



Shareholder Committee for Care Dorset Holdings Ltd

Date: Monday, 19 January 2026
Time: 2.30 pm
Venue: Meeting Room 1, County Hall, Dorchester, DT1 1XJ

Members (Quorum: 3)

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

Chief Executive: Catherine Howe, County Hall, Dorchester, Dorset DT1 1XJ

For more information about this agenda please contact Democratic & Governance Services
Meeting Contact lindsey.watson@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk

Members of the public are welcome to attend this meeting, apart from any items listed in the exempt part of this agenda. If you would like to attend this meeting and have any specific requirements please contact the Democratic Services Officer named above.

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Agenda

Item	Pages
1. APOLOGIES	
To receive any apologies for absence.	
2. MINUTES	5 - 8
To confirm the minutes of the meeting held on 6 October 2025.	
3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST	
To disclose any pecuniary, other registrable or non-registrable interest as set out in the adopted Code of Conduct. In making their disclosure councillors are asked to state the agenda item, the nature of the interest and any action they propose to take as part of their declaration.	

If required, further advice should be sought from the Monitoring Officer in advance of the meeting.

4. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Representatives of town or parish councils and members of the public who live, work, or represent an organisation within the Dorset Council area are welcome to submit either 1 question or 1 statement for each meeting. You are welcome to attend the meeting in person or via MS Teams to read out your question and to receive the response. If you submit a statement for the committee this will be circulated to all members of the committee in advance of the meeting as a supplement to the agenda and appended to the minutes for the formal record but will not be read out at the meeting. **The first 8 questions and the first 8 statements received from members of the public or organisations for each meeting will be accepted on a first come first served basis in accordance with the deadline set out below.**

Further information read [Public Participation - Dorset Council](#)

All submissions must be emailed in full to lindsey.watson@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk by 8.30am on 14 January 2026.

When submitting your question or statement please note that:

- You can submit 1 question or 1 statement.
- a question may include a short pre-amble to set the context.
- It must be a single question and any sub-divided questions will not be permitted.
- Each question will consist of no more than 450 words, and you will be given up to 3 minutes to present your question.
- when submitting a question please indicate who the question is for (e.g., the name of the committee or Portfolio Holder)
- Include your name, address, and contact details. Only your name will be published but we may need your other details to contact you about your question or statement in advance of the meeting.
- questions and statements received in line with the council's rules for public participation will be published as a supplement to the agenda.
- all questions, statements and responses will be published in full within the minutes of the meeting.

5. COUNCILLOR QUESTIONS

To receive questions submitted by councillors.

Councillors can submit up to two valid questions at each meeting and sub divided questions count towards this total. Questions and statements received will be published as a supplement to the agenda and all questions, statements and responses will be published in full

within the minutes of the meeting.

The submissions must be emailed in full to lindsey.watson@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk by 8.30am on 14 January 2026.

[Dorset Council Constitution](#) – Procedure Rule 13

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| 6. | FORWARD PLAN | 9 - 14 |
| | To review the Forward Plan. | |
| 7. | DORSET COUNCIL ORGANISATIONAL UPDATE | 15 - 20 |
| | To consider a report of the Corporate Director for Commissioning and Improvement. | |
| 8. | CARE DORSET UPDATE | 21 - 26 |
| | To consider a report of the Managing Director, Care Dorset. | |
| 9. | URGENT ITEMS | |
| | To consider any items of business which the Chair has had prior notification and considers to be urgent pursuant to section 100B (4) (b) of the Local Government Act 1972. The reason for the urgency shall be recorded in the minutes. | |
| 10. | EXEMPT BUSINESS | |
| | To move the exclusion of the press and the public for the following item in view of the likely disclosure of exempt information within the meaning of paragraph x of schedule 12 A to the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended). The public and the press will be asked to leave the meeting whilst the item of business is considered. | |

There are no exempt items scheduled for this meeting.

