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CABINET

MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY 5 OCTOBER 2021

Present: Cllrs Spencer Flower (Chairman), Peter Wharf (Vice-Chairman), Graham Carr-Jones, Ray Bryan, Tony Ferrari, Laura Miller, Andrew Parry, Gary Suttle, Jill Haynes and David Walsh

Apologies: There were no apologies to report.

Also present: Cllr Cherry Brooks, Cllr Simon Gibson, Cllr Nocturin Lacey-Clarke, Cllr Jane Somper, Cllr Dave Bolwell, Cllr Shane Bartlett, Cllr Andrew Starr, Cllr Susan Cocking, Cllr Jean Dunseith, Cllr Beryl Ezzard, Cllr Matthew Hall, Cllr Brian Heatley, Cllr Ryan Holloway, Cllr Rob Hughes, Cllr Nick Ireland, Cllr Sherry Jespersen, Cllr Carole Jones, Cllr Paul Kimber, Cllr Rebecca Knox, Cllr David Morgan, Cllr Louie O'Leary, Cllr Jon Orrell, Cllr Val Potheary, Cllr Molly Rennie, Cllr Maria Roe, Cllr David Taylor, Cllr Bill Trite and Cllr John Worth

Officers present (for all or part of the meeting):

Matt Prosser (Chief Executive), Aidan Dunn (Executive Director - Corporate Development S151), Jonathan Mair (Corporate Director - Legal & Democratic Service Monitoring Officer), John Sellgren (Executive Director, Place), Kate Critchel (Senior Democratic Services Officer), Vivienne Broadhurst (Interim Executive Director - People Adults), Theresa Leavy (Executive Director of People - Children), Andrew Billany (Corporate Director of Housing, Dorset Council), Jon Bird (European Policy and Funding Officer), Ken Buchan (Head of Environment and Wellbeing), Bridget Downton (Head of Business Insight and Corporate Communications) and Jim McManus (Corporate Director - Finance and Commercial)

WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

The Chairman welcomed all presented and advised that virtual meetings were continuing. Where a decision was required, the appropriate Portfolio Holder would make that decision after taking into account the views expressed by the wider Cabinet membership.

74. **Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest to report.

75. **Public Participation**

There were nine questions/statements from the public. These questions were read out by Matt Prosser, Chief Executive and Jonathan Mair (Corporate Director, Legal and Democratic Services) and responded to by the appropriate Portfolio

Holder. A copy of the full questions and answers were set out in the detailed responses at Appendix 1 these minutes.

76. Questions from Councillors

There were four questions from Councillors P Kimber and B Heatley; these along with the responses are set out in Appendix 2 to these minutes.

77. Forward Plan

The draft Cabinet Forward Plan for November 2021 was received and noted.

78. Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) and budget strategy

Cabinet considered a report which showed the work that was being carried out to prepare for setting a budget for 2022/23 and looked forward to the Medium Financial Plan for 2023/27. The Portfolio Holder for Finance, Commercial and Capital Strategy highlighted: -

- That there was a predicted deficit of more than 8million pounds. A detailed update would be provided to members in the quarter 2 report to the November Cabinet meeting.
- He highlighted the significant challenges around increase in costs and demand, and the significant impact on the council tax and business rates collections fund.
- The directorate planning assumptions (which cabinet was requested to consider) were set out in 13.1 of the report.
- That the transformation “spend to save” programme must continue, plus considerations on how the council could raise income in the future.
- He stressed that the council was underfunded compared to other councils of a similar size.

The Leader of the Council advised and set out the long lead-in process of the budget setting programme (including the “all member” budget café) to develop a balanced budget for 2023-24. Details would be shared with members shortly. In response to question the Chief Executive assured members that scrutiny committees would be part of that process.

The Portfolio Holder referred the Cabinet members to the recommendations set out in the report, which, at this stage, primarily asked the committee to note the situation and budget setting timetable.

Cabinet members:

- (a) Noted the updated cost pressures set out in the paper and the validation work that had been carried out on them
- (b) Agreed the assumptions being used in the Medium-Term Financial Plan (MTFP);
- (c) Noted the financial gap arising from (i) and (ii) above.

- (d) Agreed the 2022/23 draft principles for budget setting.
- (e) Noted the approach to closing the budget gap that was set out in the paper, recognising that this was work in progress.
- (f) Agreed that Portfolio Holders work with officers to continue to identify and develop savings opportunities.
- (g) Noted the emerging national context set out in this paper.
- (h) Endorsed the next steps and timetable leading up to the 2022/23 budget being presented to full Council on 15 February 2022.

Reason to note and receive the report

This paper was presented to Cabinet to provide an update on the budget gap for 2022/23 and the subsequent years of the MTFP and to update on progress on action/savings to date.

79. LGA Finance Peer Challenge report and action plan

The Portfolio Holder for Finance, Commercial and Capital Strategy advised that the council had invited the Local Government Association (LGA) to undertake a peer review of the council's financial arrangements. He thanked all those involved in this excellent engagement and advised members of the fair and accurate recommendations set out in the action plan and report.

Cabinet members indicated that they were "minded to view" to support the recommendations.

Decision of the Portfolio Holder for Finance, Commercial and Capital Strategy

That the action plan, in response to the recommendations set out in the corporate peer challenge report, be approved.

[Executive Decision - LGA Finance Peer Review - Report and Action Plan - Dorset Council](#)

Reason for the Decision

To ensure that the council acts on the corporate peer team's recommendations.

80. Dorset Council Plan

The Portfolio Holder for Corporate Development and Change presented the report on the update of the Dorset Council Plan.

Input in respect of the development of the plan had consisted of a workshop involving both of the council's overview committees on 26 July 2021 followed by their formal meetings of 2 September and 17 September 2021. The minutes and comments from those meetings were attached at appendix 3 of the report.

He highlighted that although the primary focus had been the impact of the covid-19 pandemic, members of these committee(s) were keen that "climate and ecology" became a priority within the Plan. This aimed to reflect that the Council had adopted its Climate and Ecological Emergency Strategy and action plan since the first Dorset Council Plan had been agreed in January 2020.

Responding to previous questions put by non-executive members, the Portfolio Holder confirmed that climate and ecology was now one of the key themes to be considered within the plan.

