



People and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Minutes of the meeting held at County Hall, Colliton Park,
Dorchester, Dorset, DT1 1XJ on Wednesday, 4 July 2018.

Present:

David Walsh (Chairman)
Mary Penfold (Vice-Chairman)
Derek Beer, Graham Carr-Jones, Katharine Garcia, Mary Penfold, Byron Quayle, Mark Roberts,
Clare Sutton and William Trite.

Members Attending

Cherry Brooks, Vice-Chairman, Economic Growth Overview and Scrutiny Committee
Jill Haynes, Cabinet Member for Health and Social Care.

Officer Attending: John Alexander (Senior Assurance Manager - Performance), Diana Balsom (Commissioning Manager, Housing and Prevention), Harry Capron (Head of Service Learning Disability/Mental Health), Martin Elliott (Assistant Director - Adult Care Operations), William Haydock (Senior Health Programme Advisor), Steve Hedges (Group Finance Manager), Rick Perry (Senior Manager for Change Management and Planning), Matthew Piles (Service Director - Economy, Natural and Built Environment), Mark Taylor (Group Manager - Governance and Assurance) and Helen Whitby (Senior Democratic Services Officer).

(Notes: 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 People and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee to be held on **Wednesday, 10 October 2018.**)

Apologies for Absence

25 An apology for absence was received from Councillor Shane Bartlett.

The Chairman welcomed Councillor Mark Roberts to his first meeting.

Appointment of Vice-Chairman

26 At the County Council meeting on 27 April 2018 nominations from Group Leaders had been received for the position of Vice-Chairman for both Shane Bartlett and Mary Penfold, It was agreed that the Committee would decide the appointment at the next meeting.

On putting this to a vote, it was

Resolved

That Councillor Mary Penfold be appointed as Vice-Chairman for the remainder of the year 2018/19.

Terms of Reference

27 The Committee's terms of reference were unchanged.

Noted

Code of Conduct

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

Councillor Mark Roberts stated that his company had a small adult care contract with the County Council so he would not take part in discussions about contracting arrangements.

Minutes

- 29 The minutes of the meeting held on 21 March 2018 were confirmed and signed.

Progress on Matters Raised at Previous Meetings

- 30 The Committee considered a report by the Transformation Programme Lead for Adult and Community Forward Together Programme which set out outstanding actions from previous meetings and an update on identified reviews.

Members noted that the Brexit Group would not continue to meet as this work could be dealt with more efficiently elsewhere.

Noted

Public Participation

- 31 Public Speaking

There were no public questions, statements or petitions received at the meeting in accordance with Standing Orders.

Outcomes Focused Monitoring Report: July 2018

- 32 The Committee considered a report by the Transformation Programme Lead for Adult and Community Forward Together Programme which set out performance against the 2017-19 Corporate Plan and population indicators for the Healthy and Independent outcomes. The report also included performance measures which showed the Council's Services contribution and impact on outcomes, and risk management information relating to outcomes and population indicators.

Attention was drawn to performance relating to LiveWell Dorset services to tackle alcohol and substance abuse and promote healthy weight, which appeared to have declined. It was reported that these services had recently been brought in-house, and monitoring procedures had become more rigorous. Figures for the next quarter would give a better idea if there was a genuine decline in performance. A new population indicator for mental health was based on the percentage of people on GP registers suffering from depression, which was a more accurate and timely indicator for trends in mental health..

In discussion members highlighted that changes to the way mental health was understood measured made comparisons over time difficult; sleep deprivation and social media might be causes of depression; social isolation and loneliness were more significant in deprived neighbourhoods rather than rural areas; schools' role in promoting emotional health and wellbeing, particularly given current concerns for education in Weymouth and Portland; the dip in the number of children being adequately prepared to go to school; and the increase in young people not in education, employment or training (NEETS).

Members were concerned about the sharp increase in the proportion of care leavers who were NEET and suggested a further explanation be sought about what was being done to address this. They thought a short review might be needed.

