



People and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Minutes of the meeting held at County Hall, Colliton Park, Dorchester, Dorset, DT1 1XJ on Tuesday, 11 October 2016.

Present:

David Walsh (Chairman)

Steve Butler, Ronald Coatsworth, Barrie Cooper, Fred Drane, Ros Kayes, William Trite and Kate Wheller.

Members Attending

Deborah Croney, Cabinet Member for Learning and Skills

Janet Dover, County Councillor for Colehill and Stapehill

Robert Gould, Leader of the Council

Matt Hall, County Councillor for Sherborne Rural

Jill Haynes, Cabinet Member for Adult Health, Care and Independence

Trevor Jones, County Councillor for Dorchester

Daryl Turner, County Councillor for Marshwood Vale.

Officer Attending: Helen Coombes (Interim Director for Adult and Community Services), Steve Hedges (Group Finance Manager), Paul Leivers (Assistant Director - Early Help and Community Services), Patrick Myers (Assistant Director - Design and Development), Richard Pascoe (Head of ICT and Customer Services), Ben Print (Programme and Project Manager), Roger Sewill (Strategic Estate Management Team Manager), Sue Warr (Early Help Service Manager) and Helen Whitby (Senior Democratic Services Officer).

(Notes:(1) 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, 11 January 2017.**)

Apologies for Absence

12 Apologies for absence were received from Spencer Flower, Mary Khan, Joy Tubbs, Michael Turnbull and Harry Capron (Assistant Director - Adult Care).

Andy Canning was also unable to attend for consideration of his motion at minute 17 below.

Code of Conduct

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

However, Ronald Coatsworth, Ros Kayes, David Walsh, William Trite and Kate Wheller declared general interests as local members whose electoral divisions would be affected by the proposals considered at minute 19 below in relation to changes to the Registration Service.

Minutes

14 The minutes of the meeting held on 16 June 2016 were confirmed and signed.

Progress on Matters Raised at Previous Meetings

- 15 The Committee considered a report by the Interim Director for Adult and Community Services which set out progress with matters raised at the previous meeting, including recommendations to Cabinet.

Noted

Public Participation

16 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.

Motions referred from County on Racism and Xenophobia

- 17 The Committee considered a motion from Councillor Andy Canning which was referred to them by the County Council on 21 July 2016. The Committee also considered a report by the Assistant Director – Design and Development on the Council's response to hate crime.

The Assistant Director reminded the Committee of the Council's legal duty to address discrimination and equality and that, in addition to this motion, the Cabinet had received reports about the Council's responsibilities for refugees, with the first Syrian refugee families due to be resettled in Dorset in November 2016. The report provided an overview of hate crime in Bournemouth, Dorset and Poole, with no significant increase being recorded. It was noted that figures for the period since the Brexit referendum were not yet available, that hate crimes were thought to be under-reported and steps being taken to address this were explained.

Councillor Janet Dover, who had seconded the motion, considered the report to be helpful. She suggested that the Committee receive an update in 12 months' time to review the resettlement of Syrian refugees, particularly in the light of arrangements for leaving the EU. The Cabinet Member for Adult Health, Care and Independence, suggested that any report be broadened to include discrimination against those with physical and learning disabilities. Other members also highlighted incidents relating to those with Downs Syndrome and mental health issues. Officers agreed to include this information in any future report along with appropriate data.

Members discussed the report in detail. They were concerned about the possible increase in hate crime since the Brexit referendum and suggested that a report was needed earlier than the suggested 12 month's so that any variation could be monitored. Members noted that 12 unaccompanied children had been resettled in Dorset to date and that members had corporate parenting responsibility for any who were under eighteen years old. With regard to whether any training or briefing would be arranged for members, the Cabinet Member for Learning and Skills explained that there was a resource within the South West which could be used to understand how to support this cohort of refugees. She would discuss the need for member training with colleagues but, in the meantime, information would be shared with the Corporate Parenting Board, and other members would be given access to the information. She would also progress corporate parenting training for all members as it was important for them to understand their responsibilities.

It was highlighted that although figures given for incidents in Weymouth and Portland

were the highest, it was the largest conurbation in Dorset so more incidents could be expected. Officers agreed to include rates per 1,000 people in future reports so as to better reflect the situation.

