SHAREHOLDER COMMITTEE FOR CARE DORSET HOLDINGS LTD

MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON MONDAY 28 SEPTEMBER 2026

Present: Cllrs Nick Ireland (Chair), Richard Biggs (Vice-Chair) and Gill Taylor

Present remotely: Cllrs Steve Robinson and Ben Wilson

Apologies: None

Officers and others present (for all or part of the meeting):
Chris Best (Chief Executive Officer, Care Dorset), Jen Cook (Lawyer - Contracts and Commercial), Sean Cremer (Director - Resources (Section 151 Officer)), Julia Ingram (Director - Adult Social Care), Sarah Sewell (Head of Commissioning - Adults Care and Support), Caroline Tapster (Chair of the Care Dorset Board) and Lindsey Watson (Senior Democratic and Governance Officer)

11. **Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held on 29 June 2026 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

12. **Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

13. **Public Participation**

There were no questions or statements from members of the public or local organisations.

14. **Councillor Questions**

There were no questions from councillors.

15. **Forward Plan**

The Forward Plan was noted.

16. **Care Dorset Update**

The shareholder committee considered a report, which provided an update on matters relating to Care Dorset since the previous meeting.

The Chair of the Board introduced Chris Brophy, a Non-Executive Director on the Care Dorset Board.

The Chair of the Board reported that recruitment for an additional Non-Executive Director with commercial and business expertise was ongoing. In addition it was noted that a governance effectiveness review had been commenced to ensure that governance arrangements remained aligned with recognised good practice and continued to support the organisation's strategic objectives. A final report was expected in the new year.

The Chief Executive Officer reflected on where Care Dorset was as the company approached its four-year anniversary, noted the areas covered by the annual performance report, progress made and savings delivered. There was recognition of the contribution made by all colleagues for services delivered. It was acknowledged that there was more to do to grow, become more commercially capable, support people and provide value to the shareholder.

The Chief Executive Officer provided an overview of the areas covered by the update report.

The shareholder committee considered the issues covered by the report and during discussion the following points were raised:

- Congratulations were given on the Good rating achieved following a recent Care Quality Commission inspection for the Lawns residential care home in Weymouth
- A question was raised in respect of the self-funded occupancy levels set out in the report. The Chief Executive Officer noted that there were differences in the price per bed across care homes and the difference in figures would need to be checked
- In respect of financial performance and closing the gap in finances, this was being monitored and it was noted that there had been a focus on marketing activity and a deferment of some planned activity to the following year. A further note in respect of this would be provided following the meeting from the Care Dorset Chief Financial Officer
- The importance of keeping the financial position under review was highlighted
- In response to a question on the figures in the report related to self-funded occupancy, the Chief Executive Officer provided clarification on the figures and noted that 53% was the number of beds occupied by self-funders or those with another funding route. In respect of the number of empty beds, the Chief Executive Officer confirmed the current position and noted that there were around 20 beds empty
- It was confirmed that Care Dorset's supported living services provided move on accommodation.

The report was NOTED.

17. **Care Dorset Annual Performance Report**

The Chief Executive Officer, Care Dorset provided an annual performance report and presented the Impact Report 2025/26.

In response to a question, it was confirmed that the electronic rostering system was assisting with effective staffing management and was contributing to the ability to reduce agency use.

It was noted that the annual performance report would be presented to Cabinet at the November meeting for information.

The report was NOTED.

18. **Urgent Items**

The Chair reported that there were two items that had been added to the agenda under urgent items.

Annual Report and Year end Accounts

The Chair noted that the accounts had to be approved by the Care Dorset Board of Directors at a meeting on 21 September 2026, which was after the agenda publication date. As Chair, he had agreed to add the item to the agenda to ensure timely consideration of the report.

The shareholder committee received a report of the Chief Financial Officer, Care Dorset, which presented the audited annual accounts for the 18 months ending 31 March 2026. It was noted that the accounting period had been extended in order to align with the Dorset Council financial year.

Councillors considered the report and discussion was held in the following areas:

- In response to a question regarding Care Dorset's leasing arrangements, the Chief Executive Officer confirmed that there was assurance from auditors in respect of the arrangements. It would be important for Care Dorset to have the opportunity to explore arrangements within the estate as the business sought to grow and became more independent from the council
- No concerns in relation to profitability had been raised by the auditor. From a commercial perspective the company was secure as an ongoing concern, however there was recognition of the need to grow and diversify income streams and there was ambition to create reserves for future investments
- There had been early-stage discussions in respect of works required to properties, with decisions to be taken on where responsibilities lay. The Chief Executive Officer thanked those involved for their work in this area
- In response to a question about whether there were any challenges in the recovery of debt, the Chief Executive Officer noted that Care Dorset was comfortable with the position regarding debt and that there was a strong debt management process in place
- It was noted that the reliance on agency staff had reduced and a question was raised as to whether this was a sustainable position. Assurance was given that there were strong processes in place to manage workforce including greater visibility of rosters through the online system and use of the neutral vendor to manage the relationship with agency providers. There

were no current significant concerns, but this would continue to be kept under review
- There had been a reduction in staff numbers although it was noted that this was due to the closure of facilities and changes made within the support team and not due to a reduction in front line staff delivering care services. Staffing was expected to remain stable apart from any increase as required for the opening of new facilities
- It was noted that the nature of the service and how services were provided was constantly under review and that this could have an impact on staffing. A summit event would be held to talk about future issues for Care Dorset.

The report was NOTED.

Dorset Council Commissioner's Update

The Chair noted that the report had been received past the standard deadline for agenda publication. As Chair, he had agreed to add the item to the agenda to ensure timely dissemination of information to members.

The shareholder committee considered a report which presented the developments led by the council, relevant to Care Dorset, and summarised key progress since the last meeting of the shareholder committee.

In response to a question, the Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and Health reported that, in respect of the former Sidney Gale site, issues on site had caused a slight delay and therefore the report to be brought to Cabinet regarding the reablement centre would be brought towards the end of the year or beginning of next year.

The report was NOTED.

19. **Exempt Business**

It was proposed by R Biggs seconded by G Taylor

Decision

That the press and the public be excluded for the following item in view of the likely disclosure of exempt information within the meaning of paragraph 3 of Schedule 12 A to the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended).

Reason for taking the items in private

Paragraph 3 – Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information).

The livestream was concluded at this juncture.

20. **Trading Company proposal**

The Chief Executive Officer (Care Dorset) presented the exempt report and noted that the recommendation had been amended. A copy of the amended recommendation was tabled to shareholder committee members present in the meeting room. Those members of the shareholder committee attending online confirmed that they had seen a copy of the amended recommendation.

The Chief Executive Officer provided an overview of the issues covered in the report and responded to questions and comments from the shareholder committee.

It was proposed by R Biggs seconded by G Taylor.

Decision

That the exempt recommendations as amended and tabled at the meeting be approved.

Duration of meeting: 2.00 - 2.57 pm

Chairman

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