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Democratic Support

Plymouth City Council
Civic Centre
Plymouth PL1 2AA

Please ask for Katey Johns
T 01752 307815
E katey.johns@plymouth.gov.uk
www.plymouth.gov.uk/democracy
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YOUR PLYMOUTH

Monday 10 March 2014

4 pm

Council House (next to the Civic Centre), Plymouth

Members:

Councillor Tuffin, Chair

Councillor Sam Leaves, Vice Chair

Councillors Casey, Damarell, Philippa Davey, Jarvis, Jordan, Martin Leaves, Michael Leaves, Rennie, Ricketts and Tuohy.

Co-opted Representative:

Steve Meakin, Money Advice Co-ordinator Devon and Cornwall.

Members are invited to attend the above meeting to consider the items of business overleaf.

Tracey Lee

Chief Executive

YOUR PLYMOUTH

AGENDA

PART I - PUBLIC MEETING

1. APOLOGIES

To receive apologies for non-attendance by members and to note the attendance of substitutes in accordance with the Constitution.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Members will be asked to make any declarations of interest in respect of items on this agenda.

3. MINUTES (Pages 1 - 8)

To confirm the minutes of the last meeting held on 4 November 2013.

4. CHAIR'S URGENT BUSINESS

To receive reports on business which, in the opinion of the Chair, should be brought forward for urgent consideration.

5. WORK PROGRAMME (Pages 9 - 16)

To review the Your Plymouth work programme 2013 – 2014 whilst having regard to possible matters for consideration during 2014 – 2015 (Transformation Programme).

6. TREE MANAGEMENT (Pages 17 - 38)

The panel will receive an update in respect of Tree Management, particularly in relation to the Tree Management Strategy submitted to its last meeting and to concerns raised over ownership issues. A copy of the response to questions raised by Members at the last meeting is also attached for information.

7. EMERGENCY WELFARE SUPPORT (SOCIAL FUND) (Pages 39 - 44)

The panel will receive an update in respect of the Emergency Welfare Support Fund.

8. COOPERATIVE REVIEW - UNAUTHORISED ENCAMPMENTS TO FOLLOW

The Panel to note the report arising from the Unauthorised Encampment Cooperative Review prior to its submission to the Cooperative Scrutiny Board.

9. TRACKING RESOLUTIONS

(Pages 45 - 46)

The panel to review and monitor the progress of tracking resolutions and receive any relevant feedback from the Cooperative Scrutiny Board.

10. EXEMPT BUSINESS

To consider passing a resolution under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 to exclude the press and public from the meeting for the following item(s) of business on the grounds that it (they) involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph(s) of Part I of Schedule 12A of the Act, as amended by the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

PART II - PRIVATE MEETING

MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC TO NOTE

that, under the law, the panel is entitled to consider certain items in private. Members of the public will be asked to leave the meeting when such items are discussed.

NIL.

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Your Plymouth**Monday 4 November 2013****PRESENT:**

Councillor Tuffin, in the Chair.

Councillor Michael Leaves, Vice-Chair.

Councillors Mrs Bowyer (substitute for Councillor Bowyer), Casey, Damarell, Philippa Davey, K Foster (substitute for Councillor Martin Leaves), Jarvis, Jordan, Rennie, Ricketts and Tuohy.

Co-opted Representative: Mr Steve Meakin.

Apologies for absence: Councillors Bowyer and Martin Leaves.

Also in attendance: Councillor Penberthy, Cabinet Member for Cooperatives and Community Development, Chief Superintendent Andy Boulting, Devon and Cornwall Police, Sarah Hopkins, Community Safety and Partnerships Manager, Chris Angle, Financial and Social Inclusion Officer, Dave Saunders, Interim Assistant Director for Customer Services, Darin Halifax, Lead Officer, and Katey Johns, Democratic Support Officer.

The meeting started at 4 pm and finished at 5.55 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.

20. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

In accordance with the Code of Conduct, the following declaration of interest was made –

Name	Subject	Reason	Interest
Mr S Meakin	Personal Debt	Money Advice Co-ordinator, Devon and Cornwall working with Citizens Advice Bureau	Personal

21. **CHAIR'S URGENT BUSINESS****Appointment of Vice-Chair**

Agreed, in the absence of Councillor Bowyer, that Councillor Michael Leaves, is appointed Vice-Chair for this particular meeting only.

22. **MINUTES**

Agreed the minutes of the meeting held on 30 September 2013.

23. **PLYMOUTH COMMUNITY SAFETY PARTNERSHIP : CRIME FIGURES**

The Chair welcomed Councillor Penberthy, Chief Superintendent Andy Boulting and Sarah Hopkins who were in attendance to update the panel on the latest crime statistics for the city and on performance against the following five targets –

- Closing the gap in overall crime
- Acquisitive Crime
- Violence with Injury
- Criminal Damage
- Anti-Social Behaviour

Members were advised –

- (a) four out of the five were on target and the fifth – closing the gap in overall crime in neighbourhoods – was slightly off-target;
- (b) focus remained on the 10 priority neighbourhoods with four in particular having seen significant increases between April and August 2013 when compared to the same period last year, namely –
 - Stoke
 - Devonport
 - East End
 - Mutley
- (c) since production of the report, some of the neighbourhood statistics had changed and these changes were updated verbally as follows –

Area	% change in crime for the period 1 April to 20 October (compared to the same period the year before)
Stoke	45% (was 53%) - improving
Devonport	31% (was 41%) – improving
East End	20% (was 18%) – slightly worsening
Mutley	9.8% (was 18%) – improving
Plymouth City Centre	0.9% (was 3%) – improving
All Crime	4.4% (was 5.7%) – improving

- (d) of the wide range of crime reduction work being undertaken by the Council, Police and other key partners;
- (e) displacement continued to be a particular challenge;
- (f) Plymouth was fifth best out of 15 similar cities for overall crime.

In response to questions raised, Members heard further that –

- (g) regular meetings took place between the Police and Community Safety Partnership to look at incidents and discuss the tactical approaches required to mitigate the impact of displacement;
- (h) detection and conviction rates were available and could be shared with members if requested. There were different rates for different areas, for example the detection rate for shoplifting in the City was higher due to there being a higher level of surveillance and security presence;
- (i) the new Crime and Anti-Social Behaviour Bill was still working its way through Parliament and its progress was being carefully tracked by Community Safety Partnerships across the peninsula with consideration being given to training packages for staff, councillors and partners to help them understand the new tools, powers and costs;
- (j) the night time levy would apply to any premises serving alcohol after 12.30 am and therefore would not affect many premises outside of the city centre. The fund would be used to help mitigate the impact of the evening and night-time economy on residents.

The Chair thanked the Cabinet Member, Chief Superintendent and Community Safety and Partnerships Manager for their attendance.

24. **PERSONAL DEBT**

Further to a request made at its last meeting, the panel heard from the Cabinet Member for Cooperatives and Community Development, and Chris Angle, Financial and Social Inclusion Officer, on personal debt. Councillor Penberthy introduced the report, advising Members that it was only able to provide a snapshot of the current situation as it was based on information gathered from Advice Plymouth's customer base – just one of many agencies offering support and advice on debt.

In addition, to set the scene nationally, Steve Meakin reported that in England and Wales it was estimated that there were eight million people in debt.

In response to questions raised, Members were advised that –

- (a) during the period July to September 2013, 114 customers were seen by Advice Plymouth with a total of £1.5m problem debt;
- (b) in the last 12 months there had been significant increases in –
 - demand on the city's food bank;
 - water debt as people struggle to pay their water bills;

- council tax debt due to changes introduced in April;
- (c) the Council's Housing Options Department hosts an Advice Plymouth debt adviser at their customer services desk and any customer visiting with a housing issue would automatically be offered a consultation;
- (d) take-up on the emergency welfare scheme was increasing and it was now anticipated that the entire fund would be spent by the end of the financial year;
- (e) personal debt was dependent upon an individual's personal circumstances and was only a problem when it was unmanageable. Whilst one person's level of debt may be significant to them in terms of their ability to pay it back, that same level of debt may not be an issue for someone else;
- (f) the cost of administering council tax liability orders was currently charged at £85 per head, with court costs for those in receipt of benefits or attachment of earnings being waived. However, work was under way to see if it was possible to bring that cost down.

