

Overview and Scrutiny Management Board

Wednesday 21 September 2011

PRESENT:

Councillor James, in the Chair.

Councillor Lock, Vice-Chair.

Councillors Mrs Aspinall, Mrs Bowyer, Browne, Churchill (substitute for Councillor Nicholson), Coker, Evans (substitute for Councillor Lowry), McDonald, Stark, Thompson and Wildy.

Co-opted Representatives: Viv Gillespie.

Apologies for absence: Councillors Lowry and Nicholson and Doug Fletcher (Co-opted Representative).

Also in attendance: Councillor Mrs Pengelly, Leader, Barry Keel, Chief Executive, Jonathan Fry, Senior Policy, Performance and Partnership Advisor, Giles Perritt, Lead Officer, and Katey Johns, Democratic Support Officer.

The meeting started at 2 pm and finished at 4.15 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.

41. APPOINTMENT OF VICE-CHAIR

In the absence of Councillor Nicholson, the Chair sought nominations for a Vice-Chair.

Agreed that Councillor Lock, having been proposed by Councillor Mrs Bowyer and seconded by Councillor Browne, is appointed Vice-Chair for the purpose of this meeting.

42. 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 Mrs Bowyer	52 – Project Initiation Documents	Manager of a Care Home	Personal

43. MINUTES

Agreed -

(1) the minutes of the meeting held on 27 July 2011;

- (2) that the minutes of the meeting held on 7 September 2011 be submitted to the next business meeting in order to give Members more time to consider them.

44. **CHAIR'S URGENT BUSINESS**

There were no items of Chair's urgent business.

45. **LEADER AND CHIEF EXECUTIVE**

The Chair welcomed the Leader and the Chief Executive who were in attendance to report on current City and Council issues, which included -

- Americas Cup – Plymouth had successfully played host to this prestigious yachting event which had attracted thousands of spectators to the Hoe and surrounding foreshore;
- Inward Investment - a team of 50 representatives had recently visited the City to see what Plymouth had to offer;
- British Arts Show - the City was current host to the 7th British Arts Show with exhibitions on display at five different venues from 17 September to 4 December 2011;
- Life Centre – works continued to progress well with the development overall and the hi-tech, state-of-the-art fitness suite was very impressive. Members were encouraged to make arrangements to visit the development;
- Plymouth Argyle – the Council had offered to consider purchasing back the ground should it become a factor in saving the club. Any sale would be subject to an open market bidding process;
- Terms and Conditions – agreement had now been reached with all of the unions following eight months of difficult negotiations. This agreement will help achieve the £18m worth of savings required from the employment budget over the next three years;
- Senior Management Structure – a report proposing changes to the Senior Management Structure would be presented to City Council in October.

Members commented that –

- they had concerns about the accuracy and consistency of some of the information being provided following departmental restructures, particularly in Children's Services where some staff were appearing on more than one structure chart – this was something that was currently being pursued through the Children and Young People's Overview and Scrutiny Panel;
- it would be helpful to know the timescale for the senior management structure;
- lessons could be learned from the America's Cup, particularly with regard to the co-ordination of different events in the City. Identification of a nominated lead officer within the Council for such events would help Councillors with any queries or issues they may have;
- sight of the economic gain to the City from the America's Cup would be welcomed, including a breakdown of what it actually cost the City to host the event;
- whilst an opportunity to visit the Life Centre was welcomed, it appeared visits were currently restricted to being accompanied by Councillor Bowyer;

- the opposition had submitted a motion on notice to City Council back in January to buy back the ground from Plymouth Argyle;
- the de-recognition and subsequent recognition of Unison may have damaged the Council's reputation;
- the Forward Plan often included new items at short notice with tight timescales for decision-making.

In response to comments/questions raised Members heard that –

- (a) the concerns raised in regard to the restructure of children's services had been noted and an undertaking given to investigate the matter;
- (b) Plymouth had had just six months to prepare for the America's Cup whereas most countries had a two-year lead-in period. It was acknowledged that mistakes had been made and it was important that lessons were learned for future events. A designated point of contact for Councillors was something which could be considered;
- (c) Plymouth Argyle had not been in administration back in January and the value of the ground had been estimated to be £7m – it was now considerably less. Any decision to buy back the land would be subject to approval by City Council;
- (d) there were a number of people (both from within and outside of the authority) who had been supportive of the action taken to de-recognise Unison. Ultimately, the action taken had helped the situation and got the union to support the wishes of its membership;
- (e) Cabinet was often in the difficult situation of having to make decisions quickly and the Forward Plan reflected this. However, the work of scrutiny was appreciated and it was acknowledged that, as an organisation, the authority could do better in terms of pre-decision scrutiny.

Agreed that responses be provided in writing to Members of the Board in respect of -

- (1) the economic gain to the City from the America's Cup, including a breakdown of what it actually cost the City to host the event;
- (2) visits to the Life Centre being restricted to parties only accompanied by the Cabinet Member for Finance, Property and People.

46. **UPDATE ON BUDGET SCRUTINY RECOMMENDATIONS**

Further to minute 113, the Board received an update on progress against recommendations arising from scrutiny of the Budget and Corporate Plan 2011. In attendance to present the report and respond to questions were Jonathan Fry, Senior Policy, Performance and Partnership Advisor, Councillor Mrs Pengelly, Leader, and Barry Keel, Chief Executive.

