

Cabinet

Monday 10 July 2023

PRESENT:

Councillor Evans OBE, in the Chair.

Councillors Briars-Delve, Coker, Cresswell, Dann, Penberthy and Aspinall.

Apologies for absence: Councillors Haydon, Laing and Lowry.

Also in attendance: Emma Crowther (Interim Head of Commissioning), Joanne Green (Strategic Commissioning Manager), Tracey Lee (Chief Executive), Hannah Shaw (Commissioning Officer), Jamie Sheldon (Senior Governance Advisor) and Gary Walbridge (Head of ASC and Retained Functions).

The meeting started at 2.00 pm and finished at 3.08 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.

15. **Declarations of Interest**

No declarations of interest were made.

16. **Minutes**

The Cabinet agreed the minutes of the meeting held on 12 June 2023 as a correct record.

17. **Questions from the Public**

There were three questions from members of the public:

The following question was received from Mr Richard Paltridge and answered by The Leader:

Question: When I was in business, I would catch the Plymouth flight to Heathrow on a monthly basis and I believe PCC underestimates the importance of business to our Ocean City. I would like to know if the council have any intention of progressing the opening of Plymouth Airport?

Answer: It was a huge disappointment when Sutton Harbour Group closed the Airport in 2011 - No one in the city wanted to see it close least of all me. As Leader of the labour administration, we did everything we could to support the creation of a new airline, Air South West, when Brymon Airways and BA left the Plymouth with no air connectivity. Had we not done so the airport would have closed at that point.

	<p>In 2011 when the Conservative administration accepted the closure notice from Sutton Harbour, I for one would have done more to keep the airport open, but we were in opposition at that time.</p> <p>Since the Airport closed Sutton Harbour Group, who have a lease of the site, announced their intentions to develop the site for housing – something we have strongly resisted. The Council owns the freehold of the site but currently has limited control over the site because of Sutton Harbour's lease.</p> <p>The current situation has been going on long enough and I have instructed officers to do everything possible to see if we can acquire that lease, which would give the Council control over what happens to the site. These negotiations are ongoing. If we are able to acquire the lease this would allow the Council to re-gain control of the site so that we can make our own decisions about its future. It should be the Council making these decisions on such an important site for the benefit of the public not private property developers.</p> <p>I hope that we will be able to provide further updates on these discussions soon.</p>
<p>The following question was received from Mr Tim Forth and answered by The Leader:</p>	
<p>Question: As part of the lease agreement with SHG, the airport was to be maintained at a functional level, although it clearly has not, what is the estimated cost to undo SHG's neglect of Plymouth City Airport?</p>	<p>Answer: The Airport lease places various obligations on SHG to maintain the infrastructure of the site as well as setting out how the Airport land is to be dealt with when the airport is not viable. I can take the opportunity now to reassure you that the Council will seeking to assert its full rights under the lease.</p> <p>We have recently commissioned a consultant to undertake an inspection</p>

	<p>of the site and they have advised us of the condition of the various buildings within the airport demise. However, the costs of improving the buildings and reinstating the equipment necessary to support aviation would vary significantly depending on the type of aviation proposed, i.e. general aviation or commercial flights.</p> <p>What is clear to this administration is that issue has gone on too long since Sutton Harbour closed the airport under the Conservative administration in 2011.</p> <p>It is the Council that should be determining the strategic future of this site and I have therefore instructed council officers to do everything in our powers to acquire the lease and get control of the airport.</p> <p>It is only then that the future of the site can be properly considered.</p>
<p>The following question was received from Hon. Alderman George Wheeler and answered by Councillor Mark Coker (Cabinet Member for Strategic Planning and Transport):</p>	
<p>Question: Thank you for your reply to my question at the last Council meeting. Your reply said that construction of the transport improvements at St Budeaux is scheduled to commence from September 2023. Can you tell me when the work is scheduled to finish, with the shelters re-installed please?</p>	<p>Answer: Unfortunately, we are currently unable to provide the information that you have requested as we have not yet been able to finalise the programme's completion. In order to finalise the programme we require detailed estimates and final design from the utility companies. These have not yet been received. Once the dates are finalised, installation of the replacement bus shelters will be programmed to tie in with the works. Thank you.</p>

18. **Chair's Urgent Business**

There were no items of Chair's urgent business.