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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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Shareholder Committee for Care Dorset Holdings Ltd
Forward Plan - January to March 2026
(Publication date – 18 DECEMBER 2025)

Explanatory Note:

This Forward Plan contains future items to be considered by the Shareholder Committee for Care Dorset Holdings Ltd. It is published 28 days before the next meeting of the Committee. The plan includes items for the meeting including key decisions. Each item shows if it is 'open' to the public or to be considered in a private part of the meeting.

Definition of Key Decisions

Key decisions are defined in Dorset Council's Constitution as decisions which are likely to -

- (a) to result in the relevant local authority incurring expenditure which is, or the making of savings which are, significant having regard to the relevant local authority's budget for the service or function to which the decision relates (**Thresholds - £500k**); or
- (b) to be significant in terms of its effects on communities living or working in an area comprising two or more wards or electoral divisions in the area of the relevant local authority."

In determining the meaning of "*significant*" for these purposes the Council will have regard to any guidance issued by the Secretary of State in accordance with section 9Q of the Local Government Act 2000 Act. Officers will consult with lead members to determine significance and sensitivity.

Committee Membership 2025/26

Cllr Nick Ireland – Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Climate, Performance and Safeguarding

Cllr Richard Biggs – Deputy Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Property & Assets, and Economic Growth

Cllr Steve Robinson – Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care

Cllr Gill Taylor – Cabinet Member for Health and Housing

Cllr Ben Wilson – Cabinet Member for Corporate Development and Transformation

Subject / Decision	Decision Maker	Date the Decision is Due	Cabinet Member	Officer Contact
January 2026				
Dorset Council Delegated Decisions (as required) Key Decision - No Public Access - Open To note any decisions taken under delegation.	Decision Maker Shareholder Committee for Care Dorset Holdings Ltd	Decision Date 19 Jan 2026	Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care	<i>Executive Director, People - Adults (Jonathan Price)</i>
Dorset Council Organisational Update Key Decision - No Public Access - Part exempt To present the developments on the part of the Council relevant to Care Dorset.	Decision Maker Shareholder Committee for Care Dorset Holdings Ltd	Decision Date 19 Jan 2026	Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care	<i>Samuel Poole, Interim Corporate Director for Commissioning & Improvement samuel.poole@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk Executive Director, People - Adults (Jonathan Price)</i>
Care Dorset Update Key Decision - No Public Access - Part exempt To provide an update for shareholder members on matters relating to Care Dorset.	Decision Maker Shareholder Committee for Care Dorset Holdings Ltd	Decision Date 19 Jan 2026	Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care	<i>Managing Director, Care Dorset Executive Director, People - Adults (Jonathan Price)</i>

Subject / Decision	Decision Maker	Date the Decision is Due	Cabinet Member	Officer Contact
March 2026				
Dorset Council Delegated Decisions (as required) Key Decision - No Public Access - Open To note any decisions taken under delegation.	Decision Maker Shareholder Committee for Care Dorset Holdings Ltd	Decision Date 23 Mar 2026	Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care	<i>Executive Director, People - Adults (Jonathan Price)</i>
Dorset Council Organisational Update Key Decision - No Public Access - Part exempt To present the developments on the part of the Council relevant to Care Dorset.	Decision Maker Shareholder Committee for Care Dorset Holdings Ltd	Decision Date 23 Mar 2026	Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care	<i>Samuel Poole, Interim Corporate Director for Commissioning & Improvement samuel.poole@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk Executive Director, People - Adults (Jonathan Price)</i>
Care Dorset Update Key Decision - No Public Access - Part exempt To provide an update for shareholder members on matters relating to Care Dorset.	Decision Maker Shareholder Committee for Care Dorset Holdings Ltd	Decision Date 23 Mar 2026	Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care	<i>Managing Director, Care Dorset Executive Director, People - Adults (Jonathan Price)</i>