The overview committee(s) had also suggested that the name of the plan caused some confusion with the (planning) developing Local Plan, however he was of the view that changing the name at this stage, would cause further confusion. The Portfolio Holder advised that following discussions with the communications team, efforts would be made, the public domain, to clearly distinguish the difference between the two plans.

The Portfolio Holder suggested that the Dorset Plan be recommended to full Council along with a proposal to give delegated powers to the Portfolio Holder, Leader of the Council and Chief Executive for the final design of the plan.

The Leader of the Council thanked the overview committee(s) for their contribution in developing the Dorset Council Plan.

In response to a question regarding strengthening the "housing for young families" priority, the Portfolio Holder for Housing recognised and acknowledged the work required for this priority, but also highlighted that there were other issues that needed to be considered.

Members of Cabinet expressed a "minded to view" to support the recommendations.

Recommendation to Full Council from the Portfolio Holder for Corporate Development and Change

- (a) That the updated Dorset Council plan, as set out in appendix I of the report to Cabinet 5 October 2021, be adopted.
- (b) That authority be delegated to the Portfolio Holder for Corporate Development and Change, in consultation with the Leader of the Council and the Chief Executive for the final design of the plan.

Reason for Recommendation:

To provide clarity about this council's priorities following the COVID-19 pandemic.

81. **Dorset Skills Commission**

The Portfolio Holder to Children, Education, Skills and Early Help set out the report recommending the creation of a time-limited Dorset Skills Commission to oversee an “at pace” response to critical skills issues across Dorset.

He highlighted that this was work that crossed many directorates of the council and was in partnership with BCP Council. The Portfolio Holder presented his recommendations as set out in the report.

In response to comments from non-executive members, the Portfolio Holder and Chief Executive acknowledged and advised that

- the needs of those who wished to be self-employed needed to be acknowledged and included in the Dorset Commission(s) report.
- the difficulty of the gateway and the apprenticeship market for businesses including the necessity to encourage central government to enable this to be an easier process.
- confirmed that currently there were approximately 300 apprenticeships across Dorset Council

Cabinet members welcomed the report and indicated their “minded to view” to support to recommendations.

Decision of the Portfolio Holder for Children, Education, Skill and Early Help

- (a) That a Dorset Skills Commission be created between November 2021 and September 2022
- (b) For this Commission to facilitate the skills delivery needed for an effective and at-pace response to a jobs-led approach to COVID-19 economic recovery across Dorset
- (c) That the Commission undertakes a review into the Dorset skills landscape – with a particular consideration of the National Skills White Paper, producing a report that lays out a potential skills journey and opportunities/needs based on 10-, 20- and 30-years trajectories
- (d) That the Commission works closely with the Dorset Skills Board and Panel to support immediate implementation of the wider skills priorities within the agreed Dorset Skills Plan and Dorset Investment Prospectus.
- (e) That authority be delegated to the Executive Director for Place, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder(s) for Children, Education, Skills, and Early Help and Economic Growth, Assets and Property, to agree with BCP Council and the Dorset LEP the governance structure and membership of the Board for inclusion in the Terms of Reference.

Reason for Decision

Delivering sustainable economic growth, increasing productivity and the number of high-quality jobs in Dorset, creating great places to live, work and visit” is one of the five Corporate priorities in the Dorset Council Plan. People and Skills is one of the six foundations of the Dorset Council Economic Growth Strategy.

The establishment of a dedicated Commission will oversee an effective and at pace response to a jobs-led approach to COVID-19 economic recovery. It would also provide an objective and independent review of the future Dorset Skills landscape, helping to shape a world-class skills and learning infrastructure for all communities.

82. Cabinet member update on policy development matter referred to an Overview Committee(s) for consideration

There were no referrals to report at this meeting.

83. Portfolio Holder - Lead Member(s) Update Summary

The Chairman invited the Portfolio Holder for Planning to update members on issues in this area including:

- Update on the planning validation backlog, which would be cleared by the end of December 2021.
- The recruitment of new planning officers was in progress
- The Purbeck migration was completed and had meant that more accurate data was coming into the one system.
- Stopped using Terra Quest for validation work, which gave back full control of all applications.
- Transformation continued and measures were in place to help planning officers clear the decision backlog and
- This would be quarterly reviewed by the Scrutiny Committee.

Full details of the update were available within the Portfolio Holder report attached to these minutes.

84. Climate & Ecological Emergency Executive Advisory Panel Update

The Portfolio Holder for Highways, Travel and Environment advised that the team was progressing well with the decarbonisation plan for the council owned buildings.

85. Urgent items

There were no urgent items considered at the meeting.

86. **Exempt Business**

It was proposed by Cllr G Carr- Jones and seconded by Cllr P Wharf

Decision

That the press and the public be excluded for the following 2 item(s) in view of the likely disclosure of exempt information within the meaning of paragraph(s) 3 and 4 of schedule 12 A to the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended).

87. **Weymouth Quay Regeneration Project Payments over £500,000**

The Portfolio Holder for Highways, Travel and Environment presented the report and set out the details of the recommendations. The Cabinet indicated that their “minded to view” to support the portfolio holders proposal.

Decision of the Portfolio Holder for Highways, Travel and Environment

- (a) That payments in excess of £500k be paid by Dorset Council in relation to the delivery of the Weymouth Quay Regeneration Project.
- (b) That the agreement to make such payments be delegated to the Executive Director for Place to approve, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Highways, Travel and Environment and the Portfolio Holder for Economic Growth, Assets and Property.

[Executive Decision - Weymouth Quay Regeneration Project payments over £500,000 - Dorset Council](#)

Reason for the decision

There is potential for a number of transactions in the coming months to be in excess of the £500k threshold, and by agreeing to the recommendation disbursements of grant funds can be made as required and without delay. In agreeing payments under the delegation, the Executive Director will ensure that the funds are released only in accordance with CCF and MHCLG grant conditions, thereby minimising risk to DC as accountable body.

88. **Tricuro Options Paper**

The Portfolio Holder for Ault Social Care and Health set out to details of the report and its recommendations.

Cabinet members indication that their “minded to view” was to support the recommendations.

