

Your Plymouth

Monday 16 March 2015

PRESENT:

Councillor Kate Taylor, in the Chair.

Councillors Damarell, Philippa Davey, Downie, Jordan (substitute for Councillor Martin Leaves), Michael Leaves (substitute for Councillor Sam Leaves), Rennie, Ricketts, Riley, Sparling and Tuohy.

Co-opted Representative: Mr Steve Meakin.

Apologies for absence: Councillors Martin Leaves and Sam Leaves.

Also in attendance: Caroline Marr, Policy and Business Planning Officer, Bronwyn Prosser, Social Inclusion Manager, Jill Palmer, Community Cohesion Co-ordinator, Matt Garrett, Head of Housing Services, Nick Carter, Housing Delivery Manager, Sarah Hopkins, Community Safety and Partnerships Manager, Chief Superintendent Andy Boulting, Tony Hogg, Devon and Cornwall Police and Crime Commissioner, Lisa Vango, Strategy and Planning Manager, Hannah Daw, Policy and Business Planning Officer, Di Charlton, Lead Officer, and Katey Johns, Democratic Support Officer.

The meeting started at 3 pm and finished at 4.55 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.

32. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

In accordance with the code of conduct, the following declarations of interest were declared by members in relation to an item considered at the meeting –

Name	Minute No. and Item	Reason	Interest
Councillor Michael Leaves	36 – Plymouth Plan	Landlord	Personal
Councillor Riley	36 – Plymouth Plan	Landlord	Personal

33. **CHAIR'S URGENT BUSINESS**

Emergency Welfare Fund

It was noted that an update on the Emergency Welfare Fund had not been provided as expected and it was therefore requested and agreed that a briefing note be circulated to panel members after the meeting.

34. **MINUTES**

Agreed the minutes of the meeting held on 15 December 2014.

35. **BIG LUNCH AND STREET PARTIES**

The panel considered the report 'Big Lunch and Street Parties' which reviewed current processes and procedures for organising community led events within the City. In attendance to provide an overview of the paper and respond to questions were Bronwyn Prosser, Social Inclusion Manager, and Jill Palmer, Community Cohesion Co-ordinator.

The report advised that feedback from the Community and Voluntary Sector (CVS) on their experiences regarding community events had been critical, citing an overcomplicated and bureaucratic process. A number of areas where changes could be made to simplify the application process were, therefore, proposed, and these included improvements to –

- the website to make it easier to navigate;
- complicated paperwork/booking forms, including risk assessments;
- identifying relevant/appropriate point of contact;
- notice periods.

As a result of the consultation process, a number of local community groups had formed their own CVS Events network for the purpose of providing support to each other in organising events, sharing best practice/resources and provide ongoing feedback and improvement suggestions.

In response to questions raised, Members were advised that –

- (a) the website proposals would take an applicant through the process step-by-step and provide contact details for the council's Events' Team;
- (b) 28 days' notice was the current minimum requirement for notification of an event;
- (c) comments made with regard to the CVS Events network such as –
 - widening the membership to include other forums or single-issue groups;
 - sharing the operating experiences of the Plympton Community Council model;
 - inviting a Councillor to attend their AGM

would be passed on;

- (d) consideration would be given to creation of a simple tick-box application form for small events.

Members welcomed and noted the report with thanks.

36. **PLYMOUTH PLAN**

Caroline Marr, Policy and Business Planning Officer, Bronwyn Prosser, Social Inclusion Manager, Matt Garrett, Head of Housing Services, Nick Carter, Housing Delivery Manager and Wendy Hart, Plymouth Octopus Project, were in attendance to provide Members with an update on the Plymouth Plan.

Members were advised that –

- (a) the Plymouth Plan was a strategic planning framework document for the city which had a far wider approach than the Local Development Framework and brought together all of the Council's plans and strategies in one place;
- (b) the Plan was being published in two parts –
 - Part one – set out an overarching strategy for future change and growth in the City;
 - Part two – would set out detailed policies for different areas of Plymouth and would be published for consultation in autumn 2015;
- (c) consultation on the document had now closed and the responses were being considered; the intention being to take Part one of the Plan to City Council in July or September 2015;
- (d) a locally based company was working on development of an interactive web application for the Plan which would make it easy for people to use the document and find relevant information.

