

PEOPLE AND HEALTH OVERVIEW COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON MONDAY 21 SEPTEMBER 2026

Present: Cllrs Louise Bown (Chair), Jindy Atwal (Vice-Chair), Will Chakawhata, Beryl Ezzard, Margaret Goringe, Stella Jones, Jon Orrell and Byron Quayle

Apologies: Cllrs Ryan Holloway and Andrew Parry

Also present: Cllr Shane Bartlett and Cllr Matt Bell

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

George Dare (Senior Democratic and Governance Officer), Andy Frost (Service Manager for Community Safety) and John Newcombe (Service Manager for Licensing & Community Safety)

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

Sunita Khattra-Hall (Corporate Director for Quality Assurance and Safeguarding Families)

11. Apologies

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Ryan Holloway and Andrew Parry.

12. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

13. Minutes

The minutes of the previous meeting held on 6 July 2026 were confirmed and signed.

14. Public Participation

There was no public participation.

15. Councillor Questions

There were no questions from councillors.

16. **Urgent Items**

There were no urgent items.

17. **Dorset Community Safety Plan 2026 - 2029**

The Committee considered the draft Community Safety Plan. The Cabinet Member for Public Health, Prevention and Communities introduced the report and explained that the Community Safety Partnership (CSP), comprising of partners including the police, health services and probation service, was responsible for developing the Plan. He noted that the Partnership was subject to annual scrutiny by the People and Health Scrutiny Committee and the Plan needed to be presented to Full Council for adoption.

The Service Manager for Community Safety presented the Plan and advised that it contained five priority areas together with a number of cross-cutting themes. He explained that performance against the Plan would be monitored through a range of indicators reported quarterly to the CSP. He noted that Dorset remained a safe place to live and that the Plan aimed to maintain and improve community safety outcomes.

Committee members discussed the report and asked questions of the officers. The following points were raised:

- A member highlighted survey findings showing that many girls and young women did not feel safe at night. She stressed that women and girls should have the freedom to move around without fear and suggested that community safety considerations should be reflected in planning decisions, including appropriate street lighting and safe public spaces.
- That Dorset was generally a safe county but noted that a significant proportion of victims did not report domestic abuse. A greater confidence in reporting mechanisms was needed.
- The inclusion of sexual offences as a priority area and Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) as a cross-cutting theme were welcomed. Whilst VAWG required a specific focus, there were also male victims of similar offences and considered that the proposed approach would enable support and prevention activity to address both groups.
- A member noted that violence against women and girls remained significantly under-reported and expressed the hope that reporting levels would increase over time as confidence in services improved.
- Prevention work should also include educating men and boys about violence against women and girls, rather than focusing solely on actions women could take to keep themselves safe. In response, the Service Manager for Licencing and Community Safety outlined the partnership's work with the Youth Justice Service and highlighted interventions such as

the Consequences Programme and the use of Criminal Behaviour Orders to address offending behaviour at an early stage.

- Whether the committee was sufficiently involved in shaping the Community Safety Plan at an early stage and suggested that members should have greater input before the document reached its final form. The Chair advised that this issue would be considered further following the outcome of the forthcoming peer review and that opportunities to involve the committee earlier in future planning cycles would be explored.
- The Service Manager for Community Safety reported that the partnership also undertook significant work to manage perpetrators and reduce reoffending. He advised that work on the next community safety needs assessment would begin shortly and suggested that this could be brought to the committee for consideration.
- The Corporate Director for Quality Assurance and Safeguarding highlighted the close links between the CSP and the Safeguarding Children Partnership in addressing issues such as violence against women and girls. She noted that the partnership arrangements had received positive feedback and were regarded as examples of good practice nationally.
- Whether housing associations were involved in the partnership's work. The Service Manager for Licencing and Community Safety confirmed that housing associations worked closely with the CSP, particularly in relation to tackling anti-social behaviour.
- A member welcomed the partnership's approach of directing individuals towards support services, commenting that he had received very few complaints regarding street drinking during the summer period.
- Concerns were raised about rural crime, including wildlife crime and fox hunting, and suggested that greater emphasis should be given to these issues in future plans. It was also noted that reporting rural crime could be difficult. The Cabinet Member for Public Health, Prevention and Communities advised that concerns regarding rural crime reporting had been raised regularly through discussions with the police, the Police and Crime Panel and the CSP. The Service Manager for Licencing and Community Safety added that the Police and Crime Commissioner had established a Rural Crime Panel and that discussions had taken place regarding increased Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR) capability and additional resources for fly-tipping investigations.

A recommendation was proposed by Cllr L Bown, seconded by Cllr W Chakawhata and agreed by the committee.

Decision:

That it be recommend to Cabinet that the Community Safety Plan 2026-2029 be recommended to Dorset Council for adoption.

18. **Committee's Work Programme and Cabinet's Forward Plan**

The Committee noted its work programme and the Executive Forward Plans.

19. **Exempt Business**

There was no exempt business.

Duration of meeting: 6.30 - 7.22 pm

Chair

.....