

Customers and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Panel

Monday 23 January 2012

PRESENT:

Councillor Thompson, in the Chair.
Councillor Peter Smith, Vice Chair.
Councillors Browne, Churchill, Davey, Mrs Nicholson (Sub for Councillor Martin Leaves), Penberthy, John Smith and Vincent.

Co-opted Representative: Dr A Jellings.

Apologies for absence: Councillors Mrs Beer, Delbridge, Martin Leaves and Reynolds.

Also in attendance: Pete Aley (Assistant Director of Safer Communities), Carole Burgoyne (Director for People), Jayne Donovan (Assistant Director of Environmental Services), Tony Hopwood (Programme Director), Councillor Jordan (Cabinet Member for Community Services (Safer and Stronger Communities and Leisure, Culture and Sport)) and Helen Wright (Democratic Support Officer).

The meeting started at 4.00 pm and finished at 5.20 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.

62. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest made by councillors in accordance with the code of conduct.

63. **MINUTES**

Agreed that the minutes of the meeting held on 21 November 2011 are confirmed as a correct record subject to the following amendments –

Agreed that –

- (1) the minutes of the meeting held on 21 November 2011 are confirmed as a correct record, subject to the following amendments –
 - Councillor John Smith is included as present at the meeting;
 - with reference to minute 43(s) the following is added ‘both a mobile phone number and a land line were required’;

- (2) the minutes of the task and finish group held on 28 November 2011 are noted.

Further to the minutes of the task and finish group the issue of the bad state of disrepair of the lane was raised (further deterioration of the lane would result in the mechanic sweeper being unable to access the lane to clean it).

The Chair advised that –

- (a) this matter would need to be raised with the Cabinet Member;
- (b) the issue of anti social behaviour in Carlton Close and Channel Park Avenue had started in 2008 but had been largely resolved through multi agency working.

The Chair thanked councillors for participating in the task and finish group.

64. **CHAIR'S URGENT BUSINESS**

There were no items of Chair's urgent business.

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

The panel considered that a number of responses provided relating to the Plymouth Life Centre and leisure related projects programme had been inadequately answered.

The panel were advised that these issues should be raised under the appropriate agenda item.

The panel agreed to include on its tracking resolutions that a response was required relating to the relationship between the Business Improvement District for the Waterfront and Everyone Active.

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

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

- (a) Plymouth Life Centre –
 - Balfour Beatty had confirmed the final completion date of the new Centre which would be officially handed over to the Council on 27 February 2012; the Council and Everyone Active were currently putting plans in place to open the Centre over the weekend of Friday 23 to Sunday 25 March 2012;

- (b) Leisure Management Contract –
- Plympton pool and Brickfields continued to operate well with increasing usage;
 - Everyone Active had been asked to consider reintroducing the all weather pitch at Manadon into their contract; a full set of contractual documents had been produced and were being considered by Everyone Active (a response was awaited);
- (d) Skate Park –
- the skate park was now fully open and operational;
 - there had been issues regarding vandalism to the electricity control box that controlled the lighting on the site; these issues were being resolved; the project manager had attended a meeting with youth services and representatives from the skate board and BMX community to discuss the situation, potential solutions and feedback about the park.

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

- (a) the all weather pitch at Manadon had been included in the leisure management contract however, St Boniface school had expressed an interest in taking ownership of this site; this opportunity had been followed up but had subsequently fallen through; the facility would now be re-introduced into the leisure management contract;
- (b) written responses would be provided to the panel relating to the following issues -
- the cost of becoming a founder member of the Plymouth Life Centre (the cost was an initial fee of £390 with three months free) together with the benefits of this membership;
 - the issue of having to provide two contact numbers (a land line and a mobile phone number) in order to sign up for the Everyone Active's card;
- (c) there was a standard procedure in place for the handover of the building to the council;
- (d) the panel would receive an urgent response relating to the relationship between the Business Improvement District for the Waterfront and Everyone Active;

- (e) the Mayflower Centre and the Central Park Swimming Pool would be demolished within six months, following the opening of the Plymouth Life Centre (this formed part of the construction contract);
- (f) the prices for the Plymouth Life Centre were broadly comparable with the existing prices in the Mayflower Centre (the day rate swimming sessions at Plympton pool was less than when Plymouth City Council operated the pool); the facilities and membership packages provided by the Life Centre were completely different to those previously offered in the existing facilities;
- (g) as part of the construction contract the spoil from the site would be removed; once the Mayflower Centre/Central Park Swimming Pool had been demolished the spoil would be used to infill and remodel the landscape which would be put back to grass;
- (h) there was a communication strategy in place (Everyone Active was responsible for the marketing plan and Balfour Beatty for the communication plan for the building); D Clark Associates had been appointed to manage public relation communications;
- (i) the bus timetable for services that travelled to the Centre for both evenings and Saturdays and Sundays;
- (j) responses would be provided to the panel on the following issues -
 - what incentives would be put in place to encourage members of the public to use public transport, as the Green Travel Scheme was only available to Plymouth City Council staff;
 - the feasibility of joining up some of the cycle routes across the city to make it easier for people to access the Centre and to reduce car usage and raise fitness levels.
 - the costs associated with extending the existing operating times of the park and ride bus service after 6.30pm to enable people to access the facility in the evenings;
- (k) the council had entered into competitive dialogue for the procurement process to secure a partner to deliver ice and arena provision for the city; initial bids had been returned in January (the submission deadline for contracts to be returned was March 2012).

67. **JOINT FINANCE AND PERFORMANCE MONITORING REPORT
(FORMERLY COMMUNITY SERVICES)**

The Director for People and the Assistant Director for Environmental Services advised that –

- (a) there were a number of red risk areas within Environmental Services (management of toilets, play grounds, bowling greens and city water features) which would be transferring to the Directorate for Place , as from 1 March 2012);
- (b) work was being undertaken to look at options to deliver savings without having a detrimental impact on front line services and also impacting on the level of service provision;
- (c) one option currently being investigated was community asset transfer –
 - 11 play grounds across the city had been identified as being of limited play value as better play provision was available in the vicinity; prior to investigating whether closure of these playgrounds was the best option it was agreed to explore any interest in taking over these areas from both private and voluntary sectors;
 - responses from the voluntary sector were due back in February 2012;
- (d) work was also being undertaken to explore the options with the council's stakeholders to take over the management of the public toilets; discussions had been held but due to the level of investment that would be required these discussions had stalled;
- (e) the Armada Way toilets were being fully upgraded and refurbished and a charge of 20 pence would be made to use the facility; the feasibility of introducing this model across all toilets would be reviewed after Armada Way had been up and running for six months;
- (f) work was being carried out to ascertain whether the bowling clubs within the city wished to manage the bowling greens (there were 16 bowling clubs in Plymouth with eight bowling greens and a total membership of 375 people);
- (g) the model of bowling greens being privately owned had been successful in other areas of the country; however there was limited interest in Plymouth; should the clubs decide to take on these costs in the future, they would require help and support to raised the funds necessary to maintain the greens, etc.

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

- (h) work was being undertaken to ascertain if there was any interest from the voluntary sector in taking over responsibility for the play grounds that had been identified as surplus; further detailed work would be required prior to any asset being transferred;

- (i) a response would be provided to the panel regarding the information that had been submitted to the voluntary sector regarding the community asset transfer for play grounds;
- (j) it was difficult to achieve savings without impacting on front line services and as a result of this all options were being thoroughly investigated.

68. **WORK PROGRAMME**

The panel noted its work programme.

69. **EXEMPT BUSINESS**

There were no items of exempt business.