

## **PEOPLE AND HEALTH SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

### **MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON MONDAY 20 SEPTEMBER 2021**

**Present:** Cllrs Gill Taylor (Chairman), Molly Rennie (Vice-Chairman), Rod Adkins, Jean Dunseith, Barry Goringe, Nick Ireland, Mary Penfold and Bill Pipe

**Apologies:** Cllrs Robin Legg and Louie O'Leary

**Also present:** Cllr Tony Alford, Cllr Jon Andrews, Cllr Cherry Brooks, Cllr Ray Bryan, Cllr Graham Carr-Jones, Cllr Simon Christopher, Cllr Beryl Ezzard, Cllr David Gray, Cllr Matthew Hall, Cllr Paul Kimber, Cllr Rebecca Knox, Cllr Laura Miller, Cllr Andrew Parry, Cllr Val Potheary, Cllr David Shortell, Cllr Jane Somper, Cllr David Taylor, Cllr David Tooke, Cllr David Walsh and Cllr Kate Wheller

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

David Bonner (Service Manager for Business Intelligence and Performance), Andrew Billany (Corporate Director of Housing, Dorset Council), Vivienne Broadhurst (Interim Executive Director - People Adults), Laura Cornette (Business Partner - Communities and Partnerships), Lesley Hutchinson (Corporate Director for Adults Commissioning), Theresa Leavy (Executive Director of People - Children), Vanessa Read (CCG Link Director to Scrutiny), Claire Shiels (Corporate Director - Commissioning, Quality & Partnerships), Steve Veevers (Corporate Director Operations, Adult Care) and Fiona King (Senior Democratic Services Officer)

**12. Apologies**

Apologies for absence were received from Robin Legg and Louie O'Leary.

**13. Declarations of Interest**

No declarations of disclosable pecuniary interests were made at the meeting.

However, in respect of agenda item 5, Dorset Council support for post Covid VCS Recovery, whilst not a pecuniary interest, the Chairman highlighted that she was Chair of the Westham Community Group. Cllr Ireland advised that he was a partner governor at Dorset Healthcare Trust and also had a daughter working at Dorset County Hospital (DCH). Cllr Adkins had a son also working at DCH.

**14. Public Participation**

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

**15. Questions from Members**

There were no written questions received from councillors.

Cllr Andrews advised that he was still concerned with the lack of opening hours of some of the local Minor Injuries units (MIUs), which offered a vital service within the health structure in Dorset. He stressed the need for them to be maintained and to remain open.

The Chairman asked that a scrutiny request form be completed to enable the committee to do some further work on this.

**16. Dorset Council support for post Covid VCS Recovery**

Members considered a report from the Executive Director for Corporate Development which provided an update on the council's financial response to supporting the Voluntary Community Sector (VCS) during the pandemic and into recovery along with an update on the core infrastructure support commissioned post October 2020.

**Areas of discussion/questions**

The amount of money that had been given to more rural communities was highlighted.

Looking at supporting more village halls with broadband and also supporting community transport.

Supporting people back into volunteering.

Awarding of specific grants.

Timescale of particular grants and how that was operated.

Assistance with completion and assessment of grant forms.

There was a 4 week turnaround with the assessment of forms

Grants to youth clubs highlighted and were those who were eligible able to apply.

Reference to short term grants and resilience.

Targeted youth workers working hard within communities.

Access to some funding for some groups from other areas highlighted .

**17. Safeguarding (Children) Annual Report**

Members considered the Annual Safeguarding (Children) report which had been considered by the Cabinet at their meeting on 7 September 2021.

The Portfolio Holder for Children, Education, Skills and Early Help introduced the Pan Dorset report and thanked partners from across all the organisations for their input.

Anthony Douglas would be handing over the Chairmanship to James Vaughan, the retiring Chief Constable for Dorset, in October.

**Areas of discussion/questions**

The annual report related to the year of the pandemic.

Reference was made to the Strengthening Services Board which was chaired by the Chief Executive.  
 Highlighted multi-agency working and the use of Teams during the pandemic.  
 Unpredictable nature of the work highlighted.  
 Amount of multi-agency work being done during really difficult times.  
 All agencies do need to improve but this was relevant everywhere.  
 There were opportunities for agencies to improve together.  
 Telephone triaging during the pandemic highlighted.  
 Children's Advice and Duty Service work highlighted.  
 The Integrated Front Door covered a range of needs  
 There was good recognition of how partnership working had improved over the past year.  
 There was a need to look at emerging risks. More notification around domestic abuse for future reports would be useful.  
 Reference was made to the Domestic Abuse toolkit to help with answering the more difficult questions.  
 Strain and stress on frontline staff a concern.  
 Importance of health and wellbeing of staff highlighted.  
 Joining the dots – was there an understanding of what was going on 'out there', there had been an improvement but could still do better.  
 Technological and digital projects highlighted.  
 Future funding of partnership highlighted and discussed.  
 Positive working relationship with new PCC was already in place.

