

## **Report to the Parish Council October 2023**

### **Councillor Jill Haynes, Chalk Valleys Ward, Dorset Council**

#### **Public Space Protection Order**

The Dorset wide PSPO is before Cabinet next week for review. This order states when dogs can be on beaches and other public areas and also when they can be running free and when they must be on leads. There has been a lot of public comment but there are likely to be few changes to the existing order. In particular, dogs will continue to be banned from many of our beaches in the summer months but are allowed on in the winter.

#### **Joint Venture for temporary/contingency workforce**

The council has agreed to enter into a joint venture to provide contingency workers. This is currently done via an agency but that has not necessarily given the flexibility needed. The Joint Venture will have dedicated staff working at county hall enabling a close relationship with the service managers and a true understanding of the kind of staff needed. These can range through dustbin loaders, social workers, school staff right up to senior management. Sometimes staff are required just for a few days and sometimes as long as a year for a specific piece of work or while a member of staff is being recruited, on maternity leave. It is a real challenge to find the right people at short notice and the new venture will connect us much more closely to the process.

#### **Budget 2024/5**

The budget setting process continues with a day long workshop being programmed for early December. The continued pressures in many areas but in particular Special Needs Children, Adults with Special Needs and the price of materials for roads etc. seem to be increasingly difficult to control. We will need to find savings of some £30M next year from a budget of £362M.

#### **Our Future Council**

Our Future Council is a programme looking at how the council can provide services differently without cutting the quality of service. Phase one is happening at the moment and is joining up many of the councils computer systems and removing others so that there is accurate data. Most of our individual phone numbers will be removed and training given so our call centre will handle these calls. (e.g. parking fines) It will also roll out the customer account so people can do all their interactions with the council in one place. Be it blue badge applications, garden waste bins, a missed recycling collection or a change of address this should be able to be done in one place without having to get into a host of individual council web pages. Phase 2 of this programme will be an internal review of processes and stripping out unnecessary governance activity. The council needs to become more agile and leaner

## **Dorset Business Festival**

I spent an interesting day last month with the Dorset Chamber of Trade at their business festival. I was asked to be on a Q&A panel on workforce and retention. There were interesting people on the panel with me including big manufacturers from Bournemouth and a previous MD of John Lewis. The session lasted over an hour and was one of six sessions in the day. We discussed enthusing young people early and making them aware of Dorset opportunities, in particular the vast range of modern apprenticeships which allow people to earn as they learn. There was also concern raised about the cost of accommodation putting people off coming to Dorset to work.

## **Two Executive Directors to retire.**

In recent days two of our Executive directors have announced they are going to retire. John Sellgren the Director of Place will leave the council in early January. John has been with Dorset Council since it was formed and has been a very positive leader who has a vast experience in the environment area. I have to say he is also a charming person and will be greatly missed. The Place Directorate is vast, too big really, and an executive lead will be taken on short term while the future make up of the directorate is considered.

Vivian Broadhurst is also retiring but not until next March. Viv was taken on originally on a short term basis to cover for the previous director of Adults and housing who was on long term sick leave. She then moved to the substantive role three years ago. She has made a terrific difference in Adult Social Care, is a great leader and really has managed to get a grip on this budget in what is a very difficult area. Again I have had a close working relationship with Viv and found her a caring and sometimes very funny lady who will also be greatly missed at the council.