

Growth and Prosperity Overview and Scrutiny Panel

Monday 12 July 2010

PRESENT:

Councillor Nicholson, in the Chair.

Councillor Mrs Nelder, Vice Chair.

Councillors Berrow, Browne, K Foster, Martin Leaves, Roberts, Wheeler and Wright.

Apologies for absence: Councillor Mrs Stephens

Also in attendance: Gill Peele - Business Manager for Development and Regeneration, Clive Perkin - Assistant Director for Transport, Councillor Fry - Cabinet Member for Planning, Strategic Housing and Economic Development, Councillor Wigens - Cabinet Member for Transport, Kaja Curry - Coastal Planning Coordinator, Jonathan Bell - Head of Development Planning, Clive Turner - Chief Executive of Plymouth Community Homes, Phil Mitchell - Private Sector Housing and Regeneration Manager, Peter Ebsworth – Chair of Plymouth Community Homes Board.

The meeting started at 2.00 pm and finished at 5.15 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.

14. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The following declarations of interest were made in accordance with the Code of Conduct in relation to items under discussion at this meeting –

Name	Minute No. and Subject	Reason	Interest
Councillor Nelder	Minute 8, Port of Plymouth	Member of the Harbour Commission.	Personal
Councillor Nicholson	Minute 8, Port of Plymouth	Employee of Babcock Marine.	Personal
Councillor Wheeler	Minute 8, Port of Plymouth	Member of the Harbour Commission.	Personal
	Minute 9, Private Sector Housing – Regulatory Services Peer Challenge	Member of the Board of Trustees on Plymouth Access to Housing Board.	Personal

15. **MINUTES**

Agreed that the minutes of the meeting held on 14 June 2010 were confirmed as a correct record.

Councillor Nelder requested clarification regarding minute 9 (xii) and questioned if the East End Community Scheme referred to monies from the CIF (Communities Infrastructure Funding) or RIF (Regional Infrastructure Funding). The Business Manager for Development and Regeneration advised that this question should be directed towards Clive Perkin, the Assistant Director for Transport, under agenda item number 7.

16. **CHAIR'S URGENT BUSINESS**

With the agreement of the Panel, the Chair altered the order of items on the agenda so that item 13, the 'Eastern Corridor Progress Report', be heard after item number 6 'Update on Government Policy Changes'. As a result of this change the Panel would move into part II for this item at the beginning of this meeting, other than at the end.

17. **TRACKING RESOLUTIONS AND FEEDBACK FROM THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT BOARD**

The Chair updated the Panel on their tracking resolutions and feedback from the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board.

With regard to tracking resolutions, the Panel was informed that –

- (i) the Hoe Foreshore Task and Finish Group was complete as the Panel made recommendations to the Management Board at their last meeting which would be submitted to the 28 July 2010 meeting – this item had therefore been greyed out as complete and would be removed from the tracking resolutions document;
- (ii) the item on Destination South West had been moved to the Panel's work programme – this item had therefore been greyed out as complete and would be removed from the tracking resolutions document;
- (iii) the item on Plymouth City Council Housing Services had not progressed specifically with regards to the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board minute 94a recommendation 'c' as the Panel considered it was more appropriate to scrutinise homelessness and housing needs issues as a single Panel. It was agreed that the Panel recommend to the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board that the Growth and Prosperity Panel add these items to their work programme and scrutinise the issues alone;

- (iv) the Events Strategy – Coherent Marketing Strategy (joint Task and Finish Group) had been added to the Panel's work programme and would be developed alongside the Visitors Strategy – this item had therefore been greyed out as complete as it was on the work programme and would be removed from the Panel's tracking resolutions document;
- (v) the Community Events and Road Closure Policy had been added to the Panel's work programme and would be discussed later in the agenda; this item had therefore been greyed out as complete as it was on the work programme and would be removed from the Panel's tracking resolutions document;
- (vi) the Tree Strategy, as discussed at the Panel's last meeting on 14 June 2010 would not be added to the Panel's work programme as it was noted that this issue would be highlighted to the Panel if it became a concern in the future; this item had therefore been greyed out and would be removed from the Panel's tracking document;
- (vii) the item regarding the Panel's terms of reference would be submitted to the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board on 28 July 2010;

With regard to feedback from the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board held on 30 June 2010 the Panel was informed that –