The Interim Director added that the Children's and Adults Safeguarding Boards, and the Community Safety Partnership were aware of the increase in incidents of hate crime for learning disability and mental health and were looking to raise awareness. This was a matter that the Safeguarding Overview and Scrutiny Committee might wish to review. They were also considerations for the Learning Disability Partnership Board and the Making it Real Board, who had responsibility for helping vulnerable people in Dorset to report incidents.

Resolved

1. That officers continue to progress proactively the partnership work around tackling hate crime.
2. That officers continue to monitor the level of reported incidents, including those against people with physical, mental health and learning disabilities or mental health issues, in the light of the Brexit referendum and the Syrian Resettlement Programme.
3. That an update report be provided for the Committee's meeting on 11 January 2017 which includes information about incidents against those with physical, mental health and learning disabilities, appropriate data and percentage figures to better reflect the situation.

Working with Dorset's Communities, Social Capital and Community Development

18 The Committee considered a report by the Interim Director for Adult and Community Services which provided an overview of the Council's work with communities, social capital and community development so that the Committee could consider areas for scrutiny.

The Head of ICT and Customers Services provided a presentation which illustrated how digital technology could be used to meet people's needs and make a positive difference. This included a video which showed how social media could be used to get people to respond more quickly to emergency situations.

The Committee considered the report in detail. Members recognised that not everyone wanted to be digitally enabled, but there was a need for such people not to be overlooked. The role that digital technology could play in addressing social isolation was also recognised, helping to build community capacity and making a difference to people's lives. The role that local members could play in helping communities to identify those in need and how they might be helped was highlighted. Examples of where this was already happening were cited. It was also suggested that digital technology might help address current transport issues that were being addressed through the Holistic Transport Review Board. Members also realised that some funding might be needed to start to build community capacity on an invest-to-save basis and that they had a role to play in sharing best practice with their communities, particularly in areas of greatest challenge and need.

Attention was drawn to some areas where broadband coverage was poor and the difficulties this posed for children's education, and those living in the more remote areas. Members noted that a previous Policy Development Panel on Broadband had made eight recommendations to the Environment Overview Committee which they might like to review or scrutinise further. They also noted that broadband take up was lowest in the most deprived areas.

Concern was expressed that local members were still not routinely being informed of action being taken in their divisions.

As a way forward, it was agreed that a Task and Finish Group be established comprising Steve Butler, Fred Drane, William Trite, David Walsh and Kate Wheller to look at setting up a pilot project in a deprived and isolated area where digital take up was lower, to build community capacity to address social isolation, with a view to rolling this out across Dorset. As the Partnership for Older People Programme (POPPs) was seen as integral to this work, they would be included in the Group's membership,

It was suggested that the Members ICT Group be made aware of the Task and Finish Group's work and officers were asked to identify possible areas for the Task and Finish Group to concentrate on.

Resolved

1. That a Task and Finish Group be established comprising David Walsh, Steve Butler, Fred Drane, William Trite and Kate Wheller to look at setting up a pilot project in a deprived and isolated area where digital take up was lower, to build community capacity to address social isolation, with a view to rolling this out across Dorset. A representative of POPPs would be included in its membership.
2. That officers identify possible areas for a pilot by using available information.

Registration Services

- 19 The Committee considered a report by the Interim Director for Adult and Community Services which provided an update on the work of the Policy Development Panel on Registration Services.

The Assistant Director - Early Help and Community Service reminded members that the consultation had now ended and officers were now exploring the retention of additional offices in localities. The Panel would consider recommendations at its meeting on 31 October 2016 and its final report would be considered by the Committee on 11 January 2017. The Panel's Chairman highlighted the recommendations already identified within the report and that further consideration was being given to the potential closures in Weymouth and Swanage which necessitated a further meeting.

Janet Dover, County Councillor for Colehill and Stapehill, reported that the Birth Tell Us Once Service was well used and valued and asked why it had been suggested that this service be withdrawn. The Assistant Director - Early Help and Community Service explained that there was clear evidence that this service was valued in cases of death, but that demand for the at birth registration service was low. He agreed to provide further information outside of the meeting to evidence that the proposal was based on this intelligence.

