

Performance, Finance and Customer Focus Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Wednesday 2 March 2022

PRESENT:

Councillor Penberthy, in the Chair.

Councillor Jordan, Vice Chair.

Councillors Coker (Substitute for Councillor Stevens), Dann, Derrick, Harrison (Substitute for Councillor Collins), Laing, Lowry and Stoneman.

Apologies for absence: Councillor Collins and Stevens

The meeting started at 2.00 pm and finished at 5.30 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.

33. **Declarations of Interest**

The following declarations of interest were made in accordance with the code of conduct:

Member	Subject	Reason	Interest
Councillor Coker	Leisure Services Contract	He was previously a Board Member on DCLL, and DCLT	Personal
Councillor Coker	Leisure Services Contract	Director of Devonport Cafe	Personal
Councillor Lowry	Leisure Services Contract	Member of PEC	Personal
Councillor Penberthy	Leisure Services Contract	Member of PEC renewables	Personal

34. **Minutes**

Members agreed the minutes of 22 September 2021 and 1 December 2021 as an accurate record.

35. **Chair's Urgent Business**

There were no items of Chair's urgent business however under this item the Chair proposed that the agenda items 'Tracking Decisions' and 'Work Programme' are moved up the agenda.

This was agreed by Members.

36. **Policy Brief**

Sophie Tucker (Senior Support and Research Assistant) was in attendance at the meeting in order to answer questions.

Members discussed:

- was the Council going to respond to the Implementation of Mandatory Digital Waste Tracking and waste carrier, broker and dealer system reform consultations which were due to close on 15th April 2022? Confirmation would be provided to Members;
- with regards to the new funding pot of over £4 million to help Local Planning Authorities to prepare for Biodiversity Net Gain, how would this impact on the Council and its plans for biodiversity in the city?
- Plymouth was one of nine areas that had been invited to start formal negotiations to agree new County Deals as part of the Levelling Up White Paper; Members requested a written briefing is provided detailing what that entailed for the city.

37. **Finance and Capital Monitoring Report - December 2021**

Brendan Arnold (Service Director for Finance) advised Members that the Financial and Capital Monitoring Report covering period 10 was due to be discussed at Cabinet on Tuesday 8 March 2022 and it forecasted a balanced position as officers were able to supply resources from the revenue budget in the current year to help balance the shortfall in 2022/23.

Members discussed the following:

- clarification was sought upon the fact that by balancing the position for this budget there would be a forecast additional contribution to next year's budget; it was responded that in period 10 the forecast overspend was £526k however at the start of the financial year there was a forecast overspend of £1.5m; after Christmas it was normally possible to make final adjustments to see the budget through until the end of March, with period 10 resulting in a balanced position;
- clarification was sought as to how in this period there was a forecast overspend of £526k, but somewhere in the region of £4.5m was put aside in a contingency budget to settle the budget for the next financial year? It was responded that in period 9 it was usual to have a searching review of the in-year budget and be able to make strategic decisions about what might be available – the figure of £1.7m was a carry forward to 2022/23 in order to help in balancing the shortfall. Identified resources of £2.8m were carried forward to deal with the budget position for 22/23;
- that the report should have referred to officers undertaking a review in order to balance the budget; it was responded that this would be taken into account moving forward;
- in the tracking decisions document there was an outstanding recommendation from July 2021 which referred to officers including more financial risk, overspend and mitigation in future reports; it was responded that this was still ongoing as a number of improvements including format changes were to be made to the Finance and Capital Monitoring report.

Members noting the current financial position in the Finance and Capital Monitoring Report.

38. **Corporate Plan Performance Report - To Follow**

Rob Sowden (Senior Performance Officer) presented the Corporate Plan Performance Report and highlighted the following key points:

- the Corporate Plan Performance Report provided an analysis of the Council's performance as at December 2021;
- areas of good performance included net additional homes delivered, that referrals into childrens social care were decreasing, streets graded at an acceptable standard, business

rate collection was high and achieving target and the council was on trajectory to achieve its council tax collection;

- current challenges included a decrease in the percentage of household waste sent to recycling, sickness rates having increased in quarter 3, and the rate of children on multiple child protection plans was missing target.

