



People and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Minutes of the meeting held at County Hall, Colliton Park,
Dorchester, Dorset, DT1 1XJ on Monday, 26 June 2017.

Present:

David Walsh (Chairman)

Mary Penfold, Derek Beer, Graham Carr-Jones, Katharine Garcia, Ros Kayes, Andrew Parry,
Byron Quayle and Clare Sutton.

Members Attending

Rebecca Knox (Leader) and Deborah Croney (Cabinet Member for Economy, Education,
Learning and Skills).

Officer Attending: Helen Coombes (Transformation Programme Lead for the Adult and
Community Forward Together Programme), Steve Hedges (Group Finance Manager), Mark
Taylor (Group Manager - Governance and Assurance) and Helen Whitby (Senior Democratic
Services Officer).

For certain items, as appropriate

John Alexander (Senior Assurance Manager - Performance), Harry Capron (Assistant Director -
Adult Care), Chris Hook (Travel Operations Manager), Paul Leivers (Assistant Director - Early
Help and Community Services), Jay Mercer (Education Transformation Lead), Patrick Myers
(Assistant Director - Design and Development), Jonathan Mair (Head of Organisational
Development - Monitoring Officer) and Sally Wernick (Strategic Lead for Safeguarding and
Quality - Adults).

(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, 11 October 2017.**)

Apologies for Absence

24 There were no apologies for absence received at the meeting.

Code of Conduct

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

Terms of Reference

26 The Committee considered its terms of reference. The Chairman reminded members
that they had the ability to co-opt other members to join reviews and he had asked
Councillor Kate Wheller to continue the work she had started on workforce capacity
as a Committee member last year.

Minutes

27 The minutes of the meeting held on 20 March 2017 were confirmed and signed.

Progress on Matters Raised at Previous Meetings

- 28 The Committee considered a report by the Transformation Programme Lead for Adult and Community Forward Together Programme which updated them on actions arising from the last and previous meetings.

Noted

Public Participation

29 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).

Local Government Reform

- 30 The Committee considered a report by the Chief Executive on proposals for the Council to be part of two joint committees, with other Dorset councils, to develop future governance arrangements and service provision across the County in order to support Local Government Reorganisation.

The Leader of the Council presented the report and reminded members of the submission to the Secretary of State for proposed changes to Local Government arrangements in Dorset, the purpose of the suggested joint Committees and their composition. She asked the Committee to consider an amendment to the report that the County Council's seats on the Joint Committee should be capped at six irrespective of the number of councils that could join at a later date. Members noted that the report would be considered by all councils in Dorset and this change would be conveyed to them in due course.

In response to a question, the political composition and proportionality for the Joint Committee was clarified by the Head of Organisational Development, as the Monitoring Officer.

Councillor David Jones addressed the Committee on behalf of the County Council's Christchurch members about their concern for Christchurch being linked with Bournemouth and Poole. They were prepared to support the County Council having two members on the East Joint Committee but he suggested that the two seats be taken by Councillors from Christchurch electoral divisions. In proposing this representation, the Christchurch members reserved and confirmed their rights to oppose Option 2B in respect of Local Government Reorganisation. He did not think that County Council representatives would represent Christchurch residents' views on the Joint Committee and he questioned the wording in the report. In response, the Leader of the Council acknowledged that the wording had led to some misunderstanding. There was no intention for County Council representatives on the Joint Committee to represent Christchurch views. The wording should say that the County Council would only represent Christchurch residents because of the services they were receiving from the Council, not as individuals. There was no intention of County Councillors to act on behalf of the Borough Council. Councillor Jones thanked the Leader for her clarification and would report this to his Christchurch colleagues.

It was clarified that Christchurch Borough Councillors would be invited to join the Joint Committee.

The Committee was asked to comment on the report from the County Council's perspective. It was recognised that dual hatted members would also have an opportunity to comment at their District and Borough Council meetings.

RECOMMENDED (unanimously)

1. That the County Council be recommended to approve the proposal to establish two Joint Committees with other Councils across Dorset to support the development of the Future Dorset proposal for Local Government Reorganisation, aiming to deliver sustainable services across Dorset for the future.
2. That the membership of the proposed Joint Committees with the County Council's seats be capped at six, irrespective of the number of councils that could join at a later date.

Reason for Decision

To enable Dorset County Council to form part of the governance arrangements that would support the progress of local government reform in Bournemouth, Dorset and Poole as part of the Future Dorset Submission made to the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government in February 2017.

Dorset Education Performance 2016: Self Evaluation

31 The Committee considered a report by the Corporate Director for Children and Adults and Communities on the self-assessment of Dorset's Education Performance in 2016.

The Assistant Director - Prevention and Partnerships presented the report and highlighted the national context, reductions in the education support grant, the Council's responsibility for school improvement for local authority maintained schools and academies and the timing of school assessments, exams and results. He then referred to the outcomes for the different key stage areas highlighting particular areas of disappointing performance and the contradiction between performance and Ofsted inspection results.