19. **Leader's Announcements**

The Leader gave the following announcements:

- a) With regards to the Armada Way redevelopment The Leader formally confirmed that they were committed to establishing an independent review into the Armada Way decision and he had asked officers to prepare a draft terms of reference for such a review for Cabinet to consider and:
- i. The review would be truly independent, and would have an independent and senior chair;
 - ii. It would look in detail at the decision making process that took place, both in terms of legality and governance;
 - iii. It would examine how well the Council engaged with stakeholders throughout the process and the extent to which feedback was incorporated into the plans;
 - iv. It would examine the impact of the project on the local environment;
 - v. It would set out the financial implications of what had happened, including the costs directly to the Council;
 - vi. It would commence before the end of the year and it would be presented to Council on its completion;
- b) The Leader added that there would be lessons for everyone to learn, and he wanted to ensure they were learnt; the new Corporate Plan was very clear about the administrations values – and this review would demonstrate their commitment to delivering against them;
- c) Encouraged the public to view The Leader’s Forward Plan of Key Decisions to see what announcements and major scale investments were upcoming;
- d) Two business cases would be put forward:
- i. The first for a £6.5 million investment in a further phases of the Oceansgate development which would deliver 1,772 square metres of high quality, let space for manufacturing and synthetic testing and would create 49 jobs;
 - ii. The second was for a £9.1 million investment in industrial units at Langage Business Park which would deliver 5,615 square metres of flexible, high quality, sustainable workspace, and split across four different units at Beaumont Way and would create 18 jobs;
- e) The administration was committed to bringing Plymouth forward as a net-zero port and to ensure the city benefitted from large green investment from projects such as the Celtic Array and The Leader had approved tender documents to find a specialist consultant to work on developing Plymouth’s first ports strategy which would be funded by the Shared Prosperity Fund and would look at all 4 ports;

- f) The Box – Summer of Colour and Light had launched;
 - i. It had received 20,000 visitors within the first two weeks;
 - ii. Retail had taken nearly £5,000 in opening week with a book on Reynolds being the best seller;
 - iii. There had been a city-wide marketing campaign and it had featured on BBC Spotlight, BBC Sounds and BBC Radio Devon in opening week;
 - iv. It was one of the Guardian’s ‘must-see’ exhibitions and one of Time Out’s 12 best exhibitions of the summer, as well as being one of The Arts Funds top 10 exhibitions in July 2023;
- g) The first international food market, ‘The Bazaar’ had been held at The Box in partnerships with Diversity Business Incubator and the event would be held on the last Saturday of each month;
- h) Armed Forces Day had been a success after a week of events and gave the people of Plymouth the chance to show their support for the armed forces, with over 50,000 people in attendance;
 - i. The Leader congratulated Widey Court Primary School for retaining their title in the Junior Field Gun tournament;
 - ii. The Leader thanked the key sponsors for making the event possible – Babcock, AECOM and the Royal British Legion;
- i) Brittany Ferries would be celebrating their 50th Anniversary in 2023 and would be sponsoring the British Firework Championships to celebrate, an event that brought over 100,000 visitors to the city to watch the displays from the companies competing for the title.

20. **Cabinet Member Updates**

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

- a) 1,213 Velocity repairs had been made in its first month with South West Highways (SWH) achieving a further 563 Highways Defect Repairs as well which totalled 1,776 repairs over 2 months and based on these figures, it could be expected that 17,934 Highways Defect Repairs could be achieved 2023/24, although it was weather dependent;
- b) He had attended an LCRIN (Local Council Innovation Road Network) meeting in Lincoln where velocity was shown via video and there had been a lot of interest from others at the meeting.

Councillor Sue Dann (Cabinet Member for Sport, Leisure and HR & OD) provided the following updates:

- c) Following the administration's pledge to develop a Cost of Living Action Plan within its first 100 days, there would be a city-wide event on 25 July 2023 to ask a wide range of representatives across Plymouth to identify actions that could make a real difference as it was important for the action plan to be as robust as possible;
 - i. If anyone else felt that they could contribute and wanted to be invited they were encouraged to contact Councillor Sue Dann via email;
 - ii. 167,000 people had accessed the Citizen's Advice Bureau (CAB) website for cost of living support with 5220 people from Plymouth asking for support and 64% of those requests linked to cost of living issues;
- d) A full-sized replica of a 17th Century Spanish galleon would visit Plymouth in August, moored with Cattewater, and would be open to the people of Plymouth and visitors to the city, to step onboard and experience the 'living museum';
- e) Tennis Courts at Devonport Park, Hartley Park and Tothill Park had been refurbished with new Lawn Tennis Association (LTA) approved surfaces as well as new nets and posts and would run in similar way to the Central Park and West Hoe courts with a Clubspark online booking system and the Council would be working with the LTA to deliver a range of activities across the sites, including weekly organised free park tennis sessions for all ages, playing levels and experience, where equipment would be provided.