The panel recognised that people dealt with unmanageable personal debt in different ways and that, whilst many may approach their creditors in the first instance or seek support and advice through one of the various agencies, there were also many who felt ashamed of their debt and were suffering silently.

Agreed that an in-depth cooperative review is undertaken on personal debt with time being taken, prior to commencement of the review, to gather the necessary data from as many support and debt advice agencies as possible.

(Steve Meakin declared a personal interest in respect of the above item).

25. **CUSTOMER SERVICES TRANSFORMATION**

Further to minute 18(1), the panel heard from Dave Saunders, Interim Assistant Director for Customer Services, on progress with implementing the Customer Services transformation programme. The presentation informed Members –

- (a) the Customer Services transformation programme was being driven by the Brilliant Cooperative Corporate Plan's Pioneering Plymouth objective;
- (b) of the Customer Services vision and principles;
- (c) that the programme had been reshaped due to –
 - Civic Centre decant
 - new City Centre shop

- budget pressures
 - transformation
- (d) of the three work streams which had been put in place as part of the transformation programme, along with expected delivery dates, namely –
- customer insight – Feb/March 2014
 - customer access and management model
 - customer led service design – First Quarter 2014
- (e) of highlights of the transformation project's progress to date which included –
- the completion of 10,000 survey forms with customers
 - identification of key groups of customers and their preferred channel of access
 - involvement of customers in future service re-design;
 - installation of wi-fi in libraries

In response to questions raised, Members were advised further that -

- (f) there would be quality monitoring put in place in terms of customer care standards to ensure staff were aware of them and putting them into practice;
- (g) the importance of honesty with customers was recognised in order ensure realistic expectations were met as opposed to setting unachievable targets;
- (h) the council was looking into the use of volunteers to staff libraries in order to expand opening hours and make them more accessible;
- (i) e-mails from staff containing no personal data were not good customer practice as they should be personalised and make someone accountable - this would be picked up and addressed through the customer care standards;
- (j) there was a way to ensure that numbers could be displayed when staff were making outgoing calls/returning customer's calls and this would be communicated to staff;
- (k) social media was very useful for pushing messages out, particularly in terms of traffic management when there had been an accident in the city and certain roads should be avoided or to issue warnings of bad weather, but not in terms of a two-way communication tool;
- (l) staff would be available at the end of a phone to back up on-line services.

The panel welcomed the progress update and the Chair thanked the Interim Assistant Director for Customer Services for his attendance.

Agreed that regular updates on progress with the Customer Services transformation programme are presented to the panel.

26. **TREE MANAGEMENT**

Having considered the briefing paper and statement provided in respect of Tree Management, Members asked that the following questions/concerns be passed to the Cabinet Member for Environment for response and/or comment –

- whether there was enough money in the budget to undertake the work required and for continued future tree management
- is the council's policy to cut down trees rather than maintain them if that is the cheaper option?
- does the council know which trees it owns and has responsibility for and is this information available in map form?
- were waiting lists being managed effectively or were people waiting too long?

Agreed that –

- (1) responses to the points raised would be sought from the appropriate Cabinet Member and circulated to panel Members via e-mail;
- (2) the issue of ownership would be added to the agenda for the next meeting.

27. **ROADSIDE MEMORIALS**

Members welcomed and supported the Roadside Memorial Guidance.

28. **PUBLIC FUNERALS**

Members welcomed the briefing paper and agreed that a short half-day cooperative review is undertaken in order to give consideration to the following –

- whether the wishes of family members should be accommodated in regard to timing of the Bereavement Service;
- should family members be notified of the date and time of the funeral even though they have not accepted responsibility for payment;
- whether family members who are not contributing to the cost of the funeral should be offered a choice of burial or cremation;
- where denomination of the deceased is known, should a minister be employed (currently incurs a fee of £179);
- services currently make no provision for flowers or grave markings – is that acceptable?

29. **TRACKING RESOLUTIONS**

The panel noted its tracking resolutions schedule.

30. **WORK PROGRAMME**

The Chair highlighted that, as a result of earlier decisions, the panel had now committed to undertake an additional two cooperative reviews, and had a third had been referred from the Cooperative Scrutiny Board –

- Personal Debt
- Public Funerals
- The effects of the expansion of Plymouth University and its students on the surrounding residential areas

In view of the above, and the potential impact on scrutiny arising from the transformation programme, the Chair suggested that the panel may wish to reconsider its work programme.

Agreed that the Chair and Vice-Chair review and re-prioritise the panel's work programme for 2013/14.

31. **EXEMPT BUSINESS**

There were no items of exempt business.

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YOUR PLYMOUTH

Work Programme 2013 - 2014



Please note that the work programme is a 'live' document and subject to change at short notice. The information in this work programme is intended to be of strategic relevance and is subject to approval at the Cooperative Scrutiny Board.

For general enquiries relating to the Council's Scrutiny function, including this committee's work programme, please contact Katey Johns, Democratic Support Officer, on 01752 307815.

Date of meeting	Agenda item	Purpose of the agenda item	Reason for consideration	Responsible Officer
08.07.13	Customer Services	To get an overview of where we are in terms of customer service provision to help identify the focus of the task and finish scrutiny review(s)	To help prioritise focus of task and finish reviews	Andrew Stephens
	Housing Plan : Homelessness	To get an overview of where we are in terms of delivering affordable housing	This is a key element within the Corporate plan	Matt Garrett
	Cabinet Member for Cooperatives and Community Development	To inform panel of portfolio responsibilities and to identify possible areas which could benefit from pre/post decision scrutiny	To help develop panel's work programme	Councillor Penberthy
30.09.13	Emergency Welfare Support (Social Fund)	To look at budget delivery and customer satisfaction following its introduction in April 2013	Monitoring outcome of Social Fund Replacement task and finish review	Ann Thorpe
	Cabinet Member for Environment	To inform panel of portfolio responsibilities and to identify possible areas which could benefit from pre/post decision scrutiny	To help develop panel's work programme	Councillor Vincent
	Consultation on the review of the Licensing Act Statement of Licensing Policy and introduction of the Late Night Levy	To form part of the consultation process and help inform the policy review	Consultation	Andy Netherton

Date of meeting	Agenda item	Purpose of the agenda item	Reason for consideration	Responsible Officer
04.11.13	Plymouth Community Safety Partnership (Crime Stats)	To receive an annual update on crime stats for the City	Statutory Function	Sarah Hopkins
	Roadside Memorials	Update on existing policy and current situation / issues	To identify whether further issue specific scrutiny action is required	
	Tree Management	Update on existing policy and current situation / issues	To identify whether further issue specific scrutiny action is required	Gareth Harrison-Poole
	Public Funerals	Update on existing policy and current situation / issues	To identify whether further issue specific scrutiny action is required	Nicola Horne
	Customer Services Transformation	Update on progress with project delivery	To establish whether it is still appropriate to continue with the planned Co-operative Review	Dave Saunders
	Personal Debt	To receive a situation report on the level of personal debt in the City and how this is being managed (to include rent arrears)	Personal debt and the growth of the pay day loan market is a major concern.	Chris Angle
10.03.14	Emergency Welfare Support (Social Fund)	To look at budget delivery and customer satisfaction following its introduction in April 2013	Monitoring outcome of Social Fund Replacement task and finish review after first 12 months of operation	Ann Thorpe / Chris Angle
	Tree Management	To respond to issues raised at last meeting (04.11.13), including ownership	Flagged as a concern by members at meeting on 4/11/13	Gareth Harrison-Poole

