



Safeguarding Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Minutes of the meeting held at County Hall, Dorchester, Dorset,
DT1 1XJ on Thursday, 6 July 2017

Present:

Pauline Batstone (Chairman)
Katharine Garcia, Kevin Brookes, Kate Wheller, Steven Lugg and Bill Pipe

Members Attending

Steve Butler, Cabinet Member for Safeguarding.

Officer Attending: Sara Tough (Corporate Director for Children's, Adults and Community Services), John Alexander (Senior Assurance Manager - Performance), Sarah Baker (Group Finance Manager), Paul Beecroft (Communications Officer (Internal)), Vanessa Glenn (Assistant Director for Care and Protection), Mike Harries (Corporate Director for Environment and Economy), Jon Lake (Technical Officer (Traffic Engineering)), Patrick Myers (Assistant Director - Design and Development), Simon Parker (County Emergency Planning Officer), David Roe (Buildings & Construction Service Manager), Mark Taylor (Group Manager - Governance and Assurance) and Fiona King (Senior Democratic Services Officer).

For certain items, as appropriate

Daniel Cadisch, Chief Officer, Citizen's Advice Bureau.

(Note: These minutes have been prepared by officers as a record of the meeting and of any decisions reached. They are to be considered and confirmed at the next meeting of the Safeguarding Overview and Scrutiny Committee to be held on:
Thursday, 12 October 2017

Apologies for Absence

24 Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs Toni Coombs, Lesley Dedman and Beryl Ezzard.

Code of Conduct

25 There were no declarations by members of disclosable pecuniary interests under the Code of Conduct.

Minutes

26 The minutes from the meeting held on 15 March 2017 were agreed and signed.

The Chairman welcomed Daniel Cadisch, Chief Officer at the Citizens Advice Bureau, to the meeting and reflected on Minute 9 from the meeting held on 19 January 2017. Following a question from the Chairman as to whether there had been any improvement in Personal Independence Payments (PIP), following correspondence from the Director on behalf of the Committee, Mr Cadisch advised that there were still huge delays in processing applications for PIP and many clients were still being disadvantaged. He reported that this had been the single greatest issue that the Citizens Advice Bureau had faced which affected the most vulnerable clients in our communities. The Chairman had understood that more training had been given to staff but it was noted that this had still not made a great deal of difference. Officers attending appeals with clients were still successful which showed that the decisions that were made in the first place were not correct. The Chairman thanked Mr Cadisch for attending and invited him to attend a future meeting to again update members on any progress with PIPs.

The Chairman proposed that a motion be presented to the County Council meeting on July 20 2017 as follows:

“That the County Council express its extreme concern to the Secretary of State for the Department of Work and Pensions in respect of the significant distress being caused to Dorset residents as a direct consequence of poor administration of the Personal Independence Payments process; as evidenced by the Dorset Citizens Advice Bureau. We call on the Secretary of State to urgently review the process to ensure improved outcomes for all residents.

Should this motion be supported that a copy be sent to all Dorset MP’s.”

Resolved

That the motion put forward by the Chairman of the Safeguarding Overview and Scrutiny Committee for the County Council meeting on 20 July 2017 be supported.

Public Participation

27 Public Speaking

There were no public questions received at the meeting in accordance with Standing Order 21(1).

There were no public statements received at the meeting in accordance with Standing Order 21(2).

Petitions

There were no petitions received at the meeting in accordance with the County Council’s Petition Scheme.

Terms of Reference

28 The Committee noted their terms of reference.

Emergency Planning

29 The Committee considered a report from the County Emergency Planning Officer which gave members an overview as to how the County Council prepared and responded to incidents.

The County Emergency Planning Officer advised members that Emergency Planning was a very wide ranging subject. His report aimed to give members assurance that safeguarding was in place. He explained that with regard to a response of threats, part of the planning included the threat but it was not their role to provide a direct response to it but how it was responded to the threat. He advised that there was a Duty Officer on call for Emergency Planning at all times. He also referenced the gold and silver rota of Senior Officers within the County Council.

Members were provided with a statement following the recent Grenfell Tower tragedy, in order to give assurance as to how this organisation could respond with partners in such a situation.

One member made reference to the problems in relation to people identifying their responsibilities in Kensington, therefore how did the role of the Leader and Cabinet members fit into this. The County Emergency Planning Officer advised that the Local Resilience Forum had a planning and response phase included. There was a Strategic Co-ordination Group, which included Leaders and Chief Executives, within this Forum and their role was to take the significant lead in any event. Officers would welcome stronger engagement with elected members in this regard.

Following a question from the Chairman regarding Town and Parish Councils, the County Emergency Planning Officer advised that there was strong engagement with the Dorset Association of Town and Parish Councils (DAPTC) and officers had provided training for them.

In response to a question about if there was a need to house 500 people in an emergency situation, the County Emergency Planning Officer advised that the local Resilience Forum worked closely with all councils which incorporated close working with the District Councils as they had responsibility for housing.

The Director for Environment and the Economy highlighted to members that the responses provided by the County Council's staff to civil contingency events were entirely based on a best endeavours approach, no staff were contractually obliged to provide a 24 hour service and there was significant reliance on voluntary effort. He suggested it could be worthwhile for members to hold a dedicated emergency planning session as part of their member development to highlight how it all worked in Dorset. The County Emergency Planning Officer suggested it might be helpful to have smaller drop in sessions for members to visit the team's offices and see how they worked.

