

Cabinet

Tuesday 9 February 2021

PRESENT:

Councillor Evans OBE, in the Chair.

Councillor P Smith, Vice Chair.

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

Apologies for absence: Councillor Haydon

The meeting started at 2.00 pm and finished at 5.32 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.

97. **Declarations of Interest**

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

98. **Minutes**

Cabinet agreed that the minutes of the meeting held on 12 January 2021 are confirmed as a correct record.

99. **Questions from the Public**

The following four questions were submitted to Cabinet:

Question one submitted by Mr Paul Gulley was answered by Councillor Kate Taylor (Cabinet Member for Health and Adult Social Care)
Question: The Council currently tweets the COVID-19 infection rate data for the Authority and comparators. Can the Authority now include the number of vaccinations (1st and 2nd dose) and as percentage of residents that have been administered in the area to see how we are fairing?
Answer: Plymouth City Council's approach to Covid19 data has been to make information available rapidly to keep the public updated on the situation in the city. Many people follow our twitter and Facebook feeds, which provide the latest data on cases in the city as soon as we receive it ourselves. When it comes to providing data, you can make decisions to share data if you are the owner of the data and are responsible for it. If you are not responsible for the data, then you need permission from the person who holds it. For COVID19 data on cases, people in hospital etc, Plymouth City Council is not the data owner but it has

been agreed nationally to share the data. It is updated daily on the Government's covid19 data webpage.

The vaccination programme is overseen by NHS England, and currently they have decided to publish a more limited data set to the public; this is available on the government's coronavirus data webpage. NHS England also share data directly on their webpage at the geography of 'Integrated care systems' or 'Sustainability and Transformation Partnership'; for Plymouth, this means that data is not available for the city, but is available for the Devon-wide geography only. As it is not broken down by local authority, we have not included it within the local authority figures as it could create confusion. We all want to see the progress made against this very important task, and as soon as we are able to publish Plymouth figures, we will do so.

Question two submitted by Mr Danny Bamping was answered by Councillor Mark Lowry (Cabinet Member for Finance).

Question: Currently the road behind the Life Centre and in between Home Park – has been unmaintained, un-adopted and un-named since 2009 and is a mess. As this connects Outland Road in 2 places, surrounds Milehouse car park and is on a bus route with 2 bus stops. What plans do PCC have to resurface, readopt and give this road a name? As home park is on it as will Jack Leslie's statue be.

Answer: Currently there are no agreements in place that would include adoption of this land as Highway Maintained at Public Expense (HMPE). The road in question is an important well-used road, which is reactively maintained as required. There are no current plans to develop it further.

Question three submitted by Mr James Knight was answered by Councillor Kate Taylor (Cabinet Member for Health and Adult Social Care).

Question: It's widely understood that vaccine hubs are calling up persons at short notice to vaccinate them rather than let the vaccine waste at the end of the day. What efforts has PCC made to promote that teachers etc could be included on this list to safeguard their schools?

Answer: The approach to vaccinations is set out nationally by the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI) The JCVI advises that the first priorities for the COVID-19 vaccination programme should be the prevention of mortality and the maintenance of the health and social care systems. As the risk of mortality from COVID-19 increases with age, prioritisation is primarily based on age. This initial prioritisation has identified nine key groups and taken together these groups represent around 99% of preventable mortality from COVID-19. However PCC believes we could take an important step towards reopening our schools safely by getting teachers and school staff vaccinated as soon as possible. It is right that the most vulnerable are being vaccinated first and as a nation, we are on track to achieve this by mid-February. With extra capacity and new vaccines on the way, we believe that the half-term window could feasibly be used as an opportunity to immunise our teachers and school staff and this could be done with

very minor disruption to the existing vaccination rollout timetable. This is not about de-prioritising existing groups. We believe the government should have the ambition to do both.

Question four submitted by Ms Samantha Turner was answered by Councillor Sue Dann (Cabinet Member for Environment and Streetscene).