Decision of the Portfolio Holder for Adult Social Care and Health

That the recommendations 1 to 3, set out in the exempt report to Cabinet of 5 October 2021, be approved.

[Executive Decision - Tricuro - Dorset Council](#)

Appendix 1 =Public Q&A's

Appendix 2 - Councillor Questions - Q&A's

Appendix 3 - Portfolio Holder Update Summaries

Duration of meeting: 10.00 - 11.46 am

Chairman

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Public Questions for Cabinet 5 October 2021

1.Question from Kevin Egan

I want to share my experience regarding the Rapid Response Car with Cabinet, to support Cllr Suttle's request that a Task and Finish Group is set up ready to look promptly at Dorset CCG's engagement process for reviewing this life saving service.

Three years ago, I suffered a stroke! I was very fit, having run the Purbeck Marathon and placed 1st in the over 50s and in the top 50 overall. Ran the Purbeck 10k in 44 minutes.

I was a mobile mechanic at the time. Just before my birthday in May I woke up with a twitching in my thumb, thinking nothing of it I prepared as usual to drop my son to school and then head out on my usual 10-mile trial run.

Doing my shoelaces was tricky with the twitching. My wife insisted I pop into Swanage Cottage Hospital and have a check over before I venture on my run. Delayed in the hospital for over an hour I missed my run, came home and went to work. I was told it was a trapped nerve in my neck.

By lunchtime the sensation was getting worse, I popped home for lunch, my wife was concerned so insisted I call the local surgery, they were too busy to see me, I did not consider it to be urgent.

Martin the local Rapid Response Paramedic driver happened to be in the surgery and offered to pop down to see me. He carried out several tests on me, but for some reason he would not leave, he kept questioning me about any other symptoms of which I had nothing other than my arm now tingling.

My wife said that I had a headache for a couple of days, this is when Martin's skills as Paramedic and Rapid Response driver saved my life. Within minutes, I found myself and wife in the car on our way to Poole Hospital on blues and twos.

Arriving at Poole Hospital we were greeted by the stroke team, he had organised while driving me to hospital. I was in intensive care for two days.

Without any doubt had Martin and the car not been available my condition and the outcome would have been very different. I owe my life and my well-being to this truly amazing service. I have made almost a full recovery as a direct result of this service getting me to hospital so quickly.

At this end of the Purbeck peninsula, far from hospital, we simply cannot afford to lose this service. Would Cabinet please ensure that any consultation complies with the Gunning principles and that Dorset CCG honours the commitment made to Dorset Council to fully maintain this life saving service?

2.Question from Lawrie and Wilma Sandford

The Swanage based 24/7 Paramedic Car

We write to support Councillor Suttle's request for a Task and Finish Group, ready to look at any engagement process and proposals regarding this service, which has made a significant lifesaving difference to our family.

Our son and daughter came to stay with us in Swanage.

The previous week, he had been suffering with a headache and his local hospital did a C.T. scan and sent him home on strong pain killers.

On his arrival in Swanage his headache was continuing and he was feeling very weak.

On the second night around 2 to 3am he fell getting out of bed and couldn't get up.

We rang 111 and within ten minutes the paramedic arrived in the Ambulance Car.

She calmly assessed the situation and checked our son's vital signs, breathing, heart rate, oxygen levels, blood pressure and all were normal. Having explained his fall she said, "Well I think we'll call that a collapse and get him to hospital"

Our son was only 32, and she had rapidly realised something was seriously wrong.

She arranged for an ambulance which arrived 45 minutes later and took him to Dorchester Hospital.

Within 24 hours he was put into an induced coma, to safeguard his organs and blue-lighted to Southampton Hospital to the Intensive Care Unit.

His condition was identified as Transverse Myelitis which is a relatively rare disorder caused by the inflammation of the spinal cord.

He was in hospital 9 weeks but has since made an amazing recovery although he is now registered disabled, his disabilities could have been far worse.

The arrival of the Paramedic within 10 minutes, and professional assessment that the situation was very serious, more so than we had realised, probably saved our son's life, or at the very least spared him from considerable life changing disabilities including paralysis.

Had we called 999 and been referred to a call centre they would have been unable to ascertain the seriousness of the situation, and the reality is we could have waited hours for a response. There is often a long wait for an ambulance at this end of the Purbeck peninsula.

I hope you will be able to respond to the following questions, the answers, could we believe, be a matter of life, unnecessary serious life-time disabilities or death.

1) Could Cabinet please ensure that any engagement process complies with the Gunning principles, and that Dorset CCG's commitment to Dorset Council to fully maintain Swanage based emergency response vehicles is honoured?

2) What happens if there is a medical emergency with risk to life in the middle of the night and there is no rapid response vehicle in Swanage and Purbeck?

3.Question from Andrew Deacon

The Swanage based 24/7 Purbeck Paramedic Car

I am hoping that Cabinet is the right place to take my concerns about this service. There wasn't time for residents to submit their concerns to People and Health Scrutiny Committee on 8th June, however I watched that meeting, and the Chair clearly stated that, prior to any decision being made, the possible withdrawal of the Swanage 24/7 Paramedic Car fell under the remit of People and Health Overview Committee. Yet the People and Health Overview Committee Agenda on 6th July did not include this item, nor was it on the Agenda for the 2nd September meeting, and my questions to each of these meetings were not answered.

During the hospital reconfiguration discussions, Dorset County Council expressed concern about the risk to Swanage and Isle of Purbeck residents lives given the distance they would need to travel to access emergency hospital care once A&E, Maternity and specialist Children's Units closed at Poole. Dorset County Council secured a commitment from Dorset Clinical Commissioning Group, which was reported at Dorset Health Scrutiny and appears in the minutes of 17th October 2018, on page 5, to the effect that Swanage based ambulance resources – the Ambulance Station, the 24/7 Ambulance and the 24/7 Paramedic Car – would be fully maintained. I was at Health Scrutiny on 17th October 2018 and I remember this commitment very well.

When Dorset County Council became a Unitary Authority all commitments of the County Council transferred to the Dorset Council Unitary Authority.

Dorset Council also has a statutory duty to ensure that any changes to health services benefit all residents.

