

Performance, Finance and Customer Focus Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Wednesday 22 January 2020

PRESENT:

Councillor Kelly, in the Chair.
Councillor Winter, Vice Chair.
Councillors Mrs Beer, Derrick, Hendy, Mrs Johnson, Mrs Pengelly Tuffin and Vincent.

Apologies for absence: Councillors Ms Watkin (Councillor Mrs Pengelly substituting) and Wiggins (Councillor Beer substituting).

Also in attendance: Councillor Sally Haydon (Cabinet Member for Customer Focus and Community Safety), (Matt Garrett Service Director for Community Connections), Dave Ryland (Community Connections Strategic Manager), Inspector Robin Loveridge (Devon and Cornwall Police), Councillor Chris Penberthy (Cabinet Member for Housing and Co-operative Development), John Hamblin (Shekinah), Melanie Haymes (Finance Business Partner), Holly Golden (Head of Procurement), Councillor Jon Taylor (Cabinet Member for Education, Skills and Transformation), Pete Honeywell (Transformation Architecture Manager), Paul Looby (Head of Financial Reporting and Planning), Andy Ralphs (Strategic Director for Customer and Corporate Services) and Jamie Sheldon (Democratic Advisor).

The meeting started at 2.00 pm and finished at 5.10 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.

83. Declarations of Interest

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

84. Minutes

The Committee agreed the minutes of the meetings held on 02 October 2019 and 11 November 2019 (Garden waste Call-in).

85. Chair's Urgent Business

The Chair asked the Committee if they were happy to change the order of the agenda and take the Begging and Community Safety Enforcement item, before the Homeless Overview item.

The Committee agreed to change the order of the agenda.

86. **Mapping of Corporate Plan to Scrutiny Committees**

The Committee noted the Mapping of Corporate Plan to Scrutiny Committees document.

87. **Policy briefing**

The Performance Finance and Customer Overview and Scrutiny Committee were provided with the latest national picture in respect of policy announcements and legislation.

The Committee noted the report.

88. **Begging and Community Safety Enforcement**

Councillor Sally Haydon (Cabinet Member for Customer Focus and Community Safety), (Matt Garrett Service Director for Community Connections), Dave Ryland (Community Connections Strategic Manager) and Inspector Robin Loveridge (Devon and Cornwall Police) presented the Begging and Community Safety Enforcement report –

- (a) Provided detail around city wide enforcement under the Anti-Social Behaviour Crime and Policing Act 2014 and gave context as to the actions being undertaken to address begging via enforcement activity.
- (b) Begging and Community Safety Enforcement fell under the remit of Safer Plymouth, our Community Safety Partnership.
- (c) Safer Plymouth had the following statement of intent:
 - Identity – Safer Plymouth delivering safer communities;
 - Purpose – Co-ordination, Quality Assurance, Systems Leadership;
 - Focus – Reducing violence, abuse and exploitation;
 - Aims – Prevention of harm, early intervention, reducing re-offending;
 - Outcomes – Building community resilience, reducing inequalities and improving lives.
- (d) One measure for Safer Plymouth was whether people of Plymouth felt safe during the day and at night which is measured through the City survey.
- (e) The most recent survey from 2018 told us that 90% of people feel safe during the day, with 60% of people feeling safe during the dark. These results were fairly similar to both 2012 and 2014 with only very minor changes. Whilst there would be differences across localities to how people feel this showed that Plymouth was largely seen as a safe place to live.

- (f) Begging was an offence under section 3 of the *Vagrancy Act 1824*, and was a recordable offence. The maximum sentence was a fine at level 3 on the standard scale (currently £1000).
- (g) Between 01 January 2019 and 31 December 2019 in the Plymouth BCU there was 84 recorded incidents / logs of Begging (including all various definitions).
- (h) Plymouth against Retail Crime was established in September 2001 to combat the increasing problems in Plymouth City Centre of retail crime and anti-social behaviour within the City Centre Business Improvement District (BID). PARC have Officers operating in the city centre on a daily basis and were targeted towards addressing matters of concern inclusive of Begging
- (i) Plymouth City Council had a small team that worked closely with the Police and other agencies to deal with Anti-Social Behaviour in its many forms. This would support agencies to address behaviours of concern using a range of powers.
- (j) In 2019 Plymouth City Councils Community Connections team received 533 enquiries relating to Anti-Social Behaviour.

