Engagement**

Activities at the centre incl. gardening, cooking, arts & crafts, games, music, quizzes, visiting nail bar, exercising. Theme days - beach theme day in June – have ice-cream van and Punch & Judy attending

- Swimming trips
- Lunch club
- Respite
- Good mixture of ages

#### **2. Community Access & Support**

- Bus stop at the top of the road – handy for community activities
- Support to access activities in the community i.e. coffee morning at the church, library, 'Speak Out' group.

#### **3. Independent Living & Facilities**

- Flat upstairs is used for developing independent living skills.
- 3 course meals available each day, individuals can make suggestions for menus at regular speaking out meetings.

#### **4. Health & Wellbeing Services**

- Specsavers & chiropody come into the centre
- District nurse come into the centre
- Wellness clinic based in the centre
- O/T present to assess and offer equipment.

#### **5. Staff & Relationships**

- Wonderful staff

#### **9.1.2 What people are telling us is not working well**

- Transport issues
- More self-funders attending Dementia service than Council funded.

#### **9.1.3 Opportunities people told us we could develop**

- Weekend & evening provision.
- Individuals with Dementia attend on average twice a week.
- No waiting list for Dementia service, offer taster sessions.

#### **9.1.4 Potential solutions**

- No comments were received on potential solutions.

#### **9.1.5 Listening and responding to proposed solutions**

We propose to continue with the development of the Weymouth and Portland Community Hub.

#### **9.1.6 Supporting data**

#### **Q. Is there anything else you would like to tell us about the proposed changes to Weymouth Connect?**

Open text comments include both online and easy read responses. Due to the low number of responses, the feedback has been presented verbatim.

#### **Weymouth Connect – user and non-user Comments**

- I don't want to travel too far.
- Weymouth Connect supplies a much-needed service for people mainly aged from 60.
- The service needs to be age related - i.e. bingo, singing, going out for short walks - not so many quizzes!!
- Looked around with my carer and didn't like it. Old and not much there
- I need help with things sometimes.
- Like to be independent and catch the bus here (to the day centre) and back.
- I walk to the Day Centre with a carer I have a bus pass.

### **9.1.7 Data Summary**

Although respondent numbers for Weymouth Connect are small (7), the findings show strong interest in the proposed Weymouth and Portland Hub. Over half (57.1%) said they would attend, indicating a good level of support for the new model. A further 14.3% said “maybe” and another 14.3% selected “other,” suggesting some openness or alternative preferences. Only 14.3% said they would not attend, meaning most respondents are at least willing to consider the hub.

Among those not planning to attend (6), half (50%) would consider local community activities (spokes) and 14.3% said “maybe,” highlighting an opportunity to engage this group through appealing local options. While 33.3% said “no,” the conditional interest suggests that activity choice will be key.

Feedback on the proposed offer was mixed but shows potential. 28.6% strongly agreed, indicating clear support. Another 28.6% were neutral and 14.3% disagreed, suggesting that many respondents may need more detail on the proposal. Overall, these results point to opportunities to strengthen engagement through clearer communication and tailored activities.

## **9.2 Ridgeway Plus**

The proposal is for Ridgeway Plus to become the Ridgeway Specialist Hub. The proposal is to enhance the current service. Respondents had the opportunity to provide any comments regarding the proposal.

### **9.2.1 What people told us is working well**

- We do not want anything to change now or in the future.
- the Ridgeway has excellent planning for activities.
- service users get out and about several times a week.

### **9.2.2 What people are telling us is not working well**

Participants raised concerns about transport costs and underused bus resources, as well as limited space within the building to accommodate additional groups.

#### **1. Transport & Cost**

- Transport
- Taxis expensive
- Why can't the buses be used – sat outside all day?

#### **2. Space & Capacity**

- Concerned that the whole building is already being used – limited space for extra groups.

### **9.2.3 Opportunities people are telling us we could develop**

Participants see opportunities to improve transport through collaboration, extend hub use to evenings and weekends, support Carers, and offer access to hydrotherapy and physiotherapy.