Question: With fly tipping (especially where houses are) causing slip hazards and sometimes the toxic human waste that is found, it can cause illness, what will be your short and long term fix of this be?

Answer: Plymouth is not blighted by fly-tipping - between April and the end of November 2020 there have been 5,025 incidents recorded, compared to 7,546 over the same period in 2019/20 (a 33.4% decrease) - but there are pockets in residential areas that have more regular problems that Plymouth City Council target with enforcement. Fly-tipping is an illegal activity, punishable by a fixed penalty of £400 and a contribution to the clear-up operation, as the Council will look to recover costs and, depending on the type of waste, it could run in the £1000s. The council has a good record of catching and punishing offenders who are committing environmental crimes and there has been a steady increase over the last year. We are grateful to those residents who report incidents and provide us with evidence to increase the number of FPNs issued in 19/20 to over 300, compared with just under 200 in 18/19. As well as targeting so-called fly-tipping hotspots with our enforcement teams, the council is also investing in 12 rapidly deployable CCTV cameras to assist with catching offenders and these will operate in parallel to an improved information campaign to make people more aware that fly tipping is a crime. Finally, Street Services cleansing teams have a good record of clearing up incidents of waste that has been fly tipped and have a dedicated team on standby to respond to any reports received at:
<https://www.plymouth.gov.uk/streetcareandcleaning/reportflytipping>
 Most waste will be picked up with 10 days – often much quicker, but hazardous waste (needles etc.) will be collected within 24 hours.

100. **Chair's Urgent Business**

There were no items of Chair's urgent business.

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

Ruth Harrell (Director of Public Health) provided an update on Covid-19 which included:

- (a) Covid-19 cases had been reducing in Plymouth since the peak of this wave which was around the 19th January 2021; rates were now 74 per 100,000 and this compared with a rate of 131 across the South West with Plymouth currently 308 local authority out of 343;
- (b) working age adults had the highest rates of Covid-19 however Plymouth was a city with many businesses legitimately working during the lockdown, therefore this was an expected pattern;

- (c) there was a reduction in the number of people who had been admitted to hospital; whilst the numbers were still high at more than 60, this was much less than the peak which was well over 100;
- (d) the Kent strain or B.1.1.7 was more easily transmitted, and that was how it had become widespread across the country; the other variants of concern weren't seen locally as of yet however this would continue to be monitored; the measures of hands, face, space were still to be followed;
- (e) the vaccines were still effective at reducing severe disease for any of the strains that we know about currently, and the good news was that they were adaptable if that was needed in the future;
- (f) there were multiple vaccinations centres across Plymouth focusing on vaccinating people in priority cohorts 1-4; the Government broadened the scheme therefore people aged 70 and above, or classed as clinically extremely vulnerable, and had not yet been contacted to arrange a vaccination, were able to now use the national booking system – via the website nhs.uk or by calling 119;
- (g) there were some issues with queues at Home Park yesterday. Derriford, who run this, had apologised and it was understood that they have been increasing the throughput and this had led to a few teething problems. Changes had since been made therefore people were encouraged to go there for a vaccination, however it would help by only arriving 5 minutes or so before your appointed time;
- (h) there was still a very real risk that we would quickly go into yet another wave if the measures were reduced too rapidly and so it was likely that reductions in lockdown would happen slowly and carefully, allowing us to see what impact they have. We would be living under considerable restrictions for the immediate future, and although that would be difficult we are in a very different place in this wave, knowing that the number of people being protected by vaccination was increasing. People were urged to obey the lockdown guidance and to take up the offer of the vaccination to help to protect your family and those around you.

