

PEOPLE AND HEALTH SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON MONDAY 3 JULY 2023

Present: Cllrs Gill Taylor (Chairman), Molly Rennie (Vice-Chairman), Piers Brown, Robin Cook, Nick Ireland, Paul Kimber, Jon Orrell, Mary Penfold and Belinda Ridout

Apologies: Cllrs Louie O'Leary

Also present: Cllr Graham Carr-Jones, Cllr Jane Somper and Cllr David Walsh

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

Theresa Leavy (Executive Director of People - Children), Jonathan Price (Interim Corporate Director for Commissioning), Julia Ingram (Interim Corporate Director for Adult Care), Andrew Billany (Corporate Director for Housing), George Dare (Senior Democratic Services Officer), Sharon Attwater (Service Manager for Housing Strategy and Performance), Sam Brand (Service Manager for Housing Advice and Homelessness), Sue Evans (Head of Specialist Services), Sarah How (Service Manager for Housing Solutions), Joshua Kennedy (Apprentice Democratic Services Officer), Lou Ford (Performance Business Partner), Dr Dean Spencer (Chief Operating Officer, NHS Dorset) and Becky Whale (Deputy Director – UEC and Flow Operations, NHS Dorset).

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

David Bonner (Service Manager for Business Intelligence and Performance)

1. **Apologies**

An apology for absence was received by Cllr Louie O'Leary.

2. **Declarations of Interest**

Cllr Ireland declared that he is a Governor of Dorset HealthCare and that his wife worked at Yeovil Hospital and was a trustee at the Lantern Trust which was referred to in a report.

3. **Minutes**

Proposed by Cllr Ridout, seconded by Cllr Ireland.

Decision:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 9 March 2023 be confirmed and signed.

4. **Public Participation**

There was no public participation.

5. Councillor Questions

There were no questions from councillors.

6. Urgent Items

There were no urgent items.

7. Performance of Out of Hospital

The Corporate Director for Commissioning and the Chief Operating Officer of NHS Dorset gave a presentation which is appended to these minutes. The following points were covered in detail during the presentation: hospital discharge pathways, including discharge to assess and discharge into adult social care; building the right capacity in the community and Home First; performance and discharge data pre- and post-Covid; the number of people currently awaiting discharge from hospital.

At this point in the meeting Cllr Gill Taylor declared for transparency that her husband was a member of the step-up process which was mentioned in the presentation.

Members discussed the presentation and asked questions of the officers. The following points were raised:

- Where possible patients that are discharged to care homes would be placed locally.
- There was an average stay of 28 days in a Discharge to Assess or reablement bed which was an interim placement to help support people to get back home.
- There was not any seasonality to the preferred discharge pathway. There are more respiratory problems during the winter, such as flu, which may cause seasonality in the numbers.
- There was more work to do to use the full potential of IT systems.
- Relating to the 168 individuals waiting for discharge, this number was across all Dorset hospitals and sites. On the day of the committee, there were 70 people in Dorset County Hospital waiting for discharge.
- The number of people waiting for discharge decreased in April and May but had increased following those months due to industrial action and bank holidays.
- If someone has a care package upon arrival at hospital, the package would be kept open if they were likely to be discharged quickly. This enabled continuity of care.
- Patients would be offered reablement if they would benefit from it if it was needed.

The committee was satisfied with the presentation and responses. It was noted and the committee could receive an update in a year.

8. **Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy Review 2023**

The Lead Member for Housing and the Corporate Director for Housing introduced the report. The strategy provided a plan to tackle and prevent homelessness and it was supported by an action plan. This review considered the progress against the action plan and strategy. Members heard that the number of people at risk of homelessness has risen so it was important to ensure that the resourcing was right.

During discussion the following points were raised:

- The strategy had a public consultation and a service-user consultation.
- In relation to the top two reasons for homelessness, these were trying to be reduced through improving the landlord incentive.
- The majority of rough sleepers were in Weymouth and the housing service has been dependent on accommodation in Weymouth.
- The service could be more preventative rather than reactive through information campaigns and looking at council tax arrears.
- Many landlords were good, and the landlord forums were well attended.
- In order to protect tenants, the housing service would like to be able to use enforcement powers earlier. They were also waiting for national policy changes.
- End of private rented accommodation can be caused through landlords leaving the market. There was a need to see whether houses were then being sold or re-let.
- A member suggested renaming the strategy to the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Prevention Strategy.
- In response to a question on increasing temporary accommodation and funding for this, the council has done well receiving government grants for temporary accommodation, however the council has to be cautious about where the funding is from in the future.

Proposed by Cllr Taylor and seconded by Cllr Kimber, the committee made the following recommendation:

That the Portfolio Holder for Adult Social Care, Health, and Housing oversees the revised action plan.

9. **Housing Allocation Policy Review 2023**

The Lead Member for Housing introduced the report. He explained that this was the first time the Housing Allocation Policy has been reviewed since 2019 and it was a statutory requirement to have the policy.

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

- If it was possible to incentivise downsizing homes if there was funding available for it.
- Second homes and Air B&Bs were an issue and owners were being encouraged to bring the homes back into use.
- In response to a question on key worker housing, the committee was advised that there was an intention to develop a joint strategy with local health services about access to housing.
- Social housing lettings plans were on new build sites to ensure mixed communities and local lettings plans were in areas with anti-social behaviour so vulnerable people do not move there.
- In relation to the local connection part of the policy, most lets were going to people who meet the more local requirements, and most people were not moving across the council area.
- A member queried whether housing prioritisation could be streamlined using the Dorset Care Record to check their local need? In response officers informed that this was something that could be looked into.

Proposed by Cllr Taylor, seconded by Cllr Ridout.

Decision

That the implementation of the minor amendments identified be supported.

10. Scrutiny Performance Review

The Service Manager for Business Intelligence and Performance outlined the following areas of concern raised during a review of the performance dashboard:

- The percentage of long-term clients reviewed in the last 12 months.
- The number of care leavers in B&B accommodation.
- The number of first-time entrants into the Youth Justice System.
- The rate of children with a child protection plan per 10,000
- The percentage of looked after children placed outside the council area.

Officers responded to the performance areas and members asked questions of the officers. The following points were raised:

- The target for number of reviews would ideally be 100%. There are some people that receive multiple reviews due to changing need.
- There was only 1 care leaver in B&B accommodation.
- The target for children with a child protection plan was below the national average. It was important that the right children were being protected.
- Some children were placed outside the council area because they were living with family who live elsewhere.
- Where children are placed is often reviewed to ensure they are in the right place. It would be inappropriate to make changes to where children are

placed during exam periods. Family circumstances may change allowing them to return home.

11. Committee's Work Programme and Cabinet's Forward Plan

The committee noted the work programme and Cabinet Forward Plan.

An informal work programme development session was held following the meeting.

12. Exempt Business

There was no exempt business.

Duration of meeting: 10.00 am - 12.40 pm

Chairman

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