One member felt it would be opportune to consider some scrutiny on the role of the Leader and Cabinet members, including the role of the elected member. Cllr Brookes agreed to lead on this piece of work with Cllr Lugg and Simon Parker.

Resolved

1. To arrange an emergency planning development session for all elected members and to provide members with the opportunity of a drop-in session with the Emergency Planning Officers.
2. Cllr Brookes to lead a piece of scrutiny work with Cllr Lugg and Simon Parker.

Task and Finish Group in respect of Road Traffic Collisions

- 30 The Committee considered as report from the Service Director, Highways and Emergency Planning which set out the scope and responsibilities for a small Task and Finish Group in regard to the number of road traffic collisions.

Following a discussion, members agreed the contents of the scoping report and it was agreed that Cllr Wheller and Cllr Ezzard would work with the Collision Reduction and Traffic Engineering Team along with a representative from the Outcome Based Accountability (OBA) team with regards to the number of road traffic collisions.

Resolved

That the following members be elected to the Task and Finish Group: Cllr Wheller and Cllr Ezzard and provide an update for members at their next meeting on 12 October 2017.

Reason for Decision

An action was taken at the Safeguarding Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting in March 2017 to establish a Task and Finish Group to scrutinise the existing work undertaken by the County Council and partner agencies to improve road safety.

Update on arrangements for the Inquiry Day relating to the key challenges in Domestic Abuse.

- 31 The Group Manager for Governance and Assurance advised members that Tuesday 17 October 2017 had been highlighted as the day on which to hold the Inquiry Day and invitations would be sent out shortly.

The Chairman advised members that this was an opportunity to look critically with partners about services relating to domestic abuse.

The Director highlighted the number of agencies who would be invited to attend which included: Police, CCG, Volunteer agencies, Public Health, Police and Crime Commissioner, Housing, Education, Community Safety Partnership, Front line staff etc.

Noted

Approval of the Youth Justice Plan 2017-18

32 The Committee considered a report from the Corporate Director for Children's, Adults and Community Services which advised members that the Youth Offending Teams were required to publish an annual Youth Justice Plan which needed to be approved by the County Council, Borough of Poole and Bournemouth Borough Council, and highlighted areas for improvement.

The Chairman noted that the format of the Plan was now more readable and user friendly than previously. She highlighted the reference to partnership working which she felt was very useful.

Recommended

That the Cabinet approves the Youth Justice Plan 2017-18.

Reason for recommendation

The draft Youth Justice Plan has been approved by the Youth Offending Service (YOS) Management Board. The plan reviewed achievements in the previous year, detailed the structure, governance and resources of the YOS, and set out the priorities for 2017-18.

Corporate Plan

33 The Committee considered a report from the Corporate Director for Children's, Adults and Community Services which included a draft refresh of the Corporate Plan 2017-18 and an Outcomes Focussed Monitoring Report for May 2017.

The Senior Assurance Manager advised members that this was now an evidence led process and that outcome indicators were now incorporated into the Plan. Future work included the development of outcome delivery strategies along with the development of some performance measures to show the County Council's impact on outcomes.

Following a question from the Cabinet Member for Safeguarding regarding the number of children persistently absent from school, the Deputy Director for Design and Development highlighted to members the change in parameters for measuring absenteeism and made reference to the explanatory text that sat underneath the indicators in the Plan.

Following a discussion regarding benchmarking, the Group Manager noted that if there was a better benchmark that could be used this needed to be brought forward by the relevant officers.

Members were given a demonstration on the performance web pages including the Dorset Outcomes Tracker, which contained up-to-date data and commentaries relating to the Corporate Plan indicators.

The Deputy Director for Care and Protection informed members there were at present 450 children in care which included 16 unaccompanied refugees, which showed they

were on track for reducing the looked after population. Following a question about where particular refugee children were placed, the Deputy Director advised that young people were placed where it was most appropriate for their needs.

The Director advised that the reason that the Children in Care budget was under pressure was as a result of the complexity and cost of some placements rather than the total number of looked after children.

Noted

Update from the Community Safety Partnership

- 34 Cllr Pipe as the Vice Chairman of the Dorset Community Safety Partnership, updated members on the impact of a change in respect of prisons and noted that the reporting of crimes was likely to change in the very near future. He added that Dorset was safer than it was last year.

Noted

Work Programme

- 35 The Committee considered its Work Programme and gave consideration to the inclusion of a number of items which had been discussed earlier in the meeting.
- EHCPs – these had been raised with the Committee and reassurance had been received that work was ongoing. The Director undertook to update members at a future relevant point. There was a written statement of action being presented to Cabinet in September 2017, the headlines of which would be brought to members at their meeting on 12 October 2017.
 - Youth Services Provision – Members felt it was important to know that the service to young people had improved as a result of all the changes. The Director advised that initially it would be important for the EAP on Children's Services to have the opportunity to look into this for them to be satisfied that the task had been achieved and to then report back as they had been instrumental in working with staff to work towards the new arrangements.

Resolved

That the Committee's Work Programme be updated accordingly.

Questions from County Councillors

- 36 No questions were asked by members under Standing Order 20(2).

Meeting Duration: 11.15 am - 12.50 pm