



County Council

Minutes of the meeting held at County Hall, Colliton Park, Dorchester,
DT1 1XJ on Thursday, 8 November 2018.

Present:

Hilary Cox (Chairman)

David Shortell (Vice-Chairman)

Jon Andrews, Shane Bartlett, Pauline Batstone, Richard Biggs, Kevin Brookes, Cherry Brooks, Steve Butler, Graham Carr-Jones, Andrew Cattaway, Deborah Croney, Keith Day, Janet Dover, Jean Dunseith, Beryl Ezzard, Tony Ferrari, Spencer Flower, Katharine Garcia, Peter Hall, David Harris, Jill Haynes, Nick Ireland, Colin Jamieson, Susan Jefferies, David Jones, Rebecca Knox, Jon Orrell, Andrew Parry, Mary Penfold, Bill Pipe, Margaret Phipps, Byron Quayle, Mark Roberts, Clare Sutton, William Trite, Daryl Turner, Peter Wharf and Kate Wheller.

Officers Attending: Debbie Ward (Chief Executive), Richard Bates (Chief Financial Officer), Helen Coombes (Transformation Programme Lead for the Adult and Community Forward Together Programme), Mike Harries (Chief Executive), Nick Jarman (Corporate Director for Children's Services), Jonathan Mair (Service Director - Organisational Development (Monitoring Officer)), Lee Gallagher (Democratic Services Manager) and David Northover (Senior Democratic Services Officer).

(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 County Council to be held on **Thursday, 28 March 2019.**)

Apologies for Absence

62 Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Derek Beer, Ray Bryan, Andy Canning, Toni Coombs, Lesley Dedman, Mike Parkes and David Walsh.

Code of Conduct

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

Minutes

64 The minutes of the meeting held on 19 July 2018 were confirmed and signed.

Public Participation

65 (a) Public Speaking

A question was asked by Mr Mark White, resident of Gillingham, to the Cabinet member for Adult Social Care, in accordance with Standing Order 21(1), in relation to the proposed demolition of St. Martin's House, Gillingham. The question and answer are attached to these minutes as an annexure.

A statement was received from Mr Peter Sibthorp, Chairman of the Ridge Moors Action Group, in accordance with Standing Order 21(2), in relation to the Moors at Arne. The statement is attached to these minutes as an annexure.

(b) Petitions

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

Chairman's Announcements

66 (a) Deaths of Former Members of the Council

The Chairman reported on the following deaths of former members of the Council:

- Mr Steven Lugg on 20 July 2018 who served on the County Council from 2016 to 2018 representing the Ferndown division.
- Mr Michael Green on 7 August 2018 who served on the County Council from 1973 to 1985 representing the Bournemouth Boscombe East division.

Members paid tribute to the dedication and commitment of the former members to Dorset and within their divisions. The County Council then stood in silent tribute.

(b) Chairman's Announcements

The Chairman reported that she had attended a range of events including:

- Official opening of the Blackdown Nature reserve and parking area
- Reception at the Shire Hall
- Annual Legal Service with the High Sheriff
- Opening a Concert of the Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra

It was also announced that a Children in Care fundraising range of Christmas Cards were available for purchase with proceeds being raised for charity.

In addition to the items detailed above, a tribute was made to Debbie Ward, Chief Executive, at the end of the meeting as her last meeting of the County Council.

At this point in the proceedings, the meeting was adjourned for the Council to be able to attend the annual Remembrance Service.

Motions

67 In accordance with Standing Order 17, Cllr Andrew Cattaway, moved a motion which was designed to provide support for an organisation - Safe Passage UK - in arranging the safe passage of child refugees fleeing from those countries experiencing conflict, unrest, oppression and turmoil in seeking asylum in the United Kingdom and how those children could be accommodated within Dorset; the motion being:-

'That DCC should continue to give the strongest possible support to joint working with Safe Passage (Dorset) towards pursuing the aims of the national Safe Passage campaign next April/May when the new Dorset (Unitary) Council comes into being.'

The motion was seconded by Cllr David Jones.