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

- f) Since 2021, Plymouth City Council had been part of the National Changing Futures Future programme and had received £2.1 million to support work for 3 years and was due to finish in March 2023 but would continue to March 2025 thanks to further funding and the programme included;
 - i. Support for women involved in on-street prostitution, or other abusive situations through the Trevi Spark project to help them take steps to a safer and better life;
 - ii. Support for men who had perpetrated domestic abuse and young people displaying harmful behaviours through Ahimsa's behaviour change programme to prevent future harm;
 - iii. Support for women who were rebuilding their lives after substance misuse, homelessness and contact with the criminal justice system by connecting them with new laptops and mobile phones as they start their journeys back into the world of work through the Gifted Women programme;
 - iv. Support for young people making the transition from children's services to adult services;

- v. Support people leaving prison by connecting them with people with similar experiences and supporting them to reduce the risk of them re-offending and being returned to prison;
- g) He had worked with Young Devon to bring forward provision of supported accommodation for vulnerable young homeless people with a home for 4 people going 'online' over the course of the summer;
- h) The Council would be renewing its registered provider status and increasing the amount of housing it owned;
- i) Plan for Homes funding would be awarded to Plymouth Community Homes to develop the former North Prospect Library site;
- j) £2,813,781 would be added to the capital programmes for the provision of Disabled Facilities Grants to help people to enjoy a better quality of life and stay in their own homes for longer;
- k) The work to support co-operative development would be reinvigorated and a new strategy would be launched on the next International Co-operatives Day;
- l) The focus on investment from the Inclusive Economy Fund would be on the green/blue co-operative economy and the Council wanted to be innovative in its approach with more details to be announced with a potential investment of £150,000.

Councillor Sally Cresswell (Cabinet Member for Education, Skills and Apprenticeships) provided the following updates:

- m) She had visited several education settings since taking on the portfolio and looked forward to visiting more in the Autumn term;
- n) Mission Mammoth STEAMFest 2023 took place in the week commencing 26 June 2023 in partnership between Building Plymouth and The Box and Arts at University Plymouth, which involved 514 Year 5 and 6 children in creative experiences designed to raise aspirations, opportunities and attainment, with the involvement of 81 construction professionals who volunteered their time;
- o) The school attendance campaign was due to be launched in the new September term and the Plymouth Attendance Strategy had been refined.

Councillor Tom Briars-Delve (Cabinet Member for Environment and Climate Change) provided the following updates:

- p) Feedback from the public and councillors had been listened to and there were 3 priorities in relation to grass cutting; safety at busy junctions, cutting grass in play parks to give families pleasant areas for recreation and public engagement on biodiversity benefits of wildflower meadows;

- i. Additional flail decks had been purchased for ride on mowers and flail decks for pedestrian mowers which were better suited for cutting long grass;
 - ii. The Council had recently established a separate cemeteries grass cutting team and the feasibility of a similar approach to play parks was being explored;
 - iii. A business case would be developed for the next grass cutting season;
 - iv. The next higher risk highways verge cut was scheduled to commence that day and would take approximately two weeks;
- q) Plymouth had been allocated £7.1 million in grant funding to improve thermal efficiency of social housing in partnership with LiveWest and Plymouth Community Homes and an executive decision would be taken later that week and retrofitting was key in the route to net-zero, including supporting homes with the cost of living crisis who could save £300 a year.

Councillor Mary Aspinnall (Cabinet Member for Health and Adult Social Care) provided the following update:

- r) The first Dental Task Force meeting had taken place as a proactive step to working better together to improve local services for local people;
 - i. NHS Devon committed to working with the main providers of NHS dental care in Plymouth to look at the possibility of local underspends in other areas of NHS dental provision could be re-prioritised;
 - ii. NHS Devon agreed to work with Peninsula Dental School's new high street practice in the city centre as well as Livewell South West agreeing to work with the dental school to increase capacity across their organisations;
 - iii. Plymouth City Council would work with the NHS to find other opportunities in the city to locate a service for the funding for the five dental chairs initially meant for the health hub at Colin Campbell Court that had been planned.

21. **Administration Priorities Update**

The Leader introduced the report and highlighted the following points;

- a) The report demonstrated which Cabinet Member was responsible for which priorities, their lead officers, background information and accelerated actions;
- b) A number of the priorities' progress had been mentioned in the Cabinet Member updates;
- c) The Leader and Chief Executive had attended a meeting in the previous week to discuss Celtic Array opportunities and the administration would work with South Yard businesses;

- d) Work would be undertaken with the city Business Park on green jobs and capitalising on green technologies;
- e) The administration was committed to working with the police on tackling crime and anti-social behaviour and The Leader and Chief Executive had met with Will Kerr OBE KPM, the Chief Constable for Devon and Cornwall Police and agreed to meet on a regular basis;
- f) A performance framework to measure the progress against these priorities would go to scrutiny later in the year.

