

Cabinet

Tuesday 9 November 2021

PRESENT:

Councillor Kelly, in the Chair.

Councillor Nicholson, Vice Chair.

Councillors Mrs Bridgeman, Deacon, Downie, Drean, Mrs Pengelly and Riley.

The meeting started at 4pm and finished at 5:42pm.

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.

191. **Declarations of Interest**

Councillor Patrick Nicholson (Deputy Leader) declared a pecuniary interest as an employee of Babcock during item 13 and left the meeting.

192. **Minutes**

The minutes from 12 October 21 were signed as a true and accurate record.

193. **Questions from the Public**

There were no questions from the public submitted to Cabinet.

194. **Chair's Urgent Business**

The were no items of urgent business to report.

195. **COVID 19 Update**

Ruth Harrell, Director of Public Health provided an update for members and went through the following key points:

- (a) I am going to start with some positive news, as the number of people testing positive has reduced over the last week or so;
- (b) We are still awaiting today's figures but the latest published data shows the rate in Plymouth was 436, still higher than the England average (387) but there were promising signs. (SW region is 487);
- (c) Unfortunately there were still too many people becoming so ill that they need to go into hospital, with around 50 people in hospital. Having 50 people in hospital displaces others who might need life changing surgery, but also having 50 people with

a very transmissible infectious disease created many more difficulties. The NHS is under huge pressure already - and this was before we start to see the usual rises in flu and other respiratory diseases;

- (d) Vaccination uptake in Plymouth remained good, higher than the England average for each age group - though still with room for improvement;
- (e) For everyone aged 12 and above 82% have had one vaccine 75% have had both doses;
- (f) Over 27% of our 12-15 year olds had already been vaccinated and we hoped to see this figure continue to increase;
- (g) Vaccination had allowed us considerable freedoms but it was not the answer to all of our problems;
- (h) Without vaccination, we would be seeing far more people in hospital - and far more people dying;
- (i) We could also reduce the spread by good ventilation and avoiding crowded spaces, but where this can't be avoided, wearing face coverings to both protect you and the others around you;
- (j) It's also really important that we test regularly - lateral flow tests routinely, and PCR tests if we do have any symptoms;
- (k) We had made great progress - but this winter would still be challenging, so please do remember covid and to take precautions to protect yourself and others.

Cabinet noted the update.

196. **Leader's Announcements**

Councillor Nick Kelly, the Leader of the Council highlighted the following announcements:

- (a) The San Sebastian fountain, just across from the Council House, was now back up and working. This was after many years of neglect and was the next step the administration had taken to restore civic pride in Plymouth;
- (b) The launch event of Songlines at the Box held in the presence of His Excellency the Australian High Commissioner George Brandis. The exhibition told the Story of First Nation Australians through the work of 100 Aboriginal artists. The Show was a smash hit in Australia and this was the only place in the UK when you would be able to see the show. After Plymouth it travels to Berlin and Paris;
- (c) We had many connections to Australia starting from Cooks Voyages of empire that left from Plymouth to the thousands of emigrants that left for a new life from Millbay. This really was a once in a lifetime opportunity to see a global show of this quality and I want to remind you all that city residents are entitled to one free visit. The

press coverage had been out of this world and has included BBC2, Radio 3, Radio 4, BBC World Service The FT, Guardian the IPaper and Country life to name a few;

- (d) Plymouth had been awarded over £1.2m for 2 brilliant projects – one of the biggest allocations in the UK. The National Marine park had been awarded £655k to support businesses to make the journey to net Zero. And Stonehouse Union had been awarded £542k to help bring the Millennium back to life. Well done in particular to the Councils Economy an Enterprise team who administered the process on behalf of the Government;
- (e) The Council had secured a major new inward investment from Marks and Spencer on our land on the former Seaton Barracks site. The new M&S foods store will be double the size of the existing store at 20,000ft². Alongside M&S we have secured a new Aldi, café and gym. The scheme was now open for public consultation and we want to hear your views. It was hoped that it will create 100 new jobs and 120 constructions jobs;
- (f) Work to revive Old Town Street and New George Street which was part of a multi-million pound investment by the Council. The dated landscaping was going and the new features were designed to make it look a lot brighter, including: Islands of greenery; a new play area; a small performance area and new tree planting. We had consulted with shop owners and traders and agreed that the bulk of the work would not get underway until after the crucial Christmas shopping period;
- (g) This year's Remembrance Service on Plymouth Hoe would be held this coming Sunday 14 November. The service would begin with a two-minute silence at the Royal Naval Memorial at 11am. Members of the public and local organisations would be invited to pay their respects and can lay their wreaths at the end of the service;
- (h) This was one of the most important dates of the year and brings Plymouth together to commemorate the services and sacrifices of those who bravely gave their lives for us and our country. The service this year would also be streamed on our Council YouTube channel.

