

Brexit, Infrastructure and Legislative Change Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Wednesday 15 January 2020

PRESENT:

Councillor Winter, in the Chair.

Councillors Mrs Bridgeman (substitute for Councillor Jordan), Carson (substitute for Councillor Churchill), Drear, Kelly (substitute for Councillor Ms Watkin), Mavin, Stevens and Wheeler.

Apologies for absence: Councillors Sam Davey, Churchill, Jordan and Ms Watkin

Also in attendance: Paul Barnard (Service Director for Strategic Planning and Infrastructure), Councillor Dann (Cabinet Member for Environment and Street Scene), Kat Deeney (Head of Environmental Planning), David Draffan (Service Director for Economic Development), Patrick Knight (Economic Partnerships and Regeneration Manager), Andrew Loton (Senior Performance Advisor), Amanda Lumley (Chief Executive Destination Plymouth), Kevin McKenzie (Policy and Intelligence Advisor), Andrew Hardingham (Service Director for Finance) Anthony Payne (Strategic Director for Place), Helen Prendergast (Democratic Advisor) and Councillor Peter Smith (Deputy Leader).

The meeting started at 2.00 pm and finished at 5.35 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.

36. **Declarations of Interest**

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

37. **Minutes**

The Committee agreed that the minutes of the meetings held on 25 September and 23 October 2019 are a correct record.

38. **Chair's Urgent Business**

There were no items of Chair's urgent business.

39. **Mapping of Corporate Plan to Scrutiny Committee**

The Committee noted the mapping of the Corporate Plan to Scrutiny Committee.

Order of Business

With the permission of the Chair, the order of business was changed which was reflected in the minutes below.

40. Declaration on Climate Emergency

Councillor Dann (Cabinet Member for Environment and Street Scene), Anthony Payne (Strategic Director for Place), Paul Barnard MBE (Service Director for Strategic Planning and Infrastructure) and Kat Deeney (Head of Environmental Planning) presented the declaration on climate emergency report and provided a presentation which highlighted the following key areas –

- the value of a climate emergency;
- Plymouth sectoral emissions;
- emissions forecast for Plymouth;
- climate emergency action plan;
- corporate carbon reduction (aim and scope)
- Climate emergency summary.

The key areas of questioning from Members related to –

- (a) whether the survey that the Council had commissioned with the Centre for Energy and Environment at Exeter University relating the city's current emission had been bespoke to Plymouth, ie had the city's buildings/road network been mapped and scanned;
 - in response: Exeter University had looked at both the national carbon figures and the local context; this provided an overview of the sectoral emissions; the top three (buildings, transport and power) were generally the top three in most cities;

it was proposed to undertake a bottom up exercise, in order to fully understand where the greenhouse emissions being produced and to also review the hot spots identified within the city;
- (b) as the Council only had direct control of 1% of the city's carbon output, what work had been undertaken to engage with the top 10, 15 or 20 organisations to reduce their carbon emissions and which 10 local authorities had the Council engaged with regarding this issue;
 - in response: currently the focus had been on engaging with organisations, to ascertain what work/initiatives were being undertaken to reduce their carbon emissions; once this work had been completed, the data would be analysed which would help inform which areas to target;

over the next year, work would be undertaken to form a repository which would provide information for organisations and to facilitate the sharing of best practice;

a list of the 10 councils that Plymouth had worked with, so far, would be circulated outside of this meeting;

- (c) whether grant funding had been secured for some of the initiatives identified such as electric vehicle charging points;

- in response: the Cabinet had approved the allocation of £250,000 for the climate emergency action plan; however it should be noted that the climate emergency was not the sole responsibility of the local authority, everyone would need to play their part in reducing carbon emissions;

grant funding had also been received which included £500,000 for the installation of electric vehicle charging points, £880,000 for local renewable energy and £200,000 to reduce carbon emissions from heating;

- (d) the rationale behind the reduction in the emissions forecast since 2014;