## **1. Transport & Collaboration**

- Communities and providers could work together and share transport/collaborate to fund transport.

## **2. Extended Use of Hubs**

- Positive if evenings and weekends can be used.
- Use hubs for Carers – provide IAG, support groups.

### 3. Health & Wellbeing Services

- Access to hydrotherapy and physiotherapy

#### 9.2.4 Potential solutions

- Care Dorset are paying a lot to fund transport throughout the day, could they look at options to fund the bus licences instead of this. Could save money both sides.
- NHS groups could be part of the hub and use some of the space.

#### 9.2.5 Listening and responding to proposed solutions

The response to the consultation concluded that people felt that the Ridgeway was a valuable resource which would be enhanced if the centre is retained and developed as the Ridgeway Specialist Hub.

#### 9.2.6 Supporting data

### Q. Is there anything else you would like to tell us about the proposed changes to Ridgeway Plus?

Open text comments include both online and easy read responses. Due to the low number of responses, the feedback has been presented verbatim.

#### Ridgeway Plus – user and non-user comments

- Never heard of it.
- My mother is a registered Alzheimer's patient on Portland in need of day activities. Her carers and I are looking for social things she can do, but we don't see info about this day centre.
- It is excellent and meets all of our needs.
- We do not want anything to change now or in the future!
- Went here for festival.
- I understand the Ridgeway has excellent planning for activities with service users getting out and about several times a week.
- All staff have their cars insured to take out service users and the staffing ratio must be excellent to facilitate all these outing.
- Please could Dorchester Connect have the same opportunities and planned outings each week (including swimming) that Ridgeway has.
- It is not fair for one day centre to be so well run with so many opportunities and others not.

## 10. East Dorset

### 10.1 Ferndown Plus

The proposal was for Ferndown Plus to close and for the development of other community activities in the Ferndown area.

During the consultation we received a number of communications, insightful feedback at our Face-to-Face session, a 256-signature petition and a number of emails and correspondence. People were passionate about the Ferndown Plus service.

#### 10.1.1 What are people telling us is working well?

Participants appreciate the Hubs for offering accessible, well-located spaces that host valued activities, provide essential respite, and are staffed by caring and gifted individuals.

##### 1. Use of Space & Activities

- COPD club uses the space – keeps people away from Drs
- Is a Hub of activity for many elderly residents

##### 2. Accessibility & Location

- Ferndown is accessible, served by multiple bus routes
- Ferndown has multiple facilities on doorstep – Tesco, buses, health centre (DN's based there), library, ASC local office
- Parking available

##### 3. Support & Care

- Ferndown provides essential respite for Carers & families
- Residents find warmth, care and comfort hosted by tremendously caring and gifted staff

#### 10.1.2 What people are telling us is not working well

People raised concerns about limited access to services, lack of visibility and engagement opportunities, and ongoing transport challenges.

##### 1. Access & Availability

- Building under utilised
- Individuals who want to attend are told there are no places
- People being blocked coming in

##### 2. Visibility & Engagement

- Lack of visibility of this service
- No day trips offered

##### 3. Transport & Accessibility

- Transport

#### 10.1.3 Opportunities people are telling us we could develop

Participants see opportunities to better utilise Ferndown as a central hub, expand partnerships with care homes and NHS services, offer more clubs, and improve promotion.

### **1. Strategic Location & Use of Space**

- Why the hub at Verwood and not Ferndown?
- Use Ferndown as the East Dorset hub? It's bigger, more accessible, can be utilised much more. More older people in Ferndown than Verwood.

### **2. Collaboration & Partnerships**

- Work with local residential care homes
- Work with NHS and other community groups to utilise the space

### **3. Services & Activities**

- Run more clubs
- More NHS services could be available

### **4. Promotion & Awareness**

- Better promotion of service

#### **10.1.4 Potential solutions**

- Activities that are more Dementia friendly
- Work with other providers (e.g. Prama)
- Rental income from groups – building could pay for itself

#### **10.1.5 Listening and responding to proposed solutions**

The response to the consultation provided a valuable insight to how the building is used and could be better used.

