

# Cabinet

**Monday 8 July 2024**

**PRESENT:**

Councillor Evans OBE, in the Chair.

Councillor Laing, Vice Chair.

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

Apologies for absence: Councillor Haydon.

Also in Attendance: Liz Bryant (Monitoring Officer), Nigel Denning (Interim Service Director for Children, Young People and Families), David Haley (Director of Children’s Services), Ruth Harrell (Director of Public Health), Ross Jago (Head of Governance, Performance and Risk), David Northey (Service Director for Finance), Anthony Payne (Strategic Director for Place), Temilola Salimon (Service Director for Children, Young People and Families), and Gary Walbridge (Head of Adult Social Care and Retained Functions).

The meeting started at 2.03 pm and finished at 3.49 pm.

*Note: The full discussion can be viewed on the webcast of the City Council meeting at [www.plymouth.gov.uk](http://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**

There were no declarations of interest.

2. **Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting that took place on 20 May 2024 were agreed as a true and accurate record.

3. **Questions from the Public**

Question was submitted by David Baker	
<b>Question:</b> Will the planning application for development of Wilmot Gardens be considered at a planning committee meeting and if not on what grounds is the matter justified being granted under a delegated authority?	<b>Response:</b> The constitution enables the Service Director for Strategic Planning & Infrastructure to refer a planning application to Planning Committee under one or more of three criteria.  On July 5th, the Service Director for Strategic Planning & Infrastructure confirmed to Councillor Reilly that they were exercising their power to refer the Wilmott Gardens planning

application to the Planning Committee. As a result, the Planning Committee will now determine the application in the usual manner.

The reason the planning application has been referred to Planning Committee by the Service Director is to reflect that fact that the City Council, as is often the case, plays different roles given its various legal powers and responsibilities. In this case it is the Local Planning Authority, it is the Local Highway Authority, and it is the Local Housing Authority. In its capacity as the Local Housing Authority this is a site that is being supported under the Plan for Homes. Because of this it is in the interests of openness and transparency for the matter to be determined by the Planning Committee.

It is simply not the case that the City Council is ignoring the views of residents and to suggest otherwise is at best disingenuous. As the national planning guidance states: "Local opposition or support for a proposal is not in itself a ground for refusing or granting planning permission, unless it is founded on valid material planning reasons".

The views of local people have formed part of the normal process of consideration of the planning application and will be taken into account by the Planning Committee when it considers the overall merits of the scheme.

The Wilmott Gardens proposal is classed as a minor development which under the terms of reference of the Planning Committee is deemed to be delegated to officers unless referred. All planning applications are determined on their individual merits and therefore the outcome is not pre-determined. It is insidious to suggest that the determination of the application has

been pre-determined by either officers or Members and that accusation, with no evidence to justify it, is totally refuted.

Concerning the distance to play areas the reference to 400 metres comes from the Plymouth and Southwest Devon Joint Local Plan and is an aspirational target and not intended to be applied through an inflexible 'tick box' exercise.

Executive Decision F101 20/21 relates to the disposal of various public open space sites under the Plan for Homes programme, which included Wilmott Gardens. The decision was to proceed with the disposal of these sites in order to support the Council's agenda of increased and accelerated housing delivery. The reason for the decision was amplified by the crisis in housing and the City Council's Plan for Homes commitment to release City Council land to provide 1,000 new homes per annum. The reference in the decision to "a caring council" was part of the Corporate Plan 2018-2022 with the Executive Decision highlighting that development of these sites for housing will provide more decent homes.

The Director of Public Health did not raise any concerns about the application when consulted. As part of the revised proposals a community garden forms part of the proposed scheme.

Health and safety matters on the site have been considered as part of the planning application. The Highway Authority have raised no objections to the scheme in relation to the safety of pedestrians.

The planning statement accompanying the development proposals have been available to view on line since December 2019. Notwithstanding the

impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, site notices advertising the proposed development were erected for both the previous scheme and the current proposals in the normal way. In the case of the current planning application the site notices were erected on 09 April with the consultation running until 30 April.

The submitted Arboricultural Impact Assessment has been carried out by a suitably qualified ecologist and sets out that the Ash trees are susceptible to dieback disease in the future. It also highlighted that as the development falls within and is immediately adjacent to several root zones on the western boundary which means that there is a possibility that the health of the trees would be impacted post development. Officers have concluded that a compliant replanting strategy will have the best medium-to-long term benefits for the site ecology.