The key areas of questioning from Members related to –

- Understanding the true number of people begging in Plymouth and what their vulnerabilities were;
- How the problem of persistent beggars had been moved from the City Centre to surrounding areas of the city such as Mutley Plain and what further action had been done to prevent them continuing this behaviour in a new location;
- explained that beggars had been using big issue seller spots around the City Centre which was causing issue for the sellers;
- wanted clarification on whether members of the public busking was seen as begging;
- how big of issue begging was in Plymouth and how did we compare with cities of similar population;
- Whether members of the public should be encouraged to report people begging to the police and whether this would help them get the support they need;
- What plans were in place for Mayflower 2020 to combat begging as it would be a bigger opportunity for beggars?

The Committee noted the briefing on city wide enforcement under the Anti-Social Behaviour Crime and Policing Act 2014 and the actions being undertaken to address begging via enforcement activity.

89. **Homeless Overview (including an overview of the Alliance)**

Councillor Chris Penberthy (Cabinet Member for Housing and Co-operative Development), (Matt Garrett Service Director for Community Connections) and John Hamblin (Shekinah) presented the Homeless Overview to the Committee –

- (a) Homelessness could happen for a variety of reasons and often with circumstances out of the control of those involved. It was recognised that in a time of crisis, people were often more vulnerable, and there was a need to ensure the right support was available at the right time to prevent homelessness wherever possible.
- (b) The Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 (HRA), came into effect in April 2018, placing a new duty on local authorities to help prevent the homelessness of families and single people, who were eligible for assistance and threatened with homelessness, regardless of priority need.
- (c) The Act significantly reformed England's homelessness legislation by placing duties on local authorities to intervene at earlier stages to prevent homelessness.
- (d) The HRA has increased the number of people eligible for services. The time taken to deal with cases is longer due to the change in the law (now 112 days from application to decision, previously it was 33 working days.) Both of these factors had increased demand on front line services with the time spent on cases doubled and reduced capacity within the service.
- (e) The number of households approaching the Local Authority for advice around homelessness and being threatened with homelessness had been rising over the last few years. In 2016/17, advice was provided to 1,654 households. This rose to 1,869 households in 2017/18. In 18/19 there was a further increase to 2,514 households.
- (f) Rough Sleeper numbers in Plymouth (the most visible form of homelessness) have risen over the last few years however there was a decrease to 23 in the official count in November 2018 from 26 in November 2017.
- (g) Where it is not possible to prevent or relieve homelessness for eligible households presenting as homeless or at risk of homelessness, Plymouth City Council had a duty to provide emergency temporary accommodation if the household is determined to be in 'priority need'.
- (h) Plymouth City Council (PCC) commissions a broad range of statutory and non-statutory interventions for people who have support needs in relation to

homelessness and may also have support needs around substance misuse, mental health, offending and risk of exploitation.

- (i) Using an Alliance model, the focus was on creating systemic change: changes to culture, funding structures, commissioning and implementing policies that support a new way of working. Furthermore working together to create a contractual environment where suppliers shared responsibility for achieving outcomes and were mutually supportive, making decisions based on the best outcome for the service user.
- (j) A single contract for the provision of support for people with complex needs had been awarded to a partnership of the following organisations in Plymouth, working together in partnership with commissioners as The Plymouth Alliance for Complex Needs (TPA): BCHA, Hamoaze House, Harbour Trust, Livewell South West, Live West, PATH, Shekinah and The Zone.
- (k) An action plan specifically focused on those aged 16/17 was being implemented to reduce the number of young people in temporary accommodation and increase accommodation options to meet the wider needs of homeless young people aged 16- 24years. In order to do this, Plymouth City Council would work with the Plymouth Alliance to review young people's accommodation and broaden the range of accommodation options for all young people.