Cooperative Reviews	Consideration	Description
	Priority	
Public Funerals	1 (26 February 2014) - Completed	Panel to help inform Council's policy on managing public funerals
Neighbourhood / Locality Working	3	The panel to review Neighbourhood / Locality Working
Personal Debt	2 (July 2014)	Panel to look at level of personal debt and its impact in the City
Customer Services (focus on website and interactive transactions)	5 (Put on hold pending further update on progress with Transformation Programme)	The panel will hear from the Assistant Director for Customer Services on progress with the transformation programme at its meeting on 8 July, prior to preparing the PID and scoping documents for this review
Access to Buildings / Services (Annual Review)	6	Panel to look at barriers (including physical and language)
Cooperative Reviews Referred from Co-operative Scrutiny Board		
Review of Procedures used by the Council when dealing with unauthorised encampments	Completed	To clarify current processes and procedures against a backdrop of legal, social and financial considerations and to attempt to ensure community cohesion and public reassurance.
The effects of the expansion of Plymouth University and its students on the surrounding residential areas	4	<p>The expansion of Plymouth University over recent years has resulted in an increase in the student populations living in the surrounding areas to the University. The increase in students living in Mount Gould, Mutley, Greenbank and Lipson areas has had detrimental consequences which have predominantly been felt by local residents who have regularly had to deal with an increase in issues of Anti-Social Behaviour, noise, litter and reported crimes.</p> <p>The review will seek to analyse the effects of an increasing student population on the local surrounding areas to establish if a link exists between increased student populations and an increase in issues of ASB, noise, litter and reported crimes. To include a review of a previous piece of work completed in 2012.</p>

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DRAFT - SCRUTINY OF THE TRANSFORMATION PROGRAMME



1. Introduction

This report sets out proposals for how the Council's Transformation Programme will be scrutinised by the Co-operative Scrutiny Board and the four Panels during the 2014/15 financial year.

2. Background

2.1. Transformation Programme

During 2013 the Council put in place a number of officer and member arrangements for the development and implementation of the Transformation Programme. The main purpose of the Programme is to address the projected £65m funding gap that the Council would otherwise face by the end of the 2016/17 financial year, whilst continuing to deliver against its values and objectives.

2.2. The Budget Scrutiny Process and Recommendations

The Budget Scrutiny process in January 2014 identified that much of the detail around deliverables, efficiencies and savings targets in the Transformation Programme were not yet available, making full scrutiny of the Programme difficult. In addition, the Business Cases for the five individual programmes were not, at the time of the Budget Scrutiny, completed and could not, therefore, be scrutinised. This situation led to the agreement of the following recommendations:

- Further reassurance is needed concerning the robustness of the figures relating to transformation income, savings and investment prior to the presentation of the 2014-15 budget to Council.
- Information relating to the deliverability of the 2014/15 transformation proposals, which is part of the statutory budget, are made available for scrutiny.
- The assumptions on which the transformation figures for 2015/17 are based, and the risks associated with delivery, should be available for scrutiny.
- The role of the Co-operative Scrutiny Board and its Panels in holding the executive to account for the delivery of the transformation programme in the coming year should be clarified, agreed and published.

3. Scrutiny of the Transformation Programme

3.1. Objectives

The objectives of the proposed approach for the Board and the Panels scrutinising the Transformation Programme are as follows:

- To assist the Council's executive in transforming the Council and, thereby, delivering a balanced budget.
- To hold the executive to account for the quality and impact of specific projects and initiatives within the Transformation Programme.

- To ensure that the Transformation Programme is delivered in a way that is consistent with the Council's values, particularly the need to reflect the views of residents.

3.2. Approach

The Co-operative Scrutiny Board and the four Scrutiny Panels will carry out these objectives by a process of constructive challenge and engagement with lead members and officers. Where appropriate the Board and the Panels may also engage with the Council's partners and other stakeholders.

3.3. Overall Proposal

It is proposed that the Co-operative Scrutiny Board and the four Panels each have a specific role in examining and challenging the progress being made by the Transformation Programme. The Board, with support from the Panels, will lead on this and will ensure that constructive and specific feedback is provided to lead members and officers as appropriate.

3.4. Allocation of work to the Board and the Panels

It is proposed that each of the four Panels and the Board are allocated one of the five programmes as follows:

- The Co-operative Scrutiny Board – Co-operative Centre of Operations
- Your Plymouth – Customer and Service Transformation
- Working Plymouth – People and Organisational Development
- Ambitious Plymouth – Growth, Assets and Municipal Enterprise
- Caring Plymouth – Integrated Approach to Health and Wellbeing

3.5. Information and issues to be scrutinised

The following information should be provided at agreed times to the Board, or Panels, as appropriate:

- a. An initial presentation to the Board on the Transformation Programme showing progress to date, anticipated results/impact over the coming three months and key risks.
- b. The Business Cases for the five work programmes.
- c. Reports on progress against the Business Cases.
- d. An assessment of the Value for Money, both projected and actual, being obtained by the Transformation Programme by comparing the ongoing investment (costs) of the Programme against the actual and anticipated savings.
- e. Pre-decision reports on specific issues requiring executive decisions – these are set out in the Decision Timeline for Transformation document which could be used to decide which issues should be referred to Scrutiny and when this should be.
- f. The nature of engagement with the Council's key stakeholders and the impact, both projected and actual, that this engagement is having on transforming the Council.
- g. An assessment of how the Transformation Programme is being delivered in line with the Council's values i.e. being democratic, responsible, fair and working in partnership.
- h. Reports from relevant Assistant Directors on how the delivery of their Business Plans is assisting in the implementation of the Transformation Programme.
- i. Details of how staff are being involved in the Transformation Programme along with an assessment of the level of engagement.
- j. An assessment of the impact of the Transformation Programme on residents and service users.

3.6. Support to the Board and the Panels

In order for the Board and the Panels to deliver their role efficiently and effectively it is important to ensure that the right level of support is in place. In addition to the DSOs and the Lead Scrutiny Officers, support for this process should come from:

- The Senior Responsible Officer for each Programme
- The individual Programme Managers

3.7. Proposed Timescale

Given the limited number of meetings for the Panels and the Board before the end of this municipal year, the proposed timescale, set out underneath, is split between a shorter programme of work for this year with most of the activity taking place once the new Panels and Board are agreed after the Council's AGM in June.

3.7.1. Municipal year 2013-14

- An initial presentation to the Board (a. above) at its March meeting (12th or 26th).
- Short presentations on the individual business cases to the Panel meetings in March and the Board meeting in April (3.5 (b) above).
- Following these presentations, the Panels and the Boards will draw up terms of reference for short reviews on each of the business cases which will be carried out at the beginning of the next municipal year.
- Pre-decision scrutiny of relevant decisions (if any) at the Board meeting in April (e. above).

3.7.2. Municipal year 2014-15

- Updates (to the Panels and the Board) on each Business Case, followed by the carrying out of the reviews scoped in April (c. above).
- A Value for Money assessment to be provided to the Board at its first meeting in the new municipal year – followed by a short review by the Board (d. above).
- Ongoing pre-decision scrutiny of decisions at the Board or the relevant Panel (3.5 (e) above).
- Short presentations to the Board and each Panel (at early meetings) on the engagement of each of the five programmes with the Council's key stakeholders.
- A presentation on how the Transformation Programme is being delivered in line with the Council's values (g. above) – followed by a review if necessary.
- Regular reports by appropriate Assistant Directors (to be agreed) on how their service areas are implementing the Transformation Programme (h. above) – followed by a review examining the extent to which business plans are being used to assist in the implementation of the Transformation Programme.
- A review into the extent to which staff are being meaningfully and constructively engaged in the delivery of the Transformation Programme.

Once the details of the Board and Panel meetings are confirmed for the next municipal year, a detailed timetable will be produced setting out relevant timelines and responsibilities for the proposals in 3.7.2.

3.8. The Purpose and Impact of the Transformation Programme Scrutiny.

Given its unique role in the Council's governance arrangements, the Board and the four Panels have a distinctive and complementary role to play in scrutinising the Transformation Programme:

- The other parts of the transformation governance arrangements are mainly concerned with decision-making and information provision – the Board and the Panels will be focusing more on impact and outcomes.
- There will be a challenge on whether the Transformation Programme is delivering value for money
- The Board and Panels will be looking at how the Transformation Programme will be mainstreamed into Council services.
- The Board and the Panels will be examining the link between the Transformation Programme and the Council's Values.
- There will be a broader assessment of how the Council is engaging with its partners in order to achieve the Transformation objectives.
- The Board will coordinate the work set out above and provide feedback to the Cabinet/Transformation Advisory Group/Members' Transformation Board.

