

Brexit, Infrastructure and Legislative Change Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Wednesday 5 September 2018

PRESENT:

Councillor Morris, in the Chair.

Councillor Fletcher, Vice Chair.

Councillors Buchan, Carson, Churchill, Cook, Corvid (substitute for Councillor Mavin), Stevens and Wheeler.

Apology for absence: Councillor Mavin.

Also in attendance: Paul Brookes (Interim Chief Executive of The Box), Ed Coley (Head of Skills and Employability), David Draffan (Service Director for Economic Development), Councillor Evans OBE (Leader of the Council), Councillor Jordan, Patrick Knight (Economy, Partnerships and Regeneration Manager), Amanda Lumley (Chief Executive Destination Plymouth), Nicola Moyle (Head of Heritage, Arts and Film), Helen Prendergast (Democratic Support Advisor), Gareth Simmons (Strategic Project Director), Councillor Peter Smith (Deputy Leader of the Council), Adrian Vinken OBE (Chair of Destination Plymouth), Katy Willis (Director of Marketing and Student Experience – Plymouth Marjon University).

The meeting started at 2.00 pm and finished at 5.45 pm.

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.

16. **Declarations of Interest**

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

17. **Minutes**

The Committee agreed that the minutes of the meeting held on 4 July 2018 are confirmed as a correct record.

18. **Chair's Urgent Business**

There were no items of Chair's urgent business.

19. **Urgent Decision - Forder Valley Link Road**

Councillor Morris (Chair) advised that he had signed an urgent decision relating to the Forder Valley Link Road (Placing of Orders with Statutory Undertakers).

The decision related to the procurement of a contract for the design and construction of the utility works required for the Forder Valley Road. The works involved the design and construction of service diversions requiring civil engineering activities. These works could only be undertaken by the utility companies as they had the responsibility to operate on or divert their own apparatus.

The decision was also time critical due to the requirement to meet the Statutory Undertakers' lead-in times and to obtain a discount of 18% (which was available to local authorities under NRSWA 1991).

The Committee noted the decision.

20. **The Box Exhibition Fit Out Contractor's Appointment and Project Refinancing**

Councillor Peter Smith (Deputy Leader), David Draffan (Service Director for Economic Development), Nicola Moyle (Head of Heritage, Arts and Film), Gareth Simmons (Strategic Project Director), Paul Brookes (Interim Chief Executive – The Box) and Councillor Jordan presented this item.

The report outlined the work completed since the last update to scrutiny in April 2017. It also sought to set out in advance of Cabinet in October 2018, the nature of the capital decisions that would need to be made on letting the major exhibition fit out contract and managing the remaining construction works contract.

The key areas of outlined included the following –

- community engagement programme;
- exhibition;
- construction contract;
- organisational change and service restructure;
- funding;
- risk;
- timescales.

The key areas of questioning from Members related to –

- (a) whether further information could be provided relating to the community engagement programme, in particular 'Your Recipes, Your Heritage';
- (b) whether volunteers would be fully supported with the provision of induction training and if there were specific volunteer role profiles;
- (c) if people were interested in volunteering, how could they be signposted to find out further information;

- (d) whether existing museum staff had been retained, and if so, where had they been relocated to work during this period;
- (e) the reasons why the abnormal conditions relating to the refurbishment of St Luke's and the Edwardian part of the museum and library had not been identified when the survey had been undertaken;
- (f) the rationale behind setting the contingency fund at £1.1m for this project;
- (f) whether the -
 - figures presented to Cabinet in October 2018 would be the final costs on the projected spend;
 - risk associated with the additional monies would be borne by the Council;
 - additional funding would be fully capitalised at the end of the project;
- (g) the rationale for appointing an interim Chief Executive of The Box.

The Committee recognised the importance of being able to deliver the exhibition offer in full and the continuing engagement of the community in this project. The Committee also gave recognition to the hard work of all the teams involved in delivering The Box.

The Committee agreed to endorse the approach being undertaken with the programme (without the full costs being known at this stage).

The Committee agreed to revisit The Box in spring 2019 (March – June).

21. **Letter to the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government: Sustainable Communities Act 2007: A Proposal relating to the Impacts on Communities of the Withdrawal of the UK from the European Union**

Councillor Evans OBE (Leader) presented this item which highlighted the rationale for sending a letter to the Secretary of State for House, Communities and Local Government, relating to the Sustainable Communities Act: a proposal relating to the impact on communities of the withdrawal of the UK from the European Union.

- (a) the Council had identified a number of risks to the economic and social wellbeing of its communities, as a result of the European Union (Withdrawal) Act 2018;
- (b) in order to properly mitigate these risks, the Council sought to obtain sufficient information to inform its engagement with businesses, institutions and communities, decision-making and resource allocation;
- (c) the issues identified where the Council sought further information pertaining to Plymouth included the –
 - detail of EU powers affecting local government that would be incorporated into domestic law and the extent to which devolution of such powers to local authorities was planned;
 - likely impacts on foreign direct investment, given half of the City's twenty largest companies were foreign owned and half of these were located in Plymouth specifically to access EU markets;
 - loss of direct EU financial support including plans for the continuing support of ERDF, ESIF and EMFF funded projects after 2020.