- (viii) the Local Investment Plan should be added to the Panel's work programme; this was agreed by the Panel;
- (ix) Section 106 Revenue should be added to the Panel's work programme; it was acknowledged by the Panel that this item was already on their work programme;
- (x) Councillors Nicholson, Nelder and Berrow were nominated to sit on the South Devon Waste Partnership Joint Scrutiny Review; this was noted by the Panel

Agreed that the Panel recommend to the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board that recommendation 'c' from its 3 March 2010 meeting, namely 'the Support Services OSP join with the Growth and Prosperity OSP to help with scrutiny of homelessness and housing needs issues', be amended to read the following:

'that the Growth and Prosperity Panel scrutinise homelessness and housing needs issues as a single panel and add this to their work programme to be scrutinised in the future'

Under this item Helen Rickman, the Democratic Support Officer, informed the Panel that Cabinet had discussed recommendations originating from the Growth and Prosperity Panel on the Review of the Skateboarding By-Law and the Review of Worklessness at their 8 June 2010 meeting. The Panel noted this update.

18. **UPDATE ON GOVERNMENT POLICY CHANGES**

The Panel noted the update provided on Government Policy changes.

19. **EXEMPT BUSINESS**

Resolved that, under Section 100(A)(2) and (4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of confidential/exempt information as defined in paragraph 3 of Part 1 Schedule 12A of the (Local Government Access to Information) Act 1985, as amended by the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

20. **EASTERN CORRIDOR PROGRESS REPORT (E3)**

Councillor Wogens, Cabinet Member for Transport and Clive Perkin, the Assistant Director for Transport, provided the Panel with an update on the Eastern Corridor.

Agreed that the update be noted.

(the order of the agenda was changed and this item was brought forward.)

21. **COMMUNITY EVENTS AND ROAD CLOSURE POLICY**

Councillor Wogens, the Cabinet Member for Transport and Clive Perkin, the Assistant Director for Transport, provided the Panel with an update on the Community Events and Road Closure Policy.

In response to questions raised it was reported that –

- (i) the policy could be made available in its final format within two months however this was not definite;
- (ii) it would be a good use of the Panel's time to scrutinise this issue;
- (iii) it was considered unfair that the highways and transport budget should absorb the costs involved for all community events and road closures;
- (iv) it was important for these events to continue however it was also necessary to find out the impact of this upon resources;

- (v) having to spend this money on events and road closures had an impact upon the budget available for other transport projects;

Agreed that the Growth and Prosperity Panel recommend to the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board that they undertake a Task and Finish Group to scrutinise the Community Events and Road Closure Policy.

22. **PORT OF PLYMOUTH STUDY**

Councillor Fry, the Cabinet Member for Planning, Strategic Housing and Economic Development, Kaja Curry, the Coastal Planning Coordinator, and Jonathan Bell, the Head of Development Planning, provided the Panel with a report on the Port of Plymouth study.

The Panel was informed that –

- (i) the purpose of the Port of Plymouth study was to provide an evidence base for a port master plan, the Local Development Framework Core Strategy Review, the Local Economic Strategy Review and the Local Transport Plan 3;
- (ii) any port that handled over 1 million tonnes of goods was requested to produce a ports master plan; Plymouth had four ports which exceeded the aforementioned tonnage;
- (iii) all four ports in Plymouth did not have any port land;
- (iv) the work of the study consisted of baseline analysis, existing activities on the port, the ports assets, capacity and operating environment, the constraints and opportunities linked to the ports and a stakeholder workshop;
- (v) of the 60,000 vessel movements in 2009 in Plymouth ports, 75% were defence related;
- (vi) the key strengths identified in the study highlighted that Plymouth's ports were well established and diverse, had relatively deep water and a natural harbour, were a major marine and waterside leisure location, had minimal coastal erosion and employed 12% of Plymouth's population;
- (vii) the key weaknesses identified in the study highlighted that Plymouth's ports served largely local and regional commercial markets, had a limited mix of cargos, had a poor water depth at low tide and there was a lack of a single 'champion for port interests';

