



PEOPLE AND HEALTH OVERVIEW COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON THURSDAY 24 MARCH 2022

Present: Cllrs Mike Parkes (Chairman), Rod Adkins, Tony Alford, Pete Barrow, Jean Dunseith, Stella Jones, Beryl Ezzard and Rebecca Knox

Apologies: Cllrs Pauline Batstone and Ryan Holloway

Also present: Cllr Andrew Parry

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

Theresa Leavy (Executive Director of People - Children), Andrew Billany (Corporate Director of Housing, Dorset Council), Laura Cornette (Business Partner - Communities and Partnerships), Louise Drury (Head of Service Children in Care and Care Leavers), Catriona Fountain (Communications Business Partner, Children's), Lisa Reid (Consultant Quality Assurance), Claire Shiels (Corporate Director - Commissioning, Quality & Partnerships), Vik Verma (Interim Director of Education and Learning), Lindsey Watson (Senior Democratic Services Officer), John Miles (Democratic Services Officer Apprentice) and George Dare (Senior Democratic Services Officer)

79. Apologies

Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs Pauline Batstone and Ryan Holloway.

80. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

81. Minutes

The minutes of the meetings held on 4 May 2021, 6 July 2021, 2 September 2021, and 9 November 2021 were confirmed. The minutes were signed following the committee.

82. Public Participation

There was no public participation.

83. Councillor Questions

There were no questions from members.

84. Armed Forces Covenant Legislation

The Business Partner for Communities and Partnerships introduced the report for the preparation of the Armed Forces Act 2021. There were three principles to the Armed Forces Covenant which were outlined in the report. The MOD provided funding for an Armed Forces Co-Ordinator which was a fixed term post. The Covenant Duty applied to specific functions within the areas of healthcare, education, and housing.

Members asked questions of the Business Partner for Communities and Partnerships and the committee was advised that:

- The table in paragraph 3.1 of the report identified which practical steps had started.
- The Armed Forces Co-ordinator promoted the work of the Armed Forces and the covenant.
- Work was being done with social care to ensure that families were not disadvantaged.
- There were no regiments in Dorset but there were 2 training bases.
- Weymouth Town Council is the only parish in Dorset to have an armed forces champion.

Proposed by Cllr Alford, seconded by Cllr Barrow.

Decision:

1. That the new legal obligations be noted.
2. That the inclusion of the requirements of the Armed Forces Act 2021 within the development of new policies and the review of current policies be supported.

85. Safeguarding Families Together: New Model

The Quality Assurance Consultant outlined the report. The new model would introduce a pilot project in the Chesil area, covering Weymouth and Portland, to support the complexity of cases and due to the levels of deprivation. The new model would aim to keep more children and families at home, reducing the number of children going into care. The model was well evidenced, used in other Local Authorities, and it received positive feedback.

Officers and Portfolio Holder answered the questions of the members and advised that:

- Bases should be accessible for families in the area that they lived.
- The service would primarily be available during working hours but there would also be emergency out of hours.
- There was a plan for the measures that would be tracked throughout the pilot project, and it would have quarterly reports.
- Adult practitioners would be in place by September and the pilot would start when they were in place.
- Professionals would be seconded to the council from partners.

- During the pandemic the council has formed a much closer relationship with academies and independent schools.

Proposed by Cllr Barrow, seconded by Cllr Alford.

Decision:

That the implementation of a pilot project in Chesil (Weymouth and Portland) be recommended to Cabinet.

86. Education Leadership Board

The Corporate Director for Education and Learning introduced the item. He explained that the educational landscape has had significant changes over the last decade. Through the Covid-19 pandemic the council had worked closely with schools and partners and had built a strong relationship with them. The board would oversee the delivery of three core objectives.

The Portfolio Holder for Children, Education, Skills and Early Help responded to questions with officers and advised that:

- Dorset Council was rated good by Ofsted with outstanding leadership. The board would help to achieve this in all schools.
- Good feedback had been received from partners.
- The board would provide leadership to academised schools.
- The Executive Director of Children would be a member of the board; however, this was not included in the report.
- Regular feedback would be given to the Strategic Alliance for Children and Young People.
- The locality model that Dorset uses reduced the number of exclusions from schools. If a child is at risk of exclusion, staff work with them in an integrated way.
- There are 14 permanently excluded children in Dorset which is less than other local authorities. There was an aim to achieve 0 exclusions.
- If Cabinet approved the creation of the board, then the first board meeting would be in the summer term. The board would have a forward plan.

Proposed by Cllr Barrow, seconded by Cllr Ezzard.

Decision:

That the Committee support the creation of a new Education Board for Dorset and that the Committee recommend to Cabinet that the creation of the board be approved.

87. Children's Commissioning Strategy

The Corporate Director for Commissioning and Partnerships introduced the 5-year approach to commissioning for Children's Services. The 3 priorities identified in the report were highlighted to the committee.

In response to questions from the committee, it was confirmed that:

- Family Hubs are a new model of delivering services that the Government has asked local authorities to implement.
- Family Hubs would create a network to provide support to children and young people of all ages.
- Networks and services would be working together.
- There was an aim to start in East Dorset and Purbeck by September, then roll out across the county.
- The commissioning strategy looked at all resources that were available.
- Year 1 and 2 of the strategy, external commissioning would focus on ensuring sufficient residential provision, foster care provision, and supported accommodation, alongside some family support services.

Proposed by Cllr Jones, seconded by Cllr Knox.

Decision:

That the committee recommend to Cabinet that Cabinet approves the 5-year Commissioning Strategy and adopts the intended approach.

88. Committee's Forward Plan and Cabinet's Forward Plan

Members considered the committee's forward plan.

The Chairman informed the Committee that the Adult's Commissioning Strategy would be deferred from the meeting on 3 May to 28 June. The Chairman would be working closely with Portfolio Holders to identify items for the committee's forward plan.

The Portfolio Holder for Children, Education, Skills and Early Help asked that the Home to School and Post 16 Transport Policies item be deferred from 3 May until 28 June and that a report on Family Hubs be brought to the committee on 3 May.

Other potential items were raised by members, which included: Developments in the Integrated Care System; and support for Ukraine in Dorset.

The Chairman advised that some items raised would be better for the People & Health Scrutiny Forward Plan.

There were no comments on the Cabinet forward plan.

89. Urgent Items

There were no urgent items.

90. Exempt Business

Proposed by Cllr Parkes, seconded by Cllr Alford.

Decision:

That the press and the public be excluded for the following items(s) in the 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).

At 11.17 the meeting was adjourned for 5 minutes until 11.22 for a short comfort break.

91. Strengthening Services for Children who are Disabled

The Committee considered the report by the Head of Service, Children in Care and Care Leavers.

Proposed by Cllr Ezzard, seconded by Cllr Alford.

Decision:

That the recommendations set out in the exempt report be agreed.

Duration of meeting: 10.00 - 11.52 am

Chairman
