

Growth and Infrastructure Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Wednesday 8 November 2023

PRESENT:

Councillor Bingley, in the Chair.

Councillor Tuffin, Vice Chair.

Councillors Carlyle, Gilmour, Goslin, McLay, Noble, Raynsford, Salmon, Sproston, Stevens and Stoneman.

Apologies for absence: Councillor Partridge.

Also in attendance: Councillor Briars-Delve, Councillor Laing, Rosie Brookshaw-Williams (Democratic Advisor), Kat Deeney (Head of Environmental Planning), David Draffan (Service Director for Economic Development), Toby Hall (Project Manager), Amanda Lumley (Chief Executive, Destination Plymouth), Lauren Paton (Economic Development Officer), Anthony Payne (Strategic Director for Place), Amanda Ratsey (Head of Economy, Enterprise and Employment) and Hannah Whiting (Democratic Advisor).

The meeting started at 2.01 pm and finished at 3.46 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.

19. **Declarations of Interest**

| Name | Minute Number | Reason | Interest |
|----------------------|----------------------|--|-----------------------|
| Councillor Raynsford | 24 | Had a share in Pennon South West Water (something customers were offered). | Disclosable Pecuniary |
| Councillor Goslin | 22 | Employed by the University of Plymouth, which was part of Destination Plymouth | Private |

20. **Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held on 13 September 2023 were agreed as a correct record.

21. **Chair's Urgent Business**

There were no items of Chair's urgent business.

22. **Destination Plymouth progress report on visitor economy and Visitor Plan**

Councillor Jemima Laing (Cabinet Member for Children's Social Care, Culture, Events and Communications), supported by David Draffan (Service Director for Economic Development) and Amanda Lumley (Chief Executive, Destination Plymouth), introduced the item and highlighted the following points:

- a) The Visitor Plan 2030 established a strategic growth direction for the economy and played a pivotal role in driving the recovery of the visitor economy in the city post-COVID-19;
- b) The Visitor Plan continued to act as a key strategy in growing and positioning the city's brand, amplifying the good work to date and positioned the city as a desirable place to live and work as well as visit;
- c) Plymouth's 'Britain's Ocean City' branding, developed in 2013, proved to be a great success nearly 10 years later, effectively altering the perception of the city for visitors;
- d) Destination Plymouth would work on further developing the original brand strategy to continue growing Plymouth's identity;
- e) The new mission would be to promote nationally, and internationally, Plymouth's position and reputation as Britain's Ocean City, working with key city partners and companies to market Plymouth in support of sustainable economic growth;
- f) The four main priority work streams would be Brand, Visitors, Growth Sectors and Partnerships;
- g) Destination Plymouth Limited had been accredited to bronze standard by The Green Tourism International Accreditation Scheme which set standards in line with UN sustainability goals;
- h) A new strategy was established to facilitate and support an increased number of third-party events in the city resulting in an uplift in the numbers of visitors attending events;
- i) Plymouth City Council's (PCC) marketing team secured support from Babcock International for Armed Forces Day and the Rehabilitation Triathlon and new sponsorship for the British Firework Championships from AECOM, Brittany Ferries, Plymouth City Bus and Moxy Hotel;
- j) An article in Timeout identified Plymouth as one of the top 14 most underrated destinations in the world;
- k) 10 cruise vessels were welcomed into Plymouth in 2023, doubling the numbers from 2022 and would be looking forward to 20 visits in 2024;

- l) Destination Plymouth had been working with PCC Employment and Skills team to secure funding from the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) for a Skills Development Manager for the visitor sector;

In response to questions, it was explained:

- m) The Hotel Demand Study in 2022 identified a gap in the market for additional serviced accommodation, and conversations had been held with hotel developers to look at strategic part of the city to close that gap;
- n) 13 hotel projects were on the books, and 3 were delivered whilst 10 were yet to come;
- o) PCC events team had worked with services across the city to ensure safety for large events including encouraging the public to use the Park and Ride to disperse some of the pinch points;
- p) Destination Operations Group meets monthly and would review issues around pinch points to mitigate it and ensure measures are in place to relieve pressure;
- q) The Brand Development Group had a brand led web portal which acted as a one stop shop to promote Plymouth;
- r) The Brand Development Group had also worked on a brand toolkit and a talent attraction campaign for the city;
- s) Due to PR coverage Plymouth had reached 2.5 billion people in the past 12 months which equated to £62 million of advertisement, and this had been achieved with a budget of £36,000;
- t) Plymouth had not been a cruise destination due to various barriers which had since been broken down, causing more cruises to see Plymouth as a viable destination;
- u) 36% of Plymouth's visitors come from the London Holiday Market;
- v) 40 businesses had signed up to the Green Tourism Scheme and in the past 18 months, and over 20 of those had gained accreditation;
- w) The cruise sector had phased out vessels that had high carbon emissions and most had obtained scrubbed which would take the sulphides out of the atmosphere;
- x) Plymouth would aim to have Shoreside Power by 2030, meaning any vessels that would come into port, could be on green energy;
- y) When the New Rotterdam came into Plymouth, the crew went to the local fish market, bought fresh local fish and took it on board ship to

serve in their restaurant;

