

## **PEOPLE AND HEALTH SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

### **MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON MONDAY 11 SEPTEMBER 2023**

**Present:** Cllrs Gill Taylor (Chairman), Molly Rennie (Vice-Chairman), Piers Brown, Robin Cook, Nick Ireland, Paul Kimber, Louie O'Leary, Jon Orrell and Bill Pipe

**Apologies:** Cllrs Belinda Ridout

**Also present:** Cllr Cherry Brooks, Cllr Byron Quayle and Cllr Jane Somper

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

Andrew Billany (Corporate Director for Housing), George Dare (Senior Democratic Services Officer), Amanda Davis (Corporate Director for Education and Learning), Theresa Leavy (Executive Director of People - Children), Jonathan Price (Interim Corporate Director for Commissioning), Claire Shiels (Corporate Director - Commissioning & Partnerships) and Lindsey Watson (Senior Democratic Services Officer)

13. **Apologies**

An apology for absence was received from Cllr Belinda Ridout.

14. **Declarations of Interest**

Cllr Orrell declared that he was hosting two Ukrainian families. He withdrew from the debate for this item on Refugee Resettlement and Homes for Ukraine.

15. **Minutes**

Proposed by Cllr Taylor, seconded by Cllr Kimber.

**Decision**

That the minutes of the meeting held on 3 July 2023 be confirmed and signed.

16. **Public Participation**

There was no public participation.

17. **Councillor Questions**

There were no questions from councillors.

## 18. Urgent Items

There were no urgent items.

## 19. Refugee Resettlement and Homes for Ukraine - Update Report

The Corporate Director for Commissioning and Partnerships introduced the report and outlined the resettlement and Homes for Ukraine schemes. The funding and financial pressures were outlined. The way in which the council received unaccompanied asylum-seeking children through a national transfer scheme was explained.

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

- There has been a warm welcome for people who have resettled in Dorset.
- When unaccompanied asylum-seeking children turn 18, they become care leavers.
- Many unaccompanied asylum-seeking children were placed outside of the local area. They received support from personal advisors.
- The main reasons for Ukrainian families being rematched with hosts included transport issues in rural areas and changes in the host's personal circumstances.
- It was illegal for unaccompanied asylum-seeking children to be placed in hotels or for local authorities to not place the required number of children.
- The council received funding for the placement costs of each child, however there was no funding to support the children, creating a budget pressure of approximately £750,000.
- It was important that the council remained legal by placing the required number of children.
- Officers should be thanked for the support that they are giving to the refugee resettlement and Homes for Ukraine schemes.

Proposed by Cllr Taylor, seconded by Cllr Pipe.

### Decision

1. That members of the committee are content with the progress made on refugee resettlement and homes for Ukraine and acknowledge the good work done by our council officers in supporting people who have had to leave their country for whatever reason.

Proposed by Cllr Kimber, seconded by Cllr Taylor.

### Decision

2. To recommend to the relevant Portfolio Holders that the funding for the resettlement scheme and day-to-day resettlement costs within Housing and Children's Services and appropriately funded during the budget setting process.

## 20. **Registered Providers of Social Housing**

The Chair of the Committee introduced the report and the work of the Task & Finish Group. The Corporate Director for Housing outlined the themes of the discussions between the working group and the registered providers.

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

- There were 52 housing associations in Dorset. The smaller housing associations have less resources than some of the larger associations in Dorset.
- There were concerns about engagement and communication between registered providers and councillors.
- Some registered providers had dedicated email addresses for councillors, and these would be shared with members following the meeting.
- Some registered providers create annual reports to communicate with residents and councillors.
- The possibility of a dedicated Planning Officer for planning applications by registered providers.
- There needed to be more engagement with local communities so there was support for new homes.
- Registered providers should be encouraged to build new homes that were already compliant with upcoming legislation.

Members asked to receive an update report on the actions set out in the report in 6 months.

Proposed by Cllr Taylor, seconded by Cllr Orrell.

### **Decision**

1. That the Committee notes the findings of the review and has considered the ongoing work related to the Housing Strategy and the associated roles carried out by registered providers of social housing.
2. That the Committee gives support to continued discussions with the Portfolio Holder for Planning regarding planning applications for registered providers.

## 21. **Committee's Work Programme and Cabinet's Forward Plan**

Members considered the committee's work programme and Cabinet's forward plan.

The Chairman updated the committee on the work programme and topics for future scrutiny webinars.

22. **Exempt Business**

There was no exempt business.

**Duration of meeting:** 10.00 am - 12.11 pm

**Chairman**

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