

Overview and Scrutiny Management Board

Wednesday 29 June 2011

PRESENT:

Councillor James, in the Chair.

Councillor Nicholson, Vice-Chair.

Councillors Mrs Aspinall, Browne, Coker (substitute for Councillor Mrs. Bowyer), Dreaan, Lock, Lowry, McDonald, Stark, Thompson and Wildy.

Co-opted Representatives: Mr. D. Fletcher and Mr. J. Paget.

Apology for absence: Councillor Mrs. Bowyer.

Also in attendance: Councillor Mrs. Pengelly, Leader, Councillor Ricketts, Cabinet Member for Transformation, Performance and Governance, Bronwen Lacey, Director of Services for Children and Young People, Ian Gallin, Assistant Chief Executive, David Northey, Head of Finance, Sandra Wilson, Corporate Finance and Accountancy Manager, Patrick Hartop, Performance Officer, Giles Perritt, Lead Officer, and Katey Johns, Democratic Support Officer.

The meeting started at 2 pm and finished at 5 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.

1. WELCOME

The Chair welcomed new and old Members to the first meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board and offered a vote of thanks to all those who had been involved previously for the achievements made during 2010/11.

2. CHAIR AND VICE-CHAIR

Members noted the appointment of Councillor James as Chair and Councillor Nicholson as Vice-Chair for the Municipal Year 2011/12.

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The following declarations of interest were made in accordance with the Code of Conduct

Name	Minute No. and Subject	Reason	Interest
Councillor Wildy	8 – Joint Finance and Performance Report – Position as at 31 March 2011	Partner is a Governor at Lipson Community College	Personal

Councillor Thompson	8 – Joint Finance and Performance Report – Position as at 31 March 2011	Governor of an Academy	Personal
Councillor Stark	8 – Joint Finance and Performance Report – Position as at 31 March 2011	Academy Director at Stoke Damerel Community College and Trustee for All Saints	Personal

4. **APPOINTMENT OF CO-OPTED REPRESENTATIVES**

The Chair reported that this would be the last meeting attended by Jake Paget who would be leaving Plymouth in September to attend University in London. The Board thanked Jake for his contribution to scrutiny and wished him all the very best for the future.

Doug Fletcher advised the Board that although he wished to continue his role as a co-opted representative, due to other pressures on his time, he would be unable to attend all of the meetings programmed for the year and, in particular, he would not be available for the budget scrutiny meetings in January 2012.

Agreed that –

- (1) Doug Fletcher be re-confirmed as a co-opted representative for the Municipal Year 2011/12;
- (2) an invitation be extended to Viv Gillespie at City College to become a co-opted representative.

5. **MINUTES**

Agreed the minutes of the meetings held on 23 March and 6 April 2011.

6. **CHAIR'S URGENT BUSINESS**

Proposed Changes to Scrutiny

Further to minute 128, the Chair informed the Board that, as a result of the consultation process, the proposals for changes to scrutiny had been withdrawn.

7. **TERMS OF REFERENCE**

Discussion took place on the Board's terms of reference with the following issues being highlighted as either being incorrect or no longer of relevance –

- Membership proportionality
- Reference to Local Area Agreements

Agreed that the Board's terms of reference, particularly its aims and objectives, would be revisited as part of the Constitutional review that was currently under way.

8. **LEADER AND CHIEF EXECUTIVE**

The Chair welcomed the Leader and, in the absence of the Chief Executive, the Director of Services for Children and Young People, who were in attendance to report on Council and City issues. Success highlights of the report included that –

- Plymouth was bidding for Enterprise Zone status with potential sites having been identified at Langage Energy Park, South Yard Devonport, Plymouth International and Medical Technology Park, Tamar Science Park and Millbay
- the America's Cup was coming to Plymouth in September 2011 putting the City on the global map and bringing a boost to the City's economy
- Plymouth Arts' Show would be underway at the end of September 2011 operating over five different sites in the City
- Plymouth had just been identified as the host City for National Armed Forces Day on 30 June 2012
- the Olympic Torch would be arriving in Plymouth on 20 May 2012 as part of its journey to London
- the City was supporting the University's £4m bid to set up a new University Technical College to train teenagers to become builders, technicians and engineers. The College would provide places for 450 students from Plymouth and its travel to work area. Lord Baker would be visiting Plymouth on 27 July to look at the four sites which had been identified as possible suitable locations
- a 'topping out' ceremony had recently taken place at the Life Centre and the project was still on budget and on time

