

Cabinet

Monday 12 June 2023

PRESENT:

Councillor Evans OBE, in the Chair.

Councillor Laing, Vice Chair.

Councillors Briars-Delve, Coker, Cresswell, Haydon, Lowry, Penberthy and Aspinall.

Apologies for absence: Councillor Dann.

The meeting started at 2.00 pm and finished at 3.35 pm.

Note: The full discussion can be viewed on the webcast of the City Council meeting at www.plymouth.gov.uk. At a future meeting, the Council 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.

1. **Declarations of Interest**

No declarations of interest were made.

At this point of the meeting, The Leader held a minutes silence in memory of Former Councillor Vivien Pengelly and Alderman Ted Fry, as they had passed away.

2. **Minutes**

The Cabinet agreed the minutes of the meeting held on 9 March 2023 as a correct record.

3. **Questions from the Public**

There was one question from a member of the public –

The following question was received by Mike Sheaff and answered by The Leader on behalf of Councillor Sue Dann:

Question: The statutory time limit for public authorities to respond to freedom of information requests is twenty working days. How many responses to requests received by Plymouth City Council are currently outside of this time limit? By what date do you expect the city council to meet the statutory time limit?

Answer: As of 26th May 2023, the Council has 48 Freedom of Information requests that are overdue. It is not possible to provide an exact date when all of these will be complete due to the various dates that they were sent in, and the complexity of some individual requests. The Council receives over 1,100 requests each year, which equates to 5 per working day. Not every request can be fulfilled within the statutory timescale due to the complexity of some requests and fluctuations in daily volumes received,

	and as a result there will be variations in the number that are overdue on a daily basis. The Council responded to 88% of all requests in 2022/23 within the timescales.
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4. **Chair's Urgent Business**

There were no items of Chair's urgent business.

5. **Leader's Announcements**

The Leader gave the following announcements:-

- a) A £25m investment had been secured for Colin Campbell Court;
- b) The Leader had signed an executive decision to approve a £19m investment in the next phase of the Derriford District Centre from the Property Regeneration Fund and Devon Contractors would be starting work imminently to provide a heart for the North of the City and the Council would derive long term income from the investment;
 - i. M&S would be opening a brand new food store, twice the size of their existing store;
 - ii. There would be a new EV charging site;
 - iii. 100 permanent jobs would be created as well as 120 construction jobs;
- c) PWC Good Growth Report had ranked Plymouth's economy at 5th highest in the UK for Good Growth with particularly strong performances in income distribution, work-life balance and transport, as well as ranking Plymouth 1st for most improved city with the highest overall change in the Good Growth score from 2022-2023. Furthermore, the Resurgam Programme, undertaken by the Labour Administration, was mentioned as a cases study;
- d) The NMP's (National Marine Park) capital projects had been funded by the Heritage Lottery and were being submitted to planning, with the projects focusing on what people had told the Council they wanted to see;
 - i. Access to 2 Napoleonic Forts at Mount Edgcumbe and Mountbatten would be opened to the public;
 - ii. A number of derelict buildings at Tinside would be brought back into use to open a youth hub and a public sun terrace with a stunning view of Plymouth Sound;
 - iii. Improvements would be made to the Mountbatten Peninsular with better access to the sea;

- iv. A new eatery would be established at the Mountbatten Centre as well as the Centre being modernised to enable them to work with more young people from the local area;
- v. A stage 2 bid would be made to the National Lottery in late 2023 with the hope of working starting in 2024;
- e) The Leader was pleased to have attended his first Freeport Meeting and expressed his excitement that the Freeport would be used to incentivise more green and marine-based companies to be in Plymouth and the Leader had brought up the need to push for improvements to the National Grid across the peninsula which would be key to decarbonisation.

6. **Cabinet Member Updates**

Councillor Jemima Laing (Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Children's Social Care, Culture, Events and Communications) gave the following updates:-

- a) The Box had welcomed its 500,000th visitor since opening; it had received 250,000 visitors in a year, compared to the previous Plymouth Museum's 80,000 visitors per annum, and was still increasing despite the fact that most new attractions have high first year attendance and then plateau;
- b) The Box's Summer Programme – 'Summer of Colour and Light' had been announced and would be opened on 24 June 2023 by the President of the Royal Academy, Rebecca Salter, and would include the following three shows:
 - i. Reframing Reynolds: A Celebration - The 300th anniversary of Joshua Reynolds, who founded the Royal Academy, and the only national show celebrating the anniversary;
 - ii. Rana Begum: Dappled Light – a 21st century Royal Academician;
 - iii. Solomon Hart: The Execution of Lady Jane Grey - The story of Solomon Hart, which would include a picture that had been lost in the archives for 100 years by the most important 19th century Jewish artist, who was also a Royal Academician;
- c) The LGA Culture, Tourism and Sport Board would be making their first visit to Plymouth on 21 June 2023, hosted at Market Hall, TR2 and The Box to hear more about Plymouth's cultural journey.

