

Cabinet

Tuesday 13 October 2020

PRESENT:

Councillor Evans OBE, in the Chair.

Councillor P Smith, Vice Chair.

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

Also present: Alison Botham (Director for Children's Services), Emma Crowther (Strategic Commissioning Manager), Councillor Derrick (Assistant Cabinet Member), David Draffan (Service Director for Economic Development), Kate Farmery (Head of Business, The Box), Ruth Harrell (Director of Public Health) and Giles Perritt (Assistant Chief Executive).
Councillor derrick

The meeting started at 2.00 pm and finished at 4.20 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.

38. **Declarations of Interest**

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

39. **Minutes**

Members agreed the minutes of 15 September 2020 as an accurate record of the meeting.

40. **Questions from the Public**

There were no questions received from members of the public.

41. **Chair's Urgent Business**

There were no items of Chair's urgent business.

42. **Update from the Director of Public Health on COVID-19** (Verbal Report)

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

- as previously reported, rates in Plymouth were relatively low when compared to England as a whole, although there had been a reported increase in the rates;
- over a seven day period Plymouth had seen a rise in positive cases to

44.5 per 100,000 people (in comparison cases in the south west were 59 and England 143);

- there had been outbreaks both in care homes and education settings
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 - care homes: three outbreaks, one suspected case and seven single cases;
 - education settings: 10 outbreaks (majority of which were single cases);
- currently the number of people in hospital did not differ from those when the lockdown restrictions were imposed; there were not so many seriously ill people but there had been an increase in hospital admissions in the South West;
- across the country there had been 50 different Covid outbreaks reported which were associated to universities; there had only been a small number of positive cases within the universities in the city; students were being tested and self-isolating when required to do so;
- additional coronavirus testing capacity had been secured for Plymouth; there had been an increase in positive cases (more than expected); this was not just due to increased testing but that more people were contracting the virus;
- three new Covid alert levels had been introduced, medium, high and very high; Plymouth was currently well below the levels that would need to be reached, in order to move into the high or very high levels of restrictions;
- it would be challenging over the winter months with more time being spent indoors and people being in close contact; it was therefore important to remain vigilant, wear a face covering, regularly wash hands and maintain social distancing;
- it was highlighted that if an individual was displaying a Covid-19 symptom they should take a test.

The Cabinet noted the report.

43. **Update from the Chief Executive on Reset** (Verbal Report)

Giles Perritt (Assistant Chief Executive) advised that -

- since the last report to Cabinet, there had been a national rise in Covid cases and infections which had resulted in the regional resilience arrangements being stood back up (to the same level as the beginning of the pandemic);

strategic meetings were taking place covering the peninsula but it was important to note that no individual area had declared an emergency incident; however given these circumstances it was appropriate to co-ordinate across agencies and with other local authorities;

- the Council had in place a co-ordination hub which was dealing with responses to the changes in advice and guidelines, managing communications, managing the Covid cases that the city had and preparing and planning for the future;
- there was a large degree of co-operation with the Public Health team to ensure that the Council was aligned with what was happening with its partners; weekly meetings were held with Plymouth University, as it was dealing with a large number of issues with managing its student population and also the Police to ensure that national messaging was understood locally.

The Cabinet noted the report.

44. **Leader's Announcements**

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

- the Council's ongoing commitment as a city of culture was being recognised with a £726,000 grant from the Arts Council England to the Plymouth Pavilions;
- Sail GP had been confirmed for 2021; the economic impact of this event was immense with a benefit to the economy of \$24m, 24,000 live spectators and broadcast to cover 90 countries worldwide;
- the naming of the Mayflower Autonomous Ship had been attended by both the American and Dutch Ambassadors and had received an enormous amount of media coverage; Mayflower 400 was underway with many programmes/activities running into next year;
- since the launch of the Skills Launchpad (which supported adults and young people with careers and skills advice) on 12 August 2020, 3500 people had been supported through this scheme; the scheme had received praise from DWP for its innovation and approach;