Members discussed the report in detail, were concerned and disappointed about the current situation and agreed that a review was necessary. They asked whether poor attainment was linked to social and economic disadvantage, how schools who were not performing well were supported, current funding arrangements, the effect on figures of pupils living in Dorset and attending selective education, whether successful schools could be used to help under-performers and whether the Council was putting pressure on Central Government with regard to funding allocations. The Cabinet Member for Economy, Education, Learning and Skills assured members that Government was being lobbied by many councils with regard to funding and the lack of any indication as to future funding levels made planning difficult. She welcomed a review and indicated a couple of areas that any review might include. She was concerned that the limited resources available should be targeted to best effect to improve current performance.

The Committee agreed that an Inquiry Day should be held to undertake the review, that interested parties be invited to take part and that it should be held in Autumn 2017 after the latest provisional examination results were known. It was agreed that Councillor David Walsh would act as Lead Member supported by Councillors Ros Kayes and Kate Wheller. The Cabinet Member for Economy, Education, Learning and Skills would be kept informed of progress.

Resolved

1. That a review of pupil and school performance and school improvement work be undertaken.
2. That Councillor David Walsh would act as Lead member and be supported by Councillors Ros Kayes and Kate Weller. The Lead Member and Leader Officer would meet to progress the review by way of an Inquiry Day to be held in the Autumn.
3. That Councillor Deborah Croney, Cabinet Member for Economy, Education, Learning and Skills, be kept informed of progress.

Special Educational Needs Budget

- 32 The Committee considered a scoping report for a review of the Special Educational Needs Budget. The item had been highlighted for a possible review at a previous meeting in order for members to understand it and the pressures involved. A half day review was suggested with interested parties being invited to take part.

There was some discussion about the role of the County Council and the Schools Forum in allocating funds and members noted that the reducing funds were being used to support increasing numbers of children. In view of the Committee's role to scrutinise areas of financial challenge, members agreed to progress the review. This would be led by Councillor David Walsh, supported by Councillor Ros Kayes. They would meet with the Lead Officer to progress the review.

Resolved

1. That a half day review be organised to look at the Special Educational Needs Budget.
2. That Councillor David Walsh would act as Lead Member for the review, supported by Councillor Ros Kayes.

Draft Annual Report 2016-17

- 33 The Committee considered its first Draft Annual Report.

Resolved

That the Draft Annual Report be published.

Corporate Plan

- 34 The Committee considered a report by the Transformation Programme Lead for Adult and Community Forward Together Programme on the Draft Corporate Plan.

The Draft Plan was based on the four corporate outcomes that the Overview and Scrutiny Committees were designed to monitor.

This year's version was more evidence related and measurable, and was supported by population indicators in order to be able to demonstrate whether or not outcomes were improving. A foreword by the Leader and Chief Executive was to be added. Performance measures to measure the County Council's own specific impact on outcomes were being developed and would be presented to the Committee's meeting in October 2017, along with delivery strategies for the "Healthy" and "Independent" outcomes.

Members discussed the role of organisations to support the Corporate Plan and its aim to improve outcomes for residents, tools available to ensure organisations played their part, the role of scrutiny to review local issues in a timely way, and how inequalities in life expectancy rates and the increasing number of people living with diabetes might be better understood and addressed.

Attention was drawn to the Outcomes Tracker which members could access through Dorset for You to gain up to date outcome data. Members could be given further details on request.

The Transformation Programme Lead for Adult and Community Forward Together Programme reminded members that they needed to be mindful of the Corporate Plan and the Council's financial pressures when identifying and prioritising issues for review.

Recommended

That the Draft Corporate Plan be recommended to the Cabinet and the County Council for adoption.

Reason for Recommendation

The 2017-18 Corporate Plan provided an overarching strategic framework for monitoring progress towards good outcomes for Dorset. The Overview and Scrutiny committees provided corporate governance and performance monitoring arrangements so that progress against the corporate plan could be monitored effectively.

Race and Hate Crime

35 The Committee considered a scoping report for a review into Race and Hate Crime, which had previously been identified by the Committee as an area for review.

Although there had been an increase in incidents of race and hate crime at the time the issue was identified, this had been a temporary blip. However, members were asked to consider whether to progress the review given recent events. This would provide an opportunity to look at action in Dorset to minimise incidents, partnership working, and support provided for victims. Any review might also consider incidents concerning the disabled or those with mental health issues. A half day review was suggested with the Police, schools, the Islamic Centre and others being invited to participate.

Some members were aware of some incidents within their electoral divisions, and others had found no evidence of such crime. They discussed whether there was benefit in carrying out the review. In view of the recent incidents nationally, the under-reporting of incidents and to show that members were keen to understand the local situation, it was agreed that the review should proceed as suggested and other members should be invited to take part to share their experience.

Members were informed that Dorset's Police and Crime Commissioner was concerned about incidents of race and hate crime and officers would liaise with him about the review.

