

Growth and Infrastructure Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Wednesday 22 June 2022

PRESENT:

Councillor Riley, in the Chair.

Councillor Coker, Vice Chair.

Councillors Finn, Goslin, Hendy, Holloway, Partridge, Poyser, Salmon, Tippetts and Tofan.

Apologies for absence: Councillor Lugger.

Also in attendance: Anthony Payne (Strategic Director for Place), Jamie Sheldon (Senior Governance Advisor), Paul Barnard (Service Director for Strategic Planning and Infrastructure), Councillor Drean (Cabinet Member for Transport), Councillor Stoneman (Cabinet Member for Climate Change), Councillor Shayer (Cabinet Member for Finance and Economy), David Draffan (Service Director for Economic Development), Amanda Ratsey (Head of Economy, Enterprise and Employment)

The meeting started at 2.00 pm and finished at 4.10 pm.

Note: At a future meeting, the Panel will consider the accuracy of these draft minutes, so they may be subject to change. Please check the minutes of that meeting to confirm whether these minutes have been amended.

46. **To note the appointments of the Chair and Vice-Chair for the Municipal Year 2022 - 2023**

The Committee noted the appointment of Councillor Riley as Chair and Councillor Coker as Vice Chair of this Committee for the forthcoming municipal year 2022/23.

47. **Declarations of Interest**

In accordance with the code of conduct, the following declarations of interest were made by Councillors -

Name	Minute Number	Reason	Interest
Councillor Tippetts	Shared Prosperity Fund	He is a student at the University of Plymouth	Personal
Councillor Goslin	Shared Prosperity Fund	He is an employee of the University of Plymouth	Personal
Councillor Poyser	Shared Prosperity Fund	He is an employee of City College Plymouth	Personal

48. **Minutes**

The Committee agreed that the minutes of the meeting held on 23 February 2022 were agreed as an accurate record of the meeting.

49. **Chair's Urgent Business**

There were no items of Chair's Urgent Business.

50. **Growth and Infrastructure Overview and Scrutiny Committee Terms of Reference**

The Committee noted the terms of reference for the Growth and Infrastructure Overview and Scrutiny Panel.

51. **Policy Update (To Follow)**

The Chair referred Members to the Policy Update contained within the agenda pack.

Members noted the Policy Update.

52. **Climate Emergency Action Plan 2022 and Corporate Carbon Reduction Plan 2022 - In Year Monitoring Reports**

Councillor Stoneman (Cabinet Member for Climate Change) briefly introduced the Climate Emergency Action Plan 2022 and Corporate Carbon Reduction Plan 2022 – In Year Monitoring Reports.

In response to questions raised it was reported that –

- (a) the Cabinet Member acknowledged that the report focused upon current reflections other than a broader strategic approach and confirmed that he was to work with officers to identify long-term solutions;
- (b) the list of Council developments for various allocated sites within the city was listed in the Joint Local Plan; the Council had been discussing with utility companies how to better coordinate infrastructure planning across the board so the delivery of the projects could be better managed;
- (c) the Council was working on an enhanced partnership with bus companies to encourage bus use and sustainability – that would be reported to Cabinet later in the year; the Council was ambitious in its bid to Government for funding for the bus service however was unsuccessful – Officers would continue to bid for available funding;
- (d) positive feedback had been received to date with regards to the water storage project in Trefusis Park; the Council was in the process of finalising designs and securing funding; a separate briefing on the project would be provided to Councillor Tippett's outside of the meeting;

- (e) the Council was unsuccessful in securing funding for Tranche 3 of the Active Travel Fund as the bid was oversubscribed. As of yet no detailed feedback had been received as to why the Council's bid was unsuccessful however this would be provided to Members via a written response once received;
- (f) the Plymbridge Road Scheme and Central Park Improvements Scheme were to be funded as part of the overall capital programme as the bid to the Active Travel Fund bid was unsuccessful;
- (g) the Council's transport team were analysing bus patronage figures to assess the impact on bus services as a result of the pandemic; CityBus recorded transactions at the shop and this data was shared with the Council;
- (h) Officers were looking into a possible location for a rapid charger for the hackney carriage fleet in Plymouth; there were concerns that if a charger was installed in a taxi rank it would prevent taxi drivers moving forward throughout the rank until their vehicle was fully charged;
- (i) in terms of bus patronage levels and the impact of the pandemic upon concessionary bus fares, it was highlighted that a review was currently being undertaken. The Council was working with bus companies in terms of the viability of bus routes and patronage; funding for concessionary fares was set as part of the council tax setting process however this would be considered in the context of other budgetary pressures the council was facing. It was accepted that challenges to the viability of commercial routes was to be considered going forward. Councillor Drean, as Cabinet Member, highlighted that he was prepared to ring-fence money for the concessionary bus fare budget;
- (j) there were plans for Crownhill Road to go back to two carriageways with one being a dedicated bus lane – the Cabinet Member for Transport would investigate the possibility of a car free day to help with the reduction of carbon emissions and encourage public transport use;
- (k) standardisation for electric vehicle charging points was built around private sector investment; infrastructure was set against standards the industry was designed to meet. Ease of use was a key factor, as well as the scale of the infrastructure to support long and short distance travel. Plymouth had installed 53 pop-up chargers in the city with the programme standing at 715 chargers. It was expected that 800-900 chargers were required to support the city's usage;
- (l) the benefits of the introduction of the new Cabinet role which focused upon climate change would shine a light on one of the biggest issues currently facing society. Cross party work and collaborative working would be a key focus as this issue was considered to be too big to be political. The Cabinet Member would work with all Cabinet colleagues with a strategic focus upon climate emergency within the council in order to reach the Council's goal of being net zero by 2030. The Cabinet Member's biggest area of concern was the transport element the city faced;

