

Cabinet

Monday 31 March 2025

PRESENT:

Councillor Laing, in the Chair.

Councillor Briars-Delve Vice Chair.

Councillors Aspinall, Coker, Dann, Haydon, Lowry, Penberthy and Cresswell.

Apologies for absence: Councillor Evans OBE (attended via Microsoft Teams).

Also in attendance: Councillor Sarah Allen (Chair of Audit and Governance Committee), Geoff Baines (Deputy Chief Executive, Livewell Southwest), Stephen Beet (Head of Adult Social Care and Retained Functions), Helen Bone (Southwest Homes England), Eamonn Boylan (Chief Executive Officer, Homes England), Kristina Browning (Community Safety Manager), Emma Crowther (Service Director for Integrated Commissioning), Amanda Davis (Service Director for Education, Participation and Skills), David Draffan (Service Director for Economic Development), Paul Fanshaw (City College), Jens Gemmel (Chief Operating Officer), Jackie Grubb (City College), Lorraine Hill (City College), Pete Honeywell (Transformation Architecture Manager), Tracey Lee (Chief Executive), John McManus (Ministry and Housing, Communities and Local Government), Tracey Naismith (Head of Community Safety), David Northey (Section 151 Officer), Harry Roberts (Ministry and Housing, Communities and Local Government), Harry Roberts (Joint Head of Regeneration Delivery Unit), Jamie Sheldon (Senior Governance Advisor), Richard Stevens (Chair, City College), Michelle Thomas (Livewell Southwest), Gary Walbridge (Strategic Director for Adults, Health and Communities), Matt Ward (Head of Regeneration and Growth), Joe Wharton (Southwest Homes England), Andy Williams (Organisational Lead for Adult Social Care, Livewell Southwest) and, Ollie Woodhams (Head of Finance).

The meeting started at 2.00 pm and finished at 4.26 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.

123. **Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

124. **Minutes**

The minutes from the meeting held 10 March 2025 and 19 March 2025 were agreed as a true and accurate record.

125. **Questions from the Public**

There were no questions from members of the public.

126. **Chair's Urgent Business**

Councillor Laing (Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Children's Social Care, Culture and Communications) introduced Councillor Haydon (Cabinet Member for Community Safety, Libraries, Events, Cemeteries and Crematoria) to provide an update on the evening and night-time economy:

- a) There was a new evening and night-time economy Predatory Behaviour Disruption Partnership between Plymouth City Council (PCC) and Devon and Cornwall Police;
- b) This partnership would target those who act in a predatory manner towards women;
- c) The partnership aimed to prevent predatory behaviour from escalating into serious violence against women by spotting the signs early and taking swift and robust action against offenders;
- d) Thanks to the dedication of the PCC team, partner agencies and local venues there had been initiatives to keep the public safe at night, including the Safe Bus, Street Pastors and Ask for Angela;
- e) Plymouth had been recognised for the safety of its evening and night-time economy with the achievement of the Purple Flag Award.

Kristina Browning (Community Safety Manager) added:

- f) Civil tools and powers would be used in early intervention with an aim to prevent violence against women and girls occurring within the evening and night-time economy;
- g) Predatory behaviour was behaviour that caused women to feel afraid including:
 - i) Isolation from friends;
 - ii) Harassment;
 - iii) Following women and;
 - iv) Making inappropriate sexual comments;
- h) Research by Dr Ruth Lewis and Dr Amanda McBride from Northumbria University showed that nearly 44% of women surveyed felt fear as a result of unwanted sexual intrusions on a night out;
- i) There was intelligence to show that even though people were behaving in a predatory manner, the behaviour was not criminal and therefore the police could not take any criminal action;
- j) As predatory behaviour caused women to feel harassed, alarmed or distressed it met the definition of anti-social behaviour. This gave the Community Safety Team civil

tools and powers due to the anti-social behaviour Crime and Policing Act;

- k) The partnership was run as a pilot from November 2023 to November 2024 and during that year the partnership reviewed 43 individuals where there was intelligence around predatory behaviour;
- l) All 43 individuals were male with an age range of 22-77, with 18 having joint early intervention from Community Safety Team and the Police;
- m) Prior to the partnership, those 18 individuals would have gone unchallenged and their predatory behaviour would continue;
- n) Within the first four months of the second year of the partnership, 13 individuals had had interventions;
- o) The plan was to promote the partnership nationally due to the evidence to show it had been effective in the first year.