The key areas of questioning from Members related to –

- What plans had been put in place to deal with the hard to house group and how could they be supported;
- Whether training or support was provided to people when they are out of the hostel system e.g. cooking and life skills;
- Whether the Police would you encourage people to report rough sleeping and what was the process for doing so;
- why people opted for housing advice but had chosen not to complete an initial assessment form and was this because people needed more support filling out the forms;
- the definition for “intentionally homeless” and how support differed for these individuals;
- how many children were in temporary accommodation and bed and breakfast and the impact temporary accommodation could have on children's education.

The Committee noted the briefing on recent changes in homelessness legislation with the introduction of the Homelessness Reduction Act (HRA), the Council's duties in respect of this and the impact of this on service delivery in the City; the levels of homelessness in the City; and the current work and initiatives to prevent and relieve homelessness, including some of the work of The Plymouth Alliance.

90. **Transfer of Procurement Services**

Councillor Chris Penberthy (Cabinet Member for Housing and Co-operative Development), Holly Golden (Head of Procurement) and Melanie Haymes (Finance Business Partner) presented the Transfer of Procurement Services to the Committee –

- (a) Plymouth City Council's Procurement Service, which was a key support service within the Finance Department. This team was responsible for leading and providing professional support from low value transactional purchases up to multi million pound strategic projects across a diverse range of goods, services and works, covering 4 main category areas- Construction, Professional Services, Facilities Management and Environment and Transport.
- (b) The Cooperative Commissioning team were out of scope for this proposal. The Cooperative Commissioning team operated was part of the People Directorate and undertook all activity within Plymouth City Council (PCC) to contribute to the outcomes defined in four commissioning strategies that cover; Wellbeing, Children and Young People, Community and Enhanced and Specialised Care.
- (c) The Procurement Service was responsible for ensuring PCC's procurement and contracting activity was conducted in accordance with its own Contract Standing Orders, Procurement Regulations and Legislation in a fair, transparent and compliant manner and delivered best value for the Council.
- (d) In 2018/19, the Procurement Service and Cooperative Commissioning team oversaw the procurement of over £226.4 million of goods, services or works.
- (e) The total value of awarded contracts in 2018/19 totalled £128.4 million
- (f) Following a detailed option analysis undertaken in September 2017, the conclusion was reached that existing back office services would provide more value to PCC and Plymouth through them being delivered via a public sector shared service provider. The outcome of this analysis was that Delt Shared Services Ltd (Delt) was recommended as the best option.
- (g) The Payroll and Pensions service was transferred in early 2018, followed by Print and Document Services in the autumn of 2018. The Procurement Service was now recommended for transfer to Delt from 1 April 2020.
- (h) The Procurement Service had previously experienced severe difficulty in recruiting and retaining staff. There was a national shortage of procurement professionals and this was an especially challenging situation in the South West. The private sector had the flexibility to pay higher salaries and could offer more innovative and generous remuneration packages.

The key areas of questioning from Members related to –

- Why PCC had recruited staff and occurred the recruitment expenses if the plan was to transfer staff to Delt Shared Services Ltd;

- What were the risks for the staff transferring across as part of this proposal?
- Whether all vacant posts within the staffing structure were now filled, what the FTE of the department was and what was the Head Count;
- Why there was a large difference in the Employee costs in 2018/19 compared to 2019/20;
- Concerns were raised about not having a gain share arrangement or having details presented before the Committee;
- Whether PCC would have any involvement in recruiting staff if the procurement team transferred over to Delt Shared Services Ltd.

Councillor Kelly proposed an amendment seconded by Councillor Beer to amend the recommendation to read “The Performance, Finance and Customer Focus Overview and Scrutiny Committee are asked to recommend Cabinet enter negotiations with Delt Shared Services Ltd” and the Gain share arrangement to be finalised and made public before the deal was signed off in its entirety.