Noted

People and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee: Annual Report 2017-18

33 The Committee considered its draft Annual Report 2017-18.

Whilst the Annual Report was welcomed by members, one member pointed out that it seemed to suggest that the committee's reviews were capturing outputs rather than outcomes and the impact they had. Members were reminded that the purpose of the Corporate Plan was to focus on outcomes for residents. Other Committees had similar outputs but reviews later on the agenda would give an indication of whether improvements were being achieved.

Noted

Integrated Transport Review

34 The Committee considered a report by the Service Director, Economy, Natural and Built Environment which presented the findings of the inquiry day into Integrated Transport held on 26 February 2018.

The inquiry day had been attended by 86 people representing community transport groups, commercial bus operators and members of district and borough councils. Sessions were led by guest speakers with a focus on different ways of looking at transport and what could be done to help communities develop local transport schemes which was not based on bus provision. Information was readily available to help communities develop their own schemes but better signposting was needed.

A brief summary of the development of integrated transport since 2013 was given, including the development of a community transport toolkit, available grants, support available to help communities develop schemes, and links to health and skills. 89 schemes had been established with 97% coverage across Dorset. Officers were working with the NHS as part of the Sustainability Transformation Plan on sustainable transport for the future.

The Lead Member for the review drew attention to the need to promote progress made, show communities that support to develop their own schemes was available and for transport officers to have more time to invest in this. He also thought officers should liaise more with rail operators.

The Committee noted that the previous day a meeting had been held with the Heart of Wessex (rail operators) and that the outcomes would be reported to a later meeting. The Lead Member welcomed this.

Members noted that officers were working towards a one stop shop for transport solutions and that the inquiry day had increased awareness of available services and the need to connect services to provide joint community schemes.

Some members remained sceptical about transport arrangements within their electoral divisions.

Resolved

That the approach taken by Dorset Travel to continue to support the Passenger Transport Strategy be supported.

Homelessness in Dorset: Review of Evidence

35 The Committee considered a report by the Senior Assurance Manager which provided evidence about homelessness in Dorset. Supporting the report, the Committee also received a joint presentation by the Senior Assurance Manager and Councillor Clare Sutton, Lead Member for the review.

The evidence showed that homelessness was on the increase in Dorset but this was

not an even trend, with some district areas having a peak in 2012/13, and a more steady increase in the Weymouth and Portland area. The District and Borough Councils' Dorset Homelessness Strategy provided a vigorous approach to try to prevent homelessness.

In 2017 there were 18 rough sleepers in Dorset at the time of the annual count, a rate of 0.62 per 1000 households - the 17th highest rate in the Country. Nationally, 70 rough sleepers died on the streets in 2017, a number that had more than doubled in 5 years, three of whom were living in Weymouth. Rough sleepers were much more likely to have substance abuse issues, be the victims of violence or traffic accidents, more prone to suicide and to infections or hypothermia, all of which had an effect on the wider community. These figures did not show how many more people were on the edge of homelessness, for example through sofa surfing or sleeping with strangers.

Members were provided with a brief outline of the District and Borough Councils' duties under the Homelessness Reduction Act 2018 (HRA) - to get involved at an earlier stage, and to provide meaningful personalised support in order to prevent homelessness, regardless of their priority need. The new duty to refer would result in an increased workload for housing officers. These duties would be inherited by the new unitary Dorset Council and Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole Councils following Local Government Reorganisation in April 2019.

Funding of £72.2m over three years was to be provided for local authorities. This would mean an additional £90k for the district and borough councils in Dorset. Housing officers welcomed the Act's introduction as it strengthened councils' duties to intervene and provided more solutions for those at risk of homelessness.

There was some exploration of the possible reasons for homelessness and its causes. An explanation of current interventions was given, including the Weymouth bus which could accommodate up to seventeen people and its positive effect in Weymouth.

