

Report to the Parish Council July 2023
Councillor Jill Haynes Chalk Valleys Ward Dorset Council

Dear councillors please find some of the highlights from July meetings and activity.

An Ofsted inspection on our care leaver services happened in May and the findings were reported to the July Cabinet, the findings from the visit were overwhelmingly positive.

Care leavers receive strong and effective support and have access to a wide range of specialist services. Each young person is helped by a skilled and dedicated personal adviser. Many personal advisers care about, and have empathy for, the young people they work with. Mostly, they know their young people well. They are proud of young people's achievements and champion their aspirations. They are there for young people when they most need them.

"Leaders have significantly strengthened support and services for care leavers and have made notable improvements in the quality and standard of their accommodation. This was an area for development at the last inspection". Care leavers themselves recognised the improvements and felt they were being supported well. Ofsted identified just one area which needed improvement as follows: The quality and timeliness of supervision.

New Adult Social Care reablement centre get a step closer.

Dorset Council is working with NHS partners to secure the Dorchester County Hospital site for the first of three proposed centres. Approval to go out to procurement of a design partner to develop detailed plans and costings for the Dorchester Reablement Centre was agreed at Cabinet along with the commitment to deliver the build stages of the project. The new 80 bed Reablement centre will help to:

- Reduce pressures on the Council's finances arising from demand and cost of adult social care services.
- Ensure that the Dorset Council area has sufficient care services to meet future demand for care.
- Reduce pressure on NHS beds and services including prevention of admission.
- Improve health outcomes for Dorset Council residents who are discharged from hospital and need ongoing care and support.

The capital cost of the centre is estimated at £30.4m. The net revenue benefit to the Council of implementing the project is £3m per year from year 6 of the project.

A Devolution Deal for Dorset

Devolution Deals are a part of the Government's levelling up agenda (as set out in the 2022 Levelling Up White Paper). The stated objective of Devolution Deals is "to spread opportunity equally across the UK" through greater devolution of powers and funding. The Government set a policy objective that by 2030, every part of England that wants a devolution deal, will have a such a deal offering powers and funding over issues such as

transport, skills and economic support. Within the White Paper there is also a strong emphasis on the importance of high profile, directly elected local leadership.

The opportunity. Devolution deals provide an opportunity for areas with a well-defined economic geography and a cohesive population of over 500,000 to develop a rationale to pursue one of the Devolution options.^{1.5} It should also be noted that devolution is a mechanism to support levelling up. Therefore, any 'devolution deal' will need to show how it addresses identified barriers to prosperity, including:

- Boosting productivity, pay and living standards by growing the private sector, especially in places where they are lagging.
- Spreading opportunities and improving public services, especially in those places where they are weakest.
- Restoring a sense of community, local pride and belonging, especially in those places where they are slipping.
- Empowering local leaders and communities, especially in those places lacking local agency.

At the July meeting there was overwhelming support for Dorset Council to seek out partner councils and to apply for a deal for Dorset with them. It was made clear that if successful then the control of the spend and priorities in the Dorset Council area would remain with the Council.

New Library Strategy Agreed

After considerable engagement and consultation including over 12,000 responses and new strategy has been agreed to start in 2024. None of our existing libraries will be closed but they will run different levels of support services.

Our new Dorset Council Library Strategy will guide how we develop and deliver our library service over the next 10 years, delivering services in line with the needs of our residents and Dorset Council's strategic priorities. The new library strategy was developed following two phases of public consultation. Phase one, Let's Talk Libraries consultation, which took place from October 2021 to January 2022 and phase 2 from September to December 2022. Altogether we heard from over 12,500 Dorset residents, children, communities, partners, employees, councillors, and businesses. The feedback gathered has directly informed the library strategy. The strategy includes a new operating model which will enable the library service to fulfil the aims of the strategy and provide a more consistent, accessible, offer across all Dorset libraries.