102. **Update from the Chief Executive on Reset/Response** (Verbal Report)

Tracey Lee, Chief Executive, provided an update on Covid-19 reset/response which included the following:

- (a) the Council was continuing with its emergency planning arrangements with strategic and tactical command still in place to preserve life and limit harm whilst maintaining public services in line with Government guidance;
- (b) the majority of the council's services were still running as usual however those that were required to adapt to work in a different way was because of Government restrictions. Thanks was offered to those working in newly

formed areas including Caring for Plymouth, shielding services, the Good Neighbours Scheme, work regarding homelessness and the business support schemes;

- (c) the Council was continuing to work closely with its partners, particularly regarding communication to ensure messages were clear and consistent; this was evident regarding communication around vaccinations;
- (d) proposals for community testing was being developed; this was called the lateral flow test and would provide another opportunity of understanding the levels of infection in the city. This wouldn't replace the PCR test which was used when individuals were showing symptoms;
- (e) the reset plans were continuing – section 3 of the budget report set out elements that the council had been working on in the last 12 months as well as future plans to deliver services;
- (f) the Government had announced that elections would go ahead on 16 May 2021 for both local elections and that of the Police and Crime Commissioner; work was being undertaken to prepare for a covid safe election. Queries had been raised around location of polling stations and the use of schools; the Council had not yet published the notice of polling stations and all locations were being reviewed.

103. **Leader's Announcements (including Resurgam)** (Verbal Report)

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

- (a) Resurgam would be the economic template for the recovery of the city whilst also dealing with the consequences of Brexit; staff in both Economic Development and Finance had been working incredibly hard to make sure the grants the Government had sent through had been processed as quickly as possible. The speed in which the grants had been sent to businesses in the city had been applauded by those in receipt;
- (b) the Council had secured projects to keep Plymouth moving, including:
 - i-Mayflower project has supported 220 cultural businesses and brought through 90 new jobs;
 - the Mount Batten Centre would have a new 10 year vision;
 - the Council had got through to the final round of the Heritage Fund in securing potentially £10m to develop the National Marine Park;
 - Plymouth had secured Sail GP to take place in Plymouth Sound in 2021;
 - Crownhill Court - we bought and refurbished this redundant office

building and have Valuation Office Agency as key tenants;

- Brunel Plaza redevelopment of Plymouth Train Station towards transforming the welcome by rail;
- (c) the Council set an ambitious target for local spending in the local economy – this had increased from 45% to now 60% in just nine months;
- (d) there was enormous progress with Skills4 Plymouth and the Skills Launchpad encouraging local residents awareness of opportunities available for them in the city. 4500 unemployed and young people had been supported back to work with 8000 future jobs being identified;
- (e) the work of the Business Improvement District and Steve Hughes (City Centre Manager) was praised for keeping the city centre working effectively; the Shop Local plan had worked well and encouraged more and more businesses to have an online presence – this had helped a number of traders to continue to trade through the pandemic;
- (f) 33,000 had visited the Box since opening – this was a £47m investment in culture for the city;
- (g) a bid had been drawn up for a free port based at Oceansgate with sites at Langage and Sherford – all within the Joint Local Plan. Officers were congratulated for the speed in which the bid was developed and it was hoped that it would be successful.

104. **Cabinet Member updates** (Verbal Report)

Cabinet Members provided updates as follows:

- (a) Councillor Peter Smith (Deputy Leader) made the following announcements:
- in July 2020 the Council successfully launched a series of digital Heritage Trails across the city as part of the Mayflower 400 programme of activities. The Mayflower, Hoe and City Centre trails were made available to the general public and had been very successful to date;
 - as part of LGBT history month 'Rainbow Connections' was a brand new trail which was launched on the Plymouth Trails app on 3rd February 2021. As the Country was in lockdown, this trail was launched for local people (within walking distance) to enjoy. However, those who live in wider Plymouth could still use the app and content from their homes, or wait for local restrictions to lifted;
 - the Plymouth Trails app could be downloaded for free from the AppStore or PlayStore. For more information head to www.visitplymouth.co.uk/trails