Members then discussed the information shared in some detail including: the fact that Universal Credit could not be paid direct to landlords so they were less likely to take tenants on benefits; that some local authorities provided grants for rent in advance and deposits in certain circumstances; some local authorities were looking at effectively acting as letting agents for private sector landlords, taking on all the associated risks; the shortage of appropriate housing with registered providers building 2, 3, or 4 bedroom properties when more single accommodation was needed; members' individual experience of people becoming homeless; that support was largely only provided on a Monday to Friday basis; that HM Services support organisations did not always maintain contact with ex-service personnel; the needs of gypsy and traveller communities when they were no longer transient; that rough sleepers could be depressed or had mental health issues or complex needs and, if not local, were unable to use the Weymouth bus; the need for the new Dorset Council to continue with the current initiatives; the potential for modular housing to provide flexible solutions; that housing was currently a District and Borough Council responsibility so it was important for County Council officers to continue to engage with them to reduce duplication of effort and not create obstacles; the only way to stop homelessness was to build more council houses with affordable and controlled rents; and the need for housing and planning to work together under the new Shadow Authority.

With regard to recommendations, members agreed unanimously that the evidence clearly showed the benefit of the Emergency Local Assistance Funding and that they wanted this to be renewed. The Cabinet Member for Health and Care, and as a member of the Shadow Executive, agreed to champion this.

Looking at private rentals and underwriting the risk, the Cabinet member for Health and Care explained that this did not fall within the County Council's remit. However, funding of £1.5m had been identified for modular housing on County Council land for those with mental health issues. This needed to be completed before any extension was considered. County Councillors who were on the new Shadow Executive would be able to take this forward as a priority

Members were unsure as to whether the rent deposit scheme was also operated by East Dorset and Christchurch Borough Councils but paid tribute to the dedication of Dorset Council Partnership staff who operated the scheme.

There was some discussion about the low Local Housing Allowance which made it difficult for people to access private accommodation, that any increase might lead to rent rises and the need to increase the buy to let market for small private landlords. It was agreed that Central Government should be lobbied on both accounts and that this should involve local MPs. The wording for this recommendation would be drawn up outside of the meeting and circulated to the Committee for agreement. It was noted that the Local Housing Allowance was not necessarily based on rent in a local area.

Recommended

That the County Council's Cabinet and Dorset Shadow Executive consider the Committee's recommendation that the Emergency Local Assistance Funding be renewed.

Resolved

1. that Central Government be lobbied as set out in the minute above with the involvement of local MPs.
2. the wording of the letter to MPs be drawn up outside of the meeting and sent to members by email for agreement.
3. that Councillors David Walsh and Graham Carr-Jones, as members of the Shadow Dorset Executive, take forward recommendations and priorities as set out above.

Update on Special Educational Needs and Disability Improvement Plan and Working with Schools

36 The Committee considered a report by the Director for Children's Services which provided an update on the significant progress which had been made with the improvement plan so far in enabling a three year improvement drive within the Special Education Needs and Disability (SEND) Services for children and young people. It also included an update on the consultation with schools around the future relationship with the local authority and the support being provided to schools in the Weymouth and Portland area.

Members were reminded that the Ofsted inspection in January 2017 had identified four significant areas of weakness (strategic planning, low conversation rates, parental feedback and quality assurance) which had resulted in a statement of action to improvement performance. Since then significant progress had been made in all four areas and a brief summary was provided. Members were directed to look at the local offer for their electoral divisions.

Particular attention was drawn to transfers of children on statements to Education Health Care Plans (EHCPs) where conversion rates were completed by the end of March 2018 with additional funding provided by Cabinet. Concentration was now on achieving targets for the three stages for the new EHCPs - at s6, 16 and 20 weeks.

With regard to the consultation with schools about their relationship with the authority,

this would not proceed until two key appointments had been made - one was now in place, the other to be in place shortly. The consultation would be carried out by way of workshops facilitated by the Staff College.