- the Council had committed a £140m capital programme over the next two years which would create 2500 construction jobs; the Council had secured £10m in LEP funding to drive forward a series of 'oven ready' capital projects including the Brunel Plaza, development of new business parks, Plymouth Science Park, City College and carbon homes;
- as part of the sector hub, the Council had brought 13 sector representatives together for three meetings; 11 sector action plans focussed on emergency actions over the next six months and a series of longer term projects;
- due to the pandemic, there would be difficult economic times ahead for the city; current unemployment was 6.6% (which was better than in many areas); currently 30% of the city's workforce was furloughed; however, the furlough scheme would be replaced at the end of October 2020, with a less effective Government scheme; the Council would continue to work with its partners in business to keep the economy stable and secure;
- he had given evidence to the Fisheries All Party Parliamentary Working Group, in his role as a champion of the fishing industry which had received an excellent reception;
- the third reading of the Fisheries Bill was due to be considered by Parliament today but had only been allocated 15 minutes to discuss the future of the fishing industry for the whole of the UK which was deeply concerning.

The Cabinet noted the report.

45. **Cabinet Member Updates**

Councillor Peter Smith (Deputy Leader) made the following announcements -

- as of this week, all of the Council's 11 libraries had opened offering a range of services for residents, including online services such as eAudiobooks and Select and Collect;
- Plymouth City Council was the first local authority in the region to be able to facilitate coroner and jury inquests (following the pandemic);
- the media coverage for Mayflower 400 related activity in September 2020 had been enormous and worldwide with the naming of the Mayflower Autonomous Ship and the No New Worlds installation at The Box; from 14 September to 24 September 2020 there had been over one thousand media articles worldwide;

- Brickfields was nearing completion; it was anticipated that the newly laid track would be available for public use on 26 October 2020;
- West Hoe Tennis Courts had received a make-over which included new surfaces, nets and posts and a new access gate; the cost of an annual pass was £35 or £5 per time.

Councillor Lowry (Cabinet Member for Finance) made the following announcements –

- the capital and revenue monitoring report 2020/21 – quarter 2 would be considered at the Cabinet meeting in November 2020;
- preparation work was underway with the budget for the next financial year; the budget together with the Council Tax base setting and the Council Tax Support Scheme would be considered by Council in January 2021; it was anticipated that the Local Government Finance Settlement would be known at the end of December 2020 which would make setting the budget for 2021/22 challenging.
- reassurance was provided that the council's finances were currently in a reasonable position.

Councillor Laing (Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Families) made the following announcements –

- National Care Leaver's Week was taking place from Monday 26 October to Sunday 1 November 2020; the Council would be working in partnership with Barnardos and a wide range of local services on developing and delivering a range of activities as part of Care Leavers Week 2020;
- the main focus of the week would be on raising awareness of the issues facing care experienced young people to improve understanding and service delivery; it would also be used to celebrate achievement of Plymouth's Care Leavers, as well as kick starting activity to improve the city's activity and support in this area.

Councillor Kate Taylor (Cabinet Member for Health and Adult Social Care) made the following announcements –

- the city had a total of 97 care homes; there were currently four outbreaks in care homes (Hamilton House, Parkwood House, Waterloo and Consort);
- the total number of homes with one single confirmed case included Bethany Christian Home, Elburton Heights, Thorn Park, Camelia

House, Tamar House, Plymbridge House and Wisteria;

- there was one home with a suspected outbreak/single case in Merafield View;
- there had been one confirmed death in a care home;
- there were currently 15 residents and 26 care home workers with suspected/confirmed cases;
- the Council continued to support homes with additional deliveries of PPE if required, with clinical advice through the city's Care Home Liaison service, with guidance and training on infection control procedures and through daily contact with a member of the multi-disciplinary team;
- the Council had been able to secure additional Coronavirus testing capacity for Plymouth by providing the ground floor of the Guildhall; this would operate in addition to the regional test centre at the former Seaton Barracks site; this site would be operational from 15 October 2020 and would operate between 8am and 8pm;
- the Council would be signing up to Unison's national 'Stop the Spread' campaign which supported care workers to self-isolate, if they showed symptoms, in order to avoid spreading the virus; it was recognised that care workers were undervalued in society but the pandemic had highlighted the invaluable work they did and their contribution to the city;
- the council had invested £10m in a new care centre which would provide a minimum of 12 ensuite bedrooms, six self-contained flats which would offer meaningful activity and quiet spaces, sensory spaces, relaxation, engagement, education and assessment; this would help to reduce the number of people needing to leave the city for care and support.