On digesting the feedback from respondents, we are exploring opportunities that include linking with Children's Directorate, and local community organisations to enable the continued delivery of the Ferndown Plus as a Community Activity from the same building.

#### **10.1.6 Supporting data**

#### **Is there anything else you would like to tell us about the proposed changes to Ferndown Plus?**

Open text comments include both online and easy read responses. Due to the low number of responses, the feedback has been presented verbatim.

#### **Ferndown Plus – user and non-user comments**

- Ferndown is accessible
- Keep carers/family in mind (respite)
- Keep Ferndown

- The statement spreads misinformation/stats are wrong
- Ferndown has an ageing population
- Change is worrying for dementia/disability
- Utilise the building for other services
- Some people cannot commute/it's difficult
- Good quality staff
- I am worried about this change

### **10.1.7 Data summary**

Although the sample sizes were small, the responses (46) provide useful insight. When asked if they would attend a different hub or spoke if Ferndown Plus closes, just over half (53.8%) said they would not, suggesting strong attachment to the current service or barriers to alternatives. However, 26.9% said “maybe,” depending on activities offered, and 15.4% expressed interest in the Ferndown community activity, showing some openness to change.

Only 3.8% would consider a specialist service, and there was no interest in the East Dorset Hub or other local spokes.

Regarding the proposed offer for Ferndown Plus, most respondents (85%) strongly disagreed, indicating the proposal does not currently meet expectations, this indicates a need for further codesign, while 10% were neutral and 5% unsure, suggesting opportunities to provide more clarity and adapt the offer to better reflect people’s needs.

## **10.2 Verwood Connect**

The proposal was for the development of day opportunity currently known as Verwood Connect to become the East Dorset Community Hub.

The number of responses to the proposals for Verwood Connect to become the Verwood Community Hub was low however the comments received during the face-to-face session were valuable.

### **10.2.1 Face to face Comments**

“So long as Verwood Connect can still meets those with complex needs and offer variety of activities, I think the change probably isn't too bad”.

“Agree to keep specialist service at Verwood but am unsure if a mixture of services will cause greater anxiety to the current attendees (due to their special needs) It could become too busy for both attendees & staff to manage. The building was specifically built to cater for Learning Disabilities so has been perfect to provide the needs my husband needs. It gives me confidence that he is in the best & safest care whilst I am working”.

### 10.2.2 What people are telling us is working well

- Hub could work well. Name might need consideration
- Occupational therapy (OT) is able to be onsite

### 10.2.3 What people are telling us is not working well

- Verwood is difficult to access from Ferndown

### 10.2.4 What are the opportunities people are telling us we could develop?

- Building is big enough to include NHS services.

### 10.2.5 Potential solutions

No potential solutions were put forward however people expressed concern around the possible loss of the specialist provision currently provided at Verwood Connect

### 10.2.6 Listening and responding to proposed solutions

The response to the consultation provided valuable information particularly around the difficulties with transport links between Ferndown and Verwood. There was also concern around the possible loss of specialist service currently provided at the centre. We are reconsidering our proposal and recommend that Verwood Connect be considered as a Specialist Community Hub for the east of the County building on the specialist service already provided.

### 10.2.7 Supporting data

#### Q. Is there anything else you would like to tell us about the proposed changes to Verwood Connect?

Open text comments include both online and easy read responses.

Due to the small number of comments, the feedback is listed below verbatim.

#### Verwood Connect – user and non-user comments

- So long as Verwood Connect can still meet those with complex needs and offer variety of activities, I think the change probably isn't too bad.
- Not in agreement with it  
Agree to maintain specialist service at Verwood but am unsure if a mixture of services will cause greater anxiety to the current attendees (due to their special needs). It could become too busy for both attendees & staff to manage.
- The building was specifically built to cater for Learning Disabilities so has been perfect to provide the needs my husband requires. It gives me confidence that he is in the best & safest care whilst I am working.
- Catchment area Verwood/Ferndown

### 10.2.8 Data Summary

Although the number of responses for Verwood Connect is small (23), the data provides useful insight into future engagement and codesign opportunities. When asked if they would attend the East Dorset Hub if Verwood Connect transitions, 22.2% said 'yes' and 33.3% said 'maybe', showing that over half of respondents are open to the idea, particularly if activities meet their interests.