197. **Cabinet Member Updates**

Cabinet members heard updates provided by Councillor Jonathan Drean, Cabinet Member for Transport on:

- (a) The 'Transforming Cities Futures Two' junction improvements; twelve junctions had been improved and a mover system had been installed which would learn traffic patterns and would adapt in real time;

- (b) Six footbridges continued to be renovated and repainted. Nine pedestrian subways had been completed and the Highways team continued to work on the Crownhill pedestrian subways. The main Laira bridge would be renovated and work would be undertaken underneath the bridge;
- (c) Major drainage work would take place in the Honicknowle and Budshead ward due to an unexpected increase in silt build-up;
- (d) George Lane stabilisation programme in Plympton had been on-going;
- (e) The Cot Hill bridge strengthening programme would commence in February 2022 and was a project conducted by Network Rail. This project, once completed would suspend HGV and abnormal load diversions;
- (f) The lighting and CCTV upgrade programmes had continued to take place in the city as part of the Safer Streets Fund 2;
- (g) Winter services had been mobilised; grit bins across the city were full; six gritters had been on standby; Plymouth City Council had a stock of 1300 tonnes of salt in storage; Vaccination centres would be salted for public safety in the event of abnormal weather conditions;
- (h) A white lining vehicle would be mobilised in November and would be replacing the thermal plastic lining vehicle to cut carbon emissions and deliver on a longer lasting and higher definition white line.

Cabinet members heard updates provided by Councillor Mark Deacon, Cabinet Member for Customer Services, Culture, Leisure and Sport on:

- (a) Bonfire night which had an attendance of 25,000 on Plymouth Hoe. This event had been introduced 9 years ago following consultation with partners in the emergency services with the aim of improving community safety by reducing smaller events and back garden bonfires across the city. On-going dialogue from partners indicated that the event had been meeting that aim. Residents of Plymouth had concerns in relation to carbon emissions from the event and Plymouth City Council would be looking to reduce this;
- (b) British Elite Junior Diving Championship had been the first major event held at the Life Centre since its refurbishment work and had been a great success;
- (c) The Box had won Leisure and Tourism Project of the Year and Building Project of the Year at Michelmores Property Awards. Plymouth's Market Hall had also won Heritage Project of the Year.

198. **Commitments**

Councillor Nick Kelly (The Leader) introduced the Commitments report and invited Cabinet Members to speak on commitments relating to their portfolios as follows:

Councillor Mark Deacon updated members on:

- (a) Commitment 15 – We will introduce a designated phone line for those without internet access to contact the Council. Councillor Mark Deacon advised that the contact centre menus and options had been revised to enable all customers the choice of talking to an advisor. The options had been simplified and language used to describe the Council's services had been arranged for the customer to understand. When a customer joins the queue they would be advised where they are in that queue so they could exercise their choice to go online if they did not want to wait;
- (b) Feedback from customers had been requested, there had been many positive comments and those negative comments had been looked in to, to improve the service further.

Councillor Jonathan Dreaan updated members on:

- (a) Commitment 51 – We will prioritise the delivery of a proposed dual carriageway road improvement works from Woolwell to The George pub. Advised that £19.9 million had been received from Government as part of the Levelling Up Fund;
- (b) Commitment 52 – Continue to raise the city's profile with government to level up the investment within the city to provide a resilient and reliable road and rail network to serve Plymouth.;
- (c) Commitment 53 – Lobby for the M5 motorway to be extended past Exeter to Plymouth. Advised that a letter had been written to all its local MP's asking for support to lobby government and Plymouth's goal was to bring about the modernisation of the A38 to ensure that the route reflected its status as a major trunk road;
- (d) Commitment 60 – We will encourage and help facilitate the greater use of public transport, walking and cycling as a more sustainable way of getting around the city. We will work with bus operators to provide the services and routes you want;
- (e) Advised that Plymouth City Council had published its Bus Improvement Plan and submitted it to Government. Plymouth had progressed to the next stage of the government pilot scheme for the social prescribing of walking and cycling with a second stage bid being submitted in early November. Plymouth had also been on track to publish the 2021 local cycling and walking infrastructure plan in early December following public consultation that closed in October.