- during this latest lockdown the Council had kept open all of its parks and greenspaces; all our 127 playgrounds; all our 37 allotments. Outdoor sports facilities continued to be maintained and these would be opened as and when government guidance allowed;
- thanks were offered to the HROD team for all their contributions. This had been a difficult year, dealing with the pandemic and at the same time continuing with business as usual and beginning the work to modernise the way the Council operates. We would not have been able to deliver our services without the goodwill of the workforce – going the extra mile. Thanks were also offered to the workforce for all that they have done. In recognition of their work each employee had been granted an additional day's annual leave (prorata) for 2021/22;
- confirmation had been received from the Cabinet Office that the elections would go ahead on 6 May 2021. The Government have stated there will be additional funding given to councils to hold the local and Police and Crime Commissioner elections. The Candidate's and Agent's timetable would be published by the end of February and would be sent to all elected members and stakeholders. This would also be published on the Council's website;

(b) Councillor Sue Dann (Cabinet Member for Environment and Streetscene made the following announcement:

- the council had bid for a series of bids (jointly between the UK and France) to look specifically at green growth, reducing carbon emissions, managing flood risk and looking at fish diversity in coastal waters. The council had won its part of the bid to look at flood risk management in disadvantaged communities (approximately 500,000 euros); there were 5 projects and 3 of them had a Plymouth link. The Council would lead on the flood risk project;

(c) Councillor Mark Coker (Cabinet Member for Strategic Planning and Infrastructure) made the following announcement:

- Plymouth Highways would be featured the next Local Councils Road Innovation Network Group for all the work done for covid related issues to highways;

(d) The Leader delivered an update on behalf of Councillor Sally Haydon (Cabinet Member for Customer Focus and Community Safety):

- Environmental Protection had issued 175 fixed penalty notices per month for dropping litter;
- the Council had continued to prosecute people found guilty of fly tipping;

- the staff at bereavement services had coped remarkably well during the pandemic;
- contractors had been appointed for the crematorium facility planned for the east of the city; that project would see a complete modernisation of the crematorium;
- 142 Plymouth Registry Office weddings had taken place; couples whose ceremonies that had been affected by the pandemic would be prioritised;
- Coroner inquests had been held remotely – and delays had remain low;
- Call centre staff were thanked for their work during the pandemic;

(e) Councillor Jon Taylor (Cabinet Member for Education, Skills and Transformation) made the following announcement:

- Tina Brinkworth was welcomed to the Council, the new Head of Skills;
- the skills Launchpad was continuing to progress; there was a lot of demand due to the situation with the Covid pandemic. The Government announced there was to be a new Commissioner for Education Recovery (Sir Kevin Collins) – this was welcomed as a focus on the future was needed;
- the Council had secured funding for an Adult Skills Hub from the DWP – a Youth Hub coordinator (Jo Lacey) was seconded from City College and would start in February;
- Barclays had offered a home for the Skills Launchpad – a hub to access in the city centre was welcomed;
- On Course South West had an Ofsted visit last week; a report was expected within the next few months;
- remote learning was important – the council continued to support vulnerable children during the pandemic. The schools had adapted well to home working and were thanked for their hard work;
- the online learning offer was considered high quality for academies; schools were coming up with creative approaches for helping to support children;
- work was being undertaken to develop a better alignment of the education offer to the city's wider aim of economic growth in the city;

- the Inclusion Strategy Board commenced on 4 February – this is a strand of school improvement work.

105. **Pledge 82 (To Follow)**

Councillor Lowry (Cabinet Member for Finance) and Councillor Evans OBE (Leader) provided an update on Pledge 82 as follows:

- (a) Pledge 82 “we will work with investors to create new shops units to attract retailers currently missing from the city centre” – had been delivered and significant progress had been made;
- (b) the pledge was focused upon improving the quality of the offer in the city centre; through our excellent partnerships with the City Centre Company and key commercial landlords, the Council had been working for a number of years to make this happen;
- (c) COVID19 had and continued to have a devastating impact on the high street retail industry and the priority over the last 11 months was to support existing businesses through the pandemic; this was achieved by providing support to help businesses adapt to Covid-Secure trading, administered grants and implemented social distancing measures, as well as the launch the Shop4plymouth website and Geddon campaigns;
- (d) the Council had supported the repurposing of the former BHS and Derry’s Department stores to see new commercial units offered to the market with new tenants: B&M, and GDK (German Donner Kebab). The city centre had also welcomed Brewdog (Barcode), Hugo Boss (drakes circus), Evans Cycles (new George st), OYO hotel (former Woolworths), City furnishers store Pop-Up Shop (new George st);
- (e) the Council had worked in partnership with British Land, culminating in a joint planning consent for comprehensive improvements to the prime retail street of Old Town Street and new George Street, a refurbishment of Norwich Union House and up to six new retail pavilions;
- (f) Work will be undertaken to help fill vacant units on the high street with pop-up shops and meanwhile uses, and following successful funding bids to High Street Heritage Action Zone and Future High Street Fund to deliver a programme of major regeneration schemes to bring complementary uses to the centre and drive footfall.

Members noted the report.

106. **Capital & Revenue Monitoring Report 2020/21- Quarter 3 (To Follow)**

Councillor Lowry (Cabinet Member for Finance) introduced the Capital & Revenue Monitoring Report 2020/21 – Quarter 3 and highlighted the following:

- (a) in Quarter 2 the Council’s position for the forecast was an overspend of

approx. £922,000; now in Quarter 3, the forecast was a near breakeven position with a £27,000 variance;

- (b) interest rates had dropped substantially with the bank base-rate at 0.1% - this had led to a positive variant position of £591,000 linked to the Council's borrowing;
- (c) inability to travel and the necessity to work from home due to the pandemic had brought about savings; the Council's EVRS programme had also resulted in savings of approx. £500,000;
- (d) the Council's departments had the following impact on the budget:
 - there was continued pressure in the Adult Social Care budget with a forecast overspend of £1.6m linked to payments to care homes a consequence of Covid and providing funding for additional PPE equipment;
 - bed and breakfast numbers cost of increase was now forecast at approximately £897,000 over budget;
 - more children were supported in care as a consequence of Covid with an estimated £3m impact on the budget;
 - in economic development there was an estimated overspend as due to loss of income as people were unable to visit the Box, Mount Edgcumbe or the City Market;
 - in the street scene and waste service there was a loss of income of £1.6m from trade waste, bulky waste and the sale of recyclables;
 - there was a forecast £5.5m loss in revenue from car parking;
 - costs had been incurred of £1.5m from the housing benefit service – the council had received a combined grant income compensation of £25.56m however the report detailed funding we hadn't received;
 - the total impact of the non-recoverable losses linked to Covid-19 was in excess of £6.3m;

- (e) the capital programme had been revised to £778.671m.

Cabinet agreed to:

1. note the current capital and revenue monitoring position;
2. approve the non-delegated virements which have occurred since 1st October 2020;
3. notes the Capital Budget 2020-2025 as revised to £778.671m (as shown in appendix 1).

107. **Budget Scrutiny Recommendations and Cabinet Response** (To Follow)

Councillor Glenn Jordan (Chair of Budget Scrutiny Select Committee) presented the Budget Scrutiny recommendations and highlighted that Covid 19 had been an issue for the past 12 months; from the scrutiny panel's perspective this would be an issue going forward specifically in areas such as mental health for adults and children, homelessness, and the impact upon the economy with employment and jobs. Members were encouraged to support the recommendations.