4. Next Steps

4.1. Municipal Year 2013-14

Once this report has been agreed, the necessary arrangements for the proposed work in 3.7.1. will be put in place.

4.2. Next Municipal Year 2014-15

The arrangements for the proposed work in 3.7.2. will be put in place following the AGM on June 6th.

TREE MANAGEMENT STATEMENT

Street Scene Services



DOCUMENT CONTROL

Author: Gareth Harrison-Poole
 Department: Street Scene Services
 Distribution:
 Review date; October 2012

DOCUMENT HISTORY / CHANGES

Version 1.0	Gareth Harrison-Poole	20 Aug 2012	Set up original document
Version 1.1	Gareth Harrison-Poole	05 Sep 2012	Changes made following comments by NMaker
Version 1.2	Gareth Harrison-Poole	11 Sep 2012	Changes made following internal comments. Section numbers added
Version 1.3	Gareth Harrison-Poole	09 Oct 2012	Hedgerow section added. Changes made following internal comments
Version 1.4	Gareth Harrison-Poole	22 Jan 2013	Minor changes made following internal comments
Version 1.5	Gareth Harrison-Poole	07 Mar 2013	Hedgerow section amended
Version 1.6	Gareth Harrison-Poole	07 Mar 2013	Appendix 2 added
Version 1.7	Gareth Harrison-Poole	19 Sep 2013	Minor changes to priorities following internal comments

DRAFT

1.0 Introduction

This tree management policy is designed to provide a framework for the management of trees owned and managed by Plymouth City Council. It sets out the guiding principles for managing our tree stock, for guiding arboricultural management decisions on all Council owned and managed tree stock.

Trees enhance the quality of life in the urban environment and form an important part of its diversity. They contribute to our health and well being and enhance the enjoyment of the city.

2.0 Aims and Objectives

These overall objectives will be achieved by implementing and continuously developing the management statements contained in this document.

The policy statements have been formed to ensure that the large range and benefits of Plymouth's tree stock are all considered and provide a framework for effective management.

3.0 Aims

- carry out regular inspections to identify problems early and take preventative action, example, felling of dead, diseased or dangerous trees in high traffic areas before it falls naturally;
- retain trees unless there are external influences on arboricultural, environmental, or risk-related reasons not to do so;
- grow a wide range of tree species through our planting programmes;
- where necessary proactively manage our trees based on maintenance cycles ranging from 1 - 5 years depending on age, distance from property, species, health and other arboricultural factors;
- not remove or prune trees for the following reasons:
 - I) Seasonal nuisance, to reduce leaf fall and berries or honeydew
 - II) To reduce activities of birds or invertebrates
 - III) To change natural light levels
 - IV) To improve TV reception for satellite or improve vistas
 - V) To enable solar panel installation

4.0 Objectives

To manage the tree resource, through best technical practice for the multiple aims of landscape, biodiversity, conservation, amenity and environmental benefits.

To guide elected members, employees, contractors and residents on the management principles for Plymouth's tree stock.

5.0 Tree types

5.1 Street trees

Street trees are defined as planted and growing in pavements and road verges along the city's highway network.

Street trees are beneficial to the city, they help to filter traffic pollution, and they can provide shade to car parking and pedestrian passage. A tree-lined street will improve the appearance of a street. In most cases property value is increased with street trees.

5.2 Trees in parks

Trees growing in the city's parks and green spaces, including cemeteries are the most significant in terms of providing visual amenity and valuable in providing leisure extensions. If the tree cover is to survive, their high value will remain in perpetuity from the benefits derived from a sustained high quality management programme.

5.3 Trees on non PCC land

Private tree owners have a direct responsibility for their trees. However The Highways Act 1980 allows the Plymouth City Council to serve notice on a landowner (or occupier of the land) to undertake specified works or works as necessary to remove a danger or obstruction, within 14 days of the serving of the notice. Failure to do so would result in the Local Authority being able to undertake the work and recover all reasonable costs in undertaking the work. The Local Authority also have powers under the same Act to enter private property with no notice to remove any severe or imminent threat from a tree in land adjacent to the highway. This would be instructed as part of the duties of the controlling authority to take action to remove any danger to the highway.

TMS 1

The Council will not carry out general tree work on private property at our own expense. Any tree works carried out on land not owned by us will be a chargeable service.

The Council will prosecute any tree owner who carries out or allows another to carry out on his/her behalf unauthorised works to a tree protected by a Tree Preservation Order or within a Conservation Area.

5.4 Trees in woodland

The Council is keen to ensure that woodland management across the Plymouth is consistent and that knowledge and examples of best practice are shared between the different organisations responsible for woodlands.

As a local authority with a duty of care to residents and visitors to the city there is a need to implement and continually develop a risk-based approach to tree maintenance.

There is a growing need for the Council to provide accurate information on all of its assets, to show transparency in local government processes. One of the ways we meet this is through independently verified management systems. Our Street Scene Services Department is certified to BS EN ISO9001:2009 and this must be reflected in our overall approach to managing trees in the urban environment.

6.0 Risk Management

6.1 Principles of tree risk management

Tree risk management is a systematic and proactive approach that prioritises work based on potential risk of hazardous trees. This assessment method provides an efficient process for establishing an inspection schedule and methods, and enables the prioritisation of works based on perceived risk.

TMS 2

The Council will carry out regular inspections of trees in parks and open spaces.

6.2 Tree work priorities

Each tree or groups of trees that have been inspected will be given a category based on the ground inspection information (ascertained through the application of VTA or QTRA) and the level of risk they pose to the general public.

TMS 3

The Council will only carry out tree work based on its listed priorities.

These priority categories are documented below-

Priority 1 – Dead, dying or dangerous trees. Trees in this category warrant work to make safe within 3 months.

Priority 2 – Tree(s) that are showing signs of decay or stress. These trees will be monitored for further decline but do not warrant work to be undertaken immediately including trees that need to be pruned or felled in relation to insurance claims

Re-Inspection – Tree(s) that are causing an issue to a resident or residents (such as dropping leaves/sap on cars or creating shade). These trees fall outside of Priority categories 1 and 2.

6.3 Risk management procedure

A proactive tree management system is coupled with scheduled tree inspections to identify and mitigate future incidents. Plymouth City Council uses a systematic process that utilises tree assessment and management works based on levels of risk.

TMS 4

The Plymouth City Council will programme tree inspections and management works to ensure the health and safety of trees is maintained and the potential for tree-related damage is kept to a reasonable minimum.

Tree risk zones are classified as High Risk, Moderate Risk and Low Risk, to show how these areas are to be treated in relation to the type and timing of scheduled tree inspections. The 'risk zone' determines the timing of scheduled tree inspections and is shown in table 1. The method of scheduled inspection will also vary depending on the risk zone and type.

The process for tree inspection includes a ground inspection to evaluate if there are any trees that are hazardous and require maintenance works or additional inspection. This inspection would be recorded on Plymouth City Councils Tree Management database. This incorporates the identification of the existing tree problem (if any) and stipulate any remedial action necessary based on best practice to address the specific issue.

Further to this the following information is gathered to ensure sufficient information to allow for relevant monitoring and decision making -

- Inspection date and officer
- Location
- Species
- Age
- Tree measurements; height, canopy spread and trunk diameter
- Condition and health of the tree
- Any defects, i.e. damage to stem or limbs, decay
- Work history
- Recommendations

The inspections will generate maintenance works that will be prioritised (see Section 6.2 for priority descriptions).

Determining the level of risk is based on public use and tree within public area, which could be considered to be low, moderate or high the tree characteristics, including tree condition, species characteristics or age, and location factors and further considerations, the presence of known 'problem' species and declining tree populations.

Table I presents the risk classification, inspection schedule and method of inspections.