A petition started last year by the Chair of Swanage Area Forum, Mr Melvyn Norris, to save Swanage Paramedic Car is at just under 8,000 signatures.

A new petition that I started at the end of June asking Dorset Council to require Dorset CCG to honour their commitment to fully maintain Swanage based ambulance resources already stands at 2,870 signatures.

Could Dorset Council Cabinet please assure residents that they will work with Dorset CCG to ensure that

- As soon as any consultation or engagement is announced, a Task and Finish group look at DCCG's proposals, engagement plan and the evidence, ensuring that any engagement plan complies with the Gunning principles for due consultation, that Swanage and Isle of Purbeck residents views are properly taken into account, and can affect the outcome?
- Dorset CCG's commitment to fully maintain all emergency response resources based in Swanage is honoured?

4. Question from Roger Ridout

Midsummer, Sunday afternoon.

Returning to my car, having walked my daughter's dog, I suffered a complete cardiac collapse, resulting in a National Trust warden ringing for an ambulance; apparently, my heart stopped beating for a number of minutes.

The Swanage Rapid Response Ambulance Car - and Matt Trant, the Paramedic, arrived within minutes and treated me at the scene; saving my life.

An ambulance then arrived. Matt immediately drove the ambulance to Poole Hospital, whilst two Paramedics, Peter and Mike, undertook CPR and defibrillation en-route.

Here in Purbeck, particularly for Swanage residents, it cannot be forgotten we are a popular, high-density tourist destination, with bumper-to-bumper traffic and only one main road out and in. This life-saving car is available when an ambulance so often is not; frequently having to wait critical hours for one to turn up.

Please can Dorset Council Cabinet meeting on 5th October agree to set up a Task and Finish Group? As soon as Dorset Clinical Commissioning Group announce their engagement plan and proposals, there needs to be a group who have the capacity to review the engagement plan and the evidence before a decision is made.

5. Question from Hannah Attride

I am emailing you as Chair of Dorset Council Cabinet. I understand Councillor Suttle has asked that the Cabinet meeting on 5th October considers setting up a Task and Finish Group, ready to consider Dorset Clinical Commissioning Group's engagement plan and proposals, as soon as these are announced, regarding the review of the Swanage based Purbeck Paramedic Car.

Our family has understood since May that the Clinical Commissioning Group is due to announce any alternative proposals and their engagement plan 'shortly'. The possible withdrawal of the Paramedic Car is causing our family a lot of anxiety. The Ambulance Trust is very busy, and Ambulances, including our Swanage Ambulance, are out of base in use across the County. It can take a long time for an ambulance to get to us.

Our MP, Richard Drax, has reported that Dorset CCG are considering withdrawing the Swanage-based 'tethered' Paramedic Car, and increasing Ambulance hours at Wareham, 10 miles away. Even if there is an ambulance in Wareham when our family needs one, it cannot possibly get to us in the 7 minute response time that gives the best chance to save life.

We know that the Car Paramedic attends over 400 risk to life emergencies, just in Swanage, each year. My five year old daughter, Everly, is one of these emergencies. Everly has complex epilepsy, and her seizures mean that she can stop breathing suddenly. Often when we call the closest ambulance is over ten miles away, and we

are being told to start CPR and compressions on our daughter. Then the Ambulance Car arrives, usually within two to three minutes, and the Car Paramedic takes over her care.

So the Car is really essential for us, and I am writing to support Councillor Suttle's request to Cabinet to please set up a Task and Finish Group to properly consider this matter.

I am asking Cabinet to please bear in mind the risk to life associated with withdrawal of the Swanage-based emergency service that is most likely to be here when we need it.

6. Question from Swanage Town Clerk on behalf of Swanage Town Council (598 words)

Swanage Town Council is greatly concerned at the multiple risks to life presented by the possible withdrawal of the 'tethered', 24/7 Paramedic Car serving Swanage and surrounding villages in Purbeck. (This is also known as the Ambulance Car or Rapid Response Vehicle.) Swanage lies well off the main Dorset road network at the end of a peninsula, 10 miles beyond Wareham. With the loss of A&E, Maternity and Specialist Children's Care from Poole Hospital, an emergency will find Swanage residents and visitors facing a journey of over 30 miles to access hospital care at the Royal Bournemouth Hospital, much of that journey being on single-carriageway roads which are often the most traffic-congested in Dorset outside the conurbation, particularly during the lengthening holiday season. This increasing risk to life and risk of lives lived in disability is the reason that the former Dorset County Council's Health Scrutiny Committee secured a minuted commitment from the Dorset Clinical Commissioning Group (DCCG) in October 2018 to fully maintain Swanage-based ambulance resources of one 24/7 Ambulance and one 24/7 Paramedic Car.

The further that urgent hospital care moves away, the greater the need for the swift, life-preserving response which the Paramedic Car provides. The Car is extensively used, with over 1,800 call-outs in Purbeck per year, the great majority in Swanage which has an extremely high proportion of elderly residents, even by Dorset standards. The Car is a 4x4 vehicle that can reach off-road locations which ambulances sometimes cannot. Time after time the Car has enabled life to be maintained until an ambulance arrives, or has prevented a Category 2 or 3 case deteriorating into a Category 1 emergency (imminent danger of death). Often the 50% of patients who do not need to go to hospital are successfully treated by the Car, thereby saving scarce double-crewed ambulance resources.

Unlike ambulances, which have to be routinely for use across the County wherever they're most needed, the Paramedic Car can remain 'tethered' to Purbeck since only very exceptionally does it take patients to hospital. It also provides cover following the overnight closure of Swanage Community Hospital's Minor Injuries Unit, and it supports Purbeck GPs in assessing patients who are too unwell to attend their surgery. This 'tethering' means the Car is nearly always available and very likely to be first on the scene in an emergency - usually within minutes.

The Town Council understands that the DCCG has yet to supply information concerning its plan for an engagement/consultation with residents and stakeholders in connection with the potential withdrawal of this Paramedic Car. It is further understood that, when DCCG announces this engagement/consultation, Dorset Council will formally respond and consider the extent of that plan. There is, however, much concern that once such a plan is announced, events will move very rapidly such that the DC Cabinet and Committee meeting timetable may not facilitate a comprehensive and timely response. There is also some doubt about whether DCCG understands an 'engagement' to be what a local authority would normally consider a proper consultation.