Cllr Andrew Cattaway provided an introduction in celebration of the successful work already being achieved by Children's Services officers with looked-after children, and the recent introduction of the Safe Passage "Our Turn" lone child refugee campaign. How Safe Passage UK could complement the work already being done was explained to members.

During the course of the motion being moved, Cllr Cattaway took the opportunity to propose an amendment to it, in that any agreement to support what was being done should be only "in principle" and that the new Dorset Council should be persuaded to maintain that commitment, if at all practicable. He felt that it was the duty of the County Council to be seen to be setting an example in humanitarian terms and inclusiveness in providing a safe haven for those children and in providing the opportunity for them to be able to be resettled and make a life for themselves in Dorset, benefitting from the opportunities other children had across the County and in being able to access what Dorset had to offer.

He clarified that any agreement to this by the Council would not mean an obligation to any financial commitment from it nor its successor authority. If Safe Passage UK was

unsuccessful in its bid to Government for 100% funding for a scheme, then this would not be taken any further forward.

The Council received a deputation from Safe Passage UK and heard from Mr Bernard Sullivan who explained the history behind the organisation and how it had built upon the inspirational work begun in 1938 of an organised humanitarian effort, Kindertransport, which had successfully assured the asylum in this country of Jewish children prior to the outbreak of the Second World War. He explained how Safe Passage UK operated, what it did and the means by which refugee children seeking asylum came to the UK.

Given that the current resettlement arrangements in place by the local authorities were due to cease in 2020, he made an impassioned plea that the Council did all it could to support the work the organisation was doing in trying to resettle those children and that the Council might play its part in accepting up to three child refugees, each year, for the next 10 years. He appreciated that the Council could not give any commitment from April 2019 as it would cease to exist, but that any example they set might persuade the successor authority to do the same. The Chairman confirmed that a short video clip complementing the deputation would be made available to members following the meeting.

Cllr Clare Sutton endorsed what was being done, feeling that the Council should play its part in this process.

Cllr Bill Pipe moved an amendment to the motion in that, whilst he appreciated what was being done and the reasons for it, he did not wish the successor Council to have any obligation towards this of any ongoing financial commitment - which he had calculated to be some £2m. His amendment was that the County Council should only be committed to supporting the ambitions and aims of Safe Passage UK and the issue should be drawn to the attention of the new Authority in April. His amendment was seconded by Councillor Pauline Batstone.

On the amendment being moved, Cllr David Harris considered the amendment to be unnecessary, and clarified that the addition of the word “until April 2019” being sufficient in achieving all that the amendment was seeking to do.

Cllr Cattaway reaffirmed what Mr Sullivan had said: in that there would be no financial commitment to this, or any successor authority, as the project would not proceed unless the ‘Our Turn’ campaign could achieve full funding from Government. On that basis, Cllr Pipe withdrew his amendment, and Cllr Cattaway confirmed that his original motion would be updated to reflect the comments received to show the decision as ‘in principle’ and that it would include the wording ‘until April 2019’.

A range of supportive statements were received from members across the chamber for the motion. Members were moved by the emotive speeches they had heard and what was being done to help in the resettlement of those children seeking asylum resonated with them. On that basis, they considered that the Council had a duty to show compassion towards what was being done and understood the importance of making a commitment, in principle, to support the efforts being made by Safe Passage UK and to play its part in helping to welcome those vulnerable children to the county.

On being put to the vote it was unanimously agreed.

Resolved (unanimous)

That Dorset County Council continue to give the strongest possible support, in principle, to joint working with Safe Passage (Dorset) towards pursuing the aims of the national Safe Passage campaign until next April 2019 when the new Dorset (Unitary) Council comes into being.

Leader's Announcements

68 The Leader was pleased to announce a number of positive stories with which the Council had been recently involved.

The Friends of Durlston Country Park had been recognised at the Dorset Volunteer Awards for their contribution towards the interpretation of the Victorian landscape at Durlston Country Park so that it made the most of what it had to offer. She was proud that over 800 volunteers had given some 10,000+ hours of their own time in playing their part in this success.