The Cabinet agreed to:

- 1. Note the actions completed and planned accelerated actions;
- 2. Ensure that arrangements were put in place to ensure that progress towards delivery of the administrations priorities were monitored and reported.

22. **Commissioning of Resettlement Support Service (formally Refugee Integration and Support Service)**

Councillor Chris Penberthy (Cabinet Member for Housing, Co-operative Development and Communities) introduced the report and highlighted;

- a) Plymouth had been designated a dispersal City for Asylum Seekers under the 1999 Immigration and Asylum Act and had a proud history of accepting and settling refugees from before the act and since;
- b) The services offered by PCC helped those arriving in Plymouth to navigate their way through the cultural and organisational systems, enabling them to resettle, connect and become part of the city in a positive way;
- c) Many refugees experienced traumatic experiences in their home countries and in their journeys to their new country of residence as well as during the process of gaining status and it was important to improve legal support, access to education and employment opportunities, and improve housing conditions;
- d) The report recommended the approval for the recommissioning of the previous Refugee Integration Service to support the smooth resettlement and integration of people with refugee status into the community;
- e) The voluntary and community sector organisations across the city provided integral support;
- f) There were approximately 350 asylum seekers living in Home Office commissioned dispersal accommodation at any given time in Plymouth and that was increasing.

Emma Crowther (Interim Head of Commissioning) added;

- g) The service was jointly funded by Community Connections, Strategic Commissioning and NHS Devon Integrated Care Board and would take an asset-based approach to provide help and support with access to housing, improved English language skills, increased self-sufficiency via employment and community integration;
- h) The work would also contribute towards community cohesion within Plymouth and support other organisations to become more culturally aware;
- i) The service would learn from what had and hadn't worked in the past and reflect the current migration patterns and the latest legislative requirements.

The Cabinet agreed to:

- 1. Approve the business case, including the proposed procurement process for the resettlement support service to ensure continuity of provision of an integration and resettlement service;
- 2. Delegate to the Strategic Director for People the authority to award contract(s) where they would not already have the authority to do so;
- 3. Ensure providers evidence co-production and co-delivery at the heart of the service, with local providers, and those with lived experience, having a clear voice woven through both delivery and management of the service.

23. **Options for the future delivery of extra care housing and social inclusion**

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

- a) Extra care housing and social inclusion was vital to support residents of Plymouth to be able to live independently for longer without the need to move into more expensive and inappropriate social and nursing care;
- b) The aim was to ensure that residents were able to continue participating in social activities that supported mental health and wellbeing;
- c) Without sufficient provision in place, there was a risk that the needs would be unmet and lead to an increase in demands on housing support and care services;
- d) Through the commissioning approach, services would work co-operatively with partners such as LiveWell and those in the voluntary sector to serve the best interests of the community as detailed on Page 60 of the report.

Emma Crowther (Interim Head of Commissioning), Hannah Shaw (Commissioning Officer) and Joanne Green (Strategic Commissioning Manager) added:

- e) The proposal was to procure new contracts for both extra care provision and social inclusion within all of the seven existing extra care schemes and this would include a core care service for all tenants, self-directed support for individual care needs, and

social inclusion for all tenants;

- f) The team intended on holding market engagement sessions to support and encourage collaborative and co-operative bidding from providers;
- g) The demand for housing with care provision was going to increase over the next 10 to 12 years and was reflected through the population data which predicted an increase in the older population of 27% from 2020-2035 and so the business case allowed for the potential to build on and increase the extra care housing stock in the city through the proposed contract term which would mean the council could flex the contract to meet growing demand;
- h) Feedback showed that social inclusion was a critical part of the service, helping residents moving into schemes and making them feel settled and welcome;
- i) The existing service needed to be provided whilst the commissioning work so it was recommended that the current provider continued for another eight months.

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

- j) He would be working with Councillor Mary Aspinall through the Plan for Homes, which would ensure that there was enough supported housing in the pipeline to meet future demand.

In response to questions, it was reported:

- k) That the aim was to encourage companies and organisations that would normally be in competition to work collaboratively;
- l) Contracts would go live at the beginning of April 2024.

The Cabinet agreed to:

1. Approve the Business Case;
2. Approve the direct award of a new contract to the current Extra Care provider, Gemcare Southwest T/A Cera Care, for a period of 8 months to 31st March 2024 in order to bridge the gap in provision of services whilst a procurement exercise is undertaken (with a contract value for 8 months of circa £2.3m);
3. Approve the decision to commence a procurement process for the commencement of new contracts in April 2024 for extra care housing service for older people (care element) and social inclusion (total potential contract value for full contract term and potential additional ECH stock to address future demand – circa £50m);
4. Delegate authority to the Strategic Director for People to make the contract award decision, and other relevant decisions in relation to this contract where authority to do so is not already delegated to officers.