Given that the function of the Paramedic Car is truly a matter of life and death, will the Cabinet grant Swanage Town Council's request that, in advance of any engagement/consultation plan being announced, the Cabinet will set up a Task & Finish Group in order to examine such proposals as soon as they are available? This would not only ensure the Task & Finish Group had sufficient time to consider the plan, but the Group could also examine the relevant qualitative and quantitative data in order to inform Dorset Council's response to the DCCG.

Response to questions 1 – 6 from the Portfolio Holder for Adult Social Care and Health

"The decision about the provision of emergency cover in Purbeck will not be made by Dorset Council but, as a resident and local ward member, I fully appreciate the strength of feeling about this amongst local people who live in the area.

"I would like to reassure residents that a working group will be set up from members of the People & Health Scrutiny Committee to respond to the Clinical Commissioning Group's consultation as soon as it is announced."

7. Question from Jane Ashdown

Preamble:

In April of this year, Dorset Council secured funding from the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government to create a County-wide list of local heritage assets with a view to promoting and protecting local heritage including monuments and landscapes. In response to a question that I posed to Councillor Walsh at the April 15th 2021 Council meeting regarding the implementation of this project, it was anticipated that there would be a public launch in May of this year followed by an online survey to gather initial views with the nominations process taking place in the summer. As a Dorchester resident I am especially interested in protecting the valued landscapes of archeological, cultural, and environmental significance around the County town, but have yet to learn of any outreach to the public about the Heritage List Campaign as a result of this funding.

Question:

What is the current status of the Local Heritage List Campaign?

Response from the Portfolio Holder for Planning

“Dorset Council and BCP Council have appointed Land Use Consultants (LUC) to manage the Local Heritage List Campaign, which will enable communities of all ages and backgrounds across Dorset to nominate locally important buildings, sites, monuments and features to be included on new Local Heritage Lists.

The project has been funded by a grant of £70,000, from the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities. The Local Heritage Lists will provide a free publicly accessible record of non-designated heritage assets, whose conservation will then be a material consideration in planning decisions.

The campaign will provide a baseline Local Heritage List for each authority and will be regularly updated with new additions into the future, with the records of all assets being added to Dorset's Historic Environment Record.

Later this autumn a public call for nominations will be announced on the Dorset Council and BCP Council websites and through other media channels, along with guidance on the criteria for assessment. These will be guided by Historic England's standard criteria for Local Listing, but opportunities will be taken to identify local criteria that are specific to Dorset's wide range of communities and heritage.”

8. Question 1 from Peter Bowyer (CPRE)

On 22nd June 2021 Cllr Philip Broadhead Portfolio Lead for Regeneration, Economy and Strategic Planning for BCP Council supported the following statement and motion:

In August 2020 the Government proposed reforms to the current ‘Standard Method’ formula used to determine housing demand in each local authority. This formula seemingly dictates a house building target on BCP, which many people feel is unrealistic and puts undue pressure on our infrastructure, open spaces, Green Belt, and town centres. This figure uses out of date, 2014, population growth data and takes no account of the unique circumstances that BCP has.

The council therefore resolves to:

- Acknowledge that the Portfolio Holder has written to the Secretary of State, once again making the case to Government to use more recent data in their calculations, rather than the outdated 2014 numbers, along with urging greater work to recognise sites to be completed not just commenced.
- Ask the Planning Officers to continue to proceed with haste with the Strategic Housing Market Needs Assessment, to enable us to work with our neighbouring authorities in a timely manner to fulfil any unmet needs.

Because BCP does not have the capacity to meet its housing target, as established by the Standard Method, Dorset Council has undertaken to include 9,000 homes in its Local Plan on behalf of BCP under the duty to cooperate. However, BCP is challenging its housing target on the grounds that the Standard Method is based on ‘out of date’ data with a letter to the Secretary of State and also asking its Planning

Officers to 'proceed with haste' with a Strategic Housing Market Needs Assessment, which could substantially change the number of homes BCP cannot accommodate.

Please could the Portfolio Lead explain why he is not taking similar measures as his counterpart in BCP Council?

Response from the Portfolio Holder for Planning

"The standard method using the 2014 household projections and the latest affordability ratios is the government's preferred approach for calculating the minimum local housing need for each local planning authority. Taken nationally, this approach seeks to deliver the governments stated target of 300,000 new homes per annum.

A departure from the standard method is only acceptable where exceptional circumstances justify an alternative that reflects current and future demographic trends and market signals. Although BCP are indicating that exceptional circumstances exist for the BCP area, the same is not true for Dorset Council. Using more recently released household projections gives a housing figure very similar to when the 2014 projections are used and very similar to the approach that informed housing targets for the former district's emerging local plans."

9. Question 2 from Peter Bowyer (CPRE)

In view of the number of responses to the consultation on the Dorset Local Plan, the fact that BCP Council are challenging their housing target, the unknown effects of Brexit and Covid-19, the stalling of the government proposals to the planning system, and the reported problems of capacity within the planning service at Dorset Council, why is the Dorset Council not seeking a legal challenge to the deadline for the completion of the Dorset Local Plan so as to ensure that the Plan reflects more accurately current circumstances and the needs of Dorset and its residents?

Response from the Portfolio Holder for Planning

"In her letter to local planning authorities on October 1st 2020, the Chief Planner strongly encouraged 'local authorities to continue in the preparation and adoption of local plans' despite the uncertainty over the proposed planning reforms. This was reiterated in a written statement to the House of Commons by the Housing Minister on 19 January 2021 with a repeated commitment to the December 2023 deadline. If a local plan is not in place by the December 2023 deadline, the government have indicated their willingness to intervene and take control of the plan making process. External intervention will not deliver a locally derived strategy that reflects what is important to Dorset.

It is important to get a local plan in place in Dorset to enable effective and efficient planning decisions to be made in order to direct development to the most appropriate locations and protect its high-quality environment. The local plan is important in providing sufficient developable sites to enable the housing delivery test and five-year housing land supply requirement to be met. If either of these are not met, the council's ability to control where development takes place is severely restricted."