With regard to the question concerning the Plymouth Open Space Assessment, this was undertaken in 2015 and 2016 and formed part of the evidence base of the Plymouth and South West Devon Joint Local Plan. This assessment included consideration of the community use of open space. The approach taken in the Plymouth Open Space Assessment was to review sites above 0.2 hectares, which is why baseline assessments would only "sometimes" have been undertaken. By definition this therefore is not an inconsistent application of policy.

The site is un-designated green space and therefore the application of Policy DEV27 in the Plymouth and Southwest Devon Joint Local Plan has limited weight. However, as a material consideration the current application has considered a revised layout which includes more open grass space on the

	<p>eastern boundary, a 'community garden' to the south and a fully SPD-compliant replanting scheme.</p> <p>Councillors are required to undertake mandatory planning training prior to sitting on Planning Committee and this training is open to all councillors. It is not considered necessary for training on the completion of the referral form. Councillors are advised to contact the planning case officer about individual applications who will provide advice regarding the referral process if needed.</p> <p>The City Council has not received an application to designate the land at Wilmott Gardens as a "village green". It would not be appropriate for the City Council to comment on the merits of any village green application because the Planning Committee, sitting as the Town or Village Green Registration Authority, must consider the evidence in support of the designation as part of a prescribed process.</p> <p>All of the information in relation to this development proposal set out in this response are considerations for the planning committee in their consideration of the overall merit of the scheme.</p>
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Question was submitted by Lois Lloyd	
<p><b>Question:</b> There are a huge number of health benefits to having easy access to green spaces, we are concerned that taking this one away would have negative consequences including social exclusion, particularly for elderly residents with mobility issues. What consideration has been made for elderly residents in the Wilmot Gardens area?</p>	<p><b>Response:</b> Referred to the answer to the first question.</p>

Question was submitted by Matt Fleming	
<p><b>Question:</b> With 41 objections raised against the property development at Wilmot Gardens will the council</p>	<p><b>Response:</b> Referred to the answer to the first question.</p>

concede that it needs to rethink and listen to residents instead of dismissing their views out of hand?	
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Question was submitted by Pat Coyle	
<b>Question:</b> According to the Arboricultural Impact Assessment for Wilmot Gardens none of the ash trees show any signs of ash dieback but a number of them are recommended for felling because they could be "at risk for ash dieback" in the future. This is a disingenuous assessment is it not?	<b>Response:</b> Referred to the answer to the first question.

Question was submitted by Ryan Aldred	
<b>Question:</b> Considering the reputation for democratic deficit Plymouth City Council gained in the aftermath of the Armada Way trees disgrace, is it really the intention of this Council to once again ignore local residents' concerns and plough ahead with bulldozing Wilmot Gardens green despite the strength of opposition from local communities?	<b>Response:</b> Referred to the answer to the first question.

Question was submitted by Jacqueline Marsh	
<b>Question:</b> With a planning officer declaring on May 30th that "the LPC will be proceeding to approval under delegated powers," is it fair to say that this development was always going to go ahead?	<b>Response:</b> Referred to the answer to the first question.

Question was submitted by James Marsh	
<b>Question:</b> If the green space at Wilmot Gardens is turned into a housing estate, will the council not be in breach of policies within its Joint Local Plan to have playable spaces within 400m?	<b>Response:</b> Referred to the answer to the first question.

Question was submitted by Joanna Horodenska	
<b>Question:</b> Is it worth the Council providing more training to support Councillors such as our local ward Councillors, who 'misunderstood the planning call-in process' and 'should have known better' and is it fair that	<b>Response:</b> Referred to the answer to the first question.

our community pays for that misunderstanding by losing its green?	
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Question was submitted by Louise Martin

**Question:** According to the Executive Decision F10I 20/21 part of the reason for this decision is because Plymouth is "a caring Council" does that not apply to residents in the Wilmot Gardens/Ruskin Crescent area who have raised objections?

**Response:** Referred to the answer to the first question.

Question was submitted by Paul Marsh

**Question:** According to the Executive Decision F10I 20/21 part of the reason for this decision is because Plymouth is "a caring Council" does that not apply to residents in the Wilmot Gardens/Ruskin Crescent area who have raised objections?

**Response:** Referred to the answer to the first question.

Question was submitted by Rachel Nichols

**Question:** Many children use the green by Ruskin Crescent/Wilmot Gardens for recreation. If the site is built upon, the next nearest green is over a mile away across a busy road. How do you intend to keep our children safe and would the green's protection not make most sense?