Subject / Decision	Decision Maker	Date the Decision is Due	Cabinet Member	Officer Contact
Care Dorset Annual Business Plan Key Decision - Yes Public Access - Part exempt For the Shareholder Committee to consider progress in delivering the 5-year business plan, and any review of the plan as necessary.	Decision Maker Shareholder Committee for Care Dorset Holdings Ltd	Decision Date 23 Mar 2026	Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care	<i>Managing Director, Care Dorset</i> <i>Executive Director, People - Adults</i> <i>(Jonathan Price)</i>
Trading Company proposal Key Decision - Yes Public Access - Fully exempt Proposal to establish a new trading company.	Decision Maker Shareholder Committee for Care Dorset Holdings Ltd	Decision Date 23 Mar 2026	Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care	<i>Managing Director, Care Dorset</i> <i>Executive Director, People - Adults</i> <i>(Jonathan Price)</i>
Annual Reports				

Care Dorset Annual Business Plan (March) Key Decision - Yes Public Access - Part exempt For the Shareholder Committee to consider progress in delivering the 5-year business plan, and any review of the	Decision Maker Shareholder Committee for Care Dorset Holdings Ltd	Decision Date March	Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care	<i>Managing Director, Care Dorset</i> <i>Executive Director, People - Adults</i> <i>(Jonathan Price)</i>
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Subject / Decision	Decision Maker	Date the Decision is Due	Cabinet Member	Officer Contact
plan as necessary.				
Review of Terms of Reference (June) Key Decision - No Public Access - Open To note the shareholder committee terms of reference.	Decision Maker Shareholder Committee for Care Dorset Holdings Ltd	Decision Date June	Leader and Cabinet Member for Climate, Performance and Safeguarding	<i>Grace Evans, Head of Legal Services and Deputy Monitoring Officer grace.evans@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk</i>
Care Dorset Annual Performance Report (June) Key Decision - No Public Access - Open To consider the Care Dorset Annual Performance Report.	Decision Maker Shareholder Committee for Care Dorset Holdings Ltd	Decision Date June	Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care	<i>Managing Director, Care Dorset Executive Director, People - Adults (Jonathan Price)</i>
Annual report and Year end accounts (June) Key Decision - Yes Public Access - Open To receive the annual financial report.	Decision Maker Shareholder Committee for Care Dorset Holdings Ltd	Decision Date June	Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care	<i>Managing Director, Care Dorset Executive Director, People - Adults (Jonathan Price)</i>

Private/Exempt Items for Decision

Each item in the plan above marked as 'private' will refer to one of the following paragraphs.

1. Information relating to any individual.
2. Information which is likely to reveal the identity of an individual.
3. Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information).
4. Information relating to any consultations or negotiations, or contemplated consultations or negotiations, in connection with any labour relations matter arising between the authority or a Minister of the Crown and employees of, or office holders under, the authority.
5. Information in respect of which a claim to legal professional privilege could be maintained in legal proceedings.
6. Information which reveals that the shadow council proposes:-
 - (a) to give under any enactment a notice under or by virtue of which requirements are imposed on a person; or
 - (b) to make an order or direction under any enactment.
7. Information relating to any action taken or to be taken in connection with the prevention, investigation or prosecution of crime.

Shareholder Committee for Care Dorset Holdings Ltd

19 January 2026

Commissioners' Update

For Review and Consultation

Cabinet Member:

Cllr S Robinson, Adult Social Care

Local Councillor(s):

All

Senior Leadership Team:

J Price, Executive Director of People - Adults

Report author and job title: Sam Poole, Corporate Director of Commissioning & Improvement

Email: samuel.poole@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk

Statutory Authority: Dorset Council

Report status: Public (the exemption paragraph is N/A)

Executive summary

This report provides an update on developments led by the Council that are relevant to Care Dorset, summarising key progress made over the past 2–3 months since the last Shareholder Committee meeting in October 2025.

1. Recommendation(s)

- 1.1 This report asks the Committee to note the report and progress contained within.

2. Reason for the recommendation(s)

- 2.1 Care Dorset is a key part of delivering the Council's 'Commissioning for A Better Life' strategies, and for improving the quality and sustainability of the care and support delivered to adults in Dorset.

3. The report

- 3.1 This report provides an update on key areas of work that affect Care Dorset. It covers progress on day services, supported living, extra care housing, reablement centres, system transformation and a financial update.