In terms of challenges faced by the authority, the Board was informed that –

- Cabinet Members and CMT were continuing to rigorously monitor performance to ensure high quality services were being delivered to local people within budget efficiencies
- child poverty remained a priority focus of the City and the Council continued to work closely with partners to deliver the shared agenda through a package of job creation, reducing inequalities and raising attainment
- officers were closely monitoring the masses of Government policy changes (local and national), consultations etc. to ensure the City was on top of the changes and to assess their impact on the City. In order to ensure a more efficient use of the Council's resources in this regard, a reorganisation was currently under way to co-locate staff into one Policy Team

- a number of teaching staff would be taking industrial action on 30 June resulting in the closure or partial closure of some of the City's schools
- with regard to the health agenda, the City was working closely with the Chief Executive of the new cluster comprising NHS Devon, NHS Plymouth and Torbay Care Trust. It was envisaged that a number of challenges and opportunities would arise through –
 - the transfer of responsibility for public health back into local authority control
 - establishment of a relationship with the GP consortia

In response to questions raised, Members were advised that –

- (a) with regard to the Enterprise Zone bid –
 - it was not known when an announcement on the decision would be made nor whether Lord Baker would select the site for the City during his visit, though it was suspected that he may have a view
 - the growth plan for the City would continue to be delivered through the Growth Board regardless of the outcome of the bid which, if successful, would be a bonus
- (b) with regard to the University Technical College proposal –
 - this would provide an additional educational option for the City's young people that they currently did not have. They would still be able to go to University if they so wished
 - school numbers would not drastically be affected because the number of places available was relatively small, just over 100 per year, and some of those would be taken by young people from outside of Plymouth
 - the Department for Children and Young People would be losing a number of staff at the end of term due to changes in Government funding. Focus would remain on reducing the equality gap in educational attainment and driving up achievement, particularly in the primary sector
- (c) with regard to changes in Government policy and the numerous consultations being circulated, it was acknowledged that it was often difficult for Members to keep abreast of what was going on or, indeed, to understand what it meant;
- (d) with regard to the industrial action being taken and the number of departmental reorganisations underway, the Council was aware that staff were under increased pressure and morale could be fragile. A number of tools were used to gauge how staff were feeling, including –
 - staff appraisals

- the recent staff survey
 - sickness monitoring
- (e) the Council was able to influence Government a number of ways including –
- lobbying (written and face-to-face)
 - responding to formal consultations

On behalf of the Board, the Chair thanked the Leader and Director of Services for Children and Young People for their attendance.

Agreed that with regard to (c) above, the Assistant Chief Executive would arrange production of a brief plain English guide to help Members keep up to date with Government Policy changes and current consultations.

9. **JOINT FINANCE AND PERFORMANCE REPORT - POSITION AS AT 31 MARCH 2011**

The Cabinet Member for Transformation, Performance and Governance, Corporate Finance and Accountancy Manager, and Policy Officer, were in attendance to respond to questions on the Joint Finance and Performance report as submitted to Cabinet on 7 June 2011.

Areas of focus in the discussion included –

- lack of clarity on the latest revenue position
- concerns over the increase in incidents of staff sickness
- that, throughout the report, there was a lack of information on how performance was monitored or evaluated
- lack of information on how the schools' budget was allocated
- how the City compared to others in terms of its Council Tax collection

Agreed that –

- (1) when the budget is amended to read “Latest Approved Budget”, the date at which approval was obtained is added, additionally a further column is added stating the original approved budget;
- (2) details of the high risk areas for each directorate are included in future reports;
- (3) Panels should continue to receive their respective performance score cards;
- (4) information relating to the allocation of the schools' budget is circulated to Board Members via e-mail;
- (5) information relating to the Council's performance in respect of Council Tax collection is circulated to Board Members via e-mail.

10. **MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY 2011-2015**

The Head of Finance was in attendance to respond to questions on the Medium Term Financial Strategy 2011-2015 submitted to Cabinet on 7 June 2011.

In response to questions raised, Members were advised that –

- (a) Officers were working closely with Adult Social Care to identify the financial risk of the demographic growth in elderly residents;
- (b) the Audit Committee had responsibility for monitoring both the Council's Strategic and Operational Risk Register and could refer areas of concern to scrutiny for investigation;
- (c) Category management related to expenditure which could be grouped together such as transport and utilities.

