

Overview and Scrutiny Management Board

Wednesday 31 March 2010

PRESENT:

Councillor James, in the Chair.

Councillor Mrs Watkins, Vice Chair.

Councillors Coker, Fox, Purnell, Roberts, Thompson, Viney and Wildy.

Co-opted Representatives: Mr Douglas Fletcher

The meeting started at 2.00 pm and finished at 4.45 pm.

Note: At a future meeting, the committee 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.

97. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The following declarations of interest were made in accordance with the members code of conduct.

Name	Minute	Reason	Interest
Councillor Mrs Watkins	No. 101 Tracking Resolutions.	Member of Plymouth Community Homes Board	Personal
Councillor Jack Thompson	No. 101 Tracking Resolutions.	Member of Plymouth Community Homes Board	Personal
Councillor Wildy		Partner is a contractor with Devonport Regeneration Community Partnership	Personal

98. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on the 3 March 2010 were approved as a correct record.

99. CHAIR'S URGENT BUSINESS

There were no items of Chair's urgent business.

100. CALL-INS

(a) Members will be advised of any executive decisions that have been called in.

The Chair advised that no executive decisions had been called in.

(b) To monitor actions from Call-ins.

There were no actions to monitor from call-ins on this occasion.

(c) Members will receive a schedule of executive decisions that have been deemed urgent with the agreement of the Chair.

The Chair advised that no urgent executive decisions had been taken between 22 February and 19 March 2010.

101. TRACKING RESOLUTIONS

Members considered a schedule of tracking resolutions and the following was highlighted –

- (i) regarding O & S Commission minute 37(5) which refers to presentations on Care Quality Commission for all Members and LSP theme groups, officers advised that the scrutiny and LSP theme group would be invited to receive a presentation at the first Health and Adult Social Care Overview and Scrutiny Panel or first informal briefing of the Panel of the new municipal year.
- (ii) regarding O & S Commission minute 37(5) which refers to LSP theme group chairs and scrutiny chairs it was commented that the breakfast meeting held earlier in the day had been a very useful and productive event.
- (iii) regarding O & S Commission minute 94 (a) 3 which refers to the implementation of locality working, officers advised that an implementation timetable would be made available to members as soon as available.
- (iv) regarding O & S Commission minute 94 (a) (1) With regard to Health and Adult Social Care OSP draft minute no. 56 – Joint Strategic Needs Assessment the Chair of the Adult Health and Social Care OSP reported that she had met with the director for community services and the Chief Executive of the Primary Care trust and was entirely satisfied that the status quo should remain.

Resolved that a localities briefing is included in the member's induction process and all members are also invited to attend.

102. CABINET RESPONSE TO BUDGET SCRUTINY RECOMMENDATIONS

The leader of the council introduced the cabinet response to budget scrutiny recommendations. The leader thanked the Board and the supporting officers for all of the hard work which was carried out during the two day scrutiny. It was reported that-

- (i) the cabinet accepted recommendations about value for money and the delivery of efficiency targets and acknowledged that there would be significant pressure on the Council and its partners to do more for less;
- (ii) it was acknowledged that there was more to do in regards to communicating what the Council was doing, and to listening to what people say;
- (iii) there would be a continued focus on Children's and Adult social care;
- (iv) a review of Corporate Improvement Priorities, and targets would be part of the planning process for the coming year;
- (v) regarding recommendation 2.8 it was anticipated that mainstream budgets would not be allocated against CIPs although specific spending would be shown;
- (vi) regarding recommendation 5.4 about the unannounced inspection in Children's services: it was hoped that although the result of the recent full OFSTED inspection is yet to be published it would show that, while there were still challenges in the delivery of services to children and young people, they should not be described as 'poor'.

Resolved that -

1. The Chair and Head of Performance, Policy and Partnerships would allocate relevant

budget scrutiny recommendations to panels in conjunction with panel chairs and lead officers for inclusion in forward work programmes

2. That the management board undertake a formal mid year review of the progress against recommendations in September or October 2010

103. **RESPONSE REGARDING INFORMATION REQUESTED AT BUDGET SCRUTINY IN RESPECT OF GRANTS**

The Head of Finance introduced a report in respect of grants.

The Board expressed disappointment at the poor quality of the report presented. It was reported that-

- (i) there were only 3 grants described that had not been applied for;
- (ii) officers apologised for the amount of time it had taken to collect the data and as a result had developed a set of principles going forward for recording grant related decisions;
- (iii) a corporate grant coordinator role would be created and a corporate grants register set up;
- (iv) the authority is considering purchasing software to help identify sources of grant funding;

In response to questions from members of the board, it was reported that the authority would undertake to investigate how access could be gained to grant finding software through partnership working.