- (viii) key opportunities identified in the study included an expansion of oil related cargos, a growing demand for marine / leisure based activity, a growth in demand for cruises, a strong policy support for sustainable freight transport (including short-sea shipping) and the potential release of vital port infrastructure at Devonport;
- (ix) key threats identified in the study included the competition for limited cargos and cruises, the need for infrastructure investment at Devonport, the HSE blast zone, lack of public funding for ports development, the loss of key waterside sites to non-port uses, limited expansion capacity at Cattewater & Sutton Harbour and port expansion constrained by local and regional transport networks;
- (x) the following scenarios were discussed by stakeholders however scenarios 1, 3 and 5 were discounted:
- Scenario 1 - Safeguard existing position / business as usual
 - Scenario 2 - Targeted diversification
 - Scenario 3 - Managed contraction of commercial port facilities & enhancement of leisure role
 - Scenario 4 Major step change/re-use of Devonport land and waterfront
 - Scenario 5 - Radical restructure
- (xi) possible next steps stemming from the study would include the Masterplan preparation, Coastal Action Plan, raising the profile of the Port by identifying a 'Champion', Cruise Market Feasibility/Action Plan and Safeguarding Cattewater Branch Line Track Bed;

In response to questions raised it was reported that –

- (xii) fishing employment was currently low for the city however was still seen as important;
- (xiii) the MOD would only allow the ports to be dredged to increase port depth where absolutely necessary however it was highlighted that this would allow larger cruise ships into Plymouth;
- (xiv) the study would enable a greater focus on the marine industry and ports in regards to the economic agenda and would enable officers to highlight specific supply and demand issues.

Agreed that Councillor Fry, Kaja Curry and Jonathan Bell be thanked for their informative presentation and that an update report be submitted to the Panel during the course of the year when it was considered appropriate.

23. **PRIVATE SECTOR HOUSING - REGULATORY SERVICES PEER CHALLENGE**

Councillor Fry, the Cabinet Member for Planning, Strategic Housing and Economic Development, Stuart Palmer, the Assistant Director for Strategic Housing and Phil Mitchell, Private Sector Housing & Regeneration Manager, provided the Panel with a report on Private Sector Housing – Regulatory Services Peer Challenge.

In response to questions raised it was reported that –

- (i) a local staff survey identifying staff needs had not yet been completed however it was noted that acknowledgement and recognition of hard work were important factors;
- (ii) the Private Sector Housing team consisted of eight officers with a heavy workload; this was identified in the report;
- (iii) several local authorities had been contacted for benchmarking purposes;

The Chair thanked the officers and Councillor Fry for their attendance and confirmed a task and finish group was not required to monitor progress.

Agreed that the Panel receive a further report on progress against delivery of the Revised Improvement Plan and plans for 2011/12 by the end of March 2011.

24. **PLYMOUTH COMMUNITY HOMES - PRESENTATION**

Clive Turner, the Chief Executive of Plymouth Community Homes, provided Members with an update on Plymouth Community Homes following the agreement that feedback would be provided to the Council on a bi-annual basis.

The Panel was informed that Plymouth Community Homes –

- (i) was a new 'not for profit' landlord, was the largest housing association in the South West, had £250m of additional capital investment and was working on a major re-generation scheme in North Prospect;
- (ii) had met 100 day pledge which consisted of 125 promises in the business plan, provided a 5 year Business Plan, started North Prospect Plans, had provided new doors to properties, had installed new heating systems and achieved 27 of 125 promises;

- (iii) had spent £4.7m on decent homes, issued new handbooks to all tenants, started improving neighbourhoods by estate inspections, created 120+ new jobs, created opportunities for apprenticeships, spent £500k on environmental improvement and started moving people out of North Prospect;
- (iv) had identified that only 41.5% of homes were decent, 66.01% of tenants were on Housing Benefit, 10% of tenants were unemployed, 73.25% tenants were satisfied with services and that £26m of savings needed to be made in the next 5 years;
- (v) needed to improve the caretaking service, produce detailed service standards and improve tenants access to our services;
- (vi) aimed to improve decency in homes, introduce a handy persons scheme and begin demolition in North Prospect;
- (vii) aimed to produce estate action plans, improve communal areas and get more tenants gardening;
- (viii) aimed to improve opportunities for resident involvement, improve communications and implement a scrutiny process;
- (ix) aimed to invest £1m in ICT equipment, deliver efficiency targets and continue to resource the North Prospect project.

The Chair thanked Clive Turner, the Chief Executive of Plymouth Community Homes, for his presentation.

(this item was heard in the Council Chamber and was opened up to all Councillors.)

25. **WORK PROGRAMME**

The Panel noted their work programme and agreed to include the Local Investment Plan.