

Cabinet

Tuesday 15 September 2020

PRESENT:

Councillor Evans OBE, in the Chair.

Councillor P Smith, Vice Chair.

Councillors Haydon, Coker, Dann, Lowry, Penberthy, Jon Taylor, Laing and Kate Taylor.

Ruth Harrell (Director of Public Health), Tracey Lee (Chief Executive), Alison Botham (Director of Children's Services), Craig McArdle (Strategic Director for People), Andrew Loton (Head of Performance, Governance and Risk) and Jamie Sheldon (Senior Governance Advisor).

The meeting started at 2.00 pm and finished at 4.40 pm.

Note: The full discussion can be viewed on the webcast of the City Council meeting at www.plymouth.gov.uk. At a future meeting, the Council 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.

25. **Declarations of Interest**

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

26. **Minutes**

Members agreed the minutes of 18 August 2020 as an accurate record of the meeting.

27. **Questions from the Public**

There were no questions received from members of the public.

28. **Chair's Urgent Business**

Under this item Councillor Chris Penberthy (Cabinet Member for Housing and Co-operative Development) was invited by the Leader to provide an update on a recently published consultation document by Government titled 'Changes to the Current Planning System'. Responses were required to be submitted by the end of the month with the aim for Cabinet to endorse the actions proposed. It was advised that the consultation document contained four proposals which had a significant impact on the Council's ability to deliver affordable homes and a mix of homes in the right locations.

Cabinet were encouraged to resist the proposals contained within the consultation document.

Cabinet agreed that Councillor Penberthy respond to the consultation document 'Changes to the Current Planning System' as indicated in his address to Cabinet.

29. **Update from the Director of Public Health on COVID-19**

Ruth Harrell (Director of Public Health) gave an update on Covid 19 –

- since the last update to Cabinet Covid 19 had increased from approximately 15 per 100,000 in Plymouth to just over 20 per 100,000 in a relatively short time;
- there was starting to be an increase in the amount of places and settings impacted by this – workplaces had small clusters including care homes and schools;
- testing for Covid 19 was a live issue; guidance issued stated that if someone had symptoms they were encouraged to get a test however this was proving difficult for some. Testing had increased as last week 3,300 people were tested however a month ago the figure was around 2,000 tested. More tests had become available however demand had increased; additional capacity for testing had been brought in at Seaton Barracks;
- it was highlighted that if someone was displaying a symptom of Covid 19 they should take a test however if you had been in contact with someone who had a confirmed case of Covid 19 then you were required to self-isolate for 14 days;
- new guidance had been issued regarding the restriction of social contact; some things were to be embedded in law. Plymouth's figures were considerably lower than the England average however everyone was encouraged to consider if they could avoid social contact, to wear face coverings in confined spaces and to stick to hygiene measures like hand washing.

Cabinet noted the update.

30. **Update from the Chief Executive on Reset**

Tracey Lee (Chief Executive) gave an update on the Reset programme and invited Alison Botham (Director of Children's Services) and Craig McArdle (Strategic Director for People) to give a brief overview of key developments within their directorate:

- there were three elements of the programme; Response, Restart and Recovery. In the Response phase work was undertaken to assess the situation surrounding Covid 19 and the support required to run key services and create new services to support people. In the Restart phase services that were required to stop or slow down were being assessed so that they could operate within the Government guidelines of safety. The Reset phase was not a linear process due to the nature of the pandemic and the requirement to respond to changes quickly;
- The Council's website had the most up to date information regarding services provided and residents were encouraged to access this; weekly emails were also produced in which people could subscribe to.

Alison Botham (Director for Children's Services) highlighted the following key points:

- since the last Cabinet meeting there was a key focus on schools reopening; there were currently some schools with either confirmed or suspected cases of Covid 19 – this was a small but currently increasing number;
- by the end of last week, all schools in the city had reopened safely to all year groups; some year groups in some schools were closed due to confirmed or suspected cases of Covid 19; schools were thanked for their hard work and cooperation in enabling the successful opening of schools from September 2020;
- those pupils that required additional support in returning to school were receiving support in learning, emotional and wellbeing needs. A programme was being rolled out to ensure all aspects of a child's needs were met;
- all children and young people with a social worker were being seen face to face and were no longer only having virtual contact. This approach would continue to be reviewed as the changing picture both locally and nationally was assessed.