Councillor Sally Haydon (Cabinet Member for Community Safety, Libraries, Cemeteries & Crematoria) provided an update and highlighted:-

- d) The Bereavement Service had invited staff, Councillors and partners from the funeral industry, to an open day at the new crematorium which would be known as 'The Park' which was set to open in Spring 2024;

- e) Plymouth's Purple Flag status for the evening and night time economy areas had been renewed with no recommendations, but work continued to try and make people feel safer following feedback from the VAWG (Violence Against Women and Girls) perception survey;
- f) That Plymouth City Council would be signing up to the Community Safety Charter (a scheme under the Neighbourhood Watch banner), whose aim was to involve a wider range of local organisations, charities, businesses and groups in crime prevention activity to extend the scope of the work towards a goal of eliminating harassment, antisocial behaviour and intimidation.

Councillor Mark Lowry (Cabinet Member for Finance) provided the following update:-

- g) There would be an investment of £25m in a new community diagnostics centre in the west end of the city centre, with more announcements to come in creating a 'Health Village' in the west end.

Councillor Mark Coker (Cabinet Member for Strategic Planning and Transport) provided the following updates:-

- h) He had worked with Councillor Kevin Sproston in approaching Plymouth City Bus on getting involved with the Community Safety Charter, as mentioned by Councillor Sally Haydon;
- i) Mount Wise pools had opened in the weeks previous with no charge to the public which was important to allow local people, and people from across the city, to access the water for free and to reduce social isolation and improve mental health, who had expressed in feedback that they might not have been able to afford to use the pools, had a charge been introduced and he thanked Ruth Harrell (Director of Public Health) and Plymouth Active Leisure for working with him on this.

Councillor Mary Aspinall (Cabinet Member for Health and Adult Social Care) provided the following updates:-

- j) There were 9,000 people on the NHS waiting list in 2019 and this had increased to 21,000 in 2023 and so a Dental Task Force was going to be launched and would report quarterly on progress;
- k) An 'Ageing Well' agenda would have been launched with the aim of better looking after, treating and working better with older population;
- l) She had been involved in making a video to say thank you to carers across Plymouth for all of the wonderful work they were doing and to help raise awareness of the support services available to them as carers.

7. **Cabinet Appointments 2023 - 24**

Cabinet agreed to note the Cabinet Appointments for 2023/24.

8. **Corporate Plan 2023 - 2026: Key messages**

The Leader introduced the item and highlighted:-

- a) The Corporate Plan 'on a page' would show the public, members, staff and partner organisations the vision for the city, values and priorities;
- b) The vision that Britain's Ocean City would be one of the Europe's most vibrant waterfront cities where an outstanding quality of life would be enjoyed by everyone would remain;
- c) Labour had been elected on five key pledges for building a better Plymouth and these were reflected in the revised Corporate Plan alongside their long-standing commitment to keeping children, adults and communities safe;
- d) Priorities included tackling anti-social behaviour, increasing green investment, more affordable homes to buy and rent, tackle GP and Dentist shortages, tackling the impact of the cost of living crisis.

Tracey Lee (Chief Executive, Plymouth City Council) added:-

- e) The Corporate Plan would be visible in all Council buildings and on the Council's IT systems, as previous, and therefore would be easy to refer to;
- f) The Corporate Plan would be key for budget setting;
- g) Important to have clear priorities for inspections;
- h) Shows what the Council wants to achieve and how through a series of action plans that would sit below the Corporate Plan;
- i) Performance metrics would show what was changing and what had been achieved.

Cabinet agreed to:-

- 1. The revised mission, values and priorities that underpinned the Council's Corporate Plan 2023-26;
- 2. Recommended to Council that the revised Corporate Plan 2023-26 was adopted as part of the Council's policy framework.