127. **City Centre, Homes England and Civic Centre Strategic Update**

Councillor Evans OBE (Leader of the Council) explained that there was another report linked to this item under item 16 that contained commercially sensitive information, and if there were no questions relating to this, they would remain in a Part 1 public meeting.

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

- a) In March 2024, Cabinet adopted the new Economic Strategy, the Ports Strategy and the Creative Industries Plan;
- b) Plymouth was at an economic tipping point with a £6 billion investment pipeline, underpinned by a £4.5 billion investment by the Government in defence. This strategy would deliver:
 - i) 1000 new businesses;
 - ii) 8000 new jobs;
 - iii) £1 billion increase in Gross Value Added (GVA);
 - iv) A 20% increase in productivity;
 - v) Helping 5000 people into work;
 - vi) 50 vacant buildings back into use;
 - vii) Lift 3000 people out of poverty;
 - viii) 10,000 new homes;

- c) The report established a new long-term partnership and vision with Homes England to:
 - i) deliver 10,000 new homes;
 - ii) See the Civic Centre restoration as a beacon for city centre regeneration;
 - iii) Provide Plymouth with a new state-of-the-art city centre campus for City College focussing on blue and green skills for the future economy;
 - iv) Secured a £40 million grant package;
 - v) Illustrated that PCC is prepared to invest;
- d) The new partnership was one of the most significant and important regeneration interventions that PCC had ever undertaken;
- e) Thanks were given to all partners.

Eamonn Boylan (Chief Executive Officer, Homes England) added:

- f) The partnership was not just about building houses, but about creating homes and fostering a sense of community;
- g) Thanks were given to PCC for their input into the partnership.

A video was shown from Luke Pollard MP.

Jackie Grubb (Chief Executive, City College Plymouth) added:

- h) Plymouth's wages remained lower than the national average at £28,000 annually and skills attainment was falling short;
- i) Key Stage Four English and maths results, level two attainment and higher level and higher education qualifications were below the national standard;
- j) These challenges were recognised in the Growth Alliance and the new Economic Plan;
- k) A strong jobs pipeline had been built to ensure opportunities were accessible to local communities;
- l) The vision was for a state-of-the-art city centre blue green skills hub that would deliver world-class education whilst driving regeneration;
- m) The new campus would not just be for students and would be open year round, including evenings and weekends to ensure accessibility to the wider public;

- n) Commitment to blue green skills was at the heart of the project and would train up to 2,000 students a year across 60 new courses;
- o) Comprehensive training would include engineering, nuclear and offshore wind skills, augmented reality welding, green energy technologies, retrofit skills, sustainable business management and key city centre training in areas such as health and special education needs.

Richard Stevens (Chair of Governors, City College Plymouth) added:

- p) The new Civic Centre would correct the learning deficit faced in Plymouth in the past.

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

- q) City College played a vital role in Plymouth's skills ecosystem, acting as a cornerstone for education, training and workforce development;
- r) The role of educators was to harness the talents and interests of young people and channel this energy into seeking meaningful employment and lives;
- s) City College had received the Association of Colleges Beacon Award for 2024, which was a national recognition of excellence in further education;
- t) City College was Plymouth's anchor organisation for student learning, supporting more than 12,000 young people and adults to upskill with industry experienced lecturers and worked with more than 600 local employer to address the skills gap;
- u) The blue green skills hub demonstrated City College's continued commitment to investing in cutting-edge facilities to support careers in growth industries;
- v) The initiative represented PCC's largest ever investment in skills capital.

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

- w) Housing lead city centre regeneration required three key elements:
 - i) Brave and ambitious leadership;
 - ii) Clear direction and master planning;
 - iii) Value of the importance of strategic partnerships and investment;
- x) The solution to the housing crisis was not just temporary accommodation, but the provision of permanent homes;
- y) There were 500-600 permanent residents in the city centre at the time of the meeting.

Councillor Lowry (Cabinet Member for Finance) added:

- z) The Civic Centre was constructed in 1957 with a total project cost of £1.6 million and was opened by Queen Elizabeth II on 26 July 1962;
- aa) A pre-construction agreement was underway and the complete strip out and structural investigations would be complete by August 2025. The revised planning application would be submitted in December 2025 and phase one works would be undertaken between February 2026 and November 2026 which would include structural repairs and the removal of the cladding. November 2026 to April 2028 would see the main works taking place with a view to City College opening for teaching in September 2028;
- bb) Progress on the partnership and regeneration would be brought back to Cabinet quarterly.

