

## **DORSET COUNCIL - PEOPLE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

### **MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY 10 SEPTEMBER 2019**

**Present:** Cllrs Jane Somper (Chairman), Mary Penfold (Vice-Chairman), Toni Coombs, Stella Jones, Emma Parker, Molly Rennie, Mark Roberts, Maria Roe, Clare Sutton and Gill Taylor

**Apologies:** None

**Also present:** Cllr Shane Bartlett, Cllr Graham Carr-Jones, Cllr Beryl Ezzard, Cllr Andrew Kerby, Cllr Laura Miller, Cllr Andrew Parry and Cllr Daryl Turner

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

Diana Balsom (Strategic Commissioning Lead), Helen Coombes (Interim Transformation Programme Lead), Adam Fitzgerald (Building Better Lives Programme Manager), Ian Grant (Programme Coordinator), Sarah Parker (Executive Director of People - Children), David Webb (Service Manager - Dorset Combined Youth Offending Service), Kay Wilson-White (Community Safety Business Manager), Lee Ellis (Scrutiny Officer) and Lindsey Watson (Senior Democratic Services Officer)

#### **9. Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held on 2 July 2019 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

#### **10. Declarations of Interest**

Councillor Coombs declared an interest in respect of exempt agenda item 17, 'Building Better Lives – Programme Overview and approach to Wareham Gateway', as Chairman of the Dorset Council Eastern Area Planning Committee. In order to prevent a conflict of interest when the issue was considered at the Eastern Area Planning Committee, she indicated that she would leave this meeting during consideration of the item.

Councillor Roberts declared an interest as a provider of domiciliary care to the Local Authority.

Councillor Penfold declared an interest in respect of exempt agenda item 17, 'Building Better Lives – Programme Overview and approach to Wareham Gateway', as she had previously visited the site with the NHS body. She indicated that she would stay in the room during consideration of the item.

#### **11. Public Participation**

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

## 12. **Urgent items**

There were no urgent items.

### **MOVING OF AGENDA ITEM**

The Chairman indicated that she would be moving agenda item 8, 'People Scrutiny Committee work programme' to the end of the agenda.

## 13. **Approval of Youth Justice Plan 2019/20**

The committee received and considered a report with regard to the Youth Justice Plan for 2019/20. Councillors were informed that there was a statutory requirement to publish an annual Youth Justice Plan which must provide specified information about the local provision of youth justice services. The report summarised the Youth Justice Plan for 2019/20, with a copy of the Plan appended. It was noted that the Youth Justice Plan needed to be approved by Full Council.

Councillors considered the issues arising from the report and during discussion, the following points were raised:

- A point was raised with regard to the closure of youth clubs, including youth worker arrangements and whether this had an impact in this area. It was noted that some work had been done in this area and although it was hard to pinpoint reasons, it was reasonable to assume that this had an impact
- The Executive Director for People – Children, provided information with regard to the restructure within the Children's Services Directorate and noted that feedback from partners and young people was being taken into account. Part of this was the establishment of an adolescent service including Cabinet approval for a residential hub for children and young people
- A discussion was held about the link with schools and how resources would be deployed and work undertaken with schools moving forward. The focus was on prevention and early intervention. It was noted that there was a need for better links with schools and for there to be a broad and diverse approach
- The link with mental health issues was raised and in response it was noted that the importance of mental health was recognised and that the service had a strong mental health team and in addition, worked closely with the Looked After Children Team. A part-time psychologist provided consultation to the nurses and the whole service and a training programme was in place
- In response to a point raised with regard to the use of restorative justice, an example of work undertaken was provided. Work was being undertaken with the Head of Youth Services for Dorset Police to put forward a proposal