Day Services

- 3.2 Dorset Council continues to develop a new model for day opportunities, which has direct implications for Care Dorset as a key provider of day services across the county.
- 3.3 The consultation report has now been published, capturing rich feedback from over 350 survey responses, 850 comments, and petitions from the Blandford and Ferndown communities.
- 3.4 Key insights highlight that people want flexibility, choice, and local provision, with strong support for community-based activities alongside specialist and respite services. Engagement continues with local groups, and recent visits to Blandford and Ferndown have provided valuable insight into community priorities and ideas for improvement, which are being used to shape the new model of day opportunities. Commissioners continue to engage with Care Dorset on the proposed model, which will expand the range and availability of day opportunities across Dorset, ensuring services are responsive to local needs.
- 3.5 A report will be presented to the People & Health Overview Committee and the Health & Wellbeing Board in February, with recommendations onto Cabinet in March.

Supported Living

- 3.6 In 2023, Dorset Council commissioned Care Dorset to deliver a supported living service in Weymouth, designed to help young adults build independence and, over time, transition to fully independent living. Following the success of this initiative, a second site in Weymouth is now underway. This new development will provide four additional beds and is on track for completion in spring 2026. We are delighted with Care Dorset's proactive approach and strong partnership working, which have been central to the success of the first site. Their commitment gives us confidence that the second development will deliver equally positive outcomes for young adults across Dorset.

Extra Care Housing

- 3.7 Commissioners have worked closely with Care Dorset to support the delivery of care at St Martin's in Gillingham, which officially opened in November 2024. This 55-apartment extra care scheme, operated by Care Dorset in partnership with Magna Housing, was originally designated for older adults. However, following a planning determination on 11 November 2025, eligibility criteria were relaxed to encourage broader uptake. This change has enabled the service to diversify and therefore achieve approximately 90% occupancy by the end of December; with an expectation the scheme will be fully occupied in

early 2026. Throughout this period, Care Dorset has delivered high-quality, 24/7 on-site support and demonstrated flexibility in embracing the shift, facilitating improved service reach and outcomes.

Reablement Centres

- 3.8 The redevelopment of Sidney Gale House in Bridport into a modern 56-bed reablement centre is progressing well. Care Dorset is actively involved in the final design phase, ensuring the layout and operational model will deliver a high-quality, efficient service aligned with best practice. Their input has been invaluable in shaping a design that aims to work seamlessly for staff and residents, with a strong emphasis on flow, accessibility, and person-centred care.
- 3.9 The project remains on track, subject to planning approval and Cabinet agreement to award the construction contract in May 2026. Current timelines anticipate the centre opening in early to mid-2028. Care Dorset is the preferred operator for the new service; however, the council retains the option to explore alternatives if required to secure best value and outcomes. This development represents a significant investment in short-term care capacity and will play a vital role in supporting independence and reducing pressure on hospitals and residential care services.

System-wide transformation

- 3.10 Care Dorset is actively engaged in the FutureCare Programme and the wider health and care system transformation, supporting its aims and objectives to improve outcomes and efficiency. While system funding for 18 of Care Dorset's reablement beds, previously supported through Section 256 arrangements, has come to an end, this change has provided an opportunity to rethink how these resources are used. Care Dorset is proactively repurposing these beds, working with commissioners to explore how to better meet emerging needs and maintain service sustainability, ensuring they continue to support priority areas across the county and mitigate income loss.
- 3.11 Alongside this, commissioners and the FutureCare Programme team have worked closely with Care Dorset to strengthen reablement services at Castleman Plus in Blandford, concentrating on improving the effectiveness and performance of its 12 dedicated beds. This partnership has included regular performance reviews, joint planning sessions, and targeted support to deliver timely, outcome-focused interventions. Operational colleagues and the Care Allocation Team have played a vital role, streamlining referrals, improving flow, and aligning care pathways to maximise utilisation and impact.
- 3.12 Care Dorset has responded positively to this collaborative approach, implementing agreed changes swiftly and constructively. These improvements

have had a clear impact on performance. The average length of stay has fallen from 51 days to 37 days as of 16 December 2025. When excluding a small number of complex, long-stay cases, this reduces further to 25 days, better than the best practice benchmark of 28 days. During this improvement cycle, 13 people were discharged from Castleman Plus, with 85% successfully returning home, demonstrating the strong outcomes achieved in promoting independence and recovery.

