

Growth and Prosperity Overview and Scrutiny Panel

Monday 7 March 2011

PRESENT:

Councillor Mrs Nelder, in the Chair.
Councillor K Foster, Vice Chair.
Councillors Berrow, Martin Leaves, Mrs Nicholson (substitute), Roberts,
Mrs Stephens, Wheeler and Wright.

Apologies for absence: Councillor Nicholson

Also in attendance: Gill Peele - Business Manager for Development and Regeneration, Paul Chapman - Head of Value for Money and Efficiencies, Mark Looker - Worklessness Co-ordinator, Chris Grace - Head of Economic Development, Clive Perkin - Acting Director for Development and Regeneration, Kaja Curry - Coastal Planning Co-ordinator and Stuart Palmer - Assistant Director for Strategic Housing.

The meeting started at 2.00 pm and finished at 5.00 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.

76. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The following declarations of interest were made by Councillors 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	85. Port of Plymouth Study Update	Member of Harbour Commission	Personal
Councillor Wheeler	85. Port of Plymouth Study Update	Member of Harbour Commission	Personal

77. MINUTES

Agreed that the minutes of the meeting held on 10 January 2011 are confirmed as a correct record.

78. **CHAIR'S URGENT BUSINESS**

The panel was informed that there were no items of Chair's urgent business however under this item the Chair raised her concern with the number of verbal reports that were referred to in the agenda.

Gill Peele, Business Manager for Development and Regeneration, informed the panel that as this was the panel's final meeting for the municipal year it was considered that the completion of the work programme was important, hence the number of items on the agenda, however the scale of work required by officers meant that the majority of reports could not be provided in accordance with the agenda publication deadline. A new working procedure was in place for agenda publication which directed that 'to follow' agendas could no longer be published; this was to ensure that officers met approved legal deadlines and would give panel members the opportunity to receive reports five working days in advance of the meeting.

The panel raised concerns over the inability of officers to send 'to follow' agendas and highlighted that it was better for members to receive written 'to follow' reports in advance of the meeting other than a verbal update on the day of the meeting; this would give members the opportunity to scrutinize reports and formulate appropriate questions.

Agreed that clarification be provided to the panel on the procedure for 'to follow' reports and agendas.

79. **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 regards to tracking resolutions, the panel was informed that –

- (a) the Tourism/Visitor Strategy would be added to the work programme next year;
- (b) the request for information on minute 55 – 8 November 2010 would be followed up and sent to Members again.

The panel was informed that there was no update from the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board.

80. **PLYMOUTH'S LOCAL CARBON FRAMEWORK - THE FIRST STEPS TOWARDS A LOW CARBON ECONOMY**

Paul Chapman, Head of Value for Money and Efficiencies, provided the panel with an update on Plymouth's Local Carbon Framework – The First Steps Towards a Low Carbon Economy.

The panel was informed that –

- (a) the Local Carbon Framework programme started in February 2010 and pilot status was awarded by the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG);
- (b) there were nine different Local Carbon Framework pilots allocated across the UK; Plymouth's pilot was concentrating on public sector development of local businesses and commercial awareness;
- (c) citywide partners were working together to support the Local Carbon Framework;
- (d) pilots were managed directly by the Department of Energy and Climate Change which had several aims and expectations for this pilot including producing national policies for local use.

In response to questions raised it was reported that –

- (e) Plymouth's Local Carbon Framework was concentrating on businesses however other pilots across the country would look at different aspects and age groups;
- (f) information was being collated to ensure that targets were met;
- (g) officers were promoting local businesses to purchase locally to encourage sustainability;
- (h) a Low Carbon Manager had been appointed to manage potential projects to invest in areas for the council to save in its energy expenditure;
- (i) the Low Carbon Manager had had meetings with representatives of the Dockyard to discuss the reduction of energy consumption;
- (j) formal adoption of the Local Carbon Framework would take place in summer 2011 by City Council;
- (k) the council was keen to promote car sharing in Plymouth, especially targeting individuals travelling to work;
- (l) a full programme of climate change week events would be given to Councillors.