- The potential impact on a persons' life chances if they received a youth caution was noted
- It was suggested that the committee could undertake more in-depth work with regard to looked after children
- Councillors considered the figures for first time entrants to the service during the previous year and the number of custodial sentences received. It was noted that these figures included the area of Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole Council. The situation nationally was also referred to
- No custodial establishments were available in the South West of England
- A query was raised with regard to a cost of £65,000 set out in the report for performance and information gathering. In response it was confirmed that this represented the cost of the case management system and the salary of a Performance and Information Management Manager. It was noted that the service relied on a good quality of information
- It was noted that a lot of young people in the service had been excluded from school. The service had an education officer whose remit was to ensure that the right education provision was in place. There had been an increase in the number of children being excluded from school
- In addition the service worked with the parents of a number of young people who were electively home educated
- Work was being undertaken with the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) with the aim of producing a plan which could be supported by the PCC. A question was raised with regard to the PCC election and it was confirmed that spending commitments could continue beyond the term of office
- There was a need for relevant organisations to have a holistic and shared approach to their response in this area
- A question was raised as to how information was shared between different geographical areas and how it could be ensured that a young person arrested for an offence would be safe once they returned to their local area. In response it was noted that the local Police and Social Care Service would communicate with their respective service in the area the young person was from. However it was noted that there was a lack of a coordinated approach in this area at a national level and this was the subject of current lobbying to the Government. At a local level, useful discussions had been held with the Children's Society to provide support in this area
- A suggestion was made that the Local Government Association Children's Board could be looking at this issue
- Currently there were no Dorset children in custody. In the case where there were, the service had a requirement to visit at least once a month and this would also include a visit from a nurse.

The Chairman suggested that in addition to the recommendation set out in the report, an update on this area should be received in 6 months-time on progress made with the plan.

It was proposed by Councillor Roberts seconded by Councillor Sutton

### **Recommendation to Cabinet**

That the Youth Justice Plan be recommended to Full Council for approval.

### **Decision**

That an update be provided to the People Scrutiny Committee in 6 months-time on progress with the plan.

## **14. Domestic Violence and Abuse Services in Dorset**

The committee received a report that set out the issues around the recommissioning approach for Domestic Violence and Abuse Services In Dorset.

Councillors considered the issues arising from the report and during discussion the following points were made:

- A comment was made that the committee may need additional information in order to fully consider the issues in this area including an explanation of acronyms, a copy of the previous contract and information around the increasing numbers of people presenting to the service
- In order to provide an integrated service in a rural area, a comment was made that there was a need to look at more than just pattern changing services but also include a focus on issues around children in this area including whether the contract could provide for a children's worker and the issue of stalking. The role of and funding provided by external organisations was recognised and it was felt, should be part of the contract. Although the report suggested a like for like service, it was felt that more was required in order to provide support to all that required it
- The Domestic Violence and Abuse service was a demand led service and it had been noted where the highest incidences were. However there was a need to ensure that there was service coverage for the whole area
- A point was raised with regard to spaces available in refuges and it was noted that a provider would be expected to find refuge accommodation elsewhere if there was none available locally. People may also be moved out of the area due to safety issues
- In respect of the impact on children in this area, close working was undertaken with Children's Services. A point was raised that children in these situations were not always identified and that this should be a priority in the new contract

- A discussion was held with regard to the availability of refuge accommodation
- It was important to have a whole system approach in this area, working alongside non statutory agencies who provided support
- Through the procurement process, there was a need to ensure that providers understood the direction of travel and the current issues
- It was noted that the approach set out in the report allowed the council to provide a service. However, there needed to be work undertaken to look at how all partners, including the council, health, police and voluntary organisations, came together and developed the support available. It was recognised that this would take some time to develop
- A question was raised with regard to pilot projects to be undertaken and information was provided on some projects being undertaken
- There was a need to do more work on the referral process and to evidence the success of interventions and measure outcomes beyond crisis intervention
- A provider engagement event had been held and those attending had been happy with the approach, which allowed further work to develop good practice. It was noted that there were already good examples of innovation in Dorset
- Consideration was given to the figures for occurrences of domestic violence amongst different age ranges and those that were accessing the service. One explanation was that there may be greater awareness amongst younger people. Work was undertaken with the service provider to raise awareness of support that was available and this had been added to the equality impact assessment to ensure that the service was inclusive
- The importance of early intervention for young families was recognised
- The Portfolio Holder for Housing thanked the committee for their comments and would discuss these with officers following the meeting.