- in response: during this period power plants had switched from using coal to gas and there were more renewable energy initiatives (this was a national issue);

- (e) whether the option to ban cars from the city centre, as other local authorities had done, such as Bristol and York, would be required in order to meet the target of carbon neutral by 2030;

- in response: the Council would look at other local authorities which had banned cars from their inner cities, to ascertain whether this had been successful; however, a range of issues would need to be considered such as behavioural changes (encouraging people to use the bus once a week), the introduction of cleaner buses, electric taxis, etc;

the Plymouth Plan and the Joint Local Plan set out the Transport Strategy 2034 and the Growth Strategy both of which would need to be recalibrated in light of the declaration of the climate emergency;

- (f) whether the Council had received feedback from its partners relating to the operation of electric buses in the city, given its topography and if any information was available on the measures that the haulage companies would be taking to reduce carbon emissions;

- in response: regular discussions were held with the Cabinet Member for Strategic Planning and Infrastructure and the bus operators; other options were being considered such as hydrogen buses; discussions were also being held with the business community on how the Council could support businesses that wished to become carbon neutral;
- (g) whether the Council could lobby for the electrification of the rail network as part of the climate emergency agenda;
- in response: the Peninsula Rail Task Force together with the city's MPs continued to lobby the Government for the electrification of the rail network, however there were no current plans to electrify the network from Bristol to the peninsula;
- (h) it was reported that in order for Plymouth to reach carbon neutral by 2030 it would cost approximately £442m or £1,625 per household; this would be a hefty burden for residents who were already struggling with other financial obligations;
- in response: it was not the intention of the Council to charge £1,625 per household; these figures had been produced to demonstrate the level of investment that the city would need to make to support both national and global climate changes; it was everyone's responsibility to reduce carbon emissions; the Council would need to spend money in a different way in order to achieve the benefits such as LED street lighting invest to save scheme which had reduced the Council's energy costs;
- (i) what robust plan was in place to increase the city's recycling rates from 39% to 65%;
- in response: there were a number of measures being undertaken such as a leafleting campaign, encouraging residents to compost, registering for the garden waste service and working with enforcement to ensure residents were recycling more effectively; there would however need to be a behaviour change from residents in order to meet the 65% target; residents would be fully informed of the benefits of recycling that would save the Council money which would allow it to spend it in a different way;
- (j) how the reduction in carbon emissions was measured in the city;

- in response: currently the measurement of carbon emissions was done on a national basis; it was the intention to install air quality sensors in the city, in order to capture information to demonstrate that improvements had been achieved;
- (k) whether consideration had been given to permit electric vehicles to use the existing bus lanes;
- in response: there would be a range of policies to consider, prior to any decision being made to permitting electric vehicles to use the bus lanes;
- (l) whether consideration had been given to operating electric taxis within the city;
- in response: the Council was currently working with Dundee City Council (which operated a fleet of 130 electric taxis) to investigate the feasibility of installing vehicle charging hubs, funding for this project and how best to support the trade in making the transition to electric taxis;
- (m) whether increasing the amount of freight that came into the city via Cattedown wharves had been investigated;
- in response: a wide range of issues would be considered such as electric ferries and the onward transportation of goods that came through the city;
- (n) the cost of installing an electric vehicle charging point, the lead in time for this work to be undertaken, whether planning consent was required and would 100 workplace charging points be installed by April 2020;
- in response: a substantial amount of research and pre-planning had been undertaken regarding the installation of 100 workplace electric vehicle charging points; an assurance was given that 100 charging points would be installed by April 2020; the cost of the installation would largely depend on the existing infrastructure;
- the location of the 100 workplace electric vehicle charging points and the cost of installation would be provided outside of this meeting;
- (o) sought clarification as to the worse air polluted areas in Plymouth;