Cabinet agreed the completion of commitment number 15, 51, 52 and 53.

199. **Finance and Capital Monitoring Report September 2021**

Councillor Nick Kelly (Leader) and Brendan Arnold (Service Director for Finance) introduced the Finance Monitoring Report September 2021 –

- (a) We had reached the 2nd quarter reporting for the financial year 2021/22. The report before us today covered both the revenue forecast and capital position as at the end of September 2021;
- (b) At the review of each monitoring report for this year, the financial position will fluctuate as we move through the year;
- (c) the quarterly position in the year, the Capital Programme had been updated to reflect newly-approved schemes;
- (d) The forecast revenue outturn after the application of Covid grants and council mitigating actions was currently estimated at £729,000 over budget. Last month reported £945,000, an improvement of £216,000 in the month;
- (e) As a reminder, we had seen the position improve from a forecast over spend of £1.514m at Quarter 2 in June – we were continuing to move in the right direction;
- (f) The movement this month was mainly within the Customer & Corporate Services Directorate, having moved from an over spend of £1.185m to £765,000. This movement was attributed to further vacancy management and treasury savings;
- (g) The directorate was continuing to explore further opportunities to manage this position and would carry on monitoring as the year progresses;
- (h) The Place Directorate was reporting an over spend of £38,000 which was an adverse movement from the month 5 under spend of £139,000. This was due to pressure on income targets;
- (i) We would continue to show the position of the additional costs and income lost due to Covid, which is currently showing a drawdown against grants of £16.562m. The details were set out by directorate in Section B;
- (j) Officers and Members will work closely to manage the finances towards a balanced position by the end of the year;
- (k) It is worth noting that after the 2nd quarter, we were reporting achieved savings of £3.067m and savings on-track of a further £6.410m, a total of £9.477m being 68% or two thirds of the £13.845m target;
- (l) The five year capital budget 2021-2026 was currently forecasted at £647.591m as at 30 September. The capital budget had been adjusted to take into account the addition of newly-approved schemes and to adjust the future funding assumptions shown in table I in the report;
- (m) New approvals include two allocations of investment in Disabled Facilities Grant totalling just under £3m;
- (n) Based on current average costs this additional funding would enable us to support 386 adaptations and maintain the independence of people in their own homes.

Cabinet agreed to –

1. Note the current revenue monitoring position;
2. Approve the revision of the Capital Budget 2021-2026 to £647.591m (as shown in Section C Table I) and recommend to City Council 22 November 21.

200. **Finance Update 2022/23**

Councillor Nick Kelly (Leader) and Brendan Arnold (Service Director for Finance) introduced the Finance Update 2022 – 23.

- (a) The purpose of this report was to provide an update on progress on the starting point and development in the coming weeks of the 2022/23 revenue and capital budgets;
- (b) The report showed the result of the initial budget build as a shortfall of £20m. Since this time work had been done, which had included reviewing additional cost pressures;
- (c) We had modelled the cost and volume impact on the demand-led services and also other financial adjustments. All of these would be further refined as we move towards balancing the budget;
- (d) This report did not look at or address the contents and impact of the Autumn Budget and Comprehensive Spending Review 21 announced Wednesday 27th October;
- (e) The Comprehensive Spending Review (CSR) gave very few local authority funding details and we cannot reliably predict the value of this for Plymouth at this point;
- (f) Within the assumptions regarding core resources it was presently assumed the Council's resources base would be broadly unchanged by the Local Government Finance Settlement, expected sometime between early and mid- December;
- (g) Although directorates had identified £25m of additional gross costs, when taken with other corporate adjustments we were left with a forecast budget shortfall in 2022/23 of £20m;
- (h) We were reviewing the £20m budget shortfall and are in the process of identifying solutions to resolve the current position;
- (i) It was important that ongoing sustainable solutions are used to bridge the gap, wherever possible. That said, it was not unlikely that a mixture of one off and recurring solutions may need to be considered in achieving final balance when the Finance Settlement was eventually received and the shortfall confirmed;
- (j) In this regard it was important to note that the Council launched a Consultation exercise last week so that residents can feed in their views to the work being undertaken presently by chief officers and Portfolio Holders to devise means of

addressing the shortfall. We would be reviewing progress at our Cabinet meeting in December 21.

Cabinet noted the report and the timetable for preparation of the 2022/23 revenue and capital budgets.

