

**THE SHAREHOLDER COMMITTEE FOR THE DORSET CENTRE OF  
EXCELLENCE (DCOE)**

**MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON MONDAY 16 SEPTEMBER 2024**

**Present:** Cllrs Ryan Hope, Clare Sutton (Chair) and Gill Taylor

**Also present:** Cllr Jane Somper

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

Ian Comfort (Chair of the Dorset Centre of Excellence Board)

Jen Cook (Lawyer - Contracts and Commercial)

Kate Critchel (Senior Democratic Services Officer)

Amanda Davis (Corporate Director for Education and Learning)

Paul Dempsey (Executive Director of People - Children)

Aidan Dunn (Executive Director - Corporate Development S151)

Chris Harrod (Senior Democratic Services Officer)

Andrew Holder (Managing Director)

Matt Prosser (Chief Executive)

Claire Webb (Strategic Commissioner)

**12. Election of Chair**

In the absence of both the Chair and Vice-Chair, it was necessary to undertake an election of chair for this meeting.

It was therefore proposed by Cllr Jill Taylor and seconded by Cllr Ryan Hope that Cllr Clare Sutton be elected as Chair of the meeting.

**13. Apologies**

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr Nick Ireland and Richard Biggs

**14. Minutes**

The minutes of the previous meeting were confirmed as a correct record.

**15. Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

**16. Public Participation**

A question had been received, however it did not fall within the remit of the shareholder committee to address.

## 17. **Councillor Questions**

No questions were received.

## 18. **Dorset Council Commissioning Report**

The Strategic Commissioner introduced the report which set out the commissioning activity that had taken place since the previous meeting, current activities taking place and also provided a forecast for the next quarter.

Officers responded to Members' comments and requests for clarification, details included:

- While there had been some delays to the building programme, which had affected a small number of children, the council, as commissioners, had ensured that bespoke transitions in place. Care had been taken to identify students and families affected and mitigating plans had been put in place along with regular communication. Those students affected had a longer transition plan that ensured that a suitable provision was available for each individual child until such a time that the classrooms were open for use. The Committee was advised that the assembly of the pre-fabricated building had been completed on site at the end of the previous week and work to complete was moving to the next stage.
- The commissioning team were naturally cautious and had felt that wating the residual risk as 'medium' was the correct approach to take at this point in time, highlighting that there was a lot going on at the school right now in terms of growth and staffing that needed to "bed-in". It was expected that this risk would be lowered from the spring term.
- It was acknowledged that the on-site swimming pool was not being fully utilised and that while the school had clear plans to get to that point and there was a meeting due to be held to review a series of submissions from community groups that had expressed an interest in using the pool. The school naturally had to work out how multiple providers of swimming lessons could utilise the same pool without conflicts of interest arising.
- The Coombe House Reading Scale was a solution that set about measuring progress in a different way that worked on the logic of its pupils being able to try different learning methods that encouraged engagement through innovation and sharing successes.

### **NOTED**

## 19. **DCoE - Report of the Chair of the Board of Directors**

The Chair of the Board introduced the report, which set out the work that had been undertaken by The Dorset Centre for Excellence since its opening, including progress made since the previous board report.

Officers responded to Member comments and requests for clarification, details included:

- Coombe House School wanted to do more than what was expected of it in terms of the support that it provided its pupils throughout their time there and in order to prepare them for departure, and this was constantly monitored to with students their families to ensure that things were progressing well. What was offered by the school was considered to be sustainable.
- Clare Sutton – check question – There had been some discussions relating to the provision of residential social care on-site and some modelling had been undertaken by Dorset Centre of Excellence for the type of provision and associated costs, although the commissioning team needed to review what had been put forward to try and match the need for such provision. This was still in the very early stages and so there was not yet enough information available.
- Coombe House School worked to ensure best outcomes for children and this is why it undertook the monitoring referred to in a previous question. The desire was that school leavers had a route into employment. From a wider perspective the commissioning team and other children’s teams across the council were focussing on children moving from this setting into adulthood.

**NOTED.**

**20. Forward Plan**

The forward plan was noted.

**21. Urgent Items**

There were no urgent items.

**22. Exempt Business**

There was no exempt business

**Duration of meeting:** 10.00 - 10.34 am

**Chairman**

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