

Your Plymouth

Monday 9 June 2014

PRESENT:

Councillor Kate Taylor, in the Chair.

Councillor Sam Leaves, Vice-Chair.

Councillors Damarell, Philippa Davey, Downie, Martin Leaves, Rennie, Ricketts (replacing Councillor Mrs Nicholson), Riley, Sparling and Tuohy.

Apology for absence: Councillor Mrs Nicholson.

Also in attendance: Councillor Peter Smith, Deputy Leader, Stuart Palmer, Assistant Director for Homes and Communities, Hannah Daw, Policy and Business Planning Officer, Peter Honeywell, Transformation Programmes Manager, Ross Johnston, Transformation Project Officer, Dave Saunders, Interim Assistant Director for Customer Services, Darin Halifax, City of Service Chief Officer, Di Charlton, Lead Officer, and Katey Johns, Democratic Support Officer.

The meeting started at 4 pm and finished at 5.50 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.

1. **APPOINTMENT OF CHAIR AND VICE-CHAIR**

The panel noted the appointment of Councillors Kate Taylor as Chair and Sam Leaves as Vice-Chair for the municipal year 2014/15.

2. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

In accordance with the constitution, there were no declarations of interest made by members in respect of items being considered at this meeting.

3. **CHAIR'S URGENT BUSINESS**

There were no items of Chair's urgent business.

4. **TERMS OF REFERENCE**

The panel received its terms of reference for information and noted that its areas of responsibility fell within the portfolios of the following Cabinet members –

- Deputy Leader
- Environment
- Co-operatives, Housing and Community Safety

5. **APPOINTMENT OF CO-OPTED REPRESENTATIVES**

Members were advised that although Steve Meakin had been unable to attend today's meeting he had indicated his willingness to continue working with the panel as a co-opted representative.

The panel recommends that Steve Meakin, Money Advice Co-ordinator, Devon and Cornwall, is appointed as its co-opted representative for the municipal year 2014/15.

6. **FRAMEWORK FOR WORKING WITH CITIZENS AND COMMUNITIES**

The panel received a report setting out a proposal for a new framework for working with citizens and communities. In attendance to present the report were Councillor Peter Smith, Deputy Leader, Stuart Palmer, Assistant Director for Homes and Communities, and Hannah Daw, Policy and Business Planning Officer.

The report informed members that a need had been identified for Plymouth to create a new relationship with its citizens who felt removed from the decision making process and faced barriers to community involvement. This went against the Council's vision for the City to be a place where 'people could have a say about what is important to them and where they could change what happened in their area'.

By working with partners such as the Police, Health, Plymouth Community Homes, and the voluntary sector and sharing resources and responsibilities, the Council hoped to be able to respond to customers and communities in a more flexible way and the framework was the start of a journey towards empowering communities to take control.

In addition, the report looked at the role of local councillors and how support would be needed in order to help members 'channel shift' towards becoming local leaders in their communities and set out a series of work streams for when the framework was agreed in order to move forward.

In response to questions raised, Members were advised that –

- (a) a return to the Area Committee style model was not possible and changes in staffing, restructuring and transformation within the Council meant that it was no longer possible to support the current model of community/neighbourhood engagement either. Resources needed to be focussed and structured differently;
- (b) it was acknowledged that one size model would not suit all and buy-in from partners was essential. Conversations with partners to date had been positive and a pilot project in Barne Barton was demonstrating positive results; with a further two possible pilots in the pipeline. In addition, where there were already well-established groups who were working well, lessons would be learned and those foundations would be built upon;
- (c) it was acknowledged that if people didn't feel listened too they wouldn't

engage so other ways of capturing feedback and consultation methods were being explored such as use of social media.

Members were concerned that the framework was lacking in detail and felt that it would benefit from pre-decision scrutiny in the form of a co-operative review.

