

Place and Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Wednesday 7 March 2018

PRESENT:

Councillor Bowie, in the Chair.

Councillor Ball, Vice Chair.

Councillors Carson, Churchill, Sam Davey, Fletcher, Fry, Mavin, McDonald (substitute for Councillor Penberthy), Morris and Storer.

Apology for absence: Councillor Penberthy.

Also in attendance: Simon Arthurs (Senior Financial Analyst), Matt Garrett (Head of Community Connections), Faye Hambleton (Assistant Director for Customer Services), Andrew Hardingham (Interim Joint Strategic Director for Transformation and Change), Gareth Harrison-Poole (Head of Service Streetscene and Waste), Peter Honeywell (Transformation Architecture Manager), Ross Jago (Lead Officer), Councillor Jordan (Cabinet Member for Culture), Councillor Michael Leaves (Cabinet Member for Strategic Streetscene/Environment), Sarah Lees (Consultant Public Health), Amanda McDonald (Service Manager), Mandy Pearse (Head of Public and Partner Relations), Helen Prendergast (Democratic Support Advisor), Councillor Ricketts (Cabinet Member for Transport and Housing Delivery), Councillor Riley (Cabinet Member for HR/Democracy and Governance/Licensing), Dave Saunders (Strategic Development Manager), Jane Stephenson (Head of HR Business Services).

The meeting started at 3pm and finished at 5.30pm.

Note: At a future meeting, the Panel 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.

52. **Declarations of Interest**

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

53. **Minutes**

Agreed that the minutes of the meetings held on 8 December 2017, 3 January and 31 January 2018 were confirmed as a correct record.

54. **Chair's Urgent Business**

There were no items of Chair's urgent business.

55. **Shared Services - Trade Union Recognition Agreement Update**

Andrew Hardingham (Interim Strategic Director for Transformation and Change) and Peter Honeywell (Transformation Architecture Manager) presented a report which highlighted the work undertaken to facilitate the signing of the recognition agreement, subject to the consultation findings, by the Unions (Unite, GMB and Unison) and Delt.

The Chair took this opportunity to thank officers for their hard work.

The committee noted the report.

Order of Business

With the permission of the Chair, the order of business was amended, as set out below in the minutes.

56. **Tracking Decisions**

The committee noted the progress of its decisions for 2017/18.

57. **Work Programme**

The committee agreed to include on its work programme for 2018-19 the following issues –

- (1) Homelessness Action Plan;
- (2) Gypsy and Travellers.

58. **Capital and Revenue Monitoring Q3**

The Chair advised that this item had been included on the agenda for information and as no issues had been identified for consideration prior to the meeting, no Cabinet Members or officers had been invited to attend.

59. **Library Service Update**

Councillor Jordan (Cabinet Member for Culture), Faye Hambleton (Assistant Director for Customer Services), Dave Saunders (Strategic Development Manager) and Amanda McDonald (Services Manager) presented an update on the library service.

Following the agreement of the Plan for Libraries in July 2017, the library service had undertaken a number of initiatives, including -

- (a) investment in library buildings;

- (b) enhanced and increased the in-library offer;
- (c) extended opening hours;
- (d) increased the outreach offer by implementing a more structured approach focussing on areas where libraries were closing or where there was no current provision.

The key areas of questioning from Members related to –

- (e) the current progress on the re-development of the St Budeaux Library;
- (f) staff morale following the service review;
- (g) what measures were in place to support literacy in schools and encourage children to use the library service);
- (h) whether there was a revised launch date for the library app;
- (i) how customers were interacting with the new service;
- (j) whether there were plans in place for the outreach offer at West Park (during the re-development of the St Budeaux Library);
- (k) the accessibility of the library service for those residents that worked during the day;
- (l) whether staff were confident in providing advice, through the assisted digital programme, for those residents applying for Universal Credit.