Craig McArdle (Strategic Director for People) highlighted the following key points:

- there was a rising number of Covid 19 cases in care homes in the city with four care homes currently at outbreak status, two care homes with suspected cases and four care homes with single cases. This was adding to rising pressures within the system;
- care home staff were thanked for continuing to support the city's most vulnerable people in such a difficult situation; care home visiting was still in place and 84% of care homes had opened up following the completion of risk assessments – this would be kept under review;
- all day centres in the city were open however due to Covid 19 restrictions the number of sessions was reduced; work was ongoing with the voluntary and community sector linked to the stepping down from hospital;
- the Local Care Partnership had been formed and priorities had been agreed and were being focused upon.

Cabinet noted the update.

31. **Leader's Announcements**

Councillor Evans OBE (Leader) highlighted the following in his announcements:

- he had written to the Secretary of State, Matt Hancock and Baroness Dido Harding, the Chair of the National Institute for Health Protection, regarding the lack of testing capacity in Plymouth;
- the Council was seeking feedback from residents regarding their

experiences of the Covid 19 testing in order that they could be collated and passed on to the Government for them to address and improve the problems currently ongoing; people were encouraged to email the following address:

covid19testfeedback@plymouth.gov.uk

- it was announced by Government that a new rule banning gatherings of more than six people would be introduced today and that Councils were to recruit Covid 19 Marshalls to patrol to ensure that people didn't break the new rule; Council's had very little notice of something they were required to introduced three days later;
- the new NHS Covid-19 app is being launched on 24th September, this app will allow people to report symptoms, order a coronavirus test, check in to venues by scanning a QR code and it will help the NHS trace individuals that may have coronavirus;
- Plymouth was one of 29 Councils that had been named as a site where temporary lorry parks and other port infrastructure could be put in place without the normal planning controls. The Council would do what it takes to ensure that our port operators are supported in putting in place the necessary infrastructure to support the city and the region's imports and exports;
- the Government published a consultations document entitled "Changes to the Current Planning System" at the start of the summer holiday with the period for responses ending on 1st October 2020, ahead of that for the Government's Planning White Paper consultation which ends on 29th October;
- there was a Government announcement that £2bn was to be released as part of the Green Homes Grant, that citizens could access to make their homes more energy efficient. The Government had indicated that there was to be no continuation of this scheme past March 2021;
- the Chief Executive and the Leader met with the Rail Minister on 20 August at Plymouth Train Station and spoke to him about the city's exciting new plans for Brunel Plaza, the multi-million pound project to upgrade the train station and completely revamp the surrounding area;
- the aim of the Council's economic recovery plan, Resurgam, was to protect existing jobs and create as many new opportunities for our residents during these difficult times by supporting our key sectors, helping our young people and using the spending power of the Council to kick-start the local economy;
- tickets were now on sale for the Box and could be booked via The Box's website. There were timed entry slots throughout the day for social distancing – this was all completely free for Plymouth residents. The Box

would officially be open on Tuesday 29 September and an extended 3 day residents' preview would be scheduled on 25th, 26th and 27th September.

32. **Cabinet Member Updates**

Councillor Pete Smith (Deputy Leader) made announcements including:

- Plymouth had been selected to host the Sail GB on 17 and 18 July 2021;
- the schedule of works for the Life Centre was on track with the aim to have two sports halls open by November 2020;
- work was ongoing to re-open library services in the city.

Councillor Kate Taylor (Cabinet Member for Health and Adult Social Care) made announcements including:

- her disappointment regarding the difficulties in accessing tests and getting results back in a timely manner;
- Caring for Plymouth's 'Thank you week'; an online book of thanks had also been launched and people were encouraged to make comments;
- since the last Cabinet meeting a new service had been launched – the Plymouth Autism Spectrum Service – this offered advice and consultation for adults and families;
- Age UK were supporting people who encountered difficulties in leaving hospital.

