

Shareholder Committee for Care Dorset Holdings Ltd

23 March 2026

Commissioners' Update

For Review and Consultation

Cabinet Member:

Cllr S Robinson, Adult Social Care

Local Councillor(s):

All

Senior Leadership Team:

J Price, Executive Director of People - Adults

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Statutory Authority: Dorset Council

Report status: Public (the exemption paragraph is N/A)

Executive summary (maximum of 500 words)

This report provides an update on developments led by the Council that are relevant to Care Dorset, summarising key progress made since the last Shareholder Committee meeting in January 2026.

1. Recommendation(s)

- 1.1 This report asks the Committee to note the report and progress contained within.

2. Reason for the recommendation(s)

- 2.1 Care Dorset is a key part of delivering the Council's 'Commissioning for A Better Life' strategies, and for improving the quality and sustainability of the care and support delivered to adults in Dorset.

3. The report

- 3.1 This report provides an update on key areas of work that affect Care Dorset. It covers progress on day services, supported living, extra care housing, reablement centres, system transformation and a financial update.

Day Services

- 3.1 Dorset Council is now moving into the implementation phase of its new model for day opportunities, following Cabinet approval of the proposals on 3 March. The modernised, more sustainable delivery model aligns with the Council's wider approach to locality-based working, improved use of community assets, and a stronger emphasis on prevention and independence.
- 3.2 The proposals, which were already supported by the People & Health Overview Committee and the Health & Wellbeing Board in February, set out a revised commissioning model with Care Dorset and the private sector, alongside a more flexible, multi-site approach to delivering day opportunities across Dorset. Commissioners continue to work closely with Care Dorset to shape how the new model will operate in practice and to ensure continuity of support for people through the transition
- 3.3 With Cabinet approval secured, work now progresses into implementation. This includes finalising the commissioning plan with Care Dorset and independent providers; developing implementation plans tailored to each locality; ongoing engagement with people who use services, families, staff and wider council departments; and coordinating property and asset planning to support the redesigned model. These steps will underpin the phased roll-out of the new approach and ensure it delivers the outcomes identified through extensive consultation.

Supported Living

- 3.4 Following the success of the first move-on supported living site in Weymouth, the second development, a three-bedroom property, is now nearing completion, with the nominations panel scheduled to meet next week to agree prospective residents. The builder has advised that works should be completed by the end of April, after which we will allow a short period for snagging and final checks before the Registered Social Landlord undertakes the formal handover to Care Dorset.

Extra Care Housing

- 3.5 Occupancy at St Martin's in Gillingham has continued to rise since the planning determination in November 2025, with the scheme now consistently operating at around 90% occupancy. Care Dorset has maintained strong on-site support throughout, adapting well to the broadened eligibility and ensuring the scheme remains on track to reach full occupancy soon.

Reablement Centres

- 3.6 The redevelopment of Sidney Gale House in Bridport into a modern 56-bed reablement centre continues to progress well. The planning application was

successfully approved on 26 February 2026, enabling demolition work to begin, with a clear site expected by May 2026. The programme will require a Cabinet decision in May 2026 to award the construction contract, keeping the project on track for an anticipated opening in in 2028. Care Dorset remains actively involved in the final design process, contributing operational insight and added value to ensure the new facility supports high-quality, efficient, person-centred care. Next steps include finalising the operator procurement and agreement, with Care Dorset continuing as the Council's preferred operator, alongside preparing the construction phase and ensuring smooth transition into delivery.

System-wide transformation

- 3.7 Commissioners and the FutureCare Programme team continue to work closely with Care Dorset to strengthen performance across Pathway 1 Reablement. Positively, weekly starts remain above trajectory and have met the target of 18 and the length of stay is now performing at national best practice levels, sitting at 21 days. Although effectiveness remains an area for improvement, increased use of the Reablement App, Multi Disciplinary Team (MDT) style working, and the rollout of the offline version of the app are supporting better step-down rates.
- 3.8 Castleman Plus continues to show strong progress, supported by weekly improvement cycles that have enhanced caseload management, increased occupancy, and reduced the average length of stay from 51 in late 2025, to around 30 days, as of February 2026. The addition of a new Occupational Therapist has enabled the service to support more people with therapy needs. Bed flow remains steady, with around two admissions and two discharges each week, and a growing proportion of individuals regaining sufficient independence to return home with support rather than entering long-term residential care.

Finance

- 3.9 Care Dorset has continued to demonstrate strong financial discipline throughout the current year, delivering approximately £1.6 million in efficiencies against the agreed contract price. This has been achieved through a combination of operational improvements, tighter cost management and ongoing collaboration between Care Dorset and commissioning colleagues to ensure services remain both high-quality and financially sustainable.
- 3.10 Alongside in-year performance, constructive discussions have taken place to finalise the contract price for Year 4 – 26/27 financial year. These conversations have focused on ensuring the contract remains aligned with the Council's broader financial planning framework, including the approach to corporate uplifts applied across the Council. The intention is to agree a

contract value that reflects inflationary pressures, market conditions, and Care Dorset's ongoing transformation activity, while maintaining a clear expectation around continued efficiency and value for money.

- 3.11 The strategic summit on 4 February brought together senior colleagues from Care Dorset and Dorset Council to review organisational progress, discuss current operational pressures, and reaffirm both the strategic direction and future opportunities for the organisation. The session also included focused discussions on financial and commercial planning, covering Care Dorset's current financial model, long-term sustainability, and opportunities aligned with the Council's wider transformation and asset strategies. It was agreed that proposals on Care Dorset's future operating model and strategic direction will be brought back to the Shareholder in June for discussion.

4. Legal considerations

- 4.1 There are no immediate legal implications arising directly from this report. However, any future decisions relating to service transformation, contractual changes, or commissioning arrangements will need to comply with relevant statutory duties, including those under the Care Act 2014, public procurement regulations, and employment law.

5. Financial implications

- 5.1 This report does not seek any formal decisions at this stage, and therefore does not introduce new financial commitments. However, the ongoing pressures facing the Council's adult social care budget remain and therefore solid commissioning decisions related to Care Dorset will need to be made.

6. Natural environment, climate & ecology implications

- 6.1 While this report does not raise any direct environmental implications, ongoing work on the transformation of day services and the redevelopment of Sidney Gale House presents opportunities to improve the environmental performance of Care Dorset's estate. These projects offer potential to enhance energy efficiency, reduce carbon emissions, and make better use of existing buildings in line with the Council's wider sustainability goals

7. Well-being and health implications

- 7.1 The services described, and their journey of improvement, are significant contributors to the maintenance and improvement in the health and wellbeing of people who draw on support.

8. Other implications

- 8.1 No other implications identified.

9. Risk implications

9.1 No decision is required; no risk assessment therefore needed.

10. Equalities

10.1 No decision is required. Equalities impacts are assessed in connection with decision made on specific service developments.

11. Appendices

11.1 None

12. Background papers

12.1 None

13. Report sign-off

13.1 This report has been through the internal report clearance process and has been signed off by the Director for Legal and Democratic (Monitoring Officer), the Executive Director for Corporate Development (Section 151 Officer) and the appropriate Portfolio Holder(s).