- in response: Plymouth had a single air quality monitoring area (AQMA) which had been declared in 2014 for nitrogen dioxide (largely due to road traffic emissions); the AQMA covered Exeter Street, Mutley Plain, Stoke Village, Royal Parade and Tavistock Road; however the air quality within the city was good;

further information on the AQMA together with the tree planting associated to transport schemes would be provided outside of this meeting;

- (p) it was widely recognised that trees would remove carbon from the atmosphere, however there were no details within the action plan that identified the locations that the trees would be planted in nor the size of the trees;

- the planting of trees was one element in reducing carbon emissions; both sea grass and sea kelp took carbon from the atmosphere up to 35 times faster than trees;

tree planting in the city associated with transport schemes would be provided outside of this meeting;

- (q) whether the action plans could be reviewed on a six monthly basis;

- in response: it was considered that a six month update on the actions could be provided to the Committee, rather than reviewing the suite of documents.

The Committee noted the progress that had been made since the declaration on climate emergency.

The Committee agreed to -

- (1) support and endorse the corporate reduction action plan 2019/2024;
- (2) support and endorse the 2019 climate emergency action plan;
- (3) support an annual review of the corporate carbon reduction plan 2019-2024 and the climate emergency action plan;
- (4) receive an update against the actions on a six monthly basis with regard to the climate emergency action plan and the corporate reduction plan 2019-2024.

The Chair thanked the Cabinet Member for Environment and Street Scene and officers for attending the meeting and the Committee members for the robust debate.

41. **Plymouth Visitor Plan - Refresh 2020-2030**

Councillor Smith (Deputy Leader), David Draffan (Service Director for Economic Development), Amanda Lumley (Executive Director Destination Plymouth) and Patrick Knight (Economy, Partnership and Regeneration Manager) presented the Plymouth Visitor Plan refresh 2020-2030 which highlighted the following key areas –

- (a) the plan would enable Plymouth's residents to benefit from the visitor economy, supporting quality job retention and creation; whilst also enabling Plymothians to take full advantage of the city's rich history, heritage and unique environment, by promoting opportunities for education, health and wellbeing and pride;
- (b) work on the Visitor Plan refresh was being led by Destination Plymouth and was initially brought to the Committee in August 2018 and was then further reviewed with the headline Visitor Plan 2020-2030 strategy being adopted by the City Council in March 2019;
- (c) the growth of tourism and the visitor economy had been a great success story for the city with over 25% growth in the last eight years; from just under four million visitors to 5.4 million in 2018 spending over £347m annually and supporting nearly 8000 jobs, over 7% of the city's employment;
- (d) the Visitor Plan 2020 had more than achieved its targets ie –
 - visitor numbers had grown by 25.9% against a target of 20%;
 - visitor spend had grown by 25% in 2018, against a target of 25% by 2020;
- (e) the plan's aim was to build on and consolidate the success of the previous plan and the legacy of Mayflower 400; the delivery of the refreshed Visitor Plan would generate a further 1000 new jobs in the city bringing employment in tourism to just under 9000;
- (f) the 2030 targets included -
 - growing visitor spend by 30% from £347m to £450m in a decade;
 - increasing the total visitor number by 15% from 5.1 to 6 million by 2030;
- (g) the new strategy had three key themes -

- blue-green city;
- brilliant culture and heritage;
- premier destination.

The key areas of questioning from Members related to –

- (h) whether all the cruise ships scheduled to visit Plymouth in 2020 would be docking at Millbay;
- in response -
 - the Disney Magic cruise liner would be anchored in Plymouth Sound; passengers on board would land at both Millbay and Commercial Wharf on the Barbican via tenders;
 - work had been undertaken with Disney Cruise Liners to arrange for the passengers to pre-book visits such as the National Marine Aquarium, The Box and Plymouth Gin Distillery;
 - the initial aspiration was to secure up to 30 vessels a year, based on the current infrastructure; Trinity Pier had the capacity to berth 150m vessels; companies that operated 150m vessels or smaller were being targeted to visit Plymouth (companies did not always operate larger vessels around Britain);
- (i) the need to be digitally ready, in order to provide visitors with an opportunity to download an app which would enable them to visit areas of interest across the city and whether this could be an augmented reality app;
- in response: the aim was to launch the first pilot app for three of the heritage trails (which had been developed for Mayflower 400); it was hoped to launch the app in February 2020 (in time for the half term holidays) however this may slip to March 2020; once the app had been tested, it was hoped to build on this with children and accessibility friendly trials (work was being undertaken with Plymouth Area Disability Action Network regarding the accessibility friendly trail); initially this would not be an augmented reality app but it was hoped that in the future this could be achieved;

