

Cabinet

Monday 11 November 2024

PRESENT:

Councillor Evans OBE, in the Chair.

Councillor Laing, Vice Chair.

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

Apologies for absence: Councillor Coker.

Also in attendance: Karen Blake (Head of Service, CYPF), Liz Bryant (Head of Legal), Matt Garrett (Service Director, Community Connections), Jens Gemmel (Interim Chief Operating Officer), Ruth Harrell (Director of Public Health (via Microsoft Teams)), Karime Hassan (Interim Strategic Director for Growth), Ross Jago (Head of Governance, Performance and Risk), Tracey Lee (Chief Executive), Vivien Lines (Project Consultant, CSC Improvement), David Northey (Service Director for Finance) and Jamie Sheldon (Senior Governance Advisor).

The meeting started at 2.02 pm and finished at 4.38 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.

56. **Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

57. **Minutes**

The minutes from the meeting held 14 October 2024 were agreed as a true and accurate record.

58. **Questions from the Public**

There were no questions from the public.

59. **Chair's Urgent Business**

There were no items of Chair's urgent business.

60. **Finance and Capital Monitoring report Q2**

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

- a) The revenue position was forecasting a £4.6 million overspend or 2% of the net budget;

- b) This was down from a forecasted £74.7 million at this period last year;
- c) The Chief Executive department was showing a nil variance;
- d) Customer and Corporate Directorate was showing a forecast spend of £36 million against a budget of £35 million, totalling a £1 million overspend;
- e) There was a substantial forecast overspend in Children's Services of £7 million;
- f) The Adult Social Care and Community Directorate was showing a forecast overspend of £1.6 million;
- g) Much of this overspend derived from an excess of £.38 million from services directed at Homelessness;
- h) There had been a draw-down from the contingency reserve of £5.4 million to address the overspend rates, particularly in respect to Children's Services;
- i) The total revised Capital Budget (2024/25 – 2028/29) was forecast at £376 million. The five year programme was funded predominately by corporate borrowing which equated to 24.7%;
- j) The affordability of the Capital Programme was in a constant state of review.

David Northey (Service Director for Finance) added:

- k) Despite the deficit of £4.6 million, savings had been extracted from every member of the Council and progress had been made.

Cabinet agreed:

1. To note the forecast revenue monitoring position at Period 6 as set out in the report as an adverse variance of £4.609m;
2. Senior Officers would continue to work with Cabinet to reduce the forecast overspend;
3. To note the Capital Budget 2024-2029 was revised to £372.669m as shown in Table I and agreed that this revised forecast was recommended to Full Council for approval;
4. To note the Prudential Indicators Q2 2024/25.

61. **Medium Term Financial Strategy 2024/25 – 2028/29**

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

- a) The recent federal budget indicated a real term increase in the core Local Government spending power of around 3.2% in 2025 and 2026;
- b) This included at least £1.3 billion of new grant funding, £600 million of which would be new grants to support social care;
- c) There were other initiatives which may ameliorate the budget position of certain key areas of concern for local governments e.g. homelessness, disabled facility grants, budgets for schools and business rights;
- d) The plan of the current administration in Westminster was to move away from one-year government settlements towards three year settlements;
- e) The Medium Term Financial Strategy was a dynamic document which would be constantly and frequently updated.

David Northey (Service Director for Finance) added:

- f) There were unknown factors emanating from the budget announcement, the most serious of which were the changes to National Insurance;
- g) Overall, the budget announcement was good news and welcomed;
- h) The move from a revenue deficit of £17 million to £4 million indicated a pleasing achievement.

Councillor Evans OBE (Leader of the Council) added:

- i) The budget was targeting an increase in funding for public institutions and Local Governments and the uplift in National Insurance in the National Budget would be utilised in this respect;
- j) Three-year settlements would be welcomed to create headroom for Local Government budgets;
- k) The budget displayed support and relief for Hospitality and Retail sectors across the City and Nation.

Cabinet agreed to:

- I. Approve and recommend the Medium Term Financial Strategy to the Council at its meeting 25 November 2024.