104. **PERFORMANCE MONITORING**

(a) To receive the bi-monthly Finance and Performance Report and to identify issues for further review / monitoring by Panels.

The Cabinet member for Finance, Property People and Governance commented on the report. It was reported that-

- (i) the projected overspend of £3.146m has been mitigated by a £2.144m VAT repayment from HM customs and excise and a £0.229m Local Authority Business Growth Incentive grant which has resulted in a projected overspend of approximately £400,000 after applying a number of 'corporate health' adjustments;
- (ii) a further dividend from Heritable Bank of £195,000 has been repaid, although there was still money outstanding this was currently subject to legal process;
- (iii) the capital position was outlined and the assessment of year end spend is £95.8m, actual spend on the Capital programme as at end of January 2009 is £62.364m.

In response to questions from members of the board it was reported that –

- (iv) the unexpected rejection of the bid for funding a gypsy site within the city was a significant problem, legislation stipulated that a suitable site would need to be created for gypsies. With the rejection of the bid the Council has continued to review its options which could include approaching the Homes and Communities Agency to look at any problems with the bid;
- (v) there has been no extra funding set aside for the move to Localities, it is expected that the Localities programme would be funded from existing resources;

- (vi) the spending gap on the capital programme between January and year end was an annual occurrence, the authority continues to improve project management to reduce slippage;
- (vii) section 106 monies are now placed in a central pot. There is reference to section 106 monies within the overall capital position. It was suggested that to further scrutinise this area would require the presence of representatives from the Development Department;
- (viii) budget pressures had been identified in Adult Services and Services for Children and Young People, these pressures have been addressed in part by transferring resources from the back office to the front line;
- (ix) although statistical analysis can help forecasting of where budgetary pressure may be in the future it is not an exact science for example, further high profile cases such as the Baby P case could see further increases in the number of looked after children;
- (x) which ever party forms the next government there are likely to be deep cuts to public sector spending, the Council will have to make painful decisions with partners on priorities for the city, it is clear that some services the council provides now will need to be cut in the future.

The Cabinet member for Customer Service, Performance and Partnerships highlighted the progress against performance milestones. It was reported that there had been good progress against a number of milestones including the increase in benefit take up and the increase in the number of affordable homes. Although currently off target with recycling rates it was hoped that the introduction of garden waste collection would increase rates. In response to questions from members of the board it was further reported that –

- (xi) a culture of performance monitoring was being developed by the appraisal process to ensure improvements in service delivery;
- (xii) the number of temporary staff employed by the council would be made available to members of the board;
- (xiii) the appraisal process has identified areas of development for individual staff, it was unknown what the budget implications would be, the process of the appraisals would contribute to the Council becoming an excellent authority by 2012.

Resolved that-

- (1) The relevant Corporate Improvement Priorities score card be provided to each Overview and Scrutiny panel as a standing agenda item;
- (2) A representative from the Development Department and Director for Corporate Support are invited to a future meeting of the board to provide a break down of how section 106 monies have been collected, how they have been spent and how the new tariff system is likely to affect where and when they are spent.

(b) To receive updates from Panels on actions / progress on performance issues previously identified.

It was reported that a Task and Finish group on reducing teenage conception rates in the City had been completed; the recommendations would be presented to the Board at the first meeting of the next municipal year.

(c) To monitor performance against Local Area Agreement targets and to identify issues for further review / monitoring by Panels.

The Chair highlighted a number of Local Area Agreement stretch targets which were showing as red within the report and asked that Panel chairs consider these areas during their meetings with theme group chairs.

(d) To monitor performance against the Scrutiny Improvement Plan / development of Protocols.

The Chair reported that working protocols for the LSP theme groups and Overview and Scrutiny panels had been agreed.

Officers reported that the IDeA had been approached to support member development, with member personal development reviews in June and July.

105. COUNCILLOR CALL FOR ACTION TOOLKIT

The board considered a report on the draft Councillor Call for Action Toolkit.

Resolved to recommend to council that the Councillor Call for Action toolkit is approved and included in the council's constitution.

106. LOCAL STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP / OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANELS UPDATES

(a) To receive updates from each Panel on ongoing / completed work with the related LSP Theme Groups.