**Response:** Referred to the answer to the first question.

Question was submitted by Ria Baker

**Question:** The initial disposal of the green at Wilmot Gardens was done during Covid in 2020 when it would have been more difficult for residents to access planning notices. Is it not disingenuous and damaging for the Council's reputation to operate in such bad faith?

**Response:** Referred to the answer to the first question.

Question was submitted by Sandra Crocker

**Question:** Green spaces are vital for protecting biodiversity and providing a home for local wildlife. Will the council support our application for the plot of land by Wilmot Gardens to be designated as a Village Green?

**Response:** Referred to the answer to the first question.

Question was submitted by Sylvia Plant	
<b>Question:</b> Why was the green by Wilmot Gardens declared 'surplus to requirement' by Councillor Mark Lowry, how many residents did he speak to prior to drawing this conclusion and was a consultation done?	<b>Response:</b> Referred to the answer to the first question.

Question was submitted by Tom Moss	
<b>Question:</b> If the Council insists on going ahead with this unpopular and unwanted property development on our green, will the loss of our green 'be replaced by equivalent or better provision in a suitable location' according to policy DEV27?	<b>Response:</b> Referred to the answer to the first question.

4. **Chair's Urgent Business**

There were no item of Chair's urgent business.

5. **NHS End of Life Care**

Councillor Aspinall (Cabinet Member for Health and Adult Social Care) introduced the item and highlighted the following points:

- a) In response to concerns around End of Life Care performance in Plymouth, as well as statistically higher hospital deaths at University Hospital's Plymouth (UHP) than national averages, the Health and Adult Social Care Overview and Scrutiny Committee (H&ASC OSC) considered End of Life Care at the end of the last municipal year;
- b) A key priority for the Labour Administration was better access to healthcare across the course of a person's life, and therefore Cabinet were made aware of the recommendations to the Local Health Services to help improve the support for those nearing their end of life;
- c) It was critically important that people were supported, particularly around quality of life, ensuring that good symptom management delivered comfort, maintained dignity and allowed people to live as fully as possible until their passing;
- d) There should have been a personalised approach where healthcare Professionals collaborated with the person, their family and loved ones, to make informed decisions about their care options;
- e) Holistic care should have been addressed physically, emotionally, socially and spiritually;



- f) By treating the needs of the person and not just their illness, it provided comprehensive support throughout their sensitive time;
- g) The H&ASC OSC made a number of recommendation to Health Partners reflecting the above;
- h) The proposal of the following:
  - i) Cabinet recognised the importance of End of Life Care for the citizens of Plymouth and thanked the Scrutiny Committee for their diligent work;
  - ii) Cabinet endorsed further review at H&ASC OSC of the Improvement Plan being undertaken by the NHS and Partners in relation to End of Life provision and the consideration of any further recommendations that the Committee deem appropriate;
  - iii) Cabinet noted the Cabinet Member response to Appendix Two.

Councillor Penberthy (Cabinet Member for Housing, Co-Operative Development and Community) added:

- i) Plan for Homes 1, 2, 3 and 4 had been concerned about ensuring that that there was adequate housing provision for everyone who needed housing in the city;
- j) This was also reflected in the Joint Local Plan;
- k) This meant specialist housing would have to be provided for those with specialist conditions, including End of Life conditions;
- l) Councillor Aspinall would work closely with officers in Adult Social Care to ensure the Service Director for Community Connections had all of the evidence necessary to build a strong Housing Needs Assessment. This would ensure there was the appropriate provision for people with health needs, people with disabilities and people receiving End of Life Care.

Gary Walbridge (Interim Strategic Director for Adults, Health and Communities) added:

- m) The H&ASC OSC was powerful and gave people a chance to discuss the choices they would make in terms of End of Life Care and gave credence to talking about End of Life Care as early as possible to reduce the stigma around it.