201. **Woolwell To The George Transport Improvements: Scheme Approval & In Principle Compulsory Purchase Order Resolution**

Councillor Jonathan Drear (Cabinet Member for Transport), Paul Barnard (Service Director for Strategic Planning and Infrastructure), Philip Heseltine (Head of Transport) and Steve Flaxton (Strategic Transport Coordinator) introduced the Woolwell to The George Transport Improvements: Scheme Approval & In Principle Compulsory Purchase Order Resolution.

- (a) This report summarised the development of the Woolwell To The George (WTTG) transport Improvement Scheme (“the Scheme”) and sought approval of the preferred option and to progress to the next development stage.

The report also sought approval to -

- In principle to compulsorily acquire land and rights by way of a compulsory purchase order (CPO) for the Scheme; for the progression of documents required to make a side roads order (SRO); and
- to place the necessary funding required for the Scheme onto the capital programme
- This would provide certainty and allow preliminary processes required for the making of a CPO to be carried out at the same time as negotiations with landowners were ongoing, thereby saving time and supporting the negotiation process. A further Cabinet decision would still need to be sought in the future to make a CPO to acquire any property interest that is required for the Scheme that cannot be secured via negotiated settlement.

- (b) The report summarised the benefits of the Scheme and the strategic importance of the Scheme in delivering the growth identified in the Plymouth & South West Devon Joint Local Plan (JLP), particularly in the north of the city at Derriford and Woolwell

Having considered all information including representations received Cabinet agreed to -

1. Approve the Woolwell To The George Transport Improvements Scheme as set out in the report and Appendix C (“the General Arrangement Drawing”);

2. Allocate £33,501,475 into the capital programme funded by £19,923,910 Levelling Up Fund, £5,000,000 Section 106 contributions, £7,270,565 Local Authority Corporate Borrowing, £755,000 Capital Receipts, £552,000 Integrated Transport grant;

3. Delegate to the Service Director for Strategic Planning & Infrastructure approval of all subsequent design amendments, Scheme approval submissions, procurement and contract awards associated with developing and delivering the Woolwell To The George Transport

Improvements Scheme through to construction and completion in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Transport;

4. Approve the principle of pursuing a Compulsory Purchase Order pursuant to sections 239, 240, 246, 250 and 260 of the Highways Act 1980 in respect of the land neighbouring the A386 Tavistock Road and Woolwell Road, as outlined in red and cross hatched green on the CPO Resolution Area plan in Appendix D (“the Order Land”);

5. Authorise the Service Director for Strategic Planning & Infrastructure and the Head of Legal Services to negotiate to acquire all interests in the land and new rights within the Order Land by agreement and where appropriate, to agree terms for relocation, including authorisation to enter any agreement necessary for the progression of negotiations;

6. Authorise the Service Director for Strategic Planning & Infrastructure and the Head of Legal Services to make arrangements for the relocation of owners and occupiers where appropriate;

7. Approve the principle of pursuing a Side Road Orders (SRO) in exercise of powers under Sections 14 and 125 of the Highways Act 1980 to carry out works to the highway in association with the proposals for the CPO;

8. Authorise the Service Director for Strategic Planning and Infrastructure to authorise officers to begin preparatory work to use its compulsory purchase powers, including serving requisitions on landowners, investigating all land interests, the preparation of a Statement of Reasons and all other necessary documentation.

202. **Freezone Update**

Anthony Payne (Strategic Director for Place), Richard May (Head of Ocean Gate and Marine Investment) and Kevin McKenzie (Policy Advisor) introduced the Freezone update:

- (a) Plymouth and South Devon Freezone would harness the power of high value engineering and advanced manufacturing sectors, with a focus on Marine, Defence and Space application to deliver clean and inclusive growth;

The Freezone would deliver a pipeline of jobs across the spectrum of employment from entry level to a higher skilled level and it was the aim to galvanise efforts to upskill the workforce. This would play a key part in levelling up Plymouth and South Devon’s economy;

- (b) There had been three sites that were being developed and included Langage Business Park, South Yard and Sherford;
- (c) The Freezone had launched Ocean Futures the anchor innovation initiative that would underpin the Freezone; bidding for additional funding through the Comprehensive Spending Review had taken place;
- (d) Cabinet members heard the next steps for the Freezone which included completing the outstanding sections of the Outline Business case which would be ready for submission on 26 November; having the full business

case submitted on 4 March 2022; With Summer 2022 having the Freeport operational;

Cabinet noted the report.