A number of senior schools in Weymouth and Portland had been deemed "inadequate" by recent Ofsted inspections. Although some of these were academies with greater autonomy, the local authority was offering support to these schools to ensure that agreed actions plans were followed through as a means of improving standards and life chances for children,

In response to questions officers were confident that the local authority would fare well if another Ofsted inspection took place; would report the suggestion that school improvement services should help the Weymouth and Portland Schools at no cost; that Children's Services were working with Governing Bodies on solutions and identifying good practice and experience which could be shared; that every means available was being used to help these schools; that printed material was available for families with no access to the webpages; that the Dorset Parent Council were members of the SEND Delivery Group and were able to identify families with no internet access and facilitate their engagement; and that the advisory service focused on maintained schools with a view to early support being provided. Members were reminded that it was the academies' decision as to whether they took advantage of support offered.

Attention was drawn to the fact that although there were some schools where improvements were needed, other Dorset schools had dedicated teachers who provided a good education for their pupils enabling them to achieve grades and secure university placements.

Members were keen to hear more about the outcomes of the consultation workshop being held on 9 July 2018 and officers agreed to provide an update to be provided for the meeting on 10 October 2018.

With regard to the continued drive to raise standards in Dorset schools, members were asked to let officers know if they heard of any issues relating to schools in their electoral divisions in order to address these.

Resolved

1. That the significant progress that has been made in improving the service provided to children and young people and their carers with SEND post the Ofsted inspection be noted.
2. That the work that has taken place around the consultation on the future relationship with schools be noted.
3. That the continued drive to raise standards in Dorset schools be supported.
4. That an update report on the consultation workshop being held on 9 July 2018 be provided for the meeting on 10 October 2018.

Mental Health Review - Responses

37 The Committee considered a report by the Senior Democratic Services Officer which provided an update on the Delivery Plan arising from the Mental Health inquiry day held on 13 December 2017 and the response received from relevant organisations.

Members noted that two responses had been received from partner organisations; that the local authority now had representation on the Mental Health Integration Board; Dorset Healthcare University NHS Foundation Trust were expanding psychotherapies, increasing investment in psychiatric liaison services and out of area placements; the Dorset Clinical Commissioning Group were working to provide better local support for those in crisis, develop a crisis intervention service and retreats;

there was a commitment to follow up on people with serious illnesses; increased opportunities for employment by joint working across health and social care; a review of dementia services was planned; the suicide prevention plan was overseen jointly by partners; the local authority was to review the out of hours service and consult on plans to extend mental health services to evenings and night-times; communications between partner organisations had improved; more integrated pathways for mental health and disability services were being developed; practical changes for service users and staff were to be considered; work was to be undertaken to look at pathways to homelessness, and a review of supported lodgings scheme was to be undertaken. In summary there was a need to build on existing meetings and priorities identified in the workshop to integrate these into programmes of work.

Officers agreed to established whether there was an equivalent to the Disability Partnership Board for those with mental health issues as this was seen as a good example of service user inclusion.

The Lead Member for the review drew attention to the key message that came out of the inquiry day that another day with service users and carers should be held so that they could be made aware of action taken as a direct result of the inquiry day. It was explained that each of the work programmes would include engagement. Officers agreed to ask the Partnership Board whether they wished to carry out engagement overall or whether this should be done on a project by project basis.

In summary, the inquiry day was seen as a great success, with meaningful outcomes which had been shared with stakeholders for them to consider. Stakeholders would be contacted again later in the year to establish progress on the implementation of the Delivery Plan which would be reported to the January 2019 meeting.

Resolved

That stakeholders be contacted again later in the year to establish progress on the implementation of the Delivery Plan which would be reported to the January 2019 meeting.

Social Isolation: Final Report of the Member Working Group

38 The Committee considered the final report of the Member Working Group on Social Isolation.

The Lead Member of the Group explained that as social isolation was a big topic Beaminster and Blandford had been selected as areas to investigate what problems they experienced and how they were being tackled.