Cabinet had the opportunity to respond to Councillor Jordan as follows:

- (a) happy that the value of healthcare workers from overseas and support for the adult social care reform was included in the report, however what brought the panel to recommend a 3% adult social care precept?
- (b) welcomed recommendation number 2 which effectively encouraged the Cabinet to continue the progress make since the design of the fostering service;
- (c) non-compliant playgrounds had been identified and work would be done to assess the budget to establish when works could be carried out; the use of agency staff were used for seasonal work such as the garden waste service and during Covid the council had to use agency staff to deliver the domestic waste services; not everything that the Council did to reduce carbon reduction would result in savings – some upfront funding was required from Government;
- (d) recommendation 4 – home to school transport should be directed towards Councillor Jon Taylor other than Councillor Jemima Laing; the recommendation linked to Kickstart had a recovery focus with an anticipation that further lockdowns would follow; to encourage scrutiny to look at the skills in its wider remit;
- (e) the eviction ban was an important area to consider regarding future implications; the Cabinet Members welcomed further scrutiny on this.

Cabinet agreed:

1. the recommendations (as amended as set out in the Cabinet response report attached to the agenda) as well as amending recommendation 4 so that the Cabinet Member for Education, Skills and Transformation is correctly referred to.
2. to thank the Budget Scrutiny Select Committee Members and Officers for their work.

108. **Proposed budget 2021/22** (To Follow)

Councillor Lowry (Cabinet Member for Finance) and Brendan Arnold (Service Director for Finance & S151 Officer) presented the Proposed Budget 2021/22 and highlighted the following:

- (a) Cabinet considered the draft 2021/22 budget at its meeting on 12 January 2021 and the Budget Scrutiny Select Committee considered the budget proposals on 18-19 January 2021;
- (b) the budget was circulated to the Chamber of Commerce and the Small Business Federation who agreed with the approach of the Council and were very supportive of the city's infrastructure and its capital programme;
- (c) the budget was considered financially sound and robust however there were challenges expected going forward; the Council would invest a further £5m in social care, £600,000 to address homeless and £3m to support the increase for the number of children in care. The Council was also increasing its budget allocation to £668,000 for streetscene and waste;
- (d) the capital programme in this budget was £778m; this was a huge investment in Plymouth;
- (e) there was in excess of £20.6m to address climate change related issues in the budget, including making corporate buildings more energy efficient, using LED lighting and installing electric car charging points;
- (f) the Government had provided a one year settlement which highlighted a lot of uncertainty; the revenue support grant had been reduced from former levels and there was considered to be a lack of clarity regarding the Government's future intentions specifically regarding fair funding and business rate retention.

Cabinet Members provided an update on their areas of responsibility related to the budget and the impact of Covid-19.

Cabinet agreed to recommend the following to Full Council:

1. the Revenue Budget 2021/22;
2. the Capital Budget;
3. the Capital Financing Strategy 2021/22;
4. the Treasury Management Strategy 2021/22.

109. **Brexit Update** (To Follow)

Giles Perritt (Assistant Chief Executive) and Kevin McKenzie (Policy & Intelligence Advisor) provided the Brexit Update and highlighted the following key points:

- (a) a Freeport could help to maintain the flow of foreign direct investment – if

successful the bid would help to bring 9000 new jobs to the city over the lifetime of the Freeport and some major new companies to Plymouth;

- (b) there were operational problems in the trading cooperation agreement; the EU said British fisherman were indefinitely banned from selling live shellfish into the EU; this was hoped to have been resolved by April 2021 but was looking unlikely;
- (c) issues raised by shellfish exporters included: issues with commodity codes which were causing problems at the border, each customer being delivered to had to have their own export health certificate, problems with groupage loads on lorries which caused delays, deficiency of customs agents and the chief electronic system was not built to handle the volumes it was currently dealing with – the new system would not be ready in time;
- (d) a special meeting was scheduled on Friday for the Brexit, Infrastructure and Legislative Change Overview and Scrutiny Committee looking into current issues with fishing – a variety of expert witnesses, exporters and fisherman had been invited; a report would be brought back to Cabinet for consideration;
- (e) further detail would be provided shortly on the Governments £23m Seafood Disruption Support Scheme.

Members questioned the impact that Brexit was having upon businesses in the city and their economic survival.