

## **PEOPLE AND HEALTH OVERVIEW COMMITTEE**

### **MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY 6 FEBRUARY 2024**

**Present:** Cllrs Mike Parkes (Chairman), Tony Alford, Pauline Batstone, Jean Dunseith, Ryan Holloway, Stella Jones and Rebecca Knox

**Present remotely:** Cllrs Beryl Ezzard

**Apologies:** Cllrs Cathy Lugg and Howard Legg

**Also present:** Cllr Shane Bartlett, Cllr Byron Quayle and Cllr Jane Somper

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

Vivienne Broadhurst (Executive Director - People Adults), George Dare (Senior Democratic Services Officer), Amanda Davis (Corporate Director for Education and Learning), Paul Dempsey (Corporate Director - Care & Protection), Julia Ingram (Corporate Director for Adult Social Care Operations), Theresa Leavy (Executive Director of People - Children), Jonathan Price (Corporate Director for Commissioning), Lisa Reid (Corporate Director for Quality Assurance & Safeguarding Families), Jennifer Lowis (Head of Strategic Communications and Engagement), Kelly Henry (Interim Head of Placement Commissioning), Matthew Turnbull (Democratic and Electoral Services Apprentice), Carol Hosking (Project Manager - Family Hubs) and Rebecca Watson (Project Lead - Family Hubs)

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

Liz Crocker (Service Manager for Libraries)

**51. Apologies**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Cathy Lugg and Howard Legg.

Cllr Ezzard attending the meeting virtually.

**52. Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

**53. Minutes**

Proposed by Cllr Holloway, seconded by Cllr Alford.

**Decision**

That the minutes of the meeting held on 30 November 2023 be confirmed and signed.

**54. Public Participation**

The Committee received a question, and the Portfolio Holder provided a written response.

The question and response are attached to these minutes.

**55. Councillor Questions**

There were no questions from councillors.

**56. Urgent Items**

There were no urgent items.

**57. Committee's Work Programme and Cabinet's Forward Plan**

There were no comments from the committee on the work programme.

The next meeting on 19 March 2024 would be cancelled if there was no sufficient business planned for it.

**58. Families First for Children Pathfinder Update**

The Corporate Director for Care and Protection introduced the update report and gave a presentation to the committee. He outlined the 4 key areas of reform, the progress since the last update, the £4.9 million funding for the pathfinder and the investment areas for the funding, and the approach to the new model becoming live. The presentation is attached to these minutes.

Committee members discussed the report and asked questions of officers and the Portfolio Holder. The following was discussed:

- Officers were working with senior officials at the Department for Education and the pathfinder was very important for transformation of children's social care. There was an acceptance that there needed to be a new settlement for local government children's services. Other local authorities would need funding in order to deliver the reform.
- The process to become a special guardian was currently not a good experience for families. The council was looking at bringing the service in house to offer a better assessment process with enhanced support.

- There were representatives of 2 voluntary sector organisations on the programme board and there would also be a representative on the Safeguarding Partnership Board.
- The Family Hubs Programme has engagement with the voluntary sector on a local level.
- Due to the funding, Dorset Council was in a better position than other local authorities to deliver the work.
- Children's services was an attractive place for people to work so it was likely the new family help posts would be recruited.
- The Department for Education had commissioned an evaluation partner which would evaluate the experience of children and families, as well as costs.
- There were resourcing challenges for partners, particularly Dorset Police.

Members noted the update.

#### 59. **Childrens Sufficiency Strategy 2024-2027**

The Corporate Director for Care and Protection introduced the Children's Sufficiency Strategy and gave a presentation, which is attached to these minutes. He explained the sufficiency duty and what the sufficiency strategy was for. The seven priorities of the strategy and measures to see whether it was successful were outlined.

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

- There was no work done on the 20 self-contained units for care leavers. Officers were open to suggestions of appropriate places for them.
- There were currently 5 care leavers in B&B accommodation.
- There were commercial arrangements with B&B's however young people would receive wraparound support from multi-disciplinary professionals.
- The increase in children's home places were from additional provision from existing children's homes and through residential providers.
- Some care leavers will be receiving a service from the council whereas others will only have contact with the council when needed. Not all 309 care leavers receiving a service from a Personal Advisor were in staying put arrangements.

Proposed by Cllr Batstone, seconded by Cllr Holloway.

**Decision:**

That the Sufficiency Strategy and related action planning be recommended to Cabinet for approval.

#### 60. **Equality, Diversity & Inclusion (EDI) Strategy**

The Chairman read the following statement:

“As agreed with senior officers and with Cllr Jill Haynes, Portfolio Holder for Corporate Development and Transformation, the EDI Strategy and Action Plan will be deferred for discussion at a People and Health Overview committee to be held later in the year.

The reason for this is that officers have recommended waiting for the Department for Education’s current consultation on “Gender questioning children: draft schools and colleges guidance” to be completed and their report published, so we can consider the finalised guidance and align Dorset Council’s position appropriately”.

## 61. **Family Hub Network Development**

The Family Hubs Programme Lead introduced the report and gave a presentation to the committee, which is attached to these minutes.

Members considered the report and asked questions of the officers. The following points were made:

- Officers were aware of the issues in the East of the county. They were working with the VCSE to develop financial model.
- The most appropriate sites for family hubs in some areas have been identified as the existing children’s centre.
- Specific requirements, such as confidential spaces, in hubs would require some adaptations to be made in some buildings.
- There were 4 hubs currently open, and it was aimed that 8 hubs would be open by September.
- Library buildings were varied so the offer in each one would be varied. Work to look at assets was not yet completed.
- Library sites would have a core offer which is trained staff being able to signpost to services. Options to enhance offers at libraries were being looked at where possible.
- The Beaminster Library was not good for this type of service, but there was another Dorset Council building nearby that would be more suitable. The member sought assurances that this alternative building was being looked at. It was requested that further details be provided for Cabinet about intentions going forward.

Proposed by Cllr Alford, seconded by Cllr Dunseith.

### **Decision:**

That the proposed development of Dorset’s Family Hub Network be recommended to Cabinet for approval, with the additional information requested on libraries.

## 62. **Exempt Business**

There was no exempt business.

**Duration of meeting:** 10.00 - 11.46 am

**Chairman**

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