

**DORSET COUNCIL - PEOPLE AND HEALTH OVERVIEW COMMITTEE**

**MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON MONDAY 14 DECEMBER 2020**

**Present:** Cllrs Andrew Kerby (Chairman), Pauline Batstone (Vice-Chairman), Tony Alford, Pete Barrow, Toni Coombs, Stella Jones, Rebecca Knox and Daryl Turner

**Also present:** Cllr Peter Wharf (Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Corporate Development and Change)

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

Vivienne Broadhurst (Interim Executive Director - People Adults), Nicola Fowler (Financial Assessments Team Manager), Theresa Leavy (Executive Director of People - Children), David McIntosh (Corporate Director (HR & OD)), Gill Vickers (Interim Corporate Director - Adult Care Operations), Susan Ward-Rice (Equalities and Diversity Officer) and Helen Whitby (Senior Democratic Services Officer)

**19. Apology**

An apology was received from Councillor Ryan Holloway.

**20. Declarations of Interest**

No declarations of interest were made by members at the meeting.

**21. Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held on 27 October 2020 were confirmed subject to the following amendment. The Chairman would sign them at the earliest opportunity.

Minute 10 - Declarations

Remove Councillor Alford's declaration as he did not have a property which was rented out.

**22. Public Participation**

There were no questions or statements from Town and Parish Councils or members of the public.

## 23. **Current & Future Changes to the Financial Assessment and Care Contributions Policy**

The Committee considered a report by the Interim Executive Director of People - Adults on changes to the financial assessment and care contributions policy.

The current policy had been unchanged since the Care Act was introduced in 2014 and in some appeals the Local Government Social Care Ombudsman had found the local authority at fault. The changes would not alter the way that contributions were collected but provided greater clarity as to how certain situations would be treated and examples were given to illustrate this. Comments were welcomed on the policy either at or following the meeting.

Members discussed the report in detail and the follow changes/amendments were suggested:-

- there should be reference to people having their own home;
- there should be a reference to married couples;
- the policy should be written in a way to make it more easily understood;
- this was a new policy for Dorset Council yet there were references to dates in 2015;
- the risk rating for the policy was low yet the activity carried some financial risk;
- the need to encourage people to make plans for their future health and financial position before they had care needs;
- that a similar approach to the mid autumn adjusted system be adopted;
- was there anything in the policy about people who were uncooperative?
- links be provided to the two policies referred to on Page 30.

Having made the above suggestions, the Committee:-

### **Recommended**

That the updated policy as set out in appendix A is agreed. This incorporates the changes identified with this report under section 2.2.

That agreement is sought for the Executive Director and the Portfolio Holder for Adult Social Care and Health to have delegated authority to sign off future minor amendments and clarification of decision-making processes within the policy.

### **Reason for Recommendations:**

To update the Charging and Financial Assessments Policy to support the continued delivery of the Service ensuring care contributions could be assessed and collected in a timely manner supporting fairness and equitability across the county.

## 24. **Equality, Diversity and Inclusion: Draft Strategy and Action Plan**

The Committee considered a report by the Chief Executive on the draft Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy and Action Plan.

The Strategy and Action Plan would be considered by Cabinet in January 2021. The Strategy had been drafted in order to have a clear and cohesive strategy across all Council services. The recent murder of George Floyd in America and the spread of Covid and its impact on vulnerable communities had added urgency to the Strategy's development. The voluntary and community sector, partners, Trade Unions, the Forum for Equality and Diversity, Dorset Race Equality Council and residents had all been involved in its development. In particular the Committee were asked to consider whether the Strategy needed greater cohesion, whether anything was missing, whether any additional recommendations should be made to Cabinet and how it could be embedded within the Council's culture.

Members then discussed the Strategy and action plan in detail. Comments and suggested amendments included:

- what did good look like and what targets should be included;
- members would have had more time to consider the four areas if they had been given them prior to the meeting;
- the need for organisations the Council worked with to have similar equality standards;
- the Strategy referred to Covid and its effect on the older population but young people and those of working age had been affected by lockdown too and this was not included;
- Covid had also affected people's mental health and finances which was also omitted;
- health inequalities needed to be addressed within the Strategy;
- the current workforce did not represent the wider community;
- negative and positive discrimination and the need for appointments to be made on merit;
- the Nepalese population and their families, veterans and ex-service men did not feature within the Strategy;
- the need for the use of plain English so that the Strategy was easily understandable to the public;
- the Strategy needed to make reference to the style guide which needed to be updated to reflect Black and Minority Ethnicity and other protected characteristics;
- that the emphasis on young people, health inequalities and links to the armed forces covenant be strengthened in the Strategy.

Although cultural change was difficult to monitor, the Pulse and Hive surveys undertaken by staff gave an indication of changes. The Corporate Director for HR&OD would arrange for a member seminar to be scheduled on this.

In view of their involvement in the Strategy it was suggested that a member of the Public Health Team be invited to the meeting when the Strategy was next reviewed.

Members noted that discussions were IT were under way to develop the action plan as a live document so that people could input directly into it.

A member seminar on leadership, employer of choice and the use of plain English would be held during the first part of 2021.

Having discussed the Strategy in full, the Committee:-

### **Recommended**

That Cabinet adopt the draft equality, diversity and inclusion strategy and action plan (attached at appendix 1);

### **Reason for Recommendation:**

As a public body, we have both a legal and a moral duty to promote equality, diversity and inclusion.

### **Decisions**

1. That the findings of the public consultation be noted.
2. That the timetable for decision-making by Cabinet in January 2021 be noted.
3. The Corporate Director for HR&OD would arrange a member seminar on the Pulse and Hive surveys.
4. A member of the Public Health Team be invited to the meeting when the Strategy was next reviewed.

## **25. Committee and Cabinet Forward Plans**

The Committee considered its Forward Plan.

The Chairman reported that he had been in discussions with the Leader and Cabinet about possible items for future scrutiny. He referred to a recent workshop on housing which had proven successful and he suggested that these be used as an initial means of developing policy.

He suggested that workshops on the Harbour Project in January 2021, towards a settled adulthood in February 2021 and on carers at a later date. These were agreed.

The results of the housing workshop would be considered at the meeting on 4 March 2021.

### **Decisions**

1. That workshops be held as follows:-

Harbour Project - January 2021  
Towards a settled adulthood - February 2021  
Carers - to be scheduled

2, That a report on the outcomes of the workshop on housing be provided for the meeting on 4 March 2021.

**26. Urgent Items**

There were no urgent items.

**27. Exempt Business**

There was no exempt business.

**Duration of meeting:** 10.00 am - 12.00 pm

**Chairman**

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