

## **Working Plymouth**

**Wednesday 18 March 2015**

### **PRESENT:**

Councillor Murphy, in the Chair.

Councillor Darcy, Vice Chair.

Councillors Ball, Hendy, Jarvis, Michael Leaves, Morris, John Smith, Storer and Wheeler.

Apologies for absence: Councillors Wigen.

Also in attendance: Stephen Bashford (Economic Research and Monitoring Officer), David Draffan (Assistant Director for Economic Development), Councillor Tudor Evans (Leader of the Council), Richard Grant (Local Planning Manager), Patrick Knight (Economy and Employment Manager), Stefan Krause (City Centre Manager), Tom Palmer (Principal Surveyor), Gill Peele (Lead Officer), Amanda Ratsey (Enterprise and Inward Investment Manager) and Helen Rickman (Democratic Support Officer).

The meeting started at 3.00 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.*

### 37. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest in accordance with the Code of Conduct.

### 38. **MINUTES**

Agreed the minutes of 10 December 2014 as an accurate record of the meeting.

### 39. **CHAIR'S URGENT BUSINESS**

There were no items of Chair's Urgent Business.

### 40. **PLYMOUTH CITY CENTRE COMPANY BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT BALLOT**

Stefan Krause (City Centre Manager) Patrick Knight (Economy and Employment Manager), David Draffan (Assistant Director for Economic Development) and Councillor Tudor Evans (Leader of the Council) provided Members with an update on the Plymouth City Centre Company Business Improvement District Ballot.

Members were advised that –

- (a) a report was submitted to the 9 December 2014 Cabinet meeting regarding the renewal of Plymouth City Centre's Business Improvement District detailing the significant achievements of the city centre since the establishment of the BID in 2005;
- (b) the legislative framework for business improvement districts contained a provision enabling the local authority to veto the bid proposals;
- (c) Doug Fletcher, the Chair of the Board, and Officers had been working extremely hard to continue the ongoing success of the bid specifically during a time of difficult budgetary pressures;
- (d) in total 612 ballot papers were issued and 249 ballots received resulting in a 40.8% turnout – this was reflective of the national average. 175 votes were in favour of the BID with a percentage of 70.2%.

In response to questions raised it was reported that –

- (e) the City Centre BID was undertaken as a secret ballot therefore a breakdown of the number of votes from smaller retailers in comparison to larger retailers was not available;
- (f) the costs in developing the bid proposals and hosting a ballot was approximately £100,000 if taking the national average, however the Plymouth City Centre ballot had been managed within a much smaller budget of £40,000 including in-kind staffing costs and printing;
- (g) changes had taken place with regards to the governance structure of the Plymouth City Centre Company including both the strategic and operational boards as well as the financial structure and focus of the company's projects. The promotion of the city centre and West End was a priority for the PCCC and this was strongly reflected in the business case to ensure the future resilience of Plymouth's city centre;
- (h) the extension of the geographical City Centre BID area to include Bretonside had been formally agreed; consultation had taken place and this area of the city was fully inclusive in the city centre business improvement district.

The Chair congratulated the Leader and officers in attendance on behalf of the Working Plymouth scrutiny panel and highlighted the positive affect the result of the ballot would have upon the city centre.

The panel, having considered the report and advice of officers, unanimously supports the City Centre Business Improvement District proposals and recommends to the City Council that the power of veto, as per Regulation 12 of the Business Improvement District (England) Regulations 2004, is not exercised.

41. **PLYMOUTH PLAN**

Richard Grant (Local Planning Manager), David Draffan (Assistant Director for Economic Development), Stephen Bashford (Economic Research and Monitoring Officer), Tom Palmer (Principal Surveyor) and Amanda Ratsey (Enterprise and Inward Investment Manager) provided Members with an update on the Plymouth Plan.

Members were advised that –

- (a) the Plymouth Plan was being published in two parts; Members currently had the opportunity to comment on part I of the plan as part of the consultation process. The plan itself set out the shared strategic direction for the future of the city and would bring together approximately 130 plans and strategies into one, including the Local Economic Strategy, the Health and Wellbeing Strategy and the Child Poverty Strategy;
- (b) the updated Local Economic Strategy (LES) would feed directly into the Plymouth Plan reflecting aspirations of both the public and private sector. Six priority sectors were focused upon in the LES including Ocean City Infrastructure, Digital Economy, Business Growth and Investment, Learning and Talent Development, People Communities and Institutions, and the Visitor Economy and Culture;
- (c) preparations were ongoing for the Mayflower 400 celebrations with an exchange programme with US businesses as a key driver; it was essential that Plymouth's infrastructure was in place to support this event to showcase the city at its best;
- (d) the Council had an existing portfolio of £112m and an income of £6.8m from business occupancy rates which were approximately at 90% capacity;
- (e) the Council's commercial estate supported 326 businesses and 2670 jobs ranging from medical to manufacturing services; the economic development department acted as an enabler for economic growth in the city;
- (f) Langage Science Park was due for completion in July 2015, the 3000sqft site was expected to attract 80 new jobs; the £40m development of Bretonside bus station was expected to deliver 260 construction jobs.

