

PEOPLE AND HEALTH SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON MONDAY 22 SEPTEMBER 2025

Present: Cllrs Toni Coombs (Chair), Jane Somper (Vice-Chair), Barry Goringe, Carole Jones, Chris Kippax, Robin Legg, Andy Todd and Carl Woode

Present remotely: Cllrs Sally Holland

Apologies: Cllrs Bridget Bolwell

Also present: Cllr Steve Robinson and Cllr Gill Taylor

Also present remotely: Cllr Ryan Hope and Cllr Clare Sutton

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

Andrew Billany (Corporate Director for Housing), Sam Crowe (Director of Public Health), George Dare (Senior Democratic and Governance Officer), Paul Dempsey (Executive Director of People - Children), Sarah Howard (Deputy Director of Modernisation and Place) and Rachel Partridge (Deputy Director of Public Health)

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

Julia Ingram (Corporate Director for Adult Social Care Operations) and Jonathan Price (Executive Director of People - Adults and Housing)

24. Apologies

An apology for absence was received from Cllr Bridget Bolwell.

25. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

26. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 30 July 2025 were confirmed and signed.

27. Public Participation

There was no public participation.

28. **Councillor Questions**

There were no questions from councillors.

29. **Urgent Items**

There were no urgent items.

30. **Arrangements for Public Health in Dorset Council following Disaggregation**

The Director of Public Health and Prevention introduced the report on the disaggregation of Public Health Dorset. There were several key issues throughout the disaggregation, which included the need to ensure the disaggregation was safe whilst still maintaining an effective service in both councils. There would be a need for the committee to consider which areas of public health they would like to scrutinise in the future. Public Health Dorset was able to do significant work in the local health system, however the Public Health and Prevention Directorate would need to focus on delivering effectively with a smaller team and BCP Council's public health team.

Members discussed the report and asked questions of the Director and Deputy Director of Public Health. During discussion, the following points were raised:

- The re-procurement of public health contracts was to ensure they were right for the future and due to wider influences such as clustering of Integrated Care Boards and more place-based working.
- Commissioning services separately from BCP Council could be better for integration of public health in Dorset Council, however joint commissioning could be more efficient and better value.
- 5-year projections and inflation were considered for the regional assurance process, due to the potential for 3-year Public Health Grant settlements. Additional grants received by public health would be included in the Public Health Grant.
- Committee members were concerned that public health may receive less money if additional funding was merged into the Public Health Grant.
- The Regional Director led a robust assurance visit and feedback from the visit was incorporated into an action plan.
- Smoking cessation and NHS Health Checks were both examples of public health outcomes with performance measures. The Committee would monitor these metrics in quarterly performance reviews. An all-member webinar would be held on the Public Health and Prevention directorate, with information about smoking cessation and health checks included.
- Members queried the numbers of people quitting smoking. It was the number of validated quitters after 4 weeks. High numbers were achieved through working with digital and marketing teams. Most of the 5-year smoking cessation programme was achieved in year 1, so it was unknown how successful it would be in the coming years. Following a question from

the Chairman, it was confirmed that the majority have transferred to vaping and had not given up entirely.

- A member asked if there had been a lower take up of childhood MMR vaccinations. It was confirmed that Dorset was not achieving the national standards, however the county was outperforming the wider South-West and England averages. Public health worked with the NHS on vaccinations but did not commission the vaccinations.
- A member referenced a scheme in Minehead, where GP appointments were made for young people missing school, which had positive results for helping young people stay at school. The Deputy Director of Modernisation and Place offered to explore this with the NHS. Cllrs Jones, Todd and Kippax would collaborate on this piece of work.
- Members emphasised that outcomes were the key to all the council does. The Director of Public Health and Prevention explained there was not much flexibility for spending the Public Health grant, however through integrating public health into the council and through Integrated Neighbourhood Teams, public health would be able to reach people better, creating outcomes for them.

Committee members commended the seamless disaggregation of public health and aligning it with council directorates and priorities, without a change to service delivery. The Chairman summed up the discussion and emphasised the Regional Director of Public Health's comment about the 'brilliant' public health work in the council.

31. Dorset Safeguarding Children's Partnership Annual Report 2024-25

The Executive Director of People – Children introduced the Safeguarding Children Partnership annual report. This was the first annual report since the disaggregation of the Pan-Dorset Safeguarding Children Partnership, due to Dorset Council taking part in the Families First for Children Pathfinder. The new model of the partnership is chaired by a senior person from a statutory partner, rather than an Independent Chair, however an Independent Scrutineer had been appointed to the partnership. Overall, the partnership had achieved deeper integration, better communication, and Ofsted commented positively about it.

The Committee asked questions of the Executive Director of People – Children and discussed the report. The following points were raised:

- A member raised that there are 23% of children living in poverty and gave examples of poverty to remind the committee the challenges that poverty brings to young people.
- Although the numbers were low, members were concerned by the number of young people experiencing harm. The Executive Director explained the work to reduce and prevent harm, which included working with the Community Safety Partnership and the police. The Pineapple Project focussed on safeguarding young women and girls and individual children would have their own Child Protection Plans. If the risk of significant harm increased then support would be increased, with the possibility of the young person being taken into care where necessary.

- A member raised that family hubs were becoming a trusted place for families and asked how the council could measure and show the value of family hubs. The Executive Director explained that metrics for families receiving support would increase and the number of child protection plans decrease over time as family hubs are successful. Specific metrics for family hubs would be explored.
- There were impact reports from the voluntary sector which measured the impacts of family hubs. The Our Future Council programme and developing a new customer model would provide opportunities to how the council receives feedback from customers about services.
- There was a new target to report to Government for the percentage of children achieving a good level of development at early years foundation stage. The council was achieving 70% for this performance measure, however members emphasised the need to be supporting the other 30% of children to ensure they were also being developed.
- A member raised that attainment in schools was lower than average for Key Stage 2 outcomes. This was confirmed by the Executive Director, and it was a target to improve KS2 outcomes in the council plan. Improving attainment was being delivered through the Dorset Education Board, an education improvement strategy, a school improvement team, and education challenge leads.
- Members asked how the role of the Independent Scrutineer would operate in the Safeguarding Children Partnership and requested that they contribute to the annual report in future years. The partnership meetings would be chaired by the council's Chief Executive rather than an Independent Chair going forward.

The Committee Chairman summed up the discussion and reiterated the need to ensure that the council continues to have effective safeguarding arrangements for children and young people in Dorset.

32. Committee's Work Programme and Executive Forward Plans

The Chairman outlined the agendas for the upcoming meetings in November and January. The November meeting would have a focus on Adult Social Care due to the upcoming CQC inspection in early December. The January meeting would focus on the budget and Medium-Term Financial Plan.

Changes to children and young people's mental health services would be brought to the committee after a year to review the differences the changes are making.

33. Exempt Business

There was no exempt business.

Duration of meeting: 10.00 - 11.34 am

Chairman

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