Agreed that areas of risk identified in the Risk Register and related to the Medium Term Financial Strategy are appended to future reports.

11. **ANNUAL SCRUTINY REPORT**

The Lead Officer tabled for comment the first draft of the Annual Scrutiny Report. Members were advised that the main focus of the report had been to demonstrate how the work of scrutiny supported the City's four priorities. Discussion took place on other potential issues for inclusion within the report and whether the timing of its presentation to Board should be revised to the second quarter.

Agreed that the draft report is circulated to all of the scrutiny panels for comment with a view to submission to City Council in September.

12. **TRACKING DECISIONS**

The Board noted the schedule of previous decisions made.

13. **URGENT EXECUTIVE DECISIONS**

The Board noted that two urgent decisions had been taken in consultation with the Chair since the last meeting, namely –

- (a) The America's Cup World Series
- (b) Plymouth to host Partnership Bid for Local Sustainable Transport Fund (LSTF) for South West Smart Ticketing

With regard to (a), concern was raised over a discrepancy between what was stated within the financial implications section of the urgent decision and what was stated within the Joint Finance and Performance Report. One estimated that costs would be met from within

existing budgets and private sector contributions, the other was recommending an additional budget allocation of £100,000.

Agreed that clarification would be sought on the costs to the Council in staging the America's Cup World Series event and the response circulated to Board Members via e-mail.

14. **RECOMMENDATIONS**

The Board considered recommendations received from the Growth and Prosperity and Children and Young People's Overview and Scrutiny Panels. As these recommendations related to the Panels' work programmes, details of the discussion were recorded under minute 15b.

15. **WORK PROGRAMMES**

(a) To receive new items from the Forward Plan with a view to identifying items for inclusion in panel work programmes

The Board noted that there had been 12 new additions to the Forward Plan since its last meeting. With regard to Plymouth's Local Carbon Framework, it was suggested that pre-decision scrutiny of the matter may be appropriate. Councillor James, in his capacity as Chair of the Support Services Overview and Scrutiny Panel, offered to raise it at the Panel's next agenda setting meeting.

(b) To consider and approve work programmes for each of the Panels, to include a progress update from each of the Chairs

The work programmes of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board and Panels were submitted for consideration and approval.

With regard to Growth and Prosperity –

- the Lead Officer reported that he had prepared a briefing on the Localism Bill which he would be happy to circulate to Board Members
- the Panel would be hosting a session with Plymouth Community Homes at 4.30 pm on 11 July 2011

With regard to Customers and Communities –

- a query was raised as to why the Panel was receiving an update on Revenues and Benefits when the matter was being looked at by Support Services
- a suggestion was made that the panel may want to look at the impact of late return fees following the abolition of stamping library books with a return by date
- it was noted that dates for consideration of items still had to be identified

With regard to Health and Adult Social Care a query was raised about the use of Ritalin in the City, one of the highest in the Country. The Lead Officer advised that he believed this had been raised previously in the guise of a Member's Question.

With regard to the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board, it was noted that there was duplication with Support Services on Procure to Pay.

With regard to Support Services, it was noted that dates for consideration of items still had to be identified.

With regard to Children and Young People, the Panel Chair raised concern over the lack of action taken in respect of one of the recommendations arising from the Young Carers Task and Finish Group, namely the showing of a DVD to all Members prior to a meeting of City Council.

Agreed the work programmes as submitted, subject to –

- (1) Plymouth's Enterprise Zone Bid being added to the Growth and Prosperity work programme, depending on the outcome;
- (2) the Supporting People item being removed from the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board work programme and added to that of Customers and Communities;
- (3) the Procure to Pay item being removed from the Support Services work programme;

With regard to the concern raised by the Chair of the Children and Young People's Overview and Scrutiny Panel, it was also agreed that –

- (4) further endorsement by the Management Board is given to the showing of the DVD during the City Council tea break.

(c) To consider and approve Project Initiation Documents

There were no Project Initiation Documents to consider on this occasion.

(d) To receive Task and Finish Group Updates/Reports

There were no Task and Finish Group Updates or Reports to consider on this occasion.

16. EXEMPT BUSINESS

There were no items of exempt business.