Matt Ward (Head of Regeneration and Growth) added:

- cc) There had previously been £40 million investment in Plymouth Railway Station, £10 million of capital investment into the National Marine Park, and £22 million invested into sports and well-being facilities;
- dd) The city centre regeneration was creating a positive impact on Plymouth by bringing in private investors.

David Draffan (Service Director for Economic Development) added:

- ee) New homes and the City College would drive football and create Plymouth city centre as a destination.

Tracey Lee (Chief Executive) added:

- ff) The partnership was happening due to years of hard work and dedication;
- gg) The drivers for the partnership were the defence of the realm and how to reinvent Plymouth;
- hh) Plymouth had been reinvented through culture with The Box, through leisure with the Barcode, and through health interventions with the Community Diagnostic Centre.

Cabinet agreed to:

- I. Note the progress that has been made towards the creation of a new strategic delivery partnership with Homes England and delegated authority to the Service Director for Economic Development to agree the terms of a Memorandum of Understanding with Homes England setting out our joint commitment where he would not already have authority to do so.

2. Authorised officers to progress discussions with Homes England around establishing a joint venture to facilitate housing delivery across the city subject to more detailed recommendations being provided in advance of any formal agreement being concluded.
3. Note the funding package for the Civic Centre project and approved an update to the capital programme to include each element of the funding as set out below:
 - £8,500,000 of grant funding from the Levelling Up Fund;
 - £950,000 of District Heat Network funding;
 - Subject to Homes England's formal approval, £20,000,000 of grant funding from Homes England;
 - £14,395,144 of corporate borrowing (which includes £4.7m of corporate borrowing to replace £4.7m of Future High Street Fund grant previously vired to the Armada Way project); and
 - £2,971,182 of service borrowing.
4. Note that the use of the grant funding from Homes England, the corporate borrowing and the service borrowing will be subject to a more detailed business case (including a cost plan which has been subject to further due diligence and market testing) to be reviewed by the relevant Scrutiny Committee during 2025/26 and subsequently approved by Cabinet.
5. Approved the freehold purchase of the Civic Centre from Urban Splash for £1.00;
6. Grant authority to the Strategic Director for Growth or the Section 151 Officer to agree the terms of:
 - A grant funding agreement with Homes England; and
 - An Agreement for Lease and / or Lease of all or parts of the Civic Centre to one or more third parties and / or any other related agreements in order to facilitate the redevelopment of the site.

128. **Adult Social Care - Improvement Journey**

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

- a) Since April 2024, Adult Social Care had worked with over 13,000 people through assuring people's physical and mental health, providing day services and making sure people were kept safe through safeguarding processes;
- b) PCC aimed to support people who cared for others including social workers, occupational therapists and, paid staff members in care homes or supported living.

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

- c) The Care Quality Commission (CQC) started their inspection of PCC's Adult Social Care in September 2023;
- d) The first approach was to undertake a self-assessment against the CQC framework to help PCC understand where they excelled and needed to make improvements. An improvement plan was made from this procedure;
- e) Partners from the Local Government Association (LGA) would give PCC a peer review on their improvement plan;
- f) One of the Care Act duties was promoting the integration of care and support with health services and in 2015 PCC integrated all its assessment functions with Livewell Southwest;
- g) Plymouth was second best in the Southwest for discharge performance.

Stephen Beet (Head of Adult Social Care and Retained Functions) added:

- h) The CQC were halfway through reviewing every Local Authority Adult Social Care department in the country;
- i) The LGA undertook the peer review in January 2025 where PCC shared 300 documents in advance and included 10 case file audits and 40 meetings with 180 members of staff;

Michelle Thomas (Livewell Southwest) added:

- j) The LGA highlighted how passionate and positive staff were about supporting the people of Plymouth, and how good staff retention rates were;
- k) PCC were exploring available regional data to support benchmarking conversations;
- l) Livewell were focussing on integration and closer collaboration with well-being hubs, primary care family hubs and delivering whole family offers across all services;
- m) All Livewell staff had access to Care Act training;
- n) Livewell and PCC senior managers regularly attended joint briefings as a commitment to communicating their joint development visions.

Geoff Baines (Deputy Chief Executive, Livewell Southwest) added:

- o) Areas of feedback from the CQC inspection included social work practice, equality and diversity recording and waiting times;
- p) Livewell had been delivering health services to asylum seekers through an asylum seeker service;

- q) A Waiting Well policy had been introduced to give people on the waiting list good information about other support services available in the interim;
- r) There had been a 50% reduction in those waiting to be seen within the last 12 months.