Cabinet agreed to the following recommendations:

1. That the Cabinet recognised the importance of End of Life Care for the citizens of Plymouth, and thanked the Scrutiny Committee for its diligent work;
2. That the Cabinet endorsed further review at Scrutiny of the improvement plan being undertaken by the NHS and partners in relation to End of Life provision and the consideration of any further recommendations that the Committee deems appropriate;

3. That the Cabinet noted the Cabinet Member response at appendix two.

6. **Response to Foster Carer Recommendations**

Councillor Laing (Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Children's Social Care, Culture and Communications) introduced the item and highlighted the following points:

- a) Recruiting, supporting and retaining Foster Carers for Plymouth children in Plymouth City Council's (PCC) care was a key priority for the Administration;
- b) When a child did need to be in PCC's care, the goal was to have them live in a family setting that enabled them to still be connected to their families, schools and communities;
- c) The budget for 2024/25 increased the budget for the range of measures that supported Foster Carers, including an improved financial package;
- d) Following the Foster Care Summit and further consultation with Foster Carers, the report set out how the allowances had been improved for Fosters Carers that included a 6% uplift in allowances and a Council Tax Allowance;
- e) Foster Carers continued to collaborate with PCC to co-design the support and retention measures and would provide opportunities where Foster Carers, social workers and the wider professional network could come together and share their views, ideas and learn together;
- f) Foster Carers were an invaluable asset to Plymouth and the measures would help PCC to provide the absolute best care for the children who cannot remain with their families.

David Haley (Director for Children's Services) added:

- g) The tremendous work that PCC Foster Carers do for Plymouth, children and young people was acknowledged;
- h) The report, and the Summit, demonstrated that PCC had listened to the Foster Carers about what would make a difference in helping them to care for the children and the first element of that was financial;
- i) There was further work being done with the Foster Carers to ensure that the right support package was put in place;
- j) Decisions were made with Foster Carers to ensure future implementations aligned with their needs.

In response to questions, it was explained:

- k) There was now a regional approach to recruitment as part of the Department for Education (DFE) funded programme, and early signed were encouraging in terms of

Foster Carer enquiries;

- l) Retention levels were also key, as well as understanding why Foster Carers may leave to go to independent fostering agencies or give up fostering altogether.

Cabinet agreed to the following recommendations:

1. To note the content of the report and the work undertaken to support Plymouth City Council's Foster Carers;
2. To endorse a new foster carers financial package that includes a Council Tax Allowance within the agreed 2024/25 financial envelope;
3. To note the annual uplift to the Fostering Allowances since 01 April 2024, of 6% (including the new reward payment) and the commitment to continued annual reviews of allowances in line with the financial year;
4. To note the uplift in Festival, Birthday and Holiday Allowances since 01 April 2024;
5. To note the work being undertaken in Phase two, to co-design the support and retention offer to Plymouth City Council's Foster Carers;
6. To endorse the co-design of the support and retention offer.

## 7. **Achieving Excellence - A strategy for Children's Services 2024-27**

Councillor Laing (Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Children's Social Care, Culture and Communications) introduced the item and highlighted the following points:

- a) The report set out a three-year Strategic Plan to develop, sustain and embed good and outstanding practice for all children, young people and families in Plymouth;
- b) The plan set out how PCC would create the conditions within the organisation to achieve excellent and build on the improvement that had been made whilst recognising the Council were not consistently good yet in all areas;
- c) The plan described the vision for Children's Services by 2027, where children and families would receive the help they needed and would prevent problems from escalating wherever possible;
- d) When families did need support from PCC's statutory services, the Council stepped in seamlessly with timely and high quality assessment and intervention, with would meet identified needs using evidence based and value for money approaches with

were developed within Plymouth wherever possible;

- e) Asked Cabinet to approve the three-year Strategic Plan and the proposed milestones for the delivery of the ten strategic priorities.

David Haley (Director for Children's Services) added:

- f) The plan set out ambitious targets over the next three years;
- g) Each of the 10 priorities had detail of what the milestones were for each three years;
- h) There were more detailed plans within each of the service areas to ensure that there was alignment and that the key milestones were truly delivered by the services;
- i) The plan had been developed with PCC's key partners, particularly statutory partners that worked across the safeguarding system, meaning many of the priorities were shared priorities.

Councillor Evans OBE (Leader of the Council) added:

- j) The OFSTED inspection was the start of the new journey towards excellence.

Temilola Salimon (Service Director for Children, Young People and Families) added:

- k) All of the milestones were well understood across all teams and the heads of service, and the service plans reflected that.

Nigel Denning (Interim Service Director for Children, Young People and Families) also added:

- l) The plan had been co-produced by PCC's partners, frontline practitioners and had had contributions from young people.