The Chair thanked Paul Chapman for his update and encouraged him to come back to the panel in the future to provide an update.

81. **TACKLING THE WORKLESSNESS AGENDA**

Mark Looker, Worklessness Co-ordinator, provided the panel with an update on tackling the worklessness agenda.

The panel was informed that –

- (a) a number of employment related organisations attended the Growth and Prosperity panel 15 months ago to inform the panel on worklessness in Plymouth; recommendations were made to Cabinet that the council should take a greater leading role in the worklessness agenda;
- (b) worklessness occurs when unemployment and economic inactivity existed together in an area;
- (c) the issue of worklessness in Plymouth would be managed in two distinct phases; the first phase would involve analysing the internal policies and procedures for dealing with worklessness; the second phase would be an external outlook to analyse agencies in the field with the aim to gather information and develop a unified approach to worklessness in Plymouth;
- (d) an internal worklessness group was being set up to look at the issue of worklessness – the first meeting would take place in early April 2011;
- (e) there was a known link between deprivation and worklessness;
- (f) focus would be directed to six wards in Plymouth which were considered to be deprived, namely Devonport, Budshead, Ham, St Peter and the Waterfront, Sutton and Mount Gould and Honicknowle;
- (g) it was recognised that there was a problem with worklessness of individuals between the ages 18 – 24;
- (h) there was a known link between experiencing worklessness at a young age and again in later life;
- (i) there was an aim to develop a worklessness document by mid July 2011.

In response to questions raised it was reported that –

- (j) an analysis of worklessness was focused towards wards other than neighbourhoods because of the officers lack of statistical knowledge of the city and the lack of time to look in depth at different areas of the city;
- (k) it was acknowledged that accessibility in and around Plymouth was an important factor in the worklessness agenda.

The panel raised concerns that the analysis of worklessness in Plymouth should be focused towards neighbourhoods and not wards as this would coincide with the council's current way of working.

The Chair thanked Mark Looker for his update and encouraged him to take on board the panel's comments.

82. **PLYMOUTH GROWTH BOARD REVIEW OF SKILLS THEME**

Chris Grace, Head of Economic Development, provided the panel with an update on the Plymouth Growth Board and Review of Skills theme.

The panel was informed that –

- (a) the Plymouth Growth Board presented the business review in January 2011;
- (b) the Plymouth Employment and Skills Board led on the review because of their expertise in this matter;
- (c) there was currently a lower representation of people aged between 24 - 45 in Plymouth's work force;
- (d) it was important for Plymouth to attract more inward investment and knowledge based businesses;
- (e) Plymouth attracted a lot of people aged between 40 – 50 years to the city; it was expected that a lot of people moved back to Plymouth to retire having moved away several years ago;
- (f) local businesses considered that employability skills needed to be improved in Plymouth;
- (g) schools were encouraging students to learn world of work skills which would help their generic employability skills;

The Chair thanked Chris Grace for his update.

83. **GROWTH BOARD/GOVERNANCE AND GROWTH FUND**

Clive Perkin, Acting Director for Development and Regeneration, provided the panel with an update on the Growth Board and Governance.

The panel was informed that the principles of the growth fund were included in the budget papers submitted to the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board in January 2011. He also advised the panel that this panel was headed by Doug Fletcher, was principally private sector led and was working well.

The Chair thanked Clive Perkin for his update.

84. **UPDATE ON GOVERNMENT POLICY CHANGES AND LOCALISM BILL**

Clive Perkin, Acting Director for Development and Regeneration, provided the panel with an update on Government policy changes and the Localism Bill.

The panel was informed that officers were still waiting for clarification regarding the new major scheme bid process; it was expected that a bid would be completed by April 2011 for strategic transport infrastructure. With regards to the Localism Bill it was expected that this would be adopted in November 2011; officers were to be mindful of the affect this would have on planning and the Local Development Framework.

Under this item the Acting Director for Development and Regeneration updated the panel on the Highways Maintenance Review which was undertaken by panel members in February 2011; this report was submitted to Cabinet and some recommendations from the report had already been implemented.

Agreed that a copy of the Highways Maintenance Task and Finish Group report would be emailed to panel members for their information.