In response to questions raised it was reported that –

- (g) the Plymouth Plan would bring together many strategies, with adoption of the plan expected by 2017; the plan would however be used for material consideration to make current decisions. Work linked to the Council's Economic Strategy was still ongoing with an emphasis on job creation and support to enable businesses the potential to grow;
- (h) in relation to Policy 8 of the Plymouth Plan 'Protecting and Strengthening Devonport Naval Base and Dockyard's Strategic Role', officers confirmed that the Council had a good relationship with the Naval Base and Babcock Group PLC. The Devonport Task Group, of which both the Council and Naval Base

were represented by the Leader of the Council and the Commander of the Naval Base, focused upon cooperative working to drive the city forward. A piece of work was due to commence, led by the University of Plymouth, to monitor the socioeconomic impact of the dockyard on Plymouth;

- (i) officers confirmed that they would review the wording of Policy 24 'Provision for Shops and Services' as retail should be specified in the policy. It was also confirmed that the retail space targets specified on pages 61 and 62 of the agenda pack were considered realistic and were calculated based upon current shopping trends. Forecasted retail space figures did not include the vacant premises in the City Centre, including Derry's;
- (j) a 'dark shop' was a premises laid out similarly to a normal supermarket however was not accessible to the public; this store would service online customers only;
- (k) dark stores were not considered to count against the retail provision targets and had been removed from floor-space plans. Banks would also not count as retail provision; the final Plymouth Plan would include a breakdown of district shopping centres;
- (m) arrangements for the Mayflower 400 celebrations were progressing; this was a fantastic opportunity for the city to showcase itself. The Leadership group was due to meet to discuss sponsors, events and Plymouth's offer. This was a national celebration of importance, involving the USA, and arrangements for the celebration had to match the scale of the event;
- (n) the Council's commercial premises occupancy levels were approximately 90%; the Council offered flexible letting terms, a variety of premises in terms of size and location, and support from the enterprise zone to remain competitive. Officers were continually working to help businesses grow and attract new business;
- (o) with regards to Policy 8 of the Plymouth Plan 'Protecting and Strengthening Devonport Naval Base and Dockyard's Strategic Role' officers would assess the wording to make it clear that not all MOD land was suitable for development;
- (p) officers acknowledged Members concerns that the City's bus services were losing passengers due to the change in services provided and the reduction of bus routes; it was expected that this would be addressed in the Local Transport Plan 4.

The Chair thanked Officers for their attendance and encouraged concerns and comments raised by the Working Plymouth scrutiny panel to be fed back to the Plymouth Plan team.

42. **WORKING PLYMOUTH ACHIEVEMENTS 2014/15**

The Chair advised Members that the Annual Scrutiny Report for 2014/15 was due to be written and achievements from all of the scrutiny panels, including Working Plymouth, were required to be collated. The Chair praised the work of Members for their scrutiny into the Coach Hub, Controlled Parking Zones and the transformation projects such as the Waste Collection Reorganisation and Street Services. Members praised the effect the new Controlled Parking Zones Policy was having upon local residents. Members were encouraged to contribute additional Working Plymouth achievements for inclusion in the Annual Scrutiny Report.

Agreed that the Chair, Vice Chair, Lead Officer and Democratic Support Officer to pull together the achievements for the Working Plymouth Panel for submission into the Annual Scrutiny Report.

43. **TRACKING RESOLUTIONS AND UPDATE FROM THE COOPERATIVE SCRUTINY BOARD**

Members noted the briefing reports regarding Controlled Parking Zones and Inward Investment attached to the Tracking Resolutions agenda item.

44. **WORK PROGRAMME**

The Chair advised Members that this was the final Working Plymouth scrutiny meeting for 2014/15 and thanked everyone for their work throughout the year including the Lead Officer and Democratic Support Officer. Members thanked Councillor Murphy for her role as Chair.

(Councillor Ball was absent for this item)

45. **EXEMPT BUSINESS**

There were no items of exempt business.