

DORSET COUNCIL - PEOPLE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY 2 JULY 2019

Present: Cllrs Jane Somper (Chairman), Mary Penfold (Vice-Chairman), Toni Coombs, Stella Jones, Emma Parker, Molly Rennie, Mark Roberts, Maria Roe, Clare Sutton and Gill Taylor

Apologies: None

Also present: Cllr Tony Alford

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

Sarah Parker (Executive Director of People - Children), Mathew Kendall (Executive Director of People - Adults), Lee Ellis (Scrutiny Officer) and Lindsey Watson (Senior Democratic Services Officer)

1. Declarations of Interest

Councillor Mark Roberts declared an interest as a provider of adult services to the local authority.

2. Welcome from Chairman

The Chairman welcomed all present to the meeting and everyone introduced themselves.

The Executive Director for Children and the Executive Director for Adults both attended the meeting and provided an overview of their areas. They noted the challenges faced by both service areas and welcomed the involvement of the committee in reviewing the services. The links to the health area was also recognised.

A point was raised with regard to the involvement of the committee in the area of mental health and it was recognised that this should be linked into the committee's work programme moving forward.

3. Overview and Scrutiny Committees - Terms of Reference

Members noted the Overview and Scrutiny Committees' Terms of Reference, as set out in the Dorset Council Constitution (Part 1, Article 7 – Overview and Scrutiny Committees).

Members considered the Terms of Reference document and during discussion the following points were raised:

- It was noted that in relation to the exercise of overview and scrutiny functions relating to education matters, the membership of the People Scrutiny Committee was required to include four co-opted members representing particular diocese and parent governors in addition to the 10 councillors. The committee discussed where the additional persons could be drawn from and how they were chosen? In response, the Scrutiny Officer confirmed that further information would be sought to clarify the process and that information would be provided to councillors
- Councillors noted that 7.1 (g) (iii) (Role/Terms of Reference) stated that “people” shall be solely responsible for the performance of overview and scrutiny functions relating to education matters. A comment was made that the phrasing of this section could leave the impression that the committee would only be looking at education issues, which was not the case. The wording was contained to indicate that the People Scrutiny Committee was the only committee to review education issues. Differing views were expressed but there was an overall view that this wording should be reviewed in order to make the position clear to anyone reading the terms of reference. It was noted that there was to be a review of the Constitution and that the minute of the discussion could be carried forward to this in order to represent the view of the committee
- The use of committee pre-meetings in preparation for particular meetings was discussed and a concern raised with regard to the public perception of this and the need to ensure the committee was making the best use of its time. The Chairman noted that a pre-meeting could be useful in advance of particular agenda items in order to plan questioning and suggested that the committee tried it out as a method and reviewed its usefulness. It was agreed that the issue should be considered further at the committee’s work programme session to follow the meeting.

4. **Public Participation**

There were no representations from town or parish councils or from members of the public.

5. **Urgent items**

There were no urgent items.

6. **People Scrutiny Committee Work Programme**

The Scrutiny Officer noted that there would be a session for councillors to discuss the committee’s work programme after the meeting. In addition to the dates scheduled in the Calendar of Meetings, an additional meeting of the committee would be held on 10 September 2019.

Councillors considered the work programme for the committee and during discussion, the following points were raised:

- A number of potential items had been brought forward from the scrutiny committees of the former sovereign councils and these would be considered by the Dorset Council scrutiny committees for inclusion in their work programmes moving forward
- A review of the Emergency Assistance Fund was suggested as a potential review for the committee
- A point was noted that the committee needed to be a critical friend when reviewing areas and that officers and councillors were working together for the benefit of residents
- Reference was made to the role of all councillors as corporate parents and whether there was any cross over of work that needed to be undertaken by the committee? Possible areas for review could be a look at how the Council was meeting its targets for education health and care plans and the transition of young people into adult social care
- In response to a question as to how items were submitted to the work programme, the Scrutiny Officer noted that a pro-forma was available for councillors and members of the public to complete if they wished an item to be considered by the committee. In the future it was hoped to develop an area on the Council's website for the scrutiny function
- The work programme would be developed with the committee and brought to the meeting in September
- The committee would need to prioritise items for inclusion on the work programme
- Items on the Cabinet Forward Plan could be reviewed by the committee before a decision was taken by Cabinet
- A point was made that the committee should be looking at Adult Social Care – Direct Payments, which was to be considered by Cabinet on 1 October 2019

7. Cabinet Forward Plan

This was noted during the previous agenda item.

8. Exempt Business

There was no exempt business.

Duration of meeting: 10.00 - 10.35 am

Chairman

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