Cabinet agreed:

1. The Children's Services Strategic Plan, Achieving Excellence - 2024 – 27;
2. The proposed milestones for the delivery of the ten Strategic Priorities were implemented in Children's Services as set out in the attached three-year milestones.

## 8. **Productivity Plan**

Tracey Lee (Chief Executive) introduced the item and highlighted the following points:

- a) Simon Hoare (Minister for Local Government) in the previous Government had asked all Local Authorities in April 2024 to produce a Productivity Plan which needed to cover areas such as, how services had been transformed, how technology was being used, how Local Authorities were maximising efficiency and what the

barriers/challenges were;

- b) The Plan should not have been more than three to four pages long;
- c) PCC and the Local Government Association (LGA) took advice from the Government regarding the change of Government and how this would affect the Productivity Plan;
- d) The Plan would not be scored, however a panel would be set up to consider the themes;
- e) The barriers had been set out in the Plan, outlining what PCC wanted to do in Local Government, with multi-year settlements being one of the most important areas.

Cabinet agreed to:

I. Endorse the content of the Productivity Plan and agreed to submit to Government.

## 9. **Provisional Capital and Revenue Outturn Report 2023/24**

Councillor Lowry (Cabinet Member for Finance) introduced the item and highlighted the following points:

- a) When the Labour Local Authority got elected in May 2023, the budget inherited from the Conservative Local Authority had a forecast pressure of £8.14 million;
- b) There were additional costs from a Local Government Pay ward of approximately £1.2 million;
- c) In the 23/24 budget, Children's Services saw an additional net increase of £1.6 million, SEND schools transport increased by £2.2 million and Adult Social Care increased by £6.4 million;
- d) There were additional costs of over £105,000 for the Keyham World War II bomb emergency;
- e) Three by-elections increased the cost of Local Government by £150,000;
- f) Work had been carried out to improve the homelessness agenda and the SEND agenda, and the 24/25 budget reflected the costs needed to deliver those services;
- g) The gross expenditure budget was balanced at £560 million;
- h) There was a drawdown of £1.93 million in unusable reserves and there was £9.3 million from corporate resourcing adjustments;
- i) An additional £4.9 million was brought in from business rates. Devon business rate pool provided an additional £2 million and additional council tax provided an additional £2.1 million;

- j) Working balances had been retained at £8.7 million and had not been used during the last financial year;
- k) The 23/24 budget for the Capital Programme was £189 million, however the actual spend from the most recent forecast was £91 million. This was caused by disruption of the supply chain, considerable labour shortages in the construction industry, COVID-19 and there had been a significant increase in inflation and interest rates, which had a huge effect on the Council's ability to borrow;
- l) Projects which were grant-funded had been brought forward, however some projects that required borrowing had been slowed down until interest rates had fallen;
- m) There would be continual slow-down in expenditure where it was required to borrow money to ensure that when it was borrowed, it would be done so at the cheapest possible rate.

David Northey (Service Director for Finance, Section 151 Officer) added:

- n) The 23/24 budget had £23 million of savings;
- o) The report remained provisional under external Auditors had signed it off as being true and fair view;
- p) Due to a national backlog, the report was not due back from the external Auditors until February/March 2025.

Cabinet agreed to the following recommendations:

1. To note the Provisional Revenue Outturn position for the year to 31 March 2024;
2. To note the Provisional Capital Outturn position for that year including the Capital Financing Requirement of £91.361m;
3. To recommend the report to City Council 16 September 2024.

#### 10. **Medium Term Financial Forecast 2024/25 – 2028/29**

Councillor Lowry (Cabinet Member for Finance) introduced the item and highlighted the following points:

- a) There was a £44 million forecast shortfall over the next four years, however the change in Government could affect this;
- b) £188 million had been saved through budget savings in the past decade;
- c) Assumptions included the predicted Revenue Support Grant with an annual uplift, an assumed cap on the council tax increase and the continuation of the council tax

precept for Adult Social Care for 2025 and the future years;

- d) There was uncertainty about the future fair funding review and the changes to business rates due to the fact they were set out by the previous Government;
- e) There were cost pressures around key services including Adult Social Care, Children, and Homelessness, with 73% of all expenditure being spent in those areas;
- f) There was not a lot of money left to address issues such as climate change, transport, housing and communities.

David Northey (Service Director for Finance, Section 151 Officer) added:

- g) The forecast set out the parameters the Council would work within.

Councillor Evans OBE (Leader of the Council) added:

- h) The new Government would look at the Country's resources against its priorities which would make decisions about how Local Authorities are treated.

