

PEOPLE AND HEALTH OVERVIEW COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY 17 OCTOBER 2023

Present: Cllrs Mike Parkes (Chairman), Tony Alford, Beryl Ezzard, Ryan Holloway, Stella Jones, Rebecca Knox and Howard Legg

Apologies: Cllrs Cathy Lugg and Jean Dunseith

Also present: Cllr Cherry Brooks and Cllr Jane Somper

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

Andrew Billany (Corporate Director for Housing), Vivienne Broadhurst (Executive Director - People Adults), George Dare (Senior Democratic Services Officer), Paul Dempsey (Corporate Director - Care & Protection), Theresa Leavy (Executive Director of People - Children), Jonathan Price (Corporate Director for Commissioning), Claire Shiels (Corporate Director - Commissioning & Partnerships), Liz Curtis-Jones (Principal Lead Best Start in Life), Joshua Kennedy (Apprentice Democratic Services Officer) and Kaye Wright (Youth Voice Manager)

29. Apologies

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Cathy Lugg and Jean Dunseith.

30. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

31. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 14 September 2023 were confirmed and signed.

32. Public Participation

There was no public participation.

33. Councillor Questions

There were no questions from councillors.

34. Urgent Items

There were no urgent items.

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

Members noted the committee's work programme and forward plan.

The work programme would be revised to enable the next meeting to have more focus on the Housing Strategy.

36. Adults & Housing Directorate Peer Review and Action Plan

The Portfolio Holder for Adult Social Care, Health, and Housing introduced the item, and the Programme Lead outlined the report. The peer review was designed to support the council in preparing for the new CQC Annual Assurance regime. An action plan was developed from the findings of the review. A presentation was given to members, and it is attached to these minutes.

Members discussed the report and raised the following points:

- The action plan in the report was high level. The inspection will produce a detailed report.
- Connections between the peer review and the housing directorate were being made.
- There needed to be a way to measure how successful the council is in responding to the action plan.

37. Adopting Care Experience as a Protected Characteristic

The Corporate Director for Care and Protection introduced the report and gave a presentation which is attached to these minutes. The presentation outlined the protected characteristics in the Equality Act 2010 and gave background details to adopting care experience as a protected characteristic. Approximately 50 councils had adopted care experience as a local protected characteristic, and it was a recommendation from the national children's social care review.

Members asked questions and discussed the report. The following points were raised:

- The care leaver service could help care leavers identify as care experienced.
- What members could do as corporate parents to help champion care experience as a protected characteristic.

- It would be important for care leavers to identify as a care leaver on applications forms so they can receive support.

Proposed by Cllr Jones, seconded by Cllr Holloway.

Decision:

That the following recommendations be made to Cabinet:

1. To support the development of an agreed definition of care experienced for the purpose of making this a protected characteristic.
2. To agree that 'care experience' will be treated as if it were a Protected Characteristic under the Equalities Act 2010 so that decisions on future services and policies made and adopted by Dorset Council are assessed and consider the impact on people with care experience.
3. To approve the amendment of Dorset Council's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy 2021-2024 to reflect 'care experience' being treated as if it were a protected characteristic and the development of specific actions to reduce the disadvantage and discrimination that care experienced people face.

38. The Families First for Children Pathfinder Delivering the Government's Stable Homes, Built on Love Strategy

The Executive Director of People – Children introduced the report on the Families First for Children Pathfinder. Dorset Council was selected by the Department for Education to be one of three pilot local authorities for the pathfinder. The council had received the first round of funding and was expecting more further funding in November.

The Corporate Director for Care and Protection gave a presentation which is attached to these minutes. The presentation outlined the recommendations, the six pillars of the strategy, developing a new model to deliver the pathfinder, the progress made, and the financial implications to the council.

Members asked questions on the report and raised the following points:

- The Treasury were supportive if the programme to keep children in their extended families.
- The police and health services would like additional funding for the programme but have not received any.
- The current system had a focus on crisis intervention; however the programme would change the integrated care system to focus on early intervention and prevention.
- The family help pillar could be achieved through family hubs and creating networks of support.

Proposed by Cllr Ezzard, seconded by Cllr Jones.

Decision

That the People and Health Overview Committee recommend to Cabinet that the approach to delivering the Families First for Children Pathfinder be adopted by the council.

39. Report on the Dorset Education Board

The Executive Director of People – Children introduced the report and outlined several key parts of the report. These included the statistics for Ofsted inspections of Dorset schools, attainment of English and Maths, and recruiting and retaining staff working in the education sector.

In response to questions from members, the Executive Director of People – Children advised that the council does not differentiate between maintained schools and academies. She also advised that the Belonging Strategy had received a soft launch with school leaders, and it would ensure that there was support for schools with link workers, and that youth practitioners would work alongside schools to encourage children to attend school.

Members noted the report.

40. Expansion of funded childcare offer from April 2024

The Principal Lead for Best Start in Life introduced the report on the expansion of the funded childcare offer. The expansion was announced by the Chancellor in the Spring Budget and the council would be responsible for distributing funding on behalf of the Government. Members received a presentation, which is attached to these minutes, and it included details on national changes to support the policy implementation, providing grants to new registered childminders, and it outlined the implementation plan.

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

- In preparation for challenges from an increased childcare demand, the support that may be needed for childcare was being mapped, areas where childminders may be needed were being identified, and best practice was being shared among local authorities.
- Parents would need to earn £100,000 each before they need to pay for childcare.
- Funding would be received through the dedicated schools grant for early years.
- The funding received would be per child.
- The ratios of staff to children would depend on the age of the child.
- Local provider agreements state that they should not charge parents extra for equipment to prevent discrimination.

Proposed by Cllr Ezzard, seconded by Cllr Holloway.

Decision

The approach to the expansion of funded childcare offer from April 2024 be recommended to Cabinet for adoption by the Council.

41. **Exempt Business**

There was no exempt business.

Duration of meeting: 10.00 am - 12.00 pm

Chairman

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