Finance

- 3.13 Care Dorset's financial year, previously running from October to September as a legacy of its establishment in October 2022, will now be aligned with the standard April-to-March fiscal period. This change will streamline reporting, strengthen contractual arrangements, and ensure greater consistency with council financial rhythm.
- 3.14 Commissioners and Care Dorset are exploring opportunities for additional provision and commercial ventures to strengthen Care Dorset's profitability and resilience. These discussions include new service models and innovative approaches to meet emerging care needs.
- 3.15 To build on this progress, a strategic summit is scheduled for 4 February. This session will focus on shaping future opportunities, addressing any outstanding issues, and ensuring both organisations are aligned on priorities for the year ahead.

4. Legal considerations

- 4.1 There are no immediate legal implications arising directly from this report. However, any future decisions relating to service transformation, contractual changes, or commissioning arrangements will need to comply with relevant statutory duties, including those under the Care Act 2014, public procurement regulations, and employment law.

5. Financial implications

- 5.1 This report does not seek any formal decisions at this stage, and therefore does not introduce new financial commitments. However, the ongoing pressures facing the Council's adult social care budget remain and therefore solid commissioning decisions related to Care Dorset will need to be made.

6. Natural environment, climate & ecology implications

- 6.1 While this report does not raise any direct environmental implications, ongoing work on the transformation of day services and the redevelopment of Sidney Gale House presents opportunities to improve the environmental performance of Care Dorset's estate. These projects offer potential to enhance energy

efficiency, reduce carbon emissions, and make better use of existing buildings in line with the Council's wider sustainability goals

7. Well-being and health implications

- 7.1 The services described, and their journey of improvement, are significant contributors to the maintenance and improvement in the health and wellbeing of people who draw on support.

8. Other implications

- 8.1 No other implications identified.

9. Risk implications

- 9.1 No decision is required; no risk assessment therefore needed.

10. Equalities

- 10.1 No decision is required. Equalities impacts are assessed in connection with decision made on specific service developments.

11. Appendices

- 11.1 None

12. Background papers

- 12.1 None

13. Report sign-off

- 13.1 This report has been through the internal report clearance process and has been signed off by the Director for Legal and Democratic (Monitoring Officer), the Executive Director for Corporate Development (Section 151 Officer) and the appropriate Portfolio Holder(s).

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Care Dorset Shareholder Committee

19 January 2026

CARE DORSET UPDATE

For information and assurance

Report author: Chris Best
Title: Managing Director
Email: chris.best@caredorset.co.uk
Date: 18 December 2025

Report status: **PUBLIC**

Brief summary:

Care Dorset reports strong operational performance: residential occupancy averaged 93%, day opportunities exceeded contract hours at 102%, and community reablement delivered over 12,000 hours, reducing long-term care needs. Workforce turnover remains below sector averages, sickness levels are stable, and training engagement is high with the CarePath academy launched. Financially, agency spend is reducing, revenues are on track, and year-end is projected breakeven with a modest surplus.

Strategic priorities are progressing, including hub-and-spoke day opportunities, a unified operating model, and expanded reablement. Planning is underway to transition Streets Meadow into a nursing home, while self-funder activity grows through Castleman Plus and enhanced therapy. Governance focus included legal updates, risk management, and customer engagement, with the 2026/27 plan in development. Upcoming highlights include the February 2026 Summit with Dorset Council and recognition through colleague awards and national nominations.

Recommendation:

The Shareholder Committee is asked to note the report and the updates contained therein.

Reason for recommendation:

Care Dorset plays a crucial role as a delivery partner to Dorset Council, providing essential adult social care and support. Significant efforts remain to strengthen operations and drive strategic growth, both in scale and revenue.