Table I: Tree risk categories and inspection schedules

Risk Zone Category	Location
High Risk	<p>High-use parks and sport grounds and high use areas within a park; Playgrounds Buildings Shopping precincts Tree's on the annual monitoring list School playgrounds – Where PCC are contracted to do so Street trees with very high-risk tree characteristics such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - tree roots causing severe pavement buckling - Close to buildings - Overhanging bus routes <p>Main thoroughfares: congested intersections and visually obstructed traffic signs and stoplights and street lights.</p>
Moderate Risk	<p>General parks Parking areas/Car Parks Minor roads</p>
Low Risk	<p>Low use public areas within dispersed recreation, e.g., Open areas, Nature Reserves, playing fields</p>

(Note – the location list is not exhaustive)

6.4 Tree risk assessment method

Tree inspections will be carried out by qualified and experienced arborists that can demonstrate good judgement by their arboricultural knowledge and experiences of tree assessment methods on tree condition, location, land use and perceived risk. The main principles of tree assessment are the Visual Tree Assessment (VTA) method and the Quantified Tree Risk Assessment (QTRA).

The VTA is a method of evaluating the structural condition, health and stability of a tree. The first stage is the visual inspection of the tree for defect, symptoms and vitality. If a defect is suspected on the basis of the symptoms, thorough examination is carried out. If the defect is confirmed remedial action will be carried out to reduce the risk the tree or limb poses.

The Quantified Tree Risk Assessment (QTRA) system applies accepted risk management principles to tree safety management. The system can assist the identification of acceptable risk levels and priority for action.

Tree risk assessment methods generally consider three components of tree failure: risk-target value, probability of failure, and impact potential.

Tree hazard is able to assess and quantify the risk, therefore the risk can be kept within acceptable or reasonable limits with appropriate risk control measures. The assessment of tree hazards will enable managers to operate and actions can mitigate the tree risk to a minimize level.

TMS 5

The Council will classify the tree risk zones and undertake inspections and subsequent tree work based on risk.

6.5 Ground inspections

Ground inspection can be applied for scheduled tree inspections. The method can also be adopted to execute more detailed street tree inspections. These could be grouped into two types, informal and routine.

Informal: A quick scan by to pick out a tree with an obvious warning sign after reports of damage or following significant storms

Routine Programme: Individual tree inspection to pick out obvious warning signs and completing the inspection checklist

6.6 Specialised diagnostic tools

Tree risk inspections provide a systematic method of assessing tree by evaluating the level of risk trees will cause hazardous to public safety occasionally visual inspection is insufficient to evaluate all probability of tree failure. In-depth inspections and the use of specialized diagnostic tools maybe required.

Decay assessments determine the location and extent of decay exist in a tree to assess the structural integrity of the tree. The outer shell of sound wood is measured to ensure safe limits are met and the tree does not pose an unacceptable

level of risk. The use of specialised diagnostic tools will only be used in extreme cases where the qualified arboriculturalists can not ascertain sufficient information about the health of a tree from a ground inspection.

6.7 Ancient trees

We recognise the importance of mature and ancient trees and will balance safety with our duty to protect the environment. Higher levels of risk will be acceptable in areas of lower footfall (e.g. the middle of a woodland site) as opposed to highly visited areas (e.g. play areas). This will allow us to keep veteran trees to encourage biodiversity without creating undue risk.

6.8 Method of review

Plymouth City Council Street Scene Services department is certified to BS EN ISO 9001:2009 (Risk Management) and this must be reflected in our overall approach to managing trees in the urban environment. The tree risk management program will be reviewed every four years. The process will include reassessment of classification into risk zones, and evaluation of the tree inspection and assessment methods and recording processes.

7.0 Tree Removal

Plymouth City Council will seek to avoid tree removal wherever possible. The potential risk of a tree is related to the tree size and structure that increase the opportunities of tree failure. Public safety is the first consideration on tree removal request. Due to safety reasons, the action should be to reduce the high risk to an acceptable level or mitigate it through treating the tree or removing the tree. All tree management options will be investigated prior to the recommendation for removal.

Plymouth City Council will only remove trees if the following reasons exist:

- A tree is dead, dying, diseased or dangerous
- A tree is seriously infected with a fungus or a disease or fungus which threatens to spread to other trees
- The tree has caused damage to property, roads and buildings or is likely to cause damage to adjacent structures & underground services where pruning is not a viable option
- A tree severely interferes with adjacent tree or tree group to the extent with fully potential development.
- The tree is a species which it is known will ultimately outgrow its location and in doing so unreasonably restrict the use of the areas
- Trees that are proven to be the cause of subsidence by qualified professional arborist
- The tree stands in the way of agreed development work via Plymouth City Council's Planning Committee

TMS 6

In case of tree disease outbreak, we will provide advice and information regarding control and prevention methods to private tree owners, in line with national guidance and advice.

Where birds are found to be nesting in trees, tree works will be delayed until the end of the nesting season unless there is a specific Health and Safety reason that requires urgent remedy. Any trees identified and confirmed to be supporting roosting bats will not be worked on until advice is sought and remedial action agreed.

TMS 7

The Council will not carry out tree removal in direct response to any natural or seasonal phenomena.

Plymouth City Council will not carry out tree removal for the following reasons:

- Natural and seasonal phenomena as leaf fall as berries, honeydew;
- Emission of sunlight or man made lighting during any part of the day;
- TV or satellite signal reception;
- Blocking or obstruction of a view from a residence

7.1 Tree removal associated with infrastructure improvements

When tree removal is to facilitate the construction of new infrastructure or the maintenance of existing infrastructure a consultation process is sought with the relevant stakeholders to ensure the tree work is warranted and carried out minimise the impact on the treescape.

Plymouth City Council will work with developers to ensure the value of trees in developments are championed and any existing trees in planned development sites are protected. If tree removal is warranted by planned new development Plymouth City Council will ensure the trees are relocated and/or replaced with appropriate species.

7.2 Unauthorised tree removal

If a Council managed tree or group of trees is removed by any person or authority without Council authorisation, that person may be required to pay the full cost of tree reinstatement for tree purchasing, tree planting and a minimum two-year tree maintenance period of the tree.

TMS 8

Under the Town and Country Planning Act (1990), Plymouth City Council has responsibility to protect certain identified trees under Tree Preservation Orders. Our planning officers can protect the tree from lopping, topping, cutting down or willful damage.

8.0 Procedures for Tree Work Requests

8.1 Tree work requests

Tree work will only be carried out following the inspection from Plymouth City Council's qualified tree officers or approved qualified contractors. Residents may ask for an inspection by contacting Plymouth City Council and the tree officer will be scheduled to inspect the tree(s) if it is warranted. All tree inspection requests shall be recorded and then inspected and assessed by a suitably qualified person. All tree work should be carried out to BS 3998 (2010) Tree Work recommendations.

8.2 Approvals

All approvals for tree removal shall be authorised by Plymouth City Council. Tree work requests will be rejected if the tree(s) do not meet one of the criteria listed in section 7.0.

8.3 Out of Hours

Plymouth City Council operates a 24hr on call service and we have a selection of tree maintenance contractors available to operate within the city out of office hours if the

9.0 Tree Selection, Planting and Replacement

9.1 Tree selection

An appropriate planting site and tree selection can have the following benefits:

- Mitigate conflicts between tree roots and adjacent buildings /property and road surface;
- Reduce the occurrence of tree disease through selecting resistant type of trees ;
- Reduce maintenance cost of tree pruning and root protection;
- Reduced tree demand like tolerances of drought in urban environment;
- Attractive streetscapes that emphasize the landscape and architectural character

TMS 9

The Council will create a varied and sustainable tree population in parks and open spaces.

Plymouth City Council will take consideration of plant tolerances and adaptability in tree selection for all planting schemes. Based on the principles of 'right tree, right place', appropriate tree selection can minimize nuisance and maintenance cost.

