

Questions from County Councillors

Questions from Cllr Kate Wheller and Cllr Susan Jefferies to the Cabinet Member for Adult Health, Care and Independence in relation to Tricuro

Questions from Cllr Wheller

Following a difficult few weeks for former DCC staff now employed by Tricuro can the Cabinet Member Cllr Mrs Haynes confirm that the threat of dismissal has now been withdrawn? Can she further confirm that assistance of ACAS has now been enlisted to find a solution to the proposals to terms and conditions which would lead to a loss of earnings from between £600 – £3000 per year. It is acknowledged that the biggest asset for Tricuro is its staff. A staff who when they worked for DCC felt valued and appreciated. This is no longer the case and the company risk losing these employees. Can Cllr. Haynes please explain to members how changes to pension and insurance and the shortfall in government funding have had an impact on Tricuro's finances. Why were these not factored into the budget? Is she able to give us an update on the staffing situation?

Will Cllr Jill Haynes the cabinet member for Adult Health and Social Care undertake to secure a proper budget settlement for Tricuro from its shareholders that delivers the undertakings given to staff and to the members of this Council. Thus allowing Tricuro to concentrate on stabilising its position. Leaving it free to grow its potential for income generation, serve the community and respond to the new health and social care requirements in the way we all envisaged and in which we as members and our staff can be proud.

Questions from Cllr Jefferies

Members will be aware that in May 2016, Tricuro started a consultation to change staff terms and conditions, contrary to a commitment given to Councillors, Trade Unions and staff that there would be no such change for the first five years following the establishment of Tricuro by Dorset County Council, the Borough of Poole, and Bournemouth Borough Council.

Members may not be aware that:

- a. On Tuesday 18 October 2016 Tricuro sent an email to all the staff that had been employed by Dorset or had been employed since 1 July 2015. The email asked them 'to voluntarily accept' a change to their terms and conditions.
- b. Staff were asked to sign and return the letter agreeing to the change 'by Wednesday 26 October' – just 8 days later. Staff without email addresses and informed by letter were given just 6 or 7 days to decide.
- c. The email went on to tell staff that "Should you not voluntarily agree to the changes in your terms and conditions, it will be necessary to move to a formal process of dismissal"
- d. Tricuro's briefing note for managers includes the following

Q What if the staff member does not accept the changes to Terms and Conditions?

If the member of staff does not accept the changes to the terms and conditions, it will be necessary to move to a formal process of dismissal. A dismissal letter will be issued on 31st October 2016....

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- e. UNISON declared a collective dispute at the end of October that Tricuro accepted, and as a consequence dismissal letters that were due to be issued on 31st October were not sent.

Does the Leader agree that:

- i. This approach to its staff is unethical and ill befits a company that has been established to care for elderly and disabled people in the County of Dorset, including Poole and Bournemouth.
- ii. Railroading frightened staff, against their will, into signing these letters to accept a pay cut by threatening them with outright dismissal is unethical
- iii. The staff who have signed acceptance forms have not done so because they voluntarily agree with the change to their terms and conditions, but because they feared that if they didn't, they will be sacked outright.
- iv. Dorset County Council (as a Tricuro shareholder) deeply regrets these events and the considerable distress that has been suffered by ex Dorset staff and staff appointed since 1 July 2015.

Will the Leader intervene in order to find a solution that does not involve a change to the terms and conditions of ex-Dorset staff or staff appointed since 1 July 2015 in line with the solemn undertakings that this Council gave to its staff when they transferred, that their terms and conditions were to be protected 'for the first five years' and the equivalent undertakings given by Poole and Bournemouth Council to their staff when they were transferred to Tricuro in 2015?

Will the Leader press for the participation of the shareholders in the talks with Unison, through ACAS if necessary, and press other shareholders to do likewise?

Question from Cllr Susan Jefferies to the Cabinet Member for Adult Health, Care and Independence and the Cabinet Member for Health Wellbeing and Children's Safeguarding in relation to Serious Case Reviews

Questions

I note the following from the Annual Report of the Children's Safeguarding Board

"The rise in the number of cases being referred for Serious Case Review has increased which could be indicative of pressures in the system. The cases reviewed in 2015/16 all centred on adolescent mental health and two of the cases were of teenage suicide. This led to work under the prevention of harm group and outcomes from the Serious Case Reviews informed an element of the CAMHS Review. The Board determined that emotional health and wellbeing will become a priority for the DSCB going forward into 2016/17."

1. I would be interested to learn how many Serious Case reviews we have had so far during 2016/2017 and whether the trend continues to increase. It was noted last year that the increase could be indicative of pressures within the system, implied as to being pressures within the CAMHS service.
2. Could the members be updated annually in future on the numbers of Serious Case Reviews?
3. Many of our Children's Care Social Workers report an increase in their caseloads, which may also create pressures. Please could members be told the level of caseloads of our workers, compared to the average recommended nationally which I understand to be under 15? Have we set a safe benchmark for our Social Workers?

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Question from Cllr Kate Wheller to the Cabinet Member for Learning and Skills and Cabinet Member for Organisational Development and Transformation in relation to Living and Learning Centres

Question

Underhill in my division of Portland Harbour is classified nationally as an area of significant multiple deprivation. May I ask members to agree with me that every effort should be made to develop and support activities that will benefit residents and foster community spirit and wellbeing. The Islanders Club, centred within a large housing estate with minimal public transport has been the object of considerable investment over recent years. It is the only voluntary facility in Underhill but has been identified by both DCC and W&PBC as a building that could be disposed of. Would the cabinet member seek a postponement of any decision on this until discussion has taken place into creating a Living and Learning Hub focused on the building. Thus securing the much needed youth club, and adding services for the elderly, young families and advice providers all under one roof.

Question from Cllr Paul Kimber to the Cabinet Member for Learning and Skills in relation to IPACA Portland

Question

Clearly with the news that the Aldridge Foundation no longer wish's to be involved with IPACA and with the number of parents opting to send their children off the island for Education, this is putting pressure on School places in Weymouth and beyond. The Governments direction to moving to Multi Academy Trusts has been a major concern for local people on Portland.

As Dorset County Council is a Partner with IPACA what is our responsibility to the IPACA school and what assistance are we giving the school?

Question from Cllr Kate Wheller to the Cabinet Member for Environment, Infrastructure and Highways in relation to Highways Adverts

Question

It has been a requirement to advertise road closures, traffic requirements, planning etc in the local press. This is expensive and adds greatly to the cost of events for charities as well as to our taxpayers via the Council when announcements have to be made. Fewer people now read a local paper and very many councils now rely upon publishing this information on-line in websites and social media. Can Cllr Finney tell me is DCC considering this? Are we in fact following this procedure at all? If not why not and could we please do so?

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