While 44.4% said 'no', further questions revealed that among those not planning to attend, half (50%) would consider local community activities depending on what is offered, suggesting flexibility and the importance of tailoring options. A third (33.3%) were unsure, indicating an opportunity to raise awareness of what is available.

Feedback on the proposed offer for Verwood Connect shows room for improvement but also potential. While 25% strongly disagreed and 12.5% disagreed, a quarter (25%) were neutral and 37.5% selected 'don't know', highlighting that clearer communication and more detail could help convert uncertainty into engagement.

## **11. Purbeck**

### **11.1 Purbeck Connect**

The proposal was for Purbeck Connect to become the Purbeck Community Hub. The number of responses received to the consultation were low with only 17 people in total responding.

Of the responses received the majority were either in favour of or would consider attending a Purbeck Community Hub this was supported by the Face-to-Face feedback with the majority of people supporting the proposal for the development of the Purbeck Community Hub.

#### **11.1.1 What people are telling us is working well**

Participants value the day centre's accessible location, hot meal provision, existing NHS partnerships, and strong relationships with care staff.

##### **1. Accessibility & Location**

- Close to town
- Accessibility is suitable.

##### **2. Food & Facilities**

- Ability to have a hot meal.
- Anglebury Court kitchen – providing hot meals.
- Want to use swimming facilities.

##### **3. Partnerships & Relationships**

- Already working with NHS services
- Good relationship with care staff

#### **11.1.2 What people are telling us is not working well**

Feedback highlighted long-standing transport issues, underused facilities, staffing challenges, and a lack of activities and social opportunities, particularly in Wareham and at the Purbeck site.

### **1. Transport & Accessibility**

- Transport has been an issue for the last 20 years
- Current activities rely on staff cars – barrier for people with mobility needs, wheelchairs
- Purbeck site not accessible, not safe for pedestrians, parking

### **2. Use of Space & Facilities**

- Building is not used to its full potential. Upstairs not used at all
- No access to swimming
- No outdoor activities now

### **3. Staffing & Support**

- Recruitment is a challenge in this area. Not enough staff.
- Mixing complexities, staffing ratios, 1:1, dealing with behaviours with this model. Noise & age mix.
- No Carers involvement / visits to Purbeck Connect

### **4. Activities & Social Opportunities**

- Have asked for more things to do.
- Nothing in Wareham to enable me to have a social life.

#### **11.1.3 Opportunities people are telling us we could develop**

Participants see opportunities to adapt the space for growing demand, involve Carers more flexibly, and make better use of facilities as a shared community asset.

#### **1. Growing Demand & Inclusion**

- A lot more people are coming through transitions.
- Involve Carers
- Need flexibility for Carers support – appointments / ad hoc.

#### **2. Use of Space & Facilities**

- Use the kitchen for catering / baking sessions
- Building configuration could be set up to support this
- Raised beds / woodwork

#### **3. Community Value**

- Community asset 'we all can use'

#### **11.1.4 Potential solutions**

- Improved transport could enable service to develop and offer more.
- Change our licence for the transport and use it.



### 11.1.5 Listening and responding to proposed solutions

The response to the consultation provided us with valuable insight into how the building is being used and could be better used.

We are a listening authority and therefore we plan to proceed with our proposal for to develop Purbeck Connect as a Community Hub. There are conversations with the local community and possible partner organisations that will take place in order to progress this proposal.

Open text comments include both online and easy read responses. Due to the low number of responses, the feedback is presented verbatim. However, feedback on the Purbeck Connect proposed changes reveals a few minimal recurring themes.

Some respondents expressed strong support for the existing Wareham Centre, stating there is nothing wrong with it (2) and commending the quality of its staff (2). Others raised concerns about the spread of misinformation related to the proposal (2). Despite these concerns, there is also a sense of openness among some individuals who are willing to try the proposed changes (2).