- z) Accessibility would be at the heart of planning the Live Nation Event for 2024;
- aa) Legal information had been given to all local residents regarding the Live Nation Event to ensure everybody would be communicated with prior to the event;
- bb) Housing and Provision of Accommodation work stream had been set up for ensure hotels are not filled up in the summer with temporary construction contracts;
- cc) Due to the COVID19 legacy and National Strategic Funds that went to support COVID19 emergencies, the Devonport Collections had not moved forward;
- dd) Work with the National Museum of the Royal Navy to have a naval heritage centre had stalled, contact from the Committee, might assist.

The Committee agreed to:

1. Continue to support the work of Destination Plymouth;
2. Support the transition to a broader remit growing and positioning the city's 'place' brand going forwards;
3. Recognise the continued significant achievements of the Destination Plymouth, Plymouth City Council and BID teams in supporting the sector and moving the brand strategy forwards;
4. Support the development of a citywide brand strategy to position Plymouth as a place to 'live, work and visit';
5. Write a letter to the Naval Base Commander to encourage them to work with the National Museum of the Royal Navy to have a naval heritage centre.

23. **Economic Intelligence and Insight**

Toby Hall (Project Manager for Economic Development) introduced the item and highlighted the following points:

- a) Total employee numbers had risen significantly since 2014 to 116,000 in the city in 2022, showing an increase of 8,000;
- b) Unemployment rates peaked during COVID;

- c) Pre-pandemic unemployment rates were above UK average in Plymouth but since August 2020 Plymouth had a lower than UK average unemployment rate;
- d) 3,500 job listings had been posted every month with a clear upward trend;
- e) In 2023 Plymouth had over 6,300 Enterprises which showed consistent growth despite the impact of the pandemic;
- f) Female wages had risen significantly in the past 5 years, starting to close the gap between male and female wages as male wages had remained stagnant, however there was still a gap between male and female wages;

In response to questions, it was explained:

- g) Tina Brinkworth's (Head of Skills and Post 16, Education, Participation and Skills) Skills and Education report would be added to the work programme;
- h) More information could be circulated to the Committee on the levels of earnings in Plymouth in comparison to the wider South West Region and UK.

24. **Water Quality**

Councillor Tom Briars-Delve (Cabinet Member for Environment and Climate Change), supported by Kat Deeney (Head of Environmental Planning), introduced the item and highlighted the following points:

- a) Due to having a Victorian 'combined sewage system' waste water from toilets and sinks and surface water from drains and gullies end up in the same system meaning would there be a large storm, dirty water would back up into homes or open spaces;
- b) A system had been introduced as a safety valve to release pressure into certain waterways, this had last been activated most recently at Eastern Kinds on 4 November 2023;
- c) South West Water had committed to reducing spills from overflows to an average of 20 per year by 2025 across the region;
- d) Agriculture estimated 75% of sediments polluting waters;
- e) The Climate Impact Assessment Wheel, including an aspect on ocean and waterways, had been launched and would be used for any business cases worth over £250,000 to consider the impact it would have on the ocean;

- f) Partnerships with PCC, South West Water and the Environment Agency had been created to align capital projects such as sustainable urban drainage;
- g) PCC had been lobbying South West Water for greater investment primarily through the Water Fit Programme to spend on strategic impactful projects;
- h) Recommended bringing Water Quality to Select Committee to further scrutinise the issue.

In response to questions, it was explained:

- i) Due to having the National Marine Park and being Britain's Ocean City, Plymouth would want to be at the forefront of South West Water's WaterFit programme;
- j) Good news stories for Plymouth: Innovative work happened with businesses regarding Marine Technology, Plymouth Sound had the first National Marine Park in the country, most sites had been rated good or excellent in the Bathing Quality Water Assessments;
- k) Working with South West Water, PCC would look at green and nature-based solutions to holding and cleaning large amounts of water as the historical solution was pipes and tanks;
- l) The Environment Agency classified Plymouth Hoe West and East as excellent.

The Committee agreed to:

1. Note the report;
2. Agreed to establish a Select Committee by March 2024 focused solely on Water Quality, inviting key stakeholders and user groups to provide evidence for consideration and review.

25. **Tracking Decisions**

The Committee agreed to note the tracking decisions document.

26. **Work Programme**

The Committee agreed to note its work programme.