Councillor Questions for Cabinet 5 October 2021

Questions from Cllr Paul Kimber

Question 1

From the national news many communities will be welcoming Afghans refugees, can you tell me how many refugees Dorset Council will be welcoming to our county.

Also, the need for support for the Afghan community is the Dorset council actively reaching out to community Groups that can assist.

Response from the Portfolio Holder for Housing and Community Safety

Dorset Council has agreed to participate in the national Afghan Relocation and Assistance Policy (ARAP), which prioritises relocation in the UK for those who worked for the British Armed Forces. The number will be determined by the availability of suitable housing and local support services. We issued a press release and appeal for housing on 27/08/21. We have sent this appeal to local community groups, local media and hundreds of landlords. We are looking for offers of additional housing from private home owners and landlords, and are not proposing to use social rented housing. From 30 offers of help we have been able to confirm one property as suitable and affordable and the first family is expected early November 2021. We are in a similar position to most local authorities in the South West. As a local comparison, BCP Council have also secured one property to date. We are in ongoing conversations with landlords, Ministry of Defence, local charities, community groups and local media to seek further housing so that we can welcome more Afghan families.

We have successfully resettled over 86 Syrian refugee families in Dorset and have very good knowledge and experience of refugee support needs. We have put this provision in place for Afghan families via our in-house resettlement staff and a local charity who currently support Afghan refugees in Bournemouth. We have contacted all the local community groups across Dorset already involved with the Syrian community to explain our plans and priority need for housing. We are actively supporting Community Sponsorship in Dorset, an additional government scheme where a local community group sponsor a refugee family – we have approved two groups so far and a third is at an early stage of the Home Office application process. We are working very closely with our Armed Forces Covenant Coordinator, MoD military services and charities to prepare further support or specialist help for Afghans who were employed by the UK Forces. We have responded to over 200+ queries and offers of help from people and groups across Dorset, we are keeping a record of all offers that may be suitable or needed by Afghan families depending on their location and individual needs. We have established links at local DWP, Job Centres, Dorset Police, Citizens Advice, School Admissions, Dorset CCG and English tuition providers to prepare support for the families arriving in Dorset.

Question 2

[Timetable consultation - South Western Railway December 2022.](#)

In partnership with Network Rail and the Department for Transport, there is a stakeholder consultation on proposals for December 2022 timetable.

This is a strategic review of future service levels affecting our local services.

As many of you will know rail Passengers in Dorset and the wider Southwest communities are unhappy about the cuts in train time frequency.

- With recent concerns about overcrowding and a need for a return to the twice hourly service to and from Weymouth to Waterloo service.
- The need to attract people back to the railways and relieve overcrowding for the public on our rail service.

SWR timetable consultation From Dorset Council.

Could I see Dorset council written response to the consultation.

Response from the Portfolio Holder for Highways, Travel and Environment

The answer is yes and the report will be emailed to you following this meeting.

Question 3

I wish to ask at the next Cabinet meeting a question regarding two prominent buildings on Portland. The first building is the modern Dorset Council owned Fortuneswell Primary School, which has been empty for years and is a constant unexplained talking point on Portland. The second building is derelict and ugly Hardy Block, owned by Comer Homes, which is very prominent and visible to everyone arriving on Portland; first impressions of any place are crucial.

As we know, the Government has established a high priority Levelling Up Agenda. In the last week, this policy shift has been given added prominence by the appointment of Rt Hon Michael Gove as Secretary of State for the new Department of 'Levelling Up, Housing and Communities'. Interestingly local government has been replaced by communities in the departmental branding. As a result, local government may have to prove its community credentials.

Regarding the new government focus on Communities, it is often forgotten that Weymouth and Portland reside at the lowest levels of Government Indices for wages and social mobility. To place this in context Portland and Weymouth were hit badly by the Royal Navy Closure in 1995, with a long-term community impact equivalent to the closure of FOUR pits.

I have put forward an outline strategy for using the empty Fortuneswell Primary School as an easy in easy out business start-up centre. The location, classroom, and hall space layout would suit this and fit well with the levelling-up and communities' agenda. Location-wise, Portland has the largest blue-collar demographic in Dorset, many of whom support independent living for many of the sub-regions elderly and retired. Without this support, responsibility would fall onto the Dorset Council Social Services budget.

The Hardy Block has a variety of conversion options. The one that would support Portland's young, blue-collar demographic would be conversion to affordable rental housing. The wing that doesn't face the sea could easily be converted into an easy in easy out business start-up centre as expansion space from a successful Fortuneswell Primary School conversion or as a replacement if other long term uses are identified for the school.

The above is a reminder that Dorset Council needs to find a way or retaining young people and families in the County. There is self-interest in focusing training and start-up business support in vocational skills that will support independent living for Dorset's disproportionate aged resident population. The wake-up call may well come with the initial Census results that are likely to show a continuing trend of young people and families leaving Dorset.

My question is - When will we see the community supporting proposals on the Hardy Block supplying new homes for rent and the new empty Fortuneswell Primary School being used for medium-term vocational business start-ups that will support Dorset's ageing population?

Response from the Portfolio Holder for Planning

Cllr Kimber raised this matter in a question to the Council meeting in December 2020. The response given at that time stands and is set out below for ease of reference

Prince Andrew House is part of the former naval base which has the benefit of an extant planning permission for 554 residential units, involving a mix of new-build and conversion. The approved plans would see the conversion of the 'Hardy Block' into 157 units. However, this is a difficult and expensive site to develop and viability has proved to be a key stumbling block, in spite of a previous award of money through the Government's Housing Infrastructure Fund. Unfortunately this was still not sufficient to make the scheme viable and so the money could not be drawn down. In the absence of a substantial capital injection, completion of the scheme is therefore likely require a significant change in market conditions. On the issue of safety, the building itself is structurally sound and not a dangerous structure under the provisions of the Building Act. The Council's Environmental Protection Officers have previously investigated reports of people accessing the site and at the time were satisfied that the company had secured the site as far as reasonably practicable and introduced appropriate monitoring procedures. This will be monitored but it is relevant to note that unauthorised access to private land is a responsibility for the owner and potentially a police matter. Turning to the question of compulsory purchase, this requires ministerial approval and acquiring authorities should only use such powers where there is a compelling case in the public interest, and must demonstrate that they have taken reasonable steps to acquire all of the land and rights included in the Order by agreement. A number of steps are therefore required. In any event Dorset Council would need to be prepared to shoulder the financial cost (and subsequent risk) in taking such action, including any potential compensation liabilities under the provisions of the Compulsory Purchase Act. I would advise

Council that now is not the appropriate time to be taking on such risks and the balance of public interest currently would not lie with embarking upon the acquisition via CPO of this site.