62. **Director of Public Health Annual Report (Thrive Plymouth: A decade of impact, a future of possibilities)**

Ruth Harrell (Director of Public Health) introduced the report and highlighted the following:

- a) The ten-year Thrive Plan was launched in February 2014;

- b) There was an initial focus on the “4-4-54 construct” to address four health behaviours (poor diet, lack of physical activity, tobacco use and excess alcohol consumption) which contributed to four diseases (coronary heart disease, stroke, cancer and respiratory disease) and were responsible for 54% of deaths in Plymouth;
- c) Health inequalities were intrinsically linked to external factors and it was often beyond the scope of individual actors to combat overall inequality;
- d) The programme operated with annual “themes” which brought in a diverse array of participants;
- e) Organisations involved included – local schools, Plymouth Community Homes and Livewest;
- f) The Council had achieved the Sustainable Food Silver Award across the City;
- g) There were numerous positive changes observed including smoking rates fell, healthy behaviours in children had risen and mortality rates for the four indicated diseases had fallen;
- h) Whilst life expectancy had improved, the City still trailed behind the national average;
- i) The refreshed approach for a further year would be launched officially on the 28th of November – widening the construct to look at “healthy body, healthy mind, healthy places and healthy communities”;
- j) The updated Thrive Plymouth construct included the T.H.R.I.V.E principles (Together, Human Centred, Respectful, Inequalities Focused, Versatile and Evidence Based);
- k) The updated approach aimed to link with Plymouth City Council’s strategic goals e.g. Community building and community empowerment.

Councillor Aspinall (Cabinet Member for Health and Adult Social Chair) added:

- l) In general, the cross-cutting approach to health appeared to have worked effectively;
- m) Women’s health still remained a key area of investigation for improvement.

Councillor Cresswell (Cabinet Member for Education, Skills and Apprenticeships) added;

- n) In addition to the multi-pronged approach in its impacts on children’s nutrition, government initiatives such as breakfast clubs for primary school aged children would have a positive impact;
- o) It was the culmination of local, national, collective and individual approaches which would forge a real impact in this area.

Councillor Penberthy (Cabinet Member for Housing, Cooperative Development and Communities) added:

- p) Early intervention and engagement at a community level was often a rarity at Local Government level but the current Thrive report and process employed this tool effectively;
- q) Although it was a challenge, it was hoped that the finding and successes of the report could be utilised to lobby for national funding.

Councillor Evans OBE (Leader of the Council) added:

- r) There was a major disparity in Public Health funding between the City of London and more deprived rural locations;
- s) Dentistry also had a major effect on children's public health outcomes;
- t) Various funding schemes caused a major concern for achieving public health outcomes within the City of Plymouth.

Councillor Dann (Cabinet Member for Customer Services, Sport, Leisure & HR, and OD) added:

- u) The Active to Thrive Plan had taken a dynamic, co-operative and cohesive approach across the city which was essential in pulling in various activities across the City;
- v) This included events such as working with Poole Park Farm to render children in touch with green space, the Horizon's Bid, ensuring children have access with the sea, swimming lessons, collaboration work that goes on between Plymouth Active Leisure and the YMCA and Plymouth Community Trust, Well-being Hubs throughout the community.

Councillor Lowry (Cabinet Member for Finance) added:

- w) Over 75% of the revenue budget was being spent on helping people and the Thrive Plan was a major component of this.

In response to questions, it was explained:

- x) Whereas the area of women's health still required attention, various comparative gaps continued to close;
- y) Two major areas of statistical analysis for the Public Health were in identifying real improvement in outcomes as well as comparatively with England;
- z) Childhood obesity remained a major concern for the directorate and was heavily correlated with deprivation;
- aa) Policies employed to counteract childhood obesity included; "Healthy Place Schools", recalibration of planning laws and restrictions in respect to fast food establishments

within distances of schools, abiding by national policies relevant to this area of concern as well as being at the national forefront of this area, gathering data on the issue and using this to identify actionable considerations;

Cabinet agreed to:

1. Endorse the report for publication as the annual Director of Public Health report and also publish and launch to the Thrive Plymouth network;

2. Specific recommendations within the report are:

- a. To refresh Thrive Plymouth for a further ten years;
- b. To broaden the Thrive Plymouth framework to include Healthy Body, Healthy Mind, Healthy Places and Healthy Communities as integral to health;
- c. To provide more structure to PCC public health team's leadership role in Thrive Plymouth.