85. **PORT OF PLYMOUTH STUDY UPDATE**

Kaja Curry, Coastal Planning Co-ordinator, provided the panel with an update on the Port of Plymouth study.

The panel was informed that –

- (a) at the 12 July 2010 Growth and Prosperity committee meeting the panel received a presentation on the Port of Plymouth Evidence Base which was undertaken by Atkins Ltd;
- (b) the evidence base aimed to set out the baseline position by auditing the current activities in the port, the infrastructure and planning considerations;
- (c) a strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT) examination was carried out which resulted in a preferred way forward and seven recommendations;
- (d) the seven recommendations included:
 - (1) Masterplan/Coastal Action Plan/Supplementary Planning Document – Officers were still waiting for clarification on this and were continuing to asses the best way forward for Plymouth's ports;

- (2) Safeguarding Marine employment sites – a land review was currently being undertaken by Arup and a final report was expected in the near future;
- (3) Coherently raising the profile of the port by appointing a ‘Champion’ – work was still ongoing to identify a Champion;
- (4) Cruise market feasibility action plan – the City Development Company were leading on this piece of work however with their recent closure work had focused towards the Visitor Plan instead;
- (5) Skills and training investment and sector support – the Local Economic Strategy action plan included the Marine and renewables sector and advanced manufacturing as two of the six priority sectors for the city; now that these were identified there aim was to achieve growth in the city;
- (6) Planning for climate change – a Shoreline Management Plan had been undertaken and adopted; this plan confirmed that the coastline needed defending against the change in sea levels;
- (7) Safeguarding Cattewater branch line track bed and protecting transport links – it was considered that policies in the Local Development Framework would safeguard the Cattewater branch;

In response to questions raised it was reported that –

- (e) a ‘Champion’ for this project had not yet been appointed however this was no longer judged as a priority;
- (f) the waterfront coordinator focused raising tourism and bringing in local business for the business improvement district.

The Chair thanked Kaja Curry for her attendance at the meeting and encouraged her to come back to the panel with an update in the future once the work programme had been set.

(Councillors Nelder and Wheeler declared a personal interest in this item)

86. **STRATEGIC HOUSING POLICY DEVELOPMENT**

Stuart Palmer, Assistant Director for Strategic Housing, provided the panel with an update on Strategic Housing Policy Development.

The panel was informed that –

- (a) the current strategic housing policy was due to run out;

- (b) there was a statutory responsibility to assess housing needs and conditions;
- (c) the Homeless Act 2002 required that a strategy be developed to tackle homelessness and rough sleeping;
- (d) there was a duty to develop a strategy to tackle Anti Social behaviour (Anti Social Behaviour Act 2003);
- (e) the Ker Street development in Devonport was very successful and was shortlisted for a building award;
- (f) the Alma Road development was delivered through S106 funds for affordable family housing;
- (g) over the past three years 241 empty dwellings had been brought back into use and long term empty dwellings reduced from 1,046 to 640;
- (h) the Efford building communities initiative won an award for community engagement;
- (i) Devon Home Choice based letting scheme allowed people to bid online for housing;
- (j) a Family Intervention Pilot had helped 94 families in the last three and a half years; 12 months intensive work with each family would cover the following issues –
 - Offending behaviour / Anti Social Behaviour
 - Health (physical, mental, & sexual) , Substance use
 - Parenting/child safety
 - Debt and Finance
 - Domestic abuse
 - Employment and adult education
 - Education and attendance
 - Personal responsibility/Community Engagement
- (k) the Homelessness Strategy effectively targeted the causes of homelessness:
 - 491 households were prevented from becoming homeless last year however the numbers of rough sleeping and homelessness have recently started to increase.
 - numbers of families in expensive temporary accommodation was starting to rise;

The Chair thanked Stuart Palmer for his presentation and invited him to attend the panel in the near future.

87. **WORK PROGRAMME**

The Chair informed the panel that the work programme had been completed for 2010/2011 and thanked the members for their support in business meetings and task and finish groups.

88. **EXEMPT BUSINESS**

There were no items of exempt business.