Tree selection will need to consider:

- Ecology considerations of tree diversity, maintaining and the opportunity for contributing to local biodiversity
- Availability, concerning the space available and potential size and numbers of tree planting programme
- Functional and spatial considerations that relates to the tree root system and limited impact on adjacent buildings /property, pavement damage.
- Ground conditions (in particular soil type and drainage), relates to a trees ability to tolerate urban conditions
- Health considerations, select low levels of toxic or allergenic characteristics of tree species
- Aesthetic considerations for enhancing the visual amenity of a streetscape or area
- Historic associations and the opportunity for new tree planting to reflect historic planting patterns

General guidelines for tree selection:

- Native tree species will be given priority for tree planting.
- Species will be selected that can maintain spatial constraints within a street, e.g. pedestrian and vehicle clearances, overhead power line clearances, root volume restraints and hard surfaces.
- Select tree species that have moderate to high tolerance of stress relating to climatic suitability, soil oxygen levels, soil compaction, drought, pest and diseases, high wind and atmospheric pollution.
- Priority will be given to tree species that do not need additional establishment to keep in safe and aesthetically pruning practices. Tree species that can cause damage to property/buildings will be avoided.
- Using tree species that are known to have low or manageable litter drop, such as leaves, flowers, fruit and bark.

9.2 Tree planting guide

Plymouth City Council will seek to ensure that all new tree planting is planted in a suitable location with tree pit (if necessary); appropriate size, ground preparation, staking, irrigation and protection. The choice of tree species will need to take into consideration local conditions including the space available, soil type, street character and presence of services.

TMS 10

The Council will select species based on the principles of ‘right tree, right place’. When selecting trees for planting in the street, the council will select the appropriate species and location. Specification of all new tree planting by the Council or partners is approved prior to implementation in the tree planting programme.

9.3 Tree pit

If trees are being planting in a built up area adjacent to development or infrastructure, tree pits may be required to be used. Prior to planting the excavation works will need to be inspected by a qualified arboriculturist.

Tree pit location and specification will need to consider:

- Type of surface
- Ground conditions (e.g. soil type, pH and drainage)
- Space available for the tree pit
- Presence of street lights
- Proposed tree species
- Shape of tree pit

9.4 Tree root barrier

Root barriers are used to prevent or reduce conflicts between tree roots and adjacent buildings. Barriers provide deflection of lateral growing roots down below the depth of the barrier or constrict them within a designated area.

The type and size of tree root barriers installation will be determined by assessing the factors shown below:

- Tree species
- Tree age
- Tree condition
- Relative tolerance of tree to root severance
- Distance available for root pruning
- Potential of tree root conflict
- Soil type
- Distance from tree to infrastructure
- Significance
- Feasibility

10.0 Trees and the Environment

10.1 Biodiversity

Tree's and woodland's, including traditional orchards, are very important to the city in terms of providing a wide range of habitats and biodiversity for a large range and

variety of mammals, birds and invertebrates. Trees make a contribution by acting as food source, nesting location, roost sites and as links between otherwise fragmented habitats.

Tree, woodland and orchard planting provide important chances for enhancing biodiversity in Plymouth. Native trees provide wildlife habitat for nesting / foraging opportunities, and cover for birds from predators. Orchards are hotspots for biodiversity supporting a wide range of wildlife and containing UK BAP priority habitats and species, as well as an array of Nationally Rare and Nationally Scarce species. Trees also provide roosts, commuting routes and foraging opportunities for bats.

TMS 11

The Council will ensure that its woodlands are managed as a long term sustainable resource for the public, for education and for nature conservation and biodiversity. The Council will encourage expansion of the urban woodland in appropriate locations ensuring layout and selection of native species of local provenance to reflect the local woodland character.

The UK Biodiversity Action Plan was produced in 1994 and sets out action plans to identify, conserve and protect existing biological diversity in the UK, and identify opportunities for enhancement. Target habitats include wet woodland, neutral grassland, ancient hedgerows and Traditional Orchards. The creation of such is widely supported and encouraged throughout Plymouth ensuring planting schemes have community involvement and are suitable and sympathetic for the local area.

TMS 12

The Council will allow to remain *in situ* any dead or felled trees in order to create wildlife habitats. The Council will manage woodland to fulfill its obligation as owners to ensure safety of people and property whilst remembering that woodlands are natural places and the level of acceptable risk must reflect this. Trees within our woodlands will not be felled without adequate arboricultural or legal justification. Where appropriate the Council will ensure standing dead and fallen wood is left on site unless there are sound conservation and / or safety reasons for its removal. Natural regeneration will be supported on appropriate sites.

10.2 Climate change

Climate change is the biggest issue facing the world and threat to the presence of trees in urban areas. The Forestry Commission has noticed that the climate of the UK will become milder and wetter in winter, and significantly hotter and drier in the

summer periods in the coming years. As a result of this, trees are likely to experience drought stress in the summer and will be more easily affected by pest and disease.

TMS 13

Correct species selection during new planting schemes will prevent planting tree species that are intolerant to climate change.

11.0 HEDGEROWS

Hedgerows play an important role in the city providing shelter, creating landscape features and defining boundaries. They also provide an important habitat for wildlife and are often seen as defining the character of the English landscape.

Many hedges and trees grow on the edge of the highway and mark its boundary with private property. In such cases it is the responsibility of the adjacent landowner or occupier to properly maintain them. This also applies to trees that overhang the highway or those which may fall on to it. Plymouth City Council will maintain all hedgerows growing within the highway limits.

11.1 Maintenance

Maintenance on Plymouth City council owned hedges is carried out usually twice a year. Inspections are also carried out twice a year (During February/March & the end of May /beginning of June) any work resulting from the inspections will be actioned by the end of the coinciding inspection periods (end of March and beginning of June). This removes the initial early growth to stop summer growth over growing paths and roads.

Inspections on private hedges are also carried out twice a year by Plymouth City Council's highway contractor (During February/March & the end of May /beginning of June). Any work resulting from the inspections will be programmed for Street Scene Services to action by the end of the coinciding inspection periods (end of March and beginning of June). This removes the initial early growth to stop summer growth over growing paths and roads. Plymouth City Council's highway contractor will seek to claim back the cost incurred.

Autumn/winter maintenance requires all three sides to be cut back (if warranted) to ensure hedges do not outgrow their location. The general accepted standard for hedgerow maintenance is to remove all vegetation back to last year's growth point.

Please see Appendix 2 for flow diagram detailing the process in more detail.

ACTION PLAN

Action No	How we are going to do it?	How will we know we have been successful?	Timescale for action	Priority	Responsibility for delivery
1					
2					
3					
4					
5					
6					
7					
8					
9					
10					

APPENDIX I: BENEFITS OF TREES

Trees provide a vital benefit to the city. Trees planted in the city help to make life more pleasant for residents and visitors, their presence can help towards creating tranquillity and help reduce stress. Trees have many benefits, for example, they:

Provide shelter - Trees reduce wind speed around buildings. Dappled shade from trees provides a useful barrier from ultra violet radiation.

Cool the air - Trees regulate evaporation, provide shade and absorb heat. Trees release oxygen into the air.