63. **Foster Summit Outcomes: Phase 2 Proposals**

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

- a) The report described the second phase of the support and retention offer to Plymouth City Council foster carers which had been co-designed following the Foster Carer Summit;
- b) Key themes discussed included financial, practical and emotional support as well as training and development opportunities for both foster carers and for staff;
- c) The financial offer, which was implemented from 1 April 2024, included a 6% uplift in the fostering allowance and the introduction of a council tax allowance.

Karen Blake (Head of Service, Children, Young People and Families) added:

- d) The fundamental sentiment of the report and feedback was that "your commitment, our commitment and the commitment of the wider community made fostering much easier than the challenging job which it is" in essence, the commitment was more than financial.

Cabinet agreed to:

1. Endorse 'Our Commitment To You: Plymouth City Council's Support and Retention Offer to Our Foster Carers 2024/2025'

64. **Foster for Plymouth Recruitment**

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

- a) Plymouth City Council's Family Homes for Plymouth Children Programme had been established to improve practice placement sufficiency and outcomes for children and young people;
- b) It was strongly believed that children and young people should grow up in a family setting with Foster carers as close as possible to their home area in order to maintain relationships stay in the same school access to social workers as well as health and therapeutic services;
- c) Foster for Plymouth, Plymouth City Council's in-house fostering team, revitalized and enhanced their approach to foster care recruitment in order to attract and recruit more carers and in-house fostering sufficiency;
- d) This included work with the regional fostering hub and the launch of Plymouths first mockingbird constellation - a new approach to fostering;
- e) There were four major businesses working with the Council to develop marketing strategies for the recruitment drive: Dartmoor Zoo, Babcock and Brown, YMCA and Vospers.

Karen Blake (Head of Service, Children, Young People and Families) added:

- a) The addition of cards utilising QR codes would enhance the connection with potential foster carers and augment foster care uptake.

Cabinet agreed to:

1. Support the recruitment campaign by sharing promotional material, spreading the word across networks and advocating for Foster for Plymouth.
2. Urge the greater Council to support recommendation one.

65. **Corporate Plan Performance Report Q2**

Chris Penberthy (Cabinet Member for Housing, Cooperative Development and Communities) introduced the report and highlighted the following:

- a) The report was consistently being updated to improve clarity of data and was consistently reviewed by internal and external groups;
- b) Data was included from a wide range of data sets, including from before the Covid-19 pandemic, to assess robust performance indicators at a broad level;
- c) The report highlighted the resilience and innovation that the Council had been taking to combat circumstances which affected the entire nation and were often out of Local Government control;
- d) Plymouth had maintained excellent performance against carriageway works and road defects within agreed timescales, although this was hampered by successive funding cuts since 2006;

- e) 100% of major development applicants were determined on-time by the Planning Department;
- f) There was some success with the reduction of numbers of under 25-year olds claiming Universal Credit and an increase in employment rates;
- g) The ability for pupils to access schools in Plymouth had increased to its highest level since the pandemic;
- h) In terms of healthcare, patients in primary care had seen positive improvements – rates of being seen within a fortnight had increased from 63% to 83%;
- i) This had not occurred within the field of dental care across the City.

Councillor Evans OBE (Leader of the Council) added:

- j) Electoral registration performance had been remarkable with 213, 000 people being registered.

Cabinet agreed to note the report.

66. **Strategic Risks Q2**

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

- a) There were 18 strategic risks on the register in total;
- b) Three risks had been removed from the register:
 - i. The lack of adult social care workforce;
 - ii. I.T supply chain constraints;
 - iii. Senior management capacity.
- c) Risk was still present in terms of:
 - i. Council expenditure
 - ii. Impact of planning reforms
 - iii. Cyber security
 - iv. Health inequality
- d) One new risk had been added to the register which was centred on Governance Arrangements for the family of companies associated with the PCC.