- (j) concerns regarding visitors' initial impressions of the city coming through the Millbay gateway;
 - in response:
 - discussions were continuing with ABP Plymouth and Brittany Ferries to provide experiential improvements to the Millbay gateway; this area would also be enhanced by the Millbay Boulevard;
 - discussions were being held with ABP Plymouth and Brittany Ferries to co-invest in the infrastructure to provide berthing facilities for 300m vessels.

The Committee wished to express its thanks to the team that had secured the increase in cruise ships visiting the City and also the coverage of Plymouth by CNN International media-company.

The Committee noted the report.

The Committee agreed to recommend to Cabinet that it adopts the proposed plan including the emerging 'Star Projects'.

(The Committee received a presentation on the Plymouth Visitor Plan Refresh 2020-2030)

42. **Brexit - New Burdens and Fiscal Impacts**

Councillor Peter Smith (Deputy Leader), Andrew Hardingham (Service Director for Finance) and Kevin McKenzie (Policy and Intelligence Advisor) presented the Brexit New Burdens and Fiscal Impacts report which highlighted the following key points –

- (a) a new burden was defined as any policy or initiative which increased the cost of providing local authority services such as the transfer of a function from central to local government;
- (b) services of the Council which were included in the scope of new burdens included -
 - Environmental Health (additional resources at Millbay ferry terminal, in order to discharge the Council's Port Authority role);
 - Trading Standards (a range of impacts on advisory and enforcement roles);

- (c) in 2018/19, a grant had been received from the Government of £104,958 which had not met the Council's Brexit preparation costs of over £300,000; in 2019/20 the Council had received a Government grant for £209,968 which would not cover its preparation costs;
- (d) the fiscal impact could include the following -
- net payments to the EU budget currently amounted to 0.4% of UK gross domestic product (GDP); these payments could be redirected to fund increased UK public spending, although the UK may be required to continue to contribute to the EU budget, in return for a closer relationship;
 - details of the UK Shared Prosperity Fund were yet to be published by the Government; (the Government had guaranteed to underwrite EU funded schemes which were due to be delivered by December 2020);
 - structural unemployment was anticipated due to the displacement of people from negatively impacted industries (this could lead to a skills shortage in industries that experienced growth);
- (e) Brexit would impose new burdens, some of which would be temporary others would have longer term budget pressures; some additional funding had been made available through various Government departments but this funding had not covered the Council's costs;
- (f) many of the fiscal impacts would not be within the scope of the new burdens doctrine; Central Government was operating on a presumption of the resilience of local authorities to economic shocks.

The key areas of questioning from Members related to –

- (g) whether there was an update relating to the city being designated as a Border Inspection Post;
- in response: the Council was currently developing a programme which included a number of priorities to be delivered over the next year, one of the priorities was the designation of Plymouth as a Border Inspection Post;

- (h) what measures were the Council putting in place to mitigate the risk of the UK leaving the EU without a trade deal in place by December 2020;
 - in response: one of the priorities of the programme would be to keep under review a no deal scenario, in the event that a trade deal could not be secured with the EU;
- (i) the measures being taken by the Council to gain clarification from the Government on outstanding issues;
 - in response: the Committee was assured that officers led by the Assistant Chief Executive were lobbying the Government to seek clarification on a range of issues;
- (j) the need for Plymouth to have an unique business case which identified the prevalent issues in the city, in order to differentiate it from other cities, thus enabling it to be more effective in lobbying the Government for additional funding;
 - in response: the suggestion of drafting an unique business case for the city with a focus on building a stronger economy in the longer term was welcomed;
- (i) whether the Government would assist the Council to negate the risk of Brexit having a detrimental impact on the city;
 - in response: it was anticipated that the Council would need additional funding in order to negate the impact of Brexit on the city.