She was proud to say that two projects and an individual had been shortlisted for the National LGC Awards 2019, these being:-

- an innovative ecological approach to highway verge management in Dorset,
- working in partnership to deliver social, economic and environmental benefits to the Dorset coast; and,
- that Transport Planning Team Leader, Kate Tunks, had been shortlisted for her transport planning work in the 'Rising Star' category.

The Leader considered that national recognition of what the County Council was doing and how it was doing it to be a clear justification and endorsement of the means by which the Authority was delivering its services. The nominations were highly prestigious and, on behalf of the Council, she wished those shortlisted every success.

How the County Council was delivering social care to its residents had been reflected in the achievement of Dorset being ranked first of all 150 local authorities in England in the national 2018 Adult Social Care Survey for the support it provided to residents using its social care services. The Leader was very proud of this success and in the recognition of the commitment made by staff of the Adult Services Directorate in this achievement.

The Council roundly endorsed all the announcements the Leader had drawn to their attention.

Questions from County Councillors

69 There were no questions received at the meeting in accordance with Standing Order 20.

Cabinet Meeting on 18 July 2018

70 **Resolved**

That the minutes of the Cabinet meeting held on 18 July 2018 be adopted.

Cabinet Meeting on 5 September 2018

71 Homelessness in Dorset: Review of Evidence

In relation to minute 101b, clarification was sought regarding the future of Emergency Local Assistance funding to which Cllr Jill Haynes, as the Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care, explained that there was a lot more work to do in this area with district council colleagues regarding targeted funding. It was noted that discussions were taking place within the Shadow Dorset Council.

Resolved

That the minutes of the Cabinet meeting held on 5 September 2018 be adopted, and the recommendation below be approved.

Recommendation 101 – Approval of the Youth Justice Plan for 2018/19

That Cabinet be asked to recommend the County Council to approve the Youth Justice Plan for 2018-19.

Reason for Recommendation

The draft Youth Justice Plan meets statutory requirements. The Plan reviewed

achievements in the previous year, details the structure, governance and resources of the Youth Offending Service, and sets out the priorities for 2018-19.

Cabinet Meeting on 17 October 2018

72 Quarterly Asset Management Report

Questions were raised in respect of the future of Weymouth Registration Office within minute 110. Cllr Tony Ferrari, as the Cabinet member for Community and Resources, clarified that the future was not certain as this depended on what arrangements would be put in place by Weymouth and Portland Borough Council in respect of the new Weymouth Town Council from 1 April 2019.

Defining the New Relationship between the Local Authority, Schools and Academies

In relation to minute 112, Cllr Clare Sutton sought reassurance regarding the difference the Dorset School Improvement Board would make to local schools in the greatest need, especially in Weymouth, and in relation to the geographical clustering of peer support. Cllr Andrew Parry, as the Cabinet Member for Economy, Education, Learning and Skills highlighted the faith he had in the work being done to improve schools that were struggling in Weymouth and that there were clear statements of action that were fit for purpose. He also drew attention to the inspirational teaching staff in Dorset's schools who would benefit from peer support. £100k had already been pledged for cluster working. It was noted that this issue would also be discussed outside of the meeting.

Motor Neurone Disease Charter Adoption

Assurance was provided in respect of minute 114 on the application of the charter following adoption, which would include a focus on the timeliness of activities and support through a whole system joint approach which was enhanced using the Council's integrated care system.

Resolved

That the minutes of the Cabinet meeting held on 17 October 2018 be adopted.

People and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee - Meeting held on 10 October 2018

73 Update on working with schools, school improvement within Weymouth and Portland and Education Health Care Plan performance

In relation to minute 47, a request was made for further information about the increase in the number of Education Health and Care Plans (EHCPs) over the past three years, the impact on the completion of the plans, the cost of the plans to the Council and the cost to schools (especially those with high levels of Special Educational Needs and Disability). A further comment was received about the level of completion of EHCPs within the target timescale which stood at 87% and was expected to be above 90% by the end of November 2018.