The Chairman thanked Anthony for all the work he had done over the past couple of years.

## **18. Dorset Children Thrive**

Members considered a report from the Executive Director for People, Children which provided an update on the implementation of the new operating model for Children's Services.

### **Areas of discussion/questions**

Performance benchmarking explained.  
 Progress made during the pandemic.  
 Continuous improvement was evident.  
 Any idea on potential changes that might arise as a result of issues that came up  
 This was a starting point of what the Council wanted to be achieved in the future, strong principles and the importance of localities were noted.  
 The Council had a huge ambition for the children of Dorset.  
 Good life outcomes for children within the next 10 years was highlighted.  
 Iterative and growing process.  
 Staff working in the virtual world and the difficulties that had presented.  
 Ability to access training had been a benefit along with the speed of getting to know people had been really good.  
 How do we set targets and what targets should we be setting. Key performance indicators from other authorities were looked at. Benchmarking at what was good and outstanding elsewhere was also researched.  
 Work of Corporate Parenting Board highlighted.

Notification of imminent Ofsted inspection was given.

The Portfolio Holder for Children, Education, Skills and Early Help thanked all councillors for their continuing support to Children's Services.

## 19. **Performance Scrutiny**

Members reviewed the Performance Dashboard.

The link to the dashboard is shown below and members were advised that on the home page of the tool there was a button/box called '2020/21 Dashboard', this would provide access to performance from the last financial year and would open in a new window:-

[People & Health Scrutiny Performance](#)

This information was also accessible for members of the public.

### **Areas of discussion/questions**

The monthly updates on the RAG table were looked at.

**Number of adults with learning disabilities in paid employment**, was below target, was the target set too high? The Interim Executive Director for People, Adults advised that over the past 18 months it had been difficult to progress employment for residents with a learning disability. A new contract was due to go out to tender in respect of this and it was important to have a stretching target in this area. Following a discussion it was agreed that an update would be provided for members at a later date when retendering the contract. Officers suggested that a deep dive on progress would be helpful but stressed the need for in a few months time in order for the contract to settle in.

Following a question about whether the new contract was for volunteering plus paid employment or just employment, the Interim Executive Director for People, Adults advised that the message was that the directorate was ambitious for Dorset residents. The focus was on paid employment, but volunteering was also important. It was important to build up community resilience.

Independent housing was still below number.

**Hospital discharges and bed occupancy.** The Chairman advised that at the next meeting of the Committee on 1 November 2021 there would be a report on the Adult Care Market which would include a hospital discharge element and where and how this impacted services.

**Freedom of information** requests answered on time were flagging as off-target for the Children's Directorate. Members were advised that in some areas response was much slower than would have been done in pre-covid times. Work both corporately and within the directorate was needed in this area. The consistency of approach was also highlighted. It would be helpful for members to look at this in future months to see how it was progressing. The Chairman undertook to speak with the Chairman of the Place and

Resources Scrutiny Committee to discuss a potential joint piece of work between both scrutiny committees.

**Housing** – reference was made to the duty of homelessness of residents and the likelihood of any increases? Officers had been expecting an increase but it was not as high as expected. There was concern regarding availability and affordability of private lettings. Officers were finding a rise in family evictions, possibly as a result of the pandemic. Currently there were 16 families in B&B, 6 were there as a result of a family eviction. More preventive face to face work was being carried out. There had been a shift from looking for rough sleeper accommodation to searching for family accommodation. In respect of the number of pregnant women in B&B accommodation who had been there for more than 6 weeks was 16.

**Delivering of affordable housing** the target of 300 was on track to be met but it was recognised there was still more to be done. Following a discussion it was agreed that a deep dive into this area would be helpful. The chairman undertook to liaise with the Corporate Director for Housing and Community Safety outside of the meeting.

20. **Committee and Cabinet Forward Plans**

The Committee considered its Forward Plan and that of the Cabinet.

The Chairman highlighted that a busy meeting was planned for November and that budget scrutiny would take place in December.

21. **Urgent Items**

There were no urgent items of business.

22. **Exempt Business**

There was no exempt business.

**Duration of meeting:** 10.00 am - 12.40 pm

**Chairman**

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