

Cabinet

Monday 5 February 2024

PRESENT:

Councillor Evans OBE, in the Chair.

Councillor Laing, Vice Chair.

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

Also in attendance: Paul Barnard (Service Director for Strategic Planning and Infrastructure), David Haley (Director of Children's Services) (via Teams), Ruth Harrell (Director of Public Health) (via Teams), Martin Ivatt (Regeneration & Placemaking Manager), Tracey Lee (Chief Executive), David Northey (Service Director for Finance), Jamie Sheldon (Senior Governance Advisor) and Gary Walbridge (Interim Strategic Director for People).

The meeting started at 2.00 pm and finished at 2.26 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.

95. **Declarations of Interest**

No declarations of interest were made.

96. **Questions from the Public**

No questions from members of the public had been received.

97. **Chair's Urgent Business**

There were no items of Chair's urgent business.

98. **Recommendations from the Growth and Infrastructure Overview and Scrutiny Committee**

The Leader introduced the item by:

- a) Expressing his thanks and appreciation to the members of the Growth and Infrastructure Overview and Scrutiny Committee for their careful consideration of the scheme;
- b) Explaining that his administration had always wanted to have an open and transparent consultation process on Armada Way.

Councillor Laing (Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Children's Social Care, Culture, Events and Communications) added:

- c) It was decided that Plymouth City Council would work with an independent consultation and engagement specialist (ECF), who had vast experience in the field, to offer public reassurance that the process would be different to what had happened before;
- d) t) The proposals and information were shared, and feedback was gathered through:
 - i. A dedicated project website, email and phone number, and the website had 24,000 visitors and 1,568 subscribers;
 - ii. A survey hosted online, in hard copy and EasyRead format;
 - iii. 1-2-1 interviews with stakeholders;
 - iv. Four workshops with under-represented groups – including older people, parents and families, those with disabilities and young people;
 - v. The submission of formal written responses from groups and organisations;
 - vi. Those without access to the internet could also provide feedback through a dedicated phone number as well as through hard copy survey;
- e) To ensure that as many people as possible knew about the consultation and how to have their say, a robust publicity plan was developed – which included:
 - vii. Social media posts by PCC and through digital advertising – and as the ECF report highlights, there were significant views – including over 2.2m impressions in the paid for advertising campaign;
 - viii. Emails to over 250 stakeholder contacts – made up of key businesses and organisations – including environmental groups – encouraging them to publicise via their networks and on their channels;
 - ix. Briefings with stakeholders, the local MP and councillors;
 - x. Vinyls on hoardings along Armada Way;
 - xi. Press releases and video sharing – including weekly updates and videos focusing on different areas in the proposals – including a SUDS (Sustainable Urban Drainage System) scheme explainer, the history of Armada Way, the cultural value of regenerating Armada Way;
 - xii. Hard copy materials were available in the central library, the indoor market and the Theatre Royal;
 - xiii. Over 15,000 postcards distributed to businesses, schools, wellbeing centres, residential areas, shopping centres and to people along Armada Way.

Councillor Tuffin (Vice-Chair of the Growth and Infrastructure Overview and Scrutiny Committee) introduced the recommendations and highlighted:

- f) He had emphasised to the committee that this was a new decision and a new scheme and as such the members would be afforded as much time as they felt necessary to complete their scrutiny of the proposal;
- g) As Chair for the meeting, he had exercised his discretion to allow public speakers to address the committee, and they heard concerns over the sustainable urban drainage system (SUDS) and translocation of trees, as well as a statement of support from the City Centre Company;
- h) Members had raised issues during discussion in relation to:
 - i. The cost of the project and funding deadlines;
 - ii. Translocation of trees;
 - iii. The varied species of trees to be included;
 - iv. The Sustainable Urban Drainage System (SUDS);
 - v. The consultation process;
- i) Having considered the recommendations set out in the draft 19 February 2024 Cabinet report regarding the Armada Way Scheme, the committee resolved to fully support the new scheme and in addition recommended to Cabinet the following recommendations:
 - i. The City Centre Public Realm Board includes cross-party membership;
 - ii. The provision of waste bins should be of the combined litter and recycling type;
 - iii. Further consideration should be given to the provision of outdoor gym equipment in the play area;
 - iv. Further considerations should be given to how to improve community engagement in the delivery of the project (e.g. community painting event for bird boxes);
 - v. The Cabinet will use best endeavours to ensure that the project is completed on time and within budget;
 - vi. Cabinet should give consideration on how to assess overall economic impact of the project and to report back to an appropriate meeting of the Growth and Infrastructure Scrutiny Committee;

- vii. Further consideration should be given to improving the 1:1 replacement ratio for failed translocated trees;
- viii. Consideration of inclusion of braille on the plaques placed under trees.

In response to questions, it was explained:

- j) Although the committee had understood that Councillor Briars-Delve was already looking into the provision of recycling facilities, they felt it needed to be included in the recommendations, so it was not overlooked;
- k) Concerns over the translocation of trees had been raised by members of the public, and the concern of the committee was that if translocation failed, would they be replaced by mature trees;
- l) The committee were happy to support the suggestion of braille plaques, as an example of what could be done to support accessibility;
- m) Background was provided on the recommendation relating to community engagement.

The Leader then added:

- n) The consideration of the scheme had been comprehensive;
- o) Scrutiny had an essential role in holding the executive to account;
- p) A response to the recommendations would be provided at the 19 February 2024 meeting of Cabinet.

Cabinet unanimously agreed to note the recommendations from the Growth and Infrastructure Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting on 22 January 2024.