The review discovered that there were a number of common issues which were raised consistently - the lack of transport, lack of knowledge about available transport, and people not being aware of what was available. It also showed that isolation and loneliness could be experienced not only in rural areas but also in towns and communities. Information gained through the Young Researchers' Survey was highlighted as this had given a picture young people's lives and their issues.

The Group had made recommendations which would they thought would address the issues and they hoped this this work could progress and not be lost through the forthcoming local government reorganisation.

Members recognised that the County Council could not solve loneliness and isolation, but by creating caring communities and looking after neighbours isolation and loneliness could be reduced.

Recommended

1. That the Committee agreed that the key issues identified in the report and addressing them at a strategic level across council activities and expenditure will combat social isolation and was recommended to the Cabinet (as set out in Appendix 1, paragraph 4.3 of the report).
2. That the Cabinet's attention be drawn to the potential benefit of further action being taken on a corporate basis informed by the toolkit of the Campaign to end Loneliness (as set out in Appendix 1, paragraph 6.1b of the report)
3. That the Cabinet consider the recommendations with a view to drawing these findings and associated action to the attention of the Shadow Executive for the new Dorset Council and to the Health and Wellbeing Board (as set out in Appendix 1, paragraph 6.2 of the report).

Delayed Discharges Performance

39 The Committee considered a report by the Transformation Programme Lead for Adult and Community Forward Together Programme which provided an update of delayed discharge performance within the Dorset Health and Wellbeing Board area. The report included some cases studies which members had requested at the last meeting.

Members noted that performance continued to improve and this was important as Better Care Funding depended on the Local Authority and partners meeting delayed discharge targets. The need for health and social care teams to work closely together to enable patients to be provided with the resources to enable their return home was highlighted.

The case studies illustrated the pathway followed by some patients in order to be able to return home with appropriate support.

One member referred to a case within his own electoral division whereby a patient wanted to leave hospital yet was not medically fit to return home. The Assistant Director would discuss this further outside of the meeting.

Members recognised that the majority of patients wished to return home but that in some cases the cost of this to the local authority could be high. They also recognised that support needed to be provided to enable patients to return home, that care providers could be given short to put care in place, and that there was no way of predicting this which made planning difficult.

The Cabinet Member for Health and Care highlighted that the Government were challenging local authorities to ensure patients were discharged quickly from hospital and that if this was not done funding would be reduced. The Local Authority's performance had improved considerably but other authorities had also improved their performance which meant that Dorset remained in the bottom quartile. There was a reablement service and domiciliary care was also provided if required on discharge, but shortage of supply could sometimes lead to short delays. This was thoroughly monitored and the Brokerage Service sourced a service as soon as it was available. The Local Authority needed to work closely with health colleagues to further improve performance and she thought more emphasis should be put on keeping people out of hospital in the first place. She reminded members that the Dorset Health and Wellbeing Board received regular reports on delayed discharge performance and suggested that the Committee receive an update in six months' time to see whether performance continued to improve.

With regard to whether the system would be able to cope with the closure of beds at the Portland Community Hospital, it was explained that a lack of nurses had led to the closure and that nurses working there currently would be moved to Weymouth. Discharges from Dorset County Hospital would not be affected by this change. The

local MP was to answer questions on this at a local church the following evening.

Resolved

That an update report on delayed discharge performance be provided for the Committee's meeting in January 2019.

Work Programme

40 The Committee considered its work programme.

The Chairman reminded members that due to the transition to the new Shadow Dorset Council, there were limited opportunities to undertake scrutiny reviews. Any new scrutiny work would need to be of a short duration rather than in depth.

Items added to the work programme were:-

10 October 2018 meeting Update on the schools workshop
Education Health Care Plan performance

January 2019 meeting Update on mental health review and implementation of
recommendations
Integrated Transport - actions and outcomes and next
stage for delivery
Delayed Transfers of Care performance

Resolved

That the above items be added to the Committee's work programme.

Questions from County Councillors

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

Meeting Duration: 10.00 am - 12.55 pm