

Customers and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Panel

Thursday 20 January 2011

PRESENT:

Councillor Ball, in the Chair.

Councillor Coker, Vice Chair.

Councillors Mrs Beer, Mrs Bragg, Fox (substitute for Councillor Delbridge), Martin Leaves, Mrs Nicholson; Vincent and Wildy (substitute for Councillor Smith).

Co-opted Representatives: Dr A Jellings and Mr C Singh.

Apologies for absence: Councillors Delbridge and Smith.

Also in attendance: Peter Aley (Assistant Director for Safer Communities), Dave Boobyer (Safety Officer Plymouth Argyle Football Club), Councillor Bowyer (Cabinet Member for Finance, Property, People and Governance), Councillor Brookshaw (Cabinet Member for Community Services (Safer and Stronger Communities and Leisure, Culture and Sport)), Carole Burgoyne (Director for Community Services), Peter Ford (Head of Development Management), Tony Hopwood (Programme Director), Nick Jones (Waste Collection and Street Scene Manager), Councillor Martin Leaves (Cabinet Member for Community Services (Street Scene, Waste and Sustainability)), Superintendent Dave Sumner and Dan Thomas (General Manager Plymouth Argyle Football Club).

The meeting started at 4.00 pm and finished at 6.25 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.

52. 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	Subject	Reason	Interest
Councillor Mrs Beer	minute 59. review of policing and safety following Plymouth Argyle match against Exeter city	employed by Devon and Cornwall Police	personal and prejudicial

	minute 61. police authority meeting		
Councillor Coker	minute 59. review of policing and safety following Plymouth Argyle match against Exeter city	member of Mayflower Trust	personal
Councillor Mrs Nicholson	minute 59. review of policing and safety following Plymouth Argyle match against Exeter city	member of Mayflower Trust	personal
Councillor Vincent	minute 58. allotment service overview	allotment tenant	personal and prejudicial
Councillor Wildy	minute 58. allotment service overview	ward member Ocean Street allotments	personal
Dr A Jellings	minute 57. Plymouth Life Centre and leisure related projects programme update	employed by Plymouth University	personal

53. **MINUTES**

Agreed the minutes of the meetings held on 18 October 2011 and 15 November 2011.

54. **CHAIR'S URGENT BUSINESS**

There were no items of Chair's urgent business.

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

The Chair updated the panel on its tracking resolutions and provided feedback from the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board.

With regard to feedback from the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board meetings held on 24 November 2010 and 5, 12 and 17 January 2011, the panel was informed that –

- (a) the Board made the following recommendations to Cabinet relating to the Medium Term Financial Strategy 2010-14 –
 - a review of the reserve provision of the insurance general fund for future years be undertaken;
 - the update strategy be adopted by the City Council;
- (b) a full report on Transformational Change Programme would be provided to the Board early in 2011;
- (c) discussions would be held between the Scrutiny Chairs and LSP Theme Group Chairs, in order to foster better links;
- (d) the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board would form the membership of a task and finish group to undertake a review of how the scrutiny function could better engage with the media;
- (e) a PID was being drafted for the Management Board to undertake a task and finish group into the final sign off of the Devonport Regeneration Company Partnership Succession Strategy;
- (f) recommendations from the scrutiny of the draft Corporate Plan 2011-2014 and the Revenue and Capital Budgets 2011/12 would be made to Cabinet for consideration.

56. **QUARTERLY SCRUTINY REPORT**

The panel considered its draft quarterly report.

Agreed that the report is submitted to the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board.

57. **PLYMOUTH LIFE CENTRE AND LEISURE RELATED PROJECTS PROGRAMME UPDATE**

The Director for Community Services submitted an update report on the Plymouth Life Centre and leisure related projects programme. The update highlighted the following main areas –

- (a) programme governance;
- (b) programme work stream overview –
 - Plymouth Life Centre – progress;
 - leisure management contract including the procurement timetable;
 - ice and associated facilities;

- (c) Project Manager's report.

Councillor Bowyer, Cabinet Member for Finance, Property, People and Governance and Councillor Brookshaw, Cabinet Member for Community Services (Safer and Stronger Communities and Leisure, Culture and Sport) advised the panel that –

- (d) as a result of the recent adverse weather conditions, the construction timetable for the project would be delayed by five weeks, although the project was still on target to be completed by autumn 2011 and there were no cost implications;
- (e) the procurement process for the leisure management contract was progressing; Cabinet approval would be sought at the end of March 2011; (the pane would have an opportunity to scrutinise the award of the contract prior to its submission to Cabinet);
- (f) approval had been given by the Cabinet to progress with the soft market testing of the Pavilions site, to ascertain if there was any interest from the private sector in the site and also the delivery of the ice and arena facilities.

