

People and Health Scrutiny Committee – 28 January 2021

Questions from Dorset Councillor's

Question from Cllr Peter Barrow

As we are all aware housing homeless residents in Weymouth Sea Front hotels during the first lock down led to a number of issues. The most serious being a significant rise in the frequency and nature of anti-social behaviour, which had a very detrimental effect on local residents. DC's reliance on using B+B/Hotel accommodation meant there was no alternative to using the small number of BB/Hotels who actually offered accommodation and as these were on Weymouth Sea front this led to a concentration of issues in a very small area. There is now a welcome move to providing in house accommodation to reduce the reliance on B+B/Hotels and to provide accommodation nearer to residents home locations. In order to understand how effective this might be it would help to know the following.

How many bed spaces does DC plan to have available?

When will the bed spaces be available for use?

Where are the bed spaces to be provided?

What type of accommodation will the bed spaces be provided in (Hostel/shared house/self-contained flat/etc...)?

Question from Cllr Howard Legg

I wish to respond the invitation to members at the end of agenda item 7 to respond to the report on Homelessness during the winter and also to the email received on 21st January from the Corporate Director of Housing via the Communications Team on the same subject. Since I will not be attending the meeting, could my comments which follow be made available to the attendees please.

There are comprehensive details given about government support and expectations with regard to numbers of people sleeping rough and what offers of shelter that must be made to them. There is also a list of charity groups that the Dorset Council works with in implementing the requirements triggered by cold weather and the Covid situation but both the report and the email fail to advise councillors what accompanies the provision of shelter.

Many of these people bring problems with them that need assessing and acting upon. Assessment and solutions will consider a variety of situations including occupying the rough sleepers/homeless during their waking hours, making sure they stay safe and preventing anti social behaviour. Their overall wellbeing needs to be considered and not believing the council's job is done in providing them with a just roof over their heads. Providing a security guard when local residents complain is of no benefit to the people who are being helped.

Both reports neglect to say what the council will be doing and neither goes into much detail of what our partners will do either.

I would like to be informed how the council is adopting a holistic approach to this situation and to be informed of it.