In response to questions raised Members were advised that –

- (a) recommendations requiring no further action would be greyed out to make it clearer where to focus attention in future;
- (b) with regard to R7, the matching funding for the small grants scheme for community and voluntary groups would be coming from the Drake Foundation Consortium;
- (c) with regard to R13, that a review of all grants relating to the provision of children's services that were not continuing with succession arrangements would be published in explicit detail in the second quarterly report;
- (d) with regard to R2, Plymouth was participating in a number of shared service projects, including the energy from waste plant and audit. Other potential projects were also being considered including broadband / connectivity with Cornwall and Devon.

Agreed that responses be provided in writing to Members of the Board in respect of –

- (1) a list of shared service projects currently being considered;
- (2) the situation in Plymouth regarding the new homes bonus;
- (3) progress on the Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP).

47. **TRACKING DECISIONS**

The Board considered the schedule of decisions made. Members were advised that Cabinet had considered a number of the Board's recommendations, including those relating to the Localities and Neighbourhood Working Review at its meeting on 13 September.

With regard to –

- (a) R2.7 relating to preparation of draft proposals for years three, four and five of the capital programme, Members again considered the response from Cabinet and questioned when it would be appropriate;
- (b) R4.1 relating to recycling targets, Members queried the last time monthly tonnage rates had been written up at the tip.

Agreed that –

- (1) the tracking decisions schedule is updated to reflect progress on budget scrutiny recommendations, as reported under minute 46;
- (2) a written response is sought from Cabinet on when it would be appropriate to prepare draft proposals for years three, four and five of the capital programme as part of the ongoing budget setting process;
- (3) a written response is sought to the question raised in relation to the writing up of monthly tonnage rates at the tip, together with an explanation as to why

this is no longer happening;

- (4) Cabinet's response to the Board's recommendations, including the Localities and Neighbourhood Working Review is circulated to Board Members and incorporated into the tracking schedule.

48. **CALL-INS**

There were no call-ins for consideration at this meeting.

49. **ANNUAL SCRUTINY REPORT**

Further to minute 11, Members were advised that the Annual Scrutiny report had now been circulated to all scrutiny panels and no comments had been received.

Agreed –

- (1) that a more fitting tribute to Councillor Viney is included;
- (2) subject to (1) above, that the Annual Scrutiny Report is submitted to the next meeting of City Council.

50. **TASK AND FINISH GROUP UPDATES/ REPORTS**

Members received an update on progress with the Growth and Prosperity Task and Finish Group on Winter Maintenance. Highlights of the update included –

- (a) seven roads had been identified as priorities for gritting in the City as part of the winter maintenance programme. Any grit bins at these locations would be moved to roads of a lesser priority;
- (b) that the salt barn at Prince Rock Depot was not being used to store salt. As a result, Amey was to be approached to enquire whether they would be interested in leasing the barn from the council for salt storage;
- (c) it would cost £90k to fill the salt barn. The Council should consider the benefit of making a bulk purchase during the warmer months and thus having the capacity to meet demand in the winter as well as the ability to assist partner organisations, such as Police, NHS and Fire Service;
- (d) submission of the report to the next meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board would delay consideration of the recommendations by Cabinet.

The Board noted the update with thanks.

Agreed that approval of the Growth and Prosperity Task and Finish Group Winter Maintenance report be delegated to the Scrutiny Lead Officer in consultation with the Chair

of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board, Councillor James, and Councillor Mrs Aspinall.

51. **RECOMMENDATIONS**

The Board endorsed and agreed the following recommendations –

Customers and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Panel

(1) **Appeal against Council's response to a Petition**

the Council's response to the petition was satisfactory.

(2) **Work Programme**

the revenue and benefits service item is removed from the Customers and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Panel's work programme and any issues concerning benefits make-up are considered within the universal credit and/or financial inclusion service items on the programme;

(3) a task and finish group on social media.

Children and Young People's Overview and Scrutiny Panel

(4) **Tracking Resolutions**

the panel look at Child Poverty at its November meeting;

(5) **Priorities and Challenges for Children's Services**

the Child Poverty Multi-agency Delivery Plan prepared as a result of the motion accepted at City Council on 25 July 2011 is reviewed by the Children and Young People's Overview and Scrutiny Panel at its meeting on 10 November, prior to its approval by Cabinet. The review will ensure that targets, actions and milestones within the plan are SMART, appropriately resources and prioritised.

52. **PROJECT INITIATION DOCUMENTS**

The Board considered the following Project Initiation Documents (PIDs) –

- Apprenticeships;
- Children's Emotional Wellbeing and Mental Health;
- Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults.

With regard to –

- (a) Apprenticeships, the Chair of the Children and Young People's Overview and Scrutiny Panel reported that some information had been omitted from the

PID and she would therefore like to give it further consideration;

- (b) Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults, the Board was advised that additional text was required to Objective 11 so that it read “To review and assess the adequacy of unannounced visits to care settings for vulnerable adults”.

Agreed –

- (1) the Project Initiation Documents in respect of –
- Children’s Emotional Wellbeing and Mental Health;
 - Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults (as amended).
- (2) that approval of the Apprenticeships Project Initiation Document be delegated to the Scrutiny Lead Officer in consultation with the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board.

(Councillor Mrs Bowyer declared a personal interest in respect of the above item).

53. **WORK PROGRAMMES**

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

Agreed that -

- (1) the De-recognition of Unison is added to the work programme of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board;
- (2) consideration is given to using a provisional meeting to look at the next Joint Finance and Performance Monitoring Report;
- (3) approval of the Customers and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Panel’s Project Initiation Document on Social Media is delegated to the Scrutiny Lead Officer and the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board;
- (4) the Growth and Prosperity Overview and Scrutiny Panel undertake a task and finish group on the 5-week programme of works to the Tamar Bridge.

54. **EXEMPT BUSINESS**

There were no items of exempt business.