9. **Cost of Living**

The Leader introduced the item on the cost of living in the absence of Councillor Sue Dann (Cabinet Member for Customer Services, Sport Leisure and HR & OD) and highlighted the following:-

- a) Energy, food and fuel prices had increased significantly, as well as mortgages, which had had an impact on rental costs;
- b) Government statistics showed that 20% of children were living in low-income families and of those, nearly 75% were families in work;
- c) The average wage in Plymouth was significantly below the national average;
- d) Demand for crisis support had increased by three times in comparison to the previous year with record amounts of households in temporary accommodation;
- e) Councillor Sue Dann would be leading a working group to work with a wide range of organisations across the city who were on the front line providing support, to develop a Cost of Living Action Plan, which would be reported on to Cabinet in two months;
- f) The Leader had instructed officers to begin work as soon as possible on any actions that could be implemented more quickly.

Dr Ruth Harrell (Director of Public Health) added:-

- g) Although inflation was dropping slightly, the gap between income and outgoings on necessities was still increasing;
- h) Cost of Living would be a very significant issue for Plymouth, and for other areas, for the foreseeable future;
- i) The Cost of Living crisis was also damaging health and wellbeing;
- j) There were community and voluntary sector organisations across the city that wanted to continue to work to help and the Council would continue to work closely with them to understand what more could be done to support them and the households, across the city, that were struggling.

Councillor Chris Penberthy (Cabinet Member for Housing, Co-operative Development and Communities) added:-

- k) Labour administrations had worked over the past decade to tackle the systemic problems of poverty in Plymouth and it was important to continue this;
- l) It was important to tackle the long-term systemic issues, but also the short-term impacts and the action plan would make this possible.

Cabinet agreed:-

1. The Terms of Reference for the Cost of Living Working Group;
2. Required the Chair of the Cost of Living Working Group to report back to Cabinet in August 2023 with an action plan.

10. **Ageing Well**

Councillor Mary Aspinall (Cabinet Member for Health and Adult Social Care) introduced the Ageing Well item and highlighted:-

- a) It was a national pattern that there were increasing numbers of older people in the population which was often portrayed as an issue which this initiative would aim to change;
- b) The initiative would endeavour to make Plymouth accessible and inclusive city where everyone could thrive, regardless of their age and would empower older residents to live their lives to the fullest and enjoy a good quality of life;
- c) A city-wide steering group would be set up to identify the benefits of the programs in place across the city, but also to identify where the gaps were and how they could be filled;
- d) Older people would not be defined by a number as the Council recognised that people of all ages can feel different from others the same age as them and the benefits of the programmes would be for the benefit of the population of Plymouth as a whole.

That Cabinet agreed:-

- 1. To commit to the development and implementation of the Ageing Well programme (and through this, apply to become a member of the UK Network of Age-friendly Communities);
- 2. Delegate to Councillor Mary Aspinall (Cabinet Member for Health and Adult Social Care) to approve the Terms of Reference of, and to Chair, a city wide steering group to oversee the work from a stakeholder and older persons' perspective. This would be supported by appropriate Council Officers, and Task and Finish groups;
- 3. Through this Steering Group, to develop and/or implement;
 - a. a baseline assessment;
 - b. a strategy to set the vision;
 - c. an action plan;
 - d. an evaluation framework
- 4. Receive an update report to Cabinet in six months detailing progress.

11. **Provisional Capital and Revenue Outturn Report 2022 - 23**

Councillor Mark Lowry (Cabinet Member for Finance) introduced the report:-

- a) It is a requirement by law that the Council balance its books;

- b) 2022/23 had involved unforeseen financial challenges including the cost of energy had amounted to £20m and £9.8m had had to be drawn from useable reserves and £1.1m of corporate adjustments had been made through capitalisation;
- c) The Council had not had to draw down from its working balances, which would remain at £8.4m;
- d) Utility costs had increased significantly;
- e) Some areas had overspent, but others had underspent and balanced out, but it was important to monitor the areas of overspend to try and avoid that in the 2023/24 financial year;
- f) Only £86m of the £189m capital programme expenditure had been spent, mainly due to challenges in supply chains and labour shortages.

David Northey (Interim Section 151 Officer) added:-

- g) It was important to learn lessons from the overspends and pressures, moving into the next year.

The Leader then added:-

- h) Councils were the only part of the public sector who were required to balance their books;
- i) Difficult decisions would need to be made;
- j) The Council was not immune to increasing costs with electricity costs having increased significantly;
- k) Thanks to David Northey and finance officers for their work over the previous 12 months.