It was confirmed that information would be shared with members outside of the meeting, and for the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board's Inquiry Day into Children's Services in January 2019.

Resolved

That the minutes of the People and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 10 October 2018 be adopted.

Safeguarding Overview and Scrutiny Committee - Meeting held on 11 October 2018

74 School Exclusions Update

In relation to minute 45, a question was asked about whether the removal of youth club provision was a contributory factor to an increase in crime. It was explained by Cllr Steve Butler that he was not convinced that youth service provision contributed, but the reduction in outreach workers funded by the Dorset Police had made a difference.

A further question was asked in relation to the trends and comparison of exclusions between maintained schools and academies which were considerably higher. The increased focus of Ofsted in relation to monitoring exclusions was explained and that in Dorset there was a process of managed movement of pupils, but this was an area to closely monitor, with information being shared with members outside of the meeting.

Resolved

That the minutes of the Safeguarding Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 11 October 2018 be adopted.

Dorset Health Scrutiny Committee - Meeting held 17 October 2018

75 Report regarding the work of the Dorset Health Scrutiny Committee Task and Finish Group Re: Clinical Services Review

A request was made for confirmation that the submission of a referral to the Secretary of State for Health in respect of the Clinical Commissioning Group's Clinical Services Review at minute 38 had now been made. Cllr Bill Pipe, as the Chairman of the Dorset Health Scrutiny Committee, explained that a letter, supporting evidence and documents had all been sent to the Secretary of State.

Resolved

That the minutes of the Dorset Health Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 17 October 2018 be adopted.

Staffing Committee - Meeting held on 30 October 2018

76 Members considered a recommendation and report by the Leader of the Council in relation to the appointment of interim roles of Chief Executive and Director for Adult and Community Services until 31 March 2019 following a decision of the Staffing Committee to agree a request for voluntary redundancy by Debbie Ward as the Chief Executive of the County Council.

A question was asked in relation to the start date of the Adult Services role for Nick Jarman on 1 December 2018, which coincided with concerns regarding the financial state of Allied Healthcare and that the Council could be liable to take on commitment for service user placements with the company from the end of November 2018. Cllr Jill Haynes, as the Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care, confirmed that there was one service user that could be affected, and options were being explored in relation to this issue.

Resolved (unanimous)

1. That Mr Mike Harries be appointed as Interim Chief Executive and designate him as Interim Head of Paid Service until the end of 31 March 2019.
2. That Mr Nick Jarman be designated as Interim Director of Adult Services, in addition to his role as Director for Children's Services until the end of 31 March 2019.

Reason for Decision

To ensure the continued delivery of the County Council's statutory responsibilities and effective management.

Cllr Colin Jamieson - Absence from Meetings

77 This item was withdrawn at the meeting.

Tribute to Debbie Ward, Chief Executive

Members paid tribute to the Chief Executive and her 38 years in Local Government. Her professionalism, leadership, approachability and commitment were lauded, and the personal help she had provided to both members and officers was recognised. She had made a huge difference to the direction the Council had taken, had provided strong leadership for her staff, was regarded and respected by them and was at the forefront of what members and the organisation were trying to achieve. Members wished her and her family well for the future.

In response the Chief Executive thanked members for their kind words and recognised that she would not have been able to achieve anything without the support of her staff.

Meeting Duration: 10.00 am - 1.05 pm

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Question and Statement from Members of the Public

Question

Question from Mark White, Resident of Gillingham to the Cabinet Member for Community and Resources and Natural and Built Environment in relation to proposed demolition of St Martins House in Gillingham

Question:

This Council wishes to demolish St Martins House in Gillingham. The building is locally listed with the District Council as a heritage asset and is given the same level of importance in the Gillingham Neighbourhood Plan. The Plan, supported by Gillingham Town Council reflects the wishes of the people of Gillingham with regard to future development. It was ratified by the District Council in July 2018 after a 91% approval from a local referendum. Given the level of opposition to the loss of St Martins, will this Council rescind the Demolition Notice and commence a full public consultation?