In response to questions raised, it was reported that –

- (e) promoting community cohesion was a top level performance measure which included resolving not just social inclusion but housing and anti-social behaviour etc. The Council worked closely with the Police in this regard. In addition, various action plans were in place around making Plymouth a welcoming City, addressing equality and diversity issues and eradicating racism;
- (f) officers did monitor comments on the Herald website and any offensive remarks were reported and usually removed fairly quickly if the person who posted the remark was unwilling to rephrase it;
- (g) an engagement framework for working with citizens and communities was being worked up and members had had the opportunity to attend a number of development workshops in this regard (minute 38 refers);
- (h) within the Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS), the Octopus project

had done some work in mapping areas of the City to ascertain how many community groups were out there (if any) and what they represented. If members felt that there were areas that weren't adequately represented they should contact the Octopus project who would be happy to hear from them;

- (i) one of the issues faced by the City was that particular wards comprising larger, older-style houses which presented prime conversion opportunities for houses of multiple occupation were then saturated with these types of dwellings. This then left the problem of how to rebalance those communities;
- (j) a plan for the private rented housing sector was to be launched next week. Officers working in consultation with letting agencies across the City, landlord association, Plymouth University and the VCS had come up with a set of aims to bring about better homes, improved standards, attracting new investment, providing better protection for tenants and dealing with unscrupulous landlords;
- (k) another delivery plan in the pipeline was looking at ways to tackle the problem of empty homes in the City, particularly those of a long term nature;
- (l) re-conversion of long-term empty shops back to living accommodation was something that could be considered, subject to meeting necessary planning requirements;
- (m) with regard to the identification of potential housing development sites, it was confirmed that this level of detail was not covered in the first part of the Plan;
- (n) by the end of 2014, three community assets were successfully registered on the councils asset list using community right to bid powers, with one of those assets being successfully taken over by the community.

The panel noted the Plan and trusted that its feedback would help shape the final document prior to its submission to City Council.

(Councillors Michael Leaves and Riley declared personal interests in respect of the above item).

37. **SAFER PLYMOUTH PARTNERSHIP - CRIME STATISTICS UPDATE**

The panel considered the report 'Safer Plymouth', submitted by the Community Safety and Partnerships Manager. In attendance to provide an overview of the paper and respond to questions were Sarah Hopkins, Community Safety and Partnerships Manager, Superintendent Andy Boulting and Councillor Penberthy, Cabinet Member for Co-operatives, Housing and Community Safety. Councillor Penberthy introduced the report which provided an overview of Safer Plymouth activity and performance against crime reduction performance measures. Members were advised that –

- (a) with regard to the Safer Plymouth Partnership Board –
- its agendas and minutes were now published to the internet and its meetings were open to the public;
 - its membership had increased as a result of the split of the Probation Service – one representative from the National Probation Service and one from the Community Rehabilitation Company. In addition, the Office of Public Health and Police and Crime Commissioner were now core members;
 - it had recently agreed its commissioning intentions for 2015/16 which had been determined in line with the priorities identified in the most recent Safer Plymouth Partnership Strategic Assessment, Peninsula Strategic Assessment, Police and Crime Plan and current performance in Plymouth;
- (b) there were increasing concerns about the decline in neighbourhood watch members and, as a result, the Police and Crime Panel would shortly be undertaking a scrutiny review into the matter. Members were asked to talk to their constituents and community groups and pass any comments back to Sarah, who was co-ordinating a consultation as part of the scrutiny review. This information would then be considered by the Police and Crime Panel at its next meeting.

The panel also welcomed Tony Hogg, Devon and Cornwall Police and Crime Commissioner, and Lisa Vango, Strategy and Planning Manager who were in attendance to report on the Police and Crime Commissioner's approach to tackling alcohol related crime and excessive drinking.