Councillor Chris Penberthy (Cabinet Member for Housing and C-operative Development) made announcements including:

- the Plymouth Good Neighbours Scheme supported a huge number of people during the early response phase of the pandemic, thanks was offered and the importance of this scheme was highlighted.

Councillor Sue Dann (Cabinet Member for Environment and Streetscene) made announcements including:

- Western Mill Recycling Centre was to open from 8.30am – 5.30pm;
- over 40,000 residents had registered for the garden waste collection service; there was to be a move from bags to bins;
- some bins were not being collected due to the large amount of rubbish left inside them making it difficult for the waste operators to handle them;

some bins were also not collected on entire streets – people were encouraged to leave their bins out and remain patient as they would likely be collected the following day.

Councillor Jon Taylor (Cabinet Member for Education, Skills and Transformation) made announcements including:

- over the last few weeks people had been working hard to get ready for the return to school – all schools were able to open as of last week – attendance levels were very high with over 90% in primary schools;
- a number of schools had to shift to home learning for bubbles that were required to self-isolate. Delays in testing were having an impact on this area as it affected how long some children were asked to remain at home. This had also affected the workforce as some people needed to take time off to look after young people;
- it was pleasing to see a large number of children with health and care plans return to school last week;
- the school transport situation was being monitored closely;
- the Skills Launchpad went live on 12 August.

33. **Completed Pledge Report**

Councillor Mark Lowry (Cabinet Member for Finance) presented the Completed Pledge Report –

Following the completion of pledges 14, 68 and 70 in August, the total number of pledges completed was 78 of the 100. A “pledge on a page” overview had been prepared for each of the following pledges listed below:

Pledge 14: Working with Network Rail, Plymouth University, Great Western Railway and Government partners, we will support the development of the new gateway project at Plymouth Train Station. This will include plans for a grand new entrance overlooking the city, a new car park and more spaces for business and retail.

Pledge 68: We will work with Mayflower 400 to ensure that Plymouth is not only at the heart of national and international commemorations, but that the benefits from this year of events last long into the future, creating a legacy for the whole city, not just those communities along the waterfront.

Pledge 70: We will use phone apps and digital technology to enrich the tourism experience. This will also mean that local residents can hold the keys to our city’s past in their hands.

Cabinet noted the completion of pledges 14, 68 and 70 in August 2020, bringing the total number of completed pledges to 78.

34. **Planning For The Future: The Governments White Paper**

Councillor Mark Coker (Cabinet Member for Strategic Planning and Infrastructure), Councillor Evans OBE (Leader of the Council) and Paul Barnard (Service Director for Strategic Planning and Infrastructure) introduced the Planning for the Future: The Governments White Paper report –

The report summarised the Government’s proposals set out in the “Planning for the Future” White Paper published on 06 August 2020 which, if carried forward into the necessary primary and secondary legislation, alongside the required changes to accompanying national planning guidance, represented the most radical changes to the planning system since its creation in the 1947 Town and Country Planning Act. The report summarised the implications of the 24 proposals set out in the White Paper for the future planning of Plymouth.

The report concludes that the proposed changes are, from a local authority perspective, profoundly undemocratic; seek to centralise more planning decisions, thereby severely limiting the ability of local people to effectively influence the planning of their city and neighbourhoods, and inappropriately continued to deregulate aspects of planning control which deliver important planning outcomes for the city.

The report found that the Planning White Paper misses a once-in-a-generation opportunity to place the climate emergency at the heart of the English planning system and was likely to lead to increased inequalities across the country through an unfair distribution of resources that favours London, the South East and other higher value areas. Furthermore, although the White Paper included some interesting ideas, there was a dearth of information on key proposals and so it is unclear whether or not they were even achievable and at what cost.