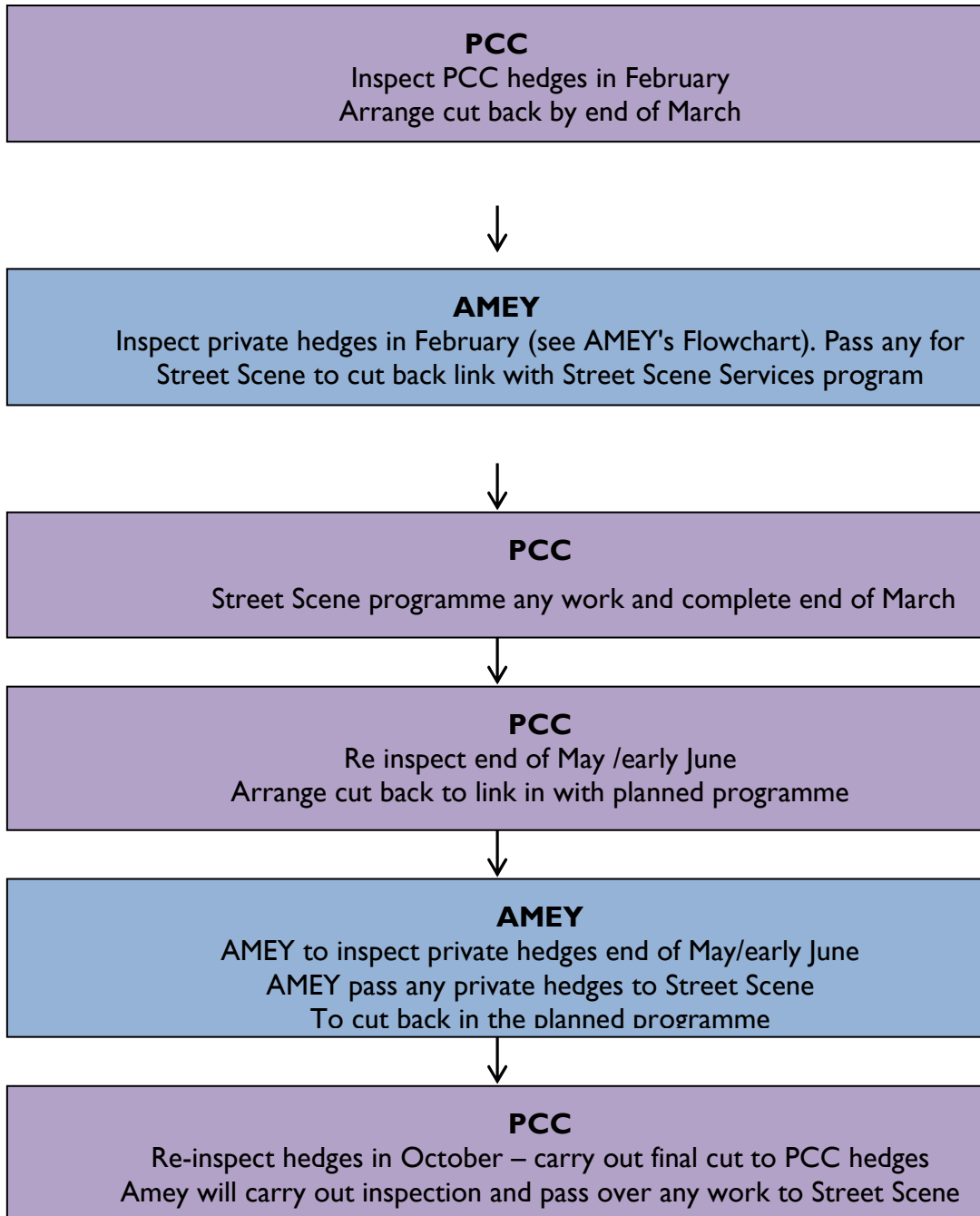
Stabilise soil - Soil erosion on areas where there are no trees is up to one thousand times greater than a tree covered area.

Filter air pollution - Trees act as filters to remove particulate pollution deposited on leaves. Trees remove carbon dioxide from the air. Trees planted close together can absorb noise provide sonic barrier.

Create wildlife habitats - Trees of varying ages provide a wide range of habitats and biodiversity for a large range and variety of mammals, birds and insects.

Improve the landscape - The presence of trees provides a softening effect to built structures and the built environment. Trees can form backdrops to urban settings to improve people's enjoyment of the city's landscape and form a visual screen.

**APPENDIX 2: PLYMOUTH CITY COUNCIL STREET SCENE SERVICES
PROTOCOL WITH PLYMOUTH TRANSPORT & HIGHWAYS/AMEY**



TREE MANAGEMENT

Your Plymouth Scrutiny Panel – 10 March 2014



ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS RAISED AT PANEL MEETING HELD ON 4 NOVEMBER 2013

1. Whether there was enough money in the budget to undertake the work required and for continued future tree management

The current operating model for tree management i.e. prioritising the dead dying and dangerous trees, has been effective in keeping on top of work requests of this nature. The current budget does not cope with the requirements placed on the city to undertake work of a less serious nature such as tree/limb removal for causing nuisances or blocking views or light.

2. Is the council's policy to cut down trees rather than maintain them if that is the cheaper option?

No, each tree is looked at individually and is assessed for decay and damage. The work requested on each tree is designed to maximise the life of the tree. Trees play an important role within the city in absorbing water, combating air pollution and reducing the urban heat island effect.

3. Does the council know which trees it owns and has responsibility for and is this information available in map form?

The Council has mapped all of its land using GIS therefore we know if a tree or group of trees are on land owned by Plymouth City Council. This can be viewed using our corporate GIS system GGP. It does not cover each individual tree but will indicate the land which is growing on either PCC or in another's ownership.

4. Were waiting lists being managed effectively or were people waiting too long?

Waiting lists are being managed effectively, the work completed over each year is dependent on climatic conditions (if we suffer from severe storms then the budget has to cope with the storm damaged trees as well as the dead dying and dangerous). The priority system put in place is communicated effectively to those who have requested a visit from the tree officer and understand the process and reasons behind it.

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EMERGENCY WELFARE SCHEME

Your Plymouth Scrutiny Panel – 10 March 2014



PLYMOUTH
CITY COUNCIL

1. Purpose of the report|

1.1 The Emergency and Welfare Fund (EWF) was introduced in April 2013 to provide support for people in extreme financial difficulties. The scheme is funded by central government for two years and it has been confirmed that funding will not be available from 1st April 2015.

1.2 A review of the scheme was required within 6 months of implementation and with a further review at the end of year one. This report is to provide Your Plymouth Scrutiny Panel with an update on the delivery of the Emergency and Welfare Fund following implementation of the scheme in April 2013 and to enable any recommendations for improvement to be made.

2. Emergency and Welfare Fund Update

2.1 Since September we have been focussing on improving the service delivery for the customer, promoting access to the fund and re-focusing on early intervention and prevention. Spend projections indicate that we are on track to spend the full year 2013/14 budget.

2.2 Promotion of scheme: We have continued to promote the scheme to organisations and internal departments targeting those who have a client base that is likely to be in need of support. Since the last review we have worked with Youth Offending teams, Adult Social Care, Police and Neighbourhood Liaison groups. A Community Support campaign has also been used to make residents of hard to reach communities aware of the existence of the scheme - a bus has been touring the City taking support organisations out into the community. This has contributed to the significantly increased spend during Quarter 3 (October – December), which shows an overall increase of 50% in comparison with Quarters 1 & 2.

2.3 Scheme development: Because of a lack of information provided by the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) about allocations from the previous Social Fund in Plymouth, it was difficult to predict demand for the EWF, meaning we had no choice but to limit the scheme in terms of scope and levels of awards. This has meant that whilst we have successfully managed the Fund within budget (£984,046 frontline budget for 2013/14) significant demand was not being addressed. In November 2013, the Portfolio Holder took steps to address this and agreed a series of measures funded from the EWF directed towards those vulnerable people in need of this type of assistance:

1. Funding to help people clear arrears if they need to downsize because of the Bedroom Tax, but are unable to do so because of their arrears (£6,000)
2. A package of proactive advice and support for the 642 people waiting to downsize because of the impact of the Bedroom Tax (£7,000)
3. Support for the Food Bank (£20,000)
4. A new worker for Plymouth Energy Community to help people sort energy debt and enable them to switch to cheaper providers (£55,000)
5. A fund to incentivize some of Plymouth's most financially vulnerable residents to save with a credit union (£40,000)
6. Continuation funding for a specialist caseworker within Housing and Revenues and Benefits to identify and deal with problems early (£42,000)
7. A fund to ensure people get Medical Assessments and Disclosure and Barring Service Checks when they need them to access benefits and get into work (£10,000)
8. A feasibility study into the council providing an ethical payday lending scheme (£10,000)

2.4 Food Bank: Up to 31st January 2014, 169 customers have been provided with vouchers for the Foodbank, which provides support for those in crisis without incurring a cost to the EWF. Based on the food cash allowances, the 169 customers equates to a £4000.75 spend from the fund. The £20,000 grant was given to the foodbank in December as financial support to mitigate any burden Plymouth City Council puts on the scheme by providing vouchers for our customers and to generally support the Foodbank and ensure it is sustainable. The team continues to make referrals and to liaise with the Foodbank.