Members heard that the Police and Crime Commissioner –

- (c) was trying to ensure that the seven Community Safety Partnerships and five Health and Wellbeing Boards within his force area were joined up as much as possible by either attending personally or by being represented;
- (d) welcomed the positive report from Safer Plymouth and particularly applauded the increased reporting of crime in general;
- (e) had retained his Crime Plan priorities for the year but would also be focussing on cyber-crime child sexual exploitation;
- (f) Chaired an alcohol focus group which was represented by all 43 Police Force Police and Crime Commissioners across the UK. Currently the views of all members and their Chief Constables were being surveyed with a view to lobbying central government with concerns about the harm alcohol was causing;
- (g) was keen to work with the alcohol industry and supermarkets to discuss a policy around pricing. Achieving a compromise between an industry

that brings an inward investment of over £21m compared to the cost of dealing with the harm and effect of too much would be difficult to achieve and was a brick wall which needed to be scaled;

- (h) had visited the City's Glenbourne and Harbour Units today where he had personally witnessed the work being done with chronic alcoholics. Successful treatments result in improved health for the individuals concerned, protection of victims, reduced offending and reduced demand on treatment resources;
- (i) would continue to focus on the following with regard to alcohol –
 - deterrents and enforcement
 - legislative reform
 - cultural change, particularly understanding 18-25 year olds
 - treatment and recovery.

In response to questions raised, Members heard that -

- (j) Mr Hogg was committed to retaining neighbourhood policing and had delivered on his pledge to keep numbers above 3,000, indeed since he came into post there were between 200-300 more police officers in post. Despite meetings with local MPs to discuss the unfairness of the funding formula for the south-west, a very challenging future policing environment lay ahead and it was likely that 800 posts across the organisation would need to be lost;
- (k) in addition to the strategic alliance with Dorset, and sharing accommodation with other agencies (such as fire authorities), other money-saving innovative measures were being explored including looking at the Force's property assets;
- (l) their frustration at the lack of Licensing Committee powers to deal with condition breach matters promptly was shared, particularly where individuals were required to keep a detailed log of issues which could often take time to build;
- (m) the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner would soon be looking to commission some research into the true impact of 24-hour licensing with the intention to use that information to lobby government for change. Local authorities views would be consulted and members' views would be welcomed for inclusion in the lobbying document.

Agreed that an e-mail is circulated to all members informing them of the scrutiny review into the decline of neighbourhood watch and asking for their views.

38. **FRAMEWORK FOR WORKING WITH CITIZENS AND COMMUNITIES UPDATE**

With regard to Working with Citizens and Communities, the panel considered the progress report as submitted, and heard from Hannah Daw, Policy and Business Planning Officer, in response to questions who advised that –

- (a) Officers had looked at other authorities to see what was being done elsewhere and to share knowledge and practice, particularly around devolved budgets but further investigation into what exactly this would mean to a community was required;
- (b) in addition to looking at area profiles, it was also being established what facilities communities did or did not have, how engaged partners were in the ward etc. in order to build a bigger, more comprehensive, picture of local community needs. This was being done by co-ordinating existing initiatives and projects among the many service areas who were already actively working with citizens and communities;
- (c) once the detail of what was required was understood, it would be possible to develop the necessary work-streams, processes and competencies to deliver the identified objectives and realise the benefits, as set out in the report;
- (d) Elected members would be supported in order to enable them to effectively assist their constituents in doing more for themselves which would then result in them being able to focus on other areas of local leadership such as city growth.

39. **LIBRARY SERVICE REVIEW**

The panel noted the update on the current review of library services.

40. **TRACKING RESOLUTIONS**

The panel noted progress made against previous recommendations and that the co-operative review on the University had been postponed.

41. **WORK PROGRAMME**

The Panel considered its work programme and was asked to reflect upon its achievements for 2014/15 for inclusion in the annual scrutiny report. Members congratulated themselves on completing their busy work programme which, in addition to their normal business meetings, had included –

- Customer Services Strategy Co-operative Review
- Problem Debt Co-operative Review
- Framework for Working with Citizens and Communities Workshops

Attention was drawn to one of the outcomes of the Problem Debt review which had been inclusion of a Credit Union promotional flyer in the Council Tax despatch.

Agreed that the Lead Officer and Democratic Support Officer, in consultation with the Chair, prepare a summary of the panel's achievements for inclusion in the annual scrutiny report.

42. **EXEMPT BUSINESS**

There were no items of exempt business.