

Overview and Scrutiny Management Board

Tuesday 3 July 2012

PRESENT:

Councillor Mrs Aspinall, in the Chair.

Councillor Tuffin, Vice Chair.

Councillors Ball (substitute for Councillor Nicholson), Bowie, Bowyer, Casey, James, Monahan, Murphy, Mrs Nelder and Wigans.

Apologies for absence: Councillors Philippa Davey and Nicholson.

Also in attendance: Councillor Coker (Cabinet Member for Transport), Councillor Evans (The Leader), Councillor Lowry (Cabinet Member for Finance), Councillor McDonald (Cabinet Member for Public Health and Adult Social Care), Councillor Penberthy (Cabinet Member for Coopertives and Community Development), Giles Perritt (Head of Policy, Partnerships and Performance), Councillor Peter Smith (Deputy Leader), Councillor Vincent (Cabinet Member for Environment), Councillor Williams (Cabinet Member for Children and Young People) and Helen Wright (Democratic Support Officer).

The meeting started at 4.30 pm and finished at 7.20 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.

15. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

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

16. **CHAIR'S URGENT BUSINESS**

There were no items of Chair's urgent business.

17. **CORPORATE PLAN 2012-2015**

The Head of Policy, Performance and Partnerships advised that the Corporate Plan was originally submitted to the Management Board in January 2012 as part of the budget scrutiny process. The Plan was subject to a number of recommendations which were endorsed by the city council. The purpose of this meeting was to scrutinise the revisions made to the Plan.

The Leader provided an overview of his areas of responsibilities which included –

- the Corporate Plan;
- economy, enterprise and employment;

- Destination Plymouth and associated bodies;
- regional and local economic strategy.

The following responses were provided to questions raised by members –

- (a) as Chair of the new task force on jobs, the Leader would ensure an urgency in putting in place plans and initiatives to attack long term unemployment within the city;
- (b) members of the Management Board were being consulted in the first instance regarding the Corporate Plan; a discussion took place regarding the pre decision scrutiny arrangements and whether partners should have been consulted first, in this instance);
- (c) the cooperative council ethos would be operated within the existing budget framework which had been set in March 2012; this would be a different way of working for the council but at the same cost; (although there would be variations within the current budget framework);
- (d) with the reduction in the number of Cabinet Members from ten to eight this provided revenue in the sum of £50,000 which would be used to set up the Community Economic Development Trust; (the same model would be used as the Wolsley Trust).

The Deputy Leader provided an overview of his areas of responsibility which included -

- customers services including libraries;
- business continuity and civil protection;
- leisure management contract;
- sports development.

The Chair took this opportunity to congratulate the Deputy Leader on the resounding success of Armed Forces Day which took place on 30 June 2012, and asked for the Board's congratulations to be passed to the team that had been involved with the event.

The following responses were provided to questions raised by members –

- (e) there was no reference within the manifesto to the closure of libraries;
- (f) the council was currently liaising with other local authorities regarding joined up ICT services;
- (g) work was being undertaken to investigate ways of increasing voter registration, such as automatically being entered into a prize winning competition when people registered to vote;

- (h) there was a commitment to finding a long term solution for Breton Side bus station; improvement works had already been undertaken such as the refurbishment of the street furniture and cleansing of the area;
- (i) in order to engage members of staff with the cooperative council ethos, a new employee handbook was being drafted; communication links would also be improved; the council's employee benefits discount scheme iCHOOSE had also been launched;
- (j) it was anticipated that with the use of social media such as Twitter and Facebook this would encourage young people to engage with the democratic process;
- (k) work was being carried out with the council's covenant partners to develop action plans.

The Cabinet Member for Finance provided an overview of his areas of responsibility which included –

- revenue budget;
- capital programme;
- strategic procurement;
- housing benefit and revenues;
- performance management;
- strategic housing delivery.

The following responses were provided to questions raised by members –

- (l) work was currently being undertaken to look at asset management, such as the options for the Civic Centre; some services provided internally may be better provided by the third sector;
- (m) work would be undertaken with developers to look at the stored sites within the city and also land owned by the council; a meeting would be held with key suppliers to bring forward low cost energy/affordable housing;
- (n) funding for highways maintenance would be in accordance with this year's budget; (the extra funding provided by Central Government in 2011/12 was not available in 2012/13);
- (o) the capital programme would not include unfunded capital investment priorities but for transparency and openness, Councillor Lowry, would be willing to discuss this issue further.

The Cabinet Member for Children and Young People provided an overview of her areas of responsibility which included –

- children's social care;
 - adoption and fostering;
 - corporate fostering;
 - schools and colleges, including governing issues;
 - early years development;
 - youth service;
 - early intervention and prevention.
- (p) it was anticipated that the scrutiny process would help to develop a key piece of work in establishing a commissioning service for children and adult services;
- (q) work was being undertaken to actively look at the transition arrangements for vulnerable children to adulthood;
- (r) in order to address the likely impact of the welfare reform on looked after children, work was being carried out to increase the number of in house fosterers.