Cabinet agreed to the following recommendations:

1. To note the Medium Term Financial Forecast 2024/25 – 2028/29;
2. To note the Capital Programme including the Capital Financing Requirements;
3. To note a revised Medium Term Financial Strategy will be presented to Cabinet and recommended to City Council.

#### 11. **Corporate Plan Performance Report Quarter 4**

Councillor Penberthy (Cabinet Member for Housing, Co-Operative Development and Community) introduced the item and highlighted the following points:

- a) This was the final report for the 2023/24 financial year ending in March and provided Cabinet with an overview of how the Council was performing against the priority indicators agreed in the 2023 – 2026 Corporate Plan;
- b) More 16 -17 year olds were in education, employment and training since before the COVID-19 pandemic;
- c) In May 2023, 80% of pupils attended schools judged good or better, and that figure was now at 90%;
- d) There had been improvement in dealing with complaints with 88% being resolved within the specified timeframe, in comparison to 70% in 2022/23;

- e) In the last year the amount of adults registered to vote in the City had increased by 2,460 voters;
- f) The Trust Budget and the previous Government not dealing with Section 21 Notices meant more people had been at risk of homelessness as rents rose at their fastest rate since records began with tenants facing a 3.6% increase in their rent;
- g) In 2021/22 839 households were prevented from becoming homeless and the focus on homelessness in 2023/24 increased that figure to 929;
- h) There were continued challenges facing PCC and the Council would be working with the Labour Government and local partners to deliver economic stability, cut NHS waiting times and reduce Anti-Social Behaviour in line with the Government's missions;
- i) The national missions were also local commitments, and the report set out the difference a Labour Administration had made in the past 12 months.

Ross Jago (Head of Governance, Performance and Risk) added:

- j) A few indicators within the report were based on annual information which would be made available in the Q1 report.

Cabinet agreed to note the Corporate Plan Performance Report, Quarter Four 2023/24.

## 12. **Care Experience as a Protected Characteristic**

Councillor Laing (Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Children's Social Care, Culture and Communications) introduced the item and highlighted the following points:

- a) Tribute was paid to Terry Galloway for his work on the campaign;
- b) In March 2023, the Council unanimously supported the motion to treat care experience as if it were a protected characteristic;
- c) The report provided an update on how each resolution within the motion had been progressed and confirmed that the approach had been incorporated into Service delivery across the Council;
- d) PCC were the first Council in the Southwest to pass the motion;
- e) The motion had a valuable impact on the future of Care Leavers;
- f) Officers had taken the resolutions in the motion and made them meaningful;
- g) An equality objective was 'Plymouth City Council will give specific consideration to care experienced people in its decision making to raise aspirations, increase opportunities and seek to improve their life outcomes including access to training, employment and housing, and we would encourage other organisations to do the



same’;

- h) Cabinet Members across the county had been in contact to hear more about the work;
- i) Progress would be monitored through the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan.

Cabinet agreed:

1. To note the progress made to embed care experience as a protected characteristic across the Council;
2. To support this by ensuring care experienced individuals were considered in decision-making to help raise aspirations and increase opportunities;
3. To encourage other organisations to treat care experience as if it were a protected characteristic to increase access to opportunities across the city for those individuals.

### 13. **General Election Update**

Councillor Evans OBE (Leader of the Council) introduced the item and highlighted the following points:

- a) Thanked the Returning Officer and staff for their hard work during the General Election;
- b) Free and fair elections were run in Plymouth which gave people confidence in the electoral process;
- c) Kemi Badenoch won in her constituency by 2,106 votes, however 2,100 postal votes were not dispatched to voters which called into question the legitimacy of the election;
- d) Gary Streeter stepped down from the South West Devon constituency and Rebecca Smith (MP) stood for the seat;
- e) Gave congratulations to Rebecca Smith (MP) for winning the South West Devon seat;
- f) Gave congratulations to Luke Pollard (MP) who had returned for Plymouth Sutton and Devonport constituency, totalling 13,328 votes;
- g) Former MP Johnny Mercer was defenestrated and replaced by Fred Thomas (MP);
- h) There was a 32% drop in Conservative votes in Moorview constituency;