### 11.1.6 Supporting data

#### **Q. Is there anything else you would like to tell us about the proposed changes to Purbeck Connect?**

Open text comments include both online and easy read responses. Due to the low number of responses, the feedback is presented verbatim.

#### **Purbeck Connect – user and non-user comments**

- Don't know, what are the changes?
- I feel it is a cost saving exercise, there is nothing wrong with the present building and service at Wareham Plus.
- The staff are excellent.
- Why change something that works?
- I DONT AGREE that WAREHAM PLUS is not suitable.
- It is a spacious building and has great facilities for local elderly folk.
- I'm sad that this has been messed about with and being threatened
- This is a very difficult place to get to if you don't drive.
- There are no connections to town and follow on activities without a long and dangerous walk/wheel, crossing the railway and getting the bus.
- I recognise that the Purbeck Connect building is underutilised but the proposals to close Wareham Plus, a popular, highly regarded and well utilised service with an excellent location does not strike me as a logical conclusion in response to this.
- Whilst Purbeck Connect has a lot of good facilities, there are also significant drawbacks, especially its location, being out of town on an industrial estate with a long (and hilly) walk to town on poor surfaces for wheelchair use and with poor transport links.

- These drawbacks, which are not easily resolved, cause current staff real challenges in being able to support existing service users to easily access services and activities in the community and does not lend itself to the proposed use as the main hub for the Purbeck area.
- Wareham Plus has a far better location for use as a hub given the proximity to town (including bus stops).
- Surely a hub for the community needs to be located within the community, not on an out-of-town industrial estate (Service users from Purbeck Connect are supported to access town by being driven into town and using the facilities of Wareham Plus as a base to park and use accessible toilet facilities)
- Another service that needs to be properly thought through with regards to these proposals is that Wareham Plus is able to provide a nutritious cooked lunch (utilising the kitchen and staff of Anglebury Court) and this is often the only source of high-quality nutrition we are confident service users are consuming each week. Purbeck Connect do not have the facilities or infrastructure to replicate this.
- There needs to be far greater recognition when planning day opportunities for Purbeck that the provision required by our service users whose needs arise as a result of aging (primarily dementia and frailty) are fundamentally different from those who are younger and whose needs arise primarily due to a learning disability.
- Great progress has been made in developing LD day opportunities and there are now private operators who offer the variety and choice that many LD service users are looking for. This competition has been great for the service users who want this and has led to the decline in use of Purbeck Connect. This is the service that is now under-utilised.
- The service users who still attend Purbeck Connect are, in the most part, a cohort of Learning Disability service users who are older and who find the more traditional day centre provision the best option for them.
- The vast majority of service users could be supported at the Wareham plus site and if doing so would benefit from the additional opportunities to be supported to access services within the town easily and without the need for a vehicle journey that currently needs to take place and is a significant barrier to this.
- Rather than look to consolidate the day centre provision in Wareham to run from Purbeck Connect as the hub, a better option would be to consider Wareham Plus as the location of the hub and consolidate the services from there – especially if the long term objective is to move to a purpose built space as part of the proposed Purbeck Gateway development.
- I would like to try it, and I could pass on to all my very good friends at Wareham, how I would encourage them to try it.
- Happy in Purbeck Connect. Gardening / cooking / computer / workshop
- but need time to think what, or how to say.
- depends on the activities offered
- I work for Wareham Plus and it would not be good for the Dementia People we support

### **11.1.7 Data summary**

Although respondent numbers for Purbeck Connect are small (47), the findings offer encouraging insights. Nearly half (47.1%) said they would attend the Purbeck Hub if the proposed change went ahead, showing strong interest in the hub model. A further 35.3% said “maybe,” indicating many are open to the idea but want more detail on activities. Only 17.6% said “no,” suggesting limited resistance.

Among those not planning to attend, there is still potential for engagement. While 16.7% would consider local community activities and 25% expressed conditional interest, 33.3% were unsure highlighting an opportunity to provide clearer information and promote appealing options.