The Committee agreed that -

- (1) the Cabinet ensures that the Council is well prepared for a dialogue with Government regarding the scope and extent of new burdens and the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UK SPF), as well as other consultations;
- (2) a business case, identifying the issues that were prevalent to the city is drafted (in order to differentiate Plymouth from other cities) to enable more effective lobbying Government for additional funding.

43. **Corporate Plan Performance Report**

Andrew Loton (Senior Performance Advisor) advised that this was the first time that the Corporate Plan performance report was being scrutinised by all four of the scrutiny committees. The report provided an analysis of performance against the Council's key performance indicators which provided a detailed performance update against the Corporate Plan priorities, as at September 2019.

The main area of questioning from Members related to -

- (a) why the target for the measure relating to the total value of strategic projects, third party investment and notable Foreign Direct Investments (FDIs) brought into the city or facilitated by the Council, was the same figure for 'how have we done' and 'the target for 2019/20 of £334.408'm;
 - in response: the target for 2019/20 and the 'how we have done' measure was the same, as the amount of inward investment was a forecast for this year and the actual amount of investment would not be known until the end of the financial year;
- (b) whether the measures relating to the efficient transport network (public satisfaction with traffic flow) were set nationally or by the Council;
 - in response: the performance indicators were reviewed on an annual basis with the Cabinet Members and Strategic Directors;
- (c) what measures were being put in place to address the issue of a significant number of young people not agreeing with the statement that Plymouth had a lot to offer;
 - in response: this may be an issue that the Committee wished to scrutinise further at a future meeting.

The Committee noted the Corporate Plan quarter two performance report.

The Committee agreed to request that with regard to the measurement of the efficiency of the transport network, an additional performance indicator is included in the Corporate Plan for the time taken for a set of journeys at peak and non-peak times be measured and the difference evaluated.

44. **Policy Update**

Kevin McKenzie (Policy and Intelligence Advisor) presented the Policy update which highlighted the following key areas –

- (a) the Queen’s speech which outlined the Government’s intentions over the next Parliament;
- (b) Government policy, legislative announcements and news which included -
 - Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs: £50m Woodland Carbon Guarantee scheme which would encourage farmers and landowners to plant more trees to help tackle climate change;
 - Department for Transport: funding available to local authorities for electric car vehicle charge points;
- (c) open consultation – Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government: this consultation sets out plans for Future Homes Standard which included proposed options to increase energy efficiency.

The key areas of questioning from Members related to –

- (d) whether the Council would be eligible for funding from the Woodland Carbon Guarantee scheme as a landowner;
 - in response: a response would be provided to the Committee, regarding this matter;
- (e) the reason for the reduction in the UK threat level from terrorism from severe to substantial given the recent events;
 - in response: the reasons for the reduction in the threat level were not known;
- (f) whether the Council should respond to the open consultation on plans for the Future Homes Standard;
 - in response: the Cabinet Member for Housing and Co-operative Development could be requested to respond to this consultation.

The Committee requested that the Cabinet Member for Housing and Co-operative Development consider responding to the Future Homes Standard consultation.

45. **Work Programme**

The Committee noted its work programme.

The Committee agreed that the following items be included on its work programme

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- (1) vibrant cultural offer including music venues (11 March 2020);
- (2) Brexit Community Cohesion (11 March 2020);
- (3) six month review of the actions included in the climate emergency action plan and the corporate carbon reduction plan 2019-2024.

46. **Tracking Decisions**

The Committee noted the progress of its tracking decisions.