- i) Councillor Sarah Allen entered the race for South West Devon at a late stage and nearly pulled off a shock win;
- j) Local and regional political geography had changed dramatically with there being 24 Labour MPs in the South West of England which was more than any other party;
- k) Cornwall had gone from six Conservative MPs to four Labour MPs and two Liberal Democrat MPs;
- l) There being four Labour MPs in Cornwall and two Labour MPs in Plymouth would hopefully increase the South West's ability to be heard at a national level;
- m) A letter would be sent to the three Plymouth MPs to invite them for a regular cross party meetings with political leadership of PCC;
- n) The new Government's agenda included Local Government playing a part of its five missions, in particular inclusive economic growth, housing, and net zero. These three were of particular interest as PCC to try and delivery clear evidence of change for Plymouth;
- o) PCC under Labour leadership wanted to play its full part in delivering and helping the Government to deliver on its five missions and its six first steps.

#### 14. **Leader's Announcements**

Councillor Evans OBE (Leader of the Council) gave the following announcements:

- a) Due to the Pre-Election Period there had been no updates published but there were 84 projects underway;
- b) Work had started on the Civic Centre Project, the Brickfields Community Hub Project, the City Centre Community Health Hub Project, the Derriford District Centre Project, and at Tinside Lido.

Councillor Lowry (Cabinet Member for Finance) added:

- c) There were buildings under construction in the new Derriford District Shopping Centre;
- d) PCC bought the land and were working with developers to bring the project forward;
- e) It was a nearly £20 million project;
- f) The construction started in June 2023 and was due to finish in October 2024;
- g) The Shopping Centre would include a Costa, an ALDI, a Pet's Corner, a Pure Gym and EV Charging spaces;

- h) 20,000 square feet of space would be handed to ALDI in the coming week for them to start their final fit out, and they would be opening in October 2024;
- i) The businesses would be providing jobs for the city, and providing rent which would come back to PCC.

15. **Cabinet Member Updates**

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

- a) The Box and Mount Edgcumbe had been awarded a 2024 Trip Advisor Travellers Choice Award which meant that they were in the top 10% of attractions worldwide;
- b) There had been over 800,000 for The Box, with over 60% being from Plymouth;
- c) The Box had a new summer show called 'The Time Is Always Now' and was an international blockbuster and there were ten things that were highlighted:
  - i) 'The Time is Always Now: Artists Reframe the Black Figure' was an internationally touring exhibition which included work from some of the most important living artists from Britain and America;
  - ii) The exhibition was a major study of the Black figure and its representation in contemporary art;
  - iii) It had been organised by the National Portrait Gallery and curated by writer Ekow Eshun who was the former assistant editor of 'The Face' and former editor of 'Arena Magazine' and was the current Chair of the Fourth Plinth in Trafalgar Square;
  - iv) The exhibition was displayed at the National Portrait Gallery earlier in 2024 and received a number of four and five star reviews from national art critics;
  - v) The Box was the only location outside of London where the exhibition could be seen in the UK;
  - vi) The exhibition opened on Saturday 29 June 2024 and would stay until Sunday 29 September 2024, and had attracted over 3000 visitors alone in its opening weekend;
  - vii) The exhibition would start in St Luke's church before continuing in North Hall (ground floor), North Gallery and Hurdle Gallery (first floor) in The Box's main building;
  - viii) It featured 46 works of sculpture, painting and drawing by 22 artists from the UK and USA, all of which had been made between 2000 and 2023;
  - ix) In London the exhibition was a paid-for show but at The Box it was free for everyone to visit;

x) It would travel to the Philadelphia Museum of Art, USA after it's showing in Plymouth.

Councillor Penberthy (Cabinet Member for Housing, Co-Operative Development and Community) gave the following updates:

- d) Saturday 6 July 2024 marked the International Day of Co-Operatives;
- e) PCC were proud to be a Co-Operative Council and worked hard to grow Plymouth's Co-Operative economy;
- f) Co-Operatives empowered people by offering them greater control over their jobs, livelihoods and the businesses they work for, as well as giving control to the people who used the businesses;
- g) Co-Operatives kept money in the local economy and ensured everyone benefits from economic growth;
- h) Co-Operatives were firmly woven into the fabric of Plymouth's economy were recognised in PCC's strategy as a good growth model;
- i) In 2018, PCC launched a plan to support the development of Co-Operatives in Plymouth, and a recent review by Co-Operatives UK, indicated that there had been notable success;
- j) Since 2018 there was growth of 43% of Co-Operatives headquartered in Plymouth compared to national growth of 5%;
- k) There was 127% growth in employment within these Co-Operatives compared to national growth of 6%;
- l) Following the General Election, the new Government was committed to doubling the size of the Co-Operative and Mutual economy by addressing key legislative issues and barriers;
- m) Plymouth was in a good place to aid the Government through local actions such as building knowledge and capacity;
- n) The Government had also spoken about the role that the Great British Energy would have to partner with local energy Co-Operatives;
- o) PCC had key learning and opportunities through their partnership with Plymouth Energy Community (PEC);
- p) PEC were a Co-Operative which was delivered because of PCC's Manifesto commitments in 2012;
- q) The team from PEC had met with Ed Milliband and his team, and PCC wanted to build on those discussions to further the green agenda in Plymouth;