Councillor Penberthy (Cabinet Member for Housing and Co-operative Development) made the following announcements –

- as part of the Covid related food insecurity programme, the Council had launched a Covid food aid programme where local organisations could apply for a small grant of up to £10,000;

- an urgent decision had been signed to allow the Council to distribute the Government's Test and Trace Discretionary Support Payment of £500, to people on low incomes who were required to self-isolate; the total sum awarded was £77,368.83 which would support 154 eligible applicants;
- the Make a Change Campaign had been launched last week; last year local people donated £1,500 to the Soup Run, Shekinah and Path; terminals were now available in a number of businesses across the city;
- decisions being taken this week included the updated HMO Licensing Policy and implementation of the Minimum Energy Efficiency Standard Policy;
- October was Black History Month which allowed everyone to reflect and celebrate the important contributions that black individuals and communities had made to society;
- work was being carried out to install a memorial plaque to the victims of the slave trade in the Peace Garden before the end of November 2020;
- the Council continued to work with its partners of the Unify Plymouth project; this project targeted four of the least cohesive wards in the city; a launch event would be held at the end of October 2020;
- Anti-Slavery day was on 18 October 2020 which gave an opportunity to raise awareness of human trafficking and modern slavery; (the Council was committed to tackling modern slavery through its procurement processes and Charter);
- it was with the deepest regret to have to advise Cabinet that Ann Wilkinson passed away last week; she was a staff member at Plymouth and Devon Race Equality Council and had served for more than 10 years as a Co-Director;

Ann's commitment to challenging prejudice and tackling hate crime was singular and her unwavering commitment to promoting a positive vision of good race relations in the city; the city owed her a debt of gratitude.

Councillor Haydon (Cabinet Member for Customer Focus and Community Safety) made the following announcements –

- a large amount of working was being undertaken with the Council's partners relating to modern slavery; on 19 October 2020 the Council together with Devon and Cornwall Police would be raising awareness with residents in the city centre to share ways of how to report modern slavery
- for the second year running Plymouth had been accredited with the 'Purple Flag'; this was given to cities and towns that met or surpassed the standards of excellence in managing its evening and night time economy; the Council had worked with businesses and its partners to achieve this accreditation;
- the Council had received funding from the Government to pay for Covid Marshalls; the work of the 'Plymouth Against Retail Crime' Rangers had been important in helping the city to keep going during the pandemic, in particular working to keep people safe and Covid secure;
- since August 2020, the Environmental Protection Service had undertaken 66 prosecutions for a variety of environmental crimes which totalled fines of £28,183; a new approach was being undertaken to identify people who were dumping rubbish and fly tipping; a dedicated Facebook account had been set up in order to gather evidence;
- the level of fixed penalty notices (£400) was set by Defra; however it was considered that this was an insufficient amount to deter people from dumping rubbish or fly tipping;

it was therefore proposed to recommend that a letter be sent to the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs to seek to increase the level of fines.

Councillor Lowry advised that fixed penalty notices was not a money making scheme for the Council; the fine of £400 did not cover the cost of this service and considered this recommendation would recoup the money for Plymouth's tax payers.

Agreed that the Cabinet Member for Customer Focus and Community Safety write to the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs seeking to increase the level of the fixed penalty notices.