This site is in the ownership of Comer Homes. Homes England as the Government's housing delivery agency has previously offered grant funding to support viability of the development of the new-build phase three of the site. This grant offer from Homes England was not pursued by Comer Homes, however it is understood that Homes England is aware of the issues of this site and could look favourably upon any fresh approach from the site owners.

The Osprey Quay School premises are in the process of being surrendered by the Aspirations Academy Trust back to Dorset Council. The Council in turn is in negotiation with the Department for Education over the re-use of the site for new education provision. Whilst there is no defined timescale for the re-use of the site, whilst those negotiations are ongoing the site would not be available for any alternative use.

Question 4 from Cllr Brian Heatley

At item 8 on the Agenda Cabinet are asked to make the climate and ecology a priority in the Dorset Plan (p.89). I welcome this as will a wide range of people and groups in Dorset who suggested this during the consultation on the Plan.

At item 6 on the Agenda the paper notes the priorities in the Dorset Council Plan as it was on adoption in February 2020 as part of its framework for the budget process for the 2022-23 Budget and Medium-Term Plan. These priorities did not of course then include the climate and ecology.

Could we have an assurance please that if Cabinet agrees the proposal in item 8 to make climate and ecology a Corporate Plan Priority, it will be treated as priority along with the others in the 2022-23 Budget process?

Response from the Portfolio Holder for Finance, Commercial and Capital Strategy

"Yes, I confirm that if Cabinet agrees the proposal in item 8 to make climate and ecology a Corporate Plan Priority, it will be considered as a priority alongside the others in the 2022-23 Budget process"



PORTFOLIO HOLDER/LEAD MEMBER UPDATE SUMMARY

PORTFOLIO:¹

Cllr Ray Bryan
Highways, Travel and Environment

CABINET DATE:²

5th October 2021

KEY ACTIVITIES SINCE
THE LAST REPORT:³

Creating a response to the BSIP project which is about providing better bus services across the DC area. Various meetings with stakeholders including bus companies

Finalising the Car Park Charges review ready to submit to overview and cabinet.

Working on the winter plan for 2021/22

Working with colleagues on budget for year 2022/23

SEN transport financials. Now working on ways of reducing costs.

Working with officers on numerous bid proposals

Reviewing policies in highways and amending where required.

Phase two of the EV charging programme.

Opportunities for either wind or Solar panel build to power Dorset.

¹ Enter the portfolio area

² Insert the date of the Cabinet meeting to which this summary update is to be reported

³ Provide brief details of the meetings attended, key activities or project milestones completed since the last report

DELEGATED DECISIONS
MADE:⁴

Bus service improvement plan

Weymouth Gateway.

Numerous TRO's

ANTICIPATED
ACTIVITIES/MILESTONES
FOR NEXT PERIOD:⁵

Looking at all the budget pressures and finding ways of delivering a balanced budget.

Climate and Ecological Emergency update and set new targets for change. Working on decarbonisation plan for council owned buildings.

Delivering Bus Service Improvement Plan to Central Government.

Looking at opportunities to be more commercial to help revenue.

Improving the network of alternative methods of transport.

⁴ Enter details of any delegated decisions made since the last meeting

⁵ Provide details of key activities, project milestones or significant meetings anticipated in the next period

PORTFOLIO HOLDER/LEAD MEMBER UPDATE SUMMARY

PORTFOLIO:¹

Housing and Community Safety

CABINET DATE:²

7 October 2021

KEY ACTIVITIES SINCE
THE LAST REPORT:³

- Work to develop an overarching Housing Strategy for Dorset is under way. Part of the purpose is to develop a strong and compelling direction for Housing in Dorset, fitting effectively with the aspirations set out in the Council's Plan and transforming the approach.
- We've made strong and sound progress over the past year introducing excellent strategies to prevent and tackle homelessness and rough sleeping and policies to allocate social housing to those who need it. The next step is to bring together all of our work as a Housing Authority into one overarching Strategy – tackling housing standards, services, housing need and the supply of new homes as part of the range.
- We are completing a process to introduce our new Housing Allocations Policy, with all people waiting for social housing needing to re-register. A new system has been introduced, being very user friendly and easy to access.
- We are continuing with the appeal to landlords and property owners to offer homes for the recently launched Afghan Relocations and Assistance Policy. These are in addition to the social rented homes we use for people on our Housing Register. We have our first four-bedroom home coming

¹ Enter the portfolio area

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The DELEGATED
DECISIONS MADE:⁴

None

ANTICIPATED
ACTIVITIES/MILESTONES
FOR NEXT PERIOD:⁵

- forward in November, and this will be offered to an Afghan family and supported through the scheme.
- We have moved to holding monthly meetings of the Community Safety Partnership, from quarterly. This is a reflection of the growing profile of the activity across the Partnership, including the implementation of the new requirements of the Domestic Abuse Act, but addressing a wide range of community safety priorities.

- Ongoing work to develop the Housing Strategy and delivery plan – drawing in other Portfolio Holders and Lead Members to make this fit well across the range of the Council's Plan and associated strategies.

⁴ Enter details of any delegated decisions made since the last meeting

⁵ Provide details of key activities, project milestones or significant meetings anticipated in the next period

PORTFOLIO HOLDER/LEAD MEMBER UPDATE SUMMARY

PORTFOLIO:¹

Economic Growth Assets and Property

CABINET DATE:²

5 Oct 2021

KEY ACTIVITIES SINCE
THE LAST REPORT:³

The major project of this (and every) summer is the Repairs and Maintenance Schools Summer program which encompasses an enormous program of work which must be completed before the pupil's return to school. This was completed almost entirely on time and within budget.

Major progress has been made on the staff relocation program, including the emptying of South Walks House prior to its reuse.