The report provided the framework for the City Council’s detailed response to the consultation on the Planning White Paper, the deadline for which is 29 October 2020.

Cabinet agreed to –

1. Instruct the Service Director for Strategic Planning & Infrastructure to incorporate the concerns and objections to the Government’s “Planning for the Future” White Paper as set out in the report, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Strategic Planning and Infrastructure.

2. Instruct the Leader to raise the concerns and objections to the “Planning for the Future” White Paper set out in the report with local Members of Parliament.

35. **Financial Monitoring Report Month 4 (To Follow)**

Councillor Mark Lowry (Cabinet Member for Finance) presented Financial Monitoring Report Month 4 –

Outlined the capital and revenue finance monitoring position of the Council as at the end of July 2020;

Updates the report presented to Cabinet on 18 August 2020 which set out a revenue position statement for 2020/21 and the impact upon 2021/22 financial planning arising from the COVID-19 pandemic;

Set out the capital budget 2020-25, taking into account changes to the capital programme and adjustments to income assumptions as a result of the pandemic.

Cabinet agreed to –

1. Notes the current capital and revenue monitoring position.
2. Endorse the mitigating actions set out at paragraphs 1.7-1.10 below to offset the impact of the projected overspend.
3. Approve the creation of a Covid Reserve to fund the additional costs and lost income arising from the Pandemic as set out in paragraph 1.10.
4. Continue to work with Strategic and Service Directors to explore further options to reduce the projected overspend and minimise any further call on the Council's reserves to balance the 2020/21 budget.
5. Recommend that the Council approves the Capital Budget 2020-2025 as revised to £593.638m (as shown in Table 5).

36. **Joint Trading Standards Services**

Councillor Sally Haydon (Cabinet Member for Customer focus and Community Safety) and Ruth Harrell (Director of Public Health) presented the Joint Trading Standards Services report –

The report outlined the proposal to create a joint Trading Standards Service for the Heart of the South West area by Plymouth joining with the existing Devon, Somerset and Torbay Trading Standards Service. It provided background information on the role of Trading Standards and outlined the advantages of creating the joint service. It introduced a joint Full Business Case which provided detailed information to assist members in deciding whether or not to proceed.

Cabinet agreed to –

1. Give approval for Plymouth to enter into a joint Trading Standards Service with Devon, Somerset and Torbay subject to;
 - (i) the satisfactory conclusion of negotiations in relation to the legal agreement on the principles contained in the business case/cabinet report.
 - (ii) a report authorising the detailed governance arrangements and any necessary proposed amendments to the constitution.
2. Authorise the Director for Public Health to conclude the terms of the legal agreement.

37. **New Multi-Agency Safeguarding Arrangements Working Together To Safeguard Children: Plymouth Strategic Safeguarding Children's Partnership**

Councillor Jemima Laing (Cabinet Member for Children and Young People) and Alison Botham (Director for Children's Services) presented the New Multi-Agency Safeguarding Arrangements Working Together to Safeguard Children: Plymouth Strategic Safeguarding Children's Partnership report –

Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018 was the statutory guidance that transferred strategic local safeguarding arrangements from Local Safeguarding Children Boards (LSCBs) to three new statutory safeguarding partners, namely the Local Authority, Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) and Chief Officer of Police to a local area.

In June 2019 Cabinet approved and adopted a proposal for new strategic multi-agency safeguarding arrangements across Plymouth and Torbay. These proposals came into effect on 29 September 2019. Since that date Torbay Local Authority had evaluated the sustainability of the arrangement and concluded that in order to achieve the required improvements in safeguarding arrangements for Children and Young People in Torbay they need to establish single Torbay strategic safeguarding arrangements.

This report proposed a revised approach to comply with the Working Together guidance with new multi-agency strategic safeguarding arrangements for Plymouth delivered via the statutory safeguarding partners, Plymouth City Council, NHS Devon Clinical Commissioning Group and Devon & Cornwall Police.

Cabinet agreed to approve and adopt the revised proposal for the new multi-agency strategic safeguarding arrangements set out at section 3 of this report.