The Customer and Communities panel chair highlighted that in relation to National Indicator 192 (Percentage of household waste sent for reuse, recycling and composting), the LSP theme group would be conducting a task and finish group and would communicate their findings to the panel.

(b) To agree further meetings / discussions with the LSP Theme Groups.

It was reported that the breakfast meeting was a success and illustrated that the priorities of the scrutiny panels and Local Strategic Partnership theme groups were closely aligned. It was suggested that an event of this nature would continue to be useful if held annually.

107. QUARTERLY REPORTS

(a) To receive quarterly reports from each Panel (some to follow).

The draft quarterly scrutiny reports of the Overview & Scrutiny Management Board and O & S Panels were submitted for consideration. The following points were highlighted –

- (i) that the quarterly reports from each panel are not consistent in the information they provide;
- (ii) members' attendance should also reflect attendance at task and finish groups, including any joint reviews;
- (iii) the budget of each panel should be included within the report.

Officers reported that there would be no carry over of the scrutiny budget. However budget for the new municipal year would be ring fenced for specific scrutiny reviews.

(b) To agree the quarterly scrutiny report for forwarding to Cabinet.

The board approved its draft quarterly report.

108. RECOMMENDATIONS FROM PANELS

(a) To receive and consider recommendations from Panels for O & S Management Board, Cabinet or Council (some to follow)

Resolved –

- (i) To defer recommendations from the Health and Adult Social Care OSP until the next meeting of the municipal year when a permanent lead officer is appointed;
- (ii) to approve the recommendation of the Growth and Prosperity OSP, minute 55 (1) to transfer the scrutiny of the carbon reduction commitment to the Support Services OSP;
- (iii) to approve the recommendation of the Growth and Prosperity OSP minute 65 (1) supporting the governance proposals for the growth agenda;
- (iv) to approve Customers and Communities OSP recommendation minute 69 “following the completion of the work regarding recycling rates by the LSP Safe and Strong Theme Group, a revised report regarding partnership working is submitted to the Panel, with SMART targets and demonstrating a more proactive approach to the issue.”
- (v) that Customers and Communities OSP minute 71 (1) that the views of both Efford and Compton wards are sought regarding Councillor Ball’s Councillor Call for Action.
- (vi) to defer Customers and Communities OSP recommendation minute 71 (2) for further investigation into how the Councillor Call for Action will work within the new Locality working structures.
- (vii) Customers and Communities OSP recommendation draft minute 79, that the tree strategy is added to the Growth and Prosperity OSP work programme, is approved.
- (viii) that the Plympton Area Committee draft minute 58, to approve the recommendation to add the scrutiny of the Community Events and Road Closure Policy to the Growth and Prosperity OSP work programme under CIP 11.

(b) To monitor actions against recommendations made to Cabinet / Council.

There were no actions on this occasion.

109. **WORK PROGRAMMES**

(a) To receive and consider recommendations from Panels for O & S management board, Cabinet or Council.

Please refer to minute 102 (1) for items arising from budget scrutiny to be added to work programmes.

(b) To consider and approve additions to work programmes.

Resolved – that the Board note the Panels’ work programmes.

(c) To receive new items from the Forward Plan for 1 April 2010 to 31 July 2010 with a view to identifying items for scrutiny.

There were no items on the forward plan identified for scrutiny.

It was commented by Board members that many of those in the business community did not see the forward plan or understand the need for its existence. It was difficult to find on the website

being buried amongst the agendas and minutes of committees.

Resolved that -

- (1) the forward plan be circulated to all Panel and Theme Group Chairs
- (2) The format and publication of the forward plan is reviewed to be made it more accessible and clearer to understand

(d) To agree Project Initiation Documents / Task and Finish Groups.

Resolved that the Project Initiation Document for a task and finish group on the Carers Strategy is approved.

(e) To receive updates on Task and Finish Groups.

It was reported that a Task and Finish group on reducing teenage conception rates in the City had been completed; the recommendations would be presented to the Board at the first meeting of the next municipal year.

It was reported that a Task and Finish Group on the financial inclusion strategy action plan refresh had been completed. The Chair of the task and finish group commented that it was a focused piece of scrutiny which had been well supported by officers.

Resolved to recommend to Cabinet that the recommendations within the task and finish group report on the financial inclusion strategy are approved.

110. **COMMUNICATIONS**

(a) To receive reports of any press coverage.

It was reported the task and finish group on financial inclusion received excellent press coverage.

(b) To consider any communication plans.

There were no communication plans to consider.

111. **EXEMPT BUSINESS**

There were no items of exempt business.