Councillor Rennie noted that the same level of funding was being made available for this contract as for the previous contract, but noted that the council was seeking a greater level of innovation and exploration of issues. Because of the impact this service could have on peoples lives, she proposed that Cabinet should look at ways to increase funding in the area moving forward into 2020/21.

In response, the Portfolio Holder for Housing noted that the contract should be kept under a watching brief as to whether funding levels were adequate or whether there would be a need for additional funding. He also indicated that an Executive Advisory Panel could be set up to look at issues in this area and allow the opportunity for councillors to feed into this work. It was noted that further discussion would be needed to agree the best way forward for looking at these issues.

Councillor Rennie withdrew her proposal.

The Chairman suggested that in addition to the recommendation set out in the report, additional wording could be included within the recommendation to Cabinet to set out that if based on evidence from officers on the work carried out, with particular regard to the short term and pilot project, it is felt that there could be a benefit from the input of additional resources, this should be considered by Cabinet. It was also suggested that a further report should be provided to the committee in 12 months-time to provide an update.

It was proposed by Councillor Coombs seconded by Councillor Rennie

### **Recommendation to Cabinet**

That the Recommissioning approach for Domestic Violence and Abuse Services in Dorset be approved.

That, if based on evidence from officers on the work that is carried out, with particular regard to the short term and pilot project, it is felt that there could be a benefit from the input of additional resources, this should be considered by Cabinet.

### **Decision**

That a further report is provided to the People Scrutiny Committee in 12 months-time.

## **15. Exempt Business**

It was proposed by Councillor Parker seconded by Councillor Sutton

### **Decision**

That the press and the public be excluded for the following item(s) in view of the likely disclosure of exempt information within the meaning of paragraph 4 of schedule 12 A to the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended).

Councillors Coombs, Jones, Penfold and Sutton left the meeting.

## **16. Building Better Lives - Programme Overview and approach to Wareham Gateway - Exempt**

The Chairman reminded all present that this agenda item was being considered under exempt business and therefore all discussion within the meeting was confidential and could not be discussed outside of the meeting.

In addition to the information contained within the report, the committee was provided with a presentation which provided an overview of the issues and options under consideration. Councillors asked questions with regard to the issues arising from the report.

A number of invited attendees addressed the committee during discussion on the item as follows:

- Councillor Hilary Gooding attended the meeting on behalf of Wareham Town Council and provided a statement on behalf of the town council
- Councillor Ezzard, ward member for Wareham, provided a statement on behalf of herself and Councillor Holloway
- Councillor Carr-Jones, spoke as Dorset Council Portfolio Holder for Housing
- Diana McLaughlin, from the Dorset CCG and representing GPs in the Wareham Surgery attended to show the organisation's commitment to the programme and approach
- Matthew Metcalfe, attending on behalf of Dorset NHS provided some comments on the development

The committee discussed the issues arising and the options presented in the report.

It was proposed by Councillor Roberts seconded by Councillor Roe that the recommendations set out in the report be supported with the addition of a point to recognise that this was a multi-agency project.

**Decision**

That the People Scrutiny Committee support the recommendations contained within the exempt report in the agenda for the meeting with the addition of a point to recognise that this was a multi-agency project.

The committee moved back into open business.

**17. People Scrutiny Committee Forward Plan**

The Scrutiny Officer provided an overview of items on the committee work programme and councillors noted those items expected at the next meeting.

**Duration of meeting:** 2.00 - 5.15 pm

**Chairman**

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