Councillor Dann (Cabinet Member for Environment and Streetscene) made the following announcements –

- the Green Minds project had been funded through the European Regional Development Fund (€4m) under the Innovation Actions Programme and included the University of Plymouth, Real Ideas Organisation, Plymouth College of Art, Devon Wildlife Trust, The Data Place and the National Trust as partners; the project would help to re-wild urban areas and encourage people from across the city to enjoy the health benefits from blue and green spaces;
- as part of the Green Minds project, a family of beavers would be released in the Forder Valley, as part of the new nature scheme;
- further funding of £170k for the Future Parks Accelerator had been secured which would extend the scheme until 2022; this had been funded by National Lottery Heritage Fund and the National Trust;
- the Council had won a Greener Homes Grant (£3.3m) to deliver improvements to 300 fuel poor homes; the six month programme would support 43 full time jobs, installing over 850 energy measures result in 612 tonnes of co2 saved annually and £150,501 annual utility bill savings;
- £300,000 had been secured through the OLEV on-street electric vehicle charging grant; the fund would enable the Council to deliver 50 on-street electric vehicle charge points to help Plymouth residents in the transition to cleaner, greener transport.

Councillor Coker (Cabinet Member for Strategic Planning and Infrastructure) made the following announcements -

- the launch of e-Voyager, the UK's first sea-going electric ferry had been successful; the local authority had worked with partners to design and develop the vessel; the launch had received national media coverage;
- the Charles Cross Transport Improvement Scheme had won the Re-Engineered Project Over £3m Award at the Institution of Civil Engineers South West Civil Engineering Awards 2020; the scheme had been described as a great example of engineering with people in mind, there had been really good communication and articulation with the local community on what was being done, why it was being done and what would be achieved;
- wished to thank the residents of Plymouth for wearing face coverings on public transport in order to protect themselves and others.

Councillor Jon Taylor (Cabinet Member for Education, Skills and Transformation) made the following announcements -

- around 14 schools were affected by a positive Covid case at any one time, leading to 800-1000 pupils in bubbles self-isolating;
- Woodlands Special School had been fully closed for a period due to a case/suspected cases but the school had now re-opened;
- Brook Green Centre for Learning was fully closed until after half term due to a number positive cases and a significant number of staff and pupils self-isolating;
- all schools were following their Risk Assessments, Public Health England and Public Health advice and were managing well;
- during the pandemic early years childcare providers had seen a decrease in income (although they were in receipt of income from Plymouth City Council) and have benefited from Government aid; however the disruption to business, the additional costs associated with implementing Covid safety measures and the lack of uncertainty regarding the take up of childcare places, the future of the childcare market remained extremely unpredictable;
- Skills4Plymouth had completed its first full month's review of the Launchpad and there were pleasing figures on usage and positive feedback.

The Cabinet noted the report.

46. **Completed Pledge 83: The Box**

Councillor Lowry (Cabinet Member for Finance), David Draffan (Service Director for Economic Development) and Kate Farmery (Head of Business, The Box) presented the completed pledges report.

The administration continued with its four year programme to deliver against the 100 pledges by March 2022, for a better, greener and fairer Plymouth. Following the completion of pledge 83 in September 2020, the total number of pledges completed was 79 of the 100.

A 'pledge on a page' overview had been prepared for pledge 83 – by tripling the size of our museum, we will make sure The Box is the biggest cultural investment in the south outside of London. It would be big enough to tell the story of Plymouth properly for the first time. The Box would also contain a major celebration of Plymouth's naval history which would reflect the contribution Plymouth had made to the country and the world. The Council would also ensure it became the home to the National Figurehead Collection.

A presentation on the first two weeks of The Box was provided to Cabinet which highlighted –

- more than 10,000 people had already visited The Box;

- three quarters of the remaining tickets for October 2020 had been booked;
- exceptional visitor feedback across all platforms (including 100 plus 5 star/excellent reviews on Google and Trip Advisor);
- social media – 244 tweets and 108k Facebook posts/shares;
- 52 excellent reviews on Trip Advisor;
- 200 plus significant pieces of media coverage (including all major national newspapers and regional/national TV).

The Leader on behalf of the Cabinet, thanked all staff, partners and stakeholders for their dedication and commitment in making The Box an amazing asset for the city of Plymouth.

The Cabinet noted the completion of pledge 83 in September 2020, which brought the total number of completed pledges to 79.