Intrepid Minds have moved into units in the Quadrant on the Innovation Park, which is now full. Spirent, a global leader in software development processes have agreed to locate to the Park.

DELEGATED DECISIONS
MADE:⁴

¹ Enter the portfolio area

² Insert the date of the Cabinet meeting to which this summary update is to be reported

³ Provide brief details of the meetings attended, key activities or project milestones completed since the last report

⁴ Enter details of any delegated decisions made since the last meeting

ANTICIPATED
ACTIVITIES/MILESTONES
FOR NEXT PERIOD:⁵

Announcement on the Levelling Up bid with significant implications for Weymouth and Portland regeneration.

⁵ Provide details of key activities, project milestones or significant meetings anticipated in the next period

PORTFOLIO HOLDER/LEAD MEMBER UPDATE SUMMARY

PORTFOLIO:¹

Customer and Community Services

CABINET DATE:²

5th October 2021

KEY ACTIVITIES SINCE
THE LAST REPORT:³

Strategic meetings on shortages of drivers and loaders in waste
Process for new Dorset Council area ASB and PSPO
Ongoing review of leisure services provision
Further work on one front door, libraries role in customer services going forward.
Further work on out of hours call centre
Libraries strategy steering group
Governance review for JAS
Redland sports facilities review.
Informal Cabinet
QE leisure consultation
Costings on leisure centres after lockdown
Performance management
Meeting Towns and larger parishes DAPTC
Various updates with Directors in Place
Preparation for Festival of the Future

¹ Enter the portfolio area

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DELEGATED DECISIONS
MADE:⁴

Reversionary interests museum grants

ANTICIPATED
ACTIVITIES/MILESTONES
FOR NEXT PERIOD:⁵

Continued work on route optimisation for
domestic waste whole DC area

Consultation on QE management for leisure
services

Consultation on Library Services and initial
engagement with stakeholders and larger
community on library strategy

Continued work on customer service offer and
one front door

Out of hours service call centre review

Planning stage of enabling communities strategy

Continued work on HWB regarding use of leisure
facilities and green space

Continued work on Dorset wide renewal of
PSPO's and ASB's

Webinars for DAPTC members

⁴ Enter details of any delegated decisions made since the last meeting

⁵ Provide details of key activities, project milestones or significant meetings anticipated in the next period

PORTFOLIO HOLDER/LEAD MEMBER UPDATE SUMMARY

PORTFOLIO:¹

Children, Education, Skills & Early Help

CABINET DATE:²

3.10.2021

KEY ACTIVITIES SINCE
THE LAST REPORT:³

Ofsted Inspection – welcome to Ofsted who have undertaken a 3-week inspection of Dorset Children’s Services. Cllr Parry has met twice with lead inspector.
Visit to Westfield Arts College – Cllr Parry was delighted to be invited to see the excellent work going on in one of our Special Schools.
Meeting of the Virtual School Governing Board. Welcome to new Governors Natasha Solomon-Mondal & Joe Barnett.
Aspire Adoption Board Meeting – Service updates and budget discussions
Dorset Travel Transformation Steering Group, join meeting with colleagues & officers in Place Directorate
Corporate Parenting Board – Formal Meeting, held virtually.
Don’t forget the Festival of the Future!

DELEGATED DECISIONS
MADE:⁴

Approval for necessary adaption and upgrade works at The Dorset Centre of Excellence ahead of opening in 2022.

ANTICIPATED
ACTIVITIES/MILESTONES
FOR NEXT PERIOD:⁵

Publication of Ofsted Inspection report.

¹ Enter the portfolio area

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⁴ Enter details of any delegated decisions made since the last meeting

⁵ Provide details of key activities, project milestones or significant meetings anticipated in the next period

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PORTFOLIO HOLDER/LEAD MEMBER UPDATE SUMMARY

PORTFOLIO:¹

Planning

CABINET DATE:²

5th October 2021

KEY ACTIVITIES SINCE
THE LAST REPORT:³

There is positive news to report in regard to planning validation backlog. We knew it wasn't going to be an overnight fix but the combination of changes below means we are finally turning a corner.

1. Sheer hard work and determination from all the teams
2. New training and development post that started at the end of July is having a great success in fast tracking training of our new Tech support officers, also in refresher training and building the confidence of existing team members in validation.
3. 7 New officers started since the end of July. (2 temporary posts still to fill.)
4. The reduction in administrative tasks i.e. Neighbour letters, directing to online commenting, means officers have more time for validation.
5. A steadying of applications being received is giving us some breathing space.
6. Following the Purbeck migration in early July it means that more accurate data is coming into the one system and makes life so much easier in regard to stats and proactively monitoring.
7. Stopped using Terra Quest for validation work, which gave us back full control of our applications.

The overall aim is for all the areas to have cleared their backlogs by end of Dec 2021 at the latest.

What this does however mean is the backlog baton will now be passed over to the planning case officers. We

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have a number of measures in place to help the planning teams deal with increased caseloads as the validation backlog is cleared, and with the aim of making progress on the decision backlog. We will be keeping this under review over the coming months:

- We have recently successfully recruited a number of planning officers, with our Northern Development Management team now fully staffed, and the Southern/Western team due to be fully staffed by mid-November.
- We have forthcoming vacancies in the Eastern team which we have struggled to recruit to.
- The teams are currently being supported by additional temporary resource (agency planners and TerraQuest) to assist in clearing backlogs.
- The migration of former East Dorset data to the new MasterGov system in early October will mean that all former districts are covered by the single Dorset Council system, helping us to improve efficiency and consistency of process across the three area teams.
- Our new simplified report templates are helping officers to improve efficiency whilst maintaining a focus on the key planning issues.
- We have set up a number of 'surgeries' for specialist input to planning applications, which are helping to ensure that specialist advice is available to planning officers when needed. These surgeries cover legal, flood risk and conservation issues.

DELEGATED DECISIONS
MADE:⁴

⁴ Enter details of any delegated decisions made since the last meeting

ANTICIPATED
ACTIVITIES/MILESTONES
FOR NEXT PERIOD:⁵

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⁵ Provide details of key activities, project milestones or significant meetings anticipated in the next period

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