For – Councillors Kelly, Johnson, Pengelly and Beer.

Against – Councillors Winter, Hendy, Derrick, Tuffin and Vincent.

The amendment was not passed but Councillors Kelly, Johnson, Pengelly and Beer wanted it noted that they wished to have a firm split in the gain share arrangements.

The Performance, Finance and Customer Focus Overview and Scrutiny Committee were asked to recommend to Cabinet –

- The Procurement Service transferred to Delt, with staff transferring under TUPE arrangements with effect from 1 April 2020.
- All Procurement Service work is channelled through Delt allowing for greater efficiencies and growth through a central hub and the potential for greater retention and stability in the workforce through a broader range of procurement categories
- A Gain share arrangement is put in place whereby both PCC and Delt are motivated to drive down the cost of spend through a share in savings generated. The finer details of the gain share arrangement are to be worked up in partnership with Delt. Finalised
- The client function to remain within PCC Finance department with KPI's to be agreed in partnership with Delt.

For – Councillors Winter, Hendy, Derrick, Tuffin and Vincent.

Against – Councillors Kelly, Johnson, Pengelly and Beer.

91. **TWWW Programme Update - To follow**

Councillor Jon Taylor (Cabinet Member for Education, Skills and Transformation) and Pete Honeywell (Transformation Architecture Manager) presented The Way We Work Programme Update –

- (a) Described the rationale and approach to digital services that the Council was taking as part of The Way We Work Programme. Previous updates to the panel had explained how digital was part of the programme without fully explaining why it was so important.
- (b) Provided a description of the new Assisted Customer Service Support scheme which protected customers who might otherwise be in danger of digital and even social isolation.
- (c) Taking a customer focused approach to the digitisation of more of our services will achieve the following benefits:
 - Benchmarks shown that whilst face to face interactions cost between £10.53 and £14.00 and calls cost between £3.39 and £5 per call, digital transactions cost between £0.08 and £0.17 per interaction. In 2012 Government Digital Services (GDS) estimated the annual savings to central government were in the region of £1.7bn to £1.8bn per year;
 - Access to services 24/7;
 - Status updates on progress to complete a service request;
 - Ability to see and manage multiple requests at the same time.

The key areas of questioning from Members related to –

- The possibility of using text messages to remind residents when bins needed to be collected;
- Concerns were raised that not all residents had access to the technology required and would isolate them from services.

The Committee noted the report and considered the data and analysis in the report as background for future recommendations arising from The Way We Work programme.

92. **Revenue Monitoring - Month Eight**

Paul Looby (Head of Financial Reporting and Planning) presented the Revenue Monitoring - Month Eight report to the Committee –

- (a) This report outlined the finance monitoring position of the Council at the end of November 2019.
- (b) The primary purpose of this report was to detail how the Council is delivering against its financial measures using its revenue resources.
- (c) The projected revenue overspend is £2.699m against a revenue budget of £185.483m.
- (d) The Children Young People and Families Service were reporting a net budget pressure of £2.342m at Month 8.
- (e) Street Scene & Waste services were reporting an adverse variation. This can be attributed to the RTS fire and closure of the facility for 9 weeks, increased costs linked to health and safety, increased maintenance costs of an aging fleet and overall pressures to deliver clean and tidy streets.
- (f) Strategic Planning and Infrastructure budget position showed a net £86k positive variation to budget. This was a positive change since last month's budget monitoring report of £69k.

The key areas of questioning from Members related to –

- What Financial information would be provided to the budget scrutiny meeting?
- Concerns were raised regarding the ongoing use of reserves.

The Committee noted the month eight monitoring position.

93. **Work Programme**

The Committee noted the work programme and agreed to -

1. Add the Communication Review Plan to 18 March 2020 meeting;
2. Add the Policy plan on rogue landlords to the Work Programme for the next Municipal year.

94. **Tracking Decisions**

The Committee noted the progress against actions since the last meeting.