

Overview and Scrutiny Management Board

Wednesday 1 February 2012

PRESENT:

Councillor James, in the Chair.

Councillor Nicholson, Vice-Chair.

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

Apologies for absence: Councillor Wildy and Mr D Fletcher, Co-opted Representative.

Also in attendance: Graham Russell, Independent Advisor, Judith Shore, Democratic and Member Support Manager, Giles Perritt, Lead Officer, and Katey Johns, Democratic Support Officer.

The meeting started at 2 pm and finished at 4.35 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.

80. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

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

81. **MINUTES**

Agreed the minutes of the meetings held on 22 November and 14 December 2011.

82. **CHAIR'S URGENT BUSINESS**

There were no items of Chair's urgent business.

83. **SCRUTINY PERFORMANCE**

The Chair extended a warm welcome to Graham Russell, an Independent Advisor, who had been commissioned to deliver training to scrutiny members and to provide an objective overview following observation of scrutiny panel meetings. Mr Russell presented his findings to the Board which included that –

- the building blocks for a sound scrutiny process were in place;
- too much work was being done through the formal business meetings of panels and the use of the task and finish process appeared limited;
- valuable information gained through the questioning of witnesses was lost due to there being no routine method of dissemination and a lack of any media management;

- better use could be made of opportunities to challenge the executive;
- there was little evidence of robust pre-decision scrutiny through monitoring of the Forward Plan which contained limited information about key decisions only and often left little or no opportunity for scrutiny involvement.

On behalf of the Board, the Chair thanked Mr Russell for his attendance and the constructive advice contained within his report.

Agreed that -

- (1) a provisional meeting of the Board is used to informally consider the findings of the report, and to discuss proposals for the future operation/structure of scrutiny;
- (2) the Leader is recommended to review the timeline of the Forward Plan to enable more pre-decision scrutiny in light of Mr Russell's findings and recommendations.

84. **SCRUTINY OF BUDGET PRIORITIES AND CORPORATE PLAN 2012**

The Chair and Lead Officer presented for consideration the minutes and draft report arising from scrutiny of the Budget Priorities and Corporate Plan 2012. Members welcomed the detail in the report and agreed that it accurately reflected the discussions which had taken place over the three-day period, subject to a few minor changes to some of the recommendations. Concerns were raised about the level of the detail in the information that was presented as part of the budget scrutiny process and discussion took place on how things could be improved for next year.

Agreed –

- (1) the minutes of the meetings held on 11, 16 and 18 January and the Budget Priorities and Corporate Plan 2012 report, subject to the following changes –
 - R4 to be removed and attached to R55 so that the library related issues are covered by one recommendation – amended R55 to read “Libraries review to include consideration of other engagement work with the community and voluntary sector and to be made available for pre-decision scrutiny;
 - R8 to be deleted;
 - R14 to be amended to read “Cabinet assurance is sought that plans are in place to ensure a smooth and seamless transition for children in care to adult social care”;
 - R16 to be amended to read “Information to be provided into the impact of the adult social care transformation programme on the adult care sector”;
 - R17 – delete the word “sufficient” and replace with “appropriate and

effective”;

- R21 – “changes to health provision to the health workforce” be amended to read “changes to health provision on the health workforce”
- the inclusion of an additional recommendation after R21 to read “A report is produced detailing the demographic impact of Plymouth’s ageing population”;
- moving R38 to the ‘wrap up’ session at end of the report and delete the words “in Environmental Services”;
- R39 – insert the words “over and above the grant allocation” immediately after “additional resources”;
- the inclusion of an additional recommendation after R50 to read “A review is undertaken into the procurement, shared services and location risk assessment arrangements of the data centre”;
- R59 to be amended to read “An appropriately funded plan be put in place to mitigate the likely impact on voter numbers of the proposed electoral reforms”;
- the inclusion of an additional recommendation after R59 to read “Any decision to use the Life Centre for the count at the local elections is informed by cost and value for money implications”;

(2) that a review of the budget scrutiny process is added to the Board’s work programme for 2012/13.

85. **TRACKING DECISIONS**

The Board considered the schedule of decisions made and noted the latest position.

86. **CALL-INS**

There were no call ins for consideration at this meeting.

87. **FORWARD PLAN**

In considering the new additions to the Forward Plan, the Board again expressed its concern at the short timescales for determining some of the decisions. Members also felt that the level of detail in some of the decisions was lacking.

Agreed that -

- (1) on behalf of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board, the Chair writes to the Leader of the City Council reiterating Members’ concerns over the insertion of late items into the Forward Plan leaving little or no opportunity for scrutiny involvement;

- (2) pre-decision scrutiny of the Library Service Review is added to the Customers and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Panel;
- (3) Cabinet is recommended to delay its decision in respect of the Adult Social Care Personal Budget Policy in order to allow for pre-decision scrutiny by the Health and Adult Social Care Overview and Scrutiny Panel;
- (4) subject to (3) above, should pre-decision scrutiny not be facilitated, a cross-party call-in of the Cabinet decision would be supported;
- (5) in conjunction with (2) above, the Constitutional Review Panel is recommended to look at the Forward Plan arrangements.

88. **RECOMMENDATIONS**

The Board endorsed and agreed the following recommendations –

Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Panel

(1) **Progress Update on Previous Tracking Resolutions**

that the Youth Service task and finish group is deferred to the next municipal year;

Growth and Prosperity Overview and Scrutiny Panel

(2) **Article 4 Direction for Houses in Multiple Occupation**

that the Cabinet Member for Planning, Strategic Housing and Economic Development, taking into account the consultation responses received, should confirm the Direction;

Customers and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Panel

Task and Finish Group – Anti-Social Behaviour in Compton Ward

that Cabinet be recommended to consider –

- (3) the installation of lockable bollards at either end of the lane, to prevent general vehicle access;
- (4) a general clean up of the area is undertaken, working in partnership with Plymouth Community Homes and residents;
- (5) that Plymouth Community Homes are asked to work together with Plymouth City Council and community groups to identify a way forward for the use of the derelict garage site in Channel Park Avenue;
- (6) to establish the boundaries of the properties in Carlton Close and to notify the land owners and outline their legal duties.

Health and Adult Social Care Overview and Scrutiny Panel

(7) **Chair's Urgent Business**

the appointment of Sue Kelly, member of the Local Involvement Network Stewardship Group, as a co-opted member.

89. **PROJECT INITIATION DOCUMENTS**

There were no project initiation documents for consideration at this meeting.

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

Councillor McDonald reported that the Safeguarding Adults review was progressing slowly with a number of witnesses still to be heard. She raised concerns that the progress had been slow due to a lack of officer resource but the Board was assured by the Lead Officer that this was not the case.

With reference to minute 73, Councillor Nicholson sought approval to co-opt representatives and to expand the scope of the project initiation document.

Agreed that, with regard to the Youth Unemployment in Plymouth Task and Finish Group –

(1) the following representatives be co-opted –

- David Parlby, Chamber of Commerce
- Ashley Beare, South West TUC and PABC Executive
- Jacki Williams, Job Centre Plus

(2) the scope of the PID be expanded to include the age range of 16-24 year olds.

91. **WORK PROGRAMMES**

The work programmes of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board and scrutiny panels were considered and agreed as submitted, subject to removal of the following task and finish items –

- Driving Speeds on the Hoe item from the Growth and Prosperity Work Programme;
- Social Media from the Customers and Communities Work Programme.

92. **EXEMPT BUSINESS**

There were no items of exempt business.