In response to questions, it was explained:

- e) The first quarter (Q1) “risk score” for the penultimate listed risk “Emergency Response Centre (ERC) back-up power” was set at zero as the risk was not present

in the first quarter and that the second quarter risk score would be consistently reviewed;

- f) Senior Management Capacity risk had been correctly removed from the register as interim appointments were assessed to have been filled concretely;
- g) There were additional risk that were listed by various other means in lists deferential to the Strategic Risk Register.

Cabinet agreed to note the report.

67. **Children's Services update**

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

- a) The report was being brought as a standing item to Cabinet on the basis that the overspend prevalent in item six necessitated public openness and transparency and out of a desire to display the difficulty of the situation and the effectuality of approaches being employed to mitigate the circumstances;
- b) Whilst the number of children in care was reducing in line with statistical neighbours, as a result of a national shortage of fostering placements the City had more children than expected placed in residential settings and a small number in unregistered settings;
- c) The cost of residential provision has risen as a result of national sufficiency issues and unregistered provision remains particularly costly;
- d) The considerable challenges facing the authority's Children Services department were common nationwide;
- e) Schemes to recruit and support additional foster carers were underway;
- f) Proposals for the development of the 'Family Homes for Plymouth Children' Programme had been examined.

Vivien Lines (Project Consultant – CSC Improvement) added the following:

- g) Whilst the goals of Children's Services and the institutional models of development evident within the 'Family Homes for Plymouth Children' may sound conflicting, there were 57 Plymouth Children placed in Children's Homes, 33 of which were not in Plymouth;
- h) It was evident that Children requiring a high level of intensive support would be granted a greater chance of success by opening in-house provision of this model.

Councillor Lowry (Cabinet member for Finance) added:

- i) In addition to the aspirational goals of the programme, it was hoped there would be some financial benefit;
- j) The programme would commence slowly with aspirations to provide far more accommodation in the future.

Councillor Chris Penberthy (Cabinet Member for Housing, Cooperative Development and Communities) added:

- k) The next ten years' worth of supported means, primarily for people aged 18 years upwards, were being looked into.

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

- l) Whilst the terminology applied to "residential children's home" might incur outdated connotations, these homes were essentially modern in both design and philosophically, being two-to-three bedroom homes intended to create a family atmosphere.

Cabinet agreed to note the report.

68. **Leader's Announcements**

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

- a) Remembrance Day commemorations had been conducted on Sunday 10 November, to a crowd larger than before and transpired successfully;
- b) A run of success had been experienced since the General Elections in terms of economic investment, growth and procurement of grants within the City, totalling over £120 million and were comprised of:
 - I. Completion of a £23 million pound investment in port facilities at MillBay;
 - II. £25 million pound Community Diagnostics Hub;
 - III. Completed in handing over an £18 million investment in the Derriford District Centre;
 - IV. All of the £25 million Freeport Seed Capital had been allocated;
 - V. £7 million had been invested into 'Innovation Barns';
 - VI. Planning was secured and procurement was complete for the £8 million Beaumont Way development;
 - VII. The £10 million Waterfront Regeneration Scheme had started;
 - VIII. Contracts had been awarded for the Mount Batten Centre's improvement scheme.
- c) The Port Strategy had been completed and brought through the Scrutiny Process;
- d) The Port Strategy was especially important for Plymouth as the City had the highest marine sector employment within the UK at 20,110 jobs or 19% of the city employed in the sector or Gross Value Added (GVA) of £1.2 Billion;

- e) The strategy aimed to grow this sector by at least 2,500 indirect jobs and 4,200 indirect jobs by 2030;
- f) The Marine Stewardship Council were hosted at The Box within the previous month and work would be conducted with this entity to boost local fishing incentives and initiatives.

