

Support Services Overview and Scrutiny Panel

Thursday 27 October 2011

PRESENT:

Councillor James, in the Chair.

Councillor Mrs Aspinall (substitute for Councillor Lowry), Vice Chair.

Councillors Berrow, Casey, Evans, Lock, Murphy, Rennie, Stark and Stevens.

Co-opted Representatives: Janet Isaac, University of Plymouth

Apologies for absence: Councillors Delbridge, Lowry and Reynolds.

Also in attendance: Councillor Ian Bowyer – Cabinet Member for Finance, Property and People, Chris Trevitt – Head of Capital and Assets, Paul Chapman – Head of Value for Money and Efficiencies and Ross Johnston – Democratic Support Officer.

The meeting started at 2.30 pm and finished at 3.10 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.

40. APPOINTMENT OF VICE CHAIR

Agreed that Councillor Aspinall is appointed as Vice Chair of the Panel for this particular meeting.

41. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

42. MINUTES

Agreed that the minutes of the meeting held on 15 September 2011 are approved as a correct record subject to minute 30 (h) reading as follows –

“As the traffic impact assessment did not include Saturdays and the bus timetable information was inaccurate both should be revised with the information provided at a future meeting, however, as the project had an impact on budgetary savings the process should be accelerated”.

43. CHAIR'S URGENT BUSINESS

The Chair informed members that at the panel's meeting on 23 November 2011 a scrutiny training session had been arranged to commence at 9am, one hour prior to the panel meeting.

44. **RELOCATION OF THE REGISTER OFFICE TO POUNDS HOUSE**

Councillor Bowyer, Cabinet Member for Finance, Property and People and Chris Trevitt, Head of Capital and Assets, were in attendance to provide an update on the Relocation of the Register Office to Pounds House.

The Chair informed councillors that he had received an email 20 minutes prior to the meeting explaining that the Traffic Impact Assessment (TIA), requested at the meeting on 15 September 2011, had not been completed. The highway traffic count system had failed after only two hours of data logging at the last Plymouth Argyle home match on 22 October 2011.

Due to the TIA not being completed the Chair proposed that the item be deferred until the next meeting of the panel.

Panel members commented that –

- (a) it was disappointing that this information had not been fed back to the Chair before today, as the meeting could have been postponed earlier; this would have ensured that members had not unnecessarily attended the meeting;
- (b) the scrutiny process was not being taken seriously by officers.

With regard to the report, members raised concerns regarding the following -

- (c) the updated bus timetable information requested at the panel's meeting on 15 September 2011 had not been submitted;
- (d) the Traffic Impact Assessment report submitted was too technical, provided no clear information and was a waste of public money;
- (e) the instructions given to Hydrock Byways and Highways to undertake the TIA;
- (f) the information provided on the distance from bus stops on Outland Road to Pounds House did not explain how the distance was calculated;
- (g) the information contained in Appendix C did not include dates or quantify the data presented;
- (h) the report referred to the capacity of three junctions when there were only two existing junctions;
- (i) the Equalities Impact Assessment (EIA) did not have a date and stated that there was no adverse impact on disability despite floor two at Pounds House not being accessible to persons with disabilities.

Members further commented that –

- (j) the entrance to Pounds Park from Outland Road was a safety issue and was only accessible from one direction due to the prohibition of right hand turns on Outland Road;
- (k) given that the Coroner's Service was to be co-located with the Register Office, it would have been prudent for the survey conducted with customers of the Register Office to have been conducted with customers of the Coroners Service and for them to have been included in the TIA;
- (l) Coroners' inquests were often held in the Council House which had a displacement effect on other meetings sometimes leading to uncalculated costs.

It was agreed that –

- (1) the item is deferred until a future meeting of the panel to be scheduled for 23 November 2011 at 4pm (this panel meeting is in addition to the already scheduled meeting at 10am on the same date);
- (2) a revised bus timetable report to remove the previous inaccuracies is submitted to the panel;
- (3) the author of the EIA is invited to attend the panel meeting on 23 November 2011;
- (4) a representative of Hydrock Byways and Highways is invited to attend the panel meeting on 23 November 2011;
- (5) a list of questions is agreed by members in consultation with the Chair and Paul Chapman, Lead Officer, to be answered by Chris Trevitt, Head of Capital and Assets, prior to the meeting on 23 November 2011.

45. **IMPACT OF THE RESTRUCTURE IN REVENUES AND BENEFITS, CUSTOMER SERVICES, CASHIERS AND INCOMES AND CREDITORS TASK AND FINISH GROUP**

The Chair informed members that the task and finish group set up to review the impact of the restructure in Revenues and Benefits, Customer Services, Cashiers and Incomes and Creditors had been postponed from 27 and 28 October 2011; this had been due to the sensitive nature of the restructure and the fact that the restructure's implementation date had been postponed from 1 September 2011 to 1 November 2011.

Agreed that –

- (1) the Chair in consultation with Councillor Lowry, Vice-Chair, and Paul

Chapman, Lead Officer, agree the dates of the task and finish group;

- (2) the Labour group members nominated to sit on the task and finish group are Councillors Casey, Murphy and Rennie.

46. **TRACKING RESOLUTIONS AND FEEDBACK FROM OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT BOARD**

This item was not discussed.

47. **WORK PROGRAMME**

This item was not discussed.

48. **EXEMPT BUSINESS**

There were no items of exempt business.