Feedback on the proposed offer was mixed but points to room for improvement. While 11.1% agreed, 27.8% disagreed or strongly disagreed. Importantly, 22.2% were neutral and 38.9% selected “don’t know,” suggesting that clearer communication and more detail could help convert uncertainty into support.

## **11.2 Wareham Plus**

The proposal for Wareham Plus was to end the current contract and focus on finding support for people in the local area.

During the consultation we received insightful feedback from the face-to-face session from attendees and carers who are passionate about the Wareham Plus service. Supporters felt strongly that current service, meets local needs and provides vital dementia support, respite, and continuity.

### **11.2.1 What people are telling us is working well**

Feedback shows people value the day centre’s central location, accessible facilities, vital services that support independence and safety, strong community links, and the dedication of staff.

#### **1. Accessibility & Location**

- People can walk here.
- Building in a central location, close to town / shops / church / quay / flat access
- There is no problem with parking.

#### **2. Facilities & Services**

- Centre enables individuals to remain at home for longer.
- Safe haven for individuals and their Carers. Centre is a lifeline.
- Building allows safeguarding issues to be discussed.
- Services found upstairs is ideal – can see people within an hour.
- Sitting service invaluable
- Hot lunch provided which is invaluable.
- ASC offices upstairs, sensory room, craft, kitchen

### **3. Community Links & Staff**

- Links to Anglebury Court positive
- Links to community activities from this site – easy and cheap
- Staff are a great asset and help more than they appreciate.

#### **11.2.2 What people are telling us is not working well**

Participants raised concerns about long waiting times, limited transport options for those with mobility needs, and poor visibility and planning around community activities.

##### **1. Access & Waiting Times**

- Waited for 1 year for a place here.
- Waited months for this place.
- Long waiting list

##### **2. Transport & Mobility**

- Wheelchair accessible taxis are limited.

##### **3. Community Engagement & Activity Planning**

- Weather will limit opportunities to access activities in the community.
- Timetabling for access to community activities
- No one knows about it!

#### **11.2.3 Opportunities people are telling us we could develop**

- This centre could be used in the evenings and at weekends.
- Building in a central location

#### **11.2.4 Listening and responding to proposed solutions**

The response to the consultation provided us with invaluable insight as to how the building is used and could be better used.

We are a listening Local Authority and there are further considerations to make in light of the consultation responses, we are exploring the opportunity to work more closely with the Residential Home that shares the same location to better enhance both services.

#### **11.2.5 Supporting data**

**Q. Is there anything else you would like to tell us about the proposed changes to Wareham Plus?**

#### **11.1.6 Supporting data**

**Q. Is there anything else you would like to tell us about the proposed changes to Purbeck Connect?**

Open text comments include both online and easy read responses.

Due to the low number of responses, the feedback has been presented verbatim.

#### **Wareham Plus - user and non-user comments**

- Current service meets current need/no need to change
- Important asset in the community
- Current location is good
- Dedicated staff can't be replaced by volunteers
- Dementia support so important. Only one in the area
- Continuity so important to users
- Provides important respite
- Problems listed are not issues/based on false information
- Travel not feasible for all
- Hot meal provision important
- Spokes not suitable for all
- Service could be expanded
- Consultation information not clear / not clear to users
- Centre allows people to stay at home longer, not in residential homes
- How will people be transported from one activity to the next?
- More people at the centre will create negative atmosphere for some
- What the centre offers not considered
- Purbeck not a suitable alternative

#### **11.2.6 Data summary**

Although respondent numbers are small across groups, the findings provide useful insights and clear identified opportunities. Among current users (9), one-third (33.3%) said “maybe, it will depend on the activities offered,” showing openness to alternatives if the offer is appealing.

A further 44.4% expressed interest in specific options such as the Purbeck Hub, local spokes, or specialist services, indicating varied preferences that could be addressed through a flexible approach.

Caregivers (29) were less open overall, with 44.8% saying “no” and 10.3% “maybe,” but 17.2% confirmed they would attend the Purbeck Hub, suggesting that promoting the benefits of this model could increase engagement. The ‘other’ group showed the greatest potential, with 43.8% saying “maybe” and 12.5% interested in specialist services, highlighting an opportunity to target this segment with tailored information.