Emma Crowther (Service Director for Integrated Commissioning) added:

- s) The CQC peer reviewers met with PCC's commissioning providers for care homes and supported living and agreed there was mutual respect and a good, trusting, open relationship;
- t) Gaps in services included specialist care provision with people with complex challenges, and more choices for short breaks and respite for people who are caring and cared for;
- u) The Multi-Agency Safeguarding Partnership was recognised;
- v) The message from the peer review what PCC could do more to work with partners more closely;
- w) More clarity was needed on the Adult Social Care vision and strategy to ensure the workforce understood and engaged with processes;
- x) There needed to be more visible leadership and communication through every level of both organisations to ensure frontline social care teams were involved in improvement plans;
- y) There was a priority around occupational therapy and ensuring the work occupational therapists do was visible and well understood.

Andy Williams (Organisational Lead for Adult Social Care, Livewell Southwest) added:

- z) Governance systems were put in place to ensure Adult Social Care was being delivered by Livewell Southwest, with the responsibility sitting with the Local Authority, in the right way;
- aa) Although there were no statutory time frames to measure performance, Livewell Southwest were using 28 days as a benchmark which was the gold standard;
- bb) The benchmark for reviews was 12 months even though there was not a statutory time frame for this.

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

- cc) The information provided was discussed at the Health and Adult Social Care Scrutiny Committee;
- dd) Recommended the Action Plan be brought back to Cabinet.

In response to questions, it was explained:

- ee) Learning had been taken from children's experiences and services, and other partners;
- ff) There would be a social care therapist and physio at Foulston Park.

Cabinet agreed:

1. To note the content of the report;
2. To bring the Action Plan back to the next Cabinet Meeting.

129. **New Shareholder to join Delt Shared Services Ltd**

Councillor Dann (Cabinet Member for Customer Services, Sport, Leisure and HR and OD) introduced the report and highlighted the following points:

- a) North Somerset Council had requested to joint DELT Shared Services as a fellow shareholder.

Councillor Lowry (Cabinet Member for Finance) added:

- b) DELT Shared Services was set up as a key division in the Southwest to provide employment and opportunity.

Cabinet agreed to:

1. Approve North Somerset Council joining Delt as a new shareholder.
2. Delegate authority to the nominated shareholder representative - Service Director for Finance – to agree changes to the reserved matters governing the company required to recognise the arrival of a new shareholder.

130. **Bereavement Services Operating Arrangements**

Councillor Haydon (Cabinet Member for Community Safety, Libraries, Events, Cemeteries and Crematoria) introduced the item and highlighted the following points:

- a) PCC had constructed a new crematorium, wake and café facility which had been operating since October 2024;
- b) The services provided at the crematorium would continue to be run in-house.

Cabinet agreed to:

1. Approve the proposed bereavement model, keeping the service in-house;

2. Delegate authority to the Director of Public Health to determine and set the final, detailed list of fees and charges for all bereavement related services in accordance with the principles set out in this report;
3. Approve the recommendation that the Charity “Plymouth Crematoria” be dissolved.

131. **Audit and Governance Chair’s Report**

Councillor Sarah Allen (Chair of the Audit and Governance Committee) introduced the report and highlighted the following points:

- a) During 2024-2025 the Audit and Governance Committee had held seven meetings. This had increased due to unusual events such as the audit back stop, the boundary review and the electoral cycle review;
- b) The Committee had received an update on the role of an audit member which was presented by Paul Dosset (Grant Thornton);
- c) There had been five sets of statements of accounts to approve from 2019 through to 2024 which complied with the national audit back stop to clear the rising backlog of audited accounts and auditor opinions;
- d) There had been verbal updates from the Section 151 Officer on the capitalisation direction that dated back to the financial transaction made in October 2019;
- e) Annual self-assessments had been implemented;
- f) Changes to the Constitution had been considered by the Committee including the establishment of a Standards Committee, an updated petition scheme and amendments to procedures which brought PCC in line with national best practice.

Councillor Lowry (Cabinet Member for Finance) added:

- g) Thanks to the Audit and Governance Committee.

Cabinet agreed to note the report before consideration by City Council.