COMPANY UPDATE

1. Operational performance
 - 1.1. Occupancy levels
 - 1.1.1. Average occupancy across block-funded residential beds was 93% over the three months to November 2025, representing a 2% increase compared with the previously reported position.
 - 1.1.2. Average occupancy across reablement beds for the same period was 77%, a slight reduction from the prior reporting cycle. This decrease reflects the temporary closure of one of the two sites to referrals due to a respiratory infection during the period.
 - 1.2. Day opportunities
 - 1.2.1. For the three months ending November 2025, Care Dorset delivered 30,092 hours of support which equates to 102% of the block contract.
 - 1.2.2. 372 people were supported in this period.
 - 1.2.3. Care Dorset continues to work in close partnership with Dorset Council on progressing the outcomes of the day opportunities consultation. In response to what people told us, we have developed a structured transformation programme to reshape and modernise day opportunities provision across the county.
 - 1.3. Community reablement
 - 1.3.1. In the three months to November 2025, the community reablement team delivered 12,383 hours of support, ensuring timely and responsive care across the community.
 - 1.3.2. During the same period, 51% of individuals were fully reabled, no longer requiring ongoing support. A further 20% continued with their original package of care, typically following significant hospital stays, highlighting the service's role in stabilising recovery.
 - 1.3.3. The team's interventions generated substantial efficiencies, saving an estimated 1,637 hours of support per week compared with the packages initially assessed at hospital discharge. This demonstrates the tangible impact of reablement in reducing long-term care needs.
 - 1.4. Supported living
 - 1.4.1. The supported living team continues to deliver the contracted hours across the three supported living settings.
 - 1.4.2. We are delighted to be working with colleagues within the Council to set up a second transition service for younger adults

following the success of the Dorchester Road service. It is expected that this new service will be operational in Spring 2026.

1.5. St Martins

- 1.5.1. Occupancy levels have been steadily increasing at St Martin's and the change in planning determination will support achieving full occupancy in the coming few months.

2. Workforce performance

2.1. Turnover

- 2.1.1. For the 12 months ending November 2025, voluntary turnover stood at 15%, compared with the organisation's target of 12%. Importantly, this level remains 10% below the sector average, reflecting stronger workforce stability than peers.
- 2.1.2. Total turnover (including both voluntary and involuntary leavers) for the same period was 18%, exactly in line with the organisation's target of 18%, demonstrating effective management of workforce dynamics.

2.2. Sickness

- 2.2.1. On a rolling 12-month basis to the end of November 2025, average sickness levels per colleague were 10.3 days, which is broadly in line with the company's target of 10 days. This demonstrates that absence levels remain stable and well-managed, with only a marginal variance from target.

2.3. Training and development

- 2.3.1. In the three months to November 2025, Care Dorset delivered 5,132 hours of training across both online and face-to-face formats. Training compliance reached 85%, which is close to the organisational target of 90%, reflecting strong engagement and a clear trajectory towards full compliance.
- 2.3.2. The organisation continues to invest significantly in colleague development, with 42 colleagues currently supported through apprenticeship programmes, strengthening skills and building long-term workforce capability.
- 2.3.3. Care Dorset's dedicated academy, CarePath, has been successfully soft-launched across the organisation, with further expansion and activity planned for 2026 to embed a culture of continuous learning.

3. Financial performance

- 3.1. Agency spend is tracking in line with the forecasted reduction, which is encouraging given short-term increases in sickness. Overall pay costs

remain aligned with forecast expectations, reflecting effective cost management.

- 3.2. Revenues are broadly in line with forecast, with self-funder income from residential beds only marginally below expectations. Average occupancy was 23.25 beds, compared with a forecast of 24 beds. However, overall, the organisation is on track to achieve the target it set itself for 2025/26.
- 3.3. In November, the organisation expanded capacity at Castleman Plus with the addition of four new beds dedicated to self-funded respite care. Early interest has been encouraging, and the service is well-positioned to achieve strong occupancy levels through 2026.
- 3.4. The financial outturn for the year ending 31 March 2026 is projected to be at least breakeven, with the potential for a modest surplus of approximately £20k. Considering the financial challenges navigated during the year and the savings delivered to Dorset Council, this represents a positive and resilient position.

