

Overview and Scrutiny Management Board

Wednesday 12 December 2012

PRESENT:

Councillor Mrs Aspinall, in the Chair.

Councillor Tuffin, Vice Chair.

Councillors Ball (Substitute for Councillor James), Bowie, Bowyer, Mrs Bowyer (Substitute for Councillor Monahan), Philippa Davey, Mrs Nelder, Nicholson, Kate Taylor (Substitute for Councillor Murphy) and Wigen.

Apologies for absence: Councillors Casey, James and Monahan.

Also in attendance: Pete Aley (Head of Safer Communities), Councillor Lowry (Cabinet Member for Finance), David Northey (Head of Finance), Councillor Penberthy (Cabinet Member for Cooperatives and Community Development), Giles Perritt (Head of Policy, Performance and Partnerships), Eugene Potter (ICT Project Manager), Councillor Vincent (Cabinet Member for Environment) and Helen Wright (Democratic Support Officer).

The meeting started at 4.30 pm and finished at 6.40 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 by councillors in accordance with the code of conduct.

81. MINUTES

Agreed that the minutes of the meeting held on 14 November 2012 are confirmed as a correct record.

82. CHAIR'S URGENT BUSINESS

The Chair requested councillors to indicate whether they were permanently leaving the meeting, so this could be recorded within the minutes. This information could also be used in the event of a fire.

83. TRACKING DECISIONS

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

With regard to minute 48, (Members of Parliament for Plymouth Moorview and Plymouth Sutton and Devonport), recommendations 1, 3 and 4 had been completed.

With regard to recommendation 2, no further clarification had been provided from the government regarding changes to the permitted development policy.

The Chair advised that it had been difficult to arrange a further meeting with the City's MPs in December 2012 and suggested that the meeting was deferred until February 2013, as the Management Board would be extremely busy in January 2013 with budget scrutiny.

The Board agreed -

- (1) that arrangements are made to meet the City's MPs in February/March 2013 and the work programme is amended to reflect this change;
- (2) to follow up the MPs' responses to the written questions submitted by Board members.

84. **CALL-INS**

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

85. **URGENT EXECUTIVE DECISIONS**

There had been no urgent executive decisions for consideration at this meeting.

86. **NOTICE OF FORTHCOMING KEY EXECUTIVE DECISIONS AND PRIVATE BUSINESS**

The Board noted the update provided on the executive key decisions as follows –

- (a) the Council Tax Base 2013/14 would be considered by Cabinet at its meeting scheduled for 15 January 2013;
- (b) the Public Health Transition Arrangements had been agreed by Cabinet at its meeting held on 11 December 2012;
- (c) the Healthwatch – Contract Award had been agreed by Cabinet at its meeting held on 11 December 2012;
- (d) the Adult Social Care Services Delivered within Extra Care Housing – Contract Award had been deferred to the Cabinet meeting scheduled for 15 January 2013;
- (e) the Marine Academy Free School Contract Award had been agreed by Cabinet at its meeting held on 11 December 2012 with an additional recommendation (agreed that measures to encourage local procurement and local employment are investigated for future contracts);
- (f) the Tenancy Strategy had been deferred;

- (g) the Tamar Estuaries Management Plan 2013-2018 had been agreed by Cabinet at its meeting held on 11 December 2012.

87. **CORPORATE MONITORING REPORT FOR OCTOBER 2012**

The Head of Finance and the Cabinet Member for Finance submitted the corporate monitoring report for October 2012, which highlighted the following main areas –

- revenue monitoring position;
- key issues and corrective actions (if required);
- revenue delivery plan position;
- amber delivery plans and actions;
- capital position;
- medium term financial forecast;
- key issues.

In response to questions from the Board, it was reported that –

- (a) work was currently being undertaken in order to balance the budget; transformation of Adult Social Care was taking longer than anticipated however, it would deliver reductions in spend;
- (b) sickness levels were higher than average within the People Directorate and also Environmental Services, as these included services provided by frontline staff; sickness levels were being monitored on a monthly basis which had resulted in a downward trend across the authority.

88. **CABINET MEMBERS**

The Chair welcomed the Cabinet Member for Environment, who gave a brief overview of his areas of responsibilities which included –

- work was currently being undertaken to assess the impact of increasing the recycling rates on the authority's carbon footprint;
- work was continuing to secure funding for environmental enhancements in Central Park;
- dog waste would now be able to be placed in the normal waste bins within the parks, rather than in the dog waste bins.

In response to questions from the Board, it was reported that –

- (a) an assurance was given that there would be no reduction in the number of litter clean ups, even with increasing pressures on the budget;
- (b) work was being undertaken to investigate areas where reductions could be made without having a big impact or an adverse impact on the environment; the number of grass cuts per year would reduce

from 13 to nine; this decision had been made not only to save money but to benefit the wildlife; (no reduction in the grass cutting programme was planned for the city centre);

- (c) there was a commitment (if the Board agreed) to provide regular progress updates on the Energy to Waste Plant;
- (d) monies saved from the reduction in the number of grass cuts would be used to fund tree maintenance works.

The Board agreed to review whether it should receive progress reports on the Energy to Waste Plant in three months' time.

The Chair thanked the Cabinet Member for Environment for attending the meeting.

89. **WELFARE REFORM UPDATE**

The Director for People submitted a report on welfare reform (the Cabinet Member for Cooperatives and Community Development together with the Head of Safer Communities were present for this item), which highlighted the following main areas –

- changes and impact;
- loss to the economy in Plymouth;
- preparing a Plymouth City Council response;
- financial implications.