The key areas of questioning from Members related to –

- (d) how much direct EU funding would Plymouth lose;
- (e) reservations relating to the timing of the letter, as currently it was unclear how the Secretary of State would be able to provide definite responses when Brexit negotiations were ongoing;
- (f) whether an acknowledgement or response to the letter had been received;

- (g) why the letter had not been sent directly following the referendum.

The Committee noted the letter.

The Committee agreed that any responses received are circulated to all Committee Members.

22. **Visitor Plan Refresh 2020-2030**

Councillor Evans OBE (Leader), Adrian Vinken OBE (Chair of Destination Plymouth), David Draffan (Service Director for Economic Development), Amanda Lumley (Chief Executive – Destination Plymouth) and Patrick Knight (Economy, Partnerships and Regeneration Manager) presented this item.

The report outlined the Council's intention to commission the refresh of its Visitor Plan 2020 – 2030, took a retrospective look at the achievements of the existing plan and looked to maximise the legacy of Mayflower 400.

The report outlined the following key areas -

- (a) the need to refresh the Visitor Plan in the light of an evolving market place, the significant progress against the existing plan and new opportunities arising which included how best to capitalise on the Mayflower 400 legacy and the proposal to establish the UK's first marine national park;
- (b) the achievements of the existing plan which included the –
 - growth of visitor numbers (which had seen the target of 20% surpassed with the actual visitor growth of 24.9%);
 - growth in visitor spend which had seen an increase of 17.5% (£321,767,000);
 - growth in jobs had seen an increase of 3,154;
 - growth in Gross Value Added (GVA) equated to £40m;
- (c) the refresh of the plan would set out new objectives, projects and aspirations which included –
 - the diagnoses and addressment of the opportunities/issues facing the growth in the sector, wider 'place marketing' challenges and establishment of a clear direction for the future development of Plymouth as a destination;

- the engagement with key partners across the City to define priorities, projects and assets that would help drive visitor growth;
- the identification of how best to invest limited funding and resources in improvements to the visitor offer and marketing effort.

The key areas of questioning from Members related to –

- (d) what work had been undertaken by Destination Plymouth to develop the offer for all Plymouth residents;
- (e) how many hotel beds would be required for Mayflower 2020 and in developing the plan for the next 10 years;
- (f) the provision of a cruise ship terminal in Plymouth;
- (g) what extent were the variances between the summer and winter periods and whether there was scope in developing the off peak season;
- (h) the sustainability of core funding from the Council.

The Committee recognised the importance of being able to deliver the exhibition offer in full and to retain the quality of the project in setting the capital budget whilst continuing the engagement of the community. The Committee also gave recognition to the hard work of all the teams involved in delivering The Box.

The Committee agreed that –

- (1) it recognised the success of the current Visitor Plan in growing the City's Visitor economy;
- (2) it supported the refresh of the Visitor Plan for the ten years from 2020 up to 2030;
- (3) the Visitor Plan is developed and circulated to Members of the Committee and consideration is given as to whether the Plan will need to be submitted to its scheduled meeting on 9 January 2019.

(Councillors Buchan, Carson, Churchill, Cook, Stevens and Wheeler left the meeting and did not participate further in the meeting).

23. **Brexit - Impact on Higher Education**

Councillor Evans OBE (Leader), Ed Coley (Head of Skills and Employability) and Katey Willis (Director of Marketing and Student Experience – Plymouth Marjons University) presented this item which highlighted the following key areas -

- (a) Plymouth had three Higher Education institutions which collectively employed 3,125 FTEs with a number of world class areas of subject expertise and facilities;
- (b) the University of Plymouth generated in excess of £460m of output for the City;
- (c) the success and vibrancy of the Higher Education institutions contributed significantly to the City's economy with student spend this was estimated to be worth over £120m to the local Gross Value Added (GVA) and also supported nearly 5000 jobs;
- (d) the loss of this contribution to the City's economy would have a severe impact and affect businesses that supported the student population.

The key areas of questioning raised by Members related to –

- (e) the potential impact of the loss of the Erasmus student exchange programme;
- (f) the potential changes that would be required for the retention and recruitment of faculty;
- (g) whether there would be opportunities to market Plymouth as a centre for marine excellence following the UK's withdrawal from the European Union;
- (h) how could the Council collaborate with the Higher Education sector to market the City internationally as an attractive place to study as well as a destination for employers;
- (i) whether the City's three universities could form part of Plymouth's offer for employment and training opportunities.

The Committee agreed that the following recommendations are submitted to Cabinet for consideration -

- (1) to ask the Government to -
 - (a) clarify the status of EU citizens in the UK in the event of a 'no deal' Brexit;
 - (b) take international students out of the net migration figures and give an assurance that changes to immigration rules and visa requirements will not limit the ability of universities to attract and recruit world leading researchers and teachers;
 - (c) provide greater clarity on what the UK Share Prosperity Fund might look like and where possible to negotiate close relations with existing structures such as Framework Programme 9;
 - (d) offer EU nationals continued access to UK research facilities and a matched funding scheme to support international collaborative research;
- (2) to collaborate with the Higher Education sector to market the City internationally as an attractive place to study and as a destination for employers.

24. **Work Programme**

The Committee noted its work programme for 2018/19.

25. **Tracking Decisions**

The Committee noted the progress of its decisions.

(Please note: this meeting was webcast and can be accessed via the link https://plymouth.public-i.tv/core/portal/webcast_interactive/368866)