Cabinet agreed to:-

1. Note the Provisional Revenue Outturn position for the year to 31 March 2023;
2. Note the Provisional Capital Programme Outturn position for that year including the Capital Financing Requirement of £86.653m;
3. Recommend the Report to City Council on 19 June 2023.

12. **Local Government Association Corporate Peer Challenge - progress review report**

The Leader introduced the Local Government Association Corporate Peer Challenge - Progress Review Report and highlighted:-

- a) The Local Government Association (LGA) were pioneers of sector-led improvement, part of which was the Corporate Peer Challenge program;
- b) A Corporate Peer Challenge team undertook a review of Plymouth in 2022;
- c) The team had acknowledged the progress that the Council was making against their recommendations and understood that the cost of living crisis, amongst other issues, had put a restraint on resources;
- d) Some of the recommendations from the review were incorporated into the Corporate Plan.

Tracey Lee (Chief Executive) added:-

- e) Peer reviews were incredibly important as they provided an external view of how the Council was doing;
- f) The reports are made public;
- g) Some good progress had been made in challenging circumstances;
- h) An area that had been highlighted was capacity to deliver as the Council was under huge pressure due to reducing capacity.

Cabinet agreed to:

- 1. Note and endorse the findings from the LGA's follow up report further to the progress review held on the 23rd February 2023;
- 2. Note the development of an Organisational Effectiveness Plan.

13. **Plymouth Children's Services Improvement Plan**

Councillor Jemima Laing (Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Children's Social Care, Culture, Events and Communications) introduced the report:-

- a) The Department for Education had issued an improvement notice and the Council had established an improvement board in March 2023 where Plymouth City Council was being supported by colleagues at Dorset Council as a sector-led improvement partner;
- b) The report detailed the current improvement plan;
- c) Improvements needed to be made at pace and sustainably, so that in time the improvement notice could be lifted;
- d) An ILAC Ofsted Inspection (of PCC's Children's Services) was expected in Autumn 2023;

- e) It was important that Plymouth was the best place for people to grow up and grow old in.

Sharon Muldoon (Director of Children's Services) ran through the 6 areas of focus detailed in the report and added:-

- f) The plan was detailed and would be refreshed as time went on and had a series of performance indicators to measure the direction of travel;
- g) Improvement Board meetings were held every month.

Tracey Lee (Chief Executive) added:-

- h) They were determined to make the improvements that were needed and driving the improvements forward was a priority and regular updates would be provided.

The Leader further added:-

- i) The Leader and Deputy Leader sat on the improvement board and met with the Department for Education on 12 June 2023 to assure them that the new administration fully backed the improvement plan.

Cabinet agreed to:-

1. Note the Improvement Plan;
2. Note the remit and constitution of the Improvement Board.

14. **Young Carers & Substance Misuse Business Case**

Councillor Mary Aspinall (Cabinet Member for Health and Adult Social Care) introduced the report and highlighted:-

- a) These services would provide an important function in the early identification of children and young people experiencing challenges in their lives, either through caring for a family member with, or through their own difficulties with, drugs and alcohol;
- b) The work would support children to remain with their families and communities, whilst addressing their caring responsibilities or substance misuse issues with the aim of preventing the need for more intensive and intrusive interventions.

Emma Crowther (Interim Head of Commissioning) added:-

- c) It would be combining two services together which support children who had a parent with substance abuse issues, and children with substance abuse issues themselves;
- d) There had been a significant drop in the number of estimated young carers in Plymouth, and this is believed to be down to inaccurate data, rather than a real drop in the number of young carers in the city with concerns over how some young carers

may feel about their caring role being discovered, or not even realising that they were young carers;

- e) The team would be working with organisations across the city to encourage young people to come forward and identify as young carers;
- f) It was important to support young carers as they are more likely to go on to be adult carers and they deserved the same opportunities as their peers.

In response to questions, it was explained:-

- g) The team would encourage current providers to work together to provide the new service.

Cabinet agreed:-

1. That a procurement of young carers and substance misuse services was carried out, to have new contracts in place for 1st April 2024;
2. That the procurement would have two Lots. The new contracts would be for 5+3+3 years and would commence on 1st April 2024. The anticipated end of the contracts with all extensions invoked was 2035;
3. That the award of the contracts for the services was delegated to the Strategic Director for People.