Members discussed:

- why sickness rates were increasing and was it linked to ongoing covid issues, or connected with back to work mental health issues? It was responded that whilst the sickness rate had increased, the Council compared relatively well against its LGA comparator group. Covid had had an impact however work was ongoing to support employees. A breakdown of the numbers and different types of staff sickness would be provided to Members;
- that an explanation be provided as to why there had been a significant decrease in inward investment and what actions were being taken to address this; it was responded that a response would be provided to Members as well as to Members of the Brexit, Infrastructure and Legislative Change Overview and Scrutiny Panel for their information;
- how many families were currently housed in bed and breakfast, including the number of children, and how long had they been there? It was queried if a KPI regarding bed and breakfast use could be included in the register as it was considered an important issue; it was responded that the report had a strategic focus however the numbers of households, including families and children was recorded and tracked in the operational report, however these figures would be provided to Members as well as Members of the Education and Children's Social Care Overview and Scrutiny Committee for their information;
- due to the importance of housing children and families in bed and breakfast accommodation, it was requested that this was recorded and tracked in the strategic register; this was acknowledged by officers;
- was it known why levels of household waste sent to recycling had fallen dramatically from Q2 to Q3? It was responded that levels had fallen because of service pressures as well as it being a seasonal trend as garden waste collection had ceased during this period. It was expected that numbers would increase going into Q4;
- how was the Council monitoring the progress of early years settings and childminders if data was no longer being submitted to the local authority? Plymouth was below average for settings deemed to be good or above, was something in place to monitor this? It was responded that a detailed response specifying what actions were being taken to mitigate the risk would be provided to Members as well as Members of the Education and Children's Social Care Overview and Scrutiny Panel;
- data requested on the number of Afghan interpreters in bed and breakfast; the Chair responded that accommodation was provided as part of a government funded programme to anyone part of the Afghan resettlement scheme so private rented accommodation was likely;
- that reassurance was required as to what measures the authority was putting in place to provide support and accommodation to refugees and unaccompanied children from Ukraine; the Chair advised that a report should be scheduled on the panel's work programme for the next scheduled meeting detailing what support the Council was providing for those seeking resettlement from Syria, Afghanistan and Ukraine;
- there was concern regarding the drop in the Council's customer experience score and if it was known what was contributing to this; it was responded that a number of indicators fed into this score however a response would be provided as to reasons why.

Members agreed:

1. to note the Corporate Plan Quarter Three Performance Report;
2. that a breakdown of the numbers and different types of staff sickness would be provided to Members;
3. that a response would be provided to Members as well as to Members of the Brexit, Infrastructure and Legislative Change Overview and Scrutiny Panel regarding an explanation as to why there had been a significant decrease in inward investment and what actions were being taken to address this;
4. that a response regarding how many families were currently housed in bed and breakfast, including the number of children, and how long had they been there would be provided to Members as well as Members of the Education and Children's Social Care Overview and Scrutiny Committee for their information;
5. that a detailed response specifying what actions were being taken to mitigate the risk of Plymouth being below average for early years settings deemed to be 'good or above', and how the Council was monitoring progress now that data was no longer being provided to the local authority from these settings, would be provided to Members as well as Members of the Education and Childrens Social Care Overview and Scrutiny Panel;
6. that a report should be scheduled on the panel's work programme for the next scheduled meeting detailing what support the Council was providing for those seeking resettlement from Syria, Afghanistan and Ukraine;
7. a response would be provided to Members detailing the drop in the council's customer experience score and reasons as to why this was the case.