The following responses were provided to questions raised by the panel –

- (g) the ice facility would close five weeks later than anticipated to reflect the current delay in the construction process;
- (h) the contractor was currently undertaking an assessment of what the effect of the adverse weather conditions had on the project and the implications to the programme;

the contractor had extensive experience of delivering a project of this size and was doing everything it could to keep the project on target for completion in autumn 2011;
- (i) the Assistant Chief Executive was currently working on proposals to bring forward a solution for Brickfields;
- (j) clear communication plans were in place for all staff in those facilities that would be affected by the award of the leisure management contract;
- (k) it had been previously estimated that the facility would attract one million attendances a year; in order to achieve this the facility would be actively marketed.

(Councillor Coker, Councillor Mrs Nicholson and Dr A Jellings declared a personal interest in this matter).

(Dr A Jellings was not present for the whole of this item).

58. **ALLOTMENTS SERVICE OVERVIEW**

The Director for Community Services submitted a report on the overview of the allotments service. The report highlighted the following –

- (a) at present there were 1400 allotment tenants , on a total of 32 sites city wide;
- (b) the budget in 2009/10 was £87,799 which combined both private and commercial rents; this budget had been used to fund the daily maintenance of each site together with officers' salaries;
- (c) the cost of a full plot was £31 per annum and a half plot £15.50 per annum; all tenants were required to pay an initial £5 for the key to the allotment site; water charges were shared equally by all the tenants on each site;
- (d) the total income received for 2009/2010 which included private rental income, commercial rent and other income totaled £31,563;
- (e) in 2010 there were 1201 people on the waiting list for allotments;
- (f) Knowle Avenue was the newest site in the city which offered 40 full sized plots and one school plot;
- (g) accessibility to the sites had been increased which had included a series of adaptation works (raised beds, car parking closer to the sites, gravel and tarmac footpaths and handrails);
- (h) following a successful pilot scheme, half size plots had been introduced in 2003, as people had been finding it difficult to maintain full size plots;
- (i) future projects included the Central Park Action Plan which proposed amendments to some of the allotment sites within Central Park and the production of an allotment strategy;
- (j) both section 106 and capital receipts from the sale of land used for allotments could be used to develop new sites, or improve capacity and function of existing ones;
- (k) the service regularly benchmarked against other local authorities to ensure the delivery of an excellent service and to adopt best practices.

The following responses were provided to questions raised by panel members

–

- (l) the provision of the allotment service was a statutory one;
- (m) in order to increase the fees in line with other local authorities, a benchmarking exercise was being undertaken; although it was anticipated that the increase in the fees would not be substantial as this could lead to the service being unaffordable to residents;
- (n) Cardiff was just one of the local authorities that the city benchmarked itself against;
- (o) the council was currently looking at increasing the capacity of the service via extending current sites and renting private land;
- (p) there were specific issues with the number of people on the waiting list; some people wanted particular sites and were unhappy to accept other sites that were offered;
- (q) work was currently being carried out with the planning department to build into the planning process the use of section 106 monies to fund the provision of allotments;
- (r) the area near the castle at Plympton St Maurice was unsuitable as an allotment site, due to the large trees shading the area and inhibiting the growth of plants;
- (s) additional facilities, such as the provision of toilets could be achieved through increased income, although it was anticipated that there would not be a substantial increase in the fees, as this could result in people not being able to afford the service.

The panel agreed to recommend to the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board that the following matters are referred Cabinet –

- (1) that the panel support all efforts being made to find additional land for allotment plots and recommend all channels are explored including direct discussions with public and private land owners eg the National Trust;
- (2) that officers establish the funding available in the medium term to contribute towards the allotment service from capital receipts and Section 106 monies;
- (3) that rents are reviewed on an annual basis but any rent increase should not be such to disadvantage enterprise and other groups using the allotments (for example schools,

community groups, groups with special needs, those on low incomes and also making good use of the neighbourhood profiles);

- (4) that a review of the plot sizes and associated costs, is undertaken.

(Councillor Wildy declared a personal interest in this matter).

(Councillor Vincent declared a persona and prejudicial interest in this matter and left the room, whilst increases in fees were discussed).