69. **Cabinet Member Updates**

Councillor Penberthy (Cabinet Member for Housing, Cooperative Development and Communities) made the following announcements:

- a) A thank-you was extended to all organisations and individuals involved in the successful operation of Remembrance Day, a wide array of organisations assisted ranging Schools to small and large businesses such as Babcock and Brown;
- b) Plymouth was awarded £600,000 by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government following the public disorder which occurred in Plymouth during August. Of this grant, £510, 000 is designated for revenue and £90,000 is designated for capital expenditure;
- c) 20 Applications for use of the awarded money were received from the Community totalling a request for £1.4 million, which passed funds available by 137%;
 - I. Pride in Place were allocated £90,114, 15% of the budget
 - II. Children, Young People in Schools received £77400, 13%
 - III. Community Cohesion received £389, 874, 65% of the budget
 - IV. Community Events received £29, 000, 5% of the budget
 - V. Recovery Costs were 14, 000 or 2% of the budget
- d) The majority of the successful applicants were small voluntary sector organisations with the background of delivering services in Plymouth and the offer of the grant was subject to their compliance of the conditions of the grant as well as agreed key outcomes and milestones;
- e) Work would be conducted collaboratively between the Council and organisations in receipt of grants in order to maximise the impact of the fund;
- f) A panel of Plymouth City Council employees had made recommendations of a Small Community Grants Programme totalling £46, 000. This had been accepted by the Cabinet and the funds purpose was to promote community cohesion in the city.

Councillor Laing (Deputy Leader and Cabinet member for Children’s Social Care, Culture and Communications) made the following announcements:

- g) The Box Autumn Season had opened on 19 October 2024 and was centred around the theme “Land, Sea and Sky”;
- h) Exhibitions included the works of JMW Turner as well as contemporary artist Ingrid Pollard, a shortlisted candidate for the Turner Prize in 2022, and Vija Celmins;

- i) There were new films from Paul Rooney marking the 200th anniversary of Devonport;
- j) A timely installation from Osman Yousef called “When Will We Be Good Enough” was on display;
- k) The “You Can Do It Awards” took place on 07 November to award care leavers.

Councillor Haydon (Cabinet Member for Community Safety, Libraries, Events, Cemeteries and Crematoria) made the following announcements:

- l) Bonfire Night celebrations occurred, with an estimated attendance of 24,000;
- m) Anti-Social Behaviour Week would run between 18 and 24 November and was intended to highlight actions for those experiencing anti-social behaviour and how to support victims;
- n) Plymouth Libraries successfully received £5,000 from Arts Council England to run a project titled “Lets Read Together” which provided books for Early Year Settings;
- o) The Christmas Lights would be switched on the Thursday evening 14 November and the Barbican Lights would be switched on Saturday 16 November.

Sally Cresswell (Cabinet Member for Education, Skills and Apprenticeships) made the following announcement:

- p) The Dolly Parton Imagination Library was functioning in Devonport Ward and St Peter and the Waterfront Ward and would be gifting books to parents and young children.

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

- q) Plymouth Active Leisure had developed a referred eight-week programme for people with a wide range of health issues to devise tailored support on health journeys;
- r) Various members of the Cabinet were trialling this programme and would act as advocates.

Councillor Aspinall (Cabinet Member for Health and Adult Social Care) made the following announcements:

- s) The week commencing 18 November was “Adult Safeguarding Week”, a national event dedicated to reminding people of their safeguarding responsibilities.

70. **LGA Update**

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

- a) Councillor Louise Gittins, Chair of the LGA, was posed to visit Plymouth at the start of December;
- b) The movement towards “prevention” strategies within Children’s social care was heavily predicated upon additional funding supplied by National government and the LGA had thanked them for this contribution;
- c) The LGA had called for fundamental reform of the SEND system, focusing on improving inclusion in mainstream settings;
- d) Greater clarity been requested regarding financial reform and multiyear settlements and the LGA had effectively called for greater headroom in their day-to-day operations;
- e) The LGA were supporting the government “Smoke Free Generation” ambition and this was being reflected within Plymouth;
- f) The request on Children’s Social Care was to cover in totality Council’s expenditure in their efforts to support vulnerable children.