(Councillor Laing declared a personal interest during this item as she is a Trustee of PATH)

39. **Returning to Work Safely - Presentation**

Councillor Riley (Cabinet Member for Governance, IT, HR and Community Safety) and Andy Ralphs (Strategic Director for Customer and Corporate Services) presented the Returning to Work Safely presentation and highlighted the following key points:

- from 21 February 2022 the Government had removed legal restrictions in relation to Covid and moved to a new state of alert;
- per 100,00, Plymouth had 391 cases of Covid whereas the England average was 321 – there were currently 80 patients in local hospitals;
- there were subtle changes around council buildings including changes to social distancing to 1 metre which allowed for additional office capacity, the installation of CO2 monitors as well as ventilation around buildings. From 1 April 2022 more staff were expecting to return to council offices on a flexible working basis;
- staff were being moved from Windsor House to Ballard House and Crownhill Court;
- investment had been agreed for the Council's depots and Council House to make improvements, and the business case for Midland House was due to be considered by the Leader shortly;
- financial savings of £900k would be realised from 2024/25 with other venues being

used for collaboration space on a cost effective basis;

- employees had fed back through wellbeing surveys that they like the flexible working approach but some needed the support of an office; the direction of travel for working was supported by the peer review team;
- it was expected that flexible working would encourage the council's green initiatives – staff due to travel into work were encouraged to promote green travel.

Members discussed:

- what engagement had taken place with service users, specifically parents, carers and children, regarding Midland House? It was responded that engagement had taken place through the service and their knowledge of service users' needs however further engagement would take place. There was confidence that the move would allow for improvements to be made. The Chair's suggestion of including the Education and Children's Social Care Overview and Scrutiny Committee in discussion relating to the move, specifically with regards to the impact upon parents, carers and children was noted;
- had consideration been given to encourage members of staff returning back to the office to use green methods of transport in light of the climate emergency? It was responded that the Council had a green travel plan however it was acknowledged that changing behaviours could be complex but would be managed carefully;
- the Council's accommodation strategy was envisaged pre-covid; were officers confident that office requirements were at the appropriate level, would anticipated savings be achieved, and how much had trade unions and staff been engaged with? It was responded that trade unions and staff had been consulted and it was expected that 60% of staff would work flexibly, 20% would work from home and 20% would work in the office; contingencies were in place to give flexibility;
- what options for catering facilities were being offered to staff working in the office? It was responded that this had not yet been decided however there was an offer from Womble Bond Dickinson to use their facilities if required;
- the importance of understanding and encouraging informal conversations at work which previously would have taken place in a corridor; it was responded that this could be done via a flexible process and some officers were setting up coffee morning meet ups to help projects get off the line;
- had benchmarking taken place in relation to carbon emissions in terms of staff travelling to work? It was responded that the impact on carbon emissions from staff working at home or more flexibly had been considered however benchmarking would take place;
- that welfare facilities were appropriate for all staff, including those that worked in depots as currently that had proven difficult to achieve; it was responded that the business case for the depot and council house redevelopment had not yet been written however consideration for workers who did not work from an office or at home would be undertaken;
- had consultation taken place with residents with regards to collaboration spaces used by staff across different parts of the city including Devonport Market Hall, Devonport Guildhall and Oceans Gate as there was already issues with parking in local areas causing local communities stress? In response it was highlighted that a project manager would liaise with local communities and agreed that ward councillors would be consulted in order to allow a joined up approach. Staff Members would also be encouraged to use different forms of transport and not to park in residential areas;

- it was queried if work was being done to encourage and support staff and Councillors that opted to use their own device. It was considered that this would have cost saving benefits; it was responded that work would be done regarding bringing your own device to ensure it protected data the council held for its clients whilst trying to meet the needs of the user.