The committee raised concerns regarding the terminology used to describe activities and services currently available in ‘Tier 1’ libraries and work required to deliver the same activities and services in ‘Tier 2’ libraries. The committee considered that the libraries termed as ‘Tier 2’ would not be properly funded and ultimately this could lead to further library closures.

60. **Customer Services (Contact Centre Performance) Update**

Councillor Jordan (Cabinet Member for Culture), Andrew Hardingham (Interim Strategic Director for Transformation and Change), Faye Hambleton (Assistant Director for Customer Services) and Dave Saunders (Strategic Development Manager) presented this item.

The Contact Centre provided call handling for 14 services (including the Council’s enquiry line).

As a whole 95% of all calls were answered within an average speed of 48 seconds. Staff were trained in a range of services (dependant on experience) which allowed for flexibility in answering calls across these services.

The key areas of questioning from Members related to –

- (a) clarification on the loss of two weeks' data from July 2017;
- (b) the longest average time it took to answer a call;
- (c) clarification relating to the data provided for Parking and Cleansing in 2016 (differing time frames);
- (d) interrogation of the data provided for the enquiry line.

The committee noted the report.

(Councillor Sam Davey was present for the remaining items)

61. **Staff Survey**

Councillor Riley (Cabinet Member for HR/Democracy and Governance/Licensing), Andrew Hardingham (Strategic Director for Transformation and Change) and Jane Stephenson (Head of HR Business Services) presented the 'the view from you' staff survey 2017. Each year since 2010 the Council has run a staff survey to ask employees their views on working for the Council; employees were asked to respond anonymously to an online questionnaire.

The key areas of questioning from Members related to –

- the clarity of the questions asked within the survey (whether staff fully understood the questions);
- concerns regarding the decrease (since the 2016 survey) to the 'my team uses customer feedback to improve our services' question and the measures implemented to address this;
- the confidence within the organisation that best practices were being shared across all services of the Council;
- concerns regarding the decrease in the number of apprenticeships within the Council.

The committee noted the report.

62. **Waste Services Update**

Councillor Michael Leaves (Cabinet Member for Strategic Streetscene/Environment) and Gareth Harrison-Poole (Head of Service Streetscene and Waste) presented the update which highlighted the 2017/18 baseline statistics for the provision for waste collection and the level of contact with the Council regarding waste services.

The key areas of questioning from Members related to –

- (a) clarification regarding the rise in the number of missed brown bins, 769 in May 2017 from 209 in May 2016;
- (b) the numbers of staff assigned to monitor the streets/hotspot areas, in order to report, incidents of litter/waste/fly tipping;
- (c) whether an increase in litter/fly tipping had been reported;
- (d) whether there were future plans to roll out more community bins.

The committee noted the report.

63. **Homelessness Delivery Plan**

Councillor Ricketts (Cabinet Member for Transformation and Housing Delivery) and Matt Garrett (Head of Community Connections) presented the Plan for Preventing Homelessness 2018-2020 which highlighted the following key points –

- (a) the purpose of the plan for preventing homelessness was to implement and deliver against the priorities contained within the Plymouth Plan;
- (b) the Plymouth Plan sets out the strategic direction for Plymouth between now and 2035 and reaffirmed the Council's commitment to tackling homelessness in the city;
- (c) the Plan sets out to build on previous actions initiated in the last Homelessness Strategies; it fulfilled the Council's statutory duty under the Homeless Act 2002 and developed a strategic response to identify local causes of homelessness as detailed in the Code of Guidance.

The key areas of questioning from Members related to –

- (d) what new duties did the Homelessness Reduction Act 2018 place on the local authority;

- (e) whether there was additional Government funding for the 'new duties' placed on the local authority, and if so, how much;
- (f) the lack of timelines/targets contained within the Plan.

The committee agreed to include the Homelessness Action Plan (including timelines/targets) on its work programme for 2018-19.

The committee recommended that an all Member briefing session on the Homelessness Reduction Act 2018 is arranged.