47. **Garden Waste Service Improvements**

Councillor Dann (Cabinet Member for Environment and Streetscene) together with Councillor Derrick (Assistant Cabinet Member) presented the Garden Waste Service Improvements report together with the business case which detailed the proposal to transition from a bagged kerbside collection service to a wheelie bin kerbside collection service for the city, ready for the 2021 season which would begin on 5 April 2021.

The proposal would require investment in approximately 45,000 bins and the replacement of up to five refuse collection vehicles, as part of the Council's ongoing fleet replacement programme. The use of wheelie bins was considered to be the industry standard receptacle to reduce the risk arising from the nature of the manual handling operation, as per the Health and Safety Executive's guidance, the Manual Handling Operations Regulations 1992 and guidance from the Waste Industry Safety and Health (WISH) Forum.

The Cabinet –

- (1) approved the business case;
- (2) allocated £1.874m for the project into the Capital Programme funded by -
 - £1.014m corporate borrowing;
 - £0.860m service borrowing;
- (3) authorised the procurement process;
- (4) delegated the award of the contract to the Strategic Director for Place.

48. **Accommodation Framework 2020-23**

Councillor Lowry (Cabinet Member for Finance) together with Councillor Derrick (Assistant Cabinet Member) presented the Accommodation Framework 2020-23 which highlighted that in recent years, the Council's Accommodation Strategy had sought to identify future options for the corporate estate, particularly with a view to reducing costs associated with running and maintaining a significant number of buildings across the city.

Since the Accommodation Strategy was last agreed there had been a number of significant changes and principles that now needed to be incorporated within the Accommodation Framework.

The Framework would build on principles and outcomes agreed by Council, including the Climate Emergency Action Plan and the Corporate Carbon Reduction Plan that aimed to make Plymouth carbon neutral by 2030, the significant increase in digital working and flexible working and that Ballard House was not part of the corporate estate.

The Accommodation Framework also sets out how Plymouth City Council's corporate office accommodation could be reduced by at least one building, rationalising the corporate estate and providing opportunities to make progress towards zero carbon by 2030 target and redevelopment in the north of Plymouth.

The framework approach rather than a strategy approach reflected that a one size all approach to the corporate estate was not appropriate but instead there were overarching principles that connected the management of all the Council's assets.

Councillor Lowry (Cabinet Member for Finance) provided reassurance that as the city centre was incredibly important to the success of the city, not just for residents but for visitors, the Council would support the city centre within this framework, by prioritising its assets and ensuring that these were brought back into meaningful use and not just left as empty properties.

The Cabinet supported and endorsed the Accommodation Framework 2020-2030.

49. **Business Case for Supported Accommodation for Young People Aged 16+ (in Care and Care Leavers)**

Councillor Laing (Cabinet Member for Children and Young People), Alison Botham (Director for Children's Services) and Emma Crowther (Strategic Commissioning Manager) presented the report which highlighted that Plymouth City Council had a statutory duty under Section 22G of the Children Act 1989 to ensure there were sufficient placements in the local area to meet the needs of children and young people in care.

These placement needed to cover a broad range of provision, including children's homes, residential special schools and foster care. This also included supported accommodation for young people aged 16 and 17 and some young people as they leave care and step into independent living.

This type of provision was not currently required to be regulated by Ofsted or the CQC, as it offered support rather than care. The DfE was currently considering the introduction of some national quality standards for this type of provision and this was welcomed in further driving up quality.

This business case described the current contractual arrangement for supported accommodation for young people aged 16 and 17 and some young people as they leave care. It sets out the proposal for a new arrangement via a procurement. It also described the longer term ambitions for a more integrated system for young people in care aged 16 plus and care leavers. This approach related to existing revenue on spend for placements and proposed some adjustments to how this funding was used to support value for money (it did not request additional funding or describe any reduction in service).

The Cabinet agreed to –

- (1) proceed with a procurement for a new contract for 16 plus supported accommodation to replace the Peninsula Framework;
- (2) delegate the contract award to the Portfolio Holder for Children and Young People.