In response to questions from Board Members, it was reported that –

- (a) the benefit cap would be introduced in April 2013 which would mean that no household would receive more in benefits than an average working family; the cap would apply to the combined income from benefits such as Jobseekers Allowance, Housing Benefit and Council Tax Benefit; data from the Department of Work and Pensions indicated that 150 families in Plymouth would be affected by the cap;
- (b) the introduction of the benefit cap to council services would be an increase in pressure on front line services such as Adult Social Care, more demand on information and advice services in the city and a negative impact on child poverty and lower levels of revenue collection/income generation for council services;
- (c) 650 frontline members of staff had recently received training on the effects of welfare reform; Service Managers across the council had also received training as part of the awareness raising programme;
- (d) the length of time that people were having to wait to receive advice from the Advice and Information Service would be investigated.

The Chair thanked the Cabinet Member for Cooperatives and Community Development and the Head of Safer Communities for attending.

90. **PAPERLESS OFFICE FOR ELECTED MEMBERS**

The ICT Project Manager submitted a briefing paper on paperless office for elected members.

The Chair advised that following supply issues with the equipment it had not been possible to commence the paperless office pilot and therefore the training sessions had been cancelled.

The ICT Project Manager apologised for the extremely late cancellation of the training session and for the delay in the start of the paperless office trial. However, the delay had provided an opportunity to re-evaluate the scope and equipment for the pilot. Work was currently being undertaken to explore the feasibility of using tablets (either personal or corporate devices). It was currently proposed to commence the pilot in February 2013 using both laptops and notebooks however it was anticipated that later in the year tablets could be introduced.

The Board agreed that –

- (1) the paperless office pilot will commence in February 2013 with the notebook option and the feasibility of using tablets will also be explored;
- (2) the ICT Project Manager will contact individual Board members to ascertain their connectivity/equipment requirements.

(Councillors P Davey and Nicholson left the room).

BUDGET SCRUTINY

91. **Cabinet Responses to Budget/Revised Corporate Plan Recommendations - Progress Report**

A progress report on Cabinet's responses to the budget/revised corporate plan recommendations was submitted to the Board for consideration.

The Board agreed that –

- (1) the Lead Officer will undertake further work on the recommendations that had been identified as incomplete, in order to provide further information for questioning;
- (2) each individual member of the Board will be contacted to ascertain how they would like their Budget Scrutiny agenda pack and handbook delivered on 21 December 2012.

92. **Aims and Objectives 2013**

The aims and objectives for Budget Scrutiny 2013 were submitted to the Board for its consideration.

The Board agreed its aims and objectives for Budget Scrutiny 2013.

(Councillor Wogens left the room).

93. **RECOMMENDATIONS**

The Board endorsed and agreed the following recommendations –

(1) with regard to Growth and Prosperity OSP –

- Heart of South West Local Enterprise Partnership minute 42 refers (recommended that Plymouth City Council continues to work with the Heart of the South West Local Enterprise Partnership, as well as other partners within its sub region, in the interests of the city around major strategic issues such as City Deals and transportation, and in order to support local businesses accessing LEP influenced or controlled funding streams);
- Heart of South West Local Enterprise Partnership minute 42 refers (recommended that Tim Jones, chair of the LEP and the future Chief Executive of the LEP to attend the Panel's meeting in May 2013 to provide an update and review progress of the LEP since November 2012;
- government proposals to change the planning system minute 45 refer (see minute 93(4));
- work programme minute 48 refers;

(2) with regard to Health and Adult Social Care OSP -

- Plymouth NHS Hospitals – Car Parking minute 43 refers (recommend to the Cabinet Member for Transport that Plymouth City Council increase marketing activity with regard to the George Park and Ride for access to the Hospital and congestion surrounding the Derriford Hospital site and sustainable transport links to all health care sites across the city are reviewed by the Cabinet Member for Transport and a written report provided to the Panel).

(3) with regard to Support Services OSP –

- governance of the capital programme minute 40 refers (request Cabinet Member for Finance to provide further evidence on how Member involvement could be built into the process);
- School Academy Transfer minute 43 refers (request information on which services are being offered to schools from outside the city; reassurance that a proactive approach is being taken to ensure that business is not lost);
- revenue and benefits monthly position statement minute 44 refers (request a report on wait times and customer satisfaction levels in relation to revenues' and benefits' customers at the Civic Centre).

(4) the Customers and Communities OSP –

- review the impact of Clause 5, modification or discharge of affordable housing requirements secured through Section 16 agreements, in the Growth and Infrastructure Bill, to determine the impact this clause may have on local communities as a result of applicants applying to the local authority for modifications to or the removal of agreed S105 agreements with respect to affordable housing. Where an authority fails to make a determination within the specified time or determine that no modification will be made, the applicant may appeal to the Planning Inspectorate.

94. **WORK PROGRAMMES**

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

The Board agreed –

- (1) the Panels' work programmes and its own work programme;
- (2) that the bi annual scrutiny reports are removed from all the Panels' work programmes;
- (3) to arrange a meeting with the city's MPs in February/March 2013.

95. **PROJECT INITIATION DOCUMENTS (PIDS)**

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

96. **TASK AND FINISH UPDATES/REPORTS**

The report highlighted the following main areas –

- what were subsidised bus routes?
- what were through tickets?
- Government legislation and advice;
- relevant statistics and information;
- relevant local statistics and information.

Councillor Nicholson took the opportunity to thank officers for their support on this task and finish group.

The Board agreed –

- (1) to recommend the task and finish group report on Subsidised Bus Routes and Through Ticketing to Cabinet for its approval, subject to the amendment of the report to read ‘Dylan Morris’;
- (2) that the comments from the Youth Parliament will be forwarded to the bus companies for information.

97. **EXEMPT BUSINESS**

There were no items of exempt business.