Members agreed to:

1. note the Returning to Work Safely update;
2. recommend that of the money set aside for the redevelopment of Council depots, that welfare facilities are specifically focused upon to ensure they were fit for purpose and of the same quality as welfare facilities which were provided for office staff;
3. recommend that green travel plans to support staff in accessing council buildings/ collaborative spaces should be actively considered and encouraged and should be a model to other employers in the city;
4. recommend that ward Councillors should be involved at an early stage of discussions when considering plans for council/ collaborative spaces around the city to ensure that detriment was not caused to local residents;
5. a Return to Work Safely report is scheduled for the October 2022 Performance, Finance and Customer Services Overview and Scrutiny Panel detailing progress made, specifically regarding the staff side perspective.

40. **Business Support Review Update**

Andy Ralphs (Strategic Director for Customer and Corporate Services) and Ross Johnston (Project Manager) answered Members questions on the Business Support Review Update.

Members discussed:

- that the Council's customer experience score had fallen over the last quarter and how would improvements be made when a number of staff had been lost to the business support review?; it was responded that customer satisfaction wasn't only related to one area such as the business support review – the review itself was still embedding;
- was business support a back office function or a front facing experience?; it was responded that the business support review didn't include libraries however the One Stop Shop and the Contact Centre were included as well as financial transactions, revenues and benefits and administrative support;
- customer service was going to be delivered from libraries around the city however this front facing service was questionable as libraries were only open a few days a week; it was responded that libraries were not part of the business support review and had a separate budget and review. There was an opportunity as changes to business support embedded to see where there were opportunities to do things differently including longer opening hours;
- the importance of members scrutinising the library service as well as collaborative spaces in the next municipal year;
- that most people would not know what roles were included in the business support review. It was questioned if parking and planning officers brought into the review were being assessed as to what was being achieved now they were part of business support other than standalone in their departments? Was beta value still being achieved? It was responded that the responsibilities of officers remained as they did before. The

performance of the teams was actively monitored and a reporting tool was available that provided automated and immediate updates on performance and how targets were being met. By centralising the resources and activities it enabled the ability to assess what was working well and what wasn't working well. The Council was now in a position to put in place plans to upskill staff to provide more services for PCC as a whole other than working in a silo environment;

- was the overall benefits for the whole department going to be reviewed? There were concerns that the review took officers out of one area and giving them a specific job to do but what about the jobs they did previously? It was responded that a 3 month review of implementation was being undertaken as well as value added;
- the plan previously included cross training so that residents that couldn't make it into the One Stop Shop in the city centre could visit a library in their local area and receive support; it was responded that there was a potential for business support staff to be positioned in libraries in order to provide a face to face support service and the upskilling of staff was being looked into in order to see if this would be provided.

Members agreed to

1. note the Business Support Review Update;
2. add the Business Support Review Update to the work programme for the October 2022 meeting in order to receive a detailed update on the reviews currently being undertaken and that members of staff perspective is included.

41. **Tracking Decisions - to follow**

The Chair raised the following with regards to the panel's tracking decisions:

- Minute 27 - Bereavement Services Update "a confidential briefing note would be provided to Members on the accounting treatment for the crematorium services" – an email providing an update on this had been sent to Members prior to the meeting;
- there were several tracking decisions on the document that were still outstanding – it was agreed that the Democratic Advisor would contact officers requesting information is provided within the next fortnight otherwise the Chair would formally write to the Chief Executive complaining that scrutiny recommendations/ questions were not being answered in a timely manner.

42. **Work Programme**

The committee considered their work programme and agreed the following:

- Grass cutting – biodiversity detailed data report – scheduled for the July 2022 meeting;
- Homelessness/ Rough sleeping strategy – scheduled for the July 2022 meeting;
- Member Development Update – to be scheduled for the July 2022 meeting;
- Customer Services Select Committee Review – to include the contact centre and libraries update;
- Corporate Estate Select Committee Review – to include Pounds House;
- Equalities and Diversity – the Chair will assess the action plan and may consider a select

committee review if necessary;

- report to be scheduled for the July 2022 detailing what support the Council was providing for those seeking resettlement from Syria, Afghanistan and Ukraine;
- a Return to Work Safely report is scheduled for the October 2022 meeting detailing progress made, specifically regarding the staff side perspective;
- the Business Support Review Update is scheduled for the October 2022 meeting in order to receive a detailed update on the reviews currently being undertaken and that members of staff perspective is included;
- the Leisure Services Contract is scheduled for the July 2022 meeting detailing the initial implementation of the project.