- (m) the Council was still waiting for guidance and legislation from Government with regards to the handling of waste. The waste agenda and the potential changes would have a fundamental impact as to how the council operated. The importance of reuse and prevention of waste build up in the first place was to be considered;
- (n) the engagement of communities in the tackling of the climate emergency was already underway and would be relied upon to ensure that everyone played their part in reducing carbon emissions. The Council's existing communications structure would be used as well as libraries which were to be community hubs.

Members agreed:

1. that Councillor Tippetts would be provided with a separate detailed briefing on the water storage project in Trefusis Park;
2. that the Committee would be provided with a written response as to why the Council was unsuccessful in securing tranche 3 of the active travel fund once feedback was provided from the Department for Transport.
3. to accept the Cabinet Member's offer to ring-fence the money within the concessionary bus fare budget should there be a surplus (whilst being mindful that budget pressures and priorities may change moving forward);
4. to note the Climate Emergency Action Plan (CEAP) 2022 Monitoring Report, details of which are set out in Appendix A;
5. to note the Corporate Carbon Reduction Plan (CCRP) 2022 Monitoring Report, details of which are set out in Appendix B.

53. **Shared Prosperity Fund (To Follow)**

Councillor Shayer (Cabinet Member for Finance and Economy), David Draffan (Service Director for Economic Development) and Amanda Ratsey (Head of Economy, Enterprise and Employment) presented the Shared Prosperity Fund report and highlighted the following key points:

- the Shared Prosperity Fund replaced European funding however the allocation received didn't match previous investments; Plymouth had been allocated £3m which was a third of that previously allocated. It was considered that the formula the Government had used to allocate money disadvantaged Plymouth and this had been flagged with local MPs;
- the Council had to produce an investment plan as part of the requirements of the fund setting out how to approach how the money was to be spent. The £3.14m would be spread out over three years with the majority of the money back-loaded into the final 18 months. Officers considered it would be better to undertake a fewer number of better projects, due to the small

sums involved, other than a larger amount of cheaper projects, in order to achieve best impact;

- currently 'net zero' was a cross cutting theme for projects to be considered as a result of discussions with local businesses and organisations.

In response to questions raised it was reported that:

- in terms of the percentage decrease in funding received in comparison to previous allocations, Plymouth was now categorised in a less favoured area due to being joined with Devon and Somerset. Because Plymouth was in a larger block with wealthier places within it the calculation and funding formula wasn't as sensitive. Approximately £9m worth of projects were sent in as part of the expression of interest however approximately £6m was lost from the local economy because the UK Government had not funded schemes to the same level;
- the loss of funding received by Plymouth could be reconciled by bidding for other funds; Plymouth had done exceptionally well over the past few years by successfully bidding for over £185m;
- Officers considered the best approach for the fund was to undertake a smaller number of larger projects; only 4% of the fund was to be spent on the administration of it therefore, due to the small allocation received, more money would be available for the project itself if it was approached in such a way;
- the business communities reaction to the funding allocation was pragmatic; the Council would continue to work together with local businesses and communities to successfully move projects forward where possible. It was highlighted that the Council didn't rely on one pot of funding for success and that a proportionate amount of time would be spent on the fund;
- Officers considered all projects received and on occasion melded projects together to make them viable; a rules based approach was directed by Government therefore the Council was limited in what actions it could take. Officers were disappointed in the amount of funding received and the opportunities available however would prepare for other funding in the future.

The Committee agreed to note the report and recommend that Officers focus upon a fewer number of projects in their approach due to the limited funding received as part of the Shared Prosperity Fund.

54. **Tracking Decisions**

Members noted the tracking decisions contained within the report.

55. **Work Programme**

The Chair introduced the work programme for 2022/23. Members discussed the following:

- the potential inclusion of sustainable transport and bus delivery improvement at the September meeting;
- the Strategic Director's recommendation that the Freeport and National Marine Park were considered at the December 2022 meeting;
- the inclusion of the city centre regeneration, the British Arts Show and the Box Annual Review at the September meeting;
- the impact of the Environmental Bill;
- annual updates on the Culture Plan and Visitor Plan;
- that previous meetings of the panel were 3.5 hours – this was considered too long for a committee meeting therefore meetings would be approached differently in order to make them more efficient;
- how task and finish group meetings could be used to scrutinise issues; there was a risk that a wider view wouldn't be considered as those sitting on the committee would have a specific interest in that item;
- disappointment that the work programme wasn't already populated with subjects for scrutiny and that meetings were important because Councillors were accountable to the public;
- how the scrutiny prioritisation tool should be used to help populate the work programme

Members noted the work programme.