

Cabinet

30 January 2024

Dorset Centre of Excellence Annual Performance Report November 2023

For Review and Consultation

Portfolio Holder: Cllr B Quayle, Children, Education, Skills and Early Help

Local Councillor(s): Cllr

Executive Director: T Leavy, Executive Director of People - Children

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Report Status: Public

Brief Summary: For Cabinet to note the progress, performance and improvement journey of the Dorset Centre of Excellence (DCOE), who are the company responsible for Coombe House School. Please note the attached first Annual Performance Report to the Company Stakeholders. This report has been shared with the Shareholder Committee (November 2023) and Full Council (December 2023).

During December 2022 Ofsted reported that there was a history of challenges since the Coombe House School opened in May 2022. At that point not all standards for independent schools had been met. As a result, a full Recovery Plan was approved to ensure the close alignment of the School and the Council as it proceeded through its full improvement journey.

The Recovery Plan took full account of the need to improve strengthening the governance arrangements for the company and the school as a priority. This included, strengthening the executive with the appointment of a new Managing Director (Andy Holder), Senior Finance Manager, HR Manager and Facilities Manager.

All of which has added to the significant progress that we can now demonstrate and evidence. This new leadership team have secured the pace and progress required.

A comprehensive Business Plan was approved in June 2023, resulting in financial benefits exceeding targets with a healthy trajectory going forward throughout next year.

From a journey of October 2022, when Ofsted declared that the school “did not meet all of the independent school standards” to June 2023, when further improvements have been made, we can be assured that the recovery plan has been effective. Ofsted latest report noted “significant improvement to the school in a short time” (June 2023)

Although there is still further work to be done, in terms of ensuring the curriculum at the school is sufficiently robust, closing the gaps in the primary phase in reading and improving the outcomes for a small minority of pupils not engaged with the curriculum. However, the current leadership team are demonstrating their ability to continue the positive improvements they have made to date.

Recommendation:

For Cabinet to note the DCOE Annual Performance Report, which maps its improvement journey.

Reason for Recommendation:

To ensure Cabinet are fully informed of the current DCOE performance and journey.

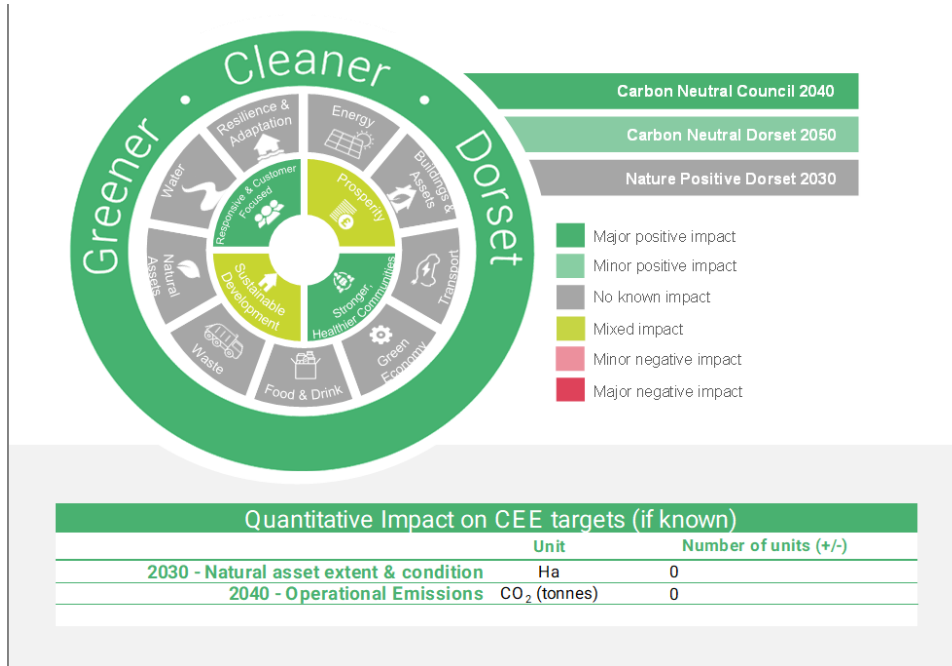
1. **Report**

1.1 This report provides an overview of the improvement journey of the Dorset Centre of Excellence for 2023 as highlighted within their annual performance report.

2. **Financial Implications**

2.1 Not applicable.

3. Natural Environment, Climate & Ecology Implications



ACCESSIBLE TABLE SHOWING IMPACTS

Natural Environment, Climate & Ecology Strategy Commitments	Impact
Energy	No known impact
Buildings & Assets	No known impact
Transport	No known impact
Green Economy	No known impact
Food & Drink	No known impact
Waste	No known impact
Natural Assets & Ecology	No known impact
Water	No known impact
Resilience and Adaptation	No known impact

Corporate Plan Aims	Impact
Prosperity	neutral
Stronger healthier communities	strongly supports it
Sustainable Development & Housing	neutral

Responsive & Custom Focused	strongly supports it
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4. **Well-being and Health Implications**

- 4.1 For the pupils attending the Coombe House School, it is positive to know that all standards in independent schools have been met and that the current leadership and executive is effective at making the necessary improvements towards excellence. For families and carers this is particularly reassuring.

5. **Other Implications**

- 5.1 The reputation of the Council will be impacted positively as a result of this rapid progress in performance.

6. **Risk Assessment**

- 6.1 **HAVING CONSIDERED:** the risks associated with this decision; the level of risk has been identified as:

Current Risk: low

Residual Risk: low

7. **Equalities Impact Assessment**

n/a

8. **Appendices**

8.1 Appendix 1: Accessible Table of Impacts and Table of Recommendations

8.2 Appendix 2: Dorset Centre of Excellence Annual Performance Report

9. **Background Papers**

None