

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

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.

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?

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?

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?