Answer:

Officers and Cabinet Members have continued to discuss the future of St Martins in Gillingham, and the application for a new build on that site. It has been agreed that the County Council and Magna Housing will pause the demolition of St Martins House and the planning application for a new build on that site in order to allow further consideration of all the different factors and views that need to be taken into account as we move forward in the local area. It will also allow us to make sure from a health and care perspective the opportunity of the site is maximised. It has been agreed that the County Council and Magna Housing will pause the demolition of St Martins House and the planning application for a new build on that site while this review takes place.

Improving Health and Well Being is a priority for Dorset County Council and the residents that live in Dorset. Our partnership working with the NHS to deliver care closer to home and support people and people and communities to remain healthy and independent is also all about how we use the resources we have including our workforce in the best way possible as our population changes. The adult social care programme Building Better Lives is all about making sure we help people and families continue to live in their local communities including those who have disabilities. To do this having the right accommodation is important but we also want to make sure that the key workers who provide health and care, can also live locally. This proposed Extra Care development is one of a number across the county, with similar schemes in Bridport and Wareham and will help deliver sustainable health and social care in local communities. I know that for many local people having choice about where they live in their local community, near family and friends is important as they get older and this development will help make that happen.

Magna Housing are our partner in Gillingham, and we have entered into a contract that has sold the land to them, Homes England funding has been secured to support the development and the scheme must be completed by March 2021. We must progress this scheme within these timescales as even now we have people unable to live locally and as independently as they would want and receive the care they need because of a lack of suitable accommodation. Our health and care providers also report the issues that the workforce is having finding affordable housing in the area.

The County Council is aware of the local listing of St Martins Home in the Gillingham Neighbourhood Plan, and it has consulted with the planners on this specific point. It has been advised by the local planning authority that this listing does not carry any legal status and does not prevent the demolition of St Martins Home. Furthermore, the County Council has been informed that an application to Historic England for listed building status, which would carry legal status, has been turned down by Historic England.

The principal reasons given by Historic England are as follows:

Lack of architectural interest:

- although neatly made, with some attention to detail, as a house of the last decade of the C19, its style is typical, rather than exceptional, and the design does not demonstrate the high degree of quality in architectural style which would be needed to set it apart from its many peers;
- while the materials were made locally, in style and substance they are all very typical of their period, and houses using similar materials, mass produced, can be found in large numbers across the country, with little regional variation;
- little information is available about the interior, but photographs indicate that there have been significant alterations, and in any case, even the survival of a complete and high-quality decorative scheme would be unlikely to outweigh the lack of exterior interest.

Lack of historic interest:

- the association with a long-lived local building firm, and the use of the house as a showcase for its work, is clearly of local interest, but Thomas Hudson is not a significant figure nationally.

Conclusion:

The County Council considers that the assessment by Historic England on the merits of preserving St. Martins House should be the definitive judgement given that it has been made by experts who have considered all the facts available.

The County Council did not consult prior to the service of a demolition notice because there is no requirement to undertake consultation as part of the prior approval process. Furthermore, it is not able to undertake a full public consultation exercise, as requested, since it is unable to act on any outcome which entails the retention of the building as it has exchanged contracts with Magna Housing for the sale of the land. Magna Housing is contractually committed to providing an extra care scheme on the site.

Therefore, the County Council is pausing the progression to ensure, from an adult social care and health perspective, that the plans maximise all of the opportunity the site provides to meet local need.

Statement

Statement from Peter Sibthorp, Chairman of the Ridge Moors Action Group in relation to the Moors at Arne

I am here to alert you to some of the potential risks.
Ridge Moors Action Group represents around 200 people from Ridge.

TRAFFIC

The single track roads will be overwhelmed by construction and visitor traffic.

FLOOD RISK

This will be made worse as the sponge like capacity of The Moors to absorb rainwater will be much reduced and there will be insufficient room for water.

SILTING

The planned River Frome breach at Turners Cove will cause silting to occur which will reduce depths of water thus limiting navigation to Wareham.

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