Feedback on the proposed offer for Wareham Plus was largely negative, with strong disagreement across most groups. However, a small proportion expressed agreement (4.8% of caregivers and 13.3% of the ‘other’ group), and 9.5% of caregivers selected “don’t know,” suggesting that clearer communication and more detail could help convert uncertainty into support.

## 11.3 Swanage Connect

Dorset Council transferred the building known as Swanage Connect to Swanage and Purbeck Development Trust (SPDT) in 2023.

The proposal was for the day centre currently operated by Care Dorset within the Wellbeing Swanage Hub known as the Focus Centre to become a community activity.

During the consultation we received little feedback on the proposal with people demonstrating a clear desire to continue to attend services in Swanage.

### 11.3.1 What people are telling us is working well

#### 1. Local Accessibility & Safety

- People value having a local service—no need to travel far (e.g., Wareham is seen as too distant).
- Being local feels safer medically and fosters a sense of community.

#### 2. Smaller Group Settings

- Smaller groups are seen as more effective.

#### 3. Respite Opportunities

- The service provides respite.

#### 4. Growth & Development

- There's enthusiasm about seeing the service flourish and expand.
- The hub is already established, and the upcoming café is generating excitement.

### 11.3.2 What people are telling us is not working well

#### 1. Space & Facilities

- Limited space and lack of private areas for sensitive conversations.
- Shared toilets with the public (especially when the café opens).
- Accessible toilets need improvement.
- Restrictions from the Development Trust (e.g. shared facilities).

#### 2. Transport & Accessibility

- Transport is a concern.
- Minibuses are underused and unavailable for service users.

#### 3. Affordability & Service Value

- Rising costs without changes in service make regular use difficult.

#### 4. Referral Pathways & Group Suitability

- Referral imbalance: mostly from GPs, few from Adult Social Care.
- Staff confusion around referral processes.

- Mixed age groups in sessions are not working well.

### 11.3.3 Opportunities people are telling us we could develop

- Café

### 11.3.4 Listening and responding to proposed solutions

The response to the consultation although low in numbers gave a clear message that people living in Swanage want to continue attending services provided in the Swanage area. We propose to continue to explore partnerships with the community, local day opportunities providers and the Focus centre to deliver a Swanage based service.

### 11.3.5 Supporting data

#### Q. Is there anything else you would like to tell us about the proposed changes to Swanage Connect?

Open text comments include both online and easy read responses.

Due to the low number of responses, the feedback has been presented verbatim.

#### Swanage Connect - user and non-user comments

- I can't really understand what you are proposing.
- Have you already made these changes, as I've seen that there are changes to the Swanage Day Centre already, so why are you asking us?
- Key aspect is communication with service users and awareness in the wider community as the population ages and others need to access services
- I don't really know anything about the Swanage site.
- As a social care professional working in the Purbeck Area, I feel the proposals regarding the Swanage Day Centre/Services are sensible and these appear to be a good way to provide a sustainable high-quality service to those that need it in this area.
- Not sure

### 11.3.6 Data summary

Although respondent numbers for Swanage Connect are small (18), the findings show encouraging signs of flexibility and interest. When asked about attending options under the proposed model, 40% said “maybe – it will depend on the activities offered,” indicating that many participants are open to engaging if the offer meets their needs.

A further 30% said they would not attend, but 20% expressed interest in the Swanage community activity and 10% in other local spokes, showing that some respondents are willing to consider alternatives within the model.

No respondents selected the Purbeck Hub or specialist services, suggesting these options may need clearer promotion.

Views on the proposed offer were generally neutral or uncertain, with 25% agreeing and another 25% neither agreeing nor disagreeing, reflecting some support and ambivalence.

Importantly, 50% selected “don’t know,” highlighting a significant opportunity to provide more information and clarity. Notably, no respondents expressed disagreement, suggesting there is no strong opposition at this stage—creating a positive foundation for engagement through better communication and tailored activities.