The panel therefore recommends that –

- (1) Cabinet delays consideration of the Framework for Working with Citizens and Communities on 15 July 2014 and defers it to its next meeting;
- (2) pre-decision scrutiny in the form of a co-operative review takes place to –
 - explore using community organisations, for example existing community economic development trusts (CEDTs), to hold and deploy neighbourhood budgets and commission services such as youth services and health projects;
 - explore incorporating public health funding into devolved neighbourhood budgets so that communities can commission services projects and initiatives to improve the health and wellbeing of their neighbourhoods and tackle highly localised public health issues.

7. **TRANSFORMATION PROGRAMME - CUSTOMER AND SERVICE**

Further to minute 43, the panel received a brief re-run of the presentation on the Customer and Service Transformation Programme. In attendance for this item and the next were Peter Honeywell, Transformation Programme Manager, and Dave Saunders, Project Executive.

In summary, the presentation –

- identified the problems that the programme was addressing;
- set out the overall aims of the programme;
- detailed the specific projects included in / excluded from the programme;
- highlighted the costs and financial benefits anticipated overall and in 2014/15;
- indicated how key partners were being engaged in developing the programme;
- identified the main risks and how they were being addressed;
- suggested how scrutiny could get involved and add value to the process.

In response to concerns raised about the ability of the council's IT services to support the transformation of customer services, members were advised that external advice had been sought and a different perspective provided on how the council should be designing and building services fit for purpose. Assurances were given that IT would be embedded throughout the process.

8. CUSTOMER ACCESS STRATEGY

Further to minute 7 above, the panel heard more detail on proposals to create a Customer Access Strategy. Members were advised that –

- (a) the Council needed to develop a deeper understanding of its customers;
- (b) the Customer and Service Blueprint project would help drive the Council's vision towards becoming a brilliant co-operative council by putting the customer at the heart of everything it did;
- (c) a cross-functional team from all services across the Council would be established in order to join up customer-focussed services and provide access channels in a way customers would prefer as opposed to what was being offered;
- (d) a set of customer service standards would be established, measured and reviewed;
- (e) once a draft Customer Access Strategy had been produced, it was hoped that scrutiny could be engaged to –
 - provide critical friend advice for the strategy's development;
 - champion the project's vision;
 - carry out a cross-panel, transformation focussed co-operative review, involving all members in a workshop type setting.

In response to questions raised, Members heard that –

- (f) once established, the customer service standards would be embedded throughout the authority and monitored as part of the performance management process;
- (g) one of the drivers for change was to create capacity and maximise staff resources. By directing large groups of customers to use on-line services, customer services based staff would then have more capacity to deal and assist with face to face enquiries at the new city centre shop;
- (h) staff, service users and partners became stakeholders in how the city centre shop was designed and delivered.

Members welcomed the presentation and were supportive of the proposals.

The panel recommends that a cross-panel and transformation focussed co-operative review is undertaken into the Customer Access Strategy.

9. **DRAFT WORK PROGRAMME 2014/15**

The panel considered its draft work programme for 2014/15. The Vice-Chair raised concerns about increasing levels of anti-social behaviour in relation to the evening and night-time economy and proposed that a co-operative review into the matter may be appropriate. It was suggested that information relating to anti-social behaviour and incidents of hate crime be included in the Crime Update report due to panel in September and that, should levels be of concern to the panel, the request for a co-operative review be reconsidered then.

The panel recommends approval of its draft work programme for 2014/15, subject to the following –

- the Safer Plymouth Partnership : Crime Figures Update scheduled for September to include details of incidents of anti-social behaviour and hate crime;
- a further update in respect of Safer Plymouth Partnership : Crime Figures to be scheduled for consideration by the panel at its meeting on 16 March 2015.

10. **SCHEDULE OF MEETINGS FOR FORTHCOMING YEAR**

Future meeting dates for the Your Plymouth scrutiny panel in 2014/15 were noted as follows –

- 8 September 2014
- 15 December 2014
- 16 March 2015

11. **EXEMPT BUSINESS**

There were no items of exempt business.