2.5 Utilities: The team have been working with Plymouth Energy Community (PEC) in order to promote switching to cheaper energy providers. Referrals are also made to Advice Plymouth where a customer presents with an energy debt - the debt advisors there are able to use their knowledge and experience to tap into funding and assistance to aid the customer. Funding has also been made available to PEC to employ a full time debt worker until March 2015, to increase debt advice availability to customers in crisis

2.6 Benchmarking: The trend with Local Authorities nationally appears to be that spend to customers is less than predicted. Various decisions have been made about future funding from other Local Authorities and some have decided to not continue offering an emergency scheme. Plymouth has continued with its commitment to help the most vulnerable in our community and will continue to run the scheme for 2014/15 and look for ways to continue this support once government funding has stopped.

2.7 White goods: The community care grants (white goods) procurement process has been changed from 1st February 2014. Customers are now provided with payments by BACs so that they can secure white goods for themselves. This allows for a more efficient process allowing for speedier supply of goods and more flexibility and control for the customer, as well as reducing the administration costs of delivering this element of the service.

3. Customer Demand

3.1 Customer contact has increased significantly over the last 6 months. In September we reported a total number of customers contacting the team since April of 2667. Since then we have adjusted our reporting process and are able to show that demand has increased with the total number of customers contacting us between April and January to 6907, an increase of 158%. There has been a 19% increase in applications from customers in crisis and 187% increase in customers that have been signposted to the DWP or other agencies. This supports the value of the advisor capacity of the team as well as the financial support that is available.

3.2 As well as the increase in demand there has also been an increase in the number of applications where support has been awarded. 75% of application have received financial support, which is 8% above the 67% anticipated levels based on DWP information. This is reassuring as it shows customers' needs continue to be met as well as the benefits of expertise that allows for the considerable signposting to other organisations.

3.3 Most of the customer demand has been made via the Freephone number with some customers using the online form. We have received 2042 applications and of those approximately 44% were made via the online application form.

3.4 We have received 10,710 calls since April with a significant increase since September, the average monthly calls have increased from 1010 to 1131, a 12 % increase. Despite this increase in calls we have continued to maintain the level of calls answered, however this has resulted in an increase in wait times for customers. Although we are confident, that customers are either

waiting to speak to an advisor or calling back, we are reviewing our application processes to ensure that wait times are reduced despite the increase in demand.

Customer Demand up to 31.1.14

2013/14 Up to 31/0/2014	Crisis Loans	Community Care Grants	Total	% awarded
Anticipated Applications	5683	2233	7916	
Anticipated Awards	4450	891	5341	67%
Actual Applications	1366	676	2042	
Actual Awards	1101	434	1535	75%
Customers signposted (DWP)			599	
Customers signposted (Other)			4266	

3.5 Specialist support for identifiable customer groups: We recognise that some individuals or families in crisis are supported by other organisations or departments within PCC. We have worked with various groups to allow quicker access to the Emergency Welfare service by prioritising the applications made from support workers accepting that they have already validated customers' needs and are working with them to engage in making improvements with their situation. An example would be applications for assistance from families who are part of our Families with a Future (FWAF) programme. Their applications are now being identified early and prioritised. The families making applications to the fund all have a dedicated worker assigned to them who understands their issues and financial position. In order to be able to continue the intense work being done with these families, applications made with the support of the worker can be emailed direct to the Welfare Team who can then identify them and prioritise them according to the urgency of the need.

4. Government Funding

4.1 The government has recently announced that the funding for Social Fund replacement schemes will be cut from the end of 2014/15, it is therefore essential that we plan for the future, to minimise spending on hardship and crisis, whilst ensuring there is an effective safety net for the most vulnerable people in Plymouth. Therefore as well as considering improvements to the scheme, we are considering how best to re-focus the fund on early intervention and prevention including areas such as employment support and financial capability. A package is being put together and we hope to shortly announce more detail about this.

4.2 Customer demand has increased as the scheme has progressed and we have continued to work with other organisations to ensure that those most vulnerable in our community have access to funding. This is reflective in the table below which shows a steady increase in Crisis and Community Care Grant payments since April.

Emergency Welfare Budget spend April 2013 to January 2014

	Q1 Apr / May / Jun	Q2 Jul / Aug / Sep	Q3 Oct/ Nov / Dec	Q4 up to 31/01/2014	Cumulative
Community Care Grants	£31,929.00	£49,770.02	£86,423.00	£34,436.00	£202,559.02
Crisis Payments	£14,971.46	£22,931.61	£32,855.05	£12,932.00	£83,690.12
Initiative Spend			£190,000.00		£190,000.00
Admin Costs	£20,154.63	£21,676.58	£23,589.53	£7,613.44	£73,034.18
Total Spend	£67,055.09	£94,378.21	£332,867.58	£54,981.44	549,283.32
Budget	£269,203.64	£272,395.78	£248,986.77	£88,315.81	1,064,046.00
Difference	£202,148.55	£178,017.57	£83,880.81	£33,334.37	-514,762.70

* Spend is based on total budget for 2013/14 of £1064,046.00

5. Future Activity

5.1 Promotion of scheme: Promotional work with organisations that have a vulnerable client base will continue to ensure that they are aware of the scheme and that support that can be offered. A review of the community outreach campaign will be undertaken in April to assess if future campaigns of this nature are of benefit to the community.

5.2 Advisory Service: PEC is currently working on employing two debt case workers to assist customers with their energy debt in order to switch suppliers, but also to assist with more general debt issues that affect a customer's ability to pay their energy bills. These debt advisors will be based in the Revenues and Benefits Department for three days a week in order for them to work closely with the Welfare Team

5.3 The Housing Options Department has an Advice Plymouth debt caseworker based with them to refer customers with assistance. This contract has been renewed and extended so that the Revenues and Benefits staff, including the Welfare Team, can make referrals direct to them.

5.4 Future years; In 2014/15 we will receive £1,048,000 to deliver the Emergency Welfare Fund. If administration costs are deducted at the same level as 2013/14, (£80,000), this will leave a frontline spend of £968,000. After this no further funding will be provided by the Government to deliver an emergency fund.

We are considering using the fund received for 2014/15 to deliver the scheme for a further three years from April 2014. This would mean £322,666 would be available for each of the three years. To operate within this reduced budget, we would require efficiencies, further emphasis on prevention and early intervention to minimise demand, and possible changes to the scheme eg offering some payments on a loan basis with support from the credit union. The scrutiny Panel's views on how this should be taken forward would be welcomed.

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YOUR PLYMOUTH

10 March 2014

Tracking Resolutions and Recommendations
2013 - 2014



PLYMOUTH
CITY COUNCIL

Date and Minute number	Resolution	Progress
04.11.13 Minute 24	<p>Personal Debt <u>Agreed</u> that an in-depth cooperative review is undertaken on personal debt with time being taken, prior to commencement of the review, to gather the necessary data from as many support and debt advice agencies as possible.</p>	<p>A cooperative review request form has been drafted and submitted to the Cooperative Scrutiny Board for approval on 19.02.14. Approval was granted with a recommendation from the Board that the review is webcast and does not commence until the new municipal year.</p>
04.11.13 Minute 25	<p>Customer Services Transformation <u>Agreed</u> that regular updates on the Customer Services Transformation programme are presented to the panel.</p>	<p>The whole Transformation Programme will be scrutinised by panels during 2014/15. A draft briefing paper on how this will be undertaken was tabled for comment at the Cooperative Scrutiny Board on 19.02.14 (a copy of which is attached to the Work Programme item on today's agenda).</p>
04.11.13 Minute 26	<p>Tree Management <u>Agreed</u> that</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Responses to the points raised would be sought from the appropriate Cabinet Member and circulated to Members via e-mail 2. The issue of ownership would be added to the agenda for the next meeting 	<p>Responses to questions e-mailed to Members on 13.02.14 Tree Management added to agenda for today's meeting.</p>
04.11.13 Minute 28	<p>Public Funerals <u>Agreed</u> that a short half-day cooperative review is undertaken.</p>	<p>A cooperative review into Public Funerals took place on 26.02.14.</p>
04.11.13 Minute 30	<p>Work Programme <u>Agreed</u> that the Chair and Vice-Chair review and re-prioritise the panel's work programme for 2013/14.</p>	<p>Updated work programme attached to this agenda (this may need to be reviewed further given the impact of the transformation agenda).</p>

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