43. **Leisure Services Contract - To Follow**

Councillor Deacon (Cabinet Member for Customer Services, Culture, Leisure and Sport), Craig McArdle (Strategic Director for People) and Louise Kelly (Sports Development Manager) highlighted the following points:

- since August 2021 work has been undertaken to establish a Local Authority Trading Company to run the existing Leisure Management Contract provided by SLM;
- the project was on track to complete the transfer by 1 April 2022; the new company 'Plymouth Active Leisure Limited' had been registered with Company's House, branding had been agreed, a new website was in development and officers were due to launch a marketing campaign;
- a new leisure management IT system had been purchased and was currently being configured, TUPE proceedings had started and staff engagement sessions had been held, procurement officers were buying all goods and services needed for 1 April 2022 deadline and operating policies and procedures for the running of the centre were being drafted;
- a draft version of the new service specification was set out in the report as well as identified risks.

Members discussed the following:

- clarification was sought as to what was being scrutinised as Councillor Deacon had referred to "the centre" in his opening presentation; the Chair confirmed that the Leisure Services Contract contained a variety of sporting and leisure venues and not just the Life Centre, therefore if one centre was being referred to then it should be named specifically;
- it was queried how the contract was being managed, the staffing levels and if employees/ directors had the correct skillset; there were concerns that governance of this contract wasn't referred to in the report therefore it was questioned who the trustee directors were and how they were selected in order to ensure that the correct management structure was set beneath that to deliver what was needed;
- concerns were raised regarding the amount of work to be done in less than a month until 1 April 2022 deadline; with less than 4 weeks to go had an action plan been created to log what needed to be completed, specifically regarding condition surveys and the equipment? It was responded that the report was a progress report on work undertaken since August 2021 when the business case was approved by the council. Work streams were on course to be delivered by 1 April 2022 and whilst it was acknowledged that there was still a lot to be done there was an extensive programme team leading the project and there was a confidence that deadlines

would be met;

- reassurance was sought as to whether the facilities contained within the Leisure Services Contract would be fully operational with up to date health and safety standards and all equipment in place by 1 April 2022 deadline; there were concerns that the LATC may be required to undertake and pay for works if Everyone Active had not completed by the agreed date; it was confirmed by the Strategic Director that this would be completed;
- it was queried if Plympton gym was contained within the leisure services contract; it was responded that Plympton gym was being brought into the contract and was on target to be transferred on 17 March 2022 to SLM, before being contained within the transfer to the LATC on 1 April 2022. Planning permission had been granted on the site for an extension and officers were working through business cases and feasibility studies;
- there was disappointment that: training and development would only be reviewed other than ensuring it was appropriate and detailed; that a strategic approach to apprenticeships would only be being looked at other than having a commitment to provide apprenticeships in the city by the new training subsidiary; and that it was only being considered that an early staff survey would be undertaken to set a baseline. It was responded that the lack of workforce strategy was considered a key risk and whilst there was confidence that the transfer would be complete by 1 April 2022, there was still work to be done with regards to the workforce specifically with regards to vacancies and skills gaps. Scrutiny on this issue post transfer was welcomed;
- how many employees were expected to transfer over with the leisure contract; was it known if any didn't want to transfer across and what affect would this have on the service? It was responded that approximately 250 employees were employed and the final TUPE list would need to be validated against what was known about the structure and where the vacancies were;
- SLM members currently could make use of an App to book classes and renew their membership, would this continue from 1 April? It was responded that the Plymouth Active App was in development and would enable members to book a class or deal with their membership, further functions would follow;
- was there reassurance that on 1 April 2022 Everyone Active in Plymouth would transfer Members to Plymouth Active Leisure Limited and not hold on to them? It was responded that from 1 April 2022 all Members would TUPE transfer across to Plymouth Active Leisure members however Members would only be able to use facilities as part of the contract as this was not a national operator. It was highlighted that in terms of GDPR, the council was adhering to relevant policies and procedures;
- had officers asked permission for staffing TUPE on a GDPR basis to happen as there were concerns that this could take several months to complete; it was responded that this was in progress as part of SLM's bulk deed transfer and data migration;
- there was a concern that if problems were experienced in transferring data across to Plymouth Active, then sporting and leisure facilities in Plymouth would be hindered in reaching out to users in order to advise them of the service and what was on offer resulting in a lack of faith in the service and a drop in numbers; it was responded that there was a potential risk in terms of data migration however when Plymouth Active took over they would have more control of the data management to help to improve and increase activity programmes and participation;
- the importance of bringing open space into the offer, specifically with regards to Devonport; it was responded that there was a desire to take sports out into communities and this was being explored;