Matt Hall, County Councillor for Sherborne Rural, highlighted that 39 of his parish councils supported the retention of the registration service in Sherborne because of the distance and time needed to travel to Dorchester if it were withdrawn.

The Assistant Director - Early Help and Community Service explained that the proposed changes were in anticipation of forthcoming legislative changes and to improve customer service. As a consequence of these proposed changes, fewer locations would be needed and the Policy Development Panel was looking at the geographical placement of services. The consultation had highlighted concerns from a number of areas and the Panel would take these into consideration when making their recommendations, which the Committee would consider on 11 January 2017 and, in turn, recommend to the Cabinet for approval. The Panel Chairman invited the local members to the Panel's final meeting whilst highlighting that this was confidential.

A member expressed the concern that the cost of marriage services might mean that those on low incomes would not be able to afford to get married and whether this would lead to means testing.

Noted

Work Programme

20 The Committee considered its updated work programme for 2016-17.

The Interim Director for Adult and Community Services highlighted the two initial scoping documents attached to the report on Fair Charges and Quality and Cost of Care and asked members to consider whether these reflected the areas that members wish to scrutinise.

It was noted that the cost of care had been the subject of a previous Executive Advisory Panel, who had visited providers of care but had not been assured by its quality. The Interim Director explained that this area would cover how people contributed to their care, local policy for the implementation of legislation, the local care market and its cost for the local authority, the NHS and self-funders. It could also provide an opportunity for the Committee to meet independent providers of home and residential care and service users. It was also suggested that Healthwatch be involved. Members agreed that a review of this area would be useful, particularly as the Clinical Services Review was to report soon. The need for affordable housing, particularly for key workers was also highlighted. It was explained that the latter point was being addressed through the Dorset Public Service Reform Workstream and possibly other forums and the need for duplication to be avoided was emphasised.

Resolved

1. That an inquiry day be held to scrutinise the quality and cost of care.
2. That providers, service users and the Local Healthwatch be invited to attend.
3. That the Senior Democratic Services Officer identify a date for the inquiry day.

Questions from County Councillors

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

Exempt business

22 **Resolved**

That in accordance with Section 100 A (4) of the Local Government Act 1972 to exclude the public from the meeting in relation to the business specified in minute 23 as it was likely that if members of the public were present, there would be disclosure to them of exempt information as defined in paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Act and the public interest in withholding the information outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information to the public.

The Community Offer for Living and Learning

23 The Committee considered a report by the Director for Children's Services which set out progress with the Community Offer for Living and Learning. The report included an exempt appendix.

The Assistant Director - Early Help and Community Service presented the report in detail outlining progress to date and engagement with local organisations, arranged with the help of local members, to take forward proposals in various localities.

Members recognised that the proposals would prove beneficial to the Council and stakeholders by the more efficient use of premises. They supported the submission of a One Public Estate Bid and noted that the result of the bid was due to be announced later that week, although this would be confidential initially. If this was successful, a more detailed business case would be submitted. As this followed

work the Council wanted to pursue, even if this was unsuccessful, the work would still be of benefit.

The Cabinet Member for Learning and Skills informed members that she had taken an opportunity to highlight the Council's work to the Local Government Association and the Minister in order to raise the profile of the Dorset bid.

Officers responded to questions in relation to Bridport, Ferndown, Upton and Wimborne. The need for officers to involve local members in this work was emphasised.

Recommended

1. That the Cabinet is recommended to approve bidding to and, if successful, committing to activity which is supported by the Cabinet office and Local Government Association's One Public Estate Programme which may be above £0.5m in value (paragraphs 2.11 to 2.16 of the report).
2. That the Cabinet be recommended to give authority to extending work to take in Wareham and that in the event that any other extension is appropriate that this decision is delegated to the Director for Children's Services and Section 151 Officer, after consultation with the Cabinet Member for Organisational Development and Transformation.
3. That local members be consulted upon any development within their electoral divisions at the earliest opportunity.

Reason for Recommendations

The approach was in line with the Council's vision of working together for a strong and successful Dorset, was part of the action required as part of the Council's Medium Term Financial Plan and contributed to the four corporate outcomes of Safe, Health, Independent and Prosperous.

Meeting Duration: 10.00 am - 12.00 pm