

Draft council plan

On 1 October cabinet reviewed the draft council plan. Once this is approved the draft plan we will be asking for your views on it in a number of ways: 1. Through an online survey 2. Through an employee forum session 3. Hopefully some drop-in sessions across the Dorset Council buildings (dates, times venues to be decided upon) In the meantime you can read the draft plan here <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4BqZnfHJycA&feature=youtu.be> and (no sound - so no headphones needed!) Residents input is really important so please ensure that you, the Parish Councillors circulate this information to as many people in the parish as possible.

Blueprint for Change

Blueprint for Change is the proposed new structure for the whole children's services directorate. It's the start of a longer-term plan to transform the way we support our children and families. Consultation on the proposed structure is now underway and over the next few weeks, time will be spent listening to employees and taking on board their feedback before proposals are finalised.

Cabinet agrees council tax exemption for young people leaving care

Dorset Council's Cabinet has agreed that young people who have spent time in foster or residential care will be exempt from paying council tax until the age of 25 if they live alone or given a 25 per cent discount if they live with someone else.

The decision follows a national campaign by The Children's Society, who say that managing household finances can be particularly difficult for care leavers as they often don't have the same support networks and opportunities as other young people.

Dorset Council is responsible for 225 care leavers aged between 18 and 25 in its role as corporate parent. It's estimated that 104 of these live in Dorset and are likely to qualify for a council tax exemption or discount, which would cost the council around £46,500 per year.

Household Recycling Centres

From Tuesday 1 October, Dorset residents will be able to visit their local household recycling centre daily from 10am until 4pm.

Entry is still free of charge, with the vast majority of items still free to drop-off.

HRCs are open daily all year, except for Christmas Day, Boxing Day and New Year's Day.

The overwhelming majority of items taken to these HRCs continue to be accepted free of charge, including but not limited to:-

- Furniture (including sofas, mattresses etc.)

- Small and large electrical items (inc. fridges, freezers, washing machines, dishwashers etc.)
- Wood and timber
- Metals
- Clothing and textiles
- Garden waste

Glass, paper, plastic, cardboard, newspapers and magazines should be recycled using the Recycle for Dorset kerbside service, but all these materials are also accepted at HRCs free of charge.

There are a few materials that incur a modest charge at the HRCs, but this is easily payable on site by all popular payment methods. The charges go directly toward the running of the sites and maintaining the service for all residents. The link to the items that incur a charge can be found on this Dorset Council link <https://www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/bins-recycling-and-litter/recycling-centres-and-banks/blandford-recycling-centre.aspx>

There are no fees for entry to the HRCs, although van drivers should check to see if they need to apply for a permit before visiting. This is a quick and simple process online, with an immediate approval in most cases.

Commercial waste (waste produced from commercial activity) is not accepted at the HRCs, with the exception of Swanage, Sherborne and Blandford, which accept commercial waste with restrictions at certain times of the week.

The household recycling centre winter hours will remain in place until Wednesday 1 April 2020, when they will change back to 9am to 6pm daily for the summer period.

Peer Review

The council has been subject to a peer review that took place over the past week. That is a thorough examination of the way the council works undertaken by officers and councillors from other councils.

On Friday councillors received a verbal overview. We will receive the final written report in three weeks but the feedback we received was positive.

Christmas

I hate to mention the 'C' word but I thought I'd get it in quickly! It has been agreed that all council offices will be open for the three working days between Christmas and New Year.