- did inductions for equipment only apply to new Members? It was responded that the equipment wasn't changing on sites therefore all inductions previously undertaken were still valid. New members would be required to undertake an induction;
- was a survey of members going to be undertaken in order to allow for greater business planning? It was responded that this was being explored, as well as potentially expanding the Life Centre user group to other sites;
- was there an intention to help market clubs and organisations that used facilities within the Leisure Services Contract? It was considered that in order for Plymouth Active to be a success then these clubs and organisations needed to be successful; it was responded that officers were keen that people's health and wellbeing was improved and that would be achieved by working together with stakeholders and partners;
- was there going to be active engagement with the student community in the city who were keen to use the leisure facilities across the city? It was responded that students would be engaged and that arrangements already in place to cater for students at the Life Centre would continue;
- could assurances be made that community engagement would take place across the city, with a focus also on GPs, and social prescribing? It was responded that TA6 were leading a campaign on engagement and a follow up activity would take place after 1 April 2022 in order to help maximise usage and utilisation across all sites in the city;
- it was queried if the marketing of Plymouth Active had gone through an accessibility study as it was considered that the images provided focused towards young and fit people, the text was hard to read and the logo appeared to fade into the background; it was responded that the images in the agenda pack were only examples and the marketing would depict different images depending on the target audience;
- a request was made for a copy of the marketing plan to be sent to members; it was responded that time may not allow input to be made into it as things were in the process of development;
- there was concern from a Councillor that he had no confidence that the Council was going to be ready for 1 April 2022 transfer date as timelines had not been provided detailing lines of development, the progression set against targets or the risks involved;
- concerns were raised regarding the marketing of Plymouth Active – it was highlighted that marketing shouldn't just focus upon fit people as all users should be encouraged to attend facilities and feel welcome; it was responded that a photo shoot was planned whereby local people that used the facilities would be involved;
- there were concerns that the governance arrangements including the board of directors were not known, that the CEO was not yet in post and the company was due to be in operation in less than a month, that the stakeholder group was narrow and that local communities and other providers needed to be involved;
- that it was important that directors had the appropriate skillsets in order for the company to be successful.

Members agreed that the Leisure Services Contract is scheduled on the work programme to be discussed at the July 2022 meeting detailing the initial implementation of the project.

44. **Governance and Management**

Refer to minute 43 above.

45. **Customer Experience**

Refer to minute 43 above.

46. **Stakeholder Engagement**

Refer to minute 43 above.

47. **Future Thinking**

Refer to minute 43 above.

48. **Exempt Business**

Agreed that under Section 100(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, to exclude the press and public from the meeting for the following items of business on the grounds that involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 3 of Part I of Schedule 12A of the Act, as amended by the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

49. **Leisure Services Contract**

Members discussed the Leisure Services Contract.

A Part 2 (Private Minute) is available for this item.