Resolved

1. That a half day review of race and hate crime be undertaken.
2. That Councillor Clare Sutton be Lead Member, supported by Councillor David Walsh.
3. That officers liaise with the Police and Crime Commissioner about the review.

Workforce Capacity

36 The Committee considered a scoping report for a review of workforce issues.

Members noted that workforce issues affected both Adult and Children's Services and provided additional budget pressures for both Directorates. The review linked to the financial efficiency of the County Council and future demand on foster care. It was suggested that the review focus on retention and recruitment. This could include looking at the possible effects of Brexit, external initiatives, multi-agency action, what worked well and what was not working, The review would help officers better manage the budget in future.

The Committee recognised the importance of the review and that it would require several meetings to complete. It was agreed that a working group be established to undertake the review and that Councillor Ros Kayes would act as Lead Member with Councillor Kate Wheller in support.

Resolved

1. That a review be undertaken.
2. That Councillor Ros Kayes act as Lead Member with support from Councillor Kate Wheller.

Social Inclusion

- 37 The Committee considered a scoping report for the review of social inclusion previously identified by them as an area for review.

The report set out a suggested way of undertaking the review, using the areas of Beaminster and Blandford to try to understand them in order to identify what might be rolled out in other areas. Given the recent changes to the Committee's membership following the election, members' support for the review was sought. Councillor David Walsh had previously been identified as Lead Member.

Members noted that the review would consider social inclusion across all age ranges and that Young Researchers would be used to gain young people's views.

With regard to how surveys were conducted and whether results gave a true reflection, officers agreed to look at response rates and sample sizes.

Links between social isolation, deprivation, loneliness and community transport were highlighted, and a lack of information about the Weymouth and Portland area.

Resolved

1. That the review continue as set out in the report.
2. That the Group comprise Councillors David Walsh (Lead Member), Derek Beer and Andrew Parry.

Review of Community Transport

- 38 The Committee considered a briefing report which was provided as Community Transport had been identified previously as an area for review.

Members were reminded that the Audit and Scrutiny Committee had reviewed Community Transport in 2014 and its recommendations had been implemented. Officers were now working with communities to look at alternative provision, and with local Transport Action Groups, operators and the Clinical Commissioning Group to explore options.

Many local members had experience of transport issues within their electoral divisions and supported this approach as a means of addressing cuts to services. They suggested that a press release be issued, particularly for rural areas, to explain how community transport could fill gaps in provision.

With regard to whether operators were coming forward to run routes, it was explained that tenders for inter-urban routes were to be submitted by that day. However, communities did need to come forward with ideas for provision within their areas and it was noted that there had been few responses from East Dorset.

Approaches to community transport being taken in Bridport, Weymouth and Portland were highlighted as well as the need to support local towns and their businesses. Attention was drawn to changes to school arrangements on Portland from September 2017 and that no transport plan had been put in place for this.

It was agreed that a review be undertaken by way of an inquiry day, with Councillor Derek Beer acting as Lead Member supported by Councillors Andrew Parry and Mary Penfold.

Resolved

1. That a review of Community Transport be undertaken by way of an Inquiry day by a group comprising Councillors Derek Beer (Lead Member), Andrew Parry and Mary Penfold.

2. That officers consider issuing a press release, particularly for rural areas, to explain how community transport could fill gaps in provision.

Quality and Cost of Care

39 The Committee received an update on actions taken following the Inquiry Day into the Quality and Cost of Care held in February 2017.

Members noted that key issues related to work force recruitment and retention, the increasing complexity of the care that was needed, that people were increasingly funding their own care and how this affected the viability of care packages. The Committee had already established a group to look at workforce issues and had added a review of the Better Care Fund to its work programme. An invitation had been issued to members from a care provider to visit a care home and many were keen to do this.

With regard to recent press articles indicating that a number of small care providers were going out of business and how this was impacting on the County Council's provision of care, it was explained that nationally there was a shortage of nursing and skilled staff and this meant that some smaller providers could not sustain their business. Locally work was ongoing across organisations to try to assist providers to facilitate staff retention and address capacity issues. With the increasing complexity of cases it was likely that more nursing care would be needed in future and this needed to be taken into account when future capacity was being considered.

Attention was drawn to recent press coverage of BUPA care homes and members noted that there were three in Dorset, all rated Good by the Care Quality Commission. These were regularly monitored by the County Council.

Members were reminded that other councillors could be invited to take part in reviews, not just members of the Committee, The possibility of using Sharepoint to inform members about reviews being undertaken was suggested.

Noted

Work Programme

40 The Committee considered its current work programme for 2017-18.

The Chairman referred to items still to be scheduled for review and stated that he would lead the Delayed Transfers of Care review to be undertaken in January 2018 and that Councillor Mary Penfold would lead the Mental Health review, supported by Councillor Derek Beer.

Members were referred to the chart included in the work programme report which could be used to prioritise items for review.

Noted

Questions from County Councillors

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

Meeting Duration: 11.15 am - 1.50 pm