ANNUAL BUSINESS PLAN UPDATE

- 4. On 14 April 2025, the Shareholder formally endorsed Care Dorset's Annual Business Plan for 2025/26. This marks the first plan to be fully aligned with our five year strategy, Your Life, Your Way, which received Shareholder approval in December 2024. The Annual Plan demonstrates the progression from strategic intent to operational execution, ensuring a consistent vision and delivery across the organisation.
- 5. The Plan identifies six core priorities for delivery:
 - 5.1. Transitioning to a hub and spoke model for day opportunities, enhancing accessibility and efficiency.
 - 5.2. Establishing and embedding a unified operating model to drive consistency across all services.
 - 5.3. Expanding and refining models of support to remain responsive to evolving needs.
 - 5.4. Launching the Care Dorset Academy to invest in workforce development and build future capability.
 - 5.5. Publishing enabling strategies that reinforce governance, assurance, and long-term sustainability.
 - 5.6. Applying the reablement model as a preventative approach, reducing dependency and promoting independence.
- 6. Progress continues to be made across the priority areas. The day opportunities activity continues to be progressed with strong engagement with day opportunity colleagues with plans being drawn up in discussions with Commissioners.
- 7. Following discussions with Commissioners about the transition of Streets Meadow into a nursing home, planning is now underway with the registration changes proposed to take place by the end of the financial year.

8. Care Dorset remains on track to deliver its target of £1.4m from self-funders in residential care and significant activity is ongoing to improve the sales and marketing approach to bolster its pipeline. Additionally, four new beds have been brought on steam at Castleman Plus offering self-funder respite. Interest for this offer has been positive.
9. 12 beds have been retained at Castleman Plus into the next financial year following the FutureCare review. Care Dorset has bolstered its therapy offer with the appointment of its own Occupational Therapist and investment in the creation of a therapy suite.
10. Planning is underway for the development of the 2026/27 business plan which will be shared with this Committee for approval in March 2026.

CORPORATE GOVERNANCE

11. Following Andrew Billany's announcement that he will be leaving Dorset Council, and in light of his new role which prevents him from continuing as a Non-Executive Director with Care Dorset, the Board has resolved not to initiate recruitment for a replacement Non-Executive Director at this stage. The position will be reconsidered in approximately six months.
12. The Board held a learning day in November at which members received a legal update from Anthony Collins on company law as well as forthcoming legal changes. Members also discussed how to improve the involvement and engagement of the people we support and their families with Care Dorset's newly appointed Head of Customer Experience. Discussions also took place on risk management including cyber security. Finally, the Board held a planning session exploring the possible of areas of focus within the 2026/27 business plan. The final version of which will be submitted for Board approval in March 2026.

OTHER MATTERS TO NOTE

13. Care Dorset, in partnership with Dorset Council, is preparing for the Care Dorset Summit scheduled for February 2026. The Summit will provide a key forum to establish a refreshed and collective direction for the organisation, framed within the ambitions of the five-year strategy.
14. Following the departure of the Chief Commercial Officer, Care Dorset has reinforced its focus on managing commercial and business development opportunities with strong discipline and clear oversight. Responsibility for this work is now shared across the Chief Officers, ensuring robust governance, continuity, and collective accountability.
15. Care Dorset held its Colleague Awards evening on 11 October 2025 at Kingston Maurward College near Dorchester. There were winners across 11 categories who were nominated by colleagues and decided by a panel of colleagues and people we support.
16. Care Dorset was delighted to be nominated for a series of awards at both the British Care Awards and the Andor Awards, reflecting the organisation's growing reputation and the dedication of its teams.

17. Care Dorset continues to work in close partnership with Dorset Council on the redevelopment of Sidney Gale House in Bridport into a dedicated reablement centre. Our teams have contributed expertise across the building design, proposed staffing model, and the development of the fire safety strategy.

APPENDICES

18. There are no appendices to this report.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

19. There are no background papers.