The Cabinet Member for the Environment provided an overview of his areas of responsibility which included –

- development planning;
- waste management, recycling and street cleaning;
- parks including playgrounds and green spaces;
- public protection service.

The following responses were provided to questions raised by members –

- (s) there were a number of local authorities that had created and implemented an energy supply company; the council was currently looking at these models;
- (t) all options for energy supplies were currently being explored;
- (u) in order to reduce the backlog of tree works within the city, skills within the existing workforce were being utilised; (works would be completed by the end of August 2012 for the trees on the 'critical list');
- (v) partnership working would continue with the police and other agencies to achieve the right balance between the night time economy and the health impact of alcohol misuse;
- (w) a view on the incinerator would be made once the legal decision was known (it would not be appropriate to comment at this stage);
- (x) initiatives in other local authorities were being explored in order to achieve the recycling rates; these included a real nappies scheme and food waste;

- (y) the council would work in partnership with the university and landlords to look for a resolution to the amount of rubbish that was left out for collection when students moved out of their accommodation; (models in other university cities would be investigated).

The Cabinet Member for Transport provided an overview of his areas of responsibility which included –

- transport policies and procedures;
- sustainable transport;
- highways;
- Tamar Bridge and Torpoint Ferry.

The following responses were provided to questions raised by members –

- (z) several meetings had been held with the council's highways contractor, Amey, in order to engage them with the cooperative council ethos;
- (aa) the council was currently looking at ways of assisting people with disabilities to move around the city, such as continuing the enforcement of bus lanes and providing dropped kerbs;
- (bb) work was currently being undertaken to reach an agreement with all the city's MPs to improve connectivity to the city.

The Cabinet Member for Public Health and Adult Social Care provided an overview of her areas of responsibility which included –

- public health;
- adult health and social care including, older people's services, mental health services, physical disability services, drug and alcohol services and learning disabilities;
- joint health and social care commissioning;
- health and wellbeing.

The following responses were provided to questions raised by members –

- (cc) the Older Person's Charter represented a pledge to older people and a structure for the council to monitor the standards and values that should be expected;
- (dd) community hubs and outreach services would be used to identify those people who needed information and advice on benefits;
- (ee) the council was currently looking to work closer with the Plymouth Community Health Care to sustain people to live in their own homes for longer.

The Cabinet Member for Cooperatives and Community Development provided an overview of his areas of responsibility which included –

- social enterprise support and development (including use of council assets);
- anti-social behaviour;
- community safety;
- localities working;
- community and neighbourhood development;
- homelessness.

The following responses were provided to questions raised by members –

- (ff) the crime figures reported to the Customers and Communities Panel at its April 2012 meeting had been off target; however, it was reported that these figures were now on target; work was currently being undertaken with the police to address challenging issues, such as the reduction in police officers and budgets following the election of the Police and Crime Commissioner;
- (gg) the anti-social behaviour targets were currently being met within the city; a cross party briefing on anti-social behaviour had been arranged in order to review the process; (one potential area could be to look at how to deal with anti-social behaviour in line with the Licensing Act and the Cumulative Impact Policy);
- (hh) the creation of social enterprises would enable the profits to be reinvested within the city; work was currently being undertaken to investigate the creation of a social enterprise in Devonport.

The Overview and Scrutiny Management Board agreed to recommend the following recommendations to Cabinet, that -

- (1) the progress of the task force for jobs is subject to a six month evaluation by the Growth and Prosperity Overview and Scrutiny Panel;
- (2) the production of an action plan for increased voter registration, including joint work with the university, other higher education institutions and with schools;
- (3) the Cabinet seek and publish partners' agreed approaches to the cooperative council ethos, including those of service delivery partners, such as Amey;
- (4) the Cabinet provide clarity about how the city will balance the needs of the night time economy against the health impacts of alcohol misuse;

- (5) the Cabinet agree with the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board a brief for its input into the development of the city's child poverty strategy;
- (6) within six months child poverty in Plymouth will be defined by Cabinet, following appropriate consultation, including referral to the Children's Trust Board and brought to council; this will allow measures to be taken that will record the incidence of child poverty;
- (7) the Cabinet provide clarity that the Older People's Charger is a cross service, rather than a social care initiative;
- (8) stronger impetus is given to the energy supply company initiative, to provide the earliest possible relief to those in fuel poverty;
- (9) in the spirit of open government, Cabinet revisit the earlier recommendation of this Board, to bring forward proposals as to how as yet unfunded capital investment priorities can be considered in a transparent way prior to funding becoming available;
- (10) the Cabinet is asked to demonstrate that plans are in place to ensure a smooth and seamless transition for vulnerable children to adulthood.

18. **EXEMPT BUSINESS**

There were no items of exempt business.