59. **REVIEW OF POLICING AND SAFETY FOLLOWING PLYMOUTH ARGYLE FOOTBALL MATCH AGAINST EXETER CITY**

Peter Ford (Head of Development Management), Superintendent Dave Sumner, Dan Thomas (General Manager Plymouth Argyle) and David Boobyer (Safety Officer Plymouth Argyle) informed the panel that –

- (a) the level of violence at the Johnstone's Paint Trophy match, at Home Park between Plymouth Argyle and Exeter City on 9 November 2010, had not been seen in a considerable number of years;
- (b) sixty-six police officers together with dog handlers had been deployed at the match;
- (c) the migration of home supporters to the away supporters' end had been difficult to manage by police officers and stewards; this had been due to people standing in the footways and stairways; both police officers and stewards had been forced to stand on pitch side during the match to prevent any confrontation between the rival supporters;
- (d) following the game it had taken 40 minutes to clear the stadium and move the Exeter supporters to the coaches;
- (e) the traffic management on match days of the car park, was the responsibility of Plymouth Argyle Football Club, although all parties were working together to improve this.

The following responses were provided to questions raised by the panel –

- (f) there had been a change in the law which meant that the police did not have the responsibility for traffic management at pre planned events, unless there was an emergency (police officers were permitted to direct traffic if there was a road traffic accident or an emergency); the current traffic management arrangements had been agreed between the council, police and Plymouth Argyle;

- (g) the police had not given the match a low priority, as the potential for trouble had been recognised albeit at a lower level than was witnessed; 66 police officers had been deployed at the match compared to much lower numbers at normal matches;
- (h) the Safety Advisory Group had been established for all league football clubs following the Hillsborough tragedy; the group –
 - allowed all relevant parties to discuss and resolve any safety issues;
 - comprised representatives from the council, police, fire, ambulance and Plymouth Argyle Football Club;
 - oversaw the Safety Certificate which was issued by the council's Licensing Committee;
- (i) the car park was licensed to Plymouth Argyle on match days and associated traffic management arrangements were the subject of discussions between Plymouth Argyle and the Council with the view to identifying improvements;
- (j) one flare had been thrown onto the side of the pitch (if the flare had landed on the pitch, the game would have been stopped); all stewards had been trained to NVQ level 2 which included fire training (it was a requirement of the Safety Certificate that all stewards received fire training); as a result of this incident buckets of sand were available at pitch side should this event occur in the future; one person was due in court in February 2011 in relation to this incident;
- (k) the issuing of the Safety Certificate was the responsibility of the council, however, if the requirement of the certificate were not met by the Club, it would be in contravention of legislation; the day to day running of the Club and the ground was the responsibility of Plymouth Argyle;
- (l) the car park was licensed to Plymouth Argyle; proposals for an effective traffic management plan had yet to be approved by the directors of Plymouth Argyle and the Cabinet Member;
- (m) at the end of the match there had been a large number of people intent on violence together with a group of peaceful onlookers which had created a problem; an effective traffic management plan would not have helped this situation;

- (n) due to the migration of a large number of home supporters to the away supporters' end, it had not been possible for a number of season ticket holders to sit in their designated seats; police officers had taken this decision as they had not wanted to make the situation worse by enforcing this;
- (o) a large number of supporters liked to stand during matches; this had previously been enforced, with those supporters refusing to sit down being ejected from the stadium which had caused problems; a risk assessment of supporters standing during matches had been undertaken; in order to avoid any confrontation, as long as supporters were not disorderly they were allowed to stand;
- (p) the police would be happy to discuss CCTV issues outside of this forum;
- (q) the deployment of mounted police at Plymouth Argyle matches was rare; this service was extremely expensive;
- (r) additional police resources had been drawn in with a total of 78 police officers being deployed.

The panel agreed to recommend to the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board that the following matters are referred to Cabinet –

- (1) that Ward Councillors should be consulted by the Safety Advisory Group;
- (2) that a review of the traffic management at the park and ride car park is undertaken on Plymouth Argyle match days and consideration is given to a proposal to open the bottom end of the car park on match days to relieve congestion.

(Councillor Mrs Beer declared a personal and prejudicial interest and left the room).

60. **SAFE AND STRONG THEME GROUP UPDATE**

The panel noted the update from the Safe and Strong Theme Group.

61. **POLICE AUTHORITY MEETINGS**

The panel noted the December 2010 Chief Constable's report to the Police Authority.

(Councillor Mrs Beer declared a personal interest in this matter).

62. **WORK PROGRAMME**

The panel considered its work programme for 2010/11.

Agreed that an update report on the replacement of Plympton Library is submitted to the panel's March meeting.

The panel agreed to recommend to the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board that the City's recycling performance is included on its work programme.

63. **EXEMPT BUSINESS**

There were no items of exempt business.