Dorset Council

SHAREHOLDER COMMITTEE FOR CARE DORSET HOLDINGS LTD

MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON MONDAY 6 OCTOBER 2025

Present: Cllrs Nick Ireland (Chair), Richard Biggs (Vice-Chair), Steve Robinson and Ben Wilson

Apologies: Cllr Gill Taylor

Officers present (for all or part of the meeting):
Chris Best (Managing Director), Sean Cremer (Corporate Director for Finance and Commercial), Grace Evans (Head of Legal Services and Deputy Monitoring Officer), Tony McDougal (Communications Business Partner - Adults and Housing), Sam Poole (Interim Corporate Director for Commissioning & Improvement) and Lindsey Watson (Senior Democratic and Governance Officer)

12. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 25 June 2025 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

13. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

14. Public Participation

There were no questions or statements from members of the public or local organisations.

15. Councillor Questions

There were no questions from councillors.

16. Forward Plan

The forward plan was noted.

17. Dorset Council Organisational Update

The shareholder committee considered a report of the Corporate Director, Commissioning and Improvement, which presented the developments on the part of the Council, relevant to Care Dorset, and summarised significant developments since the last meeting of the shareholder committee.

In presenting the report, particular reference was made to supported living, including work with Care Dorset to develop a second move-on service in Weymouth and a review of two other supported living settings. Updates were also provided on progress with reablement and the current financial position, which included a targeted saving of £500,000 for the current financial year, expected from improved operational efficiency within day services. In addition, it was reported that the consultation around day services had now concluded, and thanks were given to Care Dorset for their support. Revised proposals would be considered by Cabinet in December.

Councillors considered the issues covered in the report and discussion was focused on the following areas:

- In response to a question relating to the £500,000 savings target and the potential impact of this, the Managing Director, Care Dorset provided an overview of savings already made and noted ongoing work required
- The Cabinet member for Adult Social Care recognised the good progress that had been made by Care Dorset and, in addition, noted that he had visited a supported living setting in Weymouth and had the opportunity to meet the young people and the staff team whom he commended. He also highlighted that he would be speaking at a Future Care event shortly
- In respect of the report to be presented to Cabinet following the consultation on day services, the Chair asked that information on supporting integrated neighbourhood teams be included
- Further information was provided on the reablement app produced through the Future Care programme, which Care Dorset had been trialling.

The report was NOTED.

18. **Care Dorset Update**

The shareholder committee considered a report, which provided an update on matters relating to Care Dorset since the previous meeting. This included Care Dorset’s financial and operational performance, workforce trends, governance and strategic priorities.

In presenting the report, the Chair of the Board provided an update on corporate governance matters and reported that a non-executive director, Dr Felix Davies, had been appointed to the board to provide clinical leadership.

The Managing Director provided an overview of issues covered in the report and in particular made reference to paragraph 1.2 of the report, with progress having been made with the occupation agreement and discussion with Dorset Council officers having taken place. In addition, reference was made to workforce and work placement development, including progress made in respect of sickness levels, an overview of financial performance, progress made across all areas in the business plan and external recognition.

Councillors considered the issues arising from the report and points were noted in the following areas:

- In response to a question, information was provided about the role of the neutral agency vendor and how this could drive improvements in cost in this area. The neutral vendor also provided an oversight dashboard, which would enable trend analysis to be undertaken
- Regarding the projected year-end financial position, it was noted that some re-forecasting work was to be undertaken but that it was hoped that the company would be in a break-even position by the end of the financial year. Further information could be provided following the meeting
- If a break-even position was not achieved, there would be a pressure on the shareholder, therefore further understanding of this was required
- In response to questions relating to property related matters, it was reported that work to the boilers referenced in the report had been undertaken with some parts awaited to improve efficiency of the boilers. In addition, work on fire doors at day centres was currently on hold, with discussions having taken place with property colleagues and mitigating risk assessments put in place
- A working capital loan arrangement was in place with the council's finance team and included criteria for when money was drawn down, with agreed interest arrangements for repayment in place
- In respect of outstanding property matters (set out at paragraphs 1.1 and 1.3 of the report) and whether action was required from the shareholder committee, the Managing Director noted that there was no requirement for action currently. There was confidence that the conversations taking place were addressing the issues and thanks were expressed to council officers
- An update was provided in respect of occupancy levels in different settings, which were comparable with other similar organisations
- In response to a question, it was noted that there was a year-to-date budget deficit variance of £270k which was based on the revised budget forecast position. This included a 40% reduction in the cost of agency, which was on target to be achieved by 30 September 2025.

The report was NOTED.

19. **Urgent Items**

There were no urgent items.

20. **Exempt Business**

There was no exempt business.

Duration of meeting: 2.00 - 2.29 pm

Chairman

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