132. **Corporate Parenting Annual Report 23-24**

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

- a) The Corporate Parenting Board had demonstrated continued commitment to improving outcomes for children and young people in care and care experienced young people;
- b) Key partners across Plymouth had continued to listen to the voice of care experienced young people and scrutinised and improved local arrangements for children and young people;

- c) The Board had been supported by the Corporate Parenting Operational Managers Group which put in place a stronger partnership plan and stronger local arrangements following an OFSTED inspection in January 2024;
- d) During 2024-2025 the Corporate Parenting Board would continue to have oversight of health and education arrangements for children in care and care experienced young people;

Cabinet agreed to note the achievements highlighted in the Annual Report.

133. **Leader's Announcements**

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

- a) PCC's £19.5 million Levelling Up Finding had been formally confirmed and the process of on-boarding with the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) was underway;
- b) There was a new project for the provision of shore power by Associated British Ports (ABP) which would enable Millbay to head towards becoming net-zero;
- c) There was a formal launch of the Ports Plan at the Marine Station with over 50 stakeholders in attendance. This included a marine roundtable to consider how the plan would be delivered not only by PCC but it's partners;
- d) The £4 million refurbishment of the Mount Batten Centre had commenced as part of the Lottery Heritage Fund;
- e) Gratitude was given to David Northey (Service Director for Finance/Section 151 Officer) ahead of his retirement;
- f) Welcomed Ian Trisk-Grove as the new Service Director for Finance and Section 151 Officer.

134. **Cabinet Member Updates**

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

- a) Gave thanks to the Department for Work and Pensions for giving PCC £4,445,11.26 for the Household Support Fund for the coming 12 months;
- b) Food vouchers would be provided during the school holidays for families with children that were eligible for free school meals;
- c) PCC would continue to work with Citizen's Advice and Plymouth Energy Community to target people most in need with guidance, advice and financial

assistance;

- d) There would be grants for welcome spaces during winter;
- e) Thanks were given to those who responded to the consultation on the Assisted Living Policy;
- f) Over the past three years, PCC had supported over 500 disability adaptations in people's homes across the city, and last year were granted £3 million to deliver this service. The Government had awarded PCC a top up of £422,000 from the Better Care Fund to allow the delivery of more mandatory disability facilities;
- g) The MHCLG had awarded PCC with £1,531,231 from round three of the Local Authority Homes Fund. Eight open market homes would be purchased by Bournemouth Church's Housing Association for use as temporary family accommodation;
- h) PCC would be purchasing five homes for families who were in the UK as part of the Afghan Citizens Resettlement Scheme or the Afghan Relocation and Assistance Policy;
- i) Congratulations was given to the Homelessness Team and partners for securing a fifth year of funding for the Changing Futures project from the MHCLG and the National Lottery, totalling in £772,000.

Councillor Haydon (Cabinet Member for Community Safety, Libraries, Events, Cemeteries and Crematoria) gave the following update;

- j) Recognition was given to Shaun Stanfield (Service Manager for Customer Services) for his work prior to his retirement;
- k) An event was held for Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) community grants and nine community facing charitable volunteering organisations had come forward with support;
- l) A second open day would be held at the crematorium on the 26 April 2025.

Councillor Dann (Cabinet Member for Customer Services, Sport, Leisure and HR and OD) provided the following update:

- m) There was over one million pounds of grant funding for the Fit and Fed programme;
- n) Over the Easter break there were 66 general clubs and six clubs specifically for SEND through the Fit and Fed programme.

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

- o) Jill Bradley's new exhibition Running in Return would open to the public on 05 April 2025.

135. **LGA Update**

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

- a) The LGA continued to be busy working with Government to highlight a range of issues from discussing the role of Councils in fostering community cohesion, at the Women Inequalities Committees Inquiry and providing oral evidence to the Transport Committee as part of the inquiry into the management and impact of street works;
- b) On 26 March 2025 the Chancellor addressed Parliament with the spring forecast and the LGA put together a briefing highlighting the key announcements from the address;
- c) The Chancellor stated that Government would create a £3.25 billion Transformation Fund to support key public sector reforms and deliver savings for the taxpayer, to invest in additional employment, health and skill support from 2026/2027 to help people start or stay in work whilst rebalancing the payment levels in Universal Credit to promote work and would take the next step to reform the Children's Social Care system, providing an additional £25 million for the fostering system;
- d) The Government had also announced an additional £3.4 billion to support public finances and public services by 2029/2030 and committed to holding a spending review every two years, setting departmental budgets for a minimum of three years;
- e) The LGA Chair continued to lobby for Local Government Finance issues, describing Councils as the backbone of the country and stating that every critical service a Council provided needed to be funded properly.