- r) Research found Plymouth was positioned as a national leader in the development of support of the Co-Operative Movement and PCC were committed to cementing and building on that by demonstrating the power of Co-Operative enterprises for a better future. This exemplified the readiness to support the Government in achieving its ambitions for the Co-Operative Movement;
- s) A new iteration of the action plan to support Plymouth's Co-Operative economy and its development would be launched later in 2024.

Councillor Dann (Cabinet Member for Customer Services, Sport, Leisure & HR and OD) gave the following updates:

- t) Congratulated a former member of staff, Louise Kelly, for being awarded an MBE in the King's birthday honours list. Louise had worked for the council for 34 years where she dedicated to making sure that young people at school, and those with extra special complex needs, did not go hungry and remained active during the school holidays;
- u) PCC and Louise Kelly MBE used to Fit and Fed programme to work with families and organisations to ensure what was offered across Plymouth was accessible for all;
- v) A brochure had been sent to schools outlining the Fit and Fed programme for summer 2024 which would be provided for people eligible for free school meals, people who had looked after children with extra care educational plans, young carers, children of recognised refugees, children from asylum seeking families and home educated children;
- w) There were over 85 holiday clubs which covered children up to 11, and there was a young teen section and a section for people with special educational needs; all of which were free and accessible;
- x) In summer 2023, PCC offered 24,000 places for young people across the city at holiday clubs;
- y) There was additional work happening through libraries and the Plymouth Family Hubs;
- z) The cost of living was still a crisis for young people, children and families who without these schemes would not have support during the school holidays;
- aa) Four Fit and Fed events had happened in Central Park, Victoria Park, Tot Hill Park and Ernesettle Green in 2024.

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

- bb) Skills Launchpad Plymouth and the National Marine Park had teamed up to offer young people the chance to take part in immersive and interactive activities run by local employers to find out more about the skills and future careers in the city's green

and blue economies;

- cc) The Big Splash event at Tinside Lido would welcome secondary schools and youth groups to engage with the local environment and marine and construction employers who would showcase the work they do through hands-on activities;
- dd) The Big Splash event was funded by the Youth Investment Fund and the primary aim was to inspire the next generation to consider careers in Science, Technology, Engineering, the Arts and Maths (STEAM);
- ee) 8 June 2024 marked the 300 anniversary of the birth of John Smeaton who designed the third Eddystone lighthouse, better known as Smeaton's Tower;
- ff) Throughout June, Building Plymouth hosted nearly 400 local primary school children to visit Smeaton's Tower where they met modern civil engineers and learnt more about John Smeaton;
- gg) Working with The Box, the Institute of Civil Engineers and the University of Plymouth, school grounds were hosted at Smeaton's Tower with the aim of inspiring children to understand more about Plymouth's major civil engineering projects, both past and present, and learn about the importance of the role and career pathways into civil engineering.

## 16. **LGA Update**

Councillor Evans OBE (Leader of the Council) gave the following update:

- a) A number of Councillors were successful in their parliamentary ambitions in the General Election which left necessary and urgent changes to the Local Government Association (LGA) leadership;
- b) As well as being the Chair of the Co-Operative Councils Innovation Network, Councillor Louise Gittins was the new Chair of the LGA, taking over from Shaun Davies (MP);
- c) Shaun Davies (MP) initiated a review in which the LGA operated, which caused changes such as there would no longer be an LGA Board, they would be an Executive made up of Chairs of individual panels;
- d) The LGA were still committed to the Improvement Agenda and Sector Led Improvement;
- e) The offer made to the previous Government still stood, which was that Councillors and the sector stood ready to be credible and competent and would deliver in cheaper and faster ways than Government can.